Sonic the Hedgehog: Heroes of Mobius

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Sonic is a hedgehog with super speed and unwavering heroism. He's used to saving the day from crooks and criminals but life on Mobius will change forever when Dr. Eggman invades and plots to take it over...

Status: complete

Published: 2011-10-10

Updated: 2014-10-24

Words: 2209018

Chapters: 227

Rated: Fiction T - Language: English - Genre: Adventure - Characters: Sonic, Tails, Sally, Dr. Robotnik/Dr. Eggman - Reviews: 606 - Favs: 182 - Follows: 99

Original source: https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7453072/1/Sonic-the-Hedgehog-Heroes-of-Mobius

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Prologue: A Battle's Beginning

Author's Notes

Hey there users of . This is my newest story and possibly my best. This is Sonic the Hedgehog: Heroes of Mobius, an idea for a comic I had and now turned into a fan fiction story. The series is basically my own take on the Sonic universe with my choice of characters and portrayals. There will be pre-made and fan-made characters in this series and some of the pre-made characters will be changed a little in order to make HOM a different continuity to the others.

If you don't like any of the changes I've made, that's fine, just please don't make an issue about it. I won't tell you about any of the fan-made characters who appear in this series, I'll just introduce you to them as we go along. A side note I'd like to add is this story is written in episodic form, not chapter form. Now let's get on with this newest Sonic universe…

Prologue: A Battle's Beginning

Mobius, the home planet of the weird and wonderful Mobian race. The Mobians all ranged in various forms and colours from pink echidnas to green hedgehogs. Mobius was a very beautiful planet too with its fair share of large cities and countryside. The planet was ruled by the Acorn family who lived in the majestic looking Castle Acorn. The Acorn family consisted of three squirrels named King Maximilian and Queen Alicia and their daughter Princess Sally. The Acorns had a lady-in-waiting named Nicole, who was a lynx in a purple toga and Sally's best friend. They ruled Mobius with pride and justice and fought to keep the world under tight organization in order to prevent world chaos. As of this moment, everything was just the same as usual, a quiet, peaceful sunny day on Mobius with children playing and Mobians walking around enjoying the day.

One Mobian was sitting on a tree branch in the middle of dense forest just chilling out. It was a blue hedgehog with a peach coloured muzzle, peach coloured belly and peach coloured arms. It wore

gloves and red and white sneakers with a gold buckle on the sides. This hedgehog was known as Sonic. He got his name after he miraculously ran fast, VERY fast. He could run faster then the speed of sound! No one is really sure how Sonic got his trademark speed, nor did Sonic himself know that. He just assumed he was born to run fast. A lot of people often challenged Sonic to races to see if they could run faster then he could but none prevailed. Because of this, Sonic was given the title "The Fastest Thing Alive" as they hadn't known anyone on Mobius or anywhere else to run that fast. Sonic enjoyed adventure and longed for it. He even helped out if anyone was in danger, no matter how risky the situation was, if there was danger, he would be there in the nick of time. Because of these heroic acts, Sonic was much loved amongst the people of Mobius and a lot of the girls longed to date him. However Sonic wasn't bothered about romance yet so these girls had to keep dreaming and hoping. Right now, Sonic was in one of his relaxing moods where all he wanted to do was lie on a tree branch and chill for a good hour or two. After all even heroes had a quiet moment. Whenever Sonic relaxed, he always thought deeply on what his next adventure would be like.

"I wonder what's in store for me today. thought Sonic as he napped. "Hopefully another crime to tackle as I love those. Or maybe something different altogether."

The average person would have thought "today would be no different" since days on Mobius were average at the most. However, today would be different. Today would change Sonic's life forever, and the rest of the people on Mobius would have their lives changed forever too. As Sonic continued napping and thinking, a low ominous rumbling sound echoed through the quiet skies of the planet. At first Sonic dismissed it as nothing more then a construction vehicle but the second time the rumble came, it was a lot louder and sounded more like it was coming from the sky then the ground. Sonic knew it wasn't a bulldozer or some other vehicle on the ground. He got to his feet and climbed higher up the tree to see what the noise was. It was most likely a plane but he didn't remember planes sounding that loud before. Sonic got to the top of the tree and got the biggest surprise of his life. The rumbling noise wasn't from a plane, it was a battleship! A real-live battleship filled to the brim with gun turrets and

laser cannons! Not to mention this battleship was colossal! So huge in fact it blocked out the sunlight and turned everything dark! The battleship had a logo which consisted of a face with a moustache and was coloured black and red. Sonic couldn't believe what he was seeing. This was unlike anything he'd ever seen before. Was he dreaming? Sonic rubbed his eyes and stared again. The battleship was still there. He wasn't dreaming, he was looking at a real flying battleship.

"Well I did think something different might be in store for me today!" gasped Sonic "I just hope whoever owns that thing doesn't mean us any harm!"

Unfortunately, it did. The battleship slowly hovered over the fantastic city of Mobotropolis, aimed its many cannons at the city below it and opened fire. The sky rained with laser bolts and cannon blasts and buildings were destroyed the moment the blasts hit it. Rubble rained down on the frightened citizens as they fled for their lives. Sonic couldn't believe his eyes. This battleship just opened fire on Mobotropolis! Why was it doing this? What had the people of Mobius done to tick the owner off so badly? Well Sonic needed to stop the battleship's terror before it harmed, or even killed anyone. Sonic leapt out of the tree and picked up speed. He ran like a lightening bolt through the meadows as he headed to Mobotropolis. The battleship continued to fire on the impressive city, knocking down buildings and causing citizens to flee. At Castle Acorn, Sally noticed the danger and almost fainted with shock. Nicole came in and noticed Sally's frightened state.

"Anything wrong Sally?" asked Nicole politely.

"Look…out…side!" gasped Sally.

Nicole peered through the window and got the same shock as Sally. The battleship was still firing at the city of Mobotropolis but it was also coming towards Castle Acorn, slowly but steadily. Was it going to attack the castle too?

"Sally! We should get into the safety bunker before that thing shoots us!" yelped Nicole, preparing to run.

Unfortunately Sally couldn't move, she was frozen with fear. Nicole grabbed hold of Sally's arm and tried to pull her away but the battleship stopped right outside Castle Acorn and fired at the tower Sally and Nicole were in. Luckily, only one of the walls crumbled to bits and no one was hurt. Then a ramp telescoped out from the nose of the huge vessel and stopped at the floor of the castle. Down the ramp, came a funny looking robot with two wheels as legs, a pointy head and a upper-class expression on its face. The robot's body was painted to look like it was wearing a tuxedo and a bow tie. The robot stopped in front of Sally and Nicole and pulled out a scroll from a compartment in its side. It unfolded the scroll and read aloud from it.

"Attention Queen of Mobius." the robot's voice was that of a stereotypical posh gentleman "You are to come aboard by order of Dr. Eggman or we will use brute force on you all."

"Um, I'm not the queen." said Sally "I'm a princess and even if I was the queen, I will not come with you for any reason!"

The robot stared at her coldly and put the scroll away.

"Fine, then I guess my master will have to deal with you, you royal brat." it said darkly.

Just as he finished that sentence, the sound of feet pitter-pattering on the ramp followed. This time, it wasn't a robot; it was a human, a species unfamiliar to the Mobians. The human was tall and fat. He wore a red outfit with yellow squares on it, black trousers with what looked like screw heads on the sides of his shoes, and white gloves. He also wore glasses and had a thick bushy moustache. He had goggles perched on the top of his bald head. The human stood right next to the robot.

"Well Alonzo?" he asked the robot.

"This Mobian isn't the queen, she's the princess." reported Alonzo "And she's refusing to come."

The human glowered at Sally and Nicole. If he wasn't wearing glasses, you could probably see hatred in his eyes.

"I see." said the human "Princess, I am Dr. Eggman and I have come to take this planet for my own. And you will come with me or I will level this city faster then you can blink!"

Sally shivered at the human's cold words.

"I'm going to give you five seconds to decide if you're coming aboard or if I'm destroying the city below me!" warned Eggman, holding his hand up.

"Five…" down went one finger.

"Four…" down went another finger.

"Three…" Sally didn't know what to do. She knew instantly that Eggman could be trouble but she couldn't let him destroy her parent's kingdom. She had to do something to save her people and she knew what had to be done.

"Two…" said Eggman as he put his third finger down.

"One…"

"Wait!" cried Sally "I'll come with you."

"Sally?" gasped Nicole "You can't! Don't go!"

Sally turned to face her friend sadly.

"I have to do this for the sake of my people." said Sally "I'll be fine, I promise."

Nicole had doubts since she didn't like the look of Eggman one little bit but she always knew that Sally knew what she was doing even in helpless situations like this. Sally turned back to Dr. Eggman who was smiling at her evilly.

"I'll come on one condition." said Sally "If I come, no one gets hurt. If you refuse I won't come."

"You have the word of Dr. Ivo Eggman that not a single soul on the ground will get harmed." said Dr. Eggman "Now let's go princess."

Eggman and Alonzo turned around and walked back up the boarding ramp of the battleship with Sally following them reluctantly. Sally looked back at Nicole, a small tear trickled out her eye and down her cheek. Nicole waved goodbye at her, fighting back tears as she boarded the battleship with Eggman and Alonzo. The boarding ramp telescoped back into the ship and the ship turned slowly away from Castle Acorn. Nicole couldn't take it anymore, she had to get help but just before she could leave the room the door flung open and Sonic appeared.

"Yo Nicole, what's the drama?" asked Sonic, surveying the destroyed room.

"That battleship attacked the castle and the person who owns it has taken Princess Sally!" cried Nicole, tears flowed down her face "You have to help her Sonic, who knows what that man will do to her!"

Sonic's eyes widened in shock. If there was one thing he hated it was looking slow and the fact he got there the moment Sally got kidnapped was unforgivable.

"Don't you worry Nicole, I'm gonna save the princess and teach that guy some manners!" said Sonic.

"Be careful out there." said Nicole.

"I'll be fine." assured Sonic "Now it's time I jammed outta here!"

He began to run and charged straight forward. He leapt out of the wrecked room and straight towards the battleship which had almost finished turning around to leave. If Sonic missed this, he would get jet fumes in the face. Luckily though Sonic just managed to catch the tip of one of the wings with his hands. Sonic fought to hold on as the ship finished turning and began to activate its jet engines. The ship began to zoom away from Castle Acorn and right over the semi-wrecked city of Mobotropolis. Sonic scrambled onto the wing and held on tight as he tried to figure out a way in.

"I'm not gonna let the psycho who owns this battleship harm the princess or anyone else!" said Sonic with great determination "I'll save everyone!"

Onboard the colossal battleship, Sally was sitting in a chair, thick steal cuffs wrapped around her wrists to keep her to the chair. Alonzo circled her slowly, observing every inch of her body. Then he stopped in front of her and smirked.

"Not much of a princess are you?" sneered Alonzo "I thought princess wore fancier outfits then that."

"Oh shut up!" snapped Sally "At least my outfit isn't painted on like yours is!"

Alonzo fumed in anger. "Of course my outfit's painted on!" he snapped "I'm a robot; robot's don't wear clothes of any kind! Well I guess my armour could count as an outfit of sorts…"

He was interrupted by the sound of a door opening. It was only Dr. Eggman. He walked into the room with an evil smirk on his moustachioed face. He stared evilly at his captive Mobian, restrained to a chair and helpless looking. Sally tried to hide her fear by keeping a straight face as she looked at Eggman.

"So, what did you want with me or my mother?" asked Sally.

"I hoped you would ask." said Dr. Eggman "Because I have an easy answer for you. The people on this animal inhabited planet care a lot for their King and Queen do they?"

Sally wasn't sure she should answer but she did with a nod of the head.

"So if I have you, then all the citizens will get desperate to have you back, especially your parents." purred Dr. Eggman "So I'll exchange you…for the planet!"

"I'm a hostage and I'm being used for blackmail too?" shrieked Sally "How could you?"

"I only want a place to build my dream Eggman Empire." replied Dr. Eggman "And I couldn't conquer my home planet because their forces are too strong so I went out into space looking for a weaker planet to target, and this seems like the perfect one."

"You think Mobius is weak because we're all animals?" said Sally "Didn't anyone ever tell you never to judge a book by its cover?"

"Um, this is a planet, not a book so how can we judge a book by its cover if it isn't a book?" said Alonzo, scratching his metal pointed head.

Dr. Eggman clopped him round the head, causing it to spin around faster then a roundabout. Alonzo's head stopped spinning but his eyes didn't.

"It's a term of phrase you incompetent piece of titanium!" snarled Dr. Eggman "And I thought I perfected you in the grammar department!"

Alonzo's eyes finally stopped spinning and the poor servant bot fainted.

"We may look weak but we're stronger then you think!" said Sally Acorn bravely "We won't surrender to you!"

Dr. Eggman stared at Sally with a scowl on his face. He adjusted his glasses and turned away from her. He put his hands behind his back.

"I'm pretty sure they will…" said Eggman, his voice all soft and dangerous sounding.

Sally swallowed a lump in her throat. This man was very creepy there was no denying it. And what if this man's plan to take over Mobius succeeded? The planet would have a very dark future indeed.

"Sonic, where are you…?" Sally whispered under her breath.

Sonic had finally managed to climb across the wing he had grabbed hold of and began to climb up the ship's hull. This ship was a lot bigger up close and Sonic knew it, but no ship of any size was bigger then Sonic's determination to save Mobius from disaster. The battleship had left the smoking city behind and was just hovering over a nearby field.

Sonic looked over his shoulder to see the damages done to

Mobotropolis. The city looked like an earthquake had gone straight down the middle of it. Buildings had crumbled into pieces and the roads were cracked so much they might cave in if anymore damage was done to them. Seeing all this made Sonic furious, Mobotropolis was his home city after all. Sonic turned his attention back to the ship. He was almost on top of the huge vessel. Once there, he could just run forward, into the bridge and confront the man who piloted this death machine. But before he could climb any further the ship jerked slightly and then began to turn around again.

"Oh great, another attack?" groaned Sonic as he held on tight.

The ship turned around 180 degrees so it was facing Mobotropolis once again. However it didn't make any attempts to move forward or attack. Instead it just remained where it was. Then a huge holographic picture emerged out of a window from the bridge tower. The picture showed Dr. Eggman. All the Mobians of Mobotropolis stared in fear at the huge image.

"Attention citizens of Mobius." Eggman's voice boomed out from the image "I am Dr. Eggman and I have come to take this planet for my own."

The city echoed with a chorus of gasping, especially from Sonic.

"And if you furry freaks don't do as I ask…" said Eggman "Then you'll never see your precious princess again!"

He stepped to the side to show Sally restrained in a chair and Alonzo was pointing a gun at her. He didn't look very happy having to do so. Mobotropolis was filled with even louder gasping from before.

"I'll give you the princess back if you surrender your world to me." said Dr. Eggman "I'll give you ten minutes to decide. If you don't surrender Mobius to me, I'll lay siege to the whole city and wipe you all out!"

Then he cackled a loud demented cackle. The image switched off. The crowd of Mobians murmured to one another, wondering what they should do. Nicole saw the whole thing from the wrecked tower

she stood in, her stomach was filled with worry, so much she thought she'd burst. As for Sonic he was filled with more determination then before after Eggman's testimony.

"So he wants to conquer the world does he?" muttered Sonic "Well I am not going to let him!"

Sonic got his feet and eyed the bridge tower. Sonic began to spin into a spin dash and prepared to launch himself at the bridge where he would have a showdown with that creep Eggman.

Meanwhile Eggman began pacing back and forth waiting for someone to speak up. Sally just sat where she was, praying for something good to happen. Alonzo just stood where he was watching Eggman pace back and forth constantly. Finally after one whole minute, Eggman got cross.

"How long does it take to make a decision?" he groaned "The princess made hers in five seconds so it shouldn't take those fools on the ground a full 10 minutes to decide what happens!"

"You forget Master," said Alonzo "Decisions can take a lot of time you know. Especially if it's something like this."

"I didn't ask for you opinion you stuck-up servant bot!" roared Eggman "Now be quiet unless I give you permission to speak!"

"Yes master." grumbled Alonzo. He began cursing under his breath.

"You can't do this!" said Sally bravely "I won't let you take over our Homeworld!"

"And who's gonna stop me?" taunted Dr. Eggman "Some imaginary hero you made up?"

Then suddenly one of the windows behind him shattered and the sound of shattering glass screamed in his ears. Glass flew everywhere, narrowly missing Sally and Eggman. Eggman turned around sharply to see what had happened. There stood a blue hedgehog with a scowl and a smirk on his face.

"I'm not sure about imaginary, but I'm a hero you can be sure of

that!" said Sonic.

"How dare you break my master's windows?" yelled Alonzo "I spent ages cleaning those! He loves to see his lovely face in them!"

"Well your master should look in a mirror!" snickered Sonic "Provided it didn't crack when he did so!"

Sally Acorn beamed with relief, to see Sonic the Hedgehog, hero of Mobius there to help at last.

"Who are you?" demanded Dr. Eggman.

"I'm Sonic, Sonic the Hedgehog." introduced Sonic "And I'm the hero of this planet, and I'm gonna save the princess and put an end to your plans for world domination!"

Eggman cackled like a demented Santa Claus.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho! How do you think you're gonna stop me then?" he jeered.

"Like this!" cried Sonic, spinning into a ball.

He spin dashed straight into Dr. Eggman's stomach. Eggman gasped as all the air in his body escaped his lungs and he was flung back like a tossed stone. Eggman crashed into the wall and gasped violently. Alonzo got very mad and charged at Sonic, doing a very bad sounding roar as he did so. Sonic smirked at Alonzo and spin-dashed him as well. But since Alonzo was a robot, he smashed into pieces. Alonzo's body parts littered the floor. The servant bot grumbled to himself but Sonic just laughed at him.

"As that all you've got Eggman?" he jeered "I've seen robots in movies better then this!"

Dr. Eggman got to his feet and growled loudly. He pulled out a remote device and pressed a blue button on it. Two doors opened and out of these doors marched ten robots. These robots had spiked heads, chicken walker legs and guns instead of hands. They had two laser cannons that acted as tails and they were all red in colour with yellow reptilian eyes. They surrounded Sonic and Sally and

aimed their weapons at the two. Their guns clicked loudly as they reloaded themselves.

"If you don't leave now Sonic, I will have to destroy you and the princess." threatened Eggman "And you don't want that to happen do you?"

Sonic just gave Eggman a calm smirk.

"That's a LITTLE better, but still no contest." said Sonic smoothly "Now, I'm going to show you why I'm called Sonic."

Sonic got into a position ready to run. Then before anyone could do anything, Sonic took off. As Sonic ran he charged into all the robots at the speed of a bullet, destroying each of them as he hit them. Dr. Eggman just stood there with his mouth wide open. Alonzo had just put himself back together but Sonic ran into him and destroyed him again. Alonzo wailed in agony as his pieces flew everywhere again. Sonic then destroyed the last robot and leapt at Sally's chair. He snapped the cuffs around Sally's wrists, scooped her up and zipped towards the control pad. Dr. Eggman tried to leap at him but Sonic was obviously too fast for him so he missed. Sonic hit the control pad with his feet and put a horrible dent in it. Some of the buttons had broken and the control pad cracked a little. Then Sonic leapt out of the broken window with Sally in tow. Dr. Eggman pulled on his moustache with anger. He was standing in a circle of robot pieces and flying sparks. This sight made Eggman even crosser. He leapt about in blind fury. As he was doing this Alonzo finished putting himself back together again.

"Can I get you a soothing drink master?" he asked politely.

"No drink can sooth my anger now!" growled Eggman "That hedgehog has earned my hatred for life! This means war Alonzo, get the gun turrets ready!"

"Yes sir." said Alonzo, zipping over to the control pad.

His expression grew worried as he saw it. The centre of the control pad was cracked horribly and many buttons were broken or sunken into the column so deeply they could not be pressed no matter what.

Those controls were for the gun turrets, they wouldn't be working if the control pad was broken. Alonzo turned around, sweating oil as he dared to give Eggman the bad news.

"Sir, the g-g-gun turret control pad is s-s-severely d-damaged." whimpered Alonzo "The gun-turrets won't work!"

Eggman looked like he was going to have a heart-attack.

"WHAT?" he shrieked. Then his face turned purple with rage "That stupid hedgehog! Well I will not lose to him so easily; I have another trick up my sleeve!"

He ran over to a different part of the control pad that wasn't damaged and pressed a yellow and black striped button.

Outside, Sonic ran across the battleship holding Sally in his arms. The wind whizzed over their heads as Sonic ran.

"Thank you so much Sonic." said Sally.

"Don't mention it Sal, that's what I was born to do." said Sonic modestly "I'm not letting some creep take over our home world and making it a living nightmare for us all!"

Sally smiled in appreciation. Then suddenly Sonic screeched to a halt. He had just reached the edge of the battleship. Unfortunately the only way down was a very long drop and if they jumped it Sonic would probably break his legs in the process. There didn't seem to be any safe way down.

"How are we gonna get down from here?" Sally said with an obvious tone of worry.

"I have no idea." said Sonic "I don't wanna risk a jump like that either, we're too high up."

Then suddenly the sound of jetpacks filled their ears. Eggman had sent out some flying robots. They looked like the ones Sonic destroyed on the bridge only they were equipped with jet packs for flying. Sally yelped in surprise but Sonic just put a serious face on. The robots aimed their four guns at him and prepared to fire.

"Sonic, what are we gonna do?" cried Sally, burying her face into Sonic's chest.

"We are gonna use those robots to get down from here!" declared Sonic "Just hold on tight!"

Before Sally could question what he was on about, Sonic took flight. He hit the first robot in a powerful homing attack. The robot was sent spiralling out of control and it crashed into Eggman's battleship and exploded on impact. The force of the explosion shot Sonic and Sally straight into another robot. Sonic grabbed the robot by the spikes and started twisting it left and right as if it was a steering wheel. The robot began to fly in crazy somersaults in an attempt to shake the Mobians off. Sally held on tightly to Sonic as he tried to manoeuvre the robot into the ground. Unfortunately as the robot began to plummet to the ground, the other robots followed it and tried to shoot Sonic and Sally. One robot's gun blast skimmed straight past Sally's arm, causing her to yelp in pain. Sonic held on to Sally and leapt off the robot he was on. He hit another robot and caused it to spiral out of control. Then he hit a robot lower to the ground and sent that one flying. Then Sonic landed on another robot and hit it into a headfirst position so the jetpack would blast it down instead of up. Sonic held on as the robot plummeted to the ground faster then a cheetah. Then seconds before it crashed into the ground, Sonic leapt off it with Sally in his arms. The remaining two robots landed on the ground and aimed their cannons at the Mobians. Sonic charged at one and homing attacked it in the torso, smashing it to pieces as he hit it. Then he spin dashed into the last one. The last robot crumbled into tiny bolts and broken circuitry. Sonic dusted his hands off.

"All in a day's work." he said "You alright Sal?"

As for Sally, despite looking shaken, she was laughing at the whole thing that had just gone off. Sonic looked at her with a confused face.

"What's so funny Sal?" he asked.

"That was one of the most thrilling things of my life!" Sally squealed happily "Sonic, that was so incredible what you just did!"

Sonic giggled modestly. "Well one tries, I didn't think everything would work as well as it did. I haven't done things as extreme as that before!"

Sonic and Sally laughed some more at their incredible escape from the battleship. But their victory was short-lived however. A holographic image emerged from the battleship. The image showed Eggman's furious face. He was red with sheer anger, so red in fact he looked like a ripe tomato.

"You may have saved your precious princess Sonic but can you save your precious city as well?" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

"You do what you want!" yelled Sonic "I'll just stop you, no matter the cost egg-head!"

Eggman smirked confidently. "We'll see about that." he purred "I have to repair the controls to the gun-turrets since you smashed them." he added "So enjoy yourselves while you can! Because once I'm finished this city will be erased from the map!"

And he laughed his demented cackle once again as the holographic image switched off. There was a very long silence. Then Sonic finally spoke up.

"That Eggman sounds like he means business." said Sonic "What should we do?"

Sally Acorn gave a heavy sigh and said "I think it's time we brought the Council of Acorn to meeting…"

The Royal Fighter's Service: Part 1

Story 1: The Royal Fighters Service Part 1

Not long after Eggman's statement, Sonic and Sally returned to Castle Acorn to bring the council together. Sally's parents and Nicole were thrilled to the bone to see Sally back safe and sound. They were also eternally grateful to Sonic for saving her.

"God bless you Sonic." said King Max "For what you did out there."

Sonic just gave a casual smile "Your welcome Your Majesty." he said.

Moments later the Council of Acorn had been gathered and now they began thinking hard on what to do against this new threat that had arrived to Mobius. The council members consisted of The King and Queen themselves, a pig named Hamlin, a porcupine named Dylan, a platypus named Penelope and a mongoose named Julian. King Max was the first to speak.

"Now everyone here, I guess you already know why we're all gathered here." he said "Our glorious home is under siege from a deadly new threat, nothing like we've ever encountered before."

"And as you can see, this invader has already done a great deal of damage to Mobotropolis." added Alicia "So this is a much more serious situation then we've ever had before."

The Council members murmured amongst each other. Sonic, Sally and Nicole all stood before them waiting for their permission to speak.

"If I heard correctly, this invader calls himself Dr. Eggman." continued Max "And he wishes to take control of Mobius it seems as he tried to trade our daughter for the planet. But thanks to the heroic intentions of our friend, Sonic the Hedgehog, Sally was saved without any sign of harm done to her."

Sonic gave the council a thumbs up sign.

"Permission to speak sire?" he asked.

"Granted." said Max, intent on hearing what he had to say. Sonic walked closer to the council table and spoke.

"This Eggman guy has more then just that huge battleship out there." he said "He has robotic minions at his side. This guy looks like a mad genius and I'm pretty sure he is judging by the robots he's built."

"They can't be that strong, you took them all out." noted Alicia.

"That's because I can run fast." noted Sonic "If the robots attacked anyone else, I can't guarantee they'll be lucky because no one on Mobius can run as fast as I can."

Alicia nodded in agreement, Sonic was indeed the fastest person on the planet, no one else could run as fast as he could so the citizens of Mobius would be in even greater danger then Sonic would if Eggman's supposed robot minions attacked.

"And I bet there'll be a time where I meet my match and I'll need help." added Sonic "So I thought we could ask anyone to sign up for combat training so they'll be able to fight against Eggman's wrath."

"Are you nuts?" yelled Hamlin "Just think how many lives are at risk if we do that!"

"Oh shut up Hamlin!" hissed Max "You're not authorised to speak right now."

Hamlin folded his arms and grumbled. King Max turned his attention back to Sonic

"Sonic, Hamlin does have a point there." said Max wearily "But if we don't do anything against this madman, our world is over."

"So do you approve?" asked Sonic hopefully.

"We'll begin the voting session." said Max "All in favour of Sonic's

idea?"

Everyone except Hamlin raised their hands and said "Yay." Hamlin just said "Nay." being the grumpy porker he is.

"The Council has voted and the votes go in favour of Sonic's idea." said Max "We shall hand out training lessons for the citizens of Mobius and those who sign up will be appointed as the Kingdom of Acorn's Royal Fighters. That is all everyone."

The council members left their seats and walked out of the room to bet back to their usual activates. Sonic, Sally and Nicole left the room with looks of concern on their faces.

"That was a good idea Sonic, but do you think anyone will sign up?" asked Sally, worriedly.

Sonic just gave her a casual expression. "I hope so, because despite my strength and speed, there might be a time where Eggman defeats me or even kills me and then who's gonna fight him when I'm gone?"

"That's a very good point." said Nicole "So we best keep our hopes up for any volunteers. I'll get the posters made."

And with that, Nicole walked into a room where the Acorn family do most of their writing work to make some posters that would advertise the Royal Fighters Service and hopefully get some volunteers. Despite the king's approval of the idea, Sonic knew that the next few days and weeks were going to be very hard for all the people of Mobius…

"Alonzo, what's the level of damage done to the control pad like?" asked Dr. Eggman.

He and Alonzo had spent the whole time cleaning up the masses of robot pieces that littered the floor. Now that was done Eggman wanted to know what the damage to the control pad was like.

"I'll run a diagnostic test immediately." announced Alonzo in his upper class English accented behaviour.

Alonzo pressed a button on the undamaged side of the control pad and told the computer to run a test for damage. The computer fell silent except for whirring and buzzing noises as it scanned. The computer finished scanning and gave its report.

"The damage is 90%" droned the computer "It may take some time to repair."

Alonzo muttered and mumbled some angry gibberish under his breath.

"The damage is pretty high sir." reported Alonzo "It could take hours or days to repair."

That wasn't what Dr. Eggman wanted to hear but it couldn't be helped could it? Sonic did land on those gun turret controls very hard after all.

"I don't care how long it takes to fix those blasted controls!" shouted Eggman "I just want them fixed! NOW GET TO IT YOU USELESS BUTLER-BOT!"

"Yes sir." mumbled Alonzo angrily.

He trundled over to the controls, opened one of his side compartments and pulled out a toolbox. He had no idea how long it would take to fix those infernal controls but he had to do it otherwise Eggman would probably mash him into tiny pieces. Or even send him to the scrap yard. As Alonzo began to work on the broken control pad, Eggman surveyed the computer monitors that gave him a clear view of the semi-wrecked city of Mobotropolis below him. It gave Eggman great pleasure to watch what his victims were up to while he was sitting in his huge battleship waiting to attack. Eggman also began to have images of a destroyed city in his evil mind. Then something caught his sharp eyes. Dr. Eggman peered closer at the centre monitor. He could see a brown dot wondering about the city. Dr. Eggman zoomed in the monitor's views so he could see what was happening. The monitor now showed him Nicole carrying a bunch of posters under her arm. She walked to several lampposts that hadn't fallen over or some buildings that were still intact and stuck the posters on them. Nicole walked away to stick up another

poster. Eggman zoomed in the monitor even further so he could see what the poster said. The monitor gave him a clear view of the poster stuck to one of the walls on an intact building. The poster said:

ROYAL FIGHTERS NEEDED!

Our good King Maximilian Acorn has decided to have an eager group of fighters fight against the new menace that has invaded Mobius in threat of taking it over. The volunteers that sign up must be already skilled in combat or eager to help protect our dear home planet from this invader. If there are any volunteers who aren't skilled in combat, there will be a special training session with the combat experts of Mobius. Please sign up and fight for Mobius!

Yours sincerely, the Kingdom of Acorn.

Dr. Eggman just erupted in laughter. He laughed so loud he surprised Alonzo and Alonzo accidentally hit himself with a hammer. He groaned and rubbed his pointy head.

"What in the world of technology is so funny master?" shrieked Alonzo, feeling the newly formed dent in his head.

"Those furry fools have decided to form a resistance against us!" explained Eggman "How bold they are!"

"So why is that funny?" said Alonzo "If this resistance has that slimy worm Sonic then we're in trouble, and maybe the Mobians helping him might just be as strong as he is!"

Dr. Eggman stopped laughing and suddenly fell silent. Even though he hated it when Alonzo noticed something important before did, he knew the butler-bot was right. What if the Mobians had fighters that were just as strong as Sonic was? Sonic took a whole squad of robots out without breaking a sweat so who knew what those Mobians could do to him and his robots? He had to sort that out and fast! And luckily he had the perfect idea. Eggman stroked his moustache slowly.

"Alonzo, I have just the thing to deal with those resistant little

Mobians." he purred darkly "Get the roboticizer ready!"

"But who's going to take care of the control pad?" asked Alonzo.

"I will." said Dr. Eggman "Now get the roboticizer ready! I'll explain my plan once it's ready!"

"Yes sir! Definitely sir!" said Alonzo happily, zooming off in a hurry.

After Alonzo left, Dr. Eggman picked up the toolbox and began to continue working on the control pad. He couldn't wait to put his next plan into action…

Three whole days passed and not many people had signed up to the Royal Fighters Service. There was only Sonic himself and two volunteers. One of these two was a skunk in a combat suit named Geoffrey St. John. He was armed with an arm mounted crossbow that could fire darts of different kinds. He spoke with an Australian accent too. The other was a red female fox named Fiona. She wore a black crop top and black trousers with black shoes and black fingerless gloves. For some daft reason she had a dainty yellow bow tie on her head (I guess she's a child at heart). Sonic sighed at the disappointingly small team he ended up with.

"I guess not many people are keen on the whole "save the world" get go." said Sonic "Shame really."

"I wouldn't worry about it mate." said Geoffrey kindly "It doesn't matter how big our team is, it's how strong the team is."

"How skilled are you two?" asked Sonic "Do you need training?"

"Nah mate." said Geoffrey "I've been taught the combat basics since I was a little boy. That's why I wear this suit of mine."

"What about you Fiona?" asked Sonic.

"I've learnt a little bit of fighting to defend myself." replied Fiona "But not the advanced stuff."

"I guess we're alright then." said Sonic "I just hope you can keep up with me."

"Ooh, cocky are we mate?" teased Geoffrey "Cockiness can lead to trouble y' know!"

"Thanks Geoffrey." muttered Sonic "Just watch your attitude."

"Are we gonna fight each other instead of this Eggman freak?" snapped Fiona, obviously not keen on watching boys fight each other.

Geoffrey gave Fiona a slight frown but said nothing whereas Sonic raised an eyebrow.

"You sound like you could stop a fight." noted Sonic "That's very helpful."

"Thanks." Fiona said modestly.

Then the door opened and in walked the King and Queen. Geoffrey and Fiona stood together. Sonic stood to the side and bowed to them. Max and Alicia turned to face the volunteers. Max observed them closely.

"These two look like natural born fighters." said Max proudly "I just wonder why no one else has bothered about signing up."

"Not everyone is keen on fighting dear." said Alicia softly "There are only so many people with that kind of interest."

Max nodded in agreement and turned to face Sonic.

"My boy, you'll have to make do with these two until we get more volunteers in the future." he said.

"I'll make sure we don't let you down." said Sonic, hoping that he wouldn't.

"Excellent." said Max happily "Now you three may go…"

But before he can say anything else, Nicole burst into the room. She looked like she had just escaped from a pack of ravenous wolves and lived to tell the tale.

"Sonic! You highness!" she squeaked "That crazy guy Eggman's moving forward! I think he's about to attack us!"

Alicia clasped her hands over her mouth to prevent herself from squealing whereas Max gasped loudly. Sonic however just smirked.

"It's time for the Royal Fighters to go into action!" he declared happily "Come on Geoffrey and Fiona!"

Sonic ran out of the room with Geoffrey and Fiona following him closely. They ran out of the castle and screeched to a halt to see what was going on. The whole city of Mobotropolis had suddenly grown dark as Eggman's battleship slowly flew over, blocking out the sun and covering the city in a huge shadow. However none of its gun turrets were pointing down at the city below it. They were still pointing forward. Then, from directly underneath, a huge funnel shaped contraption telescoped slowly out from the ship.

"What's that?" asked Fiona, shaking.

"I dunno." said Sonic.

"We'll have to see what it does." said Geoffrey.

Then before another word could be uttered, the funnel thing finished telescoping out and made a loud noise. Then it made another noise, but this noise sounded more like a giant vacuum cleaner in reverse. Sonic felt the wind whizzing past him from behind. Then he felt himself slowly get tugged forward. The same was happening to Geoffrey and Fiona. And the same was happening to all the other citizens. The battleship was attempting to suck everything up! Several nearby Mobians were suddenly yanked from the ground and sucked up into the funnel shaped contraption. Sonic almost found himself being sucked up but he managed to grab on to a nearby lamppost and held on as tight as his hands would let him. Geoffrey held on with him. Fiona wasn't so lucky as she was sucked up before she could grab onto anything. The strength of the sucking wind was intense but Sonic fought hard to hold on to the lamppost. He wasn't letting Eggman get him. Then suddenly the sucking died down and the funnel shaped contraption telescoped slowly back into the battleship's underbelly. The hatch closed as the funnel finished

coming back inside. Then the battleship began to back away from Mobotropolis, its engines roaring loudly as it did so. Sonic gasped for breath as he finally let go of the lamppost. Geoffrey was just as shaken as he was. He let go, flumped on his bottom and gasped.

"Well I didn't see THAT coming!" cried Sonic.

"Neither did I mate." spluttered Geoffrey "That bloke Eggman has a few bloomin' surprises up his sleeve I'll say."

"Well we have to spring into action now." noted Sonic "That creep just kidnapped half the city! And Fiona!"

Geoffrey pulled a dart out of a pocket on his belt and loaded his arm mounted crossbow.

"Good thing I have just the dart for the occasion." he smirked.

The skunk aimed his arm at the backing up battleship and fired his crossbow. The dart shot out of the crossbow, a long cable unwinding behind it as it flew, and it struck the underbelly of the battleship. Geoffrey pulled on the cable to make sure it was nice and tight and then started climbing up it. Sonic decided to follow his skunk partner as he had the only way up to that ship. As they climbed further and further up the cable, Sonic thought on what Eggman could possibly be planning to do with all those Mobians he had just captured.

"A success! A brilliant success!" cheered Dr. Eggman, leaping about in a rather comical dance "My battleship's sucker definitely sucked up a lot of Mobians for me to roboticize!"

All the Mobians that had just been sucked up onto the ship were now trapped in cages made of Diamond Glass, one of the hardest substances on Mobius. Eggman found that out after a brief study of the planet upon arrival and collected some Diamond Glass from a glass factory in a different city from Mobotropolis. Those captive Mobians wouldn't be going anywhere in a hurry. Fiona was more upset then anyone. Her first mission for the newly formed Royal Fighters and already she gets captured, how unlucky was that? Eggman eyed all his captives evilly.

"I bet you're wondering why I've brought you all here." he said smoothly.

The frightened Mobians nodded their heads.

"Well, I'll explain it to you." said Eggman.

Alonzo appeared beside him and held out a billboard which explained Eggman's plans in five easy steps. Eggman pointed to each step as he explained his plan.

"You see, I found out about this Royal Fighters Service you furry freaks of nature decided to form." explained Eggman "And that troublesome hedgehog Sonic was already one heck of a handful for me and if he has any accomplices, I have more trouble to deal with so I decided to kidnap you all as I go and turn you all into my demonic, robotic minions with a flick of the switch! That way no one can stop me!"

And he erupted into a loud evil cackle. Fiona shivered. She had no idea how Eggman was going to "turn them all into robots" but she knew that Eggman couldn't possibly be kidding. After Eggman stopped cackling he turned to Alonzo.

"Alonzo, prepare to activate the roboticizer!" he ordered.

"With pleasure sir." said Alonzo, more then happy to do so.

He zoomed over to the control pad and began pressing keys on the keypad. Eggman turned his attention to a computer monitor that displayed a map of the planet. He leafed through the various states, cities and continents, wondering which city to target next after he roboticized the bunch of Mobians he had now. After all, if Mobotropolis gave the word to the other continents, these places would try and follow in their footsteps and probably overwhelm him. Eggman eyed a city on the map named "Grand Metropolis". This was the second largest city on Mobius and bound to be brimming with Mobians. Eggman pressed a button marked "Target Lock" and a target locking symbol appeared on the monitor.

"Now once I've finished here, I can set the ship's course to this

"Metropolis" and level that place just as I have to this one." he said to himself.

"The roboticizer is ready to activate master!" announced Alonzo gleefully.

"Excellent!" cried Eggman "Activate it Alonzo!"

Alonzo saluted proudly and pressed a large square button surrounded by black and yellow warning stripes marked "Activate". All the glass cages began to glow a terrific electrical blue colour. Incredible flashes of blue electricity crackled around the cages and they hummed really loudly. The trapped Mobians began frantically banging against the wall in a feeble attempt to escape. However Diamond Glass couldn't be shattered or broken by even the strongest of forces, even a bomb wouldn't work on it! Dr. Eggman cackled menacingly as he watched the roboticizing process unfold before his evil eyes. Then suddenly, a window broke and in leaped Sonic the Hedgehog and Geoffrey St. John! Dr. Eggman turned around and shrieked with horror.

"Hey Eggman, miss me?" sneered Sonic.

"Wh…wh…wha…?" stuttered Eggman.

"Oh that's just great! Another broken window to add to my list!" moaned Alonzo, surveying the slithers of glass all over the shiny floor.

"So, what's with the light show?" asked Sonic.

"You're too late hedgehog!" gloated Eggman "All these captives are being roboticized before your very eyes!"

"What in the name of Mobotropolis does "roboticize" mean?" asked Sonic.

"It means, I am turning all these furry fools into robots that will obey my will!" retorted Eggman.

Sonic and Geoffrey both stared at him, wide eyed and jaw-dropped.

"Now that's just sick!" cried Geoffrey, aiming his crossbow at him.

Sonic leapt at Eggman and landed a powerful kick on the evil man's face. Eggman yelped in pain as he was knocked off his feet. Then Sonic, seizing his chance, ran to the nearest cage and looked at the small key pad on it. He saw a green button marked "open" so he pressed it. The cage stopped glowing and the glass case lifted up to reveal a terrified but relieved Fiona Fox.

"Oh thank you Sonic!" gasped Fiona, clutching her pounding chest.

"Come on Fiona, we have to save everyone else!" cried Sonic.

Fiona leapt out the cage and ran to a nearby cage while Sonic ran to another one. They both pressed the open button on the respective cages and they opened up. The Mobians in those cages were an orange dog in army camouflage coloured shorts and a purple mouse with a yellow tail wearing a lime-green sleeveless top and a short skimpy skirt. The relieved Mobians thanked Sonic and Fiona and ran for cover. Unfortunately though, it seemed this would be all Sonic would be rescuing because all the other cages stopped glowing and in their places stood evil robotical versions of their old selves. Metal replaced fur and their eyes all glowed a terrifying blood red colour. They were all armed with razor-sharp teeth and claws. And when they spoke, their voices sounded more electronic and threatening then they once did. Some of the roboticized Mobians even roared instead of spoke.

"Now that's way past un-cool!" cried Sonic.

"They're all monsters!" shrieked Fiona.

Then suddenly Geoffrey appeared, holding an unconscious yellow female rabbit wearing a pink leotard in his arms. However the rabbit's legs and left arm were now robotical instead of organic. Sonic and Fiona stared at the rabbit with amazement.

"I managed to save this one before she was fully roboticized." said Geoffrey "But I was a little too late."

"She's half rabbit, half robot!" squeaked Fiona.

"She's a RABBOT!" joked Sonic.

Geoffrey chuckled slightly.

"Boys, can we laugh later?" said Fiona crossly "Right now we've got thousands of killer robots to deal with!"

"Oh yeah." said Sonic, turning his attention back to the roboticized Mobians that stood before them.

All the cages containing them opened up to set them free. The monstrous robots then advanced on the three fighters menacingly, bearing their teeth and growling softly. Sonic, Geoffrey and Fiona took a step back. The robots hissed in unison, oil dripping from their mouths. Dr. Eggman got back to his feet and stared in satisfaction at his handy work. The roboticizer had been a great success! Pity four of the thousands he'd captured were rescued before they could be roboticized but who cared if he had four robots short in his army? The number he had now was good enough as it is. Eggman cackled tauntingly at the fighters.

"You were much too late my courageous fighters!" he crowed "Now bare witness to my new minions, the Robians!"

"Oh I get it," mocked Sonic "It's short for "Roboticized Mobian" isn't it?"

"Yes." muttered Dr. Eggman "So can you dare to attack your own species?"

"They're not Mobians anymore!" yelled Fiona "They're robots! Evil monstrous robots!"

"We're gonna make you pay for that you black-hearted fiend!" declared Geoffrey, aiming his crossbow and preparing to fire.

"Well we'll see about that, won't we?" sneered Eggman "Robians, ATTACK!" he bellowed.

Before Sonic and the others had time to react, the ferocious Robians leapt on them, snarling like lions…

The Royal Fighter's Service: Part 2

Story 2: The Royal Fighters Service Part 2

Sonic leapt into the air as the Robians all dived towards him. They all hit the floor face first. Sonic got into his spin-dash move and charged at one Robian. He hit it in the back of the head so hard the Robian's optics nearly popped out. Another Robian tried to slash Sonic but the speedy hedgehog leapt out of the way, the Robian's claws missing him by centimetres. Fiona tried a dropkick on one Robian but the Robian ducked and gave her a terrific punch to the face. Fiona flew across the room and landed headfirst into the wall. She hit it so hard she passed out. A Robian which assembled a vole ran up to Fiona, ready to attack her but Geoffrey shot at it with his arm mounted crossbow. Several stun darts hit it in the face and put the Robian out of commission. Unfortunately Geoffrey found himself under attack from a Robian that assembled what was once a bat. It tore at his combat suit with its razor-sharp claws and prepared to bite him in the neck with it's fangs but Sonic homing-attacked it in the back and knocked it off of Geoffrey. Dr. Eggman laughed joyfully as he watched his new robotic minions battle the fighting heroes.

"Fight all you want you pathetic beasts!" sneered Eggman "You won't keep it up for long!"

"Should we send in the normal robots to join in with these roboticized-Mobians?" asked Alonzo.

"Maybe we should." thought Eggman momentarily "It would make things even harder for that meddling hedgehog."

Then suddenly he was punched in the face by a sudden robotic fist! Eggman's eyes had swirls in them and he saw lots of stars. Then the fat doctor collapsed on the floor with a thump. Alonzo panicked and tried to run off but he was punched by the strange robotic fist. That punch was so hard it knocked the butler-bot's head clean off! Alonzo groaned and grumbled as he trundled over to pick his head up and put it back on. The robotic fist belonged to the half

roboticized female rabbit. Her new robotic arm seemed to be able to stretch a good distance as she was about 10 feet away from Eggman and she managed to punch him and Alonzo. The rabbit looked surprised at the fact that just happened

"Oh mah stars." she said with a tone of amazement. Her voice was a thick southern accent "Ah could never do that before."

She then saw her roboticized arm and legs and had a bit of a freak out moment.

"Oh mah stars! Ah…ah have robot limbs now!" she squealed "How did that happen? Ah can't believe this! Well at least ah can give that ugly Eggman guy a whoppin' for doin' this to me!"

Sonic had seen the rabbit punch Eggman and Alonzo and was amazed to the bone. He ran over to her before the Robians could grab him.

"That was incredible!" he said "How did you do that?"

"Ah dunno sugah." said the rabbit "My new robotic arm just stretched and punched that crazy doctor in the face."

"Well those new robotic limbs seem to be useful don't they?" said Sonic, admiring them "What's your name?"

"Bunnie." said the rabbit "But ah guess ya'll could call me Bunnie Rab-BOT now I have robotic limbs!" she sniggered.

"OK then, Bunnie." said Sonic, winking "Care to help us fight these guys off so we can stop Eggman and send him packing?"

"Sure sugar-hog!" beamed Bunnie, flexing her robotic left arm and robotic legs "Ah'd love to!"

And with that Bunnie's arm stretched and she landed a powerful punch in the face of a Robian that looked like a cat of some kind. The Robian looked dazed and confused and it fainted. Two other Robians saw this and scampered towards Bunnie, snarling loudly. Sonic charged straight at the two Robians and homing attacked them both on the head. They both fainted and flumped on the floor.

As for Geoffrey he reloaded his crossbow and fired five stun darts at five advancing Mobians, knocking them all out momentarily. However the poor skunk was getting a little worn out. Then one Robian leapt on him from behind and began tearing chunks out of his backpack. Geoffrey grabbed the Robian and flipped it over, hitting the floor hard with it.

"Oi! I need that backpack to store me weapons mate!" he grumbled.

Then another Robian leapt on his back but Geoffrey was ready for it and shook it off with a good shake. The Robian flew off Geoffrey and hit the wall. The dog and mouse that had been freed before they were roboticized had been watching the whole fight with amazement and they began to think they could probably join the Royal Fighters once they got off the battleship. As for poor Fiona, she finally came to and staggered onto her feet. She rubbed her head wearily and tried to focus her attention on the attacking Robians. Then suddenly before she could react a Robian lunged at her and slashed her across the stomach. Fiona kicked it under the chin but another Robian leapt on her and chomped on her other leg. Fiona squealed in pain as the two Robians pulled her onto the floor and prepared to tear her apart. However they were both punched into the air by Bunnie's robotic arm. Fiona stared at her with amazement.

"Oh thank you miss!" she gasped.

"You're welcome sugah." said Bunnie, flexing her robot arm "Ya'll OK?"

"No, one of those monsters just gave me a good bite on the leg." groaned Fiona, clutching her left leg. There were deep puncture wounds on the lower part of the leg, caused by the Robian's sharp teeth. She wouldn't be walking for a while now.

"Ah think ya'll should rest." said Bunnie with concern "That looks nasty."

Fiona grimaced as she lay against the wall. This was certainly not her day. Her first mission and she was punched in the face, knocked out, slashed and bitten. Some fighter she turned out to be! Meanwhile Sonic was having his fair share of Robians coming to

attack and then getting beaten back by his homing attacks and spin-dashes. However Sonic was getting noticeably worn out. True he had great stamina but he had never battled so many foes before. And any Robian that had been beaten down before had just gotten back up for more. Ten Robians all ran up to Sonic, roaring like a pack of wolves. Sonic saw an opportunity and then got into a spin-dash. He charged straight at the oncoming Robians. He knocked them all down like skittles. As the fight continued Dr. Eggman finally came to. His face felt like there was a thorn the size of his finger stuck in the middle. Eggman watched the fight going on. The Robians were all getting knocked down continuously but they were coming back for more and looked like they were starting to wear out the Mobian heroes. He smiled evilly at his robotic minions as they fought.

"Well a roboticized Mobian certainly seems stronger then my usual stash of robots." he purred "And while those fools fight, I think I'll just wipe a city off the face of this planet."

He sneaked over to the gun-turret control pad which had been repaired the day before. He looked over his shoulder to make sure no one was watching him and then pressed the red button marked in capital letters "FIRE". The huge battleship's gun turrets all lowered down so they were aiming at the city of Mobotropolis down below and then they all fired huge yellow cannon blasts at the city. The buildings all erupted into a horrifying explosion of smoke, debris and fire. Any Mobians who were fortunate enough to not have been sucked up into the battleship ran for their lives. Some were unfortunate enough to get crushed or injured by falling debris. The buildings that had been blasted by the battleship began to crumble to the ground like a fallen sandcastle. Nicole was watching the horrifying scene from Castle Acorn and thought she was going to faint.

"Oh Sonic, help us!" she wailed to herself.

The battleship continued its onslaught of incredible firepower as buildings exploded, roads cracked and citizens ran about like a panicked colony of bees. Eggman just roared with laughter at the carnage he was causing. The sight of a city being destroyed was a beautiful sight to an evil man like himself after all. As for Sonic and

friends, they were still fighting for their lives. However they were being overwhelmed by the mass number of Robians. No matter how many they knocked down, they just got back up and attacked again. As Sonic spin-dashed another Robian into the floor he panted heavier then a dog in hot weather.

"I dunno about you but I'm getting tired of this!" spluttered Sonic.

"There's too many of them!" gasped Geoffrey, sitting on his bottom "We'll be dead meat if we keep this up!"

"We're gonna have to escape or something." said Fiona, grunting at the pain flooding through her still paining leg.

"I have an idea." said Bunnie "Let's bring that Eggman guy crashing down to the ground first and then we escape. That should delay him for a while until we have a new battle plan."

"Nice one Bunnie." said Sonic agreeably "And I know how to do that."

He eyed Eggman at the control pad, laughing like a deranged clown at what he was doing to Mobotropolis. Sonic gathered up speed and charged straight into Eggman's back. Eggman screeched loudly as Sonic hit him. Then Sonic landed on the control pad, not hard enough to damage the controls this time around.

"Now which of these buttons will bring this thing down?" wondered Sonic as he surveyed the control pad.

Sadly he couldn't see a button marked "self-destruct" anywhere. Obviously Eggman was smarter then most fiends he'd faced before. Then he saw button that worked the engines. Maybe if he pressed that the engines would turn off and the ship would drop to the ground. Despite the fact he might end up killing everyone onboard, it would be worth it if he stopped Dr. Eggman once and for all. Sonic pressed the button without second thought.

"NO! NOT THAT ONE YOU MORON!" shouted Eggman.

Too late. Sonic pressed it and then the whole ship began to glow red. An alarm blared throughout the entire battleship and the

engines stopped roaring as they switched off. All the Robians stopped attacking the fighters and looked around frantically, wondering what on Mobius was going on. Even Bunnie, Geoffrey and Fiona began to worry.

"What's goin' on?" yelped Bunnie.

"Your infernal friend just switched the engines off!" replied Eggman angrily "This ship is going to go down and crash!"

"What? shrieked Fiona "Are you mad Sonic? We're all gonna die!"

"No we aren't!" yelled Sonic "We're going to escape!"

He leapt for the broken window and flew clean out of it. Bunnie stretched her robotic arm and gripped the window frame. Fiona and Geoffrey held on to her and Bunnie pulled herself to the broken window. They all leapt out of the window in a hurry. Eggman ran about in blind panic, Alonzo followed him, not sure what to do. All the Robians didn't know what to do so they just copied Eggman and Alonzo. The ship's engine alarm continued to wail loudly. Then Eggman stopped running about and yelled.

"This isn't helping! We have to get to the escape pods!"

"Why don't we just turn the engines back on?" asked Alonzo.

"They won't power back up in time!" replied Eggman "We'll crash before they finish powering up! Now let's get out of here!"

Dr. Eggman jogged (yes this sounds rather humorous doesn't it?) to another room of the ship, Alonzo following him as quickly as he could. Eggman ran to a door outlined with warning stripes and frantically pressed the open button. The door opened and Eggman ran into the escape pod the door led to. Alonzo followed him. The door closed and the escape pod jolted away from the falling ship.

Meanwhile Sonic, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Fiona were still on the ship. They had run to the end of the ship but unfortunately they were too high up to leap off the falling vessel and by the time it was low enough for them to jump off the ship would crash and probably explode.

"How do we get off?" Fiona fretted.

"I dunno." said Sonic "I can't see a way down from here!"

Then suddenly Bunnie Rabbot leapt into the air. But instead of coming back down she remained where she was! Sonic stared at her in disbelief. Jet fumes were coming out from under the rabbit's feet! Bunnie's new robotic legs gave her the ability to fly! Even Bunnie couldn't believe what she was doing right now.

"Oh mah stars! I'm a flyin' rabbit!" she squealed.

"That's great!" cried Sonic "We can use you to get down from here!"

Bunnie flew back to Sonic, grabbed hold of him and flew away from the falling battleship. She flew towards the ground and put Sonic down. Then she turned back to the ship and flew towards it to pick up Geoffrey and Fiona. Sonic ran off, knowing he was too close to where the ship was going to crash so he had to get out of range. And since he could run fast that wasn't a problem at all. As for Bunnie She knew she didn't have time to take one Mobian off of the ship and go back for the other so she decided to pick them both up. Geoffrey and Fiona held tight to the cyborg rabbit as she flew them away from the ship. As for the dog and mouse that Sonic had saved earlier, they found an escape pod chute and they took the chute down to the escape pods. They slid down the chute and into an escape pod and the escape pod dispatched from the ship. The dog and mouse were saved. Then finally the ship crashed into the ground nose first. The ship exploded into a titanic bright red and orange explosion that filled the air and surrounded the city with a tremendous bang. The whole ground shook like a giant jelly because the ship was so big. Bunnie, Geoffrey and Fiona stared at it with sheer astonishment. If they were still on that ship they definitely wouldn't have crawled away from that. Even Sonic heard the explosion and turned around to see it. It was almost as if a volcano had erupted. In Castle Acorn, Nicole had watched the whole scene and now began to wonder if Sonic and friends managed to escape the ship before it crashed. Bunnie flew down to the ground and put Geoffrey and Fiona down.

"Well I certainly hope we don't go through that again!" gasped

Geoffrey "that was the biggest bang I think I've ever bloomin' seen!"

"I'll say." muttered Fiona.

"At least we escaped with our lives." said Bunnie happily "And we wouldn't have done that if it weren't for mah robotic limbs."

"I bet Eggman's gonna be furious when he realizes he inadvertently saved us." sneered Fiona.

"Oi mates." said Geoffrey, his face strangely sad looking "Now's not the time for celebrating. Look."

He pointed. Fiona and Bunnie looked in Geoffrey's direction and saw what he meant. Mobotropolis, the third largest city on Mobius and their home city, was completely destroyed. Buildings were billowing with smokes, debris littered the remains so much the city looked more like a rubbish tip. Fires were everywhere, blazing away like mad and a few dead citizens could be seen lying around. The sight was truly appalling and horrifying beyond description. Even Sonic had seen the carnage and was absolutely devastated. His home city, burnt to the ground and reduced to nothing more then a smoking wreck of fire and debris. Sonic was more ticked off at the fact he failed to save the city as well as himself and the others. He was more depressed at the fact he didn't save any of the roboticized Mobians so they could hopefully find a way to de-roboticize them or something. Today had truly been a dark day for Mobius, a whole city blasted to smithereens and many lives had been claimed. Hopefully one of those lives was Eggman. Then suddenly a hovering sound filled the blue hedgehog's ears. Sonic turned to the left and saw Eggman's escape pod hovering just above the ruined city of Mobotropolis. Sonic felt his blood boil, that fat fiend escaped from the ship before it crashed! That made him feel even angrier since Eggman lived to fight another day. As for Eggman, he felt delighted to see the ravaged city and Sonic's angry face.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!" chortled Eggman from inside the escape pod. "How does that feel Sonic? You've fought hard against me! And for what? A city unfit for civilization! A city so wrecked and ruined even the tiny little insects wouldn't find sanctuary there!"

Eggman's mean taunts made Sonic even angrier. He growled furiously and gritted his teeth.

"Eggman!" he yelled loudly "You will pay for what you've done to our home! I will make sure you are kicked out of Mobius and we'll be free from you once and for all!"

Eggman just mocked him shamelessly.

"We'll see about that you little runt!" snorted Dr. Eggman "Especially since I am going to crate an army of robots and release them everywhere on Mobius! Think you can catch them all?"

He roared with laughter.

"This world will be mine and you will all be roboticized!" he crowed "See you next time Sonic!"

And with that he flew off, hoping to find a good place to build a base for himself. Sonic was so enraged he wanted to run after the fat doctor and kill him, but killing wasn't what this hedgehog did or glorified so he reluctantly remained still, paralyzed with anger and watched as Dr. Eggman soared away in his little escape pod. Bunnie and Geoffrey walked over to Sonic while Fiona limped because of her bad leg. Bunnie put her organic hand on the cross hedgehog's shoulder. Sonic calmed down a little after feeling such a lovely touch from a remarkable woman who had saved his life.

"Ya'll did all ya could sugah-hog." said Bunnie softly.

"We all did mate." added Geoffrey "That Eggman bloke's a real tough one."

Sonic sighed sadly and turned to his friends.

"At least we brought down Eggman's ship so he won't be destroying anymore cities for a time." he said "And now all we have to do is find Eggman and take him down. But for now I think we should rest."

"Especially me." grumbled Fiona, clutching her leg again. The bite marks had stopped bleeding but her leg still hurt very badly. Sonic noticed this and nodded in agreement.

"Pity now the city is destroyed there isn't a hospital for you to go to." he said sadly.

"Haven't you noticed Castle Acorn is still standing?" noted Geoffrey, pointing.

Sonic looked in Geoffrey's direction and noticed the skunk was right. Castle Acorn hadn't even been touched by Eggman's onslaught of cannon fire. Not even a little. They must have stopped him before he had chance to fire at the magnificent castle. Sonic's face brightened at that sight.

"Well that's convenient." he said happily "The sight of Castle Acorn still standing fills me with a little bit of hope for Mobius right now. And they have medical rooms for anyone who lives there so we could take Fiona there to heal."

Fiona's face brightened. Then suddenly another hovering sound was heard. Then it was followed by the sound of landing. The Mobians turned their attention to the sound and saw another escape pod exactly like the one Eggman flew away in. Only instead of something evil or terrifying, out of it stood the dog and mouse Sonic had saved from being roboticized. Geoffrey pointed his crossbow at them but Bunnie put his arm down.

"Easy sugah, they're one of us." she said.

"Oh sorry." said Geoffrey, blushing "I have trouble trusting people I've never met before due to a little event that happened to me when I was little. I don't wanna talk about it."

"Then how come you trusted us in a jiffy?" asked Sonic.

"I can trust a fighter, especially a royal one." said Geoffrey.

The dog and mouse walked up to Sonic and friends.

"Hi there Sonic." said the dog "You saved me and my friend Mandy from becoming robots and for that we owe you our lives."

"You're welcome." said Sonic cheerfully "That's what heroes do, save lives."

"The name's Wilson by the way." said the dog.

"Nice to meet you Wilson." said Sonic, shaking his hand "And you said the mouse's name is Mandy right?"

"Uh huh." said Wilson.

"We watched you four fight those robotic demons bravely and with determination." said Mandy, twirling her tail "So we thought we could join you four in the Royal Fighters Service."

"That would be great." said Sonic approvingly "We need all the fighters we can get! Can you two fight though?"

"No." said Wilson sadly "But we could get combat training."

"I'll be happy to help you mates." volunteered Geoffrey "I'm a pro at this stuff."

"That's nice." said Mandy "Where do we sign up?"

"You just go to his majesty King Max himself and ask to join the group." said Sonic "Let's go get you two signed up immediately."

"Ah'll sign up too." said Bunnie "After all, ah haven't joined the Royal Fighters yet."

Sonic gave her a thumbs up. "Your robot limbs will come in handy for us all." he said "Now let's pay a visit to the king and queen and see what they think."

Despite all that had happened today, Sonic felt a glimmer of hope for himself, his friends and everyone on Mobius. Eggman had won for now, but this battle was far, far from over…

What a way to start a story eh? Sonic's home city's just been destroyed! But there seems to be a ray of light in this dark hour as the Royal Fighters Service is ready to kick some ass! Join me next time as we have the introduction of everybody's favourite twin-tailed fox...Reviews are welcome and any

criticism must be constructive. No flaming or insulting reviews please.

Speed and Flight Part 1

Story 3: Speed and Flight Part 1

Eight dark, heavy, eventful, exhausting months had passed since the destruction of Mobotropolis. Since then Sonic and the Royal Fighters had been fighting off Eggman's resistance long and hard. Wilson and Mandy had been trained to perfection by Geoffrey St. John, Fiona had made a quick recovery and Bunnie was having the time of her life, fighting Eggman robots and saving Mobians from the mad scientist's wrath. The past eight months had been long and hard for the fighters, but they had made it through them all in the end. Many of Eggman's evil schemes had been foiled and mountains of his robots had been destroyed. However not everything had been in the Mobian's favour all the time. There had been a time where Eggman kidnapped Fiona and almost roboticized her again and she was saved with moments to spare but the experience heavily traumatized the poor fox. So much she had nightmares about it every night from now. There had also been a time Eggman kidnapped five Mobian families to use as bait and Sonic and crew ended up in a trap. They had escaped with seconds to spare but by the time they could save the captured Mobians, Eggman had roboticized them all. As of now, Eggman had roboticized a great number of Mobians and built a good deal of robots. Then he released them all over Mobius so there were robots everywhere. It was getting hard for the Royal Fighters to keep up with this so King Max sent the word out to all the other continents on Mobius. Those places took in the warning and set up their own fighting groups or joined the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis. However, despite the Mobian's best efforts, Dr. Eggman continued his quest for domination. It was going to be a hard battle to win but the Mobians were determined to win in the name of their home planet. As of now, the Council of Acorn were discussing over the past events that had happened in the last eight months.

"It's been a long hard tussle." announced King Max "But despite that mad man's most evil attempts, we have been able to hold him back for a while."

"But he still continues to battle." said Queen Alicia "He is desperate for world conquest we can definitely say. He won't let our planet go without a fight."

"And even as we speak, somewhere on Mobius someone needs help." continued Max "Eggman's machines of death are all over the world. We have fighters in those places but according to these reports…" he pulled out a heap of paper containing classified information only he and the Queen were allowed to read "Some of our best groups still need an extra hand."

"So what ideas do you have daddy?" asked Sally Acorn with concern.

"We're thinking about sending some fighters from our group to other fighter groups to give them a hand in combat." said King Max.

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" snorted Hamlin rudely "What happens if we have too heavy a resistance to deal with and we can't do anything because our fighters are away?"

"Shut up Hamlin!" snapped Max "How many times do I have to tell you? You speak when you're authorised to!"

Hamlin didn't say another word. He just silenced himself.

"I won't be sending everyone away." said Max "We're keeping Sonic the Hedgehog here with us."

"So who are you gonna send to help the other groups out there?" asked Sally.

"We're gonna send Miss Bunnie Rabbot to help the Royal Fighters of Megapolis." announced Max "And Mr. St. John will be going to Downunda to help the Downunda Royal Fighters."

"What about Wilson and Mandy?" asked Sally.

"They'll be off to Grand Metropolis." said Max "Sonic and Fiona will remain here."

"Sounds like a plan." said Sally "I hope Sonic's OK with that."

Speaking of the hedgehog, he had been outside the council room, listening to every word that had been spoken. Luckily he was OK with the council's decisions, but he did feel a little disappointed that his new friends Bunnie, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy were off to other parts of Mobius while he remained here in Mobotropolis. Still, there were fighting groups out there that needed all the help the Kingdom of Acorn could offer them and lending some of their fighters to those groups was the best method they had. After all Geoffrey was a pro in the skills of combat, Wilson could take on anyone and bring them down in a jiffy, Mandy was an excellent snooper and could find out lots of information without being detected and Bunnie could fight better then most people. Even some of the males envied her strength! Sonic wished he had someone a little better then Fiona though. She clearly, was not suited for the world of combat. On her first mission she had been captured, punched, knocked out, slashed, bitten and came out worse then he and Geoffrey did. And over the past eight months, she hadn't been improving either. She was always the one getting in trouble, she was always getting defeated in battles and she was always the one getting hurt. It was amazing the poor fox was still alive! Hopefully Fiona would eventually find her strength and help Sonic and crew win rather then slow them down a lot. Then the door to the council room opened and out walked Sally Acorn.

"Sonic, I hope you won't be too disappointed but…"

"I heard everything Sal." said Sonic "And while it will be a bit of a downer for me, I'll be fine with my friends in different places around the world. I know they'll do their bit for the planet and I'll just do my bit for the planet."

Sally smiled with affection. "Very well Sonic." she said.

Then Nicole appeared, holding a small handheld portable computer in her hand. It was beeping furiously.

"Your highness, my computer's found Eggman's location." said Nicole "He's hiding in a forest somewhere in Green Hill Zone."

"Well that's excellent news!" beamed Sonic "I'll just go and get Fiona and we'll be off!"

Sonic charged out of the room, causing a brief wind that blew from behind Sally and Nicole.

"That hedgehog amazes me!" said Nicole, flabbergasted.

"He amazes me too." agreed Sally.

Sonic had dashed out of Castle Acorn but the moment he did he noticed an odd sight. Fiona Fox was already slinking off somewhere as if she knew what Sonic was going to tell her! Sonic ran over to the red vixen immediately.

"Yo Fiona!" he said "Where are you off to?"

"Home." mumbled Fiona miserably "I've quit the Royal Fighters Service."

Sonic thought his ears had fallen off.

"Care to run that by me again so I know I didn't imagine you saying that?" he asked.

Fiona stood still firmly and repeated in monotone "I-quit-the-Royal-Fighters."

She practically spat every word out harshly. Sonic stared at her as if she had just done something stupid. Fiona's expression fell into a sad one and tears formed in her eyes.

"Why?" exclaimed Sonic.

"Because I'm of no use to this team." sobbed Fiona "Look what happens when I go on a mission. I get caught, I get you lot in trouble and I get beaten up, what kind of fighter am I? I haven't even once won a fight on my own! One of these days I'll end up killing myself or you, or anyone else!"

"Fiona come on…" said Sonic, trying to put an arm around her put Fiona smacked it away.

"Don't "Fiona come on" me hedgehog!" snapped Fiona "You'll just try and make me feel better by filling me with false hope! Well it

won't work so there!"

She wailed some more after that. Sonic didn't know what to say after that so he just remained silent instead. Fiona sniffed and then put her hand on Sonic's shoulder.

"Goodbye blue streak." she snivelled.

And with that she ran off, crying her eyes out. Sonic just watched her run, not even daring to run after her. Now Sonic didn't mind Bunnie, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy going to another part of Mobius to fulfil their duties but he did mind the fact Fiona just quit the team and ran off. Secretly Sonic actually was developing a fondness for the young vixen but now she's gone, Sonic would have to deal with the heartbreak and try his luck somewhere else. For now, he had a mission to do and he wouldn't let Fiona's departure bother him otherwise he would get into big trouble. Sonic prepared to run off but a familiar voice called to him "Oi, wait a minute!" and stopped him dead in his tracks. It was only Geoffrey St. John. He had Bunnie with him.

"Hey guys." said Sonic "I guess you two are off then."

"Aye mate." said Geoffrey "I'm off to Downunda to help the Downunda Royal Fighters."

"And ah'm off to Megapolis to do the same there." said Bunnie "We wanted to say goodbye before we go though. Ya'll take care of yerself sugar-hog."

"I will, I will." boasted Sonic teasingly "And I'll see you two later."

"Same to you." said Geoffrey "Just beware of your cockiness."

"I could say the same to you Geoff!" chortled Sonic.

"Where's Fiona?" asked Bunnie "Off somewhere?"

"She quit sadly so we won't be seeing her again." sighed Sonic.

"Aw, that's too bad." said Bunnie "Me and her got on very well."

"I had a feeling she would quit." muttered Geoffrey "Due to how bad her bloomin' luck's been with us. Always getting into trouble and slowing us down and all that tosh…"

"Can we leave Fiona to the side now and focus on our missions?" asked Sonic, hoping to stop Geoffrey from degrading Fiona further "That's what's important now."

"Sure mate." chuckled Geoffrey "Off to Downunda I go. See you later!" he called to Sonic as he ran off to board a plane to Downunda.

"Bye sugar-hog!" said Bunnie, taking flight with her jet feet and flying off to Megapolis.

"Bye you two!" Sonic called to them as they disappeared from sight. Now they were gone, Sonic finally ran off again. He looked on admiringly at the construction work going on to fix the wrecked city of Mobotropolis. Soon they would be able to go back to their old homes again. True there would be some differences but at least the Mobians that lived in Mobotropolis wouldn't be homeless anymore. Once the city was rebuilt, they were going to rename it "New" Mobotropolis since the old one had been reduced to cinders and ashes eight months ago. As Sonic continued running, he finally exited the under construction city and ran though the huge meadows that led to Green Hill Zone. Once he arrived there he would search the whole forest for Eggman and then he would destroy his base and make him pay for what he did to him and the other Mobians over the months.

Watch out Egg-Brain! thought Sonic as he sped through the meadow Sonic the Hedgehog is on his way to defeat you!

Somewhere in the dense forests of Green Hill Zone, a squat domed building resided in the centre somewhere. The dome had a logo which consisted of a black silhouette of Eggman's face in front of a yellow and red circle. Several pipes were built into the sides of the building. The building was surrounded by a stone fence that formed a rectangle shape around it. Robots stomped around the perimeter

of the grounds, making sure nothing was suspicious and everything was going as normal. These robots were the ones with guns in place of hands and tail like cannons that Eggman had used before. Speaking of the fat scientist, he (No surprise) occupied the domed building and he was working away like mad on his latest scheme. Alonzo just did small tasks for him such as fetching him his meals and drinks or helping him build and fix things. Right now, Eggman had fifty roboticizing cages and they were all empty as he hadn't caught anything or anyone yet. He pondered around the room wondering madly on where to find life in the forest.

"There must be some Mobians wondering about the forest." blabbered Eggman "There might even be some who live here, where can I find them?"

Alonzo just sighed loudly. Why of all luck did he have to have such a dim-witted master?

"Why don't you just send some searcher bots out into the forest to find anything?" snorted Alonzo "Those robots are used for searching as well as combat you know!"

"Oh shut up you titanium twit!" snarled Dr. Eggman "I'm thinking!"

"I can see that." scoffed Alonzo sarcastically.

"However you did have a good suggestion." added Dr. Eggman "I shall send a squadron of robots to go critter searching immediately."

Of course I had a good suggestion. thought Alonzo angrily *I'm the clever clogs here!*

Dr. Eggman pressed a button on the control pad. A hanger bay door in the rear of the building opened up and out of it walked a small squad consisting of five robots. These were the many gunned ones. They marched in unison out of the building. They hovered over to the other side of the stone wall and walked into the dense surrounding forest. Eggman watched this on one of his monitors.

"Hopefully they'll find something." he said to himself "Especially that irritating twin-tailed fox kid I've been perusing all month."

"We'll catch him eventually." Alonzo assured Eggman "He's only a kid and kids can't do anything except run away like a coward."

"I'm amazed his parents were a whole lot easier to capture." added Eggman "I caught those two on my first try and that kid has evaded me for a whole month straight."

Alonzo nodded.

"I hope that irritating hedgehog doesn't show up and ruin everything again." said Dr. Eggman "It makes me bare my beautiful teeth every time I think about him!"

"We'll get him this time master." said Alonzo, even though he knew he was wrong "We'll get him."

Eggman laughed with glee as he thought about the glorious day he finally caught and defeated Sonic the Hedgehog once and for all.

Meanwhile, Sonic had been running through Green Hill Zone for thirty minutes. He hadn't found a single thing since he had arrived but he was determined to find Dr. Eggman's base. He wished he had brought Nicole's handheld computer with him since it was a useful device for finding things. Nicole had built it some time ago to aid the fighters in finding Eggman. But since Sonic didn't have that computer he had to make do without it. Then Sonic ran past something greyish coloured and stopped dead in his tracks. Did he just run past something interesting? Maybe he'd run past something to do with Dr. Eggman? Sonic ran back a little and stopped again. The grey thing he had run past was the stone wall keeping intruders out of Dr. Eggman's base. Sonic surveyed it with interest.

"A stone wall?" he said to himself "What on Mobius is that doing in the middle of the forests of Green Hill Zone? Maybe there's something to do with Eggman on the other side." he thought. A slight smirk appeared on his face. "Only one way to find out…"

And with that he stepped several paces back from the wall and then revved his feet up. Then he charged straight at the wall and crashed straight into it. He had run into it so hard he crushed his way through the wall! A huge hedgehog shaped hole was now on the wall since

Sonic had run into it. Pebbles and stones littered the ground and cracks formed into the wall. The robots on patrol heard Sonic's smashing through the wall and immediately went into exterminate mode. They aimed their four guns at the speedy blue hedgehog and all fired at him. Sonic wasn't scared though; he was used to this kind of reception from his enemies. Sonic leapt out of the way of the oncoming fire blasts. They all singed the grassy ground, its colour now a pitch black burnt colour instead of its green colour. The robots got mad and all fired in random directions. The area was filled with flying cannon blasts hitting this and that here and there. They hit anything but Sonic as he just somersaulted, ran or jumped out of the way of the oncoming cannon blasts. Sonic headed for the door of the base and lunged for it. One of the robots caught sight of him and fired at him. The blast skimmed the edge of his bottom, causing the startled hedgehog to yelp and clutch his bottom. He hadn't felt pain like this before, nor had he even been hit before; those robots were definitely getting better at their stuff. The robots aimed at Sonic and fired again. Sonic jumped out of the way so the robots blasted the door down instead of Sonic. This alerted Dr. Eggman and he ran over to the monitors to see what was going on. He almost jumped out of his clothes when he saw Sonic the Hedgehog run into his base, the guard bots chasing after him and firing at him.

"Egads!" shrieked Eggman "That hedgehog is in the premises!"

"He is?" shrieked Alonzo "Where?"

Before Eggman could answer, a door was blasted clean off its hinges by a spin-dash attack from Sonic. Eggman almost jumped ten feet into the air when he saw that. Sonic stood up straight and stared at Eggman angrily.

"It's good to see you again Egghead." he said sarcastically.

"So we meet again Sonic the Hedgehog." purred Dr. Eggman ""Well prepare to be blasted to slag you miscreant of a Mobian!"

"Oh I'm flattered!" joked Sonic "You'd better hope those tin cans of yours can actually hit me!"

Then suddenly the four guard bots stormed into the room and circled

Sonic the Hedgehog. Sonic just gave a calm expression as their guns clocked.

"FIRE!" blasted Dr. Eggman.

But inevitably Sonic leapt out of the way the moment the robots fired their weapons. Sonic landed directly onto the control pad and pulled a cheeky face at the robots.

"Come and blast me bolt brains!" he jeered.

"No! Don't!" cried Dr. Eggman.

Too late. The robots all fired at Sonic. Sonic leapt off the control pad and the cannon blasts hit it instead of Sonic. The control pad erupted into flames and showered Eggman with splinters of debris and glass. Then an alarm went off. Sonic smirked at Eggman and ran past the robots and out of the door. Dr. Eggman began to panic. The base was going to explode in a matter of moments! Dr. Eggman eyed the emergency exit door he had installed in case he needed it. He yanked the door open so hard he almost tore it off its hinges and dashed outside. Alonzo zoomed out after him. Then the whole base erupted into a gigantic explosion. Sonic looked over his shoulder to see what had happened and laughed to himself.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! That's what I call going off with a bang!" he laughed as he continued to run.

As for Dr. Eggman, his face was full to the top of fury. The sight of a destroyed base that he owned was appalling to him.

"I HATE that hedgehog!" he snarled.

"Oh well, I guess it's off to the next base we go." grumbled Alonzo quietly.

Alonzo turned around and trundled away. Dr. Eggman stayed where he was momentarily.

"Don't celebrate too soon hedgehog." he said darkly "I'll be back…"

And with that he walked off after Alonzo. He would begin his next

scheme the moment he got to the second base he had set up in Green Hill Zone.

The only sound that could be heard throughout the forest was pounding feet. And those pounding feet belonged to Sonic. He ran through the quiet and peaceful forest of Green Hill Zone, thinking to himself as he headed to the exit.

That Eggman doesn't know when to quit does he? he thought *However I can't give up or he'll win and turn this place into a living hell. I've been kicking his evil butt for eight months straight with and without friends and I will not stop until he's defeated once and for all!*

Then suddenly he was interrupted by the sound of a child screeching "HELP!" Sonic stopped dead in his tracks with a screeching halt. Just when he thought he'd finished here he had more help that needed attending to. Sonic ran off in the direction of the child's voice. He had no idea on what he would find but he knew it would involve an Eggman robot or two. Sonic stopped in front of a couple of bushes and peered through them. His eyes widened at what he saw. He saw a little yellow fox cub with two tails, gloves and red & white shoes with his back pressed against a large rock and staring in fear at two Eggman robots. The kid looked terrified as the robots growled at him ferociously.

"P-P-Please leave me alone!" whimpered the cub "Don't hurt me!"

The robots weren't listening. They bore down on the terrified fox cub, ready to snatch him up and take him away.

"HEY!" yelled Sonic, catching the robot's attention.

He leapt out of the bushes and spin-dashed his way through both robots in the blink of an eye. They were reduced to smithereens.

"Didn't anyone ever tell ya it's not nice to pick on little kids?" scolded Sonic.

As for the fox cub he stared at Sonic with astonishment. He had never seen anything as cool looking as this before. Sonic turned

around to face the little cub.

"Hey, are you OK kid?" he asked with concern.

"I'm just fine thanks to you." said the cub, smiling at him "Thank you mister…"

"Sonic." announced Sonic, doing his trademark thumbs up sign "Sonic the Hedgehog, Hero of Mobius and Royal Fighter."

"Why do they call you Sonic?" asked the cub.

"Behold!" Sonic simply said.

Then he dashed off in the blink of an eye with a whoosh. The cub gasped in awe at that amazing feature. Then seconds later Sonic reappeared and screeched to a halt.

"Ta da!" he exclaimed, standing in a "ta da!" pose.

"Whoa!" cried the cub in excitement "That's so cool! I've never seen anyone run that fast before!"

"Thank you." said Sonic "That's why I'm called Sonic; I can run at supersonic speeds. So what's your name?" he added.

"My name's Miles Prower." introduced the cub "But everybody calls me Tails because of my two tails." he wagged them proudly "And I can fly with them too."

And he demonstrated this ability by twisting them around each other and spinning them around in a circle like a helicopter propeller. Then he flew a few feet off the ground.

"See?" said Tails.

Sonic stared at him with a look of astonishment. He had never seen kids of any age or any kind do things like that before. This cub was clearly blessed with a great ability.

"Well, I've never seen a "flying fox" before!" said Sonic with an impressed tone "That's pretty cool Tails!"

"Thanks." said Tails, landing back on the ground. Then his expression changed into a solemn one "Unfortunately everybody thinks I'm a freak because of my two tails and flying abilities."

"Do they seriously think that about you?" exclaimed Sonic, unable to believe what he had heard.

Tails just nodded glumly. Sonic then put on one of his serious expressions.

"Well don't listen to those guys!" he said "They obviously haven't heard the old "It's not what's outside it's inside that counts." saying."

Tails' face brightened. "Thank you Sonic, that made me feel a lot better."

"You're welcome." said Sonic "So, why are you out here all by yourself?"

Tails' face fell again. Only this time it was more then just a solemn expression.

"About that…" he began "I used to have a mom and a dad but some crazy fat guy with a moustache took them away and turned them into evil killer robots."

Sonic's ears pricked up at the mention of a fat guy with a moustache. Tails must be talking about Dr. Eggman! That black hearted scoundrel must have roboticized poor Tails' parents! How heartless could that bad egg get? Tails sat down on the ground, tears were forming in his eyes.

"Ever since my parents were turned into robots I've been on my own with no one to protect me from harm." he sobbed "I'm so alone and vulnerable here, I keep feeling like someone's gonna pounce on me every moment or so. Especially them robot things the moustache guy keeps sending out to capture me."

He began to cry. He held his face in his hands and cried into them. Sonic looked at the poor fox sadly. He felt really sorry for Tails, Sonic knew what it was like not to have parents since he didn't have any himself. Sonic bent down on one knee and put an arm around

Tails.

"Hey Tails, don't cry." he said "I'll protect you if you want me to."

Tails lifted his head out of his hands and looked at Sonic. "W-Would you really do that for me Sonic?" he said in a quiet voice.

"Sure!" said Sonic brightly "It's in the hero's job description."

After hearing those words, Tails leapt up to his feet and grasped Sonic in a hug.

"Oh thank you Sonic!" cried Tails "That's the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me!"

"OK, take it easy bud." yelped Sonic.

Tails let go of Sonic.

"Now I'm telling you this." said Sonic in a serious tone "I won't always be there for you so I'm gonna give you some training tips so you can defend yourself when I'm not around."

"Thanks Sonic." said Tails. He liked the idea of being able to fight for himself and he would love to beat Eggman up for what he did to his poor parents.

"I'll start off with the basics." began Sonic "If you're on your own you must NEVER lower your guard, you must always be prepared for what's around the corner…"

"Sonic LOOK OUT!" shrieked Tails.

Sonic turned around to see what Tails had seen. There were three Eggman robots exactly the same as the two that attacked Tails standing there glaring at the two Mobians. Sonic frowned at them and then gave one of his trademark grins.

"So Eggman decided to give us a welcoming committee eh?" he said "Well let's crack him wide open!"

And with that he span into a spin-dash move and charged at the

robots. He smashed through one robot and then he ricocheted off a tree and smashed through another one. Then he ricocheted off another tree and smacked the last one in the head. The destroyed robots all collapsed in a heap. Sonic just laughed at them.

"All too easy." gloated Sonic.

"Sonic help!" cried Tails.

Sonic's quills straightened. He turned around and gasped at what he saw. There was Dr. Eggman in a hovering vehicle with arms attached to it. The vehicle was holding Tails in one of its mechanical hands. The terrified cub squirmed furiously whereas Eggman just hooted with laughter at Tails' pitiful attempts.

"Did you like that little distraction I set up for you Sonic?" sneered Eggman.

Sonic felt his quills shake with rage.

"Let him go Egghead!" snarled Sonic.

"No I don't think I will." purred Eggman "I've been after this little boy for a whole month now. I roboticized his parents sometime ago and now I'm going to roboticize this twin-tailed nuisance. I will go now and if I catch you following me I will change my mind and kill the boy instead!"

He stroked his moustache. Sonic clenched his fists angrily.

"You win for now Eggman but I will stop you and rescue Tails! Just you wait!" he declared furiously.

"We'll see about that." sneered Eggman, turning his Egg-mobile around and hovering away, holding Tails in one of the vehicle's giant hands. Sonic just stood still and watched the fat scientist hover a good distance away and then he ran off after him…

Tails now makes his grand debut! Can Sonic save him before Dr. Eggman can roboticize him? Tune in next time! Reviews are

welcome.

Speed and Flight Part 2

Story 4: Speed and Flight Part 2

"Follow me and I'll kill the boy he says!" mocked Sonic as he ran through the thick dense forests after Eggman "Good thing he didn't say I can't follow him in secret!"

Sonic had met a fox cub named Tails and was making friends with him until Eggman kidnapped him. Now Sonic was running through the forest to save him. Eggman threatened to kill Tails if he saw Sonic following him so Sonic ran through thicker parts of the forest so Eggman wouldn't be able to see him. Sonic didn't even run at top speed in case Eggman heard him, he ran at a normal jogging pace so Eggman would never be able to hear him.

"That egg-head will never see me coming." Sonic said to himself.

He would follow Eggman to wherever he was heading to and he would save Tails from that evil man's clutches.

Dr. Eggman arrived at his next base. This one was exactly the same as the other base that Sonic had destroyed only it was larger and surrounded by a steel fence instead of a stone one. Eggman hadn't been sure if stone or steel was the best fence after all so he tried the stone fence on one base and steel on the other. The fence had a "Keep Out!" sign sprayed somewhere on it. Eggman's Egg-mobile landed next to his base and Eggman grabbed Tails by the scruff of his neck. He carried his captive into the base and through several corridors. He came to a door labelled "Roboticizer room". He opened it and walked in to the room. He put Tails in one of the cages and pressed the close button on the small keypad. The glass case descended down and closed around him. Tails was trapped like a rat. Eggman cackled with laughter at Tails.

"Finally, after weeks of hunting you down, I've got you in my grasp Miles Prower!" cackled Eggman.

Tails sat on the floor, folded his arms and frowned. He was getting tired of Eggman calling him by his real name when he absolutely hated it.

"For the last time everyone calls me Tails!" he grumbled.

"Whatever." muttered Dr. Eggman. "ALONZO!" he screeched.

Alonzo, Eggman's servant bot trundled into the room.

"Yes master?" he said in his posh accent.

"Is the roboticizer ready yet?" asked Eggman eagerly.

"Oh yes sir." said Alonzo, saluting like a general.

"Excellent." said Eggman happily "Any news on you-know-who?"

Alonzo's face turned into an evil smirk. "Not yet sire but we'll catch that blackguard don't you worry!"

Dr. Eggman just hooted with laughter. He loved it when Alonzo made himself sound so sure he was going to win this time. Dr. Eggman turned his attention back to Tails, who was pressing his hands against the glass cage and looking worried.

"Little Tails." purred Eggman "In a matter of moments you will become my newest addition to my marvellous robot army. I can't wait to see the horrified look on Sonic's face when he fails to save you!"

And then he cackled his usual demented cackle. Tails shook like a leaf and hugged his tails fearfully.

I don't wanna be a robot! thought Tails *Oh Sonic, where are you?*

Sonic the Hedgehog had finally made it to Eggman's second base. He screeched to a halt in front of the huge steel fence. He admired the steel fence and grinned mockingly.

"A steel wall?" he sneered "Well its better then a stone wall at least!* Still won't keep me out though…"

"Especially since I'm gonna tunnel under the wall!" he yelled.

He leapt into the air, did a spin-dash and plunged into the ground. He ploughed straight through the ground, chucking soil and grass everywhere as he dug down and down. On the other side of the fence there were three robots on guard. They clinked and clanked as they stomped around place to place observing every inch of the area, making sure there were no intruders. One of the robots stood on a sewer lid. Then suddenly the sewer lid began to rattle under the robot's feet. The robot looked down curiously at its feet. Then suddenly the sewer lid burst open and the robot was catapulted into the air like a tossed stick! Sonic had done that. He had dug straight through the ground and came up through the sewer lid.

"The hedgehog is in the building!" he announced more to himself then anybody.

The robot that had been sent flying hurtled down to the ground faster then a falling stone and landed slap-bang into the wall. One of its tail cannons accidentally fired. It hit another robot in the bottom. The startled robot screeched a mechanical screech and fired one of its arm cannons. The cannon blast hit the third robot and blasted its whole head off. Pieces of robot head fell to the ground and the robot's dead body collapsed, smoke trailing out of where its head once was. Sonic stared glumly at the fleeing and destroyed robots. He put his hands on his hips and sighed.

"Humph! So much for the welcoming committee!" he grumbled "Oh well, it makes my job a little easier."

He leapt out of the hole and charged straight at Eggman's base at top speed. Then he bashed his way through the door. The door was ripped clean off its hinges and flung across the room. Sonic's head throbbed a little after that but he never felt much pain from charging into doors and it never lasted long. Then Sonic dashed through the corridors.

Alonzo burst into the roboticizer room flailing his arms around like

mad. He had a panicked look on his face.

"Master! The hedgehog has gotten into your premises!" shouted Alonzo in blind panic.

"WHAT?" squeaked Eggman, sweat dropping "How did he get past my security?"

Tails' ears pricked up. His face brightened.

"That must be Sonic!" he cried out with joy "He's come to save me at last!"

Unfortunately Eggman heard him.

"Thanks for that little Tails." said Eggman "Because I have an idea now."

His face turned into a dark sinister look complete with an evil smile.

"Sonic must be here to save you." he said; his voice strangely low and sinister "So I'm gonna set up a little surprise for him…"

Tails gulped. He didn't like the sound of that. What was that crazy man up to now?

Sonic had run through several corridors and destroyed lots of robots. However upon reaching this corridor he skidded to a halt and slowed down. Security was bound to be tighter around here since he was near the roboticizer room. Sonic pressed his back against the wall and crept slowly across it. As he crept along he noticed something strange was going on. This corridor was strangely quiet and there didn't seem to be a guard in sight. Eggman obviously wasn't bothered about security around here but that seemed unusual for him.

"That's strange." Sonic said to himself "No Eggman robots patrolling the corridors like usual. Eggman has those things patrolling the corridors 24/7 and guarding anything. So why are there no robots?"

He put his hand on his chin and pulled a thoughtful face.

"I bet that creep is planning an ambush." he deduced "It couldn't be anything else. I'll just keep my hedgehog senses on the alert."

And with that he tip-toed through the hallway and came up to a door. Sonic didn't care which room this was, he was just keen on finding Tails. He seized the handle and pulled it. The handle clicked and the door opened. Sonic opened it very slowly so as to not make a noise. The room he had entered was full of weird machinery and treadmills. Electricity buzzed and crackled as the machines worked away and electronic humming could be heard everywhere. This was definitely not the roboticizer room. This seemed more like the robot production room. However this room was just as important since if he destroyed the machines, Eggman wouldn't be able to make any robots.

"Well this isn't the room I'm looking for." said Sonic "But I'll definitely come back here later."

Then suddenly he felt a sharp thump against his head. Sonic's eyes widened and then he collapsed to the floor, seeing millions of stars before dropping off into slumber. Alonzo had been hiding behind the door when Sonic entered and he crept up behind the hedgehog and knocked him out with a club made from copper and surrounded with gold rivets. Alonzo cackled a rather silly sounding evil cackle at his success.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" he chortled "The famed Sonic the Hedgehog fell for the oldest trick in the book! Master will be very pleased indeed!"

And with that he picked Sonic up, threw him on his shoulder and carried the knocked out hedgehog out of the room.

"Blimey he's heavy!" spluttered Alonzo "What does he eat?"

Alonzo left the room, huffing and puffing and trundled down the corridor to the roboticizer room. Eggman would be pleased to see he had Sonic the Hedgehog, knocked out on his shoulder once he arrived. And they'd get to roboticize him as well! This day was going well for Alonzo and Eggman after all…

Sonic moaned a weary moan as he opened his heavy eyelids. His vision was blurred and he felt very groggy. After all he had been hit on the head very hard. His head was still throbbing like goodness knows what. As he began to get onto his knees he rubbed his throbbing head and blinked his eyes to wake them up a little. Then Sonic suddenly noticed something. Was that glass right in front of him? Sonic held his hand out and reached forward. His hand pressed against something. It WAS glass! He was in a glass cage! The exact same cages Eggman trapped his victims in when he was ready to roboticize them! How on Earth did this happen? Sonic thought for a moment to see if he could remember. He remembered the sharp knock against his head that put him in dreamland. Maybe the thing who knocked him out was the one that put him here. And the one who knocked him out was Dr. Eggman no doubt. He had to get out of here before he was roboticized!

"Sonic!" called a childish sounding voice he recognized immediately.

Sonic turned to his right and saw Tails in a glass cage directly next to his cage.

"Tails!" said Sonic with relief "Found ya at last! Pity I had to be captured though."

"I'm so glad you're here." said Tails "Although like you I wish you weren't captured. Do you know how to get outta here?"

"Sure." said Sonic, getting into a ready to charge pose "I'll just smash my way through the glass!"

He revved up and then charged at the glass. But instead of breaking it he crashed into it and hurt his face. Sonic rolled over backwards and rubbed his aching nose, groaning furiously.

"Ouch!" he cried "Why didn't I smash the darn glass? I can break lots of things!"

"That's because it's Diamond Glass my helpless hedgehog!" announced a voice Sonic wished he would never hear again.

Sonic looked directly in front of him and saw, wait for it…Dr.

Eggman standing there (no surprise!) smiling wickedly at him. Sonic glared at him.

"I should have known you're the reason I'm in here!" grumbled Sonic "It couldn't have been anyone else!"

"Well actually it was Alonzo's doing." admitted Eggman "He crept up behind you, knocked you out and put you in there." Clever little servant bot isn't he?"

Alonzo just put on a very smug face.

"I'm not only used for fetching meals you know." he smirked.

Sonic had to admit it; Alonzo actually did something useful for once. Never before had the servant bot gotten the drop on him. Eggman definitely was getting better at his stuff. Dr. Eggman strolled over to the control pad and turned a few dials.

"You've been a thorn in my side for eight months Sonic." said Eggman dryly "Now our conflict will end. And you will be roboticized!"

He pressed a red button marked in capital letters "ACTIVATE" and the two cages began to glow. Light blue electricity circled around the cages and crackled as the process went underway.

"No!" cried Sonic.

"Yes!" cried Dr. Eggman, delighted to see Sonic was finally going to get defeated by him.

For the first time in his life, Sonic was terrified. He was just about to get turned into an evil killer robot under control for Dr. Eggman! How on Earth was he going to get out of this one? The glass was Diamond Glass, a substance strong enough to resist even bombs and he had no way of escaping! He was doomed to be a robot forever! Then suddenly Sonic realized something. The floor of the cage wasn't made of Diamond Glass. Maybe he could break his way through the floor and escape!

Yes!

Sonic jumped up, span into a ball and spin-dashed straight into the steel floor. He churned his way through thick steel and sent splinters of metal flying everywhere. Dr. Eggman's moustache flopped and his eyes widened so much his glasses nearly fell off. Tails however stared at him, unable to believe his eyes.

"WHAAAAAAAATTTTTT?" he screamed.

"Awesome!" cried a gobsmacked Tails.

Sonic had dug his way through the floor of his cage. He had now dug himself under the floor of the room. But instead of popping up he turned to the right and dug towards Tails' cage. Then he aimed up and burst through the floor of Tails' cage. Tails almost leapt out of his fur when Sonic appeared. Then Sonic fell straight back down the hole and dug his way under the floor of the room again. Then he smashed his way through the floor, leaving a hole in it. He was now out of his cage and in front of Dr. Eggman, smirking cockily at him. Dr. Eggman thought he was going to faint. Tails slid down the hole in his cage and crawled through the tunnel Sonic had made underground. Then Tails came out of the hole and stood next to Sonic.

"You are amazing!" cried Tails.

"Thanks." said Sonic happily "I got us both out in one spin-dash."

Eggman just reached behind himself and pressed the deactivate button. The cages stopped glowing and the electricity faded away into nothingness. Sonic glared at the fat scientist smoothly.

"You're getting smarter Egg-head." he said calmly "But not smart enough for me. Now give up while you have the chance."

"Never!" declared Eggman "I will roboticize you and your friend! Alonzo get them!" he ordered.

"With pleasure sir!" cackled Alonzo.

He charged at Sonic as fast as his little wheels would let him. However Sonic just lunged forward with a powerful kick to the midsection. Alonzo gasped and his optics nearly popped out. Even

though robots shouldn't feel pain, Alonzo did, but in a different way humans do.

"Get a life Alonzo!" yelled Sonic.

"Oh I say!" wheezed Alonzo as he slumped on the floor feebly. He clutched himself in pain.

"Is that all you've got Eggman?" taunted Sonic.

"No, this is!" said Eggman, whipping out a small test-tube shaped device with a button on top from his pocket. He pressed the button. Then suddenly a door on one of the walls exploded into fragments. Sonic and Tails almost leapt out of their skins when that happened. Smoke billowed out of where the door had once been. Eggman put on his wicked grin as he got ready to announce.

"You've defeated many of my past robots Sonic." he said "But you won't defeat my latest creation…SCREAM ROLLER!"

Out of the fading smoke stomped a huge robot. It stood about ten feet tall. The robot had a spike on its head and a structure assembling something on a knight's helmet protruding from behind it. It had a pointed nose and pointed moustache that vaguely assembled Eggman's own facial features. Its hands had sharp claws at the end and its waist section was studded with spikes. It carried a weapon that looked like a hand roller only the roller had spikes everywhere. Its right shoulder had an exhaust stack that had a thin trial of steam coming out from it. It was coloured red and black, similar to Eggman's outfit. Tails hid behind Sonic in fear but Sonic just put on a bored face.

"Gosh Eggman, you really need to stop giving your robots puns for names! It's unbearable!" moaned Sonic.

You see, Eggman had a strange habit of giving his robots puns for names. Some robots were unfortunate to have "Egg" at the beginning of their names.

"If you think the name's unbearable wait till you see him in action!" crowed Eggman "Scream Roller ATTACK!"

Scream Roller raised its hand roller weapon up and then swung it like a baseball bat. The spiked roller detached from its pole and hurtled towards Sonic. Sonic leapt out of the way just in time as the zooming roller shoot straight past him like a whizzing arrow and it crashed straight into the wall, leaving a huge studded dent in it. Even though Eggman was the enemy, Tails couldn't help but be impressed.

"Whoa, that's some serious weaponry!" gasped Tails.

"Thank you Tails, it only gets better though!" purred Eggman.

The roller wrenched itself free from the wall and rolled back to Scream Roller. It reattached itself to the pole and Scream Roller held his weapon in the hand roller position. He pushed the roller and stampeded towards Sonic. Sonic ran out of the way as Scream Roller hurtled past him with his studded roller. That was one weapon he didn't want to be run over by.

"Yikes!" shrieked Sonic "I don't know about you Egg-brains but I don't wanna become a cross between a pancake and Swiss cheese thanks!"

"Oh you will Sonic, you will!" crowed Dr. Eggman "And don't try to outrun it because I built him with enough power to keep up with even you!"

"Oh man!" yelped Sonic as he ran away from Scream Roller's charge.

The huge robot ran after him, still pushing his roller weapon in an attempt to flatten his prey once and for all. Tails just watch the whole kafuffle helplessly. Sonic ran this way and that but Scream Roller just continued to chase him down with his spiked roller.

"Sonic needs help!" squeaked Tails "But what can I do? I'm no fighter!"

He thought to himself desperately. He had to help his friend, he had to! But how could he help if he couldn't fight? Then he had an idea. What had his parents always told him about robots with exhaust

stacks mounted on them? He got it at last. He twisted his tails around one another and took flight. He dodged Scream Roller as he and Sonic ran past him and Tails flew towards Dr. Eggman, who was prancing about cheering "Flatten him Scream Roller!" over and over. Alonzo stood beside him, watching with intent. Tails swooped down and seized Alonzo by the body. Alonzo yelped in surprise whereas Eggman just sweat-dropped.

"What are you doing with my servant bot fox face?" demanded Eggman angrily.

"This!" cried Tails, flying towards Scream Roller's shoulder mounted exhaust stack. He raised Alonzo above his head and prepared to shove him down the huge robot's exhaust stack.

"Put me down!" squealed Alonzo "I don't want to clean up the mess afterwards!"

Tails ignored him and shoved Alonzo head first into Scream Roller's exhaust stack. The ten foot robot screeched to a halt and remained still. Then it began to make a rather ominous sounding electronic wail. Dr. Eggman panicked, his moustache straightened and he sweat-dropped.

"NO!" he shouted "If you block Scream Roller's exhaust pipe up he will overload and explode!"

"Exactly!" retorted Tails.

Sonic couldn't believe what Tails had just done but he shook it off for the moment as now was not a good time for admiration.

"In that case it's time we escaped now!" he said.

Tails flew down to Sonic and landed in his arms. The blue hedgehog carried the yellow fox as he whizzed through the corridors at his trademark speed. Dr. Eggman knew right now was a good time for a strategic exit so he ran to the door marked exit, hurled it open and ran through it as fast as his legs would let him. He runs pretty quickly for a fat person doesn't he? Scream Roller's huge body began to shudder and shake. Then steam began venting out from

his body. Then Scream Roller began to get fatter as all the trapped steam inside him built up and up and up. Scream Roller got fatter and fatter until his overloaded body couldn't take it anymore. Then…

KA-BOOM!

The huge robot exploded into an even bigger explosion. The explosion tore through the whole of Eggman's base and sent it erupting into flames. Sonic looked over his shoulder to see the carnage. It was almost like a bomb had gone off inside. Sonic just laughed at the second Eggman base that had been destroyed today. He leapt over the steel wall and charged off into the forests of Green Hill Zone, carrying Tails in his arms. Minutes later Sonic found a quiet place in the forest and settled down for a rest. He put Tails down and sat down beside him.

"Tails, that was sweet," applauded Sonic "How did you know that would happen if you blocked Scream Roller's exhaust stack up?"

Tails smiled modestly.

"Well, me and my parents are skilled in mechanics and technical fiddle-faddle." he said "I can fix and repair things and I studied all about machinery. I learned that if a robot has an exhaust stack it's always the weak point because if you block it up, the trapped steam has nowhere to go and the robot overloads and explodes from the steam building up inside it. Pretty cool huh?"

Sonic couldn't believe his luck. He had come across a kid with an amazing amount of technical intelligence as well as mechanical skills! This kid was blessed with greatness and he knew it! He knew Tails would make an excellent fighter if he joined him. He smiled at his new friend and said.

"Tails, that's not cool…that's WAY past cool!"

He gave him his ever famous thumbs up sign. Tails giggled with pleasure.

"Now we have a moment, let's begin your training." said Sonic "You, I can tell will be a great fighter."

"OK Sonic." said Tails eagerly.

Sonic got to his feet and wondered off with Tails following him. Sonic couldn't wait to begin Tails' training…

Footnotes:

***See the previous story for Sonic's stone wall smash**

Horda and Borda

Story 5: Horda and Borda

Three weeks had passed since Sonic and Tails had first met each other. Those three weeks had been spent training the little fox to be able to fight. Tails' training hadn't been progressing as much as some people but it was coming along nicely. Tails could fight a little now but he wasn't physically strong yet. Right now, Sonic had set up an obstacle course for Tails. He had to use his flying and fighting abilities all at once in this course. Sonic gave the order to go and Tails took off. He flew in zigzags through the hordes of trees. This was a test of his agility. Then a wooden board with a robot painted on the front appeared in front of him. Tails stopped and kicked it, snapping it off its post. Another board with a robot painted on appeared. Tails flew towards it and smashed straight into it. The board was knocked into splinters. Then Tails found himself flying towards some logs set up for another agility test. Tails flew under and over the logs, zigzagging his way over them as fast as he could. Unfortunately he went a little too fast and lightly knocked his head against a log he had to fly over. Tails stopped for a moment to rub himself better and then carry on. He had flown out of the logs and now found himself flying towards more boards with robots painted on them. One even had Eggman painted on. Tails flew into all the boards, punching them off or kicking them off their posts. He flew towards the Eggman one and kicked it twice. The board snapped in half rather then fell off its post as it was a lot thicker then the others. Then Tails flew towards the finish post where Sonic stood and landed. Sweat rained down from his head and he was exhausted.

"So…how did…I…do?" wheezed Tails.

"You're getting better you know." said Sonic happily "You are getting better. The only mishap there was that little bump into the log."

"Sorry." said Tails.

"No need to be." said Sonic, stroking his head playfully "Anyone can

make a mistake, even I can. And we learn from these mistakes."

"I knew that." fibbed Tails.

"No you didn't." chuckled Sonic, handing over a bottle of water to Tails "Now take a rest, you've earned it."

Tails unscrewed the lid and immediately began gulping his bottle of water down. Training was thirsty work after all. Sonic took his own bottle of water and began to drink out of it. Tails stopped drinking to get some air back into him and turned to face Sonic.

"Sonic." he said "I hope you don't mind my asking but, how did you and Eggman ever become enemies?"

Sonic stopped drinking and fell silent. He sighed and began.

"Eight months ago he invaded Mobotropolis*" he said "And he kidnapped Sally Acorn. I rescued her and in an effort to fight back, we formed the Royal Fighters Service**, a group of fighters fighting under the name of the Acorn Family and for Mobius. However he destroyed Mobotropolis and since then we've been fighting him, desperate to drive him out of Mobius once and for all."

"Oh my gosh!" gasped Tails "That madman destroyed Mobotropolis?"

"Yep." said Sonic "Mobotropolis was my home city too so I have nowhere to live until they rebuild it."

"That's terrible, how could anyone be so vile?" asked Tails.

"I dunno." muttered Sonic "I guess it's just the way some people are."

Tails nodded and continued to sip his bottle of water.

"Hopefully New Mobotropolis will be completed soon and I'll have a place to live in again." Sonic said more to himself then anybody "Do you live anywhere Tails?"

"Not anymore." said Tails dully "I used to live in a small village on

the outskirts of Green Hill Zone but that Eggman guy burnt it down two months ago."

Sonic almost did a wild spit-take with his water. That bad egg couldn't leave Tails alone could he? He kidnapped his parents AND burnt his whole village to the ground as well?! That made Sonic feel even sorrier for the young cub. Tails was parentless and homeless it turned out. He needed a place to live as the forest wasn't always a safe place, not with Eggman around at least.

"Well Tails, hopefully I'll be able to find you a new home in New Mobotropolis once its completed." said Sonic "Heck, I'll share my home with you if you like."

"That sounds great." said Tails "You're my only friend after all."

Sonic nodded. It felt great to be helping those in need of help. That's what he was born to do, help others at any lengths necessary, even if it meant doing all he could to stop the deadliest of bad guys. Then suddenly he felt something vibrate against his wrist. Sonic had taken a small communication device and kept it in his glove in case he needed it and now it had gone off. Sonic pulled the device out of his glove and answered it.

"Yo Nicole what's up?" asked Sonic.

"We have a distress signal from the Mobian Police Department in Central City." Nicole's voice announced on the other side of the communicator "Two robots are attacking the place; you're requested to come for help immediately!"

"No probs Nicole." said Sonic "I'll be there immediately."

He shut off the communicator and put it back in his glove.

"What's the matter Sonic?" asked Tails with interest.

"I'm requested to go to Central City to stop an attack going on at the Mobian Police Department." explained Sonic "You can come too if you want."

"Boy do I ever!" cried Tails excitedly "I can test my new skills on

those attackers!"

"I'd keep it steady if I where you." warned Sonic "You're still in need of training after all. Now let's go!"

He revved up and zipped off. Tails spun his tails around, took flight and followed Sonic closely. Sonic looked over his shoulder, rather surprised to see the young fox actually keeping up with him. Sonic ran straight out of Green Hill Zone and headed to Mobotropolis. Once there he had to make a sharp turn left and run a good distance before reaching Central City. Central City wasn't very far from Mobotropolis luckily so Sonic knew where he was going. He just wondered what Eggman was up to this time…

After a good long hour of running, Sonic and Tails finally reached Central City. Central City was the largest city on Mobius and chock-a-block with inhabitants and strange looking hover cars of many shapes and sizes that whizzed here and there. Tails stared in absolute awe at everything he saw. After all he was a techno geek and all the technology he saw looked amazing to him, especially the hover cars.

"Impressive isn't it?" said Sonic, noticing Tails' impressed face.

"It's incredible!" exclaimed Tails "I've never seen a city like this before!"

"Well it is the largest on Mobius so it's bound to be impressive." noted Sonic "Now, where's that MPD station?"

Each city on Mobius had one MPD station. The Mobian Police Department was the name of the police forces on Mobius and the MPD stations acted as headquarters. They also contained classified information on all the cities and other places on Mobius so if Eggman was after that, it couldn't be good. After walking through a few city blocks, Sonic finally came across the MPD station. It was a fairly large rectangular cuboid shape with a uniquely shaped roof and a logo consisting of a blue circle with "MPD" in white capital letters. This was the MPD station and presumably where the

distress signal was from.

"Now let's show those attackers what happens when they mess with Mobians!" said Sonic, smugly.

He walked through the doors with Tails following him. The first thing they saw were police officers laying on the floor, out cold. Some of them had nasty burn marks on their faces. This concerned Sonic a little. The attackers obviously meant business and they obviously had fire powers. It must be Eggman's work; the attackers must be Eggman robots. Sonic stepped over the sleeping police officers and crept up to a door.

"Wait here Tails." whispered Sonic as he opened the door.

He crept inside and closed the door behind him. Tails stood where he was, waiting for Sonic to come out and give him the news but his sensitive fox ears heard voices coming from another room. Tails looked over his shoulder and spotted another door. He flew quietly over to the door and listened to it. He heard the voices on the other side. Even though he was told to wait where he was, Tails had to see what was going on in that room while Sonic was in the other room. Tails twisted the door handle slowly. The door clicked and he pushed it open very slowly. The room he was looking in was full of computers. However it didn't look very tidy as a lot of the computer monitors and keyboards were over turned, knocked off their desks or smashed. It was clear the attackers had violent intentions of some sort. Tails closed the door behind him and tip-toed slowly over the mess. He tried to make sure he didn't tread on anything so he wouldn't make a noise and get found out. The voices he heard earlier were getting louder. Then Tails spotted a bright light coming from around the corner. He headed towards it. Then suddenly Tails tripped over a low hanging wire and fell on his face. Tails groaned and got to his feet. Nothing stirred so it was obvious he hadn't alerted anyone.

Tails continued tiptoeing and almost trod on a computer mouse. He felt his foot press against the mouse and he lifted it up. He put his foot back down again away from the mouse and continued creeping forward. Tails eventually came to the corner and knelt down on his knees. He poked his head around the corner and saw two robots

taping keys on a keyboard and staring at a huge computer monitor.

One robot was tall and the other was short. The tall robot was hunch backed. Its head had spikes going down its neck; a V-shaped structure was perched above its black visor with red reptilian eyes. It had spikes pointing forward on the side of its face and a spike pointing backwards on each of its shoulders. It was rather broad. It had two sharp talons on its feet and five sharp claws on each hand. It was red and black in colour and its head spikes were silver coloured. The short robot looked less scary. It had a spike starting from above its visor and pointing behind it. Its reptilian eyes were blue instead of red. It had mandible like structures on its face. It had pointed shoulders, a chest plate with spikes that pointed sideways. Its feet were pointed and it had three fingers instead of five. The small robot was working on the computer whereas the tall one kept looking over his shoulder or all around as if it were keeping watch. The small robot appeared to be worried.

"I don't like this, I don't like this!" it gibbered to itself "We're gonna be in trouble, we're gonna be in trouble!"

"Quit jabbering and hurry up Borda!" snarled the tall robot, its voice electronic and gravely sounding "I can't shake the feeling we're being watched!"

Tails watched the robots with interest. What on Mobius where they up to? And were they Eggman robots? They must be, Tails didn't know anyone else who could build a robot. The tall robot walked off to check something whereas the short one, known as Borda, continued to work on the computer. He pressed a key and the computer droned "Download commencing." Borda stopped worrying and lightened up, knowing his job was getting underway. Tails crawled up to Borda as silently as he could. Then he lifted his head up and took a sneaky peak at what Borda was doing. Borda appeared to be downloading something. Tails squinted at the screen closely. It said "Downloading of secret files commencing." Those files contained vital information on city populations and police data. Who knew what those two robots wanted those files for? Then suddenly Borda noticed Tails next to him and tried to shriek but Tails seized the robot and yanked him under the desk. He grabbed a nearby snapped wire and wrapped it around Borda. Then he kicked

the tied up robot away from him and started taping keys on the keyboard. He was trying to stop the downloading of the files before it was too late. As for poor Borda he had skidded across the floor and hit the tall robot, whose name was Horda in the back of the feet. Horda felt him and turned around. He almost did a wild-double take at what he saw.

"Borda?" he blurted, picking his tied up sidekick up "What happened to you?!"

"Mobian!" squealed Borda "There's a Mobian here!"

Horda looked up and saw Tails typing furiously on the keyboard.

"Oh, a Mobian!" sneered Horda, creeping up towards Tails "I was expecting a bigger one though."

Tails jumped in fright and turned around to see Horda towering over him. Horda truly looked terrifying but Tails put on his bravest looking face to hide it.

"I know what you guys are up to." he said slowly "But I won't let you get away with it!"

Horda laughed a mechanical throaty laugh and then threw Borda directly at the little fox. Tails caught him and threw him back at Horda. Horda just slapped Borda away, the poor robot hitting the floor headfirst and groaning. Tails laughed.

"Is that anyway to treat your buddy?" he taunted.

"I'll teach you to make fun of me!" growled Horda.

Horda seized Tails by the neck and slammed him against a very wide computer tower. Tails struggled in his grasp but Horda was too strong. He pulled Tails away from the tower and slammed him against it again. That slam caused a little damage to the tower.

"I will not tolerate you interfering with our mission!" snarled Horda "You will burn like those officers have!"

He pulled out a strange looking object and pressed a button. A huge

flame emitted from it. Tails gasped in horror as Horda held the flaming metal torch to his face. Tails squirmed desperately as Horda inched it closer and closer. Then suddenly an ice gun descended from the ceiling and pointed directly behind Horda's back. The computer room had ice guns to put out electrical fires for water couldn't put those kind of fires out and having a sprinkler system would likely short-circuit everything in the room if they had systems like that in a computer room. The rest of the headquarters had sprinklers if there was a fire anywhere else.

"Look out Horda!" screamed Borda as he snapped himself free from the wire he was tied up with.

"Huh?" said Horda, turning around.

He spotted the ice gun and leapt out of the way. The ice gun squirted poor Tails with a jet of ice and water. The ice guns were used for putting out small electrical fires in case one happened. They were programmed to come out whenever a fire was detected and Horda's mechanical fire torch had set them off. Tails squealed a high pitched squeal as he was jetted with freezing cold ice and water. He was so shocked by the cold that when it finally stopped he fell to the floor, shivering as if he was in the middle of the Arctic.

"C-C-Cold…!" shivered Tails "S-so…c-cold…"

As for Horda and Borda, their download had finished and they scooped up their memory stick. They were walking away from the monitor.

"What about the Mobian?" asked Borda.

"Bah!" snorted Horda "We got what we came for and that's all that matters. I'm happy to leave him on ice."

They walked over to the emergency exit and opened it. Then they left the building, laughing like a pair of hyenas. Tails just sat where he was, shivering furiously. He was so cold that was all he could think of, being cold. Then Sonic burst into the room, looking around. He took note of the smashed computers and keyboards and ran up to where Tails was. The poor fox was still shivering.

"Tails, there you are!" gasped Sonic "What happened?"

"T-t-two r-r-robots n-n-named H-Horda and B-Borda w-w-were working on a c-c-computer." shivered Tails "I t-t-tried to stop th-th-them but th-th-they o-overpowered me a-and I g-g-got blasted by an i-i-ice g-g-gun."

"That sounds like Eggman to me." said Sonic. Then he turned back to Tails. "And don't you dare wonder off when I tell you to wait!" he scolded "What if those robots killed you?"

"I'm sorry Sonic." said Tails sadly "I only w-wanted t-to see w-what they were up to and if I-I c-could stop them."

"Well next time listen to me." said Sonic sternly "I'm really concerned about your safety Tails. I don't know what I'd do if I lost you."

"Sorry." Tails said again.

"That's all right." said Sonic softly "By the way, what were those robots doing on the computer?"

"They were downloading the secret files." explained Tails "I managed to tamper with it and make them download an empty file instead but I bet they'll be back once they find that out."

"In that case we wait for them." said Sonic "And we'll be ready for them!"

Tails beamed. He couldn't wait for the chance to redeem himself and to catch those two robots once and for all.

Meanwhile Horda and Borda had retreated to a small spaceship they had hidden in an alleyway. Their ship was no bigger then a lorry and was rather sleek and pointed in design. It had a cloaking device so no one would be able to see it. Inside the ship, Horda and Borda had set up a computer and they plugged their memory stick into it. They were eagerly waiting to see what information they had downloaded.

"I hope there's information on which cities have the highest population so we can kill lots of disgusting Mobians." hoped Horda "And I hope there's information on some large cities so we know which ones to target when we do our daily collateral damage patrol."

"Our master Rorda will be very pleased." beamed Borda as he uploaded the information on the computer.

The upload had finished and a small screen was displayed on the monitor. Horda clicked on the file icon to see what was in it. However there wasn't a single bit of information displayed on the screen after clicking on the file icon. Not even a word. Not one word. Horda stared hard at their computer.

"What's this?!" he bellowed "This file is empty!"

"What?!" shrieked Borda "I could swear I found the secret files!"

"You idiot!" snarled Horda, slapping Borda across the head "You downloaded the wrong file! Now we have to go back and try again!"

"But what if there's a group of Mobians guarding the place?" piped Borda.

"They can send as many as they dare." sneered Horda "We'll just destroy them all! Now come on you bumbling bolt brain!"

Horda lowered the boarding ramp of the ship and exited it. Borda followed closely behind.

Sonic and Tails were still at the MPD station waiting for Horda and Borda to return for the real secret files.

"Will we beat them Sonic?" asked Tails nervously.

"Sure we will." said Sonic "No villain's a match for me or you."

Then suddenly the emergency exit door was ripped off its hinges and tossed away. Horda and Borda had returned to get the secret files. Horda had even brought the memory stick with him. Sonic and

Tails hid behind a computer desk and waited for Horda and Borda to start working on the computer. Horda stomped over to the same computer he had been working on before and turned it on. He looked around to make sure no one was around.

"Borda, you get to work now!" ordered Horda "I'll keep watch!"

Borda gulped. He hated doing the dirty work as he always worried on getting caught. But he was made to follow orders so he did so. The computer finished turning on and displayed its screens. Borda immediately got to work, taping the keyboard keys and searching for the right information he and Horda required. Horda just whipped out his two fire torches, ready to activate them the moment he spotted an intruder. Then, without warning, Sonic leapt from his hiding place and spin-dashed Horda in the back. Horda yelped in surprise as he was flung into the wall by Sonic's spin-dash. Borda immediately got scared and saw what was happening. Sonic ran up to Borda and grabbed him.

"Alright, why do you two miscreants want the secret files?!" demanded Sonic angrily.

"I-It's our j-job." gibbered Borda "W-w-we want t-to launch an attack on th-this planet's largest cities f-for our master. Please don't hurt me!"

Sonic thought on what Borda had said. Launch an attack on Mobius' largest cites? That sounded exactly like an Eggman plan. But why were those robots so different looking to the usual Eggman robots he was used to? Then suddenly Horda lunged from behind and punched Sonic away from Borda. The startled hedgehog crashed into a desk.

"We do not wish to battle!" snarled Horda "But if you want one, we will be happy to oblige!"

"Leave Sonic alone!" cried Tails hotly.

He flew up to Horda from behind and kicked him in the back of the neck. Horda gasped and fell over. Sonic got to his feet and glared at Horda.

"I bet this is Eggman's doing isn't it?" he asked "You're doing this for Eggman aren't you?"

Horda just gave Sonic a confused stare.

"Who in the mechanical world is an Eggman?" asked Horda bluntly.

"Don't play games with me metal face!" snapped Sonic "You're working for Eggman and downloading those files for him I know it!"

"What in the mechanical mind are you talking about?!" growled Horda "We do not know who this Eggman is, nor are we affiliated with him! We're not even from this planet!"

"Say what?!" spluttered Sonic.

Horda and Borda weren't Eggman robots? Nor were they from Mobius? These foes were mysterious indeed! Horda suddenly leapt to his feet and slashed at Sonic. Sonic jumped out of the way and kicked Horda across the face. Then suddenly Borda sneaked up from behind and punched Sonic in the back. Then Borda pulled out a pair of saw blades he had as weapons. He activated them and raised them above his head. But before he could chop Sonic into ribbons, Tails kicked him from behind. Borda dropped his saw blades. Tails grabbed one and churned into Borda's back with it. Horda grabbed Tails by the tails and hurled him into the wall. Tails smacked head first into it and slid down to the floor. Sonic then spin-dashed into Horda's face and sent him toppling over. Sonic then spotted Horda and Borda's memory stick lying next to the computer. He grabbed it, threw it on the floor and stomped on it, breaking it into pieces.

"NO!" yelled Horda.

"Now you can't download anything for your mysterious master!" smirked Sonic.

Horda got very, very cross. He leapt to his feet and whipped out his flame torches. He activated them. The flames roared loudly.

"You shall pay for your interference you miserable organism!" he declared angrily "And you shall pay for that by becoming my next

barbecued victims!"

"Ah, ah, ah Horda." said Sonic "Don't you know what happens if you play with fire in here?"

Horda ignored him and advanced on Sonic. Then suddenly three ice guns descended from the ceiling and pointed directly at him. Horda turned around and stared at them in horror.

"Oh bugger!" he whimpered.

The ice guns blasted him in the face. One ice gun was bad enough, but three at once were even worse. In fact the three ice guns began to FREEZE Horda because the icy water they squirted was so cold. Another ice gun appeared from nowhere and joined in with the freezing process. Bigger fires required more ice guns after all and Horda had two flame torches so those two flames were enough to summon four ice guns. Borda noticed his friend was in trouble and ran over to help him. Then Tails flew up to one of the ice guns and turned it into Borda's direction. Now Borda was blasted in the face by icy water. Water and electricity didn't mix after all and Borda began to short circuit. He ended up having a mechanical seizure and started jittering about like a jitterbug. Then Borda's chest plate popped off and he fainted. Tails clenched his fist and mouthed "Yes!" in triumph. As for Horda, the ice guns had finished squirting him. He was frozen solid. He couldn't do anything except stand there, defeated and disgraced. Sonic smirked at him and so did Tails.

"Now who's having the cold shoulder?" jeered Tails.

Horda glared at the little fox.

"You two have disgraced us!" he snarled "You will pay dearly for this! But for now, we shall leave so we can repair ourselves. We will return…"

And with that he broke one of his arms free from the ice. He freed his other arm and pressed a teleporter device on his wrist. He and Borda vanished into thin air. Sonic merely huffed.

"Well that's that I guess." said Sonic.

"Yeah I guess." added Tails "I wonder if we'll see those two again."

"They said they'll return so we'll just have to be ready for them." said Sonic, "I just wonder who their master is and what they want to destroy cities for?"

Tails merely shrugged.

"By the way Tails." said Sonic "You redeemed yourself back there. Well done bro."

He gave him a playful smack on the back.

"Thanks Sonic." said Tails modestly. "And I learnt my lesson; never do anything by yourself unless you have the right skills for it."

Sonic gave him the thumbs up and winked at him. Then suddenly Sonic felt a vibration against his wrist again. He pulled his communication device out of his glove and answered it.

"Yo Nicole what's up this time?" asked Sonic.

"Have you dealt with the problem in Central City yet?" asked Nicole.

"Yes." said Sonic "The MPD is safe and sound now."

"That's good but Bunnie Rabbot and the Royal Fighters need your help in Megapolis!" announced Nicole "They're in serious trouble!"

"I'll be there right away." said Sonic, turning the device off. "Man this day just gets better doesn't it?"

"Can I come?" asked Tails hopefully.

"Why not?" said Sonic "I'm sure Bunnie would love to meet you."

And with that he dashed straight out of the MPD station with Tails following him. Sonic had no idea what he was going to expect in Megapolis, but he couldn't wait to smash Eggman's latest scheme…

Footnotes:

***See the prologue story A Battle's Beginning**

****See stories 1 & 2**

Mayhem in Megapolis

Story 6: Mayhem in Megapolis

"Blast it all!" groaned Bunnie as she blasted another Eggman robot away with her arm cannon "Where's that sugah-hog when I need him?"

Ever since her arrival in Megapolis three weeks ago, Bunnie had been spending her whole time destroying robots and helping out the Royal Fighters of Megapolis. Since her arrival, things had started to go well for the fighters. Unfortunately, a few days after, the battle had recently been turning into Eggman's favour. More robots were being made then ever before and they were beginning to overwhelm everybody, even poor Bunnie Rabbot! No one knew how Eggman was making the robots so quickly but they knew that if they didn't keep on fighting, they would be vanquished. Right now though, Bunnie was under pressure from a horde of Eggman robots. She kept blasting them away with her arm cannon but there were just so many she couldn't keep up with them. Then suddenly one robot leapt on her from behind, Bunnie blasted it off but another robot, this one with fists for weapons rather then guns, sneaked up on her and punched her across the head. Bunnie had never felt such a punch in her life. The poor rabbit found herself toppling over. Her eyes closed and she passed out.

The robots cackled at their fallen victim and they pulled out a pair of laser cuffs. Laser cuffs were the only restraints that couldn't be broken. It looked like a sphere to start with but once they were placed in between the captive's wrists a pair of lasers emitted from each sides of the sphere, wrapped around the captive's wrists and held them in place. The Eggman robots hauled Bunnie over to a lamppost and put on the laser cuffs. Now she wouldn't be going anywhere unless she broke free of the cuffs which is impossible being as they're lasers. The biggest robot, the one that had punched Bunnie's daylights out, pulled out a communicator and spoke into it.

"Dr. Eggman sir, we have captured the Rabbot." droned the robot.

"Excellent!" cackled Eggman's voice on the other side "Keep hold of her until I arrive in my Egg Tank! I will finish roboticizing that half finished Mobian at long last!"

"Yes sir." droned the robot, shutting the communicator off.

Bunnie slowly began to come around. She was still feeling groggy from that punch. The robots noticed this.

"Commander, she's awoken." reported one robot "Should we knock her out again?"

"No." said the large robot "She won't be going anywhere. Those laser cuffs will keep her in place."

Bunnie finally finished waking up and noticed she had been overpowered and restrained to a lamppost. She pulled furiously on her arms but the cuffs refused to give up. They just couldn't be broken. The only way they could be turned off is by the touch of a button, which unfortunately Bunnie didn't have. The robots had the switch off button. The Eggman robots with guns pointed their guns at Bunnie.

"Dare move and we'll blow your brains out!" they threatened.

Bunnie stopped struggling and remained still. It looked like Eggman had defeated her once and for all. Then suddenly the lead robot was smashed into pieces by a blue blur! The other robots jumped up in surprise and saw their commander, lying in pieces. Then the blue blur charged at the other robots and smashed them to pieces one at a time in one swift charge. Sonic the Hedgehog had arrived at long last! Bunnie couldn't believe her good luck that Sonic had finally arrived. As Sonic destroyed the last robot he skidded to a halt.

"Now that's what I call making an entrance!" he chortled "Eh Tails?"

"I'll say." said Tails, landing next to him "You destroyed about twenty robots in one charge!"

"No robot is too tough for me after all." boasted Sonic "Oh! I just remembered, Bunnie Rabbot!"

He noticed Bunnie, still tied up to the lamppost. Sonic ran over to her and bent down to see the laser cuffs.

"Darn!" he cursed "Laser cuffs. Tough ones they are, only a button can turn them off."

"You mean this one?" asked Tails, holding up the remote device the lead robot had before it was destroyed by Sonic.

"Yeah that one." said Sonic.

Tails pressed the button on the remote device and the laser cuffs switched off. Bunnie rubbed her wrists and got up to her feet. She threw her arms around Sonic.

"Ya'll came at last ya swifty thing!" she cried with joy "Ah was beginning to think ya weren't coming!"

"I got a bit held up at Central City*." explained Sonic "By the way it's good to see you again."

"Same to you sugar-hog." said Bunnie happily. She then noticed Tails standing there, looking away shyly.

"Who's the adorable fox cub then?" asked Bunnie.

"This is my new friend Tails." said Sonic "I met him during my time in Green Hill Zone and saved him from Eggman**. I've been giving him some training so he will be able to help us fight against Eggman."

"Hi Bunnie." said Tails meekly.

"Howdy there cutie." said Bunnie "Aren't you adorable?"

Tails giggled modestly. His parents always said that to him.

"Thanks Bunnie." said Tails "By the way, what happened to your legs and arm?"

"Ah was half roboticized by that Eggman guy***." explained Bunnie "Ah don't mind though, I can smash robots and fly now so that Eggman has just done us a favour by making me stronger."

"I bet he's annoyed at that!" chuckled Tails.

Bunnie laughed along with Tails until Sonic interrupted them.

"So Bunnie, how's things been going on here?" he asked.

"Terrible sugar-hog." answered Bunnie "Eggman's been vanquishing the Royal Fighters here. He's somehow building robots at an incredible speed. We started beating back the robots a few weeks ago but then they began coming at us in enormous numbers. We can't keep up with that mad man and as ya'll saw, ah got over powered by them robots."

"Building robots at an incredible speed?" repeated Sonic "That sounds strange, Eggman couldn't build robots that quickly."

"Do you think he probably has some super speedy production line or something?" wondered Tails.

"Maybe, we'll have to investigate on this." said Sonic "Bunnie, do you know where Eggman's base is?"

"Nah sugah." said Bunnie "No one does."

"Then we'll have to find it ourselves!" declared Sonic "Come on Tails and Bunnie, we've got an Eggman to find!"

And with that he zoomed off at his trademark speed. Tails and Bunnie both took flight and followed him. Bunnie couldn't believe her eyes at what Tails was suddenly doing right now.

"Oh mah stars! You can fly?" she gasped.

"Yep." said Tails "All thanks to my twin tails!"

"Ya'll a peculiar one ain't ya?" said Bunnie.

Tails blushed. He hadn't received comments like that from a woman before. Tails shook it off for the moment and focused back on following Sonic. Hopefully they would find Eggman's base and sort out the robot problem Megapolis was having…

"Alonzo you sluggish steel stump hurry up!" bellowed Eggman "I'm getting ready to activate my Egg Tank!"

"I AM hurrying up you fat load of anger!" snapped Alonzo "I can't go any faster while I'm dragging your supplies on board!"

Dr. Eggman and Alonzo were loading up the Egg Tank, Eggman's latest invention. After the destruction of his two bases in Green Hill Zone****he had retreated to his biggest headquarters which was in Megapolis. The Egg Tank was one heck of a death machine. It was H-shaped and loaded with weapons. These weapons of death consisted of a huge two barrelled cannon, two smaller cannons on either side of the cannon barrel and two extra guns on the sides of the tank. Thirteen cannons is a lot of cannons on one tank isn't it? The tank's colour scheme was red and black, like Eggman's uniform, all it's weapons were gold and the tank itself was taller then a three storey building. It was built out of super strong titanium too so it would be a tough machine to beat. Alonzo loaded the last supplies onboard the giant tank and flopped on the floor in exhaustion.

"Whew! Carrying supplies is hard work!" he puffed.

"Finally, you've finished." said Eggman dryly "Congratulations. Now let's get going and pick up Bunnie Rabbot shall we?"

"Well you've always wanted to finish roboticizing that tough girl haven't you?" asked Alonzo.

"Oh yes." answered Eggman "She'll be a valuable ally to me. And Sonic won't know what to expect when I use her against him!"

And with that he cackled with laughter. Alonzo joined in, with his bad sounding cackle that would make people laugh when they heard it. Eggman stopped laughing and smacked Alonzo around the head. The poor robot's head started whizzing around like a mad roundabout and Alonzo fell over with a thump.

"Don't you dare try to do an evil cackle!" snarled Eggman "You just spoil the mood you stupid lump of steel!"

"Well SO-RRY for contributing to your greatness sir!" grumbled Alonzo, rubbing his head.

"Just do something useful while I get the tank going!" ordered Eggman "And stop complaining all the time!"

"Yes sir." mumbled Alonzo.

Why did he have to have such an abusive master who never appreciated a thing he did? Just his bad luck he supposed. Dr. Eggman sat down in the driver's seat and began pressing controls on the tank's control pad. The Egg Tank whirred into life. Eggman grabbed the controls and pressed the buttons to go. The Egg Tank's enormous engines roared louder then a pride of lions as the colossal machine began to slowly move from its parking space. Its huge treads began to groan loudly as the tank moved forward. The hangar bay doors opened, letting in bright sunlight, to let the tank out of the darkness of the hangar bay and into the open air. The tank finally trundled out of the hangar bay, the door closing behind it. Eggman cackled gleefully.

"What a beautiful day." he said "A beautiful day to cause chaos that is!"

"Agreed sir." chortled Alonzo.

"Now let's go and pick up Bunnie Rabbot!" said Eggman eagerly "And destroy a city along the way. Egg tank, away!"

The Egg Tank began to trundle forwards slowly, then as it went along its speed picked up to a speed unnatural to a real tank. Eggman had equipped jet engines to the back after all. Now the tank was speeding through the small desert that surrounded the city of Megapolis. Upon arrival, Eggman would lay siege to the city and hopefully kidnap a good number of Mobians to roboticize, particularly Bunnie Rabbot. He just hoped that Sonic wouldn't interfere for once.

Sonic, Tails and Bunnie had been searching for thirty minutes

straight and hadn't found a hint of Eggman anywhere. The only things Eggman they had run into were Eggman robots, which Sonic and Bunnie destroyed without a problem. They decided to stop searching and rest a moment.

"That Eggman's hidden his base in a good place this time hasn't he?" muttered Sonic as he wiped his forehead.

"Ah don't know about you sugah but I'm not even sure Eggman's hiding IN the city." thought Bunnie "Maybe he's hiding somewhere else."

"Maybe." said Sonic "Maybe he's hiding on the outskirts somewhere."

"I haven't seen any Royal Fighters." said Tails "Where are they?"

"Hiding sugah." said Bunnie dully "Ever since Eggman began to push us back with his madly increasing robot army, the fighters have all resorted to hiding and then ambushing the robots. It's been a good tactic so far but we're not sure how much longer they'll be able to keep it up."

Then suddenly a tiger in a combat uniform leapt on Sonic from behind and pinned him to the ground. The startled hedgehog yelped in surprise.

"Hold it right there Eggman robot!" snarled the tiger, pulling out a pistol from his gun pouch.

"Easy Thomas, he's on our side!" yelped Bunnie "Its Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"Oh, sorry about that." said the tiger, a trifle embarrassed at his actions "I'm just a bit over cautious that's all." He put his pistol pack in his gun pouch.

"Who's this guy?" asked Sonic, standing up and dusting himself off. He glared at the tiger angrily.

"This is Field Marshal Thomas K. Tiger." said Bunnie "He's the leader of the Royal Fighters here."

"Nice to meet you Sonic the Hedgehog." said Thomas, holding his hand out.

"I don't call pouncing on me from behind "Nice to meet you"!" snorted Sonic.

"I thought you were a robot, I'm sorry about that!" yelled Thomas "I keep thinking everybody's a robot due to that darn Eggman roboticizing everybody."

"That makes sense." said Sonic "But didn't it occur to you that I wasn't attacking anyone? Nor was I trying to take Bunnie and Tails to Eggman?"

"I know. I really made a pig's ear out of this." mumbled Thomas "I'll make it up to you by helping you out."

"I know how you can help us out." said Tails "Do you know where Eggman's base is?"

Thomas stared at Tails for a moment and put a hand to his chin. Then he snapped his fingers.

"Ah I do know where his base is!" he said "I remember sending our top spy to find it yesterday and she reported it being a few miles north-east outside the city."

"Thanks for that Tommy." said Sonic "You've made it up to me already. Now let's…"

But before he could do anything a low earth shaking rumble filled everybody's ears and made them wobble briefly.

"Earthquake?" fretted Tails.

"No." said Thomas "That sounds like Eggman's heavy artillery. Not sure what it is though."

Then from out of the horizon, the Egg Tank came into view. As it neared Megapolis, the ground began to rumble more and more. Sonic could tell this was something big and bad. And it was coming to them.

"We've gotta stop that thing before it gets to the city!" cried Sonic.

"Then let's go sugah hog!" cried Bunnie, taking flight "Royal Fighters away!"

Sonic, Bunnie and Tails all ran off to confront this new foe that was heading for them. As for the Egg Tank, it was hurtling towards the city at tremendous speed. Eggman would reach the city in no time. He couldn't wait to destroy it and then remould it into his image. Then suddenly the tank's radar picked up three oncoming life forms. They must be Royal Fighters putting up a feeble resistance.

"So some fighters have seen me coming eh?" he jeered "Oh well, I'll have to get rid of them first!"

He put the Egg Tank's brake on and the giant machine halted with an earth shaking skid. The huge tank finally stopped. Just after it had stopped, the three Mobians on radar came into view. Eggman couldn't believe his eyes when he saw them.

"Just my luck!" groaned Eggman "I begin to push back those pitiful Royal Fighters of Megapolis and Sonic shows up! And with Tails no less! And I thought my robots had captured Bunnie for me!"

"Well obviously Sonic saved her from your robots you dweeb!" snorted Alonzo.

Eggman leapt out of his seat and punched Alonzo in the face. The startled servant bot fell over backwards with a thunk. He groaned dopily.

"Don't you dare call me a dweeb you titanium twerp!" snarled Eggman "You will respect your master!"

"Yes sir, no sir, three bags full of bolts sir!" giggled Alonzo stupidly.

Eggman sighed and turned his attention back to the oncoming Mobians. Even though Sonic had come to ruin everything, Eggman didn't worry too much. He was certain his Egg-Tank would destroy Sonic and friends easily. It was heavily armoured and filled to the brim with weaponry after all. As for Sonic, Tails and Bunnie they finally reached the tank and stopped in their tracks. Tails gaped in

awe at the sheer size of the tank.

G…G…Go…Gosh!" stammered Tails. He was paralyzed with shock at the tank's appearance.

"Big deal, it's just a tank waiting to be smashed by us." said an unimpressed Sonic.

Tails started speaking frightened gibberish before finally swooning over and fainting. Sonic saw that and bent down by his side.

"Wake up Tails! We've got an Eggman to stop!" he cried, slapping Tails repeatedly in the face to wake him up.

"Huh…Who….What…Where?" mumbled Tails dimly.

"Some fighter you have Sonic the Hedgehog!" taunted Eggman from inside his Egg Tank "He falls asleep on the job!"

"Eggman, you may have a big tank but it's not gonna be enough for my speed and skill." boasted Sonic "I'll take it down the same way I took the rest of your toys down!"

"I wouldn't be so sure Sonic." purred Eggman "It is heavily armoured AND heavily armed too!"

Sonic had had enough and decided to throw the first punch or spin-dash in his case. He charged straight at the Egg Tank and… bounced straight off it! In fact the tank's body was so hard Sonic had hurt himself when he hit it! Sonic spin dashed straight into the ground face first and skidded to a halt. He groaned and passed out. Tails and Bunnie were well and truly gobsmacked.

"Oh mah stars!" said Bunnie shakily "S-S-Sonic didn't even s-scratch that darn thing!"

"We're dead meat!" shrieked Tails.

"Yes you are!" laughed Eggman "Egg Tank, away!"

And with that the colossal death machine began to roar into life and slowly move. Bunnie engaged her arm cannon and began firing

madly at the tank's incredible armour. However none of the shots seemed to do anything to the tank apart from bounce off harmlessly. Bunnie couldn't believe her eyes. Then she decided to change tactics and punch the tank instead. However her robotic fist didn't do any better. From inside the tank, Eggman was laughing away like the deranged manic he is. It was so funny seeing his victims put up such a pitiful fight against his heavily armoured masterpiece.

"Look at them Alonzo! So desperate to stop me but their attempts are in vain!" jeered Eggman.

"Agreed sir." said Alonzo "Should we open fire now?"

"Yes we should!" said Eggman gleefully "Fire away!"

"Certainly sir." said Alonzo, pressing the fire button on the tank's control pad.

The tank's thirteen cannons all fired horrifying cannon blasts at Bunnie. Bunnie managed to dodge them all but she knew that she wouldn't be able to keep it up for long so she flew out of the way from the tank's cannon fire. Tails followed her. Unfortunately, the Egg Tank's turret turned around in their direction and fired at them. Tails dropped down to the ground and braced himself, hoping he wouldn't get hit whereas Bunnie kept trying to fly away. Then suddenly one cannon blast managed to catch her by the ankle. Bunnie yelped in pain and then plummeted down to the ground. Her stricken foot was out of commission and she couldn't fly with one foot working as it was harder to control so she started falling. Tails noticed Bunnie falling and leapt up to catch her. He only just managed to catch the falling rabbit and he used his tails to slow himself down so he could land safely.

"Thanks Tails." said Bunnie.

"Heh, heh, you're welcome." said Tails, his face turning red with embarrassment.

Eggman decided not to bother about Bunnie and Tails anymore since they couldn't do any harm to his tank so he continued moving forwards. He was almost at the city of Megapolis. Once he arrived,

he would blast it to smithereens. As for Thomas, he noticed the tank coming and called for evasive action. The Royal Fighters of Megapolis has assembled an attack squad and they were all armed with bazookas and rocket launchers. They were the strongest weapons they had after all and hopefully it would be enough to destroy Eggman's deadly tank. As the tank neared, the squad got ready to fire.

"Ok lads wait for it…" commanded Thomas "Wait for it…"

The tank's advance was nearing and nearing. Now it was only a mile away from the city.

"Ok lads…FIRE!" bellowed Thomas.

The squad obeyed and fired all their weapons at once. Rockets screamed loudly as they whizzed towards their targets. Eggman noticed this onslaught of rockets and took action. He aimed the Egg Tank's thirteen cannons and fired them. Most of the cannon blasts missed their targets but a few had hit the rockets before they could reach the tank. The rockets that weren't hit exploded into the Egg Tank. The tank was now engulfed with smoke as the rockets continued to rain down on it. Bunnie and Tails were watching the whole ordeal and their faces brightened.

"Oh that Thomas, he knows how to deal with situations like this." said Bunnie proudly.

"That tank can't possibly have survived that." said Tails "I bet Eggman's all in pieces!"

As for Thomas and the squad, they all cheered their heads off, certain that their attack had worked. Then suddenly the smoke lifted up into the air revealing…the Egg Tank standing there with hardly a scratch! The Royal Fighters stopped cheering and gasped with horror. Bunnie and Tails gasped too. All those rockets and Eggman's tank was still in prime condition!

"Oh mah stars!" screeched Bunnie.

"That thing's indestructible!" shrieked Tails "Now what do we do?"

"Attack it on the inside!" announced a voice from behind.

Tails turned around to see Sonic standing there. He had a large bump on his head but he looked just fine at least.

"Sonic!" cried Tails "Thank goodness you're awake!"

"I know." said Sonic "And I think I know how to destroy that thing. If we can get inside and attack it we might be able to destroy it that way."

"But how do we get IN the tank?" questioned Bunnie.

"Thomas and his boys will likely be keeping him busy so I'll just sneak on to the top of that turret, open the hatch and bingo I'm in." said Sonic "Come one, we haven't a moment to lose!"

Sonic charged off whereas Bunnie and Tails took flight after him. Meanwhile, Thomas and the attack squad reloaded their weapons and fired them again. However the Egg Tank just kept on moving forward, ploughing straight through the rain of rockets. The rockets were slowly beginning to dent the tank's armour, but not fast enough. To make matters worse, the Royal Fighters were losing ammo and fast. They would have run out of ammo by the time they did any more damage to the tank. Eggman fired the tank's cannons at the city the tank was heading towards. The tank's cannons blasted every building they were aimed at. The blasted buildings began to burn and crumble to the ground. Smaller buildings were merely blasted to bits. Thomas began to get worried and ordered the squad to fall back. The squad obeyed him and fled the battle. They were hopelessly losing so there wasn't much point putting up a fight. Eggman laughed at the retreating fighters and continued his onslaught on the city. While he was doing that, Sonic leapt up onto the back of the Egg Tank and headed up to the gun turret with Tails and Bunnie following him. Sonic reached the gun turret and found the hatch. He opened it and leapt inside. He found himself inside the tank's control room. Eggman heard Sonic land inside and turned around to see him standing there, smirking confidently.

"Oh of all times, you have to show up now don't you?" he grumbled.

"Yeah." said Sonic "Now stop what you're doing or I'll smash this tank from the inside out!"

"I will not stop what I'm doing!" snarled Eggman, reaching behind himself and pressing a button on the control pad "I will stop you from stopping me instead!"

A Diamond Glass case descended from above and closed around Sonic. The blue hedgehog was now trapped like a rat. Sonic grumbled to himself and sat down.

"Jeez, you're much better prepared then before aren't ya?" he muttered.

Eggman just smiled tauntingly at him.

"The best villains plan in advance you know." he sneered, turning back to the tank's controls so he could continue firing at Megapolis.

As for Bunnie and Tails they peered down the hatch and noticed Sonic trapped in the glass case. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and aimed at the control pad.

"Careful Bunnie." said Tails cautiously.

"Ah know sugah." hissed Bunnie.

She fired her cannon. The blast whizzed straight above Eggman's head and hit the control pad. The controls exploded in his face. Eggman shielded his face from the explosion. After the explosion finished, Eggman stared in horror at the control pad. There was a huge black hole in the centre of it and huge chunks had been blasted out of it. The tank wouldn't be doing anything now. Bunnie cheered with victory and then leapt into the control room with Tails. Eggman turned around and saw them. Sonic did the same and smiled at them.

"You two should win the noble prize for "Best Dramatic Timing"!" he sniggered.

Bunnie giggled with him. Eggman began to get mad.

"You Mobian miscreants really make things hard for me don't you?" he snarled "Alonzo, get them!"

Alonzo obeyed and lunged at Tails and Bunnie. But all Bunnie needed to do was point her arm cannon at Alonzo and the cowardly servant bot stopped in his tracks and backed away fearfully. Bunnie then changed her arm back to normal. She grabbed the glass case Sonic was trapped in and wrenched it off the ground, freeing Sonic.

"There you go sugar-hog!" she cried.

"Thanks Bunnie." said Sonic, turning to Eggman "Now will you give up Egghead?"

Eggman grumbled to himself and then put his hands up.

"I surrender." he said reluctantly.

"That's better." sneered Sonic "Now, how are you building robots at great speeds and therefore overwhelming the Royal Fighters here?"

"I have a super fast production line." explained Eggman "It can build robots faster then you can run."

"Is that so?" sneered Sonic "Well then, you can take us back to your base so we can destroy it!"

"No I can't." snorted Eggman "The controls are busted!"

"Well use a different vehicle then!" yelled Sonic.

"OK then!" Eggman yelled back "I have my Egg mobile in the back of the tank, I'll activate it right now."

But instead of doing that, he pulled out a small device and pressed it. Two small spheres with gun barrels descended from the ceiling and pointed at Sonic, Tails and Bunnie. Before anyone could react the spheres fired a painful electromagnetic pulse (EMP for short) shot at them. The three fighters screamed in pain and then collapsed to the floor. Eggman roared with laughter.

"You fell for my trap you foolish heroes!" chortled Eggman "I've got

you all out cold and by the time you wake up, you'll be in my base, waiting to be roboticized!"

"Nice one sir." applauded Alonzo "But how do we get back home since the control pad's destroyed?"

"I installed a teleporter in this tank." explained Eggman "We can just warp ourselves home."

And with that he pressed a button on the wall. The tank glowed very brightly and then vanished in one bright yellow flash…

Footnotes:

*** See the previous story for more**

**** See stories 3-4 for Sonic and Tails' first encounter**

***** See story 2**

****** See stories 3-4 (again) for Eggman's explosive ending to his bases**

Under Pressure

Story 7: Under Pressure

The empty hangar bay of Eggman's base was filled with a bright light as the Egg Tank materialized into place. After the Egg Tank finished materializing, Eggman ran out of the tank while Alonzo trailed after him, carrying the unconscious Sonic, Tails and Bunnie Yes, Alonzo does all the carrying for Eggman doesn't he?). Eggman headed to the roboticizer room so he could prepare the three captives for roboticization. He had to do it quickly before they managed to wake up so Eggman began doing everything as fast as he could. Alonzo finally made it to the room and dropped the Mobians on the floor. The exhausted robot collapsed in a heap.

"Just because puff! I'm the servant bot around here wheeze! I have to carry just about everything!" puffed Alonzo "I really hate this injustice!"

"Oh shut up you metallic moron!" growled Eggman "And help me get the roboticizer ready! Those fools will be waking up any moment now!"

"Yes sir." mumbled Alonzo as he dragged the three Mobians towards their cages.

However Sonic had started coming around as Alonzo dragged him, Tails and Bunnie towards the cages. He had finally woken up and noticed what was going on. Sonic then got into a spin-dash and broke out of Alonzo's grasp. The startled butler-bot fell flat on his face. Dr. Eggman heard Alonzo falling on the floor and turned around to see Sonic, awake and at the ready.

"Oh for the love of robots!" grumbled Eggman "Of all times Sonic had to awake!"

"I guess I just got lucky." sneered Sonic "Now if you don't mind I'll be juicing out of here with Bunnie and Tails right now."

"Oh I don't think you will!" retorted Eggman.

Just as he said that, a huge swarm of robots stomped into view and blocked the doorway. They aimed their weapons at Sonic, desperate to fire at him.

"Do you think you'll be able to smash your way through that?" taunted Eggman "I think I have too many robots for you to cope with!"

"There's no such thing as too many for me to cope with." gloated Sonic.

And with that he spin-dashed straight into the first robot. He hit the robot so hard the robot's optics popped out. Sonic then started ploughing his way through several more robots as he continued spin-dashing. Unfortunately that's where his luck ended. He spin-dashed straight into a giant robot's open hand but the robot was stronger then Sonic was and the robot smashed him straight into the ground. Sonic tried to get up but the giant robot seized him and held him tightly. Sonic squirmed in the robot's grasp but the robot was just too strong. Then the robot marched into the roboticizer room and put Sonic in the glass cage. Alonzo put Tails and Bunnie in the other cages just as they were about to wake up. When they did, they realized the situation they were in now. Eggman hooted with laughter.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho! How did that feel Sonic?" cackled Eggman "I built a robot strong enough to take you out!"

"You just got lucky that time Egg-head!" snorted Sonic "Once I get out of here you won't be so lucky!"

"There won't BE a next time!" sneered Eggman "Because I'm going to roboticize you and your two friends right now!"

He ran over to the control pad and began pressing buttons. The monitor displayed a screen saying "Roboticizer ready." Eggman beamed and then pressed the red button marked "Activate". The glass cages containing Sonic, Bunnie and Tails began to glow brightly. Electricity sparkled and surrounded the tops of the cages.

Tails began to panic whereas Sonic just merely grumbled.

"That's the second time I'm almost gonna get roboticized*!" he moaned "Either Eggman's getting better or I'm losing my touch! Oh well I'll just break out the same way I did the first time!"

And with that he spin-dashed straight into the floor of the cage. But he didn't smash through it like before; he merely hit it and hurt himself. Sonic sat against the glass, his eyes spinning around and his head throbbing.

"Gosh, one of these days I'm gonna get a migraine!" he slurred.

Eggman just laughed at him. "I know you'd try that again Sonic so I made the floor of the cages with an extra layer of titanium so it's even harder to smash!" he explained "By the time you do smash through it, you'll be roboticized!"

Sonic groaned. That Eggman had finally got him this time. He was doomed, he was dead, he was going to spend the rest of his life as nothing more then a mindless savage killer robot under Eggman's control. Same with Tails and Bunnie was going to end up with more metal parts then before. Speaking of Bunnie, for some reason she aimed her fist at the floor as if she was about to punch it. Bunnie had an idea of sorts but she wasn't sure if it was going to work. The cages glowed ever brighter as the roboticizing process continued. It was now or never. Bunnie activated the telescoping feature on her robotic arm and hit the floor. However Bunnie's arm continued telescoping and since her fist was already embedded in the floor, she ended up pushing herself up into the roof of the cage. She hit it so hard and so fast the cage was torn away from its place and Bunnie flew straight up. Eggman's moustache flopped down. He began to gibber stupidly in disbelief. Bunnie landed on the floor with a thud. The cyborg rabbit got up, groaning.

"Well I'm amazed that worked!" she said weakly "But ah wish it weren't so painful!"

"Alonzo get her before she rescues Sonic and Tails!" roared Eggman.

Alonzo decided to ignore Eggman and not do anything as he knew Bunnie would destroy him if he tried to manhandle her. Bunnie smirked at Alonzo's cowardice and then tore Sonic's cage away from the floor. Then she did the same to Tails' cage.

"Jeez!" sniggered Sonic "That's the second time I've been saved by you Bunnie**! You must be on a roll or something!"

"Ah think I'm just amazing." said Bunnie modestly.

Eggman's face went purple with rage. He leapt up and down in such a comical fit of anger he looked like he was having a seizure. He was so angry steam was coming out of his ears. Alonzo knew that Eggman was probably going to use him as a punching bag in a moment so he silently crept away. Eggman stopped throwing a fit and yelled.

"THAT'S THE LAST STRAW! NO MORE MR. NICE GUY! ROBOTS KILL THESE CRETINS ONCE AND FOR ALL!"

The robots outside the room all obeyed and marched in one by one. The circled the three Mobians and aimed their weapons at them. The average person probably would be frightened to death at this point, but Sonic wasn't, he just remained as calm as ever.

"What do we do Sonic?" whimpered Tails.

"This!" cried Sonic.

He then ran around in a circle at top speed. He was running so fast he began to create a huge whirlwind. The whirlwind began to get faster and faster and stronger and stronger. Then without warning Eggman's robots were all blown away like leaves in the wind. Some flew out the doorway and some flew straight into the wall. The giant robot flew into the wall and smashed straight through it! Even Eggman got blown away and he landed straight into a chair. But the chair was on wheels so he wheeled backwards and hit the wall with a thud. Sonic stopped running around and halted. He couldn't help but laugh at what he just did.

"Now that's what I call a whirlwind!" he chortled "Those poor robots

didn't know what hit them!"

"Now let's get outta here before they get up." said Tails eagerly.

"Nuh uh Tails, we've got a robot production line to smash first." noted Sonic "Because if we don't, Eggman will overwhelm us all if he makes armies as big as that at such a fast rate."

"Well let's get to it sugah-hog!" cried Bunnie.

Sonic dashed out of the room with Tails and Bunnie following closely behind. Sonic had no idea where the production facility was but he was determined to find it and put an end to Eggman's scheme. Since Sonic could run at supersonic speeds he just ran in one room, observed it to see if it was the right one or not and then ran back out to look in another one all in one go. He found a silver door edged with warning stripes and there was a red light above it. This might be the production chamber so Sonic decided to have a look in it.

Rather then spin-dashing it down as he had hurt his head one time too many he just pressed a button on the keypad next to the door. The door opened. Sonic wondered into the room with Tails and Bunnie behind him. They saw a huge machine with treadmills and slopes that led into it. Various bits of metal slid down the slope and into the machine. And seconds later a fresh new Eggman robot appeared on the treadmill and taken out to make room for the next one. Three robots had been made in a matter of seconds. This was definitely the robot production room.

"Would you look at that?" said Sonic.

"The speed it's making those robots at is incredible!" gasped Tails "How on Mobius is it able to do that?"

"That Eggman's one heck of a builder ain't he?" said Bunnie.

"I'll admit it, he is one evil genius." said Sonic "But I'm not letting him get away with this. We're gonna tear that machine down piece by piece!"

"I'll do the honours since ah have the best weapon for this occasion." said Bunnie, deploying her arm cannon.

She pointed it straight at the robot making machine and blasted it. The machine halted its work and exploded into showers of debris. Fire and smoke billowed out of the destroyed machine. Sonic smirked with triumph.

"Nice one Bunnie." he applauded "That'll slow Eggman down for a while."

"Thanks Sonic." said Bunnie "Now should we go and destroy Eggman's darn tank?"

"That sounds like a good idea." said Sonic "That tank's a nightmare to battle and it already destroyed a small part of Megapolis City so why not?"

"If only we knew where it was." muttered Tails.

"No probs, I'll just run everywhere until I find it." said Sonic, dashing off in a flash.

In a matter of minutes, Sonic ran into ten different rooms before finally finding the Egg Tank, parked in the hangar bay waiting to be used again. It had been damaged to the point of needing extensive repairs but if they didn't destroy it now Eggman would repair the tank and send it out to destroy Megapolis City.

"Bunnie, Tails, I've found the tank!" Sonic called out to them.

Tails flew over to where Sonic was whereas Bunnie just took the long way on foot since she couldn't fly due to the damage done to one of her feet earlier. They walked into the hangar bay with Sonic, admiring the Egg Tank with awe.

"I will give Eggman credit, it is an impressive machine." said Tails.

"Agreed." said Sonic "But it's going to the scrap yard before it does anymore damage to Megapolis."

"Y'know if the controls weren't dead*** we could probably steal the darn thing and give it to the Royal Fighters." suggested Bunnie "It would be an excellent weapon."

"Yes it would." agreed Sonic "But we don't know how to drive it and I don't think we could fix it either because we wouldn't know how to fix it up so it's pretty useless to us."

"OK then." said Bunnie "Let's just destroy it and get outta here before Eggman catches us."

Sonic and Bunnie leapt onto the tank's turret and opened the hatch. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and fired in as many places as she could. The inside of the tank burst into flames and began to emit small explosions. Due to how much damage had been caused to the interior of the tank, the whole thing was going to explode in a matter of minutes. Sonic and Bunnie leapt off the tank and ran for it. Tails flew after them as fast as he could. They all charged out of the hangar bay and waited for the killer explosion. Then without warning the whole room erupted into flames as the giant tank exploded into smithereens. The explosion was so powerful it had blown a massive hole in the side of Eggman's base. Smoke billowed out of it. Sonic and the others saw this as their golden opportunity to escape so they ran for it. However the smoke was very thick and they couldn't see very well. The Mobians covered their mouths to prevent smoke getting into their lungs as that would cause a lot of problems. Visibility was terrible but Sonic was determined to get out of Eggman's base so he ran on with his friends behind him. Then, at last, they managed to escape the clouds of smoke and into the open fresh air. They uncovered their mouths and breathed in deeply to clear out their mouths.

"Cough! we made it!" spluttered Sonic.

"Yes we did." coughed Tails "Cough! I don't think I wanna go through that again!"

"Well at least we destroyed Eggman's tank." said Bunnie brightly "And we've saved Megapolis from more danger."

"I bet Eggman will be back though." noted Sonic "But not for a while. Let's go and meet Thomas and give that old tiger the good news."

And with that he carried Bunnie in his arms and ran off with Tails flying after him.

As for Dr. Eggman he was livid to the bone to see his precious base in ruins. His production facilities had been blasted to tiny bits but worse then that his glorious tank had been completely obliterated. That tank was the strongest thing he had and now it was gone, he was back to square one. It was so unfair! And he was winning against those stupid fighters too!

"Alonzo!" growled Eggman.

"Yes sir?" squeaked Alonzo, trundling up to him nervously.

Eggman said nothing and simply punched Alonzo in the face. He loved to let his anger out on his servant bot after all.

"That insolent hedgehog has vanquished my glorious tank!" roared Eggman "It's time to bring in the backup plan!"

"At once sir." droned Alonzo dopily.

Alonzo pulled out a remote device from his side compartment and pressed a button. Outside of Eggman's base, the ground began to shake. Then the ground began to crack like an egg. Then the ground erupted into showers of sand and rocks. Something was rising out of the ground. And that thing was…another Egg Tank! It was exactly the same as the first one from the thirteen cannons to the paint scheme. Eggman knew this would happen so he built a secondary Egg Tank and hid it underground so no one would find it. Now it was out in the open, waiting to be put into action. Eggman and Alonzo ran out of the base and up to the new tank. They climbed up to the tank's colossal gun turret and opened the hatch. They leapt inside and got to the controls immediately. The tank whirred and roared into life and then began to move from where it had risen from. It trundled nosily through the dunes as it headed to its designated target: The city of Megapolis.

"I bet Sonic will never see this coming!" jeered Eggman "I am full of surprises after all!"

Meanwhile, Sonic, Tails and Bunnie had returned to Megapolis and

were met with cheers and congratulations from the relieved Royal Fighters and Thomas Tiger. Sonic had explained everything that had happened and was certain everything was going to be alright now. Thomas was impressed with all this.

"Well, I can easily see why they call you the Hero of Mobius." said Thomas "Thanks to you, Eggman will be slowed down and we'll be able to push him back and finally defeat him."

"Thanks Tommy." said Sonic "However I wouldn't have done it without Bunnie Rabbot, she's the one who destroyed the tank and production lines. She's the real hero of the day."

"Aw shucks." said Bunnie, blushing.

"Well congratulations to you too Miss Rabbot." said Thomas, shaking her hand "No wonder his majesty King Acorn himself sent you over to help us. You've been a big help to us all."

"You're welcome Field Marshal." said Bunnie modestly.

"Now Eggman's forces have been repelled, we can set up our next attack and strike back at him as hard as we can!" declared Thomas "Let's get ready chaps! That Eggman is going to get kicked out of Megapolis once and for all!"

The fighters cheered and ran off to ready their weapons for the next battle.

"All in a day's work eh Tails?" said Sonic happily.

"I'll say." said Tails "That Eggman's getting good but we've still managed to beat him back. If we keep our best efforts up we'll hopefully kick him out of Mobius once and for all."

"I look forward to that day." sighed Sonic.

Then suddenly Bunnie shrieked at the top of her voice. She startled Sonic so much he almost jumped out of his fur. He ran up to the cyborg rabbit.

"What's up Bunnie?" asked Sonic.

"Th-th-there's another t-t-tank c-c-coming!" said Bunnie shakily.

Sonic looked in Bunnie's direction and got the same shock as she did. There, in the distance, slowly coming towards them was the Egg Tank looking as menacing as ever. Sonic's quills straightened.

"WHAT?" he cried "I thought we destroyed it!"

"We did destroy it." noted Tails "That Eggman obviously had a second one hiding somewhere."

"That Eggman sure knows how to surprise us all doesn't he?" muttered Sonic "Oh well, we'll just destroy it again!"

"How are we gonna do that sugar-hog?" asked Bunnie.

"The same way we destroyed the first one." said Sonic "Now let's go!"

Sonic charged off as fast as his feet could carry him. Tails flew after him. Bunnie just ran after the two boys since one of her feet had been damaged and rendered her unable to fly. Meanwhile, the Egg Tank continued to hurtle towards the city. As the tank neared its target, Eggman continued to laugh as he pictured himself opening fire on Megapolis. He even pictured Sonic's shocked expression when he found out he had another tank. However Eggman didn't have anything to laugh about anymore because his radar was picking up three oncoming life forms. They were, no doubt, Sonic, Tails and Bunnie. Eggman grumbled to himself.

"It really makes me wonder how that miserable hedgehog always manages to see me coming!" moaned Eggman.

"Well don't you think it points to the fact the Egg Tank is so unbelievably huge anyone can see it from miles away?" scoffed Alonzo.

Um…yeah that works." mumbled Eggman "No matter, they couldn't do much to it before so let's give them a hard time again!"

And with that he opened fire. The tank's thirteen cannons blasted at the oncoming Mobians. Sonic dodged every shot with ease as he

was so fast. Bunnie activated her force field in order to defend herself whereas Tails just flew out of harm's reach. Sonic charged at the Egg Tank and then leapt into the air. He was aiming for the tank's turret so he could get inside and damage the interior again. Unfortunately Eggman saw it coming and raised one of the tank's cannons. The cannon hit Sonic and sent him hurtling into the ground face first. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and fired at the tank's treads as rapidly as she could. But like before, the blasts did no damage, they merely bounced off the tank's incredible armour. Eggman aimed one of the tank's cannons at Bunnie and fired. The blast hit the ground in front of her and sent her flying backwards. As for Tails, he flew behind the tank and landed behind the turret. He decided he was going to sneak his way inside the tank and luckily for him, the rear of the tank was a blind spot so Eggman wouldn't see him. Tails sneaked up to the hatch and carefully opened it. Then he snuck inside the tank. Meanwhile, Sonic had recovered and spin-dashed towards the tank again. He hit the tank but he only bounced off it since the tank's armour was too strong. Bunnie tried shooting the tank's treads again but Eggman fired at her. Bunnie managed to get out of the way in the nick of time. Eggman laughed at the Mobian's failed efforts.

"They try so hard but they fall just as harder!" sneered Dr. Eggman "My tank is invincible! They'll never be able to stop me!"

"And yet they managed to destroy your first tank." muttered Alonzo.

"Oh shut up Alonzo!" snarled Eggman "I'm trying to destroy those fools!"

As Eggman continued firing at Sonic and Bunnie, Tails tip-toed over to the main generator. It was a huge silver cube with a lightening bolt symbol on it. Tails figured that if he could short out the generator, the tank would probably explode or just merely power down. Tails whipped out a screwdriver and undid the bolts to one of the panels. After that Tails seized the panel and lifted it away from its place. Tails then pulled out a pair of scissors. He was going to try and cut some wires to see which ones would power the tank down if he cut them. Trouble was, Tails had no idea which ones were the right ones. Shrugging his shoulders, Tails just decided to cut every last wire. And he did just that. One wire he snipped gave him a

painful zap but the others he cut didn't do anything. After Tails cut the last wire, the tank made a loud power down noise. All its cannons stopped firing at Sonic and Bunnie and merely drooped down. Eggman was so shocked at what was happening he almost had a fit.

"W-w-what!" he cried "What in the world happened?"

"The tank's powered down sir!" cried Alonzo "I think someone's sabotaged the main generator!"

"That's right! I did!" announced Tails.

Eggman leapt out of his seat and saw Tails standing there. He growled so much he sounded like a tiger. He gritted his teeth so much they looked like they were about to crack.

"You had to go and ruin everything didn't you?" snarled Eggman.

"Well that's what you get for roboticizing my parents and destroying my village!" shouted Tails.

Then Sonic and Bunnie jumped into the tank and stood beside Tails.

"You've lost Eggman!" declared Sonic "Give up while you still can!"

"I won't give up but I will leave!" growled Eggman "I'll be back Sonic the Hedgehog! And I'll turn you all into mincemeat!"

And with that he pressed a button on a remote control he had and he elevated down through the floor. His Egg Mobile was under the tank and he had escaped into it. The Egg Mobile slid out from under the tank and flew away, leaving it to get destroyed. Seeing as Eggman had abandoned his weapon elevated down through the floor. His Egg Mobile was under the tank and he had escaped into it. Seeing as Eggman had abandoned his weapon of mass destruction, Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and prepared to fire until Sonic stopped her.

"Sonic? We can't let Eggman take this thing back or he'll destroy everything!" yelled Bunnie.

"He isn't getting it back." said Sonic "Because we're gonna give it to Thomas Tiger and the Royal Fighters so they can fight Eggman with it."

"Yeah, pity I just made a mess out of the generator." muttered Tails "But I could always fix it up so the tank can be used."

"Good idea Tails." said Sonic approvingly "By the way, thanks for saving our necks out there."

"You're a hero Tails!" cried Bunnie, hugging him.

"Y-you're welcome." said Tails modestly.

"Now let's get this thing fixed and ready for usage." said Sonic "I bet Eggman will be ticked to the bone when he sees his own weapon being used against him!"

Two days later, Tails had fixed the Egg Tank's generator and worked out how everything works. Thomas was very happy to have one of Eggman's deadliest weapons under Royal Fighter control and couldn't wait to use it for the first time. As of now, Sonic and Tails were preparing to leave since they weren't needed anymore.

"I suppose you two chaps will be off then." said Thomas.

"Yep. Off on a new adventure." said Sonic "And I can't wait for that!"

"Well the citizens of Megapolis wish you all the best and we hope to see you again soon." said Thomas, giving them a proud salute "Goodbye Sonic the Hedgehog."

"See ya Tommy." said Sonic, ready to juice off until someone stopped him. It was only Bunnie Rabbot.

"It was nice seeing ya'll again sugah." said Bunnie "Pity ya'll are off again."

"Well I'm never in the same place for too long." said Sonic "And I hope that tank helps you and Thomas win the battle against

Eggman's bolt buckets."

"Ah'm sure it will sugah-hog." giggled Bunnie "See ya'll."

"See ya around Bunnie." said Sonic "And good luck!"

And with that he charged off like a charging bull. Tails took flight and followed him as fast as he could. Bunnie and Thomas waved goodbye as Sonic sped out of Megapolis. After that, Thomas marched off, ready to prepare his troops for the next battle. Bunnie followed him. And yet she couldn't help wondering what Sonic was up to now…

Footnotes:

***Sonic almost got roboticized in story 4**

**** Bunnie saved Sonic from a trap in the previous story**

*****Bunnie destroyed the controls in the previous story**

Punch em up! Part 1

Story 8: Punch em up! Part 1

"So Sonic, where are we going now?" asked Tails as he and Sonic sped through the dunes.

"A place you'll find very unusual." explained Sonic "A place you'll probably find very interesting and surprising."

"What is it?" asked Tails eagerly.

Sonic snorted. "If I tell you, it won't be a very surprising place will it?" he snickered "You'll just have to wait until we get there!"

"OK." mumbled Tails.

Sonic and Tails had just finished helping Bunnie Rabbot and the Royal Fighters out in Megapolis* and now they were off on their next adventure. Sonic apparently knows an unusual place that Tails might find interesting. Tails wasn't pleased at the fact Sonic wasn't going to tell him what this place was but he decided to follow him and find out when they got there. He couldn't help but wonder what this fascinating place was…

"I hate that hedgehog! I hate, hate, HATE that hedgehog!" grumbled Eggman as he sailed through the air in his Egg Mobile.

"Well you quit saying that?" moaned Alonzo "That's all you've said for ten minutes straight!"

"Well that's how much I hate Sonic!" retorted Eggman "I could say those four words forever I hate him so much!"

Things hadn't been improving for Dr. Eggman since the disastrous battle of Megapolis that caused him to lose two Egg Tanks. As of now he was looking for his next base which for some reason he

couldn't remember where it was so he just hovered around place to place trying to jog his memory. After another two minutes, Eggman got angry and thumped the control pad in temper.

"WHERE IS THAT DAMN BASE?" he shouted at the top of his voice.

"In the outskirts of the Northern Border you turd!" snorted Alonzo rudely "Geez, how forgetful are you?"

Eggman seized Alonzo by the shoulders and held him up to his hideous face. His face contorted with rage.

"Do you want me to throw you out of the Egg Mobile?" snarled Eggman.

"No!" squeaked Alonzo fearfully.

"Well keep your stupid mouth shut or I'll scrap you worse then you can imagine!" roared Eggman, throwing him against the edge so hard Alonzo almost toppled over it and fell out of the Egg-Mobile.

Alonzo began cursing under his breath. He just couldn't stand Eggman when he got mad, you'd think he went to a school that teaches people how to get angry he has such a bad temper! Eggman set courses for the Northern Border on the Egg Mobile and set it to autopilot. The Egg Mobile then automatically began to fly off in a certain direction. Eggman just sat back and relaxed since he didn't need to control the Egg Mobile.

A few moments later, Dr. Eggman finally reached the Northern Border. The Northern Border was a small area that signalled where the end of Megapolis was in the North. On the other side of the border was an entirely new place. Eggman's base, which had been built by his robot minions, last month, was located on the very outskirts of the Northern Border. This base was small and cube shaped rather then large and domed shaped. Eggman landed his Egg Mobile at the base and walked inside. The first thing he did was slump in a chair in front of the computer monitors and begin plotting on his next scheme. Eggman was always plotting away like mad after all. Alonzo just stood beside him and watched him think.

"So, what's our next target master?" asked Alonzo.

"I'm thinking on that now." muttered Eggman "I'm not sure if I should help my robots out in another city or if I should target a smaller place, get some Mobians to roboticize and then unleash them in the cities to help my robots."

"After all we're dangerously low on roboticized Mobians sir." noted Alonzo "And Robians are very strong and powerful so they're a great help to us."

"Agreed." said Eggman.

Then Alonzo spotted something on the monitor.

"Hey master, what's that?" asked Alonzo, pointing at the monitor.

Dr. Eggman peered closely at what Alonzo was pointing at. The map of Mobius was displayed on the monitors and Alonzo was pointing at something he hadn't seen before. It looked like an island but it wasn't on water or anything, nor was it on the out skirts of the continent they were on now. This island was actually FLOATING a good few feet above the ground! There was even a huge crater where this floating island supposedly used to be before it floated. Eggman rubbed his eyes and stared at the monitor again. He wasn't seeing things; the monitor was showing him an actual floating island. Eggman's glasses almost fell off his big nose in surprise.

"Well grind my gears!" he exclaimed "A FLOATING island? How is that possible?"

"Well sir we don't we pay a visit to this floating island and find out?" asked Alonzo.

"Maybe we should." said Dr. Eggman "Get my Egg-Mobile ready; we're going to the floating island!"

"Yes sir!" said Alonzo proudly.

He zipped off as fast as he could to prepare Eggman's Egg-Mobile. Eggman stared at the monitor once again to admire the floating island. He stroked his moustache intently as he observed the island.

"How do you float island?" he murmured to himself "What secrets do you contain? Well I'll find the answers to those questions sooner or later…"

He cackled softly as he thought on what he would find on the island. He just hoped that Sonic wasn't going to show up and spoil everything yet again…

Meanwhile Sonic and Tails had finally left Megapolis behind and after a good few hours of running and flying reached the continent of Downunda. Downunda was very much like the continent of Australia on Planet Earth and just as hot. The whole place seemed like it was baking under the incredible warmth of the sun. All the residents of Downunda spoke in Australian accents too. Sonic and Tails finally stopped to rest and they fell flat on their bottoms.

"Phew! What weather!" puffed Tails, wiping sweat off his forehead "I don't think I've ever been in a place as steaming hot as this before!"

"That's because Downunda is the hottest place on Mobius Tails." explained Sonic "They have on average 300 days of sunshine."

"Wow!" cried Tails "300 days of this weather? The guys who live here must feel like it's a summer holiday all the time!"

"By the way Tails, Y'know that interesting thing I wanted to show you?" said Sonic.

Tails nodded his head.

"Well look over there." said Sonic, pointing in a certain direction.

Tails peered in Sonic's direction. Then his eyes widened so much he thought they would pop out of his head. The thing Sonic was pointing at was a huge floating island! An actual floating island! The island floated at about hundred feet or more above the ground! And on the ground was an enormous crater where the island supposedly used to be before it began floating. Tails rubbed his eyes and stared again. This wasn't a dream, he was actually looking at a floating island! But how was that possible? How was this island floating

when it should be on the ground?

"Well, you impressed?" asked Sonic.

"That's incredible!" cried Tails "That is the most amazing thing my eyes have ever seen! An island that floats!"

"I know you'd be interested." said Sonic "Just wait till you see what's ON the island."

"On? Are we gonna go on the island itself?" asked Tails.

"Sure." chuckled Sonic "You'll love it!"

"But how do we get on the island?" asked Tails.

"Well you could fly us up there." noted Sonic "Anyone who can't fly usually uses a warp ring. Not many people visit Angel Island though, especially since this war with Eggman began."

"OK then." said Tails.

He held Sonic tightly by the waist and got his tails spinning. Then the little fox took off into the sky and headed up towards the floating island above him.

Meanwhile Dr. Eggman and Alonzo had arrived to Angel Island moments ago and began their exploration of the island. Eggman had brought one of his hi-tech monitors with him to see if anything of interest was nearby. He and Alonzo were strolling through a thick jungle heavy with trees, low hanging vines, tall grass and hot air. Alonzo was carrying a jungle knife and constantly slashing this and that to clear the way whilst Eggman monitored his handheld monitor. As Alonzo slashed another tree branch out of the way he sighed loudly.

"I hate jungles." he groaned "They're too thickly grown and too hot."

He felt himself. He felt like he was on fire. After all metal heated a lot easier then anything else so Alonzo was bound to be hot all over.

"Will you stop grumbling and get a move on you lazy lead pile!" ordered Eggman, clearly frustrated with his sagging minion.

"I am getting a move on you fat lump of lard!" retorted Alonzo "You'll just have to be patient…"

His ranting was interrupted by a faint beeping noise coming from Eggman's monitor. The fat doctor peered at it. The monitor was telling him a huge source of power was coming from somewhere. It was directing him to the left.

"This monitor is picking up something of great power nearby." said Dr. Eggman "Follow me."

He turned to the left and darted through the trees with Alonzo whizzing after him as fast as his wheels would let him on this kind of terrain. Luckily for the two nincompoops the trees were beginning to thin out so they must be bearing the end of the jungle. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo both lunged through a bush and found themselves out of the jungle and into a clearing. There wasn't much around save for a staircase that led up to something. Eggman peered at his monitor. The thing it had detected was on the staircase. Eggman and Alonzo headed to the shrine and gazed up it. At the top of the stairs, glowing a brilliant green glow was a huge emerald. It was enormous, even bigger then most Mobians and even Eggman himself. This truly was a sight for some. Eggman looked at his monitor again. The thing it was detecting was the giant emerald at the top of the stairs.

"So the island has a giant emerald does it?" said Dr. Eggman, admiring it's beauty "I wonder what that emerald's there for? No matter, it's mine now! Finders keepers after all."

"But how on Earth can we carry that giant thing?" squeaked Alonzo "It's bound to be too heavy!"

"Don't worry my dear Alonzo." said Eggman brightly "My Egg-Mobile is equipped with big strong arms. It'll be plenty strong enough to carry the emerald."

And with that he pulled a remote out of his pocket and pressed the button. The Egg-Mobile started flying from its parking space and

towards Eggman's location. The Egg-Mobile reached Dr. Eggman's location and the evil doctor hopped into the pilot's seat. He deployed the machine's arms. Then the Egg-Mobile reached forward and seized the giant emerald with its huge hands. Then, with a tremendous strain, the Egg-Mobile wrenched the emerald free of its housing place. Bits of rock rained down onto where the emerald once was. Eggman cackled happily.

"I bet this emerald is full of great power!" he chortled "And if it is I'll doom this planet once and for all!"

And with that he began to fly away from the island with the emerald in tow.

"Oy master! You forgot about me!" cried Alonzo, zooming after him.

Immediately after they left, Sonic and Tails landed on the island. Sonic's ear twitched as he heard the sound of jet fumes fading away.

"Is that jet fumes?" he wondered aloud.

"Maybe someone's going away for a time." suggested Tails.

"Perhaps." said Sonic, not really sure if that was the case "By the way, great view eh?"

Tails looked into the distance. From this height, the view was incredible. He could see hundreds of miles into the distance.

"It's fantastic!" cried Tails "I can see all the way to Soleanna and Kingdom Valley from up here!"

"I knew you'd like Angel Island." said Sonic happily.

"By the way Sonic, why does the island float?" asked Tails "Why can't it be in the sea down below like all the other islands?"

"Well if my memory serves me well, Angel Island was almost hit by a comet but the echidnas found a way to raise it up off the ground so they did and saved the whole place from total devastation." explained Sonic "They have a so called Master Emerald to keep the

island floating. Good thing too, it's not safe back on the ground with Dr. Eggman and his robotic minions of death destroying everything."

"I see." said Tails.

"By the way, if I remember this place as well as I think I do, the Master Emerald should be around here." thought Sonic, looking in several directions. "Ah there it is." he suddenly said.

He had spotted the shrine. He and Tails ran over to it only to find out something was wrong. The Master Emerald wasn't there. Sonic zipped up to the top of the shrine only to find a massive hole where the emerald had once been. He scratched his head in thought.

"Well that's strange, the Master Emerald's gone." said Sonic with concern.

"If the Master Emerald's gone and it was used to keep the island afloat…" said Tails "Then does that mean the island…?"

"…will fall back to the ground." Sonic finished for him "Yes it will. And at the moment it's hovering over the ancient ruins of Albion so if it falls the ruins will be crushed and this island, as well as everything on it may get severely damaged."

"We've gotta find it!" cried Tails "How long do we have until the island falls?"

"Not sure." said Sonic "But I'm sure we'll find the emerald before…"

Then suddenly something leapt on Sonic from behind and tackled him to the ground. Then Sonic and the attacker tumbled down the staircase and hit the ground. Tails gasped in fright as Sonic and the attacker began brawling with one another. The attacker threw punches whereas Sonic threw kicks. Then Sonic kicked the attacker off him and panted. The attacker was a red echidna with spiked gloves and purple eyes. The echidna wore red shoes with a yellow stripe on them and had a white sideways crescent on its chest. The echidna looked very angry too.

"OK now we've stopped slugging it out I'd like to ask a few questions!" said Sonic crossly "What is your problem hothead?"

"What's my problem?" bellowed the echidna "I have no problem; it's you who has the problem hedgehog!"

"What the hell do you mean?" demanded Sonic angrily.

"I mean you and your foxy friend decide to just waltz onto my island and steal the Master Emerald!" snarled the echidna.

Sonic couldn't believe his ears. This stranger was accusing HIM of stealing? Did this echidna have a sight problem or something?

"Listen knucklehead, If I've stolen your Master Emerald (which I haven't) then why isn't it here with me?" yelled Sonic.

The echidna paused and thought for a moment but he clenched his fists.

"You must have hidden it!" he growled "Because when I left, the emerald was where it's supposed to be and when I return it's gone and you two are here!"

"Well let me clear something up redhead!" said Sonic crossly "I would never steal anything, especially since I know how important the Master Emerald is to the island!"

"You cannot fool me with your lies!" snarled the echidna "Now tell me where the emerald is or I'll…"

"Stop it!" yelled Tails "Let's settle this a little calmer shall we?"

Sonic and the echidna glared at each other but they resisted the urge to punch each other's lights out.

"Thank you." said Tails, smiling "Now sir, can you tell us your name and why the Master Emerald is so important to you?"

"The name's Knuckles." said the echidna, flexing his muscles and showing Tails his spiked gloves "And I'm the guardian of the Master Emerald."

"Well if you're the guardian then why weren't you here when we arrived?" asked Tails.

"Guardians have to have their breaks from time to time." explained Knuckles "I requested a friend of mine to take over but he's not arrived yet it seems."

"I see." said Tails "And to prove our innocence, me and Sonic will find your emerald and put it back where it belongs. I'll stake my life on it since you don't trust us the slightest."

"Very well twin-tailed fox." said Knuckles "You and Sonic have until the island falls to find the Master Emerald. Should you fail, I'll declare you two thieves and then I'll hunt you both down and kill you!"

He shoved his fist in Tails' neck threateningly. Tails gulped.

"O-o-ok then." he whimpered.

Knuckles stormed up the staircase and looked out to see if he could spot anything. Sonic glared at Knuckles and then stormed off himself. Tails followed him in a hurry.

"I'd like to see that Knuckles try and finish me off!" grumbled Sonic "Not that he could anyway."

"If we find that emerald, Knuckles won't need to finish us off." noted Tails "But how do we find that emerald?"

"The Master Emerald is huge and green and glows brightly, you'd have to be blind to miss it." explained Sonic "The only trouble is knowing where it is."

"Which we don't." said Tails "We'll have to look hard for it."

"Agreed." said Sonic "And I bet that no good Dr. Eggman stole the Master Emerald, it couldn't be anyone else."

"If Eggman stole it, he must be long gone now." wailed Tails.

"Not exactly." said Sonic "He might still be here, loading it onto his Egg-Mobile or any of his crazy robots."

"Well let's go find him then." said Tails "I'll look from up above."

"And I'll search on foot." said Sonic "OK let's go!"

And he charged off like a whizzing arrow. Tails never got enough of that sensation he felt when Sonic charged off. Then Tails twisted his trademarks around one another and took to the skies. He was determined to find the Master Emerald, especially as his and Sonic's lives were at stake.

"Are we at the Northern Border yet Alonzo?" asked Dr. Eggman for the millionth time.

"No master we are not at the stupid Northern Border yet!" snapped Alonzo "Will you be flipping patient?"

Alonzo and Eggman had left Angel Island and were heading back to the base with the Master Emerald. They were taking longer then they thought they would. Eggman was desperate to get back to the base as quickly as he could as he feared Sonic would be on his trial and ready to snatch the Master Emerald off of him. Dr. Eggman stared longingly at the giant gem in the Egg Mobile's giant metal hands.

"Isn't that giant emerald a beauty?" said Dr. Eggman.

"It is sir." agreed Alonzo "And it's all yours."

"Yes it is." sneered Dr. Eggman "I just wonder how much power this thing contains. Enough to wipe out my enemies I hope."

Then suddenly the Egg-Mobile's arms exploded! Someone had sneaked a bomb on either arm and they had just gone off. The Egg-Mobile rocked about sharply and Eggman clutched the sides tightly to prevent himself from falling out. The Master Emerald plummeted to the ground where it would surely smash if it hit. But something caught the emerald before it could fall anymore. Eggman finally got the Egg-Mobile under control and growled loudly.

"Alright, I demand to know who dared to do that to the great me!" he roared.

"I did." came a very sexy feminine voice.

Eggman looked around for the voice and then saw something flying up to him with the Master Emerald tied up in rope. The flying thing was a bat wearing a skin-tight leather suit that came up to the chest. She wore a heart-shaped breastplate and white high-heel boots. She had teal make-up on her eyelids. Eggman glared at the bat with immediate hatred.

"Who are you batfink?" he snarled.

"I'm Rouge the Bat, but you can call me Rouge." said the bat smoothly "And thanks for saving me the trouble of stealing this glorious gem from that hot-headed echidna."

"That gem belongs to Dr. Eggman and you'll hand it over to him right now!" ordered Alonzo.

"No I will not hand over the gem." said Rouge "I'm taking it for my own since I'm a treasure hunter and I get whatever I want."

"Oh yeah, well I get whatever I want!" retorted Dr. Eggman "Now give me that giant emerald!"

"OK, here you go fat man!" cried Rouge.

Without warning she began to spin around, still holding the emerald by the ropes. She got closer and closer to Eggman until eventually the Master Emerald struck the Egg-Mobile and sent it flying through the air. The moment the Egg-Mobile disappeared from sight, Rouge smirked and flew away.

"What a stupid man." She said to herself "At least he saved me the trouble of stealing the Master Emerald. This gem will look so lovely in my collection."

Meanwhile Sonic and Tails had searched all over the island and hadn't found anything. Sonic screeched to a halt and Tails flew back down to the ground next to him.

"I don't think the emerald's on Angel Island anymore Sonic." said Tails sadly.

"That Eggman must have taken it away." said Sonic "You'll have to fly us down to the ground so we can began searching for the Master Emerald."

Then suddenly the whole island jerked like a plane in a storm. It felt like an earthquake to anyone on the island. Tails fell over on his bottom whereas Sonic fell forward onto his face.

"W-w-what's happening?" yelped Tails.

"I th-think the i-island's beginning to fall!" cried Sonic "We don't h-have much t-time left! The whole island's gonna plummet in a matter of moments!"

As for Knuckles, he had felt the jerk and began to worry.

"If those two don't recover the Master Emerald soon, my home is gonna fall to the ground." he said to himself "I hope they hurry up…"

Footnotes:

*** See the stories 6-7 for Sonic, Tails and Bunnie's tussle with Eggman in Megapolis**

Punch em up! Part 2

Story 9: Punch em up! Part 2

Tails flew off of Angel Island carrying Sonic and headed down below. Knuckles eyed them flying to the ground and scowled.

"The Master Emerald must be down below if that's where they're heading." he said to himself "Well I hope they find it down there or my island is doomed."

Then a rustling in the bushes was heard and out of them popped a maroon echidna in a ragged brown robe. Knuckles turned round to see him.

"Hey Knuckles!" said the echidna "Sorry I'm late, I got a bit lost in that stupid jungle. The island's jerking like mad for some reason."

"The Master Emerald's gone Garth." said Knuckles "A blue hedgehog named Sonic and a yellow twin-tailed fox are looking for it even though I think they're the ones who stole it."

"Really?" said Garth "I'm so sorry I didn't get to the Master Emerald in time to take over your position."

"It's alright." said Knuckles "That jungle does take a keen sense of direction to get through. Let's just hope that hedgehog and fox find the Master Emerald."

He and Garth stared down at the continent of Downunda, watching Sonic and Tails running off in search of the emerald.

"Look anywhere you can Tails, we MUST find that emerald before the whole island plummets and causes disaster!" cried Sonic.

"I am doing!" Tails cried back.

Sonic and Tails had no idea where to look for the Master Emerald so

they just decided to look anywhere they could. They searched all through Albion but had no such luck so now they headed to the small villages in the western part of Downunda. These villages weren't densely populated or choc-a-bloc full of buildings. Upon arrival at the villages, Sonic looked in any place he could find like in a house, behind a house, on a house, in a market anywhere, He startled a few pedestrians as he whizzed past at his supersonic speed. Tails continued searching from in the air, looking down on everything he flew over. Some pedestrians saw him flying overhead and murmured to one another about the strange sight of a flying fox. Tails ignored them and carried on searching. Then a brief twinkle of something shiny caught his eye. Tails looked to the right and saw something glowing faintly from inside a house. The house was rather small with two windows and a door. Tails flew down to the house and peered through the windows. His eyes widened and his jaw dropped. The room he was looking into was full to the brim of jewels, diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires and many more priceless gems. Tails almost fell to the ground in surprise. Who on Mobius owned all these jewels? And how did the owner get them all? Maybe the owner was a jewel thief and the jewels were all stolen. Regardless, Tails decided not to jump to conclusions and fly away.

But he stopped in his tracks when yet another sight came to him. A huge emerald was coming towards him. Was this the Master Emerald? Well Sonic had said it was a giant emerald and emeralds are green so it must be the Master Emerald. Tails even saw who was carrying it. We all know it's Rouge the Bat but Tails doesn't. He did however immediately assume the bat meant trouble so he hid in a nearby dumpster to spy on her. He opened the lid just a fraction so he could see what Rouge was doing. Rouge flew behind the house and put the Master Emerald down. Then she went into the house for a moment and came back out with a tarpaulin. Rouge went back behind the house and put the tarpaulin over the Master Emerald.

"That way no one will find you my delightful little gem." purred Rouge "Especially that stupid echidna. I'm so happy to have the world's biggest emerald in my jewel collection."

Tails frowned at what he heard. That bat must be on Eggman's side!

She stole the Master Emerald and is probably hiding it until Dr. Eggman arrives to pick it up! Rouge then flew away, laughing quietly to herself. Tails opened the dumpster and climbed quietly out, clutching his nose to block out the horrendous stench that was in the dumpster. Then he tip-toed over to the covered up Master Emerald. He grabbed the tarpaulin and yanked it off. The emerald's amazing glow almost blinded him. Sonic ran past the house but noticed a glow coming from behind and screeched to a halt. He ran back to the house and noticed that Tails had found the Master Emerald.

"Tails! You've found it!" cried Sonic.

"Yes I have." said Tails "And it wasn't Eggman who stole it, it was a bat woman in a leather outfit and white boots. She put the emerald here and covered it up so no one would see it."

"Bat woman?" repeated Sonic "Not familiar with any bat women but I bet this bat woman's on Dr. Eggman's side if she's the one who stole the Master Emerald in the first place."

"I had the same thought." said Tails "Now we've found the Master Emerald, let's get it back to Angel Island."

"I wish I had a warp ring." muttered Sonic "It would have made it so much easier to get it back up there."

"Well we're gonna have to carry it all the way back to the island." said Tails "I hope I'm strong enough."

"Good thing there's a rope around it." noted Sonic "Carry it by the rope."

Tails grabbed the rope and then started flying. He didn't get very far up though, the emerald was very heavy. Tails pulled and pulled as hard as he could. He managed to lift the Master Emerald about two feet off the ground but that was the most he could lift it. Sonic shook his head.

"You won't be able to keep that up for long." he said sadly "Tell you what, I'll carry the emerald but you keep hold of the rope to keep me stable in case I get wobbly."

"Good idea Sonic." said Tails.

Sonic walked under the emerald and grabbed it. He was now holding the huge gem above his head. Then Sonic ran off with Tails holding the Master Emerald's rope to keep him steady. They had to be extra quick though because Angel Island was beginning to plummet. Unfortunately Sonic didn't get far. A bomb appeared from nowhere and landed directly in front of him. Then it went off with a big bang, sending Sonic hurling through the air. Then the super speedy hedgehog landed flat on his back. Tails yelped in surprise and dropped the Master Emerald.

"Sonic! What happened?" he shrieked.

"Someone just bombed me!" grunted Sonic "And I'd like to know who it was!"

"It was me." said a feminine voice.

Sonic and Tails looked up to see Rouge the Bat flying towards them. She landed in front of them, batting her eyelids seductively at them.

"Who are you?" said Sonic.

"I'm Rouge the Bat." said Rouge "And you're stealing from me you naughty boys."

"We're not stealing anything bat lady!" yelled Tails "You're the one who's stealing around here!"

"Tails is right, you're stealing the Master Emerald and keeping it for yourself!" added Sonic "And you have the nerve to say we're stealing?"

"You caught me in the act true blue." said Rouge teasingly "But why do I care? I am a treasure hunter and a treasure hunter gets what a treasure hunter wants."

"Did you miss the part about Angel Island will plummet to the ground if the Master Emerald is gone?" cried Sonic "Doesn't that matter to you?"

"Nope." said Rouge "Angel Island is no concern of mine, only jewels are. If only that hot-headed echidna could see that."

"You know Knuckles?" said Tails.

"Of course I do, he's the Guardian of the Master Emerald and he's the one who guards it from me." said Rouge "I was going to try my next attempt at getting that gorgeous gem but some fat guy with a hideous moustache stole the Master Emerald and I stole it off of him."

"So Dr. Eggman DID steal the Master Emerald after all!" declared Sonic "Which reminds me, you're not on his side are ya?"

"Who me? Of course not!" snapped Rouge "I maybe a thief, but I'm no villain."

"Well if that's the case then stop being a villain and return the Master Emerald to where it belongs!" ordered Sonic.

"No, it's mine and that's that." said Rouge, flapping her wings and swooping towards the emerald "Bye, bye boys."

But before she could grab the rope around the Master Emerald, Tails flew in front of her and dropkicked her in the face. Rouge cried in pain and dived straight into the ground. She scraped across it for a few centimetres before stopping.

"Take that you selfish bat!" said Tails hotly.

He grabbed the rope that was tied around the Master Emerald and proceeded to lift the heavy gem off the ground. But before he could go anywhere Rouge attacked him with a screw kick move. Tails fell to the ground with the emerald in tow. Then Rouge seized the rope and carried the Master Emerald away, cackling in victory. But her victory was short-lived however because Sonic spin-dashed her from behind, causing her to drop the emerald. Rouge got angry and tried to kick Sonic but the blue hedgehog dodged and kicked her in the gut. Rouge tried another kick but Sonic ducked and came back up with a punch to the face.

"I don't usually hit women but in this case I'll make in exception!"

said Sonic.

Rouge growled and spun around into a screw kick attack. She struck Sonic directly in the chest. The poor hedgehog was sent hurtling backwards before coming to a halt with his back on the ground. Rouge tried another screw kick but Tails intervened with a charge. He hit Rouge in the side and sent the bat hurtling into the ground like a falling stone. The poor bat seemed to be out of commission for now. Tails grabbed the Master Emerald's rope and tried once again to carry it until suddenly a warp ring appeared from nowhere and out of it came none other then Knuckles the Echidna.

"Knuckles!" cried Tails.

"'Bout time you showed up." muttered Sonic "What brings you down here?"

"I saw you two slugging it out with Rouge so I thought I'd help out." said Knuckles "But you seem to have things under control now."

"We've got the Master Emerald back." said Tails, proudly presenting it to him "That nasty bat lady stole it."

"I should have known it was Rouge, she's always trying to steal the Master Emerald." sighed Knuckles "I offer my deepest apologies for suspecting you two."

"Apology accepted knucklehead." said Sonic. He and Knuckles shook hands. "Now let's get your shiny gem back up on Angel Island before the island plummets to the ground."

"I'll adjust the size of my warp ring so the Master Emerald will fit through." said Knuckles.

Knuckles activated the warp ring again only this time it grew to a much bigger size then before. It was so big you could fit a boulder through it. Knuckles carried the Master Emerald through the warp ring. The warp ring teleported him back to the shrine on Angel Island, where the Master Emerald had once been. He put the giant emerald back into its place. The emerald shone very brightly as it was put back in place. Then Angel Island stopped jerking about and

slowly falling. It rose back up and up until it was at exactly the same height it was before. Knuckles smiled proudly.

"Well that was a close one." he said "That Rouge has gone too far, next time I see her I'll be putting her on trial for this!"

"That would be an excellent idea." said Sonic "And I know a good place for her, the Mobian Police Department."

"Angel Island has a state-of-the-art prison camp." explained Knuckles "If we put her there, she'll never escape."

"Sounds cool." said Sonic "By the way Knuckles, would you care to help us on our struggle against Dr. Eggman?" he added, hoping Knuckles would say yes.

"You mean that fat guy with the moustache who's been attacking all the cities on Mobius?" asked Knuckles.

Sonic nodded.

"I would love to whup that guy for ya but I have too many responsibilities here." sighed Knuckles "I would happily help you fight Eggman but I don't think I could be by your side 24/7 knowing the Master Emerald's unguarded and the other guardians aren't as strong as I am."

"Fair enough." said Sonic "Say where's Tails?" he added.

He had noticed the yellow fox hadn't followed him through the warp ring. Then suddenly Rouge came through the warp ring holding a battered and bruised Tails in her hands. Sonic was livid with rage. He couldn't believe Rouge just did that to Tails. Knuckles was even angrier at the fact she showed up.

"Rouge, you showed up again." growled Knuckles "Now you'll face justice for your crimes against Angel Island!"

"No I won't handsome." said Rouge teasingly "You will give me that Master Emerald back or you won't see your foxy friend again."

"You let Tails go or I'll spin-dash your brains out!" snarled Sonic.

"Nah, ah, ah true blue." said Rouge "That's no way to speak to a lady. Now if you want Tails back you give me the Master Emerald."

"I will not let you have the Master Emerald and therefore, cause my home to fall to the ground!" yelled Knuckles "Do you even care how many lives are at stake if Angel Island falls?"

"Maybe." said Rouge sarcastically "But I'm no treasure hunter without the world's largest emerald so give it to me."

Then suddenly Rouge was hit from behind by a cannon blast and sent flying into the shrine with a sharp thump. Tails sailed towards Sonic and the blue hedgehog caught him in one big leap. Knuckles looked up to see what had hit Rouge and saw Dr. Eggman in his newly fixed Egg-Mobile. The mobile's arms were deployed and Eggman seized the Master Emerald with them. Then he wrenched it free off its spot and cackled dementedly.

"Gah ha, ha, ha, ha!" he chortled "Must be my lucky day! Well I'll be off now!"

"Oh no you don't!" snarled Knuckles, leaping up into the air.

He tried to punch the Egg-Mobile but Eggman swung the Master Emerald around and clobbered him. Knuckles hurtled into the ground. Sonic decided to help out with a spin-dash attack. Eggman dodged but Sonic managed to scrape one of the Egg-Mobile's shoulders. Then Eggman swung the Master Emerald around again and hit Sonic. Sonic skidded across the ground and almost fell over the edge of the island but he managed to grab on just in time. Eggman cackled in victory.

"Petty resistance." he snorted "Well, time to go."

"No way, that emerald's mine!" yelled Rouge, screw-kicking the Egg-Mobile from behind.

Dr. Eggman yelped in surprise and turned around to face Rouge.

"So you want clobbering batty? Then be my guest!" roared Eggman.

He raised the Egg-Mobile's arms and brought them down in a flash.

Rouge was hit smack in the face by the emerald and she hurtled into the ground like a falling stone. Then suddenly Knuckles lunged at the Egg-Mobile from behind and walloped the floating machine with one massive punch. Eggman gasped and the Egg-Mobile dropped the Master Emerald. Sonic caught it before it could smash into the ground. Then Rouge kicked Sonic in the back and snatched the emerald off of him. She tried to fly away but Knuckles caught her by the legs and pulled her to the ground. Rouge dropped the Master Emerald. Then Knuckles landed a punch to the gut on Rouge. That blow winded her. Knuckles ran over to the Master Emerald but before he could grab it, Eggman appeared and punched Knuckles away with his Egg-Mobile. Then Sonic spin-dashed into the Egg-Mobile to stop him grabbing the Master Emerald. Eggman got furious and activated the Egg-Mobile's weapons. Two cannons fried at Sonic and Knuckles. They dodged the blasts as Eggman fired at them wildly. Rouge had recovered and seeing her chance, decided to steal the Master Emerald while Sonic and Knuckles were occupied. Then suddenly she felt a sharp kick to the back of the head and Rouge toppled forward onto her face. Tails had recovered from Rouge's beating and he decided to save the Master Emerald before Dr. Eggman could steal it. As for Sonic and Knuckles, they were still under attack from Dr. Eggman. He kept shooting at them as madly as he could. Then Sonic ran under the Egg-Mobile and homing attacked it. Dr. Eggman jerked up and nearly fell over and out of the Egg-Mobile. Seeing his chance, Knuckles jumped up and smashed one of the Egg-Mobile's arms to bits with one powerful punch. The Egg-Mobile then fell to the ground. Eggman and Alonzo groaned in defeat. Sonic gave Knuckles a thumbs up sign.

"Nice punch there pal!" he said.

"Thank you." said Knuckles "Now let's finish this fat man off!"

"OK Egg-brain why do you want the Master Emerald?" asked Sonic.

"It contains high quantities of power and I will use that power to wipe you all out once and for all!" declared Dr. Eggman.

Knuckles clenched his fists and growled.

"You want to misuse the Master Emerald and use its power for evil?"

he roared "Well I'm not going to let you! You will leave Angel Island now!"

"I will Knuckles and I'm taking the Master Emerald with me." sneered Eggman "Alonzo, activate our secret weapon!"

"Yes sir." said Alonzo, pushing a button on the Egg-Mobile's control pad.

The sound of enormous wings flapping filled Sonic's ears. He and Knuckles turned around to see three large robotic bats. They were roughly the size of the Master Emerald and were purple in colour with gold accents here and there. Their eyes were green and their wingspans were huge. The middle bat grabbed the Master Emerald with its huge talons and lifted it off the staircase.

"Stop right there Eggman!" yelled Sonic.

He tried to charge at the bat bot but the other two bats opened their mouths and emitted a loud shrilling screech. It really hurt Sonic's ears. Poor Tails' ears were hurting from the horrible screeching too. Sonic dropped down on his knees, clutching his ears to block out the sound. The screeching was so piercing and so loud Sonic thought his ears would explode. The lead bat bot began to fly away with the Master Emerald in its talons. But it didn't get far. Rouge the Bat had recovered and managed to sneak away from the screeching bat bots and flew after the lead one. She screw-kicked it in the head, causing it to spin around madly. The bat-bot's head stopped spinning and then it decided to screech the same horrible loud screech the other two were emitting. It was worse for Rouge then it was for Sonic because bats have excellent hearing. She clutched her ears in agony as the bat bot continued screeching loudly. As for Sonic, Tails and Knuckles, they were still suffering from the bat-bot's onslaught of loud noises. Dr. Eggman, who was wearing earphones to block out the sound, crept away in his Egg-Mobile. He flew away from the island and up towards the lead bat bot.

"Fun's over boys, let's go home." announced Dr. Eggman.

The bat bots stopped screeching and flew after Eggman. Rouge recovered from the bat bot's ordeal and flew after them. Then she

screw-kicked the lead bat bot in the back. She went right through the robotic bat. The bat bot howled a robotic howl and then fell down to the ground. Rouge grabbed the Master Emerald and flew back to Angel Island.

"That'll teach you to try and imitate us bats!" scoffed Rouge.

Dr. Eggman had seen what had happened and ordered the other two bats to seize her. The two bat bots swooped after Rouge, their talons and fangs bared and ready for the kill. Rouge yelled in fright and flew towards Angel Island. The two bat bots followed her closely. Rouge flew towards the shrine and then flew over it just before she could hit it. One of the bat bots did the same but the other wasn't quite as fast and smashed straight into the shrine. The remaining bat bot then opened its mechanical jaws and emitted its horrible ear-splitting screech. Rouge cried in agony and let go of the Master Emerald to block her ears. The bat bot didn't notice and continued flying after her through the forest. Then suddenly Sonic showed up and spin-dashed the bat bot into pieces. Rouge sighed with relief.

"Thank you hot shot." she said "But why help little ol' me?"

"No special reason." Sonic said admittedly "Just felt like it."

Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman seized the opportunity to steal the Master Emerald while Rouge and Sonic were out of sight. However Knuckles appeared from nowhere and smashed the Egg-Mobile's other arm with his spiked fists. Then he punched the Egg-Mobile so hard it zoomed through the forest and over the edge of Angel Island. Eggman got it hovering again before he could plummet to the ground. He flew away from Angel Island, shaking his fists angrily.

"I hate echidnas now!" he yelled in rage. "And what's more, I hate echidnas just as much as hedgehogs!"

"Oh brother!" sighed Alonzo "He'll take a while to calm down."

Sonic and Knuckles watched Dr. Eggman fly away.

"Should we go after him?" asked Tails.

"Nah, we'll get him next time though." said Sonic.

Rouge emerged from the jungle, carrying the Master Emerald. However instead of flying away with it, she handed it over to Knuckles. Knuckles was surprised at this but he shook it off and carried the giant emerald up the steps. He put it back into place and the island floated back to its original height.

"Well that takes care of that." said Knuckles "What a day it's been for Angel Island today."

"Well we took care of Dr. Eggman, that's all that matters." said Sonic "Now Rouge, will you stand trial for trying to steal the Master Emerald?"

"No speedy boy but I will stop trying to steal the stupid emerald." said Rouge "As a token of gratitude for saving my life earlier. The Master Emerald was too big anyway."

"Well that's nice to know." said Sonic "I'll let you off Rouge, but you'd best keep your word you will not bother Knuckles or steal the Master Emerald ever again."

"You have my word honey." said Rouge "I'll just steal someone else's treasure instead. So long spiky."

And with that Rouge took to the skies and flew away. After Rouge disappeared from sight, Knuckles decided to say something.

"I owe you much for what you've done to save this island and its people." he said "From now on, you are welcome on Angel Island and you have my trust."

"Thanks Knuckles." said Sonic "And I must admit, you know how to kick some butt don't ya?"

"Yeah, I'm Knuckles by name and Knuckles by nature!" he said, punching the air.

"I'd love to have a friendly fight with ya some day." chuckled Sonic.

"I can't wait for that!" laughed Knuckles "Then we'll see who's the

stronger of the two!"

Sonic laughed with him and then said "Well, me and my little buddy are off now. See ya around Knuckles."

"So long Sonic." said Knuckles, walking up the stairs to the Master Emerald.

He activated a warp ring for Sonic and Tails to go through. They walked through it and ended up back down on the ground. The warp ring vanished. Sonic and Tails stared admiringly at Angel Island one last time and then walked away.

"Well you were right Sonic, Angel Island is amazing." said Tails "I wonder why the echidnas still wanna stay up there though?"

They've become accustomed to life in the sky." said Sonic "Not to mention the dangers down below won't be much of a danger to them now."

"That's nice." said Tails "So, where are we going now?"

"Back to Mobotropolis Tails." said Sonic cheerfully "I wanna see how the rebuilding of it's been going on since I left*."

"Well then let's go!" cried Tails, flying off.

"Hey head-starter! Get back here!" sniggered Sonic, running after him.

The two friends ran off into the distance. Knuckles watched them leaving Downunda from on top of the staircase where the Master Emerald proudly stood, glowing its gentle green glow. He had a feeling he and Sonic would be meeting each other again sometime soon…

Footnotes:

***Sonic left Mobotropolis in Story 3**

Chocolate Eggman Part 1

Story 10: Chocolate Eggman (Part 1)

After a very long run, Sonic and Tails had finally reached the still under construction city of Mobotropolis. Not much had changed since Sonic had left. There were still buildings being built but there were a few that were nearing completion. Tails looked around with a not very impressed look on his face.

"Gosh, Eggman must have dealt with this place well!" he said "Everything's being rebuilt."

"Yeah, Eggman blasted the whole city to bits*." said Sonic "Only Castle Acorn survived luckily. It's gonna take years for Mobotropolis to get back to its former glory."

"So where do all the people who lived here live now?" asked Tails.

"They reside in Empire City for the time being." explained Sonic "It's quite near to here so we haven't got far to go."

And with that he ran off again with Tails following him.

A short while afterwards they arrived at Empire City, the fourth largest city on Mobius. Any human who visited this city would have compared this to the city of New York because it looked very similar to New York. This city had its fare share of busy traffic and tall buildings. In fact, Empire City had a skyscraper very similar in height and appearance to the Empire State Building. And like Sonic said, everybody who once lived in Mobotropolis had moved to Empire City until New Mobotropolis was completed. Some citizens were lucky enough to find an empty home whereas others had to share homes with the people of Empire City but the citizens of Empire City didn't mind as they knew what the citizens of Mobotropolis had been through since Eggman's arrival. Tails admired Empire City's tall skyscrapers.

"Is that any better?" asked Sonic.

"Much better." said Tails.

"Well since we've beaten Dr. Eggman back for a while we'll just hang about for the time being." said Sonic "I know a good place we can relax in."

He led Tails to Central Park, a small beauty reserve in the centre of Empire City. Central Park was a quiet peaceful place where many people went for walks or had picnics. Sonic mostly came here to sit near the lake and chill out. Tails was impressed with the park's beautiful nature.

"You know what." said Tails "I feel like I'm in the middle of a forest rather then a city out here."

"Yeah it does feel like that in Central Park doesn't it?" agreed Sonic "That's why people who hate noise hang out here, to get a rest from it all."

"It's a wonderful place so I can see why anyone would want to hang out here." said Tails, lying down on the grass near the lake.

"Me too." said Sonic, lying down beside him "And we could do with a chill out for now."

Sonic and Tails closed their eyes and listened to the gentle sound of the lake lapping against the bank. A sound like that was bound to make anybody relax. Unfortunately Sonic and Tails didn't get to relax long because their peace and quiet was disturbed by the sound of someone crying in pain. Sonic leapt to his feet and turned around to see what it was. He saw a woodchuck lying on the grass with a purple wagon with red and gold decorative details on all sides by his side. Sonic dashed over to the woodchuck. The woodchuck was rubbing his ankle. He looked very hurt.

"Hey, are you OK?" asked Sonic.

"Well apart from a sprained ankle yes." grumbled the woodchuck.

"Can you walk?" asked Sonic.

"I don't think I can." replied the woodchuck, trying to stand up but

sitting back down due to the pain flaring in his ankle. He grumbled some more.

"How can I sell my delicious chocolate bars if I can't walk?" he cried.

"Chocolate bars?" asked Tails, running up to Sonic and the woodchuck "Are you a chocolate bar seller?"

"Yes child." said the woodchuck "My name is Larry Cad Burry but everyone calls me by my nickname, Mr. Dairy. I'm a travelling chocolate bar salesman and I walk around Empire City selling chocolates to all the wonderful people here. But now I've sprained my ankle I won't be able to walk. My happy customers won't get their daily chocolate bars!"

Mr. Dairy began to wail. Sonic and Tails looked at each other for a moment and thought on what to do about the situation. After a short think, they decided on what to do.

"If you don't mind Mr. Diary, we'll take over your duties." Sonic offered "We'll deliver your chocolate bars to everybody and sell as many as we can."

"You'd really do that for a poor feeble old man like me?" gasped Mr. Dairy.

"Sure, that's what good guys do." chuckled Sonic.

"Oh thank you, you two!" cried Mr. Dairy "I don't know what to say about your kindness!"

"You can thank us later." said Tails "So how do we know which people we've gotta serve chocolates to?"

"Oh I just serve anyone." said Mr. Dairy "I knock on doors and offer chocolates to people or I ask someone on the street."

"Sounds easy enough." said Sonic "But what are we gonna do about you? We can't leave you out here since you can't walk home."

"I know." said Tails, flying off.

He found a fallen tree branch lying near a thick oak tree. Tails picked the branch up and flew back to Mr. Dairy. He handed the branch over to the woodchuck. Mr. Dairy put it under his arm and used it as a crutch. He walked a few paces back and forth using the branch and beamed.

"It works perfectly!" he said happily "Thank you little one."

"My name is Tails." said Tails "And you're welcome."

"I'll just get home and rest my poor ankle now." said Mr. Dairy "I hope you two do well on my rounds."

"We'll be done before lunch time." said Sonic cockily "Don't sweat Mr. Dairy."

Mr. Dairy laughed. "OK then, say you later boys!" he said as he limped away, using the tree branch to help him walk properly.

"So, how do we work this thing?" asked Tails.

"Like this." said Sonic, grabbing the wagon's handles and running off as fast as ever. Tails flew off after him in a hurry. Mr. Dairy stopped walking away as he had heard Sonic dash off and turned around to see it. Sonic and Tails had already left though. The old woodchuck put a hand to his chin in a thoughtful matter.

"That blue boy runs fast doesn't he?" he said to himself "Why does that seem to ring some bells all of a sudden?"

He continued walking home, thinking on why Sonic's speed reminded him of someone.

On the other side of Empire City, Sonic and Tails made their first stop. They had come to a small two storey house with a flat roof, four windows and a small front garden. Sonic opened the garden gate and pulled the wagon of chocolate bars up to the house.

"OK Tails, here's a first customer." said Sonic "Just follow my lead."

He knocked on the door. The door opened and there stood an orange otter wearing a pale brown shirt and blue trousers.

"Good morning sir, can we interest you in some chocolate?" said Sonic, holding a bar out.

"Chocolate hmm…chocolate." said the otter dopily.

"Yes sir." said Tails "We have mint, caramel, dark, truffle, creamy, non creamy, with nuts, without nuts and even white chocolate." he held up one of each bar he mentioned.

"Chocolate…" said the otter in a strange matter. Then his face turned from calm and dopy into a crazed and demented expression and he began shrieking in a crazed and demented voice.

"CHOCOLATE?" he screamed "CHOCOLATE! CHOCOLATE!"

Sonic and Tails looked at each other in fright.

"I think he's delirious!" squeaked Tails.

"Let's scraper!" shrieked Sonic.

And they ran off with the crazy otter running after them screaming at the top of his voice "CHOCOLATE!" over and over.

One hour later, Sonic and Tails had finally outrun the chocolate crazy otter. They panted like dogs in hot weather.

"O….K…that first…guy…didn't…count!" puffed Sonic "I…wonder what's up…with…him?"

"May…be he's crazy…about…chocolate." wheezed Tails "I…hope… no one else…is like…that!"

"Well let's try someone else." said Sonic "We promised Mr. Dairy we'd help him out with selling his chocolates."

And with that they tried another house. This house was only one

storey, making it a bungalow and it had a front garden. Sonic pulled the wagon up to the house and knocked on the door. A white female meerkat in a flowing red dress answered the door.

"Ooh what can I do for you two young men?" she asked.

"We're selling chocolate bars." announced Sonic "Mr. Dairy's unavailable right now so we're taking over for him."

"Would you like one?" asked Tails.

"Oooooh I love chocolate!" squealed the meerkat "I'll take one!"

Sonic handed her a plain bar of chocolate. The meerkat handed Sonic 50 cents and closed the door.

"That was much better then that otter." said Sonic.

"Let's hope all the others are like that." said Tails "So, where to now?"

"Back to Mobotropolis and to Castle Acorn." said Sonic "Sally Acorn would love a bar of chocolate."

And with that he dashed off as fast as he could.

Later they returned to Mobotropolis and arrived at Castle Acorn. Its majestic appearance hadn't changed a bit since Sonic left. Tails was impressed with the castle's appearance. He had heard many a tale about Castle Acorn but never before had he seen it in real life.

"Is this really Castle Acorn?" asked Tails.

"You bet it is." said Sonic "Home of the Acorn Family."

He knocked on the door and waited for Sally to answer. But she didn't, instead Sally's lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx opened the door. The moment she saw Sonic, her face brightened and she grasped him in a hug.

"Oh Sonic you've returned at last!" cried Nicole "How've you been since Megapolis?** We haven't heard from you since!"

"Fine thanks Nicole." said Sonic as Nicole put her down "We just visited Angel Island and saved it from falling.***"

"Knuckles told us all about that." said Nicole "He's very grateful to you and your friend. Speaking of which, where is he?"

"Right here." said Tails shyly waving.

Nicole noticed Tails and awed at him, causing him to blush.

"Hello there little boy." said Nicole "What's your name?"

"Tails." said Tails bashfully "I'm Sonic's new friend, I'm skilled at technical stuff and I've been helping Sonic out on some of his adventures."

"That's nice to know." said Nicole "I bet you'd love to join the Royal Fighters Service."

Tails nodded bashfully.

"Anyways, we're selling chocolates." Sonic put in "Would you like one?"

"Um no thanks, I'm on a diet." said Nicole, twirling one of her ponytails "But I'll take two for Sally, she loves chocolate."

"Which type of chocolate does Sally like best?" asked Tails, holding out the various selections.

"She loves dark chocolate and chocolate truffles." explained Nicole "I'll just take one of each."

Tails handed her one dark chocolate bar and one chocolate truffle bar. Nicole handed him one dollar and sixty cents.

"Thank you very much boys and good luck on your sales." said Nicole.

"You're welcome Nicole." said Sonic "By they way, where is Sally? She always answers the door by herself."

"Oh, she's not here right now." said Nicole "She and her parents are out sight-seeing for the time being but when they come back I'll tell them you're back and I'm sure Sally will thank you for the chocolates."

I'm sure she will." said Sonic "Well we'd best get going, see you later Nics."

"Bye Sonic." said Nicole, closing the door behind her as she went back inside the castle. Sonic sighed happily.

"This is just getting better every time isn't it?" said Sonic.

"Uh huh." said Tails "And I hope you don't mind me saying but I think Nicole's very beautiful."

"Yeah she is isn't she?" agreed Sonic "She's the Mobotropolis beauty queen and has been for five years running!"

"Gosh!" cried Tails "She must be beautiful!"

"Yeah." agreed Sonic "Nicole likes her body too. Pity she hasn't found the right someone for her."

"Do you think she fancies you Sonic?" chuckled Tails teasingly.

Sonic went red in the face.

"Nah, I don't think I'm the right man for her." said Sonic "I think Nicole needs someone a little less adventurous then me. Whereas I, I'm not sure I'd be that interested in royal business like Nicole is."

Then suddenly he and Tails were interrupted by the familiar demented sound of someone mentally insane screaming "CHOCOLATE!" loudly. It was the chocolate crazy otter again! Sonic and Tails grabbed the wagon and immediately ran for their lives as the chocolate crazy otter chased them away from Castle Acorn screaming insanely at the top of his voice "CHOCOLATE!" "CHOCOLATE!" "CHOCOLATE!" "CHOCOLATE!"

As Sonic and Tails ran for it, a small camera telescoped out from behind a hedge near Castle Acorn. That camera belonged to none other then Dr. Eggman (duh!). He had planted it there so he could monitor Sally's movements and make an attempt to kidnap her but this time the fat doctor's attentions was focused on Sonic and Tails fleeing for it. Seeing them run away like cowards made Eggman roar with laughter. Even his snobby robotic assistant Alonzo laughed at them. When Dr. Eggman and Alonzo finally contained their irresistible laughter Eggman spoke.

"So our two friends are selling chocolate bars are they?" snorted Dr. Eggman "Some heroes they are!"

"Yeah, especially since they're being chased by a crazy otter that screams out loud "CHOCOLATE!"" chortled Alonzo "I bet if we did that Sonic and Tails would run for their lives!"

"Yeah but villains don't do that." noted Eggman "And yet this chocolate bar caper is giving me a wicked thought…" he purred, stroking his thick bushy moustache in thought.

"Oh no, he's thinking again." said Alonzo "Time I escaped."

"THAT'S IT!" screamed Dr. Eggman, leaping to his feet.

"Too late." muttered Alonzo.

"I'll make my OWN stash of chocolate!" declared Dr. Eggman "And I'll make Sonic and Tails sell it to everyone!"

"Um…nice one?" said Alonzo, really thinking the plan was stupid "But your chocolate tastes like motor oil sir so I don't think you'll have very happy customers."

Dr. Eggman punched Alonzo in the face. The poor butler bot felt very dazed and confused and a few bolts popped off.

"You twonk!" snarled Eggman "I'm going to trade Sonic and Tails' stash with my own stash so they'll end up selling my chocolate!"

"And that way SONIC & TAILS will have the unhappy customers!" declared Alonzo happily "Oh that's ingenious sir! Everybody will be

angry with the hedgehog and we can laugh in his face!"

Dr. Eggman face palmed himself.

"You really are a bolt brain aren't you?" he muttered "Oh well, I'll tell you the full details later, I've got chocolate to make."

And with that he ran off to get making. Alonzo stood still and began scratching his head. What on Earth was that fat moron up to now? Oh well, he'd find out later. Alonzo trundled back to the camera screen to watch Sonic and Tails getting chased by the crazy otter.

Another hour later, Sonic and Tails had finally outrun the crazy otter. They collapsed on the pavement in a heap.

"Geez! How does that crazy otter keep it up for so long?" gasped Sonic "That's the second hour we've spent running away from him!"

"I hope that's the last we've seen of him." panted Tails "Otherwise I'm going to quit this chocolate selling business."

Sonic got back to his feet and counted the money he had gotten from the three bars he had sold. He had sold two to Nicole and one to the meerkat and overall he had two dollars and ten cents. Sonic sighed grimly.

"We're not doing so well here." he said "We'd best pick up the pace."

"Good idea Sonic." said Tails "Let's go as fast as we can and that way we'll sell more."

And with that Sonic ran to each house at his trademark speed. Every house he went to, he sold one chocolate bar. Sonic even sold chocolate bars to people walking in the street. Alonzo watched the whole performance from cameras set up in the trees of Central Park. Watching Sonic dash back and forth was making him feel funny.

"Geez, watching him do that's making me nauseous!" he gurgled.

He almost fainted but he regained his senses and decided to stop

watching Sonic run about for the sake of his health. Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman was in the kitchen, pouring motor oil into various trays and covering the splodges of oil with a thick chocolate layer. That was his idea of good chocolate. Then he added a drop of a strange greyish coloured liquid to the chocolates. Then he put the trays into a fridge for them to set good and hard. He had to wait a good while though as chocolate took time to set. Thirty minutes later the chocolate had set and was ready to eat (unless you like motor oil which I guarantee you don't!). Dr. Eggman cackled with delight at his finished chocolate. Then he put the chocolates in a machine that automatically wrapped the chocolates up for you. After all Eggman is lazy. The finished chocolates popped out of the machine, neatly wrapped up in yellow and red striped wrapping.

"Oh if I wasn't using these for an evil deed I'd eat them all myself!" he cackled "Oh well, I'm sure the Mobians of this planet will love them just as much as I do! ALONZO!" he bellowed.

"Yes sir?" asked Alonzo, rushing into the kitchen.

"Find Sonic and swap his chocolates for these." said Eggman, thrusting the four trays at him.

"No problem master." said Alonzo, saluting.

He trundled out of the kitchen, holding the tray with both hands and staring at the chocolates.

"What on Earth is my dumbo of a master up to?" he wondered "Conning Sonic into selling his chocolates? What's so evil about this plan?"

Sonic and Tails had sold around thirty chocolate bars by now and they had made a whole lot more money now. They had made eighteen pounds and seventy cents overall. Sonic jingled the money in his hands.

"Now that's a lot better." said Sonic, putting it in the money jar "Good thing we picked up the pace."

"We should call ourselves Sonic and Tails, the supersonic chocolate bar sellers!" joked Tails.

"That does have a nice ring to it." said Sonic "But I'd rather smash robots and kick Eggman's fat butt then sell chocolate bars."

"I wonder how Mr. Dairy is doing." wondered Tails "I hope he's alright."

"I'm sure he's resting." said Sonic "In fact, why don't we pay him a visit and tell him how we're doing?"

Tails nodded. Sonic had no idea where Mr. Dairy lived but he knew how to find him. He saw a woman in a jumpsuit walking by and caught her attention. He then asked the woman where Mr. Dairy lived. The woman instructed him to go to the end of the first block of buildings, turn right and look for a purple house decorated with rainbow coloured dots. Sonic thanked the woman and rushed off with the wagon in tow. Sonic followed the woman's instructions and found Mr. Dairy's house. Just like the woman had described, the house was purple and decorated with rainbow coloured dots, making it look like there were Smarties all over the walls. The house looked like the kind of house Willy Wonka would live in. Sonic and Tails walked to the door and knocked on it. Mr. Dairy got up from his chair and, using the tree branch crutch, limped over to the door and opened it. He was pleased as punch to see Sonic and Tails at the door.

"Boys!" he cried with joy "How's the business been going?"

"We've made eighteen dollars and seventy cents." said Sonic, handing the jar of money over to Mr. Dairy. The old woodchuck beamed in satisfaction.

"How did you sell so much so quickly?" asked Mr. Dairy.

"I can run fast." said Sonic "And I got lucky with some of the customers I guess."

"If only I could run that fast." chortled Mr. Dairy "I'd be selling a lot more chocolates a day then what I usually do!"

As he and Sonic chatted away, Alonzo poked his head out from behind a dumpster. He had found Sonic and Tails at long last and he crept over to the chocolate wagon, keeping a low profile so he wouldn't get spotted. Then Alonzo grabbed the wagon and slowly pulled it away from Sonic and back to the dumpster he had hidden behind. Then, when he thought he was a good distance away, Alonzo stopped and opened the side hatch. He pulled all the chocolates out and threw them in the dumpster. Then he tipped the tray of Eggman's chocolates up and they all slid off into the hatch. He did the same with the other three trays. Soon all of Eggman's chocolates were in the wagon. Then Alonzo quietly pulled the wagon back to Sonic and trundled quietly away, giggling silently to himself. Tails looked over his shoulder as he thought he had heard something but he saw nothing so he shrugged it off. Sonic and Mr. Dairy had finished talking.

"Well, I've got the last bunch of chocolates in the wagon to sell." said Sonic "See ya later."

He and Tails ran off with the wagon in tow.

"See ya boys, and thank you for all your help!" Mr. Dairy called to them.

Sonic and Tails did the same thing they did earlier, run around to each house as fast as they could. They sold chocolates to every house they came to and even sold a chocolate or two to any passer-bys in the busy streets. During their rounds, Sonic came across two familiar faces walking by. One was an orange dog wearing combat fatigues and the other was a purple, yellow tailed mouse also wearing combat fatigues.

"Hey it's Wilson and Mandy!" he said happily.

"Who are they then?" asked Tails.

"Two friends of mine in the Royal Fighters Service." said Sonic "I saved them from being roboticized eight months ago**** and we've been good friends since. Not to mention they're excellent fighters."

He ran over to them in a jiffy. Wilson and Mandy gasped in surprise,

only to smile at the fact it was only Sonic the Hedgehog.

"Well Sonic my man." said Wilson, giving him a handshake "Long time no see."

"Good to see you two Wilson." said Sonic "How's things been at Grand Metropolis?"

"Marvellous." said Mandy "We helped the Metropolis Royal Fighters foil a drilling operation for oil and we stopped the person in charge of the operation who is known to her lackeys as the Mistress of Darkness*****. Everything's under control now so we've been allowed to return home."

"That's excellent to know." said Sonic "Where's good ol' Geoffrey St. John?"

"Still tied up with his work at Downunda." explained Wilson "But he's fighting good and hard for the Royal Fighters there. By the way who's the kid?" he added, pointing at Tails.

"This is my new friend Tails." said Sonic "I saved him from Eggman during my time in Green Hill Zone******."

"And I've been helping Sonic fight Eggman since." added Tails.

"Have you now?" said Mandy "We'll have to see you in battle one day."

"So what have you two been up to?" asked Wilson.

"We're selling chocolate bars." said Sonic "Care for one?"

"Oh! I haven't had one in months!" cried Wilson "I'll take one."

"Me too." said Mandy "How much are they?"

"Only 50-60 cents." said Sonic "Depends which kind of chocolate you pick."

They both picked a plain old ordinary chocolate bar so they only needed to pay fifty cents. Sonic put the money in the jar and waved

goodbye as Wilson and Mandy walked away with their chocolate bars. After they were out of sight, Sonic and Tails helped themselves to a bar each. Sonic picked a caramel chocolate whereas Tails picked a mint chocolate. Tails loved mint candy after all.

"What a good day its been." said Sonic "We've helped out a poor chocolate bar seller and there hasn't been any case of Dr. Eggman at all."

"Let's eat our chocolates in hope of ending this war with Eggman." said Tails, tearing the warping off of his chocolate and stuffing it into his mouth. But after one chew his face curled and he spat the chocolate out onto the pavement and licked his hands to get the taste off of his tongue. Sonic was puzzled.

"What's up Tails?" asked Sonic.

"That chocolate bar tastes like motor oil!" spluttered Tails "Who on Mobius made that one?"

Sonic sniffed his own chocolate bar. It didn't smell like chocolate, it smelt like a cross between chocolate and motor oil. Sonic put the bar in a bin nearby.

"Well that was weird." he said "Two of our bars taste and smell of motor oil. I certainly hope none of the others tasted the same way."

"Should we taste them all to see if they taste of motor oil?" asked Tails.

"Nah, we can just smell them." said Sonic.

So the two of them pulled out chocolate bar after chocolate bar, sniffing each one to see what it smelt like.

Dr. Eggman watched the two of them sniffing their haul with glee. His plan had obviously worked; Sonic and Tails had sold his chocolates to half the city so now it was time for the next step. He pressed a button on the control pad. It beeped loudly and silenced

afterwards. Dr. Eggman cackled.

"Now it's time for my new minions to prove their worth to me!" he chortled "Sonic will have no idea what hit him!"

Sonic and Tails put the last chocolate in the bin. Every single chocolate they had sniffed smelt of motor oil. They both clutched their noses, clearly disgusted with the smell of motor oil burning their nostrils.

"Well that's funny." said Sonic "How did all our chocolates suddenly start smelling and tasting of motor oil?"

"Who knows?" asked Tails "I hope none of the chocolates we sold had motor oil in them."

"Well we'll find out sooner or later." said Sonic "If the chocolates we sold did taste of motor oil then we'll have an angry mob on us."

Then Sonic began to think. Chocolate with motor oil in it was starting to sound familiar somehow but he couldn't quite put his finger on it. Then suddenly Tails began to shudder and shake as if he was desperately cold. Sonic noticed Tails' strange state. Then the little cub stopped shaking and looked down at the pavement.

"Hey buddy, you OK?" asked Sonic.

Tails didn't answer him. He continued to stare at the pavement. Sonic gave him a light shake.

"Tails?" asked Sonic.

Then Tails raised his head. But there was something different about him now. His eyes were no longer blue, they were red! And they looked like robot eyes too! Sonic flinched and stepped back. Tails roared an uncharacteristically strange roar that sounded more like it came from a lion then a fox cub. Sonic shuddered, this was not normal. Something was desperately wrong. Tails pounced on Sonic but Sonic dodged so he missed and hit the road. Sonic ran off but Tails flew after him, snarling like a lion. Sonic had no idea why Tails

was acting like this but he had a vague thought on a possibility. Maybe the motor oil chocolate had something to do with it? Because Tails was just fine until he ate it. Then suddenly Sonic saw something and skidded to a halt. A crowd of Mobians were marching towards him. Their eyes were all red in colour and they had a particularly murderous look in them too. Even Wilson and Mandy had been affected and had joined the crowd! Sonic began to back away but the possessed Mobians continued marching towards him like zombies. They surrounded the speedy hedgehog and began to close in around him. Sonic looked around desperately for a way out as the Mobians advanced on him, roaring like a pride of lions…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 2 for Mobotropolis' downfall**

**** See Stories 6-7 for Sonic's time with Bunnie in Megapolis**

***** See Stories 8-9 for Sonic's time in Angel Island**

****** See Story 1**

******* See *Arc 1: The Malicious Metropolis Masquerade* from the spin-off title *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius***

******** See Stories 3-4**

I don't consider this one to be one of my best but the next story is better I promise you.

Chocolate Eggman part 2

Story 11: Chocolate Eggman: Part 2

Sonic desperately looked around for a way out of the advancing circle of possessed Mobians. They were getting closer and closer. Soon they would snatch him up and probably eat him alive or rip him apart. Then Sonic had an idea. He jumped into the air like a ballet dancer. The advancing crowd of possessed Mobians stared at him in disbelief. Sonic leapt so high he did a double somersault in mid air and then landed outside the crowd. He smirked at them.

"Now that's skill!" he sneered and he jolted off.

The angry crowd ran after him but of course, they couldn't catch up with Sonic as he was miles too fast. Only Tails had a chance and even he was having trouble keeping up with the super fast hedgehog. Sonic turned his head around to face Tails and stuck his tongue out at the little fox cub tauntingly.

"If you think you're gonna catch me little guy forget it!" he jeered.

But Sonic should have been watching where he was going because he ended up crashing into a dustbin and falling over it. Tails saw his chance and seized Sonic by the arms and lifted him off the ground. Sonic squirmed in the little fox's grasp. For being eight years old, Tails could grab someone very well! Then Tails dragged Sonic back towards the crowd. Sonic squirmed even more but Tails' unnaturally strong grasp was too strong for him. But the crowd stood stole instead of trying to slaughter him. Sonic put on a confused expression but he soon found out what was up. A small cuboid TV hovered above Wilson and Mandy's heads. The TV had Dr. Eggman's face on the screen and seeing that face made Sonic's quills shake with rage.

"Dr. Eggman!" he shouted "I should have known you'd be behind this strange business!"

"Indeed I am Sonic the Hedgehog!" chortled Dr. Eggman "And I bet

you're wondering how I'm behind all this!"

"I am!" yelled Sonic, struggling in Tails' grasp "How did you turn all these people into evil zombie-like creatures?"

Dr. Eggman hooted with laughter.

"Well I'll tell you." he said "I had Alonzo swap your stash of chocolates for my special stash of chocolates!"

"No wonder it smelt and tasted like motor oil." muttered Sonic "But how did that turn them evil?"

"I added my secret ingredient." announced Dr. Eggman "A liquid substance full of microscopic robots called Brain Tonic. Once consumed, the robots crawl up into your blood stream and take control of your mind and body. So all these people are my mindless slaves!"

"You monster! Let them go or I'll make you!" threatened Sonic.

"How are you gonna do that then?" sneered Eggman "Frown at me? You're at my mercy Sonic and I'm going to send you to your doom. Slaves! Kill that miserable beast!"

The crowd immediately responded and lunged at Sonic. Wilson grabbed Sonic by the legs while Tails still held Sonic by his arms. Sonic tried to get out of their grasp but he couldn't because they were much too strong. Then Wilson and Tails began to pull on his limbs. Sonic yelped. They were trying to pull his limbs off! Then Mandy came up to Sonic with a jungle knife in her hand. She poked Sonic's chest with it lightly as if she was marking where to stab him. Then Mandy raised the knife up high and got ready to strike Sonic. Then suddenly she was knocked to the floor by a powerful kick. It was Nicole! Wilson and Tails let go of Sonic and tried to attack Nicole but she ducked, swerved and elbowed Tails in the back, sending him crashing into the road nose first. Wilson tried to counter attack but he was met with an unfortunate karate chop to the gut.

"Sonic! Run!" cried Nicole.

Sonic did not wait to be asked twice. But instead of running off and

leaving Nicole by herself, he picked her up bridal style and ran off with her. Tails, Wilson and Mandy ran after them but Sonic was much too fast. Soon enough he left the crowd of possessed Mobians behind and darted into Central Park in an attempt to outrun the crowd. Sonic looked over his shoulder and saw no one behind. He screeched to a halt and stopped in front of the lake. He put Nicole down.

"That was sweet Nicole." said Sonic, winking "I didn't know you knew how to fight."

"I learnt a thing or two about fighting before I moved to Mobotropolis." said Nicole "I'm not a spectacular fighter but I'm good enough to hold my own at least."

"Well Nicole that is way past cool." said Sonic "What are you doing here anyway?"

"I wanted to have a moment's peace from the castle so I came here to hang out in Central Park for a couple of hours." explained Nicole "But when I arrived I saw half of the city trying to kill you so I decided to step in and help you."

"And I am grateful for that." said Sonic "And if you're wondering what's up with half the city, I've inadvertently sold them Dr. Eggman's own stash of chocolates and now they're all under his control. Even Tails! And Wilson and Mandy!"

Nicole clasped her hands over her mouth to prevent herself from gasping.

"Oh my gosh!" she spluttered "How could that horrible man do that?"

"He'll do anything to conquer Mobius." sighed Sonic "And I bet he's going to order everybody to come to him and allow him to roboticize them."

"Well we'd better cure them before that happens!" declared Nicole "But how are we gonna do that?"

"Beats me, I have no idea what the darn cure is." said Sonic glumly.

Then suddenly, someone lunged out from nowhere and leapt on Nicole. It was Tails! He had seen Sonic run into Central Park and followed him stealthily before coming in for the kill. Before Tails could harm Nicole, Sonic charged into Tails headfirst and knocked him off of Nicole. He hit Tails so hard; the young fox rolled down the bank like a beach ball and then fell into the water with an enormous splash. Sonic watched the lake for in case Tails came back up and tried to attack. But Tails didn't come back up. He was actually sinking down and down to the bottom of the lake like a stone. Sonic got worried: Tails would drown if he didn't come back up! But if Sonic saved him he would likely try and attack him and Nicole again. But if Sonic didn't save Tails, they wouldn't be able to turn him back to normal so Sonic decided he had to save Tails. The only trouble was Sonic was afraid of water and he couldn't swim so he couldn't save Tails. Then Nicole ran to the bank and did a graceful dive into the lake. Sonic got splashed as he was standing so close. Nicole was clearly amazing in more then just the beauty department! Sonic stood and waited for Nicole to come back up as she dived down to rescue Tails. A few moments later the surface of the water began to bubble. Nicole burst up from underneath, gasping for breath. She had Tails in her arms, hopefully unconscious. Nicole dragged him onto the bank and settled him down on the grass.

"I…think Tails is alive…" gasped Nicole "Just un…conscious…"

Sonic knelt down by Tails side and prayed to himself he would pull through. Nicole put her hands on Tails chest and did a heart compression method three times on him but to no avail. Nicole tried again. Still no avail. Nicole decided to give it one more try. Then after the last press, Tails started spluttering and coughing up water. He opened his eyes and saw Sonic and Nicole beside him. Sonic instantly noticed that Tails' eyes were now back their normal appearance.

"Tails! Thank goodness!" cried Sonic.

"Wha….What happened? Why am I all wet?" asked Tails, squeezing and twisting one of his tails to get the water out.

"You had a bit of a tussle with Sonic when you were brainwashed by Dr. Eggman and you fell into the lake." said Nicole, shaking her hair

to dry it off "But I saved you from drowning."

"Gee thanks Nicole." said Tails "And what do you mean by "I was brainwashed by Eggman"?"

"That motor oil tasting chocolate is Eggman's special bunch." explained Sonic "Anyone who's eaten it is under Eggman's control now."

"Ah I remember." said Tails "I was fine until I tried that chocolate. Oh I hope I didn't hurt you when I was brainwashed."

"Well apart from trying to yank my arms off, you didn't do much harm." said Sonic "But right now, we need to find out how to change everybody back before chaos ensues."

"Wait a second." said Nicole, putting on a thoughtful face "Tails was a mindless drone for Eggman until he fell into the lake. And after I rescued him, he's back to normal. How did that happen?"

"I know!" cried Tails "Maybe water is the cure!"

"I think you're right Tails." said Sonic "Because Eggman said his chocolate contains tiny microscopic robots. And if you drench a robot in water it goes boom so after you fell into the lake, the water obviously destroyed the robots!"

The three of them cheered and leapt into the air at this discovery. But Nicole's face fell afterwards.

"I don't suppose you're gonna tell everybody to jump into the lake are you?" she asked.

"I would but they're under Eggman's control so they wouldn't obey me anyway." said Sonic "And I don't think I'll be able to trick them into jumping into the water since Eggman will probably see through my act and stop them. There must be a better way to cure them."

"Maybe we could let the possessed Mobians capture us and bring us to Eggman and then we find out how to shut the robots down and do it?" suggested Nicole.

"That's a little risky, but it might just work." said Sonic "We'll give it a try, it's the only way."

Nicole and Tails nodded. Sonic walked off, ready to give himself up to the crowd of possessed Mobians.

As for the crowd of possessed Mobians they were searching high and low for Sonic the Hedgehog with Eggman on the little hovering TV bellowing orders at them. Wilson led one group of searching Mobians whereas Mandy lead the other group. They looked in anything they came across. They looked in open sewer holes, in dumpsters, in dustbins, under cars, in cars and in any house they came across. They obviously terrified anybody they came across as they snarled at everybody. Dr. Eggman was beginning to get bored watching his mindless slaves looking everywhere for Sonic. He was just about to do something else until something caught his eye. He saw Sonic, Tails and Nicole coming towards the crowd with their hands up. Sonic looked directly at the hovering TV with Eggman's face on.

"Hey Egg-Salad!" he yelled at the fat man "We surrender! Tell your cronies to take us to you so we can be roboticized!"

Dr. Eggman thought he was going insane. Sonic the Hedgehog is willingly giving himself up to be roboticized? Unbelievable! Nevertheless, Eggman gave the order.

"Slaves! Seize those three!" he bellowed.

The possessed Mobians ran up to Sonic, Tails and Nicole, grabbed them by the shoulders and forced their arms behind their backs. Then they began marching away with the prisoners in tow.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" whispered Tails.

"Sure Tails." Sonic whispered back "The moment Eggman orders his slaves to put us in the roboticizer, we break free and look for a way to shut those microscopic robots down."

Tails nodded, even though he had concerns about how well this

would work.

Much later, the slaves arrived at the Northern Border where Eggman's base was. Sonic, Tails and Nicole were taken to the roboticizer chamber where Dr. Eggman and Alonzo were waiting for them. Eggman smiled at his captives as the slaves brought them into the chamber.

"Well, well, well Sonic the Hedgehog!" he sneered "I've captured you at last!"

Sonic wanted to do something to him but he kept calm and put on a straight face.

"And I've even caught your friend Tails who unfortunately has managed to break free of my control." added Eggman.

Tails frowned at the fat man but said nothing.

"And I even have the princess's lady-in-waiting." added Eggman "Um…what's your name again?"

"Nicole." said Nicole glumly.

"Thank you, now you three, it is time for you to be roboticized!" said Dr. Eggman "Alonzo! Are those pods ready yet?"

"Yes sir and please stop that mindless bellowing!" grumbled Alonzo "It's hurting my audio receptors!"

"Oh shut up you moronic, metallic miscreant and open the pods!" snarled Eggman.

Alonzo pressed a button on the control pad and pressed a button that opened the roboticizer pods.

"Now slaves, put them in!" ordered Eggman.

Now was their chance. The slaves began to push Sonic, Tails and Nicole towards the pods. Then Sonic stomped very hard on the

slave's foot. The slave squealed and let Sonic go to clutch his foot in pain. Then Tails did the same to the slave holding him. The slave let him go to grab his foot in pain. Then Nicole wrestled out of her slave's grip and elbowed him in the gut. Dr. Eggman gasped in horror. He didn't see this coming at all. Sonic leapt on Eggman and knocked the fat man off his feet. Alonzo tried to rush to his aid but Nicole gave him a cold stare that suggested "Don't even think about it!" Alonzo leapt back in fright.

"OK Eggman! You tell us how to shut down those microscopic robots down and I won't have to hurt you!" ordered Sonic.

"I shall not tell you how to do that!" roared Eggman "Now get off me!"

He shoved Sonic off of himself and got back to his feet.

"Slaves! Seize them!" he ordered.

The slaves advanced on Sonic, Tails and Nicole menacingly. Sonic did the same thing he did before, leap into the air, somersault and land outside the advancing slaves. Tails took flight, grabbed Nicole by the waist and carried her out of the crowd before they could leap on them. The slaves all hit each other face first. Dr. Eggman tugged on his moustache in rage. Then suddenly Wilson leapt on Sonic and tackled him to the ground. Sonic pushed against Wilson but the dog was too tough for him. Wilson pinned his arms down and got ready to bite the hedgehog on the neck. Then Tails flew straight at Wilson and kicked him off of Sonic. As for Nicole, she was having a bit of a tussle with Mandy. Mandy was much more advanced in combat skills then Nicole was but Nicole put more effort in avoiding the mouse's blows then trying to counter attack in an effort to wear her out and then attack her before she recovers. Mandy threw a punch at Nicole but the lynx avoided it just barely by bending backwards and then counter attacked with a head butt to the face. Mandy stumbled to the floor, clutching her nose.

"So sorry Mandy." said Nicole.

Mandy merely growled at her and stood back up. She lunged at Nicole like a leaping tiger. She tackled the lynx to the ground. But

before Mandy could do anything, Sonic spin-dashed into her, knocking the startled mouse off of Nicole.

"You OK Nicole?" he asked.

"I am now you saved me." said Nicole "Thanks."

Sonic smiled at her. Meanwhile, Tails and Wilson were seemingly playing a game of cat and mouse. Tails flew around, taunting the enraged dog while Wilson kept leaping up at him, trying to catch him but failing each time. Wilson leapt at Tails but he missed and then the fox tail-whipped him so hard he fell into the floor face-first. Tails laughed at him. Eggman got mad at Tails and threw Alonzo at him. Alonzo hit Tails in the back and knocked him to the ground. Eggman hooted with laughter. Before Tails could get back up, Wilson leapt on him and pinned him down. Sonic and Nicole were beginning to get overwhelmed by the sheer number of possessed Mobians advancing on them. Not to mention they were getting worn out. Then Mandy appeared from behind and kicked Nicole in the back. Then she punched Sonic in the cheek and sent him stumbling over. Before Sonic could get up, three slaves surrounded him and grabbed him. Sonic struggled and squirmed but the Mobians were too tough for him. They carried Sonic over to the pods. Wilson picked Tails up and carried him over to the roboticizer pods. Mandy grabbed Nicole and carried her over to the pods. Sonic then performed a spin-dash to get free from the Mobian's grasp and it worked. Sonic spin-dashed into Wilson and Mandy to free Tails and Nicole from them. He skidded to a halt across the floor.

"I don't think we can keep this up any longer!" cried Sonic "There's too many Mobians under Eggman's control and I'm getting worn out!"

"Same here." panted Tails "What are we gonna do?"

"You can try and find out which button on that control pad shuts the robots down." said Sonic "Me and Nicole will cover you."

"But what if that control pad doesn't have the shut down command?" asked Tails worriedly.

"Then we'll try the other rooms and see which one has the right button." said Sonic "Now get going!

Tails twisted his tails around one another and flew over the oncoming crowd of possessed Mobians. He flew over to the control pad and studied it carefully and closely. None of the buttons or levers seemed to have a shut down command for anything except for an off switch and that was for the roboticizer pods. Well this room was the roboticizer chamber so the control pad was obviously for the pods and nothing else. Tails flew away from the control pad and flew out of the chamber with Mobians leaping up at him but missing narrowly. They tried to chase Tails but Sonic jumped in front of them and spin-dashed them back into the chamber. In order to keep them from trying to run after Tails, Sonic pressed a button that closed the door. Now no one could get in or out unless Sonic reopened the door. That should buy Tails plenty of time to shut down those robots and free everybody's minds from Eggman's devious control. For now, Sonic had to keep the Mobians from getting him roboticized so he either jumped out of their way or run rings around them. Nicole just kept out of harm's way since Sonic was distracting them all.

Tails flew into the main computer room. He had no idea how he found it but he was grateful he had found it. This room was filled to the brim with computer monitors, control pads and all sorts of machinery. All this technology made Tails stare admiringly at them. He was impressed at how advanced Dr. Eggman was. Tails ran over to the control pad and looked closely at it. There were many controls on the pad ranging from buttons to switches and levers. Tails began to sweat, his heart began to pound. He had no idea which of the millions of controls on that pod would free everybody from Eggman's control but Sonic was counting on him so he had to try. Tails eyed a small round blue button. Was that the right button? But before he could press it, his eye caught a tiny red button near the centre of the console. Was this the right one? Since it was a tiny button it might be a command for a tiny robot like the microscopic ones that the possessed Mobians had in their brains thanks to Eggman's chocolate. But what if the tiny button wasn't a shut down button? What if it did something worse? Tails really didn't want to risk it in fear of doing serious harm but he had to try as he had lives to save from Eggman's control. Tails closed his eyes, fearing the worst and

shakily, pressed the button. One of the monitors flashed into life saying "Micro-bots shut down commencing." Tails opened his eyes slowly and breathed a huge sigh of relief when he saw what the monitor said. He had pressed the right button, now everyone was free from Eggman's command!

Back in the roboticizer chamber all the possessed Mobians began clutching their heads and shrieking like mad before silencing and looking down at the floor.

"That fox better not have…!" snarled Eggman.

Then the entire crowd raised their heads and began to murmur amongst one another. Their eyes had all returned to normal and they could all now speak again.

"Where are we?"

"What happened?"

"How did we get here?" they all asked one another.

"Why are we in Eggman's base?" Wilson and Mandy wondered. Nobody knew of course. Eggman thumped his head in rage.

"That fox did it! He's broken my control over those mindwiped Mobians! Oh the indignity!" he cried.

"The game's over Eggman!" said Sonic hotly "Now back down or else!"

"I'm not letting you all go that easily!" shouted Eggman "Alonzo! Bring in the heavy metal!"

"At once sire." said Alonzo, pulling a lever on the control panel nearby.

A colossal door on the far side of the room opened and out of it appeared a large floating robot. The robot was domed in shape and had a multiple amount of cannons all over its domed top. Its body was coloured a very dull grey and coloured orange around the edges and the base. The crowd of Mobians gasped at it.

"This new toy of mine Sonic, is the Portable Roboticizer 3000 G-1." explained Eggman "But I call it Port for short."

Sonic groaned. "Gee, and I thought "Scream Roller" was bad!"

"Well what till you see what this machine does!" cackled Eggman "Port! FIRE!"

Port aimed its cannons at the crowd of Mobians and fired four sizzling shock blasts at them. Some of the crowd was hit by the blasts but instead of being blasted to smithereens, something else was beginning to happen. The Mobians that had been blasted were beginning to change. Their skin and fur was turning into cold hard metal, their teeth were growing sharper and their eyes were changing back to red. Sonic's quills straightened in terror. Eggman's machine was roboticizing them all in one cannon blast! No wonder it was called the "Portable Roboticizer"! Eggman cackled dementedly at his machine's progress as it continued roboticizing. Sonic knew what he had to do, get the rest out before they got roboticized.

"Nicole! Get everybody outta here!" cried Sonic "I'm gonna take down that portable roboticizer thingy!"

"OK." said Nicole, turning to the crowd. "Everybody run for your lives if you want to remain flesh and blood!"

The crowd didn't hesitate even for a second; they ran out of the chamber as fast as they could with Nicole yelling "Go, Go, Go!" as they ran past. Sonic spin-dashed into Port and knocked it aside so it's cannons missed the crowd. Tails came out of the computer room to rejoin Sonic and Nicole but he was sidetracked by the fleeing crowd. After the last Mobian bolted out of the chamber, Tails flew into the chamber to see what was happening only to gasp in horror at what he saw. Thirty Mobians had been roboticized and they were ready to rip someone apart. The Robians lunged at Tails but the little fox flew out of the way, leaving them to crash face first into the floor. Nicole decided to flee with the crowd, knowing she wasn't skilled enough to take on a roboticized Mobian. As for Sonic, he kept trying to smash Port to bits but the machine wasn't having any of it. It seemed to be resisting his blows every time he hit! Sonic eventually stopped homing attacking and spin-dashing it and landed on the

floor, tired as anything.

"That's one tough robot!" panted Sonic "What's it made off?"

"I made it out of the right materials to resist your petty attacks." crowed Eggman "You cannot destroy it!"

"Oh man!" moaned Sonic "What am I gonna do now?"

"Surrender!" yelled Eggman.

"Never!" cried Sonic.

He charged himself up and bolted directly into the robot. He hit Port so hard the hovering robot spiralled out of control and crashed into the wall. It hit the wall so hard it dented it. Sonic was about to charge again until a cry for help from Tails distracted him. The Robians had cornered him and were advancing on him menacingly, ready to slash him to pieces. Sonic charged at the Robians and sent all of them flying as he charged through them. The Robians hit the walls, the ceiling and even control panels as they rained down to the floor. Two Robians recovered and tried to attack Sonic but he kicked them both away. Another Robian recovered and slashed at Sonic but Sonic dodged and homing attacked it so hard it was knocked silly. Tails sighed with relief.

"Oh thank you Sonic!" he gasped "I thought I was done for!"

"You're welcome buddy. Now Tails, we've got to get outta here." said Sonic "Eggman's portable roboticizer is too tough for me to destroy and if we're not careful we're gonna get…"

Then suddenly he was blasted in the back by a yellow shock blast! Port was doing it! The machine had recovered from it's collusion with the wall while Sonic was busy fighting off Robians and now it had blasted Sonic with its roboticizing shock blasts! Sonic was being roboticized! Tails thought he was going to die of shock from what he was seeing.

"NO!" cried Tails.

Eggman roared with laughter. Alonzo joined in. They had finally

done it! They had roboticized Sonic at long last! Port stopped blasting Sonic and the blue hedgehog fell to his knees. He was no longer flesh and blood. He was steel and oil. His eyes were replaced with a visor and emotionless red eyes. His muzzle was silver, he had short gold shoulder pads and he had jet rockets in his feet for flying. Tails began to shake furiously. This couldn't be happening. This couldn't be happening! But unfortunately, it was. His best friend Sonic the Hedgehog, had been roboticized. After Eggman stopped cheering he made an announcement.

"How about that then Tails?" he crowed "I've roboticized that infernal hedgehog once and for all! Now you face a new threat from me… MECHA SONIC!"

He hooted with laughter. Mecha Sonic seized Tails by the neck and pinned him against the wall. The terrified fox struggled in his metallic grasp but he couldn't get free as Mecha Sonic was much, much too strong. As well as becoming metal, Mecha Sonic had gained super strength from his roboticization too.

"Now Mecha Sonic, kill that little twerp!" ordered Eggman.

"As-you-wish-mas-ter." droned Mecha Sonic in monotone.

His voice no longer sounded like Sonic, he sounded like a robotic version of Sonic. Mecha Sonic tightened his grip around Tails' neck. The poor fox was beginning to suffocate.

"No! Sonic…please!" begged Tails "Don't…"

Mecha Sonic wasn't having any of it. He obeyed only Eggman and he had been ordered to kill Tails and that was just what he was going to do…

Footnotes:

***Geoffrey St. John left for Downunda in Story 3**

OMG! MECHA SONIC! Do our heroes even have a chance? Find out next time! Reviews are welcome as always.

The Unstoppable Mecha Sonic

Story 12: The Unstoppable Mecha Sonic

Mecha Sonic tightened his grip around Tails' neck more and more. He was squeezing so hard Tails' face was beginning to turn purple and then blue. Tails was losing his breath and fast. If he couldn't stop Mecha Sonic from doing anything then he would surely die from suffocation. Then before Tails could lose all hope of rescue, Nicole returned to the chamber holding something. It was a taser and it was a useful weapon against a robot since it was used for shocking people with. Nicole thrust the taser in Mecha Sonic's side and activated it. The roboticized hedgehog let out an electronic wail as electricity pulsed through his circuits. He let go of Tails who had passed out from lack of air. Mecha Sonic fell to his knees and Nicole picked up Tails. She ran out of the chamber with Tails in her arms. Port fired at her but missed every shot. Dr. Eggman began to go red in the face.

"Why is it every time I get close to victory someone ruins everything?" he moaned.

"I guess these Mobians have a strange ability of good timing master." suggested Alonzo.

"Oh well, they won't get far." said Eggman "Once Mecha Sonic recovers he'll blast them to smithereens!"

Funny Eggman should say that because Mecha Sonic had already recovered from the shocking taser blast. He got back to his feet and bowed to Dr. Eggman.

"My a-pol-o-gies mas-ter." he said "I-failed-my-task."

"Don't worry my new weapon of death." said Dr. Eggman "I have a new task for you. Make this your number 1 priority…you will go to every city on Mobius and bring them to the ground! Don't you dare come back to me until every last city on Mobius is destroyed!"

"I-o-bey." droned Mecha Sonic "Priority-1: Des-troy-des-ig-nat-ed-tar-gets-which-are all-cities-on-Mobius. I-will-not-fail-this-priority."

"That's a good boy." purred Eggman "Now go and cause as much destruction as you wish!"

Mecha Sonic obeyed and activated his jet feet. Then before Eggman could blink, he rocketed out of the roboticizing chamber like a speeding bullet. After the smoke from the jet fumes cleared, Dr. Eggman smiled admiringly at what he had just created.

"You know what Alonzo, this is such a glorious moment I think I might cry!" he said, pulling out a hankie and dabbing his eyes with it.

"If I could cry I would be right now." chuckled Alonzo "We've finally won for once. We've got the famous Sonic the Hedgehog is our weapon of death! Those pitiful fluff balls don't stand a chance!"

"Indeed they don't Alonzo." agreed Eggman "Indeed they don't…"

Nicole had run a good distance away from Eggman's base and taken shelter in a junkyard around the back of the base. This was where Eggman just dumped the remains of his old creations that had been destroyed by Sonic and the royal fighters and left them there to rust or until he wanted to use them for spare parts. Nicole heard the sound of jet fumes coming from Mecha Sonic from around the front of the base. Nicole poked her head around the corner to see Mecha Sonic flying away and heading north which was the direction Megapolis was. After Mecha Sonic was out of sight, Nicole turned her attention back to the unconscious Tails. She felt his chest. His heart was still beating but he wasn't breathing. After all Mecha Sonic had throttled him pretty hard. Very hard in fact. If Mecha Sonic had throttled Tails any harder the poor fox would have died so it was a good thing Nicole saved him. However Tails didn't show any signs of waking up which was beginning to worry Nicole. Maybe she had been a tiny bit too late and Tails was losing the will to live. Nicole put her hands on Tails' chest and shook him gently.

"Oh please, please wake up Tails." begged Nicole as she shook him

"Sonic won't be happy to find you dead."

Tails still didn't wake up. His face however was changing back to its normal colour which was a good sign. Nicole shook him a tiny bit harder. Then Tails began to stir in his sleep. He mumbled to himself.

"No…Sonic…no…" he mumbled.

Nicole beamed and thought she was going to break down crying with joy. Tails was alive! She had no idea what Sonic would have done if Tails did die. He probably wouldn't be the same again. Tails then suddenly shot up, open-eyed and looking flustered. He looked around madly as if he was expecting to be surrounded by Eggman robots or be attacked by Mecha Sonic. As soon as he realized there was no one around apart from Nicole he settled down.

"What happened Nicole?" asked Tails "How did I get here?"

"I noticed you and Sonic were taking too long to come out so I feared the worst and came back to help you out only to find a robot that looks like Sonic throttling you half to death." explained Nicole "How did Eggman build such a robot? And where is Sonic? I didn't see him in the chamber with you."

Tails' face fell.

"Nicole." he said slowly "That wasn't a robot that looks like Sonic…it IS Sonic."

Nicole gasped and clasped her hands around her mouth.

"You're kidding!" she gasped "Please tell me that isn't true!"

"I'm sorry Nicole but it is true." said Tails solemnly "Eggman's Portable Roboticizer 3000 robot blasted him and roboticized him right in front of my eyes."

Nicole thought she was going to pass out. This was the most horrifying thing that had happened since the destruction of Mobotropolis*. Nicole didn't know what to do except fight back the urge to sob.

"Sonic's been r…r…ro…roboticized?" spluttered Nicole "I…I don't… know…what to say!"

"I agree with you." mumbled Tails "Sonic, Hero of Mobius and my best friend is now going to kill us all."

"I think I should get back to Mobotropolis and warn Castle Acorn before he attacks!" cried Nicole "And Tails, you'd better warn everybody else!"

"OK Nicole." said Tails "Do you know where Mecha Sonic is?"

"Um I saw him heading north from here." said Nicole.

"That's where Megapolis is!" shrieked Tails "Bunnie and the Royal Fighters are going to be doomed!"

"Then you should get there and warn them right away!" cried Nicole "I'll go back to Mobotropolis and warn Castle Acorn! I hope Sally's back so I can warn her too."

And with that Nicole ran as fast as she could. Tails twisted his tails around and took to the skies. He flew as fast as he could go. He had to get to Megalopolis in double quick time otherwise Megapolis wouldn't be a pretty sight at the end of the day…

KA-BOOM!

The Egg Tank's thirteen cannons blasted away another power generator that belonged to Dr. Eggman. Debris and hot steel rained down on where the generator had once been. Thomas Tiger and the Megapolis Royal Fighters were advancing on Eggman's remaining forces and they were well and truly vanquishing them all. Ever since Sonic and Tails had helped them capture the tank** they had been victorious in every battle they had been in. Eggman's robots had tried their hardest but the Egg Tank's thirteen cannons were far too powerful for the little robots. They were all blown to bits every time. As of this moment, Bunnie Rabbot had detected power generators for Eggman's robot production line and the troops were using the Egg Tank to destroy the generators. They had just one more to go

and Bunnie knew which way it was. She led the tank to the left and walked onwards: constantly eyeing a tracking device she had with her. Thomas marched beside her.

"I have no idea how you found those generators Bunnie dear but it's a good thing you have." said Thomas "We'll put an end to Eggman's robot madness once and for all."

"Thanks Tommy." said Bunnie modestly "I'm just doing mah job."

"Indeed you are." said Thomas briskly "I'm glad Castle Acorn let you come here to help us***. We couldn't have done this without you."

"And I couldn't have done all the amazing things ah can do if it weren't for mah robotic limbs which Eggman sort of gave me****." said Bunnie, flexing her robotic arm.

"I bet that fat moron's really mad he's inadvertently given you those abilities." chuckled Thomas.

Bunnie Rabbot laughed with the jolly tiger. She really was thankful to Eggman for half roboticizing her and she was thankful to Geoffrey St. John for rescuing her before she could get fully roboticized*****. Then her tracking device started to make a faint beeping noise. Bunnie looked at it. The device was telling her that the last generator was nearby. She directed the tank to turn right a little and go forward until they see it. The enormous tank's engine roared as the tank began to turn slowly to the right. Thomas signalled to the tank drivers to stop turning. Then the colossal machine began to heave forward on its titanic treads. It trundled slowly and steadily as it moved. Minutes later a silver object began to peer over the horizon as the tank went on and on. As they neared it, Bunnie's tracker began to go wild. The object was the last generator. If they destroyed it then Eggman's robotic forces would be eliminated as the generators worked the production lines Eggman had built for his robots to use to mass produce themselves when their numbers were low. Thomas signalled the tank to halt. The tank stopped and let off a loud hiss.

"You may fire when ready." said Thomas "And we shall put an end to that filthy Eggman's reign of terror!"

The tank drivers primed the tank's thirteen cannons and got ready to fire. In a moment, the last generator would erupt into flames and debris and that would be the end of Eggman's robots in Megapolis. The tank's cannons were now ready to fire. The tank drivers prepared to pull the trigger. But something caught their eye and they hesitated. Thomas and Bunnie spotted it too. Mecha Sonic had arrived on the scene and he landed in front of the tank at a good distance away from it. He fixed the fighters a cold steel stare.

"What on Mobius is that?" cried Thomas.

"That looks remarkably like Sonic the Hedgehog." said Bunnie "So Eggman's making robot duplicates now?"

"No matter, we'll jolly well take it down just as easily as the rest!" growled Thomas "Chaps, FIRE!"

The tank drivers didn't wait to be asked twice. They pulled the lever which fired the cannons. The tank's thirteen cannon barrels lit up and then blasted away at Mecha Sonic. The roboticized hedgehog didn't show any signs of fear or concern about what was happening. Instead he activated his jets and flew out of the way. The cannon blasts hit the spot where Mecha Sonic once was and tore a massive hole into it, sending showers of soil and stones flying everywhere. A huge cloud of smoke followed afterwards and hung around for a few seconds before drifting away into the air. After the smoke cleared, Thomas observed the scenery. The blasts had made a small crater in the ground. It was about as large as sixteen elephant footprints altogether. There was no way any robot could have survived that onslaught. Thomas smiled proudly.

"Well aimed chaps." he said "Now prepare to blast the generator."

The tank drivers began readying the cannons again. However, as we already know, Mecha Sonic hadn't been blasted to bits, he had dodged the cannons and now he was hiding in a mountain nearby. He deployed his blasters and aimed at the tank down below. You see, in Mecha form Sonic had blasters now, a weapon he wouldn't be caught dead using in his organic form. Mecha Sonic locked on target and fired his blasters. Bunnie however, being a rabbit, has excellent hearing and she heard the blasters coming just seconds

after Mecha Sonic fired. She grabbed Thomas and jumped out of the way before the laser blasts could hit. The blasts hit the tank and caused it to explode a titanic explosion. The smoke made a small mushroom cloud and the fire blazed away at the tank's hull. Thousands of tank pieces rained everywhere. Bunnie and Thomas dived to the ground so they wouldn't get hit by the showers of debris. After the debris stopped falling Bunnie and Thomas got back to their feet and stared at a terrible sight. The Egg Tank, their greatest weapon, the colossal thirteen cannoned machine of carnage, had been completely obliterated in one swift laser blast. Bunnie's ears dropped down in despair.

"Oh mah stars!" she cried "The tank…it's destroyed!"

"And it took the lives of the fellow tank drivers too." said Thomas sadly "This is a dark moment for us. We've lost our greatest weapon."

"But what in the heck shot the tank?" asked Bunnie "None of Eggman's robots had the firepower to…"

Then suddenly a blue blur rocketed into Bunnie and sent her flying through the air like a tossed stone. She came down and hit the ground back first and skidded to a halt. Mecha Sonic had done that of course. Thomas's eyes widened so much he thought they would pop out of their sockets.

"How in the blazes did you survive our tank attack earlier?" he blustered.

Mecha Sonic didn't say a word. Instead he gave the tiger a look of cold steel that could easily make the faint-hearted faint. Thomas stood his ground and whipped out his pistol. He blasted Mecha Sonic but the shot didn't seem to do much harm to him. Mecha Sonic deployed his blasters and fired at Thomas. The tiger was sent hurling through the air. Thomas landed on his side and skidded to a halt. The impact severely grazed his arm and he clutched it in pain. He had dropped his pistol after Mecha Sonic had shot him. Mecha Sonic picked up the pistol and crushed it with his bare metal hands. Thomas sat up, only to see Mecha Sonic coming towards him with a murderous intent in his red robotic eyes.

"Priority-1: Des-troy-all-cities.." droned Mecha Sonic "I-will-also-kill-any-one-who-re-sists-the-will-of-Dr.-Egg-man."

He deployed his blasters and aimed at the tiger. Thomas put his hand over his heart, accepting this was to be his fate, to die at the hands of a Sonic-like robot. Then suddenly Mecha Sonic was blasted away by a powerful plasma cannon blast. It was Bunnie Rabbot! She had recovered just in time to save Thomas' life. Seeing his chance, Thomas ran off and hid behind a chunk of tank tread to keep watch on the upcoming battle. Mecha Sonic got back to his feet and growled a mechanical growl. Bunnie wasn't the least bit intimidated, she just stood her ground.

"Ya'll are gonna regret messin' with me gruesome!" said Bunnie "Yer gonna get smashed just like those other Eggman robots!"

"You-can-not-de-feat-me." gloated Mecha Sonic "I'm-too-power-ful."

"We'll see about that metal brain!" said Bunnie cockily.

Mecha Sonic charged straight at Bunnie at an incredible speed. Bunnie deployed her shield generator and activated the force-field to defend herself. Mecha Sonic hit Bunnie but the force-field defended Bunnie from the full force of the attack. It didn't stop Mecha Sonic from pushing her a good distance backwards though. Bunnie shut down the force-field and gave Mecha Sonic a left hook to the face. The robotic hedgehog's head span around crazily and stopped a moment after. Bunnie tried to give Mecha Sonic and uppercut but Mecha Sonic caught her arm before she could hit home. Then Mecha Sonic threw her arm backwards which caught Bunnie off-guard and then Mecha Sonic let loose an array of punches. The poor Rabbot was getting pummelled good and hard. Then Mecha Sonic withdrew his right arm and got ready to land another punch in Bunnie's face but Bunnie withdrew her robotic arm and lunged at the same time. Their fists slammed into each other. Bunnie smirked and then activated her telescoping feature so her arm stretched and sent Mecha Sonic hurtling backwards into the Rocky Mountains surrounding the area. That however didn't bring Mecha Sonic down and out. It did stun him but the robotic hedgehog was still unharmed.

Bunnie charged at Mecha Sonic with her plasma cannon deployed.

She aimed at Mecha Sonic and fired multiple shots at the robot. Mecha Sonic merely flew out of the way, leaving Bunnie to blast the mountains. Then Mecha Sonic charged down at Bunnie like a homing missile. Bunnie saw him coming and took flight. She gave Mecha Sonic an uppercut and then kicked him in the chest before he could retaliate. Mecha Sonic got very mad and fired at Bunnie. Bunnie activated her shield generator to defend herself. Mecha Sonic had a cunning plan. He fired so much laser blasts that Bunnie couldn't see him and then before the lasers had finished hitting Bunnie's force field he flew off. Bunnie turned off the force field and looked around for her opponent. Mecha Sonic was nowhere to be found.

"Hey Mech face!" shouted Bunnie "I ain't finished with you yet! Come out so I can whup yer ugly backside in!"

Then suddenly something fast charged straight into Bunnie's back and sent her hurtling to the ground. Mecha Sonic had sneaked up behind Bunnie and charged at her top speed. Bunnie hit the ground face first. The impact left three small scratches under her eyes. Bunnie got back to her feet and opened one eye to see where Mecha Sonic was. He was charging towards her again. Bunnie telescoped her arm and hit Mecha Sonic smack in the face. Now it was Mecha Sonic's turn to fall to the ground face first. Bunnie tried to attack him before he could get back up but Mecha Sonic recovered too quickly and was already back on his feet by the time Bunnie reached him. Then Mecha Sonic raised his foot and landed a tremendous kick slam to the stomach. That one kick was so hard Bunnie was winded and she felt like she had been hit by a truck. She flew backwards and landed on her back. She coughed and spluttered violently. Mecha Sonic advanced on Bunnie with an evil look of death on his mechanical face. He stared emotionlessly at his downed opponent.

"I-knew-I-was-too-power-ful." he droned "Now-after-a-val-i-ant-fight, you-shall-die-Bunnie-Rab-bot."

Bunnie's ears pricked up. How on Mobius did that robot know her name? She didn't have time to wonder though; she was staring death in the face right now. Mecha Sonic deployed his blasters and was about to fire until Bunnie's arm stretched and landed a punch to

the face. Mecha Sonic toppled over backwards. Bunnie laughed.

"If there's one thing you robots don't have, it's a brain!" she sneered "That's why we Mobians will win at the end of the day."

Mecha Sonic didn't say a word. He just got back up and got ready to attack again. Bunnie beat him to it and punched him straight in the chest. She gave him an uppercut, then a left hook and then a blast to the face. Mecha Sonic got angry and retaliated with a left hook and a right hook. Then he kicked Bunnie in the stomach again, only not as hard as before. Bunnie blasted him again but Mecha Sonic fired his lasers to stop the blast from hitting him. Then Bunnie tried another punch but Mecha Sonic caught her arm and kneed her in the back. He whacked her across the head and then he hit her in the back of the leg which forced her down on one knee. Then Mecha Sonic clawed Bunnie across the cheek. Three bleeding scratches appeared on her face. Then Mecha Sonic was about to come in for the kill but Bunnie reacted just in time and punched him in the face. Mecha Sonic stumbled backwards but he regained his balance. Bunnie activated her plasma cannon once more and shot him multiple times in an effort to keep him back. The shots were doing some damage to Mecha Sonic at long last but it wasn't serious or even superficial. Once Bunnie was certain Mecha Sonic was too distracted, she charged at him and walloped him around the head. Then she elbowed him and landed an uppercut on him once again. Mecha Sonic retaliated with an uppercut of his own, shortly followed by a dropkick move that sent Bunnie tumbling backwards.

She recovered and then Mecha Sonic and Bunnie linked hands and tried to push either one away. If Bunnie had two mechanical arms she might have had a better chance of overpowering the robotic hedgehog but she only had one so Mecha Sonic only just managed to overpowered her and brought her kneeling down due to how hard he was pushing on her. Bunnie then released Mecha Sonic's left arm and punched him in the stomach. Mecha Sonic let go of Bunnie's other hand and jumped back to avoid another attack from her. Then both opponents deployed their weapons and blasted each other. The two shots made contact and exploded, the force sending them both sliding backwards. Bunnie recovered quicker and flew towards Mecha Sonic. Mecha Sonic however was sneaky and had a

sneak attack in mind. The moment Bunnie was at arm's length from him, he blasted her with his laser eyes. Bunnie yelped as she fell to the ground. Mecha Sonic had hit her in the face and momentarily blinded her.

Then Mecha Sonic began to stomp on her back. Bunnie turned onto her back just as Mecha Sonic was about to stomp on her again, telescoped her arm and punched him squarely in the face yet again. Then the Rabbot leapt to her feet and began to shower Mecha Sonic with fierce punches to fast for him to keep up with. Then she gave him another uppercut, a dropkick and a blast to the chest. Mecha Sonic was sent sliding backwards. That rabbit was clearly tougher then he thought she was. Then Mecha Sonic collapsed to his knees and bent down on his hands. Then his red optics died down to blackness. It appeared to Bunnie that Mecha Sonic had been defeated. She panted hard but she managed to put a smile on.

"Ah…ah did it." she spluttered "After all that fightin' ah defeated that robot Sonic duplicate. Now I'd best tear him tear him apart before he wakes up."

She walked towards Mecha Sonic cautiously, making sure he was truly down and out and not waiting to ambush him. Mecha Sonic did not stir. Bunnie stopped a few inches in front of Mecha Sonic and deployed her arm cannon, ready to blast him to smithereens. Then suddenly Mecha Sonic jumped to his feet and let fly an electrical surge at Bunnie Rabbot! The robot hadn't been defeated; he pretended he had shut down to catch Bunnie off guard and then when the moment was right, he electrocuted her. Bunnie squealed as electricity surged through her body. Thomas, who had been watching the whole fight, almost died of shock at seeing Mecha Sonic electrocute Bunnie. Mecha Sonic thrust his arms forward and sent the shocked rabbit flying backwards. Bunnie skidded to a halt and passed out. Mecha Sonic advanced on her menacingly. He glared at his opponent.

"You-have-de-fied-the-will-of-Egg-man." he growled electronically "Now-you-shall-die-for-this."

He deployed his blasters was about to blast her dead until a communication message from Eggman stopped him dead in his

tracks. He answered it.

"No don't kill the Rabbot!" yelled Eggman on the other side of the communicator "Take her to me so I can roboticize her! She'll be a valuable asset to my glorious army."

"I-o-bey." whirred Mecha Sonic.

So he put his blasters away and instead, picked Bunnie up and draped her over his shoulder. He was about to fly away until something flew up to him from behind and kicked him in the back of the head, causing him to drop Bunnie and fall on his face. It was Tails! He had finally arrived on the scene after a long flight and saw Mecha Sonic about to take Bunnie away so he took action before he could get away. Mecha Sonic growled mechanically as he got back up. Tails put on his bravest face and stood his ground.

"I don't want to fight you Sonic but I will if I have to." he said with great courage.

"You-can-not-stop-me." crowed Mecha Sonic "You-are-hardly-a-fighter-so-what-chance-do-you-think-you-have-a-gainst-me?"

Tails suddenly got confused. How does Mecha Sonic know he's not much of a fighter? Does he have Sonic's memories of his friends stored somewhere? Then suddenly Mecha Sonic charged at Tails. Tails leaped out of the way and Mecha Sonic accidentally collided with a pile of tank pieces. The impact had left Mecha Sonic very dazed and very stunned. In fact he had a massive dent on his head so he likely had brain damage. Also, Mecha Sonic's optics were going fuzzy and he was speaking unintelligibly.

"Must...kzzt! vanquish…kzzt!…fuzzy fur…kzzt brained… garden… of…turkeys…does kzzzzzttt! not…kzzt! compute…with…priority!" he slurred rather stupidly. He sounded very funny indeed.

"You're severely damaged mech brains so I suggest you go home and get repaired." said Tails.

"Pri…buzz…ority…is…kzzt!…not…completed…" mumbled Mecha Sonic mindlessly "Can…not…fail…my…zzz…Egg…Salad…mas…

ter…kzzzzzttt!"

Then Mecha Sonic's communicator began buzzing.

"Mecha Sonic, you're not in fighting condition." said Eggman "Return to me at once for repairs!"

"I…re…fuse…I mean…I…zzz o…bey plaster….I kzzt…mean… master…" croaked Mecha Sonic.

The damaged mech took flight and slowly flew away from the battlefield, still droning mindlessly to himself. Tails watched Mecha Sonic leave and turned back to the unconscious Bunnie. She looked terrible; she had bruises, scratches and a few burn marks from being electrocuted all over her as well as a few small dints on her robot limbs. Thomas Tiger emerged from his hiding place and ran over to Tails and Bunnie.

"Good to see you again Tails lad." said Thomas "Pity you came here at a dark moment."

"I know." said Tails "Bunnie's been beaten to a pulp by Mecha Sonic and from the litter of tank pieces I think your Egg-Tank is destroyed."

"Yes it was, by that robot Sonic thing." said Thomas "How did he make such a robot? And where's Sonic, he should be with you young man."

"I'm sorry to say Thomas." said Tails glumly "That robot Sonic IS the real Sonic the Hedgehog."

"He…WHAT?" shouted Thomas.

"Eggman roboticized him right in front of my eyes." said Tails "Sonic's been turned into his robotic minion and now goes by the name Mecha Sonic."

"Oh my gosh!" cried Thomas "We're dead! We're doomed to defeat! In fact I may as well make some surrender flags! We're definitely going to need them."

"Thomas!" snapped Tails "Shame on you! Sonic would never give

up on us so you shouldn't give up on him!"

"But how in the name of Megapolis can we defeat that monstrosity?" cried Thomas "He just beat the cuss out of Bunnie Rabbot! And it's the real Sonic in robot form so if Eggman can't stop normal Sonic how can we stop Mecha Sonic?"

"We're gonna have to try and subdue him for long enough to de-roboticize him." said Tails "But we don't have a de-roboticizer."

"So we should probably steal one from Eggman." suggested Thomas "Me, you and Bunnie could probably sneak into Eggman's base when Mecha Sonic leaves to attack somewhere else and then steal a de-roboticizer."

"I have another thought." said Tails "Eggman has a floating machine that can roboticize Mobians called Port so if I could set that thing in reverse we could use it on Sonic."

"Sounds like a good plan." said Thomas "But it is also a risky one."

"We have to try Thomas." said Tails "There's no other choice."

Thomas nodded in agreement. He had no idea how successful this raid would be but he hoped with all the hope he could that he and Tails would be able to save Sonic from Dr. Eggman's nefarious control over him…

Footnotes:

***Mobotropolis was destroyed in Story 2**

****Sonic, Tails and Bunnie captured Eggman's second Egg Tank in Story 7**

*****The Council of Acorn voted for Bunnie to help out in Megapolis in Story 3**

******Bunnie Rabbot became a Rabbot after being half-roboticized in Story 1**

*******Still talking about Story 1**

Mecha Sonic maybe wounded but that doesn't mean it's over yet! Can Tails de-roboticize Sonic or is there no hope left for the blue hedgehog? Reviews are welcome.

Special thanks for Kratos Pwns for your kinds words. I'm glad you're enjoying this. And as for Cosmo the Seedrian being in this? We'll see about that... ;)

Mecha Sonic's Next Target

Story 13: Mecha Sonic's Next Target

Nicole had been running for hours, literally hours. The Northern Border of Megapolis was far away from Mobotropolis but Nicole's determination to warn Castle Acorn about Mecha Sonic was stronger then anything on Mobius. She did have to stop to catch her breath a few times but Nicole never stopped for long and at long last she had reached the under construction city of New Mobotropolis where Castle Acorn was. Panting heavily, Nicole opened the door and staggered inside. To her absolute relief, Sally Acorn was there, sitting in a chair in the lounge. She noticed Nicole's tired state and got up from her chair. Nicole fell to her knees. Sally knelt down beside her.

"Nicole, I've been wondering where you were." said Sally "What's going on? You look like you've run a marathon around the whole of Green Hill Zone."

"I feel like I've run a flippin' marathon." huffed Nicole "I just ran all the way from Eggman's base in the Northern Border all the way to here!"

"What were you doing in Eggman's base?" asked Sally "He captured you no doubt."

"Well not exactly." said Nicole, her panting calming down to a few heavy breaths "Sit down and I'll explain everything."

Sally sat back down in the chair while Nicole told her all about Sonic's return from his recent adventures in Green Hill Zone, Megapolis and Downunda* and the chocolate mind-control incident in Empire City**.

"So that's how you ended up in the Northern Border." said Sally "But where are Sonic and Tails? Were they captured before they escaped?"

Nicole looked down at the floor very sadly. Her ears drooped back which Sally knew was not a sign of good news.

"That's exactly why I ran all the way back here." said Nicole with a sorrow expression on her face "I had to warn you about a brand new holy terror that Eggman has unleashed on us."

Sally gripped the edges of her chair, fearing the news Nicole was dreading to tell her.

"Eggman has…has…" Nicole's beautiful green eyes began to well up with tears. She choked them back long enough to deliver the final part of the news.

"Eggman has…roboticized Sonic!" wailed Nicole, finally breaking down in tears.

Sally's face went white with horror. She looked like someone had pulled a knife on her. In fact she was so horrified she fainted in her chair. Nicole stopped crying and noticed Sally had fainted. She moaned in annoyance.

"Great, now I've got to drag her all the way to the cellar!" she said to herself "Oh well, safety comes first as they usually say."

Nicole picked Sally up and draped her over her shoulder. She strained as she carried Sally out of the lounge. Nicole was taking Sally to the cellar. In severe emergencies, the Acorn family had to hide in the cellar for their own safety and they had to remain there until the danger was over. The cellar was a fairly large underground room with a little refrigerator so the family had food to keep them going during their time in the cellar, a pool table, four chairs to sit in, a coffee table and a shelf of books. After all the family needed things to occupy themselves with because the situation could be bad enough to confine them to the cellar for a good few weeks or even months. Nicole opened the cellar door, turned the light on and carefully carried Sally down the steep stairs. She settled Sally down in a chair and ran back out of the cellar to warn Sally's parents about Mecha Sonic.

Meanwhile, Mecha Sonic had returned to Dr. Eggman's base. The poor mech was a gibbering wreck. He talked absolute nonsense non-stop on his way back to the base. The fight with Bunnie Rabbot had left him battle-damaged and thanks to Tails, tricking him in crashing into some tank debris he suffered brain damage. Mecha Sonic staggered clumsily into Eggman's base. He finally managed to get to the main control room where Dr. Eggman and Alonzo resided. Dr. Eggman couldn't believe what Mecha Sonic looked like. His eyes widened so much his glasses fell off. He picked them up and put them back on.

"Holy androids! What did that Rabbot girl do to you?" cried Dr. Eggman.

"Rab…bot…kzzt!…did…considerable…kzzzzzttt!…dance… moves…tobzzt!…shower me…klunk!…with…salad bars… kkkrrruuummmppplllleee!"

"What are you talking about?" yelled Alonzo "You're talking fiddle-faddle!"

"That fight must have severely damaged his brain." said Eggman, taking close note of the horrible dent in Mecha Sonic's head "I'm gonna take forever to get you back into shape!"

"I…zzzz…must…com…zzzzzuuuuummmmmmppppp…plete my… pri…ority…gargle!…for…you…master…" gibbered Mecha Sonic feebly.

"You can complete your priority once I've repaired you." insisted Dr. Eggman "Now shut down."

"I…obey…fat…frumpy…slab…" Mecha Sonic croaked stupidly.

"DON'T CALL ME FAT!" snarled Dr. Eggman.

Mecha Sonic didn't hear him for he had shut himself down.

"Alonzo, take him to the repair bay." ordered Dr. Eggman.

Alonzo muttered angry gibberish under his breath. He picked Mecha Sonic up and heaved him out of the room. Dr. Eggman sat down in

his seat and stroked his moustache, deep in thought.

"If Bunnie Rabbot can put up one heck of a fight with Mecha Sonic then who knows if there are any other Mobian rats who can fight that well." he thought to himself "Maybe I should give Mecha Sonic a power boost of sorts…"

Then the idea hit him smack on the head.

"Of course!" he cried "I'll send Mecha Sonic to Angel Island and get him to steal the Master Emerald! That'll give him plenty of power! He'll be invincible! He'll be unstoppable! He will be unbeatable!"

And he cackled like a demented crazy man in a mental asylum. He couldn't wait for Mecha Sonic's repairs to finish so therefore he could give Mecha Sonic his new priority…

Back in Megapolis Bunnie Rabbot had finally come to after passing out from being electrocuted by Mecha Sonic in their titanic battle earlier***. She was delighted to see Tails again but she wasn't pleased to hear that Mecha Sonic had flew away to be repaired. She was even less pleased to hear that Mecha Sonic was a roboticized Sonic the Hedgehog.

"So ah've been fightin' a roboticized Sonic the Hedgehog?" she yelped "Oh mah stars! If Sonic is on Dr. Eggman's side now we're doomed to defeat! Dr. Eggman's gonna vanquish us and roboticize us all!"

"Oh no he isn't!" declared Tails hotly "I have a plan."

"What is it then sugah?" asked Bunnie eagerly "How can we stop Mecha Sonic?"

"We are gonna sneak into Dr. Eggman's lab and steal his Portable Roboticizer." explained Tails "Then, using my techno skills, I am going to set it in reverse so it will be a de-roboticizer and we will use it on Sonic to turn him back to normal."

"Are you sure it'll work?" asked Bunnie.

"We haven't got a better option." said Thomas gravely "We have to try it."

"When are we gonna do it?" asked Bunnie.

"We will wait until Mecha Sonic leaves to attack again and then we will steal Port." explained Tails "But given the damages done to Mecha Sonic we might be waiting until tomorrow or even the day after. We might even be waiting for…"

"We get the idea lad." interrupted Thomas "It doesn't matter how long we wait; I could wait a year to save a life, especially a dashing hero like Sonic the Hedgehog."

"I'm sure Sonic would have liked to hear such determination." said Tails, impressed with Thomas's speech.

"And I'm sure he would like to hear your determination to save him from Eggman." said Thomas, a smile appeared on the tiger's face.

Tails nodded modestly. He began to think hard about the forthcoming plan. Would it work? Would he be able to set it in reverse? Would he be able to de-roboticize his best friend? Only time would tell if the plan was going to be a success or a failure…

Two days had passed. Mecha Sonic's damages from his battle with Bunnie Rabbot were so great it took Dr. Eggman two days to finally repair him and get him back into tip-top shape. Now the roboticized hedgehog was as good as new and ready to whoop someone's backside in at any moment now. Mecha Sonic marched out of the repair bay and stood to attention. Dr. Eggman smiled admiringly.

"It's so good to see you back in shape Mecha Sonic." purred Dr. Eggman.

"This-u-nit-is-in-100%-fight-ing-con-dition." droned Mecha Sonic "I-shall-get-back-to-my-priority-and-des-troy-all-of-Mobius'-cities."

"No my dear Mecha Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "I have a different priority for you."

"My-num-ber-1-priority-is-to-des-troy-all-cities-on-Mobius." Mecha Sonic insisted "Why-are-you-not-order-ing-me-to-do-so?"

"Because I have an idea to make you stronger and too powerful to defeat." said Dr. Eggman "You will go to Angel Island and absorb the Master Emerald's power so you will be too strong too defeat. You will vanquish every last Mobian on the planet with that amount of power!"

Mecha Sonic thought for a moment and made up his mind.

"Very-well. My-new-priority-is-to-get-the-Mas-ter-Em-er-ald-and-ab-sorb-it's-power." droned Mecha Sonic "I-will-not-fail-you-Mas-ter-Egg-man."

"And you should see to it you don't fail me or it's the scrap heap for you!" threatened Dr. Eggman.

Mecha Sonic saluted him and then activated his jet boosters. He flew out of the base at top speed. After leaving the base, he set his courses to Angel Island all the way in the continent of Downunda. He had a new priority and he wasn't letting anyone get in his way. After Mecha Sonic left, Dr. Eggman sat back in his seat and watched the monitors to see Mecha Sonic heading off to Downunda. He smiled wickedly, eagerly waiting for Mecha Sonic to get the Master Emerald and absorb its power. He thought on how powerful Mecha Sonic was going to get after absorbing the Master Emerald. Mecha Sonic might end up becoming the most powerful robot in the history of robots. Alonzo appeared beside Eggman with a thoughtful face on.

"That Mecha Sonic really is something isn't he?" said Alonzo.

"Oh yes, especially since he's my primary nemesis in robot form." said Dr. Eggman "I can't handle organic Sonic so those Royal Fighters filth shouldn't be able to handle Mecha Sonic!"

"But Bunnie Rabbot handled him pretty well." noted Alonzo "And it's taken us two days to repair that blue demon so heaven knows what will happen if there's anyone stronger then Bunnie he happens to come across."

"Once he gets the Master Emerald no one will be able to handle him!" declared Eggman "I have no idea how powerful that gem is but I bet it's power is incredible since it keeps a whole island afloat!"

"I've just had a horrid thought." said Alonzo suddenly "What if Mecha Sonic's pride gets the best of him and he betrays you? You will be toast!"

"If he does that I will de-roboticize him." said Dr. Eggman "I can set Port in reverse so he will de-roboticize victims instead of roboticizing them."

"But then you've got Sonic the Hedgehog to deal with once again you moron!" blurted Alonzo "How can you sort that out?"

"After I de-roboticize Sonic, I will simply kill him before he has a chance to do anything." said Eggman simply "I will bring a pair of robots with me to zap him on the spot before he gets back up. Genius!"

"Agreed sir." applauded Alonzo "You simply are marvellous."

"I know." boasted Dr. Eggman "But fingers crossed I won't need to de-roboticize my greatest weapon. He's too valuable for me to lose."

He turned his attention back to the monitors and watched Mecha Sonic's position. He was now flying over Megapolis and heading in the direction Downunda was located. Eggman couldn't wait to see the carnage Mecha Sonic would cause once he got his power boost.

Meanwhile, Tails, Bunnie and Thomas had been waiting patiently for Mecha Sonic to leave Eggman's base so they could put their plan into action. They had sneaked into the Northern Border and waited in Eggman's junkyard around the back. Bunnie had also made quick but steady recovery and was now in fighting condition once again. The moment they heard the sound of jet fumes they poked their heads around the corner to see who it was. It was indeed Mecha Sonic so now was the right time for their plan. Rather then going around the front and breaking in, Tails thought the best idea was to

get in through the back of the base, luckily, had a back door. Eggman's base always had a back door for quick escapes after all. The back door unfortunately was locked but that wasn't a problem for Tails, Bunnie and Thomas. Bunnie just flexed her robotic arm, aimed and landed a huge punch in the centre of the door. The force of the punch broke the lock and the door swung open. Tails took a cautious look around to make sure the noise of the door being forced open didn't alert anyone or anything. No one was about. Not even a little guard bot so Tails, Bunnie and Thomas sneaked inside like a trio of serpents. The trio took their steps carefully while they crept through the corridors. They daren't not make a noise otherwise they could alert Dr. Eggman and he would be on them in a jiffy with his horde of robots. Bunnie might be able to fight them off but without Sonic the Hedgehog, the trio would soon be overwhelmed by the robots and then be taken to the chamber for roboticization. Tails, Bunnie and Thomas had made it through a whole corridor and came to a corner. Tails gave a shush sign and peeked wearily around the corner. He looked both ways to make sure the coast was clear.

There wasn't a soul to be seen. Tails had a sneaky feeling that this mission was becoming a little too easy. Was Eggman deliberately letting them in to catch them off guard and then waiting for the right moment to strike? Fat chance, Dr. Eggman wasn't the kind of person known for being subtle in his approach. Or was it simply the fact Eggman never bothered to have many guards around despite the many dangers that await him? Or maybe he, Bunnie and Thomas were just getting lucky with their approaches? Regardless, Tails knew he had to remain vigilant as Dr. Eggman could strike at any moment without warning or they could come across an Eggman robot and end up triggering an alarm. Tails, Bunnie and Thomas tip-toed as quiet as mice through the next corridor. Tails hoped he remembered where the main computer room was. He had been taken to the roboticizing chamber by Eggman's chocolate possessed Mobians and after escaping that dreadful chamber, he had somehow found the computer room****. The only trouble was Tails couldn't really remember where exactly the room was. He kept being sure on where it was but he wasn't fully sure if he was right or not.

After passing several closed doors throughout the corridor, Tails, Bunnie and Thomas came up to a huge red door with warning stripes around the sides. This was likely the main computer room. Tails kept his fingers crossed as he pulled the lever to open it. The door opened. Tails' face brightened. It was the main computer room. Hopefully Port was in here. Tails closed the door and he, Bunnie and Thomas began to explore the room. Tails sat in the chair and stared at the big computer screen in the centre of all the smaller monitors to see what was going on. The screen showed Dr. Eggman and Alonzo sleeping in the bedroom. The relief that swept over Tails after seeing that was like an ocean wave. As Tails monitored Eggman's position, Bunnie and Thomas looked in any of the storage compartments. Then Bunnie wrenched a compartment open and stared at what she saw. It was a huge domed robot with a multiple number of cannons and coloured dull grey.

"Hey Tails! Ah darn found something!" cried Bunnie.

Tails leapt out of the chair as if Bunnie's words had an electric effect on him. Tails ran over to where Bunnie was and observed the robot she was looking at.

"Well done Bunnie!" cried Tails "That's Eggman's portable roboticizer robot!"

"Portable? Do you mean that thing is basically a floating robot that can roboticize people with a blast of a cannon?" asked Thomas.

Tails nodded.

"Now that's positively primeval!" said Thomas loudly "Eggman won't need to capture us and put us in cages anymore, he can just send that thing out and get it to do the job for him!"

"Well he won't do once we capture that thing." said Tails, grabbing one of the handles around Port's base and yanking the big old machine out of the storage compartment.

"Once we set this thing in reverse and get it turned on we'll use it on Mecha Sonic to turn him back into Sonic." said Tails "If only I knew how to do it though."

"Well don't lull about here." said Thomas "We risk getting caught, we'll have to take that portable thingy with us while we escape."

"Ah agree." said Bunnie "I'll watch yer backs while you and Tails escape." she added, deploying her arm cannon.

"Be careful Bunnie." said Tails, dragging Port to the door and opening it.

Tails and Thomas dragged Port out the door and down the corridors with Bunnie following them and constantly stopping to turn around and make sure the coast remained clear. So far, everything was going according to plan. The only problem was, Tails and Thomas could get inside the base quietly without a load, but now they had Port with them, they risked making a noise even more then before. Then suddenly, Tails stepped on a stray rivet on the floor and fell flat on his face. Thomas suddenly fell forward and pushed Port forward so hard the domed robot hurtled over Tails and crashed straight into the corridor doorway. The domed robot span around like a roundabout for a moment and then slowed to a halt. The doorway had cracked from the impact of the crash. Tails froze to the spot, expecting something terrible to happen. That crash had actually woken Dr. Eggman and Alonzo up and they burst out of the bedroom.

"What the blazes is going on here?" yelled Eggman "I'm trying to nap!"

"It's Tails, Bunnie and that tiger guy!" cried Alonzo "They're stealing Port!"

"Is that so?" crooned Dr. Eggman "Well you three won't be doing anything of the sort! You three will be taken to the chambers and roboticized!"

"No we darn won't fat man!" declared Bunnie Rabbot, punching Eggman in the face with her robotic arm.

Alonzo laughed at Eggman, prompting the fat doctor to wallop him around the head. Seeing the opportunity, Tails, Bunnie and Thomas ran for their lives with Port in tow. Dr. Eggman got really mad and

ordered his robots to surround the base before the trio could escape. Fortunately, the trio only just managed to get out of the base before the guard robots could surround the base. They didn't get far though. Two guard bots fired at Thomas' legs and brought the tiger falling to the ground. Tails and Bunnie noticed this and ran back to help Thomas. The guard robots surrounded the three of them and aimed their guns at them. Bunnie merely deployed her arm cannon and then blasted each of the robots at once. Once all the guard robots were blasted to bits, Bunnie dumped Thomas on top of Port since he wouldn't be able to run thanks to the robot blasting his legs. Tails and Bunnie ran off, dragging Port with them. Dr. Eggman saw this and quite literally, threw a fit. He looked proper funny with his arms flinging around and yelling dirty words that cannot be mentioned. Alonzo kept his distance and laughed at him. He had never seen his idiot master look so funny.

"NO!" bellowed Eggman after he stopped throwing a fit. "Those Mobian morons might try and set Port in reverse and use him on Mecha Sonic to turn him back to normal!"

"So what do we do now sir?" asked Alonzo.

"I'm going to get that Portable Roboticizer back!" announced Eggman "And I know just the robot for the job!"

"I bet you're going to bring out Egg-Squid aren't you?" muttered Alonzo.

"I'm going to bring out Egg Squid!" announced Eggman.

"How predictable." scoffed Alonzo.

"Oh be quiet you talking garbage can!" snapped Eggman "And get Egg Squid-online!"

Alonzo left to do the job with Dr. Eggman following him.

Meanwhile, Mecha Sonic was well on his way to Downunda. You see, he had Sonic's memories of certain places he had been to stored in his databanks so he remembered anywhere he had been to when he was Sonic the Hedgehog. Mecha Sonic also

remembered Angel Island, the Master Emerald and Knuckles the Echidna so he knew he had a fight in store when he got there. But what Mecha Sonic didn't know was that fellow Royal Fighter Geoffrey St. John was in Downunda too. He had been helping the Royal Fighters of Downunda since the King and Queen decided to send one of their troops to help the other groups three weeks ago*****. During his time in Downunda, Geoffrey had been a great help to the Royal Fighters of Downunda with his combat skills and arm-mounted crossbow. At one point Geoffrey even pretended to betray the group to get some vital information from the robot factory set up in Downunda.

As soon as he got the information, he blew the whole robot factory up and gave the information to the Royal Fighters. The fighters used this information to their advantage and completely obliterated three robot squads in one day. At this moment they were setting up a trap to capture Mecha Sonic. Nicole had given the news of Sonic's unfortunate roboticization to all the other fighter groups so they could prepare for Mecha Sonic's inevitable attack on them. The trap Geoffrey and the others were setting up was a cannon that could shoot an EMP (Electromagnetic Pulse) blast. The blast would hopefully short circuit Mecha Sonic, put him out of commission and bring him crashing down to the ground so they could put him in lockdown until they could de-roboticize him. The only problem was the group didn't seem very supportive of Geoffrey's plan.

"Are you sure this EMP cannon will work Mr. St. John?" asked one fighter. He was a golden brown weasel wearing a brown leather jacket. He had a belt around his waist. The belt held several pouches that contained bullets for his two handheld pistols he kept in his pockets.

"Of course it'll work Mr. Staffer." said Geoffrey, loading his arm mounted crossbow "It worked on that air raid last week. Those robots fell out of the sky like a flock of dead birds."

Secretly though, Geoffrey was having the same doubts as Mr. Staffer. He wasn't sure the cannon would work on something as powerful as Mecha Sonic. Still he had to try anything to save Mobius

from Dr. Eggman, even if it meant bringing one of his own allies down. Geoffrey and two other fighters turned the crank to make the cannon rise upwards so it was pointing up into the sky. They were pretty sure Mecha Sonic was likely going to attack them from up above so they had to get the cannon aimed and ready for Mecha Sonic's arrival. Geoffrey stopped turning the clank and crouched down behind the cannon.

"OK boys, now we wait." he said "Get down and don't fire that EMP cannon until I give the command."

The fighters nodded and crouched down behind him, waiting for their attacker to come. There was a very long silence. Then suddenly Geoffrey's ears picked up the sound of oncoming jet fumes. He poked his head around the side of the cannon. Mecha Sonic was coming and he was coming fast.

"OK boys, get ready…" ordered Geoffrey.

Mr. Staffer got to the control pad and raised his hand, ready to slam down on the fire button. Mecha Sonic soared closer and closer until he was almost flying over the fighters.

"FIRE!" blasted Geoffrey.

Mr. Staffer slammed his hand down on the fire button. The EMP cannon whirred into life and blasted at Mecha Sonic. Unfortunately, Mecha Sonic saw it coming. He stopped dead in his tracks and ducked so the blast soared directly over his head. Geoffrey was so shocked at that miss his whiskers nearly fell off. Mecha Sonic glared at the fighters down on the ground.

"Hos-tile-res-is-tence-de-tec-ted." he droned "Commenc-ing-battle-for-mation."

He deployed his blasters and shot at the EMP cannon. Geoffrey and the others ran for cover. The laser blasts hit the cannon and blew the great weapon to pieces. Geoffrey was absolutely crushed to see his beautiful plan crumble to pieces as bits of cannon littered the place. With that plan down and out, Geoffrey had no choice but to try the next plan, which was engage Mecha Sonic in combat himself.

Nicole had said Mecha Sonic was probably a dangerous foe in combat so Geoffrey had a secret weapon for in case he needed it, which was a stun dart capable of stunning robots as well as organics. Mecha Sonic charged at Geoffrey at breakneck speed. Geoffrey aimed his arm-mounted crossbow at Mecha Sonic and got ready to fire. Mecha Sonic was about to slam directly into Geoffrey until the skunk fired at him. The dart hit Mecha Sonic directly in the forehead. The dart sent an electric pulse surging through Mecha Sonic's circuits. Mecha Sonic wailed an electronic wail and then collapsed to the ground, dead as a dingbat. Geoffrey smiled; happy his Plan B had worked.

"Well mates, the metal bloke's been de-commissioned." announced Geoffrey "Now let's get poor Sonic to someplace safe and secure until we can find a way to de-roboticize him."

Geoffrey grabbed Mecha Sonic's legs while Mr. Staffer picked him up by the shoulders. Then the two carried Mecha Sonic off. They needed to get him to an airport so they could catch a plane to Empire City and then deliver Mecha Sonic to Castle Acorn. They couldn't go to an airport at Mobotropolis since Mobotropolis had been destroyed so Empire City was the only option near enough to Mobotropolis.

"How long will it take for Mecha Sonic to wake up?" asked Mr. Staffer.

"Long enough for us to get to Castle Acorn." said Geoffrey, hoping he was right "And hopefully we'll be able to turn good ol' Sonic back to his normal self. I feel sorry for the bloke. I wouldn't want to be a heartless robot under that Eggman bloke's control."

"Nor I." agreed Mr. Staffer "I bet Sonic will feel much better when he's flesh and blood again."

Geoffrey nodded. As he continued to carry Mecha Sonic away, the skunk hoped dearly that the dart's effects would last as long as he thought it would.

Tails, Bunnie and Thomas had dragged Port all the way before Megapolis and decided to hideout in Green Hill Zone so they could rest themselves. They chose an area with thick bushes and short stumpy trees so Dr. Eggman would have a harder time seeking them out. Tails slumped on the grass, panting hard. Bunnie and Thomas slumped on the grass too.

"Ah wish I flew instead of running." puffed Bunnie "Ah wouldn't have tired myself out as much."

"Well now we've taken a break we can see if we can set this robot into reverse." said Tails cheerfully "I might be able to work this out since I'm so technical minded."

"I'll say you are, you fixed a broken tank generator in two days." said Thomas, thinking back to the time Tails fixed up the Egg-Tank for him and the other fighters.

"OK then." said Tails, observing the domed robot with a spanner in his hand "Let's take a look at this thing."

As he observed Port and wondered on what to do, Thomas's pocket began to vibrate. It was his phone ringing. Thomas pulled the phone out and answered it. The person on the other side was Geoffrey St. John.

"Mr. St. John, what a pleasure." said Thomas "So what's the occasion?"

"We've captured Mecha Sonic mate." said Geoffrey "Be sure to inform the Acorn Family, we can't get through to them and you're probably nearer to Castle Acorn then we are so you'll probably reach them."

"We're only in Green Hill Zone old chap." explained Thomas "So we are nearer to Castle Acorn. I'll see if I can reach the Acorn family."

"Good on ya mate. Cheers." said Geoffrey.

The phone started buzzing, meaning Geoffrey had hung up. Thomas dialled another number on his phone and put it to his ear. Instead of someone answering him he got a message saying "We're sorry. The

castle has been placed in lockdown and the phone is out of service until further notice. Sorry for the inconvenience." Thomas put the phone back in his pocket.

"Anything wrong sugah?" asked Bunnie.

"Geoffrey has successfully captured Mecha Sonic and has requested me to inform the Acorn Family." explained Thomas "But I can't get through to them. The castle has been placed in lockdown."

"Well in emergencies like this, the Acorn Family go into lockdown for their own safety." noted Bunnie Rabbot.

"We'll have to go to Castle Acorn and inform them in person." said Thomas "But we'll wait and see if Tails can set this strange contraption in reverse first."

All the while Thomas and Bunnie had been talking; Tails had been scratching his head, thinking on how to set Port in reverse. He had opened up a panel on Port which had all his settings. There were many different lights, buttons, blots and dials but Tails' mechanical mind couldn't quite work out what their functions probably were. They weren't labelled or anything so Tails had no idea what any of those things could do. He didn't dare try anything in case he did something wrong and blew Port up or something even worse. But if he didn't try anything, he would never be able to de-roboticize Sonic so he had to try something out. Tails tired turning one of the dials on the settings pad. His head rained with sweat and his heart pounded like a hammer hitting a nail. He turned the dial fully to the left. All that did was make Port hover above the ground. Tails turned the dial back to the right and Port floated back down. Tails was glad that dial didn't do anything dangerous. He decided to try another dial. With shaky hands, he turned the dial to the right. All that did was make the cannons twitch and rotate. Tails turned the dial back. Then Tails decided to press a button and see what that did. The button activated the cannons and they blasted a nearby tree. The tree was now a metal tree with no leaves on. Bunnie and Thomas stared in disbelief at the steel tree. What a sight it was for them! Tails kept his finger over the button to remind himself that button activated the cannons. He decided to try another dial and see if any of those reversed the process. But which dial was it? He'd already tried two

and they didn't work so he had no idea which dial was right. Tails tried a dull silver dial with a chrome surface. He closed his eyes in fear the dial would do something terrible. He turned the dial slowly to the left with his hands shaking uncontrollably. Nothing happened. Then Tails pressed the button. The cannons blasted the tree again, only this time the tree's metal turned back into wooden bark. That meant he had set Port in reverse! Tails cheered with excitement.

"I did it!" he exclaimed, punching the air "I set it in reverse!"

"Well I do say young chap." said Thomas "You surprise me."

"Well done Tails." applauded Bunnie "Now we can use it on Sonic and turn him back to normal!"

"But we have to get it to Mecha Sonic first." noted Tails "And he could be anywhere now."

"Geoffrey and the Downunda Royal Fighters have captured him and are coming back with him." explained Thomas "So we'd better go to Castle Acorn and wait for them to arrive."

"I hope they're not doing too much harm to Sonic." said Tails.

"Sonic's a robot now, he can't feel pain." said Bunnie, hoping that would make Tails feel better "So Geoffrey and his troops can't hurt him too much."

"Well that's a relief." said Tails "Well let's get this thing towed to Castle Acorn and wait for Mecha Sonic's arrival."

Tails, Bunnie and Thomas got to their feet and began tugging Port away. They decided to go quickly so if Eggman was on their trial he wouldn't catch them so quickly. Unfortunately, they didn't get far. A huge red, metallic tentacle appeared from nowhere and wrapped itself around the three fighters. The tentacle pulled them out of the bushes and raised them up so they could see the thing the tentacle belonged to. It was Dr. Eggman and he was sitting in a huge red robot that looked a giant squid, complete with tentacles, pointed head and huge red eyes. Eggman cackled madly at his catch.

"Ha, ha, ha! Gotcha!" crowed Dr. Eggman "And you fools thought

you could escape me so easily!"

"Let go of us Eggman!" cried Tails.

"What? And let you turn Sonic back to normal?" sneered Dr. Eggman "No chance! I'll squeeze you all to death with my giant metal tentacles!"

And with that Egg-Squid's tentacle tightened its grip on its prey. The trio yelped and gasped as Egg-Squid began to squeeze them harder and harder. In a moment, they would all suffocate…

Meanwhile the Downunda Royal Fighters had reached an airport at long last. Now all they had to do was to get Mecha Sonic on a plane to Empire City and then they would be off. To make double sure Mecha Sonic wouldn't escape; Geoffrey had his crew strap him down to a bed so even if the dart's effects wore off, Mecha Sonic wouldn't be going anywhere. The plane they had managed to catch was a white plane with a propeller and two wings. There was enough room for Geoffrey and all of the fighters he worked with as well as the pilot. Two fighters pushed the bed into the plane's cargo hold and closed the hatch.

"We'll be ready for take-off in five minutes." announced the pilot.

"OK mate." said Geoffrey.

He had one little job to do before boarding the plane. He just needed to pack up the supplies he'd brought with him to Downunda and then he would be ready. Geoffrey ran to the pile of suitcases that were waiting to be loaded onto the plane. Geoffrey pulled out the one with his name on and opened it. He took his backpack off and loaded it into the suitcase. He wouldn't want to sit in his seat wearing it as it would be very uncomfortable with the backpack digging to his back. He didn't want to take off his arm mounted crossbow but he had to for security reasons. He took the weapon off his arm and put it in his backpack. Then he put the backpack back into the suitcase and loaded it back on the rack of suitcases. Then suddenly the airport seemed to explode around him. Geoffrey turned around sharply to

see the plan engulfed with flames and smoking heavily. Two dead bodies lay next to the remains. Those bodies were the pilot and co-pilot.

Geoffrey couldn't believe his eyes. What happened? Did Mecha Sonic somehow escape? Impossible! The dart's effects shouldn't have worn off already! Geoffrey ran over to the plane's blazing wreckage and observed it as close as he could. There was no sign of Mecha Sonic anywhere. Geoffrey began to panic. Where was he? Where was Mecha Sonic? He soon found the answer to his question as his eyes caught sight of Mecha Sonic flying away. Mecha Sonic had woken up from the dart's effects earlier then expected since Geoffrey's darts don't effect robots as well as Mobians and due to his strength, Mecha Sonic had broken free from his restraints and blasted the plane to slag before making a clean getaway. Geoffrey stomped the tarmac in temper.

"Damn it! That blighter got away!" he cursed "And now he's going to cause more chaos elsewhere!"

His ears drooped down in sorrow.

"I can't believe it, I failed my mission and now Mecha Sonic's going to destroy us all." he moaned "I hope there's someone else out there who can help us."

Little did the skunk know, there was someone out there who might be able to help out…

And that someone was Knuckles the Echidna. Angel Island had gotten Nicole's message and prepared for Mecha Sonic's arrival. Knuckles stayed with the Master Emerald so he could keep Mecha Sonic away from it. He wasn't at all pleased to hear Sonic had been roboticized but he was looking forward to fighting him. He had looked forward to challenging Sonic and seeing who would win in a fight between him and Sonic. Knuckles had been waiting for Mecha Sonic's arrival but several hours had passed and the robot hadn't shown up. Maybe Mecha Sonic had been dealt with? Or maybe Mecha Sonic was just taking his time with his arrival? Regardless,

Knuckles remained vigilant as the deadly machine could show up at any moment. At one point, Knuckles nearly decided to call it off and assume Mecha Sonic wasn't going to show up but he remembered he should never assume so he remained in his position. Then he heard a faint noise in the distance. Knuckles looked to the left and saw where the noise was coming from. A tiny blue dot was coming towards him with the sound of roaring jet fumes following it. The tiny dot was Mecha Sonic coming towards Angel Island at top speed. Knuckles clenched his fists and punched them together with a smirk on his face.

"Finally, I was beginning to think he wasn't going to show up!" said Knuckles happily "Now he's here, it's time to bring him to the scrap yard!"

Mecha Sonic continued hurtling towards the island. His sharp red optics caught sight of the Master Emerald. His priority was to get a power up from it and that's what he was going to do. It didn't take long for Knuckles to work out that Mecha Sonic was heading towards the Master Emerald. Knuckles leapt on it and got ready to land a powerful punch to Mecha Sonic's metallic face. Unfortunately, Mecha Sonic noticed Knuckles on top of the Master Emerald and halted. He deployed his blasters and shot Knuckles directly off the emerald. Knuckles fell down the stair case and landed in a heap on the ground. Mecha Sonic landed on the Master Emerald and was about to get his little power boost until Knuckles recovered and punched him off.

"Keep away from the Master Emerald creep!" he bellowed.

Mecha Sonic glared at Knuckles. He tried to blast him again but Knuckles jumped out of the way and punched Mecha Sonic in the face again. Mecha Sonic retaliated with a kick to the gut. Then the two fighters linked hands and pushed on one another. They were both as strong as each other so they pushed each other away, their feet scrapping the soil and grass as they slid backwards. Mecha Sonic gave Knuckles a death stare.

"You-can-not-stop-me-Knuckles." gloated Mecha Sonic "Bunnie-Rab-bot could-not-stop-me-so-what-makes-you-think-you-can?"

"I'm as tough as nails!" boasted Knuckles "And I have fists of steel! So back down and I won't have to hurt you Sonic!"

"That-is-not-my-name." snarled Mecha Sonic "My-name-is-Mecha-Sonic!"

"No it isn't, your name is Sonic!" argued Knuckles "Come on buddy, I know it's you deep down! Fight Eggman's control! Get control over yourself! You know you don't wanna do this! You are Sonic the Hedgehog! You fight Dr. Eggman, not serve him!"

Mecha Sonic, angered at Knuckles' pitiful speech, just promptly attacked him with a flying punch. Poor Knuckles didn't know what hit him. Knuckles hurtled through the air and fell over the side of Angel Island. Before he could fall any further he punched the side of the island. That punch had submerged his fist into the rock. Knuckles could climb up rock by digging his fists into the rock and heaving himself up. Knuckles climbed up as fast as he can but when he got back onto the island a terrible sight met his eyes. Mecha Sonic was on top of the Master Emerald! And even worse green energy was circling around Mecha Sonic like dancing fireflies. He was absorbing the emerald's power! Knuckles leapt back onto the island and ran as fast as he could to stop Mecha Sonic absorbing anymore power but the boosted robot saw him and blasted him away. The only difference was his lasers were much stronger then before, the blast sent Knuckles flying ten feet away from Mecha Sonic. Knuckles got back to his feet and got ready for another attack. But something he saw shocked him so much his dreadlocks quivered. Mecha Sonic was mostly the same as before only he was now coloured gold instead of blue and his metallic quills pointed upwards.

"No…" stammered Knuckles "Not a…"

The golden Mecha Sonic glared at Knuckles. He had a murderous and slightly crazed look in his eyes.

"You-could-hard-ly-man-age-Mecha-Sonic." he droned "Now-let's-see-you-deal-with-SUPER-MECHA-SONIC!"

And with that he thrust his arms forward and sent a tremendous wave of energy hurtling towards Knuckles…

Footnotes:

*** See Stories 3-9 for all the adventures**

**** See Stories 10 & 11**

***** See the previous story for the titanic contest between Bunnie and Mecha Sonic**

****** Tails found the computer room in Story 11**

******* Geoffrey St. John was requested to go to Downunda in story 3 remember?**

Mecha Sonic was bad enough but S uper Mecha Sonic? How are our heroes even capable of fighting such a powerful robot? See the titanic conclusion to the Mecha Sonic saga next time!

Mecha Sonic's Last Strike

Story 14: Mecha Sonic's Last Strike

Things hadn't been going any better for poor Tails, Bunnie and Thomas. They were still caught in Egg Squid's giant tentacles and being squeezed so hard their breath was escaping their bodies. They were about to suffocate too since Dr. Eggman tightened the squeeze harder and harder.

"Eggman…please…let…us…go…" choked Tails helplessly.

"What? And let you de-roboticize Sonic?" sneered Eggman "Not a chance!"

"Yeah! Not a chance!" added Alonzo.

Eggman glared at his assistant. If he wasn't wearing his glasses you could probably see a cold death stare in his eyes.

"Alonzo, have I told you not to imitate me before?" snarled Eggman.

"Um…yes you have sir." said Alonzo "My apologies."

"Accepted." said Dr. Eggman "Now where was I? Ah yes, squeezing the life out of my victims!"

Egg Squid's squeeze had reached it's maximum. It couldn't squeeze any tighter but it was already squeezing hard enough to kill someone so it didn't need to. Just as it looked like Tails, Bunnie and Thomas were done for; two small bombs appeared out of nowhere and attached themselves onto Egg-Squid's tentacle. Then in a matter of seconds the bombs went off, blowing the tentacle clean off. Dr. Eggman was so shocked I swear to god his moustache almost fell off! Alonzo looked like he wanted to grow a moustache just so he it could fall off in shock. Tails, Bunnie and Thomas landed on the ground, gasping for air. They felt so relieved to be free from that robot's grasp.

"Who saved us?" asked Bunnie.

"We did." said a voice that sounded familiar to her.

It was Wilson and Mandy! The two had made it in the nick of time to use the bombs they had on their belts to free the trio from Egg-Squid's tentacles. Tails, who had hardly met them, was strangely pleased to see them too.

"Gosh we owe you big time!" he gasped "We're about to suffocate until you arrived."

"That's the thing with heroes." said Wilson "We seem to be masterful at good timing."

"Now you three, get outta here, we'll hold Egg-Face off!" ordered Mandy, pulling another bomb off her belt pouch, ready to throw.

"No, I'll go." said Tails "Bunnie and Thomas can give you extra support."

"Well if that's the case, where are you going then?" asked Wilson.

"I'm taking Eggman's portable roboticizer to Castle Acorn as I have a sneaky suspicion that's where Mecha Sonic will likely be or heading to if he isn't already there." explained Tails "And I've set this thing in reverse so I'll be able to turn Sonic back to normal."

"That's incredible!" cried Mandy "Well you'd better get going before Eggman catches you!"

Tails did not wait to be asked twice. He ran off as fast as his little legs would carry him. Dr. Eggman saw this and tried to catch Tails with another one of Egg-Squid's tentacles but Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and blasted the tentacle to smithereens. While the fight was going on, Tails grabbed Port by the handles and dragged him off. He hoped he remembered where Castle Acorn was. Eggman saw him getting away and tried to go after him but Bunnie grabbed on of Egg-Squid's tentacles and pulled him back. She sent the squid falling on its back so Eggman was no looking up at the sky.

"You ain't getting Tails and you ain't stopping him from saving

Sonic!" yelled Bunnie "So give it up fatty!"

"I never give up!" declared Dr. Eggman "And you ain't seen all of Egg-Squid's power yet!"

The huge squid-like robot got back upright and then began to make a loud hissing noise. Then, the two empty sockets where the tentacles had been before they were blown off, began to puff out puffs of steam. Then a brand new tentacle shot out from the socket! The fighters couldn't believe their eyes.

"Holly leaping fish!" yelped Wilson "That thing can grow new tentacles?"

"This only makes our fight harder young chap." said Thomas wearily.

"It doesn't matter how many tentacles that thing has, we'll stop it no matter what!" declared Bunnie Rabbot.

"We'll see about that." chortled Eggman.

Then suddenly Egg-Squid's new tentacles shot forward faster then a flying arrow. The fighter leapt out of the way just as the tentacles struck the ground. They pulled themselves out of the ground. The impacts had left holes in the soil and grass. Then Egg-Squid swiped at them with its tentacles. The tips were very sharp and if the fighters were unfortunate enough to get hit, they would be sliced in half. Egg-Squid almost hit Mandy but the mouse ducked in the nick of time whereas Bunnie jumped out of the way. Then she extended her arm and grabbed the tentacle before it could hit Thomas. She pulled it until the tentacle was completely straight. Mandy threw the bomb she had taken off her belt at the tentacle. The bomb blew it clean off in one swift explosion. Then Bunnie proceeded to whack Egg-Squid with the tentacle like a giant whip. The robot tumbled backwards and fell over again. The whack had left a small scar over one of Egg-Squid's eyes. Dr. Eggman began to get furious. The robot up righted itself again and just like before, it grew a new tentacle to replace the one Mandy had blown off.

"If you fools think you're going to beat me, think again!" bellowed Dr.

Eggman "I've got plenty of tricks up my sleeves!"

"We'll beat you no matter what!" snapped Bunnie "And we'll save Sonic from you!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" cackled Dr. Eggman "Well wait till you see what else this thing can do!"

"Is it time for the secret weapon?" asked Alonzo.

"It is time for the secret weapon." said Eggman "Get ready for it!"

He pulled a lever on the control pad. The Egg-Squid began to hover up into the air slowly but steadily. The Mobians watched in confusion.

"What's that rascal up to now?" asked Wilson.

"Something old friend." said Mandy "That's all I'm aware off."

Then suddenly Egg-Squid stopped hover and then began to slowly spin it's tentacles around. Second by second, minute by minute, the tentacles began to pick up speed. The tentacles were spinning around so fast Egg Squid looked like it had a giant saw blade underneath its enormous head. Then it hurtled itself forward. The fighters ran for their lives but Egg-Squid was locked onto them like a homing missile so no matter where they ran, Egg-Squid followed them, chopping down anything it ran into. If it kept up the chase then the unfortunate Mobians would like by sliced to ribbons…

Meanwhile, things were not going well on Angel Island at all. Super Mecha Sonic was giving Knuckles a heavy pounding due to his super enhanced strength. In fact not only was Mecha Sonic stronger and super form, he was also a lot faster. Every time he pounded Knuckles into the dirt, Knuckles would get back up and try to punch him but the super powered mech was out of the way faster then you could blink. Knuckles tried once again but Super Mecha Sonic jumped out of the way and elbowed him in the back, sending Knuckles falling down once again. Knuckles tried to uppercut Super Mecha Sonic but the golden mech caught his arm before he could

hit home and picked Knuckles up by his arm. Then Super Mecha Sonic spun the echidna around at such a fast speed he looked like a big red blur. Then Super Mecha Sonic let go and sent the echidna flying through the air. Knuckles went straight up for at least twenty feet and then he came hurtling down faster then a hurtling arrow. Knuckles hit the ground face-first so hard he made a hole the size of his own head in it. Super Mecha Sonic glared at Knuckles with his crazed optics.

"You-should-su-rren-der." he droned cockily "You-could-not-beat-Mecha-Sonic-so-you-can-not-beat-Super-Mecha-Sonic."

Knuckles pulled himself out of the earth and shook all the dirt off himself. He looked at Super Mecha Sonic.

"Sonic, I know you can hear me in there." he managed to splutter "Try and fight Eggman's control over you! I know you can do it!"

Super Mecha Sonic wasn't having any of it. When Eggman roboticized him everything, including his free will had been vaporized. There was no way Sonic could fight Eggman's control over him unless he was de-roboticized. Knuckles soon realized that trying to snap him out of it was totally useless so he had no choice but to continue fighting. He hurtled at Super Mecha Sonic and landed a great big punch smack in the robot's face. That punch actually sent Super Mecha Sonic flying backwards and crashing into the staircase which had the Master Emerald at the top of them. The impact seemed to have done more damage to the stairs then Super Mecha Sonic. The robotic hedgehog growled a strange mechanical growl and pulled himself onto his feet. He deployed his blasters and fired at Knuckles. Knuckles leaped out of the way but before he could land back down Super Mecha Sonic zoomed up at him and punched Knuckles so hard the echidna flew backwards for twenty feet. Knuckles came to a halt after hitting a tree. Before Knuckles could recover from that blow, Super Mecha Sonic zoomed towards him and hit him with a flying kick. Knuckles got very mad and decided to try something else. And he had the perfect move.

"Hey mech head!" roared Knuckles "Wanna know what earth and rock tastes like?"

Super Mecha Sonic glared at him but said nothing.

"Well you're just about to find out!" yelled Knuckles.

He jumped a good distance into the air. Super Mecha Sonic just stood and watched as he knew no matter what Knuckles did, it wouldn't hurt him. Knuckles then plummeted down with his fists forward. Then he hit the ground with extreme force. That incredible pound was so powerful it literally sent bits of earth and rock flying up and hurtling towards Super Mecha Sonic. The mech just stood there and let himself get showered by rocks and earth. Then Knuckles finished off his move with two uppercuts to the face. The uppercuts were so strong Super Mecha Sonic was knocked off his feet. Super Mecha Sonic wasn't too badly affected by the move but it did leave a good few dents on his armour.

"How did that feel?" smirked Knuckles.

Super Mecha Sonic didn't answer; he just got back to his feet and blasted Knuckles away with his blasters. Then to finish him off, he let fly his electrical attack. Due to being super powered, it was even more painful then before and poor Knuckles was getting shocked and zapped to the brink of death. But Super Mecha Sonic decided he'd had enough of pummelling Knuckles and stopped shocking him. Knuckles only just had enough strength to live. Super Mecha Sonic turned his back on Knuckles and flew away from Angel Island. He decided to go back to his first priority which was destroy all cities on Mobius. Downunda didn't have a city so he left Downunda and headed for the nearest city to Downunda…Mobotropolis.

The fight between the Mobians and Egg-Squid wasn't going any better. Egg-Squid continued to spin his tentacles around and charge at the Mobians, narrowly missing them every time. He had caused a considerable amount of damage to the surrounding forests due to the fact Egg-Squid kept diving into the trees when trying to hit the Mobians. All this running away from Egg-Squid was beginning to tire the Mobians out. If they collapsed due to exhaustion then they would be done for surely. Thomas decided they needed a plan so he gathered everyone around.

"This is getting us nowhere lads and lasses." said Thomas "We need a plan."

"What can we do against that terrifying machine of death?" yelped Wilson "If we bomb it's tentacles off it just grows another one!"

"Maybe we shouldn't focus on destroying the tentacles." suggested Mandy "Maybe we should destroy the head or something."

"Yeah, the head is where Dr. Eggman is housed in so if we can get him out of that machine then it won't be able to do anything with no one at the controls." said Bunnie.

"OK then, we will attack the head." said Thomas "Bunnie will have to do it because if we try we might get sliced up by its spinning tentacles but since Bunnie can fly she'll be less likely to get hit."

"Let's try it out sugah." said Bunnie, deploying her arm cannon.

"Me and Mandy will get Eggman's attention while you creep up on him." said Wilson, taking a bomb off his pouch.

Bunnie nodded and flew away. Wilson and Mandy threw their bombs at Egg-Squid to distract Eggman. The bombs hit its spinning tentacles. They went off with such a bang after Egg-Squid began slicing them up. The blow sent the robot spiralling around and around out of control. Poor Dr. Eggman was getting dizzy after all this spinning around. Then Egg-Squid landed head first into the ground, impaling itself in there due to its pointed top. Eggman began to grumble and mumble under his breath.

"Why are Mobians such a nuisance?" he said more to himself then anybody.

"I dunno." said Alonzo "Maybe it's natural for villains to find the heroes annoying."

"Oh shut up you idiot!" spat Eggman.

He pulled the levers and that started Egg-Squid's tentacles spinning around. The spinning tentacles slowly pulled the machine out of the ground. The moment Egg-Squid pulled himself out of the ground,

Bunnie Rabbot charged at him like a flying javelin. Then she began to repeatedly blast Egg-Squid's pointed head. The attacks caught Eggman by surprise. Eggman instantly retaliated by firing Egg-Squid's laser eyes. Bunnie ducked but she got the top of her head singed by the cannon blasts.

"Yeesh Eggman, take my hair off why not!" snapped Bunnie, feeling the blackened, burnt part of her hair.

"I'll take more then just your hair off you irritating Rabbot!" snickered Eggman "I might take your entire head off!"

He fired again. Bunnie was more alert this time and managed to avoid getting zapped or singed. Then Bunnie charged at the centre of Egg-Squid's head and landed an amazingly powerful punch right in between its eyes. That impact clearly shook Eggman. Before Eggman could regain his senses, Bunnie ripped a panel in between Egg-Squid's eyes off with her mechanical arm. Eggman instantly began to jibber like an idiot.

"Please, don't hurt me!" he whimpered "Leave me alone!"

"Ah won't hurt you but ah am going to yank you out of there!" yelled Bunnie.

Then suddenly she was hit in her side by a sudden bolt of electricity. Alonzo had pulled a taser out of his side compartment and fired it on the poor Rabbot. Bunnie instantly fell unconscious and fell forward, on top of Dr. Eggman. Eggman shoved Bunnie off himself.

"Since when did you have a taser Alonzo?" Eggman said, rather flabbergasted.

"Since I decided to equip myself with one." said Alonzo with pride on his face "Robotic minions need to defend themselves from danger you know."

"Well that was a very good trick Alonzo." said Eggman "Maybe you're not so useless after all."

Alonzo smiled. It was nice being appreciated instead of criticized for once.

"Once I defeat these morons I'm going to take Bunnie away to be fully roboticized!" declared Dr. Eggman "Just imagine how powerful I'm going to be with Sonic and Bunnie on my side!"

"I can almost imagine how powerful you'll be if you had Tails and Knuckles on your side too." said Alonzo.

"Now that you mention it, maybe I should try to roboticize Knuckles next." thought Eggman "He is a toughie after all isn't he…?"

Then suddenly a loud bang was heard from behind and Egg Squid began to violently rock about side to side. Wilson and Mandy were bombing it again. They had noticed Bunnie was in a bit of a scrape so they decided to help out. Egg-Squid turned around and fired its laser eyes at them. Mandy got her tail singed and Wilson only just managed to avoid getting hit. Thomas whipped out his pistol and shot at Egg-Squid's eyes. He managed to blast one eye to pieces but Egg-Squid's remaining eye fired at him, causing the tiger to leap out of the way to avoid getting singed.

"This is getting out of control!" cried Mandy "We're so doomed right now!"

"I wish Sonic was here to help us." muttered Wilson "We'd be caning him by now."

The suddenly Wilson saw a golden twinkle in the corner of his eye. He looked up and saw none other then Super Mecha Sonic hurtling over Green Hill Zone at the speed of a rocket. Eggman peered out of the gaping hole in Egg-Squid's head to see what it was. What he saw made his moustache straighten.

"Well grind my gears!" he cried "That Master Emerald's given Mecha Sonic quite a boost eh?"

"He's changed colour too master, he's now a brilliant gold instead of blue." noted Alonzo.

"I wonder why that happened." wondered Eggman.

Still, he couldn't help but wonder what carnage Super Mecha Sonic was going to cause…

Tails had finally made it to Castle Acorn with Port by his side. The tired fox cub fell forward on his knees due to how exhausted he was. Now all he had to do was wait for Mecha Sonic to attack. He knew Mecha Sonic would likely target a place as important as Castle Acorn so he was certain he would be there in a moment or two. And the moment he arrived, Tails would activate Port and Sonic would be back to normal. Tails just hoped he remembered how to fire Port's cannons. Then suddenly Tails' ever so keen ears picked up the sound of jet fumes. He looked up at the sky and saw Super Mecha Sonic coming towards Castle Acorn at the speed of a rocket. Tails' ears drooped back in fear. He had noticed Mecha Sonic's changes for he was now gold and his quills pointed up.

"How did that happen then?" he asked himself "I don't remember Mecha Sonic being gold before."

Super Mecha Sonic saw Tails down below and blasted at him. Tails leaped out of the way before he could get hit by the blasts. The force of the blast sent Port spiralling away. Super Mecha Sonic then charged directly into Castle Acorn's huge doors, knocking them down effortlessly. Tails knew that Super Mecha Sonic was going to try and attack the Acorn Family as well as bring the castle crumbling down on their heads so he picked himself up and dragged Port with him as he ran into the Castle. Super Mecha Sonic didn't do much of anything except blow things up with his blasters. Then he started scanning the building for life forms. He detected four in the cellar. These four, of course were Sally, her parents and Nicole. Super Mecha Sonic blasted the cellar door down, startling the Acorn family and Nicole. Then the super powered robot hovered slowly into the cellar with a murderous and crazed expression in his red optics. Sally and Nicole hugged each other fearfully, Queen Alicia hugged them both but King Max stood his ground, even though he knew he couldn't take down Mecha Sonic.

"Stand down Sonic or you'll get it!" threatened Max.

Super Mecha Sonic just knocked the old man aside. He advanced on the cornered Alicia, Sally and Nicole menacingly, the three of them shivering as he neared.

"You-are-enemies-of-Dr.-Egg-man." droned Super Mecha Sonic "But-if-you-surren-der-I-will-spare-your-lives-and-may-be-Egg-man-will-be-merci-ful."

"If we surrender you'll take us to Eggman so we can be roboticized no doubt." said Sally.

"A-ffir-ma-tive." said Super Mecha Sonic "And-I'll-take-this-king-dom-for-my-self."

"We will never let you have this kingdom!" yelled Queen Alicia.

"Then-you-will-be-ex-ter-min-ated!" snarled Super Mecha Sonic, aiming his blasters at the three cornered Mobians.

Then suddenly he was hit in the back by a yellow blast that made him wail. Tails had found the cellar and fired Port's cannons at him. Now Super Mecha Sonic was beginning to change back to organic form. Mecha Sonic's metallic body was beginning to turn back into the familiar form of Sonic the Hedgehog. But for some reason his body was still gold and his quills were still pointing up. That's because Mecha Sonic was super powered when he was de-roboticized so now he's been de-roboticized he's now just Super Sonic, not Super Mecha Sonic. If Mecha Sonic was still Mecha Sonic he would just be turned back into Sonic. After the de-roboticization process was complete, Super Sonic fell on his hands and knees. Tails, while pleased it worked, was wondering why Sonic was gold instead of blue.

"Why is Sonic still gold?" asked Tails "Did something go wrong?"

"No Tails, the de-roboticization worked." said Sally "It's just when he was still Mecha Sonic he was super powered and now you've de-roboticized him, he's still super powered, just not Mecha anymore."

"How did Sonic become super powered anyway?" asked Tails.

"I dunno." said Sally "He must have had contact with a powerful energy source like that Master Emerald on Angel Island. Things like that have happened before."

"I see." said Tails, walking up to Super Sonic and kneeling beside

him.

"Sonic? Are you alright?" asked Tails.

Then suddenly Super Sonic leapt to his feet. His red eyes were screaming with rage and he was gritting his teeth so hard I swear they could have cracked!

"Where is he? Where's that Eggman?" snarled Super Sonic.

"He's in Green Hill Zone." explained Tails.

"Thanks Tails." said Super Sonic "Now, I'm gonna kill that Eggman! He's gonna pay for roboticizing me and making me hurt innocents and smash everything to pieces!"

He rocketed off through the cellar door and out of the castle at blinding speed. Tails followed desperately after him. He had to stop Super Sonic's blind rage before it corrupted him and changed him into something dark and dangerous.

The fight with Dr. Eggman had gone disastrous. Wilson and Mandy had run out of bombs and Thomas' pistol had been destroyed. Now they were all caught by Egg-Squid's deadly tentacles and about to be squeezed to death. Dr. Eggman was really happy with his victory. He had Bunnie Rabbot, unconscious and cuffed up beside him and now he had three Royal Fighters in his deadly grasp. This was one of his greatest victories since he roboticized Sonic.

"How about that Alonzo?" said Eggman "I've had luck on my side since I roboticized Sonic. I have Bunnie captured and three morons ready to be squeezed to death! Isn't life grand?"

"Oh most certainly master." said Alonzo, beaming "Most certainly."

Then suddenly a golden bolt blasted its way through Egg-Squid's lower section, blowing it to smithereens leaving only its head remaining. The tentacles all fell to the ground. Wilson, Mandy and Thomas all gasped with relief now they were free. Dr. Eggman almost went wild with rage until the golden bolt attacked again. This

time, it charged through the head and snatched Bunnie Rabbot away from Eggman. This golden bolt was Super Sonic of course. Super Sonic lowered the still unconscious Bunnie on the ground and snapped her cuffs. Then Super Sonic rocketed at Eggman and hit him so hard he went right through the back of Egg-Squid's head. Dr. Eggman began to fall down but Super Sonic caught him the scruff of his shirt. Alonzo, knowing that this was a dangerous place for him, flew away in the remains of Egg-Squid's head. Dr. Eggman had never been afraid of anything much before but for the first time in his life he was downright terrified. He knew Sonic was dangerous to him, but now Sonic looked more dangerous then ever before.

"Um…hi Sonic?" squeaked Eggman.

"How dare you roboticize me!" yelled Super Sonic "Do you realize how much harm I could have caused to the innocents on this planet? You are so dead Eggman! You are so, SO dead!"

"No Sonic!" yelped Eggman "Please have mercy!"

"Why should I? You never did!" snarled Super Sonic "Your evil ends here!"

He drew his arm backwards, ready to land a powerful blow on Dr. Eggman. Eggman covered his eyes in fear.

"Sonic stop!" cried a voice he knew too well.

Super Sonic looked down to see Tails on the ground looking up at him.

"Tails, Eggman turned me into a weapon of death!" yelled Super Sonic "I'm going to give him what he deserves! He's too dangerous to live!"

"But Sonic, if you kill Eggman that makes you no better then he is!" cried Tails "And if you go too far your anger might corrupt you and change you forever! You're better then that Sonic! I know you are!"

Super Sonic really wanted to finish Eggman off but he knew Tails was right. Killing Eggman would make him no better then Eggman. And he never really fantasised killing anyway. Super Sonic pulled

Eggman close to his face.

"You were lucky this time Eggman!" he growled "But I might not be so merciful next time!"

He lowered Eggman to the ground and pushed him over.

"I will put an end to your reign of terror Egg-Face!" warned Super Sonic "And that's a promise!"

Then he lowered himself down to the ground and powered down. His golden fur was now back to his normal cobalt blue colour and his eyes were back to their natural green colour. He gave Tails a friendly smile and put a hand on his shoulder.

"Thanks Tails." said Sonic "I clearly don't know when I'm going too far."

"You're welcome Sonic." said Tails "I'm just so glad you're not a robot anymore!"

And with that he threw his arms around Sonic and hugged him happily. Sonic hugged him back. Wilson, Mandy and Thomas cheered with glee to see Sonic back to normal. Bunnie Rabbot had become conscious and squealed with joy to see Sonic back to normal. Dr. Eggman saw his chance to get away while everybody was cheering over Sonic's return to organic form. He ran as fast as his legs could carry him. Bunnie spotted him and tried to fly after him until Sonic stopped her.

"Let him go Bunnie." said Sonic "He's not worth it. We'll get him next time though."

"But…he…Okay sugah hog." said Bunnie.

"Did I do much damage while I was Mecha Sonic?" asked Sonic.

"Well apart from beating Bunnie to a pulp* and damaging Castle Acorn you haven't done much else." explained Tails "By the way, how did you super power like that?"

"When I was still Mecha Sonic, I absorbed power from the Master

Emerald and it gave me super power." explained Sonic "That explains the golden fur job."

"How do you remember all this even though you've been de-roboticized?" asked Tails. "I thought de-roboticized Mobians have no memory of what happened when they were robots."

"I'm not fully sure I can answer that." said Sonic "But when I was Mecha Sonic, I had memories of places I'd been too and I still remembered everybody's names and that. Maybe no one loses their memories when they've been de-roboticized or whatever."

"Well the only thing that matters is you're back to normal Sonic." said Thomas "Now you won't harm an innocent person ever again."

"I hope not." said Sonic "I just hope Knuckles forgives me for grounding him into the dirt earlier."

"I'm sure he understands." said Tails "And I'm sure he'll forgive you for misusing the Master Emerald."

"Yeah." agreed Sonic "Now let's put this messy business behind us and let's focus on our next move on Dr. Eggman and his tyrannical army."

"Oh yeah!" everybody yelled in unison, they all punched the air.

Sonic couldn't wait to get back at Eggman for roboticizing him and turning him into his evil robotic minion.

Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman and Alonzo arrived back at their base. Eggman was so angry over his failure and the loss of his greatest weapon he whacked everything with a giant spanner and smashed a great deal of things.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE I LOST MY GREATEST WEAPON EVER!" he roared at the top of his voice as he smashed a huge dent into a desk and smashed some test tubes "SUPER MECHA SONIC WOULD HAVE WIPED EVERYTHING OUT AND CROWNED ME RULER OF MOBIUS!"

"Well it's your own fault for letting Tails get away sir." noted Alonzo "If you didn't let Tails get away with Port, this wouldn't have happened."

Dr. Eggman was too busy smashing things in blind rage to hear Alonzo's critiques. Then Dr. Eggman suddenly calmed down and threw the spanner to the side.

"I also can't believe Sonic even threatened to kill me!" he shrieked "For the first time in my evil life I was…I was…terrified! That Super Sonic is going to give me nightmares for the rest of my life!"

"So sir, now we've lost Mecha Sonic." said Alonzo "What's your next nefarious move?"

"I'm going to build a new Mecha Sonic." replied Eggman.

"A new one?" cried Alonzo "How is that possible?"

"When Mecha Sonic was being repaired for the damages done to him by Bunnie Rabbot**." explained Eggman "I downloaded all his data and now I'm going to upload it into my next machine. Even though it'll take me a while to finish him, it'll be worth it, for soon everyone will tremble by the name of…METAL SONIC!"

And with that a light turned on, revealing a shiny sleek blue under construction robot with three spikes on its head, a black visor with red glowing eyes, a pointed nose, sharp claws and red feet. Dr. Eggman exploded into laughter at the sight of his new machine. Who on Mobius knew, what this brand new machine was going to do once it was unleashed into the world…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 13 for Bunnie vs. Mecha Sonic**

**** Still talking about Story 13**

Metal Sonic? This doesn't sound good! Tune in next time as we get to meet the one and only...Amy Rose! :) Reviews are welcome as always.

Sonic's Fan Girl

Story 15: Sonic's Fan Girl

Even though cities were the main targets of Dr. Eggman's nefarious army of robots and Robians (Roboticized Mobian) there would be a case of attacking the occasional village if they ever came across one. Densely populated or not, villages still had a fair amount of people living in them and every last life form mattered for Eggman needed Mobians if he was going to have an army of Robians to back up his own army of robots. Eggman had recovered from the fright he received from Super Sonic during the Mecha Sonic agenda* and now he ordered his army of robots to attack a village known as Knothole. Knothole was one of Sonic's favourite places to visit as it was a rather nice quiet place to chill out and the residents were too friendly for words. The moment he had heard about Knothole being under attack, Sonic was off faster then you could say "Well blow me down and pull me back up again!" He consulted to the Council of Acorn about it and he was willingly granted permission to help out. He needed back up though and the only available Royal Fighters for him were Wilson and Mandy since Bunnie Rabbot was still helping out in Megapolis and Geoffrey St. John was still helping out in Downunda. Tails wanted to come but Sonic felt like it might be better for him to stay home and continue working on something he had been building for the past few days. Right now, Sonic, Wilson and Mandy arrived at Knothole and hid behind a rock. It certainly didn't look like a nice place with all of Eggman's robots everywhere, shooting buildings down and kidnapping the villagers. This sight made Sonic quiver with anger.

"How could Eggman do this?" gasped Mandy "It's only a peaceful little village!"

"That's Egg-Face for you Mandy." muttered Sonic "He'll attack anything."

"I wouldn't be surprised if he decided to victimize a bloomin' anthill." mumbled Wilson.

"Well let's not stand here with our lips flappin' let's save everyone!" cried Sonic, ready to leap over the rock and run off.

"Hold it blue boy!" yelled Mandy, grabbing him by the quills and holding him back "Let's do this more stealthily shall we and we might not get our heads blown off?"

Sonic wasn't very keen on the stealth approach but he knew that Mandy was right.

"OK, we'll see where those jokers are taking the villagers and then we attack." Sonic decided "Is that a good plan?"

"Sounds good to me Sonic boy." said Wilson "Me and Mandy got ourselves a new supply of smoke bombs so we could just throw them at the Eggman robots and before the smoke clears, save everybody."

"That's way past cool Wilson." said Sonic, winking "I'm so glad I've got you two here."

Wilson and Mandy just gave him modest smiles.

"Just doing our bit for the kingdom and the planet." said Wilson.

"OK let's get a move on before we lose those walking trash cans." said Sonic, taking note of the robots marching away with citizens in tow.

The robots had the captured villagers by a chain around their necks and they marched off with the villagers reluctantly having to walk with them or risk getting choked by the chain. The trio decided to follow the robots at the back of the line so they weren't likely to see them as they were focused on what was in front and the only thing they were concerned about being behind them were the villagers following them.

A little while later the robots had taken the villagers to the designated place and halted. Sonic, Wilson and Mandy had taken cover behind a bush before the robots halted and they watched what was happening. After the robots halted, Dr. Eggman and Alonzo appeared on the scene with a brand new portable roboticizer with

them. This portable roboticizer was the same as the one Tails used to de-roboticize Sonic** only a little larger with more cannons and coloured claret red instead of dull grey. Sonic eyed the machine with deep suspicion.

"Is Egg-Brains gonna use that thing to roboticize those poor people?" asked Sonic.

"Likely." said Mandy "We have to take it down and fast."

Sonic nodded and was about to leap into action until something caught his eye. He stared at one of the captured villagers. It was a female hedgehog at about the age of fourteen with pink fur, jade eyes and she wore a backless red dress with a white trim at the bottom and red high heel boots with a white stripe on them. The hedgehog also wore white gloves with golden cuffs around her wrists and a red head band just behind her ears. Seeing this girl made Sonic gasp.

"What's up Sonic? Is there someone you know out there?" asked Mandy.

"That pink hedgehog they've captured is my biggest fan and pen pal Amy Rose." explained Sonic, pointing at the pink hedgehog "I'm not letting her get roboticized!"

"OK then, the moment Eggman tells that thing to roboticize everybody we throw the smoke bombs and tell the citizens to run for their lives." said Wilson.

"Good plan." agreed Sonic "And we'll also take out the machine Eggman has."

Wilson and Mandy took two smoke bombs from their belts and held them tightly. They waited for just the right moment to throw. As for Eggman, he was making one of his usual stupid, pointless announcements at the captured villagers.

"Now I have you lovely bunch, I'm going to turn you all into robots and you will all join my glorious robotic empire!" he crowed "And you will enjoy every moment of it!"

"You can't do this to us you walking beach ball!" snapped Amy, struggling in the grasp of one of the robots "Let us go!"

"I will once you've all been roboticized!" sniggered Eggman "Alonzo, activate Port II now!"

"Oh yes sir." said Alonzo, saluting.

He trundled over to Port II and turned it on. He aimed at the Knothole Villagers and was about to fire Port's cannons until four bombs appeared from nowhere and struck the ground like hail. The bombs split apart and smoke billowed out of the shattered shells, clouding everybody's vision. Wilson and Mandy had thrown the bombs just as Alonzo turned Port II on and now the smoke was distracting Dr. Eggman and Alonzo, Sonic ran up to the villagers and broke their restraints with a spin-dash.

"Run before the smoke clears!" he ordered "Run if you want to avoid being roboticized!"

The villagers, surprised at the arrival of Sonic, did not wait to be asked twice. They ran for it as fast as they could. Wilson and Mandy led the way to make sure they wouldn't get hurt. Unfortunately Amy wasn't so lucky. One of Eggman's robots spotted her and seized her by the arm and pulled her back. Amy squirmed in it's grasp but the robot was too tough for her. Sonic noticed this and with one swift homing attack to the head, sent the robot falling forward flat on its face. Amy was relieved to be saved but she didn't quite see who it was. Then suddenly something picked her up in bridal style. Amy looked to her left side to see who it was and to her absolute joy, it was her hero, Sonic the Hedgehog.

"Hi Ames." he said "So nice to meet you in person."

"Oh Sonic!" squealed Amy, wrapping her arms around the hedgehog "I knew you'd rescue us from that mean old Eggman!"

Sonic admired Amy's supportiveness of him. She was his biggest fan after all.

"Hold on tight Amy, I'm going to go super fast!" announced Sonic.

Amy held on tight. Just as the smoke finally cleared, Sonic rocketed off at such a fast speed he actually caused a sonic boom! The boom made Eggman grip his ears to block the extremely loud noise out but all the robots, including Alonzo shattered to tiny metal pieces from the intense volume of the noise. This heist just made Dr. Eggman jump up and down in rage.

"WHY MUST THAT STUPID PINCUSHION RUIN EVERYTHING?" he bellowed.

"Um, because that's what heroes do to the villain." snorted Alonzo as he put himself back together (Don't ask me how he does it, I just don't know.) "Traditionally, the hero makes things harder for the villain you doofus."

Eggman just bopped him on the head so hard the butler bot fell apart again. Alonzo sighed with annoyance.

"Oh shut up you unsupportive pinhead!" he growled "Oh I wish Project: Metal Sonic would hurry up and finish so I can unleash it on Sonic and his idiot friends!"

"Well master if you remember correctly (Fat chance of that) Project: Metal Sonic will be completed by next month." explained Alonzo as he put himself back together once again. "Which according to my built in calendar: is only three weeks away."

"I hope I can wait that long." said Eggman "My patience can only hold for so long."

"Your patience couldn't last five minutes." whispered Alonzo.

Unfortunately, Dr. Eggman heard him.

"Stop criticizing me and get Port back to base!" he roared "I'll attack Knothole later when Sonic's not around."

Alonzo grumbled as he towed Port away. Dr. Eggman climbed into his Egg-Mobile and hovered after him. He failed to roboticize Knothole now, but hopefully Sonic wouldn't be able to save Knothole the next time he attacked…

"Whee! This is so incredible!" squealed Amy "I've never been this fast before!"

"That's because you've never rode a supersonic hedgehog before." said Sonic with a smug face.

After escaping Eggman, Sonic was taking Amy for a small jog around Green Hill Zone at his trademark speed. Amy thought she was dreaming but she was thrilled she wasn't. Right here, right now, she was in the arms of Sonic the Hedgehog and riding at supersonic speed with him. This was truly the most exciting feeling Amy had ever had in her life.

"So, where are we going my handsome hero?" asked Amy sweetly.

Sonic went red in the face and his quills straightened in surprise. He was so taken aback by the compliment he almost fell over in mid sprint. That sudden name call just made Sonic feel all nervous and shy now.

"Um…my place." Sonic said after snapping out of his trance "Plus there's someone I know who I'm sure will like to meet you."

Amy liked the sound of that. A few minutes later, Sonic screeched to a halt outside a house. The house was only one storey with pale yellow walls, a blue door, two windows and a blue roof. There was a garage attached to the left side. Empire City didn't have any room for Sonic since all the available places had been taken up by the homeless Mobotropolis citizens but the Council of Acorn had managed to find an available home on the outskirts of Green Hill Zone, not far from Knothole. In fact Knothole was only a twenty minute sprint away from Sonic's new home so you can imagine Sonic didn't have far to go when he was called for help earlier.

"This is your house?" asked Amy, trying not to sound rude "I thought you would have lived in something a little…you know…nicer."

"That's the only place the Council of Acorn could find." said Sonic "My home city Mobotropolis was blasted to the ground by Eggman*** so I can't live there anymore. Besides, I like this little

place. Nice and cosy."

"I bet it was horrible for you when Mobotropolis got destroyed." said Amy sadly.

"It was." said Sonic "I was more devastated at the fact I couldn't save it as I was busy fighting Robians."

"What's a Robian?" asked Amy.

"A roboticized Mobian." explained Sonic "They're not nice to come across. Some of Mobius' best scientists are trying to come up with a de-roboticizer to de-roboticize any Robians they capture but with no success. Luckily Tails gave them the Portable Roboticizer he stole from Eggman**** so they're now making progress."

"That's great!" said Amy happily "I feel sorry for those poor people who got roboticized. Must be a horrible feeling for them."

"I know. It happened to me the other day." said Sonic sadly.

Amy almost fainted with shock.

"Y-you got roboticized?" she shrieked. Then she clenched her fists and gritted her teeth. "Ooh! If that Eggman was here right now I'd teach him a lesson or two!"

"It's alright Amy." said Sonic, holding her back to stop her throwing a fit. By gum was she scary in a bad mood! "I'm back to my normal self now. Although I was in such a rage at Eggman when Tails de-roboticized me."

"Who's Tails and where is he?" asked Amy.

Then, as if Tails had overheard them talking, he ran out of the house and up to Sonic. He was clearly happy to see his best friend back.

"Sonic! How did Knothole go?" he asked.

"As swell as it gets." said Sonic, grinning "Wilson and Mandy distracted Eggman with a few smoke bombs and I got the villagers to safety. Eggman shouldn't bother them anymore."

"That's great Sonic." said Tails happily "And by the way, my new invention's making some progress…"

He trailed off as he spotted Amy next to Sonic.

"Um…who's that?" asked Tails.

"That's my pen pal Amy Rose." said Sonic "She's one of the villagers at Knothole. I brought her over to say hi."

"Hi there." said Amy cheerfully "Are you the one known as Tails that Sonic's been mentioning?"

"Yep, I'm Tails." said Tails, shaking Amy's hand "Nice to meet you Amy."

"Aw, he's so cute and polite as well!" giggled Amy "Did you raise him up like that?" she added, though she meant it more as a joke then anything.

Sonic went red again. "No…I didn't raise Tails up like that Amy." he said "I didn't even raise him. I was running around Green Hill Zone until a saw a couple of robots attacking him*****. I saved him from the robots and I've decided to train him up to be a Royal Fighter."

"I bet that must be awesome Tails!" squealed Amy "You get to go on adventures with Sonic the Hedgehog! You must be the luckiest kid in the world!"

"Um…I do feel like that." said Tails modestly "I wish I could run as fast as Sonic. And I wish I was just as strong as him too."

All this made Sonic blush even harder. Man was this girl embarrassing to be around! Not that she meant to be embarrassing in the first place. Still, Sonic wanted to save himself further embarrassment by sending Amy home.

"Uh…Amy don't you think you should be…ahem…getting back home now?" said Sonic nervously.

"Well I should really." said Amy "But it's been wonderful to meet you and your friend Sonic. I hope to see you again soon!"

And with that she waved goodbye to Sonic and Tails and headed home. As soon as Amy disappeared from sight, Sonic sighed loudly.

"I can tell this girl's gonna be a handful." said Sonic "If she decides to show up again that is."

"Aw come on Sonic, she's not that bad." said Tails "I think she's really lovely."

"Yeah, and embarrassing." said Sonic "But she'll hopefully tone down the next time."

Tails suddenly put on a mischievous little smirk. His eyes narrowed to evil slits at Sonic.

"You like her don't you?" he jeered.

Sonic blushed so hard he went red all over his body!

"No! No I don't!" cried Sonic with embarrassment "I just..."

"Admit it Sonic, you like Amy don't you?" sniggered Tails, trying hard to contain his laughter.

"OK! I do a bit." sighed Sonic loudly "But not in the way you're thinking of so don't you dare suggest anything else!"

"Yeah right." laughed Tails, walking back into the house, laughing to himself.

Sonic face-palmed himself and groaned quietly to himself.

"Why do girls and kids have to be so embarrassing sometimes?" he moaned "Oh well, it might not be so bad next time."

He walked back into the house to make himself some lunch, which of course, would consist of about 12 chilidogs, his all time favourite food which he would happily eat all day, every day. Yet as he made his lunch, he couldn't stop thinking about Amy. One of the first things he thought when he saw her was, she's a lot prettier in person. That thought made Sonic go red every time he thought it. And Amy's voice, while not the loveliest voice in the world, was still lovely all the

same. The only trouble was, Sonic would never be able to say these things about her. There was something about Amy that made him go all nervous and shy. Was it her face? Was it her beauty? Or was it just the fact she was a bit of an embarrassment to be around? Or it was probably the fact Sonic did secretly fancy her he just probably wouldn't be able to admit it. But this was now, some time later Sonic might be able to get the courage and tell Amy what he secretly thought of her. Hopefully she wouldn't be much of an embarrassment the next time too. Sonic's train of thoughts just kept racing around as he began munching on his first chilidog. He had no idea what his next meeting with Amy would be, but he hoped it would be a little better then the first one.

The next day, Sonic was hanging out in Green Hill Zone. He hadn't heard anything from Dr. Eggman so he decided to chill out and make the most of it while he had the time. After all, heroes don't often get much time to relax and take it easy, they're always on their toes, waiting for the villain to make their next move. At this moment, he was just lying at the base of a tree and listening to nature's many voices as he lay there peacefully. Unfortunately, his peace couldn't last. Something pink leapt out from behind a tree and grabbed him into a bear hug. Sonic was so startled he almost jumped out of his sneakers.

"Now I've gotcha Sonic!" cried the pink thing.

It didn't take long for Sonic to figure out that the thing that pounced on him was Amy Rose.

"Um…hi Amy." said Sonic uneasily "Nice to…see you."

"Oh thank you Sonic." said Amy happily.

"So what are you doing here?" asked Sonic, trying to get free from Amy's hug.

"Oh I was just taking a leisurely stroll out in the beauty of Green Hill Zone and I just happened to come across you." said Amy "What a coincidence eh?"

"Yeah, coincidence." muttered Sonic as he finally pulled himself free from Amy's hug. By gum could that girl squeeze hard! Did a bear give her hugging lessons? And as for Amy happening to be in the same place as him, for some reason Sonic didn't think it was a coincidence.

"So what are you up to cutie?" asked Amy.

Sonic blushed and groaned at the same time. Man did she have to start with the soppy name calling again?

"I was just relaxing." said Sonic, trying to hide his embarrassment "I don't often get the time to just kick back and relax so I'm making the most of it."

"Aw! Surely you wanna do something much more exciting then that!" giggled Amy "You're Sonic the Hedgehog! You live for adventure and you stop the evil forces of Dr. Eggman! You shouldn't be sitting there relaxing!"

Boy this girl knows me as if I was her brother! thought Sonic.

"Come on I know a good place to hang out in!" cried Amy, grabbing one of his hands and trying to pull him away.

"Um…perhaps some other time when I'm in the mood for it." said Sonic through gritted teeth, he pulled his hand out of Amy's grip.

"Oh…" said Amy, staring down at the grassy ground beneath her feet. She looked disappointed.

"OK if you don't wanna hang out with me I'll leave you alone then." she added "Sorry for being a nuisance. See ya."

And with that she walked away. Yet as Amy walked away, she continued staring at the ground and Sonic could tell from the way she was walking that she didn't look too happy. In fact, Amy looked quite miserable. Sonic began to feel guilty. He didn't mean to upset her; he tried to be reasonable with her. Maybe he was being a bit too rash, after all Amy couldn't be too much of a bother for just one day could she? Sonic ran up to Amy and stopped her in her tracks.

"I've changed my mind." said Sonic "How about me and you grab ourselves a chilidog and we could walk around the lake?"

"Oh that sounds wonderful!" cried Amy, grabbing him into another hug and holding tightly.

"OK Amy! Stop squeezing me so hard!" gasped Sonic.

"Oh, sorry." said Amy, letting go of Sonic.

So, Sonic took Amy off to find a chilidog stand. Now I know what you're thinking, "Aaaaw! Sonic's going romantic and gushy over Amy! How cute!" well you're wrong. Sonic was only doing this to make Amy feel better; he's not doing this out of romance alone. In other words, this wasn't a date or anything, just a friendly outing more or less. Yet Sonic dreaded the day that he would be on a real date instead of just a friendly outing. Sonic hoped Amy wouldn't be like this everyday with him.

Unfortunately, Amy was no different throughout the week. Everyday since the rescue of Knothole, Amy would miraculously show up wherever Sonic went, grab him in a bear hug, squeal his name until his ears went numb and try to get him on an outing or even a date. Even though Sonic did secretly fancy Amy, her constant appearing wherever he went and fan-girlish behaviour was beginning to drive the poor hedgehog up the wall. Sonic felt like if Amy pounced on him one more time he would snap like a twig and probably lose his temper on her and hurt her…by accident of course. Man that girl was so persistent! Why couldn't she just give it a rest for one day? Sonic decided not to go out today as he wanted at least one day without Amy Rose bugging him. Yet, Sonic knew he couldn't keep letting Amy get to him. He should just tell her he's not interested in her right now and she should give him time. But Sonic really hated the idea of making Amy miserable. He wasn't the kind of person who wanted to hurt anyone's feelings, except Dr. Eggman of course. Sonic's train of thoughts continued as he lay back in the sofa while Tails was working on a strange contraption that he had been working on all week. He was listening to the Take That song Kidz on the radio and he was clearly enjoying it because he sang a few lines

after every turn of the spanner and tap of the hammer.

" *There will be trouble when the kids come out"* Tails sang in time to the music as he continued working. *"There will be lots for them to talk a-bout. There will be trouble when the kids come out, when the kids come out, when the kids…"*

"Hey Tails." said Sonic, distracting the little fox from his work "Can I talk with ya a moment?"

"Of course you can Sonic." said Tails, turning the radio down so he could hear Sonic "After all; I'm in no real hurry to finish this gizmo I'm building."

"I'm having problems right now." said Sonic "With Amy. Darn girl won't leave me alone for five minutes!"

"Oh tish Sonic!" said Tails, flinging his arm down "You saved her life from Dr. Eggman a week ago, she's gonna be wanting to hang out with ya. Especially since she's your biggest fan so give her some slack."

"Yeah but she keeps showing up from nowhere and coincidentally happens to show up in the same place as me." added Sonic "I almost feel like she's stalking me!"

"Oh come on Sonic, Amy's not like that and you know it!" snapped Tails "Only bad guys like Dr. Eggman stalk people and Amy's no bad-guy!"

"Yeah, but how does she coincidentally show up wherever I go?" demanded Sonic "It might just be a weird coincidence that's continuously happening but it's freaking me out!"

"Maybe Amy just wants to spend time with you." suggested Tails "You are the apple of her eye after all."

"Yeah but you'd think she had the sense to give me some personal space." noted Sonic "I'm pretty sure not all girls are that obsessive over their boyfriends and…"

The conversation was interrupted by a knock at the door. Sonic had

a dreaded feeling over who it could be. He walked up to the door and opened the little shutter that covered a small window on the door. What he saw through that little window was of course, Amy Rose (I bet you saw that coming!). She had a gormless grin on her face and a bunch of flowers in her hand. Sonic merely shut the shutter and turned back to face Tails.

"I'm gonna have to move!" he sighed loudly, causing Tails to snicker mockingly at him.

Sunday

Luckily for Sonic, Amy hadn't bothered to show up yesterday so hopefully she wouldn't bother him today. Sonic was also a bit bored of sitting in his house all day so he went for a hearty jog around Green Hill Zone to keep his legs in good shape. After two hours of running laps around Green Hill Zone, things were beginning to look good. No Dr. Eggman and no Amy Rose. Maybe today wouldn't be so bad after all. Sonic decided he'd had enough of running the same few laps around Green Hill Zone and decided to take a rest. Sonic found a good tree to lie against and lay down to relax. But the moment he started getting comfortable, he heard a voice he didn't want to hear until he was ready.

"Sonic! There you are my handsome hero!" squealed the voice of (who else?) Amy Rose.

"Just when I thought this day was going well!" sighed Sonic crossly.

"Hi Sonic." said Amy, kneeling down beside him "So what are you up to today?"

Sonic tried to ignore her and hoped she would go away.

"I guess you're just relaxing." said Amy "Oh well. When you're ready how about we go for a meal at Frankie's diner back at Knothole? I'm sure you'll have a lovely time cute stuff."

That did it. Sonic finally flipped. He leapt to his feet and in blind rage, pushed Amy on the ground. The poor girl was shocked to say the

least. Sonic then finally broke into a rant.

"Amy Rose! For goodness sake will you leave me alone!" roared Sonic "All you've done for the past week is stalk me and drive me chilli-dog crazy!"

"Sonic I…" began Amy.

"Don't give me any excuses!" snapped Sonic "Admit it! You've been stalking me ever since I saved your butt from Eggman the other day! And all you do when you meet me is squeeze me so hard I almost suffocate and scream my name until my ears explode! And why do I always have to go somewhere with you? I don't mean to be nasty or anything but can you please knock off the annoying fan girl behaviour!"

Amy Rose looked like she had been shot through the heart. She'd never seen Sonic in such a rage before and what he said to her really took effect on her. Amy's eyes began to water as she stood back to her feet.

"I get it." she said, trying to hold back tears "You hate me don't you?"

Sonic couldn't believe his ears. Amy wasn't listening very closely was she? Sonic did not at all say he hated Amy! What gave her that idea? Then it dawned on him that maybe his angry fit had been a bit too harsh on the girl so Sonic decided to clear up the misunderstanding.

"No! I don't hate you at all Amy!" cried Sonic.

"Yes you do!" snapped Amy "You just see me as a nuisance don't you? That rant you had suggests you think I'm annoying and unbearable."

"I didn't mean it like that." said Sonic "I was just saying…"

"That all I'm doing is driving you mad." interrupted Amy "Well I'm dreadfully sorry for that. I was just hoping we could become friends but it's evident that you don't want anything to do with me. Well if that's the case I'll leave you alone…forever."

"Amy, you don't understand!" cried Sonic; desperate to save himself the guilt of upsetting Amy "I didn't mean it like that! I may have been too harsh but…"

"I don't want to hear your feeble excuses!" spat Amy "I'm sorry I've been such a pain to you and I hope if I never see you again that you'll be happy! Goodbye true blue."

She ran away from the gobsmacked hedgehog, crying her broken heart out. Sonic wanted to run after her but his feet wouldn't let him, he remained where he was, watching Amy run away from his sight. After Amy disappeared from view, Sonic literally slapped himself in the face. He was so angry with himself for being such a jerk to poor Amy.

"Idiot!" he groaned "How could you be so hard on her?" he yelled at himself "True she was a nuisance but that was totally unnecessary Sonic!"

He laid back down against the tree he was lying against before and thought on how was he going to make it up to Amy. She probably wouldn't forgive her but Sonic wanted to try. He just wasn't sure how he was going to do it. Thirty minutes passed and he still had no idea how to apologize to Amy.

"Man how am I gonna apologize to her?" he moaned "I bet she'll never forgive me for this. Hopefully I'll learn something from this, I really should control my temper next time otherwise I'll be turning into Knuckles!"

Before he could tell himself off any further, his ears picked up at the sound of panting and feet pounding through the grass. It was Mandy Mouse. She looked flustered to say the least.

"Yo Mandy! What's up girl?" asked Sonic, getting back to his feet.

"It's Knothole!" gasped Mandy "Eggman's attacking it again! And he's got Wilson and Amy too!"

"Oh my gosh!" cried Sonic "How did that happen?"

"Well Eggman tried to be more subtle this time." said Mandy "By

pretending to attack to draw you or any fighters in and then pounce on them. He got Wilson but I managed to escape and I ran back to get you for help as I can't take that tub of lard myself. And I only just realized we forgot to destroy Eggman's portable roboticizer during our first rescue the other day."

Sonic face-palmed himself. Darn it! How on Mobius did he forget to destroy Eggman's portable roboticizer? He obviously hasn't been too focused on the battle recently!

"Well let's go and rescue Knothole once again Mandy!" cried Sonic.

And with that he charged off like an accelerating race car. Mandy ran after him as fast as she could run.

Minutes later, Sonic and Mandy reached Knothole, only to realize that they had been a minute too late. Half of the village had crumbled to the ground and any homes still standing were empty. All the villagers had obviously been captured by Dr. Eggman and his robotic drones.

"Damn!" cried Sonic "Eggman's got them! We'd better hurry if we're gonna save them from being roboticized!"

"They'll likely be in the same place as before." said Mandy.

"Then let's do it to it!" cried Sonic, charging off.

He and Mandy ran to the same area Dr. Eggman dragged the villagers to before. And just as they thought, he was there with all the villagers lined up awaiting roboticization. Unfortunately, Sonic and Mandy were too late to save everybody. The first few villagers had been roboticized and stood next to Eggman awaiting orders. Port II zapped the villagers one by one as it went down the line. Amy Rose was shaking furiously as Port got nearer and nearer. Even though she was upset at what Sonic had said to her earlier, she was dying for Sonic to come and save her again. After the next villager was roboticized, Eggman smiled coldly at Wilson who just gave him a death glare.

"Well little Wilson." said Dr. Eggman "Where's your buddy Sonic? Not here to save you! Once I roboticize you, you'll be my good little doggy!"

"Dr. Eggman, so help me I'll see you defeated yet!" snarled Wilson "You may have roboticized my parents****** but you won't roboticize me!"

"Actually, I think I am going to roboticize you silly dog." jeered Dr. Eggman "Alonzo! Activate!"

"With pleasure sir." said Alonzo wickedly.

He aimed Port II at Wilson, ready to roboticize him. Wilson closed his eyes and feared the worst. Then suddenly a blue blur appeared from nowhere and churned its way through Port II. Alonzo leapt backwards in surprise. Dr. Eggman's glasses popped off in surprise. Port II then short circuited and exploded into pieces. Amy and Wilson both smiled with joy for they knew who it was. It was obviously Sonic the Hedgehog. The robots saw Sonic and tried to attack him but Mandy subdued them with a shock of a taser. After the robots collapsed, Mandy freed everybody from their neck chains. Dr. Eggman was about to go mental but he calmed himself down. Sonic smirked cockily at the fat man.

"So Egg head, couldn't leave Knothole alone could you?" he smirked "Well you should have learnt that any place you attack, I will be there to stop you!"

"I know Sonic." snarled Dr. Eggman "Which is why I always have a back-up plan this time."

Then he whipped a remote device out of his pocket and pressed a button on the remote. Then suddenly the whole ground seemed to crumble under Sonic's feet. Then he was thrown into the air like a tennis ball. Wilson, Mandy and Amy gasped at Sonic being thrown into the air. The thing that had thrown him into the air was a long robotic cobra coloured red with a yellow underbelly. It had six horns, a long mouth, two fangs that were visible, even when the mouth was closed, green eyes, a huge hood, two long thick arms and a three pronged claw at the tip of its two tails. Sonic plummeted down to the

ground but the snake bot caught him with one of its claws at the end of one of its tails. Sonic struggled and squirmed but the robot clenched him tightly.

"Meet my new friend, Egg-Cobra!" announced Dr. Eggman "He'll be your end Sonic! Egg-Cobra! Squeeze the living daylights out of that meddlesome hedgehog!"

"But sire, wouldn't it be better to roboticize him all over again?" asked Alonzo.

"I risk him getting de-roboticized again, or betraying me." said Dr. Eggman "So it's best to get rid of him as quickly as possible."

Egg-Cobra squeezed Sonic as hard as it possibly could. Sonic yelled at the top of his voice pitifully as Egg-Cobra's grip tightened. Then suddenly, just as it looked like Sonic was done for, Egg-Cobra was walloped around the head by something. Egg-Cobra was hit so hard it let go of Sonic and its face plummeted into the ground. Sonic coughed loudly and got back to his feet.

"Thanks Mandy I…" he stopped.

His jaw dropped. It wasn't Mandy or Wilson who saved him from Egg-Cobra. It was Amy Rose! She stood over the downed robot with a large red and yellow hammer in her hand. Wilson and Mandy were about to help Sonic but Amy had summoned this strange hammer from nowhere and pounced on Egg-Cobra and walloped him around the head. The dog and mouse were just as startled as Sonic. They had no idea Amy Rose had a weapon! Amy gave a smug smile at Sonic.

"What? Do I look like the kind of girl who can't defend herself?" she sneered.

Sonic didn't know what to say. Dr. Eggman was just as speechless as he was. He never expected Amy to be able to fight!

"Well that's an unexpected turn of events!" stuttered Alonzo "The pink hedgehog girl has a weapon!"

"Who cares if she has a weapon?" snarled Dr. Eggman "She's just

as toast as Sonic is! Egg-Cobra! GET THEM!"

Egg-Cobra reared itself back up and opened its mouth. A long cannon barrel telescoped out of its mouth and squirted a strange purple liquid at Amy. Amy leaped out of the way and threw her hammer at Egg-Cobra. The hammer smacked Egg-Cobra on the nose. The snake like robot fell backwards but it regained its balance and brought its head zooming forward, ready to flatten Amy. Amy held her hand out and summoned another hammer from nowhere. Sonic couldn't believe his eyes. There's more to this girl then meets the eye! First she has a weapon, now she can summon it from nowhere! Amy walloped Egg-Cobra on the nose again, this time leaving a nasty dent on it. Unfortunately, Amy's luck ended there. Egg-Cobra recovered from the slam and squirted the purple stuff at Amy again. This time the liquid substance hit Amy and pinned her to the ground. It was extremely sticky and Amy found herself unable to move. She tugged on her limbs as hard as she could but the purple stuff was too sticky for her. Now she was trapped, Egg-Cobra raised its head, ready to slam it down on Amy and squish her.

"Sonic! HELP ME!" screamed Amy.

Egg-Cobra brought its head zooming down, ready to smash its victim. But Sonic the Hedgehog intervened by hitting it in the head with a spin-dash. Egg-Cobra somersaulted backwards and crashed down on the ground. Sonic laughed at his downed opponent and grabbed Amy's hand. With a mighty tug, he wrenched her free from the purple stuff.

"Thank you Sonic." said Amy.

"You're welcome Amy." said Sonic "And I'm sorry about what I said earlier."

"Can we talk about this later?" said Amy "Once we defeat this thing?"

"Good idea." said Sonic "Wilson! Mandy! Bomb that thing to submission and then me and Amy will come in for the kill!"

"Roger that." said Wilson "This is for trying to roboticize me

Eggman!"

He and Mandy pelted bombs at Egg-Cobra. The bombs exploded on impact and they began to tear holes in Egg-Cobra's tough armour. Then, Sonic began to spin around into a ball.

"When I say now Amy, hit me like a golf ball!" yelled Sonic.

"Got it." said Amy, picking her hammer back up.

Sonic began to pick up speed more and more until he reached his limit.

"NOW!" he ordered.

Amy walloped the spinning Sonic with the hammer as if she was playing golf with him. Sonic rocketed towards Egg-Cobra's huge horned head. Egg-Cobra made the foolish mistake of opening its mouth and thinking its sticky purple goo would stop him. Sonic hurtled straight into Egg-Cobra's mouth. He then demolished his way through the back of Egg-Cobra's head and landed back down on the ground. Egg-Cobra, with a robotic wail, erupted into flames and then exploded into smithereens, showering Dr. Eggman and Alonzo with debris. Dr. Eggman literally went red all over. He was so hot with anger you could fry eggs and bacon on his head right now!

"So Master? What do we do right now?" asked Alonzo.

"The same thing we do after every failure stupid, run for our lives!" cried Dr. Eggman.

He took off as fast as he could. Alonzo zoomed after him. The four fighters chuckled at Eggman fleeing away into the distance.

"We showed him good!" laughed Mandy.

"Fat head didn't know what hit him!" added Wilson.

Sonic looked at Amy.

"Y'know what Ames?" he said "I think you would make an excellent addition to the Royal Fighters Service!"

"I would?" gasped Amy with excitement "Oh Sonic! I don't know what to say." She went red in the face.

"Well I say, you're way past cool Amy." said Sonic, giving her his ever famous thumbs up sign. Amy giggled with pleasure.

"I'm sorry for what I said to you earlier Amy." said Sonic "I was just a little irritated with what happened the past week."

"Apology accepted Sonic." said Amy "I'm sorry I bugged you so much. I didn't mean to, I just wanted to make friends with you."

"Right." said Sonic "Well I'll make a deal Amy. If you promise me you won't act all fan-girly all over me every time you meet me, and you give me my personal space, I'll be friends with you. Maybe more then just friends if I..."

He suddenly went all shy and embarrassed.

"If you what?" asked Amy.

"Never mind." said Sonic quickly "So, do we have a deal?"

"Of course!" said Amy, shaking his hand quickly "I hate the thought of driving you mad all the time."

"Welcome to the team Amy." Sonic said.

Amy leaped up and cheered with delight. Wilson and Mandy applauded her. Sonic smiled. His troubles with Amy were over at last. Hopefully Amy would remember the deal and maybe she would be more bearable to be around. Yet he couldn't wait to see Amy whack Eggman's sorry behind with that giant hammer of hers again…

Footnotes:

*** See Stories 12-14 for the whole saga**

**** See the previous story for Sonic's de-roboticization**

***** See Story 2**

****** Tails stole Eggman's Portable Roboticizer in Story 13**

******* See Story 3 for Sonic and Tails' first encounter**

******** Wilson's parents got roboticized along with some other Mobians and Mandy's parents in *Tales from Mobius: Arc 1***

Hmm...(glances at check-list) let's see who I've introduced. Sonic: check, Tails: check, Knuckles: check, Amy: check. Cream...oh, i haven't introduced her yet! I guess it must be Cream the Rabbit's turn to appear next! Join me next time as Sonic goes on a rabbit hunt! Reviews are welcome.

The Rabbit Hunt

Story 16: The Rabbit Hunt

KA-POW!

That sudden flash of lightening and clap of thunder made Amy leap three feet into the air from her seat. It was a horrible stormy day on Mobius right now. Rain hammered down like goodness knows what and lightening flashed every now and again, followed by the traditional clap of thunder. Amy grumbled to herself.

"Oooh! How I hate stormy rain!" she moaned "It spoils the fun doesn't it?"

There was also the fact that thunder and lightening making her jump every time it happened.

"I wonder if Sonic hates rainy weather?" wondered Amy.

Sonic did hate rainy weather as it disrupted his running. Amy knew that the storm wouldn't last forever, it would blow over eventually. But she still hated it. Then Amy heard a tiny knock against the door.

"Now who in the world could that be?" she wondered.

Amy got up from her seat and walked over to the door. She opened the door and saw who was knocking on it. It was a little cream coloured female rabbit with light brown markings on her head, ears and eyes. The rabbit wore an orange dress with a white collar, a blue cravat around her neck and orange and yellow shoes. She looked no older then six years. Beside the rabbit was a small blue creature with a raindrop shaped head, a small body with stubby arms and legs and a red bow-tie around its neck. Amy almost fell over backwards at the sight of such a young child standing there in the cold and wet.

"Oh my gosh!" she cried, picking the child up and rushing her inside "You poor, poor thing! You must be chilled to the bone!"

"I'm fine miss, really…" the rabbit insisted.

"Don't give me that nonsense." said Amy sternly, sitting the rabbit on a seat near a cheerful, blazing fireplace "Little kids like you shouldn't be out in the storm without supervision."

"I'm sorry miss." said the rabbit "It's just…"

"I do hope you're not catching a cold young lady." said Amy, feeling the rabbit's forehead to see if it was the right temperature "Quite easy to catch one out there."

"I'm fine, please stop fussing me." said the rabbit quietly.

"Ok I'm sorry." said Amy "I just get a bit over myself when I see kids on their own with no parents. Where's yours? Did you lose them?"

"Well not exactly "lose" them." said the rabbit "I don't have a father, I only have my mother."

"Well where's your mother then?" asked Amy.

"Gone." said the rabbit, staring at her feet. She looked very sad. "An hour ago I was playing in the Chao Gardens until a big robot that looked like a scary scorpion appeared from nowhere and took… my…mother away!"

And with that the child broke down into tears. Amy had a feeling this might be Eggman's doing; only Eggman used big robots on people. Amy stroked the rabbit's head soothingly.

"Don't cry little girl." she said "I know someone who can help you."

The rabbit stopped crying and looked up at Amy with her big brown, adorable eyes.

"You do?" the rabbit asked.

"Sure!" said Amy "This person I know who can help you is called Sonic the Hedgehog. He's the hero of Mobius and the one hope we have against Dr. Eggman and his robotic forces. I'm also a big fan of his."

"Now that you mention him, I was looking for Mr. Sonic to see if he would help me rescue my mother." said the rabbit "But I don't know where he lives and no one could be bothered to help me find him."

"I know where Sonic lives." said Amy with a smile "I'll take you to him."

"Oh thank you Miss!" cried the rabbit, hugging Amy tightly. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

"Pleasure to help." said Amy "My name's Amy Rose."

"My name's Cream the Rabbit Miss Rose." said the rabbit "And this is my pet Chao Cheese. Say hi Cheese."

The small blue creature known as Cheese shyly waved at Amy.

"He's so cute!" cried Amy "What's a Chao by the way?"

"Chao are small creatures that live in gardens." explained Cream "They're fun loving and peaceful creatures and they hate violence. I hate violence too. So horrible and nasty!"

"I couldn't agree more." said Amy.

Then she smacked herself on the head.

"What the heck am I doing still chattering?" she yelled at herself "We need to get you to Sonic right away Cream!"

Amy put on a raincoat and grabbed an umbrella. She opened the umbrella to keep herself and Cream dry from the rain and she took Cream by the hand and went outside. The storm was appearing to slow down a little as it was raining less harder then before, much to Amy's delight. Amy set off down the road to the outskirts of Green Hill Zone, where Sonic lived. She was thankful Sonic wasn't far away from Knothole; she would have hated walking through all this rain for long. She hoped Sonic was home; otherwise Cream would have to wait for him.

Sonic was at home, lounging on the sofa and staring at the dark stormy scene out of the window. He hated rain; it would distract his running as he ran so fast, the raindrops would hammer in his eyes and disrupt his vision which would cause problems for him when running. Tails was sitting at his desk, adjusting the last few pieces on his new invention he had been building after the Mecha Sonic agenda*. Sonic had been wondering what in the world Tails was building but Tails wouldn't tell him and said he'd find out when he finished it.

"OK, just tighten this last bolt…" said Tails as he turned a screw lightly with his screwdriver.

"I'm amazed how long you can spend just building that thing." said Sonic from the sofa "Don't you get tired?"

"I do, but I have fun building these things." said Tails "Let's me exercise my mechanical talents, and my over-developed brain."

Sonic laughed at the "over developed brain" remark. He often thought that about Tails since the little fox was only eight, yet he could probably be a science teacher for University.

"So, how's that thingamajig coming on?" asked Sonic.

"Its finished." said Tails.

He presented a machine that looked like an old fashioned typewriter with a satellite dish on the top. There were two dials on the front and many buttons and switches to alter frequency and radio waves. Sonic stared at it in confusion.

"What is it?" asked Sonic.

"It's a little something I built so we can monitor Eggman's position." explained Tails "This machine (if it works) will pick up Eggman's conversations with Alonzo from miles away and we will know Eggman's every move before he makes it."

"Sweet!" said Sonic "How does it work?"

"I need to actually sneak into Eggman's base and set up this

microphone." said Tails, showing Sonic a small round microphone "Once I set the microphone up, we'll hear everything the microphone picks up through this machine."

"I bet you feel like a spy now Tails." said Sonic "And although I'm not that keen on spies, I like this plan."

"Well, we need to know what Eggman's up to." said Tails "So if we spy on him, we'll be one step ahead of him and approximately ten steps closer to victory."

"I like the sound of that." said Sonic, giving Tails a thumbs up.

Then his ears picked up the sound of someone knocking at his door.

"Who in the world would be out in this weather?" wondered Sonic "Best see who it is."

Sonic got up from the sofa and opened the door. The person at the door was Amy Rose in a raincoat with a little rabbit beside her. The rabbit had a Chao with her.

"Amy!" said Sonic "This is a surprise. What brings you here?"

"A little rabbit kid brings me here." said Amy, stepping inside and closing her umbrella.

Cream appeared shyly from behind Amy. She stared up at Sonic. Sonic looked down at her.

"Who's this then?" he asked "Your little sister?"

Tails snickered. Amy glared at Sonic.

"She's not my little sister!" snapped Amy "She came across my house and told me she was looking for you so I brought her here."

"What's she looking for me for?" asked Sonic.

Amy just gave Cream a look that suggested "You tell him Cream.". Cream looked back at Sonic.

"My name is Cream the Rabbit Mr. Sonic." she said quietly and politely "I've been looking for you because I think you can help me with something."

Sonic listened eagerly, hoping this would be another Eggman scheme for him to foil.

"My mother's been kidnapped by a giant robot and I've heard all about your heroic deeds so I decided to go and look for you since you're the only one who can help me." explained Cream.

"That definitely sounds like Dr. Eggman's doing." said Sonic, who had listened to everything Cream said and took interest "I bet he's on a kidnapping spree again."

"Why would he do that?" asked Tails.

"He's probably desperate for Robians in his army." said Sonic grimly "So he's, without a doubt, kidnapping people to roboticize."

Cream and Cheese shivered with fear at what Sonic had said.

"Wh-wh-what does r-r-roboticize m-mean Mr. Sonic?" she asked fearfully.

"It means Eggman turns people into robots." explained Sonic "Heartless, mindless, killer robots. He roboticized half of Mobotropolis** when he first arrived and now he wants to roboticize everything and everybody."

Cream looked like she was going to bawl ever so loudly.

"You mean that Eggman person might turn my mother into a robot?" she whimpered.

"Likely." said Sonic "But we'll put a stop to that!" "Tails! Amy!" he announced "We've got a rabbit's mom to save!"

"OK Sonic!" said Tails "Now's a good time to set up my microphone so we can spy on Eggman!"

"What was that?" asked Amy.

"We'll explain later." said Sonic "We'd better get going if we're gonna save Cream's mom from roboticization. Wish it wasn't raining though, it disrupts my running."

"Put these goggles on." said Tails, taking them off his head and handing them over to Sonic "They'll shield your eyes from the rain as you run."

Sonic put them on.

"Thanks Tails." he said "I don't know what I'd do without you. Now, let's go!"

He charged off through the door and out of the house, leaving a gust of wind to blow past Tails, Amy and Cream behind him. Cream was utterly fascinated at such speed coming from a hedgehog.

"That Mr. Sonic lives up to his name doesn't he Cheese?" she said to her pet Chao.

"Chao." piped Cheese.

Chaos don't talk fluent English like Mobians did. They spoke "Chao" language; a language where all Chao ever said was merely the word Chao.

"What are we waiting for, let's go!" cried Amy.

She ran out of the house. Tails flew after her and so did Cream. Cream could fly by flapping her large ears. Tails couldn't believe his eyes and nor could Amy for that matter.

"You can fly?" gasped Tails.

"Uh huh." said Cream "It helps if you have big ears. I've noticed you can fly too Tails."

"I wouldn't be able to if I didn't have two tails." said Tails "Now where's Sonic?"

He didn't have to look for long for he soon caught sight of him. Sonic had held back to let the others catch up. The moment they did, he

sped up. It was going to be a long run from here to the Northern Border but Sonic wasn't going to let that slow him down. Nor was he going to let the rain slow him down. The goggles shielded his eyes from the rain perfectly much to his delight so he wouldn't have to worry about his vision getting disrupted. As Sonic and the others ran on, Sonic couldn't stop wondering what Eggman was up to this minute…

Knothole wasn't the only village in Green Hill Zone. There was another, larger village nearer to the entrance to Green Hill Zone. This village was called Stardom Village and it was home to the Chaotix Detective Agency. The Chaotix Detective Agency were a trio of detectives that would answer any call for help but never got involved with anything dirty. The detectives resided in a funny looking two storey house with a stair case to the door, three windows and many angled roofs. It truly was an odd looking house; many would wonder whose idea was it to build it like that. The detectives who ran the agency were Vector the Crocodile and his buddies Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee.

Vector was the boss of the agency and also the brawn. He wasn't that good on brains but he has a big heart. He will answer any call for help, even if it was a little call for help like finding lost toys for children. He wore a golden neck-chain and earphones which he was always listening too, even when he was fighting.

Espio was a ninja chameleon who could turn invisible. He was a disciplined and opinionated character and the best at fighting. He wielded shuriken and ninja-style knives as weapons and his invisibility made him an excellent spy, if ever he was one.

And finally, Charmy Bee was the little kid of the team. He appeared to some as more of a cute mascot then anything else. He was a fun-loving ditz of a bee and he wore a helmet, presumably for in case he crashes into anything head first. He enjoys annoying Vector but he doesn't mean anything mean on anyone, he just always wants to play. Charmy also packed quite a sting for anyone who riled him.

As of this moment, the Chaotix team were having one of their

quieter days. So far, there had been no calls for help or any cases for them to solve so the team were just chilling out. Vector was lying on the sofa and listening to yet another song on his earphones (I did say he's always listening to them didn't I?) whereas Espio was meditating. Charmy was elsewhere but no one was sure where exactly. Then Espio heard the sound of buzzing from behind the door. Charmy was obviously back. The bee crashed through the door, startling Espio and Vector and he looked like someone had chased him for fifty miles straight.

"Hey Vector!" squeaked Charmy.

The bee was in such a panic he wasn't watching where he was going and crashed straight into Vector, knocking him off the sofa and tumbling over onto the floor.

"We've got some major trouble!" yelled Charmy, shaking Vector's head madly as he spoke.

"Charmy, will you knock before you enter?" growled Espio "You don't half scare us when you burst in like that!"

"Sorry." said Charmy.

Vector picked himself off the floor and looked at Charmy angrily.

"Why'd you come crashing in here anyway?" he demanded, hoping Charmy had a good excuse for him not to get mad at him.

"Um…what was it again?" Charmy thought aloud as he tried to remember the reason why. Good memory wasn't his strongest point after all.

"Something about cream…" thought Charmy "Cream cheese? No. Vanilla cream? No. Oh!" he said suddenly "Cream's mother is gone! I saw her get captured by a scorpion-like robot!"

"You mean Miss Vanilla's been captured by a robot?" asked Vector.

"Yes." said Charmy

He and the other members knew Cream's mother, Vanilla by name,

very well. In fact, she had called them for help whenever Cream went missing or she needed their help for something. Vector secretly fancied Vanilla but he would never admit it. This piece of news Charmy just gave him made Vector angry.

"Well whoever decided to kidnap Cream's mother is gonna get a pounding! From me!" declared Vector, punching his other hand "Boys, we're gonna find her and save her!"

"Roger that." said Espio.

"Okay." said Charmy, saluting him.

Vector left the house with Espio and Charmy following him. The crocodile was determined to find Vanilla the Rabbit. He had helped her many times before and now he was going to help her again. He began wondering on who kidnapped Vanilla. Likely Dr. Eggman. He had heard all about Eggman by reading newspapers all about Eggman's nefarious schemes and attempts for world domination. He had also read about how Eggman's plans had always been foiled by Sonic the Hedgehog. He began to wonder if Sonic was on the case as well as he was. If Sonic was, then Vanilla was easily as good as saved. But Vector wanted to help her so he hoped he would save her first. He also couldn't wait to give whoever kidnapped Vanilla a good pounding for kidnapping her.

"Do you think that Eggman guy's responsible?" asked Charmy, who was fluttering beside Espio.

"Likely." said Espio "That man has a reputation for kidnapping the innocents."

"I have an extra special pounding saved for him if it is." said Vector "I've always wanted to whup that fat man for trying to enslave us all!"

"I want to make him pay too." said Espio, pulling a ninja star out "And I'll let him feel the wrath of my ninja stars!"

"I'll sting him, and sting him, and sting him over and over until he can't sit down anymore!" laughed Charmy.

"Quiet Charmy!" snapped Vector "And let's focus on the objective

here!"

"Okay." said Charmy.

The Chaotix wondered on, ready to begin the search for Vanilla the Rabbit.

Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream had run/flown a great distance already and had now left Green Hill Zone. They were in the Great Dunes which were pretty featureless save for rocky ground, tall rocks and small mountains. The storm, rainy weather had finally stopped and now it was hot and sunny out in the dunes. Sonic had taken off the goggles and handed the back to Tails since he didn't need them anymore. Cream, unfortunately was beginning to lag behind from exhaustion and Amy called for Sonic to stop and let Cream catch her breath before they carried on. Sonic was reluctant but it wasn't nice to leave people behind so he stopped and waited. He hoped he wouldn't be waiting too long as time was of the essence right now. For all he knew, Cream's mother could be waiting to be roboticized at any moment now.

"Mr. Sonic, are you sure you know where Eggman's base is?" asked Cream sweetly.

"Of course I am." said Sonic "It's in the Northern Border of Megapolis. And I should know, I've been there twice already*** I wish it wasn't such a long sprint away though."

"If only we had a mode of transport." said Tails "We'd get to places much faster."

"Well you probably would." said Sonic "But I wouldn't. Nothing's faster then me."

"Really?" said Cream with fascination.

"I'm the fastest thing alive!" boasted Sonic "Of course nothing's faster then me! Not even vehicles can go faster then I can!"

"I can almost imagine your face if you got beaten by a car for the

first time in your life." smirked Amy.

Sonic frowned at her.

"That'll be the day." he said "So Cream, you all rested up?"

"Yes Mr. Sonic." said Cream "I'm ready to fly some more!"

"Well let's get juicing then!" cried Sonic "We haven't a moment to lose!"

He rocketed off again, leaving a gust of wind behind as he ran off. Tails and Cream took flight and followed Sonic. Tails carried Amy this time so the pink hedgehog wouldn't lag behind. The feeling of flying was truly wonderful for Amy. She was enjoying it so much she held her arms out as if they were wings and pretended she was soaring through the sky, the wind blowing over her as she flew. Tails couldn't help but give a hearty chuckle at Amy for doing that. Sonic looked over his shoulder to see if everybody was keeping up with him. Luckily they were and hopefully he wouldn't need to stop again. Unfortunately he did. The ground suddenly erupted in front of him, sending sand flying everywhere and Sonic was sent hurtling backwards. Tails and Cream stopped in the tracks and gasped. The thing that had exploded its way through the ground was a giant robot scorpion. It was black and red in colour with a purple tail. The tail had a drill in place of the sting and its claws had drills inside them. It had two cannons beside its head and six legs, each tipped with a spike. Cream was the first person to panic since she recognized the robot.

"That's the robot that snatched up my mother!" she squealed.

"Well it picked the wrong time to mess with Sonic the Hedgehog!" said Sonic angrily.

The scorpion bot lowered its head and the cockpit window opened revealing who was piloting it. To everybody's surprise, it wasn't Dr. Eggman in the cockpit; it was his servant bot Alonzo! He looked particularly pleased with himself.

"Alonzo? What are you doing here?" asked Sonic.

"Eggman's busy with his top secret project and he has people to roboticize once he gets the time." explained Alonzo "He caught you on radar and since he can't fight you himself, he sent me to destroy you with this Egg-Scorpion bot while he works."

"What's this "top secret project" Eggman's working on?" asked Tails.

"If I told you…it wouldn't BE a top secret project would it?" snapped Alonzo rudely "Now, prepare to be drilled into the next continent!"

He closed the canopy and activated Egg-Scorpion's claw drills. As the drills squealed away as they span, Egg-Scorpion lunged forwards at the Mobians. They leaped out of the way, leaving Egg-Scorpion to smash into the ground and then dig its way down into it. Sonic just caught sigh of Egg-Scorpion disappearing into the undergrowth.

"Tails! Girls!" he yelled "That thing can dig underground! Keep your senses alert!"

They nodded and listened out for Egg-Scorpion. Cream had the most sensitive ears due to how large they were and rabbits had excellent hearing. She heard a faint tunnelling noise coming from under her feet.

"It's coming back up!" warned Cream.

Tails, Amy and Cream ran away from the spot whereas Sonic readied himself for an attack. Egg-Scorpion erupted its way back up and out into the open air. Sonic spin-dashed it directly in the head the moment it was out of the ground. Egg-Scorpion somersaulted backwards and landed on its back. Sonic laughed at the robot.

"Think you can get me because you can tunnel underground?" sneered Sonic.

"I forgot Mobians have excellent hearing." muttered Alonzo from inside Egg-Scorpion "Oh well, time for Plan B."

The robot rolled itself back onto its legs. But instead of digging underground again, it fired its cannons. But these weren't laser cannons, they were EMP cannons. Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream

didn't see it coming and suddenly found themselves getting painfully electrocuted by the blasts. They screamed pitifully as they were shocked. Alonzo finally stopped shocking them and dug underground again, knowing by the time they recovered, they would be too late. Sonic groaned as he tried to sit up.

"Hey guys, where's the robot?" he asked.

"Probably underground again." Tails grimaced as he tried to get up "But due to the effects of that EMP shock, we won't recover in time to get away!"

And he was right. The ground exploded underneath them and the four Mobians were flung through the air like tossed stones. Egg-Scorpion had come back up again. Before the Mobians could fall back down, Egg Scorpion's claw drills telescoped back inside so now they were just plain old claws. Then Egg-Scorpion caught all four Mobians with one claw. Alonzo chortled with laughter.

"Yes! I caught them all!" he cheered "Just think how proud my master will be when he sees this!"

Sonic and friends squirmed and struggled in the terrifying grasp of Egg-Scorpion. But try as they might, there was no way they could escape a grasp that strong, especially since it was a robot. Then suddenly, out of seemingly nowhere, five ninja stars sailed through the air and imbedded themselves into Egg-Scorpion's claw. Then the ninja stars exploded like bombs, blowing the claw clean off and freeing the Mobians. Alonzo's head almost popped off due to how amazed he was at that amazing feat. But the surprise didn't end there. Three new Mobians had now appeared on the scene. These three were Team Chaotix. Espio was the one that had thrown the ninja stars at Egg-Scorpion's claw and blown it off. Alonzo had no idea who these three were, but he didn't care. He was going to eliminate them all the same. The drill on Egg-Scorpion's tail began spinning and the tail lunged at Team Chaotix. They dodged the attack and Vector clamped his jaws on the robot's tail. With a mighty pull, he managed to rip the end of the tail clean out of its socket! Alonzo was even more surprised then before. Vector then threw the tail drill at Egg-Scorpion so hard, the robot was knocked backwards. The cockpit window had been smashed to pieces by the blow and

Charmy saw the opportunity to bombard Alonzo with an onslaught of stings. Poor Alonzo was dented all over his face afterwards. Alonzo decided now was the time to retreat. Egg-Scorpion used it's only remaining claw to dig underground and escape from the battle. Vector chortled.

"All in a day's work eh boys?" he laughed.

"That thing was no match for us." said Espio.

"I wonder how many times I stung it?" said Charmy.

Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream picked themselves up and stared at Team Chaotix.

"Who are those guys?" asked Amy.

"I dunno, but I think we should thank them for saving us back there." said Sonic.

"I know who they are." said Cream "They're Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee."

"Are they friends of yours Cream?" asked Amy.

"Yes." said Cream "They're members of the Chaotix Detective Agency and they've helped me and my mother out many times."

"Well maybe they can help us rescue your mother Cream." suggested Tails.

Vector noticed Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream talking to one another. He walked up to them.

"Well if it isn't the famous Sonic the Hedgehog!" he said happily "What a coincidence meeting you here!"

"Um…how do you know my name?" asked Sonic.

"Everybody knows who you are Sonic!" chuckled Vector "Although we actually read about you in the newspaper we read everyday."

"Well it's nice to meet you Vector." said Sonic "And thanks for saving our necks from that scorpion bot earlier."

"Glad to help." said Vector "So, what are you and your friends up to?"

"We're helping Cream find her mother." explained Sonic "And according to Cream, you and your buddies are friends of hers."

"We are indeed." said Espio.

"Well we heard about Vanilla's abduction so we decided to save her." said Vector "Maybe we could work together."

"Sounds good to me." agreed Sonic, giving Vector the thumbs up. Then he turned to Cream and said to her "Vector just said Vanilla. Is that your mother's name?"

"Yes." said Cream.

"Well now I don't have to keep calling her Cream's mother anymore." said Sonic.

"Were you four heading for Eggman's base?" asked Charmy "Where is it?"

"In the Northern Border of Megapolis." explained Sonic "We were heading there until Eggman's whiny servant bot stopped us with his Egg-Scorpion, which according to Cream was the robot that kidnapped Vanilla."

"It's just a pity it didn't still have Vanilla with it." said Espio "We would have saved her already."

"Well let's not just stand there, let's go!" cried Sonic "Chaotix, follow me, I know the way to Eggman's base."

"Roger!" all three of them said.

Sonic took off with Tails flying after him, carrying Amy again. Cream and Charmy flew beside Tails and Vector and Espio ran after Sonic. The seven Mobians now headed onwards to the Northern Border.

Dr. Eggman wouldn't know what hit him once they arrived…

Project: Metal Sonic.

Why was it taking to long for it to be completed? Mind you, this was likely going to be the most complex, the most powerful and the most amazing creation of Dr. Eggman's career and Eggman was putting all the effort he could into making this machine great. Though Eggman himself didn't really understand why it was taking him until next month to complete. Maybe he was putting more time and effort into Metal Sonic then ever before. After all, there was no such thing as putting too much time or too much effort into anything. The more effort you put into your projects, the better they come out when completed and Metal Sonic was going to be one heck of a foe for Sonic when he was completed. Even though Dr. Eggman had data records on Mecha Sonic's strengths, speed and abilities, he had other things to add to Metal Sonic to make him stronger then even Mecha Sonic. I can tell you, Sonic's pretty much dead meat once this thing is completed! Eggman began downloading another data file into the still under construction Metal Sonic. No one really knew what this file contained but Eggman did, and he knew it would make Metal Sonic great. As he worked, people in glass cages just watched him nervously. Dr. Eggman had said once he decided he'd had enough of working on Metal Sonic for the day, he was going to roboticize them all. So as Eggman worked, they kept praying and praying for someone to save them, preferably Sonic. One of these people, was Vanilla the Rabbit, Cream the Rabbit's mother. She looked like an older version of Cream and she wore a burgundy vest, a purple dress with a white trim, gloves with gold cufflinks and heeled burgundy shoes. She was just as polite as Cream was (no wonder Cream was raised up to be so polite, she takes after her mother.). Vanilla kept hoping either Sonic or Team Chaotix would be there just in time to save everybody but that didn't seem possible right now. Eggman looked over his shoulder and glared at everybody.

"Look, I know you're all looking forward to being roboticized but I can't hurry this." he said rudely "I need to take all the time and effort I can to make Project: Metal Sonic my ultimate success, so BE

PATIENT!" he bellowed, making several Mobians jump.

"We're not even looking forward to being roboticized chump!" snapped one Mobian who was a female skunk in a yellow two strapped toga.

"Why am I not surprised?" snorted Dr. Eggman, getting back to his work.

But before Eggman could so much as tighten a bolt, Alonzo burst into the room. He looked like he had just been in a car crash and lived.

"MASTER!" screamed Alonzo, falling flat on his face. Several Mobians laughed at him.

"Let me guess, Sonic and friends wrecked Egg-Scorpion, one of the finest machines I've ever built!" snarled Eggman without even turning around.

"Well, not exactly master." said Alonzo, getting back to his wheels "I actually had the blackguard in my giant metal claws! But a new trio of Mobians stepped in and made a total mess of Egg-Scorpion."

"New trio?" said Eggman with interest. He turned away from Metal Sonic and faced Alonzo "Who are those three new pests I have to deal with?" he asked.

"Well I don't know their names but one is a crocodile, one is a chameleon and one is a bee." said Alonzo "And look what that bee did to my face!" he added, pointing to all the dents in his face from when Charmy stung him "These are not bullet wounds either!"

Vanilla's face brightened. Team Chaotix were on the case at last! Now help seemed to be on its way! Unfortunately, Alonzo spotted her.

"What's that rabbit lady so happy about?" he snorted.

"Maybe she knows who this trio is." purred Eggman "Let's find out shall we?"

He marched up to Vanilla's cage and pressed his face against the glass, making the poor rabbit shudder.

"Who are the three Mobians Alonzo just mentioned?" he asked in an eerily polite tone.

"T-they're Team Chaotix." explained Vanilla "And they're going to stop your nasty plans you nasty man!"

"Oh are they?" sniffed Eggman "The only one who can stop me is Sonic the Hedgehog! Oooh! How I hate that meddlesome rodent!"

"I bet that Sonic the Hedgehog person will stop you too." said Vanilla "It makes me mad on how you could dare to be so vile to us all!"

"You know what makes me mad other then people interfering with my plans?" growled Eggman "Mobians talking back to me! SHUT UP!" he roared.

"Y-yes Mr. Eggman." said Vanilla, standing up straight with her back against the glass.

"Alonzo!" said Eggman "If that Sonic is still coming for me, and he finds out about project Metal Sonic…"

"He'll likely wreck everything!" exclaimed Alonzo "And then you'll have to start over from scratch!"

"Exactly!" yelled Dr. Eggman "Which is why I'm going to hide Metal Sonic! Alonzo, you prepare everybody for roboticization! I need Robians for defence since my robots are in standby for update mode!"

"Happy to do so sir." said Alonzo, saluting him.

Dr. Eggman gather up all of the parts and Metal Sonic's under construction body, put them carefully in a metal crate and ran out of the room with the crate. He was going to hide Metal Sonic in a place Sonic would never find him, and that was in a secret compartment he had under the floor in the spare parts storage room. He couldn't risk Sonic coming in on him and wrecking Metal Sonic before he was complete so that's why he was hiding him. Eggman ran into the

storage room, opened the compartment in the floor, stored Metal Sonic in the compartment and closed it up so now the floor looked perfectly normal. The only thing he needed to do was not to forget he put him there. Dr. Eggman ran back into the work room where he saw Alonzo taking the cages out of the room and leading them into the roboticizing chamber.

"Good work Alonzo." said Eggman.

"Thanks sir." said Alonzo "Is Metal Sonic hidden safely?"

"He'll never be found." declared Eggman smugly "Sonic won't find anything about Project: Metal Sonic."

"Marvellous sir." said Alonzo as he led the cages into the chamber.

"Sonic better watch out when I send these Robians on him!" said Eggman evilly "He has a tough time dealing with some of them as it is!"

It took a while, but Sonic and crew had finally made it to Eggman's base. They stopped outside the door and gathered around to make a battle plan.

"Ok here's the plan." said Sonic "Me and the Chaotix will take out Dr. Eggman and save Vanilla, Amy will provide back up and Tails will set up his little spy machine he built earlier."

"What can I do Mr. Sonic?" asked Cream politely "Should I stay out here and wait?"

"Nah, you risk getting caught by Eggman robots." said Sonic "You can go with Tails. That's the safest option for you."

"Ok Mr. Sonic." said Cream.

"Do you think security will be tight?" asked Espio.

"Bound to be." said Sonic "But it shouldn't be a problem for you Espio. You're a chameleon and you can turn invisible right?"

"Right." said Espio "I can take them out and they won't see me at all."

"That's why I hired him to be part of the Chaotix Detective Agency." said Vector, beaming.

"Then its settled then." said Sonic, winking at the group "Let's do it, to it team!"

"I never get tired of hearing him say that." sighed Amy dreamily.

The team set their plan into motion. Espio turned invisible and sneaked into the base. Sonic and crew had to wait until Espio said the coast was clear before they could move on. As for the invisible chameleon, after silently sneaking through the corridors he was rather surprised to see no robots on guard anywhere. Maybe security wasn't as tight as he thought it was going to be. Or maybe they were planning an ambush. In any case, the coast was clear so Espio signalled the others with his knife. The others ran quietly into the base.

"Anything Espio?" whispered Vector.

"Not so much as a guard bot." whispered Espio, turning back visible "Eggman's security obviously isn't as tight as we thought it was going to be."

"Do you think he's planning an ambush?" asked Tails.

"Could be." thought Sonic "Let's keep our guard up."

What Sonic and crew didn't know was the reason the robots weren't here is because they were in standby for update mode. That means the robots were all shut down and awaiting updates to make them swifter and stronger. It wouldn't matter if they were updated anyway since Sonic would still destroy them all. Sonic and crew crept further into the corridor, looking for two different rooms. One was the roboticizer chamber, and the other was the main computer room. Sonic decided it would be best to split up so they'd have a better chance of finding the rooms. Espio, Vector, Charmy and Amy went with Sonic and Cream went with Tails, just like their plan said.

Sonic's group were looking for the roboticizer chamber whereas Tails was looking for the main computer room.

Tails remembered where the computer room was since he had been in it twice already****. He went down a long corridor, took a left and found the familiar red door with warning stripes around the sides. He pulled the lever to open the door. The door opened and Tails and Cream crept inside as quiet as a pair of mice. Tails closed the door behind him so no one would spot him in the computer room. Cream stared, wide-eyed at all the technology around her. She'd never seen so many computers in one room before.

"So Tails, what do we do now?" asked Cream.

"I am going to set up my spy machine." said Tails.

He pulled out the little microphone he made for the machine and hid it under one of the main computer monitors. He turned it on and pulled out the spy machine he had just completed earlier. He turned the machine on.

"Now Cream, speak into that microphone and I'll see if I can hear you through it." he said to her.

"OK." said Cream.

She leaned forward near the computer monitor and spoke into the microphone Tails had placed underneath the monitor.

"Hello Tails." she said into the mike.

Tails, who had put the machine's earphones on, heard her clear as crystal.

"It works!" he cried "Now we'll know Eggman's every move before we make it!"

"We will?" said Cream, puzzled at what Tails said.

"Yes Cream." said Tails "That microphone will pick up everything

Eggman says while he's in this room, and I'll hear everything he says through this machine I built." he showed the machine to Cream. Cream went "Oooh." in fascination.

"Man, I feel like a super spy!" joked Tails.

"So is that your job done?" asked Cream.

"Uh huh." said Tails "Let's catch up with Sonic and see if he's found the roboticizer chamber yet."

And with that, the two children left the computer room to look for Sonic.

Speaking of Sonic, he and his group couldn't find the roboticizer chamber. Sonic had decided he would try and find it but it dawned on him that he couldn't remember where it was. He kept thinking he was sure on where it was but he kept finding the wrong room every time. But if Sonic kept trying, he was bound to find it eventually.

The others however, were beginning to get frustrated with Sonic constantly finding the wrong room.

"Sonic, are you sure you know where it is?" asked Amy after Sonic checked in yet another room only to find out it wasn't the roboticizer chamber.

"I don't really so I'm just checking any room I come across until I find that chamber." said Sonic. "I don't know why I don't remember where it is. I've been in it before*****."

"It's easy to forget things." said Espio "Nobody remembers everything straight away but as you go along, maybe something will jog your memory and you'll remember where it is."

Sonic nodded in agreement.

"Hey! What's that?" cried Charmy, pointing at something.

Everybody turned their heads to see what Charmy was pointing at.

The little bee was pointing at a Robian. This Robian looked like a robotic wolf and it looked like it was ready to pounce on someone and attack. But the Robian Wolf wasn't the only one there. There were more Robians behind it, all coming out of an open door further down the corridor one by one.

"Well I guess the roboticizer chamber is over there." said Sonic "Since all these Robians are coming out of that room."

"Maybe Cream's mom is in there!" shrieked Amy "We have to get to that room and save her!"

"But we've got to get past these jokers first!" cried Vector.

The Robians all pounced on the group. Soon a big fight ensued. Sonic and Amy fought the Robians back to back with Sonic spin-dashing, punching, kicking or homing attacking them and Amy hammered them away with her Piko-Piko hammer (that's the name of her hammer). Espio used his ninja skills to fight the Robians off while Vector chomped on them with his big jaws and threw them away. And Charmy, well, I wouldn't say he was fighting them, he was more like playing cat and mouse with them. No prizes for guessing who the mouse is!

"Don't damage them too badly!" yelled Sonic "Remember, these are roboticized Mobians!"

"We've gotcha pal!" said Vector as he threw another Robian into the wall.

As the fight continued, Tails and Cream came across the roboticizer chamber further up the corridor. They saw the fight between Sonic and the Robians going on further down but they decided not to get involved since Sonic and the others likely had things under control. Instead, they decided to rescue Vanilla. Tails and Cream sneaked into the chamber, only to see Mobians getting roboticized. It truly was a terrifying sight for poor little Cream but she knew her mother was likely in here so she looked around. Then Tails spotted something.

"Hey Cream, is that your mom over there?" he said.

Cream looked in Tails' direction. She beamed with happiness, it was her mother! Cream ran over to greet her.

"Mother! I'm here!" cried Cream.

Vanilla turned around and glared at Cream with her red optics. Cream immediately halted and stared up at Vanilla. She no longer looked like Vanilla, she was now completely silver in colour and her body appeared to be completely metal! Even her dress appeared to be metal! Her beautiful brown eyes had now become a black visor with red optics in them. Tails couldn't believe his eyes either, they had been too late! Vanilla the Rabbit had been roboticized and was now Mecha Vanilla! Mecha Vanilla roared at Cream, showing off her sharp metallic teeth. Cream stepped back fearfully.

"M…m…mother?" whimpered Cream "D…Don't you r-r-remember me? I'm your daughter Cream! Remember?"

Mecha Vanilla wasn't having any of it. Like all Robians, her freewill had been vaporized. She advanced on Cream menacingly as if she wanted to devour her all in one go.

"Mobian." She croaked in her new robotic voice "All-Mobians-must-be-ro-bot-i-cized!"

"Mother, please!" cried Cream "You're not an evil killer robot! You're my mother!"

"Cream, forget it!" cried Tails ""It's too late! Your mother's been roboticized! She won't listen to you!"

"Why not?" asked Cream.

"Because her freewill has been vaporized!" yelled Tails "She has only one purpose now, to serve Dr. Eggman!"

"Can we change her back?" asked Cream, her eyes brimming with tears.

"Yes we can." said Tails "But I don't have a de-roboticizer with me so Vanilla will have to wait. Now come on Cream before she catches us!"

Cream didn't want to leave Vanilla behind but she had no choice. Staying with her would more likely get her killed or roboticized herself so Cream, with tears trickling down her adorable face, ran out of the chamber. Mecha Vanilla ran after them, roaring mechanically.

Meanwhile, the fight wasn't going well. Due to how many Robians there were, the group were getting overwhelmed. No matter how many times they beat them down, they kept coming back. Robians had incredible stamina due to being robots and robots don't get tired unlike organic beings. Amy whacked another Robian down with her Piko-Piko hammer but after that, she began to pant. Sonic was getting noticeably tired too.

"Sonic, we can't keep this up forever!" puffed Amy "They just keep coming back!"

"Yeah, we knock them down but they come back at us." said Sonic breathlessly.

"We may have to fall back." suggested Espio.

"No way Espio!" cried Sonic "I'm not leaving here until Cream and her mother are back together again!"

Two Robian leopards advanced on the group, growling ever so softly and sending chills down Amy's spine. Espio and Vector just merely readied themselves for an attack. Sonic didn't do anything except stand there and grin smugly at the Robians as if he was urging them to attack. More Robians began to advance on the Mobians with their teeth and claws bared. Then Sonic began to spin himself around. He span faster and faster and faster until he looked like a big blue tornado. Any Robians that were stupid enough to get close to Sonic were pulled up into the tornado and spun around. Any Robians that didn't get caught in the tornado were smart enough to stay well back from this attack. After a minute of spinning, the Robians were thrown out of the tornado and sent crashing into any other Robians around. That attack clearly made an impact on them as they lay on the floor all dazed and dopey like with their tongues hanging out. Sonic's tornado finally faded away and Sonic stopped spinning.

"Now that's amazing stuff isn't it?" he said proudly.

"I'll say!" said Charmy "That was awesome! Do it again!"

Suddenly, Sonic heard the sound of footsteps running down the corridor towards them. He turned around to see who it was. It was Tails and Cream and they were being chased by yet another Robian. Tails was so focused on running away from Mecha Vanilla, he didn't see Sonic in front of him and he crashed right into him, knocking the hedgehog off his feet. Cream ran into Amy's arms and began crying. Sonic picked himself back up.

"Whoa Tails!" he cried "What's the matter?"

"We were too late Sonic!" blustered Tails "Cream's mom got roboticized and now she's after us!"

Sonic thought he was going to do a wild double take. Team Chaotix thought they were all going to do even wilder double takes. Before anyone could question if Tails was right, they saw Mecha Vanilla running towards them, roaring madly. She lunged at Sonic, grabbed him by the neck and pinned him down on the floor. She then proceeded to try and throttle him. Watching Vanilla do this made Cream cry harder. Her mother would never harm anyone if she was her normal self again. Sonic tried to wrestle Mecha Vanilla off him but the roboticized rabbit had a very tough grip. He pushed as hard as he could but Mecha Vanilla refused to let go. Vector, reluctant to hurt Vanilla, grabbed her with his jaws and threw her off of Sonic and into the wall. Mecha Vanilla hit the wall and slid back down to the floor. Sonic leapt back to his feet. He stared at Mecha Vanilla and his quills began to shake angrily.

"I can't believe Eggman beat us to it!" he growled "Now Cream's mother is a mindless drone on the fat man's side!"

"I'm gonna give that Eggman a sorting out once I get my hands on him!" growled Vector.

"No Vector." said Sonic "We're gonna leave here before more Robians show up and try to rip us apart."

"But what about Vanilla?" asked Amy.

"She'll have to wait." said Sonic "We don't have a de-roboticizer with us now. Now let's leave here."

Then suddenly Mecha Vanilla and all the other Robians came to and they all roared in unison at the Mobians. Sonic took off as fast as he could with everybody following him as fast as their legs would let them. The Robians chased after the Mobians but Espio threw a ninja star at the ceiling. The star exploded and the ceiling fell down on them to slow them down. After the ceiling finished caving in, the Robians began to dig their way through the pile of debris. Dr. Eggman heard all the commotion and burst into the corridor.

"What is going on here?" he blasted.

He saw the Robians digging their way through the debris that blocked their way through the corridor.

"I guess Sonic and crew decided to retreat." said Dr. Eggman "I knew my Robians were too strong for them!"

"Well that's a first." snorted Alonzo "You won for once."

"I know." said Dr. Eggman "And I will have my ultimate victory when Project: Metal Sonic is complete! And luckily, Sonic and neither of his friends found out about him."

He ran up the corridor and into the storage room. He opened the secret compartment in the floor and took Metal Sonic out since he didn't need to hide him anymore. He took Metal Sonic back into the inventing room so he could continue working on him. He set Metal Sonic back on the desk and got his tools out.

"I can't wait to see this beauty in action." crooned Eggman, his glasses twinkling in the light "Sonic will have met his match…"

Sonic and crew had run all the way back to Green Hill Zone and to Sonic's house. Sonic invited the Chaotix to stay for a few minutes to rest their legs before they set off back to their own home. After

everybody settled down, Amy decided to make a cup of tea for everybody to make them feel better since the failure today had dampened their spirits. As Amy made the tea, the boys began discussing amongst one another.

"I cannot believe we failed to save Miss Vanilla Rabbit!" moaned Espio "My skills have been insulted!"

"I know Espio, it's a dark day for all of us." said Vector sadly "But no one's more heartbroken then Cream is."

Cream was sitting in the corner with her back turned on everyone. She was silently crying to herself with Cheese in her arms. She hadn't stopped sobbing since Vanilla's roboticization. Seeing Cream upset made Vector want to sob with her but he knew that wouldn't make things any better so he refrained himself from doing it. Sonic wanted to help cheer Cream up but he decided it was better to leave her alone for a minute. He decided to change the subject.

"So, did you set up your spy machine thingy Tails?" asked Sonic.

"I have indeed." said Tails happily "And it works perfectly. I can hear everything Eggman says through that machine thanks to that little microphone I've smuggled under his computer monitor."

"So maybe this day wasn't so bad after all." said Vector "If you can hear what Eggman is saying, you'll know his every move before he makes it!"

"We will avenge Cream and Vanilla!" exclaimed Espio.

"Tea's ready boys!" announced Amy, walking into the room with seven cups of tea on saucers on a tray. She set the tray down on the coffee table and everyone except Cream grabbed a cub and eagerly sipped their teas.

"I feel much better already!" said Charmy with a silly expression on his face.

Amy noticed Cream was still sitting in the corner by herself. Amy walked quietly over to Cream and patted her on the back.

"Are you alright Cream?" she asked nicely.

"No Miss Rose." sobbed Cream "I'm not alright. Please leave me alone."

"Cream, I know how devastated you are at the fact your mom's a robot now." said Amy softly "But crying about it won't help. We'll save Vanilla, I promise you."

Cream still stared at the floor, sobbing. Amy thought for a moment and then struck an idea.

"You know what?" she added "Since I'm so generous, I'm going to let you stay at my house until we can de-roboticize Vanilla."

Cream stopped crying and looked at Amy with her big brown adorable eyes.

"Y-y-you will?" she snivelled.

"Of course." said Amy with a smile "I'll take good care of you."

"Did you hear that Cheese?" said Cream excitedly "Amy's going to take care of us!"

"Chao! Chao!" cooed Cheese with excitement.

"How does Amy do that?" sniggered Sonic "All she has to do is spend thirty seconds with a crying child and she's happy again!"

"Well I'm glad Cream's happy again." said Tails "It's making me feel better too. I think Amy's making a good choice; I can see those two being as close as sisters."

"Reminds me of our brother like friendship." said Sonic "Amy and Cream are basically like girl versions of me and you!"

That set everybody off. They laughed a hearty, happy laugh. That seemed to cheer everybody up. After they stopped laughing Cream said something.

"I bet the next time we fight that mean old Eggman, we'll beat him!"

she said with determination.

"So do I." said Sonic "Especially since Tails will find out what he's up to with that machine of his."

Tails nodded in agreement. He couldn't wait for his first moment of spying on Dr. Eggman.

Footnotes:

*** See Stories 12-14 for the whole saga**

**** See Story 1**

***** Sonic went to the Northern Border in Stories 6-7 and Stories 10-11**

****** Tails went into the computer room in Stories 10-11 and during the Mecha Sonic saga (12-14)**

******* Sonic first went in the chamber in Story 11**

How about that? Cream's mother is a robot and Cream is part of the team! Can Sonic save Vanilla from Dr. Eggman or is the rabbit doomed to be a robot forever? Reviews will be appreciated.

Special thanks to Kratos Pwns for your kind words. You bring a smile to my face every time you review this story. :)

The Circus Park Part 1

Story 17: The Circus Park Part 1

"Friend or Foe?" asked Amy Rose, pointing at a picture of a dome shaped Eggman robot with a pointing stick.

Amy Rose was tutoring Cream on her knowledge on friends and foes. Since Cream was going to be with Sonic for quite some time, she needed to know on who to be weary of and who to be glad to see in a fight. So far Cream had only made a few mistakes but she wasn't doing terribly badly for someone her age and no fighting knowledge.

"Um…foe?" guessed Cream.

"Correct." said Amy happily.

She pulled the string on the side of the picture and another one came down showing a picture of yours truly, Sonic the Hedgehog.

"Friend or Foe?" asked Amy.

"That's easy, Mr. Sonic is a friend." said Cream "Isn't that right Cheese?"

"Chao!" piped Cheese in agreement.

"Well that one was too easy." said Amy "Let's try another one."

She pulled the string to make another picture come down. This one was a picture of Mecha Vanilla.

"Friend or Foe?"

Cream didn't know what to say. Vanilla was her mother so she should be classified as a friend, but since she's been turned into a robot by Dr. Eggman*, that should technically classify her as a foe. But Cream couldn't bear to call her mother a foe. Amy saw the picture Cream was presented with and changed it quickly. The next

image was now a picture of fellow Royal Fighter Geoffrey St. John, a friend of Sonic's he hadn't seen in a while.

"Friend or Foe?"

"Um…" said Cream.

She had no idea seeing as she hasn't met Geoffrey yet but since he wasn't a robot, he looked like a friend so she guessed friend.

"Friend?" asked Cream.

"Correct." said Amy "Although I only know Mr. St. John is a friend after Sonic told me. I wonder what he's like in person."

"He's a good friend." said Sonic from the other side of the room "And he knows how to put up a fight. Pity he's confined to Downunda at the moment."

"At least you still have us Sonic." said his best friend, Tails who was sitting at his desk with a pair of earphones on. The earphones were connected to the machine Tails had built yesterday**. He was listening into them for any schemes Dr. Eggman had in mind so they could send Team Chaotix to foil them or do it themselves if Team Chaotix weren't available. Even though the range between the microphone Tails set up under Eggman's monitor and the machine was superb, Tails was having trouble hearing what Dr. Eggman was saying. He pushed on the earphones to see if he could hear any better but he could only faintly hear Eggman's voice.

"Anything wrong little buddy?" asked Sonic.

"I'm having trouble hearing Dr. Eggman." said Tails "I think either the transmission is breaking up or he's not close enough to the microphone I set up yesterday. Maybe I should boost the transmission."

Tails twisted a few knobs and dials on the machine in order to make the transmission stronger. But they were already set at high frequency so Tails couldn't make it that much stronger really, he could still only faintly hear Dr. Eggman's voice, albeit less fainter then before. You see, the reason why Tails can't hear Eggman very

well is because Dr. Eggman is strutting about on the other side of the main computer room, a fair distance away from the monitor Tails had placed the microphone under. The microphone's sound range isn't very far unfortunately so Dr. Eggman had to be really close in order to be heard clearly. However as Dr. Eggman strutted around aimlessly, he did end up in range briefly so Tails could hear him less faintly for a few seconds before he moved out of range. Tails was confused at the fact Eggman would get fainter and fainter and then briefly less faint before getting fainter again.

"Can you hear him any better now?" asked Sonic.

"He gets really faint to the point I can't hear him." explained Tails "But then for a brief moment he gets loud enough for me to hear him and then faint again. Is he aimlessly walking around the room or something stupid like that?"

"Maybe." said Sonic "We can't see what he's doing all the way in the Northern Border so we can't be sure on what he's doing."

Tails decided to listen closely and see what he could pick up before Eggman went out of range again. Eggman's voice got loud enough for him to hear and he heard some very peculiar words indeed. Then Eggman went faint again. Then Eggman went fainter and fainter until Tails couldn't hear even any faint footsteps anymore. This meant Dr. Eggman must have left the room. Tails took the earphones off and put on a thoughtful face.

"Build Circus Park?" he said out loud to himself more then anybody "Why would he be doing that?"

"Doing what, what?" asked Sonic.

"I managed to hear the words "Build Circus Park"." replied Tails "Although I couldn't quite catch what he said afterwards. What an odd thing for an evil genius like him to build."

"I'll say." agreed Sonic "Don't you think a Circus Park is a little bit childish even for him?"

"Maybe." said Tails "But there must be a reason as to why he's

building one."

"Maybe we should ask Team Chaotix to check it out." suggested Sonic "Then we'll come and see for ourselves."

"I'll inform them right away." said Tails, picking up the phone and dialling Team Chaotix's number.

He put the phone to his ear and waited for Team Chaotix to pick up. After a few seconds of listening to phone buzzing, the sound of a phone being picked up came into Tails' ears. Then he heard the familiar gravely, grizzly voice of the Chaotix Detective Agency's boss, Vector the Crocodile.

"Yo there who is it?" said Vector.

"It's me Tails." said Tails "We have a request for you and your team."

"What's that then?" asked Vector.

"We've been spying on Dr. Eggman but I haven't been able to hear much from him." explained Tails "And I only just managed to catch the words "Build Circus Park" so I wondered if you'd be so kind as to find out what Eggman's evil plan is since I can't get much from him right now."

"We'll get to it right away bud!" said Vector "See ya!"

And with that he hung up, leaving Tails to hang up the phone himself.

"Well?" asked Sonic.

"Team Chaotix are on it Sonic." said Tails "I just really can't stop wondering what on Mobius is Eggman building a circus park for?"

"Hopefully we'll find out after Team Chaotix spy on Eggman." said Sonic "And we'll be there to crumble whatever evil plan Eggman's planning."

"And maybe we can get him back for turning Cream's mother into a

robot!" added Amy.

"Yeah, that too." said Sonic, even though he was more keen on destroying Dr. Eggman's so-called circus park then paying him back for roboticizing Vanilla. Just what was that fat scientist planning?

Half an hour later, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee arrived at the Northern Border and took shelter behind a pile of rocks. They peered over the rocks and saw an extraordinary sight indeed. Just around Dr. Eggman's base, there were robots by the hundred rushing here and there, building strange buildings and structures of strange proportions. They were building amazingly fast, faster then any organic creature could ever build. Robots didn't need to rest after all so they could build all day and not get tired. No one could tell what exactly those robots were building but the Chaotix had a hunch this was something evil and deadly. They had to check this out now.

"Hey Espio, feel up to the task?" whispered Vector.

"Certainly." said Espio "I will find out what dark motives that fat man is up to."

And with that he turned invisible. It was almost liked he just vanished into thin air. Then Espio, still invisible, crept up to the construction site. That was the advantage he had of being invisible, he could creep up on anybody and not get found out and nobody would ever see him coming. This made Espio an excellent spy. I bet Sonic's just glad Espio is one of the good guys otherwise they'd be in one heck of a scrape if Espio spied on them for Eggman.

Espio continued sneaking up to the construction site, being aware of any robots nearby so he wouldn't accidentally bump into one and get found out. The funny thing was, even though he was closer to the structures, he still couldn't work out what they were supposed to look like. They were truly weird looking things indeed. What was Eggman building? Maybe he'd find out if he could find the plans to this thing. Then Espio spotted something. In the centre of the construction sight, Dr. Eggman stood there holding a piece of blue

paper and bellowing orders at any random robot that went by. Alonzo stood beside him doing nothing in particular. Dr. Eggman noticed this and yelled at him.

"Why are you still standing there doing nothing?" he bellowed "Get helping the others!"

"But sir, I was built to be a waiter, not a builder!" squeaked Alonzo.

"JUST GET ON WITH IT!" roared Eggman.

"Yes master, but don't blame me if it comes out badly!" grumbled Alonzo.

He trundled off to do something. Dr. Eggman watched the construction work going on around him and smiled with satisfaction.

"This new circus park I'm building will be my most brilliant achievement!" he announced more to himself then anybody "I do hope Sonic appreciates the hard work I'm doing just to entertain those miserable Mobians!"

While Eggman was talking, Espio sneaked like a serpent up to the fat scientist and eyed the paper in his hand. He carefully reached out and gripped the paper by the corner. He then proceeded to carefully slip the paper out of Eggman's hand. Funny enough, Dr. Eggman didn't seem to notice. He was probably too focused on the building of his Circus Park. Seeing as Eggman didn't notice he'd pinched the paper, Espio ran for it, still invisible of course. Espio didn't bother slowing down or looking back to see if anyone was after him, he just ran for it as if his life was at stake. As for Dr. Eggman he had finished rambling to himself and looked at the plans for the circus park. Only he couldn't since Espio had pinched them. Dr. Eggman almost went berserk.

"MY PLANS HAVE BEEN STOLEN!" he bellowed "EGGMAN ROBOTS, FIND THAT PAPER OTHERWISE I CANNOT BUILD THE PARK AS I'D PLANNED IT!"

All the robots stopped what they were doing and looked around the site for the plans. Even Alonzo. Espio soon realized Eggman had

discovered the missing plans and was now more determined to get out of here. He wasn't watching where he was going and ended up colliding with a giant domed, silver robot carrying a colossal spiked hammer that could squish a truck flat in one smash. The robot felt the bump and turned around to see what it was. He couldn't see anything though since Espio was invisible. But the plans weren't invisible like Espio was so all the robot saw was the plans just lying there. It reached out to grab the plans but Espio stood up and ran off again. To the robot, it looked like the plans just magically picked themselves up and ran off. It scratched its head dimly at that strange little sight, wondering what was going on.

Espio had finally escaped from the construction site and leaped behind the pile of rocks Vector and Charmy were hiding behind.

"So, how did it go Espio?" asked Vector.

"Fairly well." said Espio "I got these plans while I was snooping around."

He handed the blue piece of paper to Vector. Vector unfolded the plans and looked at them. Charmy peered over his shoulder so he could get a look. The plans had very weird looking buildings and structures on them. Some buildings were shaped like ice cream or candy floss and some were shaped like clown's heads. There was a big tent detailed in the centre of the plans. It truly did look like a strange place indeed and Dr. Eggman was obviously building what was on the plans. Charmy looked fascinated due to him being such a ditz.

"What on Mobius is that Eggman building?" said Vector out loud "This is the weirdest looking thing I've ever seen!"

"If I heard him correctly." said Espio "It's supposed to be a circus park. I have no idea why he's building something so childish."

"Who cares? It looks like fun!" giggled Charmy stupidly. He did a few somersaults. "I wanna play! I wanna play!"

"Shut up Charmy!" snarled Vector, grabbing the bee by his head.

"Sorry." said Charmy.

"Did you find out anything else?" asked Vector.

"Well I heard Dr. Eggman saying "I do hope Sonic appreciates the hard work I'm doing just to entertain those miserable Mobians!"" said Espio "I have no idea what that means though."

Vector put a hand to his chin and thought for a moment.

"What exactly is this guy's evil plan?" he thought "We'd best tell Sonic what we've found out. Let's get outta here boys."

"OK!" squealed Charmy for no reason.

"Roger that." said Espio.

And with that, the three Mobians ran away from their hiding place and headed back to Green Hill Zone to inform Sonic the Hedgehog what they had found out.

All was not well back at the under construction circus park. The robots were looking everywhere but not matter where they looked they couldn't find the darn plans anywhere. It was like they had just vanished into thin air or something. Dr. Eggman was getting impatient and Alonzo knew it.

"Why haven't my robots found those plans yet?" roared Dr. Eggman.

"I don't know sir." said Alonzo "My best guess is you might have not been holding onto them very tightly and without you knowing it, they got blown away in the wind."

"You chrome klutz!" cried Dr. Eggman, slapping Alonzo around the head "There is no wind! I can't have possibly lost the plans that way!"

Alonzo rubbed his sore head and groaned.

"I'm just lucky I have a spare set of plans back in the base." said Dr. Eggman "Otherwise my circus park would never get built."

He left the park and went inside his base to get the spare set of plans. Alonzo followed him.

"You know what master, why are you wasting time on this childish park when you could be working on Project: Metal Sonic, the real work of a genius right now?" asked Alonzo.

"Because I like to prove I can build anything." sneered Dr. Eggman "And it's all part of my plan. You see, I'm going to pretend I've turned over a new leaf and I've built this park for entertainment purposes when really I'm leading them into a trap!"

"And by trap, you mean there's a giant roboticizer hiding under the tent." added Alonzo grimly "And you're going to wait until everybody, even Sonic has been fooled by this act before you strike."

"That is correct." said Dr. Eggman "This circus park shall be one of my greatest plans ever!"

And with that he began cackling with glee whereas Alonzo just folded his arms and sighed. Sometimes, he wished his master wouldn't come up with such childish plans and would just focus on the important ones such as Project: Metal Sonic. But nope, his egg-brained master had to come up with a plan to roboticize more puny Mobians. Couldn't that fat moron give it a rest already? He has plenty of robots which he can build himself, why does he need to roboticize Mobians? The reason why was a mystery to the butler bot. Still, at least Dr. Eggman was good at coming up with a way of tricking Mobians. He couldn't wait to see how this worked…

Meanwhile, Team Chaotix had made it back to Green Hill Zone and arrived at Sonic's house. Sonic let them in and they sat themselves down on the sofa.

"So guys, what did you find out?" asked Sonic.

"I got these." said Espio, handing Sonic the plans to the circus park.

Sonic took them, unfolded them and observed them with interest. This was the weirdest looking park he had ever seen in his life and

he knew it was bound to be deadly because Dr. Eggman built it. Still, why is Eggman building a park? What kind of evil plan was this? Tails peered over Sonic's shoulder and looked at the plans.

"That's got to be the creepiest looking park I've ever seen." said Tails.

"Not to mention the weirdest." said Sonic "Did you find anything else out?"

"I heard Dr. Eggman saying "I do hope Sonic appreciates the hard work I'm doing just to entertain those miserable Mobians!"" said Espio.

"Hard work just to entertain us?" repeated Tails "What is Eggman's game here?"

"If I didn't know any better he's either turned over a new leaf and is making this park as a way of saying "sorry for all my evil plans in the past" or he's trying to lead us into a trap." said Sonic, crumpling the plans up in his hands. "We'll have to investigate this scenario further. Tails, get Amy and Cream. We're gonna investigate this circus park plot ourselves."

"OK." said Tails.

He left the house and headed for Knothole to get Amy and Cream.

"Thanks for your efforts Chaotix." said Sonic.

"Don't mention it." said Vector "We're just happy we could help."

"Can I play in the circus park Vector?" asked Charmy excitedly "Can I play in the circus park?"

"No you ditz!" snapped Vector "I will not have you charging into an Eggman scheme! If you get caught you'll end up like Miss Vanilla!"

"OK." said Charmy glumly.

"Well I'm off now." said Sonic "See ya around Chaotix."

"See ya Sonic." said Vector "And good luck!"

Sonic nodded and zipped out the open door. He went so fast that after running through the door, the wind that followed him closed the door behind him.

Later that day, Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream arrived at the Northern Border and hid behind the same bunch of rocks Team Chaotix had hidden behind when they had come here earlier. The four friends poked their heads over the edge to see what they could see. They saw the circus park, still under construction but more or less nearing completion. Most of the buildings had taken shape and appearance whereas some were either missing a paint job or still nearing completion. After all Eggman's robots could build fast, faster then any builder in the world so this was no surprise that it was so near to completion. The four Mobians were surprised at what they were looking at. This really was one heck of a park and they knew it. They had to get a closer look at this.

"OK guys, let's do it to it." said Sonic, about to jolt off.

"Wait Sonic!" cried Tails "Don't you think we should take it nice and slow for once?"

"OK." mumbled Sonic. He hated having to go slow as he loved going fast all the time and going slow bored him a little.

"Amy, do you think that nasty Eggman is going to catch us?" asked Cream, shaking slightly.

"If he tries to, we'll knock him sky high!" said Amy "Especially since I have my Piko-Piko hammer."

She summoned it from nowhere again and gave it a hefty swing.

"Amy put that away!" cried Tails "We want to look like we've come to the park in peace, not like we've come to tear the park to pieces!"

"That's what I'm here for." muttered Sonic.

Amy put her hammer away. The four Mobians then crept slowly out of their hiding place and headed towards the circus park. The closer they got to the park, the more amazing it looked. It was one massive park with seas of bright colours, flashing lights and robots. Most of the robots were providing the finishing touches to the park whereas others were on guard. The four Mobians stopped at the entrance. The entrance was a tall red arch with a black neon sign with red flashing letters saying "WELCOME TO EGGMAN'S EGGS-TRAORDINARY CIRCUS PARK!" The Mobians gaped at the neon sign. If this was a plan to make them think Eggman had turned nice then it certainly would have fooled a lot of people.

"Well I've gotta hand it to ol' eggy." said Sonic "He sure knows how to pretend to make us feel welcome."

"This place looks like fun, don't you agree Cheese?" asked Cream.

"Chao!" squeaked Cheese with excitement.

"Don't lose your heads Cream and Cheese." warned Amy "This place isn't what it seems. And don't forget that Dr. Eggman built it so it's bound to be a trap."

"Where is Eggman anyway?" asked Tails "I don't see him anywhere."

"Well let's look for him shall we?" asked Sonic.

Before he could do anything Alonzo the butler-bot appeared from nowhere and zipped up to the Mobians with a casual expression on his face. This was unusual behaviour for Alonzo, he usually glared, glowered or scowled at the Mobians, not greet them with a friendly face.

"Hello dear Mobians." he said politely "How may I help you?"

Sonic looked at Tails. Tails looked at Sonic. Amy looked at Cream. Cream looked at Amy. What was going on? Alonzo would never have greeted them or spoken to them like that! Something was definitely wrong.

"Um…may we see Mr. Eggman please?" asked Cream "We want to

ask him something."

"Certainly little bunny." said Alonzo "I shall fetch him immediately."

And with that the butler-bot zipped off to get Dr. Eggman. The Mobians fought hard to keep the look of confusion of their faces but they couldn't.

"What is going on?" asked Sonic "Alonzo is way out of character right now!"

"I bet he's doing this to trick us." said Amy.

"Well I kinda like the new Alonzo." said Tails "Definitely a lot better then the old snooty slop-bucket he used to be."

"I bet he secretly is still a snooty old slop bucket." said Sonic "We'd better keep our senses alert for anything suspicious."

Then shortly after Sonic had finished talking, Alonzo arrived back at the entrance with Dr. Eggman behind him in his Egg-Mobile which had been painted gold and decorated with images of clown's faces and balloons around the front and sides. A red balloon hung on the back of the Egg-Mobile. Dr. Eggman however had a great big smile on his hideous face. Definitely unusual for him to greet the Mobians in such a manner.

"Hello my former foes!" he said cheerfully "And welcome to Dr. Eggman's Eggs-strodinary Circus Park! I'm afraid you can't come in and have fun yet since the place isn't open yet so I suggest you all leave and come back tomorrow. We'll be all finished by then."

"We didn't come here to have fun." said Sonic calmly "We came here to ask you something."

"Oh really?" said Dr. Eggman, still grinning "What may that be then?"

"What is your evil plan this time?" asked Sonic "Why are you building a circus park?"

Dr. Eggman chortled.

"Oh Sonic I have no evil plans this time." said Dr. Eggman "I have turned over a new leaf. I am now a good guy. And as a way of apologizing for my actions in the past, I'm building this park for all you marvellous Mobians to enjoy. I hope you appreciate my hard work."

"How do we know you aren't lying?" asked Tails.

"Yeah!" added Amy "How do we know this isn't a trick?"

"Oh you two." said Dr. Eggman "There's no need to be suspicious. I am a man of my word. And I give my word this isn't a trick of any kind. And to prove it, I'm giving this wonderful red balloon to one of you."

He took the balloon that floated at the back of the Egg-Mobile and held it out to the Mobians.

"Who wants it?" asked Dr. Eggman.

The Mobians weren't sure what to do. Should they take it or refuse it? The balloon looked totally harmless but appearances can be deceptive so for all they knew, the balloon could be a robot in disguise or even a bomb. Unfortunately, Cream didn't think any of those things; she was spellbound by the kind offer.

"I'll take it Mr. Eggman." said Cream.

She took the balloon from Dr. Eggman and beamed proudly.

"I do hope you enjoy it." said Dr. Eggman happily.

Sonic glared at the balloon suspiciously but said nothing about it. If Cream was happy to have the balloon, she can have it and if it was a robot or whatever he'd be on the scene in no time.

"Thank you Mr. Eggman." said Cream "And since you're being a good guy now, can you please turn my mother back to normal?"

"I haven't got much time on my hands right now little bunny." said Dr. Eggman sadly "But once I get the time, I'll de-roboticize your mother."

"WHAT?" shrieked Sonic "You can't seriously think that you can roboticize someone's mom one minute and then turn them back to normal the next minute and everybody's gonna be OK with that! It doesn't work like that!"

"Sonic, how could you be so inconsiderate to Mr. Eggman?" snapped Cream "He's trying to be nice to us and you accuse him! How could you?"

Sonic face-palmed himself. Cream was one gullible prat. True she was a kid and all but even five year olds weren't this gullible! And Cream's six! Still, maybe he shouldn't jump to conclusions and assume Dr. Eggman is trying to trick everybody. Maybe he was trying to prove he was one of the good guys now.

"I apologize for my angry outburst." Sonic said to Dr. Eggman "But you can't just turn all nice and friendly and expect everybody to be OK with it Eggman. And besides, what about all the robots you still have in other places on Mobius that are blowing cities up?"

"I've ordered them to cease their original priority and return to base." said Dr. Eggman "Their priority now is to entertain Mobians."

Sonic raised a suspicious eyebrow but said nothing more. This all seemed so sudden. First Dr. Eggman wants to turn Mobius into a robot paradise and roboticize the population, next he wants to entertain everybody and be nice to them? What on Mobius came over Eggman's head last night? Still, Sonic didn't trust Dr. Eggman. He was sure this was a very convincing trick well he wasn't falling for it. Unfortunately the others seemed to have fallen for it since they seemed to have warmed up to Eggman's sudden change in personality.

"I really can't wait to see this park when it's open tomorrow!" said Tails "I bet we're all gonna have fun!"

"I certainly agree!" beamed Cream "And my mummy's going to be back to normal soon! I can't wait!"

Cheese joined in the excitement with a chorus of excited chirps. Even Amy was smiling.

"I definitely like nice and friendly Dr. Eggman better then evil and nasty Dr. Eggman." she said.

Sonic groaned. How the heck were Tails, Amy and Cream so convinced Eggman's a good guy now? Eggman wrecked their lives in the past and now he's nice they're over these facts? This just didn't make sense. He had to get out of this looney bin now.

"Um Dr. Eggman we've gotta get going now so bye, bye." said Sonic "I'm looking forward to the circus park tomorrow."

"See you later Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "And I look forward to our newly formed friendship."

Sonic and the others turned around and left the gleaming, glittering circus park behind. After they disappeared over the horizon, Dr. Eggman turned to Alonzo and grinned wickedly.

"The plan is working like a lucky charm!" he said "The fools believe me!"

"Yeah." agreed Alonzo "I hope I don't have to be nice to them again. It was truly revolting."

"You won't have to my steel stooge." purred Dr. Eggman "Once all the Mobians come to my circus park, they'll be spellbound by my marvellous performing robots and then when the time is right, I'll activate the roboticizer that is hiding under the tent."

He pointed at a colossal red tent that stood proudly in the centre of the circus park. That tent was where the clown shows and circus skills were going to be held.

"And I'll roboticize the entire audience!" he added dramatically.

"Oh marvellous marvellous-ness your royal flabbiness." snorted Alonzo sarcastically "And then maybe you'll get on with something really important like Project: Metal Sonic!"

"YOU SHUT UP YOU NUTTY NIT-WIT!" bellowed Dr. Eggman "I'll get on with Metal Sonic when I want to! Right now I just want to increase my Robian army to join my robot army since I'm running

low on Robians!"

"And the reason for that is because you were stupid enough to let Tails get away with Port and give it to other Mobians to use***." noted Alonzo.

"I DID NOT LET TAILS GET AWAY WITH PORT!" roared Dr. Eggman "I had my hands full when he got away you stooge! What are you Alonzo?"

"I'm a stooge sir." grumbled Alonzo.

He pulled a pointy hat out of a side compartment and put it on. The hat had the word "Stooge" printed on it. Dr. Eggman laughed at him.

"I love it when you do that Alonzo!" he sniggered "Maybe you should be one of the clowns for the circus park. You'll make a lot of Mobians laugh!"

Alonzo swore under his breath and turned his back on his laughing master to sulk to himself.

That evening Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream arrived back at Sonic's house and gathered around the sitting room to have a chat about Eggman's strange behaviour.

"Well guys and gals that was definitely one strange discovery wasn't it?" said Sonic "Dr. Eggman's mean and evil one minute, nice and friendly the next. Something doesn't add up here."

"I don't care." said Tails "I like Eggman a lot better that way. I hope he'll find a way to make it up to me for the destruction of my village and roboticizing my parents."

"I don't see that happening." muttered Sonic, his ears drooped backwards. "And even though you lot think Dr. Eggman's good now, it still think he's evil and this circus park is part of some evil plot of his."

"Oh Mr. Sonic can you stop being nasty to Dr. Eggman?" asked

Cream crossly "He's trying to be nice to us and you are refusing his kindness. You should be ashamed of yourself!"

"And why should I?" snapped Sonic, leaping to his feet angrily "Eggman tore my home city to the ground****, roboticized many innocents, turned me into a robot***** and tried to cause Angel Island to fall******! And you expect me to forgive him for that just like that?" he snapped his fingers for effect.

"But…" said Cream quietly.

"And what about your mother Vanilla?" added Sonic "Eggman turned her into a robot and you're gonna forgive him for it just like that?" he snapped his fingers for effect again "It doesn't work like that Cream! Eggman is lying to us and I know it! And he's probably lying to you about de-roboticizing Vanilla too! I can't see why you can't see through Eggman's plot you gullible little bunny!"

Cream's eyes went big and round and tears began to well up in them.

"You're so mean Mr. Sonic!" wailed Cream "I can't believe you'd say something like that!"

And with that she ran out of the room crying. Cheese followed her. Amy glared at Sonic crossly.

"Sonic! How could you be so horrible to Cream?" she scolded "She has hopes of getting her mother back and you're crushing them right in front of her by distrusting Dr. Eggman!"

"Don't tell me you think Eggman's really changed!" snapped Sonic "That makes you as dim-witted as Cream is!"

Amy had had enough of Sonic's attitude right now. She slapped the blue hedgehog across the cheek as hard as she could. Sonic was so stunned by that smack he almost fell over backwards.

"Sonic, you'd better change your attitude or else!" growled Amy "And you'd better have a proper apology for me and Cream!"

And with that she stormed out of the room and slammed the door

behind her. A picture of Sonic as a five year old fell off its peg and smashed to pieces on the floor. Sonic sat back down on the sofa and rubbed his sore cheek in silence. Tails was so shocked at what just happened he was frozen to the chair.

"Well I never thought someone like Amy would slap you that hard." gasped Tails "And I thought she had a crush on you."

Sonic said nothing. He remained silent and just continued to rub his sore cheek. He was just as shocked as Tails was. He never thought Amy was so bad-tempered she would strike out at him like that. Then again, he shouldn't have been such a jerk to Cream and he shouldn't keep assuming Dr. Eggman's trying to trick everybody. He didn't have proof Eggman was tricking them so therefore, he shouldn't keep jumping to conclusions. The only thing he was concerned about was how he was going to apologize to poor Cream and Amy. Well Cream would probably forgive him instantly whereas Amy would take some time to forgive him. Right now, Sonic needed to have a moment to think about what he had just said to upset the girls.

Night had fallen and the Mobians had decides to hit the sack. Tails had fallen asleep instantly but Sonic just lay in bed staring at the ceiling. So many thought were running through his head. How could he apologize to the girls for what he had said to them earlier? And what about Dr. Eggman's change in personality? Was Eggman really turning good or was this an act for some sinister scheme of his? And if it was, what was his sinister scheme? Hopefully he'd find out some time tomorrow when the park was open. Right now, Sonic needed to get to sleep so he'd be well rested and ready to find out what Eggman was up to.

Not everybody was asleep though. Dr. Eggman was up to something. He and Alonzo were in the show tent and were observing the acts the robots were supposed to be performing for the Mobians to entertain them. Unfortunately, success had been scarce around the tent. You see, the robots weren't that good at performing circus acts. They kept crashing into things or falling over and messing up. One robot was doing some trampoline bouncing.

He bounced on the trampoline higher and higher and higher. The robot did a somersault and a few back flips in midair but on the way down, it lost its balance and missed the trampoline and landed in a bucket of water. The water short circuited the robot and it blew up.

One robot was doing a shooting out of the cannon act. The robot lit the cannon and the cannon blasted the robot inside to pieces instead of shooting it out into the target which was a giant custard pie. Robot parts littered the floor. The robot that fired the cannon was so surprised its eyes popped out on springs.

One robot was supposed to be doing a tightrope walking act but it kept losing its balance and landing on the tight rope crotch first and falling off onto the floor. The robot tried another tightrope walk but it lost its balance and fell onto the rope crotch first. The rope sagged down and then shot back up, sending the robot flying up into the ceiling. It went straight through the ceiling, leaving a tiny hole in it.

Finally, one robot was supposed to be a lion tamer but every time it got into the cage with the lion robot, it chickened out and ran away screaming like a girl. The lion robot ran after it, roaring loudly. It spotted Dr. Eggman and chased him around the tent. Alonzo laughed so hard, his eyes were welling up with oily tears and he was rolling on the floor. Unfortunately, the robot lion saw Alonzo and decided to chase him instead. Alonzo squealed like a girl and ran off as fast as his wheels can go. Dr. Eggman pulled out a remote control and pressed a button. The robot lion skidded to a halt and collapsed on the floor dead as a dumpling. The robot had been turned off. Alonzo sighed with relief but Dr. Eggman was pulling his moustache angrily.

"These useless wits are useless!" grumbled Dr. Eggman "I've built them especially for this job and they mess up like stooges! What am I doing wrong?"

"You can't build a robot to do those kind of things." snapped Alonzo "Robots aren't meant to be circus performers! You need organic performers. I'm pretty sure Mobians could do a much better job then those useless robots."

"You know what Alonzo I think that's a good idea." said Dr. Eggman

with appreciation "I think I'm going to kidnap Sonic and his friends and make THEM the performers! I bet I'll get a lot of people coming to see the show since Sonic the Hedgehog will be in it!"

"I imagine they will sir." said Alonzo "Let's just hope you can persuade them to perform for you."

"Oh I will." sneered Dr. Eggman "Oh I will! But it'll have to wait until morning." he added "I don't want them to be too tired to perform."

"Agreed master." said Alonzo.

So the next morning Dr. Eggman sent out a robot to capture Sonic and friends. The robot was cone shaped and coloured metallic blue. It had little features, the visible ones being a circular shape in the centre of the robot and it had no legs and no arms. It just hovered above the ground. This robot was also called "Tranz-Mat" and you'll find out why it's called that later. The robot hovered through the Great Dunes and headed to its designated target, Green Hill Zone where Sonic currently resided and where Knothole was located.

Meanwhile, Amy was still comforting Cream about what Sonic said last night. She hadn't had much success last night since Cream was too upset to listen but now she had had a good night's sleep she'll probably be in more of a listening mood. Amy sat down on the sofa next to Cream and patted her back.

"I know you're still upset after last night Cream but I'm sure Sonic didn't mean it." said Amy "He just got a bit mad that's all."

"I know." said Cream "But I still can't understand why Mr. Sonic keeps thinking Dr. Eggman is playing a trick on us."

"Sonic and Eggman have been enemies for months." noted Amy "Sonic's gonna have a tough time trusting someone he's been toe-to-toe with for a while now."

"Ah, I understand now." said Cream "But I bet once Sonic's seen that circus park of his he'll change his mind about him."

"Maybe or maybe not." said Amy "We'll just have to see about that. Right now, I think we should apologize to Sonic. Me in particular."

"Why, what did you do to Mr. Sonic?" asked Cream.

"I slapped him after he called me dim-witted." said Amy; she stared at the floor sadly "I felt horrible after doing that to him. I hope he'll forgive me for it."

"I'm sure he will Miss Rose." said Cream, smiling.

"Chao." Cheese added in agreement.

Amy smiled back. Cream was definitely a good friend to have around. In fact, Cream felt like a sister to Amy. If Vanilla ever got de-roboticized and Cream had to go back home with her, Amy would end up feeling like she was missing somebody around the house. Still, at least Cream would be happy and Amy would try to be happy for her.

Outside, Tranz-Mat hovered slowly past Amy's house and then stopped. It hovered back and peered through the window. It saw Amy and Cream talking to each other on the sofa with Cheese fluttering next to Cream. Tranz-Mat scanned the three of them with its tiny circular eye above the circular disc in the middle. They all registered as friends of Sonic the Hedgehog so that meant one thing; it had found what it had been sent for.

"Mobian presence detected." it droned in a musical voice "Commence transmat beam."

Now you see why this robot is called Tranz-Mat, it fires transmat beams. The circular disc in the centre of the robot fired a yellow and white electrical beam and it hit Amy. Amy yelped in surprise and then in the blink of an eye, vanished into thin air. Cream screamed and gasped. But before she could do anything else, Tranz-Mat fired at her. Cream yelped as she was hit and then just like Amy before her, she vanished into thin air. Only Cheese was left but Tranz-Mat hardly noticed the little Chao. It hadn't been sent to capture Chao, it had been sent to capture Mobians so Tranz-Mat turned away from Amy's now empty house and hovered away to find Sonic or some

more of his friends. Cheese, sensing this meant trouble, fluttered after the cone-shaped robot.

Meanwhile, Sonic was pacing up and down the living room back and forth. He was deep in thought about something. He still didn't know how to make it up to the girls. And he was still having a train of thought about Dr. Eggman's change in personality and what evil plans he probably had. As for Tails, he was once again listening to his spy machine to see if he could hear anything from Dr. Eggman this time. Only he couldn't hear anything because Dr. Eggman wasn't in his base, he was in the circus park making the final arrangements. Tails decided to pack it up for now since he wasn't getting anything from anyone. He took his earphones off and laid them beside the machine. He sighed to himself. Some spy he was turning out to be. He hadn't found anything out from Dr. Eggman yet. Maybe it was because he was just getting unlucky right now and every time he tried to listen on Eggman, he was somewhere else. Maybe so he was more likely to hear Eggman in other places he should set up microphones in other rooms around his base. That way Tails could hear him no matter which room he was in. But that would have to wait for now. Tails got up from his desk and noticed Sonic was still aimlessly pacing up and down. He had been doing that since breakfast and Tails was getting tired of it.

"Sonic can you please stop that?" said Tails "You're making me tried just watching you."

"Then don't watch me." snapped Sonic.

"What are you so worked up about anyway?" asked Tails.

"Well there's the fact I need to make it up to the girls after upsetting them last night." noted Sonic "And there's the other fact I'm still trying to work out what Dr. Eggman's up to."

"Oh Sonic why do you keep thinking Eggman's up to something?" said Tails, the tone of annoyance in his voice was noticeable "He's a changed man now. Can't you see that?"

"Do you think after eight months of whopping his backside and saving the world from his evil plans I'm gonna suddenly decide

everything's alright now?" snapped Sonic "I don't care what anyone says, I still think he's evil and he's gonna have to do a lot to convince me he's changed."

"Well that's kinda reasonable I must admit." said Tails "But give him a chance will you? Everybody deserves a second chance."

"Fine." muttered Sonic grumpily "But don't blame me if you all end up being roboticized or something."

Outside, Tranz-Mat was still searching for Sonic or any of his friends. It hadn't found them in Knothole so it left Knothole and searched the area Sonic was located in. It spotted the lone house and decided to go up to it and peek through the window to see if what he was looking for was in that house. Tranz-Mat peeked through the window and saw Sonic and Tails talking to one another. It scanned them. The scan registered positive, Tranz-Mat had found what he was looking for again.

"Mobian presence detected, commence transmat beam." it droned.

It was about to fire its transmat beam at the two Mobians but Sonic and Tails both left the living room. Tranz-Mat stopped itself and waited to see what would happen next. The front door opened and Sonic and Tails walked out of it.

"We'll see what this circus park is really like." said Sonic "If it's an entirely innocent little show then I might be convinced Eggman's changed after all."

"I bet we're gonna have lots of fun." said Tails "And I bet Eggman's gonna make some funny robots to perform funny antics…"

Tranz-Mat fired its yellow electrical beam at Tails and hit him in the back. Tails screamed and Sonic gasped in shock as Tails was wiped out of existence. Sonic blinked in surprise. His jaw dropped.

"Wha…? What the heck?" he gasped.

Then Tranz-Mat fired again. Sonic saw the blast coming just in time and jumped out of the way. Tranz-Mat fired again. Sonic dodged and ducked the cone-shaped robot's blasts. Cheese came onto the

scene and gazed at the scene before him. Tranz-Mat had found Sonic and was now trying to shoot him. But no matter how many times Tranz-Mat fired, Sonic always dodged. The blue hedgehog was just miles too quick for the hovering robot.

"You may have dissolved Tails into atoms but you're not doing the same to me!" yelled Sonic.

Tranz-Mat continued showering Sonic with transmat beams but missed every single time it fired. As Sonic continued dodging the blasts, he began to grit his teeth angrily.

"I knew Eggman hadn't changed!" he said to himself "I bet he sent that robot to destroy us! Well after I deal with this floating traffic cone I'm gonna have a word with him!"

Trouble was, could Sonic keep this up? Would Tranz-Mat eventually catch him off guard and dissolve him into atoms too? All that mattered now was trying to evade the robot and eventually come in for the kill.

Amy and Cream slowly sat up and opened their eyes.

"Man what happened?" mumbled Amy sleepily.

"Where are we?" asked Cream, shaking.

Amy had no idea so she observed her surroundings. They appeared to be in a giant tent seeing as there were tent poles everywhere. This must be part of the circus park. But why were they brought here? And how did they get here? Then Amy remembered being blasted a moment ago. Maybe a robot had teleported them here? All that Amy knew was she and Cream were in a tent and possibly in Eggman's circus park. Then suddenly a bright yellow flash appeared from nowhere in midair and Tails suddenly appeared out of the blue. He fell to the ground face first. Amy ran over to him and helped him up.

"Oh Tails are you hurt?" she asked.

"Not really, just my nose is." groaned Tails, rubbing his nose "Where am I?"

"I think we're in a tent." said Amy "See those tent poles?" she pointed at the tent poles.

"Why are we in a tent?" asked Tails "And how the heck did I get here?"

"I dunno." said Amy "I'm not even sure how me and Cram got here although I do remember being blasted by something."

That statement made Tails think for a moment.

"Do you think we might have been brought here by a transmat beam?" asked Tails "Because I vaguely recall getting blasted in the back a few seconds ago."

"Well however we got here, I bet Eggman's responsible!" said Amy crossly "Only he would dare to kidnap us like this!"

Then suddenly as if on cue, Dr. Eggman appeared from nowhere. He looked very different though. Rather then his traditional outfit, he wore a ringmaster's outfit which consisted of a glittering purple top hat, a glittering red coat, a green bow tie, and his traditional black trousers. Alonzo stood beside him, still the same as before. The three captured Mobians gazed at him in disbelief.

"Welcome friends to the Grand Opening of…Eggman's Eggs-strodinary Circus Park!" Dr. Eggman announced at the top of his voice…

Footnotes:

*** See the previous story**

** See the previous story (again)

*** See Story 15

**** See Story 2 for Mobotropolis' downfall

***** See the now famous Mecha Sonic saga (Stories 12-14)

****** See Stories 8-9 (how many footnotes are there?)

I know the plot sounds ridiculous right now but believe me, it's not as ridiculous as it looks! ;) Join me next time as Sonic and friends have a show of epic comedy and circus stunts! Reviews will be greatly appreciated.

The Circus Park Part 2

Story 18: The Circus Park Part 2

"Eggman!" shrieked Amy, pulling out her hammer and getting ready to pounce on him "I should have known you were responsible for this!"

"Responsible for what my dear?" purred Dr. Eggman in an unusually polite tone.

"Warping us here via transmat beam!" snapped Tails.

"Oh that?" sniggered Dr. Eggman "I sent a robot out to warp you here to save you the trouble of walking all the way here that's all."

"You are a liar!" snarled Amy, twirling her hammer "You obviously sent that robot to kidnap us! Now admit it!"

Dr. Eggman just laughed in the pink hedgehog's face.

"My dear, I am one hundred percent honest here." he lied "I did not send that robot to kidnap you three; I sent it to warp you here so you didn't have to go through such a long walk to get here."

Amy would have continued ranting at the fat man until Tails pulled her back by the shoulders and shook his head at her as if he was saying "Drop it Amy, this is getting us nowhere." Amy, seeing that Tails was right, breathed in deeply and breathed out to calm herself down.

"OK Eggman, we'll let you off this once." said Tails "But you'd better promise to warp us back home once we've finished here."

"You have my word as a kind-hearted scientist." fibbed Dr. Eggman.

"So, what do we do now?" asked Cream quietly.

"We prepare for the show of course!" boomed Dr. Eggman, twirling his top hat and throwing it into the air and catching it again.

"What show?" asked Tails "You mean a show with clowns and such?"

"Precisely." said Dr. Eggman, grinning widely "And as luck as it, you three get to be my performers!"

The three Mobians stared at Dr. Eggman with their mouths open. Eggman wanted THEM to be the clowns? What was going on around here?

"We wanted to come to this park to **enjoy** the show, not **be** in the show egg-brains!" yelled Amy "Why don't you whip up a couple of robots and make them the performers."

"Oh he tried." said Alonzo "But the ding-bats keep failing and blowing each other to bits. And that's because Dr. Eggman was too stupid to realize you can't get a robot to successfully perform circus acts."

Dr. Eggman decided to ignore his snobby sidekick's insults.

"So you see, I haven't got any performers." he said "So I'm kindly asking you to fill in for my robots."

The three Mobians looked at each other. Should they do what Dr. Eggman was asking them to do? Or should they just say no and run for it? Then again, running for it wasn't such a good idea since Sonic wasn't here to help them and the circus park was likely to be crawling with robots so they may as well be the clowns. It might even be enjoyable. So the decision was made, they would reluctantly sign up for the show and be the performers.

"OK Dr. Eggman, we'll do it." said Tails "But there'd better not be a sneaky little twist behind this or we won't perform."

"The show is completely harmless little Tails." said Dr. Eggman "I can assure you it is. Alonzo, take them to the changing rooms." he added.

"Yes sir." said Alonzo "This way little Mobians."

He led the Mobians to the other side of the tent and led them

through a flap that led to the backstage where the changing rooms were located. The Mobians had no idea what they had to do but they knew they had to otherwise Eggman's attempt to prove he's a changed man would be a giant flop. Tails just hoped Sonic was alright back home.

Speaking of the speedy hedgehog, Sonic was still playing cat and mouse with Tranz-Mat. The floating cone-shaped robot was proving to be quite persistent with its attack. No matter how many times Sonic dodged Tranz-Mat's transmat beams, the cone-shaped robot just carried on endlessly. Tranz-Mat was a very loyal robot after all and once it was given a priority, it didn't stop until it completed it similar to how Mecha Sonic wouldn't stop until his priority was completed. Sonic was beginning to get frustrated with Tranz-Mat now. He dived for shelter in a rose bush. Tranz-Mat began searching the area for the blue hedgehog. Sonic kept watch through the rose bush.

"That's one stubborn robot." he said to himself "Well it can be stubborn all it wants, it's not gonna get me."

The only trouble was how was Sonic going to stop Tranz-Mat. He could risk a head on attack but Tranz-Mat might see him and blast him into atoms before he could hit. Then Sonic remembered who he was, the fastest thing alive. He'd be too quick for Tranz-Mat to catch. Tranz-Mat floated around aimlessly, looking for Sonic. It floated past Sonic's hiding place. Now was the time to attack. Sonic leaped out of the bush and homing attacked Tranz-Mat in the back. He didn't smash it to pieces though. The startled robot span around crazily and bounced off a nearby tree. After Tranz-Mat stopped spinning it began searching for Sonic again.

"Target initiating hostile resistance." it droned musically "Must remain vigilant."

Sonic however, had hidden back in the rose bush so he could leap out and attack Tranz-Mat again. Tranz-Mat hovered by the rose bush again. Sonic leaped out and spin-dashed it in the back. This attack did more damage to Tranz-Mat seeing as he had now sent it

hurtling over in a cartwheel but he still didn't smash the robot to pieces. Tranz-Mat was one tough robot. Cheese the Chao, Cream's pet and best friend had been watching the whole fight and decided to give Sonic a hand. After Tranz-Mat got back upright, Cheese flew into its eye and blocked its vision. Tranz-Mat couldn't see anything now the little Chao was in the way. It just began to spin around crazily and blindly. Sonic watched this little event and pulled a face. He couldn't see Cheese on the robot so to him it looked like Tranz-Mat was just spinning around like a mad thing. Seeing his chance, Sonic decided to finish Tranz-Mat off. He leaped out of his hiding place and attacked Tranz-Mat with yet another spin-dash. Cheese flew out of the way before Sonic walloped Tranz-Mat in the side with his spin-dash. The spin-dash was so powerful, Tranz-Mat hurtled across the grass spinning like an out of control roundabout and hit a tree. The dazed and startled robot collapsed on its side and shut off.

"Chao! Chao!" cooed Cheese happily.

Sonic wiped sweat off of his forehead.

"Whew!" he said "Those robots are defiantly getting better at this! I'm gonna have to work out so I'll be sharper and swifter then ever!"

Then he noticed Cheese dancing about happily. Confused at the sight of the little Chao without Cream, he called to him.

"Hey Cheese, where's Cream?" he asked.

Cheese stopped dancing and tried to tell Sonic about Amy and Cream's abduction earlier, but being a Chao he didn't speak English; he only spoke Chao language so Sonic had no idea what he was saying. Sonic knew this was going nowhere so he stopped Cheese.

"Sorry little guy, I don't speak Chao." he said "You'll have to find a different way to communicate with me."

Cheese thought for a moment and then had an idea. He picked up a nearby twig and began to draw some pictures in the soil. Sonic watched Cheese as he drew. The little Chao doodled and doodled until it drew a picture of Tranz-Mat firing its transmat beam. Then Cheese added some stick figures to the soil picture that were

supposedly meant to assemble Cream and Amy in front of Tranz-Mat's firing beam. Sonic realized what Cheese was trying to say to him.

"Aha!" he exclaimed "I get it. Are you trying to tell me that floating traffic cone blasted Amy and Cream?"

Cheese nodded.

"So he zapped them to atoms too?" shrieked Sonic "Oh man! How am I gonna save the girls and Tails now?"

"Chao?" said Cheese.

"That robot got Tails earlier and tried to get me." explained Sonic "And I bet Dr. Eggman's responsible! I'm gonna march over to that circus park and give him what for!"

While he was ranting, Tranz-Mat suddenly re-booted online and descended slowly back up right. Tranz-Mat spotted Sonic and before the blue hedgehog could jolt away, Tranz-Mat blasted him with a transmat beam! And Cheese was directly behind Sonic so he got blasted too! Now they would be transported to Eggman's shifty tent in his shifty circus park…

Meanwhile at the Circus Park, the Mobians had changed from their old outfits to clown outfits. They emerged from the changing room so Alonzo could see them.

Amy looked absolutely ridiculous in an oversized yellow frock with green and blue polka-dots, matching trousers, big blue floppy shoes and a flat yellow hat with pink polka dots and a wobbly spring on top. She didn't know for sure why it was there.

Tails was a comedic sight for anyone. He wore floppy purple shoes that were even bigger then Amy's and he could hardly walk in them, he wore a red shirt with yellow polka-dots and his face had been smeared from top to bottom with make-up. He now had big red lips; big red eyes and his face had been covered from top to bottom. And to add insult to injury, he had a big red honky nose that squeaked

every time he squeezed it.

And finally, Cream came out. Her ears had been tied up in a ridiculous knot to give her a comedic appearance. She wore an oversized blue dress with red polka-dots that dragged on the floor, green floppy shoes that were tattered and torn in places, a really tall orange hat that could be squished down flat and would pop back up afterwards and a clown mask with a big smiley face and thin eye holes. Cream could barely see through them and spent half the time fumbling about.

Alonzo couldn't hold it in any more and he shrieked with laughter. The Mobians were not impressed at all.

"These clothes are awful!" whined Amy "This frock makes me look huge!"

"And these shoes make my feet feel ten feet long." added Tails "And why am I the only one with make up?"

"I dunno." said Cream "Maybe Mr. Eggman thought you'd look funnier with make up. I have no idea why I'm wearing this silly mask I can hardly see out of."

Alonzo continued laughing like a gremlin at them. He was laughing so hard he was rolling on the floor uncontrollably. If he was a human, his sides would be aching like mad. Amy began to get cross.

"And what exactly is the matter?" she growled.

"I'm sorry you three…hee, hee!" laughed Alonzo "I've never seen such a funny sight! Little old you and your little old friends, skulking around in those ridiculous clown outfits! Ho! Ho! Ho!"

"Well thank you for your sympathy." muttered Tails.

"Oh come on, see the funny side of it." said Alonzo kindly as he got back onto his wheels "If you see yourself in the mirror, you'll be laughing your head off I'm sure."

Then he burst into laughter again. Amy had had enough of Alonzo taunting them. She summoned her hammer and whacked Alonzo's

head so hard she sent it flying clean off! The head landed near the entrance to the showroom of the tent. Alonzo's body dropped down to the floor and began searching for his missing head. After a while of fumbling about, he finally found it near the entrance. He picked it up and put it back onto his body. Then he began to rant at Amy.

"Now you see here missy!" he ranted, shaking his fists "You've got to treat all robots with respect around here! Especially as we're not your enemies anymore! I'm going to have a word with Dr. Eggman about this and you'll be in big, big…"

Amy merely bopped him on the head and the servant bot fell apart. His pieces littered the floor. Cream and Tails laughed at him.

"I hate it when that happens." grumbled Alonzo.

"Who's laughing now Alonzo?" jeered Amy, sticking her tongue out at him.

"Are you three ready yet?" Eggman's voice called out from outside.

"We're ready!" Amy called out to him.

The three Mobians walked into the showroom. Alonzo just put himself back together (I still don't know how he does it) and trundled out after them. Dr. Eggman, who had been making tweaks to the tightrope, spotted the costumed Mobians and tried hard not to snicker at their appearances. Instead he contained himself and said.

"My but those costumes suit you so well!"

"Yeah right." moaned Amy "They suit us like dirt!"

"I think I look alright." said Cream "I wish I could take off the mask since I can hardly see through it."

"Why am I the only one with make-up on?" Tails complained.

"Because it looks funnier on you." sneered Dr. Eggman "Now, let's begin the rehearsals shall we? We have four hours until show time so we have plenty of time to practice our skills."

"What do you want us to do?" asked Tails suspiciously.

Dr. Eggman didn't answer, instead he instructed Alonzo to announce from a check board he was now holding. Alonzo cleared his throat and read:

"The show's schedule goes like this: We begin with ten minutes of juggling and unicycle riding, then we go onto the tightrope walking, then we go onto shooting out of cannons into targets, then the lion taming act and the finale will consist of various circus acts. Tails will be juggling, Amy will be unicycle riding, Cream will be tightrope walking, Tails and Cream will be doing the cannon shooting, Amy will be lion taming and all three of you will be performing the finale."

The Mobians were flabbergasted. This was going to be a long, hard, sweaty rehearsal.

"Do you really expect us to learn all that in four hours time?" shrieked Amy "We'll never be all trained up in that amount of time!"

"It doesn't matter if you mess up in any of those acts." explained Dr. Eggman "It'll just add up to the comedy factor."

"So is there any point rehearsing if you don't mind if we mess up?" asked Cream.

"Well I want the cannon and lion taming acts to go right." said Eggman admittedly "So get rehearsing or you don't get a lunch break!"

The Mobians obeyed instantly and dashed off to practice their acts. Tails picked up three juggling balls and gazed at them absentmindedly. He had no idea how to juggle balls so he just threw them around, guessing that's how they worked. He threw them up into the air and they all landed smack bang on his head. Tails rubbed his sore head as Alonzo laughed at him.

Amy however, tried unicycle riding. A unicycle is a bicycle with only one wheel so it was a very difficult vehicle to ride on and Amy knew it. Still she had to practice so she wouldn't make a fool of herself in front of the audience. Amy pulled herself up onto the unicycle and

inevitably, fell off after it tipped backwards. Amy stood the unicycle up again and tried to get on again but the moment she did, the unicycle fell forward and she hit the floor face first. Her nose hurt so much she thought it was going to explode. A small tear escaped her eye. Amy tried once again to get onto the unicycle. She managed to get onto the seat but the unicycle began to tip forward. Amy slammed her feet on the pedals frantically and began to push the unicycle forward. The unicycle stopped tipping and balanced in an upright position. Amy continued pedalling the one wheeled thing. It then began to tip backwards but Amy held her arms forward to balance herself and the unicycle stopped tipping. Amy beamed with pride. She was beginning to get the hang of this. She waved her arms about in triumph as she pedalled around the tent. Tails and Cream stared at Amy in amazement and so did Dr. Eggman. The fat scientist was impressed with how fast Amy had managed to learn how to ride the unicycle. Amy waved at Tails and Cream as she rode along. Unfortunately she didn't see a robot marching about setting up the cannon act and rode straight into the robot. The unicycle hurtled forward and over the startled robot and Amy was sent flying through the air. Amy then landed with a mighty crash into a taco stand. The stand was destroyed and taco shells, taco sauce, grated cheese, lettuce leaves and a bowl of minced meat flew straight up into the air. Then without warning came crashing down on top of poor Amy Rose. The poor pink hedgehog was now covered in red hot taco sauce, bits of cheese, lettuce leaves and broken crispy taco shells. The bowl of mince meat landed with a splat on her head. Amy looked very silly and very messy indeed. Tails and Cream ran over to her aid whereas Dr. Eggman and Alonzo exploded with laughter. This was by far the funniest thing they had seen all day.

"You know what Alonzo?" cackled Eggman "If this wasn't a rehearsal, I'd think this was the actual show!"

"Why don't we actually make that happen sir?" suggested Alonzo "It'd be a hit amongst the foolish audience!"

"Maybe I will." purred Dr. Eggman. He pulled out the schedule board and added a few extra notes to it as if he was making a rewrite to the show. As for Amy, Tails and Cream helped her to her feet. Amy

threw the bowl off her head and wiped a few bits of taco of herself.

"Are you alright Miss Rose?" asked Cream in a squeaky voice.

"I'm half dead to be honest." joked Amy "But I'm fine. Just messy."

"I think the moral of today is to watch where you're going Amy." said Tails.

"You don't have to tell me twice." muttered Amy.

"Come on, let's get you cleaned up Miss Rose." said Cream.

"No that won't be necessary." said Dr. Eggman; finally containing his laughter "We unfortunately don't have washing utensils installed in these premises. Amy will have to have a costume change."

So the three Mobians took Amy to the backstage to change her costume. The moment the left though, a bright flash emitted from behind the audience seats. And after the flash faded away, Sonic the Hedgehog and Cheese the Chao appeared. Sonic lay there, not really sure what was going on. Cheese regained his senses and looked around. He saw Sonic still lying there and shook him gently to wake him up. Sonic opened his eyes and sat up on his bottom. He rubbed his aching head as he tried to regain his vision.

"What a trip through hyperspace…" mumbled Sonic dimly "I wonder where I…"

His vision returned and he suddenly realized he had no idea where he was. He got to his feet and looked up at the ceiling. He couldn't see the sky so he realized he was not outside anymore, he was inside something but he had no idea what. Then he realized something else. How did he get here? Shouldn't he have been blasted into atoms after Tranz-Mat shot him? Then it dawned on him. Maybe Tranz-Mat didn't blast people to atoms, he teleported people so when the robot shot him, it merely teleported him into this strange location. And if that was the case then maybe it didn't blast Tails, Amy and Cream to atoms as well, it must have teleported them here just like it teleported him here. Wherever "here" was. Sonic saw Cheese cooing at something around the corner of the

seats. Sonic crept up to the corner and poked his head around it. He saw Dr. Eggman in his ringmaster outfit standing there, clearly waiting for something. Sonic soon realized where he was. He must be in Eggman's Circus Park otherwise he wouldn't be wearing a ringmaster's outfit. And this thing he was in must be a circus tent because it certainly looked like it due to the tent poles and the tightrope walking apparatus. Why on Mobius would that robot teleport him into Eggman's circus park rather then a roboticizer or something? Many questions whirled around Sonic's brain but he didn't know the answer to any of them. For the time being, Sonic decided to watch and wait and see what was going on. Cheese however, fluttered out of the hiding place and looked around.

"Come back Cheese or Eggman will see you!" hissed Sonic.

Cheese ignored him and continued looking around. Then he saw Tails, Amy and Cream coming out from the backstage, all wearing clown's outfits. Amy had changed hers and now wore a pink oversized frock with orange polka-dots, a spare pair of blue shoes and another flat yellow hat with pink polka dots and a wobbly spring on top. Cheese, delighted to see Cream, flew towards him with excitement. Cream saw Cheese and caught him in her arms and hugged her pet tightly.

"Oh Cheese I'm so glad to see you!" she squealed.

"Chao! Chao!" cried Cheese.

"Wait a minute." said Tails suddenly "How the heck did Cheese get here?"

"Do you think that robot with the teleporting laser beam thingy got him?" wondered Amy.

"Likely." said Tails "I just hope it blasted Sonic here so he can get us out of this circus nightmare."

"Stop talking to yourselves and get on with your rehearsals!" roared Dr. Eggman impatiently.

The three Mobians leaped into action and got back to their

rehearsals. Sonic stayed where he was and watched his friends rehearse. Tails was now trying to juggle balls, Amy was once again, trying to ride the unicycle and Cream practiced the tightrope walk which did fortunately have a safety net for her in case she fell off. Tails was getting much better at the juggling act now. He threw the balls into the air one at a time and caught them in his other hand and then threw them up again. Unfortunately he slipped up and ended up with the balls landing on his head again. One ball smacked him on the nose. Tails yelped and clutched his nose. As for Amy, she continued pedalling on the unicycle as she rode around the tent, this time being wearier of any stray robots marching around. As for Cream, she held the pole in her hands and steadily walked across the thin tightrope. She wobbled ever so much but she managed to regain her balance and continue walking. Cheese sort of followed her and cheered her on. Sonic decided he had had enough of watching his friends do these circus acts and decided it was time for him to step in and save the day. But before he could go anywhere, he bumped into a giant bulky robot with a hideous scowling face and enormous mechanical biceps. It looked like it could pack quite a punch. Sonic stared up at the robot nervously and smiled uneasily at it.

"Um, hit blot brains." he said, sweating "I was just looking for the hot dog stand."

The robot seized him with one giant metal hand and lifted him off the ground. Sonic squirmed in the robot's incredible grip.

"Put me down you walking scrap yard!" Sonic ordered.

The robot ignored him and took him to Dr. Eggman in the centre of the stage. Dr. Eggman stopped watching the Mobians rehearse and smiled happily.

"Oooh!" he squealed in a girlish fashion "You've got Sonic the Hedgehog! Well done BI-CEP!"

BI-CEP said nothing and merely dropped Sonic on the ground. Sonic shook his head and glared at the fat man.

"Alright Dr. Eggman!" he said angrily "When we wanted to come to

the circus park, this wasn't what we had in mind!"

"My apologies Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "I can't make a robot that can perform a circus act correctly so I decided to ask your friends to be the performers instead."

"I see." said Sonic, still being suspicious about this "But why did you send a robot to teleport them here? Didn't it occur to you it would kinda make them think you were kidnapping them?"

"I did it to save them the trouble of walking here." said Dr. Eggman "Including you."

"Well it eventually got me." said Sonic "But you didn't need to teleport me here, I could easily run from my place to here in a matter of minutes."

"Indeed." said Dr. Eggman "Now you're here Sonic, would you care to join your friends in the circus performance?"

Sonic thought for a moment before finally saying "No thanks, I'll watch the show instead."

"Very well." said Dr. Eggman "I hope you enjoy the show."

He pulled out a whistle and blew it hard. Sonic covered his ears due to how loud Eggman blew the whistle.

"Clowns! It's lunch time!" he announced "Be back here in twenty minutes!"

Tails, Amy and Cream stopped what they were doing and ran to the backstage. Sonic followed them into the backstage. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo left the tent to have their lunch break. Sonic peeked around the corner to see if the coast was clear. Then he turned back to his friends who were clearly happy to see him. Tails hugged Sonic.

"Sonic! I'm so glad you're here at last!" he cried with joy.

"It's good to see you too Tails." said Sonic with a smile "Same to you Amy and Cream."

"Why did you come here Sonic?" asked Amy "Have you come to rescue us?"

"Well not exactly." said Sonic "I was kinda teleported here, same as you three so I didn't come here by choice. And besides, why would I need to rescue you? You don't look like you need rescuing."

"We do need rescuing!" snapped Amy "From this circus act! I refuse to wear this crummy oversized dress a minute longer! And I'm tired of looking ridiculous and hurting myself!"

"Miss Rose, I'm sure it's not that bad." said Cream quietly.

"Nah, it's much worse." laughed Sonic "You three look like a bunch of stooges!"

"Are you begging for me to give you a migraine Sonic?" growled Amy, the fire in her eyes becoming very noticeable "Because it almost sounds like you are!"

"No not at all Amy!" Sonic yelped in fright "I didn't mean to laugh at you; I meant it in a light hearted way!"

"Well I bet you won't be laughing once I stuff you in a clown's costume!" yelled Amy.

"Amy calm down!" shrieked Tails "This is going nowhere!"

Amy stopped grumbling and turned her back on her hero. Sonic giggled nervously.

"That's Amy for you." he said "Easy to rile, hard to clam."

"So Sonic, do you have any idea on how we're gonna get outta here?" asked Tails.

"Well I thought about making a dash for it once the show is over." said Sonic "Because I have this weird feeling Eggman's gonna try something once the show ends."

"OK Sonic." said Tails "But remember to be careful."

"Sure I will!" said Sonic, winking and giving Tails his trademark thumbs up sign "I won't get caught by any of Eggman's smelly robots! Now where's lunch? I'm one hungry hedgehog."

Alonzo appeared from nowhere, carrying a tray full of food.

"My master requested me to deliver this to you." he said, handing Sonic the tray.

The tray was full of hot-dogs from the hot-dog stands. Sadly, there were no Chilli-Dogs on the tray but Sonic didn't mind as long as he got something to munch on. The friends eat their lunches in silence and prepared for the upcoming show that would begin in three more hours…

Showtime!

A massive crowd of Mobians lined up to get into the enormous circus tent. Dr. Eggman had let everybody know about his Egg-strodinary Circus Park by having his robots send out leaflets everywhere. He had also remembered to add "This is not an evil scheme of any sorts, this is purely out of kindness to celebrate my turn to the good side." so the Mobians would go. There were Mobians from many places at this park. Some from Mobotropolis, some from Empire City, some from Central City and some from many more places around the world. The Circus Park had been a huge hit so far. There had been firework displays, candyfloss, hot dogs, fortune tellers and Alonzo even did a fire dance for the entertained crowd (he did accidentally set fire to the stage though and ended up scorched and blackened). And now it was the main event of the day, the Eggs-cellent Circus Park Super Show which the Mobians were queuing up for right now. Eggman robots helped them find a seat. Sonic the Hedgehog say in the front row so he could get the best view. He had to admit it though, the park was pretty cool and he'd enjoyed himself so far. Maybe Dr. Eggman had turned over a new leaf after all. Now all that was left was the Super Show and if that went on without any dodgy acts Sonic could congratulate Eggman on his new found kindness. As for Tails, Amy and Cream, they poked their heads around the corner and almost

fainted with what they saw.

"Oh my gosh!" cried Tails "I bet half of Mobius is here!"

"I think I'm gonna die of nervousness." gulped Amy "I don't think I can do this."

"Come on Miss Rose." said Cream gently "Don't worry too much. My mother always said if you're nervous it's best to keep your mind off the crowd and keep your mind on what you're doing and that way, you're less likely to mess up."

Amy smiled at the six year old rabbit. Even in the most intense moments, she still remained confident and wanted her friends to remain confident too.

"Thanks Cream." said Amy, stroking Cream's head "You're such a big help. Now let's get out here and knock them dead!"

"Yeah!" cheered Tails, punching the air excitedly.

The three Mobians emerged from the backstage as Ringmaster Dr. Eggman made his announcement.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Mobians of all ages." he boomed into the microphone "I present to you, the main event of Eggman's Egg-strodinary Circus Park, the Eggs-cellent Circus Park Super Show!"

The crowd erupted into cheer. Sonic however just clapped sarcastically as he still didn't trust this show. Still, at least his friends were the ones performing and he couldn't wait to see how well they do.

"Now let us begin with this Eggs-cellent show." continued Eggman "By introducing our clowns. Please welcome, Binky, Bonky and Coco!"

Sonic snorted with laughter. Eggman had to humiliate his friends further by giving them daft names didn't he? But hey, it's a circus show, clowns have daft names. Tails, Amy and Cream took the centre stage and waved at the applauding crowd. Eggman spoke into his microphone again.

"Now our first act is juggling, which will be provided by Binky."

Binky, which was the clown name Eggman had given Tails, bowed down to the crowd as he prepared for the act. Sonic watched with intent as Alonzo handed Tails the juggling balls. The audience fell silent, waiting for the act to begin. Tails took a deep breath, and juggled. He threw the balls into the air one by one and caught them before they could fall. He juggled them around and around and around without a single stop. The crowd gave out several "Oooh's" and "Aaah's". Even Sonic was pretty impressed with Tails' juggling. He'd learnt how to juggle pretty quickly hadn't he? Tails continued juggling the balls and then he threw them into the air, did a handstand, and juggled them with his feet! The crowd gasped. Then Tails threw them into the air, got back on his feet, caught them with his tails, and juggled the balls with his tails! The crowd shrieked with joy at this amazing performing fox. Tails then finished off by throwing the balls into the air and holding a hat out to catch them in. Only two went in the hat, the third one missed and bonked him on the head. Tails ignored the pain in his skull and said

"Ta da!"

The crowd erupted into applause. Tails bowed down modestly. Sonic whooped and whistled at his friend.

"Tails that was sweet!" he called out to him.

Tails bowed at Sonic and walked off the stage.

"Now wasn't that an amazing way to start the show?" said Dr. Eggman, taking back the centre stage "Now our next act is unicycle riding which will be provided by Bonky. Enjoy everybody."

Dr. Eggman walked off the stage and Alonzo set up the unicycle. Amy, who had taken the clown name Bonky for some reason, climbed onto the unicycle. It began to titter and totter for a few seconds but Amy hit the pedals with her feet and regained balance. Then, just like she did in rehearsals, she pedalled all around the stage on the one wheeled bike. The crowd were pretty amazed at what Amy was doing right now. Unicycle riding was not an easy thing to do. Amy waved at the crowd as she cycled past them. Then

Dr. Eggman added something else to the fray. He threw the juggling balls at Amy. Amy caught them and juggled them around while riding the unicycle. That was a pretty impressive act considering you have to focus on pedalling a one wheeled bike while remaining balanced and juggling balls at the same time. Amy was pretty impressed herself at how well she was doing. And come to think about it, it actually was kind of fun. Good thing Sonic didn't break them out of this show after all. Unfortunately, Dr. Eggman decided to add insult to injury by having a robot march in front of Amy's cycle path and stay there. Amy couldn't see the robot seeing as she was too focused on the juggling balls and rode into the robot again. The robot tripped the unicycle up and Amy hurtled through the air. Alonzo put a giant jam tart in the speculated place Amy was going to land. Amy landed slam dunk, head first into the jam tart. Jam rained all over the crowd. Sonic opened his mouth to see if he could catch any bits of flying jam. The crowd shrieked with laughter and then fell silent for a moment before Amy emerged from the sticky jam tart and yelled.

"Ta-da!"

The crowd cheered and whooped. Amy curtseyed at the crowd and licked some jam off her face.

"You rock Amy!" cried Sonic.

Amy blushed scarlet at Sonic's remark. Then Amy left the stage and Dr. Eggman reappeared.

"That was marvellous wasn't it?" he said, smiling at how well this show was going "Now, next act is tightrope walking which will be provided by Coco!"

Dr. Eggman left the stage and Cream, who had taken the name Coco, appeared. Cream looked up at the tall posts with the tightrope at the top. Was it her imagination or was the tightrope higher then it was in rehearsals? Regardless, she had to do the act. Cream climbed up the ladder and onto the platform that the tightrope was connected to. Cheese followed her in case she needed support. Cream looked down nervously. She must be at least forty-five feet off the ground right now. Not that it should bother her since she can

fly with the aid of her long floppy ears but it was still dizzying for her. Cream shook it off, grabbed the long pole that was supposed to help her balance and began the walk. The crowd looked up at the little rabbit walking across the ever so thin tightrope. Cream took her steps carefully as she walked along, wobbling slightly. She manoeuvred the pole a couple of times in order to balance herself. Cheese cheered her on as she continued walking. Cream's heart began to pound, her hands felt sweaty. One wrong step and she would fall. Not that she should be worried since there was a safety net at the bottom but she hated falling as it was such a scary feeling for her. Cream tried her hardest not to look down as she continued walking. Sonic had been watching her and kept wondering if she was going to make it or not. Dr. Eggman was wondering the same thing too. At one point, Cream looked like she was going to let her fears get the best of her and give up and fall but she remembered what Vanilla had told her, "focus on nothing except the thing you're doing and that way you'll worry less". So Cream focused on getting across the tightrope. And strangely enough, focusing on crossing the tightrope gave Cream the determination she never knew she had. She continued across the tightrope, wobbling much less then before. Cheese continued cheering her on. The crowd made a chorus of "Oooh's" at the rabbit. Then with one final step, Cream made it across the tightrope.

"Yay I did it!" she squealed.

The crowd cheered at Cream's amazing tightrope walk.

"Well done Cream!" Sonic called to her.

Cream bowed and waved sweetly at the crowd below her. Then, using her ears, she fluttered down to the ground. Cheese flew into Cream and hugged her. Cream giggled and hugged her little pet back.

"Thanks for cheering me on Cheese." she said.

"Chao, Chao!" piped Cheese.

"Wonderful performance Coco." Dr. Eggman congratulated "I thought you weren't going to make it."

"I thought the same thing too Mr. Eggman." said Cream "But I made it and I feel so happy I wanna tell everybody!"

Eggman pretended to find that cute and adorable.

"Now audience, it's time for the next act!" he announced.

The rest of the show was a triumph. Cream and Tails did the cannon act which involved Cream shooting Tails out of the cannon and into a giant custard pie which caused everybody to get covered in custard, including Dr. Eggman and Alonzo, Amy did the lion-taming act and with one smack of her hammer, tamed the lion pretty quickly, some Eggman robots did an act involving how many robots can you squeeze into a Volkswagen Beetle and ended up tearing it apart and now was the finale which involved the clowns doing various circus acts in a cycle. Tails did bike riding across the tightrope, Amy did the spinning plates and Cream did a bicycle course which involved riding through hoops and leaping over robots. Everyone did pretty well at this.

Once Eggman blew his whistle, the clowns changed activities so now Tails was doing the spinning plates, Amy was doing the bicycle course and Cream was cycling across the tightrope. Tails didn't do well with the spinning plates unfortunately; he kept dropping them every time he threw them up and tried to catch them on the stick. Amy tried her best at the cycle but when it was time to ride through the hoops, she didn't go fast enough and the back wheel of the bike caught on the hop, causing her to fall off and crash into the ramp she was supposed to land on after riding through the hoop. Cream did pretty well at her act though. She was focused on riding the bicycle more then the fact she was on a tightrope so she didn't worry too much on falling.

Eggman blew his whistle once again and the clowns switched acts. Cream was on the spinning plates, Amy was on the bike riding across the tightrope and Tails was doing the course. Cream was even worse at spinning plates then Tails was. Every time she span one around, it flew off and hit somebody in the crowd or Tails or Amy. Tails did pretty well at the bicycle course though. He leaped through hoops and over robots just like that and even when Eggman set the hoop on fire to make things more interesting, Tails still

managed it. Even though one of his tails caught fire and he did a mad cycle around to cool it off. As for Amy, well…let's just say she fell off the tightrope more times then I could count. One time she fell off, Alonzo replaced the safety net with another custard pie and she landed splat into it, causing everybody to get covered in custard again. Amy was getting a bit tired of getting messy right now but it was only part of the show. Then a few minutes later, Dr. Eggman blew his whistle to let the clowns now the show was over. Tails, Amy and Cream stood in a line and bowed down to the roaring crowd. Sonic whooped and cheered at them. Many Mobians threw roses, daises and other flowers at the clowns. Then the clowns left the stage to change into their normal outfits. Dr. Eggman appeared onstage, waving merrily at the crowd.

"Thank you! Thank you!" he said to the crowd "What a marvellous show that was!"

"An utter triumph I might say sir." added Alonzo.

"It was, wasn't it?" purred Dr. Eggman, stroking his moustache.

Sonic leaped out of the crowd and wondered up to Dr. Eggman. Eggman looked down at his super speedy nemesis.

"I gotta hand it to ya Eggman." he said "You're much better at organizing a show then defeating me in battle."

"I couldn't agree more, former enemy." said Dr. Eggman proudly.

"And I'm sorry I didn't believe you when you said you'd changed." Sonic added.

"Oh Sonic that's all right." crooned Dr. Eggman "Especially since…I HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL!"

Before Sonic could say anything else Dr. Eggman said "How would you like to see a magic trick?"

Sonic stepped back and Eggman yelled "ALA…KAZAM!"

He pointed at the floor and the room exploded in a puff of purple smoke. Then the ground began to shudder and shake as if there

was an earthquake about to happen. Then out of the ground, four metallic shapes rose out and began to close around Sonic and the terrified crowd of Mobians. Tails, Amy and Cream, who were now back in their normal clothes, heard the commotion and peeked around the corner to see what was happening. A terrible sight met their eyes. The stage was now replaced with a giant, chrome, egg-shaped, pod-like machine. The crowd was presumably in it since the seats were nowhere to be seen.

"What the blazes is going on?" cried Amy.

"I hope this isn't what I think it is!" wailed Tails.

Dr. Eggman admired the machine proudly.

"What a triumph!" he said "My hidden egg-shaped roboticizer has them trapped like rats in a cage!"

"I'm rather proud of it myself sir." said Alonzo, smirking.

"Roboticizer?" screamed Amy "So this was all a trap! Eggman made this park to roboticize more Mobians!"

"How could he lie to us and deceive us like this?" wailed Cream.

"That rotten egg is like that Y'know." said Tails "He's a natural born liar. I should've known something was fishy when he kidnapped us earlier."

"Sonic was right to distrust him after all." said Amy "I can't believe Eggman fooled us like this."

"Well now's the time to redeem ourselves." said Tails "Let's stop that roboticizer!"

The girls did not wait to be asked twice. Without a moment's hesitation, Tails, Amy and Cream charged out of their hiding place and towards Eggman's giant egg-shaped roboticizer. The fat man was just starting to turn it on and activate it. Inside the roboticizer, everybody began to panic, even Sonic. He had horrible images of his time as Mecha Sonic* flooding back into his head. If he didn't escape that roboticizer now, he would end up becoming Mecha

Sonic once again. The only trouble was, he didn't know how to escape. There were too many people in the roboticizer so he couldn't spin-dash into the floor and dig his way out and there wasn't enough room for everyone to get out of the way. He was well and truly trapped this time; there was no way he could escape from this. Unless of course Tails and the girls could save everybody since they hadn't been caught in the roboticizer. Dr. Eggman finished booting the roboticizer up and prepared to activate it.

"Say your prayers everyone!" he yelled.

He raised his arm and prepared to press the button that would activate the roboticizer but Tails and Amy leapt on him and pinned him to the floor. Cream just flew over to the roboticizer's control pad and wondered what to do.

"Get off me this minute!" ordered Eggman.

"No chance fatso!" yelled Tails "You're gonna pay for tricking us like that you bad egg!"

"You will not roboticize Sonic again Eggman!" shouted Amy, brandishing her Piko-Piko Hammer and itching to smack Eggman on the head with it.

As for Cream, she just stared at the control pad and wondered what to do. She was no techno geek so she had no idea how this thing worked.

"Cheese, how are we gonna open this thing and save our friends?" asked Cream.

"Chao?" piped Cheese, shrugging.

"You get away from that highly advanced machine young lady or I will have to hurt you pretty badly." threatened Alonzo, creeping up on Cream like a swamp creature.

"You stay away you bad robot!" retorted Cream, putting her hands on her hips in the style of a stern mother.

Alonzo ignored her and continued advancing on her. But before he

could grab the little girl, Cheese hurtled himself into Alonzo's face and knocked him over backwards. Cheese flew around in a dizzy circle and rubbed his throbbing head.

"Oh Cheese are you alright?" asked Cream.

"Chao…" burbled Cheese dimly.

Tails leaped off of Eggman and landed next to Cream, leaving Amy to take care of him herself. Since Tails knew machines like the back of his hand, he went to work right away.

"Now which button is going to open this thing?" he wondered aloud as he gazed at the control pad "Aha! There it is."

He pressed a blue button marked "Open". The pod hissed louder then a thousand snakes as the four sides that formed the egg shaped pod began to slowly separate from one another. The crowd saw this and seizing their chance, tried to make a run for it. Sonic managed to leap out of the opening pod in one graceful leap. Unfortunately not many got out. Alonzo recovered from Cheese's attack and he punched Tails away from the pad and slammed the close button with his fist. The pod had only opened enough for one person to escape each side and now it was closing back up again. The Mobians who were fortunate enough to have escaped just ran for their lives whereas the Mobians unfortunate enough to still be in the pod were now trapped again. Alonzo seized the opportunity now he had it and activated the roboticizer. The inside of the egg-shaped pod flashed a bright blue colour as the Mobians began to get roboticized. Sonic, who had landed on his feet and breathed a sigh of relief after escaping, turned around to see the pod in action. It made him angry how only a few Mobians had managed to escape the pod while it was opening and there were hundreds and hundreds still trapped in there. Amy, who had knocked Eggman senseless ran over to Sonic and hugged him tightly.

"Oh Sonic, you made it!" she squealed.

"Yeah but nobody else did." muttered Sonic "Eggman has more Robians for his never ending army."

"Sonic, let's get out of here before those Robians get us!" cried Tails "We won't stand a chance against a hundred odd Robians!"

Sonic was very reluctant to retreat but he'd rather live to fight another day so he zipped out of the tent just as the roboticization process in the egg pod had completed. The pod opened and hundreds of roboticized Mobians spilled out of it. Dr. Eggman had finally came to and he gave the order for the Robians to get Sonic and his friends. The Robians did as they were told and ran after the fleeing Mobians.

As Sonic and the others fled, the entire circus park collapsed around them and began to change into their true shapes. The colourful dazzling lights dimmed down into threatening blood red lights, clown faces on buildings turned into the familiar logo of the Eggman Empire and the building's bright cheery colours died down into dull robotic grey or silver. It was like the circus park was transforming into a robotic city of some sorts all around them.

"So the whole park was an Eggman city in disguise?" snorted Sonic "How quaint! I can't wait to tear it down later!"

"Sonic, the Robians are after us!" cried Tails.

Sonic looked over his shoulder and surely enough, saw the stampede of Robians coming towards them. Luckily for him though, none of them could keep up with him. No one was faster then Sonic the Hedgehog after all. Unfortunately, Sonic had another problem. The city gates were beginning to close! Sonic leaped into the air and spun into a spin-dash. Then he charged towards the closing gates at full speed. He crashed into the gates and forced them back open. He only dented the gates very slightly though. Tails and Amy ran on as they neared freedom. Cream was beginning to lag behind though. Then suddenly, she tripped over a hot dog that somebody had dropped on the ground and landed on her face. Tails and Amy finally escaped out of the terrifying robot city that was unfolding behind them. Cream got back to her feet and ran as fast as she could towards the gates. Unfortunately a Robian wolf grabbed her by the leg and tripped her up just before she could get past the gates. Cream screamed in terror as the Robian began to pull her back. Sonic immediately went into action and grabbed Cream's

arms. He tried to pull her out of the grasp of the Robian wolf but the Robian's grasp was tight enough to almost crush bones so it was very tight. Sonic refused to give up. He had failed to save Cream's mother from roboticization** and he was not letting Cream herself suffer the same fate.

"Mr. Sonic! Help me!" screamed Cream.

"I'm trying Cream!" grunted Sonic as the tug of war continued "That darn Robian's too strong!"

Cheese began to squeak about in panic. He hoped and hoped Sonic would save the one person who raised him up and looked after him. Then several other Robians joined in the tug of war match by grabbing the wolf by the shoulders and pulling him. Sonic felt like he was trying to pull a truck with so many Robians joining in the tug of war and the poor hedgehog was beginning to lose his grip on Cream. One Robian was tough enough but ten Robians pulling at once was too tough for even Bunnie Rabbot or Knuckles the Echidna to handle. Then more trouble happened. The gates were beginning to close once again and if Sonic didn't get out of the way in time he would get squished in between them!

"Sonic look out!" shrieked Tails.

Sonic noticed the closing gates. Now his attention was focused off of Cream, the Robians simply yanked the terrified rabbit out of his grasp.

"Cream!" cried Sonic.

"Help me!" shrieked Cream.

Sonic tried to run in and help Cream but Tails grabbed him by the quills and yanked him backwards just as the giant gates slammed closed with a deafening bang. Sonic and Tails landed in a heap on the ground. Sonic picked himself up and began thumping on the iron gates with his fist. He was pounding the gates with enough force to shatter his knuckles to pieces (not literally of course).

"Let me in Eggman!" yelled Sonic "You're not getting Cream the

same way you got her mother!"

As Sonic continued pounding pointlessly on the gates, Amy slumped on the ground and held her head in her hands. She began to cry.

"Oh Cream!" she howled "And I was supposed to protect her until we save her mother!"

Tails looked sadly at Amy. He knew what Amy felt like. Tails felt just like Amy did when Eggman kidnapped his parents and roboticized them. And Cream getting caught must feel like losing a long lost sister to poor Amy. Tails also knew how Sonic was feeling right now. He'd failed to save Vanilla the Rabbit from being roboticized and now it looked like he was going to fail to save Cream from roboticization. And poor Cheese! Cream was his owner and now he was going to lose her. It was amazing how losing a friend they'd only known for a short time could cause so much upset. Sonic had finally ceased his pitiful pounding on the gates and fell to his knees in defeat.

"I can't believe it!" he moaned "Yet another defeat for me to choke on! I think I'm losing my edge here!"

"Sonic, I know you're disappointed we couldn't save Cream but don't let it bite away at you." said Tails "We'll get her back somehow."

"And I know how." said Sonic, getting back to his feet.

"Oh really?" said Tails "How are we gonna save Cream then?"

"I'm gonna get some help from two people who know how to break into an Eggman base." said Sonic "We need…Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse…"

Footnotes:

*** See the Mecha Sonic saga (stories 12-14) and you'll see why Sonic's so frightened at the thought of becoming Mecha Sonic again**

****See Story 16 for Vanilla's Roboticization**

OMG! Cream's been caught! And how about that for a plot twist? Eggman's circus park is really a city for him! Welcome to Robotropolis readers! Join me next time as Sonic attempts to rescue poor Cream but he has more then just Eggman to bother with as a pair of robots make their return... Reviews are welcome.

A Rescue and a Return

Story 19: A Rescue and a Return

Approximately twenty minutes had passed since Sonic made the call to send Wilson and Mandy to the Northern Border to help him and the two fighters hadn't shown up yet. The Northern Border is quite a long way from Mobotropolis after all and even though Sonic could sprint there in under fifteen minutes due to his speed, no one else could go as fast as him, even in a car. As time ticked by, Sonic kept pacing up and down impatiently as he waited for them. Amy just tried to break in by pounding the gates with her enormous hammer and Tails sat there comforting the heartbroken Cheese. Sonic couldn't take it any longer. He stomped the ground in impatience.

"Where are those two?" he moaned "Time's ticking and Eggman's probably getting ready to roboticize Cream right now!"

"I don't see why you didn't think of letting me fly you over the wall and into Eggman's city." said Tails helpfully.

"Well 1: There are too many robots to count and they'll shoot you if you're not careful and 2: I'm not risking you or anyone else getting caught." said Sonic "Otherwise you'll end up in the roboticizer."

"Good point actually." said Tails.

Amy finally stopped whacking the invulnerable iron gates and fell to the ground panting.

"What are those gates made of?" she gasped "I haven't left a scratch on them and I've pounded them goodness knows how many times for the past few minutes!"

"Well if my knowledge on metallic materials is accurate, I'd suggest these gates are made of a really strong kind of iron that is quite literally, almost invulnerable." said Tails "I've seen barricades on forts made out of them before."

"But I dented them after I spin-dashed into them to stop them closing." noted Sonic "If the iron these gates are made of is invulnerable shouldn't that mean nothing can dent it?"

"I said it was ALMOST invulnerable." repeated Tails "I didn't say it was invulnerable."

"Well if my spin-dash can dent them then maybe I should spin-dash it a couple of times to knock them down!" yelled Sonic.

He prepared to attack but Tails stopped him.

"I think by the time you knock the gates down you'll be too late." said Tails "The dent you first made is so insignificant I don't think it can even be classed as superficial damage, so I dread to think how many spin-dashes you'll need to eventually knock the gates down."

"Well I guess we'll wait until the help I've requested arrives." muttered Sonic, folding his arms "Mandy knows how to break into a base."

Then as if on cue, a silver hover-car with black windows and three jet engines appeared over the horizon and sped towards the city. Sonic peered in the distance to see if he could see who was driving the car. The car eventually arrived at the gates of Eggman's city and gracefully halted in front of Sonic. The doors opened and out of the car stepped Sonic's old friends Wilson the Dog and his friend Mandy Mouse. They were wearing sunglasses as well as their usual combat outfits. The two Mobians closed the doors and removed their sunglasses.

"Sonic, so good to see you once again." said Wilson, smiling happily.

"Good to see you too Wilson." said Sonic.

They both gave each other a friendly knuckle punch.

"So what's the problem?" asked Mandy.

"One of our friends got caught by Eggman and we can't get through those gates." explained Sonic "And you two are great at breaking

into bases so I thought you'd be the best fighters for the job."

"Good thing we geared up for this kind of job." beamed Wilson "I'll get the equipment out now."

He went to the back of the car and opened the boot. He started unloading some huge suitcases that contained goodness knows what.

"Nice to see you are doing well Amy Rose." said Mandy politely.

"Thank you Mandy." said Amy modestly "How's things been with you two?"

"Pretty quiet actually." said Mandy, leaning against the car casually "Ever since our successful mission in Grand Metropolis* everything's been going smoothly there and Eggman's forces are diminishing. Amazing how foiling one drilling operation brings total collapse to the entire army."

"I bet you gave Eggman's army a right good kicking!" cried Amy, punching the air.

"Oh we did." Mandy said with a smile "I bet Eggman's still mad he hasn't got any extra oil for his precious robot army."

Then suddenly Tails interrupted.

"That car is so cool!" he exclaimed "How fast can it go? What is it made of? What engine does it have?"

"Ah, ah, ah." said Mandy, putting her hand up to stop Tails from touching the car "No touchy little boy. This is my little beauty I put together myself and I don't like little kids touching it and getting greasy fingerprints over its lovely silver coat."

"You built it yourself?" exclaimed Tails "That's awesome! Could you teach me how to build a hover car?"

Mandy giggled a friendly giggle at Tails' excitement over machines.

"I don't see why not kiddo." she said "Once we return to Empire City

I'll give you a tutorial."

Tails was looking forward to that. As Mandy and Tails talked about the car, Wilson had finally unloaded everything from the boot. He had taken out four heavy suitcases and two belts containing their bomb supplies. Wilson clipped his belt on and tossed the over to Mandy so she could clip it on. Wilson opened one of the suitcases and pulled out what looked like an enormous drill. Sonic shivered at the sheer size and monstrosity of the drill.

"What the heck is that?" blurted Sonic.

"This is out ticket to getting past those gates." said Wilson "We are going to use this delightful thing to tunnel under the wall and into the city."

"But what if the robots on the other side of the wall hear the drill and attack you?" asked Amy.

"No problem." said Wilson, grinning like a clown "Mandy will use her excellent hearing to find the quietest area of the city since that is the likeliest place to not contain robots and we'll tunnel there."

"Well we'd better hurry otherwise we'll be too late to save Cream." said Sonic impatiently.

With that said, Wilson and Mandy went into action. Sonic kept hoping that Cream was alright right now. He did not want to turn up in the city and find her roboticized just like her poor mother.

If there's any place in the whole wide world Cream would rather be in right now, it would be in the arms of her loving mother and not in a glass cage. After the Robians had successfully seized her and snatched her away from Sonic, Eggman had put her in a roboticizer and was making a few tweaks to it before he activated it. Cream was very frightened. In a moment or two, she would end up just like her mother: a cold, emotionless, monstrous, malevolent robot under Eggman's control. She shivered at the very thought of being a robot and also feared attacking her friends while she was one.

"Alonzo pass me that spanner will you?" asked Eggman.

Alonzo passed him the spanner and Eggman used it to tighten a few bolts.

"Mr. Eggman sir." said Cream, putting her hands against the glass "Please let me out. I don't wanna be a robot."

"I'll let you out Cream." purred Dr. Eggman "AFTER I roboticize you that is. Alonzo pass me a screwdriver please."

Alonzo pulled a screwdriver out of the toolbox and handed it to Eggman. Eggman started tightening a few loose screws on the underside of the roboticizer with it.

"Oh please don't do this Dr. Eggman!" begged Cream "Please, please don't turn me into a robot!"

Dr. Eggman pretended he couldn't hear her. He got out from underneath the roboticizer and wiped his sweaty forehead. He stood up and smiled proudly.

"There, it's all finished." he said "Now where's Mecha Vanilla? Since she's Cream's mother apparently I'm going to give her the honour of roboticizing her own daughter!"

"There she is sir." said Alonzo, pointing to a shadowy corner of the room.

Mecha Vanilla emerged from the corner, her red optics glowing like candlelight. Cream almost screamed at the sight of her. Mecha Vanilla stood to attention and awaited orders.

"You've arrived at last Mecha Vanilla." said Dr. Eggman "Now activate the roboticizer!"

"I o-bey." droned Mecha Vanilla.

"Mother!" cried Cream, pounding the glass desperately to get her attention "Don't do it! Please! Don't do it!"

Mecha Vanilla did not seem to have heard. She marched over to the

control pad and prepared to activate it.

"Mother! Don't you recognize me?" cried Cream "I'm your daughter Cream! Please don't turn me into a robot!"

Mecha Vanilla looked up at Cream briefly as if she still recognized her own daughter's name but she soon shrugged it off. One of the prices you pay after getting roboticized is losing your freewill end of so only Dr. Eggman had control over her. Mecha Vanilla pressed two buttons and pulled the lever. The glass cage began to glow a bright malevolent blue colour. Cream circled around the cage fearfully. She was getting more and more terrified by the second. Where was Sonic the Hedgehog? Was he coming to save her or what? Cream backed herself against the glass, closed her eyes and awaited her doom. But then suddenly the glass cage stopped glowing and the loud humming noise the roboticizer made had silenced. Cream opened her eyes, delighted to see she was still her normal self but also puzzled as to why she was still her normal self. Mecha Vanilla noticed the roboticizer had ceased and she pulled the lever to activate it again. Nothing happened. She pulled it up and down several times. Nothing happened.

"What's the doggone matter now?" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

"The r-o-bot-i-ciz-er-is-not-work-ing." droned Mecha Vanilla "I-think-there's-a-fault-some-where."

"Of all times for it to malfunction!" moaned Dr. Eggman "Oh well, it can easily be fixed. Alonzo, can you see to the roboticizer while I check my city's progress?"

"Indeed I can master." said Alonzo loyally.

Dr. Eggman and Mecha Vanilla left the room to check on Dr. Eggman's marvellous new robotical city he had disguised as a circus park a moment ago. Cream was alone in the room with Alonzo. Alonzo gazed at the roboticizer in confusion. He couldn't understand why it suddenly turned itself off. It looked perfectly fine to him.

"Now let's see…" he muttered to himself as he continued observing

it for problems "Where's the fault in this thing?"

He bent down and peered under the roboticizer. Cream began to worry. If Alonzo fixed it she would get roboticized defiantly. She had to distract him until Sonic eventually showed up.

"Um, Mr. Alonzo?" she said in a small voice.

Alonzo heard Cream and stood up to answer her but he forgot he was under the roboticizer and conked his head. He emerged from underneath, rubbing his sore head and groaning loudly.

"Don't do that!" scolded Alonzo "You just made me hurt myself! Oooh I say that did hurt!"

"I'm sorry." said Cream "I just wanted to ask you something."

"If it has anything to do with letting you out of that cage forget it." snarled Alonzo "I'm not doing it. You cannot win me over with that disgusting cuteness of yours."

"That's not what I was going to ask you Mr. Alonzo." said Cream truthfully "I wanted to ask you this: what's the best part of being a butler bot?"

Alonzo thought for a moment. No one had ever asked him something like that before.

"Hmm…" he said to himself "That's a good question. What do I think is the best part of being a butler bot…?"

Hopefully by the time he got the answer Sonic the Hedgehog would show up and rescue Cream. But then suddenly a faint sound of voices were heard from the other side of the room. Alonzo heard this and rushed off to see what the noise was. Cream just sat there wondering what was happening. Alonzo disappeared around the corner and then a second later, his voice could be heard screaming with terror. Then a horrible crushing sound was heard and Alonzo reappeared around the corner, in bits and pieces. Not that it would be a problem since he could rebuild himself every time. Cream was amazed at what just happened and wondered what it was that did it. Then from around the corner at the other side of the room, two

robots appeared.

One was tall and one was short. The tall robot was hunch backed. Its head had spikes going down its neck; a V-shaped structure was perched above its black visor with red reptilian eyes. It had spikes pointing forward on the side of its face and a spike pointing backwards on each of its shoulders. It was rather broad. It had two sharp talons on its feet and five sharp claws on each hand. It was red and black in colour and its head spikes were silver coloured. The short robot had a spike starting from above its visor and pointing behind it. Its reptilian eyes were blue instead of red. It had mandible like structures on its face. It had pointed shoulders, a chest plate with spikes that pointed sideways. Its feet were pointed and it had three fingers instead of five.

The two robots that just appeared were none other then Horda and Borda! Sonic had given them two a good kicking in Central City a while ago** and now they were back and obviously ready to cause trouble. Since Cream had not met Horda and Borda before, she had no idea who they were. They were certainly not Eggman robots since they just attacked Alonzo but they didn't seem friendly either. Cream decided to try and make herself scarce by crouching down on the floor of the cage. Horda and Borda walked straight past the roboticizer and walked towards a computer located on the wall behind the roboticizer.

"Get working now Borda." ordered Horda "I'm dying to know this city's greatest weapons and how much damage they can cause."

"Y-y-yes Horda." stammered Borda.

"And hopefully we will not have a repeat of last time." added Horda "I felt so humiliated after being defeat by that blue Mobian with the bad attitude."

"Y-yes Horda." said Borda.

Borda began to type on the computer. Horda, as usual kept watch. Horda is the brawn and Borda is the worker after all. As Borda began typing about and scrolling through various items on the computer, he gibbered worriedly to himself as usual.

"I hate this job." he gibbered "Someone might catch us and mash us into metallic paste!"

"Oh will you shut up you moronic, metallic miscreant?" snapped Horda "I do wish you'd stop worrying so much! Why did I get stuck with a such a skitter-bug?"

Borda stopped gibbering and continued working. Cream watched everything with interest. What were those two robots up to? Were they planning to destroy Eggman's city. Were they good guys? Then suddenly Cream felt a tickling tingle in her little nose. She felt like she was about to sneeze. Cream tried to stop herself from sneezing but to no avail.

"A…choo!" she sneezed rather quietly.

Unfortunately, Horda heard her. His heard turned around sharply and he glared at the terrified rabbit in the glass cage.

"What is it Horda?" squeaked Borda "Are we under attack? Are we in trouble?"

"I heard something." said Horda, pulling out a flame torch and activating its blazing hot flame "You keep working and I'll deal with whatever I heard."

Borda obeyed his tall hunchbacked friend and kept his attention glued to the computer. Cream backed up against the glass as Horda advanced towards the cage with his weapon in hand. He clearly didn't look pleased to see a Mobian in the same room as he and Borda were. Cream tried to refrain from screaming as Horda glared at her from outside the glass cage with his red reptilian eyes.

"So, what do we have here?" he hissed "A Mobian spying on us? I'd better deal with it."

He reached out to seize the terrified rabbit but his clawed hand ended up hitting the glass. Horda didn't understand why he couldn't grab Cream. He reached out again and touched the glass. He put his weapon away and touched the glass with his other hand. He felt the glass and finally realized what was up.

"So this Mobian is trapped in this glass case?" he said to himself "Just my luck! She can't sneak off and tell anyone about us!"

"Excuse me Mr. Scary Robot but can you get me out of here please?" asked Cream, her eyes going big, round and cutesy like in hope he'd be spellbound by them and help her.

"And why should I?" snorted Horda "If I let you out of there, you'll tell someone about us and get us destroyed."

"No I won't." said Cream.

"Oh yes you will!" snarled Horda "You must think I'm stupid enough to believe that rubbish! You are staying where you are Mobian and that's the end of it."

"V-v-very w-w-well t-th-then." whimpered Cream.

She curled herself up in fear. Horda slunk away from the cage and marched back towards the computer Borda was working on.

"How goes the work Borda?" asked Horda.

"Pretty well so far." said Borda "I'm finding data-files about some pretty interesting robots so far. Whoever built them must be a genius."

"Well hopefully we'll be able to take control of them and use them to destroy Mobius' largest cities." said Horda "We all know how much master Rorda loves destruction."

Cream's long, floppy ears stood up straight at what Horda had just said to Borda. Destroy Mobius' largest cities? These guys were not good guys at all! They were bad guys like Dr. Eggman! But why exactly did they want to destroy Mobius' largest cities? Did they have a grudge on Mobius or something and they wanted revenge on the planet by destroying cities? Well hopefully Sonic would be there in time to stop them. The only trouble was, would he be able to stop them? As Cream thought these things, Alonzo had put himself back together and was trying to sneak away and tell Eggman. Cream spotted him and patted against the glass in hope of catching Horda's attention. She wanted Horda to catch Alonzo so Alonzo wouldn't

bring Eggman back into the room and that way, Eggman wouldn't be there to roboticize her before Sonic could save her. It worked as Horda turned around and glared at the trapped rabbit.

"What do you want now you little nuisance?" he growled.

"I'm sorry if I'm interrupting anything but Alonzo is getting away." said Cream.

Horda spotted the escaping butler bot. Alonzo cursed Cream for snitching on him and tried to run away but Horda pulled out his twin flame torches, slammed them together and fired a long trial of fire at Alonzo. The fire trial caught him and blasted him off his wheels. Alonzo fell on the floor in defeat and Horda rushed over to seize him. He scooped up the butler bot and held him to his hideous face.

"So you think you can snitch on me and Borda?" sneered Horda "Well I don't think that'll be happening right now! You're staying here!"

"Thanks a lot Cream the Rabbit!" grumbled Alonzo.

"You're welcome." said Cream, beaming.

"I was being sarcastic you toad!" snapped Alonzo.

"Oh." said Cream.

Horda carried Alonzo to the roboticizer, lay him against it and using his brute strength, ripped Alonzo's wheels off their pegs! Alonzo wouldn't be going anywhere now. Horda put the wheels on the computer desk so Alonzo wouldn't be able to get them.

"Now no one will snitch on us." crowed Horda "The Mobian is already trapped and that poor excuse for a robot has no wheels so he can't move. Borda, we're finally in the clear."

"That's a relief." sighed Borda "Now I can stop worrying and get on with this work."

As the two robots continued their research, Cream put her hands together and prayed hard that Sonic the Hedgehog would finally

show up, save her from Eggman's roboticizer and stop Horda and Borda before they destroyed Mobius' cities.

Meanwhile Mandy crouched down against the iron walls that surrounded Eggman's nefarious city. She pressed the side of her head against the wall and listened for any robots on the other side. Mice have very good ears so Mandy could hear any kind of sound, even on the other side of a giant wall such as the one surrounding Eggman's city. Mandy listened out for robots, her ears twitching towards various parts of the wall. She could hear faint marching. This meant there were robots there and if they dug under the wall they would get caught. Mandy moved to another section of the wall and listened out for any robots. Sonic was losing patience and fast.

"How long is this gonna take?" he moaned.

"Will you be patient spiky?" snapped Mandy "I can't listen out for robots any faster!"

"I know it's just…Eggman could be roboticizing Cream any moment now." said Sonic.

"Why is this Cream so important to you?" asked Wilson "Is she a dear friend or something?"

"Well not exactly." said Sonic "You see, Eggman roboticized her mom and I'm not letting Cream suffer the same fate so I'm desperate to rescue her. And it'll make Amy happier too."

Amy blushed and smiled at Sonic's remark. It seems Sonic did care for her after all.

"I always thought Dr. Eggman couldn't get any meaner." said Wilson "But it seems I was wrong. He roboticized my parents too." He added "We discovered that shocking revelation during our time in Grand Metropolis***."

"Oh my gosh!" cried Tails "Eggman did what?"

"I know, it's terrible isn't it?" said Wilson, he hung his head sadly "I

was looking forward to meeting them again once this war with Eggman was over."

"I know how you feel." said Tails sadly "My parents got roboticized too."

Wilson's face changed from a solemn face to a shocked face.

"He did WHAT?" he cried.

Now it was Tails' turn to stare at the ground sadly. His ears drooped back in misery.

"That's why I have to take care of him." Sonic added "Tails hasn't got a home anymore, and he has no parents."

"Well you seem to make a good parent old buddy." said Wilson, giving Sonic a playful smack on the back "You and Tails seem like great friends."

"Actually, he sees me as more of an older brother then a father." corrected Sonic "And I see him as a younger brother more then a son."

"And I see Cream as a long lost sister." chirped Amy.

"Interesting." chuckled Wilson "Sonic, you seem to know how to make the parentless feel better don't you?"

Sonic just casually kicked some soil on the ground. Before he could answer Wilson's question Mandy interrupted them.

"Hey boys! I've found a quiet area here!" she called to them.

Everybody rushed over to where Mandy was. Mandy had gone through three sections of the wall before finding a section with no noise coming from behind it. Seizing their chance before they lost it, Wilson turned on the enormous power drill and thrust its pointed end into the soil at the foot of the wall. Then the drill began to slowly descend into the underground. Wilson let go of the drill and let it continue digging.

"Why have you let go of the drill?" asked Sonic.

"It can work on its own." explained Wilson "It comes back to me once it's finished digging."

The drill continued its working, making a loud whirring noise like all drills do. Hopefully the noise the drill made wouldn't be loud enough to catch anybody's attention. After a minute or two, the drill had now dug a tunnel under the wall big enough for everybody to crawl through. The drill reappeared through the tunnel and Wilson grabbed it. He pulled it out of the tunnel and switched it off. He ran off to put the drill back in the car. Sonic got down on his hands and knees and crawled under the deep tunnel Wilson's drill had dug just now. It was a bit of a tight fit due to his big quills but Sonic eventually made it under the wall. He crawled out of the tunnel and waited for everybody else to crawl through. Soon Tails crawled through the tunnel and made it into Eggman's city. Then Amy crawled under and then Mandy and finally Wilson. The five Mobians took a nervous look around before creeping off to hide behind a building. Sonic peeked around the corner and saw a troop of marching robots heading in the east direction.

"Ok, has anyone got a plan?" whispered Sonic.

"Yes." said Mandy "Me and Wilson boy will distract those jokers with our smoke bombs while you three go rescue your friend."

"But what if you get caught?" asked Tails.

"We'll remain hidden here until you come back." said Mandy "Then we all run for it."

"Sounds like a plan to me." said Sonic "So let's go."

Wilson and Mandy grabbed a handful of smoke bombs and threw them at a horde of robots marching past their hiding place. They exploded and thick black smoke clouded the whole city. The poor robots couldn't see a thing and they began blindly marching about, droning gibberish. Sonic grabbed Amy and Tails by the arms and rocketed off at his trademark speed. He zoomed through the thick smoke and set his sights on Eggman's base. Speaking of Dr.

Eggman, he and Mecha Vanilla had been observing the whole city and now they were caught up in the smoke heist. Dr. Eggman coughed loudly whereas Mecha Vanilla just merely stood there wondering where everything was.

"Smoke?" spluttered Dr. Eggman "I think we're under attack! Mecha Vanilla, go and see what you can find!"

"I o-bey." droned Mecha Vanilla.

She marched through the thick black smoke and activated lights in her optics so she could see through the smoke. As she searched through the smoky city, she just caught sight of Sonic, Tails and Amy running into Eggman's base so Mecha Vanilla decided she would follow them and capture them. Mecha Vanilla marched quietly through the still thick smoke towards Eggman's base. Sonic would never see her coming and by the time he did, she would have him…

Meanwhile, Horda and Borda continued their little research on all of Eggman's weapons. Whatever they came across well and truly fascinated the two destruction loving robots.

"Whoever built these robots and weapons must be a genius!" exclaimed Horda "Look at that menace right there!"

He pointed to a diagram of Egg-Scorpion, a robot that Sonic had trashed with help from Team Chaotix****. The scorpion-shaped robot with its drill claws and drill tail made Horda feel unusually excited just looking at it. He also fancied the blasters on the sides of its head.

"I-I bet w-we could do lots of damage with that thing." stammered Borda, shivering at the sight of Egg-Scorpion. Eggman's robots were enough to scare Borda it seems.

"I bet we could." said Horda "Especially as it can dig into the ground. I however kinda liked that robot with the spiked roller weapon."

Borda scrolled the screen back up to show a diagram of Scream-Roller, a robot that Tails had taken out by shoving Alonzo down it's

exhaust stack*****. Horda clearly seemed to be delighted with Scream-Roller's unusual weapon.

"I bet you're spoiled for choice Horda." said Borda "So many great looking weapons, I bet you don't know which ones to pick."

"Exactly." said Horda sinisterly "Which is why I've decided…to choose them all. Get the memory stick out and we'll download these diagrams. Once we've done that we'll go back to our home planet and then build these things ourselves. The after we've built them, we will return to Mobius and cause as much destruction as we wish."

"Yes Horda." said Borda, saluting.

He pulled a memory stick out and plugged it into the computer tower. He then commenced the download and the data-files on Eggman's robots were downloading slowly onto their memory-stick.

"Oy!" cried Alonzo "Those robots are copyright to the Eggman Empire! You can't download them and build them yourself or Eggman will have to sue you!"

Horda and Borda ignored the babbling butler bot and continued with the download. Then suddenly, without warning, Horda was hit in the back of the head by a blue blur. Horda tumbled over and fell on top of Borda. The two fell to the ground like falling dominos. Cream was absolutely flabbergasted at that blur. Then her amazement turned into sheer joy when she saw who it was. It was Sonic the Hedgehog, here to rescue her at long last! And what's more he brought Tails and Amy with him. Even Alonzo was strangely pleased to see Sonic but that's only because Sonic was attacking them and delaying their download. Horda and Borda both got back to their feet and growled at the blue hedgehog. They were all too familiar with him from their last encounter.

"You again!" snarled Horda "I thought we'd get away without having to run into you again!"

"Well guess again Horda and Borda." jeered Sonic "The hedgehog is here and you are finished!"

"What are you two up to this time?" asked Tails.

"Mind your own business you twin-tailed freak!" snapped Horda, whipping out his flame torches and igniting them.

"Those two want to steal Eggman's machines and use them to destroy all the cities on Mobius!" cried Cream.

"Thanks for that." said Sonic, winking at her "Tails, you get Cream out of that roboticizer, me and Amy will take care of those creeps."

"OK." said Tails, running off to the roboticizer.

Amy pulled out her Piko-Piko hammer and raised it, ready for attack. Borda began to shake at the sight of Amy's enormous hammer. Still, he knew a battle was coming so he deployed his saw blades.

"So my handsome hero, who are these two clowns then?" asked Amy.

"Their names are Horda and Borda and they're two robots from another world." explained Sonic "Me and Tails taught them a lesson or two when we first met them and now me and you will teach them another lesson!"

"We shall not be so easily defeated this time hedgehog!" snarled Horda, his torches blazing away "Borda, you get the girl, Sonic is mine!"

"D-d-d-do I-I-have t-to f-f-fight the s-scary-h-h-hammer wielding w-witch Horda?" whimpered Borda.

"DID YOU JUST CALL ME A WITCH?" screamed Amy.

That did it, she leaped straight on top of Borda and began pelting him with hammer blows all over his small body. Borda tried to fight back with his saw blades but Amy squashed them flat with one whack of the hammer. Horda scowled at the sight of his sidekick getting beaten up and was about to help him but Sonic stood in his way.

"Y' wanna hurt Amy, you'll have to get past me first." said Sonic

coldly.

"So be it!" growled Horda "I wanted to fight you anyway."

With that said, Horda swiped at Sonic with his twin torches. Sonic leaped out of the way in a perfect back flip and after he landed, he charged into Horda's chest like a shooting arrow. Horda was sent flying backwards and he crashed into the computer he was downloading diagrams from. Horda and the computer tumbled backwards over the desk and onto the floor. The computer smashed into pieces. Now Horda and Borda wouldn't be downloading anything. Horda's circuits sparked with rage. He grabbed his twin torches and leaped on Sonic, roaring like a dragon. He looked like a demented fire dancer leaping in a graceful leap as part of the act. Sonic jumped and kicked Horda in the chest, sending the tall hunchbacked robot hurtling backwards and onto the floor. He landed on the spikes on his head and ended up impaling himself into the floor. Now Horda was stuck fast. He tried to pull himself out of the ground but his spikes were embedded so deep it would take a while for him to pull himself out. Seeing as Horda was out of commission, Sonic seized the opportunity to cause more damage to him by spin-dashing him all over his body. Horda felt searing pain as Sonic churned into his armour with every hit.

Meanwhile, Tails was trying to figure out how to open Cream's cage. He wasn't having much luck though due to the fact the open button wasn't marked this time.

"Tails, please hurry up and get me out of here." pleaded Cream.

"I'm trying Cream, I just can't figure out which button opens this thing." said Tails as he stared at the control pad.

"And don't bother asking me for help because I'm not helping you." snapped Alonzo ever so rudely.

"WILL YOU BE QUIET?" snapped Tails and Cream together.

"Hey, Alonzo's given me an idea!" cried Tails suddenly.

He ran over to the wheel-less butler bot, grabbed him by the arm,

twisted his tails around one another and took flight with Alonzo in tow.

"Oy! What's the meaning of this?" cried Alonzo "Put me down at once wretch!"

Tails ignored the rude robot and then he began to swing Alonzo back and forth slowly at first and then faster, and faster, and faster. Cream wondered what Tails was up to.

"Cream get back!" ordered Tails.

Cream backed herself into the other side of the cage. Then with one mighty swing, Tails let go of Alonzo and the butler bot hurtled into the glass cage like a thrown javelin Alonzo crashed into the cage head first and smashed a hole in it. Glass splintered everywhere but luckily, Cream didn't get hit by any shards of glass. Alonzo slid back down to the floor dazed and confused. The hole Alonzo made in the glass cage was big enough for Cream to climb through. So Cream reached up to the hole, grabbed the edge (making sure not to cut herself) and pulled herself through the hole and out of the cage. Tails was very pleased with himself on how his plan had worked. After Cream climbed out of the cage, Cheese dived into her and began hugging her happily.

"Oh Cheese it's good to see you too!" cried Cream happily "And thanks for getting me out of there Tails."

"Don't mention it." said Tails "It's what heroes do after all."

Alonzo grumbled to himself and while no one was looking, he crawled away using his arms to pull himself so he could get to the computer desk and retrieve his wheels and then tell Dr. Eggman everything.

As for the fight, Sonic had beaten Horda pretty badly and now the battered robot had many impact marks on his body from when Sonic had spin-dashed into him and his armour was cracked in several places. Horda had had enough of being beaten to a pulp and in a desperate act to free himself; he used his blazing hot torches to weaken the two spikes on his head to the point of breaking easily.

Then Horda yanked on his head and the two spikes that were embedded in the ground snapped like twigs. Horda wasn't pleased to lose his spikes but at least he was free now. Horda lunged at Sonic with his torches blazing ever hotter. He chipped Sonic on the shoe and lightly singed the tip of it as Sonic jumped out of the way. Sonic stared at his singed shoe angrily.

"Oh man and I love these shoes!" he moaned.

Horda then lunged at Sonic again. Sonic leaped out of the way and dropkicked Horda in the side of the head. Horda was getting annoyed at constantly getting hit so he decided to try something else. He clipped his two torches together to form a terrifying double-sided torch and then he began to spin his entire hand around while holding the double sided torch. His hand now looked like a spinning circle of fire. Sonic stared in disbelief at the firing circle as Horda advanced on the blue hedgehog menacingly. Sonic leaped out of the way as Horda lunged at him and landed behind Horda. He tried to attack from behind but Horda knew what Sonic was trying so he reached out behind him, his hand still spinning and now the circle of fire was behind him. Sonic noticed it just in time and jumped out of the way before he could accidentally dive into it but as he soared over Horda; Horda whip lashed at him and managed to catch Sonic on the legs. The fire from the torches was so hot they were singed instantly. Sonic fell to the ground in a painful dive and skidded across the floor.

"Sonic!" cried Tails.

He rushed over to help his friend. Horda cackled at Sonic and his hand stopped spinning.

"I win hedgehog now it's time for you to pay for our humiliation!" he growled.

He raised his double-sided torch, began spinning his hand around once again and advanced on Sonic. He was going to hit Sonic with his spinning torches and set him alight. Or at least he would have done if Tails and Cream didn't interfere by piling him with dropkicks to the head while they were airborne. Horda roared in anger and he dropped his double sided torch. Tails grabbed it, unclipped it so now

the double-sided torch was just two torches now, switched them off and threw them as hard as he could into a wall. The two torches hit the wall hard but not hard enough to break. Sonic smiled at his two flying friends.

"Sweet moves you two!" he said "If it weren't for you, I'd be a kebab hedgehog!"

"You're welcome Mr. Sonic." said Cream as she and Tails landed.

But there was more trouble on the way. During the fight with Borda, Amy had beaten the robot to a pulp but she foolishly let her guard down, thinking he was defeated and then Borda slashed her arm with his flattened saw blade which in turn made her drop her hammer and left Amy vulnerable. Then Borda grabbed Amy's arm, forced it behind her back and held a flattened saw blade to her neck. Even though Borda was short, he was very strong for someone his size and Amy soon found that out after being unable to break free from his grasp.

"Hey Horda! Hey Horda!" cried Borda in excitement "I gotta hostage! I gotta hostage!"

"Excellent work Borda." said Horda, getting back to his feet.

Sonic and the others looked over their shoulders and saw Borda with Amy at blade point.

"Let go of her this minute!" ordered Sonic.

"Oh no I won't!" sneered Borda, holding his flattened saw blade closer to Amy's neck.

"Oh yes you will!" ordered Sonic.

"Oh no I won't!" snapped Borda "You surrender yourselves and let Horda fry you and serve you with chips, or I'll cut this pink witch's neck so horribly it might kill her!"

"Sonic do something!" screeched Amy as she tried to keep Borda's saw blade away from her neck.

"What will it be wretch?" growled Horda "Surrender, or get the pleasure of watching that pink girl die?"

Sonic didn't know what to do. He did not for starters want to watch his biggest fan and pen pal die in front of him. On the other hand, he certainly did not want he or any of his friends to be turned into a grilled steak by Horda. Sonic thought desperately on a way out of this mess as Borda made a menacing gesture towards Amy's neck. Then Sonic had an idea and due to how fast he could run, it was bound to work.

"OK you big bullies, let her go. We surrender." said Sonic, getting down on his knees and putting his hands behind his head.

Tails and Cream, not sure what Sonic's plan was, got on their knees and put their hands behind their heads. Borda let go of Amy and she did the same.

"Hey Horda, they surrendered!" piped Borda, leaping about in excitement "We beat em' we beat em!"

"I can see that." snapped Horda "Now you make sure they don't get away while I retrieve my torches."

Borda pulled the four Mobians close together and held his saw blades near their necks in case any of them tried to make a quick getaway or try to pounce on him. Horda stomped off to retrieve his twin torches which were lying near a wall. He picked them both up and stomped back over to Sonic and friends. He was pleased to see Borda had managed to keep them where they were the whole time.

"Now, prepare to go up in flames!" snarled Horda.

He ignited his torches…but nothing happened. Horda tried again. But the torches only sparked lightly instead of igniting a big roaring flame. Tails had thrown them into the wall so hard both torches had broken a bit on the inside so now they wouldn't work. Sonic had no idea this would have happened but he was glad it did so now his plan would work even better now. While Horda kept trying to ignite his broken torches, Sonic grabbed both of Borda's arms and flipped him over his head and into Horda. The two robots collapsed in a

head on the floor.

"Now Amy, finish them off!" yelled Sonic.

Amy obeyed and pulled out her Piko-Piko hammer. Then, raising it high above her head in the style of a golfer, she walloped Horda and Borda as if they were a pair of golf balls. The two robots soared into the air and came hurtling down like a bird falling from the sky. They both crashed into a storage cupboard and the whole cupboard fell to pieces. The two robots were covered in cupboard pieces, toolboxes and spare robot parts. Several tools that had been sent flying bonked them on the head as they rained down on them.

"Yahoo! Way past cool!" cried Sonic "Amy you rock!"

Amy blushed with pleasure.

"Thank you Sonic." she said quietly.

Getting a comment from someone she was madly in love with was probably one of the best feelings in the world. But remembering the promise she made to Sonic******, she didn't let it go over the top and instead kept her fan-girl thoughts in her head. Unfortunately, even though Horda and Borda were now out of commission, more trouble arrived. While Sonic was congratulating Amy, Cream screamed in terror and made everybody jump. They turned around and saw Mecha Vanilla, holding Cream up to her height by the neck and roaring at her in a mechanical tone.

"Mother, please put me down!" begged Cream "You're hurting me!"

Mecha Vanilla, being the emotionless robot she was, ignored her daughter's pleas for mercy and continued to throttle her.

"Must-kill-none-Robians." she droned "Must-o-bey-Dr.-Egg-man."

Mecha Vanilla probably would have throttled Cream to death if Tails hadn't stepped in and interfered with a flying punch around the head. The roboticized rabbit dropped Cream and fell on her side. That punch Tails did clearly did some damage to Mecha Vanilla since her red optics were going fuzzy and her voice was going up and down.

"Sorry I had to do that to your mom Cream." said Tails "But she would have killed you if I didn't stop her."

"That's alright Tails." said Cream "I just hope we can turn mother back to normal."

"I think I hit her pretty hard." said Tails, only just realizing how sore his hand felt after punching something made of metal with his bare fist "She seems to be acting a bit funny."

And Tails was right on that. Mecha Vanilla didn't seem to know which was up and which was down. She just lay there with her optics fuzzing and her voice crackling for a moment and then going back to normal. Then her optics finally stopped fuzzing and the roboticized rabbit got back to her feet. But Mecha Vanilla didn't seem to have the murderous look in her eyes Robians usually have. In fact, she still seemed a bit confused. Not to mention she began speaking in her natural voice instead of a robotic voice.

"W…Wh…What on…Mobius…?" she mumbled mindlessly.

"What's going on?" asked Sonic.

"I think I hit Vanilla so hard I must have given her some brain damage." said Tails "Or even better, restored her freewill. Her voice doesn't sound robotical anymore."

Mecha Vanilla stared dopily at Sonic and friends.

"Who…Who are you three…?" she managed to blurt out.

"I'm Sonic the Hedgehog and I'm gonna get you out of that robotic body." said Sonic.

"Robotic…what…?" said Mecha Vanilla. She felt herself all over and almost fainted with shock. She was completely metal.

"Oh my!" she cried "How did this happen? Cream wouldn't want me to look like this! I'll scare the poor child!"

"Mother I'm right here." said Cream.

Mecha Vanilla stared down at her daughter. If she was still Robian-minded, looking at Cream wouldn't have triggered any emotions whatsoever, but now she appeared to have her freewill back, seeing Cream was like seeing her for the first time in a million years. She scooped up Cream and hugged her. Cream cried tears of joy.

"Oh Cream you're alright!" she cried happily.

"Yes I am." said Cream "And it's thanks to Mr. Sonic and his friends for taking care of me."

Mecha Vanilla looked at Sonic, Tails and Amy who were admiring this tender mother-daughter moment with awe.

"Oh how can I ever repay you three for looking after Cream while I've been in this horrible body?" she said.

"No need to." said Sonic "I just love to help. And once we escape this city, we're gonna turn you back to normal."

"Sonic!" cried Tails "Horda and Borda are getting back up!"

"Who and who?" asked Mecha Vanilla.

The mountain of debris erupted, sending pieces of broken cupboard, tools and empty tool boxes flying everywhere and there stood Horda and Borda. The two robots did not look very happy at all.

"This has gone on far enough!" bellowed Horda "I shall burn you all into ashes!"

"And I'll slice their heads off!" yelled Borda, brandishing his flattened saw blades.

"Just try it Thing 1 and Thing 2!" yelled Sonic, getting into a battle ready pose.

But before the fight could commence, a loud noise was heard from outside. Everybody looked to their right. Horda and Borda looked to their left. Then the wall exploded into tiny pieces. Everybody ducked as showers of steel rained on them. Horda and Borda weren't bothered since they were metal themselves to they didn't need to

run for cover. Then a giant robot appeared in the wall's place. It was Egg-Scorpion all fixed up and as good as new. Only instead of Alonzo, Dr. Eggman was now piloting the scorpion style machine. Mecha Vanilla stared at the robot as if she vaguely recognized it. After all, it was the robot that had snatched her away and took to Dr. Eggman in the first place. Horda and Borda stared at the giant robot, petrified with fear. The only thing that scared Horda and Borda more then anything was a robot bigger then them.

"So it appears I have a pest control to deal with!" declared Dr. Eggman "And I have two intruders snooping about on my computers, is that right Alonzo?"

"Yes sir, those two robots were trying to download your machine diagrams." said Alonzo, pointing at Horda and Borda "Luckily Sonic the Hedgehog stopped them."

Dr. Eggman looked at the two with interest.

"I'm not familiar with you two, but if you try and steal things from Dr. Eggman, you suffer the consequences!"

Horda and Borda finally snapped out of their fear and ran for their lives Dr. Eggman would have chased after them but he decided they were not worth it and focused his attention back on Sonic and friends.

"And as for you, Sonic the Hedgehog!" he said crossly "This is the last time you'll ever come snooping around my premises again!"

"Come and get me fat man!" Sonic said challengingly.

"Gladly!" sneered Dr. Eggman

He thrust the levers on the control pad forward and Egg-Scorpion lunged at them, its drill claws whirring away like mad…

Footnotes:

*** See the very first story from the spin-off title *Tales from***

Mobius

**** See Story 5 for Horda and Borda's debut**

***** Again, see the first story from *Tales from Mobius***

****** See Story 16**

******* See Story 4**

******** See Story 15 (How many footnotes are there?)**

This doesn't look good! Can Sonic defeat Eggman and save Cream and Vanilla? Join me next time as Sonic and Eggman go head to head in one epic showdown! Reviews are welcome.

The Great Throw Down

Story 20: The Great Throw Down

While Sonic and friends brawled with Dr. Eggman's ferocious Egg-Scorpion, Horda and Borda finally made it out of the base and ran into their ship, which was parked directly beside Eggman's base. Horda leaped into the pilot's seat frantically and began pounding on the controls to get the ship up and running. Borda buckled himself up in the passenger's seat.

"We've gotta get outta here!" screeched Horda frantically as the ship began to power up.

"But what about the diagrams we failed to download?" asked Borda "M-master R-R-Rorda won't be pleased to see us come back after another failure to destroy the cities of this world!"

"I don't care!" screamed Horda "I just wanna get out of here before I'm turned into a scrap heap by that scary scorpion bot!"

The ship finally kicked into action and faster then the speed of sound, the ship raised off the ground and rocketed into the sky and vanished from view. The ship taking off caught Wilson and Mandy's attention and they looked up to see it.

"What was that?" asked Wilson.

"No idea." said Mandy "But it's left now so we don't have to worry about it."

"Do you think we should go into Eggman's base and give Sonic a hand?" asked Wilson "He's been in there an awful long time and he might need some help."

"You do worry too much." said Mandy "I'm sure Sonic has everything under control. But we don't know if he's alright so maybe we should see how things are going."

And with that, the two Mobians crept out of their hiding place and headed towards Eggman's base, being careful to avoid any robots along the way.

Egg-Scorpion made yet another dive into the floor a vain attempt to catch Sonic and friends. Every time Egg-Scorpion dived for Sonic or any of his friends, he missed and ended up embedding himself into the floor, only to pull himself out afterwards. Mecha Vanilla grabbed Cream and took shelter behind a cabinet since she didn't want Cream hurt. Egg-Scorpion pulled himself out of the ground and searched for Sonic. Sonic was standing right on top of the scorpion's head so the robot couldn't see him at all.

"Sonic, where are you?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"I'm up here Egg-Brains." said Sonic.

Dr. Eggman looked up and surely enough, saw Sonic standing right above him. He pulled on one of the levers to make Egg-Scorpion's left arm move and hopefully swat Sonic like a fly. Predictably enough though, Sonic moved out of the way and Egg-Scorpion ended up clopping itself on the head where Dr. Eggman was stationed. The cockpit window amazingly withstood the powerful slam but it cracked in many places. Another slam like that and the window would shatter all over Dr. Eggman and Alonzo. Before Egg-Scorpion could recover from its self-inflicted injury, Tails came in on the attack, carrying Amy by the arm. He threw Amy straight into Egg-Scorpion and Amy, with her Piko-Piko hammer at the ready, prepared to strike on the cockpit window. Unfortunately, Dr. Eggman was too quick for her and Egg-Scorpion ended up seizing her in its terrifying claw. Amy squealed as she was grabbed by the giant robot. Tails gasped in horror and flew towards her in an attempt to save her but Egg-Scorpion grabbed *him* with his other claw. Now Tails was caught. Dr. Eggman cackled with triumph as he admired the captured Mobians Egg-Scorpion held in his claws.

"Sonic! Help! Eggman's got us!" screeched Tails.

Sonic saw Tails and Amy's situation and dashed in to help them. Unfortunately, Dr. Eggman saw Sonic coming and blasted the hedgehog away with Egg-Scorpion's tail mounted cannons. Sonic

was propelled backwards and sent crashing into the wall. He crashed into it so hard he was deeply embedded into the wall and stuck fast! As Sonic tried to free himself from the wall, Egg-Scorpion skittered towards the trapped hedgehog. Cream and Mecha Vanilla had been watching the whole fight and were shocked at what they were seeing.

"Mother, Mr. Sonic needs help!" cried Cream "I need to help him!"

"Cream, no!" cried Mecha Vanilla desperately "I don't want you to risk your life out there! That horrible man will kill you!"

"But…Who's gonna help Mr. Sonic if I don't?" said Cream.

Mecha Vanilla didn't want to lose Cream so shortly after getting her freewill back but she knew that Sonic was in trouble out there and he needed all the help he can get so she gave in.

"OK Cream, you can help Sonic, just be careful out there." she said.

"Thank you." said Cream "Come on Cheese, let's help Mr. Sonic!"

"Chao!" cried Cheese in agreement.

The two friends flew towards the advancing Egg-Scorpion. Sonic was still trying to free himself from the wall but he was embedded so deeply he couldn't get free. And he couldn't spin free since he was stuck so Sonic had no hope of getting out of this one. Egg-Scorpion stopped just in front of the trapped hedgehog and Dr. Eggman glared at him.

"Caught between a rock and a hard place aren't ya?" jeered Dr. Eggman "Now you will die!"

He aimed Egg-Scorpion's tail mounted cannons at the trapped hedgehog and prepared to blast Sonic to bits. But before he could fire, Cream the Rabbit flew onto the cockpit window and blocked Dr. Eggman's vision.

"Oy! Get off my cockpit window!" yelled Dr. Eggman "I can't see Sonic!"

Cream refused to move. Dr. Eggman had to get Cream off if he wanted to see where he was aiming but both of Egg-Scorpion's claws had captives in them and if he let them go to grab Cream, they would cause trouble for him and if he tried to swat Cream, he would smash the cockpit window to pieces and leave himself vulnerable to attack. Then it dawned on him he knew exactly what to do. He aimed Egg-Scorpion's cannons at Cream and threatened to fire at her. Cream fell for it and moved out of the way. Now she was off the window, Egg-Scorpion swatted her away with one hefty swipe of the claw. Cream hurtled into the floor face first and skidded for a few centimetres before coming to a halt. The impact had hurt her face an awful lot and she had a few scrape marks on her muzzle.

"Cream!" cried Mecha Vanilla, rushing over to her daughter's aid. Dr. Eggman noticed this act and scowled.

"So one of my Robians has gained her freewill back?" he grumbled "Oh well, I'll deal with her later. Right now, I end Sonic's life for good!"

Sonic was still trying to pull himself out of the wall but still to no avail. Dr. Eggman aimed Egg-Scorpion's tail-mounted cannons and prepared to fire once again. Then suddenly Egg-Scorpion's giant claws were sliced right off their wrist sockets! The claws dropped to the ground with a loud clang and opened up, releasing Tails and Amy. Dr. Eggman couldn't believe his eyes. Sonic wondered what had happened too. Then he found the answer. Wilson and Mandy had arrived on the scene at last and Wilson had used his trademark spinning blade weapon to slice Egg-Scorpion's claws off. Dr. Eggman got mad and lunged at the two but Wilson and Mandy were way too quick and they leaped out of the way. While Egg-Scorpion was distracted, Tails and Amy grabbed Sonic's arms and pulled as hard as they could in an attempt to pull him out of the wall. It took a lot of effort and a lot of hard pulling but they eventually pulled Sonic out of the wall. The wall had a neat Sonic shaped hole in it where Sonic once was. Sonic brushed some dust off of his quills and arms.

"Thanks guys." he said "Now it's time for me to, yet again, defeat Dr. Eggman!"

"Of course." said Tails.

Sonic leaped into the air, spun into a spiky ball and charged straight at Egg-Scorpion, who was still chasing Wilson and Mandy. Sonic hit the enormous tail and broke it in half so now Egg-Scorpion had no tail. Then Sonic's spin-dash smashed directly through the top of Egg-Scorpion and came out through the bottom. Then finally, Sonic went directly back up and ended up smashing straight through the cockpit, sending Dr. Eggman and Alonzo flying straight through the already horribly cracked window. Now Egg-Scorpion had no one piloting it so the huge machine stood to a stand still. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo fell to the floor and landed on top of each other. Alonzo unfortunately, was at the bottom. Dr. Eggman weighed quite a lot so poor Alonzo was getting squished under the fat man's weight.

"Get off!" he yelled, punching Dr. Eggman off of him with amazingly, one punch with hardly any effort.

Sonic landed in front of the two dazed villains and smirked at them with triumph. Dr. Eggman scowled a threatening scowl at Sonic. Sonic didn't care; he was used to that kind of scowl by now since Dr. Eggman uses it all the time.

"You snooze, you lose Doc Egg." snickered Sonic.

"Blast you, you infuriating sack of needles!" roared Dr. Eggman "Why must you always ruin my evil plans?"

"Because Eggman, I refuse to let you take over Mobius." snapped Sonic "We wanna live our own lives, not the life of a stinking robot! We've battled for eight months straight and I come out on top every time so why don't you be a good boy and give it up already?"

"Aaaah. You don't ALWAYS come out on top." noted Dr. Eggman "I actually managed to capture you a couple of times AND I actually managed to roboticize you*! So that proves I'm getting better!"

"But I always escape and I managed to get de-roboticized." noted Sonic "So what does that tell ya?"

"It tells me you only got lucky because you have friends to help you." sniffed Dr. Eggman "You couldn't defeat me on your own."

"Oh yeah?" yelled Sonic challengingly "I could beat you with both my arms tied behind my back and with my eyes closed!"

"Then we'll see about that shall we?" sneered Dr. Eggman "At exactly twelve o' clock tomorrow, you and I will have a showdown to determine who's the best! And you must face me ALONE!"

"Fair deal." sniffed Sonic, unimpressed "But YOU must fight me ALONE too!"

"Fair enough." said Dr. Eggman, grinning widely "I'll pick my greatest robot to fight you! You won't know what hit you!"

"I have an idea to make things more interesting." added Sonic "If I win, you will get your sorry butt outta Mobius once and for all!"

"But what if **I** win?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"Then you get Mobius and you get to roboticize everybody, starting with me." said Sonic smoothly.

"Sonic no!" cried Amy "You can't do that! What if Eggman actually beats you?"

"Oh relax, I've had eight months of practice defeating this guy." said Sonic calmly "This'll be a piece of cake."

Dr. Eggman got to his feet and he and Sonic shook hands on the deal.

"You have a deal Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "Now you Mobians better run home and rest. You'll need to be in tip-top shape if you want to witness my ultimate victory over Sonic!"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah." snorted Sonic "Whatever, let's go guys."

Sonic, Tails, Amy, Cream, Mecha Vanilla, Wilson and Mandy all left Dr. Eggman's trashed base behind. They carried on through the robotical city all around them and then they left through the giant iron gates that opened for them to let them out. Dr. Eggman was now alone in his base. He smiled wickedly to himself and yelled at Alonzo.

"Alonzo! Is my battle suit ready?"

"Yes sir!" piped Alonzo "Your battle suit is ready and functional!"

"Good." purred Dr. Eggman "Project: Metal Sonic maybe a good idea to use on Sonic, but hopefully I maybe able to finish him off with my side project, which is my battle suit. Sonic won't know what hit him…!"

And with that, he exploded into evil laughter.

At approximately 9 o' clock next morning after breakfast, Sonic was doing his morning warm ups which usually consisted of a hearty jog around Green Hill Zone for half an hour. Doing this usually woke him up fully and prepared him for whatever dangers could be lurking around the corner. After jogging Sonic rested for ten minutes and then moved on to his next exercise which was target practice. The targets? Crudely made robots of course! Sonic was never really that great a builder and the robots were made out of pieces of old Eggman robots he had smashed in the past. Sonic would use these targets to practice his aiming when in spin-dash. Being the excellent aimer he is, he hit every single robot and after smashing them to pieces, he would put them back together just so he can do it again the next time he does target practice. After Sonic hit the last robot and smashed it to pieces, he took another ten minute break. However as he was resting, Tails, Amy and Cream & Cheese appeared.

"So how's your morning exercises coming on Sonic?" asked Amy.

"Eh, they're coming on OK." said Sonic casually.

"Where did all these robot parts come from?" asked Cream, taking note of the pieces of robot that littered the ground. Cheese tried to pick one up but to no avail.

"After Sonic destroys Eggman's robots he collects some of their parts so he can make up some robots to use as target practice." said Tails "Even though he builds them pretty badly."

Sonic gave Tails a casual smile. "What can I say?" he said snidely "I'm not a mechanic. And they're only for target practice so it doesn't matter if they're built up badly."

Tails chuckled at Sonic's snide remark.

"I know Sonic." said Tails "You build them how you want. They're your robots."

"More like they're Eggman's busted up robots for me to us as target practice and bust them up even more." laughed Sonic.

The others laughed with the blue hedgehog. After the laughing stopped, Amy suddenly said something.

"Does anyone other then me wonder what robot Eggman is going to use in the throw down this afternoon?"

"Who knows?" said Sonic, shrugging "But it doesn't matter; I'll just smash it up the same way I always smash Eggman's robots when I fight them."

"I'll laugh my socks off if he's using Scream Roller again." chuckled Tails.

"Nah, Eggman usually builds an entirely new robot from scratch rather then reusing the same one." said Sonic "After all, why use the same robot if he knows he can't beat me with it?"

Tails nodded in agreement. Then suddenly Cream put on a worried face.

"What if Mr. Sonic loses his battle with Dr. Eggman?" she asked "He'll turn us all into robots and Mobius will be a robot world! I don't wanna be a robot!"

"Relax Cream, Sonic can beat anything Dr. Eggman throws at him." said Amy, even though secretly she was just as worried over her beloved Sonic as Cream was "Sonic will beat that guy with his eyes closed!"

Sonic groaned. Even though he usually liked to exaggerate, he

didn't really like it when Amy did it because sometimes she took it too far and she always had that fan-girl attitude on when she exaggerated about Sonic which embarrassed him. Still, Sonic had beaten Dr. Eggman so many times he could probably defeat him blindfolded. But even though Sonic had so much confidence about himself, even he was beginning to have a tiny nagging feeling that Dr. Eggman might actually best him this time around. Sonic knew that losing that fight would cost the lives of everybody on Mobius and even the whole planet since the deal was if Eggman won he'd get to roboticize everything and everybody. So losing this fight would be a heavier loss then just losing a fight, losing the fight would mean losing their freedom and their homes. And Sonic would even up becoming the terrifying Mecha Sonic once again. These horrible images were beginning to make Sonic lose his confidence a little. But then Sonic remembered who he was, the fastest thing alive, the hero of Mobius, there was no way some stupid fat man and his army of mechanical toys were going to defeat him. Not here, not now, not ever. Sonic was going to win the showdown with Eggman at noon and there was no way he was going to lose.

"Hey Sonic, you alright?" asked Tails, snapping Sonic out of his train of thoughts.

"Huh? What?" he mumbled "Oh yeah. I'm OK Tails. Just deep in thought that's all."

"About what?" asked Tails.

"The upcoming fight and how I'm gonna trash Eggman so hard he'll never forget it!" lied Sonic.

"That's the Sonic I know!" squealed Amy happily "I can't wait to see the fight!"

"Me too." said Tails.

Sonic then suddenly realized his rest was over and he leaped onto his feet.

"My break's over you four." said Sonic "Can you lot wait while I finish off my morning exercises?"

"Sure we can." said Cream politely "What are you doing next?"

"One final sprint around the forest for half an hour." said Sonic "Here I go!"

And with that said, he rushed off into his half hour sprint. Because he ran so fast he could do two laps around Green Hill Zone in two seconds flat so doing the same laps for thirty minutes was usually a good way to keep himself fit and sharp. And he needed to be fit and sharp for the upcoming battle at noon…

As for Dr. Eggman he was having some "morning exercises" of his own. Only his didn't involve jogging around a forest for half an hour (pity really. It would have done some good on his waistline), his involved testing his new invention's weapons and target practice. This invention of his was one to make your eyes pop. Dr. Eggman had made a robotic battle suit for him to us in the titanic contest that waited him in a few hours time. The suit was large just like his usual machines and it contained jet wings on its back for flying, a row of spikes that started from its nose and ending at the back of its head. On one arm it had a shield and on the other it had a huge spiked mace in place of an actual hand. It had a blaster cannon on each side of its waist and a missile launcher on its back. Its body and legs vaguely assembled Dr. Eggman himself and under the sharp pointed nose was a thin metallic moustache. The robot was coloured red and black with strips of white and bits of yellow just like Eggman's outfit was. This machine was one machine Sonic would never forget. Dr. Eggman fired the battle suit's weapons at the various hedgehog shaped targets had had set up for the target practice and every single target was blasted to tiny little bits. Then Dr. Eggman decided to test the machine's mace which could be used for hand-to-hand combat or long range attacks. The mace fired from its wrist socket and landed with a deafening smash on the last remaining target. The target was completely obliterated and to add insult to injury, the mace emitted a brief EMP shock after it hit the ground so anyone unfortunate enough to be nearby would be shocked pretty badly. So if you got hit by that mace you would either get skewered, smashed or shocked or even all three at once! Talk about heavy weaponry! Dr. Eggman was cackling like a demon

inside the robotic suit. The top half of the suit made a loud hiss and detached from its legs to let Dr. Eggman out of the suit. Dr. Eggman hopped out of the suit and dusted his hands off.

"Not bad eh Alonzo?" he crooned smoothly "My machine does a lot of damage doesn't it?"

Alonzo, who was supposed to be overseeing the test had taken shelter behind a stack of crates due to how terrifying Eggman's new weapons were. He emerged from his hiding place, shaking like a million leaves.

"Y-y-y-yes s-s-sir." he stammered, still shaking from the sheer scariness of Eggman's brilliance "Y-y-y-you g-g-got e-e-e-e-every s-s-single target! Th-th-that hedgehog's a g-g-goner!"

"Oh that's good!" said Dr. Eggman happily "At long last my genius will triumph over Sonic's puny speed once and for all! Mobius is practically mine! Oooooh I can almost feel it crumble before me in the palm of my giant metal hand!"

"You don't have a giant metal hand you doofus!" snapped Alonzo.

"It's a figure of speech my steel stooge!" said Dr. Eggman crossly "And don't you go calling me a doofus either! I'm the brain and you are the stooge!"

"Yes boss I'm a stooge." said Alonzo pathetically "And you're the brain."

He pulled out his famous pointed hat with the word "stooge" printed on it and put it on his pointed head. He pulled a silly face and Dr. Eggman laughed at him.

"That never gets old Alonzo!" he chuckled "I could watch you do it all day!"

Alonzo just turned his back on his fat master and gave him the cold shoulder. Dr. Eggman didn't seem to notice this though as he climbed back into his robotic suit. The top half of the suit closed around him, forming the whole robot once again.

"I can't wait to pound Sonic into the dirt with this ingenious device!" he crowed to himself "He'll never forget the day I, Dr. Ivo Eggman, well and truly defeats him once and for all!"

Alonzo was not impressed by his master's gloating. Why does that tub of lard always gloat about how he is going to stop Sonic and yet always gets sorely defeated every time? Maybe it was because Dr. Eggman was such an egotistical nutcase he doesn't care how many times he gets defeated, he just takes the old "If at first you don't succeed: try, TRY again" routine and constantly comes back for more. Alonzo couldn't wait to see Eggman get defeated by Sonic once again. And he only had a few hours to wait until the showdown over the planet began…

Twelve o' clock midday.

It is time.

Time for the colossal contest between Sonic the Hedgehog and Dr. Eggman to determine the fate of everybody on Mobius. Sonic and his friends gathered around into the Great Dunes which was where the battle would be taking place. There was Tails, Amy and Cream & Cheese (of course), Mecha Vanilla and even Knuckles the Echidna had come to watch the fight. He was only here because he had nothing better to do and he always did enjoy watching a good fight.

"Who are you?" asked Amy "I don't believe we've met before."

"The name's Knuckles." said Knuckles "I'm from the famed Angel Island and I'm a friend of Sonic's."

"Well any friend of Sonic's is a friend of mine." said Amy, shaking Knuckle's hand politely "I'm Amy Rose, Sonic's biggest fan and soon-to-be love interest."

"And my name is Cream." said Cream "How do you do?"

"Um…fine thanks." said Knuckles modestly "And may I ask who's the robot bunny there?" he added, pointing at Mecha Vanilla.

"I'm Vanilla, Cream's mother." said Mecha Vanilla "But as you can see, I've been turned into a robot by that horrible Dr. Eggman person."

"I know what that fat man can do." said Knuckles angrily "And I'm going to make him pay for trying to steal the Master Emerald the other day!**"

"The what, what?" questioned Amy.

"The Master Emerald keeps Angel Island a float." explained Knuckles "Without it, the island will fall to the ground and goodness knows how much catastrophe it'll cause!"

"And Eggman tried to steal it?" said Amy "How low can that man go?"

"As low as he can I guess." muttered Knuckles. Then he turned to Tails and said "How's it going Tails?"

"Just fine Knuckles." said Tails "How's things been since Mecha Sonic attacked your island***?"

"Not too shabby." said Knuckles "I was kinda bewildered to find out I was defeated by a roboticized Sonic I'll admit. I wonder if still that strong now he's not a robot!" he added jokingly.

Tails gave Knuckles a fake chuckle and turned his attention to the battlefield which had Sonic already there, waiting impatiently for Dr. Eggman to arrive. Tails was beginning to feel worried for his friend out there. What if Dr. Eggman well and truly defeated him? What evil scheme did he have up his sleeve to defeat Sonic? And would Sonic see it coming?

On the battlefield, Sonic was still impatiently waiting for Dr. Eggman to arrive. Two whole minutes had passed and Dr. Eggman hadn't arrived yet. What was keeping the fat man? Had he chickened out before the fight even began?

"Hey Egg-Brains! Where are you?" yelled Sonic "I'm getting old here!"

Then as if on cue, Dr. Eggman arrived on the scene in his giant robotical suit. He hovered through the skies and then landed a good distance away from Sonic, who smiled happily at the fact Eggman had finally decided to arrive. Alonzo had been riding on the suit's shoulder and he hoped off. Sonic smirked at Dr. Eggman's new invention.

"Is that seriously all you got?" he sneered "A robot that's the spitting image of you only fatter? You've gotta be kidding me!"

"Snide remarks and bad jokes won't help you in this fight Sonic." snarled Dr. Eggman from inside the robot suit "This will be one beat down you'll never forget!"

"Pssh Whatever." said Sonic in a bored tone.

Alonzo trundled into the centre of the battlefield and made an announcement.

"This battle will determine who is the superior in combat." he said "We have Sonic the Hedgehog competing against Dr. Eggman. The winner will decide the fate of Mobius. There are no rules in this fight except win and they must fight without any assistance."

Sonic raised an eyebrow suspiciously. Something was beginning to smell fishy around here when Alonzo said there are no rules except the two he just mentioned. Did that mean Eggman would try and do something unfair to Sonic which would give him the advantage in the battle?

"Are you ready?" yelled Alonzo.

"Ready!" the contestants said.

The onlookers watched closely as the fight was beginning to start.

"Ready…Set…" said Alonzo slowly as he trundled out of the centre of the battle field. Sonic and Eggman tensed themselves as they prepared to lunge at each other and begin the fight.

"GO!" yelled Alonzo.

Sonic and Eggman lunged at each other faster then you could blink. Eggman had the shield raised so Sonic charged straight into the shield. Sonic bounced off it harmlessly and rubbed his head.

"Nice one." he said "But still not good enough to stop me."

Sonic span into a spin-dash and was about to attack until suddenly Alonzo pressed a button on a remote device he held and the ground began to shake. Sonic stopped what he was doing and looked around him as the ground shook. Dr. Eggman didn't seem to be bothered about it though, he remained clam and contained. Then the whole ground began to crack all around the two fighters. Then four large black iron walls began to emerge from the cracking ground around Sonic and Eggman. The onlookers gasped in amazement at the giant walls. Sonic had no idea what was happening but he knew this must be some kind of trick Eggman had up his sleeve. The walls finally finished ascending from the ground. Now Sonic and Eggman were enclosed in a rectangular enclosure formed by the black iron walls. Sonic glared at Dr. Eggman crossly.

"OK, what's going on?" he demanded.

"These walls are merely there to stop anyone from trying to interfere with our battle Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "And since no one can see us, no one knows who's winning and it raises the tension doesn't it?"

"Yeah I guess." said Sonic "But it doesn't mean I'm gonna lose!"

Sonic leaped into the air to attack Dr. Eggman…and suddenly got zapped in the back by a brilliant flash of electricity. Sonic fell to the ground painfully and he rubbed his electrocuted back.

"What the heck happened?" he asked.

"I forgot to mention something." crowed Dr. Eggman "These walls are fitted with motion sensors and EMP cannons and they'll zap you every time you leap into the air! So no homing attacks or spin-dashes from you in this fight it seems!"

Sonic was absolutely livid.

"This is an outrage!" he yelled "How can I possibly fight back if I

can't use my signature moves on ya without getting zapped? That's not fair!"

"There are no rules in this game except win and no allies." sneered Dr. Eggman "So I can use anything to help me vanquish you for good!"

"It's still not fair on me though." muttered Sonic.

"That's the point Sonic!" laughed Eggman "I DON'T play fair!"

He aimed the robot suit's wicked mace at Sonic and fired at him. Sonic leaped out of the way of the mace but due to the motion sensors and the EMP cannons, he got zapped the minute he leaped out of the way. Sonic fell to the ground again and Eggman's mace returned to him. Then he fired the mace again before Sonic could get back up and the poor hedgehog was hit full on by the mace. Luckily the mace's spikes didn't quite get him. The mace crashed into the iron wall and embedded itself into the wall thanks to its spikes. Now Sonic was trapped between the wall and the mace. And then suddenly he was zapped by the mace's built in electricity conductor. After the mace's shock ceased, Sonic panted heavily.

"How many times am I gonna get zapped in this fight?" he gasped "I may as well become a lightening rod!"

The mace suddenly freed itself from the wall and returned to Dr. Eggman. It attached itself neatly into the robot suit's wrist socket. Then Dr. Eggman proceeded to raise the robot arm with the mace on and then swing down on Sonic in a hopeful attempt to crush him. Sonic managed to recover just in time to get out of the way. Eggman hit the wall with a terrific smash of the mace. The impact of the mace had cracked the wall slightly. Sonic ran around the arena at his trademark speed while he tried to think of a way to attack Eggman without leaping at him. Dr. Eggman noticed Sonic running around madly and decided to try and blast him. The suit's waist cannons fired at Sonic as he ran around the arena. Sonic couldn't leap to dodge any of the blasts since doing so would just get him zapped so he relied on running fast enough to get by just as the cannon blasts were fired at him. Then Sonic had an idea. He carried on running at supersonic speed but he aimed at Eggman's legs in hope of hitting

them hard enough to take them out. Unfortunately Eggman caught sight of him and put the shield in front of the legs to stop Sonic from hitting them. Sonic hit the shield and bounced straight off it and into the wall. Sonic fell from the wall and landed front first onto the ground.

"Valiant effort Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "But I'm afraid it's not valiant enough. You'll have to try much harder then that to stop me this time!"

"You mean like this?" cried Sonic.

He got back to his feet and charged at Dr. Eggman's robotic suit. But instead of charging into him like a shooting bullet, he began to run rings around Eggman. Dr. Eggman knew what he was attempting to do; Sonic was using his Sonic Tornado move, a powerful move that did not require leaping to perform. Why hadn't he made it so every time Sonic attacks he gets zapped? Sonic continued running around Eggman and forming the familiar blue tornado that appeared whenever he performed the move. Eggman was beginning to get caught up in the wind and his suit was spinning around madly. Sonic finally stopped running and the tornado span Eggman directly into the wall. The move had clearly shaken Eggman a little because he seemed too startled for words. Sonic smirked at him.

"How this for trying harder?" he crowed.

"Very clever Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "But this suit is strong enough to withstand your mere tornado attacks."

The robotical suit stood back up and aimed it's mace at Sonic. Then it fired the mace at him. Sonic ducked and the mace whizzed over his head and hit the ground a few meters behind him. The mace returned to Dr. Eggman. Then he began to spin the mace arm around at an incredible speed. Sonic ran away from Eggman but the determined villain chased after him, his robotical arm still spinning. The robot suit was fast enough to keep up with Sonic and since they were in an enclosed area, Eggman didn't have too much trouble chasing him down. He eventually caught up with Sonic and walloped him with the mace. Sonic hurtled into the wall like a golf ball that had

just been hit by the golf player. Sonic leaped off the wall and ended up whizzing towards Eggman like an arrow. Eggman raised the shield up and Sonic bounced straight off it once again. Sonic hit the ground face first and before he could recover, Dr. Eggman walloped him with the mace again. Sonic hit the wall and slid back down to the ground. This fight was going in Eggman's direction and he knew it. Sonic needed a plan and fast otherwise he would be defeated and Mobius would be doomed forever.

Outside the enclosure, everybody was wondering what was happening.

"What's going on in there?" asked Amy.

"Is Sonic winning?" asked Tails.

"Is Eggman getting thrashed?" asked Knuckles.

Alonzo was less then helpful though.

"I'm sorry but there are no windows for you to see through and I can't be bothered to install any." he said "You'll have to wait until the fight is over and you'll see who's won."

"Oh shut up!" snapped Amy, whacking him on the head with her Piko-Piko hammer.

Alonzo fell to pieces yet again. He cursed Amy under his breath and put himself back together.

"I have no idea how he does that." said Tails.

"I really hope Sonic's alright on the other side of those walls." said Knuckles "But I have a feeling in my bones he isn't."

And that feeling in Knuckles' bones was right. Sonic wasn't alright, he was getting caned in this fight. Dr. Eggman kept whacking him with his mace or kicking him. Sonic kept recovering and trying to retaliate but Eggman was too quick for him and kept defending the suit's weaker points with his shield. Sonic tried another Sonic Tornado move but all that did was shake Eggman a little and then in a trice, he would recover and attack again. Sonic needed an idea

and he needed it fast. But he had no idea on what to do. He couldn't spin-dash or homing attack Eggman since he gets zapped every time he leaps and his Sonic Tornado didn't do much harm to him. Then Sonic had an idea. Dr. Eggman bore down on him and prepared to attack until Sonic stopped him.

"Hey Egg face!" he yelled "I surrender! You win!"

Dr. Eggman stopped in his tracks and stared at Sonic. Sonic the Hedgehog is surrendering to him? What on Mobius was going on? Sonic would NEVER surrender to anyone! Then Dr. Eggman realized something. This must be a trick. In fact…it was!

"Oh no you don't Sonic!" said Dr. Eggman "You're pretending to surrender so the moment I lower the walls to announce the winner, you'll cut loose on me all you like!"

"No I won't!" protested Sonic "Honest!"

"Try all you like, I'm not falling for it!" bellowed Dr. Eggman "You will fight this fight to the end and that's all there is to it!"

"Fine Egg Breath!" yelled Sonic "I'll defeat you the old fashioned way!"

And with that Sonic revved up and charged straight at Eggman's legs again. Eggman lowered the shield but Sonic stopped in front of the shield before he could hit it. He grabbed the edge of the shield, pulled himself onto the shield and kicked the robot suit's head. Then Sonic grabbed the robot's head and pulled himself onto it. Dr. Eggman knew what Sonic was up to, he would try to coax Eggman into attacking him and then leap off so he'll hit himself. Dr. Eggman instead decided to grab Sonic instead of hitting him off. Sonic saw Eggman reaching out to grab him and moved out of the way. Then he kicked the robot's head again and was about to retaliate with another attack but Eggman grabbed him with the robot's only hand and threw him into the ground. Sonic skidded across the ground for a good few meters before stopping. The impact had left several grazes on his face and his lower lip had a thin trickle of blood coming from it. Before Sonic could get up, Dr. Eggman fired some missiles at him. The missiles almost hit Sonic but they only just

missed and instead, the force of their explosions sent him flying straight up. The onlookers saw Sonic going straight up and sensed the fight wasn't going well for the poor hedgehog. Sonic plummeted straight back down but unluckily for him, he hit the top of one of the walls on his way down and ended up with searing pain flooding through his back. Sonic landed back on the ground front first. Dr. Eggman decided not to wait for Sonic to get back up and fired his mace at him. Sonic saw it coming and just managed to kick it away and send it flying back into Eggman. The mace hit Eggman and knocked him over. Then the mace's electric attack shocked the robot suit. The mace hadn't done grievous damage to the suit, but it had definitely shaken Eggman up a bit.

"How about that Eggman?" crowed Sonic "Talk about a taste of your own medicine!"

"I must admit that was unpleasant." said Dr. Eggman as the robot suit got back to its feet "Now I know what my own weapons feel like. But it's still not strong enough to stop me!"

Then Eggman blasted Sonic with the waist mounted cannons and sent Sonic flying into the wall. Sonic hit the wall and slid back down to the ground. He gasped and panted for breath as Dr. Eggman advanced on him menacingly. Sonic stared helplessly as Eggman's robot suit raised its mace arm and prepared to strike.

"Say goodbye Sonic the Hedgehog!" yelled Eggman.

Eggman swung the mace down on Sonic. But Sonic did a spin-dash on the ground and catapulted himself into the robot's undergarment. He sent the robot wobbling about madly. After Eggman regained his balance he glared at Sonic.

"How did you do that without getting zapped?" he asked "It's supposed to zap you every time you leap!"

"Correction: I didn't leap." said Sonic "I did a spin-dash on the ground and doing so catapulted me into you, I didn't leap at all. So your plan is now crumbling into little bits!"

"So what if you've seen a way around my plan?" snorted Dr.

Eggman "You're injured and weak Sonic! You'll not be able to keep this up any longer!"

"I'll show just how long I can keep this up for!" yelled Sonic angrily.

He did another spin-dash on the ground and propelled himself into Dr. Eggman again. Unfortunately, Eggman was too quick for him and he raised the shield just in time to block his attack. Sonic bounced off of it as if he was a tennis ball. Sonic managed to land on his feet this time and tried his attack again. But instead of using the shield to defend himself, Dr. Eggman whacked Sonic away with the shield and sent Sonic crashing into the wall face first. Sonic had hit the wall so hard he was literally stuck in it. But since only his face was stuck in the wall he could actually pull himself out this time. Sonic pressed against the wall with his feet and pulled his face out of the wall. Unfortunately, Eggman saw the opportunity to hit Sonic with the mace. Sonic was sent hurtling up into the air and then he came falling back down. Before Sonic could hit the ground, Eggman hit him again with the mace. Sonic was sent flying back up and then hurtling back down. Instead of hitting him with the mace and sending him flying back up, Eggman hit swung the mace sideways so when he hit Sonic, he hit him to the side and not straight up. Sonic hit the wall and bounced off of it and landed back first on the ground. Then Eggman kicked Sonic with the robot suit's large feet as if Sonic had now become a football. Sonic hit another wall and bounced off of it. Sonic recovered and did the ground spin-dash again. He propelled himself into Eggman and hit the suit just below the neck but he didn't do much harm to it. He merely bounced off it and hit the mace arm so hard the mace detached from the wrist socket and fell to the ground hard. Then Sonic used another Sonic Tornado move. This time, he did it around the mace and the mace was sent hurling around and around. Then the mace was sent hurling out of the tornado and it hit the robot suit straight in the head. It hit it so hard it almost tore it straight off! Eggman recovered from the attack and reattached the mace back on the robot's arm.

He saw Sonic trying another ground spin-dash attack and raised the shield to protect himself. But Sonic didn't catapult himself into the upper part of the robot suit. He hit the legs and sent Eggman toppling over. Sonic then began to rapidly kick the head at sonic

speed but Eggman blasted him away with one of the waist mounted cannons. Sonic slid across the ground and hit the wall head first. He was beginning to feel exhausted and he knew it. But he knew he couldn't let Eggman win so he had to try his hardest. Sonic got back to his feet and charged at Eggman, only not at top speed. He was too injured to run at top speed now. Eggman noticed Sonic's slowed condition and swatted him away with his mace. Sonic flew in a rainbow arch and landed on the ground. Eggman then raised the mace for another attack. Sonic saw this and leaped out of the way before Eggman could smash him. But seeing as he leaped, he got zapped by the walls again. After Sonic got zapped, Eggman caught him on the shield and tossed him into the air. Then before Sonic could hit the ground, Eggman walloped him as hard as he could with his deadly mace. Sonic hit the ground and scraped across it, leaving more cuts on his face then before. The battered and bruised hedgehog knew he couldn't keep this up any longer so he had to give in already. But he couldn't let Eggman win otherwise Mobius would be a robot paradise for Eggman. Sonic tried to get back to his feet, only to find out he couldn't Eggman had beaten him up pretty badly and now he couldn't get back up. Sonic's muscles eventually gave in and he flopped on the ground in total and utter defeat. His eyes closed and he passed out. Dr. Eggman glowered down at his defeated opponent and smiled like a maniacal witch. He'd done it! He'd finally done it! He'd defeated Sonic the Hedgehog at long last! He'd won the fight! Mobius was his at last!

Outside the walls, Alonzo listened to them to see if he could hear any fighting going on. Instead, he heard total silence. Alonzo decided to lower the walls to see who the winners was. He could almost picture the sight of Eggman's defeated machine right now. Tails, Knuckles and Amy stared hard as the walls began to lower while Mecha Vanilla hugged Cream & Cheese. The walls descended into the ground, revealing a triumphant Dr. Eggman and a very battered and beaten Sonic the Hedgehog lying on the ground, well and truly defeated. The Mobians gasped in horror at the sight of Sonic. Alonzo was so shocked at that revelation he almost fainted. His master had actually won for once? How could this be possible? Dr. Eggman's robot suit opened up to reveal Dr. Eggman and the fat man spoke.

"As you can see Mobians, I have won the fight!" he announced gleefully "Now Mobius is mine at long last!"

He cried out for joy and waved his arms about in triumph. The Mobians didn't know what to say. They were too horrified at the fact Sonic just got defeated.

"No…" gasped Tails, tears welling up in his eyes "No…No…No… It…It can't be! Sonic never loses!"

"Oh no!" cried Amy "My Sonic lost the battle!"

"We're gonna be robots!" wailed Cream.

Knuckles was extremely mad at this. He was not letting Eggman get away with this at all. He was going to take on Eggman himself and vanquish him in the blink of an eye. While Eggman cheered, Knuckles charged towards him, roaring angrily. Eggman heard Knuckles coming and raised the shield to defend himself. Fortunately, the robot suit wasn't designed to withstand Knuckle's sheer strength. Knuckles hit the shield with his spiked fists and he hit it so hard it cracked. Then Knuckles punched the shield clean off the robot's arm and he began to launch a series of punches on Eggman's robotical suit in blind rage.

"You're not going to have our home as your kingdom!" he yelled "And you're not populating Mobius with your wretched, filthy machines!"

"Oh woe betide you red head!" sneered Dr. Eggman and he swatted the angry echidna away with his mace.

Knuckles was sent flying into the ground. Dr. Eggman advanced on the downed echidna but suddenly he was hit in several places by a blue blur. It was Sonic the Hedgehog! He had finally recovered and now he had no walls to stop him, he could leap all he liked and he was free to spin-dash Dr. Eggman. He smashed Eggman's mace arm and knocked it clean off as he hit him. Knuckles got back to his feet and joined in with the smashing and trashing. Eggman tried to fly away but Knuckles punched the jet wings off and the robot suit came crashing down to the ground. Sonic knocked off the wrecked

head and Knuckles smashed the shield arm to smithereens. Amy decided to add insult to injury by joining in the fight and giving the robot suit a good pounding with her Piko-Piko hammer. Eggman cried out in agony as his robot suit was ripped, smashed and torn apart limb from limb and piece by piece. After the three Mobians were finished, all that was left of Eggman's robotical combat suit were tiny pieces that littered the battlefield. Dr. Eggman sat in the midst of the debris. He looked like his sanity was about to explode. He had come so close to victory and now his triumph had crumbled to pieces before him all thanks to Sonic, Knuckles and Amy. Sonic smirked at Eggman triumphantly.

"I win Egg nose." he grunted "I've just proven you cannot defeat me without cheating or having any assistance. Whereas I can defeat you by myself and without cheating."

Dr. Eggman scowled angrily at Sonic. His face was darker then a thundercloud.

"You'll regret robbing me of my ultimate victory rodent!" he snarled "I'll be back!"

And with that, he and Alonzo ran for their lives. The Mobians watched them disappear from view and then they cheered.

"Hooray! We won!" cried Amy.

"We totally beat that bad egg!" cried Tails.

"Yeah but being the bad egg he is, he won't keep the deal we made." noted Sonic "He won't leave Mobius like he should do now I've defeated him, he'll just come back for more."

"We'll be ready for him buddy." said Knuckles, with a smile "He can't defeat you or all of us together."

Sonic smiled back at Knuckles.

"Cool punches by the way." he said.

Knuckles was about to say something back but Sonic suddenly fainted. Amy shrieked and knelt by his side.

"Sonic? Are you OK?" she cried.

"I think he's fine Amy, he's just so worn out he can't stay awake any longer." said Tails "We need to get him to a hospital and fast."

And with that, Tails and Cream picked Sonic up and flew off with him. The others followed them on foot. They were going to deliver Sonic to a hospital in Empire City where he could recover from his injuries.

Later at Empire City, Sonic had been delivered to the hospital and was now placed under care from the doctors. His injuries from his fight with Dr. Eggman had been pretty severe but not fatal luckily. In a few weeks time, Sonic would be as good as new. Until then, he had to rest up and let his body heal from the beating it had received. Tails and Amy stood beside Sonic's bed as they waited for him to come around. They had been waiting for a long time. After what felt like forever, Sonic opened his eyes and he turned to see Tails and Amy beside him. Their faces were full of joy seeing him awake at last.

"Oh Sonic! You're awake finally!" cried Amy.

"How did I get here?" asked Sonic.

"Me and Cream brought you here." said Tails "After the doctors ran a test on you they said you've gotta be the luckiest Mobian alive because you're injuries were only severe, not fatal so you'll live to fight again."

"That's good news." said Sonic "And that Eggman better watch out because next time, he won't be so lucky!"

"You said it handsome!" shrieked Amy happily "Oh and we made this card for you."

She handed Sonic a card. The card was plain white and had the words "Get well soon Sonic!" on the front in glittering blue letters. Sonic opened the card and inside it read in a neat felt pen:

To Sonic,

We hope with all our hearts that you make a speedy recovery. Get well soon!

And the letter had been signed with Tails, Amy, Cream, Cheese, Vanilla and even Knuckles' names at the bottom. Sonic closed the card and smiled at Tails and Amy.

"Thanks guys, you're the best friends a hedgehog could ask for." he said.

"You're more then welcome Sonic." said Amy happily "We're with ya no matter where you are."

"That's way past cool." said Sonic, giving Tails and Amy his trademark thumbs up sign and winking.

Tails and Amy giggled with pleasure. Seeing how caring his friends were really made Sonic feel a lot better already. He couldn't wait to be up and at them again.

Back at Eggman's base, things were not going well. Eggman had shut himself in a room and although Alonzo had no idea what was going on, he knew Eggman was throwing a fit in there. Alonzo decided to keep out of his master's way until he calmed down. In the room Eggman surprisingly enough, was not throwing a fit or smashing things out of anger. Instead he was working on Project: Metal Sonic. Since his side project had been a failure, he decided to work on the greater project, Metal Sonic.

"You narrowly defeated me this time Sonic." Dr. Eggman said to himself "But you'll never defeat Metal Sonic once he's completed in a week's time!"

As he worked on his new machine, he cackled to himself, knowing that Sonic would never be a match for Metal Sonic. Once he unleashed Metal Sonic, victory would finally be his…

Footnotes:

***How many times am I gonna bring up the damn Mecha Sonic saga (Stories 12-14)?**

**** See Stories 8-9**

*****Mecha Sonic attacked Angel Island in Story 13**

What an epic showdown that was! And Eggman ALMOST beat Sonic! Will he beat him next time or is this the only time he's going to get close? We'll see about that. ;) Join me next time as a certain Seedrian finally makes her grand debut... :) Reviews will be appreciated (Sorry if I sound demanding, I'm just curious on what you think of my story.)

Mars Attacks Part 1

Story 21: Mars Attacks Part 1: The Strangers

The sun was starting to set over the meadows of Green Hill Zone, turning the sky from blue into a mixture of pinkish red and light blue. Sonic and Tails were the only ones in the meadow at this time. Sonic had made a speedy recovery since his epic throw down with Eggman the other day* and now he and Tails were enjoying a moment's peace since Eggman wasn't up to anything right now. They had decided to watch the sun set. It was truly a magnificent sight of beauty for them, staring at the mixture of colours in the sky and the sun slowly slinking from view.

"I never get tired of watching these things." said Sonic "It's a nice peaceful pass time isn't it?"

"Yes it is." said Tails in agreement "My mom loved sunsets, it made her think of romantic days with dad before she gave birth to me."

"It's just a pity not everybody respects beauty." said Sonic "Especially Eggman! His idea of beauty is a robot city!"

"Well with us around he certainly won't get that wish." said Tails "We're too much for him!"

Tails laughed and Sonic laughed with him

"Oh yes we are, aren't we?" chuckled Sonic.

Then suddenly Tails leapt to his feet and pointed up at the sky. Something clearly caught his attention.

"Hey look Sonic!" cried Tails "What's that thing up there?"

Sonic looked up at the sky to see what had caught Tails' attention. He saw a faint white twinkling light.

"It's just a star Tails." said Sonic.

"If it's a star then why is it coming towards us?" asked Tails.

Sonic looked back up at the sky. Surely enough, the "star" was actually coming towards them. Its twinkling whiteness getting bigger and bigger as it neared them. Sonic and Tails ran for their lives and the "star" rocketed over the meadows and came down with a deafening crash that could have startled the whole of Knothole if it was near it. A wall of fire emerged from the crash sight. Sonic and Tails ran up to the crash sight to see what it was. The "star" wasn't a star at all, it was a space pod! It was a sleek, green petal shaped space pod! It was now a flaming wreck and its pilot was lying beside the wreck. Tails flew up to the unconscious pilot and hauled her away from the wreck before she could get burnt or injured anymore. Tails settled her down on the grass and Sonic looked at her. The stranger was like no one he'd ever seen before. She had a round head with leaf-like hear and rosebud ears. She had thin eyelashes and no visible nose. There was a red gem on her chest and she wore a green shirt with a white skirt with green tips at the ends. She wore white tights and green shoes. She also looked around Tails' age. This stranger was a sight to behold wasn't it?

"What is it?" asked Sonic.

"No idea." said Tails "I'll bet it's from a plant like species considering her plant like appearance."

"We'd best get her to my place." said Sonic "She's not safe out here."

Tails picked the stranger back up and flew off with her. Sonic ran off after him and the two friends headed for Sonic's house. Hopefully when the stranger awoke, they'd find out about her like who she is and where she's from.

Hell.

A war zone practically epitomizes the word hell. Soldiers and warriors getting blasted by flying laser blasts or getting slashed to pieces by warriors swinging swords everywhere. Not to mention the

scenery was filled with walls of fire and war trodden ground. It would be a terrifying sight for anyone around, especially the peace loving Seedrians. They had not wanted to be in a war but the Martian's hostile reception gave them no choice. They simply had to fight for their survival. So it came to this, a war with the peace loving Seedrians and the peace hating Martians. The Seedrians were all pretty looking plant creatures where as the Martians were pretty much demons in battle armour. The scariest of all Martians being the enormous brute and ruler of the Martians known as Diablo the Invincible. A Seedrian known as Lucas, all dressed in battle armour raised his golden sword and Diablo raised his tremendous mace. Then the two lunged for each other as the Seedrian children watched with fear…

The stranger opened her eyes and sat up, gasping. She had awoken from a bad dream. Then she suddenly realized she was in a nice cosy bed in an unknown house. The stranger observed her surroundings with puzzlement on her face. You could tell from the expression on her face she was wondering where she was and how did she get here. She was even wondering what planet she was on and that seemed to worry her. Then the stranger heard voices coming from behind the door. Voices she was not familiar with. Then the door opened and in walked Tails. Sonic had decided it might be a good time to check on the stranger so Tails walked into the bedroom to check on her. His eyes widened a little to see the stranger awake but the stranger pulled the bed covers over her face. She was clearly frightened as she had not seen a Mobian before.

"What's the matter?" asked Tails nicely "Are you afraid?"

The stranger refused to answer; she just sank lower under the covers. Tails walked over to the bed and pulled the covers away from the stranger's face. It then dawned on him that the stranger had the most beautiful blue eyes. They were like pools of water sparkling in the sun light.

"Are you scared?" asked Tails.

The stranger nodded.

"There's no need to be scared of me." said Tails "I won't hurt you

and neither will my friend Sonic."

"How's she doing Tails?" asked Sonic, coming up beside him.

"She seems scared Sonic." said Tails.

"Does she?" said Sonic "I bet she's not seen a Mobian before. Hey miss, we won't hurt you, we're good guys here. There's no need to be scared of us." he said to the stranger.

The stranger stopped shaking and sat up.

"Do you mean it?" she asked. Her voice sounded like an angel's.

"Sure!" said Sonic "I'm Sonic the Hedgehog, Hero of Mobius. And you are?"

"My name is Cosmo." said the stranger "And I'm not from here."

"So where are you from Cosmo?" asked Tails.

"I'm from a planet far away from this one." said Cosmo quietly "I am a Seedrian and Seedrians come from a planet teaming with plant like creatures and plant life."

"I see." said Sonic "So why are you so far from home? Out sight seeing?"

"Unfortunately no." said Cosmo. Her face fell into a solemn expression as if something depressing was coming up. "The Seedrians are at war with a vile, malicious race of peace-hating monsters called the Martians. They're demons from Mars and they loathe peaceful planets and peaceful races."

Sonic and Tails didn't like the sound of that. Those Martian guys sounded worse then Eggman!

"The Martians came to my planet and instantly disliked it for its peaceful nature." Cosmo continued "And that's when the war broke out. My mother and all other mothers were desperate to save their children so we were all sent out to reside on our twin planet until the war was over. One Martian spotted us and tried to stop us. He

knocked my space pod off course and I spiralled through space until I landed on this planet."

"That explains the crash earlier." said Tails.

Cosmo nodded and continued. "I feel so alone here. I'm on a completely new planet with no idea on what's what and I constantly fear over if the Seedrians are going to defeat those horrible Martians once and for all! What am I going to do?"

She put her head in her hands and began to cry. Sonic and Tails stared at her sadly. How on Mobius were they going to help Cosmo out? She would feel like a fish out of water on Mobius. Sonic put a hand on Cosmo's shoulder.

"Don't worry Cosmo, you'll be alright here." he assured her "Me and Tails will make sure you feel welcome and we'll be your friends."

"Oh you are so kind." said Cosmo happily "But I really don't want to be a burden to you…"

"It's no trouble at all Cosmo." said Sonic reassuringly "I'll make sure you feel welcome here on Mobius. You're gonna like it a lot I promise you."

"Oh Sonic, that sounds wonderful." said Cosmo.

Sonic smiled at her.

"Hey Tails, can you keep an eye on her?" asked Sonic "I'm gonna meet up with Knuckles to see how he's doing."

"OK." said Tails.

Sonic left the room and ran out of the front door at sonic speed. Cosmo saw him running through the bedroom window.

"That Sonic is fast isn't he?" she said.

"That's why they call him Sonic Cosmo." said Tails "By the way, how are you feeling? Are you hurt anywhere?"

"Only my lower back and my legs hurt." said Cosmo "But I'll be fine after a good rest."

"I'll get you some tea Cosmo." said Tails "That'll make you feel better."

Before Cosmo could thank him, Tails left the bedroom to make the tea. She couldn't help but smile at Sonic and Tails' kindness and generosity. She was a complete stranger to them and yet they were willing to help them. Maybe Mobius wouldn't be so bad after all…

Knuckles the Echidna was given the evening off of guarding the Master Emerald for now and he decided to hang out in Green Hill Zone as he never got to go there often. Being in these forests reminded him of the old days where his father Locke would train him up to be an excellent fighter and an excellent guardian. Knuckles missed his father who had sadly passed away after a battle but Locke's spirit lived on in him and Knuckles vowed to make his dad proud by fulfilling the duty he was trained for. And he had done it very well by fending off Eggman robots that were attacking Downunda or making an attempt on Angel Island. The stupid machines were no match for his spiked fists after all.

"I wonder if this conflict with Eggman will ever end?" thought Knuckles "I long for the day it does. I wonder how Sonic's been recently."

Then Knuckles' ever alert eyes caught sight of something. He looked up at the dusking sky and flexed his muscles. The thing he saw was a circular spaceship that fitted the description of a UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) and it was coming down to Mobius.

"Oh great!" moaned Knuckles "Aliens! Well they're gonna regret coming here!"

Knuckles waited until the space landed on its four legged landing gear. The boarding ramp lowered down to the ground and out of the spaceship came an odd looking creature. The creature wore an unbuttoned black leather jacket, a golden helmet with three spikes

and golden shoes with a dark red stripe in the middle and two spikes on both sides near the heel. The creature had devilish orange eyes too and a cold expression on its face. Knuckles was taken aback at the sight of such a strange creature but he quickly regained his senses.

"OK mister who are you and what are you doing here?" he bellowed.

The creature didn't seem intimidated at all.

"Oh silly creature, there's no need for that nonsense." said the creature calmly "I come in peace."

"Yeah right." snorted Knuckles "Aliens mean no good and you definitely look like you mean no good!"

"Well maybe you need to work on the old "don't judge a book by its cover" rule." snapped the creature.

That did it; Knuckles pounced on the creature like a tiger and wrestled him to the ground.

"I'm gonna give you fifty knuckle sandwiches you alien filth!" he roared.

"Hey Knuckles lay off!" cried a teenage sounding voice.

Sonic the Hedgehog had arrived on the scene and stopped Knuckles from pounding the creature's face in. Knuckles grumbled at Sonic.

"Sonic, it's an alien!" cried Knuckles.

"It might be a friendly alien!" snapped Sonic "Why must you always jump to conclusions?"

Knuckles was about to argue back but he stopped himself. Sonic helped the creature back on his feet.

"Well at least one Mobian has manners." said the creature, smirking at Knuckles.

"So sorry about Knuckles." said Sonic "He's a bit edgy around strangers."

"I can see that." sneered the creature "My name is Marik the Martian." he added, holding his hand out for a handshake "What's yours little spiky thing?"

Sonic's face changed. Martian! This guy was a Martian! The very creatures Cosmo had described to him and Tails earlier! This guy definitely couldn't be trusted! But instead of attacking him, Sonic decided to pretend he didn't know to lure Marik into a false sense of security and then grind him into the dirt later. Sonic shook Marik's hand wearily.

"I'm Sonic the Hedgehog." said Sonic "And why are you here on Mobius?"

"I'm a tourist." said Marik "And I'm here to have a little look around this planet. Consider it a holiday of sorts. I'll only be here for a couple of days at most so don't worry about me being here too long."

"Ok then Marik." said Sonic "I hope you enjoy your stay."

Secretly, Sonic didn't trust Marik one bit. He betted his life that Marik was here for Cosmo or to see if this was a planet he wanted to destroy since Mobius was a peace loving planet. Sonic knew he had to keep an eye on this stranger. Sonic signalled for Knuckles to come to him. Knuckles came to him and Sonic kept his head low so Marik wouldn't hear him whispering to Knuckles.

"You were right to distrust this guy." whispered Sonic "He's a Martian and somebody told me Martians are peace hating creatures that will destroy any peace loving race."

"They are?" hissed Knuckles quietly "Man! I wish you didn't stop me from pounding his face in."

"I kinda wish that to." said Sonic "But if that Marik does anything suspicious, I'll let you go to town on him all you want, but save some for me."

"Ha, Ha! I will Sonic!" chuckled Knuckles.

"Is something the matter?" asked Marik who had been wondering what they were talking about.

"No, nothing at all Marik." lied Sonic. Then he looked at his wrist as if he had a watch on and pretended to be startled at what time it was.

"Oops! Look at the time, I'd best be off now. Have a nice tour tomorrow!" he said and ran off at his trademark speed.

Marik was totally amazed at that.

"Incredible!" he gasped "I've never seen a creature run as fast as that before! And I thought I was the fastest thing alive."

Knuckles turned to go but before he left, he grabbed Marik by the collar.

"I don't trust you yet Marik!" he growled "And if I catch you doing anything villainous I will pound you so much your face will fall off!"

"Oh ye of little brain." said Marik "There's no need to distrust me; we Martians pride ourselves in being civilized and well brought up. Me and villainous thoughts don't mix."

Knuckles, still glaring put Marik down and walked away. For a peace hater, Marik seemed unusually calm and polite. Maybe the thought of Martians being peace haters was just a nasty rumour and the Martians were the exact opposite. Regardless, Knuckles knew he had to keep an eye on this stranger for he knew he couldn't be trusted.

"You Seedrians sound like an interesting species." said Tails.

"I could say the same about you Mobians." said Cosmo.

Cosmo and Tails had been talking to one another about their own races. Both were fascinated by what they had learned about each

other.

"One thing puzzles me Tails." said Cosmo "Why do you have two tails when foxes traditionally have just one?"

"I'm not really sure on that." Tails admitted "Maybe I was just one of those foxes that got more then one tail when I was born."

"I see." said Cosmo.

"I'm glad I do have two tails." said Tails "Because if I didn't, I wouldn't be able to do this."

Tails twisted his tails around one another and began flying a few centimetres off the ground. Cosmo stared at him in amazement. Tails landed back on the floor and his tails stopped spinning.

"Amazing huh?" he said.

Cosmo wasn't sure on what to say. Tails just gave her a friendly chuckle.

"Lost for words aren't you?" he laughed.

"Um…yes really." said Cosmo "I'm not sure what to say about what you just did. It's pretty unbelievable."

"It is, isn't it?" said Tails "Foxes aren't really known for flying. But I think the view up there when I am flying is absolutely spectacular so I don't mind."

Before Tails and Cosmo could talk some more, they heard the sound of some whooshing up to the door, yanking it open and running inside. It was only Sonic. He skidded into the bedroom but he didn't stop fast enough and slid right under the bed, out the other side and hit the wall feet first.

"Man! I need to work on my brakes!" Sonic groaned his he picked himself up.

"Sonic!" cried Tails "What the heck's the matter? Is Dr. Eggman attacking again?"

"No Tails, its worse then that!" gasped Sonic "A Martian has come to Mobius, claiming to be a tourist!"

Cosmo was so shocked; she almost collapsed on the bed. A Martian had come to Mobius? Was it looking for her?

"Did he say his name at all?" asked Tails.

"He calls himself Marik or something like that." said Sonic.

"Oh no! Not Marik!" squeaked Cosmo.

"Y'know him?" said Sonic.

"Unfortunately yes." said Cosmo "Marik is an unholy terror. He enjoys blowing things up and causing malice everywhere. Your planet is in danger now he's here! And I bet he's come looking for me!"

That was more then enough information Sonic needed about Marik. He had to get rid of the Martian before he harmed anyone. Tails was more concerned over if Marik was here to harm Cosmo.

"What are we gonna do Sonic?" asked Tails.

"We're gonna kick Marik's sorry butt back to Mars." said Sonic "But we'll wait till morning, it's getting late and I need my beauty sleep otherwise it disrupts my running."

"I'm a bit tired myself." said Tails "But where can Cosmo sleep? We only have two bedrooms."

"I have a sleeping bag under here." said Sonic.

He reached under the bed and pulled a dark blue sleeping bag out. He handed it to Tails.

"I'm sure she'll be comfortable enough." he added "Goodnight Tails."

"Goodnight Sonic." said Tails, leaving the room with Cosmo following him.

Sonic climbed into bed, turned the lights out and closed his eyes, ready to drift off to sleep. Many thoughts raced through his mind. Was Marik really all that bad? Will Marik be an easy foe to defeat? Will Marik try to destroy Mobius? The only thing Sonic knew was he had to get rid of him before he caused any serious harm. He just hoped there weren't any noteworthy events happening tomorrow. Then suddenly Sonic remembered something. Tomorrow was the Acorn family's Royal Anniversary! The day they celebrated 25 years on the throne! Now Sonic knew he had to get rid of Marik in case he tried to wreck the ceremony, if he happened to come across it that is.

After Sonic had awoken the next morning and eaten his breakfast, he dashed out of the house to find Marik and hopefully send him away from Mobius. A while later, he arrived at the landing sight of Marik's spaceship only to find Knuckles the Echidna already there and coming out of the ship. Knuckles looked grey for some reason.

"Hey Knuckles, what's up?" asked Sonic.

"I came back here to whop Marik's ugly tush back to his home planet but he's gone!" cried Knuckles.

Sonic couldn't believe his ears.

"Gone?" he said "Are you sure?"

"Positive." said Knuckles "I've searched this strange tin-can up and down and he's nowhere to be found in there."

"He must be elsewhere!" cried Sonic "We have to find him before he harms anyone!"

And with that Sonic ran off. Knuckles ran off too. Both of them were searching up and down and anywhere in the forests of Green Hill Zone to look for Marik.

Speaking of Marik, the Martian had already left the spaceship early

on and was taking a stroll through the forest a good distance away from where Sonic and Knuckles were. In fact Marik was almost at the end of the forest. During his walk he had eyed every single tree, every solitary bush and every little Flicky bird that had come across him with disgust. On Marik's home planet which of course is Mars, they didn't have forests and forests were a repulsive sight for a Martian. No one really knows why although many guess it's because forests are of a peaceful nature and Martians were peace haters.

"Why do forests have to be such repulsive environments?" he moaned to himself "They'll be much better being used as wood for a bonfire!"

To his delight, he'd finally made it out of the forest and came across another sight to behold. He had come across the under construction Mobotropolis. The current status of the city was still no buildings yet completed but some were nearing completion at least. Marik was amused at this sight.

"So, somebody already tore this city apart and the Mobians are rebuilding it eh?" said Marik with a sinister impressed tone in his voice "Pity I wasn't here to help this person. It would have come out MUCH worse!"

He laughed wickedly at the thought. Then Marik strolled down to the under construction city and surveyed every single detail of it as he walked by the buildings. For some reason he was enjoying the sight of this and as he walked by, his foul mind imagined what it would have been like if he had destroyed it. Several workers stopped what they were doing and stared at the strange little creature that was strolling past them. They hadn't seen a Martian before so this truly was a strange sight for them. Marik glared at all the staring workers but carried on and ignored them. It's not like they were of any bother to him. Unfortunately, one foolish worker decided to tease Marik. He climbed down his ladder and stood in Marik's way. Marik stared up at the fat worker. He looked enormous compared to him, Marik was only three feet tall and the worker was about five feet.

"Hey there freak." said the worker dopily "What'cha doin' ere?"

"What I'm doing here, fatso." snarled Marik "Is none of your pathetic

business so get out of my way you walking bag of cement or I will pulverize you into the next century!"

The worker frowned at Marik's rude comment. Other workers had heard Marik's rude remark and they climbed down their ladders to join the fat one.

"Oooooh! A trouble maker huh?" growled one worker, seizing Marik by the jacket and lifting him off the ground "Well we've got a way of dealing with trouble makers like you! I bet this guy's an Eggman robot!"

Marik had no idea on what the worker suggested he was.

"I say we hammer his head in Dave!" cried one worker, brandishing a hammer threateningly.

"Put me down you numbskulls!" ordered Marik "What kind of workers are you? Threatening people on the street! You lot should be sacked! If I was your boss, I would defiantly fire you all on the spot!"

"That's it!" snarled Dave "Tim, hit him as hard as you can with that hammer of yours."

Tim obeyed and raised the hammer. But before he could whack Marik into the next country with it, Marik swiped his arm and hit the worker with a wave of energy. The worker hurtled backwards and landed on his back. Marik then elbowed Dave in the gut, causing the builder to let go of him and ran for it, using his jet shoes to run faster.

"He's getting away!" yelled Dave "Get him!"

The other builders chased after Marik but Marik had already escaped from view and was hiding up an under construction sky scraper that was at least 20 storeys high. Marik waited until the builders ran past his hiding place and hovered down to the ground with his jet shoes. He then carried on through the city, scowling at what had just happened.

"I didn't know Mobians had such bad tempers and poor social

abilities!" he grumbled "Definitely a race that needs to be taught some manners!"

His train of angered thoughts was interrupted at the next building he came across. He looked up at the building. The building he was look at was Castle Acorn, standing proudly and majestically above the under construction city. Marik observed it with confusion. It was a mystery to him why Castle Acorn was the only building in Mobotropolis that wasn't under construction. Still, if this was a castle, Marik knew he could cause lots of trouble there. And maybe, if he liked it a lot, he could take over the castle and make it his own. Marik knocked on the door and waited for someone to answer it. The door opened. Princess Sally Acorn was the one who had answered it. Marik looked at her. Sally looked at Marik, clearly taken aback at the strange creature on her doorstep.

"Oh um…can I help you?" she asked.

"My name is Marik the Martian Madame." said Marik "And I'm a space tourist. I'm here for a two day tour of this planet and I wondered would you care to give me a tour of this lovely looking castle of yours?"

"Well Marik, I'm sure my parents wouldn't mind." said Sally "Come in."

Marik did so and was instantly met with a breathtaking sight. The hallway was truly magnificent. It was large and beautifully coloured and decorated with a glistening chandelier and various paintings of the Acorn family's ancestors. Marik was impressed. He knew instantly he was going to like Castle Acorn. Sally giggled at Marik's expression.

"Amazed already and we haven't started!" she laughed "You're easy to impress aren't you Marik?"

"I am really Miss." said Marik "Anything can astound me. By the way." he added "What's your name?"

"I'm Princess Sally Acorn." said Sally.

Marik just pulled a funny face at her.

"You're a princess?" he asked with a weird tone in his voice.

"Yes, is that a problem?" asked Sally.

"Not really." said Marik "It's just, you don't look much like a princess so I was a little surprised. You know what they say, "Appearances can be deceptive" after all."

"I agree with you on that Marik." said Sally "Now, shall we begin the tour?"

"Whenever you're ready Princess." said Marik.

So Sally led Marik off to the first room for him to look in. Marik could tell he was going to enjoy this tour a lot more then he thought he was. And as he walked on, an evil plot was beginning to piece itself together in his foul little mind…

Meanwhile, Tails had woken up only to find Sonic gone. The hedgehog had left him a note saying he had gone to find Marik and get rid of him which Tails had found and read. Tails decided he'd go on a little walk through Green Hill Zone and be ready for the Acorn Family's Royal Anniversary at twelve o' clock. Cosmo wanted to come with him so she could see what Mobius was like but she feared being found out by Marik or worse, being made fun of due to her appearance so Tails disguised her in a ragged old hooded robe he had found some time ago. The robe made Cosmo look like a beggar woman and the hood drooped over her face so she could hardly see but she didn't care as long as Marik wouldn't recognize her with it on. Tails and Cosmo set off through the forest. The whole forest made Cosmo beam with amazement at what she was looking at. It was reminding her a lot of her home planet and it was just as beautiful she thought. A Flicky bird landed on her finger and Cosmo cooed at it playfully. Tails smiled at her.

"I knew you would like Green Hill Zone Cosmo." he said "It's full of nature."

"It reminds me of home." said Cosmo "And I still feel that warm loving feeling I always feel when I'm in a forest just like I did back home."

"I'd love to see what your home planet looks like." said Tails "If it wasn't at war with the Martians right now."

"It looked a lot nicer before the war." said Cosmo sadly "I hope when I come back, those demon Martians are defeated and my home planet is restored to its former glory."

"I hope Sonic will get rid of Marik soon." said Tails "It makes me shudder just thinking about what he's gonna do to Mobius if he hates it."

Then Tails heard a very familiar voice calling his name.

"Tails! Hi there!" came the cheery voice of Amy Rose.

Amy had been talking a walk herself and just happened to come across Tails and Cosmo.

"Hi Amy." said Tails.

"Nice to see you." said Amy "Where's Sonic?"

"Elsewhere." said Tails "I'm not sure what he's doing right now."

"Probably dealing with Dr. Eggman again." thought Amy "That guy's always on the move isn't he?"

Then she spotted Cosmo standing behind Tails.

"Who's that?" asked Amy.

"Oh this?" said Tails, pointing at Cosmo "This is my new friend Cosmo. She's not from around here."

"What do you mean?" asked Amy, raising an eyebrow at Tails suspiciously.

Cosmo pulled her robe hood down so Amy could see what she

looked like. Amy stared at Cosmo with interest.

"Oh, now I know what you mean." said Amy "What are you Cosmo?"

"I'm a Seedrian from another planet." said Cosmo "And I crash landed on your home planet by accident."

"Really?" said Amy "I bet that was scary for you. You're on a planet very different from your own with totally different beings to you."

"It was scary at first." said Cosmo quietly "But thanks to Sonic and Tails' kindness, I feel much safer and welcome."

"That's lovely." said Amy happily "My name's Amy Rose and it's nice to meet you."

"Thanks." said Cosmo, shaking Amy's hand "It's nice to meet someone as nice as you."

Amy was really flattered at that comment.

"Oh thank you!" she said "I think me and you are gonna get on really well Cosmo. And I'm pretty sure Cream the Rabbit will like you too."

"Cream the Rabbit?" asked Cosmo.

"You'll see her later." said Amy quickly "By the way, tell be a bit more about yourself. I bet you Seedrian thingies are really fascinating…"

Tails was pleased to see Amy and Cosmo being friendly to one another. If only everybody was like this! he thought miserably. Tails betted that not everybody would be this nice to Cosmo. He even had a dreadful vision of one mean person pelting rotten fruit at her and screaming "GO HOME ALIEN WRETCH!" Hopefully that wouldn't happen.

"By the way, I don't mean to ask but what's with the robe?" asked Amy "You cold or something?"

"No, not at all." said Cosmo "I'm wearing it to hide myself. I'm afraid on what other people will think of my appearance. They might think

I'm…ahem…a freak." she whispered.

"Well if anyone thinks that, you shouldn't listen to them!" said Amy sternly, she put her hands on her hips "Just because you look different Cosmo, it doesn't mean you're a freak. Do you think I'm a freak because I look different to your people?"

"No." said Cosmo truthfully.

"Well therefore, don't you let the thought of being called a freak bother you!" said Amy loudly. Then she spoke quietly "You certainly don't look like a freak to me."

"Or me." added Tails "And I bet Sonic doesn't think you're a freak either."

Cosmo was overwhelmingly flattered by these compliments and she beamed with pride. She had never seen such kind people other then her own before and it was truly a wonderful feeling.

"Thank you so much for your kindness you two." said Cosmo "I really don't know how I'd manage if you weren't there."

"You're welcome." said Tails "Hey Amy." he added quickly "Are you going to the Acorn Family's Royal Anniversary later?"

"Of course I am!" beamed Amy "They've done so much for Mobius so I'm paying my respects to them by attending their party!"

"Is Cream coming too?" asked Tails.

"Certainly." said Amy "Speaking of Cream, I'd best get home and see how she's doing. See ya later Tails and Cosmo!"

And with that, Amy skipped away into the forest and on home to Knothole. After Amy left, Cosmo looked at Tails with a confused expression on her face.

"What's the Acorn Family's Royal Anniversary?" she asked.

"It's a party we hold every five years to celebrate the Acorn Family's successful rule over Mobius." explained Tails "The Acorn Family rule

Mobius with pride and justice and they're proud of it. I'm sure you'll enjoy the party."

"I hope so." said Cosmo, pulling her hood back up.

"It's not till twelve o' clock and it's only half past ten now so we have time to lay back and relax before we have to get ready." said Tails "Shall we walk some more?"

"Of course." said Cosmo, taking Tails' arm in her own arm.

The fox began to blush bright pink but he relaxed himself and walked off further through the forest with Cosmo arm in arm. Tails knew this girl was going to be a very special friend indeed. Maybe more then just a friend. But he knew he couldn't rush things, he had to take it nice and steady just like Sonic and Amy were. As Tails and Cosmo walked on, Tails could hardly keep his eyes off the Seedrian. She really was beautiful to him, probably the most beautiful person he had ever seen and he would never meet a person as beautiful as Cosmo again so he really hoped he would get the courage to express his true feelings to her.

"And this is our dining room." said Sally, showing Marik where the dining room was "We eat our meals here, no doubt you already knew that, and we work hard on keeping it spic and span every time we eat here and after we leave."

Every room Marik had been in so far was either amazing, marvellous, incredible or down right astounding to the little Martian. He had not been in a proper castle before. Castles on Mars looked much different to this one he was touring in now. Marik surveyed the dining room with enormous interest. The dining room looked fit for a castle. Its walls were red with golden flower like shapes painted everywhere. The table was long enough to seat twenty people and it was lined with a fresh white silk table cloth. There were plates neatly laid out with knives and forks beside each plate, all nicely wrapped up in a silk napkin. There were lovely looking brown chairs under each place and a silver chandelier hung about six feet above the table. Marik thought he would collapse at the sight of such a

beautiful dining room.

"I can easily say I've never seen such a wonderful dining room before." Marik commented.

"Thanks, Castle Acorn's always been this luxurious and beautiful since it was first built back in 1777." explained Sally Acorn "Amazing how it still stands now. Although it has had a few tweaks in places to keep it standing really…"

Marik wasn't really listening to Sally now. Something else had caught his attention. He had spotted Nicole the Lynx, dusting a portrait in the hallway and humming quietly to herself. Marik was completely entranced at the lynx's beauty. Although his idea of beauty was a war zone, he had no idea another creature could look beautiful. He thought that once he took over the throne, Nicole would make an excellent queen for him. Marik continued to stare at Nicole longingly until Sally Acorn snapped him out of his trance.

"Huh, what?" slurred Marik dopily.

"You seemed a million miles away Marik." said Sally "Is everything alright?"

"Oh I was just staring at that beauty over there." said Marik, pointing at Nicole.

"That's my lady-in-waiting." said Sally "Her name is Nicole and she is a great friend of mine. She's a loving person and hasn't got a mean bone in her body."

She will do once I make her my queen! thought Marik grimly.

"Hi Sally." said Nicole, waving at her politely "Is the guest enjoying his tour?"

"I certainly am my dear." said Marik "And I'm equally delighted to meet someone as pretty as you."

He took Nicole's hand and kissed it tenderly. Nicole blushed scarlet and looked away from him in embarrassment.

"Um…thank you sir." she giggled nervously "Well I've got more dusting to do. See you at the party Sally."

Nicole ran further down the hall to dust another portrait.

"Party?" said Marik "What party?"

"My family are celebrating their 25th anniversary on the throne as ruler of Mobius." explained Sally "We hold anniversary parties every five years to celebrate our time on the throne. The Acorn family have been doing so three generations now."

"Sounds interesting." said Marik "May I attend this party my princess?"

"Of course you may." said Sally "I'm sure Mom and Dad will love to meet you."

"Can't I meet them now?" asked Marik.

"No, they've got too much time on their hands." said Sally "So, shall I continue the tour?"

"Nah, you rest yourself for a minute." said Marik kindly "I'll just explore more of the rooms I've already looked in."

"OK, don't wonder in any room I haven't shown you." said Sally.

Sally wondered down the hall and disappeared around the corner. The moment Sally left, Marik's friendly face changed to its true nature. He reached into a pocket inside his jacket and pulled out a hard looking club.

"Now it's time to do away with the Acorns, convince the feeble minded citizens to elect me as king and then I'll rule this sorry slump of a planet!" he declared "But first, I'm going to have to look for the King and Queen."

Marik ran off down the hall and came across a grand looking staircase that led upwards to another floor. He hadn't been up there yet so he decided he was going to look up there. Marik tip-toed up the stairs and found himself on the next floor of the castle. This was

the top floor and this was where the bedrooms and bathroom were. Marik sneaked like a serpent through the empty hall and checked each room he came across.

He opened the door to the first room he came across and peeked inside. The room was Sally Acorn's bedroom. It contained a round bed with pink sheets and a blue pillow. Her clothes cupboard contained more blue vests and boots as well as some fancy party dresses for special occasions. There was also a make up table in the left side of the room with a small mirror. Marik closed the bedroom door with disgust and moved to the next room. He opened the door and peeked inside.

This bedroom belonged to Nicole. It contained a rectangular bed with purple sheets that matched the colour of her toga and a purple pillow to match. Her clothes cupboard also contained dresses for special occasions and she had a trophy case that displayed her Beauty Queen Winner trophies. Marik admired the glittering trophies but hated the fact they were won by beauty. He'd rather have a trophy that was won by strength. Marik closed the bedroom door and moved onto the next room. He opened the door quietly and peeked inside.

This bedroom belonged to Queen Alicia Acorn, the Queen of Mobius and King Maximilian Acorn, the King of Mobius. They were in the bedroom, trying on several outfits to see which one would be the right one for the upcoming ceremony. Marik made a nasty guess that they were the king and queen but he waited until he was fully sure they were the right ones. King Max put a crown on his head and adjusted it to the right angle.

"Does this look right my love?" he asked.

"It looks fine sweetheart, don't get into such a flap." laughed Alicia "I do wish I could make up my mind on which dress to put on for the party though!"

"It doesn't matter which you put on Alicia." Max assured her "You still look like a queen no matter what you wear."

BINGO! thought Marik, grinning like a hobgoblin. Those two clots in

the room were the right ones! Now for the strike. Marik burst into the room and leapt on Max and Alicia, snarling crazily and brandishing his club. The terrified rulers screamed in terror.

Their screams were so loud; Sally heard them on the floor beneath them.

"Mom? Dad?" she thought "Oh no! They're in trouble!"

She dashed up stairs to the top floor as fast as she could and she burst into her parent's room. A terrible sight met her eyes and she screamed in so much terror I cannot put into words what it sounded like…

Footnotes:

***See the previous story for the epic throw down with Sonic and Eggman**

What plans does Marik have for the kingdom? Will Sonic be able to get rid of him? Or will Marik take over and rule Mobius? Join me next time for Mars Attacks Part 2 as Sonic and Marik go head to head for the throne of Castle Acorn! Read and Review.

Special thanks once again goes to Kratos Pwns for being a dedicated reader. On a side note, if you're wondering how I'm updating so quickly it's because all these chapters so far uploaded were written months ago. The prologue and first two stories for example were written all the way back in January and I've been writing these all through out the year (I know, it sounds like a lot of hard work doesn't it?). Hope that answers your question Kratos Pwns. :)

Mars Attacks Part 2

Story 22: Mars Attacks Part 2: The Fight for the Throne

What Sally Acorn had just seen was a sight she would be haunted by for the rest of her royal life. Her parents were lying on the floor dead as dingbats. Their heads looked like someone had given them a good whack and they were slightly bleeding. Sally began to feel faint all over. Who could have done this and why? And just before they could celebrate their 25th anniversary on the throne! Now the parents had been killed, the ceremony would have to be cancelled! Oh how disappointed and shocked everybody would be! It truly was a dark day for the Acorn family right now. Then suddenly Sally felt a sharp knock against her head. Her head felt like pins and needles and she collapsed to the floor. She passed out and standing over her, cackling like a demon, was Marik the Martian, holding his deadly club in his right hand.

"I killed three Mobians in one day!" he crowed "Aren't I a beast? Mum and Dad will be so proud of me!"

Marik bent down and picked up Sally's body. He hurled the body on his shoulder and carried Sally out of the room. He took her down stairs to the middle floor and then he took her down stairs to the ground floor. He was getting hot and bothered at having to carry Sally all the way down two stair cases and how heavy she was but duty was duty. Marik carried Sally all the way to the cellar that Sally had shown him on the tour around the castle and opened the door. He put Sally down and kicked her in the cellar. She fell down the stairs and landed on the floor with a cringing thump that could have likely broken her bones. Marik just glared at the body and slammed the door shut.

"No one will find her in that dull room." said Marik, grinning like a swamp troll "She'll rot in there. Now I'd best get the parents…"

"Sally?" called a familiar sounding voice from nowhere "Are you almost ready for the party? It's due on in half an hour!"

Yikes! It was Nicole! Marik knew what he had to do about the lynx. Nicole came pitter-pattering down the stairs and she ran through the hall, calling for Sally. Then she spotted Marik, pretending to look all sad and crushed as if somebody he loved had dumped him. Nicole ran over to Marik.

"Hello Marik." said Nicole "Have you seen Sally? I can't find her."

"I'm afraid Nicole, you're too late." said Marik in a fake tone of sorrow "Sally and her parents have both been…"

He paused for dramatic effect and then whispered "Murdered."

Nicole clasped her hands over her mouth to stop herself from screaming. Her heart felt faint and her legs felt like jelly. She was about to faint but Marik was quick to catch her. He carried her to a chair nearby and sat her down in it. Nicole began to make strangled gasping sounds.

"Murdered…Sally….parents…murdered…" she mumbled uncontrollably.

"I know, it's a terrible tragedy isn't it?" said Marik "They were going to celebrate 25 years on the throne and some deranged manic killed them both. I feel your pain Nicole."

"This is the most horrible thing that's ever happened to me!" wailed Nicole.

She broke down in rainfalls.

"My best friend is dead!" she cried "Who could have done such a thing? Sally would never have harmed anyone in her life!"

"Who knows?" said Marik, pretending to feel sorry for her.

"Who's going to rule Mobius now?" shrieked Nicole "The king and queen are dead and Sally, the next in line is dead so we have nobody to take over from them!"

"I have an excellent idea." purred Marik softly. He put an arm around the heartbroken lynx. "You could start up a campaign and see if

anyone out there will be willing enough to rule Mobius in the Acorn Family's place."

Nicole leapt to her feet in excitement.

"Marik! You're a life safer!" she cried, picking the Martian up and kissing him on the forehead "I'll start making leaflets right away!"

And with that Nicole put Marik down and ran off to the study to get the campaign leaflets made. Marik just stood where he was, frozen in amazement. He felt his forehead ever so tenderly as if he had just been kissed by an angel.

"She…kissed me!" he squeaked "She actually…kissed me!"

He swooned over and fainted. He had never been kissed by such a beautiful creature before and it was likely never to happen again. After Marik came too he smiled at himself. His beautiful plan was working perfectly. Now all he had to do was take part in the campaign and convince everybody to pick him as the new king and then his reign of terror could begin. It only his beloved parents could see him now…

Sonic and Knuckles had spent the entire morning looking for Marik. They had looked up every last tree in the forest and in any bush they came across but they couldn't find the helmeted creature anywhere. They were getting hot and bothered so they rested for a moment.

"Either Marik's a really good hider or we just aren't looking hard enough." puffed Knuckles.

"Well he certainly hasn't gone back to his home planet." noted Sonic "His spaceship would have been gone otherwise."

"Maybe he's not even in Green Hill Zone anymore." suggested Knuckles "So where could he be?"

Sonic thought. Knuckles thought. They racked their brains several times over for an answer. Then they both had an excellent thought on where he was and both yelled at each other in unison.

"CASTLE ACORN!"

"Why didn't I think of that before?" yelled Sonic wildly "Marik's bound to show interest in Castle Acorn! Who knows what he's gonna do there?"

"Well let's get a move on!" yelled Knuckles "For all we know, he could be ransacking the place and interrogating the Acorns."

So Sonic revved up and charged off at his trademark speed with Knuckles following him as fast as he could run. Knuckles could run pretty quickly so he didn't lag too far behind. Sonic needed to go faster then ever before if he was going to reach Castle Acorn and stop whatever evil plan Marik had.

Minutes later, Sonic and Knuckles arrived at Castle Acorn. The castle was still standing all in one piece luckily. Maybe Marik hadn't decided to attack it after all. Or maybe Marik wasn't there like they thought. Then Sonic suddenly remembered about the anniversary.

"Hey Knux, what time is it?" he asked.

Knuckles just looked up at the sun. Echidnas like him were able to tell the time by looking at the sun's position.

"It's almost noon." he said "Why?"

"It'll be almost time for the Acorn Family's Royal Anniversary where they celebrate 25 years on the throne today." explained Sonic "I had a dreadful feeling Marik would try and ruin the party but since things seem alright I shouldn't need to…"

He began walking off and he wasn't looking where he was going and he bumped into Nicole. She was carrying a bunch of papers and now they flew everywhere. Sonic picked himself up and began grabbing bits of paper before they could blow away.

"Sorry Nicole." he said.

"It's alright Sonic." said Nicole "I'm in a bit of a rush right now. Could you please read those papers you have?"

Sonic shrugged and read them. The papers said.

ACORN FAMILY MURDERED!

REPLACEMENTS REQUIRED!

Could YOU be the new ruler Mobotropolis needs after this terrible tragedy? If so then sign up and campaign now! And maybe you could be on the throne and willing to raise Castle Acorn out of the ashes of this tragedy.

Yours truly

Nicole (The Acorn's lady-in-waiting).

Sonic could hardly believe what he had read. The Acorns had been murdered! When did that happen and who could have possibly done it? Dr. Eggman likely but Sonic was more sure it was possibly Marik the Martian. If it was Marik then why did he do it? What exactly was his evil plan? Probably to take over the kingdom and rule Mobius with an iron fist. It made Sonic shudder just thinking about what Marik would do to Mobius if he ruled it.

"Hey Sonic, what do those papers say?" asked Knuckles.

"The Acorns have been murdered and Nicole is sending out leaflets to try and get any volunteers to take over from them." explained Sonic.

"I have a sneaky suspicion on who murdered the Acorns." said Knuckles "Either Dr. Eggman or Marik. Still, I hope we can find someone who will be willing to rule in the name of the Acorn Family."

"I don't see why Nicole didn't think of being that replacement." said Sonic "Mind you; she hasn't quite got the skills to rule a kingdom."

"You're right on that." said Nicole "I couldn't rule a kingdom to save my life. The pressures would be too much for me so I'd rather wait around the castle then be the actual owner of it."

"I see." said Sonic.

The doors to Castle Acorn opened and Marik staggered out, carrying several planks of wood, a bucket full of nails and a hammer all at once while trying not to fall over. Marik wobbled about like a jelly in a hurricane but amazingly he didn't fall over. Then Marik dumped the tools on the ground. He stretched himself to get the stiffness out of his back. Sonic almost flipped over backwards.

"Marik?" he blurted "What in the name of hedgehogs are you doing here?"

"I'm helping Nicole with the campaign pin-head!" snapped Marik "I'm building voting booths for the volunteers."

"Oh are ya?" said Sonic, his eyes narrowed to suspicious slits. "You wouldn't happen to have been involved with the Acorn family's murder would you?"

"Certainly not!" snapped Marik "I wasn't anywhere near the blasted Acorns before they were killed! Why do you accuse me? Do you take me for an evil fiend or something?"

Sonic longed to say yes but he resisted the urge to for some reason.

"Is something wrong Sonic?" asked Nicole "You seem to be familiar with little Marik here."

Sonic pulled Nicole close to him and began talking to her in barely audible voices.

"You can't trust that creep Nicole." hissed Sonic "A little birdie told me this guy's a demon that fantasises violence and malice. I'm willing to bet he's the guy who killed the Acorns."

Nicole glared at him.

"Well that little birdie is telling you false tweets." she hissed at Sonic "Marik's a lovely boy and he informed me of the Acorn's murder first hand so how could he possibly be responsible?"

"That just begs the question of how did Marik know they were murdered and why he's at Castle Acorn in the first place?" whispered Sonic.

"He was on a tour." explained Nicole "He says he's a tourist and he asked for a tour of the castle. As for how he knew the Acorns were murdered," she added "I'm guessing he must have heard the struggle and came to see what was happening only to find the dead bodies."

"OK you got me." lied Sonic "But I've got my eye on that Martian."

"OK then." said Nicole "Just don't bother him please. He's trying very hard to help rescue the kingdom from certain doom."

Sonic was certain Marik intended to do the complete opposite of what Nicole had just said. Marik looked up from a voting booth diagram he was looking at.

"Speaking of rescuing the kingdom." he said "I'll be one of the volunteers for the throne."

Right now this minute, Sonic wanted to cartwheel in mid air and scream in exaggerated madness. Marik was going to take part in this campaign? Sonic could see through Marik's evil plot now. He must be trying to get the throne of Castle Acorn for himself and then he'll unleash any other evil plots he probably had stored in his devilish mind. Sonic had to stop Marik and he knew how he was going to do it. HE would campaign for the throne of Castle Acorn just to defeat Marik. He did not at all like the idea of being a king but he had no choice. Better to be a king then let Marik do it.

"Nicole, I'll join this campaign!" announced Sonic.

Knuckles thought he was going to topple over backwards. Nicole was just as speechless where as Marik looked very ticked off but he kept his face straight to hide his true feelings at that announcement.

"You…you will?" stammered Nicole.

"Yeah!" said Sonic "Everybody will want me to be the new king! I'm the famed Hero of Mobius after all. And who knows, maybe the royal life won't be as bad as I thought it will be."

Nicole looked uncertain.

"I'm not sure you have the proper skills for it." said Nicole "A kingdom is not an easy thing to rule."

"I'll learn somehow." said Sonic doubtfully.

"Well, I wish you two boys good luck with the public." said Nicole "I'll inform the people of Mobius of this news and I bet they'll look forward to hearing what plans you have for the kingdom."

Nicole went back into the castle. Sonic and Marik gritted their teeth and glared at each other angrily.

"I'll squash you like a bug Marik!" growled Sonic "I'm much loved amongst the public and no one knows who the heck you are! You haven't got a chance!"

"Well maybe I can change the people's minds once I make my speech!" snarled Marik "I bet you're too dim-witted to come up with one remotely convincing!" he smirked at Sonic confidently.

Sonic and Marik stared at each other tensely and turned their backs on each other. They were determined to vanquish each other in this campaign, no matter what it took.

Later that day, Tails and Cosmo had arrived at Castle Acorn, ready for the anniversary party only to be informed of the terrible news. Tails was really distraught at the news. He had hoped to show Cosmo what a great party it was going to be only for it to be shattered to pieces by a tragedy. Tails was informed of the campaign and he happily helped out with building Sonic's voting booth. The booth was a few feet taller then Sonic himself and painted blue. Cosmo drew Sonic's name neatly on a wooden board with a paint brush and they hung the board on the front of the booth. Marik had observed them with loathing but he worked on his booth all on his own. He was going to paint it gold like his helmet and put his name on it. Since he had no one helping him, he was taking longer then Sonic was and that made him mad. Sonic gave Marik a smug expression.

"See what I mean?" he sneered "No one's even helping you build a booth. You haven't a hope of winning!"

Marik scowled at him.

"Well Sonic, with an ego as overbearing as that, you are going to be a terrible king indeed!" snorted Marik "A true king doesn't let his pride get the best of him."

"I don't suppose your mommy-kins taught you that." taunted Sonic.

Tails and Cosmo laughed at the remark but Marik began to grouch and grumble.

"Sonic, if you want to live long enough to face me in this campaign, I suggest you keep that enormous hole in your face shut!" snarled Marik. Then he added "By the way, I forgot to ask. Who is that robed figure with you? Some beggar woman you hang around with?"

That unkind remark made Cosmo livid but unlike Marik, she never lost her temper so she resisted the urge to snap at him. Tails stood up for her.

"She's not a beggar woman." he said "This is my cousin's sister's daughter and I'm taking care of her for a few days."

Marik raised his brow suspiciously.

"Aren't you a little young to be taking care of somebody?" he asked coldly.

Tails' whiskers flopped down in despair. Marik had caught him in the act. Now he was bound to start asking questions of all sorts! Luckily, Tails had the perfect remark.

"I'm pretty mature for my age so I'm alright." said Tails "Although I can easily see why you wondered. I do look a little young to have someone placed in my care don't I?"

"Hmm." mumbled Marik.

Then suddenly, Marik heard two unfamiliar voices from nowhere. He

saw two unfamiliar Mobians coming up to Castle Acorn. They were Amy Rose, Sonic's Biggest Fan, and Cream the Rabbit, Amy's friend. Sonic was happy to see them both and he waved at them. Amy waved back.

"What's going on Sonic?" asked Amy "I thought the Acorn Family's Royal Anniversary would have started by now."

Sonic explained to the girls about the Acorn Family's murder and the campaign for a new king or queen. Amy and Cream were both shocked at the bad news but they instantly brightened up at the news about the campaign.

"I'll support you all the way my beloved Sonic!" squealed Amy "You'll be a great king once you win!"

Sonic pulled a funny face at her but he managed to put on a sick smile which made him look like his stomach hurt. Marik made horrible gagging noises mockingly at Amy. He found her supportiveness of Sonic totally disgusting. Amy just snorted at him and stuck her nose in the air.

"Who is that jerk anyway?" she sniffed.

"Marik the Martian." said Sonic grimly "A guy who should pack his bags up and go home."

Marik ignored her. Cream didn't seem to take much dislike to Marik. In fact, she let her politeness get the best of her and wondered up to the stranger.

"Excuse me Mr. Marik but you look like you need help." she said "May I give you a hand?"

Marik was absolutely awestruck at Cream's politeness. He hadn't seen a Mobian as polite as this since Sally and Nicole.

"Um no thank you but I appreciate your concern." said Marik "Makes you a lot better then the others."

Sonic, Tails and Amy stuck their tongues out at him. Marik raised his hammer and hit a nail on his under construction booth. But he hit the

nail too hard and that in turn made the walls of the booth crack and split and then the whole booth collapsed in a heap on top of him. Marik screeched in panic as he was downed by piles of wood. Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cosmo laughed at the unlucky Martian but Cream began tugging wood off of Marik with her pet Chao, Cheese helping. Cream and Cheese managed to get Marik out of the pile of wood and helped him to his feet. The Martian look dazzled to say the least.

"Are you OK Mr. Marik?" asked Cream.

"Chao?" cooed Cheese.

"I'm fine." said Marik "I clearly don't know my own strength at times."

He didn't realize the hammer had gotten caught in his pocket and then it fell out of his pocket and landed like a falling stone on his foot. Marik screamed so loudly, Castle Acorn's windows rattled and looked like they were going to shatter. Marik grabbed his foot in pain and leaped about like a pogo stick. Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cosmo laughed at him again, this time a lot louder. Marik was hoping about so much, he didn't see the toolbox lying nearby and he stood on top of it accidentally and tripped over it. He fell flat on his face and sent the toolbox flying into the air and hurtling back down. It hit him on the back of his head really hard and made him groan in extreme pain. It would have hurt him more if he wasn't wearing his helmet. Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cosmo were laughing so hard; they had fallen on the ground and were rolling around laughing their heads off. Cream helped the injured Martian back onto his feet. Marik saw stars circling around his head.

"Oh poor you." said Cream "I'll get you inside and make you feel all better."

"Oooooh…" slurred Marik dopily. His head felt like it was going to erupt in volcano style.

The others stopped laughing and stared at Cream. That rabbit needed to learn not to let her kindness get the best of her.

"Cream, just leave him!" ordered Amy "That jerk deserved all that

pain!"

"You can be horrid all you want!" snapped Cream "I'm helping this poor man out."

"Chao!" piped Cheese crossly.

Cream helped Marik into the hallway of Castle Acorn and set him down in a nearby chair. She saw Nicole coming out of the study and ran over to her.

"Can you get Marik a hot water bottle, a bucket and a kettle with hot water please?" asked Cream "He's really hurt himself."

"Sure." said Nicole "Poor Marik. What did he do?"

"He just had a little accident." said Cream "But I'm sure he's alright."

Nicole nodded and left to get Cream's required items. Five minutes later, Nicole returned with a red hot water bottle, a small metal bucket and a fancy bronze tea kettle with steaming hot water. Steam faintly emitted from the spout.

"Here you are." said Nicole.

"Thanks." said Cream, taking them off Nicole and giving them to Marik.

Nicole walked away to do something else. Cream gave Marik the hot water bottle and the Martian took his helmet off and placed it on his head. He put the helmet back on his head. The soothing heat made his head feel much better. Cream put the bucket at Marik's feet and Marik put his feet in the bucket.

"You are so kind little girl." said Marik "You must have lovely parents who raise you up well."

"I do Mr. Marik sir." said Cream "Well actually, I only have a mother. I don't have a father. I'm not really sure what happened to him."

"Indeed." said Marik "So where is your mother?"

"She's been turned into a robot by a nasty man named Dr. Eggman*." said Cream sadly, pouring the steaming hot water into the bucket "It was really horrible."

"I bet it was." said Marik, pretending to feel sorry for her "Tell me about this Dr. Eggman guy. He sounds like a guy who needs to be put back in his place."

"Dr. Eggman is Sonic's arch enemy and he wants to take over Mobius." explained Cream "He kidnaps people and turns them into scary nasty robots that serve him. They're so scary and horrible. I hope Sonic can defeat that Eggman for good. And hopefully turn my mother back to normal."

Marik listened to Cream with interest and began to think. This Dr. Eggman sounded like a great guy but Marik wasn't sure he'd be willing to team up with him. Eggman might just try and take over the kingdom for himself or stab Marik in the back later so Marik knew that if he ever met this so called Dr. Eggman, he had to watch out for him. What Marik didn't seem to notice was all the while Cream had been talking to him; she hadn't stopped pouring the water into the bucket. The water was now far too hot and Marik, who had began to relax, suddenly realized it! He leaped into the air and bellowed so loudly he could have brought the castle crumbling down on their heads. His legs had become bright pink due to scolding and they hurt a lot. Marik blew on them frantically to cool them down. Cream cowered backwards in fright.

"Too hot?" she said nervously.

Marik seized Cream by the collar and held her close to his furious face. His helmet had fallen over his eyes and he was in blind rage at Cream for burning his legs like that.

"WHY YOU GARBERING IMBECILE I….!" roared Marik, ready to pound Cream around the block.

"Marik! What are you doing?" screeched Nicole.

She had heard the commotion and ran out into the hall to see what was the matter, only to see Marik about to pound Cream's face in.

Marik immediately stopped what he was doing. He breathed in deeply and let it back out again. Then his face relaxed into a more casual expression and he put Cream back down. The poor rabbit was shaking like a leaf.

"I'm sorry Cream." said Marik "I lose my temper easily."

"N-no I'm sorry." said Cream "I should have been watching what I was doing."

"Chao." agreed Cheese.

Cream then slipped away and ran out of the castle. Marik frowned at himself. He could have probably goaded Cream into voting for him and now she probably wouldn't vote for him. But Marik remembered that the voting took place after the speeches. Nicole decided that should happen since if they did the votes and then did the speeches, it wouldn't be fair on Marik since Sonic would get every single vote and if they wanted to vote for Marik after the speeches, they couldn't change their votes. And Marik was certain his speech would wow everybody.

Outside, Cream told everybody about what had happened inside the castle and what Marik had almost did to her.

"So you accidentally scolded his legs and he tried to hurt you?" screeched Amy.

"Yes." said Cream "Good thing Miss Nicole stopped him."

"That's it, no one tries to hurt Cream and lives!" snarled Amy, summoning her hammer from nowhere "I'm gonna pound Marik so much he'll have a permanent headache!"

She would have marched through the doors and leapt on Marik in blind rage but Tails seized her by the dress and held her back.

"Amy please! That isn't going to help!" cried Tails.

"Chill out Ames." said Sonic calmly "Marik will get what is coming to

him once the speeches and the voting start."

Amy still wanted to give Marik a migraine for almost hurting Cream but she thought that Marik getting vanquished in a voting campaign by Sonic was just as good so she calmed down and put her hammer away.

"I dread to think what Marik's gonna say in his speech." said Cosmo "If he lies about himself, I will make sure your people know the truth about him."

"I don't think that's a wise idea Cosmo." said Sonic "Marik will recognize you and then you'll be in trouble."

"Oh don't worry, I'll disguise my voice a bit once I speak to everybody." said Cosmo "And if I keep the hood over my face he'll not recognize me."

"I still think you shouldn't do it just to be in the safe side." said Tails.

"But how can I tell your people the truth about Marik if you won't let me?" asked Cosmo.

"I would love to let you." said Tails "But since no one on Mobius knows what a Martian is, they might fall for Marik's act just like Cream and Nicole did and not believe you so I think you should stay put and not get in Marik's way."

"But…" said Cosmo feebly.

"Please." begged Tails, giving her the puppy dog eyes. Cosmo sighed. She knew when she was beaten so she gave in.

"OK I won't." said Cosmo.

Tails beamed at her. He turned to face Sonic who all of the sudden had a worried expression on his face.

"What am I gonna say in my speech?" asked Sonic "I don't know what a fancy speech should sound like or what I should say. I'm mud out there!"

"I'll write one for you." said Amy sweetly "I have a good idea on what a fancy speech should sound like."

"But wouldn't that be cheating?" asked Cream.

"Would you rather let that jerk Marik beat Sonic and rule Mobius?" snapped Amy.

Cream shook her head.

"Then it's settled. I'll write Sonic a speech and he can take the credit for it." beamed Amy.

"Amy, if you help me win this." said Sonic "I'll take you on a date."

He was actually joking but Amy thought he meant it so she squealed with joy and she grabbed him into a hug. Tails, Cosmo and Cream tried hard not to laugh at Sonic but they couldn't resist the urge or stop a laugh escaping their mouths.

"Me and my big mouth." muttered Sonic.

Later that afternoon, the contestants were ready to do battle. The voting booths had been built and Amy was at Sonic's booth constantly yelling at people to vote for Sonic no matter what Marik said. A stage had been set up for Sonic and Marik and they was a microphone for them to speak in so the crowd of Mobians could hear them. Speaking of the crowd, they were all Mobians that lived in Mobotropolis before it was destroyed by Dr. Eggman. They had heard the news from Nicole and left Empire City to place their votes.

Sonic was feeling a little nervous now. He had the speech that Amy had written from the top of her head and given to him. Sonic had read it to himself and was pretty impressed at what Amy had written. But would it be convincing enough for the audience to go crazy for him? And if he won, would it be worth it? It would be worth it if it meant Marik didn't win but then Sonic would probably have to give up playing the hero and have to wise up and play happy ruler. He couldn't imagine himself enjoying it much but it would be better then having Marik be king. Sonic was also amazed that no one else

signed up. He was expecting to have more competition then just Marik to deal with and to be honest, he was wishing he had more competition then just Marik so that someone else would beat Marik and him and be the new king or queen of Mobius so Sonic wouldn't have to do it himself.

After the crowd had all gathered up they stopped murmuring amongst one another and fell into silence as they waited for the speeches. Nicole came up to the microphone.

"Welcome people of Mobotropolis." she said into the microphone "We've gathered you all here to vote for a replacement for the Acorn Family to go on the throne and rule over Mobius. The Acorns were unfortunately murdered so we've put this campaign together for you to decide who should take over from them. Now it's over to the contestants to make their speeches which will hopefully help you decide on whom to vote for."

Nicole stepped away from the microphone. Sonic didn't want to go first as he was feeling so nervous so he reluctantly let Marik go first. Marik walked proudly and smugly up to the microphone and spoke into it.

"People of Mobius." he said "You don't know who I am because I am not from here. But there is no need for you to fret about it."

The crowd began to murmur amongst one another about the strange little creature up on stage. Marik scowled at them and continued his speech.

"I come from a race that prides itself in being a civilized society and rules over it's kingdoms with pride and glory." he said "And I've had great practice in ruling over a kingdom so if you lot vote for me you are making a very wise choice. I'll help you poor people get out of the ashes of today's tragedy and help you in your conflict with this person whom you know as Dr. Eggman. I've heard about him from a friend of Sonic's and I can assure you he'll not be safe with me around…"

Cosmo, who was in the crowd with Tails and Cream, was absolutely livid. How could Marik stand up there on that stage and tell those big

whopping lies about himself? She refused to let the Mobians fall for his convincing act. They had to know the truth! Even though Tails had begged her to go against it earlier, Cosmo would not stand and let Marik fool the Mobians any longer. She stormed through the crowd and up towards the stage. Tails called her back but Cosmo refused to listen to him. Cosmo climbed up on stage and snatched the microphone off of Marik. The Martian couldn't believe what had just happened. Cosmo began to rant into the microphone.

"Don't listen to this demon people of Mobius!" she cried "Everything he's just told you is a lie! Marik comes from a race of creatures that fantasize violence & warfare and detest peace and beauty. If you vote for him, you'll doom your own planet!"

The crowd began to murmur again. Marik clenched his fists in rage and his face went bright red all over. He snatched the microphone off Cosmo and seized her by the collar.

"So terribly sorry people!" he said, laughing nervously "Children tell the ugliest lies don't they? I'll just teach her a few manners right now."

He turned his back on everybody and glared at Cosmo. Cosmo kept the robe's hood over her face.

"I don't know who you are and how you know about me Miss." he growled under his breath "But if you want to live to see another sunrise I suggest you haul yourself off that stage and get back in line!"

"Yes sir." squeaked Cosmo, still keeping the robe's hood over her face.

She slunk off quietly and shamefully off the stage. The crowd glared at her as she crept back to her place next to Tails. Marik turned back to the crowd.

"Tails, you should keep your cousin's sister's daughter under control in the future!" he said crossly.

"A thousand apologies Marik." said Tails "She's not usually like this."

Marik glared at Tails but he turned his attention back to the crowd. Tails leaned over to whisper to Cosmo.

"That was a very stupid thing to do Cosmo." hissed Tails "Marik could have killed you if he found out who you were."

"I'm sorry Tails but I refused to let your kind be conned into thinking Marik's a well civilized creature who is willing to raise your kingdom out of the ashes of a tragedy." whispered Cosmo.

"I know that Cosmo but like I said, I don't think anybody will believe you." whispered Tails "And I don't think anyone believed a word you said."

As for Marik he continued making his speech.

"I do hope you didn't believe that beggar woman's lies." he added "Martians hate violence and love beauty. I think someone's been telling her tall tales. Never mind, I can assure you I will be a fine king. I will put my heart and soul into this kingdom and make sure everything runs smoothly. So if you vote for me, you are making the best decision of your…"

"Hold it! Hold everything!" cried a voice from behind the stage.

Marik grumbled. More interruptions! Could this get any worse? The person who had interrupted Marik came onstage and caused a crowd of shocked and amazed gasps. Even Sonic and Marik gasped in surprise. But nobody was more shocked and relieved then Nicole was. It was Sally Acorn! Alive and well and standing right before everybody! Marik stared in disbelief at the sight of Sally Acorn, standing on stage alive and well when she should be lying in the cellar dead as a dingbat. He looked like he was going to throw a fit of epic proportions. Nicole ran up to Sally and hugged her.

"Sally! You're alive! Oh thank goodness!" she cried happily.

"Yes Nicole, I'm alive." said Sally. She turned to the crowd. "People of Mobotropolis. As you can see I am not dead. But someone tried to kill me just like they killed my parents. Since my parents are dead, I will assume the throne and I'll raise the kingdom out of the ashes of

this terrible tragedy. And hopefully the wicked person who killed my parents and tried to kill me will be caught and dealt with personally."

The crowd cheered loudly. Sonic was more happy then any of them so now he didn't have to try and defeat Marik since Sally was alive and willing to be the new Queen of Mobotropolis. Marik however was less then satisfied. His beautiful plan crumbled to pieces before him so now he had to retreat and form a Plan B. Marik sneaked away from the stage like a serpent and hid behind his now useless voting booth.

How on Earth did Sally live that whack around the head? That was one thing Marik didn't get. Did he not hit her hard enough or did Sally just get lucky and live somehow? How she did survive was a mystery but it didn't matter anymore. Marik was determined to get rid of Sally Acorn, the last of the Acorn Family and take over Castle Acorn. He refused to let this slimy mud ball of a planet live the way it was now and he vowed to make sure he turned it into a wasteland. Marik knew he had to try something different this time and that was kill Sally with a different weapon. His club didn't work so he decided to use something guaranteed to work. Marik reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a knife with a red handle and long thin silver blade. That was guaranteed to work. Marik crept out from behind the voting booth and sneaked into Castle Acorn.

Meanwhile, Sally had said her final words and left the stage to go back into the castle with Nicole following her. The crowd departed back for Empire City where as Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream stayed behind to tidy up. Cosmo however had seen Marik sneaking to the castle and crept away to stop him from whatever he was planning to do. She had taken off the robe too and left it lying on the ground.

"I really wonder how Miss Sally lived." thought Cream "I thought the Acorns were all killed."

"Well obviously the killer didn't quite do away with Sally." noted Amy "But I'm glad she's still alive. She's been a princess for quite some time now so she's bound to be a great queen."

"I just hope she can cope with the change in management now." said Tails "It must be hard for Sally having to take over the throne so early. She's only 17 you know."

"She'll manage." said Sonic confidently "I just hope Marik's not too angry he can't get the throne now."

"Speaking of that jerk, where is he?" asked Amy "I want to give him a serious migraine for what he did to Cosmo up stage!"

"Hopefully gone forever." said Sonic. He looked up and noticed something. "Hey, where's Cosmo?" he asked.

Everybody looked around only to see no sight of the Seedrian. Cream spotted Cosmo's robe lying on the ground. She picked it up and looked at it worriedly.

"Cosmo's left her robe behind." she said.

Sonic and Tails looked at each other.

"What is Cosmo up to?" asked Sonic "She hasn't gone after Marik has she?"

"I have a nasty thought." said Tails "Do you think Marik might be hiding in the Castle waiting to kill Sally and Cosmo's gone in there to stop him?"

"Seems likely." said Sonic "We'd better get in there and help out!"

Sonic and Tails ran off towards the castle, leaving Amy and Cream to wait for them.

Inside the castle, Sally had gone up to her room to put on a new outfit to make her look more like a queen. She couldn't go around wearing only boots and a vest if she was a queen now so she needed a dress to make her look more like a queen. Yet as she went through her wardrobe, Sally couldn't help but wonder on who killed her parents and also tried to kill her. It was likely Dr. Eggman and he was plotting to get the throne no doubt. What would Eggman

do once he found out she was still alive? Would he make another attempt on her life? It made Sally worry on if any of these thoughts were true.

As Sally continued searching through her wardrobe, she didn't notice someone was hiding behind her bedroom door. It was, of course, Marik the Martian. He had his knife in hand and he sneaked up on Sally as quietly as he could. He raised his knife and prepared for a well aimed strike on her back…

Footnotes:

***Vanilla the Rabbit, Cream's mother was roboticized in Story 16**

SALLY'S ALIVE! But for how long? Will Marik kill her like he killed her parents or will Sonic make it in time? Maybe Cosmo might be able to stop him...? Reviews are welcome.

Mars Attacks Part 3

Story 23: Mars Attacks Part 3: For a Friend

Just when Marik thought he was going to do this without being spotted, he got spotted. Sally had twirled around to see how well one of her dresses flowed and ended up seeing Marik. The moment she saw the knife in his hand, Sally shrieked loudly. Marik stabbed at her but he missed and ended up embedding the knife into the floor instead.

"Blast this thing!" he grumbled as he tried to wrench it free.

Sally saw her chance to escape and tried to run away but Marik caught her and knocked her down with an energy wave. Sally fell on her face and Marik managed to pull his knife out of the floor. He advanced on the terrified queen, laughing like a demon and ready to make another attempt at killing her. Fortunately, Nicole came in at that moment. She saw what Marik was doing and gasped.

"Marik, what are you doing?" she shrieked.

Marik didn't answer her. He just swiped the air with his arm and sent a wave of energy flying smack into Nicole and knocking her off her feet and onto the floor. He turned his attention back to Sally.

"What are you doing Marik?" asked Sally "Why are you trying to kill me?"

"Because I want this poor excuse of a kingdom for myself." explained Marik "And once I get my hands on it, I'll re-mold Mobius in my image and make it a paradise for all Martians out there!"

Something ticked inside Sally's brain. Her eyes narrowed to a death glare at the Martian.

"I bet it was you who killed my parents and tried to kill me earlier." she said.

"It's taken you just now to make the connection?" snorted Marik "And I thought humans were dumb."

"What is Mobius going to look like once you take over the kingdom?" asked Sally wearily.

"In your terms, probably like Hell itself." said Marik "But in my terms, that's a paradise. Now say goodbye to your life princess, or should I say queen?"

He raised the knife, ready for the killer blow. Sally covered her eyes in fright as Marik prepared to strike. Then suddenly, before Marik could stab, he was splattered in the back of the head by something fruity. Marik stopped what he was doing and felt the fruity thing that had hit him. He sniffed it and pulled a face.

"An orange?" he sniffed "Who in the world would dare throw something as harmless as an orange at me?"

"I would!" yelled a voice that Marik knew all too well.

He turned around to face the person and got one of the biggest surprises of his life. The person who had yelled at him was standing there glaring at him looking all brave and courageous even though deep down, she was neither of those things. It was Cosmo the Seedrian. Sally looked over Marik and saw Cosmo. She was a strange sight to her but she was grateful for her helping her. Marik's surprised expression turned into a hideous scowl.

"You!" he snarled "I was hoping I would come across you again Cosmo! I have no idea how you got here but I don't care. As long as you're here, I can now destroy you."

"You leave the princess alone!" said Cosmo sternly.

"Or what?" taunted Marik "You'll throw petals at me like a big sissy girl? Oh I forgot, you ARE a big sissy girl!"

He advanced away from Sally and onto Cosmo. Cosmo began to back away in fear until she found herself backed against a table. The table had a fruit bowl and that was where Cosmo had gotten the orange she threw at Marik from. She reached out behind and felt her

hand close around another orange in the bowl. She waited for the right moment to throw it at him. Marik continued taunting her.

"You Cosmo my dear, can do nothing against my sheer power." he bragged "You're just a Seedrian! Not only that you're also a pacifist! You wouldn't so much as touch a weapon in your miserable life and that is why you Seedrians are going to lose this war with the Martians!"

"I may not be able to help my family back home." said Cosmo "But I will defeat you Marik."

Marik snorted with laughter.

"Defeat ME?" he sneered, pointing at himself "You wouldn't hurt a fly! So what chance do you have against me?"

"This!" yelled Cosmo.

She yanked the orange out of the fruit bowl and splattered it straight into Marik's eyes. Marik yelled loudly. She pushed on the orange to make more juice come out and now Marik was blinded, Sally seized the opportunity for a quick getaway.

"Ow! My eyes! My eyes!" shrieked Marik "Once I regain my vision, I'll tear you apart limb from limb Cosmo!"

Now was a good time for Cosmo to make a quick getaway. She charged out of the room before Marik could regain his vision. Unfortunately, Marik recovered a lot quicker then Cosmo hoped he would. He wiped all the orange juice and orange pieces out of his eyes and ran out of the room after Cosmo. He was well and truly ticked off I can tell you! His face looked like it was about to explode in rage. Now by the time Marik had recovered, Cosmo was halfway down the hall. That was no problem at all for Marik since he could run fast. He activated his jet shoes and rocketed down the hallway like a boy on roller skates. He went so fast he went past Cosmo and stopped directly in front of her. Cosmo stopped and screamed at him. She turned around to run away but in a split second, Marik was in front of her again. Cosmo ran away again but Marik did the same thing and blocked her path. It was all thanks to his jet shoes. Not

matter where Cosmo went, Marik would beat her to it due to his superior speed.

They kept this up for a few minutes until finally Cosmo fell to her knees in exhaustion. She would have loved to try and run away from Marik again but she knew it was futile since he would just out-speed her again. Marik grinned at his tired victim.

"What's the matter Cosmo?" he sneered "Too tired to flee for your life?"

Cosmo didn't answer him, she just continued to pant and wheeze. Seizing his chance, Marik raised his knife and prepared to stab Cosmo. And he would have done if Sonic the Hedgehog didn't show up at the right time and spin-dash him in the stomach and send him flying backwards and onto the floor. Cosmo looked up to see Sonic and Tails standing defensively in front of her. It made her beam like sunlight to see her new friends there. Sonic smiled at Cosmo.

"Next time there's a party, you should invite us!" he joked.

"Sorry." said Cosmo "I just saw Marik sneaking into the castle and I had a theory he was going to try and assassinate the Princess."

"That was brave of you Cosmo but you should have brought us along." said Sonic "We'd be much better at fighting Marik. And by the way," he added "Sally's not a princess anymore; she's the new Queen of Mobotropolis since the old Queen's dead."

"Oh right." said Cosmo.

"Tails, you get Cosmo out of there now." ordered Sonic "I'll take care of Marik the Moron."

"OK Sonic." said Tails.

He took Cosmo by the hand and ran off with her in tow. Sonic waited until they were out of sight and then turned his attention back to Marik. The Martian had recovered from Sonic's earlier attack and gotten back to his feet. He glared a terrifying death glare at the blue hedgehog. Sonic glared back.

"I've waited a long time for this." said Sonic, getting into a battle ready position "It's time to kick your sorry butt back to Mars Marik the Martian!"

"I think not foolish Mobian!" snarled Marik "I refuse to leave this planet until I have Cosmo strung up dead as a doornail and after I've turned this planet into a war zone!"

"More like you'll leave this planet after I spin-dash you into a pulp!" yelled Sonic.

And with that he spin-dashed straight into Marik's head and knocked him over. Marik's golden, spiked helmet had fallen off after that attack. Marik picked it up and put it back on his head. Then it was his turn to charge into Sonic. He activated his jet shoes and hurtled straight into the blue hedgehog head first. Sonic well and truly felt that attack and it hurt him even more due to the fact Marik wore a helmet. Sonic was thrown backwards a good distance down the hall and landed on his back. Marik ran up to Sonic again and prepared to leap onto him but Sonic managed to recover and get out of the way before Marik could land on him. Then Sonic kicked Marik in the back and sent him sprawling on the floor. And to add insult to injury, Sonic homing attacked him just as the Martian was getting back up. Sonic prepared for another homing attack but Marik was ready for him. He swiped the air with his arm and sent an energy wave hurling into Sonic's face. The blow sent him somersaulting backwards and he landed on his back. And just to be cruel, Marik swiped both his arms to make an even bigger energy wave emit from nowhere and hit Sonic. That wave was so powerful Sonic as thrown straight into the ceiling and he was embedded in it for a whole minute before falling free and landing straight into the floor. The hedgehog groaned as he tried to pick himself up. Marik bore down on his opponent and smirked a hideous smirk at him.

"You're tougher then I thought." spluttered Sonic "You clearly don't play games here."

"Well when you come from a planet that fantasies warfare what do you expect?" sneered Marik "Now hedgehog will you stand down peacefully and allow me to continue with my plans? Or do I have to finish you off?"

"You get to do neither." said Sonic "Because I'll finish you off!"

And before Marik could even so much as blink, Sonic leaped back to his feet and walloped him very hard. Marik stumbled backwards into the wall. Then Sonic began to perform one of his best attacks, the Sonic Tornado. He ran around in a circle at supersonic speed. Round and round and round he ran going faster and faster and faster. He was going so fast I bet he overtook himself at one point! Then sooner or later, the blue circle began to expand upwards into a blue tornado like appearance. Marik took a step back but before he knew it he was caught up into Sonic's supersonic tornado and hurled around and around continuously until finally he was thrown out of the tornado and sent crashing face first into the floor. The impact had clearly done some damage to Marik because he appeared to be out cold. Sonic stopped spinning around and the tornado vanished into thin air. He panted heavily but he smiled at his downed foe. Just to make double sure Marik was down and out, he stepped cautiously towards him. Marik didn't stir or even move so much as a finger. Sonic stepped even closer to him. Marik still didn't move. Maybe Marik was down and out after all. Now Marik was defeated, Sonic decided to bring him to justice. And he knew a good place for the Martian. The castle dungeons. Nobody had ever escaped from those dungeons since the castle had been used so Marik was going nowhere once he was put in there. Sonic reached out to grab Marik until suddenly Marik opened his eyes and swiped at him. Sonic was hit with an energy wave and sent hurtling backwards into the wall. Sonic slid down the wall and landed on his bottom, grimacing painfully. Marik stood back up and laughed at his opponent.

"A bold move hedgehog." he sneered "But I have tremendous stamina. It'll take quite some time to finally knock me down and keep me knocked down."

"Oh man!" moaned Sonic "And I thought this fight would be just a walk in the park."

"Proves how idiotic you are." taunted Marik "You should never judge a book by its cover you know. It can leave to deception in battle you know."

"You mean like this?" cried Sonic.

He leaped up to his feet and dropkicked Marik in the face. The Martian was sent hurtling backwards and crashing into another wall. Before Marik could recover, Sonic began to let fly a series of punches to the gut on him. Marik could feel the pain good and hard. Then Sonic grabbed Marik by the jacket and threw him into a wall. The impact left several cracks in it and bits of the stonework crumbled. Sonic didn't give Marik a chance to recover by grabbing him by the jacket and throwing him into another wall. This throw into the wall was much harder then before and the wall ended up with bigger cracks then the first one. But Sonic didn't stop there; he grabbed Marik and threw him into the wall again. And again, and again. Amazingly enough, the blue hedgehog kept it up for five whole minutes!

After one last slam into the wall, Sonic fell on his hands and knees in exhaustion. Marik appeared to be down and out. After all, he couldn't possibly still be in fighting condition after five minutes of being slammed into a wall. As a matter of fact, Marik did seem to be hurt very badly. Still, he managed to open one eye and glare at Sonic. He probably had flames in his eyes right now.

"That was a good tactic." said Marik "Throwing me into walls and not giving me a chance to recover."

"I'll try anything to take you down Marik." said Sonic "And you may as well give up. You can't possibly still be in fighting condition after all that I've done to you."

"I do feel too battered to fight." said Marik admittedly. In fact he was so battered it looked like he was having great pain just moving one of his arms and reaching into his pocket.

"But I do have a sure fire ace up my leather sleeve." crowed Marik.

He pulled out what looked like a huge green and red diamond that sparkled like a million suns. Sonic stared in disbelief at the diamond.

"What's that?" he asked.

"It's an Energy Diamond originating from Mars." said Marik "Every Martian takes one into battle and its incredible power heals us whenever we're injured."

That was all Sonic needed to know. He tried to snatch the diamond off Marik but Marik tapped into its power and the whole room was engulfed in a bright light. Sonic shielded his eyes from the incredible brightness of the light. It was so bright in fact you'd probably be permanently blinded just by looking at it for a second. Then the light slowly faded away and there stood Marik the Martian, looking as good as new and looking like he hadn't even been in a battle right now. Sonic couldn't believe his eyes. Just his rotten luck for Marik to have a way of recovering! Now how was he going to defeat him? Marik however was laughing like a swamp troll.

"See the incredible power this thing has?" sneered Marik "I feel like I haven't been in a fight! And that's not all." he added "This diamond can enhance my speed and strength momentarily. But it doesn't matter; you'll be defeated before I run out."

Sonic braced himself for the inevitable strike. Marik once again tapped into the diamond's power and his whole body began to glow with a bright green outline around him. Then in the blink of an eye, his feet whizzed around so fast they became red and gold blurs and he rocketed into Sonic and sent him flying with one supersonic punch. Sonic flew straight into the ceiling, crashed his way through it, continued shooting upwards and then fell back down into the castle, crashing through the roof again and landing on the floor. And to add insult to injury, Marik charged at Sonic at lightening speed repeatedly and beat him up over and over and over at such a blinding speed you couldn't even see Marik attacking Sonic, it just looked like Sonic was being attacked by a golden blurry thing. Marik threw the final punch and sent Sonic hurtling backwards in cartwheel motion and coming to a halt flat on is stomach. The hedgehog looked terrible, he was coated with bruises and battle scars, his left eye was swollen and became purple and his nose had a thin trickle of blood coming out. Sonic was so battered he couldn't move an eye lid or even twitch his nose. Never before had Sonic the Hedgehog been punished with such an onslaught and it had all been done at lightening speed. Not even Dr. Eggman's infamous machines had

been able to hurt Sonic so much! Marik put the glittering diamond and stared with satisfaction at his downed opponent, grinning like a wicked witch that had just made a perfect stew.

"Ah, I just love a crippled victim." he said happily "Especially since I'm responsible."

"Marik!" cried a voice he knew too well "Your evil has got to stop!"

"And why should it my dear Nicole?" asked Marik, turning around to face the lynx, only to be positively shocked by what he was soon faced with.

"OH MY GOODNESS!" he cried, putting his hands to his head in shock.

Nicole had barely recovered from Marik's earlier attack but she was on her own two feet and pointing a sleek, silver two barrelled pistol at the Martian. The Acorn Family had a pistol in case they needed to warn off intruders and now Nicole was using it to threaten Marik and it certainly worked because the Martian stood there with his hands up. Nicole kept the gun pointed at Marik, her hand shaking.

"You did this." she said coldly "You killed Queen Alicia and King Max and tried to kill my best friend Sally too! Now I'm going to put an end to your terror!"

Marik just erupted with laughter, an action that made Nicole hesitate and stare at him funny.

"You know what's so funny?" chuckled Marik "Of all my years of being held at gunpoint…snicker!…I've never been held at gunpoint by a woman before so this should be interesting."

"I'll shoot!" warned Nicole.

"Then do it you stupid girl!" urged Marik "Go on! I'm wide open for you!"

"Before I do." said Nicole, her hand still trembling "Why did you do those horrible things to the kingdom?"

"Because I want it for myself you fool!" snapped Marik "What did you think I wanted it for? And besides, once I take over this poor excuse for a kingdom, I'll make you my queen my pretty little Nicole." he added flirtingly.

This comment more disgusted Nicole then flattered her.

"I would rather die then by your queen!" she growled at him.

"Well I'd be happy to arrange that for you Nicky." teased Marik.

"That's it! I'm pulling the trigger!" threatened Nicole.

"Then go on! Stop stalling!" taunted Marik "Just shoot me woman!"

Nicole didn't hesitate. Usually she would never shoot anyone or point a gun at them but in this case, it was necessary. Marik had to be killed before he killed anyone else. Nicole pulled the trigger but just at the exact moment she pulled the trigger, Marik whipped out his Energy Diamond and used its powerful energy to shield himself from the blast. Nicole couldn't believe her eyes.

"So go on." urged Marik "Shoot me again, I'll only block it again. And by the way, I have unfinished business elsewhere before I deal with you and this castle." he added.

He tapped into the diamond's power again and this time, used it to warp himself away in one bright dazzling flash. That little event surprised Nicole even more.

"He can teleport?" gasped Nicole "That makes him harder to defeat!"

Her mind then focused on something else. Poor Sonic the Hedgehog. He was still lying there out cold from the pounding Marik had given him. Nicole had seen it all happen and the sight of Sonic's state made her feel sick. She didn't even dare go near Sonic and rub him better in fear of hurting him even more. Hopefully, Sonic wouldn't take too long to recover; otherwise a dark and grim fate for Mobius would be certain to happen.

Meanwhile, Tails and Cosmo had run deep into the forests of Green Hill Zone and kept it low by hiding behind thickly grown bushes. Marik wouldn't find them there, nor would anyone for that matter. They had been hiding for a while now and Cosmo was beginning to get worried about Sonic. She knew what Marik was like in combat and she kept fretting on whether Sonic would be in trouble or not.

"Tails, do you think Sonic will be OK?" asked Cosmo.

"I'm sure he's beaten Marik to a pulp by now." said Tails "I still can't believe he killed the King and Queen."

"I know." said Cosmo "I heard him say it all to Queen Sally Acorn earlier."

"I bet Marik wants to seize the kingdom." said Tails "But Sonic will put a stop to that. He always wins his battles."

"That Sonic sure sounds amazing doesn't he?" asked Cosmo.

"He is amazing Cosmo." said Tails "He can run fast, destroy robots, create tornadoes and spin-dash attack his enemies. And you know what?" he added "He even saved my life from a couple of robots a while back*."

"I bet that's why you and he are such good friends." said Cosmo.

"You bet!" said Tails, winking at her "And I'm gonna be a powerful fighter working for the Royal Fighter's Service just like Sonic the Hedgehog!"

Cosmo giggled at the fox's determination "I bet you are!"

Tails blushed and looked away, giggling modestly. Unfortunately, their funny moment diminished. Out of nowhere, a bright light flashed. Tails and Cosmo shielded their eyes from the sheer dazzling brightness of the light and when they could open their eyes again, they saw Marik the Martian standing there with a diamond in his hand and smiling at them wickedly. Tails and Cosmo couldn't believe their eyes. Shouldn't Sonic have defeated him by now? Nevertheless, Tails did not hesitate for a moment; he immediately jumped in front of Cosmo defensively and put on his bravest face.

"You will not harm Cosmo!" he cried "She told me all about your rivalry with her people and I will not let you harm her in the name of her people!"

Marik snorted with laughter.

"Such bravado for a little kid!" he snorted "Trouble is, you'll end up eating those words."

He advanced on the two menacingly. Tails' legs began to feel wobbly but he kept on his brave face. Secretly, he was downright terrified of the little Martian. Marik could sense his fear easily and he smiled at the fact Tails was scared of him.

"I just beat Sonic to a pulp." he announced gloatingly "So what chance do you think you have against me? I bet you couldn't even beat up a kid your own age!"

"I'm more skilled then you think Marik!" said Tails angrily "I've helped Sonic the Hedgehog defeat baddies in the past and I will help him take you down!"

Marik snorted with laughter again.

"I can easily tell from that overbearing ego of yours Sonic raised you up!" he chortled "You're just as egotistical as he is!"

"Stop mocking me!" snapped Tails.

"I would if you'd stop making it so easy to do so." sneered Marik "Now if you want to leave this forest with all your limbs intact, I suggest you step aside and hand over that vermin you're strangely so eager to protect."

"Never!" cried Tails "I'm not letting you hurt Cosmo!"

Marik laughed once again.

"Cosmo, you haven't been on this planet for a week and already you have a boyfriend!" he taunted "You clearly are a hit amongst the males!"

Tails went red in the face. Cosmo poked her head over Tails' shoulder.

"He's not my boyfriend." said Cosmo quietly.

"Sure he isn't." snorted Marik in a voice dripping with sarcasm "Now little boy, move out of the way and let me take care of your adorable little girlfriend and I will let you live."

"Forget it Marik!" yelled Tails "I will never let you have Cosmo!"

"Then you die!" roared Marik "And I have a delightfully gruesome fate planned for you!"

Before Marik could do anything to the twin-tailed fox, Tails looked over his shoulder and screamed to seemingly nobody "NOW!" Then without warning, Amy Rose the Hedgehog and Cream the Rabbit with Cheese the Chao leaped out of the nearby bushes and landed several blows in the back of Marik's head. The startled Martian was thrown off his feet and sent falling on his face. Amy and Cream stood over him. Amy was wielding her trademark Piko-Piko hammer whereas Cream didn't have any weapons; she just had Cheese to throw at Marik. Amy turned to Tails and Cosmo.

"You two run along, we'll keep this creep busy!" cried Amy.

Tails and Cosmo ran off without a second thought. This ambush was all Tails' idea after all. He had feared that Marik might beat Sonic and come looking for them so he told Amy and Cream to hide in the bushes until he gave the signal. Now the two girls were focused on keeping Marik at bay until Tails and Cosmo were safe and Sonic would show up to help again. Marik picked himself up and glared at the two girls.

"So I'm against the pink nuisance who has a strange fondness of Sonic and that rabbit girl who scolded my feet earlier**?" he said in an unimpressed tone "Seriously, if this is all I'm pitted against then I'll take over this planet easily!"

"You're going down you freak!" snarled Amy.

"You're going to pay for all the nasty things you did today!" cried

Cream.

"Chao!" piped Cheese.

"And what chance do you two foolish females think you have against me?" boasted Marik "I took down Sonic the Hedgehog! You have no hope!"

"SHUT UP!" screamed Amy, leaping up to Marik and bringing her hammer swinging down on him.

Marik swiped his arm and hit Amy smack in the face with an energy wave. Amy, dropped her hammer, flipped over backwards and landed in a bush with a thud. Marik seized the hammer.

"Oy! Give that back!" yelled Amy, getting up and out of the bush and running up to him.

Marik merely whacked her with the hammer. Amy flew backwards and landed into the bush again. Her head throbbed hard and she felt dopey. Stars were spiralling over her head.

"Now I know what my own hammer feels like!" she moaned.

Marik raised the hammer, ready to make another blow on the pink hedgehog. Amy covered her eyes and feared the worst. She knew that hammer could kill if someone whacked someone hard enough with it and Marik seemed intent on doing so. Fortunately, Cream came to the rescue by throwing Cheese straight in Marik's face. Marik dropped the hammer and Amy grabbed it quick. Then she walloped Marik around the head so hard Marik span around in a dizzy circle before falling onto his back. She and Cream gave each other a high five.

"Thanks for saving my life Cream." said Amy.

"You're welcome Miss Rose." said Cream, curtsying for no apparent reason.

Marik recovered and got up on his hands and knees. He stared grimly at Amy and Cream, his eyes drowning in rage.

"Maybe you two aren't so weak after all." he said sarcastically "But I'm afraid enough is enough. It's time to bring you both down!"

And with that, Marik leapt on Cream, roaring like a tiger. He pinned Cream to the ground and waited for Amy to try and attack him. Amy raised her hammer and brought it hammering down on him but Marik was too quick, he threw Cream directly into the hammer's path so Amy ended up hitting Cream accidentally. The rabbit burst into tears and clutched her face.

"Ow Miss Rose! That hurt!" she whined.

"I'm sorry Cream." said Amy "I was trying to hit Marik."

Then suddenly it was Amy's turn to get leaped on and pinned down. Then Marik picked Amy up and threw her into a tree. She hit it hard and slid slowly back down to the ground. Cheese yanked on Marik's collar and held him back for Amy to make another attack, but the Martian seized Cheese and threw him straight into Cream's arms.

"Are you OK Cheese?" asked Cream.

"Chao, Chao." mumbled Cheese. He wasn't OK but he wasn't hurt much either.

Amy had recovered from Marik's earlier attack and then advanced on Marik menacingly with her hammer in hand. Marik wasn't the least bit intimidated. Instead he swiped both of his arms and sent a huge energy wave crashing into Amy. It was so powerful her hammer was snapped in two and she somersaulted backwards twice and landed in a mud puddle. Cream was about to step into help but Marik glared at the rabbit as if he was asking her "Do you dare keep up the fight?" Cream knew she had no chance so she stood back. Marik smiled at the two girls.

"I knew I wouldn't have much trouble beating you two." he said "Now if you'll excuse me ladies, I have a Seedrian to kill. Bye, Bye!"

He pulled out his Energy Diamond and used its incredible power to warp away in a bright dazzling light. Amy struggled to get back up. Her face, her dress, her gloves and her legs were all covered with

mud. She looked very messy. Cream helped Amy back onto her feet. Amy stomped the ground in frustration.

"Darn!" she cursed "How did we fail to defeat him?"

"Mr. Marik's very strong I guess." suggested Cream.

"I'll say he is." said Amy "He said he took Sonic out and now he's taken us out."

"So who's going to help Tails and Cosmo?" squeaked Cream "I think Marik's going to go after them! He warped away using a magical diamond thingy he had!"

"Marik can teleport?" shrieked Amy "Oh no! By the time we reach Tails and Cosmo it'll be too late!"

"Hopefully someone else will be in time to save them." hoped Cream "Like Mr. Sonic."

"I think we'll have to pray for a miracle now." said Amy "Cause I don't think anyone will be around to help and I don't think Tails will be able to fight Marik either."

Cream nodded sadly in agreement. It seemed hopeless now didn't it? All the girls could do was pray for a miracle because Tails and Cosmo were bound to need one at this very moment.

Meanwhile, Tails and Cosmo hadn't stopped running since they escaped from Marik. They ran as deep into the woods as the possibly could. Tails had a sneaky suspicion that Marik had probably defeated the girls now and was on their trail which is why they ran as far into the woods as they could. That way he'd have a harder time tracking them down. Unfortunately, they reached the end of the line. Tails and Cosmo had finally run out of the woods but they screeched to a halt and gasped. They had run to the edge of a cliff. The cliff was steep and led to a very rocky ground below with gentle ocean waves lapping up at the shore. If Marik caught them here, they would be trapped.

"Tails, there's nowhere else to go!" cried Cosmo "We should head back and try another route."

"No Cosmo, Marik might catch us." said Tails "I'll fly us to the other side."

You see, on the other side of the sea was another cliff directly facing the cliff Tails and Cosmo were on now.

"Marik will never catch us then." said Tails "Unless he can fly of course."

"I don't think Marik can fly." said Cosmo.

"Well that's one thing in our favour." said Tails "Now let's…"

Then suddenly a gold blur leaped out of the bushes and hurtled into Cosmo headfirst. It was Marik! His Energy Diamond had brought him into the bushes a few feet away from the two and waited for the right moment to charge out and head butt Cosmo in the back. His head butt attack was so hard; Cosmo tumbled over the edge of the cliff and began falling down to the rocky ground below!

"NO!" cried Tails, trying to fly after her but Marik seized him by the legs and held him back.

Cosmo continued to plummet to the hard rocky ground that awaited her at the bottom of the cliff…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 3**

**** See the previous story for Cream's accidental leg scolding**

Talk about a cliffhanger! Looks like Cosmo will be leaving this story just shortly after entering! Or will she...? Join me next time as Mars Attacks comes to a conclusion! Read and Review.

Mars Attacks Part 4

Story 24: Mars Attacks Part 4: Hedgehog and Martian

Tails covered his eyes, unable to witness Cosmo's demise. Then his eyes began to well up with tears and he stared sadly over the edge of the cliff. Cosmo, his newest friend was dead. And Marik had done it. Speaking of the devil, Marik was laughing like a deranged evil maniac and skipping about, clapping his hands madly.

"Yes!" he cried "I did it! I killed Cosmo, one of the biggest thorns in my side since the war with the Seedrians started! Oh boy will mum and dad be thrilled with me! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Tails then did something he doesn't usually do. He snapped. And I truly do mean snap. He leaped on Marik and began attacking him in such a blind fury that I don't think anyone, not even Knuckles could contain the fox's anger. Even Marik was surprised at the fox's rage.

"You killed her!" screamed Tails as he punched Marik directly in the face "You killed her! How could you? She could never hurt you so what gives you the right to do so?"

Marik blocked one of Tails punches and threw him backwards. Then he stomped on the fox's stomach and kept his foot there to pin him down.

"I'm a peace hater." explained Marik "And we Martians hate peace lovers so we kill them. It's our way of life and I absolutely love it to the bone!"

"But why?" asked Tails "Why do you hate peace? What is possibly so bad about it that you've declared war on it?"

"What use does peace have in this stupid little galaxy?" snorted Marik "All it does is make you weak and unprepared for surprise attacks. If you're me though, you always know the unknown and expect the unexpected because of a lifetime's worth of combat training. You don't get that from your precious peace do you?"

And with that he seized Tails by the tails and held him over the edge of the cliff by them. Tails gulped. Was Marik planning to drop him so he would suffer the same unfortunate fate as Cosmo? Even if he was, it wouldn't work since Tails could fly.

"Go ahead, drop me." urged Tails "I can fly with my two tails you doofus so it won't work!"

"Well I've got just the solution." sneered Marik, pulling his knife out of his pocket and holding it with the blade touching Tails' two tails.

"Let's see what happens if I cut those overgrown paintbrushes off while I'm holding you over the edge by them!" cried Marik, his pupils went tiny and his eyes had a wicked, deranged, demented look in them as if he was mentally insane. Tails went right shaky at that statement.

"No! Please no!" cried Tails.

Marik ignored him. He raised his knife and prepared to make the killer swipe that would slash Tails' tails off and he would plummet to the rocky ground below. Tails closed his eyes tightly and prepared for the inevitable. Marik was about to slash until someone snatched his knife away so Marik slashed at Tails only for nothing to happen. Marik looked at his now empty hand and almost had a nervous breakdown.

"What the Dickens?" he shrieked "My knife's gone!"

"That's because I have it!" cried a voice from behind him.

Marik put Tails down and looked behind him. He was so gobsmacked at what he saw I think he would have had a nervous breakdown right now! He saw Knuckles the Echidna standing there with his knife in hand and Cosmo hiding behind him. Tails almost exploded with joy at the sight of Cosmo behind Knuckles.

"Cosmo! You're alive!" he shrieked.

"Yes I am and I have this echidna to thank." said Cosmo.

Knuckles just smiled at Tails. Tails smiled back. Marik couldn't

contain his anger any longer. He literally exploded into a fit of rage and fury.

"Impossible!" bellowed Marik, stomping about madly "How in the name of Mars did you survive that plummet?"

"Well I just coincidentally happened to be at the bottom of the cliff." said Knuckles "And I saw this girl falling off the edge so I leaped out, caught her and glided her to safety. She told me Tails was in trouble from you so I climbed back up and saved him from having his tails cut off."

Marik clenched his fists so hard I think they went a pale white colour. He frowned so hard it would give the average human or Mobian a headache if they tried.

"Well spike fist you've ended up on my long list of people I hate!" snarled Marik "And I'll make you pay for saving Cosmo's life when she was supposed to die!"

"And I'm going to make you pay for all you've done today!" snarled Knuckles "I've been waiting a long time for this!"

Marik charged at Knuckles, roaring menacingly but Knuckles was ready. He held his hands out and caught Marik in them. Marik continued to push but Knuckles was strong enough to resist. Marik could hardly move Knuckles an inch because the echidna was so strong. Knuckles then lifted Marik off the ground and threw him like a basketball. Marik hurtled through the air and plummeted over the edge of the cliff. Knuckles laughed at his victory.

"All too easy." he gloated.

But Marik suddenly started coming back up to the edge of the cliff! Tails and Cosmo couldn't believe their eyes, nor could Knuckles for that matter.

"Y'know that we wondered if Marik could fly?" asked Tails.

"Yes?" said Cosmo.

"That answers our question." said Tails.

And answered that question it did. Marik was actually flying! His jet shoes were capable of flying abilities as well as enhancing his speed. Marik stood in midair with his arms folded, a gloating smirk on his face and his jet shoes still going.

"Did you really think you could just toss me off a cliff and it'd all be over?" jeered Marik "I am more then meets the eye! I am prepared for anything, be it falling off something, opponent too strong or needing to make a quick getaway. I will always be one step ahead of you Mobian mongrels!"

"Stop boasting and taste my bare knuckles!" Knuckles yelled challengingly.

"As you wish." said Marik calmly.

And with that he boosted his jets and rocketed into Knuckles head first. Knuckles was well pounded by that blow and sent hurtling backwards into the forest. Marik then turned his attention to Cosmo. He flew towards her and grabbed her by the waist.

"Help! Put me down you hideous hobgoblin!" yelled Cosmo, thumping Marik's arms helplessly.

"Save the pitiful fist work girl!" growled Marik, flying a good distance away from the cliff and stopping "Now let's see if anyone can save you from falling now?"

And with that he, well, let go of her of course. Cosmo began to fall but she wasn't falling for long. The wind got caught up in her skirt and it spread out neatly like a blooming flower. The skirt started acting like a parachute and Cosmo was slowly descending to the ground. Marik face-palmed himself as hard as he could.

"Damn it!" he moaned "I forgot Seedrians can do that!"

True Cosmo wasn't going to fall like a stone now, but it didn't mean she was going to be safe at the bottom. You see, Marik had held her above the sea and dropped her. Now Cosmo was going to fall into the sea and probably get swept away by the fierce waves and currents below. Worse, there could be sharks in the water and

Cosmo was bound to end up as lunch if one caught her. Luckily, this wasn't going to happen. Tails had taken flight and flown over to Cosmo to grab her and take her back to the cliff tops. He caught her in bridal style and carried her back to the cliff tops. Unfortunately Marik interfered. He swiped the air with his arms and sent an energy wave hurtling towards Tails and Cosmo. They were both hit and sent flying into the cliff top. They hit the edge and were about to slide over and fall but Knuckles caught them just in time and pulled them to safety. Marik began to get really cross. Just how hard could it be to kill a stupid Seedrian? Marik flew towards Knuckles and prepared to attack him but Knuckles was ready this time. He stood to the side and let Marik fly straight past him and crash head first into a tree. Marik slid down to the ground dazed and confused. Knuckles dusted his hands off.

"And that does it I believe." he said.

"Let's tie him up or something before he comes around." said Tails.

"We haven't got any rope." said Cosmo.

"I'm just gonna throw him off the edge." said Knuckles "This demon is too dangerous to live. According to you Cosmo, he killed the king and queen and tried to seize control of the kingdom*. If we let him live he'll doom us all so he must die."

No one suggested otherwise so Knuckles picked Marik's unconscious body up and carried him over to the cliff's edge. Knuckles raised Marik above his head and prepared to throw the Martian over and to his death. But by sheer unluckiness, Marik happened to come around just before Knuckles could throw him over the cliff. Marik kicked Knuckles in the head which in turn, caused Knuckles to drop Marik behind him and rub his sore head.

"So you thought you could chuck me over the cliff while I was unconscious huh?" said Marik crossly "Well unluckily for you, I recover quickly! Now let's see how you like it!"

Marik was about to kick Knuckles in the back and send him tumbling over but Tails and Cosmo seized him by the collar and held him back.

"You grubby little beasts, let go of my jacket!" cried Marik, tugging back.

Tails and Cosmo continued to pull on him whereas Marik pulled back in a desperate attempt to free himself. Knuckles decided that now was the right time to attack since Marik was unable to fight back. So while Tails and Cosmo held him at bay by pulling on his collar, Knuckles landed several powerful blows to Marik's stomach. Punch after punch after punch, Marik could feel the wind getting knocked out of him. Blimey where those punches hard! Then Knuckles punched Marik in the face and decided to finish him off with an uppercut to the chin. Marik shot straight up into the air like a rocket and fell straight back down. He landed with a thud in some nearby bushes. The three Mobians ran over to him. They saw Marik, lying in the bushes, clutching his stomach as if he had a tummy-ache (I think I would have had one if Knuckles went to town on me like that!). He looked like he wouldn't be getting up in a hurry. Then Tails noticed something. A glowing green diamond was lying in the grass next to the bushes. Tails went over to the diamond and picked it up.

"What's this?" he asked.

"That." said Cosmo grimly "Is an Energy Diamond. Martians use those to enhance their strength and speed momentarily. You mustn't let Marik have it or he'll be invincible."

"In that case I'll throw it into the sea!" cried Tails "He'll never be able to use it that way!"

Tails began to run off but Marik came around and saw Tails running away. He swiped his arm and hit Tails in the back with an energy wave. Tails fell over and dropped the diamond. The diamond began to roll closer to the cliff's edge. Marik leaped to his feet and dashed over to grab the diamond. He only just caught it before it could tumble over the edge. Marik sighed with relief. But he wasn't relieved for long, Knuckles came charging into him and punched him in the back. Marik dropped the diamond and the glowing jewel rolled backwards. Cosmo grabbed the diamond and tried to throw it over but Marik caught her with an energy wave. The diamond then flew into the air and landed into Tails' hands. Again, Marik caught him off

guard with an energy wave. Tails fell over backwards and sent the diamond flying backwards into the forest. Marik sped off to catch the diamond. He caught it before it could hit the ground. Then he turned his attention to the Mobians.

"Enough is enough!" he growled "It is time to end this pathetic conflict!"

And I bet Marik would have used the Energy Diamond to power up if he wasn't interrupted by a blue blur spin-dashing him in the back and causing him to drop the diamond. Marik got back to his feet and stared in disbelief at what he was suddenly faced with. It was none other then Sonic the Hedgehog! He still looked a little bit battered from his fight with Marik earlier** but he seemed in fighting condition. He had Amy Rose and Cream the rabbit beside him, looking like they were ready to fight. Tails, Cosmo and even Knuckles were very pleased to see Sonic here.

"So did I miss anything?" asked Sonic.

"Well not much." said Tails "But boy am I glad you're here!"

"Im-possible!" spat Marik "How can you possibly be on your feet right now? I gave you a hideous pounding earlier so you should still be lying on the floor unable to move!"

"Let's just say I recover just as fast as I run." joked Sonic "Now it's time to kick your butt all the way back to Mars!"

"You're toast Marik!" declared Amy, brandishing her Piko-Piko hammer.

"Your evil ways are over!" cried Cream.

"Chao!" piped Cheese.

Marik soon found himself surrounded by the six Mobians. Although Marik was strong, there was no way he could possibly take on six Mobians at once. Well only Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Amy could fight well enough to defeat him but Cream and Cosmo would probably be good support.

"Oh come on, that's not fair!" whined Marik "I'm outnumbered six to one! Don't you think that's going too far?"

"We'll go as far as we can to get rid of you!" said Sonic angrily "Everybody, leap on him and pin him down!"

And they did so. Marik braced himself as the Mobians were about to land on him. Then the sneaky Martian swiped both of his arms at once, one forward and one backwards. This caused two energy waves to fly out in different directions and hit three Mobians each. The Mobians all fell down to the ground like falling birds. Marik cackled at the Mobian's failed attack.

"You are gonna have to do better then this you pathetic creatures!" crowed Marik.

"How about this?" snarled Amy, leaping onto her feet and charging at Marik like a bull to the matador.

Marik swiped his arm and hit Amy with an energy wave once more. Then Knuckles leaped on him from behind and grabbed him. He held Marik back so the Martian was vulnerable to any oncoming attack. Sonic and Tails attacked while they could. Sonic spin-dashed into Marik several times while Tails tail-whipped Marik across the face. Marik felt like he was being whipped repeatedly by Tails' twin tails. Then Amy added insult to injury by giving him a hard thump on the head with her Piko-Piko hammer. And finally Knuckles picked the overwhelmed Martian up and held him over his head. He then began to spin Marik around above his head. The echidna began to pick up speed drastically by the second while the others watched him with interest. Soon Knuckles was spinning Marik around so fast he was nothing more then a red, black and gold blur spinning around above Knuckles' head. Then finally, Knuckles tossed the spinning Martian away and Marik, spinning wildly out of control, hurtled straight into a very large oak tree. Marik smacked into it so hard he ended up embedded into the tree's thick bark and acorns were shaken so much they fell off their branches and to the ground like rainfall. Marik, groaning like a ghoul, slowly slid out of the Martian shaped impact he made into the tree and fell to the ground head first. After falling to the ground, he fell onto his back and grimaced. Sonic stood over the downed Martian with a triumphant

smirk on his face.

"We win Marik!" he declared "Now get out of Mobius and don't come back! That's my last warning!"

Marik slowly began to sit up. He opened one eye and glared at the arrogant blue hedgehog. Marik was in pain all over his body and he knew it. He was in no shape to fight and he probably couldn't retrieve his Energy Diamond since he'd likely be too slow to get it. Still, surrender was never a word Marik was associated with so he was willing to try anything to win.

"You cannot defeat me hedgehog!" grunted Marik, clutching his arm "And I've said a million times already, I am not leaving Mobius until I've turned it into a war zone!"

"Marik, why won't you just give up?" snapped Tails "Look at you! You can't possibly keep this fight up any longer! Just give up while you can!"

"Martians don't surrender!" snarled Marik "And I will go to any lengths necessary to achieve my goal, even if it means I die trying!"

Then suddenly, as if Marik had recovered from the beating he had taken; he got back to his feet and leaped over the Mobians in a perfect rainbow arch. He landed behind a few feet away from them and right next to the Energy Diamond. He grabbed it and quickly tapped into its power to heal himself. He was surrounded by a dazzling flash of light. The Mobians turned around and saw what he was doing.

"What's he doing?" asked Amy "Is he teleporting again?"

"No!" cried Sonic "He's healing himself! We've got to get that diamond off of him!"

The light died down and there stood Marik, looking like nothing had happened to him the past few minutes. The moment the light died down, Sonic pounced on Marik and grabbed the diamond. He tried to wrench it out of the Martian's hands but Marik refused to let it go. He held on tightly and wrestled with Sonic over the diamond. This

was going to be a tough match everybody could tell.

"Let go of it Marik!" grunted Sonic as he continued tugging on it.

"You let go!" snarled Marik "This diamond is not for Mobians!"

Seeing as no one was going to win this tussle, Tails and the others decided to interfere with Marik. Knuckles ran up to Marik and delivered a massive punch to the Martian's face. The punch was so powerful, Marik was thrown aside like a rag sheet and he let go of the diamond. Marik hit the ground and rolled across it painfully. Sonic smiled at the fact he know had the Energy Diamond.

"Now let's see what happens if I use it against you!" said Sonic.

"No Sonic don't!" cried Cosmo "You have no idea what…"

Sonic ignored her. He tried doing what Marik did and tapped into the diamond's power. Sonic had no idea if the diamond would work for him since the diamond was probably from Mars, Marik's Homeworld, but he was determined to try everything. Marik got back to his feet and gaped at what he was seeing. Sonic had his Energy Diamond and now the blue hedgehog was trying to use it.

"Stop!" cried Marik "You don't know how to use it!"

Too late. Sonic had managed to tap into the diamond's power and now he was glowing with a bright green outline around his body and his quills were waving up and down as if they were blowing in the wind. Sonic had no idea how he managed it, but he didn't mind, he could now use the diamond's immense power against Marik and defeat him once and for all. Sonic then revved his feet. They were going so fast you couldn't see them, not even as a blur. Sonic felt a feeling he had never felt before, a feeling of going at an unimaginable speed. He had felt something like this when he was Super Sonic during the Mecha Sonic agenda*** but this felt more thrilling then even that! Sonic then rocketed into Marik the Martian at the speed of light. He hit Marik so fast it looked like he was being attacked by thin air. Then Sonic began to repeatedly attack him over and over just like Marik did to him earlier. Marik was getting pummelled and pummelled by the second and he felt like he was

getting hit by a sea of trains because Sonic was going so fast and pounding him so hard. Then Sonic gave Marik one final mighty wallop in the stomach. That wallop was so hard Marik was heavily winded by the blow and sent hurtling backwards at about one hundred miles an hour. Marik hurtled backwards so fast he actually hurtled over the cliff and, crying with anguish and defeat, plummeted into the roaring sea that awaited him at the bottom with a huge splash.

Sonic stopped what he was doing and came to a halt at the edge of the cliff. He peered over to see what had become of Marik. His body did not come back up to the surface. That only meant one thing; Marik had been defeated and was dead. Sonic chucked the now useless diamond into the sea, never to be found again. Then he cheered and punched the air with his fist.

"Way past cool!" cried Sonic "Marik's gone! Forever! Whoo Hoo!"

The others ran out of the forest to meet him.

"Sonic, you did it!" cried Tails.

"You've defeated that ugly wretch once and for all!" squealed Amy.

Cream and Cheese did a little dance for joy whereas Knuckles just gave Sonic a smile that suggested "Congratulations bud". Even Cosmo smiled with appreciation at Sonic.

"Now Marik's gone, I have one Martian less to worry about." she said "Thank you Sonic.

"Don't mention it Cosmo." said Sonic, giving her the thumbs up "That's what I do best, help those in need."

Cosmo beamed like a sunrise.

Later that day at Mobotropolis, the five Mobians and Seedrian were at Castle Acorn and were being thanked for their efforts by Sally Acorn, who was now wearing a shoulder less, flowing, elegant pink dress, pink gloves that came up to the elbow, golden lace around

the waist and Queen Alicia's old crown. She proper looked like a queen now and the fighters were impressed.

"If it wasn't for you brave fighters." said Sally "The kingdom would be in total collapse and chaos. I'm sure my parents would have been very grateful to you all."

Everybody nodded in agreement.

"Now Marik the Martian is gone," continued Sally "Castle Acorn won't have to worry about being ransacked. Thank you, all of you."

"You're welcome Princess…uh, I mean Queen Sally." said Sonic, bowing at her.

Sally giggled. "I have one special thank you for someone else though before I finish." said Sally "Where's the plant-like girl?"

Cosmo shyly stood forward and curtsied to Sally.

"Your Majesty." she said politely "My name is Cosmo and I'm from another world. I'm afraid I'll be here for a while since my kind is at war with the Martians and I'll have to wait until it's over."

"Well for the time being you're welcome to stay on Mobius." said Sally happily "Especially since you were the one that saved my life earlier. Thank you Cosmo."

Cosmo beamed with pleasure. Sonic gave her the thumbs up.

"Not bad eh Cosmo?" he said "You haven't been here long and the new Queen of Mobotropolis congratulates you. That's real swell!"

"I thought I wouldn't be welcomed." said Cosmo "But I feel like a fit in very well. I think I might like this planet after all."

"You will Cosmo." said Tails happily "You will."

And Cosmo knew deep down that Tails was probably right. She had no idea what she would get up to on this strange new world, but she had a feeling she would like it. And if the Seedrians won the war with the dreaded Martians, she would have one heck of a story to tell her

mother…

Footnotes:

*** See the first two parts of this saga (Stories 21-22) for more details on Marik's nefarious scheme**

****See the previous story for Sonic's less then pleasant tussle with Marik**

***** Surely you haven't forgotten the Mecha Sonic Saga (Stories 12-14) have you?**

And that's it for the Mars Attacks saga! Marik's gone and Cosmo has a new home to settle in to. Join me next time for it is my very FIRST milestone chapter next time! OK technically I've already done twenty-five chapters since we have the prologue in Chapter 1 and the twenty four chapters currently uploaded but I don't include the prologue when I count these stories. Reviews are welcome as always.

Sonic the Martian

Hi there users of ! This is Mixedfan8643 with a very special chapter to the Heroes of Mobius series! I am now on my FIRST milestone story! And here's a treat for you Sonic fans, milestone stories are EVEN longer then the other stories! So that means more Sonic and more epic action! What more can a Sonic fan ask for? Enjoy!

Story 25 *: Sonic the Martian*

"Thank you for letting me have a tour of this beautiful island." Cosmo the Seedrian said to Knuckles the Echidna "It's been lovely up here."

"Don't mention it." said Knuckles, sitting back against the glorious, glowing Master Emerald "Since you'll be staying on Mobius for a while, you need to know the whole planet up and down."

Cosmo nodded. Ever since she landed on this planet, her new friends had been giving her various tours around Mobius. She had been shown almost everything from Empire City to Knothole to Downunda. Now Knuckles had kindly offered the little Seedrian a tour around the notorious Angel Island, the island that floated in the air. Cosmo had enjoyed every second of the tour but the one thing she enjoyed was the spectacular view Angel Island offered her. She could see very far into the distance from up here. There was just one thing she wanted to know.

"Knuckles, why does this island float?" asked Cosmo.

Knuckles looked at Cosmo.

"A lot of people ask me that." said Knuckles "Well here's your answer: Angel Island used to be on the ground and named Echidnaopolis. The elders predicted a comet would fall from space and hit us and wipe us all out so using magic and the Master Emerald's power, we managed to get the island to lift up from the

ground and we managed to avoid being hit by the comet."

"Does everyone like the island as it is now?" asked Cosmo.

"Not everyone." said Knuckles sadly "Our ruler Imperator Ix didn't like Angel Island being up in the air so he tried to get it to come back down but the elders ignored his protests and insisted the island stays afloat so we will always be safe from danger. Ix didn't like that and he betrayed us all. He slaughtered the elders and tried to remove the Master Emerald from the shrine and make Angel Island fall but my late father Locke stopped him with a Chaos Control and my Uncle Finitevus sent him away using his Warp Ring technology. I have no idea where Ix is now but hopefully, we won't have to worry about him again."

"That's some story isn't it?" said Cosmo, intrigued with every thing she had heard "What happened to your dad after he stopped Ix?"

"Using his Chaos powers on Ix drained quite a lot of energy from him and he sadly lost the will to live." explained Knuckles "But he's still with me, in my memories. As for Uncle Finitevus, he's been missing for a while now and I have no idea if he'll ever return."

"I bet that's so sad." said Cosmo, feeling sorry for the spike-fisted echidna "Losing two of your relatives. Do you miss them terribly?"

"I do." said Knuckles sadly "But I don't let that bother me too much. I guard the Master Emerald in my father's name and I always think about how proud he would be of me if he was still around."

"But who guards the Master Emerald when you're not here?" asked Cosmo "I mean, when you were helping us fight Marik* was someone else guarding it in your place?"

"Yes." said Knuckles "I take turns with some other echidnas that have had practice guarding the Master Emerald. I like it when I get to leave the Master Emerald in some one else's care so I can help any of those Royal Fighter groups defeat Eggman's armies all over the world."

"Is this Eggman person someone I should look out for?" asked

Cosmo.

"Certainly." said Knuckles, standing up "He is Sonic's sworn enemy much like Marik was your sworn enemy. Sonic's always the one foiling his schemes and he somehow manages to come out on top in the end. I have no idea how he does it though, I guess it's because he can run really fast."

"Well in that case I don't think I should be too worried if Eggman's around since Sonic will be there to stop him." said Cosmo with relief.

Knuckles nodded in agreement.

"I look forward to the day Sonic finally kicks his butt out of Mobius once and for all." he said "Or I could do it for him."

Cosmo laughed at Knuckles' remark.

"Thank you for the tour of Angel Island." she said, standing up and walking down the stairs "It's been lovely but I've got to go now."

"Use this." said Knuckles, tossing a warp ring to Cosmo. She caught it. "Just touch the ring and think about where you want to go to and the ring will warp you there." he added.

Cosmo touched the warp ring and thought about Sonic's house all the way back in Green Hill Zone. The ring expanded to ten times its own size so Cosmo could just walk through it now. Cosmo walked through the warp ring and she vanished into thin air. The ring went back to its normal size and dropped on the ground. Knuckles picked it up and put it away. He looked down at the ground below Angel Island.

"I hope we'll defeat Dr. Eggman and get our freedom back." he said to himself "I cannot stand the thought of living in a robot city for the rest of my life."

Knuckles wasn't a big fan of technology after all. Smashing Eggman's robots always made him feel happy, especially since Eggman's robots were used for horrible purposes such as kidnapping the innocents and taking them to Eggman to be roboticized. Knuckles just wondered when would all this end.

Hopefully sooner or later. Once Eggman was kicked out of Mobius, Mobius would be free once again.

Back at Green Hill Zone, Sonic was taking yet, another lengthy jog through the forests of Green Hill Zone. Sonic ran at his trademark speed, the wind blowing in his face the faster he ran. Sonic came across a rocky hill and in no effort at all, leaped up the hill and over it. Sonic landed on the other side of the hill and ran on. He then came across one of those strange mountains that looked like loop de loops. Sonic never knew why those mountains were shaped like that, nor did he know how they came to be, all he knew is that they were great to run up. Sonic ran through the loop de loop mountain, whooping as he did so, and did a fantastic slide under a low hanging rock. After sliding under the rock, Sonic leaped back to his feet and ran on again. Unfortunately, he appeared to be reaching a cliff top. Cliff tops never bothered Sonic since he could leap with perfection and land on the ground below without injuring himself. Sonic ran to the cliff's edge, jumped and he flew through the air like a bird. Then Sonic raised his feet as he began to hurtle down to the ground. Just like always, he made the perfect landing. After landing, Sonic ran on ever faster. He had completed his lengthy jog and was now heading for home to see how Tails was doing with his little spy machine. For some strange reason though, as Sonic sped through the forests and back home, he was having some strange thoughts. Why did it suddenly dawn on him how repulsive the forests suddenly looked? And why did he have this urge to burn them down for some reason? Sonic had no idea what was going on in his head right now. In fact ever since he defeated Marik** he had been having these strange and sometimes wicked thoughts he would never usually think and he was not sure why. He had to ask Tails and see if he knew anything about this. He hoped it wouldn't continue regularly because these strange thoughts were beginning to worry Sonic. Sonic shook it off and continued running. However Cosmo's warp ring just happened to open up in Sonic's path and Cosmo stepped out of it. Sonic saw her and tried to stop himself but he was going way too fast and he ended up crashing into her. The two tumbled over each other and finally came to a stop side by side. Sonic got to his feet and helped Cosmo up.

"Sorry there Cosmo. Didn't see ya in time." he said.

"That's OK." said Cosmo "Although I'm kinda puzzled as to why the warp ring brought me here when I asked for it to warp me to your house."

"Sometimes warp rings can be unreliable." said Sonic "But the warp ring wasn't too far off the mark, my house is only up there."

He pointed to the familiar little house that resided near the outskirts of the zone.

"So how was Angel Island?" asked Sonic.

"It was wonderful." said Cosmo "Knuckles even told me a bit about Angel Island's back story and history."

"I bet he told you the story of how Angel Island floats and how his dad defeated some guy named Imperator Ix who I'm not familiar with." said Sonic

"He did indeed." said Cosmo.

"Anyone who asks why does the island float usually gets told that story." said Sonic "Even I did when I first visited it. I was only twelve at the time."

"I see." said Cosmo "How is Tails doing by the way?"

"Oh he's just spying on Eggman right now." said Sonic "Why don't we see how he's doing?"

Cosmo nodded and with that, Sonic and Cosmo headed off back to Sonic's house. Unfortunately, Sonic began to have these strange, sinister thoughts again. As he looked at Cosmo, why did he keep having this sudden urge to kill the poor girl? Why did she suddenly look like a repulsive creature with a fondness for peace? What was going on in his mind right now? Why does it feel like he was beginning to sound like Marik the Martian in his head? Sonic had no idea why he kept having these horrible thoughts all of the sudden. Then his head began to throb suddenly and the hedgehog was so stunned by the sudden throbbing he grabbed the sides of his head

and fell on his knees. It almost felt like someone had sneaked into his head and hammered his brain briefly. Cosmo noticed something was wrong and bent down to ask Sonic what was wrong.

"Sonic, are you OK?" she asked kindly "Have you got a headache?"

"Shut up you repulsive, walking rose bush!" snapped Sonic.

Cosmo couldn't believe what Sonic had just said to her. This was not like Sonic at all, something was definitely wrong. Sonic suddenly realized he'd said something he didn't mean and was quick to apologize.

"I meant, yes my head's throbbing." said Sonic "I have no idea why I just said what I just said a moment ago."

"Is there something wrong?" asked Cosmo.

"I think so." said Sonic, still rubbing his head "I keep having horrible thoughts that I don't usually have and now my head is suddenly throbbing. And now I'm saying things I don't mean."

"When did this start happening?" asked Cosmo.

"Um…since I defeated Marik I guess." said Sonic "And oddly enough, these horrible thoughts I'm having sound like something Marik would probably think."

"Well that's a strange coincidence." said Cosmo "You defeat Marik and suddenly you start thinking like him. There's a catch to this somewhere but I can't some to put my finger on it…"

"Hopefully it'll wear off." said Sonic "Let's just see how Tails is doing."

And with that, the two carried on to Sonic's house. Cosmo however, couldn't stop staring at him with a worried face while he wasn't looking. Sonic was just fine until he defeated Marik the Martian and then suddenly he thinks like him. Why did this sound so familiar all of a sudden? Has something like this happened before only on a different world? Cosmo was trying to think about why this strange business sounded so familiar but she just couldn't quite work it out

yet. Sonic and Cosmo finally arrived back at Sonic's house and Sonic walked in though the front door. And surely enough, he saw Tails sitting at his desk with his earphones on and clearly listening to something on that machine of his. In fact, Tails was so absorbed in his work he didn't even hear Sonic and Cosmo come in.

"Tails! I'm back!" called Sonic.

Tails did not seem to have heard his friend call him. He was still listening to what he could hear through those earphones he wore and he appeared to be writing something in a notepad. Obviously he was writing whatever he was hearing Eggman talk about. Cosmo went over to Tails and lifted the right earphone off his ear so he could hear her.

"Tails, we're back." she said to him quietly.

Tails finally snapped out of his work and turned to face Cosmo.

"Oh sorry about that!" he said, giggling nervously "I was so caught up with this spy work I didn't hear you come in."

"That's forgivable." said Sonic "So what's old Egg brains up to? I haven't seen him since the throw down we had the other week***."

"Well according to what I've managed to pick up." said Tails, reading the notes he had written on the notepad he had with him "Eggman's planning to attack poor old Angel Island and seize the Master Emerald. And to think he wouldn't try that again after he failed to get it the first time****."

"Oh no!" cried Cosmo "If Eggman gets the Master Emerald Angel Island will fall!"

"Well we'd best send a message to Knuckles right away!" said Sonic.

He pulled a communicator out of a desk draw and switched it on. He tapped a few buttons and soon the screen flashed into life with Knuckle's face on.

"Sonic! What's up now?" asked Knuckles.

"Tails just managed to find out Dr. Eggman is planning to steal the Master Emerald again." said Sonic "Prepare yourself for his arrival."

"Will do." said Knuckles "I haven't seen the fat idiot since me and you whupped his ugly butt after he seemingly beat you to a pulp the other week so I'm going to enjoy this!"

"I wish I could join in!" chuckled Sonic "But I don't have a warp ring right now."

"I'll be able to handle that Eggman myself." boasted Knuckles "I'll see ya around Sonic and tell Tails I said thanks for the warning."

"OK." said Sonic, shutting the communicator off and putting it back in the desk drawer.

"Knuckles said thanks for the warning." he said to Tails.

Tails nodded and put the earphones back on.

"Now let's see what else I can find out." he mumbled to himself.

He picked up his pen and got ready to write some notes.

"Tails don't you think you should rest?" asked Cosmo politely.

"I'll rest after I've listened to this conversation." said Tails, not taking his eyes of the notepad "I'm just making double sure there's nothing else I can find out."

"You're such a busybody Tails." giggled Cosmo "I bet you spend most of the day working on something."

"Yeah, I'm always working on something." said Tails modestly "Be it machine, vehicle or just a small gizmo of sorts. I'm always making something and I enjoy it so much. Technology is the only thing I'm any good at aside from fighting."

"I see." said Cosmo "I'm not much of a technical person myself. In fact mother always said technology can bring a mixture of bad or good depending on the type so my planet isn't really as technically advanced as other planets. But I like it the way it is and hopefully it'll

be in one piece when I or if I return."

As Tails and Cosmo talked to each other about technology, Sonic just slumped on the sofa to have an afternoon nap. But as he silently snoozed away to himself, he began to have horrible thoughts again. Only this time, these thoughts were expressing themselves through dreams. Sonic was dreaming he was in a devastated wasteland on what was left of a deserted and destroyed Mobius and strangely enough instead of feeling devastated at all this, he was actually enjoying the sight and laughing like a cross between a hyena and a devilish wizard. This was very unusual for Sonic since when Mobotropolis was wrecked*****, he was horrified and yet in this dream he was pleased with the sight of a ravaged Mobius full of raging fires, collapsing cities and dead bodies. Then suddenly, while Sonic continued laughing a cruel, sadistic laugh at the horror around him, the familiar figure of Marik the Martian appeared from nowhere and tapped him on the shoulder. Sonic turned to face the Martian and seemed unusually pleased to see someone he had just beaten up and sent falling into the ocean.

"Well done Sonic." purred Marik "I knew your brand new mutated mind would be put to good use and now you've created a paradise for Martians everywhere! I salute your efforts!"

"You're welcome Marik." said Sonic, grinning evilly "It was my pleasure."

That did it. Sonic woke up with a jolt and screamed so loudly Tails fell over in his chair, the earphones being yanked off his ears by the short wire. Cosmo jumped and stared at the poor hedgehog. Sonic began to pant heavily as if he had just seen a ghost.

"What's the matter Sonic?" gasped Tails "You look like you just woke up from a nightmare!"

"I did!" cried Sonic "I was in a devastated Mobius and for some reason I was enjoying the view and then Marik the Martian came up to me and said something really strange!"

"What did he say like?" asked Cosmo.

"I can't remember." said Sonic, taking a big calming breath "Although I think it had something to do with a mutated mind. What does that mean?"

"I don't know." said Cosmo "But I bet those horrible thoughts you're having have something to do with this nightmare you had."

"What horrible thoughts?" asked Tails.

"Ever since I defeated Marik, I keep having thoughts that I don't usually think." explained Sonic "Sometimes I think anything beautiful looks repulsive, sometimes I have this sudden urge to maim someone and a moment ago I said something way out of my league to Cosmo. I have no idea why I'm having these thoughts and it's freaking me out! Real bad!"

"That seems like a weird coincidence." said Tails "After you defeat Marik you start thinking like him. Any ideas Cosmo?"

"This sounds so familiar but I can't quite decipher what it is." said Cosmo "Maybe it had something to do with the Energy Diamond…"

"Well I do hope it wears off because I'm getting freaked out by these thoughts." said Sonic, shaking.

"Why don't you have a jog for a few hours and see if that'll keep your mind off it." suggested Tails.

"I'll try that." said Sonic.

He leaped to his feet and dashed out of the door faster then you could say "She sells seashells by the seashore." Tails and Cosmo looked at each other and exchanged worrying glances.

"I do hope Sonic will be alright." said Tails "I hate it when he's not OK."

"I'm concerned for Sonic too." said Cosmo ""And why does all this keep sounding so familiar to me? I'm sure something like this happened to one of my kind during the war. What was the cause…?"

"Maybe it'll come to you later." said Tails reassuringly "Right now we'd best hope Sonic will be OK and Knuckles will be able to fend off Eggman's attack."

Things were only about to get worse later on though…

Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman was on his way to Angel Island. He had built a small air force of flying robots especially for a job like this since he had come to steal the Master Emerald again. The robots were white in colour with thin chicken-walker legs, a machine gun on one arm and a missile launcher on the other and they had the ability to fly. There were some variants amongst the squad as well. Some were red with missile launchers on both arms, some were blue with laser cannons instead of a machine gun and some were yellow with rocket launchers on both arms. This squad was defiantly one to look out for, especially since they'd come in large numbers. Alonzo was not impressed with this since Eggman had tried and failed to steal the Master Emerald before so he wasn't sure why Eggman was trying it again. Then again, Eggman never gave up on anything, he always took the old "If at first you don't succeed, try, TRY again." road. If he failed to do something, he'd be quick to try again. Not to mention since the Master Emerald had great power and Eggman would love to use that power for his insidious robot army.

"We're almost there Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman happily "I'll catch that stupid echidna by surprise once I arrive here."

"I bet you will since he won't see it coming." said Alonzo "And by the way, what do you want the M.E. for this time?"

"I want to use its power silly head!" snapped Eggman "Power like that will be a great asset to my city and my army you know. And this time, I'm going to succeed!"

Little did Dr. Eggman know was that Knuckles was lying in wait for him. Since he had been warned about it already, Knuckles was standing on top of the Master Emerald, waiting to make his move. The first of Eggman's air squad flew in to seize the Master Emerald but before it could even touch it, Knuckles leaped into the air and

smashed its head in with one powerful punch! Eggman saw this and was so surprised he sweat dropped and his moustache drooped down.

"What the heck?" he screeched "How did Knuckles know I was coming?"

"Um…master. Didn't it occur to you that oh it dunno…Knuckles is the one who GUARDS the Master Emerald!" snapped Alonzo "Since he's always where the Master Emerald is he's bound to see you coming!"

"Well since Knuckles wants to put up a fight I'll be happy to oblige." sneered Eggman "Egg Gunners! Egg Lancers! Egg Stingers and Egg Launchers! ATTACK!" he bellowed.

The whole squadron obeyed his orders and zoomed down to Angel Island to seize the Master Emerald and obliterate Knuckles. Knuckles was not the kind of guy who went down without a fight so he sprang into action. The white robots, which were known as Egg Gunners, surrounded Knuckles and opened fire with their machine guns. Knuckles leaped out of their way, leaving them to accidentally shoot each other and then Knuckles punched their remains off of Angel Island. Pieces of destroyed robots rained down onto the ground below. The blue robots, known as Egg Lancers, tried firing on Knuckles with their much more lethal laser cannons. Knuckles dodged their attacks but one blast caught him off guard and he fell off the Master Emerald and landed on the ground. The Eggman robots moved into seize the giant jewel but Knuckles was quick to recover and he smashed on of the Egg Lancers to pieces with a powerful uppercut.

"Get off the Master Emerald!" he bellowed.

The robot he had destroyed with the uppercut was sent flying into another robot and they both fell out of the sky and landed with a sharp thump on the stairs that led up to the Master Emerald. Other Egg Lancers tried firing again but Knuckles dodged their attacks with ease and punched them out of the sky. Their remains fell down to the ground below Angel Island. Dr. Eggman began to growl furiously.

"I cannot believe it! I'm losing!" he roared.

"Well of course you are!" snapped Alonzo "You need much heavier weaponry then those stupid flying robots you're using!"

"Oh shut up before I throw you out of the Egg-Mobile!" snarled Eggman "Knuckles maybe winning for now but he won't be able to keep it up forever. My robots have come in large numbers so Knuckles will soon be overwhelmed."

As for the fight, more Egg Gunners made an attempt to seize the emerald while Knuckles was fending off some of the Egg Stingers. Since they didn't have hands, they used something else to grab the Master Emerald. They fired cables from their machine gun hands and the cables attached themselves to the emerald. Then with a mighty heave, they managed to slowly lift the giant gem off the ground. Knuckles punched another Egg Stinger and sent it hurtling over the edge of the island and down to the ground. Knuckles turned around to fend off some more robots and saw a squad of Egg Gunners trying to make off with the Master Emerald.

"Oy! You put that down!" he yelled, leaping into the air.

The Egg Gunners saw him coming and fired at him with their missile launchers. Most of the missiles missed Knuckles but Knuckles actually managed to punch one of the missiles and send it flying into one of the Egg Gunners. The robot was destroyed in an instant and suddenly the Master Emerald was now too heavy to carry with the one robot gone. The remaining robots struggled to keep it aloft and Knuckles decided to add insult to injury by destroying another robot with his powerful punches. Now the squad couldn't carry the giant emerald. They tried as hard as they could but their tough cables eventually gave way and snapped. The Master Emerald fell to the ground but since it wasn't that high off the ground, the fall didn't break it or even scratch it. The emerald was still as grand and marvellous as ever. Knuckles, using his sheer strength, hoisted the Master Emerald above his head, carried it up the stairs and put it back where it belonged.

"Eggman! If you want this gem you'll have to get through me first!" yelled Knuckles, punching the air.

"I think that's a good idea." said Dr. Eggman "Robots, forget the emerald! Eliminate Knuckles first and then steal the emerald!"

The robots obeyed and turned their attention to Knuckles only now. The remaining Egg Stingers aimed at Knuckles with their missile launchers and fired at him. Knuckles jumped out of the way of the missiles but the moment the missiles hit the ground, the force of the explosion caught Knuckles off guard in mid air and sent him flying up into the air. Two Egg Gunners flew after him and dropkicked him in midair. Then with one powerful downwards kick, the Egg Gunner sent Knuckles shooting into the ground like an arrow whizzing to its target. Knuckles hit the ground face first. Then, while he was still stunned from the attack, Two Egg Launchers fired some rockets at him. Knuckles managed to recover but he saw the rockets too late and ended up getting blasted by them. Knuckles flew through the air and crashed into a tree. He hit the tree so hard he literally sent it falling to the ground! Pity he forgot to say "TIMBER!" after the tree fell. Knuckles picked himself up and braced himself for another attack.

"I think I might need some back up." said Knuckles "These guys are a bit of a handful."

Back up would have to wait though since the robots were preparing for another attack. Knuckles lunged for them, roaring loudly as he prepared to punch them out of the sky…

Back in Green Hill Zone, Sonic had been taking a jog for two hours straight in an attempt to keep his mind off of those horrible thoughts he was having recently. While jogging he tried to think about something else such as how fast he was running. He even tried thinking about Knuckles fending off Eggman's attacks on Angel Island. And in a desperate act he even tried thinking about how annoying and yet how pretty Amy Rose was. But none of these seemed to work. No matter what he did to keep his mind off of those thoughts, he was still having them. In fact throughout the whole jog around Green Hill Zone, he kept thinking to himself why do forests suddenly give him a feeling of hatred and disgust? He usually loved the sights of Green Hill Zone as he ran through them and suddenly

he was finding them horrible. What was up with his mind right now? The suddenly Sonic zipped past a familiar village. He screeched to a halt and zipped back to the village to look at it. It was none other then the village of Knothole, the home of his biggest fan Amy Rose. Suddenly, Sonic began to think something horrible and then said it out loud by accident.

"What a terrible village!" he snorted "It'll look better once I burn it down!"

Then he shook his head furiously and said "Oh my god, did I just say that out loud? What is going on with me?"

What indeed? No one seemed to know, especially Cosmo. Then suddenly Sonic had the throb in his head from before and it was so sharp, sudden and painful he collapsed on the ground.

"Aaaah! What's with the sudden migraine?" he grunted, clutching his throbbing head.

He felt like his brain was going to erupt any moment now. The only difference was, the longer the throb lasted, the more horrid thoughts Sonic was beginning to have. It was almost as if the throb was causing his brain to change in someway or another. Sonic groaned and grimaced as the headache continued. Then after a while, the headache finally died down. Sonic got back to his feet. The only difference is, he was now a very changed hedgehog. He had a very evil menacing look in his eyes and he had evil sadistic thoughts similar to what Marik the Martian has. Sonic glared at Knothole and then said,

"I'm sure this village will look better after I give it a bit of a makeover."

And with that he ran into Knothole and, not taking the slightest bit of care about his speed or where he was going, he crashed through every single house he ran into and because he ran really fast, he crashed through the houses, left a giant hole in the wall and then emerged from the other side of the house. And strangely enough as he crashed through the houses, a sudden feeling of joy was sweeping over him like an ocean wave. In fact Sonic was actually

enjoying this destructive course he was having. As he crashed through more houses he thought of one house in particular he wanted to crash through, the house of Amy Rose.

Speaking of the cheerful pink hedgehog, a researcher had arrived to her house with Port, a domed shaped robot that could roboticize people with one blast. Tails had stolen it, set it in reverse****** and given it to the researchers so they could use it on any Robian they captured to turn it back to normal. Now the researcher had come to use it on Mecha Vanilla to turn her back to normal at long last. Cream and Mech Vanilla had been staying with Amy since they escaped Eggman's city. The researcher activated Port's cannons and they blasted Mecha Vanilla with a brilliant yellow cannon blast. Then in a matter of seconds, Mecha Vanilla was transformed from her robotic self back to her normal self. After the process was completed, Vanilla admired herself with joy, happy to be flesh and blood once again. Cream and Cheese both cheered and hugged Vanilla, happy to see her as her old self again. Amy couldn't help but give them a quick tear of joy. She felt so happy for the rabbit family now they were back together again.

"Well that's that done I guess." said the researcher "Thank you for informing me about this one Miss Rose. Sorry it took so long though, Port was occupied for a few days and it took a while for him to be free for me to use."

"That's OK." said Amy "I'm just glad Cream's got her mother back to normal now."

"Well I'll be off now." said the researcher "I may have other Robians to attend to. Ta-ta!"

And with that he left Amy's house, carrying Port with him.

"So, what are you going to do now you're back to normal?" Amy asked Vanilla.

"Well, I suppose we could go back to our old home." thought Vanilla "But since Cream seems to like you a lot I thought we could move into Knothole so she'll forever remain close to you."

"I think that's a wonderful idea." said Amy "Me and Cream get on like sisters whenever we're together."

Then suddenly something exploded through the wall and came to a halt. The girls were so shocked they almost jumped out off their dresses! After the smoke cleared, Amy got a shock powerful enough to knock her out of her boots.

"Sonic?" she cried "Why did you just burst through my wall like that? Couldn't you use the door?"

Sonic said nothing. He just glared at Amy in a creepy way. Amy could sense Sonic was not his usual self right away. Sonic then began to advance on Amy in a strangely menacing way. Vanilla scooped Cream up and kept her close as they watched Sonic advance on Amy. Amy began to back away, her eyes fixed onto Sonic's evil gaze.

"Um…Sonic? Why are you staring at me like that?" asked Amy "Did I do something wrong?"

Sonic still didn't answer and continued to advance on her. Amy soon found herself backed against the wall. With no where to go, she continued to stare at Sonic, her face full of fear and strangely enough, Sonic seemed to like that look.

"Sonic, what are you doing?" whimpered Amy "Why are you acting like this?"

Sonic still didn't answer. Instead he grabbed Amy by the neck and gritted his teeth at the poor girl.

"HELP!" cried Amy.

Sonic gave Amy a twisted evil grin as he prepared to severely hurt her…

Sonic had been out for a while and Tails was getting worried on where he was, especially since he was not feeling himself recently. So Tails and Cosmo decided to go and look for Sonic and see if he

was feeling any better or if his mind was still going awry with horrid thoughts. They searched in some of Sonic's favourite places for a run around Green Hill Zone, especially the loop de loop mountains but the blue hedgehog was not sighted anywhere. Being as he can run fast, Sonic could be anywhere, even on the other side of the world as far as Tails knew but he was determined to find Sonic and make sure he was alright. Tails knew one place Sonic liked to visit and that was the village of Knothole so he and Cosmo decided to go to Knothole and see if he was there. However upon arrival on Knothole, Tails and Cosmo were met with a terrible sight. Knothole looked like a drill had gone through it since every house in Knothole had a giant hole in it.

"Holy galoshes!" cried Tails, almost leaping a foot in the air "What happened here?"

"I dunno." said Cosmo "Maybe we should ask someone."

So the two walked into the wrecked village to ask someone. They came across a female duck in an apron and pigtails who clearly seemed to be cross at the sight of her wrecked home. Tails tapped her on the shoulder and the furious duck turned around to look at him.

"What do you want kid?" she snapped.

"Nothing really." said Tails "Do you have any idea what happened here?"

"Well I was having a relaxing moment in my home when suddenly this blue blur crashes straight through my home and now look at it!" the duck raved furiously "There's a hole in my wall and there's another hole on the other side of the house! Whatever that blue thing was he should really watch where he's going!"

Tails began to have a nasty theory piecing itself together in his brain. Could the duck be talking about Sonic the Hedgehog? No! She couldn't be! Sonic can run fast but he wouldn't just senselessly run into someone's home and make a hole in it. And he's certainly not careless or anything when it comes to running.

"I hope that duck woman's not talking about Sonic." said Cosmo.

"Well Sonic comes to mind whenever someone says blue blur and Sonic is blue and he becomes a blur when he runs so it must be Sonic she's talking about." said Tails "Maybe we should see Amy and see what she thinks."

And with that, Tails and Cosmo headed off to Amy's house which, like herself, was pink with a red roof so it was pretty hard to miss. As they arrived at Amy's house, they noticed a hole on one side, presumably meaning the so-called blue blur had been through Amy's house too. Tails could almost imagine how cross Amy would be if she saw that. Tails knocked on the door. But when the door opened, they saw Cream standing there instead of Amy.

"Oh Tails and Cosmo!" squealed Cream "Thank goodness you're here! Something terrible has happened!"

"Oh no! What?" asked Tails, fearing what Cream had to say.

Cream didn't say anything else, she just led them into the house and into the bedroom. The bedroom, like Amy, was pink. It had pink walls, a pink door and a pink bed with pink sheets (What is up with this girl and the colour pink?). There were several pictures of Sonic the Hedgehog pinned to the wall and one of them had "My Hero" written on it in bright neon green felt. After Cream led Tails and Cosmo into the bedroom they immediately saw something unpleasant. Amy Rose was lying in bed, unconscious and looking terrible. She had been beaten black and blue and was covered with bruises is if someone had just brutally attacked her and held back long enough for her to live. Vanilla was kneeling beside Amy and dabbing her head with a cold wet tissue to make her feel better. Cosmo looked like she was about to hurl so Tails took her out of the room and closed the door.

"What the heck happened to Amy?" shrieked Tails "She looks like she's been in a gang fight!"

"You won't believe me." snivelled Cream, tears starting to trickle down her face.

"Why wouldn't I?" asked Tails.

"Because it's so unbelievable you'll never believe it to be true." sobbed Cream.

Cheese the Chao sort of nodded in agreement.

"Cream, I'm never gonna know if you don't tell me." said Tails "Now please tell me, what happened to Amy?"

Cream just stared at the floor. She didn't look like she wanted to tell Tails the terrible truth. Vanilla decided to answer instead since Cream couldn't say anything.

"I'll tell you Tails dear." she said kindly.

"Nice to see you're not a robot anymore." said Tails politely.

"Thank you." said Vanilla "Now, here's what happened to Amy…"

She paused for a moment and then spoke.

"I have no idea what made him do this but, your friend Sonic the Hedgehog smashed through the wall and for some reason advanced on Amy in a very creepy way and then just…attacked her."

Tails looked like he was going to have a seizure and a heart attack at the same time.

"I'm not kidding." said Vanilla in case Tails denied any of this "Sonic just attacked Amy for no reason and creepily enough, appeared to enjoy it. And after he'd finished he said something like "I hope the other life forms are as fun to beat up as you are." I have no idea what's made him do that. I always thought Sonic was a heroic boy with a heart of gold."

Tails could not believe a word he was hearing. Sonic the Hedgehog had changed from a heroic hedgehog with a passion for freedom and adventure to a straight up sadist with a passion for beating people up? Something was definitely wrong. And it probably had something to do with Sonic's strange thoughts he had been having all day. If the thoughts did have something to do with Sonic's

behaviour, how did the thoughts suddenly end up changing his personality? It was almost like the thoughts had corrupted him over time. But how did this happen? Tails was so shocked at what Vanilla had told him he sat down on the red fluffy carpet that lay in the middle of the floor.

"I knew you wouldn't believe it to be true." sobbed Cream.

"It is unbelievable!" gasped Tails "How could Sonic do this to Amy? I was always certain he liked her, a lot. What on Mobius gave him the idea to do this?"

"I have the answer." said an angelic voice.

Cosmo had heard everything from the other side of the door and decided to come in and explain everything. Tails was kind of surprised Cosmo suddenly had the answer to what they were talking about.

"So what's going on with Sonic?" asked Tails.

Cosmo breathed a heavy sigh and slowly said.

"He's been corrupted." she began "When Sonic defeated Marik; he used Marik's own Energy Diamond to defeat him. But he shouldn't have used it because whenever someone who isn't a Martian uses it, a nasty side effect happens. The Energy Diamond's power literally mutates their brain and transforms that person's mind into that of a Martian."

"So you're saying Sonic now thinks like a Martian?" asked Tails "He's basically Marik the Martian in Sonic's body now?"

"Unfortunately yes." said Cosmo, looking down at the floor sadly.

"How did you know that?" asked Cream.

"One of my dad's friends used a stolen Energy Diamond against Marik's dad, Diablo and over time his mind mutated into a Martian mind and he ended up joining the Martian side." explained Cosmo "Dad reluctantly killed him before he killed any of us and we all learned the hard way that using a Martian's own weapon against

them does more harm then good."

"Is there a cure?" asked Tails, grabbing her by the shoulders and shouting madly "Oh please Cosmo! There must be a cure! What's the cure?"

"I don't know." said Cosmo sadly "No one knows. Mother wanted to capture Dad's friend and analyze him to see if we could find out how to reverse the diamond's effects but he was too dangerous to contain so like I said before, Dad reluctantly killed him."

Tails let go of Cosmo and stared at the floor. He was about to cry.

"Well, I guess we're doomed." he said sadly "Sonic's doomed to be a peace-hater forever."

"Tails I'm surprised at you!" said Cream in a very uncharacteristically stern tone with her hands on her hips "Don't you dare give up on Sonic like that! Sonic would never give up on you!"

"But Cream, we don't know how to reverse what Marik's stupid diamond has done to him!" snapped Tails "How can we possibly turn Sonic back to normal?"

"I'm sure we'll think of something." said Cream "You're supposed to be smart, you think of something."

"Cream dear that wasn't a very nice way to speak to poor Tails." said Vanilla sternly.

"I'm sorry mother." said Cream.

Tails sat on the carpet, thinking hard on how they could turn Sonic back to normal. Tails knew any attempt to turn Sonic back to normal would be futile since they had no idea on how to reverse the Energy Diamond's effects. Then Tails remembered something. He was the one who never gave up on Sonic when he was transformed into Mecha Sonic and they managed to turn Sonic back to normal then so surely they could turn Sonic back to normal again. Nothing's impossible after all, there was always a way to sort something out. Then Tails suddenly had an idea.

"Hey…I just remembered something." said Tails "There's a lake known as the Lake of Rings that is located in the Great Forest. Maybe one of the power rings it makes can change Sonic back to normal."

"Where's the Great Forest located?" asked Cosmo.

"On the west side of Green Hill Zone." explained Tails.

"And how do we find this Lake of Rings?" asked Cosmo.

"No idea actually." said Tails "It looks just like a normal lake. I'll have to build a tracker that can detect high levels of concentrated energy that the lake gives off when the power rings are made."

"How long will it take?" asked Cosmo.

"Hopefully not too long." said Tails "We'd best get home immediately and get working on that tracker. Cream, I think you should stay with your Mother and look after poor Amy."

"OK." said Cream sweetly.

"Cosmo, after I've built the tracker, me and you will find the lake of rings, get a ring and use it on Sonic." Tails said to Cosmo "And fingers crossed it will work."

"I hope your plan works too Tails." said Cosmo.

Tails nodded in agreement. "Now let's get going!" he cried "Sonic needs our help!"

Tails and Cosmo ran out of Amy's bedroom, into the sitting room, out the front door and off to Sonic's house since Tails had installed a laboratory for himself when he was working on something. After Tails and Cosmo left, Amy suddenly opened her bruised eyes. Tails had woken her up without knowing about it just before he and Cosmo left.

"Did I just hear Tails' voice right about now?" she whispered hoarsely.

"You did dear." said Vanilla "Tails and Cosmo know what's wrong with Sonic so they're going to try and turn him back to normal."

Amy smiled weakly.

"I knew there was something wrong with Sonic." she croaked "I knew he would never attack me like that if he was his normal self."

"I hope they succeed." said Cream "Or Mr. Sonic will hurt someone else."

Amy nodded in agreement. She hoped more then anyone that Tails and Cosmo could save Sonic from the wild animal he had become…

The fight on Angel Island was not going well at all. Knuckles was managing to destroy many robots but there were so many of them so he had trouble keeping up with them. Every time he destroyed one robot, he would get blasted by another. Even though Knuckles preferred to work alone, he knew right now he needed help. In fact he even wished Sonic was here. For now, he had to keep it up and pray for a miracle. As for Dr. Eggman, he just sat back and relaxed in his Egg-Mobile. He was certain Knuckles would succumb to him eventually.

"This is quite the show isn't it Alonzo?" sneered Dr. Eggman "Knuckles is getting overwhelmed by my marvellous gang of robots."

"Oh yes sir." said Alonzo "That emerald is practically ours now!"

"Hey Alonzo, you've given me an idea!" cried Dr. Eggman "Since Knuckles is busy with my robots; *we* can steal the Master Emerald ourselves!"

"Does the Egg-Mobile have the right attachments to carry it?" asked Alonzo.

"It does indeed." said Dr. Eggman, pressing a button on the control pad.

Two side compartments on the Egg-Mobile opened and an arm

came out of each side. These two arms were strong enough to carry five tonnes so a giant green emerald was no contest. Dr. Eggman slowly edged his Egg-Mobile towards the Master Emerald, his giant robotic hands ready to grab it.

Knuckles punched another Egg Gunner to pieces but he ended up taking a rocket from an Egg Launcher. Knuckles hurtled into the air and before he could fall back down to the ground, an Egg Lancer walloped him with a powerful downwards kick and sent him hurtling into the ground. Knuckles groaned in agony as pain flooded through his face. As Knuckles strained to get up, all the Eggman robots landed on the ground and surrounded him. They aimed their weapons at the poor echidna and threatened to fire. Knuckles knew he had been defeated but he knew the Master Emerald was vital to Angel Island. If it fell the results would be catastrophic so he had to keep fighting, no matter the coast.

As for Dr. Eggman, he grabbed the Master Emerald with the Egg-Mobile's powerful robotic hands and lifted it gently off the shrine. He smiled widely at his success but the smile soon left his face. A white blur appeared from nowhere and destroyed the Egg-Mobile's hands. The Master Emerald fell back into the shrine since Eggman had lifted it straight up so it just fell straight back down. Knuckles had seen the white blur attacking Dr. Eggman and he had a feeling on who it was. Dr. Eggman got angry and began yelling.

"Who dares to rob me of my victory?" he demanded.

"I dare." said a familiar smooth sexy voice.

The voice belonged to none other then one of the biggest thorns in Knuckles' side, Rouge the Bat. She fluttered into Eggman's view and smirked at the fat man.

"Did you really think you could steal that precious gem again?" she crowed.

"Rouge the Bat, how unfortunate it is to see you again." said Dr. Eggman "Now get lost! I have an emerald to steal!"

"Oh I don't think so big boy." sneered Rouge, kicking the Egg-Mobile

so hard Dr. Eggman and Alonzo almost fell out of it.

"I made a promise that I wouldn't steal the M.E. again so that means I get to help Knuckles to protect it." she said smoothly.

Knuckles was astonished by the fact Rouge was helping him when usually, she played solo. He had to remember to thank his former nemesis once this madness was over. The robots, sensing their master was in trouble, decided to ignore Knuckles and attack Rouge. They took flight and zoomed towards the bat with their guns blazing. Rouge caught sight of them and just merely flew out of their way, causing many robots to crash into each other and fall from the sky. Knuckles punched their remains over the edge of the island. Four Egg Stingers fired their missiles at Rouge but the bat was too quick for them and she flew out of the missiles path. Then she used her screw-kick attack and became a spinning white blur. With one strike on each robot, the robots were destroyed and sent falling to the ground. An Egg Launcher which was still on the ground aimed it's rocket launchers at Rouge and prepared to fire but Knuckles sneaked up behind it and smashed it to pieces with a couple of punches. Dr. Eggman stared at his crumbling squad of robots as Knuckles and Rouge took them down one by one.

"Um…master?" said Alonzo "I think we should…retreat?" he squeaked on the last word, fearing that Dr. Eggman would clobber him.

But instead of clobbering Alonzo for being right as always, Dr. Eggman actually remained clam and turned the Egg-Mobile around.

"I'll get that emerald if it's the last thing I do!" he declared.

"Stupid thing to say sir, what if it IS the last thing you do?" snorted Alonzo.

Since Dr. Eggman couldn't stand Alonzo's rudeness and that little statement just made him even angrier…he threw Alonzo out of the Egg-Mobile. Alonzo fell all the way down to the ground and smashed to pieces. But as always, he somehow managed to put himself back together (Yes, I still don't know how he does it). Dr. Eggman was at least kind enough to come back for Alonzo after the servant bot had

put himself back together. Then the two villains flew off back to their base in the Northern Border where they could plot their next scheme.

As for the remaining robots, Knuckles and Rouge had finished them all off. The final move they did involved Knuckles spinning Rouge around and then throwing her into some robots while she did a screw-kick attack on the robots she was thrown at. Now all the robots were defeated, Knuckles tossed their remains over the edge of the island and down onto the ground below. He dusted his hands off and smirked.

"Not as tough as they think they are, are they?" he sniffed.

"Oh hush." snorted Rouge "Eggman would have had your guts for garters if I didn't intervene."

Knuckles was about to argue back but he resisted since he knew Rouge was absolutely right. He was getting his butt kicked until Rouge appeared so Rouge had helped him out a lot.

"Well thank you for your help." said Knuckles "But what made you help me anyway?"

"I just felt like it." said Rouge smoothly "Especially since you're so cute I had to save you from getting your head caved in."

Knuckles went red in the face (not that he can do since he's already red!). He couldn't stand it when Rouge teased him like that.

"Well I hope you didn't stick your nose in just to steal the Master Emerald for yourself." said Knuckles angrily.

"Did those robots batter you so hard you lost your memory?" sneered Rouge "After blue boy saved me from Eggman I promised I would leave that stupid gem alone and I'm a woman of my word aren't I?"

Knuckles knew on the one hand he couldn't trust that bat and she never usually kept her promises. On the other hand Rouge would have taken the emerald off of Eggman and flew off with it if she was trying to steal it again so maybe Rouge was keeping her promise

this time round.

"Speaking of blue boy." Rouge suddenly said "My sensitive ears picked up some rumours going around Green Hill Zone."

"What kind of rumours?" asked Knuckles.

"Horrible rumours." said Rouge grimly "If I recall the rumours I heard state that…"

She paused and looked over her shoulder and then whispered into Knuckles' ear,

"Sonic has gone bad."

"WHAT?" shrieked Knuckles. He looked like he was going to go mad "What on Mobius is making people think that?"

"Well according to what I've heard, Sonic barged through Knothole and beat up some girl named Amy Rose." explained Rouge "I have no idea what's giving Sonic the idea to do that, seems very out of character for him."

"Well I think this is a lie." said Knuckles "I'm going to go to Green Hill Zone and see for myself."

"I'll come with you." said Rouge "In case blue boy attacks you and you need back up."

Knuckles glared at the bat.

"I don't need help." he snarled "I'm more then a match for Sonic."

"We'll see about that won't we redhead?" taunted Rouge.

Knuckles ignored the bat's taunts and flicked a warp ring into the air. The warp ring expanded to a size large enough for someone to walk through and Knuckles walked through it. Just before the ring could close, Rouge sneaked through the ring after Knuckles. After all, the bat was secretly fond of Knuckles even though she'd never admit it and she didn't want him to take on someone like Sonic the Hedgehog on his own, especially since the hedgehog has gone

rogue, so Rouge was going to help Knuckles if he liked it or not.

Three and a half long hours slowly ticked by as Tails worked his head off on the tracker he was going to use to find the Lake of Rings but he'd finally built it. The tracker was shaped like a big chunky mobile phone similar to those used in the olden days with an antenna that could "point" in any direction and a small screen that would flash if it detected the lake. It was coloured yellow after Tails' own fur colour. Cosmo had spent the long hours just waiting for Tails to build the tracker. When Tails finally emerged from his laboratory, Cosmo was strangely happy to see him as if he'd been gone for a week and he had just returned.

"So have you built the tracker thing at last?" asked Cosmo.

"It took me three and a half hours but I've built it." said Tails, proudly showing it "Now let's go and find that lake."

He and Cosmo left the house and Tails switched the tracker on. The tracker whirred into life and the antenna pointed to the left. The Great Forest was located on the west side of Green Hill Zone so Tails went in the direction the tracker was pointing. To save his legs, Tails took flight but then he thought about poor Cosmo. She couldn't fly and she'd probably get tired running after him so Tails picked Cosmo up by the waist and carried her. In order for him to use both hands, he gave Cosmo the tracker so Cosmo could make sure he was still going in the right direction while flying.

"Which direction is the antenna on the tracker pointing now?" asked Tails.

Cosmo peered at the tracker. The antenna was pointing directly forward now.

"Um, it's pointing straight ahead." said Cosmo.

"OK, tell me if it changes direction." said Tails as he continued to fly.

"OK." said Cosmo.

She was enjoying the feeling of the wind soaring over her as Tails carried her in flight. For a few minutes on end, Tails flew straight forward. If he was running or walking, he'd probably be taking a lot longer to reach the lake then he was now. Then after what seemed like an hour of going straight forward, The antenna on the tracker pointed to the north-east.

"Tails, it's pointing slightly to the right." Cosmo informed him.

"That probably means we need to go North West." said Tails, turning slightly to the right.

The antenna then pointed straight forward so Tails flew straight on. He didn't have to fly far though because two minutes later a lake came into view. The lake was round and at least twenty feet long and twenty-four feet wide. Then suddenly the screen on Tails' tracker flashed, the dazzling light blinding Cosmo for a moment since she was the one holding it. Tails looked down and saw the flashing screen on the tracker.

"I think we found it." said Tails excitedly.

He descended to the ground and put Cosmo down on her feet before landing himself near the edge of the lake. Tails looked at the tracker. The screen was still flashing. The screen was supposed to flash if they found the Lake of Rings and because it was flashing, it obviously meant Tails and Cosmo had found it.

"Now we've found the lake, what do we do now?" asked Cosmo "Ask it nicely for a ring?"

"No silly." laughed Tails "We have to wait until a ring comes up and then we catch it. And that usually takes twenty…four…hours…to…hap…pen." he said slowly, his face fell into despair.

"We have no idea how long we have to wait for the ring now." moaned Cosmo "We could be waiting for hours or even till tomorrow for it to appear."

"Let's just keep our fingers crossed a ring hasn't already appeared and we missed it." said Tails "Otherwise we'll have to wait until

tomorrow."

"I don't think you'll be waiting that long because you won't live to see tomorrow!" came a familiar voice with an added growly tone to it.

Tails and Cosmo almost leaped into the lake in surprise. They turned around to see yours truly, Sonic the Hedgehog. He still looked like Sonic only he was now glaring at them in an evil way and his eyes were as black as coal. Tails fought hard to keep himself from shaking with fear but he failed.

"Hello Tails." purred Sonic in a very sinister voice "Out sight seeing?"

"S-s-s-Sonic." stammered Tails "St-st-stay a-a-way f-f-from me."

"Or what?" scoffed Sonic "You'll tickle me to death with those giant paintbrushes that are glued to your butt? You have no chance against a Martian warrior!"

"Martian warrior? Sonic you're a hedgehog you idiot!" snapped Tails "What the heck's the matter with you?"

"He thinks he's a Martian now remember?" said Cosmo "His brain has mutated because of that diamond and now he not only has the mind of a Martian, he thinks he IS one."

"Oh Cosmo." sighed Sonic "I don't THINK I'm a Martian, I AM one! I thought you'd know what a Martian looks like since your wretched kind is at war with them!"

"Sonic! Knock it off!" cried Tails desperately "This isn't you, you're not a Martian and you're not a peace hater! You're Sonic the Hedgehog, the fastest thing alive and my best friend!"

"Oh will you shut up and drown already?" snarled Sonic, pushing Tails so hard, the horrified fox cub fell into the lake with a mighty splash.

Cosmo couldn't believe her eyes. Sonic would never do that to Tails and seeing him do it was a horrifying sight, not that he could help it since he had been corrupted. Tails came back to the surface of the

water and splashed about frantically. Sonic picked up a stone and threw it at Tails' head. Unfortunately, he hit him and the stone was so hard Tails passed out and he disappeared under the water. Sonic, since he had the mind of a Martian, was delighted at this.

"And as for you…" he snarled at Cosmo "I think you should get plucked like flowers usually do!"

Cosmo took a step back and found herself near the edge of the lake. She would have fallen in if she took another step back.

"Please, don't hurt me." pleaded Cosmo.

"Why not?" asked Sonic "Peace loving creatures are a waste of space in this galaxy why should I let you live? In fact, you can drown alongside Tails!"

Sonic pushed Cosmo into the lake. Cosmo disappeared from sight under the water. Sonic waited for a moment to see if she would come up but she didn't.

"I know plants like water but even plants can drown." he said to himself "Now I've killed those two ninnies, I'll attack someone else. Hopefully I'll enjoy it as much as I enjoyed beating up that pink idiot I beat up earlier."

And with that, Sonic sped off at his trademark speed. The moment he left though, Cosmo shot up from the surface, gasping for breath. She had Tails' unconscious body over her shoulder. After Sonic pushed Cosmo into the lake, she dived down to get Tails and because the lake was so deep, she had to go down pretty far which explains why she took so long to return to the surface. Cosmo pulled Tails to the bank and hauled him out of the water and onto the grass. After she did that, Cosmo pulled herself out of the lake and coughed a hard spluttering cough. After coughing Cosmo observed Tails' unconscious body. The poor fox just lay there dead as a doornail. Cosmo began to get a bad feeling in her stomach. She began to shake Tails gently in hope of waking him up.

"Tails." she said softly "Oh please wake up."

Tails didn't stir or even twitch. He remained as he was. Cosmo's eyes began to well up.

"Oh Tails, please don't die on me." she begged to herself "Sonic will never forgive himself when he finds out he killed you."

She began to shake his body a bit harder. Tails still didn't do anything. Cosmo felt like she was going to panic. She shook him as hard as she could. While she was shaking Tails, his eyes suddenly started to open but because Cosmo was shaking him so hard she didn't realize it. Then Tails started coughing and that brought Cosmo to a stop.

"Cough! Why is it I'm always falling in a lake and almost drowning?" coughed Tails, remembering the time Nicole had saved him from drowning in a lake*******.

"Tails! Oh my gosh you're alive!" cried Cosmo, grasping the startled fox cub into a hug.

Tails was so shocked he couldn't say anything. The girl he secretly fancied was hugging him. Tails felt like he wanted to hug her back but he felt too embarrassed to do so. Cosmo suddenly realized what she was doing and let go of Tails, her face went bright red.

"Um, thank you for saving my life Cosmo." said Tails, full of gratitude.

"Oh Tails I had to." said Cosmo "If we turned Sonic back to normal and you were dead he would never forgive himself."

"Yeah you're right." said Tails "Speaking of Sonic, where's he gone now?"

"Run off to cause more trouble I suppose." said Cosmo and then she suddenly added "What do we do now?"

"We wait for the power ring to come up so hopefully, we can use it to save Sonic from the menace he's become." said Tails "I'll wait until tomorrow if I have to."

And with that Tails sat up and stared at the lake. Cosmo just sat

beside him and admired the lake's beauty. Deep inside, Tails was silently praying "Please let a ring come now, we need one badly." As time ticked by, Tails and Cosmo could only wait for the magic to happen. And yet they were also worried about Sonic and what harm he would be causing next…

Speaking of the blue hedgehog, he was running through the Great Forest and heading to Green Hill Zone. Sonic remembered where Empire City, the city where the homeless people of Mobotropolis currently resided, was and in order to head there and cause as much malice as he wanted, he had to make a sharp turn right out of the Great Forest and back into Green Hill Zone and the go straight forward to the under construction Mobotropolis then turn right from there and go straight forward to Empire City. Sonic remembered the directions well unfortunately so he wouldn't have much trouble getting there. His Martian mind thought about all the delightfully evil things he would be doing once he arrived at the city. Sonic came to a sharp corner and he turned to one side and skidded sideways to a halt. The moment he stopped though, he shot on again. He past a brown wooden sign that said "You are now entering Green Hill Zone. Have a nice day!" so this meant he had now left the Great Forest. Now it was just straight on from there to Mobotropolis and once he arrived there he would turn to the right and head straight forward to Empire City.

But Sonic didn't get any further. A few minutes after passing the sign, a warp ring opened up from nowhere in a bright golden flash, causing Sonic to stop dead in his tracks and shield his eyes from the light. Out of the ring stepped Knuckles the Echidna and Rouge the Bat. Knuckles did not seem happy at the fact Rouge just stowed away with him but he decided to let it drop for now. Sonic glared at the two life forms that just appeared out of thin air.

"Oh goody!" he said, grinning inanely "Fresh meat to soften my knuckles on! How lovely!"

Knuckles and Rouge turned around and saw Sonic standing there with a very devilish look on his face. They were pretty taken aback by what Sonic had just said to them.

"What did you just say Sonic?" growled Knuckles, clenching his fists.

"I said, Oh goody! Fresh meat to soften my knuckles on! How lovely!" repeated Sonic, punching his left hand with his right fist.

"Oh yeah, he's defiantly gone bad." said Rouge instantly "I've barely known blue boy and yet I know for sure he would never say something like that."

"Sonic, what's gotten to your head buddy?" asked Knuckles, holding back.

"I'm not your buddy, pal!" snapped Sonic "And nothing's gotten to my head! What's given you that daft idea?"

"Well for starters you're not talking like Sonic." noted Knuckles "You have a devilish look on your face and you seem intent on hurting us."

"Well that's because I am!" yelled Sonic, grinning inanely again and baring his teeth "I will beat you the same way I beat up that pink hedgehog girl earlier! And maybe I'll enjoy it just as much!"

Knuckles couldn't believe what he was hearing. Sonic was suddenly starting to sound like a straight up sadist and thug now. He beat up Amy and he claims to have enjoyed it! This was not like Sonic at all. Sonic may have been cocky and overbearing, but he was not sadistic and he definitely did not beat up any of the good guys. Something was up with him but what? Knuckles raised his fists and bared his teeth.

"Sonic, I'm gonna knock some sense back into you!" he yelled.

"Just try it." sniffed Sonic "I'll only vanquish you. Your strength is no match for an ever alert, well trained Martian warrior!"

Both Knuckles and Rouge gasped together.

"Martian warrior?" questioned Rouge "What the heck is a Martian warrior?"

"Long story." said Knuckles "But I haven't the faintest idea why

Sonic suddenly thinks he's a Martian."

"Last time I looked, Sonic boy is a hedgehog." said Rouge.

"Why do you Mobian finks keep thinking I'm a hedgehog?" snapped Sonic "I'm a Martian and in the name of Mars, I will obliterate you and then I'll obliterate this planet!"

"Just try it traitor!" snarled Knuckles "I'm gonna string you up and use you as a punching bag!"

Sonic lunged at Knuckles, roaring like a lion. Knuckles leaped into the air and delivered a massive sucker punch to Sonic's face. The blue hedgehog was sent flying into a tree. He hit the tree so hard it actually fell over! The tree was about to crash down on top of Rouge but the bat managed to fly out of the way just before the tree crashed down on the ground.

"I should have said "Timber!"." sneered Knuckles.

The blow Knuckles delivered to Sonic had been so powerful, Sonic had been knocked unconscious. Knuckles grinned at his knocked out opponent.

"That wasn't much of a fight was it?" he gloated "All I did was one punch and he's out cold!"

"Well you did hit him pretty hard big boy." said Rouge "Makes me wonder why you never hit me that hard when we were enemies."

"Don't tempt me!" warned Knuckles "Now we'd best tie the little maniac up and bring him to the MPD. Hopefully they'll place him under heavy lockdown and everybody will be safe from him."

Rouge chuckled softly and said "I can't imagine Tails being awfully pleased to hear his best friend has gone rogue and insane all at once."

"I'm pretty sure Tails already knows about it." thought Knuckles "Now get something to tie Sonic up with."

"Don't look at me red head, I don't carry rope or anything like that."

scoffed Rouge "And I doubt we're gonna find anything in a forest that we can tie Sonic up with."

"In that case we'll have to bring him in as he is." said Knuckles "Good thing I still have my warp ring." he added, pulling the ring out from his glove "So now I can just warp us to an MPD station."

"I think we should pick the one located in Central City." suggested Rouge "I've heard that's supposed to be top notch in security and lockdown."

"Central City it is then." said Knuckles "Now let's get going."

He bent down to pick Sonic up…only to be met with a sucker punch to the face that was almost as hard as the one he'd given Sonic a minute ago. Sonic had unfortunately come to and he seemed very angry. He'd punched Knuckles so hard the echidna toppled over on his back and dropped his warp ring. Sonic laughed at Knuckles.

"Ha! Got you with your own medicine!" he cackled "How does that feel Knuckle-Wuckle?" he jeered.

Knuckles got back to his feet, clutching his nose and growling like a wolf. Knuckles glared a fiery glare at Sonic.

"That's it Sonic! You're going down so hard you won't know what hit you!" bellowed Knuckles.

"Just try it pea brain!" yelled Sonic challengingly.

The two boys lunged at each other and grappled arms with one another. Sonic and Knuckles began pushing against one another as hard as they could. They were trying to get an edge over each other. Try as they might though, neither one could push on harder then the other could. Rouge decided to intervene by delivering a screw-kick to the back on Sonic. Sonic yelped as Rouge knocked him off his feet. And then before he could get up, Knuckles grabbed Sonic by the quills and threw him straight into a tree. Unfortunately, Sonic lifted his legs up so he hit the tree feet first and then he sprang off the tree with his legs and hurtled straight into Knuckles like a firing arrow. Sonic hit him so hard he knocked Knuckles over and sent him

flying backwards about ten feet before the echidna came to a halt on his back. Rouge tried to attack again but Sonic dodged her speedy move and counter attacked with a kick to the face. The bat fell on her side and rubbed her cheek tenderly. Sonic could kick just as hard as she could. The hedgehog laughed at his two opponents.

"If this is all you've got, this fight will be a cinch!" he taunted.

Knuckles and Rouge both got back to their feet and prepared to attack again. Sonic laughed once again and lunged at them…

Back at the Lake of Rings, twenty-five slow, long minutes ticked by and still nothing had happened. Tails was beginning to find himself falling asleep due to the quietness of the forest and the gentle flowing of the slow flowing lake he sat waiting at. Every time he nodded off though, he kept jolting himself awake. If he fell asleep and the ring came he would miss it. Cosmo however, was not falling asleep. She just lay back peacefully on the grass and breathed in the fresh air. The quiet and peaceful nature forest was reminding Cosmo heavily of home and she felt in touch with it just lying in the grass and listening to the voices of nature. She just wished that her home wasn't currently being invaded and her people weren't at war with those stupid Martians. Two minutes later, Tails nodded off once again. Then he jolted himself awake and saw that still nothing was happening.

"I don't think I can keep this up any longer." whined Tails "I'm so bored right now!"

"Well if you're bored Tails then why don't you do something else and I'll watch the lake?" suggested Cosmo, sitting back up. She wasn't too pleased that Tails just disturbed her train of thoughts.

"I dunno." said Tails "I think maybe because I wanna see what happens when the magic rings come out of the lake."

Then suddenly the centre of the lake began to bubble slightly. Hundreds of bubbles formed from the lake and quickly popped. Tails noticed this and stared hard at the centre of the lake. Then bubbling

began to increase and soon the lake was bubbling faster then bubbles in a Jacuzzi. And finally, something happened. Out of the bubbling water emerged…a shiny golden ring. Its bright golden glow dazzled Tails and Cosmo and they stared admiringly at it. Seizing the opportunity before he lost it, Tails took flight and flew towards the ring. The ring started to descend back into the water but Tails grabbed it just as it was beginning to submerge under the water. Tails carried the ring back to shore and sighed heavily.

"Thank goodness for that!" he cried "I almost lost it!"

"After what felt like forever, it finally decided to appear." said Cosmo "It was such a good fortune that we arrived in plenty of time to get it."

"Thank goodness we didn't miss it otherwise we'd have to wait until tomorrow." added Tails "Now we have the power ring, let's find Sonic and use it on him. And pray with all your might it works!" he added, crossing his fingers.

"How do we find Sonic?" asked Cosmo desperately "We have no idea where he is now."

"I'll search this place up and down." said Tails "We'll find him eventually."

With that said he handed Cosmo the power ring, grabbed her by the waist, twisted his tails around one another and took flight with Cosmo in tow. He flew away from the peaceful Lake of Rings and flew in search of Sonic the Hedgehog. He hoped the poor, corrupted hedgehog wasn't causing too much trouble…

As for the fight, Knuckles aimed some powerful uppercuts at Sonic but being the speedy hedgehog he is, he dodged every single shot. Sonic then leaped up, spun around and kicked Knuckles in the face. He landed on the ground and elbowed Rouge, who was trying to ambush him from behind, in the stomach. The stricken bat fell to her knees, wheezing heavily. Sonic tried to hurt Rouge again but Knuckles punched him in the back and sent him hurtling into a bush.

Sonic leaped out of the bush in a spin-dash and tried to hit Knuckles but Knuckles caught the spinning hedgehog in his hands. Knuckles strained to hold him back as Sonic's spin-dash move pushed on him hard. Then with a valiant effort, Knuckles threw Sonic as hard as he could and the spinning hedgehog hurtled straight into a tree. He cleaved straight through it and sent the tree tumbling down to the ground with a mighty crash. Sonic cleaved through another tree and sent that one falling down before finally hitting a giant oak tree and coming to a halt. Sonic sprang out of the tree with his legs and landed feet first on the ground. He clenched his fists and growled at Knuckles. Knuckles clenched his fists and got into a battle-ready stance.

"You ready to give in Sonic?" he said, smirking.

"This fight has only just begun!" yelled Sonic "Now is when it really gets going!"

The blue hedgehog span into his spin-dash manoeuvre once again and charged…straight over Knuckles and Rouge and into a tree. He cleaved straight through the tree and brought it falling down with a horrible creaking noise. Knuckles ran for it but Rouge fell over after Sonic ricocheted off of her. The falling tree landed straight on Rouge's legs. The poor bat cried in excruciating pain. That tree was awfully big and awfully hard so you can imagine how much pain Rouge felt after the tree fell on her legs. As well as being in colossal pain, Rouge was stuck fast under the sheer weight of the tree. It would probably take a hundred Mobians to pick it up. Seeing Rouge trapped under the tree brought sheer delight to Sonic's face. Now he could attack her and finish her off and she wouldn't be able to get away. Sonic spun into another spin-dash and propelled himself towards the trapped bat. Before Sonic could hit Rouge though, Knuckles leaped up and punched him away as if he was thumping a basketball away from the enemy player. Sonic landed straight into the ground but he didn't stop. He actually churned his way into the ground and began digging straight down. He was probably trying the old dig-underground-and-pop-back-up-and-attack routine but Knuckles didn't seem to notice. He was trying to free Rouge from the tree. He pushed with all his might on the tree but he didn't have the strength to push it off of Rouge's legs. Then without warning,

Sonic appeared from the underground and spin-dashed straight into Knuckles. Sonic landed on his feet and then landed Knuckles with a homing attack. Knuckles punched at him but he missed and Sonic spin-dashed Knuckles again. Sonic, once again spin-dashed at Knuckles but Knuckles leaped out of the way and Sonic hit the tree that was trapping Rouge. Sonic hit it so hard he actually knocked the tree off of Rouge's legs so now the bat was free. The only problem was, the tree had broken both of her legs so Rouge would be unable to kick. Still, she could fly above the ground using her wings and she could still punch. Sonic wasn't pleased at the fact he just freed Rouge but he didn't care. He was going to cause her more pain anyway. Sonic leaped into the air and prepared to land a dropkick on Rouge but Knuckles interfered with an uppercut to the face. Sonic fell back down to the ground. Knuckles panted heavily. He was clearly tired from this fight and Sonic was clearly more of a handful then he thought he was. Sonic got back to his feet and glared at Knuckles.

"Give it up Sonic, no one's going to win this fight!" puffed Knuckles.

"That's what you think!" yelled Sonic.

He then held up something small, round and golden for Knuckles to see. It was his warp ring!

"How did you get that?" asked Knuckles.

"You dropped it after I gave you that sucker punch." explained Sonic "And I swiped it while you weren't looking."

He activated the warp ring. The ring expanded to three times its size. What was Sonic planning on doing? Warping away and causing damage somewhere else? But Sonic did not go through the warp ring, instead he spin-dashed Knuckles in the head and knocked him over. Before Knuckles could recover, Sonic grabbed him by the dreadlocks and tossed him through the warp ring. Rouge followed him through. The warp ring closed and Sonic dusted his hands off.

"I do hope Dr. Eggman takes care of you for me." he sneered.

You see, that's where the warp ring led, straight into Dr. Eggman's base. So now Knuckles and Rouge would be fighting for their lives in Eggman's base. Seeing his enemies defeated, Sonic decided to carry on to Empire City. But the sound of someone calling his name brought him to a quick stop.

"Sonic! Stop right where you are!" yelled the voice.

Sonic turned around and gasped. Tails and Cosmo were standing there and glaring at him.

"Impossible!" shrieked Sonic "You should be at the bottom of the lake and dead!"

"Cosmo saved me." said Tails "Now Sonic, you will surrender yourself!"

"And why should I?" scoffed Sonic.

"Because I have this." said Tails, holding up the ring he'd gotten from the lake.

Sonic stared at the ring in fascination.

"This is a power ring." said Tails "I'll use its power to become more powerful then you can imagine. You want it? Come and get it!"

Bad choice of words though. Sonic charged straight into Tails and knocked the fox over. Tails dropped the ring and Cosmo grabbed it while Sonic wasn't looking. Sonic grabbed Tails by the fur on his chest and threw him into a tree. Tails fell back to the ground and lay there. Sonic found a large rock lying nearby and he picked it up. Tails remained where he was, staring directly at his best friend and frozen with fear. He could tell Sonic was planning to crush him with the rock. Sonic grinned wickedly at the fox and raised the rock above his head.

"Let's see how easily this rock will crush your head!" he said sadistically.

"No! Please, Sonic no!" begged Tails, tears coming to his eyes.

Sonic ignored him and prepared to throw the rock at Tails. Tails, with tears pouring down his face, covered his face in fear. Sonic was about to let Tails have it until Cosmo interfered.

"Leave him alone!" ordered Cosmo "I'll give you the ring if you leave Tails alone."

Sonic happily obliged and put the rock down. He turned away from the terrified fox and walked towards Cosmo, who showed no signs of fear. Tails uncovered his face and was relieved to see Sonic was falling for Cosmo's obvious trick. She was going to willingly let Sonic have the ring and if it worked, he would be back to his old self once again. Sonic walked up to Cosmo and smiled evilly at her.

"You would willingly betray your own people and let me have ultimate power?" he hissed at her.

"There's no point in fighting a battle I can't win." said Cosmo "So I surrender and I'm reluctantly going to let you have the ring."

"Good girl!" laughed Sonic, patting her on the head "I'll be sure to give Diablo your regards once I ruin this planet! I'm sure he'll be thrilled to hear a Seedrian has betrayed her people and is helping us Martians wreck the galaxy!"

Sonic snatched the ring out of Cosmo's gentle hands. But the moment he grabbed it the ring blasted him with a bright golden glow and some sparkling energy buzzed around his hands. Sonic screamed as the ring's energy began to surge up his body. Tails and Cosmo watched this display with interest. Tails crossed his fingers, closed his eyes and whispered to himself "Please work! Please work! Please work!" as Sonic was engulfed by the ring's energy. Then the bright sparkling energy slowly died down and Sonic collapsed to the ground. He appeared to have passed out. Tails and Cosmo ran to his side and knelt down by him.

"Did…did it work?" asked Cosmo nervously.

"I hope so." said Tails worriedly.

Then Sonic opened his eyes. His eyes were now back to their

natural green colour. Sonic, with a heavy groan, got back to his feet while clutching his head. He shook his head and mumbled droopily.

"When did I get such a major headache?" he murmured.

"Sonic!" Tails cried with joy "You're back!"

"I'm back?" mumbled Sonic "Where did I go like?"

"Marik's Energy Diamond corrupted you and turned your brain into a Martian brain." explained Cosmo "You ended up thinking like Marik and acting like Marik."

"Holly spin-dashes!" cried Sonic "I guess that explains the horrid thoughts I had earlier. Did I kill someone?" he asked, hoping the answer would be no.

"Nope." said Tails "But you wrecked Knothole and beat Amy black and blue though."

Sonic pulled a funny face.

"Oh no! I wrecked one of my favourite places to visit!" yelped Sonic "And Amy will never forgive me for beating her up when I was corrupted!"

"I'm sure she'll understand." said Tails "Especially since you're you again."

"Yep and it feels good to be back!" said Sonic, flashing his trademark grin and thumbs up sign "The hedgehog is back in business!"

Then suddenly a warp ring opened up and Knuckles leaped out of it and onto Sonic. Knuckles and Rouge had managed to hold off some Eggman robots long enough to activate the warp ring and get back through before they were mince meat. Knuckles looked like he was about ready to kill Sonic now.

"I'm gonna rip you to pieces you bloodthirsty hedgehog!" screamed Knuckles, preparing to punch Sonic.

"Easy Knuckles, I'm me again!" yelped Sonic.

"Yeah!" cried Tails "I used a power ring to fix his mind!"

Cosmo showed Knuckles the power ring. Knuckles relaxed himself and let Sonic get back up.

"Where did you get that ring from?" asked Knuckles.

"The Lake of Rings." said Tails "I thought the rings would be able to restore Sonic's mind back to normal."

"I have no idea how you found that lake but I'm glad you did." said Sonic, giving Tails a smile that suggested "Good job buddy" "Cause now I'm my good old self again."

"I still don't forgive you for breaking my legs." said Rouge, scowling.

"Oh they'll heal." said Sonic "And I apologize for that. I was corrupted. According to Cosmo, it was Marik's Energy Diamond that messed my mind up."

"Of course!" said Knuckles, snapping his fingers "No wonder Sonic was acting like Marik and thinking he was a Martian! How did I not work that out?"

"Maybe because you haven't got a brain." snickered Rouge.

Knuckles growled at the bat angrily whereas Sonic, Tails and Cosmo laughed at him. After they stopped laughing Sonic said

"Now I'm back to normal I'm gonna fix Knothole, apologize to Amy and plan on foiling Dr. Eggman's next schemes once again!"

"About that, me and Rouge kicked his butt out of Angel Island earlier." said Knuckles, grinning.

Sonic laughed at Knuckles' remark.

"I bet he won't try and steal the Master Emerald any time soon!" he snickered "And you know what? Me and you should kick Eggman's butt together sometime soon!"

And with that, everybody else laughed with him.

Footnotes:

*** See the previous story**

**** See the previous story (again)**

*** See Story 20 for the epic battle between Dr. Eggman and Sonic

**** See Stories 8-9 for Eggman's first attempt at stealing the M.E.

***** See Story 2

****** **See Story 14**

******* See Story 11 (Yes I'm sick of these footnotes!)

Whew! How's that for my first milestone? Martian possessed Sonic is creepy as hell! LOL. And you've got to admit, the Energy Diamond mutating Sonic's mind was quite the plot twist wasn't it? Well get ready for the road to Story 50 is we meet new faces, old faces and partake in new adventures that only Sonic the Hedgehog is cool enough to have! Join me next time as Tails' little spy machine ends up being too useful for his own good. Reviews are welcome.

Also, see spin-off title* Tales from Mobius *for an all new adventure staring Cream and Cosmo coming soon!

Hired Hands Part 1

Story 26: Hired Hands Part 1: Snooping as Usual

Sonic took a deep breath of fresh air and sighed happily.

"Oh yeah, it's good to be back." he said to himself "No more horrid thoughts, Knothole's nicely fixed and I have the perfect gift for a certain pink hedgehog I know."

Sonic raced off through the Great Forest, a large forest near to Green Hill Zone only the Great Forest didn't have any mountains shaped like loop-the-loops, it was just an ordinary forest. Sonic liked the Great Forest just as much as it often offered him a nice quiet place to chill out or have a good hearty jog. This time though, Sonic was looking for a rose bush. He remembered there was one near the Lake of Rings, the very place he was heading. Sonic, in no time at all, reached the lake and skidded sideways to a halt. The Lake of Rings had just made its only power ring of the day and it had risen up from the water. Sonic grabbed a long stick and hooked the ring on it. He brought the ring to himself and stared at its golden gleam.

"How one of these managed to fix my mind when it was messed up I'll never know." said Sonic "But I bet these will come in handy in battle one day."

He didn't have anywhere to put the ring so he just held it in his hand. Sonic walked up to the rose bush that lay a few meters away from the lake. The bush was teaming with red roses. Sonic chose a big gleaming red one in the centre and picked it out.

"How appropriate to give Amy a rose since her surname is Rose." Sonic said to himself with a chuckle.

Now he'd chosen a gift for Amy, he ran off again. In a matter of seconds, Sonic raced into Knothole and screeched to a halt. He had a feeling the citizens might still be a bit nervy of him since when his mind was messed up; he barged through Knothole and made a mess of it. Luckily he'd repaired it pretty nicely and insisted on doing

the work himself since he'd wrecked Knothole. Sonic just walked through Knothole and headed for Amy Rose's house. It was pretty hard to miss since unlike the other houses in Knothole; Amy's was pink and red, just like herself. Sonic walked up to Amy's door, put the rose on the doorstep along with a little note he wrote earlier and knocked on the door. Then he zipped off before Amy could answer it. Amy opened the door and looked around only to see no one there. Despite being beaten black and blue the other day, Amy had made a steady recovery and was just as good as new again. She was a bit baffled to see that someone knocked on her door but no one was there. Then Amy saw the rose on her doorstep along with a note.

"Aw a rose." said Amy picking it up and smelling it happily "How funny for someone to give me a rose and my surname is also rose."

Amy picked up the note that came with the rose and read it. It was a bit hard to read due to Sonic's relatively poor handwriting but she managed to read it. It said:

"Dear Amy,

To say sorry for beating you up badly while I was corrupted, I've given you this rose as a token of apology. I hope we can put this messy business behind us and be friends again.

From Sonic."

Amy swooned in the doorway dreamily and happily.

"My Sonic does care for me after all." she sighed dreamily "I wish he was here so I could say to him "Apology accepted"."

She went back inside, singing merrily to herself and closed the door. Sonic, who had been hiding behind a wall had listened to what Amy Rose had been saying to herself and was pleased to hear she was willing to accept his apology. Now that he'd made Amy happy again, Sonic ran off once again. He was now heading to his little home on the outskirts of Green Hill Zone. Sonic looked at the power ring he held in his hand and had a little thought.

"I wonder if this thing can enhance my speed?" he wondered.

He held the ring tightly and thought about going faster. The ring's energy began to pulse up his body and its golden glow became more dazzling and bright. Then Sonic roared down the forest like a speeding bullet. This was an amazing sensation he was having. He'd had never gone this fast before and unlike Marik's Energy Diamond, it wouldn't mess up his brain. Sonic was going to fast everything became a blur whizzing past him as he ran. Sonic had no idea if he had reached home since everything was blurred so he decided to slow down. It's a good thing he did slow down because he almost ran past his house. He screeched to a halt and stared at the ring in his hand. The ring's glow died down and its golden paint job faded into a murkier golden colour. The rings from the Lake of Rings burn out after use so the user has to use it when he/she needs to. Sonic chucked the now useless ring over his shoulder and said;

"Those rings pack quite a punch don't they? I ran faster then I've ever run before! Pity they don't seem to last long so next time I get one, which will be tomorrow since they only come out once a day, I'd best use it when I really need to."

Sonic opened the door to his house and walked inside. Just as he'd expected, he saw his best friend Tails sitting at the desk with a pair of earphones on again. Tails was listening in on Dr. Eggman's conversations once again and he appeared to be finding out a lot as he had a lot of notes written down beside the machine the earphones were connected to. Sonic decided not to bother Tails since he was likely listening in on yet another conversation. Tails was listening very closely to this one and he was writing down more notes on a piece of paper with a black pen. After Tails wrote the notes he took the earphones off and put them beside the machine. Then he gathered all his notes together and turned around in his chair. He was briefly surprised to see Sonic there since he hadn't heard him come in.

"Oh Sonic, you're back." said Tails "What have you been up to then?"

"I just had a run through the Great Forest and gave Amy a rose as a

token of apology." said Sonic "Luckily for me; she's willing to forgive me after what I unwillingly did to her."

"I knew Amy would have gotten over your Martian-minded agenda." said Tails "She's crazy over you after all."

"Yeah she is." said Sonic grimly "So, what have you been up to Tails? More spying on Eggman I presume?"

"Uh huh." said Tails "And boy has he got a lot on his mind."

He held up the sheaf of notes he had and flicked through them, reading them as he came to them.

"He's sending a robot strike force to attack the Downunda Royal Fighters and retrieve whatever land Eggman's already lost." he read from one note and flicked on to another "Then he's going to send a strike team to capture Bunnie Rabbot and ransack Megapolis, then he's going to send some robots to Mobotropolis and sabotage the building work so Eggman can rebuild it into his image and finally he's sending a new squad of robots to try and retrieve Grand Metropolis for him."

Sonic whistled in awe.

"That's one busy guy hey Tails?" he said "Just think how unprepared for all those attacks we would be if we didn't find out all those things Eggman's planning. The Royal Fighters would be toast!"

"That's exactly why I built this thing." said Tails, patting the machine tenderly "So we can find out Eggman's move before he makes it and remain one step ahead of the fat guy."

"Have you informed everybody of your discoveries?" asked Sonic.

"I sure have." said Tails "Geoffrey St. John's preparing his team for the robot strike force, the Megapolis Royal Fighters are armed and ready, Team Chaotix are at Mobotropolis, ready to defend it and the Metropolis Royal Fighters are preparing themselves for Eggman's robot squad."

"I bet old egghead's gonna be REALLY mad when he sees his many

attack forces crumbling before him because we were ready for them!" laughed Sonic "I fact, I'll join Team Chaotix in defending Mobotropolis. See ya later Tails!"

And with that he rushed out through the door faster then you could open your mouth to speak. After Sonic left, Tails leafed through the notes again and stopped at one that had information about something he couldn't believe he'd forgotten to tell Sonic about.

"What's Project: Metal Sonic?" he wondered to himself.

As for Dr. Eggman, he was watching the performances of his many attack forces in the computer room. The monitors displayed everything the robots saw and Eggman watched them closely.

"Those stupid fighters will be blown to atoms before they can prepare to fight back!" he sneered "I've picked my finest machines for this job and no one will see them coming!"

"Agreed sir." said his snooty, stuck up servant bot Alonzo "I'm amazed how well you've done since your humiliating defeat the other day*."

"I was so close to vanquishing Sonic that day!" groaned Dr. Eggman, remembering the eventful showdown between him and Sonic and how he nearly won but Knuckles stepped in and ruined everything with Sonic helping him "But this time, not even Sonic will see these robots coming!"

"Nice of you to try the subtle approach I must say." said Alonzo "Choosing a moment when the Royal Fighters look like they've lowered their guard and then come in for the kill."

"Yes it was a good idea wasn't it?" purred Dr. Eggman "And we're about to find out how well it's going to work once my robots attack."

Alonzo just nodded. Maybe his master wasn't such a dipstick after all. Maybe he'd finally come up with a plan that was guaranteed to make them victorious. All Alonzo had to do now was stand and watch, then he and Eggman will see how well this plan was going to

work.

The Downunda Freedom Fighters had received Tails' message about the forthcoming strike force that had been sent to attack the fighters and reclaim any of the land Eggman had recently lost to them and were preparing to counter attack with a plan of their own. Geoffrey St. John and one of his mates, a sandy brown ferret in a fedora named Gerald were setting up EMP mines that would go of if any robots were detected. The Downunda Royal Fighters had been mostly victorious since Geoffrey St. John had joined up with them and they were not about to let Dr. Eggman defeat them and take over the country. After Geoffrey planted the last EMP mine, he and Gerald ran for cover behind a rock and waited for the show to begin. Gerald pulled some binoculars out and kept watch.

"That Eggman bloke's gonna get a right surprise when his bunch of metal heads arrive and get their circuits fried by the mines." said Geoffrey, snickering.

"I wonder how does Sonic's friend Tails know what Eggman's up to?" said Mr. Staffer, another Royal Fighter for Downunda.

"No idea mate." said Geoffrey "I look forward to meeting the young fella once I'm free to return to Mobotropolis."

"Hopefully after this attack, you will be free to return." said Mr. Staffer.

"Oi mates!" cried Gerald "Eggman robots at something o' clock!"

Geoffrey and Mr. Staffer poked their heads around the corner to see, surely enough, Eggman's squad of robots he'd sent to Downunda. The squad consisted of small flying hover-bots with machine guns equipped underneath their wings, small egg-shaped robots armed with blasters or lances and shields and larger robots that wielded enormous shoulder cannons. The squad could easily have taken the Royal Fighters out if they weren't already prepared. The Royal Fighters remained hidden as Dr. Eggman's attack squad stomped or hovered closer to the mines. The moment they were

within two feet of the mines, the mines went off and the robots were engulfed with a brilliant flash of blue and white electricity. The Royal Fighters peeked out from behind the rock to watch the robots get electrocuted. The robots wailed a electronic wail as the EMP mines did their work. Then they all collapsed onto their backs and the hover-bots fell to the ground with a smash. The EMP mines had short-circuited every single one of the robots in the squad and now they would never work again unless Dr. Eggman repaired them. So Eggman wouldn't be able to repair them, the Royal Fighters charged at the dead robots and tore them to pieces with whatever weapon they had. They would then use the spare parts to make new weapons or vehicles for the Royal Fighters Service to use.

"I dunno why but I really enjoy tearing robots to pieces." Geoffrey said to himself as he used a small machete to chop any robot's limbs off "Maybe it's because they break so easily."

Dr. Eggman was so gobsmacked he could do nothing but sweat-drop and stare wide eyed at the monitor that showed the Downunda squad. His eyes had opened so wide even his glasses couldn't fully hide them. Alonzo thought he was about to malfunction very violently.

"WHAT IN THE NAME OF ROBOTROPOLIS JUST HAPPENED?" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

"Um…I think skunk boy and his cronies just trumped your squad sir." said Alonzo quietly.

"But how did they see that coming?" shrieked Dr. Eggman "I made sure I picked the exact moment it looked like they were unaware of anything and sent the squad!"

"I dunno about you master but I think something strange is going on around here." said Alonzo, putting his three-fingered hand to his chin "I have a sneaky theory on what that strange thing is but I'm not going to say anything."

"Why not?" demanded Eggman.

"We'll see if this continues and if it does, I'll tell you what my theory is." said Alonzo.

"Alright." said Dr. Eggman, turning back to his computer monitors "Downunda may have seen me coming, but Megapolis won't!"

Actually, Megapolis will see Eggman coming because after Tails had informed Thomas Tiger, leader of the Megapolis Royal Fighters that Eggman was planning to ransack the city and kidnap Bunnie Rabbot, he had told Bunnie to lie in wait for whatever Eggman sent and then blast them to pieces with additional fire power provided by the Megapolis Royal Fighters. Bunnie Rabbot hid on top of a high reaching rocky cliff and waited until Eggman's attack arrived. She had deployed her arm cannon and was ready to fire.

"Ah really oughta thank that Tails for warning us in advanced about Eggman comin' and tryin' to kidnap little ol' me as well as ransack Megapolis." Bunnie said to herself "The nerve that Eggman has!"

As for Thomas and his group, they were lying low and waiting patiently for Eggman's arrival. They were armed with muskets and rocket launchers, the perfect weapons for destroying robots.

"Wait for it chaps." said Thomas as he primed his own musket for fire "When Bunnie begins firing, we fire, understood?"

"Yes Thomas." said the squad in unison.

Back on top of the cliff, Bunnie's sensitive long ears picked up the sound of approaching robots. Bunnie turned to the left and saw some very large robots with very large arms. These robots were duplicates of an earlier robot named BI-CEP whom Sonic had encountered at Eggman's circus park some time ago**. These robots had powerful steel arms and they looked like they could easily smash something to pieces and bring down Bunnie Rabbot so it was a good idea Tails had found out about this and warned them about it. Bunnie kept her arm cannon ready and waited until the BI-CEP drones were directly underneath her. The robots moved slowly so it took them a while to get there but they eventually got there and

Bunnie Rabbot opened fire on the large armed robots. She blasted them off their feet and sent them falling flat on their faces. The moment Bunnie had fired, Thomas and his squad opened fire on the BI-CEP drones. Their muskets didn't do much damage to them but the rocket launchers did much better. The squad fired the rocket launchers, the rockets zoomed too their targets and blew the BI-CEP drones to tiny little pieces. Bunnie Rabbot flew down from the cliff to see if the robots were all destroyed. All that remained of the squad of BI-CEP drones were smoking remains and chunks of debris.

"Alright!" cheered Bunnie "We blasted them darn bots to tiny little fragments!"

"Job well done I must say." said Thomas, putting his musket down "Our timing was perfect and they all crumbled like sandcastles before us."

"That Eggman ain't getting me today or any other day!" declared Bunnie "So he can try as hard as he wishes, we'll just destroy his robots again!"

And with that, the Megapolis Royal Fighters joined in with her cheering.

Dr. Eggman and Alonzo watched that little performance with astonishment and they couldn't believe what had just happened. Dr. Eggman looked like he was going to have a mental breakdown.

"How the heck did Bunnie and the others know when your robots would show up?" screeched Alonzo "They couldn't possibly have known that early!"

Dr. Eggman merely thumped the arms of his chair and grumbled.

"Once is an accident, twice is coincidence but the third time's the charm!" he muttered "There's defiantly something strange going on."

"I agree." said Alonzo "And I have a feeling the Mobians in Mobotropolis might end up knowing when your attack force will show

up and then they'll destroy them."

"We'll have to see if you're correct." said Dr. Eggman "But I sincerely hope you aren't."

"I sincerely hope I'm not too." said Alonzo agreeably.

Well Alonzo better stop hoping he's wrong because he's absolutely right. Team Chaotix, which consisted of Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee, were hiding in the outskirts of Green Hill Zone so that when the robots arrived to attack the still unfinished New Mobotropolis, they would have them. And Espio would add insult to injury because he's invisible so no one will see his attacks coming. The three boys waited ever so patiently for Eggman's attack force to come.

"I really wonder why Eggman would want to attack a city that's still under construction?" thought Vector.

"Maybe he wants to rebuild it into his image." suggested Espio, pulling out his shuriken and turning invisible.

"I bet Sonic wouldn't like that." said Charmy "After all, he used to live in Mobotropolis."

"You're right on that Charmy." said Vector "We will make sure that Dr. Eggman will not get his hands on that city."

Then something unexpected came out of nowhere in a blue flashing blur. Then the blue blur skidded to a halt in front of Team Chaotix's hiding place, which was behind some large bushes. It was none other then Sonic the Hedgehog. Team Chaotix smiled at him.

"Hey Sonic!" cried Vector "I bet you came to join in the fun didn't you?"

"I sure did croc-boy." said Sonic, giving Team Chaotix a thumbs up "After Tails informed me of what he found out I just had to join you three in saving my home city from Eggman."

"Well that's convenient." said Espio "That way, victory is insured for us."

"Who said that?" said Sonic, looking around only to see nobody.

"It's only me." said Espio "I'm invisible so you won't be able to see me."

"Oh of course." said Sonic "I forgot chameleons can do that. I bet that invisibility of yours is very handy at times Espio."

"It is, especially when I'm in battle or when I need to sneak up on somebody." said the still invisible Espio.

"Sometimes he creeps up on Vector while he's invisible and scares the daylights out of him" giggled Charmy "It's so funny when he does that!"

Sonic laughed too. Vector grumbled to himself but he said nothing. He turned around to see if anything was coming. Good thing he did turn around to see if anything was coming because something was coming. Eggman's attack force had arrived. The attack force simply consisted of marching Egg-Pawns and hover-bots. Egg Pawns were small squat robots that carried a variety of weapons ranging from guns to lances and even hammers. They also had shields. The hover-bots were similar in shape to the Egg-Pawns but they had wings instead of arms and legs. They wielded blaster cannons or bombs that were stored on the underbelly of the bots. Sonic snorted with laughter.

"Is that REALLY the best Eggman can give us?" he chortled "I don't think he's even trying now! I bet I didn't even need to come over and help!"

"Even I think that." said Vector "But since you're here, you may as well help us."

"Attack when I give the signal." said Espio, raising his shuriken and getting ready to throw it.

"What signal?" asked Sonic.

"Espio will throw his ninja stars at an Eggman robot and once he does, we attack." said Vector.

"Got it." said Sonic, couching down low behind the bush so the robots wouldn't see him.

Eggman's attack squad marched onwards towards the end of the forest. Once out of the forest, they would kill all the builders and rebuild Mobotropolis into Eggman's image. However, they would get no further. Espio threw his shuriken at the first Eggman robot and the moment it hit, the robot exploded. That was the signal to attack. Sonic jumped out from behind the bush and homing attacked some of the hover-bots. The hover-bots were instantly destroyed and sent falling to the ground. Vector charged at some Egg-Pawns and chomped on their arms. One Egg-Pawn tried to blast him but Vector swung around and threw the Egg-Pawn he had in his mouth into the Egg-Pawn that was shooting at him. Another Egg-Pawn tried to skewer him with his lance but Vector grabbed the lance with his giant jaws and yanked it out of the robot's hands. Then Vector impaled the lance into the robot's chest, killing it instantly. Espio threw several shuriken at some Egg-Pawns that were trying to shoot Vector and Sonic and the robots were blown up instantly. Some Egg-Pawns detected the threat and tried to attack but they couldn't see Espio being as he was invisible. As for Charmy Bee, he charged into the robots head first and did some damage to them due to how powerful his charge was. His helmet protected his head from the impacts luckily. A hover bot tried to blast the bee but Charmy flew to the hover unit and punched it, sending it wobbling away and then he charged into it, bottom first this time. His sting did some superficial damage to the robot and brought it crashing to the ground. As Charmy laughed at the downed hover-bot, an Egg-Pawn appeared from behind and tried to skewer him with its lance but Sonic spin-dashed it.

"Sorry but I'm taking "Bee on a stick" off the menu!" he said to the destroyed robot.

"Thanks Sonic." said Charmy.

Sonic nodded at him and spin-dashed another Egg-Pawn. Vector punched an Egg-Pawn so hard it became embedded into the

ground. The robot was stuck fast and was not getting out of this in a hurry. Vector punched it again, this time, crushing its head after he punched it. Espio finished off the last of the hover-bots with his shuriken and Sonic spin-dashed the last remaining Egg-Pawns. Eggman's attack force had been swiftly reduced to tiny pieces.

"That was fun! Let's do it again!" cried Charmy, dancing about in midair.

"We've destroyed them all Charmy so we can't do it again." said Espio, turning back visible.

"Aaaaw!" moaned Charmy.

"Don't worry, there'll be more Eggman robots to come some time soon and then we can destroy them all over again." Vector reassured him.

"OK." said Charmy.

"Well I enjoyed that." said Sonic "Mobotropolis is safe once again."

"So, where will you be going then?" asked Vector.

"Back home." said Sonic "I wonder if Tails has found anything else out."

And with that he raced off, sending a gust of wind blowing past Team Chaotix. Seeing as their work was done, Team Chaotix decided to return to Stardom Village and await their next case. They hoped that everybody else was doing as well as they were elsewhere.

Dr. Eggman and Alonzo had watched the whole battle between Sonic, Team Chaotix and the robot squad and they were horrified. Especially Alonzo since his prediction was correct. Dr. Eggman went wild with rage and leaped out of his seat in rage.

"THAT'S THE LAST STRAW!" roared Dr. Eggman, shaking his fists "THIS IS GETTING FAR TOO WEIRD! IT'S LIKE THOSE BLASTED

MOBIANS KNOW MY EVERY MOVE BEFORE I MAKE IT!"

"I agree." said Alonzo "That was way too much of a coincidence for Team Chaotix to just suddenly happen to be in the exact same place you were sending the squad."

"So Alonzo, are you ready to tell me your theory yet?" asked Dr. Eggman "And I bet it's the same theory I'm having."

Alonzo cleared his throat and said slowly.

"I think, my dear master…" he paused and looked around to see if no one was watching. All clear so he continued.

"I think there's a spy in the works." he said.

"Funny enough Alonzo, I was thinking the same thing." said Dr. Eggman "There must be someone spying on me and informing those wretched Royal Fighters so they'll be ready for me."

"But who could this spy be?" wondered Alonzo "Definitely not Sonic, spy work is too subtle even for him."

"Well it must be one of his friends or something like that." said Dr. Eggman "Or even…one of my own robots is spying on me!" he shrieked.

"Well don't look at me you bloated buffoon!" snapped Alonzo "I'm no spy! I was created to serve you, not spy on you and give the information to the enemy!"

"Why would I even suspect you in the first place Alonzo?" sniffed Eggman "You haven't got the nerve to betray me! Until I find out who this spy is, I'd better not send out any more robots. I'll cancel the attack on Grand Metropolis too since the Mobians there are likely lying in wait for me."

So Dr. Eggman pressed a button on the control pad that told the robot attack squad set for Grand Metropolis to abandon their priority and standby for the time being. After that was done, Dr. Eggman sat back in his chair and put a hand to his chin in thought.

"We need to find out who this spy is and strike before the spy strikes again." said Dr. Eggman "But how am I going to find out who they spy is?"

"You could send out a spy probe to find out who the spy is." suggested Alonzo.

"Or you could hire someone especially skilled at this kind of stuff to do it." said an unfamiliar feminine voice that appeared to come from the ceiling.

Dr. Eggman and Alonzo were startled by the sudden voice from nowhere and they turned around and looked up at the ceiling. A shadowy figure was clinging on to the ceiling and it appeared to have a tow cable sprouting from its belt. The figure leaped off the ceiling and lowered it's self down to the floor. It landed and it put the tow cable away. The figure was a female skunk dressed in an olive green suit that covered her whole body. She also wore silver arm pieces, forest green boots with black soles, a backpack, a chest plate with added shoulder pads, a belt with a triangular buckle and two gun holsters and a helmet with a black visor. Her long flowing white hair peeped out from behind the helmet and her tail poked out of her outfit. Dr. Eggman was surprised at the arrival of such a dressed up woman but on the other hand, it was still a Mobian so he let it slide.

"Guards, get that Mobian!" he ordered.

Two robots appeared on either side of the skunk girl and prepared to grab her but the girl whipped out two handheld pistols and swiftly blasted the robots in the chest. The two robots collapsed to the floor. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo were speechless to say the least. The girl put her blasters away, removed her helmet and tucked it under her arm. Her face looked very much like Geoffrey St. John's only more feminine like with hazel eyes and she had a single black stripe under her left eye.

"The name's Lola Gunn." said the girl "And I've come here to help you with your thorny problem, not to fight."

"Well that's unusual." said Alonzo to Eggman "A Mobian that's

willing to help us! I think we should let her help us don't you master?"

"Hold on a moment." said Dr. Eggman. "So my dear Lola," he said to Lola "Why are you willing to help me? Don't you know who I am?"

"I do know who you are fatty." said Lola in a deadpan tone "You're the crazy Dr. Eggman guy who wants to take over Mobius, as if I care."

"So why are you willing to help the one person who is trying to doom this planet?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"I'm a bounty hunter, the best there is on Mobius." explained Lola "I kill for profit and I enjoy it oh so much. I will be willing to help you find out who's spying on you and kill him or her for you, IF you're willing to pay."

Dr. Eggman put a hand to his chin for a moment and then said "Me and Alonzo will decide on that now."

His chair rotated around so Lola couldn't see him. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo gathered together and began whispering quietly to one another.

"Master, are you sure we can trust that woman?" whispered Alonzo.

"If she kills for money, I'll be willing to trust her." whispered Dr. Eggman "She maybe able to find out who the spy is and eliminate it."

"But how are you going to pay her?" asked Alonzo "You don't have money on you!"

"I'm NOT going to pay her." hissed Dr. Eggman "Once she's done the deed I'll have her destroyed."

"How did I not see that coming?" mumbled Alonzo.

Dr. Eggman and Alonzo stopped talking to one another and turned back around to face Lola, who appeared to be staring at her fingers for some reason.

"Lola my dear, after much deliberation." said Dr. Eggman "We've decided to hire you to destroy the one who is spying on us."

"How much are you willing to pay me then?" said Lola, looking up at Eggman.

"1,000 Mobiums." said Dr. Eggman.

Mobiums is the currency of Mobius and Dr. Eggman obviously didn't have any Mobiums. Lola snorted at Eggman and whipped out a pistol. She pointed it straight at Eggman's face and said.

"That's nowhere near enough you walking boulder. You must pay me 150,000 Mobiums, no less. I don't work for free you know."

"Very well, 150,000 Mobiums it is." said Dr. Eggman nervously "I'll pay you as soon as you've killed the spy. And maybe you'd be willing to kill someone else for me too."

"Who might that be then?" asked Lola.

"Would you happen to know Sonic the Hedgehog by any chance?" asked Dr. Eggman.

Lola snorted.

"Of course I know that blue moron." she snapped "He's the over hyped big hero of this stupid world and I'd love to shoot him if someone hired me for it."

"Well after you've killed the spy, you can kill Sonic the Hedgehog for me too." said Dr. Eggman with a big smile on his face "And I'll pay you 250,000 Mobiums if you do so."

Lola pretended to consider this offer and then said in a low soft voice "I like the sound of that. I think I'm going to enjoy working with you Dr. Eggman. You'll make me richer then I've ever been in my life. No one I've worked for has ever offered me so much glorious money before!"

"In that case you'd better get a move on!" shouted Dr. Eggman "I must have that spy dead now!"

"Keep your hair on tubby!" snapped Lola "I only work at night. Night time's the best time to strike since no one can see me and the victims will be unprepared for my attack."

"Very well." said Dr. Eggman "I suppose I can wait that long. Thank you ever so much for offering to help rid myself of a big danger that threatens my downfall Miss Gunn."

"Don't you dare call me Miss Gunn!" snarled Lola, pointing the pistol at Eggman's face again. "Just call me Lola."

"OK I'm sorry." said Dr. Eggman sweat dropping "Thank you for your services and I look forward to paying you tonight."

"And I look forward to seeing my cold hard cash." said Lola "Bye, bye Egghead."

And with that she left the room. After she left, Dr. Eggman turned his attention back to the still flashing computer monitors.

"That Lola Gunn person certainly isn't very bright is she?" he said to himself "She should know better then to trust someone like me!"

"I can almost imagine the look on her face when you order your robots to destroy her when she asks for her money!" said Alonzo with delight.

"She'll rid me of Sonic and the spy and she won't be getting a single penny from me, because I have no money!" cackled Dr. Eggman.

He and Alonzo began laughing loud enough to bring the house down.

Meanwhile, Tails was outside and working on his next big project. He was building a blue bi-plane with four rings, a propeller and Sonic's name on it as well as few symbols of his tails on the tail fin and wings. The reason Tails was building a plane is so he and Sonic could get to really far away places a lot quicker and a lot easier. He was trying hard to make sure the plane was fast and durable so it could withstand heavy attacks and manoeuvre really quickly to avoid

being shot at. Not to mention Sonic always liked going fast. So far Tails was only on the layouts stage where he was working out which piece goes where and what would be the best engine to make the plan go. As Tails worked, Sonic sped past him. He skidded to a halt and ran back up to Tails. Tails looked up from his work and smiled at his best friend who seemed so full of energy and excitement right now.

"Hey Tails, you missed the B.S.T.E.!" exclaimed Sonic.

"B.S.T.E.?" questioned Tails.

"Best Squad Thrashing Ever!" said Sonic with heaps of excitement surging up his body "Me and Team Chaotix sent that squad of Eggman robots to the scrap heap in a matter of moments! I can almost picture Dr. Eggman's furious face right now! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Tails laughed with him as he pictured Dr. Eggman pounding the control pad in rage and stomping about and throwing tantrums like a little baby.

"And we all know who we have to thank for that." said Sonic "If it weren't for your brilliant idea to spy on Dr. Eggman, none of this would be possible so I think you're even more of a hero then I am. You've saved dozens, probably hundreds of lives just by snitching on Dr. Eggman and warning everybody in advance about his nefarious plots! So I think you should take all the credit for this little buddy."

Tails blushed with pleasure.

"Oh Sonic, I'm not that much of a hero." he said bashfully.

"Oh come on Tails, don't start with the low self esteem nonsense." said Sonic sternly "You've saved more lives then I ever could by finding out what Dr. Eggman's up to and giving everybody the heads up. Surely you can take the praise for once?"

"OK I will." said Tails "But I don't want to become as popular as you though. I prefer to be, you know, just normal and all that, not very famous like you are."

"I guess that's reasonable." said Sonic "So, what are you up to then?"

"I'm building a plane that I can use to battle Eggman's forces and fly us to faraway places in a jiffy." explained Tails "I'm gonna make it so it can go really fast so it suits your tastes."

"Sounds cool." said Sonic "I always wondered what it would be like to fly. Even though I sort of found that out when I was Super Sonic that one time***."

"Yeah you had the ability to fly when you were Super Sonic." said Tails as he did some more work on the layouts "I wonder if you'll ever be able to become him again."

"Maybe I might be able to become him again." said Sonic "But why would I need to? With you spying on Dr. Eggman and the Royal Fighters being about ten steps ahead of Dr. Eggman, we'll send him packing before you know it!"

And with that, the two boys laughed half heartedly. Unfortunately for Sonic and Tails, Lola Gunn happened to be passing by whilst looking for the spy and ended up eavesdropping on their conversation. She had hidden behind a tree and listened to every word that had been spoken. After hearing Sonic say "With you spying on Dr. Eggman" to Tails, she instantly pulled out a communicator and switched it on. She crouched down low so it would be hard to see her behind the tree and whispered into the communicator.

"Hey Eggman, I've found the spy." she hissed to Dr. Eggman in the communicator.

"Excellent work Lola!" cheered Dr. Eggman "I trust you'll terminate the spy at nightfall?"

"It will be done, and you'd better have my pay check ready or I'll kill you too." warned Lola.

"It is ready!" lied Dr. Eggman "Me and Alonzo are counting the money now!"

And with that, he pretended to count something by saying a few numbers.

"One…two…three…four…"

Lola was fooled by this fake act and she switched the communicator off. She hooked it back onto her belt and watched Sonic and Tails closely. Her beady eyes stared at them from behind the helmet's black shiny visor.

"I've found the spy AND Sonic the Hedgehog at the same time." she purred to herself "If they're both together by the time night falls, I'll have them BOTH and all in one night! I'm such a lucky girl sometimes aren't I?" she sneered, rubbing her hands greedily.

Night time was going to be a time she would be eagerly awaiting from then on. Sonic and Tails would not stand a chance against her cunning, subtlety and weaponry. They'd be dead before they even realized what they were up against.

Sonic and Tails spent the rest of the day building the plane which Tails had decided to name the Tornado. By nightfall, they'd managed to build half of the plane's underbelly. It was coming on well so far but unfortunately, they had to stop since it was night time and they need their sleep so Tails stored the half built plane underbelly in the garage that was attached to the left side of Sonic's house. After storing the plane away, Tails closed the garage door and stretched.

"Oh I could do with a good sleep right now." he yawned "Building is hard work after all."

So Tails went back inside the house to go to bed. Sonic was not home right now. He had zipped off to the shops to get Tails a new spanner since Tails had accidentally broken his old one earlier today. The nearest shop was in Knothole so luckily, Sonic wouldn't be gone long. Tails kicked his shoes off and climbed into bed. He pulled the duvet over himself and closed his eyes. As he started to drift into sleep, he began thinking on what plans Eggman had next.

Another thought then suddenly bugged him. Project: Metal Sonic. What did that even mean anyway? Was Eggman making a robot that looks like Sonic to fight him or something? Tails would have to investigate this scenario further. And why did he keep forgetting to tell Sonic about Project: Metal Sonic? Maybe because he didn't want Sonic to start thinking about Mecha Sonic. As those thoughts circled around his head like goldfish in a bowl, Tails soon drifted off into a much needed sleep.

Outside however, Lola Gunn was watching the fox from behind the window. She had been waiting for Tails to fall asleep and it seems like he finally has. Lola pulled on her backpack straps and lowered her arms to let it slide off her back and onto the ground. She unzipped the backpack and began rummaging about for something. She pulled out two halves of a really long chrome rifle and a packet of toxic darts. She opened the bag of darts and took one out. Then she clipped the barrel of the rifle and the handle of the rifle together to make it a whole rifle. Then she slipped the dart into the rifle barrel and primed the rifle.

"That kid is so cute when he's asleep I almost feel bad about this." Lola said sarcastically "But I'm in it for the money so why do I care?"

She opened the window very slowly so she wouldn't wake Tails up. After opening the window she rested the rifle on the windowsill and aimed at Tails' neck which luckily for her, wasn't covered up by the duvet. Then Lola fired the dart! The dart rocketed out of the rifle barrel with a silent bang and plunged into Tails' neck. The sudden sharp prick of the dart jolted Tails awake instantly. Lola ran off. Tails sat up in bed and felt his neck. He felt the toxic dart and pulled it out of his neck.

"What is this?" he cried "Is someone trying to kill me? Who fired this at me?"

He looked at the open window only to see no one there. Tails was suddenly baffled at the fact the window was open even though he didn't open it before he went to bed. This could only mean one thing. Someone had opened the window and fired the dart at him. But who?

Lola retrieved her backpack, put it back on her back and ran off with the rifle still in her hands. She cackled to herself.

"Yes! One down and one to go!" she cheered.

She didn't run far though. Sonic the Hedgehog had returned from the shops with a brand new spanner for Tails and he saw Lola running away from his house. He spin-dashed straight into her stomach and sent her flying into a tree. The bounty hunter got back to her feet and glared at Sonic from behind the helmet's visor.

"Who the heck are you and what are you doing snooping around my place!" demanded Sonic angrily.

"The name's Lola Gunn." said Lola, picking up the rifle and aiming it at Sonic's face "And I am a bounty hunter. I've been hired to kill the one spying on Dr. Eggman, and you."

Before Sonic could say anything, Lola pulled the trigger and sent a brilliant laser blast hurtling towards him…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 20 for a showdown you'll never forget**

**** See Story 18 for Eggman's Egg-strodinary Circus Park**

*** See Story 15 for Super Sonic's cracking debut

The clock ticks as Tails' life begins to seep away! Is this the end of poor Tails? Or can Sonic find a cure for Lola Gunn's toxic dart? Read and Review. Also, see the spin-off title* Tales from Mobius *for The Cosmo and Cream Adventure which takes place during this story and the next.

Special thanks once again goes to Kratos Pwns for being a dedicated reader. I'm really glad you're enjoying it. :)

Hired Hands Part 2

Story 27: Hired Hands Part 2: Bounty on the Head

Sonic leaped out of the way in a perfect rainbow arch and the laser blast just singed the grass slightly. Lola growled in frustration and tried to shoot Sonic again. Sonic dodged the rifle shot again. Lola kept shooting madly at him but Sonic kept dodging the shots without breaking a sweat.

"Keep still you miscreant!" snarled Lola as she kept trying to shoot him.

"I think not!" yelled Sonic.

He spin-dashed straight into Lola and snapped the rifle in two as well as give her a good hard whack. Lola tumbled backwards in roly-poly fashion and landed on her stomach. Her helmet had fallen off too, revealing her rather pretty face. Sonic stood in front of her with his foot on her helmet. He glared at her.

"OK Miss Trigger-Happy what were you doing around my place?" demanded Sonic "If you've hurt Tails you'll be sorry you were born!"

Lola glowered up at Sonic but gave him a villainous smirk.

"I've shot him with a toxic dart." she said "That boy will be as good as dead in one hour's time."

Sonic felt like somebody had shot him through the heart. Tails had been poisoned and was going to die in one hour? That did it; Sonic lost his temper and went into another spin-dash.

"You creep!" he yelled "I'm gonna spin-dash you so hard people can use you as a carpet!"

He charged at Lola but the female skunk leaped out of his way and whipped out her twin pistols. She held them both sideways and began rapidly shooting at Sonic. Sonic ran around her as Lola tried

to blast him with her two pistols. However since Sonic was running circles around Lola, Lola had to constantly spin around in an attempt to blast Sonic away. After a minute of doing this, Lola began to feel extremely dizzy and she fell to the ground in defeat, dropping her two pistols. Sonic quickly scooped the pistols up and smashed them to pieces by stomping on them.

"Man I hate guns!" he said "I wouldn't be caught dead using one of those!"

As for poor Lola, she didn't seem to know which way was up. The whole world was spinning madly around her. Sonic glared at the dizzy skunk angrily.

"You are not killing me and you are not killing Tails!" he said "Not today, not tomorrow, not ever! Once I save Tails' life, I'm gonna make you pay for this!"

And with that he ran into the house, leaving Lola to stare up at the sky while everything was still spinning around her. The dizzy skunk picked herself up and wobbly walked off.

Sonic ran quickly into the bedroom to see Tails still lying there and staring at the toxic dart he had pulled out of his neck and he was staring at it. He looked like he was frozen to the spot because he kept his attention glued to the dart in his hand.

"Tails!" Sonic called to him.

Tails looked up to see Sonic and was overcome with relief.

"Oh Sonic!" cried Tails "You'll not believe what's just happened to me! I've been shot by this!"

He held out the dart for Sonic to see. Sonic took the dart out of Tails' hand and looked at it up close.

"I think that's the toxic dart Lola Gunn said she'd fired at you." said Sonic.

"Who's Lola Gunn?" asked Tails.

"Some bounty hunter I've never encountered before." explained Sonic "I had a brief scuffle with her outside and she says she fired a toxic dart at you and you'll die in an hour's time."

"I'm WHAT?" shrieked Tails. His face turned snow white. "I'm going to…die?" he gasped hoarsely.

"No you aren't!" said Sonic "Because I'm gonna find a cure for whatever was in that dart."

"But you can't possibly find a cure in that amount of time!" wailed Tails "You don't even know WHAT the cure is!"

"That is unfortunately true." said Sonic "But I will go to any length's necessary to make sure you live and that's a promise."

Tails didn't know what to say. Sixty minutes away from death and yet Sonic remains undefeated and will try whatever he can to save his life. Sonic truly was a great friend.

"Sonic, you're the best friend I've ever had." said Tails.

"Thank you." said Sonic "Now you just hang in there while I try what I can. I'll save you if it's the last thing I do!"

"Take this watch." said Tails, handing Sonic a wrist watch he kept in a drawer next to the bed "That way, you'll be able to keep the time and figure out how long you've got before I'm doomed."

Sonic put the watch on his wrist and looked at the time. It said 9:30. Sonic had to have a cure by 10:30 or Tails will die.

"Thanks Tails." said Sonic "I promise I'll save you. I'll be back as quick as I can!"

And with that he rocketed out of the bedroom and out of the house and headed for one of his favourite places to go to: Knothole. He had a feeling someone would be able to help him out. And that someone was a certain pink hedgehog he knew and secretly fancied. That someone was none other then his biggest fan, Amy Rose. Hopefully Amy Rose would be able to help Sonic out otherwise Tails would not live to see the next morning…

As for Lola, she had staggered a good distance away from the battlefield and she clumsily collapsed over her own feet. Her head was still spinning but it was beginning to get better. After falling over, she sat up and shook herself. Her senses had finally come too and the dizziness had stopped. Everything was still once again. After recovering from her dizziness, Lola suddenly realized she was weapon less. Sonic had snapped her rifle after spin-dashing in her and while she was dizzy, Sonic had crushed her two pistols to pieces. However, Lola had one final trick up her sleeve. She took her backpack off and opened it. She pulled out that appeared to be another rifle. This one was only half as long as the first rifle and was coloured a dull grey colour.

"This rifle isn't exactly sleek and shiny but it'll have to do." sighed Lola as she loaded it.

Then she felt something vibrate on her wrist. It was Dr. Eggman trying to call her on the communicator. Lola switched it on and spoke into it.

"What do you want now baldy nose hair?" she snapped.

"Don't be so rude Lola dear!" Dr. Eggman bellowed to her on the other side of the communicator "Have you done the job yet?"

"Sort of." said Lola "The job's half done right now. I've shot the spy in the neck with a toxic dart and in one hour he'll be dead. Sonic still lives unfortunately."

"Well don't just stand there wasting time!" roared Dr. Eggman "Get a move on! I want that hedgehog dead as a doornail!"

"OK, OK! Keep your pants on Mr. Shouty face!" snapped Lola; she switched off the communicator in a huff "Geez, men are so unbearable at times! All they bloomin' do is shout their heads off for nothing!" she ranted.

Lola got to her feet and silently tip-toed through the forest.

"I hope Sonic's close by or I'll have to wait until the next night." Lola

said to herself rather grimly "The day time's not a safe time to be hunting people since I'll be easier to see."

Lola continued tip-toeing through the forest, desperate to find Sonic the Hedgehog and kill him so she would complete her mission and get her whopping great reward.

Seven minutes later, Sonic arrived in Knothole and screeched to a halt. He looked around for Amy's house and spotted it. A pink and red house is pretty hard to miss after all so Sonic didn't have to look long for it. He ran over to Amy's house and knocked on the door. Amy opened the door and her eyes widened in surprise.

"Oh Sonic!" she chirped "This is a surprise. I was just about to go to bed and then you arrive. Whatever's the matter?"

"A bounty hunter shot Tails with this." said Sonic, showing Amy the toxic dart that Lola had shot Tails with "And if we don't get a cure for him in fifty-three minutes, he'll die!"

"Oh no!" gasped Amy, putting her hands on her cheeks in alarm "We need to act fast and I know just the person who will have a cure for the poison in that dart in a jiffy!"

"You do?" said Sonic, almost dumbstruck at how lucky he had just ended up being right now "Who is that person?"

"Follow me." said Amy, taking Sonic by the hand "She lives in Knothole and I'll be able to find her house for you."

She ran off with Sonic in tow and the two went searching all through Knothole. A while later the two hedgehogs came across a house with a faded brownish paint job on the walls and a coned shaped roof made from thick straw. Thin red smoke trailed out of the house's only window which was around the back and square shaped. Sonic stared at the house uneasily. It looked more like a witch's cottage then an actual house.

"Um…who lives here?" said Sonic with a tone of disgust in his voice.

"This is the home of Mariah the Medicine Cat." said Amy "She is a national hero amongst the villagers and all of Mobius due to the fact she can whip up a medicine for any disease known to Mobian kind. I met her when I was younger. She's a genius and she's the key to Tails' survival."

"I hope you're right Amy." said Sonic uneasily.

Amy just scoffed at him and knocked on the door.

"YES! WHAT?" barked a fierce rough voice from behind the door.

"It's me, Amy Rose. Fan of Sonic's?" said Amy.

"Oh it's you Miss Rose." said the voice in a much sweeter tone "I haven't seen you for a while now. Do come in."

Amy walked in with Sonic keeping close behind. They stepped into a really small living room. There was only a wooden rocking chair and a soft little sofa that only had room for two people. The sound of bubbling could be heard in the next room and hot air was creeping into the living room. An elderly female cat walked into the room with her eyes half open. She had brown fur with white paws and a white muzzle and she wore a long silky white robe with blue flowery patterns on the chest and sleeves. Her face was wrinkled and her right ear was missing a chunk as if she'd had it bitten off or something. Her eyes were a very pale yellow. The moment she saw Amy Rose, she held her arms out to welcome her in a hug.

"Miss Rose!" she said cheerfully "How delightful to meet you again! And my how much have you grown since I've last seen you? You were only a little tiddler the last time I saw you!"

The cat laughed a hearty laugh and Amy chuckled uneasily.

"Um Mariah, this is Sonic the Hedgehog." said Amy, diverting the cat's attention to the blue hedgehog who tried to make himself scarce "He's the big hero of Mobius who fights long and hard to stop Dr. Eggman from taking over Mobius and soon-to-be my boyfriend."

"Amy!" hissed Sonic "Ix-nay on the An girl-fay!"

"Sorry." said Amy, blushing slightly.

Mariah waddled over to Sonic and stared closely at him as if she was struggling to see him properly so she had to get really close.

"Sonic the Hedgehog." she said "I've heard about you and your legendary speed. Who hasn't? Every time I hear about you, I daydream about what it would be like if I could run as fast as you."

Mariah stared up at the ceiling dreamily.

"Sadly, I'm an old woman now and my legs are weak and feeble so I'll never be able to run again." she said glumly "Still, at least I can make my many marvellous medicines to cure the lovely folk of Mobius." she added cheerfully "It's such a shame no one else on this blasted planet has my genius so who's gonna carry on my medicines when I'm gone? I may have to teach someone and then maybe I'll have someone who can carry on my business and become the new medicine person of..."

"Yeah, yeah, I get the message." interrupted Sonic "We're in a hurry right now so we need your medicine making genius pronto!"

"OK, don't rush me boy!" barked Mariah "I swear teenagers these days have no respect for the elderly!"

"Sorry about that but we need a medicine quick." said Sonic "My friend Tails got shot by a toxic dart and he'll die in about fifty-one minutes, do you have a cure for the poison found in one of these?"

He handed Mariah the toxic dart Tails had been shot with. Mariah took the dart and held it up close to her eyes.

"Ah yes." she said "The hunter's dart. Bounty hunter scum use darts like these to kill their victims! Horrible! I suppose your friend was shot by a bounty hunter?"

"He was." said Sonic "Do you have a cure for the poison in that dart?"

"I do indeed." beamed Mariah "The poison in a hunter's dart is known as Hunternos Toxicus. Once fired into a victim, it kills them in

sixty minutes. I have developed a cure for this and I've helped save many lives from bounty hunters who use these darts."

"Can you make the medicine needed to cure Tails?" asked Sonic desperately.

"Don't need to." said Mariah "I have some bottled up in my storage cupboard. Follow me."

She led the two hedgehogs into a room that was very small indeed. The only things in the room were a giant black cauldron that sat in the middle of the room, a storage cupboard, and an ingredients cupboard. The cauldron had strange colourful liquid that bubbled and made red smoke that trialled out through the window. Sonic stared at the cauldron in fascination. Mariah noticed Sonic was looking at the cauldron and she smiled half-heartedly at the hedgehog's curiosity.

"I use that to make the medicines." she said "All that colourful liquid becomes a medicine for whatever I'm making one for. Heart disease, all forms of cancer, flu, headaches, I can make a medicine for anything and due to my genius, they always work. So your friend is as good as saved thanks to my medicine making genius."

She opened the storage cupboard. The shelves were full of bottled liquid that were various different colours. The bottles were all labelled and filed in alphabetical order so Mariah would know which medicine she was looking for and it would be easy to find.

"Now, where did I put that Anti-Hunternos?" she muttered to herself as she searched through the "A" column of the cupboard.

"Ah! There it is." she said.

She pulled out a small round bottle that contained a pale translucent coloured liquid. She handed Sonic the bottle.

"One drop of this and your friend will be as good as new." said Mariah with an old wrinkly smile "Don't give him more then one spoonful though because too much of that medicine may cause an unpleasant side effect."

"Got it." said Sonic "Mariah, you're way past cool!" he added, winking at her and giving her the thumbs up sign.

"Oh ho, ho, ho!" chuckled Mariah modestly "I'm just happy to help Sonic! It's my job to create medicines to help the sick and the weak."

"Thank you very much Mariah." said Amy "We owe you one big time. Goodbye and take care of yourself."

"Same to you dear." said Mariah "And be careful not to drop that bottle. If you do, I'll have to make a new one from scratch and that will take some time off your hands."

"We'll be careful." said Sonic "And once we've cured Tails, I'll give him your regards."

"No need to." said Mariah kindly "Just get to him and save him already!"

"OK then." said Sonic, suddenly realizing he only had forty-four minutes left "See ya around Mariah and thanks for everything!"

Sonic and Amy ran out of the house and headed for Green Hill Zone in a desperate race against time to save Tails' life. Mariah waved them goodbye and watched Sonic disappeared into the dark of the night.

"How does that boy run so fast?" she wondered.

Sonic sped through the silent dark forest carrying Amy bridal style so they could speed things up. Amy held the bottle tightly to her chest so she wouldn't drop it.

"How much time do we have left?" asked Amy.

"Forty-three minutes." said Sonic "Not that time matters since due to my speed I can get from my place to Knothole in seven minutes so I can get from Knothole to my place in seven minutes."

"It's a good thing we acted when we had the opportunity or Tails

really would be dead." said Amy "I still wonder who's the heartless brute who dared to do such a thing to poor Tails?"

"I'll tell ya later Ames." said Sonic.

He continued running down the forest. Despite the fact he had plenty of time, he wasn't going to take his time to get home, he wanted to cure Tails as quickly as possible so he would suffer less from the poison. Unfortunately, things weren't going to go right. Lola Gunn was hiding up a tree and waiting for Sonic to run past so she could shoot him. She knew she'd have trouble hitting something that moved so fast but the rifle she had could lock onto the opponent so once she fired, Sonic would get blasted no matter how fast he went. Sonic came into view and Lola pointed the rifle at him. She waited for a few seconds before finally pulling the trigger. The rifle fired a brilliant laser blast and it hurtled towards the running hedgehog. The blast hit the ground just in front of Sonic and the force of the impact sent him flying backwards. Sonic landed on his back and Amy took a tumble for the worst. She had been sent flying too and after she landed, the medicine bottle flew out of her hands and came down to the ground with a smash! The translucent liquid lay in a tiny puddle on the grass and bits of glass littered the ground. Amy was overcome with horror when she saw the broken medicine bottle.

"No!" she wailed "No!"

"What's up Ames?" asked Sonic, getting back to his feet.

"The medicine bottle broke!" shrieked Amy, showing Sonic the bits of glass that remained "We'll have to go back to Mariah's and ask her to make some more of this medicine!"

"You will be staying here and tasting the wrath of my guns!" growled Lola, leaping from the tree.

She landed on the ground and pointed the rifle straight at Sonic's face. Amy got mad and summoned her Piko-Piko Hammer.

"Put the gun down and I won't have to hammer your head in missy!" snarled Amy.

Lola turned her attention away from Sonic and glared at Amy. Then her expression strangely enough changed to a smirk of some sorts.

"I didn't know you had a girlfriend Sonic." she crooned "I guess that gives me more of a reason to shoot her eh?"

"She's not my girlfriend!" grumbled Sonic.

"Sure she isn't." sniffed Lola sarcastically. She turned her attention back to Amy "I must say you're not bad looking pinkie."

"Oh um…thank you?" said Amy, taken aback by the comment.

"Pity you have terrible fashion sense." sneered Lola.

That set Amy off! She leaped on Lola and brought the hammer crashing down but the sneaky skunk elegantly dodged the blow.

" *I* have terrible fashion sense?" shrieked Amy, rising her hammer ready for another blow "I could say the same about you what with that hideous combat suit you wear!"

"Do you really think you can defeat me with just a hammer pinkie?" gloated Lola.

"Yes I do!" shrieked Amy, lunging at her to try and hit her once more.

Lola merely dodged the hammer blow once again. After Amy's hammer hit the ground, Lola delivered a painful kick to the head and sent Amy sprawling. Then Lola picked up Amy's hammer and whacked her with it before she could get up. Amy rolled over several times and stopped. Lola prepared to whack Amy again but she was tackled from behind by a spin-dash from Sonic. Lola fell flat on her face and Sonic stood on top of her.

"Amy, you get back to Mariah the Medicine Cat and get another bottle of that medicine, I'll keep Miss Trigger-Happy busy!" ordered Sonic.

"But I want to help you beat her up." said Amy pathetically.

"Amy, that's an order!" yelled Sonic "We have less then thirty-nine minutes to save Tails so we need a replacement bottle now!"

"OK." said Amy; she knew when she was defeated "I won't be too long."

And with that, Amy ran off and headed back to Knothole. Lola tried to get up and stop her but Sonic remained standing on top of her so she couldn't move.

"Get off me!" growled Lola "I will not be denied my reward!"

"I can't believe how sick you are!" said Sonic angrily "You'd willingly kill an innocent little kid just to get some filthy stinking money? What is up with you?"

"Nothing is up with me!" snapped Lola "And besides, I get much more money by killing people then I would do any other way! You will not deny me my money now get off me!"

Sonic refused to move. He remained on top of her. He was planning to keep her like that until Amy returned with the new bottle of medicine they needed to cure Tails and then he would head for home as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, he didn't manage to keep Lola subdued for long. Lola had a very sharp knife hidden in a pouch on her thigh and she pulled it out. She aimed for Sonic's leg and tried to slash him but Sonic saw the knife and leaped off her before she could swipe at him. Lola jumped to her feet but she was soon knocked down again by a sonic spin-dash. She dropped her knife and Sonic snatched it away before she could pick it up again. Sonic threw the knife away.

"This will be a battle with no weapons of any kind." said Sonic "You'll have to face me hand to hand."

"So be it." said Lola grimly.

She leaped into the air and hurtled towards Sonic with a flying kick. Sonic defended the blow with a kick of his own and Lola was sent cart wheeling backwards. The skunk landed on her feet and only just managed to dodge a homing attack from Sonic. Before Sonic could

retaliate in time, Lola seized him by the arms and threw him into the air. Sonic hit a tree feet first and sprang towards Lola. Lola dodged Sonic's oncoming blow and the blue hedgehog skidded across the ground feet first. Lola ran towards Sonic and prepared to punch him from behind but Sonic flipped backwards over her and attacked her in the back. Lola fell on her face.

"You fight much better without a stupid gun." Sonic complimented.

"Oh do I?" said Lola casually "A lot of people reckon that. I guess that means I'm not an easy person to defeat in battle."

"Still doesn't mean you're going to beat me." huffed Sonic "Let's finish this shall we?"

"My pleasure." said Lola darkly.

The two lunged at each other…

Meanwhile, Amy Rose had finally made it into Knothole and she burst wildly into Mariah's house. The old cat was in the cauldron room making another medicine. She stirred some thick, bubbling red liquid around and around in the cauldron. The moment she heard Amy burst in she put on a grim face and turned to face her. Amy was worn out from all that running she did but she managed to gasp the words out.

"Mariah!" panted Amy "We…need…you…again!"

"Let me guess, you dropped the medicine bottle even though I explicitly told you not to!" barked Mariah, prodding Amy sharply in the stomach with a long white finger. Amy bent over and rubbed her aching stomach.

"We didn't drop the bottle." gasped Amy "Some girl in a green suit with a gun shot at us and caused us to drop it. All the same, we need another bottle desperately!"

"I told you already you noodle-brain, I don't have anymore!" snapped Mariah "I shall have to make a new bottle of Anti-Hunternos from

scratch. Luckily for you, it'll only take five to six minutes for me to make."

"Well that's convenient." said Amy.

Mariah went back into the cauldron room and opened the ingredients cupboard. She leafed through the many bottles and contents that were stacked on the shelves.

"Now what were the ingredients for Anti-Hunternos?" she said to herself, her brain whirring away as she tried to remember.

"Ah yes," she remembered, pulling three bottles and two small plastic boxes down from the shelf.

"The feathers of a Flicky bird." Mariah said, opening one box and pouring the contents into the cauldron.

"The DNA of a Chao." she said, opening a bottle and pouring it into the cauldron.

"A little drop of water from the Lake of Rings." she added, pouring it into the cauldron.

"A pinch of gold glitter." she added, taking a pinch of gold glitter from a box and sprinkling it in the cauldron.

"And finally, a squirt of grape juice." she added, pouring the grape juice into the cauldron.

The boiling liquid began to turn into a faint purple colour. Amy was amazed by this.

"Your medicine ingredients are definitely not what you'd expect eh Mariah?" said Amy.

"That's why my medicines are like no other." said Mariah "I don't use ingredients doctors put in medicines, I use my own formula and my medicines always work every time."

"So, what do you now?" asked Amy.

"I just let this boil for five minutes, providing little gentle stirs along the way and then its done." said Mariah, tenderly stirring the faint purple liquid with a wooden spoon.

"Thank goodness your medicines don't take long to make." said Amy "We'll make up the lost time easily."

"Let's hope so." said Mariah wearily "Or your friend is history."

The fight between Sonic and Lola was getting desperate now. Lola appeared to be getting better at dodging Sonic's attacks so Sonic spent a lot of time spin-dashing at her and missing by inches. Sonic spin-dashed at Lola once again but the skunk dodged him once again and let him dive into the ground. Before Sonic could get back up, Lola kicked him in the back. Sonic fell on his stomach. Lola tried to attack him again but Sonic got out of the way and kicked her in the stomach. That kick was so hard Lola ended up being winded and she ended up bending over in spluttering. Before she could recover, Sonic spin-dashed her yet again, this time hitting her since she was unprepared. Loa was sent flying backwards and she collided with a tree. Several apples fell out of the tree and bopped her on the head. Lola rubbed her head and groaned. Sonic walked up to her, picked up an apple and took a small bite out of it. Then he tossed it over his shoulder.

"Give up Lola, we all know who's going to win this fight." said Sonic "So save yourself the beating and go home."

"Never!" cried Lola "I will not rest until you're dead as a dumpling!"

She picked up an apple and threw it straight into Sonic's eye! Sonic yelped in pain and clutched his sore eye. Lola leaped on him like a pouncing tiger and tackled him to the ground. She grabbed Sonic's neck and began to strangle him. Sonic grabbed Lola's arms and tried to prise her hands off his neck. The struggle was kept up for a couple of minutes.

"Man you're strong!" gasped Sonic as he tried to get Lola's hands off.

Lola didn't say anything. She continued to throttle him. Sonic tried as hard as he could to get Lola's hands off but he couldn't quite do it. Her grasp was pretty strong. Then Sonic had an idea. He closed his eyes and pretended to pass out from the lack of oxygen he was getting from being strangled. Lola fell for the trick and let go of his neck so she could fetch her rifle and shoot him before he came to. The moment Lola got off him, Sonic spin-dashed her right in the face. Lola tumbled over backwards and landed sharply on her back. Sonic laughed at her.

"For a bounty hunter you sure are stupid!" he taunted "How could anyone fall for a trick like that? I thought you bounty hunters had to keep your guard up at all times."

Lola got back to her feet and scowled at the taunting hedgehog.

"That was a cheap shot." she claimed "You won't be so lucky next time."

Suddenly, instead of lunging at Sonic, she ran off. She picked up her rifle which was lying next to a tree and she opened fire on Sonic madly. Sonic found himself being showered by laser blasts and he had a tough time dodging them all.

"He-He-Hey!" cried Sonic as he continued dodging rifle blasts "I said no weapons!"

"I'm the kind of girl who doesn't play by the rules." sneered Lola "Rules are obsolete when I'm involved."

She continued to shower Sonic with rifle blasts. Sonic ran as fast as he could to dodge them all but he only managed to dodge them by inches. Lola was pulling the trigger extremely quickly so she was firing a laser blast every five seconds. This was a desperate attempt to catch Sonic off guard since it would be hard to keep up with a laser being fired every five seconds. Sonic leaped into the air in an attempt to dodge the lasers but Lola aimed the rifle up at him and blasted him. The blast singed Sonic across the side and the pained hedgehog ended up falling in somersaults to the ground. He landed sharply on his back and ended up in serious pain. His whole back seemed to explode with pain. Lola ran up to Sonic and pinned him

down with her foot. She aimed the rifle at his chest. Sonic glared at Lola but Lola kept on a casual face.

"Time to say goodbye hedgehog." she said dryly.

Lola was just about to pull the trigger until suddenly she felt a sharp whack on the back of her head and the skunk passed out. Sonic looked up and to his relief, he saw Amy Rose with her hammer in hand and looking furious.

"No one shoots my Sonic and lives!" she yelled at the unconscious skunk.

"Amy, your timing is perfect!" exclaimed Sonic "I thought for a moment I would die!"

"Well I did have to wait for Mariah to make the medicine and then I had to run all the way back." said Amy "With all that time gone I'm amazed I actually made it in time to save you."

"Speaking of time…" said Sonic, looking down at his watch. The moment he saw the time, his quills straightened in amazement.

"Holy hedgehogs!" he shrieked "That fight lasted a long time didn't it? We only have eight minutes left to save Tails!"

"We'd best get going!" shrieked Amy.

Unfortunately, Lola recovered from the sharp whack Amy had given her and leaped on Amy. Lola grabbed her rifle and pointed it at Amy's chest.

"Leave her alone!" ordered Sonic.

"You hand over the medicine you're going to use to cure Tails or this horribly dressed girl will die." threatened Lola, her finger twitching on the trigger.

"I haven't got the medicine!" snapped Sonic.

"Well if you haven't got it then I suppose pinkie here has it?" said Lola.

"I do." said Amy "But I'm not letting you have it!"

"Then you die, simple as." said Lola, preparing to pull the trigger.

Sonic took the opportunity to spin-dash Lola in the side just before she could fire. Lola was sent hurtling off Amy and skidding across the ground. Amy leaped to her feet and picked up her Piko-Piko hammer. Sonic and Amy stood over Lola and glowered at her.

"Give it up Lola!" ordered Sonic "You can hardly keep up with me so I don't think you'll be able to take me AND Amy on at once!"

Lola glared at the two hedgehogs. Despite her stubbornness and eagerness to finish the job, she knew when she was beaten. Lola picked herself up and ran away as fast as she could run. Amy wanted to run after her but Sonic held his arm up as if to say "Let her go". They watched the defeated skunk disappear into the distance. After Lola disappeared from sight, Sonic smiled.

"I can't imagine her bosses being too pleased with her." he sneered.

"I bet they'll be furious." chuckled Amy "I hope we never see that gun loving witch again!"

"I don't think she'll be showing up again in a hurry." said Sonic "The humiliation will be too much for her I bet."

"Hey Sonic, how much time do we have now?" piped Amy.

Sonic looked at the watch and did a wild double-take.

"We only have seven minutes left!" he shrieked "We need to make up the lost time and fast!"

Quick as a flash, she scooped Amy up in bridal style and rocketed off at such a terrific speed he broke the sound barrier! Sonic ran as fast as he could through the dark murky forest, desperate to get home as quick as possible. Despite the sheer darkness of the forest, Sonic still knew where he was going. He knew his way home even in the dark so the dark was no obstacle for him.

Three minutes later, Sonic finally made it home. He and Amy ran

inside and into the bedroom where Tails lay. Tails looked terrible. His body had become a faint mix of green and yellow and he was having trouble keeping his eyes open. He groaned ever so horribly too. The poison was beginning to take hold of him. Luckily, Sonic and Amy had made it home with four minutes to spare. Amy took the bottle out of her pocket and gave it to Sonic. Sonic ran over to his sickened friend and gently poured a small trickle of medicine into Tails' mouth. Tails swallowed the medicine and smacked his lips. Sonic stood back and waited for something to happen. Would the medicine work as well as Mariah said it would? Or would it take a while to take effect? Shortly after Tails had been given the medicine, his fur began to change back to its normal yellow colour. Then the fox cub opened his eyes without any trouble this time. He looked around to see he was still in the bedroom and Sonic and Amy were watching him.

"Am I dead yet?" he said ever so quietly.

Sonic was so relived the medicine had worked he ran over to Tails grasped him in a hug.

"Tails! The medicine worked!" he cried "You're going to live!"

"I am?" said Tails.

"Yes you are little buddy!" cried Sonic "Amy took me to see Mariah the Medicine Cat and she gave us the medicine that cures the type of poison in that dart Lola shot at you."

"Oh thank goodness!" cried Tails. He leaped into the air and cheered "Yippee! I'm going to live!" he screamed happily.

"Yes you are Tails." said Sonic happily.

"Oh thank you for saving my life Sonic!" cried Tails, hugging Sonic.

"Well actually I think you should thank Amy." said Sonic "She knew who Mariah the Medicine Cat was and she took me to her to get the medicine needed to cure you so I think Amy's the real hero."

"Oh Sonic!" said Amy, blushing bright red "You're just as much a hero as I am. You were fast enough to get us home in time to save

Tails so technically we're both heroes."

"Well I'm grateful to both of you." said Tails "I owe you both big time. And if you meet this Mariah the Medicine Cat person can you tell her I said thanks a lot?"

"Sure thing big guy." said Sonic.

"One thing concerns me." said Amy "Who on Mobius hired that skunk woman to kill Tails?"

"I think Dr. Eggman did." said Sonic "Because earlier she said she'd been hired to kill the one spying on Dr. Eggman so I assume it was Eggman who hired her."

"Well I'm gonna quit spying on Dr. Eggman." said Tails dramatically "I don't wanna be a spy as long as I live."

Sonic stared at Tails.

"But Tails, how can we be one step ahead of Eggman if you're gonna quit spying on him?" asked Sonic.

"We'll just have to take him out the old fashioned way." said Tails "If I stop spying on Eggman, he won't send any more bounty hunters to kill me."

Even though Sonic wasn't pleased with Tails' decision, he knew he was right. Better safe then sorry as the old saying went.

"OK Tails." said Sonic "The spying business is over. But I don't care; I'm just too relieved I managed to save your life."

"And I'm relived I'm going to live." said Tails "Thanks to you and Amy."

"Any time." said Amy "Now I think we should all have a good night's sleep so we're well rested and ready to fight Dr. Eggman once again!"

"I think that's a good idea." said Sonic with a yawn "Goodnight everyone."

He lay down on his bed and Tails lay back down in his. Since Amy had a long walk back to Knothole, she decided to spend the night at Sonic's. She went into the living room and lay on the sofa. The three friends couldn't wait to foil Dr. Eggman's next scheme tomorrow morning.

"So let me get this straight." said Dr. Eggman "You shot the spy but you've failed to kill Sonic and then you surrendered like a coward and let them get back home with a medicine to cure the spy and they've probably cured him by now?"

"Yes Dr. Eggman sir." said Lola "I'm sorry I couldn't complete the mission. Please forgive me."

Lola had run all the way back to the Northern Border and reported her failure to Dr. Eggman. He was less then pleased to hear that Lola had failed her mission.

"Since you've failed to do the job correctly, you get no money and you're fired." said Dr. Eggman "Robots, take her to the roboticizer!" he ordered.

"WHAT?" shrieked Lola "You can't do that to me!"

Too late. Two BI-CEP drones seized Lola by the arms and took her away, kicking and screaming.

"I'll get you for this you boulder with legs!" she screamed.

The BI-CEP robots dragged Lola away and the door shut behind them. Dr. Eggman turned back around to his computer monitors.

"Well she was a waste of time." said Dr. Eggman "At least Tails has decided to quit spying on me for the sake of his health so I won't have to worry about spies anymore."

"But what about your failed attacks sir?" asked Alonzo "The Mobians are one step ahead of you and more of your regions are crumbling under their onslaught!"

"That is obsolete now." said Dr. Eggman "The Mobians will be no match for my latest and greatest invention, Metal Sonic! Sonic is a match for me so Metal Sonic will be a match for the Mobians. Once I unleash him, Mobius will succumb to my might once and for all!"

And with that he cackled a loud demented cackle of victory.

Yeah...I feel a bit miffed with how this turned out. I resorted to Deus Ex Machina in this story, the one thing I strive to avoid when writing. Don't worry, I won't do it again...hopefully...never mind, join me next time as everybody's favourite green hedgehog from the notorious Sonic comic by Archie makes his grand debut ! :) Reviews are welcome.

A Real Scourge Part 1

Story 28: A Real Scourge Part 1

Sometimes night time is a peaceful time. Night time is the time where everybody sleeps; waiting for the morning to come so they could do whatever they liked all over again. Not all nights are peaceful though. Night time at a prison sometimes isn't peaceful and tonight was just that. The alarm was blaring as loud as it could blare, waking up the entire prison centre. The policemen who worked at the centre knew that alarm all too well. That was the prison break alarm. A prisoner had escaped.

But this prisoner was like no other. He was a green hedgehog with blue eyes, red sunglasses and thick green and black boots. He looked almost the same as Sonic save for the colour changes and different shoes. The prisoner tore off his orange prison outfit, revealing a cool leather jacket with flames on the arms underneath. He seemed a lot happier to be rid of the prison outfit.

Unfortunately for the police, this hedgehog could run just as fast as Sonic too. By the time most of them arrived on the scene, the hedgehog had gone. How had he escaped? The cells of the MPD (Mobian Police Department) were almost impossible to escape from so how had this prisoner escaped? Well they saw a police officer lying unconscious in the prisoner's cell so that suggested he had knocked the officer out and ran for it while he had the chance. The officers had a suspicion that the escaped prisoner was heading for the exit so a lot of them gathered up at the exit to block his escape. But even a wall of police officers was no match for the might of this Sonic look-a-like. The hedgehog spin-dashed them all out of the way before they could even pull their guns out and fire at him. The officers were sent sprawling everywhere and the prisoner charged out the door. The only thing that separated him from freedom was a steel wall that was too high to climb up. The prisoner screeched to a halt and stared at what he was up against. Even more officers with their guns loaded, plus the man in charge, Melchett the Hedgehog. He was a grey hedgehog with four quills on his head, a thick, bushy,

black moustache and a blue police uniform. He was a proud officer and he was not about to let this prisoner get away. He pulled his gun out, held it sideways and pointed it at the prisoner.

"Scourge the Hedgehog!" boomed Melchett "You are hopelessly outnumbered and surrounded so give up and get back in your nice warm cell!"

"I think not!" snarled the hedgehog known as Scourge. His voice was a raspy tough guy kind of voice.

He ran around all the officers at a terrific speed and began to whip up a Sonic Tornado smiliar to what Sonic the Hedgehog could do, only his tornado was green instead of blue. The officers were swept up in the tornado and spun around like spinning tops. Even Melchett the Hedgehog was swept up in the terrifying tornado. The police officers were thrown into the wall by the tornado and knocked out whereas some others weren't so lucky. They were thrown straight over the wall and killed by the force of the impact. Melchett was one of the lucky survivors. After the tornado ended, Scourge hurtled into the air and landed on the ground a good distance outside the prison walls. He was free at last. He had been in jail for two whole years and now he was going to get his revenge on the one person who put him there. He looked up at the sky and roared at the top of his voice.

"SONIC!"

Then he spoke in a softer voice. "I have returned…" his eyes narrowed to an evil slit. He couldn't wait to get his revenge on Sonic the Hedgehog and no one would be able to stop him…

"And…another Eggman robot bites the dust!" cheered Sonic the Hedgehog, spinning in the air and landing in perfect fashion.

"Alonzo, am I allowed to say I hate that hedgehog yet again?" grumbled Dr. Eggman as the Egg-Mobile detached from his destroyed machine and hovered away.

"Yes master. You are." muttered his wormy sidekick Alonzo the

Butler Bot.

The next day had arrived and Eggman decided to attack Green Hill Zone and set fire to it with his latest machine, Egg-Blaze. Egg-Blaze was a tall four legged machine armed with two flame throwers on the top and there was a canopy for his Egg-Mobile to neatly slot into so he could command the machine. The reason Eggman wanted to burn Green Hill Zone down is because he thought if there was no forest, Sonic might be easier to find and he wouldn't have much hiding places either. However Egg-Blaze was no match for Sonic though and the super speedy hedgehog quickly brought it crashing down into pieces. With his most recent robot defeated and his plan foiled, Dr. Eggman retreated away in his Egg-Mobile. Sonic teasingly waved him goodbye and walked away from the smoking pile of robot parts. His best friend, Tails the fox cheered for him.

"Alright Sonic! That was way past awesome!" cried Tails.

"No, no, no, no, no. The phrase is way past cool, not way past awesome Tails." corrected Sonic, doing one of his signature finger waggles.

"Oh, sorry." said Tails.

"Don't sweat it Tails, you can say way past awesome if you want." laughed Sonic "It does almost sound as good as way past cool at least."

"OK then." said Tails "I wonder why Eggman tried to burn the forest down?"

"He thinks with no forest, it'll be harder for me to hide from him." explained Sonic "And the fact he just loves to wreck the environment adds to that too."

"I don't see why anyone would want to burn a forest down." said Tails "Forests are a great environment and we need trees to live you know."

"We do?" said Sonic with a tone of surprise in his voice.

"Sure we do." said Tails "Trees are what give us…"

Before he could say anything else he heard two female voices calling his and Sonic's names. Sonic and Tails looked to the left to see Cream the Rabbit with her pet Cheese the Chao and Cosmo the Seedrian running up to them. They were very pleased to see Sonic and Tails again. Cream threw her arms around Sonic in a welcoming hug and Cosmo did the same to Tails.

"Hey Cream and Cosmo!" said Sonic happily "So good to see you two again!"

"It's good to see you too Mr. Sonic." said Cream sweetly.

"Chao!" piped Cheese excitedly.

"So, how did your flower picking go?" asked Tails.

"Well, it was more then just flower picking." said Cosmo modestly "You'll not believe what we've just been through."

"Why don't we all sit down and Cosmo can tell us everything?" suggested Sonic.

Everybody sat down in the grass and Cosmo told them about their adventure with the Chao and Marik the Martian*. She explained everything from the Chao that called for help to rescuing the Chao from Marik and the destruction of his ship. Sonic and Tails were intrigued by the story and even though Sonic couldn't believe the two had just taken Marik out all by themselves, he was impressed with what Cosmo had told him. Just proves that even the weak and inexperienced can manage to pull some surprises on you.

"And that's what me and Cream have been through all this time." finished Cosmo.

"Well, that's pretty cool." said Sonic "I bet Marik will live with that humiliation for the rest of his stinking life!"

"But I thought you killed Marik Sonic." noted Tails "You used his own diamond against him and knocked him off a cliff**."

"Marik survived that fall unfortunately." said Cosmo "Martians have pretty solid bodies so a fall off a cliff only hurts them at the most. But

after Cheese accidentally set his ship to self-destruct, I can't guarantee Marik survived that one. He didn't make it off the ship so I think we can safely say he's as good as gone."

"I hope so." said Sonic "I don't ever wanna see that creep again!"

"So what have you two been up to?" asked Cream.

"Tails spied on Eggman and helped several Royal Fighters trump Eggman's armies." explained Sonic "Unfortunately, he almost lost his life last night after Eggman hired a bounty hunter to kill him***."

"Oh my gosh!" gasped Cream, putting her hands to her mouth to stop herself from screaming.

"And because of that, I've quit being a spy." said Tails "Gives Eggman less of a reason to want to kill me now. I'm working on something much better though. A plane that me and Sonic can use to get to faraway places and combat Dr. Eggman from the skies."

"That sounds good." said Cream "I bet it'll be lots of fun flying in a plane."

"When will it be finished Tails?" asked Cosmo.

"Oh it's got a while away yet." said Tails, his ears drooping down "But it'll be built soon I'm sure."

"What's with all the robot parts?" asked Cream.

She pointed at the pile of robot parts that remained from Eggman's Egg-Blaze machine.

"Oh, me and Eggman had a fight pretty early this morning." said Sonic "I beat him in about five minutes though. That machine is pathetic!"

Tails suddenly had a bright idea.

"Hey, maybe I can salvage some of those robot parts and use them to build the Tornado with!" he said excitedly "I'm sure some of these parts will come in handy!"

"You're gonna need some help carrying those parts." said Sonic "They look pretty heavy."

"We'll help." Cream offered eagerly.

So the four friends set to work on scavenging the best parts of Egg Blaze's wrecked remains and carrying them back to Sonic's house. Tails knew some of the parts were bound to come in handy when building his upcoming plane, the Tornado. In a way, they could thank Dr. Eggman for this since he'd sent the robot and Sonic destroyed it and now they were using its parts to help Tails build something. Maybe Eggman could do something good after all. Pity he wasn't naturally good otherwise things would be a whole lot nicer. And knowing Dr. Eggman, he was probably plotting something else right now.

Meanwhile, Scourge the Hedgehog came across Empire City, the city were the people of Mobotropolis resided until it could be rebuilt. Scourge knew that Sonic lived in Mobotropolis and he also knew that Mobotropolis had been completely destroyed by Dr. Eggman a long time ago**** so he thought that if he was to find Sonic, he would find him in Empire City. Scourge casually wondered through the city, pretending to be some ordinary pedestrian having a stroll down the street. Empire City was a fascinating city to the green hedgehog since he had never been to Empire City before. He looked up at the towering skyscrapers and admired the busy streets full of people and hover cars.

"Once I take over the world." Scourge said to himself "Maybe I should build my kingdom in this place, it's such an awesome looking city."

"Hey buddy." said a pedestrian who was a fat beaver with a striped shirt.

Scourge turned to face the beaver and scowled at him.

"You really shouldn't talk to yourself." said the beaver "People will think you're crazy."

Scourge resisted the urge to skin the beaver alive.

"Thanks for the tip tubby." he said through gritted teeth "I was just looking for the one known as Sonic the Hedgehog. I'm an old friend of his." he lied.

"If I remember correctly he lives in Green Hill Zone now." said the beaver "Empire City ran out of room for him so he had to live somewhere else."

Green Hill Zone! Why on Mobius would Sonic be living in a forest full of loop-de-loop rocks? Maybe there were houses in Green Hill Zone. Still, if Sonic was there, then that was where he needed to be.

"Thanks a lot fatso." said Scourge "I'll be off now."

And with that, he sped off at sonic speed, causing a gust of wind to blow past the beaver. The beaver just stared at him in disbelief.

"He looks like he can run just as fast as Sonic the Hedgehog." he said to himself "Oh great! Now I'm talking to myself!" he grumbled.

Scourge sped out of Empire City and headed for Green Hill Zone. Despite spending two years behind bars, he still remembered where Green Hill Zone was. He sped by the still under construction Mobotropolis and looked at the progress coming on. It was clear whoever destroyed Mobotropolis was a not force to be reckoned with, not that Scourge cared since he was insanely powerful just like Sonic. Scourge headed on and found himself running into Green Hill Zone. Now all he had to do was find Sonic the Hedgehog and make him pay for what he did to him two years ago…

Meanwhile, Sonic, Tails, Cosmo and Cream had scavenged all the best parts from Dr. Eggman's destroyed machine and now Tails was continuing his work on the Tornado. Using parts they'd salvaged from the remains of Egg-Blaze and parts Tails already had, they began to form the frame of the plane. Once they'd built the frame, they would install all the mechanics and motors needed to power the plane and then build the outer body around the frame of the plane. It

would take a long time, but Tails knew it would be worth it in the end.

"I wish we could help Tails build the plane." said Cream "That way we'd have it built quicker."

"That would be nice but we aren't technical people so we can't." said Sonic "The most we can do is keep watch to make sure Dr. Eggman isn't plotting a revenge attack on us."

"I don't think Dr. Eggman will be showing up after such a swift defeat this morning." said Tails as he began to install the motors needed to power the plane "He'll more likely come back the next day or something like that."

Sonic however had a feeling Dr. Eggman would show up again and he had a feeling it wouldn't be tomorrow or any other day, he had a feeling it would be right now or some time soon.

"Cosmo can you pass me that spanner please?" asked Tails.

Cosmo handed him a spanner. Tails took the spanner and began tightening some bolts. Sweat began to trickle down his forehead like raindrops trickling down a window. Tails wiped his forehead with his hand and carried on working.

"I always wondered if Tails will ever come up with an invention that will lead us to victory." Sonic said aloud.

"If I ever come up with an idea that's certain to guarantee us victory over Eggman for good, I'll build it." said Tails as he tightened some bolts.

Deep down though, Tails knew he would never be able to build anything that would help them defeat Dr. Eggman for good. Still, anything he did build gave his friends an extra hand in helping push back Dr. Eggman's forces so if he kept building things to aid his friends and the Royal Fighters in battling Dr. Eggman, Dr. Eggman's defeat was certain.

"Hey Tails, why don't we put some music on while you work?" suggested Cream "It'll make your work more fun."

"I think that's a nice idea Cream." said Tails, getting up off his knees and onto his feet "I'll get my portable radio."

He ran into the house to fetch his portable radio. A few seconds later he arrived with a small rectangular blue radio he had built some time ago. He turned a few knobs on the radio to get it working. His radio ended up on a news station that was giving the daily news for the morning. As usual the news station droned about things Tails never understood such as politics, relationship disorders and celebrity gossip as well as its fair share of what's happening in the world.

"I hate listening to the news." said Tails grumpily "I'll see if I can get the all music channel on."

"No leave it Tails." said Sonic quickly "Something they're saying's just grabbed my attention."

Tails left the radio on the news station and Sonic listened to what was just being said. Cosmo and Cream listened with him.

"…despite this happy news we've been proud to inform you listeners of I'm afraid we now go to the darker side of the world." the news reporter's voice trailed out of the radio "First off: Scourge the Hedgehog who is the infamous brother of our good friend Sonic the Hedgehog, has managed to escape from prison. This shocking event happened last night and many police officers were killed or severely injured by the escaping mad hog. If anyone sees Scourge the Hedgehog, it is well advised to keep away from the maniacal hedgehog and call the cops. Melchett the Hedgehog, head of the Mobian Police Department has stated he will not rest until Scourge is behind glass once again…"

Sonic turned white all over his body while listening to what the radio was saying. Tails and the girls just pulled faces at one another and exchanged puzzling glances. Tails switched the radio off.

"I didn't know Sonic had a brother." said Tails slowly.

"Nor I." said Cream.

"Sonic, who is Scourge the Hedgehog and is he dangerous?" asked

Cosmo wearily "He sounds horrible from what the radio just said about him."

Sonic snapped out of his petrified gaze and breathed heavily.

"Scourge is my brother." said Sonic "Me and him never really got on well when we were kids. We often fought and competed for our parent's affection. Even when we were teenagers we fought a lot. Two years ago me and Scourge visited Angel Island and Scourge was so entranced by the Master Emerald, he tried to steal it. Instead, his soul was filled with dark chaos energy and he became corrupted by the power he absorbed. After that power surge, he changed forever. He became highly aggressive, selfish and greedy and he literally tried to take over the world. I managed to stop him and Scourge was put under heavy lockdown. I never saw him again and I never had to worry about him again. But now he's escaped, I'll have to defeat him once again."

"That Scourge sounds an awful lot like Marik!" squeaked Cosmo fearfully.

"Maybe he's worse then Mr. Marik since he's Sonic's brother!" cried Cream.

"What does Scourge look like?" asked Tails.

"He looks like me only he has green fur, blue eyes, red sunglasses, a leather jacket and big green and black boots." explained Sonic "You can't miss him."

"Now we know what he looks like, we'll know which hedgehog to look out for." said Tails "What should we do if we meet Scourge?"

"Don't make contact with him at all." said Sonic seriously "If you see Scourge, come straight to me, understood?"

"Understood." said Tails, Cream and Cosmo.

"Good." said Sonic "Now let's forget about him for the time being and continue working on Tails' plane."

Everybody nodded and Tails switched his radio on so they could

listen to some music while he worked. A bright melodic tune began to trial out of the radio. Tails liked the music immediately and Cream and Cosmo seemed to like it to. Sonic however, was still worried over Scourge. He knew how dangerous his brother could be and he also knew Scourge could scale a city if he wanted to. Scourge would stop at nothing to take over the world and he would probably be after Sonic for revenge on getting him arrested. Well whatever Scourge wanted to do, Sonic would make sure he fails and is put back in prison where he belongs. Then something snapped him out of his train of thoughts. Dr. Eggman had returned surprisingly enough and he brought a squadron of robots with him. These robots were a fiery red colour with flame throwers attached to their arms. A rubber hose connected the flamethrowers to a backpack where the fuel needed for their flame throwers was kept. Tails switched his radio off and stared at Eggman's sudden arrival.

"Bet you weren't expecting me back so soon were you Sonic the Hedgehog?" crowed Dr. Eggman.

"What do you want now Egg-Face?" demanded Sonic angrily "You're not here to burn the forest down again are ya?"

"Yes I am." said Dr. Eggman "Fire-bots, burn the forest to the ground!"

The squad obeyed and began spouting fire out from their flamethrowers. They set the grass alight and the fire began to spread around the Mobians in a next circle. Sonic leaped out of the ring of fire in perfect fashion and ran around it at super sonic speed. Due to how fast he was running, the fire was beginning to simmer out because of the high winds Sonic created when he ran. The ring of fire was eventually extinguished and Sonic set his sights on the fire squad. One robot tried to set him on fire but he missed and Sonic destroyed it with on fell kick to the head. Another robot tried to set him on fire but Sonic destroyed it with a spin-dash. The final two robots had him surrounded and they tried to set Sonic on fire but Sonic ducked so they blasted each other. The robots were heat proof though so their own fire didn't do any harm whatsoever but it did distract them. Sonic spin-dashed them both and destroyed them instantly.

"Ha, ha!" sneered Sonic "Dr. Eggman's gonna have to do better then this if he wants to burn Green Hill Zone down!"

"Sonic help!" shrieked Tails.

Sonic turned around and to his horror, he saw Dr. Eggman's Egg-Mobile with its arms deployed and holding Tails in one of its hands and Cosmo in the other. Cream stared up at the Egg-Mobile and was finding it hard to resist the urge to scream.

"Has it dawned on you that every time you leave your friends unguarded I always manage to catch them?" laughed Dr. Eggman.

"You let them go this minute!" demanded Sonic.

"No, I think I'll take these two to my base if you don't mind." laughed Dr. Eggman "I can't wait to see what a Mecha Tails will look like."

Sonic spin-dashed towards Dr. Eggman's Egg-Mobile but the sneaky scientist pressed a button on the Egg-Mobile and in one bright dazzling flash, he vanished into thin air. Sonic ended up spin-dashing straight into the ground. He sat up and rubbed himself better. Cream helped him up and began to panic.

"What are we gonna do Mr. Sonic?" squealed Cream "Dr. Eggman's gonna turn Tails and Cosmo into robots!"

"We are gonna go to Eggman's base and rescue them." declared Sonic, punching the air with his fist "I will not let Tails suffer the same fate I once had!"

As Sonic told Cream what he was going to do, Scourge the Hedgehog appeared in a tree and watched Sonic talking to Cream. He grinned wickedly showing off his sharp white teeth that glistened like a thousand daggers in the sunlight. He flipped his sunglasses down over his eyes.

"I've finally found you brother." he purred "Now it's time to give you what you deserve."

He leaped out of the tree and landed. He was about to run up to Sonic and punch his daylights out until a pink hedgehog in a red

dress leaped out from nowhere and threw her arms around him.

"Oy! Get off me!" yelped Scourge, flapping his arms about madly.

"I've gotcha now Sonic!" shrieked the voice of none other then Amy Rose, Sonic's biggest fan and admirer "So wonderful to come across you in these woods."

She opened her eyes and realized she was not hugging Sonic. She almost felt sick and she nearly did a double take in Scourge's face. She let go of him and backed away in fright.

"Hey you're not Sonic!" she shrieked "Oh I'm so sorry about that!"

She covered her face in embarrassment. Scourge straightened his jacket and glared at the girl who just randomly grasped him in a hug.

"Are you usually like this?" he growled rudely "If you are then you need to see a psychiatrist…"

He was soon cut off at the fact he suddenly noticed Sonic the Hedgehog had disappeared.

"Hey! Where'd he go?" cried Scourge desperately.

He glowered at Amy.

"Thanks a lot you pink nutter!" he roared, raising his fist as if he was ready to punch her around the face. Amy fell on her bottom and cowered as Scourge ranted on.

"Because of you leaping on me and grasping me in a hug, I missed Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"I'm so sorry!" whimpered Amy "Please don't hurt me!"

Scourge lowered his fist and calmed down. He held his hand out to help Amy back onto her feet. Amy took his hand and Scourge helped her back up.

"I'm sorry I caused you to miss someone." said Amy "Who did you say you were looking for?"

"I was looking for Sonic the Hedgehog." said Scourge "You see, I'm his brother and we haven't seen each other for a while so I wanted to meet up with him and say hi."

"I didn't know Sonic had a brother." said Amy.

"He doesn't talk about me much." said Scourge, kicking some stones away with his foot "But that's probably because he's jealous of my awesomeness."

"I'll help you find Sonic." Amy offered eagerly "You see, I'm looking for Sonic too so if we both look, we'll be bound to find him."

"That's very thoughtful of you babe but I'd rather look by myself thanks." said Scourge.

"Come on." pleaded Amy "Two heads are better then one when looking for someone right?"

Scourge began to think of something. Maybe if he worked with Amy, she'd help him get closer to Sonic and he'd get the pleasure of watching her horrified face when he killed him. Scourge decided to go with Amy.

"OK babe." said Scourge "We'll look together."

"My name is Amy Rose." said Amy "What's yours?"

"Scourge." said Scourge.

"That's an unusual name." said Amy "I don't know many people called Scourge."

"I know it's an unusual name." said Scourge "But at least my name isn't Sonic the Second!" he laughed.

Amy laughed too.

"So shall we start looking?" asked Amy.

"Whenever you're ready Amy." said Scourge already running off.

"Hey wait up!" cried Amy, running after Scourge.

The two hedgehogs ran through Green Hill Zone. Scourge smiled to himself. His plan was formulated and Amy would end up helping him find Sonic. He could picture his brother's demise now and the very thought made him cackle with glee. Sonic may have beaten him before but he'd had some beefing up while he was in prison so Sonic wouldn't stand a chance against him this time.

"Maybe this day's starting to take a turn for the better for once eh Alonzo?" purred Dr. Eggman as he flew through the air in his Egg-Mobile with Tails and Cosmo grasped firmly in the mobile's hands.

"Oh yes sir." said Alonzo "You got Sonic's best friend and… whatever the hell that is." he said, pointing at Cosmo.

"I'm not familiar with the plant like girl." mused Eggman, stroking his moustache "Once I arrive back at base I'll have to examine her. She definitely doesn't look like she's from around here."

As Dr. Eggman and Alonzo chattered amongst one another, Tails kept squirming in the grasp of the metal hand that held him but try as he might, he just couldn't get free. A robot hand can grip pretty tightly, especially if it's really large. Cosmo didn't try to get free, she just stared into space, wondering what was going to happen to her and Tails. Would Eggman turn her and Tails and robots? Tails finally gave up squirming and panted heavily.

"I hope Sonic hurries up." he said tiredly "I don't wanna be a robot!"

"Is that what he's going to do to us?" asked Cosmo worriedly "Turn us into robots?"

"That's exactly what Egg-Face is going to do." said Tails "That's what he strives for, to roboticize all life on Mobius. I'm pretty sure he'll still roboticize you even though you're not Mobian."

Cosmo shivered at the very thought of being mechanical. What would her mother think if she saw her as a robot?

"But don't worry Cosmo." said Tails, beaming "Sonic will save us. He's always there in the nick of time to save us all."

"Speaking of Sonic." said Dr. Eggman, who had been listening in onto their conversation "I have a little surprise for the rodent once he gets here."

"As a matter of facts…here he comes!" shrieked Alonzo.

Eggman turned around to see Sonic running at top speed towards him on the ground. Dr. Eggman just smiled wickedly and pressed a button on the control pad.

Down on the ground, Sonic ran after the Egg-Mobile while carrying Cream bridal style. Cream held Cheese close to her chest. Sonic was not about to let the Egg-Mobile get away, especially since it had Tails and Cosmo so he ran as fast as he could. Then suddenly, the whole ground collapsed right underneath his feet and he, Cream and Cheese found themselves falling down a deep pit! That was the surprise Eggman had set up for Sonic, he rigged up explosives in the ground and they had gone off to make the ground collapse and cave in. Tails and Cosmo watched the performance from over their shoulders and gasped. Dr. Eggman cackled loudly.

"That was my little surprise Tails." said Dr. Eggman "I made a pit for Sonic to play in. I can't imagine him getting out there in a hurry."

"It's gonna take more then a lousy old pit to stop Sonic!" cried Tails.

"Oh there's more to this then trapping him down a pit…" purred Dr. Eggman.

The Egg-Mobile flew on as Dr. Eggman cackled to himself.

As for Sonic and Cream, they had finally reached the bottom of the pit and they landed on their backsides. Sonic sat up and rubbed himself better whereas Cream dusted herself off. Cheese shook some dirt off his wings. Sonic looked up at the way out of the pit. They were an awful long way down; the pit was at least twenty feet deep.

"That was a pretty cunning move I'll have to say." said Sonic "Dr.

Eggman had a pit set up for me. Well its gonna take more then a pit to keep this hedgehog down!"

"I'll fly up and see if it's safe to come out." said Cream, flapping her ears and taking flight.

Cream and Cheese flew up to the top of the pit and were about to fly out…until they hit something. Cream rubbed her head and stared in confusion. There was nothing there so what did they just bump into? Cream felt the thing they'd bumped into. It was glass, thick glass, very, VERY thick glass. In fact it was Diamond Glass, one of the hardest substances on Mobius and almost impossible to break. There was no way Sonic could get out of this pit. Cream flew back down to the bottom of the pit to tell Sonic what was up.

"Oh Mr. Sonic it's terrible!" squeaked Cream "The top of the pit is blocked by glass! We can't get out!"

"Chao!" added Cheese.

"Oh really?" said Sonic "Well I'll just see how thick this glass is!"

Sonic revved his feet up and ran straight up the wall of the pit. Cream stared at him, wondering how he does that kind of thing. Sonic charged up the wall like a speeding bullet and headed for the glass. He smacked against the glass and fell straight back down. Cream flew up to catch him and only just managed to grab one of his quills. Using all her might, Cream lowered Sonic back down to the ground.

"Are you OK Mr. Sonic?" asked Cream sweetly.

"Well apart from this major headache I'm alright." said Sonic, rubbing the small bump that had appeared on his head "But I can't break that glass. It's Diamond Glass, the hardest glass on Mobius. By the time I eventually break that it'll be Christmas in the year 2153."

"We can't wait eleven years for you to get us outta here." said Cream "We need to get out now or Eggman will roboticize Tails and Cosmo!"

"If we don't get out the whole world will be roboticized, never mind just Tails and Cosmo." noted Sonic "Now how am I gonna get outta here?"

"Um, Mr. Sonic?" said Cream "I'm not sure if this is a problem but… look!" she squealed, pointing at some thing with a trembling finger.

Sonic looked in Cream's direction and saw what she was so frightened at. The pit had more then just Diamond Glass to trap Sonic in it, there were five robotical worms that Eggman had placed there just to finish Sonic off. They were gold in colour and full of razor sharp teeth. Sonic got ready to attack as the worms neared him with their teeth bared.

"Stay back Cream, I'll handle this!" yelled Sonic.

"OK." said Cream, crouching down against the wall behind Sonic.

Sonic spun into a spin-dash and charged straight at the nearest robot-worm. Surprisingly enough, the worm dodged his attack with ease. Sonic hurtled straight into the wall and churned his way through the thick brown soil, sending it showering over the robot-worms. Even though Sonic hadn't intended for this to happen, he was glad it did because it gave him an idea. True the Diamond Glass would trap him down the pit, but he could easily dig his way out of the pit by digging around the Diamond Glass. Cream and Cheese followed Sonic through the tunnel he was digging, making sure they were a fair distance away so they wouldn't get soil in their eyes. Unfortunately, the robot worms slithered after them, their razor sharp teeth gleaming like steak knives. Sonic erupted through the earth like a missile shooting up through the underground. Sonic landed on his feet and dusted himself off with his hands while Cream & Cheese climbed out of the tunnel and into the warm daylight. They took a quick breath of fresh air and sighted happily

"That was a brilliant idea Mr. Sonic." said Cream, smiling brightly.

"Chao!" agreed Cheese.

"Thank you." said Sonic, keeping his ego down "What can I say? A pit can't contain this hedgehog!"

"I'll say!" said Cream "Not even a pit with glass over it can stop you!"

Then suddenly one of the robot worms leaped out of the ground and landed on Cream, roaring angrily. Then it scooped Cream up in its jaws and swallowed her whole! Cheese panicked and flew away but another robo-worm popped up from the ground and swallowed him up! Sonic just stared in utter astonishment at the worms. The robot-worms set their sights on Sonic and prepared to eat him up. Sonic just gave them a brave glare and prepared to spin-dash them into tiny little pieces.

"I dunno about you but I'd skip lunch if you don't mind!" he said, lunging at the worm that ate Cream in a homing attack.

The robo-worm slapped him away with its tail and Sonic hurtled into the Diamond Glass above the pit he had just escaped. Diamond Glass is very hard so Sonic hurt his face and he clutched it in pain, groaning quietly. The robo-worm that had eaten Cheese lunged for Sonic and prepared to snatch him up with its jagged jaws. Sonic just stood there and let the robo-worm grab him in its jaws and swallow him up. Big mistake! The moment the worm ate Sonic; Sonic spun into a spin-dash as he entered the pit of the robo-worm's inside and smashed his way straight out of its belly! The worm squealed an electronic squeal and fell to pieces. Cheese flew out of the remains and cooed happily as the fact he was free. Sonic laughed at the robo-worm.

"What's the matter? Don't like hedgehogs for dinner?" he jeered "Too bad! Ha, Ha, Ha!"

Then he spin-dashed into the worm that ate Cream and smashed straight through the robo-worm's stomach. He burst out of the robo-worm's back with Cream in his arms and the robo-worm fainted, falling to pieces after it hit the ground. Sonic landed and put Cream down. The poor rabbit was covered with sticky slimy oil after being inside the robo-worm. She squeezed on one of her ears to get the oil off.

"This stuff is yucky and smells horrible!" she said with disgust "Thanks for getting me out of that horrible robot Mr. Sonic."

"No problem." said Sonic, winking "I'm not letting Dr. Eggman capture you just after he captures Tails and Cosmo."

"Sonic look out!" yelped Cream.

Sonic turned around and saw a robo-worm lunging for him in a rainbow arch. Sonic spin-dashed straight down the robo-worm's mouth and burst through the end of its tail. The worm collapsed to the ground and smashed to pieces. Its head landed in front of Cream, making her jump back in fright. There were only two robo-worms left. Sonic spin-dashed towards them but one of the robo-worms smacked him away with its tail. Sonic landed front first on the ground and screeched to a painful halt. The other robo-worm slithered towards him and smacked him with its tail before he could get up. Cream got mad and decided to help her friend. She flew towards the robo-worm attacking Sonic and kicked it in the head. The robo-worm hissed horribly at Cream but before it could do anything to her, Sonic spin-dashed it in the centre and sliced it into two halves. The robo-worm fell lifelessly to the ground. As for the last robo-worm, it crept up behind Sonic and tried to eat him up but Cheese walloped it in the back of the head and made its head fall forwards and embed itself into the ground. Before the worm could pull its head out, Sonic spin-dashed it into pieces. Sonic dusted his hands off and smirked at the pile of robot pieces.

"OK, seriously, Dr. Eggman's getting worse!" jeered Sonic "First that Egg-Blaze and now those robo-worm things! And the funny thing is, he managed to make a robotical suit that managed to match my strength and almost destroy me*****."

"That seems a little weird doesn't it?" said Cream "Eggman was getting good at his stuff and now he's getting bad. Maybe he's losing his touch."

"Either that or Eggman's just running out of good ideas." mused Sonic "Now we've defeated his pathetic robo-worms, we'd best get back to trying to save Tails and Cosmo."

"But Eggman's probably a long way away now." said Cream "We'll never catch up with him!"

"There's only one place Eggman lives in." noted Sonic "And that's his city of Robotropolis in the Northern Border of Megapolis."

"Oh you mean that city Eggman built and disguised as a circus park to trick us into thinking he'd turned nice******?" questioned Cream.

"That's exactly what I mean." said Sonic "So I know where Eggman is, it's just the matter of making it in time to save Tails and Cosmo."

He scooped Cream up in bridal style. Cream held Cheese close to her chest.

"Hang tight Cream, I'm going to run as fast as I can possibly run!" ordered Sonic.

"OK." said Cream, clutching Sonic's shoulders tightly.

Sonic nodded and bent down, ready to run.

"Here…we…GO!" he yelled.

He rocketed off and sped through the forests of Green Hill Zone at blinding speed. He was going at supersonic speeds and the feeling of going at this speed gave Cream a tremendous thrilling feeling of excitement as if this was an awesome ride of some sorts. Running at speeds like this, Sonic was bound to arrive in time to save his two friends from roboticization.

The moment Sonic had left; Amy and Scourge arrived on the scene, taking note of the piles of golden robot parts and worm heads. Scourge scowled at them, wondering what the heck they were. Amy searched around, sniffing the air as if she was expecting to find a familiar scent somewhere.

"I think Sonic was just here a moment ago." pondered Amy "But he must have run off."

Scourge picked up a robo-worm's head and stuck his tongue out at it.

"What the heck is this?" he spat.

Amy looked at the worm head.

"I think that was an Eggman robot." said Amy "If there are destroyed Eggman robots here then Sonic must have been in a battle a moment ago."

"Yeah, pity we just missed him." moaned Scourge, kicking the head away "Goodness knows where the hell he is now."

"I'm sure we'll find him eventually." said Amy "I can't wait to see Sonic's face when he sees you again."

Yeah, he'll be good and terrified when he sees my awesome self standing before him! thought Scourge evilly.

"You know looking at you," said Amy for no apparent reason "It isn't hard to tell you're related to Sonic. You and Sonic look almost identical."

"Yeah we do." said Scourge "But we're not twins, I'm a year older then he is."

"I see." said Amy "So, shall we continue looking for Sonic?"

"Of course babe." said Scourge with a flashy smile that could make any woman weak at the knee "In fact, I think I'll carry you so I don't have to hold back for you." he added, flipping his sunglasses down over his eyes.

"Oh, um…OK." said Amy as Scourge scooped her up bridal style.

"If you think Sonic's fast, wait till you see my speed!" bragged Scourge, preparing to run.

He jolted off and sped down the path in the exact same direction Sonic had been running a moment ago. Amy was overwhelmed by the thrilling feeling she was getting from Scourge's incredible speed. Sonic the Hedgehog was the fastest thing alive but Scourge was just as fast so if the two had a race, it would be a tie every time. Scourge sped through the forests, sensing that he wasn't far off from Sonic. He had a feeling Sonic was ahead and if he was right, he could catch up to him and make him pay for the indignity he had caused

him and wouldn't Amy get a shock when she watched him beat Sonic to a pulp? Scourge smiled sadistically to himself as he pictured Sonic's demise in his evil mind…

Robotropolis, the city of Dr. Eggman, the city of robots and the one place Eggman ruled over with complete and total authority due to the fact he had built the city and populated it with his own robots. After all even evil geniuses needed a homey little city to plot in. This city was a paradise for Dr. Eggman since the air around the city was polluted, everything was robotical and it was swarming with his finest creations. Only Sonic, Tails, Amy, Cream, Wilson and Mandy had seen the city and actually been in it as well so not many Mobians would know about this place. Dr. Eggman had arrived back at Robotropolis not long ago and had just taken Tails and Cosmo to his headquarters. He put them both in separate glass cages and readied the roboticizer for action. Tails and Cosmo exchanged worrying glances amongst each other as Eggman prepared everything.

"The roboticizer will be ready in a couple of minutes." said Dr. Eggman as he pulled a lever "I just need to adjust a few more controls and dials and then it'll be show time! Hee, Hee, Hee, Hee!"

"All systems are primed and ready." said Alonzo "We just need to wait for this thing to switch on and then the roboticizer will be ready to go."

"I know Alonzo now do me a favour and keep an eye on the monitors." ordered Dr. Eggman as he twisted a knob "We must be ready for Sonic the Hedgehog's arrival."

"Absolutely sir." said Alonzo, zipping over to the computer monitors that displayed the entire perimeter of the city as well as outside the gates. "Although I don't see why you're so concerned since the gates are too tough for him to smash through." he mumbled to himself. Unfortunately Dr. Eggman heard him.

"I want to know if he's there so I can send a robot to destroy him!" yelled Dr. Eggman "Now keep your stupid mouth shut while I ready

this thing!"

Alonzo did as he was told and kept his sharp eyes on the computer monitors. Cosmo curled herself up and sat against the glass, shaking like a leaf. Tails noticed Cosmo's terrified state and tried to comfort her.

"Don't be scared Cosmo, Sonic will save us." Tails assured her.

"But what if he doesn't get there in time?" worried Cosmo, shaking ever harder "We'll be robots and probably under the control of that horrible man there!"

"Sonic always manages to get there in the nick of time." said Tails "He'll save us with minutes to spare I promise you."

"Sonic won't be saving you at all since he's trapped at the bottom of a pit I made for him!" retorted Dr. Eggman who had heard everything Tails had been saying to Cosmo.

"You're wrong Eggman!" cried Tails "Its gonna take more then a stupid pit to stop Sonic!"

"I know, that's why I put a sheet of Diamond Glass over the top to prevent him from escaping!" said Dr. Eggman, grinning widely "And I've planted some robo-worms to finish him off. He should be as good as eaten by now; I'll have to go check on the pit after I roboticize you and your new friend here."

Dr. Eggman stopped fiddling with the control pad and walked over to Cosmo's cage, the plant girl still backed against the wall and shivering as if she was deathly cold. Even though Dr. Eggman was nowhere near as scary looking as Marik the Martian, he still sacred her. Dr. Eggman looked at Cosmo and hummed with interest.

"As for you my dear, what are you?" he mused "You definitely don't look like a local."

"I…I'm…I'm not." stammered Cosmo "I come from…another… world…"

"Interesting…" said Dr. Eggman to himself "You're from another

world eh? That'll make you all the more special once I roboticize you won't it? Ha, ha, ha!"

Cosmo shook even more and her heart almost stopped. Tails got mad at what Eggman was saying to Cosmo and decided to stand up for her.

"You leave her alone!" cried Tails.

"Or what?" sneered Dr. Eggman "You can't do anything to me, you're trapped like a big fat filthy rat!"

"You let me outta here and I'll show you who's the rat around here!" threatened Tails.

"And why would I be stupid enough to do that?" asked Dr. Eggman snidely "You're staying in that cage and that's the end of it! You won't be so cocky when I roboticize you!"

He turned his back on the two and walked back to the control panel, laughing loudly. Tails began to ram himself against the glass in an attempt to break it but his attempts were futile seeing as this was Diamond Glass. All he ended up doing was giving himself a sore shoulder. After twenty-five futile rams against the glass, Tails collapsed in exhaustion. He panted hard and his tongue hung out from the side of his mouth. Cosmo just looked at him sadly and felt sorry for poor Tails. Dr. Eggman flicked the switch on the control pad that powered the roboticizer up and the roboticizer began to whirr and buzz into life. Tails stared helplessly around him as his cage began to lighten up. That was a sign the roboticizer was almost ready to activate. Cosmo had no idea what was going on but she knew it was bad so she continued to hug herself in fear.

"It's almost ready now." Dr. Eggman announced needlessly loudly "I hope you're all good and terrified before I activate this machine!"

"We are!" snapped Tails "Do you really need to ask?"

Eggman ignored Tails' rude remark and continued working. Or at least he would have done if Dr. Alonzo hadn't started shrieking like mad.

"Master! Master! Sonic the Hedgehog has arrived!" screamed Alonzo "He's just outside the gates!"

Dr. Eggman immediately ran over to Alonzo and peered at the monitors. Tails and Cosmo's faces brightened at the news. Dr. Eggman smiled at the sight of Sonic on the monitor.

"So Sonic has somehow escaped my pit of peril and has now shown up to save his pitiful friends?" he crooned.

"How the heck did he escape the pit?" said Alonzo wildly "You covered it with Diamond Glass! He shouldn't be strong enough to smash through that!"

"I have no idea but now he's here, we can unleash something that will guarantee his defeat!" Dr. Eggman declared proudly "Alonzo, you will take Egg-Scorpion Mk II and give Sonic a warm welcome!"

"Yeesss sir!" said Alonzo obediently.

He zoomed out of the room like a motorbike.

"No matter what you do, Sonic will smash your bot, kick your butt and rescue us!" claimed Tails.

"We'll see about that won't we?" laughed Dr. Eggman "Egg-Scorpion Mk II will be much more reliable then the first Egg-Scorpion and it'll ground Sonic into the dirt!"

"Fat chance." muttered Tails.

Dr. Eggman ignored Tails and set his eyes on the computer monitors, ready to watch Sonic's demise.

Outside Robotropolis gates, Sonic screeched to a halt and put Cream down. He glared at the gates and grumbled under his breath.

"I remember those darn gates." he moaned "They're strong enough to resist my attacks and they're almost invulnerable so I'll never be able to get through by knocking the gates down."

"Should I fly you over Mr. Sonic?" asked Cream.

"That would be good idea but I don't want to risk you getting caught as well." said Sonic "Not to mention Eggman must have some kind of flying robot to take out anyone flying over the gates."

"Then how are we going to get in?" asked Cream.

"I hope that tunnel Wilson dug under the wall******* is still there." said Sonic "If it is then I can just spin-dash through that and presto I'm in!"

He ran away from the gates and headed further across the wall. He came to the location that Wilson dug under when he and Mandy were asked to help him and the others rescue Cream and stopped. Fortunately, the hole was still there. Eggman obviously hadn't found it and filled it in.

"Well that's lucky." said Sonic "I'll just spin-dash through that hole and then I'm in!"

But before he could do anything, he heard a familiar shrilly girl's voice calling his name from a distance.

"Sonic!" called the voice of Amy Rose.

"How the heck did Amy get here?" wondered Sonic, turning around to see a cloud of dust coming over the horizon.

There was more then just Amy though. She was being carried by Scourge the Hedgehog and Scourge was rocketing towards him at top speed. Cream ran up to Sonic and saw what he was looking at.

"Hey Mr. Sonic, who's the green hedgehog carrying Miss Rose?" asked Cream.

"I think I know who it is." said Sonic dryly.

Scourge came into view with Amy in his arms. He screeched to a halt and sent sand flying all over Sonic and Cream. Some sand got in Cream's eyes and she yelped. She rubbed them to get the sand out of her eyes. Scourge put Amy down and flashed a wicked smile

at the shocked Sonic. Sonic just stared at Scourge in disbelief. Amy ran up to Sonic and grasped him in a hug.

"Hi Sonic!" she said cheerfully "I bet you're wondering what I'm here for. Well I happened to come across your brother here and I decided to help him look for you and now that we've found you, you and your brother can have a happy reunion!"

Sonic said nothing and Amy let go of him, wondering why he was acting like that. Scourge raised his sunglasses, revealing his cobalt blue eyes and angry expression underneath.

"Hello bro." he said coldly.

"Scourge." said Sonic, trying not to show any signs of fear "Long time no see."

"Of course its long time no see!" snarled Scourge "I've been rotting in jail for two years because of you! And now I've returned, I will make you pay for all the indignity you've ever caused me! And by that, I mean KILL you!"

Amy couldn't believe her ears.

"You want to kill Sonic?" she screeched "But I thought…"

"Amy, he's played you for a sap." said Sonic "He was obviously using you to get to me. Scourge doesn't want a happy reunion; he just wants to spin-dash me to a pulp and mount my head on the wall."

"Oh my gosh!" cried Amy "Why does he wanna do that?"

"Because, toots." Scourge said before Sonic could say anything "Wimpo Sonic here decided to deny me what's mine and put me in jail! Well no one denies Scourge the Hedgehog total domination of this world!"

"Well I'm denying you domination of this world so there!" cried Sonic "I beat you before and I'll beat you again Scourge!"

"Just try it weakling!" challenged Scourge, daring Sonic to make the

first blow by making "come get some" gestures with his hand "I've been doing serious workouts in prison so I'll be too strong for you this time!"

"We'll see about that." growled Sonic "Amy, you back me up. Cream, you and Cheese stay out of trouble."

"OK." said Cream.

She wanted to help but she was too polite to protest so she did as she was told and stayed back from the fight. Amy summoned her Piko-Piko hammer and charged at Scourge before Sonic could say anything. Scourge gave her a massive uppercut to the jaw and Amy hurtled backwards. That punch had cracked some of her teeth and a thin trickle of blood came out from the side of her lip. Scourge just laughed at the dazed hedgehog.

"Does a girl as pathetic as this seriously think she'll get lucky with you Sonic?" he jeered "I bet you wouldn't hang out with Amy if your life depended on it!"

"That does it!" shouted Sonic, his fists shaking with rage "No one hurts Amy or anyone of my friends like that! You're going down Scourge the Hedgehog!"

"Bring it on bro!" dared Scourge.

Sonic sped towards Scourge in a homing attack but Scourge got into a spin-dash and bashed straight into him. Scourge's attack was strong and Sonic fell head over heels onto his stomach. Then Scourge spin-dash Sonic in the back before he could get up. Sonic managed to stand back up but Scourge knocked him over again with a spin-dash. Then Scourge decided to knock it off with the spin-dashes and grabbed Sonic by the arms. Using all the strength he had, he threw Sonic straight into the iron wall that surrounded Robotropolis. He threw Sonic so hard that he dented the wall after he hit it! Sonic fell on his bottom and groaned. Scourge seized Sonic by the throat and pinned him to the wall. He bared his sharp teeth and glared a terrifying death glare at his brother.

"See?" he said "I've barely started and already I've whupped your

backside! That workout's done wonders for me hasn't it?"

"Just because you're all beefed up and that…it doesn't make…you any stronger!" choked Sonic as he tried to free himself from Scourge's grasp.

"You're close to death and yet you still decide to insult me?" blurted Scourge "How arrogant are you Sonic?"

"Nowhere near as arrogant as you!" snapped Sonic.

He kicked Scourge in the thigh. Scourge yelped and let go of Sonic to rub his leg better but Sonic decided to attack with a terrific punch to the face that sent Scourge staggering backwards. Before Scourge could regain his senses, Sonic spin-dashed straight into him, sending him flying through the air like a tossed stone. Scourge landed on his back and skidded across the hard, rocky, sandy terrain. That attack didn't do much to him but he did have some scrape marks on the back of his leather jacket. Scourge got back to his feet, flipped his sunglasses down and growled like a dinosaur. Sonic got into a battle ready stance, ready to attack Scourge once again.

"That's it brother!" snarled Scourge "You can lock me up for as long as you wish, but no one ruins this jacket!"

"I'll ruin more then just that stupid jacket!" yelled Sonic "I'll break your sunglasses too!"

And with that the two hedgehogs rushed towards each other like speeding bullets. They both crashed into each other and knocked each other over. It was almost like they were playing dodgem cars. Sonic and Scourge rubbed their foreheads and groaned in unison.

"Geez Scourge what is your head made of?" groaned Sonic.

"I could ask you the same thing Sonic!" retorted Scourge.

But that was the least of their problems. Sonic and Scourge both got back to their feet but they were interrupted by the sound of a robot leaping out from the city. They both stared at Robotropolis and saw a giant scorpion robot leaping over the fence and out of the city. It

was Egg-Scorpion Mk II. It looked very much like the original Egg-Scorpion albeit with a row of golden horns on its head, bigger claws and a bigger tail with more cannons on then before. Alonzo was piloting it. The scorpion robot skittered towards the two hedgehogs. It opened one of its giant claws and seized Scourge the Hedgehog instead of Sonic. Seeing as his brother was captured, Sonic ran off before Alonzo could spot him and spin-dashed under the hole in the fence. Amy, who had recovered from Scourge's uppercut earlier, and Cream crawled under the fence after him. As for Scourge, he squirmed in the giant scorpion's grasp. Alonzo held Scourge close to the cockpit so he could see him and he hooted with maniacal laughter.

"I did it! I caught Sonic the Hedgehog!" he giggled "My master will be so pleased with me!"

"Put me down you moron!" roared Scourge, pounding Egg-Scorpion's claw with his fist "And I'm not Sonic the Hedgehog!"

Alonzo stopped laughing and stared at the hedgehog in his grasp.

"That's weird." he mused "Sonic doesn't have a raspy evil voice like that."

He opened the cockpit so he could get a better look since the cockpit window was completely red so he couldn't see what colour Scourge was. Alonzo stared at Scourge and almost had a malfunction on the spot.

"Oh my goodness!" he gurgled "You aren't Sonic the Hedgehog! You're just some cheap imitator of Sonic!"

"Cheap? CHEAP IMITATOR?" bellowed Scourge, flinging his arms about in a mad temper "I'm no cheap imitator of Sonic! I'm his older brother I'll have you know and I want nothing more then for Sonic the Hedgehog to eat mud and get bent!"

Alonzo listened to Scourge's ranting with interest.

"So you're Sonic the Hedgehog's brother eh?" he said "And you want to destroy him as well?"

"Yes!" roared Scourge "I want to make Sonic and anyone affiliated with him suffer and I also want to take over the world! Mobius will bow before me and I shall be King Scourge, ruler of Mobius!"

"Oh no you won't!" said Alonzo firmly "If anyone's taking over the world it's me! I-I-I mean it's my master Dr. Eggman!" he corrected himself "If you wish to take over the world then I'll have to terminate you so Eggman won't have any contest!"

"Dr. Eggman?" said Scourge "Isn't he that crazy fat man who wants to roboticize everybody?"

"Yes he is." said Alonzo "And he is taking over the world. Not you." he prodded Scourge in the chest with a long sharp finger "I'll take you to Eggman to be roboticized and that way, you can't interfere with him."

"You'll have to defeat me first you missile on wheels!" shouted Scourge.

"And defeat you I shall." said Alonzo darkly "I've already got you tightly trapped within the Egg-Scorpion's claws so there's no way you'll be able to do anything now."

"Oh yeah?" growled Scourge "Well watch this!"

He gripped the insides of the claw with his hands and using all the strength he had, he tried to force the claw open so he could free himself. Alonzo just stood by and watched, smirking confidently. There was no way Scourge was going to get free of that claw. But Scourge managed to force the claw open with one mighty push with his arms. The claw opened and Scourge fell to the ground. Alonzo's optics widened so much with shock they popped out of their sockets! He caught his optics and put them back in his eye sockets. Alonzo hopped back in the cockpit and closed the hatch. Scourge smirked coolly at the giant robot scorpion that loomed before him.

"You want me to rough that giant tin-can up for you?" he said evilly "I'll be happy to oblige!"

"I'll roughen *you* up you egotistical, power hungry sapsucker!" yelled

Alonzo. Then he thought to himself *Hey that sounds like something I would say to my master if I had the courage to do so!*

Scourge spin-dashed straight into Egg-Scorpion Mk II and bounced straight off the cockpit. That one little spin-dash sent the scorpion bot staggering backwards and falling on it's side. Alonzo was well and truly shaken by that onslaught.

"Oooooh my goooooodnesssss!" he burbled "That was even stronger then any attack Sonic could ever do!"

"If you thought that was mind-blowing, wait till you see the real stuff!" crowed Scourge.

And with that he spin-dashed into Egg-Scorpion once again…

Meanwhile, Sonic, Amy and Cream had made it into Robotropolis and were just making their way into Eggman's base. Sonic had explained everything that had happened earlier to Amy so she was up to speed.

"So Eggman has Tails and Cosmo and is probably ready to roboticize them any moment now?" said Amy, hoping she'd gotten everything right.

"Yup." said Sonic "And that's why me and Cream have come to Robotropolis."

"Well I hope we're not too late." said Amy "And I still can't believe Scourge tricked me like that!"

"You didn't know who he was." said Sonic "You were bound to fall for his act. It's no big deal."

"It is a big deal!" shrieked Amy "Thanks to me, Scourge is here to get you and he won't stop until he kills you!"

"Amy please be quiet." said Cream "The nasty robots will hear you."

"Sorry." said Amy, clasping her hands over her mouth.

Luckily, no robots had heard Amy shrieking. Sonic peeked around the corner of a domed shaped building and spotted Dr. Eggman's headquarters, proudly standing in the centre of this robotic metropolis. It was the tallest building in the city so it wasn't hard to find it.

Sonic, Amy and Cream headed towards the colossal building and Sonic broke the doors down with one hard spin-dash. This immediately alerted the guard bots and they opened fire on the Mobians with their laser cannons. Sonic homing attacked them and smashed them to pieces, Amy squashed them flat with a hefty swing of the Piko-Piko hammer and Cream and Cheese teamed up with kicks to the head and flying punches on the robots to distract them so Sonic and Amy could destroy them. After the guard bots had been effortlessly dealt with, Sonic, Amy and Cream ran on and headed for the roboticizer chamber where Dr. Eggman likely was. They hadn't been in the roboticizer chamber the last time they were in Eggman's base but Sonic had a sneaky suspicion on where it was. It would likely be on the upper floors of the building so Sonic and the girls headed upstairs. Sonic's guess was fortunately correct; the chamber was on the upper floors of the building. After climbing up two floors, Sonic and the girls found the chamber. Sonic spin-dashed the door down and Dr. Eggman jumped in surprise. Tails and Cosmo's faces brightened at the sight of their blue spiky friend standing there with a big smirk on his face.

"Sonic! You made it just in time!" cried Tails.

"I can see that." said Sonic, taking note of the glowing cages they were trapped in.

"B-b-b-b-b-b-but!" stuttered Dr. Eggman "How can you be here, when Alonzo's fighting you outside the gates? You can't be so fast you're in two places at once!"

"I'm not in two places at once." said Sonic "That hedgehog Alonzo's fighting is my evil brother and I bet he's tearing your scorpion bot to smithereens!"

Dr. Eggman looked at the monitors quickly and true to Sonic's guess, Scourge was tearing Egg-Scorpion apart limb from limb.

"Oh that's just great!" he groaned "One supersonic hedgehog is bad enough but he has a brother that seems to be just as fast and strong as he is? How can I cope with two supersonic hedgehogs on my back?"

While Dr. Eggman moaned, Sonic spin-dashed into Tails and Cosmo's glass cages and shattered them to tiny little shards. Then the Mobians all made a run for it before Eggman could finish being grumpy. Dr. Eggman turned away from the monitors and saw the broken cages and the missing Mobians. He face-palmed himself as hard as he could.

"Oh for Pete's sake!" he grumbled "Why did I just let those stupid computer monitors divert my attention? I could have roboticized those two at the touch of a button just before Sonic could free them both but no! I let the monitors distract me and now Tails and that plant girl have gotten away! Oooooh I really hate it when my prisoners escape!"

His temper was so great he kicked the control pad as hard as he could and just ended up severely hurting his foot. Dr. Eggman screeched in pain and leaped about like a mad rabbit while clutching his foot. After he finally stopped hopping about in pain, he pressed a button on the control pad for the computer monitors.

"Alonzo, return to base immediately!" ordered Dr. Eggman.

No answer came from the other side of the microphone.

"Alonzo! I said return to base immediately you ignorant slop bucket!" roared Dr. Eggman.

Still no answer came. Then suddenly a green spiky ball smashed through a window and screeched to a halt across the floor. It was Scourge the Hedgehog, holding a very battered and very beaten Alonzo in his hands. Alonzo had dents and cracks everywhere and his left arm was clinging on by a thread of wire. Both his wheels were missing and his right optic was smashed to pieces so he could only see through one eye. The tip of his head was bent backwards.

"I'm…sorry…master…" grunted Alonzo "I…tried…."

Then Scourge threw Alonzo onto the floor. Dr. Eggman screamed in terror and Scourge seized him by his uniform. Then, somehow, using all the strength he had, he hoisted Dr. Eggman clean off the floor with one arm! Dr. Eggman waved his arms and legs around wildly as Scourge held him firmly off the floor.

"Please! Don't hurt me!" he begged "I'll never try to harm Sonic the Hedgehog again! I swear! I'll never harm another Mobian again!"

"Good!" said Scourge crossly "Because *I* wanna do that!"

Dr. Eggman stopped gibbering like an idiot and stared at the green hedgehog that held him with one arm.

"You, what?" he said.

"I said, I wanna harm Sonic the Hedgehog!" retorted Scourge "I wish nothing more then doom open that blue moron and anyone affiliated with him!"

"You mean you're not on Sonic's side?" said Dr. Eggman, his face brightening.

"Yes! I'm not on that wimpo hedgehog's side!" snarled Scourge "He locked me up for two years and I've come for revenge! Once I destroy that hedgehog I will conquer the world and everyone will bow beneath my feet!"

"So, you want to conquer the world do you?" purred Dr. Eggman.

"Yes!" growled Scourge, holding Eggman close to his face "And I will not let YOU get in my way!"

"Oh no green Sonic." said Dr. Eggman, waving his hands about "I don't want to get in your way. You see, I hate Sonic the Hedgehog too and I want to conquer the world too. If you and me team up, we can vanquish Sonic the Hedgehog and we can BOTH be rulers of Mobius! The planet will bow down to us and we shall rule over it all! Whadda ya say?"

Scourge pretended to consider this offer by putting a finger to his chin. Then he tightened his grip on Dr Eggman's uniform, glared at

him and gritted his teeth. Dr. Eggman's moustache drooped down in dismay.

"Do you really think I'm gonna make an alliance with someone as pathetic as you?" he said, his voice dangerously soft and nasty like " *I* will conquer Mobius, *I* will rule over it all and Mobius will bow to *my* feet! I will not share power with you or anyone else!"

"But green Sonic…"

"And stop calling me that!" roared Scourge "My name is Scourge!"

"OK, *Scourge* ." Eggman corrected himself "How can you turn down such an offer? We'll be invincible together!"

"I don't need you or anyone else's help!" snarled Scourge "I will conquer Mobius by myself! I have the power and no one can stop me! And besides, if I did make that stupid alliance, you would stab me in the back after we conquer Mobius!"

"No I wouldn't!" protested Dr. Eggman "Honest I wouldn't!"

"Yes you would!" retorted Scourge "I bet the moment we conquer this planet you'll blast me dead with one of your stupid robots or roboticize me! Well guess what? It ain't happening and I am overthrowing you!"

And with that he did the one thing Sonic would never dream of doing. He tossed Dr. Eggman straight out of the broken window with one hefty throw! Dr. Eggman screamed a loud throaty scream as he plummeted out the window and straight down to the ground. Luckily for him, a flying robot saw him and swooped straight down to catch him. Unfortunately, Scourge saw the flying robot and spin-dashed into it, smashing it to pieces before it could get to Dr. Eggman. Eggman continued falling. However more luck struck for him, a robot on the ground spotted him falling and caught him in its arms. Dr. Eggman breathed a huge sight of relief. He had lived to fight another day but he had a feeling Robotropolis wouldn't. Scourge got mad at the fact Dr. Eggman had been saved from falling to his doom and he decided to take his rage out on the city. He spin-dashed into every building he aimed at, causing them to shudder and shake and

tumble over to the ground and he destroyed every single robot that tried to stop him. The robot that had saved Dr. Eggman from his fall ran out of Robotropolis, carrying Dr. Eggman with him as fast as it could run.

Scourge ploughed through yet another building, causing it to shake about and then topple over and crash to the ground, smashing any Eggman robots unfortunate enough to be in the building's path. A squadron of Egg-Pawns began aimlessly shooting at Scourge with their pistols but they missed every shot and Scourge destroyed them all with a spin-dash and a punch. One Egg-Pawn tried to skewer him with its lance weapon but he snatched the lance and impaled the robot through the head with it. The robot toppled to the ground lifelessly. More Egg-Pawns tried to skewer Scourge with their lances but Scourge swiped at them with his lance and sent their lances flying straight out of their hands with one powerful clash. Then he chucked the lance he had straight into an Egg-Pawn's chest. Two Egg-Pawns tried to grab him but Scourge jumped up and landed on one Egg-Pawn's head and then stomped on it, crushing it instantly and killing the bot. Then he did an amazing back flip off the dead Egg-Pawn and landed behind the other one. He kicked the Egg-Pawn as hard as he could and then he stomped on its back. Then he picked up the Egg-Pawn and threw it straight into another Eggman robot. A giant silver Egg-Pawn armed with an enormous, beefy hammer and a red helmet, stomped its way towards Scourge and tried to smash him with its hammer. Scourge dodged the hammer blow and tried to homing attack it but seeing as the robot was shielded with an invulnerable helmet he only hurt himself and he fell backwards. The robot tried to smash him with its hammer again but Scourge dodged the smash and homing attacked its hands, causing it to drop the hammer. Scourge grabbed the giant thing and only just managed to lift it up. He began to spin himself around with the hammer in his hands. The hammer robot decided now was a good time to run for it so it turned around and ran for its life. Scourge kept on spinning around in a circle until he was nothing more then a green circular blur. Any robot stupid enough to get close to this spinning circle got smashed by the hammer. Then Scourge let got of the hammer and sent it hurling through the air. All the Eggman robots began to run away in blind panic, fearing they would get smashed by the hammer after it landed. But by sheer bad

luck for the robots, the hammer hurtled towards the oil station mounted on the side of Eggman's head quarters. The hammer smashed through the station and oil began to spill everywhere. All Scourge needed was fire and then the city would be blown sky high. The robot with the hammer retrieved its hammer from the destroyed oil station and tried once again to smash Scourge with it. Scourge dodged the hammer blow and kicked its helmet off. Without its helmet, the robot was now vulnerable to attack. Scourge spin-dashed it in the head and crushed it instantly. Then Scourge snatched the robot's hammer and whacked the robot with it. The robot hurtled straight into the oil station and wrecked it even more. The robot's smashed head was sparking madly and the sparks flew into the oil and set the spilling oil alight! The oil was now alight with flames and the flames spread into the remains of the station. The station was engulfed with flames and then the entire city erupted into an enormous explosion that could have woken up China. Sonic, Tails, Amy, Cosmo and Cream were a good distance away from Robotropolis and they were blown over by the force of the explosion. It had spread pretty far from where Robotropolis was. Dr. Eggman looked back on Robotropolis and saw its blazing state. It riled him ever so much to see his city in ruins now. He had spent forever building it and now Scourge had blown it up, destroying everything and every robot out there. Now he would have to rebuild the entire city from scratch. The robot that saved him put him down and Eggman grumbled to himself.

"That stupid Scourge the Hedgehog!" he yelled "He's ruined my life's work! My glorious city is in ruins and all my robots are destroyed! Now I'll have to rebuild everything! Oh the indignity!"

Then something soared through the air and bounced off the ground two times before coming to a halt at Eggman's feet. It was the head of Alonzo; the only thing that remained of the stuck-up servant bot. Eggman picked up Alonzo's head and observed it. Despite the damages, Alonzo was still alive.

"Master…" he croaked weakly "Our…city…is…gone…"

"I know it is Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman "but there's one thing that Scourge won't have destroyed and that's my secret bunker underneath my headquarters."

"You…have…a…se…cret…bunker…sir…?" rasped Alonzo.

"Yes I do Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman proudly "And I have just the things to get Robotropolis back in business, a robot production chamber and I've kept Metal Sonic there in case something like this happened."

"Wow…mas…ter…you…are…brill…i…ant…" croaked Alonzo.

"Of course I'm brilliant!" bragged Dr. Eggman "I'm an evil genius and evil geniuses are brilliant! Now once the smoke clears, we shall get down to the bunker, make some more robots, give you a new body and install the final preparations to Metal Sonic and unleash him on Mobius at long last!"

"Very…good…master…" said Alonzo.

"Oh Scourge, you have not seen the last of me!" Eggman declared "I'll be back to get you and Sonic! Just you wait and see!"

Meanwhile, Sonic and friends had picked themselves up after the explosion knocked them over and they looked at the smoking ruins of Robotropolis. Despite being in the distance, they could tell what it must be like up close.

"Eggman's city is destroyed!" exclaimed Tails.

"Who did that?" asked Cosmo "I bet Eggman didn't blow the city up himself."

"He didn't." said Sonic "I bet it was Scourge."

"But why would Scourge do us a favour and destroy Robotropolis for us?" asked Tails "I thought you said he was evil."

"He is evil." said Sonic "It's just that Scourge doesn't want any competition for ruler of Mobius so I guess he did that to get rid of Dr. Eggman."

"Somehow, I don't think he did." said Amy sadly "I bet Eggman made it out somehow."

"You might be right Amy." said Sonic "Because no matter what we do, that Eggman always seems to spring back to us so I bet this isn't the last we've seen of him."

"But I bet it's the last you've seen of Scourge." said Cream "I bet that nasty hedgehog perished in the explosion he caused."

Sonic didn't think Cream was right but he knew that no one, not even Scourge could survive an explosion like that. Scourge must have perished in the explosion he had caused himself. If that was the case then Sonic wouldn't have to worry about his evil, maniacal brother anymore.

"Scourge must have perished." said Sonic "There's no way he could have survived an explosion strong enough to knock us over even though we're half a mile away from the explosion."

"I agree." said Tails "You'd have to be immortal to survive something like that."

Sonic nodded.

"Now I've saved you and Cosmo from roboticization, let's go home and continue working on that plane you're building." said Sonic.

With that said, Sonic, Tails and the girls set off for home in Green Hill Zone.

As for Robotropolis, what was once a grand robotical city fit for a machine lover had been reduced to a miserable pile of debris, oil and smoking ruins. Machine parts lay everywhere and sparks flew in several different places. It would take Dr. Eggman a long time to rebuild all this but he would do it. Even though the city was a wreck and there didn't appear to be any survivors, there was one. A big pile of ravaged steel began to shake furiously before suddenly being flung everywhere by a terrific punch. It was Scourge the Hedgehog! He had survived the terrific explosion by digging underground with a spin-dash and waiting for everything to clear up. Scourge climbed out of the hole and dusted himself off. He surveyed his surroundings and was pleased to see Robotropolis had been obliterated by the damage he'd caused.

"Now that's grand!" he hissed "I've destroyed that loser Eggman's city! I bet he won't dare to take me on anytime soon!"

He walked slowly through the wreck, ignoring the billowing smoke, piles of debris and destroyed robots that surrounded him. After leaving the destroyed city he put on a grim, angry face for he had realized that Sonic the Hedgehog had evaded him and fled for it and he had no idea where Sonic could possibly be right now. Scourge stomped the ground in blind fury and only just refrained from throwing a fit.

"~?:#!" he swore "That dweeb got away and it's all because of that moron Eggman! Well Sonic can run but he can't hide from Scourge the Hedgehog! I'll find him somehow and I won't stop until I do!"

He put his hands to his mouth and screamed at the top of his raspy voice.

"HEY SONIC! IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, I WILL KILL YOU AND I WON'T STOP UNTIL I DO!"

His voice echoed for a few moments before fading away into silence. Scourge put his arms to the side and sighed loudly. Then suddenly he had an idea on how to draw Sonic out of hiding. He smiled a wicked toothy smile at himself. Sonic couldn't resist the urge to save those in need so if Scourge just picked somewhere to cause malice and mayhem, Sonic would be on the case immediately and then he and Scourge will have their long awaited final showdown. Scourge knew where he wanted to attack and he ran off to the west direction.

"If my memory serves my correctly, Spagonia should be a few good miles from where I am now." he said to himself "Once I get there, I'll threaten to lay siege to the city and demand Sonic to show himself and face me or else. Then I'll smash that wimp into the ground and then I'll take over the world! Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!"

He continued laughed evilly to himself as he continued his journey to Spagonia. He couldn't wait for the final showdown between him and his brother and he knew he was going to enjoy every moment of beating Sonic up. The battle would be legendary…

Footnotes:

*** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 2* for the whole adventure!**

**** See Story 24**

***** See Stories 26-27**

**** We still cannot forget the shocking events of Story 2 can we?

******* See Story 20**

******** See Stories 17-18**

********* See Story 19**

Scourge the Hedgehog has entered the building baby! Oh and Scourge fans, please don't get too mad at me for changing his character a little, this is my take on the Sonic Universe so I can make little changes to the characters to make this continuity more separate from the others. Related to Sonic or not, he's still the same old Scourge isn't he...? Reviews are welcome as always.

A Real Scourge Part 2

Story 29: A Real Scourge Part 2

Shortly after Scourge had left the Northern Border to go to Spagonia, Dr. Eggman headed to the remains of his headquarters carrying Alonzo's head in his hands. He pushed his way through a pile of debris until he spotted a blue trap door mounted in the ground. Dr. Eggman opened the door and ran down a fight of stairs that led to another door. He opened the door and went inside. He was in his secret bunker which was as big as the roboticizer chamber in his quarters. The bunker contained a roboticizer, a robot production line and some desks laden with toolboxes and diagrams. He put Alonzo's head on a worktable and grabbed a toolbox.

"Now we've arrived in my secret bunker the first thing I'm gonna do is give you a new body." said Dr. Eggman, putting the toolbox on the table.

"Thank…you…sir…" croaked Alonzo pathetically.

"And once I've fixed you up I'll finish off Metal Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "And once I've unleashed Metal Sonic, I'll rebuild my robot army and set them to work on rebuilding Robotropolis."

"You…certainly…are…busy…aren't…you?" rasped Alonzo.

"I'm always busy." said Dr. Eggman "But all this work I'm doing will be worth it. I'll destroy Sonic at long last and finally claim total domination of Mobius!"

He laughed his usual loud demented cackle.

"I…bet…Metal…Sonic…will…be…too…strong…for…even… Scourge…to…defeat…" said Alonzo.

"If Metal Sonic is supposed to match Sonic in everyway then he'll match Scourge in everyway." claimed Dr. Eggman "Scourge and Sonic are the same when it comes to combat it's just Scourge is a

bit more violent when it comes to fighting."

"Agreed…" Alonzo gasped hoarsely.

"Now, shall we get started on your new body my good servant?" said Dr. Eggman, pulling out a screwdriver from the toolbox.

"Yes sir…" whispered Alonzo.

"Then let's get started." said Dr. Eggman, twirling the screwdriver in his fingers.

Spagonia may have been very far away from the Northern Border of Megapolis but distance was obsolete to anyone with supersonic speeds. A normal person running from the Northern Border to Spagonia would have taken three days at the most but Scourge could run as fast as Sonic himself so he arrived at Spagonia in less than two hours. He arrived at the glamorous little town and slowed to a halt. Spagonia was a small but nice looking village with a Western European theme going on. Most of the roofs to the buildings were red in colour and there was a clock tower that stood proudly in the centre of the village, chiming beautiful soft chimes every quarter hour. Spagonia also had a university that was very well known amongst the people of Spagonia and many Mobians graduated from there. Scourge and Sonic had both visited Spagonia before so Scourge was very familiar with this place. He casually strolled through the village as if he was just a perfectly normal person going on his daily errands about the place. As he walked through the village he eyed the houses and the stalls nearby and grinned wickedly.

"Ah this place is so familiar to me it feels like I only visited it yesterday." Scourge said to himself quietly "I think when I take over the world, this will be the first place I wreck and remould into my image."

As he passed a stall selling various sweet smelling fruits, the stall manger, who was an orange otter, called out to him.

"Hey kid! D'ya wanna buy an apple?" he asked, presenting to Scourge a shiny fresh red apple.

Scourge seized the man by the collar and pulled him close to his face.

"D'ya wanna get a nosebleed?" he snarled.

"What? What did I say?" yelped the manager.

"You don't just yell at people "D'ya wanna buy an apple?" you moron!" ranted Scourge "If we wanted to buy an apple, we would stop and buy one, not continue walking past you dumbass!"

He pushed the managed over and the manager fell onto his back. Then Scourge tipped the boxes of apples over and the apples all fell onto the manager and bounced off the ground. The apples wouldn't be fit to sell now since they'd be all bruised and dirty from bouncing on the ground. The manager wailed loudly and Scourge merely walked away, leaving the manager to complain to himself.

Now, what malice could he cause that would attract the attention of that scumbag Sonic the Hedgehog? Scourge had the answer, destroy the village of course!

Scourge rolled into a ball and charged at the first house he came across in a mad spin-dash. The spin-dash was so powerful the building literally collapsed to the ground like a sandcastle! The Mobians of Spagonia instantly noticed the tumbling building and began to panic. Then Scourge hurtled into another building as hard as he could and sent that one crumbling down. Any Mobians unfortunate enough to be near that crumbling building at the time were showered by falling bricks and tiles. The Mobians began to do more then just panic now, they ran around in circles, screaming at the top of their lungs. Some Mobians accidentally bumped into each other and knocked each other over. Scourge spin-dashed into a nearby archway, causing it to crumble and rain down on the ground, crushing any Mobian unfortunate enough to be under the archway at the time and injuring anyone that was on it. The Mobian's panicked state became more and more frenzied. They were like a panicked swarm of bees running this way and that, not sure what to do about

the person attacking them. Scourge wasn't finished unfortunately. He spin-dashed into another tall building and that building tumbled forward and crumbled to the ground. There were a bunch of stalls at the foot of the crumbling building and all the stall managers ran for their lives before the rain of bricks, sand and rubble could crush them. Scourge stood on top of a flat topped building and smiled wickedly at the panicking Mobians. It gave him great pleasure to watch them running around in fear due to the mayhem he caused. He laughed to himself.

"That's it ya losers!" he yelled "Scream in terror as I heartlessly wreck your pathetic village! All this mayhem I'm causing is bound to attract that dweeb Sonic the Hedgehog!"

He leaped into the air and spin-dashed into another archway, reducing it to a miserable pile of shattered rocks and broken stones.

"And once he comes here to save the day, I'll have him!" declared Scourge gleefully.

The Mobians ran for their lives as Scourge prepared for his next attack. If Sonic didn't arrive in time to save the day, Spagonia would be reduced to architectural ruins. Speaking of the hedgehog…

…after he, Amy and Cream had saved Tails and Cosmo from being roboticized by Dr. Eggman previously, the five friends had arrived back at Green Hill Zone and the moment they made it home, Tails immediately set to work on the Tornado, his next big project and soon to be mode of transport for him and the others. He had been working for two hours straight and the plane already looked like it was a quarter of the way finished. If Tails kept this amazing work up he would finish the plane before nightfall. Sonic admired the work Tails was doing. The plane's frames had all been made and half of the mechanical work and machinery had been installed. Tails certainly was a fast worker when he was focused one something wasn't he? Tails began tightening some bolts on one of the frames for the wings, using the new spanner Sonic had bought for him the other night*.

"Well Tails I've gotta say, I'm impressed." said Sonic "I've never seen anyone build a plane that fast before, you've already done a quarter of it and its only just past noon!"

"Well I was always gifted for being able to build quickly." said Tails modestly "My dad always said people born with the ability to invent things also have the ability to build fast."

"Sweet." said Sonic "Where would I be without you Tails?"

"Heh, heh. I'm not sure really." said Tails humbly, wiping his forehead with his gloved hand "I guess the situations you get in wouldn't be so easy to get out of."

"I can't argue with that Tails." said Sonic "Now why don't we both join the girls for lunch? You could use a break right now."

"No thanks." said Tails, tightening another bolt "I'm not hungry."

Sonic just shrugged and left Tails to his work. That was one dedicated mechanic. As for Amy, Cosmo and Cream, they had set up a garden table with a parasol and five garden chairs. They were having lunch which was a nicely prepared selection of sandwiches, salad and cupcakes. Amy had done most of the food with Cream helping her. Cosmo tucked into a tuna sandwich happily.

"The food you Mobians eat is wonderful." said Cosmo "It's much more of a variety then the food we have back home."

"Oh really?" said Amy, taking a small bite out of a cheese sandwich "Do you Seedrians eat plant food and fertilizer on your planet?"

Cosmo laughed half heartedly at Amy's joke.

"Miss Rose, what's fertilizer?" asked Cream.

"I'll tell ya later, it's not an appropriate topic at the lunch table." said Amy.

Sonic wondered over to the table and picked out a ham sandwich from the plate of sandwiches and tucked into it.

"Mmm…a ham sandwich is nearly as nice as a freshly made chilli-dog." he said to himself "Pity there aren't any right now."

"Well next time I make lunch I'll make a selection of chilli-dogs shall I?" asked Amy sweetly.

"Ah don't strain yourself." chuckled Sonic "I can make them myself."

Cream took a sip of lemonade and passed her pet Chao Cheese a cress sandwich. Cheese was fond of cress and the little Chao was happily tucking into it. Cream looked towards the under construction plane that Tails was working so heavily on. He showed no signs of wanting to stop; the little fox looked like he wanted to go on for the rest of the day.

"I do hope Tails doesn't push himself too far with his work." said Cream "Otherwise he'll tire himself out."

"Don't you worry too much Cream." said Sonic, taking a bite out of another ham sandwich "Tails knows when to take a break. He won't push himself too far."

"Although I will admit," he added "I'm amazed at the dedication to his work right now. I've never seen him this keen to build something before."

"I admire that in Tails for some reason." said Cosmo "His determination to his work reminds me of my determination to stop the Martians and return to my home planet where I can live in never ending peace once again." she sighed sadly.

"The only difference is it's much easier to build a proper working plane then it is to stop a war." said Amy "But I'm sure your kind will defeat those jerks once and for all and your world will be at peace again."

Cosmo said nothing but she nodded in agreement. Tails finally finished tightening the bolts on the wing frames and flew down to the ground. He ran over to the selection of bits and pieces to get an engine so he could install it into the plane. He chose a large brown engine that was narrow and tall. This engine was for the plane's

propeller and hopefully it would work splendidly once the plane was done.

"Once I install this engine, I should give it a test and see how well the propeller works." said Tails.

He grabbed the engine and tried to lift it up but the engine was much too heavy for the poor fox to carry. He tried to drag the engine across the grassy ground but to no avail. He only budged it a tiny bit each time. Sonic noticed Tails needed help so he left the lunch table and ran over to help Tails. Sonic grabbed the engine from behind and helped Tails to slowly hoist it off the ground and carry it over to the plane. Even though Sonic was stronger then Tails, he was finding it difficult to keep the engine hoisted off the ground.

"Man! I wish Knuckles was here right now!" grunted Sonic as he and Tails carried the engine to the plane "He could lift this thing easily!"

"I don't think even Knuckles could lift this!" joked Tails as he and Sonic put the engine down in the place Tails wanted it.

Now the engine was in place, Tails set to work on fitting it neatly and connecting everything up to the engine so hopefully if it worked properly, the propeller would spin and the plane would fly. However his work was interrupted by something beeping. Sonic felt a vibration against his wrist and he looked at it. He still had the communicator Nicole the Lynx gave to him so she could contact him whenever possible and it was going off. Sonic pushed the wrist part of his glove back to reveal the communicator underneath and he answered it.

"Yo Nicole what's up?" asked Sonic "Another Royal Fighter group needs help?"

"Not exactly." said Nicole on the other side of the communicator "We're receiving distress calls from Spagonia. They say a green hedgehog is destroying the village!"

Sonic's quills shuddered with horror and his eyes widened. He knew what Nicole meant by green hedgehog. Scourge had obviously survived the destruction of Robotropolis earlier and was now

attacking Spagonia, a place he remembered from a long time ago.

"Hello?" said Nicole "Sonic? Are you alright?"

Sonic snapped out of his horrified state and answered the lynx.

"Um…OK I'll get there as quickly as possible." said Sonic.

He shut the communicator off and pulled his glove back up. Tails flew out of the Tornado and landed beside Sonic.

"What's the matter Sonic?" he asked "Is there trouble going on?"

"Scourge somehow survived the destruction of Robotropolis and he is now attacking Spagonia." said Sonic "I've gotta get to Spagonia quickly before Scourge levels the place!"

"But how?" asked Tails "Spagonia is miles away from Green Hill Zone and even if you run at top speed, you won't get there in time! The quickest way we can get to Spagonia is flying but the Tornado won't be completed until tomorrow at most!"

"I'll just have to run then." said Sonic "There's no other way that's speedy and available right now."

"What are we gonna do?" asked Amy, getting up from the table and running over to Sonic "We can't keep up with you and we'll only slow you down."

"You aren't gonna do anything." said Sonic "This battle will be between me and Scourge. I don't want you, Cream or Cosmo getting involved since Scourge will try to attack or even kill you and I can't fight Scourge and worry about you at the same time so Amy, you, Cream and Cosmo will stay here."

"But…" protested Amy.

"Amy, let's do what Sonic says." said Cosmo "He knows Scourge better then us and we should take his advice for granted."

"OK." said Amy glumly.

"So what am I doing?" asked Tails "Am I staying with the girls?"

"Nah, you're coming with me." said Sonic "You're the only one who can keep up with me and I could do with the back up when I need it."

"OK." said Tails "I'll try and keep outta trouble while you and Scourge duke it out with each other."

"Good idea." said Sonic "Now let's do it to it!"

"Wait!" said Amy.

Sonic stopped before he could run off.

"You two be careful out there." said Amy "If anything goes wrong, we'll call Knuckles to help you."

"Sounds swell." said Sonic "And we'll be careful Amy don't you worry. Now Tails, let's go!" he cried, rushing off at his trademark speed.

Tails twisted his tails around one another and took to the skies. He flew after Sonic as fast as he could fly. The little fox could only just keep up with his supersonic friend. Sonic and Tails headed off for Spagonia and the moment they disappeared over the horizon, Amy sat back down at the table.

"I wish I could have gone with Sonic." she moaned "I'd love to wallop Scourge's backside in for tricking me into helping him find Sonic before!"

"Well hopefully Mr. Sonic will stop Scourge and put him back in jail for good." said Cream "And that way he won't be able to destroy anymore villages."

"One thing I wonder is why is Scourge attacking a village?" said Cosmo aloud "Don't you think he would have attacked something more populated then a little village?"

"You have a point there Cosmo." said Amy "I think if Scourge wanted Sonic to come and face him he would have attacked

something more serious then Spagonia like Empire City or Grand Metropolis to get his attention. Maybe Scourge has some sort of trick up his sleeve." she mused to herself.

"What kind of trick?" asked Cosmo.

"Something sneaky and bad I'm sure." said Amy "But hopefully, Sonic won't fall for it and he'll stop that green menace before he causes more harm."

Amy looked into the horizon, thinking on what might happen when Sonic arrives at Spagonia and battles his evil brother...

One hour and forty-five minutes later, Sonic and Tails arrived at the small but glamorous village of Spagonia, now not looking so glamorous. Many buildings had been destroyed and knocked down and the whole village was empty since it had been evacuated. Sonic and Tails entered Spagonia and surveyed the scenery around them. Piles of bricks, pieces of tile and chunks of stone littered the pavement and ruined market stalls lay in splinters at the foot of some buildings that had crumbled or were still standing. Sonic didn't like this and he knew that if he ever turned bad such as when he became Mecha Sonic, he himself could easily do damage like this to any city or village he came across. Seeing the damage done to Spagonia made Tails feel uneasy too.

"G-g-gosh." said Tails nervously "S-Scourge r-really knew h-h-how to c-cause a riot!"

"He does indeed." said Sonic "And that's why I'm so determined to get that homicidal manic back in prison where he belongs. I wonder where is that jerk right now? I can't see him anywhere."

"M-m-maybe he's g-gone." said Tails hopefully.

"I hope he is but I don't think he is." said Sonic grimly "I bet he's lying in wait for us and waiting to attack us at the right moment. Tails keep your senses alert." he ordered.

Tails obeyed and listened out for anything suspicious with his large

sensitive ears. Sonic walked to the left and began searching through the mess of rocks and tiles to see if Scourge was hiding anywhere. But he wouldn't find Scourge on the ground because Scourge was hiding on top of a building. He stood at the edge of the roof, watching Sonic search for him and grinned an evil, toothy grin that could make anyone feel faint. He prepared to leap from the building and spin-dash Sonic straight in the back but he stopped and caught sight of Tails, listening out for anything.

"Hmm…" said Tails "If Scourge is planning an ambush…" he fell silent as he thought to himself. He put a finger to his lips and stared at the rooftops to the buildings still intact.

"…then maybe he's hiding up there." he mused "I'll have a quick search to see if I'm right."

He rotated his tails around and flew up onto the rooftops. Scourge hid behind a roof structure and waited for Tails to come near him. Tails put his hand over his eyes to shade them from the sun and peered into the distance. Then he searched around the rooftops. He didn't find anything. He walked past the tall stony structure that Scourge was hiding behind and Scourge nabbed him. He clasped his hand around Tails' mouth and wrapped his other arm around Tails' neck. Tails tried to scream for help but he could only get muffled cries out because Scourge's hand was clasped tightly around his mouth.

"You're clever kid." hissed Scourge "But not quite clever enough! You'll not be able to save Sonic from my wrath."

He bent down to see Sonic still looking around on the ground for him. Tails tried to cry for help but he couldn't. His cries were muffled by Scourge's hand and Sonic didn't seem to have heard Tails' muffled cries. He just continued searching for Scourge. Scourge smiled wickedly as Sonic came nearer to the building he was hiding upon.

"That's it blue." he whispered to himself "Just a few more steps and I've got you!"

Sonic wondered up to the building Scourge was hiding upon and

was about to open the door and go inside until he heard something. Scourge had ever so gently moved a foot and sent a tiny pebble falling from the roof and it made a faint clatter noise on the ground. Sonic just shrugged it off and opened the door.

"SONIC MY FRIEND!" bellowed Scourge from on the roof.

He let go of Tails, pushed him away and spin-dashed straight into Sonic's back. Sonic was knocked straight off his feet and sent scraping across the ground for a few feet.

"Sonic!" cried Tails.

Sonic got back to his feet, groaning in pain while Scourge stood before him, smirking like a demon. That one spin-dash and scrape across the ground had given Sonic several scrape marks on his tummy, legs and face.

"Gee Scourge, how cowardly of you to attack me from behind!" taunted Sonic "You always had a habit of cheating when it came to battles."

"Well that's my point wimpo!" cackled Scourge "I always cheat, I never play fair! Playing fair's for losers like you Sonic!"

"I'll make you eat those words Scourge!" yelled Sonic.

The two hedgehogs charged at each other. They both bashed into each other and sent each other skidding backwards. Then Sonic leaped into the air and tried to spin-dash Scourge but Scourge dodged and decided to use his own spin-dash. They two spin-dashed into each other, the two spinning hedgehogs bounced off each other as they hit. They did the same thing over and over and over until finally Scourge overpowered Sonic and sent him flying into an abandoned market stall that was selling dates and figs. Sonic crashed into the market and sent figs flying everywhere. Scourge tried to spin-dash Sonic again but Sonic got to his feet and stomped on a long thick chunk of wood that was lying on top of a crate. This caused the chunk of wood to fly up and smack Scourge away as if he was a baseball just before he could hit Sonic. Scourge smashed into a building and sent some bricks falling to the ground. Sonic ran

out of the pile of wood and looked up at the building Scourge crashed into. He had made a large hole in the building. Scourge got back to his feet, groaning to himself and stood at the edge of the hole. Sonic saw the opportunity to spin-dash him straight in the stomach before he recovered. Scourge was sent hurtling backwards and Sonic had hit him so hard Scourge actually crashed through a window and fell out the other side of the building! Scourge landed on the pavement and made a hedgehog sized crater in it. Sonic leaped out of the building and almost landed on Scourge feet first but the green hedgehog dodged him so Sonic landed in the hedgehog shaped crater that Scourge had made when he crashed into the ground. Scourge tried to kick Sonic but Sonic grabbed his foot and threw his leg upwards, causing Scourge to fall on his back. Then Sonic grabbed Scourge by the jacket, hauled him onto his feet and threw him into a stall selling grapes. Scourge crashed into the crates full of grapes and was covered in grape juice. Scourge grumbled loudly and he picked up a crate of grapes he hadn't crashed into. Sonic charged at Scourge and Scourge threw the crate into Sonic's face, causing him to get splattered by the grapes. Sonic staggered and fell over, giving Scourge the opportunity to stomp on his back. Sonic yelped in pain and Scourge prepared to do it again. He was about to bring his foot smashing down on Sonic's back until Tails flew straight into him and punched him over. With Scourge distracted, Sonic got back to his feet and spin-dashed Scourge in the face. Scourge fell on his back and rubbed his jaw while Sonic looked down at him.

"Had enough yet Scourge?" he said snidely.

"I'm just getting warmed up you blue hack!" snarled Scourge "And your freaky friend here best stop interfering or else!"

"I am not a freak!" screamed Tails, hurtling towards Scourge at top speed.

Unfortunately, Scourge was ready for him this time and he punched Tails in the cheek, sending the fox darting to the side and landing on his shoulder.

"Shut up you mutant brat!" growled Scourge "Or I'll spin-dash you until your bones crack!"

Then Sonic tripped him up with one swipe of the leg. Scourge fell flat on his face and his sunglasses fell off. Scourge grabbed them and put them back on. Sonic then pinned him down with his foot. Scourge tried to get up but Sonic was too strong so Scourge remained pinned down to the ground.

"Get off me!" growled Scourge.

"You must think I'm really stupid huh?" sneered Sonic "If I get off you, you'll mash me into chilli-sauce so no I won't get off you."

"So what are ya gonna do?" demanded Scourge "Keep me there until I rot away?"

"No." said Sonic "Tails, see if you can find some rope or anything!" he called to Tails.

"OK Sonic." said Tails, taking to the air and flying away.

"Oh nice, REAL nice!" grumbled Scourge, not impressed with what Sonic was planning "You're gonna tie me up like a pretzel and then haul my awesome self back to jail aren't ya?"

"Of course." said Sonic "You're too dangerous to be let loose so you're going back to jail where you belong."

"I think not blue!" roared Scourge.

Then with out warning, Scourge raised his leg backwards and the heel of his boot smacked Sonic in the bottom. Sonic fell forward and Scourge leaped back to his feet. Before Sonic could recover, Scourge began to shower the blue hedgehog with rapid punches. Tails arrived back on the scene with some rope he had found.

"Hey Sonic, I got some rope!" he said.

Then he gasped in horror as he saw Scourge throwing punches on Sonic. Scourge saw Tails with the rope in his hands and stopped punching Sonic. Scourge ran over to Tails and elbowed him straight in the stomach.

"You got some rope huh?" he said "What'cha gonna do with it?"

Scourge grabbed the rope and wrapped it around Tails' body. Then he knotted the rope up and left Tails sitting there, all tied up and powerless.

"That will ensure me and Sonic aren't disturbed in our fight." said Scourge "You just sit there and be a good boy now while I finish beating Sonic up."

Tails squirmed and struggled but the rope was too thick and strong for him to break. He was stuck so he had no choice but to just sit there and watch helplessly. Scourge turned away from Tails and charged at Sonic, who had only just stood up and knocked him over again.

"Oof!" grunted Sonic as he hit the ground sharply "You really don't play fair do ya?"

"Why should I?" sneered Scourge "If I don't play fair, I'm more likely to win."

"Then maybe I shouldn't play fair either!" said Sonic.

Without warning, Sonic leaned back on his hands and sprung himself, feet first, into Scourge's face. The startled green hedgehog was knocked over and Sonic grabbed him in a chokehold.

"Now who wants a noogie-noogie?" jeered Sonic.

He began to rub his knuckles vigorously and roughly up and down on Scourge's scalp. Sonic often did that to Scourge to torment him when they were kids and even to this day, Scourge really couldn't stand noogie-noogies.

"Ouch! Ow! Knock it off you wretch!" roared Scourge as Sonic continued to noogie him.

Tails burst out laughing at what Sonic was doing to Scourge. Then Sonic let go of Scourge, nicked his sunglasses and pushed him away. Sonic put Scourge's sunglasses on.

"Gee Scourge, how do you see through these? They're almost as dark as you are!" laughed Sonic "Are they supposed to make you

look cool?"

"Yes they are!" roared Scourge "Now give them back or I'll…"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah whatever." sighed Sonic.

Scourge leaped up to nab him but Sonic took the sunglasses off and stuffed them in Scourge's mouth. Then he punched him in the back of the head, causing Scourge to crash into the ground and hitting the ground made him accidentally crack his sunglasses in his jaw. Scourge spat the pieces out and growled. He was really fond of those sunglasses and now Sonic had just made him break them made him furious.

"That's it, you're going down!" thundered Scourge.

"Bring it on jerk!" yelled Sonic.

The two hedgehogs rolled into balls and spin-dashed into each other yet again. Their attacks repelled each other and the spin-dashing hedgehogs bounced away but they came back for more. The two hedgehogs spin-dashed into each other three more times before Scourge got the upper hand and bashed into Sonic so hard that Sonic hurled through the air like a whacked baseball.

Disaster struck.

After Scourge had sent Sonic flying, Sonic ended up crashing straight into the enormous clock tower that stood in the centre of Spagonia! Sonic's impact did major damage to the tower but it still remained standing. That is until Scourge decided to add insult to injury by spin-dashing into the clock tower again. Scourge's attack did much more damage to the clock tower. So much damage in fact the whole thing started to tilt forward! Scourge leaped out of the way as the clock tower began to slowly but steadily tilt forward. Then the whole tower came crashing down on Spagonia with a thunderous smash. Any buildings that weren't destroyed by Scourge were crushed by the falling clock tower. Tails could do nothing but sit and watch the disaster unfold before him. The clock tower had been reduced to nothing more then giant chunks of rubble and the houses it had fallen on were smashed to pieces. Spagonia wasn't a pretty

sight anymore. As for Sonic, he just lay in the part of the clock tower that hadn't fallen, groaning weakly. Scourge stood before him, grinning like a crocodile. Scourge seized Sonic by the throat and hauled him to his height.

"You see Sonic? I won." hissed Scourge happily "And I won because I'm faster, stronger and far more powerful then you wish you could be. You may have beaten me two years ago but that was then, this is now."

"So go on…finish me!" dared Sonic.

"I will, just not in the way you're thinking of wimp!" laughed Scourge "I'll explain it all once we get to the top of Spagonia Temple."

"Spagonia…Temple?" said Sonic "What are…we going…there for?"

"You'll see." snapped Scourge "Now be quiet while I collect your freaky friend."

Scourge, still holding Sonic, rushed off to where Tails was sitting and scooped him up. He draped the beaten Sonic over his shoulder and held Tails under his arm.

"Put us down you monster!" cried Tails.

Scourge ignored him and ran off at top speed, leaving the wrecked Spagonia behind. The moment he left though, a purple chameleon materialized into view and watched Scourge running away with Sonic and Tails. It was Espio. He and his friends Vector the Crocodile and Charmy Bee had heard all about the trouble in Spagonia and were on their way to sort the problem out but Sonic and Tails beat them to it so they just stood and watched with Espio being invisible. Now Scourge had gone, Espio turned visible and signalled for Vector and Charmy to come. Vector and Charmy emerged from their hiding places and ran over to the chameleon.

"Yo Espio what's up?" asked Vector "Did Sonic cream that green hedgehog that looks like him?"

"Unfortunately no." said Espio "Scourge has defeated Sonic and is now taking him and Tails to Spagonia Temple."

"What's he taking them to a crummy old temple for?" asked Charmy "Temples are boring!"

"I think I know why Scourge is taking Sonic to the temple." said Espio "Let's go! I'll explain everything on the way but right now, Sonic needs help and we're the only one's available."

"I couldn't have said it better myself." said Vector with a smile "Sonic needs us and we're gonna help him! Team Chaotix away!"

"Yay! Fun, fun, fun!" cried Charmy happily.

And with that, Team Chaotix ran off, following the same route Scourge was going down. Sonic was in trouble and they were going to save him, no matter the cost…

A while later, Scourge arrived at the Spagonia Temple. The temple was huge, almost as large as a five storey house and laden with ruin. Despite it's staggering age, the temple was still standing as strong as ever even though it probably would crumble to the ground if something hit it hard enough. There was cube shaped structure at the top of the temple and each of the four sides had cuffs. Scourge cuffed Sonic and Tails by their arms to the cube and laughed triumphantly at them.

"Look at everybody's favourite hedgehog now!" he gloated "Beaten to a pulp and helpless to stop me! You'll never live down the shame will you brother?"

"I'm no brother of yours anymore Scourge!" snapped Sonic, struggling to get free of his bonds "And you may stop me, but I've got friends who will fight in my name!"

"Oh really?" sneered Scourge "I bet they're just as wimpy as you are and I'll stomp on them just as easily!"

"No you won't Scourge!" said Tails bravely "Our friends will kick your sorry butt back to jail, you'll see!"

Scourge stomped over to Tails and snarled at him.

"How can my idiot brother stand someone as annoying as you?" he said coldly "If you were my sidekick, I'd give you to that moron Eggman and let him have ya!"

Tails gulped in fear and began shaking as horrible images of Eggman roboticizing him poured into his head.

"Hey, pick on someone your own size buddy!" yelled Sonic.

"Like…you?" purred Scourge "I'll be happy to pick on you as much as I wish blue!"

"What a surprise." muttered Sonic "So, what have you dragged us all the way up here for? Are you gonna leave us here until we rot?"

"Of course not!" retorted Scourge "If I did, someone will rescue you two before you even begin to perish!"

He jammed his face into Sonic's face and began speaking in a low chilling voice that could make even Marik the Martian shiver.

"The reason I've dragged you two up here is because that's how I'm gonna finish you two off." said Scourge "Have you heard of that old Spagonia legend about this cube?"

"Nope." said Sonic "Never was much of a legends guy."

"Have you heard the legend surrounding this cube, two tails?" asked Scourge.

Tails thought for a moment before finally saying "What legend?"

Scourge sighed loudly and spoke again.

"The legend is, in a time way before ours, the Spagonians often punished crime committers by chaining them to this very cube at the top of this very temple." he explained "Usually they would just leave them there and rot away but one Spagonian found a tiny little pearl that was supposed to fit in the centre of the cube."

He paused to point at the little hole in the top of the cube. Sonic and Tails couldn't see it because they were cuffed to the faces of the

cube. Scourge continued.

"They had no idea why the pearl wasn't in the cube to start with although they assumed someone had stolen it and dropped it while trying to get away." he said "So the Royals put the pearl back in the cube and an amazing thing happened."

He altered his voice to a much more sinister pitch.

"The moment they put the pearl in the cube, the sky went black and some magical voodoo of some sorts began to happen. And then in one bright flash of lightening, the prisoners chained to the cube literally disintegrated right before their very eyes!" he screeched "They assumed it was some stupid thing about the Gods punishing the prisoners by destroying them so from then on, anyone found guilty of crime of any sorts would be sacrificed to the Gods as they called it."

Sonic and Tails stared at Scourge in amazement.

"How the heck did you know all that?" asked Sonic "I never know mythology was your type of subject!"

"It isn't." snapped Scourge "It's just that that particular myth fascinated me so I read more about it before I was put in prison."

"So if I've got this straight, you're gonna sacrifice us…gulp!…to the Gods?" squeaked Tails.

"To put it frankly yes." said Scourge wickedly.

"Ha! I bet you don't have the pearl that activates the cube's magical thingamajig!" said Sonic cockily.

"Unfortunately for you, yes I do." retorted Scourge, pulling the pearl out of his pocket. The pearl was no bigger then a fingernail and it was a sparkling dark shade of violet. Sonic's jaw dropped.

"Wha…What?" he gasped "How did you find it?"

"The pearl was in a small museum in Spagonia." said Scourge "While attacking Spagonia, I attacked the museum and found the

pearl. After reading the information given about it, I realized it was what I needed so I stole it and hid it in my pocket until the time was right."

He leaped on top of the cube and placed the pearl down the hole in the centre of the cube.

"In a matter of moments, you'll disintegrate before my very eyes!" Scourge cried gleefully "This is the perfect revenge to get on you Sonic the Hedgehog! This is what you deserve, and now you're gonna get it!"

The ancient and strange looking patterns on all four of the cube's faces began to glow a very bright icy blue colour. A thin beam of light emitted from the hole on top of the cube and went up into the sky. Then all the clouds in the sky began to turn black as if there was a terrible thunderstorm approaching the temple. Then strange ghostly creatures and swirling beams of light began to fly out of the glowing patterns and surrounded the cube as if the whole thing was some strange supernatural ritual of some sorts. Sonic and Tails watched the circling lights and creatures swirling around them as the cube's strange magical abilities continued. Scourge just stood by and watched the magic happen, laughing demonically at the scene unfolding before him. In a matter of seconds, Sonic and Tails would disintegrate and be wiped out from existence. Tails began to panic, he was breathing very fast and his heart was thumping wildly.

"Sonic! What are we gonna do?" he cried.

Sonic just closed his eyes and said

"There's nothing we can do." said Sonic "We're beaten, Scourge has won."

"Sonic! You can't give up now!" exclaimed Tails "We're inches from death and you think we're beaten?"

"I don't think we're beaten." said Sonic "We are, we can't get free so therefore, we can't get away. We're going to be disintegrated and there's no way we can survive this one."

Sonic should have known better then to just give up because Team Chaotix arrived on the scene just minutes after the pearl's power activated the cube. Vector, Espio and Charmy stared up at the black clouds over Spagonia Temple and the beam of light emitting from the tope of the temple.

"Its happened." said Espio hoarsely "That green hedgehog Scourge must be using the temple's mysterious power to disintegrate Sonic and Tails!"

"Whoa! How is he doing that?" asked Charmy.

"Geez Charmy, didn't you hear Espio on the way here?" grumbled Vector "He said some kind of pearl makes the temple disintegrate anyone on top of it!"

"We'd best get moving we haven't got much time left!" exclaimed Espio, running off as fast as he could.

Vector ran after the speedy ninja chameleon and Charmy flew after them, flying faster then he'd ever flown before. A thunderstorm was building up and there were loud roars of thunder booming throughout the dunes. Lightening strikes flashed and lit up the dark skies. Tails screamed in terror.

"Oh man I'm scared of lightening!" he whimpered.

"In that case, your demise will be more entertaining." said Scourge sadistically "Once lightening strikes the cube; you will be reduced to nothing!"

The situation was looking very hopeless now. The thunder storm was getting closer to the temple and Sonic could tell by counting the seconds between the lightening flashes and the thunderclaps. The less he counted meant the closer the storm was getting. Tails, who couldn't bear to watch anymore, closed his eyes tightly, waiting for the inevitable strike. Scourge continued to laugh demonically at what was happening. Team Chaotix finally made it to the temple and Espio, using his ninja skills, managed to climb straight up the temple whereas Charmy flew up to the top and Vector climbed after Espio, albeit not as quickly and smoothly as Espio. Charmy landed the first

blow by flying straight into Scourge's stomach head first and knocking him off the temple. Scourge cried out in surprise as he plunged to the ground. Espio leaped onto the roof and dipped his fingers inside the hole. He grabbed the pearl and yanked it out of the hole and then he threw it away as hard as he could. The pearl would never be found again. The moment the pearl had been removed from the cube, the cube stopped glowing, the magical ghostly images had vanished and the black clouds disappeared into a bright blue sky. Sonic could hardly believe his luck that Team Chaotix arrived at just the right time to save his and Tails' lives. Tails opened his eyes and was relived to see he and Sonic were still alive. Vector finally made it to the top of the temple and using his massive jaws, he broke Sonic and Tails' bonds to set them free. Tails clutched his chest and breathed heavily.

"Gosh that was so lucky!" he shrieked "I thought we were done for!"

"Admittedly I was kinda scared too." said Sonic "I don't think I've ever been so close to death before."

"And you thought we were beaten!" said Tails mockingly.

"Well I didn't know Team Chaotix were gonna arrive just in time to save our lives did I?" protested Sonic.

"Just be thankful we did arrive in time to save your lives!" said Vector "I didn't think we were gonna make it!"

"We are thankful." said Sonic "I owe you three big time!"

"No need." said Espio "We're just doing our duty."

"So Vector." said Tails "What are you, Espio and Charmy doing in Spagonia anyway?"

"Oh we heard about the attacks on Spagonia so we decided to go and help but you two beat us to it so we just hid and watched Sonic and that green hedgehog pound each other's brains out." said Vector.

"And you didn't think to give me a hand when Scourge had me down for the count?" said Sonic crossly, tapping his foot.

"Um…no we didn't." said Vector "Sorry."

"It doesn't matter, you've made up for it by saving us from Scourge and that cube." said Sonic "Speaking of which, where is he?"

"I knocked him off the temple." said Charmy, a big stupid grin on his face "I think he's lying on the ground down below."

Everybody peered over the edge of the temple to see Scourge lying on his back at the foot of the temple. Sonic leaped off the temple, followed by Espio and Vector and Tails and Charmy flew off the temple. They surrounded Scourge just as the green hedgehog was getting up and Espio pulled a dagger out of his glove and held it to Scourge's throat to prevent him from doing anything. Scourge glared at Vector and Charmy as Espio held him.

"You two and your chameleon buddy behind me will regret robbing me of my vengeance!" he growled "And I'll make sure your deaths are swift and painful!"

"Save it Scourge!" retorted Sonic "You're beaten, you cannot take me, Tails or the Chaotix on all at once! Now admit defeat so we can haul your ugly butt back to jail were you belong!"

Scourge clenched his teeth and growled like a tiger, prompting Espio to hold the dagger closer to his throat.

"I'll NEVER admit defeat!" cried Scourge "I will not rest until you're dead and the world is mine blue! But your death will have to wait…"

He stomped on Espio's foot as hard as he could, causing the chameleon to let go of him and grab his foot.

"Yeouch!" yelped Espio.

Now he was free, Scourge ran for it. He was retreating so he could fight another day.

"I've had enough fun for one day!" Scourge called to Sonic over his shoulder "But don't think you've seen the last of me because you ain't! This entire world will bow beneath my feet some day soon and that's a promise!

"Charmy, Espio, let's get him!" cried Vector, preparing to chase Scourge down.

"No Vector, let him go." said Sonic "You'll never catch him anyway."

"But…aren't you gonna catch him?" blurted Vector.

"I would but Scourge is too tough for me." said Sonic "I'll need to do some extensive training so I'll be able to match him blow for blow. And I promise the next time we face Scourge, he's going back to jail."

"I hope so." said Tails "I don't ever wanna see that creep again! He's almost as bad as Marik the Martian!"

"Marik the Martian?" said Espio "Wasn't he that man from space who killed the King and Queen the other day**?"

"He is." said Sonic "But he's long gone, we won't have to worry about him."

"That's a relief." said Charmy "The way people describe him scares me."

Sonic nodded.

"Let's go home shall we?" said Sonic "I bet Amy, Cream and Cosmo are worrying about me right now."

And with that Sonic, Tails and Team Chaotix left the temple and headed for home. As they walked, Espio turned to Sonic.

"Do you think Scourge will be back?" he asked.

"Oh yes." said Sonic "And I can't wait to kick his butt and put him back where he belongs."

When Scourge would return is a mystery but Sonic knew that day would come soon so he had to be aware of it.

Meanwhile in Eggman's secret bunker, Eggman had rebuilt Alonzo's body, made a new army of robots thanks to the robot production chamber he had in the bunker and now the robots were rebuilding the destroyed Robotropolis. And right now he was adding one last thing to his next greatest invention.

"Now I just need to upload Mecha Sonic's data and then he'll be complete." he said to himself.

"The rebuilding work's coming on nicely sir." said Alonzo "Robotropolis is already beginning to take shape!"

"I know Alonzo, robots can build extremely quickly can't they?" said Dr. Eggman proudly.

Then suddenly his computer made a beeping noise and started saying "Upload complete."

"Yes!" cried Dr. Eggman "After all these weeks he's finally ready!"

"Finally ready?" said Alonzo "You mean…?"

"Yes Alonzo, Metal Sonic is fully operational and ready for action!" cried Dr. Eggman "Now Mobius will fall to me at long last!"

He roared with laughter as Metal Sonic's limbs began to move and the blue, Sonic-sized robot stood up on his own two feet. His plain black visor alit with two red emotionless eyes that could make anyone shiver with fright. Metal Sonic was ready, and he was hungry…for destruction…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 26**

**** See Story 21**

Scourge is gone, but he'll be back and Metal Sonic has been

completed and is ready to attack! What will he be like? Join in next time as the wrath of Metal Sonic is unleashed... Read and Review.

Thanks again to Kratos Pwns for the reviews. I appreciate your slight criticism of the bounty hunter stories and I'll try to be less...um...clichéd in the future.

A Tale of Two Sonics

Story 30: A Tale of Two Sonics

"Just add a few bits of paint here…and she's complete." said Tails as he painted the last bit of the plane's fuselage blue.

A day had passed since Sonic and Tails' narrow escape from Scourge's wrath and now Tails had finally finished the Tornado. The Tornado was a two seated, vintage style bi-plane with four wings, a landing gear and a shiny coat of blue and yellow paint. Its armoury consisted of a missile launcher mounted in the underbelly of the plane and individual lasers on either side of the propeller. Tails was very pleased with the finished plane and he couldn't wait to give it a test flight. He leaped into the pilot's seat and started the plane's engine. The propeller began to spin around at a tremendous speed, so fast it was nothing more then a white blur at the front of the plane. Tails grabbed the controls and set the plane for take off. The Tornado began to move forwards and the further it moved the more speed it picked up. The Tornado hurtled down the stretch of grass that acted as the plane's runaway and then Tails pulled the levers back. The Tornado began to slowly rise off the ground and fly into the air. The plane slowly began to climb up and up until it was just the right altitude for Tails to fly straight. Tails punched the air triumphantly.

"Yes! It works!" he cried "The Tornado actually works! Whoo-Hoo!"

Just for the fun of it he decided to do make the plane do a loop-the-loop in the air. As for our old friend Sonic the Hedgehog, he had heard the Tornado taking off and decided to come outside and watch. He watched the Tornado do loop-the-loops in the air and laughed to himself.

"Tails certainly is proud of his plane isn't he?" said Sonic "He's having the time of his life up there!"

A short while later, Tails finally landed the plane and leaped out of the pilot's seat.

"The Tornado works perfectly Sonic!" exclaimed Tails "It's as fast as I wanted it to be and it flies as well as I wanted it to! I'm amazed the Tornado worked as well as it did! I can't wait to use it in battle someday…"

"Steady there Tails, calm down." said Sonic waving his hands about "I can see you're very pleased with the plane and you're over the moon right now, you don't need to blabber about it."

"Sorry." said Tails.

"I will hand it to ya, it's not bad looking." said Sonic "You should take me for a ride sometime soon and I'll see how fast it can really go."

"OK, I'll try and remember to do that sooner or later." said Tails.

He looked around and suddenly said "Have you seen Cosmo anywhere?"

"She's with Amy and Cream doing something." said Sonic "I have no idea what it is but Cosmo said it's supposed to be a surprise for me or something like that."

"A surprise for you?" said Tails "I wonder what that could be? Do you think I should help them out so I'm like contributing to this surprise?"

"Maybe." said Sonic "I'm sure Amy, Cream and Cosmo will appreciate you helping them."

"Do you know where they are?" asked Tails.

"Castle Acorn I think." said Sonic "Although I have no idea what they're at Castle Acorn for. Maybe that's there this surprise is set."

"OK." said Tails "I'll fly over to Castle Acorn immediately."

Tails twisted his tails around one another and took flight. Then he flew off and headed for Castle Acorn. Sonic watched his twin-tailed friend leave and admired the Tornado.

"That's one way past cool plane I'll admit." said Sonic "I bet it'll be

just as cool when it's in flight."

He looked away from the plane and looked up at the sky.

"But one thing I wonder is what this surprise for me is?" he mused "I hope it's something way past cool, I love surprises."

Sonic certainly would get a surprise at what was to come and it was not something way past cool, it was something way past deadly and he would soon find that out when it arrived…

A short while later, Tails arrived at Castle Acorn, the only building in Mobotropolis that wasn't destroyed when Eggman first attacked*. To his surprise he saw Queen Sally Acorn and her lady-in-waiting Nicole setting up a long row of tables with pink table cloths. Amy, Cream and Cosmo were giving them a hand. Sally was wearing a casual outfit of just a green bra, long skirt and a pair of slippers whereas Nicole was still wearing the same purple toga she always wore. Nicole and Amy pushed two tables together and Cream and Cosmo put the table cloths on. Tails landed and ran over to the girls. Amy spotted him and waved to him.

"Hey Tails!" she called out "Over here!"

Tails ran up to the tables and stopped.

"So what's going on here?" he asked.

"We're setting up Sonic's surprise." explained Sally as she straightened out another table cloth "Have we told you what it is yet?"

"No not yet." said Tails "So what is it?"

Sally looked around to make sure Sonic wasn't around and then spoke quietly to Tails.

"We are hosting a party to celebrate all his heroic deeds over the months." she said "I think it's the most Sonic deserves for all the hard work he's done for us so we need to show him how thankful we

are for his heroism."

"I think that's a wonderful idea." said Tails "I'm sure Sonic will appreciate it."

"And that's not all." said Amy, pushing the last two tables together "Sally's inviting some of Sonic's friends to come over such as Wilson, Mandy, Knuckles, The Chaotix and of course me, Cream, Cosmo and you."

"And that's still not all." added Nicole, putting the last tablecloth over the last pair of tables "I've just received news from Megapolis and Downunda that everything is under control and fellow fighters Geoffrey St. John and Bunnie Rabbot are allowed to come back here and celebrate with us."

"Yay!" cried Tails "I remember Bunnie Rabbot from when me and Sonic went to Megapolis to help destroy Eggman's tank**! It'll be great to see her again. I haven't met Geoffrey yet but I bet he's a nice guy."

"I'm sure you'll like Mr. St. John Tails." said Nicole "And just wait till Sonic sees him and Bunnie when it's time for him to see the surprise, he'll be thrilled!"

"I think Sonic will be thrilled with the party overall." said Tails.

"I just hope everything goes right." said Cream "I hope that mean old Dr. Eggman won't come here and ruin everything with his army of robots."

"Chao." cooed Cheese.

"I think Eggman will be too busy rebuilding Robotropolis to bother about us." said Tails "After all, Scourge did blow it up*** the other day."

"I hope you're right Tails." said Cream.

"I hope I'm right too." said Tails ""I certainly don't want Dr. Eggman to ruin this party. We need a good party right now to brighten ourselves up from all the fighting we've done over time."

"I couldn't agree more Tails." said Sally "Fighting robots, stopping criminals and fending off Dr. Eggman must be tiring for poor Sonic so he could use a break."

"Hey Sally I thought I'd ask you something." Tails suddenly said "What's it like being queen now?"

Sally had been hoping Tails wouldn't ask but he had so she had to answer him.

"It's tiring and stressful sometimes since I'm in charge of everything now." she explained "But thanks to tips my mother gave me, I'm managing OK now. I just wish that demon Martian Marik didn't kill my parents before I was ready to take the throne."

Her face fell into despair. Cosmo decided to comfort her.

"But you've managed to raise the kingdom out of the ashes of the tragedy now your majesty." said Cosmo "You're doing your parents proud I'm sure so don't let their deaths continue to bother you or you might not be able to manage things properly."

Sally faced the little plant girl and smiled at her.

"You're right Cosmo." she said "I'm sure my parents are very proud of the efforts I'm making to maintain stability of the kingdom and I shouldn't let their deaths bother me. Even though they're not with me now, they're still with me in spirit."

"That's what my mother always said to me when remembering loved ones." said Cosmo "No matter where they are, they'll always be with you in spirit."

"So Sally, what do you want me to do?" asked Tails, hoping to change the subject.

"Well if you want to help out with the surprise, you can help Nicole prepare the buffet." said Sally.

"OK." said Tails "I wonder what food's on offer?"

He went off into the castle with Nicole leading him. The moment

Tails and Nicole left, Amy began staring into space. Cream noticed this and shook her lightly.

"Hey Miss Rose? Are you alright?" she asked.

Amy stopped day-dreaming and looked at Cream.

"I'm fine, I was just imagining Sonic's surprised face when he sees all the hard work we've done for him." she said "I bet he's gonna love this party."

"I bet he is too." said Cream smiling "All his closest friends will be there to celebrate and there'll be nothing to worry about."

If only Cream was right. This party would go off with more then just a bang and Sonic would have more then just a celebration going on…

Meanwhile, Robotropolis was a quarter finished already due to the extreme speed of Eggman's builders and it was beginning to form its familiar shape and size from before. Eggman watched the construction work with satisfaction and smiled widely to himself.

"Isn't it amazing how fast robots can build?" he said to himself "They'll be done by Tuesday if they keep this up."

Then he heard the sound of clanking feet behind him. The clanking feet came up to his side and stopped. Dr. Eggman turned his head to see none other then his most recent creation Metal Sonic by his side and looking up at him. Metal Sonic was a shiny sleek blue robot with three spikes on his head, a black visor with red glowing eyes, a pointed nose, sharp claws, a jet booster in his back and red feet. Dr. Eggman smiled at Metal Sonic.

"Ah Metal Sonic! How's my favourite creation right now?" he asked.

"Hungry." droned Metal Sonic, his voice was very deep and robotical "Hungry for destruction."

"Ah of course you are." said Dr. Eggman "You want to smash some Mobians to pieces don't you?" he asked "Well you don't have to wait

any longer my little robot for you shall have your destruction!"

"What is your command Master Eggman?" asked Metal Sonic, saluting him.

"You will go to Mobotropolis and destroy the one known as Sonic the Hedgehog!" ordered Dr. Eggman "And you may destroy anyone affiliated with him as well!"

"It will be done Master." droned Metal Sonic "Mobius will lie in ruins and Sonic the Hedgehog will be exterminated. I shall not fail you Master."

"That's a good little robot." said Dr. Eggman "Now go Metal Sonic! GO! Go and show them who the true Sonic is!"

"I am the true Sonic." said Metal Sonic.

He activated the jet booster in his back and rocketed off at supersonic speed. Metal Sonic went so fast he caused a sonic boom in the distance and Eggman was truly blown away by it.

"Whoa ho, ho, ho, ho!" he cackled "If Metal Sonic can move that fast then Sonic has no chance against him! Metal Sonic will destroy that infernal hedgehog once and for all!"

He cackled loudly to himself as he watched Metal Sonic disappear in the distance. There were only three things on Metal Sonic's mechanical mind as he sped through the Great Dunes and that was kill, maim and destroy. Metal Sonic would arrive at Mobotropolis, destroy Sonic and destroy Mobius all in the name of Dr. Eggman. This was going to be one tough battle…

Meanwhile, Sonic was taking one of his usual lengthy jogs around Green Hill Zone to keep himself occupied. He zoomed up and around a loop-de-loop shaped rock and rocketed on through the plains. No matter how fast he ran or what he did, he couldn't keep his mind of the surprise that Castle Acorn was setting up for him. He was really tempted to sneak up to Castle Acorn and find out what the surprise was but then it wouldn't be a surprise if he knew what it

was so he resisted the temptation. Yet he couldn't stop thinking about it and trying to guess what the surprise was.

What sort of surprise would Queen Sally be setting up for me? he thought to himself *Whatever it is, I bet it'll be way past cool. I wonder if it has anything to do with all my heroism over the months.*

As he continued to think to himself, he wasn't concentrating on his running and he didn't see fellow fighter Mandy Mouse coming towards him and he accidentally crashed into her. They both fell over onto the grass. Sonic got to his feet and helped Mandy back onto her feet.

"Whoa, sorry Mandy, I didn't see you there." apologized Sonic

"It's OK true blue." Mandy assured him even though deep inside she wanted to gripe at Sonic for being so careless "It isn't easy to keep your eye on the road especially when you run that fast and everything's a blur to you."

"I guess that makes sense." said Sonic "So, where are you off to?"

"Oh…somewhere." said Mandy, trying to hide the fact she was heading to Castle Acorn since she had been invited to the celebration party "I'll meet you later OK?"

"OK." said Sonic.

Mandy then ran off in a hurry. Sonic scratched his head in thought.

"What did Mandy mean by somewhere?" he wondered "Is she hiding something from me?"

As he though on that, he was about to run off again until he saw Mandy's best friend, Wilson the Dog strolling by, carrying a lot of colourful boxes. He accidentally dropped one and tried to bend down to pick it up but that just made him drop all the boxes.

"Oh darn it!" he cried "Why did I have to drop these before I make it to Castle Acorn? I might wreck them!"

"Here Wilson, let me give you a hand." said Sonic, rushing over to

help him pick up the boxes.

"Oh…thank you Sonic." said Wilson, surprised to see Sonic there.

Sonic and Wilson picked up all the boxes and stacked them together. Wilson picked the pile up and tried to stagger off. Sonic couldn't help but wonder what the boxes were for and why they were brightly coloured as if they were presents for a birthday party.

"Hey Wilson? What's with the boxes?" asked Sonic.

"Oh, they're for the surprise at Castle Acorn." said Wilson, still trying to walk off "You'll find out what's in them when it's time. See ya."

And with that Wilson disappeared into the woods, still staggering about with the tower of boxes he was carrying. Sonic scratched his head in thought again.

"What's Wilson taking boxes to Castle Acorn for?" he wondered "Is he helping out too? And I wonder why they look like birthday presents? It's not my birthday today."

Then he chuckled slightly.

"I wonder if they think it's my birthday and they're planning a surprise party for me." he said to himself "It'd be a shame for them to go for all this hard work for nothing so maybe I should pretend it's my birthday or something."

Sonic was about to run off yet again but something else caught his eye. It was none other then the Guardian of the Master Emerald himself, Knuckles the Echidna. Knuckles was carrying a long piece of material that looked suspiciously like a banner of sorts. Knuckles saw Sonic and waved to him.

"Hey Sonic." he said "Out jogging?"

"Yep." said Sonic "What brings you here Knucklehead?"

"I'm off to help with the surprise Sally's planning for you." said Knuckles "And this thing I have is for the surprise."

"What is it?" asked Sonic.

"If you want to find out what it is you have to fight me first!" joked Knuckles, clenching his fists.

"Nah, I'm not in the mood for a fight right now." said Sonic "Maybe some other time."

Knuckles just laughed at Sonic.

"You're just saying that to avoid me giving you a migraine aren't you?" he sneered "Well, I've gotta deliver this thing to Castle Acorn, see ya around Sonic."

He walked off, carrying the banner on his shoulder. Sonic just watched Knuckles leave and scratched his head in thought again.

"First Mandy, then Wilson and now Knuckles." he mused "What are those three going to Castle Acorn for? Are they involved with the surprise in someway or another? I wonder who's next? Bunnie and Geoffrey?"

He ran off at top speed and sped through the plains as he thought to himself. Whatever this surprise was going to be, it certainly seemed like it was going to be fun. He just wondered what Wilson, Mandy and Knuckles were doing there. Maybe they had been invited to it or something like that. And whatever the reason for the invites was, he would find that out when the surprise was ready…

On the other side of Green Hill Zone, there was a skunk in a green combat suit with an arm mounted crossbow on his right arm and there was a female rabbit with a robotical left arm and robotical legs walking through the forest and back to Mobotropolis. These two were Sonic's good friends Geoffrey St. John and Bunnie Rabbot. They had been part of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters along with Sonic and they had been away helping other groups that needed an extra hand. Bunnie had been fighting in Megapolis and Geoffrey had been fighting in Downunda. Things were under control in both those places now so they were allowed to return home at long last. It felt

like they had been away for years even though it had only been a month or two at the most for both of them. As they walked through the forest, Bunnie and Geoffrey chatted to each other about their respective missions.

"…and since the capture of Eggman's tank, everything's been goin' smoothly for lil ol' Thomas Tiger and his troop." explained Bunnie "Eggman hasn't given us a decent fight since the Egg Tank's capture. And even though sugah-hog destroyed it when he was Mecha Sonic**** we still managed to defeat Eggman's last remaining robots and now Megapolis has everything under control once again."

"You sound like you've had fun luv." said Geoffrey with a smile "All I had to do was foil a train delivery and that was it, Eggman's army has been in total collapse since then. How does stopping one important train delivery cause so much damage to an army?"

"That train delivery must' a been quite important." suggested Bunnie "What was it delivering anyhow?"

"Just a very powerful missile that had enough power to sink continents when it hits its target." said Geoffrey "Good thing I stopped that train or all the continents on Mobius would end up like the city of Atlantis!"

"That Eggman's a bit crazy isn't he?" said Bunnie, putting her finger to her head and twirling it around as if to say Eggman was loopy "Ah mean, sinkin' entire continents? That's a lil extreme ain't it?"

"Nothing's too extreme for that Eggman bloke luv." said Geoffrey grimly "I bet if he wanted to he would destroy the entire world rather then try to take over it."

"Well if he ever tries that we'll be there to stop him!" said Bunnie hotly "He's no match for mah metal limbs!"

"And he's no match for my combat skills and arm mounted crossbow." said Geoffrey proudly lifting his arm to show his famed weapon "And he's no match for Sonic's speed either. That blighter will lose eventually and he'll leave Mobius and never return."

"Ah sure hope that happens some day Geoffrey." said Bunnie "Ah miss the good old days where it was just us Mobians doing as we pleased and we had nothin' to worry about."

"I long for those days to Bunnie." said Geoffrey with a sigh "Before that bloke arrived, I was a happy little soul living with my loving parents who thankfully aren't roboticized and I managed to get out of the ashes of that little event that could have ended my life here and there."

"Yo mentioned somethin' like that before." said Bunnie "What was that little event that could have ended your life?"

"I don't wanna talk about it." said Geoffrey as the painful memories came back to his head "It's too depressing for me."

Then suddenly he heard something rustle in the bushes and he aimed his crossbow directly in front of him.

"Bunnie, did you hear that?" he hissed, bending down on one knee.

"Ah sure did sugah." said Bunnie, deploying her arm cannon and aiming it in the same direction Geoffrey was aiming at "Ah bet it's an Eggman robot wanting revenge on us."

The two Mobians remained still and waited for whatever was making those rustling sounds to come out and face them. Little did they know…the thing was directly behind them! And the thing that was directly behind them was Metal Sonic. He detected them both when searching for Sonic and they registered as enemies so he decided to deal with them first. Metal Sonic leaped into the air and tried to attack Bunnie but Bunnie heard him, turned around and blasted the robot in the face with her cannon arm, making Geoffrey jump almost a foot in the air. Metal Sonic landed on his feet and skidded backwards before stopping himself and baring his claws. Bunnie and Geoffrey kept their weapons aimed at the metal monster.

"What is that?" asked Geoffrey "Another Mecha Sonic?"

"Don't tell me Eggman roboticized Sonic again!" cried Bunnie.

"Correction: I am not Sonic the Hedgehog." droned Metal Sonic in

his deep robotical voice "I am Dr. Ivo Eggman's greatest machine ever: Metal Sonic."

"Metal Sonic?" said Geoffrey "What are you supposed to be a lame robot copy of Sonic the Hedgehog or something?"

"I am no copy!" boomed Metal Sonic "I am the real Sonic and I will show you why!"

He rocketed straight into Geoffrey's stomach and sent the skunk hurling backwards into a tree. Geoffrey fell forward and landed on his stomach. He groaned loudly. Then before Bunnie could act, Metal Sonic landed a flying punch to the eye on her and sent Bunnie falling on her back. That punch had given Bunnie a black eye and it hurt ever so badly. Bunnie rubbed it tenderly and watched Metal Sonic glare at her.

"Ah can beat you Metal Sonic, even with one eye!" she declared "Now it's your turn for a punch in the eye!"

She punched at Metal Sonic and her robot arm extended. Metal Sonic dodged but Bunnie's extending arm followed him around as the robot flew away from it. Her arm managed to catch up with Metal Sonic and it tried to wrap around him but Metal Sonic grabbed the arm and held it above his head to prevent it from fully wrapping around him. Then Bunnie swung her arm down, bringing Metal Sonic crashing into the ground. But he didn't smash to pieces like a normal robot would, he withstood the impact. Metal Sonic got back to his feet and since he was still holding Bunnie's arm, he yanked on it and pulled her forward. Bunnie yelped as she was pulled towards Metal Sonic and Metal Sonic blasted her in the face with the laser mounted in his torso. Then he threw her arm away, causing her to fall backwards onto her back. Then Metal Sonic tried to jump on Bunnie but he narrowly saw Geoffrey leaping for him so he quickly dodged and left Geoffrey to crash face first into the ground. Geoffrey recovered and fired a dart from his crossbow at Metal Sonic but quick as a flash, Metal Sonic caught it in his claws and threw it away! Geoffrey tried to kick Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic grabbed his foot and threw it up, causing Geoffrey to somersault backwards and land on his face. Bunnie tried to attack him but Metal Sonic heard her coming and he blasted her with the laser mounted in his back.

Bunnie fell onto her knees and panted. Then Metal Sonic grabbed her by the ears and took flight. He lifted Bunnie straight off the ground by her ears and he began to spin her around in mid air. Down on the ground, Geoffrey aimed his arm mounted crossbow up at Metal Sonic and wanted to shoot him but he dared not to in case he accidentally hit Bunnie. Metal Sonic stopped spinning and finally let go of Bunnie, sending her flying straight into Geoffrey. The two Mobians fell over and Geoffrey's crossbow accidentally fired a dart straight into a tree branch.

"Darn, I wasted a shot!" he moaned.

Metal Sonic charged towards the downed Mobians but Geoffrey recovered just in time to give Metal Sonic a kick to the forehead that sent him crashing face first into the ground. Metal Sonic recovered all too quickly just as Geoffrey was about to land another blow on him. Metal Sonic grabbed Geoffrey by the shoulders and kneed him directly in the gut. Geoffrey wheezed loudly as all the air in his lungs began to escape him. A knee to the gut can be very painful but when a robot does it, it's even more painful and Geoffrey found himself lying on the ground in excruciating pain. Metal Sonic tried to attack Geoffrey again but Bunnie fisted him in the back of the head with her metal arm.

"Don't ya dare touch Geoffrey ya Sonic rip-off!" screamed Bunnie as Metal Sonic staggered over onto his knees.

"Your resistance is amusing as it is infuriating." droned Metal Sonic, standing back up "I guess I'll have to double my efforts."

With that said, Metal Sonic emitted a spin-dash very similar to Sonic's own spin-dash only far more dangerous looking and charged straight into Bunnie. The impact left some slashes on Bunnie's stomach and the stunned rabbit fell to her knees and clutched her stomach in pain. Geoffrey tried to attack once again but Metal Sonic dodged the skunk, spun around and kicked him in the back of the head. Geoffrey fell on his face and groaned.

"I dunno about you luv, but I think we need help." grunted Geoffrey, trying to get back to his feet.

"That Metal Sonic cough! sure is a handful isn't he?" coughed Bunnie "Ah reckon he's stronger then even Mecha Sonic!"

Metal Sonic glared at his victims with satisfaction.

"You have been an amusing bunch of vermin." he taunted "But now is the time for your lives to end. Prepare to feel my spin-dash Mobians!"

He emitted another spin-dash and charged at Bunnie and Geoffrey. Geoffrey got back to his feet and kicked Metal Sonic away. Metal Sonic ended up digging his way down into the ground slightly due to his spin-dash and now he had embedded himself into the thick soil and grass. While Metal Sonic was trying to free himself, Geoffrey pulled Bunnie close to him.

"We need a plan and I think I have one luv." said Geoffrey "You keep him busy while I load up my crossbow with an EMP dart and then I'll shot the blighter in the back. He'll be put out of commission and then we can destroy him."

"Good idea sugah." said Bunnie "Ah hope it works."

"Let's try it now Bunnie." said Geoffrey "I think the metal bloke's just about free himself from the ground!"

And he was right, Metal Sonic wrenched himself free and sent chunks of soil flying everywhere. Bunnie immediately went into action and tried to punch Metal Sonic with her robot arm. Metal Sonic dodged the blow and seized Bunnie's extending arm. He yanked on the arm and pulled Bunnie towards him. He punched Bunnie and released her arm. Geoffrey pulled an EMP dart out of his pocket and loaded his crossbow. He aimed at Metal Sonic and prepared to fire. Metal Sonic tried to slash at Bunnie but Bunnie had activated her shield generator to defend herself. She couldn't keep the shield up forever since using her robot limbs a lot wore her out a little so Geoffrey had to act before Metal Sonic broke through. Geoffrey fired the dart and the dart went straight into Metal Sonic's back. The startled robot was engulfed by a painful electric shock that pulsed through his circuits and made him switch off. Metal Sonic collapsed to the ground. Geoffrey smiled and blow the smoke

coming out of his crossbow away.

"Bull's-eye." he said.

Bunnie observed the knocked out Metal Sonic carefully to make sure he was out of commission. The robot didn't move. He appeared to be completely immobilized.

"Well Geoffrey, ah think he's down and out for now." she said "He's not movin'."

"Well that's what happens when you use EMP on robots." said Geoffrey "EMP stands for Electromagnetic pulse and it can do a great deal of damage to robot circuits you know."

"Ah know." said Bunnie "Now Metal Sonic's down we should smash him to pieces before he wakes up."

"I agree." said Geoffrey "Use your arm cannon, that'll destroy him."

"Ah would but ah feel a little worn out from using mah limbs so much." said Bunnie "If ah use mah arm cannon again ah'll collapse."

"Then maybe you should just use your robot arm to smash him up." said Geoffrey "I'm sure you have enough strength to rip robots to pieces."

"Ah'll do just that." said Bunnie "Metal Sonic will be no more when ah've finished with him…"

She turned around to grab Metal Sonic and rip him apart only to find he had disappeared. Bunnie's ears stuck up straight in surprise and Geoffrey leaped backwards.

"Hey! Where'd he go? Where'd he go?" screeched Geoffrey "He's gone! But how? My dart shouldn't have worn off yet!"

"How did he get away without us knowing about it?" cried Bunnie "He must be one silent fella!"

"I bet he's hiding and waiting to pounce on us any moment now." said Geoffrey "Keep your senses alert, we'll continue our way to

Mobotropolis and if Metal Sonic tries to attack, we'll fight back."

"Ah hope he doesn't catch us by surprise." said Bunnie "Ah've had all ah can take for today."

Geoffrey and Bunnie walked on further through Green Hill Zone, keeping their senses alert for Metal Sonic. Speaking of Metal Sonic, he was hiding behind some thickly grown bushes and waiting for the perfect moment to emerge. Geoffrey's dart didn't have much of an effect on him due to his strong build so he was only knocked out for a few seconds and while Bunnie and Geoffrey were talking, he crawled away and hid. He waited for Bunnie and Geoffrey to disappear into the woods before emerging from his hiding place and silently following them. He had a feeling if he followed Bunnie and Geoffrey, they'd take him to where Sonic was and then he would have him! Sonic would not know what had hit him…

Meanwhile at Castle Acorn, the celebration party was ready. The guests had arrived, the tables had been set, the food had been laid out and Knuckles, with some help from Tails and Cream, had managed to pin up the banner he had brought to the party. The banner said in big blue letters "THANK YOU SONIC!" and it hung over one of the Castle's windows. Everything looked splendid and Sally couldn't wait for Sonic to see it.

"Well boys and girls, everything's set." said Sally "Now all we need to do is find Sonic and tell him the surprise is ready."

"I'll go." offered Tails eagerly "I'll be able to find him."

"OK Tails." said Sally.

Tails twisted his tails around one another and he took flight. Then Tails flew off and headed for Green Hill Zone to look for Sonic since the hedgehog was likely to be there right now. The moment Tails left, Sally said

"Well everything's going well so far. Maybe this'll be a quiet day for us."

"That'll be a first." said Mandy grimly "A quiet day's an impossibility for us ever since Dr. Eggman arrived."

"Oh Mandy liven up will you?" said Wilson teasingly "There's no need to be so melancholy all the time."

Mandy ignored her friend and gave him the cold shoulder. As for Amy, she was talking to Knuckles.

"Do the people of Angel Island ever have parties?" asked Amy.

"We do host a celebration every ten years to celebrate years of guardian work." said Knuckles "The next time I'll have that kind of celebration is when I turn twenty and I'm sixteen now so that's at least four years away from now."

"I bet it's a lot of fun isn't it?" asked Amy.

"It's OK really." said Knuckles casually.

As for Cream, she and Cosmo were talking to Team Chaotix. Vector was telling them about the time they narrowly managed to save Sonic and Tails from Scourge's wrath.

"…and just as it looks like they're doomed, Charmy here," Vector patted Charmy on the head and the bee smiled with appreciation "Head-butted Scourge in the stomach and sent him falling off the temple! Then Espio snatches the pearl out of the cube and throws it away and I freed Sonic and Tails from their binds."

"It was a team effort." said Espio casually "And the green menace ran like a coward."

"That was so brave of you guys to rescue Mr. Sonic and Tails like that!" Cream squealed happily "No wonder my mother likes it when you three come to visit us!"

"Heh, no wonder." agreed Vector "And we're the Chaotix detective agency, we do what we do best and…Charmy keep away from the nachos!" he yelled.

Charmy was about to steal some nachos from the buffet table but

Vector caught him so he put his hands behind his back and moaned.

"But Vector all this food is making me hungry and my mouth's about to become a waterfall!" he whined.

"You'll have to wait until Sonic arrives." said Espio sternly "I hope Tails doesn't take too long."

"I'm sure he won't." said Cosmo "Tails is good at finding things."

"By they way, I don't believe we've met." said Espio politely "I'm Espio, may I have your name miss?"

"I'm Cosmo." said Cosmo.

"Ah, I've heard about you from the newspapers we read!" exclaimed Vector "Aren't you that plant girl who saved Sally from being killed by that Marik guy?"

"I am." said Cosmo "I saved Sally from Marik the Martian who hopefully we will never see again."

"I hope so." said Charmy "That guy sounds creepy!"

"He's worse then creepy Charmy." said Cream "He's mean, he's evil and he's…"

"Cream that's quite enough." interrupted Cosmo "Marik's gone so we don't need to tell everyone about him."

"Sorry Cosmo." said Cream, looking to her right. She suddenly spotted something turned to Vector.

"Um Vector, do you know those two over there?" asked Cream, pointing at some figures in the distance.

Everybody looked in Cream's direction and saw what she saw. She had seen Bunnie and Geoffrey, limping towards Castle Acorn. They looked terrible from the fight with Metal Sonic they had just been in, they were covered with cuts and bruises and Geoffrey's suit was torn in places. Nicole ran over to give them a hand.

"Here Bunnie and Geoffrey, let me help you." she offered, holding Bunnie's hand and helping her onwards.

"Thank you Nicole." said Bunnie weakly.

Geoffrey was still strong enough to walk so he didn't need helping. Sally ran over to the two and immediately began asking them questions.

"What happened to you two?" she exclaimed "You look like you've been in a fight!"

"We have luv." said Geoffrey "We were engaged in combat with a robot clone of Sonic!"

Sally and Nicole's jaws dropped and they looked at each other. Amy and Knuckles overheard them and they exchanged worried glances. Was this the return of Mecha Sonic or something worse?

"It's a robot called Metal Sonic." explained Bunnie, falling onto her knees "It's even faster and stronger then Mecha Sonic. Ah barely managed to beat Mecha Sonic and me and Geoffrey together were no match for Metal Sonic!"

"Where is this Metal Sonic?" shrieked Sally "Is he waiting to attack?"

"Well he disappeared after I knocked it out." explained Geoffrey "And it didn't leap out and attack us while we were walking through the forest so it may have retreated."

"Ah think it's waiting to attack us." said Bunnie "Ah think it's takin' the subtle approach."

Sally and Nicole didn't know what to think of the situation. Everybody else just murmured to one another.

"Do you think we should postpone the celebration until Metal Sonic is disposed of?" suggested Nicole.

"We may have to." said Sally "I don't want this perfectly set up party to be ruined by a robot clone of Sonic."

Then all of the sudden Tails and Sonic showed up with Tails leading Sonic.

"And here we are Sonic." said Tails "Here's your surprise."

Sonic looked at the nicely set up tables and banner that were all set up outside Castle Acorn. He admired the banner and looked at all the guests there. His closest friends were all here and obviously taking part in the celebration. Strange how they didn't seem thrilled to see him.

"Say, what's with the faces?" asked Sonic "Is something wrong?"

"Yes." said Sally "Geoffrey and Bunnie have been in battle with a robot clone of you and it might be waiting to get us!" she shrieked "I'm sorry Sonic but we're postponing the celebration until Metal Sonic is defeated!"

"Metal Sonic?" sneered Sonic "How corny! It just sounds like Mecha Sonic with a different name! Is Eggman really that short on ideas recently?"

"This isn't something to joke about Sonic!" snapped Sally "Look what it did to Bunnie and Geoffrey!"

Sonic looked at his two friends and gasped. He ran over to their sides to comfort them.

"Hey you two, long time no see." he said "What did Metal Sonic do to ya?"

"A lot, that's all we can say." said Geoffrey "That blighter's worse then you in Mecha form!"

"Well I was already a handful when I was Mecha Sonic so Metal Sonic sounds like a challenge." said Sonic "I can't wait to destroy him!"

"No Sonic, it is you who will be destroyed!" boomed a terrible voice from above their heads.

Everybody looked up and spotted Metal Sonic standing on the roof

of Castle Acorn, glowering at them with his terrible red optics. Sonic got into a battle ready stance and prepared to pounce.

"So you must be Metal Sonic." said Sonic, smirking "Eggman really shouldn't have. It was so kind of him to send a robot copy of me for me to destroy!"

"You are the copy, I am the real Sonic." droned Metal Sonic "And I will destroy you, copy!"

"Who are you calling copy? Copy!" retorted Sonic "We'll see who the copy really is!"

Metal Sonic leaped off the building and charged towards Sonic. Knuckles leaped up and punched Metal Sonic in the side of the head and sent him crashing into the ground.

"Hey Knuckles, I wanted to do that!" griped Sonic.

"Well I'm giving you a helping hand." said Knuckles.

"And so are we." said Amy, brandishing her Piko-Piko hammer.

She and everybody else were prepared to attack Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic got back to his feet and charged at Knuckles. He elbowed the echidna in the stomach and then threw him into the tables. Knuckles knocked a table over and the food flew everywhere. Sonic tried to attack but Metal Sonic blasted him with his torso laser and sent Sonic flying away. Sally was next to retaliate by trying to kick Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic ducked.

"I spent all day preparing this party for Sonic and I won't have you wrecking it!" screamed Sally "And you won't wreck Castle Acorn either!"

"Silence!" boomed Metal Sonic malevolently.

He kneed Sally straight in the stomach and sent her buckling over. Then he elbowed her in the back of the head, sending the queen falling on her face. Espio was next to attack by throwing a shuriken at the robot Sonic clone. Metal Sonic caught the deadly stars and threw them back at Espio. The chameleon found himself running for

cover from his own weapons. The shuriken failed to catch him and they embedded themselves into the ground. Espio picked them up but Metal Sonic attacked him from behind and gave him a sharp thump on the head with his knuckles, putting the chameleon out of commission for now. Vector lunged at Metal Sonic and tried to chomp him up in his jaws but Metal Sonic wrenched them open and fired his torso mounted laser straight in Vector's mouth. Vector jumped back and hit the walls of the castle, coughing loudly. Charmy tried to sting Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic just smacked the bee away with one powerful swipe.

"I'm baffled as to how the master is having trouble taking you fools on." he droned "You Mobians are weak, feeble and pathetic."

"Do you call THIS weak, feeble and pathetic?" shrieked Amy, trying to attack Metal Sonic with her hammer.

Metal Sonic grabbed her arms before her hammer could hit and threw Amy straight into the air. Tails caught her and lowered her gently to the ground. Then Metal Sonic attacked Tails by flying up to him and drop kicking him into the ground. Wilson tried to attack by ramming Metal Sonic with his shoulder but Metal Sonic stepped out the way and punched him in the back, sending Wilson falling over himself and landing on Tails. Mandy threw a bomb at Metal Sonic but the terrifying robot caught it in his claws and threw it back at her. Mandy ducked and the bomb hit the castle doors, blowing them up and knocking them down. Then Metal Sonic head-butted Mandy and sent her crashing into another table. The table's legs gave way and the table collapsed with Mandy on top of it. Bunnie and Geoffrey, despite their injuries tried to join in but Metal Sonic picked up a bench and threw it at them both. The bench took them both out in an instant. Nicole tried to step in with some of her novice style combat skills but Metal Sonic effortlessly managed to take her out with a spin-dash. Cream and Cheese sneaked up from behind and tried to attack but Metal Sonic blasted them with the laser in his back. Cosmo picked up some of the food that had fallen on the ground after Knuckles crashed into the table and threw it at Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic got splattered by a cream pie and that made him angry. He turned around and ran up to Cosmo. With one powerful head butt, he sent Cosmo flying into the wall. A very sharp flush of pain

flooded up her back and the pain was excruciating. Then Metal Sonic advanced on Cosmo menacingly. Cosmo cowered with her back against the wall. She covered her eyes and waited for Metal Sonic to strike.

"You will die freak of nature and so will the rest of you for your insolence and disloyalty to the true ruler of Mobius, Dr. Eggman!" growled Metal Sonic.

"Don't hurt me please!" begged Cosmo.

Metal Sonic ignored her and prepared to attack until he was spin-dashed from behind by Sonic the Hedgehog. Metal Sonic turned around to face the blue hedgehog who seemed mostly unhurt from Metal Sonic's earlier attack.

"That's pretty good stuff Metal Sonic but now it's time to get personal!" declared Sonic "I'm not pleased you've wrecked the celebration party all my friends have put together, and no one hurts my friends like that, ever!"

"So be it copy!" boomed Metal Sonic "You shall have the pleasure of dying by my claws!"

Sonic and Metal Sonic charged at each other with their fists clenched. This was it, the battle of the Sonics, the Supersonic Showdown that would determine who the better Sonic was…

Footnotes:

*** See the now almost legendary Story 2**

**** See Stories 6-7**

***** See Story 28**

****** Who can possibly forget the events of Story 12?**

Metal Sonic is unleashed and he's kicking everybody's butts! Can Sonic defeat him? Or is Metal Sonic just too much? Join me next time...

As we Sonic fans all know, the games haven't really...um...given Metal Sonic any glory recently so after putting Metal Sonic into this story I decided to give him the glory he once had but no longer can have thanks to SEGA being lazy and not giving a damn about him anymore. Have I succeeded? Or have I made Metal Sonic even worse? Reviews are welcome.

A Worldwide Sonic Showdown Part 1

Story 31: A Worldwide Sonic Showdown Part 1

Sonic found himself crashing into the ground yet again by Metal Sonic's spin-dash. The fight had been pretty one-sided so far and that one-side unfortunately happened to be Metal Sonic. Most of the fight had been spent spin-dashing each other but being metal, Metal Sonic's spin-dashes were harder and Sonic kept getting knocked down by the metal monster. Sonic got back to his feet and tried to spin-dash Metal Sonic once again. Metal Sonic held his hands up and caught Sonic in his claws. Sonic managed to push Metal Sonic backwards for a bit but Metal Sonic eventually overpowered his organic nemesis and threw him away. Sonic crashed straight into the castle, sending some bricks falling down and smashing to pieces against the ground. Everybody else had been watching the fight desperately and helplessly from behind the overturned tables, watching Metal Sonic match Sonic blow after blow after blow.

"This is ridiculous!" cried Sally "At the rate they're going, Castle Acorn will be a wreck!"

"I think Mobius will be a wreck if Sonic doesn't defeat Metal Sonic already." said Tails "No matter what Sonic does, Metal Sonic seems to do it better!"

"Not to mention he just took us all on and defeated us all." said Espio.

"Well we need to give Sonic a helping hand." said Sally "Everybody, let's go!"

And with that, all the Mobians emerged from their hiding place and ran over to Metal Sonic. Cosmo remained hidden, knowing she would be of no help to them. Sonic freed himself from the wall and spin-dashed towards Metal Sonic. Since Metal Sonic was looking at everybody else, he didn't see Sonic coming and Sonic spin-dashed him directly in the head, knocking him over. He managed to get back up but Sally and Nicole both double-teamed him with some good

kicks to the head. But Metal Sonic managed to take the two girls out with one hard punch to each of them. Knuckles then leaped on Metal Sonic, knocking him over again and began violently punching him around the head. Metal Sonic blasted him with his torso laser, sending Knuckles flying off him and onto his back. Wilson and Geoffrey St. John leaped on Metal Sonic, grabbed his arms and pinned him down so he couldn't defend himself from Sonic's attacks. Sonic tried to spin-dash Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic activated his jet booster and took off with Wilson and Geoffrey still holding his arms.

"Criiiiiikeeeeeeeeyyyyyyy!" screeched Geoffrey as he was lifted off the ground.

"Help!" squeaked Wilson.

Tails and Bunnie blew into the sky after Metal Sonic and Bunnie tried to punch Metal Sonic with her robot hand but he ducked. Then he threw Wilson and Geoffrey directly at Tails and Bunnie. Bunnie caught Wilson and Tails caught Geoffrey. Then Metal Sonic charged at the foursome and sent them falling to the ground with a heavy crash. Luckily, no one was hurt. Metal Sonic charged at Tails, Bunnie, Geoffrey and Wilson and tried to attack them but Sonic interfered with a spin-dash to the side. Metal Sonic was sent spiralling into the ground face first. Sonic stood beside him with one foot on Metal Sonic's back to keep him there.

"Give it up Metal Sonic, you can't hold this up forever." said Sonic "We'll eventually overpower you and you'll be nothing but scrap heap. So what do you say? Why don't you retreat so you'll live to fight another day?"

Metal Sonic said nothing. He reached behind himself, grabbed Sonic's leg and flipped him straight over onto his back. Then Metal Sonic, still holding Sonic's leg, proceeded to lift him up and smash him into the ground multiple times before throwing him into the air and flying after him so he could kick him. But Charmy Bee flew after Metal Sonic and pounded him in the side to distract him and then he caught Sonic.

"Thanks Charmy." said Sonic.

"You're welcome." said Charmy "Now let's get outta here before that Metal Sonic guy kicks our butts again…"

Unfortunately Metal Sonic sped up from behind and kicked Charmy in the head. The bee's helmet fell off and he began to plummet down to the ground. Vector ran up to catch Sonic and Charmy. He just made it and caught them in his arms.

"Whoa! Good catch Vector!" said Sonic with a thumbs up sign.

"Thank you." said Vector "I thought I was gonna miss."

"Watch out, here comes Metal Sonic!" shrieked Charmy, putting his helmet back on his head.

Surely enough, Metal Sonic came racing towards them at top speed. Sonic leaped up and spin-dashed him before he could come close to the ground. Metal Sonic landed on his feet and skidded backwards. Suddenly, he found himself being attacked from behind by Cream and Cheese.

"Take this you bad robot!" cried Cream as she and Cheese pounded him with their fists.

Metal Sonic grabbed Cream by the ears and swung her around in a perfect 360 degree spin before throwing her directly into an oncoming Sonic and knocking him over. Cheese stopped attacking Metal Sonic and flew over to Cream's aid.

"Sorry Mr. Sonic!" cried Cream.

"It's OK Cream, we'll still beat this guy." said Sonic.

Sonic got back to his feet and charged at him in a homing attack. Metal Sonic blocked the attack and smacked him away. Then Knuckles stepped in with an uppercut to the chin. Metal Sonic was thrown up for a bout five feet and then he landed on his back. Metal Sonic only just stood up but Knuckles charged at him with another punch. Then Knuckles began to shower the robot with punches. Unfortunately for him, Metal Sonic was strong enough to resist Knuckle's punches although he couldn't keep it up forever, he had to stop Knuckles punching him before his armour eventually gave way.

Amy ran up to Metal Sonic and walloped him with her hammer. Metal Sonic fell onto his side and skidded across the dirt. Knuckles and Amy ran up to him, ready to attack him again but Metal Sonic was ready for them. He leaped to his feet and let them have it with both fists in the face. His fists were as hard as anything due to them being metal and Knuckles & Amy both felt the sheer hardness of them.

"And I thought my punches were hard!" groaned Knuckles as he clutched his face.

Metal Sonic tried to attack them again but he was struck in the side by a flying shuriken. It was Espio. After throwing the shuriken at Metal Sonic, he pulled out a knife and ran up to Metal Sonic.

"I will destroy you Metal Sonic!" declared Espio, throwing the knife at him.

Metal Sonic just caught the knife in his claws and threw it away. Then he pulled out the shuriken that was embedded in his side and threw it at Espio. Espio caught the deadly weapon and threw it back. Metal Sonic just smacked the shuriken away and lunged at the chameleon. Espio let him have a ninja-style punch to the face and then he kicked Metal Sonic in the torso. Metal Sonic backed off and tried to attack again but Espio turned invisible. Metal Sonic was taken aback at that sudden act but he knew invisibility wouldn't do Espio any good. His hearing was greater then any Mobian so he could hear Espio coming, no matter how quiet he was. While invisible, Espio tip-toed behind Metal Sonic and prepared to stab him in the back with his knife. But Metal Sonic heard him tip-toeing behind him and let him have it with his back laser. Espio was blown away and he landed on his back, turning back visible.

Mandy Mouse pulled another bomb off her utility belt and threw it at Metal Sonic, hoping to get him this time, especially since she shortened the fuse. Metal Sonic saw the bomb coming and scanned it quickly. He found out the fuse was too short for him to catch it and throw it away so he just sped out of the bomb's path and the bomb exploded when it hit the ground. Mandy ran over to Metal Sonic and tried to drop kick him around the head but Metal Sonic caught her leg and threw her over his shoulder. She skidded across the grass

and slumped on the ground.

Sonic and Vector were the only ones left so they ran up to Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic jumped out their way, somersaulted in the air, landed behind them and punched them both in the back. Vector turned around and snapped at Metal Sonic with his jaws. Then he tried to let Metal Sonic have it with both fists but Metal Sonic blocked both punches with his hands and threw Vector over his shoulder. Sonic spin-dashed into Metal Sonic but the robot blocked his attacks with his arms. Sonic stopped spin-dashing him and kicked him in the head. Then Sonic let Metal Sonic have it with both fists in the face. His punches didn't hurt Metal Sonic much but the robot was effected he could tell. The two Sonics stared each other down and prepared to attack. Sonic began to pant.

"You know what Metal?" said Sonic "We seem evenly matched don't we? You can clearly hold your own out there!"

"I was built with strength one hundred times greater then Mecha Sonic himself." droned Metal Sonic "You will never defeat me. Even if you were Mecha Sonic, you couldn't defeat me. I will always defeat you Sonic, and all your friends together cannot match my power."

"Well let's see shall we?" said Sonic "But to make things more interesting, I'm going to run for my life right now. Think you can catch me copy?"

"I do not think I can chase you down Sonic, I know I can." droned Metal Sonic "My speed is greater then yours."

"Let's see shall we?" sneered Sonic.

He ran off at top speed and darted through the under construction Mobotropolis and then into the forests of Green Hill Zone. Metal Sonic activated his jet booster and roared after him at top speed. Soon the two Sonics disappeared into the forests. Sonic's battered and beaten friends picked themselves up and watched the two Sonics run off.

"Where are they going?" asked Cosmo, emerging from her hiding

place.

"They're running off somewhere." said Tails "But why? Is Sonic just doing that to save us from even more injury from Metal Sonic or is he just trying to show Metal Sonic who's the fastest?"

"Whatever the reason is." said Sally, dusting herself off "We need to follow them and see what they're up to and also give Sonic a hand while we're at it."

"But Sally, we can't defeat Metal Sonic." said Nicole "I mean look at us! There was fifteen of us and only one of him and he beat us all without breaking a sweat!"

"Hopefully, Sonic will weaken Metal Sonic while he's doing whatever he's doing." said Sally "Metal Sonic shouldn't be able to keep this up forever. Wilson!" she said loudly "Get the R.F.S.* jet ready! We'll fly after the two Sonics in it."

"Certainly your Majesty." said Wilson, running off.

"I'll take my plane." said Tails "I think it's about time the Tornado was put in use."

"You own a plane?" said Geoffrey with surprise in his voice.

"Yep." said Tails proudly "I built it myself too. I can fix and repair things as well as build things from scratch."

"Well Sonic's lucky to have a friend like you on his side isn't he?" said Geoffrey, stroking Tails' head playfully.

"Heh, heh. Yes he is." said Tails.

"Hey, has anyone seen Mandy?" asked Bunnie.

Everybody looked around only to see the little mouse had disappeared. She was nowhere to be seen.

"I guess that mouse turned chicken and ran." said Geoffrey "It's just like girls to do that." he added, remembering Fiona's sudden departure from a few weeks ago**.

"Geoffrey, it's not nice to belittle our friends like that." said Nicole "Although it wasn't nice for Mandy to abandon us like that. I thought the Royal Fighters stuck together."

"We'll just have to go without her." said Sally "Everybody come with me to the R.F.S. jet. Tails, you get your plane."

"Yes Queen Sally." said Tails.

Tails took flight and headed for Sonic's house, where the Tornado was kept. Sally led everyone else to where the R.F.S. jet was. Sally couldn't help but wonder what Sonic and Metal Sonic were doing right now. And she couldn't help but wonder WHERE on Mobius they were right now…

Meanwhile in Robotropolis: the rebuilding of the new city was half finished and Dr. Eggman was watching Metal Sonic's performance in his secret bunker. Watching Metal Sonic beat everybody up brought a great big smile to Dr. Eggman's face. He was kind of amazed himself as to how well Metal Sonic was holding up against fifteen different Mobians. It's clear that giving Metal Sonic Mecha Sonic's data and adding a few more tweaks here and there made Metal Sonic stronger then he imagined. Dr. Eggman was a little puzzled as to why Sonic and Metal Sonic had stopped fighting and were now chasing each other. Dr. Eggman laughed as Metal Sonic almost caught Sonic.

"Oh don't think you can outrun my little beauty Sonic!" chortled Dr. Eggman "His speed is greater then yours and even your evil brother's! You'll never outrun Metal Sonic!"

Eggman's servant bot Alonzo appeared into the bunker and stopped beside Dr. Eggman and saluted him.

"Master, the building work is fifty percent complete and still going." he reported "New Robotropolis should be completed in no time."

"Yes wonderful Alonzo." said Eggman, not really paying attention to his metal minion.

"How's the marvellous Metal Sonic doing sir?" asked Alonzo.

"Metal Sonic is doing splendidly Alonzo." announced Eggman happily "He managed to hold his own against fifteen Mobians at once!"

"Fifteen?" shrieked Alonzo "And I thought Mecha Sonic was powerful! Metal Sonic takes the bolts doesn't he?"

"He does." said Eggman "And I'm so proud of my little machine right now I could kiss him!"

"Very nice sir." said Alonzo sarcastically.

"If Metal Sonic can hold his own against fifteen Mobians then victory for me is certain!" declared Eggman with an evil smile "I shall conquer Mobius once and for all!"

"You know what I think you should do master?" asked Alonzo "I think you should build an army of Metal Sonics, then you'll be unstoppable."

"That would be a good idea wouldn't it?" said Dr. Eggman, putting a finger to his lips "But I don't have the parts to build an army of Metal Sonics right now so one will have to do."

"So, what is Metal Sonic doing now?" asked Alonzo.

"For some reason, Sonic's running away and Metal Sonic's chasing him." said Eggman "I have no idea what's making Sonic run for it. Is he just too afraid to face Metal Sonic so he's trying to escape him?"

"Probably sir." said Alonzo "Where are the two Sonics now?"

"Um…" Eggman's voice trailed off as he observed the monitors in front of him.

It just suddenly dawned on him that Sonic and Metal Sonic were heading towards New Robotropolis! If the two Sonics ran through his under construction city they would cause a great deal of damage and work would be delayed. Dr. Eggman thumped a button on the control pad and bellowed into a microphone.

"Metal Sonic! Take your fight elsewhere! You're heading for New Robotropolis!" screamed Dr. Eggman.

Metal Sonic got the message and stopped flying after Sonic. Then he blasted at Sonic with his torso laser. The shot zoomed over Sonic's head and blasted the ground in front ho him, causing Sonic to stop dead in his tracks. Now Sonic had stopped, Metal Sonic flew towards Sonic and grabbed him from behind.

"He-He-Hey! What's the big idea metal brains?" cried Sonic.

"We are heading for Eggman's new city." explained Metal Sonic "I will not let you wreck it while we're on this chase so I'm taking this battle somewhere else."

"I know a good place to tussle." said Sonic, spinning into a spin-dash to make Metal Sonic let go of him "If you follow me, I'll take you to the perfect place to battle! Try to keep up metal-head!"

Sonic sped off into the west with Metal Sonic roaring after him. Sonic hoped he'd be able to keep this up until he arrived at the location he wanted to be at. But he had a feeling Metal Sonic would have him by then as the metal monster got closer and closer.

Meanwhile, Tails had made it home and leaped into the pilot seat of the Tornado. He activated the plane's propeller and he pulled on the thrusters. The Tornado sped down the stretch of green that acted as his runway and the plane took to the skies. As he began to climb into the air, he spotted another aircraft on the ground near to Castle Acorn. This craft was the R.F.S. jet Sally had mentioned earlier. It was a huge silver aircraft with the ability to hover like a helicopter and fly like a plane. Its wings were long and they could rotate up and down for hovering and flying abilities. Wilson was the jet's pilot and everybody else was seat-belted in the back.

"R.F.S. jet, ready for take off!" announced Wilson as the aircraft began to whirr into life.

He pulled on the thrusters and the aircraft began to take off vertically

like a helicopter. The craft went straight up until it was just the right height and then the wings rotated forward so they were in the normal position of an actual plane's wings. Then the R.F.S. jet began to shoot forward, its jet engines roaring louder then a pride of lions. Tails watched the jet go and was amazed at the craft's speed. He pulled forward on the thrusters and the Tornado began to pick up speed whilst flying after the R.F.S. jet. The Tornado managed to catch up with the R.F.S. jet and he remained at the side of the jet. In the jet Wilson let go of the controls, put the jet on autopilot and sighed to himself.

"R.F.S. jet is flying smoothly everyone and it is now on autopilot." he announced "You're free to unbuckle yourselves until the sign above the door tells you to put your belts back on."

Everybody unbuckled themselves. Wilson put his arms behind his head and stared at the clouds whizzing past the jet as it continued to go forward.

"I wonder where Mandy is?" he said to himself "Pity she had to just up and vanish like that, she loves the idea of flying just like I do. I always did prefer planes to cars after all. I just hope Mandy's somewhere safe and out of harm's way."

As for the others, they were chatting amongst themselves.

"I wonder where Sonic and Metal Sonic are?" said Amy, looking out the window "I do hope Sonic's OK down there."

"He'll be fine." said Knuckles "Sonic will hold out in the end."

"But Knuckles, Metal Sonic can beat all of us combined so what chance do you think Sonic has?" blurted Vector "Sonic's toast down there!"

"Vector, don't lose faith in Mr. Sonic." said Cream "Mr. Sonic always wins in the end. He'll beat Metal Sonic, you'll see."

"I most certainly agree!" put in Amy "Sonic never loses faith on us so don't lose faith in him Vector!"

"OK, OK! I get it!" cried Vector "Geesh, you girls are unbearable

sometimes!"

"Will you lot stop arguing?" snapped Sally as she stared out the window "We need to focus on finding Sonic and helping him defeat Metal Sonic now!"

"We're not arguing." retorted Amy "We're just debating over Sonic's capabilities."

"Well stop debating then." muttered Sally.

"Does anyone see the twin-tailed kid in his little plane anywhere?" asked Geoffrey.

"I think that's him over there." said Nicole, pointing at a blue and yellow bi-plane that was flying beside the jet.

"That is him." said Cosmo "I can recognize that plane design from when it was almost completed yesterday."

"I never knew Tails could build things." said Nicole "He is a remarkable boy isn't he?"

"You could say that." said Amy "And Sonic's lucky to have a friend like him."

"I wonder if Tails would like to be the Royal Fighters Service's mechanic?" pondered Geoffrey "He could be a valuable asset to the team with abilities like that."

"Ah think Tails is alright how he is Geoff." said Bunnie "Ah don't think he needs more weight on his shoulders."

"But Tails doesn't carry weights on his shoulders." said Cosmo.

Bunnie and Geoffrey chuckled at the little Seedrian.

"It's a figure of speech mate." said Geoffrey "It doesn't literally mean he carries weights on his shoulders. I can see you're not used to our language yet are you?"

"Well I can speak like you can but I don't understand what some of

your sayings mean." said Cosmo "Such as that weight on his shoulders saying."

"I wouldn't worry too much sugah." said Bunnie "Ya'll don't have to understand what the sayings mean."

Then suddenly the seatbelt sign above the cockpit door began to glow, meaning everybody had to sit back down and buckle themselves up. Everybody did just that and Wilson announced from inside the cockpit,

"I've caught something on the radar and I'm going to follow it. Hold on tight everybody!"

The R.F.S. jet titled up a little and turned slightly to the right. Tails did the same and the two planes followed the thing Wilson had picked up on radar. Tails was picking up the same thing on his radar.

"I bet that's either Sonic, Metal Sonic or both." said Tails "Either way, we're following this thing to see what it is. We'll catch up to the two Sonics in no time."

But that would take longer then expected being as Sonic and Metal Sonic were faster then both jets and they were already a good distance ahead. This would defiantly take a while. Hopefully Sonic would manage to hold out until they caught up to him.

Sonic and Metal Sonic had been running for hours on end and their running had finally taken them to a place Sonic wanted to fight Metal Sonic in. They had arrived in an ancient place known as Kingdom Valley which was well known for its old abandoned castles. However there was one problem, Kingdom Valley was surrounded by water and if Sonic fell in the water, he'd have trouble getting out since he can't swim so he had to be careful. Sonic leaped in one large graceful leap and landed on top of a bridge that connected two palaces together. Metal Sonic remained hovering in the air and glowered at Sonic.

"Come on then Metal Sonic!" jeered Sonic "Don't you wanna fight me?"

Metal Sonic did not wait to be asked twice. He charged at Sonic at blinding speed, ready to send him flying off the bridge and into the water. Sonic however, leaped out of the way and kicked Metal Sonic in the back of the head and sent the robot diving straight down towards the water. Sonic leaped off the bridge and landed on one of the old castles and watched Metal Sonic plummet towards the water.

Unfortunately, Metal Sonic managed to activate his jet booster and stop himself just before he could fall in the water. Metal Sonic rocketed back into the sky and headed for the castle Sonic stood on. Sonic leaped back and Metal Sonic crashed straight through the roof. Sonic leaped over the giant hole in the roof but as bad luck would have it, Metal Sonic came through the roof and seized him by the leg. Then Metal Sonic threw Sonic down towards the water. Sonic managed to grab a nearby rope and the rope began to sag lower and lower until Sonic was close enough to the water to lightly dap it with the tip of his shoe. Then the rope pulled Sonic back up and Sonic flew straight up into the air. He activated his spin-dash and hurtled towards Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic leaped up and punched him away. Sonic was sent spinning wildly out of control and he crashed into another castle. Metal Sonic flew in after him. Sonic got back to his feet and he kicked Metal Sonic in the torso. Metal Sonic staggered backwards and Sonic lunged at him in a homing attack. Metal Sonic fell on his back and Sonic kicked him again in an attempt to send him falling into the water. But Metal Sonic grabbed the edges of the wall and pulled himself back up. Then he spin-dashed Sonic and sent him flying into the wall. To add insult to injury, Metal Sonic charged at Sonic and they crashed through the wall. Both Sonics plummeted straight into the water with a big splash. They both began to sink like stones into the water. They continued to fight, throwing punches at one another as they went down and down below. Sonic gave Metal Sonic a kick to the head that sent him cart wheeling backwards but Metal Sonic came back and grabbed Sonic's arms, activated his jet booster and he flew straight out of the water with Sonic in tow. Sonic couldn't believe it.

"No way! Water doesn't affect you?" he screeched.

"Correct: I was built to be water resistant." droned Metal Sonic "Dr. Eggman knew that I might end up falling in water at some point so he made me waterproof to save me from obliteration."

"Well he sure planned you in advanced didn't he?" spluttered Sonic.

"Yes. Now you die." droned Metal Sonic, letting go of Sonic's arms.

With a bloodcurdling yell, Sonic plummeted straight down. Metal Sonic had brought him up a good thirty feet and now Sonic began to plummet down from thirty feet and towards the water that awaited him at the bottom. Sonic however had a brilliant idea. He began to move his feet as if he was on land and running really fast. His legs became a red blur due to how fast they were moving and when he landed into the water, his fast moving legs stopped him from sinking and he ran straight across it! Metal Sonic looked like he was going to have a mechanical fit.

"Impossible!" he croaked "How can the hedgehog copy move on water with out sinking?"

Regardless of what he was wondering, he decided to chase Sonic and if he managed to catch up, he could wallop him and end up making him sink. Sonic ran across the water, waves flying behind him as he ran. Metal Sonic was finding it hard to keep up with him due to the fact that waves of water were flying in his face. Sonic finally made it to dry land and he leaped into the air and onto it.

"I don't know about you Metal Sonic but I think I've had enough of Kingdom Valley now." said Sonic "Let's go somewhere a little dryer shall we?"

And with that, Sonic rocketed off in a certain direction with Metal Sonic roaring after him.

A short while later, Sonic came across the familiar scorching hot county of Downunda, home of Angel Island. Angel Island had moved since the last time Sonic had been there and now the island was

directly over the small village of Downunda that was near to the ruins of Albion. Sonic knew that Metal Sonic might try to target the Master Emerald so he had to keep his attention away from Angel Island. Sonic stopped running, turned around and charged straight at Metal Sonic, who was coming towards him at top speed. They both collided with each other but Metal Sonic overpowered Sonic and knocked him over. Then Metal Sonic spotted Angel Island floating just above the Downunda village. He stared in wonder at the floating island and wondered how such a thing could be possible. Then suddenly Eggman communicated him.

"Metal Sonic, I see you're looking at Angel Island." Dr. Eggman's voice emitted from the side of Metal Sonic's head "Get up on that island and you should see a giant, glowing, green emerald called the Master Emerald sitting on a shrine. Get that emerald and bring it to me!"

"Understood." droned Metal Sonic "But what about my infuriating copy?"

"Squash him later if you wish!" bellowed Dr. Eggman "Just get me that emerald! Its power will ensure me victory!"

"I obey." droned Metal Sonic.

He took flight and was about to fly up into the air but Sonic spin-dashed him and sent him falling back down.

"I dunno about you Metal Sonic but I think the Master Emerald is staying where it belongs thank you!" said Sonic.

Metal Sonic got back to his feet and glared at Sonic with his cold red optics.

"You will not deny me what is Eggman's!" growled Metal Sonic "Eggman wants the Master Emerald and Eggman will get the Master Emerald."

"Yeah, over my dead body!" retorted Sonic, spin-dashing into Metal Sonic yet again.

The ruthless metal copy fell on his back again. Metal Sonic got back

to his feet and blasted an oncoming Sonic away with his torso cannon. Sonic was hurled through the air like a tossed football and he crashed straight through the roof of a house in the village. The family in the house screamed in surprise as Sonic crashed through the roof and landed directly on the table. Sonic groaned and picked himself up.

"Sorry about that guys and gals." he said to the family and Sonic leaped out of the house through the hole in the roof, leaving the gobsmacked family to stare in amazement.

Sonic landed on the roof and saw Metal Sonic flying towards Angel Island. Sonic spun into a spin-dash and tried to hit Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic spotted him and caught him in his claws. Then he threw the spin-dashing Sonic straight up into underbelly of the island. Sonic suddenly found himself embedded in the large pointy rocky bit that protruded from under Angel Island. Metal Sonic flew onto Angel Island and spotted the shrine which Angel Island stood upon. For some reason there was no one on guard duty right now so the emerald was wide open for theft. Metal Sonic advanced towards the Master Emerald but Sonic, who had managed to free himself and climb onto Angel Island, spin-dashed towards Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic heard him coming and ducked. Sonic smacked straight into the Master Emerald and knocked it straight off the shrine. The Master Emerald rolled away from the shrine and ended up very nearly going over the edge. Metal Sonic sped over to the emerald and caught it.

"Now I shall take this gem to Dr. Eggman." droned Metal Sonic "I'll be back to crush you copy."

"No you won't!" cried Sonic, leaping onto the Master Emerald and kicking Metal Sonic.

Metal Sonic dropped the Master Emerald and Sonic pushed the emerald back towards the shrine. Sonic lifted the Master Emerald just above his head and carried it up the stairs and put it back on the shrine where it belonged. Metal Sonic charged into Sonic and knocked him straight off the Master Emerald. Then Metal Sonic, ignoring the gem, decided to attack Sonic again. Sonic leaped up and gripped Metal Sonic's shoulders. Metal Sonic began to fly

around in crazy circles as Sonic began to steer him about.

"Hey metal head! Why don't you take us somewhere else to do battle?" cried Sonic as Metal Sonic tried to shake him off.

Metal Sonic ignored him and continued flying about madly. In the midst of his crazy flying, he actually ended up taking Sonic and himself away from Downunda and now they were heading somewhere else. The ironic thing is, thirty seconds after they left Downunda, the Tornado and the R.F.S. jet arrived on the scene. Tails checked his scanner and groaned to see Sonic and Metal Sonic had just left.

"Man they can't keep still for a second can they?" he griped "We follow them all the way through Megapolis, then they end up in Kingdom Valley and now they've just been through Downunda! Where are they heading next?"

Tails would soon find that out as the two jets continued flying after the two Sonics.

Sonic and Metal Sonic were still having a crazy flight and that crazy flight had brought them to the beautiful costal city-state and kingdom known as Soleanna. Soleanna was a city with a very Mediterranean theme going on and it was surrounded by water, hence it's nickname "The City of Water". Sonic liked Soleanna and he didn't want to do battle here since he would probably wreck the place or he might fall in the water and drown. Metal Sonic blasted Sonic with his torso laser which finally forced Sonic to let go of him and Sonic plummeted to the ground. Metal Sonic flew over to Sonic and punched him so Sonic fell to the right. Sonic hit a building, bounced off and fell straight into the water! Sonic began to sink like a stone as plunged down and down into the cold water. Metal Sonic hovered straight above the water and began scanning.

"Sonic the Hedgehog: Ability to swim: Considered nonexistent. Overall: he is a goner down there." he droned to himself "My mission is complete and my copy is dead. Now I can return and destroy the others."

Metal Sonic activated his jet booster and took flight. And with that, Metal Sonic left Soleanna behind. However Metal Sonic should have known better then to jump to conclusions. Sonic came back to the surface after bouncing off the floor and began splashing about wildly. He needed help and he needed it fast since he couldn't swim. If help didn't arrive then Sonic would drown. Then to his good luck, a rowing boat came straight past him and the rower spotted Sonic in trouble. The rower held out an oar for Sonic to grab and Sonic grabbed it. Then the rower hoisted Sonic out of the water and put him down on the boat. Sonic shook himself dry and coughed heavily.

"Thanks a lot there." he said "I thought I was a goner."

"You're welcome." said the rower, with a smile "What are you playing in water for if you can't swim?"

"Well for starters I wasn't playing in the water." said Sonic "I got knocked into the water by a blue robot that almost looks like me. Have you seen him anywhere?"

"Well I saw a blue robot hover just above the water about a minute before you came to the surface." said the rower "He took off and went that way."

He pointed to his left hand side. Sonic looked in the rower's direction and just caught a glimpse of flame from Metal Sonic's jet booster.

"Oh man I hope he isn't heading where I think he's heading!" cried Sonic, leaping out of the rowing boat and onto a rooftop.

Then he sped off as fast as he could to chase down Metal Sonic and stop him from attacking anyone. He had a thought on where Metal Sonic might be heading now and he didn't want Metal Sonic to start causing any trouble there.

The place Metal Sonic was heading to was a little country called Adabat which was a place with a vague Asian theme going on. Adabat had a small population that lived in a village or in stilt houses

which as the name implies, are houses on stilts just above shallow water. Adabat was also known for its flowing rivers, waterfalls and high cliffs. Adabat had a beautiful beach too which was a hotspot for tourists. Metal Sonic didn't show any interest in attacking Adabat at all so he just continued flying over it. As for Sonic, he had managed to catch up with Metal Sonic and he saw him flying onwards. Strange how he wasn't attacking anyone or causing damage to the place but Sonic knew that he couldn't let Metal Sonic go on because he might end up in Mobotropolis again and then he would attack Mobotropolis and probably destroy it before it could finish being rebuilt. Sonic leaped onto a rooftop and homing attacked Metal Sonic. He struck the robot in the back and the two Sonics plummeted down to the ground. They both landed in the shallow water and Sonic stood up.

"Man I'm getting tired of falling in water right now!" he griped "How many more times am I gonna get wet today?"

Metal Sonic merely punched him and sent him flying into a stilt house's stilt. Sonic unfortunately broke the stilt and the house began to slightly tilt to the side. Then the other silts snapped under the strain and weight and the whole house fell straight into the water. The water came half way up to the front door and it began to seep through the cracks and into the house. Sonic wasn't pleased to see that Metal Sonic had caused him to knock a house down so he decided to pay him back for it. Sonic leaped into the air and landed a powerful kick on Metal Sonic's forehead. Metal Sonic staggered backwards but he regained his balance. Sonic charged at Metal Sonic again but the ruthless robot grabbed his arms and threw him into another stilt house. Luckily Sonic didn't crash into the stilts and make the house fall down again, he just crashed straight through the door and knocked it off its hinges. Sonic crashed into the wall at the back of the front room. Metal Sonic flew into the house to attack Sonic again but Sonic kicked the front door directly at Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic punched the door back at Sonic but Sonic dodged and the door was reduced to splinters after crashing into the wall. Sonic spin-dashed into Metal Sonic and both Sonics went straight out of the house and into the shallow water yet again. Sonic punched Metal Sonic in the face but Metal Sonic punched him back harder and then Metal Sonic punched Sonic into another house only this

time Sonic didn't go straight through the wall, he only crashed into it. Sonic decided he'd had enough of this and wanted to get out of Adabat before any more damage was done to the village. He revved his feet up and sped off. Metal Sonic activated his jet booster and flew after Sonic. The chase was beginning to get on Metal Sonic's nerves now since Sonic couldn't seem to make up his mind on where their fight was going to take place in, he just kept running from location to location. So Metal Sonic decided to make this his number one priority: catch Sonic and just kill him already. Sonic led Metal Sonic up onto the high cliffs and began running ever faster. Metal Sonic remained hot in his tail, his claws bared and his jet booster roaring.

"Will you cease this irritating chase and just pick a place for us to battle?" growled Metal Sonic "You are beginning to irk me."

"No Metal Sonic." Sonic called to him over his shoulder "The main reason for this chase is to wear you out until you're too weak to fight metal brain! You can't keep going forever you know!"

"Correction: I can." droned Metal Sonic "I can go on for a very long period of time due to the powerful battery Eggman installed in me. It'll be years before my power runs dry!"

Sonic couldn't believe his ears. Metal Sonic could go on for a very long time? Then that meant his beautiful plan was ruined. He couldn't run Metal Sonic to the point his power cells would run dry so he had no choice but to fight Metal Sonic and hopefully destroy him. But Metal Sonic was way too tough, even for fifteen people all attacking him at once so how could he defeat this metal clone? As Sonic kept thinking on a way to defeat Metal Sonic, he failed to notice he had just ended up running into Chun-Nan, a Chinese style country with pagodas, an extremely long wall resembling the Great Wall of China and a temple that stood on the top of a mountain. Sonic suddenly realized where he was but he kept on running. He ran straight up the long wall and sped across it. The wall was mostly straight with no tight turns so Sonic could run as fast as he liked.

"Whoo!" he screamed "This is awesome! I can go extremely fast now!"

"So can I." droned Metal Sonic icily.

He stopped chasing Sonic and flew in a rainbow arch away from the wall and straight back to it. Metal Sonic smashed his way straight through the wall, sending tonnes of bricks flying everywhere. The wall began to crumble just ahead of Sonic and the poor hedgehog was caught off guard and he fell down the wall with the crumbling bricks. Sonic landed on his feet and ran out of the way before he could get crushed by the falling bricks. Metal Sonic saw him running away and flew after him.

"This is your last location copy." he boomed "The only logical choice for you now is to surrender to me."

"Yeah um…not happening!" retorted Sonic "And I'll decide where our last location is and it's not here!"

Metal Sonic flew towards Sonic and grabbed him by the quills on his head. He picked Sonic up and threw him through the air. Sonic smashed through the rooftop of a tall pagoda and crashed straight into a gong on a hilltop. The gong rang its low ominous ring that echoed through the valley and made everyone on the ground wonder what the gong was for. Sonic had a terrible ringing sound that rung through his entire body and made him shaky. Before Sonic could recover, Metal Sonic dropkicked him and Sonic fell off the hilltop and into a bamboo forest.

Sonic hit a few bamboo sticks and broke them in two as he plummeted to the ground. Sonic got back to his feet and ran through the thickly grown forest. Metal Sonic would likely have trouble seeing him since he was in a bamboo forest so he would be able to escape without Metal Sonic knowing about it. Unfortunately, Metal Sonic did know about it. After Sonic fell into the bamboo forest, he followed him and saw him running away so Metal Sonic began to fly after Sonic, weaving elegantly through the thick trees and bamboo sticks. Sonic looked over his shoulder and saw Metal Sonic coming after him. Thinking fast, Sonic jumped onto a bamboo stick. The stick bent over due to his weight and Sonic leaped off in an elegant rainbow arch, causing the stick to fling back up and smack Metal Sonic in the face. The stunned robot spiralled out of control and knocked some bamboo sticks over. Metal Sonic got furious and

decided to spin-dash his way through the forest. His deadly spin-dash cleaved through the sticks and trees with ease and he began to catch up to Sonic, who was almost at the end of the forest. Sonic leaped into the air and landed out of the bamboo forest and immediately began running again.

But Metal Sonic had finally sawed his way through the bamboo forest and he spin-dashed Sonic directly in the back. Sonic yelped as he was knocked off his feet by Metal Sonic's lethal spin-dash. Sonic scrambled back to his feet but he was knocked over by Metal Sonic again. Sonic got back up just in time to run off before Metal Sonic could attack him again. Metal Sonic spotted his prey getting away and chased after him. The two Sonics ran out of Chun-Nan and headed for goodness knows where. Seconds after Sonic and Metal Sonic left Chun-Nan, the Tornado and the R.F.S. jet appeared over the country. Tails checked his scanned and groaned as yet again the two Sonics had moved location.

"OK, this is getting weird." said Tails "Why do the two Sonics keep running place to place? Can they not find a suitable enough battlefield or something? Or is this part of some plan Sonic probably has?"

As for those in the R.F.S. jet, Wilson was getting frustrated with the constant change in location too.

"Men alive, I wish those two would keep still for a minute so we can catch up with them!" griped Wilson "What is up with those two anyway?"

In the cabin, the others were wondering what was the matter too.

"I wish Wilson would make up his mind." grumbled Knuckles "First he says Sonic's in Kingdom Valley, then he says he's in Downunda, then he says he's in Soleanna and then he say's he's in Adabat and now he say's he's in Chun-Nan and yet we're still flying after him!"

"Maybe Sonic and Metal Sonic keep moving place to place." suggested Amy "Although I really wonder why my Sonic would do something like that."

"I'm not an expert on machines but I suppose Metal Sonic might run out of power if he keeps on going." thought Cosmo "Maybe that's what Sonic's planning on doing, running him around the world until his power runs out."

"That's not a bad suggestion little one." said Geoffrey "But we can't be too sure that'll happen. Metal Sonic's stamina is tremendous after all."

"Ah just hope sugah-hog is doin' alright down there." said Bunnie.

"We'll see for ourselves when we finally catch up with him." said Sally "And hopefully, that won't be too long."

The two planes continued their flight, hoping to finally catch up to Sonic and Metal Sonic and give Sonic a much needed hand in fighting him.

Sonic had led Metal Sonic all the way to a hot, sticky and thickly grown jungle just simply known as Tropical Jungle. The jungle was full of trees, streams with huge lily pads, colourful fruits, low hanging vines and giant turtles with bright colourful shells that swam through the waters. Sonic decided this would be the last location he would take Metal Sonic to and he would finish things here and now but first he needed a plan. Metal Sonic resisted every attack he threw at him so he needed to change his tactics. He decided to hide in the thick undergrowth and hide there until Metal Sonic went past and then he could ambush him. Plus he knew he would be able to use the jungle to his advantage in someway or another but he wasn't sure how yet. Sonic dived into some giant bushes and lay low. He peeked through the leaves to see where Metal Sonic was. Metal Sonic appeared shortly after Sonic had hidden himself and looked around only to see that Sonic was nowhere in sight. He scanned the area but he couldn't find the blue hedgehog. Metal Sonic drifted off in search of Sonic, his scanners still alert. Sonic smiled to himself.

"Now's my chance to ambush him." he said to himself "I'd best creep as quietly as I can and then I can get the drop on him."

He was so busy talking to himself he failed to notice a dark shadowy shape lurking behind him evilly. Sonic got up off his knees and crept out of the bushes…and got spin-dashed in the back by someone! The spin-dash pinned Sonic to a tree and Sonic gagged loudly.

"Hurk! How the heck did you find me Metal Sonic?" he cried.

He opened his eyes only to find it wasn't Metal Sonic at all! It was his treacherous brother Scourge the Hedgehog! He bared his teeth and smiled like a crocodile at Sonic.

"Hey there wuss boy." hissed Scourge "How nice of you to drop by and get your butt whupped by yours truly!"

"Wha…wha…what the heck are you doing here Scourge?" squeaked Sonic.

"Plotting my revenge that's what!" snarled Scourge "I have a brilliant plan of revenge in mind but the plan is obsolete now you're here blue! I can just cave yer skull in here and now!"

And with that he put his hand on Sonic's head and pushed him straight down into the sludgy mud beneath their feet face first. Sonic got up and wiped the mud off his face.

"As much as I'd like to beat you up again Scourge," said Sonic "I'm kinda occupied right now. You see, I have this evil robot clone of me and…"

"You're not talking your way outta this one wimp!" roared Scourge "I'm gonna smash you into tiny bite-sized hedgehog pieces!"

He spin-dashed Sonic fiercely in the side and sent him flying into more mud. Sonic got up and gritted his teeth.

"Fine have it your way green!" shouted Sonic "After all, I'm dying to haul your evil butt back to jail!"

"And I'm dying to see your blood splattered on the ground right now!" roared Scourge "Get ready for a pounding!"

But the forthcoming fight was rudely interrupted by the arrival of

Metal Sonic, blasting both Sonic and Scourge with his torso laser. Both hedgehogs were knocked off their feet and Metal Sonic stood before them. He glared at the two hedgehogs coldly.

"Two Sonics?" he mused "No matter, that just gives me more copies to destroy. And the green one will be no harder to fight then Sonic."

Scourge was slightly taken aback at the arrival of a machine that looked so much like Sonic but he decided to use it to this sudden arrival to his advantage.

"Look buddy, you've got it all wrong." said Scourge, getting back to his feet and staring Metal Sonic straight in the eye "I'm Scourge the Hedgehog and I'm not a copy of Sonic. I'm his brother and arch-enemy and I wanna smash him just as much as you do metal guy."

"You do?" blurted Metal Sonic.

"Sure thing Sonic-bot." said Scourge reassuringly "How about we form a truce until we squish Sonic and then we can fight each other for the planet afterwards hmm?"

Metal Sonic considered for a moment.

"Teaming up with another who is an enemy of Sonic's equals a 20% more chance of success then before and I can beat you just as easily as I can beat Sonic." droned Metal Sonic "Request: Approved. We are allies up until Sonic's demise."

"Good choice bro." said Scourge with a smile that could please any carnivorous creature "Now let's spin-dash the dweeb into nothingness shall we?"

Scourge and Metal Sonic stood on either side of Sonic, preparing to attack. Sonic feebly raised his fists and stared helplessly at his two opponents. Metal Sonic and Scourge were bad enough as they were alone but BOTH Metal Sonic and Scourge together at once? Sonic was toast out there and he knew it.

"This isn't gonna end well!" whimpered Sonic as his two opponents prepared to lunge at him…

Footnotes:

***R.F.S. stands for Royal Fighters Service**

****Fiona Fox quit the team in Story 3 remember?**

Talk about a worldwide showdown! That was so fast and intense I had trouble keeping up with it! Well it seems Sonic has met his match here! Scourge the Hedgehog AND Metal Sonic both taking him on at once? Does Sonic even have an ounce of a chance? We'll see next time as this thrilling saga comes to an end! Read and Review.

A Worldwide Sonic Showdown Part 2

Story 32: A Worldwide Sonic Showdown Part 2

Scourge and Metal Sonic both lunged for Sonic in a homing attack but Sonic leaped out of their way and grabbed a low hanging vine, causing Scourge and Metal Sonic to bash heads with each other. Metal Sonic couldn't feel pain so it didn't bother him but Scourge felt like his head had just split open and he fell on the ground.

"Ouch! Watch it you dumb bolt!" growled Scourge.

"Explanation: The fault was not mine." droned Metal Sonic "The fault was Sonic's for jumping out of our way. If he did not do that then we would not have missed."

"Yeah I've got that metal head." grumbled Scourge "Now let's get the wimpy hedgehog before he gets the drop on us!"

"Too late!" announced Sonic, swinging from the vine and kicking Scourge straight in the head.

Scourge tumbled over in roly-poly and hit a tree. Unfortunately Metal Sonic blasted the vine with his torso laser while Sonic was still swinging and the vine snapped, causing Sonic to go flying and land straight into a mud puddle. Sonic sat in the mud and groaned in disgust.

"Ugh!" he grimaced "I think I actually preferred falling into water then mud!"

Metal Sonic activated his jet booster and flew towards Sonic, his claws bared and ready to snatch him up. Sonic grabbed a handful of sludgy, runny mud and prepared to throw it.

"Hey Metal Sonic, here's mud in your eye!" he yelled.

He threw the mud straight into Metal Sonic's visor and the robot began to panic.

"Warning: my vision is impaired!" blurted Metal Sonic "Ability to see has diminished!"

Metal Sonic couldn't see where he was going at all and he flew straight into a tree and appeared to knock himself out. Sonic laughed at his metal copy.

"And I thought this fight was gonna be hard!" he chortled "I'm winning here!"

"Not for long nit-wit!" called Scourge from behind.

Scourge rammed Sonic in the back with his shoulder and sent Sonic crashing into a tree. Then Scourge grabbed a vine that had fallen to the ground and wrapped it around Sonic's legs. Now Sonic couldn't move his legs. Sonic struggled against the vine but he couldn't snap it, it was much too thick. Scourge seized the opportunity to spin-dash Sonic over and over while he was subdued. A few minutes later Sonic was battered like a cod and bruised all over. Scourge gave him one final spin-dash and sent the beaten hedgehog flying in a low arch and bouncing off the ground. The vine around Sonic's legs snapped and Sonic lay there, battered and beaten. At that same moment, Metal Sonic came to and got back to his feet. He saw Scourge standing over a defeated Sonic and he flew over to him. Sonic had passed out from Scourge's beating and Scourge was ready to kill him.

"Hey robot Sonic!" he called to Metal Sonic as the robot copy landed beside him "I've just subdued Sonic!"

"Good." droned Metal Sonic "Now step back so I can exterminate him."

"Oh no you don't!" growled Scourge "I beat Sonic up! I've knocked him out so *I* destroy him!"

"Correction: I will destroy him." droned Metal Sonic "I was ordered to do so by Dr. Eggman so therefore, I will destroy him."

"Well I beg to differ!" retorted Scourge "I'm destroying Sonic and that's the end of it!"

"We have a truce." noted Metal Sonic "So logically, it should not matter who destroys Sonic."

"Well the truce is off bolt brains!" yelled Scourge "Now push off while I kill Sonic and then we can kill each other!"

Metal Sonic grabbed Scourge by the arms and threw him into a tree as hard as he could. Scourge crashed into the tree and knocked it straight over! The tree landed with a smash beside Metal Sonic.

"If you will not step down and let me complete my objective then I shall have to get rid of you first." growled Metal Sonic.

Scourge got back to his feet and bent over in a battle ready stance.

"So bet it robot Sonic!" he roared "You'll be just as easy to smash as my wimpy brother!"

"Correction: My designated title is Metal Sonic." retorted Metal Sonic "And I will not be easy to smash."

"We'll see about that!" bellowed Scourge, spin-dashing towards Metal Sonic.

Metal Sonic swiped at Scourge and smacked the spin-dashing hedgehog away. Scourge dived straight into the ground and skidded across it face first. That skid really hurt Scourge's face and the evil hedgehog could do nothing more then just lie there groaning in pain. Metal Sonic clanked over to Scourge, grabbed him by the neck and hoisted him up to his height.

"You will end up wishing you hadn't decided to double-cross me." droned Metal Sonic coldly "Now you will be vanquished."

And with that Metal Sonic held Scourge in front of himself and blasted the green hedgehog with his torso laser. Scourge was sent hurling thirty feet backwards, knocking down hundreds of trees as he did so and came to a halt near a river bank. Scourge tried to get back up but he couldn't find the strength to do so.

"So powerful…" grunted Scourge "How…is…that possible…?"

As for Metal Sonic had decided Scourge was down and out for now and turned his attention back to Sonic.

"Now Sonic, my loathsome copy." droned Metal Sonic "It's time to meet your end as well."

He picked Sonic up but before he could do anything to him, something from up above began shooting at him. It was the Tornado. Tails' little bi-plane began shooting lasers at Metal Sonic in an attempt to destroy him.

"You put Sonic down you monster!" screeched Tails.

Metal Sonic did what he was told and tossed the still unconscious Sonic into a mud puddle (Yeah, he's gonna be a dirty boy at the end of the day isn't he?). Metal Sonic flew into the air and tried to attack the Tornado but he heard the sound of a missile screaming loudly and rocketing towards him so he was forced to dodge otherwise he would be blown up. The missile had been fired by the R.F.S. jet. At long last Sonic's friends had all caught up with the two Sonics. Sally put on a headset and spoke into it.

"Tails, we're landing so we can collect Sonic. Can you keep Metal Sonic busy for us?"

"Sure thing your Majesty." said Tails, firing lasers at Metal Sonic "After all, I can't land here since a jungle isn't the best kind of runway for a plane."

Fortunately, Tails wouldn't have to worry about landing anymore. Unfortunately, the reason why was because Metal Sonic had managed to sneak under the plane and he smashed his way straight up it, causing the plane to burst into flames and break in two! Tails screamed in terror as his plane began to plummet from the sky. He quickly unbelted himself and flew out of the pilot's seat just before the two halves of the Tornado could hit the ground and explode into pieces. Tails looked sadly at the exploded remains of his beautiful plane.

"Aw, I spent forever building that!" he whined "And now it's gone up in smoke! I'm gonna have to…"

He was suddenly cut off by a sharp kick to the back of the head by Metal Sonic and the startled fox plummeted to the ground. Luckily for him, the R.F.S. jet had landed and everybody was just getting out of the plane until they saw Tails falling and Wilson ran out to catch him.

"I've gotcha! I've gotcha!" he cried as Tails continued falling.

Wilson leaped like a jackrabbit and caught the falling fox in his arms. He landed very painfully on his shoulder and ended up scraping it. Everybody else ran up to the dog and fox.

"Are you OK Wilson?" asked Sally.

"Well apart from a grazed shoulder I'm doing fine." said Wilson "But Tails looks like he got hit good and hard, poor fella."

Tails had passed out from Metal Sonic's onslaught which had caused him to fall. Cosmo ran up to the unconscious fox that Wilson held in his arms.

"Is he going to be OK?" she asked worriedly.

"He'll wake up eventually flower girl." said Wilson "He's only knocked out."

"Hey, where's Metal Sonic?" asked Vector, looking around wildly.

Then right on cue, Metal Sonic began rocketing down towards the group below.

"Here he comes!" shrieked Amy "Duck for cover!"

But too late. Metal Sonic charged through all the Mobians and sent them hurling everywhere. Sally and Nicole landed face first into a mud puddle, Team Chaotix were sent flying into trees, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Amy, Cream and Cosmo were all sent flying into the R.F.S. jet, Wilson landed in a bush and Knuckles just landed on his back. Immediately after Metal Sonic's attack, Sonic finally came to and sat up, moaning.

"Hrrmm…what happened here…" he mumbled to himself.

Then he saw Metal Sonic attacking his friends. He was throttling Nicole and holding Sally at bay so she couldn't stop him.

"Hey! Metal Sonic!" yelled Sonic "Pick on someone your own size will you?"

Metal Sonic turned sharply and glared at Sonic. He let go of Nicole and lunged at him. Sonic leaped out of the way but Metal Sonic skidded to a halt and came back for him. He struck Sonic in the back and knocked him over. Then Knuckles leaped onto the scene and punched Metal Sonic off of Sonic.

"I owe you a headache Metal Sonic!" roared Knuckles.

The ruthless robot didn't seem to care about what Knuckles had to say. He lunged at Knuckles and he and the echidna linked hands and pushed on one another. Metal Sonic appeared to be coming out on top but Vector took the opportunity to let Metal Sonic have it with both fists. He punched him in the side of the head which distracted Metal Sonic and Knuckles gave him another punch that should have taken his entire head off but Metal Sonic was made of strong stuff so it would take more then just a punch to the head to knock it off. While Metal Sonic was down, Espio threw his shuriken at the robot's wrists. The shuriken embedded themselves into the ground on top of his wrists, pinning the robot down to the ground. But unfortunately, even that wasn't enough to keep Metal Sonic down as he just simply pulled on his arms and pulled the shuriken out of the ground. Then Metal Sonic threw the shuriken at Knuckles and Espio. The sharp ninja-stars slashed them both above their eyes and they were brought to their knees in pain. Vector tried to chomp up Metal Sonic in his jaws but Metal Sonic punched him directly in the jaws and sent the crocodile staggering backwards. In face, Vector lost a tooth due to how hard that punch was. Charmy tried to attack with his stinger but Metal Sonic spin-dashed the bee away. Amy pounced on him with her hammer in hand and tried to hit him but she missed and Metal Sonic dropkicked her in the nose. He pinched Amy's hammer and whacked an oncoming Cream with it. Geoffrey St. John fired a dart at Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic whacked the dart away and only just managed to dodge an oncoming blow from Bunnie Rabbot.

"Eat mah fist gruesome!" yelled Bunnie as she raised her arm, ready

for another punch.

Her robot arm extended and she tried to punch Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic ducked so she accidentally punched Geoffrey in the face.

"Oh Geoffrey ah'm so sorry!" cried Bunnie, running to the skunk's aid.

"Crikey, your robot fist really does hurt!" groaned Geoffrey, rubbing his face.

Metal Sonic tried to attack Bunnie and Geoffrey while they were distracted but Wilson interfered with a kick to the shoulder. Metal Sonic landed on his side and skidded to a halt. Metal Sonic got back to his feet, only to be spin-dashed from behind by Sonic the Hedgehog. Metal Sonic landed face first into the ground and ended up covered in mud.

"Not so tough now are you metal head?" sneered Sonic.

Then suddenly he was spin-dashed from behind! It was Scourge the Hedgehog this time though. Scourge had finally recovered and decided to join in the fight. Scourge glared at all the other Mobians that were staring at him in disbelief.

"What?" he snorted "You morons never seen a green hedgehog before?"

"Who the heck is he?" asked Geoffrey "He looks like Sonic painted green!"

"That is my evil brother Scourge the Hedgehog." said Sonic "And he's just as bad as Metal Sonic."

"Oh that's just great!" grumbled Knuckles "Now we have two evil Sonics to fight!"

"Maybe we don't have to fight both Sonics at once." suggested Sally "Half of us can fight Metal Sonic and the other half can fight Scourge."

"OK then." said Sonic "We'll have teams of seven. Team 1 will be me, Tails, Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson, Nicole and Cosmo. Team 2 will be Sally, Amy, Cream, Vector, Espio, Charmy and Bunnie. Team 1 will fight Metal Sonic, Team 2 will fight Scourge."

"Sounds good to me." said Sally "I hope you know what you're doing Sonic Hedgehog."

"Since when do I never know what I'm doing?" sneered Sonic.

"OK everyone, Attack!" ordered Sally.

And with that, Sonic's team lunged for Metal Sonic while Sally's team lunged for Scourge. Scourge was not impressed at all and almost immediately after the call for attack had been called, Scourge leaped into the air and landed upside down on his hands. He did a perfect split and kicked both Sally and Amy as they tried to attack him. Then Scourge grabbed Sally by the neck and jammed his face into hers.

"Ah so you're the new Queen of Mobotropolis after the king and queen were murdered by some space man eh?" purred Scourge "Then you must be the one I should stomp on before I conquer this stinking planet!"

"You leave the queen alone!" shrieked Amy, hammering Scourge and sending him falling off Sally.

Bunnie was next to attack by giving the green hedgehog an uppercut with her robot arm. Scourge had never felt such a punch in his life. Not even his cellmates could punch that hard so he was amazed so say the least. Before Scourge could recover from that incredibly hard punch that had stunned him heavily, Espio gave him a ninjutsu style kick to the head and then Vector grabbed him with his hands and held him in place so Charmy could attack. Unfortunately, Scourge decided to spin-dash in order to make Vector let go of him and then Scourge spin-dashed Charmy in the head and knocked his helmet off.

"That's for ruining my attempts to kill Sonic in Spagonia* you bratty bee!" growled Scourge.

"Oh will you shut up already?" yelled Amy, trying to hammer Scourge again.

"You shut up you pink moron!" retorted Scourge, dropkicking Amy in the head.

Then suddenly he found himself being tripped over by someone. Cream's pet Chao Cheese had rammed him in the leg and knocked him over.

"Good work Cheese." praised Cream.

"Chao! Chao!" piped Cheese.

Then suddenly Scourge spin-dashed Cream in the chest and Cream fell onto her bottom.

"Sonic must be desperate for some team mates if he's got little kids in his army!" taunted Scourge "I mean, what use are you long ears?"

"I'll teach you to hurt Cream you green menace!" roared Amy, walloping Scourge with her hammer.

Scourge cried in pain as the heavy hammer hit him. To add insult to injury Bunnie Rabbot decided to punch Scourge with her robot arm again. Then Espio punched Scourge in the cheek and Charmy punched Scourge in the back. Sally landed a kick to the forehead on Scourge and Amy and Cream both exchanged blows on the green hedgehog. Then to finish him off, Bunnie blasted the green hedgehog with her cannon arm and sent Scourge flying into a tree. He landed on the branches and the branches snapped, causing him to fall. But Scourge had gotten tangled up in the vines so all he did was dangle in the vines just above the ground and groan. Bunnie fell to her knees and panted.

"Oh mah stars!" she exclaimed "Ah must have worn mah self down after that cannon blast because ah feel pooped!"

"Well after our combined efforts, I don't believe Scourge will be up and running any minute now." said Sally "We must restrain that hedgehog before he does any more damage."

"I'll do it." said Espio.

He pulled out a knife from his glove and cut the vines Scourge dangled from. Then he pulled out some ninja rope and tied Scourge's hands up behind his back. Then he tied the rope around Scourge's ankles too. Scourge would be going nowhere now.

"Now that horrible Scourge is all tied up, we can help Mr. Sonic fight Metal Sonic." said Cream.

"I wonder how Sonic and his team are doing?" wondered Sally, looking in the direction of their fight.

Things were not going well at all. Tails had finally come to and after Sonic explained everything they lunged at Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic slugged both Sonic and Tails in the stomach and let them have it with his torso laser. Knuckles tried to attack him from behind but Metal Sonic blasted him with his back laser. Geoffrey tried to stun Metal Sonic with a dart but Metal Sonic smacked the dart away just in time to defend himself from a kick to the face by Wilson. Metal Sonic slapped the dog away and punched Geoffrey in the chest. Nicole grabbed some nearby vine and wrapped it around Metal Sonic's neck to hold him back but Metal Sonic snapped the vine and elbowed the lynx in the stomach. Cosmo let Metal Sonic have it with a mud pie but she missed his visor and hit him in the forehead. Metal Sonic wiped the mud off and threw it back at the peace-loving Seedrian. Sonic recovered from Metal Sonic's onslaught and spin-dashed at him but Metal Sonic spotted him and spin-dashed towards him. The two hedgehogs spin-dashed and bounced away like ping-pong balls. They spin-dashed each other over and over until Metal Sonic finally over powered Sonic and sent him crashing into the ground. Knuckles and Tails both surrounded from the front and back and they lunged for the killer robot but Metal Sonic fired BOTH lasers at once, Tails got blasted by the front laser and Knuckles got blasted by the back laser! Geoffrey finally managed to get the drop on Metal Sonic by kicking him in the head. Metal Sonic tried to shoot him but Geoffrey somersaulted over the laser blast and smacked him with an upwards karate chop. Wilson and Nicole both kicked Metal Sonic in the back and Cosmo had another go at throwing mud at Metal Sonic's visor so he couldn't see. Unfortunately, she accidentally hit Wilson with the mud.

"OW! I've got mud in my eye!" yelped Wilson.

"Oh I'm so sorry!" wailed Cosmo.

Metal Sonic grabbed Wilson from behind and flipped him straight over his shoulder and slammed him down in front of him. Metal Sonic swiped at Nicole but the novice style lynx bent over backwards to dodge the blow and retaliated with a punch to the face. But she wasn't as tough as the boys and Metal Sonic was made of strong stuff so she hurt her fist.

"Ow!" wailed Nicole "Ouch, Oh, Ow! That hurts so badly!"

Metal Sonic retaliated with a punch to the face. Nicole fell onto her back, writhing in more pain then before. Sonic spin-dashed Metal Sonic again and sent the robot falling forward but Metal Sonic was quick to attack with his own spin-dash. Tails tail-whipped Metal Sonic but that attack had no effect on him and Metal Sonic grabbed Tails' tails. He spun the fox around in a perfect 360 degree spin, smacking anyone stupid enough to get close to him. Then he let go of Tails and sent the fox hurling into a tree. Tails landed on a branch and grimaced in pain. Metal Sonic blocked yet another punch from Knuckles and he threw the echidna over his shoulder. Geoffrey grabbed Metal Sonic into a chokehold and held him in place, leaving Sonic the opportunity to spin-dash at him with no means of defence. Geoffrey had chosen his position carefully when choke holding Metal Sonic so he wouldn't get blasted by Metal Sonic's back laser when he fired it but Metal Sonic had other ways of getting out of his grasp. Just as Sonic was coming towards him, Metal Sonic grabbed Geoffrey's shoulders and bent over so Geoffrey was now a shield for him. Sonic then accidentally spin-dashed Geoffrey and the skunk cried in pain.

"Sorry Geoffrey!" cried Sonic.

Metal Sonic threw Geoffrey into the air and the skunk crashed into Sonic just before Sonic could land on his feet. Sonic and Geoffrey collapsed in a heap on the ground. Seeing as they needed help, Sally decided her team should join in.

"Come on everyone, we must give Sonic's group a helping hand!"

she called to them.

"But what about Scourge?" asked Amy.

"He's not going anywhere so don't worry." said Sally "Now let's help Sonic defeat Metal Sonic once and for all!"

"OK!" said Amy, brandishing her hammer "I owe that fake Sonic a great big smash from my hammer!"

And with that Sally, Bunnie, Amy, Cream, Vector, Espio and Charmy charged into battle. Metal Sonic had just kicked Cosmo away before Espio pounced on him and knocked him over. Metal Sonic kicked Espio in the back and stood up, causing Espio to fall off him. Then he grabbed the chameleon by the tail and proceeded to swing his entire arm around in a perfect circle. Espio was nothing more then a purple blur on the side of Metal Sonic. Charmy tried to attack Metal Sonic but the robot threw Espio straight into him, knocking the bee out of the sky. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and tried to shoot Metal Sonic but as bad luck would have it, she was still too exhausted to use it and if she tried to, she would make herself faint so she had to use her plain normal robot fist. Metal Sonic lunged at the cyborg rabbit but Bunnie punched the metal monster in the visor with her robot arm. Metal Sonic was flung backwards and before he could land anywhere, Knuckles punched him back towards Bunnie. Bunnie then gave Metal Sonic an uppercut that should have taken his head straight off but didn't due to his tough build and Metal Sonic flew straight up into the air. He was hit so high he was directly above the trees. Cream and Tails flew into the air to double-team him but Metal Sonic activated his jet booster to regain his balance and he kicked Tails and Cream with a perfect split just as they were coming towards him. Tails and Cream were stunned momentarily but Metal Sonic took advantage of the situation and grabbed them both. He flew straight down below the trees and slammed the both into the ground. Amy tried to smack Metal Sonic with her hammer but she missed and hit a tree branch that snapped and fell to the ground. Growling furiously, she climbed up a tree and leaped after Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic and Amy landed on a thick branch that would easily hold their weight and they began to duel it out. Amy swiped at Metal Sonic with her hammer but Metal Sonic dodged and swiped at her, only for Amy to defend the blow with her hammer.

As for Scourge, he had finally come to and he was watching the battle with interest.

"Heh, at the rate those losers are going, Metal Sonic will cave their skulls in for me!" he chortled "Then I can smash Metal Sonic myself and take over the world!"

Sonic and Sally, who were watching Amy and Metal Sonic fight up in the tree turned around and yelled in unison at Scourge

"Will you be quiet?"

"Spoilsports." muttered Scourge.

Amy slammed her hammer down on the tree branch but she still didn't hit Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic grabbed a low hanging vine, pulled it down so he had more length and he wrapped it straight around Amy's neck. The poor pink hedgehog gagged horribly as Metal Sonic wrapped the vine around her. Sonic noticed Amy was in trouble and tried to leap up and save her but Metal Sonic pushed her off the tree. Amy began to plummet to the ground screaming at the top of her voice, the vine still wrapped around her neck. If Sonic didn't snap that vine before it ran out of length, Amy would get hung. Sonic leaped over Metal Sonic and spin-dashed the vine, cutting it in two and saving Amy from getting hung and Bunnie Rabbot caught her on the ground.

"Whew! Ah caught ya sugah!" she gasped breathlessly.

"Thanks Bunnie." said Amy.

Sonic landed beside Bunnie and Bunnie but Amy down.

"Whoa, I thought I wasn't gonna save you in time!" he spluttered "I must be faster then I thought!"

"Well you are Sonic the Hedgehog sugah-hog." said Bunnie brightly.

"Thank you so much for saving me from getting hanged!" shrieked Amy, grasping Sonic in a hug "Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you Sonic!"

"Y-you're welcome Amy." said Sonic meekly "Can you let go now? We need to defeat Metal Sonic!"

"OK." said Amy sheepishly.

"Hey Amy! Where did Scourge go?" yelped Bunnie.

Sonic and Amy turned around and saw that Scourge had vanished. All that was left were snapped pieces of rope that lay in a pile on the ground where he had once been. Amy looked like she was about to go crazy.

"But Espio tied him up good and tight!" she exclaimed "How did he get away?"

"Scourge can wait until next time." said Sonic "Right now, we need to destroy Metal Sonic. Let's go!"

Speaking of Metal Sonic, he was defending himself from blows by Geoffrey, Wilson and Knuckles all at once. Metal Sonic ducked before Knuckles could punch him and he nearly ended up punching Wilson. Before Knuckles could retract his arm ready for another blow, Metal Sonic grabbed it and he swung Knuckles into Geoffrey. Wilson punched Metal Sonic on the top of the head but Metal Sonic just shoved him over. Then suddenly, Sonic spin-dashed Metal Sonic in the back and knocked him over. Metal Sonic tried to get back up but Sonic tripped him over and kicked him onto his back. Sally and Nicole both landed dropkicks on Metal Sonic and Cosmo threw more mud at him. The mud splattered in Metal Sonic's right eye but Metal Sonic merely wiped the mud off and scooped some mud up in his claws. He threw three mud pies, one each at Sonic, Sally and Nicole. The mud pies got them in the eyes, momentarily blinding them. Cosmo threw more mud at Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic held his hand up to catch the mud and he threw it back at Cosmo. The mud hit Cosmo in the face and the Seedrian staggered over. Tails punched Metal Sonic around the head in an angry fit.

"Don't you dare hurt Cosmo like that!" he screeched.

Metal Sonic leaped up into the air and dropkicked Tails, sending the fox crashing into the ground yet again. Bunnie tried to punch Metal

Sonic but he grabbed Bunnie's extending arm and threw her into an oncoming Nicole, sending the two girls tumbling over. All three members of Team Chaotix tried to attack him together but Metal Sonic spin-dashed Vector, Espio and Charmy in the stomachs all at once. Then Metal Sonic grabbed Vector by the jaws and slammed him down on top of Espio and Charmy. Geoffrey crept up to Metal Sonic and elbowed him in the shoulder, knocking him off balance and then Geoffrey grabbed Metal Sonic and threw him into a high hanging tree branch. For the first time since they fought, Metal Sonic was showing signs of damage. The tree branch had dented his head but not severely. Metal Sonic got furious and he snapped a very thick branch free from the tree. He flew down to the ground and proceeded to whack Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Sally, Amy and Wilson with one giant swing. Bunnie, Geoffrey, Cream and Nicole lunged for Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic smacked them with the tree branch and sent them flying away. Team Chaotix were pretty much already defeated and Cosmo couldn't do anything to help so the whole team had been taken out of commission. Sonic groaned as he tried to sit up. He was in so much pain he seemed to be having great trouble just sitting up. Sally, straining heavily, managed to sit up and gasp.

"This is ludicrous!" she grunted "There's fourteen of us and only one of him and he's caving our heads in! We fought him earlier and Sonic's even taken him on a worldwide tour to wear him down and we still can't defeat him!"

"Yes we can!" claimed Sonic "We'll defeat Metal Sonic if we just keep trying!"

"But Sonic, if we keep this up we might not all make it to the end." noted Sally "Metal Sonic just seems too good for us, even with our strength combined so there's only one thing we can do."

"I hope it isn't what I think it is." said Sonic, dreading to think what Sally was going to say.

"We should surrender the match and flee." said Sally "Everyone back on the R.F.S. jet now."

"WHAT?" shrieked Sonic "Are you out of your mind? If we surrender, Metal Sonic will kill us all and destroy the world!"

"Sonic, if we keep fighting he'll kill us anyway so we must get outta here while we can!" snapped Sally "Now just do as you're told and get on the plane!"

"No!" retorted Sonic "I'm gonna smash Metal Sonic to itty, bitty pieces and that's that!"

"I'm the Queen of Mobotropolis so you have to do as you're told!" noted Sally "Let it go and get on the plane!"

"Make me!" retorted Sonic.

"I really don't wanna do this but you leave me no choice you stubborn hot head." said Sally dryly.

She nodded to Geoffrey St. John and the reluctant skunk shot Sonic in the back with a dart. Sonic yelped in pain and pulled the dart out of his back. Before he could say anything, his eyes closed and he passed out. The dart had put him to sleep. Now Sonic was subdued, Sally and Geoffrey carried him into the R.F.S. jet.

"I'm so sorry Sonic." said Sally sadly "But I had to save you from killing yourself."

After Sonic was carried onboard, everybody else ran onboard and the hatch closed up behind them. After everybody was onboard, rain began to fall. The R.F.S. jet got ready fort take off. Metal Sonic just stood there and watched the R.F.S. jet's engines roar into life. He made no attempt to stop them from getting away; he just let the jet get away. The jet took off vertically and then the jet shot forward at top speed, leaving Metal Sonic behind in the raining jungle. Metal Sonic took flight and flew away from the jungle in the opposite direction to the R.F.S. jet.

"Run." he droned to himself "Run away like cowards. You're only delaying the inevitable. I may be worn down but I'll be back, hungry for more Sonic the Hedgehog. I will destroy you once and for all my loathsome copy!"

Metal Sonic flew on through the sky, heading for home in Robotropolis. The fight had left him worn out so he needed to rest

up and then he would be ready to smash Sonic again. He could picture Sonic's glorious demise right now as he headed for home.

As for the others, the effects of Geoffrey's dart had worn off and Sonic had come to. He wasn't pleased to see that he had been taken away from the battle and he just grumbled to himself.

"I could have taken Metal Sonic out but you decided to take me away!" he moaned "Why did you do it Sally?"

"Well for starters we're unfit to fight!" yelled Sally "Look at us! And I bet you're all battered and beaten aren't you?"

"Well I am but…"

"That's why we needed to retreat, because we're too weak to fight and we need a battle plan!" explained Sally "We need to rethink our methods and think of a way to destroy Metal Sonic once and for all!"

"Right." said Sonic, realizing the situation now "Maybe we should have some more training so we can make ourselves stronger and then we'll be able to take Metal Sonic down at long last!"

"Precisely." said Sally "So are you still mad I took you away from the battle?"

"Not as much." said Sonic cheekily "So once we're all rested and healed up, we can begin training so we will be ready for the next time we face Metal Sonic!"

"I just wonder why Metal Sonic isn't chasing us down." said Tails "Don't you think he should be following us right now?"

"Maybe he's worn out too." suggested Cosmo "Maybe Metal Sonic's going back to Dr. Eggman to rest himself for the next time he fights us."

"Maybe he is." said Tails "After all, I bet all that fighting and chasing has left Metal Sonic power drained."

"Why ever Metal Sonic isn't chasing us doesn't matter." said Sonic "What matters is us focusing on how to defeat him."

"One thing I wonder is where your slimy brother Scourge is." said Amy "I still can't believe he got away!"

"Well there's one thing I'm willing to bet." said Sonic "And it's that I may be seeing Scourge again real soon, even sooner then I'm gonna see Metal Sonic again.

Whether that was true or not remains to be seen. Sonic knew that he had long hours of tough training ahead of him and hopefully that training would pay off and Metal Sonic would be reduced to scrap metal. He just wondered when the metal menace would return for him…

Footnotes:

***Don't tell me you don't remember the nail-biting climax of Story 29 do you?**

Metal Sonic sure is a handful isn't he? And I bet he'll continue to be a handful for Sonic and friends. But now we'll give Metal Sonic a rest and move onto the next story which features Scourge the Hedgehog's next sinister move on the throne of Castle Acorn... Reviews are welcome.

Ruthless Relatives Part 1

Story 33: Ruthless Relatives Part 1: There's One In Every Family

Families can be a wonderful thing at times. They love and care for each other, they're good company, they're there for you when no one else is, families are some of the most wonderful things in the world and the only group of people you can hang around and trust with your heart. Unfortunately, some unfortunate person would have a rather bratty family member that wishes nothing more then to just make their life miserable. Tails was one of those people. True his parents were very loving but one member of his family was ungodly cruel to him when he was younger. And that person was known as Ginger the Fox. Ginger was Tails' slimy cousin who was extremely opinionated, egotistical and selfish but above all, he was downright cruel. Ginger looked very much like Tails only he had ginger fur instead of yellow fur, his whiskers were trimmed and styled, he had neat black hair and hazel eyes that always seemed to burn with hatred. For some reason Ginger couldn't stand Tails and Tails did not know why. Maybe it was because he was much loved amongst all the family; even Ginger's parents adored Tails because he was so cute and Ginger was deathly jealous of that. Whenever no grown ups were around, Ginger would do whatever he could to make Tails miserable. Whatever you do, don't make me go into detail about some of the things this rotten fox did to Tails. I'll just hint at the things he did. Ginger saw Tails as nothing more then a stepping stone. And he took that thought too far and would stand on Tails' back for hours on end which left Tails with horrible backaches afterwards. And another cruel thing he used to do was hang Tails in a tree by his tails and leave him there until he untied himself. Yes, Ginger was ungodly cruel to poor Tails. I bet the little brat would kill poor Tails if he had the chance! Luckily for Tails, when he was six Ginger left the village he used to live in and went to live in a fancy estate in Central City and Tails spent the rest of his life free from Ginger. Right now though, Ginger was reading newspapers and every time he saw an article about Sonic the Hedgehog and Tails, he growled with anger and ripped the column to shreds. Ginger for some reason couldn't stand Sonic either. I think the little worm is just

jealous of the fact everybody loves Sonic and Sonic is a hero whereas Ginger is a nobody. Ginger ripped yet another newspaper to bits and chucked the remains on the pavement instead of throwing it in the bin like a sensible person would (yes he has no respect for the environment I forgot to mention!). A pedestrian walked by and glared at him for the littering. Ginger ignored him and grumbled to himself.

"Why does everybody love that blue buffoon?" he moaned "He's an idiot! He charges into battle and always expects himself to win! Why can't anyone other then me see that? The entire world is an idiot and I'm the only fortune person to be intelligent it seems!"

He picked up a torn bit of newspaper that had Tails' face on it.

"And why does everybody love my idiot of a cousin?" he grumbled "He's a dweeb! Not only that he's also a nerd! Why on Mobius would you want to waste your life away on pathetic little machines when you could do more important things like finding a pretty woman to marry or increasing your wealth?"

He scrunched up the paper in his hand and tossed it back on the floor.

"Ooooooooh! How I hate my cousin!" growled Ginger "I'm supposed to be loved, not him! I'm far more talented and better looking then he is! He's supposed to be a low-life living on the streets begging for money, not the sidekick to that moron Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"Oy you!" snarled a badger wearing a dress coat and a fedora "Will you shut up you little brat? People can hear you!"

"You shut up you poorly dressed dingbat!" snapped Ginger.

Before he knew it, Ginger found himself lying behind the bench he had been sitting on and groaning in pain. Ginger had no idea how that happened although I can make a rough guess. I think the badger gave him a knuckle sandwich hard enough to make Knuckles jealous (just kidding, but he does punch hard!).

"Hopefully you'll learn some manners you little creep!" snarled the badger "And I hope someone has a good dumpster they can toss you into as well!"

And with that the badger left in a huff. Ginger swaggered back onto the bench and clutched his head.

"Oh that imbecile!" he moaned "I should have him arrested for that!"

"Quit talking to yourself you weirdo!" snapped a ferret wearing sports shorts that jogged by and slapped Ginger on the back of the head as he passed.

"Ouch!" cried Ginger "Since when have pedestrians been allowed to assault people on the streets? This world is becoming a savage place! I've gotta get out of here before someone pulls a knife on me or something!"

He only just realized he had been shrieking at the top of his voice and attracted a large crowd of people that stared at him angrily. Ginger turned bright red with embarrassment and chuckled nervously.

"Um…hi?" he squeaked.

"Calling us savages are ya?" snarled a beaver in a leather jacket "Let's get him folks!"

And with that the entire crowd chased the little fox around an entire city block before Ginger ducked for cover in a dumpster in an alleyway. But one Mobian has seen him and said to the crowd

"Guys, he's in here!"

The crowd saw the dumpster Ginger was hiding in and they decided to leave him there.

"That little twerp's where he belongs." said the beaver "In a dumpster. He's rubbish after all."

And with that the entire crowd left to continue with their daily lives. Ginger climbed out of the dumpster and brushed some bits of litter

off. He growled to himself.

"This is all that Tails' fault this is happening to me!" growled Ginger "It's his fault my dopey family moved here because he kept complaining about me! Well he has not seen the last of me! I'll get my revenge if it's the last thing I do!"

"Well that sounds cool." said a raspy tough man voice from the shadows of the alleyway "Your determination for revenge impresses me."

Ginger jumped and looked around the alleyway. A hedgehog was standing in the shadows and he was coming out of the shadows towards Ginger. Ginger whimpered with fear as the hedgehog revealed himself to be none other then Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic's evil brother and vicious tyrannical would-be-world conqueror. Ginger screamed in terror and cowered on the floor.

"Oh no! Not Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic's evil brother!" screamed Ginger "Please don't hurt me!"

"OK kid, I have two things here." said Scourge "One: I ain't gonna hurt ya. Two: how do you know my name?"

"I've read all about you in the newspapers." whimpered Ginger "You want to conquer the world and destroy Sonic the Hedgehog am I right?"

"That's me to a T." said Scourge with a toothy grin that could make a Tyrannosaurus Rex cry.

"Well I'm glad you want to destroy Sonic because I think that guy's a moron." said Ginger, getting up off the ground "Had any luck yet?"

"No." said Scourge, scowling "I almost succeeded once but a crocodile, a chameleon and a bee ruined everything!*"

"Oh that's a shame." said Ginger "Do you know who I want revenge on?"

"Nope and should I care?" snapped Scourge rudely.

"Maybe not." said Ginger meekly "The person I want revenge on is my idiot cousin Tails, the one person I hate with a burning passion."

"Tails." said Scourge as if the name rung a bell "Isn't he the twin-tailed sucker who follows Sonic everywhere?"

"He is." said Ginger "I want revenge on him for making me move to this wretched city and I won't stop until my revenge is complete!"

"Yeah you said summet like that and your desire for revenge impresses me." said Scourge, putting an arm around Ginger and flipping his sunglass down over his eyes "So I've decided to make a proposition I know you can't resist."

"What is it?" asked Ginger, gulping.

"Me and you could team up to get our revenge on Sonic and Tails respectively." said Scourge "With my help, you can't possibly fail to get revenge on your cousin and I can't fail to get revenge on my brother. If you help me then when I take over the world…I will make you king of your very own land on Mobius but I get Mobotropolis. So do we have a deal?"

Ginger thought for a moment. This was a tempting offer but would Scourge keep his promise? He had a feeling he shouldn't trust Scourge but he wanted revenge on Tails more then anything in the world. Ginger held his hand out for Scourge to shake.

"You have a deal." said Ginger.

Scourge grabbed Ginger's hand and squeezed it as hard as he could, causing the fox to yelp in pain.

"Good boy!" he cackled "I knew you couldn't resist this offer! Now listen to me because I have a plan and I'm only going to tell you it once so pay attention!"

"OK." said Ginger, rubbing his throbbing hand tenderly.

Scourge pulled Ginger close to himself and whispered down his ear. Ginger listened to every single word Scourge said and he smiled wickedly.

"That's bound to work!" he screeched with joy "It's foolproof! Revenge on Sonic and Tails is certain!"

"Yes it is ginger boy." said Scourge "Now you have to do what I tell you or this whole thing can go kaput on us."

"I'll do whatever you say." said Ginger.

"Good." said Scourge "Now we'll do it tonight where no one will see us and they're more likely to fall for our trick. Meet me at the Mobian Store Department at ten o' clock tonight and not a second later or you're fired. Capisce?"

"Got it." said Ginger "I'd best get my hair styled."

And with that he ran out of the alleyway, leaving Scourge alone in the alleyway to do nothing more then smile at himself.

"Kids are so gullible aren't they?" he sneered "As if I'm gonna share power with a nine year old! Once ginger boy does what I've told him to do I will throw him on a spike or something like that. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

And with that he retreated back into the shadows, laughing evilly.

"Sonic, you will end up tasting the life I led for two years straight now!" he cackled.

Whatever Scourge and Ginger were going to do to make Sonic and Tails' lives miserable was bound to be bad and we would find that out sooner or later…

"Hiya!" cried Geoffrey St. John the skunk as he snapped a plank of wood in two with one powerful kick.

Training had been tough and hard since the Mobians had retreated from their fight with Metal Sonic but it seemed to be paying off at long last. Sonic's spin-dashes appeared to be stronger, Tails was far more agile in flight and Amy's accuracy with her hammer was even better then before. Even Geoffrey St. John appeared to be improving on his combat skills.

"How about that then mates?" he said "I couldn't break wood with one kick before so that new training course must be doing wonders for me."

"It seems to be doing wonders for all of us." said Sonic "Tails is so agile in flight you'd think he was a jet!"

"Oh come on Sonic I'm not THAT fast." said Tails modestly.

"Come on little buddy, don't give me that low self esteem again!" teased Sonic "Where's that sense of pride and determination you once had?"

He held Tails tightly and playfully gave him a noogie-noogie.

"Hey! No fair! Lemme go!" laughed Tails as Sonic noogied him.

Geoffrey couldn't help but laugh at the two.

"Look at you two blokes, you're like brothers." he said with a smile "No wonder your team work is unrivalled in this group."

"Yep, that's us Geoffrey." said Sonic "We're friends to the end and our friendship can never be broken."

"Never ever!" cried Tails.

"So how's Amy been doing on this course?" asked Geoffrey "I haven't seen her since this morning."

"She's doing more target practice with her hammer." said Sonic "Her accuracy is much better then before I'll give it ya. She can hit almost anything in one hit! I bet she wouldn't have any trouble hitting me at top speed with accuracy like that!" he added, chuckling.

"I don't think even Amy will be fast enough to hit someone like you Sonic." said Tails "With or without a hammer."

Sonic nodded in agreement.

"I hope you're not still too sore over losing to Metal Sonic the other day mate." said Geoffrey "After all, it was for our own good."

"I'm not still sore over it." said Sonic "I'm still not happy over the fact we had to flee but I've got over it and now I'm gonna keep on training until I'm fast and strong enough to keep up with even my phoney metal twin."

"I still wonder how is Metal Sonic so strong?" said Tails "He can defeat the likes of Knuckles, Team Chaotix and even Bunnie Rabbot. What did Eggman do to that robot?"

"That is something for him to know and us to find out." said Sonic grimly "But I can't see that happening since we'll never be able to get close enough to Metal Sonic to find out his secrets."

"Never say never mate!" said Geoffrey boldly "We might be able to find that out if we can just sneak into the Eggman bloke's city and spy on him…"

"No, no spying." said Tails "Spying almost got me killed the other day** and I don't wanna repeat of that."

"Right." said Geoffrey "How did spying nearly get you killed anyway?"

"I don't wanna talk about it." said Tails, tears coming to his eyes just thinking about it "I'm gonna get horrible images in my head again and I only just managed to get them out."

"Oh, sorry mate." said Geoffrey "Didn't mean ta upset ya. I didn't know about it since I wasn't here at the time."

"It's OK Mr. St. John sir." said Tails.

"So…" said Sonic, trying to change the subject "I bet Knuckles and Team Chaotix are training their hearts out right now."

"Who knows what those blokes are doing?" said Geoffrey "I wonder how Wilson and Mandy are doing too."

"I bet they're doing fine." said Sonic "I still wonder why Mandy wasn't fighting Metal Sonic with us in the jungle? Was she too cowardly to fight?"

"Nah, she disappeared before we even left***." said Geoffrey "I have no idea why she vanished and where she skived off to but when we returned yesterday she was there waiting for us."

"Who knows." said Sonic "But hopefully she won't do it again otherwise I'm gonna get suspicious about her."

"I agree." said Geoffrey "I do hope there isn't the horrible feeling of treachery creeping around the Royal Fighters Service."

"I don't think anyone is going to betray us Mr. St. John." said Tails "I don't think we have anything to worry about."

"I only wish I could agree with you little fella." said Geoffrey gloomily "I still have a sneaky suspicion of treachery hiding among us."

Their discussion was cut off by the arrival of a very cheerful looking Amy Rose with her hammer draped over her shoulder.

"Hey boys." said Amy happily "How's your training coming on?"

"We're doing fine Amy, we're just taking a break." said Sonic "You should see Geoffrey's new found strength Amy, he can snap wood with one kick now."

"Can he?" said Amy with surprise "That's amazing Geoffrey! You should show me when you're ready to go at it some more!"

"Oh I'll show you alright." said Geoffrey, smirking cockily "So how's your training coming on luv?"

"I'm taking a break too." said Amy "But I'm doing just fine thanks. I can hit harder and more accurately with my hammer now. Metal Sonic will have no idea what hit him next time we fight!"

"You can say that again Amy!" chuckled Sonic "I just hope you never pull that hammer on me at all!"

And with that everybody laughed. After they stopped laughing Sonic said

"I can't wait for the rematch with Metal Sonic."

"Neither can I." said Geoffrey, loading his crossbow "That blighter will get his just desserts the next time we fight!"

And with that he fired his crossbow and hit a nearby target on a stick right in the centre. All this training would defiantly pay off the next time Sonic and friends fought Metal Sonic…

Nightfall. It was ten o' clock and Scourge was waiting at the Mobian Store Department but for some reason he wasn't wearing his leather jacket, boots and sunglasses, instead he wore sneakers that looked like Sonic's own sneakers. It made Scourge groan at the fact he had to look exactly like his wormy brother for this robbery but the plan wouldn't work if he didn't look like Sonic so he had to live with it. He tapped his foot impatiently as he waited for Ginger the Fox to arrive. Thirty seconds later, Ginger arrived on the scene, flying like Tails since he had two tails as well. He had dyed his neat black hair ginger like his fur and styled it into three separate hairs like Tails. It made him growl over the fact he looked like his stupid cousin but Ginger knew that was the plan and he had to bear it just for tonight. Ginger landed in front of Scourge and the green hedgehog glared at him.

"I told you to arrive at the Mobian Store Department at ten o' clock exactly and not a second later you scumbag!" roared Scourge "You're thirty seconds late you slowpoke!"

"Sorry Scourge but I forgot about it and I was about to get my beauty sleep until I realized I should be here with you and I flew here as fast as I could!" explained Ginger "I'm so sorry your lordship!"

"Well better late then never." sighed Scourge "Now let's rob this thing before we lose time."

"Are you sure about this Scourge?" asked Ginger "What if someone sees us?"

"No one will see us you dweeb!" snapped Scourge "We're in the dark of the night, everybody's sleeping by now! The only think that's on the alert are those stupid security cameras but they're necessary

for the plan so they don't matter. Now come on before I boot you in the butt!"

"Yes sir!" said Ginger obediently.

Scourge smiled and then span into a spin-dash. With one mighty spin-dash he managed to break the door down. Nothing stirred so Scourge didn't appear to have alerted anything or anybody so he continued. Scourge and Ginger surveyed the room with interest. It was laden with jewels and diamonds galore and any crook would be stupid to pass these beauties up. Scourge, using his super speed, snatched all the jewels up, avoiding the sensor lasers as he went while Ginger made horrible rude faces at the camera in order to make Tails look rude and immature. Sooner or alter Scourge had snatched up all the jewels and he ran for it. Ginger set off the burglar alarm by touching a sensor laser that Scourge had managed to avoid while snatching the jewels. Ginger flew for it as the burglar alarm blared loudly. It seemed loud enough to wake up an entire city. No sooner had Scourge and Ginger left, Swarms of hovering police cars arrived on the scene and swarms of police officers emerged from the cars and ran into the building, all brandishing revolvers. Melchett the Hedgehog and his assistant Big Dave were leading the pack. They searched the entire building only to find all the display cases had been broken into and the jewels had been stolen. Melchett was amazed by this and began to wonder how the robbers had managed to strip the place of all it's jewels so quickly.

"The whole place has been robbed to the last diamond!" he cried "How did this happen?"

"You don't possibly think it was Scourge the Hedgehog do you sir?" asked an officer.

"Likely." said Melchett "But we don't know that for sure. Let's check the security tapes."

And with that Melchett ran into the surveillance room to have a look at everything the security cameras had recorded. He sat down in front of a computer and rewound the tape to the beginning of the burglary. He played it and watched the whole tape closely. What he was watching made his eyes pop.

"Hey Melchett!" cried Big Dave excitedly "What are you watching? Is it a cartoon? I love cartoons! Lemme watch!"

"Shut up you big lummox!" snarled Melchett "I'm trying to watch this!"

He continued watching and was shocked at what appeared to be Sonic the Hedgehog and Tails the Fox robbing the store. Sonic whizzed around at sonic speeds, snatching up every jewel he came across and Tails was making horrible rude faces at the camera. We all know it's actually Scourge and Ginger disguised as Sonic and Tails don't we? But that old fool Melchett doesn't, he's so shocked at the fact he thinks it's them it didn't occur to him that their fur was the wrong colour, he just jumped to the conclusion it was Sonic and Tails robbing the shop.

"No…!" he gasped "It can't be…he's the hero of the planet!"

"What? What? What is it Melchett buddy? Tell meeeeeeeeeeee!" begged Big Dave, dancing about like a dopey person.

"Sonic the Hedgehog and his buddy Tails have turned traitor and have robbed this store!" gasped Melchett "Why on Mobius would they do such a thing?"

"Sonic's a bad guy now?" said Big Dave dopily "That's silly! Sonic would never betray us like this!"

"Just watch the tape you monkey in gopher's clothing!" snapped Melchett.

Big Dave watched the tape and couldn't believe his eyes. Sonic and Tails appeared to be robbing the store and even though he was stupid, he knew that they were committing a crime and that meant they were criminals now. Big Dave turned away from the monitors and yelled at Melchett.

"Oh my gosh! Sonic and Tails are traitors! That's not very nice! Waaaah!" he sobbed.

"Oh stop crying you big idiot." said Melchett harshly "We'll make them pay for this crime and that's a promise!"

"Yeah! We're gonna capture Tonic and Sails!" declared Big Dave, wielding his baton high in the air.

"It's Sonic and Tails you numbskull!" corrected Melchett.

"Oh." said Big Dave.

Melchett and Big Dave left the surveillance room and gave the bad news to the other cops anxiously waiting for them to come out. The policemen all gave a chorus of gasping at the sudden "betrayal" of Sonic and Tails and they all frowned angrily and began talking amongst one another.

"How could Sonic do this to us?"

"I thought he was a good guy!"

"I can't wait to knock his brains out with my bat!"

"I'm gonna make sure he does time good and hard for this!"

"We will capture Sonic and I promise you that." said Melchett "I know where the hedgehog and his twin-tailed accomplice live so we will go there and arrest them in the morning."

"Good idea Melchett." said an officer who was a chipmunk named General Chipper.

"General Chipper, I'm trusting you with the tranquillizer gun when we arrest Sonic tomorrow." said Melchett "We'll need to subdue Sonic the Hedgehog so we can capture him easier since he can run fast."

"Thank you sir." said the General, saluting.

"Everybody, let's go back to the police station." ordered Melchett "We have a big raid tomorrow morning so we need to be well rested and ready for action."

"Yes sir!" said all the policemen.

They all ran out of the store and back into their cars. The police cars hovered slightly above the road and they drove away, their sirens

blaring like mad. Scourge and Ginger had been watching the whole thing from above a building and they smiled wickedly to see their plan had worked to perfection.

"The idiots fell for it!" laughed Scourge "Sonic will be getting a taste of the life I once had when I was in jail and so will his bratty buddy!"

"My revenge is complete!" cheered Ginger "Tails will be in his lowly place at last and I will be on high as King Ginger, assistant ruler of King Scourge of Mobius!"

"Thanks kid." said Scourge "You know what? You're the first person I've ever taken a liking to in my entire life. I really like your evilness; it really matches mine doesn't it?"

"Yeah, it kinda does doesn't it?" said Ginger "We're almost like an evil version of Sonic and Tails aren't we?"

"The only difference is, we look cool." said Scourge "And I can't wait to see Sonic get arrested tomorrow!"

"And I can't wait to see my wormy cousin get arrested tomorrow!" said Ginger, rubbing his hands happily "I'll try to remind myself to pay him a visit so I can taunt him mercilessly!"

The two evil Mobians laughed in unison, thinking about the big raid Melchett would perform on Sonic tomorrow morning…

Morning dawned and Sonic and Tails were eating breakfast. Sonic had decided to make something different instead of having chilli-dogs and eggs again. He had made himself and Tails a portion of beans, four rashers of bacon each and two slices of toast each. Tails tucked in happily since he loved bacon and toast. Sonic took a mouthful of beans and looked out of the window. It was another beautiful day, just the perfect day to go training again. He couldn't wait for today's training as Sally had promised him it would be more challenging then yesterday's training course. Tails swallowed a mouthful of toast and bacon and spoke.

"Thinking about today's new course aren't you?" he asked the blue

hedgehog.

"Yes I am little buddy." said Sonic "I wonder what Sally's set up for us today?"

"I can't wait to see Bunnie Rabbot." said Tails "Sally said she would be participating with us today along with Wilson and Mandy."

"Yeah, I'm looking forward to seeing Bunnie too." said Sonic "I wonder how she's been doing lately?"

He finished his last mouthful of beans and got up from the table to get some orange juice. But when he opened the cupboard to get a cup for his juice, a bunch of necklaces, rubies and diamonds all fell out of the cupboard and onto the counter or onto the floor with a loud clatter! Tails gasped in horror at what he saw and Sonic couldn't believe his eyes either.

"Sonic! What are all these jewels doing in your cupboard?" he shrieked.

"I…I…I seriously have no idea!" choked Sonic "I didn't even know they were even there!"

"Oh my gosh Sonic, you didn't steal them did you?" cried Tails.

"No of course not!" shrieked Sonic "Why would I wanna steal jewels?"

"Well if you didn't steal those jewels then how did they get here?" asked Tails "Did someone else steal them and hide them there in an attempt to frame you or something?"

"Well if that's the case then that person must be crazy if they think they can frame me for a jewel robbery!" said Sonic crossly "Everyone knows I would never steal a thing in my life!"

Then suddenly there was a loud knock on the door.

"Sonic the Hedgehog, this is the police!" boomed the voice of Melchett the Hedgehog from outside "Open up or we'll break the door down!"

"Now what the heck are those guys doing here?" wondered Sonic as he marched over to the door.

He opened the door and Melchett pushed past him and stormed into the house.

"Hey, what gives?" demanded Sonic.

Melchett ignored him and walked into the kitchen. Tails put his hands up and whimpered as Melchett searched the place. He saw the jewels lying on the counter and the floor. That was all the evidence he needed.

"These are the jewels that were stolen from the Mobian Store Department last night!" shrieked Melchett.

Tails tried to creep out of the room but Big Dave blocked his way and seized him by the arms. He snapped a pair of handcuffs around Tails' wrists and then Sonic ran into the room.

"Hey! What the heck is going on here?" demanded Sonic angrily "Why are you arresting Tails and why are you barging into my house like this?"

"You should know why traitor!" snarled Melchett "Aren't the jewels lying on your floor a big enough clue as to why we're here?"

Sonic suddenly realized what was going on.

"You think me and Tails robbed a jewellery store?" shrieked Sonic "How dare you even think something like that! How can you possibly think me and Tails are jewellery robbers?"

"Well for starters the jewels are in your house." said Melchett "Second, the store caught you two on tape. We clearly saw you robbing the store at lightening speed and Tails pulling rude faces at the camera on the tape! Security tapes don't lie and we've got the evidence needed to put you two away for a very long time!"

Sonic and Tails both thought they were about to go berserk. Melchett had the nerve to think they robbed a jewellery store and claims to have seen them on tape doing the crime? Sonic knew that

couldn't be true since he wasn't even at a jewellery store last night and neither was Tails so what was going on? Sonic had to investigate on this and fast before Melchett tried to arrest him.

"Melchett, you've made a big mistake!" protested Sonic "Me and Tails were right here all night! We didn't go to any jewellery stores at all!"

"Yeah as if I'm gonna believe the petty lies of a treacherous criminal like you." scoffed Melchett "The evidence is clear and you two are guilty! You're under arrest and that's that!"

"No I'm not!" said Sonic, kicking Melchett in the gut and sending the police hog falling on his back "You'll have to catch me before you arrest me you dopey cop!"

Before Melchett could get up, Sonic spin-dashed Big Dave and snapped Tails' handcuffs. He picked Tails up and sped through the door at sonic speed, knocking everybody over as he ran by. Melchett ran out of the house and watched Sonic speed away.

"Get him you idiots!" he yelled "And stop lying on the job!"

"We're not laying on the job you grumpy git-face!" retorted General Chipper, getting up and picking up his tranquillizer gun "Sonic knocked us over with his super speed!"

"Right." said Melchett "Get in your cars everybody; we may have a chance of catching up to that treacherous hedgehog!"

"Yes sir!" the police squad said in unison.

They all ran into their police cars and darted off after Sonic and Tails in them. Sonic looked over his shoulder to see a group of policeman chasing him down.

"Those guys are desperate aren't they?" he muttered.

"They're cops Sonic, that's what their job is!" cried Tails "And why did you attack Melchett and Big Dave like that? Don't you realize that isn't going to prove our innocence and neither is running for our lives?"

"Tails, we're running for our lives because we need to clear our names and we can't do that if we're arrested!" noted Sonic "Now hold on tight!"

He continued to run as the police cars tried to keep up with Sonic. Hover cars were fast, but not fast enough to catch up with Sonic at top speed so the cars were failing and lagging behind miserably. However they did have a sure fire ace up their sleeves. General Chipper leaned out of his hover car whilst another officer drove it and he aimed the tranquillizer gun at Sonic. However Tails was clinging onto Sonic's back so it was making it hard for Chipper to get a good aim on Sonic only. Chipper managed to find a spot just underneath Sonic's bottom and he fired the gun. The dart shot out of the gun's long barrel and whizzed towards Sonic like an arrow. The dart caught Sonic and he was so surprised he fell over and onto his face. Tails was sent hurling off Sonic's back and rolling across the grass. Sonic got back to his feet and pulled the dart out of his backside.

"So they're trying to sedate me are they?" he said "Maybe Melchett isn't a big buffoon after all."

"But what are we gonna do when you pass out?" asked Tails.

"I'm gonna hide somewhere until I wake up which will probably take a long time." said Sonic "The police will be long gone by the time I wake up and emerge from my hiding place."

Unfortunately for Sonic, the dart's effects suddenly ended up taking effect on him much sooner then he expected. Sonic began to feel woozy and he swaggered about as if he was drunk. Tails knew what was happening and he grabbed the droopy hedgehog. He twisted his tails around one another lifted Sonic off the ground. He was about to take him up into a tree to hide until the police all arrived and they burst out of their cars with revolvers in their hands. Tails was so shocked he almost dropped Sonic.

"Get down here and face your sentence little boy!" snarled Melchett "We'll open fire if we have to and we won't hesitate!"

"But sir, we're not criminals!" shouted Tails "Why can't you idiots get

that through your thick heads? We're being framed, I know we are and if you leave us alone we can prove it to you!"

"There's nothing to prove." said Melchett dryly "You were caught on tape, you're guilty as heck and you're under arrest. Now get down here or we'll blow your head off!"

Tails wanted to argue some more but he knew it was futile since Melchett was a very strict policeman and he believed anything he saw and it was obvious he wasn't in the mood for believing Tails. Tails decided to surrender since he didn't want to be shot at so he flew down to the ground with Sonic snoozing away from the dart's effects. The moment Tails landed, Big Dave leaped on him and snapped a new pair of handcuffs around Tails' wrists. Then he handcuffed the sleeping Sonic the Hedgehog.

"Look Melchett! I arrested them!" squealed Big Dave, clapping merrily and dancing stupidly.

"Congratulations." muttered Melchett sarcastically "Now put those traitors in the car."

"We're not traitors!" screamed Tails "Quit calling us that!"

"You have the right to remain silent young man!" snarled Melchett as Big Dave stuffed Sonic and Tails into his police car.

All the policemen got back into their cars and they drove away into the woods. Tails looked down at his feet. He couldn't believe it, he and his best friend Sonic were both being convicted for something they hadn't done! What on Mobius managed to convince Melchett it was them? Well whatever it was, Tails knew he and Sonic had to get out of prison otherwise they wouldn't be able to clear their names and prove their innocence. But who were the real criminals? And why did they frame him and Sonic? Tails had no idea but he was determined to find out. But first he would have to escape from prison and goodness knows how long that would take. The moment the police cars disappeared into the woodland, Scourge and Ginger arrived. They were back to their normal selves this time and they were grinning like a pair of goblins.

"Aaaah." said Scourge, sniffing the air "That's the sweet smell of revenge in the air this morning."

"You've said it Scourge." said Ginger "Boy I'm so happy that Tails is going to be locked up in a cold dark prison cell where he belongs I could scream with joy!"

"Now the two pipsqueaks are out of the way, I can make my first nefarious move to take over Mobius!" said Scourge happily "Come on Ginger, we have much to do."

And with that, the two criminals ran deep into the forest, laughing like hyenas.

Unbeknownst to Scourge and Ginger, Dr. Eggman had been watching the whole thing from his incredible computer monitors and he was pleased with what he was watching.

"Well this is an unexpected yet pleasing turn of events!" he said happily "Scourge and some fox that looks like Tails have managed to trick the police into arresting Sonic and Tails!"

He chortled with laughter at the thought of his enemies in jail.

"Scourge has done me a great big favour hasn't he?" he said gleefully "Now Sonic is out of the way, I can destroy Castle Acorn and he won't be there to stop it!"

"But sir, won't Scourge try to stop you since he wants to take over the world?" asked his snooty servant bot Alonzo.

"Scourge won't stop me." said Dr. Eggman "After all, I have Metal Sonic!" he added dramatically "The only catch is, Metal Sonic still isn't ready yet so I can't send him out until he's all rested up."

"So does this mean you're going to wait until Metal Sonic is ready before you attack?" asked Alonzo.

"Yes I am Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman "I would love to send a robot or two but no machine I send can take on someone as fierce as Scourge. Only Metal Sonic can take on Scourge so I'm going to have to wait until he's ready."

"While we're waiting, why don't we watch Sonic and Tails in jail and laugh at them?" suggested Alonzo cruelly.

"I was going to suggest that myself Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman "We'll do just that."

So they continued watching the monitors, eagerly awaiting the moment Sonic and Tails were put behind bars so they could laugh at them.

Meanwhile at Castle Acorn, Queen Sally Acorn had set up a training course for Sonic and friends. This course looked so challenging I bet Espio the Chameleon would have a bit of trouble getting through it! And for today, Sally was dressed in her long flowing pink dress with the long gloves again. Sonic and Tails were supposed to be at the castle right now but they weren't and Sally was beginning to get worried. She paced back and forth as time began to tick slowly by.

"Ooh, where are Sonic and Tails?" she moaned to herself "They should be here right now. Where are they?"

"Don't worry Sally." said her beautiful lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx "I'm sure they'll be here sooner or later. Maybe they're just running late or something."

"I do hope Dr. Eggman hasn't got them." said Sally "After all, he made Metal Sonic and he's sure to have sent that robot to get them."

"I hope Metal Sonic hasn't been sent to get them too Sally." said Nicole "That robot's been giving me nightmares since we retreated from the battle with him and Scourge."

"Were they terrible?" asked Sally.

"Too horrible for words." said Nicole, her long ears dropping back in despair "I'm constantly woken by them in the night and I really don't like it."

Sally put an arm around her friend and smiled sympathetically at

her.

"Oh Nicole, don't let the nightmares bother you." she said kindly "We all know they're not going to happen in real life. Sonic will not allow Dr. Eggman and Metal Sonic to win and we both know that don't we?"

Nicole looked Sally in the eye and smiled at her.

"You're right Sally." said Nicole "Sonic is not going to let Metal Sonic kill us all. He'll stop him and it will be all because of that new training course that'll be making him stronger and faster in battle."

"Sally." Nicole added "I'm so happy I'm your lady-in-waiting."

And with that she gave Sally a warm friendly hug and Sally hugged Nicole back.

"I'm happy to have you in the castle with me." said Sally "I would be so lonely without you Nicole."

Unfortunately, their loving friendly moment was cut short by the sudden and unexpected arrival of fellow fighter and cyborg Bunnie Rabbot. She had ran all the way to Castle Acorn and she was out of breath. She panted heavily and tried to catch her breath back.

"Bunnie?" said Sally "Whatever's the matter? You look like you've been chased by a car!"

Bunnie wheezed loudly before finally speaking, albeit with heavy breaths in between.

"Sally-girl…pant! ya'll won't believe…this!" gasped Bunnie "But for some…pant! reason…Chief Officer Melchett and his…police squad have…arrested Sonic and Tails on suspicion…gasp!…of a jewel store robbery!"

Sally and Nicole stared at each other in horror. Both of them looked like they were going to faint side by side. Sonic and Tails, criminals? Had they suddenly turned traitor on the world? This couldn't be!

"Bunnie, please tell me you're serious and not joking!" cried Sally.

"Ah'm tellin' ya the truth your Majesty!" wheezed Bunnie "Ah saw it all with mah own eyes and heard it all with mah own ears!"

Sally did not know what to say. Should she take this sudden revelation with a shaker of salt or should she take Bunnie's word for granted and believe her? It seemed so unbelievable that Sonic and Tails would be the world's greatest heroes and then suddenly they'd turn traitor on the world. Sally decided she would get to the bottom of this and find out what exactly was going on.

"Nicole, can you manage things while I'm gone?" she asked.

"Um, sure your highness but where are you going?" asked Nicole.

"To the Mobian Police Department. I'm going to have a word with Melchett the Hedgehog personally!" said Sally "I think that cop's getting really bad at his stuff if he's arresting Sonic and Tails for something I know they could not and would not ever do!"

And with that, the angry Queen squirrel stormed off and headed through the still un-finished Mobotropolis on her way to the MPD to speak with Melchett. Nicole and Bunnie looked at each other and exchanged worrying glances. They knew this wasn't going to end well.

The Mobian Police Department that Sonic and Tails had been taken to was in Empire City, the city where the homeless citizens of Mobotropolis had to live in until New Mobotropolis was completed. Sonic and Tails were both dressed in orange prison uniforms and were forced to sit and wait in the office with Melchett while the policemen tried to find some available prison cells for them since the prisons in Empire City were full. General Chipper typed on a computer and tried to find some available prison cells for Sonic and Tails. Melchett was beginning to lose his patience and he began to get stroppy.

"Will you hurry up and find an available prison block?" he moaned at General Chipper "I keep thinking Sonic's going to try and run for it right now!"

"Don't rush me Moany Melchett!" snapped General Chipper rudely "I can't search things up at the speed of light you know so be patient!"

Melchett grumbled and left General Chipper to the work.

"Will you give it a rest Melchy Welchy?" said Sonic crossly "I'm not going to try and run for it so you have nothing to fear."

"Well that's good to know." said Melchett.

"The only reason I'm not going to try and escape is because someone will find out we've been framed and then they'll prove it to you and clear our names before you can even find an available cell." said Sonic.

"You have not been framed!" shouted Melchett "You two are criminals, the proof is in the bag so you are going to prison now shut your horrible little mouth will you?"

"I wish you'd shut your horrible little mouth." muttered Tails "You never say anything nice to anybody."

"Agreed." said General Chipper without looking up from his work.

Melchett scowled at the general but said nothing. Then suddenly the door to the office swung open and in burst the beautiful Queen Sally Acorn who clearly didn't seem to be in a good mood. Sonic and Tails' faces brightened at the sight of her and they thought she would be bailing them out right now. Melchett was surprised at the arrival of the Queen and be bowed down in respect.

"Madame." he said "What a pleasure it is to have a figure of your nature on policeman grounds! How may I help you?"

"I would like to have a word with you Melchett." said Sally sternly.

"Oh uh…OK." said Melchett, his voice trembling and his moustache shaking.

Sonic and Tails beamed. Melchett was so gonna get it from Sally right now! Sally began to shout at Melchett.

"Are you out of your mind?" she shrieked "You go and arrest the Hero of Mobius and his best friend for something they would never even dream of doing in their entire lives! Are you getting desperate to arrest somebody?"

"I most certainly am not your royal highness!" bellowed Melchett "I've arrested those two because they robbed a jewellery store last night!"

"And what evidence do you have to assure it was them and not someone trying to frame them?" demanded Sally angrily.

"This!" said Melchett, presenting a video tape to Sally. "This is a video tape from the security cameras at the store. This video will prove everything your Majesty."

He put the tape into a TV set and the TV played the footage recorded from last night. Sonic and Tails couldn't see the tape from where they were so they could only guess what was happening in it. Sally watched the tape closely and her eyes widened at what she was watching. Sonic was robbing the store at lightening speed and Tails was pulling rude faces at the camera. The tape ended and the TV screen faded to black.

"See?" sneered Melchett.

Sally was so shocked she couldn't speak. She stepped away from the TV and began to shake.

"Sally? What's wrong?" asked Sonic.

Sally finally spoke.

"That can't be true!" she blurted "The tape must be forged!"

"There is no evidence of forgery in the tape." stated Melchett "And no one even touched the security cameras so the tape certainly hasn't been forged. Admit it your Majesty, Sonic and Tails are traitors and they must get their comeuppance for what they've done."

Sally, defeated turned to Sonic and Tails. She looked like she was

going to cry.

"You two." she said hoarsely "I can't believe you two would betray us like this! Please tell me you didn't really do this!"

"We didn't Sally!" claimed Sonic "Honest! We've been framed but no one believes us! Please don't disbelieve us like the others!"

"I believe you Sonic and Tails." said Sally, fighting back tears but one managed to trickle down her face without her realizing "But the evidence seems to imply you did rob that store. I will try to see if you really are innocent but until then I'm afraid you're under arrest until I can prove you aren't traitors."

"NO!" cried Sonic and Tails.

"I'm so, so sorry Sonic but I can't do anything about it since there's no evidence you two didn't do it!" wailed Sally "I hope I can clear your names before something really bad happens. Until then, try to hold on for me."

And with that, Sally left the MPD station, crying her broken heart out. Sonic and Tails couldn't believe it. Sally knew they were innocent but she was letting Melchett lock them up until further notice? What proof did they need to give to everybody to prove their innocence? After Sally left, Melchett grinned wickedly at the two.

"See? Even your precious Queen doesn't believe you." he purred "You two are as guilty as Scourge the Hedgehog and you're going to be put away for a very long time. I do hope you enjoy your stay."

Sonic growled at Melchett but he resisted the urge to cave his skull in since that wouldn't do any good. Then suddenly, General Chipper said something.

"Melchett sir! Good news!" he said "One of the prisoners in this MPD station has served his sentence and is now set free so we have room for Sonic or Tails in this station and Central City has an empty cell for one of them."

"Well Central City has better security then ours so Sonic can go there." said Melchett "Tails will reside in this one."

"No! No you can't tear us apart like this!" wailed Tails "I'm sticking with Sonic and that's that!"

"General Chipper, take Tails to his cell will you?" ordered Melchett hastily.

General Chipper grumpily got out of his seat and grabbed Tails roughly by the arms. He hauled Tails away from Sonic and dragged him through a pair of doors, kicking and screaming. Sonic held his hand out for Tails but he didn't run after him. He remained seated and awaited for Melchett to do something to him.

"I will send an escort to drive you to Central City." said Melchett "Don't try anything clever or funny."

"I'm not." said Sonic with a scowl "That'll only make things worse so why bother?"

"Good boy." said Melchett "Oh look, here comes your escort now." He added as a police officer walked through the doors, whistling merrily.

"Timothy?" he asked "Can you drive Sonic down to the MPD station in Central City? There's a cell free for him there."

"OK chief." said Timothy brightly "Come on sonny Jim. We're going for a nice ride now."

Sonic reluctantly got to his feet and followed Timothy outside of the MPD station and to the car park where all the police cars were kept. Timothy opened the door to one car and Sonic stepped into the back seat. Timothy got into the driver's seat and drove away in the car. He was now on the way to Central City to deliver Sonic the Hedgehog to the MPD station there so he could do time for the crime he didn't do.

"Y'know what sonny Jim?" said Timothy without turning around "I don't believe this nonsense about you and Tails robbing a store, it's gotta be a hoax but until we can prove it isn't true I'm afraid you're going to be staying in a nice warm prison cell for now."

"Thanks for notifying." muttered Sonic.

He looked out the car window and thought to himself.

Oh Tails, I hope you're OK in your cell. he thought *And I hope someone will clear our names soon enough.*

That someone would have to be quick since Scourge and Ginger were on their way to Castle Acorn and ready to ransack it. Without Sonic, Sally had no chance so Sonic would need to get out fast…

Back in Empire City, General Chipper dragged Tails to his cell. All the other cells were full of horrible, ugly, murderous looking scoundrels that made Tails shiver with fright when he saw them. General Chipper opened the glass door to a cell with a touch of a button and he threw Tails inside. Tails fell on the floor and Chipper closed the door.

"Hopefully a few years in this cell will teach you a lesson." he said coldly to Tails "No one gets away with anything while we're around."

Tails ran up to the glass and pressed his face against it, ready to protest but General Chipper had already begun to walk away.

"Don't leave me here! Let me out! I'm innocent! So is Sonic! You can't leave me in here!" Tails screamed at the top of his voice, pounding feebly on the door.

But General Chipper had already left the cell blockade. Tails' eyes poured with tears and he pounded the floor at the foot of the door.

"It's not fair!" he sobbed "Why won't those stupid policemen believe us? Me and Sonic didn't rob that jewellery store, someone else did but they won't believe us! Why, why, why?"

"Welcome to my territory Tails!" snarled a horrible voice that Tails never thought he would hear again.

Tails stopped crying and began to shiver with fear as if something gripped him by the throat.

"That…voice…!" he gasped "No…no…It can't be! Not…"

He turned around and saw a little figure sitting in a corner at the back of the cell. He was wearing a ragged old robe, a gold helmet with three spikes on it and long golden shoes with spikes at the back. He had a metal hand with sharp claws and scowling orange eyes. Tails recognized him instantly.

"MARIK THE MARTIAN?" he screamed.

Marik just scowled at Tails and he bared his sharp metal claws as Tails shook with fear with his back against the glass door…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 29 for more**

**** Who can forget Tails' near death in Stories 26-27?**

*****Mandy mysteriously vanished before the others departed to follow Sonic in Story 31**

MARIK'S ALIVE? Well...this sucks for poor Tails doesn't it? He and Sonic are locked away and Scourge the Hedgehog is ready to make his move on Castle Acorn! Is he going to succeed? Or will Sonic get out somehow...? Reviews are welcome.

By the way, Ginger is such a b*** isn't he? He's easily the worst character I've ever created for this series! He's so bad, I'm ashamed to admit I created him! I look forward to the day I kill the brat off and believe me, I AM GOING TO DO IT! And when I kill a character, the character stays killed so Ginger's death is easily something I'm looking forward to and I bet everybody else is!***

Ruthless Relatives Part 2

Story 34: Ruthless Relatives Part 2: Heroes Behind Bars

"No! No! No! It can't be!" gasped Tails "I'm in the same cell as you?"

Marik just snorted at his cellmate.

"Do you think I'm thrilled to have you as a cellmate too?" he scoffed.

"But, but you can't possibly be here now!" exclaimed Tails "You're supposed to be dead! Cosmo told me your ship blew up with you inside it!"

Marik groaned angrily.

"So Cosmo the little vermin has told you all about my humiliating defeat at the hands of her and Cream the Rabbit* has she?" he said "Oh well, I'd best explain how I'm still alive now."

Tails sat down against the glass door as Marik explained everything to him.

"True I was blown up thanks to that stupid Chao Cheese for setting my ship to self destruct but I was never killed." said Marik "I actually managed to get through the escape hatch in the roof but before I could fly away, the ship exploded and I was sent hurling through the air and into the ground. A puny fall from the sky isn't enough to kill someone as tough as myself so I obviously lived." he added "And that's all I can remember. I have no idea how I got here although I assume the cops got me while I was knocked out."

"Well at least they did something right." muttered Tails bitterly "You belong in a prison cell after all."

Marik decided to ignore the fox's insult.

"So, what the hell are you doing here?" demanded Marik "You're a good guy, good guys don't belong in a prison cell!"

"Well that idiot Melchett thinks me and Sonic robbed a jewellery store so he's arrested me and Sonic." said Tails "I'm in here with you and Sonic's in Central City, both of us doing time for something we haven't done."

Marik exploded into a fit of laughter and he clutched his sides as he rolled around snickering. This was the most entertaining thing he had ever heard since his imprisonment.

"Oh my goodness! You two have been falsely imprisoned for something you haven't done?" he laughed "Oh that's just made me day! If only I was outside to celebrate it properly instead of this cold dark place!"

Tails just let Marik continue laughing about him and Sonic being in prison, held his head in his hands and let out a long heavy sigh. After Marik finished laughing Tails suddenly decided to ask him something.

"By the way Marik, why are you wearing a robe instead of a prison outfit like the others?" asked Tails.

"Well for starters I'm not wearing that hideous orange filth they call clothes!" spat Marik "And it's cold in here so I put my robe on. Martians carry these when going on trips to other planets in case it's cold and we can fold them up so tiny it looks like we haven't got one anywhere."

"So all the while you've been here, you've had that thing folded up in your jacket pocket?" said Tails.

"Precisely." said Marik "And I'm so much warmer wearing this then that disgusting prison outfit."

"But haven't the cops protested or anything?" said Tails "I mean why should you be allowed to wear a nice long robe whereas the others have to wear prison outfits?"

"They've tried to take my robe away but all I need to do is growl at them and bear my claws and they keep away from me." said Marik, showing Tails his shiny metal hand.

The fox gasped at it.

"What have you done to your hand?" he cried.

"I badly crippled it after Sonic threw me off that cliff last time we met**." explained Marik "I installed cybernetics into it to get it working again and it works ever so nicely. I was able to electrocute people but the voltage compactor is broken."

He showed Tails the palm of his metal hand which had a cracked orb in the middle. Tails studied it closely with interest.

"Is that orb in the palm of your hand the voltage compactor?" asked Tails.

"It is indeed." said Marik "If it wasn't broken I would have taken great deliberation in electrocuting you right now but it is broken so I can't do anything about it."

"How strong are your electric attacks?" asked Tails.

"Strong enough to hurt but not kill." said Marik, frowning as if that was a major design flaw "So if I did shock you, you wouldn't have to worry about dying, although I could probably kill if I kept it up for as long as I wished…"

"Hasn't life in prison taught you anything Marik?" shrieked Tails.

"Life in prison has taught me it's a harsh, boring, miserable place full of bullies and cops who love to hurt inmates and I am so desperate to escape from it." said Marik "And once I escape maybe I should change my ways."

"Maybe I should be a kind hearted soul from now on and then I will never be locked away again." he thought "I could apologize for murdering the King and Queen and I could apologize to Cosmo for all the pain I've tried to inflict on her. And maybe I could borrow a spaceship and leave this planet forever so you don't have to worry about me again."

Tails couldn't believe what he was hearing. Life in prison really had taught Marik a lesson or two. Marik appeared to be a changed

Martian and he seemed desperate to escape and turn over a new leaf so he would never be locked up again. But was Marik being serious or was this all a trick? Tails didn't know but he knew he had to play along for now and not jump to conclusions.

"Hey Marik." said Tails "If you really have changed and want to start a new life then I'll be happy to help you escape."

Marik was speechless.

"You would help me escape?" he said in surprise "Well that's very kind of you but don't you think that will make it look like you really have turned traitor and therefore give the police a real reason to arrest you?"

"I'll be able to clear up the misunderstanding somehow." said Tails "But I'm only going to help you on one condition. That you are absolutely truthful on changing your ways and you're not doing this to trick me."

"Tails, tricks don't do it for me anymore." said Marik "I swear on my father's soul that this is not a trick and I really will change my wicked ways forever."

"That's good to know." said Tails "And as a token of gratitude for changing your ways, I'll fix your voltage compactor for you."

"How very kind of you." said Marik ""I'll direct you so you don't go wrong when fixing it. I just wonder if there's anywhere in this prison I can fix it in."

"There maybe a workshop or something." said Tails "We'll have to see once we get outta here."

"And that will be any moment now." said Marik "I can hear General Chipper coming and announcing it's exercise time."

Marik was right on that. General Chipper had come to announce it was exercise time for all the prisoners.

"OK everybody, it's time for the exercise yard." he announced "I want you all in single file and to follow me to the yard just as always.

No fighting or being rough while you're out there." he added with a tone in his voice that suggested fights in the yard had happened before.

All the prison cell doors opened and all the prisoners marched out and lined up in single file. Tails and Marik were in the centre of the line and Tails began to quiver.

"I'm not going to like this." he whispered to himself.

Then one by one, the prisoners marched out of the cell room and out into the exercise yard. Tails hoped he would survive this as he had a feeling it was going to be rough and hard…

As for Sonic the Hedgehog, he had been delivered to Central City and unlike Tails, he was not put in the same cell as some evil doer, he had a whole cell to himself although he wasn't pleased with it since he felt lonely and isolated. Just like the MPD station in Empire City, it was exercise time for the prisoners in the MPD station here. Sonic and all the other prisoners went out into the exercise yard and they were allowed to do exercise to their heart's content for an hour before returning to the prison block for lunch. The exercise yard was really large and contained a small basketball court for those playing basketball. It was surrounded by wired fences with barbed wire at the top to prevent anyone from escaping. Shortly after going into the yard though, Sonic was surrounded by a group of thugs who looked like they were ready to beat the snot out of him. The group consisted of a muscle-bound cougar with an eye patch, a skinny little jackal with scars under his eyes, an armadillo with a golden stripy shell and a broad looking bear wearing boxing gloves. These were all criminals whose crimes Sonic had foiled long before Dr. Eggman's arrival and they were pleased to see Sonic in jail with them so they could beat him up to make him pay for ruining their fun. Sonic just looked up at them glumly as if he didn't care he was face to face with this group right now.

"He-hey boys, look who's here!" said the cougar with a sadistic grin on his face.

"It's the great big "I'm so fast" hero Sonic the Hedgehog!" cackled the jackal "He got us arrested and then he thinks he can stoop to our level and get away with it! Some hero hey tiny?"

"Oh shove off you jokers." sighed Sonic "I'm not even a criminal. I've been framed."

"By who?" asked the armadillo eagerly "I bet it must be someone who really hates you like Dr. Eggman. I bet he made a robot that looks like you to frame you didn't he?"

"I have no idea Shellshock." said Sonic glumly "Eggman did make a robot clone of me but it isn't the spitting image of me so I don't think Metal Sonic would have been convincing enough to frame me."

"Well you're stuck with us aren't you Sonic boy?" taunted the bear, thumping his fists together "And we'd best give you a good beating up before someone realizes your innocence and gets you outta here!"

"You said it Buster!" said the cougar gleefully "Jack, Shellshock! Surround the hedgehog and then me and Buster will come in for the kill!"

"Yes Theo!" said Jack the Jackal and Shellshock the Armadillo.

Sonic didn't make any attempts to run away as Shellshock and Jack surrounded him on both sides. In fact, Sonic didn't even bat an eyelid, he just remained perfectly still as if he didn't care about what was going to happen. Theo the Cougar and Buster the Bear advanced on him menacingly with their fists clenched and their teeth bared. Those two were former boxing champions before becoming criminals and they could punch good and hard so Sonic was in for a beating. Theo lunged for Sonic but Sonic leaped out of the way and Theo crashed into Jack and Shellshock. Buster tried to give Sonic an uppercut but Sonic dodged the blow and spin-dashed him in the stomach. Buster fell on his back and groaned loudly. Sonic landed on his feet and ran for cover behind a wall as a policeman came out to see what the fuss was.

"Hey! I've told you hooligans to play nice!" yelled the warden "And

that acquires to all prisoners in this facility, especially your four!"

He glowered at Theo's group who were lying on the ground. To the warden it looked like Theo had punched Buster and then tackled Jack and Shellshock afterwards.

"We haven't been doing anything!" protested Theo "Sonic attacked us for no reason at all!"

"I don't give a flying monkeys on what you have to say Theo." snarled the warden "Criminals are natural born liars and everything you say is bound to be a lie. You four can go back to your cells for playing roughly with one another now."

Theo, Jack, Shellshock and Buster all growled angrily as the warden escorted them back into the prison block. Sonic smirked at the four as they were escorted away but the smile left his face as he sat back down against the wall. He stared up at the sky and began thinking to himself

"I really do wonder who's framed me and Tails and how the evidence has convinced the police so much its us?" he thought aloud "Something really doesn't add up and I'm sure I'll find out what it is."

He racked his brain for an answer but he couldn't find any answer anywhere no matter how hard he thought. Then he began to think about the tape Melchett had shown Queen Sally Acorn to convince her the criminals were Sonic and Tails. Maybe the tape had the reason why the cops are so certain he and Tails were the criminals. And maybe the tape could give him the evidence needed to prove their innocence. Sonic then snapped his fingers in realization. He knew what he needed to do now! He needed to get to Empire City and demand to see the tape and see if he can find out who the real criminals are and how they've tricked the police into thinking it was him and Tails! Then suddenly the bell for exercise time was over and all the prisoners began to file back into the cell blockade. Sonic emerged from his hiding place and ran over to the other prisoners. The warden ticked them off one by one was they filed into the blockade. Sonic ran over to the warden and tapped him on the shoulder. The warden looked at Sonic crossly.

"What do you want traitor?" he asked "Why aren't you in the queue with the other prisoners?"

"Can you take me to Empire City?" asked Sonic "I am respectfully demanding to see the surveillance tape that Melchett got from the robbed jewellery store."

"And why do you want to see the tape then?" asked the warden "Is this a last minute attempt at proving your innocence?"

"In a way yes." said Sonic "I'm sure I can work out how the criminals have framed us if you just kindly let me look at the tape."

The warden thought for a moment and with a heavy sigh he said.

"OK. I'll take you to Empire City right now. But I hope this won't all be for nothing."

"I have a feeling it won't be." said Sonic.

And with that, the warden held Sonic firmly by the arm and took him through the prison block and into the car park. He put Sonic in a hovering police car, got in the car himself and drove off to Empire City. Sonic prayed to himself that the tape would be able to prove his and Tails' innocence. If not then all hope would be lost…

Back at Castle Acorn, Nicole was sitting in the lounge reading a book quietly to herself. As she read the book to herself she couldn't help but wonder how Sally was doing with Melchett the Hedgehog at the MPD station. Then right on cue, the front doors opened and in walked a rather miserable looking Sally Acorn. Nicole put the book down and got up from her chair to greet her.

"Hi Sally, how did it go?" she asked, hoping for a good answer.

Sally looked at Nicole, her eyes still brimming with tears and her cheeks wet from crying. Nicole caught those signs and began to assume that she wasn't going to get a good answer.

"Oh Nicole, Melchett was right." said Sally miserably "Sonic and

Tails did rob a jewellery store! Melchett showed me the surveillance tape from the store and it showed Sonic robbing the store at his trademark speed and Tails was pulling faces at the camera!"

Nicole was so shocked she almost fell over backwards. She staggered backwards and sat herself down in her chair so she couldn't faint. She hadn't been this shocked since the time Sonic became Mecha Sonic or even when Sally's parents were murdered by Marik the Martian.

"Sally, this cannot be true!" gasped Nicole "Sonic and Tails would never betray us like this! They would never rob a store even if their lives depended on it!"

"I know Nicole." said Sally "Which is why I'm sure the tape was forged or they're being framed by look-a-likes. I'm going to try and find evidence to prove that Sonic and Tails are innocent! Melchett may not believe it but I know those two are still on our side I just know it!"

"I have a feeling that the boys are innocent too." said Nicole "I'll help you try to clear their names if you wish Sally."

"That would be very nice Nicole." said Sally "Now, where do we start?"

Outside, Scourge and Ginger were standing on a hillside behind Castle Acorn and admiring it from up top.

"Isn't it a beauty Ginger?" asked Scourge.

"It most certainly is." said Ginger "I've always dreamed of seeing this castle in real life and here it is, right in front of me now! I'm so glorified I could just squeal right now!"

"Well don't squeal near me or you'll look like a wuss and I don't like wusses." said Scourge crossly "Now, follow my lead ginger boy."

Scourge ran down the hill with Ginger flying after him. After getting down the hill they ran to the front doors of the castle and stopped and waited for a moment.

"OK, here we go!" cried Scourge, getting into a spin-dash and launching himself at a window.

CRAAAAAAASSSSSSSSHHHHHHHH!

Scourge smashed his way through the window with one mighty spin-dash and shards of glass were sent hurling everywhere. Sally and Nicole were so shocked by the smash they nearly jumped up high and got their heads stuck in the ceiling. They ran into the hallway to see what it was and they saw Scourge standing before them with his sunglasses over his eyes and a wide toothy grin on his face.

"Yo ladies wassup?" he said tauntingly.

"Scourge the Hedgehog?" squealed Sally "Oh no, not you! What are you doing here?"

"I'll give you three guesses your royal doofus." said Scourge.

"You're not here to try and usurp the throne from me are you?" asked Sally.

"Duh! Of course I am!" snapped Scourge "And if that wasn't enough, I have an assistant."

Right on cue, Ginger flew into the hallway and waved at Sally.

"Greetings former Queen of Mobotropolis." he said with a rude smile.

"Who the heck is he?" asked Nicole.

"I am Ginger, Tails' cousin and Scourge's apprentice." said Ginger "Me and Scourge are the ones responsible for framing Sonic and Tails and getting them put into prison when they haven't done anything wrong…"

"GARBAGE BRAIN!" roared Scourge.

And with that he gave Ginger an uppercut so hard that Ginger flew backwards into the air and straight back out the broken window! He landed with a thump headfirst on the ground outside.

"It's supposed to be a secret you dumbass!" snarled Scourge.

"Sorry sir." said Ginger groggily as he tried to climb back through the window.

Sally glared at Scourge with her beautiful blue eyes.

"You and the ginger fox are responsible for framing Sonic and Tails?" she said "I should have known. There's only you in the whole wide world who looks like Sonic and has a criminal record!"

"And yet the dumbo policemen and even you were fooled." sneered Scourge "Proves how slow-witted you are."

Then suddenly he was hit in the face by a flying kick from Sally. Scourge fell over backwards onto his back.

"First you frame the biggest hero on Mobius and now you're here to try and take over the castle!" Sally said angrily "You are in a heap of trouble at the end of the day Scourge and I'm going to make sure you get put back in jail for this!"

"Shut it you royal brat!" snarled Scourge, getting back to his feet and spin-dashing Sally in the stomach.

Ginger climbed back into the hallway and tried to help Scourge attack Sally but he was hit in the face by a flying kick from Nicole.

"You are a horrible little boy!" yelled Nicole "Framing your own cousin like that! Have you no shame?"

"Yes I have no shame." said Ginger, trying to punch the lynx but Nicole dodged his blows "Tails is an imbecile and I gave him what he deserved! Tails is locked away like a wild animal and I'm going to be assistant ruler alongside Scourge when he takes over this kingdom!"

"Oh no you're not!" yelled Nicole, elbowing Ginger in the gut.

Then suddenly she was spin-dashed from behind by Scourge. Nicole was sent falling on to her tummy and Scourge pinned her down. He grabbed her arm and forced it behind her back. Nicole

winced as pain began to flood up her arm.

"Ginger, you need fighting lessons if you're letting a mere lady-in-waiting beat the cuss outta ya!" said Scourge meanly.

"Sorry Scourge." said Ginger.

Sally got back to her feet and ran over to help Nicole but Ginger let her have it in the face with both feet. Sally was knocked onto her back.

"How's that for fighting?" sneered Ginger.

"Oh anyone can do that Ginger." said Scourge ungratefully "That doesn't make you tough though."

"Scourge, please stop hurting me!" begged Nicole as Scourge suddenly gave her arm a sharp twist.

Then for some strange reason, Scourge did so and let go of her arm. He got off Nicole and scooped her up onto his shoulder.

"I've got a good place for you two." he said "Ginger, get the Queen."

Ginger obeyed and picked Sally up by the arms. Then Scourge and Ginger carried Sally and Nicole through the hallway and Scourge led them to the dungeons. Scourge had never been in Castle Acorn before but he had a rough guess where the dungeons where and his guess was correct. Scourge and Ginger carried the girls inside and Scourge made them stand against the wall and rise up their arms. Ginger flew up to the height their arms were raised at and he snapped a couple of shackles around their wrists. Now Sally and Nicole were chained to the wall and unable to do anything about it. Scourge laughed at them.

"Look at yourself oh so high and mighty Queen Sally Acorn!" he cackled "You've quickly diminished to nothing but a lowly prisoner in my castle! I do hope you're not too humiliated!"

"I'm not humiliated at all." said Sally, tugging on her chains feebly "You let me and Nicole go right now!"

"Sorry toots but I'm afraid the answer is no." said Scourge "You can stay here until your body rots away while I take your throne and make Mobius mine. So you won't be needing this anymore will you?"

He snatched Sally's crown from right off her head and put it on his own head. Just putting the crown on made Scourge feel all powerful and mighty. Ginger bowed down to him respectfully.

"All hail King Scourge!" he said "The new king of Mobotropolis, soon to be king of the world!"

"Thank you squirt." said Scourge "Now if you'll excuse me ladies, I've got a castle to redecorate into my image."

"Don't you dare!" warned Sally.

Scourge ignored her and marched out of the dungeons with Ginger scuttling behind him like a lap dog. Scourge slammed the door behind him, making a loud echoing clang that rung through Sally and Nicole's ears. Nicole's ears drooped back in despair and looked at Sally worriedly.

"Oh Sally, what's going to become of us?" she fretted "We're going to perish in here aren't we?"

"I just hope someone gets Sonic outta prison so he can stop his power hungry brother and get us outta here." said Sally "I'm not spending the rest of my life in here."

"I don't think anyone will be able to help Sonic or Tails now." said Nicole sadly "I think we're stuck here forever and Scourge has well and truly won."

"Nicole, don't lose hope." said Sally "Don't forget there's still other people like Amy, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy who might be able to help us."

"But will they be able to take down Scourge?" fretted Nicole "He's probably just as strong as Sonic so he won't be easy."

"I hope so Nicole." said Sally, looking up at the ceiling above her and then looking down at her feet. "I hope so."

Meanwhile, exercise time was over for the prisoners at the MPD station in Empire City and they had all been escorted back to their cells. However Tails had managed to sneak into a workshop and steal some tools so he could fix Marik's voltage compactor and he had spent the whole time fixing it. Exercise time was over before he could finish but luckily he only needed a screwdriver to finish the job so he hid the screwdriver in his back pocket and returned to his cell with Marik. Once they had been shut away, Tails began tightening a few things on Marik's metal hand with the stolen screwdriver.

"OK, just to tighten this last piece here and…its done." he said.

He tightened the last bit and put the screwdriver down.

"OK Marik, give it a test." said Tails.

Marik pointed a finger as sharp as a steak knife at the bed in the left hand corner of the cell and just as he was hoping to do, he fired a brilliant jolt of electricity at it. He singed the covers and the sheets of the bed and left a big black burn mark on them. Marik smiled happily at his fixed hand.

"Brilliant!" he said "I can electrocute people again! Thank you Tails."

"You're welcome." said Tails "But I do hope you're going to use that thing for good instead of evil."

"Tails, I'm changing my wicked ways once I get out of here." said Marik "I will only use my electric powers for good now. I can't imagine many criminals getting away from someone like me."

"OK then." said Tails "Now listen Marik, I think I have a plan on how we can get outta here."

"You have a plan?" said Marik "Well I do hope it's a good one."

"It is a good one." retorted Tails "Now listen carefully."

He pulled Marik close and whispered his plan to him. Marik smiled wickedly at what he was hearing.

"Tails, that really is a good plan." said Marik "With your brilliant brain and my strength and powers, we're bound to get out!"

"Yes, yes Marik but please don't kill anyone." begged Tails "That's not going to set a good example."

"I give my word that I will not rid anyone of their lives here." said Marik "Besides, why would I want to kill anyone since I'm good now?"

"Hmm…" said Tails suspiciously.

Then he heard the sound of General Chipper walking by, making sure everybody was back in their cells. Now was the time for step one of the escape plan. Tails and Marik got to their feet and pretended to have an argument just as General Chipper walked past.

"Hey Marik! I thought I told you to leave me alone!" griped Tails "Why don't you pick on someone your own size?"

"What are you gonna do about it shrimpy?" sneered Marik "Tickle me to death with your twin paintbrushes?"

And with that, Tails and Marik pretended to fight each other. Marik tackled Tails and pinned him down while Tails tried to push Marik off of him. General Chipper noticed the scuffle and immediately opened the door to run in and break up the fight.

"Oy! Oy! Break it up you two!" ordered General Chipper "Cellmates are supposed to play nicely!"

Tails and Marik stopped fighting and ran straight past General Chipper and out of the prison cell! Marik closed the door immediately after leaving so General Chipper was trapped in their cell. General Chipper an up to the door and pounded against it.

"Oy! You let me out this minute!" he yelled at Marik.

Marik just stuck his orange tongue out at him and ran away. He caught up with Tails who had just made it out of the cell blockade.

"Well that was way too easy!" he said "But I don't think the others will be so easy to get past!"

"Don't worry." said Marik "The rest will just be a walk in the park."

Then suddenly something very big and very heavy tackled Tails from behind and sat on him. It was Big Dave and he had a pair of handcuffs with him. Marik stopped running and saw Big Dave trying to apprehend Tails.

"Now I'll just put these thingies on your wrists and then you'll go back to your cell." said Big Dave, snapping the handcuffs on Tails.

But for some reason, he cuffed Tails' tails instead of his wrists.

"Big Dave you big galoot! Why did you just handcuff my tails?" asked Tails.

"Oops, sorry." said Big Dave goofily, realizing his mistake "Shall I take them off?"

"You get off Tails you blundering blockhead!" snarled Marik, swiping the air with his arms and hitting Big Dave with an energy wave.

Big Dave was knocked off of Tails and he rolled across the floor like a beach ball. Marik helped Tails onto his feet and the two ran for it again.

"Thanks for saving me Marik." said Tails.

"Well you fixed my metal hand and you're helping me escape now so I felt like I owed you one so I got that fat cop off you." said Marik "I do hope he won't be too mad about it."

Then suddenly they were both stopped dead in their tracks by Melchett the Hedgehog. He pointed a pistol at them, sideways of course.

"You two are going to get back in your cells or I'm going to pop your guts full of lead." snarled Melchett.

"Why are you holding your gun sideways when everybody else

holds them all the way up?" asked Tails.

"It looks cool." said Melchett "Now get back in your cell, now!"

"I think not wretched cop!" bellowed Marik.

He pointed his finger like a dagger at Melchett at let fly a terrific electrical surge that pulsed up Melchett body and made him drop the gun. Melchett screamed loudly as electrical shocks began to surge up and down his body like a current. Tails grabbed Marik by the shoulder and began yelling at him.

"Marik, that's enough! That's enough!" he yelled "Please stop it!"

Marik was reluctant to stop since he hated Melchett so much for his unkind remarks to him during his time in prison but he knew he had to since he was changing his wicked ways. Marik stopped electrocuting Melchett and he left the police-hog panting and gasping on the floor.

"I cannot tell you how much I've been looking forward to zapping that moustached moron." said Marik "Melchett is the most annoying, unkind policeman I've ever seen in my life!"

"I'll say." said Tails "His speech is never delicate, even to his own men. And he's such a stooge too since he stupidly believes that me and Sonic are robbers."

"Agreed." said Marik, glaring at Melchett "This cop takes stupidity to the next level doesn't he? I think he should be fired and replaced with a much better cop."

Melchett raised his head and glared at Marik and Tails with his amber eyes. He looked like he was about ready to kill them both.

"Oooooh! You're in so much trouble you two savages!" he growled.

"Oh shut up!" snapped Marik, giving Melchett another zap.

This time he only kept it up for three seconds and then he and Tails ran for it again, leaving Melchett sprawling on the floor and trying to get his breath back. Big Dave ran over to Melchett and looked at him

with a gormless grin on his face.

"Hey Melchett! You look funny!" he said "Are you trying to be a carpet?"

"Shut up you big baboon!" snapped Melchett "Get General Chipper and then me and you will apprehend Tails and Marik and escort them back to their cells!"

"Yes sir." said Big Dave, running away to find General Chipper.

Melchett picked up his pistol and staggered to his feet. As he watched Tails and Marik disappear down the corridor, he scowled to himself.

"How the heck did Marik zap me like that?" he wondered "He's never done it before."

Meanwhile, Tails and Marik had finally made it out of the station and they ran across the exercise yard and towards the wall which was the only obstacle left for them to overcome. Once they made it over the wall, they would be free. They ran up to the wall and stared up at it helplessly. It was a very tall wall and it was covered with barbed wire at the top. They would cut themselves pretty badly if they tried to climb over that.

"So genius, what do we do now?" asked Marik.

"Well I can't fly us over the wall since Big Dave handcuffed my tails together." said Tails, looking bitterly at his cuffed tails "Why don't you fly us over Marik?" he asked.

"My shoes were damaged from the explosion too." said Marik, showing Tails the bottom of his shoes which were heavily cracked "So I can't fly anymore."

"Well why didn't you tell me that?" asked Tails, annoyed at this revelation "I could have fixed your shoes for you while I was fixing your hand!"

"I forgot." said Marik "And I didn't think I'd need them fixing since you could have just flown us over the wall but you can't now so we need

a plan."

"How about I give you a leg up and you hoist yourself onto the wall and then once you're up there you can pull me up." said Tails "Although we need to do something about the barbed wire at the top."

"No problem." said Marik, swiping the air with both arms.

He sent an energy wave soaring into the thick mass of barbed wire and the waved sliced the wires to pieces, leaving a wide clean empty space for Tails and Marik to safely climb onto and over. Marik smiled at himself and he took his ragged old robe off, revealing his still gleaming black leather jacket and he folded the robe up so small it looked more like a small envelope and he put the robe into his pocket.

"Don't need the robe since I'm not cold anymore." said Marik "Now Tails, let's do this shall we?"

"OK." said Tails.

He put both his hands together and Marik put his foot onto them. Marik hoisted himself up and stretched as far as he could so he could reach the top of the wall. Tails grunted loudly as he tried to lift Marik up and keep him up without falling over. Tails managed to lift Marik high enough to reach the top of the wall with his fingertips. Marik gripped the edge of the wall and tried as hard as he could to pull himself onto the wall. He felt himself slipping so he dug his metal claws into the wall to stop himself falling. He then threw one of his legs onto the top of the wall and using his leg, he pulled himself onto the top. He wrenched his claws free of the wall and bent over to help Tails. Then suddenly, Melchett the Hedgehog, Big Dave and General Chipper burst out of the station and began running towards Tails with batons in their hands.

"They're escaping! Stop them!" cried Melchett.

Marik watched the policemen coming towards them and Tails began hoping up and down desperately.

"Marik! Marik! Help me!" cried Tails "The police are coming! Help me get over! Marik! Marik!"

Marik looked down at Tails and grinned a wicked evil grin that could make anyone shudder.

"Where's your precious Sonic now Tails?" he said wickedly.

Tails stopped hopping up and down and stared at Marik in disbelief. His eyes widened and his jaw dropped in horror. Marik wouldn't would he?

"Bye-bye!" said Marik, waving goodbye to Tails and leaping over onto the other side of the wall, laughing demonically.

Tails' heart stopped and his stomach felt sick. Marik hadn't changed at all! He was tricking the poor fox into helping him escape all along! Now he had just freed the most dangerous villain on Mobius and there was nothing he could do about it since he and Sonic were in prison! Tails began to growl in anger.

"Marik! I'll kill you for this!" screeched Tails.

Then suddenly he was tackled from behind by Melchett, Big Dave and General Chipper. They whacked him in the back with their batons and they snapped a pair of handcuffs onto his wrists. Then they hauled the fox onto his feet and dragged him away.

"Boy, you have just freed Marik the Martian!" growled Melchett "I hope you're happy you filthy little traitor!"

"I'm not happy at all!" retorted Tails "Marik tricked me into helping him escape! I had no idea he was stringing me all along! If I had known he was tricking me I wouldn't have done this!"

"I don't give a flying monkeys on what excuses you have now Tails!" snapped Melchett "You are convicted of robbery and now you will do extra time for helping one of our prisoners escape! I doubt you'll ever taste freedom again little boy!"

As for Marik, he had been listening to the struggle from the other side of the wall and he smiled happily at what Melchett had been

saying to Tails. He laughed demonically to himself and he tore up clumps of soil and threw them into the air.

"Free! I'm…FREE! FREE AT LAST!" he bellowed at the sky and continued laughing.

"That fox is such a gullible prat isn't he?" he sneered to himself "He should have remembered I'm a peace hater and peace haters don't turn good no matter what! Well I'm grateful to him for freeing me from that wretched prison!" he added "Now I'm free to cause mayhem and malice once again!"

And with that, he activated his jet shoes and he rocketed off at the fastest speed he could go, laughing a loud, grating, demonic laugh. Who knew what plans Marik the Martian had for Mobius right now since he was free to cause trouble again…

At the village of Knothole, Sonic's pink hedgehog friend Amy Rose had heard the news all about Sonic and Tails' "store robbery" and she had been a depressed, broken hearted little soul all day. The news had surprised and shocked her so much she spent the whole morning crying her eyes out and now she was spending the afternoon outside in the back garden feeling down in the dumps. Her friends Cream the Rabbit and Cosmo the Seedrian tried all they could to assure her Sonic and Tails weren't really criminals and that they were still good guys but Amy wouldn't have any of it. In order to leave her in peace, Cream and Cosmo decided to stay in doors and talk to each other. They for one didn't believe that Sonic and Tails would ever rob a jewellery store under their own actions, they were certain something was wrong.

"What do you think about this whole jewellery store robbery Cosmo?" asked Cream.

"I don't know what to think Cream." said Cosmo sadly "But I'm sure Sonic and Tails are innocent. They must be being framed or something. I know they would never do a thing like that, especially Tails. If he was a criminal he wouldn't have stood up for me when Marik threatened my life the time he tried to take over the

kingdom***."

"I agree Cosmo." said Cream "But who would be clever enough to frame Mr. Sonic and Tails? Maybe Dr. Eggman's done this?"

"Chao." said her pet Chao Cheese unsurely.

"I don't think a robot would be convincing enough to frame Sonic and Tails." said Cosmo "Even Metal Sonic isn't an exact copy of him, he looks different enough for you to tell it isn't Sonic."

"Well maybe Dr. Eggman was using mind control to make them rob the store." suggested Cream "It's a possibility after all."

"Maybe it was mind control." said Cosmo "But if it was, how did Eggman mind control them both?"

"I dunno." said Cream "But I bet he did it in a clever way."

Then suddenly there was some loud knocking at Amy's front door that made Cosmo and Cream jump out of their shoes. The back door opened and in walked Amy Rose. She had obviously heard the knocking from in the garden so she had come in to answer it. Amy walked over to the front door, scuffing her feet and she opened it. Fellow fighter Bunnie Rabbot was there and she looked frantic.

"Oh Bunnie, hello." said Amy "Did you hear about Sonic and Tails…"

"Nevah mind that for a minute sugah-plum!" flustered Bunnie "Ah was walkin' to Castle Acorn to say hi to Queen Sally Acorn but ah saw something terrible!"

Amy, Cosmo and Cream all stared at Bunnie wide eyed and opened mouthed as she explained to them what was going on.

"Scourge has ransacked the castle and he's locked Sally and Nicole away so he can take over the kingdom!" shrieked Bunnie.

"Oh my gosh!" blurted Amy "Scourge is trying to take over the castle? We need to save it before he takes over the whole kingdom!"

"But Amy, we can't beat Scourge without Sonic." said Cosmo "You know we can't."

"I know we can't beat Scourge without Sonic but I also know we can't let Scourge win." said Amy, whipping out her Piko-Piko hammer "We've got to try. If we bring Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy with us, we may have an edge since there's seven of us and only one of him."

"I hope you're right Miss Rose." said Cream, hugging Cheese worriedly.

"OK girls, let's go!" ordered Amy, marching out of the house with her weapon in hand "We'll defeat Scourge in the name of Sonic the Hedgehog and save the kingdom!"

Bunnie, Cream and Cosmo followed her as she headed out of Knothole and onto Castle Acorn…

Footnotes:

*** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 2: The Cosmo and Cream Adventure* for the whole story!**

**** See Story 24**

*****See Story 23**

Talk about things getting worse! Castle Acorn's under siege, Marik's free and Tails is just in MORE trouble! Will Sonic be able to prove his innocence just in time to save the day? Will Sonic's friends be able to save the kingdom? And will someone shove a grenade up Ginger's ass and blow him to pieces? (God I wish!) Join me next time for the finale to the Ruthless Relatives trilogy! Reviews are welcome.

Special thanks to Kratos Pwns again and banjobandicoot52 for your reviews. They mean a lot to me. :)

Ruthless Relatives Part 3

Story 35: Ruthless Relatives Part 3: Family Fight

"Now this isn't a bad little throne room isn't it?" said Scourge as he admired the redecorated throne room "It really shows off my greatness doesn't it?"

The walls to the throne room had been repainted green, black and gold to represent Scourge's favourite colours, all the family portraits had been taken down and replaced with portraits of Scourge which were drawn by Ginger himself. Ginger was a talented artist and he happened to be exceptionally quick at drawing so he had drawn all five portraits in only two hours. The throne had been remoulded so it had a sculpted image of Scourge's face on the top. Scourge sat in the comfy throne and marvelled at the new, improved throne room. Ginger bowed down respectfully at Scourge's feet.

"Oh great king Scourge the Hedgehog, how may I serve you?" he asked.

"Just get outta here and leave me in peace for a minute shorty." snapped Scourge ungratefully.

"Oh, OK." said Ginger, a little disappointed at the fact Scourge didn't want him around "Hey your majesty, can I go to the prison Tails is in so I can mercilessly taunt him?"

"Do what you want." said Scourge "I'm not bothered right now. I've got more redecorating to do."

"Oh thank you sire!" said Ginger "I'll be right back!"

And with that, Ginger skipped out of the room and shut the door, laughing merrily to himself. The moment Ginger left the room, Scourge smiled happily and he put his arms behind his head.

"Aaaah, this is the life." he said "I'm finally going to be king of Mobius. The whole world will bow beneath my feet and everybody

will have to do as I say. I'm going to get the title I deserve and no one will be able to stop me, not even my wimpy brother Sonic the Hedgehog."

He stroked the crown on his head and smiled even wider.

"This crown gives me a feeling of power and greatness." he said "I am powerful and I am great so it's fitting. Hopefully the people of Mobius will appreciate my power and greatness. Well if they don't, I have some good punishments for them!"

Then suddenly the throne room door swung open and Bunnie Rabbot bust into the room with a wild and angry look on her face. Scourge jumped in surprise and glared at her.

"What do you think you're doing bursting in on me like this?" snarled Scourge "Can't a king have any privacy around here?"

"Ya'll are not a king Scourge!" said Bunnie coldly "You are gettin' a beating from us!"

And with that she extended her robot arm and seized Scourge by the neck. The crown fell off his head and onto the floor. Bunnie hoisted Scourge into the air and threw him straight out of the window. Scourge hurtled out of the window and landed sharply on his back down below. Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy were all waiting for him on the ground and once Scourge had landed, they pounced on him in a dog pile to pin him down. Bunnie flew out of the window and joined in. Unfortunately, they didn't keep him pinned down for long. Scourge, somehow, managed to throw everybody off of him. Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Geoffrey, Wilson, Mandy and Bunnie were all sent sprawling everywhere. Scourge leapt to his feet and glared at everybody.

"You jerks! That's not a nice way to treat your new king you know!" griped Scourge.

"You're not a king Scourge, you're a wannabe king!" said Amy, getting up on her feet "Not only that, you're also a villain and a bully! Sally would never hand her crown over to you!"

"The royal brat didn't hand the crown over to me." said Scourge smugly "I took it by force, I've taken the castle by force and the throne room is redecorated into my image so this kingdom is mine!"

"Oh no it's not." said Geoffrey St. John, loading his arm mounted crossbow and aiming it at Scourge "You need clearance from the Council of Acorn before you can become ruler you blighter!"

"I don't need stupid clearance from a stupid council!" bellowed Scourge "I'll just stomp this so called Council of Acorn into the dirt and make my own council that will give me the rights to rule!"

"In yer dreams you blackguard!" yelled Geoffrey.

He leaped into the air and dropkicked Scourge in the forehead. Scourge toppled over backwards and before he could recover, Bunnie Rabbot grabbed him with her robotic arm and threw him straight into the air. Scourge hurtled straight up like a whacked baseball. Then Bunnie flew up into the air after him and punched him on top of his head so he hurtled straight down. Before Scourge could land on the ground, Wilson and Mandy both leaped up and double teamed him with a kick to the back each. This just got Scourge angry and he decided to do something about it. Before Wilson and Mandy could attack again, he rolled up into a ball and spin-dashed them both. The dog and mouse were sent hurling backwards and rolling over in roly-poly style.

"Blimey! I wonder if Sonic's spin-dashes hurt that much!" gasped Wilson, wincing in pain.

"I don't think he does since he's not as brutal as this guy." spluttered Mandy, clutching her stomach.

Geoffrey pounced on Scourge and an attempt to attack him but Scourge leaped up and dropkicked him in the face.

"How's that you smelly old skunk?" sneered Scourge "I'm not sure what stinks more, you or your fighting skills."

"The only thing that smells around here is you!" shrieked Amy, trying to hit Scourge with her hammer but missing by a mile after Scourge

ducked.

Scourge then slugged Amy hard in the stomach, causing her to drop her hammer and drop to the ground on her knees. Scourge had punched her so hard she felt like she had a tummy ache. Scourge picked Amy's hammer up and threw it away. He smiled smugly at the pink girl.

"I know about your fondness for Sonic pinkie." he said to her "But I can easily see why he runs away from you. With a temper and bad fighting skills like that I can't imagine Sonic and you ever getting lucky, I bet Sonic would sooner run to Holoska then be with you."

Amy really wanted to give Scourge a knuckle sandwich right now but the pain in her stomach was too great. Then suddenly Cream and Cheese grabbed Scourge by the quills and pulled him backwards away from Amy.

"Ouch! Let go you ruffians!" growled Scourge.

"You are going to stop being so mean to everybody!" yelled Cream as she continued to pull "And you're not ruling over the planet!"

"Chao!" agreed Cheese.

Scourge suddenly went into a spin-dash and because Cream and Cheese were holding on, they were spun around with Scourge. Scourge now looked like a green and brownish spinning ball as he spun around. Eventually Cream and Cheese lost their grip and they were propelled off of Scourge. Scourge hurtled towards Cream and began to pull on her ears.

"Ow!" yelped Cream as Scourge tugged on her long floppy ears.

"You think it's funny to pull people's appendages? Well let's see how you like it!" said Scourge wickedly.

"Please don't hurt her!" begged Cosmo, stepping into help Cream.

"Shut it you alien brat!" snarled Scourge, giving Cosmo a terrific uppercut.

Cosmo fell onto her back and Scourge pulled on her delicate leafy hair. Cosmo tried not to yelp in pain.

"Speaking of aliens, what planet are you from?" snorted Scourge as he observed Cosmo "The Planet of Trees? Does this mean when I stomp on you, you will squish any differently to the others?"

Cosmo's eyes widened and she shook like a million leaves.

"You will not harm Cosmo you power hungry tyrant!" shouted Amy, successfully walloping Scourge with her hammer and sending him flying through the air like a tossed stone.

Scourge staggered back to his feet but was soon knocked over again by a punch from Bunnie Rabbot's robot arm. The Mobians surrounded Scourge and prepared to seize him.

"You've lost Scourge now make this easy on yourself and surrender." said Amy "That way we won't use brute force on you."

"Surrender? SURRENDER?" shrieked Scourge "ME? Surrender to the likes of you? I think…NOT!"

And with that he leaped onto his feet and began to run around the group in one big circle. He ran around them faster and faster and faster until he was nothing more then a big, green blurry circle surrounding the fighters.

"What's he doing?" shrieked Cream.

"I know what this is!" cried Mandy "I've seen Sonic do this before!"

"Same here!" said Wilson "He's doing a Sonic Tornado!"

And right on the mark was Wilson. Scourge was indeed doing a Sonic Tornado. He called it the Death Tornado instead of Sonic Tornado though since he thought the Death Tornado sounded better. Scourge picked up so much speed that a tornado was beginning to form in the centre of the circle and everybody was picked up in the terrifying tornado. They were spun around and around as if they were on a supersonic merry-go-round ride and there was no way of escaping it. Then suddenly, everybody was

flung out of the tornado and they were sent crashing everywhere. Amy, Cream and Cosmo all crashed into Castle Acorn, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy crashed into the ground and Bunnie landed in a tree somewhere on the outskirts of Mobotropolis. Scourge stopped running around and he panted heavily.

"pant! pant! That Death Tornado…gasp!…works every time!" he wheezed "Pity it tires…you out so much after…wards…"

Scourge glanced at his defeated enemies and he smiled wickedly to himself.

"I really have out done myself this time." he said to himself "Now the junior league is squished, I can lock them up along with the Queen and lynx woman."

And with that, he ran around at supersonic speed, gathering up the unconscious Mobians as he went. Once he had gathered everybody up, he ran into Castle Acorn, took them into the dungeon, chained them all to the wall and left the room. And he did all that in about five minutes if my watch was correct. Sally and Nicole glanced despairingly at the unconscious fighters who were now in their position.

"Great." muttered Sally "The combined forces of Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot, Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse weren't enough to bring Scourge down! If this lot couldn't take out Scourge then Sonic has no chance."

"I think you're right Sally." said Nicole, looking on the verge of tears right now "We're doomed to perish in here and Mobius is doomed to be ruled by Scourge!"

Or was it…?

Meanwhile at the Empire City MPD station, Tails had been put back into his cell and they had removed the handcuffs from his two tails but they left the handcuffs on his wrists on. He sat at the back of the

cell with his back turned on everybody and his face looking down at the floor. He had spent the whole time crying to himself mostly because he was no better then before and he had unknowingly been duped into helping Marik the Martian escape. Sonic was going to be furious with him when he found that out. The only good thing to come out of all this was the fact Tails didn't have Marik as a cellmate anymore, and even that wasn't good enough.

How could I have been so stupid? Tails thought to himself between snivels. *How did I fail to notice Marik was tricking me? I should have known Marik would never change his evil ways! Oh how did I fall for such an obvious trick? How? HOW?*

His thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the arrival of General Chipper outside his cell. He opened the cell door but Tails kept his back turned on him.

"Tails, you have a visitor." said General Chipper "It's someone you know apparently."

"I'm not in the mood for visitors General." mumbled Tails gloomily, keeping his head hanging low.

"Oh." said General Chipper "Well I'll send him in anyway, I'm sure this visitor will make you feel better."

"How can I feel better when I'm locked up for something I didn't do?" mumbled Tails.

Luckily, General Chipper didn't hear him. The visitor walked inside Tails' cell and General Chipper closed the door behind the visitor.

"You have ten minutes and then I'm letting you out." said General Chipper "I'm going to check on the others."

The visitor waved to the general and General Chipper walked off further down the blockade. The visitor walked up to Tails and spoke to him.

"Hello cousin." he said dryly.

Tails' ears pricked up but he kept his back turned on him and his

head down. He knew that voice; it was a voice he hoped he would never hear again. It was Ginger the Fox, his wormy cousin and the reason life was hard for him a few years ago.

"Oh great, my wormy cousin's come here to make me feel worse!" moaned Tails "Can my life get any worse?"

"It's lovely to see you too cousin." said Ginger mockingly "So how's life been for you since my departure?"

"A lot better without you, you slimy toad." mumbled Tails "But now it's taken a turn for the worse since I've been accused of something I haven't done along with Sonic the Hedgehog and the stupid police won't believe me. And now you're here to gloat in my face no doubt."

"I am indeed." said Ginger "I can't tell you how happy I am to see you locked up like a wild animal. You've finally gotten what you deserve you dirty little scab!"

And he laughed a stupid, pathetic evil laugh. Tails tried to resist the urge to mash Ginger into toothpaste and tried to ignore him. Ginger continued.

"I always knew you would end up like this cousin." he said "I think this just shows you who's the smarter out of us. You chose the life of a superhero; I chose the life of a normal person and who's come out better? Me of course! I'm free as a songbird and enjoying myself and you're here in a dusky prison cell where you'll be spending the rest of your life in."

Tails was beginning to lose his temper now.

"If only you weren't so stubborn and you listened to me instead of being your own person, you wouldn't be in this mess would you cousin?" sneered Ginger "Oh and would you like to hear a secret?"

Tails didn't answer but Ginger decided to tell him anyway.

"Just between you and me, I know who framed you and Sonic." whispered Ginger "Would you like to know who they were dear cousin?"

"Yes." snapped Tails.

Ginger smiled darkly and whispered into Tails' ear.

"The framers are me and Sonic's brother Scourge."

That did it, Tails cracked. He leapt to his feet and turned around to face Ginger, his face contorted with rage.

"WHAT?" he shrieked at the top of his voice "YOU AND SCOURGE FRAMED ME AND SONIC? HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A THING?"

"I hate you." said Ginger "And Scourge hates Sonic so we decided to get rid of you both so you two would stop making our lives miserable. And now you and Sonic are locked away, Scourge has successfully taken over Castle Acorn and he's going to become king! Try and stop that if you can!"

Tails growled like a lion and he tugged so hard on his handcuffs he actually managed to snap them in half! Ginger was gobsmacked and even Tails was surprised, he never knew he was that strong. Ginger immediately panicked and he ran over to the cell door, pounding on it feebly and shrieking.

"HELP! LET ME OUT! TAILS IS GOING CRAZY!" he screamed.

Tails grabbed Ginger by the neck and pinned him to the wall. He looked like he wanted to tear the stupid fox apart limb from limb and he was so angry I swear to god his face turned from yellow to red!

"You slimy ugly old toad!" snarled Tails "You will tell General Chipper the truth or I am going to make you suffer even worse then you made me suffer!"

"Tails please! You wouldn't hurt your own cousin would you?" pleaded Ginger.

"Why shouldn't I? You hurt me so I think I should hurt you to see how you like it!" yelled Tails "Now tell General Chipper the truth NOW!"

"I can't stupid head, we're locked in here." scoffed Ginger.

Then suddenly General Chipper walked past the cell and opened it up. He was not pleased at what he was seeing at all.

"What on Mobius is going on here?" shrieked the police chipmunk.

"My cousin has a confession to make." said Tails "Go on Ginger, tell him!"

Ginger scowled at Tails and turned to face General Chipper. The chipmunk cop looked at him sternly and tapped his foot, waiting for an answer. Ginger reluctantly spoke.

"OK I confess!" he blurted, falling onto his knees "I did it! Me and Scourge the Hedgehog robbed that stupid jewellery store, not Sonic and Tails! They're innocent! You were fooled now lock me up forever so I'm safe from this crazy lunatic!"

General Chipper was overcome with shock.

"Oh my god!" he blurted "You teamed up with that evil maniac Scourge to frame Sonic and Tails?"

"Yes!" wailed Ginger "Yes we did! We disguised ourselves as them so you were fooled by us!"

General Chipper's face turned into a scowl.

"Well young man, you are in big, big trouble!" he growled "How could you trick us like this! Tails, give Ginger your prison uniform."

"Gladly." said Tails, taking the orange uniform off and tossing it to Ginger.

Ginger scowled at Tails and he put the outfit on. Ginger did not like the way he looked in the outfit at all. General Chipper shoved Ginger into the prison cell and he closed the door. Tails put his thumbs to his head, wiggled his fingers blew a raspberry at Ginger.

"I'll make sure your cousin does plenty of time here for what he's done to you." said General Chipper "I'm so sorry we didn't believe

you Tails, can you forgive us?"

"Of course I can." said Tails with a smile "It's an honest mistake, Scourge and Ginger look a little like us and they disguised themselves so they look completely like us so all this is easily forgivable."

"Well I'm glad you're not sore about it anymore." said General Chipper "To make all this up for you, you and Sonic are relieved of your sentences and you don't have to do time for helping Marik the Martian escape, you are free to go."

"Thank you General." said Tails, shaking his hand "I do hope Melchett isn't going to be a Moaning Mertle over this terrible mistake he's made."

"He'll get over it because I'm going to make him." said General Chipper "Make no mistake about that. Now off you go Tails, you don't belong here anymore."

"Goodbye General Chipper." said Tails "And I hope we can capture Scourge for you."

Tails ran out of the cell blockade with General Chipper running after him. Ginger scowled at them from inside his cell. He then reached into his sock and pulled out a sharp little pen knife and he began to cut a neat circle in the glass door.

"Don't celebrate too soon Tails!" he growled to himself "You have not seen the last of me!"

He continued cutting the glass with the penknife. Once he'd finished, he'd be able to kick the circular chunk of glass he'd cut out and be able to escape just like that. He was looking forward to making Tails suffer once he escaped from this cell…

Meanwhile, the warden from Central City arrived at Empire City with Sonic the Hedgehog and Sonic ran inside the MPD station. Melchett the Hedgehog was gobsmacked to see Sonic there and he immediately got cross.

"What the blazes are you doing here?" he demanded "You're supposed to be in Central City!"

"I demand to see the surveillance tape from the jewellery store!" said Sonic immediately "I wanna see if that really is us in the tape!"

"Why waste your time knowing you can't prove anything?" scoffed Melchett "You'll only realize how stupid you are for thinking the tape's going to be any different to you then it is to us."

Nevertheless, he got out the tape and he shoved it into the VCR and the TV blared into life. Sonic watched the tape closely. Scourge and Ginger had broken into the store and Scourge was robbing everything at supersonic speed while Ginger was pulling rude faces at the camera. Sonic watched the whole tape and he noticed the one tiny detail that everybody else viewing the tape somehow seemed to miss. The tape finished and the screen went static. Melchett ejected the tape and put it away.

"Well?" said Melchett, smirking.

Sonic stared at Melchett with a clam look on his face.

"Melchett, you seemed to have missed one tiny little detail." said Sonic.

"THE HEDGEHOG ON THE TAPE IS GREEN!" he shouted at the top of his voice "What colour am I?" he added, pointing to himself "I'm blue! And have you also failed to notice the fox on the tape is ginger, not yellow like Tails!" he added crossly.

Melchett was amazed at the fact Sonic appeared to have noticed something he missed so he played the tape again. He looked closely at the footage and saw what Sonic saw, the hedgehog robbing the store was indeed green and not blue like Sonic was. Still, the cop was refusing to admit defeat, he hated being wrong so he was determined to win this.

"That doesn't prove anything!" he protested "You two must have painted yourselves a different colour to fool us!"

Sonic face-palmed himself angrily.

"Melchett, will you just give up already?" yelled Sonic "Admit it! You were wrong! We are innocent, we get to go home, end of story!"

"No you don't!" said Melchett crossly "Your silly little protest is not convincing enough for me to let you go! You two obviously painted yourselves a different colour in a vain attempt to trick us but it didn't work so there!"

Sonic had had enough of Melchett trying to prove himself in the right so he showed him another detail he was too stupid to notice.

"Another thing you don't seem to have noticed is the hedgehog on the tape has blue eyes and the ginger fox has hazel eyes!" noted Sonic angrily "What colour are my eyes huh? And does Tails have hazel eyes? I don't think so! So what does that mean Melchy-Welchy?"

Melchett stared at the screen and noticed the different coloured eyes. There was no way that Sonic and Tails could possibly have changed their eye colour so he sighed and reluctantly admitted defeat. In fact as he spoke, he had a wincing look on his face as if admitting he was wrong was physically hurting him.

"OK Sonic, I was wrong, you was right." said Melchett glumly "But if that's not you two robbing the store then who are they?"

"Oh for the love of…" grumbled Sonic "The green hedgehog is my evil brother Scourge you dummy! You've had Scourge in custody for two whole years and you can't tell that's him on the tape? Are you blind or something?"

"My eyesight is perfect thank you!" snapped Melchett "So the hedgehog robbing the store is Scourge, any ideas on who the fox is?"

"Nope." said Sonic "Never seen him before but he looks an awful lot like Tails so maybe he's a relative of his."

Then suddenly the doors to the office opened and in walked General Chipper and Tails. Sonic turned around and saw them and was rather confused at the fact Tails didn't have a prison uniform on

anymore. General Chipper came up to Melchett.

"Melchett sir, there's been a terrible mistake." said General Chipper "Sonic and Tails are innocent, they were framed by Scourge the Hedgehog and a fox named Ginger who is Tails' cousin apparently. Ginger told me everything."

"I know." said Melchett "Sonic managed to point out several details we missed. I feel like such a fool."

"Good." said General Chipper "You are a fool after all for jumping to conclusions like that. You'll be lucky if you don't get fired for this."

Melchett didn't say anything. General Chipper turned to Sonic.

"You and Tails are free to go." said General Chipper "We deeply apologize for the misunderstanding."

"I'll let it slide." said Sonic, taking his prison uniform off and handing it to General Chipper "After all, anyone can make mistakes, even me."

Now that the whole situation had been cleared up, Sonic and Tails left the MPD station, happy to be free once again. Sonic and Tails both took a deep breath of fresh air and sighed happily.

"Man does it feel good to be outta prison." said Sonic.

"Yeah, good old fresh air is tough to beat." said Tails "And now my wormy cousin is where he belongs and hopefully we can put Scourge back where be belongs."

"That reminds me." said Sonic "I didn't know you had a cousin."

"That's because I never want to acknowledge his existence." said Tails "I hate that ginger moron so much I refuse to acknowledge him as my cousin."

"Why, what's so bad about this Ginger guy?" asked Sonic.

"He treated me like dirt when I was four." said Tails, his expression becoming sorrowful as memories of the past flooded to his head "He

really hates me for some reason but he never told me why, he just bullied me and I was too young to do anything about it. His family moved him to Central City after my parents were sick and tired of Ginger bullying me and since then I never talked about him to anyone, I just pretended he never existed and even I forgot about him after a while until he showed up again."

Sonic listened to the heart-breaking story and he felt sorry for poor Tails. It was bad enough that Dr. Eggman's made his life hard after destroying his village and roboticizing his parents but his own cousin made life miserable for him when he was only four! Good lord this fox has had a hard time hasn't he? Sonic put his arm around Tails and said

"You don't need to worry about that jerk of a cousin anymore Tails. You'll never see him again and you've got me by your side. I'll be with you no matter what big guy and that's a promise."

Tails looked at Sonic with happy tears in his eyes. Tails hugged Sonic tightly.

"Thank you so much Sonic." said Tails "You're the best friend I've ever had."

"Don't sweat it Tails." said Sonic "I'm just taking care of those who need it."

"I missed you while I was in jail." said Tails.

"I did too." said Sonic "But we're back together again and no one is going to tear us apart again."

Tails let go of Sonic and they both smiled at each other. Then Tails suddenly remembered something.

"Oh Sonic I almost forgot!" he cried "Ginger told me Scourge has taken over Castle Acorn!"

"He what?" cried Sonic "He's taken over Castle Acorn?"

"Yes!" shrieked Tails "We need to get there before he hurts Miss Sally or someone!"

Tails suddenly found himself being scooped up by Sonic and lifted off the ground.

"We need to get there first so I'm just speeding you up." said Sonic "Hang on tight little bro! Here…we…GO!"

And with that he rocketed off faster then an accelerating dragster. He rushed through Empire City at top speed with Tails in his arms and he headed for Castle Acorn. He hoped Scourge hadn't done too much harm to the castle and he also hoped that everybody in the castle was OK. Unfortunately for Sonic and Tails, they were being followed by Ginger. He had managed to escape his prison cell and he was not letting Sonic and Tails stop Scourge in a hurry so he decided to follow them and stop them.

A few minutes later, Sonic and Tails arrived at Castle Acorn and to their satisfaction the castle looked to be OK. That meant Scourge hadn't spin-dashed the place to the ground but that made Sonic wonder about what was he up to. Sonic screeched to a halt and put Tails down. They both took cover behind a bush and Sonic peeked over the top to see if he could see anything. He spotted Scourge strolling around with Sally Acorn's crown on his head and he appeared to be thinking about something. He stood still and put a hand to his chin.

"Hmm…maybe an awesome statue of me should go there." said Scourge, pointing to a wide patch of green "I hope one of the dorks in the dungeon knows how to sculpt statues. And maybe the statue should have a water fountain or something? And maybe I should have a flag with my face on it standing right there." He pointed to another patch of green "The whole world needs to know my title and position so a flag would be a good idea. Heh, heh, heh. I wonder if there's anything else that would be a good thing to put up out here…"

His voice trailed off as he wondered off somewhere. Sonic turned back to Tails and whispered to him.

"OK Tails, we are gonna creep up on Scourge and then we'll catch

him by surprise. You attack when I attack, got it?"

"Got it." said Tails, giving him a thumbs up.

Sonic just snickered and the two crept out of the bush. The poked their heads around the corner of the castle and spotted Scourge using a spin-dash to dig in the grass for some reason. Scourge stopped digging and said to himself

"I think that's a good spot for a flag. Now if only I had one…"

Now was their chance. Sonic and Tails crept out from behind the castle and they tip-toed towards Scourge who had his back turned on them and he was thinking to himself about something. Unfortunately, before Sonic and Tails could pounce on him, they were struck from behind by a flying kick to the head. It was Ginger! The slimy little fox had sneaked up on them while flying and he tackled them while he had the chance.

"You're not attacking Scourge you mongrels!" yelled Ginger.

Scourge turned around to see what was happening and almost had a heart attack at what he was looking at. Sonic and Tails were lying on their fronts on the ground before him and glaring up at him.

"What the hell?" shrieked Scourge "You two are supposed to be in jail!"

"I managed to get Ginger to rat you and him out." said Tails "But how did you manage to get out of your cell Ginger?" asked Tails.

"All I had to do was cut a neat little circle in the glass and presto I'm out." gloated Ginger, showing off the penknife he had hidden in his sock "Aren't I a genius?"

"No, you're a worm." said Tails, getting to his feet "And I'm gonna make you pay for all the misery you've inflicted on me four years ago!"

"But Tails, what about Scourge?" asked Sonic "I may need your help in this…"

"If the brat wants to fight his cousin let him blue!" interrupted Scourge, spin-dashing Sonic in the chest and knocking him over "All four of us can have one big family fight for Castle Acorn! Brother vs. Brother, Cousin vs. Cousin."

Sonic smirked confidently and picked himself up.

"Let the best relative win I guess." he said casually.

"I plan to wuss!" said Scourge, grinning like a crocodile "And once I whup your backside, you can join your friends in the castle dungeons and I will be King of the World!"

Sonic was gobsmacked at what Scourge had just said.

"My friends are where?" he exclaimed.

"In the dungeons dweeb." said Scourge "I've locked away the Queen, the lynx lady, Amy, that soppy rabbit girl, the flower freak, the skunk guy, the cyborg rabbit, the dog guy and the mouse girl and you and Tails can join them once I defeat you!"

Sonic suddenly caught Scourge off guard with a spin-dash to the stomach.

"I'm gonna make you pay for that!" yelled Sonic.

"Just try it dumb-hog!" retorted Scourge, recovering from the blow and lunging for Sonic.

The two hedgehogs tackled each other in a homing attack and they knocked each other backwards. They skidded to a halt and lunged at each other again. Scourge tackled Sonic with a punch to the side and Sonic crashed into the ground face first. Scourge tried to spin-dash Sonic again but Sonic moved out of the way, leaving Scourge to dig a hole in the ground. When Scourge came back up, Sonic spun into his own spin-dash and the two hedgehogs charged at each other. They bounced off of one another and then they landed on the ground. They charged at each other and grappled arms with one another, trying to get the best of each other.

As for Tails and Ginger, they were staring each other down, ready to

fight. They glared at each other and they gritted their teeth.

"Ginger, before we start this fight." said Tails "Why do you hate me so much? What have I ever done to upset you so much you hate me with a burning passion?"

Ginger snorted.

"Why does it matter to you dork?" he sniffed rudely "And why I hate you is none of your business so keep your big fat nose out!"

"Ginger, why won't you tell me why you hate me?" asked Tails, annoyed at him "Or don't you have a reason and you just hate me for the heck of it?"

Ginger scowled at his cousin and sighed.

"OK, I'll tell you." he said, defeated "I hate you because you make me envy you. Everybody loved you so much; even my own parents ignored me and gave you all the attention when you visited me. Not to mention your taste in mechanics infuriates me since mechanics are filthy little people who shouldn't exist. That's why I hate you so much."

Tails couldn't believe his ears. All that meanness to him just out of jealousy? Ginger really is a worm isn't he?

"You hate me because you envy the fact everybody loved me and paid no attention to you?" said Tails, bewildered at what Ginger had said to him "And my love for machines disgusted you? What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing's the matter with me you wretched pup!" snarled Ginger "I'm sick to death of you! I'm sick of the fact you're famous and I'm not when it should be the other way around, I'm sick of your ear-splitting voice, I'm sick of your heroism and I'm sick of your dirty mouth! And in order to save myself from going insane, I'm going to kill you wretched cousin and put you out of my misery once and for all!"

And with that he pounced on Tails with his sharp pen knife in his hand. He tackled Tails to the ground, pinned him down and tried to

stab him in the chest with the knife. Desperate to live, Tails grabbed Ginger's arm and kept him from stabbing him. Ginger tried to punch Tails with his other hand but Tails blocked it and kept it held there so now Tails was blocking both of Ginger's arms. Ginger tried to stab Tails but Tails managed to hold his arm in place to keep him from doing so even though he had a feeling he wouldn't be able to keep this up. Sonic noticed Tails was in trouble and tried to escape his fight with Scourge.

"Tails, hang on I'm coming!" cried Sonic.

"Leave him alone you blue twerp!" yelled Scourge, ramming Sonic over with his shoulder "Your little friend is having his fight so you can have your fight which is with me!"

"Forget it Scourge, I'm not letting Tails die at the hands of his own cousin!" yelled Sonic, trying to get up.

"Too bad." said Scourge coldly, spin-dashing Sonic to knock him over again "You'll have to fight me first."

Sonic knew that Tails needed help but how could he get past Scourge? Sonic had no idea but he was determined to find a way. Sonic leaped back to his feet and tried to attack Scourge but Scourge jumped out of the way and dropkicked him in the head. Then Scourge leaped on Sonic and pinned him to the ground. Now Sonic found himself in the same position as Tails only Scourge wasn't trying to stab him since he didn't have a weapon. Sonic pushed against Scourge's arms in an attempt to get up but Scourge was a strong hedgehog and he wasn't letting Sonic get up so easily.

"Once I squish you into nothing but dirt blue, you will hail to me." said Scourge "You will hail King Scourge of Mobius and you will bow down to me just like everybody else!"

"Never!" grunted Sonic, trying to shove Scourge away from him but to no avail.

Meanwhile, Tails was still struggling with Ginger. Ginger refused to give up and he kept trying to stab Tails but he just couldn't get the knife any closer to him due to Tails keeping him at bay. Tails began

to sweat madly, he needed a way out of this and fast.

"Ginger!" he cried desperately "Please, don't do this! I know you can be better then this! We don't we put our rivalry behind us and be friends? We would make a good team!"

"Are you out of your mind?" snapped Ginger "What good does heroism get you? Nothing! Heroism is a dangerous thing and it gets you killed and I'm about to prove it! You should have stayed in prison where you belong but no, you had to get out and try to save the day with that moron Sonic the Hedgehog! And now I'm going to show you what happens to stupid heroic people who think they can do what they like!"

Tails gulped. His heart was racing like mad. He was staring death right in the face and there was no way out of it. Not to mention his strength was beginning to give way, Ginger was beginning to overpower him! If Tails didn't save himself, he would be dead. Tails then had an idea. Ginger's head was awfully close to his, just the right distance for a little head butt to the head. Tails swung his head forward and in turn walloped Ginger's own head. Ginger screamed in pain and got off Tails in order to rub his head better. Tails kicked Ginger in the back, causing the fox to drop his penknife. Tails stomped on the knife and broke it into little pieces, never to be used again. Ginger recovered from Tails' head butt and he glared at the fox.

"Oooh I could just get my hands on you Tails!" he growled "Especially after that really hard head butt you gave me!"

"Oh Ginger will you give it a rest?" sighed Tails "If you wanna fight me then stop wasting your breath and fight me!"

Ginger smiled as if he was saying "Gladly!" Ginger charged at Tails in blind rage and his hands open as if he was ready to grab Tails by the neck and throttle him. Tails jumped out of the way and dropkicked Ginger in the back of the head. Before Ginger could get back up, Tails grabbed Ginger by both tails and began to spin him around in a perfect circle. Tails then let go of Ginger's tails and Ginger went flying straight into Scourge who was still trying to shove Sonic away. Ginger knocked Scourge over onto his side. Scourge

punched Ginger off of him and stood over him, scowling at him.

"You stupid ginger moron!" bellowed Scourge "You're supposed to be knocking Tails over not me!"

"Sorry Scourge, Tails threw me into you!" claimed Ginger.

"How are you getting your butt whupped by Sonic's wimpy friend?" retorted Scourge "Tails can't be that hard to beat!"

Then suddenly Tails landed an amazing kick on Ginger's back and sent him falling over. But before Tails could do anything else, Scourge gave Tails an uppercut that sent Tails flying backwards in a perfect rainbow arch. Tails landed on his back and groaned loudly in pain about the uppercut he had just received from Scourge. Scourge then pinned Tails down to the ground with his foot and glared at him.

"Well since Ginger seems to be having trouble beating his own cousin, I guess I'll have to do it for him!" snarled Scourge "I think your head might look nice hanging above the fireplace in the throne room!"

Tails clutched his throat and shook like mad. Before Scourge could do anything though, Sonic spin-dashed him in the back and sent Scourge hurtling off of Tails. Then Sonic ran over to Scourge, grabbed one of his arms and forced it behind his back and kept him pinned to the ground.

"Tails, Scourge has our friends locked in the dungeons!" cried Sonic "I'll keep Scourge busy, you go and rescue them!"

"OK Sonic but please be careful." said Tails.

Tails ran off and headed towards Castle Acorn. Ginger recovered and tried to fly after Tails but Sonic let go of Scourge and spin-dashed Ginger and sent him falling down. Scourge tried to attack Sonic but Sonic threw Ginger into him. Scourge swaggered and stumbled but he managed to remain standing. He seized Ginger by the scruff of his neck and glowered at him.

"Why can't you do anything useful you pathetic lump of slag?" griped Scourge.

"I'm trying to do my best but Sonic and Tails are tough guys!" protested Ginger "It's not my fault I keep…"

Then suddenly Scourge threw Ginger forward and leaped out of the way. He had seen Sonic heading towards him in a spin-dash and he decided to let Ginger take the blow while he spun into his own spin-dash. Sonic didn't see Scourge coming in time and Scourge spin-dashed him cleanly in the back and sent him skidding across the dirt. Sonic now had his face buried in a mound of dirt and grass and soil. Scourge stood behind him cackling evilly.

"You haven't a hope of defeating me weakling." said Scourge "You succumbed to me before and you'll succumb to me now. Why don't you make this easy on yourself?" he said smoothly, kneeling down to his brother's side.

"If you surrender to me then I will be willing to make you assistant ruler of my kingdom." he offered.

"OY! That's my job!" protested Ginger.

"You're lucky if I even give you your own castle you sad sack of wimpiness!" bellowed Scourge.

Ginger shut himself up and hid his hands behind his back. Scourge continued.

"Me and you could bring peace and prosperity to the world. We could end the menace that is Dr. Eggman together. Eggman had trouble against one of us so he has no chance against both of us, we'll kick his butt out of Mobius. Mobius will be at peace and we, the hedgehog brothers will be twin kings of Mobius and everybody will love and respect us. What do ya say brother?" he purred into Sonic's ear.

Sonic had listened to every word Scourge had said and he wasn't thrilled. Sonic raised his head out of the mound of dirt and he turned to face Scourge, his face covered in soil.

"That's a tempting offer Scourge," said Sonic "But I don't wanna be king of anything. Being a king's not my kind of game. And besides,

Mobius would be a horrible place with you on the throne! So even if I wanted to be a king my answer is and always will be no!"

Scourge couldn't believe his ears. How can Sonic refuse such a great offer he made for him? Sonic certainly is persistent isn't he?

"Do you not WANT Dr. Eggman to be defeated then?" roared Scourge.

"I want Dr. Eggman defeated but I don't want to be twin ruler with you!" yelled Sonic "I'll defeat Eggman on my own and you can try to conquer Mobius alone!"

"So be it!" hissed Scourge, flipping his sunglasses down over his eyes "You'll wish you had taken my deal though you blue moron!"

Sonic leaped away from Scourge in an amazing back flip and he landed a very long distance away from Scourge. Sonic clenched his fists, gritted his teeth and bent over, ready to charge. Scourge did the same and prepared to charge. Then both hedgehogs revved up their supersonic feet and they charged at each other like a pair of bulls. Sonic and Scourge then suddenly leaped into the air at both the exact same time and they collided in mid-air with one another. They both fell back to the ground and they began launching punches on one another. Then they both managed to get back on their feet and the grappled arms with one another.

"This kingdom is mine Sonic!" yelled Scourge as he struggled against Sonic.

"In your dreams Scourge!" Sonic yelled back as he struggled against Scourge.

Then they both let go of each other and they spin-dashed each other. Then they recoiled and charged at each other in spin-dash again…

Meanwhile, Tails had found the dungeon but he couldn't open it since Scourge had locked it. Luckily the key was hung on a peg next to the door so Tails got the key and unlocked the door. Everybody in

the dungeon, who had begun to lose all hope of ever seeing the sun again, were surprised to see the door open and Tails walk inside. Tails was surprised to see how many prisoners there were. Scourge had captured Sally, Nicole, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy all at once!

"Tails?" said Sally "How is this possible? You're supposed to be in jail!"

"We managed to convince the cops we're innocent at long last." said Tails "The ones who framed us were…"

"I know, your cousin told me everything." said Sally "That Scourge and he played us all for saps and we thought you and Sonic were criminals."

"Yeah they did didn't they?" said Tails, flying over to Sally's shackles and inserting the key into the key hole. But they key wouldn't fit. Tails tried it as hard as he could but the key wouldn't turn or go in.

"I can't get this thing to fit!" cried Tails.

"The key to our shackles isn't the same key that opens the door." said Nicole "They key that opens our shackles is on the wall over there."

She pointed at the wall on the right hand side of the door. Tails spotted the key on the wall and he flew over to get it. He grabbed the key and flew back over to Sally to unlock her shackles. He slotted the key neatly into the keyhole and turned it. The shackles opened and Sally was now free. Tails gave her the key.

"You free everybody else." he said "I'm going back outside to help Sonic beat Scourge."

"You be careful out there Tails." said Sally as she freed Nicole from her shackles "We'll be with you as quick as possible."

Tails nodded and he flew out of the dungeon, leaving Sally to free everybody else from their chains.

"Ha, ha, ha! I could keep this up all day slowpoke!" taunted Scourge as he kicked Sonic off the roof of the castle and sent him crashing down on the ground below.

Sonic and Scourge's fight had been completely in Scourge's favour these past few minutes. Scourge and Sonic had been spin-dashing each other over and over and then they decided to take their fight onto the roof which resulted in heavy fighting and Scourge kicking Sonic off the roof. After Sonic landed on the ground Scourge jumped off the roof, landed beside Sonic and grabbed him in chokehold. Sonic gagged as Scourge's arm was clenched tightly around his neck. Then Scourge decided to give Sonic a noogie-noogie to pay him back for all the times Sonic had noogied him in the past.

"How does this feel wimp?" he taunted as he viciously rubbed Sonic's scalp with his knuckles.

"Ouch! Ouch! Ouch! Knock it off Scourge! Ow! That hurts!" cried Sonic.

"Now you know how I feel when you do that to me!" laughed Scourge.

Ginger (the little fool) just stood there watching and laughing.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Noogie him harder Scourge!" he urged.

Scourge obliged and proceeded to noogie Sonic even harder.

"Scourge, you'll take my head off if you're not careful!" yelped Sonic.

"Then let's hope that really happens!" said Scourge wickedly.

But then Scourge decided to stop giving Sonic noogie-noogies and he threw Sonic towards Ginger. Ginger bounced into the air using his tails as a spring and he kicked Sonic in the face. Sonic fell on his stomach and groaned. He couldn't keep the fight up anymore, Scourge had well and truly worn him down. Scourge stood over Sonic and placed his foot onto his back.

"You could have avoided all this if you had just taken my deal Sonic." said Scourge, his voice low and hissy "But now it's time I

stomped you into nothing. Goodbye Sonic!"

Scourge then raised his foot and prepared to slam it down on Sonic's back until suddenly something pricked his bottom and he was stunned into submission. He fell over onto his front just as Sonic crawled out of the way. Ginger stared in disbelief at Scourge's sudden pass-out. Sonic turned to see all his friends standing before him and glaring at Scourge. The dart that had sedated Scourge had been fired by Geoffrey St. John and he smirked at the unconscious hedgehog.

"That'll teach the bloke to lock us up like that!" he said.

"Tails, you got everybody out just in time!" said a very relieved Sonic "I was about to get my spine broken!"

"It's a good thing we made it then isn't it?" said Tails, helping Sonic onto his feet.

"Sonic!" cried Amy, grasping the blue hedgehog into a hug "I'm so glad you and Tails aren't criminals! I knew you weren't criminals all along!"

"Hey that's great Amy." said Sonic feebly "But how did you know that?"

"Ginger stupidly told me and Nicole that he and Scourge were responsible for framing you and Tails and after locking the others away we told them." explained Sally "So the whole mess is cleared up now."

"Not yet your highness." said Mandy "The ginger fox is flying away with Scourge!"

Everybody looked up in the air to see Ginger flying away, carrying an unconscious Scourge by the arms. Ginger had flown pretty high so no one could catch him unless they could fly.

"Ah'm not letting those guys get away!" cried Bunnie Rabbot, preparing to take off "Ah'm gonna fly after them and capture them!"

"No Bunnie, let them go." said Sally "They're not worth it right now."

"But Sally-girl, ah could catch them in a jiffy!" protested Bunnie "Ah'm a fast flier so Ginger can't get away from me!"

"Bunnie, I said let them go." said Sally sternly "We'll catch them next time but right now we need to rest ourselves up for the next time Dr. Eggman may attack."

Bunnie was a little disappointed at the fact she had to let Ginger and Scourge get away but she knew arguing with the queen was pointless so she did what she was told. Sonic noticed Sally's crown lying on the ground near him. It had fallen of Scourge's head when Scourge was sedated and luckily it was still intact. Sonic picked the crown up, dusted some dirt off and presented it to Sally.

"Here's your crown back your majesty." said Sonic "And good thing is Scourge didn't wreck it."

Sally took the crown from Sonic and put it back onto her own head.

"Everyone." she said "If it wasn't for your heroic efforts and support, Castle Acorn would have fallen to a deadly foe and the kingdom would have been in collapse. Thank you everybody for saving the day."

The boys bowed down and the girls curtsied to Sally. Sally smiled graciously at the heroes before her.

"Now let's prepare for the next Eggman attack which maybe some time soon now Scourge is out of the picture for now." said Sally.

"I can't wait for that." said Sonic "Metal Sonic better watch out, he won't know what hit him!"

Tomorrow would be a much more eventful day then just fighting Dr. Eggman though. Tomorrow would he a struggle over a little shining emerald which contained power great enough to turn the tides of the war between the Mobians and Dr. Eggman…

And that's it for this saga! But don't think this is the last we've seen of Scourge the Hedgehog! He'll be back and

so...will...Ginger...DAAAAAAAAAMMMMMMMMNNNNNNNN! :(Oh well, at least I don't have to deal with that ginger turd for a while now since it'll be a while until Scourge returns. Ahem! Anyway, join me next time for the grand debut of the mystical, mysterious and magical Chaos Emeralds! Reviews are welcome.

P.S. What's the best way to kill off Ginger the Fox? Should I...

A: Let Tails stab him with a sword?

B: Let someone shove a grenade up his ass?

C: Let Scourge the Hedgehog kill him for being useless?

or

D: All of the above!

Pick your choice! Nah I'm just kidding! I know how I'm going to kill off Ginger and I'm sure you'll be very satisfied with my choice...! ;)

Chaos Chocolate

Story 36: Chaos Chocolate

In the dark of the night, a lone chocolate factory had been shut down for the night and all its workers had left for home so they could get some rest and be ready for work in the morning. The chocolate factory had many funnels for all the steam building up inside to seep out and into the sky and it was very large, larger then twenty barnyards stacked up in rows of ten. The chocolate factory was just like any other chocolate factory, it was large and it made chocolate day after day, week after week and month after month. The only thing different about this chocolate factory was the fact a little green glowing emerald was sitting out of sight on the rooftop, still glowing to itself. The emerald had been up there for years and no one had ever seen it. But the emerald would be on the roof no longer for a crow flying nearby had sighted the emerald with its keen vision and flew over to it. The crow examined this pretty little gem and it pecked at it. The crow ever so slightly nudged the emerald with its beak. Then it nudged it some more. And some more. The crow was trying to pick up the emerald for it was thrilled by its shiny glow but it couldn't pick the thing up, it was much too big. The crow kept nudging the emerald with every vain attempt to grasp it with it's beak but it just kept nudging the emerald away from its original sitting place. Then the crow nudged the emerald near to a hole in the roof and the emerald fell down the hole and into the factory, much to the disappointment of the crow who flew away in disappointment. The emerald fell down the hall and bounced nosily off a nearby pipe. Then it pinged off some machinery and fell into a vat of chocolate with a splash. The shining green gem submerged into the thick brown gooey goodness and disappeared from sight. Now the factory would be sending a chocolate covered emerald to the candy stores the next morning and goodness knows who is going to get it…

Robotropolis. Dr. Eggman's grand metropolis and robot city had been torn down and blown to smithereens by Scourge the

Hedgehog but Dr. Eggman's extremely fast building crew had rebuilt the entire city from scratch and it had only taken them two days to do so. Dr. Eggman was pleased with the rebuilt city and now he didn't have to hide in his secret bunker anymore. He now resided in the newly rebuilt headquarters that proudly stood in the centre of the vast machine metropolis. Now he had a much better place to store Metal Sonic to ready him for combat and thanks to the technology of the city, Metal Sonic was now fit and ready to go once again. Right now, Metal Sonic didn't have any orders so he just stood to attention and waited for Dr. Eggman to give him any while Dr. Eggman was overseeing management in his city.

As for Sonic the Hedgehog, he had brought Tails and Amy with him on a special sabotage mission. With acute spying work from Espio the Chameleon, he had found the robot production line in Eggman's headquarters and after informing Sonic on where it was, he decided to sabotage it so the production of Eggman's robot army would be slowed down for a while. Sonic had been a little surprised at the fact Eggman had rebuilt Robotropolis so suddenly but he didn't let it bother him for he had a mission. The three friends were taking shelter behind a bunch of rocks and observing the scenery around them to make sure the coast was clear. There wasn't a robot to be found anywhere so it was safe for Sonic, Tails and Amy to come out. Sonic turned to his two friends and they gathered round to discuss their plans.

"OK do you remember the plan?" asked Sonic.

"Yes." said Tails and Amy together.

"Good." said Sonic "I'll keep Eggman's bunch of bots at bay while you two sabotage the production line. Espio gave me the coordinates on this little tracking device." he added, pulling the device out of his glove and handing it to Tails "You shouldn't have much trouble finding it with that tracker."

"OK." said Tails "We won't let you down Sonic."

"Don't worry about letting me down, worry about letting the Council of Acorn down!" laughed Sonic "They authorised this mission remember?"

"Yeah I remember." said Amy glumly "That pig guy in the council was so rude!"

"OK then, let's do it to it you two." said Sonic.

The three friends emerged from their hiding place and ran over to Robotropolis. Like the old Robotropolis, the new one was surrounded by a huge iron fence with huge iron gates that took a lot of spin-dashing to bring down. Sonic knew that there was a quicker way to get into the city and that was dig under the fence. Sonic spun into a spin-dash and began to dig a hole down and under the iron fence. Sand flew everywhere as Sonic churned his way through the sand. Then Sonic finally spin-dashed out of the ground and up into the open. He was immediately greeted by a bunch of robots that happened to be in patrol. They sighted Sonic and immediately deployed and primed their weapons.

"Hey butt-bots, think you can catch the world's fastest hedgehog?" bragged Sonic, shaking his bum tauntingly at the robots "Well come and get me if you think you're fast enough!"

And with that Sonic took off like a torpedo and all the Egg-man robots ran after him, weapons blazing and sensors alert. Tails and Amy poked their heads out of the hole Sonic had dug to see if it was safe to come out. All the robots were chasing Sonic so there wasn't a single robot around. Tails and Amy climbed out of the hole and they ran off to Eggman's headquarters which wasn't far to go.

"So once we get into fat-boy's playhouse what do we do?" asked Amy, summoning her Piko-Piko Hammer to her hands and keeping it at the ready in case she needed to smash something.

"We take the elevator up three floors and go into the first room on the right." said Tails, reading the tracker out loud "And once we're in there, we sabotage the production line."

"Good thing I have a big hammer to smash it with isn't it?" said Amy, smirking to herself at the thought of destroying Eggman's hard work.

"Yes it's a good thing you have a big hammer to smash it with." said Tails "Although it would have been better if I had brought some

bombs with me which I didn't unbelievably."

Tails and Amy ran on to Eggman's headquarters. As for Dr. Eggman, he had noticed the break-in and was watching the whole thing on the monitors. He was only focused on Sonic since Sonic was the only one he noticed, he failed to notice Tails and Amy somehow.

"Sonic has broken into my territory has he?" growled Dr. Eggman "Well he won't be staying for long that's for sure! Metal Sonic, get the hedgehog!"

Metal Sonic wordlessly nodded and he left the room. The moment Metal Sonic left the room, Alonzo, Eggman's servant-bot, looked at one of the monitors and cried out in horror.

"Master! We have a breach on the ground floor!" he shrieked.

"What?" cried Dr. Eggman, looking at the same monitor Alonzo was looking at.

This monitor showed Eggman what was happening on the ground floor. Tails and Amy had just broken into the base which was accomplished by Amy smashing the door down with her hammer and now the two were heading for the elevator. Eggman was furious. Sonic was just a distraction while Tails and Amy sabotage him? Well he wasn't going to let that happen! Dr. Eggman spoke into a microphone on the control pad.

"Metal Sonic, change of priority." said Dr. Eggman "We have intruders taking the elevator some where! Find them!"

Metal Sonic, who was on the third floor right now had gotten the message and looked around for Tails and Amy. Speaking of Tails and Amy, they had taken the elevator up to the fourth floor, the exact floor they needed to be on. Metal Sonic had seen the elevator going up on the floor he was on so he headed for the stairs that led to the fourth floor. As for Tails and Amy, remembering the coordinates Espio had given them, they ran down a corridor until they came across the first door on their right. The door was big and silver with warning stripes on the top and bottom and they slid away

instead of opening outwards like a normal door. Tails plugged the tracker into the door's keypad and he taped away on the keys, trying to break the code so he could get in. Espio had found out the code while he was spying on Eggman and had uploaded the code on the tracker so Tails broke it in a matter of seconds and the door opened. Tails and Amy walked into the room. As you would expect a reproduction chamber to look, it was a large room with giant machines and treadmills and computers so Eggman could decide on the designs the robots the machines made would have.

"OK Tails, do we just wreck everything?" asked Amy.

"Well we could." said Tails "But I wonder if there's a faster way of sabotaging this place then just smashing it with a hammer?"

"I dunno but I'm smashing this hideous place anyway!" cried Amy, brandishing her hammer and getting ready to swing.

She marched over to a large machine with a treadmill attached to it and was prepared to smash it to tiny bite-sized pieces until Tails suddenly screamed in terror.

"Amy! Help!" he shrieked.

Amy turned around and to her horror, Metal Sonic was there, clutching Tails by the throat and holding him aloft. Amy ran over to Metal Sonic and tried to whack him with her hammer but Metal Sonic threw Tails directly in her path so she ended up whacking Tails in the face by accident. Tails clutched his nose and groaned loudly.

"Oh Tails I'm so sorry!" shrieked Amy.

"Ow! Gosh your hammer really does hurt!" groaned Tails.

Then suddenly it was Amy's turn to get attacked. Metal Sonic slashed at her and caught her on the cheek. Amy tried to smash him with her hammer but Metal Sonic just snatched the hammer out of her hand and whacked her with it. Amy flew through the air like a tossed stone and she landed slap-bang into the wall and slid slowly down to the floor. Metal Sonic threw Amy's hammer away and

advanced menacingly on her. Amy kept her back pressed against the wall and her eyes wide open as Metal Sonic came up to her, his claws bared and his optics burning with murderous intent. Metal Sonic raised his arm and prepared to attack the poor girl until Tails distracted him.

"Hey! Metal Sonic, I'm going to tamper with this machine!" jeered Tails who was standing next to one of the production machines.

Metal Sonic turned away from Amy and he blasted at Tails with his torso cannon. Tails flew out of the way so Metal Sonic ended up accidentally destroying the machine. The machine exploded and showered the floor with tiny little pieces. Metal Sonic soon realized his mistake and kept it in mind not to do it again. Tails landed near another machine and pulled faces at Metal Sonic in an attempt to coax him into shooting at him again. But Metal Sonic knew what he was up to so instead of shooting at Tails, Metal Sonic lunged at Tails and grabbed him by the arms. Tails cried out in surprise as Metal Sonic held him at arm's length and prepared to blast him. Since he was holding Tails directly in front of himself, there was no way he could miss this time. Amy summoned a new hammer into her hand and ran up to Metal Sonic, ready to smash his head in. But Metal Sonic heard her coming and blasted her away with his back laser. Amy staggered over and passed out. Now Tails was trapped, Metal Sonic was bound to shoot him now. That is until Tails spun his tails around and took off with Metal Sonic still holding him. Then Tails kicked Metal Sonic as hard as he could and the killer robot Sonic clone let go of him but he didn't fall down to the floor like Tails wanted him to, Metal Sonic just activated his jet booster and now he was flying too. It was an air-to-air showdown between Tails and Metal Sonic as the two began flying around the room trying to best each other. Tails had an idea and hoped Metal Sonic would fall for it. Tails flew extremely close to a machine and Metal Sonic followed but he didn't quite see the machine in time and ended up crashing straight through it. Metal Sonic emerged from the other side of the machine and he flew after Tails, his claws bared and ready to grab him. Tails flew on, desperately trying to avoid Metal Sonic. He flew close to another machine in an attempt to get Metal Sonic to crash into it but Metal Sonic was all the wiser so while Tails flew close to the machine, Metal Sonic flew around the other side of the machine

so he would catch Tails. Tails fell for it and he ended up flying directly into Metal Sonic's arms. Metal Sonic grabbed the squirming fox and held him tight. Then he rocketed down to the floor and slammed Tails into the floor as hard as he could. Metal Sonic had slammed Tails into the floor so hard that Tails made an image of himself in the floor. Tails tried to get up but Metal Sonic pinned him down with his foot. Metal Sonic bent over and prepared to fire his torso cannon but Amy, who had just woken up, whacked him as hard as she could with her hammer and sent Metal Sonic flying straight into a production machine. Metal Sonic went straight through it and left a giant hole in the machine. Tails was relieved that Amy had just saved him and Amy helped Tails onto his feet.

"So I guess its mission accomplished?" she asked the brainy fox.

"Mission accomplished Amy." said Tails, with a smile "Eggman's production line is out of order. That was a good hit by the way." he added, notifying Amy's brilliant whack on Metal Sonic.

"Well what can I say? I'm amazing." said Amy, preening "Now let's get out of this hideous place before Metal Faker wakes up."

With that said, Tails and Amy ran out of the production chamber and headed for the elevator. Unfortunately for them, Metal Sonic emerged from the ruined machine, unharmed and thirsty for revenge. Using his jet booster, Metal Sonic rocketed out of the chamber and flew after Tails and Amy. Tails and Amy had only just made it into the elevator and Metal Sonic was coming towards them. The doors closed and the elevator prepared to descend but Metal Sonic smashed his way through the doors and the elevator began to descend. Now Tails and Amy were trapped with Metal Sonic until the elevator reached the ground floor. Metal Sonic grabbed them both and pinned them against the wall and held them there until the elevator reached the ground floor. The doors opened and Metal Sonic threw Tails and Amy out of the elevator. Before they could get up, Metal Sonic pile-dived Amy in the back and stomped on Tails' back. Then he picked them both up and hurled them a good distance across the floor. They hit the floor and slid across it until they came to a halt against the wall. But before Metal Sonic could do anything else, Sonic the Hedgehog burst into the base and spin-dashed him in the back.

"Hey Metal Joker!" taunted Sonic "So nice to see you again!"

Metal Sonic got back to his feet and slashed at Sonic. Sonic did a back flip and dodged the attack and then he rammed Metal Sonic in the centre of his torso.

"What's the matter Metal?" asked Sonic "You losing your touch or something?"

Metal Sonic's response was a spin-dash to the chest and he sent Sonic hurtling backwards. Sonic flew out of the broken doors and landed on his back. He recovered just in time to dodge another spin-dash from Metal Sonic.

"Come on Metal Sonic, you can do better than that!" teased Sonic.

Then Metal Sonic and Sonic linked arms and grappled with each other.

"Hey what's with all the silence Metal Sonic?" asked Sonic, noting the fact that he hadn't received any comebacks from his insults "Why won't you say something? Come on, I love hearing your stupid, deep, booming voice!"

Metal Sonic didn't say anything, he just threw Sonic away and the hedgehog landed face first into the ground. Sonic picked himself up just in time to dodge another spin-dash from Metal Sonic. Sonic and Metal Sonic both lunged at each other but Metal Sonic ducked so Sonic soared over him and Metal Sonic delivered an uppercut to the stomach before Sonic could finish flying over him. Then Metal Sonic grabbed Sonic by the leg and slammed him into the ground. Tails and Amy ran out of the base and joined in the fight. Tails flew in the air and punched Metal Sonic in the head, although the punch hurt Tails more then it hurt Metal Sonic due to him being metal. Amy tried to wallop Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic dodged the blow and dropkicked Amy. Tails landed beside Sonic and helped him up.

"Sonic, the mission is completed, it's time to go." he said.

"Aw, but I'm not done duelling with Metal Me yet!" groaned Sonic.

"Metal Sonic's just as strong as ever Sonic." said Tails "If we keep

this up, we won't make it to the end so we've gotta go!"

Sonic got to his feet and spin-dashed Metal Sonic in the back to distract him. Before Metal Sonic could get up, Tails grabbed Sonic and flew him over the iron fence and then he went back to fetch Amy. After Amy was safely flown over the fence, Sonic held their hands and sped off at his trademark speed. Metal Sonic flew over the fence and watched Sonic speed away. Regardless of his desire to squash Sonic, he decided he would wait another day so he flew back over the fence and headed back to Eggman's base.

As for Dr. Eggman, he and Alonzo had run down to the production chamber and needless to say, Eggman wasn't happy with what had happened.

"Curse that twin-tailed fox and curse that pink hedgehog!" growled Dr. Eggman "They've made a mess of my glorious production chamber!"

"I bet that was their intentions sir." said Alonzo "Because they've gone now."

"Well if they think they can sabotage me then they've got something devious coming their way!" huffed Dr. Eggman "I'm going to march over to Mobotropolis in my Egg-Mobile and attack Castle Acorn!"

"But who's going to fix the production chamber?" asked Alonzo.

"YOU are." said Dr. Eggman, grinning like a mad man "Me and Metal Sonic will go and attack that castle."

And with that Dr. Eggman left the room, leaving Alonzo to stare hopelessly at the mess that awaited him. Alonzo grumbled and picked up a sweep. He began to sweep away the slithers of metal that littered the floor.

Outside, Dr. Eggman came across Metal Sonic and Metal Sonic saluted him.

"Ah, Metal Sonic! I was looking for you." said Dr. Eggman, smiling widely "Come with me, we're going for a little ride."

Metal Sonic obeyed and followed Dr. Eggman back into the base.

"So that's how it happened was it?" asked Sonic as Tails and Amy told him, Cosmo and Cream what had happened in the production chamber.

"Yes, that's how it happened." said Tails "So you could say Metal Sonic kinda did the work for us, with a little temptation from me that is." he added with a slight chuckle.

Once Sonic, Tails and Amy had made it back home, they greeted Cosmo and Cream and they told them everything that had happened on the mission. Cosmo and Cream were impressed to say the least and they laughed at the fact Tails tricked Metal Sonic into destroying some of the machines in the chamber.

"You three are so brave." said Cream "Did Metal Sonic scare you when he came out?"

"Me? Nah!" scoffed Sonic "Metal Sonic doesn't scare me! He's just another robot waiting to be smashed that's all."

"A very TOUGH robot waiting to be smashed." noted Tails "Metal Sonic's no weaker then before you know."

"Maybe on your next mission, someone should sneak into Eggman's base and sabotage Metal Sonic." suggested Cosmo "Then Metal Sonic wouldn't be such a big threat to us would he?"

"No he won't." said Amy "Maybe we should do that next time huh Sonic?"

"Sounds good to me." said Sonic casually "Although I'd rather smash Metal Sonic myself then sabotage him to the point he's useless."

"But you can't smash Metal Sonic, that's the point." said Tails "He's built to withstand you and probably all of us so we have to weaken Metal Sonic the mechanical way which is take him apart bit by bit while he's deactivated or something."

Sonic just rolled his eyes but said nothing. Tails was right after all, he couldn't beat Metal Sonic in combat so it would be better to weaken him when he wasn't activated. After a minute's silence, Cream spoke up.

"So, what do we do now?" she asked.

"I think we should buy a nice treat from the store to celebrate our success with." suggested Amy "I can think of a few things already."

"As long as chilli-dogs are involved, I'm satisfied." said Sonic casually.

"I'll come with you Amy." said Tails "I can think of something nice we could eat."

"OK Tails." said Amy brightly "Does anyone else wanna come?"

"I'll come and help you with the shopping bags." volunteered Cream eagerly.

Sonic and Cosmo didn't offer.

"OK then it's settled. Come on Tails and Cream, we're going to Knothole." said Amy "I know a good store there."

And with that Amy, Tails and Cream left and headed off to the store while Sonic and Cosmo remained sitting at the garden table.

"So Cosmo, what do you wanna do while we're waiting?" asked Sonic.

"Um…I don't know." said Cosmo "Maybe we could talk to each other to pass the time."

"Nah, I'll just go for a jog." said Sonic, getting up on his feet "See ya Cosmo."

Sonic ran off at top speed and sped off into the distance. Seeing as she was on her own with nothing to do, Cosmo decided to just lie on the grass and stare up at the sky, thinking of happier times back on her home planet and how beautiful it was before the war with the

Martians started.

"I hope you're OK mother." said Cosmo under her breath "I hope you're OK…"

A short while later, Amy, Tails and Cream arrived at Amy's home village of Knothole. After arriving at Knothole, Amy took them to the store. The store was medium sized and full of all sorts of groceries but not to the extent of a superstore. Still, it was a nice place for the villagers to do their shopping in and Amy shopped there every time she needed groceries. The pink hedgehog, tan coloured rabbit and yellow twin-tailed fox entered the store and began looking around for something nice to eat to celebrate Sonic, Tails and Amy's success in Robotropolis.

"Now where to they keep the hot-dogs for Sonic's chilli-dog?" wondered Amy as he scanned the aisles.

"Don't you think Mr. Sonic already has hot-dogs at home?" asked Cream.

"He probably does." said Amy "But he should try a hot-dog from Knothole, they taste so nice."

"If you want Amy you could buy some onions since Sonic likes a lot of onions on his chilli-dogs." said Tails as he wondered down the aisles.

"Sonic likes onions on his chilli-dogs does he?" said Amy "Well he'll love the onions they sell here, nothing beats them."

"I wonder what would be a nice treat for you Amy." said Cream politely.

"Oh you don't need to worry about me." said Amy "I can find something I really like."

As Amy and Cream continued looking down the aisle, Tails wondered to the sweets aisle, the very aisle he was looking for. He wanted a nice bar of mint chocolate for his treat so he was looking

through the chocolates to see what they had on offer. Then something caught Tails' eye. On the top shelf of the sweets aisle, there were chocolates shaped like emeralds. They were about as big as the palm of your hand and they did look very scrumptious. Tails decided he would try one of the emerald chocolates so he stood up on tip-toe and reached up for the chocolate. But he couldn't quite reach it and he didn't want to fly up and get it since people would look at him funny so he just kept trying to reach. Then an old cat lady with a shopping basket came by and noticed Tails was having difficulty reaching the chocolate's so she reached up and got it for him.

"Here you go little boy." she said kindly, handing it to Tails.

"Thank you miss." said Tails.

"Before I go little one, may I ask you something?" asked the cat.

"Yes." said Tails, wondering what she wanted to ask.

"Are you the twin-tailed fox known as Tails who is a friend of Sonic the Hedgehog?" asked the cat.

"I am." said Tails "Why?"

"I'm Mariah the Medicine Cat and I've been looking forward to meeting you young man." said Mariah, with a smile.

"Mariah the Medicine Cat?" said Tails "Wait a minute, Sonic told me you were the one who made the medicine he gave me to save my life from a bounty hunter!*"

"That is correct." said Mariah "I made the medicine that saved your life. And you don't need to thank me, I was just doing my job."

"OK." said Tails "But I do appreciate the fact you helped Sonic save me."

"And I was just happy to help." said Mariah "Now if you'll excuse me, I need to continue with my shopping. Bye Tails."

"Bye Mariah." said Tails as Mariah walked on down the aisle.

After Mariah left, Tails took his emerald chocolate to the till and waited for Amy and Cream to finish shopping. Then the girls appeared from round an aisle with the shopping basket half full of goodies. Amy had brought herself a box a fairy cakes as well as the onions and hot-dogs needed for Sonic's special chilli-dog and Cream had brought a small cartoon of ice-cream, her most favourite food in the world. The three friends paid for their items and they left the shop and headed for Sonic's house.

"So Tails, what did you buy?" asked Amy.

"I bought an emerald shaped chocolate." said Tails, showing Amy the chocolate "And I'm going to share it with Cosmo. I hope she's going to like it."

"Ah chocolate, no one can resist it." said Amy "And it's the perfect gift for the perfect girlfriend isn't it?" she added teasingly.

Tails went red all over and Cream laughed at him.

"Amy, don't do that!" whined Tails "You're making me blush!"

"Oh I'm so sorry Tails." said Amy mockingly "I didn't know you really fancy Cosmo."

Tails blushed even harder and his cheeks began to feel hot.

"Amy, it's not nice to tease people because they fancy someone." said Cream "You fancy Mr. Sonic and you wouldn't like it if Tails made fun of you for it would you?"

"Oh come on Cream, I'm just playing, I mean no harm on Tails do I?" said Amy.

Tails just kept quiet and his eyes fixed on the chocolate emerald in his hands. Amy noticed Tails was feeling shy so she decided to say nothing more and leave him alone until they got home.

Cosmo was still lying on the grass and staring up at the sky. Her train of thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the return of Sonic.

He had just finished jogging around Green Hill Zone and he arrived back to see how things were going.

"Hey Cosmo, I guess Amy, Tails and Cream aren't back yet." said Sonic after he screeched to a halt.

"No they aren't." said Cosmo "Did you have a nice jog?"

"Yeah it was thrilling." said Sonic "I never get tired of running up those loop-de-loop shaped rocks when running around Green Hill Zone. I still wonder how on Mobius did we ever get rocks shaped like that?"

"Hey Sonic, Amy, Tails and Cream are back." said Cosmo, standing up and pointing.

Sonic looked in Cosmo's direction and saw them coming. Amy, Tails and Cream arrived back at the house and showed Sonic the items they brought.

"We brought a fresh jar of hot-dogs for you because I thought you'd love to try a hot-dog from Knothole." said Amy "I bet you'll like it. And we got onions for you too." she added, showing the onions to Sonic.

"Sweet." said Sonic, licking his lips "I bet I'm gonna enjoy this."

And with that he took the jar of hot-dogs and onions and went inside to make the chilli-dog. Amy and Cream followed him, leaving Tails alone with Cosmo. Tails began to feel a little nervous now he was alone with Cosmo. He had feelings for her but he was much too shy to show them. And yet he knew if he didn't try then he would never get the girl he fancied.

"So Tails, what did you buy?" asked Cosmo.

"Um…I brought this." said Tails, showing her the chocolate shaped emerald he had brought from the store. He took the wrapping off, revealing the chocolate's brown goodness underneath.

"What is it?" asked Cosmo "It's shaped remarkably like an emerald."

"Its chocolate." said Tails "A very tasty sweet food we Mobians love

to eat. Do they do chocolate on your home world?"

"Um…not that I can think of, no they don't do chocolate on my home planet." said Cosmo.

"Well you're in for a treat Cosmo." said Tails "You'll love this. I'm going to eat half of it and then I'm going to let you have the other half."

Tails eagerly bit into the chocolate. But the moment he bit into it, his teeth cracked, his eyes widened and pain flooded through his gums.

"OW!" yelped Tails, dropping the chocolate and grabbing his sore mouth "Ouch! Oh! What is that thing made of?"

"Are you OK Tails?" asked Cosmo, kneeling beside him and patting him in the back.

"Apart from a killer toothache, I'm just fine." grumbled Tails "That chocolate's as hard as rock!"

Cosmo looked at the chocolate emerald lying on the ground. She noticed the piece of emerald Tails had bitten into and little bits of chocolate had broken away, revealing a shiny glitter from inside. Cosmo picked the emerald up and thumped it on the ground hard enough to crack the chocolate and the chocolate crumbled to pieces, revealing a REAL emerald underneath! So it wasn't a chocolate shaped like an emerald, it was an emerald COVERED in chocolate! The emerald was green in colour and it shone like a million stars all at once. Cosmo stared at the emerald in her hands and was engulfed in its beauty. Tails had finally recovered from the pain in his mouth and he stared at the emerald in Cosmo's hands. Tails gasped at it.

"Cosmo, it was an emerald covered in chocolate!" gasped Tails "And that's not just any emerald!"

"Its beautiful." said Cosmo, unable to take her eyes off it "And it gives me a loving warm feeling for some reason. What kind of emerald is this Tails?"

"It's a Chaos Emerald." said Tails, pointing at it "I've heard all about

them from stories my mom used to read to me. Chaos Emeralds are powerful and there used to be cascades of them all over Mobius. But someone used the powers of Chaos and merged all the emeralds together to make seven emeralds. They are the colours green, blue, yellow, purple, red, cyan and grey respectively and if you have all seven emeralds, a miracle will happen."

"What kind of miracle?" asked Cosmo.

"I dunno." said Tails "But we'd better hide this so Dr. Eggman doesn't get it. If Eggman gets this emerald or indeed all seven of them, victory for him is certain."

"I'm sure Sonic will know where to hide this." said Cosmo "Eggman wouldn't think to look in a house in the middle of nowhere would he?"

"I hope not." said Tails "I wonder if Sonic knows all about…"

Then suddenly something leaped out of the bushes from around the corner of the house and it pounced on Cosmo, pinned her down to the ground and snatched the emerald out of her hands. Tails gasped in terror. It was none other then the insidious Marik the Martian! Cosmo thought she was going to die of shock at the sight of Marik on top of her with the emerald in his hand.

"No…No…Not you again!" squeaked Cosmo.

"Yes Cosmo it is me, Marik the Martian once again!" sneered Marik "And here to make your life miserable!"

"Marik, please don't hurt Cosmo!" begged Tails.

"Why shouldn't I?" scoffed Marik "It's her fault I almost died the last time we met**so I'm giving her, her comeuppance!"

He bared his metal claws and prepared to plunge them into Cosmo's chest.

"Wait!" cried Cosmo "How are you still alive Marik?"

"Do I always have to explain how I'm still alive?" moaned Marik "Oh

well here we go again: The ship exploded and sent me flying. Due to my well muscled body, I survived the impact but barely and I was put in prison. But your twin-tailed boyfriend decided to turn traitor and help me escape*** from prison so I could kill you all."

"I did not!" snapped Tails "You tricked me into helping you escape!"

"Yeah as if anyone's going to believe that." sniffed Marik "You'd better listen to me Cosmo, Tails is a traitor and if you stick around him, you'll end up worse off then you are now."

Cosmo couldn't believe what she was hearing. Tails, a traitor? Then again, she knew that Marik loved to be a liar so she knew that she should take Marik's statement with a pinch of salt.

"Tails, please tell me that isn't true!" gasped Cosmo "You didn't willingly help Marik escape from prison did you?"

"Of course not." said Tails with a sad face "Marik tricked me into thinking if I helped him escape, he would help me escape and he would turn good. But it turned out he was tricking me all along and he was using me to help him escape. It's the truth Cosmo, honest it is. I'm no traitor."

Marik snorted at Tails.

"Pretty words foxy boy but do you think the others would believe you? Even Sonic the Hedgehog?" he purred.

"I believe Tails." said Cosmo "I certainly don't believe you Marik, you always were known for being a deceiver and I know Sonic won't believe you since he's known Tails long enough to know he wouldn't lie to him."

"Now I'm convinced my lie isn't working." muttered Marik "Oh well, Cosmo it's time for you to die now. Tails, I'm going to spare your life as a token of appreciation for helping me escape so you be a good boy and let me do my job."

"No!" cried Tails "You leave Cosmo alone you big bully!"

Marik just pointed a finger as sharp as a steak knife at Tails and

gave him an extremely painful electric shock. Tails screamed at the top of his voice and he was brought down to his knees as electricity surged up his fluffy little body. Marik didn't hesitate, he kept up the shocking just to give Tails more pain as he felt he deserved it. Cosmo didn't know what to do, she couldn't help Tails since Marik had pinned her down and Marik had the Chaos Emerald just out of her reach. All she could do was hope Sonic would come out and save her and Tails. Marik then suddenly stopped zapping Tails and let him have a moment to breathe. Tails panted and coughed heavily as the air that almost left his lungs began to return to him.

"I said I'll spare your life as a token of appreciation Tails." said Marik dryly "Don't make me change my mind because you know I'll do it."

"What's the point of you sparing me?" said Tails bitterly "You'll only kill me later when you take over Mobius and turn it into a war zone."

Marik just rolled his eyes.

"Just because I'm going to turn this place into a war zone, it doesn't mean I'm going to kill anyone." said Marik "I'll make the citizens fight each other to the death. And with this so-called Chaos Emerald I'll be able to make all this possible!"

He grinned wickedly as he admired the shiny gem in his hand. Marik had overheard Tails explaining the Chaos Emeralds to Cosmo and he was eager to use one. Tails tried to get up so he could retrieve the emerald but he couldn't, the painful shock Marik had given him had done a good deal of pain to him. Then suddenly a window flung open and Sonic jumped out of the window in a spin-dash. He hit Marik, causing him to fall off Cosmo and drop the emerald. Cosmo quickly grabbed the emerald and stayed back as Sonic got into a battle-ready stance and Marik had only just finished standing back up.

"Hey, Martian features!" yelled Sonic "Do you mind telling me what this is all about?"

"I should have expected your unwelcome arrival Sonic the Hedgehog!" snarled Marik "You just can't leave me alone for five minutes can you?"

"Well since you're trying to kill my friends, no I can't." said Sonic "And why should I be surprised that you're here right now even though you got blown up in your own spaceship?"

"I'm getting tired of explaining why I'm still alive every time it looks like I'm dead so let's just say I lived the explosion shall we?" sighed Marik.

"If that's what you want then OK." said Sonic "Now, do you mind telling me what this is all about?"

"Well after I tricked Tails into helping me escape from prison, I decided to yet again, try to kill Cosmo." said Marik "But then they find that Chaos Emerald and I listened in on their conversation about it and it sounds like a useful tool so I decided to take it for myself if you don't mind."

Sonic turned to Tails and Cosmo.

"Where did you find that Chaos Emerald you two?" he asked.

"It was covered in chocolate and I brought it from the store." said Tails "How it ended up being covered in chocolate is a mystery to me though."

"I see." said Sonic "And did I hear Marik wrong or did he say he tricked you into helping him escape from prison?"

"You heard him right Sonic." said Tails, his ears dropping back in despair "Marik tricked me into helping him escape. If you're wondering how he got there in the first place…"

"I think I can pretty much guess how he got in jail." interrupted Sonic "Now Marik, shall we fight?"

"Gladly!" said Marik, baring his metal claws "Winner takes all, loser gets killed. Sound fair?"

"Whatever you say you tiny psychopath." said Sonic "Now here's hedgehog in your face!"

Without warning, Sonic spin-dashed Marik, literally in the face! Marik

hurtled backwards and skidded through the dirt. Marik leapt to his feet and tried to zap Sonic with a jolt of electricity. Sonic dodged the zap but Marik zapped at him again and just skimmed him across the thigh.

"Since when did you have electrical attacks?" yelped Sonic as Marik kept trying to zap him.

"This new metal hand I have gives me the ability to zap people." said Marik, zapping at him again "I will warn you though, it's very painful, but like I care about that! I love inflicting pain amongst others!"

Marik zapped at Sonic again but Sonic dodged the jolt and he spin-dashed Marik in the head, leaving a huge dent on his spiked helmet. Marik punched Sonic in the face with his metal hand. Marik's metal hand felt like a handbag full of rocks to Sonic because it was that hard. Sonic fell onto his side and spat out a tooth. Before Sonic could get up, Marik swiped the air with both arms and smacked Sonic with an energy wave. Sonic somersaulted in midair and landed on his back.

"Just because I don't have an Energy Diamond to help me it doesn't mean I'm any easier to defeat!" said Marik, smiling like a Tyrannosaurus Rex "I'm still as strong as ever Sonic and you will not defeat me this time!"

"I beg to differ though." said Sonic, leaping up, somersaulting in the air and landing behind Marik "I'm as strong as ever too and I've been active all the time you've spent imprisoned so all that time doing nothing must be affecting the way you fight now."

He then roundhouse kicked Marik in the back and sent the Martian sprawling. Before Marik could get up, Tails decided to intervene by dropkicking him. Then Amy and Cream ran outside and joined in. Marik only just stood up but Amy walloped him with her hammer and sent the Martian hurling through the air like a golf ball. Cream and her pet Chao Cheese both punched Marik in the face and the Martian crashed down to the ground. He lifted his head and spat out dirt and soil. Sonic and his friends stood before him, smirking triumphantly.

"I guess I was right." said Sonic "You're not nearly half as strong as you once were. We're gonna haul your sick-twisted mind back to jail where you belong!"

Marik just remained as he was, sitting on his knees and staring at the grass beneath him. Seeing as Marik appeared to be out of commission, Sonic and friends advanced on him, ready to nab him and restrain him. Then Marik turned around at a terrific speed and let fly four jolts of electricity from all four fingers! Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream were all painfully electrocuted from the shocks and Marik drew his arm back and thrust it forward to send them all flying backwards. Sonic and Tails crashed into the wall of Sonic's house and they groaned in pain whereas Amy and Cream landed in front of the doorstep. Cosmo gasped in horror at her downed friends and she backed against the wall, clutching the Chaos Emerald tightly to her chest. Marik smiled wickedly at his triumph and he advanced on Cosmo menacingly.

"I win so I get the prize which is the Chaos Emerald." said Marik "Now Cosmo, would you be a nice little girl and hand it over?"

Cosmo clutched the emerald tighter and shook her head, she was too frightened to speak. Marik tried to keep his temper under control.

"Cosmo, if you hand over that emerald, I won't kill everybody." he lied.

Cosmo still refused to give him the emerald. Then suddenly, before Marik could do anything, a three clawed robotical hand appeared from nowhere and grabbed the Chaos Emerald in Cosmo's hands. Cosmo held on tight but the robot hand was too strong and it wrenched the emerald right out of her hands. Marik looked up to see where the hand had come from and he saw none other then Dr. Eggman in his Egg-Mobile hovering above them with Metal Sonic hovering next to him and the Chaos Emerald in the Egg-Mobile's robotical hand. The hand lifted the emerald up to Eggman and he took it into his own hands. He stared at the beautiful gem and grinned wickedly.

"So that's the power source my Egg-Mobile detected is it?" he said "It must be valuable then. This emerald looks a lot like the Master

Emerald and Angel Island only a lot smaller but I bet it's just as powerful!"

"That emerald is mine you fat, moustachioed moron!" yelled Marik, leaping up and grabbing the robot arm that was still extended from underneath the Egg-Mobile.

Eggman bent over the edge to see what was going on underneath his Egg-Mobile and he screwed his face up at what he saw. Marik tried to climb up the arm so he could get to Eggman and snatch the Chaos Emerald back.

"Who the devil are you?" said Dr. Eggman, bewildered at the fact he wasn't looking at a Mobian.

"I am Marik the Martian and you will give me that Chaos Emerald!" yelled Marik "Or I will rip your limbs off and shove them up your nose!"

Then suddenly Metal Sonic punched Marik and the little Martian was sent flying off the Egg-Mobile's robot arm and he landed on his back. Dr. Eggman put a finger to his lips and mused for a moment.

"He's a Martian eh?" he said "So Martians DO exist! My kind have always believed in Martians for a long time and now I'm seeing one with my own eyes! I am the luckiest man alive!"

Back on the ground Marik had only just stood up and then Sonic, who had recovered from Marik's earlier attacks, spin-dashed him and knocked him onto his front. Marik got back up and smacked Sonic with an energy wave from his arm again. But before Marik could do anything else, Metal Sonic grabbed him by the arms from behind. Marik turned his head around to see what he was up against.

"What's this? A robot clone of Sonic?" he sniffed "No matter, it'll be destroyed just as easily!"

He grabbed Metal Sonic and flung him over and onto his back. Metal Sonic got back up and tried to slash at Marik but Marik dodged and gave him a whopping good kick that sent Metal Sonic staggering.

Then Marik swiped the air with his arms and hit Metal Sonic with an energy wave. Metal Sonic tried to strike back but Marik punched him with his robot hand and Metal Sonic was sent hurling backwards. Sonic and friends were watching the whole fight and they were amazed at how well Marik was doing against Metal Sonic.

"It's not fair!" whined Amy "How come we can barely lay a finger on Metal Sonic and yet Marik's beating him up without breaking a sweat?"

"I think I know why Amy." said Tails "Metal Sonic was built to withstand Sonic and anyone affiliated with him. But he's not built to withstand Marik the Martian since Dr. Eggman has never met Marik before. So that way, Metal Sonic will be a scrap heap when Marik's finished with him."

"That's the only decent thing he's ever going to do for us." said Sonic grimly "Although I wanted to smash Metal Sonic."

Marik punched Metal Sonic and the robot Sonic clone was sent skidding backwards. He stood up straight and began scanning Marik just as the Martian was getting ready for another attack. His visor then said the words "Martian Data: Copied" and then reverted back to his natural red optics. Marik tried to kick Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic was suddenly all the wiser. He grabbed Marik's leg and then swung him around in a perfect 360 degree spin and let go of him. Marik flew straight into the air and he landed painfully on his back. Marik got back to his feet and tried to attack again but Metal Sonic elbowed him in the stomach, then slammed him on the head with his fist, then gave him an upper cut and then gave him a good kick in the back side. And to top all that, he blasted him with his torso cannon. Marik fell to the ground, exhausted and defeated as Metal Sonic stood there watching him icily. Sonic couldn't believe it, Marik had the fight totally in his favour and now Metal Sonic is on top! What was going on?

"Hey Eggman!" yelled Sonic, turning into Eggman's direction "How come Metal Sonic was losing to Marik and now he's winning him?"

"That's very simple Sonic." said Dr. Eggman, smiling widely "Metal Sonic has the ability to copy other people's data. That's how he was

able to defeat you and fourteen of your friends at once, he copied all your data before he even battled you. And it doesn't matter if you get a new friend or ally; Metal Sonic will copy their data and be just as strong as ever. You'll NEVER defeat Metal Sonic, Sonic, no matter what you do, Metal Sonic will always be on top!"

He laughed his usual loud grating laugh. Sonic got mad and spin-dashed his Egg-Mobile. Eggman yelped as he wobbled about furiously and he dropped the Chaos Emerald. Cream flew up and caught it in her hands. Dr. Eggman suddenly realized his Chaos Emerald was missing and he saw Cream, flying back down to the ground with it so he tried to snatch it off of her with the Egg-Mobile's metal claw. But Sonic sliced it in two with his spin-dash and Cream landed safely on the ground. Dr. Eggman got furious and he pounded the Egg-Mobile's sides with anger.

"You ruffians! Give me back my well earned Chaos Emerald!" he ordered.

"Nope, the emerald is ours." said Sonic smugly "Finders keepers you know."

Then Marik elbowed Sonic in the ribs and sent Sonic falling over. He zapped Cream with a quick electric jolt which caused her to drop the Chaos Emerald and Marik seized it in his hands. But then Metal Sonic drop-kicked him and snatched the emerald off of Marik. Then Amy got a sneak attack on Metal Sonic and walloped him with her hammer, causing Metal Sonic to drop the Chaos Emerald and Cosmo grabbed it.

"You get inside with the emerald Cosmo." ordered Sonic "We've got this."

"Be careful Sonic." said Cosmo as she went into the house with the emerald in her hands.

Marik tried to run after her but Sonic grabbed him by the collar of his leather jacket and held him back.

"Yo Martian head, timeout!" said Sonic, doing a time-out gesture "This fight is going to get us nowhere so why don't me and you form

a temporary truce until we defeat Dr. Eggman and Metal Sonic? Once we defeat Eggman, me and you can have an out-to-out brawl for the Chaos Emerald, deal?"

"You've got it hedgehog!" said Marik, shaking Sonic's hand with his metal hand so he could give Sonic's hand a hard squeeze but Sonic didn't seem to notice "We beat Eggman, then we fight for the emerald. I like this plan."

"Yeah but don't start getting ahead of yourself!" warned Amy "You defiantly aren't getting that Chaos Emerald because we are!"

"Oh shut up you pink moron." muttered Marik.

Sonic, Tails, Amy, Cream and Marik all bent down into battle ready stances and they prepared to charge at Metal Sonic, who stood ominously before them, waiting to attack. Sonic, Tails, Amy and Cream all charged into battle. Marik just stood still. He smiled wickedly at the Mobians as they went into battle with Metal Sonic.

"Those fools will believe anything won't they?" he sneered "Now I can sneak into the house, kill Cosmo and get the emerald. Then I'll make a clean get away."

So he tip-toed away from the battlefield but he didn't get far. A warp-ring appeared right in front of him, causing Marik to jump and then he got a terrific uppercut to the face that actually knocked him out cold! It was Knuckles the Echidna! He had sensed the Chaos Emerald's sighting and he decided to come and see what was happening. He glowered at the unconscious Martian that lay before him.

"How is he still alive?" he wondered "Oh well, I've gotta help Sonic take down Egg-head and Metal Sonic."

As for the fight, Metal Sonic was holding everybody off as usual. Sonic tried to spin-dash him but Metal Sonic grabbed him and threw him away. He kicked Amy in the gut before she could hammer him into the ground, he grabbed Cream by the ears and threw her away and then he gave Tails an uppercut that made his lip bleed. Knuckles stepped in and gave Metal Sonic a terrific sucker punch.

Metal Sonic definitely did not see that coming and he was stunned by the punch. Metal Sonic fell onto his back and then Knuckles grabbed Metal Sonic and threw him straight up into Eggman's Egg-Mobile. Metal Sonic hit the Egg-Mobile so hard that Dr. Eggman literally fell out of the hovering machine and he fell onto his back. Then Metal Sonic landed with a thunk on top of him. And then the Egg-Mobile fell to the ground just behind Dr. Eggman. Sonic's face brightened at the fact help had just arrived.

"Hey Knuckles, perfect timing!" said Sonic.

"I know." said Knuckles "The Master Emerald was sensing rifts in the Chaos force which to me is a sign that someone has found a Chaos Emerald so I warped myself over the minute I managed to get a warp ring."

"Well you came just in time." said Sonic "We're having a tough time out here."

"I can see that." said Knuckles "I knocked Marik out the minute I got here." he added, pointing to the unconscious Martian that lay on the ground a few feet away "And then I helped you defeat Metal Sonic." he pointed to the groaning Dr. Eggman and the blacked out Metal Sonic.

"Well thanks for the help." said Sonic "And don't worry about the Chaos Emerald, Cosmo has it and she's hiding in my house so it's in safe hands."

"That's a relief." said Knuckles "Imagine how much trouble Eggman or Marik could do if they got it."

The moment Knuckles said Marik's name, the Martian woke up and got to his feet. Marik swaggered about as he stood up and he faced the Mobians standing before him.

"As if things couldn't get any worse." he muttered "Back up for Sonic had to arrive."

"That's right Martian head and I'm going to give you another knuckle sandwich for the crimes you've done in the past!" growled Knuckles,

raising his fists.

"Why don't you by a good boy and run for it Marik?" said Sonic "You're injured and weak, you can't possibly hope to defeat us!"

Marik hated to admit it but Sonic was right, he was in no condition to fight so he did the only logical choice, retreat and rest until he was fit to fight again.

"Alright you win you filthy heathens!" growled Marik "But don't think I won't be back because I will! And that Chaos Emerald will be mine, and so will the other six Chaos Emeralds!"

And with that, Marik turned and ran as fast as he could possibly go. As for Dr. Eggman, he had recovered from Knuckles' attack and he knew he was in no condition to steal the emerald, especially since Metal Sonic was out of commission so he got into his Egg-Mobile, which amazingly still worked despite the damage sustained, and he flew away.

"I'm going to repair Metal Sonic, but I'll be back and I'll get those Chaos Emeralds, just you wait and see!" declared Dr. Eggman as he flew up into the sky.

Sonic just watched him fly away. The moment the villains vanished he called out.

"Hey Cosmo, it's safe to come out now!"

Cosmo opened the door and came out of the house with the Chaos Emerald in her hands. Knuckles saw the emerald and his eyes widened at the sight of it.

"After all these years of hiding." he said "The Chaos Emeralds show themselves once again. How did you find it Sonic?" he asked.

"I found it actually." said Tails "It was covered in chocolate and I bought it from the store. I have no idea how it got covered in chocolate in the first place but it's a good thing I bought it so now we have the emerald."

"It was a lucky thing." said Knuckles "Mobius would be in

catastrophe if someone like Eggman ever got that emerald."

"So if we've got one of seven Chaos Emeralds then does that mean the other six will be somewhere around?" asked Amy "And if that's the case, shall we start a Chaos Emerald hunt so we can get the emeralds before the villains do?"

"That would be the best thing to do." said Knuckles "We mustn't let those emeralds fall into enemy hands!"

"Before we start this search for the Chaos Emeralds." said Sonic "I think we should recruit our friends to give us an extra hand in this search. We'll make two teams and we'll start searching for the emeralds."

With that said, Sonic dashed off to give the word to the very people he was looking for, Team Chaotix and his fellow team-mates from the Royal Fighters. As the friends watched Sonic run off, Cosmo said to Knuckles

"This Chaos Emerald hunt is going to be a tough one isn't it?"

"It sure is Cosmo." said Knuckles "But we'll find them all and keep them safe from Dr. Eggman, even if it takes us forever…"

Footnotes:

***Tails is of course talking about his near-death experience in Story 27**

****Don't miss *Arc 2: The Cosmo and Cream Adventure* from the exciting spin-off title *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius* !**

*****Don't tell me you forgotten the shocking events of Story 34 have you?**

The first Chaos Emerald has been found! The Chaos Emerald hunt is about to begin! And believe me, this is not going to be

your tradtional Chaos Emerald hunt! No, this hunt features more twists and turns then a tin of spaghetti and it will not end in total victory for Sonic either! Join me next time as the hunt for the Chaos Emeralds begins... Read and Review.

By the way Kratos Pwns, just out of interest, what's your opinion on that punchable dork Ginger the Fox? If you wish, you can explain it in a review. :)

Shiver my Emeralds! Part 1

Story 37: Shiver my Emeralds! Part 1

Moments later, Sonic arrived back with recruitments. He had brought with him: Team Chaotix which consisted of Espio the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile and Charmy Bee and his fellow team-mates from the Royal Fighters Service: Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Bunnie Rabbot the Cyborg Rabbit, Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse. They were all wondering what the commotion was all about as Sonic gathered them up and brought them back to the others who had stood waiting for him.

"So mate, what's with all the gander then?" asked Geoffrey.

"Is there a big mission which involves fighting Dr. Eggman for us all?" asked Mandy, hoping it was since she was looking forward to kicking Eggman's backside for what he did to her sister Marion the other month*.

Sonic signalled for everybody to quieten down. Everybody fell into silence and then Sonic spoke:

"The reason I have gathered you all here today is because we have found one of the seven Chaos Emeralds."

Cosmo the Seedrian showed everybody the gleaming green gem she held in her hands. Everybody stared at it in amazement but then they exchanged confused glances.

"Um, what is a Chaos Emerald?" asked Wilson "Is it something important?"

"Yes it is." said Knuckles the Echidna "Does anyone else not know what a Chaos Emerald is?"

Everybody except Espio raised their hands. Vector looked at the chameleon in surprise.

"You know what a Chaos Emerald is?" he asked, taken aback at the fact Espio knew something he didn't.

"Yes I know what a Chaos Emerald is." said Espio "Us chameleons know everything due to the fact we are acute information gatherers and we don't miss many details."

"Well for those who don't know what a Chaos Emerald is, I'll tell you." said Knuckles.

Everybody sat down in a circle as Knuckles explained the history of the Chaos Emeralds to them.

"The Chaos Emeralds are mystical gems with unfathomable power." said Knuckles "There used to be thousands of them buried in the crater where Angel Island once was. But the traitor of Angel Island Imperator Ix unearthed them all and tried to use their power to destroy us and bring Angel Island down. My father stopped them and using Chaos powers, merged the gems together to make seven so there are only seven Chaos Emeralds. After Ix was defeated, my father's last act was to send the Chaos Emeralds away. They've been hidden for years but I think all that hiding is about to end since we now have one of them so we've gathered you all here to help us find the seven Chaos Emeralds and keep them out of the reach of Dr. Eggman or any other villain out there."

The group had listened to everything and they were intrigued with the story.

"So we've gotta find those Chaos Emeralds before Eggman does?" said Bunnie "Shouldn't be a problem for us fighters at all!"

"You said it Bunnie." said Wilson in agreement "By the way Knuckles, are the Chaos Emeralds all green in colour?"

"No." said Knuckles "They are green, blue, yellow, purple, red, cyan and grey but they are all the same shape so it shouldn't be too hard to tell it's a Chaos Emerald."

"So when do we begin this emerald hunt?" asked Charmy eagerly "It sounds like lots of fun!"

"Right now." said Sonic "We'll have teams of two. Team One will be me, Tails, Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy and Team 2 can be Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Bunnie, Vector, Espio and Charmy. We'll split up and search all over Mobius for the emeralds."

"But how do we find the Chaos Emeralds?" asked Mandy "Is there a way of tracking them down?"

"If you have a Chaos Emerald with you, it glows brighter when it's near another Chaos Emerald." said Knuckles.

"But we only have one Chaos Emerald." noted Mandy "How's the other team going to find a Chaos Emerald if that team doesn't have an emerald?"

"I have an idea." said Tails, pulling the tracker he used to find the production chamber in Eggman's base out of his glove "If I can upload the Chaos Emerald's energy signature into this tracker then it should be able to track other Chaos Emeralds."

Cosmo held out the Chaos Emerald and Tails did a little scan of the Chaos Emerald with the tracker. After the scan was finished Tails did a few settings on the tracker. Then he set it to track mode and held it in front of the Chaos Emerald. It began beeping.

"It worked!" said Tails "The other team can use this tracker to find the Chaos Emeralds!"

"Wow kid, you're smart." complimented Mandy.

Tails just smiled modestly.

"Well that's settled then." said Sonic "We have a way of finding Chaos Emeralds so let's go emerald hunting everyone!"

"Yeah!" everybody cheered in unison.

Sonic gave the tracker to Amy and they held hands while staring into each other's eyes.

"Amy, you take care of yourself and your team." said Sonic "Because we won't be around to save you if you get in trouble."

"Don't worry Sonic, we'll be A Okay!" said Amy "I'll try my best to find those Chaos Emeralds. I hope your team has good luck too."

"We'll be fine Amy." said Sonic "Especially since my team has me, the world's fastest hedgehog. Goodbye for now and good luck."

"Same to you my handsome hero." said Amy teasingly.

Sonic just groaned quietly as Amy turned around to speak to the team she was paired up with.

"OK girls and boys, we've got a mission and let's not let anyone stand in our way!" said Amy in the manner of a tough army general "Now let's get going!"

With that said, Amy's team immediately departed and started their emerald hunt with Amy leading since she had the tracker. The moment they left, Geoffrey turned to Sonic.

"So when do we start?" he asked.

"Right now." said Sonic "Me and Tails will search the mountains, you and the others will search on the ground. While we're here. If we don't find anything we search somewhere else."

"Sounds good to me." said Wilson "I wonder how many emeralds we will find?"

"Who knows?" said Sonic "But don't get competitive. This isn't a competition of who can find the most Chaos Emeralds, we just need to find all seven and that's it."

"Then let's get going!" yelled Knuckles "Those emeralds aren't gonna find themselves!"

That was more then enough to get everybody going. Sonic and Tails headed north to where the mountains that protruded proudly from the centre of Green Hill Zone were and Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy started prowling around the forest to see if a Chaos Emerald was there. Sonic had taken the Chaos Emerald with him so he knew when he was getting close to one. Sonic and Tails reached the mountains and stared up at them. The mountains were very tall

but not the tallest mountains on Mobius, they were very rocky, they were flat on the top and they looked hard to climb up. Sonic never had trouble climbing anything since he could run fast and he could scale a smooth surface and Tails could fly so climbing this mountain would not be a problem. Sonic ran up the mountain at top speed and Tails flew after him. But the moment they reached the top of the tall, rocky mountain, they had an unexpected surprise awaiting them. There, sitting in the middle of the top of the mountain was Marik the Martian and he was sitting there with his feet and hands lightly pressed together and his eyes closed as if he was meditating. Sonic seemed more surprised at Marik's calm nature then the fact he was sitting at the top of a mountain but he shook it off and prepared to fight.

"Well, well, well if it isn't Marik the Martian?" said Sonic.

"Sonic the Hedgehog." said Marik softly "I should have expected your unpleasant presence sometime soon."

"You probably should have." said Sonic "Now you can make this easy on yourself and surrender so we can put you in a nice warm prison cell or you can get your butt kicked by me and Tails."

"I will do neither." said Marik quietly

His eyes snapped open and he blasted Sonic with an unpredicted jolt of electricity from his metal fingers. Sonic cried out in pain as electricity surged through his body and Marik stopped to give him a breather. The moment he stopped shocking Sonic, he turned around and leaped off the mountain. Tails did not want Marik to get away so he flew after him while Sonic began to recover from the painful shock he had received from Marik. Marik was still falling down the mountain after jumping off it and he saw Tails flying after him. Marik pointed a metal claw at Tails and tried to shock him but Tails dodged the jolt. Marik tried again but Tails yet again, dodged the jolt. Then Marik landed on a steep slope and he slid down the slope as if he was snowboarding. Tails continued flying after him, trying to keep up with Marik's fast sliding. Marik then shot up a ramp and flew through the air. He spun around five times in midair before landing on another slope and began to slide down that. Tails tried to keep up with Marik but Marik's sliding was too quick for him. Marik then slid

straight through an archway and he shot at it with a jolt of electricity. The archway caved in and blocked the slope but Tails effortlessly flew over them. Marik then slid up a loop-de-loop shaped rock and he flew through the air. He landed on his feet and jumped down a hole in the ground. Tails didn't see that and he flew straight past the hole, wondering where Marik had escaped to. Tails touched down and scanned the surroundings. Then something appeared behind him and touched him in the shoulder. Tails screamed and leaped into the air, only to see it was Sonic the Hedgehog standing there.

"Oh Sonic, you almost gave me a heart-attack!" gasped Tails.

"What? Am I naturally scary or something?" joked Sonic "Where's Marik?"

"He's gone." said Tails "I think I lost him. I'm sorry I couldn't catch him Sonic."

"Don't sweat it big guy, we'll find him." said Sonic "If I didn't know any better I'd say Marik is hiding in a cave since caves are good places to hide."

"Like over there?" asked Tails, pointing to a nearby cave.

Sonic looked in Tails' direction and saw the cave he was pointing at. The cave's entrance was wide and full of sharp pointy rocks dangling from the ceiling.

"Yeah, like over there." said Sonic "Let's see if that miserable Martian is in there."

Sonic and Tails wondered over to the cave. The cave, like all other caves was pitch black in darkness and they couldn't see a thing in there so Tails pulled out the green Chaos Emerald they had to light the way. The two friends walked quietly into the cave with the emerald providing light for them. The cave was eerily quiet with the exception of water dripping from the ceiling. Sonic and Tails looked around to see if they could find anything. There didn't appear to be anyone around, they appeared to be the only life forms in the cave. Tails began to shiver; he was feeling a little scared right now due to the cave's dark and creepy nature and the fact Marik was probably

waiting to pounce on him and Sonic any second now. Sonic didn't seem bothered at all. He kept his senses alert for anything suspicious. Then he heard a little noise as if someone scuffed a shoe on the stony ground. Sonic froze and listened again. Tails stood still and waited for Sonic to say something.

"Did you hear something?" asked Tails nervously.

"I think I did." said Sonic softly "But I'm not sure what it was."

Then they saw a flash of electricity shoot through the air and hit the huge rocky wall above them. The jolt of electricity caused a massive bang and the wall began to rain down with rocks and boulders in a big avalanche.

"TAILS RUN!" screamed Sonic.

Tails immediately ran for it and Sonic zipped away. The rocks all came crashing down with deafening smashes and Tails was struck in the back by one, causing him to fall over and drop the Chaos Emerald. Then more rocks crashed down on the ground and either caused the ground to slightly crack or broke into pieces. The avalanche finally finished and the dust floated away into nothingness. That jolt of electricity had been caused by Marik the Martian who was standing on a ledge above the entrance. He put a metal finger to his lips and blew at it as if he was blowing the thin trial of smoke from a fired revolver away. Then Marik did an amazing leap and landed in front of the rock pile. He saw a faint green glisten coming from underneath the rock pile and he dug into the pile furiously, throwing big chunks of rock over his shoulder. After throwing away many rocks he found it, the dropped Chaos Emerald that Sonic and Tails had. Marik seized the emerald and wrenched it out of the pile. He brought the gleaming gem to his face and smiled wickedly.

"You won't be needing this anymore Sonic the Hedgehog." he purred to himself.

He opened his jacket up and stuffed the emerald in a pocket that was inside the jacket. He patted his side casually and he walked away from the rock pile. Marik exited the dark cave and he turned

back around to face the entrance. He aimed a finger as sharp as a flint at the roof of the cave and fired a jolt of electricity at it. The electrical jolt caused yet another avalanche and the entrance caved in! The entrance was now full of large heavy rocks and no one would be getting in or out of that cave anymore. Marik blew at his finger and walked away.

"I do hope they were crushed in that avalanche." he said with a sadistic grin on his face "And if not, then hopefully any creatures living in there will finish them off."

He smiled at the very thought of Sonic and Tails, crushed underneath tonnes of rocks as he walked on away from the valley of mountains.

If Marik had decided to stick around, he would have died of disappointment. Tails managed to heave himself out of the pile of rocks on top of him. He brushed some pebbles off his fur and then he began to dig into the rock pile beside him.

"Sonic!" he cried as he began throwing rocks behind him "Oh Sonic, are you in there?"

"Tails when I tell you to run I mean run!" came a teenage voice from behind that Tails knew so well.

Sonic did not get caught up in the avalanche at all; he had run away and stayed put until it stopped. Tails was relieved to see Sonic was OK.

"Oh thank goodness Sonic, you're OK." he sighed.

Then Tails looked at his hands, only to see no Chaos Emerald there.

"Oh no, the Chaos Emerald!" he cried

He felt himself over frantically and then got on his hands and knees and began searching desperately.

"Where is it?" asked Sonic.

"I think it got knocked out of my hand." said Tails as he threw a rock

over his shoulder.

"By a rock?" sniffed Sonic.

"Yes, by a rock." grumbled Tails, searching through the rock pile.

"Tails, you need to take more care of the Chaos Emeralds you know." said Sonic sternly "They have great power and if they fall into the wrong hands Mobius will fall into chaos."

"I'm sorry I lost the emerald Sonic." said Tails, his ears drooping down into despair "But I wouldn't have lost it if that rockslide didn't happen."

"Speaking of the rockslide, how did it happen in the first place?" wondered Sonic.

"I think Marik did it." said Tails "I saw a jolt of electricity hit those rocks and only Marik has electrical abilities."

"I saw it too." said Sonic "So if Marik caused the rockslide…then maybe he has the Chaos Emerald!" he shrieked "That's it! Marik must have caused that rockslide in an attempt to kill us and before we recovered, he took the Chaos Emerald to boot!"

"Now I'm REALLY sorry I lost the Chaos Emerald." said Tails sadly.

"Hey Tails, don't lose hope, we'll get it back." said Sonic softly "After all, with my supersonic speed, Marik won't get far without me catching him. Now let's leave this cave shall we?"

"Yes." said Tails "I'm tired of being in a cave now."

Sonic and Tails ran off to the entrance of the cave. They had a hard time though due to the fact they had no Chaos Emerald to light the way so the cave was very dark and they spent a lot of time almost stumbling over something or banging their foot on a rock. When they finally reached the entrance of the cave, they got a nasty shock. The cave's entrance was blocked thanks to Marik the Martian's electrical attacks.

"Oh no!" cried Tails "Marik must have blocked the entrance! We're

trapped in here!"

"Not if I can help it!" yelled Sonic, spinning into a ball and spin-dashing the rock-pile.

He crushed one rock to pieces with his spin-dash. That one rock was more then enough though. The moment Sonic crushed the rock, the entire pile began to fall down and let in the light of day. Rocks tumbled over and fell down to the ground. Soon half of the pile had fallen away, allowing Sonic and Tails to escape. Sonic and Tails crawled over the pile of rocks and made it out into the fresh air and the light of day. They shielded their eyes for a moment as they waited for their eyes to adjust and then they moved on.

"Boy does it feel good to get out of that cave." said Sonic, stretching and inhaling deeply "Now where did that creep Marik go?"

"I dunno." said Tails "But we can't let him keep that Chaos Emerald. We must find him."

"Well I hope you can keep up little buddy." said Sonic "Because I'm gonna go really fast now."

Sonic revved his feet up and he ran off at his trademark speed. Tails twisted his tails around one another, took flight and he flew off after Sonic. Sonic and Tails sped through the valley of mountains, desperately searching for Marik the Martian. They knew that Martian had to be captured otherwise he would try to misuse the emerald's power and cause mayhem and destruction…

Marik had left the mountains and now he continued walking through the ever stretching fields of Green Hill Zone, holding the Chaos Emerald in his hand and staring at it with enormous interest. The emerald's beauty enchanted him and he could not keep his eyes off it. Marik, despite having a passion for death and destruction, was very fond of shiny gems and riches and treasure. Marik often felt a great sense of power just touching glamorous gems and he often felt that being surrounded by riches makes you a highly respected person.

"Oh little Chaos Emerald." he purred to himself "What kind of power do you possess? How powerful are you on your own? Or do I need all seven to unlock your power?"

His train of thoughts were soon cut off by the sound of voices in the distance. He quickly put the Chaos Emerald back in his pocket and wondered on some more. He came to a hill drop and he peered down the hill. He had come to the end of the field and had come across a boat port. There was a huge galleon at port with enormous sails and wooden bodywork. It mystified Marik as to why anyone would be using an old fashioned boat like that instead of a modern boat. But then Marik found the answer. He saw a gang of sixteen Mobians at the port, carrying heavy luggage on board as if they were preparing to leave. They were all dressed strangely too. Fifteen of the Mobians wore ragged stripy shirts and ragged shorts and they had no shoes on their feet. The sixteenth pirate was obviously their leader since he wore more fancy clothes then the others. He wore a purple dress-coat which was a fancy coat with a long section at the back often known as the tails, a blue French-cocked hat with a giant feather sticking out of it and white gloves. This Mobian was a hyena and he was a well respected leader of a pirate gang, the very gang Marik was observing now and he was known as Cutthroat Jim. He got his nickname from the fact he was deathly fond of cutting throats with his cutlass and he wore a lot of jewellery.

"Avast ye bilge rats!" Cutthroat Jim yelled at his gang "Hurry up with the loading! We be sailing in a matter of minutes!"

"Oh good. Fresh meat to sink my claws into." Marik said to himself, rubbing his hands "And they happen to be pirates too. When there are pirates, there is treasure to be had! I think I'll just stroll down there and sneak after them and see what treasures they seek."

And with that Marik sped down the hill and took shelter behind a large crate. He opened the crate and slipped inside, finding himself sitting on a lot of cups for the pirates to drink out of and he closed the lid. The pirates continued loading the ship and Marik slightly eased the lid open so he could see what they were doing. Cutthroat Jim continued barking orders out to his crew.

"You be careful with that matey!" he yelled at a pair of pirates who were carelessly carrying a crate full of expensive products "That contains me precious booty from past raids and I don't want you careless dogs breaking anything!"

"Sorry Captain." said the pirates, carrying the crate more carefully this time.

"Once we set sail, we shall head off to the Coco Islands." announced Cutthroat Jim "The treasure we seek is there and I have the treasure map to prove it."

He pulled a long slip of paper out of his sleeve and unfolded it.

"Hey can I see it?" asked a dopey pirate who was a vole with a dopey voice.

"No you may not First Mate Gormless!" yelled Cutthroat Jim, keeping the map out of Gormless' reach "Only the Captain sees ye map. Those are the rules and you swabs will obey ye rules or I will throw you all overboard!"

"Yes Captain." said Gormless.

"I do hope this so called Emerald of the Seas is worth searching for." said a nearby pirate who did some stretches to ease his aching back.

"The Emerald of the Seas matey…" said Cutthroat Jim, lifting the pirate's head up to his own and staring him directly in the eye "Is said to be the most beautiful emerald ever to be seen and that he who touches it gets a feeling of power and greatness so yes it will be worth searching for you moody, grouchy old cockroach!"

"OK Captain, I'm sorry I protested!" squeaked the pirate.

Marik had heard everything and he smiled to himself.

"Emerald of the Seas eh?" he said under his breath "He who touches it gets a feeling of power and greatness eh? Well this is one treasure I simply must steal! And primitive pirates will be no obstacle for me!"

Then suddenly he felt himself being hoisted off the ground. A pirate had picked up the crate he was hiding in and now he was carrying it onto the galleon. Marik smiled to himself. He was coming along for the trip it seemed and he would be taken all the way to Coco Island and once the pirates found the treasure, he would steal it. Cutthroat Jim watched the loading process and he glanced at the treasure map again.

"I hope this emerald is as good as the person who gave me this map says it is." he said to himself "Otherwise I will give that person a good pirate style punishment."

But Cutthroat Jim was about to get more then he bargained for on this trip…

Meanwhile, Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy had searched then entire forest for two hours straight and they hadn't found a thing since they started the hunt. Geoffrey began searching through probably the thirtieth bush he'd been searching in since this emerald hunt started and Knuckles looked in a hole in a tree only to find nothing there. Knuckles glided down from the tree with his dreadlocks and he landed beside Geoffrey.

"Hey skunk boy, found anything?" he asked.

"Not so much as a Flicky Bird mate." said Geoffrey with a tone of disappointment in his voice "Those Chaos Emeralds aren't as easy to find as I thought."

"Um Knuckles, you say that we can find a Chaos Emerald by using another Chaos Emerald right?" said Wilson.

"Yes." said Knuckles.

"But Sonic has the Chaos Emerald so how are we supposed to find another emerald without it?" asked Wilson.

"I can sense if Chaos Energy is nearby or not." said Knuckles "Years of guarding the Master Emerald have given me a good sense of Chaos Energy and whenever I'm close to Chaos Energy I can feel it

in my veins so I know if we're near or not."

"You mean you can feel Chaos Energy?" said Wilson "Well we're lucky aren't we?"

While they were talking, Mandy crept past them on tip-toe, trying to make sure nobody was watching her and she sneaked up to the deeper parts of the forest. Unfortunately, Knuckles spotted her and stopped her dead in her tracks.

"And just where do you think you are going mouse?" demanded Knuckles.

Mandy sweat-dropped and turned to face Knuckles nervously.

"Um…I'm looking for Sonic and Tails." she said quickly "I want to make sure those two are alright."

"Oh." said Knuckles "If you wanted to go looking for Sonic and Tails you could have just told us. You didn't need to go creeping off like that."

Mandy nodded and ran off as quick as she could. After Mandy disappeared into the forest, Wilson began scratching his head in thought.

"Mandy's been acting funny recently I've noticed." he said "She keeps sneaking off somewhere without telling anybody and then she comes back and never says a thing about it. I think she's hiding something."

Geoffrey's eyes narrowed to a glare and he primed his arm-mounted crossbow.

"If she's doing villainous work behind our backs then she'd better watch out." he said threateningly "Because I've got a crossbow that loves to deal with traitors and scoundrels alike."

"Now, now Geoffrey, take it easy boy." said Wilson "I don't think Mandy's going to betray us or anything like that. Maybe she's just troubled and doesn't wanna talk about it."

Geoffrey lowered his arm.

"I don't think there are any Chaos Emeralds here." said Knuckles "We've literally searched the entire place and I haven't had a whiff of Chaos Energy throughout the search."

"I think we should look somewhere else." said Geoffrey "I wonder if Sonic and Tails have found anything while they've been searching on their own."

Just as he finished that sentence, Knuckles spotted Sonic and Tails speeding by in the distance. They were heading somewhere and Knuckles wanted to find out where they were heading and why.

"Come on guys, we're following Sonic!" said Knuckles "We're gonna see where he's heading in such a hurry."

Knuckles and Geoffrey ran off whereas Wilson waited for Mandy to reappear. No sooner had Knuckles and Geoffrey run off, Mandy emerged from the forest and ran up to Wilson.

"Did I miss something?" she asked "Where are Knuckles and Geoffrey going in such a hurry?"

"Knuckles just spotted Sonic whizzing by and he decided we should go and follow him to see where he's going."

"I wish I brought my car." said Mandy grimly "We'd catch up with him easily in it."

"Well I'm afraid we'll have to run." said Wilson "Come on before Knuckles and Geoffrey lose us!"

Wilson and Mandy ran as fast as they could run and they caught up with Knuckles and Geoffrey. The four knew that they couldn't catch up to Sonic or keep up with him due to his speed but they kept on running and tried as hard as they could to keep up.

As for Sonic and Tails, they had left the mountain valley after finding no sign of Marik anywhere and they found a trail he left in the grassy

meadows from walking through it so they followed it, totally unaware of the fact Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy were about four miles behind them and trying to keep up. Sonic and Tails continued to follow the trial.

"How far did Marik walk after leaving us?" wondered Sonic "We've been following this trial forever!"

"I have no idea." said Tails "But if you're running and he's only walking, we'll catch him in an instant won't we?"

"I hope so." said Sonic "I wanna pound Marik's head in for daring to steal that Chaos Emerald from us!"

Then Sonic suddenly screeched to a halt at the edge of a hilltop he had just come across. Tails landed beside him and they both peered down at the bottom of the hill. They saw Cutthroat Jim and his pirate gang still loading things onto the ship and getting ready to set sail.

"Pirates?" said Sonic with a tone of confusion in his voice "Why would Marik be dabbling with pirates?"

"Who knows?" said Tails, shrugging "Maybe he hates pirates just as much as he hates peace lovers."

"Well if Marik thinks he can sneak onto a pirate ship with the Chaos Emerald in tow then he's got another thing coming!" declared Sonic "Tails, we are going with those pirates and we're gonna see where Marik is!"

Tails gulped.

"You're not serious are you?" he said weakly.

"I'm totally serious here." said Sonic "If Marik's on that ship and that ship sets sail, we'll never be able to catch him so we need to get on that ship and find him."

"But what if it sets sail before we can get off?" asked Tails.

"You can just fly me off the ship and presto, we're back on dry land." said Sonic "Don't worry Tails, this'll be a piece of cake."

"OK." said Tails reluctantly; scuffing his shoe "I hope it'll work."

So Sonic and Tails ran down the hill and took shelter behind a stack of barrels. Sonic peeked around the corner to see what the pirates were up to. Cutthroat Jim just stood there barking more orders to his crew as they loaded the few pieces of luggage that was left. What the pirates needed all that luggage for and what was in it was a mystery to Sonic but he knew that the luggage was a way of getting on the ship undetected. Sonic opened a barrel and Tails climbed into it. The barrel reeked of fish and Tails screwed his face up at the very smell of it. He clutched his nose as Sonic closed the barrel he was hiding in. Sonic opened another barrel that reeked of fish and was just about to climb in until he spotted something sticking out of Cutthroat Jim's pocket. Moving at lightening speed, Sonic zipped by Jim and snatched the thing out of his pocket. To Cutthroat Jim, it felt like a huge gust of wind blowing behind him and he almost fell over. Sonic leaped into the barrel and closed the lid. He looked at the thing he had just pinched from Cutthroat Jim. He had stolen the treasure map and he looked at it very closely. It was dark in the barrel so Sonic couldn't see all that much but he could see one thing that caught his attention. The X on the map which marks where the treasure was had a picture of a blue emerald above it and the emerald's shape was very similar to a Chaos Emerald's. An ordinary emerald only comes in the colour green and according to Knuckles, the Chaos Emeralds came in the colours green, blue, yellow, purple, red, cyan and grey so does this mean that the treasure the pirates seek is a Chaos Emerald? Sonic had no idea but he knew the pirates wouldn't find the treasure if they didn't have the map so he had to give it them back. Sonic opened the barrel a tiny bit and slipped the map out through the gap. It floated gently down to the ground and rested there. As for Cutthroat Jim, he had noticed the map was missing and he was doing a mad search for it.

"Curse ye rotten wind to swabble me map away!" he cursed "How am I going to find ye Emerald of the Seas if I have no map?"

"Hey Cutthroat Jim! I found it!" cried First Mate Gormless.

He was just about to pick up the barrels and started loading them but he spotted the map lying around so he picked it up and showed it to Cutthroat Jim. Cutthroat Jim took the map and bonked

Gormless on the head with his fist.

"You blundering blockhead!" he yelled "Haven't a told you only the Captain touches ye map Gormless?"

"Yes Captain, you have." said Gormless.

"Well do as the Captain says in the future!" scolded Cutthroat Jim "Now load those barrels on board you lazy dog! They're the only things left to load!"

"Yes sir!" said Gormless stupidly and he zipped off to do the job.

He picked up the barrel Tails was hiding in and he carried it across the boarding ramp and into the ship's hold. Despite being stupid, Gormless knew the barrel he was carrying suspiciously weighed more then it should and he couldn't understand why it felt so heavy. After dumping the barrel onto the floor, he went back outside to get another barrel. Gormless grabbed the barrel Sonic was hiding in and he carried that onto the ship and into the hold. He couldn't understand why that barrel felt heavy too. After he dumped the barrel, he went outside to get the rest and to his relief, they weighed as much as a barrel of fish should usually weigh so the two he'd just loaded obviously had more fish then the others did. At long last the cargo had been loaded and now Cutthroat Jim was ready to go. He boarded the ship along with his fifteen pirates and he pulled the boarding ramp onboard the ship. As for Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy, they came across the pirate gang and they spotted Sonic climbing into the barrel so they knew where he was. They lay low until the pirates had finished loading and now the huge galleon deployed its enormous sails and the ship left the port and sailed off into the wavy blue sea. The four Mobians ran down the hill and to the edge of the port and watched the galleon disappear from view.

"Now this strike me as odd." said Geoffrey, putting a finger to his chin "Why would Sonic follow them pirate blokes?"

"Maybe they have a Chaos Emerald or something." suggested Mandy "So Sonic's following them to get the emerald and run for it."

"But how can we follow him?" asked Wilson "We haven't got a boat

and there doesn't appear to be a boat anywhere on this port so we can't follow that ship and get Sonic off!"

"There's a speedboat over there." said Knuckles, pointing to it "We could use that to follow them."

The speedboat was large enough for a crew of four and it was a gleaming silver colour that sparkled like a million knives in the sun. The four Mobians scrambled onto the speedboat and Mandy took control since she knew how to drive a boat as well as a car.

"Hold on tight boys!" she said "This is going to be a really fast ride!"

The boys gripped the railings on the sides of the speedboat and Mandy started the engine. The speedboat roared into life and its engine spluttered as the boat began to start up. Then the speedboat took off at top speed and roared through the water like a torpedo, sending small waves flying everywhere. Mandy squealed with delight as she enjoyed going fast whereas Wilson looked like he was about to faint. Knuckles and Geoffrey kept their eyes on the horizon to see if they could see the galleon.

"What do you want us to do when we catch up to the pirate ship?" Geoffrey shouted to Knuckles, trying to be heard over the boat's engine.

"We kill the engine so those pirates don't hear us and we just follow it nice and slowly!" Knuckles shouted back "Those pirates won't suspect a thing!"

"I hope we catch up soon!" cried Wilson "I hate going at extremely fast speeds!"

"Oh you're such a skitter bug Wilson." sighed Mandy.

But Wilson didn't hear her because of the engine's loud motor roaring away. One whole minute later, Knuckles and Geoffrey spotted the galleon in the distance, its sails flapping in the wind like clothes on a washing line on a rainy day. Mandy stopped the motor and the speedboat slowed down to a cruising speed. The motor fell into silence and the speedboat slowly drifted through the water. The

speedboat was still going fast enough to catch up to the galleon but it wasn't going at a terrific speed, it was just going slowly through the water so the pirates wouldn't hear them. After a minute of drifting towards the sailing galleon, Geoffrey aimed his arm mounted crossbow and he fired at he galleon. He had fired a grappling hook and it hooked itself onto a railing high up on the galleon. Geoffrey pulled the end of the line out of his crossbow and he tied it around the railing to the speedboat.

"There, now the blokes can't lose us." said Geoffrey.

"Good thinking skunk." said Knuckles "Let's just hope the pirates don't notice us."

"I just hope they haven't found Sonic yet." said Wilson "Pirates are vicious and bloodthirsty sadists after all and they like to throw people overboard."

"Wilson, I wish you'd calm down a little." said Mandy "Sonic can beat an army of Eggman robots, a bunch of lame pirates are not going to be a problem for him."

"I agree." said Knuckles "And they'd certainly be no match for me if they decided to pick a fight with me. I'd ground them all into the dirt."

"But the plan isn't to fight the pirates is it?" said Geoffrey "It's just to help Sonic get off the ship if he tries to escape it."

"And that's what we're doing." said Knuckles.

The galleon sailed on through the calm, still ocean with the speedboat clinging onto it and being pulled after the galleon by the grappling hook Geoffrey had set up.

Meanwhile, Sonic and Tails opened the barrels they were hiding in and they gasped for breath. The smell of fish burnt their nostrils and they were relieved to be out of the barrels at long last. They climbed out of the barrels they were hiding in and they closed them. Tails wiped some ice off his fur.

"I always wonder why do fish smell so bad and yet we love to eat them?" griped Tails.

"Beats me." said Sonic "Now if Marik's hiding on this ship, which is likely, then maybe he's in here and probably hiding in one of those crates."

Sonic ran over to one crate and he opened it. The crate was full of spare uniforms for if the pirates ever needed a clean outfit, especially Cutthroat Jim since he loved his outfits to be spic-and-span. Sonic closed the crate and looked in another one. This crate contained some of Cutthroat Jim's most prized possessions that he loved to show off to other pirates just to make them jealous. He would also show off these insanely expensive riches to people he attacked to show them how much he had raided in his life-time and how much business he meant. Sonic closed the crate and looked in another one. Tails began looking in crates too. He looked in a crate full of spare weapons for in case the pirates ever lost theirs in battle and they needed back up. The crate was full of cutlasses, pistols, pikes and boarding axes. Pirates are brutal people and they carried a great deal of brutal weapons. Tails shuddered at his find and he closed the crate in a hurry. He spotted a small crate sitting at the back of the hold. Tails had a sneaky feeling Marik was hiding in there. Tails crept over to the crate while trying not to trip over the mess of nets and cannonballs that littered the hold. He made it to the crate and he ever so slightly eased it open. The moment he opened it though, Marik leaped out of the crate and gave Tails a very painful electric shock that brought the fox to his knees. Sonic saw Marik hurting Tails and he spin-dashed the Martian straight into the wall. Marik hit the wall and groaned and Sonic grabbed him by the arms and held him there.

"OK Marik the Martian, you give us that Chaos Emerald back or I'm throwing you overboard!" threatened Sonic.

"Fat chance hedgehog!" said Marik, trying to aim his claws at Sonic so he could electrocute him.

Tails ran over to the weapons crate he looked in earlier and he grabbed a pistol. But he didn't shoot Marik with the pistol, instead he ran up to the pinned Martian and he whacked the palm of his robotic hand with it.

"OUCH!" cried Marik "Watch it you wretched little rat! Little kids

shouldn't play with guns!"

He kicked Sonic away from him and he tried to electrocute Tails but Tails had smashed the voltage compactor, the little dome in the palm of his metal hand, with the gun so Marik couldn't use his electric attacks. His fingers just sparked harmlessly as he tried to shock him. Sonic saw his chance and he spin-dashed Marik again. Marik fell to the ground and Sonic grabbed a cutlass from the weapons crate. Sonic pinned Marik to the ground by his jacket with the cutlass so Marik couldn't get away, he was stuck and helpless. Sonic stood over the pinned Martian and glared at him.

"Marik, all we want is the Chaos Emerald back and we don't wanna cause any trouble on here since this is a pirate's ship so make this easy on yourself and surrender." said Sonic.

"I will not give you the Chaos Emerald back!" yelled Marik "It's mine and mine alone!"

"Fine, we'll take it back ourselves." said Tails, reaching into Marik's pocket and grabbing the emerald.

But Marik grabbed Tails' arm before he could pull the emerald out of his pocket. Then Marik reached over his shoulder and he pulled the cutlass out of the floorboard, freeing himself and giving himself a weapon at the same time. Marik held the cutlass to Tails' neck and he held him tightly by the arm. Tails squirmed but the Martian held him very tightly and the cutlass was so close to his neck it was practically touching his fur.

"Hey, drop that sword and let Tails go you creep!" yelled Sonic.

"Or what?" sneered Marik "What are you gonna do about it? You will surrender and leave this ship so I can raid it in peace or Tails' head is going on my bedroom wall back on Mars!"

Tails gulped so loudly you'd think he'd just swallowed a rock.

"Why do you wanna raid an old pirate ship?" asked Sonic.

"I have a passion for treasures and pirates always have large quantities of them so I'm going to steal all the pirate's treasure." said

Marik "Especially the one they've set sail to look for right now."

Sonic's quills shuddered. Marik was going to steal the treasure the pirates were looking for? If the treasure was a Chaos Emerald like he thought it was then Marik would have two Chaos Emeralds! Sonic had to stop the Martian and fast but he couldn't let Marik kill Tails so what could he do? Then as if things couldn't get any worse, the hold doors flung open and Cutthroat Jim stormed in into the hold, wielding a pistol and looking furious. He pointed the pistol at the three strangers that stood before him, staring straight at him. Marik dropped the cutlass, let go of Tails and put his hands up. Sonic and Tails put their hands up too.

"Shiver me timbers!" cried Cutthroat Jim "I have stowaways on me ship it seems! Well I'll have to throw you all overboard it seems!"

"Sorry Captain but I'm not going for a swim today!" said Sonic, spin-dashing Cutthroat Jim in the stomach, causing him to drop his pistol and fall onto his back.

Seeing their chance, Tails and Marik ran for it. Sonic grabbed Cutthroat Jim's pistol and he threw it as hard as he could. The pistol hurtled through the air and it fell into the ocean with a splash, never to be found again.

"When will I ever see the end of guns?" moaned Sonic as he ran for his life.

Unfortunately more trouble happened. Cutthroat Jim's crew had heard Sonic attacking him and they all lay in wait for him. They had already captured Tails and Marik and tied them up in rope and now Sonic had run into the fifteen pirates that lay in wait for him. Sonic yelped in surprise as fifteen pirates all pounced on him at once. They all had rope and they wrapped it tightly around his wrists, arms and ankles so Sonic was tied up tighter then a pretzel on sale at a bakery. They threw Sonic next to the tied up Tails and Marik, the latter glaring at him.

"So much for your heroism hedgehog!" he jeered "You got nabbed by a bunch of primitive pirates!"

"Oh shut up Marik!" yelled Sonic "You're no better yourself!"

"What are we gonna do Sonic?" said Tails helplessly.

"I dunno yet big guy, but I'll get us outta this!" said Sonic, struggling and squirming in the rope that was tightly tied around him.

But try as he might, he couldn't get free of the rope. Cutthroat Jim, who had recovered from Sonic's attack earlier, stood before the prisoners with a devilish grin on his face.

"Har, har, har, har!" he chortled "You scurvy landlubbers fought you could overpower Cutthroat Jim did ye? Well you've failed miserably and I have you swabs at my mercy!"

"Yeah, yeah whatever." muttered Sonic "Let us go!"

"I don't think I'll be doing that landlubber." said Cutthroat Jim darkly "Once I capture someone, I never release them! Now why are you three stowing away on me ship? Did you come to steal me treasure huh, huh?"

"Me and Sonic are only here to capture him." said Tails, motioning to Marik so the pirates knew what he was talking about "We're not here to steal anything."

"Do you expect me to believe the lies of landlubbers?" snarled Cutthroat Jim, his eyes narrowing to a glare that made Tails feel nervous "You three are here to steal me treasure and now I'm going to execute you all. Mateys, throw all three of them overboard!"

"Aye, aye sir!" said the crew of pirates.

The pirates picked up Sonic, Tails and Marik and they prepared to throw them over the ship and into the water where they would sink and drown due to the fact their limbs were tied up, preventing them from swimming. But what they didn't know is that Marik had managed to use his metal claws to cut his ropes just before they picked him up and the Martian waited for the right moment to strike. The pirates prepared to throw the trio overboard. They raised them above their heads and they got ready to throw them into the water. Then Marik broke free of his cut ropes and dropkicked the pirates

holding him above their heads. Then Marik swiped at the entire crew with his arm and sent them all flying with an energy wave. The entire crew fell in a heap against the edge of the ship. Cutthroat Jim tried to get away but Marik caught him with an energy wave and knocked him over. Then Marik grabbed Cutthroat Jim by the collar and he threw the pirate leader into the hold. As for Sonic and Tails, they lay on their sides and they were still tied up and they couldn't do anything about it since they didn't have metal claws to cut their ropes like Marik did. They squirmed violently but they just couldn't get free of the ropes, they were just too thick and too strong. Then Marik seized Sonic and Tails by the ropes and hoisted them up to his height. He grinned like a hobgoblin at the helpless heroes in his hands.

"As for you two, I think I'll do Cutthroat Jim a favour and throw you overboard for him!" said Marik wickedly "I hope you like water!"

"I don't!" yelped Sonic.

"Well your demise will be more enjoyable then." sneered Marik "Bon voyage Mobian filth!"

And with that said, he threw Sonic and Tails as if they were tennis balls and the tied up hedgehog and fox fell screaming into the ocean with a mighty splash. After the water stopped rippling and the bubbles faded, Sonic and Tails disappeared under the gentle, still ocean. They had submerged and were likely going to sink all the way down to the bottom or come back up a while later only to go under again. Satisfied with his work, Marik dusted his hands off and walked away. But what Marik didn't know is that Knuckles had seen Sonic and Tails falling into the water and he, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy immediately set to rescuing them. Geoffrey unhooked his grappling hook so the speedboat was free to move and Mandy activated the engine. The speedboat zoomed up to the spot Sonic and Tails had fallen into the water and Mandy stopped the engine.

"How are we gonna save the two boys?" she asked "I bet they've gone down awfully deep!"

"We'll have to leap in there and rescue them!" said Geoffrey "I'll go, I'm not afraid of water."

"I'll go too." said Wilson.

"Wilson, you don't like swimming remember?" said Mandy "Why ever are you going down there with Geoffrey?"

"Because I wanna prove I'm not a great big skitter bug." said Wilson.

With that said, Geoffrey and Wilson held their breath and they both dived into the water. Knuckles and Mandy watched and waited as the skunk and dog went down into the ocean blue. Under the water, Geoffrey and Wilson spotted Sonic and Tails sinking fast and running out of air even faster. Geoffrey and Wilson both swam down as fast as they could go in a desperate attempt to catch up to the sinking hedgehog and fox. Geoffrey soon began to feel worried. He was beginning to run out of air and he wasn't that close to Sonic and Tails. He began to worry that if he didn't get them in time and swim back up in a hurry, he wouldn't make it to the surface in time. Wilson began to feel the same but he didn't let that bother him this time. He wanted to prove he could do something without getting scared or worried and that's what he was going to do. Not to mention he might impress Mandy with his heroic feat. Just as Sonic and Tails were beginning to pass out from the lack of air they were getting from being underwater, Wilson managed to grab their ropes and stop them sinking any further. He passed Sonic to Geoffrey and the two began to swim back to the surface as fast as they could swim. Unfortunately as they neared the surface, Geoffrey couldn't hold his breath any longer and he gave in. Wilson noticed this but he couldn't stop now, he had to get Sonic and Tails to the surface and then he had to go back for Geoffrey. Wilson finally made it to the surface of the water and he helped Knuckles and Mandy pull Sonic and Tails onto the speedboat.

"Wilson you did it!" cried Mandy.

"Not quite." said Wilson "Geoffrey's in trouble now, I'm going down to help him."

And with that Wilson held his breath and went back under the water.

"That dog's a lot braver then I thought he was." said Knuckles.

"Agreed." said Mandy "And I thought he was a worry guts all the time."

Under the water, Geoffrey was beginning to sink down to the bottom, his eyes closed and his mouth open due to the fact he was unconscious now. Wilson saw the skunk and he swam over to him quickly. He grabbed the skunk and he swam back to the surface as fast as he could. He was beginning to run out of air but Wilson didn't give up, he was almost there, he just needed a few more paddles and…he finally made it back to the surface and gasped for breath. Then he helped Geoffrey onto the speedboat with Knuckles and Mandy pulling him on. Then they helped Wilson back onto the boat. Mandy threw her arms around the sopping wet dog.

"You're brilliant Wilson!" she cried "I never knew you had the courage in you to do this!"

"Thank you Mandy." said Wilson modestly.

As for Knuckles, he had untied Sonic and Tails and he did some heavy chest compressions on Sonic, Tails and Geoffrey in an effort to wake them up. The first few attempts came to no avail but Knuckles didn't give up. He tried again on all three. This time it worked. Sonic woke up, coughing and spluttering, Tails woke up, coughing out water and Geoffrey woke up, spluttering loudly. They sat up and shook themselves dry.

"Blimey!" said Geoffrey "I went down there to rescue you blokes." he said to Sonic and Tails "And then I ended up needing to be rescued as well!"

"Well I'm glad you guys made it in time." said Sonic, squeezing one of his quills to get the water out "I hate water and I don't want my demise to be a watery grave if ever that time comes."

"Well if Geoffrey went down to save us, and then he needed saving as well then who saved us?" asked Tails.

"I did." said Wilson "Even though I don't like swimming, I decided to risk my life for you two and then I decided to risk it again for Geoffrey when he failed to make it."

"Well I thank you dearly mate." said Geoffrey "I owe you my life Wilson and from now on, you have my willing trust."

"Me and Tails are grateful too Wilson." said Sonic, giving the dog a thumbs up "Good job man."

Wilson just smiled with pleasure.

"Alright Sonic and Tails, what were you two doing on that pirate ship?" asked Knuckles "Did you take a wild chance in thinking you could take on a pirate gang?"

"No not at all." said Sonic "Marik the Martian stole the Chaos Emerald we had and he went onto that ship so we followed him in an attempt to get the emerald back but we got caught by the pirates and Marik threw us overboard."

Knuckles couldn't believe his ears.

"You mean to tell me Marik has the green Chaos Emerald now?" he said.

"Exactly." said Sonic.

Knuckles lost his wick and he went into a mad rant on Sonic, who cowered back from the mad echidna.

"ARE YOU CRAZY?" he yelled "JUST THINK OF WHAT MARIK COULD DO WITH THAT CHAOS EMERALD!"

"It wasn't our fault." said Tails "Marik got the drop on us with a rockslide which caused me to drop it."

"That still doesn't change the fact Marik has the Chaos Emerald!" yelled Knuckles "Chaos Emeralds have great power and just one of those emeralds can make you powerful so imagine how strong Marik will be if he uses it's power!"

"Look, we're sorry OK?" said Sonic "But we'll get the emerald back I promise."

"I hope so." said Knuckles "Or I'll have to punch you overboard."

Sonic decided to ignore the echidna's threat and talk about something else.

"Besides, I found something interesting." he said "I stole Cutthroat Jim's map and the treasure marked on the map looks like a Chaos Emerald. It was shaped like a Chaos Emerald and it was coloured blue and you said one of the Chaos Emeralds is blue so I think the treasure the pirates seek is a Chaos Emerald."

Knuckles' eyes widened in surprise.

"Well that certainly seems like a weird coincidence." he said "The treasure the pirates are looking for just happens to be a Chaos Emerald. We have to get that emerald before them!"

"Do you still have the treasure map?" asked Tails.

"No, I gave it back to Cutthroat Jim so he could find it." said Sonic "I was hoping that after he found it, I could grab it from him and run but now I'm not on the ship with the pirates I can't do that now."

"We should just follow the blighters and then ambush them when they find the emerald." said Geoffrey "After all, if we keep it nice and quiet they won't hear us following them."

"I think we should steal the treasure map again." said Mandy "If the pirates don't have the map but we do then we'll find the Chaos Emerald and they won't."

"That's a good idea Mandy." said Sonic "We'll do that then."

"And while we steal the treasure map, we can also try and get the Chaos Emerald Marik stole back." suggested Tails.

"We'll do that as well." said Sonic "OK guys, let's follow that ship and get that map and emerald!"

Mandy ignited the engine and the speedboat roared into life. The speedboat rocketed through the water and sped off after the galleon that continued sailing through the still ocean. Sonic felt the wind whiz past him as the speedboat sped through the ocean. Cutthroat Jim wouldn't know what hit him this time and the pirate leader would

get a surprise when he found out what it was…

Meanwhile, Marik and the pirates had stopped fighting each other and Marik stood to attention with his arms behind his back while Cutthroat Jim paced up and down, staring angrily at him.

"You freak of nature will pay for daring to mar me pride and glory as well as me glorious crew!" he growled "And you'll pay by not being thrown overboard, but by being run through by me sword!"

He unsheathed his cutlass and got ready to stab Marik. He lunged at Marik with his sword but the Martian just grabbed the blade with his metal hand before Cutthroat Jim could hit home and then Marik proceeded to shatter the blade with his claws.

"I wouldn't try to kill me if I were you pirate scum." said Marik coldly "Your primitive weapons are no match for my brute strength and I can easily take all sixteen of you on so why bother wasting your time on me when you can be doing something more important like finding buried treasure?"

Cutthroat Jim scowled at Marik, his amber eyes burned with rage but he made no attempt on his life again.

"So if we cannot kill you, then what shall we do with you?" asked Cutthroat Jim.

"You don't need to do anything Captain." said Marik, waving his hands about "I don't wish doom on you all, but I wish to make an alliance with you."

Cutthroat Jim put a finger to his chin and thought for a moment.

"You would make an alliance with us?" he asked, not sure if he should agree to it or not "What do you want to make an alliance with us pirates for?"

"With my strength, my cunning and my brilliance," said Marik gloatingly "I may be able to help you find that treasure you want and I'll keep any "landlubbers" away from you since they'll be scared of

me. I can guarantee you won't have to worry about enemy pirates or anyone else ever again."

Cutthroat Jim thought for a moment. This sounded like a tempting offer but could he trust Marik? Then again, Cutthroat Jim could just easily run Marik through once he found the treasure and leave him for dead, preventing him from trying to stab him in the back and take the treasure to boot. Cutthroat Jim shook Marik's hand.

"You have a deal matey." he said with a dirty smile full of maggots "You will keep any scurvy landlubbers and enemy ships away from me and you will help me find that treasure!"

"You have my word as an honoree member of this crew." lied Marik "Now, how much further have we got until we reach the island the treasure is buried on?"

Cutthroat Jim pulled out the treasure map and unfolded it. He peered at the map and read it to himself. Then he looked up from the map to see if he could tell where they were and then he peered at the map again.

"We should be hitting shore in about twenty minutes." said Cutthroat Jim "The Island will come into view shortly."

Marik smiled to himself, pleased to know they didn't have far until they arrived. Then suddenly he heard the roaring sound of a motor coming from behind the ship. Cutthroat Jim heard it too and he looked around wildly to see what it was.

"What is it?" he cried "Are we under siege? Gormless!" he barked "Find out what that blasted noise is!"

Gormless did a dopey salute and he ran over to the edge of the ship and tripped over the railing and landed into a lifeboat that hung on the side of the ship for in case the pirates needed to make a quick getaway. Gormless pulled out a telescope and looked through it the wrong way so what he was seeing looked very tiny to him.

"I can't see it very well Captain!" said Gormless loudly "It's too far away!"

"You're holding the telescope the wrong way round ye dunce head!" snapped Cutthroat Jim, taking the telescope of Gormless and turning it around so Gormless could see properly.

Gormless looked through it again and he saw a silver speedboat with a blue hedgehog, a yellow twin-tailed fox, a red spike-fisted echidna, a skunk in a combat suit, an orange dog in a combat suit and a purple mouse in a combat suit. Gormless jumped in surprise and he scrambled quickly back onto the ship.

"We have enemies coming in at clock o' twelve! I mean twelve o' clock!" shrieked Gormless "They're in a speedboat and they're coming to steal our booty!"

Cutthroat Jim roared angrily and he peered over the edge of the ship to see what Gormless had seen. There was the speedboat, directly behind the ship and coming in fast. The speedboat then came side to side with the galleon and Mandy lowered the speed so the speedboat was now level with the galleon. Cutthroat Jim saw the Mobians driving the speedboat and he was so gobsmacked his hat leaped up, did a somersault and landed back on his head.

"Hi Captain!" said Sonic mockingly.

"Impossible!" shrieked Cutthroat Jim "I thought you drowned the blue hedgehog and his twin-tailed friend already!" he yelled at Marik.

"I thought I did too!" snapped Marik "But it's obvious they were rescued. You must stop them from getting onto the ship!"

But just as he said that, Tails flew above the ship, carrying Sonic and Knuckles in either hand. Tails swung the hedgehog and echidna back and forth three times and then he let go. Sonic hurtled towards the pirates and knocked them all over in a brilliant spin-dash and Knuckles landed terrific punches onto the faces of some pirates. Cutthroat Jim cried in surprise and he ran into the hold to get another cutlass since Marik had broken his. All the pirates got back to their feet and they unsheathed their cutlasses. They charged at Sonic and Knuckles, roaring loud bloodcurdling roars that pirates are well known for. Sonic and Knuckles stood back to back, ready to attack as the pirates neared them.

"Hey Knuckles, let's show these pirates how to party shall we?" said Sonic.

"You said it Sonic!" said Knuckles with a devilish grin on his face.

The pirates all closed in on Sonic and Knuckles but they didn't get them. Sonic kicked one pirate in the stomach and he stole his cutlass. Two pirates tried to slice Sonic to pieces but Sonic blocked their blows with his cutlass and he clashed swords with them. Three pirates tried to stab Knuckles with their cutlasses but Knuckles leaped out of their way and he punched one of the pirates so hard he literally sent him overboard and into the water! The other two pirates made another attempt to slice Knuckles to pieces but Tails dropkicked them before they could even attempt to attack, causing them to drop their cutlasses and fall to the ground. Four more pirates tried to attack but Knuckles gave two of them uppercuts powerful enough to knock them senseless and Tails dodged the other two's sword swings and kicked them both in the face. As for Sonic, he and the other two pirates were clashing swords wildly but neither of them was gaining the upper hand on each other. Then Sonic rolled into a spin-dash and he knocked the two pirates away. Then Sonic found himself in a sword fight with another pirate. But this one didn't last long. They clashed swords twice and then Sonic somersaulted backwards and charged at the pirate in a homing attack. He walloped the pirate in the stomach and sent him flying backwards and crashing into a mast. Gormless sneaked up on Sonic and tried to get him but Sonic punched Gormless without even turning around. The dopey pirate smiled stupidly and he fell onto his back. As for Tails and Knuckles, they took out the remaining three pirates with hard uppercuts and tail-whips and they three pirates were knocked out. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles all high-fived each other and yelled "Yeah!" in unison.

"That was way past cool!" cried Sonic "Those pirates were no match for us!"

"We've got Cutthroat Jim left to deal with." noted Tails "I wonder where he's gone to in such a hurry?"

Tails didn't have to wait long for an answer. Cutthroat Jim emerged from the hold, brandishing two cutlasses with long curved blades

and gleaming golden hand guards with purple gems on them and looking very furious. He twirled both swords in his hands and snarled loudly.

"No one assaults the great Cutthroat Jim and his crew!" he growled "I will run you landlubbers through and feed your carcasses to the sharks that live in these waters!"

"Just try it Jimmy!" sneered Sonic "With my super speed, Tails' flying abilities and Knuckles' strength, you have no chance against us Captain!"

Then suddenly without warning, Marik leaped in on the scene and he did a perfect split kick on Tails and Knuckles' heads, sending the fox and echidna sprawling onto the deck.

"You will not harm Cutthroat Jim you wretched vermin!" snarled Marik, seizing Tails by his three hairs and seizing Knuckles by his dreadlocks and then bashing their heads together. Tails and Knuckles groaned in pain and they rubbed their heads. Sonic took a step back.

"Wait a minute Marik, you're working with Cutthroat Jim?" said Sonic with a tone of surprise in his voice.

"Yes I am hog-face!" snapped Marik "Why does it matter to you? I was a threat on my own so what does having an ally make me? A danger that's what! Cutthroat Jim, let's get that hedgehog!"

"With pleasure matey!" said Cutthroat Jim, twirling his cutlasses around.

Sonic glanced at his two foes and thought fast. He would defiantly have a hard time against a vicious pirate captain and a sadistic war-loving Martian fighting him together so he had do keep the fight up until Tails and Knuckles recovered from their injuries. Cutthroat Jim lunged at Sonic but Sonic ducked and kicked the pirate hyena in the chin. Marik got a much better shot and he slashed Sonic just above his eye with his metal claws. Sonic grabbed Marik's arm before he could retract it and he threw Marik into Cutthroat Jim. Then Sonic grabbed a cutlass that lay on the deck and he engaged Cutthroat

Jim in battle with his cutlass. Marik grabbed a cutlass and he decided to help Cutthroat Jim in the battle. The ship was now ringing with the sound of clashing swords. Cutthroat Jim lunged at Sonic with his two cutlasses but Sonic defended himself with his cutlass and he pushed Jim away. Marik slashed at Sonic but Sonic clashed swords with the Martian and he kicked Marik in the leg, causing Marik to fall down on one knee. Before Sonic could strike again, Cutthroat Jim cut in with his two cutlasses and blocked Sonic's attack. Sonic swiped at Cutthroat Jim, narrowly missing his arm and he and the vicious pirate clashed cutlasses. Cutthroat Jim put his cutlasses together, making an X shape out of the two blades and defended himself from a blow from Sonic. Sonic slashed at Cutthroat Jim multiple times but Cutthroat Jim's two cutlasses withstood the blows every time and then suddenly Cutthroat Jim slashed at Sonic vertically with both cutlasses, narrowly missing him. Sonic stepped back and only just managed to dodge a slash from Marik. Marik and Cutthroat Jim lunged at Sonic but Sonic dodged, leaving the Martian and hyena to clash swords with each other. Realizing their mistake, they broke away and they lunged at Sonic with their swords. Sonic dodged a blow from Cutthroat Jim and he clashed swords with Marik just as the Martian was attacking him. Sonic and Marik clashed with each other viciously and then Marik decided to cheat and catch Sonic off-guard with an energy wave. The energy wave smacked Sonic in the face and he dropped his cutlass. Sonic landed on his back and Cutthroat Jim advanced on him with an evil smile on his face and his cutlasses at the ready. Sonic got back to his feet and he spin-dashed Cutthroat Jim in the stomach, causing him to drop his two cutlasses and fall onto his back. Sonic then picked up his cutlass and lunged at Marik with his weapon in hand. Marik blocked Sonic's attack with his cutlass and then the two rivals clashed viciously with each other, their cutlasses making a loud clang noise that rung in their ears as they did so. Sonic and Marik clashed again and then the crossed swords at face level. They glared at each other as they struggled to push each other away.

"You are not keeping the Chaos Emerald you stole from me Marik!" yelled Sonic.

"I beg to differ hedge-swine!" yelled Marik angrily "The Chaos

Emerald is mine and I'm going to find the other six so I'll have all seven! And once I have all seven emeralds, I'll wreck this planet!"

"Yeah um…not gonna happen buddy!" yelled Sonic, ramming the hand guard into Marik's face.

Marik yelled in pain and shielded his face. Sonic tried to attack again but Cutthroat Jim rammed him from the side and sent the hedgehog falling over. Before Sonic could get back to his feet, Cutthroat Jim bore down on him with his cutlasses gleaming in the sunlight and he tried to slice Sonic in half but Sonic defended himself with his cutlass and he kicked the hyena pirate away. Cutthroat Jim staggered backwards but he regained his balance and he bent down in a battle ready stance. Marik stood beside him in a battle ready stance. Then both villains charged at Sonic but Sonic managed to block both their blows with his cutlass and he kicked Marik away before he could attack again. Cutthroat Jim and Sonic clashed swords with each other and then Sonic leaped into the air and spun around in mid-air whilst holding the cutlass. Cutthroat Jim held both cutlasses in front of his face to block Sonic's spinning attack but it was a pretty strong attack and Cutthroat Jim almost dropped his cutlasses due to how hard Sonic's attack was. Sonic stopped spinning and he whacked one of Cutthroat Jim's cutlasses so hard he knocked it out of his hand and sent it spinning through the air and diving into the water. Cutthroat Jim and Sonic clashed swords with one another and Marik tried to attack from behind but Sonic kicked him in the stomach and spun around to slash at Marik. Marik blocked the attack and he swiped his arm at Sonic, sending an energy wave flying into his face and knocking him off his feet. Sonic fell onto his back but he managed to get back onto his feet just in time to block another blow from Marik. Cutthroat Jim slashed at him but Sonic dodged the blow and then he grabbed Cutthroat Jim's sleeve and head-butted the pirate captain in the face. Marik punched Sonic in the shoulder with his metal hand and then he slashed his arm with his cutlass. A thin trickle of blood poured down Sonic's arm faster then a running tap. Sonic ignored the pain in his arm long enough to clash swords with Marik and push him away. Then the two began to violently thwack each other's cutlasses as they stared each other down angrily with angry faces and gritted teeth. They clashed good and hard ten times before Marik gave the

killer swing and whacked Sonic's cutlass so hard he literally sent it flying out of his hand and it impaled itself into a mast high out of anyone's reach. Marik knocked Sonic over with another energy wave and then he stood over the hedgehog with the cutlass pointing at the hedgehog's chest. Sonic was done for now, there was no way he was going to escape this now, Marik had him completely at his mercy and now he was going to kill him.

"Sonic, you've fought valiantly but now is the time for you to fall to me." said Marik "And boy am I going to enjoy watching you scream as I plunge this sword into your heart!"

"Do away with me if you wish!" yelled Sonic "But I've got friends who will take my place and beat you creep!"

"Oh you are so misguided Sonic!" laughed Marik "No life form is a match for a well-trained Martian warrior such as myself! Your friends will fall just as hard as you Sonic! Now it's time for you to say goodbye and join the dead people in the heavens hedgehog."

He drew his arm back and he prepared to plunge the sword into Sonic's chest. Sonic just kept a straight face and awaited his fate. Then suddenly Marik got an amazing punch to the face that sent him flying into a door and crashing into it. It was Knuckles! He and Tails recovered from their injuries and now they were up on their feet and ready for battle. Knuckles helped Sonic onto his feet and Sonic gave him a thumbs up.

"Thanks a million Knuckles!" said Sonic "Boy was I done for until you stepped in!"

"You're lucky we were here." said Knuckles, cracking his knuckles "Otherwise you would have been dead now."

Cutthroat Jim ran up to Sonic and Tails, snarling a bloodcurdling pirate snarl and his cutlass blazing and he prepared to slash them to pieces but Tails flew in behind him and kicked him in the back of the head, causing the pirate to fall onto his face and drop his weapon. Tails then reached into Cutthroat Jim's pocket and he pulled out the treasure map and flew over to Sonic and Knuckles before the pirate could recover.

"Sonic, I got the map!" puffed Tails, handing it to the blue hedgehog.

Sonic folded the map up and slipped it into his glove.

"Now Cutthroat Jim will never find the Chaos Emerald." said Sonic "But we still haven't retrieved the green Chaos Emerald Marik stole from us."

Then suddenly Marik leaped onto Tails, snarling like a lion and he pinned the fox down with his metal hand. Tails screamed in terror and he tried to get up but Marik wouldn't let him. Knuckles tried to help but Marik threw the twin-tailed fox straight into him and knocked him over. Sonic spin-dashed Marik in the head and knocked him over. Marik hit the deck with a thud and the Chaos Emerald rolled out of his pocket and came to a stop next to an unconscious pirate. Tails picked himself up and he grabbed the emerald quickly before anyone else could. Marik tried to zap Tails but he remembered his voltage compactor was broken so he couldn't. Instead he swiped his arms and tried to hit Tails with an energy wave but Tails dodged the wave and he flew off the ship and into the speedboat. Knuckles punched Marik in the back of the head and then he and Sonic jumped off the ship and into the speedboat.

"We've got the map and emerald now punch it Mandy!" cried Sonic.

"With pleasure blue dude!" said Mandy, giving him a thumbs up.

She started the engine and the speedboat's engine roared into life. Then the sleek silver boat rocketed off and shot through the ocean like a torpedo under the water. Marik watched helplessly as the speedboat zoomed away from the galleon and disappeared into the horizon. Marik punched the deck so hard he latterly cracked one of the floorboards and he cursed Sonic under his breath.

"Those wretched heathens have stolen my emerald!" he roared "Oh the indignity of it all!"

"That's not all matey." said Cutthroat Jim, picking himself up and putting his hat back on "The landlubbers have stolen me treasure map. We'll never find the treasure now."

Marik didn't care about that though, he only cared about the lost Chaos Emerald. Then Marik spotted something in the distance. It was only very faint and very small but he could see something the galleon was heading towards and it looked like an island.

"Hey Captain, can I borrow a telescope?" he asked.

"Sure matey." said Cutthroat Jim "Have ye found something?"

He handed Marik his telescope and Marik extended it to its full length. Marik put the telescope to his eye, pointed it at what he was looking at and he looked through it. Through the telescope he could see a tropical island full of palm trees and sandy beaches and he saw the speedboat Sonic was riding pulling up on the shore. This meant one thing: That Sonic and crew had stolen Cutthroat Jim's treasure map so they could find the treasure and he wouldn't and the island he had spotted was the one Cutthroat Jim was sailing to. But why would Sonic want to hunt pirate treasure? Sonic wasn't the kind that valued money was he?

"What do you see matey?" asked Cutthroat Jim.

"Sonic and his friends have pulled up to a tropical island." said Marik "Is this Coco Island, the island you're heading to?"

Cutthroat Jim took the telescope off Marik and he looked through it himself. Then he lowered the telescope and put it away.

"That be Coco Island alright." said Cutthroat Jim "Those scurvy landlubbers are going to find me treasure and steal it for themselves! Well I'll show them what happens to those who mess with Cutthroat Jim!"

"And indeed you shall Captain." said Marik, smirking "Since they have the map and they're looking for the treasure, they'll lead us to the treasure and then once they find it, we'll ambush them and take it for ourselves!"

"Ha Hargh! You are ye smart one matey!" said Cutthroat Jim, giving Marik a playful slap on the back "Those scurvy landlubbers won't know what hit them!"

The two villains laughed to each other as they pictured their ambush on Sonic and friends in their foul little minds. This was one heist they were certainly looking forward to…

Footnotes:

See *STH: Tales from Mobius Arc 1

Well shiver me timbers and fire on the poop deck! We have a Chaos Emerald hunt mixed in with pirates we do! Who will win ye treasure? The scurvy landlubbers known as Sonic and friends or Marik and the cut throat pirate gang? Join me next time as ye ol' sea tale continues... Read and Review you scurvy landlubbers!

Shiver my Emeralds! Part 2

Story 38: Shiver my Emeralds! Part 2

The speedboat pulled up onto a beach and Mandy stopped the motor. The speedboat stopped with half of its body on the beach and the other half still in the water so it would be able to back up into the water when it was time to get away. Everybody climbed out of the boat and Sonic pulled the map out of his glove and unfolded it. He studied it closely to see if he could work out where they should start and what path they should take. He glanced up from the map to survey his surroundings. The island they were on seemed to match the island on the map so they were in the right place at least.

"So Sonic, which way do we go?" asked Tails.

"I think the map says we should go twenty paces that way." said Sonic, pointing to the right which led to a dense tropical jungle with thick trees and low hanging vines.

Tails looked at the map to see if Sonic was reading it correctly. The map indicated you had to go twenty paces into the jungle and then make a sharp turn left from a tree and carry on from there.

"You're right Sonic." said Tails "The map says go twenty paces that way to start off and then make a sharp turn left when you get to a tree with a skull and crossbones carved on it."

"Now what kind of crazy bloke would carve a skull and crossbones symbol on a tree?" snorted Geoffrey St. John "Is that some pathetic attempt to scare other people away or mark where other pirates maybe?"

"Maybe it's supposed to help Cutthroat Jim find the treasure easier." suggested Mandy "If he knows which tree to turn left from the rest will be simple."

"I suppose that makes sense." said Geoffrey.

"Come on team! We've got a Chaos Emerald to find!" said Sonic as he, Tails and Knuckles began walking off.

Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey caught up with them quickly.

"OK, Tails is map reader since he seems to be able to read it better then me." said Sonic "And Knuckles has the Chaos Emerald so if we get close to it, we'll know about it because it'll glow brighter then usual."

"That is if the treasure Cutthroat Jim is looking for IS a Chaos Emerald and not just an ordinary blue emerald." said Knuckles grimly.

"It won't be an ordinary emerald." said Tails "Ordinary emeralds only come in green, there's no such thing as a blue emerald, unless you're talking about Chaos Emeralds that is."

Knuckles just sighed and held the Chaos Emerald in front of him. The six Mobians entered the densely grown jungle. What a sight it was to behold for the Mobians. There were trees as big as houses with leaves as big as surfboards. Thickly grown vines hung low down from the trees. Lots of colourful fruit hung from the trees ranging from mangos to bananas. A mango fell out of a tree and landed in Wilson's hand. Wilson took a bite out of the juicy fruit and threw it away, leaving it to land with a splat on the ground. As they walked through the jungle, they counted their paces to make sure they weren't going too far since the map said they had to go twenty paces into the jungle. As soon as they counted to twenty, they stopped and Tails looked for the tree with a skull and crossbones carved on it. He couldn't seem to find it anywhere.

"That's odd." said Tails, studying the map again "It says walk twenty paces into this jungle and then make a sharp turn left from the tree with a skull and crossbones carved in it. We've walked twenty paces into this jungle but I don't see a tree with a skull and crossbones carved on it."

"Maybe we miscounted and walked too far?" suggested Wilson.

"I don't think that's the case." said Knuckles "I know I haven't

miscounted."

Sonic searched the trees up and down for a carving since he had the theory on that the carving could be high up on a tree or near the tree trunks at the bottom. He looked all the way up. No carving. He looked all the way down. No carving. Sonic scratched his head in thought. Maybe they were missing something? Maybe Tails was misreading the map a little?

"Hey Tails, are you sure you're reading the map right?" asked Sonic.

"Um...I'm sure I am." said Tails "I'll just read it again."

Tails studied the map once again. The map didn't tell him any differently to when he first read it but he did notice one thing he'd missed the first time. The map had a detailed sketch of which tree supposedly had the skull and crossbones carving on so now Tails knew which tree to look at.

"According to the map..." said Tails, looking up from the map "The tree that should have the carving on...is that one there."

He pointed at thin tree with three branches, one sticking up from the top of the tree, one protruding from the left and one sagging from the right. The Mobians all walked over to the tree and they observed it top to bottom. They couldn't see any carving anywhere on the tree. Geoffrey was beginning to get frustrated.

"How many bloomin' times are we gonna look at trees only to find none of them have a carving of a skull and crossbones on them?" he moaned "Tails, let me read that."

He snatched the map off Tails and read it himself. The map told him exactly what Tails had said a few times already.

"So Tails isn't reading this wrong." said Geoffrey "Maybe there's something we're missing here."

"I'm not sure about missing something." said Mandy, kneeling down and looking at something "But I'm a little suspicious of that mound of fungus there."

She pointed at a mound of green fungus that stuck near to the bottom of the tree. Sonic looked at the fungus and then, using his hands, he scrapped fungus off the tree and wiped it on the sides to get it off his gloves. And that's when he saw the one thing they had been looking for. The carving of a skull and crossbones. Sonic's eyes widened.

"Hey Tails! We've found the carving at last!" he exclaimed.

"You have?" said Tails, looking over Sonic's shoulder and seeing the carving at the foot of the tree it was on "How did you find it?"

"Mandy got suspicious of that mound of fungus that was where the carving was so I scraped it off and there it is." said Sonic.

"Well at least we're back on track." said Knuckles "So what do we do after we mark a sharp turn left Tails?"

Tails studied the map again for a few seconds.

"Um...after making a sharp turn left from the tree with a skull and crossbones carved on it, we continue sixty-seven paces up to Devil's Quagmire and once we get to the quagmire we have to get over it and then go right." said Tails.

"Quagmire?" said Wilson "Well we'd best keep our eyes open if there's a quagmire somewhere in this jungle!"

"I'm sure there will be a warning sign telling us where the quagmire is." said Geoffrey "No need to worry about falling in it Wilson mate."

Now that the Mobians knew where they were going, they set off deeper into the thick, hot jungle in search of the treasure.

Meanwhile Cutthroat Jim and his insidious crew had finally pulled up to the shores of Coco Island. The ship docked and the crew walked onto the island. Marik followed them and he surveyed his surroundings with disgust. Beautiful sights were not an eye pleaser for him at all, he hated beaches and jungles and he clearly wasn't happy to be on a beach right now. But he knew that Sonic and friends had his Chaos Emerald so he had to grit his teeth and bear the environment for now. He then noticed the speedboat that Sonic

and friends had been using and so they couldn't use it to get off the island, Marik swiped the air with his arms and struck the speedboat with an energy wave. The speedboat got smacked in the keel and then it drifted out into the calm sea. Then the speedboat began to sink. Marik's attack had made a giant hole in the left side of the boat so water was getting in and pulling the speedboat under. The speedboat completely submerged under the water and disappeared from sight. Marik grinned happily. Sonic and friends would not be able to get off the island now their only method of transport was gone. As for Cutthroat Jim, he was looking for Sonic and friends but he couldn't find them anywhere for they were elsewhere.

"Blast it all, where are those swabs?" he moaned to himself.

"Well Captain, didn't it occur to you that they might have started the treasure hunt now?" noted Marik "And how did you not notice this clearly obvious trial of footprints there?"

Marik pointed at a trial of footprints in the sand that had been left by Sonic and friends. The footprints led straight into the thick, dense jungle that Coco Island was famous for and Cutthroat Jim noticed the trial.

"So the landlubbers be in the jungle I see?" he mused "Well let's follow them and see how close to finding me treasure they are!"

"I assure you captain once we find the "landlubbers" we'll find the treasure you seek since they're seeking the same treasure." said Marik "And once we find the treasure, we grab it and run off and get back to the ship. And once we're on the ship, we can set sail and leave them stranded on the island!"

"Argh yes!" said Cutthroat Jim excitedly "We maroon those thieves to make them pay for what they've done! I like you smart boy. You would be a great crew mate for my pirate gang you would!"

"I might consider joining your amusing gang." said Marik "But now we've got treasure to save from being stolen by those crooks!"

"Argh, right you are matey!" said Cutthroat Jim "Come on you bilge rats! Let's follow this trial of footprints! We'll find that scurvy

hedgehog and his band of miscreants and save me treasure from getting stolen by them!"

The pirate gang obeyed and the whole gang followed the footprints with Cutthroat Jim taking lead and Marik staying close to his side. The footprints led them into the jungle and they were going the exact same route Sonic and friends had gone. The trial of footprints would lead them to the Mobians and the Mobians would lead to the treasure and once they found the treasure, they would ambush Sonic and friends and take the treasure to boot. The Mobians would defiantly not see this coming and Marik was looking forward to the ambush a lot, especially since he would get the green Chaos Emerald back in the scuffle and maybe he could take the treasure as well. If he did so then he would be one glamorous looking Martian with two emeralds to show off. He even wondered what his parents would think if they saw the two emeralds he had successfully stolen. But now was not the time to daydream, he shook his train of thoughts away and focussed on the hunt. The pirates continued following the trial. They came to the tree marked with a skull and crossbones and they turned left from the tree and followed the trial of footprints. Sonic and friends were as good as found if the kept this up...

The next few minutes had been exhausting for Sonic and friends. The jungle they waded through was full of thick growth, low hanging vines and large tree trunks. Not to mention it was very hot so the Mobians got a lot of discomfort from the heat of the jungle and their throats were dry. Wilson was panting like a dog in hot weather always does and everybody else was beginning to trudge through the jungle due to the heat making them feel a little weaker then before. In fact they all looked like they could do with a good rest.

"Sonic, I'm getting tired from this muggy jungle." moaned Mandy "How about resting the legs?"

"We don't have time to rest." said Sonic, who seemed to be the least effected out of the Mobians "We've gotta find that Chaos Emerald before someone else does so we can't stop now."

"Sonic, I think we should." said Tails "Everybody's exhausted and we need a good drink right now."

Sonic looked over his shoulder to see Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy all looking very tired and very thirsty so Sonic decided to do what Tails said.

"Alright, we rest for ten minutes." said Sonic "Then we carry on."

The whole team flopped down on the ground and breathed a huge sigh of relief for they had finally gotten off their aching feet.

"I wonder if there's a place to drink around here?" said Geoffrey "I haven't seen any lakes or rivers around here and I'm perishing with thirst."

"We all are." said Knuckles, still looking at the Chaos Emerald to see if it was having any reactions yet. The emerald was now brighter then before so there obviously weren't any emeralds nearby.

"Tails, are there any rivers marked on the map?" asked Sonic.

Tails studied the map again. As luck would have it, according to the map, there was a flowing river about ten paces to the left. They could drink out of that river and then get back on track.

"There's a river that way." said Tails, pointing to the left "It's only ten paces away so you don't have far to walk."

"Sweet." said Sonic "Everybody can go to the river and have a drink and then we get back to the treasure hunt."

Everybody got to their feet and ran to the left. And surely enough, they saw a beautiful, clear, flowing river just gently flowing through the jungle just as Tails had read off the map. All six Mobians bent down on the bank of the river and scooped the water up with their hands, then they brought it to their mouths and sipped it up before it could all runaway. A couple of minutes later, the Mobians had all satisfied their thirst and they walked back ten paces so they were back on track and ready to go.

"That was refreshing." said Knuckles "How much farther do we have

until we get to Devil's Quagmire Tails?"

Tails looked at the map again.

"Well the map says go sixty-seven paces to Devil's Quagmire and if I'm reading this, we've only done forty-three." said Tails "We have another twenty-four paces to go and then we're there."

"Then it's not much further." said Sonic "Let's get going."

The Mobians continued their trek through the jungle. Knuckles could sense they were getting closer to the Chaos Emerald every step they took. This must mean that the treasure the pirates were looking for is a Chaos Emerald after all. This only begged the question of how the emerald ended up being a pirate's treasure and who found it and who buried it for Cutthroat Jim to find. At least they had the map so they would find the Chaos Emerald and Cutthroat Jim wouldn't. After all, who knew what mayhem a vicious pirate leader could cause if he got the Chaos Emerald. Sonic brushed his way through some thick bushes and ducked under a low hanging vine whilst keeping his eyes open for the quagmire which according to Tails was another twenty four paces away. He also kept his senses alert for any sneak attacks, likely to come from Dr. Eggman and Metal Sonic, that were waiting for him and his team. Geoffrey pushed a low hanging tree branch out of his way but he didn't realize Mandy was rather close behind him so after pushing the branch out of the way and letting go of it, it swung backwards and smacked Mandy in the face.

"OUCH!" yelped Mandy, clutching her nose.

"Oops, sorry luv." said Geoffrey "Didn't know you were right behind me."

"It's OK Mr. St. John." Mandy reassured him while still rubbing her face better "These things are bound to happen in a place like this."

As for Wilson and Tails, they had gone ahead of the others and Tails had his eyes glued to the map. He counted his steps so he knew how many paces he and the others were taking to make sure they were following the map correctly. Wilson just followed Tails and kept

fretting about the quagmire. Wilson is a bit of a worry guts after all and anything dangerous that's coming their way or waiting for them always gets him in a bit of a nervous state. Still, he knew that Tails was reading the map so Tails would find the quagmire and warn everybody about it so he didn't have to worry about falling in. Unfortunately, Tails was so focussed on the map he wasn't watching where he was going and he walked right past a bright orange warning sign with a picture of a muggy bog above two words saying in big capital letters "DANGER! QUAGMIRE!" This was obviously there to warn people of the quagmire but Tails didn't notice it because he was reading the map and he didn't look up to see where he was. Wilson saw the sign and stopped immediately. He read it and smiled to himself, now he knew the quagmire was ahead, he didn't have to worry about falling in. But he saw Tails walking on and he immediately panicked. Tails was going to fall in if he didn't warn him so he immediately began shouting at Tails.

"Tails! Stop! You're heading for the quagmire!" yelped Wilson.

"Beg pardon?" said Tails, looking up from the map and looking over his shoulder.

He carried on walking though and he walked up a rock that sloped up. If he didn't stop there he would fall straight into the quagmire.

"You're heading for the quagmire!" shouted Wilson "Come back!"

"I can't be heading for the quagmire." said Tails "If there was one, there would be a warning sign telling us where it !" he screeched as he suddenly fell forward.

He had walked to the edge of the rock and fell off and straight into the quagmire with a splash. The quagmire was boggy, muddy and watery and it smelt terrible. Not to mention it was hard to swim in it due to how thick and grimy the water was so Tails wouldn't be able to swim out of the quagmire. Wilson panicked and ran up the rock Tails had fallen off. He lay down on his stomach and bent over the edge to see where Tails was. He was coughing and spluttering and trying frantically to get out of the boggy waters but he couldn't.

"I told you, you were heading for the quagmire!" scolded Wilson

"Why didn't you listen to me you stupid boy?"

"Can we talk about this later? Like before I drown in this thing?" exclaimed Tails, still trying to swim but to no avail.

Wilson reached out to Tails with his hand and Tails reached up to Wilson's hand and tried to grab it. But Tails had fallen too far out into the quagmire and the rock was too high up for Wilson to reach out to him. They were much too far apart so Wilson couldn't grab Tails and pull him out.

"Try to get closer to the edge!" suggested Wilson "I might be able to reach you then!"

"I can't!" cried Tails "This water's too..." his voice went off as his mouth went underwater whilst he was trying to shift himself forward. He raised his head and finished his sentence "...boggy and marsh! It's impossible to swim in this thing!"

"Oooh, what am I gonna do?" fretted Wilson, looking around wildly "Sonic will kill me if I fail to rescue you!"

Then right on cue, Sonic, Knuckles, Geoffrey and Mandy arrived on the scene.

"Yo Wilson, what's going on?" asked Sonic immediately "I thought I heard you and Tails screaming!"

"Tails has fallen into the quagmire!" shrieked Wilson "He's going to sink if we don't help him now!"

Sonic ran to the edge of the rock and saw Tails, feebly trying to get out of the quagmire. Sonic's eyes widened and his brain immediately began racing for an idea.

"Sonic! Help me!" cried Tails "I can't stay above any longer..." his voice trailed off as he submerged again and got back to the surface.

"I'll save you Tails, I just don't know how yet!" cried Sonic.

"I'll do it." said Mandy "I have a plan."

She strolled over to the edge of the rock, bent over and lowered her yellow tail down to the quagmire. She clutched the edges of the rock to save herself from falling in as well and she stretched her tail out as far as it would go.

"Grab my tail kid!" called Mandy "Once you've done so, I'll try and pull you out!"

Tails reached out for Mandy's tail but no matter how far he stretched, he just couldn't reach her. He was only inches away from grabbing it but he couldn't push himself any further due to his failing strength and the muggy water and Mandy couldn't stretch any further otherwise she would fall in as well.

"It's no use! I can't reach you Mandy!" cried Tails.

"Well I can't stretch any further or I'll be joining you in there." said Mandy "I'm sorry kid but my plan's not gonna work."

"I'll try and help the lad." said Geoffrey, putting a dart in his arm-mounted crossbow.

"You be careful Geoffrey." said Mandy sternly as she pulled herself back onto the rock and standing aside so Geoffrey could step forward "You'd better make sure you don't accidentally shoot Tails in the head with that crossbow of yours."

"Trust me Mandy-girl, I know what I'm doing." said Geoffrey smugly.

The skunk stood at the edge of the rock, just above the quagmire and he aimed his crossbow at the water. He fired it and the dart shot into the water with a long cable trailing behind it. Geoffrey had used a cable dart and all Tails had to do was grab the line and Geoffrey would try and pull him out. Tails could reach the cable easily since Geoffrey had fired the dart close to him so he could reach out and grab it. Frantically gasping, Tails grabbed the cable and Geoffrey tried to pull him out. But try as he might, he wasn't strong enough. Geoffrey pulled as hard as he could on the cable but he couldn't quite pull Tails out. He was making little progress second by second but not enough. Tails held on tight to the cable as Geoffrey continued to pull. Seeing as the skunk needed help, Wilson and

Mandy grabbed each of his shoulders and pulled with him. With three people pulling at once, Tails slowly began to come out of the quagmire. But disaster struck again. The cable from Geoffrey's dart couldn't stake the strain anymore and it suddenly snapped! Tails fell back into the swampy waters and Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy shot backwards and fell in a heap on the rock. Geoffrey cursed his bad luck.

"Darn it! I thought these cables could take the weight of five children at once!" he grumbled "How did this thing snap?"

"Maybe it's not as strong as you thought it was." said Wilson "How are we gonna save Tails now?"

As for Sonic, he still had no idea on how to save his twin-tailed friend. Tails was too far away from all edges of the quagmire so they couldn't reach out and pull him out, Geoffrey's cable didn't work and there wasn't anything they could use to extend their reach. However, Knuckles had a brilliant idea. Using his fists of steal, he ran up to a tree and began to punch it furiously. Sonic saw what Knuckles was doing and wondered what he was up to.

"Hey, Knuckles! We're supposed to be helping Tails, not using a tree as a punching bag!" yelled Sonic.

"I AM helping Tails stupid!" snapped Knuckles as he gave the tree the killer punch "I'm knocking this tree down so we can use it to bridge our way across the quagmire and pull him out!"

"Right, know you're talking sense." said Sonic "I never Knuckles had a brain under that thick skull of his." he muttered mockingly to himself.

Knuckles decided to ignore Sonic's playful insult as he gave the tree one last punch and the tree fell over with a loud creak of breaking tree bark and wood. The tree crashed down on the ground with a tremendous smash. Now the tree had fallen over, Knuckles used his amazing strength to push the fallen tree towards the quagmire. Tails was just starting to fail and submerge under the water when Knuckles finally managed to push the tree over the quagmire. The tree was long enough to go completely across the quagmire so

anybody coming towards it would be able to cross the quagmire easily. Sonic ran across the tree and stopped where Tails was. He reached down to the drowning fox and grabbed him by the hand just before his head could completely submerge under the marshy water. Sonic pulled with all his might and Tails began to come out of the quagmire. Sonic kept pulling as hard as he could and Tails was slowly beginning to come out of the quagmire. With one final yank, Sonic managed to pull a very muddy and very wet Tails out of the boggy, swampy waters of the quagmire. Sonic took Tails off the tree and they both settled down on the nice dry ground. Tails coughed and spluttered loudly and he shook his fur dry. Sonic shielded his face with his hands as Tails shook bits of dirt and mud off his fur.

"cough! I think we can easily say that me and water don't mix." coughed Tails "This is the fourth time I've been saved from drowning already! One of these days, I am gonna drown and that'll be the end of it!"

"Well that day will never come." said Sonic "Especially since you've got friends that will risk their lives to save yours."

"And I'm grateful for that." said Tails "Thank you Sonic."

"You'll have to thank Knuckles really." said Sonic "He punched that tree down so I could save you."

"Thanks Knuckles." said Tails.

"Don't mention it Tails." said Knuckles "Where's the treasure map?"

Tails suddenly realized he didn't have the map with him and he felt all over himself. The map was nowhere to be found.

"Oh no! I think I lost it in the quagmire!" moaned Tails, his ears drooped back in despair "We'll never find it now!"

"Well that's fantastic!" moaned Sonic "How are we gonna find the Chaos Emerald now?"

"We use this." said Knuckles, holding up the green Chaos Emerald "This will help us find the Chaos Emerald that so happens to be the treasure the pirates seek."

"Oh yeah, you said the emerald glows brighter when we get near a Chaos Emerald." said Sonic "The only problem is, we have to find it in order for our emerald to glow brighter."

"We'll find it Sonic, I know we will." said Knuckles "So stop yapping and let's find it already!"

"OK, OK! Sheesh, calm down knuckle-head!" snapped Sonic.

Sonic, Tails and Knuckles all walked off again. Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy ran down from the rock and past the quagmire and caught up with Sonic, Tails and Knuckles. The six Mobians continued their trek in the jungle and searched ever further for the Chaos Emerald. Unbeknownst to the Mobians though, Cutthroat Jim, Marik and the pirates had all caught up with them and they remained hidden until they had gone. Now the Mobians were gone, the villains were free to come out and follow them again.

"Hey Captain." said First Mate Gormless "How can the blue hedgehog find our treasure if he hasn't got the map anymore?"

"He has an emerald that seems to have magical powers." said Cutthroat Jim "And according to the red porcupine thing, it glows brighter when it's near other emeralds so maybe their emerald will help them find our treasure."

"Duh...that made no sense." said Gormless.

"Just shut up you daft dog!" snapped Cutthroat Jim "Let's follow them before they swaggle me booty!"

"Why do pirates always talk like that?" wondered Marik as Cutthroat Jim and his crew began moving again "It's so stupid!"

The villains crept past the quagmire and they followed the trial of footprints left by the Mobians. Now the quagmire was no longer a threat, they only had to focus on the Mobians and ambushing them and getting the treasure. And it wouldn't be too hard since the Mobians wouldn't see it coming...

"Phowar! That quagmire's done a lot to your scent mate!" grumbled Geoffrey, clutching his nose and pulling a face "You smell worse then a skunk you do and that's saying a lot!"

"Well it's not my fault quagmires smell bad!" snapped Tails, annoyed at Geoffrey commenting on his smell.

"Well it's your fault you fell in one." noted Wilson "If you listened to me instead of wondering off, this wouldn't have happened."

"Can you guys give it a rest back there?" called Sonic from over his shoulder "You're beginning to bug me with your complaining!"

The trek had been anything but peaceful since Tails' near death experience with the quagmire. The Mobians had been walking around for hours with no clue as to where they were going since they had no map to guide them to the treasure and the Chaos Emerald they had would only glow if it was near another one so it wouldn't be of much help to them unless they were getting closer. For all they knew the emerald could be on the other side of the island and it would be nightfall by the time they found it so this trek could take a long time to complete but Sonic was not going to rest now for he knew how valuable the Chaos Emeralds were and how badly they needed to be found before any villains could get them so he pressed on. Knuckles kept glancing at the green Chaos Emerald in his hand to see if it was glowing brightly or not. The emerald had remained the same brightness for the past few minutes and Knuckles knew what that meant, the emerald was deeper into the jungle then they had thought and it was not going to be an easy find. Yet Knuckles could still sense the abundance of Chaos energy building up somewhere so the Chaos Emerald must be near.

"That Chaos Emerald's gotta be close." said Knuckles "I can sense it."

"Oh really?" sneered Sonic "Maybe we should use you as an emerald detector and you can make a high pitched squeak every time you find an emerald! Ha, ha, ha, ha!" he broke down snickering and he slapped his knee whilst laughing.

"Sonic, are you trying to make me lose my temper?" asked

Knuckles, gritting his teeth and trying to contain his anger "Because it certainly sounds like you are!"

"Oh come on rad red, I'm only having a laugh, don't get your dread-locks in a knot." said Sonic snidely.

"Well be funny to someone else!" growled Knuckles "I haven't got time for your snarky attitude right now!"

Sonic just sighed and Knuckles focussed his attention back onto the green Chaos Emerald he held in his hand. He faced Mandy who was walking behind him and appearing to be deep in thought about something.

"Knuckles is such a killjoy isn't he?" he asked.

"Hmm?" mumbled Mandy "What was that?"

"Never mind." said Sonic, seeing as Mandy hadn't been paying attention to anything right now.

"I hope that pirate's treasure is near." said Geoffrey "I wanna grab it and get outta here quick before Cutthroat Jim and his goons arrive onto this island and ambush us for trying to find their treasure."

"Are you sure they'll find us?" asked Wilson, brushing aside some low hanging leaves from a huge tree. "We stole their map so they can't possibly know where we've headed to now."

"The treasure is on this island and they were heading for this island so they can find it." explained Geoffrey, pushing a low hanging vine out of his way "And since we've stolen their map and gone here to find the treasure, they know we're going to be here so they're definitely going to come here and hunt us down before we can find the treasure."

Wilson shivered like a human standing in the middle of a freezing cold river with no clothes on. The mere thought of a pirate attack petrified him and he was shivering at the mere image of Cutthroat Jim pouncing on everybody and slitting their throats with his cutlass.

"We've been here for hours and we haven't seen a single pirate so I

don't think Cutthroat Jim and his bunch of morons will be bothering us any time soon." said Mandy "So there's no need to worry Wilson."

She lightly touched the dog on the shoulder and Wilson stopped shivering. If there's anything that always calmed him down when worried, it was Mandy's gentle touch. The mouse knew how to make him feel warm and safe after all since she and Wilson had been friends for a long time and they knew each other as if they were brother and sister.

"Just because we haven't seen any pirates it doesn't mean there aren't any." said Tails unhelpfully "For all we know, they're probably here and hiding, waiting to attack us or something."

"Oh Tails, I just calmed Wilson down and then you start being unhelpful and filling everybody's heads with dread again!" scolded Mandy "If you can't say anything helpful, don't say anything!"

"Sorry." said Tails quickly, putting his hands behind his back.

Mandy pushed a tree branch out of the way as the Mobians continued walking through the jungle. Sonic and Knuckles stepped over some thorny branches that were lying on the ground. Tails didn't see them and he stood on them but since he wore shoes, the thorns didn't do any harm to him. Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy stood over the branches and the Mobians slowly moved through the tall grassy grounds that they had come across. Things in jungles often grew tall and grass was of no exception, they grass was about as long as Sonic's legs and getting through the grass was like pushing you way through a bunch of thickly grown bushes due to how long and tall they were. The Mobians pushed their way through the sea of grass and looked left and right for anything unusual. Then suddenly the Chaos Emerald Knuckles held began to glow slightly brighter. The light's increase in brightness was so faint that Knuckles failed to notice it. Then with every step he took, the emerald's glow got brighter and brighter. Knuckles looked down at his hand and noticed the increase in brightness on the Chaos Emerald. He knew what this meant; they were getting closer to the Chaos Emerald that Cutthroat Jim was inadvertently seeking now. As Knuckles continued walking, the Chaos Emerald continued glowing brighter. Sonic, who was walking behind Knuckles could see the emerald's light getting

brighter from behind Knuckles.

"Hey Knuckles, are we getting close to that emerald?" asked Sonic "Because that Chaos Emerald we have is glowing brighter."

"We are indeed Sonic." said Knuckles "It's glowing brighter with every step I take."

"Glowing brighter with every step you take?" repeated Sonic "We've practically found the thing then. Let's keep moving."

After a few more paces, the emerald glowed its maximum glow; it would not glow any brighter. When the emerald was at its brightest that meant the emerald it was sensing was nearby. The Mobians pushed their way out of the sea of tall, waving grass and found a little X in the middle of a sandy patch of ground. In a treasure hunt, X marked the spot so this meant Sonic and friends had found the treasure at long last.

"The emerald's underground." said Knuckles "We need to dig it up and then we can get outta here."

"I'll do it." said Wilson eagerly "I'm a dog and dogs are good diggers."

Wilson ran over to the X, got down on all fours and using his hands, he began to dig his way into the soil. His paws moved like lightening and he dug through the soil effortlessly, bits of soil flung everywhere as he dug down. Sonic and the others kept back to avoid getting hit by the flying bits of soil. Wilson kept on digging and digging until his entire front half had completely gone down. The treasure was buried deep and Wilson had a lot of digging to do to get to it. A minute later, Wilson had completely gone underground but he was still digging as quickly as he could. Sonic knew dogs could dig but he had never seen a dog of any kind dig so fast before, Wilson was obviously highly trained at digging compared to other dogs. Then suddenly, the soil stopped flying and everything fell into a stand still for a moment before the sound of something being pulled up towards the surface was heard. Wilson emerged from the hole and he climbed out whilst pulling something with his hands. He gave the thing a mighty tug and he pulled it out. It was a treasure chest. The chest

was red and gold with a padlock shaped like Cutthroat Jim's head keeping it shut.

"I've got the treasure!" puffed Wilson "It was a lot deeper down then I thought it would be."

"Now the treasure's here, let's see what's inside shall we?" said Sonic, even though he and the whole group knew what was inside it.

Sonic leaped into the air as high as he could, spun into a spin-dash and…Knuckles punched the chest and smashed it open with his fists of steel before Sonic could hit it. Sonic crashed into the ground and groaned loudly. Everybody laughed at him.

"Knuckles, I was gonna open that!" moaned Sonic.

"Well I beat you to it so there." said Knuckles "You're not as fast as you think you are."

As for the open chest, a faint blue glow was coming out from the inside. Knuckles reached into the chest and pulled out its contents. The thing in the chest was a blue Chaos Emerald. The blue Chaos Emerald glowed brightly as it was held next to the green Chaos Emerald Knuckles already had.

"We were right, the treasure Cutthroat Jim and his goons are after IS a Chaos Emerald!" gasped Knuckles.

"I can see why Cutthroat Jim thinks it's called the Emerald of the Seas." said Tails "It's blue just like the ocean."

"Well now we've got the "booty"." said Sonic "We can get outta here and get off this island and go searching for the other Chaos Emeralds."

But before anyone could so much as stand up, Cutthroat Jim, Marik and the entire pirate crew leaped out from their hiding places, which were thickly grown bushes, tall trees or shallow pits nearby and they pounced on Sonic and friends. Soon a big scuffle broke out. The scuffle was full of flying rope, swinging arms, kicks, punches and a lot of shrieking and shouting that echoed around the usually quiet jungle. Dust clouds flew everywhere as the scuffle went on. The

scuffle was tight, tough and violent but in the end, Cutthroat Jim's crew came out on top and they defeated the Mobians. All six Mobians were tightly tied up with ropes around their bodies and legs and gags around their mouths. They were not going anywhere in a hurry. Marik pointed a metal finger as sharp as a flint at them and laughed at the top of his lungs. Seeing Sonic and friends so powerless before him was such a wonderful sight for him and now the Mobians were tied up, Marik could take the green Chaos Emerald back, which he did of course. He held the shining green gem close to his face and smiled widely. Cutthroat Jim stood tall over the Mobians and glowered at them with his cold ruthless eyes, holding the blue Chaos Emerald in his hand. He grinned a dirty, toothy pirate grin at his captives who just stared up at him.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, Hargh!" he cackled "Ya thought you could just swaggle me treasure map and steal me treasure did ya? Well ye scurvy landlubbers have failed miserably I'm afraid. I have the treasure, you are my prisoners and I am going to be one wealthy pirate with this booty here." he added, tauntingly waving the emerald in Sonic's face.

"But you're already wealthy sir." said Gormless.

"Shut up you noisy old parrot!" snapped Cutthroat Jim.

He stared at the beautiful blue Chaos Emerald in his hands. The emerald was everything the person who gave him the map said, beautiful, sparkly and it gave him a wonderful feeling of power and greatness just holding it. The Chaos Emerald truly was a marvellous treasure and he was lucky to have found it before any other pirate gangs could. The other crew members stared at the emerald and marvelled at its beauty.

"Isn't it grand Mateys?" asked Cutthroat Jim, stroking the emerald as if it was a cat or some other cuddly creature people loved to stroke "Isn't it the most wonderful gem ye have ever laid ye eyes on?"

"Yes it is captain!" the crew said in unison.

Cutthroat Jim turned to Marik, who stood there with his arms folded and the green Chaos Emerald tucked safely away in his pocket.

Cutthroat Jim presented the emerald to Marik and Marik stared at it in awe. The blue Chaos Emerald looked just as wonderful as the green one although Marik preferred green over blue since in his culture, blue symbolizes peace so anything blue wasn't going to appeal to him as much as any other colour.

"This is one grand emerald isn't it Marik?" asked Cutthroat Jim "The Emerald of the Seas is as grand as I had imagined it. I am going to be one fabulous pirate aren't I?"

"Yes you are." said Marik, grinning like a hyena "The Emerald of the Seas is so wonderful and so sparkling…I think I might take it for myself!"

And then suddenly without warning, Marik slashed Cutthroat Jim across the face with his metal claws and then he elbowed the insidious pirate hard in the gut. Cutthroat Jim collapsed and rubbed his throbbing, stinging, bleeding face tenderly. He had dropped the emerald after Marik slugged him and Marik seized it. Sonic and friends made muffled gasps from behind their gags as they had not expected Marik to suddenly turn on his accomplice like that. Marik yanked the green Chaos Emerald out of his pocket and held the two gleaming Chaos Emeralds side by side. They both shone like the sun in the sky in unison. Marik smiled wickedly at the two gleaming gems in his hands.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" he cackled "I now have TWO Chaos Emeralds! At the rate I'm going, I will have all seven emeralds and then I'll turn this planet into a war-loving hell-hole with nothing but violence, malice and destruction everywhere!"

Cutthroat Jim got onto his knees and he glared up at Marik. He gritted his horrible, sharp teeth and he snarled viciously and fiercely at the traitor before him.

"Mutiny!" he screeched "How dare you betray the great Cutthroat Jim and steal his booty? I am going to rip your stomach open and tear all your internal organs out and decorate the trees with them when I'm finished with you, you sly old fox!"

"If you're going to be a sadist then do it properly." snapped Marik,

un-amused at Cutthroat Jim's statement "That's the thing about pirates, their attempts at sadism are poor compared to us Martians. And besides, I'm like a pirate in some ways, if I want something, I get it and I wanted the blue Chaos Emerald and I've got it!"

"Not for long ye haven't!" snarled Cutthroat Jim, unsheathing his cutlass and roaring like a lion.

He lunged at Marik with his cutlass gleaming and his amber eyes screaming red with rage. Marik ducked just as Cutthroat Jim gave him a deadly swing of the cutlass. Marik grabbed Cutthroat Jim by the collar and he threw the pirate leader straight into the hole the treasure chest had once been. Then Marik grabbed the opened chest and he smashed it on Cutthroat Jim's heads, reducing the thing to splinters and chunks of wood. Cutthroat Jim was knocked out cold but not dead. Gormless and the other pirates drew their cutlasses and they tried to skewer Marik with their sharp swords but Marik swiped both his arms and swept the pirates away with a giant energy wave. The pirates were blown off their feet by the sheer power of the wave and they all fell on to their backs, their cutlasses flying everywhere and either resting on their sides or impaling themselves into the ground or a tree. Seeing his opponents were down and out, Marik put both Chaos Emeralds into his pockets and he sped off with his jet-shoes. He shot through the jungle like a rocket and left a long sandy trial behind as he sped on. He disappeared into the tall grass wavy grass. The pirate crew picked themselves up and they groaned a chorus of moans.

"Oooh what a bad day we're having!" moaned one crew member who wore an eye patch on his left eye "We lose our map to landlubbers and then we get our treasure stolen by an alien! Can this day get any worse?"

"Never mind this day getting any worse!" snapped a crew member, his face laden with scars from previous battles "That freak of nature is getting away with our prize and we must catch him before he steals our ship and escapes from the island!"

"But we'll never catch him!" moaned the eye-patch pirate "He can go faster then a tiger, he'll be out of here by the time we catch him!"

Sonic tried to say something but due to his mouth being gagged, only muffled mumbles came out. The two pirates that had been talking to one another heard Sonic trying to tell them something and they ripped the gag off his mouth so they could tell what he was supposed to be saying.

"If you dopes untie me and my friends, we'll catch Marik for you and retrieve your treasure." said Sonic "I'm the fastest thing alive so I'll catch him easily."

"Do you think we're going to do that?" sneered the scar-faced pirate, drops of saliva flying out of his mouth as he spoke "You're our prisoner and you are staying put! We will catch that Marik guy ourselves!"

"No ye won't ya dopey dolts!" barked a fierce voice from the hole in the ground.

Cutthroat Jim had just recovered from Marik's onslaught earlier and he climbed out of the hole. He picked up his cutlass, which was lying near the hole and he held the sword close to Sonic's face. He glared at the hedgehog.

"I am setting you and your friends free landlubber." hissed Cutthroat Jim "But only so you can catch Marik and rescue me booty. Once you rescue me booty, you must give it back to me or I'll kill you all. Understood?"

"You have my word that your treasure returns to you safely." lied Sonic "I promise Marik will be as good as captured."

Cutthroat Jim nodded and then with one mighty slash of the cutlass, he sliced everybody's ropes in two, freeing the Mobians and allowing them to stand up and take their gags off save Sonic since his had already been taken off.

"Aaaah does it feel good to breathe again." said Geoffrey, breathing in deeply.

"I'm more in the case of "It's good to be free again"." said Sonic "Now stand back everybody, I've got a Martian to catch!"

He bent down in a sprinting ready pose and then he took off at the speed of sound. He sped off down the jungle faster then a speeding bullet and disappeared from sight in the tall grass.

"So what do we do now?" asked Mandy "Stand here and wait for Sonic to come back?"

"No, we follow him." said Tails "So we can give Sonic a hand in getting those emeralds back."

"Well let's go!" cried Knuckles "There's no time to lose!"

Tails, Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy all ran off after Sonic. The pirate crew ran after them so they would be there to collect their stolen treasure when Sonic got it back from Marik.

As for Marik, he had just made it past the quagmire and he was heading back to the pirate ship which waited on the beach. Once there, he would climb aboard and make his quick getaway. He was very pleased with himself about having captured two Chaos Emeralds. He couldn't wait to find the other five. He began picturing his take-over in his foul little mind as he sped on. Unfortunately for him, his good luck came to a close. He could hear another sound coming from behind and he looked over his shoulder to see what it was. To his annoyance, it was none other then Sonic the Hedgehog speeding after him like an Olympic sprinter with super speed. Sonic ran on and on until he was side-by side with Marik. The two enemies glared at each other as they continued speeding through the dense jungle.

"Hey Marik, care to give me those two Chaos Emeralds back?" said Sonic snidely.

"Certainly not hedge-swine!" snarled Marik "Those emeralds are mine and that's the end of it!"

"Yeah um…NOT!" yelled Sonic, ramming Marik in the side with his shoulder.

Marik wobbled a little and almost tripped but he managed to keep

his balance. Marik glared at Sonic and then he yanked both Chaos Emeralds out of his pockets.

"If you want the emeralds so badly then here they are!" roared Marik.

He thrust the two Chaos Emeralds in Sonic's face. The sheer brightness of their light blinded Sonic and Sonic shielded his eyes. Then suddenly, since Sonic couldn't see what he was doing anymore, he tripped over and fell onto his face. He skidded to a very painful halt on his face. His face was covered in scrapes and grazes after that painful episode. Marik laughed at Sonic as he began to leave him behind. Sonic picked himself up and groaned as he watched Marik get away. He was not going to let that Martian get away from him with two Chaos Emeralds so he ran off again. Since Sonic was faster then Marik by a long shot, he had no trouble catching up with the Martian again. But by the time he had caught up to the Martian, Marik had made it to the beach where Cutthroat Jim's galleon was waiting for him. Sonic leaped forward and tried to catch Marik but Marik leaped an amazing leap into the air and he landed on the bow of the ship, leaving to Sonic to fall on his face and spit sand out. Marik dug his metal claws in the wooden hull of the ship and climbed up the bow of the ship and then he threw himself over onto the deck. Sonic leaped onto the deck and landed a dropkick to the face on Marik, knocking the Martian onto his back. Marik sprawled on the deck but he wasn't down for long. He picked himself up and swiped the air with his arm, sending an energy wave hurling into Sonic's face. Sonic staggered backwards but he regained his balance and prevented himself from falling over. Sonic got into a battle ready stance and Marik did the same, his claws bared and his eyes burning with hatred.

"Those emeralds are mine Marik so save yourself a beating and give them to me!" ordered Sonic.

"More like you surrender and save yourself from a brutal beating from me!" snarled Marik "The emeralds are mine Sonic and there's nothing you can do about it!"

"How about this?" yelled Sonic, charging at Marik faster then a bull and elbowing the Martian in the gut.

Marik wheezed like an asthmatic person and he fell onto his knees after such a painful blow. Sonic then grabbed Marik by the jacket and he plunged his hand into Marik's pocket. He had managed to grab the blue Chaos Emerald and he pulled it out of Marik's pocket. But Marik grabbed Sonic by the wrist with his metal hand and he squeezed it, causing Sonic's hand to open up and drop the Chaos Emerald. Marik tried to grab the Chaos Emerald but Sonic kicked it away from Marik and punched him in the eye. While Marik was distracted, Sonic ran over to the Chaos Emerald and he picked it up. Then, remembering something he'd learnt about the Chaos Emeralds after reading legends about them, he held the Chaos Emerald in front of his face and waited for Marik to leap for him. Marik had recovered from Sonic's punch to the eye and he lunged at Sonic like a leaping tiger. Now was his chance, Sonic held the emerald before him and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

Marik's leap suddenly began to slow down and time around the Martian ground to a halt. Chaos Emeralds have Chaos powers and Chaos Control was one of them. With it, the user could stop time momentarily or teleport. If all seven were collected then something incredible would happen. Now Marik was frozen like statue, Sonic spin-dashed him in the head as hard as he could. Time resumed itself and Marik flung through the air like a baseball. Marik landed sharply on a barrel of rum and destroyed it as he crashed. Rum spilled everywhere and seeped through the tiny gaps in between the wooden gaps of the beck. Marik shook his head furiously and stared in amazement at Sonic.

"Wha…what?" he gasped "How did you do that? How did you just stop time around me?"

"Chaos Control." said Sonic smugly "Chaos Emeralds have powers like that. Chaos Control can do a good deal of things to anyone the user is fighting which is why these emeralds are so powerful."

"Well let's see what happens if I do it!" said Marik wickedly, yanking the green Chaos Emerald out of his pocket and thrusting it in front of him.

"Chaos…CONTROL!" he yelled.

Sonic was too late to react and time around him slowed to a stop. Sonic was trapped in a pose making him look like he was about to leap backwards in surprise. Now Sonic was frozen, Marik leaped on him and began throwing heavy punches on him. Time resumed and Sonic fell onto his back with Marik throwing heavy punches onto him. Sonic could take the punches from Marik's organic hand but the punches from his metal hand were hurting severely. If Marik kept this up, Sonic wouldn't be able to fight back due to his injuries. Marik then stopped punching Sonic and he viciously threw him straight into three barrels of rum. The barrels were reduced to planks and splinters and Sonic was drenched in rum. To add insult to injury, Marik grabbed Sonic by the quills before he could get up and Marik chucked Sonic straight into a mast. Sonic hit the mast so hard, the high, tall mast collapsed and came down with a crash on the deck of the ship. The floor had been completely destroyed and the mast lay there on the ship, half in and half out. The ship had been breached in the underbelly by the mast and if it was sailing right now, it would have sunk but the ship hadn't set sail so it just rested on the shallow bank of the island. Then suddenly, the sky turned grey and it began to throw it down with heavy rain. Thunder boomed through the sky and lightening flashed briefly. Sonic picked himself up and struggled onto his feet. Marik struck him again before Sonic could even suspect the Martian was there. Marik knocked Sonic onto his stomach and stomped savagely on his back. Sonic screamed loudly as Marik stomped on him. Thunder clapped again and Marik picked up Sonic with one arm. Marik threw Sonic as hard as he could and Sonic crashed through a door that led to the galley. The door was ripped off its hinges and reduced to bits of wood. Sonic lay there, battered and beaten and unfit to fight back. He tried to get back onto his feet but Marik had beaten him too badly so he couldn't get back up. Amazing how one Chaos Control from Marik had managed to turn the tides of the battle so quickly. Marik stood in the doorway and grinned at Sonic. Lightening flashed behind him, making the Martian appear as a silhouette to Sonic. Marik strolled over to Sonic and Sonic feebly tried to punch him but Marik just smacked him in the face and sent Sonic falling down again. Marik grabbed Sonic by the neck and pinned him to the wall. Sonic choked feebly and weakly in the Martian's grasp but due to the beating Marik had given

him, he was too weak to do anything about it. Marik grinned a crazed, evil grin that made him look extremely demented and he bared his metal claws.

"Nice try Sonic, very nice try." purred Marik "But I'm afraid the battle has turned in my favour now. You are beaten, I am victorious and now you die like you must do."

"No Marik…please…" gasped Sonic hoarsely as Marik's grip tightened.

Marik threw Sonic on the floor, stomped on his back yet again and then he picked up a cutlass that was lying on the floor. He held the cutlass above his head with the blade pointing down. Sonic turned his head to see what Marik was doing and he gasped feebly.

"No…don't…Marik…don't do it!" begged Sonic weakly.

Marik ignored him and got ready to plunge the sword into Sonic's back and kill him.

"Die Sonic the wretched little hedgehog!" he snarled.

He brought the sword plunging down on Sonic but before he could hit home, something grabbed him by the collar and held him back. Marik dropped the sword and yelped as he was lifted off the ground. It was Tails! He had finally made it to the ship thanks to his fast flying and he saw Sonic in distress so he flew into the galley to help him. Tails held Marik off the ground by his jacket and then with one mighty swing, Tails threw Marik out the galley and back onto the decks in the thundering rain. Before Marik could stand back up, Tails tackled Marik with a punch from behind.

"How dare you try to kill Sonic!" scolded Tails "I'm going to make you pay for that!"

But Marik slapped him in the cheek with his metal hand before Tails could even attempt to attack again. Tails landed on his side and groaned. He sat up and stared up at Marik who stood before him with an evil scowl on his face.

"Will you shut up you annoying little blister?" snarled Marik "How

does Sonic bear your obnoxious nature?"

"I'm not annoying!" snapped Tails.

"Well in my eyes you are." said Marik "And I'm going to make sure your death is very painful and gory for stopping me from killing Sonic!"

But before Marik could lay a finger on poor Tails, he got a terrific punch to the back from none other then Knuckles the Echidna. Knuckles and the others had caught up and boarded the ship at last and now they were here to stop Marik and retrieve the stolen Chaos Emeralds from him. Marik picked himself up and he glared at the Mobians before him. His eyes were like pools of fire.

"I bet you hate this don't you Marik?" taunted Knuckles "Every time you get a chance to kill someone, someone else interferes."

"I do hate this!" snarled Marik "But you fools are not going to defeat me! I have put Sonic out of commission, I have a Chaos Emerald to use Chaos Control with and I am going to make sure you all suffer for all the indignity you've ever caused me!"

"But we've never met you mate." said Geoffrey, noting the fact he, Wilson and Mandy were new to Marik "Why would you want to make us suffer you blackguard?"

"Because I hate your race skunk boy." said Marik "Everyone on this planet is my enemy and anyone who is my enemy gets a gruesome fate from me."

Then suddenly without warning, he lunged at Knuckles and slugged him right in the stomach with his metal hand. Knuckles gasped so hard he felt like his lungs were about to explode but Marik didn't stop there. He yanked on the echidna's dreadlocks almost hard enough to rip them off his head and then he began to spin Knuckles around and around in a circle. Tails, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy stayed back as Marik continued to spin Knuckles around. Marik let go of Knuckles and Knuckles hurtled into Geoffrey and he knocked the skunk onto his back. Geoffrey shoved Knuckles off himself and he shot a dart at Marik. Marik just stood there and caught the dart in his

fingers! Geoffrey gasped in horror at that sudden act.

"Blimey! You're a quick un' aren't you?" he spluttered.

"I am indeed smelly." said Marik casually, tossing the useless dart over his shoulder "Much too quick for you and your comrades."

"Is that so?" sneered Geoffrey "Well can you keep up with this?"

He ran up to Marik as fast as he could and Marik whipped the Chaos Emerald out of his pocket. But before he could even utter a word, Geoffrey socked him in the face with his fist and then let him have it in the gut with an elbow. Marik slashed Geoffrey in the arm with his metal hand and ripped a few bits of fabric from Geoffrey's sleeve. Geoffrey shot at Marik with his crossbow again but Marik slapped the dart away with his metal hand and then Geoffrey kicked Marik in the shoulder. Marik tumbled over and then Wilson and Mandy double-teamed him from behind with a pair of kicks just as he was standing back up. Marik kicked back and hit Wilson and Mandy each in the chest. Marik grabbed Wilson by the neck and gave the poor dog a horrible choke with one squeeze of the hand.

"You leave Wilson alone you vile monster!" screamed Mandy.

Marik ignored her and he kicked Mandy in the knee, causing the mouse to fall over. Marik threw Wilson away and he grabbed Mandy by the ears.

"I'm going to make sure your death is very gory and painful girl." snarled Marik "I have a bitter hatred of mice since all they do is cause chaos and be a nuisance to anybody they come across."

Mandy gulped and her tail shook. Marik bared his claw and prepared to plunge them into Mandy's neck but Wilson appeared from behind and bit him on the arm. Marik screamed in pain and let go of Mandy's ears. Mandy got back to her feet and kicked Marik sharply in the stomach as Wilson held him for her to attack. That kick felt strangely harder then a usual kick though and Marik knew it.

"Ooofff!" he spluttered "Your foot feels like metal mouse-girl! What are you made of?"

"Same as all Mobians, flesh and bones." said Mandy "My boots are obviously really hard aren't they?"

"I'll say they are!" said Wilson "You've hurt him good!"

Marik growled and wrenched himself out of Wilson's grasp and gave him a sucker punch to the jaw. Geoffrey stepped in with a great big whip of his big, black, stripy, bushy tail and then he slugged Marik in the chest. Marik leaped back to his feet and slashed Geoffrey across the nose with his metal claws, leaving scars that would never heal on it. Geoffrey screamed and clutched his nose and then Marik leaped up, spun in mid-air, and kicked Geoffrey in the cheek. Mandy tried to attack Marik from behind but Marik grabbed her by the wrists and flipped her over himself and onto the floor in front of him. Mandy landed sharply on her back and she groaned loudly. Wilson socked Marik in the back with both fists before Marik could see him coming and before Marik could get back up, Wilson hauled him onto his feet and then he threw him into the side of the deck. Marik almost went overboard but he managed to save himself from going over. Wilson ran up to Marik in an attempt to push him over before he could get back onboard but Marik swiped the air with his arm and smacked Wilson with an energy wave. Wilson was knocked off his feet and sent sprawling across the deck. Thunder clapped and lightening flashed once again. Marik leaped back onboard and attempt to make another attack but Knuckles, who had recovered from Marik's onslaught earlier, gave the Martian a terrifically powerful uppercut to the jaw and sent the Martian falling onto his back. Tails picked Marik up whilst in flight and then he threw Marik into a wall. Marik hit the wall and cracked it. He groaned loudly as pain flooded his back but he still wasn't down and out for the count yet. The five Mobians stood before Marik and they glared down at him. Geoffrey aimed his crossbow at Marik, ready to shot him and put him to sleep.

"Don't you dare do anything Marik." warned Knuckles "Geoffrey is aching to put you to sleep you know so the wise thing to do it give up, you can't beat us all."

"Oh yes I can you dumb head!" snarled Marik "I have this!"

He yanked the Chaos Emerald out of his pocket so hard he actually ripped his pocket in two! Marik held the emerald before him and

yelled

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

Knuckles immediately lunged at him but time slowed down to a stop and everybody but Marik froze to the spot. Marik stood up and walked away from his frozen enemies. He grabbed a nearby barrel, tipped it upside down and emptied its contents, which was a lot of fish and carried it over to the others. He put the barrel down and grabbed the frozen Tails. He stuffed Tails in the barrel and then he grabbed Knuckles, who was frozen in mid-leap and stuffed him in the barrel. The barrel had no more room for anyone else so Marik got another barrel and emptied it. He carried it over to the Mobians and he stuffed Geoffrey and Wilson in the barrel. There was only Mandy left and Marik got another barrel and emptied it. Marik carried the barrel back over to Mandy and he stuffed Mandy into the barrel. He closed all the barrels and he tipped them onto their sides. He rolled the barrels towards the edge of the ship and tried to pick them up. The barrels were very heavy now they were full of Mobians but he managed to get the first barrel onto the railing and prepared to tip it overboard so the Mobians inside would drown. But his Chaos Control had worn off now and Sonic, who had managed to get back to his feet, staggered out of the galley and using the blue Chaos Emerald yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" and stopped Marik dead in his tracks. Marik froze in time just as he pushed the barrel over. The barrel tipped slowly over the railing but Sonic ran over to it and saved the barrel from plunging into the sea. Sonic pushed the barrel onto the deck and he opened them all, freeing the Mobians trapped inside. Tails, Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy all poured out of the three barrels and they gasped for air.

"Oh that was horrible!" gasped Wilson "At least we're free now!"

"Sonic, you're OK!" said Tails, getting up onto his feet "But how did you stop Marik from throwing us into the ocean?"

"I used Chaos Control to freeze him in time." said Sonic, still struggling to stay stood up "Chaos Control is an ability the Chaos Emeralds have and it stops time momentarily or teleports you."

"Well it's a good thing you used it." said Knuckles "We were about to

become victims of the water until you stopped Marik."

Then suddenly, time around Marik unfroze and Marik finished his pushing motion, only to realize that he was not pushing anything. He turned around and gasped at the sight of his enemies, free from their barrels and standing before him, ready to attack him.

"WHAT?" he gasped "How is this possible? I was pushing two of you into the ocean!"

"I used Chaos Control to stop you long enough to save my friends." said Sonic "Now I'm here, we can all take you on together Marik."

"I'll kill you all!" snarled Marik "I'll use Chaos Control to destroy you all!"

"How does Marik even know how to use Chaos Control or even what it is?" demanded Knuckles wildly.

"I used it on him and he decided to copy me." said Sonic "But that's not gonna help him."

And with that, before anyone could blink, Sonic yelled "Chaos… CONTROL!" and time around Marik slowed to a halt again. Now Marik was frozen to the spot, Sonic ran over to Marik and kicked him over the railing and into the ocean. Marik fell into the water with a mighty splash. Time resumed itself and Marik came up to the surface of the water, spluttering and gasping and splashing madly. He glared up at Sonic who was peering down on him from the ship's great height and smirking at him.

"How's the water Marik?" asked Sonic mockingly "Too hot? Too cold? Just right?"

"You will pay for this Sonic I assure you!" snarled Marik, shaking his fist "But that'll have to wait! I've got injuries to heal and five more emeralds to find so I will be leaving! I'll be back for your Chaos Emerald and that's a promise!"

And with that, Marik fished the green Chaos Emerald out of his pocket, held it above his head and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

Instead of time freezing and slowing to a stop, Marik was engulfed with a dazzling bright light and then Marik vanished into thin air just as thunder boomed through the sky again. Sonic and crew were amazed at the fact Marik had decided to flee like that.

"Where'd he go?" asked Mandy.

"He teleported using Chaos Control." explained Sonic "He's gone for now."

"But we'll meet him again." said Tails "And the next time we meet him, we'll finally bring him to justice and put him behind bars for good."

"I hope he doesn't find the other Chaos Emeralds." said Knuckles "It's bad enough he has one emerald but if he gets the rest, he'll be invincible."

"Well we'd best get back home and continue our Chaos Emerald hunt elsewhere!" announced Sonic "And we don't need a ship to get back to shore, we'll use our little Chaos Emerald to warp ourselves back home."

"I can't guarantee Cutthroat Jim and his band of blackguards will be getting outta here in a hurry." said Geoffrey, surveying the damages done to the ship due to Sonic knocking the mast over after Marik threw him into it "Their ship is not fit to sail."

"Like I care about that." said Sonic "Cutthroat Jim can stay on this island, that's the most he deserves for all the trouble he's caused us. Now, let's get outta here shall we?"

Everybody formed a circle and held hands with one another. Sonic held the Chaos Emerald before him and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

The six Mobians were swallowed up by a giant, dazzling pool of light that lit up the dark, rainy scenery around them. The light shone for a moment and then died down into nothingness. The Mobians had

vanished into thin air and not a trace of their existence was left. Cutthroat Jim and his pirate gang had witnessed everything and the pirate leader was wild with rage. He threw his hat onto the ground and stomped on it.

"Shiver me timbers and fire on the poop deck!" he raved "Those cheating, lying landlubbers have stolen me treasure and vanished from sight! I knew I shouldn't have trusted them!"

"I agree." said Gormless dimly, trying to sound smart.

"Hey Captain, we're stranded here." said a pirate wearing a headscarf "The ship's mast has fallen over and caused extensive damage to the hull. The damage is so great, the lower decks have holes in them and the ship can't float. If we try to leave, we'll sink!"

"ARGH!" roared Cutthroat Jim "We're marooned here! Oh the indignity of it all! Curse those Mobians for wounding me pride and leaving me stranded here! GRRRRR!"

And with that, he threw a fierce, angry tantrum. The pirates all sighed in despair. They were stuck here forever and no one would be coming to save them. They had to make his island their new home since their ship was damaged and they did not have the tools to repair it so they couldn't escape from the island. Only time would tell if the pirates would ever, EVER make it off the island at all…

Sonic and friends have one Chaos Emerald and Marik has one Chaos Emerald. But this hunt is only just beginning. Join me next time as Amy Rose takes the spotlight in the next story. Will her team be able to find a Chaos Emerald? Reviews are welcome.

Special thanks to Kratos Pwns, banjobandicoot52 and Ultimate Black Ace for your reviews and Ginger hatred. I love all your opinions on that dork. XD

A Three Way Emerald Fight

Story 39: A Three Way Emerald Fight

An long, stretching, patch of green grass that swayed in the gentle breeze was suddenly alight with a giant, bright, dazzling glow that appeared from nowhere. Then out of the blue, Marik the Martian flashed into existence and stood in the swaying grassy meadow he had just appeared in. This meadow was the exact same one he walked through before he came across Cutthroat Jim earlier*. Marik surveyed his surroundings and was pleased to see there was no one around. He put the green Chaos Emerald back in his pocket, the one that wasn't ripped that is, inhaled deeply and sighed loudly. Then he shook all the rainwater off of his body so he was dry again.

"What a terrible defeat that was." he moaned, remembering his defeat at the hands of Sonic previously "Those Mobians are more dangerous then ever just because they have a Chaos Emerald. I must steal it off of them and find the other five before they do or I'll never conquer this planet and transform it into a war-zone."

He trudged through the grass glumly, his face as dark as a thundercloud and headed off to nowhere in particular.

"I do hope Sonic and the others are faraway from me right now." he mumbled to himself "I'm not ready to see them in combat until I've healed from my minor injuries from that fierce fight."

Then he felt the Chaos Emerald tingle against his thigh from inside his pocket. He studied it and realized it was glowing brighter then usual. It was only a tad brighter but that was enough to convince Marik something was up.

"What's this?" he mused to himself "If I heard that obnoxious echidna properly, Chaos Emeralds glow brighter when another emerald is nearby. That must mean…I'm close to another Chaos Emerald! YES! I must seize this opportunity now I have it!"

And with that, Marik ran off like a jackrabbit with the Chaos Emerald

held in front of him to see if he was on the trial or not. Marik felt a tingle of excitement burn in his stomach as he ran for it. He was near another Chaos Emerald! Now all he had to do was find it and run off with it before someone else knew about it. With two emeralds at his side, he would be more powerful then ever before and he would find the other four Chaos Emeralds with them. And once he'd found the other four Chaos Emeralds, he would steal Sonic's emerald and then have all seven at his side, ready to cause destruction and carnage with the seven colourful gems and end all peace on Mobius for all eternity. All Marik could do was hope for no competition and for this to be an easy catch operation for himself…

The Chaos Emerald hunt had not been a very easy one for Sonic's biggest fan, Amy Rose and her team mates Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Bunnie Rabbot, Espio the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile and Charmy Bee. Despite the fact Tails had managed to rework a tracker and get it to detect Chaos Emeralds, they had not found a thing since the hunt had started. They had searched high and low, far and wide and in any possible hiding place. But they had not found so much as a stone. They had been at this for hours on end with literally no rest or anything so you can imagine how famished these poor people must be. And yet, Amy pushed on with determination that could not be suppressed by anything else. Their hunt had taken them into the Great Forest, home of the legendary Lake of Rings. They had just begun searching in there now and Amy kept glancing at the tracker to see if it was detecting anything. As before, nothing appeared on the tracker. Amy had managed to bear hours of not finding anything, but now her patience had reached breaking point. She was getting very frustrated at her team's unsuccessful find over the hours so she groaned angrily.

"For heaven's sake! Where are those damn Chaos Emeralds?" she whined "They can't be THAT hard to find!"

"Maybe they're well hidden sugah." suggested Bunnie as she prowled through a bush only to find absolutely nothing inside "It may take us a while at the least to find one of them."

"Can we rest first Miss Rose?" asked Cream sweetly "I'm tired and

my feet hurt."

Amy sighed loudly but she couldn't find an emerald if her team weren't fit enough to do any searching so she reluctantly called a break for everybody.

"OK everybody, it's time to rest." announced Amy.

Everybody stopped what they were doing and the team sat down in a circle. Amy discussed their progress so far.

"OK, we've been at this for hours on end and we haven't found a thing." said Amy "What does that tell us?"

"It tells me that this emerald hunt isn't as fun as I thought it was gonna be." groaned Charmy.

"Oh shut up Charmy!" snapped Vector, grabbing the bee by his head.

"OK." said Charmy quickly.

Vector let go of him.

"OK so…what does that tell anyone else?" asked Amy, hoping for a more logical and intelligent answer this time.

"It tells me those emeralds are well hidden." said Espio "If we're going to find them, we need a lot of patience and we need to take it steady or we'll just get frustrated and we'll take even longer to find the emeralds."

"That's…a good point actually." said Amy slowly "I'll have to keep that in mind on the rest of this trek."

"I hope Sonic and his team are doing alright." said Cosmo as she thought about Sonic's current status now "I can't stop thinking about them right now."

"I'm sure they're fine Cosmo." said Amy gently "After all, Sonic can take care of himself."

"And so can Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy." added Bunnie "Those three are well-trained fighters after all."

"And I'm sure that Knuckles can take care of himself." said Amy "He was strong enough to destroy Eggman's combat suit that time Sonic and Eggman had a showdown that almost ended in tears for us**."

"So Sonic and his team will be just fine." said Cosmo brightly "I shouldn't need to worry about them."

"Yes Cosmo, you shouldn't." said Amy smugly "No one can beat my Sonic the Hedgehog. He is unstoppable and that's why I'm so crazily in love with him!"

She got up on her feet and started spinning around in a love-entranced daze.

"I can just imagine Sonic's heroic feats right now." said Amy dreamily "So dashing, so daring and so amazing. I can't wait until the day Sonic admits his love for me arrives and we marry and have a future together!"

Amy was so blinded by her love for Sonic right now, she failed to notice everybody staring at her weird. Everybody sweat-dropped in confusion and shifted uncomfortably on the ground.

"Um…is the sugah-hog girl usually like this?" asked Bunnie uncomfortably.

"Not usually." said Cream "I know Miss Rose fancies Mr. Sonic but, she doesn't usually act like this."

These Mobians are strange creatures. thought Cosmo to herself.

Vector got to his feet and put a hand the size of a gorilla's on Amy's head to stop her spinning.

"Um Amy…I think you should snap out of it and focus right now." said Vector "We've got emeralds to find."

Amy suddenly came back down to earth and realized what she had been doing in front of everybody and went bright red all over her

body. Her cheeks were hot with embarrassment.

"I'm so sorry you all had to see that." she choked uneasily.

"We'll pretend we didn't see that." said Espio smoothly "Now, are we ready to continue this hunt? I feel like I'm ready to go again."

"Certainly." said Amy "Let's go team!"

Everybody got back to their feet and continued searching. Not a million miles away (to put it more precise, just a few feet away really) a bush rustled and shook and out popped Marik the Martian. He had been searching for the Chaos Emerald he had detected and the search had taken him into the Great Forest. The emerald was telling him it was near so he knew he hadn't got far. He was annoyed to see he had come across another team of Mobians that appeared to be searching for the same thing but what made him even angrier was the fact Amy, Cream and Cosmo were there. Cosmo and Cream in particular since he still bitterly remembered his humiliating defeat at their hands***.

"Oh for the love of Phobos****!" he cursed "Did I have to come across more vermin while I was searching for a Chaos Emerald? Oh well, I'll give them a brutal beating later. The Chaos Emerald my emerald is detecting is nearby so I'll find it first."

He ducked back into the bush and then silently crept out of it, making sure nobody heard him as he sneaked away like a snake slithering through the bushes for its unsuspecting prey. Now he was out of the bush, he ran for it since there was nothing around for him to make a sound and catch some attention. Soon he was safely out of range for Amy and her team and now he could continue searching for the Chaos Emerald. The Chaos Emerald he had shone so brightly you would permanently blind yourself if you stared at it for too long. Marik glanced at it quickly and realized the emerald was very close to him now. He looked around only to see a lot of trees and fallen branches lying on the ground.

"The Chaos Emerald must be somewhere…" mused Marik "And I bet it's hiding up a tree somewhere. There's no other hiding place around here for it."

So Marik strolled over to a tree and held the green Chaos Emerald up in the air. The green Chaos Emerald kept glowing so that meant the Chaos Emerald Marik detected was up that tree. The tree was tall and brimming with acorns, just fit for the squirrels and other rodents of Mobius. Marik put the green Chaos Emerald in his intact pocket and he dug his metal claws into the tree, the sharp fingers easily penetrating the thick bark of the tree. Marik then dug the spikes on the edge of his shoes into the bark so he could easily climb up the tree. Every step up the tree he took he pulled his claws out and dug them into the bark above his head so he could climb higher. He climbed up and up and up the tall tree until he was halfway up off the ground and he came across a hole in the tree. The hole in the tree was empty except for one thing. Something gleaming and shiny shone from the hole. Marik peered into the hole and quickly pulled his head out to avoid getting blinded by the sheer brightness of the thing. The thing in the hole was a yellow Chaos Emerald! Marik immediately seized it with his organic hand and held it to his face. He scowled at it.

"Why is this emerald yellow?" he grumbled "Yellow's a horrible colour! More horrible then blue! Oh well, at least I've got another Chaos Emerald. I'm amazed that find was so easy. My luck must be increasing now."

He stuffed the emerald in a pocket inside his jacket whilst holding on to the tree with his metal hand and he zipped it up so the emerald wouldn't fall out. Then Marik climbed down the tree. The one thing Marik hated about climbing is it was much easier to get UP the thing he was climbing then it was climbing DOWN it and trees were no exception.

"If only I'd gotten that idiot fox to fix my hover shoes before I broke out of prison*****." he moaned to himself "I could have just flown up and down this stupid tree in a jiffy. If I find a lab or something I'll have to fix my jet shoes and then fix my voltage compactor so I can electrocute people again." he added, remembering the fact Tails had smashed his voltage compactor with a revolver during the whole incident with the pirates earlier******.

After a minute or two, Marik finally made it down to the ground and he let go of the tree. Now he had his prize, he walked away with a

big smile on his evil face. Now he had two Chaos Emeralds in his possession. If he was lucky, he'd be able to find the other four Chaos Emeralds and use their powers for his own evil deeds.

Meanwhile, Amy's team continued searching but yet again, they STILL found nothing. If Marik hadn't had already found the Chaos Emerald and walked off with it, Amy's tracker might have picked it up and they would have found it but Marik had found it first so the emerald was out of range. Cosmo peered into the bush that Marik had been in earlier only to find nothing but some fallen leaves and a little trial left by Marik after he'd left.

"Hmm…Has someone been hiding in here?" wondered Cosmo "And if so, I wonder who it was."

Team Chaotix kept prowling through bushes to see what they could find and Cream and her pet Chao Cheese both searched up and down trees with Bunnie Rabbot. Both rabbits could fly, Cream had her big flapping ears to use as wings and Bunnie Rabbot had her jets in her feet to fly. The two rabbits and Chao searched in about every tree they came across only to find the trees were as empty as abandoned houses. These trees were obviously not occupied by any of the wildlife that lived in this forest. The two rabbits gave up and lowered down to the ground.

"No Chaos Emerald here ah'm afraid." said Bunnie with her hands on her hips and looking up at the trees they had just searched.

"I wonder where those emeralds are hiding?" said Cream "We can't find one anywhere."

Cream shouldn't have said "We can't find one anywhere" because Amy just did. She had been prowling further up then everybody else and her tracker suddenly picked up the two Chaos Emeralds Marik had. Amy got proper excited and she almost bounced up and down like a spring in a bed.

"Hey guys, my tracker's picking up not one but TWO Chaos Emeralds!" she shrieked "We've finally found some emeralds!"

"We have?" the entire group called out.

"Yes!" yelled Amy "Come on! Let's get them before we lose them!"

Amy ran off like a wildebeest running from a hungry lion. Everybody else followed them. Cosmo, Vector and Espio ran after Amy while Bunnie, Cream and Charmy flew after Amy as she bounded off down the forest. Amy kept her eyes on the tracker to see how close they were to the two emeralds. Excitement flushed up her stomach and her heart pounded with glee. What a touch of good luck she'd suddenly had! Two Chaos Emeralds had been detected! At long last they had found an emerald! The seven Mobians ran and ran deeper and deeper into the forest, Amy glancing at the tracker every second to see how close they were. The team ran to the left and bounded onwards. After what seemed like twenty miles even though they hadn't been running that long, the team had finally caught up to the Chaos Emeralds. They took cover behind a tree and Amy glanced at the tracker.

"OK, so the tracker says the emeralds are up ahead." said Amy "Let's get them!"

She leaped out from behind the tree and…froze to the spot in horror and her jaw dropped. There ahead of her, sitting down and meditating with his back turned on everybody was Marik the Martian. Marik didn't appear to have heard anybody because he didn't twitch or move a muscle at all. He remained sitting there with his hands together, his eyes closed and legs crossed. Marik was a little tired from the fighting earlier and all the walking and climbing he'd done a moment ago so he decided to sit down and rest himself. Amy resisted the urge to scream and she glanced at the tracker. She almost died of shock at what the tracker was telling her. The tracker was telling her the Chaos Emeralds were right in front of her, in other words with Marik the Martian! Amy silently retreated behind the tree and pressed her back against it whilst panting heavily and clutching her thumping chest.

"What's wrong?" asked Vector "Have you found the emeralds?"

"Yes." gasped Amy "But unfortunately, Marik the Martian has them!"

Cosmo's eyes almost popped out of her head and she felt so wobbly and weak at the knee she had to sit down.

"Not…Marik again!" whimpered Cosmo.

"You're kidding!" cried Vector "I've read in a newspaper Sonic threw him off a cliff! He couldn't have survived that!"

"Well he did." said Amy "Unfortunately." she added bitterly.

"Oh no! Hide me!" squeaked Charmy "Marik's gonna kill us all!"

"Shut up Charmy!" cried Vector and Espio, the two of them seizing the bee and clasping their hands around his mouth to shut him up.

"Who in the who-hah is Marik the Martian?" asked Bunnie "Ah've nevah heard of that guy."

"Marik is the epitome of sadism." said Amy "He's horrible, violent, cruel and has an unhealthy love for violence and destruction. He detests peace and wants all peace lovers to die."

"Oh mah stars!" shrieked Bunnie "He sounds much worse then that darn Dr. Eggman!"

"He IS worse then Dr. Eggman." said Cosmo quietly "Marik is probably the most evil thing in the galaxy and I should know because my kind are at war with him."

"Oh mah stars again!" cried Bunnie "No wonder ya'll look so petrified little Cosmo!"

Cosmo nodded weakly at the cyborg rabbit.

"I don't want to go near that Martian again." whimpered Cream, putting her hands to her mouth and shaking terribly "I bet he wants to kill me and Cosmo in revenge for what we did to him the time he was kidnapping Chao for his evil experiments."

"You won't have to." said Amy "Because I'm going to knock him out and steal the Chaos Emeralds while he's out and run for it. You wait here and I'll knock Marik out. If I need help, you all come out and

attack."

Everybody nodded in agreement. Amy summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand and she tip-toed out from behind the tree. Marik didn't stir or make any signs of movement at all. He remained where he was, silently humming to himself and making weird hand symbols while meditating. Amy was rather baffled to see a bloodthirsty peace-hating sadist like Marik doing something peaceful like meditating right now but she had a feeling that Marik did it for an evil reason, not a peaceful reason. She shook off her bafflement and continued creeping up on Marik with her hammer in hand. She crept so quietly that I doubt a bat would have heard her and they have good ears. Marik remained still, completely oblivious to the fact someone was creeping up on him. Amy smiled evilly to her self and she put her hammer down, rubbed her hands and picked it back up. She raised the hammer above her head and aimed for Marik's head. The helmet may protect him a little from the hammer but not a whole lot. Amy raised her hammer the highest she could raise it and she brought it swinging down on Marik. But Marik reached above his head and caught the hammer head just before it could hit him! Amy gasped in horror and Marik proceeded to throw Amy over his head and onto the ground in front of him whilst still sitting down. Amy landed ever so sharply on her back and she grimaced heavily. Her hammer landed beside her. Marik opened his eyes and glared at the pink hedgehog that lay before him. Marik stood up and put a foot on Amy's face. Amy shook madly, she knew what was coming.

"Did you really think I was unaware of your presence?" snarled Marik "Just because I'm phased out it doesn't mean I can't hear you creeping on me!"

"But I didn't make a sound at all!" shrieked Amy "How could you possibly hear me?"

"When you're meditating like I am, you can hear the quietest of sounds no matter how quiet someone tries to sneak up on you." explained Marik "My hearing is so good I can hear the silent footsteps you make with every tip-toe. Not to mention I heard you rubbing your hands just before you were about to wallop me."

"Wow, that's good hearing." said Amy.

"Yeah as if you'd know about it." snorted Marik "You Mobians can't hear as well a Martian can. Now let's see what a crushed Mobian skull looks like shall we?"

He raised his foot and prepared to bring it slamming down on Amy's face. Bunnie Rabbot leaped out from behind the tree and blasted at Marik with her arm cannon but Marik heard it coming and he leaped out of the way of the blast. The blast singed a tree just ahead of Amy. Amy quickly got onto her feet, picked up her hammer and ran up to Marik, growling loudly. She tried to whack Marik with her hammer but she missed as Marik leaped out of the way and then Marik gave her a painful uppercut, made more painful by the fact it was his metal hand he used. Amy flew through the air in a perfect arch and landed sharply on her back again (I wonder if she'll get rheumatism from this at the end of the day?). Marik tried to attack Amy again but Bunnie Rabbot stepped in and tried to punch the Martian with her robot arm.

"You leave the sugah-gal alone gruesome!" snarled Bunnie.

Marik dodged the extending arm with no effort whatsoever and then he grabbed her arm before it could retract back for another attack. Bunnie's ears straightened in surprise and Marik gave her a wild grin that made him look extremely demented and insane.

"You know for some one with robot limbs, I would have expected you to have much better aim then that!" sneered Marik, yanking on the arm and pulling Bunnie onto her stomach "At least my aim is much better!"

He swung Bunnie around by the arm and threw the cyborg-rabbit straight into a tree. Bunnie screeched in pain and fell to the ground. Marik laughed at the downed rabbit and he advanced on her. Bunnie lay there, staring up at Marik and her ears drooped back in fear. Marik stared down at her and grinned like a hobgoblin.

"So you're a cyborg I guess?" said Marik "Not bad since cyborgs are powerful but when I'm finished with you, Rabbot, you'll need more robot parts then what you've already got!"

"So go ahead then, finish me." said Bunnie "What's keeping ya'll?"

Marik pointed a metal finger as sharp as a steak knife at Bunnie and the Rabbot gulped and sweat-dropped at the same time.

"The only reason I'm not tearing you apart right now rabbit bot." he hissed, his voice soft and dangerous sounding "Is because I find your accent mildly amusing."

"Oh yeah, well ah find your evilness mildly annoying!" snapped Bunnie "And ah've got a present for you!"

Before Marik could do anything, she delivered a well aimed sucker-punch to Marik's face with her robot arm. Marik was completely bewildered by the sheer power of the punch and he flew through the air in a perfect arch. He landed on his head and the spikes of his helmet embedded themselves into the ground. Marik was now upside down and stuck in the ground by his helmet. Marik's body flopped down and he pulled the helmet out of the ground and put it back on his head, only to get a ninja kick in the cheek from Espio. Marik fell onto his side and then got a flying punch from Charmy Bee before he could stand back up. Marik was in a daze and his eyes were spinning around like roundabouts. Vector charged up to Marik and seized him by the collar with his giant jaws. Then Vector hoisted Marik off the ground and began to spin him around. Vector spun his head around and around whilst he was holding Marik in his jaws and he was spinning his head so fast Marik became a black, red and gold blur and Vector's head was a green blur at the top of his body. Vector finally let go of Marik and the Martian shot through the air like a dart whizzing towards the dartboard and he crashed slap-bang headfirst into a rock. Marik's hard helmet saved him from a lot of pain but the impact still hurt him and the rock cracked heavily. Vector felt a little dizzy from spinning his head so much but he didn't take long to shake it off and recover from his dizzy spell. Charmy Bee laughed goofily at what Vector did to Marik.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! That was funny! Do it again!" giggled Charmy.

"If it didn't make me dizzy afterwards, I'd happily do so." said Vector.

As for Marik, he had been knocked out cold from that impact and he lay against the rock, still and motionless. Amy, Cream and Cosmo crept up to the unconscious Martian and they stood and stared at

him. Amy held the tracker near him and the tracker picked up the Chaos Emeralds Marik had in his pockets.

"Marik has the two Chaos Emeralds we picked up earlier." said Amy "Can someone search his pockets and find them before he wakes up?"

Cream and Cosmo were reluctant to get this close to the insidious Martian but they had to open his pockets and get the Chaos Emeralds since they were too valuable to leave in his possession. Cosmo reached into Marik's left pocket, the one that wasn't ripped, and grabbed the green Chaos Emerald that he had stolen from Sonic. Cosmo stared in amazement.

"This is the first emerald we found." said Cosmo "How did Marik ever get it from Sonic?"

"Dunno." said Amy "But if we come across Sonic, we can give it back to him."

Cream reached into Marik's ripped pocket only to inevitably find nothing inside. Then Cosmo gently turned Marik on to his back and Cream opened his leather jacket and reached into the inside pocket. Her fingers closed around the yellow Chaos Emerald and she slowly pulled it out of his pocket, being careful not to wake him up. Cream finally pulled the emerald out of Marik's pocket, her heart pounding and she sighed with relief. The girls stared at the yellow emerald Cream was now holding in her hand.

"I guess Marik found this emerald with the green emerald." said Amy "Knuckles did say Chaos Emeralds can be used to find other emeralds."

"Well now we've got them, Marik can't use them to find another Chaos Emerald." said Cosmo "Let's get outta here before he…"

Then suddenly Marik snapped awake, his eyes wide and bloodshot looking and he grabbed Cosmo and Cream by their wrists, causing the girls to shriek in terror. Marik made Cosmo drop the green Chaos Emerald due to the fact he was squeezing the hand she was holding the Chaos Emerald with but Cream still had hers and in a

terrified state, she actually THREW the gleaming gem straight into Marik's forehead! Marik screamed in pain and Cream and Cosmo picked up the Chaos Emeralds before Marik could catch them and the two girls ran for safety while Amy, Bunnie and Team Chaotix prepared to give Marik another beating. Marik just lay against the rock, glaring at them like an eagle staring its prey down before it came in for the kill.

"I wouldn't try and do anything stupid if I were you Marik." said Amy "You're surrounded and outnumbered so do us all a favour and give up. If you do we won't use brute force on you."

Marik just snorted like a wild bull and swiped at the five Mobians surrounding him with his arms. Amy, Bunnie, Espio, Vector and Charmy were swept away by an energy wave and they all landed on their backs. Marik leapt to his feet and charged towards Cosmo and Cream, who were standing watching and petrified with fear. The two girls finally decided to run for their lives but Marik leaped into the air and did a split-kick on them both. Cosmo and Cream were knocked over onto their sides and they dropped the Chaos Emeralds. Marik bore down on Cream, the rabbit shaking with indescribable fear. Cheese the Chao tried to stop Marik from inflicting any pain on his owner but Marik slapped him away with his metal hand. Cheese dived into the ground and groaned. Marik bared his claws and clenched his teeth. He looked like a carnivorous creature waiting to devour its prey.

"Don't think I don't remember my humiliating defeat at yours and Cosmo's hands Cream!" snarled Marik as the rabbit whimpered before him "Because I do, clear as daylight! And because you are such a nuisance, I am going to kill you first!"

"Oh please Marik, don't do it!" wailed Cream "I don't want to die!"

"And I'm supposed to care?" snorted Marik "I don't care if you don't want to die, I want you to stop living and I care about that so I'm going to kill you!"

Cream closed her eyes and looked away as Marik bore down on her even more, his claws ready to sink into her throat.

"Oh Marik please, I beg you, don't hurt Cream!" begged Cosmo "I'll do anything you want, but please don't hurt my friend!"

Marik looked away from Cream and at Cosmo. His orange eyes were like fire and his stare was colder then a vampire's.

"Are you begging for me to kill you first Cosmo?" said Marik coldly "Because it sounds suspiciously like it!"

"I don't care what you do with me Marik." said Cosmo "Just please, for the love of this world, don't hurt Cream."

"I'll hurt who I want thank you very much!" snapped Marik "You don't control what I do so I do what I want!"

"If I give you the Chaos Emeralds will you leave us alone?" asked Cosmo "Please? If you refuse, I won't let you have them."

Marik just smiled at the feeble Seedrian that was trying to make an amend with him. He decided to play along with it since he was on an emerald hunt and not a killing mission right now. Marik stepped away from Cream and advanced on Cosmo. The Seedrian tried her best not to shiver as Marik advanced on her with a smile that could make the easily scared faint in an instant. Cosmo immediately handed Marik the two Chaos Emeralds and Marik took them off her.

"Thank you Cosmo. At least you're reasonable unlike some people on this stupid planet." said Marik, his voice like ice "And as a token of appreciation, I'm going to let you live long enough until the next time you see me."

"Um…thanks?" said Cosmo weakly.

"Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to find the other Chaos Emeralds." said Marik "Do not attempt to follow me or I'll kill you now."

Then suddenly something flew up and kicked Marik in the back of the head, causing the Martian to fall onto his face and drop the Chaos Emeralds. Then the attacker scooped up the emeralds and flew back up into the air so no one could pounce on it and get them back. Amy and the others had recovered from Marik's attack and they saw Marik lying on the ground in pain from that sudden attack

from behind. Amy looked up and saw none other then Rouge the Bat flying above the ground with the two Chaos Emeralds in hand and smirking to herself.

"Well aren't I a lucky girl?" she purred to herself "I got two beautiful Chaos Emeralds at once. I'm such a lucky girl."

"Hey you!" Amy called out to the bat "Who are you?"

"Oh how rude of me, I forgot to introduce myself." said Rouge "I'm Rouge the Bat but you can call me Rouge and I've just taken out some scary guy you lot are having problems with for you and saved these two emeralds."

She motioned to the downed Marik the Martian who was just beginning to get back onto his feet. He rubbed the back of his head tenderly and grumbled under his breath.

"Well thanks a bunch Rouge." said Amy "Now can we have the emeralds back? We need them badly."

Rouge pretended to think for a moment before saying "Nah, I'll keep these gorgeous gems for myself if you don't mind. I'm a jewel thief and treasure hunter after all and any gem I find is mine."

"WHAT?" screamed Amy "Those are our emeralds you thieving little…you give them back or I'll hammer you into the ground like a nail!"

"And how are you gonna do that pinkie?" sneered Rouge "You're down there and I'm up here. You can't possibly reach me…"

Then suddenly Marik leaped into the air, snarling like a wolf and Rouge gasped in surprise.

"Those emeralds are mine!" snarled Marik "You give me those emeralds back you b…"

"Bat." said Rouge, giving Marik a sharp kick in the stomach and throwing the Martian into the ground as hard as she could "Remember that."

Marik growled louder then a pack of African Dogs as he lay on the ground, his face covered in dirt. Rouge laughed at the downed Martian only to get a sharp punch from behind by Bunnie Rabbot. Rouge dropped the emeralds and fell to the ground like a bird that had been shot by a hunter. Bunnie flew down to the ground and she caught both emeralds in her hands, leaving Rouge to crash into the ground face first.

"Ah've got the emeralds!" cried Bunnie.

"Not anymore!" crowed Marik, leaping over Bunnie like a pouncing wolf and snatching the emeralds straight out of her hands.

But he didn't keep hold of them for long. Amy walloped Marik in the back with her hammer, causing the Martian to drop the emeralds and fall onto his face. Cream grabbed the emeralds and tried to fly away but Rouge, who had recovered from Bunnie's attack earlier, flew up into the sky after the little rabbit and she grabbed Cream by the ears. Cream yelped and dropped the emeralds, only for Charmy Bee to catch them before they could land on the ground. Rouge let go of Cream and flew after Charmy but Charmy, despite being a ditz, knew how to deal with her. He tossed the emeralds over to Espio, who had climbed up a tree in order to reach the bee and the chameleon caught them. Then Charmy flew towards Rouge and punched the bat on the nose. Rouge got mad and kicked the bee in the head as hard as she could. Then she dived towards Espio but Espio tossed the emeralds over to Vector, who was down below waiting to catch them. Vector caught them and then Espio gave Rouge a ninja style kick in the cheek. Then Espio added a punch to the forehead, distracting the bat long enough for Vector to run for it. Rouge recovered from Espio's attacks and flew after Vector.

"Give me those emeralds you lumbering swamp creature!" ordered Rouge.

"No, I'll give them to Cosmo if you don't mind." said Vector, throwing the emeralds to the little Seedrian who was not far from him.

Cosmo caught the emeralds like baseballs and ran for cover while Vector gave Rouge a sharp punch in the gut. Rouge kicked Vector in the jaw but Vector was a strong crocodile so the kick didn't hurt

him much and he recovered with a snap of a jaws which caused Rouge to leap back to avoid getting bitten. Vector readied himself for another attack as Rouge charged at him again only for Marik the Martian to climb up his back, leap off his head and double-kick Rouge in the face and then dropkick her into the ground. Vector was taken-aback at the sudden helpfulness of Marik but then the Martian slashed him across the snout with his metal claws, causing the crocodile to wince in pain and grab his snout which now had three bloody cuts. With Vector and Rouge out of commission for the time being, Marik ran after Cosmo, the Seedrian still running for her life with the two Chaos Emeralds. Marik leaped at Cosmo like a pouncing tiger but Cosmo threw the emeralds at Cream and dodged Marik's leap, leaving Marik to miss and land on his hands. He screeched to a halt and ran after Cream, the rabbit taking flight so Marik couldn't catch her. But Marik swiped the air with his arm and caught Cream in mid-air with an energy wave. Cream dropped the emeralds and fell to the ground like a stone. Marik tried to catch the emeralds but Bunnie Rabbot punched him away with her metal arm and caught Cream before the young rabbit could hit the ground and severely injure herself. Amy caught the two Chaos Emeralds in her hands before they could smash to pieces.

"Are ya'll OK sugah?" asked Bunnie nicely.

"I'm fine now you saved my life." said Cream "Thank you Miss Rabbot."

"I've got the emeralds." said Amy "Now let's get outta here before Rouge and Marik recover."

"Great idea sugah." said Bunnie "Those two are gettin' on mah nerves what with them tryin' to steal our emeralds."

"Oh yeah? Well you're getting on MY nerves with you causing trouble for me!" snarled Marik, slugging Bunnie straight in the back and then elbowing her in the neck, causing Bunnie to collapse and grimace.

Amy took off almost as fast as Sonic but Marik unfortunately caught up with her due to his jet shoes and he tackled Amy in the legs with a kick, tripping the female hedgehog up and sending her falling over.

She dropped the emeralds and Marik immediately grabbed them. Marik ran off, cackling to himself with the emeralds in hand. But he didn't get far. Espio had turned invisible and he was lying in wait for Marik and now Marik ran past him, he turned visible and kicked Marik in the head. Marik landed face-first in a mud puddle and Espio grabbed the emeralds.

"Why are ninjas so annoying?" gurgled Marik from in the mud puddle.

Espio ran for it before Marik could recover but now Rouge the Bat was coming for him. Espio threw a shuriken at Rouge to keep her away but Rouge dodged the shuriken and screw-kicked Espio. The chameleon dropped the emeralds and was sent hurling in the air. He landed on a tree and bounced off, sending himself flying towards Rouge. The two kicked each other and sent each other flying backwards. Espio landed on the ground and Rouge flew after the dropped emeralds. Amy caught them first and walloped Rouge with her hammer. The bat fell onto her side and scraped her shoulder on the ground.

"That's for taking things that don't belong to you!" said Amy crossly.

"As if you knew about that." said Rouge "The emeralds don't belong to anybody so I'm not taking things that don't belong to me."

"Well I say the emeralds belong to me so there!" snapped Amy "And I am gonna pound your face in for…"

"I do wish you would shut the hell up you little brat!" snarled Marik, pile-diving Amy in the back and knocking her over.

Amy dropped the emeralds and Rouge grabbed them before anyone could notice. Amy tried to get up But Marik stomped on her back, forcing her back down. Then he grabbed Amy by the quills and started to swing her around in a circle. Rouge decided to stay and watch the show since this looked interesting. Amy became a pink and red blur around a spinning Marik as the Martian swung her around and around and around faster then the Trunchbull when she swung a kid around by her pigtails. Marik then let go of Amy and the hedgehog was sent flying into a tree branch. She hit it head first and

fell back down to the ground with a sharp thud. But Marik didn't stop there; he pounced on Amy, sat on top of her, grabbed her arm and forced it behind her back. He yanked on it as hard as he could just to make Amy scream in pain. Then he gave it a very, VERY sharp twist. Amy screamed extremely loudly, so loudly she could have woken the entire planet up if everybody was a sleep at the time. Tears of pain began to stream down Amy's cheeks as Marik continued to hurt her.

"I'm gonna enjoy this so much!" said Marik sadistically "I'm gonna be so happy when I break your arm Amy Rose!"

"Marik please stop this! You're hurting me so much!" howled Amy.

"That's why I'm doing it!" snapped Marik "You deserve this you obnoxious little…"

He lowered his head to Amy's ear and whispered an extremely dirty word that cannot be mentioned. Amy was shocked to say the least that Marik had just called her that. Then Marik let go of Amy's arm and grabbed her other arm and twisted it behind her back. Amy screeched but Marik thumped her on the head, causing her to shut up.

"Stop screaming you twerp!" snarled Marik "You're driving me nuts!"

"I can't help it!" wailed Amy, her face streaming with tears "You're hurting me!"

"You're a weakling!" said Marik cruelly "I've inflicted pain on many of my victims in the past and not one of them screams as loud as you! In fact, some of them don't scream at all and they just take the pain so surely you can!"

"I can't!" retorted Amy "You're hurting me too much for me to take it…"

Marik yanked on Amy's arm and made her yelp.

"Oh shut up and give me the Chaos Emeralds and I'll stop hurting you if it makes you feel any better!" growled Marik.

"I haven't got the stupid emeralds!" snapped Amy "You made me drop them you idiot!"

"Well if you don't have them then who does?" demanded Marik.

"I do alien boy." said Rouge coyly, waving the yellow emerald tauntingly at the Martian.

Marik immediately leapt off of Amy and lunged at Rouge like a werewolf. Rouge just flew out of the way and Marik ran past her. Then Rouge screw-kicked Marik in the back and Marik found himself eating dirt once again. Rouge flew away with her prizes, laughing like an evil sorceress. She didn't get far though. Cream and Charmy flew after the bat and they grabbed the emeralds and yanked them out of her hands. Rouge immediately kicked them both and made them drop the emeralds. The Chaos Emeralds plummeted to the ground like meteors and Rouge swooped after them like an eagle swooping for its prey. Cream and Charmy flew after Rouge in an attempt to catch the emeralds before she did but Rouge was too fast and she caught the emeralds first before they could hit the ground. But then Bunnie Rabbot took flight and gave Rouge an uppercut that made her drop the emeralds. Bunnie caught the emeralds and threw them at Cosmo before Rouge could try and get them back. Cosmo caught both emeralds and ran for it but Rouge caught her with no effort at all and tackled her in the back. The Seedrian dropped the emeralds and fell onto her side. Rouge seized the emeralds only to lose them to Vector after he snapped his jaws at Rouge and caught them both in his mouth. Vector spat them out to Espio and the chameleon caught them. Unfortunately Marik tackled him and took his legs out from underneath him, causing Espio to fall over. Before Espio could stand back up, Marik snatched the emeralds off of him and ran for it before anyone could stop him. Amy threw her hammer at Marik but the giant red and yellow hammer completely missed the Martian and Marik activated his jet shoes for a very speedy get away. Marik disappeared from sight with both of the Chaos Emeralds to boot. Amy thumped the ground in anger.

"NO!" she screeched "No, no, no, no! That creep has stolen the Chaos Emeralds and gotten away!"

"And we all know who's fault that is." said Rouge the Bat, glaring at

Amy with her ocean blue eyes angrily.

"My fault? MY FAULT?" screamed Amy, leaping to her feet and clenching her fists "How is this my fault you robber bandit? If you never showed up, none of this would have happened!"

"It's your fault in the sense that you didn't let me fly away with the emeralds." said Rouge "If you had just decided to leave well enough alone, the emeralds would have been safe and out of villain's reach but no, you had to get your band of morons to fight me for it didn't you?"

"We had this fight because we are looking for the emeralds in the name of the Royal Fighters Service!" yelled Amy "Me and Sonic have a team each and we're searching all over Mobius for the seven Chaos Emeralds just so we can keep them out of villains reach! What good would precious, powerful gems like the Chaos Emeralds be in your hands batfink?"

"I collect gems and store them away." said Rouge "That's it. If a gem has power I never use it, I only put it away on display. That's all I was gonna do with those Chaos Emeralds but since you're such a hot-head, you had to stop me saving them didn't you?"

Amy was about to argue back only to realize she was completely in the wrong and Rouge was in the right. If Rouge had gotten the emeralds and stored them away, no one would be able to use them or even find them. Amy felt like an awful fool right at this moment. She stared at the ground and scuffed her feet in guilt.

"I'm so sorry Rouge." said Amy softly "I didn't know you had good intentions for the emeralds."

"I should hope you are sweetheart." snapped Rouge "Because of your actions and your incompetence, that alien guy, whatever his name is, is getting away with two powerful gems and if we don't get them back, he might find the other five and have all seven. Who knows what he's going to do with the seven Chaos Emeralds?"

"That just begs another question." said Amy suddenly "How do you even know what a Chaos Emerald is and what it does?"

"Years of hanging around Angel Island and trying to steal the Master Emerald pays off." said Rouge "I hear all these legends the echidnas say to one another and I've heard all about the Chaos Emeralds after snooping around one day."

"Wow. You're nosey." said Amy.

Rouge scowled at Amy and decided to overlook the pink hedgehog's comment.

"I've heard that if you collect all seven Chaos Emeralds a miracle's supposed to happen, whatever that miracle is." said Rouge "And that miracle could spell doom on us all if that alien guy ever finds out what it is. I have to get those emeralds back."

"Actually, "we" are going to get those emeralds back." corrected Amy "Because you cannot take on Marik by yourself. Marik can hold his own against Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, me, Cream and Cosmo altogether so you'll be no contest for him."

"We'll see about that." said Rouge crossly "But I'll take you up on your offer since it's always better to work in teams then alone to stop somebody."

"Then its settled." said Amy "We'll work together to stop Marik and get the Chaos Emeralds back. I get to keep one and you get to keep the other so there are no arguments over who gets the emeralds."

Yeah right! thought Rouge. She was not leaving a valuable gem in Amy's incapable hands! She was having both emeralds for herself and that was that! Still, she had to play nice for now and then strike when the time was right.

"Sounds good." said Rouge "Now how do we catch this Marik or whatever his name is and get the emeralds back?"

"Um…we track him down and…we um…catch him I guess." said Amy, even though she had no plan whatsoever "I have a tracker that's used to locate Chaos Emeralds and since Marik has the two emeralds, we'll be able to track him down no matter where he goes."

"I see honey." said Rouge snidely "Any plan on how to stop him?"

"Um…no." said Amy sadly "No plan."

"The only logical plan right now is to beat him into the dirt and make off with the emeralds." said Espio "That's the best we can do really."

"But Marik has amazing stamina and endurance." said Cosmo "We'll be fighting him for hours before he finally gives into us and even then, we might not be able to keep a fight up for that long."

"In that case, we need a quicker way of defeating him." said Espio "But what?"

"Hey I've just been struck by an idea!" said Amy suddenly.

"Oh great, pinkie has an idea." scoffed Rouge "This better be a good plan."

"It is Rouge and it'll work so shut up and listen!" retorted Amy "Everyone, gather round while I tell you the plan."

The Mobians gathered around and Amy told them her plan.

"We could go to the Lake of Rings and get a ring." explained Amy "Then we could lie to Marik saying its more powerful then all seven Chaos Emeralds and trick him into trading the emeralds with us."

"Ah don't mean to criticize yo' plan sugah-girl but are ya'll sure that's a clever idea?" asked Bunnie "Ah mean, we're giving Marik a powerful item so we're no better off then before."

"We are better off then before." said Amy "Because magic rings don't have as much power as a Chaos Emerald and they have a negative effect on evil people so Marik is in for a shock when he tries to use the ring."

"Ah see." said Bunnie "But we have another problem. Those rings come out every twenty-four hours and we have no way of tellin' when a ring's gonna come out. For all we know, the ring's already come up and we've missed it or we're hours away before the ring comes out."

Amy looked at the tracker. For some strange reason, Tails installed

a clock on the tracker so Amy could tell what time it was by looking at the tracker. The tracker said 14:53 which meant it was twelve minutes to three o'clock.

"It's almost three o' clock." said Amy "According to a guide-book on the Lake of Rings I read in a library once, the rings come out every three o' clock in the afternoon so we've got seven minutes before a ring comes up."

"Well we'd best find that lake before three then." said Cream "Or we'll miss the ring."

That was all they needed to know. The whole group ran for it and began looking for the Lake of Rings. Luckily for Amy, the tracker picked up other traces of concentrated energy then just the Chaos Emeralds so she'd be able to find the Lake of Rings in a jiffy with the tracker.

After about six minutes of searching, Amy finally picked up the Lake of Rings on the tracker. It was just to the north-right of where they were and not a long way away either so they would be there in a moment. They ran as fast as they could, pushing through any bush that was in their way. Amy scanned the tracker again for the time. 14:58. They only had two seconds to get to the lake before the ring came up. They had a good distance from the lake before they could get there. They'd never make it in time! There was only one thing for it.

"Bunnie, you go ahead!" cried Amy "You're fast enough to get there before the ring submerges!"

"Okay sugah!" said Bunnie, activating her jet feet.

The Rabbot took off into the air and she flew in the direction Amy pointed at which was straight ahead since according to the tracker, the lake was ahead of them. Bunnie could see the lake from up where she was and she flew towards it as fast as her jets would let her. The ring of today had only just come up and it hovered there for a second or two. Unfortunately, rings never stayed up for long and Bunnie knew it. She dived towards the ring in a desperate attempt to get it before it submerged under the water. She was a fraction too

late and the ring just began to go back down into the water. Frantically, Bunnie's robot arm extended and reached out for the ring. Both the ring and Bunnie's robot hand went under the water. Bunnie had to grab it before it reached the bottom where it would disappear and not come back up until the next day. Luckily for her, she managed to seize the ring just as it was halfway down to the bottom of the lake. Bunnie pulled the ring out of the water and held it up to her beautiful face. She beamed like a sunrise.

"Phew! Ah almost lose the durn thing." she sighed with relief.

The others had finally made it to the lake and they saw Bunnie hovering in the air above the lake. She turned and looked down at her friends and she waved the ring at them. Amy smiled with relief.

"You got it Bunnie!" she exclaimed "And here's me thinking we'd be too late!"

"We almost were!" gasped Bunnie "It went back under but ah extended mah arm and caught the little ring before it could make it back to the bottom!"

"Those robot limbs of yours really are helpful aren't they Miss Rabbot?" said Cream kindly.

"They sure are sugah-bun." said Bunnie, flexing her robot arm "And ah'm proud of them!"

"Now we have the ring, we need to find that stupid Martian." said Vector "And goodness knows where he is now."

Amy quickly glanced at the tracker. The Chaos Emeralds Marik had with him had been detected on the outskirts of the forest just two hundred and fifty feet from where they were now and they didn't appear to be moving.

"The tracker's picked them up." said Amy "He's that way. Let's go!"

The group charged off to the left and ran as fast as they could. They had to catch Marik before he was on the move again and hopefully, the Martian would sit around long enough for that.

As for Marik, he had escaped the forest and decided to sit down and rest for a moment before going somewhere else to look for another Chaos Emerald. It only just occurred to him how much his body was paining him now. He had all the injuries from his previous battle and more injuries from the mad scuffle for the Chaos Emeralds. One injury that especially hadn't stopped hurting since his fights was the dog bite he'd received from Wilson on the pirate's ship. He rolled his sleeve up and looked at his arm. The wound had begun healing but it still hurt him a little so he rubbed it tenderly. Then he took off his helmet and rubbed his throbbing head. His head especially hurt from all the bangs on the head he'd received from his most recent battles. His helmet had amazingly withstood all the impacts although there were some paint chips and scratches everywhere. Marik scowled and he put the spiked helmet back on his head.

"Those Mobians are such a pain." he moaned "I do wish my glorious parents and my uncle were here." he added "They'd be able to help me out dearly and we'd wipe out those stupid Mobians in no time."

He looked at his metal hand and scowled at the broken voltage compactor, the little orb in the palm of his metal hand.

"And I especially wish this wasn't broken again." said Marik "I love electrocuting people. I'm gonna have to give this hand a new design so my voltage compactor won't be so easily broken in battle. Before I go searching for Chaos Emeralds, I'm going to have to find a toolbox so I can fix it again."

He wiggled his sharp, glistening claws and lowered his hands. He stared up at the clouds and thought about how horrible the blue sky looked.

"Why do skies have to be blue on most planets?" he wondered "They look much better when they're red and once I squash this planet flat, I'll turn this sky red."

He began to picture Mobius with a red sky in his mind and the very foul thought made him smile widely. Then suddenly he was interrupted from his "lovely" visions by the sound of approaching feet. A lot of approaching feet. Marik grumbled like an old man who's

been woken up too early.

"Not more people bothering me!" he groaned "Can't I have any peace around here?"

He got to his feet and turned to face the people coming to him only to see it was Amy Rose and her team mates running towards him. Marik almost did a somersault in shock as the Mobians ran up to him.

"What in the name of Deimos*******?" he cried "How did you finks manage to find me?"

"We have our ways." said Amy "Now don't you dare try to run away Marik or we'll do our worst on you."

Marik scoffed at the annoying pink hedgehog with the bad temper.

"What's the worst you could possibly do to me scum-face?" he sneered "I can do worse then all eight of you mongrels combined!"

"I know that." said Amy in a huff "Which is why we haven't come here to fight. We've come here to barter."

Marik raised an eyebrow suspiciously at Amy.

"Barter?" he said "What piffle is this you're talking about? Why would you want to barter with me?"

"Because we've come to realize that you're the superior being and we cannot beat you." said Amy "So we've got you this."

Bunnie handed Amy the gleaming golden ring and Amy showed it to Marik. Marik stared at the ring. He recognized that ring from when Cosmo had one and he broke it before she could use it on him********.

"You decided to just give me a ring?" snorted Marik "What use do I have for girlish items like that?"

"It's a magical ring Marik." explained Amy "And it's much more powerful then all seven Chaos Emeralds combined."

"It…is?" gasped Marik, his mouth watering for some reason.

"Yes it is." said Amy "And since you deserve the most powerful items in the world, we're willing to trade you this powerful ring, for those pathetic Chaos Emeralds. With the ring, you'll be able to smash us all and the Chaos Emeralds would have no chance against it."

Marik thought for a moment. The idea of having a more powerful item then the ones he already had was a very tempting offer but there must be some catch to this. Amy wouldn't just hand him an insanely powerful item completely out of generosity, this had to be a trick. But Marik knew how to weasel his way out of cunning plans and he knew how to weasel his way out of this one.

"OK Amy." purred Marik sinisterly "I shall take you up on your generous offer. I do hope your precious Sonic the Hedgehog won't be too mad at you for helping me doom this entire world."

"Oh Sonic won't care anymore." lied Amy "He knows you're too powerful for him to stop anyway."

Amy and Marik stepped forward to each other. Amy held the ring out for Marik to take and Marik held the Chaos Emeralds out for Amy to take. They slowly eased towards each other, making sure neither one was plotting an attack to throw each other off guard. Marik grabbed the ring and Amy grabbed the Chaos Emeralds. Then suddenly Marik slugged Amy in the stomach with the hand holding the Chaos Emeralds! Amy gasped ever so loudly as all the air in her lungs began to escape her. The Mobians watching this whole thing were surprised at Marik's sudden attack and Amy collapsed onto her knees, clutching her aching stomach. Marik roared with laughter as he held the two Chaos Emeralds and the magic ring above his head.

"When will you squabs realize that you can't trust me for a second?" sneered Marik "Did you honestly think even for a minute that I'd let you have the Chaos Emeralds? I don't care if their power is inferior to this ring, if I have this ring AND the Chaos Emeralds all at once, I'll be a god amongst all creatures with all the power in the universe! No one will match my power!"

"Marik please, you mustn't use that ring!" begged Amy, trying to get back up.

"And why shouldn't I?" sneered Marik "What harm can it do to me?"

Just as he said that, the ring began to glow a bright golden gleam in Marik's hand. Marik looked at the ring in wonder and then suddenly the ring's power began to surge up his body like an electrical current. When heroes use the ring's power, they get a power boost that lasts momentarily but when a villain tries to use it, it hurts them very, very badly and Marik soon found that out. Marik screamed at the top of his voice as the ring's power began to surge up and down his body as if he was a lightening rod. Then the ring finally stopped hurting Marik and it powered down. Marik collapsed in a heap and he passed out. The ring was useless now all its power had been used to put Marik down for a moment. The Mobians were surprised at this sudden act and they didn't know what to say.

"What just happened?" asked Cream.

"Simple." said Amy "According to a guide on the Lake of Rings I've read, when evil people try to use the ring's power, it knocks them out cold because only good people can use those magical rings."

"I guess that's how the ring turned Sonic back to normal when his mind was corrupted by Marik's Energy Diamond*********." suggested Cosmo.

"Yeah probably." said Amy "Power rings are fascinating things aren't they? Pity you can only use them once."

While the girls were talking, Rouge had sneaked like a serpent away from the group and picked up the two Chaos Emeralds. Now she had her beautiful gems, she flew away. Unfortunately, Amy spotted her.

"OY! Rouge! You get back here right now!" she screeched "We had a deal!"

"Tough." said Rouge "I'm not leaving the Chaos Emeralds in your care pinkie. Both these pretty gems will be much safer in my hands

then yours."

And with that Rouge continued flying away.

"Should ah catch the double-crossin' bat sugah?" asked Bunnie.

"No leave her to it." said Amy grimly "She'll put them in a good place so they won't be of any trouble to anyone else."

"Yeah, but we're back to square one." said Charmy glumly "No Chaos Emeralds for us unfortunately."

"We'll get the others." said Amy "There's five more to find so we've still got an emerald or two to find."

Unfortunately for Amy, Marik finally came to from the ring's magic attack and he pounced on Amy, snarling like a raptor. Amy screamed at Marik as she was tackled onto the ground. His eyes were red with rage and he had froth around his mouth. He was so angry I can't even put it into words how angry he is! Everybody else immediately ran over to Amy's aid but Marik leapt off Amy and swiped the air with his arms. Team Chaotix were both smacked in the face by an energy wave and the three Mobians collapsed to the ground. Cream and Cosmo kept their distance from the insane Martian and Bunnie tried to attack Marik with a metal punch from her robot arm. Marik dodged the blow and gave Bunnie an uppercut. Then he yanked violently on the rabbit's ears and made her scream. Then he lifted Bunnie off the ground with one arm holding her by the shirt and he threw her away as hard as he could. Bunnie soared through the air and landed back in the forest. Cream and Cosmo took cover before Marik could think about attacking them and Amy tried to run for it but Marik caught up with her effortlessly and leapt on her. Amy was tackled to the ground and she found herself staring directly into Marik's ferocious eyes. Marik roared at her and Amy cowered against the ground. Her heart was pounding so hard against her ribcage she thought it was about to burst its way out of her chest. Marik raised his arm and savagely slashed Amy right across the cheek with his metal claws. Amy screamed as a wave of pain swept through her cheek and blood began to stream down it from the fresh cuts caused by Marik's claws. But Marik didn't stop there. He punched Amy in the face as hard as he possibly could,

then he stomped on her stomach the hardest he could, then he flipped her onto her front and stomped on her back just as hard and then he picked her up by the arms and tossed her into the air like a rag doll. Amy hurled through the air like a kicked football and she landed very painfully on her side. She came to a halt near a rock as large as an SUV. Marik ran up to Amy like a wild animal and Amy crawled backwards in right. Her back came against the rock and she got up on to her feet. She pressed her back hard against the rock and whimpered. She was trapped. Marik loomed above her, drips of saliva dripping from his jaws and his eyes burning with rage. His claws dripped with blood from when he slashed Amy and he licked the claws clean. He glared at Amy like a swamp creature waiting to lunge up and grab its prey and bring it back down to its watery, swampy home. Amy shook like a person standing in the middle of the Arctic with no clothes on.

"You vacuous, repulsive, malicious, revolting, obnoxious, disgusting little stain on the face of this tainted, misguided world!" snarled the Martian "You tricked me! That ring hurt me dearly and you've caused me to lose my Chaos Emeralds! You are going to die horribly for this you smothering little ~&!$*!"

"Oh Marik please! I beg you! Please don't do this!" wailed Amy "Please let me live!"

"Shut up! Your screechy, feminine voice is driving me crazy so be quiet while I rip your internal organs out and decorate the trees with them!" snarled Marik, raising his claws and preparing to plunge them into the pink hedgehog.

"No! Please! No!" begged Amy, her eyes shrinking down to tiny little pupils of fear.

Marik ignored her. He was much too angry with Amy to listen to a word she said now. He raised his claws high above his head and aimed them at Amy's chest. Amy closed her eyes tightly and looked away from Marik as the Martian prepared to end her life, her eyes streamed with tears of fright. Cream and Cosmo were watching the whole thing and they felt afraid for Amy. They knew they had no chance against Marik but Amy would die if they didn't step in to help her so they emerged from their hiding place and ran up to Marik.

Marik was just about to plunge his claws into Amy's pounding chest until Cream grabbed him by his jacket collar and hoisted him off the ground. She flew up into the air and carried Marik away from Amy. Marik swung his arms about madder then a five year old child having a tantrum as Cream carried him away. Amy opened her eyes and saw Marik being carried away by Cream. She sighed with relief and panted heavily with her hand over her chest. I cannot put into words how thankful to Cream Amy is right now. She was close to a very violent death and Cream had saved her life. As for the little rabbit, she stopped flying up and she actually LET GO of Marik in mid air! Marik fell to the ground and he crashed into the ground front first. He lay on the ground with his face in the dirt and his arms and legs spread out as if he was doing a star jump. The Martian appeared to be out cold from that impact. Cream flew down to the ground and she dusted her hands off.

"I did it. I saved Miss Rose!" she said happily "Did you see that Cheese?"

"Chao, Chao!" piped Cheese, dancing in midair with excitement.

Then suddenly, Cream was hoisted off her feet and grasped in a bear hug by none other then her best friend Amy Rose.

"Oh Cream thank you so much!" Amy squealed "I thought I was gonna die at the hands of Marik until you saved me!"

"You're very welcome Miss Rose." said Cream "It was my pleasure."

"I want to get out of here before Marik gets up." said Cosmo "I can't stand being around that Martian anymore."

"I'm getting out of here too." said Amy "But we need to wait for Team Chaotix and Bunnie to recover from Marik's attacks first."

The minute she finished that sentence, Espio, Vector and Charmy picked themselves up and got to their feet and Bunnie Rabbot emerged from the forest, groaning like a ghoul.

"What in the who-ha happened?" she slurred.

"That Marik certainly isn't a force to be reckoned with." said Espio,

rubbing his yellow horn at the end of his nose "He's tougher then I thought."

"I agree." said Vector "He looked weak to me when I saw his pic in the papers."

"I hope I never see that creep again!" said Charmy "He's no fun to be around and he's nasty!"

"Come on guys!" cried Amy "We're fleeing for it before Evil Peace-Hating Von Sadistic wakes up!"

"You don't have to tell us twice!" cried Vector, immediately running for it with Espio running after him at ninja speed and Charmy flying after them as fast as his wings would let him.

"I'm not staying near that evil guy!" squeaked Charmy.

Bunnie ran after them as well and the entire team took off down the path and away from Marik. The moment the Mobians had escaped the Martian and vanished into the horizon, Marik's arm twitched and lifted up. He pushed the upper part of his body up and lifted his face out of the dirt. He shook all the dust and dirt off his face and he sat up and stretched. He rubbed some dirt that was still on his face off with his organic hand and he surveyed his surroundings. He was completely alone on the path on the outskirts of the Great Forest. Instead of throwing a fit over his failure, he sat there and remained calm. He crossed his legs and put his hands together. He closed his eyes and began to meditate, his breathing becoming a little softer.

"What a disappointing day this has been." Marik mumbled to himself "I lose two of my well earned Chaos Emeralds and I get sorely defeated by a pink germ and her band of misfit dirt bags. Oh well, getting angry isn't going to make things better. I need a better strategy and a good meditation will help me relax long enough to think."

You see, that's why Martians meditate. A relaxed mind thinks better then an enraged mind and Marik knew that well so if he needed a plan but he was angry, he meditated to calm himself down so he could think better and he was so angry over his failure today, he

needed a good long meditation to relax his mind long enough to think. As Marik sat there and silently hummed to himself, making weird hand signals with his hands. He wondered where the next Chaos Emerald would be found and who would find it…

A few minutes later, the Mobians had left the Great Forest behind and they were setting off to a new location to look for a Chaos Emerald. Amy had the tracker in hand and she kept glancing at it to see where they had to look. She had a large plaster on her cheek to cover up her wounds from earlier. As the Mobians began their new search, they began to talk amongst each other.

"What a crazy day this has been." said Vector "We have a mad scuffle over two Chaos Emeralds and in the end, Rouge the Bat won and made off with them."

"At least she'll keep them out of harm's reach." said Espio "Jewel thieves never use jewels for evil purposes. They only use them for show and to increase their wealth."

"You're so right Espio." said Vector "So this isn't a total loss really."

"But we still don't have any Chaos Emeralds and we've been searching for them all day." whined Charmy "I wanna find a Chaos Emerald and keep it for myself!"

"Charmy be quiet." said Espio.

"OK." said Charmy.

As for Amy, she and the girls were ahead of the boys and chatting to each other.

"Ah hope ah never see that hideous, sadistic Martian ever again!" said Bunnie "He's creepier then Metal Sonic!"

"He's not only creepier then Metal Sonic, he's worse then Metal Sonic." said Cosmo grimly "Marik is a demon and he likes to blow things up. We've been lucky so far that he hasn't blown anything up yet."

"We've been lucky to survive Mr. Marik's encounters." said Cream "He's come ever so close to killing us after all. I wonder why he didn't electrocute anybody when we had that fight."

"Maybe his voltage compactor is broken again." said Cosmo "Pity it's not that helpful to us since Marik is still powerful without the ability to shock people."

"Can we shut up about Marik now and focus on our mission?" said Amy without looking back "I don't wanna hear another word about that deranged maniac for the rest of the day."

The girls shut up and decided to say something else.

"Ah wonder how sugah hog and his team are doin'?" said Bunnie Rabbot.

"They'll be doing fine Bunnie." said Amy "They'll be doing fine…"

If only she was right. Sonic and his team were about to get a shock big enough to knock them dead on their search for the next Chaos Emerald…

Footnotes:

***See Story 37**

**** See the ever epic Story 20 for a fight you'll never forget**

*****See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 2* for probably the most epic fail in villain history!**

******Phobos is one of two moons of Mars**

*******Marik tricked Tails into helping him escape from prison in Story 34**

******** Tails broke Marik's voltage compactor with a revolver in Story 37**

********* Deimos is the second Moon of Mars**

********** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 2* again**

*********** See Story 25 (I think I've set a record of footnotes here!)**

Now that's what I call a mad scuffle! So Rouge has two Chaos Emeralds, Amy has none and Marik has none. Who's going to get the next Chaos Emerald? Join me next time as the hunt continues...Reviews are welcome.

Hidden Agents

Story 40: Hidden Agents

Things had been busy for Dr. Eggman in Robotropolis as he worked his socks off trying to mend Metal Sonic from his injuries inflicted on him by Knuckles during that mad scuffle for the green Chaos Emerald*. All the while he had been working on Metal Sonic he had not once stopped for a rest. He was too eager to get the robot Sonic duplicate into battle so he didn't stop, he kept up his work for hours on end and the hours ticked by like lightening rods. It was already the next morning by the time he'd fixed Metal Sonic and he had fallen asleep before he could put him back online. Eggman slept the morning away and by the time he woke up, it was almost noon. Eggman woke up added some finishing touches to Metal Sonic and then he booted the robot duplicate back online. Metal Sonic's pitch black visor lit up with two red optics that showed no emotion of any kind. Metal Sonic still didn't have the ability to speak since Eggman preferred Metal Sonic without a voice so he remained as silent as a mouse. Eggman smiled at the newly fixed and online Metal Sonic standing before him awaiting orders.

"Ah, isn't this a beauty?" he said to himself "Metal Sonic, all fixed up from his ordeal with Knuckles and ready for action! I can't wait to send him out again!"

Metal Sonic saluted his master and stood to attention, waiting for his first priority.

"Now Metal Sonic I know you've got a killer desire right now but you'll have to be patient my friend." said Dr. Eggman "We must wait until my agent grabs a Chaos Emerald and then we'll pop out of nowhere and blast them to smithereens!"

Metal Sonic nodded understandably.

"I can't wait to see Sonic's face when my agent strikes upon him." said Dr. Eggman evilly, rubbing his hands "It'll be a wonderful sight for me to behold I bet! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Master?" came the posh accented voice of his snivelling servant bot Alonzo.

"Yes Alonzo?" asked Dr. Eggman, wondering what his sidekick had to say this time.

"I've got word from our agent master." said Dr. Eggman "Sonic and his friends are searching through Kingdom Valley for a Chaos Emerald and they're near the abandoned palace."

"Excellent!" bellowed Dr. Eggman "Now I know where Sonic is hiding, I can send a surprise attack to slow him down a little and wear him out so Metal Sonic can defeat him swiftly and quickly when the time is right!"

"I don't see why we have to wait until that stupid Automaton reports the emerald's location before Metal Sonic attacks." said Alonzo grimly.

"Of course you wouldn't you moronic piece of metal." retorted Dr. Eggman "The reason why is because Metal Sonic is my best robot and he'll keep Sonic and friends at bay long enough for me to escape with the emerald! Get it?"

"Yes master." said Alonzo.

"Good." said Dr. Eggman "Now let's keep quiet and watch the show shall we? It's bound to be entertaining."

He switched a monitor on and sat down in a chair and stared at it, waiting for the fun to begin. Alonzo pressed a button on the control pad and a squad of Eggman robots marched out of Eggman's headquarters in single file. They marched out of the gates of Robotropolis and took flight with their jet packs. They set their courses for Kingdom Valley, the very place Sonic and friends were searching for the next Chaos Emerald. Once they arrived, Sonic and friends would be in for a surprise and they would have no idea on how the robots ever knew where they were. Eggman was looking forward to this battle and he stared longingly at the screen, eagerly awaiting the squad's arrival at Kingdom Valley…

"One thing I always wonder is why of all the places on Mobius, Kingdom Valley has the most beautiful sights?" said fellow fighter Mandy Mouse, standing on the edge of a bridge that had fallen apart and admiring the spectacular view Kingdom Valley had on offer.

Kingdom Valley was full of water, being as it was part of the City of Water Soleanna, and full of ruins since the kingdom was no longer occupied by anybody these days.

"Come on Mandy, we're here to find a Chaos Emerald, not sight-see!" called out fellow fighter Geoffrey St. John the skunk.

"OK I'm coming." moaned Mandy "Typical boys, they never appreciate the beauty of the world do they?"

She walked away from the bridge and ran off after the boys who were further up ahead, looking for the Chaos Emeralds. Sonic the Hedgehog and friends had just rested themselves up from their earlier adventure** and now they had chosen to search through Kingdom Valley to look for the next Chaos Emerald since Knuckles the Echidna had a strange feeling that the next Chaos Emerald was there. Sonic was sceptical since he didn't really like water but missions come first so he decided to just bear it and try not to look down at the water. Knuckles held the blue Chaos Emerald in front of himself to see if it was glowing any brighter then before. So far, the emerald had not glowed any brighter since they'd been here. As they walked on over bridges and short cliff tops, Sonic surveyed his surroundings to make sure that no one was around, waiting to attack them from nowhere. Their cliff top walk brought them near a castle with a hole in the wall.

"Hey Knuckles you see that castle there?" asked Sonic pointing at it.

"Yeah." said Knuckles.

"That's where me and Metal Sonic thought when we had that worldwide showdown the other day***." said Sonic "Kingdom Valley was the very first place we fought in before we went on to the other places."

"I see." said Knuckles "I never thought to ask you this, why did you

have that worldwide showdown with him anyway? Was it a race or something?"

"It was an attempt to wear Metal Sonic down but it didn't work since his battery can go on for years or so he says." explained Sonic.

"A battery that goes on for years?" repeated Knuckles "That Eggman really must have been putting his head into it when he was building that thing hasn't he?"

"I could say the same thing Knuckie." said Sonic as they made it to the end of the bridge and onto solid ground.

As for Sonic's best friend and sidekick Tails the twin-tailed fox, he was flying in the air keeping an eye out for danger, his twin-tails spinning around like a helicopter's rotor blades. Tails was the best at keeping an eye out since he could fly up in the air and see for miles around so if any sign of danger appeared from nowhere, Tails would be the first to spot it. While keeping a look out, Tails admired the lovely view he had from up where he was. Kingdom Valley was one of the most beautiful places on Mobius after all so Tails had to make the most of the view while he had it because the Mobians wouldn't be here forever, they were only here to find a Chaos Emerald and once they'd found it; they would be out of here.

"I wonder what Kingdom Valley used to be like before it got abandoned?" Tails mused to himself as he remained airborne "I bet it was a lush, lively looking kingdom with fancy looking palaces and rich people. I wonder why this place is abandoned anyway."

Why Kingdom Valley no longer had any occupants was a mystery to anybody visiting the place. No one knew why Kingdom Valley was abandoned. Many had theories on why Kingdom Valley had no occupants anymore such as a terrible disaster that occurred in the valley and forced people to leave the valley for their own safety or a disease that swept through the valley and killed everybody living in the valley and no one wanted to live here since. Those were only theories after all, no one knew why Kingdom Valley was no longer occupied by any body and its buildings had been reduced to empty ruin. Tails suddenly snapped out of his thoughts and wonderings and saw something coming. It was a fleet of flying robots! These

robots were equipped with jetpacks for flight and many an arsenal of weapons ranging from Gatling guns to missile launchers. They were all Eggman robots of course and the arrival of a fleet of Eggman robots made Tails wonder what had suddenly made Eggman send them here and how they knew where he, Sonic and friends were. Now was not the time to start wondering though, Tails flew back down to the ground at top speed and landed behind Sonic. Sonic jumped in surprise as the sound of feet landing on the ground suddenly appeared from behind.

"Whoa Tails! Are you trying to scare me to death?" squeaked Sonic.

"Sorry." said Tails "It's just that there's an army of Eggman robots coming our way!"

He pointed at the oncoming fleet of flying robots that continued coming towards them with their guns blazing. Sonic was slightly taken aback by the sudden arrival of a fleet of Eggman robots but he shook it off. Smashing Eggman robots was what he did best and he would smash this squad just as easily. Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy all prepared to start fighting. They bent down in battle ready stances and Geoffrey loaded his crossbow, ready to fire it at an unsuspecting robot. The squad of robots aimed their weapons at the Mobians and they opened fire. The sky began to rain with bullets, laser blasts and missiles all coming towards Sonic and friends. Sonic leaped into the air and landed on a missile, sending it flying into another missile and causing a massive explosion in midair. Sonic landed back down on the ground as a giant ball of fire and smoke spread through the sky, blocking his view of the robots. The robots stopped in their tracks and waited for the explosion to die down so they could attack again. The huge ball of fire and smoke slowly drifted away, leaving a clear view of the Mobians down below. The robots charged down at the Mobians at the speed of a diving eagle. Sonic leaped up into the air again and spin-dash a robot in the back, breaking the jetpack off its back and causing the robot to fall and crash against the cliff-top. It fell down to the water below in pieces with a chorus of splashes. Sonic laughed at the robot's defeat. Two robots flew towards Knuckles with their Gatling guns itching to fire at the echidna. Knuckles leaped up at the robots and punched them so hard he smashed them to pieces.

Another robot fired a missile at Knuckles but Knuckles dodged the missile and punched the robot in the centre. His fist went right through the robot's armour and the robot was dead in a minute. Four robots surrounded Geoffrey and they began shooting at him but the skunk dodged the shots and fired a dart at each of them. The darts were all EMP darts and the four robots were knocked out in an instant. The robots collapsed on the ground and Geoffrey stomped on their heads just to destroy them and kill the robots before they could get back up. Wilson and Mandy stood back to back with a bunch of robots pointing their guns at the dog and mouse. They all fired at Wilson and Mandy but the dog and mouse jumped out of their way and the robots accidentally shot each other to pieces. The robots collapsed in a heap of arms and legs and heads. Wilson and Mandy gave each other a high five. Three more robots came soaring towards Wilson and Mandy but the two Mobians were ready for them. They leaped up and kicked two of the robots in the face and they both accidentally collided with the third. The three robots crashed into the ground and Wilson and Mandy shoved them off the edge and into the water. Tails flew around in the air with some robots chasing him and shooting at him. Tails flew down towards the ground and just like he'd hoped, the robots followed him. Tails flew dangerously close to the ground, so close he was only a few centimetres above it. The robots weren't so lucky though. The moment they tried to follow Tails, the first robot crashed into the ground and the other robots collided with it and they all fell over each other like a falling tower of blocks. The robots rolled across the ground and every hit they had as they rolled tore a limb or two off. When the robots came to a halt, they had all been reduced to nothing more then a torso and a head. Tails laughed at the robot's failure and landed on his feet. As for Sonic, he spin-dashed the remaining robots into tiny little pieces and kicked them all into the water. The squad of robots had been defeated. Sonic dusted his hands off and smirked to himself.

"That Eggman really is losing his touch isn't he?" he sneered "That was one of the easiest victories ever!"

"I know but don't you think it's a little strange that this squad of robots just appeared without warning and they suddenly happened to know where we are?" asked Tails "I mean Eggman's been

spending all his time presumably fixing Metal Sonic from his injuries so he can't possibly know where we are right now."

"That is kinda strange." said Sonic "Maybe Eggman just sent this squad out and they coincidentally happened to come across us."

Geoffrey didn't seem that convinced. He had his own suspicions on this whole matter but he didn't bother jumping to conclusions yet as there was no evidence as to if it was what he was thinking it was.

"If this keeps happening then we'll have to keep our senses more alert then before." said Sonic "And we'll have to find out how this keeps happening."

Knuckles glanced at the blue Chaos Emerald he held in his hand. The emerald glowed slightly.

"I wouldn't be too surprised if the robots are after this Chaos Emerald." said Knuckles "But Dr. Eggman hasn't been in action recently so he can't possibly know that we have a Chaos Emerald."

"Don't doubt old egg-head Knuckles." said Wilson "He finds out a lot of things somehow and we never know how he does it. Maybe it's all those computer monitors he has in his base."

"Maybe it is." said Knuckles.

"Let's get going then team!" cried Sonic "If we stand here talking to ourselves Dr. Eggman may catch us again!"

Everybody did not wait to be asked twice. They immediately began walking off again with Knuckles glancing at the Chaos Emerald to see if they were getting any closer to it. As they continued their trek through Kingdom Valley, Sonic kept wondering to himself on what Eggman's up to at this time and what was he possibly planning to do. Hopefully they'd be ready for it if whatever Eggman's planning struck at them.

Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman had watched the whole thing with interest and he wasn't pleased to see that his squad of robots had been

taken down so quickly and easily.

"Those were some of my best robots." he said to himself "How did they defeat them so easily?"

"Sonic and his bratty crew are obviously getting better at their stuff sir." said Alonzo "How that is I don't know but those Mobians sure are a handful aren't they?"

"They certainly are Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman "But I'll send out some better robots to attack them. Those robots I'm going to send will defiantly wear them out for a while won't they? And if not, I'll keep sending robots out until Sonic and his friends are too worn out to fight!"

"But if they're too tired to fight, won't they be too tired to find the Chaos Emerald?" asked Alonzo "You didn't think of that one did you?"

"Of course I have." lied Dr. Eggman, even though he clearly hadn't "I'll just send my attacks at certain times so they have time to rest up in between and then they'll hopefully find a Chaos Emerald so my Automaton can steal it off them."

"You're smarter then I thought master." said Alonzo, slightly taken aback at Eggman's sudden statement.

"I have an IQ of 300 after all." said Dr. Eggman "Of course I'm smart! Now let's send the next squad of robots to attack shall we?"

"Certainly master." said Alonzo "We know where those worms are thanks to our Automaton agent so no matter where they go, we'll always know where they are."

He pulled a lever on the control pad.

The next few hours had been strange indeed for Sonic and friends. Squads of Eggman robots had been popping out of nowhere and attacking them. The Mobians were baffled at the sudden arrival at all these attack squads and how they seemed to constantly know

where they were and just pop up like that and start firing. The squads were getting stronger and stronger every time Eggman sent one and Sonic realized this as he and his friends kept fighting them off. The last squad they had just thrashed was so strong that Sonic and friends took a total of thirty minutes to finally defeat it! After Sonic had spin-dashed the last robot into tiny little pieces, he panted heavily. He was well and truly worn out after that battle and his friends were just as worn out as he was, maybe a little more since Sonic had a tremendous amount of stamina so he doesn't get tired as easily as the others.

"Whew! Those robot squads are getting better as we keep on fighting them!" gasped Sonic "That Eggman sure isn't fooling around with us today is he?"

"I dunno about you blokes but this is getting too weird." said Geoffrey St. John, loading his crossbow for the next time a fight started "It's almost like Dr. Eggman and his goons know our every move before we make it. I mean don't you think it's far too coincidental for seven squads of robots to suddenly know where we are even though Eggman probably doesn't know where we are and then somehow know where we're going and when they should pop out and attack us?"

"Maybe Eggman's sharper then we thought he was." said Mandy "Or he's spying on us somehow."

"And that somehow is making me shiver with suspicion." said Geoffrey "I haven't seen any spy probes or whatever it is the bloke uses to spy on people around so it can't be that."

"Maybe there is a probe hiding somewhere." suggested Tails, staring at the destroyed, smoking remains of Eggman's latest squad "It's just so well hidden we can't see it anywhere. It might be camouflaged for all we know."

Geoffrey shook his head disagreeably.

"That's a good theory mate but I don't think its that." said the skunk.

"What do you think it is like Geoffrey?" asked Sonic "If you don't

think it's spy probes then what do you think it is that's making Eggman sharper then normal?"

Geoffrey fell into a solemn silence for a moment. He stared at the ground below his feet and rubbed the back of his head casually. He sighed slightly and turned to his friend.

"I don't mean to jump to accusations but…" Geoffrey fell silent and bent down beside Sonic and whispered in his ear.

"I think there's a traitor amongst the Royal Fighters."

Sonic stared at Geoffrey as if the skunk had gone completely off his rocker.

"Get away with you Geoffrey!" said Sonic, frowning at the skunk "Traitor amongst the Royal Fighters? What the heck makes you think that?"

"I once learned a lesson a long time ago." said Geoffrey "And that lesson is you can't trust anybody. Just because everybody seems innocent and heroic it doesn't mean they won't turn bad on us any time soon."

"I'm totally in agreement there." said Wilson "Me and Mandy still can't forget about the time General Bostock from Grand Metropolis sold us out to the Mistress of Darkness****."

"Ya' what?" said Geoffrey in amazement "General Bostock sold you out to the Mistress of Darkness?"

"He did." said Mandy grimly "But after the Mistress's own robots turned on her, Bostock turned back good again."

Geoffrey put a finger to his lips and mused under his breath.

"Who's General Bostock?" asked Tails.

"Leader of the Royal Fighters of Grand Metropolis." said Geoffrey "Me and him are good mates and we chat to each other about our respective groups' progresses in this war with Eggman."

"I've heard of him." said Sonic "It's funny how when Wilson and Mandy told me about their time in Grand Metropolis, they never breathed a word about Bostock turning bad on them."

"It wasn't worth talking about." protested Mandy quickly "And it's not like it mattered since he's back on our side now. He only betrayed us to save the city and now the Mistress's evilness is at an end, he doesn't need to be a bad guy anymore so he's back on the side of good."

"It's like I said luv." said Geoffrey casually "You can't trust anyone and I bet there's another Royal Fighter we can't trust around here. Maybe one of you lot is an Eggman agent in disguise and in secret, you keep sending messages to Dr. Eggman and informing him on where we are and getting those robots on us."

"Geoffrey, I think you're goin a little over the edge buddy." said Sonic, trying not to sound rude "None of us is an Eggman agent in disguise at all and you know it."

"Not true mate." said Geoffrey with a cold stare from behind his goggles which he lifted up to let some air get to his face "We don't know if anyone's innocent around here. I know for definite you're not a traitor Sonic since your heroism is too great to even consider turning evil."

"Well you're right not to suspect me skunk-boy." said Sonic "I would NEVER betray anybody even if I was lying on the ground bleeding half to death and the only way to survive was turn evil."

Everybody grimaced at Sonic's rather graphic remark.

"Precisely my point." remarked Geoffrey, dismissing Sonic and turning to the others "Sonic's off the suspect list."

He bent down and glared at Tails. The twin-tailed fox sweat-dropped and he turned all nervous all of the sudden.

"You boy, you claim to have first met Sonic when he saved you from two robots bearing down on you right?" asked Geoffrey.

"Um…uh…yes?" said Tails nervously.

"How do we know you're not really a deep undercover agent sent by Dr. Eggman to infiltrate us in secret?" asked Geoffrey, staring Tails straight in the eye and pointing sharply at the fox "I wouldn't be too surprised if you were there to bait someone like Sonic into saving you and then you pretend to befriend him just to get deeper into our organization and help Dr. Eggman defeat us."

"M…Mr. St. John sir…I…I'm not a deep under cover agent! I'm not even an agent of any kind at all! Honest!" squeaked Tails "I'm a victim of Dr. Eggman! He roboticized my parents, destroyed my village and tried to roboticize me! And if that wasn't enough, he sent a bounty hunter to kill me for spying on him*****! Why would I possibly want to work for someone who's almost wrecked my life forever?"

Geoffrey stood up straight and thought for a moment.

"That…is a good point young man." said Geoffrey "You're innocent. Eggman's done too much harm to you to make you turn traitor. And Eggman wouldn't send a bounty hunter to kill his own agent would he? That would not be a clever move at all."

So Geoffrey dismissed the relieved Tails and moved onto the next suspect, Knuckles the Echidna who stood there holding the blue Chaos Emerald in his hand.

"Knuckles, I don't believe I know much about you mate." said Geoffrey "Who are you and what do you do?"

"I'm Knuckles the Echidna." said Knuckles "And I'm the Guardian of Angel Island. I guard the Master Emerald, a giant emerald that looks like an oversized Chaos Emerald and the one thing that keeps Angel Island afloat. I hope you're not accusing me of being a traitor skunk boy because I'll give you a knuckle sandwich if you are!"

"Um no mate I'm not." said Geoffrey quickly and waving his hands "You can't possibly be a traitor, you have too much responsibilities under your belt to even think about turning evil."

He hastily shifted away from Knuckles, giggling nervously as Knuckles glared at him suspiciously. He moved onto the next

suspect which was Wilson the Dog.

"So you boy, would you ever consider turning evil?" said Geoffrey sharply.

"Oh no never!" gasped Wilson "I almost got roboticized by Dr. Eggman****** and I got tortured by an evil mistress! I think I still have the scars from those electrical shocks she inflicted on me with that electrical stick!"

"So what does that have to do with anything?" asked Geoffrey.

"My point is, why would I join someone who's hurt me before?" snapped Wilson "It makes no sense!"

Geoffrey put a hand to his lips and silently hummed to himself before dismissing Wilson and moving onto the final suspect, Mandy Mouse who didn't seem very bothered by this sudden blame game Geoffrey was doing right now.

"What do you have to say about turning evil Mandy?" asked Geoffrey quietly.

"I say it's stupid and idiotic." said Mandy "And I will never turn evil."

"That's not convincing enough." said Geoffrey coldly "I need a better statement then that."

"You want convincing? I've got something that'll prove my innocence!" said Mandy angrily "My own sister turned out to be a villain and after getting turned back good, she got killed not long afterwards and I swore on her soul I would fight for freedom in her name! Why would I wanna follow the same path my sister went down when it got her killed?"

Geoffrey was well and truly taken aback by Mandy's angry statement. It made sense that Mandy would never be evil after her sister got killed after being evil. After all that talking, Geoffrey came to realize that his suspicions were going too far and he was jumping to conclusions right now. Everybody seemed innocent and none of them seemed to be an Eggman agent in hiding. Then again, there might be an agent and one of them is just a brilliant actor but

Geoffrey couldn't assume that since he didn't know if that was true or not. Then suddenly, Sonic pointed an accusing finger at Geoffrey and spoke up.

"What about YOU Geoffrey?" asked Sonic "How do we know YOU aren't a bad guy in hiding huh?"

Geoffrey glared at Sonic as if he just made a nasty threat to him.

"I most certainly am NOT a bad guy in hiding!" retorted Geoffrey angrily "How dare you make such a suggestion!"

"Well you're accusing us so I felt it was fair to accuse you." noted Sonic "Why are you so concerned about a traitor amongst us?"

Geoffrey's face fell into a solemn expression as if horrible memories were coming back to his head.

"I'm concerned about a traitor amongst us because treachery almost got me killed when I was younger." said Geoffrey sadly.

Sonic and the others murmured to themselves.

"When I was a little lad, I had a friend I trusted with my life and we were as close as brothers." explained Geoffrey "We spent a lot of time together and we were supposedly friends forever. But then the horrible thing happened."

He paused for a moment before continuing.

"Me and my friend were walking by ourselves in a forest and we were ambushed by a bunch of thugs who just loved to hurt little children for fun. My friend turned out to be one of them and he was used by the gang to coax little kids into coming into their territory just so the thugs could attack them. The thugs beat me up almost to death and the gang left me battered and beaten in the forest. I would have died if my father hadn't come looking for me and found me and got me to a hospital so I could recover from my injuries. Since then I have sworn to myself that I cannot trust anyone and my trust is not so easy to win so you can see why my suspicions are high at this moment."

Sonic and the others had listened to Geoffrey's sad story with interest and Sonic was so amazed that someone as strong, brave and dedicated as Geoffrey St. John had such a dark secret hidden in him. Sonic put a hand on the skunk's shoulder affectionately.

"That's some story Geoffrey." said Sonic "After hearing that, I can certainly say you definitely aren't a traitor. Treachery almost got you killed so being a traitor wouldn't make sense."

"Too right Sonic." said Geoffrey "Evil doesn't do it for me and I don't see why any bloke would want to become a black hearted blighter like Dr. Eggman."

"I could say the same." said Knuckles "After all, working for Eggman only ensures your chances of being roboticized since he'll likely roboticize his agents once he's finished with them."

"That's not a bad suggestion." said Sonic "After all, Eggman never keeps his promises and he's always stabbing people in the back like when he pretended to turn good and he used that stupid circus park as a way of fooling us*******."

"Don't remind me of that." said Tails, remembering all the circus stunts Eggman made him, Amy and Cream do and then after the show was over, he tried to roboticize everybody.

"So after all that accusing and revelations, I can rule out the idea of there being a traitor in the works." said Geoffrey, breathing a sigh of relief "You're all too innocent to be considered as backstabbers. But that only leaves us wondering how Eggman is sharper then normal?"

But before anyone could breathe a single word, a laser beam appeared from nowhere and struck the ground before them! The force of the impact blew everybody away and Mandy, who unfortunately happened to be near the edge of the cliff after the laser blast hit home, flew backwards and fell over the edge! She managed to grab onto a small ledge before she could plummet all the way down to the bottom but this just left Mandy hanging for dear life on the cliff.

"Help!" she cried.

Everybody had just picked themselves up from that sudden attack and realized that Mandy was in need of help.

"Mandy! I'll save her!" cried Wilson, scurrying over to the cliff.

"No Wilson, you might fall too!" cried Tails, flying after him "I'll save her, I'm not likely to fall."

Wilson screeched to a halt at the edge of the cliff.

"OK Tails, I'm counting on you." said Wilson "After all, you can fly so this'll be an easy rescue."

Tails gave him a thumbs up and he flew down to the ledge where Mandy was clinging onto. Her grip was beginning to weaken and she was slowly slipping off the ledge. Wilson peered over the top of the cliff and watched with a worried face as Tails hovered over Mandy.

"Mandy, grab my hand!" yelled Tails "I'll fly you back up to the top!"

"But if I let go, I might fall!" squeaked Mandy "It might be better for you to grab me by the shoulders or something!"

Tails knew what she meant and he flew behind Mandy, put his hands under her arms and gently carried her up from the ledge and to the top of the cliff. Unfortunately, the laser beam from earlier picked an inconvenient moment to strike again! The beam whizzed over Tails' head and struck the cliff in front of him, sending rocks flying everywhere. Tails flew up faster to avoid being hit by the showering rocks but he didn't make it. A huge rock walloped him in the head and knocked him unconscious then he and Mandy plummeted down to the water at the foot of the cliff. Mandy screamed at the top of her voice as the water below began to catch up to them.

"Tails!" cried Sonic.

"Mandy!" cried Wilson.

The knocked out fox and screaming mouse continued plummeting until suddenly, a huge robot in the shape of a barracuda erupted from the water like a leaping dolphin with its ferocious jaws wide open. Then with one snap of the jaws, it caught the falling Tails and Mandy in its mouth! Sonic couldn't believe his eyes.

"Hey! No one eats my best friend and lives with it!" shouted Sonic "It's time to give you a super sonic spin-dash!"

But before Sonic could do anything, the laser beam from earlier stuck again and blasted Sonic in the back! Wilson leapt back in surprise and the blue hedgehog flew through the air like a rag doll being tossed by a child. Before Sonic could even realize where he was heading, the barracuda robot leaped out of the water again, opened its enormous jaws and caught Sonic inside them. Then the robot disappeared under the water. Knuckles had seen everything happen and he was livid.

"That robot in the water just ate Tails, Mandy and Sonic!" he yelled.

"Um Knuckles, robots can't eat." noted Geoffrey "So they haven't been eaten, they're just trapped in it and we have to get them out before it takes them to Dr. Eggman."

"But what about that laser that keeps catching us off guard?" asked Wilson wildly "It might shoot us into the water and then the barracuda bot will get us as well!"

"We find out where that laser is coming from and then we smash it to pieces!" said Knuckles, baring his fists "And then we leap into the water and destroy that barracuda bot!"

Then suddenly, the laser blast from earlier shot at them again. Knuckles heard it coming and he, Geoffrey and Wilson jumped out of the way just in time before the blast could hit them. Geoffrey loaded his crossbow and aimed up at the sky. To his surprise, what he saw in the sky above him was another barracuda robot. The barracuda robot was long, sleek and silver with a laser cannon in its mouth, small spikes on it's bodywork and sharp looking fins. Its jaws were full of teeth the size of swords and they glistened in the sunshine. Geoffrey stared at the fearsome looking robot above him.

The barracuda robot stared him down, waiting to attack.

"Crikey." said Geoffrey "That's one vicious looking machine! And like the robot in the water, it's a barracuda bot! I never knew that Eggman bloke had a fondness for barracudas."

The barracuda bot opened its jaws and the laser cannon telescoped out from inside its throat. But before it could fire at the skunk staring up at him, Knuckles leaped into the air and punched the robot in the eye. His spiked fists penetrated the tough steel the eye was made of and cracked it heavily. Now the barracuda bot was blind in one eye. The barracuda bot roared furiously and it with mighty jerk of the head, it shook Knuckles off itself and sent the echidna crashing down on the ground. Then more trouble began. The barracuda bot in the water decided to fly out of the water and onto the cliff top to help the other barracuda bot. The one that had Sonic, Tails and Mandy trapped inside didn't have a laser cannon since it was used as a capture bot and the other one was more suited to fighting but that didn't mean the capture barracuda bot couldn't fight. It charged at Knuckles, Geoffrey and Wilson with its sharp fins spread out and ready to chop them to pieces The Mobians dodged the oncoming barracuda bot and the robot ground to a halt, spun around and charged again. The Mobians dodged once more but Knuckles grabbed one of the spikes on the barracuda bot's side and used the other spikes as ladder as he climbed up the side of the robot. He began to punch its back furiously in a desperate attempt to break into the robot and save the captured Mobians inside but the barracuda bot was made of tough armour so it would take the echidna a while to break into the robot's armour. The barracuda bot noticed what was going on and it tried to shake Knuckles off by shaking its long body up and down. Knuckles surprisingly managed to hold on despite the barracuda bot's violent shaking. The laser cannon barracuda bot eyed Knuckles riding on its mate with its only remaining eye and it deployed its laser cannon. Knuckles saw the barracuda bot aiming at him and he leaped off just as it fired at him. The laser blast hit the first barracuda bot and the robot's back was destroyed in seconds. The barracuda bot roared in agony as smoke poured out from its back. Then, out of the billowing smoke came Sonic the Hedgehog in a spin-dash. Sonic shot up into the air and came crashing down on the barracuda bot's head. The barracuda

bot let out a bloodcurdling, ear-splitting roar as Sonic smashed its way through its head and destroyed all its vital mechanisms. The robot collapsed onto the ground, its head sparking wildly and smoke still billowing out from its back. As the robot lay there, smoking heavily, Mandy emerged from within the robot's body, carrying a still unconscious Tails in her arms. She ran for it just as the second barracuda bot was preparing to fire at her. The barracuda bot shot at the fleeing mouse with its laser cannon but it didn't keep it up for long. Sonic leaped towards the robot in a spin-dash and went straight up the barracuda bot's laser cannon. Sonic smashed his way through the cannon and then started churning his way through the inside of the robot. Sonic churned all the way through the barracuda bot and then emerged from the robot's tail. The robot roared furiously but it didn't seem defeated yet. It remained airborne and it raised it's tail, ready to give Sonic a good hard smack with it but Geoffrey interfered by firing a stun-dart at it. The dart embedded itself in the robot's only remaining eye and the robot was engulfed with a painful, electrical surge that spread all over its body. The robot collapsed to the ground and went offline. Now the barracuda bot had been put out of commission, Sonic and Knuckles teamed up to completely smash the robot to bits. Knuckles punched it and Sonic spin-dashed it. After the two had finished destroying the robot, the barracuda bot exploded into smithereens, its debris littering the ground as it flew everywhere. Now the two barracuda bots had been destroyed, the Mobians were safe once again. Sonic wiped sweat off his forehead.

"Whew! That was a close one!" he said "I was about to become Eggman's captive until you managed to break me out of there Knuckles!"

"Um…I didn't actually do that Sonic." said Knuckles "The other barracuda bot did by accidentally shooting the barracuda bot that had you, Tails and Mandy although it was trying to shoot me when it did that."

"Speaking of Tails and Mandy, did they make it out of the barracuda bot before it blew up?" asked Sonic.

"Yes we did, we're here." said Mandy, waving to Sonic.

Sonic spotted her and sighed with relief. Mandy stood there with an unconscious Tails in her arms and Wilson and Geoffrey looking at him. Sonic ran over to her and looked at the knocked out fox Mandy was holding.

"Is he alright?" asked Sonic.

"The kid's alright, he's just knocked out." said Mandy, gently stroking Tails' forehead "Poor boy got hit really hard by a flying rock when that laser blast hit the cliff tops."

"Well Eggman certainly planned his next attack well didn't he?" asked Sonic "I mean he actually CAUGHT me! Not only that, he caught me with a laser blast and I'm usually too fast for those things!"

"Well I know one thing for sure." said Geoffrey "We'll have to be more vigilant then before. Who knows when Eggman's going to strike again?"

"We're gonna have to find that next Chaos Emerald soon or Eggman might beat us to it." said Sonic "Maybe that's why he's attacking us? He wants to find the emerald first and these attacks are just distractions for us while he finds it?"

"Possibly." said Knuckles "But I don't think he's found it yet. I can still sense the emerald's energy nearby so Eggman hasn't got it yet."

"That's a relief." said Sonic "Let's get moving before Eggman attacks again."

Nobody waited to be asked twice. The group began to move on with Knuckles leading the way since he had the blue Chaos Emerald. The Chaos Emerald began to glow slightly brighter so that meant they were getting closer to the next emerald. As the group continued their trek through Kingdom Valley, Sonic wondered if Eggman was planning another attack on him and his friends. And if so, what would he be using this time? Hopefully not Metal Sonic since Metal Sonic was a huge problem for everybody, including himself…

Back in Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman was getting his Egg-Mobile ready. He was adding some finishing touches to the hovering machine since it needed a little tune-up before it could be put into use. As he worked on his Egg-Mobile, he kept mumbling to himself.

"Sonic certainly is a handful isn't he? Those twin Egg-Barracudas should have been more then a match for Sonic and his friends! And they actually caught him too but Knuckles had to ruin everything by making the second Egg-Barracuda destroy the first one and free Sonic! They've destroyed my beautiful robots for the last time! This next attack is guaranteed to end their lives, all of them!"

He tightened some bolts with a spanner and then started tightening some screws with a screwdriver. Dr. Eggman kept working away on his Egg-Mobile while Metal Sonic and Alonzo stood to attention, awaiting their orders. Alonzo hated standing near Metal Sonic so he shifted away from him. Metal Sonic made Alonzo feel nervous due to his cold stare and emotionless personality so Alonzo preferred to stay away from Metal Sonic at all times.

"Um master? How long has the Egg-Mobile got until it's finished?" asked Alonzo.

"I just need to fit on this last panel Alonzo and then we're ready to go." said Eggman.

"Why are we going anyway?" asked Alonzo "Are the Mobians close to finding a Chaos Emerald?"

"They are." said Dr. Eggman "And we don't want to be late for the Automaton's order so we're going to Kingdom Valley and we'll hide somewhere until the Automaton gives the command and then we make off with the Chaos Emerald while Metal Sonic destroys everybody."

"I can't wait to see the look on their furry little faces when the Automaton strikes on them!" said Alonzo, rubbing his hands evilly "They'll be in for a shock bigger then ever before!"

"Yes Alonzo, they will." said Dr. Eggman as he screwed in the last screw with his screwdriver.

The Egg-Mobile was now ready to go. Eggman climbed into the hovering machine and Alonzo climbed in after him. Eggman grabbed the controls and set the Egg-Mobile in flight. The Egg-Mobile hovered off the ground and Eggman flew out of his base and into the open air of the outside world. Metal Sonic flew beside Dr. Eggman and the villains set their courses for Kingdom Valley, the very place Sonic and friends were emerald hunting.

"I can almost feel that Chaos Emerald in my hands now." purred Dr. Eggman as he imagined himself holding the Chaos Emerald in his hand "And once I get all seven, I'll use their power for a machine greater then any I've built before!"

"And what machine might that be then?" asked Alonzo with interest.

"You'll see Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman with a malevolent smile on his face as he continued flying through the air in his Egg-Mobile "You'll see…"

Meanwhile, Sonic and friends had climbed down a steep cliff and stepped down onto a walkway that led to a series of temples that hadn't been submerged by the water. The temples were ruins just like the palaces were and they were rather tall and narrow looking in comparison to the grand looking palaces that Sonic and friends had seen earlier. The walkway led to one temple and a walkway at the back of the temple led to another and so forth. There were four temples in total and Knuckles' Chaos Emerald was telling him there was a Chaos Emerald nearby so the emerald had to be in one of the four temples. He didn't know which temple it was in but he knew the Chaos Emerald was in one of them.

"The Chaos Emerald's nearby." said Knuckles "It must be in one of those temples."

"Well I can't see anywhere else it maybe hiding in except the water around us so let's search the temples." said Sonic "I hope it's not a cruel twist of fate and it turns out the Chaos Emerald IS in the water or we'll never get it."

But before anyone could do anything, Tails began to stir in Mandy's arms. He murmured under his breath and made slight moaning noises.

"Hey Sonic, the kid's waking up." said Mandy.

Sonic turned around to see Tails opening his eyes just as Mandy put him down on the ground. Tails started rubbing his head, which felt like someone had hammered a nail into it, and he opened his eyes.

"Ow…My head!" moaned Tails with a grimace "That rock hit me really hard!"

"Hey Tails, how are you feeling?" asked Sonic, bending down and rubbing Tails' head affectionately.

"I feel like my head's about to explode." groaned Tails "Ouch! I've never had a headache as bad as this before!"

"At least you're OK little guy." said Sonic happily "And you've woken up to good news, we're getting close to finding a Chaos Emerald."

"We are?" said Tails, completely forgetting about his killer headache.

"Yes." said Knuckles "We think it's in one of those temples and we're just about to start searching."

That was all Tails needed to hear. He leaped to his feet and ran into the temple. It was almost like the good news had brought new energy into the little fox and his headache was completely forgotten about, much to Sonic's amusement. He and the others followed Tails into the tall, narrow temple. The doors opened with a creak louder then any creaky door ever heard before due to the incredibly rusty hinges. The hinges were so rusty, they looked like they were about to disintegrate and fall apart thus bringing the door falling down. Due to being ruins, the temple was empty and featureless save for another door at the back, some faded artwork on the floor that was very unrecognizable now and some dirty windows that were not fit for looking out of. Sonic and friends looked up to the ceiling only to find nothing of interest. Then they began to search all

around the empty temple. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles circled around while Wilson got onto his knees and started sniffing around like a hunting dog searching for wild game to find for its master. Geoffrey and Mandy pressed against the walls to see if anything moved to reveal a secret passage or something. The walls were completely solid, well almost. Geoffrey pushed on the wall and a loose brick fell right through the wall and into the water on the other side much to the skunk's surprise. But the team couldn't find a Chaos Emerald anywhere.

"Darn! Nothing here!" muttered Sonic, kicking some dust away off the floor.

"We'll have to try the next temple." said Knuckles, opening the back door, which creaked just as loudly as the front door.

The Mobians left the first temple and walked across the narrow walkway and single file to the second temple. Sonic opened the door and the hinges to that door were so weak and fragile, they gave way and the door fell over and landed with a clang on the floor! Sonic jumped and then went inside. This temple was like the first one, empty and featureless with faded artwork on the floor and dirty windows. And like the first one, there didn't appear to be anything in this temple and Sonic knew just by observing the inside of the temple that there was no point looking.

"This temple's just as empty as the first." said Sonic "Let's move on to the third one."

"Either the emerald's in the third or forth temple." said Knuckles "This emerald's getting brighter with every step we take."

That sounded good to Sonic. The Mobians walked through the second temple, opened the door on the right and stepped out onto the walkway which led right to the third temple. The third temple was a little boarder looking then the first and second temples and it had more windows and two doors instead of one. Sonic opened the doors to the third temple and they didn't fall in like the door to the second temple did. In fact, they didn't even creak as loudly as the door to the first temple. The third temple's doors didn't have very rusty hinges so it was still fit to use. The third temple was full of

metal crates that were blanketed with dust and cobwebs and like the other two, it had faded artwork on the floor although not as faded as the first and its windows were filthy or broken. The six Mobians ran over to the crates and they opened them all and searched inside. Every single crate in the temple was unfortunately empty except for one thing. Tails had found a family portrait of a royal family that had long since been dead since Kingdom Valley's demise and the portrait was surprisingly still in good condition save for a few rips on the corners. The portrait had a grand looking coyote in kingly robes and fool's jewels with his hands on the shoulders of two children, one a son and the other a daughter, both coyotes. They wore prince and princess outfits and they looked very happy in the picture as did the king. The picture must have been painted a long time before Kingdom Valley's downfall and Tails could just imagine what their lives must have been like when Kingdom Valley was populated and alive with life. Wilson peered over the fox's shoulder.

"Hey, what you found Tails?" asked Wilson.

"Just a portrait." said Tails "Is this one of the royal families that ruled over Kingdom Valley before it was deserted?"

He showed Wilson the portrait and Wilson looked at it.

"It is indeed." said Wilson "It's the fifteenth coyote family to have lived in and ruled over this valley. Historians say they were the kindest and most generous of the coyote families in Kingdom Valley and they were in power over one-hundred years ago. So that's one old portrait you've got there."

"Wow, how do you know so much about the royals of Kingdom Valley?" asked Tails.

"I've read books about them." said Wilson "And they're very interesting books to read too. I think I still have them at the new home in Empire City I currently live in."

Sonic closed the crate he had been looking in. Everybody else closed the crates they were looking in and Tails put the portrait back in the crate he was looking in and closed the crate.

"No Chaos Emeralds here." said Sonic "And I had a feeling in my quills we were going to find one in this temple."

"There's one more temple left." said Knuckles "The Chaos Emerald has gotta be in the forth temple and it seems likely it is since our Chaos Emerald is glowing brighter with every temple we look in."

So with that said Sonic and friends exited the temple through the side door that led to the left and walked across the walkway to the last temple. This temple was broader then the third and taller then the other three temples. Above the door was a broken purple orb of some kind that was likely there for display. Like the third temple, this temple had two doors and when Sonic opened them, they didn't creak like the doors to the first three did since the hinges weren't as rusty. The moment Sonic opened the door though; he was met with a purple glow coming from the middle of the floor. The temple was the same on the inside as the other three temples, faded artwork on the floor and dirty windows although this temple had a worn and rusty chandelier hanging from the ceiling with a chain so rusty looking the chandelier looked like it was about to break away, crash onto the floor and break into a million pieces. In the middle of the floor, half embedded, was a purple glowing gem. Tails ran over to the gem, grabbed it and pulled it out of the floor with no trouble at all. It was a Chaos Emerald! They had found another Chaos Emerald at long last!

"Hey guys! We've found another Chaos Emerald!" cried Tails.

"Good, now hand it over!" demanded Mandy in an uncharacteristically cold tone of voice.

Then suddenly, before anyone could say a word, Mandy lashed out and kicked Tails straight in the back! Tails yelped and dropped the purple Chaos Emerald. Mandy grabbed it before anyone else could and pressed a few buttons on her wrist. She held her wrist to her face and spoke into a communicator that was attached there.

"OK boys, its play time now." she said.

Before anyone could do anything else, the temple walls exploded in a shower of bricks and concrete and in flew a bunch of Eggman

robots, all armed with Gatling guns and equipped with jet packs. They aimed at Sonic and friends and prepared to fire. Then to sum it all up, Dr. Eggman arrived in his Egg-Mobile with Alonzo beside him and he flew into view. Sonic clenched his fists and gritted his teeth at the mere sight of the fat man before him.

"Hi Sonic!" said Dr. Eggman "So nice to see you again!"

"Eggman!" yelled Sonic "What have you done to Mandy to make her suddenly turn evil on us?"

"Me? Done to Mandy?" said Dr. Eggman innocently "I've done nothing to that infernal mouse! This isn't even the REAL Mandy that stands before you!"

"You what?" blurted Wilson, his eyes wide and shocked looking.

"This is an Automaton." explained Dr. Eggman as Auto-Mandy climbed into the Egg-Mobile and sat beside him "A brilliant little invention of mine that is built to mimic other Mobians. It's so life-like that even the brightest of minds were fooled by it! And now it's gotten me this Chaos Emerald, aren't I brilliant?"

Sonic suddenly realized a few things. He remembered Geoffrey telling him Mandy disappeared before the others followed him around the world during the worldwide showdown with Metal Sonic********, he also remembered Knuckles telling him about Mandy creeping off for some weird reason********* and then he remembered Marik the Martian mentioning Mandy's foot felt like metal after she'd kicked him**********. Those things all suddenly made sense to him now, Mandy had disappeared because Eggman kidnapped her and replaced her with an Automaton and she kept creeping off to tell Eggman something in secret and her foot felt like metal because she WAS metal! How did they miss those clues to the fact that it wasn't Mandy Mouse with them all along?

"Boy you sure had us fooled Egg-head!" said Sonic crossly "Now you tell me where the real Mandy is or you're gonna get a supersonic spin-dash!"

"Oh the REAL Mandy Mouse?" said Dr. Eggman "She's dead. I used

her for the basis for the Automaton and I extracted her memories so the Automaton would be able to think like her to keep up the subtlety and once I was finished, I let Metal Sonic kill her since she was of no use to me."

Everybody gasped. Sonic couldn't believe his ears. Mandy was dead? Eggman had kidnapped her, made a robot duplicate of her and then killed her? Dr. Eggman had gone too far this time! Sonic revved up and propelled himself into the air. He spun into a ball and rocketed towards Eggman.

"That's it! I'm gonna beat the egg outta you!" yelled Sonic.

But his spin-dash was brought to a stop by Eggman's deadliest robot ever, Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic slammed Sonic against the wall and kept him pinned there. His emotionless red eyes glared at the hedgehog he so desired to destroy.

"Hey Metal Sonic, glad to see you too." said Sonic, pushing the metal hedgehog away from him.

Metal Sonic swiped at Sonic with his claws but Sonic dodged the blow and kicked him in the torso.

"What's the matter? Still not speaking?" said Sonic "Oh well, I think I prefer a quiet Metal Sonic anyway."

Metal Sonic gave Sonic an uppercut that sent the hedgehog flying out of the temple and onto the narrow walkway. Sonic skidded to a painful halt on his back and Metal Sonic lunged after him. Knuckles lunged into the air after Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic saw him and he grabbed him by the arms. He snatched the blue Chaos Emerald out of Knuckles' hand, threw the echidna in the water and tossed the emerald to Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman caught it in his hands and exploded with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! I now have TWO Chaos Emeralds! Aren't I lucky?" crowed Dr. Eggman "Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to find the other five emeralds now. Bye, bye!"

And with that Dr. Eggman turned his Egg-Mobile around and flew

away. He, Alonzo and Auto-Mandy laughed a chorus of victorious evil laughs as they flew away into the bright blue sky with the jet-pack equipped robots following them.

"Damn it! The blighter got away!" cursed Geoffrey "Now we're back to square one!"

"We haven't got time to degrade ourselves Mr. St. John!" cried Tails "Metal Sonic is still attacking us!"

"Why? Eggman's left so why is the Metal Sonic bloke still here?" asked Geoffrey.

"Maybe Eggman wants him to finish us off." suggested Wilson "After all, we're no match for Metal Sonic, fifteen of us together can't bring him down and Sonic can't bring him down so Eggman probably wants Metal Sonic to kill us since he's the only one capable of doing it."

"Well I'm not letting the blighter kill us!" said Geoffrey hotly. He primed his crossbow; ready for fire "I'm taking that metal head down if it's the last thing I do!"

And with that he, Tails and Wilson ran outside to help Sonic and Knuckles fight Metal Sonic. Sonic and Metal Sonic spin-dashed each other but Metal Sonic came out on top and sent Sonic crashing into the third temple. Knuckles tried to punch Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic caught his punches and threw him back into the forth temple. Tails flew up into the air and tried to attack Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic blasted him with his torso cannon. Tails fell down to the ground but Wilson managed to catch him just before he could hit the ground. Metal Sonic hovered down to the ground and tried to attack Wilson but Geoffrey lashed out with a kick to the forehead. Then the skunk gave Metal Sonic an uppercut that wasn't as powerful as Knuckles but it was powerful enough to knock the metal hedgehog over and then Geoffrey fired a dart at him. The dart pinged harmlessly off Metal Sonic's tough armour. Metal Sonic got back to his feet and then gave Geoffrey a terrific punch to the face. Geoffrey stumbled backwards and tripped over Tails, who was lying behind him. Wilson leaped up and began to lunge a fury of punches on Metal Sonic but the metal hedgehog didn't seem to be affected by

them. Wilson was furious over Mandy's supposed death and he wanted to make Eggman pay for it so he was trying his hardest to destroy Metal Sonic. But no matter how many punches he launched, he couldn't do any damage to Metal Sonic; the robot's armour was too tough for a normal punch like his. Metal Sonic slugged Wilson in the stomach and then he threw him into the water. Wilson landed in the water with a splash and he began to swing his arms madly as he thought to stay above the surface. Tails flew after Wilson and grabbed him by the hands. Then he pulled the dog out of the water and carried him back to the temple. Sonic had recovered from Metal Sonic's earlier attack and he spin-dashed Metal Sonic in the back. Then the two hedgehogs kicked at each other, both their feet hitting each others as they kicked, and then they linked arms and grappled with one another. Tails and Geoffrey tried to attack Metal Sonic from behind but Metal Sonic heard them coming and he let them have it with his back laser. Geoffrey and Tails both collapsed in a heap on the walkway. Sonic broke away from their grapple and then he dropkicked Metal Sonic in the head. Before Metal Sonic could recover, Sonic spin-dashed him again and sent him crashing into the forth temple. Metal Sonic bounced off the wall and rammed Sonic in the chest with his elbow. The two hedgehogs were rolling over each other like kids rolling down a hill and they came to a halt in the third temple. Sonic pushed Metal Sonic off himself and tried to punch the metal clone but Metal Sonic dodged and kicked a crate into Sonic. The crate smacked Sonic in the side and knocked him over. Knuckles saw Sonic needed help and he ran into the temple to fight Metal Sonic. Sonic kicked a crate at Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic destroyed it with his torso laser. The crate was reduced to metal pieces and Metal Sonic threw the pieces at Sonic as if they were Frisbees. Sonic dodged most of the flying metal chunks but one clipped him on the shoulder and made him grimace. But before Metal Sonic could do anything, Knuckles punched Metal Sonic in the side of the head. The metal hedgehog was brought down to the floor and Knuckles began to viciously punch Metal Sonic as hard as he could. Unfortunately, Eggman had upgraded Metal Sonic after fixing him from his earlier damages so Knuckles' punches weren't causing as much damage as they usually would. Knuckles then grabbed Metal Sonic by the arm and tried to rip it out of its socket but Metal Sonic blasted him with his torso laser before he could start tugging on his arm. Knuckles cried out in pain and then Metal Sonic

punched the echidna off himself and gave the echidna a sucker punch to the face. Knuckles fell onto his back and grimaced in pain. Sonic picked himself up, only to get knocked down by Metal Sonic's spin-dash again.

"Man, Metal Sonic's taking no prisoners today is he?" grunted Sonic.

"He's improved a little since the last time we fought him!" grunted Knuckles "My punches aren't doing much damage to him!"

"We need a plan and fast!" said Sonic "Or Metal Sonic's going to…"

Metal Sonic grabbed Sonic by the scruff of his neck and then he grabbed Knuckles by the scruff of his neck and proceeded to smack the two's heads together! A huge wave of pain swept over Sonic and Knuckles as their heads made painful contact with one another and then Metal Sonic threw them outside where they landed on their fronts and have a painful scrape across the walkway before stopping. The hedgehog and echidna groaned loudly.

"This is going nowhere!" puffed Sonic "Metal Sonic completely has us at his mercy! We can't defeat it!"

"If we keep this up, we may not make it to the end!" grunted Knuckles, trying to get back up but to no avail "We've gotta do something or we're mincemeat!"

"I have an idea." said Tails "Why don't we let Metal Sonic throw us into the water and we swim underwater and hide behind something until he leaves? That way he'll think we've all drowned and we're all dead."

"That's a great idea Tails." said Sonic "Let's do it to it!"

Now they had a plan, Sonic got back to his feet and helped Knuckles stand up too. Then the two got into battle ready stances and prepared to attack as Metal Sonic stood at the entrance of the temple holding a crate above his head. Metal Sonic threw the crate at the Mobians but Knuckles punched it away and tried to attack Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic smacked him away and sent the echidna falling into the water with a splash. Knuckles held his breath

and began to swim towards the stone pillars underneath the temple. After swimming up to them, he came up to the surface and peered around the corner to see what Metal Sonic was up to. While under water, Knuckles had swam to the other side of the temple and now he was going to stay put until Metal Sonic flew away. Sonic and Tails tried to double team Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic caught them both and hurled them into the water. Unfortunately for Sonic, he began to sink down and down like a stone but fortunately, Tails was a capable swimmer and he grabbed Sonic's hand and pulled him towards the other side of the temple. They both held their breath and they managed to hold it long enough to get to the other side of the temple and come up for air. Wilson and Geoffrey were the only ones left and they both pounced on Metal Sonic. Geoffrey landed a good hard punch on the robot's face and Wilson stomped on Metal Sonic's arm in an attempt to break it. But Metal Sonic fired his torso cannon to make the dog and skunk back away and then he leapt to his feet and jumped a perfect rainbow arch in the air. He landed in between Geoffrey and Wilson and he did a perfect split to kick them both. Geoffrey and Wilson fell on their sides and Metal Sonic grabbed them by their tail. He hoisted them up and began to swing them around by their tails. His torso section rotated a perfect 360 degrees as he began to swing Geoffrey and Wilson around. Then Metal Sonic released their tails and the two Mobians hurled through the air like stones and they landed with a splash in the water. Luckily for them, there was a walkway that had broken away from whatever it used to be connected to and under the walkway; there was a space above the water that they could use to breathe. The space was only big enough for them to stick their heads above the water but that was all they needed. Metal Sonic hovered above the water and looked around for his victims. His sharp eyesight scanned the surroundings as his head slowly rotated left and right. His scanners weren't registering any signs of life around. The Mobians he had thrown into the water must have sunken all the way to the bottom of the flooded valley and if they were all the way at the bottom that meant they had no chance of getting back to the surface for air so that meant his victims had drowned, or so he thought. Seeing as his mission was accomplished, Metal Sonic turned around and flew away from the water. His jetpack roared nosily as he flew away from Kingdom Valley and headed back home to Robotropolis where his master was waiting for him. He could almost imagine his happy

master's face when he found out he'd just killed Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends. After Metal Sonic disappeared from view, Sonic, Tails and Knuckles swam to the walkway and they climbed out of the water. Sonic grabbed his quills and squeezed them as hard as he could to get all the water out of them. Tails shook himself dry like a puppy dog and Knuckles began squeezing water out of his dreadlocks. Geoffrey and Wilson emerged from under the walkway and they swam over to Sonic, Tails and Knuckles. Sonic and Knuckles pulled the skunk and dog out of the water and they dried themselves off.

"I'm getting sick of losing to that metal faker!" moaned Sonic "Next time me and Metal Sonic fight, I'm going to beat him at long last!"

"If only we could." said Tails "He copies our data and in doing so, makes himself stronger then anybody he comes across. He's copied all our data so we're no match for him and even if we get someone new to help us defeat him, he'll just copy that person's data and be as strong as that person."

"He can copy the data of everybody on Mobius for all I care!" yelled Knuckles "Some day, we're going to take down that metal crony of Eggman's!"

"Yeah." said Sonic "I look forward to smashing Metal Sonic to pieces too. But one thing I can't stop wondering about is how did I fail to guess that the Mandy with us was a fake all along? The evidence was on the tip of my nose and I failed to notice it. That Automaton fooled us all didn't it?"

"It did alright." said Geoffrey "I can smell a traitor or a fake anywhere and even I was fooled. At least we know how Eggman was suddenly sharper then usual. That stinking Automaton was informing him of our whereabouts and what we were up to so Eggman knew where to send his robot squads to get us."

"Yeah but that doesn't help with anything." muttered Wilson "Especially since the real Mandy is dead. She was my best friend and that horrible Eggman killed her. How could he do something like this to us?"

The dog crouched down on his knees and stared at the ground. He looked like he was about to cry. Sonic and Geoffrey felt sorry for Wilson and they were sad over Mandy's supposed death as well. They had been with Mandy for eight months straight and they knew how close she and Wilson were. Mandy was a great fighter and she had great courage to match so her death was a heavy loss for the Royal Fighters Service. Regardless, Sonic was not going to let the death of a friend bother him. He was going to stop Dr. Eggman and his robotic cronies once and for all and he would do it in the name of his fallen friend Mandy Mouse. Sonic bent down to Wilson's level and said.

"I know how you feel about Mandy Wilson but we can't let her death bother us now. We've got more Chaos Emeralds to find and we've got three emeralds we have to get back from our enemies. When we get all seven Chaos Emeralds, we'll use their power to put an end to Dr. Eggman's evil once and for all. And I can assure you that Mandy will want you to fight long and hard to save your home planet from Dr. Eggman and his robotic minions so you'll have to be strong Wilson. Will you do that for me and for Mandy buddy?"

Wilson looked at the blue hedgehog and smiled at him.

"I'll do just that." said Wilson happily "I'll make sure Eggman pays for killing my friend."

"That's a good doggie!" said Sonic teasingly, ruffling the fur on Wilson's head up playfully and getting up to his feet "Now why don't we leave Kingdom Valley and start searching for another Chaos Emerald?"

"We don't have our Chaos Emeralds anymore Sonic." noted Tails glumly "So we have no idea on where to find any. We'll be on a wild goose chase!"

Sonic suddenly realized that Tails was right. The Chaos Emeralds could be used to find another Chaos Emerald and now they didn't have any, they had no chance of finding any other emeralds.

"Right." said Sonic "I guess the best thing to do know is find Amy and her team. Amy has that tracker Tails modified for her so she'll

be able to find a Chaos Emerald."

"In that case, let's go and find Amy's group and see how they've been doing while we've been on our own search." said Geoffrey, immediately setting off "I wonder if they've had better luck then we have?"

Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Wilson followed Geoffrey across the walkway and through the ancient temples that they had been searching through for a Chaos Emerald. Sonic had no idea where Amy could possibly be right now but he knew he would find her sooner or later. And one thing he couldn't stop wondering is how she and her group had been doing while he and his group had been dodging death in Kingdom Valley…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 36 for the first part of this very saga**

**** See Stories 37-38 for the second part of this very saga**

***** See Story 31 for one VERY fast paced adventure**

****** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 1* for some shocks and surprises**

******* See Stories 26-27**

******** See Story 1**

********* See Stories 17-18 for one of Sonic's most humorous adventures ever**

********** See Story 31 again**

*********** See Story 37**

************ See Story 38 (I've set another record of footnotes!)**

Well that was unexpected! Mandy is dead and has been

replaced by an Automaton and now Eggman has two Chaos Emeralds! Can he get another or will Amy and her team finally get one? Join me next time as Amy takes the spotlight once more to look for another Chaos Emerald...Reviews are welcome.

P.S. Sorry banjobandicoot52 but I am not doing any adaptations of the Sonic games. Not that I don't want to it's just that everybody's done it and I can't bring anything new to the formula so sorry, if you wanted a game adaptation then you're in the wrong story. Thanks for suggesting anyway.

Volcanic Panic

Story 41: Volcanic Panic

If there's one place on Mobius that's a highly recommended holiday resort, it would have to be the country of Adabat. Adabat was the sunniest place on Mobius with an average of three-hundred days of sunshine. Not all sunny days on Adabat were warm though and they rarely had rainy days. The people of Adabat lived in a village. The village was alive with pedestrians, shops, restaurants and buildings of any kind and one part of the village consisted of stilt houses, which are houses on stilts just above shallow water and they had a long stretch of decking connecting the houses together. The people of Adabat enjoyed their lives in this sunny country. Sonic and Metal Sonic had had a brief tussle in Adabat during their worldwide showdown* and the stilt house village had only received minor damages which had since been repaired and Adabat had not had any other misfortune since then. As of this moment, Amy Rose: Sonic's biggest fan and would-be-love interest was sitting in a deck chair with a glass of coconut milk sitting on a table next to her and soaking up the sun's warm rays. Fellow fighter and cyborg Bunnie Rabbit was sitting in a deck chair beside her and enjoying the warmth of the sun and Cream the Rabbit, her pet Chao Cheese and Cosmo the Seedrian were playing in the shallow waters that flowed under the stilt houses. Even though Amy and her team were supposed to be looking for Chaos Emeralds, they had decided to kick back for the moment and relax before setting off again to go emerald hunting again. Their efforts since their encounter with Rouge the Bat and Marik the Martian** had not improved and they had not found a thing so they were taking a moment to relax and rest themselves before continuing the hunt. Amy sipped some coconut milk out of her glass and watched Cream, Cheese and Cosmo playing in the water. Cosmo was enjoying herself a lot since she was a plant creature and plants need water to live and she was having a great time swimming around and playfully splashing Cream and Cheese. Cream and Cheese played tag and they swam around in the water trying to catch each other and they would playfully splash Cosmo as they swam past her to which Cosmo would

retaliate by splashing them back. Amy giggled to herself as she watched the girls playing so happily with each other.

"Aw, it's so lovely watching Cream and Cosmo playing so happily with each other in the water." said Amy happily.

"It is isn't it sugah?" replied Bunnie Rabbit "When ah was young, ah would play in the water when it was a hot day and ah had a great time slashing about to mah heart's content. Did you like playing in the water Amy?" she asked the pink hedgehog.

"I certainly did when I was younger." said Amy, sipping more milk out her glass "When summer time came, my dad would get the paddling pool out and me, him and mom would all get in together and play until dinner time. Those were good times. Pity I don't see my parents much these days." she added glumly "They're always so occupied with something or another and I rarely get time to meet up with them and chat about how we've been getting on since we've moved apart."

"That's a shame sugah." said Bunnie "But at least ya'll have good friends around ya. Friends ya'll can rely on and friends you love to spend time with like Cream, Cosmo or even the sugah-hog himself, Sonic."

"And I most certainly agree." said Amy happily "Sonic, Tails, Cream, Cosmo, you and the Chaotix are the best friends a girl could ask for. Speaking of the Chaotix, where are they?" she asked, realizing that they weren't around.

"They told me they're looking for a guidebook on Adabat in the village." explained Bunnie "They wanna know a bit about this country so they need a guidebook. They shouldn't be too long so don't worry about them."

"Why should I worry about Team Chaotix?" asked Amy "They're capable of defending themselves. I still can't believe they were the ones who saved my Sonic from being disintegrated by a temple in Spagonia by Scourge***. It was so brave of them to dare to take on Sonic's evil brother and save him and Tails from disintegrating."

"Well they're brave boys sugah." said Bunnie "And they're detectives so they have to be brave, it's no good being a detective if ya'll are cowardly."

"You're right Bunnie." said Amy "I can't imagine Team Chaotix doing well at their job if they were chicken hearted boys."

Bunnie chuckled in agreement.

"Hey Cream look out! Cosmo's about to send a tidal wave sweeping over you!" Amy called out to Cream.

"Beg pardon?" said Cream, looking up at Amy.

Then before she knew it, Cosmo sneaked up behind Cream swiped the water with her arms. A wave of water swept over Cream and drenched her. Cheese jumped in surprise and avoided getting splashed by flying away. Cream's ears flopped down over her eyes. She shook her head to dry herself and her ears flopped back in their normal position. Cosmo began to giggle.

"Sorry Cream, was that too hard?" she snickered.

"No it's OK." said Cream politely "I'm not too bothered about getting soaked. That was a good sneak attack though."

"I know." said Cosmo "I'm good at sneaking up on my sisters and drenching them with a wave from behind. Back on my planet we have flower pools and we all take turns to bathe in it when it's bath night. It was lots of fun swimming about in the water and playing with my sisters and friends. The water on this planet is very similar to ours." she added, scooping some up in her hand and looking at it just as it began to run away and drip back into the water "The only difference really is ours is a little sweeter smelling because there's always flowers floating about in the water."

"Really?" said Cream "I'd love to have a swim in a pool full of flowers. I bet the water's very nice."

"It is Cream." said Cosmo, lying on her back and doing some backstrokes.

She swam away on her back, being careful not to bump into anything and Cream did the same. Cheese sat on Cream's tummy and rode on her as if she was a raft floating about on the sea. Amy watched the girls with awe, thinking how adorable Cream and Cosmo looked playing about in the water.

"You know if I wasn't on a Chaos Emerald hunt, I would spend the whole day here." said Amy "Adabat is a beautiful place."

"Ah'm totally in agreement Amy." said Bunnie "In fact, ah might have a vacation here if ah get a day off at all."

"Good for you." said Amy kindly "I think we could all do with a holiday what with all the carnage Dr. Eggman's been causing on Mobius since his arrival. But because of the war with Eggman, we never have the time to sit back and relax so a holiday's gonna be hard to come across."

Bunnie nodded in agreement, her eyes all gloomy looking. The war with Eggman had made times for relaxation scarce so they had to savour this moment because it would be a long time before they ever had a moment to relax and enjoy the sunshine.

As for Team Chaotix, they had been touring the village in search of a bookshop or an information centre since they were the likeliest places to sell guidebooks. The boys hadn't had much luck though. They had been in about three bookshops but neither of them had a guidebook. The team's boss, Vector the Crocodile consulted a map he brought from a souvenir shop so he knew where he was going and where to find an information centre in the village. He found a shop marked with an I on the map. According to the key code at the bottom of the map, shops marked with an I meant it was an information centre. Vector smiled widely.

"Hey boys, I've found an information centre." he said to his team mates Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee "It's just that way according to the map." he added, pointing to the left.

"Let's hope they have the book we require." said Espio as the trio

walked to the left "I'm getting a bit tired of walking around aimlessly and finding nothing."

"I wish I was with the girls." moaned Charmy as he fluttered beside Espio "They're playing in the water and having fun."

"We're being gentlemen and letting the girls have their peace." said Vector "And we can't trust you to do as you're told and let the girls have their peace so you had to come with us whether you liked it or not. Now stop complaining Charmy!"

"OK." said Charmy.

Team Chaotix walked through the streets with Vector leading and reading the map. A few moments later, they came across a small building with a triangular roof marked with the words "Info. Centre" on a sign just above the door. That must be the information centre. They walked over to the centre and walked inside. The centre was full of leaflets, maps and books. There was a desk clerk sitting at a desk and rummaging through a filing cabinet. He looked up to see that he had three new customers to serve.

"Oh hey there." said the clerk, looking up from the cabinet "How may I help you?"

"Do you have a guidebook on Adabat anywhere?" asked Vector "We're new here and we wanna learn a bit about his country while we're here."

"The guidebooks are on that rack over there." said the clerk, pointing at a rack full of books titled "The Tourist's Guide to Adabat".

Espio wondered over to the rack and chose a book. He handed it to Vector and Vector put it on the desk for the clerk to scan out with the barcode scanner. Vector then paid for the book and the clerk put the money in the cash register.

"Thank you sir." said Vector.

"You're welcome." said the clerk.

Then suddenly a low ominous rumble was heard in the distance. It

sounded a bit like an earthquake only without the shaking and buildings crumbling to the ground. Charmy flew about in a panic, wondering what the noise was and accidentally knocking a leaflet rack over. Espio pulled out his shuriken, thinking the rumbling was caused by a monster or a giant Eggman robot or something like that. Then the rumbling stopped and everything was peaceful again. Espio put his shuriken away and Charmy picked up the leaflet rack he'd knocked over. Some leaflets had fallen out so he gathered them all up and put them back in the slots on the rack.

"What was that?" asked Vector.

"Oh it's only Mount Adabat." said the clerk casually as if it was nothing serious "It's a volcano not far from the village and it's surrounded by water so when it erupts, we don't have to worry about molten lava engulfing us since it just all goes into the water and burns out. The volcano itself isn't very active and it only erupts every five years but the volcano's being a little more active then usual. There are the occasional rumbles like you've just witnessed now and the small eruptions that last no longer then thirty minutes. It really is strange since Mount Adabat is not usually this active and we really don't know what's up with the mountain."

"How long has this been going on for?" asked Espio.

"Since last Saturday." said the clerk "Which was five days ago."

"A volcano that's more active then usual?" mused Vector "This sounds like a case for the Chaotix Detective Agency. Maybe we should investigate this scenario."

"Yay! We're looking in a volcano!" cheered Charmy, dancing about happily in mid air.

"Are you sure that's wise Vector?" asked Espio "It could be dangerous and we might not make it out alive."

"Espio, danger is our middle name!" boasted Vector "Its gonna take more then a measly volcano to scare me! We're gonna gather up the girls and investigate this weird business with the volcano!"

"I hope you know what you're doing." said the clerk "Mount Adabat is quite a climb and you never know when it might do a random erupt that it's been doing for the past five days."

"We'll be careful sir." said Vector "We're skilled in dangerous situations so this'll be a piece of cake. We're off now, bye!" he said cheerily.

He left the info centre with Espio and Charmy following him. Now they had left the centre, they ran off and headed back to the stilt house village where the girls were sunbathing. As they ran, Vector wondered what was causing the volcano's weird behaviour and how they were going to sort the problem out. He even wondered if the volcano was going to erupt suddenly and the eruption was worse then before. And if the eruptions were worse then usual would that spell danger for the people of Adabat? Vector had no idea but he knew that they would somehow find out the reason behind Mount Adabat's weird behaviour and put a stop to it. The only thing that bothered him was…how?

Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman and his metal cronies Alonzo, Metal Sonic and Auto-Mandy were still flying home from their victory in Kingdom Valley a few hours ago. They were just flying over the city of Soleanna which was mostly surrounded by water hence it's nickname: the City of Water. Eggman spent the entire trip staring at the two Chaos Emeralds he held in his hands. The blue and purple emeralds glowed in unison and their bright sparkle dazzled Eggman. He felt incredibly lucky to be holding the two Chaos Emeralds in his hands right now. The emeralds gave him a strange but wonderful feeling of great power. Almost as if he could knock someone flat with one punch. If just two Chaos Emeralds made him feel powerful just imagine how all SEVEN of the Chaos Emeralds must feel like!

"These Chaos Emeralds sure are fascinating gems aren't they Alonzo?" asked Dr. Eggman, his eyes still fixed on the emeralds.

"Oh yes master." said Alonzo "I can't believe your Automaton worked to perfection. She played those Mobians for fools and thanks to her, you have the Chaos Emeralds."

"It wasn't just Auto-Mandy who got me the Chaos Emeralds." noted Dr. Eggman "Metal Sonic got me the one Sonic and friends had so it's thanks to Auto-Mandy and Metal Sonic, not just Auto-Mandy. One thing that puzzles me is why don't they have the green Chaos Emerald that they found? Has someone else stolen it from them?"

"If that's the case then we'd best find out who's stolen the green Chaos Emerald and steal if off them." said Alonzo "We'll show he or she who the real emerald thieves are!"

"Agreed Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman "I'm stealing the Chaos Emeralds and anyone who thinks otherwise will feel my robotic wrath!"

Then suddenly, Auto-Mandy's ears began swivelling around in perfect 360 degree circles, her eyes began flashing and her tail straightened. Eggman and Alonzo were surprised by Auto-Mandy's sudden odd activity.

"Auto-Mandy my dear, is something wrong?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"I'm-de-tecting-an-other-Chaos-Emerald." droned Auto-Mandy "It-is-not-very-far-from-where-we-are-now."

Whenever Auto-Mandy spoke now, she droned in a robot voice instead of her Mandy Mouse voice since she didn't need the voice to disguise herself anymore.

"Not very far from where we are eh?" purred Dr. Eggman "Can you pin-point it's location?"

"It-is-in-the-country-known-as-Ad-a-bat." droned Auto-Mandy "I can-not-tell-where-in-Ad-a-bat-ex-act-ly-but-it-is-def-in-ite-ly-in-Ad-a-bat. When-we-get-closer-I-might-be-able-to-tell-where-it-is."

"Right." said Dr. Eggman "Alonzo, how far are we from this so called "Adabat" country?" he asked.

Alonzo checked the radar which was displaying the scenery approaching the Egg-Mobile as it flew over Soleanna.

"We're about twenty-miles away." said Alonzo "We'll arrive there in approximately five minutes."

"That's good." said Dr. Eggman "I'll storm the country and add a third Chaos Emerald to my collection once I find it! This is definitely one of my luckier days so far isn't it?"

"It certainly is master." said Alonzo with a grin on his metal face "Pity we don't get days like this more often. Maybe our luck will increase over the next few days."

"If that happens then I'll be able to defeat Sonic the Hedgehog once and for all." said Dr. Eggman happily "Now let's go to Adabat and find that Chaos Emerald shall we?"

"Indeed master." said Alonzo "I'll set our courses immediately."

He set courses for Adabat on the Egg-Mobile and the flying pod-like machine turned to the north-west direction and flew straight on. Metal Sonic, who was flying beside the Egg-Mobile, followed them. Dr. Eggman began to grin malevolently. He could imagine that third Chaos Emerald in his hands right now. Oooh what a lucky day this was for him! He's stolen two Chaos Emeralds and now he'd detected a third one! If his luck continued, he would have all seven in no time.

"You want to us to go WHERE?" shrieked Amy at the top of her voice. The pink hedgehog almost fell out of her chair.

"I said we're going up Mount Adabat and investigating the volcano's odd behaviour." said Vector "Anything wrong with that?"

"Well YES!" screeched Amy "I'm not going up a freaking volcano! They're dangerous and they spew molten lava over everything! If we go up there we'll be fried like fish!"

Team Chaotix had found the girls and told them everything about Mount Adabat and how they were going to investigate its odd behaviour. Needless to say, Amy's reaction right now was not positive.

"But Amy, if we don't find out what's making Mount Adabat more active then usual a catastrophe could happen and Adabat may

cease to exist!" yelled Vector "We have to get up that volcano and find out what's wrong with it!"

"Ah hope ya'll don't mind me saying anything but how can there be something wrong with a volcano?" asked Bunnie "Volcanoes are mountains, not machines and there can't be something wrong with a mountain."

"Well there's something wrong with Mount Adabat and we're finding out what it is." said Vector.

"No we're not!" snapped Amy "I am not getting my eyelashes singed off by that fiery death rock!"

"But Amy, what if Mr. Vector is right and something bad does happen?" asked Cream, climbing out of the water and onto the decking "Volcanoes are very dangerous you know."

"Adabat is fine Cream." Amy insisted through gritted teeth "Mr. Vector is overreacting and he wants us to do something that's of no importance."

"No importance?" blurted Vector "I'll give you no importance you selfish little brat!" he snarled, cracking his knuckles.

"Selfish?" shrieked Amy "I'll show you who's the selfish one around here!"

She summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand and leaped out of her chair. She bent down in a fighting stance and got ready for a fight. Vector bared his teeth and prepared to beat the snot out of the little girl in the red dress that was being too stubborn to do the right thing now. But before the inevitable fight could start, Espio lunged at Amy and pinned her against the wall of a hut near her deck-chair by the arms while Bunnie Rabbit restrained Vector with her robot arm.

"Sorry Vector but ah don't want you and Amy fightin' right now." said Bunnie.

Vector said nothing and remained still. Amy however, was much less civil. She struggled in the grasp of Espio the Chameleon but the chameleon refused to let her go. He held her arms against the wall

and kept her pinned there while Amy tried to break free.

"Espio, let me go!" ordered Amy "I'm gonna teach your crocodile friend some manners!"

"I will not let you go unless you calm down and settle things nicely." said Espio sternly "There is no point in senselessly fighting since it's getting us nowhere."

Amy knew Espio right and she decided not to let her stubbornness get the best of her so she sighed heavily and stopped her futile struggles.

"I'm sorry Espio." said Amy "I just don't like people insulting me."

Espio nodded in an understanding manner and let Amy go.

"No one likes being insulted." said Espio "But my master once taught me that insults are a way of losing your focus and its best not to let yourself get annoyed by the enemy's insults or you'll lose your focus and the enemy will have the advantage over you in battle."

"I see." said Amy.

Bunnie let go of Vector and he and Amy walked up to each other, staring each other grimly in the eye.

"I'm sorry I tried to knock your teeth out." said Amy.

"And I'm sorry I called you selfish." said Vector.

The crocodile and hedgehog shook hands in a forgiving manner. After they shook hands, they let go of each other's hands and Amy spoke up.

"What's so bad about Mount Adabat being more active then before?" she asked "How active is it usually?"

"According to the desk clerk at the info centre, it only erupts every five years." explained Espio "But apparently there are occasional rumbles and the volcano does small erupts that only last thirty minutes. We're interested in finding out what's causing the volcano's

strange behaviour which is why we want to go up the volcano and investigate."

"But volcanoes are dangerous." said Amy "I don't want anyone getting hurt up there so I'm not keen on this idea."

"Well ah'm going." said Bunnie "I don't want the people of Adabat to get jumpy about their local volcano being more active then normal."

"I wanna go too." said Cream.

"Oh no you don't!" said Amy sternly "Volcanoes are much too dangerous for little girls like you Cream! You're staying here!"

"But…" protested Cream.

"And that's final!" hissed Amy.

"I can't stay here on my own Miss Rose." noted Cream "I'm not responsible enough yet."

"I'm staying here since I'm not risking my life searching through a stupid volcano." said Amy "So I can take care of you. And Cosmo's staying here too since I don't want her risking her life up that volcano."

"If that's what you wish Amy then OK." said Cosmo as she climbed out of the water and shook her skirt dry "I'm not keen on going up a volcano either."

Vector sighed a little but said nothing. Bunnie Rabbot was bound to be a lot of help on this investigation so it didn't matter too much that not everyone was going. Then suddenly Charmy Bee noticed something as he fluttered aimlessly around looking for something to do.

"Hey Amy, why is your tracker beeping?" he asked.

Amy reached into her pocket and fished out the tracker. She peered at the screen and noticed something. The tracker was picking up faint signs of Chaos Energy coming from Mount Adabat which was in the distance. Amy peered up from the tracker and saw the tall

volcano, silhouetted due to the distance in the horizon. She was so shocked at what the tracker was telling her she nearly squeaked in amazement.

"Wassup Amy?" asked Charmy "You look surprised? Is something wrong?"

"There's faint Chaos Energy being detected as coming from Mount Adabat." said Amy quietly.

"Chaos Energy?" said Cosmo "Does that mean that there's…a Chaos Emerald in the volcano?"

"Probably." said Espio "That sort of explains the volcano's weird behaviour. Maybe the Chaos Emerald's energy is making the volcano more active then usual."

"How is that possible?" asked Bunnie.

"Chaos Energy is powerful stuff and it sometimes doesn't react very positively to some elements." explained Espio "A Chaos Emerald in a volcano is not a good thing at all since Chaos Energy doesn't react well to intense heat. Chaos Energy is better off cool then hot."

"I see." said Amy "Well after that sudden find, I've changed my mind. We are all going up the volcano together to get that Chaos Emerald."

"Well that's amazing!" laughed Vector "You insist you're not going up that volcano and now there's a Chaos Emerald involved you wanna come with us after all!"

"Well I wanna get a Chaos Emerald." said Amy sheepishly "So I'm going to help get it. Let's get to that volcano before anyone else finds out there's a Chaos Emerald in it!"

With that said, Amy and her team marched off to find a rowing boat to use to get across the water and to Mount Adabat.

Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman had arrived in Adabat and was heading

towards the volcano. He observed his surroundings and was rather amused at the sunny nature of the country and the stilt house village was a sight to admire for him. They reminded him of the stilt houses a country on his home planet Earth had. Mobius really is similar to Earth isn't it? All the more reason for him wanting to conquer it. He'd failed to conquer his own planet but conquering Mobius would be a brilliant substitute due to the heavy similarities to Mobius and Earth. Conquering Mobius would be just like conquering Earth; only the planet was populated with anthromorphic animals instead of humans. If he conquered Mobius he would prove that humans were superior to animals whether they were human like or not.

"So Auto-Mandy, have you pin-pointed the emerald's location yet?" asked Dr. Eggman.

Auto-Mandy's ears rotated side to die and her eyes flashed.

"A-ffir-ma-tive." droned Mandy "The-emerald-is-in-the-volcano-a-head-of-us."

Dr. Eggman's moustache drooped down in despair. The Chaos Emerald Auto-Mandy had located was IN a volcano? So much for good luck! He'd never get the Chaos Emerald if it was in a volcano! Volcanoes were extremely hot on the inside and they were full of molten lava. If Eggman tried to get the emerald he would get roasted alive or caught up in an eruption should one go off.

"Well that's nice!" moaned Dr. Eggman "My third Chaos Emerald is in a volcano! How ever am I going to get it?"

"Well you could send Metal Sonic down there." said Alonzo "He'll be able to get the Chaos Emerald without being harmed by the volcano's searing hot molten lava."

"That's the problem though Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman sadly "I didn't make Metal Sonic heatproof. I didn't think he would need to be heatproof since I never thought he would be in a place of extreme heat."

"What about Auto-Mandy?" asked Alonzo "Is she heatproof?"

"Nope." said Dr. Eggman "If I was back in Robotropolis, I could upgrade her armour so it would be heatproof as well as waterproof."

"Can't Metal Sonic upgrade his armour with his data-copying abilities?" asked Alonzo.

"No." said Dr. Eggman "He copies data from life forms and his upgrades don't change his armour the slightest, it remains the same no matter how much data he copies."

"Ah." said Alonzo "That is a problem. We're never going to get that stupid Chaos Emerald now are we?"

"We will." said Dr. Eggman "I'm going straight back to Robotropolis to upgrade Metal Sonic's armour so it'll be heatproof and he'll be able to go into the volcano without being roasted by the lava."

But before Dr. Eggman could do anything, Metal Sonic who was hovering beside the Egg-Mobile spotted something and he tapped Eggman on the shoulder. Eggman looked at his robot duplicate and Metal Sonic pointed down at the water below. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo peered over the edge of the Egg-Mobile and they saw a little rowing boat rowing away from the shore and heading towards the volcano. From their height, they couldn't see who was in the boat so Dr. Eggman activated the built in scanner and zoomed in on the rowing boat down below He almost fell out of the Egg-Mobile in surprise.

"Jumping jackhammers!" blurted Dr. Eggman "Sonic's girlfriend Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Bunnie Rabbot, the plant girl and Team Chaotix are in that rowing boat and they're heading to the volcano!"

"Oh mumbling metal heads!" muttered Alonzo "They've found out there's a Chaos Emerald in the volcano. But they must have a death wish if they're going to look in it!"

Then Dr. Eggman suddenly had an idea.

"Hey Alonzo!" he said suddenly "Maybe we can use the Mobian's determination to get the Chaos Emerald to our advantage! If we hide and wait for them to get the Chaos Emerald, we can ambush them

and get the emerald for ourselves!"

"Master, that is a brilliant idea." said Alonzo "But what if the Mobians die trying to get the emerald?"

"Bunnie Rabbot's arms and legs can extend to great lengths." said Dr. Eggman, remembering what her robot limbs were capable of "She may be able to reach into the volcano and get the Chaos Emerald without having to go into the volcano. Once she gets the emerald, we shall snatch it off them, leave Metal Sonic behind to distract them and we make off with the emerald just like we did with Sonic and friends back in Kingdom Valley."

"I'm still smiling at our victory in Kingdom Valley." said Alonzo with a cruel smile on his face "A victory I'll remember forever."

Now Dr. Eggman had a plan, he flew the Egg-Mobile round behind the mountain and picked a good place to stay and wait until the Mobians had gotten the Chaos Emerald. He parked the mobile just above a large ledge sticking out from the volcano and waited for the Mobians to arrive and begin climbing the volcano. He watched his radar so he knew how far away the Mobians were from the volcano. They had made it half way across the water so far and they were still rowing on towards the volcano. They would arrive shortly and climb up the volcano so they could get inside it and get the Chaos Emerald. His good luck was returning to him already…

As for the Mobians, everybody except Amy was rowing the boat. Amy stood at the edge of the boat and admired the volcano they were heading too. Considering the fact that they were heading towards a volcano, it didn't seem too bad. The volcano seemed pretty calm right now. Maybe Amy wouldn't have to worry about getting burnt alive after all.

"Keep rowing everybody!" she yelled in her best commanding voice "We're almost there!"

"I don't see why everybody but you had to row this thing." muttered Vector as he did another stroke with the oar.

"Someone has to take charge." said Amy, preening "And I'm the one

who's doing so."

"That still doesn't mean you shouldn't row with us." grumbled Espio.

Amy ignored the chameleon and fixed her eyes back on the volcano. Charmy Bee decided to do something naughty to pay Amy back for this. He did another stroke with the oar he was using and then he flicked the water up into the air with the oar and the water landed on Amy's neck and trickled down her back. The water was so cold Amy leaped a foot into the air and almost fell off the boat! She landed on a seat in-between Cosmo and Cream who had an oar each and were towing along with the others. After that sudden shock Charmy gave Amy, everybody began laughing at her. Amy grumbled and her face turned from pink to red.

"Hey Amy, are you getting sunburn?" laughed Charmy mockingly.

"OK, which one of you thought it was funny to throw water at me?" demanded Amy angrily.

"Oh don't be such a baby Amy, its only water." sneered Vector.

Amy's fists shook with rage and she gritted her teeth. Since nobody decided to own up, she decided to let it go and keep on the look out. She stood at the front of boat and kept her eyes on the volcano. The boat was almost at the volcano, they just needed a few more rows and they would be ashore. Amy peered at the tracker. The tracker had a dot displayed on the screen. That meant there was a Chaos Emerald in the volcano after all. But before the boat could get ashore, the entire scenery began to rumble again. The only thing was the rumble was louder and more intense then the one Vector, Espio and Charmy had experienced earlier since they were closer to the volcano. Then suddenly, the volcano spouted a small amount of lava that trickled down the mountain like a small-waterfall trickling down a mountain and headed straight into the sea. The Mobians quickly rowed away from the volcano just as the lava trickled into the sea. There was a loud hiss just as the hot lava was put out by the cold water and steam slowly drifted up from the lava as it was put out. A few minutes later the lava finished trickling into the sea and the steam faded away and the volcano was silent again. The Mobians rowed back up to the volcano and the boat ground ashore

on some flat rock at the bottom of the volcano. Everybody climbed out of the boat and stared up at the volcano. The volcano was enormous and the top of it was extremely high up.

"OK, we've gotta climb that thing and get inside." said Amy "It's gonna be a long climb though."

"No it isn't sugah." said Bunnie "Me, Cream and Charmy can fly so we'll fly ya'll up to the top of the volcano."

With that said, Bunnie held Amy by the hand and activated her jet boosters in her feet and took to the skies. The Rabbot carried Amy up the volcano. Cream flapped her ears and took flight with Cheese flying with her. She held Cosmo by the hand and carried her up to the top of the volcano. Charmy, despite being a small bee was a very strong bee. He managed to carry Espio and Vector both together and he flew them both up to the top of the volcano. Dr. Eggman watched them in secret. He smiled to himself.

"They're here at last." he said to himself "Now they'll get that Chaos Emerald for me and I'll snatch it from their hands!"

He peered up at the top of the volcano and watched as Bunnie Rabbot landed and put Amy down, Cream landed and put Cosmo down and Charmy landed and put his two team-mates down. Dr. Eggman remained in his Egg-Mobile and waited for them to get the Chaos Emerald. As for the Mobians, they peered down into the crater of the volcano which was as wide as a house. The crater was full of molten lava and rocks floating about in the lava. The lava seemed rather restless. It kept swirling around and sweeping in waves against the walls. This definitely made everybody nervous about going inside.

"Well Vector, you wanted to go up here so are we going in?" asked Amy.

"I guess…we'll have to." said Vector quietly "Does the tracker know where the emerald is?" he suddenly asked.

Amy peered at the tracker. The tracker displayed the inside of the volcano's crater and it showed the Chaos Emerald was embedded

in a rock in the centre of the crater. Amy looked over the tracker and saw a rock in the centre of the volcano crater. The tracker was telling her that the Chaos Emerald was in that rock.

"The tracker says the emerald is in that rock in the centre of the crater." said Amy, pointing at the rock in the centre of the volcano crater "One of us is going to have to go down there and get it."

"Well don't look at me!" shrieked Charmy "I'm not flying down there and fetching that Chaos Emerald! I'll singe my wings off!"

"No one is going down that crater." said Bunnie "Mah robot arm can extend to great lengths. I'll just reach down into the crater and bring that Chaos Emerald up to us."

"That's great Bunnie!" said Amy "And to think we'd have to risk our lives for this mission."

"Where's the emerald?" asked Bunnie.

"On that rock in the middle." said Amy, pointing at it again.

Bunnie saw the rock and lay down on her tummy near the edge of the crater. She aimed her robot arm at the rock and the robotic arm began to slowly extend. Her arm extended longer and longer and reached further and further down into the searing hot crater. Bunnie could feel the heat of the volcano on her metal hand as her arm extended further and further down the crater. Lava bubbled and crashed against the walls like waves against the cliffs. Bunnie's arm continued extending and soon enough, it was directly above the emerald. But that's when the trouble started. Her arm stopped extending just about two feet above the rock. Her arm wouldn't extend any further and she couldn't reach the Chaos Emerald.

"What's the matter Bunnie?" asked Amy.

"Mah arm has reached its limit." said Bunnie sadly "Ah can't stretch it any further and ah can't reach the Chaos Emerald. I'll have to bend down a little further and…"

"No Bunnie, you might fall in." said Amy "Someone will have to go down your arm and get the Chaos Emerald and once they've got the

Chaos Emerald, you pull that person back up."

"But who's gonna be brave enough to do it?" asked Cream "Not me for sure. It looks scary in there."

"Chao." said Cheese in agreement.

Vector, Espio and Charmy all exchanged glances with one another. They were wondering which one of them should go down and get the emerald. But before any of them could say a word, Cosmo stepped forward.

"I will go." she volunteered.

"You?" blurted Amy "Are you sure about this Cosmo? You do realize fire isn't exactly a plant's best friend do you?"

"I know." said Cosmo "But please let me go down. I only wish to be of some use to you and I wish to do so by putting my life ahead of everybody else's."

Amy was rather awestruck by the Seedrian's bravery. She never knew Cosmo had such courage contained inside her all along.

"You're brave Cosmo." Amy complimented.

"That's what the war between my kind and the Martians has taught me." said Cosmo "Be brave no matter what the situation is. Wish me luck down there."

"I certainly will." said Amy with a smile "You be careful down there or I'm coming after you!"

Cosmo nodded and wondered over to Bunnie, the Rabbot still lying near the edge of the crater with her arm extended down into the crater. Cosmo peered down into the lava filled crater and gulped nervously. All of the sudden, she didn't feel so courageous but she knew that no one else was willing to do such a dangerous task so she shook off her fear and grabbed Bunnie's arm. She wrapped her arms and legs around the extended robot arm and began to slowly slide down it like a fire-fighter sliding down a pole.

"Be careful down there sugah." said Bunnie "If ya'll want me to pull you back up to the top, just gently pull mah finger and I'll pull you up."

"OK." said Cosmo, shaking a little "I hope I'm going to make it. Down I go."

Cosmo began to slowly edge her way down Bunnie's arm, her hands and legs holding on tight as she slowly descended down into the crater. Everybody peered down the crater to watch her. The first few feet of her descent weren't too bad but further down, the heat around Cosmo began to increase. It was already hot enough outside but the crater of a volcano was even hotter and Cosmo could feel it over every inch of her small body. She began to sweat a little. She continued edging her way down the extended robot arm, albeit a little quicker so she could get to the bottom faster. Then suddenly, a huge spout of lava leaped up into the air and the poor Seedrian was frightened out of her skin. She screamed at the top of her voice. She was so shocked by that sudden spout of lava she almost fell off Bunnie's arm. The lava spout stopped and it fell back into the pool of lava down below in rainfalls. Cosmo panted and whimpered but she didn't give up. She continued to edge down. She was almost at the bottom of Bunnie's arm which was dangling two feet above the rock. Cosmo was two feet tall so she was the perfect height for this. Cosmo finally made it to the bottom of Bunnie's arm and she stepped down onto the rock that floated in the middle of the crater, her hands and head raining with sweat. It didn't feel very stable; it wobbled dangerously side to side as Cosmo stepped on it. Cosmo held her arms out to the side to keep her balance as the rock wobbled, threatening to throw her off and into the scorching hot lava she was surrounded by. Cosmo fell onto her hands and knees to stop the rock wobbling and she saw a faint red light coming from the centre of the rock. It was the red Chaos Emerald! Cosmo grabbed the emerald and pulled on it. The emerald refused to budge. It had been embedded in the rock and it would take a lot of pulling on it to wrench it free. Cosmo pulled and pulled but she couldn't quite wrench the emerald out of the rock. The emerald was stuck fast. Then suddenly, another jet of lava shot up into the air like a missile and Cosmo jumped in terror. The lava shot straight up and then stopped and fell back down into the lava in huge drops. The lava

sizzled as it the drops splashed into it. Cosmo felt her thumping chest and breathed fast and heavily. She thought hard to keep her breathing under control. After Cosmo stopped panting, she tried once again to wrench the emerald out of the rock. She pulled with all her might but the emerald still wouldn't budge. Then more trouble began. The rock the emerald was embedded in had become weak and frail from being in the boiling hot lava for so long and it began to break away into pieces! Cosmo wobbled about but she managed to regain her balance. The rock cracked down the middle, giving Cosmo the opportunity to finally wrench the emerald out of the rock and then it broke away into three pieces, one large piece and two smaller pieces. The two smaller pieces drifted away and sank down in the sizzling hot lava. Cosmo began to panic, she clutched the emerald tightly to her chest just as the rock she stood on broke away in another piece. The only remaining piece was only just big enough for Cosmo to stand up on. Frantic and desperate to get out before she was boiled alive, Cosmo yanked on Bunnie's fingers which dangled just above her head.

"I've got the emerald!" she yelled "Pull me up quickly before I get engulfed by the lava!"

Bunnie did not wait to be asked twice. Her arm began to retract, lifting Cosmo off the rock and bringing her back up to the surface just as a jet of lava shot up again, almost making Cosmo drop the Chaos Emerald. Bunnie's arm retracted more and more until finally it had fully retracted and pulled Cosmo up to the surface of the volcano. Amy and Cream immediately grabbed Cosmo and pulled the terrified Seedrian onto the rocky surface away from the crater. Cosmo was gasping and whimpering slightly but she didn't appear to be hurt the slightest. Her eyes had darkened underneath and the tips of her skirt had been mildly singed from flying drops of lava but she was alright. She handed Amy the glowing red Chaos Emerald. Amy took it.

"You did it Cosmo! You got the Chaos Emerald!" cheered Amy.

"I know I have." gasped Cosmo "I'm never going down a volcano again! It's terrifying down there and I almost got boiled alive!"

"You were very brave Cosmo." Cream complimented "Well done.

We're very proud of you."

Cosmo nodded and wiped her darkened eyes to get the ash off of them.

"Thanks Cream." said Cosmo "I'm glad I was able to help."

"Now we have this Chaos Emerald, we can leave here." said Amy "And hopefully Mount Adabat will be a littler calmer now the Chaos Emerald has been removed from it."

"It seems you're right Amy." said Vector "The lava in the crater appears to be less restless now."

Everybody looked down the crater and saw the pool of lava down below. Surely enough, the waves and jets of lava had stopped, the bubbling had slowed down and the lava was much stiller then before.

"So I guess the Chaos Emerald was the reason for Mount Adabat's odd behaviour." said Espio "In that case, we've done the people of Adabat a favour and put their mountain back to normal."

"That's a good thing." said Amy "It wouldn't be nice for the people of Adabat to be worrying about Mount Adabat being more active then usual so now Mount Adabat's fixed, they have nothing to worry about. Now let's get off this lava factory shall we?" she added "I can't wait to show this Chaos Emerald to Sonic. It definitely makes up for…"

Then suddenly Metal Sonic pounced on Amy from behind and tackled her to the ground! Amy dropped the Chaos Emerald and the gleaming red gem bounced with a noisy clatter down the mountain. Dr. Eggman appeared from behind the volcano in his Egg-Mobile and Auto-Mandy extended her arm to catch the Chaos Emerald just before it could plummet into the water and disappear forever. She withdrew her arm and gave the Chaos Emerald to Dr. Eggman who held it in front of his face and smiled like a child that's just brought a new toy from the toy shop.

"Hello boys and girls!" cackled Dr. Eggman "I bet you didn't see my

surprise attack coming did you?"

"Eggman!" snarled Amy, summoning her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand "You give me that Chaos Emerald back or I'll leave a permanent imprint of my hammer on your face!"

Dr. Eggman just laughed a loud, grating laugh at Amy.

"Do you really think you'll be able to that Amy?" crowed Dr. Eggman "I'm all the way up here and out of your reach and I have Metal Sonic ready to beat the cuss out of you all! And he has an assistant too."

He motioned to Auto-Mandy who sat beside him with an evil smirk on her face. Amy stared at the Automaton and pulled a puzzled face.

"Mandy Mouse?" she shrieked "What the heck is she doing with you?"

"It's not Mandy Mouse my dear." said Dr. Eggman with a big grin on his face "It's an Automaton or in other words, a robot duplicate of Mandy Mouse. I used it to fool Sonic and friends and she helped me get two Chaos Emeralds."

He held up the purple and blue Chaos Emeralds for Amy to see. Amy and her entire team gasped in astonishment.

"You have two Chaos Emeralds?" shrieked Amy.

"Yes I do." said Dr. Eggman "And now I've just stolen your Chaos Emerald, I have three. Now if you don't mind, I'm going to fly away and find the other four Chaos Emeralds. Metal Sonic! Auto-Mandy! Keep those fools busy while I escape! If you want, you can kill them just like you killed Sonic and his team." he added with a sadistic grin on his face.

That statement made everybody gasp. Amy was so taken aback with horror she felt numb all over her body. She couldn't even feel her hammer in her hands right now.

"You…killed…Sonic…and…his…team?" squeaked Amy, her voice

hoarse and raspy with shock. Her eyes brimmed with tears.

"Yes." said Dr. Eggman "Metal Sonic drowned them all in Kingdom Valley and if you want, you can join them! Bye, bye!"

And with that, his Egg-Mobile turned around and he flew away as fast as he could. Auto-Mandy leaped out of the Egg-Mobile and some flaps of material extended out of her arms to form gliding wings to glide with. She glided towards Mount Adabat and she fired some lasers out of her eyes. Bunnie Rabbot activated her force-field and defended herself from the laser blasts. She flew up into the air and gave Auto-Mandy a terrific uppercut to the chin. The Automaton mouse fell from the sky and dived straight into the sea at the bottom of the volcano. Unfortunately for the Mobians, Auto-Mandy was water proof so she was unaffected by the water. She climbed out of the water and scurried up the volcano like a mouse usually scurries. Back in the air, Bunnie Rabbot flew off in an attempt to catch Dr. Eggman and get the Chaos Emeralds back. Unfortunately, Metal Sonic caught her and punched away to the side. Bunnie cart wheeled through the air and came to a halt before she could crash. She deployed her arm cannon and fired a laser blast at Metal Sonic but the metal duplicate dodged the blow and let her have it with his torso laser. Bunnie was sent hurling through the air and crashing into the volcano. She came to a very painful halt against some sharp stubby rocks. Pain streamed up her back and she felt like someone was shoving a million daggers into her back. Metal Sonic charged towards Bunnie Rabbot with his claws bared but Bunnie Rabbot blasted him before he could attack her and Metal Sonic skimmed over the Rabbot's head. He crashed into the rocky surface of the volcano headfirst but the metal duplicate didn't seem to be hurt the slightest. Metal Sonic picked himself up and charged at Bunnie Rabbot again. Bunnie lunged at Metal Sonic and the two linked arms and began to grapple with one another. While Bunnie and Metal Sonic were duelling, Auto-Mandy finally made it back up to the top of the volcano and she tried to pounce on Bunnie Rabbot but Espio threw a shuriken at the Automaton and it struck her directly in the back. Auto-Mandy fell onto her front and before she could get back up, Vector grabbed her by the arms and proceeded to rip them out of their sockets. The Automaton shrieked at the top of her voice and then Vector smashed Auto-Mandy to pieces with one powerful

punch slam to the ground. Auto-Mandy lay in pieces on the rocky surface of the volcano and Vector kicked the remains off the volcano and into the sea. But he didn't have time to celebrate his victory over the Automaton. Metal Sonic had broken free from Bunnie's grapple with him and he was furious to see Auto-Mandy destroyed. Metal Sonic charged into Vector and elbowed him straight in the gut. Vector gasped hoarsely as all the air in his lungs was sucked out of him by Metal Sonic's powerful attack. He fell on his back and grimaced, clutching his sore stomach. Metal Sonic tried to attack him again but Espio threw a shuriken at him which forced Metal Sonic to stop what he was doing and catch the shuriken before it could dissect him. Metal Sonic threw it back at Espio but the ninja-chameleon caught it in lightening speed and put it away. Espio lunged at Metal Sonic and gave him a ninja-style kick to the head and then a punch to the stomach. Metal Sonic retaliated with a ninja-kick of his own only his was harder and Espio staggered backwards. Since Metal Sonic had copied everybody's data, he had their abilities too such as Espio's ninjutsu and Knuckle's super strength. Metal Sonic and Espio both kicked each other but neither of them harmed the other and they landed back on the volcano. Metal Sonic and Espio lunged at each other and Espio gave him an upwards chop to the chin. Then Espio let him have it in the torso with both feet. Metal Sonic back flipped in the air and he landed on his feet and skidded across the hard rocky surface of the mountain. Metal Sonic picked up a rock and he threw it at the ninja chameleon but Espio just kicked the rock and broke it in two. But the rock was just a distraction and Espio found that out after Metal Sonic charged at him and gave him a sucker punch in the face. Espio stumbled and then Metal Sonic spin-dashed the chameleon, sending Espio flying into the air only to get caught by Charmy Bee before he could land anywhere painful. Charmy spun Espio around and around in the air. Seeing as Metal Sonic had copied their data, he knew exactly what they were doing so he took to the sky and flew up towards Charmy and Espio like a rocket taking off. Charmy stopped spinning Espio around and he flung the chameleon towards the oncoming Metal Sonic. Espio shot through the air like a bullet and he raised his arms, ready to land a punch on Metal Sonic. But Metal Sonic was too quick for him and he dodged the oncoming Espio. He dropkicked him and then punch slammed him straight back down into the ground. Cream flew up and caught the chameleon before he could

hit the volcano and she lowered him gently down to the surface. Charmy panicked, seeing his attack didn't work and he began to fly away, not daring to take on Metal Sonic himself. But Metal Sonic was much too fast for the bee and he blasted Charmy with his torso laser. Charmy shrieked and he fell down to earth like a falling plane. Vector had recovered from Metal Sonic's earlier attack and he ran up to catch Charmy before he could crash. He leaped up with his arms stretched out as far as they would go and he caught the falling bee before he could make an unpleasant impact with the rocky surface of the volcano. Metal Sonic zoomed down towards Vector and Charmy with his claws bared. But before he could attack them from behind, Cosmo picked a rock up and threw it at Metal Sonic. The rock pinged him on the head and disrupted his dive, causing him to miss Vector and Charmy and crash face first into the ground. The impact seemed to have shaken Metal Sonic a little. After he picked himself up, his eyes were fuzzing a little and his face was full of tiny dents and scratches. Cosmo beamed to herself, her shot had been bang on target. While Metal Sonic was still recovering from that incredible attack, Espio, Vector and Charmy all punched him in the back and sent the robot flying off the volcano. Metal Sonic activated his jet booster to save himself from falling any further and he charged back towards the volcano. Bunnie Rabbot took flight and gave Metal Sonic an uppercut before he could get anywhere near the volcano. Metal Sonic spiralled in the air before regaining balance and then charging at Bunnie again.

While all this fighting had been going off, Amy had just been sitting there on her knees, petrified with shock over Sonic's "death". We all know that Sonic and friends are still alive but Amy didn't know that and the very thought of Sonic dead made Amy feel weak and numb all over. She was so shocked by this she couldn't even cry. She just stared at the ground with her eyes wide open, her mouth hanging open and still as a statue. Her hammer lay beside her.

"Sonic…is…dead?" she repeated to herself for the millionth time already "No…that…can't…be!"

While she mused to herself, Metal Sonic slammed Bunnie down on the volcano surface and then landed some punches on Vector just as the crocodile was about to smash him up in his jaws.

"How could this happen?" Amy croaked "Sonic can't be dead! I know he isn't! I don't care if Eggman says Metal Sonic drowned him and his team mates, I don't believe it. Metal Sonic maybe tough, but there's no way he'd be lucky enough to get the drop on Sonic and kill him. But what if Eggman's right?"

Unbeknownst to Amy, Metal Sonic just gave Espio an uppercut that almost knocked the chameleon out and then he blasted Charmy, who was sneaking up behind the robot duplicate, with his back laser and brought Charmy falling down. Bunnie and Vector both punched Metal Sonic in the head and Bunnie blasted him with her laser cannon. But after that shot, Bunnie fell down on knee and began panting.

"You alright Bunnie?" asked Vector.

"Ah'm fine Vector, ah'm just gettin' a little worn out." panted Bunnie "Mah robot limbs are very tiring to use after all."

"Well you rest up a moment, me and the boys will keep Metal Sonic at bay for you." said Vector.

"OK sugah." said Bunnie, creeping away from the battle and towards the petrified Amy.

Vector, Espio and Charmy continued fighting Metal Sonic while Bunnie rested herself. Cream and Cosmo were with Amy and they were staying well out of the fight since they wouldn't be much help to the others. Cosmo tried to comfort Amy but she still wouldn't snap out of her petrified stance.

"Amy, please stop musing to yourself." said Cosmo, shaking her a little "Your friends need your help right now. Metal Sonic is too tough for the Chaotix and Bunnie to take by themselves; we need you to help them."

Amy didn't move.

"Miss Rose, come on." begged Cream "We need to stop Metal Sonic and catch up to Dr. Eggman so we can get those Chaos Emeralds back."

Amy still didn't move. She remained frozen to the spot with shock. Bunnie frowned at the shocked hedgehog. She marched up to Amy, picked her up and held her up to her face.

"Listen sugah, we're fightin' for our lives here and ya'll can do is sit there grieving over Sonic and his friend's deaths!" she shouted "Do ya'll think Sonic would sit a fight out and do nothin'? No he wouldn't! Ya'll need to stop grieving right now and help us! What do you think Sonic would want you to do right now?"

That snapped Amy out of her petrified gaze. She blinked furiously and shook her head. She had finally come back down to earth and was back to reality.

"Sonic would want me to carry on fighting for him." said Amy quietly "Thanks for helping me regain my senses Bunnie."

"No problem sugah." said Bunnie, putting Amy down "Ah'm just happy helping mah friends out."

Now Amy had come back to reality, she picked up her Piko-Piko hammer and raised it above her head.

"Cream, can you fly me up into the air?" asked Amy.

"Sure Miss Rose." said Cream, taking Amy by the hand and flapping her ears.

She took to the skies and carried Amy up into the air. Metal Sonic was still brawling with Team Chaotix. Vector tried to smash him in his jaws but Metal Sonic grabbed him by the jaws, lifted him off the ground by his jaws and slammed him right on top of Espio, who was running up to attack him. Charmy flew around Metal Sonic and he tried to sting him but Metal Sonic punched Charmy away. Metal Sonic looked up at the sky and saw Cream flying above him with Amy in tow. Metal Sonic took flight and began flying up after them. Cream threw Amy into the air and Amy came hurtling down towards the oncoming Metal Sonic with her hammer raised and ready to smash him into pieces. Amy brought the hammer swinging down and she walloped Metal Sonic right on the cranium and sent the stricken robot diving back down into the ground. Cream caught Amy

and lowered her down just as Metal Sonic crashed into the rocky surface. Before Metal Sonic could even get up, Amy smacked him with the hammer and sent him nearly flying over the edge.

"This is for Sonic!" shrieked Amy, running up to Metal Sonic with her hammer raised and ready to smash him to smithereens.

Metal Sonic leaped to his feet and blasted Amy in the face with his torso cannon. The hammer swinging heroine was sent hurtling backwards and landing sharply on her back. Metal Sonic picked up her hammer and walloped Cream, who was trying to attack him from behind and sent the rabbit crashing into a rock. That impact hurt Cream so much she began crying. She had horrible scrapes and thin cuts on her face after crashing into the rock. Metal Sonic threw Amy's hammer away and advanced on the downed pink hedgehog, only to get an uppercut from a fully recovered Bunnie Rabbot.

"Ya'll do not touch Amy Rose gruesome!" said Bunnie firmly "I'm gonna have to teach ya'll a lesson now!"

Metal Sonic and Bunnie both punched at each other, their fists making contact and they both skidded backwards. Bunnie extended her arm and tried to punch Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic grabbed the arm and squeezed on it with his metal claws. Then he did something he never did before. He electrocuted Bunnie Rabbot! Electricity emerged from the palm of his hands and surged up Bunnie's arm like an electrical current. Eggman had given him the data of Mecha Sonic after all so he had all the abilities of Mecha Sonic, even though he didn't use them much and now he was using Mecha Sonic's electrical attack to knock Bunnie out. Bunnie screamed at the top of her voice as electricity surged through her robotic arm and up and down her body. After a minute of shocking her, Bunnie's eyes closed and she collapsed. Amy leapt to her feet, summoned a new hammer to her hand and tried to attack Metal Sonic again but Metal Sonic dropkicked her and threw Amy into Vector, who was just running up to attack him. Then Metal Sonic grabbed the unconscious Bunnie Rabbot by her arms, took flight and carried her away. Amy got back to her feet and threw her hammer at Metal Sonic but the hammer didn't get anywhere near hitting Metal Sonic and it just fell down into the sea. Metal Sonic disappeared from sight with Bunnie Rabbot in his clutches. Amy fell onto her knees and

thumped the ground as hard as she could, only to realize it was hard rocky ground and she just made her fist sore and she sucked on it to ease the pain.

"I can't believe our bad luck recently!" moaned Amy "We lose two Chaos Emeralds to Rouge the Bat, we lose one to Dr. Eggman and now Metal Sonic's just kidnapped Bunnie Rabbot! Can it get any worse?"

"I wouldn't ask that if I were you." said Charmy "Because it might get worse and we don't want that to happen do we?"

"Of course not!" snapped Amy.

"How are we going to save Bunnie Amy?" asked Cream "We're all the way in Adabat and by the time we get to Robotropolis, we'll be too late and Eggman might roboticize Bunnie!"

"We don't know until we try." said Amy "We're gonna try and catch up to Metal Sonic and get to Robotropolis in time to save Bunnie and get those Chaos Emeralds from Dr. Eggman!"

"And how exactly are we gonna do that then?" asked Vector "We can't run as fast as Sonic and we don't have a speedy mode of transport. We'll never get to Robotropolis in time!"

It then occurred to Amy that she had no idea whatsoever.

"I…don't know Vector." said Amy "I think we're stumped here."

"It certainly seems that way." said Espio "Dr. Eggman has beaten us this time."

"No he hasn't." said Amy "He may roboticize Bunnie but the researchers still have Eggman's portable roboticizer robot that Tails gave them***** so even if he does roboticize Bunnie, we can save her."

"I see." said Vector "But I'd much prefer to save her before she gets roboticized. Now let's stop wasting time and get off this volcano already!"

That was all Vector needed to say. Cream took Amy and Cosmo by the hands and she flew them off of Mount Adabat while Charmy carried Espio and Vector off the mountain. In order to get to shore quicker, instead of flying down the mountain and using the rowing boat, they flew all the way back to the shores. They made if there in a matter of seconds and once everybody touched down, they ran for it. Amy had no idea on what to do right now but she knew she had to get out of Adabat and get to Robotropolis as fast as possible. And as luck would have it, they came across a black hover car with no roof that appeared to be unoccupied.

"Look! A hover car!" cried Amy "We can use that to speed things up and get to Robotropolis quicker!"

"Let's just hope its fast enough." said Charmy as everybody ran over to the car.

Vector sat in the driver's seat since he could drive, Espio and Charmy sat in the passenger's seat and Amy, Cream and Cosmo sat in the back. Vector started the car and the hover whirred into life. It raised off the ground and hovered above it and then Vector sped off through the village. In no time, they left Adabat (it's a small country so it doesn't take long to drive out of it) and they were speeding off down the road and off to the Northern Border of Megapolis, the location of Eggman's robotical city, Robotropolis.

"Hang on Bunnie, we're coming!" yelled Amy as the car sped on down the road.

The Mobians didn't know if they would make it in time but Amy hoped with all her might that they would get to Robotropolis and save Bunnie Rabbot from roboticization…

Meanwhile, Metal Sonic arrived in Robotropolis with the captured Bunnie Rabbot and the delight on Dr. Eggman's face at the arrival of such a dangerous enemy was priceless. He literally squealed with joy like a five year old girl! Bunnie was one enemy he had been wanting to capture for ages since she was powerful and hard to bring down and also she was part robot so he wanted to finish her

interrupted roboticization off and add her to his Robian army which had recently been on the decline what with the Mobians still using his first Portable Roboticizer to change everybody back to normal. He literally only had thirty Robians left, not that it mattered too much since his robots were just as powerful but Robians created more problems for the Mobians since they had to hold back on them so they wouldn't kill them and eliminate any chance of saving them so he wanted some more. And now Metal Sonic had captured Bunnie Rabbot for him, it looked like he was going to get a new addition to his Robian army and the one addition he'd been dying to add for months on end. To make sure the powerful cyborg rabbit wouldn't get away, Eggman chained her to a post with thick heavy chains. Her arms had been raised over her head and the chains were wrapped around her wrists, arms, thighs, ankles and waist. There were two chains that were criss-crossed around her just to add extra restraint to her. Bunnie was completely immobilized; she was going absolutely nowhere right now. When Bunnie had came to and realize she was wrapped in chains, she tried to break free but Eggman had picked very thick, strong chains and he'd wrapped so many around her she would never escape, even if she struggled for a million years. Not even Knuckles would be able to get free of so many thick chains. Bunnie stopped her pitiful struggling and she remained tight-lipped and she glared at Eggman angrily. Dr. Eggman just laughed at the powerless Rabbot that was completely at his mercy now.

"Wah, ha, ha, ha, ha!" he cackled triumphantly "Oh what a marvellous feeling this is! Sonic and some of his friends are dead and now I have Bunnie Rabbot completely at my mercy! I'm such a brilliant scientist aren't I?"

"Big deal Eggman." muttered Bunnie "It was Metal Sonic who darn caught me and ya'll know it."

Dr. Eggman stopped his merry dance and glanced despairingly at Metal Sonic who stood there silent as a statue with his eyes fixed straight ahead of him.

"Well I built Metal Sonic so the victory is mine." claimed Dr. Eggman "Now, let's get down to business shall we?"

"I suppose by "business" ya'll mean me becoming part of your gruesome robot army." said Bunnie miserably.

"Correct." said Dr. Eggman with a malevolent grin on his hideous face "I've been looking forward to this ever since you joined the Royal Fighters Service you know!"

"Ya'll ain't gonna get away with this Eggman!" said Bunnie coldly "Mah friends are gonna arrive her any moment now and then ya'll well be sorry!"

"Me? Sorry?" sneered Dr. Eggman "Never! I'm all the way over here and they're all the way in Adabat! I'm miles away from Amy and her group, they'll take hours to get here! And don't count on Sonic the Hedgehog saving you because he's dead Rabbot! Face it Bunnie, you're FINISHED at long last!"

Dr. Eggman laughed straight in Bunnie's face, sending drops of salvia flying into her beautiful green eyes. Bunnie blinked to get them out and she frowned at the cackling doctor, not bothering to say another word.

"Now let's stop wasting time and get on with this shall we?" said Dr. Eggman "Alonzo! Get me the Portable Roboticizer 3000 Mk III!"

"Yes sir, defiantly sir, right away sir!" said Alonzo excitedly, zipping off at the speed of a moped and getting the portable roboticizer.

"Mark three?" questioned Bunnie "What happened to the second one like?"

"Sonic wrecked it before I could roboticize the citizens of Knothole*****." said Dr. Eggman glumly, remembering his first ever encounter with Amy Rose "But since he's gone forever, he won't wreck this one."

Alonzo suddenly reappeared with Port Mk III. Like the first two Portable Roboticizer bots, it was dome shaped with four cannons but it was larger then the other two Portable Roboticizer bots and it was coloured leaf gold. Alonzo tapped a few buttons on the control pad around the back and Port's four cannons pointed straight at the

tied up Bunnie Rabbot. Bunnie didn't show any signs of fear. Even though deep inside she was terrified at this, she did not want Dr. Eggman to have the satisfaction of seeing her terrified face so she kept a straight face and glared at the four-cannoned robot pointing its cannons at her, ready to blast her and roboticize her. As Port began to power up, Dr. Eggman smiled evilly at Bunnie.

"Any last words Rabbot?" he sneered.

"Not really apart from "Ah hope someone takes Sonic's place and defeats ya'll once and for all."" mumbled Bunnie.

"Sorry, I didn't hear that." said Dr. Eggman mockingly "But never mind, I think I can guess what they were. Alonzo, activate the portable roboticizer!"

"With pleasure Dr. Eggman." said Alonzo loyally.

He pressed the activate button and Port's cannons began to whir into life. The insides of the cannons began to glow brightly as the lasers were ready to blast. Bunnie closed her eyes and prepared for the inevitable. Then suddenly a blue blur appeared from nowhere and spin-dashed Port Mk III into tiny little pieces just before it could fire! Port exploded right in front of Dr. Eggman and Alonzo and the two villains were thrown off their feet. Metal Sonic somehow remained standing. Bunnie opened her eyes and realized she was still a cyborg. Then suddenly something churned through her chains from behind and they all collapsed to the ground in pieces. Bunnie was free! Dr. Eggman climbed onto his feet and got the biggest shock of his life. His moustache twisted and straightened and his glasses almost fell off his nose! Alonzo was so shocked his optics popped out of their sockets and bounced on the floor like ping-pong balls! Even Bunnie Rabbot was shocked at what she was seeing right now.

"Oh mah stars…" she gasped.

"Hey Eggman!" said the voice of none other then Sonic the Hedgehog. He had Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk and Wilson the Dog standing beside him with their fists bared and itching to beat Eggman up.

"If you're having a party then you should have invited us!" added Sonic, smirking at the gobsmacked scientist that lay before him, unable to believe what he had just seen…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 31 for the whole showdown**

**** See Story 39**

***** See Story 29 for one of the most nail-biting climaxes ever**

****** In Story 13, Tails stole Eggman's portable roboticizer**

******* See Story 15**

Eggman now has THREE Chaos Emeralds! It doesn't seem like he'll be keeping hold of them for long though since Sonic the Hedgehog is here! Will Sonic get the emeralds back? And who's going to find the last two emeralds that are left? Join me next time as Sonic dukes it out with Metal Sonic and then dukes it out with some old enemies... Read and Review.

The Grand City Showdown

Story 42: The Grand City Showdown

"Huh…wha…ga…jib…jab…gop…gip…lip…lap…whip…whap…wonk…wink…sink…sank…nick…nack…nock…hink…hank…WHHHHAAAAAAAATTTTTTTTTTT?" gibbered Dr. Eggman "HOW THE FLYING BALLS OF STEEL IS THIS POSSIBLE? Metal Sonic told me he drowned you all! You're supposed to be at the bottom of the water in Kingdom Valley Sonic!"

Sonic scoffed at him.

"Puh! You wish!" he sneered "We hid from Metal Sonic after he threw us into the water to trick him into thinking we'd drowned so you'd think we were dead! And it worked to perfection too. Metal Sonic was fooled and you were fooled Egghead. What do ya say to that fat man?"

Dr. Eggman leaped up onto his feet and a flurry and he was so angry he literally bellowed out the words as he gave the order.

"I say…METAL SONIC! KILL THEM ALL!" he roared.

Metal Sonic obeyed and he spin-dashed towards Sonic. Sonic dodged Metal Sonic's attack, leaving the metal duplicate to crash into the floor and scrape across it while in spin-dash. Metal Sonic stopped and spun around to attack Sonic but Sonic spin-dashed Metal Sonic and sent him falling onto his back. Sonic tried to spin-dash Metal Sonic again but Metal Sonic held his arms out in a cross shape and defended himself from the blow. Sonic managed to push Metal Sonic backwards a little while in spin-dash but Metal Sonic threw him away before he could overpower the vicious metal clone. Then Knuckles punched Metal Sonic in the back of the head and sent him hurtling across the room and landing slap-bang upside down into the wall. Dr. Eggman wasn't pleased with this at all.

"Metal Sonic, stop playing about and destroy them!" roared Dr. Eggman.

Metal Sonic wrenched himself free from the wall and charged towards Sonic. Sonic leaped out of the way and dropkicked him into the floor. Then Knuckles gave Metal Sonic an uppercut that sent him hurling through the air in a rainbow arch. Before he could land thought, Bunnie Rabbot gave Metal Sonic an uppercut and sent him flying back towards Knuckles. Tails flew through the air and dropkicked Metal Sonic into another wall. Metal Sonic crashed into the wall and slid down to the floor. Dr. Eggman couldn't believe his eyes. Metal Sonic, his strongest creation and most ingenious invention ever was LOSING to his most hated enemies? How was that possible?

"Hey Metal Sonic, what's the matter?" sneered Sonic "Are you getting tired? You look worn out buddy! Maybe I can give you a rest…in PIECES that is!"

Sonic leaped into the air, spun into a spin-dash and hurtled towards Metal Sonic. But Metal Sonic was ready this time. He leaped to his feet and he punched the spin-dashing Sonic away. Sonic had no idea where he was going after that attack and he accidentally crashed into Tails and knocked the fox off his feet. Sonic and Tails crashed in a heap on the floor.

"Oooh, sorry Tails." said Sonic weakly.

"That's OK Sonic." said Tails.

Metal Sonic advanced on Sonic and Tails, his claws bared and ready to kill. But Geoffrey stepped in with a karate kick to the head, sending Metal Sonic falling onto his side. Alonzo tried to interfere but Geoffrey fired a dart at Alonzo to keep him back. The dart embedded itself into Alonzo's eye and the butler bot yelped in pain. Geoffrey turned his attention back to Metal Sonic.

"I'm gonna make you and the Eggman bloke pay for tricking us with that Automaton you metal menace!" he said crossly.

But before Geoffrey could land the first punch on Metal Sonic, Metal Sonic swung round onto his back and blasted Geoffrey with his torso laser. Then he grabbed Geoffrey by the collar, took flight and carried him into the air. Then he threw the skunk straight into Wilson and

the two fell onto their backs. Knuckles leaped into the air and tried to punch Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic dropkicked him on the head and sent him diving into the floor face first. Then Metal Sonic flew down and elbowed Knuckles in the back before the echidna had any time to get out of the way. Then suddenly Sonic spin-dashed Metal Sonic in the back and sent the metal clone falling onto his face. Sonic stomped on Metal Sonic's back but Metal Sonic kicked Sonic in the leg to make him overbalance and then Metal Sonic stood back up and gave Sonic an uppercut. Sonic fell straight onto his back. Metal Sonic stomped on Sonic's stomach and made Sonic wheeze loudly as if he had asthma. Tails tail-whipped Metal Sonic from behind but the attack didn't hurt Metal Sonic the slightest. Metal Sonic spun-around with a punch and walloped Tails around the face. Then he grabbed the fox into a chokehold and held him down to the floor. Tails gagged and choked hoarsely as Metal Sonic began to squeeze all the air out of his lungs.

"Help…!" he spluttered.

Sonic got back to his feet and he tried to help Tails but Metal Sonic heard him and without even turning around, he blasted him with his back laser. Sonic was thrown away from Metal Sonic and he crashed into the wall. Knuckles, Geoffrey and Wilson surrounded Metal Sonic and they prepared to pound the robot into bits and pieces. Metal Sonic glared at them all with his emotionless red eyes.

"You will all remain still or I'll rip this boy's head off." threatened Metal Sonic in his deep, booming, masculine robot voice.

Dr. Eggman was rather surprised at this sudden occurrence from Metal Sonic.

"Metal Sonic has regained his ability to speak?" he said in confusion "That's strange; I thought I reprogrammed him to be silent."

"Maybe all that fighting has knocked his voice chip back into gear." suggested Alonzo "So now he can speak again."

"Oh wow, Metal Sonic talks again." said Sonic sarcastically, picking himself off the floor "You let Tails go now!" he shouted, pointing sharply at Metal Sonic.

"Correction: I will not let Tails go." droned Metal Sonic "You will stand down or he'll die. It's your choice Sonic. Which will you pick?"

Sonic didn't know what to do. He wanted to smash Metal Sonic into pieces more then anything else but he didn't want Tails to die by the robot's claws. He watched Tails gag and choke helplessly in Metal Sonic's strong, unbreakable grasp.

"Sonic…please…help me!" cried Tails hoarsely.

"I'd love to but I don't know how." said Sonic "Metal Sonic will kill you if I make any attempts to save you but I can't surrender to him or Mobius is doomed to be a robot paradise for Eggman!"

"My, my what a dilemma my brilliant Metal Sonic has put you in eh Sonic?" crowed Dr. Eggman "Which will you pick? Your friend or your survival?"

Sonic was about to retort until suddenly the door to the chamber burst open and in charged Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee! Dr. Eggman groaned in frustration.

"Not more people bothering me!" he moaned.

The girls and Team Chaotix ran up to Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic let go of Tails and threw him on the floor, coughing and spluttering. Amy whipped out her Piko-Piko hammer and walloped Metal Sonic as hard as she could. Metal Sonic hurled through the air and crashed straight into the ceiling! Amy smirked at her handy work and she glared at Dr. Eggman fiercely.

"Alright Eggman, if you've roboticized Bunnie Rabbot then I'm going to have to hammer your head in!" she threatened.

"Ah'm OK sugah!" cried Bunnie "Ah haven't been roboticized Amy!"

Amy turned her head to the right and she saw Bunnie Rabbot standing there and surely enough, she was still her normal self. Amy was overcome with relief to see her friend had been saved from roboticization.

"Bunnie!" she cried "You're OK! But shouldn't you have been roboticized right now?"

"She would have if I didn't save her." said Sonic "It's a good thing I decided to drop in and say hello to Eggman isn't it?"

Amy turned to the left and saw Sonic the Hedgehog standing there with his trademark grin on his face. Amy couldn't believe her eyes. She immediately charged at Sonic like a mad bull and she grasped the hedgehog into a hug before Sonic could realize what was happening. Sonic yelped as Amy squeezed the life out of him.

"Oh Sonic! You're alive!" Amy squealed at the top of her voice "Ohmigosh! I knew you weren't really dead! I knew Eggman was lying to us and I'm so glad your death was all a lie Sonic!"

"Hey Amy, nice to see you too." said Sonic feebly "Now can you do me a favour and…GET OFF ME?" he shouted at the top of his voice "Now's not the time for hugs and kisses!"

Amy let go of Sonic and giggled sheepishly.

"Sorry." she said.

"Now Eggman, if you don't mind, we'll be leaving now." said Sonic "Smell you around fat man!"

"You're not leaving yet you foolish Mobians!" snarled Dr. Eggman "Metal Sonic is still operational and he will destroy you all!"

Surely enough, Metal Sonic wrenched himself out of the ceiling and he hovered above the entire group. He glared down at his victims. Everybody bent down in a fighting stance and they prepared to battle Metal Sonic.

"Think you can take all of us?" sneered Sonic.

"I do not think I can take you all. I know I can." said Metal Sonic "I've taken you all on before and defeated you* and I'll do it again."

"We'll see about that won't we?" said Sonic snidely "Let's go everybody!"

Metal Sonic charged down at the twelve Mobians down below and the Mobians all charged at Metal Sonic. They all lunged for each other and a big fight ensued...

Meanwhile, a long way away from Robotropolis, Marik the Martian had entered the huge city known as Central City, the largest city on Mobius and he was looking for a mechanic so he could fix his voltage compactor and have the ability to electrocute people again. As he walked through the city blocks, he scowled at everything he came by. The cities on Mobius were truly a hideous sight for him. The cities did not look evil in anyway which in his books was a bad thing since on Mars, his cities looked evil and he felt that all cities should look the same way and he hated the many pedestrians that were walking through the streets are driving in their cars.

"Oooh this is a horrible city!" grumbled Marik "Is Mobius deliberately trying to look hideous to annoy me? I am so looking forward to smashing this city to pieces!"

A woman in high heels a long flowing red dress and lots of jewellery walked past him. Marik for no particular reason pushed the woman onto the road and in the path of an oncoming car. But since cars hovered above the ground, the car hurtled straight over the terrified woman. Marik grumbled to himself.

"Curse those hover cars!" he moaned "I wish that woman got run over!"

Marik passed a sweet shop and he glared at it. There were bright colourful sweets in sweet jars on display in the window and Marik hated the look of them. Bright colourful things looked repulsive to him and he couldn't stand the sight of them. Marik punched the window with his metal hand and the window shattered into a million pieces. The shopkeeper couldn't believe his eyes at what just happened. Then Marik reached into the shop and picked up a sweet jar. He smashed the sweet jar on the pavement and walked away. The pavement was littered with gobstoppers. Any unlucky pedestrians passing by tripped over the gobstoppers and fell on top of each other. One pedestrian slipped on a gobstopper and fell onto

the road. And to add insult to injury, just as he was standing up, a car came and crashed into him. The pedestrian was whisked off his feet and the car swerved straight into another car and crashed into it. That set off the car's alarm and the entire block was bustling with shock at the catastrophe that had just happened. They gathered around the two destroyed cars and the injured pedestrian and began shrieking and gasping. Marik looked over his shoulder and smiled a twisted, evil, sadistic smile.

"What a splendid scene I've just caused right now." he said to himself "And I do hope someone was seriously hurt or even killed in that accident I've just caused!"

As he walked further down the block, laughing to himself, he came across a mechanic shop. He looked at the shop and realized it was exactly what he was looking for. He marched into the mechanic shop and strolled over to the counter where a woman mouse in overalls stood. She looked up from the catalogue she was reading and was pleased to see she had a new customer.

"Hello love." she said kindly "What can I do for you then?"

"I am going to kindly request for you to give me some tools so I can fix this." said Marik, holding out his hand and showing her his cracked voltage compactor.

The woman looked at the palm of Marik's robotic hand and hummed to herself.

"I have just the thing." she said "Wait here."

She emerged from behind the counter and she disappeared into the warehouse around the back. A short minute later, she reappeared with a red tool box and she plonked it down onto the counter.

"I don't know which tools you need so I got a selection of tools and you can just pick the ones you need."

Marik opened the toolbox and he rummaged through the gazillions of tools in the box. Marik pulled out a screwdriver and some bolts. Be used the screwdriver to unscrew the screws on his metal hand

and he removed the broken voltage compactor. He put the compactor on the counter and he began to fumble about with the wires in his hand. The woman watched him, bemused at the sight of a stranger with a metal hand standing there and trying to fix it.

A while later, Marik had replaced all the wires in the palm of his hand with new wires and he hooked them all up so now electricity was crackling through his fingers again. He put the dome back on the palm of his hand and he screwed the dome back on with the screwdriver. Then Marik used some super glue to cover up all the cracks in the dome and get all the pieces back together. He waited for a moment as the glue dried up. Once the glue had dried up he put all the tools back in the box and he closed the box. He gleamed at his repaired hand.

"You finished love?" asked the woman.

"Almost, I need to test it first." said Marik.

He then pointed a finger as sharp as a spear tip at the woman and a brilliant surge of blue electricity shot out of his finger like a bullet shooting out of the gun barrel. The woman was stricken by the shock and electricity surged up and down her body. She screamed loud enough for the whole street to hear her. Marik kept this painful ordeal up for a whole minute before stopping and letting the woman have a breather. He smiled again at his repaired hand.

"It's fixed!" he said wickedly "How marvellous! I can electrocute people again! Now I've fixed my problem, I think I'll go and look for one of the other Chaos Emeralds that need finding. I hope no one else has beaten me to it."

Marik left the mechanic shop and strolled down the street. He had no idea where he was going to find a Chaos Emerald so he was just going to search anywhere. Somehow, he had a feeling there was an emerald hiding in this very city. And unbeknownst to him…there was! A cyan Chaos Emerald was hiding in the gutter of an apartment block just two blocks away from where Marik currently was. The Chaos Emerald wasn't glowing very brightly so anyone passing by would not see that there was a Chaos Emerald hiding in the gutter of that apartment. But that didn't mean nobody would be

finding it…

Back in Robotropolis, the fight in Eggman's base was complete madness. Sonic and friends had put up their best efforts and somehow, Metal Sonic still remained on top. Sonic spin-dashed Metal Sonic as hard as he could but the robot duplicate was holding his own against him and retaliating with his own spin-dashes which were much harder then Sonic's due to him being metal. Sonic tried a roundhouse kick on Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic grabbed the hedgehog's foot and then began to swing him around as if he was throwing the hammer for the Olympics. His entire torso section rotated around and around in a perfect 360 degree spin and he was spinning around so fast, he and Sonic became a great big blue blur, much bigger then the blur Sonic becomes when he runs at supersonic speed. Everybody made the smart choice and stood back as Metal Sonic continued swinging Sonic around like a hammer throw. Then finally, Metal Sonic tossed Sonic straight into the ceiling and Sonic crashed straight through it! But he didn't stop there, he crashed through another floor of the base and then another and another (The base is twenty stories high so if Sonic keeps going he's got a long way to go until he gets to the top floor!) before finally coming to a halt on the sixth floor. He shot through the floor and crashed into the wall and that's when he finally halted. Sonic lay against the wall, groaning like a ghoul. Back on the ground floor, Amy and Bunnie both tried to attack Metal Sonic together but he leaped up and did a perfect split kick and kicked them both over onto their backs. Amy quickly recovered and she tried to smack Metal Sonic with her hammer but Metal Sonic blasted the hammer with his torso laser and the hammer was reduced to pieces. Amy gaped at this. Nobody had ever managed to destroy her hammer before so this was a shock to her. Metal Sonic advanced on Amy menacingly but Bunnie leaped up and gave him an uppercut from behind and the metal duplicate fell flat on his face. Before Metal Sonic could get up, Bunnie grabbed him by the legs and tossed him over to Knuckles. Knuckles jumped up and punched Metal Sonic as hard as he could and sent him crashing into the floor. Vector grabbed Metal Sonic and then slam dunked him on the floor like a basketball being slammed through a hoop. Then Vector was about

to smash Metal Sonic up in his enormous jaws but Metal Sonic kicked him in the jaws before he could clamp them around him. Vector gripped his sore jaws and grimaced. A tooth fell out of his jaw and landed with a clatter on the floor. Then Metal Sonic pounced on Vector and back flipped in midair. In doing so, he kicked Vector and sent the crocodile staggering backwards. Espio threw some shuriken at Metal Sonic and for once, he actually hit him but they just pinged harmlessly off his armour. Espio was dumbstruck. How can Metal Sonic be too tough for his shuriken? His shuriken can cut through anything! Metal Sonic charged at Espio and gave the chameleon a ninja style punch to the face. Espio kicked him ninja style but Metal Sonic blocked the blow with his arm and then he blasted Espio with his torso laser. Knuckles pounced on Metal Sonic from behind and he threw Metal Sonic into the floor. Knuckles then tried to land a powerful punch on Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic blocked the punch and threw Knuckles away. Charmy Bee flew up from behind and he punched Metal Sonic in the back of the head. Then Charmy stung Metal Sonic but his stinger didn't penetrate his armour in anyway. It was just too tough. Metal Sonic clasped his fists together; jumped up to height Charmy was flying at and brought both his fists slamming sharply down on the bee's head. The attack didn't hurt Charmy's head much due to his helmet but after the punch slam from Metal Sonic, he crashed into the floor. Cream and Tails then began flying around Metal Sonic like frantic flies in an attempt to distract him while Geoffrey loaded his crossbow and aimed it at Metal Sonic. Geoffrey fired a dart at Metal Sonic but it just pinged off his armour harmlessly. Cream and Tails both kicked Metal Sonic together and they sent him flying down to the floor. Metal Sonic landed on his feet, only to get knocked off them by a flying kick from Geoffrey. Geoffrey fired a dart at Metal Sonic's eye and again, the dart pinged harmlessly off his armour. Metal Sonic grabbed Geoffrey by the arm and he yanked on it, bringing the skunk down on his stomach. Geoffrey pulled on his arm, which Metal Sonic was still holding, and Metal Sonic was brought down on the floor. Geoffrey got back to his feet and he kicked Metal Sonic to the side. He fired another dart but once again, the dart pinged harmlessly off his armour. Metal Sonic got back to his feet and he kicked Geoffrey in the face. Wilson the Dog ran up behind Metal Sonic and he rammed him with his shoulder. Then he began to furiously punch Metal Sonic in the face, not slowing down and giving

him a chance to fight back.

"This. is. for. Mandy!" yelled Wilson with every punch he threw.

Metal Sonic had had enough of Wilson punching him and he blasted him away with his torso laser. Tails flew down to Metal Sonic like a missile aiming at its target but Metal Sonic jumped out of the fox's way and kick-slammed him down into the floor. Cream tried to do the same thing but Metal Sonic kick slammed her into the floor as well! But before Metal Sonic could hurt Tails and Cream, Sonic recovered from Metal Sonic's epic ceiling smash earlier and he leaped through the six holes he had made while going through the ceiling, bounced off the floor in a spin-dash and struck Metal Sonic in the side. Metal Sonic hurtled into the floor and landed on his side. Metal Sonic leapt back onto his feet and he and Sonic spin-dashed each other. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo had been watching the entire fight and they were cheering for Metal Sonic.

"Come on Metal Sonic! You can do it!" cried Dr. Eggman.

"Beat that hedgehog into submission!" cried Alonzo.

As for Cosmo, she had been staying out of the fight since she knew she would be of no help to anybody right now. She kept cheering for the Mobians as their fight raged on and on.

"Come on Sonic, you can do it." said Cosmo "I know you can."

Sonic grabbed Metal Sonic by the shoulders just as the metal duplicate was flying towards him and he threw Metal Sonic down into the floor. Then Sonic spin-dashed Metal Sonic as hard as he could. Metal Sonic flew into the air and landed painfully on his head. He hit the floor so hard his head nearly snapped clean off its socket! Metal Sonic lay on the floor, wondering which way was up. Sonic stood triumphant over him with everybody else standing behind him.

"Finally, I beat you Metal Sonic!" he puffed "You put up a great fight buddy but now this fight is over!"

"Negative." droned Metal Sonic "The fight is not over. It is over when the weakest falls and that'll be you."

"Pfft! Seriously?" jeered Sonic "You really think that I'm gonna fall when you're clearly the weaker opponent right now?"

"Affirmative." said Metal Sonic "And you will all fall for I have one of your most powerful moves ever copy."

Metal Sonic leapt to his feet and began to run around everybody in a great big circle. Sonic's quills shook. He knew what was coming. It was his signature Sonic Tornado move! Metal Sonic ran around everybody at top speed. He became a big blue blur spinning around the group of Mobians that were powerless to do anything and a big tornado began to build up around them. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo watched this performance with interest whereas Cosmo watched with horror. Eggman had seen Sonic do this before but he had never seen Metal Sonic do it before. Metal Sonic's tornado was a big blue swirling wind that reached the ceiling and everybody was swept off their feet and spun around in the swirling wind that Metal Sonic was creating. They spun around and around until finally the tornado drifted away and everybody was thrown across the room and sent crashing into the wall on the other side of the room. That impact clearly shook everybody for as they all laid there groaning. Metal Sonic stopped running around and he glared happily at his defeated victims. Cosmo ran over to the injured Mobians and knelt down beside Sonic and Tails, who lay there beside one another.

"Are you OK?" asked Cosmo nervously.

"Not after that Sonic Tornado." grunted Sonic "I was hoping Metal Sonic was never going to use it, it's one of my most powerful moves ever."

"I don't know about you Sonic but I think we should flee for our lives." said Tails, trying to get up but pain flooded up his legs so he remained on the floor "I'm not in fighting condition right now."

"I feel a little weak myself." said Sonic, reluctant to admit it "If we try to fight again, Metal Sonic will spin-dash us to bits."

"You're not going anywhere!" said Dr. Eggman loudly "You're all going in my roboticizer chamber! Metal Sonic, seize them all!"

Metal Sonic tried to obey his master and do so but after moving one step, he collapsed onto the floor and shut off. His red eyes faded away into the blackness of his visor. Dr. Eggman grumbled to himself.

"Puh! All that fighting has worn Metal Sonic ragged!" he groaned "He's too tired to fight anymore! Oh well, Alonzo get him out of here before someone tries to attack him."

Alonzo zipped over to Metal Sonic's shut-down body and quickly carried the robot Sonic clone out of the room. The door closed behind him so nobody would be able to follow him. Dr. Eggman turned back to his captives.

"Since Metal Sonic is unable to apprehend you all, I shall get my robot army to do it instead." said Dr. Eggman.

"You'll have to catch us first Egg-Brains!" said Sonic, staggering onto his feet and running out of the door as fast as he could.

Everybody else picked themselves up and ran for their lives. Dr. Eggman got furious and he ran out of the door after them and bellowed at the top of his voice.

"GET THEM MY EGGMAN ROBOT ARMY!"

The army of Eggman robots that patrolled around Robotropolis stopped what they were doing and they spotted Sonic and his eleven friends running for it as fast as they could. They all aimed their weapons at the weakened Mobians and began to open fire. The Mobians jumped and ducked as laser blasts began to shower all over them. Even though he was a little weakened, Sonic managed to spin-dash a couple of robots into submission and hit a robot's gun to the side so it accidentally shot another robot instead. The Mobians all ran to the left and ran up to the iron fences that surrounded Eggman's entire city. The only thing left for them to do was get over the fence and since they had Mobians with flying capabilities, this was not a problem. Tails took Sonic and Knuckles by the hand and, with great strain due to being weakened, managed to carry them both over the fence. Cream carried Amy and Cosmo over the fence, Charmy carried Espio and Vector over the fence and

Bunnie carried Geoffrey and Wilson over the fence. The robots got mad at the fact the just failed to capture Sonic and friends and they all stomped off to report their failure to Dr. Eggman.

As for the Mobians, they ran a good distance away from Robotropolis before finally settling down behind some rocks to rest for a minute before moving on. The beaten and weakened Mobians all collapsed onto their bottoms and panted heavily.

"Man I can't believe it!" puffed Sonic "We *almost* defeated Metal Sonic! We were this close to defeating him and he still got the best of us!"

"Metal Sonic's a tough robot after all." said Tails "He has all our data so he'll have all our abilities such as your speed and moves, Knuckle's strength and Espio's ninja techniques. He's going to be tough to beat."

"You don't say." said Sonic "Now since we're safe and sound, it's time for a better meet and greet I think." he turned to Amy and said "Hi Amy, good to see you again and it's good to see everybody who was on your team again."

"It's good to see you again too Sonic." said Amy happily "Especially since you and your team are not dead."

"I guess Eggman told you we were dead didn't he?" said Sonic "Well Eggman was fooled and so was Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic threw us all in the water and we hid ourselves so he thought we drowned and it worked to perfection. Metal Sonic totally fell for it!"

"That was unusually cunning for you Sonic." said Espio "You're smarter then most people think you are."

"It was actually Tails' idea." said Sonic truthfully "And it was a good idea too since it worked so well."

"By the way Sonic, where's the real Mandy Mouse?" asked Amy "Eggman told us he used an Automaton to trick you and by that, I guess he meant the Mandy with you was a fake all along so where's the real one?"

"Eggman claims she's dead." said Sonic grimly, his answer gaining a gasp in response from Amy "But I don't believe that. I'm sure Mandy must be alive."

"I'm totally in agreement." said Wilson "I can feel it in my bones my friend is alive."

"If I ever get the chance, I'll sneak into Eggman's lab and see if I can find out if Mandy is alive or not." said Espio.

"That sounds great Espio." said Sonic "So, how did your team do with your Chaos Emerald hunt Amy?" he asked, turning to Amy.

"Terrible." said Amy "We found Marik and he had your green Chaos Emerald and a yellow Chaos Emerald and we lost them both to Rouge the Bat**, don't worry she won't do anything bad with them."

"That's a relief." sighed Knuckles "I can never trust that bat with powerful gems after all."

Amy nodded and continued

"And then we found the red Chaos Emerald in a volcano but Eggman stole it off us!" she cried.

"We didn't do so well either." said Sonic "We found the blue Chaos Emerald in a pirate's treasure chest*** and we lost the green Chaos Emerald to Marik, whom apparently lost it to Rouge according to you, and we found the purple Chaos Emerald but Auto-Mandy got the drop on us and gave it to Dr. Eggman and then Metal Sonic stole the blue Chaos Emerald off us and gave it to Dr. Eggman****!"

"Oh dear." said Cream sadly "We've both had a stroke of bad luck haven't we? Both of us have no Chaos Emeralds."

"Not for long Cream." said Sonic "Because once we're ready to fight again, I'm going into Eggman's base and getting those three Chaos Emeralds back from him! And there's two Chaos Emeralds left to find so this hunt isn't over yet."

"I still have the emerald tracker." said Amy, pulling the tracker out of her pocket "So we'll be able to find the other two Chaos Emeralds. I

wonder where we'll find them."

Before Sonic could answer Amy's question, he felt something vibrate against his wrist. It was his communicator that he wore so Castle Acorn could inform him of anything bad going on. Sonic pulled the communicator out of his glove and answered it.

"Hello?" he asked.

"Sonic, it's Nicole here." came the voice of none other then Sally's lady-in-waiting and friend Nicole the Lynx "Marik the Martian has been sighted in Central City and he's causing chaos! We need you to capture him quickly before he causes any serious damage to the city!"

"OK Nicole, I'll be on my way." said Sonic, switching the communicator off.

He sighed loudly.

"As if this day couldn't get any worse, Metal Sonic beats us to a pulp and now we have to apprehend Marik the Martian!" he groaned "And we're not the least bit fit enough to fight and defeat him!"

"Who says we aren't?" snapped Knuckles, getting up to his feet and flexing his muscles "Metal Sonic may have given us a good beating but we're still in fighting condition! Aren't we?"

"Yeah!" everybody yelled in unison while standing back up.

Sonic was surprised at this. Despite the heavy beating everybody had received from Metal Sonic, they still had enough energy in them to go after Marik the Martian and bring him down. Surprisingly enough, his friend's determination to bring Marik down brought new strength to him and he got back onto his feet as if the fight with Metal Sonic never happened.

"OK then, if you're ready to kick some Martian butt then so am I!" said Sonic, cracking his knuckles "Come on gang, we've got a city to save and a Martian to put back in jail!"

Sonic charged off at his trademark speed with everybody else

following him. Unbeknownst to the group, while they had been talking to each other, Dr. Eggman had been spying on them with a little robot camera just to see what they were planning on doing next. Unfortunately for Sonic, he had found out where two of the four Chaos Emeralds he had left to find were. Eggman smiled evilly to himself.

"So according to Amy, Rouge the Bat has two Chaos Emeralds?" he said to himself "Now isn't that interesting? And since Sonic's off to Central City, he'll have no idea on what I'm doing right now so he won't be able to interfere as I steal Rouge's emeralds from her!"

"How do you expect to find them though master?" asked Alonzo "Rouge could be anywhere right now and Metal Sonic isn't in fighting condition to fight Rouge and get the emeralds off her."

"I know that." said Dr. Eggman "Which is why I'm taking one of my three Chaos Emeralds with me." he said proudly, holding up the purple Chaos Emerald he'd stolen from Sonic in Kingdom Valley "Chaos Emeralds glow brighter when they are near other emeralds so I'll find Rouge's Chaos Emeralds easily!"

"But how are we going to stop Rouge from getting them back?" asked Alonzo "Like I said before, Metal Sonic isn't in fighting condition."

"Oh don't you worry Alonzo, I have a sneaky trick up my sleeve." said Dr. Eggman, grinning like an ogre "And that trick will grant me those emeralds!"

"And once we get Rouge's emeralds, we'll only have two left to find." said Alonzo excitedly "Oh this emerald hunt is going to end in victory for us!"

"It certainly is Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman happily "Get ready to go because we're leaving in two minutes."

"Yeeeeeeeeesssss sir!" said Alonzo happily, zipping out of the control room at great speed, leaving Dr. Eggman alone in the control room to stroke his moustache and smile happily to himself.

The fat man could just picture those two emeralds in his hands right now and without Sonic to bother him, getting those emeralds from Rouge would be like taking sweets from a baby…

Marik had done quite a considerable lot of damage to Central City after fixing his metal hand. He had electrocuted many innocent pedestrians and thrown them onto the road or into a building, broken cars by punching them and energy waving them to finish them off and now he was seeing to bringing buildings down to the ground by energy waving them and punching cars into them. Marik could punch hard enough to reduce a table to splinters just like he did the time he got defeated by Cosmo and Cream***** so a car was no challenge for him. He just pushed the car around until its front was facing the building he was aiming at and then he punched it from behind with his metal hand and sent the car crashing into it. The result was the car was smashed and reduced to mangled and scrunched up metal and the wall to a building fell down. To Marik, all this malice and mayhem was just playtime for him. Marik had been causing so much damage and terror to Central City the entire population of the city decided to evacuate the city. All but a quarter of the population actually made it out of the city and to safety. The quarter of the population that didn't make it either got killed by Marik's rampage or rushed off to a hospital in another place if they had managed to make it out alive or not get killed at all. Marik didn't mind though, seeing people running away and feeling for their lives was a lot of fun for him and it gave him a great feeling of power and pride to see he was striking fear into the hearts of thousands of people. All this rampaging and carnage he was causing reminded him heavily of the Martian-Seedrian war that was going on back on the Seedrian home planet. He had caused a lot of damage to the cities on the Seedrian planet and he struck fear into the hearts of many Seedrians and all this damage he was doing was giving him that same feeling. After punching another car into a building, Marik laughed maliciously and demonically. It was a laugh that would make you clutch your ears in pain due to how loud and grating it was and it would definitely make you shake with fear if he started laughing like that from behind your back.

"Carnage! Destruction! Malice! Mayhem!" cackled Marik "This is what **I LIVE FOR** ! I'm so gonna enjoy destroying all the other cities on this poor excuse for a planet!"

Marik eyed something he could attack. He had eyed a nice, smart looking petrol station not far from the carnage he'd be causing and it was in fine condition. But it wouldn't be for long. Marik aimed his metal hand at the gas station and he fired five brilliant bolts of electricity at the petrol station. His powerful electrical attacks had caused a lot of damage to the petrol tanks in the station and now they were leaking petrol. Then Marik grabbed another car by the door and pulled it to the side so it was in line with the petrol station. He ran behind the car and drew his arm back. Then he punched the car in the middle of the boot with full force and sent the abandoned vehicle hurling towards the petrol station. The car crashed into the petrol station and the leaking petrol ignited due to the sparks caused by the crash and the whole station exploded into an enormous ball of fire and smoke that shot straight up into the air. Marik watched the whole thing with sadistic enjoyment and he laughed and clapped like a maniac. Cosmo had said he loved blowing things up and blowing up that petrol station definitely entertained him gravely.

And as if Marik destroying Central City was bad enough, more trouble was on its way. A familiar looking spaceship had landed on top of a flat roofed building and its occupants had stepped out of the ship and into the open air to cause trouble. And those occupants were none other then the mysterious robotic duo Horda and Borda! Sonic had met them twice******before******* when they had come to Mobius to cause massive amounts of damage due to the fact they were destruction lovers and they had been defeated both times. Horda and Borda had returned yet again presumably to try and destroy Mobius' cities but to their dismay, the city they had landed in had already been damaged. They surveyed the destruction that Marik had been causing with interest.

"Well, well, well." said Horda in his gravel voice "It appears someone has beaten us to it and has caused a lot of damage to this city. It appears to be evacuated, there are cars all over the place and there are buildings that have crumbled or just been damaged."

"Who in the universe has the kind of power to do that kind of

damage?" shrieked Borda.

"Beats me." said Horda "But now we're here, we can help that person finish off destroying the city. I just hope Sonic won't be here to ruin everything again!" he added with a growling sigh.

Horda and Borda turned around and they stepped over the edge of the building they had just parked on with their fronts facing the wall. They dug their claws into the wall and they began to slowly climb down the building. They wrenched their claws free from the building and dug them in to the wall further down as they climbed down the building. But they didn't climb down very far before Borda suddenly noticed something gleaming from an apartment block next-door to the building he and Horda were climbing down.

"Hey Horda! Hey Horda! There's something shiny over there!" cried Borda, pointing at the gleaming thing while he held onto the wall with his other hand.

Horda looked in Borda's direction and spotted the shiny thing he was pointing at. Horda narrowed his optics and his vision zoomed in onto the object. It was glowing faintly and it was resting in a gutter on the apartment block. Horda scanned the object to see if it was anything of interest. To his surprise, the scans were reading high levels of energy coming from the object. This meant the object in the gutter must have great power and if it had great power, Horda and Borda could use its great power to cause destruction to Mobius' biggest cities. Horda and Borda began to crawl sideways across the wall and towards the apartment block. The two robots edged closer and closer to the apartment block until finally they reached it and they climbed up the wall and towards the gutter at the top. They didn't have a long climb since the gutter was only seven feet above them. They climbed up to the gutter and they peered into it. What the saw in the gutter was truly a strange sight for them. The glowing object they had scanned was a cyan coloured emerald. A Chaos Emerald for that matter but they didn't know that since they had not read a thing about the Chaos Emeralds when studying Mobius' cities. Horda grabbed the emerald and lifted it out of the gutter. Then he and Borda proceeded to climb down the apartment block and onto the pavement below. Unfortunately for them, Marik the Martian spotted them just as they were climbing down and he spotted the

Chaos Emerald in Horda's hand. Marik however didn't immediately charge at them and snatch the emerald from Horda's hand, he decided to stay put and wait for the right moment to strike. Horda and Borda finally made it to the ground and they stepped onto the pavement. Horda and Borda stared at the emerald with awe. Then suddenly Borda began shaking furiously as he stared at the emerald.

"Holy nuclear explosions Horda!" shrieked Borda "That thing's energy level reads over nine-thousand on my scanners!"

"This emerald definitely seems powerful doesn't it Borda?" said Horda "In fact, I can feel this tingle of energy in my circuits as I hold it!"

"Maybe we should use that thing's power to destroy Mobius' cities." suggested Borda "Who knows how much damage we're gonna cause when we use that thing?"

"I bet we'll level the entire PLANET with this emerald, never mind just their cities." said Horda evilly "Let's see how powerful it…"

Then suddenly Marik struck and he fired a brilliant jolt of electricity at Horda's back. Horda roared in pain and he flung the emerald up into the air as he swung his arms around. The emerald hurtled up into the air and then it began diving down to the ground. Marik stopped electrocuting Horda and he leaped into the air and caught the emerald before it could crash into the road. Marik landed on his feet and he stared at the emerald he held in his hands. Horda recovered from Marik's sudden attack and he snarled at the Martian that was holding his Chaos Emerald. Borda began shaking with fear. He shook so much his armour was quivering and all the nuts and bolts keeping him together rattled like pennies being jingled in someone's shaking hand.

"Oh ho, ho! It appears we have a Martian to deal with!" snarled Horda, whipping out his flame troches and igniting them "I've always hated Martians and their war loving ways!"

Marik scoffed at the two robots standing before him.

"I can't say I'm fond of your race either Cygnus-bot scum!" growled Marik, shoving the Chaos Emerald into his pocket "Cygnus-bots are a waste of space in the galaxy and I hope they all get wiped out by some brilliant alien race like those conquest hungry Devatrons or something."

"Right! That is it!" bellowed Horda "You burn now Martian! Come on Borda, let's show that Martian what happens to people who mess with us!"

"Are you crazy?" squeaked Borda "I'm not taking HIM on! He's a Martian and Martians are war-loving, demonic and deadly! I'll be reduced to scrap metal if I take him on!"

Horda growled at his skittish little minion. Borda quickly deployed his saw blades and said

"On second thoughts…I'll help you fight him."

Marik bent down into a battle ready stance and he prepared to attack. Horda and Borda did the same thing and their weapons activated. Horda's torches blazed away like a bonfire and Borda's saw blades spun at top speed, their deadly teeth becoming nothing more then blurs as they spun. But before anyone could launch the first blow, Sonic the Hedgehog and friends arrived on the scene just in time to witness the three about to fight. Sonic's eyes widened in surprise at the sight of two more enemies for he and his friends to deal with.

"Horda and Borda?" he blurted "Oh man! This day just gets better and better doesn't it?"

"Who are those two then?" asked Knuckles "Eggman robots?"

"No." said Tails "They're from a different planet altogether and they have a strange fascination over destroying cities. They're nowhere near as dangerous as Marik though since me and Sonic beat them twice already but they're still ones to look out for."

"We'll see about that mate!" said Geoffrey, loading his crossbow and firing it at Horda.

The dart pinged off Horda's right shoulder and the tall, hunchbacked robot turned to the right to see Sonic and friends standing there, ready to fight them. Marik saw them and groaned.

"Oh for the love of Hailey's Comet!" he moaned "Can't Sonic and his band of playschool buddies leave me alone for one minute?"

"Ah'll show ya'll playschool buddy gruesome!" shouted Bunnie, flying towards Marik and landing a tremendous punch on Marik's face with her robotic left arm.

Marik hurled into the air like a rag doll and he landed painfully on his back. The impact however was so hard, the Chaos Emerald fell out of Marik's pocket and it rolled across the road with a noisy clatter. Bunnie spotted the emerald and she extended her robot arm so she could grab it. She scooped up the cyan coloured gem and she retracted her arm so she could look at it. Her eyes widened in surprise at the gem in her metal hand.

"Oh mah stars!" she exclaimed "Marik has found another Chaos Emerald!"

"You what?" blurted Sonic, running over to the Rabbot.

Bunnie showed him the Chaos Emerald she had retrieved from Marik. Sonic stared at it in amazement and he took the gem out of Bunnie's hand.

"Well it's a good thing we DID come here to stop Marik from wrecking Central City isn't it?" exclaimed Sonic "Marik found a Chaos Emerald!"

"Incorrect." said Horda "WE found the Chaos Emerald first but the Martian stole it off us! Now give it back and I promise you'll walk out of this city without any injury of any sort!"

"No deal ugly!" yelled Sonic, leaping up and spinning into a spiky ball "I owe you two a headache for the past times we've met!"

He charged at Horda in a spin-dash and he hit him directly in the head. The hunchbacked robot was sent hurtling backwards in a somersault and he landed on his back. Then Sonic spin-dashed

Borda and knocked the little robot over. Sonic landed on his feet and he threw the Chaos Emerald over to Cosmo. Cosmo ran forward and caught the Chaos Emerald in her hands.

"Take that Chaos Emerald and hide somewhere where you'll be safe and out of danger!" ordered Sonic "We'll take care of the three stooges!"

"OK Sonic." said Cosmo "Please be careful and save the city from Marik and those two robot things."

Cosmo turned around and ran like a rabbit. Marik saw her trying to get away and he fired a jolt of electricity at her but Cosmo was too far away and his electrical attacks had limited range so he failed to hit her. Marik tried to run after her but Bunnie Rabbot seized him by the collar and threw him into a building as hard as she could.

"Ya'll leave little Cosmo alone you ugly old gargoyle!" yelled Bunnie.

Marik wrenched himself free from the wall Bunnie had thrown him into and he fired a bolt of electricity at her. Bunnie dodged the jolt and she converted her arm into a cannon and she blasted at Marik. Marik swiped the air with his arm and sent an energy wave hurtling into Bunnie's cannon blast and stopping it dead in its tracks. Bunnie lunged forward but Marik dropkicked her in the forehead and then gave her an uppercut to the chin that made the Rabbot stagger backwards. Geoffrey then tackled Marik from behind with a kick to the back. He grabbed Marik in a chokehold and held him there. Marik tried to get free from Geoffrey's hold but the skunk held on tight. He had Marik pinned down in a position where he couldn't electrocute him or do anything to free himself from his tough grasp. Sonic could see that Bunnie and Geoffrey seemed to have things under control now but he knew that it would take more then the two of them to contain Marik and yet they needed to take down Horda and Borda as well.

"Hey guys and gals, I have a plan!" cried Sonic "We need the strongest to take down Marik so me, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Knuckles and Team Chaotix will deal with Marik. Amy, you, Tails, Cream and Wilson take on Horda and Borda!"

"No problem Sonic!" said Amy, whipping out her Piko-Piko hammer and holding it out "Come on Tails, Cream and Wilson, we have robots to smash!"

"I've never seen those two before but I'll help you smash them." said Wilson, pulling his a capsule off his belt and pressing a button on it.

The capsule expanded to twice its length and two blades unsheathed from within the pole. It was his trademark spinning blade weapon which he had used on many battles, especially his and Mandy's mission in Grand Metropolis the other month********. Wilson charged at Horda and he threw the spinning blade at Horda. The long sharp weapon spun around like a boomerang and he chipped Horda across the head just above the spikes above his visor. Horda screeched but he recovered and he lunged at Wilson with his flaming torches. The spinning blade returned to Wilson and he lunged at Horda. The two crossed weapons and they pushed on each other in an attempt to overpower one another. Then suddenly, Tails kicked Horda from behind whilst flying and Horda almost fell flat on his face. Horda swiped at Tails with his blazing torches but he missed and Tails kicked him in the face. Then Wilson stabbed Horda in the thigh with his spinning blade. Horda roared in pain and he swiped at Wilson, his flaming torches just singing him above the ear. Wilson yelped and he pulled the blade out of Horda's thigh and gripped his ear. Tails grabbed Horda by the spikes above his visor and he pulled on them. Horda clipped both his torches together to form a double sided torch just so he could use one of his hands to sucker punch Tails in the face. Tails cried in pain and he fell to the ground on his back. Horda took the opportunity to stomp on Tails' stomach as hard as he could. Tails wheezed loudly as Horda's three clawed foot slammed down on his stomach. Then Horda held one side of the double sided torch close to Tails' face and prepared to burn the fox alive. Wilson ran up to Horda and he threw the spinning blade like a javelin at Horda and the weapon plunged straight into Horda's back. Horda roared like a lion that had been shot by a hunter and he stepped away from Tails as he reached behind himself to pull the weapon out. Wilson leaped into the air and landed a kung-fu like kick on Horda's head, knocking the robot over onto his side. Wilson then yanked the weapon out of Horda's back and he tried to plunge it into the robot's chest but Horda blocked the blow

with his double-sided torch and he made a sudden jerk on the torch that ended up flinging Wilson's weapon out of his hand! The spinning blade landed on the road and Horda gave Wilson a terrific uppercut that almost felt as hard as Metal Sonic's. Tails got back to his feet and he flew around Horda in an attempt to distract him but Horda smacked him with the hard side of the torch and sent the fox hurtling into the ground. Wilson retrieved his weapon and he and Horda crossed weapons again. They pushed on each other to try and force the other onto the ground and break free of the struggle so they could finish the opponent off.

As for Borda, he was not doing so well. He remembered what Amy did to him they last time they met and he was practically wetting himself at the fact he now had to face her again. Amy swiped at him with her hammer but Borda dodged the blow, leaped up and kicked Amy on the nose. Amy staggered backwards and she rubbed her sore nose. This gave Borda the opportunity to slash at her with his saw blades. He clipped her on the shoulder and slightly trimmed one of her quills in the process. A thin cut appeared on Amy's shoulder and blood began to trickle out of it. Amy ignored the pain in her shoulder long enough to wallop Borda in the face with her hammer. Cream grabbed Borda by the arms and using her long floppy ears, she flew up into the sky whilst carrying Borda. She then proceeded to drop Borda and the little robot fell back down to earth but before he could land on the pavement, Amy walloped him with her hammer. Borda hurtled through the air like a tossed stone and he landed sharply on his side. The impact bent his shoulder pad and left nasty scratch marks and dents all down his arm and side. Borda came to a halt and he groaned loudly. Amy and Cream ran up to Borda and they stood over him with stern looks on their faces. Borda stared up at them fearfully. He looked like he was about to have a robot's equivalent of a heart attack.

"Right Borda, are you going to stand down and be a good little robot or do I have to turn you into a metal pancake?" asked Amy coldly. Her face was as dark as a thundercloud.

"I surrender!" screamed Borda, putting his hands up but remaining sitting down "I surrender! Please don't hurt me! I won't hurt you anymore!"

"Well that's nice." said Cream "Borda's being a considerate little robot and standing down. Pity not all people are that nice."

"Yeah pity." said Amy "We'd bring deadly villains like Marik or Scourge down a lot easier if they surrendered themselves."

"So what do we do now Miss Rose?" asked Cream "Should we help the others?"

"No Cream, we're staying here and making sure Borda doesn't try anything funny." said Amy firmly, shoving her hammer in Borda's frightened face.

Borda whimpered and shook at the sight of the hammer.

As for Marik, he was having a tough time but he was somehow managing to hold his own out there. Marik gave Bunnie and Geoffrey a kick to the head each and then he gave Charmy Bee an uppercut just as the bee was sneaking up behind him, only to receive an uppercut from Vector afterwards. Marik staggered and fell onto his knees. Espio roundhouse kicked him in the cut before he could get up and then he punched Marik towards Knuckles who was itching to give him a punch. Knuckles punched Marik in the head and the Martian hurled into the road. Marik bared his teeth and roared like a jaguar. He pointed a finger as sharp as a sword at Knuckles and blasted him with a quick jolt of electricity. Knuckles flew backwards and hit a building but the echidna didn't seem too affected by the attack. Marik then picked up an enormous chunk of debris that was lying on the road and he threw it straight up into the air. Then, before the debris could land back down on the road, Marik roundhouse kicked it towards Knuckles. Knuckles drew back his arm and then he punched the debris as it hurtled towards him. The chunk of debris was reduced to even more debris. Marik lunged at Knuckles with his claws bared and his eyes burning but Sonic punched him away. Marik punched Sonic back but Knuckles gave Marik an uppercut that was so hard, Marik lost a tooth and he fell onto his back. The tooth landed on the road. Sonic spin-dashed Marik before the Martian could get back up and then he spin-dashed him again. Marik got back to his feet, only to get knocked back down again by a spin-dash. Sonic stopped spin-dashing Marik and he grabbed the Martian by the jacket. He threw Marik into a building

and the Martian crashed into it head first but thanks to his helmet, the impact didn't hurt him much. Marik picked himself up and he blasted Sonic with a jolt of electricity. The hedgehog was knocked onto his back and before Sonic could get up; Marik jumped on him and punched him directly in the face with his metal hand. Bunnie Rabbot smacked him away with her robot arm but Marik landed on his feet and knocked her away with an energy wave. Geoffrey fired a dart at him but the dart only skimmed Marik across the shoulder at best. Marik and Geoffrey both kicked at each other and then Marik kneed the skunk in the gut. Geoffrey retaliated with an upwards chop and Marik staggered backwards. Vector appeared from behind and punched Marik in the back of the head. Marik retaliated with a kick to the jaw and then he punched Vector in the snout but Vector got the drop on him with another punch. Then he grabbed Marik with his jaws and he threw Marik into Espio who was waiting for him. Espio leaped up and did a spinning kick manoeuvre that hit Marik in the jaw and sent the Martian diving to the left. Marik landed on his face but he managed to pick himself up and smack Espio with an energy wave. The chameleon was knocked off his feet. Charmy retaliated with a flying punch to the head but Charmy hit Marik in the helmet so he hurt his fist. Charmy grabbed his throbbing hand and he blew on it furiously to ease the pain away. That gave Marik the perfect opportunity to clasp his hands together and thump them down on Charmy's head. Charmy was sent hurling right smack into the ground. But Marik didn't get to do anything else to Charmy since Bunnie had recovered from Marik's energy wave earlier and she roundhouse kicked Marik in the side. She then transformed her arm into a cannon and she blasted Marik with it. Marik hurled straight up into the air and he fell straight back down. Sonic leaped into the air and spin-dashed Marik in the jaw on his way down. Marik landed on the road with a crash and he skidded to a very painful halt. The impact had torn his jacket sleeve and left heavy graze marks on his arm and side. Marik got up onto his hands and knees and he began to pant heavily. Despite his tremendous endurance and stamina, he was beginning to get worn out. All the combined efforts from Sonic and friends was too much for him and it wasn't helped by the fact Sonic picked the strongest of his friends to fight him. Marik tried to stand up but he couldn't find the strength to do so. He slumped back down on the ground and groaned in defeat. Sonic, Knuckles, Bunnie Geoffrey, Espio, Vector and Charmy surrounded Marik and they all

glared down at him. Marik glared up at them but said nothing.

"You're beaten Marik." said Sonic calmly "There's nothing else you can do so if I was you I would stand down and face justice for all you've done to us!"

Marik gritted his teeth and he tried to electrocute Sonic but he felt too weak to do so. All he could do was spark a lame electric jolt that wouldn't hurt a fly. Espio the chameleon pulled out some rope and he tied Marik's hands up behind his back. To make sure he didn't get away, Espio tied Marik's hands up good and tight and even triple knotted them to make them harder to undo. Marik grumbled to himself but he made no attempts to break free. Sonic knelt down to the Martian and he narrowed his eyes at him.

"You see Marik, you may be full of stamina, you maybe heavily trained and you maybe an expert fighter but in the end, we rise and you fall." said Sonic "You just have to face it Marik, you can't beat us no matter how hard you try."

Marik scowled at Sonic but he remained tight lipped and silent. Espio hauled Marik onto his bottom so he was sitting upright with his hands tied behind his back.

"You lot keep an eye on Marik." said Sonic "I'm gonna see how the others are doing with Horda and Borda."

"No need to Sonic." said Amy "We've got them good and beat."

She and Cream walked up to Sonic with Borda following them with his hands behind his head. Tails and Wilson walked up to Sonic while dragging a battered, stabbed and beaten Horda with them. Wilson and Tails had finally managed to bring the mighty robot down after Wilson stabbed him in the shoulders and chest with his spinning blade weapon and Horda looked terrible. His armour was full of holes and oil was leaking out of his wounds. Borda stood next to the tied up Marik and Tails and Wilson threw Horda beside Borda. Horda groaned like a ghoul. Sonic stared in surprise at the defeated Horda and Borda.

"Whoa, you guys did well didn't you?" he gasped "Me and my team

had a tough time taking just Marik down!"

"Horda put up a good fight." said Tails wearily "But Wilson managed to get him at long last with his awesome weapon and we managed to defeat him."

"And all I needed to do was give Borda a good few wallops and he surrendered." said Amy "But he did get me good though." she added, gripping her shoulder and grimacing.

"Amy you're hurt!" cried Sonic, running to her aid "What did Borda do to you?"

"He just clipped my shoulder." said Amy "But it's nothing serious."

"That's good." said Sonic, pleased to see Amy wasn't seriously hurt "Now we've brought down Marik and Horda and Borda, the city is safe and we can put these guys in a place where they can't cause any harm or any trouble."

Then suddenly Cosmo appeared from nowhere and she ran up to Sonic, panting and gasping. She was holding the cyan Chaos Emerald in her hand but she had something else with her. It was another emerald and it was grey in colour and the two emeralds shone brightly in unison. Cosmo stopped in front of Sonic and showed him the two Chaos Emeralds.

"Sonic." she panted "I hid in an alleyway so I'd be safe from the battle and I found another Chaos Emerald in the alleyway!"

Sonic gasped at the grey emerald Cosmo now had with her. Sonic took the two gems off her and he admired with awe.

"You found another Chaos Emerald." he said quietly "I think this is the last one too." he motioned to the grey Chaos Emerald "Because Eggman has three, Rouge has two and we have two so that must mean all the Chaos Emeralds have been found!"

"Yeah, pity we don't have them all." said Knuckles grimly "We've gotta get those emeralds back from Dr. Eggman before he misuses their power and dooms us all!"

"We will get those emeralds back Knuckles." Sonic assured the echidna "We've got some villains to lock away first and once they're out the way, we'll take back the Chaos Emeralds Eggman stole off us!"

"Speaking of Dr. Eggman, I wonder what he's planning right now." wondered Cosmo, putting a finger to her chin.

"He's probably fixing Metal Sonic so he can get us again." said Sonic "But since we have two Chaos Emeralds, we'll be too powerful for Metal Sonic to beat and then we'll smash him to smithereens!"

But Sonic was going to get a lot more then he bargained for. He may have taken down three of his most hated foes but an even bigger threat was waiting to come and all that was needed was for Dr. Eggman to return to Robotropolis with Rouge's Chaos Emeralds and then to steal the two emeralds Sonic has now…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 30**

**** See Story 39**

***** See Stories 37-38**

****** See Story 40**

******* We cannot possibly forget the events of *Tales from Mobius: Arc 2* can we?**

******** See Story 5 for Horda and Borda's first appearances**

********* And then see Story 19 for their second appearances**

********** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 1***

So all the Chaos Emeralds have been found! Sonic has two,

Eggman has three and Rouge has two. But that doesn't mean the fight is over! Join me next time as the emeralds all come together in one epic showdown...Reviews are welcome.

P.S. No need to tell me to look up The Ultimate Showdown of Ultimate Destiny Kratos Pwns, I've seen it in all it's hilarious glory. :)

Chaotic Power

Story 43: Chaotic Power

While Sonic and friends had been fighting in Central City, Dr. Eggman had set courses to Downunda, the home place of Angel Island and the place where he would likely find Rouge the Bat since he often ran into her when trying to steal the Master Emerald. He had no idea where Rouge was going to be hiding now but he knew he wouldn't take long to find her two Chaos Emeralds since he had one of the three emeralds he had. While Eggman flew the Egg-Mobile, Alonzo held the purple Chaos Emerald Eggman had brought with him and he watched it to see if it was glowing in brighter then normal. Eggman passed Angel Island but he didn't seem to notice the floating island as he flew on by in his Egg-Mobile. Then the fat scientist began flying over the ancient ruins of Albion down below. The Chaos Emerald remained as it was so that meant there was no Chaos Emerald in Albion so Eggman pressed forward. After leaving Albion behind, Eggman ended up flying over the small village of Downunda. Then suddenly, the Chaos Emerald in Alonzo's three clawed hands began to glow brighter then normal. Alonzo noticed this and he jumped.

"Master! The emerald's glowing brighter!" cried Alonzo "Rouge's emeralds must be down below somewhere!"

"How lovely Alonzo!" said Dr. Eggman evilly "Now we've found those emeralds, let's help ourselves shall we?"

Eggman pushed on the controls and the Egg-Mobile began to descend down to the village below. The emerald was glowing brighter as he neared the ground. The Egg-Mobile reached the ground and hovered slightly above it as he began searching around for the two Chaos Emeralds Rouge has. The emerald he had began glowing brighter as he started searching through the village and through windows of houses to see what was there. During the search, he came across a small house with two windows and a door. The purple Chaos Emerald Alonzo held glowed the brightest it

could glow the moment they came across the house.

"Hey Master, the emerald's glowing very brightly now!" Alonzo informed.

"The emeralds are in here." said Dr. Eggman "I can see them through that window."

He and Alonzo peered through the window and saw the green and yellow Chaos Emeralds sitting in the middle of the room amongst a heap of other shiny jewels, coins, diamonds, emeralds, rubies and sapphires. Rouge was one dedicated treasure hunter and Eggman could tell by the amount of stolen jewellery in the room he was looking into. Alonzo admired the jewellery and wondered where Rouge had managed to get it all from. Eggman shifted his Egg-Mobile away from the window and a robotic arm extended out of the side of the Egg-Mobile. Eggman drew the arm back and then thrust it forward at the window. The robot arm punched the window and shattered it to pieces. The slithers of glass rained down the wall and onto the ground or on the floor inside the house.

"Now we've got our entrance, you can get in there and get me the Chaos Emeralds Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman.

"Me?" squeaked Alonzo "Why me? Why can't you do it?"

"Because I'm too large to fit through that window." said Dr. Eggman "You're thin enough to get through it Alonzo so in you go."

Very reluctantly, Alonzo lifted himself out of the Egg-Mobile and he slid through the window and into the house. He trundled over to the two Chaos Emeralds that sat in the middle of the room and he seized them both in his metal hands. Alonzo looked both ways to make sure no one was watching him. All clear. Alonzo trundled back over to the window and he passed the emeralds over to Eggman. Eggman took the emeralds and he helped Alonzo climb back into the Egg-Mobile. Eggman admired the two Chaos Emeralds he now held in his hands.

"Aaaah, Chaos Emeralds are beautiful but stolen Chaos Emeralds are even better." he said evilly "I now have five Chaos Emeralds.

There's only two left to find and I'll have all seven."

"And I bet those two Chaos Emeralds won't be too far away." said Alonzo happily "I bet we'll find them and then we'll have all seven emeralds and we can use their power for our own nefarious needs!"

"Exactly Alonzo!" cackled Dr. Eggman "Now let's skedaddle before Rouge the Bat finds us snooping around here. She's not going to be pleased when she sees we've stolen her Chaos Emeralds."

So Dr. Eggman turned the Egg-Mobile around and took to the skies, leaving the small house behind. The moment he left though, Rouge came flying by with more stolen gems in her hands. She flew down to the house, only to find out a window had been broken and she flew in through the broken window, dreading to think what might have happened while she was away. To her relief, none of her precious jewels had been stolen or wrecked. Except for two things… Rouge noticed that both the Chaos Emeralds she had nicked from Amy Rose and Marik the Martian had disappeared! Rouge gasped in horror, dropped the gems she had been carrying and she immediately flew out of the house frantically. After flying out though, she looked to the right and she spotted Dr. Eggman flying away in the distance and she thought an incredible thought.

"So that Dr. Eggman guy thinks he can waltz into my place and make off with my Chaos Emeralds eh?" she said angrily to herself "Well I'll show him what happens to people who steal from me!"

Rouge flapped her wings and she took to the skies. She flew off after Dr. Eggman with a burning look in her eyes. She was very far from Dr. Eggman due to the fact Eggman had long left the village behind but she was a fast flier so she could catch up to Eggman easily. And yet she had an idea. She would wait until Eggman landed and then she would strike and steal her Chaos Emeralds back. And for all she knew, maybe Eggman himself had a Chaos Emerald or two she could steal. Rouge flew after Eggman but she kept back so the fat man wouldn't suspect she was coming. She would catch Dr. Eggman completely off guard and take her Chaos Emeralds back…

Meanwhile in Central City, Sonic and friends were wondering what to do with the defeated Marik and Horda & Borda. As they debated, Marik remained where he was with his hands tied behind his back while Horda lay there; still leaking oil from his injuries and Borda remained as he was with his hands up while Amy kept watch on him with her hammer at the ready.

"I know Marik needs to be contained and everything but what prison would be secure enough to permanently keep him there?" asked Sonic.

"Certainly not Empire City." said Tails "He managed to escape from that even though he used me to help him*."

"I wouldn't trust that dumb cop Melchett with Marik anyway." said Sonic "We need a place more secure then Empire City."

"Well we can't lock him up here." said Geoffrey St. John, noting the damages Marik had caused to the city "The city has been evacuated and knowing Marik, he's probably destroyed the MPD station this city has."

"I have an all." muttered Marik "And I'm not at all ashamed of doing so!"

Amy gave him a light thump on the head with her hammer.

"You can be quiet you monster!" snarled Amy.

Marik growled at her but said nothing.

"I think I have the perfect place to keep Martian boy." said Knuckles "We can put him in the prison station on Angel Island. Nobody has ever escaped from that prison and even if they did, they can't get off it since Angel Island floats and jumping off would more likely get you killed then anything."

"Yeah but Marik can fly." said Cosmo "He'll just fly off the island if he manages to escape the prison."

"No he can't." said Tails "His shoes are damaged so he's unable to fly. He'll be a sitting duck on Angel Island."

"His shoes are damaged?" said Cosmo "However did you know that Tails?"

"He told me so when I was in prison the time I was wrongly convicted**." explained Tails "I'm kinda amazed he hasn't bothered fixing them yet."

"I don't need the ability to fly you mongrels!" snorted Marik "I can beat you all even without the ability to fly!"

"Is that so Marik?" sneered Sonic "Then how come you're beaten and tied up now?"

Marik didn't answer that rhetorical question. Instead he remained silent and sat still. Then behind his back, he began to slowly cut through his ropes with his metal claws on his metal hands. Luckily for him, nobody seemed to notice.

"You're beaten because you made the mistake of trying to take so many of us on at once." said Sonic "You maybe able to hold your own against us but in the end, it's our teamwork that prevails. If you had a buddy or two then maybe you could do a little better against us but I bet you're too arrogant to rely on others aren't you?"

Marik still remained silent. While Sonic had been boasting to him, he had managed to cut through his ropes but instead of immediately pouncing on him, he waited for a moment so Sonic wouldn't expect his attack coming.

"Now you're defeated." continued Sonic "We are going to put you in a place where not even Metal Sonic would be able to escape from."

"No…" hissed Marik fiercely "No…No…NO! I AM NOT GOING BACK IN A PRISON CELL!"

He leaped to his feet, threw the rope he'd cut through away and aimed all five metal fingers at Sonic. He fired five bolts of electricity, one from each finger, at Sonic and the hedgehog was engulfed by an electrical surge. Just using one finger for his electric attacks as bad enough but using all five at once made it all the more painful. Sonic cried out in pain and he fell onto the ground, writhing about as

Marik's electrical bolts surged up and down his body. Everybody ran up to Marik to stop him from hurting Sonic but Marik stopped shocking Sonic and swiped both his arms as hard as he could. He sent huge energy waves hurtling into the Mobians and they were sent flying everywhere. Tails, Knuckles, Vector, Espio and Charmy all landed near a building on their backs whereas Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Bunnie and Wilson landed on the pavement further down the road. Now the opposition had been taken down, Marik resumed his savage attack. He fired all five bolts of electricity at Sonic again. Sonic screamed at the top of his voice as he was engulfed by Marik's electrical attacks. Never before had Sonic experienced so much pain. Nothing had ever hurt him this much, not even Eggman's robot suit from the showdown he had that nearly cost him his life and the lives of everybody on Mobius***. As Marik continued shocking Sonic, Horda and Borda stood there and watched.

"You know what Borda?" grunted Horda, clutching his shoulder "I'm getting enormous pleasure in watching Sonic get hurt right now."

"I am too." said Borda "We do hate that hedgehog don't we?"

"Yeah." murmured Horda "I just wish it was us hurting that hedgehog instead of that hideous Martian."

"Well why don't we kill him after he kills Sonic?" asked Borda "We hate Martians just as much as we hate Sonic don't we?"

"I think we'll do just that." said Horda "After the Martian kills Sonic, we'll sneak up behind him and nab him and then you slit his throat. I'm too weak to kill the Martian myself so you'll have to do it."

"OK Horda." said Borda, deploying his saw blades.

The two robots watched and waited as Marik continued to electrocute Sonic. Even though Marik couldn't kill with his electric attacks, he decided to keep it up to see if he could kill Sonic that way.

"Argh….Marik…Ungh…stop it….!" grunted Sonic as Marik continued to electrocute him.

"Not on your life Sonic!" snarled Marik "I've suffered plenty in a prison cell already and I don't need to suffer in a prison cell again! You are not locking me away and you certainly are not beating me right now! You are going to die and that's all there is to it!"

So Marik continued electrocuting Sonic. The longer he kept this up though, the weaker Sonic appeared to be getting. If Marik kept this up any longer, Sonic would be as dead as a doornail. Unfortunately for Marik, something decided to go wrong. His voltage compactor may have been fixed but the wiring inside hadn't been set up very well and the sheer power of Marik's electrical attacks was beginning to short circuit them. Then suddenly, Marik's voltage compactor erupted and exploded. Smoke billowed out of the palm of his hand and Marik's electrical attacks ground to a halt. The explosion was so powerful; Marik fell over onto his back and he roared with pain. Sonic began to pant heavily, relieved that the shocking had finally stopped. Marik sat up and looked at his metal hand. The voltage compactor had been completely destroyed and the metal around it had been singed and blackened by the explosion. He would not be able to use his electric attacks now and fixing the voltage compactor would take a long time at the most.

"Oh for the love of Jupiter!" he cursed "Why must everything go wrong just as I'm about to win?"

"I dunno…" grunted Sonic, trying to stand up but he couldn't due to how weak he was "But…I think you've…learned one thing…Marik… you just…can't…rely…on electric attacks…can…you?"

"It seems so." muttered Marik bitterly "That's the third time this stupid voltage compactor has broken on me! Never mind though, I can defeat you with or without electric attacks and now you're injured and weak, your death is certain!"

Marik charged at Sonic like a mad bull. Sonic tried to get up but he couldn't find the strength to do so. The electric attacks had weakened him too much. Marik leaped into the air and he came hurtling towards Sonic like a pouncing tiger. But before Marik could get Sonic, Knuckles ran up to him, leaped up and gave Marik an enormous uppercut. The uppercut was so powerful, Marik hurtled backwards in a somersault and he landed on his back. The uppercut

appeared to have knocked Marik out for a moment. Horda and Borda were amazed by the sheer power of Knuckles' fists and now Marik was down and out, they could kill him before he woke up. Borda activated his saw blades and he was about to cut Marik's neck until suddenly, Marik came to. He hadn't been knocked out by Knuckles' uppercut after all. He grabbed Borda by the arms and threw him into Horda. The two robots yelped and fell over. Marik growled at them and he turned his attention away from Horda and Borda. Knuckles raised his fists and prepared to punch Marik again.

"Do you want roughening up a little more you jerk?" he threatened.

"You couldn't rough me up if your life depended on it!" snarled Marik "And just because I'm a little sore from all your beating earlier, it doesn't mean that I'll be easy prey!"

And with that Marik charged at Knuckles but Knuckles punched him in the side of the head and sent him crashing into the ground. Then Bunnie Rabbot added insult to injury by blasting him with her arm cannon. Marik was thrown into the air and he landed rather sharply on some debris. Marik screamed as pain flooded up his back and he groaned ever so loudly. Sonic, who had finally managed to pick himself up after Marik's attack, staggered over to the Martian and glowered down at him.

"Marik why don't you stop being stubborn and give up already?" he said, weakly "You're beaten!"

"I will not give up until this planet is reduced to rubble!" spat Marik, drops of salvia flying out of his mouth as he spoke "In the rules of Martian life, a Martian never gives up! He may flee the battle if he knows he's done for, but he never gives up! Why do you think I keep trying over and over again? Because I don't give up!"

"Wow, you're stupid." said Sonic snidely.

Marik leapt up in rage and tried to land a huge punch on Sonic's face but Sonic reacted just in time and he punched Marik in the face. Marik ended up falling back down on the rubble and he ended up with a sore back again. The back of his helmet ended up being dented from that slam against the rubble.

"This is why you lose Marik!" yelled Sonic, grabbing Marik by the collar and hoisting him up to his face "You're so blinded by greed and power you just don't know when to quit! If you'd just cut down on the stubbornness and maybe get a brain or two, you'll get somewhere in life!"

And with that, Sonic threw Marik back against the rubble. Marik cried out in pain and then his pained cry died down into a groan. Marik felt limp and lame now, he could hardly keep his eyes open. Sonic drew his arm back, ready for another punch that would probably put the Martian out cold until suddenly, Cosmo screamed at the top of her voice.

"Cosmo?" cried Sonic, turning around sharply to see what was going on.

"Someone's attacking Cosmo eh?" sneered Marik "That's the best thing that's happened all day."

Sonic ignored Marik's sadistic remark and saw what was happening. Dr. Eggman had appeared on the scene in his Egg-Mobile and he had the mobile's robot arms deployed. The Egg-Mobile's robot arms had reached out and grabbed the cyan and grey Chaos Emeralds Cosmo had and Cosmo tried to keep hold of them but the arms were much too strong for her and Dr. Eggman snatched them both out of her hands. Geoffrey tried to stop Eggman with his crossbow but the dart had no effect on the Egg-Mobile and even Wilson's spinning blade didn't work for the Egg-Mobile caught it before it could slice its arms in two. The Egg-Mobile's arms dropped the Chaos Emeralds in Eggman's hands and he held them both in front of his hideous face. He smiled like a deranged wizard.

"Well wasn't that convenient?" he said "Sonic and friends happened to have found the last two Chaos Emeralds and now I've got them in my hands! I now have all seven Chaos Emeralds!"

"No!" cried Sonic "Eggman has all seven now? How can that be?"

"Maybe he found the two Chaos Emeralds Rouge took." suggested Amy "And he obviously used a Chaos Emerald to find them."

"Well he's not keeping them that's for sure!" yelled Sonic, getting into a spin-dash and hurtling towards Dr. Eggman at a speed slower then usual.

That slower speed though was all Eggman needed. The Egg-Mobile swiped at Sonic and smacked him away as the hedgehog was hurtling towards him. Sonic hurtled down to the ground but Bunnie Rabbot caught him before he could hit the ground. Dr. Eggman bellowed with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! Sonic, is that really the best you can do?" he sneered "You're a lot faster then that, I know you are!"

"If it wasn't for a certain Martian electrocuting me, I'd be in tip top shape right now!" retorted Sonic "You're lucky this time Eggman!"

"I know I am." said Dr. Eggman "Now I have all seven Chaos Emeralds I can use their power for my most powerful machine yet!"

"Oh no!" said Bunnie, her ears drooping back in despair "He's gonna use the darn emeralds to power Metal Sonic up and then he'll kill us all!"

"That was the plan Bunnie but since Metal Sonic is out of commission, I'm using the next best option." said Dr. Eggman "And that option is Egg-Dragon! Egg-Dragon, arise!" he bellowed and he pressed a button on the control pad.

At first, nothing seemed to happen, everything remained as it was. Then suddenly there was a distant bang which suggested that something had erupted from under the ground in the distance. Then something came flying towards Central City at tremendous speed. And that something was very long and very, VERY large. Sonic and friends stared up at the sky and their jaws dropped at what they saw. Even Marik, Horda and Borda were amazed at what had just appeared. Rouge the Bat, who was just about to attack Dr. Eggman from behind and snatch the emeralds back stopped in midair and stared at what had just arrived at Central City. It was a massive machine with a long snaky body with two arms, no legs, ball-jointed hands with claws, a huge head with one large spike pointing backwards, two smaller bull-shaped spikes on each side of the large

spike and two smaller spikes on each side of it's head, sharp metal teeth and long wiry hair, two spikes above the shoulders and the tip of it's tail concealed a laser inside. The machine roared a deafening, echoing roar that could be heard all over the city. Sonic and friends couldn't believe what they were looking at.

"You see Sonic, I know Metal Sonic is my strongest machine ever but I knew there would be a time where he would be unusable so I built this ingenious machine to take his place whenever he's unavailable." explained Dr. Eggman "And that machine is what you see before you. EGG-DRAGON!"

Egg-Dragon roared again. Then the top of its head opened up and the Egg-Mobile flew into the robot's head where the cockpit was. The Egg-Mobile stationed itself in the cockpit and Eggman took control of the enormous machine.

"I didn't expect you to use the Chaos Emeralds for this!" blurted Alonzo "This thing is positively primeval!"

"Well I am prime and I'm evil so it fits." said Dr. Eggman "Now let's see what these gems can do to this thing."

When building Egg-Dragon, he had built seven emerald shaped holes in the control pad for the Chaos Emeralds to fit into. Dr. Eggman slotted all the Chaos Emeralds into Egg-Dragon's control pad and the seven gems began to glow in unison. Their tremendous power began to surge all through Egg-Dragon's long body and the Mobians could see this by the bright lights around it. Alonzo was so amazed at Egg-Dragon's power he almost did a wild double-take.

"Master! Look at this!" he cried "The power level of this machine is off the charts! It might be over nine thousand!" he shrieked.

"Well I didn't know the Chaos Emeralds were THAT powerful!" said Dr. Eggman with glee "Sonic and friends will NEVER defeat this fine machine now!"

Egg-Dragon opened its enormous mouth and a huge breath of fire raged out from within. Sonic and friends ran for it before the fire could burn them all alive. Cosmo however, remained where she

was, frozen in fear as the fire came rushing towards her. Tails saw Cosmo petrified and standing there and he flew over to her. Just in the nick of time, he managed to grab Cosmo and snatch her away before she could be burnt to a crisp. The breath of fire from Egg-Dragon engulfed everything around it. The fire died down and Egg-Dragon closed its enormous jaws. Tails put Cosmo down and the two joined the others, who had taken shelter in an alley-way.

"Tails…you saved my life." said Cosmo, giving the fox a quick hug "Thank you so much."

"You're welcome Cosmo." said Tails.

"I'm sorry I lost the Chaos Emeralds to Dr. Eggman." Cosmo added, her voice sounding sad and worried "It's all my fault that Eggman now has all seven Chaos Emeralds and now he's going to doom us all!"

"It's not your fault at all Cosmo." Tails reassured the distraught Seedrian "We had no idea Eggman was going to show up and we were unprepared for his arrival so we weren't to know anything."

"I still should have kept hold of the emeralds." said Cosmo sadly "But I've lost them to Eggman and now he's going to use their power to take over your world. I'm so sorry Tails."

Tails wrapped his arms around Cosmo and he lightly patted her on the back.

"It's alright Cosmo, it's not your fault." he said softly "Stop putting yourself down Cosmo. We'll get those emeralds back and we'll stop Dr. Eggman from destroying the city."

"You got that right Tails." said Sonic who was leaning against the wall "With all of us together, we'll bring that stupid dragon bot down in no time!"

"No we won't." said Knuckles "Eggman has the seven Chaos Emeralds. He's invincible with those emeralds by his side. We need to get the emeralds back first and then we take down Egg-Dragon."

"Sounds like a plan." said Sonic "And we'll need all the back up we

can get and I hope three certain enemies of ours are willing to help us."

Sonic then poked his head out of the alley-way and saw Marik and Horda and Borda crawling away from the carnage Egg-Dragon was causing. And then to add more to this, Rouge the Bat flew down into the alley-way and she landed in front of Knuckles.

"Hello Knuckles." she said smoothly.

"Rouge, as if I couldn't have guessed." said Knuckles grimly "I bet you're here for the Chaos Emeralds aren't you?"

"Bingo." said Rouge "But we're gonna have to take down Eggman first so I think I may as well help you lot out while I'm here."

"I appreciate that Rouge." said Sonic, giving her a thumbs up "We need all the help we can get out here."

"Charmed." said Rouge casually.

Sonic then turned his attention to Marik and Horda & Borda. The three villains had just made it into the alley-way. Sonic folded his arms and he gave them a stern look.

"Alright you three, we're in serious danger here and we can't afford to deal with you as well as Eggman." said Sonic "So if you wanna live and all that, we're gonna have to form a temporary truce until Eggman is defeated. OK?"

"You don't have to ask us twice!" yelped Borda "We're in!"

"Agreed." said Horda "We wanna destroy Mobius' cities ourselves and we can't do that if that dragon bot is doing it for us. Plus, we hate machines bigger then us so we're gonna get a lot of pleasure in taking it down!"

Sonic nodded and then turned to Marik, who lay groggily against the wall breathing slowly.

"What about you Marik?" asked Sonic.

Marik turned to Sonic and snorted at him.

"Save your desperation!" he snarled "I refuse to form a truce, even a temporary one, with filth like you! I will take down Egg-Dragon under my OWN terms! I will destroy Egg-Dragon, but I'm not helping YOU do it! I'll wait until Egg-Dragon is almost dead and then I'll come in for the kill and steal your glory Sonic!"

Sonic scoffed at him.

"Puh, go ahead then Marik the Chicken!" he jeered "I knew you would be too scared to take on that thing."

"I AM NOT SCARED OF THAT THING AT ALL!" bellowed Marik, leaping to his feet and jamming his face into Sonic's face. "And to prove it, I will form this disgusting truce after all but watch your back! I might "accidentally" attack you while I'm attacking Eggman!" he spat, prodding him sharply in the chest as he said the last three words.

"That's better." said Sonic grimly "Now everything's settled, let's destroy that thing and get those Chaos Emeralds!"

With that said, everybody emerged from the alley-way and they ran up to Egg-Dragon, yelling loudly. Egg-Dragon turned it's huge head to the right and saw it's attackers running towards them like Native Americans charging into battle. Dr. Eggman grinned at the oncoming Mobians.

"Oh goody!" he said "Sonic's decided to come out and give me some entertainment now! I'll show him what this giant monster of a machine can REALLY do!"

Eggman pressed a button on the control pad and the giant dragon machine aimed its tail at the Mobians. Four sections of the tail tip opened up in a cross shape, revealing a large laser concealed inside and the laser aimed at its victims. Sonic could sense what was about to happen and he ordered everybody to run for it before the colossal laser could fire. Egg-Dragon fired its tail laser at the Mobians but the Mobians took cover before it fired so the laser didn't hit them, it hit the road instead. The section of road that got hit by

the laser was completely destroyed by the sheer power of the laser. The laser had left an enormous crater in the road and chunks of debris and concrete flew everywhere, crashing down onto the road or crashing through the windows of nearby buildings. The Mobians emerged from their hiding places and they stared at the damage the laser did to the road. They had never seen a weapon as powerful as that before.

"Holy spin-dashes!" cried Sonic "That is one powerful laser!"

"I bet it's the Chaos Emeralds making the laser stronger then usual." said Knuckles "No weapon should be able to do THAT kind of damage!"

"We must get those Chaos Emeralds before Eggman levels the place!" yelped Tails "I'll fly Sonic up to the robot's head and then throw him towards it so he can spin-dash into the cockpit and snatch the emeralds. Everybody else can keep him busy while I fly Sonic up there."

"That's a good plan Tails." said Sonic "Let's just hope it works."

So Tails twisted his tails around one another and he flew off the ground. He grabbed Sonic by the hand and he lifted him up into the air. Egg-Dragon noticed tails flying up and the colossal machine was about to open fire on the little fox until Bunnie Rabbot flew up to Egg-Dragon and began blasting the machine rapidly with her arm cannon. The blasts had no effect on Egg-Dragon but that didn't matter since Bunnie was only supposed to be distracting the robot while Tails carried out his plan. Bunnie blasted Egg-Dragon in the eye and flew to the left, prompting Egg-Dragon to follow her. While Egg-Dragon did that, Rouge, Cream and Charmy began flying around Egg-Dragon's head as if they were flies circling around a pile of faeces. Egg-Dragon began swinging its head left and right to try and catch the flying Mobians but to no avail. Rouge then attacked Egg-Dragon with her trademark screw kick move. She bounced harmlessly off Egg-Dragon's nose but the impact didn't seem to have shaken Rouge much. Charmy then attacked by charging bottom first into Egg-Dragon's eye. His sting hit the eye but the impact hurt Charmy more then it hurt Egg-Dragon. Charmy flew away in a dizzy flutter but Egg-Dragon swatted him its clawed hand.

The poor bee was sent hurling into the ground but luckily for him, Vector was on hand to catch him. Charmy landed in Vector's hands and he mumbled groggily to himself.

"Oooooh, that dragon bot really hurts!" mumbled Charmy "He's made my head hurt!"

"At least you tried Charmy." said Vector "And you helped distract Egg-Dragon just like we're supposed to so you've done well."

"Yay!" said Charmy weakly.

Meanwhile, Cream and Cheese flew in front of Egg-Dragon's eyes, the very thing Eggman was seeing out of, in an attempt to distract Dr. Eggman and since he wouldn't be able to see properly with the two in the way, Eggman wouldn't be able to see where he was attacking and therefore, be unable to accurately hit his enemies. Dr. Eggman was getting annoyed with Cream and Cheese getting in the way while he was trying to attack.

"That infernal rabbit and her flying blobby thing are trying my patience!" snarled Dr. Eggman "I'll swat them away!"

"No you won't." said Alonzo "Egg-Dragon's arms are too short to reach its head."

"Then how am I gonna get those two out of my way?" cried Dr. Eggman furiously "I can't use its tail to swat them away or I'll smash Egg-Dragon's head and bring the robot crashing down."

While Eggman wondered how to get Cream and Cheese out of the way, Tails flew above Egg-Dragon while still holding Sonic by the hand. He spotted the cockpit hatch on Egg-Dragon's head. It was located on the large spike that pointed backwards.

"OK Sonic, I've found the cockpit hatch." said Tails "Get ready to spin-dash as I throw you."

"No problem Tails." said Sonic "Throw me on the count of three. One...two...three!" he yelled.

Tails swung his arms backwards and then he thrust them forward

and let go of Sonic. Sonic spun into a spiky-ball and he hurtled towards Egg-Dragon's cranium. Eggman didn't see Sonic coming and Sonic hit his target at full force...and bounced harmlessly off the surface and began to hurtle towards the ground! Tails gasped and he flew down as fast as he could after Sonic so he could catch him before he could hit the ground. Tails didn't make it and Sonic hit the ground face first. Marik the Martian stood there and laughed at him.

"I didn't think I was going to get some entertainment out of this but it appears I am." cackled Marik "It's funny seeing you get beaten for once Sonic."

"Har de har, har." muttered Sonic sarcastically "Shut up Marik."

Tails landed beside Sonic and he helped the stricken and shaken hedgehog stand back up.

"But...but I don't understand." said Tails "Why didn't that attack work? You can smash through any robot Eggman throws at us."

"I know I can." grunted Sonic "That Egg-Dragon is obviously tougher then I thought. How am I gonna break into the cockpit and get those Chaos Emeralds back?"

"Maybe we could try and break through the eyes." suggested Tails "The cockpit is behind the eyes so if we can break through the eyes, we'll be in the cockpit and we can snatch the emeralds back."

"That plan is unusually cunning for heathens like you." sniffed Marik "Let's hope for your sake that it works."

"Marik if you can't say anything nice then shut up!" snapped Sonic "We're on the same side, remember? So have a little respect for us please!"

"Whatever." sighed Marik in annoyance "Just keep out of my way!"

"Marik look out!" cried Tails.

Marik turned to face Egg-Dragon only to see that the dragon bot had opened its mouth and balls of fire were shooting out of it like a meteor shower. One of the fireballs zoomed towards Marik and the

Martian jumped out of the way just before he could get hit by it. The fireball exploded on impact and sent flames flying everywhere. Marik was relieved to have dodged such a powerful attack.

"Thanks for that fox boy." said Marik gratefully.

Then suddenly, a fireball hit Tails smack on and the fox was sent hurling backwards by the powerful attack. He landed on his back and screamed in pain as the flames of the fireball burnt him in a few places. Marik stood there with his arms folded and an evil grin on his face.

"Don't expect me to return the favour though." he added coldly.

That did it. Sonic grabbed Marik by the collar and yanked the Martian to his face.

"Marik, we're working together on this so stop being unhelpful and help us already!"

"No!" snapped Marik "I made the truce to help bring Eggman down but that doesn't mean I have to help YOU! I'm watching MY back and my back only, no one else's! You watch your back Sonic and I'll watch mine!"

"Fine!" said Sonic crossly "Don't expect me to save your life if Eggman has you completely at his mercy and is about to kill you!"

Marik just snorted at him and slapped his arm away, making Sonic let go of his jacket. Now Marik was free, he ran up to Egg-Dragon and he swiped the air with his arms. He sent a huge energy wave hurtling towards Egg-Dragon and the wave smacked the machine in the face. Egg-Dragon's head bobbed up and down a little from that attack but Eggman regained his senses and set Egg-Dragon's sights on Marik. Marik swiped the air with his arms again and sent another energy wave hurtling towards Egg-Dragon. Egg Dragon swiped through the wave with its arm. Then Egg-Dragon raised its enormous tail and swiped at Marik. Marik failed to dodge the enormous tail whip and he was hit full force by it. Marik was sent hurtling through the air and he disappeared from sight. Marik had been smacked away from the battlefield. Sonic just scowled.

"Huh! He was no help anyway!" he muttered "We don't need that sadistic, stubborn, egotistical jerk! We'll take down Egg-Dragon ourselves!"

"I'm sorry Sonic but I don't think I can help you right now." said Tails weakly "I feel too weak to fly."

The fireball had done a lot of harm to poor Tails. His fur had been singed in several places so Tails had a peculiar yellow and black look on him and he had three-degree burns on his stomach, arms and legs. Tails was in no condition to fight right now.

"You stay there and take it easy Tails." said Sonic "Cosmo, you keep him company."

"OK Sonic." said Cosmo politely.

She wondered over to the injured Tails and knelt down by his side to comfort him. Cosmo helped Tails onto his feet and she carried Tails away from the battlefield and to safety so he couldn't receive any more injuries. Now his friend was out of harm's way, Sonic charged into battle and he spin-dashed towards Egg-Dragon's huge head. But all Sonic did was ping harmlessly off Egg-Dragon's tough armour. Sonic tried another spin-dash and he hit Egg-Dragon in the nostril but again, he bounced harmlessly off Egg-Dragon's armour. Sonic spin-dashed him again but still he didn't do any harm to Egg-Dragon. Egg-Dragon swiped at Sonic with its arm and the dragon bot hit Sonic just as the hedgehog was spin-dashing it again. Sonic landed on a nearby building and groaned in pain. Knuckles climbed up a building at a fast speed and then he leaped off the building and onto Egg-Dragon. The echidna landed on the middle section of Egg-Dragon and using his spiked fists, he began to furiously climb up the long metal body of Egg-Dragon. He was planning on climbing up to the cockpit hatch so he could smash his way through it and then retrieve the Chaos Emeralds. Unfortunately, Dr. Eggman spotted the echidna and he pressed a button on the control pad. A large machine gun deployed from Egg-Dragon's back near its neck and it aimed at Knuckles, who was climbing furiously up to the robot's head. The machine gun began to rapidly fire at Knuckles. The bullets ricocheted off Egg-Dragon's bullet-proof armour as the gun fired at Knuckles but missed. Knuckles stopped climbing up to Egg-

Dragon's head and he began to climb back down to avoid being shot. Knuckles leaped off Egg-Dragon and glided down onto a nearby building with the machine gun still firing at him. Knuckles ran for it, dodging the bullets as the gun fired at him and he leaped over the edge of the building and dug his fists into the wall to prevent himself from falling. Seeing as Knuckles had gone, Egg-Dragon put its machine gun away and it fired some fireballs at any Mobian down below. Now the machine gun had stopped firing, Knuckles emerged from his hiding place and he charged towards Egg-Dragon. He leaped off the building and...got swatted away by Egg-Dragon's tail. Knuckles crashed into the lower section of a nearby building and he screeched to a painful halt. On the ground, Geoffrey St. John was firing darts at Egg-Dragon. His darts didn't have any effect on Egg-Dragon due to the machine's enormous size and even though some of the darts were set to self destruct after embedding themselves into the target, none of the explosions appeared to be doing any harm to the invincible machine. Geoffrey decided to do something else. He fired a dart with a tow cable at Egg-Dragon and the dart embedded itself into Egg-Dragon just above its eye. Now his cable was set, Geoffrey retracted the cable into his crossbow and in doing so, lifted himself off the ground and up towards Egg-Dragon's head. Dr. Eggman didn't seem to have noticed Geoffrey was coming up towards him and he continued firing fireballs at Wilson, Bunnie, Amy and the Chaotix down below. After a short ascend, Geoffrey reached Egg-Dragon's head and he settled himself down on Egg-Dragon's snout. He pulled the dart out of the section above Egg-Dragon's eye and he peered in through Egg-Dragon's eye. He saw the cockpit with Dr. Eggman and Alonzo inside. Alonzo spotted the skunk and he informed Dr. Eggman immediately. That was Geoffrey's cue to attack. He loaded his crossbow with a bomb dart and set it for five seconds and he fired it at Egg-Dragon's eye. To his horror though, the dart pinged harmlessly off the thick glass the eye was made of and hurtled towards the ground! The dart exploded in mid-air before it could land. Geoffrey could not believe his eyes.

"I don't believe it!" he cried "That blighter's eyes are made of Diamond Glass! We'll never get into that cockpit now!"

Geoffrey should have been more focused on his current situation then cursing his bad luck right now because Egg-Dragon picked the

perfect opportunity to shake it's head and make Geoffrey fall over. Egg-Dragon gave a quick jerk of the head and flung Geoffrey up into the air! Geoffrey hurtled straight up like a firework and he plummeted straight down like a stone falling off a ledge. Egg-Dragon opened its massive jaws and prepared to catch the skunk with them. If Geoffrey fell into those jaws, he would not be crawling out of them alive. Luckily for him, Sonic spin-dashed towards and Egg-Dragon and hit it in the side of the head. Egg-Dragon titled to the side and Sonic bounced off the dragon bot and caught Geoffrey in his arms. Sonic landed on a rooftop and put Geoffrey down.

"Oh thank you Sonic!" cried Geoffrey "I thought I was blooming done for!"

"Don't mention it Geoff." said Sonic "So did you manage to break through that thing's eyes?"

"No mate." said Geoffrey "Those blinkin' eyes are made of Diamond Glass! We can't shatter them and get into the cockpit!"

"Oh man!" moaned Sonic "That Eggman really put his head into that robot didn't he? I guess we'll have to try the hardest we can to bring it down."

"You suggesting we go full force on that thing?" asked Geoffrey.

"Exactly." said Sonic "You with me Geoffrey old buddy?"

"I'm with ya until the end mate!" said Geoffrey, giving Sonic a thumbs up similar to what the blue hedgehog himself often did "Let's go!"

With that said, Geoffrey began firing bolts and darts at Egg-Dragon's head while Sonic started spin-dashing it again but unfortunately, none of those attacks seemed to work. Geoffrey's darts either pinged harmlessly off Egg-Dragon's armour or just plain didn't do any damage to it and Sonic just bounced off the dragon like a baseball being thrown at the wall. Down on the ground, Bunnie Rabbot kept firing madly at Egg-Dragon with her arm cannon but her blasts didn't seem to be working. To make things worse for the cyborg rabbit, she was beginning to get tired from using her robot

limbs so much. After firing another blast at Egg-Dragon, she fell down on one knee and panted heavily. Espio stood in for her by throwing shuriken at Egg-Dragon. The sharp, deadly stars embedded themselves into Egg-Dragon's tough armour and they exploded but none of the shuriken appeared to have harmed Egg-Dragon in anyway. Espio gasped. His shuriken didn't often fail to bring down a target and now they just did. Espio threw some more shuriken at Egg-Dragon but again, even after exploding, they appeared to do no damage. Egg-Dragon opened its jaws and fired a shower of fire balls at Espio and Bunnie. The two Mobians ran for it before they could get hit by the balls. Vector ran into battle and by some miracle, actually managed to catch a fireball in his enormous jaws and throw it back at Egg-Dragon! The fireball smacked Egg-Dragon in the face and that blow seemed to have made an impact on the robot because Egg-Dragon roared loudly and raised its head as if the fireball had done a great deal of pain to it. The fireball had dented and scorched some of its face but Egg-Dragon didn't appear to be seriously hurt. Egg-Dragon opened its mouth and breathed out a jet of flames at Vector. Vector turned turtle and ran before he could get singed. Rouge stepped in with a screw-kick to the eye but her attack didn't even crack the thick Diamond Glass that shielded the cockpit from everybody's attacks. Rouge screw-kicked Egg-Dragon in the head but Egg-Dragon wasn't affected by that blow and it smacked Rouge with its tail, sending the bat crashing into the ground. As for Horda and Borda, they were standing on a building and waiting for their moment to strike. Horda held his torches close together and fired a jet of flames from them both at Egg-Dragon. The flames only seemed to tickle Egg-Dragon at the most though. The flames licked the armour of Egg-Dragon but they were causing no serious damage. Horda stopped firing at Eggman and grumbled.

"That machine resists my fire?" he said aloud to himself "How is that possible?"

"That's one tough robot." said Borda "I wish I was that tough and that big."

"Well there's not much we can do Borda." said Horda "Your weapons will be useless against that thing and my weapons don't appear to be doing much harm to it so we may as well stand by and

let the Mobians defeat it."

So Horda and Borda climbed down the building they were on and they ran away like rabbits to avoid getting attacked by Egg-Dragon. Meanwhile, Amy summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hands and she began whacking great chunks of debris as if she was wielding a cricket bat and sending them flying into Egg-Dragon. The chunks of concrete and fallen building just crashed against Egg-Dragon and broke into pieces upon impact. Despite Amy's best efforts, her attacks seemed to be in vain because the debris wasn't doing any harm to Egg-Dragon. Wilson unsheathed his spinning blade weapon and he threw it at Egg-Dragon. The deadly, lethal, double-bladed pole weapon spun towards Egg-Dragon and pinged harmlessly off its armour. The weapon spun back to Wilson and Wilson caught it, unable to believe his amazing weapon didn't work. Amy stopped doing what she was doing and she called over to Sonic. Sonic heard her and he ran up to Amy.

"What's up Amy?" asked Sonic.

"I'm hammering debris into Egg-Dragon but my attacks aren't doing any harm to the robot. I think we should try the hammer-and-hedgehog move."

"Hammer-and-hedgehog?" chuckled Sonic "Is that seriously the name of that move me and you did the second time Eggman attacked Knothole****? How corny can you get?"

"Say that again and I'll show you how "corny" I can be!" threatened Amy.

Sonic said nothing more and he rolled into a ball and began spinning on the spot. Amy raised her hammer high above her head and she walloped the spinning Sonic as hard as she could. Sonic rocketed through the air and he crashed straight into Egg-Dragon's head. His powerful attack sent Egg-Dragon's head jerking backwards and the giant dragon robot doubled over backwards. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo yelped as Egg-Dragon fell backwards and landed on its back with an earthshaking crash that made the buildings wobble like jelly. Sonic landed on his feet beside Amy and he admired his handiwork. Egg-Dragon lay there, knocked out and defeated before them.

Sonic, Amy, Knuckles, Cream, Espio, Charmy, Vector, Bunnie, Geoffrey and Wilson all stood there, staring at the defeated Egg-Dragon. Tails and Cosmo poked out of their hiding place to see what was happening and they saw the defeated Egg-Dragon lying there. They beamed with joy at what seemed to be victory at last.

"Ha, ha! How did that feel Eggman?" sneered Sonic "Good old hammer-and-hedgehog too tough for you?"

Sonic should not have made the terrible mistake of claiming victory before actually gaining victory. That move had definitely been a hard and powerful move, but it wasn't enough! Egg-Dragon came to its senses and the huge machine lifted itself up off the ground and hovered above the ground! The Mobians gasped in horror at Egg-Dragon's rise back up from Sonic and Amy's attack and Egg-Dragon glared down at them all.

"That was a brilliant attack Sonic." said Dr. Eggman, his voice boomed from inside Egg-Dragon's head "You've all been splendid entertainment for me and my robot but I'm afraid your time is up. You should have known you couldn't defeat a Chaos Emerald powered robot you fools and now you'll learn that the hard way...by feeling the full wrath of Egg-Dragon's laser!"

Egg-Dragon pointed its tail tip at the Mobians. The tail tip opened up into four sections in a cross shape and the long laser concealed inside began to glow bright yellow. The laser crackled like a lightening rod and then it fired an enormous laser beam at Sonic and friends...

Footnotes:

***See Story 34**

**** See Story 33**

***** See Story 20**

****** See Story 15**

OMG! OMG! OMG! Sonic and his friends are about to be destroyed! Looks like the Chaos Emeralds are more powerful then they thought! Is this...(gulp!)...the end? Join me next time...Read and Review.

P.S. I really hope this doesn't annoy you Kratos Pwns but I'm bringing the Devatrons back in this series but with some minor alterations to make them less like Mary-Sues. They won't be showing up for AGES though, they might not even show up until I get to Story 100 so they've got a while yet. Oh and it's a pity you hate villains because I for one I'm a villain lover so I tend to put most of my creative effort into any villainous character I make. And don't worry, your last review hasn't offended me at all, it's just your opinion, I'm not expecting you or anyone to like these characters just because I do. I'm just interested in seeing what my readers think.

P.P.S. ARE THERE ANY OCs IN THIS STORY YOU DO LIKE?

Blade of the Swords Bot

Story 44: Blade of the Swords Bot

Egg-Dragon's laser struck the ground just inches in front of the Mobians and they were all thrown away by the force of the titanic laser blast. They all hurtled through the air like rag dolls and they came crashing down in a chorus of thumps. That onslaught had done a heavy deal of pain to them all. The sharp landing on the ground did more harm to them then the force of the laser blast though and the Mobians all felt like they couldn't move a muscle. Horda and Borda were absolutely horrified by the power of Egg-Dragon and they felt relieved they had not been near the laser at the time. Tails and Cosmo ran out of their hiding place and they knelt down beside the battered and beaten Sonic the Hedgehog who felt like his entire skeleton had broken. The blue hedgehog lay there, unable to move or open his eyes.

"Sonic! Get up!" cried Tails "Egg-Dragon's going to kill us all!"

"I don 't think he can get up." said Cosmo sadly "That was one powerful attack and it's done a great deal to everybody. Look at them all." she said, taking note of the downed Mobians not far from Sonic.

Tails saw them all and felt sick to his stomach. Knuckles and Rouge were lying together on their fronts, unconscious but alive, Team Chaotix were lying on top of each other and they seemed to be wondering which part of them to rub better, Amy and Cream were lying next to each other and Cream was tightly hugging Cheese to calm him down, Bunnie was lying on her side with her robot arm missing the section with the hand and Geoffrey and Wilson were lying on their backs, both unconscious. Tails' whiskers drooped down in despair. There was no way they could stop Egg-Dragon now. Sonic suddenly began to stir and he opened his eyes. He saw Tails and Cosmo kneeling beside him and he tried to get up but pain flooded up his body and forced him to lie back down.

"Tails...Cosmo..." grunted Sonic "We...can't...stop...that...thing..."

"I can definitely say you're right Sonic." said Tails "Look at everybody, nobody's in fighting condition, we're all beaten."

"I never knew the seven Chaos Emeralds were so powerful." said Cosmo "That machine can't be harmed by anything and it's put you all out of commission. We're doomed to die right now."

"I'm...afraid so...Cosmo..." said Sonic "But...at least...we'll...die...together...It's better then...dying...alone...after all..."

"I agree." said Tails "At least we tried to stop that thing, that's all that counts."

Egg-Dragon loomed above the defeated Mobians and Horda & Borda and it looked down on them all. Dr. Eggman grinned wickedly at his victory.

"I've done it!" he cheered "I've defeated Sonic the Hedgehog and his band of playhouse buddies at long last! Now let's vaporise them while we have the chance shall we?"

"Whenever you're ready sir." said Alonzo, saluting

Dr. Eggman grinned like a demon and he was about to press a button on the control pad to activate Egg-Dragon's flame jets until suddenly, a dark purple flash shot by Egg-Dragon and sliced it's head clean off its neck in one swipe! Dr. Eggman and Alonzo both screamed in unison as Egg-Dragon's colossal head broke away from its enormous body and came crashing down on the ground with an ear-splitting smash. The impact smashed the Diamond Glass eyes and sent shards of glass flying all over the place. Egg-Dragon's giant body swayed about madly like a ship's sail blowing about madly in the wind and then the whole thing came crashing down with an earth shaking crash. The moment the body crashed down, it crumbled to bits like a fallen sandcastle. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo poked their heads out of the cockpit hatch and they stared in horror at the mess of robot parts that Egg-Dragon had been reduced to. Dr. Eggman was about to go insane.

"NOOOOO!" he bellowed. "How could this happen to me? I was so close to killing Sonic the Hedgehog once and for all and then my robot is reduced to smithereens! How did that happen?"

"Um Master? I think HE has the answer!" whimpered Alonzo, pointing at something.

Dr. Eggman looked at what Alonzo was pointing at and he almost had a seizure. The thing that Alonzo was pointing at was a robot carrying two, enormous, bulky swords. The robot's head had two cold, evil looking yellow optics, a chrome mouth plate, two spikes above its optics, two spikes on its head, a large spike sprouting from the back of a thick collar piece around its neck, thick, hard looking shoulder pads, clawed hands, two long sharp cape like structures drooping from each shoulder, tough looking armour that was coloured dark purple and three clawed feet. The robot looked very intimidating and terrifying and its swords glistened in the sun like diamonds in a jewel box. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo stared in fear at the robot and then they climbed out of Egg-Dragon's cockpit and ran for it as fast as they could. The robot watched them run away and then it sheathed both its swords in a sword sheath on either side of its waist. It turned towards Sonic, Tails and Cosmo, who had watched the whole thing in amazement and he wondered up to them, its feet clanked a metallic clank as he walked up to them. He stopped before the downed Sonic and he looked down at them with his yellow optics.

"Fear not little hedgehog." said the robot "I shall not harm an innocent little being like you."

Its voice was low and sinister sounding and it had heavy reverberation in the background which surrounded his voice with an ominous echo.

"Thanks for...saving us...swords-bot." said Sonic, grateful about the fact he had been saved from certain death "Who are...you and...why...did you help us?"

"My name is Rorda the Swords Bot, Guardian of Cygnus X-387, my Homeworld." introduced the robot "I helped you because I came here looking for two convicts whom I believe are on this planet and I

saw you were in trouble so I decided to stop that giant dragon-bot for you. I despise evil and I hope to purge the galaxy of all evil."

"We're very grateful to you for saving us Rorda." said Tails "Who are the two convicts you're looking for?"

"Two robots named Horda and Borda." said Rorda "I do believe they are here right now. Where are they?"

No sooner had Rorda asked the question, Horda and Borda revealed themselves and they crept nervously up to Rorda. They looked very worried at the fact Rorda was there right now and demanding to see them. Rorda glared at Horda and Borda.

"Found you at last you two mistakes of machine kind!" hissed Rorda "I shall take you back to Cygnus X-387 immediately and turn you both into scrap metal!"

"You know these two?" asked Cosmo.

"Affirmative." said Rorda "Horda and Borda were failed experiments of mine. I wanted some associates to help me protect my planet from peril so I began creating robots to aid me in my guardian work but something went wrong and they became destruction hungry demons. I've been chasing these two for years and now I've finally caught them both, I can erase the mistakes I've made and destroy those two."

"No Rorda! Please! Have mercy on us!" begged Borda, getting down on his knees.

"We're sorry for all the trouble we've been causing!" cried Horda "Don't destroy us!"

"SILENCE!" bellowed Rorda.

Horda and Borda stopped begging and they shut up.

"You two are coming me with and you are going to be destroyed." said Rorda coldly "That's the most you deserve from all the destruction you've been causing to other worlds."

"Thank goodness." said Sonic with a huge sigh of relief "I'm getting sick of those...two trying to destroy our cities."

"I feared that's what these two monsters were doing here." said Rorda grimly "I hope they haven't caused too much trouble for you animal creatures."

"They've hardly been a...challenge for me really." boasted Sonic "I kicked their butts twice already and we...would have made it a third if... Dr. Eggman didn't come in and interfere."

"That is fortunate to know." said Rorda "Well hedgehog, these two will never bother your kind again. I'll be going now to take these two to be executed for their crimes against me and the galaxy."

He grabbed Horda and Borda by the shoulders and lifted them both off the ground.

"I bid you farewell hedgehog and our paths may cross again sometime soon." said Rorda "Maybe I can help you defeat that rotund person with the peculiar structure of hair protruding from under his nasal apparatus."

"I hope...we meet again Rorda." said Sonic "You're...way past...cool and we all owe you big...time for...saving our lives."

Rorda nodded and said "The pleasure is mine hedgehog. I have a fondness for saving lives and I was proud to save you and your friend's lives. You all look like interesting creatures. This is one planet I won't mind visiting again."

And with that, Rorda walked away, carrying Horda and Borda by their shoulders. The two robots wailed loud, electronic wails as they were carried away by the tall, imposing Rorda. Sonic, Tails and Cosmo watched Rorda walk off with Horda and Borda in hand until he vanished from sight. After Rorda had left, Sonic forced himself to sit upright even though he still felt rather weak and he turned to Tails.

"Well, talk about ironic." chuckled Sonic "I'm...constantly fighting against robots...and I ended up getting saved by one!"

"That is ironic." laughed Tails "I think I like this Rorda guy. He thinks we're interesting creatures."

"It feels...nice to be...complimented for once..." said Sonic "What with...Eggman and Marik...constantly talking bad about...us...Mobians."

"I don't see why anybody wouldn't find you Mobians interesting." said Cosmo "I certainly think you're interesting."

"We know...Cosmo and we're appreciative...of that." said Sonic weakly, rubbing his back tenderly with the back of his hand "As for Rorda...I wonder what he's like in battle? I bet...he'd kick Eggman's butt...every time if he was on our side...he beat Egg-Dragon...as if...he...was nothing!"

"Yeah and neither of us could lay a dent on him." said Tails "Rorda must be very powerful or maybe Egg-Dragon just wasn't designed to match his strength like it was built to match ours."

"Well at least Egg-Dragon is destroyed." said Sonic "Now we...can get the Chaos...Emeralds...back...provided Dr. Eggman hasn't...taken them with him...after he fled."

Tails twisted his tails around one another and he flew up to the destroyed Egg-Dragon. Only it's head was mostly intact, everything else had been reduced to a miserable wreck of steel and robot parts and the head was where the Chaos Emeralds were so Tails flew onto the head and peered into the machine's broken eyes. He saw the gleaming seven Chaos Emeralds glowing brightly in unison in the machine's cockpit control pad. Dr. Eggman had left them behind after fleeing for his life after Rorda destroyed Egg-Dragon. The control pad was surprisingly still intact despite the damages done to Egg-Dragon's head after falling off its neck section but the control pad was practically useless now since the machine it was supposed to be a control pad for is destroyed. Tails flew over to the useless control pad and he snatched the Chaos Emeralds out of their sockets. Tails flew out of Egg-Dragon's head while carrying the Chaos Emeralds in his hands and he landed in front of Sonic and showed him the Chaos Emeralds.

"Eggman left the Chaos Emeralds behind luckily." said Tails "We have them all now. Eggman can't use their power for his robots ever again."

"That's real swell." said Sonic, taking the blue Chaos Emerald out of Tails' hands and admiring it's bright shiny glow "Now we can use their power to...vanquish Dr. Eggman...once and for all!"

"I think you all need to heal up first." said Cosmo softly "None of you are in the right condition to fight. You're all beaten rather badly so you could all do with a good rest."

"To be honest...I think you're right." said Sonic, rubbing one of his quills casually "I feel like I can barely...stand and everybody's...still...knocked out from earlier."

The moment he said that though, all the knocked out Mobians began to stir and mumble to themselves. Amy and Cream both sat up and began rubbing their heads, Bunnie got up onto her knees and picked up the missing part of her robot arm and stared at it in despair, Vector pushed Espio and Charmy off himself and sat upright. Espio and Charmy did the same thing and Charmy began rubbing his antennas. Geoffrey and Wilson got up onto their hands and knees and began groaning like a ghoul that haunted a graveyard. Rouge sat up right and began rubbing her wings tenderly and Knuckles got up onto his hands and knees and he crawled over to Sonic, Tails and Cosmo.

"Hey Sonic..." he grunted, opening one eye and keeping the other one closed "How are we still alive? And...what...happened...to Egg-Dragon?"

"Eggman was about to kill us until a robot from a planet called Cygnus named Rorda sliced Egg-Dragon's head off...and brought the whole machine crashing down to the ground." said Sonic "He even arrested Horda and Borda and said he was going to take them away to be destroyed."

"A robot named Rorda saved our lives?" said Knuckles in surprise "And...he arrested Horda and Borda? I wonder...why...he did that?"

"He claims to be the guardian of his home planet and he came here looking for Horda and Borda because he wanted to execute them for their crimes against the galaxy." explained Tails "And he saved our lives out of sheer generosity. He finds us Mobians interesting apparently."

"Well...saved by a robot..." said Geoffrey with a weak smile "And we're...always battling them blighters...talk about irony eh mates?"

"I hope this Rorda guy comes here again and helps us fight Eggman." said Amy "He sounds like a nice robot."

"He's a powerful robot too." said Sonic "He has two swords and he sliced Egg-Dragon's head off in one clean swipe!"

"Well we could definitely...do with...a guy like...him on...our side." said Knuckles with a grin "Dr. Eggman wouldn't...know what...hit him..."

"He definitely won't know...what hit him." said Sonic "Especially since we now have all seven Chaos Emeralds. Eggman was stupid enough to leave them behind believe it or not!"

Knuckles chuckled a weak but hearty chuckle.

"Eggman's gonna get...what's coming to...him!" said Knuckles with an evil grin on his face "With the seven Chaos Emeralds on our side...we can use their power to put an end to his evil at long last!"

"We should rest first." said Sonic "We could all do with one right now. And once we're rested...we can stroll over to Robotropolis and give Eggman the surprise of a life time!"

What Sonic didn't know was HE was going to get the shock of a life time and it wouldn't be from Dr. Eggman...

Meanwhile, Rorda had not taken Horda and Borda away to be destroyed at all. He had brought them to his space ship which was long and narrow much like a stealth plane and it had four engines in the back that could make the ship go at the speed of light. It was

armed with enormous Gatling guns located under its wings which were swept back to allow the air to flow past the jet quicker. Once they were aboard the ship, Rorda threw them both down on the floor with an enormous thump.

"You stupid idiots!" he snarled at the two robots "Why did you not follow my plans as exactly?"

"We did Master!" snapped Horda "You told us to go to Mobius and cause collateral damage to its largest cities!"

"That was not the plan at all!" retorted Rorda, his cold yellow eyes narrowing into an evil death glare "The plan was to go to Mobius, fool the Mobians into thinking we had peaceful intentions for the planet, find out what Mobius' largest and most populated cities were and THEN destroy them! Why did you not do as you were told?"

Horda tried to argue back but he had no answer to give for his master was completely in the right and he was completely in the wrong.

"We forgot the part about fooling the inhabitants." said Horda glumly "Sorry master."

"Your apology will be taken into consideration you pair of dunces." said Rorda "Right now, I want a status report."

"Well we haven't got anything to report right now." said Borda timidly he clasped his hands together and shook like a leaf "Except for the fact we still don't know...which...

cities...on...Mobius...are...the...largest and most...pop...u...lated..." he stammered weakly.

Rorda remained completely clam and he resisted the urge to stab Borda in the chest with his deadly sword.

"I think we should have a change of plan." said Rorda "Never mind destroying some large cities, we'll destroy the entire PLANET instead. And since the Mobians think I'm a good guy, they'll never suspect a thing about me being behind the planet's destruction."

Horda and Borda stared at each other with their mouths gaping open.

"B-b-but master! Destroy the entire PLANET?" screeched Horda "Really? We don't have the kind of power for that!"

"Yes we do my feeble-minded fools." purred Rorda "We can combine together to form the unstoppable Charcaronda (pronounced CAR-ca-RON-da) remember?"

"Oh yeah." said Borda "We're a force to be reckoned with when we form that beast!"

"But Rorda, why are we destroying the entire planet?" cried Horda "You know the law of Cygnus X-387! We are permitted to destroy cities and civilization, but we're prohibited from destroying planets!"

"I do not care what that primitive law of ours states." growled Rorda "I am doing things my way and I say we're destroying the planet."

"Why though?" asked Borda.

"You two have been made fools of by those Mobians twice before so they must pay for it." stated Rorda, lightly running the tip of his claw up and down the huge blade of his sword "And we don't know which are the best cities to target so we may as well destroy the entire planet, we'll destroy EVERY city that way. And if those primitive cop-bots don't like my actions, tough for them, they'll never be able to arrest me and you two since we're too powerful and too clever to be caught by them."

"You're absolutely right." said Horda "So when do we start?"

"First thing tomorrow afternoon." said Rorda darkly, sheathing his sword "The end of Mobius will begin once we combine together and form Charcaronda. We'll split the planet apart like an egg and no one can stop us!"

And with that, the three robots began laughing in unison at the very thought of Mobius being reduced to asteroids and space rocks floating through the emptiness of space once they had finished with it...

The very next morning, Sonic had gathered all his friends around to his house to plan on their next attack on Dr. Eggman and his robot army. Despite their injuries from their battles with Metal Sonic, Marik and Egg-Dragon, they had all made a steady recovery and now everybody was fit and ready to fight once again. Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Wilson, Bunnie, Espio, Vector and Charmy all sat down on the ground in a circle and Sonic looked around the circle to see if everybody was there. Two people were missing and those two were Geoffrey St. John and Cosmo.

"Um…where are Geoffrey and Cosmo at?" asked Sonic.

"Cosmo wanted to go berry picking for some reason and Geoffrey's keeping an eye on her in case anything goes wrong." explained Wilson "They'll hopefully be with us as soon as possible."

"OK Wilson." said Sonic "Now everybody, I guess you know why we're all here right now."

"Yes." said Knuckles "We're planning our next move on Dr. Eggman."

"That's right." said Sonic "And I think I have one."

"So what is it Mr. Sonic?" asked Cream politely "Please tell us."

Sonic said nothing. He just pulled out the seven Chaos Emeralds and lay them down on the ground in front of him where they all glowed brightly in unison. Everybody stared at the glowing emeralds.

"We're gonna go over to Robotropolis and I'll use the emerald's power to smash the city to smithereens." said Sonic.

"Are ya'll sure about that sugah-hog?" asked Bunnie with a tone of concern in her voice "Ah mean, do ya'll know how to use the emerald's power or anything?"

"If I can use the power of the Master Emerald then I can use the power of these." said Sonic, remembering the time he went super

during the Mecha Sonic agenda*.

"The power of the seven Chaos Emeralds is similar to the power of the Master Emerald so I think Sonic will be fine with the emeralds." said Knuckles.

"So that's the plan then?" asked Tails "We just waltz over to Robotropolis and destroy it with the emerald's power?"

"Exactly." said Sonic with his trademark grin on his face "We're gonna kick Eggman outta Mobius once and for all and these emeralds will be the key to our victory!" he declared with a triumphant tone in his voice.

"I hope you're right." said Espio "I can't stand that fat man for another minute."

Sonic nodded and then said "We'll leave here in a couple minutes and be off to Robotropolis."

"But what about Geoffrey and Cosmo?" asked Amy "They're not back yet."

"We'll have to leave without them if they're not here by the time we depart." said Sonic "I get impatient if I'm kept waiting for long. I'll leave them a note saying we've gone if they're not back by the time we go."

Speaking of Geoffrey and Cosmo, they were in the surrounding forests of Green Hill Zone, not far away from where Sonic and friends were. Cosmo had wanted to go berry picking since she fancied a few berries for tea and Geoffrey offered to keep watch on her since Cosmo was defenceless and if she happened to be in danger, she would need someone to help her. Cosmo just reached through the bushes and picked the plumpest and juiciest berries she could find and put them in the basket she carried in her other arm while Geoffrey stood by her and kept his beady eyes open for the first sign of danger. So far, everything had been peaceful and nothing suspicious had been going on, it was just a peaceful, normal

day in the forest right now. Unfortunately for Cosmo, Geoffrey was beginning to get a little impatient as he waited for her to finish berry picking. Geoffrey just stood by the bush she was picking out of, tapping his foot and scowling a little.

"Man oh man…" he muttered to himself "Why did I offer to look after flower girl while she picks berries for herself? I hope she bloomin' hurries up though, I bet Sonic's getting impatient waiting for us to show up and join in with his meeting!"

Geoffrey turned to Cosmo, who had just picked another ripe berry and put it in the basket.

"Hey flower girl, you mind hurrying up a little?" asked Geoffrey, trying not to sound too rude or demanding "Sonic might be waiting for us."

"OK Mr. St. John." said Cosmo "I've only got a few more to pick and I'm finished."

So Cosmo searched through the bushes and picked nine more ripe, plump berries and put them in the basket. Geoffrey peered into the basket Cosmo held in her other arm. The bottom of the basket was full of berries, you couldn't see the wicker of the basket under the sea of berries that Cosmo had picked.

"Crikey, you picked a lot mate." said Geoffrey "I guess you really like berries then."

"I love berries." said Cosmo "That's why I wanted to pick some so I could eat them for tea later. I haven't eaten any berries all the while I've been here so I decided to have some. I bet the berries on Mobius are just as nice as the berries on my Homeworld."

"You'll like them Cosmo." said Geoffrey "Freshly picked berries in Green Hill Zone are the best you can get. I loved it when me mother made blueberry pie out of freshly picked blueberries from this very forest. Very nice, mmm, mmm." he said, thinking of the days of his childhood and how lovely blueberry pie tasted.

Cosmo just pulled a funny face at Geoffrey.

"You can use berries to make a pie?" she said.

"Sure you can rosebud." said Geoffrey with a cheery smile "I would have thought you'd have known that, do the people of your world not do that kind of thing on your planet?"

"No actually." said Cosmo "Our pies are made of different foods but a bet a pie made of berries would be very nice."

Before Geoffrey could say anything to Cosmo, they both heard a noise coming from deeper into the forest. It sounded like a boarding ramp lowering down and something walking up the ramp with heavy clanking sounds coming from their feet. The noise made Geoffrey wonder and Cosmo feel nervous.

"D-did you hear that Mr. St. John?" asked Cosmo.

"I sure did Cosmo." said Geoffrey quietly "Sounds like somebody's boarding a ship or summet. Let's investigate it shall we?"

"What if it's a machine piloted by Dr. Eggman?" asked Cosmo worriedly.

"Then we can show him why it's not wise to mess with us Mobians." said Geoffrey with a smug smirk on his face.

He loaded his arm mounted crossbow and crept through the silent forest, making sure not to make a sudden noise that would give him away. Cosmo put her basket of berries down and crept after Geoffrey. The two silently waded through the tall grass and lower hanging branches as they tried to find the source of the noise they had just heard a minute ago. They didn't have to go for long though, after a few minutes of walking quietly through the forest, they came to a large open area of woodland with no trees around. What they saw was a sight to behold. They saw a long sleek stealthy looking jet with four jet engines and Gatling guns under the wings. Geoffrey and Cosmo stared at it with the jaws agape. This looked like something Eggman had built but they couldn't be too sure it was Eggman's, it could belong to aliens or something.

"Blimey." whispered Geoffrey "That's one heck of a ship isn't it?"

"I wonder who it belongs to." whispered Cosmo "I do hope it's not a Martian ship, I don't want to tangle with another Martian after all the hell Marik's put me through."

They wouldn't have to be wondering on who owned the ship for long though because they heard the sound of clanking feet coming from inside the ship. Something or someone was coming out of the ship and it was coming down the lowered boarding ramp. Geoffrey and Cosmo took cover as the thing walked down the boarding ramp and onto the grassy ground that awaited it. Geoffrey and Cosmo peeked from their hiding place, which was behind a rose bush and saw what the thing was. It was Rorda the Swords Bot, the very robot that had saved the lives of Sonic and friends yesterday. He looked around to see if the coast was clear. His yellow optics swept over the forest like a sweep being swept across the floor. Everything was clear so Rorda turned to the right and he walked away, deep into the forest to observe a few things. Cosmo and Geoffrey watched Rorda walk away and then they looked at each other.

"Who's the robot?" asked Geoffrey "It's certainly not an Eggman robot. It looks too powerful to be an Eggman robot."

"That's Rorda, the one who saved our lives yesterday." said Cosmo "But what's he doing here? I thought he'd left to execute Horda and Borda for their crimes against the galaxy."

"Maybe he wants to help us again." suggested Geoffrey "Well at least we know it's nothing to be concerned about, let's go Cosmo."

The skunk turned to leave but Cosmo didn't follow him. Instead she pushed her way through the rose bush and ran up to the ship. Its boarding ramp was still lowered for some reason. Geoffrey turned around and saw Cosmo running to the ship and he ran after her as fast as he could.

"Cosmo! Come back!" he hissed "If that Rorda bloke catches you on his ship, he won't be happy!"

"I want to find out what he's doing here." said Cosmo, looking over her shoulder as she ran "And the only way to do this is to sneak onto the ship and investigate."

Geoffrey groaned in annoyance but said nothing more as he ran on to catch up with Cosmo. Cosmo ran up the boarding ramp and into the ship. Unfortunately for Geoffrey, the boarding ramp rose up and closed before he could get to it. Geoffrey groaned to himself and stood back from the ship. He hoped Cosmo would be able to get off the ship before Rorda discovered she was onboard.

As for the little Seedrian, now she was onboard the ship, she began to quietly creep through the corridor as she headed to the cockpit, the likeliest place she would find some answers. Cosmo tip-toed as silently as she possibly could, trying her hardest not to make a sound. So far, she hadn't made a noise and she had almost reached the cockpit. But as she got nearer to the cockpit, she began to hear voices coming from inside the cockpit. Voices that sounded a little familiar. Cosmo tip-toed up to the wall and she pressed her back against it. She edged quietly to the doorway so she could listen in on the voices she could hear in the cockpit. The voices she could hear where the voices of none other then Horda and Borda. They were talking to each other about their nefarious scheme that they and Rorda would soon be putting into action.

"Where's Rorda gone now?" asked Borda.

"He's making sure no one's snooping around on us." said Horda "He wants his attack to be completely unknown to the Mobians so he's making sure there's no one around here now."

Attack? What attack? Cosmo wondered in her mind.

"I'm so looking forward to the part where we destroy the planet." said Borda wickedly "I hate this planet and I hate the Mobians, especially the scary pink girl with the big hammer."

"She'll die along with the others when me, you and Rorda form Charcaronda and split the planet open like an egg." said Horda evilly "This'll be one moment of destruction I'll enjoy and we don't have to worry about getting arrested because the cop-bots will never be able to catch us."

"I doubt they'll even know we're the ones who destroyed Mobius." said Borda "For all we know, they'll probably blame it on someone

else and forget about it so we'll be in the clear."

"Possibly." said Horda "And when we return, Rorda will keep up the subtlety and act like we've not done anything suspicious while we've been out in the galaxy so the cops will remain completely in the dark. This is definitely the perfect plan and we have our master Rorda to thank for it! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Cosmo's stomach did a flip in shock and her heart skipped a beat. Rorda is a bad guy and he's Horda and Borda's master? And he's planning to destroy Mobius? This was terrible! She had to tell Sonic immediately and warn him before Rorda, Horda and Borda destroyed the planet! Unfortunately, that didn't seem possible right now. Cosmo tip-toed away from the cockpit and she looked over her shoulder to make sure no one had spotted her and she bumped straight into Rorda! The swords bot had returned from his look around and he didn't look pleased to see an intruder on his ship. He glared at Cosmo angrily and the Seedrian was so frightened, her leafy hair shook like leaves being blown in the wind.

"Well, it appears I have a nosy little worm on my ship." said Rorda dryly, drawing both his swords out and pointing them straight at Cosmo's chest, forcing the Seedrian against the wall where she was trapped and had no chance of escape. Cosmo's legs trembled and sweat poured down her head like rainfall.

"I cannot stand people spying on me and my henchmen you know so I'm afraid I'm going to have to relieve you of your life little girl." said Rorda, his voice as cold as a blizzard in the Arctic "But don't worry, this won't be painful for long, it'll be over rather quickly in all honesty."

Cosmo gulped.

"Master, what's going on?" cried Horda.

He and Borda ran out of the cockpit and they stopped beside Rorda, who held Cosmo at sword point against the wall.

"We have a spy." said Rorda "And I'm going to exterminate it before she can reveal our plans to that wretched hedgehog."

"Ooh this will be fun!" said Horda nastily "Stab her good and hard Rorda!"

"Yeah, teach her a lesson for spying on us!" added Borda.

Rorda drew the swords back and he lunged at Cosmo. Desperate to live, Cosmo quickly ducked, leaving Rorda to plunge both his swords into the wall and get them stuck. Then Cosmo crawled through Rorda's legs while the robot was trying to free his swords from the wall and ran for it before the swords bot could pulls his big, deadly swords out of the wall. Rorda spotted Cosmo escaping.

"Don't stand there you scrap brains! Get that putrid plant girl!" snarled Rorda as he continued to pull on his swords and try to free them from the wall.

"Yes sir!" cried Horda and Borda, deploying their weapons and running down the corridor after Cosmo.

The Seedrian ran as fast as her little legs could carry her. She looked over her shoulder and noticed to her horror, Horda and Borda were thundering down the corridor with their weapons in hand. This made Cosmo run even faster. She began to pant heavily as she ran on and on, desperate to escape her pursuers. Cosmo had almost made it to the end of the corridor and to her enormous luck, the boarding ramp hadn't risen back up from after Rorda had re-entered the ship. Horda held his twin-torches close to one another and they both emitted a huge flame that roared louder then a pride of lions and soared towards Cosmo like a giant fiery arrow. Cosmo was struck in the back by the blast of fire and she fell onto the floor and rolled across it. She didn't stop though; she rolled straight down the boarding ramp and out of the ship where Geoffrey St. John was waiting for her. The skunk hadn't bothered to go into the ship in case he riled anybody and he was rather shocked to see Cosmo rolling down the ramp and looking injured and a little burnt. Geoffrey picked Cosmo up and held her to his face.

"Cosmo! What the heck is going on?" blurted Geoffrey "Is someone trying to make a campfire outta ya?"

"Geoffrey, we've gotta get outta here and warn Sonic!" gasped

Cosmo "Rorda is evil and he's Horda and Borda's master! They're going to try and destroy Mobius!"

Geoffrey was so shocked by that sudden revelation he almost dropped poor Cosmo onto the ground! His pupils shrunk down into tiny dots of horror and his eyes widened.

"R-R-Rorda is e-e-evil?" squeaked Geoffrey "B-b-but he s-saved our lives yesterday!"

"I'm guessing he did that to win our trust." said Cosmo "I bet the whole thing was a trick so that we would believe Rorda is on our side when really he's not and he was never going to arrest Horda and Borda in the first place, he only came here to recruit them and put his plan into action and since we thought Rorda is a good guy, we would be completely unaware about it until it was too late."

Geoffrey snapped out of his flabbergasted state and put back on his usual serious but cocky tone.

"Well that's all we needed to know!" said Geoffrey "Come on Cosmo, let's flee for it and warn Sonic before those three blokes put their plan into action!"

"No one is going anywhere!" snarled a fierce, gravely voice that came from the top of the boarding ramp.

Horda and Borda had caught up with Cosmo and they stomped down the boarding ramp with their weapons blazing. Geoffrey primed his crossbow and he aimed it at the two robots while Cosmo hid fearfully behind the skunk's back.

"Back off you blighters!" snarled Geoffrey "Or I'll make scrap metal outta ya!"

"You can't take us both, skunk!" sneered Borda, his saw blades glistening like a ruby in the sunshine.

"Would you like to try and prove your theory bolt brain?" dared Geoffrey, a cocky smirk spread out on the skunk's lips as he prepared to fire his weapon.

That did it. Horda and Borda roared and they ran up to Geoffrey with their weapons ready to roast and slice him all at once. But Geoffrey was a strong fighter and he was extremely experienced in combat so he wouldn't be going down so easily. The moment Horda and Borda were close enough, Geoffrey fired two darts at the two robots. One dart hit Horda in the optic and the other dart hit Borda in the optic. The two robots screamed in pain and they clutched their eyes, trying to pull the dart out of them. Geoffrey immediately cut loose on them with a solid punch to the stomach to both robots, a kick to the knee on both robots and then he flipped into the air and did a split-kick in between them on their heads and knocked them both other. Horda dropped his torches and Geoffrey grabbed them both. He slammed one torch on Horda's head, breaking the left spike above Horda's visor and smashing the torch to pieces and then he slammed the other torch on Borda's head. The torch broke into pieces and Borda was left with a small dent above his visor. Now Horda and Borda were out of commission, Geoffrey grabbed Cosmo by the hand and ran as fast as he could. The moment they disappeared into the deep, dense forest though, Rorda emerged from within the ship and he stomped down the boarding ramp and onto the grassy ground below. Rorda had finally managed to pull his swords out of the wall and he had sheathed them both and ran to the ramp so he could catch Cosmo. He looked very angry at the fact his henchmen had just been beaten and he was even angrier at the fact Cosmo had escaped and was probably on her way to tell Sonic his plans. He scowled at the defeated Horda and Borda lying on the ground groaning and he kicked them both very viciously, earning a pained cry from both of them.

"You useless pair of copper bolts!" he growled "I cannot even trust you two to apprehend a simple plant creature! Why did I ever hire you two as my henchmen?"

"I dunno Rorda." said Horda "But we must catch up with the girl and skunk. They'll tell Sonic everything and Sonic will destroy us!"

"No they will not." said Rorda coldly "We're going to put the plan into action now. My scanners are detecting Sonic and his friends are on the move somewhere and they're far away from the plant girl so she'll never reach him in time. By the time she reaches him, Mobius

will be nothing but asteroids."

"Do you know where Sonic is?" asked Borda.

"Affirmative." said Rorda "He's heading to a robot city which is occupied by the fat man with the weird nasal structure according to my scanners. I'll upload the co-ordinates into the ship's navigational system and we'll head there right now."

With that said, Rorda, Horda and Borda ran back into the ship and into the cockpit. They all sat themselves down in the pilot's seats and Rorda uploaded some co-ordinates into ship's navigational systems while Horda and Borda got the ship started. The ship roared into life and Rorda pulled back on the controls. The ship rose slowly off the ground and slowly rotated around and then rocketed off like a speeding bullet. It was a very fast ship and they would be at Robotropolis in a matter of seconds.

Meanwhile, Geoffrey and Cosmo had run all the way to Sonic's house, the very place Sonic had gathered everybody around to for his meeting, so they could warn Sonic and friends about Rorda. The only problem was…nobody was there! The place was completely empty as if Sonic and friends had just left right now! Geoffrey looked around wildly for any signs of life but he couldn't find a single soul in sight. Cosmo went into the house and looked around in there but there was nobody in the house. There was nobody anywhere, the only people around where Cosmo and Geoffrey. Cosmo came back out of the house and Geoffrey stopped looking around wildly for Sonic and friends.

"There's nobody home and nobody around!" cried Cosmo "I think Sonic got tired of waiting for us so he left to Robotropolis without us!"

"I can see that!" yelled Geoffrey "We can't warn them if they're not here, we have to get to Robotropolis and fast!"

"But how?" cried Cosmo desperately "We don't have anyway of getting to Robotropolis quickly do we?"

"We have one." said Geoffrey "I'll go and get my motorbike that I rode over to Green Hill Zone before I had to keep an eye on you. You stay there while I go get it."

And with that, Geoffrey quickly ran off and disappeared into the dense forest. When Geoffrey had been requested to come around along with everybody else, he rode to Green Hill Zone on a motorbike he borrowed from Royal HQ in Empire City and he had left it in the forest while he watched Cosmo berry picking so he needed to get it in order to get to Robotropolis. Cosmo waited for the skunk to come back. Her stomach tingled with fear and she fretted on whether she and Geoffrey would make it in time. After a couple of minutes of waiting, the sound of a motorbike throttle was heard and Geoffrey emerged from the forest on his motorbike. The bike was coloured the same colour as Geoffrey's combat suit and it was a very futuristic looking bike with a very sleek design and uniquely designed windshield and wheel guards. Geoffrey had a motorbike helmet on since by law, you had to wear a helmet whilst riding a motorbike. Cosmo climbed onto the bike and held on tight as Geoffrey sped off on the motorbike. The bike roared loudly and sped through Green Hill Zone at an amazing speed.

"Hang on Sonic, we're on our way!" cried Geoffrey.

Meanwhile at Robotropolis, Sonic and friends had arrived at the Iron Gates and fences that separated them from the city. They all stared at the fences, wondering what to do first. Sonic knew he couldn't spin-dash threw them since he'd had a tough time breaking and entering through the gates the first time Robotropolis had been built**.

"So what do we do Sonic?" asked Knuckles "Do we break into the city or what?"

"No we don't Knuckles." said Sonic "I'm gonna use these emeralds and tear the city apart piece by piece, we don't need to break in."

"Well if you just need to use the emerald's power to destroy this place then why did you bother bringing us here Sonic?" demanded

Knuckles "It's pretty obvious you don't need us for this!"

"I brought you guys along in case everything goes kaput and I'll end up needing backup." said Sonic "And I thought you lot would get great pleasure in watching Eggman's city fall to the ground."

"I certainly would!" said Amy with a devious smile on her face "I can't stand that stupid Eggman and he destroys our cities so it's fair we destroy his and see how he likes it!"

"There you go." said Sonic snidely "Now stand back everyone, this may work or it may not and I don't want you all to get hurt in case it does go wrong."

Everybody stood back from Sonic and Sonic prepared to pull the Chaos Emeralds out and use them. But before Sonic could do anything, a huge bird-like robot flew over the iron fence and swooped over the Mobians like a diving eagle. Everybody ducked to dodge the swooping robot and the robot only just missed them. The robot spread out its huge wings and it landed on the ground. The robot was shaped like a huge peacock with wing feathers all made of ferociously sharp blades, huge tail feathers much like a real peacocks that were actually missiles and all painted with colourful details to match a real peacock's, a beak as sharp as a flint and four wicked talons on each foot. The robot had a laser cannon in its beak. The robot was piloted by none other then Dr. Eggman and Alonzo, who were station in the robot's torso section. Eggman glared at the Mobians from inside the cockpit, his scowl looked very frightening and serious.

"Sonic, you've been cheating death for far too long now!" declared Dr. Eggman "But you will not cheat death with me this time! My Egg-Peacock will destroy you once and for all!"

Sonic scoffed at the ranting maniac.

"Pfft! Must you call every machine you build "egg-something"? It's getting old and tedious now!" moaned Sonic.

"It's MY machine and I decide what I call it you meddlesome maggot!" roared Dr. Eggman "Now let me show you how this

machine works!"

"OK, then I'll see how these Chaos Emeralds work!" sneered Sonic, pulling the seven emeralds out and showing them to Dr. Eggman.

"Nobody will be seeing how anything works!" came a voice of steel that made Sonic and Eggman both jump in surprise.

Sonic and Eggman turned and saw a sleek, jet-like spaceship with its boarding ramp deployed and it's occupants out in the open. It was Rorda, Horda and Borda. The three robots stood there in a line with their hands on their hips and angry scowls on their face. Dr. Eggman immediately began to worry whereas Sonic beamed with delight. The other Mobians didn't know whether they should be thrilled or horrified since they hadn't seen Rorda before except for Tails, who beamed with Sonic.

"Rorda! You're back!" cried Sonic "Great, how's about helping us kick some Eggman butt again?"

"No." said Rorda flatly "I am not here to aid anyone in their fights. I am here to end the existence of your world."

"WHAT?" shrieked Sonic and Tails together.

The others gasped in surprise and Dr. Eggman just stared at Rorda in surprise. First Rorda destroys his greatest machine and stops him from killing Sonic and now he wants to destroy Mobius? What was going on with that robot?

"Are you kidding?" cried Sonic "You're kidding right? I must have heard you wrong!"

"You heard him correct hedgehog." said Horda "We're destroying Mobius and you cannot stop us!"

"Yeah, you cannot stop us!" sneered Borda.

"How are you two here?" demanded Tails "Rorda took you two away to be destroyed!"

"Incorrect." said Rorda "I did not take them away to be destroyed, I

took them to my ship to plan my move. You see Mobians, I am not a guardian of my Homeworld at all, I am Horda and Borda's master and I crave destruction like they do. I didn't like it when you two made fools of my henchmen so after a while I decided it's time I joined in the fray."

Sonic clenched his fists in anger and he gritted his teeth.

"You scum!" yelled Sonic, rushing up to Rorda in a blind fury "How dare you deceive us all like that!"

Rorda just merely punched Sonic to the side and sent the hedgehog crashing side-first into the ground and skidding for a moment before coming to a stop. Horda and Borda laughed at the downed hedgehog. Tails and Amy ran over to Sonic to comfort him.

"You had it coming you fools." said Rorda "If you had just let Horda and Borda do their collateral damage here, I wouldn't have stooped down to this level. And now I'm giving you what you deserve. And to destroy the planet, I shall be showing you my strongest form."

Rorda leaped into the air, followed by Horda and Borda. Rorda held his arms out to the side and he, Horda and Borda began to glow very brightly. The Mobians and Dr. Eggman looked up into the sky to see what was happening. Then suddenly Rorda, Horda and Borda all fired a beam of energy down at the ship and the ship was reduced to smithereens. The moment the ship was destroyed; all the debris levitated up into the sky and began to swirl around the three robots like a killer tornado. The debris began to build a colossal shape up around Rorda and Rorda began to increase in size. Horda and Borda began to increase in size also and they began to transform into something. The sky was full of whirring sounds and clashing metal as the ship's debris slammed against Rorda and began building a huge shape around him. Rorda's head began to change shape as the debris continued forming something and Horda and Borda had just transformed into a pair of arms. The shape the debris was forming was very big and very monstrous looking and it looked very deadly too. The arms formed by Horda and Borda connected to Rorda's arms and they slotted neatly into place. Rorda's head had finished changing shape and his swords formed two spikes on top of the new head. The debris finished swirling

around and the shape it had been building had been completed. The finishing result was absolutely terrifying and the Mobians all gasped in horror at what they were looking at. Even Dr. Eggman couldn't believe what he was seeing. Rorda, Horda and Borda had transformed into an enormous robot that was bigger then a thirty story building. The robot had a huge, hunched over head with four spikes, two pointing straight up and the other two sprouting out to the sides and bull shaped, ferocious looking eyes, a striped dome in place of a mouth, a large, tough looking body, a giant backpack like structure on it's back and enormous arms. The arms had large curved spikes on the back of its shoulders that pointed straight up at the sky and four sharp claws on each hand. Horda formed the right arm and the right arm's wrist section had Horda's trademark visor spikes on them along with a flame deco going all the way around wrist. Borda formed the left arm and the left arm had Borda's trademark head spike with a saw tooth deco going all the way around the wrist. The robot didn't have legs; it had a large hexagonal structure as its waist and an enormous spike in place of legs. The spike had four additional spikes on the tip. The entire robot was red, silver and bronze with tinges of orange and purple in some places. This robot was known as Charcaronda, the very form Rorda had been talking about. Charcaronda was a terrifying robot with strength capable of destroying planets and was not a force to be reckoned with. The Mobians knew just be looking at the enormous creature that Charcaronda would not be taken down so easily. Charcaronda lifted its head and it roared a deafening, echoing, rumbling bellow of a roar that could easily bring a city down onto its knees. The whole planet seemed to shake around Sonic and friends as Charcaronda roared as loud as it could. The roar was so powerful, Egg-Peacock fell over onto its back and the Mobians were brought down onto their backs. Sonic stared up at the behemoth that loomed above the ground, ready to destroy Mobius once and for all…

Footnotes:

***See Story 13**

****Remember the circus park that turned out to be an Eggman**

city in disguise from stories 17-18?

Rorda, Horda and Borda have become one! What does this mean for the people of Mobius? Is Mobius doomed or can Sonic use the Chaos Emeralds to defeat Charcaronda? Join me next time as Sonic goes SUPER SONIC! Reviews are welcome.

Robot Wars

Story 45: Robot Wars

Geoffrey and Cosmo arrived at the Northern Border of Megapolis on the motorbike at long last but what they had just come across was beyond what they were expecting. They had been expecting to see a massive fight between the Mobians and Dr. Eggman raging on, instead they were met with a giant robot with a giant spike in place of legs, huge arms and a monstrous appearance. The very sight of the machine made Geoffrey ground the bike to a halt and do a swerve as the bike braked and he and Cosmo stared in amazement at what they were looking at.

"I dunno about you Cosmo but I think we're too late!" gasped Geoffrey.

"What is that?" screeched Cosmo, bewildered by the sheer height and appearance of Charcaronda.

"I'm taking a wild guess and saying that's Rorda in super form." said Geoffrey, unaware he was completely right "But how did the blighter manage to find out where Sonic is?"

"That doesn't matter, we need to get to them now!" cried Cosmo.

Geoffrey started the engine and the motorbike roared back into life. The bike sped off closer towards Charcaronda.

As for the Mobians, they just continued to stare up at Charcaronda, not sure what to do to him. The giant robot remained hovering above the ground, staring down at the Mobians with its ferocious optics. Cream began to get scared looking at the robot so Amy hugged her to comfort her and Cream looked away from Charcaronda. Tails began hugging his two tails in fear, Team Chaotix didn't know what to make of the situation, Wilson began shaking and Sonic and Knuckles remained staring at it, unable to believe what they were looking at.

"So Rorda, Horda and Borda could all combine together…to form THAT?" screeched Sonic "That's one serious robot there!"

"I'll s-s-say!" said Tails, his voice wobblier then jelly on a plate "Th-th-that's b-b-better then anything D-D-Dr. Egg-m-man could e-ever make!"

"I am about to prove your theory wrong Tails!" roared Dr. Eggman "That machine maybe be huge and impressive but my machines will tear it to the ground!"

And with that, Egg-Peacock bent over, aimed its tail feather missiles at Charcaronda and fired them all at once. All fifteen missiles shot out of their sockets and roared towards the giant behemoth machine. Charcaronda made no attempts to defend himself, he just stood there and waited for the oncoming missiles to strike against him. The missiles all crashed and exploded against Charcaronda's tough armour and the air around Charcaronda was filled with thick black smoke as the missiles crashed into the giant machine. The Mobians watched the whole scene with anticipation, wondering if Egg-Peacock had actually done anything to the monstrous creature that loomed above them. Geoffrey and Cosmo pulled up beside the Mobians and stared up at Charcaronda as he was blasted by Eggman's missiles. Sonic spotted them.

"Geoff! Cosmo! You're just in time to join the party!" yelled Sonic.

"I know we are!" Geoffrey yelled back "And we're against probably the biggest robot we've ever come across!"

"Would you believe me if I said that thing's made up of Rorda, Horda and Borda?" asked Sonic.

"Yes I would!" answered Geoffrey "Little Cosmo found out Rorda's really a bad guy and we came here to warn you!"

"You're a little late though!" snorted Knuckles "Because we already know that now!"

The last missile struck against Charcaronda and exploded into smithereens. Egg-Peacock had fired all its tail feather missiles and it

didn't have anymore so Dr. Eggman stood by and looked up at Charcaronda, hoping he had done some damage to him. After a very tense moment of waiting, the smoke began to drift away into nothingness revealing…a very mad and undamaged looking Charcaronda glaring down at them with his huge optics! Dr. Eggman looked like he was about to do a million double-takes in a matter of seconds.

"What the flying monkeys?" he screamed "My missiles **didn't even dent it!** "

"And that was a lot of missiles you fired!" cried Charmy Bee, flying around like a maniac and gibbering madly "We're toast against this thing!"

"Not yet we aren't!" yelled Sonic "Let's see if the good old spin-dash can stop that thing!"

"Sonic don't!" cried Tails, running up to stop him from spin-dashing Charcaronda "If…"

Too late, Sonic curled into a ball and charged straight up at Charcaronda in his trademark spin-dash. Charcaronda didn't do anything; he remained completely motionless and waited for Sonic to hit him. Sonic hit Charcaronda square in the forehead and pinged harmlessly off his armour and hurtled into the ground like a missile whizzing towards its target. Sonic skidded very painfully across the ground, creating a huge mound of dirt as he skidded and he ground to a halt. The skid had been so painful Sonic felt like his entire face had been ripped off by the impact. Tails ran over to Sonic.

"Sonic! Are you OK?" he asked, hoping for a positive answer.

Sonic picked himself up from the mound of dirt he'd made and he shook his dirtied face to get the soil off. He grimaced and groaned as he felt his scraped and grazed face which was stinging horribly.

"Ouch!" he grumbled "That's one tough robot!"

"I told you not to attack it!" said Tails crossly "If fifteen missiles can't lay a dent on that thing then we have no chance against it!"

"I didn't think it was going to be that tough!" snapped Sonic "That thing's so tough I doubt Knuckles could do any harm to it!"

Dr. Eggman was not the giving up type though. He began to madly fire Egg-Peacock's beak laser at Charcaronda. But the weak and feeble attacks on Charcaronda merely tickled the machine and Charcaronda didn't even seem to notice it was being shot at. He kept his eyes fixed on the Mobians, clearly happy at their terrified faces. Terrified faces brought great pleasure to Charcaronda and just by looming above the ground doing nothing and taking the punishment everybody was throwing at it made the robot as happy as a clown. Dr. Eggman got tired of firing Egg-Peacock's laser and decided to try something else desperately.

"That's it! Time for my last minute resort!" he yelled "All robots and weapons stations of Robotropolis! Focus all the fire power you have on this giant machine before you!" he ordered.

The thousands of robots that occupied the city obeyed and they aimed their many weapons at Charcaronda. Gun turrets and other laser weapons stationed in the buildings of the city all targeted Charcaronda and began opening fire at the machine. Charcaronda still remained motionless and did nothing whatsoever. He was bombarded by a shower of lasers but the colossal gestalt didn't seem to be affected by any blast that hit it. Robotropolis fired more then just lasers, it fired missiles and it fired as many as it possibly could but neither of the missiles could damage Charcaronda. Nobody could believe what they were seeing. Charcaronda was being showered by a city-scale onslaught that could bring a mountain crumbling to pieces and not one single laser blast or missile was doing any harm to Charcaronda! Charcaronda was a nigh-invulnerable machine meaning it was strong but not impossible to destroy but nothing on Mobius had the kind of power to destroy Charcaronda so Mobius would be doomed. Robotropolis kept up its onslaught but Charcaronda just continued to stand there and take the punishment. Then for the first time since the transformation, Charcaronda did something. He raised his enormous arms up and aimed them at Robotropolis. Then the Horda and Borda spikes on his wrists extended up and pointed straight forward. Then Charcaronda opened his hands and fired a huge electromagnetic

pulse blast at Robotropolis. The blast exploded in front of the city and swept over the whole city in one enormous wave. The moment the EMP blast swept over everything, the weapons stopped firing and the city was brought to a standstill. Every single robot was horribly electrocuted by the enormous shock and they all fainted to the ground. The city had completely lost its power too; not a single building had a light on or appeared to be active. Robotropolis had been completely powered down and all the inhabitants had been deactivated by the EMP wave. Dr. Eggman was about to blow his top.

"Th-th-th-th-th-th-that th-th-th-thing j-j-j-j-j-just…" he stammered, unable to control his voice.

"That thing just completely wiped out your power supply!" Tails said for Eggman "That's incredible power behind that machine!"

"Well its official." said Wilson "We're dead! We're absolutely and completely dead! We can't hurt that thing and it can bring cities to a standstill with one blast of EMP! We may as well surrender ourselves and dig ourselves a grave because we have no chance against that thing!"

Geoffrey grabbed Wilson by the shoulders and shook him madly.

"Clam down doggie!" yelled Geoffrey "We're not giving up on Mobius, not after all our efforts these past months and if we can stop Eggman's nefarious plans then we can stop that thing! OK?"

"Whatever you…say." said Wilson quietly.

"That's more like it." said Geoffrey, putting Wilson down.

"Besides, we have a sure fire ace we can use." said Sonic, proudly showing the seven Chaos Emeralds.

The gems slowly circled around Sonic while glowing brightly.

"Sonic, an entire city couldn't stop that thing so what makes you think seven puny emeralds can?" asked Vector, hoping not to sound like he was doubting the hedgehog too much.

"They say if you collect all seven Chaos Emeralds, a miracle is supposed to happen." said Knuckles "And that miracle maybe all we need to bring that thing to the ground."

"Let's hope this miracle is as powerful as legend says it is." said Espio.

But before Sonic could even attempt to use the emeralds, Charcaronda did something else. He roared loudly and then slowly began to rise higher off the ground. He rose and rose until he was halfway up in the air and then he came back down at tremendous speed and plunged his spike section into the ground. The whole impact made Mobius shake all over and Sonic and friends fell over. Sonic dropped the Chaos Emeralds and all seven of them clattered across the ground before coming to a halt. Sonic quickly gathered them up and turned his attention back to Charcaronda to see what the gestalt was doing now. Charcaronda had embedded his entire spike section into the ground and only the hexagon shaped structure that was its waist remained above the ground. Then Charcaronda raised his arms and rotated ninety degrees to the left. The moment it did so, the ground around it began to crack and the cracks stretched to great lengths. The Mobians stared in horror at what just happened. Charcaronda then rotated another ninety degrees so now he had his back turned on everybody and the cracks increased to greater lengths and more cracks appeared around him. Everybody began to panic, what was going on? Charcaronda rotated another ninety degrees and the cracks not only lengthened, but they widened too! And even more cracks were beginning to appear after Charcaronda's third rotation and the cracks stretched beyond the Northern Border of Megapolis and into Megapolis itself.

"What's happening Miss Rose?" squealed Cream.

"I don't know Cream." said Amy "That thing's making the ground crack every time it rotates. How's it doing that?"

"I think I have the answer." said Dr. Eggman.

Egg-Peacock's torso section lifted up so Eggman could speak to everybody and they would hear him more clearly.

"That robot doesn't have any legs, it has the giant spike instead right?" he said "And I think that spike is what's causing the cracks. Every time that machine rotates, the spike underground rotates and begins cracking the ground. My guess is if he continues to do this, Mobius will split apart like a broken eggshell!"

"So that's how Rorda, Horda and Borda are gonna destroy the planet." said Sonic "They turned into that thing and that thing has the power to destroy planets. We've gotta bring that thing down before Mobius is no more!"

"Then hurry up and use the Chaos Emeralds before that thing does anymore damage!" bellowed Knuckles "It's rotating again!"

And surely enough, Charcaronda rotated another ninety degrees so now it was facing the Mobians again and the cracks widened and lengthened even more! Unfortunately, some of the Mobians were unfortunate enough to be near the cracks as they increased and the cracks opened up under their feet, causing them to fall down into them! Cosmo lost her balance and began falling down a crack until Tails caught her by the hand to save her from falling. Tails pulled the Seedrian back onto the surface with all his might. Amy and Cream fell down a crack but Cream caught Amy and flew her back to the surface. The whole of Team Chaotix fell down but Charmy caught Vector and flew him back to the surface whereas Espio used his long sticky tongue as a grappling hook to save himself from falling down. Sonic fell over and dropped three of the Chaos Emeralds down a crack but Bunnie Rabbot spotted them just in time and extended her robot arm down the crack to catch them all. She tossed the emeralds to Sonic and he caught them. Sonic glared up at Charcaronda who appeared to be watching them save themselves from falling down the cracks he'd been creating and clearly appeared to be enjoying his handiwork.

"That does it you creep!" yelled Sonic "No one is splitting my planet apart! I'm gonna make chilli-sauce outta ya!"

Charcaronda just roared at Sonic but this roar didn't sound like his natural roar. It almost sounded like he was actually laughing at Sonic for his brave statement. That did it. Sonic got mad and he threw the seven emeralds into the air and they began to glow very

brightly in unison and slowly circle around him. Everybody stood back and watched as Sonic began what would hopefully be the miracle.

"I hope this works." said Sonic "Or we're all dead meat out here."

Sonic closed his eyes and thought of nothing more then defeating Charcaronda. He had no idea how to use the emerald's power since he'd never used it before but since the Chaos Emeralds had similar power to the Master Emerald, he knew he would be able to use the power and stop Charcaronda from splitting Mobius apart. Charcaronda didn't continue his planet splitting process; instead he stood there and watched the scene unfolding before him with enormous interest. The giant machine was hoping that Sonic would inadvertently destroy himself trying to use the Chaos Emeralds power. But that thought never happened. Sonic's positive aura mixed with the power of the Chaos Emeralds was giving the hedgehog strength greater then he'd ever experienced and ever known and the miracle was beginning to happen. All six of Sonic's quills pointed straight up at the sky and his cobalt blue fur began to turn a dazzling, glorious golden colour. With the amazing power of the Chaos Emeralds, Sonic had become Super Sonic once again! Tails beamed with joy. He remembered Super Sonic's first outing during the Mecha Sonic agenda* and he never thought he would be so thrilled to see him again. Dr. Eggman began to get flashbacks from his first encounter with Super Sonic and the very thoughts made him shake with fear. Everybody else stared in amazement and were unable to speak. Charcaronda remained motionless, clearly un-amused at Sonic's transformation and what Sonic had just become. Super Sonic opened his eyes, which were now red instead of green and he smiled a cocky smile at the giant machine before him.

"You've been messing with the hedgehog for far too long Horda and Borda!" yelled Super Sonic "And so have you Rorda! You may have combined to form a giant machine of great power but that doesn't mean you're unbeatable! I'm here to tear you apart piece by piece you monster! Now pull yourself outta the ground and face me one-on-one! And to make things more interesting, we'll fight in the sky! How does that sound?"

Charcaronda looked as if he was considering this request and then he roared with laughter again. Super Sonic's eyes widened, fearing that Charcaronda was going to refuse the offer and continue cracking the planet. Then suddenly, Charcaronda slammed his huge hands on the ground and he pulled his spike section out of the ground. He left behind a huge crater as deep as the deepest ocean on Mobius and then Charcaronda's backpack began to glow around the edges. The gigantic machine began to rise slowly off the ground and he flew straight up into the sky. Super Sonic smiled, happy to see Charcaronda had accepted his offer and he rocketed into the sky after the colossal gestalt. Super Sonic and Charcaronda raced up into the sky as fast as they could fly while everybody else stared up at the sky and watched the fighters ascend.

"Sonic did it." said Knuckles slowly "He's managed to use the power of the seven Chaos Emeralds! He's used the miracle that the seven gems are said to perform!"

"But is it enough?" asked Wilson worriedly "Just because Sonic's gone gold on us, it doesn't mean he's powerful enough! For all we know, that beast machine's probably still too powerful for Super Sonic to stop!"

"I believe in Sonic." said Amy "I bet that he'll use his super powers to turn that horrible machine into a scrapheap!"

"If you believe in Mr. Sonic then so do I!" said Cream supportively.

"I believe in Sonic too." said Cosmo "If there's anyone who can stop that thing it's him."

"Well if you girls believe in Sonic, then I believe in Sonic too." said Wilson "And I bet Mandy believes in Sonic as well."

"I certainly believe in the bloke." said Geoffrey "He's taken down many a great machine, this is merely another clanker for him to smash!"

"Ah believe in the sugah hog." said Bunnie happily.

"We believe in Sonic too!" cried Team Chaotix in unison.

"I believe in Sonic." said Tails "He always wins in the end." No one believed in Sonic more then Tails did.

"If Sonic was able to use the emerald's power, then I bet he'll win this match." said Knuckles "You do your best out there Sonic. We're all counting on you!"

"Oh shut up with this "I believe in Sonic" nonsense and watch the fight!" snapped Dr. Eggman "We have no idea what's going to happen!"

Everybody turned to Eggman and yelled at the top of their voices.

"WILL YOU BE QUIET?"

Dr. Eggman said nothing more and he just closed Egg-Peacock's canopy and flew over the fence and into Robotropolis.

"I do not wish to see the fight." said Dr. Eggman "I have other plans to work on right now but I'll be monitoring the fight to see if Sonic wins or not."

"You do that Eggman." said Amy with a scowl "Nobody wants you here anyway."

Egg-Peacock flew over to Eggman's headquarters in the middle of the city and Eggman ran into his base to take cover from the oncoming clash of the titans that was about to begin. The Mobians stayed where they were and they watched with anticipation, eagerly awaiting for the battle to begin.

Up in the sky, Super Sonic and Charcaronda had stopped ascending and they stared daggers at each other. Charcaronda's nasty, evil optics narrowed down to evil slits as he stared Super Sonic down. Super Sonic just kept on his cocky smile and he prepared to charge. Charcaronda aimed its colossal arms at Sonic and its hands retracted backwards into the wrists. Then a pair of cannons extended from within and they aimed at Super Sonic. Super Sonic just smirked and waited. Charcaronda immediately opened fire and sent some huge blasts of energy at Super Sonic. Super Sonic effortlessly dodged them all and he rocketed towards

Charcaronda with his arms out and his fists clenched. Charcaronda continued firing at the golden hedgehog but none of his attacks hit home. Super Sonic dodged all the blasts and was about to hit Charcaronda in the centre of the torso until Charcaronda turned his left cannon back into a hand and he swatted Super Sonic away. Super Sonic spiralled through the air like a confused bird and he stopped himself before he could spiral any further. He shook his head madly to regain his senses and he charged again. Charcaronda turned his left hand back into a cannon and he fired the cannons at Super Sonic. Super Sonic dodged the blasts and he kicked one towards Charcaronda as he got nearer to the machine. The blast hit Charcaronda smack in the face and the giant machine clenched his face in pain and he began to roar in agony. Super Sonic smiled.

"So your own weapons hurt you do they?" he said to himself "That's one weakness I've managed to figure out."

Charcaronda stopped roaring in pain and he began shooting at Super Sonic again. Super Sonic dodged all the blasts and he kicked one towards Charcaronda in hope of hurting the machine again but Charcaronda swatted the blast away with its arm. Charcaronda transformed both his cannons back into hands and he swiped both his arms at Super Sonic. Similar to what Marik the Martian can do, Charcaronda sent waves of energy flying at Super Sonic with the swipe of the arms. Super Sonic dodged the energy waves and he charged towards Charcaronda. Super Sonic hit Charcaronda in the centre of the torso but he didn't smash his way through it and he didn't seem to do much harm to the giant machine. Charcaronda growled furiously and he smacked Super Sonic away. Super Sonic hurled through the air and he stopped himself in mid-air and he shook himself.

"Man, that's one tough robot!" said Super Sonic "Even in my super form, I can't seem to hurt him. But there must be a way to bring him down. Maybe he has a weak spot and I've just gotta find it."

Super Sonic did a Super Sonic Boost and rocketed towards Charcaronda from behind. He had a feeling the backpack structure on Charcaronda's back might be his weak spot so he was aiming for it. If he destroyed it, Charcaronda would fall down to the ground

since it's the backpack structure he uses to fly with. Unfortunately, Charcaronda heard Super Sonic coming and he turned around and punched Super Sonic. The punch didn't hurt Super Sonic too much due to the fact he was invulnerable in super form but the punch still managed to shake him a little. Charcaronda swiped his arms and sent more waves of energy towards Super Sonic. Super Sonic dodged all the waves and he charged towards Charcaronda again. Charcaronda swiped at Super Sonic but he missed and Super Sonic punched Charcaronda in the face. Then Super Sonic did his trademark spin-dash and he hit Charcaronda squarely in the head again. Charcaronda roared in agony and he tried to hit Super Sonic again but he missed. Super Sonic spin-dashed Charcaronda in the shoulder and Charcaronda tried to wallop Super Sonic again. Super Sonic dodged the swipe but Charcaronda got the drop on him with a cannon blast. The blast hit Super Sonic and sent him hurtling through the air like a tossed stone. Super Sonic regained his senses and he spin-dash towards Charcaronda again but Charcaronda swatted him away and began shooting at him. Super Sonic charged back at him with a Super Sonic Boost and he ploughed straight through the cannon blasts as if they were nothing. Super Sonic smashed through the last cannon blast and he flew straight into Charcaronda's cannon and directly up the robot's arm. Charcaronda could feel the super powered hedgehog charging and smashing through his arm and the onslaughts began to seriously hurt his arm. Charcaronda roared with pain as he felt heavy spin-dashes from inside his arm and in a desperate attempt to save himself from even more punishment, he fired his cannon and shot Super Sonic straight out of his arm! Super Sonic whooped as hurtled through the air and he ground to a halt before he could go any further.

The onslaughts he had landed inside Charcaronda's arm had done a great deal of damage to the arm itself. Smoke poured out from the armour panels and sparks flew everywhere. Super Sonic had been doing a lot of spin-dashes to damage Charcaronda's arm and the resulting damage he'd caused actually ended up starting a fire inside. Firing the cannon had only made things worse though as the fire Super Sonic had started ignited the energy used for Charcaronda's cannon blasts and Charcaronda's whole arm looked like it was about to explode. As a matter of facts, that's exactly what it did! Charcaronda's entire right arm, which had been formed by

Horda, exploded and detached away from the shoulder section of Charcaronda. The arm fell down to the ground and crashed like a falling meteor. Chunks of metal and debris flew everywhere and the arm crumbled to pieces. There was no way Horda could have survived that; Super Sonic had officially destroyed him. Charcaronda got mad, very mad and he knew how to avoid losing his other arm, if he didn't have his cannon deployed then Super Sonic wouldn't be able to get into his arm and destroy it so Charcaronda turned his left cannon back into a hand and the giant machine decided to change tactics. Charcaronda began swiping his only remaining arm and sending huge waves of energy at Super Sonic. Super Sonic effortlessly dodged all the waves but Charcaronda wasn't trying to directly hit Super Sonic, the waves were just to distract him while Charcaronda did something else. The giant spike he had in place of his legs detached from the hexagonal structure on his waist and reattached itself on his right shoulder. Charcaronda was replacing his destroyed arm and the spike would do just that. An arm section grew out from behind the spike section so now Charcaronda had a new arm with the spike as his hand. It was as if he had a giant joust on his arm. Super Sonic whistled with amusement.

"OK, that's impressive." said Super Sonic "But he still can't beat me. Its gonna take more then a giant spike to bring me down!"

Super Sonic charged towards Charcaronda at top speed. Charcaronda bent forward and rocketed right past Super Sonic with his jet boosters. The two fighters flew right past each other and they both stopped and turned to face each other. Super Sonic was impressed again.

"So you can move quickly after all." said Super Sonic "I always thought you were slow."

Charcaronda aimed his joust weapon and charged at Super Sonic at full speed. Super Sonic dodged the charge but only just, he felt the wind whiz past him as Charcaronda hurtled by. Charcaronda ground to a halt and turned back around. Then he aimed his joust and stabbed the sky. Then he began to draw a perfect circle in the air in front of him with the joust. The circle was wide enough for him to fit through and it was made up of fizzling, crackling and electrical yellow energy. Super Sonic had no idea what Charcaronda was

doing so he charged at him. But the moment he went in the circle, the circle closed around him and stopped him dead in his tracks. Super Sonic tried to move but he couldn't, the circle was firmly holding him in place. Super Sonic tried to break free from the circle but he couldn't. Despite his immense power, the circle was unbreakable and he was unable to get free of it. The circle was holding him into place and keeping him trapped where he was. Charcaronda laughed at him and seeing as Super Sonic was completely immobilized, he saw the perfect opportunity to attack. He raised the joust high above his head and walloped the subdued Super Sonic with it. Super Sonic hurtled down into the ground like a downed fighter jet. His fall was so hard he ended up making a five foot wide crater around him. The Mobians watching all did a chorus of gasping. Super Sonic picked himself up and charged up at Charcaronda again. But he couldn't quite see where Charcaronda was as he shot through the clouds. By the time Super Sonic got out of the clouds though it was too late. Charcaronda had formed another energy circle with his joust and Super Sonic spotted it too late to avoid it and he flew into it, causing the circle to trap him again. Now Super Sonic was subdued once again, Charcaronda transformed his only hand into a cannon and began to rapidly shoot the super-powered hedgehog. Since Super Sonic was subdued, he couldn't dodge the blasts and he was repeatedly blasted by them. Super Sonic wasn't too affected by the blasts due to his invulnerability but they were still hurting him as they hit him. After the last blast hit Super Sonic, Charcaronda turned his cannon back into a hand and he seized Super Sonic before the super hedgehog had time to get away. Super Sonic grimaced and groaned as Charcaronda proceeded to squeeze the life out of him. Super Sonic could have easily broken his way out of Charcaronda's grasp but the cannon blasts had weakened him and Charcaronda was squeezing so hard, Super Sonic didn't have the strength to break out of his grasp.

On the ground, the clouds had moved and the Mobians had a clear sight of Charcaronda with Super Sonic in his hand. This was not a pretty sight for them and they knew Sonic needed help. The only trouble was, how could they help Sonic? Tails had an idea though. It was going to be risky and he might even get killed, but it would be worth it if he helped Sonic destroy Charcaronda and save Mobius

from total destruction. Tails ran forward but Cosmo reached out and grabbed him by the tails.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'm going up there to help Super Sonic." said Tails "He needs it right now."

"You can't go up there!" shrieked Cosmo "That thing will kill you!"

"And if I don't get up there and help Sonic, it'll kill Sonic." retorted Tails "I'm the only one who can help him right now and I'm gonna help him whether you want me to or not, now let go of my tails!"

He yanked both his tails out of Cosmo's grip. The Seedrian didn't look very happy at Tails' decision.

"I'll be careful, don't worry Cosmo." said Tails.

"Please don't get careless up there." said Cosmo with a sad expression on her face "If you and Sonic can't stop that thing, then it's the end of the line for us all."

"Trust me, I know what I'm doing." said Tails "Wish me luck."

And with that, Tails twisted his tails around one another and the twin-tailed fox took to the sky. He flew straight up into the clouds where Charcaronda and Super Sonic were battling. Charcaronda still had Super Sonic in his grasp and he continued to squeeze ever tighter. If Sonic wasn't super powered by now, he would be suffocated. Tails put his plan into action. He flew straight up to Charcaronda's face and flew around in front of his optic in hope of distracting him. Charcaronda's optic followed Tails flying around in front of his vision and he prepared to wallop him with his joust. Big mistake though. Charcaronda swung at Tails but Tails dodged the attack, leaving Charcaronda to accidentally wallop himself in the face with his joust. The resulting wallop caused a lot of damage to Charcaronda's face and he let go of Super Sonic to clutch his face and roar in pain. Super Sonic flew away from Charcaronda and watched the machine roar madly. Tails flew beside Super Sonic and admired his handiwork.

"Ha, ha, ha! It worked!" he laughed "I can't believe he actually fell for that!"

"That was a risky move Tails, but I'm glad you pulled it off." said Super Sonic "If you didn't fly up here to help me, I would have lost my super form and that thing would have squeezed me to death."

"I can't believe how strong that thing is." said Tails "Even in your super form, that thing is too strong for you."

"If I'm gonna destroy that thing then I need to find its weak point." said Super Sonic "Every machine has a weak point."

"You know if I can get him to whack himself in the face over and over, he might take his own head off." suggested Tails "But I don't think he'll be stupid enough to fall for that again."

"He won't, he'll be all the wiser about it." said Super Sonic "This thing seems to learn from it's mistakes. After I destroyed its right arm, it seemed to know how I managed to do it and now it doesn't use its cannons in fear of me being able to destroy its other arm."

"Then we'll have to get its weak point." said Tails "But what is it?"

"No idea, but I'm going to attack it from behind." said Super Sonic "That backpack thing on it's back is how it flies so if I destroy it, the robot will fall."

"I'll keep its attention diverted." said Tails "Then you attack it from behind."

"No problem Tails." said Super Sonic "Now let's smash that thing and save Mobius from disaster!"

Super Sonic rocketed towards Charcaronda with Tails following him as fast as he could, even though he could nowhere near as fast as Super Sonic. Charcaronda lifted his face up to see Super Sonic coming towards him. His face had been heavily cracked from Tails tricking him into hitting himself and one of his optics had fallen out, leaving him with only one optic left to see with. Charcaronda lunged at Super Sonic with his joust but he missed. Super Sonic spin-dashed Charcaronda in the shoulder and Charcaronda swung at

Super Sonic, only to miss again. Then Tails flew in front of Charcaronda's face and caught its attention. Charcaronda swiped at Tails with his hand but Tails dodged the swipe and flew away so Charcaronda flew after him. He transformed his hand into a cannon and he fired at Tails. Tails flew around, dodging the blasts as they came to him with great agility but Charcaronda was determined to hit the twin-tailed fox so he kept on firing. Super Sonic flew around behind Charcaronda and he rocketed towards Charcaronda's back. Charcaronda failed to notice Super Sonic coming to him and Super Sonic hit him, smack in the back. Amazingly, Super Sonic actually managed to smash his way through the backpack structure! Charcaronda suffered from an unfortunate design flaw which was the backpack was made up of weaker armour then his actual body so Super Sonic smash his way through the backpack and into Charcaronda's internal mechanisms. Now he was inside Charcaronda himself, Super Sonic began to spin-dash the inside of the machine as wildly, violently and madly as he possibly could, destroying every vital mechanism, every little wire and every bolt that kept the machine together. Everything he spin-dashed was smashed to pieces and snapped in two. Charcaronda stopped chasing Tails and shooting at him and he ground to a halt. It was almost as if Super Sonic had triggered something inside that had caused him to freeze completely. Tails stopped flying away and turned around to see what was happening. Super Sonic continued to smash Charcaronda up from the inside and the giant machine began to roar in excruciating and agonizing pain over what Super Sonic was doing to him. Smoke began to pour out of his shoulders, neck and optics and everything inside of him felt like he was falling apart from the inside out. Tails watched the scene in amazement and he began to wonder what Super Sonic was doing to the behemoth before him. At long last, Super Sonic stopped destroying Charcaronda's insides and he exploded out of the machine's back like a missile ploughing through its target. Tails was delighted to see Super Sonic emerge from inside Charcaronda and he knew what had happened to the machine. Super Sonic and Tails flew away from Charcaronda and down to the ground so they wouldn't get caught up with the falling machine. Charcaronda wailed, roared and screamed in agony as he began to explode everywhere on his body and his backpack structure gave way and exploded into a thousand pieces. Without the ability to fly, Charcaronda began to plummet

straight down and towards the ground below. Charcaronda howled a mechanical, wailing howl as he began to plummet back down to earth. He fell through the surrounding clouds and he crashed straight into the ground about 30 feet away from Robotropolis. Super Sonic and Tails landed on the ground and they watched the spectacular scene before them as Charcaronda erupted into a fiery explosion that could rival any volcanic eruption. The Mobians all watched Charcaronda's destruction with awe, completely awestruck by the spectacular scene that unfolded before their very eyes. After what felt like forever, the explosion died down and the Mobians all ran up to the remains. Charcaronda had been reduced to nothing more then giant, enormous pieces of debris and robot parts. Borda, who had formed the left arm of Charcaronda, had been reduced to nothing more then a head and an arm after Charcaronda's destruction. Borda was completely destroyed just like his friend Horda had been. Rorda however, was barely alive. He was surrounded by the debris and he lay next to Charcaronda's shoulder section. His armour had been ravaged to the point that he only had tiny pieces of it left on him, his cape like structures were gone; all his eternal mechanisms were exposed and his legs were missing. Half of his face was missing too and he was literally clinging onto his life by a thread. He looked like he would die just by being prodded due to how much damage had been caused to him following the destruction of Charcaronda. Super Sonic stood over the swords bot and glared at him. Rorda, while clutching his chest, looked up feebly at the super powered hedgehog.

"How…" he croaked ever so weakly, his voice was nothing more then a hoarse whisper "How did you…manage to defeat….me?"

"Because I found your weak spot and completely destroyed you." said Super Sonic "Simple as."

"But…no one can…defeat me and my…henchmen…when we… are…one!" protested Rorda "No…one!"

"Well I did defeat you, Horda and Borda as one so there." said Super Sonic coldly "And this is for trying to destroy our planet."

He raised his foot and held it above Rorda's head.

"NO HEDGEHOG!" cried Rorda.

Super Sonic ignored him and brought his foot slamming down on Rorda's head. Due to how fragile it had become from the damage and how strong Super Sonic was, Rorda's head was completely destroyed by that one slam. Rorda was dead. Now Rorda, Horda and Borda could no longer try to destroy Mobius. Super Sonic had won the battle and saved the day. Everybody began whooping and cheering.

"He did it! The bloke saved Mobius!" cheered Geoffrey, punching the air.

"All hail Super Sonic!" cried Wilson, his tail wagging furiously like a happy dog's tail usually does.

"Well done sugah hog!" cheered Bunnie.

Super Sonic just smiled happily at his friend's comments.

"I have one more thing to do now." said Super Sonic.

He held his arms out and the seven Chaos Emeralds appeared from airspace and circled around him.

"Chaos…CONTROL!" yelled Super Sonic.

The Chaos Emeralds glowed brighter then any star and then all seven formed a row in single file and rocketed off in a rainbow arch to wherever Sonic was sending the emeralds. The emeralds disappeared into the distance and Super Sonic powered down back to Sonic. His quills were back in their normal position and his fur returned to its natural blue colour. Knuckles stared at Sonic in wonder.

"What did you do with the emeralds?" asked Knuckles.

"I sent them away to Angel Island." explained Sonic "They'll be safe there with the Master Emerald and I'm sure I can count on you to guard them and keep them safe from harm."

"I'll keep the emeralds under heavy lockdown." said Knuckles "No

one's getting a hold of them while I'm around. But why did you send them away?"

"So Dr. Eggman or any other bad guy can't steal them from me and Angel Island's the best place to hide them." said Sonic "And since I know where they are, they're there when I need them and I bet I'll need those emeralds again some time soon. Whenever I need the Chaos Emeralds, I'll just let you know and you can bring them to me."

"Sounds like a good idea." said Knuckles "No one except us will know where the emeralds are and we'll have them whenever we need them."

"Exactly." said Sonic "Now I think we should all go home. I would love to stay here and trash Robotropolis but that fight with Rorda and his big machine's left me pooped."

"We'll trash Eggman's city another time." said Tails "Until then, let's be thankful that Mobius is safe for now."

"Mobius is safe." said Sonic "And Eggman better watch out because I'll be ready for him. I'll save Mobius from his reign of terror once and for all just like I saved Mobius from Rorda's wrath. Eggman won't know what hit him."

So all the Mobians began to walk away from Robotropolis and head for home. Sonic was a little annoyed he couldn't smash the city as he had intended to but destroying Charcaronda was more important then destroying Robotropolis so Sonic wasn't too fussed about it. With the emeralds out of reach though, he would have to destroy Robotropolis without them. Not that he minded, Sonic knew he could destroy Robotropolis without the Chaos Emeralds anyway. Eggman would have to lookout because Sonic would be back and better then ever...

Footnotes:

*** See Story 14 for the very first appearance of Super Sonic**

And that my friends is the end of the Chaos Emeralds saga! You know what? All this epicness is too much for me, I think it's time I went back to two parters for a bit. Join me next time as we gear on to Story 50! Oh and Amy Rose takes the spotlight in the next story (Amy fans insert excited scream here). :) Reviews are welcome.

Amy's Adventure

Story 46: Amy's Adventure

Countdown to time change: 4

Quiet days on Mobius weren't easy to come across due to the ongoing war with Dr. Eggman right now but if you were lucky, you'd get a day to kick back, relax and have fun. Tails and Cosmo were fortunate enough to have a quiet day to themselves. Sonic the Hedgehog, the Hero of Mobius and fastest thing alive had gone on a secret mission in Grand Metropolis and left his biggest fan and self-proclaimed love interest Amy Rose to keep an eye on Tails and Cosmo since they were rather vulnerable without him around. Amy didn't mind since she liked being with Tails and Cosmo due to how good friends they were but she was a little disappointed she was left behind to baby-sit two little children while Sonic went to Grand Metropolis, the second largest city on Mobius, to do whatever it was he was doing there. The three Mobians had gone to the Great Forest and Tails and Cosmo decided to go for a swim in the Lake of Rings. Tails removed his gloves and shoes and left them on the river bank whereas Cosmo had dressed herself in a swimming costume that was the same leaf green colour as her hair. Tails and Cosmo both dived into the lovely, cool water and began swimming around. There was something about the Lake of Rings that felt different to normal lakes. Maybe it was the magic of the rings that made the water feel wonderful to anyone taking a dip in it. Cosmo loved the water, what with her being a plant after all, and she was having a good time, swimming around and going underwater to see how far she could swim before needing to come back to the surface to breathe. Tails was enjoying himself too, swimming around after Cosmo to see if he could catch her whilst diving under to see what he would discover under the lovely water. Tails and Cosmo both popped back to the surface and began playfully splashing one another, laughing like a pair of toddlers as they took turns and splashing and being splashed. Tails decided to cheat by spinning his tails around and causing a great big tidal wave to sweep over Cosmo and drench her. Cosmo just laughed, this was all great fun

for her. Tails tried again but Cosmo ducked underwater to dodge the tidal wave and swam up behind Tails and grabbed his tails, causing him to jump in the air and land back down in the water. Cosmo came back to the surface and began laughing until her sides hurt. Tails just stroked his tails and fumed at her but he couldn't help but smile at her. She was only having fun with him after all and that's just what he wanted, a whole day of having fun with the one he secretly fancied.

Only one person wasn't having fun though and that person was Amy Rose. Amy just sat on the bank watching Tails and Cosmo have the time of their lives in the lake and sighing to herself rather miserably. She was thinking about Sonic and how he had gone off on a perilous mission all by himself and hadn't thought about bringing her along with him. She had wanted to go with her handsome hero but Sonic insisted he go alone since he felt it would be better for him to go alone rather then bring someone with him. Amy even thought of how Sonic hadn't picked her to be part of his team during the Chaos Emerald hunt* the other day. Maybe he hadn't picked her because he didn't want to be around her or he did that to avoid her. Amy loved Sonic with all her heart but did Sonic feel the same? And what if Sonic saw her as more of a nuisance then a friend? If that was the case then Amy would feel absolutely crushed. Sonic had made Amy make a deal with her which was she would give him his personal space and not act all fan-girly over him and he would be friends with her, maybe more then just friends** but did Sonic mean that? Amy began wondering if Sonic made that deal with her just to keep her away from him but that didn't sound like Sonic at all. Sonic wasn't the kind of person who would push people away and leave them to the side so maybe Amy was worrying too much. Then suddenly Amy's train of thoughts was interrupted by Tails popping out of the water and seizing her by the arm.

"Hey Amy, why don't you come in with us?" laughed Tails, dragging the startled pink hedgehog into the water with him.

Amy shrieked as she was pulled off the bank and into the water by Tails. The two Mobians went completely under the water. Cosmo watched and tried to refrain from laughing, she clasped her hands over her mouth but she couldn't stop a laugh escaping. Amy came

back to the surface and began gasping and panting for air and she scrambled frantically back onto the bank. Water dripped from her face, clothes and hair and her dress was so drenched it looked like it was wrapped tightly around her body. Tails popped back to the surface, laughing like a mischievous school boy until Amy began yelling at him.

"Tails, don't do that!" she screeched, shaking her fists at him "I'm not wearing the right clothes for swimming in a stupid lake right now!"

Amy picked herself up and stomped over to a tree and sat against it, fuming to herself. Tails just remained where he was, with his ears drooping back and a guilty look on his face. Cosmo swam up beside him.

"What's up with Amy?" asked Cosmo "She seems a little grumpier then usual."

"Well I did pull her into the water even though she didn't wanna go swimming." said Tails "That was a bit naughty of me. Maybe I should apologize to her."

"I'll wait for you Tails." said Cosmo.

Tails climbed out of the lake and onto the water bank. He put his gloves and shoes back on and crept nervously over to Amy, who was still dripping with water and scowling to herself. Tails stood behind Amy and cleared his throat.

"Um…Amy." he said wearily "I…I'm sorry I pulled you into the…lake. I…was just having a bit of fun that's…all."

He expected a rather angry answer from the pink hedgehog or even worse, the big meaty hammer she wielded and used to great effect in battle but instead, Amy got to her feet, faced Tails and spoke nicely to him.

"That's alright Tails." she said quietly, squeezing some water out of her quills "Kids will be kids as my mother used to say and all kids wanna do is have fun so I'll forgive you for that one."

Tails breathed a sigh of relief. Amy's mood swings were rather to

and fro weren't they? One minute she's uncontrollably angry and next minute she's all calm and nice! Then again, she was a teenager and teenagers have rather bad mood swings that last a while or don't last very long. Amy and Tails both sat against the tree and sighed in unison. Tails then decided to ask something else.

"I hope you don't mind me asking but Cosmo seems to think there's something the matter with you." said Tails "Is there something on your mind?"

Amy didn't really want to admit her problems to Tails but the curious fox would just keep up the questions so she decided it would be better to answer him. She sighed sadly and said,

"Do you think Sonic likes me?"

Tails pulled a face at the pink hedgehog.

"What do you mean?" asked Tails "Of course Sonic likes you! He wouldn't recruit you on his missions if he didn't like you."

"I don't mean "like me" as in "just friends"." corrected Amy "I mean do you think Sonic like, likes me?"

Tails' wonderfully powerful brain ticked and he realized what Amy was on about.

"I'm sure Sonic has feelings for you just as you have feelings for him Amy." said Tails "He's just too cool to admit it."

"But what if he doesn't feel the same way I feel about him?" asked Amy "I don't go into battle and help out on his missions just for the sake of it, I do it because I wanna show Sonic how impressive I can be and he never seems to notice. It's as if all my attempts are in vain and Sonic just doesn't acknowledge me as a powerful fighter."

"I'm sure he does Amy." said Tails "But he's too busy fighting other robots to notice every single thing you do. I bet he knows you're strong and powerful, especially when you have that hammer by your side, and he appreciates the fact that you're doing your bit for the planet as well as everybody else and that's a good thing."

"I know Tails but I want me and Sonic to be more then just friends." said Amy sadly "I dream of marrying him and becoming Mrs. Hedgehog but I bet Sonic doesn't feel that way. Maybe he doesn't love me, maybe he just sees me as a good friend."

"He probably does Amy and that's good enough isn't it?" asked Tails "As long as Sonic likes you, that's one thing to be proud of."

"I know." sighed Amy, fiddling about with the dirt in the grass beside her "But there must be some way I can show Sonic how much I care for him without letting my fan-girly traits go out of proportion since I promised Sonic I wouldn't act like that. What do I have to do to impress Sonic so much he'll fall head over heels for me?"

"Well this is a crazy suggestion but, if you managed to capture Dr. Eggman and bring him to justice, Sonic would be speechless for a week about it." joked Tails, laughing a little "Sonic would definitely fall for you that way, capturing Dr. Eggman would be the most impressive thing that anyone's ever managed to do. But like that's gonna happen." he said in despair "No one can capture Dr. Eggman and keep hold of him, he's too crafty and cunning for us."

Amy had taken Tails' joke statement into consideration and thought an incredible thought.

"I'm going back in the lake." said Tails, taking off his shoes and gloves.

"You do that." said Amy "I'll just sit there and dream about a free and happy Mobius with no Dr. Eggman around."

Tails smiled at the very thought and dived back into the lake with Cosmo and drenched her due to the fact the Seedrian was standing too close. The two immediately began splashing each other and laughing their heads off. Amy paid no attention to the happy couple in the Lake of Rings; she was deep in thought about something. She was thinking about what Tails had said to her, unaware about the fact he was joking. Maybe if she did capture Dr. Eggman all by herself…then Sonic would fall for him and all her dreams of her and Sonic being a happy couple would come true at long last! The only problem was, how was she going to find Dr. Eggman? He was all

the way in Robotropolis and that was a very long walk away from the Great Forest. By the time Amy would get to Robotropolis, she would be too tired to capture Dr. Eggman and she'd be easy prey for the fat man. She sighed loudly. If she was to capture Dr. Eggman then she would have to hope Dr. Eggman would, for some reason, come prowling around Green Hill Zone and then she could gave him a sharp whack on the head with her hammer to knock him out, bring him to an MPD station and then they could lock him up forever! But the chances of Eggman coming around Green Hill Zone were a hundred to one. After all, what would a fat, evil scientist want to come prowling around a forest for? The suddenly Amy heard something whirr and click from nowhere. She leapt to her feet and summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand.

"I bet it's Eggman!" Amy whispered to herself with an evil, witchy grin on her face "Now's my chance to capture him and win Sonic's heart!"

She crept away from the tree she had been sitting against and into the bushes, pushing the big bushy branches and brambles as she crept through them. She crept as quietly as possible to make sure Dr. Eggman or whatever the whirring thing was would hear her. Then she came across something made of metal that floated in the air in front of her face. It had four prongs that sprouted out from a round circular lens in the centre of the object. It looked like a robo-camera of some sorts. The camera whirred and clicked as it too Amy's picture. Amy groaned, the whirring and clicking thing she'd heard wasn't Dr. Eggman at all, it was a robo-camera. But maybe she could find Dr. Eggman if the robo-camera returned to him and she followed. The robo-camera observed Amy up and down and then spotted her enormous hammer. The robo-camera made a weird noise that sounded like a high-pitched, robotic shriek of terror and darted off as fast as it could possibly go! Amy was pleased to see she'd scared the robo-camera off. The robo-camera was likely to be returning to Dr. Eggman and if she chased it the fleeing robot-camera, she would find Dr. Eggman and get her hands on him at long last! Amy raised her Piko-Piko hammer above her head and ran after the robo-camera as fast as her agile little legs would let her. If she could keep up with someone as fast as Sonic then a stupid little robo-camera would be no match for her, she'd keep up with it easily.

The robo-camera, as Amy suspected, was returning to Dr. Eggman and the robo-camera kept turning around to see if Amy was still chasing it, only to find out she was so it kept on flying like mad with Amy pursuing it relentlessly. She smashed through any obstacle that got in her way as she chased after the robo-camera. No way was she letting it slip out of her sight! She was going to follow it to Robotropolis and capture Dr. Eggman and nothing was going to stop her…

Meanwhile, in Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman was watching the robo-camera flee like mad and he was determined to do something about it since he didn't want Amy following it back to Robotropolis and foiling his plans.

"That irritating Sonic-obsessed girl is following my camera!" he grumbled "She cannot be allowed to chase it to Robotropolis! I must stop her before she realizes I've been attempting to spy on Sonic's friends and capture them while the hedgehog isn't around to defend them!"

Luckily he had a trick up his sleeve that was guaranteed to work but he decided to wait for a while before putting it into action.

Amy smashed through another tree with her hammer as she thought to keep up with the fleeing robo-camera. She had been keeping the chase up for thirty minutes straight, non-stop, all through the Great Forest and into Green Hill Zone. She was getting a little tired but she was determined not to let the camera get away so easily. Dr. Eggman had decided she'd been chasing his precious camera for long enough now so he pressed a button on the control pad and the robo-camera ground to a halt and faced Amy. Amy finally caught up to the robo-camera and looked it in the lens, panting and gasping.

"Ha, gotcha you stupid camera!" he gloated "Now you take me to Dr. Eggman or I'll make mashed metal out of you!"

She raised her hammer threateningly to show the camera she

wasn't fooling around. The robo-camera stood still and didn't do anything. Then the lens extended out from the centre and straight into Amy's face. The lens was just an inch in front of her eyes. Then the robo-camera took a picture of Amy. Unfortunately, it had the flash on and Amy was completely blinded by the sheer brightness of the flash. Amy shrieked and clutched her eyes, rubbing them furiously to adjust them and put her vision back to normal. The robo-camera seized its chance and flew away as fast as it could. Amy stopped rubbing her eyes and looked around fro the robo-camera. Her vision had returned even though she could still see spots of colours everywhere she looked. To her utter annoyance and disappointment, the robo-camera had evaded her after blinding her and had escaped. There was no telling where the robo-camera was now, she'd never find it and follow it to Robotropolis. Amy stomped the ground in rage.

"Damn it!" she swore "I had that camera in my grasp, how could it had slipped away from me so easily? And how did I fall for its little flash photo trick? Now I'll never capture Dr. Eggman! Oh well, I'd best return to the Lake of Rings before Tails and Cosmo realize I've gone missing."

She put her hammer away and began to walk off. Then she stopped and realized something. It dawned on her that she had no idea where she was. She had been in Green Hill Zone before, but this area was unfamiliar to her. She had not been in this particular area of Green Hill Zone before. This area was heavy with trees but the bushes were full of striped or spotted fruit unlike the other areas she had been in where the fruits were natural coloured. The trees also grew to greater heights then the trees in other areas of the zone. Amy began to look around frantically. Nothing looked familiar to her. She couldn't quite remember the way she had come due to the fact she had been chasing a robo-camera through the forest and had been running after it so she hadn't really seen the scenery. Amy then realized that she was completely, totally and hopelessly lost in the middle of unfamiliar territory. She clasped her hands together and began to worry. Her legs quivered nervously.

"Oh no! That chase has gotten me lost!" whimpered Amy "However am I gonna get back to Tails and Cosmo? Sonic's gonna kill me if he

realizes I've abandoned them when I was supposed to be looking after them!"

She then thumped herself rather sharply on the head.

"Stupid Amy Rose!" she moaned to herself "Letting your determination get the best of you like that! Now I'm hopelessly lost and Sonic will be so furious with me, he'll never speak to me again! That is…if he ever FINDS me at all!" she shrieked.

A terrible thought crept into Amy's head. If she was lost and no one knew where she was, then Sonic would never find her and she would never see her beloved hero again! Or anybody for that matter! She could just imagine Cream the Rabbit's horrified face when she found out Amy had gone missing. It was not a nice image to imagine at all since the thought of Cream sad made Amy want to cry. But sitting there crying wouldn't solve anything; Amy had to find her way back to the Lake of Rings before she wasted away into the soil. Once she found the Lake of Rings, she'd be back on track and be able to her way back to Sonic's house. But how could Amy find her way back to the Lake of Rings if she had no idea where she was? She had no way of knowing where to go since this area was unfamiliar to her. If Amy didn't know where to start then she would have no way of getting back to the Lake of Rings. Amy's ears drooped in despair.

"It's hopeless." Amy moaned "I'm doomed to be lost forever. No one will find me and I'll be stuck here forever. But if I don't try to find my way back then I WILL be stuck here forever!" she said suddenly "I think it's time I stopped feeling sorry for myself and started making my way back! Maybe I'll come across something familiar if I start walking through this forest."

She picked a random direction and walked off. She had just started walking and already the scenery looked unfamiliar to her. But Amy didn't care, she was determined to get back to the Lake of Rings before Sonic returned from his mission and realized she had abandoned Tails and Cosmo. Then suddenly something caught Amy's eye. She looked to the left and saw something big and red at the far end of the forest. Could it be an Eggman robot or a house or anything? If it was a house then maybe the residents of the house

would be able to help her. Amy ran over to the red thing as fast as she possibly could. She had a glimmer of excitement in her stomach that it was a house and the residents would be able to help her. But what if the house was deserted? Then she would be back to square one but Amy didn't know if she didn't look so she continued running up to the red thing. Her running had taken her out of the forest and into an open area of field green that surrounded the red thing. Amy screeched to a halt and stared in awe at what she had just come across. The red thing, to her sheer luck, was a house but not just any house. It was a mansion and the mansion was as big as the tallest tree in Green Hill Zone. It was built out of red bricks and the roof was a shiny silver colour made out of the traditional roof tiles. There were a total of twenty-four windows on the mansion, eight at the front, eight at the back and four windows on both sides of the mansion. The mansion had a water fountain around the back that was sculpted like a dolphin and the water spouted out of the dolphin's air hole. There were beautiful flower beds on the window sills of the two ground floor windows at the front of the mansion and the garden around the back was something to make your eyes pop due to how beautiful and eye catching it was. Amy just stood there and wondered to herself. What was a big, fancy mansion doing in the middle of Green Hill Zone? A forest is an odd place to build such an enormous house isn't it? Nevertheless, it was a house and it didn't look like it had been deserted so it must have people in it. Amy walked up to the front door, which had beautiful gold sculptures around the edges and centre, and knocked on it. The door opened and there stood a hideous looking green lizard with three horns on its head. It only wore gloves and a pair of shoes shaped like its natural feet and its tail was long and whippy. It had blue spots on its scaly back and yellow, reptilian eyes that didn't give Amy a very welcoming feeling as the lizard gazed at her. Its teeth were yellow and pointed, suggesting it as a carnivorous type of lizard. The lizard glared at Amy as if she had just interrupted something important.

"We don't do money, we don't like charities and we don't buy raffle tickets!" snarled the lizard; its voice was high and croaky, suggesting he was rather old "Go away!"

He slammed the door in Amy's face. Amy fumed to herself. Talk about impolite! Well that lizard certainly wasn't going to help her

that's for sure! But what if there were more people in the huge mansion? Maybe they would be a little more considerate to her. Amy knocked on the door again. The door opened and there stood another lizard. This lizard had a darker green skin colour then the first lizard and this lizard only had one horn on its head. It wore gloves and shoes similar in looks to the first lizard, its tail was shorter and it had red spots on its back instead of blue. Its pointed teeth were glistening white instead of yellow, suggesting that he had taken better care of his teeth then the first lizard and his eyes were amber coloured. The lizard scowled at Amy.

"Whadda ya want you scrounging little merchant?" snarled the lizard, his voice was deep, gravely and growly and Amy's heart felt faint and her spine shuddered just hearing it.

"Who are you calling a merchant lizard face?" snapped Amy "I'm only here to request for some help and you and your buddy are too busy being rude to see what I'm here for! Hasn't anyone ever taught you good manners?"

The lizard was rather taken aback by Amy's angry statement and he put a clawed finger to his chin. He thought for a moment and then said.

"Alright, get in you little scrub. I hope our master's feeling gracious right now or you've had your chips girl."

Master? Did that mean that the two lizards were servants and that there was someone in charge of the mansion? Hopefully it wasn't another lizard; Amy could hardly bear to look at the two lizards that scowled at him angrily. Amy stepped into the mansion and marvelled at its beauty. The hall was full of paintings, sculptures and fancy wallpaper. There was a very fancy looking staircase that led up to another floor. There were sculptures of a fat rat in a smart outfit at the start of the staircase. Amy smiled like a child that's just been given money for ice-cream. The three horned lizard scowled at the one-horned lizard.

"Why did you let her in you idiot?" he growled, slapping the one-horned lizard in the face "Mr. Florenzi hates guests remember?"

"No he doesn't you dumbo!" snapped the one horned lizard "And if I left her on the doorstep, she wouldn't go away and keep knocking so I had to let her in!"

"Well I do hope this won't get us demoted Mr. Polikaza!" griped the three horned lizard "If it does, I'll throttle you to death!"

"Not if I throttle you first Mr. Wazikaza!" snarled the one-horned lizard known as Mr. Polikaza.

The two were about to unleash hell on each other until Amy started laughing.

"You two have funny names." she giggled "Polikaza and Wazikaza? Are those foreign names or something?"

"YOU SHUT UP!" roared Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza at the top of their voices, making Amy jump back in fright.

"What the blazes is going on down there?" barked a deep strong British accented voice from the top of the fabulous staircase.

Amy looked up at the staircase and saw a fat rat wearing a black tuxedo, red, spotted tie, fancy black trousers and polished black and white shoes that sparkled in the light. He had a thin pointed moustache that sprouted out from under his sharp, pointed nose. He had well styled and well trimmed black hair, hazel eyes and a stern expression on his face. He held a cane in his left hand and he tapped the floor with it twice as he stared coldly at the two lizards and the pink hedgehog at the bottom of the stairs. The rat walked slowly down the stairs with a cold look on his face that suggested someone was in for the chop.

"Who is this?" demanded the rat fiercely, pointing his terrible cane at Amy Rose and making her jump.

"A poor scrounger looking for help." said Mr. Polikaza.

"He let her in!" blurted Mr. Wazikaza, pointing accusingly at Mr. Polikaza "I was against this from the start!"

The rat looked back at Amy, who was shaking like mad and looking

worried. The rat's face changed into a more friendly expression.

"Well, isn't this a surprise?" said the rat cheerfully, putting his cane down "It's not often I have visitors in this lonely old place. How lovely it is to have such a beautiful young girl to wander into my residence!"

Amy blushed at the compliment and giggled.

"Um…thank you." she said, curtseying politely at the rat "I'm guessing you're the master of this fabulous mansion?"

"I certainly am." said the rat "My name is Francesco Alonzo Florenzi the Fifth but you may refer to me as just Mr. Florenzi if you please."

"Nice to meet you." said Amy politely "My name is Amy Rose and I got lost in Green Hill Zone. Can you help me find the Lake of Rings?"

"The Lake of Rings hmm?" said Mr. Florenzi, putting a hand to his chin in though "Not many people know about that magical lake do they? Well I'm sure I can be of great help to you Miss Rose."

"Really?" said Amy excitedly.

"Absolutely my child." said Mr. Florenzi, putting an arm around the pink hedgehog and grinning kindly at her, he tapped the floor softly with his cane "But that'll have to wait I'm afraid, we were just about to have dinner. How would you like to join us?"

"I'd like that very much thanks." said Amy "Thanks for the offer."

"The pleasure is all mine." said Mr. Florenzi "Nothing does my heart better then kindness to others. I do hope my servants didn't frighten you too much." he added, looking bitterly at Mr. Polikaza and Wazikaza.

The two lizards folded their arms and scowled at their master.

"Oh no." said Amy "They didn't frighten me too much. They have funny names though, just like you do. Where did you three originally come from?"

"Me, Polikaza and Wazikaza all came from the country of Spagonia." said Mr. Florenzi "We're of Italian heritage but my parents were both British so I speak their accent, not Spagonia's. Polikaza and Wazikaza weren't too fond of their accents either so they adjusted to the accents of Mobotropolis folk, not that I mind since I like those accents better then the Italian accents of Spagonia."

The two lizards nodded at the rat.

"Now please, this way my dear." said Mr. Florenzi, leading Amy up the staircase "The dining room is just up the stairs and just wait till you see what awaits you there!"

Amy could almost imagine what dinner was going to be like right now. She hoped she wouldn't be here for too long otherwise Tails and Cosmo would realize she'd gone missing and start looking for her. And she hoped Mr. Florenzi would be as helpful as he appeared to be…

Meanwhile at the Lake of Rings, Tails and Cosmo were still swimming around and splashing each other while laughing happily at each other. Cosmo put her hands together and depth-charged at Tails, sending a wave of water over the fox and soaking him. Tails dived under and swam up to Cosmo from under the water. He grabbed her by the ankles and pulled her under. Cosmo yelped as she was pulled underwater and she held her breath. Tails and Cosmo both emerged back to the surface, gasping for air and laughing at each other.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh what fun we're having!" said Tails, turning onto his back and doing a few strokes.

"I haven't had this much fun since the war with the Martians started." said Cosmo "Thank you for such a lovely time Tails."

"Y…you're welcome." said Tails bashfully, his muzzle going red in the cheek area "I think it's time we got out though." he said despairingly "I think we should see what Amy wants to do, it's not

fair to make her sit and watch while we enjoy ourselves."

"I agree." said Cosmo "Pity the fun had to end though, I was having a great time."

"There's always the next time." said Tails reassuringly with a friendly smile as he did some breast strokes to the bank "And I'm sure Amy can think of something fun for us to do."

Tails climbed out of the water and onto the bank where he shook himself dry like a wet dog. His fur became all big and bushy after shaking himself dry. Cosmo paddled up to the bank and climbed onto it. Tails put on his shoes and gloves while Cosmo wiped herself dry with a towel she'd brought and left hanging on a tree branch nearby. Then she grabbed her normal clothes, which she had also left hanging on a tree branch, hid behind a very thick bush and started getting changed out of her swimming costume and into her white and green dress, tights and shoes. After Tails had dressed himself, he looked around for Amy, only to find the pink hedgehog was nowhere in sight. A dreadful feeling crept down his spine and into his tails.

"Amy?" asked Tails nervously.

No answer.

"Where's Amy?" asked Cosmo as she slipped her dress back on and straightened out the petal like skirt "I don't see her anywhere."

"I don't know where she is Cosmo." said Tails "I think she's gone. I think we were having so much fun we failed to realize Amy had disappeared somewhere."

"What on Mobius would give Amy the idea to wander off and leave us like this?" asked Cosmo as she pulled her tights up her legs.

"I dunno." said Tails "Maybe she's got something urgent to do or she's gone wandering off out of boredom through the forest."

Then a very sinister thought crept like a crawly creature into Tails' over-developed brain.

"No…she wouldn't have…" he said hoarsely.

"What, what's up cute stuff?" asked Cosmo, hoping out from behind the bush whilst putting her other shoe back on.

Tails seemed to have failed to notice Cosmo had called him "cute stuff" and he said to the Seedrian "I think Amy's gone of to try and capture Dr. Eggman all by herself!"

"Capture Dr. Eggman all by herself?" repeated Cosmo, flipping her leafy hair around to get the water out "Why ever would she try a crazy thing like that?"

"Well when I was talking with her earlier, we were talking about her fondness for Sonic and how to win him over." explained Tails "And I suggested she should try and capture Dr. Eggman and bring him to justice once and for all since that would win Sonic over. I was only joking though." he added, his ears drooping down in despair "But I bet Amy took it too seriously and is actually looking for Dr. Eggman and attempting to apprehend him!"

"We'd best find Amy before anything bad happens to her!" shrieked Cosmo "Dr. Eggman will do something horrible to Amy if he captures her, like roboticize her!"

"But how in the name of Mobotropolis are we ever gonna find her?" cried Tails "We have no idea where she's gone! She could be half way to the Northern Border by now!"

"Maybe you could fly in the air with me and tow and we'll search from the sky." suggested Cosmo "We'd have a good chance that way."

"I could give it a go." said Tails "I'm not too hopeful that it'll work though."

But before anyone could do anything, a blue blur whizzed past Tails and Cosmo, a gust of wind following it as it ran and screeched to a halt. The blur ran back up to Tails and Cosmo and stopped before them. It was none other then Sonic the Hedgehog, the hero of Mobius, back from his mission and looking very happy.

"Hey you two!" he said happily "I'm back as you can see! And boy what a mission that was!" he blurted quickly, he was bouncing around with excitement and going over his entire mission at a faster pace of speech then usual "I sped through Grand Metropolis, met up with Bostock and Mortimer and then we stormed Eggman's new headquarters, which were full of robots, and we smashed them all! I spin-dashed them and the two chipmunks blasted them with Neo-Rust Blasters and the robot army was reduced to nothing more then smithereens! It was EPIC! And after we destroyed the dumb robots, we stormed the command centre and blew the whole base up! WHOO! Best Base Thrashing Ever! I can't tell you how much I enjoyed myself in this mission, really I can't…"

"Sonic, Sonic!" cried Tails "Slow down, we don't understand a word you're saying!"

"So how did the mission go?" asked Cosmo politely.

"Me and Royal Fighter Generals Bostock and Mortimer destroyed every Eggman robot in his new quarters in Grand Metropolis and we blew the base up." repeated Sonic, much slower this time "Wasn't too hard a mission really. I wish you three could have seen it, it was awesome! I totally rocked out there!"

"Now we understand you." said Tails "Congratulations on your mission Sonic but I'm afraid we have a little trouble ourselves."

"Really? What's that then?" asked Sonic, hardly able to believe there was another problem for him to solve just shortly after getting back from a mission in Grand Metropolis.

"Amy's gone missing." said Cosmo "Me and Tails were playing in the Lake of Rings and Amy's disappeared somewhere! We don't know where she is!"

"Amy's WHAT?" cried Sonic angrily "I strictly told her she was to stay with you two and keep an eye on you two at all times! What the heck's made her go wandering off into the woods?"

"It was my fault Sonic." said Tails despairingly "I jokingly suggested she go off and capture Dr. Eggman to win your heart and I think

Amy took that fact to heart and is probably trying to capture him now."

"I never thought Amy would be crazy enough to try something like that!" blurted Sonic "If she actually succeeds in apprehending Dr. Eggman, I will be impressed, but Eggman's too sneaky and smart for the likes of Amy! He'll get Amy before she can get him! We've gotta find her and save her from getting herself caught and roboticized!"

"But we don't know where she is!" noted Tails "How will we know where to start?"

"I know one person who can help." said Sonic "The fighter with the keenest nose in the army: Wilson the Dog. Luckily I still have my communicator so I'll be able to contact the dog."

Sonic pushed the wrist section of his glove forward, revealing the communicator he always had there and pressed a button.

"Yo Wilson, are you there buddy?" he asked.

"I sure am Sonic." said Wilson "I'm just cleaning up Royal HQ right now, what's the problem?"

"Amy's gone missing and I think you'll be able to help us find her." explained Sonic "Can you aid us in our search?"

"I sure can Sonic old buddy." said Wilson "I'll use my keen nose to find the lost hedgehog. I'll be over as quickly as possible."

Wilson shut off and Sonic shut his communicator off. He covered it back up with his glove.

"Does anyone have anything that might have Amy's scent on it?" asked Sonic "Wilson will need it."

"I don't think so." said Tails glumly.

"Wait I've found something." said Cosmo, bending down and picking something up.

It looked like a small clump of Amy's fur no larger then the palm of Cosmo's hand that had fallen out after she chased the robo-camera. Sonic looked at the fur and sniffed it. The familiar scent of roses drifted into his nose. Amy smelt of roses since she often sprayed rose-scented fragrances on herself.

"Yep, that'll do." said Sonic "Wilson will find Amy easily with that little bit of lost fur to smell."

"I just hope Amy's not in danger right now." said Tails sadly "I'll feel awful if she's in danger and it's all because of me suggesting that stupid thing for her to do."

"It's not your fault at all Tails." said Sonic "Amy should know better then to take jokes too seriously and try something that crazy on her own. Knowing her, she'll be alright what with that enormous hammer on her side."

Secretly, Sonic was hoping the same thing Tails was hoping and that Amy was right as rain and not in grave danger right now…

Back at the mansion, Mr. Florenzi, Mr. Polikaza, Mr. Wazikaza and Amy had just eaten a beautiful dinner and finished off with an even more beautiful desert. Amy wiped her mouth with a fancy, silk napkin and sighed a satisfactory sigh. She hadn't had a meal as glorious as this in a long while and she had enjoyed every bite. She loved the dining room, which was very large and had a beautifully polished table with a silk table cloth trimmed with fancy gold trimmings. No wonder Mr. Florenzi was so fat, because he always had big meals like this one she'd just eaten.

"That was delicious Mr. Florenzi." said Amy "Thank you ever so much for inviting me for this."

"Don't mention it my dear." said Mr. Florenzi as two butlers took the dirtied bowls and dishes away to wash "I couldn't let a lost soul like you starve so I had to let you join us for this fine meal. I enjoy dinner times ever so much I do."

"I can tell by your stomach." said Amy, trying to make sure she wasn't offending Mr. Florenzi whilst eyeing his big bulging belly.

"Mr. Florenzi will not tolerate any fat jokes thank you very much!" snarled Mr. Polikaza

"Yeah, how would you like it if we made fun of your horrible pink fur you bad-mannered little runt!" growled Mr. Wazikaza.

"Poli, Wazi!" barked Mr. Florenzi, whacking the table sharply with his cane "That's no way to treat our guest! I'm sure Amy wasn't trying to make a fat joke were you dear?"

"I wasn't." said Amy truthfully "I was trying to make note of your love for food without offending you."

"You won't offend me." said Mr. Florenzi "I know how large I've gotten and I really should try to lose a few ounces shouldn't I?" he said with a hearty chuckle.

Amy began to feel uncomfortable with the conversation right now and decided to change the subject quickly.

"So Mr. Florenzi, how long have you lived in this gorgeous mansion?" she asked, hoping to learn a bit about Mr. Florenzi and his mansion.

"I've lived her for thirty years Amy dear." said Mr. Florenzi "I moved into this estate when I was twenty seven and I'm still here now. Thirty years has gone so fast for me." he added, sounding a little like he was drifting off into space "I remember what the place looked like before I moved in here. It didn't have my many portraits and sculptures at the bottom of the staircase when I came here."

"Have you always owned the place or has it been previously owned?" asked Amy.

"Four other people in my name have owned this estate before I moved in." said Mr. Florenzi "The first Mobian to live here was Francesco Alonzo Florenzi the First. He's my great-great-great grandfather and is well known for his well mannered personality and unrivalled kindness. He was a rat like I was. Then there was

Francesco Alonzo Florenzi the Second. He was a meerkat and he had a very strong sense of peace and serenity. His sense of peace and serenity lived on for many years, even after his death in 1886. Pity it hasn't lived on to this day now, what with the war with Dr. Eggman going on."

"Yeah, I wish Mobius could go back to its original, peaceful self once again." said Amy gloomily.

"If that Sonic guy keeps fighting, Eggman will be kicked out of this world for good!" said Mr. Wazikaza with a sinister grin on his face "I hate that guy and his love for robots! Robots are dumb and they're good for nothing!"

"Agreed Wazikaza." said Mr. Polikaza "Robots are a wasted invention and should be un-invented in my opinion."

Tails would throw a fit if he heard those two bad-mouthing robots right now! thought Amy grimly.

"Anyway, continuing with this mansion's history." interrupted Mr. Florenzi "The next person to inherit this place was Francesco Alonzo Florenzi the Third. He was a vole and a little more bitter then the other two masters of this estate. He was the kind of person who acted first and asked questions later and that led to many vicious fights. Many people nicknamed him "Vicious Florenzi" after his rather malicious behaviour to people he didn't like."

"I think he's the only Florenzi I don't like." said Amy "Thank goodness he's no longer around."

"I think the same." said Mr. Florenzi bleakly "And finally, the last person who lived here before I came was Francesco Alonzo Florenzi the Fourth. He was a mongoose and he was tough but fair and he was well respected by many people that met him. He loved the people as much as his home but one of his servants didn't like his tough but fair behaviour and she attempted to assassinate him. Her attempts failed luckily and she was banished into the Great Dunes where she starved to death. Mr. Florenzi the Fourth lived until he was ninety-one and he died three years before I inherited the estate. And now I carry on the Florenzi name in this fabulous house. Who

knows who will be the next person to live here when I die?"

"Who knows." said Amy "And that was a very interesting story Mr. Florenzi, thank you for sharing that with me."

"I'm so glad you were interested." said Mr. Florenzi "The Florenzi name has a proud history and I'm glad to keep this proud family going now."

"By the way, now I've eaten, can you help me find the Lake of Rings?" asked Amy "I need to get there now."

"Oh of course, I almost forgot!" said Mr. Florenzi "How silly of me! Me and my servants have just got something private to discuss first and then I'll help you find your lake. Excuse us a moment."

He got up from the table and walked out of the dining room with Mr. Polikaza and Wazikaza following him. Amy was now left alone in the glorious dining room. Amy didn't know what to do. Should she stay put or should she get up and explore the place before leaving? After all, this was a big mansion and there was bound to be a lot to explore. Amy stood up from her chair, pushed it back under the table and walked slowly out of the dining room. She poked her head out of the door to see if anyone was watching her. The coast was clear so Amy walked out of the dining room and across the hall to the room opposite to the dining room. She admired the hall and the staircase as she walked by and into the other room. Mr. Florenzi was clearly one lucky rat to live in such a fabulous estate that clearly looked like an unfitting place for a rat to live in. Rats were often poor, run-down, dirty, scandalous creatures that had a terrible reputation but Mr. Florenzi wasn't like those rats, he was well-mannered, kind, generous and clearly very wealthy to live in such a place. Amy walked into the next room. This room didn't have much of anything in it, it just seemed more like a room to stand in and look out the window and enjoy the view. All the room had was a couple of comfy chairs and a portrait of Mr. Florenzi the First riding a horse and wielding a broadsword that hung on the wall the chairs were up against. Amy stood in front of the window and admired the beautiful garden view she was met with. The garden had a dolphin shaped water fountain that spouted water out the air hole, flowers of every colour seen in a rainbow and neatly trimmed grass that stretched a

long way out from behind the mansion. There was even a hedge sculpting of Mr. Florenzi, Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza beside the water-fountain. Amy thought to herself maybe she should go down to the garden and see everything up close once she'd finished exploring the enormous mansion. Amy left the little room, went through a door and found herself in a corridor that had six doors, three on each side, going down to the end of the corridor. Amy tried the first door but it was locked. Amy thought to herself suspiciously. What was behind that door and why was it locked? She could of course just smash the door down with her infamous hammer but Mr. Florenzi would hear her and probably throw her out for damaging his property so Amy decided to leave that door and try another one. She went to the second door and was about to open it when suddenly she heard two familiar voices on the other side of the door. Amy bent down on one knee and pressed her ear against the door. The voices she could hear were of Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza and they were talking to one another.

"You think the pink girl buys our act Wazikaza?" asked Mr. Polikaza.

"Of course she does you little fool!" snapped Mr. Wazikaza "She thinks that we're innocent people willing to help anybody when really we aren't and is completely in the dark about us!"

"She's one gullible prat if she fell for my subtle acting." said Mr. Polikaza with a chuckle.

"She fell for MY subtle acting you mean!" snapped Mr. Wazikaza "I'm far more talented at acting then you are!"

"Wazikaza, you're about as subtle as a house on fire in the middle of the forest!" taunted Mr. Polikaza "And yet the girl's fooled by your poor acting. That's one gullible girl."

"I think we can all agree Mr. Florenzi's the best actor out of us three, his true nature is completely unknown to that girl." said Mr. Wazikaza "I can almost imagine her shocked face when we pack her in a shipping crate and whisk her off to Dr. Eggman like all the other unfortunate people to have come across our territory!"

The two lizards began laughing like mad. Amy was so shocked she

could not move. She didn't hear them mention Mr. Florenzi since Mr. Wazikaza's voice had dropped a little quietly when he said the rat's name so from what Amy had heard, the two lizards are really evil and plotting something very evil indeed. She had to warn Mr. Florenzi immediately! Amy got up onto her feet and crept away from the door, turned around…and bumped into Mr. Florenzi! Amy looked up nervously at the rat, hoping he wasn't getting the wrong idea about her. Mr Florenzi tapped the floor with his cane.

"Whatever's the matter Amy?" asked Mr. Florenzi in a kind voice "You look a little scared. Have my servants been scaring you?"

"No." said Amy "But I think they're actually evil. I overheard them talking about me falling for their acting and imagining my face when they pack me in a shipping crate and whisk me off to Dr. Eggman. I think they're plotting to do away with me against your wishes sir, we've gotta stop those two before they can do anything!"

"Mr. Polikaza and Wazikaza are plotting to send you to that foul fiend Dr. Eggman?" blurted Mr. Florenzi. "Well isn't that terrible?"

"It's awful!" cried Amy "And they claim to have done it to others in the past! What are we gonna do?"

"Oh we're not doing anything." said Mr. Florenzi in a very creepy tone of voice "And I know what my lizard henchmen are plotting… because I'm in it too!"

Before Amy could do anything, Mr. Florenzi whipped out a golden object and clamped it around her neck. The moment the object clamped around Amy's neck, a quick surge of mysterious energy buzzed through her veins and bought the hedgehog down on her knees. Amy coughed and gasped. She felt a little strange after the gold object clamped around her neck. She felt weak, feeble and helpless and she couldn't even feel her hammer so she couldn't summon it from hammer space and bash Mr. Florenzi's head in for clamping the thing on her.

"Wh…what…?" wheezed Amy "I…can't feel my…my hammer…and I feel…weak and helpless…how did you…?"

"Control Collar." said Mr. Florenzi with a wicked smiled on his ratty face "Weakens you to the point of being unable to hurt anybody and cuts off any type of superpower so we won't be having that ridiculous hammer of yours ruining my plans my dear."

Amy stared at Mr. Florenzi in complete shock. She could hardly move.

"How did you know about my hammer?" she demanded "And how the hell did you get one of these?" she added, tugging on the control collar "These things are illegal and every existing collar was destroyed five years ago!"

"I managed to scavenge one and hide it before the cops could get it." explained Mr. Florenzi "And don't think I only have one because I got my technician to build more of those collars so I can put one on as many people as I wish. And in answer to your first question," he added "Dr. Eggman has given me an extensive profile on Sonic the Hedgehog and all of his friends, even you my dear, so I know everything about you Amy Rose the Hedgehog, even your unhealthy obsession with Sonic!" he finished with a jeer and a smirk

Amy was livid. How dare he make fun of her fondness for Sonic! Amy tried to pounce on Mr. Florenzi but with the collar on, she could barely leap a foot off the ground. Mr. Florenzi seized her by the arms and punched the weakened hedgehog in the face. Amy crashed against the wall, alerting Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza and the two lizards burst out of the room to see what was happening and were rather surprised to see Amy there with Mr. Florenzi.

"You three are working for Dr. Eggman?" shrieked Amy "Are you mentally stupid or what? What on Mobius gave you idiots the crazy idea to work with that fat…"

She was about to say a very dirty word until Mr. Wazikaza wrapped her tail around her neck and began to choke her. Amy gagged and choked as Mr. Wazikaza's squeezed on her neck.

"Shut up you pink blister!" snarled Wazikaza "We're not stupid, you are stupid for not joining the glorious Dr. Eggman!"

"Yeah, if you let him take over Mobius instead of fighting him, we wouldn't have this stupid war going on with him would we?" growled Polikaza "You and that dumb Royal Fighters Service thingy are doing more harm then good fighting Eggman you know! We never get any peace because of this war and it's all Sonic's fault for defying Eggman's will in the first place!"

"That's quite enough you two, let the girl go." said Mr. Florenzi.

Wazikaza reluctantly let Amy go and the pink hedgehog dropped to the floor, gagging and spluttering. Mr. Florenzi grabbed Amy by the arm and hauled her onto her feet.

"Come along my dear, I've got a lovely place for you to stay in until I can contact Dr. Eggman." he said darkly.

He dragged Amy down the corridor with Polikaza and Wazikaza following him, through the room with the two chairs, portrait and window view of the gardens and down the staircase. Amy tried to free herself from Mr. Florenzi's tough grip but with the control collar limiting her strength and making her weak, she couldn't pull her arm out of Mr. Florenzi's hand. The three villains strode through the hall and took Amy to a dirty, wooden door that seemed very out of place in a fancy mansion like this. Mr. Florenzi motioned to his lizard henchman to wait outside as he unlocked the door and dragged Amy inside. Polikaza and Wazikaza stood on either side of the wooden door to stand guard and make sure everything is alright.

The door led to a very dark, dusty and cold cellar that looked more like a dungeon then a cellar what with the chains and shackles attached to the wall. The cellar reeked too since the cellar was not occupied much and it was never cleaned out. Amy did not want to be in a horrible, smelly place like this and she tried even harder to escape from the fat rat but her attempts were feeble. Mr. Florenzi threw Amy back first against the wall, grabbed both her arms, raised them above her head and snapped a pair of shackles around her wrists. Amy tugged feebly onto her bonds but with her weakened strength and inability to use her hammer because of the collar, all she was doing was making futile attempts. Mr. Florenzi smiled a creepy smile that suggested he liked the sight of little girls chained to the wall and feebly trying to escape. Amy glared up at Mr.

Florenzi and she gritted her teeth.

"You let me go this minute or I'm gonna bash your head off!" screeched Amy.

"You will do nothing except be…QUEIT!" bellowed Mr. Florenzi, sharply prodding Amy in the stomach and making her gasp.

Mr. Florenzi prodded her so hard, Amy felt like he'd plunged a sword into her tummy. The prod had winded her and she gasped heavily.

"I feel so lucky to have gotten my hands on you Amy Rose." purred Mr. Florenzi "You're a strong fighter with a big hammer, a bad attitude and even worse temper. You'll make me a fortune my dear."

"Fortune?" repeated Amy "What do you mean you crazy rat?"

"I mean, you'll fetch a high price for me when I deliver you to Dr. Eggman to become part of his Robian army Amy." said Mr. Florenzi in a sinister voice, his deep baritone voice rumbled through Amy's ears as he spoke.

"Deliver me to Eggman? Fetch a high price?" shrieked Amy "Are you…you… SELLING me to Dr. Eggman for profits?"

"That's precisely what I'm doing Amy." laughed Mr. Florenzi softly "I serve the Eggman Empire and I contribute to the fat genius by kidnapping innocents and selling them to him. This job has made me a fortune and I've sold many people to him. You're the next of many I'm selling to Dr. Eggman."

"You sick, twisted, sadistic scumbag!" blurted Amy "How can you do that to those poor innocent people?"

"I'm doing my bit for the planet." said Mr. Florenzi casually "Just not in a good way that's all. Once I sell you to Dr. Eggman, he'll pay me gloriously and promote me as Chief Mobian catcher for the Eggman Empire! And I look forward to that marvellously!"

The evil rat began to bellow with laughter. Amy just stared at Mr. Florenzi with a worried face on. She'd been wrong about Mr. Florenzi, he was just like all other rats on Mobius, evil, vile,

scandalous and horrid but what he was doing was meaner and more evil then any rat in history had ever committed. Mr. Florenzi stopped laughing and looked Amy in the eye again.

"You know if I'm REALLY lucky, I might get my ratty little hands on Sonic the Hedgehog himself and all of his friends." he purred evilly "I'll be the richest rat in the world once I capture Sonic and sell him to Dr. Eggman!"

"You'll never get Sonic you filthy rat!" snapped Amy "Sonic will spin-dash you to a pulp and put an end to your unspeakable evil Mr. Florenzi the Foul Traitor to the world!"

"Whatever." said Mr. Florenzi dryly "I'd love to stay and chat Amy but I've got other business to do. I'll see you later Amy." said Mr. Florenzi, turning to go "Until then…try to get comfortable because you'll be there until Eggman arrives and I have no idea how long that'll take."

Mr. Florenzi walked out of the cellar, slammed the door shut behind him, the slam echoed ominously around the room, and locked the door. Amy began feebly pulling on her shackles but again, her attempts were futile. She stopped pulling on the shackles and she stared at her feet sadly.

"Well done Amy Rose!" she cursed herself "Now look what you've gotten yourself into! I'm chained to a wall in a dark, rancid smelling cellar with no way of escaping and it's all because you decided to chase that stupid robo-cam! If I never chased that thing, I wouldn't be in this position would I?"

A tear escaped from her beautiful jade eyes and landed with a plink on the toe of her left boot.

"How ever am I going to get out of here?" said Amy hopelessly "I can't use my hammer to smash my shackles because this stupid collar is preventing me from doing so and Sonic has no idea where I am. I'm doomed to be sold to Eggman and turned into a mindless robot on Eggman's side!"

That did it. Amy broke down into floods of tears. She couldn't wipe

them away since her arms were chained over her head so they were free to trickle down her face and splash on the toes of her red and white boots. The situation looked very hopeless for Amy indeed and if Sonic couldn't find her, then Amy would be whisked off to Robotropolis and converted into a Robian and forced to serve Dr. Eggman to no end…

Footnotes:

*** See Stories 36-43 for the whole saga**

**** See Story 15**

Well Amy had it coming didn't she? She should have known better then to try and capture Eggman by herself and this mistake looks like it's going to cost her dearly! Can Sonic save her before she gets shipped to Dr. Eggman? Join me next time... Read and Review.

P.S. Do NOT ask me how I came up with the names Florenzi, Polikaza and Wazikaza! I seriously have no idea! XD

Hedgehog for Sale

Story 47: Hedgehog for Sale

Countdown to time change: 3

"Hi Sonic." said Wilson the Dog "So sorry I couldn't have come sooner buddy, I got held up in my work at Royal HQ."

"That's alright Wilson." said Sonic "You're here now, that's all that matters."

Sonic, Tails and Cosmo had been kept waiting for a while since Wilson had taken a little longer on his duties then hoped. Sonic had almost lost his patience and ran off himself but Tails and Cosmo had managed to keep him in place long enough for the dog to finally show up.

"So what's this I hear about Amy skiving off somewhere and getting herself lost?" asked Wilson "Was she looking for you Sonic?"

He laughed at his rather poor joke and immediately stopped after Sonic glared angrily at him.

"Amy was supposed to be keeping an eye on Tails and Cosmo but for some reason she's run off somewhere and is probably lost." said Sonic "Tails and Cosmo don't know her whereabouts since they hadn't seen Amy running off but we think you and your brilliant nose will be able to find her in record time."

"We have a clump of her fur for you to smell." said Cosmo, handing Wilson the clump of fur she'd found.

Wilson took the fur from Cosmo and sniffed it. His nose caught the scent of a rosy fragrance Amy liked to use. The smell was absolutely wonderful and Wilson loved it. It made him think of the violet fragrance his friend Mandy Mouse liked to wear on special occasions.

"Mmm, roses." said Wilson "You know what Sonic, Amy knows how to smell nice doesn't she?"

"Yeah she does." said Sonic casually "I can see why she's called Amy Rose. Red dress, red boots and red hair band like the red rose petals and a rosy scent on her, she takes her surname way too seriously doesn't she?"

"And that's the way we like her." said Tails "I wouldn't want Amy to change herself at all."

Wilson suddenly stopped smelling the clump and he got down on all fours, a dog's natural position, and began smelling the ground. The rosy smell drifted into his nostrils as he sniffed the grass. He pointed into a certain direction.

"She went that way." said Wilson, pointing in the very direction Amy had chased the robo-camera earlier today "Follow me, the smell continues that way."

Wilson got back up on his feet and ran into the bushes as fast as he could. Sonic, Tails and Cosmo ran after the dog. Wilson was a very fast runner and Tails & Cosmo could tell by watching Wilson run through the thick bushes. None of the bushes seemed to slow Wilson down at all, he just kept on running. Sonic could keep up easily with Wilson since he could run at supersonic speeds but he kept behind the dog since he knew where Amy was and Sonic didn't.

Hang on Amy, we're coming! thought Sonic as he and his friends followed Wilson through the forest.

Meanwhile in the mansion, Mr. Florenzi picked up a holographic-phone that he owned, pressed a few buttons and put the phone down on the table. A holographic image of Dr. Eggman emitted from the speaker section. Holographic-phones were owned by wealthy people and were liked for the way they worked since anybody using one would know who was calling them and strangers wouldn't be able to get the drop on them since the caller was projected in a

holographic image and the one answering the phone could see who it is. Mr. Florenzi smiled at the sight of Dr. Eggman.

"Aaaah, if it isn't the Fabulous Mr. Florenzi with probably another Mobian for me to sell!" said Dr. Eggman happily.

"I do have another Mobian to sell Dr. Eggman." said Mr. Florenzi with a dark smile "And it's one you'll drop your jaw at."

"Go on then." said Dr. Eggman, listening eagerly.

"I have Sonic's self-proclaimed girlfriend Amy Rose in chains in my cellar with a control collar clamped on her throat." informed Mr. Florenzi "Little girl just stumbled across my mansion and I fooled her into thinking I was nice with my brilliant acting and now I have her completely subdued!"

Dr. Eggman's jaw, just like Mr. Florenzi had said it would, dropped in surprise. If Dr. Eggman wasn't wearing his glasses, you could probably see wide open eyes full of shock. He was so surprised he couldn't say a word.

"Y-y-you've captured Amy Rose?" blurted Dr. Eggman "Well this is a glorious piece of news for me! Amy is a dangerous enemy and she'll be valuable to my Robian & Robot army! How much are you selling her for Mr. Florenzi?"

"Well the average, everyday Mobian ranges from 120,000 Mobiums to 125,000 Mobiums depending on the type." said Mr. Florenzi "But Amy is a special girl with a big strong weapon and added strength to boot so shall we say…140,000 Mobiums no less?" he suggested.

Dr. Eggman put a finger to his chin as if he was considering this offer. He knew 140,000 Mobiums was expensive but since he had built a machine that could make fake but very convincing and realistic looking money non-stop, he didn't have to worry about being unable to pay his sinister agent. He put both his hands behind his back.

"Deal." said Dr. Eggman "I'll pay you as soon as Amy arrives at Robotropolis and not a second later."

"Very well." said Mr. Florenzi "I must say, I'm really enjoying this alliance with you master. You've made me a mint. I do wonder where you get all your money from, it's as if you have a factory producing this money for me non-stop at all times."

"I steal it all." lied Dr. Eggman "I have enough money to make the entire planet rich so it'll take a while for me to run out Mr. Florenzi."

"Really?" said Mr. Florenzi "You are one wealthy man aren't you?"

"Indeed." said Dr. Eggman "Now deliver Amy to me now before Sonic finds her and rescues her!"

The image of Dr. Eggman vanished into thin air and the holographic phone switched off. Mr. Florenzi put the phone away and he strode over to the dirty, wooden cellar door. He unlocked the door and walked into the cellar. Amy Rose looked up from her feet and closed her eyes to shield them from the sudden bright light that appeared into the cellar and lit up the place. Her cheeks were wet from crying so much and her arms felt like there were a million needles sticking in them due to being held over her head by very uncomfortable shackles for so long. Mr. Florenzi smiled malevolently at Amy and he pointed his wicked cane at her.

"My business with Eggman is concluded and you are going for a little ride to Robotropolis my dear." he said as he walked up to her.

"Do you need to tell me you horrible man?" muttered Amy.

Mr. Florenzi grabbed her by the face and put his face just a few inches in front of her.

"I was just telling you in case you hadn't heard." he said through gritted teeth "And you'll be pleased to know I sold you for 140,000 Mobiums, more then any other Mobian I've ever sold! Doesn't that make you feel special my child?"

"It makes me feel as special as having a toothache and a headache both at once." grumbled Amy, scowling at the horrid rat that had the nerve to do this to her "Get off my face before I bite you!"

Mr. Florenzi surprisingly did what he was told and he let go of Amy's

face. Then he took a key out of his pocket and plunged it into one of Amy's shackles. The shackle opened, releasing Amy's poor, throbbing wrist from its cold, metallic grasp. Mr. Florenzi unlocked the other shackle and Amy rubber her wrists tenderly. Her hands felt a little numb from the uncomfortable experience with the shackles and her arms ached like they'd never ached before. She felt relieved to be free from the shackles at last but she knew she was still doomed. Mr. Florenzi held Amy firmly by the shoulder and he dragged her out of the cellar, closing the door behind him and locking it, and he dragged Amy out of the mansion where a luxurious looking black hover-car with a Rolls-Royce style theme to it was parked near the door. Two servants emerged from the car. They were both rather snooty looking horses with dead-pan expressions on their faces and they were dressed in fancy waiter's outfits. One horse had a slightly trimmed mullet and the other had neatly combed hair.

"Sir." said the two horses in posh voices.

They bowed down before Mr. Florenzi.

"Take this pink rat to Dr. Eggman and come back with the money he's paying me with." said Mr. Florenzi, shoving Amy into the horses.

"Who are you calling a rat? Rat!" snapped Amy "I'm a hedgehog you moron!"

The horses grabbed Amy by the shoulders and they shoved her roughly into the car.

"You sit in the back with the Mobian we're taking to Eggman this time Timothy." said the first horse.

"If you say so Darren." said Timothy, getting into the back and sitting next to Amy who folded her arms and pouted, fuming angrily.

"We'll be back as soon as possible master." said Darren, getting into the driver's seat "See you in a tick."

Darren closed the door and the sleek hover car rose off the ground

and sped away into the forests of Green Hill Zone. Mr. Florenzi watched the car whiz away from view and he smiled a wicked, greedy smile. He couldn't wait to see his pay check when the two horses arrived back from Robotropolis. He began to wonder on who his next victim might be…

Back in Green Hill Zone, Wilson continued following the rosy trial with Sonic, Tails and Cosmo keeping close to the dog. They were almost at the area where the robo-camera escaped from Amy by blinding her with a flash photo.

"The scent gets stronger as we go." said Wilson "We maybe close to Amy now."

"I wonder what's with all the fallen trees." said Cosmo as they passed a tree that had been knocked over by something.

"Maybe Amy did it with her hammer." suggested Tails "Although why she would knock a tree over is far beyond me."

"I'd guess she was chasing Eggman and she kept trying to hit him with her hammer but she missed and hit those trees." suggested Sonic "You did say she maybe searching for Dr. Eggman to try and capture him."

"Yeah." said Tails "I wish I never suggested for her to do that. If I hadn't, none of this would have happened."

"Relax Tails." said Sonic, leaping over a tree stump "I'm sure Amy's fine now."

The four Mobians pushed through a big bush and found themselves in an area of the forest with bushes full of spotted or striped fruit and trees that grew to greater heights then all the other trees in the zone. Sonic knew this area since he'd actually been all over Green Hill Zone.

"Rainbow Wood." said Sonic aloud "So called because of its spotted and striped fruit that makes this part of Green Hill Zone more colourful then the rest of the forest."

"The trees here are very tall." said Cosmo, looking straight up at the towering trees "None of the other trees in this forest grow this high. I wonder how the trees grew so high."

"I'm not sure myself Cosmo." said Sonic "And I know a lot of things about Green Hill Zone. The view at the top of those trees is very spectacular and I should know because I've been at the very top of one of those trees."

"How's the scent Wilson?" asked Tails.

Wilson got down on all fours and began sniffing the ground. He prowled around in a circle will sniffing away to see if he could pick up Amy's scent. It didn't take him long to pick the scent back up and the familiar scent of rosy fragrances drifted into his sensitive nostrils.

"Amy was here." said Wilson "But she walked off…" he sniffed the ground and followed the scent to where Amy left the area "…in this direction, left Rainbow Wood and went…that way." he said, pointing down the long stretch of forest that led to the diabolical Mr. Florenzi's mansion.

Sonic, Tails and Cosmo followed Wilson and found themselves in an area with a row of trees leading into the distance.

"Eggman must have led the girl on quite a chase." said Wilson, getting up onto his feet "They weren't in Rainbow Wood for very long, heck, they didn't go very far. It was as if they were in and then out just like that."

"What's that in the distance?" asked Cosmo, pointing at the end of row of trees.

Everybody looked in Cosmo's direction and saw what she was pointing at. It was Mr. Florenzi's mansion, the very place Amy had run to and ended up getting sold to Eggman. Sonic thought for a moment.

"Maybe Amy went to that house." he thought "But why she would do that while she was chasing after Eggman doesn't make sense."

"She's definitely gone up to that house." said Wilson "Her scent

leads that way."

Wilson scampered off towards the mansion and Sonic, Tails and Cosmo ran after him as fast as they could. The four Mobians ran and ran until they finally reached the mansion. The mansion looked very impressive to Sonic, Tails, Cosmo and Wilson up close; they stared at the mansion in admiration.

"I wonder who lives here?" asked Cosmo "This is one fabulous looking mansion."

"Dunno." said Tails "Obviously someone really wealthy."

"Well let's see if this "really wealthy" owner of this mansion has Amy or not." said Sonic "Wilson seems to reckon Amy's here."

"She is." said Wilson "I can smell her."

Sonic walked up to the door and knocked on it. The door opened and there stood Mr. Florenzi who seemed to be very, very surprised to see none other then the famous Sonic the Hedgehog standing on his doorstep. His evil mind was abuzz with excitement and he began plotting on how to capture Sonic and sell him to Eggman.

"Why hello there Sonic the Hedgehog." said Mr. Florenzi "What an honour it is to have someone as famous as you come across my residence."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever." said Sonic "We're looking for a girl named Amy Rose who is a friend of mine, is she here?"

"She certainly is." lied Mr. Florenzi "Come in and I'll fetch her for you."

Mr. Florenzi stood to the side and invited Sonic and friends in. Sonic, Tails, Cosmo and Wilson walked into the mansion and stared in wonder at the impressive looking hallway. The hallway made Cosmo think of home for some reason, maybe it was the fact most homes on her planet were very wealthy looking. Sonic and Tails were a little impressed with the mansion themselves and Wilson seemed very interested with the paintings as he ran over to a painting and began admiring it. While everybody admired the hall,

Mr. Florenzi reached into his pocket and he quietly pulled out a control collar. He aimed at Sonic and was about to throw the collar at Sonic until Tails turned around and saw what he had.

"Sonic, duck!" he cried.

Sonic had no idea what was going on but he ducked anyway just as Mr. Florenzi threw the control collar at him. The control collar whizzed over Sonic and landed with a ping on the floor. Mr. Florenzi cursed his bad luck, since he only had one control collar with him right now. Cosmo ran over to the collar and picked it up.

"What's this?" she asked.

"That's a control collar." said Sonic "An invention that's been outlawed for a long time. Why do you have an illegal item with you and why did you try to put it on me?" he asked, glaring at Mr. Florenzi.

"Because I use it to weaken my captives." explained Mr. Florenzi "And I tried to put it on you so I can weaken you and sell you off to Dr. Eggman just like I sold off your precious girlfriend Amy Rose!"

"You…WHAT?" shrieked Sonic angrily "You kidnapped Amy and sold her to Dr. Eggman?"

"Then that means Amy's probably at Robotropolis now!" cried Tails "We've gotta get there and save her before Eggman roboticizes her!"

"You four aren't going anywhere." said Mr. Florenzi coldly "You are staying here and fighting me for your freedom."

Then suddenly, out of nowhere, Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza appeared at the top of the stair case, glaring at Sonic and friends with their evil reptilian eyes and saliva dripping from their dagger-like teeth. They leaped into the air and they landed on the floor at the bottom of the staircase and they bared their claws and teeth. Cosmo freaked and threw the control collar straight into Mr. Wazikaza's eye. The collar hit Mr. Wazikaza's eye, bounced away and landed on the Mr. Florenzi sculpture that stood proudly at the bottom of the

staircase. Mr. Wazikaza rubbed his eye and snarled at the Seedrian. Mr. Florenzi advanced on the Mobians while tapping his hand with his cane. Sonic didn't show any signs of fear at the fat rat creeping up to him.

"Are you seriously gonna take me out with a cane?" mocked Sonic.

Mr. Florenzi glowered at Sonic and he grabbed the top of the cane. He pulled it upwards and revealed a long, sharp, shiny sword that was concealed inside. He threw the "sheath" away and pointed the sword straight at Sonic.

"You can make this simple Sonic." said Mr. Florenzi "Let me snap a control collar on you and whisk you to Robotropolis, and I won't skewer you and your friends one by one."

"Yeah um…no thanks!" yelled Sonic, jumping into the air and spin-dashing Mr. Florenzi straight in the stomach.

Mr. Florenzi flew backwards and slammed into the wall. He growled and grabbed his sword. Wilson pulled out his spinning blade weapon and unsheathed only one of the two blades. Mr. Florenzi ran up to Sonic and tried to slice the hedgehog in two but Wilson stepped in and blocked his blow with his weapon. He growled a natural dog growl at Mr. Florenzi and he kicked the rat away.

"I'll take out the sword wielding rat!" Wilson yelled at Sonic "You take out the creepy lizard guys!"

He and Mr. Florenzi began to sword fight with their weapons.

"I've gotcha Wilson!" said Sonic with a thumbs up "Tails, you wanna join in?"

"Sure." said Tails "Let's make these guys pay for selling Amy to Dr. Eggman!"

"You two are asking for a death wish if you're gonna fight us!" growled Mr. Polikaza "We're deadly fighters in combat!"

"Yeah, we'll rip you to shreds!" yelled Mr. Wazikaza.

"Just try it lizard boys!" yelled Sonic, leaping up into the air and spin-dashing towards Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza.

But Sonic should have known better then to underestimate his enemies. Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza both knew an ability known as a spine-dash, a reptilian style spin-dash that Sonic was well known for. The two lizards spun into a spiked, scaly ball and they both charged straight into the spin-dashing Sonic. With the two lizard's spin-dashes combined together, they overpowered Sonic's spin-dash and knocked the blue hedgehog onto the floor. Polikaza and Wazikaza laughed at Sonic and they spine-dashed him again. Tails tried to attack them but Wazikaza heard Tails flying towards him and Polikaza from behind and Wazikaza spine-dashed Tails in the face, sending the fox falling down to the floor. Polikaza grabbed Tails before he could land on the floor, threw him up and tail-whipped him as if Tails was a baseball and his tail was a bat. Tails crashed into the staircase and he groaned in pain.

"What the heck?" blurted Tails "Those two freaks know how to do a spin-dash?"

"Nah Tails, they're using a spine-dash." said Sonic "Only reptilian creatures like them are capable of using it. Spine-dashes are stronger then spin-dashes too. This is gonna be a tough fight."

"We did warn you hedgehog!" cackled Mr. Polikaza "Now we'll spine-dash you into tiny bite-sized pieces!"

"So you think!" said Sonic smugly "This hedgehog has more then just a spin-dash you know so beware!"

Sonic and Tails charged towards Polikaza and Wazikaza and the two lizards charged at them with their teeth and claws bared…

Meanwhile, Darren and Timothy had finally arrived at Robotropolis with the unlucky Amy Rose to give to Eggman. The car pulled up outside the gates and the two horses got out of the hover-car, dragging Amy with them. Darren knocked on the door and a security camera telescoped out of the side of the gate. It looked the two

horses straight in the eye and observed them up and down. It spotted Amy Rose with them and it stared at her.

"Ah, Amy Rose has arrived at last." the camera said in Dr. Eggman's voice "Hold on a minute and I'll be there to fetch her."

The camera telescoped back into the gate and the hatch closed. Darren and Timothy stood and waited for something to happen but nothing did. Everything was still and quiet for a couple of minutes. Amy began to wonder what was keeping Eggman. Then suddenly the gates to the city opened up, giving the horses a view of Robotropolis that they couldn't see when the gates were closed. They weren't that amazed though, they had seen Robotropolis plenty of times with all the deliveries they'd made for Mr. Florenzi. After the gates opened, Dr. Eggman strolled up to the horses and snatched Amy Rose from them.

"Thanks ever so much for delivering me this valuable Mobian you two." said Dr. Eggman "I can't tell you how much I've been looking forward to roboticizing her."

"You're welcome sir." said Timothy "Where's Mr. Florenzi's reward?"

"Here." said Dr. Eggman, handing them an enormous sack full of Mobiums.

The two horses took the sack from Eggman and they peered into it. The sack was full of gleaming, golden and bronze coins, all as sparkly as a starry sky at night time. The sack was full of the exact amount of Mobiums Mr. Florenzi had sold Amy for.

"Thank you doctor." said Darren "We'll see you the next time Mr. Florenzi has someone to sell."

"Same to you two." said Dr. Eggman "Bye, bye for now and I hope you deliver me another great Mobian for me to roboticize!"

The two horses bowed in respect and they got back into the hover-car. They started the car up, the car hovered above the ground and sped away from the colossal, robotical city that Eggman had built and occupied. The tough, iron gates closed shut, trapping Amy in

the city with Dr. Eggman and keeping anyone else from getting in. Dr. Eggman smiled maliciously at Dr. Eggman.

"You know if Mr. Florenzi got his hands on you Amy," purred Dr. Eggman "I can guarantee he'll get his hands on Sonic and his other friends too."

"No he won't!" said Amy determinedly "Sonic will make that fat rat of yours pay for all his crimes and aiding you in roboticizing the innocents!"

"Aaaah, such bravado from a little girl." said Dr. Eggman dryly "Let's see if that ego of yours will survive the roboticization process!"

"Before you roboticize me Egg-Brains, please answer me this." said Amy "How long has Mr. Florenzi been capturing Mobians for you for?"

"Oh he's been at this for weeks." said Dr. Eggman "I met him after my failure to steal the Master Emerald the second time*. After Knuckles and Rouge defeated my robot army, I began flying back to my base to continue working on Metal Sonic and plan my next move until I came across a mansion. I visited it and had a talk with Mr. Florenzi who was a very pleasant gentleman with greed greater then any I'd ever seen before. So I made a deal with him. He captures Mobians for me and I pay him handsomely. Little does the fool realize, all the money I give him is completely fake! Since I don't need money, I don't have any to give him so I made a machine that creates fake money but he'll never find that out because the fake money is impossible to distinguish from real money! Genius aren't I?"

"Yeah, genius." said Amy sarcastically "I bet Mr. Florenzi would go purple with rage if he found out every single penny of his pay check is a cheap fake produced by a machine. I hope someone finds out what he's been doing and puts him behind bars for good!"

"By the time that happens Amy, all of Mobius will be roboticized." said Dr. Eggman with a big smirk on his face "Now come on. The roboticizer chamber awaits your presence Amy!"

"Fan-whooping-tastic." muttered Amy as Dr. Eggman seized her firmly by the arm and hauled her away.

Dr. Eggman dragged Amy through the metal streets of Robotropolis and to his headquarters. All the robots in the city stopped what they were doing and stared at Amy as if the presence of a Mobian was an odd sight for them. Amy just ignored them. Some Robians stared at Amy and Amy stared back at them, trying to imagine what they used to look like before they became robots. She began to have a horrible image of what she was going to look like after she got roboticized. She could also imagine her friend's reaction when they saw her as a robot. Cosmo would be horrified, Cream would die of fright and her beloved Sonic would be hopping mad at what Eggman did to her. These were not pleasant things for anybody to imagine and these thought made Amy feel even sadder then before. As for Dr. Eggman, he was having pleasing (to him that is) images of roboticizing not just Amy, but everybody else, including his hated nemesis Sonic the Hedgehog. He already had Metal Sonic by his side, who was almost fixed from his damages the other day** and if he roboticized Sonic then he would have Metal Sonic AND Mecha Sonic on his side. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sonic would be one unstoppable duo indeed and Eggman laughed at the very thought of having such a dangerous and deadly pair of robots as part of his Eggman Empire…

Back at the mansion, the fights seemed to be even sided for both heroes and villains. Wilson was holding his own out against Mr. Florenzi whereas Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza were owning Sonic and Tails big time. Cosmo just stayed out of the battle since she couldn't be of any use to anyone right now. Wilson and Mr. Florenzi clashed blades with their weapons five times and Mr. Florenzi lunged at Wilson in an attempt to skewer the dog but Wilson blocked the blow. Wilson pushed Mr. Florenzi back and lunged at him but Mr. Florenzi blocked the blow and pushed him away. The rat and dog clashed weapons and crossed swords at face level. The two fighting Mobians glared at each other and Wilson bit Mr. Florenzi on the nose. Mr. Florenzi yelped and grabbed his sore nose and Wilson kicked the wealthy rat in his enormous belly. Mr. Florenzi flew

backwards and literally bounced off the wall like a basketball being thrown at the wall. Mr. Florenzi flew straight into Wilson after bouncing off the wall and the dog failed to get out of the way in time, resulting in him getting walloped by Mr. Florenzi and sent flying backwards. Wilson stopped himself before he could crash into the staircase. He got back to his feet, grabbed his spinning blade weapon and ran back to Mr. Florenzi. Mr. Florenzi prepared to block Wilson's attack but Wilson didn't do what he expected him to do. Wilson leaped into the air, did a somersault, and kicked Mr. Florenzi in the head. Mr. Florenzi fell onto his back and Wilson attempted to subdue him by holding his weapon to his neck but Mr. Florenzi punched Wilson in the jaw before he could do anything to him. Wilson steeped back in pain and Mr. Florenzi got back to his feet and without warning, unleashed a giant uppercut to the chin. The uppercut was so hard, Wilson was sent flying through the air in a rainbow arch and he landed on his head. The blow had startled the dog a little but Wilson was still determined to beat the evil rat. Mr. Florenzi ran up to Wilson with his sword in hand and he prepared to slice the dog in two but Wilson got on to his hands and pushed himself forward straight into Mr. Florenzi foot-first. Mr. Florenzi gasped heavily as all the air in his body was sucked out of his lungs and he fall onto his back. Wilson got back to his feet, picked up his weapon and deployed the other blade. Mr. Florenzi was a little startled at the sight of a double-bladed weapon but he didn't let that bother him. He stood back up and clashed swords with Wilson.

As for Sonic and Tails, things were going horribly wrong for them. No matter what technique or move they tried, Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza just overpowered them with their invincible spin-dashes. Sonic's homing attacks didn't work since the spine-dash was stronger then even that and Tails could hardly get a hit on them because the two lizards had good hearing and they always heard him before he could attack them. After getting spine-dashed into the floor yet again, Sonic began to grumble.

"Man, those two are tough!" he said "I can't land a blow on them and any attack I try is easily overpowered by their attack! The only thing I have that they don't is super speed!"

"Wait a second…" thought Sonic "That's it! That's how I can defeat

them!"

Tails landed sharply on the floor after getting spine-dashed by Polikaza again.

"Tails, I have an idea." said Sonic "You keep those guys busy and I'll charge at them at super-speed. Once I knock them down, I'll run rings around them to make them dizzy and then we'll both finish them off. Got it?"

"Got it." said Tails "I hope I can hold out."

They both got back to their feet and Tails flew at Polikaza and Wazikaza. The two lizards cackled like a pair of goblins and they tried to spine-dash Tails both at once but Tails managed to dodge their attacks this time. Sonic ran off to the other side of the hall and he waited until the moment was right. Tails flew around the two lizards, keeping all their attention squarely fixed on him. They both lunged at him with their tails but they missed and Tails tail-whipped them both in the head. Sonic revved his feet up and he charged like an arrow at the distracted lizards. Polikaza and Wazikaza saw the hedgehog coming but before they could even twitch, Sonic rammed them both in the stomach and slammed them against the wall. The two lizards shrieked and gagged after that attack. Sonic leapt back and gave the two lizards a chance to get out of the wall and prepare to attack again. Then Sonic began to run around the two lizards at supersonic speed. The one thing you should never do when fighting a supersonic opponent is follow it as it runs around you since you'll result in unbelievable dizziness but Polikaza and Wazikaza weren't very bright so they stupidly followed Sonic with their eyes as he ran rings around them. They watched and watched and watched until their eyes couldn't take it anymore and they felt extremely dizzy. The room appeared to spin continuously around them as they tried to regain what senses they had. Sonic seized the opportunity and he spin-dashed them both over and over before they could recover. Tails finished them off with a flying punch to the back of the head each. That blow was more then enough to take the two lizards down. Polikaza and Wazikaza both fainted side-by-side on the floor, dizzy as anything and completely beaten down. Sonic stood over them and laughed.

"I knew it would work." said Sonic "Super speed always wins in the end."

Tails grabbed the two lizard's tails and he tied them both together so they wouldn't be able to escape when they recovered.

"That'll hold them." said Tails "These two are tough. If only they were on our side, Eggman would have a lot of trouble if we had two fighters as tough as them fighting alongside us."

"Not everybody can be a good guy." said Sonic sadly "Now those two clowns are down, we've got a rat to deal with."

"I know how we can take him down." said Cosmo.

She ran over to the sculpture that stood at the bottom of the stair and climbed up it. The control collar was hanging off the statue's nose and Cosmo unhooked the collar off the statue's nose and hopped off the statue. Sonic and Tails smiled, they knew what the Seedrian was up to. Wilson and Mr. Florenzi were still furiously fighting with each other, their swords were silver blurs constantly clashing against each other and the hall echoed with the sound of clashing metal. Cosmo aimed at Mr. Florenzi and she threw the control collar as hard as she possibly could. The collar soared towards Mr. Florenzi, opened up and clamped around the rat's neck. Mr. Florenzi gagged and choked as the collar closed around his neck and sent a surge of energy up his veins. He fell onto his hands and knees and coughed heavily. Wilson was a little startled at that sudden turn of events but he was grateful nonetheless. Mr. Florenzi picked up his sword and he tried to swing it but due to the collar weakening him, he couldn't even do that properly. Wilson effortlessly knocked the sword out of Mr. Florenzi's hand and he forced him onto the floor. He pointed one of the spinning blade's two blades at him.

"You can stay there you vile beast!" snarled Wilson "You are going to pay for your crimes against Mobian kind!"

Sonic, Tails and Cosmo stood over the subdued Mr. Florenzi with an exchange of angry forces.

"Not so tough when your own collar is used on you eh ratty boy?" sneered Sonic.

"Gloat all you want you ingrates!" snapped Mr. Florenzi "You have not seen the last of me! I'll get my revenge, you see if I don't!"

"Oh I think this will be the last we've seen of you." said Sonic smugly "Now if you'll excuse me, I have a pink hedgehog named Amy to save. Tails, Cosmo and Wilson, you three stay there and make sure those three get put behind bars, I'm going to save Amy from becoming a robot!"

"OK Sonic." said Tails.

"No problem buddy." said Wilson, pointing the blade closer to Mr. Florenzi's face.

Sonic ran out of the mansion and revved his feet up. He charged off at top speed and rocketed through the quiet forests of Green Hill Zone like a speeding bullet. The moment Sonic left, Cosmo ran over to a telephone that was mounted on the wall and she dialled 911 into it. She put the phone to her ear and waited for someone to answer it.

"Hello, this is the Mobian Police Department of Empire City." boomed the voice of Melchett the Hedgehog "What's the crime?"

"Hello officer." said Cosmo politely "We have three criminals subdued and awaiting arrest. Can you come around and pick them up please?"

"Sure I can Miss." said Melchett "Where are they and who are they?"

"The lead criminal is a fat rat in a tuxedo with a thin moustache and neat black hair." said Cosmo, looking at Mr. Florenzi to make sure her descriptions of him were accurate "And his two minions are a pair of lizards wearing shoes and gloves. One has three horns and the other has just one. They're in a fancy, wealthy mansion that's red on the outside."

"I know who those three are!" gasped Melchett on the other side of

the phone "They're Mr. Florenzi and his two servants Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza! Me and him are good mates and Mr. Florenzi hasn't got an evil bone in his body! He can't possibly have committed a crime of any sort!"

"If you don't believe me then he'll tell you himself when you arrive." said Cosmo "I don't think you'll be happy with what he has to say."

"I'll be there as soon as I can miss and I do sincerely hope you're not pulling my leg!" warned Melchett, hanging up.

Cosmo put the phone back on the wall.

"I'll never confess my crimes to that impudent oaf Melchett!" yelled Mr. Florenzi "So you can lose all hope of turning me in you little brat!"

Cosmo folded her arms and scowled at him. She hated being called a brat, especially by an evil person since it sounded more horrible then when an ordinary person calls someone a brat.

"More like you can lose all hope of being a free man." said Wilson darkly "If you won't confess then I'll FORCE you to confess!" he growled, pushing his blade closer to the rat's neck.

Mr. Florenzi didn't say another word, he just remained where he was, defeated and subdued.

"Now the evil rat guy's down, all we can do is hope Sonic can save Amy in time." said Tails.

"I hope he does too." said Cosmo with a look of despair "Although I'm not sure if he'll make it."

"He won't make it!" cried Mr. Florenzi "Robotropolis is miles away from here and my horse servants haven't arrived back yet so if a fast, hi-tech, luxurious hover-car hasn't returned from a trip to Robotropolis yet then Sonic has no chance of getting there in time to save Amy, even with super speed!"

"WILL YOU KEEP QUIET!" yelled Wilson, Tails and Cosmo in unison.

Mr. Florenzi scowled and shut up. All Wilson, Tails and Cosmo could do now is wait for Melchett to come and pick up Mr. Florenzi and his henchmen and hope with all their might that Sonic would save Amy before she could get roboticized…

Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman had set up the roboticizer chamber and Amy had been sealed in a Diamond Glass cage so if Sonic did make it in time, he wouldn't be able to break the cage and get Amy out. Amy was completely trapped with no hope of ever escaping. Amy stood in the cage with her hands pressed against the glass as she watched Dr. Eggman work away like a maniac. Every second that ticked by made Amy grow more and more frightened. She was seconds away from being roboticized and there seemed to be no chance of help arriving for her. Dr. Eggman pressed a button on the control pad and the roboticizer started up, waiting for Eggman to punch in the killer command and roboticize its victim. Dr. Eggman looked over his shoulder and smiled evilly at Amy.

"I hope you've enjoyed being organic Amy." said Eggman in a dark voice "Because from this day forward, you'll be a glorious Robian for my glorious robot army! Since I'm feeling generous, I'll let you speak your last words. So what are they?" he asked, putting his hand to his ear mockingly and waiting for Amy to speak.

"I may get roboticized Eggman but you still haven't won yet." said Amy "Sonic will beat you and your precious robot army and save me from being a robot! And I hope this process will be quick and painless." she added.

"Oh don't worry Amy, you won't feel a thing." said Dr. Eggman with a big smile on his face "The process is very quick and very painless. It'll be over before you know it! Now let's begin shall we?"

"Whenever you're ready tubby." said Amy grimly.

She was just keen to get this over with already since she'd lost all hope of being rescued. Dr. Eggman obeyed her wishes and he started the roboticizer with the flick of the switch.

Outside, Sonic came rocketing towards the city at top speed. Sonic didn't often go at top speed but when he did, he was too fast for words and he was impossible to catch or stop at this speed. Sonic found himself running towards the iron-gates that were too strong for him to knock down. Not that that mattered since he could easily leap over the gates in one tremendous leap. When running at top speed, Sonic could leap very, very, VERY far. In fact, Sonic could leap over a football pitch when running at top speed! Sonic jumped into the air just inches in front of the iron-gates and hurled over the gates and half-way across Robotropolis. He landed on the ground and ran up to Eggman's headquarters that stood tall and proud in the centre of the grand robotical metropolis. Any robot that tried to shoot him missed completely due to how fast Sonic was moving. Sonic jumped into the air again and landed in front of the headquarters. He ran straight up the building and headed towards the window.

Inside the building, Amy's cage glowed a bright ominous blue flash and electricity began to surround the top of the cage and make its way downwards towards Amy. Amy cried a single tear as she awaited her doom. Dr. Eggman began grinning and hopping about in excitement. He never felt this excited since the time he roboticized Sonic. But all that excitement was about to end. Sonic had reached the window to the headquarters and he smashed through it with a powerful spin-dash. Dr. Eggman stopped hopping about with excitement and he stared in shock at the sudden arrival of Sonic the Hedgehog in his base. Sonic landed straight in front of Amy's cage and his eyes widened in horror. Amy had been engulfed in bright blue electricity that circled around and around. This was the first stage of the roboticization process.

"No! NO! I can't be too late!" he cried.

Desperately, he spin-dashed the cage but he didn't so much as scratch it due to the fact it was Diamond Glass. Dr. Eggman laughed at the hedgehog's failed attack.

"You'll never save your precious Amy Sonic!" he jeered "The cage is made of Diamond Glass! You'll never break her out of it!"

"Well if I can't break Amy out then I'll have to switch the machine off and save her that way!" yelled Sonic.

He homing-attack Eggman in the stomach and sent him hurtling away from the control panel. With Eggman out of the way, Sonic consulted the control panel frantically. He found the switch that turned the roboticizer on and he pulled it backwards desperately. The cage stopped glowing and the electricity disappeared into thin air. Amy collapsed in a heap on the floor. Sonic pressed a button on the control panel and just as he'd hoped, the cage opened, freeing Amy. Sonic ran to Amy's side and knelt down beside her. He ripped Amy's control collar off her neck and threw it away. The roboticization process had left Amy slightly burnt and scarred but she appeared to be OK at the most. Sonic stared at the passed out Amy and prayed she was alright. Dr. Eggman got back to his feet and he grumbled to himself.

"Curse that Sonic and his infernal interference!" he ranted "I came this close to roboticizing Amy and he interferes with everything!"

Sonic scooped Amy up bridal style and he glared at Eggman.

"I'm only here for Amy Eggman." he said slowly "I'm outta here now but I'll be back to trump your robot army. Goodbye for now."

Sonic leaped through the broken window and he landed on a nearby building roof. All the Eggman robots spotted Sonic and Amy and they tried to shoot him but every shot that had been fired missed completely. Sonic leapt from rooftop to rooftop whilst holding tight to Amy and dodging the shooting robots. One robot almost got Sonic on the leg but it only just missed him by an inch and Sonic leapt onto the next building. Sonic leapt off the building and onto a stack of barrels that were full of toxic substances. He knocked the stack over and leapt onto another building. The barrels all came crashing down onto the ground and the lethal liquid stored inside them spilled everywhere. The liquid was corrosive and literally dissolved anything organic or metal that touched it. The robots all scrambled backwards to avoid the deadly liquid that came trailing towards them. Sonic leapt off a building and on top of the gates. He leapt off the gates and onto the ground. Now he was out of Robotropolis, he ran off as fast as he could so he and Amy would be a safe distance from Dr. Eggman and Sonic could see if Amy is alright. As for Dr. Eggman, he scowled at his failure and he watched Sonic disappear into the horizon.

"Someday, I'll get that infernal hedgehog." he swore to himself.

After a while of running, Sonic ground to a halt and he put Amy down on the ground. Sonic had run so far away from Robotropolis, he couldn't see it anymore. Sonic looked down at Amy and hoped she would wake up. He knew what was coming the moment she woke up but he didn't care about that. All that mattered to him now was if Amy was alright. Sonic shook Amy gently. Amy still didn't move or show any signs of life. Sonic shook her a little harder.

"Wake up Amy!" he begged "You can't die on me just narrowly after I save you! Wake up!"

Amy still didn't move. Sonic shook her harder. As he shook her, a horrible feeling began to creep over him. What if stopping the roboticization process ended up killing her instead of saving her? That would mean Sonic had just unintentionally killed Amy while trying to save her and Sonic would never be able to live this down. Sonic stopped shaking Amy and he stared at her despairingly. Amy didn't seem to be waking up any moment soon. Even worse, it seemed as if she would never wake up. Then suddenly, just as Sonic had lost hope of Amy ever waking up, the pink hedgehog began to stir a little. Sonic's eyes widened and his heart leapt with a glimmer of hope. Amy sat up and opened her eyes, moaning a little. She saw that she was lying next to her hero Sonic the Hedgehog and just seeing him with her brought new strength to the frazzled hedgehog. Amy threw her arms around Sonic and began wailing uncontrollably.

"Oh Sonic! You saved me!" she cried "Oh thank you Sonic! I'm so, so, so sorry I got myself into this mess! I'm so terribly sorry Sonic!"

She began crying into the hedgehog's fur and Sonic put his arm around Amy. He patted her softly in the back.

"It's alright Amy." said Sonic "You're safe now, that's all that matters."

"I know I am." snivelled Amy "But it was stupid of me to abandon Tails and Cosmo and try to follow a robo-cam to Robotropolis so I can capture Eggman! I hope you're not too angry with me Sonic but

if you are, please don't chastise me too much!"

"I'm not pleased with what you did Amy." said Sonic sternly "And I hope this experience has taught you a lesson."

"It has!" blurted Amy "If I wanna win you over, I should just be myself. I shouldn't try to do anything amazing or fantastic to impress you, I should just be who I wanna be, and I wanna be me, Amy Rose, friend of Sonic's and defender of Mobius alongside you and the Royal Fighters."

Sonic hadn't expected an answer like that but he was impressed at how Amy wanted to mature herself and make up for this whole ordeal so quickly.

"That's cool Amy." said Sonic "If you keep that in mind then you'll never get into scrapes like that again."

"Can we go back to Green Hill Zone so Tails and Cosmo can see I'm OK?" asked Amy.

"No problem." said Sonic "They're at the mansion where the rat who sold you to Dr. Eggman lives. They and Wilson have the rat and his lizard friends beaten and subdued so you can give them a good telling off."

"Boy will I give that Mr. Florenzi a good telling off!" said Amy crossly "I wanna pound his head in for almost getting me roboticized!"

Without realizing it, Amy summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand and began swinging it around madly. Amy stopped what she was doing and stared in surprise at her hammer as if she'd never used it before.

"I can use my hammer again!" she said happily "Then that means…"

She felt her neck and to her delight, felt no control collar there.

"I broke that thing while you were passed out." said Sonic "Clever of that Mr. Florenzi or whatever that rat's name is to put one on you so you can't hammer his or Eggman's head in."

"It was." said Amy "Now can we get going to Green Hill Zone?"

"Sure." said Sonic, scooping Amy up bridal style and preparing to run "Let's go!"

He charged off at top speed and shot off into the distance faster then a speeding bullet.

Sonic and Amy arrived at Mr. Florenzi's mansion only to find a splendid scene before them. Three police hover cars were parked outside the mansion and Mr. Florenzi was being shoved into one by General Chipper, Melchett's helper and one of the head officers of the police force. Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza were shoved into a police car by Melchett's assistant Big Dave the Gopher. He laughed goofily at the arrested criminals. Even Darren and Timothy, the two horses that delivered Amy to Robotropolis were bundled into a police car. They were technically part of the crime so they were under arrest too. Melchett just stood there, fuming to himself.

"Possession of an illegal invention." he said, scowling at the control collar around Mr. Florenzi's neck "Kidnapping innocents and selling them to Dr. Eggman for profits, which is all fake money." he added, holding up a coin and glaring at it "Three crimes committed at once! I doubt you'll ever taste freedom again my old friend!" he growled.

"Oh shut up you idiot!" snapped Mr. Florenzi.

"You shut up you cold-hearted criminal!" snapped Melchett "Take him away General Chipper, I'll join you in a moment."

"Yes sir." said General Chipper, getting into the car and driving away.

Sonic and Amy watched as Mr. Florenzi was driven away by General Chipper and off to jail where he belonged. Amy just smiled.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" she said "That creep deserves to be in a prison cell!"

"I don't know how I can thank you and your friends Sonic." said

Melchett in an oddly kind tone of voice, a tone of voice not often used by him "I've been trying to track down the source of the disappearing civilians for weeks and thanks to you, he'll be doing long hard time."

"Don't mention it Melchy." said Sonic "I'm just doing what I do best, busting crime and defeating enemies."

Melchett smiled at Sonic and got into his police car.

"Good luck with your ongoing conflict with Dr. Eggman." he said "I look forward to the day you bring him down and I get to arrest him and lock him away forever."

"I look forward to that too." said Sonic.

Melchett nodded and drove away. Big Dave climbed into his car and he drove away. The two police cars disappeared into the distance. Sonic and friends were alone at the foot of Mr. Florenzi's mansion.

"Well today's been not bad." said Sonic "We've busted another evil-doer and he's going behind bars where he belongs."

"And you saved Amy from getting roboticized." said Tails "I'm amazed you made it."

"I'm thankful he made it." said Cosmo, running up to Amy and giving her a hug "I would be horrified if you got roboticized Amy."

"I'm so sorry I abandoned you two." said Amy to Tails and Cosmo "I should have stayed with you and none of this would have happened."

"It's a good thing it happened though." said Wilson "Because of you, we busted the rat guy and stopped him from kidnapping any more Mobians and shipping them to Eggman to be roboticized so I think Amy's the one we should thank for all this."

"So you reckon that Mr. Florenzi got foiled because of me?" said Amy.

"Yes." said Wilson "You ran off and got caught by him which in turn,

led us on the search for you and brought us here."

"So it looks like you did do something good after all Ames." said Sonic "Even though it would have been better if you didn't get caught and nearly roboticized."

"I know." said Amy "But still, that is kinda amazing how we got Mr. Florenzi busted because of me."

"By the way Amy." said Sonic "Since I'm feeling generous right now and I'm so relieved you're OK and I think we need some catching up to do on our friendship…do you wanna go on a date with me tomorrow?"

Everybody gasped in unison. Even Sonic himself was rather surprised he just asked that. Amy was so overwhelmed and so amazed by the fact her hero had just asked for her to go on a date with her, she almost went fan-girl crazy but she remembered that Sonic didn't want her acting like that since it annoyed him so she fought to keep her emotions under control.

"I…I don't know what to say." said Amy "I…I never thought you'd ever ask me that."

"I didn't either." said Sonic "I think it's about time me and you got better acquainted and all so I thought we could have a day out together."

"Well Sonic, I happily accept." said Amy with a cheerful smile on her face "I look forward to tomorrow."

"And I hope this date won't be one to regret." said Sonic glumly.

For some reason, he had this nagging feeling that he wasn't going to enjoy tomorrow much…

Footnotes

*** See Story 25**

**** See Story 42**

Snigger! Sonic has a date with Amy! Who wants to bet that it won't go well though? Join me next time as we have double dates and double dilemmas... Reviews are welcome.

Two Dates Part 1

Story 48: Two Dates Part 1:No Days Off for the Heroic

Countdown to time change: 2

"Ohmigosh! Ohmigosh! Ohmigosh!" shrieked Amy uncontrollably as she burst into the home of fellow fighter and good friend Bunnie Rabbot "Bunnie, you'll never believe what Sonic's done!"

After being asked to go on a date with Sonic, Amy had been as high as a kite and as jumpy as a rabbit and had been running around screaming with excitement and telling her friends about the date such as Cream and Vanilla, Mariah the Medicine Cat and even Team Chaotix. Now she wanted to tell Bunnie about this since she and Bunnie were good friends and Amy thought she would be thrilled to know about this.

"What is it sugah?" asked Bunnie, a little bewildered by Amy's excitement "Ya'll seem awfully excited!"

"That's the point!" cried Amy "I AM excited! Sonic has offered to take me on a date tomorrow! Can ya believe that?"

"He what?" said Bunnie in surprise "Ah never knew sugah hog had that secret somebody he durn fancied. Ya'll are one lucky girl Amy."

"I know I am." said Amy dreamily, swooning about "I have a date with the hero of Mobius tomorrow! But there's just one thing, and that one thing is the reason I came to you for."

"Really?" said Bunnie "And here's me thinkin' you just wanted to tell me the good news. So what have ya'll really come to me for sugah?"

"I want tomorrow to be perfect for me and Sonic." said Amy, her excitement dying down and her face changing "But I'm a little worried about messing it up for him. I promised him I wouldn't act all fan-girly over him but what if I forget and do so? I'll ruin everything and Sonic will leave me. Do you have any tips?"

"Well ah think ya'll should just try to relax and take it easy." said Bunnie "If ya'll start feeling nervous and worried about messing up, try to focus yo mind on something else and ya'll will be just fine. Ah know all about dating from one ah had some time ago."

"You've been on a date before Bunnie?" said Amy in surprise.

"Ah have." said Bunnie, her ears dropped down in despair "But that was the only one. Shortly after the date, ah caught the person ah dated hanging out with another girl and he told me ah'd been played for a sap and he only hung out with me just so he could break mah heart. It broke my little ol' heart to think that he took me on a fabulous day out and then threw me in the dirt like that."

"Aw that's sad Bunnie." said Amy affectionately "How could anyone be so cruel and heartless?"

"Ah know." said Bunnie "But ah've moved on now and ah'm happy being single, ah don't have time for dating what with all that fighting against Eggman and his robot army. Ah'm kinda surprised sugah-hog's found a minute or two to hang out with ya."

"Yeah, days-off aren't easy to get these days so me and Sonic best make the most of it tomorrow." said Amy "And if Eggman dares to ruin it, I'll show him how furious I can get!" she added furiously, clenching her fists.

"Ah'm sure Eggman won't come anywhere near you and Sonic on you're little ol' date tomorrow." said Bunnie "Ah'm sure you and him will have a wonderful time."

"I'm sure we will too Bunnie." said Amy "And I'll take your advice for granted so I don't mess up Bunnie."

But Amy wouldn't have to worry about messing up on the date, she'd have to worry about a certain fat-man coming in and causing havoc while she and Sonic tried to have their date…

Meanwhile in Green Hill Zone, Sonic was sitting on the sofa twiddling his thumbs and deep in thought. Tails was drawing

concept designs for his next big invention that he may or may not build to use to fight Eggman with. Tails wasn't having much luck though. None of his ideas seemed plausible or certain they were going to work. Tails screwed up his piece of paper and he threw it in the wastepaper bin under his desk. Since his mind wasn't really focused on his inventions now, he decided to see how Sonic was. He got up from his desk and wandered over to the sofa Sonic sat on. Sonic was so deep in thought, he appeared to be frozen. He didn't move a muscle and he didn't even bat an eyelid. He didn't even appear to be breathing.

"Sonic, are you alright?" asked Tails "You look completely phased out."

Sonic snapped back into reality and looked at Tails who was sitting next to him.

"I'm thinking." said Sonic "Thinking about the date tomorrow."

"Are you?" said Tails "What are you thinking about?"

"I'm thinking about how I can make this a perfect day for Amy and how it won't be a boring one for me." said Sonic "But I really don't have much of an idea on how everything's gonna work out. I almost wish I never asked Amy to go on a date now."

"Well if you're not pleased with yourself for doing so, why did you even ask Amy to go on a date with you in the first place?" asked Tails

"I thought about how much Amy cares for me and how I don't seem to take her affections for granted." said Sonic "It seems kinda mean of me so I felt I owed her at least one chance. Not to mention she impressed me with how quickly she'd learnt her lesson after almost getting roboticized so I felt I should give her credit for that."

"Well that's really nice to hear that you do care for Amy." said Tails "I bet she'd love to hear that."

"I bet she would." said Sonic "But whereas Amy has no trouble admitting her feelings for me, I do. Amy's cute and a little pretty but I

just never have the courage to say those things to her. That's probably why I turn her down sometimes, because I'm too shy to admit how I really feel about Amy."

"I know how you feel." said Tails "I'm too shy to admit my true feelings for Cosmo and I keep wishing and wishing I had the courage I needed to show Cosmo how I feel for her."

"You have the hots for Cosmo?" said Sonic, raising an eyebrow of surprise "How long have you been fancying her then? I never noticed you had a thing for Cosmo."

"I've…been feeling this way about her since the day we met her*." said Tails bashfully, his muzzle went bright red "But I've never been able to show her my affections, I'm just too shy."

"Me and you have one thing in common big guy." said Sonic casually "We're too shy to admit our feelings for the girls we fancy. Well this could be your chance to get your relationship with Cosmo off the ground." he suddenly said "You and Cosmo could have a date while I have my date with Amy. And after we've had our dates, we can tell each other how they went and if we managed to get over our nervousness."

"I go on a date with Cosmo while you have yours?" repeated Tails unsurely "I dunno, aren't I and Cosmo a little young to be going on dates? I mean, we're only kids, we're not even ten years old yet, aren't dates for older people like you Sonic?"

"Y….yes really." said Sonic "But by "date" I mean you two just have a nice day by yourselves with no one else around. Think of it as a friendly outing."

"Yeah, me and Cosmo will have a friendly outing while you and Amy have your date." said Tails "I have an idea as to where me and Cosmo can go. Do you have any idea on what to do on your date Sonic?"

"I'll just take Amy out for dinner and for a walk around the Lake of Rings." said Sonic "I'll make sure we make to the Lake of Rings in time to see the ring of the day appear so Amy gets something

beautiful to look at. I hope she'll be happy with that."

"I'm sure she will." said Tails "Just being with you will make Amy happy. I just hope Cosmo will be willing to spend the day with me."

"Don't sweat it Tails, she'll join you." said Sonic "And I wish you luck with Cosmo tomorrow."

"I wish you luck with Amy tomorrow." said Tails.

The two Mobians gave each other a friendly fist punch for good luck. Little did the hedgehog and fox know is their dates would be dates to remember and not your average date by any means…

The next day arrived, bright and sunny. Just the perfect weather for taking someone out on a date. Sonic had spent most of the morning making sure he was nice and clean and well groomed so he wouldn't go on the date looking like a scruff. Tails had been just the same for his day with Cosmo and not only had he cleaned and groomed himself, he also polished his shoes for no particular reason; he just wanted to look nice for Cosmo. Sonic didn't really see the point of Tails' polished shoes but he said nothing about it. Before they went on their respective dates, Sonic and Tails decided to wish each other luck for today.

"How do I look Sonic?" asked Tails.

Sonic looked Tails all over. The fox looked well groomed and cleaned to say the least and his shoes were polished to the point he could see his face in them.

"You look just fine." said Sonic "You have a splodge of oil behind your ear that you missed."

"I do?" cried Tails "How? I washed my fur a good few times over this morning!"

Sonic burst out laughing at his frantic friend.

"I'm just kidding Tails! Don't be such a drama queen!" laughed

Sonic.

"Well don't do that!" whined Tails "I'm really nervous now and you kidding about me having dirt patches anywhere is not helping!"

"Sorry bud." said Sonic "I was just having a bit of fun that's all."

"It's OK Sonic, I know you're a joker at heart." said Tails softly "How are you feeling now?"

"Almost like I wish this date wasn't really happening now." said Sonic "But I'm gonna keep it cool and play along with it. I'm sure this date won't be so bad once I get into it."

"Good luck on your date with Amy." said Tails.

"Good luck on your date with Cosmo." said Sonic with a cheeky grin.

With that said, Sonic and Tails left the house and Sonic ran off to Knothole to pick up Amy. Tails remained where he was and waited for Cosmo to appear so he could ask her if she wanted to spend the day with him. Cosmo had spent the morning out in the forest and said she'd be back by noon and according to Tails' watch, it was noon now so Cosmo would be returning soon. After thirty seconds of waiting, Tails saw the familiar flowery figure of Cosmo coming out of the forests of Green Hill Zone and singing merrily to herself. Tails sighed dreamily at her. Cosmo sang like an angel and her singing voice had put him into some kind of spellbound trance. Tails stared at Cosmo with his eyes half closed, a grin on his face and his arms drooping by his side. Cosmo did a lovely little ballerina twirl as she got closer to Tails. She was one happy Seedrian right now and Tails liked that. Hopefully, he could make her even happier on this date. Cosmo stopped singing and wondered up to Tails.

"Hi Tails." she said.

Tails didn't answer. He was still stuck in his trance.

"Tails?" said Cosmo "Are you alright? What's the matter with you?"

Tails suddenly realized he was being an idiot and he snapped out of his trance. He shook his head furiously to focus his mind back on

reality.

"Oh nothing's the matter Cosmo." said Tails quickly "I'm fine, I just enjoyed your singing voice that's all."

Tails could hardly believe those words had just come out of his mouth and he went bright red in the face.

"You liked my singing voice?" said a very flattered Cosmo "Oh thank you Tails, I've never had a compliment on my singing voice from anyone other then my mother."

"You're welcome Cosmo." said Tails, fiddling about with his tails "So uh…ahem!…are you doing anything…um…right now Cosmo?"

"Not right now why?" asked Cosmo.

"Well I've not really got plans for today and since you're not doing anything either I thought maybe me and you could…spend the…day at Stardom Valley?" said Tails, trying not to trip over his words as he spoke.

"Sure, I'd love to spend a day out with you." said Cosmo happily "What's Stardom Valley like?"

Tails resisted the urge to cheer and dance about like a maniac and answered Cosmo's question "Stardom Valley is a village similar to Knothole only larger and it's said to have lovely parks that people can walk around in. Do you like walks in the park?"

"I'm over the moon for a walk in the park." said Cosmo happily "So peaceful and so full of nature, it's impossible for me not to enjoy one."

"Well when we get to Stardom Valley we can have a walk in the park and then grab a soda afterwards." said Tails, finding it hard to believe his good luck right now.

"That sounds like the perfect day out." said Cosmo "I think I'm going to enjoy today."

I KNOW I'm going to enjoy today! thought Tails excitedly.

"Shall we go then?" asked Tails.

"Of course." said Cosmo "I'm dying to see the parks now."

She held Tails' hand and the two began walking off, hand in hand. Just holding Cosmo's hand made Tails grin like an idiot. He didn't think Cosmo would be as willing as this to spend the day with him, she obviously like him a lot more then he thought. If that was the case then…maybe…she loved him as much as he loved her…?

Meanwhile, Sonic arrived at Knothole in record time and he skidded to a halt. He walked through the village since he didn't want to be scaring anybody by whizzing past at supersonic speed. It didn't take him long to find Amy's pink and red house, the house stuck out like a sore thumb since all the other houses in Knothole were yellow and brown. Sonic knocked on Amy's door and waited for her to answer. Sonic took a deep breath and murmured to himself.

"Relax Sonic, just take it easy. Everything's gonna work out."

The door opened and there stood (who else?) Amy Rose looking very pleased to see her hero standing on her doorstep. So she looked nice on their date, Amy had put on her usual rosy fragrance spray to make herself smell nice and she tied a bow into her quills. The bow was just behind her ear. Sonic looked at her and smiled at Amy without knowing it. Secretly, he thought that bow on her head made her look cute but he couldn't find the urge to say the very words.

"Hi Sonic, I guess we're ready for our date." said Amy cheerfully "How do I look?"

"You look…um…"

Sonic tried his hardest to force the word out but he couldn't quite get his mouth to say it.

"You look…lovely." he just managed to convince himself to say "And that sweet smelling fragrance is a really nice touch." he added, smelling the air and catching the scent of Amy's fragrance.

"Thank you." said Amy with a flattered giggle "I put the fragrance on because I thought it'd be nice if I smelt nice. So what are you plans for this date my handsome hero?"

Sonic fought hard to keep himself from blushing. He failed. Must Amy start with the pet names again? He hoped she wouldn't keep it up throughout the day otherwise he'd never make it!

"I thought we could go out for lunch and then have a walk to the Lake of Rings." said Sonic "Does that sound good?"

"That sounds like the perfect day." said Amy "I especially love the Lake of Rings. I hope we get there in time to see the ring of the day pop up. It's so magical and spell-bounding when it happens."

"You must have read my mind Amy." laughed Sonic "Because I was going to time the walk carefully so we would get there by three, the time the ring of the day appears so we'll be there in plenty of time to see it."

"So are we ready?" asked Amy excitedly.

"Ready when you are." said Sonic.

The two hedgehogs held hands and they walked away from Amy's house and through the village of Knothole. Everybody stopped and stared at them. Sonic began to feel uncomfortable. Must everybody stop and stare at him and Amy? If they started making a fuss about this, he would go mad. Amy could sense how Sonic was feeling so she decided to do something about it.

"People, please don't stare at us, you're embarrassing Sonic." she requested.

Everybody understood the message and they stopped staring at Sonic and Amy. Sonic breathed a sigh of relief.

"Thanks Amy." said Sonic "I was about to drop dead with embarrassment with all these people looking at me."

"You're welcome Sonic." said Amy "I don't want anyone spoiling this day for us."

As they walked through Knothole, they passed the house of Mariah the Medicine Cat, Knothole's local hero and medicine magician. She poked her head out of the window and watched Sonic and Amy walking hand in hand past her house and further on through Knothole. She smiled with joy at the two hedgehogs.

"I blinked and Amy grew up." she said to herself "First she was a tiny little thing and now she's a teenager on a date with Sonic the Hedgehog. Time really does fly doesn't it? I wish I had myself a man when I was younger. Oh well, I had my chance and I lost it. For now, I hope everything goes right for the two darling hedgehogs."

But nothing would go right, not for Sonic and not even for Tails…

Tails and Cosmo finally arrived at Stardom Valley. The village was just as lovely looking as Tails remembered it from a visit to the village long ago. As Tails and Cosmo walked through the village, they observed and admired their surroundings. The village was as lively and cheery looking as Knothole. Everybody seemed friendly and everybody seemed to be a happy little soul. Cosmo beamed. Stardom Valley was reminding her a little of home, her home was full of friendly and happy people just like Stardom Valley was. Tails took a quick glance at Cosmo and was pleased to see her smiling.

"Wow, you like it already." he said "I didn't think you'd grow a likeness for Stardom Valley so quickly."

"This village seems so happy it's making me happy." said Cosmo "It reminds me of the happy days back home. Before the war started…" she suddenly added glumly.

"Let's not think about that now." said Tails, trying to put Cosmo's worries to the side "Let's not worry about the war on your planet or Marik the Martian or anything. We're gonna have a nice day in the park and nothing is going to spoil it."

"You're right." said Cosmo "I should let my worries rest for a moment or I'll spoil this nice day you planned for us."

"That's a good idea." said Tails with a smile "Now where's that park? I'm sure I remember where it is."

He and Cosmo continued walking through the village while Tails tried to find where the park was. Then suddenly, Cosmo heard something rustle through the nearby forest. She stood still and listened again. Tails realized Cosmo had stopped in her tracks and he looked over his shoulder to see what was wrong.

"Cosmo? Why have you stopped?" he asked.

"I heard something." said Cosmo "In there." She pointed at the nearby woodland.

Tails began to despair. The date hadn't begun and already something was going on. Couldn't fate leave him alone for one day? Before Tails could stop her, Cosmo ran into the woods and pushed her way through a bush. Tails immediately chased after her. He didn't want Cosmo to start searching through the woods in fear of something bad happening. He began wondering if the thing Cosmo heard was Marik the Martian rustling through the bushes and waiting to pounce. Cosmo pushed her way through another bush and saw something lying down on all fours next to a tree. To Tails' relief, it was not Marik, it wasn't even a Martian, it was a Mobian but a very peculiar looking Mobian indeed. The Mobian was a blue cat like creature about ten years old with a long, striped tail and purple stripes on its head. It had ocean blue eyes, a white muzzle and its whiskers pointed up instead of down like Tails' did. It had a white belly and it wore purple gloves and purple boots. It also wore a purple collar around its neck. Whatever it wore that for was a mystery to the two of them. This Mobian was definitely a strange looking one and Cosmo wanted to know more about it. Cosmo crept up quietly to the stranger, reached out her hand and lightly stroked his back. The stranger immediately flinched and ran around to the other side of the tree, causing Cosmo to quickly withdraw her hand. Tails wondered what was the matter and he tried to creep up to the stranger and ask him. But the moment he got close, the stranger moved quickly away from him. Tails followed him but the stranger kept moving away from him.

"Tails, please stop doing that, you're scaring him." said Cosmo.

"I don't see why I'm scaring him." said Tails "I'm nothing to be scared of."

The stranger had had enough of Tails trying to catch him so he pointed at him with his gloved finger and blasted the twin-tailed fox in the face with a jet of water. Tails yelped as he was knocked off his feet by the powerful jet of water. It felt like someone using a hose pipe on him at full blast. This stranger obviously had water powers, a trait not often seen amongst Mobian kind. After the stranger stopped squirting Tails, Cosmo crept slowly up to him.

"Don't be scared." she said softly, holding her hands up ready to defend herself if the stranger squirted water at her "We won't hurt you. We're good people, honest we are."

The stranger seemed to settle down a bit after Cosmo talked to him. The stranger's eyes widened and he got up onto his feet and he slowly started to walk up to Cosmo. It was as if he'd never seen a girl before. He'd obviously never seen a Seedrian before since Seedrians don't live on Mobius but he didn't seem bothered about that, he seemed entranced by Cosmo's strange but beautiful appearance.

"Well…my luck has changed already." said the stranger, his voice was rather teenage sounding "I escape from two horrible Mobians and I come across a creature more beautiful then my eyes have ever set themselves on. I didn't think post Chun-Nan life would be so bad."

He held Cosmo's hands and stared dreamily into her beautiful blue eyes. Cosmo stared back, not sure what to say. Tails picked himself up, shook himself dry and began to fume in anger at what was happening right now. He'd finally gotten the chance to have a date with Cosmo and a total stranger goes and steals her from him! Well no way was he letting him!

"Your eyes are as beautiful as mine." said the stranger "Blue eyes always look the prettiest I always say. Now may I have the pleasure of knowing your name pretty one? I bet it's as beautiful as your face."

Cosmo blushed scarlet and giggled a flattered giggle.

"Hee! Hee! Hee! You're so charming stranger." she said "I'm flattered by your comments. And in answer to your question, my name is Cosmo. What's yours?"

"I am Ruben the Water Panther." said the stranger, pointing straight up and squirting a thin jet of water out of his finger as if his hand was a faucet "Water Panthers are a proud race originating from Chun-Nan and we use our watery powers for good purposes, never evil ones."

"Well my name is Tails." said Tails, butting in on Ruben and Cosmo "And me and Cosmo are going on a walk together. Nice to meet you Ruben, bye, bye." he added, quickly steering Cosmo away from Ruben and walking away.

"Wait! Two-tails!" Ruben called to Tails.

He aimed his hands at the ground and shot himself into the air with a gush of water. He soared through the air in a rainbow arch and he landed in front of Tails and Cosmo. The two were impressed with that sudden act.

"Are you the two-tailed boy who aids the legendary Sonic the Hedgehog in his adventures?" asked Ruben.

"I am." said Tails "Why?"

"Since you are friends with Sonic the Hedgehog, I'm hoping you can help me with something." said Ruben.

Tails didn't really want to help a complete stranger that was trying to steal his girlfriend with anything but it wasn't in his nature to put down any requests for help. Plus Sonic would have done the same thing if he was here so Tails decided to see what Ruben wanted.

"Somewhere in these woods, two horrible people are holding captive Mobians in metal cages and they're treating them very horribly." explained Ruben "I was unfortunate enough to be one of their captives but I escaped and now I seek help. If you can help me free the other Mobians, I'll be as happy as a gentle flowing river."

"So if I understood you correctly, two people are holding some Mobians captive and treating them horribly?" said Tails "Like slaves?"

"Yes, like slaves." said Ruben "And those two people have everything, including whips. They really hurt and the scars they leave are hideous."

He turned around and showed them a long, pink scar he had on his back. Before Ruben escaped, he had been whipped plenty of times and the constant whipping left that long scar on his back. He wouldn't even have been scarred if he hadn't been whipped constantly. Cosmo gasped and put her hands to her mouth in shock.

"That's awful!" cried Cosmo "How can anyone be so cruel?"

"No idea Cosmo." said Ruben "We've got to help those Mobians before they spend the rest of their lives in slavery and torture."

"Something doesn't add up here." said Tails "Why are those two people holding Mobians captive and treating them like slaves?"

"I think they stated their reason but I'm not quite sure what it was." said Ruben, trying to remember "But that doesn't matter, we have Mobians to save from a horrible treatment, follow me! I know where the site is!"

Ruben bent down on all fours and scampered off at lightening speed. Tails held Cosmo by the waist and he flew after the water panther. Tails was rather surprised at how fast Ruben could run. He was almost as fast as Sonic! Tails was a little disappointed his day had been interrupted but there were lives that needed attending to now and that was more important. He just wondered who was behind all this and why…

Meanwhile, Sonic and Amy had arrived at a lovely little restaurant in Empire City, the current residence of the people of Mobotropolis after its destruction**. It wasn't a big restaurant but it was nice enough for two hedgehogs on a date. Sonic and Amy sat at their

table, which was outside the restaurant, and ordered a couple of drinks. The waiter went into to the restaurant to prepare them their drinks. While they waited for their drinks, Sonic and Amy peered at the menus.

"They have a lot of good food at this place." said Amy "There's a lot of delicious looking meals on this menu."

"Yeah but there's no chilli-dogs, unfortunately." said Sonic glumly.

"Of course there's no chilli-dogs silly!" giggled Amy "This isn't a hot dog stand, this is a restaurant!"

"So? I've seen restaurants that serve hot dogs." said Sonic "Oh well, I'll try something else this time. Maybe the steak pie would be nice." he added as he glanced at the menu.

The waiter returned with their drinks on a tray and he put the tray down for them. Sonic had ordered a cool, refreshing class of cola and Amy had ordered a nice, sweet glass of lemonade. The two hedgehogs took their drinks and the waiter took the tray away.

"Are you two ready to order?" asked the waiter.

"Not yet, give us a few minutes." said Amy.

The waiter left and Amy glanced back at the menu. As Amy glanced at the menu, Sonic peered over the top of his so he could sneak a look at Amy. Had it never occurred to him how beautiful Amy looked? Maybe he spent so much time running and rushing around he hadn't had the time to look at Amy and admire her beauty. If only he was able to tell her this! In fact, Sonic even thought the words in his head but his mouth wasn't willing to say them so he remained quiet and continued to stare at Amy. Amy peeked up from her menu and noticed Sonic was looking at her.

"What are you looking at Sonic?" asked Amy.

"You." said Sonic, trying not to go all shy and embarrassed. Thank goodness his face was hidden by the menu so Amy couldn't seem him blushing.

"Why? Do I have a spot somewhere, do I look funny or am I doing something strange?" asked Amy worriedly.

"No, no!" cried Sonic, putting the menu down "I'm looking at you because…because…"

Come on! Say those words Sonic the Hedgehog! his brain told him.

"Because what?" asked Amy.

"Because…I…I can't help but admire how…p…p…pretty you look." Sonic managed to force himself to say. Just saying those words felt like he was just learning how to talk.

"You think I'm pretty Sonic?" said Amy, a little surprised at the fact Sonic had just said that to her "Wow, I never thought you'd ever say that to me."

"It took a lot of urging myself to say that." said Sonic "I've been wanting to say that to you for ages but I just couldn't find the courage to say those words to you."

"I never took you for the shy and nervous type Sonic." said Amy "You certainly never seem nervous in battle."

Sonic sipped some of his cola and put the glass back down on the table.

"There's nothing to be nervous about in battle." said Sonic "But dates are different. Unlike a battle where you don't have to worry about much, on a date you have a lot to worry about so that's why I'm never nervous in battle."

"If only I was as brave as you." said Amy in a down-hearted tone "When I'm in battle, I'm always nervous. Nervous about if I'm gonna make it out alive or not."

"It's OK to be nervous in battle." said Sonic "You don't have to be as brave as I am, as long as you have some courage in you, that's more then enough to get you through the battle in one piece."

"That's good advice." said Amy with a cute little smile on her face

"Thanks Sonic."

"You're welcome." said Sonic, about to take another sip of cola.

Then suddenly, without warning, the entire restaurant erupted into smoke, fire and debris and sent everybody flying everywhere. Sonic and Amy hurtled into the air like tossed stone. Sonic grabbed Amy into a hug to cushion her fall as they landed rather sharply on the ground. Sonic and Amy picked themselves up just in time to dodge a flying table that came down with a heavy crash and broke into pieces. Sonic and Amy were completely speechless. The whole restaurant had been brought to the ground and nothing remained of it. It was nothing more then a miserable, smoking remain with fire blazing and smoke billowing. Amy was so horrified at the fact she and Sonic almost got killed on their first date, she began shaking and her eyes brimmed with tears. Sonic put his arm around Amy to comfort her.

"This is awful!" cried Amy "The restaurant blew up and everybody inside is probably dead! And all on our first date too!"

She began to cry like there was no tomorrow. Sonic was pretty bewildered by the whole scene too. If he and Amy had sat inside… then they would have been killed too! How lucky were they to make it out alive by sitting outside the restaurant! But who did this and why? Was it Scourge the Hedgehog trying to kill him so he would have no competition when he fights for Castle Acorn? Was it Marik the Martian trying to get his own back on them for all they've done to him before? Or could it even be Lola Gunn, the bounty hunter skunk that tried to kill Tails before*** and she had been hired to assassinate Sonic? These various possibilities circled around Sonic's head but there was one person he never thought of. Dr. Eggman. Speaking of which, a huge machine hovered slowly through the billowing smoke from the destroyed restaurant. Sonic and Amy stared up at it in surprise. The machine was shaped like a dog only instead of legs, it had jet thrusters that kept it airborne and it had four cannons on its back. Its head concealed another cannon and its entire body armour was coloured a shiny silver. Sonic clenched his fists and gritted his teeth.

"Eggman!" he yelled "How did I not see you coming?"

"Greetings Sonic the Hedgehog and Amy Rose." Eggman's voice boomed from inside the dog-bot's head "I'm so sorry to interrupt your date but I just built a new machine, the one you're looking at right now, and I was looking for a good place to test its fire power on and I picked this place since it seemed just right. I must say, it was rather a strange coincidence that you happened to be there at the same time I tested Egg-Dog's fire power isn't it?"

"That was no coincidence you fat, hulking, lump of horridness!" screeched Amy, summoning her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand "You knew we were here, that's why you blew the restaurant up and killed everybody inside it! And I'm gonna make you pay for ruining our date!"

"You mean to tell me there were life forms in the restaurant?" said Dr. Eggman innocently "Oh dearie me! I'm so sorry, I had no idea there were Mobians in there. If I could do it all over again, I would have captured them and roboticized them!"

"That's it! You're gonna pay you sadist!" screamed Amy.

She was about to throw her hammer at Egg-Dog but Sonic stopped her.

"No Amy, you can't handle this." said Sonic "I'll deal with Egg-Butt."

"But I wanna help you kick his butt." moaned Amy.

"You can once I bring this thing crashing down." said Sonic "We'll show him what happens when he ruins our date!"

"I don't think that'll be happening Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "I have an old friend you must be dying to meet now, I know he's dying to meet you now!"

A compartment opened up under Egg-Dog and a robot came flying out of it. To Sonic's horror, it was none other then his insidious copy Metal Sonic! Eggman had repaired him from his damages done to him last time they tussled**** and now Metal Sonic looked as mean and as bad as ever. Metal Sonic was the only foe Sonic had that he could never seem to defeat. Even fifteen Mobians at once were no

match for Metal Sonic but Sonic was determined to finally destroy Metal Sonic once and for all.

"Hello Metal Sonic!" said Sonic in a cocky tone "How nice of you to show up! Get ready for a supersonic spin-dash to the face you metal faker!"

Sonic rolled into a ball and spin-dashed towards Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic dodged Sonic's attack and drop kicked him into the ground. Sonic hit the ground face first and groaned. Sonic just got back up to his feet but Metal Sonic came flying towards him and he knocked him over again. Then Metal Sonic whipped out a control collar and threw it at Sonic. The collar clamped around Sonic's neck and Sonic gagged. A surge of energy buzzed through Sonic's veins and he slumped on the ground. He felt weak and helpless now.

"A Control Collar?" cried Sonic "How did you get a control collar? Only Mr. Florenzi has one and I bet Melchett destroyed his entire supply after arresting him!"

"Mr. Florenzi gave me one the other day." said Dr. Eggman "And I forgot all about it until after Mr. Florenzi got arrested. So now I've remembered I have one, I took the perfect opportunity to bring it with me and get Metal Sonic to clamp it on you! How does it fell to be completely helpless Sonic the Hedgehog?"

"It feels lame Eggman." said Sonic "You tell Metal Sonic to get this thing off me so we can have a fair fight!"

"I don't play fair." said Dr. Eggman darkly "Metal Sonic, bring him to me now!"

Metal Sonic grabbed the weakened hedgehog by the arms and flew up to Egg-Dog with Sonic in tow. Amy got mad and she threw her hammer at Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic dodged the hammer and continued flying up. Egg-Dog's under compartment opened and Metal Sonic flew into it with Sonic in his claws. The compartment closed and Egg-Dog turned around and flew away. Amy watched in defeat as Egg-Dog began to fly away from sight. What a horrible day this had been! Her date with Sonic gets ruined by Eggman blowing the restaurant up and now Sonic gets kidnapped by him! Could

things get any worse? They could do if Amy didn't do anything about it. If she just stood there and let Eggman get away, Eggman would deliver Sonic back to Robotropolis and roboticize him, therefore bringing the terror of Mecha Sonic back to Mobius!

"What am I gonna do?" wailed Amy "I can't save Sonic myself! Eggman's too good for me! I'm gonna need some help! And I think I know just the person to help me."

So Amy took off down the street as fast as her legs would let her to find Bunnie Rabbot. Amy prayed she was still at home. If Bunnie wasn't home then Amy would need to find other help but other help would be hard to come by and by the time she did find other help, Sonic would be roboticized and it would be too late…

Meanwhile, Ruben had led Tails and Cosmo very far into the woods of Stardom Valley and the three came to a halt by a hilltop. Ruben signalled for Tails and Cosmo to keep it down while he checked to see if he was in the right place. He crept ever so slowly up the hilltop, taking a careful step as he crept, trying not to make the slightest sound. Ruben then dropped down onto his stomach and crawled the rest of the way up with his ears drooped back. Ruben made it to the top of the hilltop and he signalled to Tails and Cosmo to come to him. Tails and Cosmo crept up the hill after him, trying to be as quiet as Ruben had been when he crept up the hill top. The moment they were at the top, Ruben signalled them to lie down and keep still. Tails and Cosmo did as they were told and they remained as still as statues.

"So what's going on Ruben?" asked Tails "Are we at the place were the Mobians are being held captive?"

"We are." whispered Ruben "This you see down there," he pointed at the bottom of the hilltop "Is the campsite of the slaves and the two ordering them about are their cruel masters Marcus and Celia Punch."

"Punch?" said Cosmo "That's an unusual name. Do they really punch people a lot?"

"They're punch by name and punch by nature sweet flower." said Ruben "That's all you need to know."

Tails fumed at him for calling Cosmo a pet name but Ruben didn't seem to notice. Tails and Cosmo looked in Ruben's direction and they saw, surely enough, a horrible sight at the bottom of the hilltop. The campsite had a lot of horrible metal cages and one tent. The cages were for the slaves and the tent was for the masters. The masters were a pair of dogs, one male and one female. The male dog wore an army green suit, heavy brown boots and his right eye was missing. He had a rather messy hairstyle, mainly because he never combed it, long floppy ears and he was really broad and stocky, suggesting he possessed great strength. The female dog was slim and fit in appearance. She wore an army green suit but her top didn't have sleeves and she wore shorts instead of trousers. Her ears were short and they pointed straight up and she had a cold witch's expression on her face, suggesting she was not very friendly at all. She always carried a whip and she had a sadistic fondness of whipping people. Their names were Marcus Punch and Celia Punch. The two dogs were training a group of slaves. This group was full of Mobians of many kinds. There were about two skunks, five ferrets, a weasel, three squirrels and four newts. They were all having to do push ups and they looked very tired and worn out as if they had been doing this all day. One of the newts was so tired, his muscles gave way and he slumped on the ground. This did not please Celia at all and she whipped the newt sharply on the back with her vicious weapon. The newt screamed a piercing scream that made Cosmo want to cry.

"Get up you lazy no good sack of pathetic-ness!" snarled Celia "If you want to work for our master Dr. Eggman, you have to be fit and healthy now keep on doing push ups or I'll get Marcus to break your arms and your legs! Isn't that right dear?" she purred to her husband.

"Of course!" said Marcus with an evil smile.

Marcus was a peculiar Mobian. Peculiar in the sense of how he only ever says "Of course!" No one was sure why he only ever says of course, not even Celia but she actually liked it so she didn't mind. The newt forced himself back onto his hands and feet and he began

doing more push ups. Celia smiled a cruel, despicable smile.

"Why I get so much joy out of hurting others, I don't know." she said in a creepy voice "Maybe I just enjoy the way they scream when I whip them."

Tails' face contorted with rage and he clenched his fists. Cosmo just put her hands to her mouth, unable to believe how vile and evil this woman was and Ruben just pulled a sad face.

"That's horrible!" cried Cosmo "That woman happily whips people just for not doing their duties! How could she be so horrid to those poor, poor people?"

"I don't know." said Ruben "But Celia Punch is one evil woman and probably the most sadistic Mobian I've had the misfortune to know. And I know how that newt feels; I've been whipped by her before I escaped. I wonder if he'll have scares like mine on his back."

"Do they know you've escaped?" asked Cosmo, worried for Ruben's sake and well being.

"Unfortunately yes but the Punches can't be bothered to look for me." said Ruben "Anyone who escapes, they just dismiss as too cowardly and unfit to serve this Dr. Eggman person they work for so they don't bother with the escapees."

"Dr. Eggman?" said Tails, his ears pricking up "Did you say Dr. Eggman?"

"Yes little boy I did say Dr. Eggman." said Ruben "Is he someone you know?"

"Have you not heard of Dr. Eggman?" asked Tails "The man who builds robots, turns people into robots and is the one Sonic and the Royal Fighters Service are at war with?"

"I believe I've heard of him." said Ruben "But I haven't met him in person. I don't think Eggman's been anywhere near Chun-Nan since Chun-Nan's never experienced a robot attack from him."

"The people of Chun-Nan are lucky then." said Tails bitterly "I

wonder why Eggman doesn't bother with Chun-Nan?"

"I think he's too focused on the big cities and more popular places to bother about Chun-Nan." said Cosmo.

"Never mind about that now." said Tails "If these two are working for Dr. Eggman then we've gotta do something about it! I'm gonna teach those two dogs a lesson!"

Tails twisted his tails around one another and he took off into the sky.

"No don't you ignorant pup!" yelped Ruben, trying to stop him but he was too late.

Tails was out of reach and heading towards Marcus and Celia Punch. Ruben thumped the ground angrily. Tails is gonna get himself captured if he's not careful! He couldn't use his water powers to stop Tails since if he did, he would get spotted and recaptured so he and Cosmo lay there helplessly as Tails headed for the evil dogs. The slave group had finished doing push ups at long last and they were relieved to get off their hands and feet and have a minute's sit down to rest up. The only thing was, once they'd rested, they'd be doing more exercise and it was pull-ups next. This was going to be more tiring and difficult then doing push ups. Celia tapped her hand with her whip as she waited for rest time to finish. Marcus's ears pricked up and he turned around to see what the noise was. Tails flew into Marcus's face and he landed foot first on his face. Marcus was knocked off his feet and onto the ground. Celia turned around sharply and her cold eyes widened at the sight of Tails standing over her downed husband. Tails glared up at Celia he flew into her. He knocked Celia over and caused her to drop the whip. Tails grabbed the whip and he threw it away. The slaves all watched with wonder and excitement, excitement in the sense someone had come to free them. Ruben watched the entire scuffle with interest.

"Maybe the kid isn't doomed after all." he said "I should know better then to underestimate the little ones."

After throwing the whip away Tails glowered at Marcus and Celia, who were just standing up after being knocked over. The two dogs

growled at him but Tails wasn't intimidated the slightest by them.

"You two! Cut it out!" cried Tails "You can't mistreat these poor people! It's horrible and unfair! Those people don't deserve to be treated like this and you have no right to enslave them like this!"

"More like you have no right to tell us how we conduct ourselves!" snapped Celia "Isn't that right dear?" she purred to her equally angry husband.

"Of course!" bellowed Marcus.

"We were hired by the great scientist Dr. Eggman to enslave some Mobians, train them to perfection and then send them off to Eggman so they can become healthy, strong Robians for his robot army." explained Celia "And Eggman crosses my palm with cold hard cash afterwards. I've become richer then ever before and I won't let my beautiful alliance be sullied by a scrawny little brat like you!" she snarled, her eyes narrowing to a piercing, heart-stopping death glare.

"I'll show you how scrawny I am!" retorted Tails.

He flew into Celia and punched her in the face. The woman was knocked onto her back and she clutched her face. Tails was about to attack her again until Marcus stepped in and gave Tails a terrific uppercut that could make Marik the Martian jealous and Tails crashed into the Punches' tent. He went straight through the tent and left a giant gaping hole in it. The tent collapsed on top of Tails and he began to squirm around, trying to get out of the tent. Marcus stomped over to the tent and he plunged his hand into the fallen tent. He fumbled about in the tent for Tails and then suddenly something bit his finger as he was fumbling about. It was Tails and after biting Marcus's finger, he crawled out of the tent and left Marcus to blow on his sore finger. Tails ran over to the group of slaves that were watching the whole performance with great satisfaction on their miserable faces.

"Come with me everybody!" cried Tails "I'll save you all! Your masters are defeated and now's a good time to run!"

The abused and humiliated slaves did not wait to be asked twice. Tails ran for the hilltop with the entire group following him like a herd of zebras. Ruben and Cosmo were thrilled with the whole affair and were pleased to see Tails leading the group up the hill and to freedom.

"I have no idea how he managed but he did it!" exclaimed Ruben "The kid is fantastic! He's saved everybody!"

"He's a hero!" said Cosmo with joy "Oh Tails is so brave, selfless and wonderful I love him! I'm so grateful to him for his kind and selfless ways."

Ruben looked a little disappointed. He fancied Cosmo just as much as Tails did but Ruben was a sensible boy and didn't believe in stealing other people's girlfriends so he let it go and decided to leave Cosmo to Tails. As Tails ran up the hill with the slaves following him, a rush of excitement swept through his stomach like a raging current. He'd just stopped two evil dogs and saved a group of slaves from their evil and sadistic ways as well as saved them from getting sent to Dr. Eggman to be roboticized! Just wait until he told Sonic! He would be impressed with him!

"I'm gonna make it! I'm gonna make it!" puffed Tails as he ran "Ha! Ha! I can't believe I actually did it! I've saved all these people from their horrible treatment and from getting shipped off to Dr. Eggman for roboticization!"

Unfortunately, even when you're this close to success, the books can turn completely against your favour. Marcus had finished blowing his sore finger and he pulled a grenade out from a briefcase that sat on a nearby table amongst some horrible weapons and instruments of torture. Marcus threw the grenade at the hilltop as hard as he could. Ruben and Cosmo freaked and ran for their lives as the grenade headed to the top of the hill. The grenade landed with a bang on the hilltop just inches in front of Tails and Tails was thrown backwards away from the hilltop and he landed on the ground just centimetres away from the campsite. The slaves were horrified and they didn't know what to do. Should they carry on and leave their rescuer behind or should they help him and risk being recaptured? Marcus picked up another grenade and threatened to

throw it. That meant "Get back here now or I'll bomb you all to slag!" The slaves took the threat to heart and they reluctantly ran down the hill and returned to the camp. Celia smiled a witch's smile at the failed escape attempt.

"Just for escaping, you can all go back into your cages." said Celia dryly "Now get in your cages NOW!"

The slaves miserably did as they were told and they all trudged over to their cages that all stood neatly in a row with their doors open. The slaves went into their cages and all the cage's doors closed shut. There was no escape for the slaves now. Tails picked himself up and shook his head to wake himself up. But before he could do anything, Marcus picked him up by the scruff of his neck and hoisted him of the ground. Tails began to punch at him furiously but he couldn't hit him because Marcus was holding him at arm's length away from him.

"Let me go! Let me go!" ordered Tails "You'll be sorry when Sonic hears about this!"

"Sonic?" said Celia "Did you just say Sonic little boy?"

"Yeah." said Tails "Once he finds out what you two are up to, he's gonna put an end to your evil plans and save everybody!"

"So you know Sonic the Hedgehog do you?" said Celia in a low voice "Well then, I guess that makes your capture more special doesn't it? Ha, ha, ha, ha! And I don't think Sonic will be saving you any moment now you twin-tailed brat because he's been taken to Robotropolis to be roboticized!"

"What?" shrieked Tails. His eyes widened.

"Dr. Eggman just captured Sonic a few minutes ago and he told us all about it, right Marcus?"

"Of course!" said Marcus, grinning like a hobgoblin at Tails.

"He told us he's subdued Sonic with a control collar and is bringing him to Robotropolis right this minute!" crowed Celia "The big hero of this planet is about to become the big villain of this planet and

there's nothing you can do about it brat!"

She and Marcus both laughed in unison. Tails couldn't believe his ears. Sonic had been captured and was being taken to Robotropolis? No! It couldn't be! Eggman is gonna turn Sonic into Mecha Sonic all over again and nobody will be able to stop him! Tears began to well up in Tails' big blue eyes and his expression changed into a very sad one.

"Since you're affiliated with Sonic, we'll enslave you brat-face." said Celia "You'll be a wonderful addition to Eggman's army. Tie the brat up Marcus!" she barked "I want to teach him the rules of discipline before making him a member of the group!"

She showed her whip and straightened it to show Tails what she meant. Tails was well and truly shocked. That horrible woman was going to whip him? Was there no end to her cruelty? Marcus took Tails away to be tied up will Celia grinned a malicious, malevolent grin that could make anyone shudder.

As for Ruben and Cosmo, they had seen the whole thing and needless to say, they were downright horrified.

"That evil woman is going to whip Tails!" wailed Cosmo "Poor Tails! I can't stand by and let Tails get whipped! We have to save him!"

"And to your great luck I'm willing to help you." said Ruben "I'm getting sick and tired of those beastly people doing beastly things to innocent people! We're going down there and saving not just Tails but everybody!"

"But how?" asked Cosmo "Tails almost succeeded and he failed. What if that happens to us."

Ruben flashed a charming smile that could impress any woman. He shifted closed to Cosmo and held his head near to her ear.

"As it so happens Cosmo." he whispered to her "I have a plan…"

Footnotes:

***See Story 21**

****See Story 2**

*****As remembered in Stories 26-27**

******See Story 42**

Talk about Dates of Disaster! Sonic's captured by Dr. Eggman and Tails is about to be whipped by slave masters! Can Amy save Sonic and can Ruben & Cosmo save Tails? Only one way to find out...tune in next time for part 2!

Marcus Punch: Of Course!

Reviews are welcome as always.

Two Dates Part 2

Story 49: Two Dates Part 2: Double Dates and Double Missions

Countdown to time change: 1

After a while of running, Amy burst into the home of fellow fighter and cyborg rabbit Bunnie Rabbot. Bunnie had just been drinking a cup of tea and Amy bursting in made her jump in her seat and almost spill her tea on herself. Bunnie put the cup down on the coffee table and got to her feet. She attended to Amy after seeing her frantic expression. Amy looked as if she had just run away from a pride of lions and lived to tell the tale.

"Amy Rose! What the hoo-hah's the matter?" exclaimed Bunnie "Did yer date go horribly wrong or something?"

"It went worse then horrible!" shrieked Amy "It's the epitome of horrible! Eggman crashed our date and kidnapped Sonic!"

"Oh mah stars!" cried Bunnie "How the heck did Eggman capture poor sugah-hog?"

"He brought Metal Sonic with him and Metal Sonic snapped a control collar on Sonic!" explained Amy breathlessly "Sonic's weak and helpless now so he won't be able to escape! We must get to Robotropolis and fast or Eggman will turn Sonic into a robot!"

Bunnie froze to the spot as memories of Mecha Sonic flooded back into her head. She'd fought Mecha Sonic before and narrowly got defeated by him*. Who knew what horrors would come to Mobius if Mecha Sonic returned!

"If Eggman succeeds, it'll be Mecha Sonic all over again!" said Bunnie Rabbot hoarsely Amy, ya'll are comin' with me to Robotropolis. We're gonna save sugah-hog from becoming the one thing he hoped never to become again!"

"You don't have to tell me twice!" cried Amy.

Bunnie and Amy ran out of the house and Bunnie wrapped her arms around Amy's waist. She activated the jets in her metal feet and took to the skies. It was precisely this and her enhanced strength that made Bunnie pleased to be a cyborg although she did often wish to be fully organic again. As for Amy, she had never flown with Bunnie Rabbot before and she thought it was just as fun and awesome as flying with Tails.

"Do you know your way to Robotropolis?" Amy called to Bunnie.

"Ah sure do Amy!" Bunnie called back "If ah'm correct, it's in the Northern Border of Megapolis isn't it?"

"That's right." said Amy.

"Then Eggman bettah watch out because we're comin' to trash his little city!" Bunnie cried confidently.

She flew through the sky on course to Robotropolis. Unfortunately for the girls, this rescue mission was going to be easier said then done…

Meanwhile, Marcus had tied Tails up by his arms to two thick wooden poles that stood high above the ground. The poles were there for this very reason, whenever Marcus and Celia got a new slave to add to the group, they tied that slave up and whipped him repeatedly in the back to teach him discipline and order in the camp. Tails was not at all looking forward to this. His head was pouring with sweat as Celia kept pacing back and forth and tapping her thigh with the wicked weapon. Tails didn't know which weapon was worse, a gun, a knife, a sword or a whip, either way they were all terrible weapons all the same but the whip was bound to be a very painful experience. Ruben the Water Panther and Cosmo the Seedrian had sneaked down to the camp as quietly as they could and they took shelter behind some cages that the horrified slaves had all been shut up in. The slaves weren't looking forward to watching Tails get whipped since he was the one that tried to save them all and watching him get hurt would be like watching a grand hero or warrior get hurt by the evil dictators and warlords they had

been battling against. Ruben and Cosmo poked their heads around the side of the end cage and watched as Celia prepared to cut loose on Tails.

"I can't bear to watch!" whimpered Cosmo "I don't wanna see Tails get hurt!"

"If the plan works to perfection we won't have to see Tails get hurt." said Ruben "That whip won't get anywhere near Tails if this works."

"So what's the first step?" asked Cosmo.

"The first step is, I squirt Celia with water before she whips Tails." explained Ruben "And then I squirt Marcus afterwards."

"Then what?" asked Cosmo.

"I get them to chase me." Ruben continued "And while they're chasing me, you free Tails and then you and Tails free the slaves and run for the hills before the Punches can stop them."

"I hope this works." said Cosmo "I don't want to get captured by those two horrible Mobians and whipped just like the slaves do."

"You won't." Ruben insisted as if he was making it a definite certainty that his plan was going to work and absolutely nothing was going to go wrong whatsoever "The plan's foolproof and we're going to put an end to Marcus and Celia's evil deeds."

"You're right." said Cosmo "And Ruben, thank you so much for your generosity."

"Think nothing of it." said Ruben "After all, generosity is my middle name."

Ruben pointed a gloved finger at Celia and aimed at her just above the waist. He waited for the right moment to strike at her. Celia finally stopped pacing around and she stood behind tails with the whip in hand. Tails didn't dare to look over his shoulder for he knew what was coming. He just remained facing forward and awaited his punishment.

"Are you ready you little brat?" asked Celia in a fake sweet voice.

"No I'm not ready." snapped Tails rudely "But you're gonna whip me anyway so get on with it. Please don't whip me too hard." he begged.

"Aw don't worry little boy." said Celia, keeping on the fake sweet voice "The first whip won't hurt much, it'll only feel like a smack on the bottom. It's just the four whips you should be worried about!" she added in her normal voice.

"You're gonna whip me five times?" shrieked Tails "I think once is enough thanks!"

"I decide how many times is enough you brat and if you keep objecting, I'll whip you six times instead!" shouted Celia.

"Why are you so cruel Celia?" asked Tails "Why are you like this?"

Celia hesitated for a moment and took a big breath. Then she spoke.

"Because I've been in slavery myself." she said "I got kidnapped by the now disbanded Black Market when I was twelve and turned into a slave for them. I was abused, tortured and humiliated like all slaves are and I still have the scars from all that whipping even to this day. When I was fourteen, I escaped from the market and made it my solemn vow to get revenge on the people by enslaving them and abusing them myself. Then at the age of twenty, I married darling Marcus Punch and we both become slave masters. We go about our happy ways enslaving innocents and giving them a tough time just like the time I had in slavery."

"But why do you take it all out on innocent people?" asked Tails "They never did anything to you! They're not the ones who hurt you, your masters are!"

"Because I want everybody else to feel the same way I felt!" snapped Celia, whipping the ground angrily "Why should I have been abused and humiliated so horribly when there are people in the world who deserved it and not me? So I feel its fair they should

suffer the same way I suffered in slavery!"

"Well then that makes you selfish!" cried Tails "Why should innocent people suffer because you did? They never hurt you so you have no right to hurt them!"

"SILENCE!" roared Celia "And just for that I'll whip you not six, not seven, not even eight or nine times, I'll whip you TEN times and that'll keep you in line you horrible, stubborn, hot-headed, scrounging little brat!"

She raised the whip and prepared to let Tails have it across the back at full whack. Tails closed his eyes and waited for the inevitable strike. Now was the time to strike! Ruben sent a jet of water rushing towards Celia and the blast hit her in the side, knocking her clean off her feet. Marcus leapt back in surprise and turned his head to see who it was. Ruben leapt out from behind the cage and let Marcus have it with a jet of water in the face. Marcus was knocked off his feet and onto his back. Tails opened his eyes only to see Marcus and Celia were down. He turned to his left hand side and beamed happily.

"Ruben!" cried Tails "I didn't think I'd be glad to see you!"

"Thank me later Tails, this is only the beginning!" Ruben called to him.

Marcus and Celia both picked themselves up. They were dripping with water and they were so furious I cannot put into words how furious they were.

"WHO…DID…THAT?" bellowed Celia.

"I did you pair of mongrels!" yelled Ruben "You remember me Marcus and Celia Punch?"

"Of course!" snapped Marcus.

"You're the spunky little water panther that wouldn't stay in line aren't you?" snarled Celia.

"Yes I am!" said Ruben "If you want to catch me, you'll have to come

and get me! Think you're fast enough idiots?"

That set them both off. Marcus and Celia screamed like angry bulls and they charged towards Ruben like angry bulls. Ruben just stood there and smiled and waited for them. The moment they were twenty inches in front of him, Ruben thrust his arms forward and sent a wave of water sweeping over them. Marcus and Celia were once again knocked off their feet. Ruben saw the perfect opportunity to run like hell. He bent down on all fours and scampered away with his tail raised high in the air. Marcus and Celia got to their feet and ran after the water panther as quickly as they possibly could.

"Ruben! Come back! You forgot to untie me!" cried Tails.

"No he didn't." said a voice he'd been looking forward to hearing again "He gave me the privilege of untying you."

Tails turned his head to his left hand side again and saw Cosmo walking up to him with a smile on her face.

"Cosmo! I'm so glad to see you!" exclaimed Tails "What are you doing here anyway? It's not safe for you here!"

"Ruben came up with a brilliant escape plan." said Cosmo, reaching up to untie Tails' left arm "He's distracting the Punches and while he's doing that, me and you are going to free those poor slaves from their cages and make a break for it before they come back."

"Well when Ruben comes back, I'm going to give him a lot of thanks." said Tails "It's a good thing he acted before Celia could whip me."

Cosmo untied the knot around Tails' wrist and Tails' left arm was now free. Cosmo then did the other arm. She untied the knot and Tails' right arm was now free. Tails threw his arms around Cosmo and hugged her.

"Thank you for untying me Cosmo." said Tails.

"You're welcome Tails." said Cosmo "Now let's free everybody shall we? The Punches might come back unless they're still keeping up the chase with Ruben."

"Of course." said Tails "There's not a minute to lose, let's open those cages!"

Tails and Cosmo ran over to the row of cages that all the miserable slaves were shut up in. There were fifteen cages each containing a captive Mobian and their faces lit up when they saw Tails and Cosmo heading to their cages. Tails bent down on one knee and observed the lock. To his disappointment, the lock was a touch sensitive lock and it would only open if someone put their finger on it. Tails touched the lock with his finger but the cage didn't open.

"Oh no! It's a touch sensitive lock!" moaned Tails "I bet it only opens if Celia or Marcus touches it!"

"How are we going to open the cages now?" asked Cosmo.

"I wish Ruben was here." said Tails "He could use his water powers to short circuit the locks and all the cages would open. But I bet he's gonna run a good distance away to keep the Punches busy so he won't be back for a while."

"We'll have to open the cages ourselves." said Cosmo "I'm sure there's something we can use to get them open."

Tails took Cosmo's idea to heart and began searching on the nearby table for something to open the cage with. Cosmo stayed put and wondered how Ruben was doing with the Punches. The table Tails searched on was full of weapons and tools that didn't really seem to be there for any particular reason and Tails was searching for something that would open the cages. Tails grabbed a crowbar and ran back to the line of cages. He stuck the crowbar in the gap between the door and pushed on it in an attempt to wrench the door open.

"Come on! Please work!" Tails grunted with effort as he pushed on the crowbar.

Things weren't going to get any better from here though…

"Here we are! Robotropolis!" announced Bunnie as she and Amy

arrived at the Northern Border of Megapolis.

"The one place I never wanted to set foot into again." said Amy bitterly.

Bunnie's flight hadn't been very long, she'd only been flying for a few minutes at most and now she and Amy had arrived at Robotropolis, the home city of the notorious and robot obsessed Dr. Eggman. Bunnie flew down towards the city and landed on the other side of the gates so she and Amy were in the city.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" shrieked Amy "The robots will spot us and start shooting at us!"

"Trust me, ah know what ah'm doin'." said Bunnie with a confident smile that reminded Amy of Sonic's smile.

Bunnie put Amy down and Amy summoned her trademark Piko-Piko hammer to her hand. The swarm of Eggman robots and Robians immediately spotted Bunnie and Amy and they opened fire on them. Bunnie stood close to Amy and activated her force field to defend herself and Amy from the gun blasts. The blasts ricocheted of Bunnie's shield as they hit it. Bunnie deactivated the shield and flew towards the robot army that was shooting at her and Amy. She gave three robots a hefty punch with her robot arm. Her robot arm extended, allowing her arm to punch through three robots at once and destroy them. A robot blasted at Bunnie and the shot just whizzed past her long ears. Bunnie turned around and punched the robot that tired to shoot her in the face, smashing its head to pieces in an instant. Then she transformed her arm into a cannon and began blasting some of the robots. Any robot unlucky enough to be blasted by the cyborg rabbit was instantly reduced to smithereens. Amy joined in the fun, whacking any robot she came across with her hammer. All it took was one mighty wallop of the enormous hammer and the robot was smashed and reduced to bits of metal. One robot deployed lasers from its wrists and began shooting at Amy. Amy dodged the blasts and leapt into the air. She hammered the robot's head in as if she was hitting a nail and the robot was smashed to pieces.

"I don't know about you Bunnie but smashing Eggman robots is a lot

of fun isn't it?" called Amy.

"It sure is sugah!" Bunnie called back "Yee-haw! Eat mah metal fist gruesome!"

She punched a cat-like robot straight in the jaw and destroyed it. Then suddenly, a pair of dome shaped robots armed with mallets the size of two large barrels stood on one another, stomped into the battle. Bunnie just blasted two more robots away and didn't see the two robots coming. By the time she did though, she was too late. One of the robots swiped at her with his hand and walloped Bunnie away. She flew into the air and landed with a crash into the wall of a nearby tower that was half the size of Dr. Eggman's headquarters. The impact had left Bunnie slightly embedded upside down into the wall. She pulled herself free from the wall, causing herself to fall, and she flipped herself to the right side up and activated her jets to slow her fall before she could become a nasty stain on the pavement. She landed on the ground and faced the two hammer bots that were advancing nosily towards her with their hammers raised and ready to smash someone into the ground. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and blasted at them but the blast pinged harmlessly off their armour. Those two robots were very heavily armoured and a normal cannon blast wouldn't destroy them. Bunnie flew towards the robots and she punched one of them in the face. But despite her amazing strength, her robot fist didn't seem to shake the huge robot the slightest. In fact, it didn't seem to have realized it had been hit! Bunnie immediately freaked and tried to fly away but one of the hammer bots blaster her head on with its laser eyes. Bunnie came crashing down on the floor and she groaned like a zombie. She never thought anything would hurt her as much as Mecha Sonic did but those two robots were pretty close. The hammer bots advanced on Bunnie with their enormous hammers at the ready. Bunnie got back to her feet but the hammer bots were just behind her now. One of them raised its hammer high above its head and was about to bring it crashing down on Bunnie until Amy leaped on it from behind and hammered it on the head. Amy's hammer didn't hurt the robot but it did stop it dead in its tracks. It looked up and saw Amy standing on its head. Amy hammered it in the optics and the robot wailed. The other robot made the stupid mistake of trying to get Amy off its partner by trying to hit her with its

hammer. Amy saw it coming and she jumped off the robot just as the other one was trying to hammer her. The robot smashed the second robot to pieces with its hammer and reduced it to nothing more then a metal pancake. Bunnie's brain ticked. That was how she could defeat those hammer wielding menaces! Their own hammers are strong enough to destroy them! Bunnie took flight and flew straight towards the remaining hammer bot. She punched it in the optic to distract it and she flew towards the flattened hammer bot. She grabbed the hammer with her metal arm and lifted it above her head. She nearly lost her balance and fell over. That thing was heavy! The remaining hammer bot saw what she was doing and he tried to hit her but he missed and Bunnie swung her hammer. She hit the robot and smashed it into a metal pancake much like the first one. Now the two hammer bots were down and out, Amy and Bunnie were free to break into Eggman's headquarters and look for Sonic. Bunnie and Amy headed for Eggman's base and Bunnie with no effort at all, broke the door down with one mighty punch.

Dr. Eggman had seen the entire battle on his super computer monitors and he did not like what he had been watching.

"Curse that Rabbot!" he growled through gritted teeth "When will I ever make a robot that is capable of bringing her down?"

"Maybe some day master." said his pointy headed servant bot Alonzo "You'll just have to try harder won't you?"

"Yes I suppose I should." said Dr. Eggman "But I knew that Bunnie Rabbot and Amy would make it into my base somehow so I've set up a little surprise for them."

"Have you?" said Alonzo "What's that then?"

"If I told you, it wouldn't BE a surprise would it you steel stooge!" snapped Dr. Eggman "Now make yourself useful and keep an eye on my star prisoner…"

Then suddenly, something began ringing. It was a communicator on the control pad and Dr. Eggman answered it.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"It's me, Celia Punch Dr. Eggman." said Celia "I need your help a minute!"

"Do you my wonderful agent?" said Dr. Eggman in surprise "What do you need my help for my dear?"

"I'm having problems with pest control in my camp!" shouted Celia "I need you to send a robot over to give me and my husband a hand!"

"Don't worry Celia, I have the perfect bot for you." said Dr. Eggman "I'll send it over as fast as I can."

The communicator switched off.

"Alonzo, Marcus and Celia seem to be having trouble right now." said Dr. Eggman "I want you to take Egg-Peacock to their camp and eliminate their problem."

"Yes sir, right away sir!" said Alonzo loyally "Good luck with the Rabbot by the way!"

He zipped out of the room as fast as a motorbike. Dr. Eggman turned his attention back to the monitors.

"Watch out girls." he purred to himself "Things are not what they seem around here…"

Bunnie and Amy were inside Dr. Eggman's headquarters. It had only just occurred to them both on how cold it was. Then again, Dr. Eggman was cold hearted so a cold base was fitting for him. The room they were in seemed to be some sort of hangar bay. It was a large room with various machines not functioning right now. Eggman must store his robots in there before he uses them for his nefarious schemes. Amy didn't like it here and she was keen to find Sonic as quickly as possible.

"OK Bunnie, any ideas?" asked Amy hopefully.

"Sugah-hog's bound to be on the top floor since that's where Eggman always is." said Bunnie "If I just fly up and punch mah way through the floors then I'll make it up there much quicker then if we just try to find a way up there."

While Bunnie thought, a large crane arm not far from where she was twitched and started to rotate towards her. The crane arm had a large magnet dangling from its arm and unfortunately for Bunnie, the magnet was on. With those robot limbs, Bunnie had no chance against it.

"Stay back Amy." said Bunnie, getting into a battle charge pose "Ah'm gonna smash mah way through the….AIIIIIIIIEEEEEEEE!" she squealed as she was pulled off the ground by a magnetic force.

The magnet was directly above Bunnie and it was a very powerful magnet. It was very high up off the floor and it attracted Bunnie just like that. Bunnie was now stuck to the magnet and to make matters worse, the magnet had a clamp on it for her organic arm and it wrapped around her wrist. Now she was completely immobilized, her robot legs and left arm were stuck to the magnet and her organic arm had been bound up. She was completely trapped. Amy gasped in horror at this.

"Bunnie!" cried Amy.

"Amy, get me down from here!" cried Bunnie, pulling on her arms and legs "Ah can't move while ah'm stuck to this magnet!"

"I'll get you down." said Amy, summoning her hammer to her hands "I'll just find the controls to the magnet and smash it to pieces."

Unfortunately, bad luck for Amy decided to arrive. Before Amy could do anything at all, a squad of robots surrounded her with their guns deployed and itching to shoot at her. And to make matters worse, two hammer bots showed up as well with their hammers ready to smash someone to pieces. With Bunnie out of bounds, Amy was doomed. Not even someone as strong as Amy would be able to take on so many robots, especially the hard to destroy hammer bots. Amy just threw her hammer on the floor and raised her hands in defeat.

"I surrender." said Amy "Please don't kill me or Bunnie."

"Wise-move-hedge-hog." droned a robot with guns for hands and two guns that acted like tails "You-will-be-taken-to-Dr.-Eggman-for-

robot-i-ci-za-tion."

Amy had no choice but to do what she was told. This is the second time this week she'd been captured and about to be roboticized! The only difference is, Sonic wouldn't be able to save her since he'd been captured himself…

Tails had been pushing on the crowbar for minutes on end and his face had turned bright red in effort but the cage door hadn't come close to opening. Tails gave one final push on the crowbar and then slumped on the ground in defeat. He picked up the crowbar and throw it on the ground in frustration.

"It's hopeless!" he whined "I can't open the stupid cage! Not even with this!" he pointed to the crowbar that lay there on the ground "How am I gonna get the cages open without Ruben here to short circuit the locks?"

"We've got to try something Tails." said Cosmo "We're so close to freeing them, we can't back down now."

"But we can't try." retorted Tails "The crowbar doesn't work and I don't think anything else on the table's gonna work, the locks are touch activated and will only work if Marcus and Celia touch it so there's no way we can open the cages!"

"Don't talk pathetic Tails." said a familiar voice "There's always a way, even if it never seems like it."

Tails turned around only to see Ruben sitting on top of the cages with a charming smile on his face.

"Ruben!" cried Tails "Where did you come from? And where are Marcus and Celia?"

"While chasing me, they had an unfortunate accident with a lake." said Ruben "They both fell in to it and I seized the opportunity to escape while they were trying to get out. They won't be back here for a while yet."

"Well now you're here, we need you to open the cages." said Cosmo "The locks are touch activated and you maybe able to short circuit them with your water powers."

"No problem Cosmo." said Ruben, leaping off the cage he was sitting on "After all, that's how I escaped. I short circuited my lock and ran for it while no one was looking so it appears I'll have to do the same to this bunch."

He touched the lock to the first cage and a puddle of water began to seep out from under his finger and all over the lock. Ruben withdrew his finger just before the lock short circuited since he didn't want to get shocked by it. The lock sparked and spluttered and then switched off. The slave inside pushed on the door and it opened. The slave got out of the cage and began to dance about with joy.

"I'm free!" he cried "Yippee! I'm free!"

"Yes you're free now run for it!" ordered Ruben "Get out of here before your masters return!"

The slave did not wait to be asked twice. He ran for it as fast as he possibly could while Ruben went to the next cage and short circuited the lock. The cage opened and the slave inside ran for it as fast as he could. In order to speed things up, Ruben leaped in front of the cage he was on next and squirted the lock with a quick jet of water. He did so to the next cage and the next and the next and the next until finally all fifteen cages were open and all the slaves had escaped. They all ran into the woods and disappeared from sight. Ruben was very pleased with himself.

"I am magnificent." he said "Why didn't I do this brilliant plan before?"

"Well done Ruben." said Tails "You freed everybody. You did much better then me." he added sadly "I couldn't save all the slaves when I had the chance and I couldn't even open the cages. You were much better then I was."

"Oh don't put yourself down Tails." said Ruben kindly "You tried your hardest and you almost succeeded. I just got luckier then you that's

all."

"Yeah but only because you have water powers." said Tails "I wish I had water powers then I could be as great as you."

"Tails, as my clan bride once said to me, you don't need great powers or great strength to be great. The only way to be great is be yourself." said Ruben.

"You're right." said Tails "I am great just being myself. I've helped Sonic on many occasions and my inventions have helped make things easier for him and his friends. I'm sorry if I sounded jealous of you."

"No need to apologize little guy." said Ruben kindly, stroking Tails' head "I can understand your jealousy. Water is a great power and not many can use it so a lot of people envy my power."

"By the way, what did you mean by clan bride?" asked Cosmo "Are you part of a clan or something?"

"And you mentioned something about coming from Chun-Nan." said Tails "Are you a clan member from Chun-Nan?"

"I was." said Ruben, his face fell into a depressed expression and his ears drooped back "But not anymore."

"Not anymore?" said Cosmo "What do you mean?"

Before Ruben could say anything of the sort, a loud swooping sound was heard from directly above them. Tails, Cosmo and Ruben looked up and saw the familiar shape of Egg-Peacock flying above them and circling them like a vulture waiting to dig into its find. Tails had seen Egg-Peacock before from when Sonic and friends tried to use the Chaos Emeralds to destroy Eggman's city** but they hadn't really gotten the chance to fight it because Rorda, Horda and Borda interrupted them before they could fight. Egg-Peacock landed on the ground and flapped its enormous bladed wings. Ruben was completely gobsmacked by the giant robot for he had never seen an Eggman robot before.

"Roaring ocean waves!" he blurted "What the heck is that!"

"That is an Eggman robot." said Tails "And I bet Dr. Eggman himself is in there."

"Wrong actually." came Alonzo's snooty, posh voice from inside Egg-Peacock "It is I, Alonzo the Butler Bot, Eggman's loyal servant and…"

"Yes, yes, yes, we know who you are Alonzo." interrupted Tails hastily "What are you doing here?"

"Dr. Eggman isn't pleased with you messing up Marcus and Celia Punch's plans so he sent me to give them a hand." explained Alonzo "And since your precious Sonic is captured, you have no chance against me."

"Sonic may not be able to help us." said Tails "But we have someone who can help us just as easily. Meet our new friend… Ruben the Water Panther." he introduced, pointing at Ruben.

Egg-Peacock bent over and peered at Ruben who just stood there with a straight face and his arms folded.

"What the heck are you supposed to be?" snorted Alonzo "Are you a reject from a circus or something?"

"No I am not tin head." said Ruben coolly "I am a Water Panther, a proud race originating from Chun-Nan. You had better take that flying tin pot and get outta here before you regret it."

Alonzo just snorted with laughter from inside Egg-Peacock.

"Ha, ha, ha! What are you gonna do? Throw water at me?" he teased.

"Precisely." said Ruben.

He thrust his arms forward and a geyser of water shot out from hands and gushed over Egg-Peacock. Water and electricity don't mix so Egg-Peacock was going to be reduced to a drenching wreck when Ruben was finished. Ruben stopped squirting water at Egg-Peacock and…gasped in horror. The peacock shaped machine was still standing and appeared to be in great condition!

"What?" cried Ruben "Water overpowers machines! How is he…?"

"Its waterproof you brainless oaf!" crowed Alonzo "Dr. Eggman feared there would be a day where his robots ended up falling into water or facing a water powered creature so he made all his robots waterproof so they can still survive after being soaked. Your powers are useless little boy!"

"Oh are they?" sneered Ruben "I may not be able to bet you with my water but I can beat you with my fists instead."

Before Tails could stop him, Ruben jumped into the air like a kangaroo and flipped like an acrobat. Ruben landed a kick slam on Egg-Peacock's head, jumped off and kick slammed it on the shoulder. Those attacks shook the peacock machine slightly and Alonzo's optics began dancing about in his head. But Ruben didn't stop there. He jumped off Egg-Peacock's shoulder and began spinning in mid-air like a drill bit. He struck Egg-Peacock in the neck and knocked the giant machine onto its back. Ruben leaped away from Egg-Peacock and landed in front of Tails and Cosmo, who stood there with their mouths open.

"Wow…That was awesome!" cried Tails.

"However did you get so strong?" asked Cosmo.

"When you're part of a ninja clan, years of ninjutsu pays off." said Ruben "Although I'm more of a kung-fu person myself so I have novice style ninjutsu combined with novice style kung-fu."

"That's pretty cool!" said Tails in amazement "I wish you was a member of the Royal Fighters Service! You'd be an excellent member of the team!"

"I've heard all about the Royal Fighters Service." said Ruben "Word travels quickly around Chun-Nan. If I remember correctly, the service was formed by the Acorn parents, who were both murdered by a man from space, and Sonic the Hedgehog is part of it."

"That's absolutely right." said Tails "The people of Chun-Nan know a lot about us it seems."

"Like I said, word travels quickly around Chun-Nan" said Ruben "Even though I left Chun-Nan, I started hearing about the Royal Fighters Service before I got caught by the Punches and I became intrigued. If joining your group means helping Sonic defeat Dr. Eggman then I'll happily join the service."

"Nobody will be joining anything!" yelled Alonzo "I still function and I'm gonna make bird seed out of you three!"

Egg-Peacock got back up onto its feet and raised its tail-feather missiles. All fifteen of them fired at once and they soared out of their sockets and towards Tails, Cosmo and Ruben. The two Mobians and Seedrian all ran for it as the missiles came crashing down and exploding around them. Tails and Cosmo ducked down to the ground with Tails shielding Cosmo with his body as the missiles soared past them and exploded the moment they made contact with the ground. Ruben did some somersaults to dodge them all as the last two missiles roared past him and exploded.

"I may be strong! But I can't fight missiles!" he shrieked as he ran away from an explosion.

"Consider yourself lucky Egg-Peacock only has fifteen missiles!" Tails called over to him "Now he's fired them all, that's it! He hasn't got anymore!"

"Oh Tails, for someone as smart as you, you are so thick!" cackled Alonzo.

To Tails' amazement and shock, Egg-Peacock grew fifteen new missiles out of the sockets they fitted in! Now Egg-Peacock had a brand new arsenal of tail-feather missiles to fire! Tails couldn't believe his eyes.

"No way! You've got another supply?" shrieked Tails.

"I have thousands of supplies." gloated Alonzo "The missiles are very small and are stored inside Egg-Peacock's huge body and when they're deployed they expand to the size you see them as now. And to think Dr. Eggman came up with that himself. Now get ready for another shower of missiles!"

The new supply of missiles fired and shot out of their sockets and showered over Tails, Cosmo and Ruben. That instantly got the three of them running for their lives again. But Alonzo decided to make things harder be deploying the next supply immediately after firing the missiles so he could fire a good number of missiles in a matter of seconds. The whole slavery camp was filled with exploding and screaming missiles as they crashed here and there in an attempt to blow up their target. Marcus and Celia Punch finally made it back after the long chase they had with Ruben earlier and they were not pleased to see that their slaves had escaped and Alonzo was tearing their camp down while trying to destroy Tails, Cosmo and Ruben. They immediately got mad and Celia began ranting and raving while Marcus began barking madly.

"Oy! Alonzo! Watch what you're doing with that giant bird machine!" yelled Celia "You're tearing my beautiful camp down!"

Alonzo did not seem to have heard. Well how could he with this onslaught of firing missiles constantly going off and exploding around him as he tried to destroy his targets? Marcus and Celia could see that Alonzo couldn't hear them so they scampered for it before they could get caught up in the hail fire. Tails took flight and began flying up into the sky to avoid the showers of missiles Alonzo sent out second after second.

"I wish Sonic was here!" cried Tails "He'd deal with this in a jiffy! Speaking of which…I can go to Robotropolis, save him and bring him here! But I can't leave Cosmo and Ruben behind! They'll get blown to pieces! Unless…"

Tails suddenly had a bright idea. He flew back down to collect Cosmo and Ruben. Ruben had been dodging the missiles as fast and as frantically as he possibly could whereas Cosmo remained lying on the ground and listening to the missiles soaring past her and exploding. Tails landed beside Cosmo and helped her onto her feet.

"Cosmo, I have an idea." said Tails "Get Ruben and I'll explain it!"

"OK." said Cosmo.

She called over to Ruben who was not far away from them.

"Ruben, come here!" she called.

Ruben heard her and he leapt over to Tails and Cosmo just as a missile was about to hit him.

"What is it Cosmo?" asked Ruben.

"I have a plan." said Tails "I'm gonna fly into the air with Cosmo in my arms and you follow us somehow. We get Egg-Peacock to chase us all the way back to Robotropolis and once we get there, we can save Sonic from Eggman's roboticizer and then he can bring Egg-Peacock crashing down to the ground in little bits."

"That's a good plan Tails." said Cosmo "But what if we get there and Sonic's already roboticized? The plan will be in jeopardy!"

"We don't know if we don't try Cosmo." said Tails "We'll try it and hope that we make it in time."

Tails scooped Cosmo up bridal style and flew up into the air out of the missile fire. Ruben sent himself shooting into the air with a jet of water and he flew as high as Tails. In order to keep himself airborne, Ruben created a long trial of water for him to slide on. Well trained Water Panthers had abilities like that to get to long distances in shorter time. Tails was well impressed by that ability. Ruben was definitely one impressive panther wasn't he? Alonzo saw the Mobians getting away so Egg-Peacock flapped its bladed wings and flew after them, just as Tails hoped he would. Tails looked over his shoulder to see Egg-Peacock flying after him. Luckily it wasn't flying too fast so he could keep ahead of it.

"That's it Alonzo." said Tails "Follow me all the way back to Robotropolis."

Deep down though, Tails was hoping with all his might that he would make it in time to save Sonic from roboticization or it would be Mecha Sonic all over again…

Meanwhile, Bunnie and Amy had been taken to Dr. Eggman by the gang of robots. They had both been fitted with heavy laser cuffs around their wrists. These cuffs were not the traditional handcuff design, they were one big piece to it would be even harder to break out of this design. Not to mention that laser cuffs cannot be broken so Bunnie and Amy were well and truly stuck now. The moment they arrived at Dr. Eggman's quarters, his face lit up like a sunrise.

"Well! What a catch for me!" he cackled "I have Amy Rose and Bunnie Rabbot restrained and completely at my mercy! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Must ya'll gloat about every victory ya'll have?" muttered Bunnie "It's stupid!"

"Yes I must gloat about my victory." said Dr. Eggman with a gloating smile "Gloating is one of my hobbies after all. I practice gloating in the mirror every morning and every evening to make sure I still gloat brilliantly."

"Very funny. We're all rolling on the floor laughing our heads off." said Amy sarcastically "Now where's Sonic?" she demanded.

"Always the demanding type aren't you?" said Dr. Eggman "Oh well, if you want your precious Sonic then here he is."

A light at the back of the room turned on revealing a bruised and battered looking Sonic restrained to a chair and trapped in a glass roboticizer cage. He had cuffs around his wrists, his ankles and even his neck. Even if he didn't have a control collar on, Sonic would be going nowhere restrained like that. Sonic looked terrible to say the least, it was as if he had been in a nasty fight but he still had some strength in him to stay awake. He opened one eye and saw the captured Amy and Bunnie staring at him in horror.

"Hi girls…" he croaked "I was beginning…to think help wasn't….coming."

"What did you do to him you horrible man?" shrieked Amy.

"I wanted Sonic to pay for all the crimes he's done to me over these

past eight months so I had Metal Sonic beat him up before I locked him away."

"But why did you need to restrain him like that?" asked Amy, notifying Sonic's chair "He can't do anything! He's got a control collar on! He's weak and pathetic now! No offence Sonic." she quickly added.

"None taken, you're absolutely…right about me…" said Sonic grimly "Stupid…collar."

"I've restrained Sonic like that because I'm being extra cautious." said Eggman "You never know what might happen. The collar might malfunction and stop working so I've put Sonic under heavy lockdown so even if the collar stops working, he can't go anywhere. I was about to roboticize him until you two arrived so now I can have a triple roboticization!"

"No ya'll won't!" screeched Bunnie "Ya'll are not getting sugah hog or us!"

Then suddenly she pun around on her heel and kicked the robot that was standing behind her. The robot fell over and dropped the remote for hers and Amy's laser cuffs. Bunnie pressed the button with her toe and both laser cuffs turned off, freeing the girls and allowing them to fight. Dr. Eggman's moustache straightened in surprise.

"They're loose!" he shrieked "Metal Sonic get up here now!" he bellowed into a microphone on the control pad.

Bunnie and Amy immediately began to cut loose. Bunnie punched all the robots and Amy hammered them all. Luckily for them, the two hammer bots weren't here because they were too big to fit through the door so they wouldn't be having trouble from them anytime soon. The robots tried shooting Amy and Bunnie but their blasts missed and they were quickly destroyed by the relentless women. The last robot was destroyed and Bunnie and Amy set their sights on Eggman and Sonic. Amy ran over to Sonic's cage to get him out and Bunnie kept Dr. Eggman in place. Eggman remained sitting in his chair and didn't dare to move.

"Ah'm gonna be polite and kindly ask ya'll to stay put Eggman." said Bunnie, deploying her arm cannon and pointing it at Eggman's face "We're gonna take Sonic home and we're gonna take you to an MPD station where ya'll will pay for ya crimes against the Mobians."

"Whatever you say Miss Rabbot." said Dr. Eggman.

As for Amy, she whacked Sonic's cage furiously with her hammer but her hammer would even crack the glass but that didn't stop Amy, she kept trying and trying, hitting the cage as fast as he could.

"Amy…stop!" croaked Sonic "Its Diamond Glass, you'll never break it!"

Amy stopped hammering the cage and growled.

"How am I supposed to open this thing then?" exclaimed Amy "Bunnie, get Eggman to talk will you?"

"Sure Amy." said Bunnie "How do ya'll open that cage?" asked Bunnie with a threatening face on.

"You press the yellow button marked "open" on the control pad I'm sitting at." said Dr. Eggman.

Bunnie looked at the control pad, choc-bloc with buttons and controls of all kinds. Seeing as she was near the control panel, Bunnie pressed the open button. The glass cage opened up and the restraints on Sonic's chair opened up at the same time, freeing the beaten hedgehog. Sonic staggered onto his feet. He felt limp and lame due to the heavy beating he'd received from Metal Sonic. Amy put her arm around Sonic and helped him walk.

"Take it easy Sonic, you're hurt." said Amy "All we've gotta do is get that collar off and then we can leave."

"Thanks for coming…all this way…to save me…Amy and Bunnie…" said Sonic weakly "I really appreciate it"

"Yer welcome sugah-hog." said Bunnie as Amy brought Sonic over to her.

Bunnie grabbed the collar with her robot arm and broke it in two. The moment the collar was removed though, new strength seemed to come back to Sonic and he didn't feel so weak now. He flexed his muscles and he stood up on his own.

"Hey, I don't feel so weak now!" said Sonic "Now that collar's gone, I'm my old self again. Still a little sore though." he rubbed his back tenderly.

"Collar or no collar, you're still weak Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "Too weak to defeat Metal Sonic that is and if I'm very much mistaken, he's here now!"

Surely enough, the base door opened and in walked Metal Sonic, the only Eggman robot Sonic and friends had a problem with. Sonic, Bunnie and Amy all got into battle-ready stances as they prepared to fight. Sonic struck the first blow with a spin-dash but Metal Sonic spin-dashed back and due to Sonic's weakened state, Metal Sonic overpowered him with ease. Sonic was sent sprawling on the floor. Amy tried to hammer Metal Sonic in rage but Metal Sonic snatched Amy's hammer from her, threw it away and slugged her in the stomach with a metal punch. The blow made Amy gasp and splutter and she sprawled on the floor, coughing as if she had asthma. Bunnie flew into Metal Sonic and punched the mighty robot in the face but that attack didn't stun Metal Sonic for long. Bunnie tried to kick Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic dodged, punched her in the face and kicked her onto the floor. Bunnie lay on her tummy on the floor and Metal Sonic sat on her back. He grabbed her organic arm and forced it behind her back, causing a tremendous flush of pain to surge through her arm like water running through a drainpipe. Bunnie yelped like a stuck pig.

"Ouch! Ow! Oooh, Oh! Stop that!" cried Bunnie.

"Say uncle and he'll let you go." ordered Dr. Eggman.

"Not on yer…"

Before Bunnie could finish speaking, Metal Sonic gave her arm a sharp twist and Bunnie screamed loud enough to bring the house down.

"OW! UNCLE! UNCLE! UNCLE YOU CRAZY ROBOT!" she squealed.

Just as Eggman had said, Metal Sonic let Bunnie go and Bunnie began to tenderly rub her organic arm. Amy suddenly appeared form behind and hammered Metal Sonic away from Bunnie. Metal Sonic landed on his feet and spin-dashed Amy, knocking her on the floor. Sonic leaped up and spin-dashed Metal Sonic but due to his weakened state from Metal Sonic's heavy beating earlier, the attack didn't even knock him over. Metal Sonic slapped Sonic away and sent him crashing into the control panel. Before Sonic could get up, Metal Sonic grabbed him by the quills and lifted him to his height.

"Kill him Metal Sonic! Snap his neck!" ordered Dr. Eggman.

Eerily enough, Metal Sonic seemed to obey this command. He put his other hand around Sonic's neck, let go of his quills with the hand he was holding them with and put it around his neck. Before Metal Sonic could make the killer blow, something crashed and ripped its way through the wall and sent everybody sprawling! It was Egg-Peacock! Tails and Ruben had gotten the thing to chase them all the way to Robotropolis and they flew ever so close to the building and moved out the way, causing Egg-Peacock to crash head first into the wall. Now Egg-Peacock's head was inside Eggman's base while the rest of its body was outside. Dr. Eggman went wild with rage.

"ALONZO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING YOU CRAZY IDIOT?" roared Dr. Eggman.

"I was trying to catch the pests that were bothering Marcus and Celia and they tricked me into crashing into the wall!"

Egg-Peacock pulled on its long neck and yanked its head out of the wall. Tails flew in with Cosmo in his arms and Ruben following him. Tails' face brightened when he saw that Sonic was still organic and he was pleased to see Amy and Bunnie there too.

"Sonic! We made it!" cried Tails "We made it just in time to save you!"

"Actually Tails, we saved Sonic." said Amy "Me and Bunnie came all

the way here to help him and we saved him from being roboticized."

"And then Tails saves me from getting my neck broken." said Sonic "I'm having a double dose of having my life saved today. So what's your problem Tails?"

"Me and Cosmo were about to have our date but we ran into Ruben here." he pointed to Ruben "And he took us to a slave camp that works for Dr. Eggman. We foiled the camp and freed everybody and then Alonzo tries to attack us with Egg-Peacock."

"Sonic, it's a pleasure to meet you at last." said Ruben, bending down and shaking the hedgehog's hand "We citizens of Chun-Nan have heard great tales about you and I wish to join you in your quest to destroy Dr. Eggman and free Mobius."

"Sweet." said Sonic "And you're a water panther, even better. I've read about you guys, you have water powers am I right?"

"Correct." said Ruben "I also have ninjutsu and kung-fu. I'm one tough panther."

"Well I can't wait to see you in battle someday Ruben." said Sonic "Right now, we've gotta skedaddle before Metal Sonic kills us all!"

"Metal who?" asked Ruben.

Metal Sonic suddenly tackled Ruben from behind and pinned him down on the floor. Bunnie retaliated and punched Metal Sonic off of Ruben. Ruben leaped back to his feet and kicked Metal Sonic in the head. Then he gave Metal Sonic a kung-fu style punch, which is much stronger then a normal punch, and tail-whipped him into the wall. Now Metal Sonic was out for the moment, Sonic and friends could deal with Egg-Peacock. Sonic leaped out of the hole in the wall and spin-dashed Egg-Peacock but because he was weak, he didn't damage Egg-Peacock as much as he'd hoped he would. But Bunnie and Amy sorted that out for him. Egg-Peacock deployed his beak laser and tried to shoot Bunnie as she flew towards him but Bunnie dodged the attacks and she blasted Egg-Peacock repeatedly in the head with her arm cannon. The blows did some hefty damage to Egg-Peacock and the giant bird machine appeared to be on the

verge of falling. Amy then hammered Egg-Peacock's damaged head in and knocked it clean off. Then she began to hammer the body repeatedly and knocked one of Egg-Peacock's wings off. Bunnie punched Egg-Peacock, grabbed its other wing with her robot arm and ripped it clean off its socket. Egg-Peacock had no way of flying now so the giant bird machine collapsed onto the ground and smashed into tiny little pieces. Bunnie caught Amy and flew through the air to the gates of Robotropolis. Tails carried Sonic and Ruben carried Cosmo as they all headed for the gates. All the robots on the ground tried to shoot them but they all missed their attacks. The Mobians all landed on the other side of the gates and Sonic ran for it with Bunnie and Tails flying after him and Ruben using his water trial to go at fast speeds. In a matter of moments, the Mobians had left Robotropolis and disappeared into the distance. Dr. Eggman thumped the wall in fury.

"Why must my plans get ruined when I'm so close?" he grumbled "I was so close to having Sonic as Mecha Sonic again and his stupid friends go and wreck everything! Stupid Mobians!"

The base door opened and in came a very battered and steaming Alonzo. He had crawled out of Egg-Peacock's miserable remains and took the elevator to the top floor to meet up with Dr. Eggman.

"Those Mobians have ruined everything sir." said Alonzo "They've busted Mr. Florenzi, they've foiled Marcus and Celia, but they're still at large, and they've wrecked your base. What are we gonna do now?"

"I'll let those Mobians have this small victory." said Dr. Eggman "After all, the tides of this war will turn into my favour. I have more then enough Robian slaves to aid me in building my ultimate machine now so I don't need Mr. Florenzi or the Punches anymore."

"Your ultimate machine?" questioned Alonzo "You…don't mean…"

"Oh I mean Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman evilly "The machine that'll grant me my victory…EGG-TIMER!"

He began to laugh a loud and grating cackle that seemed to echo around Robotropolis and beyond…

Later that day, the sun was beginning to set and Tails was sitting near the Lake of Rings, staring at the lovely, clam water and feeling a little down in the dumps since he still thought that Cosmo loved Ruben now. Ever since they had returned, Tails had relayed everything to Sonic about his adventure and Sonic and Ruben had been having a get together moment to get better acquainted. Tails' ears suddenly pricked up. He turned around and saw Cosmo coming towards him.

"Hi Tails." said Cosmo brightly "What are you doing here?"

"Chilling out." said Tails "What are you doing here?"

"I came looking for you." said Cosmo "I wondered where you'd got to."

She sat down beside Tails and admired the lake's beauty. The sunset shining on the lake made the lake look like a lake of glistening diamonds. Cosmo noticed that Tails looked a bit sad so she decided to ask him what was up.

"Is something wrong Tails?" asked Cosmo "You look sad."

"You know that day out together I wanted us to have?" asked Tails.

Cosmo nodded.

"Well the reason I wanted us to have it…it was so me and you could…get together and…I could show you how….how…how I… how I truly feel about…you." said Tails slowly "But then it got ruined by us needing to save those slaves and Sonic. And I'm also sad because I wanted to show how I feel about you but I bet you're with Ruben now."

"Excuse me?" asked Cosmo politely.

"Ruben really flattered you with comments I would have wanted to say and he's much more amazing and brilliant then I am." said Tails miserably "I bet Ruben is much more appealing to you then me."

"Tails, I like Ruben and I think he's a lovely boy who's willing to help anybody, even people he doesn't know." said Cosmo "But my heart doesn't belong to him."

"It doesn't?" asked Tails with a ray of hope in his stomach.

"No Tails." said Cosmo "My heart belongs to you. You're just as amazing as Ruben. You're clever, helpful, kind, brave, selfless and always putting other lives ahead of yourself. Not to mention you stood up for me when Marik tried to kill me*** and you've saved my life plenty of times. That is more amazing then anything Ruben can do."

Tails was completely dumbstruck. He never knew that Cosmo had felt this way about him the whole time and she thought he was more amazing then Ruben! Tails' face went bright red and his heart began to beat really quickly.

"I…I'm completely speechless Cosmo." said Tails "I…I never…knew you…f…felt this way…about me the whole time…" he stammered nervously.

"I've loved you ever since you tried to make me feel welcome and save me from Marik the first day I was here****." said Cosmo, putting her arm around Tails "I've been hoping you felt the same…" she added, going a little red in the cheeks herself.

"Well I do Cosmo." said Tails quickly before his shyness got the best of him "I really like you. Not just like I mean…like-like you."

For some reason, his lips couldn't quite form the word "love".

"I'm really happy to hear that Tails." said Cosmo sweetly "Thank you for being such a good friend to me."

"The pleasure's all mine Cosmo." said Tails, putting his arm around Cosmo and hugging her as she hugged him.

The two lovesick children warmly embraced each other in the warming sunset near the Lake of Rings. Unbeknownst to them, Sonic the Hedgehog and Ruben the Water Panther were watching them with smiles on their faces.

"Would you look at that?" said Sonic "Tails and Cosmo have found love in each other."

"And at such a young age too." said Ruben "They only look like eight year olds to me."

"They are." said Sonic "It's not often people that age find their true love."

"When do you think you'll find yours Sonic?" asked Ruben mischievously with a taunting smile on his face.

"You what?" blurted Sonic "What do you mean? I hope it has nothing to do with Amy!"

"Well it wasn't hard for me to detect that Amy had a rather big obsession over you since on the way back she kept going on about how Eggman had ruined your date just as it was getting all romantic and lovely and all that gushy stuff." said Ruben "I bet you and Amy are destined to be lovers for all time."

"You wish!" sneered Sonic mockingly "I like Amy but she's not the girl for me!"

"Surrrrre she isn't." jeered Ruben sarcastically.

"I mean it! Stop teasing me!" chuckled Sonic.

"Only if you admit you love Amy Rose!" laughed Ruben.

"If you catch me, I'll tell you my true feelings!" chortled Sonic, getting up to his feet and running off "Catch me if you can!"

"I certainly will Sonic!" giggled Ruben, running after Sonic on all fours.

The two Mobians began to run rings around the perimeter of the lake while Tails and Cosmo continued to warmly embrace each other. They were hugging each other with Cosmo's head resting on Tails' furry chest and Tails rested his head on Cosmo's, enjoying the moment greatly. They had to enjoy the moment though because this loving tender moment was doomed to be their last…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 12**

**** See Story 44**

***** See Story 23**

****** See Story 21**

Awwwwww! Tails and Cosmo are sooooooooo CUTE! :) Sadly though, this moment will not last. Join me next time for the epicness that is my second milestone Story 50 as Mobius gets a major makeover... Reviews are welcome.

Time God

Story 50: *Time God*

It seemed like the blink of an eye.

The blink of an eye and the entire world just changed right before the Mobian's very eyes.

A couple of days ago Mobius was a lush planet full of life ranging from the colourful Mobian race to the far stretching forests all full of trees. Now it had been turned into a robot paradise. The entire world was silver, literally silver from the shiny metal it was now suddenly made of. Trees had been turned into energy posts to give the robots that now occupied the planet an energy boost should they run low on it, buildings had been transformed into factories, oceans and water of any kind had been reduced to nothing more then thick, gooey oil that gave the robot occupants something to run on. Sally Acorn was no longer in charge of Mobius either, Dr. Eggman's insidious, killer robot duplicate and soldier Metal Sonic was in charge now. He was king of this robot planet and he ruled the world with an iron fist (no pun intended). His appearance had somehow changed too. He had an entirely new body that was much taller then his old body and much more fearsome looking. He had five spikes instead of three, curved shoulder pads, spiked knees, longer arms and legs, a spiked belt around his waist and a long flowing black cape that clung onto his spiked belt. The world was populated by robots that look like Metal Sonic's original form, Mobians slave away day and night making more robots for Metal Sonic or becoming robots themselves and worst of all…Sonic the Hedgehog no longer existed! No one knew how that happened; it was just like he was erased from existence just like that. This change had been so sudden to many of the citizens they had no idea how this had happened. Some say it was an act of the gods and they had decided to reshape the world. Some say it was a magical spell by an evil wizard.

But only one Mobian knew what had really happened. And that was

none other then Sonic the Hedgehog's twin-tailed friend Tails the Fox. Tails had heard all about it from Metal Sonic. Heard all about what had happened and how this change to the world had happened in the first place. As of now, he's a poor homeless junky living on the robotic streets of Metal Sonic's robotical world. He was scavenging in the waste bins for a decent meal but as bad luck would have it, he found nothing to eat. Food was becoming scarce on this planet due to the fact robots didn't need food and Tails was perishing with hunger right now. If he didn't find anything he would waste away and it seemed like he would do just that in a day or two. Tails looked dreadful too. He had dirt all over his untidy fur, his shoes were scuffed, his gloves were ragged and torn and his eyes looked like they were about to melt out of their sockets. Plus his throat felt dryer then a sunny day in Downunda. Not only did poor Tails look terrible, he felt terrible too. He felt incredibly weak and just standing up was a big challenge for him. His weak and feeble legs gave way and he collapsed beside the waste bin, groaning hoarsely.

"This is the most horrible thing that's ever happened to me." he croaked as he crawled down an alley way that was littered with stained and rusty walls and tiny pieces of robot on the floor "My life was making a turn for the better after meeting Sonic the Hedgehog. Then all of the sudden, a bright flash changes everything and I become a starving merchant on the streets."

Tails was so weak from hunger he felt exhausted just crawling into this alley way and propping himself in a sitting position against the wall. He sighed ever so hoarsely. His sigh sounded more like a raspy choke then a sigh due to how hoarse it was.

"Oh Sonic, I wish you didn't get erased from existence by Dr. Eggman." said Tails, his eyes filling with tears "That way, me and you could save the world from this horrible present timeline."

The warm tears came trickling down his face like raindrops on a window. Tails had spent most of his days crying his eyes out ever since this sudden change had happened mostly because Sonic had been erased from existence and Tails was never going to see him again. It wasn't just Sonic he cried over, he cried over the fact that Cosmo the Seedrian, his secret love interest and whom he had just recently dated had disappeared without a trace and was presumed

to have been killed by Metal Sonic or erased from existence and he would never see her again. And he cried over the fact that this new timeline was going to be the past, present and future of Mobius for all eternity.

"How did Eggman ever build a machine capable of doing this?" sobbed Tails "No one should have that kind of power, it's physically impossible to have the ability to manipulate and literally reshape the universe to how you see fit. Just how did he do it?"

"Oy mate, musing to yerself and moaning isn't going to get you anywhere." said a low voice from nowhere.

Tails wrapped his arms around his legs and huddled up against the wall, shaking like a jelly wobbling about on a plate.

"Who-who-who's there?" asked Tails "Please come out and show yourself. I don't like creepy people who hide in the shadows and try to make it look like their voice is everywhere."

Then suddenly, something came out of the shadows at the back of the alley. It was a robed figure. The figure wore a long, draping hooded robe that completely concealed his identity. Tails had no idea who this guy was but he tried not to look frightened. The figure walked up to Tails and sat down against the wall beside him.

"You looked starved mate." said the figure, pulling out a small box from his huge pocket and opening it "Have summet to eat and then we'll talk."

He showed Tails the box. The box had a small supply of food and the food in the box was fresh and fit to eat. The food was a couple of baguette pieces, a carton of yoghurt and a few carrots, presumably scavenged from whatever food supplies Mobius had left. There was also a flask of plain old river water, scavenged from whatever water Mobius had left. Tails grabbed both baguette pieces and hungrily devoured them in an instant, much to the amusement of the figure. Then Tails picked one carrot and ate that up as well. Then he had one thing he desperately needed, a good long drink of water. His throat felt relieved and alive again after getting the smooth, tingling, soothing trickle of water seeping down it. After Tails had finished

drinking, he put the flask back in the box and the figure put the box away.

"Can you believe how rare food is in this new world?" said the figure "It's almost impossible to find food these days. I just got a lucky ration in the market up street."

"Tell me about it." sighed Tails miserably "I can't believe how this world has changed from perfect to hell in a matter of seconds."

"I just can't stop wondering how the bloomin' heck it happened?" said the figure, scratching his still concealed head "I mean it's almost like magic or something. All this couldn't have just happened suddenly, there has to be a reason for it!"

"It wasn't magic sir." said Tails "It was machinery. Eggman had built a machine, capable of reshaping worlds and he's literally made this by using the machine."

"Really?" said the figure with interest "Tell me about it little guy and maybe we'll find a way to set things back to normal."

Tails looked at the figure groggily for a moment before breathing out heavily and leaning back against the wall. He stared up at the dark, polluted skies above Mobius. The figure leaned back against the wall with him and waited for Tails to start telling the story.

"OK sir, I'll tell you exactly what happened." said Tails quietly "It all started a couple of days ago when I was playing with my new friend Ruben the Water Panther…"

Mobius: A couple of days ago

It was a bright sunny day on Mobius and Tails was making the most of the glorious weather. He and his new friend Ruben the Water Panther were playing a game of aero-ball. Aero-ball is a unique mix of basketball and trampoline sports. Aero-ball consisted of bouncing on two trampolines surrounded by nets and the players had to bounce as high as they could and throw the ball into the net on the other side of the enclosure. Aero-ball was a great game enjoyed by

many Mobians and Tails and Ruben were no exception. They bounced as high as they could and took turns in shooting at the net and defending the net. Tails bounced as high as he could and threw the ball at Ruben's net on the other side of the enclosure. Ruben bounced up and caught it with his hands and landed down on the trampoline. Then Ruben bounced up into the air and threw the basketball, which was a soft ball and not a hard ball like a real basketball is, into Tails' net and scored a goal.

"Another score for Ruben!" cheered Ruben.

"Right, our scores are tied at the moment but it's not over until it's over Ruben!" cried Tails, bouncing up and down and aiming for Ruben's net.

Tails threw the ball straight into Ruben's net and scored a goal. Ruben caught the ball, started bouncing and aimed for Tails' net. He shot the ball at Tails' net and scored another goal, bringing the score to a tie again. Cosmo the Seedrian had been watching the game and she couldn't stop thinking to herself how much fun it looked and how she'd like to have a go when Tails and Ruben had finished. She spent the whole time wondering who was possibly going to win the game since it looked very close right now. Tails bounced up and threw the ball at Ruben's net but he missed and hit the surrounding net instead. Ruben caught the ball and he threw it at Tails' net but he threw it too hard and too high and it whizzed straight over the enclosure and out onto the grass! Cosmo immediately got to her feet and ran after it.

"Whoopsie." said Ruben "I don't know my own strength sometimes."

Tails stopped bouncing and he dropped onto his bottom. He unzipped the entrance into the aero-ball enclosure and climbed out.

"Let's call it a day shall we Ruben?" he puffed, all worn out and almost out of breath "We could do with a rest, with been playing this for a whole hour."

"I agree." said Ruben, climbing out of the enclosure.

He pointed a finger inside his mouth and squirted some water into it

to quench his thirst. Tails giggled slightly.

"When you have water powers, you never need a water bottle." he said.

"You're absolutely right." said Ruben "If you want, I'll give you a drink Tails. Just open your mouth."

Tails obeyed and opened his mouth. Ruben pointed at Tails' mouth and squirted a thin trickle of water straight into Tails' mouth. Tails gulped and gulped as Ruben squirted water into his mouth. The water Ruben squirted was just as refreshing and soothing as plain old tap water. Tails closed his mouth and sighed with relief.

"Thanks Ruben." said Tails "That was refreshing."

All of the sudden, Cosmo returned with the basketball in her hands.

"I've got the basketball boys." said Cosmo.

"Thanks Cosmo but we've finished our game." said Ruben "Scores are tied 20-20."

"So it was a tie." said Cosmo "Very nice. Aero-ball looks like a lot of fun. Do you think you could teach me how to play Tails?"

"Sure." said Tails "Next time we play, you can join us if you like."

Then suddenly, a blue blur whizzed past them, sending a gush of wind rushing past them. The blur screeched to a halt and ran back to Tails, Cosmo and Ruben. The blur screeched to a halt just in front of them. It was none other then the hero of Mobius and fastest thing alive, Sonic the Hedgehog.

"Hi Tails, Hi Cosmo, Hi Ruben." said Sonic "How's aero-ball?"

"Lots of fun thank you." said Ruben "I wish we played sports like that back in Chun-Nan."

"Who won?" asked Sonic.

"It was a tie." said Tails "Me and Ruben are very good at this game."

"Is that so?" sneered Sonic "Well next time we play aero-ball, I'll join in and we'll see who's the master aero-ball player."

"I look forward to it." chuckled Ruben "I bet with speed like yours, you'll be a demon at aero-ball."

"So what brings you here Sonic?" asked Cosmo.

"Just wondering how you were doing that's all." said Sonic.

Then suddenly, a chameleon appeared from nowhere and tapped Sonic on the shoulder, making him jump. It was only Espio the Chameleon of the Chaotix Detective Agency and he'd been invisible this whole time. Now Sonic had arrived, he showed himself to everybody.

"Geez Espio! I wish you wouldn't creep up on me like that! You scare the quills off of me!" shrieked Sonic.

"A thousand apologies Sonic." said Espio, bowing "I have grave news for you all."

"Oh no, what's that then?" asked Cosmo nervously. She hated bad news and she wasn't looking forward to hearing this.

"I've been spying on Dr. Eggman while invisible and I've found out what his next nefarious scheme is." said Espio "He's building a new machine that could spell doom on us all. I couldn't quite catch what it does but I know just by looking at the machine it looks dangerous and we must destroy it before Eggman uses it."

"New machine that could spell doom on us all?" questioned Sonic "That sounds extreme. I wonder if it's a king-sized roboticizer and he's going to roboticize the entire planet with it."

"Is that even remotely possible?" exclaimed Tails.

"Possibly." said Espio "We have to act now before Dr. Eggman uses the machine."

"A mission this big is gonna require some heavy muscle." said Sonic "Tails, Ruben and Espio, you're coming with me and I'll also bring

Wilson and Bunnie, they'll be very useful."

"I guess I'll just stay here then." said Cosmo "Since I'll be of no use to you on this mission."

"You can go over to Amy's and see what she and Cream are doing." said Sonic "I'm sure they'll be happy to have you over."

"OK." said Cosmo, running off.

Sonic had shown here where Knothole was so she knew the way to the village. The moment Cosmo left, Sonic ran off at his trademark speed.

"I'm getting Wilson and Bunnie, wait there for me!" he called out to Tails, Ruben and Espio as he ran off.

Sonic disappeared into the distance.

"Do you think this mission will be an easy one?" asked Ruben "I bet there's a lot of robots on the loose and Eggman will try his hardest to protect that machine from us."

"Don't worry Ruben, we always come out on top in the end so we'll destroy Eggman's machine and save the day again." said Tails confidently.

Secretly though, Tails was just as worried as Ruben. What was this machine Eggman had built and would it be as dangerous as Espio thinks it is? The only thing Tails knew is they had to destroy the machine quick before Eggman could use it…

"Come on you Robian slaves! You can work faster then that!" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

Dr. Eggman had been a very busy bee recently. After getting a bunch of Mobian slaves from his cruel and greedy agents Mr. Florenzi* and Marcus & Celia Punch** and turning them all into robots, he had been using them to build his latest and by far greatest invention ever. It was a machine shaped like a giant egg

only it was silver in colour and very mechanical looking. It had Dr. Eggman's face on (meaning it had eyes, a nose, a moustache and a mouth) and a giant black bar was above its eyes. There was a control panel at the bottom of the machine and the machine was as tall as a three story building. Dr. Eggman was lucky he had enough room for the machine. He had the Robians build the entire thing in the underground cellar since it was roomy enough for the huge machine. As the Robians worked harder and harder and faster and faster on the machine, Dr. Eggman began grinning like an overlord. is assistants Alonzo and Metal Sonic stood beside him, watching the construction of the giant machine.

"Isn't it a beauty Alonzo?" asked Dr. Eggman "The greatest machine ever devised by man is being constructed before your very eyes!"

"It definitely looks impressive master." said Alonzo "But what exactly does Egg-Timer do?"

"Haven't I explained it already?" snapped Dr. Eggman in an annoyed tone.

"I believe you have actually but I've forgotten." said Alonzo "Care to remind me?"

Dr. Eggman sighed and explained the purpose of his incredible machine again.

"Egg-Timer is a machine that, if it works, will give me the power to reshape worlds." explained Dr. Eggman "All I have to do is put in the control panel what I want Mobius to look like and this machine will remake the world into my image! Mobius will be mine at long last! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"So you're telling me you can literally reshape Mobius and manipulate it's timeline?" squeaked Alonzo "That's phenomenal power behind that machine! You're a god with that invention!"

"I know I am." said Dr. Eggman proudly "That's why it's such a brilliant invention and only someone as intelligent as me could ever invent it! If Egg-Timer works here then maybe I'll go back to Earth and use Egg-Timer on Earth and show those stupid world leaders

why they shouldn't have shut my lab down and exiled me!"

"Oh yes sir, they'll pay most beautifully." said Alonzo with an evil smile.

As Dr. Eggman and Alonzo talked to each other, Metal Sonic watched the construction of Egg-Timer. He observed the entire machine and began to wonder if it would work. He was also developing an evil plan of his own in his evil, metallic mind…

No sooner had Sonic recruited Wilson the Dog and Bunnie Rabbot, the group had all set off to Robotropolis to stop Dr. Eggman's new machine that according to Espio could spell doom on everybody. Sonic hadn't had time to explain to Bunnie and Wilson what the occasion was so they just went along with it and Sonic said he would explain it to them when they arrived at Robotropolis. A short while later, Sonic, Tails, Ruben, Espio, Bunnie and Wilson arrived at Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman's robotic city and base of sanctuary when he wasn't attacking Mobius or trying to destroy Sonic and friends. They took shelter behind a rock to make up a plan so they wouldn't be on a wild goose chase in the city.

"So what's the occasion sugah-hog?" asked Bunnie.

"Espio's been spying on Dr. Eggman and he's found out something mondo big in there." explained Sonic "He says Egg-butt's building a machine that could spell doom on us all and we're here to destroy it before Eggman can use it."

"That does sound big." said Wilson "And terrifying. What exactly can the machine do?"

"I'm not fully sure but I know its terrible." said Espio "And I don't think we should stick around to find out what it does so we must act before Eggman can use it."

"Where's Vector and Charmy?" asked Wilson "Did they not want to come?"

"They're investigating something else at the minute." said Espio

"They don't mind me not being with them right now so they'll be alright."

"So Sonic, what's the plan?" asked Tails.

"I say we go in teams and split up." said Sonic "Tails and Bunnie, you're with me. Ruben and Wilson, you're with Espio. I'll keep whatever defence Eggman has busy while Espio, Ruben and Wilson destroy Eggman's machine since Espio knows where it is."

"Roger." said Espio "I shall not fail my task Sonic."

"OK." said Sonic "Let's do it to it everybody! For Mobius!"

"For Mobius!" everybody cheered.

The Mobians leaped out of their hiding place and ran up to the gates of Robotropolis. Sonic remembered how tough those gates were but he didn't have to worry about being unable to break through the gates since he had someone easily strong enough to break through them.

"Bunnie, if you please." said Sonic.

"It'll be mah pleasure Sonic." said Bunnie flexing her robot arm.

She punched the gates as hard as she could and the gates were forced open by the incredible punch. Ruben was absolutely speechless.

"You're incredible!" he gibbered.

"Thank you sugah." said Bunnie brightly.

Now the gates were open, the Mobians charged into the city with all haste. All of Eggman's robots that were on patrol were alerted to the presence of Sonic and friends and they immediately began firing at them with their guns. Sonic dodged all their blasts and he spin-dashed into some of the robots and destroyed them all in an instant. Ruben squirted a bunch of robots with a jet of water and caused them all to malfunction since water and electricity don't mix. Bunnie blasted some robots with her arm cannon, Espio destroyed some

robots with his deadly shuriken, Wilson disembowelled the robots with his deadly spinning blade weapon and Tails gave some robots a good hard kick or punch while flying into them, knocking them over and leaving them vulnerable to an attack from someone else.

But as usual, their attacks did not go unnoticed. Underground, an alarm began to blare around the room and the Robians stopped building and began to wonder what was going on.

"Don't stop building you idiots!" roared Dr. Eggman "Get back to work! I'll see what the problem is!"

The Robians obeyed and continued building Egg-Timer. Dr. Eggman ran over to a computer monitor to see what the problem was. He was not pleased to see Sonic and friends were in his city trashing his robots and making a scrap pile out of them.

"For the love of Robotropolis!" he cursed "Why does Sonic have to invade my city and ruin everything just as my ultimate victory is near!"

"One thing I wonder is why they're here!" cried Alonzo "Do you think they're here to destroy Egg-Timer?"

"No." said Dr. Eggman "They know nothing about Egg-Timer so they can't be here to destroy it. I think they're here just to make a mess out of my city again."

"If they get anywhere near Egg-Timer, should we send Metal Sonic to destroy them before they can attack it?" asked Alonzo

"Yes we should Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman "But we won't have to worry on that since Sonic and his band of playmates will never find us down here!"

Back on the surface, Sonic and friends had effortlessly ploughed their way through Dr. Eggman's pathetic defences and with one mighty punch to the door from Bunnie Rabbot, broke into Dr. Eggman's headquarters. Sonic kept his senses alert, expecting something perilous or a giant machine to be somewhere about waiting to pounce on them. But to his surprise, the base appeared to

be completely deserted. There wasn't a single robot in sight and there was no Dr. Eggman around. Something was up and Sonic didn't like it. Was Dr. Eggman plotting to ambush them in secret or was he really so worked up on his death machine he hadn't noticed Sonic had arrived? Sonic had no idea but since the coast was clear, they could get to it and find the machine.

"OK everybody, you remember the plan?" asked Sonic.

"We sure do sugah-hog." said Bunnie.

"Cool." said Sonic "Tails, any ideas where Eggman maybe?"

"Either he's up on the top floor as usual, a different floor all together or he's underground." suggested Tails "We know he's not here that's for sure."

"Espio, where's Eggman's machine?" asked Sonic.

"Underground." said Espio "The machine was too big to build up here."

"Then that's where Dr. Eggman will be then." said Sonic "Me, Bunnie and Tails will stay up here and keep any of Eggman's robots away from Eggman's underground base. You, Ruben and Wilson make chilli-sauce out of that machine."

"Roger." said Espio, immediately running off "Come on you two!"

Ruben and Wilson immediately followed the chameleon as he ran down the corridor to find Eggman's machine. The moment the three Mobians disappeared down the corridor, Sonic, Tails and Bunnie stood guard and kept their senses alert for any sign of danger.

"One thing I wanna know is why this place is emptier then a desert?" said Sonic "If that machine of Eggman's is so important to him then why is he not trying to stop us from destroying it?"

"On the contrary Sonic, I AM trying to stop you from destroying my city!" boomed Dr. Eggman's terrible voice from an intercom in the corner of the room, causing everybody's ears to prick up and look up at the ceiling for the source of the voice "Can't you be content with

just ruining my brilliant schemes Sonic? It seems not because you're here to make a scrap pile out of my city!"

"We're not here to destroy the city Egg-face!" retorted Sonic "We're here to destroy your death machine that can spell doom for us all!"

"What death machine?" Dr. Eggman's voice boomed innocently "I hardly know what you're talking about Sonic."

"Don't talk stupid with us Eggman!" snapped Tails "A little bird told us you're building a machine that can spell doom for Mobius and we're here to destroy it!"

"Oh are you?" sneered Dr. Eggman "In that case, try and get past my brilliant Mechas and we'll see about that!"

"Mechas?" blurted Bunnie "What do ya'll mean?"

Dr. Eggman said nothing. Instead, a hatch at the end of the room opened up and four ferocious looking robots stomped out of the storage room and into the bay where Sonic, Bunnie and Tails stared at them in disbelief. The robots were six feet tall with red piercing eyes and they looked remarkably similar to Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Amy. The robot that looked like Sonic looked exactly the same as Mecha Sonic only larger, the Tails robot looked like a roboticized Tails and instead of tails, he had a giant rotor blade on his bottom, the Knuckles robot looked like a roboticized Knuckles with deadly looking spiked fists that appeared to have enough power behind them to bring a skyscraper down in one punch and the Amy robot looked like a roboticized Amy with a spiked hammer that made it look more like a pickaxe then a hammer. Sonic, Tails and Bunnie couldn't believe their eyes. Those were some hardcore and dangerous looking robots Eggman had built!

"Behold Sonic, Mecha Sonic Mk II, Mecha Tails, Mecha Knuckles and Mecha Amy!" announced Dr. Eggman over the intercom "Four brilliant robots I managed to build after Metal Sonic was kind enough to lend me his data on Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Amy. These robots are as powerful as Metal Sonic and they'll be your doom Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"Oh yeah? We'll see how well your overgrown toys do against us!" yelled Sonic confidently.

"Have you lost your mind?" shrieked Tails "We can't fight these things! They're huge and they're just as strong as Metal Sonic! We can't take on Metal Sonic so what chance do we have against these guys!"

"I have this horrible habit of being overly stubborn and cocky." said Sonic "And that makes me wanna mash these guys to pieces. We'll take these guys!"

Mecha Sonic did a spin-dash that made him look like a giant saw blade, and almost hit Sonic, Tails and Bunnie. The three Mobians dodged the blow but felt the wind rush past them as the huge robot whizzed past them. Sonic knew he did not want to get hit by a spin-dash as big as that. Mecha Sonic skidded to a halt and he charged at Sonic again in a spin-dash. Sonic leaped out of the way and Mecha Sonic crashed straight into the wall. Needless to say, Mecha Sonic had caused quite a considerable amount of damage to the wall. Mecha Tails joined in the battle and he took flight with his propeller blade. Sonic spin-dashed into Mecha Sonic before Mecha Sonic could pull himself free from the wall but Mecha Tails grabbed the hedgehog before he could spin-dash the Mecha-hedgehog again and threw him into the floor like a rugby ball. Bunnie punched Mecha Tails in the back of the head with her robot arm and sent the Mecha-fox into the floor face first. Bunnie didn't have time to defend herself from Mecha Knuckles who sneaked up behind her and punched her as hard as he could. Bunnie was sent crashing into the floor and skidding painfully on her shoulder. Tails flew around Mecha Knuckles to keep the Mecha-echidna distracted before he could attack again. Unfortunately, Tails didn't manage to stay airborne for long. Mecha Amy leaped up and walloped Tails with her pickaxe like hammer. Luckily for Tails, Mecha Amy didn't hit Tails with the sharp points of her hammer but she did hit him pretty hard and Tails felt really dizzy and dopey after that hit. Mecha Amy stomped over to Tails and tried to hammer him into the floor with her spiked hammer but Sonic spin-dashed her in the back, causing her to drop the hammer.

"I already have a little pink girl bothering me, I don't need a big pink

girl bothering me!" chuckled Sonic as Mecha Amy fell onto her front.

Sonic then suddenly got walloped by Mecha Knuckles' missile fists. Mecha Knuckles could fire his fists like missiles and once they hit their target, they returned to Mecha Knuckles. Bunnie flew behind Mecha Knuckles and punched the Mecha-echidna in the back of the head. Mecha Knuckles staggered and Bunnie punched him again, causing Mecha Knuckles to fall onto his side. Mecha Tails suddenly got the drop on Bunnie with a flying kick from behind. Sonic spin-dashed Mecha Tails and sent him crashing down into the floor. Sonic rushed over to the downed Tails and knelt by his side.

"I think you were right to say "Had I lost my mind?"." said Sonic "These guys are hectic!"

"What are we gonna do?" asked Tails "We can't get past these guys without defeating them first."

"I'm sure I'll think of something." said Sonic "Until then, we'll have to keep fighting."

Sonic and Tails suddenly leapt to their feet and jumped out of the way just as Mecha Sonic spin-dashed towards them and crashed into the wall. Sonic spin-dashed towards Mecha Sonic but Mecha Sonic caught him in his hands and slammed him against the wall. Sonic was now trapped between the wall and Mecha Sonic's claws. Bunnie extended her arm and wrapped it around Mecha Sonic's neck and yanked him away from Sonic. Mecha Amy ran up to hammer Bunnie's puny body to bits but Bunnie threw Mecha Sonic into Mecha Amy and knocked the hammer swinging Amy-bot onto her back. The two were sent sprawling across the floor in a heap. Mecha Tails and Mecha Knuckles ran towards Sonic and Tails and Sonic spin-dashed Mecha Tails in the stomach. Tails flew around Mecha Knuckles and he kicked him in the optics. Mecha Knuckles punched Tails away and Mecha Tails slammed Sonic into the floor. Sonic got back to his feet and leaped up at Mecha Tails and kicked him in the face. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and she shot Mecha Amy before she could hammer her again but she wasn't quick enough to dodge a punch from Metal Sonic. Tails flew into Mecha Sonic's face, pulled a rude face and tricked Mecha Sonic into trying to spin-dash him. He flew towards Mecha Knuckles and flew

out of the way just as Mecha Sonic spin-dashed at him, causing Mecha Sonic to accidentally spin-dash Mecha Knuckles and knock him over. Mecha Tails tried to get Tails but Bunnie blasted him away and flew at him to attack the Mecha-fox again. Sonic spin-dashed Mecha Amy in the head and tussled with Mecha Sonic some more. As the fight raged on, Sonic began to wonder if Espio team was having an easier time then he was…

Down the corridors, Espio, Wilson and Ruben were creeping as quietly as mice to where Espio was leading them. Espio had worked out they were close to Eggman's underground lab so he told them to keep quiet and remain vigilant. There was bound to be hectic security since Eggman's underground lab was likely to be of great importance, especially since Eggman's doom machine was in it. So far, they hadn't encountered anything but that made Espio even wearier since he had a horrible feeling there would be an ambush any minute.

"Hey Espio, how close are we to this underground lab?" asked Ruben.

"Very." answered Espio "Which is the reason we have to be extremely cautious at this point. Security is bound to be tight around here."

"You're very cautious aren't you?" asked Ruben.

"Yes I am." said Espio "My master once taught me cautiousness is very important when sneaking around. That's why we chameleons are such successful ninjas."

"I must say, that's good advice." said Ruben "I think I'll take that."

While Espio and Ruben talked, they walked by a brightly lit room that caught Wilson's attention. Something made him want to look in the room so he went into the room. Ruben heard Wilson going into the room and he tapped Espio's shoulder.

"Hey Espio, Wilson's gone into a room." said Ruben.

Espio turned around and ran to the room Wilson went in.

"Wilson, we don't have time to look around." hissed Espio "We've got a machine to destroy."

Wilson ignored him. Something in the room had caught the dog's attention and he appeared to be in complete shock. The room was very brightly lit, so bright the entire room appeared to be yellow in colour and it was full of tools and robot exoskeletons as if Dr. Eggman was building androids. It had a capsule containing something inside and Wilson was completely focused on only that. He could only faintly see what was inside the capsule and he wanted to see what it was to see if it was what he thought it was. Wilson pressed a button on the control pad at the side of the capsule and the capsule opened. This just brought another shock to the dog's face. The thing in the capsule wasn't a thing, it was a Mobian and that Mobian was none other then Wilson's girlfriend and fellow Royal Fighter Mandy Mouse! She was in suspended animation with her eyes closed as if she was in a deep sleep and she had a weird looking helmet on her head. Wilson was so shocked he almost broke down crying with joy.

"Mandy?" he gasped "She's alive! But I thought Dr. Eggman said he'd killed her***!"

"He was obviously lying." said Espio "I'm guessing he lied to us so we wouldn't bother looking for her and therefore, he can still use her to make more Automatons of her."

"Who is she?" asked Ruben.

"Mandy is my girlfriend." said Wilson "We were best friends growing up and now we're a couple. She's a Royal Fighter like me and she's as tough as nails and brave as a lion. Dr. Eggman kidnapped her behind our backs and replaced her with an Automaton which ended up getting him a Chaos Emerald and he fibbed to us saying he'd killed her. Now I'm here, I can get her out of this and bring Mandy back into the battle."

"Careful Wilson!" cried Espio, fearing something bad would happen.

Wilson didn't hear him and he grabbed the helmet on Mandy's head and yanked it off. The moment the helmet was removed, Mandy jolted awake and sat up, panting and gasping as if she'd just woken up from a nightmare. She appeared to be just fine, removing the helmet hadn't done anything harmful to her at all much to Wilson's relief.

"Oh my gosh! Gasp! What happened? Where am I?" gasped Mandy, breathing heavily "This pant! isn't Royal HQ!"

"Sadly it isn't." said Wilson "This is Dr. Eggman's base."

Mandy turned to her left and saw Wilson standing there with a happy face on. Mandy's face immediately brightened and she threw her arms around him happily.

"Wilson!" she cried "You're here! Oh I'm so happy to see you! But what are you doing here and how did I get here?"

Wilson and Mandy broke up the hug.

"It's a long story on why you're here." said Wilson "And we're here because Espio told us Eggman's building a machine that can spell doom on us all so we're going to destroy it."

"Well it's a good thing you got me out of this thing." said Mandy, notifying the capsule she'd been lying in for days "Now I can join in with this operation and get Eggman for trapping me in that thing."

But before anyone could go anywhere, the sound of marching feet was heard from further down the corridor.

"What's that?" asked Ruben, almost jumping a foot in the air.

"Eggman robots!" cried Mandy "We'd best run for it before they catch us in here!"

Unfortunately, they were too late. The robots marching towards the room arrived and stormed in to catch the intruders. These were not just robots though, they were Automatons. Prototype Automatons. The robot exoskeleton had been built and it was fully functional but the Automatons didn't have their Mobian guise on yet so they still

looked like robots. After the success of Auto-Mandy, Eggman had been hoping to build more Automatons to use on Sonic and friends but he hadn't really had the time and resources to continue working on them so they had been pretty much forgotten for a while and all they were being used for were waiting and guarding purposes. The Automatons did not look pleased to see intruders in the room and they began shooting at them with their laser eyes. Everybody ducked for cover and Mandy leapt out of the capsule and threw a couple of bombs at the Automatons. Two Automatons were destroyed in an instant by the bombs. One Automaton tried to shoot Mandy but the mouse, despite having been out of action for a while, was still as fast and agile as ever and she dodged the attacks. An Automaton kicked Mandy in the leg but Espio gave it a ninja-kick to the head and knocked it clean off, killing the Automaton. Another Automaton tried to shoot Espio but Wilson stepped in with a kick to the face on the attacking Automaton. Then he drew out his spinning blade weapon, deployed only one of its two blades and impaled the Automaton in the chest, killing it in an instant.

"That'll teach you to impersonate Mandy!" he yelled.

"Impersonate me?" asked Mandy "What do you mean?"

"Do you have any memory of getting kidnapped by Dr. Eggman?" asked Wilson.

"Well during the fight with Metal Sonic**** after he sent me skidding into the ground, I got nabbed by a Tranz-Mat robot." said Mandy as she jogged her memory "It teleported me here and Eggman put some weird helmet on me and then…nothing, I don't remember anything else."

"Well while you've been in that capsule, Eggman replaced you with an Automaton." said Wilson "It was an amazing likeliness, it fooled us all and it stole a Chaos Emerald off of us (I'll explain what a Chaos Emerald is later). And to pour salt on the wound Eggman lied to us saying you were dead."

"Well that wasn't nice of him at all, lying about my well-being like that." said Mandy coldly, she gritted her teeth and her eyes narrowed to an evil expression "I seriously want to punch him in the

face for that!"

"That'll have to wait Mandy, there's more Automatons coming!" cried Espio, throwing a shuriken at one that just appeared into the room.

The shuriken struck the Automaton in the chest and the incomplete robo-impersonator was dead. Three more Automatons charged into the room and they began firing at Espio. Ruben charged in and squirted them all with a jet of water. The Automatons short circuited and exploded. They collapsed lifelessly on the ground, their remains smoking. Mandy was impressed with that.

"Wow, you're good kid." said Mandy "Water powers are great when fighting against robots. What's your name?"

"I'm Ruben the Water Panther." said Ruben "I come from a clan in Chun-Nan and I'm a newly joined Royal Fighter. It's a pleasure to meet a fighter of your stature miss."

"Oh, so polite for a little boy." said Mandy "I think I'm going to like you a lot Ruben. Espio, are there anymore Automatons?" asked Mandy.

Espio stuck his head out of the door and looked left and right. The corridors were empty and there was nothing around. The coast was clear.

"The corridors are empty." said Espio "I don't think we have anymore Automatons to worry about."

"In that case, let's destroy Eggman's machine." said Wilson "And now we've woken Mandy up, she can join us."

"Just out of curiosity, is Sonic here?" asked Mandy.

"Sonic is here with Tails and Bunnie. They're in the main hall watching our backs." said Espio "We won't have to worry about any robot on the upper floors getting to us, Sonic, Tails and Bunnie will keep them at bay."

"I wonder how blue boy's doing now?" wondered Mandy, tiptoeing out of the room with Espio, Wilson and Ruben and heading down

the corridor "I hope he's not in peril or anything."

Sadly, Sonic was in peril and things were about to get even worse from here…

Back in the underground lab, Dr. Eggman was watching the fight between Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and his four Mechas. Things seemed rather even sided for the fighters. At one point, Sonic, Tails and Bunnie appeared to be gaining an edge on them but then the Mechas would strike back good and hard and things would be back to square one. Dr. Eggman was enjoying this fight very much and he cheered whenever his insidious Mecha gang was getting on top in the fight. Mecha Amy whacked Bunnie and Tails both at once with her hammer and sent them hurtling into the wall.

"Ha, Ha! Good one Mecha Amy! Hammer them as hard as you wish!" yelled Dr. Eggman.

"Master?" asked Alonzo.

"Not now, I'm busy!" yelled Dr. Eggman "Good hit Mecha Tails! Spin-dash them again Mecha Sonic!" he yelled at the computer monitor he stood at.

"It's important sir!" Alonzo piped "Egg-Timer is finished and ready for activation!"

Dr. Eggman stopped leaping up and down and cheering like a fan crazed child at a baseball game.

"Oh is it?" said Dr. Eggman "Thanks for that Alonzo, I don't have to worry about my Mechas losing against Sonic and friends now. I'll just wipe them from existence with Egg-Timer and create a world where I rule over Mobius and everything is a robot!"

Dr. Eggman ran over to his completed Egg-Timer. The machine stood proudly before him awaiting activation. Dr. Eggman pressed the "on" button and Egg-Timer whirred into life. It's "eyes" opened and it's "mouth" gritted it's "teeth". The "eyes" glowed a bright florescent orange and it's "teeth" were as white as snow. Dr.

Eggman rubbed his hands eagerly.

"Now all I have to do is punch in what I want the world to be remade as and Egg-Timer will change everything." said Dr. Eggman "Mobius' entire history will be different, its appearance will be different and its people will be different! Ho, ho, ho! I can just picture it now!"

Then suddenly, before Dr. Eggman could press a single button, Metal Sonic appeared from nowhere and grabbed Dr. Eggman by his uniform. He hoisted Dr. Eggman up off the ground and held him away from Egg-Timer. Dr. Eggman began to flail his arms and legs around madly as Metal Sonic held him at arm's length off the ground. Alonzo tried to step into help but Metal Sonic turned around and glared at him as if to say "You know what's coming if you dare attack me!". Alonzo stopped dead in his tracks and trundled backwards away from Metal Sonic. Dr. Eggman began feebly pounding on Metal Sonic's head but the killer Sonic duplicate didn't seem to notice his pounds on him.

"Put me down you insolent robot!" he yelled "What is the meaning of this?"

Metal Sonic just threw Dr. Eggman as hard as he could and the fat scientist landed slap-bang into the wall.

"You master, are an incompetent imbecile." droned Metal Sonic, his deep ominous voice echoed hauntingly around the room "Every scheme you attempt fails miserably and my loathsome copy comes out on top at the end of our conflicts. So I've decided I will have the privilege of taking over this operation."

"You're taking over Operation: Reshape?" blurted Dr. Eggman "Why?"

"Because of your incompetence and idiocy, you do not deserve to rule Mobius." droned Metal Sonic flatly "I deserve to rule Mobius due to my superior strength and power so I am taking over this operation and making Mobius MY own. You will be my pet, I will have a much more competent sidekick then your idiot butler bot…"

"Hoi!" yelled Alonzo furiously.

"…Mobius will be populated by clones of myself, I will have a new body to state my authority over everybody, Mobians will be my slaves and Sonic will not exist. Mobius will be my paradise and I shall rule over it through fear and force."

He clenched his fists and laughed a deep, droning laugh that made Eggman's spine shiver.

"I like the idea of Sonic no longer existing but I don't want to spend the rest of my life grovelling at your feet Metal Sonic!" yelled Dr. Eggman "You are MY creation and you worship ME!"

"Negative." said Metal Sonic "You are MY servant and you will worship ME. I am in charge of Operation: Reshape and that is all there is to it."

"No it isn't!" yelled Dr. Eggman "Get that traitor Robians!" he bellowed.

The gang of Robians prepared to pounce on Metal Sonic, who appeared to be oblivious to the whole gang right now.

"Stand down Robian drones." ordered Metal Sonic.

The Robians stopped what they were doing and stood down.

"Don't obey him you morons!" yelled Dr. Eggman "He's betrayed us! GET HIIIIIIMMMMMMMMM!"

The Robians resumed their original priority and they advanced on Metal Sonic.

"I am in charge of Operation: Reshape and you obey my commands." droned Metal Sonic "Stand down!"

The Robians did what they were told again and they stood down.

"All Robians obey me now, repeat: all Robians will obey me now." droned Metal Sonic to the group of Robians "This order cannot be countermanded."

That meant no one would be able to restate their leadership of the Robians, the Robians were completely bound to Metal Sonic's whim now and there was no way Dr. Eggman could ever get them back.

"Restrain the former master." ordered Metal Sonic.

The Robians obeyed and they all ran over to Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman tried to run away but the Robians all pounced on him at once and they pinned him down to the ground. They held down his arms and his legs and they pinned his body in place. Dr. Eggman was completely immobilized. Metal Sonic was free to do what he wished now. He walked over to Egg-Timer, tapping his claws excitedly.

"Alonzo, stop that treacherous junk pile!" yelled Dr. Eggman.

"No way! I'm not going near that guy!" shrieked Alonzo "He'll blow me to pieces!"

Metal Sonic then turned around and blasted Alonzo with his torso laser. Alonzo was reduced to tiny little pieces and he was completely destroyed. Dr. Eggman gasped in surprise. Alonzo was dead.

"Why did you do that to my poor servant bot?" cried Dr. Eggman.

"He did not deserve to live." explained Metal Sonic coldly "He would be of no use to me. Now watch and marvel as my victory begins Dr. Eggman."

"Metal Sonic please reconsider!" begged Dr. Eggman "Don't do this to your master please! I'll do anything! I'll make a world where me and you are joint rulers and you can be as mean as you wish to any who oppose you!"

Metal Sonic ignored his pleading master and he began to type into Egg-Timer's keypad. He typed this into the keypad:

Name of planet: Mobius

Appearance: Completely metal with oil oceans and an endless metal city

Capital: Robotropolis Prime

Population: Fifty million Metal Sonic drones, one human (Dr. Eggman), six million Mobians (Sonic the Hedgehog isn't one of them) and one Seedrian

Ruler: Metal Sonic Neo

Appearance of ruler: Larger and stronger body with five large spikes on head, shoulder pads, spiked knees and spiked waist with flowing black cape

Status of Mobians: Slaves

Status of Dr. Eggman: Ruler's pet

Status of Metal Sonic drones: Fiercely loyal Servants and Army

After typing all of that into the keypad, Metal Sonic cackled to himself.

"Now let's see if this works." he droned.

He pressed the big red "time change" button on the keypad. The moment he did, the lower part of Egg-Timer's "mouth" slid down and its eyes began to flash orange and yellow. Then a big white beam shot out from Egg-Timer's mouth and began to expand to an enormous size, engulfing everything around it. Metal Sonic cackled a deep, metallic, droning cackle as the underground lab and himself was engulfed in the white light. Espio, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben broke through the door and charged into the lab to destroy Egg-Timer only to find the egg-shaped machine had already been activated.

"No! We're too late!" cried Espio.

"What's that white light?" whimpered Wilson.

Mandy shielded her eyes from the light as it began to expand. The light spread all around the lab and engulfed Espio, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben. The light spread up from the lab and into the base above it. All the corridors were swallowed up by the enormous white

light. Sonic, Tails and Bunnie were still fighting the four Mechas and they were beginning to get worn out. The Mechas were relentless and no matter how good their attacks were, the Mechas didn't seem to be showing much signs of fatigue. They still appeared to be in good condition as if they hadn't been fighting at all!

"I don't know about you but I think we should run for it sugah-hog!" panted Bunnie "We can't defeat these things!"

"No! We can't leave Espio, Wilson and Ruben behind!" yelled Sonic "We've got to get past these Mecha morons and…"

"Sonic! What's that light over there?" shrieked Tails, pointing at the door on the other side of the hall.

Sonic and Bunnie looked in Tails' direction and saw the white light spreading out towards them. The whole room was engulfed by the light and Sonic, Tails and Bunnie shielded their eyes from the sheer brightness of it all. The light began to expand all the way through Eggman's base, all the way through Robotropolis and all the way beyond, engulfing everything in its path.

In Mobotropolis, Queen Sally Acorn and her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx were looking out of the window of Castle Acorn and they were amazed at what they were seeing. The white light expanded towards Castle Acorn and threatened to swallow it up.

"What's that Sally?" asked Nicole worriedly.

"Something big coming from Robotropolis I guess." said Sally "What it is, I don't know but it's coming towards us!"

The white light swept over the under construction Mobotropolis and swallowed up Castle Acorn. Sally and Nicole hugged each other as they were engulfed in the light. Mobians all over the world saw the light and began panicking as they were engulfed by it. They had no idea what was going on but they knew it wasn't good. The light continued to expand until finally the entire planet of Mobius was engulfed by the enormous, white light. Mobius was now completely white. Sonic, Tails and Bunnie unshielded their eyes only to find themselves surrounded by white. The Mechas were gone at least

but that didn't matter now.

"What's going on?" asked Sonic, his voice seemed to be everywhere at once.

"Dunno Sonic." said Bunnie "But ah don't like it."

"Is this what Eggman's machine does?" exclaimed Tails worriedly "Wipe everything out?"

"Maybe." said Sonic "I don't know about you but I can't feel my legs."

Sonic looked down at his legs only to find they were dissolving into thin air! Tails and Bunnie were shocked.

"Sonic! You're dissolving into thin air!" shrieked Tails.

"No!" cried Sonic as his legs completely dissolved in to the whiteness of the light "I can't disappear! I haven't kicked Eggman out of Mobius yet!"

Sonic continued to dissolve. Desperately, Tails reached out for Sonic and Sonic reached out for Tails. Their hands almost met until Sonic's hand began to dissolve into nothing. Tails' eyes streamed with tears as Sonic continued dissolving in front of him. Sonic appeared to shed a tear as his existence was disappearing by the second. Sonic finally finished dissolving and disappeared out of existence.

"Sonic!" cried Tails, his voice everywhere at once.

The white light got bright and bright and Tails was beginning to disappear into the brightness of the light.

"SOOOOOOONNNNNNNIIIIIIIICCCCC C!..."

Mobius: Present Day

"…and that's how it happened." Tails finished sadly, his eyes filling with tears again.

"Crikey." said the hooded figure who had listened to Tails' story with great interest "Dr. Eggman made a machine capable of reshaping worlds as you see fit! That's insane! There's no way anyone can have that kind of power! Man or Machine! That Dr. Eggman really is a genius isn't he?"

"Yeah." mumbled Tails "I still wonder why is Metal Sonic ruler and why Dr. Eggman's not in charge? Did Metal Sonic take over Eggman's machine and remake the world into HIS image and not Eggman's?"

"Possibly." said the figure "Dr. Eggman wouldn't make a world where Metal Sonic's in charge and the world is populated by Metal Sonic clones. He'd make the world closer to his image if he had used that machine."

"Well whoever it was who used the machine." said Tails, on the verge of tears again "They still erased Sonic from existence. And… I'll…never…see him again!"

Tails put his head in his hands and broke down into floods of tears. This was not a rare occurrence, Tails spent most of the day crying his eyes out due to the fact Mobius was doomed to be ruled by Metal Sonic forever and Sonic no longer existed. If the figure sitting next to him wasn't wearing a hood to conceal his identity you could probably see an expression that suggested he felt sorry for poor Tails. The figure put a hand on tails shoulder.

"Listen mate, sobbing your eyes out and feeling sorry for yourself is not going to fix anything." he said "We've got to get into the Palace of Steel and see if that time-changing machine's still there and that way we can change the world back to normal."

"That's crazy talk! We can't take on Metal Sonic or his army of Metal Sonic clones!" gasped Tails.

"No such word as can't mate." said the figure "Not when you're a Royal Fighter."

The figure pulled his hood down revealing himself to be none other then fellow skunk fighter Geoffrey St. John! Tails was so surprised to

see he had been talking to a familiar face the whole time.

"Geoffrey St. John?" he blurted "Boy I'm so glad to see you! Why did you have to keep yourself hidden?"

"The robe's my way of sneaking around the metal kingdom to help the poor suffering slaves without being found out." said Geoffrey "And it works really well. Anyone who sees me doesn't know my true identity and Dr. Eggman won't be able to track me down. I've been plotting against him since yesterday but I wasn't sure on how to change Mobius back to normal but now you've told me how it happened in the first place, I have a plan."

"You do?" asked Tails excitedly.

"Definitely." said Geoffrey with a friendly smile "Me and you will sneak into the Palace of Steel, the likely hiding place of Dr. Eggman and Metal Sonic and we'll use that time changing machine to turn Mobius back to the way it was two days ago."

"How are we gonna get in though?" asked Tails "The palace is surrounded by Metal Sonic clones and without Sonic, we'll never get past them!"

"I've been building EMP bombs in secret with Wilson and Mandy, who are in hiding right now." explained Geoffrey, pulling one out his pocket. The bomb was silver in colour with a button and a timer screen on it "We throw one at the army of Metal Sonics and we'll put half the army to sleep."

"That sounds awfully risky Mr. St. John." said Tails "Do you think we'll succeed?"

"I haven't a doubt in my mind little boy." said Geoffrey confidently "As Sonic once said, let's do it to it mate!"

Geoffrey immediately leapt to his feet and tore his robe off, revealing his green combat suit and he ran out of the alleyway with Tails following him quickly.

Unfortunately, they had unknowingly been spied on by a camera probe shaped like Metal Sonic's head. Metal Sonic had heard

everything that Geoffrey and Tails had been saying to each other from the comfort of his own throne room and he wasn't pleased to hear that Tails knew how he changed Mobius and now he and Geoffrey were going to try and ruin everything. However unlike most villains, Metal Sonic didn't fret or worry about it. He was so confident his army was invincible and he was so unbeatable that Tails and Geoffrey would die trying to get to Egg-Timer. Metal Sonic patted the arms of his metallic blue throne that was as spiky as he was and he cackled a deep malevolent cackle to himself.

"So, I have a resistance do I?" he droned "Good, I was beginning to fear this new life was going to get dull and vapid."

"Don't you get too over confident Metal Sonic!" yelled Dr. Eggman "Your arrogance will lead to your downfall if you're not careful!"

Dr. Eggman was locked in a cage that sat beside Metal Sonic's throne. The cage was way too small for him, he couldn't even stand up in it, he was trapped in a sitting position and he was awfully cramped in the cage. Metal Sonic thumped the cage furiously.

"I will thank you for not voicing your unneeded opinions Dr. Eggman." snapped Metal Sonic "I know how to handle Sonic's loathsome sidekick. My army will be too much for him and if he somehow gets past my clones, he won't get past my marvellous killing machine that lurks in the lower parts of my palace."

"I hate to say it Metal Sonic but I think you're right." said Dr. Eggman in a defeated tone "Without Sonic, Tails is no match for your clone army or your killer pet."

"Affirmative." said Metal Sonic, getting up from his throne and wondering up to the balcony outside the throne room.

He stood at the balcony and admired his glorious city that stretched all over Mobius. His waist cloak blew in the hard blowing yet gentle wind behind him. His city looked as glorious as ever and to Metal Sonic's pleasure, his slaves were working as hard as ever. The slaves were continuing to gather mining material for Metal Sonic to use to make more Metal Sonic clones. They looked famished and worn out as if they had been at this all day and all night. Queen Sally

Acorn and Nicole the Lynx were unfortunate enough to be slaves themselves and they both looked dreadful. Any Mobian caught fainting or slowing down got a beating from one of Metal Sonic's insidious clones and that was one of the reasons the slaves looked terrible, they were often beaten since due to the lack of food and water, they were becoming weaker day by day and all that earned them was a beating from the clones. Metal Sonic just admired the sight of the suffering and working slaves with sadistic satisfaction. This was the perfect world and he had earned it unlike Dr. Eggman who did not deserve anything after all his foiled attempts in the past. He was certain nothing was going to foil it and nothing was going to go wrong for him.

As for Tails and Geoffrey, they found themselves running through the working slaves as fast as they possibly could. All the slaves stopped working and looked up in surprise at Tails and Geoffrey rushing past them. The Metal Sonic clones that watched the slaves looked up and stared at the skunk and fox running toward the Palace of Steel. The clones immediately stepped forward and prepared to attack Tails and Geoffrey. Geoffrey was ready for them though. With a sinister grin on his face, he yanked and EMP bomb out of his pocket, pressed a button and threw it in the centre of the crowd of Metal Sonic clones.

"Geoffrey, is it really a good idea to throw the bomb here?" cried Tails "The bomb will hurt the people was well as the clones!"

"Nah mate, the bomb's effects are completely harmless to organic matter." said Geoffrey brightly "Only robots are affected by its sheer power."

The Metal Sonic clones began to advance menacingly on Tails and Geoffrey with their optics blazing and their claws bared. But before the army of clones could get even a foot close to them, the bomb went off and sent a electromagnetic pulse roaring all through the army. All the slaves watching the performance, like Geoffrey promised, weren't effected in anyway by the wave but all the Metal Sonic clones began to groan robotically, their joints sized up, electricity pulsed through their circuits and their optics began to go crazy. Then the entire clone army did a chorus of fainting after the EMP pulse stopped. Tails was well and truly impressed.

"Wow! That was incredible! Who invented those bombs?" he cried excitedly.

"A mechanic me, Wilson and Mandy have befriended in this new timeline." said Geoffrey "He's a great guy at mechanics and inventions and he made those EMP bombs for us to use on the clone army of Metal Sonics."

"Well if it works on those clones then we can use it on Metal Sonic and then Dr. Eggman will be powerless against us!" exclaimed Tails "This is perfect! This operation will be easy!"

"Yeah about that…I only bought one." said Geoffrey sadly "The mechanic hasn't made anymore yet, the bomb I used is literally the first bomb he built. He hasn't rung me to say he's built anymore so I don't think I'll get any spares anytime soon."

"Well that's a bummer." said Tails "We'll have to try and avoid Metal Sonic best we can, we can't defeat him without Sonic on our side."

"Sounds good to me." said Geoffrey "Now let's go, our key to Mobius' return to it's former glory is in our hands."

Geoffrey ran up to the Palace of Steel. Tails tried to run after him but he was stopped by someone tugging on his tails. It was Nicole. She and Sally were surprised with the sudden rescue mission and they wanted to wish the two luck before they pressed on.

"What is it Nicole?" asked Tails "I've got our world to save."

"Please…cough!…be…careful in there you two." said Nicole hoarsely, she had trouble speaking clearly due to how weak she was.

"You're our only hope…splutter!to return…the world to normal." coughed Sally "Don't…lose your heads…cough!…in there or we're doomed!"

"We'll be fine Sally." said Tails "We know what we're doing. We'll have the world back to normal in no time."

Tails ran off to the palace after Geoffrey who was already at the

doors. The doors had been opened thanks to the EMP bomb so they just let themselves in. Sally and Nicole looked at each other with an exchange of worried expressions.

"I know…Commander St. John can handle things…himself…but will he and Tails…be enough for Metal Sonic and his…army?" wheezed Nicole weakly.

"There's a small doubt they'll…be…able to Nicole…" said Sally, gasping with every word she said "If only Sonic…hadn't… mysteriously…disappeared…he could save the day…in…record time."

As for Metal Sonic, he had watched Tails and Geoffrey St. John's attack from up in his balcony and he was furious to see that Geoffrey had a weapon that could trump his army. He had scanned the bomb just as it went off so he had the data necessary to render himself invulnerable to the EMP bomb's effects so the weapon would be useless against him. Regardless, he had to stop Tails and Geoffrey from getting to Egg-Timer before they ruined his glorious paradise. And he had just the thing to stop them.

"So Sonic's sidekick and the skunk fighter have compromised my army and entered my palace?" he said to himself "No matter, my killer pet will eviscerate them before they can even get here…"

He cackled darkly to himself.

In the palace, Geoffrey and Tails had run through the main hall, went through a door and found themselves in a giant room that was featureless save for four plain white walls and an elevator door that likely led up into Metal Sonic's quarters. Tails began to wonder what this room was for.

"Well, for a big metal palace, this is pretty drab looking." said Geoffrey "The palace was nice and all but this room doesn't seem like it fits into the palace at all."

"I have no idea what this room is but I bet it's not good." said Tails.

He was about to run over and try the elevator and see if they could

get up to Metal Sonic's quarters until he spotted something. There was a little girl chained to the wall by her arms and looking terrible. Tails ran over to the girl and to his horror, found out it was none other then his love interest Cosmo the Seedrian! Metal Sonic hadn't erased her from existence after all! Instead, he'd taken her prisoner and took great delight in torturing her due to the fact she wasn't Mobian and it was his sick, twisted idea of fun. Cosmo's clothes were torn in some places, her face was laden with scares and she had bruises everywhere. She looked like she'd been hit by a truck. Tails' stomach churned. How could anyone do this to her? He obviously didn't know who did it but he was determined to make whoever it was pay for causing Cosmo so much pain. He whipped out his screwdriver and he plunged it into the lock on Cosmo's shackles. Geoffrey noticed that Tails was doing something and he ran over to him.

"What's up Tails?" he asked "Oh my goodness! Is that poor little Cosmo?" he cried, noticing Cosmo's pained state.

"It is." said Tails as he tried to pick the locks "Dr. Eggman and Metal Sonic decided to take her prisoner and use her for stress relief it seems. I'm gonna make them pay for doing this to her!"

He gave the screwdriver a turn and Cosmo's left shackle suddenly opened. Her arm flopped down lifelessly by her side. Tails began working on Cosmo's right shackle and he opened it with the pick of a lock. Cosmo slumped against the wall on the floor, groaning like a zombie. Tails picked her up bridal style. Cosmo's head flopped back lifelessly and she sighed a weary sigh. Tails' eyes began to water again.

"Cosmo…? Are you alright…?" he asked worriedly.

Cosmo stirred weakly and she opened her eyes. Despite the heavy beating she'd received, her eyes remained as beautiful and as blue as ever. She lifted her head up and her face lit up when she saw who was carrying her. Tails' face brightened too, he was relieved to see his girlfriend was alive.

"Cosmo!" he cried "You're alive! Thank goodness! I thought I'd never see you again!"

"I'm…glad to see…you again too…Tails." choked Cosmo.

She was so battered and beaten she seemed to be having great trouble just talking to Tails. She feebly put her arms around Tails and smiled at her adorable boyfriend.

"Who did this to you and why Cosmo?" demanded Tails.

"Metal Sonic…did…" croaked Cosmo "He didn't…like…my appearance…so he kidnapped…me…kept me here…and used me as a punch…ing…bag. He tortured…me just…to get the…satis… faction of hearing…me…scream. He held…back long…enough… for…me…to live but…the…moment I re…cover…he'll torture…me again…"

"No he won't!" yelled Geoffrey "We're going to sneak into Metal Sonic's quarters and reset the world back to normal!"

"Oh really? How do you plan to do that then organics?" Metal Sonic's deep, ominous voice boomed around the entire room, making everybody jump.

Tails put Cosmo down and looked up at the ceiling. Geoffrey looked up at the ceiling and wondered where Metal Sonic's voice was coming from.

"Metal Sonic!" yelled Tails "You and Eggman have gone too far! You've ruined our world, tortured one of my best friends and erased my best friend from existence! I'm gonna set things right and you'll be sorry you did this!"

"I'll overlook your condescending and overbearing tone little one if you heave the gravity of mine." boomed Metal Sonic's voice flatly.

"If it's an interesting tone and not a vapid and arrogant one then we'll listen." retorted Geoffrey.

"Dr. Eggman had nothing to do with this world." explained Metal Sonic "All this is my work. I overthrew my incompetent and insubordinate master and hijacked the operation. I shaped this world into my image and everyone is bound to my rules and my whims. I took the pleasure in torturing your plant friend because she is a

freak of nature and she's an amusing novelty when it comes to inflicting pain on her."

"You sick, metal monster!" screeched Tails "You show yourself so I can pound your ugly head in!"

"I will not give you the satisfaction of facing me in battle unless you can defeat my little pet." retorted Metal Sonic eerily "If you can defeat him, you may battle me. If not then you become my next victims of amusement."

"Bring it on! We'll take it!" yelled Geoffrey cockily.

Metal Sonic said nothing more. The elevator shaft suddenly went ding and opened up.

"With great pleasure and deep pride, I present to you, my machine of mass destruction and pet of amusement." boomed Metal Sonic "Behold…Silver Sonic!"

The elevator doors opened and a huge hand burst out of the shaft and clawed at the wall. Then the entire body came out, destroying the shaft as it emerged from within the small space it was contained in. Tails, Geoffrey and Cosmo stared up in disbelief at the giant machine that stood before them. This machine was Metal Sonic's killer pet robot Silver Sonic. He was an eight foot tall robot that strongly resembled Sonic the Hedgehog. It had orange eyes that burned in a black visor, huge sharp blades on it's head and back instead of quills, large clawed hands, a sharp black nose, red feet with a pair of small wheels on either foot, gold details around the legs and a very shiny silver coat of metal. Silver Sonic looked extremely scary and he looked like he was ready to kill. Tails and Geoffrey were so shocked they almost chickened out and fled the room where as Cosmo didn't know if she wanted to faint or not.

"Great blinkin' soldiers of war!" blurted Geoffrey "That bloke's a bloomin' beast!"

"I'll s-s-say it i-i-is!" whimpered Tails "I-it's s-s-scarier l-looking then M-M-Mecha Sonic!"

"Silver Sonic…ATTACK!" bellowed Metal Sonic's deep, malevolent voice.

Silver Sonic obeyed his evil master and he spun into a spin-dash. A six foot tall Mecha Sonic spin-dash was bad enough but Silver Sonic's was downright lethal! He looked like a huge ball with sword blades sticking out of it! Tails, Geoffrey and Cosmo ran like rabbits around the room as Silver Sonic tried to spin-dash them. Silver Sonic's spin-dash was so powerful and fierce, he dented the floor as he hit and ended up catapulting himself into the ceiling. He hit the ceiling, dented it, and landed back on his feet. Geoffrey started rapidly firing darts at Silver Sonic but not a single dart harmed the giant silver beast of a robot. They just pinged harmlessly off his armour. Silver Sonic ran over to Geoffrey and tried to claw at him but the skunk leaped out of the way, landed on Silver Sonic's arm and ran up it. Silver Sonic whacked at Geoffrey but he missed and hit his arm. He didn't accidentally break it off since Silver Sonic was tough enough to withstand his own punches. Geoffrey climbed onto Silver Sonic's shoulder and began firing darts at his visor. The darts just pinged off Silver Sonic's visor harmlessly. Silver Sonic was made of tough stuff and it was going to take more then a simple dart to harm it. Geoffrey decided to stop relying on his weapon and do something else. He leaped towards Silver Sonic's huge head and kicked it. The attack didn't seem to hurt Silver Sonic the slightest but it did distract it long enough for Geoffrey to kick it again. Silver Sonic swiped at Geoffrey, forcing the skunk to dodge and leap off of Silver Sonic for his own safety. He landed on the floor and Silver Sonic clawed at him again, missing by inches. While Silver Sonic was distracted by Geoffrey, Tails was trying to get out since he didn't want to take on that beast of a robot Silver Sonic. The only trouble was, the door was locked so he, Cosmo and Geoffrey were trapped in the room with Silver Sonic. Then he noticed the destroyed elevator shaft that Silver Sonic had torn his way through. Maybe he could fly up the shaft and up to Metal Sonic's lair to Egg-Timer. Tails flew past the brawling Silver Sonic and Geoffrey and headed to the elevator shaft. But suddenly a pair of doors closed in front of the destroyed shaft, cutting Tails off from the shaft and leaving him more trapped then before.

"Nah ah, ah small one." purred Metal Sonic "No one leaves this

room until there's a victor in this conflict."

"Metal Sonic, you let me out of here now!" yelled Tails" Or are you too scared to face us yourself?"

Metal Sonic didn't answer him. Tails turned around just in time to dodge a mega spin-dash from Silver Sonic. Silver Sonic crashed into the wall but he quickly regained his senses and chased after the fox. Geoffrey distracted him by firing a dart into the underside of Silver Sonic's shoulder pad. The dart stunned Silver Sonic's shoulder but it didn't hurt him. Silver Sonic diverted his attention from Tails and back to Geoffrey who ran around the room to keep Silver Sonic busy. Silver Sonic ran after him, trying to claw at Geoffrey as he neared and neared him. Now Silver Sonic was off Tails' back, Tails could see to trying to get through the elevator shaft. He knelt down by the closed shaft and opened a panel on the wall with his screwdriver.

"Now if I can sabotage this….then I should be able to open this shaft…and get up to Metal Sonic's quarters and set things back to normal." he said to himself.

He began fiddling about with the wires and circuitry inside the open panel. Silver Sonic and Geoffrey ran past Tails but Tails didn't seem to notice. He was too keen to open the door. Geoffrey leaped into the air just as Silver Sonic clawed at him and Geoffrey fired a dart at his shoulder. The dart pinged off his shoulder but that didn't matter since the dart was just a diversion so Geoffrey could climb up Silver Sonic's shoulder and kick him in the head. That kick was a lot harder then the first and Silver Sonic's head went backwards a little. Geoffrey climbed on top of his head and tricked Silver Sonic into trying to whack him. Silver Sonic swatted at Geoffrey but the skunk jumped off of him so Silver Sonic whacked himself in the forehead. Silver Sonic ended up knocking himself over but even that didn't bring the giant silver beast down. Silver Sonic got back to his feet and stomped at Geoffrey in an attempt to squash the skunk but he missed. Then Silver Sonic spotted Cosmo just lying against the wall feeling limp and lame. Silver Sonic was a mindless killing machine so it didn't care who it killed or who his targets are, he would kill anyone just for the sake of it. Silver Sonic stomped over to Cosmo. Cosmo opened her eyes and screamed as Silver Sonic loomed

above her. She tried to get up and run but her injuries were too great so she was forced to stay sitting down. She could do nothing but stare up helplessly at the giant silver robot looming above her.

"Tails! Help!" she cried.

Tails stopped what he was doing and almost fainted with shock at what he saw.

"Oh no! Cosmo! I'm coming!" cried Tails.

Too late. Tails got up to his feet and ran over to Cosmo but Silver Sonic raised his foot and brought it crashing down on Cosmo. There was a horrible crunch sound as his foot squashed the poor Seedrian into the floor. Silver Sonic raised his foot, revealing a squashed and pretty much dead Cosmo lying on the floor. Silver Sonic was about to squash Tails next but Geoffrey distracted him with another dart and Silver Sonic clawed at him. Tails knelt down beside the flattened Seedrian and his eyes began to well up with tears.

"Cosmo…?" he asked nervously.

No answer. Cosmo was well and truly dead. No one could survive being stomped on by an eight foot tall machine like that. Tails broke down in tears for the third time today.

"NO!" he cried "Cosmo! That monster killed you! You suffered enough pain as it was, you didn't need to die as well!"

Tails just knelt by Cosmo's side, sobbing over her grisly death. Then something in Tails' mind went click and he stopped wailing.

"Wait a minute…it doesn't matter." he said "If I reset Mobius to the way it was before Metal Sonic changed it, Cosmo will still be alive! The only trouble is I need to get to Metal Sonic's quarters and find that machine!"

He wiped his eyes dry and ran back to the elevator shaft so he could try and get the doors open. Meanwhile, Geoffrey was beginning to get worn out from all the running he did whilst avoiding Silver Sonic. Geoffrey knew he needed back up but he couldn't get any because the doors were locked and he was trapped in the room with Silver

Sonic. Unless he could get Silver Sonic to break the doors open for him. Geoffrey knew what he had to do. He saw Silver Sonic trying to spin-dash at him again and he ran towards the door. Geoffrey threw himself down on the floor and left Silver Sonic to whiz over him and crash into the door. Being strong and massive, Silver Sonic broke the doors open effortlessly. Geoffrey ran up to the broken down doors just as Silver Sonic was turning around. He spotted Tails trying to get the elevator shaft open and he decided to attack him. Silver Sonic ran over to Tails and straight over Geoffrey. Now he was safe, Geoffrey retreated through the broken doors and out of the room. He ran on through the hallway and out of the palace to get some reinforcements.

"Sorry to abandon you Tails but we need some spare recruits!" Geoffrey puffed to himself as he ran "I'll be back as soon as I can!"

As for Tails, he was still trying unsuccessfully to open the elevator shaft. No matter what he did to the open panel, he couldn't seem to get the shaft to open. Then suddenly, Tails found himself being grabbed from behind by Silver Sonic and hoisted up to his monstrous height. Tails looked Silver Sonic directly in the eye and began to tremble with fear. His ears drooped back and his eyes widened. Silver Sonic made a weird sound that sounded almost like a growl only very robotical sounding. He was pleased to have caught somebody in his claws. Metal Sonic's ominous voice boomed with laughter over the intercom and echoed around the room.

"Looks like you lose twin-tails." cackled Metal Sonic "Now you shall spend the rest of your life as my little toy. Silver Sonic, bring him up to me." he ordered.

Silver Sonic obeyed and smashed his way through the closed elevator shaft with Tails still in his claws. The elevator, which was still intact, began to take Silver Sonic up to Metal Sonic's quarters. There was no escape for poor Tails now. He was doomed. There was no hope for Mobius now, Mobius was doomed to be trapped in this timeline forever…

Meanwhile, Geoffrey St. John had run all the way back to his secret

hideout. His hideout was in a sewer that only he and anyone else hiding in it knew about. As Geoffrey opened the sewer lid and climbed down into the sewer, he began to feel bad about leaving Tails alone with the monstrous Silver Sonic. Tails could be dead at this moment and it would be his fault for not bothering to take him with him. If Tails was dead though it didn't matter. If they reset Mobius and time to how it was two days ago then Tails, as well as Cosmo, would be brought back alive. Geoffrey climbed down the last step and ran through the smelly, murky tunnels of the sewer to the hiding place. Geoffrey came across a door in the wall and he opened it. He went through the door and closed it behind him. He was now in a room that looked like a bunker in a World War. It was only a tiny space with beds for anyone hiding in this room to sleep in, chairs and a table and various equipment for battle such as weapons and gadgets and gizmos of any kind. The only people in this room were Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse. They had survived Mobius' time change and had spent these two days plotting things with Geoffrey. The two fighters had been doing nothing but waiting around for any updates and the moment Geoffrey returned, their faces lit up.

"Geoffrey! You're back." said Wilson happily.

"How did things go?" asked Mandy "Did the EMP bomb work?"

"It worked to perfection Mandy." said Geoffrey "Have we got any spares yet?"

"We just got a delivery today." said Wilson, picking up a brown bag and showing it to Geoffrey "This bag is full of EMP bombs. Now we know they work, we can take them into battle."

"That's great news." said the skunk, his face brightening "We could do with them bombs right now. Metal Sonic has a giant robot named Silver Sonic and it's absolutely terrifying! It's got blades on the back of its head, it's huge and it's tough to beat!"

"I'm not surprised Metal Sonic has something like that." muttered Mandy "It's just in his nature to have giant killer robots at his beck and call."

"I've got other news for you two." said Geoffrey "I have a little talk with somebody and he knows how this timeline got changed and how we fix it."

"Really?" said Wilson happily "How do we change time back to normal then?"

"Dr. Eggman has a machine that has the ability to change time and appearances." explained Geoffrey "All we've got to do is get into Metal Sonic's headquarters and use that machine. If we can get to the machine, we use it to reset time and the world is fixed and back to the way it was."

"How are we going to know which is the machine?" asked Wilson "We don't know what it looks like."

"Maybe I can convince Dr. Eggman into telling us." suggested Geoffrey "Now are we ready to go you two?"

"Ready when you are Geoffrey." said Mandy with a tone of determination in her voice.

"Alright then, let's march over to Metal Sonic's headquarters and give that metal bloke what for!" said Geoffrey.

Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy left the room and marched on down the sewers.

Hang on Tails mate thought Geoffrey in his head *We're coming…*

Footnotes:

*** As revealed in Story 46**

**** As revealed in Story 48**

***** He did indeed in Story 40**

****** See Story 31**

Whoa, that's a lot of stuff going off in a simple milestone story! Mobius has been changed, Sonic is gone, Mandy's alive, Metal Sonic has betrayed Eggman and become ruler of Mobius, everybody's slaving away for Metal Sonic, Cosmo is dead and Tails has been captured! Has Metal Sonic well and truly...won? (DOM, DOM, DOOOOOOOOMMMMM!). We'll find out in the titanic conclusion next time! Reviews are welcome.

Thanks to Kratos Pwns, my most dedicated reader, banjobandicoot52, Ultimate Black Ace and Chaos Kai X for all your reviews on this story. Without your kind words, I wouldn't have uploaded all these chapters, I would have just left them on my hard drive for eternity.

His World and Our World

Story 51: His World and Our World

"Look how the mighty have fallen." droned Metal Sonic in his deep, malevolent voice at his captive "You were the sidekick of my very nemesis Sonic the Hedgehog and now you're nothing more then my novelty of amusement Miles Prower. Or should I say Tails since you do not like your real name?"

He cackled tauntingly. Tails had been restrained to the wall by laser cuffs around his wrists and ankles. He was going absolutely nowhere and he knew it. Metal Sonic had been very pleased with the fact he had captured Sonic the Hedgehog's sidekick and now he was free to do as he saw fit with him. Tails was not impressed with Metal Sonic's gloating at all, he just remained tight lipped and took the gloats. He noticed Dr. Eggman all locked up in his cage and looking very cramped indeed.

"So I take it you're not in charge anymore Dr. Eggman?" asked Tails.

"Correct." said Dr. Eggman "Metal Sonic that blasted piece of machinery thought it was funny to betray me, make the world into his image and reduce me to his little pet! I've spent the last two days in this cage and I think I'm beginning to get rheumatism!"

He rubbed his back tenderly, suggesting it ached what with being stuck in a sat-down position for so long.

"Your voice is not needed to be heard right now Eggman." snapped Metal Sonic "I'm trying to have a conversation with a **worthy** person."

Dr. Eggman just shut up and began to grumble to himself. Metal Sonic turned his attention back to Tails.

"I never thought you would end up attempting to try and undo all I've done for this world." he droned "I would have thought with Sonic the

Hedgehog gone, your spirit would have diminished into a flickering flame that is on the verge of being blown out."

"Shows how much you know." grumbled Tails "With or without Sonic, I'll do what I must to ensure Mobius' peace and freedom returns once again!"

"And how do you plan to do that in your position?" purred Metal Sonic, grabbing Tails by the face and jamming his face into Tails'. Metal Sonic's sharp, pointed nose prodded Tails in his nose "You're completely restrained, there's no one to help you and the skunk fighter has deserted you, you have no hope of bringing peace and prosperity back to Mobius little boy."

Tails was about to retort back but he stopped himself. He had no comeback to give to Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic was completely right. There was no one to help him, Geoffrey had left him and he was bound to the wall. There was no way he could possibly turn Mobius back to normal. Defeated, Tails closed his mouth and stared down at the floor. If Metal Sonic had a mouth, he would probably be smiling right now. Metal Sonic lifted his face away from Tails and he began to chuckle darkly.

"Why is it a defeated hero is such an amusing novelty?" he said darkly "Maybe it's because they aren't being so irksome with their witty comebacks and combat moves."

"I can't believe I'm saying this Dr. Eggman." said Tails, looking over to Dr. Eggman, who was squatting in his cage and sulking to himself "But I think I preferred it when you were the only threat we had to deal with."

"You're only saying that because I'm manageable to you!" snapped Dr. Eggman "You can find a way to foil my schemes but when Metal Sonic tries to take over Mobius, you think it's all over! You must really think little of me Tails!"

"Dr. Eggman, if I hear your voice again then I'll have to eviscerate you in front of the prisoner." said Metal Sonic coldly "Silence yourself and don't talk again!"

Dr. Eggman shut up again and he folded his arms and pouted. Metal Sonic turned back to Tails.

"Now little fox, it's time I had some fun now." he purred in a cruel, sadistic tone.

"You're not gonna torture me like you tortured Cosmo are you?" asked Tails nervously.

"No." said Metal Sonic "I'm going to torture you differently to how I tortured the Seedrian filth. With the Seedrian, I was physical, with you, I'll let your binds do it for me."

He pressed a button on the wall and Tails' laser cuffs began to electrocute the poor fox with a jolt of electricity. The electricity surged up Tails' tiny body and the eight year old fox cub howled in pain. His screams echoed around the room and Metal Sonic just laughed with amusement. The tyrannical Sonic double was clearly enjoying watching Tails suffer from his evil wrath. He began to wonder what it would have been like if he was torturing Sonic the Hedgehog, his most primary nemesis instead of his twin-tailed friend instead. Metal Sonic pressed the button and the laser cuffs stopped electrocuting Tails. Tails began to gasp heavily and his head flopped down.

"What is with you…Metal Sonic?" he gasped "You've…remoulded Mobius…in your image! Is that not enough for you? You…have to… torture people…for you own amusement now?"

"Oh Tails, see it from my optics." droned Metal Sonic "I'm ruler of Mobius with my city and my servants, Mobians slave away for me and I have no opposition because Sonic doesn't exist. I have nothing to occupy myself with so I'm allowing you Mobians to live alongside my clone army so I may have some entertainment."

Tails was livid with shock.

"Entertainment?" he shrieked "You mean the only reason we're alive is because you're holding back enough for us to live? And the only reason you're letting us live is so you can entertain yourself with us?"

"Affirmative." droned Metal Sonic "I could easily erase you Mobians from existence with Eggman's Egg-Timer machine but then what would I do to keep myself entertained? You're nothing but toys for me little fox. All you Mobians are my items of amusement and once I'm bored of you Mobians, I'll just wipe you from existence and then make a new bunch of Mobians for me to toy around with Egg-Timer's unique and unfathomable power. And the best part is that no one has the power to stand against me. Anyone who steps out of line will just get erased, simple as."

Tails felt sick to the stomach after hearing what Metal Sonic had to say. He couldn't believe how evil Eggman's robot Sonic clone had become since the change. The Mobians were just toys for Metal Sonic now? How sick and twisted was this robot? Even Dr. Eggman was impressed at what Metal Sonic had said.

"I must say, I never knew Metal Sonic was THAT evil!" he blurted "I'm impressed Metal Sonic! You sound an awful lot like me you do! There's more of me in you then I thought!"

"That is why I am superior." gloated Metal Sonic, pointing sharply at Dr. Eggman "I have the body of a robot, the speed of Sonic the Hedgehog, the strength of many and the intelligence and evil of you Eggman. All this combined makes me the most powerful robot ever created and it's exactly those traits that have earned me my power and my robot kingdom which no one will ever be able to stop."

"So you think Metal Sonic!" exclaimed Tails "Someone will stop you and set things right and then you'll be sorry!"

"You are the one who will be sorry young one." droned Metal Sonic coldly.

He pressed the button on the wall and Tails soon found himself being electrocuted once again. His pained screams filled the room as electricity surged through him like a lightening rod…

Geoffrey St. John, Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse had all crept out of their hiding place down the sewers and closed the lid behind

them as quietly as they could as they didn't want to make a noise and get themselves found out. The three Mobians began to creep as quietly as they possibly could through the metal streets of Metal Sonic's kingdom. They crouched down beside a dumpster behind a building and remained hidden as a bunch of Metal Sonic clones began to march by. The sight of so many Metal Sonic clones began to make Wilson shiver with fright. Just one Metal Sonic was bad enough but an ENTIRE ARMY of Metal Sonics was just too much. Wilson stopped looking at the marching Metal Sonic army and he sat down with his back against the wall, trying to calm down. Mandy just put her hand on his shoulder and the dog relaxed.

"Oh thanks Mandy. I needed that." said Wilson happily.

"That's what I'm here for Wilson, to drown out your fears and rise up your courage." said Mandy "So skunk boy, do we have a plan?"

"You bet your tail I do." said Geoffrey "With this bunch of EMP bombs we have, we're gonna bomb the clones guarding the palace, then we're gonna bomb Silver Sonic before he can stop us from reaching Metal Sonic and once we reach Metal Sonic, we bomb him and then we find the machine Metal Sonic used to change time and reset everything back to the way it was."

"And since these EMP bombs can take out machines of any kind, Metal Sonic is toast!" said Mandy, full of determination "When do we start?"

"When I give the command." said Geoffrey "Wait here."

He crept to the other side of the building and looked both ways. There was nothing on his left and on his right he just saw the Metal Sonic clones marching towards the Palace of Steel. Directly from behind would be the perfect time to strike. Geoffrey pulled an EMP bomb out of the bag he had around his shoulder and he tossed the bomb at the army of Metal Sonic clones. The bomb landed just behind the back of the line and shortly after landing, the bomb went off, sending a huge electromagnetic pulse sweeping through the clones. The clones wailed at the top of their robotic voices as electricity pulsed through their circuits and then they all collapsed in a heap after the shocks were finished. Geoffrey smiled to himself.

"We can start now!" he hissed to Wilson and Mandy.

Wilson and Mandy got to their feet and ran up to the skunk. They peeked around the corner and saw the knocked out squad of Metal Sonic clones that Geoffrey had just bombed.

"That's one effective EMP bomb isn't it?" said Wilson.

"It sure is." said Geoffrey "Metal Sonic doesn't stand a chance against us not while we have these bombs with us. We don't have an awful lot so we'd best keep our bombings to a minimum."

"Right." said Mandy "Let's press forward then, the fate of the world lies in our hands!"

Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy emerged from their hiding place and headed towards the Palace of Steel, the very place Metal Sonic was lurking in and the likely place the three Mobians would find Egg-Timer. As they reached the Palace of Steel, Geoffrey noticed that all the Metal Sonic clones he'd knocked out earlier were still unconscious. Maybe the bomb was more effective then they thought and it actually killed the Metal Sonic clones instead of just knocking them out. The slaves that were slaving away for Metal Sonic saw Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy heading for the Palace of Steel and they began to wonder if they would set things right and fix the world. Queen Sally Acorn and Nicole the Lynx however, weren't so hopeful. Geoffrey and Tails couldn't get through to Metal Sonic so Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy weren't likely to either. Then suddenly, just as Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy were passing them, the Metal Sonic clones began to wake up. Their fearsome red eyes returned to their pitch black visor and they all began to get back to their feet. Sally noticed this and called over to the three Mobians.

"Geoffrey! Look out! The clones are waking up!" she screeched.

Geoffrey stopped dead in his tracks and noticed that like Sally had said, the Metal Sonic clones were all getting back to their feet. Geoffrey plunged his hand into the bag to get another EMP bomb but one of the clones blasted him in the back with its torso laser and knocked him over. Geoffrey dropped the bag and a Metal Sonic clone grabbed it. Sensing what was in the bag was a danger to

them, it began to swing the bag around and around as if it was throwing the hammer and then with a mighty swing of the arm, the Metal Sonic clones let go of the bag and the bag hurtled into the air. It flew for one hundred yards before finally falling down and crashing somewhere out of sight. The EMP bombs were lost now, there was no way of defeating the clones without it. Geoffrey cursed his bad luck and he got back to his feet.

"Well mates, I guess we'll have to take these blokes with brute force!" he said, getting into a battle ready stance.

"It sure does seem that way Geoffrey St. John." said Mandy, bending down in a battle ready stance.

"Are you both insane?" shrieked Wilson "We can't take on all those Metal Sonics by ourselves! We couldn't even take one of them down so what hope do we have against an ENTIRE ARMY OF THEM?"

"We're not taking them on, we're merely keeping them back so we can get into the palace." snapped Geoffrey.

"Oh right." said Wilson, pulling a capsule off his belt.

The capsule extended into his trademark spinning blade weapon and he bent down in a battle ready stance. The Metal Sonic clones surrounded the three Mobians and they all prepared to attack. Their claws were bared and they were ready to strike. Wilson struck first by throwing his spinning blade. The double-bladed pole like weapon hurtled like a boomerang through the Metal Sonic clones and any Metal Sonic clone unfortunate enough to be in the path of the spinning blade got sliced in half. The Metal Sonic clones all pounced on Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy but Geoffrey kicked them away and began to cut loose on them. Mandy leaped out of their way in an elegant somersault, leaving the clones to crash into each other. Mandy pulled a bomb off her belt and threw it at the clones. The bomb landed in the middle of their circle and the bomb blew the clones to pieces.

"These guys are a joke!" laughed Mandy "They're not even as strong as the real Metal Sonic!"

"Lucky us I guess!" yelled Wilson as he pushed a Metal Sonic clone away with his spinning blade.

One tried to sneak up behind Wilson but Wilson stabbed behind him with the spinning blade and he stabbed the clone in the torso, killing it instantly. A Metal Sonic clone dropkicked Wilson in the head and sent him sprawling on the floor. Mandy tried to help with a dropkick of her own but the clone caught her leg and threw her into the ground. Geoffrey shot the clone with a dart that stunned the clone and switched it offline. Unfortunately for Geoffrey, a Metal Sonic clone suddenly got the drop on him with a punch to the face. The punch was so hard, Geoffrey's goggles cracked and he landed painfully on his side. Then two clones tried to attack Geoffrey while he was down but Mandy kicked them both away. She helped Geoffrey back onto his feet.

"I think fun time's over Geoffrey old boy." said Mandy "Let's get in the palace before those Metal Sonic clones overwhelm us."

"Funny, I was just thinking the same thing luv." said Geoffrey "Wilson, come on! We're going to the Palace of Steel now!"

"Aw, I was having fun!" muttered Wilson, pushing a Metal Sonic clone away and impaling it through the stomach with his spinning blade weapon.

The three Mobians ran up to the palace doors only to find out they had been closed shut. Geoffrey murmured to himself.

"Dang it!" he cursed "When me and Tails ambushed the place, the EMP bomb opened the doors for us but now Metal Sonic's closed them. I bet we'll have a tough time opening them too."

"I have a sneaky feeling that the doors maybe bomb proof." said Mandy, feeling the thick steel they were made of "And I can't afford to waste any bombs, I only have a handful left and I'll need them all for the fight with Metal Sonic."

"Why don't we climb up there?" asked Wilson.

He pointed up to the balcony that was high up from the ground.

Geoffrey looked up at it and thought for a moment.

"That would be a good way in." said Geoffrey "I hope my grappler can reach that high."

He loaded a dart into his arm-mounted crossbow and he fired it up at the balcony. As the dart whizzed up to its target, a rope extended out the back of it. The dart embedded itself directly under the balcony. Geoffrey pulled on the rope to make sure it was nice and tight and he began to climb up the wall with use of the rope. Unfortunately, a bunch of Metal Sonic clones began running up towards the Mobians with their claws bared. Geoffrey looked over his shoulder and gasped.

"Wilson, Mandy! Keep those blokes away while I climb this and then you climb up once I'm on the balcony!" he ordered.

"Roger." said Mandy, leaping up in an elegant somersault and landing foot first on a Metal Sonic clone.

The clone was knocked off its feet and onto its back. Wilson threw his spinning blade at the clones and the spinning blade sliced any clone in its path to pieces. While the dog and mouse kept the clones busy, Geoffrey climbed up and up the wall and closer to the balcony. He just prayed none of the clones would fly up after him or he would be mince meat. The position he was in left him rather vulnerable to attack since he would be unable to fight back as he was holding onto the rope and climbing up it and if any of the Metal Sonic clones snapped his rope, he would fall and have a not very pleasant landing on the hard ground below. Luckily, the Metal Sonic clones seemed keener on attacking Wilson and Mandy then flying up after him and stopping him from reaching the balcony. Down on the ground, Wilson and Mandy were still trying their hardest to keep the Metal Sonic clones away but despite their best efforts, they still kept coming. Metal Sonic had millions of clones after all so no matter how many clones they took down, they just kept coming back. Mandy kicked one clone away and then fell to her knees, panting.

"pant! I dunno about you Wilson but I'm getting worn out!" she gasped.

"I think we should climb up after Geoffrey." said Wilson, pushing a clone away with his weapon "And we'd best be quick or these things will get us."

Wilson turned to the wall and he grabbed the rope. He began to climb up it just as Geoffrey pulled himself onto the balcony. The skunk peered over to see what was happening and was relieved to see Wilson climbing to safety. Mandy began to climb up the rope after Wilson and since she was a very good climber, she began climbing exceptionally quickly in comparison to Geoffrey and Wilson. The Metal Sonic clones looked up at the climbing dog and mouse and they flew up after them. Geoffrey saw what they were doing and he began rapidly firing darts at them to keep them distracted. The darts all pinged harmlessly off every clone Geoffrey hit and the clones glared angrily at the skunk. Two clones flew towards the skunk but Geoffrey was ready for them. He dropkicked one clone on the head and sent it crashing into the other clone and they both began hurtling down to the ground. They whizzed past Mandy and crashed into the wall. Wilson had just made it unto the balcony and Geoffrey helped him climb onto it just as Mandy was reaching the end of the rope. Four Metal Sonic clones charged towards the mouse but Wilson threw his spinning blade at them. The clones knew what the weapon could do so they dodged it and the weapon just boomeranged back to Wilson's hand. The weapon was just a distraction to keep the clones at bay while Mandy made it onto the balcony. Now all three were on the balcony, they could ambush the real Metal Sonic and put an end to this nightmare of a present timeline once and for all.

"Come on mates! Let's go!" ordered Geoffrey, running for it.

"You don't have to tell us twice skunk boy." said Mandy, running after him.

Wilson ran after them both. Even though they didn't know where Metal Sonic could be, they had a feeling he was just around the corner and once they arrived, the heist could begin…

Tails' pained screams suddenly died down to heavy panting as

Metal Sonic switched off the electricity again. Metal Sonic had been giving Tails painful shocks all the while Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy had been fighting for their lives and poor Tails was losing the will to live by the second. Metal Sonic could sense that and he didn't want to kill Tails since he was too amusing for him so he decided to hold back and let Tails recover which would take a few days at most. Metal Sonic lifted Tails' head up to his eye level with his claw and he looked him directly in the eye.

"Torturing you has definitely been worth my while little one." he purred evilly "But you are on the verge of joining the millions of deceased people so I am going to be generous enough to hold back and let you live."

"And then…you…will…torture…me again." croaked Tails hoarsely "Why don't you… just…kill me…and…put me…out of…my…misery already…?"

"Because you're too amusing for me to eviscerate." droned Metal Sonic "Of all the Mobians I've had the pleasure of torturing, you are the most amusing. Because you are Sonic's accomplice, harming you gives me a feeling of delight so I will not kill you little one."

"If I were you Metal Sonic I would do it." said Dr. Eggman "You never know when something can go horribly wrong for you and Tails might end up being your end so kill him now and eliminate a potential threat to your power!"

"What I do with my prisoners is of no business concerning yours Eggman so silence yourself and don't talk again." snapped Metal Sonic "You had your chance to be ruler but you messed it up with your incompetence which is why you are at your lowly place former master."

Dr. Eggman said nothing more. He just silenced himself, folded his arms and pouted. Metal Sonic turned back to the tortured Tails.

"Our time together is at an end for now." droned Metal Sonic "I will be back in a few of days to see if you've recovered from your injuries and then I can get the pleasure of inflicting pain on you all over again. For now, I think I'll torture the former queen of Mobotropolis,

Sally Acorn I believe her name is…"

"Don't…you…dare hurt Sally!" rasped Tails weakly.

"Why not fleshling?" droned Metal Sonic in an ominous tone of voice "You're in no position to choose what I can and cannot do so you can keep your ignorance to yourself."

Tails decided not to argue back since arguing with the one being who was on top of the world right now was anything but clever. Metal Sonic turned around and began to walk away from Tails but he didn't get far for as the moment he was half-way across the room, Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy all burst in, wielding their weapons and bending down in battle ready stances. This sudden turn of events didn't shake Metal Sonic the slightest, he just stood there and didn't show any signs of surprise or shock. Tails' face brightened at the sight of three familiar faces in the room.

"Stay where you are Metal head!" yelled Geoffrey.

"We're gonna tear you apart and set things right you dictator of a robot!" snarled Mandy, her arm itching to throw the bomb she held in her hand.

Wilson, didn't seem so brave this time though.

"G-g-g-gosh!" he stammered "M-M-Metal Sonic l-l-looks scarier then u-u-usual!"

"I don't remember him looking like that. How did you manage to change your appearance Metal Sonic?" asked Geoffrey.

"I altered my appearance with the time-changing machine." explained Metal Sonic "In this body I am much stronger and more powerful then you can ever imagine. You could not stand to me as plain old Metal Sonic now you will cede to the power of Neo Metal Sonic. Do not try to resist me or I shall vanquish you all with my unfathomable power."

"Big talk Metal Sonic." said Geoffrey in a cocky tone "Is that supposed to make you sound tough?"

"Geoffrey, don't kid around with him!" snapped Mandy "He looks like he's deathly serious and if you rile him he'll disembowel you bit by bit!"

"The mouse girl is correct." droned Metal Sonic "Now my warriors of unwavering valour and spirit, leave my palace and save yourselves the grisly nature of which your deaths will be. If you do not then I will make sure you all suffer worse then my other victims."

He stood to the side so Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy could see the sate of Tails. Tails could only smile weakly at them at best. Geoffrey was absolutely horrified at Tails' state. He looked like he had been roughened up very badly. Seeing Tails' tortured state made Geoffrey feel extremely guilty for leaving him behind to get caught by Silver Sonic earlier.

"What did you do to him?" shrieked Wilson.

"I tortured him and in doing so, hopefully dampened that irksome spirit and determination of his." answered Metal Sonic coldly.

"Oh Tails, I'm so sorry I left you behind mate!" cried Geoffrey "I had no idea that was gonna happen to you! You shouldn't have had to suffer like that! I shouldn't have left without ya…"

"Geoffrey…I understand…why you…left me…" croaked Tails "You…needed backup…and you…didn't have time…to…fetch me… now you…Wilson and Mandy…are here we…can undo…all of Metal…Sonic's evil…"

"Negative." droned Metal Sonic "Skunk boy and his friends will perish by my claws."

"Oh yeah?" snapped Geoffrey "Well let's see about that shall we?"

Geoffrey struck the first blow by firing a dart at Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic caught the dart in his claws and he threw it away.

"You'll need more then primitive stun darts to bring me down skunk boy." gloated Metal Sonic.

"How about this then?" shrieked Mandy.

She threw a bomb straight at Metal Sonic and the bomb blew up in his face. Metal Sonic was surrounded by smoke and Mandy beamed in hope that the bomb would have done some damage to him. But to her horror, the smoke cleared and revealed a very unharmed looking Metal Sonic! Metal Sonic laughed at the Mobian's horrified expressions.

"Did I not mention that I am invulnerable?" he purred "When I altered my appearance, I decided to make myself invulnerable so no one can step to me. All your attempts to eradicate me are futile and if you do not cede to me then I'll kill you all in the grisliest way possible."

"We will never give up!" yelled Wilson, pointing his spinning blade at him "Let's fight!"

Metal Sonic glared icily at his challengers.

"So be it." he snarled coldly "If you're so desperate to join the deceased then I'll be very happy to make that happen."

Then suddenly without warning, Metal Sonic leaped into the air and spun around while snarling a vicious robotical snarl. He landed between Wilson and Geoffrey and he did a split kick, hitting them both on the side of their heads and knocking them other. Mandy landed a kick on Metal Sonic's shoulder but he swatted at her, sending her cart wheeling in midair and then he punched her in the stomach, sending her crashing into the wall just beside the bound up Tails. To Metal Sonic's bad luck though, she hit the control panel and her back hit the off button. Tails' laser cuffs switched off and the tortured fox fell to the floor with a heavy thump. Mandy picked herself up and smiled.

"Tails, you're free! Now you can help us fight Metal Sonic!" she exclaimed happily.

Tails looked up weakly at Mandy.

"Mandy Mouse?" he croaked "It can't be…I…thought Dr. Eggman said…he'd…killed you."

"Well he lied about my death." said Mandy, glaring angrily at the caged Dr. Eggman.

Eggman just smiled nervously at the mouse. Mandy turned back to Tails.

"All the time I've been out of action, I've been in some machine but Wilson freed me from it." explained Mandy "If you're wondering how I got captured in the first place, I was nabbed by a Tranz-Mat robot while we were fighting Metal Sonic the first time he was unleashed*."

"I…remember those…Tranz-Mat bots…" said Tails, bitterly remembering the circus park ploy he wished to forget about** "They shoot a transmat…beam at you…and they teleport…you…to Dr… Eggman."

"Yes they do." said Mandy "I'll deal with the fat man later, we have a world to set right and a Metal Sonic to deal with. Come on Tails. Let's destroy that metal monster once and for all."

Tails tired to get back to his feet. He lifted his upper body off the floor with his arms but his strength quickly gave-way and he slumped back on the floor. He tried to lift himself up again but given how much he had been tortured, he had little to no strength left in him. He slumped on the floor again. Mandy could sense Tails needed help so she tried to lift Tails up herself. She helped Tails to get up onto his feet but the moment the fox was stood up, he slumped against the wall and fell down onto his bottom.

"I…can't get…up." said Tails weakly "I'm…too weak…from… torture…to do…so."

"That's inconvenient." said Mandy "We could use all the help we can get in here and you can't help us. Oh well, I guess it's up to me, Geoffrey and Wilson to save the day."

Then suddenly Wilson was sent flying into Mandy and he knocked the mouse clean off her feet and onto her tummy. They both landed in a heap just in front of Tails whose eyes widened in surprise. Wilson got back to his feet and he lunged at Metal Sonic with his

spinning blade in hand. Metal Sonic smacked Wilson in the face and sent him crashing into the floor. Geoffrey leaped in with a kick to the face but that attack only made Metal Sonic stagger. The attack didn't seem to have hurt him at all. Metal Sonic clawed at Geoffrey and the skunk ducked before he could hit him. Metal Sonic narrowly nicked him across his hair. Geoffrey then retaliated with an uppercut to the chin but all that did was give Geoffrey a sore fist due to how hard Metal Sonic's armour was. Metal Sonic kneed Geoffrey in the gut and then he pushed him down onto the floor. He grabbed the skunk by his tail and swung him into the wall. Geoffrey hit the wall very sharply and a wave of pain swept over his back and shoulders. The skunk slid slowly down to the floor and he groaned hoarsely. Wilson then sneaked up behind Metal Sonic and he stabbed at Metal Sonic's waist cloak with the spinning blade. In doing so, he embedded the blade into the floor and ended up trapping Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic pulled on his waist cloak but the blade kept him held firmly in place. However it didn't work for long. Metal Sonic grabbed the weapon and yanked it out of the floor, freeing himself. Then he threw it at Wilson. The deadly double-bladed pole like weapon spun towards Wilson and the frightened dog yelped and ducked to avoid getting hit by it. The blade missed him and it hit the wall. It fell to the floor with a clatter and Wilson grabbed it double quick. He ran up to Metal Sonic and stabbed at his chest but the moment he did, the blade shattered against his armour. Since Metal Sonic was invulnerable, no weapon of any kind would work on him. Metal Sonic laughed at him and he viciously punched Wilson in the face. Mandy dropkicked Metal Sonic in the back and knocked him over. Before Metal Sonic could get back to his feet, Mandy place a bomb on his back and the bomb went off. The bomb didn't harm Metal Sonic but it surrounded him in smoke so he was unable to see where anyone was. Seizing their chance, Wilson and Mandy both attack Metal Sonic with a pair of kicks to the head. And to add to it all, Geoffrey kicked Metal Sonic in the face just as the smoke cleared. Metal Sonic landed on his back and skidded across the floor. Despite all that, he still looked as good as new and completely unharmed. Metal Sonic leaped into the air and spun around like a drill bit. He walloped Mandy and Geoffrey while spinning but he missed Wilson since the dog leaped out of his way. Metal Sonic landed back on his feet and charged straight into Wilson. He elbowed the dog in the gut, grabbed him by the front of his combat

suit and tossed him into the ceiling. Wilson hit the ceiling head first and came falling down to the floor. Metal Sonic leaped up and kicked him before he could hit the floor. Wilson was sent rolling across the floor and he came to a stop just inches away from a wall. Mandy got furious and she punched Metal Sonic in the face. The punch did no damage whatsoever to Metal Sonic. In fact, he didn't appear to have felt it. He just stood there as if Mandy hadn't touched him. Mandy immediately flinched and sweat-dropped fearfully as Metal Sonic glared at her. Metal Sonic leaped in the air and spun around like a spinning top. He spread his legs out so he could kick anyone stupid enough to be near him. Mandy tried to run away but Metal Sonic clopped her in the back of the head with his spinning kick. Geoffrey pile-dived Metal Sonic from behind and brought Metal Sonic crashing into the floor. Geoffrey grabbed Metal Sonic's arm and forced it behind the insidious Sonic duplicate's back. He then motioned for Wilson and Mandy to leap on Metal Sonic while he was down. The dog and mouse obeyed and they piled on top of Metal Sonic. The plan was to keep him pinned down while Geoffrey tried to find a vulnerable point on Metal Sonic to fire a dart at. Geoffrey considered shooting him in the neck since the neck was always a vulnerable point so Geoffrey aimed his crossbow at Metal Sonic's neck. Unfortunately, before the skunk could fire, Metal Sonic got back to his feet with the Mobians still clinging onto him, yanked his arm out of Geoffrey's grasp, grabbed Mandy by the neck and yanked her off, grabbed Wilson by the mouth with his other hand and threw them across the room. Geoffrey began desperately pounding on Metal Sonic's visor in an attempt to blind the insidious metal monster but despite his hardest pounds, he couldn't so much as crack the visor. Metal Sonic snarled furiously and threw Geoffrey into a wall. Geoffrey hit the wall and slid down to the floor. Metal Sonic lunged at Geoffrey only to get tackled from the side by Wilson. Wilson stabbed at Metal Sonic's neck with the only remaining blade on his spinning blade but he missed and hit the floor instead. Metal Sonic grabbed the blade and snapped it in two. Now Wilson's spinning blade was absolutely useless since both blades were broken. Wilson freaked and ran away but Metal Sonic blasted him with his torso laser and knocked him off his feet. Wilson skidded painfully across the floor and came to a halt on the balcony. Metal Sonic laughed ominously as Wilson tried to pick himself up. Mandy threw yet another bomb at Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic caught it and

threw it away. Mandy ran up to Metal Sonic and Metal Sonic punched at her but Mandy ducked, skidded right through in between Metal Sonic's legs and kicked him in the back of the leg. That made Metal Sonic kneel down and Mandy kicked him furiously in the head. The kick was so hard, Metal Sonic's head shot forward and hit the floor with a vicious clang. That seemed to have fazed Metal Sonic a little but he quickly recovered. Mandy planted another bomb on his back so she could distract him and attack him before the smoke cleared. The bomb went off but Metal Sonic knew what was going to happed so he back-flipped out of the cloud of smoke just as Mandy leaped in with a karate style kick. Mandy was a little baffled to see her sneak attack failed and before she knew it, she was spin-dashed by Metal Sonic. Mandy skidded very painfully across the floor and came to a halt in the middle of it with a heavy groan. Geoffrey started firing darts rapidly at Metal Sonic but they all just pinged harmlessly off his armour. Metal Sonic and Geoffrey then lunged for each other, yelling loudly as they did.

Tails had watched the whole fight with despair, knowing that this fight was going to end very badly for the Mobians. He had to do something and fast but he couldn't join in the fight, he was much too weak. But he could undo Metal Sonic's evil. If only he knew where Egg-Timer was! That was when Tails looked at Dr. Eggman he had an idea. He pulled himself weakly away from the wall and he crawled feebly towards the caged Dr. Eggman. Geoffrey whizzed right over Tails' head as he crawled towards Dr. Eggman and crashed into a wall. Tails made an "Oooh, that's gotta hurt!" face and continued to crawl. He crawled ever so slowly and he felt tired just crawling a few metres but he finally made it to Eggman's cage. He collapsed weakly and moaned hoarsely. Dr. Eggman scowled at Tails.

"What do you want fuzzy?" he demanded "I can't help you!"

"Yes you…can…Eggman…" croaked Tails "You must…know where…Metal Sonic's hidden Egg-Timer…after changing…the world's appearance…"

"To your amazingly good fortune I do." said Dr. Eggman "Metal Sonic has hidden it in a large storage room. If you go through the door at the back of the room, you'll find it there."

"Thank…you Dr. Eggman…" said Tails weakly "How do I…undo this…world? Can you tell…me? Please?"

Dr. Eggman thought for a moment. On the one hand, he did not want to help one of his enemies save the world. On the other hand he didn't want to spend eternity in a cage grovelling at Metal Sonic's feet. He'd rather be on top of the world rather then being a lap dog for his own creation. Dr. Eggman knew what had to be done.

"You just simply press the reset button." said Dr. Eggman "It's a big red button marked "Reset" on the control pad. You can't miss it."

"Thank you…Eggman." said Tails "I can…only hope too much…that this…will make us…allies from now on."

"Not on your life Tails, just save the world so I can take it over myself." snapped Dr. Eggman.

Tails stuck his tongue out at Dr. Eggman and he twisted his tails around one another. He began to slowly lift himself off the ground but he was too weak to properly fly. He just sort of, hovered above the ground like a dragonfly. Tails slowly made his way over to the door at the other side of the room just as Metal Sonic elbowed Wilson in the eye and pushed him away. Unfortunately just as he was reaching the room, his strength was beginning to give way. Tails landed on the floor just in front of the door and slumped on the floor. He pushed on the door as hard as he could and the door opened. Tails pulled himself into the room. The moment he made it into the room, he was met with a sight he had wanted to see since day one of this new world. It was Egg-Timer, Eggman's time changing and time altering machine, the one thing that started all this. Tails smiled happily. Yes! He'd found it! Now he could reset the world and bring Sonic back! And maybe once he'd reset the world, he could use Egg-Timer to make a world without Dr. Eggman and bring peace back to Mobius! What a victory this would be! Tails tried to get to his feet but he couldn't bring himself to get up, he was just too weak from torture. Still, he couldn't give up while he was so close to saving the world. If he didn't take this chance, Metal Sonic might catch him and stop him before he could hit the reset button. Tails reached up to the control pad and he pulled himself up so he could see all the buttons on the pad. He just managed it and he

looked at the key pad. Just as Eggman had said, there was the big red reset button just in the corner of the pad. One touch of the button and everything would be back to normal.

Outside, Metal Sonic had finally defeated Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy and the three Mobians all lay down on the floor, grimacing in pain and groaning loudly. Metal Sonic laughed at them and he grabbed Geoffrey by the neck and hoisted him up to his height. He glared at the skunk furiously.

"Such valiant bravado skunk boy but your little gang has failed." he gloated "I have won, the world is still mine and now you die. I bet your neck will snap rather easily."

"Kill all three of us if you wish!" yelled Geoffrey bravely "You'll only rile the people of Mobius and then they'll team up against you and your army and you'll be reduced to a pile of scrap metal you cantankerous robot of evil!

"What magnanimous last words skunk boy." sneered Metal Sonic "Your death will be an honouree one indeed."

Geoffrey just kept on a straight face as Metal Sonic put his other hand on the back of his head and prepared to make the killer blow. But just before he could snap Geoffrey's neck, Tails pressed the reset button and slumped on the floor. The lower part of Egg-Timer's "mouth" slid down and its eyes began to flash orange and yellow. Then a big white beam shot out from Egg-Timer's mouth and began to expand to an enormous size, engulfing everything around it. Geoffrey smiled happily whereas Metal Sonic immediately gasped.

"What abomination is this?" he demanded furiously.

"Someone's hit the reset button Metal Sonic." sneered Geoffrey "Your world is disappearing in a bright flash metal head!"

"No! This cannot be!" cried Metal Sonic "I cannot lose! I'm invincible! I'm invulnerable! I've taken over this planet! I cannot lose it now!"

He threw Geoffrey away and he ran over to the room with Egg-Timer in. Too late. The room was engulfed with a giant white flash and the

white light began to swallow up everything in it's path. Metal Sonic shielded his optics from the white light just as it engulfed him as well as everything around him.

" **NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO….** "

Tails opened his eyes and got up from the hard rocky floor he lay on. Rocky? Rocky floor? Tails immediately began to observe his surroundings quickly. He was not in Metal Sonic's planet wide city or in the hangar bay of Eggman's headquarters fighting the four Mechas Eggman had unleashed on him, Sonic and Bunnie. He was in Dr. Eggman's underground lair with a bunch of Robians, Dr. Eggman, Alonzo and Metal Sonic! Metal Sonic was back in his original body too! YES! He did it! Everything was back to the way it was about two minutes before the world had changed! The world was saved! Funny enough though, Tails remembered everything about the world created by Metal Sonic. Shouldn't resetting the world have erased his memory of the past events he had just been through? And why did he feel like he hadn't been tortured by Metal Sonic? He felt as right as rain! Maybe Egg-Timer undid everything, including what Metal Sonic had done to him. The only thing that hadn't been reset was his memory; he still remembered everything he had just been through. As for Dr. Eggman, he seemed to have memories of the altered timeline and unfortunately, so did Metal Sonic. Tails cheered with joy.

"I did it!" he cried "The world's back to normal!"

"Yes, congratulations, we're all very proud." said Dr. Eggman sarcastically "Now run for your life before Metal Sonic gets you!"

Tails stopped cheering just in time to see Metal Sonic lunge at him in an angry spin-dash. Metal Sonic hit Tails full on in the torso and sent him flying backwards into the wall. Tails hit the wall hard and he grimaced in pain. Then Metal Sonic grabbed Tails by the neck and he pinned him against the wall. Tails stared fearfully into the robot's eyes as the robot clenched his neck tightly.

"How dare you, you insolent brat!" snarled Metal Sonic "You've

ruined everything! You've ruined my glorious worldwide Metal Sonic empire and reverted Mobius to it's original timeline! I am going to eviscerate you for that you irksome little miscreant!"

"Metal Sonic please! Don't!" begged Tails fearfully as Metal Sonic bared his claws.

Metal Sonic ignored him and he prepared to plunge his claws into Tails' chest.

"Once I eradicate you from existence little one, I shall revert Mobius back to my timeline and this time, you won't be there to fix everything!" he boomed coldly.

Tails closed his eyes and waited for the killer strike. But it never came. Metal Sonic was about to kill Tails until a dagger appeared from nowhere and plunged itself into the palm of Metal Sonic's hand. Metal Sonic yelled an electronic yell of pain and he let go of Tails and grabbed his injured hand. Tails turned to his left and his face lit up. It was Espio the Chameleon! He, Mandy, Wilson and Ruben had made it to Eggman's underground lab just in time to destroy Egg-Timer and Espio had just saved Tails from a very gruesome death.

"Espio! Thank goodness!" cried Tails "I was about to die until you showed up!"

"It's a good thing I did show up." said Espio "We cannot afford to lose our comrades after all."

Metal Sonic yanked the dagger out of his hand and he threw it away.

"Not more Mobians to rile me!" he growled "I guess I'll have to disembowel you all!"

He lunged towards Tails but Mandy kicked him furiously away.

"Don't you dare touch Tails you metal monstrosity!" she yelled.

Metal Sonic skidded across the floor and stopped beside Egg-Timer. Metal Sonic got back to his feet and realized where he was. He instantly ran to the keypad and began typing again.

"Stop him!" yelled Tails "He's going to try and change Mobius again!"

"Change Mobius again? What do you mean by that?" asked Wilson "Mobius hasn't changed at all."

Tails then realized that Wilson had no memory of the altered timeline. And he assumed Mandy didn't either so he didn't dare tell her anything about it.

"Never mind that, just stop him!" ordered Tails.

Mandy could tell from Tails' expression that whatever Egg-Timer was going to do was bad so she took a bomb off her belt and threw it at Egg-Timer. The bomb landed on the keypad and blew up in Metal Sonic's face. Metal Sonic was sent hurtling backwards and the explosion had completely destroyed the keypad. Now nobody could use Egg-Timer. Metal Sonic go furious and he rammed Mandy in the stomach in rage. Wilson whipped out his spinning blade and he walloped Metal Sonic with the flat end of the blade. Ruben then stepped in with a ninjutsu kick and sent Metal Sonic hurtling into the unusable Egg-Timer. Too add insult to injury, Ruben squirted water all over Egg-Timer. Water and electricity don't mix so Egg-Timer would explode into a million pieces and eliminate any chances of being used by Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman immediately panicked.

"NO! Don't do that you stupid water powered Mobian!" he shrieked "You'll blow it up!"

"That's the intention." snapped Ruben "Now you can't use this machine of death not now and not ever!"

"Let's run for it everybody!" cried Espio "The machine is about to explode and we don't wanna get caught up in it!"

Nobody waited to be asked twice, they all ran out of the underground lab as fast as they could just as Egg-Timer was beginning to malfunction and overheat. Dr. Eggman looked despairingly at his greatest invention about to go up in smoke.

"Master, I think we should run too." said Alonzo.

"Good idea Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman "We don't want to be caught up in the inevitable explosion."

"But what about Metal Sonic?" asked Alonzo "He's still in Egg-Timer and he'll be destroyed if we don't save him!"

"We're leaving him." said Dr. Eggman "We're letting the traitor get destroyed for his crimes against me!"

"You what?" asked Alonzo.

Dr. Eggman was about to rage in Alonzo's face when it dawned on him that Alonzo had no memory of the altered timeline because he didn't exist in it. He was destroyed before Metal Sonic changed everything so Alonzo didn't get to experience the altered timeline.

"I'll explain later." said Dr. Eggman "Let's scraper!"

And with that, he and Alonzo ran quickly out of the lab just as Egg-Timer was beginning to whirr loudly and ominously and electricity crackled everywhere. Metal Sonic, who was still inside Egg-Timer after being kicked into it by Ruben, sat up and peered out the hole he made when crashing through it. Metal Sonic was about to climb out until Egg-Timer suddenly erupted into an inferno of flames and smoke that tore its way through the entire underground lab, engulfing him with it.

The explosion began to tear it's way up the entrance to the underground lab and down the corridors. Tails, Espio, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben had all made it into the hangar bay where Sonic and Bunnie were still fighting the four Mechas Eggman had set on them. Sonic spin-dashed Mecha Tails away and was rather surprised to see everybody running for it.

"Hey guys, what's going on?" he asked.

"We've destroyed Eggman's machine and its exploding!" yelled Espio "We have to get out of here before we're engulfed in it!"

"Sweet!" said Sonic happily "Come on Bunnie, fun time's over!"

"OK sugah hog." said Bunnie as she punched Mecha Amy into the

wall.

Sonic sped off at his trademark speed, Bunnie flew after him and everybody else ran after the blue hedgehog. Just seeing Sonic again made Tails want to hug him Amy-style and cry with joy but since Sonic was erased from existence, he would have no memory of the altered world so Sonic would just wonder what Tails was on about. Still, Tails had an enormous feeling of joy all of the sudden just seeing Sonic again. He felt like this was the first time in years he'd seen his supersonic friend. All the Mobians ran for it out of Dr. Eggman's headquarters, through Robotropolis, over the gates and away from the city. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo had run into a different building just as the explosion tore up through half the side of Eggman's headquarters. One side of the quarters had been complete engulfed in flames and smoke billowed out into the air and beyond. Dr. Eggman looked grimly at his destroyed quarters.

"Darn it! And I just got the place fixed up from when Scourge wrecked it***!" moaned Dr. Eggman.

"Never mind Dr. Eggman, we can always rebuild it." said Alonzo "Pity about Egg-Timer. We could have altered the world into your image and you would have been ruler of the world."

"I know." said Dr. Eggman "Egg-Timer was pure genius. Pity Metal Sonic went rogue and remoulded the world into HIS image and made me be his pet!"

"I beg your pardon master?" asked Alonzo with a confused expression on his face.

"Metal Sonic went rogue and used Egg-Timer to remake the world into his image." explained Dr. Eggman "You won't remember because you were dead before he did so."

"Wait a minute." said Alonzo as if something was coming back to him "I remember it now. Metal Sonic grabbed you, threw you away and announced he was taking over Operation: Time-Change."

"He did and he made the world into his image but Tails reset it all." said Dr. Eggman "Now the world is back to normal, I can get to

conquering it! I will not rebuild Egg-Timer though! I don't want anymore robots going rogue and remaking the world into their image again!"

"So I guess its back to the drawing board again is it?" asked Alonzo.

"It is Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman "It is…"

"So if I've got this right, you were never dead, you were placed in a pod all the time you've been inactive and Wilson freed you from it. Am I right?" asked Sonic.

Once everybody had made it back to Green Hill Zone, Mandy had managed to clear up the misunderstanding about her being dead to Sonic and Bunnie.

"That's right." said Mandy "And the very thought of Eggman lying about my wellbeing makes my skin crawl! I hate it when people lie about people's deaths and I want to make Eggman pay for this!"

"Maybe we'll get our chance." said Wilson, putting a hand on Mandy's shoulder "I've just got a message from Royal HQ. Me and you are to join General Bostock from Grand Metropolis and the Chaotix in a heist on Robotropolis."

"Really?" said Mandy happily "Great! I can give Eggman some much needed payback!"

"I wonder why Bostock picked you two in particular." said Sonic "Maybe it's because you two were the ones who saved Grand Metropolis from catastrophe the other month****.

"Yeah, Bostock's very grateful to us so he picked us two for the heist." said Wilson.

"Pity I'm not invited, I would love to join in." said Sonic "Maybe next time though."

"I think for now, we should just relax and take it easy." said Bunnie "We've just had one hectic day takin' down that big ol' machine Dr.

Eggman had."

"I wonder what it was able to do?" wondered Sonic "Whatever it was, it was bound to be serious so it's a good thing we destroyed it while we could."

"I think we destroyed Metal Sonic as well." said Ruben "I kicked him into Egg-Timer and drenched the machine in water, causing the whole thing to explode. I don't think even Metal Sonic could have survived that."

"Metal Sonic's gone?" cried Sonic happily "Sweet! Now he's gone, all our attacks on Eggman will be as easy as pie! Ha, ha, ha!"

While everybody was talking, Tails had slipped away from the group to find Cosmo. Even though Cosmo had been killed by Silver Sonic in the altered timeline, time had been reset so Cosmo's death never happened. Tails didn't have to look for long though. He found Cosmo standing at a rose bush admiring its beauty. Tails beamed like a sunrise. Cosmo was alive! He was about to go nuts about it until it dawned on him that Cosmo would have no memory of the altered timeline so he kept his cool and tried to act like the altered timeline never happened.

"Cosmo!" Tails called to her.

Cosmo looked up from the roses and her face lit up.

"Tails!" she cried, running up to the twin-tailed fox.

The two embraced each other and Tails picked Cosmo up and twirled her around, earning a giggle from the Seedrian.

"So how did the mission go?" asked Cosmo.

"It was hectic but we made it in the end." said Tails "We destroyed Eggman's machine and Metal Sonic both at the same time."

"Metal Sonic's destroyed?" said Cosmo "That's wonderful. We won't have to worry about him anymore."

"I know Cosmo." said Tails "But it's only too much to hope that Dr.

Eggman will be giving up on this war. He'll just create a new weapon to replace Metal Sonic and it'll be back to square one."

"Don't lose hope Tails." said Cosmo "I'm sure you'll defeat Dr. Eggman and bring peace back to Mobius. I know you will."

"I'm sure we'll bring the peace back Cosmo." said Tails "Until then, we'll have to keep fighting and hope we'll make it to the end…"

Footnotes:

***See Story 30**

****See Stories 17-18**

***** See Story 28**

****** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 1***

And that's that for this story! Yeah, it kinda sucks that Metal Sonic's great victory only lasted one story doesn't it? If I could, I would have made it longer but hey, you can't have everything. So that's the end of Metal Sonic! But when an old villain falls, a new villain rises! Join me next time as Sonic investigates some BIG trouble in little Chun-Nan! Reviews are welcome.

Thanks to Kratos Pwns, Charmyxcream14 and KunxXSu for your reviews recently. You've all been wonderful authors to me. :)

Big Trouble in Little Chun Nan

Story 52: Big Trouble in Little Chun-Nan

Chun-Nan. A country on Mobius very much like the country of China on Earth. Chun-Nan was full of pagodas, bamboo forests, temples, dragon sculptures and many kung-fu teachers. Chun-Nan was home to many peace loving clans that fought against any evil force to try and make sure Chun-Nan remained in peace. Unfortunately, there was one force that threatened to consume all of Chun-Nan. And that was the deadly kung-fu mistress Zira the Ruthless. Zira was a leopard dressed in Chinese attire that consisted of a black shirt with no sleeves, an orange tie around her waist, orange wristbands, black baggy trousers that came to the knee, orange ties around her calves and sandals on her feet. She had a long pony-tail that came down to her bottom. Zira was ruthless by name and ruthless by nature. She learnt some very advanced kung-fu skills and those skills gave her the strength to take on a thousand warriors and be home in time for tea. Zira's evil nature had gotten her banished from Chun-Nan but the evil kung-fu mistress was not going to let that stop her. She wanted to rule over Chun-Nan and she didn't care if no one wanted her around, she would get what she wanted even if she tried for a million years. And as of this moment Zira was making a very steady trek back to Chun-Nan dressed in a red hooded cape. Years of exile were about to come to an end. She had spent her exiled years training and building an army. Now she had a bunch of ninjas and two kung-fu masters at her side. Alone, she was hard to defeat but now she had an army, she was invincible. Zira's soft footsteps were unheard to anyone as she headed towards the entrances gates to Chun-Nan. The only people who saw her coming were the two panda guards standing by at the gates. They were both dressed in samurai armour complete with shoulder pads, chest plates, tunics and helmets and they were both armed with axes. They saw the caped leopard coming up to them and they didn't know it was Zira due to the fact she had a hood up but years of guarding duty and experience taught them that they could never trust anyone in a hood. They raised their axes and ran up to Zira. Then suddenly shortly after the guards charged, there was a sickening crack sound

and the two guards collapsed to the ground dead. Zira just walked on as if nothing had happened, leaving the dead panda guards to slowly rot away into the earth. Zira came up to the huge red wooden gates decorated with golden dragon details around the edges that shut the outside world out of Chun-Nan. Zira drew her arm back and punched the doors in kung-fu style. The doors were reduced to splinters as if they were cheap wood and Zira marched on. She came across a training arena that she remembered all too well. This arena was the very place she was educated in. Every kung-fu lesson she took was in this very arena. At this moment, an elderly monkey dressed in Chinese attire with added shoulder pads and a tunic and armed with a staff was teaching some children kung fu lessons. Zira remembered him all too well. This monkey was her former teacher and the one person who defeated her and kicked her out of Chun-Nan. He was the first person to kill on her list of people to kill so she decided to put her plans into action. She marched onto the arena and pushed past the baffled children who just stared at her in disbelief. None of the young minds here knew a thing about her but they were about to. The monkey looked up from the kids and stared at the caped leopard that stood before him. He frowned at her and pointed his staff at her.

"Halt!" he ordered "Who are you and why are you here?"

Zira said nothing. She just pulled her hood down, revealing herself to the monkey. The monkey gasped in horror and he immediately bent down into a battle ready stance.

"Young ones, get in the temple!" he ordered "You're not safe out here!"

The children had no idea what was going on but they didn't dare question their teacher so they ran for it and headed into the temple behind the monkey. That didn't stop them from peeking nervously through the door and out the windows to see what was going on. The monkey kept his staff pointed at Zira, the leopard just stood there with a straight face on.

"Zira! What are you doing here?" boomed the monkey furiously "Treasonous people like you are forbidden to set foot in this peaceful country!"

"Oh Master Shan, is that anyway to treat one of your fellow kung-fu students?" sneered Zira, taking the cape off and throwing it to the side "I didn't come all this way to get a rude greeting you know."

"You are not my student anymore! You are a traitor Zira!" snarled Master Shan, his legs itching to spring into action and send him pouncing on Zira "You assassinated three innocent clans, destroyed a village and plotted to ransack the Pagoda of Prosperity which you failed to find! You were banished long ago and you are not welcome here! Leave now or I will have to use brute force!"

The children hiding in the temple looked at each other, wondering what was going to happen. Zira stood still and didn't move whatsoever. She appeared to be completely frozen due to how still she was. Master Shan didn't like that one little bit so he kept his senses alert for any sign of attack. Zira grinned wickedly at her former master.

"Oh Master Shan, for a kung-fu master you are such an idol of idiocy." she taunted "Did you really think I travelled through ice-cold mountains, treacherous valleys and stretching forests just to get kicked out again? I will not leave. My place is here in Chun-Nan and don't think you can kick me out again. My skills have tripled since the last time you saw me Shan."

"Zira, don't make me have to attack you!" warned Master Shan "I beat you before and I'll do it again!"

"Oh we'll see about that won't we?" cackled Zira, baring her claws and hissing at the monkey master "How about we have a nice little duel to determine my fate? If I win, I stay, if I lose, I leave. What do you say Master Shan?"

"I accept." said Master Shan "You'd better hope the tides of victory are on your side you insidious leopard!"

"I don't need to hope." said Zira coyly, bending down in a battle ready stance "The tides of victory ARE on my side. You will be nothing more then a gentle ocean wave lapping weakly at the towering shores that stand above it."

The two stared daggers at each other and prepared to fight. The hiding children all stared at the two fighters with their eyes wide open.

"Master Shan's going to fight!" whispered one child.

"Is he going to beat that scary leopard woman?" whispered another.

"I hope so." whispered a third.

Zira roared a threatening leopard roar and Master Shan bared his teeth threateningly in proper monkey style. Then the two lunged at each other at speeds unachievable by the average person. Shan swiped at Zira but Zira leaped over Shan and dropkicked him in the back of the head, sending him falling flat on his face. Zira landed and then tried to kick Shan but Shan kangaroo kicked her in the stomach and sent her skidding across the arena floor. Shan leapt back to his feet and Zira lunged at him. She leaped into the air and began to launch a series of kung-fu kicks onto the master monkey but Shan defended himself by spinning his staff around. Zira flipped backwards and charged at Shan again. Shan whacked her with his staff but Zira flipped backwards and landed on all fours. She unsheathed her claws and lunged at Master Shan.

"Spitting cobra!" she yelled.

She held two fingers up and curled them in the style of fangs and lashed out at Shan in the style of a cobra lunging at its prey. The blow hit Shan directly in the abs and he was sent flying backwards. Zira then kick slammed the ground and caused some floor tiles to stick up. She threw one into the air and kicked it towards Shan. Shan whacked it away with his staff and leaped out of the way just as Zira was lunging to him. Shan ran behind Zira and began to rapidly whack small chunks of debris at Zira with his staff as if he was hitting a million golf balls at once with a golf club. Zira defended herself with a series of chops and punches but those stones were just a distraction. Shan charged towards her with his staff glowing a deep crimson red at the tips.

"Crimson bat of the mighty!" he bellowed.

He whacked Zira with an energy enhanced swipe of the staff and Zira hurtled backwards to the edge of the arena. If she fell out, she would be declared the loser and Master Shan would have won once again so she was keen not to fall out. Zira got back to her feet and she leaped into the air and hurtled towards Master Shan. Master Shan swiped at her with his bat but he missed and Zira punched him with both fists. Shan staggered and Zira tripped him up with one swift kick to the back of the ankles. Shan fell onto his back and Zira snatched his staff. She snapped the powerful weapon in two and threw it away. Shan got back to his feet and the two began to rapidly launch punches at each other. Due to how fast they were both moving their fists looked like blurs and it was hard to tell who's punches was who's. Both opponents were blocking each other's blows at breakneck speed as they launched punches at each other. Zira stopped punching at Shan and she back flipped away from the kung fu monkey. She bent down on all fours and charged at Shan like a ravenous tiger chasing a deer. Shan just stood there and prepared for the attack. Zira pounced on Shan and spun around in mid-air. She walloped Shan on the head and sent him hurtling towards the edge of the arena. Shan managed to stop just before he could fall out of the arena and he leaped towards Zira. He walloped her in the head with one hefty swipe of his tail and he punched Zira with both fists before she could recover. Zira skidded backwards and she came to a halt just by the edge of the arena. The moment she stopped, Shan charged towards Zira and kicked her in the stomach. The kung fu leopard was sent hurling out of the arena but like all cats do, she landed on her feet. She glared grimly at Master Shan, not happy to have been defeated by him yet again. The children all beamed happily. Their teacher had won! Now Zira was out of here! Master Shan stood before Zira and he glared down at her.

"You have been defeated Zira." said Master Shan "You may leave now."

"I will leave…" said Zira smoothly "If you can defeat THIS lot."

Then, right on Que, a swarm of about twenty-five black ninja cats dressed in black ninja attire appeared from nowhere and stood behind Zira in battle ready stances. Every single one of them wielded shuriken. Then two more creatures appeared from nowhere

and stood beside Zira. One was a red falcon with claret feather tips, two long feathers from either side of his head and three of his feathers stuck up from the top of his head and were held in place with a golden band. He wore a bronze coloured robe with long sleeves and a dragon symbol on the left side of the chest area. He wore nothing on his feet since he often fought with his razor sharp talons. He had a look on his face that suggested he wasn't thrilled with this. The other was an iguana with a row of tiny spikes starting from the top of his head and going down his back. He wore a sleeveless black shirt with the yin-yang symbol on it and two Chinese words (威武, 爬行动物) which translated as "Mighty reptile". He wore a blue tie belt around his waist and baggy trousers with yin-yang symbols on the legs and blue ties around his legs. He wore the same kind of sandals as Zira. He too had a straight face on suggesting this kind of stuff was just another day for him. Master Shan was speechless to say the least.

"Y-y-you've formulated a gang?" he gasped "And you have Masters Bladefeather and Mushu on your side? How did you do that?"

"Well when I was making my month long trek back to Chun-Nan, I came across this group of shadowy ninja cats and I managed to get them to work for me." explained Zira "All it took was the promise of riches to get them on my side and now they serve me faithfully. As for these two kung-fu masters? Well, they've betrayed you too Master Shan and have decided to join me in my glorious conquest of this little country. You're only just enough for me alone but can you defeat me, Bladefeather, Mushu and a gang of ninjas all at once?" she sneered.

Master Shan was stumped. He was not trained to take on a large number of people at once since he refused to take those kind of lessons. He believed that was a way of falling to the dark side. Still, he couldn't let Zira and her gang take over Chun-Nan so he put up his fists and prepared to fight, showing no signs of fear. Zira laughed mockingly at her former master and she and the gang all lunged towards Master Shan, all yelling at once…

"I'm so glad you took me to Chun-Nan with you Sonic." said Amy

Rose, Sonic's biggest fan and would-be love interest "I've wanted to go to Chun-Nan for years and now I'm finally visiting it! And it's such a beautiful place!"

"Whatever you say Ames." said Sonic, clearly not very pleased he took Amy with him.

Things had been going slowly since the altered-timeline had been restored back to normal* and Sonic hadn't had any missions or Eggman schemes to foil so far so Sonic decided to spend his day-off in Chun-Nan. He had taken his best friend and twin-tailed sidekick Tails, Amy, the ever polite and sensitive Cream the Rabbit, Tails' love interest Cosmo the Seedrian from another world and Ruben the Water Panther, newly recruited Royal Fighter and former inhabitant of Chun-Nan so this was like going home for him. Knuckles the Echidna, Guardian of Angel Island and defender of the Master Emerald had tagged along with them since he fancied visiting such a well respected and much loved country in the east of Mobius. Everybody had been enjoying the cheery villages of Chun-Nan that they walked through. Never before had Sonic seen so many happy people in one place. It made him think of what Mobius used to be like before Dr. Eggman came and ruined everything with his invasion. At this moment, Tails was showing Cosmo some of the wonderful things that the people sold in the market stalls they walked by. Cosmo had been thrilled by the decorative pottery, tapestries, silk robes and elegant vases on sale and all were made by hand. Chun-Nan was a very old tradition country with nothing modern so most things on sale were made by hand. Cream the Rabbit and her pet Chao Cheese were sticking close to Amy as she admired the clothes on sale at a market stall. Amy had a fondness for trying on new clothes and even shopping for them whenever she visited a new place and she couldn't wait to try on the gorgeous silk robe she was admiring. It was red with an image of a magnificent golden dragon sewn around the shoulders and all the way down to the waist. As for Ruben, he was entertaining some little kids with his water powers. He pointed up at the air and squirted water straight up above his head. He then twirled his hands and made some twizzling water shapes with his water powers. The kids squealed with delight and clapped in applause at Ruben's little show. Sonic smiled. So many happy faces in one place made him feel warm and good

inside. If only this war wasn't going on! Then there still would be happy faces around and there would be no Dr. Eggman to ruin everything! Nevertheless, Sonic had to make the most of this slow day before the inevitable happened and he needed to foil another Eggman scheme.

"I've heard a lot of stories about Chun-Nan and I had no idea the country was this nice." said Sonic "No wonder this is a much loved country by many."

"I couldn't agree more Sonic." said Knuckles "Chun-Nan's as grand as legends make it out as."

"So what made you wanna come here Knuckles?" asked Sonic "I never took you as the kind of person who loved to sightsee."

"I came here because I have a day-off from guarding the Master Emerald." said Knuckles "I hate to leave it unprotected but it's in good hands. The person guarding it right now is at my level of guardian intellect so no one's getting near that giant gem."

"Cool." said Sonic "Nice how you have a chain of guardians that work on a Rota so neither one has to guard it 24/7. After all, guardians need their breaks too."

Knuckles smirked at Sonic's remark.

"I know that guardians need a rest every now and again but I love guarding the Master Emerald." said Knuckles "It's a job we echidnas have stuck to with dignity and whenever I'm on guard, the one thing I have on my mind is "I'll guard this gem until the very end and nothing will make me deviate from it"."

"No wonder you echidnas are a proud race." said Sonic with a mock snigger "You're all hot-heads that love nothing more then guarding a giant gem on a floating island day-after-day."

Knuckles frowned but he didn't react. He knew Sonic was a kidder and he had learnt he needed to be patient with Sonic since he loved to crack a joke every now and again.

"Just out of interest, how are the Chaos Emeralds?" asked Sonic.

"The guardians made a special tomb for them to stay in after you sent them there after your super showdown**." said Knuckles "The tomb's thick strong build hides their energy signatures so no one will be finding them anytime soon. They're safe as safe can be."

"Way past cool." said Sonic, flashing Knuckles a thumbs up sign "That's why I sent them to Angel Island, because I knew you echidnas would take good care of them."

"Thank you Sonic." said Knuckles "By the way Sonic, if memory serves me correctly, didn't you run through Chun-Nan on your worldwide showdown with Metal Sonic***?" he asked out of interest.

"I sure did." said Sonic "I ran across the Great Wall over there." he pointed to the notorious Great Wall that resembled the Great Wall of China and stretched for miles around. No matter where in Chun-Nan you were, you would always see the wall.

"That wall is so long and far stretching its awesome when I run at supersonic speeds!" cried Sonic excitedly "I felt way past cool when I ran across the wall and I think I'll do it again while I'm here!"

"Go on then, you've got your chance Sonic." said Knuckles "Run all around the whole wall for all I care."

"I'll do it later." said Sonic "It'd be rude of me to run off without telling anyone where I am. I can imagine Amy shrieking like a maniac at me if I ran off without telling her where I'm off to." he said lowly.

The one thing he never wanted to think about was Amy's hammer. She was such a scary girl when she had that giant mallet by her side! It's a wonder to anyone that Sonic had actually taken Amy on a date that didn't end particularly well the other day****. Speaking of Amy, she had just come out of a tailor's shop wearing the red silk robe she had been wanting to try on. Sonic looked at her and gawped. Amy looked absolutely gorgeous! That silky red robe really made Amy look beautiful and Sonic wasn't afraid to admit it to himself! Amy did a very pretty twirl and the robe flailed about around her as she twirled. Sonic stared at her, unable to keep his eyes off her. Amy stopped twirling and admired herself.

"This robe is gorgeous!" she trilled merrily "I'm so glad I'm wearing it right now! I think I'll buy this."

She went back into the shop to buy the robe. Sonic snapped out of his daze and focused back onto reality. Knuckles snickered evilly.

"What was that about Sonic old buddy?" he sneered "Is Amy becoming too much for you?"

"No! Not at all!" protested Sonic "It's just…she looked rather…um… cute in that robe she was wearing a moment ago."

Knuckles chortled with laughter.

"I thought you fancied that hammer-swinging hedgehog!" he taunted "But don't worry about it Sonic, your secret is safe with me."

"What secret?" blurted Sonic "I don't fancy Amy! True she's cute and all but I don't fancy her!"

"Sure you don't." sniggered Knuckles.

Sonic began to go red in the face. These were the times where he wished embarrassment wasn't an emotion, he didn't like experiencing it. Tails and Cosmo walked up to Sonic, hand in hand each wearing a bracelet shaped like the yin-yang symbol around their wrists. Sonic eyed their bracelets and wondered what was going on.

"Hey Tails, Hey Cosmo. What's with the fancy bracelets?" asked Sonic.

"Cosmo thought they looked pretty and the seller said that any pair who wears the symbol of yin-yang will forever be together in eternal happiness so I thought me and Cosmo should have one each." explained Tails.

"We'll be together and forever be happy while we wear these." said Cosmo dreamily "How wonderful."

Sonic didn't know what to make out of that statement other then Tails and Cosmo's fondness for each other seems to get stronger

every passing day.

"That sounds pretty nice Tails." said Sonic "I always thought yin-yang represented good and bad though."

"Yin-yang usually means polar opposites that are interconnected and interdependent on the world and how they give rise to each other in turn." said Ruben, who had finished entertaining the kids and decided to see what the others were doing "It has nothing to do with good and bad at all."

"Well I can't argue with someone who actually hails from Chun-Nan." said Sonic casually "How does it fell to be home again Ruben?"

"It feels like I'm walking down memory lane." said Ruben with a happy sigh "I remember these villages and the Great Wall like the back of my hand. Five years ago I would be happily making my way through these villages gazing at this and that and wondering what everything does and what everything is used for. If only it could have been like this always." he said in a suddenly sad tone, his ears drooped down and his face fell into a glum expression "I was so happy in Chun-Nan but now Chun-Nan brings me nothing but sad memories."

"Why is that then?" asked Sonic "What is it about Chun-Nan that makes you sad Ruben old buddy?"

Ruben was about to answer Sonic's question until a cry for help was heard not far away from where they were. The villagers seemed to have heard the cry too and began worrying about what was happening. Then suddenly out of nowhere, two black cats dressed in ninja uniforms complete with the masks that concealed their identities, leaving only their eyes visible appeared on the roof of a stall. They each had a katana in their hands. The villagers panicked and began running around fearfully.

"Run! The Yīnyǐng Mao clan is here again!" cried one villager as she ran for her life.

Sonic, Tails, Cosmo, Ruben and Knuckles began to wonder what was going on as the villagers panicked. The two cats held their

katanas at the ready and they prowled through the village as if they were looking for something to pounce on. Sonic stared at them suspiciously and wondered what they were up to. Amy and Cream burst out of the tailor's shop and they ran up to Sonic. Amy was still wearing the robe she'd brought.

"Sonic! What's happening?" asked Amy "Everybody's panicking and getting scared and running around!"

"Two ninja kitties have appeared from nowhere and are supposedly looking for trouble." said Sonic "Ruben, what's the story behind these felines in their pyjamas?"

"They're members of the Yīnyǐng Mao clan." explained Ruben "Yīnyǐng Mao means "Shadow Cat" in Chinese. The Yīnyǐng Mao are outsiders who live outside Chun-Nan's gates in exile. They go around pillaging villages and stealing riches which vary greatly from jewels to robes and even pottery."

"No prizes for guessing why those two clowns are here then." said Knuckles "Let's teach them a lesson or two!"

"No Knuckles!" cried Ruben "We cannot attack those two without a plan! Yīnyǐng Mao ninjas are very swift and sneaky and if you're not careful, they'll run you through with those katanas of theirs."

"In that case, we'll hide and pounce on them when it looks like they don't suspect a thing about us." said Sonic "Let's get behind that pile of woks."

Surely enough, everybody did as they were told and they ran for cover behind a pile of woks on display at a wok stall. They crouched down and peeked around the side of the wok pile to see what was happening. Two villagers, one a bunny rabbit with a ponytail and the other a wombat with earrings and no shirt on stared up fearfully at the two cats that glared icily at them with their steely green eyes that showed no signs of sympathy or regret of doing this. They pointed their katanas at the villagers and kept them in place as another ninja cat showed up from nowhere. He had a considerably grander appearance then the two foot soldiers with circular shoulder pads on his shoulders, a chest plate and a black vest-coat that flowed

beautifully behind him as he walked. He removed his mask, revealing a very gruff look on his face and a crescent moon shape on his forehead. He scowled at the two villagers the two cats had cornered. He looked down at them and he pointed sharply at them.

"Rrrright you two scrrrrubs." he growled gruffly. He rolled his R's every time he spoke "I have a proposition for you two."

The couple said nothing; they just stared up in fear at the mask-less cat that stood before them menacingly.

"If you two would be so honourable as to tell me where the Pagoda of Prosperity is then my men will spare your lives." he said in a kinder tone of voice.

"W-w-w-we d-d-don't know w-w-where the Pagoda of P-P-Prosperity is." stammered the bunny, her eyes wide with fright and looking like they were about to fill up with tears.

"Oh come on you little villagers, don't play stupid with old Fong Zarr now." said the cat in a dangerously soft voice "Now tell me where the Pagoda of Prosperity is or my minions will tighten your belts and suffocate you."

"My wife has told you already! We don't know where the Pagoda of Prosperity is!" snapped the wombat, putting on a pretentious brave act "Now go away and leave us poor villagers alone you Yīnyǐng scum!"

Fong Zarr didn't seem awfully pleased with the wombat's tough talk.

"Men, grrrab that man and tighten his belt." he ordered "Suffocate him until he talks."

The two cats did not hesitate. They seized the wombat by his arms and hoisted him off the ground. The wombat shrieked in fright and began to flail his legs around madly. Fong Zarr grabbed the wombat's belt, undid it and tied it back around him again. But he didn't stop there, he began to pull on either sides of the belt and tighten it around the poor wombat's waist. The wombat yelped and spluttered as Fong Zarr tightened his belt. The wombat could feel

his waistline getting shorter as Fong Zarr pulled on the belt harder and harder. Sonic's quills quivered in rage. He hated seeing people being attacked and tortured for no reason and he felt like just leaping out of his hiding place and spin-dash Fong Zarr into a pulp.

"Look what that horrible cat is doing to that poor man!" cried Cream in pity "We must help him!"

"That's just what we're doing Cream." said Sonic "Let's go team!"

He leaped out from behind the pile of woks he was hiding behind and he spin-dashed Fong Zarr directly in the back before anyone could stop him. The ninja cat yelped in surprise as he was knocked onto his face. The two cars holding the wombat dropped the wombat in surprise and he ran off with the bunny rabbit to take cover. Fong Zarr got back to his feet and growled a vicious tiger like growl.

"Who dares to attack the grrrreat Fong Zarr?" he demanded angrily.

"I do Mr. Whiskers!" retorted a voice from behind him.

Fong Zarr turned around and scowled at Sonic the Hedgehog who stood before him with a big smirk on his face. Fong Zarr snarled at Sonic and he drew out a pair of katanas.

"Who are you servant boy and why do you dare to stand to me?" he roared at him.

"OK first of all, I'm not a servant boy." snapped Sonic "And second, I have a hatred of evil people who love to harass innocent villagers so I'm teaching you a lesson or two. You and your pair of cronies better skedaddle before you regret it!"

"Seems to me like you are forgetting your place you little termite!" snarled Fong Zarr "Looks like I'll have to put you back into it! Get him my minions!" he ordered.

The two ninjas did not wait to be asked twice. They lunged at Sonic with their katanas glistening in the blazing sunlight and they hissed viciously. Sonic leaped out of their way and the two cats crashed into each other. Sonic ran up to the ninja cats and kicked them both in the head. The ninja cats staggered backwards and they shook

their heads furiously to regain their senses. Sonic spin-dashed both cats and sent them falling onto their sides. Fong Zarr clenched his teeth and he ran up to Sonic, roaring like a lion. Sonic back flipped over Fong Zarr and kicked him from behind. Fong Zarr fell onto his face once again and Sonic quickly snatched up his katanas and threw them away before he could pick them up again. Zarr got mad and he kicked Sonic in the stomach ninjutsu style. Sonic staggered backwards and punched Fong Zarr in the face. Fong Zarr growled and punched Sonic back. Sonic tried to attack Fong Zarr again but Zarr flipped over Sonic and double-kicked him in the back. Sonic hurtled into the wall of a stall and sent its contents spilling everywhere. Ruben decided that he and the others shouldn't stand idly by and let Sonic take the punishment from a powerful ninja warrior so he leapt out and joined in the fight. So did Tails, Knuckles, Amy and Cream. Cosmo stayed put, knowing she would be of no help to anyone in this fight. Sonic had just gotten back to his feet until Fong Zarr kneed him in the gut and karate chopped him across the face. Sonic fell onto his side and spluttered. Zarr tried to stomp on him but Ruben squirted him with a jet of water and sent Fong Zarr falling over in roly-poly style. Zarr got back to his feet and he pulled out a pair of shuriken.

"More termites that need to learn their place in this country!" he grumbled "Guess I'll have to take you all on!"

"Get your facts straight fuzzy!" yelled Knuckles, giving Fong Zarr an uppercut that sent him hurtling into a stall, destroying it as he landed on it "We're not from Chun-Nan so we don't need to learn our place here! You're the one who needs to learn his place!"

"Of all the courrrageous and overbearing…" mumbled Fong Zarr, picking himself up from the wrecked stall and scooping up his shuriken "Chun-Nan rrrresidents or not, you will succumb to the might of Zira the Rrrruthless, leader of the Yīnyǐng Mao clan and destined to be Empress of Chun-Nan!"

Ruben's tail straightened and his face went pale.

"Zira! Z-Z-Z-Zira the R-R-Ruthless?" he choked "No! It can't be! S-s-she's e-e-exiled! She d-d-doesn't live he-he-here anymore!"

Tails looked at him in wonder. What was Ruben suddenly so scared at? And who was he on about?

"Shows how much you know water panther." said Fong Zarr coldly "You live here so how are you so slow on the updates here?"

"You leave Ruben out of this!" snapped Amy "Let's fight!"

"If you're so desperate for a broken neck then be my guest!" snarled Fong Zarr.

He put his shuriken away, charged towards Amy and elbowed her in the gut. Cream retaliated by throwing Cheese like a baseball at him. Cheese fisted the cat in the eye and Fong Zarr yelped in pain. Amy summoned her hammer to her hand and she whacked Fong Zarr with it. Fong Zarr hurtled through the air in a rainbow arch and he landed on his back. His two cronies got back to their feet and they both ninja-kicked Amy and Cream in the back. Knuckles fisted them both in the face and bashed their heads together. The two cats saw stars and they fell to the ground, dazed and dopey feeling. Fong Zarr kick slammed Knuckles on the head and dodged an uppercut from the echidna. He roundhouse kicked Knuckles in the face. Tails dropkicked Fong Zarr in the face while flying and sent him falling onto his back. Fong Zarr threw a shuriken at Tails and the star skimmed him across the hip. Tails yelped in pain and plummeted to the ground. Sonic caught him before he could crash into the ground. He settled Tails down and spin-dashed at Fong Zarr. Fong Zarr held his arm up in front of his face to defend himself and Sonic hit him. He didn't knock Fong Zarr over but he did hurt his arm. Fong Zarr rubbed it better and threw his other shuriken at Sonic and narrowly missed him. Knuckles and Sonic both double teamed Fong Zarr with a punch each and Fong Zarr tried to kick them both but he missed. Knuckles grabbed his leg and slammed him into the ground. Fong Zarr yanked his leg out of Knuckles' grasp and threw some dust off the ground into the echidna's eyes. Knuckles yelped and rubbed his eyes as Fong Zarr gave him an uppercut to the chin. Cream and Tails both kicked Fong Zarr while flying and Fong Zarr swiped at them but the rabbit and fox were out of his reach so he missed. Fong Zarr leaped up and since he was a ninja, he could jump high and he found himself in between Tails and Cream. He did a split-kick and walloped them both in the stomach. The two fliers fell down

and landed on a hammock on sale at a hammock stall. The hammock broke their fall luckily and it didn't rip after they crashed so it was still fit to sell. Amy tried to hammer Fong Zarr again but Fong Zarr gave the hammer an upwards chop and knocked it clean out of her hands. The hammer landed on the roof of a pottery shop. Amy tried to run away and retrieve it but Fong Zarr grabbed her by the robe and threw her into the hammock stall. Amy landed in a hammock and ended up snapping one of the strings so the hammock sagged onto the floor. Cosmo decided to do something to help her friends in the fight so she picked up a rather light but tough wok and threw it at Fong Zarr like a Frisbee. Fong Zarr defended himself from a pair of attacks by Sonic and Knuckles but he got conked on the head by the wok and the wok had hit him so hard it actually knocked him out! The ninja cat collapsed onto the ground and closed his eyes. Cosmo put her hands to her mouth in surprise. She hadn't expected her wok to hit him THAT hard! For once, she'd actually helped her friends defeat the enemy! The very feeling made her feel good inside. Sonic stared at the knocked out Fong Zarr and scratched his head.

"Who threw that wok at him?" he wondered.

"I did." said Cosmo, emerging from the wok pile and walking up to Sonic "I was only trying to help you so I threw a wok at him to distract him and give you a chance to attack him. I hadn't intended to actually knock him out."

"Well that was pretty amazing Cosmo." said Sonic "I always wondered if you'd ever be of use to us in battle and it seems you can be. All you need is something to throw and you're good to go."

"Thanks Sonic." said Cosmo, smiling with pride.

As for the two ninja cats, they had recovered from their head bashing and they scooped up their knocked out clan leader. They carried Fong Zarr away and ran for it before anything else could happen. Sonic just watched them run away and he folded his arms.

"What a creep that Fong Zarr guy is!" he said crossly "If he dares to come here again I'll give him a good helping of hedgehog fury!"

"One thing I wonder is why he and his two minions even came here." said Amy, dusting herself off "What do they want?"

"They said something about the Pagoda of Prosperity." said Tails "What is it and why is it important to them?"

"The Pagoda of Prosperity is where the emperor or empress of Chun-Nan live." explained a shaken but seemingly OK looking Ruben "If I were to guess, the Yīnyǐng Mao clan are obviously attempting to ransack the pagoda for Zira the Ruthless who is supposedly in charge of them now."

"Who is this Zira the Ruthless person?" asked Knuckles "Is she ruthless by name and ruthless by nature?"

"She epitomizes the word ruthless." said Ruben "Zira is the most evil thing that's ever hailed from Chun-Nan. She was a student of fellow kung-fu master and local hero Master Shan. She was his star student and was destined for greatness. But after her mother died and her father left forever, she suddenly turned evil and began attacking innocent villagers for no apparent reason. She had decided to use kung-fu for evil and wanted to take over the Pagoda of Prosperity. She never found it and in her desperation to find it, tore up a whole village while asking questions on it's whereabouts. A wise old fortune teller then foretold of a prophecy that is yet to unfold."

"Which is?" asked Sonic.

"The prophecy stated that Zira would be defeated in battle by a member of a clan and some other being and peace would return to Chun-Nan." explained Ruben "Zira didn't like the sound of that so she slaughtered the three clans that lived here. One of them was the Hǎilàng clan, (Hǎilàng meaning "ocean wave")the clan I originated from. Zira killed all the clans and their brides. I'm the only one of the Hǎilàng left. All my friends and family, Zira killed them all just to prevent a stupid prophecy from becoming real." his eyes began to well up and his ears drooped back in despair "That's why I feel so sad returning here, I get bad memories of my clan's demise and that horrible leopard woman. I left Chun-Nan to get out of my despair but all that happened was more despair when I got captured by Marcus

and Celia Punch and trained to be a slave for Dr. Eggman*****! I wish my mother, the Bride of the Gentle Waves was still alive! Then I wouldn't always be in despair right now!"

He broke down crying and knelt down on the ground. Cosmo felt sorry for the water panther and she knelt down beside him. She put a hand on the panther's back as he wept.

"There, there Ruben." said Cosmo gently "Don't let your sorrow get the best of you. I know how you feel and how sad it is to feel alone. My entire race is at war with another and I feel like I'm the only one left on this planet but I don't let that bring me down. I can rely on my friends to make my happy and I'm sure you can too. Please be strong Ruben, for me, for everyone and even for the people of Chun-Nan. I'm sure your mother would have wanted you to be strong for her."

Ruben stopped snivelling and he looked at the caring Seedrian with a thankful smile on his face.

"You're right." said Ruben, wiping his eyes "Mother would want me to be strong. OK Cosmo, I'll be strong, for everybody in Chun-Nan."

"Well done Ruben." said Cosmo, giving him a friendly hug.

"Mr. Ruben sir, forgive me for asking but what happened to Zira after she killed all the clans here?" asked Cream politely.

"Master Shan had decided Zira had gone too far and had to be stopped so he single handily defeated her in a kung-fu match." explained Ruben "Zira was no match for her master since Shan hadn't taught her the skills of his level. Zira was sentenced to life in exile and we haven't heard a peep from her for five years straight. And now Fong Zarr shows up, claiming she's their new leader and demanding the location of the Pagoda of Prosperity. She must have returned to get revenge on Master Shan or something."

"Well if Master Shan beat her before, he must be able to defeater her again." said Knuckles.

"I hope so." said Ruben "I do not wish to see her again and I cannot

leave her knowing my country is under siege from that vile woman."

"If we see this Zira gal, we'll kick her butt right out of Chun-Nan!" declared Sonic, pounding his other hand with his fist "We'll take her down no problem!"

"Zira's no push over Sonic!" blurted Ruben "She destroyed three whole clans without breaking a sweat! She'll not be so easy to defeat! Only an advanced kung-fu master has a chance against her and if Master Shan cannot defeat Zira again then we're all doomed!"

Sonic's face fell into an "Oh right." kind of expression.

"In that case, we'd best hope that Zira doesn't get here." he said.

"As for this Pagoda of Prosperity." put in Tails "Do you know where it is Ruben?"

"I do indeed." said Ruben "I remember the way as if I'd only walked it yesterday. Why?"

"Well if Zira wants to attack the emperor and the emperor has no idea that she's here, someone needs to warn him." suggested Tails "Not to mention, we would be good protection for him."

"If the emperor knew about Zira's return then all of Chun-Nan would know of Zira's return so the emperor is obviously oblivious to Zira's return." thought Ruben "We'll have to warn him. Come on friends, follow me!"

He scampered off as quickly as he could. Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream and Cosmo ran after him. Ruben led them through the village and onto the Pagoda of Prosperity. If they didn't reach the pagoda in time then Zira would strike and bring turmoil to Chun-Nan…

Meanwhile, General Bostock and his right hand man Commander Mortimer were standing outside the iron gates of Robotropolis with a horde of men at their side. Fellow fighters Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse were by their side. They also had the Chaotix, Espio

the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile and Charmy Bee with them too. Vector had a bag of supplies on his shoulder and these supplies were for the siege. Ever since Wilson and Mandy's successful mission in Grand Metropolis****** Bostock and Mortimer had destroyed all of Eggman's forces and Grand Metropolis had been won back. They had found some of their roboticized men during their assaults and thanks to the researchers using the portable roboticizer machine that Tails had given them after sealing it from Eggman*******, they had de-roboticized them and now they were back in action and waiting to attack. Wilson and Mandy were pleased to see Bostock again and Bostock was pleased to see them again.

"Wilson, Mandy. It's a delight to be working with you two again." said Bostock gruffly.

"The pleasure's ours." said Wilson "We're happy to be on a mission involving laying siege to Dr. Eggman's hideous city."

"As for you Mandy." said Bostock, looking at the young but skilful mouse "When we heard rumours of your death, I was devastated. I cannot begin to describe my relief when it turns out you were actually alive, you were just in captive all the time you've been out of action. It's good so see you back on the battlefield."

"Thank you Bostock." said Mandy, saluting him "I need to pay Eggman back for having the nerve to lie about me like that. I'm even more disgusted at the fact he used me to make Automatons of me to trick Sonic and friends. The fat demon won't know what's hit him when I'm finished!"

"That's what I like to see Mandy girl." said Bostock cheerfully, patting the mouse on the shoulder "Determination to carry out the mission. You are a fine soldier indeed."

"And these Chaotix chaps look like fine soldiers too." said Mortimer, admiring Espio, Vector and Charmy "I'm looking forward to seeing you in battle."

"And we're looking forward to this heist." said Vector "We've got some scores to settle with Eggman ourselves."

"Whee! This is going to be loads of fun!" cried the Chaotix moron Charmy Bee "Loads of laser thingies blasting and blasting, loads of robots getting destroyed! And we'll be the ones doing it! Hee, hee, hee, hee!"

"Hmm…a little excited isn't he?" mused Mortimer "Is he always like this?"

"Charmy's an excitable little boy but he means well." said Vector "Despite his small size, he's a great help to us three and he's had training on how to kick an Eggman robot's behind."

"Yeah!" said Charmy excitedly "Dr. Eggman's not gonna know what's hit him!"

"He especially won't with me around." said Espio "I can turn invisible so he'll never see me."

"Aaaah, invisibility powers." said Bostock "A trait found in all chameleons. Very useful. I bet you'll be a great asset to us in this battle."

"I shall be at my best on this mission." said Espio.

"That's why I'm so proud to have Espio on the Chaotix." said Vector with a big fat smile on his face "He's always willing to fulfil his tasks and accomplish his missions no matter the costs."

"No wonder you three are so formidable in battles." said Mandy "Your teamwork is faultless and you have evenly balanced skills. Eggman's gonna have a tough time with you three I can tell."

"Just you watch us Mandy." boasted Vector "We three are a one-bot wrecking crew in battle!"

"Enough talk now fighters, it's time to attack." said Bostock "Mortimer, are the detonators set?"

"Primed and ready general." said Mortimer "Those gates maybe near invulnerable but these bombs will take out the gate's weaker points and allow us to invade without second thought."

"Then set them up and prepare to press forward." ordered Bostock gruffly.

Mortimer obeyed and ran over to the gates. He'd enjoyed working with Bostock ever since the Royal Fighter's Service had been formed and he was so pleased that his friend had turned back to the good side after the Operation Drill ordeal the other month. And now he and Bostock were here, ready to invade Eggman's city and do a good deal of collateral damage to the city to hinder Eggman's forces. He set the two detonators on either side of the gates and sent them to blow in ten seconds. After setting them to go, he ran for it as the countdown started. The moment he was out of range, the detonators erupted and exploded in a brilliant explosion. the explosion tore through the gates' attachment points and completely destroyed them. The gates fell forward and crashed down on the ground with an enormous clang. Everybody beamed with pride at how beautifully the detonators worked. The gates had fallen down and now they were free to attack with all haste.

"Royal Fighters CHARRRRRRRGE!" bellowed Bostock.

Everybody obeyed and they charged through the entrance to the city and into Eggman's notorious city. The masses of Eggman robots that occupied the city all jumped in surprise and they immediately began to attack. As for Dr. Eggman, he was up in his headquarters, which was being repaired from after Egg-Timer exploded and took half of the building with it yesterday. He looked out the window and was not pleased to see he had intruders in his city while his quarters were still being repaired.

"Dang and blast those stupid Mobians!" he grated "Can't I get any peace around here?"

"You can't even repair your headquarters without Mobians invading your city and making a mess of things!" griped his "loyal" servant bot Alonzo "We're going to have to get rid of them!"

"Well I'm limited with choices." said Dr. Eggman despairingly "Metal Sonic, my strongest weapon ever is destroyed, the explosion of Egg-Timer destroyed my four Mechas and I haven't had anytime to build anymore Mechas or even a new Metal Sonic!"

"So what options do we have master?" asked Alonzo "We can't let them stay here or they'll wreck your city!"

"I still have Egg-Dog from the time I kidnapped Sonic********." said Dr. Eggman "We'll use that. Egg-Dog will destroy all those pesky Royal Fighters with one blast of it's deadly cannons! Come Alonzo, let's get going!"

"Right away sir." said Alonzo, saluting.

Dr. Eggman and Alonzo ran out of the room as fast as they could and headed for the hangar bay where Egg-Dog was kept.

Outside, things were already going in the Mobian's favour. All the robots on patrol at the minute were mere pawns and scout units and not much of the heavy artillery was out at the moment so the Mobians were having an easy time smashing the robots to pieces. Rather then a belt of bombs, Mandy had decided to wield two laser pistols since she wanted to use a different weapon for once. Wilson however, still had his trademark spinning blade weapon which was a double-bladed pole like weapon he threw at his enemies like a boomerang. Bostock and Mortimer had their rust guns which caused any robot they blasted to crumble into a rusty pile of metal parts. Espio, Vector and Charmy just had their usual weapons, shuriken, brute strength and stinger respectively. Mandy began rapidly shooting any Eggman robot that dared to come near her. Her twin pistols were very powerful, despite their small size and they destroyed any robot Mandy shot at. One pull of the trigger and the robot was blasted to smithereens by the pistols. Mandy shot an Egg-Pawn and the whole bot was reduced to tiny metal pieces. She smiled at her handiwork.

"Maybe I should use these things more often." she said to herself "These pistols are very effective."

Meanwhile, Wilson was surrounded by a swarm of Egg-Pawns and Blast-strike bots but he of course, was not afraid as he knew how to deal with them. He threw his spinning blade at the swarm of robots and the deadly weapon spun towards the robots, its twin blades becoming ferocious blurs as it boomeranged towards its targets. The Egg-Pawns tried to run away but the spinning-blade sliced them all

to pieces as it churned through them all. The weapon boomeranged back to Wilson and he caught it in his hand. Two Blast-strike units began rapidly firing at the dog but Wilson dodged their attacks and plunged one of the two blades into one of the robots, killing it instantly. The other shot at Wilson but he deflected the blast with the other blade and he threw the weapon like a dart at the second Blast-strike robot. The blade impaled the robot in the chest and killed it. Wilson yanked the blade out and ran on to attack again.

"There's nothing in the world more fun then smashing Eggman robots!" he cried excitedly.

As for Bostock and Mortimer, they had their fight completely in their favour. Not only did they have rust guns but their horde of soldiers they had brought with them had rust guns too. Any robot foolish enough to get too close to the Grand Metropolis Royal Fighters were shot by the guns and reduced to a rusting wreck. The poor robots had no chance and sooner or later, Bostock and his men had brought all the robots attacking them into a miserable wreck of rusty metal.

"This reminds me of our fights in Grand Metropolis." Bostock said to Mortimer who was standing behind him.

"The only difference is you won't turn out to be a turncoat again." said Mortimer with a big grin on his face.

Bostock just grinned back and prepared to shoot again. Team Chaotix completely had their fight in their favour too. Espio threw shuriken at any robot attacking him, Vector smashed them all to bits with his brute strength and fearsome jaws and Charmy Bee flew past the horde of robots, walloping them as he buzzed by. He stung one robot in the head and killed it and he walloped another robot into Vector. Vector punched the robot before it could crash into him and the robot was completely destroyed. A robot walloped Vector in the snout but Vector got his own back and chomped it to pieces with his fearsome jaws. He coughed and spluttered as the robot's oil seeped onto his tongue and he rubbed his tongue furiously to get the taste out. Espio ninja kicked two Blast-strike units that were trying to attack him and then he karate chopped one in the neck, knocking its head clean off its body. The other robot shot at Espio.

The blast skimmed off Espio's back and Espio yelped in pain. He threw a shuriken at the robot and the shuriken sliced the robot's head off, putting it out of action for good. Espio dusted his hands off and turned to Vector who had just smashed another robot against a wall.

"This is pathetically easy." said Espio "Eggman needs to do much better then this if he wants to keep us out of Robotropolis."

"I think Eggman's still recovering from the time you, Sonic and some others destroyed his big death machine or whatever it was supposed to be." said Vector, shrugging "Oh well, let's hope things stay easy for us, we could afford an easy mission for once."

"Hey Vector, I've trashed all the robots attacking us." said Charmy "What do we do now?"

Vector took the bag of supplies off his shoulder and he pulled out two pairs of bombs. He handed a pair to Charmy and a pair to Espio.

"The General wants us to bomb one of Eggman's communication towers so he can't make contact with any of his forces abroad." said Vector "The only trouble is, I don't know where the communication tower is."

"I do." said Espio "It's directly behind his headquarters. I found that out when spying on him the other day."

"Then let's go and blow that stupid tower up already!" cried Charmy excitedly "It's gonna be lots of fun and we'll stop Eggman from calling any of his buddies that are in other places!"

"Charmy! I'm in charge so I give the order!" snapped Vector.

"Whatever boss." scoffed Charmy.

Vector scowled at the bee and turned to Espio.

"Go for it you two, blow that tower sky high!" ordered Vector.

"Roger." said Espio, running off with the bombs he was carrying.

Charmy buzzed off after him. Vector smiled with satisfaction and he ran off to join Wilson and Mandy in their attack. Mandy shot four robots dead with her powerful pistols and after they collapsed in a heap, she spun them around in her hands in the style of a cowboy and blew at the barrel as if she was blowing smoke away. Vector appeared behind Mandy and tapped the mouse on the shoulder. Mandy turned around to face Vector.

"What's up croc?" she asked.

"Espio and Charmy are getting ready to blow the communication tower." said Vector "The plan is in action."

"That piece of news is music to my ears." said Mandy, stroking her big round ears "Eggman's gonna have a lot of trouble if he can't call any of his forces abroad for back-up."

"Let's hope that nothing goes wrong for us." said Vector.

"At the rate things are going? This mission will go like clockwork all the way through." gloated Mandy.

Then suddenly, an bone-shaking rumble was heard and everybody began to wobble about as if there was an earthquake going off. Mandy and Wilson fell beside each other on their bottoms and they dropped their weapons. Vector managed to keep his balance and he held his place until the rumble stopped.

"Wh-what was th-th-that?" screamed Wilson.

"I think Eggman's bringing in the heavy artillery." suggested Mandy "Only Eggman's biggest machines cause shakes like that."

And how right Mandy was, for moments after the rumbling had stopped, the giant dog-shaped machine known as Egg-Dog appeared from behind Eggman's headquarters and hovered over to the Mobians. Bostock and Mortimer stopped firing and they looked up at Egg-Dog. They were well and truly shocked. They had faced many Eggman threats back in Grand Metropolis, but never had they been up against any of Eggman's colossal machines. To them, Egg-Dog looked like a very fearsome machine with four cannons, a dog-

shaped head and four jets in place of legs that kept it airborne. Wilson helped Mandy back onto her feet and the two kept their eyes fixed squarely on Egg-Dog. Eggman's voice boomed from inside Egg-Dog's cockpit.

"Attention invaders." the voice echoed throughout the entire city "You are trespassing in Eggman territory and vandalizing my wonderful work. I am going to kindly request for you all to leave or I'll destroy you all with Egg-Dog's unmatchable firepower!"

Dr. Eggman burst into loud grating laughter that echoed through Robotropolis. Wilson and Mandy looked at each other fearfully.

"OK…this isn't what we were expecting." gulped Mandy.

"Of all the times Eggman had to get the big machines out!" whined Wilson "I w-w-wish S-Sonic was here! He c-c-could take that th-thing down one two three!"

The dog began to shake in a terrified manner.

"Relax Wilson." said Mandy, touching Wilson on the shoulder to calm his nerves "We're not here to fight Dr. Eggman, we're here to blow up his com-tower. Once Espio and Charmy set the charges, we can leave here."

"Oh right." said Wilson "Let's give them a call and see how they're doing."

"I'll call them." said Bostock, tapping some buttons on his wrist mounted communicator.

"Espio? Charmy? Do you read me?" asked Bostock gruffly.

"Loud and clear General." came Espio's deep voice "What's your status?"

"Under siege from Eggman at the moment but that's obsolete." said Bostock "Set the charges and then we can leave here."

"The bombs are in place." said Espio as Charmy fitted in the last bomb on a sensor array in the tower "We're going to set them to

blow in thirty seconds."

Espio and Charmy were inside the tower and they had placed the four bombs in the towers most vital areas so they could destroy it in an instant.

"Very good boys." said Bostock "We'll wait until you and Charmy emerge from the tower."

"Roger." said Espio, switching off.

"Um…Espio?" said Charmy, his antenna quivering with fright "I don't think we'll be getting out of here in a hurry."

"Why not?" asked Espio.

Charmy just pointed out of the window and Espio looked out to see what the problem was. His eyes widened in horror, an expression the chameleon hardly ever used. Twenty huge dome shaped, heavily armoured Eggman robots armed with hammers, bazookas and shields were standing guard outside the tower. Those robots were very dangerous and very tough robots and trying to get past twenty of them in a dash would be suicide. They were hard to destroy and they were heavily protected so their attacks would be in vain. Espio switched the communicator back on and spoke into it.

"General? I think we're going to need some back up!" cried Espio "There's a gang of heavily armoured robots outside the tower and me and Charmy can't get past them without getting smashed!"

"We've got your message Espio." said Bostock "We'll send help immediately. Over and out."

The general chipmunk switched off and turned to Wilson, Mandy and Vector.

"Espio and Charmy need some help you three." said Bostock "Me, Mortimer and you three will aid them in escaping the robot guards. My men will keep Eggman's dog machine at bay."

"Well if you're sure…" said Mandy uncertainly.

"My men will be fine." said Bostock "They're fine soldiers and they are willing to go out in a blaze of glory if they have to."

"Wow. Those guys are loyal." said Vector, impressed with what Bostock had said.

"OK then boys, let's save our friends." said Mandy "Charge!"

She, Wilson, Vector, Bostock and Mortimer ran off to save Espio and Charmy. Dr. Eggman saw them running away so he aimed Egg-Dog's cannons at them. Bostock's men all aimed their rust guns up at Egg-Dog and began firing at it. The blasts rocked Egg-Dog about and Eggman almost fell onto his side. Eggman looked down at Bostock's attacking troops and he aimed Egg-Dog's cannons at them.

"I recognize their weapons." Eggman mused to himself "Rust guns. Makes anything rust when they shoot at it. Too bad for them Egg-Dog has rust-proof armour! Still, I'd better destroy them before their pistols do some damage to Egg-Dog."

"All cannons fire at that group of soldiers!" ordered Alonzo.

Egg-Dog's four cannons pointed down at Bostock's soldiers and fired at them. The troops immediately scattered and ran for it before they could get hit. Bostock looked over his shoulder to see what was happening and began to wonder if his men would hold out. He shook his head and ran on to the communication tower to help Espio and Charmy escape.

"Talk you obstinate monkey! TALK!" screamed Zira, kicking Master Shan very sharply in the stomach.

Zira and her gang had taken down Master Shan but instead of killing him here and then, Zira had taken him to an abandoned Chun-Nan prison for interrogation. They had chained Master Shan by his arms to the wall and had been showering him with hard punches, kicks and even whips and nunchakus. Master Shan looked as if he had been in a road accident. He was coated in bruises and cuts and he

felt like all his bones were broken. It was amazing that the kung-fu monkey was still alive after all that! Despite Zira's best efforts, Master Shan had remained quiet.

"Not…matter how…much the…lightening strikes…" croaked Master Shan "It's…victim…will never…speak…"

Zira growled in frustration and punched Master Shan in the face. The punch made Master Shan spit out a tooth and a thin trickle of blood seeped out of his nose.

"I always forget that kung-fu masters are the hardest to break." sighed Zira "But still, even my level of torture should have you squealing to me former master. Do I have to take it to the extreme Master Shan?"

"Um Ma'Am, vis-à-vis this interrogation, if we push this torture to an even more pernicious nature, we may end up executing him." said the falcon "We cannot learn his sequestrated secrets if we execute the monkey you know."

"I know we can't learn anything from a dead monkey!" snapped Zira "Stop being rhetorical Bladefeather!"

"My utmost apologies mistress of turpitude." said Bladefeather politely.

"I hope Fong Zarr's having an easier time then we are." said Zira "Villagers are easier to snap then a kung-fu master after all. I bet the first villager Fong Zarr has questioned has cracked like a little insignificant egg right now." she laughed evilly at the very thought of terrified villagers succumbing to the mighty Fong Zarr right now.

Then suddenly the door swung open and in burst the two ninja cats that Sonic and friends had just defeated. They lay down the still knocked out Fong Zarr and they saluted Zira respectfully. Zira strode over to Fong Zarr and felt his pulse. He was obviously alive but Zira wasn't pleased to see he was knocked out.

"What happened to him?" snarled Zira fiercely.

"He was knocked out after someone threw a wok at him." explained

one of the cats.

"At least he's alive." said Zira "Did you find out the location of the Pagoda of Prosperity?"

"Unfortunately no." said the other cat "Fong Zarr was interrogating one of the villagers and then a blue hedgehog and his gang of friends appeared from nowhere and attacked him. They defeated him so we retreated and brought him back here."

Zira was so angry she looked like she was about to explode.

"Of all the unreliable…that's it!" she screeched "I'm taking this interrogation to the max! I'll get Master Shan to talk if it's the last thing I do! And I think I know how to get him to crack at last." she purred, putting a finger to her head and thinking hard.

Bladefeather and Mushu looked at each other, waiting for something to happen. Zira strolled back over to Master Shan and, for some strange reason, unchained the kung-fu master. Master Shan fell onto his hands and knees, panting and gasping heavily. Zira knelt down before the monkey and lifted his head up so he was looking her directly in the eye.

"You know what Master Shan?" purred Zira "If you won't tell me where the Pagoda of Prosperity is…then I bet your students will."

My…my…students?" gasped Master Shan, he's eyes widening in horror.

"Yes your students." said Zira "Since you've taught them everything you know, I bet they know where the Pagoda of Prosperity is. And children are easier to break then kung-fu masters so maybe I could interrogate one of them for the information I require…"

"The young ones…don't know…where the…pagoda is…" spluttered Master Shan "They…aren't old…enough to know…yet."

"In that case, I'll just kill them all and lower the population of unneeded citizens in Chun-Nan." purred Zira evilly.

"No!" choked Master Shan "Not the…young ones…please…!"

"Then tell me what I want and I promise with my stony heart I will not lay a paw on those snot-faced children!" snarled Zira.

Master Shan stared down at the floor in shame. He didn't want Zira to learn the location of an important place in Chun-Nan but he loved children and always thought their lives were more important then older people since children have much to learn over their years so he had to for the sake of his students.

"The Pagoda…is…five miles west…from the local…village…and up on…a…hilltop just left from…the lake…" explained Master Shan with great reluctance.

Zira put both her hands on Master Shan's face and she jammed her face into his.

"Thank you Master." she said coldly "Your services are no longer required."

Master Shan's eyes widened in fight. Zira flashed her former master a sick twisted grin and then…

CRACK!

And that was it. Master Shan was dead. His lifeless body collapsed to the floor and Zira cackled a very witchy kind of laugh. Bladefeather and Mushu seemed to be horrified at this but they said nothing.

"Finally!" she cackled "I've found the location of the Pagoda of Prosperity! Now my reign over Chun-Nan can begin once I assassinate the emperor and his daughter! Bladefeather! You get the Yīnyǐng Mao ready!"

"At once mistress." said Bladefeather, taking flight and flying out through the door with one mighty swoop of his wings.

"Mushu, me and you will arrive at the pagoda and do NOT attack until Bladefeather and the ninjas arrive and I give the order!" hissed Zira "Is that understood?"

Mushu nodded. Mushu was a silent kung-fu master. He had lost his

ability to speak in a fight and his only method of communication was roars and hisses as well as sign language. His quiet nature made him a dangerous foe for anybody fighting him.

"Good." said Zira "Now that's sorted, we can make our merry way to the place that is deservingly mine. And now Master Shan is dead, I have no obstacle in my way!"

Zira and Mushu left the room and the two ninja cats carried their still knocked out Fong Zarr after them. The door shut with an echoing clang that filled the entire room. Now Zira knew where the Pagoda of Prosperity was, Chun-Nan was doomed…

Footnotes:

***See the already legendary Story 50**

**** See Story 45 for a super showdown**

***** See the whole worldwide adventure in Story 31**

****** See Story 48 for a date that doesn't go as well as most dates…**

******* As revealed in Story 48**

******** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 1***

********* See Story 13**

********** See Story 48 (again)**

Oh dear! Looks like Sonic's in for a treat! Can Sonic defeat Zira or will he have no chance against a kung-fu mistress? Join me next time. Reviews are welcome. Also see the spin-off title **Tales from Mobius** ***as Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey St. John investigate some Trouble in Adabat!***

P.S. I apologize for if Zira's main method of killing disturbs you.

P.P.S. You may need a dictionary to understand some of the words Bladefeather the Falcon is saying throughout the saga as you may not be familiar with most of them.

The Pagoda Pandemonium

Story 53: The Pagoda Pandemonium

"Here it is Sonic." said Ruben the Water Panther, pointing at the top of a hilltop they had just come across "The Pagoda of Prosperity."

Sonic the Hedgehog and friends hopped over a bunch of stepping stones set in the lake for travellers to use to cross over. They looked up at the hilltop and stared in awe at what awaited them up there. The pagoda was just as glamorous as all pagodas with its multiple eaves and uniquely styled roof. Its colour scheme was white and gold and it had a large symbol above the door. The symbol was the symbol of peace with the symbol of yin-yang behind it all carved out of gold. The pagoda had two very large and beautifully sculpted vases outside the door with very colourful plants in them. Sonic was impressed. The pagoda certainly looked like the dwelling place of an emperor. Sonic whistled in an impressed tone.

"Wow. Very emperor-y looking." said Sonic "So this is the place Zira is looking for I guess."

"Good thing we found it first." said Cosmo "Now we can warn the emperor of Zira's return."

"What's this emperor like?" asked Cream "Is he as horrible as the emperors you read about in the history books?"

"Horrible?" blurted Ruben as if he'd never heard of the word "horrible" before "The emperor doesn't even know what the word "horrible" means! He's the kindest man in Chun-Nan and it's precisely his reign that makes Chun-Nan a wonderful place and brings a smile on everyone's face."

"In that case, he won't have any trouble listening to us." said Sonic "So let's go meet him."

The Mobians all ran up the small hilltop and towards the pagoda. The moment they were atop the hilltop, Ruben knocked on the door

and waited for an answer. The door slid sideways to open up and there stood a reddish brown mongoose in an emperor's robe and fancy hat that all Chinese emperors wore. His robe was a mixture of red, gold and green and his hat was black with rep strips on the sides. He was twenty years past his prime but he still looked as fit as a fiddle and he had a very welcoming smile on his face. Beside him was a pretty looking twenty one year old female mongoose who wore a purple strapped dress decorated with Chinese symbols and plant like decals. Her hair was styled in a bun with hair sticks and she carried a hand fan which had a beautiful deco on it.

"Greetings young ones." said the emperor mongoose, bowing down respectively to his visitors. He had a deep baritone voice that indicated his age heavily "I was not expecting visitors at all but I'm glad I have some. It's getting a little lonesome up here."

Everybody bowed down to the mongoose.

"Nǐ hǎo emperor." said Ruben, bowing down to the mongoose "I am Ruben the Water Panther, last of the Hailàng Clan."

"Oh little Ruben, I know who you are child." said the mongoose with a slight chuckle "I knew much of the Hailàng Clan before Zira the Ruthless slaughtered the entire clan. I didn't know there was a survivor though. I thought Zira had wiped the entire clan out."

"Funny you should speak of Zira your highness." said Sonic, standing up "We came here to warn you about her. Zira's returned and she's plotting to ransack this place!"

The girl mongoose hid her face behind her fan but the emperor mongoose kept a straight face on. He did have a look of concern in his eyes though.

"This is unfortunate news." said the emperor mongoose slowly "I cannot believe it! Zira's returned? We banished her years ago and now she's back! I'll have to get the villagers to evacuate the village and get Master Shan, Master Bladefeather and Master Mushu to fend her off once again!"

"Shall we let these nice people come in?" asked the girl sweetly "I

bet they're fascinating people and I bet they'd love to know all about us."

"Fascinating, you bet we are!" boasted Sonic "And I'm more then just fascinating. I'm…"

"Yeah, yeah we get it Sonic now come on before your head swells up!" grumbled Knuckles, sharply pushing Sonic towards the pagoda.

The Mobians all walked inside the pagoda and found themselves in a large room decorated with tapestries that had drawings of wildlife and ancient Chun-Nan on them. There were lots of soft silky or velvet cushions for the occupants to sit on and there was a table and chair on the other side of the room. The emperor mongoose invited Sonic and friends to sit on the cushions while he sat on one himself. Everybody sat down and the emperor mongoose called the girl mongoose to him.

"Prepare some tea for our guests Matilda." he said "That's the honouree thing to do when we have visitors."

"Yes father." said the girl mongoose who's name was apparently Matilda.

She ran off to make the tea.

"Allow me to introduce myself my guests." said the mongoose "I am Emperor Dalon Tai and the person making the tea is my daughter Princess Dalon Matilda."

"That's silly, why are both your names Dalon?" asked Tails.

"No child, in Chun-Nan, we introduce ourselves surnames first." explained Tai "Tai is my first name and Dalon is my surname."

"I see." said Tails.

"Matilda's an odd name to call a citizen of Chun-Nan isn't it?" asked Amy "It definitely doesn't fit in with the other names in Chun-Nan."

"I called my daughter Matilda because the name means "might" and "strength"." explained Tai "And I also picked the name because I

thought it would make Matilda stand out a bit more form the rest of the Chun-Nan citizens. What are your names by the way?"

"I take it you've not heard of me eh emperor?" said Sonic.

"I know full well who you are young man." said Tai with a big grin on his face "You are the world famous Sonic the Hedgehog. You're the one who fights that invader Dr. Eggman and tries to bring peace back to Mobius. How could I have not have heard of you?"

"Well maybe because there's no Eggman invasion going on here?" suggested Sonic.

"Word travels fast around Chun-Nan and I'm always the one that gets it." said Tai "No news in this country or other countries goes around without me hearing about it."

"And yet you heard nothing about Zira's return." noted Amy.

"Her return is too recent for me to pick up right away." said Tai "It's usually the next day I hear news like that. Now, would the rest of you like to introduce yourselves please?"

"Yes emperor. My name's Miles Prower but everybody calls me Tails." Tails introduced.

"My name is Cream the Rabbit. How do you do?" introduced Cream sweetly.

"My name is Cosmo and I'm not from this planet." introduced Cosmo.

"I'm Knuckles, Guardian of Angel Island." said Knuckles.

"And I'm Amy Rose, Sonic's biggest fan and soon-to-be girlfriend." said Amy.

"Amy!" snapped Sonic "No go on the fan-girl behaviour please!"

Amy ignored him.

"I've heard much about you five." said Tai as Matilda came by

everyone and passed them a cup "You're all Sonic's helpers in his missions if I'm correct."

"That's right." said Tails as Matilda poured him some tea from a teapot "I'm Sonic's best friend and sidekick. I'm also a mechanic and I invent things to help make things easier for Sonic and friends in their battles. I don't think I've made much progress though." he said sadly.

"It doesn't matter my child." said Tai kindly "You may not be making much progress now but that doesn't mean your progress will never increase over time. I'm sure your gadgets will bring peace back to Mobius once again."

Tails smiled with pleasure. That statement made him feel much better.

"As for you dear child." said Tai, pointing at Cosmo who was just taking a sip of tea from her cup that Matilda had just poured for her "I've heard fascinating tales about you. Weren't you the one that saved the Princess of Mobotropolis from certain death?"

"I was." said Cosmo, putting the cup down and looking sad "I saved her from getting killed by a demon from space named Marik. He's a Martian from Mars and he's the embodiment of sadism and destruction. He's always trying to kill me and my kind and his kind are at war with each other. I came here completely by accident while I was being evacuated but I like it here and I've made lots of new friends that are keeping my spirits up while I'm here. I hope one day to return to my Homeworld and find the Martians are gone for good and my people are standing victorious."

Tails didn't like the sound of that. If Cosmo left then his heart would shatter like glass and he would end up losing the one girl he loved more then anything.

"That is an interesting tale little one." said Tai quietly and he held out his cup for Matilda to pour some tea into "My advice on that is things may seem bleak and the fires may be burning, remember that no fire lasts forever and there's always hope in even the bleakest of situations. The conflict with your kind will end and there's always the

chance it will be your kind that arises from the ashes of the war."

Cosmo was touched by that statement and her saddened face brightened up. Tai took a sip of tea and he looked at Amy.

"Nice touch you have, wearing a Chinese robe so you can fit in better with the locals Miss Rose." he said.

"Thank you Mr. Dalon sir." said Amy "What do you know about me other then my fondness for Sonic?"

"Guys, gals, I don't mean to sound rude or anything," interrupted Sonic "But can we discuss something more important like how are we gonna stop Zira from taking over Chun-Nan?"

"Patience hedgehog." said Tai firmly "We cannot rush into the roaring flames without a way of extinguishing it first."

"Whoever said anything about fires?" snapped Sonic.

"No silly boy, daddy means we must think first before we take on that horrible woman Zira." explained Matilda "Isn't that right daddy?"

"You are correct angel." said Tai "Now Sonic, in answer to your question, I do know how to stop Zira. Our three strongest kung-fu masters Master Shan the Monkey, Master Bladefeather the Falcon and Master Mushu the Iguana are a formidable force for her and all three of them together kicked her out of Chun-Nan the first time so those three will do it again. But we must get the villagers to safety first and then we call the masters to duty."

"And me and my pals will be happy to help them." said Sonic, pounding his fists together "I hate evil people and I wanna show Zira what happens when she messes with countries I really like!"

"Sonic, Zira is not a laughing matter." said Tai firmly "She is a relentless woman with insane kung-fu skills. Some of the best in Chun-Nan's history. I know of your super speed and combat skills but kung-fu is not a force to be reckoned with. It is a much more powerful skill then anything you've ever faced. But since you'll be fighting alongside the three kung-fu masters then I guess you'll be alright against her."

"You bet I will!" boasted Sonic "Zira won't know what's hit her when I've finished with her!"

Then suddenly there was a rather loud and sharp knock at the door that made everybody jump and almost spill their teas. Tai got to his feet and wondered over to open it and see who it was. The moment he began sliding the door open, something kicked the door and sent the emperor flying backwards and crashing into the wall. Matilda screamed, dropped the teapot on the floor by accident and ran over to help her dad. Sonic and Knuckles were the first to leap up. They ran outside to see what the attacker was only to get attacked themselves. They were hit by a rapid fast punch and they were sent flying into the wall beside Tai and Matilda. Amy, Cream and Cosmo got to their feet to help them where as Tails and Ruben stood defensively in front of the emperor and princess. The attacker did a flip into the room and he landed before Tai and Matilda. Matilda clutched her father's robe in fright and her ears drooped back as they stared up at the assailant. It was the silent but deadly kung-fu warrior Mushu the Iguana! He gritted his teeth and scowled at his victims before him. Tai was livid and he stood to his feet.

"Master Mushu, what is the meaning of this?" demanded Tai angrily "You know this is a place of honour and prosperity!"

Mushu ignored him and he prodded him sharply in the stomach. Tai wheezed and fell back against the wall.

"Daddy!" cried Matilda "Are you alright?"

Mushu snarled angrily at his victims and he bore down on them. Tails took flight and flew towards the iguana, ready to punch him in the face.

"You leave the emperor and princess alone!" yelled Tails.

"Know your place!" snarled another voice from nowhere.

The voice belonged to Bladefeather the Falcon. He had crushed his way in through the roof and he dive-bombed Tails into the floor. Ruben stood back, knowing it was suicide to go near the falcon and try to attack him. Bladefeather put his clawed foot on Tails' back and

pinned him down. Tails turned his head around to look at his attacker.

"Wh-wh-who the h-h-heck are you?" asked Tails.

"Don't you dare talk to me in that disapproving tone you little brat!" snarled Bladefeather, raising his wings menacingly "I am Master Bladefeather, Master of the Thousand Daggers and I am going to educate that peevish mind of yours with some much needed manners!"

Then suddenly, a third assailant appeared from nowhere and stood by the door. She was accompanied with a gang of ninja cats and their leader Fong Zarr, who had recovered from Cosmo's wok throw earlier and he looked furious to see Sonic and friends there again. The cats all had their katanas at the ready. Bladefeather and Mushu turned around to see who it was, only to see it was their new leader.

"Mistress of perjured nature and turpitude." said Bladefeather respectively "We have secured the pagoda."

"Excellent work Bladefeather." said the voice of none other then Zira the Ruthless as she entered the glamorous pagoda and stood before the terrified emperor and his equally as terrified daughter "Now Emperor Dalon Tai, your reign comes to an end and my reign over Chun-Nan begins!"

"Stop putting up this feeble resistance Mobians!" yelled Dr. Eggman as Bostock's men continued to fire at Egg-Dog's tough armour "You cannot penetrate Egg-Dog's invincible hide!"

Bostock's troops and Egg-Dog had been keeping up this game of cat and mouse for a while and they were still shooting at each other. Eggman hadn't hit anybody so far but he came pretty close a lot of times.

As for Bostock, Mortimer, Wilson, Mandy and Vector, they had just made it to the communication tower which like Espio had said, was surrounded by twenty heavily armed robots. The robots were dome

shaped and very heavily armoured. They armed with hammers, bazookas and shields. The Mobians looked a little worried. It was going to be hard to destroy something with a shield. The robots glared at the Mobians and they raised their hammers menacingly, threatening to squish them. Mandy raised her pistols and threatened to pull the trigger.

"Don't make me have to shoot you!" she warned "Now be nice little robots and step aside so we can help our friends will you?"

The robots just charged up to the mouse with their hammers raised above their heads. Mandy fumed over the fact her little threat didn't work so she shot at the robots. Despite the raw power of her twin-pistols, the laser blasts just bounced harmlessly off their armour! Mandy flinched and ran for it as the robots ran towards her. One tried to smash her with its hammer but it missed and Mandy leaped over it in a somersault.

"OK, you don't wanna step aside." said Mandy, standing on top of the attacking robot's head "You wanna do battle. Well your wish is granted."

She pointed her pistols at the robot's head which she stood upon and rapidly fired at it. But even the robot's head was heavily armoured and her shots didn't even singe its head. Another robot plodded up to the robot Mandy was standing on and it swung its hammer at her. Mandy leaped out of the way just seconds before the hammer hit. The robot's hammer completely destroyed the robot Mandy was attacking and it collapsed to the ground in a pile of robot parts.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mandy "Robots, the only thing they don't have is a brain!"

"Good one Mandy." said Bostock "If you keep doing that, all the robots will destroy each other."

"Let's see if our rust guns work on these guys." said Mortimer, pointing his pistol at a robot that charged towards them.

Mortimer fired at the robot but the robot raised its shield and the

blast bounced off it. Bostock fired but the robot kept its shield raised to deflect the blast. The robot tried to smash them with its hammer but it missed and hit the ground, leaving a hammer sized crater where it hit. Bostock and Mortimer fired at the robot from the other side so it couldn't raise its shield in time but the blasts bounced harmlessly off its armour.

"Curses! Rust proof armour!" moaned Bostock "Our pistols are useless!"

"This just makes me wonder why aren't all of Eggman's robots rust proof." said Mortimer "That scientist is a senile fellow isn't he?"

"So if we can't blast these things to pieces then I'm willing to bet my spinning blade won't work on them." said Wilson, shaking a little "What do we do now?"

"I'll see if I can smash these guys to bits!" said Vector, cracking his knuckles.

Vector ran up to a robot and punched at it but the robot had its shield up so Vector punched the shield. Vector then grabbed the robot's shield and ripped it clean off its arm. The robot tried to hammer him but Vector hid behind the shield and let the shield take the punishment. The hammer it with a deafening clud and Vector ended up with a loud ringing in his ears. Vector shook it off and threw the shield at the robot like a Frisbee. The shield hit the robot directly in the forehead and knocked it over. Mandy then had an idea and she fired at the robot while it was lying on its back. The robot was destroyed in seconds after being shot at. Mandy's face brightened.

"The underside is their weak point!" she exclaimed "Now we know how to destroy these con-bots!"

"Well that's convenient." said Wilson "Now these guys will fall in a matter of moments and we can get Espio and Charmy out of here."

"I have a better idea." said Bostock "Vector, you throw that shield at that window up there."

He pointed to a window high up from where they were now. The com-tower was very tall after all and Espio and Charmy were in the top floor.

"Um…OK general." said Vector "I hope this plan isn't a stupid one."

Vector threw the shield at the communication tower's window. The shield crashed through the window with a terrific smash and Espio and Charmy jumped out of their skins.

"Hey! What's going on? Someone's attacking us!" screamed Charmy.

"No Charmy, I think someone's buying us an exit." said Espio, looking out of the window and seeing Vector waving up to him on the ground.

"So does that mean we can set these things to go bang and we can get outta here?" asked Charmy.

"Yes Charmy, we can get outta here." said Espio with a sly grin on his face "Set the bombs."

Charmy obeyed and he switched them on. The countdown on the bomb started and the numbers began to beep down from thirty seconds. Charmy held Espio by the hand and flew him out of the broken window and down to the ground. One of the armoured robots saw them and aimed it's shoulder mounted bazooka at them in an attempt to blast them out of the sky but Vector leaped up and socked it in the face, knocking it over onto it's back and leaving it vulnerable to Mandy, Bostock and Mortimer's laser pistols. The three Mobians shot at the downed robot and destroyed it. Charmy and Espio made it to the ground just as the countdown reached zero and the communications tower erupted into a ball of smoke and fire. This was a sign for everybody to run for it. The Mobians retreated from the battle as large chunks of debris began to shower down on the ground around the tower. The robots tried to run but they were much to large and heavy to run so they lumbered away. They were not fast enough to escape the falling tower and they were destroyed as the tower crashed down on the ground, making a terrific noise as it did so. Dr. Eggman saw the explosion out of the corner of his eye

and he stopped firing at Bostock's troops.

"What's going on over there?" blasted Dr. Eggman.

"I think someone is causing trouble behind your headquarters sir." said Alonzo "Let's see what it is."

Dr. Eggman agreed and he steered Egg-Dog to the right. Egg-Dog hovered away from Bostock's troops and headed towards Eggman's marvellous headquarters. The Mobians down below stopped running and looked up at the giant dog machine coming towards them. Wilson whimpered.

"That machine's coming for us!" he whined "I think Eggman knows what we've just done!"

"Eggman's gonna blast us! We should run for our lives!" cried Charmy.

Egg-Dog was now directly above the watching Mobians and Eggman could see the carnage they had just caused right now. His communications tower was completely destroyed. It was lying in a miserable fragmented, smoking wreck on the ground. Dr. Eggman went wild with rage and he yanked on his moustache angrily.

"Curse those stupid Royal Fighters!" he bellowed "Now I can't make contact with any of my forces abroad! I'll need to make a new com-tower now!"

"Um Master, our scanners are picking up seven Mobians directly beneath us." said Alonzo, looking at a bleeping scanner that showed seven dots, representing the Mobians down below.

"Well in that case, let's bomb them!" roared Dr. Eggman "Bombs, deploy!"

He pulled a lever on the control pad and a hatch opened up. A huge bomb fell down out of the open hatch and soared to the ground. The Mobians screamed in terror and ran for it just as the bomb hit. Nobody got hit by the bomb but the force of the explosion sent everybody flying. Bostock and Mortimer landed rather painfully on a pile of destroyed robots, Wilson and Mandy landed near a building

and Mandy hit her head on something hard and passed out and Team Chaotix landed on the roof of a flat-topped building. That was a very powerful bomb and the Mobians would not have survived had they been directly underneath it when it dropped. Dr. Eggman laughed like a maniac to himself.

"Now I've knocked those Mobians out, I think we can pick them off, one by one!" he cackled gleefully "Prepare the cannons!"

"Yes sir." said Alonzo, pulling a lever and pressing some buttons.

Egg-Dog aimed its four cannons at Team Chaotix and prepared to blast all three of them into slag…

"Zira!" growled Tai, getting back up to his feet and looking Zira in the eye "You and your goons are trespassing in sacred property! I am going to kindly ask you to leave before things get unpleasant."

Zira just laughed in the emperor's face.

"Dalon Tai, you're such a senile little fellow aren't you?" she cackled, wiping her eye "I've just spent weeks making my way back here and I finally find out where your palace is and you want me to leave? You must be insane if you think I spent all this time trying to get here just to leave!"

"Zira, get out!" yelled Tai, losing his patience "This is a holy place of peace and prosperity and I will not tolerate your assaults on it!"

"And I will not tolerate you imbeciles constantly denying me what is rightfully mine!" snarled Zira, baring her claws and holding them close to Tai's neck "I am the most powerful kung-fu master in the whole of Chun-Nan so therefore, I am the only one mighty enough to rule over it!"

"You're not the most powerful kung-fu master in Chun-Nan!" snapped Matilda "Master Shan is more powerful then you could ever be! He kicked you out before so he can do it again!"

"Master Shan you say?" said Zira innocently "Oh dearie me I almost

forgot about that irritable oaf of a kung-fu master. Well about him…I killed him."

"You WHAT?" screamed Tai and Matilda both at once. They both felt faint and like they were about to die themselves.

"Me and my new army took him down and we interrogated him for the pagoda's whereabouts." explained Zira "He told us your home's location and to eliminate the only obstacle in my path from stopping me, I snapped his neck and now he's gone to join the elder kung-fu masters. No one can stand to me now!"

"Oh yeah?" challenged Sonic "I'll just spin-dash against you instead!"

Sonic leaped to his feet and spin-dashed Zira directly in the chest. The vicious kung-fu leopard was sent flying into a wall and she crashed straight through it, leaving a hole in it and she landed outside at the edge of the hilltop. Sonic leaped out of the hole and landed in front of Zira. Zira got back to her feet, growling a natural leopard growl as she did so.

"Hey there Zira!" said Sonic with his trademark grin on his face "I'm your new enemy Sonic the Hedgehog, Hero of Mobius and resident from the west and I'll be very happy to kick your butt back to where you came from!"

"In that case, don't bother because I AM where I came from!" retorted Zira "And I will not have my flawless invasion marred by a peasant boy with an overbearing tone of fiduciary!"

"Yeah, I'm gonna take this moment to try and figure out what the heck "fiduciary" means and while I'm at it, I'll beat the snot outta ya." sneered Sonic, launching a punch at Zira.

Zira grabbed the punch with her clawed paw and sharply twisted Sonic's arm. Sonic yelped in pain but he tried to fight it. He tried to pull his arm out of Zira's grasp but the kung-fu master had a very strong grip. Not even the strongest of men could free himself from her grasp. Zira then socked Sonic directly in the nose and let go of his arm, causing him to fly backwards and roll down the hill. Sonic

came to a stop at the bottom of the hill and he rubbed his nose in pain. Zira leaped down and landed in front of the hedgehog. Sonic looked up at Zira, still shaken from such an enormous punch and he tried to get back up. Zira bent down and looked Sonic in the eye.

"I don't know what's made you come all the way over here just to stomp me into submission but when I'm through with you, you'll be wishing you had stayed where you were!" she hissed menacingly "Anybody who stands to my unfathomable might gets their neck broken! I slaughtered three whole clans, masses of villagers and my former master, Master Shan! So what hope do you have against me little boy?"

Sonic climbed back to his feet, staggering as he did so and he managed to get his eyes to fully open.

"Me and my friends didn't come here to defeat you." he corrected "We came here to spend our day off but after hearing about your evil, we couldn't resist the urge to stop you. You see, I hate evil as much as I love freedom and you are not taking over a country I happen to be very fond off!"

He punched Zira directly in the face and sent her falling onto her back. Before Zira could get back up, Sonic grabbed her by the tail and swung her around in a circle. He let go of Zira's tail and sent her flying into the top of the hill. Sonic ran up to the hill at his trademark speed just in time to tackle Zira in the side as she was getting back up. Zira got up on all fours and roared at Sonic. She charged at Sonic but Sonic dodged and dropkicked her. Then Sonic tried a spin-dash but Zira karate chopped him away and sent him crashing into the bottom of the hill again. Zira leaped down and landed directly on top of Sonic, literally knocking the wind out of him, scooped him up and punched him into the stream of stepping stones. Sonic landed in the stream with a splash and sent water flying everywhere. Sonic grumbled to himself and he picked himself up.

"I hate getting wet." he mumbled, shaking water out of his blue fur "Now you've just made this personal Zira!"

"It gets personal when I'm at my fiercest!" snarled Zira, walking

slowly up to Sonic with a scowl on her face "Prepare for an onslaught of relentless pounding!"

She charged towards Sonic just a fraction too fast for the hedgehog to dodge and she clawed him directly across the cheek, leaving four bloody cuts. Sonic fell onto his side and rubbed his cheek, getting bloodstains on his glove. Sonic wiped his glove on his leg and spin-dash towards Zira. Zira was hit in the head and she fell into the stream. Zira got back to her feet but Sonic spin-dashed her again. Zira stood up but Sonic spin-dashed her again. Zira was getting tired of getting spin-dashed so she didn't get back up, instead she stood up on all fours and charged off like a running cheetah. Sonic spin-dashed at her but Zira leaped out of his way and kung-fu kicked him into the ground. Sonic hit the ground face first and rolled out of the way as Zira attempted to stomp on him. Sonic grabbed Zira's long ponytail and he pulled on it, causing Zira to bend to one side and give Sonic a clear punch to the face on her. Zira yanked her ponytail out of Sonic's grip and kicked him in the shoulder. Sonic staggered backwards only to get it in the face with both fists from Zira. Sonic fell onto his back but he wasn't down for long. He leaped up and homing attacked Zira. Zira defended herself with her arms and leaped backwards to prepare for another attack on Sonic. The two then charged at each other and punched each other in the face. Both opponents were sent sprawling on the ground and they both gasped heavily. Sonic and Zira got back to their feet and they stared daggers at each other.

"You really are a powerful warrior." said Sonic cockily, feeling his healing cuts which had stopped bleeding "You're definitely more challenging then Dr. Eggman."

"I'm a challenge to everyone peasant boy!" snapped Zira "I'm surprised a merchant like you is managing to hold himself against me so far but it won't last! You may have unusually fast speed but you need fast speed, fast moves and brute strength to back it up! No one ever got anywhere just being fast you know!"

"I do know." retorted Sonic calmly "I have strength and speed on my side which is why I always win in the long run. I've won all my conflicts before in I'm gonna win this one."

"You're so overbearing peasant boy." scoffed Zira "And that will be your downfall."

The two fighters charged at each other mono y mono style, leaped into the air and kicked at each other, hitting either one's legs in mid-air.

Back in the pagoda, Bladefeather, Mushu and Fong Zarr were standing by, waiting to attack as Tails, Amy, Knuckles, Cream and Ruben prepared to fight them. Tai stood to the side, waiting for the fight to begin.

"So Bladefeather and Mushu, why have you betrayed Chun-Nan?" asked Tai coldly.

"Let's just say that Zira has given us a meritorious amount of gold that she'll reward us with if we help her conquer Chun-Nan." said Bladefeather "The country may have clawed itself out of relapse but it'll soon fall back into it. Now why don't we propose an armistice to arbitrate the conditions of your surrender and our magnanimous conquest emperor? We don't want to hurt you."

"Who's "we"? snapped Fong Zarr "I want to hurt him!"

"I'll thank you for keeping your ignorance to your self Yīnyǐng scum." snapped Bladefeather.

"Bladefeather, I will not surrender this palace to Zira." said Tai slowly "If you want it you'll have to fight for it."

"So be it." said Bladefeather icily "Don't say I didn't warn you."

He swiped the air with his wing and sent ten sharp feather shaped daggers hurling towards the emperor. Amy jumped in front of Tai and shielded herself with her hammer. The daggers all embedded themselves into Amy's hammer head. She walloped the floor with her hammer and broke the daggers.

"You leave the emperor alone!" screeched Amy "Your fight is with us!"

"Must I have the privilege of wasting my time fighting peevish,

repugnant little mendicants who don't even belong in this holy country?" sneered Bladefeather "Why not? I could do with the exercise."

"We're more then just exercise buddy!" screamed Knuckles.

He charged up to Bladefeather and lunged at him with his spiked fists. Bladefeather just stood to the side and left Knuckles to run past him. Knuckles screeched to a halt and he ran back at Bladefeather. Bladefeather spun around like a spinning top and sent feather-shaped daggers flying in all directions. Fong Zarr and his cat ninjas knew very well they had to hide outside the pagoda when Bladefeather was doing that dangerous move so they ran for cover as daggers embedded themselves into walls, the floor, the ceiling and even into the ground outside. Everybody ran for cover as Bladefeather's tornado of daggers threatened to impale them all. Knuckles leaped over Bladefeather and punched him on the top of his head, sending him falling onto the floor and dropping any daggers he was about to throw.

"How does he have so many daggers?" asked Tails "He's got thousands!"

"He's the Master of the Thousand Daggers." explained Ruben "It's a technique that lets you pull daggers from airspace and throw them in anyway you want. You have limitless amounts so old Bladefeather will never run out. It's precisely that technique that makes Bladefeather one of the most dangerous turncoats ever."

"He may have a limitless amount of daggers but I have a limitless amount of hammers!" yelled Amy "And my hammer is much stronger then a bunch of itty-bitty daggers! I'm gonna smash that traitor to his own country into mush!"

Amy ran up to Bladefeather, who was being pinned down to the ground by Knuckles but Mushu interfered by ramming her into the wall. Amy hit the wall and groaned in pain. Bladefeather punched Knuckles in the nose and threw the echidna off himself. He stood up and wondered over to Amy who stood with her back against the wall and her hammer in hand. Bladefeather bent down to Amy's height and he felt the robe she was wearing.

"I like the pretentious robe little girl." said Bladefeather sarcastically "Leaves people under the pretence you live here."

He then proceeded to rip the entire robe off of Amy, revealing her backless red dress underneath. Amy gasped in horror as Bladefeather tore the robe to pieces and threw the remains on the floor.

"Now you can't fool any flaccid minds into thinking you're from Chun-Nan you perfidious little mendicant." said Bladefeather in a nasty tone of voice

"Knock it off with the big words and fight me properly!" screamed Amy "And how dare you tear my robe to pieces! It was bought and paid for by myself personally!"

She swung her hammer at Bladefeather only for Bladefeather to catch it and grab her wrists. He then threw Amy directly into Tails, who was trying to help her. The two fighters landed on a cushion on the other side of the room. Tails and Amy tried to get back up but Mushu seized them by the scruff of their necks and hauled them off the floor. Bladefeather glared at them crossly.

"Children, such nasty stains on the face of the earth." he scoffed "Eviscerating you two bit by bit will be invigorating I can tell."

"You wouldn't be so cocky if Sonic was here feather head!" screeched Amy "Let us go you lumbering reptile!"

Mushu ignored her and remained holding her and Tails.

"Sonic? Sonic the Hedgehog?" questioned Bladefeather "I've heard all about that speedy boy. He's the one currently preventing Dr. Eggman from throwing Mobius into a pernicious state isn't he? In that case, you two must be his lap-dogs, his sidekicks who help him crawl out of the fires in his adventures."

"We're not lap-dogs!" snapped Tails "We're his friends and we help him defeat Dr. Eggman! We're gonna help him beat you and you'll regret underestimating us like that!"

"Such bravado from such a little one." sneered Bladefeather "Your

death will be more honouree then most deaths I can tell. Mushu, kill those mendicants!" he ordered.

Mushu nodded in agreement and he put Amy down but pinned her to the floor with his foot to keep her from getting away. He held Tails by the neck and proceeded to do what Zira always did to her victims until suddenly Ruben squirted Mushu and Bladefeather with an enormous jet of water. The two kung-fu masters were sent hurtling into the table at the far side of the room, breaking it and knocking it over. Ruben helped Tails and Amy back to their feet.

"Are you two OK?" asked Ruben.

"Yes thanks to you." said Tails "You saved my life."

"Now let's kick those guy's butts together!" declared Amy, summoning her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand.

Bladefeather and Mushu picked themselves up and bent down in battle ready stances.

"So you have a water panther on your side do you?" said Bladefeather in an impressed tone "Very meritorious indeed. And am I right to believe that you hail from the deceased Hailàng Clan little one?"

"You're dead right Bladefeather." said Ruben "I am the last of my clan. And by the water I am blessed with and the heart and soul of my clan, I will defeat Zira and you! Zira will pay for slaying my clan as well as the other two clans in this country!"

"We'll see about that won't we Ruben?" purred Bladefeather.

Tails, Amy and Ruben all bent down in battle ready positions. But they weren't the only ones ready for battle. Knuckles had recovered from Bladefeather's earlier attack and he bent down in a battle ready position.

"These two are going down!" growled Knuckles "Amy, me and you will take on the falcon, he's the deadliest."

"No problem Knuckles!" said Amy with a disturbingly evil grin on her

face.

"So I guess me and Ruben are against Mr. Quiet here." said Tails, pointing at Mushu.

"Yes." said Knuckles "Let's go for it Mobians! For Chun-Nan and for Mobius!"

The four Mobians and two kung-fu masters all ran up to each other and began fighting. Fists flew, feet kicked and punches were launched. Fong Zarr and his cat gang just stood by and watched the fight with interest.

"What should we do Lord Zarr?" asked a cat ninja.

"We have no orders so we don't do anything." said Fong Zarr "I'm quite content to stand idly by and watch these so-called heroes of the west get bludgeoned into nothing by our new allies. And once Zira, Bladefeather and Mushu stomp these heroes and take over Chun-Nan, we can execute Zira and take the throne for ourselves. The Yīnyǐng Mao clan will be supreme at long last and I shall be known as Emperor Zarr, rrrruler of Chun-Nan!"

He cackled quietly to himself as the fights between the Mobians, Zira and the two kung-fu masters raged on around them…

Egg-Dog fired its four enormous cannons at Team Chaotix but Charmy grabbed Espio by the hands and lifted him off the rooftop and Vector grabbed Espio's legs as Charmy flew off. Charmy carried both his team-mates off the rooftop just as Egg-Dog's cannons fired at the rooftop, destroying the building and sending debris and shrapnel hurling in every direction. Charmy touched down and the Chaotix ran for cover as Egg-Dog prepared to fire again. They ran past Bostock and Mortimer, who had just picked themselves up after their rather painful landing on a pile of robots and they followed the trio. They stopped beside Wilson, who was carrying an unconscious Mandy bridal style and running for cover behind a tower that was of no importance to them.

"Soldiers, keep Egg-Dog at bay while we think of a plan!" ordered Bostock in his loud, gravely voice.

The soldiers obeyed and decided to use a different weapon instead of their rust guns since they didn't work on Egg-Dog's rust-proof armour. Two soldiers pulled a bomb off their belts and they threw the bombs both at the same time at Egg-Dog's head. The bombs both hit Egg-Dog's window eyes and set off. These weren't the kind of bombs that blow things up though. These bombs contained a fast setting sticky, gooey purple substance that was hard to get off and would make anything stick to the ground if they got caught in it. Now Egg-Dog's windows were covered by the thick, purpley goo the bombs contained. Dr. Eggman got furious and he pounded the arms of his chair madly.

"Alonzo, remove that goo from the windows!" he barked at his servant bot.

"At once sir." said Alonzo "No pointing in firing at something if you can't see what you're firing at."

Alonzo grabbed an emergency jetpack that was behind his seat and he zipped off out of Egg-Dog's cockpit to clean the windows and give Eggman his vision back.

On the ground, Bostock, Mortimer, Wilson, Mandy and the Chaotix had all taken shelter behind a tower and they were racking their brains for a much needed plan on how to destroy Egg-Dog. Charmy stood watch so he could warn everyone if Egg-Dog was attacking again.

"We know our rust guns don't work on that thing." said Bostock "We need to try a different weapon."

"I wish me and Mandy had brought some bombs with us." said Wilson, gently setting the unconscious mouse on the ground "I bet we could blow that thing sky-high with a bomb or two."

"I doubt that bombs will work on that thing." said Mortimer "I wouldn't be too surprised if Egg-Dog's armour is resistant to explosives of any kind."

"Why don't we just flee for it while Eggman's distracted?" asked Wilson "Our mission is complete, we destroyed the com-tower, that's all we came here for."

"That is true my boy but I refuse to let that thing function and cause havoc anywhere else." said Bostock gruffly "That thing is too dangerous to stay intact, we must bring it down before Eggman uses it on a densely populated city or something! That thing could wipe out our entire service!"

"I see." said Wilson "So how are we gonna stop that dog machine then…?"

As for the Chaotix, Espio was looking up at Egg-Dog and his sharp, keen mind was whirring away like crazy. He stood as still as a statue with a finger to his lips and thinking hard. The chameleon was coming up with an idea, an idea he wasn't sure would work but in desperate situations like this, they had to try anything they could.

"Hey Espio, what's on your mind?" asked Charmy.

"I have an idea." said Espio quietly "If one of us could get up to that machine and break into it, we could sabotage the machine from the inside and bring it down to the ground."

"That sounds kinda risky Espio buddy." said Vector gruffly "But it's worth a shot. Charmy, you fly me and Espio up to Egg-Dog and we'll do the rest. Be on hand to fly us down when we've finished."

"OK." said Charmy "Up we go!"

The bee hoisted Espio off the ground and Vector held onto Espio's legs as Charmy flew off the ground so the whole Chaotix was flying up to Egg-Dog. The moment the Chaotix began ascending up into the sky, Mandy Mouse opened her eyes and woke up from being knocked out. Wilson beamed at the sight of his friend waking up. Mandy rubbed her still throbbing head and sat up straight.

"Oh my head kills!" moaned Mandy "What did I land on?"

"Mandy!" said Wilson, hugging the mouse "You're awake! And good timing too because Team Chaotix are attempting to bring Egg-Dog

down."

"Are they?" asked Mandy "Well let's keep our fingers crossed that they succeed."

The dog and mouse looked up at Egg-Dog to see Team Chaotix flying up to it. Alonzo was frantically trying to clean all the purple goo off Egg-Dog's cockpit "eye" windows. He was using the jetpack to hover in front of the windows and he had a brushing tool that looked like a garden hoe and Alonzo moved the tool up and down to scrap the thick purple goo off Egg-Dog's windows. He was doing a very good job so far, most of the goo had already been removed, he just had a few splodges around the edges and the centre to wipe away and Eggman would be able to see again. Charmy put Espio and Vector down on Egg-Dog and remained airborne while the chameleon and crocodile went into action. Espio immediately targeted Egg-Dog's four back mounted cannons by throwing shuriken at them. The shuriken embedded themselves into Egg-Dog's four cannons and exploded like they were bombs. The cannons were completely destroyed by the explosions of so many shuriken going off at once. The explosion rocked Egg-Dog and Eggman almost fell out of his chair. Alonzo slipped off Egg-Dog's nose as he was finishing scraping the goo off but his jet back saved him from falling to the ground and he flew back inside Egg-Dog quickly. Charmy sensed that now would be a good time to get Espio and Vector to safety since the damage done to Egg-Dog's cannons may have damaged the vessel itself in someway or another. The bee flew down and grabbed Espio by the hands and Vector grabbed Espio by the ankles. The whole of Team Chaotix began to descend down to the ground as the explosions finally finished tearing through Egg-Dog's tough armour after destroying the cannons. Egg-Dog rocked about wildly as if it was about to come crashing down to the ground. Dr. Eggman frantically pulled some stabilizer levers on the control pad to stabilize Egg-Dog and keep it airborne. Egg-Dog stopped rocking about and the machine regained balance much to Bostock's despair. Team Chaotix landed on the ground and let go of each other.

"So, did we do it?" asked Charmy.

"Eggman's regained balance." said Bostock "I think you need to get

back up there and do some more damage to that machine."

"Damn!" cursed Espio "I knew I should have thrown more shuriken!"

"Enough chit-chat boys!" cried Mandy, leaping up to her feet "Eggman's doing something else now!"

Everybody looked back up at Egg-Dog only to see that the dog machine was opening up its large jaws. A laser cannon extended out from inside Egg-Dog's mouth and it whirred into life. Eggman's voice boomed out from Egg-Dog's head.

"That's quite enough Mobians!" said Dr. Eggman crossly "I warned you this would happen and now you're forcing me to use drastic measures!"

Alonzo had removed all the goo of Egg-Dog's windows so unfortunately for the Mobians, Eggman could see what he was aiming at. Egg-Dog's mouth mounted laser cannon began to glow bright yellow from the inside and energy began to build up inside the deadly weapon. Bostock sensed this was bad and he ordered everybody to move. Bostock, Mortimer, Wilson, Mandy and the Chaotix ran one way, Bostock's men ran the other way just as Egg-Dog's mouth cannon fired at them. A sizzling, colossal blast of energy roared out of Egg-Dog's cannon and blasted the ground it aimed at which was absent of any targets. The stricken area erupted into stone, earth and bits of metal and it rained everywhere, narrowly missing the Mobians who had all bent down to brace for impact. Eggman roared with laughter at how powerful his weapon was and was pleased to see its effects. A large crater had been formed by the insanely powerful laser cannon.

"What a weapon!" he cried "Pity I missed the Mobians but I won't miss the next time! Charge it up for another blast Alonzo!"

Alonzo obeyed and began tuning some knobs on the control pad. The control pad hummed loudly and ominously as the recharge of the cannon commenced.

Back on the ground, Wilson got to his feet and looked up at Egg-Dog to see what it was doing. The dog machine was still hovering

but its cannon, which was still deployed wasn't glowing with energy.

"Hey guys, I think Egg-Dog's standing by for its next attack." said Wilson quietly.

"Well we'd best attack it before it fires again." said Mandy, surveying the damage done by the first blast "Has anyone got a missile launcher or a grenade or something?"

"I have one." said one of Bostock's soldiers who was a Tasmanian Devil in combat fatigues and a tin hat. He had an Australian accent and a deep voice.

He reached behind his back and un-strapped something. It was a missile launcher with two launchers that he had brought with him to use on the mission. He handed the weapon to Mandy. The mouse took it off the soldier, slightly surprised at the soldier instantly offering her the weapon instead of Bostock or Mortimer.

"I brought it along for a special occasion." explained the soldier "I didn't think we'd need it until now but it's obvious we do. I'm granting you the honour of using it Mandy because according to you, you have a score to settle with Eggman so now's your chance."

"Thank you." said Mandy "I've always wanted to use a missile launcher."

The purple mouse primed the huge weapon and she aimed it up at Egg-Dog. She peered through the target locker and made sure she was aiming at the cannon in Egg-Dog's mouth. She had a strong feeling that shooting the cannon would destroy it and bring Egg-Dog crashing down to the ground. Mandy locked on target and pulled the trigger. The missile screamed into life and blasted out of the launcher, blowing Mandy away and roaring towards its target. Egg-Dog's cannon had just finished charging up and Dr. Eggman was ready to fire. Unfortunately for him, Mandy's missile went straight into Egg-Dog's exposed cannon and exploded. The missile combined with the building up energy in Egg-Dog's cannon was not a good mix and the explosion that ensued from this deadly combination was horrendous. The explosion tore through Egg-Dog's entire body. The machine rocked about as its body was being torn

up from the inside and its head exploded into smithereens. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo had ejected themselves from Egg-Dog as it was exploding and they parachuted down to the ground. The mighty dog machine came crashing down to the ground in a blazing, smoking wreck of searing hot flames and thick, suffocating black smoke. What was once a giant machine had now been reduced to a smouldering wreck of flaming metal and smoking interiors. Dr. Eggman and Alonzo landed on the ground a few feet away from Egg-Dog and Eggman looked despairingly at his incredible machine now reduced to nothing more then a flaming wreck. Eggman yanked on his moustache angrily.

"Curse those Mobians!" he whined "That was one of the greatest machines I've ever made! How did they possibly defeat it?"

Something tapped Eggman on the shoulder and interrupted his ranting. Eggman turned around and to his surprise, saw Mandy Mouse standing there with her arms folded and her eyes narrowed into a death glare. Eggman immediately grew nervous. He smiled weakly and began sweating.

"Um…hi Mandy?" he said nervously "I take it you're still mad about me kidnapping you and making an Automaton out of you? What can I say other then I'm just an evil old man aren't I?"

Mandy put a hand on Eggman's shoulder and looked Eggman in the eye. If Eggman wasn't wearing glasses, you would probably see tiny irises of fear in his eyes.

"This is for lying about my well-being and deceiving my friends with that Automaton." said Mandy coldly.

She drew her arm back and in the blink of an eye, punched Dr. Eggman straight in the face! Everybody stared in surprise at the mouse and Wilson gasped. The punch was so hard that Dr. Eggman passed out and fainted. Alonzo screamed like a girl and Mandy smiled triumphantly, pleased to have finally gotten her own back on Dr. Eggman for what he had done to her.

"Oh my gosh!" he cried "Eggman's knocked out! I'd best get him out of here before something else happens!"

Alonzo grabbed Dr. Eggman by the uniform and dragged him away. Due to Eggman's weight though, Alonzo had a tough time dragging him away. Mandy stood there with her arms folded and just watched Alonzo get away with Dr. Eggman.

"That felt good." she said to herself "But it's only too much to hope that that punch will teach him a lesson or two."

"Mandy!" cried Wilson, running up to the mouse "That was really unexpected of you! Of all the people to physically attack Dr. Eggman like that, I never thought it would be you!"

"Well Eggman had it coming for a long time." said Mandy casually "And I needed some stress relief for what he's done to me the past day or two so I let him have it."

"I must say that was pretty cool Mandy." said Vector with admiration.

"You should punch him again!" laughed Charmy "That was funny!"

Mandy didn't know what to feel right now with all the boys commenting on her assault on Eggman but she knew that Eggman deserved it and if he didn't learn his lesson then she'd be happy to punch him again.

"Now our mission is complete, we can leave this metal hell hole." said Mortimer "Come on men, our work here is done."

The soldiers obeyed and followed the chipmunk out of Robotropolis. Bostock, Wilson, Mandy and the Chaotix followed them. Mandy looked over her shoulder to see the damages they had done to Robotropolis. They had destroyed a com-tower and Egg-Dog and many of Eggman's robots. Some of Robotropolis had been damaged by Egg-Dog firing at them and missing so Eggman had a lot of cleaning up to do at the end of the day. What a comeback to the battlefield this was for Mandy! She'd held her own well in battle, destroyed Egg-Dog and punched Eggman directly in the face in revenge for what he had done to her. This had been a very good day for the Royal Fighters Service. As everybody walked out of Robotropolis, another though crossed Mandy's mind.

I wonder how the blue dude ' s doing now... she wondered in her head.

Things were looking very grim for the Mobians right now. Sonic's fight with Zira had been mostly in Zira's favour the past minute or so. Despite Sonic's super speed, Zira had fast reflexes and was an acute dodger, meaning Sonic missed every time he spin-dashed at her. Zira knew kung-fu and Sonic only knew standard fighting skills as well as his super speed moves so Zira's attacks hurt Sonic more then Sonic's attacks hurt Zira. Sonic punched at Zira but the kung-fu mistress blocked it with her paws and she punched Sonic in the cheek. Sonic staggered backwards and Zira slugged him in the stomach. Sonic doubled over in pain and wheezed loudly. Zira karate chopped him on the back, causing him to fall flat on the ground and then she kicked him onto his back. She tried to stomp on Sonic but Sonic rolled out of her way, leaving Zira to stomp at the ground. Sonic then kicked Zira in the butt, knocking her onto her face. Sonic then spin-dashed Zira before the kung-fu mistress could get back up. Then Sonic decided to use his most powerful move on Zira. The Sonic Tornado. He ran around Zira in a circle at super-sonic speed and became nothing more then a blur around her. Zira got back to her feet and sensed this was not a good thing that was happening right now so she jumped out of Sonic's path just as the Sonic Tornado was beginning to build up. Sonic still ran around at top speed and the blue blur made a blue tornado of wind that was doing no harm to anybody because nobody was in the tornado. Sonic eventually stopped running around and he came to a halt, the tornado died down and Sonic began panting and gasping. He doesn't usually get tired but running around while having had a beating for the past minute does wonders on your energy. Sonic looked at Zira tiredly and was not pleased to see his Sonic Tornado move didn't work. Zira lunged at him and kneed him directly in the gut. Then she elbowed the hedgehog on his head and punched him in the face with both fists.

"For someone who's the Hero of Mobius your fighting is very abysmal." taunted Zira as she punched Sonic in the chest and sent him falling onto his back "I've never seen such appalling fighting in

all my life. You should learn more battle skills and rely less on your super powers. Just because you're fast it doesn't mean you're strong, you need strength to match that speed if you wish to be all powerful peasant boy!"

She stomped on Sonic's stomach and the hedgehog wheezed loudly. Sonic coughed and spluttered and he sat up. Zira grabbed the hedgehog by the neck and hoisted him up to her height.

"Now you die peasant boy." said Zira with a cruel smile "It's been fun beating you up but now I must execute you and get back to taking over the Pagoda of Prosperity now. Bye, bye!"

She then proceeded to snap Sonic's neck but the hedgehog saved himself by moving his legs rapidly as if he was running. He kicked Zira as he did so and the leopard dropped him. Sonic back flipped and landed on his feet and charged like a bull at Zira. Zira was too slow to react and she got it full force in the stomach from Sonic's super fast charge. Zira flew backwards and landed on her back. Sonic then spin-dashed her before she could get back up. Zira snarled a natural leopard snarl and she ran out of the way before Sonic could spin-dash her again. Sonic and Zira then charged at each other with their fists bared. They lunged at each other and punched each other in the face at the same time. They both skidded backwards after that onslaught and they charged at each other again.

Back in the pagoda, things were going no better. The combined might of Amy and Knuckles didn't seem to be enough against Bladefeather's kung-fu might and Tails and Ruben didn't seem able to land much of a hit on Mushu. Knuckles punched Bladefeather in the back with his spiked fists and ducked just as Bladefeather swiped at him with his wing. Knuckles gave Bladefeather an uppercut and Amy walloped him with her hammer. Despite those attacks, Bladefeather didn't show much signs of fatigue or indeed any signs that he was hurt. Amy tried to hammer Bladefeather again but Bladefeather kicked the hammer was it was coming down on him and broke it into pieces! Amy gibbered like an idiot in shock and Bladefeather smacked her in the face with one swipe of his wing. Knuckles landed a blow on the back of Bladefeather's head but even that didn't affect the falcon much. Kung-fu masters are made of

strong stuff and it can be very hard to hurt one after all. Bladefeather swiped at Knuckles but he missed and Knuckles slugged him in the stomach. Bladefeather got made and he swiped his wing at Knuckles. Six sharp daggers hurtled towards the echidna but Knuckles deflected them all with his fast hitting. But the daggers were just a distraction. Knuckles deflected the last dagger and then got a punch to the face from Bladefeather. Knuckles hurtled backwards and crashed into the wall, leaving cracks in it. Amy summoned a new hammer to her hand and tried to attack Bladefeather but Bladefeather smacked her with his wing and sent her crashing into the floor. He then summoned two daggers to his hands and threw them at Amy. The daggers caught her on the sides of her boots and embedded themselves into the floor. Amy was stuck now. She pulled on her legs but the daggers firmly fixed the sides of her boots to the floor so she couldn't move. She sat up straight and tried to pull the daggers out but they had embedded themselves too deeply for her to remove and she simply wasn't strong enough. Seeing one of his foes out of action, Bladefeather set his sights on Knuckles, the only one who was actually holding his own against him. Knuckles recovered from Bladefeather's earlier attack and he walloped Bladefeather in the beak with his fists. Bladefeather fell onto his back and Knuckles tried to attack again but Bladefeather blocked his attack with his talons. He was equally as good with his feet as he was with his wings and his feet were very good substitutes for hands. Bladefeather pushed Knuckles away and leaped back to his feet. Then the two linked hands and began to grapple with each other.

"I must say for a gamin you sure know how to fight." complimented Bladefeather "No mendicant has ever fought me and managed to hold their own against me."

"Well I am a guardian after all!" grunted Knuckles "And guardians are very skilled at fighting!"

"I can see that." said Bladefeather "Pity you guardians are the embodiment of debility and fatuity."

Knuckles had no idea what those words meant but he had a feeling it was an insult so he got mad. He pushed Bladefeather back and began launching punches rapidly at him. Surprisingly, Bladefeather

managed to dodge every single punch with his wings. Bladefeather kicked Knuckles away and the two began rapidly launching punches at each other whilst blocking the other's blows.

As for Tails and Ruben, Mushu was proving to be one tough iguana. Mushu was more skilled in the speed department and he showed that by moving at a very quick pace. Ruben kept squirting water at Mushu but Mushu dodged every blow with no difficulty. He was even too fast for little Tails to hit. Tails kicked at Mushu but Mushu swiped his arm up at Tails and hit his foot, causing Tails to cartwheel backwards in midair. Mushu then kick-slammed Tails into the floor. Ruben spun around in mid-air and kick-slammed Mushu on his head. Then Ruben grabbed Mushu by the throat and tossed him onto the floor front first. Mushu got back to his feet, opened his mouth and punched Ruben with his tongue. His tongue couldn't stretch as far as a frog's could but it packed quite a punch. Ruben rubbed his muzzle and blocked a blow from Mushu. Tails flew behind Mushu and kicked him. Mushu tail-whipped Tails and pushed Ruben away. Tails tail-whipped Mushu back but his tails weren't as hard as Mushu's tail so his tail whip didn't hurt Mushu much. Mushu roundhouse kicked Tails in the head and sent the poor little fox crashing into the floor. Ruben smacked Mushu in the jaw with a ninja style chop but Mushu retaliated with a kung-fu style chop. Ruben maybe strong but Mushu was stronger. Ruben was only novice at best whereas Mushu was a master so Mushu would win this fight, no matter how good a fight Ruben put up. Mushu tried to attack the water panther again but Ruben let him have it with two jets of water and Mushu was sent hurtling backwards.

"I may not be a master at kung-fu but I have water powers." said Ruben "That will be my one advantage over any kung-fu master."

Mushu climbed back to his feet and he tried to attack again but Ruben squirted him with some more water. However, Mushu was ready for him and he ploughed through the water as if it was nothing. Mushu let Ruben have it in the stomach with both fists and the water panther crashed into the wall. Tails tried to attack Mushu but Mushu gave the fox an uppercut that sent him hurtling backwards. Tails landed, luckily, on a cushion and he groaned in pain. Mushu advanced menacingly on Tails and he grabbed him by

the neck. But before he could do anything, Dalon Tai prodded him rather sharply in the back and Mushu's nerves seemed to freeze up all at once. The iguana then fainted. Tails looked at Mushu in wonder and he prodded him. The iguana didn't move. He didn't even twitch. Nor did he even bat an eyelid.

"What did you do to him emperor?" asked Tails.

"I'm no kung-fu warrior but I learnt a special paralyzing move that causes the victim to freeze up for a long time." explained Tai "Only I know this move and I use it for defence rather then assault."

Bladefeather pushed Knuckles away and saw that Mushu had been subdued so he ran over to help the iguana. Tai stood in his way and prodded him sharply in the stomach. Bladefeather's nerves all froze up and he fainted too. Bladefeather was paralyzed just as Mushu was. Knuckles pulled the daggers that were pinning Amy to the floor out of the floor so Amy could stand back up and he wondered what had happened to the dagger-wielding falcon.

"Hey Tai, what happened to falcon boy there?" asked Knuckles.

"I paralyzed him." said Tai "He and Mushu won't be moving for a long time. Unless of course, Zira knows how to free them from this paralyzing prison I've put them in but we won't have to worry about them anymore."

Then suddenly, Sonic the Hedgehog crashed through the wall and rolled about on the floor before coming to a stop. Everybody gasped in horror at what just happened. Sonic groaned loudly and he tried to get back to his feet but he couldn't. Zira then leaped into the pagoda and stood over Sonic in triumph.

"As you can see scrubs from the west, I've just stomped your precious Sonic into submission." she taunted "Now you lot can surrender and let me conquer Chun-Nan or I'll kill Sonic."

"Forget it Zira!" screeched Tails "We will not let you conquer Chun-Nan! And look what's happened to your cronies by the way!"

He pointed at the paralyzed Bladefeather and Mushu. Zira looked at

them and almost did a wild double-take.

"Wh-wh-what?" he spluttered "H-h-how did you d-d-do th-th-that?"

"I know a move that only I know and no one else does." said Tai, stepping forward "It's a nerve freezing move that paralyzes the victim for a while. If you do not leave this pagoda then I will be forced to paralyze you too Zira."

Zira was well and truly scared. That paralyzing move Tai knew was the only thing she feared and she did not want that to happen to her. She knew when she was beaten. It annoyed her though that she had done so well and yet she hadn't won yet. She grabbed Bladefeather and Mushu by their collars and hauled them onto her shoulders. She didn't seem to have much trouble carrying the two kung-fu masters.

"Fine! Have it your way!" she snarled "But I warn you, I will be back tomorrow afternoon! And this time, your nerve freezing move won't work on us because we'll be ready for it!"

She then ran off like a lightening bolt. Fong Zarr and the Yīnyǐng ninjas knew that this was retreat time to they fled along with Zira. Now the villains were gone, the Mobians could rest themselves and prepare for Zira's return. Amy ran to Sonic's aid and she helped the battered hedgehog get back to his feet.

"Sonic, are you OK?" she asked worriedly.

"Well getting beaten to a pulp by a kung-fu leopard does not suggest I'm OK." said Sonic in a snarky tone "But I'll live at least. Man that woman's tougher then I thought!"

"I'll go and get something to make you feel better." said Matilda, running out of the room as quick as she could.

Amy helped Sonic to walk over to the cushions and gently helped him sit down, being careful not to hurt him. Cream and Cosmo, who had been on the sidelines this whole fight, stared at Sonic's injuries and they were well and truly scared at what Zira did to Sonic.

"That Zira woman is too tough for Mr. Sonic to take on!" squealed

Cream.

"If Sonic can't defeat Zira then all hope for Chun-Nan is lost." said Cosmo despairingly "This is the end of Chun-Nan. Nobody can defeat Zira."

"Not true child." said Tai sitting down on his cushion "There is one hope we still have."

"What's that then?" grunted Sonic, rubbing his arm.

"Zira slew all the clans in Chun-Nan." explained Tai "But shortly after her exile, a new clan formulated in the outskirts of Chun-Nan."

"A new clan?" asked Ruben "How come I don't know anything about this?"

"You left before the new clan formed child." said Tai "So you're not bound to know anything going on in Chun-Nan."

"Oh yeah." said Ruben "And what luck that is. A whole new clan! The prophecy states that Zira will be defeated by a member of a clan and someone else and maybe this new clan can take Zira out! After all, only a kung-fu master or a ninja master has a chance against her!"

"So where is this new clan and how do we get to it?" asked Sonic desperately.

"It's in the outskirts of Chun-Nan." explained Tai "An area not often visited by many so few know about the new clan. Getting to it will not be an easy job." he said in a despairing tone "The way to the clan is full of traps and challenges. You will have to rest up before you can go to it."

"OK emperor." said Sonic "So once we're all rested up, we can go and meet this new clan and get them to join us in our battle against Zira!"

"It will not be that easy my boy." said Tai "This clan may not be so willing to fight someone as deadly as Zira the Ruthless so when you meet this clan, you'll have to make their demands and respect their

wishes. Do not rile them, an angry clan is greater then a pride of lions and you don't want to feel their full force."

"I understand emperor." said Sonic "Tomorrow's going to be hectic I can tell. I just hope this new clan is willing to help us save Chun-Nan or I'm going all the way over to the outskirts for nothing."

Sonic knew that tomorrow was going to be a very big day for him indeed…

A new ninja clan eh? Well this looks interesting. Join me next time as Sonic and Ruben go on an epic journey to find this so-called new clan and hopefully get them to help defeat Zira once and for all. Reviews are welcome.

A Path Through the Storm

Story 54: A Path Through The Storm

The next morning dawned bright and sunny. Sonic had rested well from his brutal fight with Zira, although he was still feeling a little beaten and slowed down and he was set to find this mysterious new clan that Emperor Tai had told him about. Ruben the Water Panther, last of the Hǎilàng clan decided to go along with Sonic on his journey since he had more knowledge on Chun-Nan and its landscape then Sonic did. Tai packed Sonic a bag which had food supplies in case he got hungry and a map to the new clan's territory. Sonic gave the map to Ruben since he wasn't interested in reading it and Sonic slung the bag of supplies on his shoulder.

"Do I need anything else emperor?" asked Sonic.

"All you need is vigilance and skill." said Tai "The way to the clan is full of challenges since its bride only excepts powerful and mighty citizens and if you can pass them all, your journey will be all that simpler. But I'm warning you, this is a dangerous trek and you MUST be careful or you won't make it back alive."

"Emperor, puh-lease." scoffed Sonic, wafting his arms down "I'm Sonic the Hedgehog, the fastest thing alive. I don't need to be careful, any challenge this clan has awaiting me won't be able to snag me, I'm too fast!"

"Sonic!" snapped Tai "I mean it! I've braved the path to the clan's territory before and I barely made it out alive! If you don't be careful you will die! Please take this seriously or I will forbid you from going!"

"OK, OK! Keep your hair on emperor!" snapped Sonic "Sheesh, why are royal people so darn grouchy?"

"Sonic! Don't speak to the emperor like that!" hissed Ruben "It's disrespectful and bad manners!"

"Whatever." said Sonic casually "Well, I'll be going now. Wish me luck emperor."

"I do wish you luck young one." said Tai lowly.

"And so do I." said Princess Matilda, fanning herself with a handheld fan she was fond of using "Make sure you don't get killed out there hedgehog of heroic nature."

"Don't worry about me princess." said Sonic casually "I'll be fine. Come on Ruben, let's juice!" he cried.

He ran off and out of the door and supersonic speed.

"Oy! Wait for me you overeager hedgehog!" yelped Ruben, running out of the door after him.

In order to catch up to Sonic, he summoned a wave of water out of his fingers and rode upon it in the style of a surfer. The wave carried him down the hilltop and after Sonic who was already near the local village a good distance away from the pagoda. Tai and Matilda watched Sonic and Ruben head off to the village. They looked at each other with dis-concern on their faces.

"If that boy's obstinacy doesn't falter then he'll be dead before he gets past the Valley of Stepping Stones." said Tai despairingly.

"That's why we sent little Ruben to accompany him daddy." said Matilda, putting her fan away "Ruben is more level headed then the hedgehog after all so he'll keep him under control."

"Let us hope so, for his sake." said Tai.

As for Sonic's friends, Tails the twin-tailed fox, Amy Rose, Cosmo the Seedrian, Cream the Rabbit with her pet Chao Cheese and Knuckles the Echidna were sitting on cushions, not really sure on what to do right now other then wait for Sonic and Ruben to return. Matilda sensed they were bored and wondered if she could be of assistance.

"Excuse me heroes of the west, can I get you anything?" she asked.

"We don't need anything thank you." said Knuckles "Don't strain yourself worrying about us."

"OK." said Matilda "I'm going into the sacred garden outback to meditate. If you need me, just call me."

"OK." said Cream.

Matilda left the room and headed out the back into the garden. Tai decided to meditate with his daughter so he followed her. Now the two mongooses had left, Tails spoke up to break the silence that started drifting around the room after the emperor and princess left.

"So. When do you think that Zira woman will attack again?" he asked.

"I believe she said she'd be back in the afternoon." said Cosmo "But she didn't say a particular time in the afternoon. It could be midday, half twelve, one o' clock or anything."

"Well when Zira and her army of misfit morons show up again, I'll be very happy to pound every one of their heads in!" said Amy crossly, summoning her hammer to her hand "I owe that Bladefeather guy a headache for wrecking my robe yesterday!"

"One thing I wonder is how did Zira subjugate two kung-fu masters with mere bribery?" asked Knuckles "Aren't kung-fu masters supposed to be tough and don't give into their enemies no matter what?"

"Maybe they're just as evil as Zira is." suggested Cream.

"Chao." piped Cheese.

"But Tai knows them for being good." said Tails "Maybe they fell to the dark side just like Zira did or there's more to their alliance then what we know at this moment."

"I can't stop wondering how Zira got a clan of ninja cats to work for her." said Cosmo to nobody in particular "They seem like the kind of ninjas who want Chun-Nan for themselves, they don't seem like the kind that ally themselves with someone."

"They're thieves according to Ruben." noted Tails "I bet Zira bribed them as well. Any amount of bribery can get a gang of thieves to serve you faithfully."

"I have a sneaky feeling Zira maybe lying to them." said Amy "I mean, once she conquers Chun-Nan, what need will she have for a clan and two kung-fu masters?"

"So are you thinking Zira's going to kill them after she conquers Chun-Nan?" squeaked Cream "How horrible! I hope that isn't what she's planning!"

"Well if we can defeat her, she won't get a chance to do that." said Knuckles, pounding his fists together "I really hope this new clan will be enough to stand up to Zira's might or we're dead meat!"

While the Mobians were talking, Cheese fluttered near the window to get some fresh air and upon reaching the window, he saw a nasty sight coming towards the pagoda. He gasped in shock and flew back to Cream, squeaking madly and waving his arms around in a flurry. Everybody stared at the frantic Chao who's panicked words could only be understood by Cream since she could speak Chao.

"Chao, Chao, Chao!" cried Cheese frantically. Cream's eyes widened in shock, she knew what Cheese was trying to tell everybody.

"What's up with Cheese?" asked Tails "He seems worried."

"Cheese says Bladefeather is standing outside the pagoda and he's got Mushu with him!" shrieked Cream, putting her hands to her cheeks "Oh no!"

"What are those two clowns doing here?" asked Knuckles, raising his fists "Are they here to hinder us and give Zira a chance to grind us into the dirt?"

"Well we're not letting them!" declared Amy, waving her hammer around "Let's get them!"

Everybody leaped up onto their feet and ran outside to confront the two invaders. They stood protectively in front of the pagoda in battle

ready stances and ready to strike. Bladefeather and Mushu stood at the edge of the hilltop with straight faces and their arms folded. Tails clenched his fists, Knuckles gritted his teeth and raised his fists, Amy raised her hammer, Cream clenched her fists, Cheese flapped beside the rabbit's head and raised his fists and Cosmo put on a pretentious brave face and clenched her fists, even though she knew she was going to get creamed by the two kung-fu masters.

"Hold it right there you two mercenaries!" screeched Amy, pointing sharply at them.

"Back off and we promise we won't pound your skulls in!" snarled Knuckles.

Bladefeather just sarcastically clapped at his confronters.

"What a marvellous display of vapidity and fatuity my obscure and impetuous heroes of the west." snorted Bladefeather "Now do me a favour and soothe those overly jumpy nerves of yours before someone gets hurt."

Amy growled and tried to pounce on Bladefeather but Tails grabbed her by the dress and held her back. He shook his head at her as if to say "No Amy." and Amy lowered her hammer, still scowling at the vain falcon. Bladefeather held his hand out and out of his long sleeve dropped a long piece of rope, some shuriken, a pair of shackles, a dagger and a white gag with a yin-yang symbol on it. They all dropped onto the ground at his feet.

"We are here under the pretence of kidnapping Princess Matilda and delivering her to Zira the Ruthless for hostage purposes." explained Bladefeather, motioning to the equipment he'd just dropped on the ground "Zira believes that Dalon Tai will cede to her demands if the life of his precious daughter is threatened. But that is not the **real** reason for our presence here and we do not intend to carry out this repugnant mission."

The Mobians hesitated and softened their expression. They all looked at each other. Bladefeather and Mushu aren't going to do what Zira told them to do? What was going on? Bladefeather and Mushu were two very mysterious people indeed! Tails stepped

bravely forward, while being weary of any sneak attacks that possibly hid and spoke to the falcon.

"If you're not here to kidnap Matilda." said Tails slowly "Then…what are you here for…um…sir?"

Bladefeather scowled at Tails.

"As if I am going to inform you." he sniffed "I do not discuss seminal messages to mere gamin and mendicants!"

"Care to repeat that again? In English?" snarled Amy, raising her hammer threateningly "We don't know what you mean!"

Bladefeather sighed loudly.

"Of all the uneducated…I do not discuss important messages to mere children and tramps!" he repeated crossly using small words this time.

"Tramps?" screamed Amy "That's it! I'm gonna…"

"No Amy." said Knuckles, holding his arm up to stop her from hammering Bladefeather into the ground like a nail.

Amy tensed up for a minute before standing down and stepping back.

"So, if you won't talk to Tails then will you talk to me?" asked Knuckles "I'm not a child, I'm sixteen and a guardian of a special island so I'm definitely not a child or a tramp."

Bladefeather scoffed at him.

"You're vacuous. I only talk to **intelligent** people." he said nastily to Knuckles.

"Are you calling me stupid?" snarled Knuckles, preparing to give Bladefeather a black eye.

"Knuckles, don't kill him! That's not going to settle anything!" cried Cream.

Knuckles stepped back and lowered his fists, growling like a tiger to himself.

"Where's the magnanimous Sonic the Hedgehog and the Hǎilàng Clan survivor Ruben the Water Panther?" asked Bladefeather "I will acquiesce to talking to them if you don't mind. They're meritorious and worthy enough of hearing my terms."

"They left." said Tails bluntly "They've gone to meet a clan in the outskirts of the country and hopefully get the clan to help us beat Zira."

"Fat lot of good a primitive ninja clan will do." muttered Bladefeather "Zira obliterated the three clans of Chun-Nan with little effort so this one won't be of any good. In that case, bring me Emperor Dalon Tai instead." he ordered "I will explain everything to him and no one less."

No one moved. Amy just raised her hammer and gritted her teeth.

"Oh I get it now!" she growled "You're tricking us into thinking you have no intention to kidnap Matilda so you can kidnap the emperor instead! I can see right through your little plot Bladefeather! Well tough luck bird brain, if you want to kidnap the emperor then you'll have to go through me first!"

Mushu face-palmed himself in annoyance and Bladefeather glared at Amy.

"You are the embodiment of idiocy child!" snapped Bladefeather "Which part of "we do not intend to kidnap anybody" did you fail to comprehend? We are here to discuss seminal matters and clear up some misunderstandings with the emperor and you are just making this innocent act of ours seem like an act of serpentine! You get me the emperor or you will not live to see another sunrise you vacuous, perfidious little brat!"

"Stop talking with big words and speak English for once!" snapped Amy "You sound like a dork!"

"Amy, stop trying to start a fight with him!" yelled Tails angrily "He's

here on peaceful terms and all you're doing is making him mad!"

"I'll go and get the emperor before a fight starts." said Cosmo "I'll be right back."

Cosmo ran back into the pagoda to fetch Emperor Tai. Bladefeather smiled wickedly at Amy.

"The leaf child is more mature then you are gamin." sneered Bladefeather "And yet her age doesn't seem to be at your level. You should be ashamed of yourself."

The only thing stopping Amy from killing Bladefeather right now was Cream the Rabbit grabbing her by the dress and holding her back.

"Once the emperor appears, I shall reveal our true nature to you merchants." said Bladefeather "And I think you'll be very invigorated with what I have to say."

"Invigorated my foot." hissed Amy under her breath.

Tails began to wonder what Bladefeather was going to say once the emperor showed up to meet his amends. Was this all a trap or was there another reason for Bladefeather and Mushu being here…?

Meanwhile, Sonic and Ruben had left the local village behind and were running through a long stretch of plains that seemed to go on forever.

"So Ruben, are we following the map correctly?" Sonic called over to the water panther.

Ruben peered at the map he held in his hands.

"We are indeed Sonic." said Ruben "We've gone through the village, through a bamboo forest, over the Great Wall of Chun-Nan and we've been travelling for fifteen minutes straight across these plains. In a moment or two we should come across a guard who will instruct us on our first challenge we have to brave."

"Cool." said Sonic "Those Chun-Nan folk can set up whatever challenge they like! No challenge is too great for Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"Of all the ego-centric…" muttered Ruben in annoyance.

The two Mobians continued making their long trek through the plains. If an average person was walking these plains, he would probably have taken eight hours to walk the entire way but Sonic, being super speedy and Ruben, using waves as transport, were making this journey in a jiffy. They had been travelling for fifteen minutes straight and five minutes later, they finally arrived at their first destination. There were a pair of iron gates chained shut with a long stretching wall on either side, boxing in whatever was on the other side of the gates. A guard who was a rhinoceros in full body armour stood by the gates. He was so heavily armoured even his horn had armour on it! He had a spear at the ready and he looked extremely mean and tough looking. He also didn't seem to show much tolerance for visitors given how he angrily snorts at them every time one comes. Sonic and Ruben skidded to a halt in front of the guard and looked up at him. The guard looked down at them and blew steam out of his huge nostrils. Sonic held his hands up in front of his face.

" **What are you two here for** ?" boomed the guard.

His voice was as powerful as his appearance.

"We've come to meet the clan that lives on the outskirts of Chun-Nan." explained Sonic "Now let us through tubby! It's urgent we get to this clan!"

The guard laughed at Sonic. His laugh sounded like thunder due to his powerful voice.

" **You want to meet up with the all powerful, all mighty Raiju clan?** " he bellowed " **I doubt Conquering Storm will make amends with peasants like you!** "

"Conquering Storm?" said Ruben "Who or what is Conquering Storm?"

" **That is for me to know and you to find out peasant boys.** " snarled the guard " **And the only way you'll find out is if you can brave the two challenges the Raiju clan have set up as a test of might to see if they are worthy enough of meeting them.** "

"That's what we're here for so let us through." ordered Sonic impatiently.

" **Not so fast little boy.** " boomed the guard, holding a huge hand up to stop Sonic in his path " **Conquering Storm does not like cheats so I must ask you if you have super powers of any kind, can you refrain from using them? If not, then the Raiju clan will not except you.** "

"So does that mean no-go on the super speed?" cried Sonic "That sucks!"

" **As for you little boy.** " the guard pointed at Ruben " **Give me your aqua-collar. I cannot trust a water panther to not use his water powers to aid the hedgehog in the challenges.** "

Ruben reluctantly pressed a button on the back of his purple collar he wore around his neck that unclipped it and he handed it over to the guard. The guard hooked it on his horn and chortled to himself.

"What's with the collar and why do you wear it?" asked Sonic.

"The collar is what gives me my water powers." said Ruben "Without it, I'm cut off from my water powers and all I end up having is my novice style kung-fu and ninjutsu."

"Well that's a stupid idea." muttered Sonic "Who invented that?"

"It wasn't an invention." said Ruben "We water panthers don't have our water powers until we get our collars. When we wear those collars, we have the ability to use water powers and control water. Only the most trusted of the Hǎilàng clan are granted permanent water powers by our bride leader, Bride of the Gentle Waves. When Gentle Waves grants us permanent water powers, we don't need the collars and we can use our powers at all times. If you can't be trusted then you're stuck with your collar and if you went rogue,

Gentle Waves just confiscated your collar and you were permanently cut off from your water powers."

"Oh." said Sonic "I'm sorry little guy, I had no idea…"

"I know you didn't mean any harm Sonic." said Ruben "I understand your thoughts on the subject. Since Bride of the Gentle Waves is dead though, I'll never be able to have permanent water powers, I'm cursed with that stupid collar for the rest of my life. If I lose it or it gets destroyed then that's it, no more water powers for me."

Sonic pulled a grim face and he turned back to the rhino guard.

"Hey tubby, you'd better promise me that Ruben gets his aqua-collar back or I will be forced to fight you for it." said Sonic.

" **You have my word of honour that the water panther will get his collar back.** " boomed the guard.

"Is that a promise?" asked Sonic.

" **In Chun-Nan, one's word of honour is sacred and it would be the ultimate dishonour if I went back on my word.** " explained the guard " **When I say the water panther will get hiscollar back, I mean he'll get his collar back and I will not go back on my word.** "

"Good." said Sonic in a softer tone "Now let us through."

" **Very well.** " said the guard, pulling the key to the gates out of his pocket and unlocking the heavy padlock that kept the chains together " **Good luck out there travellers, you're going toneed it.** " he said in a rather flat tone, suggesting that other travellers taking the challenge hadn't been so fortunate.

The rhino guard pulled the chains away and opened the gates. Sonic and Ruben were met with a rather wonderful sight on the other side of the gates. There was a large lake with tall stones protruding from it. The stones were seventy feet tall and they led all the way to a ledge on the other side. The lake was surrounded by bamboo trees, full of lily pads and brightly coloured flowers that grew on the banks. Ruben was delighted at the sight of water but Sonic,

given his dislike for water, wasn't so delighted. He groaned in annoyance.

"Jeez, water again?" he moaned "I got wet yesterday! I don't need to get wet again!"

"I take it you don't like water then." said Ruben, disappointed.

"Nah I don't mind water it's just I can't swim and I don't really like getting wet." said Sonic, hoping he wasn't offending Ruben.

"Well you won't have to worry about getting wet." said Ruben "All you have to do is hop across the lake on those stepping stones and you'll be as dry as a bone."

The rhino guard closed the gates behind the hedgehog and water panther, startling them a little but they shook it off and focused on the objective.

"So where's the challenge then?" wondered Sonic "I don't see what's so challenging about stepping stones."

"According to the map…" said Ruben, consulting the map "This is the Valley of Stepping Stones. Not many people survive this area and it can be a very tense area due to the challenge it presents."

"Which is?" asked Sonic impatiently.

"Watch." said Ruben sternly as he folded the map up and stored it into his glove.

He picked up a stone and threw it at one of the stepping stones. The stone hurtled through the air and landed on the stone. The moment the stone landed with a clatter on the stepping stone, it shook slightly and began to descend down into the lake. The stone descended down and down until only the top of it was above the water. Sonic and Ruben peered over the edge of the ledge they were standing on and saw the shrunken down stepping stone. Then suddenly a metal dragon shaped head appeared from nowhere and its jaws clamped around the stepping stone. Then smoke poured out of its nostrils and the jaws opened up, revealing the stepping stone which was blackened a little and the stone Ruben threw at it had

been disintegrated and the head disappeared back underwater, making lots of bubbles as it did so. The stone then rose back up to its original height, causing it to rain down on the water under it. Sonic was surprised to say the least.

"This is a challenge of patience and brain." explained Ruben "You have to find the correct path across the stepping stones. If not, then you're toast, literally."

"So I have to leap across the right stones or I'm a kebab hedgehog?" exclaimed Sonic "Well I think this is the first challenge I'm not so confident on!"

"Proves you shouldn't be so arrogant Sonic." said Ruben "Now since I'm willing to give my life for you and Chun-Nan, I will find the correct path across the valley."

"Are you sure?" asked Sonic "It's not that I doubt you but, what if you mess up and get fried? I can't do this trek without you buddy."

"I am positive about this friend." said Ruben kindly "You have your life ahead of you, I have nothing to fight for since everything I lived for is gone so I don't care if I die."

"Well I do!" said Sonic firmly, grabbing Ruben by the shoulders "Would your clan leader want you to throw your life away like that? No! She would want you to be strong and you need to be strong Ruben or we'll never make it to the clan and tempt hem to help us defeat Zira!"

"Y-y-y-you're right." said Ruben, his ears drooping back in despair "What was I thinking? I'm such a fool! Oh Sonic, I'm sorry I thought so little of myself."

"Ruben, it's cool." said Sonic "No need to apologize. You just needed some support that's all. Now let's get across this lake, together!"

"Right." said Ruben with a much more confident expression on his face.

Sonic leaped off the ledge and onto a stepping stone. Ruben

gathered up a few pebbles so he could use them to find out which stones were deadly and which stones were and he leaped onto the same stepping stone as Sonic. Sonic tried not to look down at the water below. He kept his eyes fixed straight ahead at the sea of stepping stones they had to hop across. There seemed to be at least fifty in total and only a few of them would be non-lethal. Sonic looked around desperately. Apart from the stone with the scorched stone from earlier, he had no idea which stone to step on next.

"So Ruben, any ideas?" asked Sonic.

"Yes." said Ruben.

He threw a pebble at the stone in front of them. Nothing happened. Sonic and Ruben leapt onto the stone and Ruben scooped up the pebble.

"If I keep throwing pebbles at the stones as a tester then we'll find our way across easily." said Ruben "We'll know which stones are lethal and which are not."

"But what if you run out?" asked Sonic.

"I have more then enough Sonic." Ruben assured the hedgehog "We'll be across before I run out."

Sonic gave Ruben his trademark thumbs up sign with an added wink as if to say "OK then buddy." Ruben tossed another pebble at a stepping stone in front of them. The pebble landed on the stone and the stone descended down into the water. Bad step. Ruben threw another pebble at the stone on their left. That stone descended down into the water too. Ruben threw a pebble at the stone on their right. Nothing happened so they hopped onto it.

Sonic and Ruben kept this up for a while and soon enough they had made it half way across the valley. Their hop across the stones had been a huge zigzag across the valley. Unfortunately, Ruben had used up more pebbles then he anticipated and he only had a few pebbles left. Not nearly enough to help find the right way across to the end of the valley. They had twenty-eight stones to get over and they had no idea which ones would be right. Regardless, Ruben

used up his three remaining pebbles to get across the stepping stones. Two stones descended down but one didn't so Sonic and Ruben hopped onto the stone and Ruben scooped up his last pebble. He threw it at a stone and the stone descended down, taking away his last pebble. Sonic folded his arms and sighed in annoyance.

"So much for "We'll be across before I run out"!" moaned Sonic, mimicking Ruben's exact words.

"I didn't think I'd use my pebbles so quickly!" snapped Ruben "But now I've run out, there's no knowing how to get across without knowing which stones we should avoid. I guess we'll just have to take chances and make a lucky leap."

"So are you saying if a stone goes down into the water, we should leap before we go down with it?" asked Sonic

"Yes." said Ruben "It's our only chance."

Sonic and Ruben leaped onto a stone on their left. Safe stone. They then leaped onto another stone. Another safe stone. They leaped onto another stone. The stone started to descend down and they leaped for it before they could go down with it. Unfortunately, they landed on another death stone and they leaped off just as it started to descend. Luckily, Sonic landed on a safe stone but Ruben had been slightly off mark and he landed on a stone directly beside Sonic and the stone started to descend into the water. Ruben leaped off but he didn't quite make it and he ended up clinging onto the edge of the stone Sonic was standing on. Ruben started to slip but Sonic grabbed his hands and hauled him on. Now Ruben was safe, Sonic and Ruben leaped onto a stone in front of them. The stone began to descend down and they leaped off it and onto another stone. Luckily it was another safe stone but Sonic landed funny and he lost his balance and almost fell off and into the lake but Ruben grabbed him just before he could fall over. Ruben pulled Sonic to safety and the heroes leaped onto another stone. The stone descended down and Sonic and Ruben leaped off it before they could go down with it. They landed on another stone and didn't bother waiting to see if it was safe or not and they made a valiant leap for the ledge that was one stone away from them. Sonic was a

good jumper but even he missed his targets sometimes. He didn't quite leap far enough and he ended up clinging onto the edge of the ledge. Ruben had been just as unlucky and now the two were clinging for their lives on the edge of the ledge. Sonic tried to climb back on but he just didn't have the strength to do so. Ruben was having just as much trouble. Ruben wasn't a very good climber and it seemed that this heavy flaw would end up costing him. Sonic pulled and pulled on his arms, desperate to make it onto the ledge. He couldn't fail now, not while he was so close. Sonic grunted with effort and got a good grip on the ledge with his feet to help push himself onto the ledge. With one mighty effort, Sonic managed to pull himself onto the ledge and to safety. Ruben however was beginning to lose his grip. Sonic grabbed Ruben's arms and pulled as hard as he could to get the water panther to safety. It took a lot of pulling but Sonic finally managed to haul Ruben onto the ledge. Ruben panted and gasped heavily.

"Oh thank you Sonic!" he cried "I would have been done for if I fell!"

"No offence Ruben but you need climbing lessons." said Sonic with the shrug of the arms.

"I know I do." said Ruben "We water panthers aren't very skilled in climbing. We're only skilled in martial arts and swimming. I'm gonna need to learn how to climb or I'll be done for."

"Well at least we made it." said Sonic "Now let's get outta here and move onto our next challenge. I hope the next one will be easier."

"Somehow, I doubt it will." said Ruben with an unsupportive tone in his voice.

Ruben fished the map out of his glove and unfolded it to see where they were going next.

"Right, now we've done the valley of stepping stones, we move onto the Plains of Deception" he said.

"Why do they call it the Plains of Deception?" asked Sonic.

"Because they're plains and they're deceptive I guess." said Ruben

"Unfortunately, I won't be able to keep up with you now I don't have water powers. If only I didn't have to relinquish my collar."

"I'll carry you bud." said Sonic, scooping Ruben up bridal style "You just tell me where to go and we can get going."

"We just go straight on until we come to a sign that says "Plains of Deception." said Ruben, observing the map "I don't think we've got far."

"Then let's do it to it!" exclaimed Sonic "Hang on tight Ruben! This is going to be really fast!"

Ruben quickly folded up the map and put it back into his glove and Sonic raced off at top speed. What challenge awaited them at the plains they had no idea but if they could conquer the valley of stepping stones then they could conquer any challenge…

Meanwhile at the Pagoda of Prosperity, Cosmo returned to Bladefeather and Mushu with Emperor Dalon Tai by her side. Tai stood forward to meet the pompous, ill-tempered falcon and Cosmo stood respectfully back since Bladefeather didn't want any kids near him while he spoke to Tai. Princess Matilda stayed indoors and watched through the window to see what was going on. Tai wasn't pleased to have been summoned by a traitor but he was curious on what Bladefeather had to say so he respectfully waited for the falcon to speak up. Bladefeather bowed respectfully to Tai but Tai just stood there with a stern look on his face.

"So Bladefeather you subversive fiend, what do you require my presence for?" asked Tai coldly, folding his arms.

Bladefeather took a deep breath and spoke.

"Your grace, me and Mushu came here to apologize for what we have done to the Pagoda of Prosperity and Chun-Nan." said Bladefeather slowly.

Tai's eyes widened and the Mobians all gasped in shock.

"Here's here to apologize?" whispered Tails.

"What is going on with that bird?" whispered Amy.

"I would thank you little brats for silencing those accursed lips of yours." said Bladefeather, his voice like ice.

The Mobians stopped whispering and fell into silence. Tai spoke up and broke the silence.

"You and Mushu…want to apologize?" he said slowly "I hope you can explain yourselves you two."

"We can emperor, well I can, not Mushu." said Bladefeather "Allow me to clear up the misunderstanding between us, you and the distinguished guests from the west." he added, notifying the Mobians watching them.

"Talk. I'm listening." said Tai dryly.

Bladefeather breathed in deeply, breathed out and then spoke.

"All my talk of us joining Zira under the promise of riches was nothing more then a red herring." explained Bladefeather "Me and Mushu weren't bribed into serving Zira the Ruthless, nor were we willing to join that serpentine. Our abhorrence for her is just as great as all of Chun-Nan's and we wish nothing more then to throw Zira back into obscurity and exile."

"I see." said Tai, taking this information in rather well "So why are you working for Zira if you hate her?"

"Me and Mushu were forced into joining her." explained Bladefeather, his expression becoming a grim and miserable looking one "Last week, me and Mushu were having a tour through the mountains that stretch beyond the borders of Chun-Nan and we met Zira. She engaged us in battle and she must have aggrandized herself because me and Mushu could hardly keep up with her. We along with Master Shan had no trouble handling her the first time but when me and Mushu fought Zira again, she refuted us. We had no idea how she aggrandized herself and we couldn't believe it when we got beaten. Mushu suffered worse then me though."

"Why?" asked Tai.

"Zira gave him a rather acerbic blow to his throat in our battle." explained Bladefeather "The blow damaged his voice box and thus has rendered him unable to verbally communicate to anyone now. He'll never recuperate from that blow, he will be mute for the rest of his life."

Mushu pulled a sad face as if he missed being able to talk. He clearly didn't look happy being mute for life.

"After Zira refuted us," continued Bladefeather "She prepared to execute us but I pleaded for mercy. Me and Mushu were forced to swear fealty to Zira and she took us in. If we dared to rebel against her, our penance would be too pernicious and barbaric for me or anyone to put into words. Me and Mushu strive to abnegate our ties with Zira but we dare not in fear of having our necks broken. Thus we were forced to serve Zira faithfully and we played a part in Master Shan's capture and later execution. We weren't pleased with ourselves but we have to remain in this forlorn condition or we die, no second thoughts."

He stared down at the ground and sighed sadly. Tai hummed to himself. He could see it in Bladefeather's eyes he was not lying, every word of his story had been true and he knew it. Tails stepped forward to the down-hearted falcon.

"So if we've got this straight, you want us to help you and Mushu defeat Zira?" asked Tails.

"Please don't talk little boy." said Bladefeather coldly "This is an **adult's** conversation."

"Bladefeather!" snapped Tai "There's no need to be so acrimonious to our guests from the west! I know of your abhorrence for children but please tolerate them just this once! They're your only hope of being free from Zira's grasp!"

"My utmost apologizes my magnanimous emperor." Bladefeather apologized with a respectful bow.

"So is Tails right?" asked Tai.

"The kid is absolutely correct." said Bladefeather "Me and Mushu wish to form an alliance with Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends and you emperor. Zira may be a match for me and Mushu together but with me, Mushu, Sonic, his friends and you, not even Zira will be a match for us. We'll be the unstoppable typhoon that will blow away Zira's mighty advances!"

"Don't forget she's got the Yīnyǐng Mao clan on her side." reminded Tai "Fong Zarr is a mighty warrior and he has a lot of ninjas at his side. Zira has advantage in numbers but we have advantage in brain and strength so we may have a chance."

"We will." said Cream "Especially since you have that nerve freezing thingy that paralyzes people. You can paralyze Zira with it."

"That is right child but I don't think Zira will be easy to hit." said Tai "Regardless, we must try all we can to prevent Zira from filling Chun-Nan with depredation."

"So do you accede to my requests?" asked Bladefeather hopefully.

"Yes. We do." said Tai, holding his hand out "Welcome back to the good side Bladefeather and Mushu."

"The pleasure is ours." said Bladefeather, shaking Tai's hand "Now, I have already begun to contrive a plan. Get ready to listen because this is very seminal. Heroes from the west, you may gather around with me, Mushu and the emperor."

Knuckles, Tails, Amy, Cream and Cosmo did as they were told and they gathered around Bladefeather, Mushu and Tai and they began communicating to each other in whispers barely audible to any who was passing by.

"Here's the plan…" whispered Bladefeather.

Meanwhile, Sonic and Ruben came across a fancy and brightly decorated sign with Chinese writing on it. A silver sculpture of a

dragon's head was perched on top of the sign and it greeted anyone coming near it with demonic red eyes and a snarl with steam venting from its nostrils. Sonic looked at the sign but being as he doesn't live in Chun-Nan he had no idea what the writing on the sign said.

"Hey Ruben, care to translate this?" asked Sonic.

Ruben peered at the sign and looked at the writing.

"It says "You are at the Plains of Deception. Cross these plains at your own risk! Only the mightiest will make the way through and get the honour of meeting the mighty Raiju clan." Ruben translated.

"Wow. This Raiju clan has might issues." joked Sonic.

"So I'm guessing these are the Plains of Deception." said Ruben, looking ahead of him.

There was a long stretch of plains that expanded quite far. If one looked closely enough, you could see a sign at the end of the plains presumably marking the finish line. The plains seemed quite harmless and there didn't seem to be any challenge in this at all. Sonic was pleased to see this and he was ready and rearing to go.

"Well these aren't very deceptive plains are they?" sneered Sonic "They look completely harmless. Let's go!"

"Stop you idiot!" hissed Ruben, yanking on Sonic's quills to hold him back "They're called the Plains of Deception for a reason! They're plains and they're deceiving! It may LOOK harmless but it actually isn't!"

"Prove it smarty pants." scoffed Sonic.

"Of all the self-centred…" moaned Ruben.

He picked up a stone lying near the sign and he threw it into the plains. Before the stone could even hit the ground, a spurt of fire shot up from the ground like water from a geyser and scorched the stone to pieces. Sonic was so surprised his quills almost dropped off.

"Huh…uh…wha…um…huh?" blurted Sonic.

"I knew it!" said Ruben crossly "This is a test of agility and intelligence! The plains are full of invisible traps! But how did the Raiju clan get invisible traps? I thought only chameleons had that kind of technology."

"There are chameleons in Chun-Nan?" asked Sonic "I wonder if Espio once lived here…" he mused to himself.

"No, there are no chameleons in Chun-Nan." said Ruben "But my clan has met a clan of chameleons when we went sight-seeing in another country and they showed us their invisible trap genius that they had invented. If I were to guess, I'd say the Raiju clan must have stolen this technology from the chameleons or they've somehow managed to duplicate it. Nevertheless, we must remain vigilant as we cross these plains. There maybe more then just fire geysers we have to avoid."

"So I'm guessing we're taking this slowly and steadily aren't we?" asked Sonic in dismay "I hate going slow, it's boring."

"Well as boring as being slow is, you don't wanna get killed do you?" snapped Ruben "Now stop complaining and come on!"

"OK! OK!" said Sonic, waving his hands around hastily "Sheesh, who's got your tail in a knot Ruben?"

"Of all the irksome…" grumbled Ruben.

Ruben stormed out into the plains with Sonic slowly following him. The plains stretched a long distance away and they were only moving at a walking speed so this trek would take a while. Sonic and Ruben passed a fire geyser and the geyser spouted a huge jet of fire from underground, making them jump. The fire died down after that huge spout.

"Whoa!" cried Sonic "I am NOT gonna get used to that!"

"You won't have to once we cross these plains." noted Ruben "Because we won't have to do it a second time."

Ruben wasn't watching here he was going and he walked over a symbol marked on the ground that activated a trap. The symbol lit up and out of nowhere, daggers started shooting everywhere and whizzing straight past Sonic and Ruben. The hedgehog and water panther began leaping about to dodge the daggers.

"Ruben! What did you do?" cried Sonic as he ducked to dodge a dagger.

"I think I accidentally activated a trap!" yelped Ruben, falling to the ground so the daggers wouldn't be able to hit him "Silly me! I should be watching where I'm going!"

Sonic decided to do something about the showers of daggers that were coming from nowhere. He leaped into the air and spun into a spin-dash. Any dagger that hit the spinning hedgehog was instantly shattered by Sonic's spin-dash. That idea impressed Ruben and it seemed to be working well because the daggers couldn't harm anybody with Sonic breaking them all in a spin-dash. The daggers seemed to be slowing down because less and less were shooting at Sonic and Ruben by the second. Ruben made the mistake of getting up and thinking it was safe and all of the sudden, a dagger skimmed across his back, leaving a huge gash and bringing the water panther down to his knees. Ruben grimaced and rubbed his throbbing back. Sonic stopped spin-dashing and landed beside Ruben to see what was wrong. Luckily, the daggers stopped coming and everything fell into silence.

"Ruben! Are you OK buddy?" asked Sonic.

"Ugh! I should have stayed down!" grunted Ruben "A dagger skimmed me on the back! Erhn! My back hurts!"

"That dagger got you good." said Sonic, noticing the gash on Ruben's back left by the dagger "Good thing it was only a skim. If it actually impaled you I bet the outcome would be a lot worse. Can you stand?"

Ruben tried to stand back up but the pain in his back forced him back down. Ruben grimaced as if he did have a dagger in his back.

"I can't!" grunted Ruben, tensing up "The pain in my back is too great! You'll have to…go on without me!"

"What? No! I'm not leaving you behind Ruben! How could you even suggest something like that?" exclaimed Sonic "Friends don't leave friends behind! They stick together no matter what!"

Ruben was really surprised at Sonic's selfless nature. He was willing to provide help for anybody that needed it, even if it meant slowing him down in the process.

"Sonic, I dunno what to say." said Ruben, touched by the statement.

"Don't say anything buddy." said Sonic, putting his arm around Ruben and helping him onto his feet "We're gonna get to the end of those plains even if it kills us."

"Your valour is incredible." said Ruben "I think my clan would look up to you if they met you."

"Really?" said Sonic "I suppose they would. A lot of people look up to me. Especially Tails.

"I can see why." said Ruben.

With that said, Sonic continued the trek with Ruben walking beside him. Sonic kept his arm around Ruben to support the wounded panther as they made their way across the plains. Ruben kept his eyes out for symbols marked in the ground so they didn't accidentally activate another trap and Sonic kept all his senses alert. In a place like this with invisible traps, you had to be weary of anything. More fire geysers activated but none of them managed to singe the hedgehog or panther yet. Sonic pressed on as the geysers died away. Another shooting daggers trap activated but Sonic and Ruben were ready for them this time. Ruben stayed down on the ground while Sonic broke all the daggers. He even found where they were coming from and Sonic spin-dashed the dagger shooter, which was invisible, to pieces. Now the daggers had stopped firing, Sonic helped Ruben back up and they continued their trek. But an even deadlier trap was waiting for them and this one did not require a symbol to activate it. As Sonic and Ruben carried on, a whoosh

sound was heard from nowhere and the whoosh was soon followed by a slam on the ground. Even though there didn't seem to be anything there, the ground cracked after the slam sound was heard, startling Sonic and Ruben who were inches away. It was an invisible hammer on a machine. The machine couldn't harm them since they weren't close enough so Sonic and Ruben carried on. But there was more then one of those hammer machines. Another invisible hammer swung down and slammed the ground. Sonic and Ruben were just inches away from that one and they were sent staggering backwards. Another hammer machine activated and tried to slam down on Sonic, who unfortunately was in range this time. Sonic heard the whoosh and he rolled over to avoid a ground cracking smash that followed. The slam rung in Sonic's ears and he felt a little shaken afterwards. Ruben strained to get back up and he managed it, although he couldn't stand up straight and he helped the shaken hedgehog back up. Sonic shook off the slam's effects and they carried on. Another fire geyser activated right in front of their faces and the two could feel the heat of that. If Ruben's collar hadn't been confiscated he could easily fight the fire with his water powers. The geyser died down and the two Mobians carried on. Unfortunately, they were halted by an invisible wall. They bumped into it and fell onto their backs. Sonic shook his head and frowned at the invisible wall.

"Oh that's just cheating!" he grumbled "How is anyone supposed to get over an invisible wall? We have no idea how high this thing could possibly be because we can't see it!"

"I'm willing to bet this thing expands all the way to the edges of the plains." said Ruben "And they're blocked off by high stretching rocks. I'll have to see how high this is."

He picked up a stone lying nearby and he threw it at the wall the highest he could throw it. The stone hit the wall and fell back down to the ground. Ruben's face fell.

"It's higher then I thought it was." he muttered.

"Well I'm not giving up!" yelled Sonic determinedly "We're close to getting to the end of these trap-laden plains so we can't give up now! If we can't get over the wall we'll have to go through it!"

Sonic spin-dashed into the wall…and bounced straight off it. He hit the ground and groaned in pain.

"Man! Is that wall invulnerable or something?" he muttered.

"Well we can't get over or through the wall so we'll have to go under it." said Ruben, digging a hole at the base of the wall.

Ruben began to dig at a rapid speed, sending soil flying behind him as he dug. Sonic stepped back so he wouldn't get hit by the dirt. After a while of digging, Ruben finally managed to dig his way under the wall and onto the other side. Sonic spin-dashed through the hole Ruben had dug and he leaped out on the other side. But then more trouble began. The moment Sonic and Ruben were on the other side of the invisible wall, fire geysers all began going off at once. There were at least twenty fire geysers all going off at once. And to add insult to injury, daggers began shooting from nowhere. And there were hammer machines lying in wait for its victims.

"Well I guess the Raiju clan decided to put everything at once at the end in an attempt to stop us." said Sonic, bewildered at what he was faced with.

"Taking it slowly won't do us any good here." said Ruben "Sonic, you are free to go as fast as you wish."

"Sweet!" cheered Sonic, scooping Ruben up bridal style "Hang on tight Ruben! This is gonna be hectic!"

Sonic charged into the fire geysers at top speed but because he was going so fast the fire didn't have time to burn him. Sonic weaved his way around all the geysers and dodged all the flying daggers. He ran too quick for the invisible hammers to it him and he jumped on top of the machine and leaped through the air like a grasshopper. Sonic landed on the ground directly in front of a fire geyser that went off. Sonic charged on at his trademark speed, too fast for the fire to burn him and too fast for the daggers to hit him. He got a little careless and almost got smashed by an invisible hammer but he stopped just before it could hit him and he leapt back, leaving the hammer to hit the ground. Sonic leaped on top of the hammer, then onto the machine wielding the hammer and leaped through the air

again. He landed on the ground and charged on. The dagger's numbers were beginning to increase as he got closer to the end of the plains, increasing the chance of getting hit even at sonic speed but Sonic knew how to deal with the daggers. He fell down on his back and slid right across the ground with the daggers whizzing over him. Sonic was sliding so fast he actually managed to dodge all the shooting daggers and make it to the end of the plains! They slid past one last fire geyser and Sonic leaped back onto his feet. He put Ruben down and whooped with joy.

"Whoo hoo! That was awesome!" he cheered "Let's go again!"

"Sonic!" blustered a very frazzled and shaken Ruben "You are the craziest hedgehog I've even known! And that's why we made it to the end of the plains. Your super speed helped us avoid all those traps. Maybe next time I shouldn't doubt you when you wanna rush off into things."

"I understand there are times I have to slow down." said Sonic casually "I just don't enjoy them that's all. Now, where too next Ruben?"

Ruben pulled the map out from his glove and studied it.

"Um…now we've conquered the plains it's straight onto to the clan's territory." said Ruben "Funny, I was expecting more then two challenges."

"Well I'm glad there aren't anymore." said Sonic "We barely escaped with our lives just doing those two! How's your back by the way?"

"Better." said Ruben "I can walk now. So, let's get on to the clan's territory. I really hope they're willing to barter with us."

"If they're not then Chun-Nan has no hope of survival." said Sonic "And Zira will conquer this country for sure."

"Exactly." said Ruben "So, shall we continue hero from the west?"

"Ready when you are water boy." sniggered Sonic.

Sonic and Ruben ran off and headed on to the clan's territory. What

awaited them there was unknown at the moment and what the clan would be like was a mystery. But answers to those questions were just around the corner and Sonic wasn't going to back down now…

"What is taking those idiots so long?" roared Zira, punching the wall and cracking it heavily "Kidnapping a stupid princess shouldn't be that hard!"

Zira and the Yīnyǐng Mao clan had retreated back to the abandoned prison and were eagerly awaiting Bladefeather and Mushu's return with Princess Matilda in hand. They had been taking an awful long time and Zira was beginning to lose her patience. Fong Zarr just stood against the wall with his arms folded and he watched Zira pace around with an oddly amused expression on his face. Zira stopped pacing and she pointed sharply at Fong Zarr.

"You! Have you heard anything from Bladefeather at all?" she snapped.

"Not so much as a little whisper." said Fong Zarr bluntly "Your boys maybe in grrrrave danger rrrright now."

"They can't possibly be in danger!" snapped Zira "They're kung-fu masters! Sonic the Hedgehog and his band of younglings can't possibly be that much of a threat to them and they'll be all the wiser about the emperor's paralyzing technique! I think they're playing about like children! Well, I've got a lovely punishment planned for those two morons when I get my claws on them!"

"So what do you suggest oh mighty leader of the Yīnyǐng Mao clan?" asked Fong Zarr inquisitively "Are we going to find them?"

"No. I am going to kidnap that princess myself!" announced Zira "You and your ninjas are coming with me Zarr. And try not to get hit by a wok like last time*!" she roared.

"My head still grrrieves thinking about that discombobulating defeat of mine." muttered Fong Zarr, rubbing his head which had healed up nicely after being hit by a wok.

"Zarr, get your ninjas together!" barked Zira "We're leaving the moment you're ready so get a move on!"

"At once your majesty." said Fong Zarr loyally, leaving the room to get his gang of ninja cats together.

The moment he left the room and headed down the dull, dusty corridors, his face changed to a more evil expression then before.

"Oh Zira you unrrrrighteous fiend." he purred to himself "You will not conquer Chun-Nan. Once we arrive at the Pagoda of Prosperity, my clan will refute you, then I'll take the thrrrrone myself and I will be rrrruler of Chun-Nan and you will be nothing but a bleeding, broken corpse lying by the side of a river somewhere. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha…"

His laughing filled the empty, dusty corridor as he headed off to gather his ninjas together…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 52**

Bladefeather and Mushu are good guys? I bet you didn't see that coming! Sonic and Ruben have made it to the end of the new clan's challenges too! Will this clan be willing to abide with them or has their journey all been for nothing? Join me next time as Sonic meets the new ninja clan face-to-face... Reviews are welcome.

Teaming Up With The Storm

Story 55: Teaming Up With The Storm

It had taken them a while to get there but Sonic and Ruben had finally made it. They had arrived at the so-called Raiju clan's territory. Needless to say, it wasn't a very inviting place at all. Rather then a pagoda, the clan's home was a huge steel palace which had a very tough looking and slightly sinister appearance to it. It looked more like the home of an evil overlord then a simple ninja clan. Not to mention the fortress was surrounded by lethal looking assault courses which looked like they could kill someone should they mess up. It was a wonder to Sonic as how all these ninjas were successfully conquering the courses without so much as a scratch. Speaking of ninjas, every single ninja they saw was a lynx in black ninja attire. They looked strong, powerful and mighty and it seemed years of training they had had paid off for them as they effortlessly ploughed through their assault courses. Ruben peered at the map to make sure they were in the right place. The map marked the huge steel palace they were looking at so they were in the right place.

"Well Sonic, we're here." said Ruben with not much joy in his voice. It was quite clear he wished he was in a less violent place right now.

"This is the home of the clan the emperor told us about." said Sonic "The Raiju clan it's called according to that rhino guard we met earlier. Well, let's go over to them, say hi and beg for them to join us in out struggle against Zira the Ruthless."

"Um…I wouldn't do that if I were you hedgehog." said Ruben wearily "They don't look like the kind of people who are in the mood to talk. All they wanna do is fight it seems."

"Well we don't know if we don't try Ruben old buddy so let's go and meet them." said Sonic, striding off.

"No Sonic!" cried Ruben "You don't know what they'll…"

He groaned loudly in annoyance and ran off after Sonic. Sonic

wondered over to a Raiju ninja doing sit-ups. He seemed to be exercising really hard as he was doing sit-ups over and over without showing any signs of slowing down or tiring. Sonic tapped the lynx on the shoulder and the lynx stopped what he was doing and he turned to face Sonic. He didn't look very happy to see the blue hedgehog standing there before him.

"Hi there ninja guy or whatever your name is." said Sonic "We're here to meet…"

"Intruders!" screeched the lynx, hoping to his feet and drawing out a dagger and point it straight at the hedgehog's chest "Seize those peasants at once Raiju ninjas!"

The other ninjas stopped what they were doing and they all ran over to Sonic and Ruben. Sonic instantly realized that he was in trouble so he leaped out of the pouncing lynx's way and he ran for it. Ruben ran after him with the lynxes hot on their trials. They all bounded down the hilly, stony staircase Sonic and Ruben had just climbed up to get to the fortress.

"OK Ruben, maybe this wasn't my best idea!" cried Sonic "We may have to come back later when those guys have calmed down!"

"Maybe next time I tell you no you'll listen to me!" yelled Ruben crossly "You do realize that I know this country better then you do so I'm gonna know how things work around here so you should stop being so obstinate and listen to me!"

"Sheesh! I never took you to be such a grumpy-guts Ruben!" muttered Sonic "I thought you water-panthers were a happy bunch!"

"Of all the witty and insulting…!" grumbled Ruben.

Unfortunately, the Mobians didn't get very far. There was a lynx lying in wait for them at the bottom of the hilly staircase they had walked up to get to the palace and he lay some large stones on the stairs. Sonic and Ruben didn't see the stones and they tripped on them. This in turn caused them to fall down the stairs and land on the ground at the bottom with a sharp thud. Luckily, the trip didn't cause too much damage to them but Sonic and Ruben couldn't find the

strength to get back to their feet and run for their lives. The ninja lynxes chasing them caught up to them and pounced on them without a moment's hesitation. They tied Sonic and Ruben up with thick rope and they hauled their prisoners onto their feet. One ninja who was visibly larger and stockier then the others stepped forward. He glared at Sonic and Ruben. The hedgehog and water panther could only look nervously back at him.

"You two are in a heap of trouble." boomed the lynx "The penalty of intruding and spying on the mighty Raiju clan is death! Conquering Storm does not take lightly to spies and intruders."

"We didn't come here to spy on your stupid clan!" snapped Sonic "We came here to negotiate with you!"

"A likely story." said the lynx in a vapid tone of voice "Let's see if Conquering Storm will be fooled by your lies. I wouldn't get hopeful that she will though you heathens."

"We aren't lying!" protested Ruben "I give you my word of honour we aren't lying!"

"Word of honour indeed." snapped the lynx "We are the Raiju clan! Only through strength and might do you earn anything honouree here! Take those peasants away and bring them to our glorious bride!" bellowed the lynx.

The lynxes obeyed and they dragged Sonic and Ruben back up the hilly, stony staircase and to their steel fortress. Sonic whispered to Ruben.

"What's a bride in a clan?"

"Bride is a title given to a female leader of the clan" Ruben whispered back "A bride is wed to their house and their clan in turn is wed to them."

"How do you know so much?" demanded one of the lynxes carrying Ruben angrily.

"I…I…used to live…in…Chun-Nan." said Ruben nervously "I used to…be…in a…clan myself…my clan is…dead now…"

"Really?" said the lynx "I guess your clan isn't as mighty as we are if it's dead."

"Hey! If you put grief on poor Ruben you answer to the hedgehog!" snapped Sonic angrily.

"And you would be very wise to keep your accursed mouth shut if you don't want us to stomp you into the dirt you little vermin!" retorted the lynx carrying Ruben "Now you two, not another word until we meet Conquering Storm!"

Sonic and Ruben knew arguing with their captors was a foolish idea so they stopped talking and kept their mouths shut. Hopefully Conquering Storm would be merciful or they were dead meat in that palace. Before Sonic and Ruben knew it, they were dragged into the throne room of the steel palace by their captors and thrown rather roughly onto the floor at the feet of a few steps that led to a throne. Sonic and Ruben got up onto their knees, shook their heads and they stared at the throne. There was a female lynx sitting in the throne and she did not look pleased to see two Mobians that weren't lynxes kneeling on the floor and looking up at her. The lynx had orange fur and purple eye-shadow on her eyelids, orange eyes and two thin black bangs that drooped over her eyes. She wore a straw coolie hat on her head which pushed down her big ears, a purple samurai outfit that was belted at the waist and trimmed in gold, big black and grey fingerless gloves with red cuffs near the elbow and brown boots with metal reinforcements at the toe. She looked like a formidable woman and Sonic could easily see why she was supposedly the leader of the Raiju clan. The broad and stocky lynx stood forward.

"Conquering Storm my dear." he boomed "We caught these two peasants snooping around your fortress Ma'Am. What do you wish for us to do with them?"

Conquering Storm didn't answer him. She stood up from her throne and strode over to Sonic and Ruben with a cold expression on her face. She didn't look like the kind of woman who could take a quirk, she looked deathly serious and Sonic could tell this from her actions. Conquering Storm stood before Sonic and Ruben and she glared at them.

"What are you two scoundrels doing here?" she demanded, her voice was like ice "I do hope you are not spying on the mighty Raiju clan! If you are then I'll have to punish you both and you will not make it out of here alive!"

"So I take it you're the woman in charge?" asked Sonic.

"I am hedgehog." said Conquering Storm bluntly "I am the Bride of the Conquering Storm, leader of the Raiju clan but you will refer to me as Conquering Storm, nothing more."

"Conquering Storm?" sniggered Sonic "That's a daft name! What are your parents called? Raging Typhoon and Thundering Gale?"

"Sonic! Show some respect!" hissed Ruben "Do you want us to get killed?"

Sonic didn't answer. Conquering Storm shifted her steely gaze from Sonic and onto Ruben.

"I know you." she said in a flat tone "You're a water panther. You were once part of the Hǎilàng clan weren't you?"

"I-I-I was." stammered Ruben.

"Pity your clan was lacking in might and strength." said Conquering Storm cruelly "No wonder they're dead now."

"Hey! You leave Ruben alone!" snapped Sonic "How would you like it if your clan was dead and Ruben teased you about it!"

Conquering Storm glared at Sonic with her orange eyes. They seemed to burn like a bonfire as she glared at Sonic.

"You've got some nerve talking to me like that boy!" she snarled "Who do you think you are? Some poor fool who thinks he can preach to me like this?"

"No I don't think that at all." retorted Sonic "I am Sonic the Hedgehog, hero of Mobius and me and Ruben are here to talk, not spy on you."

"Sonic the Hedgehog?" mused Conquering Storm "Hero of Mobius? How did I fail to notice this?"

"You know me?" asked Sonic.

"Don't be a fool, of course I don't know you!" snapped Conquering Storm "I've merely heard of you. Everybody in this wretched country has heard of you. Dàfēng Rai*, release them." she ordered to the broad and stocky lynx that stood behind them.

"But Ma'Am…" protested Rai.

"Do as you are told!" growled Conquering Storm.

Rai did as he was told and he untied Sonic and Ruben. The two Mobians looked at each other. Was Conquering Storm willing to listen to them? Rai didn't look too happy as he unwrapped the rope from around their bodies.

"Why do I have to release these spies?" asked Rai.

"Because they wish to speak and someone as honouree as the hero of Mobius is deserving of hearing my terms." explained Conquering Storm "So Sonic, Hero of Mobius and peasant of an overly obstinate nature, what are you here for and make it quick, I haven't got all day." she said to Sonic in a vapid tone.

"You don't waste any time do you?" said Sonic happily "OK, here's what we're here for: have you heard of Zira the Ruthless?"

"What a stupid question to ask, of course I've heard of Zira the Ruthless!" snapped Conquering Storm "Do you think I've been living in a cave all my life?"

"No! No of course not!" insisted Sonic "I wasn't to know was I? Well, Zira has returned and she's gotten two kung-fu masters and a clan of ninja cats on her side and we're kinda having trouble defeating her so we travelled here, conquered your traps fair and square and made it here to kindly ask you to join us in our battle with Zira."

Conquering Storm narrowed her gaze at Sonic and she put a finger to her lips. She then put both her hands behind her back and

relaxed her face.

"Bold words hedgehog." said Conquering Storm "But we cannot be bought like this. We are the mighty Raiju clan! Only through strength and might do you earn anything!"

"Oh I get it." said Ruben "You're one of those "Duel of Honour" types aren't you?"

"Correct." said Conquering Storm.

"In that case, I wager a duel of honour." said Ruben "Sonic will face whoever you wish for him to battle and if Sonic wins, you join us, if not then we leave and we fight Zira ourselves."

"A bold idea water panther." said Conquering Storm bluntly "And I accept. Nothing like a good duel of honour to give the Raiju clan some exercise. Dàfēng Rai! You will face the hedgehog!" she barked at the stocky lynx.

"Yes Ma'Am. Thank you Ma'Am. Tremendous honour Ma'Am." said Rai loyally.

"Before we fight, I have something for the water panther." said Conquering Storm.

She plunged her hand into her pocket and fished something out. She threw it to Ruben and Ruben caught it, not really sure what it was. He opened his fist and looked at it. It was his water collar! He quickly snapped it back onto his neck. He got sudden wave of water flowing through his veins as he put his collar back on and he felt like a water panther once again.

"My guard at the Valley of Stepping Stones gave it to me and told me on his word of honour to give it back to you since he'd promised to return it." explained Conquering Storm.

"Thank you Conquering Storm." said Ruben, bowing politely to the cold and straightforward lynx in the coolie hat.

Conquering Storm sniffed at Ruben and turned to Sonic.

"Don't expect to win hero." she said coldly "Dàfēng Rai is my star warrior and not once has he fallen to any foe that has challenged him."

"If you say so." said Sonic casually "I'm just gonna do the best I can."

"May the best fighter win." said Conquering Storm "And that will be Rai of course. Let the duel of honour…COMENCE!" she ordered at the top of her voice.

A lynx rang a gong that made a very loud, haunting, ominous gong noise that echoed through the room and Sonic and Rai took their positions. Then, before anybody could so much as blink, Sonic and Rai charged at each other and leaped into the air, preparing to beat the snot out of each other…

Meanwhile in Chun-Nan, Bladefeather had gathered Tails, Amy, Knuckles and Cream to an old and rickety rope bridge that stretched a good length from the ledge to the other ledge. Cosmo had decided to stay at the pagoda since she would be of no use to them in this fight. Amy summoned her hammer and gave it a hefty swing.

"So Jerk-feather, why are we here?" she asked.

"Need I admonish you that we're now allies so I will not abide the name-calling thank you." snapped Bladefeather "We are here because this is where Zira will arrive. I'm am willing to bet that Zira is on her way now and this rope bridge is the only way for her to get to the Pagoda of Prosperity. So, do you remember the plan heroes from the west?"

"We do." said Tails "We're here to slow Zira down and give Sonic and Ruben a chance to get home and hopefully, we can tire her out enough for you and Mushu to eliminate her."

"Correct little boy." said Bladefeather "You are more intelligent then you look."

"Are you sure that we'll be OK out here?" asked Cream nervously "I

mean, that nasty Zira woman's very strong. What if we can't beat her? She'll break our necks!" she cried, clutching her throat.

"Zira may indeed by incredibly vigorous and her strength by be unequivocal but she's not interested in mendicants like you, she's only interested in the emperor." said Bladefeather "If she refutes you, she won't execute you, she'll just run off and continue her mission."

"And how can you be sure of that?" asked Amy, narrowing her eyes at the falcon.

"Zira only executes people who are a threat to her." explained Bladefeather "Hence the reason she slaughtered three ninja clans. She hasn't been known to execute innocent civilians…yet."

"Somehow, I don't believe you." said Amy "You're just saying that to calm Cream down."

"Of all the vexing…" muttered Bladefeather "Me and you may have a variance with each other but do not take umbrage at me, I am only speaking what is truthful. Zira won't see you lot as a threat and she will not execute you. Comprehended?"

"Um…yes?" said Amy, not really sure what the word "comprehended" meant.

"How radiant." said Bladefeather sarcastically "Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a pagoda to get back to. I bid you valediction and good luck my magnanimous heroes from the west."

Bladefeather flapped his wings and he took to the skies. Then he shot off at a speed Tails could only dream he could fly at. Bladefeather was so fast he was out of sight in a matter of seconds. Amy stuck her nose in the air and huffed.

"Man I hate that pompous, big headed jerk!" she moaned "Always talking with the big words and making us feel stupid! Ooooooooooohhhhhhh what I wouldn't give to smash his face in!"

"Amy! Shame on you!" scolded Cream "How could you be so rude and discourteous to Mr. Bladefeather? He's only trying to help save

Chun-Nan!"

"He's rude and discourteous to us Cream so he doesn't deserve my niceness." sniffed Amy.

"Well regardless of if he deserves it or not, one thing we can thank him for is for bringing us one step ahead of Zira." said Tails "We're ready for her now."

"I just hope this plan wasn't a trick to get us as far away from the emperor as possible so Bladefeather can kidnap the princess." said Knuckles as he clenched his fists.

"Did you not hear a word Bladefeather said?" snapped Tails "He's on our side! He's trying to help us save Chun-Nan, he wants to be free from Zira, he's not attempting a kidnapping of any kind!"

"I'll believe it when I see it." scoffed Amy.

"OK, can we forget about Bladefeather? This is getting us nowhere." muttered Tails "Let's focus on…"

"Zira's coming!" squealed Cream, pointing to a rope bridge that led to the one they were standing at right now.

"Chao!" squeaked her pet Chao Cheese.

Surely enough, Zira was running, on all fours, across the rope bridge at top speed. Fong Zarr and his ninjas weren't far behind. Zira finished crossing the rope bridge and she made it onto the ledge. Then she began running across the rope bridge that the Mobians were standing at.

"She's coming!" cried Cream.

"If only we could cut this thing." said Tails, notifying the ropes that held the bridge in place "We could send her falling to her death and that would be it."

"Well we can't cut this thing so we'll have to engage her face to face." said Knuckles, raising his fists "Let's go team!"

Amy and Knuckles were the first to attack. Amy ran up to the charging Zira and whacked her directly in the face with her hammer, sending her flying backwards and landing further back up the rope bridge. Fong Zarr and his ninjas stopped in their tracks and waited at the foot of the rope bridge. Zira picked herself up and rubbed her face. She hissed at Amy and stood up on two feet. The rope bridge wobbled dangerously. Zira advanced slowly on Amy.

"So what are you peasants doing here?" she demanded angrily.

"We're here to stop you reaching the pagoda!" retorted Amy "You will not pass!"

Zira chuckled coldly at the pink hedgehog.

"Oh my dear, you are such a foolish little girl aren't you?" she sneered "Do you realize who I am? I am Zira the Ruthless, the almighty and powerful kung-fu mistress and destined to be ruler of Chun-Nan!"

"More like destined to fall of this rope bridge and be defeated by me!" shrieked Amy, swinging her hammer at Zira.

Zira had her hands straight and she blocked every single one of Amy's blows with her arms in swift motion. After blocking the last blow, Zira grabbed Amy by the neck and tossed her back onto the ledge. Amy hurtled over Knuckles and landed beside Tails and Cream. Knuckles charged towards Zira and he punched her in the stomach. Zira skidded backwards and she charged at Knuckles. She rammed the echidna in the stomach and sent him falling onto his back. Then she picked Knuckles up by the ankles and threw him onto the ledge. Knuckles landed directly on top of Amy. Amy gasped loudly. Zira leaped onto the ledge and the Mobians instantly backed away before she could strike at them. Zira stood up in a battle ready stance, unsheathed her claws and roared a natural leopard roar.

"Look here merchants, I do not wish to tangle with unworthy dirt such as you." purred Zira "My time is with the emperor and no one less so back off and I won't have to kill you."

"We will not back off!" yelled Tails "We won't let you hurt the

emperor!"

"You'll have to get through us first if you want to get to the emperor!" bellowed Knuckles, raising his fists.

"Well since you're all begging for a broken neck then I'll be happy to answer to your summons!" snarled Zira "You'll be sorry you dared to stand up to the great Zira the Ruthless you wretched vermin!"

"Hey Zira, what's with all this power hungry stuff about anyway?" asked Amy "Why do you wish to conquer Chun-Nan? Has the country made a bad impact on you or something?"

Those words seemed to make Zira tense up and scowl icily at Amy. She clenched her fists for a moment before relaxing and standing up straight with her arms by her side. The Mobians waited for something to happen but nothing did. Zira breathed in deeply and then spoke.

"Chun-Nan has indeed had a bad impact on me little one." said Zira smoothly but with a tone of anger in her voice "When I was just a child, I was a helpful little servant to my parents. I made the meals and cleaned the house while my parents did their own thing. One day, I came across a school that taught martial arts and I fell in love with the sport of kung-fu. It was my only love in life and I wanted ever so desperately to master the strength and challenges of kung-fu. But my mother didn't approve of this. She hated kung-fu with a burning passion and forbid me to so much as look at a kung-fu master but my heart told me to ignore her and learn what I wished. So every afternoon when my mother left for her art classes I sneaked off to a kung-fu school which was run by Master Shan, my master and mentor. For weeks I did this and because of my kung-fu lessons, I learnt the art of subtlety and managed to act like nothing had changed on me so mother was led under the pretence that I hadn't left my home in the afternoons.

But two months later, some heartless fool snitched on me and after I returned from my lesson of the day, I was forced to explain everything to mother. She was not pleased and she ordered my father to beat me for punishment. He beat me black and blue and he broke my arm, all under my mother's orders. Father was like a

mindless drone to her and that's the way she liked it. The experience was traumatising and my heart grieves just thinking about it. And as I started to recover from my beatings, I had one thing on my mind: revenge and with my kung-fu skills, it was completely possible for me to get revenge on my heartless mother.

So after I healed from my beatings, I killed my stupid mother in revenge for her unforgivable cruelty to me. She was the first neck I broke and father ran away forever to avoid getting killed by me, clever of him since he was my next target. No one knows what happened to father but I have a sneaky suspicion the old fool died of a broken heart shortly after running away. So after the death of my mother, I continued taking lessons and the anger in me I got from remembering the beating my father gave me increased to disproportionate levels. I then had this sudden urge to conquer something so I destroyed a village, slaughtered three clans and tried to ransack the country. I was foiled by Master Shan, Bladefeather and Mushu and sent into exile. This just made me angrier and more determined to get what I want so I came back and now I will rule Chun-Nan and make it pay for all the pain it's endorsed on me!"

She finished her tale with a heavy breath and a growl. The Mobians looked at each other and then back at Zira. Cream, bravely spoke up.

"Zira, killing your mother wasn't a nice thing to do." she said "You could have tried to tell her how you felt about kung-fu and how you loved it. Like my mother once said to me, revenge won't get you anything, all it will do is bring you more pain and then you'll be sadder then you already have been."

"Don't preach to me about morality you little brat!" snapped Zira "You're just a kid! You don't know anything about bad impacts and the pain you feel from being abused by your superiors! And I did try to tell mother about my feelings for kung-fu and her response was "No daughter of mine will be learning that blood sport! Children are meant to be servants and a servant is what you shall be young lady!"! Revenge was the only way I could get what I want and it worked! I'm a kung-fu mistress and I'm soon going to be ruler of Chun-Nan! This whole country will bow to my feet and pay for the indignity it's ever caused me!"

"Chun-Nan didn't cause you any indignity." said Knuckles "You caused yourself indignity by being so vengeful. You will be consumed by your own hate Zira and the only way of avoiding this fate is to change your ways or you'll be finding yourself receiving pain for the rest of your life."

"How dare you lecture me you fatuous worm?" snarled Zira "That's it! I will pound you all into submission and once I conquer Chun-Nan, you will be my lap-dogs, grovelling at my feet and spending an eternity in chains and misery!"

Zira lunged forward and tried to attack Knuckles but Knuckles beat her to it and he socked Zira in the face. Zira landed on her side but she was quick to recover. Knuckles tried to punch her again but Zira kung-fu kicked him in the head and sent him stumbling, Then she picked Knuckles up, spun him around in midair and kicked him straight into Tails, who was trying to help Knuckles. Cream throw Cheese at Zira but Zira smacked him away with one swipe of an arm. Cream flapped her ears and flew towards Zira. She grabbed Zira's ponytail and yanked on it. Zira yelped angrily and she leaped into the air. She dropkicked Cream into the ground, causing the rabbit to let go of her ponytail and before Zira could add an elbow slam for added effect, Tails tackled her and sent her rolling across the ground. Zira got back to her feet only to get a punch to the cheek from Knuckles. Zira retaliated with a karate chop to the face and she kicked Knuckles away before he could try to retaliate. Fong Zarr and the ninjas watched the fight in interest.

"Well, this fight is going to get interesting isn't it?" Zarr mused to himself "Well since I have no orders, I'm quite content to stand idly by and watch. I bet Zira will massacre those scrrrrubs in a matter of moments. If those merchants last more the five minutes then I'll be impressed."

Fong Zarr chuckled dryly to himself as Zira did a split-kick to take out Tails and Amy both at once and then she landed a kick slam on Knuckle's head just as he was about to attack. Cream tried to attack but Zira gave the rabbit an enormous uppercut that actually ended up rendering Cream unconscious! Cheese fisted Zira in the eye but that didn't seem to do much to her and Zira swatted Cheese away. Amy tried to wallop Zira with her hammer but the vicious leopard

knocked the hammer out of her hands and kicked Amy into Fong Zarr who kicked her away before she could hit him. Knuckles then grabbed Zira in a chokehold and forced her onto her knees. He thumped Zira sharply on the head to daze her a little and he let go of her so he could give her an uppercut. Zira stumbled backwards and rubbed her throbbing chin better and she lunged at the echidna with her claws bared, fangs shown and she roared ferociously at her opponent…

Rai held up his arms in front of his face in an X-shape to defend himself from one of Sonic's mighty spin-dashes. The fight between Sonic and Rai had been pretty even sided so far with neither opponent being able to land much of a blow on each other. Conquering Storm was impressed with how well Sonic was holding up against her mightiest ninja, this hedgehog was as strong as the legends made him out as. Ruben had just been watching the whole fight nervously and was rather surprised that Sonic was holding out so well against a well trained ninja. Maybe Rai wasn't as strong as Conquering Storm made him out to be. Sonic leaped backwards and skidded to a halt just as Rai was lunging for him. Sonic spin-dashed Rai in the stomach and sent him crashing into a wall. Rai pulled himself free from the wall and lunged at Sonic, spinning in mid-air like a drill-bit. He hit Sonic directly in the gut and sent him skidding across the floor on his back. Before Sonic could get back up, Rai grabbed the hedgehog by the ankles and threw him into the ceiling. The ceiling was very high up and Sonic would have a rather nasty fall if he pulled himself free from it. But Sonic knew how to deal with heights so he had no problem. He rolled into a ball and spin-dashed off the ceiling…only to get walloped by Rai and sent crashing into the floor. Sonic picked himself up and dodged just as Rai was lunging at him with his arms stretched out. Sonic kicked him in the back of the head as he was leaping over him and Rai fell flat on his face. Rai got back to his feet but Sonic took his legs out from underneath him with a swift kick to the ankles, causing him to fall back on the floor. Rai rolled onto his front, stood on all fours and charged at Sonic like an angry bull. He head-butted the hedgehog and sent him accidentally hurling towards Conquering Storm. The prideful bride kicked Sonic away before Sonic could hit her.

"Watch it Rai you careless oaf!" shouted Conquering Storm.

"My apologies my dear." said Rai "I shall be more careful in this fight."

"Blah, blah, blah, here's hedgehog in your face!" yelled Sonic, punching Rai directly in the jaw.

Rai bent over backwards, sending Sonic hurling over him and he rubbed his jaw. Sonic charged at him at super sonic speed but Rai gave the hedgehog a huge uppercut that sent him hurling through the air in a neat rainbow arch. Sonic landed, luckily, on his feet and he charged at Rai again. Rai tried to attack but Sonic was too fast. He tackled the lynx and sent him falling onto his back. Sonic tried to attack again but Rai kangaroo kicked him away and leaped back onto his feet. Sonic began to throw punches left and right at Rai but Rai blocked every single one of them with his arms. Rai threw punches back but Sonic with his incredibly fast reflexes managed to dodge them all. Then he tripped Rai up and Rai fell onto his back. Rai rolled out of Sonic's way as he was about to kick slam him and Rai roundhouse kicked the hedgehog in the head. Sonic felt a little dazed after such a powerful kick and he staggered about like a drunken person. Rai then walloped him with the side of his fist and Sonic hurtled backwards like a rag doll. Sonic landed on one of the Raiju ninjas who was watching the fight and he knocked him over. Sonic got back to his feet and then noticed the ninja he landed on had a pair of katanas in sheaths strapped to his back. Sonic grabbed the katanas, unsheathed them and threw one to Rai, who caught it in his hand.

"Hey muscle boy, I've decided to spice things up a little." said Sonic, twirling the katana in his hand "Why don't we have a little sword fight instead of a normal fight?"

"Whatever you say hedgehog." said Rai with a big grin on his face, twirling his katana at a very fast speed "I love a good sword fight."

"How marvellous, this fight is going to get more interesting I can see." said Conquering Storm with a dry smile on her face.

Ruben wasn't so sure that this was a good idea. Did Sonic know

how to sword fight? If not then this battle would end very badly for Sonic indeed.

"Ready?" asked Sonic.

"When you are challenger." boomed Rai.

The two fighters charged at each other and their katanas clashed together, the loud clang rang around the room. Sonic and Rai then began to rapidly clash katanas together. They were swinging their swords so quickly you couldn't see them and there were so much clanging noises that was the only noise you could hear in the whole room. Rai swung at Sonic but Sonic jumped over him and they clashed katanas as Sonic sailed over Rai. Sonic landed behind Rai and Rai spun around to block an attack from Sonic. Sonic aimed at Rai's thigh but Rai blocked the blow with his katana. Rai aimed at Sonic's shoulder but Sonic blocked the blow with his katana. They both linked swords and pushed on each other as hard as they possibly could but no one could gain the advantage on either one. Rai then suddenly broke up the sword cross and slashed Sonic on the hip. Sonic cried in pain and fell down on one knee. Rai then tried to strike at Sonic but Sonic defended himself with his katana.

"Hey! This is a duel of honour isn't it?" asked Sonic "We're supposed to defeat each other not KILL each other!"

"Wrong hedgehog." boomed Rai "When the Raiju clan fights it's a fight to the death, honouree or not."

"Well why didn't you say that in the first place?" demanded Sonic.

"Because we wanted you all shocked and surprised when we killed you at the end." explained Rai "But that's not possible since I've just explained it to you."

Ruben was horrified at this revelation.

"Hey! Conquering Storm! That's not how a duel of honour goes!" he yelled at her "I demand you call off this duel now!"

"You will know your place and shut up!" snapped Conquering Storm, not taking her eyes off the battle "You are in Raiju territory so you do

things our way. You may have a rule where you don't kill the opponent in a duel of honour but we do not. In our duels it's a duel to the death."

"So if Sonic wins this fight does this mean he has to kill Rai?" asked Ruben.

"Yes he does." said Conquering Storm, not showing much empathy on the subject matter.

Those Raiju guys are brutal and cruel! thought Ruben *I'm so glad I was never part of this clan!*

Meanwhile, Sonic had managed to stand back up, straining as he did, and he was soon back in the battle. He was having trouble running though due to his slashed hip. Rai began roughly swinging at Sonic, making very loud clangs as he hit Sonic's katana, and he tripped Sonic up with one kick to the legs. Sonic fell onto his back and Rai tried to stab Sonic with the katana. Sonic rolled out of the way, causing Rai to accidentally plunge his katana into the floor. Rai tried to pull it out and Sonic kicked him in the side, sending him rolling over a few meters across the floor. Sonic then spin-dashed the stuck katana and destroyed it and he threw his katana away.

"Enough with the sword play, let's stick to hand to hand from now on." said Sonic, raising his fists.

"Suit yourself hedgehog." said Rai casually, getting back up to his feet.

The two charged at each other but Sonic got the first blow this time, kicking upwards at Rai and walloping his jaw. Rai stumbled backwards and Sonic kicked him again in the gut. Sonic then added insult to injury by kick slamming Rai's head and sending him falling down on his face. Rai tried to get back-up but Sonic spin-dashed him before he could get up. Sonic tried to spin-dash again but Rai smacked him away with his powerful arms. Rai leaped back onto his feet and then he dropkicked Sonic just as he was standing up straight. Sonic landed on the floor with a thump and Rai elbow slammed him while he was down to add insult to injury. Sonic gasped loudly as all the air in his body seemed to be escaping from

him but Rai just laughed. Rai then picked Sonic up as if he was a rag-doll and he threw the hedgehog into the wall. Sonic was ready however and he bounced off the wall with his feet, sending himself hurling towards Rai fist first. The hedgehog successfully punched Rai directly in the nose, sending the lynx falling over. Sonic landed on the floor and he charged at Rai again but Rai was ready for him and he leaped out of the hedgehog's way. Sonic skidded to a halt and spin-dashed at Rai but the ninja lynx once again, smacked him away and sent him hurling into the ground. Sonic skidded to a halt and decided to let Rai try and attack him before doing anything. Rai tried to punch Sonic but Sonic beat him to it with an uppercut. Rai uppercut Sonic back and then he swiped Sonic away with his arm. Sonic lay on his side, trying to get back up. Rai ran towards him, ready to slam down on him but Sonic rolled onto his back, leaned back on his hands and sprung himself feet first into Rai's face. Rai was sent hurling backwards and before he could recover, Sonic spin-dashed him in the gut. Rai doubled over in pain and Sonic decided to be naughty and kick him in the backside. Rai fell onto his face and he rubbed his sore bottom. Conquering Storm did not seem pleased at all.

"Dàfēng Rai!" she yelled "Cease this idiotic display and get back in the battle! You know what happens if you lose!"

"Yes dear, I know what happens if I lose." said Rai, getting back to his feet "I shall double my efforts."

And it seemed he was willing to cheat in order to win this fight. He ran over to the wall, which had many weapons on display, and took a large, rock hard club that looked like it could cause some serious damage. Sonic spin-dashed towards Rai but Rai walloped him with the club and sent him hurling into the wall. Sonic groaned in pain and he slid slowly down to the floor.

"H-h-hey!" he spluttered "Wh-who says you get to use a w-weapon?"

"I do." said Rai "There are no rules in this duel except win."

"Really?" said Sonic "You guys aren't really rules people are you?"

"Shut up and face me with pride hedgehog!" boomed Rai.

He raised the club and prepared to smash Sonic into the ground with it but Sonic spin-dashed him and sent him falling over, causing him to drop the heavy club. Rai tried to pick it up but Sonic grabbed the club, threw it into the air and spin-dashed it into pieces so Rai couldn't use it. Rai got mad and he pulled a pair of nunchakus off the wall. He spun them around furiously. He began to do all sorts of arm twirls with the spinning nunchakus and Sonic spin-dashed towards him. Rai walloped him with the nunchakus but they didn't hurt Sonic anywhere near as much as the club. Sonic landed on his feet and charged at Rai. He slid between Rai's legs so he ended up behind the lynx then he jumped on his back and pulled on his ears. Rai yelped and made the foolish mistake of trying to hit Sonic with the nunchaku. Sonic leaped off him and Rai ended up hitting himself. A tremendous wave of pain swept over Rai and he grimaced. Nunchakus hurt a lot after all. Sonic spin-dashed Rai again and Rai swiped at him with his nunchakus, missing this time. Ruben was watching the whole thing with butterflies in his stomach and he kept silently begging to himself.

"Go Sonic! Go Sonic! Go Sonic!"

Sonic and Rai lunged at each other but they missed and Rai walloped Sonic in the back with the nunchakus. Sonic retaliated with a kick and the two attacked each other again…

Meanwhile, things had been going horribly for the Mobians. Zira was such a powerful kung-fu mistress and so fast that she was hard to hit and any attacks they launched on her, she just shrugged off as if they weren't even serious blows. Cream had been beaten to the point where she couldn't fight anymore so she was forced to forfeit and stay out of harm's way and Cheese without Cream wasn't very helpful so he forfeited too. Only Knuckles, Amy and Tails were managing to hold their own against the kung-fu mistress. Knuckles and Zira punched each other's fists and Amy tried to whack her with her hammer but Zira kicked backwards and hit her in the gut. Amy doubled over in severe pain and Zira then kneed Knuckles in the gut. Tails kicked her in the back of the head while he was flying and

Zira swiped at him but she missed due to the fox's speed while flying. Knuckles gave Zira an uppercut that caused a small tooth to fall out of her mouth and then he gripped his fists together and slammed Zira in the stomach as hard as he could. Zira flew backwards and landed at the feet of Fong Zarr who seemed to be enjoying this match a lot.

"Forgive me mistress but I am not sure what to do." said Fong Zarr with a sneer "I mean, you needed us to take down Master Shan, do you need us to help you take down a bunch of kids?"

"Grrr! I've got this!" retorted Zira furiously "You stay out of this match and await my command!"

"Yes Ma'Am." said Fong Zarr in a sarcastically polite tone.

Zira charged back into the battle and landed a spitting cobra attack on Knuckles. Zira knew kung-fu moves with names after all and spitting cobra was only one of those attacks. She had plenty more ready to use. Tails flew into attack Zira but she turned around, made a circle with her finger and thumb and shouted. "Kung-fu gorilla flick!" and she flicked Tails straight in the nose. A normal flick can hurt but a kung-fu master's flick hurts even more and Tails felt more like he had been punched in the nose rather then flicked. He fell down onto the ground, clutching his nose and grimacing. Zira grinned evilly at Tails and then she used the spitting cobra attack on Tails just as he was standing back up. Tails found himself falling down again, groaning loudly. Amy tried to hammer Zira from behind but Zira just reached over her shoulder, grabbed Amy's hammer as it was coming for her and she tossed Amy onto the ground in front of her. Amy crashed face first and she groaned like a ghoul. Before Zira could do anything to Amy, Knuckles gave her an uppercut from behind and Zira fell forward in roly-poly and she landed on her back. Zira quickly got back to her feet but Knuckles punched the ground beneath his feet and caused some bits of rubble and earth to stick up. He then ripped the rubble out of the ground, leaving a hole in it, and tossed it towards Zira. Being a kung-fu mistress though, Zira ploughed through the rubble as if it was merely sand and she charged towards Knuckles. Knuckles gave her another uppercut to the chin that sent Zira hurling backwards in a rainbow arch. She landed on her back and came to a halt just millimetres away from

the edge of the cliff. Zira groaned in pain and she sat up, rubbing her chin as Knuckles advanced on her.

"My…destiny…" grunted Zira.

Knuckles slammed his foot down on Zira's stomach, forcing her back down on her back. She stared straight up at Knuckles in an expression not often used by her. Fear. She looked very worried to say the least.

"My destiny…it cannot be trumped by mere children!" she wheezed.

"Well it just did." said Knuckles coldly "Now say your prayers Zira! This blow will knock you out cold and while you're out of it, the emperor can find a nice cell for you to rot in!"

He raised his fist high above his head. Zira stared up at it in fear. She awaited the killer blow as Knuckles prepared to strike. Knuckles roared loudly and he punched at Zira, his arm moving at the blink of an eye. But he didn't hit Zira like he hoped he would do. Zira had caught his fist in-between her hands and stopped him dead in his tracks! Tails and Amy were well and truly shocked. Knuckles had come so close to knocking Zira senseless and she stopped him! Zira then climbed back onto her feet, growling at Knuckles and still clutching his fist. Knuckles tried to wrench out of her grasp but she was too strong and she wouldn't let go of him. Zira then flash Knuckles a sick, twisted grin that made him shudder.

"How was it you put it echidna?" she sneered "While I'm out of it, the emperor can find a nice cell for me to rot in?"

She then threw Knuckles' arm to the left, causing Knuckles to stagger to the left and then she thumped him sharply on the right shoulder. Luckily, she hadn't broken anything but that thump hurt Knuckles an awful lot and he clenched his shoulder in pain. Zira then elbowed Knuckles in the stomach, then she kneed him in the stomach and to finish it off, she kicked him directly in the face. Knuckles hurled through the air and landed at the feet of Fong Zarr. The vile ninja thief kicked him away just to be cruel and to add insult to injury. Tails tail-whipped at Zira but she blocked the blow with her arm and grabbed Tails' twin tails. She then hurled the fox into a tree.

Tails hit the tree and slid slowly down to the ground, crying in pain. Amy then tried to hammer Zira but the leopard dodged her with no trouble and she leaped away. Amy kept trying to hit Zira but Zira kept dodging her blows with ease and then she dropkicked Amy in the head. Amy staggered backwards and Zira picked up her hammer, which Amy had dropped after getting kicked, and she tossed it away. Zira then charged at Amy and rammed her in the gut. That blow was so hard Amy ended up falling off the cliff and plunging down to the ground below! Tails was onto it and he flew after the falling Amy as fast as his tails would let him. While that was happening, Knuckles had managed to get back to his feet but he didn't have much strength left in him and he felt weak. Regardless, he knew he couldn't give up so he forced himself back into the battle. Zira saw Knuckles coming and she leaped into the air, spun around like a spinning top and landed behind Knuckles. Knuckles was too slow to react and Zira tripped him up with a swift kick to the legs. Knuckles landed on his back and Zira picked him up. She head butted him in the forehead and threw him into a tree. Knuckles landed on his front and he grunted in pain. Zira cackled in victory, pleased to see she had defeated her opponents but then suddenly, she was struck from behind by a hammer blow. It was Amy Rose being carried by Tails! Tails had caught Amy luckily and they managed to land a sneak attack on Zira. Zira got back to her feet but Amy walloped her again, harder this time, and Tails successfully landed a tail-whip to the face on Zira. Amy then walloped Zira before she had time to recover and sent the kung-fu leopard hurtling into a tree beside Cream. Cream cheered, pleased to see that Zira had presumably been defeated. But Zira wasn't down yet. She got back to her feet and she growled furiously at Tails and Amy. She then saw Cream the Rabbit, who cowered back in fright and she suddenly lunged at her. She grabbed Cream by the neck with both hands and Tails and Amy ran up to her. Cream screamed in terror and Cheese tried to help but Zira flicked him away. She turned her attention back to Tails and Amy.

"You mongrels dare come near me another inch and this child's neck gets broken like a teapot!" she snarled threateningly "I mean it! This is your only warning!"

"Amy! Help me! Please!" wailed Cream "Don't let this horrible

woman kill me!"

"You let go of Cream or you'll be sorry!" screeched Amy.

"You let me and my ninja army go to the Pagoda of Prosperity and this rabbit child will live!" retorted Zira "I will not warn you again! You have ten seconds before I make the killer blow!"

"No!" squeaked Cream "Please!"

Zira ignored her and tightened her grip while counting down from ten.

"Ten…nine…eight…seven…six…"

Tails and Amy looked at each other desperately. They couldn't let Zira go but they couldn't let her kill Cream either. Then again, Sonic would probably be on his way back with the other ninja clan hopefully beside him to help defeat Zira so letting Zira go wouldn't be much of a problem.

"Five…four…three…two…" counted Zira.

"Stop!" cried Tails "We give in. You win just leave Cream alone!"

"Tails means it." said Amy, tossing her hammer on the ground as a sign of surrendering "We surrender."

Zira smiled like a witch and she threw Cream at Amy. The rabbit was in rainfalls of tears and she hugged Amy tightly.

"Oh Amy! That was so horrible! I thought I was going to-to-to…" sobbed Cream.

"Sssh, Sssh, Sssh, It's alright now Cream." said Amy gently, putting her arms around Cream "You're safe now."

"Not for long scrrrrubs!" growled Fong Zarr, unsheathing his twin katanas and wielding them menacingly "It's our turn to play now!"

The whole Yīnyǐng Mao advanced from the rope bridge and onto the cliff with their weapons ready. They were preparing to attack the

defeated Mobians. They all hissed menacing cat hisses at the Mobians and Tails, Amy and Cream all backed up to each other fearfully.

"Shadow cats, tie them up." said Zira "That'll stop them from denying me my destiny."

"But mistress." protested Fong Zarr "Wouldn't it be better to kill the little brutes now so they can't bother us later?"

"It probably would." said Zira bluntly "OK then, tie them up and hang them over the edge of the cliff." she instructed "Make sure the rope is loose enough to un-knot and they'll plunge to their deaths. A fall of a cliff is a more honouree death for valiant fighters like them then simply killing them now."

"Yes Zira." said Fong Zarr.

So the Yīnyǐng Mao put all their weapons away and instead pulled out a bunch of thick ropes that would be difficult to snap. They pounced on Amy, Cream and Tails and they tied them tightly together with the rope. They even tied Cheese up with the three Mobians. The rope was wrapped around the three, keeping them tightly together and they tied up each of their legs too just to make double sure they were secure. Then four ninjas carried the tied up Tails, Amy and Cream over to the edge of the cliff and they tied a rope around a nearby stone but not very tightly. They lowered Tails, Amy and Cream down over the edge so now they were left dangling over the edge of the cliff. In a matter of moments, the loosely tied rope would unravel due to their combined weight and they would fall to their deaths. Zira cackled triumphantly. There was no way out for the Mobians, she had defeated them and now she could continue on to the Pagoda of Prosperity.

"Come on Yīnyǐng Mao!" she barked "Our destiny awaits us at the Pagoda of Prosperity! Let's go!"

"Rrrright behind you Zira dear." said Fong Zarr in a fake tone of loyalty.

Zira, Zarr and the ninjas all charged off at top speed, leaving the tied

up Tails, Amy and Cream behind and dangling off the edge of the cliff. They hadn't tied up Knuckles though but they had forgotten about him and it didn't matter since Knuckles was too weak to get back up so Tails, Amy and Cream were still in peril. The three exchanged worrying glances as the rope slowly began to unwind.

"Tails! What are we gonna do?" cried Amy "We're going to fall and then we're going to die!"

"I dunno Amy." said Tails sadly "I can't fly us away since we're all tied together. There's no room for my tails to spin."

"What about you Cream?" asked Amy desperately "You can fly us away with your flappy little ears can't you?"

"I probably could Miss Rose but I might have trouble carrying the two of you with me." said Cream sadly "And even if I can manage, I might tire out before I can make it."

"Then we're doomed!" wailed Amy "I can't die now! I have a future with Sonic to look forward to before I die! Oh Sonic, where are you?"

It seemed as if all hope was lost for the Mobians as the rope continued to unwind, threatening to loose its grip and send Tails, Amy and Cream falling to their deaths…

Meanwhile, Sonic and Rai had spent the past few minutes playing cat and mouse with Sonic being the mouse and Rai being the cat inevitably. Rai kept trying to hit Sonic with his nunchakus but he kept missing since Sonic was too fast for him. Sonic couldn't run fast due to his slashed hip so he spin-dashed out of Rai's way instead and he hit Rai in the back of the head every time he dodged. This whole ordeal seemed to be fazing the lynx a little and his pursuit seemed to be slowing down. He was also growing tired after running around roaring and swinging nunchakus and getting spin-dashed in the head so many times. He tried to hit Sonic again, wheezing as he did so but he missed and Sonic spin-dashed him in the back of the head yet again. Rai fell onto his hands and knees and be began to pant heavily. Conquering Storm glared at Rai angrily.

"Rai, are you deliberately trying to disappoint me?" she snarled "Get back on your feet and beat that hedgehog if you want to live!"

"Yes…my master…" puffed Rai.

He forced himself back onto his feet and he prepared to attack. Sonic spin-dashed at Rai again but Rai saw him coming and whacked him away with his nunchaku, sending Sonic skidding across the floor. Rai was getting all the wiser about Sonic's tactics so he didn't chase the hedgehog down so he knew he couldn't catch him so he decided to just let Sonic come for him and then attack. Sonic spin-dashed at Rai again but Rai whacked him away again. Sonic skidded across the floor and he bent down in a battle ready stance. He was beginning to sense what Rai was up to so he decided to change tactics. He spin-dashed at Rai and Rai prepared to whack him with his nunchaku. But instead of spin-dashing Rai, Sonic spun over Rai and hit him in the back. Rai fell onto his stomach and he dropped his nunchakus. Sonic quickly scooped them up and he threw them away. Rai got mad and he tried to punch Sonic but Sonic leaped out of the way before he could get hit. Sonic then saw a spear mounted on the wall and he had an idea on how to win the match. He dodged yet another blow from Rai and he ran over to the wall. Rai sensed what Sonic was trying to do and he grabbed a shield that was mounted on the wall and threw it at Sonic. Sonic didn't see the shield coming in time and he got hit by it. Sonic staggered backwards and Rai let him have it in the face with both fists. Sonic was sent skidding across the floor and he rubbed his head tenderly. Rai charged up to Sonic again but Sonic kangaroo kicked him before the lynx could grab him and then Sonic jumped over Rai and kicked him in the back of the head. Rai fell forward and Sonic ran to the wall to get the spear. Sonic grabbed the spear and pointed it straight at Rai, who was charging up to Sonic. Rai stopped dead in his tracks and he sank down on his knees. He knew he couldn't do anything to Sonic without getting killed by the spear. Sonic kept the spear pointed directly at Rai's chest and Rai raised his arms in defeat.

"I concede. You win Sonic." said Rai.

Sonic smiled happily.

"Heh, well played Rai." said Sonic with a thumbs up at the lynx.

Rai just scowled at him. Ruben cheered happily.

"Yes! Sonic you did it!" he cried "Now the Raiju clan will help us defeat Zira!"

Sonic chuckled in a cocky tone and he gave a thumbs up to Ruben. Conquering Storm clapped her hands in sarcastic applause at Sonic.

"Bravo hero from the west." she applauded in a vapid tone "You have won the duel of honour now you may execute your opponent."

"What?" cried Sonic, rubbing the inside of his ear with his finger "Did I hear you wrong or did you just tell me to kill your own ninja?"

"In the Raiju clan, we fight to the death in a duel of honour." said Conquering Storm "The loser gets executed and since Rai has been defeated, you may do the honours hedgehog."

Sonic looked at Rai, the ninja's eyes full of fright as if he had accepted his fate but wasn't happy about it. He bent down and waited for Sonic to do the honours. Sonic just glared at Conquering Storm and he promptly broke the spear by slamming it on his thigh. Rai looked up, surprised at the fact Sonic had spared his life and Sonic threw the spear on the floor angrily. He marched up to Conquering Storm and pointed sharply at her, his face full of anger.

"You're sick if you think I'm gonna stoop down to your level Connie!" said Sonic crossly, pointing straight at Conquering Storm's face "I don't believe that people should die just for getting defeated by someone better then them in a fight! Everybody deserves a second chance at things and I think Rai deserves one for his valiant efforts!"

"Well said Sonic!" praised Ruben "For one so obstinate, you're such an honouree person Sonic!"

"Thanks Ruben." said Sonic, bowing.

"Silence!" yelled Conquering Storm.

Her voice echoed ominously around the room for a moment. The moment things quietened down, Conquering Storm spoke.

"Very well hedgehog I shall meet your amends." said Conquering Storm grimly, clearly not happy with her decisions "Rai will live but next time, I will not be so merciful." she said, glaring furiously at the defeated lynx.

"I will not fail you again master." said Rai loyally "I shall take extra training to ensure my victory next time."

Conquering Storm nodded and then turned to Sonic.

"Since you have won the duel hedgehog, we will join you in your quest to defeat Zira the Ruthless." said Conquering Storm "And I'm so glad I'll be joining in since I've been wanting to fight that vile woman for a long time."

"If that's the case then why didn't you join up with us immediately?" asked Ruben "Wouldn't that have been better?"

"Did you not hear me properly little boy?" snapped Conquering Storm "The Raiju clan only earns anything through might and strength! And through might and strength, you've earned our allegiance! Now enough of the stupid questions and let's go and stop this evil fiend from ransacking our country!"

"Sweet!" said Sonic happily "You don't waste any time do you lady?"

Conquering Storm ignored her and she, Rai and her hordes of Raiju ninjas all charged out of the throne room. Sonic and Ruben ran after her. Now Ruben had his water collar, he could use his water powers to keep up with Sonic. Sonic, Rube, Conquering Storm and the Raiju ninjas all ran out of the fortress and headed off for the village of Chun-Nan. Sonic prayed with all his might that they weren't too late…

Footnotes:

*** Dàfēng Rai means "Gale Thunder" in Chinese**

Sonic has made an alliance with the all-mighty Raiju clan! Can this clan defeat Zira or are they just another pathetic obstacle for the kung-fu demon? Find out in the explosive finale to the Chun-Nan saga! Reviews are welcome.

P.S. Conquering Storm is NOT my character! She is a character from the Sonic the Hedgehog comics published by Archie.

The Duel for Chun Nan

Story 56: The Duel for Chun-Nan

Zira the Ruthless and the Yīnyǐng Mao clan had finally arrived at the Pagoda of Prosperity, their primary target. Emperor Dalon Tai and his daughter Princess Matilda had seen them coming from a good distance away and they retreated back into the pagoda and awaited for Zira to attack. Cosmo the Seedrian, who had stayed with them the whole time Sonic and the others had been out, sensed what was going on and stayed inside the pagoda with them. She looked out the window nervously and saw Zira and her gang of ninja cats marching up the hill and up towards the pagoda.

"Emperor, they're here." said Cosmo worriedly.

"They took longer then I expected." said Tai to himself "Maybe Tails, Knuckles, Amy and Cream are stronger then I imagined. Bladefeather's plan is nearing completion now."

"Will Bladefeather and Mushu be able to defeat Zira?" asked Matilda worriedly "They failed the last time so will they make it this time?"

"Hopefully, Zira will be worn out from her fight with Sonic's friends and not be in much of a fighting condition." said Tai "But from the looks of things…that doesn't seem likely."

"Where are Tails, Knuckles, Amy and Cream anyway?" asked Cosmo "They're not chasing after Zira and her gang. Did she…kill them?"

"If they don't show up after a while then we must assume the worst little one." said Tai in a sympathetic tone "I hope the fate of your friends isn't what it seems to be."

Cosmo had a strong feeling in her mind that her friends were still alive and were on their way to try and finish off the invincible kung-fu master.

Outside Zira and the Yīnyǐng Mao clan had reached the top of the hill but something stopped them dead in their tracks. Bladefeather the Falcon and Mushu the Iguana appeared from nowhere and stood in front of the pagoda defensively. Zira was rather surprised to see them but she didn't show it. She frowned at them and put her hands on her hips.

"Bladefeather! Mushu!" she growled "There you are! Why didn't you kidnap the princess as instructed?"

Bladefeather and Mushu ignored her.

"Answer me you disobedient dogs!" snarled Zira "Do you want me to break your necks you two?"

The two kung fu masters still ignored her. Bladefeather looked at Fong Zarr, the Yīnyǐng Mao clan's leader, who seemed to be grinning evilly behind Zira's back.

"Fong Zarr." said Bladefeather "Your well contrived and carefully formulated plan was a total success. The heroes of the west have joined us and they have slowed and tired Zira down to hopefully, give Sonic time to return and give us the advantage over her in battle."

"Excellent." said Fong Zarr wickedly, unsheathing his katanas and advancing away from Zira and onto Bladefeather's side "Now let's show Zira how "loyal" to her we truly are!"

The rest of the Yīnyǐng Mao clan joined Bladefeather and Fong Zarr's side and they all drew out their weapons and got ready to fight. Zira flinched angrily and she prepared to battle. She couldn't believe what was going on right now. Her entire army had betrayed her! How dare they? Well she would teach them a lesson or two! Bladefeather and Mushu lunged forward to strike the first blow and Zira prepared to strike back…

Things were getting more desperate by the second for Tails, Amy and Cream as the rope continued to slowly unwind due to the weight

it was carrying over the edge of the cliff. Tails' mind had been racing for a way to get out of this situation but no matter how hard he thought, he couldn't think on how to get out of this desperate situation. The rope had almost fully unwound now. It literally had a few centimetres left and then Tails, Amy and Cream would fall to their doom. As the rope continued to unwind, Amy began panicking.

"Tails! We're gonna die!" she screeched "Please tell me you have an idea or something or we'll become a nasty stain at the bottom of this cliff!"

"Well our only hope is Knuckles." said Tails "We'd best call him before we fall."

Seeing as they had no other option, Tails, Amy and Cream all yelled at the top of their voices.

"Knuckles! Help us! We're going to fall!"

Knuckles, who had been weakened considerably from Zira's beatings earlier, heard them and he opened his eyes.

"Tails, Amy, Cream." he said to himself "They need help! Well I guess it's up to me since I'm the only one here."

Knuckles strained and grunted as he pushed himself up from his front and onto his knees. The desire to save his friends was bringing new strength to the echidna and he didn't really notice it. He then pushed himself up onto his feet and he staggered away from the tree. The rope had millimetres left before it unwound. Tails, Amy and Cream began to grow even more worried.

"Did Knuckles hear us?" asked Cream worriedly.

"I hope he did." said Amy.

"Hey Amy, Cream, if we don't make it out of here alive." said Tails in a tone suggesting he had accepted his fate "I want you two to know that you along with Sonic and Cosmo are the best friends I could ever ask for."

"Oh that's nice Tails." said Amy "Such a shame that those are gonna

be our last words!"

The rope finally unwound from the rock and Tails, Amy and Cream began to plummet down from the cliff, screaming at the top of their lungs as they did so. Knuckles lunged forward but he was a fraction too late and he missed the rope. Knuckles peered over the cliff to see his friends falling to their deaths.

"NO!" cried Knuckles.

Then suddenly, Tails, Amy and Cream stopped falling much to Knuckles' bewilderment. They then slowly began to rise back up to the cliff top! In a desperate attempt to live, Cream had begun furiously flapping her ears and amazingly, she was managing to carry the weight of Amy and Tails back up to the cliff top. Cream was stronger then she looked after all. Unfortunately, she didn't look like she would be able to keep this up for long. Luckily for her, Cheese had managed to wriggle free from the ropes and he stepped in to help Cream by pulling on the long piece of rope that had kept them from falling until it untied. But even Cheese didn't seem to be able to keep this up for long. Cream and Cheese tried as hard as they could but their strength was quickly fading and they were only just level with the cliff top before their strength eventually gave way and they plummeted down once again. Knuckles was ready this time and he caught the rope before they could fall to their deaths. Knuckles almost fell off the cliff with them but he managed to hold on tight and he managed to stay on the cliff top as he pulled on the rope. Despite the beating he'd received from the fight with Zira earlier, he still had enough muscle in him to keep himself from falling off the cliff and he pulled with all his might on the rope. With a lot of pulling and a lot of effort, Knuckles managed to pull Tails, Amy and Cream back on to the cliff. Knuckles slumped down on his back and panted heavily. Then he untied Tails, Amy and Cream and threw the rope over the edge of the cliff.

"Thank you Knuckles!" cried Tails.

"You saved our lives!" cried Amy, hugging Knuckles without even realizing it "I can't believe how close to death we were until you saved us!"

"Well I wouldn't have done it if it wasn't for Cream and Cheese." said Knuckles "I missed the rope and you fell and if Cream and Cheese hadn't managed to fly you back to the cliff top, you'd be dead by now."

"So I guess we're heroes as well Cheese." said Cream, hugging her pet Chao happily "We helped Knuckles save our lives. What a wonderful feeling this is!"

"Chao!" cried Cheese happily.

"Now everybody's safe, we can get back to the village and stop that creep Zira and her cat gang from taking over the country." said Knuckles "Let's go! Time is of essence now!"

Nobody waited to be asked twice. Knuckles, Tails, Amy and Cream all ran off as fast they could into the bamboo forest and off to the village. He knew what chaos was going on at the village right now…

"Why is it easier getting from your place to the village then it is getting from the village to your place Connie?" asked Sonic as he, Ruben, Conquering Storm and her ninjas ran through the plains and on towards the village.

"Because you go through the challenges set up on the way to my fortress." explained Conquering Storm, running beside Sonic at swift ninja speed "And the challenges are there to see which travellers are mighty enough to meet the Raiju clan and which ones aren't."

"I see." said Sonic "And since me and Ruben trumped your challenges, you thought we were worthy of meeting you."

Sonic, Ruben, Conquering Storm and her ninjas had run the whole way back to the village of Chun-Nan. Since Sonic and Ruben had conquered Conquering Storm's challenges, they were disabled as they ran the way back to the village. It was amazing how the way to Conquering Storm's fortress felt really long and perilous but the way back to the village felt a lot shorter and quicker. Maybe it was because everybody knew where they were going and there were no

challenges to be won.

In a matter of moments, everybody arrived at the village of Chun-Nan. Sonic's face brightened, he was glad to be back in the village once again.

"I never thought I'd be happy to see this village again." said Sonic "Good to see it's still in one piece. I guess I didn't miss much when I left."

"If the village is intact then Zira can't possibly be here now." said Conquering Storm to herself "Destruction follows her wherever she goes. Something isn't right here…"

"Well if Zira isn't here now then you can always wait for her." said Sonic "Yesterday, she said she'd be back tomorrow afternoon and it seems like the afternoon now so she'll be here any minute now."

"I think she's already here Sonic." said Ruben as everybody turned right and headed out the village and to the Pagoda of Prosperity "There's a fight going on up the hill."

"Really?" said Sonic "Sweet! We're just in time to wrap that fight up!"

So everybody ran towards the hill there the Pagoda of Prosperity stood proudly above Chun-Nan. Upon reaching the top of the hill though, Sonic and Ruben got a big surprise and Conquering Storm stared in interest at what was going on. What they were looking at was a huge fight outside the Pagoda of Prosperity. Zira the Ruthless was in battle with Bladefeather, Mushu, Fong Zarr and his entire clan and by some miracle, Zira appeared to be holding her own against the sheer number of foes she was in combat with. She gave Bladefeather an uppercut and growled loudly, showing her ferociously sharp teeth.

"TRAITORS!" she screamed at the top of her voice as she pile-dived Mushu in the stomach.

Bladefeather swiped his arms and sent waves of daggers hurtling towards Zira but Zira swiped her arm and smacked all the daggers away, not receiving so much as a cut. She charged at Bladefeather

and gave the pompous falcon yet another uppercut.

"I took you two idiots out on my own!" she yelled, pushing Bladefeather away and punching Mushu in the face "Both of you! And yet you mutiny against me? ME? The great Zira the Ruthless, world's most powerful kung-fu master?"

Bladefeather gave Zira an uppercut and then he pinned her down onto the ground with his talons. He drew out a dagger and pointed it at Zira's throat.

"How can we be mutinying against you if we never were on your side to begin with?" sniffed Bladefeather "Our allegiance to you was nothing more then a pretence to save our necks and keep you in the dark about our true motives. Circumstances just forced us to drop the subtlety."

Zira growled and she scratched Bladefeather's leg with her claws. Bladefeather screamed and let go of Zira to rub his leg better. Zira grabbed Bladefeather by the robe and she tossed him onto the ground. Mushu tail-whipped Zira in the back. His tail felt more like a mace due to how hard it was. Zira got mad and she kicked backwards, hitting the silent iguana in the thigh and knocking him over.

"You idiots!" she growled "You should have joined me for real! That way I wouldn't have to kill you right now! And as for you Mushu!" she added, pointing at Mushu with a clawed finger "I already broke your voice box, don't make me have to break your neck as well! Stop this futile resistance and join me for real!"

Mushu's response was a head butt to the face. Zira yelled in pain and Mushu kicked upwards, knocking her backwards and into Fong Zarr. The black ninja cat seized her and forced her arm behind her back in an attempt to hurt her. Zira wrestled out of his grasp and elbowed him in the back of the head. She then forced Fong Zarr's arm behind his back and made him yelp.

"As for you!" she growled "I promise you riches beyond your wildest dreams and this is how you repay me? I thought you and your clan were thieves and bandits!"

"We are." said Fong Zarr dryly "But I am an intelligent ninja and I can tell between lies and truth tellers. I could tell from the moment you made the promise that you're lying to us. The moment we help you conquer Chun-Nan, you will kill us all and take the thrrrrone for yourself so I plotted death against you. The arrrrival of the heroes from the west and the alliances with Bladefeather and Mushu made it all the more easier for me to refute you."

"No wonder your clan is a sad sack of failure!" growled Zira, giving Fong Zarr's arm a sharp twist and making him yell again "You're vacuous and obstinate! Well those personality flaws are going to be your downfall Fong Zarr!"

"Heads up Zira!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing at Zira and walloping her in the head.

Zira was sent hurling off Fong Zarr and landing on her back. Sonic and Ruben stood before the downed leopard with cock grins on their faces. Zira sat up, shook her head and growled at Sonic.

"So, the hero from the west returns to face me once again?" she snarled "Too bad I'll defeat you once again!"

"Yeah, yeah, whatever." scoffed Sonic "You stay put while I ask a few questions Sneer-a."

Sonic turned away from Zira and looked at Bladefeather, Mushu and the Yīnyǐng Mao clan who stood there in wonder. Zira tried to attack Sonic but Ruben squirted her with a jet of water and forced her back onto the ground.

"OK you three, what the flying chilli-dogs is going on?" asked Sonic "Why are you fighting Zira?"

"Allow me to plainly and simply explain the confusing matters of this mind-bending situation." said Bladefeather politely. "Me and Mushu are not villains, we were forced to swear fealty to Zira after she defeated us in combat but we did not approve of her abysmal and subversive life so we and Fong Zarr, who also didn't approve of Zira, plotted against her. We made an alliance with your friends and they fought Zira to slow her down and give you a chance to arrive back

here with the supposed new ninja clan. Zira made it here unfortunately so we chose this very moment to strike a vigorous blow against her."

"So if I've got this right, you and Mushu are good guys and you're trying to stop Zira from taking over Chun-Nan?" asked Sonic.

"Correct." said Bladefeather "Fong Zarr isn't a good person though, he's just fighting her because he wants Chun-Nan for himself."

"And no one is stopping me!" growled Fong Zarr.

"If you say so." mocked Sonic "Now ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to the leader of the mighty Raiju clan and one me and Ruben have recruited to help us defeat Zira the Ruthless: Bride of the Conquering Storm!"

Conquering Storm, the ninja lynx in the coolie hat and heavy boots, stood forward with a straight face on and she stepped in front of Zira. She folded her arms and glared at Zira with her steely orange eyes. Bladefeather stared at Conquering Storm with interest and Mushu wolf whistled at her. He thought she was a pretty ninja. Zira got to her feet and looked down at Conquering Storm, the lynx looking up at her, unimpressed at Zira's height.

"Oh goodie, I need a fresh bag of meat to release my anger on." said Zira cruelly "So who are you peasant girl and why are you here?"

"I am the Bride of the Conquering Storm, leader of the mighty Raiju clan and I am your downfall." said Conquering Storm "I have heard everything about you Zira, how you destroyed a village, slaughtered three clans all at once and how you were exiled for it."

"Brilliant, you know everything about me child." said Zira sarcastically "Now can you kindly step down and go away while I conquer Chun-Nan?"

Conquering Storm refused to move. She stood with her feet apart and her arms by her side. Her eyes narrowed down into a steely glare at the kung-fu leopard that stood over her.

"I was asked to defeat and therefore, I shall not leave until you are defeated." said Conquering Storm flatly "I gave my word of honour and I am not about to go back on it. Prepare for a proper Raiju style beating Zira."

"Such big words coming from such a tiny warrior!" cackled Zira "Well I can do with some exercise before I eviscerate everybody so I'll fight this silly little ninja."

"I wager a duel of honour." said Conquering Storm "If I win, you go back into exile. If you win then you get to kill me, take control of my clan and on their word of honour, they will serve you faithfully and without question."

"Connie, don't!" cried Sonic "That's too risky a bet to wager!"

"Silence hedgehog!" snapped Conquering Storm "And kindly refrain from calling me Connie! My name is Conquering Storm, nothing less to you!"

Sonic said nothing more. Zira smiled at Conquering Storm.

"I accept." she said "OK then Conquering Storm, prepare to be a CONQUERED Storm!"

Zira lunged at Conquering Storm but the lynx caught her fist in her hand and threw her arm back. Zira staggered backwards and lunged at her with rapid strikes of the hand, her fingers were pointed forward and her claws were bared. Conquering Storm swiftly blocked every single blow she launched with her arms. Zira lunged at her furiously, striking with her fingers so fast that her arm become nothing more then a blur but the ninja lynx in the samurai outfit blocked every single blow with no effort at all. Sonic, Ruben, Bladefeather and Mushu were gobsmacked at Conquering Storm's great speed but DàfēngRai, Conquering Storm's star ninja, and the rest of the Raiju clan weren't shocked at all. They had seen Conquering Storm fight and they knew all about her speed and skill so this wasn't a new experience for them. Zira got mad at Conquering Storm and she tried to use a spitting cobra attack on her. She curled her fingers up in the shape of snake's fangs and she struck at Conquering Storm but the ninja lynx blocked the blow with

one swift swipe of the arm and the she kicked Zira in the stomach. Any kick was bad enough but Conquering Storm's boots had metal reinforcements at the toe so her kick was even harder. Then Conquering Storm spun around in mid-air and double smacked Zira in the face, knocking her onto her back. Zira sprawled on the ground and growled. Conquering Storm then elbow-slammed Zira in the stomach, knocking the wind out of the leopard. Then, using her great strength, she picked Zira up with one arm and tossed her straight into the Pagoda of Prosperity. Zira crashed into the wall, leaving cracks in it and she landed sharply on the ground. Zira picked herself up and roared furiously.

"I'll tear off your head for that!" snarled Zira, clenching her fist.

"Pry I don't tear yours off first." scoffed Conquering Storm, showing no emotions on her face whatsoever.

Zira got mad and she charged at Conquering Storm at a terrific speed. Conquering Storm leaped straight over her and kicked the leopard in the back of the head, sending her crashing face first into the ground.

"For a kung-fu master, your fighting is very abysmal." taunted Conquering Storm, pulling on Zira's ponytail and punching the leopard in the back of the head "I thought you were mighty, powerful and deadly. To me, you seem to be all anger and no patience. You've been very poorly trained I can see." she added as she began to rub Zira's face into the dirt "No wonder ninjas are the supreme warriors, we're well trained and skilled in many traits over then just strength and speed."

"Nnnrrrrrrgggghhhh…SHUT UP!" screamed Zira, elbowing Conquering Storm directly in the eye.

Conquering Storm put a hand over her throbbing eye and she rubbed it to ease the pain away.

"Not only is your fighting appalling, your comebacks are abysmal as well." sneered Conquering Storm "I've heard better comebacks from ninjas-in-training."

"Enough with the insults!" retorted Zira "Let's continue this fight!"

Zira lunged at Conquering Storm and rapidly began to punch at her. Conquering Storm blocked every blow Zira threw it her but Zira was forcing her to back away slowly as she pressed her offensive. Conquering Storm slowly backed away, blocking every punch Zira threw at her as Zira advanced on her. Zira eventually stopped throwing punched and used the kung-fu gorilla flick move on Conquering Storm's face. Conquering Storm wasn't quick enough and she was flicked by the kung-fu leopard. Being a ninja however, she wasn't affected too much. Zira clawed at Conquering Storm but the ninja lynx dodged her blow and dropkicked her in the face. Then she yanked on Zira's ears, flipped herself up and over Zira's head, landed behind the leopard and then tossed Zira onto the ground in front of her. Zira tried to get back up but Conquering Storm charged at her and rammed her in the side. The two then tumbled and rolled on the ground whilst grappling with each other. Zira and Conquering Storm stopped rolling on the ground and they picked themselves up. They both punched at each other at rapid speeds, blocking each other's moves as they struck blows at each other. Zira roundhouse kicked Conquering Storm in the legs and tripped her up. She then punched Conquering Storm in the stomach and threw her into the wall of the Pagoda of Prosperity. Conquering Storm picked herself up and charged at Zira. She back flipped just as Zira lunged at her and she kicked the leopard in the face, sending her falling backwards. Conquering Storm then rapidly threw punches at Zira and hit her in several places. Sonic and Ruben couldn't believe their eyes at this fight and they were wondering how Conquering Storm was managing to hold her own against such a powerful kung-fu mistress.

"Wow! She's good!" complimented Sonic.

"Good?" scoffed Ruben "She's astounding! How is she holding her own against Zira? Three whole ninja clans were no match for her so how is Conquering Storm doing so well?"

"Allow me to educate you flaccid minded folk with the answers to this pressing question." said Bladefeather.

"OK then, tell us feather head." said Sonic.

"In martial arts, strength, speed and defence are the main traits needed to be vigorous." explained Bladefeather "Zira is all on strength and attack and little on speed and defence, I'm not saying that she is slow, I'm just saying she's more strong then fast. Conquering Storm however seems to have an aberrantly high level of speed at her side, suggesting she is more on speed then strength. Speed is greater then strength since it hurts more to strike swiftly then strike hard and you do more damage because if you strike swiftly, you can strike more times at once then you can with radiant strength. Not to mention, Conquering Storm seems to focus highly on blocking her opponent's moves before she herself attacks, suggesting she's more on defence then attack. If you have a good skill in defence, you'll be more likely to refute your opponent then you would with a miraculously vigorous level of attack power."

"Um…that makes sense I guess." said Sonic unsurely "Ruben, did anyone teach you that at all?"

"Yes." said Ruben "My mother, the Bride of the Gentle Waves taught me that it's better to be swift then powerful since being swift is a great power in it's own right."

"But I'm fast and powerful and Zira creamed me!" protested Sonic "Care to explain that?"

"No mere gamin, with or without super powers, can defeat a kung-fu master." explained Bladefeather "Only the meritorious and magnanimous kung-fu masters or ninja masters can refute another kung-fu master."

"I see." said Sonic "And since you, Mushu and Fong Zarr can't beat Zira that literally means Conquering Storm is our only hope. If she loses then Chun-Nan is done for!"

"Not necessarily buddy." said Ruben "If Conquering Storm gets defeated, her entire clan will join in the battle and then me, you, Bladefeather, Mushu and the Yīnyǐng Mao clan can join in. Not even Zira can take on such a huge number of fighters and our large numbers are bound to weaken her."

"I hope you're right Ruben." said Sonic, turning his head back to the

fight between Zira and Conquering Storm.

Zira struck Conquering Storm in the face with a powerful chop move and then she tried to kick Conquering Storm in the shoulder but the ninja lynx defended herself with her arm. Zira kicked again but Conquering Storm grabbed her by the ankle and threw her leg upwards, causing Zira to lose balance and fall over. Conquering Storm tried to attack but Zira kangaroo kicked her away and leaped back onto her feet. She then spun around in mid-air and tried to double-smack Conquering Storm but she missed and Conquering Storm gave the leopard an uppercut. Zira landed sharply on her back and before she could get up, Conquering Storm kneed her in the gut and then elbow slammed her back into the ground. She then kicked Zira very hard. So hard in fact, Zira was sent rolling down the hill! Conquering Storm leaped into the air, somersaulted gracefully, and landed on the ground just as Zira stopped rolling. Zira got up onto her knees and then Conquering Storm kicked her in the face, causing her lip to bleed and the leopard felt a little shell-shocked due to how hard Conquering Storm's boots were. Conquering Storm tried to stomp on Zira but Zira rolled out of her way, grabbed the lynx by the ankle and tripped her up. Zira then elbow-slammed Conquering Storm in the gut, picked her up by one of her arms and threw her into the hill a bit further up. Conquering Storm recovered just in time to block Zira's next attack. She roundhouse kicked Zira in the legs, causing her to trip up and land on her back. Conquering Storm then picked Zira up by her uniform and threw her into the nearby stream and visitors had to hop across before reaching the hill top. Zira landed in the stream with a splash and water flew everywhere. The leopard tried to pick herself up but she couldn't find the strength to do so. Her head rested on a stepping stone while her body lay slumping in the gentle flowing water of the stream. Conquering Storm stood over Zira, smirking at her triumphantly. She slightly raised her coolie-hat, which had drooped down a little after all the fighting and she straightened out her bangs.

"Looks like the rumours on you being unstoppable were all lies." taunted Conquering Storm with a dry smile "You managed to kill three whole ninja clans and subjugate two kung-fu masters and a clan of mere thievery and yet you fall to a ninja clan that formed shortly after your exile. It's clear that I am the mightiest opponent.

After all, the Raiju clan ALWAYS wins in the end! We are mighty, we are strong and we are swift! Nothing can defeat the raw power of the Raiju clan! So Zira, now I have won the duel of honour, you will go back into exile and don't worry, I have no plans involving making your life miserable so you won't have to bother about me."

Zira pushed herself up onto her hands and knees and mumbled something quietly that Conquering Storm failed to hear properly. She bent down and smirked at Zira.

"What's that?" asked Conquering Storm "I didn't hear your words of defeat. Care to repeat them? Slowly and steadily so I get the pleasure of hearing each one of your despairing words?"

"You…will…not…" grunted Zira quietly. Then she lifted her head and raised her voice.

"…DENY ME MY DESTINY!" she screeched at the top of her voice.

She then leaped onto her feet and socked Conquering Storm directly in the face. The lynx was completely astounded by that swift attack and she was too shocked to strike back. Zira then began to punch Conquering Storm over and over, not giving Conquering Storm a chance to fight back and every punch she threw was harder then the last one. Then Zira gave Conquering Storm a very powerful blow with from her spitting cobra attack and Conquering Storm was sent hurling backwards and skidding across the ground on her back. She skidded to a halt and her coolie-hat fell off her head, revealing a flat, black hairstyle that extended to the back of her head. Her ears stood up straight because her hat had fallen off. At the top of the hill, Sonic, Ruben and the others were shocked at that sudden turn of events and Rai decided to do something to save his clan leader from Zira's wrath. Zira advanced on Conquering Storm, panting heavily and growling loudly. Conquering Storm cowered on the ground and she began to back away but Zira grabbed her by the neck. She hoisted Conquering Storm up to her height, the lynx squirming madly and trying to get free but Zira's grasp was too strong. She growled at Conquering Storm and gasped tiredly at her.

"You've been…a…worthy challenge Conquering…Storm…" she panted "But…now it's time…you joined…the deceased…now. Say

hello…to…Master Shan for me…" she added with a twisted grin on her face.

She put her other hand on Conquering Storm's head but before she could make the killer blow, Rai punched Zira directly in the face, causing her to drop Conquering Storm and sending her falling onto her side.

"You will not execute my clan leader you kung-fu slime ball!" roared Rai.

He turned to Conquering Storm and offered a hand out to help her up onto her feet but Conquering Storm was a stubborn woman and she didn't accept help from anybody, nor did she show any gratitude to Rai for saving her life. She picked herself up and put her coolie-hat back onto her head.

"Thank you Rai." said Conquering Storm "Now let's finish her off shall we?"

"Whatever you say my dear." said Rai, cracking his knuckles.

Zira got back to her feet and she raised her hands, ready to fight. Then suddenly, Sonic and Ruben ran down the mountain and joined Conquering Storm and Rai. So did Bladefeather and Mushu and so did Fong Zarr, his clan and the Raiju ninjas. Zira found herself completely surrounded by ninjas, kung-fu masters and heroes from the west. Even though Zira was a very stubborn fighter, she herself knew that she couldn't beat such a huge number of people but she didn't show any signs of fear or surrender. Ruben stood forward and pointed at Zira.

"Zira the Ruthless." he said slowly "We are the mighty ocean and you are a small little island, we have vastly surrounded you and you are hopelessly outnumbered. Please do not resist us and surrender or things will get very graphic not just for you but for everybody."

Zira growled at Ruben but the water panther didn't fret, flinch or show any sign of fear. He stood there with his arms folded and a straight face on. Zira scoffed and glared at her opponents.

"I will not surrender!" she yelled "But I will not keep this fight up any longer! I will leave Chun-Nan and get a brand new army, an army that will obey my will and serve me like an empress! Then I will conquer Chun-Nan and make you all suffer for all the indignity you've ever caused me!"

She then leaped a graceful leap out of the circle of opponents and she landed a few feet away from them. Then she ran off as fast as she could run.

"Sonic! Get her!" ordered Ruben "She's too dangerous to run free! We must capture her!"

"Way ahead of you Ruben!" cried Sonic, running off after Zira at his trademark speed.

But by the time he caught up with Zira, he was met with a pleasant surprise. Tails, Amy, Knuckles and Cream had finally returned and Amy got the drop on Zira with one smack of the Piko-Piko hammer and Knuckles pinned Zira down before she could get away. Sonic skidded to a halt and beamed with joy.

"Tails! Amy! Knuckles! Cream!" he cried "Perfect timing you guys! Zira was about to escape!"

"Good to see you again Sonic." said Tails happily "And it's a good thing we made it in time to stop Zira from escaping or she would have escaped."

"She wouldn't have, not with Sonic the Hedgehog chasing her." boasted Sonic "I would have caught her in no time!"

Then suddenly, Zira threw Knuckles off of herself and she grabbed Tails by the neck. She hoisted Tails up to her height and she bared her claws at Sonic. Sonic wanted to attack but something told him that was a bad idea so he stood still and clenched his fists. Tails squirmed in Zira's grasp worriedly.

"Let go of Tails or I'm gonna make you sorry Zira!" yelled Sonic.

"You will let me escape or this boy will not leave to see another sunrise!" yelled Zira "I can't imagine his puny little neck will

withstand a slash from claws as big as mine!"

Then suddenly, something prodded her from behind and her nervous system seized up and she froze as if she was blasted by liquid nitrogen. Then she dropped Tails onto the ground and she fainted. The person who prodded her was none other then Emperor Dalon Tai! He had sensed that enough was enough and the fight had to end now so he used his nerve paralyzing trick to bring Zira to a standstill. Sonic smiled at the emperor.

"Emperor Tai!" he said happily "Good timing! Tails was about to become Zira chow!"

"I watched the entire fight from within the safety of the pagoda and I sensed things were spiralling out of control so I had to end this fight before it got a very grisly ending." said Tai "Now I've paralyzed Zira, we can lock her away forever. She's too dangerous to roam free so I'll make sure she is placed under heavy lockdown and will never taste freedom again."

"Sweet!" said Sonic "Chun-Nan will never have to worry about Zira again!"

"That maybe true but they'll have us to worry about now!" yelled Fong Zarr, drawing out his katanas and pointing them at Sonic "Now it's my turn to make a move on the Pagoda of Prosperity! I will assassinate the emperor right now and the Yīnyǐng Mao clan will become rrrrulers of Chun-Nan!"

Zarr stood forward, ready to attack Tai but Mushu stood in front of the emperor and put his hands on his hips. Fong Zarr recoiled and gritted his teeth.

"What do you want scales?" he growled furiously.

Mushu didn't answer since he couldn't talk. Instead he marched up to Fong Zarr, grabbed the katanas by their blades and yanked them out of Zarr's hands. Iguanas have tough skin so Mushu wouldn't get cut by the blades. He threw the katanas away and stared coldly at the ninja cat that dared to attack the emperor. Fong Zarr got mad and he tried to punch Mushu but Mushu caught his fist in his hand

and socked Zarr directly in the face, knocking the ninja cat out cold and sending him falling onto his back. Mushu dusted his hands off and stuck his tongue out at the Yīnyǐng Mao ninjas that watched with horror. Seeing as their clan leader had been knocked out, the Yīnyǐng Mao ninjas scooped him up and retreated faster then you could say "Big trouble in little China". Mushu smirked happily at the retreating cats.

"Masterfully done Mushu old friend." said Bladefeather, putting a feathered hand on the iguana's shoulder.

Mushu nodded and beamed with appreciation.

"So…I guess that's it now." said Sonic "We've won, the day is saved and everybody's happy now."

"I've just realized something!" exclaimed Ruben "The prophecy has been fulfilled!"

"What prophecy?" asked Conquering Storm with her arms folded "What are you prattling on about little one?"

"A fortune teller told Zira she would be defeated by a member of a clan and somebody else." explained Ruben "I guess the prophecy was referring to you and Emperor Tai. You defeated her in battle and Tai has subdued Zira now so the prophecy has been fulfilled!"

"But I didn't defeat Zira." noted Conquering Storm "She defeated me. Rai defeated her by taking her out and saving me from getting killed. Maybe Rai was the one the prophecy was talking about."

"That is the ultimate honour for me." said Rai "I saved my clan leader and fulfilled a prophecy foretold by a fortune teller. I really am the Raiju clan's star ninja!"

"It's a good thing Sonic convinced me to let you live." said Conquering Storm "Or I would have been dead in this fight. Well since Zira is now defeated, we will be going now."

"Farewell Conquering Storm." said Tai "And thank you for helping us defeat Zira."

Conquering Storm just marched past the emperor in a huff and stuck her nose in the air. The other Raiju ninjas followed her. Bladefeather turned to Mushu and whispered.

"Very callous isn't she?"

Mushu nodded in agreement. The moment the Raiju clan was out of earshot, Conquering Storm spoke to herself.

"Zira, the biggest threat to Chun-Nan has been defeated. Excellent. Now the Raiju clan has no threat to deal with, I will make my move and Chun-Nan will be mine…"

When Conquering Storm would strike was unknown for now but no one would be prepared for her clan's oncoming attack when she finally strikes. Zira maybe gone but that didn't mean Chun-Nan was going to be eternally peaceful, it meant Chun-Nan would have to brace itself for another attack, this time from a mightier enemy….

Later that day, Zira had been taken to a top-notch prison cell and placed under heavy lockdown so she was permanently out of action and Chun-Nan needed not to fear her anymore. The Raiju clan had left, the Yīnyǐng Mao had retreated and Sonic and friends were bidding farewell to the emperor and the princess of Chun-Nan. Emperor Tai, Princess Matilda, Bladefeather and Mushu all bowed down respectfully at the heroes from the west.

"We bid you farewell heroes of the west and we wish you a safe journey home." said Tai "We are eternally grateful for all you've done for this holy country and its peace-loving citizens."

"Don't mention it emperor." said Sonic "We're just doing what we do best. I hope Chun-Nan will be safe again and you will all have peace at long last."

"This country will claw its way out of relapse, don't worry heroic one." said Bladefeather "Chun-Nan will be at peace and if you all keep up your fighting, peace will return to all of Mobius and Dr. Eggman will be gone forever."

"I hope so Bladefeather." said Sonic.

"As for you Ruben." said Tai, pointing at the little water panther "I trust that you will fight well, not just for the Royal Fighters Service but for the people of Chun-Nan and for your long lost clan."

"I will emperor." said Ruben with a loyal salute "I will make my mother proud by fighting for Mobius until the end."

Tai smiled at Ruben.

"Your mother would have been very proud of you Ruben." said Tai gently "Very proud indeed."

Ruben smiled back and a warm feeling spread from his ears to his toes. He was so happy he squirted jets of water in faucet style out of his fingers and all over himself. Everybody laughed at that and then they gave one last bow to the emperor before turning to leave.

"See ya around Tai!" Sonic called to him "And good luck with your country!"

"Farewell heroes of the west." said Tai, waving to them "And good luck in your war with Dr. Eggman."

Sonic gave the emperor mongoose a thumbs up and he and his friends walked down the hill and left the emperor behind. Tai, Matilda, Bladefeather and Mushu all waved goodbye as Sonic and friends walked off and headed to the local village. As Tai watched the Mobians leave, he couldn't help but wonder what was going on in the other countries of Mobius right now…

"Aaaah." purred Rouge the Bat, infamous jewel thief and treasure hunter as she flew through the morning air (Time is different in Chun-Nan) "I love the smell of the mornings. Just the smell to put me in the mood for treasure hunting. And boy am I in a treasure hunting mood today. I wonder what I'm gonna find today?"

She gave off a sly chuckle just thinking about what gems she would hopefully find in her daily treasure hunt today. She flew low to the

ground, keeping her keen eyes peeled for anything shiny and sparkly that could possibly be lurking around any corner. She wasn't flying for long though. She flew past a pile of rocks and her eyes caught a faint shine coming from behind the rocks.

"Oooooh, I'm a lucky girl." said Rouge in a delighted tone "I've found something already. I hope it's a big shiny ruby or something."

She flew over to the pile of rocks and she screw-kicked the pile into rubble, breaking the rocks away and revealing what was under them. Rouge's eyes widened in surprise.

"That's not a gem!" she exclaimed "But this is an interesting find nonetheless, I wonder what it is?"

What she had just found was a strange looking silver and red capsule and the capsule was closed tightly shut. Whatever was in it was bound to be something strange and mysterious and Rouge was curious to know what it was so she found the key pad and tapped a few keys on the pad. The capsule opened up and Rouge put her hands over her mouth at what was inside…

HOLY S**T! WHAT IS THAT? OH MY GOD! I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT STORY! WHAT THE HELL'S GONNA HAPPEN? So Zira's defeated but it seems that there's something else going on now! Join me next time as a new saga begins... Reviews are welcome.

Shadow

Story 57: Shadow

The capsule Rouge had opened contained something way different from what she was expecting. She had expected an object of some kind to be in the capsule. Instead, there was a male Mobian hedgehog with black fur and red stripes on his quills, the sides of his eyes, arms and legs. The quills on the either side of the hedgehog's head pointed up instead of down like Sonic's and he had a white tuft on his chest. He wore white gloves with red and black at the wrist section, gold rings around his wrists and a pair of shoes with jets at the soles. The hedgehog was a peculiar sight for anybody and Rouge was taken aback by what she was looking at. The hedgehog didn't move or stir. It appeared to be in suspended animation. Rouge looked at the hedgehog in wonder.

"Well, I wasn't expecting that." she said "What the doozey is a capsule containing a sleeping hedgehog doing in the middle of nowhere?"

Then suddenly, the hedgehog's eyes opened, revealing his red eyes and he sat up in the capsule he lay in, causing Rouge to leap back in alarm. The hedgehog turned his head to his right, saw Rouge staring at him and his fiery red eyes narrowed into a burning death glare. Rouge grew nervous. Would the thing attack her?

"Who are you and where am I?" asked the hedgehog. His voice was deep and spine-chilling and Rouge shivered as he spoke.

"I think the more pressing question would be, who are you honey?" asked Rouge, narrowing her eyes to hide her fear.

"I am Shadow, Shadow the Hedgehog." the black hedgehog introduced, climbing out of the capsule he was lying in and standing before Rouge, who stepped back nervously "I am a genetic experiment created for one sole purpose."

"And what purpose would that be?" asked Rouge smoothly.

"I can't remember." said Shadow, putting a hand to his head as he thought about it "Nor can I remember who my creator is. In fact…" he paused as he continued to think "I don't remember anything other then my name and what I am. I must have lost my memory or something. Why can't I remember my creator and purpose? And why am I here? How did I even get here?"

Memory loss eh? thought Rouge with a coy smirk on her face as Shadow pondered to himself *I can use this to my advantage. I'll trick this guy into thinking he's a treasure hunter like me and get him to help me on my treasure hunts!*

"Hey Shadow boy, since you've forgotten your purpose, maybe I can give you one." Rouge said to the pondering black hedgehog.

"You?" sniffed Shadow "You can't give me a purpose! You know nothing of me, and you still haven't given me your name strange creature."

"OK, OK," said Rouge hastily "I am Rouge the Bat, treasure hunter and jewel thief. Happy now?"

"Bat?" thought Shadow "I've never heard of a bat before. What planet am I on?"

Wow, he doesn't even remember his own planet! thought Rouge *He really has memory issues! But on second thoughts…maybe he's not even FROM this planet. That's maybe the reason why he seems to have no knowledge on bats or even the name of this planet. Does that mean he's an…alien? But he looks like he lives on Mobius. Are there aliens that look like Mobians? Or is there more to this Shadow person then meets the batty little eye…?*

"You're on the planet Mobius honey." said Rouge "Does that ring any bells?"

"Mobius…" mused Shadow to himself.

Then suddenly he blanked out and stared into space. He began to hear a strange voice in his head. A voice he didn't remember and yet sounded so familiar to him in some way or another.

You will go to Mobius… the voice in his head said … *and annihilate the entire Mobian race…*

"Shadow?" asked Rouge "What's going on dark boy?"

Shadow snapped out of his daydream and he stopped hearing the voice in his head.

"Nothing." said Shadow "The name Mobius sounds familiar but I'm not sure why."

"I see." said Rouge "So Shadow, care to tell me what planet you're from?"

Before Shadow could answer her, a blaster cannon appeared from nowhere and pointed straight at Rouge and Shadow. Shadow flinched and bent down in a battle ready stance whereas Rouge stared up at the cannon in disbelief and prepared to fight.

"Don't any of you rats move or I'll blast you to slag!" bellowed the voice of none other then Dr. Eggman.

The cannon belonged to his Egg-Mobile which he was piloting and his snivelling sidekick Alonzo sat beside him. Eggman had decided to go looking for the seven Chaos Emeralds after Wilson, Mandy and the Chaotix made a mess of his city* so he could use them to destroy the Mobians with. He had picked up an energy signature from Shadow's capsule so he decided to investigate, thinking the signature belonged to a Chaos Emerald, only to find Rouge and Shadow standing there.

"Blast it all!" moaned Eggman "I find a Chaos Emerald and Sonic the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat are there waiting for me!"

"Um…master." said Alonzo "That's not Sonic." he pointed to Shadow "And according to the radar, the energy signature belongs to that capsule buried in the rocks, not a Chaos Emerald."

Eggman looked at the radar and then he looked at the capsule. He groaned angrily and he put his laser cannon away.

"Stupid energy signatures tricking me!" he grumbled "I'm going to

have to make a scanner that picks up only Chaos Emerald energy signatures!"

Shadow blanked out and began hearing voices again after Eggman said "Chaos Emerald energy". Those words boomed in his head and the voice spoke.

Once you possess a Chaos Emerald Shadow…you will be a master of Chaos Control…an unstoppable force that no mortal being can fathom…

Shadow snapped out of his gaze and turned his attention back to Dr. Eggman.

"Who are you and what do you want?" he demanded angrily.

"I am Dr. Eggman." Eggman introduced "The invader of Mobius and soon to be ruler of Mobius! Who are you?"

"I am Shadow, Shadow the Hedgehog." introduced Shadow "I am a genetic experiment with a lost purpose and some lost memories."

"Genetic experiment with lost memories eh?" said Dr. Eggman "Well this is an interesting find."

He then began thinking to himself. Was this genetic experiment a powerful one? And since he didn't know what his purpose was, would he willingly work for him? And would he be a worthy adversary for Sonic the Hedgehog? There was only one way to find that out…trick him of course.

"My dear Shadow the Hedgehog." said Dr. Eggman "You have a lost purpose no more."

"What are you talking about?" demanded Shadow in a untrustworthy tone.

"I am your creator Shadow." lied Dr. Eggman "I created your for the sole purpose of helping me destroy the Mobians and conquer Mobius. I lost you during an attack on Robotropolis and I came out here to find you and now I've found you, you can do your duty and help me eliminate the Mobians once and for all."

Alonzo gave Eggman a funny look. He didn't remember Eggman creating a Mobian. What was going on? Shadow had listened to Dr. Eggman's very convincing fib with interest and he thought for a moment. The idea of eliminating Mobians sounded a little familiar. Maybe that was his purpose? And Dr. Eggman did look like a scientist so maybe he was his creator? Shadow knew that he had no memories of his creator and purpose and since Eggman had claimed to be his creator, he had to believe him. He couldn't stand the thought of being created for nothing. He stepped forward and looked up at Dr. Eggman, who looked back at him with a big smile on his evil face.

"Are you telling me the truth?" asked Shadow coldly.

"I am indeed." said Dr. Eggman "I never lie, lies don't even cross my lips Shadow. Now come with me and we can begin our glorious conquest of Mobius."

Shadow, knowing that he had to trust Eggman until he got his memory back, stepped into the Egg-Mobile and sat next to Dr. Eggman. Alonzo scowled at Shadow and then he looked up at Dr. Eggman suspiciously. Why hadn't Eggman told him about Shadow before? Was Eggman keeping secrets from him? And why had Eggman created a Mobian? He was a robot lover! Eggman never creates flesh and blood creatures! Something was very suspicious about all this and Alonzo wanted to find out what. As for Rouge, she wasn't happy that Eggman had stolen her potential partner in crime so she stepped onto the Egg-Mobile and glared at Eggman.

"Hey fat boy." she said smoothly "I found Shadow first so the hedgehog is mine."

"I created him!" retorted Dr. Eggman "Shadow is mine! Go away you pesky bat!"

"Wait doctor." said Shadow "Rouge was the one who awakened me from that pod. Maybe she's on our side. Maybe she can help us eliminate these so-called Mobians."

"I hate to break it to you Shadow but I'm a treasure hunter, not a planet conqueror." said Rouge "I am not getting tangled up into this

business. Bye, bye." she added, preparing to fly off.

"Hey Rouge." said Dr. Eggman, thinking fast "I have a deal."

"What deal would that be then baldy nose hair?" smirked Rouge.

Eggman resisted the urge to punch Rouge in the face.

"If you help me and Shadow conquer Mobius, I will give you my secret treasure." said Dr. Eggman "I have a secret horde of treasure hidden in my headquarters and if you help me and Shadow take over the world, I will give it to you."

"You will?" said Rouge, her eyes glittering with excitement.

"Every last gem will be yours." said Dr. Eggman with a smile on his face "And believe me when I say it is the biggest treasure you'll ever hold in your hand my dear."

Rouge thought for a moment. She knew Eggman was lying since he was not the kind of guy to have treasure but maybe she could use this alliance to her advantage. Maybe she could goad Shadow into ditching Eggman and joining her in some way or another while he wasn't looking. Rouge smiled a sly smile. She could not pass this opportunity up, it was much too good.

"Very well Eggman. You have a deal." said Rouge, holding her hand out for Eggman to shake "Consider me part of your team now."

"Excellent!" cried Eggman happily, shaking Rouge's hand "I'm so glad we've come to an agreement Rouge. So, now we've settled all this, let's get going! Our first target is Castle Acorn, the home of the Acorn family!"

"Why is that doctor?" asked Shadow curiously.

"If we eliminate the royals, we will destroy the Mobians faster." explained Dr. Eggman "Their spirits will be broken by the death of their rulers and they won't put much of an effort into fighting and therefore, we'll eliminate them faster. That's why."

"I see." said Shadow.

With that said, Dr. Eggman hit the button and the Egg-Mobile took off at a terrific speed. Eggman couldn't wait to see Shadow in action. He hoped Shadow would be a valuable ally. If not then this alliance was all for naught…

"…and one thing you must remember Tails when building a car is to install the sparkplugs in the engine." said fellow Royal Fighter Mandy Mouse to Sonic's sidekick Tails the twin-tailed fox "A car will not work without spark plugs."

"I see." said Tails "You know a lot about cars don't you Mandy?"

"Well when you own a car, you need to know the vehicle inside and out kid." said Mandy with pride "So when something goes wrong, you'll be prepared for it."

Sonic and friends had returned from their day-off in Chun-Nan to a nice quiet day in Mobotropolis. Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse had told Sonic all about their successful mission in Robotropolis and Sonic had told them all about him and his friend's adventure in Chun-Nan and how they defeated Zira the Ruthless. Since nothing was going on right now, Mandy had taken Tails to Royal HQ, the Royal Fighters Service headquarters located next-door to Castle Acorn, for car building lessons since she had promised to give him a tutorial sometime soon. Sonic, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben had come along mainly because they wanted a tour of the headquarters. Sonic had been in Royal HQ so he led his friends on the tour. As for Tails and Mandy, Tails was enjoying the lessons Mandy was giving him and he felt like he was ready to build his first car.

"Just out of interest, what vehicles can you build?" asked Mandy.

"I can build a plane from scratch." said Tails "I've done so before but Metal Sonic destroyed it unfortunately**. I haven't really had time to rebuild it."

"You've built a plane from scratch?" said Mandy in surprise "Now that is some skill you have Tails! I couldn't build a plane if my life

depended on it. I can only build cars."

"Pity you weren't around to see the Tornado before it was destroyed***." said Tails "You would have liked it."

"Yeah I bet I would." said Mandy, tightening a bolt in the engine of her hover car which she had used for the tutorials "I love planes, especially when they're flying. Planes are cool."

"Hopefully if I ever get to rebuild the Tornado I'll show it to you." said Tails.

"You're a lovely little boy, do you know that?" giggled Mandy as she finished tightening the bolt.

Tails went red in the face. He loved it when people commented on him like that. Mandy got up off her knees and closed the bonnet to her car. She wiped her sweaty forehead and sighed.

"There, he's all finished." said Mandy, admiring her handiwork with pride "Isn't he a beautiful boy Tails?"

"It's a very cool looking car." said Tails "I would love to try building a hover car someday."

"Well since I've given you tutorials, you maybe able to." said Mandy in a friendly tone "You're a technical genius according to Sonic so I'm sure a hover car won't be much trouble for you to build."

Then suddenly, the door to the lab opened up and Sonic stepped in with two Mobians standing behind him.

"Hey Tails and Mandy! Geoffrey and Bunnie are back!" he announced.

Tails and Mandy turned around and their faces brightened. There behind Sonic were Geoffrey St. John the Skunk and Bunnie Rabbot. Mandy ran over to Bunnie and Geoffrey and gave them a greeting hug and Tails said hello to them.

"It's so good to see you two again." said Mandy "How did Adabat go?"

"It was more then just a lay on the beach luv, believe me." said Geoffrey grimly, remembering the whole ordeal with Ravage Bloodfang he and Bunnie had just been through****.

"But we had a lovely time thanks." said Bunnie "How's things been since Wilson rescued you from Eggman?"

"Excellent Bunnie." said Mandy happily "I'm back on the battlefield and I gave Eggman some much needed payback for lying about my wellbeing."

"I'll say she did." said Sonic who was casually leaning in the doorway "She told me she literally punched Eggman in the face."

"Crikey!" cried Geoffrey "You really did that to him Mandy?"

"I did and I have no regrets." said Mandy "No one says I'm dead when I'm not and gets away with it. And no one makes a cheap copy of me and deceives my friends either."

"Well I say good on you luv." said Geoffrey "I'm kinda surprised Sonic hasn't done that yet." he added, smirking teasingly at the hedgehog behind him.

"I've come close though." said Sonic casually "And I've broken many of his robots, that's a lot more then simply punching his ugly face in."

Geoffrey chuckled at Sonic.

"So how have ya'll been sugah-hog?" asked Bunnie "Was Chun-Nan any good?"

"More then any good Bunnie." said Sonic "Chun-Nan is a way past cool country. It was more then just a simple visit to the country though. I had to stop an evil kung-fu mistress from taking over Chun-Nan."

"Oh mah stars!" said Bunnie "Did ya'll do it?"

"Nyah…sort of." said Sonic casually "I had to get some help though but me and my friends trumped that kung-fu mistress once and for all. She's been placed in heavy lockdown so we won't be seeing her

ugly face anytime soon."

"That's good news." said Geoffrey "We've done a lot of good these past days, me and Bunnie save Adabat, you save Chun-Nan and Wilson and Mandy make a mess of Robotropolis. What good we've done lately. So, where are your mates Sonic?" asked Geoffrey.

"I was taking them on a tour of the place but I left them to greet you and Bunnie." explained Sonic "Wilson's taken over for me."

"I'm kinda amazed you haven't shown them Royal HQ before." said Geoffrey.

"Eh, didn't have the time." said Sonic, shrugging casually.

"So Tails, what are you and Mandy doin'?" asked Bunnie "Somethin' with cars?"

"Mandy was giving me tutorials on building cars in case I ever want to have a go at it." said Tails "I really like the lab Royal HQ has. I might set up some of my equipment from home here."

"You can use the lab whenever you like." said Mandy "Anyone who is a Royal Fighter is free to access Royal HQ anytime they wish."

"Really?" said Tails excitedly "Oh thank you Mandy!"

"You're welcome Tails." said Mandy with a kind smile "I think me and you are going to be good friends indeed."

Sonic smiled at his friends. It felt good to have such wonderful friends that were willing to stand by each other's side no matter the cost and form an unbreakable bond between them. In his conflicts with Eggman, the one advantage Sonic would always have is teamwork. Speaking of team, he began wondering where Wilson was taking the others right now.

As for Wilson, he had led Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben onto the roof of Royal HQ. He was showing them the lookout turret, a structure on the top of the building shaped a little like a

castle's turret. There was only a seat and a telescope on the turret.

"And this is where we look-out for any sign of danger." said Wilson, pointing at the turret "The telescope has a powerful lens and you can see all the way to Kingdom Valley through it."

"That sounds like a powerful telescope." said Amy Rose, Sonic's fan girl and hammer swinger "Who usually sits up here?"

"There isn't a specific person for look-out duties." said Wilson "We usually take turns and when Royal HQ is empty, Nicole, Sally's lady-in-waiting, is put in charge of Royal HQ and look-out duties. She's a very good look-out since she's managed to find many dangers in the past for us."

"Can I look through the telescope?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian, a being from another world and Tails' love interest.

"Of course." said Wilson "Maybe you would like to be our look-out for the moment." he added with a chuckle.

Cosmo climbed up the steps in the turret and she sat down in the seat. She peered through the powerful telescope and to her amazement; she could see very faraway, clear as crystal. She beamed with amazement.

"I can see very far with this." said Cosmo "This is an amazing telescope isn't it?"

"It is indeed." said Wilson.

"Can I have a go next Cosmo?" asked Cream politely.

"Sure." said Cosmo, beaming "You'll love the view you get through this Cream."

"I bet you can see very far on Angel Island can't you Knuckles?" asked Amy "I mean, an island that floats, you're bound to get a good view on that aren't you?"

"The view is one reason the echidnas of Angel Island don't want Angel Island to go back down." said Knuckles the Echidna, guardian

of Angel Island and protector of the Master Emerald "The view is too spectacular for them to want to settle back down."

"An island that floats?" questioned Ruben the Water Panther "How is that possible? Are you echidnas magical or something?"

"No quite, the island is kept afloat by the Master Emerald." explained Knuckles "I myself never really understood how it does that but the echidnas are glad it does, otherwise Angel Island will have to go back down to the ground which they don't want, they've come too accustomed to life in the sky."

"Interesting." said Ruben "I myself would prefer life near a river but I bet life in the sky is a wonderful feeling."

Before Knuckles could say anything, Cosmo screamed in terror, making everybody jump in surprise. Cosmo had gotten up from the seat and she was staring into the telescope, frozen in terror and unable to move.

"Cosmo? What's wrong?" asked Cream worriedly "Is there danger incoming?"

Cosmo stopped looking in the telescope and she turned around to face everybody. Her face was pale and she was trembling all over like leaves being blown in the wind

"M-M-Marik!" she gasped hoarsely "M-M-Marik the M-Martian is c-c-coming! He's h-h-heading towards C-C-Castle A-c-corn!"

Everybody except Ruben gasped in horror or surprise. Ruben just pulled a face at Cosmo. He hadn't met Marik yet so he didn't know who he was.

"Oh no!" shrieked Cream, putting her hands to her face in fright.

"Marik the Martian?" shrieked Amy "Oh not that creepy sadist again!"

"Who the ocean waves is Marik the Martian?" asked Ruben with a confused expression on his face.

"A demon." gasped Cosmo "I'll explain later, we've got to stop Marik immediately!"

"Well any enemy of yours is an enemy of mine rosebud." said Ruben "I'll help you defeat this so-called Marik."

"Good." said Amy "I'm looking forward to seeing you kick his backside in."

"Before we do anything, we've got to warn Sonic." said Wilson "Let's get going now! Castle Acorn is at stake!"

Nobody waited to be asked twice, Wilson, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben all ran to the door that lead down from the roof into Royal HQ and down the stairs to warn Sonic, Tails, Mandy, Bunnie and Geoffrey of Marik the Martian.

As for Marik, he was walking at a slow, steady stride, an action unusual for the war-loving Martian. He had a hideous scowl on his face and electricity crackled furiously around his metal claws as he walked through the grassy meadow and towards Castle Acorn. The very sight of Castle Acorn brought back some memories to the Martian, some happy and some that made him growl furiously. Marik had not been seen in action since the battle of Central City with Egg-Dragon*****, Eggman's Chaos Emerald powered machine. The reason for that is Marik had been in hiding since then. He had managed to fix his voltage compactor after it had malfunctioned and blown into bits so now he was back to full power and since he had waited for a while, he thought Sonic would be unprepared for him. Marik breathed in deeply and sighed a happy sigh.

"Aaaah…revenge, the best scent in the universe next to a rotting carcass of a dead soldier." said Marik casually "And the scent of revenge is strong because I am going to finish what I started on Castle Acorn****** as well as finish off that infernal hedgehog."

He held his robot hand up to his face and electricity crackled around his claws. He grinned a wide toothy grin that could make a dinosaur scream in terror.

"And since my voltage compactor is fixed and I'm all rested up from the fight in Central City, I am at my strongest and Sonic will never see me coming." he crowed to himself "Revenge on all who have opposed me is certain I can tell! Ha, ha, ha, ha…"

His laughing trailed off as he headed on to Castle Acorn.

Back in Royal HQ, Wilson and the others had run to the lab where Sonic, Geoffrey and Bunnie were chatting and Mandy was letting Tails sit in her car and see what it felt like. Everybody stopped what they were doing and they looked at the dog in wonder.

"Whoa Wilson bud, what's the matter?" asked Sonic, holding his hands out to slow the dog down "Is Eggman attacking?"

"Worse then that!" cried Wilson.

"Marik is coming and he's heading for Castle Acorn!" shrieked Cosmo "I saw him through the telescope on the roof!"

"No way!" cried Sonic "Marik's coming?"

"Of all the awful things to happen…" sighed Geoffrey angrily "And just when we were getting some peace!"

"Who's Marik?" asked Mandy "Some enemy I don't know about but you lot do?"

Wilson was about to retort to her until he realized that the Mandy that had experienced Marik on the Chaos Emerald hunt was the Automaton, not the real Mandy so she wouldn't know a thing about the Martian. Instead he decided to simply let Cosmo explain everything.

"You tell her Cosmo." said Wilson "You know more about Marik then me."

Cosmo stood forward and looked up at Mandy, who was waiting to hear about Marik.

"Marik is a demon from Mars." she explained "He's highly ruthless, extremely sadistic and very, very vengeful. He loves war and hates peace and he has a grudge on me, Sonic and anyone affiliated with him."

"Sheesh, that guy has problems." said Mandy "And I will be happy to sort those problems out for him. He maybe a peace hater but I'm not letting him take our peace away!"

"Then let's not waste anymore time and do it to it!" cried Sonic "We've got a Martian to stop!"

Everybody ran out of Royal HQ as fast as they could possibly run only to find that Marik the Martian was within a few feet of the still incomplete New Mobotropolis. Everybody ran through the under construction city and to where Marik was standing. Marik had seen them coming and he just stopped dead in his tracks, waiting for his enemies to come. He was clearly not impressed with what they were going to do now. Everybody stood side by side as if to make a defensive wall and Sonic, who was in the middle, pointed at Marik.

"Hold it right there Martian brains!" he yelled "You're invading royal grounds! Pack up your bags and go before I…"

"Look Sonic, if you're going to perform your usual vapid display of valour and heroism then don't bother!" growled Marik "It's so old and tiring I know what you're going to say to me!"

"Puh, pity your mommy didn't tell you it's rude to interrupt." snickered Sonic.

Marik resisted the urge to tear Sonic to pieces. He just remained eerily clam and didn't move from his spot.

"So what are you doing here you freak?" asked Tails, putting on a brave face even though secretly he was terrified of Marik.

"I would have thought the obviousness of my presence would be clear to you weak minded dweebs right now!" snorted Marik rudely "But since you're too stupid to guess, I'll have to tell you: I am here to get rid of Sally Acorn, take over Castle Acorn, become ruler of

Mobius and turn the planet into a war zone that's what!"

"Marik, news flash: you already tried that." scoffed Sonic "Why would you try the same failed scheme again?"

"Because I've been out of action for a while I thought you would be unprepared for my return." explained Marik "Unfortunately, you were prepared for my return so before I can accelerate my plans, I am going to have to rip you all apart! And I see you have a new face on your team." he added, pointing a clawed metal finger at Ruben who just frowned at him "Too bad he has the humiliation of being the colour blue. I hate the colour blue!" he growled, tensing up "Blue symbolizes peace and I so despise peace!"

"If you hate peace so much then why are you trying to stop us having peace?" asked Ruben furiously "What we do is none of your business so why should you stop us from having what we want just because you don't like it?"

"I am not stopping anybody from having peace." snapped Marik "We Martians are trying to get the idiots of the other planets in the galaxy to see that peace is a pathetic, idiotic thing to crave for and it's better to be a war lover! We're only doing the universe a favour by telling everybody the truth but sadly, nobody agrees with us so we have to smash them to bits to teach them a lesson for saying no to us!"

"The reason everybody says no to you Marik is because you're wrong!" said Cosmo bravely "Peace is not a bad thing at all, being a war lover is! If you keep up your war loving ways, you are eventually going to get yourself killed! So please leave Mobius and leave it's people alone or my friends will have to handle you very roughly."

"I will not take orders from scum like you Cosmo the seed-vermin!" roared Marik, baring his claws and clenching his teeth "You Seedrians are morons to take on us Martians and you're even more vacuous for craving peace! I will not leave Mobius until I wreck the place and make you all pay for the indignity you've caused me!"

"Then what are you waiting for jerk-bag?" sneered Sonic "Let's go! Prepare for a hedgehog style thrashing courtesy of Sonic the

Hedgehog, soon to be your butt-kicker."

"If you're so desperate to die then I accept." said Marik dryly "I'll show you a proper Martian style beating!"

"Nobody will be doing anything!" bellowed a voice that Sonic was sick of hearing.

Sonic and Marik and everybody else turned their heads to see Dr. Eggman in his Egg-Mobile with Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat by his side. Shadow hopped off the Egg-Mobile and looked at the Mobians and Martian. Everybody just stared in wonder at what Eggman had just brought with him.

"Who are they doctor?" asked Shadow.

"Our mortal enemies Shadow." said Dr. Eggman "These Mobians do their best to wreck my plans and make sure I do not conquer Mobius. My biggest threat is that blue hedgehog in the red sneakers, Sonic the Hedgehog. You must destroy him more then the others Shadow."

Shadow nodded and he stared at Sonic with his fiery red eyes. Sonic just stared back with a cocky smirk on his face.

"So who are you tall, dark and spiny?" asked Sonic.

"I am Shadow, Shadow the Hedgehog." introduced Shadow "I am a genetic experiment created by Dr. Eggman to destroy you Mobians and help him conquer Mobius."

"Genetic experiment?" questioned Tails "I didn't know Eggman made live beings as well as robots."

"He's a scientist, he can make whatever he wants mate." said Geoffrey in an unimpressed tone while shrugging.

"You wanna destroy us Mobians and help Eggman conquer Mobius?" said Sonic "That's nice but I have this big problem with people who try to destroy me, my friends and everybody else and conquer my home planet so I'm afraid I'm going to have to stomp on you faker."

"Faker?" snarled Shadow "You dare to call me a fake? I am over fifty years old so I existed way before you did so you're the faker, faker!"

That little information surprised Eggman. Shadow was fifty years old? He certainly didn't look fifty! Who on Earth created him then?

"Wow, you're doing well for a guy who's fifty years old." sneered Sonic "You look about my age."

"That's because I am ageless." said Shadow "I do not physically age and my age can only be calculated by how long ago I was created. That in turn makes me…the ultimate life form."

That fact interested Eggman even more. An immortal experiment that never ages? Excellent! So when he conquers Mobius, Shadow will be able to take over from him when he dies and he'll always be around to rule Mobius in his name! Brilliant! Looks like Shadow was worth the goading and lying to after all!

"Ultimate life form huh? We'll see about that." said Sonic, preparing to fight.

Suddenly, before anyone could fight, Marik punched Sonic away and sent him hurling into Knuckles.

"I am not letting you weaklings mess this up!" snarled Marik "I will take the liberties of destroying Shadow for you since I cannot rely on you Mobians to do anything right!"

"Oooh what a cheeky little scumbag!" grumbled Mandy, clenching her fists "I wanna punch HIM in the face now!"

"Well that will have to wait Mandy, Marik's doing us a favour for a change." said Sonic "Let's see how he does."

Marik stepped forward and glared directly into Shadow's red eyes. Marik liked the colour red, especially since it symbolizes hell, blood and fire but since Shadow was an enemy, he had to fight him and ignore the fact he had red eyes.

"Who are you then?" asked Shadow coldly.

"I am Marik the Martian, invader from Mars and I am turning Mobius into a war zone!" he claimed to the black hedgehog "I am not letting you and your oaf of a master ruin my plans by taking over Mobius for me!"

"Is that so?" sneered Shadow "Well, I beg to differ! Me and you shall duel. Winner conquers Mobius and destroys the Mobians. Do you accept Martian?"

"I accept with all haste!" yelled Marik "Prepare to die you cheap Sonic copy!"

That did it. Shadow spun into a black and red spiny ball and he charged straight at Marik in a spin-dash. He hit the Martian directly in the stomach and sent him hurling over eighty meters. Marik was completely shocked by the sheer power behind that spin-dash and after landing rather sharply on the ground and skidding to a halt, he just lay there and stared up at the sky, unable to move. Everybody gasped in surprise.

"Whoa! That is one powerful spin-dash!" shrieked Tails.

"That Shadow guy makes you look like a wuss Sonic!" teased Knuckles.

"Ha, ha, ha, very funny mister funny echidna." sniffed Sonic sarcastically.

Shadow dusted his hands off and smirked cockily.

"That wasn't too hard." he said "Now to take on the blue faker and his kindergarten group."

But Shadow should have known better then to claim victory without being absolutely certain he is victorious first. Shadow began advancing slowly on Sonic and friends but Marik appeared from nowhere and pounced on him. Marik had recovered and he was determined to make Shadow pay for that spin-dash. Marik pinned Shadow down to the ground and began to violently slash Shadow across his face with his metal claws. But after about three slashes, Shadow teleported out from underneath Marik, much to the

Martian's bewilderment. Shadow re-appeared behind Marik and dropkicked him, knocking the Martian's helmet off. Marik quickly put the helmet back on before anyone could see his horrible cranium and he got back to his feet. Marik roared loudly and launched punches at Shadow. Shadow threw punches back and the two fighters punched each other in several places while moving incredibly fast. Eggman, Alonzo and Rouge were impressed with Shadow's performance so far. For a fifty year old experiment that had been in a pod for goodness knows how long, his fighting skills were top-notch as if he had been fighting for ages. Marik gave Shadow an upper-cut to the chin and Shadow hurtled through the air but before Shadow could hit the ground, Marik grabbed his foot and slammed him down on the ground as hard as he could. Then he threw Shadow away and electrocuted him with his metal hand as Shadow hurtled through the air. Shadow landed painfully on the ground and rolled for a moment before stopping. Marik activated his jet shoes and hurtled towards Shadow but before he could reach him, Shadow swiped his arm and sent a few yellow arrow shaped beams hurling towards Marik while yelling "Chaos Spear!". The Chaos Spears hit Marik in the face and the Martian tripped over and landed on his face. Shadow got to his feet, ran over to Marik and grabbed him by the jacket before he could recover. Then Shadow gave Marik an uppercut of his own and sent Marik hurling about fifty feet through the air. Marik landed on his back and grumbled in pain as pain surged through his back like an electrical current. Marik picked himself up only to get spin-dashed by Shadow. Marik landed back on his back and he began to wonder how the hedgehog moved so fast. Shadow charged towards Marik and Marik sent a jolt of electricity crackling towards Shadow. Shadow teleported and re-appeared about an extra four feet ahead and continued charging. As he ran, Shadow skated as if he was on ice and his shoes were ice skates. It was due to his jet shoes giving him the ability to run fast and allow him to slide across the ground as if it was ice. Marik kept trying to shock Shadow but Shadow kept teleporting out of his way and re-appearing a few extra feet ahead before he could get hit. Shadow swiped his arm and sent more Chaos Spears hurling into Marik's face. Marik staggered backwards and before he could regain his vision, Shadow punched Marik directly in the face, causing Marik to spit out some drops of saliva and fall onto his side. Shadow tried to attack again but Marik swiped his arm at him and hit him with an

energy wave. Shadow staggered backwards and Marik punched him before he could regain his senses. Marik began to punch Shadow furiously and quickly, desperate to make sure he couldn't attack back. Shadow however, teleported again and re-appeared behind Marik. He took Marik's legs out from underneath him with one swift kick and Marik fell onto his stomach. Shadow grabbed Marik's leg and tossed him away. Marik landed in front of Sonic and just to add insult to injury, Sonic decided to kick him in the head and then toss him back to Shadow. Shadow spin-dashed Marik before he could hit the ground and the Martian landed on his back. Marik picked himself up and swiped his arm at Shadow, sending an energy wave hurling towards him but Shadow blocked it with a Chaos Spear and then he spin-dashed Marik again. Marik skidded backwards and Shadow gave the Martian an uppercut the sent him hurling twenty feet into the air and crashing down a good distance away. Marik groaned and lay defeated on the ground. Shadow ran up to Marik and stood over his defeat opponent. Marik couldn't believe his bad luck. His plans were interrupted and he had just gotten defeated by a genetic Mobian experiment.

"Beaten…by an…experiment!" he grumbled "How…humiliating…!"

"Serves you right for daring to challenge the ultimate life form." boasted Shadow "I remember a few things from my creation, my creator designed me to be perfect and perfect I am! I don't age and I am the most powerful being in the known galaxy!"

"I…am going to…prove you…wrong!" roared Marik.

He tried to punch Shadow but Shadow grabbed the Martian's arm and squeezed it. He then grabbed Marik's arm with his other hand and…

CRACK!

Marik screamed in pain as his arm felt limp and flopped down by his side. Shadow had broken it. Now Marik would never defeat Shadow. Shadow then decided to knee Marik in the gut to finish him off. Marik landed on his back and passed out. The Martian was defeated at last. Shadow turned away from the defeated Martian and walked back over to Sonic and friends. Dr. Eggman and Rouge looked at

each other in amazement.

"Well Shadow takes no prisoners doesn't he?" said Rouge "He just broke the Martian's arm and knocked him out."

"It's a good thing I managed to get Shadow to join me after all isn't it?" asked Dr. Eggman, grinning widely "He's going to do me a lot of good in my glorious conquest isn't he?"

Sonic and friends were amazed at what happened to Marik and they began to grow nervous as Shadow approached them with a villainous scowl on his face.

"What are we gonna do Sonic?" asked Tails worriedly.

"I say we should all take him on at once." said Sonic "He can't possibly match all of us. Bunnie, you start and then I'll attack and then everybody else join in."

"OK sugah-hog!" said Bunnie, running up to Shadow the Hedgehog at top speed.

Shadow just stood there and waited for Bunnie to attack him. Bunnie drew her robotic left arm back and punched at Shadow, her fist extended so she could keep her distance but still attack. Shadow dodged the attack and threw some Chaos Spears at Bunnie but Bunnie dodged the spears and punched at Shadow again, this time hitting him. Shadow was slightly taken aback at such a powerful punch but that didn't stop him from getting back onto his feet and getting ready to attack. Bunnie and Shadow stood their ground and stared daggers at each other, preparing to lunch the first attack. Then suddenly, Sonic spin-dashed Shadow from behind and knocked him over. Bunnie ran up to Shadow and grabbed him with her robot arm. Shadow squirmed in her grasp and Bunnie flew into the air with her metal jet feet. Bunnie flew about twenty-five feet in the air and threw Shadow straight down into the ground as hard as she could. Shadow crashed on the ground and groaned in pain. Shadow tried to get back up but Sonic spin-dashed him again, knocking him over.

"Everybody, attack and don't give him chance to fight back!" yelled

Sonic.

Everybody ran in on the offensive as Shadow was picking himself up. Bunnie flew towards Shadow and punched the black hedgehog with her robot arm again and Shadow staggered before falling on his hands and knees. Geoffrey and Knuckles reached Shadow first and they launched the first attacks. Knuckles threw one of his famous punches and Geoffrey threw his own punches too. Shadow teleported before the skunk and echidna could attack him again and he reappeared behind Geoffrey. Geoffrey threw himself down on his hands and knees to dodge Shadow's attack and he kicked backwards like a bucking horse to knock the hedgehog over. Knuckles tried to attack but Shadow teleported again, reappeared behind Knuckles and kicked him in the back of the head. Geoffrey tried to help but Shadow flipped behind Geoffrey and pile-dived him. Bunnie and Sonic then stepped in to try and attack Shadow but Shadow threw some Chaos Spears at them and Sonic and Bunnie were both struck. Tails flew towards Shadow but Shadow just smacked him and sent him crashing into the ground. Ruben dropkicked Shadow in the head and then gave him a kung-fu style chop to the back with his hand. Shadow threw some Chaos Spears at Ruben but Ruben blocked it with a wall of water and he threw a spinning water ball at Shadow. Shadow was stricken in the eye and he tumbled onto his side. Shadow picked himself up only to get elbowed on the head by Mandy. Shadow elbowed Mandy in the side, grabbed her head and head-butted her directly in the forehead. Mandy felt dazed and she grabbed her throbbing head. Wilson round-house kicked Shadow in the legs, tripping him up and Amy whacked Shadow in the back with her Piko-Piko hammer. Shadow got back to his feet and dropkicked Amy. Wilson tried to attack again but Shadow grabbed Wilson by his jaw and he tossed him into Amy. Cream threw her pet Chao Cheese at Shadow like a baseball but Shadow smacked Cheese away, sending the Chao crashing into the dirt and he spin-dashed Cream out of the sky. Tails got the drop on Shadow by striking him from behind but Shadow quickly retaliated with a punch to the cheek with the side of his fist. Tails landed on his feet but Shadow spin-dashed him on to his back. Sonic spin-dashed Shadow and the two spin-dashing hedgehogs bounced off each other. They landed on their feet and charged at each other in another spin-dash. Shadow overpowered Sonic and sent him

crashing into the ground. Bunnie gave Shadow an uppercut from behind and Geoffrey uppercut Shadow from the front. Shadow threw some Chaos Spears at Bunnie and Geoffrey and both fighters were hit in the shoulder and side respectively. Shadow then grabbed Bunnie and Geoffrey's heads and bashed them together, causing them to slump on the ground a pained daze. Ruben let Shadow have it with a jet of water and Shadow was knocked off his feet. Shadow quickly recovered and ran up to Ruben at top speed. Ruben tried to jump out of the way with his water powers but Shadow was a fraction too quick and he spin-dashed him just as he was getting off the ground. Cosmo decided to distract Shadow by picking up some reasonably sized pebbles and throwing them at him. The pebbles hit Shadow and he turned around to see who was throwing them at him. He glared at Cosmo and advanced on her menacingly. Cosmo backed away, shaking but trying not to look too scared. Now Shadow's attention was diverted, Sonic spin-dashed him from behind and knocked him onto his stomach. Shadow picked himself up only to get spin-dashed in the gut by Sonic. Knuckles then pile-dived Shadow and threw him into Wilson, who was waiting for him. Wilson caught Shadow and threw him into Amy who hammered him as if he was a baseball and Shadow landed on his head. Shadow picked himself up just as Amy was running up to him with her hammer ready and he gave Amy a massive uppercut to the nose. That attack hurt Amy so much, she felt like her nose had been ripped off. Amy landed on her back and clutched her nose painfully. Sonic spin-dashed towards Shadow until suddenly, Rouge the Bat appeared from nowhere and screw-kicked him into the ground. Sonic spat out bits of grass and glared at Rouge who stood over him with a coy smirk on her sexy face.

"So what made you suddenly decide to turn traitor?" demanded Sonic angrily.

"Well there's the promise of getting Eggman's secret treasure and the fact I have taken a liking to Shadow boy." explained Rouge "Sorry hotshot but I'm with Eggman now."

"I didn't ask for your help Rouge!" growled Shadow "I can take these morons myself!"

"News flash shadow boy: you can't." noted Rouge "These guys are

creaming you right now so you need me to provide some extra punch."

"I do not need help!" snapped Shadow "Now stay out of this! This is my fight and I will win it whether you wanna help or not!"

"Fine, fine." said Rouge crossly "Sheesh, you need to chill out for a moment!"

Shadow shot Rouge a death glare and continued his fight. He and Sonic spin-dashed each other again and bounced off of each other. They did this four times until Shadow finally over powered Sonic and ground him into the dirt. Tails tried to attack but Shadow punched him away and shot a Chaos Spear at an oncoming Knuckles. Knuckles dodged the spear and Shadow spin-dashed at the echidna. Knuckles held his hands up and caught Shadow while he was in spin-dash. Shadow pushed Knuckles back a little but Knuckles managed to overpower Knuckles and throw him away. Shadow hurtled accidentally into Eggman's Egg-Mobile and destroyed it. Eggman and Alonzo fell onto their backs and the Egg-Mobile lay in pieces around them. Shadow picked himself up and spin-dashed back towards Knuckles, only to get punched away by Bunnie Rabbot. Geoffrey loaded his crossbow and fired a dart at Shadow. The dart skimmed Shadow across the shoulder but it didn't hurt him too much. Amy and Cream tried to attack Shadow together but Shadow leaped out of their way, causing them to crash into each other. They both fell over each other and onto the ground. Shadow spin-dashed towards them only to get blocked by Sonic. Shadow spin-dashed again and knocked Sonic over onto his back. Mandy came in and kneed Shadow in the gut as hard as she possibly could. Shadow kicked her in the thigh and tried to punch her but Mandy blocked his punch and punched him in the face just as hard as she had punched Eggman in the face. Shadow staggered backwards and swiped his arm. Five Chaos Spears hurtled towards Mandy but she bent over backwards to dodge them. Wilson appeared from behind, clasped his hands together and fisted Shadow in the back of the head, knocking the hedgehog over and he tried to do it again but Shadow teleported, reappeared behind him and pile-dived him. Mandy kicked at him but missed and Shadow gave her an uppercut to the side of her head. Mandy

rubbed her head in pain and grimaced. Shadow tried to attack the mouse and dog but Knuckles attacked him from behind with his spiked fists and knocked him over. Shadow picked himself up only to get blasted by Bunnie's arm cannon and spin-dashed by Sonic. Shadow landed on the ground and groaned. He got up on his hands and knees and glared at his enemies who all stood triumphant over him. Sonic looked down at Shadow with a cocky smirk on his face.

"Heh. We win, what a surprise." he sneered "So Shadow, are you gonna get lost and leave Mobius alone?"

"Never!" yelled Shadow, getting to his feet "This match isn't over faker! Especially since I haven't removed my inhibitor rings yet!"

He put his hand around the ring on his wrist and unclamped it. The ring fell onto the ground with a clatter. Shadow then unclamped the other ring on his other wrist and that ring fell to the ground with a clatter. Shadow becomes a very dangerous opponent when his rings are removed. Shadow tensed up, he clenched his fists, gritted his teeth and his whole body began to glow red. Sonic sensed this was something bad and he flinched.

"Everybody! Back!" he yelled "Shadow's gonna…"

"Chaos… **BLAAAASSSSSSTTTTT!** " bellowed Shadow as he unleashed all the energy he had.

A huge red energy blast came from nowhere and blew everybody away. Sonic and his friends hurled through the air like rag-dolls and they came down harder then falling stones. That blast was very powerful and it had done a lot of damage to Sonic and friends. They lay on the ground unable to move or get back up. Marik the Martian, who had come around from his beating had watched the whole thing and decided now was a good time to retreat since he couldn't fight with a broken arm. Marik fled and disappeared into the nearby forests of Green Hill Zone. When he would show up again was anyone's guess but he would definitely be back…

As for Shadow, he panted heavily and he fell onto his knees. Despite all that power he felt weak and lame. Unleashing his power and removing his inhibitor rings left him power drained. He would

have to take a rest before continuing his fight. Shadow reached weakly for his rings but Geoffrey, who had managed to get onto his knees, aimed his crossbow at him and fired a dart at Shadow. The dart embedded itself into Shadow's shoulder and it put the power drained hedgehog to sleep. Shadow lay on the ground, knocked out cold. Dr. Eggman's jaw dropped in horror.

"Shadow!" he cried "He's all power drained and now he's been knocked out!"

"And I don't think I can take these guys on by myself, even if they are weakened." said Rouge "Any ideas tubby?"

"I think retreat is the best option now dear Rouge." said Eggman "Alonzo, carry me back to Robotropolis, Rouge you get Shadow and follow me!"

Alonzo groaned in despair as he hoisted Eggman off the ground and carried him away, straining as he did so due to Eggman's weight. Rouge picked up the knocked out Shadow the Hedgehog and his inhibitor rings and carried him away, following Dr. Eggman as they disappeared into the forests of Green Hill Zone. The moment Eggman left, Sonic and all his friends picked themselves up. Tails helped Cosmo up since she was having a bit of trouble.

"Are you OK Cosmo?" he asked.

"I'll be fine." said Cosmo weakly "Are you OK?"

Sonic managed to get back to his feet. He felt a little weak and he felt like just standing was hard work but he'd managed it.

"Guys…I think we should get back to Royal HQ and rest." he said quietly "We need to talk about this new threat we have to deal with now."

So everybody limped back to Royal HQ which to everybody's relief, was just a small walk away. They only had to go through the under-construction New Mobotropolis and to Castle Acorn and they were there so they didn't have far to go.

The moment everybody was inside, they all sat down on chairs or

lay down on beds in the rest rooms around the back of the headquarters. Sonic then spoke to his weakened friends.

"Well this isn't good." he said "Eggman has a new weapon known as Shadow the Hedgehog, Rouge turns traitor and Shadow creams us all. He definitely doesn't kid around, he seems like a dangerous foe for anyone to face. He has my speed and skill and he also seems to have Chaos powers. He knows Chaos Spears and Chaos Blast."

"How is that even possible?" asked Tails "Eggman can't possibly have given Shadow Chaos powers! He hasn't got any Chaos Emeralds!"

"Who knows?" asked Sonic "But we do know that Shadow is deadly and we must defeat him or get him to ditch Eggman and join us at least."

"I know one thing we need to do." said Geoffrey "We need to warn Castle Acorn about Shadow so Queen Sally Acorn will be ready for the bloke when he returns."

"I'll give them a call immediately." said Wilson "I'll see if I can get us an appointment with the council tomorrow so we can discuss this new threat and think of the best way to deal with it."

Wilson picked himself up and staggered out of the room to phone Queen Sally.

"Here's one advantage we have over Shadow." said Sonic "He seems to get weak when he removes those rings he has on his wrists. If we can trick him into doing that all the time we can beat him as long as we don't get hit by his Chaos Blasts."

"That sounds like a good tactic Sonic." said Mandy "We can only hope it works though. I bet Shadow won't be stupid enough to do that again."

Sonic nodded grimly in agreement. This conflict with Shadow was going to be a long battle indeed and how they were going to win didn't seem possible but Sonic knew there had to be some way and they would find that out soon enough and use it to defeat Shadow

once and for all…

Footnotes:

*** See Stories 52-53**

**** See Story 32**

***** Mandy disappeared in Story 31 and turned out to have been captured in Story 50 remember?**

****** See the spin-off title *Tales from Mobius Arc 4: Trouble in Adabat* for the whole story!**

******* See Story 43**

******** See Stories 21-24**

Sonic can't catch a break can he? He's just saved Chun-Nan from disaster and now he's dealing with Shadow the Hedgehog! Can anything go right for Sonic? Well maybe it will in the next story. Join me next time for the next titanic contest with Shadow the Hedgehog...Reviews are welcome.

Shadow Fight Part 1

Story 58: Shadow Fight Part 1

The next day arrived and Sonic the Hedgehog had gone to Castle Acorn to discuss about their new threat Shadow the Hedgehog with the Council of Acorn. While this was happening, everybody else had been staying behind in Royal HQ and waiting for Sonic to return. Tails the Fox, Sonic's best friend, had gone to Sonic's house in Green Hill Zone to set up his lab equipment so it was there when he visited Royal HQ's laboratory. While he was doing that, everybody was sitting in chairs in total silence and Knuckles the Echidna was pacing back and forth impatiently. They were waiting for Sonic to return and give them the news on what the council had told him. Unfortunately…patience was not one of Knuckles' strongest points. He finally got fed up of waiting and he grumbled loudly.

"What is taking Sonic so long?" he moaned "Surely a meeting with a council shouldn't take this long!"

"You don't know anything about council meetings here Knuckles." mumbled Mandy Mouse, Royal Fighter and car mechanic "Council meetings here can go on for a while. Especially with that rude porker on the council never shutting his big fat trap when he's told to."

"Well that isn't helpful is it?" yelled Knuckles, almost causing Mandy to fall out of her chair "Shadow the Hedgehog's probably all rested and powered back up now and all we're doing is sitting around doing nothing? We need to take action and defeat that experiment thing once and for all!"

In his rage, he slammed his fist on a high-tech electrical drill that was lying on the counter nearby. The drill was bent, buckled and in pieces now and to make matters worse, the drill belonged to Tails, who had seen this happen and he got angry.

"Knuckles! I needed that!" whined Tails angrily.

"Whoops." said Knuckles, looking at the destroyed drill on the

counter.

"Someone needs to keep their temper down." Geoffrey St. John the Skunk whispered to Bunnie Rabbot.

"I heard that!" yelled Knuckles.

"Everybody, can we please calm down?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian, a being from another world "Getting angry and anxious isn't going to make things any better. I'm sure Sonic will be back in no time and we can plan our next move."

"I agree with Cosmo." said Cream the Rabbit "I'm sure we won't be waiting any longer. Mr. Sonic will be here any minute now."

Then as if right on Que, Sonic the Hedgehog entered the lab. Unfortunately, he didn't seem to be very happy. His face was as dark as a thundercloud. He stormed past everybody and slumped on a chair in the corner of the room. Tails sensed what was wrong with Sonic and he ran over to help him.

"Hey Sonic? Is there something wrong?" asked Tails.

"Not just wrong Tails, mondo wrong!" yelled Sonic angrily "The stupid council wants us to take NO action against Shadow until we can find a weakness on him and use it to defeat him!"

"What?" cried Tails "Why would the council want us to do that?"

"Because they're afraid we might get seriously hurt or killed trying to destroy him." said Sonic in a mock frightened woman's voice "They reckon from what I've said that Shadow is too dangerous to fight and no one should battle him! How stupid is that? Me and everybody in this room fought him to a stand still and we only lost to him because of that dumb Chaos Blast, but we know how to avoid that if he does it again, so why can't we fight him again?"

"So if we're not allowed to fight Shadow, then what can we do?" asked Tails.

"The council has said they'll send whatever spies they can find to find out Shadow's weakness and use that on him." explained Sonic

"But if Shadow's allowed to run free with no one fighting against him, there won't be any spies to spy on him!"

"Well I'm not letting the stupid council stop me from kicking Shadow's butt!" screeched Sonic's girlfriend Amy Rose, summoning her trademark Piko-Piko hammer to her hand "I'm fighting him whether we're authorized or not!"

"I don't think that's a good idea." said Wilson the Dog, Mandy's boyfriend "The council are very strict and if we disobey them we could get severely punished! Or worse, demoted!"

"Oh Wilson, don't tell me you're going to let a band of idiot politicians stop you from doing what's right?" scolded Mandy, getting up from her chair and pointing sharply at Wilson "Council or no council, I'm not letting Castle Acorn's staff stop me from doing what we should be doing which is fighting against Eggman and his new weapons of mass destruction!"

"Wow, you don't kid around when you're mad do you Mandy?" said a very impressed Sonic.

"You got that right blue dude." said Mandy, turning her attention to Sonic "In fact, I say me and you should go and fight Shadow ourselves and show the Council of Acorn how stupid they are!"

"And I say I agree." said Sonic "Get yourself armed Mandy, we're going to grind Shadow into the dirt!"

Mandy ran out of the room to get herself some weapons. The moment she left, Ruben the Water Panther spoke up.

"I admire your bravery and determination Sonic but aren't you concerned about the trouble you may end up in?"

"When me and Mandy stomp all over Shadow the council will realize they made a pea-brained decision and they'll thank us for it." said Sonic smugly "Don't worry Ruben, I'm specialized in disobeying council orders and getting away with it so I'll be fine."

"Ah hope you will be sugah hog." said Bunnie with concern in her voice "Because ah can't stand the thought of you making the council

mad."

"One thing's for certain, you won't be able to beat the Shadow bloke up if ya don't blinkin' know where he is." noted Geoffrey "The blighter could be anywhere by now."

"Good point Geoff." said Sonic "Tails, care to use the computer monitors to find out where Shadow is?"

"OK." said Tails.

He wondered over to the amazingly powerful and hi-tech computer monitors in the corner of the lab. Those monitors had been very helpful to the Royal Fighters in the eight month conflict with Eggman as they managed to pin-point many locations and show them what was going on and where they had to be. Since Tails was a computer whiz, he had no trouble working the monitors and soon he was scrolling through the contents to try and find out where Shadow the Hedgehog was at this moment. While Tails worked on the monitors, Mandy reappeared into the lab. Sonic looked at her and his eyes widened at what she was suddenly armed with. Mandy had equipped herself with a shield that was coloured white with a red circle in the centre on her left arm and some brass knuckle attachments on her right hand. Sonic wolf-whistled in amazement at the mouse.

"Nice weapons Mandy but, why did you pick those in particular?" asked Sonic.

"The shield will protect me with Shadow's spin-dashes and Chaos Spears." explained Mandy "And the brass knuckle attachments will make my punches harder."

"I see." said Sonic "Let's hope that weapon combo works or you're chilli-sauce."

As for Tails, he had found out where Shadow was and he seemed very frightened about it.

"Sonic! I've found him!" cried Tails "He, Eggman and Rouge are heading for Spagonia!"

"Spagonia?" cried Sonic "What the spin-dashes are they going to Spagonia for? Spagonia's not important!"

"Well Eggman always has a reason to attack something so we'd best find out what it is." said Mandy "Let's go Sonic."

"You be careful Mandy." said Wilson "Shadow is a dangerous foe and he won't take your resistance lightly."

"I'll be fine Wils, I have Sonic with me." Mandy insisted "Sonic always wins in the end so Shadow won't lay a finger on me."

Sonic then scooped Mandy up bridal style, surprising the mouse a little.

"We need to get to Spagonia mondo quick Mandy so I'm gonna have to carry you." said Sonic.

"Alright then." said Mandy "Let's go Sonic!"

"Let's do it to it!" cried Sonic, running out of the lab while carrying Mandy.

Sonic ran through the corridors of Royal HQ and outside into the open air. Now he was outside, he could run off at his trademark speed. He shot off like a bullet, earning an excited scream from Mandy as they rocketed through Mobotropolis and into Green Hill Zone on their way to Spagonia. The moment Sonic and Mandy were gone, everybody began wondering what to do to themselves.

"So…what's on the activities list?" asked Ruben jokingly.

Nobody answered. They all just sat there and began waiting. This wait, the wait for Sonic and Mandy to return and what the council's reaction would be was going to be one of the longest waits of their lives…

A short while later, Sonic and Mandy arrived at the village of Spagonia. The village had been under repairs after Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic's evil brother had wrecked it* and it seemed to be

doing just fine, the clock tower was under construction and a lot of houses had been rebuilt from Scourge's rampage. That surprised Sonic as he had expected to see Shadow, Eggman and Rouge wrecking everything and causing a riot. Instead, everything seemed to be under control as if Shadow, Eggman and Rouge weren't here after all.

"What gives?" asked Sonic "Where's Egg-butt, Shadow and Rouge? Tails said he pinpointed their location to here!"

"Tails said they were HEADING to Spagonia he didn't say they were AT Spagonia." noted Mandy "For all we know, we've got here before them."

"But if Eggman was already heading to Spagonia, he should have arrived long before we did." noted Sonic "Are they somewhere else or are they hiding and lying in wait for us."

"Doubt it since they don't know we're here." said Mandy "They must be somewhere else. Well let's find them before all hell breaks loose."

With that said, Sonic and Mandy began looking all around Spagonia in search of Eggman and his comrades. They went around the streets of Spagonia looking in any possible hiding place including behind houses, in houses, on the roof of houses, behind market stalls and in alleyways. Every time Mandy looked somewhere, she kept her shield raised so she would be ready to defend herself from any surprise attacks that could launch at her and due to Sonic's speed, he could look in several places at once to save Mandy looking in a few places. A few minutes later, they gave up searching and met back at where they arrived.

"Find anything blue dude?" asked Mandy.

"Not so much as a black and red quill." said Sonic glumly "Eggman's picked a good hiding place I'll give him that, I can't find him anywhere."

"Maybe Eggman wasn't planning on going to Spagonia." suggested Mandy "Maybe he was going somewhere else and Tails mistakenly

thought he was heading to Spagonia when really, he's heading somewhere else."

"Maybe that's it Mandy." said Sonic "Well in that case, we should go back to Royal HQ and ask Tails to track Eggman again and see if he can…"

Then suddenly, they heard an explosion far off in the distance. Sonic and Mandy looked to their right and saw a thin trial of smoke coming from the distance.

"Should we check it out?" asked Sonic.

"Definitely." said Mandy "I sense this being Eggman's doing."

So Sonic and Mandy ran through the village of Spagonia and to where the explosion was coming from.

A few moments later, Sonic and Mandy ran out of the village of Spagonia and came across a large dam that stood proudly above everything else a few hundred meters away from the village of Spagonia itself. To their horror, Eggman, Shadow and Rouge where there too. Eggman was sitting back and relaxing in his hover-pod while Shadow and Rouge were attacking the dam. Shadow spin-dashed against it and Rouge screw-kicked it. Their attacks didn't seem to be doing much damage to the dam though. The dam was doing a good job of withstanding their powerful attacks but even a strongly built dam wouldn't survive constant punishment from Shadow and Rouge. If they kept this up, the dam would break away eventually and if it broke away, the water behind it would flood the village! Sonic knew what had to be done, he had to stop Shadow and Rouge before they broke the dam.

"There they are!" yelled Sonic "They're attacking the Spagonian dam!"

"Why are they doing that?" asked Mandy "What's making them want to attack a dam and flood an innocent little village?"

"Eggman's evil, what more do you need?" asked Sonic "Well let's kick their butts and save the village!"

With that said, Sonic spin-dashed towards Eggman and he hit his Egg-Mobile. Eggman yelped as he fell out of the Egg-Mobile and onto the ground with a thump.

"Hey Egg-Brains!" yelled Sonic "What's the big idea? Why are you attacking a dam?"

"Quite simple rodent." said Dr. Eggman with a wide smile on his face "I'm getting Shadow and Rouge to break the dam so I can flood Spagonia! And the reason why I'm doing that is just for the fun of it! I'm giving Shadow the pleasure of unleashing his full power on whatever I decide just for the fun of watching him destroy things!"

"Wow, even for you that is sick!" yelled Sonic "Well I'm going to blend my fist into your face!"

So Sonic drew his arm back and punched Eggman directly in the face…only to knock his head clean off his body! Mandy was so horrified at that she thought she was about to gag. That is until she and Sonic both noticed that there were wires underneath Eggman's head. The neck where the head had once been had wires sticking out of it too. That meant…

"Eggman's a robot?" shrieked Mandy "Does that mean the real Eggman isn't here?"

"What the power rings is going on here?" demanded Sonic to the beheaded Eggman robot.

"Quite simple Sonic." said the head of the Eggman robot "The Eggman, Shadow and Rouge you see before you are simple androids I built to distract you while me, Shadow and Rouge infiltrate Royal HQ and destroy your friends!"

"What?" shrieked Sonic "That tears it! No joker gets the joke on me!"

And with that he furiously kicked the robot Eggman's head into the dam where it bounced harmlessly off it and rolled away somewhere.

"Mandy, we've gotta juice!" ordered Sonic "Our friends maybe in trouble!"

"Right Sonic." said Mandy "I had a feeling this was all a trap. The Eggman we know wouldn't flood a city, he'd kill any potential people he could kidnap and roboticize that way."

But before anyone could move anywhere, the Shadow bot spin-dashed Sonic from behind and pinned him to the ground. The Rouge bot screw-kicked Mandy in the back and pinned her to the ground. Neither robots could talk but they snarled vicious robotical snarls at Sonic and Mandy. Sonic and Mandy struggled in the robot's grasps but they couldn't force them off themselves.

"Let us go you bolt brains!" ordered Sonic "We've got a place to be and it's not here!"

The robots ignored him and the Shadow bot forced Sonic's arms behind his back. The Rouge bot forced Mandy's arms behind her back. Mandy then wrestled her shield arm out of the Rouge bot's grasp and whacked the robot with her shield. She then pushed the Rouge bot of herself and got back to her feet. She punched the Shadow bot off Sonic with her brass knuckle attachments. The Shadow bot fell off Sonic and rolled across the ground.

"Thanks Mandy." said Sonic.

"You're welcome Sonic." said Mandy "Keep on your toes though; this is going to get intense."

The Shadow and Rouge bots picked themselves up and lunged at Sonic and Mandy who lunged back ready to attack them…

Back at Royal HQ, the other fighters had been doing something to occupy themselves while they waited for Sonic and Mandy to return from their mission in Spagonia. Cream, Cheese and Cosmo were playing tiddlywinks, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and Ruben were playing a game of cards and Knuckles just stood in the corner and kept quiet, grumbling to himself. Tails remained on the computer monitors to keep track of Sonic and Mandy and Amy sat beside him, watching the screen and hoping that Sonic and Mandy were doing alright.

"Hey Tails, can you find out what's going on at Spagonia?" asked Amy.

"Hopefully I can." said Tails, taping furiously on the keyboard.

The screen flashed through various pictures and sights as Tails taped on the keyboard before finally displaying Spagonia to him. Tails leafed through the many pics of Spagonia displayed on the monitor and he found Sonic and Mandy fighting the Shadow and Rouge robots at the dam. The fight was very intense and Sonic, Mandy and the robots were moving at such a terrific speed, it was pretty hard to see what was going on. The very sight made Tails stare in wonder.

"There they are." said Tails "They're at the Spagonian dam fighting Shadow and Rouge."

"A dam's a bit of an odd thing for Dr. Eggman to attack." said Amy "Is he plotting to flood the village?"

"I wouldn't be too surprised if he is." said Tails "But flooding a village doesn't seem like the kind of thing Eggman would usually do. When he invades villages, he kidnaps the inhabitants and roboticizes them just like he did to the village I once lived in."

"I'll never forget the time that fat idiot invaded Knothole and tried to roboticize me and the other inhabitants**." said Amy, folding her arms and scowling at the very memory that crept into her head.

"Let's just hope Sonic and Mandy can stop Shadow and Rouge." said Tails as he watched the fight on the monitor "Or the villagers will spend the rest of their lives underwater."

"Here's one thing I wonder." said Amy, peering closer at the computer monitor "Where's Eggman? Didn't you say he was heading to Spagonia along with Shadow and Rouge?"

"I did." said Tails "Either Eggman's watching off screen or he's attacking elsewhere."

Then suddenly, the sound of a laser blast hit Royal HQ from outside and the attack shook everybody about as well as startle everybody.

Tails and Amy leaped out of the chairs and onto their feet as everybody picked themselves up.

"What the hoo-ha was that?" cried Bunnie.

"I think something's shooting at us!" shrieked Tails "We're under attack!"

"What could possibly be shooting at us?" cried Knuckles.

"Eggman I guess." said Geoffrey "But how can that be possible? The bloke's in Spagonia!"

"There's only one way to find out." said Ruben "We're going to have to see for ourselves."

With that said, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben all dashed out of the Royal HQ lab and out of the headquarters to see what was going on. What they were met with was a shock to all of them. There, standing before Royal HQ were the real Shadow the Hedgehog, Rouge the Bat and Dr. Eggman who was sitting in his Egg-Mobile. The Egg-Mobile was armed with laser cannons on either side and he was shooting at Royal HQ with them.

"Dr. Eggman? Shadow? Rouge?" cried Tails.

"How can you three clowns be here when you're in Spagonia?" demanded Knuckles angrily.

"We're not in Spagonia." explained Dr. Eggman "The Eggman, Shadow and Rouge that Sonic and Mandy are dealing with are robot replicas I made to distract them."

"But if the ones in Spagonia are fakes then how come the monitors picked them up as the real you, Shadow and Rouge?" asked Tails.

"I fitted my Egg-Mobile with a scrambling device." explained Dr. Eggman "It scrambles all radars and communication relays so your monitors will never pick me up on them and you won't be able to call anybody as my device will scramble your cries for help. Now Sonic's a good distance away from here, I can destroy Castle Acorn and

Royal HQ and then roboticize you all!"

"Not on yer blinkin' life you blighter!" yelled Geoffrey, aiming his crossbow at Dr. Eggman.

He didn't get a chance to fire though. Shadow threw a Chaos Spear at Geoffrey and he was hit in the stomach and sent hurtling backwards in into the Royal HQ building. Shadow bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to attack.

"Shadow, you and Rouge will take out the Mobians while I destroy Royal HQ and Castle Acorn." ordered Dr. Eggman.

"With all due respect doctor, I can do this alone." boasted Shadow, earning an angry glare from Rouge.

"No you can't." said Dr. Eggman "You had a lot of trouble taking everybody yesterday and if you need to remove your inhibitor rings, you'll need some back up from Rouge while you put them back on."

Shadow glared angrily at Dr. Eggman but he said nothing to his "creator".

"As you wish." he muttered.

"That's much better Shadow boy." said Rouge teasingly "I bet me and you together will be too much for those feeble fighters."

"Just stay out of my way if you know what's good for you!" snarled Shadow.

With that said, Shadow spin-dashed towards the Mobians and they all leaped out of the black hedgehog's way before he could hit anyone. Shadow bounced off the wall and hurtled towards Bunnie Rabbot. Bunnie reacted just in time and walloped Shadow with her metal arm. Shadow hurtled into the ground and skidded across it, forming a huge mound of dirt and leaving scrap marks in the soil. Shadow picked himself up just as Bunnie was preparing to attack Shadow again. Before she could do anything to the black hedgehog, Rouge screw-kicked her from behind and knocked the cyborg rabbit over. Ruben shot a jet of water at Rouge but the water-panther missed the bat as she flew out of his way. Then Rouge spun around

while flying and walloped Ruben in the face. She didn't have much of a victory as shortly after attacking Ruben, Knuckles leaped up and gave the jewel thief a well-deserved uppercut for all she had done to him in the past. Ruben landed on her back and Knuckles prepared to pile-dive her until Shadow spin-dashed him from behind and knocked him onto his face. Knuckles picked himself up and tried to punch Shadow but Shadow teleported and reappeared behind Knuckles just as Knuckles finished his punch. Shadow walloped Knuckles from behind and knocked him onto his face again. While Knuckles was down, Shadow kicked him very sharply, causing him to roll onto his back and groan in pain. Tails and Cream both charged at Shadow whilst in flight but Shadow spin-dashed them both out of the sky. Then he grabbed them by their necks and bashed their heads together, causing Tails and Cream to cry in pain and Shadow tossed them both into Royal HQ back-first. Tails and Cream crashed into the wall and slid down to the ground. Amy tried to whack Shadow with her hammer but she missed and Shadow walloped her with a powerful punch. Amy hurtled into the wall and landed beside Cosmo. The blow had left Amy stunned and Cosmo sat beside her to comfort her while she recovered. Geoffrey, who had recovered from Shadow's earlier attack, ran into battle with Wilson beside him and they both pounced on Shadow. They pinned Shadow to the ground and Wilson drew out his trademark spinning blade weapon which was a double-sided pole he threw at his enemies. He held one of the blade's to Shadow's throat. The black hedgehog glared at Wilson with his hellish red eyes.

"You're beaten Shadow!" declared Geoffrey, aiming his crossbow at Shadow's head "Surrender and the Kingdom of Acorn MIGHT be merciful."

"There won't BE Kingdom of Acorn weaklings!" yelled Shadow, smirking evilly at them "Me and Rouge are just the distraction!"

"What do ya mean you crazy bloke?" demanded Geoffrey.

He was suddenly interrupted by a loud KRA-KOOM sound that shook everybody. Geoffrey and Wilson turned to their right and saw Dr. Eggman opening fire on Castle Acorn with the laser cannons built into his Egg-Mobile. Eggman cackled loudly as he began shooting the castle madly with his laser cannons.

"Ha, ha, ha! Take that Castle Acorn!" he bellowed with laughter "That'll teach you to defy me and remain standing while I burnt the rest of the city down***!"

The laser cannons were doing some damage to the centuries old building. There were holes in the walls and bricks lay everywhere. Eggman fired the laser cannons again and the lasers struck the huge walls of the castle, sending bricks flying everywhere and leaving a huge gaping hole in it. The castle's residents, Queen Sally Acorn and her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx were horrified at what was going on and they ran out of the castle to take some cover as it was not safe for them in the castle anymore.

"Everybody, evacuate!" shrieked Sally "Hide in the city until the threat's been dealt with!"

Everybody in the castle didn't hesitate to obey Sally's orders and they evacuated the castle with the queen and her lady-in-waiting as Eggman fired another laser. Sonic's friends were horrified at what Eggman was doing and they immediately set to stopping him.

"Wilson, keep the blackguard pinned down while I deal with Eggman!" ordered Geoffrey, running over to Dr. Eggman in his Egg-Mobile while Wilson kept Shadow pinned down.

Unfortunately, the dog didn't manage to keep Shadow pinned down. Shadow teleported out from underneath Wilson and reappeared in front of Geoffrey. The skunk jumped in surprise and Shadow gave Geoffrey an uppercut to the chin that sent him hurling backwards about twenty feet. Tails and Knuckles stepped in to fight and Tails flew behind Shadow to tackle him. Shadow turned around and swiped at Tails but he missed and Knuckles pounced on Shadow. He pinned the black hedgehog to the ground. Bunnie Rabbot deployed her arm cannon and fired at Dr. Eggman's Egg-Mobile. She hit the Egg-Mobile and completely destroyed it. Dr. Eggman yelped in surprise as his Egg-Mobile fell to bits underneath him and he landed painfully on the broken remains that littered the ground. Shadow and Rouge were not pleased at the fact they had failed to keep everybody busy while Eggman destroyed Castle Acorn. Castle Acorn was still intact and there were only a few large holes that could easily be repaired in a matter of days. Shadow punched

Knuckles off of himself and threw him into Tails. He then ran over to Dr. Eggman and helped him back onto his feet. Rouge landed beside Dr. Eggman.

"What do we do now Eggman?" asked Rouge "Your lil' ol Egg-Mobile is in tiny little pieces. Should we keep this fight up?"

"Yes." said Dr. Eggman "I have a Plan B and it's commencing now!"

He whipped a remote control device out of his pocket and pressed a button. A loud whooshing sound was heard in the sky above everybody and they all looked up to see what it was. A large squadron of robots that folded up in flight flew over everybody and they began dropping bombs on the ground below them. The Mobians all shrieked in terror and they ran for their lives as the flying robots dropped bombs on them. The bombs missed them narrowly but the force of the explosions narrowly behind them sent them hurling across the ground. They all landed on their backs and the fleet of Eggman robots all unfolded from their flying forms and landed on the ground. The robots were all red and yellow in colour save for the lead robot which was gold and red. They were a humanoid shape equipped with laser cannons and shields and they had the ability to fold up into a plane shape and fly as they had done earlier. Dr. Eggman grinned inanely at the Mobians who all stared at the fleet of robots.

"Meet my fleet of E-2000 robots." he announced "They are powerful robots with powerful weapons and they will destroy Castle Acorn and Royal HQ for me now my Egg-Mobile is down!"

"We'll see about that Eggman!" yelled Knuckles.

"Everybody, stop the robots before they can attack!" ordered Tails.

Geoffrey, Bunnie and Wilson were the first to attack. Wilson threw his spinning blade at the lead robot but the golden robot, known as E-2000R, held up its shield to defend itself from the attack. Bunnie blasted at some E-2000s with her powerful arm cannon but they all raised their shields to defend themselves. Geoffrey tried firing darts at the robots but again, they raised their shields to defend themselves from the skunk's attacks.

"Get into the air my marvellous squad and destroy Castle Acorn and Royal HQ!" ordered Dr. Eggman.

The robots all obeyed him and they folded up into a plane shape. They shot off into the sky to take up an air strike and to get out of the Mobian's reach. Tails and Cream flew up after the robots in a vain attempt to stop them but Rouge flew after them and took the fox and rabbit out with a screw kick to the heads each.

"Nah, ah, ah." said Rouge smoothly as Tails and Cream plummeted to the ground "You're grounded children so that means no flying up after Eggman's pretty little robots."

Ruben summoned a wave of water and he used it to catch Tails and Cream and lower them to the ground before they could crash into the ground. Rouge didn't like that and she flew down to attack Ruben but the water-panther was ready for her. After Tails and Cream were safely on the ground, Ruben threw his arms up and the wave he had used to break Tails and Cream's fall shot up and whacked Rouge, sending her hurling up into the air in a cartwheel and crashing straight on top of Dr. Eggman. Rouge picked herself up only to get a Piko to the back of the head from Amy, who had recovered from Shadow's powerful punch earlier. Shadow then threw a Chaos Spear at Amy and the spear skimmed her across the shoulder, causing Amy to scream in pain. Shadow ran up to Amy in his trademark skating fashion but Bunnie Rabbot pile-dived him from the side and sent him sprawling on the ground. Rouge tried to screw-kick Bunnie but Bunnie gave the treacherous bat a bone-shattering uppercut with her robot arm. That attack had cracked some of Rouge's teeth and she landed rather sharply on her back. Shadow spin-dashed Bunnie from behind and ground her into the dirt. Tails picked himself up and observed the chaos going on as Shadow and Rouge battled Bunnie, Amy, Knuckles, Geoffrey, Wilson and Ruben and Eggman's E-2000 drones began to open fire on Royal HQ and Castle Acorn with their powerful laser cannons. They were in even more trouble then before now.

"This is terrible!" cried Cream "Castle Acorn and Royal HQ are going to be destroyed if we don't do something!"

"I wish Sonic was here." moaned Tails "He'll be able to handle this.

Still, we can't give up, we've gotta stop those robots before Castle Acorn and Royal HQ are reduced to sad miserable ruins."

"But how?" cried Cream "We can't defeat Shadow and Rouge and if we try to stop the robots, they'll just stop us!"

"We'll think of something." Tails assured Cream "I know we'll come up with a plan."

They needed a plan and fast or Mobotropolis would lose its last standing building to Dr. Eggman…

Meanwhile in Eggman's insidious robotical city of Robotropolis, Alonzo the Butler Bot, Eggman's snivelling servant and punching bag was watching the two fights going on simultaneously on the huge, powerful monitors in Eggman's headquarters. Alonzo had not been invited to come on the mission with Eggman, Shadow and Rouge since he wouldn't be of any use on the mission. Alonzo was furious with that of course and he wanted to come and prove to Eggman what a useful servant he could be. As is, he was stuck in the base watching all the fun he was missing out on. Shadow and Rouge were holding their own against Sonic's friends and Sonic & Mandy were under siege from the Shadow and Rouge bots in Spagonia. The fights were completely in the villain's favour so far and Alonzo was not pleased to be missing out on it all. He grumbled to himself as he stared at the monitors and watched what was going on.

"It's not fair!" he grumbled "I've been at Eggman's side since he was five and have served him faithfully day after day and he leaves me behind while he gets to destroy Castle Acorn and Royal HQ!"

He glared at the monitor that showed Shadow fighting Sonic's friends. Right now he was yanking on poor Bunnie's ears and making her scream while keeping Knuckles and Ruben away by throwing Chaos Spears at them.

"Why does HE get to go just because he's as powerful as Sonic with added abilities?" grumbled Alonzo as he watched Shadow beat

everybody up "I'm far more loyal to Eggman then he is! Eggman didn't even create Shadow and yet he brought him along for the mission!"

He clenched his fists and thumped the keyboard angrily.

"Well I'll show Shadow who's Eggman's best minion around here!" he yelled to himself "I'll take a great big Eggman robot that will be certain to take down Sonic the Hedgehog and defeat the blue blackguard myself! Then Eggman, the ungrateful, bloated buffoon, will think twice before leaving me behind again!"

And with that Alonzo zipped out of the room to get an Eggman robot. Eggman had many great robots to use but he knew exactly which robot he would use to destroy Sonic with…

Back in Spagonia, Sonic and Mandy were still fighting the Shadow and Rouge bots. They were very tough bots and they did a good job at resisting most of their attacks due to their tough hide and sturdy construction. Sonic and the Shadow bot spin-dashed each other and sent each other flying away. Sonic skidded across the grass and the Shadow bot bounced off the dam. They charged at each other again in a spin-dash. They hit each other but the Shadow bot's spin-dash was strong and it sent Sonic rolling backwards. As for Mandy, the Rouge bot was proving to be more then she could handle. The Rouge bot screw-kicked at Mandy and due to being a robot, her screw-kick looked more like a drill bit and she could give anybody a very nasty cut should she hit them. Mandy raised the shield and blocked the robot's attack. The Rouge bot kicked at Mandy's shield but she didn't harm the mouse in anyway. Mandy lowered the shield and punched the Rouge bot with her brass knuckle attachments but even they didn't seem to be laying a dent on the robot. The Rouge bot kicked upwards and hit Mandy in the face. The mouse staggered backwards and fell over onto her back. The Rouge bot tried to screw-kick Mandy but she raised the shield again to defend herself. Then Sonic appeared from nowhere and spin-dashed the Rouge bot away from Mandy. The Rouge bot picked herself up and flew towards Sonic with its metal fangs bared. Sonic back-flipped and kicked the Rouge bot in the head, sending it cart wheeling

backwards. Mandy picked herself up and tried to help Sonic but the Shadow bot spin-dashed towards her, forcing her to turn around and block the attack with her shield. The Shadow bot bounced off Mandy's tough shield and landed behind her. The robot tried to attack Mandy again but the mouse held the shield up to defend herself. The Shadow bot hit the shield while charging at Mandy but the charge knocked the mouse onto her back. Mandy picked herself up only to get an uppercut from the Shadow bot and sent flying backwards into the dam. The impact had left the mouse feeling a little sore and she rubbed her throbbing back, grimacing as she did so. Sonic got mad and he spin-dashed the Shadow bot. The Shadow bot walloped Sonic with its fist and Sonic hurtled onto his stomach. He lay there groaning in pain and the Shadow bot pinned him down with its foot. The Rouge bot stood beside him, baring its fangs and hissing at Sonic. Mandy picked herself up and saw Sonic in trouble. Thinking fast, she threw the shield at the Shadow and Rouge bots and the shield conked them both in the head. The robots fell over and Sonic spin-dashed them both before they could get back up. Sonic grabbed Mandy's shield, leaped away from the robots and ran over to Mandy. He handed her the shield and Mandy reattached it to her arm.

"Those robots are tough!" cried Sonic "I can't lay a dent on them no matter how hard I spin-dash them!"

"I have a feeling they're built in a similar fashion to Metal Sonic." thought Mandy "Metal Sonic was hard to hurt and these guys are hard to hurt. We need a plan and we need it now."

"But what can we do?" asked Sonic "My spin-dashes don't work and your knuckle and shield combo doesn't work either."

Mandy put a finger to her chin in thought.

"If only we could remove their heads…" she mused to herself "That would destroy them for sure…"

"Pity you didn't bring a sword." sighed Sonic "We could have used that to destroy them."

Mandy nodded in agreement. She began wishing she had brought a

sword with her. But there were more ways to sever something then just with a sword. Mandy looked down at the shield attached to her arm. She felt all the way around the shield. The shield wasn't exactly sharp but if she threw it like a Frisbee at the robots, it might be enough to sever their heads.

"I have an idea but I'm not that sure it'll work." said Mandy "I'm gonna try throwing the shield at their necks and see if it'll knock their heads off. A robot's neck is never very strong after all."

Months of fighting with Eggman robots had taught her that.

"Sounds like a plan Mandy girl." said Sonic "Let's try it."

The Shadow and Rouge bots both charged at Sonic and Mandy but Sonic spin-dashed the Shadow bot away and Mandy blocked the Rouge bot's attack with her shield. Then Mandy unclipped the shield from her arm and she threw it at the Rouge bot like a Frisbee. The shield hurled towards the Rouge bot and it hit the robot in the neck. It didn't sever the robot's head off but it had done some considerable damage to the robot's neck. Now the Rouge bot's head flopped around feebly and loosely. Sonic saw that and he spin-dashed at the Rouge bot. He hit it smack in the head and knocked its head clean off its body. The robot collapsed onto the ground, no longer functioning and dead as a doornail. The Shadow bot was furious with that and it kicked Sonic sharply in the back. Sonic retaliated with a kick to the leg and the Shadow bot fell onto its face. Mandy picked her shield up and threw it at the Shadow bot. The shield it the Shadow bot's neck and almost knocked its head off. The Shadow bot fell onto its knees, its head falling forward and clinging onto its socket by a few threads. Sonic spin-dashed the robot's head off, disabling it and putting it out of action, permanently. Now the two robots were defeated, Sonic and Mandy could leave and get back home and stop the real Dr. Eggman, Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat from destroying Castle Acorn and Royal HQ.

"Well that was an annoying distraction." said Sonic "But fun nonetheless. Let's go Mandy, our friends will need us."

"I'm sure they're doing fine." Mandy assured Sonic "But that doesn't mean we shouldn't help out. Let's skedaddle."

Sonic picked Mandy up bridal style and Mandy wrapped her arms around Sonic so she was holding on tight to him as he ran. Sonic ran off at his trademark speed…but he didn't get very far. A huge robot jumped out of nowhere and landed straight in front of Sonic, sending him and Mandy hurling backwards and landing onto their backs. The robot was shaped like the fearsome dinosaur Velociraptor. It had a huge head full of steel teeth, two long lanky arms with razor sharp claws and clawed feet. Like a real Velociraptor, its third tow stuck up and the claw on it was even larger then the others. It had a long spiked tail that was likely used as a club. It had Gatling guns on its back and shoulders and a laser cannon on its cranium. The cockpit was in its chest and Sonic could see the recognizable figure of Alonzo the Butler Bot in the cockpit. Alonzo cackled a pathetic, crappy evil laugh that wouldn't scare even a baby.

"Hello Sonic the Hedgehog." he purred "How nice to see you separated and so far away from your friends."

"Alonzo, what the chilli-dogs are you doing here?" demanded Sonic.

"I'm doing Eggman a favour and destroying you while he's busy in Mobotropolis." said Alonzo "And I've picked the perfect robot to do it, Egg-Raptor! This robot is not only heavily armoured and loaded with weapons, it's extremely fast, much faster then you and its claws will make short work of your soft fleshy bodies!"

"So you think you snooty moron!" retorted Mandy "We've crushed many of Eggman's baby toys for a while now! What makes you think this robot will be any better?"

"The fact it's faster then Sonic my child." purred Alonzo "Now, stand still while I blow your heads off."

Sonic ignored him and spin-dashed Egg-Raptor directly in the chin. The blow didn't do much harm to Egg-Raptor and the machine quickly shook off the attack. Alonzo grumbled.

"I don't like disobedient wretches!" he yelled "Prepare to have the humiliation of falling to Eggman's lowly servant you mongrels!"

Sonic charged at Egg-Raptor again and Egg-Raptor roared at him, preparing to fire its many guns at the hedgehog…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 29**

**** See Story 15**

***** See Story 2**

Wow! That's some crazy crud going on right now! Can Sonic and Mandy stop Alonzo and get back home in time to stop Shadow, Rouge and Eggman? Join me next time...Reviews are welcome.

Shadow Fight Part 2

Story 59: Shadow Fight Part 2

"Mandy! Heads up!" cried Sonic the Hedgehog as he leaped onto Egg-Raptor's shoulder and tried to disarm one of its shoulder cannons "There's more bullets headed your way!"

"I can see that." snapped Mandy Mouse, raising her shield up to defend herself from the bullets fired by Egg-Raptor's Gatling guns.

Egg Raptor was proving to be a handful for Sonic and Mandy right now. It had a lot of Gatling guns and Sonic was finding it difficult to dodge all the bullets. There were so many bullets firing everywhere that Mandy practically had to keep her shield permanently raised to defend herself. She began wishing she had brought a pistol or two with her, preferably the very strong pistols she used during the raid on Robotropolis the other day*, so she could shoot Egg-Raptor with it. As is, she had to rely on Sonic to disarm Egg-Raptor before she could attempt to do anything to the giant dinosaur machine. As Egg-Raptor kept firing its guns, Sonic saw to destroying them as he clung on to the dinosaur bot's shoulder. Sonic spin-dashed the shoulder gun and destroyed it. But being one gun short wasn't going to do much of anything so Sonic set to attacking the guns on its back and other shoulder. Egg-Raptor had about four guns on its back and it had another one on its other shoulder still functioning. Sonic spin-dashed the back mounted Gatling guns and destroyed them. Now Egg Raptor had only one gun left. Alonzo could see what Sonic was up to so he aimed Egg Raptor's only remaining gun at Sonic and began shooting rapidly at him. Sonic dodged the bullets with ease and he destroyed the last Gatling gun with a spin-dash. Alonzo got mad and he made Egg-Raptor do a sudden jerk that shook Sonic off the robot and sent him falling onto the ground. Egg Raptor looked down at Sonic and roared at him, showing off its gleaming silver teeth that looked like dagger blades.

"I'll teach you to mar Egg-Raptor's weaponry!" yelled Alonzo "You may have destroyed the Gatling guns but the head mounted laser

cannon will finish you off!"

And with that he activated it and the laser mounted on Egg-Raptor's cranium fired a powerful orange blast at Sonic and Mandy. Sonic zipped off and Mandy, knowing her shield wouldn't protect her from such a giant laser blast, ran out of the way as the laser blast fired at her. Sonic then had an idea. He scooped up Mandy before the mouse could even figure out where he was and he ran off at his trademark speed before Egg-Raptor's cannon could finish firing. Now he had escaped Egg-Raptor, it was straight onto Mobotropolis to save his friends, Castle Acorn and Royal HQ. Unfortunately, Egg-Raptor's cannon had stopped firing and Alonzo soon realized he was all alone at the Spagonian dam.

"Huh? Where are those mangy Mobians?" he cried.

He peered at Egg-Raptor's radar which showed him where Sonic and Mandy were. They were just heading through Spagonia and heading north east to Mobotropolis.

"They're escaping are they?" purred Alonzo "Well they won't get far! Egg-Raptor is fast enough to match Sonic's speed!"

And with that he pulled on some levers and Egg-Raptor turned around and ran off in a heavy, bone shaking and swift sprint that a real Velociraptor would do when it ran. Egg-Raptor thundered through Spagonia, ploughing through anything that got in its way and no sooner had it started running but it caught up with Sonic and Mandy. Sonic heard loud stomping behind him and he turned around to see what it was. To his amazement, it was Egg-Raptor, sprinting after him and roaring loudly at him.

"What the heck?" cried Sonic "That thing can keep up with me?"

"I guess Egg-Raptor is a super sonic machine!" shrieked Mandy "A machine this big with legs that long can run fast enough as it is but the fact it can keep up with you, the fastest thing alive, is incredible!"

"Well I guess we can't outrun it so we HAVE to stop it before we go back to Mobotropolis." said Sonic, screeching to a halt and putting Mandy down.

Egg-Raptor leaped into the air and landed behind Sonic and Mandy with an earth-shaking thud. Sonic and Mandy fell onto their backs and Egg-Raptor turned around to face them. Alonzo hooted with laughter at the hedgehog and mouse.

"I told you this thing could run as fast as Sonic!" crowed Alonzo "You'll never escape me! You will have to take me down if you want to help save Mobotropolis from Eggman, Shadow and Rouge!"

"Be my guest Alonzo." sneered Sonic casually "Mandy, be a pal and distract him will you?"

"With pleasure blue dude." said Mandy with a wink.

She threw her shield at Egg-Raptor like a Frisbee and the shield hit the dinosaur robot in the optic. The shield boomeranged back to Mandy and the mouse caught it. Egg-Raptor roared loudly and Alonzo grumbled as the machine shook off the attack to its eye. Then Mandy threw the shield at Egg-Raptor again and hit it in the other eye. Egg-Raptor roared in pain and shook its head madly and the shield came back to Mandy. Before Egg-Raptor could finish recovering from the attack, Sonic spin-dashed Egg-Raptor directly in the leg, tripping it up and sending it falling onto it's side. The machine was about to pick itself up but Sonic spin-dashed it again, forcing it back onto its side. Sonic then aimed at its head and spin-dashed towards it but Egg-Raptor smacked him away with its tail and Sonic crashed into the ground face first. He left a huge mound of dirt and he had some scrap marks on his muzzle. Mandy ran over to help him up.

"You OK Sonic?" she asked.

"I'm fine Mandy." said Sonic "Let's get back to the battle."

Then suddenly, Egg-Raptor got back to its feet and lunged at Sonic with the largest claw on its foot. Sonic dodged the claw and the claw embedded itself into the ground. Alonzo cursed his bad luck and pulled on a lever to make Egg-Raptor yank its claw out of the ground. Sonic spin-dashed at Egg-Raptor again but Egg-Raptor smacked Sonic away with its spiked tail. Sonic landed on his feet and he spin-dashed Egg-Raptor again. He hit it in the shoulder but

his attack didn't seem to do much damage. Egg-Raptor fired at Sonic with its head mounted laser but he missed and hit a tree. The tree fell down and almost landed on top of Mandy but the mouse dodged it just as the tree landed with a crash on the ground. Egg-Raptor fired at Sonic again but he missed again and Sonic spin-dashed Egg-Raptor in the head, sending the machine staggering backwards but he quickly shook it off and regained it's senses.

"Spin-dash all you like Sonic boy." crowed Alonzo "You won't destroy Egg-Raptor, its armour is just too thick for you to penetrate."

"We'll see about that." muttered Sonic as he charged at the dinosaur machine again in a spin-dash.

"Ugh!" cried Tails as Rouge the Bat knocked him out of the sky and onto the ground yet again.

The fight had been going horribly wrong for the fighters these past minutes. The squad of E-2000 robots were blasting everything in sight and being a nuisance to the Mobians and Shadow and Rouge were proving to be quite a challenge to get by. Every time Tails or Bunnie flew up to stop the E-2000 robots from attacking Castle Acorn and Royal HQ, Rouge the Bat would fly after them and screw-kick them out of the sky. And Shadow was no easier to get by since he would be on hand with his spin-dashes and Chaos Spears. Ruben the Water Panther tried to shoot some water at the E-2000 robots but Shadow threw a Chaos Spear at him and the spear struck Ruben in the cheek, knocking him onto his side. Knuckles retaliated by giving Shadow an uppercut from behind, sending the black hedgehog falling onto his face but then Rouge got the drop on him with a screw kick from behind. Amy then walloped Rouge with her hammer but Shadow got back to his feet and walloped her with his fist. Then he saw Cream the Rabbit flying up to the E-2000 robots with her pet Chao Cheese by her side, hoping she could do something about the robots. Shadow threw a Chaos Spear at Cream and the spear skimmed her across the side. Cream yelped and began to descend back down to the ground. Shadow threw another Chaos Spear at Cream but he missed and hit the powerful telescope mounted on the roof that the Royal Fighters used for lookout duties.

Wilson the Dog saw this and he wasn't pleased at all.

"Aw! We needed that!" whined Wilson.

Shadow just spin-dashed towards Wilson but the dog evaded his attack and threw his trademark spinning blade weapon at Shadow. The double-bladed pole weapon skimmed Shadow across the shoulder and the black hedgehog experiment cried out in pain. Now he was vulnerable, Geoffrey St. John aimed his arm mounted crossbow at Shadow and prepared to shoot him with a stun dart that would put him to sleep. But before he could pull the trigger, Rouge the Bat screw-kicked him from behind and knocked him onto his stomach. Geoffrey elbowed Rouge off of himself, got back to his feet and threw the bat straight into Shadow just as he was getting back up. The skunk panted heavily.

"This fight's getting us nowhere!" he gasped "We can't fight off Shadow and Rouge and try to save the two most important buildings in Mobotropolis at the same time!"

"We need a plan." said Wilson "I hope Tails has come up with one at last."

"I have actually." said Tails, who had just picked himself up and dusted himself off "We can't get to the E-2000 robots because Shadow and Rouge keep distracting us. We need to distract them and I've got a way how."

"What's the plan then mate?" asked Geoffrey eagerly.

"I will pretend to fly after the squad and get Rouge to chase me." said Tails "Knuckles, Ruben, you, Wilson, Amy and Cream will keep Shadow busy and Bunnie will fly up there and destroy the robots with her arm cannon."

"Ah like the sound of that plan sugah." said Bunnie "Ah just hope it works."

"I'm sure it will." said Tails, twisting his tails around one another and taking flight.

Rouge had just gotten a jet of water in the face by Ruben and sent

falling onto her back. Before she could do anything, Knuckles socked her in the nose with his famous spiked fists. Rouge lay on her back, clutching her face and groaning. Tails then called down to her.

"Hey Rouge! I'm going to stop the E-2000 robots from attacking Castle Acorn! You'd better come and get me!"

Rouge scowled at Tails and she flapped her wings and took flight.

"Haven't had enough of being ground into the dirt have you kiddo?" she sneered "Well I'll be happy to kick you out of the sky again!"

Tails smirked at the bat and flew off as fast as he could. Rouge flew after Tails, desperate to catch him and knock him out of the sky again. As for Shadow, he gave Amy an uppercut to the chin and he spin-dashed Cream into the ground. Knuckles leaped on Shadow from behind and punched him as hard as he could. Shadow soon found himself getting a face-full of dirt. Knuckles then picked Shadow up and tossed him towards Geoffrey. The skunk leaped up and dropkicked Shadow before he could hit the ground. Shadow landed on the ground and groaned in pain. Wilson tried to attack him but Shadow teleported behind Wilson and kicked him onto his face. Ruben got the drop on Shadow with a ninja style kick and a kung-fu chop to the head but Shadow was quick to retaliate with a smack to the face and knee to the gut. As for Amy, she had an idea of her own.

"Hey Cream, I've got something." said Amy "You carry Cosmo and Cosmo carry me and then you swing us around and I'll smack Shadow with my hammer."

"OK Miss Rose." said Cream, flapping her long floppy ears and flying over to Cosmo the Seedrian who was on the sidelines since she couldn't do much to help.

Cosmo had overheard Amy's plan so she knew full well what was going on. Cream put her hands on Cosmo's waist and carried her off the ground. Then Cosmo held Amy by the waist and Cream carried them both off the ground. Cream flew over to Shadow who was just fending off Geoffrey and Ruben with a Chaos Spear attack. Cream

then did what Amy said and began swinging Cosmo and Amy around in a circle. Amy summoned her hammer to her hand and Cream flew closer and closer to Shadow as she swung her friends around. Shadow saw them coming but he was too late to react and Amy walloped him with her hammer. Amy's hammer combined with Cream's flying and swinging abilities made the blow much harder and Shadow was sent hurling a good distance away. The girls broke the formation and they high fived each other gleefully.

"I knew it would work!" screeched Amy "That was great!"

"I think we should do that again next time we fight." said Cream.

"We can only hope that that was enough to take Shadow out for a while." said Cosmo glumly, knowing that Shadow was bound to recover from a move so powerful.

As for Bunnie Rabbot, she could see that Tails' plan was working beautifully and now she was clear to attack the E-2000 robots that were attacking Mobotropolis. Seizing her chance before she lost it, Bunnie flew up to the squad of robots with her rocket feet and she deployed her arm cannon. The robots saw Bunnie Rabbot coming towards them and they instantly began opening fire on the cyborg rabbit with their powerful laser cannons. Bunnie dodged every single shot and she began blasting the robots with her arm cannon. Her arm cannon was a powerful, formidable weapon and it didn't take much effort to take just one of the robots down. Just one blast and that was it, it was reduced to smithereens and sent falling from the sky. The Castle Acorn evacuees were watching Bunnie's marvellous performance from down below and so was Dr. Eggman. He wasn't pleased at all.

"Destroy that infernal rabbit my robot army!" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

The robots didn't wait to be asked twice and they began firing more rapidly at Bunnie. The Rabbot evaded their blows and she blasted three robots into smithereens with one blast of the cannon. The wreckage and debris of the robots crashed down harmlessly onto the ground. The lead robot, which was gold and red and labelled E-2000R decided to transform into normal mode and fight Bunnie hand to hand. Bunnie blasted four more E-2000 robots out of the sky

and turned around to face the E-2000R unit only to get whacked in the face by its shield. Bunnie spiralled through the sky but she regained her balance and fired at the E-2000R unit. E-2000R raised its shield above its face and successfully defended itself from the blow. Bunnie was surprised to see the robot withstanding her blasts.

"Ah guess ya'll are stronger then the normal drones." she deduced "Sho, nuff. Ya'll are still no contest for lil' ol me."

And with that she transformed her cannon back into an arm and she flew towards E-2000R at top speed. She walloped the robot as hard as she could with her robot arm and sent the robot back-flipping backwards in the sky. E-2000R regained its balance and shot a powerful purple laser at Bunnie. The Rabbot evaded the blow by ducking and she gave E-2000R an uppercut that almost took its entire head off. E-2000R retaliated by punching Bunnie in the face and then kneeing her in the gut. Bunnie swiped at E-2000R only to miss and get smacked by E-2000R's shield. Two E-2000 units, the only ones left in the squad decided to help their leader by blasting at Bunnie. Bunnie deployed her force field generator and defended herself from the attacks. But seeing as she had three opponents at once, she knew she couldn't fight E-2000R and defend herself from the remaining E-2000 units so she had to do something and fast. E-2000R tried to shoot Bunnie with its cannon but the Rabbot ducked, leaving it to accidentally shoot one of its comrades and completely destroy it. The last E-2000 unit flew towards Bunnie only to get grabbed by the wing by Bunnie and thrown straight into E-2000R. The two robots spiralled through the air and Bunnie shot at them with her arm cannon. Her blast destroyed the last E-2000 unit but E-2000R survived due to it having stronger armour. Bunnie and E-2000R flew towards each other and they both punched at each other.

Down on the ground, Rouge was still chasing Tails and the two were just flying around Royal HQ like a pair of birds chasing each other. No matter how fast Rouge flew, she just couldn't seem to catch the little fox. Tails turned his head around and blew raspberries at the bat.

"Nyah, Nyah! Can't catch me!" he jeered.

"We'll see about that little boy." scoffed Rouge with a sly smirk.

She had a devious idea. The bat stopped chasing Tails and she flew around Royal HQ in the opposite direction so she was flying towards Tails from the front instead of behind. Tails looked over his shoulder as he flew around another corner, noticing with satisfaction that he appeared to have lost the bat. He turned his head back around only to see Rouge coming towards him and he was too late to react. Rouge flew over Tails and dropkicked him into the ground. Tails ended up with a face full of dirt and he groaned to himself. Rouge stood over the defeated fox and she cackled smoothly at him.

"That'll teach you not to try and out fly foxy boy." she sneered "I am the better flier and I will always beat you."

Tails said nothing for his face was buried in a mound of dirt.

"You leave Tails alone you traitorous witch!" yelled Amy, walloping Rouge in the back with her Piko-Piko hammer.

Rouge fell onto her face and groaned. She tried to get up but Knuckles pounced on Rouge and forced both her arms behind her back.

"I knew I should have locked you up for your previous crimes instead of letting you go the time I met Sonic**!" he yelled at the traitor he now had pinned down to the ground.

"Whatever knuckle boy." muttered Rouge.

As for Tails, Amy helped the fox back onto his feet.

"You OK?" she asked affectionately.

"Yeah." mumbled Tails, rubbing the dirt off his face "Just annoyed at constantly getting knocked out of the sky by Rouge the Ratty Bat."

"You'll beat her some day." said Amy "Care to help us beat Shadow?"

"Sure." said Tails "Speaking of which, where is he…"

Then right on cue, Shadow spin-dashed towards Tails and Amy and ploughed through them as if he was a bowling ball crashing through a pair of skittles. Tails crashed into Royal HQ and Amy landed on her side. Knuckles released Rouge and linked arms with Shadow. The two began to push on each other but they couldn't get the best of each other. Rouge tried to help Shadow by attacking Knuckles from behind but Geoffrey shot a dart at Rouge. The dart split open and a rope wrapped around the bat's body. Now Rouge was all tied up and unable to fight. Geoffrey pulled on the rope and Rouge was brought down onto her side.

"That's you out of action luv." smirked Geoffrey "Now be a good girl and stay there while we beat Shadow up."

Rouge just scowled at Geoffrey and tried to struggle free from the rope but it had wrapped itself tightly around her and no amount of struggling would help her. Shadow looked over his shoulder and noticed Rouge was in trouble and he was about to run over and help her but Knuckles, taking advantage of the situation, tightened his grip on Shadow's hands and he swung Shadow around and straight into the wall beside him. Then he proceeded to throw Shadow away, sending him sprawling across the ground. Shadow landed on his side and skidded painfully to a halt. He picked himself up only to be surrounded by Wilson and Ruben.

"If I were you Shadow I'd surrender." said Ruben, getting ready to squirt water at him "We are a Wall of Steel and you are a feeble traveller. You try to break us but your efforts are in vain as we are too solidly built for you to destroy."

"Um…what he said." said Wilson, pointing the spinning blade weapon at Shadow "Step down and you'll spare yourself anymore pain."

Shadow scowled at the dog and water panther. He looked over at Rouge, who was tied up and unable to get free and then he looked up at Eggman's robot squad which had been reduced to just E-2000R which was having a tough time against Bunnie. The plan was in total jeopardy, the logical choice right now would be to surrender. But surrender was not something Shadow did. And he knew how to deal with the Mobians.

"I will never surrender!" yelled Shadow "The plan maybe in jeopardy but I'm still too much for you fools to handle!"

He then got back to his feet and removed his inhibitor rings. Wilson and Ruben immediately panicked and they turned around and ran for it.

"BACK! EVERYONE BACK!" shouted Wilson "SHADOW'S GOING TO CHAOS BLAST US AGAIN!"

Everybody did as they were told and they ran for their lives as Shadow tensed up and began to glow red. They all ran behind Royal HQ and took shelter as Shadow released all the energy in him.

"Chaos… **BLAAAASSSSSSTTTTT!** " he yelled as all the energy in his body released and violently spread out.

He didn't hit anything as nothing was in range so he was wasting his energy. Bunnie, who was still having her sky fight with E-2000R, could see what was happening and she had an idea. E-2000R tried to attack Bunnie but the Rabbot grabbed E-2000R by the arm and threw him down to the ground where Shadow was Chaos Blasting. Unfortunately for E-2000R, he landed in Shadow's path and got destroyed by the Chaos Blast, much to Dr. Eggman's annoyance. Shadow finally stopped Chaos Blasting and he fell down onto his knees, power-drained and helpless. Dr. Eggman quickly ran over to Shadow and he grabbed his inhibitor rings. He handed them to Shadow and the black hedgehog snapped them back onto his wrists. The fighters emerged from behind Royal HQ and to their dismay, saw Shadow standing there all powered back up and as determined as ever. He ran over to Rouge and ripped the rope wrapped around her to pieces, freeing her. Shadow and Rouge stood in battle ready stances, ready to beat the crap out of their enemies. The fighters did the same and Bunnie Rabbot flew down to join them. There was just one problem though. The colossal battle had left everybody worn out and exhausted. Bunnie's extensive use of her robot limbs had left her tired out and everybody else weren't feeling ready for a battle. Tails could see the problem and his whiskers drooped down in despair at what he was looking at.

"This is great! Just great!" he muttered crossly "Shadow's gotten his

rings back so he's all powered up again and we're all worn out! If we try to fight him again he'll just Chaos Blast us and we'll be unable to defeat him!"

"If we keep this fight up anymore Shadow will cream us all." said Bunnie "What should we do sugah?"

"What indeed?" jeered Eggman mockingly "You may have foiled both my attempts to destroy Mobotropolis' only surviving building and Royal HQ but will you press on to defeat the invincible Shadow the Hedgehog and his assistant Rouge the Bat and therefore, foil their attempts to help me destroy the buildings I desire to wreck?"

He hooted with mocking laughter at his worn out enemies. Tails sighed with defeat and raised his hands in surrender. Everybody else didn't like the way this appeared to be going.

"We surrender." said Tails "You win. You can have Royal HQ but leave Castle Acorn alone and you can have it."

Everybody gasped in horror. Was Tails mad? Did he just swan-dive into Lake Crazy or something? Why was the fox letting their sworn enemy have Royal HQ?

"Very well." said Dr. Eggman "Shadow and Rouge, get into Royal HQ and make yourselves at home. We're moving into the headquarters."

The hedgehog and bat obeyed their master and they ran into the building before anyone can stop them.

"That's that then." said Dr. Eggman "As for you horrible bunch, you mongrels are on my property so go away before I tell Shadow to Chaos Blast you all!"

"You don't have to tell us twice you blackguard!" snarled Geoffrey.

And with that, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben all left Royal HQ behind and headed to the nearby forests of Green Hill Zone. Dr. Eggman grinned like the Cheshire Cat as his enemies all slunk off in defeat and disgrace.

"Aaaah." he said happily "It's good to be victorious for once. I've now taken over Royal HQ, the very headquarters of the Royal Fighters Service. Just think how many advantages I'll have over the Mobians now I'm in their own base!"

He cackled with laughter and strode pride fully into Royal HQ. He switched on a communications device mounted on his wrist and he spoke into it.

"Alonzo my dear servant." he loudly announced into it "I have some good news for you! I've just taken over Royal HQ and kicked the fighters out! Come over here and meet up with me immediately!"

Alonzo didn't answer for he was not at Robotropolis right now. Dr. Eggman fumed and he roared into the communicator.

"Don't ignore me Alonzo!" he bellowed "Get over here and meet up with me NOW!"

Still no answer. Dr. Eggman began to get suspicious. He ran into the Royal HQ lab, which Shadow and Rouge had just been occupying and began to tap furiously on the powerful computer monitors.

"What's up Dr. Eggy?" asked Rouge.

"Alonzo's not responding to me." replied Dr. Eggman "I'm looking for him on the monitors to see if he's at Robotropolis."

After a minute of searching, he got a display of Robotropolis up onto the monitors and searched through it. There was no sign of Alonzo anywhere.

"He's not in Robotropolis." said Dr. Eggman "He must be elsewhere."

He began taping a few more keys and he found out where Alonzo was. He was in Spagonia fighting Sonic and Mandy with Egg-Raptor. Eggman's face went redder then the fiery pits of hell and steam poured out of his ears.

"What the blazes is that chrome klunk-head doing in Spagonia?" he roared "Is he trying to destroy Sonic for me?"

"Must be." said Rouge "Why is that something to get mad about?"

"I DIDN'T GIVE ALONZO PERMISSION TO USE EGG-RAPTOR AND DESTROY SONIC WITH IT!" bellowed Dr. Eggman "And I want to destroy Sonic myself! I'm not content letting my lowly servant bot do it for me! It'll make me look like an incompetent imbecile and a total oaf! Shadow, go to Spagonia, fetch Alonzo and bring him straight to me so I can punish him for disobeying orders and doing things without my express permission!"

"Yes doctor." said Shadow, zipping out of the lab and out of Royal HQ in the blink of an eye.

He charged away from Royal HQ and headed over to Spagonia where Alonzo and Sonic were brawling. Alonzo was in so much trouble once Shadow arrived back to Dr. Eggman with the butler bot in tow…

Back in Spagonia, things hadn't been going any easier for Sonic and Mandy. Egg-Raptor was proving to be a tough robot to battle as it withstood most of Sonic's spin-dashes and it was back on its feet shortly after being knocked over. Mandy's weapons weren't really helpful since a shield is meant for defence more then attack and her brass knuckle attachments weren't any good against such a large target. Egg-Raptor's head mounted laser cannon was lethal and Sonic and Mandy had to avoid it whenever it was fired which if anything put more pressure on the two. Any other attack by Egg-Raptor such as its clawed feet and spiked tail weren't as lethal but still ones to look out for. Running away from the robot didn't do any good either since Egg-Raptor could run as fast as Sonic so Sonic gave up trying to out run the machine. Sonic skidded to a halt as Egg-Raptor caught up with him again and he stared tiredly up at the dinosaur machine. Alonzo hooted with laughter at the blue hedgehog.

"What's the matter Sonic?" he sneered "Worn out? I guess Egg-Raptor is just too much for you! Ho, ho, ho!"

"You know what Alonzo, you really are annoying when you're on the

battlefield do you know that?" said Sonic in an irritated tone.

"He's even more annoying then BECK-E from Grand Metropolis***." muttered Mandy, scowling at Alonzo crossly.

"How dare you!" yelled Alonzo "You're the irritating ones you Mobian rats!"

And with that, he thrust the levers forward and Egg-Raptor lunged at them with open jaws. Sonic and Mandy dodged and Egg-Raptor ended up with a mouth full of grass and dirt. Egg-Raptor opened its jaws and let all the grass and dirt fall out onto the ground and it lunged at Sonic with the huge claw on its foot. It missed Sonic and impaled itself in the ground. Egg-Raptor pulled the claw out of the ground and tried to attack again, only for Sonic to spin-dash it in the leg, causing it to fall backwards and land on it's back. Egg-Raptor madly scrambled about to get back onto its feet but not before Sonic could spin-dash it in the underside. Egg-Raptor picked itself up only to get spin-dashed in the back of the head by Sonic who had managed to climb on its back so it could hit the head. Egg-Raptor fell forward and its head hit the ground nose first. That attack had clearly shaken Alonzo and he shook his head madly to regain his senses. His optics wouldn't stop spinning though.

"Ooooohhhh…." he groaned "Stupid hedge-hooooooooooggggggg…."

Since Alonzo wasn't ready yet, Sonic could attack Egg-Raptor without any problems at all. Sonic spin-dashed it once again in the leg and Egg-Raptor fell down on one knee. The loud thud that followed Egg-Raptor's knee hitting the ground seemed to snap Alonzo back into reality and he was back on the attack. Egg-Raptor stood back up once again and walloped a spin-dashing Sonic with its spiked tail. Sonic hurtled into the roof of a house and he almost crashed through it. That attack earned a startled glance out of the window and up at the roof from the occupant of the house to see what was going on and he was rather surprised to see a blue hedgehog in red sneakers standing on it. Sonic saw the person looking at him and he shrugged casually.

"Sorry." he said "Bye, bye."

He leaped off the roof, leaving the gobsmacked occupant to just stare at him. Sonic ran up to the monstrous Egg-Raptor once again and the dinosaur bot attacked Sonic with its clawed feet. It missed yet again and Sonic spin-dashed Egg-Raptor's underbelly. That attack shook the robot and Egg-Raptor staggered about, trying not to fall over. As for Mandy, she had an idea on how to down the robot dinosaur. She climbed up Egg-Raptor's leg and leaped onto the machine's arm. She was now directly above the cockpit window mounted in Egg-Raptor's chest. All she had to do was break the window and yank Alonzo out of the cockpit and Egg-Raptor would be unable to move since no one would be at the controls. Mandy clung onto Egg-Raptor's arm tightly with her left arm and she punched the cockpit window with her right hand, which had the brass knuckle attachments. That one punch left heavy cracks on the window. A couple more punches and the window would be destroyed. Alonzo immediately fretted at the fact Mandy was trying to break into the cockpit. The mouse smirked evilly at Alonzo and she punched the window two more times. The window was reduced to shards of glass that rained down on the ground below Egg-Raptor. Alonzo panicked and thrust a lever forward. That lever controlled Egg-Raptor's arms and the arm Mandy was clinging onto swung sharply to the left, flinging the purple mouse off itself and straight into the ground. Mandy groaned in pain, furious her plan had failed. And yet it presented a big opportunity for Sonic the Hedgehog. Alonzo was now vulnerable to the hedgehog since the window was broken so if Sonic could spin-dash into Egg-Raptor's chest he could destroy Alonzo and then destroy Egg-Raptor from the inside. Sonic noticed what Mandy had done and he spin-dashed towards Egg-Raptor's open chest. Alonzo aimed the head mounted laser cannon at Sonic and he fired it. The cannon blast hit Sonic and sent him hurling into the ground. Mandy cried out in horror as Sonic got blasted. The blast had left the hedgehog singed and weakened and he feebly tried to get back up but he couldn't. Egg-Raptor raised a clawed foot in the air and aimed straight at the downed hedgehog before him.

"Eggman's biggest mistake hedgehog, was not finishing you off sooner!" yelled Alonzo "Well I, Alonzo the Butler Bot will now rectify that mistake!"

"No!" cried Mandy "Stop! Please!"

She ran over to Sonic to help him but she stepped on an exceptionally large stone and her foot swerved sharply to the right. Mandy fell over and grabbed her throbbing ankle, grimacing and clutching it bitterly while trying to hold in the pain. She had just twisted it and now the mouse couldn't walk properly. All she could was lay there helplessly as Egg-Raptor prepared to stomp Sonic into the ground and squash him flat. Then suddenly, a black and red spiked ball appeared from nowhere and hit Egg-Raptor in the back of the head, knocking it over onto its front and causing Alonzo to fall out of the open cockpit and onto the ground. Sonic picked himself up and feebly crawled away before Alonzo could do anything. The butler bot picked himself up and shook himself. Then suddenly, Shadow the Hedgehog landed directly in front of him, his ruby red eyes burning with fury at Alonzo. The butler bot began to shake furiously as Shadow glared at him.

"Um…h-h-hi Shadow." he squeaked "How fortunate of you to arrive! Now me and you can crush Sonic together and please the great Dr. Eggman!"

"I'm not here to help you Alonzo." hissed Shadow "I'm here to collect you and bring you to Dr. Eggman so you can answer for your crimes."

"What?" cried Alonzo "Crimes? What crimes? I'm a perfect little soul I am! What crime have I possibly committed?"

"Well there's using Eggman's robots without authorization combined with you attacking Sonic without any given instruction." said Shadow bluntly, grabbing Alonzo by his pointed head and hoisting him off the ground "You are going to answer to him personally you disobedient scrap pile."

"What? No!" cried Alonzo as Shadow ran off with the butler bot in tow "I'm only doing what I was built for! To serve Dr. Eggman faithfully! I'm trying to destroy Sonic in Eggman's name! Don't rat me out on this! Please! NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO…."

Alonzo's voice trialled off as Shadow skated off into the distance

with the butler bot under his arm. Sonic picked himself up and pulled a confused face.

"Why did Shadow just save my life?" he wondered "I thought he was with Eggman now. Unless…Eggman's not content with Alonzo destroying me." he deduced "I bet ol' eggy wants to do it himself so he got Shadow to stop Alonzo from doing the one thing he can never do. Eggman's gonna regret his stupidity once I kick him outta Mobius at long last! I bet he'll be wishing he let Alonzo kill me when he had the chance…"

"We get it Sonic." interrupted Mandy "We're safe, we're alive and all that now can we go back to Mobotropolis and help our friends?"

"Sure Mandy." said Sonic.

He ran over to the pained mouse to help her back onto her feet. He held his hand out for Mandy to take. Mandy took Sonic's hand and tried to stand up but her twisted ankle was hurting too much and she fell back onto her knees, groaning and moaning in pain.

"Mandy, you're hurt!" said Sonic "What happened?"

"I twisted my ankle." said Mandy "I can't walk. I won't be able to fight either; more's the pity since I love fighting."

"That's too bad." said Sonic affectionately "I'll carry you home. Hold on tight!"

He scooped Mandy up bridal style and ran off at his trademark speed, leaving the abandoned Egg-Raptor behind to do nothing but lie there and probably rust away unless someone retrieved it. Mandy clung on to Sonic tightly as Sonic ran through Spagonia and back home to Mobotropolis. They hoped that things were going well back home…

…which they weren't of course. Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Wilson and Ruben had all taken shelter in the nearby forests of Green Hill Zone, safe and out of sight from Dr. Eggman and Shadow and needless to say, everybody immediately

began to rant at Tails for his abysmal decision to let Eggman have Royal HQ.

"What were ya thinkin' ya bloomin idiot?" yelled Geoffrey, grabbing Tails by the shoulders and shaking him so hard, his head almost snapped off "Why did ya let Eggman have Royal HQ ya crazy fox?"

"Yeah!" added Wilson "Royal HQ is deathly important and letting Eggman have it my cost us the war!"

Tails couldn't give any answer for Geoffrey had shaken him so much he felt dizzy and he felt too ashamed to say anything.

"Guys, please leave Tails alone." said Cosmo "You're upsetting him and that's not going to make things any better."

"I agree." said Ruben "The only way to fix things is to take things steadily and lightly first and then make the big push later."

Geoffrey and Wilson stopped yelling at Tails and they quietened themselves up. Cosmo held Tails' hand gently, giving the fox a nice soothing feeling and quietly asked him.

"Why did you let Eggman have Royal HQ?"

Tails sighed sadly and looked at his girlfriend.

"I had no choice." said Tails "We're too banged up to fight Shadow and if we kept on going, we may not have made it to the end. So I felt it was better to let them have it now, wait until we heal and then take it back."

"But what if we can't take it back?" asked Amy "Then you will have made a pig's ear out of all this!"

"Sonic will be able to save Royal HQ." said Tails "Once he joins us, taking Royal HQ back will be a breeze."

"Speaking of Sonic, what's keeping him?" asked Knuckles "A lousy robot copy of Shadow and Rouge shouldn't be enough to keep him at bay, he must have destroyed them by now!"

Before anyone could say anything, Sonic arrived on the scene with an injured Mandy in his arms and he skidded to a halt before everybody.

"The hedgehog is here everybody!" he cried "Sorry me and Mandy are late, Alonzo held us up with an Eggman robot."

"It's about time you showed up Sonic." said Knuckles crossly.

"Mandy!" cried Wilson happily, running over to her as Sonic put her down.

He noticed his friend was hurt and he sat down beside her as Mandy rubbed her throbbing ankle better.

"You're hurt! What happened?" asked Wilson "Did you hurt your ankle?"

"Unfortunately yes." muttered Mandy "I fell over a stone, a very big stone. Oooh! It hurts!" she moaned.

As Wilson comforted Mandy, Sonic spoke to the others.

"So what happened while we were gone?" asked Sonic.

"Eggman, Shadow and Rouge have taken over Royal HQ." said Tails grimly "We're too weak to fight them so we had to surrender and wait until we heal."

"They've taken over Royal HQ?" cried Sonic "Oh man, if only I'd have been here! I could have saved the day as always and Eggman would have been running home in defeat to Robotropolis by now!"

That was the least of Sonic's worries now. Now Queen Sally Acorn had found everybody and she did not appear to be very happy with Sonic at all. Sonic noticed Sally was there and he smiled weakly at her.

"Um…hi Sal?" he said feebly.

"Come with me Sonic." said Sally coldly "You've got a lot of explaining to do for what you and your friends have just done."

Sonic then remembered that he, Mandy and just about all of his friends had gone against the council's earlier decision of not to engage Shadow under any circumstances so now he and all his friends were in trouble. Sonic shrugged in defeat and followed Sally as she walked back to the damaged Castle Acorn which was still standing much to everybody's delight. Sonic could only hope that the council would be merciful and not too mad at his actions…

Footnotes:

*** See Stories 52-53**

**** Go all the way back to Stories 9-10 for more**

***** I bet you remember BECK-E from *Tales from Mobius Arc 1: The Malicious Metropolis Masquerade* don't you…?**

Oh uh! This doesn't look good for several people! Sonic's in trouble for disobeying the council, Alonzo's in trouble with Dr. Eggman now and Royal HQ has been taken over! What more could go wrong? I had to ask didn't I...? Join me next time as Sonic faces the council and attempts to get Royal HQ back.

Lost Weapons Part 1

Story 60: Lost Weapons Part 1

All was not well at Royal HQ, the Royal Fighters Service Headquarters which had recently been taken over by Dr. Eggman and his new henchmen Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat. Shadow had just brought Alonzo the Butler Bot, Eggman's "loyal" servant to him for punishment for trying to attack Sonic without authorization from his master Dr. Eggman. Moments ago, Alonzo had attacked Sonic the Hedgehog and Mandy Mouse at Spagonia with Egg-Raptor even though he wasn't given clearance to do so. Right now, Eggman was raging for Earth at Alonzo and the terrified butler bot just gazed up at him, petrified with fear at how angry his master was. Shadow and Rouge just watched wordlessly. Rouge seemed a little frightened by the whole ordeal whereas Shadow in some twisted, sadistic fashion appeared to be enjoying the whole thing.

"You are my servant Alonzo and if I WANTED you to kill Sonic, which I didn't, I would have ordered you to do so!" yelled Eggman "You do not do anything unless I order you to do so! From now on, you wait for a command! Is that clear?"

"Y-y-y-yes master!" whimpered Alonzo "I-I-It's just you were o-o-occupied at the time, a-a-and an oppor-tu-tu-tunity presented it s-s-elf s-so I acted! I thought I w-w-would do y-you a f-f-favour and g-g-get r-r-rid of Sonic for you!"

Dr. Eggman gave Alonzo a terrific clout to the face and sent the missile shaped robot on two wheels falling onto his back with his head spinning around and around.

"NO ONE RIDS ME OF SONIC BUT ME! IS THAT UNDERSTOOD!" roared Dr. Eggman, his face redder then hell itself.

"Yes master!" croaked Alonzo "Please don't smash me to bits!"

"I can't be bothered to smash you right now Alonzo." said Dr.

Eggman in a huff "I have this brand new base to explore and get used to so I've got to have a look around the place. I was going to give you a very important role in Royal HQ Alonzo," Eggman added, glaring at him from behind his glasses "But your behaviour recently has made me change my mind. You're not welcome in my new home, you can go back to Robotropolis and serve the head Eggman robot that I've built to run the place while I'm gone while I run this base and convert it into my new headquarters."

"B-b-but sir…" protested Alonzo.

"NO BUTS ALONZO!" screamed Dr. Eggman, pointing at the door "GET OUT AND DON'T COME BACK! I DO NOT WISH TO SEE YOU AGAIN!"

Alonzo desperately wanted to argue back but he knew it was pointless. He hung his head down low and he trundled miserably out of the lab. The door slammed shut behind him. Alonzo trundled down the corridor and out of the building. The moment Alonzo left, Dr. Eggman dusted his hands off and huffed angrily.

"I built Alonzo to be my loyal servant." he said to himself "Why is he not being loyal to me?"

"If I didn't know any better I'd say he's being loyal to himself." said Rouge "I have a sneaky suspicion he's plotting against you."

"Don't be a twonk Rouge!" snapped Eggman "Alonzo, that tin-plated wazzock hasn't got the nerve to plot against me! He's too afraid of me to do so!"

"I see." said Rouge "So, who's going to be your loyal servant now Alonzo's fired?"

"Shadow is." said Dr. Eggman "After all it is his purpose, to serve me faithfully and to the bitter end."

Shadow's eyes widened. Loyal servant to Dr. Eggman? Was that his lost purpose? It could be but Shadow had a feeling that it was not that. Maybe his lost purpose was something more then being a loyal servant. Maybe…Shadow decided to just shake it off and accept this

new purpose for now until he found out his real lost purpose.

"If that is my purpose then I will serve you faithfully doctor." said Shadow "I am your servant and I will fight your fights and carry out your plans, under your orders that is."

"Now that is more like it!" cried Dr. Eggman "I'm so glad I created you now Shadow! Now be a good boy and stand on guard duty while your glorious master explores the rest of this base."

"As you wish." said Shadow, leaving the lab to stand guard outside of Royal HQ.

Meanwhile, Alonzo was trundling miserably though the grassy meadows that led to Green Hill Zone, mumbling and grumbling and saying naughty words that cannot be mentioned for the sake of the kiddies reading this fanfic and even randomly saying the word "pants" over and over for no particular reason (he's weird when he's angry.).

"Stupid, ungrateful master!" moaned Alonzo "I try to do him a big favour and he punishes me for it! Well I'll show that fat *&^$%£!£)! I'll take control of an Eggman robot and use it to destroy him and Sonic and then I'll take control of his proxy empire! And I have a very good idea on where to go, a place that Dr. Eggman has long since forgotten about since the fall of the Mistress of Darkness and the failed drill operation…*"

And with that, Alonzo sped up his little wheels and he zipped off to a place Eggman had completely under his control until Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse ruined everything…Grand Metropolis…

Meanwhile in Mobotropolis, Sonic the Hedgehog was standing before the Council of Acorn, the government body of Mobotropolis and facing them for disobeying their orders. Earlier** the council had authorized no action to be taken against Shadow the Hedgehog since they didn't want to risk anybody's lives and they thought the subtle approach would have been better but Sonic and his friends went against those rules and fought Shadow anyway.

"So Sonic the Hedgehog." said Queen Sally Acorn, the Queen of Mobotropolis and head of the Council of Acorn "Why did you deliberately disobey the council's orders? Did you not care about the fact we care about the safety of our people and most importantly you?"

"I disobeyed you guys because you guys were being stupid!" argued Sonic "I'm probably the only one who has a chance against Shadow the Hedgehog and how are we gonna stop him if we don't do anything? And why do you need to find out what his weakness is? I already told you it about five times the last time I was here! We don't need to spy on him and find out what his weakness is because I already know it."

"You're foolish to think you can stand up to your superiors like this Mr. Hero-Hog!" snorted the council douche lord Hamlin Pig "I'd watch your tone before you get into more trouble then before!"

"Hamlin! SHUT UP!" yelled everybody in the council.

The rude and egotistical pig shut his big snout up and grumbled to himself.

"May I say a word your highness?" asked Julian Mongoose, a council member.

"Yes Julian." said Sally.

"While it was wrong for Sonic to disobey the council's orders," said Julian "I can't help but think he made the right choice. I believe that Sonic was right and we were wrong. Or should that be Hamlin was wrong since taking no action against Shadow was his idea?" he added, giving Hamlin a cold stare.

The pig just snorted at him and stuck his nose in the air.

"I second that." said Penelope Platypus, another council member.

"I um…third that." said Dylan Porcupine, another council member

"Coming to think of it," said Sally, thinking for a moment "Sonic was right after all. He knows how to beat Shadow and is the only person

capable of doing so…"

She turned to Sonic and sighed in a defeated tone.

"Sonic, I'm sorry I didn't listen to you in the first place." said Sally "I should know better then to trust Hamlin over you. I hereby say that you are dismissed of all charges and this case is dismissed."

"Thank you Sal." said Sonic with a wink "I knew you'd make the right choice Queenie. Now if you don't mind, I'll be taking Royal HQ back from Dr. Egg…"

"Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait." said Sally quickly "Taking Royal HQ back? What do you mean?"

"Oh man! I almost forgot!" muttered Sonic, face-palming himself in annoyance for forgetting to bring up such an important subject "Moments ago, I just got word from Tails that Eggman, Shadow and Rouge have taken over Royal HQ and I'm gonna get it back!"

The council all gasped in shock at that startling revelation.

"Not Royal HQ!" cried Sally's lady-in-waiting and Mobotropolis beauty Nicole the Lynx "That place is vital to the Royal Fighters Service! Just think of the chaos Eggman can cause now he's taken over the place!"

"Exactly." said Sonic "Which is why I'm going to get it back. Wish me luck council guys."

He prepared to run off but he was stopped by Nicole who spoke up since she had an idea.

"Wait a minute Sonic." the lynx said "This turn of events presents us a perfect opportunity to sabotage his forces at his home. Maybe you and your friends could go over to Robotropolis and make a mess out of it and since Eggman won't be there to keep things under control, his city will be in chaos!"

"That's a good idea actually Nicole." said Sally supportively "But we need someone to get Royal HQ back."

"Me and Bunnie will do the honours." said Sonic "Everybody else can attack Robotropolis. Who knows, maybe the mess my friends make at Robotropolis will draw Eggman out of Royal HQ and therefore, make my job a whole lot easier."

"Let's hope that happens." said Sally "We cannot let Royal HQ remain in Eggman's hands or the Royal Fighter's Service will be in jeopardy."

"Well I'll be off now." said Sonic "See ya later Sally, I'll inform you the moment Royal HQ is free of Eggman's grasp!"

"Good luck Sonic." said Sally with a warm smile on her beautiful face "You'll need a lot of it."

Sonic winked at Sally, gave her his trademark thumbs up sign and he ran out of the council room at top speed. He couldn't wait to see the look on Eggman's face when he and his friends trash his precious robot city…

Meanwhile, Alonzo had travelled a good distance away from Mobotropolis and he didn't go back to Robotropolis like he was instructed to, he went off to Grand Metropolis instead. Grand Metropolis was the second largest city on Mobius with Central City being the largest. At one point during Eggman's tyranny, Grand Metropolis succumbed to his forces and due to how late the Royal Fighters of Grand Metropolis formed, the city had pretty much all but been conquered and all their efforts did was delay the inevitable. When Wilson and Mandy came to help some time ago, things changed for the better. They along with Mandy's sister Marion, who had been turned into an Eggman agent known as the Mistress of Darkness only to defect back to the hero side, destroyed the drill that was to be used for the drilling operation and that in turn did quite a lot of damage to Eggman's forces. Marion sadly lost her life in the process but her sacrifice had been worthy for Eggman's forces had been significantly reduced and General Bostock and his men destroyed the base and freed Grand Metropolis from Dr. Eggman's grasp. Eggman had stupidly decided to abandon everything and not set foot in Grand Metropolis again and the

wreckage of Eggman's base and forces had been left there to rust away into nothing. Alonzo was here because he knew of a certain weapon that Eggman had built and for some reason decided to forget about after the destruction of his Grand Metropolis forces. A weapon that could destroy Sonic or indeed any Mobian very easily. The only problem was, that weapon might have been destroyed along with the base when Bostock's men blew it up. The only way to find it though was to look for it. Alonzo finally arrived at Grand Metropolis and the first thing he was met with was the destroyed drill that lay in giant pieces everywhere and the destroyed base that Eggman had set up there. Alonzo sighed sadly at the sight of such wreckage. The sad remains of an impenetrable fortress that could not possibly have fallen gave Alonzo a heavy feeling of loss, as if he and Eggman had lost a huge part of their army.

"Aaaah Grand Metropolis." said Alonzo to himself "However did its forces fall? It's amazing how that infernal dog and mouse managed to jeopardize everything just by destroying the drill. It's also a great pity that we lost the Mistress of Darkness, one of Eggman's best agents ever in the scuffle. She was one great villainess and we could do with her right now."

Alonzo trundled down the smooth slope that he was standing upon and he trundled towards the wreckage of Eggman's forces. As he trundled towards the mess, he came across a familiar pink robot wearing a tutu that had lost its head in battle. The head lay in halves beside the robot. This robot was of course BECK-E, the Mistress's annoying servant bot who betrayed her due to the treatment she had received from her master. BECK-E had ultimately been killed by Wilson during the battle of Grand Metropolis and nobody missed her, not even Eggman and he was the one who built BECK-E to serve the Mistress faithfully.

"Oh my dear BECK-E." said Alonzo to the dead body of the tutu-wearing servant bot "You were an obnoxious little brat but that obnoxious streak of yours charmed me in some way. If you were still alive, we could rule the Eggman Empire together, like a married couple or something. I think me and you would have been the perfect couple, regardless of how irritating you are."

Alonzo turned away from BECK-E's sad remains and trundled

onwards to the destroyed base that was only a few feet away from him. The base was once a grand base with robot production lines and roboticizer chambers and it was one of Eggman's most glamorous bases ever. Now it was nothing more then a miserable pile of debris waiting to be cleaned up. Roboticizer cages lay in pieces on the ground, robot soldiers littered the remains and the whole thing looked like a sea of metal and rubble stretching as far as the eye can see. It really made Alonzo sad to think that this pile of debris was once one of Eggman's strongest holds over Mobius. But he put that thought to the side as he was not here to mourn over losses, he was here to find something even though he had doubts he would find anything functional in the piles and piles of broken metal, twisted machinery and chunks of debris.

"Now if my memory serves me correctly and by a sheer amount of good luck, I should find the thing I'm looking for in this wreckage." said Alonzo "I doubt it'll be working though but it never hurts to look."

Alonzo zipped towards the wreckage as fast as his little wheels would let him and he dived into the wreckage…and ended up hurting himself in the process.

"Ouch!" he cried "Note to self: do not dive into metal and debris!"

He rubbed himself better and began digging furiously through the wreckage. Alonzo may be a small robot but he was an expert digger and no matter how big the wreckage was, he would be through it in a matter of minutes, a lot faster then a construction vehicle to be precise. Alonzo's arms moved in circles at a terrific speed and they were sending chunks of metal, rubble and debris hurtling backwards over his shoulder. Alonzo began to dig and dig into the debris until he hit something and he stopped.

"Aha! I've found it!" he cried.

He grabbed the thing he hit and yanked it out of the piles of debris. He had found a dead Robian jaguar. This Robian like all Robians had once been an innocent flesh and blood Mobian but now it was dead, it would never be de-roboticized. Alonzo scowled at his find and he tossed the dead Robian away.

"Not what I'm looking for." he muttered.

He continued to dig at his speedy pace, moving his arms at a lightening pace and throwing debris over his shoulder. Fifteen minutes later, he bumped into something else during his dig.

"Is this what I'm looking for?" he wondered.

He pulled the thing out of the wreckage. It was another dead Robian only this one was a dingo. Alonzo scowled again and he threw the Robian away.

"Well there were a lot of Robians here at the time so I shouldn't be too surprised if I keep coming across them." said Alonzo.

And with that, Alonzo started digging yet again. He began to despair as he moved on through the wreckage. Maybe he wouldn't find what he was looking for after all. But he'd only just started so he couldn't give up now, he had to keep trying until he was absolutely certain what he was looking for was gone for good. Another fifteen minutes alter, Alonzo bumped into something else. He pulled the thing out of the wreckage and stared in wonder at it. The thing he had found was a red and black robot with a round body, huge bulky arms, thin legs, long feet, spiked wrists, clawed hands, a small flat yellow head with optics and it had jets in its back. The machine had the symbol for Omega on its shoulders. The robot was very dusty and worn looking but amazingly, it didn't have a spec of damage on it, suggesting it was an extremely tough machine. This truly was a formidable looking machine and that was precisely the thing Alonzo was looking for.

"Yes!" cried Alonzo "I've found it! E-123 Omega, the strongest Eggman robot ever created is still in one piece! I remember Eggman built this machine to use as a last resort and it was only to be used in desperate situations. It's heavily armed and strong enough to withstand an explosion it seems, it's only got a few scratches and that's it. Pity the bloated buffoon couldn't be bothered to look here and see if it had survived the wreckage. He just assumed it had perished along with everything else when the base went ka-boom. Now I've found him, I can get him to kill Sonic and Eggman and then I, Alonzo the Butler Bot shall rule the Eggman Empire!"

With that said, he eagerly pressed some of the keys on Omega's back to see if he could get him to come online. To his good luck, it worked. Alonzo pressed the right button and Omega whirred into life. His optics began to glow orange and it stood up on its own two feet, making whirring noises as it did so. Omega turned around to face Alonzo, who was grinning like an excited school boy as he saw the great machine move. Omega looked down at Alonzo and spoke in his trademark robotical voice.

"Function status: Activated and ready for battle. Unit Identification: E-123 Omega. Status: Awaiting orders."

"Excellent!" purred Alonzo evilly; rubbing his three fingered hands together.

Eggman and Sonic's days were numbered now Omega was online. He couldn't wait to send the machine into action…

Back in Mobotropolis, Sonic's friends had been wondering what was going on in Castle Acorn right now. They had remained in their hiding place so Eggman wouldn't send Shadow to attack them and they waited anxiously for Sonic to return.

"What do you think is going on at Castle Acorn?" asked Sonic's best friend Tails the twin-tailed fox.

"Knowing the Council of Acorn, they'll be chastising Sonic for going against their vote and being their usual pig-headed selves." muttered Mandy Mouse, folding her arms and pouting.

"You seem to have a bitter hatred of your own government don't you Mandy?" asked Ruben the Water Panther "Does Mobotropolis have bad politics or something?"

"No, Mobotropolis have great politics, it's just the council can be hard to reason with sometimes and they're just a pain when they're in a stubborn mood." said Mandy, tenderly rubbing her still throbbing ankle which she had twisted earlier during her fight with Egg-Raptor.

"We should know, we've had to follow them for eight months

straight." said Wilson the Dog, Mandy's boyfriend.

"The council Angel Island has is a bit similar to yours behaviour wise only they're a bit harsher to those who go against their votes." said Knuckles the Echidna, Guardian of Angel Island "You should be glad you never have to answer to them, they always win in an argument."

"Politics, they can never be reasoned with." said Mandy glumly.

"Hey everyone! Mr. Sonic's coming back!" Cream the Rabbit announced.

Everybody looked up and saw Sonic the Hedgehog running to them at his trademark speed. He skidded to a halt and stopped just in front of his amazed friends.

"Sonic!" cried Tails happily "How did it go at Castle Acorn?"

"They let me off this time." said Sonic happily "They finally got it through their heads that their decision was dumb and I was right. We're free to fight Shadow to our heart's content."

Everybody looked stunned to say the least.

"Well…that's unusual for the council to admit they were wrong." said Geoffrey St. John the Skunk "Is there summet up with them?"

"Nah." said Sonic "It's not hard to admit you're wrong, especially when Hamlin's the one who came up with the dumb idea."

"I'm totally in agreement there." said Mandy with a chuckle.

"So my handsome hero, what's the plan?" asked Sonic's biggest fan and hammer swinging heroine Amy Rose.

"Nicole came up with an excellent idea." said Sonic "Since Eggman's not at Robotropolis, she suggested we could go over to Robotropolis and trash the place just to sabotage his forces and he won't be there to keep everything in check so Robotropolis will be in Robo-Chaos."

"I like the sound of that!" smirked Knuckles, punching his fists together with a big smile on his face "I can't wait to trash some Eggman butt-bots!"

"But what about Royal HQ?" asked Bunnie Rabbot, cyborg rabbit and beauty "We need to get it back or Eggman's dun get the advantage over us sugah-hog."

"I know." said Sonic "Which is why I decided that me and you will kick Eggman, Shadow and Rouge's butts outta Royal HQ and back to Robotropolis, which will probably be in pieces once my friends are finished."

"Me?" asked Bunnie, a little surprised that Sonic had chosen her in particular "What did ya'll pick lil ol' me for?"

"You're the strongest." said Sonic casually "And I think it'd be best if the strongest and fastest take out Shadow and Rouge if we're to get Royal HQ back."

"What? I'm the strongest!" retorted Knuckles "I can punch through boulders for crying out loud!"

"Nah, Bunnie's stronger." said Sonic with a crude smirk at Knuckles "She's punched through iron gates that are strong enough to withstand my spin-dashes."

"Humph!" fumed Knuckles "Maybe after this me and you should arm wrestle to see who's the strongest." he jokingly said to Bunnie.

"Yer on sugah." chuckled Bunnie "No harm in a friendly contest after all."

"So now everything's settled, we can do it to it." said Sonic "When do you guys plan to go?"

"Right now." said Amy, summoning her Piko-Piko hammer to her hands "I'm itching to smash Eggman's property just to make him mad!"

"Are you sure we're properly prepared for this?" asked Wilson "I mean, Mandy can't walk because of her twisted ankle and we don't

have any bombs to blow Eggman's base up."

"Our bomb supply is in Royal HQ." muttered Mandy "We can't get any to use."

"I have some explosive darts on me luckily." said Geoffrey brightly, unzipping his backpack and loading his crossbow with some of them "All I have to do is fire them at something and press a button on the back of my crossbow and "bang!" thing's blown up. I may need to use a lot due to how big Eggman's head quarters are."

"That's lucky." said Ruben "But poor Mandy can't join us because of her injuries. What can she do if she can't fight?"

"She may have to stay here." said Geoffrey "She won't be of much use with a twisted ankle."

"Oh woe is me." muttered the purple mouse, scowling to herself.

"Never mind Mandy, you'll be with us in spirit." said Wilson, giving the mouse a quick peck on the cheek "And I'm sure you'll recover in time for our next fight."

"Yeah." said Mandy, softening up a little "Good luck everybody and trash that stupid robot city for me will you?"

"Gladly." said Amy with a devious expression on her pretty face.

"OK then everybody, let's do it to it!" cried Sonic "Good luck in Robotropolis everybody!"

"Good luck with Shadow Sonic." said Tails "We'll be back as soon as possible."

With that said, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Wilson, Geoffrey and Ruben all ran off through the forests of Green Hill Zone and on their way to Robotropolis in the Northern Border of Megapolis. Cosmo the Seedrian, Tails' love interest and plant girl didn't go anywhere.

"Um…why aren't you going to Robotropolis with the others Cosmo?" asked Sonic with a confused expression on his face.

"I won't be of much help to everybody." said Cosmo "I'll stay here and keep Mandy company instead."

"Suit yourself." said Sonic "See you later girls, I've got a headquarters to get back!"

"See you Sonic." said Mandy "And give Eggman an extra hard spin-dash for me, I still feel bitter about him lying about my well-being***."

"Will do." said Sonic "Come on Bunnie, its juice and jam time!" he cried, running off at his trademark speed.

"Yee-haw!" cried Bunnie, activating her rockets and flying off after Sonic.

After Sonic and Bunnie left, Cosmo and Mandy just sat by a tree and began wondering what to do to pass the time.

"So Cosmo." said Mandy "What do you like to do?"

Cosmo thought for a moment and thought of something.

"Maybe I could tell you a bit about myself and my race?" she asked.

"OK then kid." said Mandy "I'm sure you've got some interesting stuff to tell."

Cosmo thought again, wondering where to start. Mandy just smiled to herself. She always knew when a kid had a lot to tell and it was always fun listening to them when they told their stories. Deep down though, she was wishing she could have joined the others in Robotropolis and helped wreck the city. Nevertheless, she knew she could relay on her friends to do a good job and she was looking forward to hearing what they had to say about the whole mission once they returned.

"Questioning query: Who are you tiny pointy thing?" asked Omega, looking at Alonzo and observing him up and down.

"I, marvellous Omega, am Alonzo the Butler Bot, your master and

soon to be ruler of the Eggman Empire." announced Alonzo.

After switching Omega on, Alonzo had decided to trick Omega a little and hopefully get the marvellous robot to work for him or his plan to get rid of Eggman and Sonic wouldn't work.

"Error: You are not my master." Omega correctly noted, pointing a huge clawed metal finger at Alonzo and making him jump in fright "My master is the glorious Dr. Eggman. I am programmed to serve him and I will serve him to the max."

Drat! My lie hasn't worked! cursed Alonzo in his head *Time to try the next one!*

"Yeah, of course he is, I don't know what I was thinking Omega." said Alonzo sheepishly "I have some bad news for you though Omega. Dr. Eggman has abandoned you."

"Impossible!" bleeped Omega in anger "Dr. Eggman built me and programmed me to serve him. Why would he abandon me?"

"Because he foolishly thinks you're worthless." lied Alonzo "He decided you were a waste of time and he decided not to use you. As you can see, you're in the wreckage of the base you were stored in."

He swept an arm all around himself, showing Omega the wreckage he was standing upon. Omega's small robot head rotated a full 360 degrees to survey his surroundings.

"The base was destroyed by Eggman himself." lied Alonzo "He wanted to get rid of you because he thought you were such a junk heap. He doesn't like you at all Omega. He's abandoned you and forgotten all about you."

Omega's huge arms began to shake with rage. Robots don't usually have emotions but Eggman built all his robots to have emotions so they would seem less like robots and more like children to him.

"Dr. Eggman hates me and he tried to obliterate me?" he yelled at the top of his robotical voice "How dare he! Statement: I will destroy him and make him pay for trying to eviscerate me! Prioritizing: Must destroy Eggman and prove to him I am the mightiest of all his

robots."

Alonzo grinned evilly to himself. His beautiful plan was working as well as a newly built and tested remote control car. Yes!

"I'm glad you see it my way Omega." said Alonzo "I've been abandoned by Dr. Eggman too so me and you together can destroy him and make him pay for his folly! What do you say Omega? With my brains and your brawn, we're bound to defeat him!"

"Assessing proposal: Acceptable." droned Omega "Explanation: Me and you are partners and we will obliterate the enemy, Dr. Eggman."

"Excellent Omega!" cheered Alonzo "But there's more then just Eggman we have to worry about. There's the notorious Sonic the Hedgehog."

"Questioning query: Who is Sonic the Hedgehog?" asked Omega.

"He is a blue hedgehog with super speed and he lives to serve Dr. Eggman." lied Alonzo "He also has some friends who wish to serve Dr. Eggman too. We need to destroy them as well as Eggman. What do you say?"

"Prioritizing: Anyone affiliated with Eggman as an enemy of ours." droned Omega "Conclusion: Eggman and all his forces will be purged with fire!"

"Good boy!" cried Alonzo "Now we have one more thing to do before we leave."

"Questioning query: What is that then?" asked Omega.

"We need to test your fire power to make sure everything still works." said Alonzo "Destroy that pile of debris over there." he ordered, pointing to the remains of the giant drill that the Mistress of Darkness attempted to use to drill up a large oil supply.

Omega obeyed and deployed his weapons. Omega had a huge amount of weapons built into his body. He had missiles launchers and Gatling guns in his arms and laser cannons in his body. His huge arms would be useful for hand to hand combat too. Omega

fired his entire arsenal at the wreckage of the drill and blew the debris into pieces. There was a terrific explosion caused by the lasers, missiles and bullets that were fired at the remains and the drill's wreckage had been reduced to even smaller pieces of debris. In fact, some of the debris had been educed to sprinkles of dust by Omega's colossal barrage. Alonzo smiled evilly to himself. This was perfect! He had Eggman's mightiest machine at his command and ready to use on Eggman and Sonic! Those two were as good as dead once Omega arrived on the scene!

"Well done Omega." said Alonzo "Now follow me, I know where our enemies are."

Omega obeyed and followed Alonzo, who zipped off on his little wheels. The two left the wreckage of Grand Metropolis behind and headed to Mobotropolis. Alonzo couldn't wait to watch Omega kill Dr. Eggman and Sonic, the two people he loathed more then anything in the world. The whole thing would be like a fireworks display once Omega fired his barrage of weapons at Eggman and Sonic…

In Royal HQ, Dr. Eggman had toured the entire base and he was pretty impressed with what the base had to offer. He was particularly impressed with the weapon supply that Royal HQ had and the laboratory was on thing he loved as well. Shadow and Rouge had just been lounging around in the lab waiting for Dr. Eggman to finish his tour and whereas Rouge was getting bored, Shadow didn't seem bored at all. He was a very patient waiter after all.

"Hey Shadow boy, aren't you getting bored of waiting for Eggman to finish touring this dump?" muttered Rouge.

Shadow ignored her. Rouge scoffed at the black hedgehog's ignorance. Then she suddenly realized something. Now she was alone with Shadow, she could try and get Shadow to dump Dr. Eggman and go off with her and be her partner in crime on jewel hunts. She had to take the opportunity now before Dr. Eggman arrived back.

"Hey Shadow." said Rouge in her sexy seductive voice "Now we're alone, I've got something to ask you."

"What is it?" sighed Shadow an annoyance.

He was really finding Rouge to be an annoyance right now. Rouge looked around to make sure no one was about and then she spoke.

"Do you really think Eggman is your creator?"

"If he says he is, he is." snapped Shadow "Why would he say he created me when he didn't?"

"Eggman's known for being a liar after all." said Rouge, truthfully "And he's lying to you about your creation, I think. I have a feeling he's not the one who made you, I keep thinking he's…"

Shadow wasn't listening. He blanked out once again and began hearing that strange voice in his head again.

I am your creator… boomed the voice in his head *…and you will serve me faithfully and loyally my brilliant creation…*

That voice was beginning to get on Shadow's nerves. Why did he keep hearing it all the time and what was it on about? Was it a memory from creation or something? Nevertheless, Shadow kept telling himself to ignore the voice until further notice but he couldn't help but succumb to it and have it booming through his head like a pounding drum.

"Shadow?" asked Rouge.

Shadow snapped out of it.

"Huh? What?" he mumbled.

"Oh that is so rude!" muttered Rouge "Didn't anyone ever tell you it's not polite to ignore people when they're trying to talk to you?"

"I was never taught any manners." said Shadow "I don't even know what "manners" are."

Boy will he be a disaster at the dinner table then! joked Rouge in her mind.

Then suddenly, before she could repeat what she was saying to Shadow before he blanked out, Dr. Eggman arrived back into the lab.

"Well you two, it seems we've captured ourselves quite a base!" he announced loudly "Look at all the things they have! They've got a great weapons supply and the lab here is pretty top notch for one built by Mobians! I think I'll live here from now on and leave Robotropolis as a spare base for me."

"We're riveted eggy boy." said Rouge sarcastically "Now have you got anything interesting to say?"

Dr. Eggman fumed angrily at Rouge's cheeky remark.

"I'd watch your tone batty or you'll be in big trouble!" warned Dr. Eggman.

Then suddenly, the huge computer monitors began to beep furiously as if it was warning Eggman of something.

"Intruders!" cried Dr. Eggman "It's a good thing I reset the intruder alarm so that it will warn me of any Mobians coming. Who is it Rouge?"

Rouge taped a few keys on the keyboard and the monitor displayed what was going on outside. It showed them a picture of Sonic the Hedgehog and Bunnie Rabbot coming towards Royal HQ.

"It's Sonic and the cyborg girl." said Rouge "They're heading this way."

"Are they?" sneered Dr. Eggman "How valiant of them to come and try to take their precious base back from me! Ha, ha, ha! Shadow, eviscerate them both!"

"Will do doctor." said Shadow, running out of the lab at top speed.

"Should I help him?" asked Rouge.

"No Rouge you may not help him." snapped Dr. Eggman "You'll embarrass him. He can handle Sonic by himself. You can stay here and man the laboratory while I watch Shadow crush Sonic and Bunnie."

Rouge scoffed at Eggman, folded her arms crossly and stuck her nose in the air. Dr. Eggman left the lab and strode down the corridor as he headed for outside Royal HQ. He was looking forward to watching Shadow, his most brilliant weapon crush Sonic and Bunnie together. Today looked like it was going to reward him another victory so shortly after his first one…

Outside, Shadow stood guard in front of the door to Royal HQ and he stood there waiting with his arms folded. He waited for Sonic and Bunnie to arrive and in a matter of seconds, they did. Sonic skidded to a halt and Bunnie touched down beside him. They both stared at Shadow who scowled at them with his cold red eyes. Sonic and Bunnie bent down in battle ready stances and prepared to cut loose on Shadow. Dr. Eggman exited Royal HQ and stood by the door to watch the fight. This was a fight he could tell he was going to enjoy and he wanted to savour every minute of it.

"Hey up Shadow." said Sonic with a cocky grin "Nice to see you again."

"Sarcasm will get you nowhere blue hedgehog." snarled Shadow "Now get off my master's property faker or I will spin-dash you into the ground!"

"OK we will." said Sonic in a mocking tone "If we were ON your master's property that is. You're on our property so you get lost."

"We took your base Sonic so it's ours!" yelled Shadow "I'll take your life as well if I have to!"

"Ya'll are taken nobody's life shadow-hog!" yelled Bunnie "Now you, Eggman and Rouge get out of Royal HQ before we do our worst on ya'll!"

"I have a better idea, I'll fight you for Royal HQ!" yelled Shadow "Winner gets the base and loser gets destroyed! How about that faker?"

"You're on stripes." said Sonic "And stop calling me faker, faker!"

"You have the nerve to call me faker when I've been around for far longer then you have?" exclaimed Shadow "I am the Ultimate Life form and I'll make you see who the real faker is!"

"Then enough talk and let's bash each other's brains out." said Sonic.

Shadow did not wait to be asked twice. He charged towards Sonic on his jet shoes and gave the blue hedgehog a massive punch to the face. That punch left Sonic stunned and gobsmacked and the next thing he knew, he was lying on the ground looking up at the sky. Shadow smirked triumphantly and prepared to stomp on Sonic's head. Bunnie Rabbot gave the black hedgehog an uppercut to the side of the head that sent him hurling a good distance away from Sonic. Bunnie then bent down to help Sonic stand up. Sonic rubbed his cheek, still stunned by that powerful punch.

"Are ya'll OK sugah-hog?" asked Bunnie worriedly.

"I'm fine, just shaken." said Sonic "Man that guy can punch!"

"Good thing ah can punch harder!" laughed Bunnie "Look how far ah've sent shadow-hog flyin'!"

She pointed in front of here and Sonic could see Shadow lying there about fifty feet away from where he and Bunnie were.

"Let's get the drop on him before he gets up!" exclaimed Sonic "Bunnie you take the right, I'll take the left!"

"No problem sugah-hog!" cried Bunnie, running up to Shadow as fast as her robotic legs would let her.

Sonic revved up his feet and ran after the Rabbot. Shadow picked himself up and saw Sonic and Bunnie coming towards him with their fists raised and ready to punch his daylights out. Bunnie was coming

to him from the right and Sonic was coming to him from the left. Shadow didn't show any signs of fear since he had a sure fire ace up his sleeve. He merely teleported out of their way just as Sonic and Bunnie were coming for him. Bunnie punched at Shadow with her robot arm but since he had just teleported out of their way she ended up punching Sonic directly in the face instead. That blow cause Sonic to lose a couple of teeth and give him a large bruise on his cheek. Sonic lay on his side, completely overwhelmed by Bunnie's colossal punch. Bunnie immediately freaked and bent down beside the stricken hedgehog.

"Oh ah'm so sorry Sonic! Ah'm so sorry!" she cried "Ah didn't mean to miss! Shadow darn moved before we could get him!"

"Yeah I know." muttered Sonic "Stupid teleporting thingy he does."

Shadow reappeared behind Bunnie and he sharply elbowed her in the back. The Rabbot cried out in pain and then she cried out again as Shadow walloped her on the head. The Rabbot fell down on her knees and she began rubbing her head while grimacing. Sonic got mad and he lashed at Shadow with a punch to the nose. He hit Shadow and caused the black hedgehog to yelp. Shadow punched back but Sonic blocked it with his arm. Then Sonic and Shadow began to furiously punch at each other at lightening speed. The two hedgehogs kept punching and blocking each other and neither one could get the upper hand on each other. Sonic then kicked at Shadow but Shadow ducked so Sonic's leg swept right over him instead of hitting him. Shadow tried the same trick but Sonic bent backwards to dodge the attack. Sonic and Shadow kicked at each other both at the same time and they hit each other's legs. Bunnie got back to her feet and she lunged at Shadow with her robot arm. Shadow grabbed the arm and swung Bunnie straight into the ground with a slam. Sonic spin-dashed Shadow and knocked him onto the ground. Shadow got back to his feet and he spin-dashed at Sonic who was getting ready for another spin-dash. The two hedgehogs spin-dashed each other several times before Shadow finally overpowered Sonic and slammed him down into the ground. Before Sonic could get back up, Shadow spin-dashed him again. Bunnie then activated her arm cannon and blasted Shadow before he could spin-dash Sonic again. Shadow was sent hurling away but he

landed on his feet and skidded backwards to a halt. Bunnie ran up to Shadow with her arm cannon still deployed and she blasted at Shadow again but Shadow blocked the blow with a Chaos Spear. Bunnie kept rapidly blasting Shadow but Shadow kept throwing Chaos Spears at the blasts to stop them dead in their tracks. Bunnie could see her attacks weren't working so she turned her cannon back into an arm and she punched at Shadow only for the black hedgehog to swiftly leap over her head and kick her in the back of it, sending her falling down face first. Bunnie got back to her feet only to get an uppercut from Shadow. Bunnie began hurling into the air but Shadow grabbed her leg before she could fly away from him and he slammed her into the ground. Then he threw her straight into Royal HQ. Bunnie crashed into the wall and slid down to the ground. She moaned in pain and Dr. Eggman laughed at her. He was enjoying this epic showdown so far. Sonic spin-dashed towards Shadow only for the black hedgehog to spin-dash him back and knock him into the ground. Sonic got back to his feet just in time to block a dropkick from Shadow. He then tried to punch Shadow in the stomach but Shadow smacked his arm away and punched Sonic in the stomach. Then Shadow roundhouse kicked Sonic in the head and knocked him over onto his back. Sonic got back to his feet and he ran off at his trademark speed. Shadow ran after him with his jet shoes activated. Sonic was hoping to gain some good distance from Shadow and then charge at him in an all powerful mover but Shadow was following him so the attack wouldn't work. Sonic looked over his shoulder and was surprised to see Shadow keeping up with him. The black hedgehog really was fast wasn't he?

"Nice, you can run as fast as I can." Sonic complimented.

"No blue hedgehog, I can run FASTER then you can." boasted Shadow.

He then proceeded to overtake the speedy Sonic with no effort whatsoever. Sonic was absolutely gobsmacked by that. He was no longer the fastest thing alive now. Shadow then did a very sharp U turn and he charged straight at Sonic. He grabbed the blue hedgehog and he ran back towards Royal HQ with the hedgehog over his shoulder. Shadow then leaped very high into the air, spun around like a spinning top and tossed Sonic straight into Royal HQ.

Sonic crashed into a wall and landed on his bottom. He grimaced tensely and he rubbed his aching back. Bunnie saw Sonic was in trouble and she rushed over to his aid. She helped Sonic get back to her feet and Sonic dusted himself off. Shadow then charged towards Royal HQ at top speed. Sonic was ready for him this time. He jumped just as Shadow was about to attack him and he flew gracefully over the black hedgehog, causing Shadow to crash into the wall. Shadow grumbled at his epic failure and he tried to attack Sonic again but Sonic kicked him back into the wall. Bunnie then grabbed Shadow by the neck and slammed him into the wall as hard as she could, making cracks in the wall in the process. Then she threw Shadow away from Royal HQ and the black hedgehog landed on his back. Bunnie and Sonic ran over to Shadow to attack him before he could get up but Shadow beat them to it and he got to his feet. He then threw some Chaos Spears directly at Sonic and Bunnie. The spears hit their feet, causing them to trip up and roll over the grass and dirt beneath them. Sonic and Bunnie came to a halt on their fronts and before they could get up, Shadow pinned Sonic's head down with his foot and made a threatening gesture to Bunnie that suggested "Dare get up and I'll squash him" so Bunnie didn't dare move. Shadow smirked at his defeated opponents and he looked down at Sonic.

"I win faker." he sneered "Now you can either get out of here or die. It's your choice and I'm giving you ten seconds to decide."

But before Shadow could even begin the countdown, he was blasted away by a powerful laser blast. Shadow was sent sprawling on the ground and Sonic and Bunnie got to their feet, wondering what was going on. Then suddenly, they got blaster by a laser each and ended up lying beside Shadow. They all sat up and stared at what they were suddenly faced with. It was E-123 Omega standing there with his laser cannons deployed and a murderous look in his optics. Dr. Eggman's eyes widened so much you could see them even with his glasses on.

"Omega?" he blurted "Impossible! You were destroyed when the Royal Fighters blew the base in Grand Metropolis up!"

"Correction: I survived." droned Omega "Much to your dismay. You abandoned me and tried to have me destroyed so now I will destroy

you in revenge for trying to do away with me Dr. Eggman!"

"I did not abandon you at all Omega!" protested Eggman "I…uh… merely though you had perished along with everything else in the base! I should have known better then to jump to conclusions and assume the worst…"

Omega began to advance on Dr. Eggman menacingly, his feet making a clanking stomp noise with every step he took. Dr. Eggman backed away from Omega only to end up with his back pressed against the wall. Dr. Eggman stared straight at Omega in fear. He had nowhere to go and Omega was about to blow him to pieces. Alonzo had hidden behind Royal HQ and he poked his head around the corner to watch Omega kill Dr. Eggman.

"Prioritizing: I do not believe your quotes of untruth." droned Omega "Conclusion: you are my enemy and I will purge you with fire!"

"No! Omega please have mercy!" cried Dr. Eggman "Don't kill your own master!"

"Correction: You are not my master." droned Omega coldly "I have no master now, I am solo and I will wipe out you and the entire Mobian population and rule your empire. Now prepare to be decimated Eggman!"

Alonzo grinned wickedly as Omega aimed his cannons at Eggman's head and prepared to blow the fat scientist to pieces. Alonzo had told Omega not to reveal to Eggman who his master was so that should things go awry, Eggman would think Alonzo was still loyal to him and he would be in the clear and Omega had thankfully remembered that. And now here was the moment Alonzo had been waiting for, the deaths of Sonic and Dr. Eggman! But before Omega could even fire his cannons, Shadow spin-dashed Omega and knocked him away from Dr. Eggman. Alonzo swore under his breath.

"Doctor, get inside!" ordered Shadow "I'll handle the robot!"

Eggman immediately ran inside so he would be safe from Omega. Omega picked himself up and he clenched his fists angrily.

"You are trying to delay my objective." droned Omega angrily "Prioritizing: You will be decimated for your insolence!"

"Just try it bot brain!" snarled Shadow "I am the ultimate life-form and I…"

Shadow should have known better then to stand there boasting about himself because while he boasted, Omega lunged forward, grabbed Shadow with his huge hands and slammed him directly into the wall. Then he tossed Shadow into the air as if he was playing volleyball and Shadow hurtled about thirty feet into the air and crashed down to the ground faster then a falling meteor. That attack had shaken Shadow and the black hedgehog was finding it hard to get back up. Omega activated his jet pack and he flew towards Shadow, ready to attack him again. As for Sonic and Bunnie, they just watched the fight with interest and they couldn't help but wonder who Omega was and what he was here for.

"What in the hoo-ha is that?" asked Bunnie.

"According to Dr. Eggman, its called Omega and it seems to be an insanely powerful robot bent on killing his own master." said Sonic "That must suck for the fat man really badly. Well since Omega's content on getting rid of Shadow for us I guess we can go now and leave him to it." he said casually, getting up and ready to leave.

"Sonic! We can't do that!" cried Bunnie, grabbing Sonic's arm and stopping him "What if Omega blows Royal HQ sky-high in an attempt to kill Dr. Eggman? And what happens when he kills Eggman? He'll probably target us next and we'll need Eggman's help if we're to defeat it and he won't be able to help us if he's dead!"

"That's a good point Bunnie." said Sonic "Well, I guess we'll have to swallow our pride and team up with Shadow-butt until we get rid of Omega."

With that said, Sonic and Bunnie charged towards Omega who was slamming Shadow into the ground like a rugby ball. Sonic spin-dashed Omega and Bunnie blasted Omega away with her arm cannon. The huge robot tumbled backwards and landed on his front. Shadow scowled at Sonic and Bunnie ungratefully and Sonic just

smirked at him.

"Hey Shadow, care to form a truce until butt-bot's in butt-bot pieces?" asked Sonic, holding his hand out for Shadow to shake.

"Save your sympathy faker!" growled Shadow, smacking Sonic's arm away "I will not side with my enemies! I'll destroy you, Bunnie AND Omega all at once if I have to!"

"Designating targets: Three bags of flesh to unleash my arsenal on." droned Omega, picking himself up and getting ready to attack "Deduction: Must eviscerate them all. Priority 1: Destroy Mobian targets!"

Omega ran towards Sonic, Shadow and Bunnie with his arms above his head and his claws bared. Bunnie gave Omega a terrific uppercut that sent him hurling backwards and she ran off to engage the robot again. Sonic and Shadow resumed fighting with Shadow kicking at Sonic and Sonic blocking the blow.

"The fight for Royal HQ just got harder!" cried Sonic as he dodged a kick to the legs from Shadow.

This fight was certainly going to be a handful for Sonic and Bunnie as they had a powerful robot and a genetic experiment to deal with…

Meanwhile, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Geoffrey, Wilson and Ruben arrived at the huge iron gates of Robotropolis, the one thing keeping them out of the city. It had been a while since Tails, Amy and Cream had been to Robotropolis**** and to them, the city still looked as horrible and intimidating as ever. Knuckles had been to Robotropolis but he had never been in the city itself since Charcaronda had waylaid them at the time***** so this would be his first time in the city, same with Geoffrey St. John. Wilson remembered his mission with Mandy and Team Chaotix in Robotropolis where they destroyed a comm. tower****** and this time, he would be destroying more then that.

"Here we are everybody." said Tails "Robotropolis, Eggman's base and robotical city."

"To me that translates as: Welcome to Robotropolis, a city that needs to be smashed!" growled Knuckles, flexing his muscles "Let's get in there and cut loose!"

"We need to break down those iron gates first." said Wilson "If only Bunnie was with us, she could break through the gates easily."

Knuckles just simply marched up to the iron gates and gave them a sharp thump with his spiked fists. It took only two punches and the gates were open, giving the Mobians the perfect opportunity to attack the city and destroy as much as they could.

"Let's go everybody!" cried Tails.

"For freedom and for Mobius!" yelled Amy, twirling her hammer around.

Everybody ran into the city, yelling at the top of their voices and preparing to attack. Eggman robots all over the city flinched in fright and they began to open fire at the attackers. But the Mobians had had plenty of practice smashing robots so they would have no chance whatsoever against these invaders…

Footnotes:

*** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 1: The Malicious Metropolis Masquerade***

**** See Story 58**

***** Dr. Eggman kidnapped Mandy and replaced her with an Automaton in Story 31 and lied to Sonic saying she was dead in Story 40**

****** Tails last went to Robotropolis in Story 50, Amy last went to Robotropolis in Story 49 and Cream hasn't been to Robotropolis since Story 28**

******* Remember Story 45? Huh? Do ya? I bet you do!**

******** See Stories 52-54**

And so it begins! The fight for Royal HQ and a collateral damage mission in Robotropolis! Will either of this battles go well for the Mobians? Or will the bad guys win these fights? Join in next time for the epic conclusion! Reviews are welcome.

Lost Weapons Part 2

Story 61: Lost Weapons Part 2

"OK, a fight between Shadow the Hedgehog and a big annoying robot was not the fight I came for today!" cried Sonic the Hedgehog as he dodged a spin-dash from Shadow the Hedgehog and a laser blast from E-123 Omega.

The fight with Shadow and Omega had been going chaotic. Sonic and Bunnie Rabbot were having a real tough time taking on two strong opponents at once while trying to defend each other. Omega's many weapons were hard to dodge, especially when he fired them all and whenever anybody dodged Omega's attacks. Shadow would then get the drop on the blue hedgehog and cyborg bunny before they could get ready for an oncoming blow. Sonic jumped on Omega's head and leaped into the air, only to get a kick to the face from Shadow.

"You're just whining because I'm kicking your…"

But before Shadow could finish what he was saying, Omega flew up after him and clouted him with his huge arms.

"AUGH!" cried Shadow as he was knocked down to the ground.

Omega then tried to attack Sonic but Bunnie gave Omega a terrific punch that sent Omega hurling backwards.

"Ya'll leave the hedgehogs alone gruesome!" screeched Bunnie.

Omega skidded to a halt and he stared in wonder at the cyborg rabbit that had just punched him.

"So much power coming from a being who is 60% metal and 40% organic." he droned to himself "How is this possible?"

As for Sonic and Shadow, Shadow punched at Sonic only for Sonic to bend over to his right side to dodge the attack. Sonic then turned

around and slugged Shadow in the stomach. Then he kicked the black hedgehog away and sent him sprawling on the ground.

"Look Shadow, we're in trouble from Big Boy over there and you're duking it out with me!" cried Sonic "I thought you wanted to smash Omega in order to defend Dr. Eggman!"

"I do wanna smash Omega!" snapped Shadow "I just haven't had enough making you eat dirt yet! Besides, your cyborg friend's fending him off for me. That means I can whale on you all I…"

Shadow was interrupted by a massive smack from Omega's giant arms. Omega then deployed his Gatling guns and began to fire masses of bullets at Shadow. Shadow dodged all the bullets and spin-dashed Omega in the centre of his torso. Bunnie Rabbot flew into the air, deployed her arm cannon and began firing at Omega. She hit him twice in the back, causing an angry Omega to turn around and start firing at her. Due to Bunnie's fast flying, she dodged every shot that was fired and she flew down towards Omega with her cannon still deployed. She blasted at Omega but Omega deployed his own laser cannons and blasted Bunnie's laser blast to stop it from hitting her. Bunnie raised her feet and landed foot first on Omega's face, knocking him onto his back. Bunnie then hoisted Omega off the ground with her robot arm and tossed him towards Sonic, who spin-dashed the mighty robot. Surprisingly, his spin-dashes didn't seem to do any damage to Omega's tough hide. Omega landed on his face and he picked himself up. Shadow threw some Chaos Spears at Omega but all they did was bounce harmlessly off his armour. Omega turned around, aimed his cannons at Shadow and blasted him. Shadow teleported out of the way and re-appeared just inches in front of Omega. Shadow gave Omega a terrific uppercut that sent the robot staggering backwards but Omega regained his balance and let Shadow have it with a sucker punch. Shadow hurtled backwards and landed beside Sonic. Sonic smirked mockingly at Shadow and he spin-dashed towards Omega. Omega smacked Sonic away and the hedgehog hurtled straight into Royal HQ once again. Bunnie Rabbot tried to attack Omega but Omega grabbed her with one hand and slam-dunked her into the ground. Shadow spin-dashed Omega but the robot didn't fall over and he regained his balance, only to get spin-dashed by

Shadow again from behind. Omega fell onto his front and Shadow stood over him like a warrior standing over his fallen victim.

"It's going to take more then a lousy robot to stop me." boasted Shadow.

"Great, now Omega's down, we can spin-dash each other to bits!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing Shadow from behind.

Shadow landed on his face and he groaned in annoyance at Sonic's cheap shot. Sonic and Shadow spin-dashed at each other once again and Bunnie Rabbot ran in to help Sonic should he need it. Unfortunately, Omega wasn't defeated like Shadow thought he was. Omega got to his feet and socked Bunnie in the face. He then turned around and held his hands out as Sonic and Shadow spin-dashed at each other. They accidentally ended up spin-dashing into Omega's hands and the robot grabbed them both. He then proceeded to slam them both together and throw them away. Sonic and Shadow landed on the ground and skidded to a halt. Their faces were covered by a mound of dirt they had made by skidding across the ground.

"So much for Omega's down." muttered Sonic, his voice muffled by the dirt.

"It's…so strong!" exclaimed Shadow "How did Eggman even make it so powerful?"

"I'm willing to bet it's supposed to be able to take me and my friends on." said Sonic "Eggman usually does that with his best toys such as Metal Sonic whom I'm glad to be rid of."

"So what if it is?" growled Shadow "I'll destroy it anyway! I'm the ultimate life form and nothing can defeat me!"

"As if." sneered Sonic.

Shadow sharply thumped Sonic in the back of the head with his elbow. Shadow then got back to his feet and skated towards Omega on his jet shoes. He and Bunnie were having a wrestling match. They had linked arms with each other and they were trying to

overpower one another. Omega appeared to be winning as he was pushing Bunnie backwards with little difficulty. Shadow spin-dashed Omega directly in the side and sent the huge robot tumbling over onto his side. Shadow tried to attack Omega again but Omega whacked Shadow away. Omega got back to his feet only to get blasted by Bunnie's arm cannon. That shot appeared to tire Bunnie out though as she began to pant and wheeze heavily. She fell down on her knees and gasped for breath. Omega picked himself up and observed Bunnie with interest.

"Analysis: Rabbit Cyborg creature seems to tire after excessive use of her weapons." he notified more to himself then anybody "Deduction: Must eliminate her before she recovers."

He aimed his cannons and Bunnie and prepared to blow her into atoms but Sonic spin-dashed Omega in the head and momentarily dazed the robot. Omega began warbling mindlessly to himself as he tried to regain his senses. Sonic knelt down beside Bunnie, who was still panting.

"What's up Bunnie?" he asked "Tired again?"

"Yes…sugah hog…" gasped Bunnie "Mah weapons…have left me exhausted…when ah rest up ah should just use mah arm…then ah won't…tire mah-self out…"

"You rest for a minute Bunnie." said Sonic "Me and Shadow have got this."

Just as he said that, Shadow spin-dashed Sonic from behind and knocked him over.

"Wrong, I'VE got this!" growled Shadow.

Omega ran up to Shadow with his arms out ready to grab him but the black hedgehog spin-dashed him once again. Sonic picked himself up and muttered to himself.

"I bet my friends are having more fun in Robotropolis then I am right here."

Sonic was right to say that because his friends were having more fun in Robotropolis then he was in Mobotropolis. Since Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Geoffrey, Wilson and Ruben were here to cause a big deal of collateral damage to the city, they were free to do what they liked without holding back and since Eggman wasn't there to bring any of the big robots out, they had nothing to worry about. Tails was leading the group as well as joining in the fighting and everybody else just followed his orders. Right now, everybody was just smashing Eggman robots, the only things standing in their way to Eggman's headquarters. There were Egg-Pawns by the thousand all armed with various weapons and there were also the larger varieties of Egg-Pawns armed with enormous hammers and the transforming E-2000 drones with their shields and laser cannons. Knuckles the Echidna ran towards a squad of Egg-Pawns and let them have it with his trademark spiked fists. They were reduced to scrap metal in a matter of seconds by his mighty punches.

"Ha, ha! Take that Eggman robots!" cried Knuckles with joy as he gave another Egg-Pawn an uppercut that was so powerful it took its entire head off.

Geoffrey St. John the Skunk armed his arm-mounted crossbow and shot a dozen Egg-Pawns with stun darts, putting them all to sleep as he shot them.

"I always did find smashing Eggman robots fun." said Geoffrey to himself as the Egg-Pawns all collapsed.

He then proceeded to smash them all to pieces with a good punch and a hard stomp on the back before they could wake up. Wilson the Dog deployed his trademark spinning blade weapon and he threw it towards a squad of Egg-Pawns all armed with lances. The Egg-Pawns freaked and ran for their lives but the double-bladed pole sliced them all to pieces as it cleaved through them all. The spinning blade sliced through the robots and boomeranged back to Wilson. The orange dog caught it and smiled at what he had just done.

"When you have a spinning blade, you're always going to win." he said to himself.

As for Ruben the Water Panther, he had a very easy time with the Egg-Pawns that were coming his way. Since water is the best weapon to use against electricity, all he had to do was send a wave of water hurling over the Egg-Pawns and that was it, they malfunctioned and dropped dead. Ruben laughed to himself.

"Ah when you have water powers, anything mechanical has no chance against you." he crowed "Although I wonder why Dr. Eggman didn't make all his robots water-proof. He did so with that peacock bot I remember battling before*."

An Egg-Pawn with a blaster gun crept up behind Ruben and shot him on the shoulder with it. Ruben cried out and fell onto his knees, clutching his shoulder and grimacing in pain. The Egg-Pawn ran up to Ruben in an attempt to blast him again but Ruben just pointed over his shoulder with his good arm and squirted the robot with a jet of water. The Egg-Pawn malfunctioned and collapsed to the ground. Ruben got back to his feet and scowled at the soaking wet Egg-Pawn that lay lying on its back dead as a doornail.

"Piece of tin." he said to himself "I'm glad they're not invading Chun-Nan and making a mess out of it."

Amy and Cream were having a very easy time with any Eggman robot coming in to attack them. Cream picked Amy up and took flight with her long flappy ears. Cream then spun Amy around and around like she was a tornado in the sky and Amy summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand. The girls then edged closer and closer to their attackers and any Egg-Pawn foolish enough to be too close to them ended up getting a face full of mallet. The robots were smashed by Amy's incredible hammer and any other Egg-Pawns nearby ran for their lives. Cream put Amy down and the girls high-fived each other.

"We rock Cream!" cheered Amy.

"That was fun! I wanna do it again!" squealed Cream excitedly.

"Chao!" piped her pet Chao Cheese.

Unfortunately for the girls, a giant Egg-Pawn armed with an equally as large hammer stomped towards them. Cream stared at the robot

and freaked, Cheese panicked but Amy stood her ground and held her hammer at the ready. The robot then tried to smash them with its enormous hammer but the girls dodged the attack, leaving the Egg-Pawn to smash the ground and leave a huge pothole in it. Amy then retaliated by whacking the robot with her hammer. The robot wobbled about precariously and then fell onto its back where it would have a tough time getting back up.

"I'll teach you to wave your big fat hammer around like a maniac you crazy robot!" screeched Amy, running onto the robot and holding her hammer up high.

The Egg-Pawn stared helplessly at Amy as it tried to get back up but the pink hedgehog smashed its head to pieces with her Piko-Piko hammer, killing the robot instantly. Amy smirked at the dead robot she stood upon and she flipped her hair around while preening.

"This is why I'm the best hammer wielder there is." she gloated.

"Well done Miss Rose!" cheered Cream happily "You're the best!"

"Chao, Chao!" cheered Cheese.

Amy smiled with pride. This is why she liked Cream; the young rabbit was so supportive of her.

"Thank you Cream." said Amy "Now let's smash some more bots!"

"Yay!" cheered Cream.

As for Tails, he didn't really see the need to get involved as everybody was managing things themselves right now. He just flew around watching the fight and piecing together a plan in his head. The team had to do more then just destroy some Eggman robots, they had to cause collateral damage to the city and make sure the damage would be devastating enough to hinder Eggman for a while. As Tails observed the chaos going on around him, he began thinking very hard to himself.

"Hmmm…" he thought as he took a good look around Robotropolis while flying with the aid of his famous twin-tails "Maybe we could… sneak into Eggman's headquarters and blow that up…that is the

most important building in Robotropolis and if we destroyed it…that would hinder Eggman's forces big time. We'll do that then." he deduced "Now we have a plan." he said, beaming proudly at himself.

Tails should have known better then to fly low to the ground while thinking at the same time as a giant Eggman robot appeared from nowhere and grabbed him by his tails. Tails yelped as he stopped flying forwards and ended up dangling upside down by his twin tails which were being held by a BI-CEP drone, an Eggman robot with huge arms and mainly used for hand-to-hand combat. BI-CEP drones were tough enough to stop Sonic even in a spin-dash as one demonstrated way back during Tails' first visit to Megapolis** which had been a while ago now. Tails squirmed in the robot's grasp but he couldn't get free.

"Let go of me! Let go!" cried Tails.

The BI-CEP drone just stared emotionlessly at him and just to torment him, he began to shake the fox around while he was holding his tails. Tails was swung back and forth and back and forth as if he was a bag of sweets being swung about by the person holding it. BI-CEP stopped shaking Tails and laughed a mechanical laugh at the captured fox.

"Ruben! Help!" shrieked Tails.

Ruben, who was just nearby and had just fended off a jousting squad of Egg-Pawns, heard Tails calling for help and he scampered over to aid him. He saw the BI-CEP drone holding Tails by his tails and the water panther let the giant robot have it with a wave of water. The robot was drenched by the wave and the water short-circuited its circuits and caused it to drop Tails and malfunction and self-destruct. The robot fell to the ground and lay in miserable smoking pieces. Tails rubbed his tails better and smiled appreciatively at Ruben.

"Thanks Ruben." he said "I'm so glad you joined us."

"Don't mention it Tails." said Ruben brightly "We water panthers aim to do good and good is what I aim to do, especially in the name of

my clan. I bet they'd be so proud of me if they saw me now."

"They would." said Tails quickly "Now Ruben, gather everybody up. I have a plan."

"Roger." said Ruben, running off to get everybody.

Knuckles, Wilson and Geoffrey were all fending off a mass squad of Egg-Pawns and they were smashing them to pieces as they came to them. Ruben joined in by squirting the robots and causing them to blow up.

"Thanks for the water works but we've got this Ruben." said Knuckles "No offence."

"None taken." said Ruben "Tails has a plan by the way, we have to move on."

"Oh really?" said Geoffrey "This is the part where things get exciting."

"Amy! Cream! Come on!" Wilson called over to the girls as they took down an Egg-Pawn wielding a giant mallet "We're moving on now!"

Amy and Cream heard them and they followed the boys as they ran back over to Tails who was still standing over the wet remains of the BI-CEP drone that Ruben had destroyed.

"So what are we doing Tails?" asked Ruben.

"If we're gonna hinder Eggman's forces, I figured the best thing to do would be blow Eggman's headquarters sky-high." explained Tails "We should break into the base, find anything explosive and get Geoffrey to plant an explosive dart on them. Then once we're out of the building, Geoffrey can set the darts to go and we'll blow the base into smithereens."

"Great idea Tails!" said Amy supportively "I think we should stay out here and keep the rabble off your back though."

"OK then." said Tails "Geoffrey, you're with me, the rest of you, just do what you like."

"Roger." said Geoffrey, following the twin-tailed fox as he flew towards Eggman's base.

"Ah that's nice." said Knuckles with a smirk "That means I can smash more Eggman robots!"

"Then what are we waiting for?" cried Amy "Let's go!"

Amy, Cream, Knuckles, Wilson and Ruben all ran into battle, screaming battle cries at the top of their voices as more Eggman robots ran in to attack.

As for Tails and Geoffrey, they had effortlessly managed to break inside the base and they crept through the main hangar bay and headed for a corridor.

"So, what are we lookin' for mate?" asked Geoffrey quietly.

"Anything explosive." said Tails "Maybe a generator or a delicate piece of machinery. I'm glad I'm not gonna be the one planting the bombs as I'm not keen on destroying machines unless necessary."

"I see how you feel, you make machines after all." said Geoffrey "At least you're destroying Eggman's machines and not your own."

Tails nodded as they continued creeping down the corridor. Little did they realize is that they were being watched by an Eggman robot that looked eerily like Dr. Eggman himself. He was the head Eggman robot was left in charge of things whenever Eggman was away and he was not content in letting Dr. Eggman's base get destroyed by a couple of Mobians so he crept silently after them. They would never see him coming and he would kill them both in an instant…

"These are the times were I preferred it when Eggman was the only one to worry about!" grumbled Sonic who had just been slammed into the ground by E-123 Omega.

The fight hadn't really been any different from earlier. It had pretty much been Sonic and Shadow and Omega all fighting each other

and not anyone in particular, they just switched opponents as they went along and took turns beating the snot out of each other. Bunnie Rabbot had just been sitting on the sidelines resting up and she feared the worst as the fight continued to spiral hopelessly out of control. It seemed grim for Sonic as he continued getting pounded by Shadow and Omega respectively. Luckily for her, she had finally rested up and was ready to fight once again. Bunnie got to her feet and charged towards Omega who was having a wrestling match with Shadow the Hedgehog. Bunnie extended her robot arm a good long distance so she could attack from a safe distance and she clopped Omega in the head. The mighty robot fell down on his side. Before Shadow could do anything, Bunnie swung her still extended arm and walloped Shadow in the face. The Rabbot then ran over to Sonic and helped him get back to his feet.

"Bunnie, good to see you back on the battlefield." said Sonic with a weak smile.

"It's a good thing ah don't need to rest much sugah-hog." said Bunnie brightly "Now we can take those two clowns down together!"

"You said it Bunnie!" agreed Sonic "Let's do it to it!"

Sonic and Bunnie then ran towards Shadow and Omega who were just standing up. Sonic spin-dashed Shadow in the gut and Bunnie walloped Omega with her robot arm. Sonic then pinned Shadow down to the ground with his hands and said to him.

"Look stripes, I'm getting tired of us trying to fight everybody at once so I decided to make things simpler, we'll fight and Bunnie can take care of Omega."

"As you wish." said Shadow, smirking "Omega will be Bunnie's funeral and I can stomp all over you as I see fit! Then once I'm done, I'll destroy Omega and save the doctor from him!"

Shadow then teleported out from underneath Sonic, leaving the hedgehog baffled. Shadow reappeared behind Sonic and dropkicked him in the back.

"Urgh! Cheap shot!" grumbled Sonic "Fight fair for once you

cheater!"

Sonic leaned back on his hands and kicked Shadow but the hedgehog defended himself with his arms held out in a cross shape. Sonic then punched at Shadow but Shadow blocked his blows with a swift block of the arm each time Sonic tried to attack. Shadow then slugged Sonic in the stomach and then smacked him with the side of his fist. Sonic fell down on his hands and knees but he quickly recovered and kneed Shadow in the groin. Shadow screamed in pain and he fell down on his knees, trying to fight the pain in between his legs. Seizing the chance, Sonic gave Shadow an uppercut and then spin-dashed him. Shadow landed on his back but he quickly recovered and threw some Chaos Spears at Sonic. Sonic dodged the spears and the two hedgehogs spin-dashed each other.

As for Bunnie and Omega, they were proving to be a very fierce rival pair. They were both equally as strong as each other and they both had powerful weapons. Bunnie decided not to rely on her arm cannon though so she wouldn't tire herself out and just relied on her mighty metal punches. Omega however, relied on his huge arms and weapons. Omega fired a missile at Bunnie but Bunnie deployed her force field generator and blocked the attack. Bunnie transformed her arm back to normal and let Omega have it in the face with a powerful punch. Omega was sent hurling backwards and he skidded across the ground on his back. Omega sat up straight just as Bunnie was running up to him. Bunnie punched him back down on his back and then stood on top of him, glaring at the powerful Eggman machine. Omega stared back up at Bunnie.

"So much power." he droned "I like your strength fuzzy/metal hybrid. Me and you could be a powerful team and we could destroy Eggman together."

"Ah don't work with Eggman robots." said Bunnie flatly "And ah don't believe in destroying mah enemies, even if they deserve it."

She then deployed her arm cannon and aimed at Omega's head, preparing to blow the robot's head to pieces and kill him instantly. Alonzo freaked and decided to interfere. He pulled a wrench he used for repairs out of his side compartment and threw it straight at Bunnie's head before she could kill Omega. The wrench hit the

Rabbot and distracted her long enough for Omega to grab her by the waist and hoist her off of himself. He then got back to his feet while still holding Bunnie in his grasp. Bunnie tried to point her arm-cannon at Omega but her arms were trapped by her side due to the fact Omega's claws were tightly clasped around her body so she couldn't move her arms. She struggled feebly in the robot's grasp as Omega glared emotionlessly at her.

"Analysis: You rejected my offer and tried to decimate me." he droned "Conclusion: You will perish for this!"

"Nugh! Let me go you ugly old trash can!" grunted Bunnie, squirming in Omega's grasp.

Omega ignored her and deployed his Gatling gun in his other arm. He aimed it at Bunnie's head and prepared to blast her head off until Shadow spin-dashed Sonic straight into him. Sonic hit Omega in the side and knocked the robot onto his side, causing him to drop Bunnie. Sonic picked himself up and charged back at Shadow. The Rabbot picked herself up and grabbed Omega by the arm. She spun him around in a perfect circle and then tossed the machine straight into Royal HQ where he crashed into a wall and almost went straight through it. Omega picked himself up and charged straight back into battle. As for Alonzo, he had been enjoying the fight dearly and he began thinking to himself.

"What a marvellous show this is." he purred to himself "And while I'm quite content to watch Sonic, Shadow and Bunnie get bludgeoned into nothing, I can't help but notice how well they're holding against Omega. They really are valorous beings aren't they? Willing to take on even the deadliest of foes just to save whatever it is they're protecting. If I can turn Omega to my side then maybe I should try it on Shadow or even Sonic! Sonic may need some convincing but I'm sure I'll find a way to get him onto my side."

As for Dr. Eggman, he poked his head nervously out of Royal HQ to see how the fight was going on. Alonzo spotted him and instantly hid back behind the corner of Royal HQ so Eggman wouldn't see him. Dr. Eggman should have known better then to show himself though because Omega spotted him and instantly freaked.

"Dr. Eggman detected! Commencing full barrage attack!" he announced rather loudly.

Dr. Eggman immediately retreated back into Royal HQ but even a base of operations as solidly built and hi-tech as Royal HQ wouldn't withstand the full barrage of Omega's arsenal. Omega literally deployed every single weapon in his body and aimed at Royal HQ. Alonzo zipped away from Royal HQ so he wouldn't get caught up in the explosion. But before Omega could fire anything, Bunnie Rabbot blasted his weapons with her arm cannon. She destroyed all his missile launchers and torso mounted laser cannons. The resulting destruction of Omega's weapons ended up severely damaging the robot and causing his torso to smoke. Despite this, Omega appeared to have withstood the attacks and still seemed to be in fighting condition.

"How dare you foil my attempts to decimate Eggman!" scolded Omega, pointing sharply at Bunnie.

"Well ah couldn't let ya'll destroy Royal HQ along with Eggman so ah had to stop you!" snapped Bunnie "Now ya'll stay away from Royal HQ until this fight is over!"

"Analyzing proposal: Acceptable." droned Omega "I will not touch the building until this battle is over. Priority: Once I crush you with my bare hands, I will destroy the building with Eggman inside!"

"That's mighty fine with lil' ol me!" said Bunnie with a brave smile on her face "Let's tussle some more!"

The two rivals charged at each other and linked arms with one another.

Inside Royal HQ's laboratory, Dr. Eggman was worryingly pacing up and down while Rouge watched the fight between Sonic, Shadow, Bunnie and Omega rage on with neither sides gaining the upper hand on each other. The bat had been enjoying the battle and yet wanted to join in and help Shadow defeat Omega so he wouldn't kill him should he gain the upper hand.

"The suspense is killing me!" wailed Dr. Eggman "This fight looks

like it's going to go on forever! We must do something and stop that deranged Omega from trying to kill me!"

"Why don't you let me join in flabby man?" asked Rouge smoothly "I bet I'll be great help to Shadow the Hedgehog in this fight."

Dr. Eggman looked at the sexy bat with the heart-shaped breastplate and thought for a moment.

"I can't imagine Shadow being content with this." said Eggman "But desperate times call for desperate measures. Rouge, you may join in the battle."

"Thank you doc." purred Rouge, running out of the lab faster then you could say "You're only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!"

Rouge ran out of Royal HQ and flew towards Omega who had just slam-dunked Bunnie into the ground. Rouge screw-kicked Omega in the back and knocked the machine onto his front. Bunnie picked herself up and was pretty surprised to see Rouge the Bat helping out.

"Thank ya'll Rouge." said Bunnie.

Her response was a kick to the face from the jewel-thief.

"I'm not here to help you honey." said Rouge "I'm here to help Shadow so my opponents are Shadow's opponents."

Bunnie was furious with this and she socked Rouge in the face with her metal arm. Rouge got mad and she screw-kicked at Bunnie but the Rabbot dodged the attack and punched Rouge in the cheek. While the girls brawled it out, Omega picked himself up and crept away from them. He was planning to destroy Royal HQ while Bunnie and Rouge were fighting but he didn't get the chance to. Sonic and Shadow were spin-dashing each other and while doing so, they spin-dashed into Omega by accident. Shadow dropkicked Sonic into the ground and then threw a Chaos Spear at Omega. Omega got back to his feet and whacked Shadow with his arm. Sonic spin-dashed Omega but he didn't do much harm to the amazing robot and Omega blasted him with a laser cannon. Sonic lay on the

ground grumbling to himself.

"Stupid robot!" he muttered "Showing up and making my life harder! If I survive this, I'll be the luckiest hedgehog alive!"

He picked himself up and spin-dashed Shadow who was just throwing Chaos Spears at Omega. Bunnie and Rouge then both attacked Omega and Omega attacked them back while fending off Sonic and Shadow. Alonzo cackled with delight and he clapped like an excited little kid.

"Go on Omega! Cream them all!" he cheered.

Omega grabbed Rouge and slam-dunked her into the ground and then gave Bunnie an uppercut powerful enough to knock someone out but Bunnie was a tough woman so she managed to stay active. Sonic spin-dashed Omega once again and landed behind him as Shadow spin-dashed Omega also.

"I really wish we had some backup right now!" muttered Sonic to himself as everybody began to gang up on Omega…

Mandy Mouse had spent a pretty boring hour sitting around doing nothing while Cosmo the Seedrian told her all about herself and her species. Mandy had twisted her ankle after a mission in Spagonia and had to sit out of the mission in Robotropolis and Sonic's attempt to get Royal HQ back. Cosmo had decided to sit out of the mission in Robotropolis since she felt she wouldn't be of any use and had tried her best to keep Mandy entertained but her efforts seemed futile as the mouse looked like she was ready to fall asleep.

"Oh Mandy I'm sorry, am I boring you?" asked Cosmo.

"Sort of, yeah." said Mandy glumly "Don't take this the wrong way sweetie, I appreciate your efforts and I'm pleased to see you care about me but I'm not the kind of girl who sits around listening to stories and lying around doing nothing for minutes on end."

"All the girls on my planet are like that except mother." said Cosmo "Mother is the only serious women on my planet so because of this,

I assume all girls on other worlds are like the girls on my planet."

"Well most girls are like that." said Mandy "I just have that particular tomboyish streak that most girls never seem to have."

"I bet you really wish you were in Robotropolis destroying robots right now." said Cosmo softly.

"I am in all honestly Cosmo." said Mandy "I can just picture the whole scene that's going on without me right now! My handsome boyfriend Wilson using that cool spinning-blade of his to slice robots apart, Geoffrey using his combat skills to smash the robots to bits, Amy going berserk with that hammer of hers, Cream doing whatever it is she does to help in battle, Knuckles destroying robots with his spiked knuckles and that cute little water panther Ruben using his water powers to short-circuit Eggman's forces! Oh if only I could be joining them right now! It's just a pity I had to twist my ankle and end up being unable to walk."

She twitched her foot slightly but that just sent a flush of pain up her ankle and she quickly grabbed her ankle and grimaced tensely.

"Ooofff! Ouch it still hurts!" she wailed "Boy I twisted it good didn't I? Oh, ow!"

"Do you want me to get something damp to ease the pain?" asked Cosmo politely.

"No little Cosmo, I'm fine." Mandy insisted, not wanting Cosmo to fuss over her like an overly cautious housemaid "Although you could do me a big favour and get me something to use as a crutch so I can stand up."

Cosmo was up on her feet and off through the forest in a jiffy. Mandy smiled graciously at the little plant girl that was being so kind to her right now.

"Such a wonderful little girl." she said to herself "If I ever have a kid, I want him or her to be just like her, as well as like me of course."

Cosmo wasn't gone for very long. When you're in a forest, it doesn't take long to find something to use as a crutch. Cosmo had found a

long tree branch that had long since fallen off and she picked the branch up. It pained her to see fallen tree branches as it made her think of the poor trees and how it was like losing an arm or a leg to them but it made her feel good to think she was putting the branch to good use. She dragged the long branch back to Mandy and dropped it down by the mouse's feet.

"Will this do?" asked Cosmo.

"Definitely." said Mandy, picking the branch up and standing up on her good leg while using the branch to keep herself up "Thank you Cosmo."

"Why do you want to stand up anyway?" asked Cosmo.

"To tell you the truth, I'm curious as to what's going on at Royal HQ so I want to see if everything's going well." said Mandy "You coming Cosmo?"

"Of course." said Cosmo.

Mandy then limped off with the tree branch by her side. Cosmo followed her and the two headed off through the woods and to Royal HQ where a big fight was going on and they'd soon end up in it…

Meanwhile in Robotropolis, everything was going the Mobians' way. Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Wilson and Ruben had been doing a brilliant job at keeping the robots at bay while Tails and Geoffrey were preparing Dr. Eggman's headquarters for destruction. The fox and skunk had had a thorough search of the base and they found something that looked delicate enough to destroy and blow the base sky-high. They had found a generator room with four hi-tech and very powerful generators that powered the base. If they destroyed the generators, the explosion would tear the base apart so they decided to set things up in the generator room. Geoffrey loaded his crossbow with the exploding darts and he shot eight darts, two in each generator and he and Tails left the room. The closed the door behind them and ran down the corridor.

"Alright mate, once we get out of the base, I'll push this button." said Geoffrey, pointing to the button on his crossbow "The darts will all explode and the generators will be blown to smithereens."

"Great." said Tails "I'm kind of amazed how easy a time we're having here. We haven't had much trouble getting through Eggman's forces and our operation here was way too easy."

"I guess Eggman's forces are slobby when they have no one to command them." suggested Geoffrey.

The skunk and fox continued running down the corridor until something appeared in the doorway and stopped them dead in their tracks. Tails and Geoffrey skidded to a halt and stared in surprise at their confronter. The thing that had stopped them dead in their tracks was a robot that resembled Dr. Eggman. It was just as tall as Eggman himself and had a spherical body, spherical shoulders with spikes on them, a spiked head, missile launchers on its back, spikes on the top of its feet and a metal moustache similar to Dr. Eggman's own moustache. It was equipped with a shield on its left arm and it wielded a spiked mace. It didn't do anything except stand there ominously and glare at it's victims with its single visor eye. This was the head Eggman robot that Dr. Eggman used to run things whenever he was gone. Tails and Geoffrey were quite taken aback by the appearance of such a robot and began wondering what it was.

"What is that thing?" asked Tails.

"A robot that's begging for a bruising that's what!" declared Geoffrey, loading his crossbow with an explosive dart "I'll take it down!"

Geoffrey shot the Eggman bot but the Eggman bot defended itself with its shield. The dart embedded itself into the robot's shield and Geoffrey was about to press the button on his crossbow that would cause the dart to explode until Tails stopped him.

"No Geoffrey, you'll set the darts in the generator room off as well as the dart in its shield." noted Tails "And you'll blow the base up and kill us as well as the robot if you do that."

"In that case, we've gotta get past the bloke and out the base then I can set the darts to blow." Geoffrey deduced "Let's go for it Tails!"

Geoffrey tried to run past the Eggman bot but the Eggman bot simply held a hand out and grabbed the skunk by the throat. He then slam-dunked Geoffrey straight into the floor and pulled out its mace. It raised the mace above his head and prepared to smash Geoffrey into the floor but Tails kicked it in the head and made it stagger backwards. Geoffrey picked himself up and tried to kick the Eggman bot but the Eggman bot raised its shield and defended the blow. The Eggman bot slugged Geoffrey in the stomach and elbowed Tails who was trying to attack it from behind. Tails fell to the floor clutching his face and Geoffrey doubled over clutching his stomach. Tails then sprung back into action and tail-whipped the Eggman bot in the head but the attack didn't seem to do much to the powerful Eggman-shaped robot. The Eggman bot walloped Tails with its mace and Tails was sent hurling into a wall. He groaned hoarsely and lay there weak and defenceless as the Eggman bot advance on him and prepared to club him to death with the spiked mace it wielded. Geoffrey saw the perfect opportunity to escape but he noted that he couldn't leave Tails behind so instead he leaped onto the Eggman bot's back and pulled on its head. The Eggman bot flailed about madly trying to get Geoffrey off of himself but the skunk managed to hold on tight. The Eggman bot grabbed Geoffrey with one of its hands and it tossed Geoffrey down the corridor. Geoffrey got to his feet and ran for it in an attempt to get out of the base so he could set the darts to blow but the Eggman bot pressed a button on the wall that made a steel door close, trapping Geoffrey and Tails in the corridor with it. Geoffrey cursed his bad luck and looked back as the Eggman bot ran up towards him, spinning it's mace around.

"Man! if only I could get the darts to explode individually and that way I could fire a dart in this door and blow it down without setting off the ones in the generator room at the same time!" moaned Geoffrey "It's a blinkin' shame the darts I plant all explode at once when I pull the trigger!"

The Eggman bot swung it's mace at Geoffrey but the skunk dodged the blow and the mace hit the door instead. It dented the door but only slightly and Geoffrey ran past the robot and back up the

corridor. The Eggman bot flew after him with jets on its back and it raised the mace, preparing to smash the skunk into the ground. Tails had recovered from the Eggman bot's mace attack and he flew up the corridor towards the Eggman bot and Geoffrey. The Eggman bot swung it's mace at Geoffrey but it missed and hit the floor just inches behind Geoffrey. Tails flew feet first into the Eggman bot's head and landed a kick slam on its head. The Eggman bot hurtled down into the floor with a crash. The robot wasn't down though. It picked itself up and glared at Tails. It swung it's mace at Tails but it missed and hit the wall instead. Tails tried to attack the robot again but the Eggman bot clopped him with its shield. Tails landed face first on the floor and he lay there wondering which part of his face to rub first.

"Ouch!" he cried "That's one tough robot!"

"You can say that again mate!" exclaimed Geoffrey, dodging a kick from the Eggman bot "It doesn't seem to take any of our blows and it appears to be an intelligent robot too because it blooming sealed off our way out of here further up the corridor!"

"What? Oh no!" whined Tails "We're trapped in here! How are we gonna get out?"

"You ask me mate!" shrieked Geoffrey as the Eggman bot tried to club him with its mace.

Tails began to think fast as the Eggman bot continued playing cat and mouse with Geoffrey. Tails eyed the missile launchers on the robot's back and had a bright idea. If he could trick the robot into firing a missile at the door that was trapping them in the corridor with the robot, the missile would blow the door to pieces and he and Geoffrey would be free to escape.

"Hey bot brains!" cried Tails "If you're so tough then why don't you lob a missile or two at me? You'll have to catch me first!"

He twisted his tails around one another and flew off down the corridor. The Eggman bot got furious and it stupidly did what Tails told it to do and fired a missile. The missile soared out of its launcher and roared down the corridor after Tails. Geoffrey immediately

freaked.

"The kid's bone idle!" he cried "He's gonna get blown to pieces by the missile!"

The missile chased Tails down the corridor, picking up speed faster and faster by the minute. Tails looked over his shoulder and noticed the missile was gaining on him and fast. Tails made a desperate dive up to the ceiling and the missile, which to his sheer luck wasn't a heat seeker, charged on straight past him and landed slab-bang in the middle of the door that was sealing him and Geoffrey in the corridor with the Eggman bot. The door wasn't bomb-proof so it was blown into a thousand tiny metal pieces that littered the stainless steel that the floor was made of. Tails beamed happily at the fact his plan had worked.

"Hey Geoffrey!" Tails called down the corridor "The Eggman bot's missile has destroyed the door! We're free to go now!"

"Crikey! That's a good bit of luck isn't it?" said Geoffrey happily as he charged down the corridor with the Eggman bot following him.

Tails and Geoffrey ran as fast as they could down the corridor but the Eggman bot was much too quick for them. It flew straight over their heads and landed in front of them, blocking their way and stopping them from escaping. It whacked the floor with its mace which brought Tails and Geoffrey to a hasty stop.

"Any more bright ideas?" asked Geoffrey desperately.

"No sorry!" answered Tails "I'm all out!"

The Eggman bot swung its mace at them again and narrowly missed the skunk and fox. Tails actually felt the whoosh of the mace by his side as it swung down and hit the floor and he jumped like a frightened cat. Tails ran back down the corridor and the Eggman bot chased after him. Geoffrey then suddenly realized something.

"I'm such a thick-head!" the skunk blurted, smacking himself on the head "I have more types of dart then just exploding darts! I'll just stun the Eggman bot with a stun dart and that's it, our problem is

sorted!"

In a flash, Geoffrey lowered his arms and let his backpack fall off his shoulders and onto the floor. He opened his backpack and pulled out a stun-dart. He loaded his crossbow with the stun-dart and he put the backpack back on his back. He then ran down the corridor to catch up with the Eggman bot and Tails. He ran a very long way because the chase between the Eggman bot and Tails had taken them to the end of the corridor. Unfortunately for Tails, he had run into a dead end and he was now cornered by the Eggman bot. The Eggman bot raised its mace and prepared to club Tails into the floor, giving Geoffrey the perfect opportunity to shoot the Eggman bot with his stun-dart. Geoffrey fired his crossbow and the stun-dart embedded itself into the robot's back. The dart emitted an EMP pulse that surged through the Eggman bot's circuits and knocked it out. The robot fell onto the floor with a clunk and its visor switched off, meaning it was no longer online. Tails sighed with relief and he ran past the Eggman bot.

"Thank you Geoffrey!" exclaimed Tails "I was about to become a very nasty stain on the floor until you saved me!"

"Think nothing of it mate." said Geoffrey "It's just a good thing I always bring a stun-dart in case I need one."

The skunk and fox then ran back down the corridor only this time, there was nothing to stop them so they made it all the way through the corridor and into the main hangar bay of the base. They ran through the hangar bay and outside into the open air of Robotropolis which was filled with robots firing lasers, waves of water, swinging hammers, spinning blade weapons and spiked fists. Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Wilson and Ruben had destroyed yet another squad of Eggman robots but they were getting worn out. After smashing another robot, Amy began to pant.

"Hey…guys?" she puffed "I…think we should…fall back…"

"Now's a good time." said Ruben, spotting Tails and Geoffrey running towards them "Tails and Geoffrey are coming back, their operation must be complete."

"Awesome!" cried Knuckles "Now we can skedaddle and blow the place sky-high!"

The Mobians all ran off with Tails and Geoffrey just catching up to them. The Egg-Pawns were all surprised to see the Mobians all retreating but they didn't do anything about it, they just danced about with joy, thinking they had won the battle. The Mobians all ran out of Robotropolis and Geoffrey pressed the button on his crossbow. The darts embedded in the generators in the generator room and the lone dart embedded in the Eggman bot's shield all exploded and set off an even bigger explosion that tore through the Eggman headquarters and sent the place erupting into a giant fireball that expanded to a great height. The Mobians were all spellbound by the sheer sight of the explosion that tore through Eggman's headquarters and reduced it to a smouldering wreck of girders, debris and smithereens.

"Whoa!" gasped Ruben "I don't think even MY water powers would be able to put THAT out!"

"Well at least its Eggman's property that's on fire." scoffed Knuckles "He likes to destroy our cities and homes so he had this coming for a long time."

"Yeah!" agreed Amy "Eggman deserved this!"

"Our mission was a success." said Tails happily "We did it! Just wait till we tell Castle Acorn!"

"I can imagine the entire council being happy with our success." said Wilson "And I bet Queen Sally will be over the moon over this."

"I wonder if Mr. Sonic has gotten Royal HQ back yet?" asked Cream quietly.

"Even if he hasn't Eggman will be forced to return to Robotropolis and rebuild his headquarters." noted Tails "Eggman can't possibly stay in Royal HQ with the thought of his city in turmoil nagging at him. Let's go and deliver Sonic the good news everyone!"

The Mobians all ran off and headed back for home in Mobotropolis.

What a bit of good news they had to tell for Castle Acorn and Sonic the Hedgehog! They could almost imagine Dr. Eggman's expression when he realized that his city was in chaos right now…

"Nothing can stand to my invincible power!" Omega gloatingly announced as he smacked Rouge out of the sky and sent her crashing into the ground.

He then proceeded to do the same thing to Bunnie Rabbot. Bunnie crashed into the ground yet again and she groaned to herself. The fight had still been going no better for Sonic and Bunnie. Shadow and Omega were proving to be a tough pair of opponents, even if they weren't working with each other and Rouge the Bat was just being a pain attacking Sonic and Bunnie in turn. She was helping Shadow after all so she was more helping Shadow then helping Sonic and Bunnie. Regardless, not even Rouge the Bat could match Omega's great power and despite the damages done to him earlier by Bunnie destroying some of his arsenal, he was still standing. Omega was a very persistent robot with a tremendous amount of stamina. It would take a while for Omega to finally fall. Sonic tried to spin-dash Omega in order to help Bunnie and Rouge but Shadow interfered by spin-dashing him away and grinding him into the dirt.

"Oooofff! Shadow, I'm trying to destroy Omega!" moaned Sonic "Isn't that what you're trying to do as well?"

"Yes but I just feel like kicking your ass." said Shadow sadistically "Now stop whining like a baby and fight you weakling!"

Sonic happily obliged and gave Shadow an uppercut to the nose.

Shadow stumbled backwards, clutching his nose and Sonic was just about to let him have it in the face with a punch until Rouge the Bat screw-kicked him.

"You're not punching my boy Sonic the Hedgehog." said Rouge with a sly smirk on her face.

She was about to attack Sonic again until Bunnie walloped Rouge in

the back of the head with her robot arm.

"Ya'll leave sugah-hog alone traitor!" yelled Bunnie.

Rouge got mad and pounced on Bunnie but the Rabbot bent over and kicked Rouge and sent her hurling over her head. Sonic and Shadow began fighting each other again only to get interrupted by Omega clawing at them with his fearsome claws and they ended up spin-dashing him. Omega shot them both with lasers and then flew towards Bunnie and Rouge who were having a little catfight in midair. Omega shot them both with lasers and they collapsed to the ground. Bunnie retaliated by upper cutting Omega and then punching Rouge in the cheek. Omega punched Bunnie and held his arm up to defend himself from a spin-dash by Sonic. Shadow threw some Chaos Spears at Omega but they didn't do any damage of any kind to Omega's tough armour. Omega walloped Shadow and sent him crashing into Rouge the Bat. Sonic spin-dashed Omega in the back and knocked him onto his front and stood on his back.

"Hey Bunnie, this fight is getting us nowhere!" puffed Sonic "We need to get help!"

"But our friends are away and we can't call for help because Eggman's in charge of Royal HQ." noted Bunnie "Shadow and Rouge won't let us get near the building."

"Then I guess we'll just have to carry on fighting." said Sonic, jumping off of Omega just as he was getting up to his feet.

Bunnie drew her arm back and socked Omega directly in the face, sending him hurling about twenty meters backwards. Shadow then dropkicked Bunnie in the back and Bunnie punched Shadow off of herself. Rouge tried to help but Sonic spin-dashed the bat away from Bunnie.

Unbeknownst to anybody, Mandy and Cosmo arrived at Mobotropolis at long last and they were just coming up the hill to see how the fight for Royal HQ was doing. They were met with an incredible fight that was going on between Sonic, Bunnie, Shadow, Rouge and Omega. The girls stared in amazement at the incredible fight going on and their immediate thought on the fight was who the

robot was.

"Well, this looks hectic!" blurted Mandy "Sonic, Bunnie, Shadow, Rouge and some Eggman robot are engaged in a heated epic battle!"

"That robot looks too tough for them to defeat." said Cosmo "And it doesn't seem to be on Eggman's side either as it is fighting Shadow and Rouge as well as Sonic and Bunnie."

She said this as Omega whacked Sonic and Bunnie away and blasted Shadow and Rouge with his cannons.

"Well whoever's side it's on, it must be destroyed." said Mandy "It can hold it's own against Sonic, Shadow, Bunnie and Rouge all at once, that makes it too dangerous to remain functioning."

"But how are we going to destroy it?" asked Cosmo.

"You sneak into Royal HQ and get me a bomb." ordered Mandy "Did Wilson show you were the weapon's storage is when he took you on the tour yesterday**?"

"Yes." said Cosmo.

"Good now go!" ordered Mandy "I must have a bomb! It maybe the only chance Sonic will have against the robot!"

Cosmo nodded and ran off towards Royal HQ while Sonic, Shadow, Rouge, Bunnie and Omega continued fighting each other. Cosmo ran into the building and ran down a corridor, straight past the lab which earned a curious peek out of the door from Dr. Eggman. He saw Cosmo running down the corridor and then she stopped and turned to her right, opened a door and ran inside. Eggman scratched his head in thought.

"What is that plant girl doing here?" he wondered.

The room Cosmo had run into was the weapons storage room and she began looking quickly through the shelves. She found a steel box labelled with the word "explosives" and she pulled the box down from the shelf. Cosmo pulled a detonator out of the box and put the

box back on the shelf, remembering to close the lid as she did so. She then grabbed the detonator and ran back down the corridor with Dr. Eggman watching her. Cosmo ran past Dr. Eggman and out of Royal HQ, making the fat scientist wonder what was going on. Outside, Cosmo ran back towards Mandy who was lying down on the grass to keep herself hidden from Shadow, Rouge and Omega. Cosmo narrowly managed to dodge getting hit by Omega as he was spin-dashed by Sonic and she dropped down beside Mandy. Panting and gasping, she gave Mandy the detonator.

"Will…this…do?" she puffed.

"It will." said Mandy happily "Cosmo, you're a star. Now let's hope I can get this right first shot, I only have one try at this."

Mandy primed the detonator and set it to explode in thirty seconds. She got up onto her knees and raised the detonator up to her ear. She held her hand out to aim properly and aimed at Omega who was preparing to blast Sonic and Shadow away. Mandy swallowed a nervous lump in her throat and threw the detonator. She closed her eyes, unable to see what was going to happen. The detonator hurtled through the air and neatly attached itself onto Omega's back with fifteen seconds to spare. Omega began rapidly firing his Gatling guns at Bunnie and Rouge who were trying to attack him.

"You cannot defeat me." boasted Omega "I am E-123 Omega, the ultimate creation by my traitorous master Dr. Eggman. I am invincible, I am invulnerable and I am going to destroy Eggman and then all of Mobius and rule the Eggman Empire! All of Mobius will serve me and my faithful subjects…"

His gloating was suddenly cut off by an explosion that tore through his body and blew his entire right arm off. Omega bellowed in pain and fell down on his side as his circuits began to fry and explode from the detonator. Omega's entire right arm had been destroyed, a huge chunk out of his right side had been torn out and all that was left of him was his left side and legs. Omega lay on the ground in a miserable smoking, flaming wreck. Omega had finally been destroyed. He was dead at long last. Alonzo couldn't believe his eyes. He went wild with rage and he began to have a robotic fit.

"NO!" whined Alonzo "How could this happen? Omega was doing so well! How could this plan backfire on me so badly? No, No, Noooooooo!"

Mandy opened her eyes and was relieved to see a destroyed Omega lying on the ground in flames.

"YES!" cheered Mandy "I did it! I destroyed the robot!"

Sonic and Bunnie saw Mandy and Cosmo lying in the grass and they ran up to the girls.

"Mandy! Cosmo!" said Sonic in surprise "Boy am I glad you two showed up! We needed the extra hand!"

"How did ya'll destroy Omega?" asked Bunnie.

"I asked Cosmo to get me a bomb and she did." explained Mandy "I threw the bomb at Omega and it destroyed him. Who is Omega anyway?"

"A brilliant creation that decided to go rouge on me." answered Dr. Eggman who had heard the explosion from in the lab and had come out to see what had caused the explosion. He was pleased to see Omega finally dead and non-functioning.

"I built Omega as a last minute resort and he was supposed to come out when all hope was lost." explained Dr. Eggman "But after my forces in Grand Metropolis were destroyed, I assumed he had perished along with the base so I gave up on him. He survived and I should have known he would because I had placed him in a bomb shelter for in case the base got destroyed and for some reason he turned rogue on me! I am not rebuilding Omega again because he might go rouge on me again!"

Rats! thought Alonzo, thumping the wall in anger *My plan is in jeopardy! Oh well, back to the drawing board. I may as well run off back to Robotropolis so Eggman won't suspect anything about me. I'll start plotting once I'm there.*

With that, Alonzo trundled off while no one was looking and headed off to Robotropolis. He was in for a nasty shock though. As for Dr.

Eggman, he said something else now.

"Now Omega is gone, I can deal with some pest control." said Dr. Eggman "Shadow, Rouge, be good helpers will you and get rid of Sonic, Bunnie, Mandy and Cosmo will you?"

"With pleasure doctor." said Shadow, cracking his knuckles.

But before he could do anything, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Geoffrey, Wilson and Ruben all showed up from nowhere and arrived at Royal HQ where everybody else was. Sonic smiled at the sight of his friends and wondered what they were going to say.

"Sonic!" panted Tails "We did it! We've destroyed Eggman's headquarters in Robotropolis!"

"Sweet!" congratulated Sonic, giving Tails a thumbs up sign "That's the first bit of good news I've heard all day!"

Dr. Eggman's jaw dropped and his glasses almost fell off in surprise.

"Wh…wha…?" he burbled.

He couldn't speak. He was so shocked he thought he was going to die of shock.

"You heard Tails!" yelled Sonic, pointing sharply at Dr. Eggman "Your home sweet home is a burning wreck! You see, Nicole came up with the bright idea that we should make a mess out of Robotropolis as payback for stealing Royal HQ from us! And according to Tails, my friends have destroyed your headquarters! So what's it gonna be eggy? Keep Royal HQ? Or run back to Robotropolis and get things under control once again?"

Dr. Eggman was in turmoil. He didn't want to lose Royal HQ to Sonic but he didn't want his home city to be in chaos and carnage. If his base of operations was out of operation then he wouldn't be able to make anymore Eggman robots and call for any of his forces so reluctantly, he had to retreat.

"Fine!" blurted Eggman "Take Royal HQ back! But mark my words, I will get it back!" warned Dr. Eggman "And that's a promise!"

With that, he stomped off angrily with Shadow and Rouge following him. Sonic and friends waited until they disappeared into the forests of Green Hill Zone and they all cheered with delight.

"We did it!" cheered Amy "We've got Royal HQ back!"

"Looks like making a mess out of Robotropolis was a good idea after all!" said Tails happily "We got Royal HQ back and Eggman's going to be seriously delayed for a time!"

"You said it Tails." said Sonic with a thumbs up sign "I oughta give Nicole a tonne of thanks for the idea. It worked to P-E-R-F-ection!"

"Um Sonic? What the heck is that?" asked Knuckles, pointing at the smoking remains of Omega which Ruben promptly squirted water all over to put the fire out.

"Long story sugah." said Bunnie casually "We'll explain later."

"Right now we have more important things to think about." said Sonic.

"Which is?" asked Cream.

"How to defeat Shadow and eliminate Eggman's greatest weapon once and for all…" said Sonic with his voice in a low tonne of pitch.

Shadow was too dangerous to leave into Dr. Eggman's hands after all so Sonic and friends had to get rid of him or Eggman will NEVER be defeated…

Footnotes:

***Remember Egg-Peacock from Story 49?**

**** It was indeed a while ago! ALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL the way back in Story 6! That is a while ago!**

***** See Story 57**

Dun! Dun! DUUUUUUNNNNN! This is it ladies and gentlemen! The final showdown between Sonic and Shadow! Who will triumph? Join me next time as Sonic tries to defeat Shadow the Hedgehog! Read and Review.

Trivia: I went through hell and back trying to get Omega into this series! Really I did! My first drafts for Heroes of Mobius last year featured Omega having his own story titled "Omega" where he and Sonic just...fought and then he'd have some bit parts throughout the series and eventually get killed off in a Tales from Mobius arc but it just didn't work out and Omega blended into the story very poorly so I decided to just abandon all hope of ever putting Omega in Heroes of Mobius. Then I thought of giving Alonzo a Tales from Mobius arc, which ended up becoming this recent two part story, which featured him getting Omega online and getting him on Dr. Eggman only to get into a fight with Sonic and Shadow and eventually get defeated. My reason for killing Omega off after a measly two stories is because I just don't know what to do with him so I felt like Omega just had to die. Sorry Team Dark fans but Team Dark will never be complete. Please don't kill me for this, I tried to get Omega to work in this story but I failed. So sorry. :(

Defeat Shadow

Story 62: Defeat Shadow

Dr. Eggman, Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat had returned to Robotropolis and they were met with a terrible sight. Eggman noticed that his iron gates had been busted down thanks to Knuckles and the city was littered with destroyed robots. But that wasn't the worst of it; the worst of it was the huge flaming wreck of what was once his proud and glorious headquarters. What was once the centrepiece of Robotropolis was now a colossal flaming wreck of smoke and fire. Dr. Eggman stared in horror at what his headquarters had just been reduced to and he could feel himself burning with rage. Even Shadow was pretty surprised at this and for some reason, the image of a huge fire was giving him a flashback and that mysterious voice began booming around his head once again.

Yes Shadow … the voice boomed *Once you're completed … you will purge Mobius with fire … and burn every thing in sight …*

Shadow then snapped back into reality and looked at Dr. Eggman who was trying to refrain himself from throwing a fit. Eggman then looked at the ground and noticed something. A red spiked head with a metal moustache. He ran over to the head, bent down and picked it up. It was the head of the head Eggman robot he left in charge of Robotropolis whenever he was away. Just the sight of the destroyed robot made Eggman feel as if he had lost a lifelong friend or something. Eggman's face contorted with sorrow and he sadly put the head back down on the ground. The head Eggman robot was one of his favourite creations after all and now it was destroyed. He would have to build a new one but that would require his robot production line which he didn't have now his headquarters were destroyed. As for Alonzo the Butler Bot, Eggman's "loyal" servant, he saw Eggman grieving over the losses of his precious base and Eggman robots and he felt now was the time to make a dramatic entrance. Alonzo zipped up to Dr. Eggman on his two little wheels and he tapped him on the shoulder. Dr. Eggman got back to his feet

and looked at Alonzo. Even though he loathed Alonzo with his life, he was strangely happy to see him again only he didn't show it, instead he kept his serious face on and picked Alonzo up and hoisted him up to his height.

"Alonzo! What happened here?" demanded Dr. Eggman.

"I dunno!" blurted Alonzo truthfully "I was just trundling home to Robotropolis and then when I arrive, I find the base has been destroyed!"

Alonzo didn't stick around after Omega's destruction and thus missed what Tails had just said to Sonic after he and the others returned from their Robotropolis mission so even he didn't know what happened. Dr. Eggman put Alonzo down and pointed sharply at a nearby Egg-Pawn.

"You there! What happened?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"Some-of-Sonic's-friends-came-here-and-des-troyed-the-base." droned the Egg-Pawn "They-also-des-troyed-many-of-your-Egg-Pawn-soldiers."

"Curse those Mobians!" cried Dr. Eggman "Why is it every time I* get a victory** it somehow manages to slip out of my fingers and back into Sonic's?"

"Beats me doctor." said Rouge casually "Looks like you've got a huge mess to clean up."

"Yes Rouge, I do have a huge mess to clean up." muttered Dr. Eggman crossly at the bat who was being rhetorical to him "Egg Pawns! Put that fire out and start rebuilding my base!"

"Yes-sir." droned the Egg-Pawns that were left.

They all plodded off and got some hoses to put the giant fire out.

"Where do we stay while the base is re-built?" asked Alonzo

"In the back-up base at the other side of the city." said Dr. Eggman "It's like I always say, never build something without a back up plan.

Come on everyone."

Dr. Eggman walked off with Shadow, Rouge and Alonzo following him. As they walked past the huge fire and to the other side of the city, Alonzo's mind began racing like mad. The traitorous servant bot was thinking on his next plan on how to get rid of Dr. Eggman. And the revelation of a backup base seemed to be giving him ideas.

So Eggman has a back-up base does he? Alonzo thought to himself *Now that's a lovely piece of news! Whenever the fat idiot is busy working on his next project, I can work on a project of my own and I'll do it in the back-up base while Eggman works in the main base once it's rebuilt. And this project will be enough to end even the mighty Sonic the Hedgehog!*

This brilliant plan he was coming up with would have to wait though because for now, the main base needed rebuilding and Alonzo would have to keep up the subtlety and make sure Eggman had no idea about his true motives or he'll be scrap metal. Once his plan could come into action, he would destroy everybody and be in charge of the Eggman Empire...

Meanwhile, Sonic the Hedgehog and Tails the Fox had informed the Council of Acorn about their recent adventure and how they had managed to get Royal HQ back, earning a hearty praise from everybody including Queen Sally Acorn. After their meeting with the Council, Sonic and Tails decided to pay a visit to Royal HQ and discuss about Shadow the Hedgehog, the one person they desperately needed to be rid of. They arrived at Royal HQ, pleased to see the base back to normal and no Dr. Eggman in it and they went into the lab where their friends Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit and her pet Chao Cheese, Cosmo the Seedrian, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk and Ruben the Water Panther had been waiting for Sonic and Tails to return so they could begin making plans on how to defeat Shadow.

"Sonic, you're back!" said Amy happily.

"That's right everybody." said Sonic "The Council of Acorn were pleased to hear that we've got Royal HQ back and made a mess out of Robotropolis. Everybody including that dorky pig Hamlin cheered when me and Tails gave the news."

"They were especially pleased with the damage we did to Robotropolis." said Tails "I bet Eggman won't be bothering us for a while. He'll be working on fixing his headquarters."

"Well that's good." said Mandy "We need a break from that fat moron."

"How's your ankle Mandy?" asked Sonic.

"Healing well thanks." said Mandy, giving it a gentle rub "I'm able to stand up now but it still hurts a little."

"It's healing much quicker then I thought it would." said Wilson "At the rate you're going you'll be up and fighting in a couple of days."

"I like forward to that." said Mandy "I hate sitting around doing nothing, it bores me."

"You're not the only one." said Sonic, sitting down at the table next to Amy, who was clearly happy to have her hero sit next to her, and Tails sat down next to Cosmo who was happy to see him again "Now everybody, let's discuss about Shadow the Hedgehog."

Everybody sat down to the table and Sonic spoke up.

"What do we know about Shadow the Hedgehog?" he asked.

"He's a genetic experiment that never ages?" said Bunnie, hoping she'd remembered correctly.

"He looks like Sonic only with black fur and red stripes and a quill do?" suggested Ruben.

"He can teleport short distances and use Chaos Blast." said Knuckles.

"He has a scary deep voice?" said Cream pointlessly.

"That's not important!" snapped Amy.

"Sorry." said Cream.

"He's a dangerous ally for Eggman and he must be stopped." said Tails.

"Great, we know plenty about Shadow-butt." said Sonic with a cheeky grin on his face "But we don't know how to beat Shadow do we?"

"He seems capable of taking us all on and beating us all." said Tails "Even Marik the Martian couldn't beat Shadow and all fighting him did ended up with him getting his arm broken. I bet Shadow would to that to us if he wanted to"

"And if we fight him all at once and don't give him a chance to fight back, he just Chaos Blasts us." noted Knuckles "We know how to counter that attack though by getting out of range and letting him tire himself out but once he puts those ring things back on his wrists, he's all powered back up again."

"I could always shoot the bloke with a stun-dart and put him to sleep after he tries to Chaos Blast us." suggested Geoffrey "It worked the first time remember?***"

"That is a good idea." said Sonic "But I bet Shadow will be ready for that and he'll dodge the dart before it could hit him. In fact, he might not even Chaos Blast us, knowing that we'll try to dodge the blow and leave him worn out."

"We don't seem to have any other methods of defeating Shadow so I think we should try that." said Mandy "We trick that creepy hedgehog into Chaos Blasting us and make sure we're out of the way and while he's tried, Geoffrey stuns him with a stun-dart before he can put his wrist rings back on and in turn, puts him to sleep. While he's napping we then haul him to a nice and secure prison cell and he can stay there for eternity. Plain and simple." she added with a gloating smile on her pretty face.

"But won't Shadow just Chaos Blast his way out of the cell?" thought

Cosmo "His Chaos Blast is very powerful and it'll easily destroy a prison cell."

"I don't think so." said Tails with a finger to his lips and thinking hard "Shadow seems to get power drained whenever he removes his rings so once he removes his rings and we knock him out and take him to prison, he won't have the power left to Chaos Blast his way out of the cell because he won't have his inhibitor rings to power himself back up."

"Even though I have doubts about this plan, it might just work." said Knuckles "It's the only chance we have and we've gotta take it."

"I actually concur with knuckle-head." said Sonic "We'll try that plan. But where should we get Shadow to fight us? We can't battle in Mobotropolis, the new city's not finished yet and Royal HQ's still patching up from the damages it received from our last battle."

"I have an idea." said Wilson "How about the old construction site near Stardom Village? We'd have a lot of things to take shelter behind while we fight Shadow and I'm sure we can use the surroundings to our advantage."

"When did ya'll know there was a construction site near Stardom Village sugah?" asked Bunnie.

"I've known it was there for a while." said Wilson "I saw it a good number of times as a kid whenever my parents took me to Stardom Village and I remember it so well."

"In that case, we get Shadow to fight us in that construction site." said Sonic "Good idea Wilson."

Wilson's tail wagged like a happy dog's tail always does.

"I hope the owners of the construction site won't mind the damage we might accidentally cause in our battle there." said Cream worriedly. She was a very respectful child after all and hated the thought of making people angry.

"No worries Cream." Sonic assured the rabbit "They'll just assume it was an Eggman attack and we'll be in the clear. Now we have a

plan, let's do it to it everybody!"

"Yeah!" everybody cried in unison.

They all got up from their seats, left the lab, left Royal HQ and set off for Stardom Village. This fight was one Sonic was looking forward to dearly and he could almost imagine Shadow's angry face as he was beaten and put behind glass in a damp prison cell in an MPD (Mobian Police Department) station in Empire City or Central City or anywhere that was free and the very thought made Sonic laugh to himself…

Fiona Fox's life had been absolute garbage to her since she abandoned the Royal Fighters Service****. Ever since she left the team, she spent most of her time scavenging for food since she no longer had a home to live in. You see, she was stricken with financial problems and she was unable to pay a rent so she had to relinquish her home and become homeless. Her outfit consisting of a black crop top with black leather trousers, black fingerless gloves and black shoes with a buckle on them and a belt with a belted skirt around her waist literally became her permanent outfit since she couldn't buy new clothes to wear as she had no money left. At least it saved her a tonne of washing up as all she had to do was find a nice clean lake to wash her clothes in and that was it, they were fit to wear again. Life on the lam wasn't easy for her either as she often got caught for stealing food by the sellers and chased by them. Sometimes she got away, other times she got caught and beaten. There was one time where she resorted to stealing priceless jewels for the sake of getting money so she could live and she had to evade Melchett the Hedgehog and a squad of policemen. She only just made it but since then, she had been wanted by the jewel store owner she stole from and Melchett had been on the lookout for her since. Fiona had taken refuge in Rainbow Wood which was part of Green Hill Zone and only came out of her hiding place if she needed to steal food at all. True there was food in the wood for her but she didn't fancy the idea of having a permanent diet of berries and fruit so when she fancied something else to eat, she left her hiding place and robbed whatever store she came across. Fiona returned to her hiding place in Rainbow Wood with a loaf of bread, a block of

cheese and a couple of ham slices she had just robbed from a supermarket in Empire City. She almost got caught by Melchett once again but she managed to escape and now she had returned to her hiding place, ready to tuck into her stolen food. Fiona, who was perishing with hunger right now, just devoured her stolen food at the speed of a pack of African Hunting Dogs. She didn't really care how she ate as long as she had something to eat. After Fiona devoured every last crumb, she lay back miserably against a tree and sulked to herself. Sulking about her life had literally become one of her personal hobbies.

"My life sucks." she moaned to herself "Ever since I ditched that stupid fighter's service, I've been in rock bottom! I have no home, no money and I'm literally a street rat now! I have to hide in this desolate wood just so the dumb cops can't find me and I have to steal just to eat! Oh why did I leave the Royal Fighters Service?" she whined, feeling very sorry for herself "If I was still in the Royal Fighters Service then I'd probably still have some dough on me right now! Then again, with my abysmal fighting, I'd be dead by now but then, if I took some lessons and improved my skills, I'd probably be a better fighter and I wouldn't be dead. Oh I am such a fool!" groaned Fiona, putting her hands on her head in an exasperated manner "I am such a great big dunce! It's my own fault I'm a street rat and now I'm going to die a street rat and the only person to blame is myself!"

She sighed a frustrated sigh and folded her arms in a huff. She frowned at herself and remained lying by the tree she was leaning against. She could feel some tears coming to her beautiful blue eyes. Fiona had spent most of her days crying due to what she had been going through right now and she had cried so much these past months, it was amazing she still had any tears left to cry. Fiona wiped her eyes dry before the tears could fall and began to think to herself.

"Maybe I should go back to the Royal Fighters Service." she wondered "That way I can redeem myself, get myself off the streets and clear myself of any inevitable charges I'll be facing should I ever get arrested. But will anyone want me back?" she asked herself "I bet they won't, they'll be all like "We don't take quitters into our

group!" and all that crud! Knowing Sonic, he'll be ready to accept me back but I can't imagine Geoffrey St. Jackass or Mandy being so civil. Those two morons were never really fond of me anyway, especially Geoffrey. What I wouldn't give to have my hands around his wretched throat for all the grief he's given me!" she growled to herself, clenching her fists angrily and imagining herself throttling Geoffrey to death.

"In fact, coming to think about it," Fiona suddenly said to herself "It's not my fault I left the Royal Fighters, it's that skunk's fault! He was always the first to criticize me whenever I messed up and that stupid mouse Mandy would sort of join in and those two ended up lowering my self esteem and making me leave the group! So it's their fault I'm going to die a street rat not mine! I don't know what on Mobius I was talking about earlier! If I ever make it back into the service, the first thing I'm going to do is get some much needed payback on those two!"

"Then again…" Fiona thought to herself "…that would make me a villain and it would just make my bad image even worse so no, I shouldn't get payback on Geoffrey and Mandy. If I manage to rejoin the Royal Fighters and improve myself then maybe they'll be a lot nicer to me. The only thing wrong though is will they be willing to let me join again?"

Then suddenly, there was a rustling sound heard just a few feet from where Fiona was and Fiona flinched in fright.

"EEK! The cops!" she squealed "They've found me!"

She lay down flat on the ground and kept low behind a bush. She could feel herself shaking all over. How had the blasted cops managed to find her? They never looked for criminals in Rainbow Wood! Maybe she had accidentally left a clue or two as to where she was hiding and they had used it to find her? But Fiona had been tidy about herself whenever she hid in the wood so she couldn't have left any clues. Fiona then though maybe it wasn't the cops looking for her and it could be something else. She peeked nervously through two gaps in the bushes and saw what was making the noise. She saw a green hedgehog in a black leather jacket with flames on the arms, big black and green boots and red

sunglasses that rested on his forehead. Following him was a ginger fox with neat black hair, styled whiskers and two tails. Those two were none other then Scourge the Hedgehog and Ginger the Fox! Scourge was Sonic's evil brother and Ginger was Tails' wormy, toady, egotistical, jealous grump of a cousin who had a very abysmal view on life and needed to grow up badly or at least get a punch in the face. Fiona freaked. She recognized Scourge from newspapers she had found in dustbins she scavenged in and read and had read all about Scourge's attempted ransack of Castle Acorn with Ginger by his side*****. She knew that Scourge was evil and he had to be stopped. She may not be a Royal Fighter anymore but that didn't mean she couldn't be a hero. Maybe if she stopped Scourge and took him to jail, that would be enough to convince the Royal Fighters she wasn't useless and she could prove how strong she was! There was no time to lose; Fiona had to take this opportunity before she lost it. No more life on the lam, once she arrested Scourge, her life would improve itself at long last. Fiona stayed down and waited for Scourge and Ginger to walk past her. Ginger, not surprisingly, was whining like a spoiled little brat (insert angry growl here readers!)

"Scourge, I hate it here!" whined Ginger "This forest is making my intelligence drop and it's making me feel like a homeless little tramp!"

"Oh will you shut the bloody hell up you annoying little whinge-bag!" snarled Scourge, punching Ginger in the face to shut him up "All you do is whine, whine, whine and I'm sick of it! Just stop whining and SHUT UP!" he bellowed at the ginger coloured fox.

Ginger shook like a leaf and rubbed his throbbing face. He decided to shut up and stop driving poor Scourge mad.

"The reason we're walking through this mangy old wood is because we're going to Mobotropolis!" Scourge reminded Ginger "I have a plan and it requires us taking over the Royal Fighters Service headquarters, aka Royal HQ and the only way to get through it is to walk through the forests of Green Hill Zone so you'll have to live with it you irritating little worm!"

"Y-y-yes Scourge!" squeaked Ginger.

Scourge just promptly kicked Ginger in the crotch, causing the ginger coloured fox to fall on his knees and clutch his tenders. He groaned in pain and tried not to scream.

"What was that for?" he wailed.

"For being a wimp!" snapped Scourge "Now come on weakling before I leave you there to get eaten by bears or wolves or whatever lives in these forests."

Ginger got scared and he leaped back onto his feet in a jiffy. Scourge and Ginger then began strolling off. Fiona leapt out of the bushes and ran after Scourge. Scourge heard her coming and before he could do anything, Fiona tackled him down onto the ground, earning a girly shriek from Ginger. Fiona forced Scourge's arm behind his back and pinned him down. Ginger, being a coward, stood back and left Scourge at Fiona's mercy.

"Alright Scourge the Hedgehog, the jig is up!" yelled Fiona in a pretentious brave voice "Either you come quietly or I'll break your arm!"

"Oh get off me you crazy loon!" yelled Scourge, wrestling his arm effortlessly out of Fiona's grasp and punching the fox off of himself.

Fiona picked herself up and wrestled with Scourge but her attempts were in vain. Scourge grabbed Fiona by the arms and through her into a tree. He grabbed her throat with his hands, pinned her to the tree and began to strangle her. Fiona feebly struggled against Scourge's grasp. Ginger grinned like an idiot and cheered.

"Give it to her Scourge!" he cried "Rip her head off!"

"Shut up!" snarled Scourge "I'll handle the wretch myself!"

Ginger shut himself up and put his hands behind his back. Scourge turned back to Fiona and stared into her blue eyes. He himself had blue eyes and it amazed him as to how similar her eyes looked to his but he couldn't let that fool him. Fiona was trying to get him arrested and he was not about to let her.

"Alright you wretch, how do you know my name and why are you

trying to apprehend me?" demanded Scourge.

"I've read all about you in the newspapers and I'm just trying to arrest you so I can redeem myself for all the bad stuff I've done!" explained Fiona fearfully staring straight at Scourge.

"Are you now?" snarled Scourge "Well then, I guess I'll have to kill you then girl! I warn you though, this will be VERY painful!"

"No! Please! I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" shrieked Fiona "I'm sorry I tried to do something so foolish! Please don't hurt me! Please!"

Scourge was having none of it and he raised his fist, ready to punch Fiona's daylights out. Fiona closed her eyes and awaited for Scourge to punch her. She shook like a leaf and her forehead rained with sweat. Scourge was about to let Fiona have it until Ginger stopped him.

"Wait, wait Scourge!" cried Ginger "Don't hurt her!"

"Why not runt?" roared Scourge.

"In case you weren't listening to her properly, I believe she said she wanted to redeem herself for all the bad things she's done." noted Ginger "This could mean that she's a bad girl like we're bad boys. Why don't you ask her?"

Scourge grumbled at his wormy sidekick but he strangely enough, listened to him and looked back at Fiona. The young fox opened her eyes and was surprised to see Scourge wasn't trying to kill her right now. She began to calm down, her heart still pounding like mad.

"Alright woman, who are you and what do you do?" asked Scourge.

"My n-name, gulp!, is Fiona F-Fox." said Fiona nervously "I-I used t-to be part of the R-Royal Fighters Service but I-I-I quite the team and since then, I've been nothing but a lowly street rat stealing goods and hiding from cops."

Scourge took all of this information in and began to think. Maybe he could manipulate this fox into working for him. She seemed like a bad girl and maybe he could get her to join him. After all, having a

female sidekick wouldn't be a bad thing, especially since Fiona was drop-dead gorgeous in his eyes. As Scourge stared at Fiona, he only just realized how beautiful she looked. Scourge was the kind of boy who tried to impress the ladies and have them all over him but maybe he could have an actual female sidekick on his side and have Fiona be more then just a trophy unlike the other girls he hung around with in his youth. Scourge then let go of Fiona's neck and spoke to the frightened fox.

"So you're a low-life are ya?" he asked smoothly, making Fiona shudder "Interesting. And you quit the Royal Fighters did ya? Why was that then?"

"I was useless and a lot of people put a lot of grief on me." said Fiona bitterly "I quit the team in order to save myself but now I wish I hadn't. I've lost all my money and my home and I have to steal my own food now and after robbing a jewellery store in order to get some money, I've ended up getting myself wanted and Melchett the Hedgehog is after me now!"

"Well Fi, I can make your life so much better." lied Scourge, flashing her a toothy grin that made Fiona feel weak at the knee "You see, I'm the world's strongest hedgehog and soon to be ruler of Mobius. Once I conquer the world and become ruler of Mobius, your life will never be the same again. So I say ditch your old life and start anew with me and I'll help you get your own back on all who have wronged you, especially the Royal Fighters Service."

"I can't join you!" blurted Fiona "You're-you're-you're a bad guy! I can't join the life of a villain!"

"Face it Fi, it's either join with me or spend the rest of your life as a street rat." sniffed Scourge

"And trust me, you'll love the life of a villain much better then the life of a hero. You'll be stronger,

you'll force people to respect you and no one will ever cause you grief again!"

"Yeah!" piped in Ginger.

"Who's the dorky kid?" asked Fiona rudely. She clearly wasn't pleased at Ginger at all.

"Hoi!" cried Ginger "How dare you talk to me like that you filthy woman! I am Ginger the Fox, Scourge's loyal sidekick and soon to be assistant ruler of Mobius…"

"SHUT UP!" roared Scourge.

He gave Ginger an uppercut that knocked him out and sent him hurling backwards a few feet. Scourge turned back to Fiona who was thinking about what Scourge had said to her.

"He's a tool to my schemes, nothing more." said Scourge "Don't talk nicely at him, don't even treat him nicely. He's my little pet that I get to smack around all the time."

"Oh I see." said Fiona "So back onto this villain business..." she added, thinking about what Scourge had said to her "If I join you and help you conquer Mobius, can I be your queen?"

"Whatever you wish Fi." said Scourge with a smile.

"And I'll be able to get my own back on all who have wronged me?"

"Check."

"And I'll also be well-respected by everybody and they'll all bow in respect to me?"

"You betcha!" declared Scourge "So what do you say now Fiona? Do you wish to stay good and continue scavenging in the forests? Or do you wish to betray everybody and join a life of fun, destruction and malice? Go on, make your choice Fiona."

Fiona began to think hard to herself. On the one hand, she knew the perks of being a villain and what happened to most villains in the end. On the other hand, her life was absolutely terrible right now and nothing was going to improve it. She then began to remember all the bad things her former comrades had said to her during her time in the Royal Fighters Service. She especially remembered what Geoffrey and Mandy always said to her. But most of all, she

remembered how Sonic the Hedgehog had not paid much attention to her in the service and never stood up for her whenever she was picked on. She wanted to pay everybody back, especially the Royal Fighters for the grief they had given her and Melchett the Hedgehog for trying to arrest her. Fiona scowled at the memories and quickly made her mind up. She decided to abandon all hopes of redemption and join Scourge the Hedgehog. After all, what was the point of trying to tighten loose ends if you just couldn't do anything right? Fiona held her hand out.

"I choose…to join you Scourge." said Fiona.

"Well done Fiona!" cried Scourge, shaking her hand "You're a smart girl! I think me and you are going to become good friends already!"

Fiona just slyly smiled to herself. Boy was Sonic and friends in for a surprise when she returned to Mobotropolis with villainous intentions! She could tell already she was going to enjoy this new life with Scourge the Hedgehog…

Back in Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman, Alonzo, Shadow and Rouge had set up base in the back up base at the end of Robotropolis. The base was half the size of the main headquarters but it was still as functional and hi-tech as the main headquarters and for the time being it would have to do. The only thing the back up base didn't have that the main headquarters did have was a production line but it did have a roboticizer chamber so Eggman was still capable of roboticizing his captives. Alonzo liked the look of the base and had a feeling that he'd be able to hide whatever he built for any plans he had very well in this base. This base would be perfect for Alonzo's secret hiding place. Shadow and Rouge didn't think much to the base but Eggman didn't really mind, he wasn't expecting the two to feel at home after all.

"Well this is my back-up base." said Dr. Eggman "Not as good as my main headquarters but it'll have to do for now."

"So what do you want me to do Dr. Eggman?" asked Shadow.

"I want you to wait a moment." said Dr. Eggman "I'm going to find out where Sonic and his friends are and then send you to destroy them. They're probably at Royal HQ but you never know until you look. When I find out where Sonic is, I'll inform you immediately Shadow."

Dr. Eggman left the room. Alonzo was now alone in the room with Shadow and Rouge. Shadow just kept on his serious face and he folded his arms.

"So are you in charge pin-head?" asked Rouge teasingly.

"Shadow's in charge." said Alonzo "I'm going to sleep. I'm running low on battery power and I need a recharge."

With that Alonzo shut his eyes, withdrew his arms into his body and his wheels folded up into his body. He now looked like a missile standing upright with a tuxedo and a hair style painted on it. Rouge began to wonder why Alonzo suddenly wanted to take an afternoon nap but she just shrugged casually and decided to forget about it. After all, since Alonzo had shut himself off and Dr. Eggman had left the room, she could now try to convince Shadow to ditch Dr. Eggman and join her on her treasure hunts instead. Rouge rubbed her hands and tapped Shadow on the shoulder. Shadow just glared at her with his red eyes that burned like a wildfire.

"What do you want?" snapped Shadow angrily.

"Geez, touchy aren't you?" scoffed Rouge "I only wanna tell you something handsome."

"Well this better be interesting." said Shadow hastily "I haven't got time to waste right now."

"Do you really believe that you were created by Dr. Eggman shadow boy?" asked Rouge.

Shadow looked stunned as if the question Rouge had asked was an ungodly shocking one. He shook it off and answered her anyway.

"I have a feeling he's not my creator." said Shadow "But I don't remember who my creator is so I can't make any conclusions until I

get anymore evidence as to the origins of my past."

"I know that." said Rouge "Which is why I have a cunning plan which will refresh your rusty old memory."

"What plan might that be then?" asked Shadow.

"I say me and you ditch bot boy and become partners in crime." suggested Rouge "I'm a jewel thief and treasure hunter and I think me and you will be very good at this game together."

"But how will that regain my memories?" asked Shadow.

"It won't really but when we're not stealing jewels and priceless artefacts we can go on an adventure and look for clues to your past." explained Rouge "Maybe we could search all over Mobius and see if anything jogs your memory and we can find out who really created you and what your real purpose is. For all we know, maybe your purpose is to be a treasure hunter like me…"

Unbeknownst to the bat, Alonzo was hearing everything Rouge was saying to Shadow. Alonzo hadn't really shut himself down as he had made it out to be. He was pretending to be asleep while really he was listening to everything Rouge was saying. His audio receptors and mind were still switched on while the rest of his body wasn't so he could hear everything Rouge was saying and he was recording everything in his mind so he would have the proof for Dr. Eggman. The reason for him spying on Rouge is he had suspicions about Rouge after taking a close look at the way she was acting on the way to the back-up base. She had constantly been looking at Eggman and then shifting to Shadow simultaneously as if she was getting nervous about something so Alonzo decided to spy on Rouge and confirm his suspicions. Even though he was against Eggman, he was doing this to fool Eggman into thinking he was still loyal to him by getting Rouge arrested and making Eggman think he was still a devoted servant. He cackled evilly in his mind as Rouge continued talking to Shadow.

"…so I say me and you ditch Dr. Eggman and start a life of treasure hunting." said Rouge "I'm sure you'll have fun with it and I'm sure we may find clues to your past as we hunt. What do you say Shadow

boy? Doesn't that sound like fun?"

Shadow had listened to everything Rouge was saying and he didn't know what to do. Was his purpose really stealing jewels? And would he find the answers to his past if he tagged along with Rouge? Or was he just a tool for the sly and sexy bat? Was Rouge trying to manipulate him into her own goals? Or was she trying to help him? Shadow had no idea if he should stay with Dr. Eggman, the one who claims to be his creator, or Rouge the Bat, the one who awakened him from stasis. Before he could answer anything though, Dr. Eggman's voice boomed from a megaphone in the ceiling.

"Shadow the Hedgehog, I have located Sonic and friends." he said "They're at a construction site in Stardom Village. Come to the lab and I'll give you the directions."

Shadow walked off without saying a word to Rouge the Bat, as if he had completely forgotten about the conversation they had just had with each other. Shadow left the room and took the elevator to the lab, leaving Rouge and Alonzo alone together. Rouge grumbled to herself.

"Why does that Eggman have to ruin every opportunity I get to convince Shadow to ditch him and run off with me?" she moaned "Can't a girl get any privacy anymore?"

That ' s all I needed to hear … purred Alonzo in his evil mind.

Rouge left the room in a huff, leaving Alonzo alone in the room. Alonzo put himself back online and he pulled a comlink out of his side compartments. He spoke into it.

"Master?" he said into the comlink "I have a shocking revelation for you sir…"

Meanwhile, Sonic and friends had arrived at Stardom Village and Wilson had led everybody to the construction site that he had been talking about earlier. The construction site looked old and was full of construction vehicles that didn't seem to have been used for some

time. There were a couple of bulldozers, four cranes all carrying flatbeds at the end of their hooks, large excavators that looked as big as houses, enormous dump trucks with huge wheels and large dumpers and even cement mixers with their huge rotating barrels that mixed cement mix and water up to make cement. The site looked as if some building work was going on and yet, nobody appeared to be here right now, as if all construction work was abandoned for unknown reasons.

"So this is your little old construction site is it?" asked Sonic "Huh, cool."

"If this is a construction site then why is there no work going on?" asked Tails.

"I don't know myself Tails." said Wilson, thinking about it "But I vaguely recall it having something to do with the company going bust and therefore, abandoning all work that was going on here. Due to the Eggman war, I don't think anybody can be bothered to continue with building work here."

"So if we accidentally wreck the place while fighting Shadow, we won't upset anybody." said Cream, sighing with relief.

"So what do we do now Sonic?" asked Knuckles "Just sit around and wait for Shadow to find us?"

"Um…yes actually." said Sonic "And knowing Eggman who always has a way of finding us somehow, he'll somehow find us and direct Shadow there."

"I hope it doesn't take too long." muttered Knuckles "I'm desperate to get into some action and kick some shadow butt!"

"I'm just the same knuckle head." laughed Sonic "Now, does everybody remember the plan?"

"Yes." replied the group.

"Good." said Sonic "Like Knuckles has said before, it may not work but we have to try whatever chance we have. Shadow must be taken down…"

While Sonic talked to everybody, Mandy stared at a colossal red excavator which had its scoop bucket raised high above the ground. She stared thoughtfully for a moment and then had an idea.

"Hey blue dude." said Mandy "I've got a way we can subdue Shadow."

"You have?" said Sonic, turning around to see Mandy looking at the excavators.

"Sure." said Mandy "Someone could operate that excavator, get a tonne of soil and then drop it on him. We then dig into the soil until we find Shadow and then Geoffrey shoots him before he can squirm his way out of the soil."

"That's a great idea!" Sonic complimented.

"But we need ignition keys to get the vehicles started." noted Tails "And knowing the owners of these vehicles, they probably took the keys with them so we can't get the vehicles working."

"Oh yeah, I can't believe I didn't think of that." muttered Mandy, her big round ears drooping down in despair.

"We don't need ignition keys." said Wilson "Those kind of excavators work with the touch of a button."

"They do?" said Tails, surprised at that fact "How do you know that Wilson?"

"I read about them in a book I once owned as a kid." explained Wilson.

"Well that's convenient." said Mandy happily, running off to the excavator.

She climbed up the ladder on the side of the excavator that led to the cockpit. Mandy opened the door and let herself into the cockpit. She sat down in the driver's seat and pressed the ignition button. The excavator's huge engine roared into life and the enormous machine was functional once again. This gave Mandy an excited feeling in her gut as she took the controls and made the excavator

rotate around 90 degrees and prepare to dig. She had always wanted to drive a huge vehicle and the fact she was driving one of the largest excavators on Mobius made her excited. Mandy pushed on the levers that controlled the excavator's arm and the arm, with a loud hiss and hum of the hydraulics, lowered down to the ground and the huge teeth of the scoop bucket embedded themselves into the dirt. The scoop dug down into the dirt and scooped up a huge pile of it. There was enough dirt to bury a small car under. The arm raised the dirt pile up into the air with a whirr and a clank. Mandy then rotated the excavator back 90 degrees so it was back to facing forwards once again. Sonic looked up at the raised excavator arm carrying a huge pile of dirt in its scoop bucket.

"So that's that plan set up then." said Sonic "We'll easily bury Shadow and subdue him with all of that dirt."

"I'll be amazed if we don't end up squashing the bloke flat!" blurted Geoffrey "We've got enough dirt to crush a hover-car!"

"Oh relax Geoff, we're not going to drop all the dirt." said Sonic "We're just going to drop enough dirt on Shadow to keep him down. We don't wanna kill Shadow, we just wanna put him in a nice comfy prison cell that's all."

"Um…Mr. Sonic?" piped Cream nervously who was flying with her long floppy ears and looking over the fence that surrounded the construction site "I hate to be the…bearer of bad news…but Shadow is coming this way and he looks mad!"

Sonic and friends all looked to their right and surely enough, Shadow the Hedgehog was coming towards them at top speed in skating fashion and he looked like he was ready to kick some serious backside! Shadow ploughed straight through the fence, not bothering to go through the gate, and he skidded to a halt just in front of Sonic and his friends, who all just bent down in battle ready stances and prepared to begin the inevitable showdown. Shadow just glared at the heroes and smiled gloatingly at them. Coincidentally, he ended up standing directly under the excavator's arm, giving Mandy a perfect opportunity to drop dirt on him.

"Hello blue hedgehog," purred Shadow "How nice of you to gather

your play buddies around for a get-together beating. Don't worry though, I "promise" I won't hurt them too much!"

"How the heck did you find us Shadow?" asked Knuckles.

"Dr. Eggman managed to pin-point you on his computer monitors." explained Shadow "One thing I can't help but wonder is why you picked this place to have our fight Sonic?"

"I like our fights to have stylish surroundings." lied Sonic "And I thought a construction site would be a nice place to have a fight. Do you like it?"

"Enough talk blue hedgehog!" snarled Shadow "We're here to fight, not waste time talking! I have a purpose assigned to me by Dr. Eggman and that is to destroy Mobian kind and help Dr. Eggman conquer Mobius! And my conquest will start right here with your deaths!"

"OK then Shadow, let's fight!" yelled Sonic, preparing to launch at Shadow.

Shadow bent down in a battle ready stance and was about to charge at Sonic until Mandy thrust the levers forward and the excavator's scoop bucket tipped down slightly. It was down enough for about half the amount of dirt it had scooped up to slide out from the scoop and drop down straight on top of Shadow who was much too late to react and move out the way. Masses of dirt landed on top of Shadow and soon enough, he was completely submerged under a huge mound of dirt. It looked like he was buried in a giant molehill. Shadow wouldn't be getting out of that in a hurry. Sonic just laughed at his unlucky opponent.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! We win already Shadow!" gloated Sonic "What a surprise! OK Geoff, dig him out and shoot him with a stun-dart already."

"Right-o mate." said Geoffrey, digging into the pile of soil that Shadow was trapped under.

But after only three clumps of dirt had been moved, the underneath

of the dirt pile started to glow red. Geoffrey freaked and ran away, knowing what was going to happen. Sonic saw it too and couldn't believe his eyes.

"No way!" he blurted "How…?"

"… **BLASSSSSSTTTTTTTTTT ! "** roared Shadow from under the dirt pile.

Shadow activated his Chaos Blast and threw the entire dirt pile off of himself, sending huge clumps of dirt raining everywhere and blowing everything near him away, including Sonic and friends. The Mobians all crashed into a wall and the excavator Mandy was in was destroyed by the blast but the mouse had managed to bail out before Shadow activated his Chaos Blast so she lived. Shadow had somehow managed to remove his inhibitor rings despite being buried by dirt and he let loose his deadly Chaos Blast. Shadow reattached his inhibitor rings and looked very angry, so angry in fact it looked like his face was about to change from black to red.

"How dare you try to crush me with a primitive dirt pile!" growled Shadow, pointing sharply at Sonic the Hedgehog "Just for that, I'll make sure all of your deaths will be extremely painful and very gory!"

He then spin-dashed straight into Sonic just as the hedgehog was picking himself up and preparing to fight. Sonic crashed straight through the fence and landed outside the construction yard. This earned Shadow an angry response from Amy Rose and she tried to hammer the hedgehog into the ground with her hammer. Shadow just effortlessly dodged Amy's attack.

"Hey! Fight fair you monster!" screeched Amy, hammering the ground after missing Shadow again "You should give Sonic a chance to fight before you fight.

"I'm not supposed to fight fair!" retorted Shadow, giving Amy a massive uppercut that sent her hurling about fifty feet backwards and landing next to a steel girder "I fight how I wish to fight and that is with brute force!"

Ruben then stepped into the battle by giving Shadow a ninjutsu style kick to the face that knocked the black hedgehog onto his back.

"I wouldn't rely on just brute force alone Shadow." said Ruben, drenching Shadow with a jet of water out of the palms of his hands "Because that won't guarantee you victory all the time, It'll just make you angry and confused and cause you to lose focus on your objectives."

"Oh shut up!" snapped Shadow, throwing a Chaos Spear at Ruben.

Ruben dodged the spear and gave Shadow a kung fu style chop to the face. Shadow retaliated with a punch to the face that made Ruben splutter and then Shadow slugged the water panther in the stomach, winding the water panther and making him gasp. Bunnie Rabbot ran up to Shadow and prepared to punch him in order to save Ruben but Shadow teleported out of the Rabbot's way, causing her to accidentally punch Ruben with her robot arm. Ruben hurtled through the air and crashed head first into a bulldozer's scoop. This in turn knocked him out cold and Bunnie gasped in shock at what she had just accidentally done. Bunnie ran over to Ruben and knelt down by his side to see if he was alright,

"Ruben!" she cried "Ah'm so sorry ah didn't mean it! Shadow teleported outta mah way before ah could hit him!"

Ruben couldn't say anything since he was knocked out. He just lay there as motionless as a statue and with a particularly dead look on his face. To Bunnie's relief, he was still alive but he would be out for a while. Shadow seized the opportunity and spin-dashed Bunnie in the back, causing her to fall forward onto the knocked out Ruben. Bunnie picked herself up and tried to punch Shadow but she missed due to the hedgehog's unbelievable speed and Shadow spin-dashed the Rabbot once again. Tails and Knuckles stepped into fight and they both had their fists bared, ready to let Shadow have it. Shadow, once again, teleported out of their way and Tails and Knuckles ended up accidentally punching each other in the face. Knuckle's punch hurt Tails much more then Tails' punch hurt him and Tails ended up lying on the ground, writhing in pain and choking back tears.

"Tails! You alright buddy?" asked Knuckles worriedly.

"I'll be OK." said Tails "That Shadow's getting sharper I can't help but notice."

Shadow re-appeared behind Tails and grabbed the fox cub by the scruff of his neck. Knuckles tried to attack Shadow and save Tails but Shadow grabbed Knuckles's head and slam-dunked him into the ground. He then proceeded to throw Tails straight into the barrel of a cement mixer truck. Tails landed in the barrel with a clunk and he groaned to himself, rubbing his head and body to ease the pain. Shadow then attempt to destroy the cement mixer truck by throwing Chaos Spears at it in hope of causing it to explode with Tails inside. But before Shadow could throw any Chaos Spears, Knuckles punched Shadow in the cheek and sent him staggering sideways. Shadow recovered only to get an uppercut from the echidna. Shadow hurtled into the air and landed on a pile of cement bags. Shadow picked himself up, picked a cement bag up and tossed it straight at Knuckles! Knuckles punched the bag away but the bag was just to distract him so Shadow could spin-dash him. Knuckles was too late to react and Shadow hit him directly in the torso, knocking him backwards. Wilson and Mandy then double-teamed Shadow with a pair of kicks each but Shadow just swiped his foot at them and kicked them both across the faces with one kick. Mandy retaliated with a punch to the face but Shadow got his own back with a punch to the stomach and then he yanked on Mandy's large round ears, making her yelp. Wilson got mad and tried to bite Shadow but Shadow threw a Chaos Spear at Wilson and hit him in the muzzle. Wilson yelped like a puppy who's gotten its tail trapped in the door and he fell onto his bottom. Mandy managed to wrench herself out of Shadow's grasp and she elbowed the black hedgehog directly in the eye, stunning him momentarily. Mandy roundhouse kicked Shadow in the legs, tripping him up and bringing him down and Mandy pinned him down with her foot. She clenched her fist and prepared to let Shadow have it once again but Shadow teleported from underneath her, causing her to accidentally punch the ground and give herself a sore fist instead. Mandy gripped her hand and grimaced in pain. Shadow reappeared behind Mandy and dropkicked her in the back. Wilson pulled out his trademark spinning blade-weapon and he threw it at Shadow but Shadow ducked,

causing the weapon to miss and impale itself into the ground. Shadow smirked evilly at Wilson and then he ran over to the weapon. He grabbed the double-bladed pole weapon and he threw it at Wilson. Wilson shrieked in terror and ran off just as his weapon was about to hit him. He won the chase and the weapon embedded itself into the ground again. Wilson pulled it out and braced himself as Shadow ran towards him. Wilson feebly pointed the weapon at Shadow, hoping he would accidentally run into it and impale himself on it but Shadow leaped over Wilson and soared over him. He kicked Wilson in the back of the head, causing the dog to fall onto his face and Shadow snatched Wilson's spinning blade. He was about to stab the dog with his own weapon until Cream the Rabbit kicked him in the head. Shadow dropped the weapon and Cream yanked on his black and red quills. Shadow growled furiously at Cream and he tried to punch the rabbit but Cream flew away, causing him to miss and punch himself accidentally. Cosmo then decided to distract Shadow by throwing a clump of dirt into the black hedgehog's eyes. She hit him and Shadow was now momentarily blinded. That move was more then enough time for Amy, Cream and Cosmo to gather together for their swinging hammer move that they did to Shadow before. Cream carried Cosmo and Cosmo carried Amy. Cream swung Cosmo and Amy around and Amy summoned her hammer to her hands. They edged closer and closer to Shadow, who was still rubbing the dirt out of his eyes. Unfortunately, Shadow heard them coming and he leaped backwards, causing the girls to miss him and crash into a heap on the ground. Shadow finally managed to rub the dirt out of his eyes and he spin-dashed Amy, Cream and Cosmo as if they were just a bunch of skittles. Amy landed on her stomach and Cosmo and Cream landed on their backs. Tails flew out of the cement mixer truck's barrel and he flew towards Shadow with his fists at the ready. Shadow retaliated first with a leap into the air and an uppercut to the chin that brought Tails crashing down onto the ground. Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey St. John tried to double-team Shadow with a pair of punches each but Shadow stood upside down on his hands and did a split-kick as they were coming to them, hitting both Bunnie and Geoffrey. Shadow then proceeded to grab Bunnie by the robot arm and swung her over onto her back with a slam. Geoffrey tried to help her but Shadow swung Bunnie directly into Geoffrey, knocking the skunk off his feet. The two lay on the ground in a heap. Shadow laughed at his

opponents.

"Look how pathetic you are!" he sneered "You can't even stand to me! That proves I'm the ultimate life form and I am the superior being in the known galaxy! With my powers and the doctor's leadership, our conquest of this planet is certain and I will have fulfilled my long lost purpose!"

"Oh do you ever shut up Shadow?" said Sonic mockingly, spin-dashing Shadow and knocking him off his feet.

The two crashed into the ground and rolled over each other in roly-poly but Shadow won that one by grabbing Sonic as they were rolling around, getting to his feet and throwing Sonic into a steel girder. Sonic hit the girder with a clang and he felt the wind being sucked out of him. Shadow then grabbed Sonic by the neck and pinned him to the girder.

"Your resilience is beginning to annoy me hedgehog!" growled Shadow "It's time I put you down! Any last words?"

"Yeah." said Sonic "How much does a head butt hurt?"

He then proceeded to head butt Shadow directly in the nose. Shadow screamed in pain and clutched his throbbing nose and Sonic then punched the hedgehog as hard as he could. Shadow hurtled backwards for seven feet. Sonic ran up to Shadow but Shadow leaped out of Sonic's way and reached for the low hanging flat board that was being held aloft by a crane. Sonic leaped after Shadow just as Shadow grabbed the flat board and pulled himself onto it and Sonic grabbed the edge of the flat board. He pulled himself on only to promptly get kicked off by Shadow. Sonic fell back down to the ground but he wasn't down for long. Sonic leaped back onto the flat board just as Shadow leaped off and landed on another flat board held slightly higher up by another crane. Sonic leaped onto the flat board and Shadow leaped off of it. He landed on a very long and wide flat board held a dizzying height above the ground by a third crane. Sonic leaped onto the bed but Shadow once again leaped off of it and landed on an even longer and even wider flat board carried by the fourth and last crane in the yard. Sonic leaped onto the flat board and looked down at the ground. He and Shadow

were about eighty feet off the ground, a very dizzying height indeed and should any of them fall, they would be dead meat at the bottom.

"This is where we shall fight blue hedgehog." said Shadow "Pry you don't fall off and make an unpleasant confrontation with the ground below."

"You'll be the one who's kissing the ground Shadow!" yelled Sonic, running forward to punch Shadow.

Shadow just caught Sonic's fist in his hand and gave Sonic's arm a sharp twist. Sonic yelped in pain and Shadow punched Sonic. Sonic slid backwards and stopped at the edge of the board. Sonic ran back towards Shadow and the two hedgehogs began to have a heated battle. They began rapidly punching at each other faster then kung-fu masters and they continuously began to block each other's blows while throwing punches of their own. Down on the ground below, everybody else was looking up at the two hedgehogs and wondering what was happening. Sonic and Shadow were too high up for them to see what was going on so they couldn't begin to guess who was winning.

"What's going on up there?" asked Cream "Is Mr. Sonic winning?"

"I don't know Cream." said Amy "I have a bad feeling that Sonic needs help tough. I've gotta get up here and help my Sonic. Tails, you fly me up there pronto!"

"OK Amy." said Tails.

He held Amy tightly by the waist and he flew straight up to the flat board that Sonic and Shadow were fighting on. Sonic and Shadow continued to throw punches and fail to hit each other as they continued to block each other. Sonic eventually managed to get a successful hit on Shadow but the blow didn't do much to him. Shadow swung his leg at Sonic but Sonic bent over backwards to dodge the kick. Sonic punched Shadow again but Shadow jumped over Sonic, landed behind him and kicked him as hard as he could. Sonic hurtled forward and almost fell off the flat board. Without even knowing it, he found himself clinging onto the edge of the flat board with his fingers. He desperately tried to pull himself back onto the

flat board but Shadow stood over him with an evil smile on his face.

"Goodbye Sonic." he hissed evilly "It was fun while it lasted."

He stomped on Sonic's fingers, causing him to let go of the flat board and plummet straight down from eighty feet to the ground. Bunnie Rabbot saw Sonic falling and she flew up to him with her jet rockets and just managed to catch him in the nick of time. Shadow saw this and he growled in anger at the fact Sonic had just been saved. Then suddenly, before he could see them coming, Tails and Amy flew up towards him and Amy whacked Shadow with her hammer. Shadow was sent hurling off the flat board and he plummeted down to the ground. Shadow crashed through a wooden floor to an under construction building and he landed with a sharp thump on the concrete floor at the bottom. Shadow grimaced in pain and tried to get back up but the fall had done a good deal of pain to him. Then suddenly, the wooden floor above him caved in without warning and fell straight on top of Shadow. Then the girders keeping the floor upright caved and landed straight on top of the pile of wood. Tails and Amy watched the commotion from their height and they were speechless to see what they had just done.

"Oh…my…gosh!" blurted Amy.

"Did…did we just…kill Shadow?" gasped Tails in surprise.

"I bet we did." said Amy "No one, not even a genetic experiment thingy or whatever he was can survive a fall from this height and get a bunch of wood and girders falling on top of him."

Tails flew Amy back down to the ground where Sonic and friends were waiting for them. Sonic greeted them with a cheery grin on his face.

"Nice move there Tails and Amy!" congratulated Sonic "You got Shadow good and hard!"

"I think we did more then just that Sonic." said Amy "I think we killed him. He plummeted straight down eighty feet and ended up with a bunch of wood and a couple of girders falling onto him. Look over there."

She pointed to the under-construction building that Shadow had crashed through. Sonic could see the pile of wood and the two girders that had fallen down and Shadow was presumably underneath the pile. Sonic grimaced at the gruesome image of Shadow crushed to death under the wood.

"Well I can definitely say that Shadow boy's dead." said Sonic "No one could have survived falling from eighty feet and getting crushed by wood and girders."

"Good riddance!" scoffed Knuckles "He can't be our problem anymore! Dr. Eggman is back to square one now!"

"I don't know about you guys but, I wish we could have found a more peaceful solution to stopping Shadow." said Cosmo gently "I wish we could have tried something like talking him out of his objectives and probably get him to join the side of good. Shadow would have been very useful to the Royal Fighters and he would be a deadly opponent to Dr. Eggman."

"Shadow can't be redeemed." said Tails softly "He would have just scoffed at us and beat us up. I don't think we could have convinced him to change."

"Well Shadow's gone and that's it, end of story, we can go home now." said Sonic "Let's go and tell the Council of Acorn what's happened."

Nobody waited to be asked twice. The Mobians all left the construction site and headed home to Mobotropolis to give the good news out. Bunnie picked up the still unconscious Ruben and left the site. Before leaving the site, Sonic looked over his shoulder at the pile of wood Shadow was presumably buried under. He began to wonder to himself if Shadow could have been redeemed after all. But now he was dead, they would never get the chance. Sonic just shrugged it off and left the construction site and followed his friends home to Mobotropolis. The moment everybody left though, a gloved hand with a golden ring around the wrist punched its way through the pile of wood it was buried under…

Back at Robotropolis, Rouge the Bat had been sitting around the lab waiting for Shadow to return. Shadow had been gone for a while and the bat was beginning to worry. Shadow obviously needed help and he needed it now. She had to go and help Shadow out and fast! Rouge stopped waiting around and ran over to the lab door, ready to make a break for it. The door opened just as she reached it and there stood Dr. Eggman, looking down at Rouge and glaring at her. Alonzo stood behind him with a gleeful smirk on his face. Rouge looked worriedly up at Eggman and wondered what was happening.

"Hi doc." she said calmly "What's the occasion?"

"Rouge, I'd like a word with you." said Dr. Eggman coldly.

He grabbed Rouge by the arm and hauled her out of the lab and down a corridor.

Oh uh! thought Rouge worriedly *I ' ve been found out! Eggman ' s gonna kill me now!*

Eggman dragged Rouge down the corridor by her arm with Alonzo following him and trying hard not to look at Rouge and grin evilly. . Who knew what the bat was in for right now but anyone could guess it wouldn't be pleasant…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 11 for Sonic's roboticization**

**** And then see Story 20 for Eggman's victory over Sonic in a battle**

***** It sure did in Story 57**

****** Go all the way back to Story 3 and refresh your memory, it really was a long time ago wasn't it?**

******* Don't tell me you don't remember the Ruthless Relatives arc (Stories 33-35) do you?**

Shadow's still alive and Rouge is in trouble! What's gonna happened next? Tune in next time as the Shadow saga comes to a close and a new one begins...Reviews are welcome

Thanks to all my reviewers for your reviews. On a side note Chaos Kai X, what do you mean by do I take OCs and what errors do I keep making? Whenever you review this story, you constantly tell me I'm making errors. What errors are they? They're not serious are they?

The Shadow Still Stands

Story 63: The Shadow Still Stands

The Stardom Village construction site was thought to have become the final resting place of the dangerous Shadow the Hedgehog after a heated a hectic fight with Sonic the Hedgehog and friends which resulted in him getting whacked off a high hanging flat board and sent crashing down to the ground and getting piled on by a bunch of wood and a couple of girders. Somehow though, Shadow had managed to survive all of that. He punched his way out through the wood and he pulled himself back onto his feet while shifting huge planks of wood away. After dusting himself off and freeing himself from the wood pile, Shadow growled ever so furiously. He was very mad at his loss but it wasn't due to the fact that he got knocked off a high place, it was the fact he got knocked off a high place by a pink girl with a big hammer. A defeat by Sonic's hands would have been less humiliating but getting defeated by Amy Rose? That was the epitome of humiliating! Just the thought of the fact he got beaten by a girl made Shadow's skin crawl and made him want to destroy things in anger.

"Beaten by a girl!" he mused "How humiliating! It's bad enough that the blue hedgehog is a thorn in my side but I got knocked off a flat board and almost killed by a pink female hedgehog! Sonic and his friends will pay for this!"

He could feel his Chaos energies pulsing through his veins as he tensed up angrily. He then suddenly felt a wave of pain surge over his back and he grimaced in pain. The fall had hurt him very badly and he would need to go home and rest back in Robotropolis.

"I'm hurt." muttered Shadow "I'd best return to…to…Robo…um… what was the name of the doctor's city again? Speaking of which… who's this doctor I'm thinking of?"

The fall from the flat board hadn't just severely hurt Shadow and almost cost him his life. It had caused him to have memory loss all

over again. The only thing he hadn't forgotten was his name, Sonic's name and what happened to him five minutes ago. He had forgotten about Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman, Alonzo and even Rouge the Bat, the one who had awakened him from stasis. Shadow began to think hard, trying to remember Dr. Eggman and Robotropolis but he just couldn't remember. His mind was blank after that nasty fall.

"I can't remember my creator and where he lives." said Shadow "How am I going to return to…wherever my creator lives if I can't remember? I need to go for a look around this planet and ask some questions. Maybe someone can jog my memory."

Shadow stopped waiting around and he skated off on his jet shoes in a random direction. He didn't know who he wanted to ask but he didn't really care on that either as he could ask anybody on the subject matter. It was a huge pity that the direction he was running in just happened to be the direction to Ruben the Water Panther's home country…Chun-Nan…

Back in Robotropolis, Rouge the Bat had been strapped by her arms and legs to a steel bed that was raised upright and a bright light was shining in her eyes, making it hard for her to keep them open. Rouge struggled feebly in her bonds but try as she might, she couldn't get free. She wasn't strong enough. She was a prisoner now, a prisoner at Dr. Eggman's mercy. Speaking of Eggman, how did he manage to figure out that she was plotting against him? Had someone snitched on her? If that was the case then who did it and how did they manage it? Then Rouge remembered Alonzo shutting himself off earlier. Alonzo probably didn't shut himself off as he had made it out as, instead he was pretending to be shut down so he could spy on Rouge and tattle on her to Dr. Eggman like a goody-goody two shoes. Well how dare he! Once she got free, she would screw-kick Alonzo until there was nothing left of the snitching little worm! The only trouble was, she couldn't get free. Dr. Eggman glared at his prisoner with his arms folded. Rouge just shot him a steely glare and struggle in her bonds.

"Ugh! Let me go Dr. Eggman!" she grunted "Is this anyway to treat one of your minions?"

"You're not my minion anymore Rouge!" snapped Dr. Eggman "You are a traitor and a liar and you will be punished for it!"

"Traitor? Me?" purred Rouge innocently "How awful, wherever did you get a horrible idea like that tubby boy?"

"Alonzo tells me that you've been trying to get Shadow to abandon me and join you!" shouted Dr. Eggman "And don't you dare lie to me by saying you weren't because he has recorded evidence of your mutiny!"

Alonzo smirked gloatingly at Rouge. Rouge shot the butler bot a death glare but because she was restrained, she couldn't look very scary to him. Dr. Eggman continued.

"I promise you my secret treasure should you serve me faithfully and this is how you repay me?" exclaimed Dr. Eggman "How ungrateful can you get you flying rat?"

"I only joined you because I wanted Shadow boy on my side." said Rouge smoothly "I had a sneaky suspicion your "secret treasure" was nothing more then a pretence to trick lil' ol me into serving you so I decided to pretend I was fooled and I tagged along just so I could attempt to get Shadow to run off with me. You've been had Eggman, I was never on your side to begin with. As I always say, I'm a jewel thief, but I'm not a villain."

Dr. Eggman took all of this in well and instead of getting angry at Rouge, he smiled awkwardly at her, making the bat feel extremely uncomfortable and afraid. This was not looking good at all.

"Well Rouge, you were right to be suspicious about me secret treasure because it WAS a lie!" laughed Dr. Eggman "I thought that with you being a treasure hunter, you'd fall for that lie of mine but apparently you didn't. You're smarter then I took you to be. Well since you're not on my side for real, I'll have to force you to be on my side for real!"

"What do you mean?" asked Rouge coyly "Dress me in uniform and turn me into an Eggman robot?"

"No Rouge." said Dr. Eggman "I am going to roboticize you! And as it so happens, you're in the roboticizer chamber right now so we can begin the process!"

"What?" shrieked Rouge "No! Please! Not the roboticizer! Anything but the roboticizer!" she begged desperately, sweating madly.

"Alonzo, activate the roboticizer!" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

"With pleasure sir." purred Alonzo loyally.

Alonzo zipped over to a control panel and he pressed a button. A diamond glass cage began to descend down from the ceiling above Rouge's head and close around her. The frightened bat struggled madly in her binds but she just couldn't free herself. The cage closed around Rouge, trapping her even more now and Alonzo pressed the "activate" button on the control pad. The roboticizer cage began to glow a brilliant blue glow as Rouge was zapped by electricity. She howled at the top of her voice as the cage was engulfed in a bright light. After a moment of bright flashing, the glow died down into nothingness and the roboticizer cage opened up. Rouge the Bat was no longer lying strapped to the bed. In her place was a roboticized version of Rouge. Flesh and bone had been replaced by metal and oil and her beautiful blue eyes were now optics that glowed an icy blue colour that made her look cold and deathly serious. She was completely silver and white in colour now and her wings looked as sharp as a flint. She was now Mecha Rouge. Mecha Rouge pulled on her bonds and effortlessly ripped them out of their sockets, freeing herself and she stood up from the bed, her robotical joints whirring and her feet clanking as she stood up straight. She stood in a ready for duty position and she droned in a robotical voice at Dr. Eggman.

"Mecha-Rouge-on-line-and-wait-ing-for-orders."

"Welcome to the Eggman Empire my dear!" Dr. Eggman announced in a welcoming manner "You have no orders yet so standby and await my command Mecha Rouge."

"I-o-bey." droned Mecha Rouge.

She remained where she was and stood as still as a statue. Dr. Eggman walked away, very pleased with himself and he left the roboticizer chamber with Alonzo following him.

"I must say master, that was a good move." said Alonzo "Rouge is a strong woman in battle so Mecha Rouge will be even stronger. Sonic and friends will have their hands full won't they?"

"They certainly will Shadow." said Dr. Eggman "After all, you know what they say! The more the merrier! Now come along my loyal servant, we've got to find Shadow. He hasn't come back to me yet so I'm assuming he's in trouble and needs my help. We're going to go and look for him."

Where he would find Shadow would be the last place Eggman would expect to find Shadow though, the holy country of Chun-Nan…

"No, no Mushu that doesn't like right." said kung-fu master and dagger thrower Bladefeather the Falcon to his silent companion Mushu the Iguana who was at the top of a large statue and adjusting the head "The head looks a little boorish at this angle. Try making it face the front."

Mushu nodded and with a strain and a push, he pushed the head of the statue so it now faced the front. The statue that Mushu was on was a statue of their beloved and well respected emperor Dalon Tai who was the emperor of Chun-Nan and a much loved figure amongst the locals. Bladefeather and Mushu had decided to build a statue of the emperor in his honour and they were building it near his home which was the Pagoda of Prosperity. Sonic and friends had saved it from the nefarious Zira the Ruthless when they visited Chun-Nan* and since then, Chun-Nan had been having no problems whatsoever. Everything had just been going as normally and everybody was pleased about it. After Mushu adjusted the statue's head, Bladefeather stepped back to admire the statue. The statue of Emperor Tai was sculpted in a noble pose which was Tai having his hand over his chest and holding the flag of Chun-Nan, which was a real flag and not made out of stone. Bladefeather smiled at his and Mushu's work.

"Hey Mushu, come down here and admire this radiant work of ours old friend." Bladefeather called to the iguana.

Mushu climbed down from the statue and stood back to admire it along with Bladefeather. It had only just dawned on him as to how wonderful the statue truly looked and how it captured Emperor Tai's personality to a T. It truly was a great tribute to their great emperor and all carved out of stone. Mushu smiled widely and gave Bladefeather a pair of thumbs up.

"I agree with you Mushu, its magnanimous and meritorious work isn't it?" said Bladefeather "Emperor Tai will be most proud of this honouree piece of sculpture which we have carved with our own hands."

Sadly, Emperor Tai wasn't here at the moment. He was out in the village to see how things were coming on. His daughter, the beautiful Princess Matilda had stayed behind and she came out of the pagoda to see how the statue was coming on. The statue looked amazing to her and she was very pleased with the hard work Mushu and Bladefeather had just done for her father.

"This is amazing!" cried Matilda "You two did a very good job on the statue. Well done, my daddy will love this!"

"I know he will my elegant princess." said Bladefeather, politely kissing Matilda on the hand "We've worked callously on this and Mushu, the real artist behind the statue tried his hardest to make sure that every tiny little detail on the statue was absolutely perfect, didn't you old friend."

Mushu just nodded.

"I can't help but wonder what made you wanna make a statue in my father's honour anyway." said Matilda "I appreciate the thought but, what made you wanna do it Bladefeather?"

"Just the fact I am unwaveringly loyal to our emperor and I thought he deserved something noble and glorious to show my appreciation for his reign over Chun-Nan." said Bladefeather "There's nothing unrighteous about it is there?"

"Not at all." said Matilda "I'm just amazed as to how kind you are. I'm so glad you don't work for Zira anymore."

"Nobody's more pleased about that fortunate turn of events then me." said Bladefeather "Zira threw me into obscurity and I was in depredation when I was forced to serve her along with Mushu but after the righteous and valorous acts of Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends, we managed to break Zira's hold over us. Now Zira has been defeated, Chun-Nan has nothing to worry about now."

Sadly, that wasn't going to be the case. For out of nowhere, Shadow appeared and ran up to the Pagoda of Prosperity. He leaped onto the pagoda, jumped off of it and accidentally crashed into Tai's statue. He knocked the head clean off of it's body and sent it crashing down on the ground, almost landing on top of Matilda until Mushu managed to get her out of the way just in time. The head shattered into a million pebbles and rocks, running Bladefeather and Mushu's hard work and leaving the statue headless. Bladefeather immediately got mad and he tugged on his feathers while hoping about in a hissy fit.

"Oh of all the unrighteous and peevish things to happen!" cursed Bladefeather "Chun-Nan was beginning to recuperate from all of Zira's wrong doing and now somebody takes it upon themselves to wreck mine and Mushu's hard work! I am going to personally castigate the person responsible for this pernicious and repugnant act of theirs!"

Mushu spoke to Matilda in sign language, signing out the words "Are you OK?" with his hands.

"I'm fine thank you." said Matilda "But who's the heartless brute who just decided to wreck my daddy's statue?"

"Who knows?" grumbled Bladefeather "But once I catch the canaille responsible for this, I will not be very lenient on him!"

Mushu got to his feet and saw something. He tapped Bladefeather on the shoulder, earning a shot from an angry face at him. Mushu then pointed to the thing he was looking at and Bladefeather looked at what Mushu was looking at. They were both looking at Shadow

the Hedgehog who stood before them with a blank expression on his face. The sight of such a creature was baffling to the kung-fu masters but Bladefeather didn't let that bother him. Instead he drew out a pair of daggers and prepared to fight.

"Well, well, well." he said coldly "It appears we have a pretentious little mendicant who's begging for an acerbic beating."

"Pretentious?" asked Shadow "What do you mean bird brain?"

"I mean you look vaguely like Sonic the Hedgehog but really, you aren't Sonic the Hedgehog." noted Bladefeather "That's very pretentious to me."

"You're right, I'm not Sonic the Hedgehog." said Shadow "I am Shadow the Hedgehog, the ultimate life form and a being with a lost purpose. I'm here to ask some questions."

"Oh are you know you vulgar, pedantic little brat?" snarled Bladefeather "Well vis-à-vis what's just happened, you've wrecked my statue and almost killed Princess Matilda in the process so you must be castigated for it. You penance will be too great for me to describe shadow hog."

"Look here you pompous old windbag, I'm not here to fight!" yelled Shadow "I'm just wondering where my creator is and what my purpose is and I wanna ask some questions!"

"Well tough luck you boorish, perfidious, abhorrent little demon!" snapped Bladefeather "I do not accede people who just throw their weight around trying to aggrandize themselves and go wrecking other people's property! I am going to educate that abysmal mind of yours with some much needed manners! Mushu, you join me."

Mushu nodded and bent down in a battle ready stance beside Bladefeather.

"Matilda, get inside." ordered Bladefeather "The vehemence of this fight maybe too much for you to stomach."

Matilda did as she was told and she ran back into the safety of the pagoda while Bladefeather and Mushu prepared to cut loose on

Shadow. Shadow bent down in a battle ready stance, wondering why Bladefeather and Mushu wanted to hurt him. Maybe the statue he had damaged was of some importance and he had riled them by damaging it but that gave them no reason to engage him in battle! Still, if they were so desperate to get their faces pounded then he would be happy to oblige. Bladefeather threw a dagger at Shadow but Shadow swiped his arm and stopped the dagger with a Chaos Spear. The dagger was reduced to shards of metal. Bladefeather gasped in horror and Mushu just stared opened mouthed at what just happened.

"The mendicant just…shattered my dagger!" he choked "That is some aberrant power behind that little boy!"

"I tried to warn you." said Shadow coldly "But you wouldn't listen you stuck-up little fool! Now you'll get the pounding you so desperately want!"

With that said, Shadow charged towards Bladefeather at top speed and tackled him. Bladefeather hurtled backwards into the Pagoda of Prosperity and almost crashed straight through the wall. Mushu growled a feeble, weak growl due to the fact his voice box had been damaged by Zira and he ran up to Shadow with his fists clenched and his teeth bared. Shadow jumped into the air and dropkicked the kung-fu master in the head but a mere kick to the head was nothing special to Mushu as he was a kung-fu master and thus, was tougher then the average person. Mushu quickly recovered and whacked Shadow with his tough tail. To Shadow, Mushu's tail felt more like a club and he was sent hurling backwards. Shadow landed on his back and Mushu advanced menacingly on him. He cupped his hand around his fist and gritted his teeth. Shadow stared up at Mushu and Mushu drew his arm back, ready to let Shadow have it in the face. Shadow rolled over, causing Mushu to miss him and punch the ground by accident and Shadow socked Mushu in the face. Mushu shook his head but Shadow leaned back on his hands and kicked Mushu in the gut. Mushu fell over onto his back and Shadow stood over him with a cocky grin on his face.

"How did that feel lizard boy?" he sneered.

Mushu just stared at him wordlessly and he picked himself up. He

glared at Shadow with his reptilian eyes but Shadow didn't show any signs of fear. He was just puzzled as to why Mushu wasn't giving him any cocky response or something like that.

"Well?" asked Shadow "Aren't you going to say something?"

"He can't dark boy." Bladefeather answered for the mute iguana "He is unable to verbally communicate due to a fight that ended with him getting his voice box damaged so you'll have to get used to Mushu's silence."

"He can't talk eh?" said Shadow "Oh well, at least he can't annoy me with insults of any kind."

"Mushu may not be able to talk but that doesn't mean he's not a good fighter Shadow." said Bladefeather dryly "And you're about to find that out."

Mushu then proceeded to give Shadow a powerful kick to the gut and Shadow hurtled backwards a good few feet. Shadow skidded to a halt and he ran back to Mushu. Mushu stood to the side and let Bladefeather smack Shadow away with his wing. Shadow ended up crashing face-first into the ground, Bladefeather then pinned Shadow down to the ground with his sharp talons and he proceeded to pick Shadow up, using his other leg to remain standing. Bladefeather then flapped his wings and lifted himself off the ground slightly and he spun Shadow around in a perfect circle. He then let go of Shadow and tossed him a good distance away from the pagoda. Shadow landed at the bottom of the hill that the pagoda was on top of and he came to a stop just near the lake that wasn't far from the hilltop. Bladefeather flew down to the ground whereas Mushu just ran down to the bottom of the hill. Shadow picked himself up just as Bladefeather and Mushu landed straight in front of him with angry expressions on their faces.

"You know what Shadow? I think we should cease this abominable fight." said Bladefeather "We don't want to inflict a high level of pain to you just for wrecking a statue and you cannot possibly refute us as we're kung-fu masters so I suggest we propose an armistice to arbitrate the conditions of your defeat and your departure from this holy country."

"Well I say no!" yelled Shadow "You asked for this so you'll get what you wished for feather head!"

"So be it." snarled Bladefeather "You'll only regret it later you obstinate imbecile."

Shadow, Bladefeather and Mushu all charged at each other, yelling at the top of their voices and lunging into the air towards each other…

Back at Mobotropolis, Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends Tails the twin-tailed fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot and Ruben the Water Panther (who had just recovered from his unfortunate collusion with a bulldozer earlier although his head was wrapped in bandages) were standing before the Council of Acorn, Castle Acorn's house of government and delivering them the "good" news.

"Queen Sally Acorn." said Sonic, bowing down respectfully to the queen squirrel who was on the high bench with the other council members and her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx beside her "We have some mondo good news for you."

"Really?" said Sally with a twinge of excitement in her gut "Please explain. We're all eager to hear it."

"We've just defeated Shadow the Hedgehog in a fight." said Tails "Although we more then just defeated him though."

"We actually killed him." added Amy "Tails flew me up to Shadow and I hit him off a high place with my hammer and he fell to the ground and ended up getting buried by wood and a couple of girders. I don't think he could have possibly survived that, even if he claims to be the ultimate life form."

The council murmured amongst each other in glee.

"That is good news." said Nicole "Now Shadow is gone, we only have Dr. Eggman to worry about now."

"But what about that double-crossing bat Rouge?" asked Knuckles furiously "She's probably still working for Eggman and she's just as big a problem to deal with and I should know, I've had tussles with her for years on Angel Island."

"Knuckles, don't sweat it buddy." said Sonic reassuringly "Rouge can actually be handled, Shadow couldn't so we had to get rid of him. Rouge, maybe we can hopefully talk her out of working for Eggman. Maybe promise her some fancy jewels or something."

"Alright then." said Knuckles "But I'm still going to throw her in a prison cell of Angel Island for all the bad she's done in her life!"

"You do that if you want knuckle-head." said Sonic casually "I'm not bothered about that bat."

"So Royal Fighters, do you have any other news to give?" asked Sally Acorn.

"No your highness, that's all we came to give you." said Geoffrey, bowing politely to the queen squirrel.

"Well in that case, that's it for now." said Sally "Thank you for delivering us this good piece of news Sonic."

"No problem Queenie." said Sonic casually.

"This meeting is over and you're all dismissed." said Sally proudly "Have a nice day everybody and we look forward to seeing you next…"

Then suddenly, a messenger who was a boar dressed in a royal outfit burst frantically into the room. He looked frantic as if he'd just heard that the castle was about to blow up any second now.

"Gorton, what is it?" asked Sally with a tone of concern in her voice.

"I've just got a message snort! from Chun-Nan!" blurted the boar, pulling a letter out of his pocket "I just grunt! received it from a messenger bird ten minutes ago snort!. Apparently, the villagers of Chun-Nan oink! had reported seeing a black hedgehog with red stripes up at the Pagoda of Prosperity grunt! and is attacking the

local heroes Bladefeather and Mushu!"

Ruben was the first person to react to that startling piece of news and everybody else gasped after him. Even the council gasped in surprise.

"No way!" shrieked Sonic "Shadow's still alive?"

"Impossible!" cried Tails "No one can survive an eighty foot fall and getting piled on by wood and girders!"

Ruben however, seemed more horrified at the fact Shadow was attacking Chun-Nan then the fact Shadow was still alive.

"My…my home country is…under attack?" he gasped "This is horrible! Shadow's probably attempting to assassinate Emperor Tai and Princess Matilda! I must go and save Chun-Nan at once!"

"No Ruben, you need to rest." said Cosmo hastily "Your head's still recovering from that sharp bump you've had after crashing into a bulldozer."

"But I must save my country!" protested Ruben "I may not live in Chun-Nan anymore but I must still show my love and appreciation to the country by helping to defend it!"

"Tell you what Ruben old buddy." said Sonic with a nice smile on his face "I'll go to Chun-Nan for you and stomp on Shadow and show him what happens to those who mess with the people of Chun-Nan. I promise that Shadow will be kicked out of Chun-Nan faster then you can say "Let's do it to it team!"."

Ruben thought for a moment. He knew he could rely on Sonic to save the day but he wanted to save Chun-Nan from Shadow. Regardless, his mother had taught him that acting with a serious injury is guaranteed a very painful and dis-honouree defeat so he had to reluctantly sit out of this mission and let his head recover before fighting again.

"OK Sonic." said Ruben "I'll trust you to save my former home from destruction."

"Good boy Ruben." said Sonic "Well I'll be juicing, see ya everybody!"

"Wait!" cried Bunnie Rabbot "Can't we come with ya'll?"

"No, I'll handle this myself." said Sonic "Not to mention Bladefeather and Mushu will be able to hold their own against Shadow so they'll be all the help I need. See ya later guys and gals!"

With that said, Sonic ran out of the council room at his trademark speed. After Sonic left, Sally spoke up.

"Never mind everybody." she said kindly "There's always a next time. Now since there's nothing else to discuss, you're all free to go now. Goodbye and wish Sonic luck in Chun-Nan everybody."

Everybody obeyed their queen and they left the room. As they walked through the hallway to the doors of Castle Acorn, Ruben began to wonder what was going on in Chun-Nan right now and if Emperor Tai and Princess Matilda were alright. If not then Sonic would be on hand to save them as always. It was just a worrying thought that Shadow was attacking Chun-Nan. The only question was…why? They may never know the answer but all that mattered was that Shadow was ejected from Chun-Nan immediately before he harmed anybody…

Meanwhile in Rainbow Wood, Scourge the Hedgehog, his dweeby sidekick Ginger and their newest recruit, the former Royal Fighter and down-in-her-luck Fiona Fox, were preparing for Scourge's next big scheme. Fiona and Ginger stood to attention while Scourge explained what his plan was.

"OK you foxes, my good thinking has helped me come up with an excellent idea which will guarantee me the throne of Castle Acorn and my first step to conquering the world." said Scourge, pacing back and forth and flipping his sunglasses over his eyes.

"What is this excellent idea?" asked Fiona, looking forward to hearing what Scourge had to say.

"This excellent idea…" purred Scourge with a flashy grin on his face that made Fiona feel faint "…involves us taking over Royal HQ, the supposed clubhouse that Sonic and his fluffy buddies cuddle up together in after missions. Once we gain control over Royal HQ and beat Sonic's friends into a bunch of pulps, we'll be able to command the Royal Fighters Service and they'll have to serve us no matter the consequences."

"Oh brilliant Scourge! That is a brilliant idea! You're a genius!" applauded Ginger, happily.

"Shut up fool." snapped Scourge "I already told you the stinking' plan so you should already know it dweeb."

"Sorry, I keep forgetting." protested Ginger.

"Why is this dork with you again Scourge?" asked Fiona, mystified as to why the all powerful Scourge the Hedgehog would be hanging out with some dweeby little kid.

"He's there for stress relief, nothing more Fi." said Scourge "Although he can be a teensy bit helpful when he's in the right place."

"You got that right." said Ginger with a gloating grin on his face.

Scourge ignored him and began talking to Fiona again.

"Before we do anything though, I have a few things to clear up first Fi." said Scourge, pointing sharply at her and giving her a steely stare from behind his sunglasses "One: you'd better not be joining me just so you can get the drop on me to redeem yourself and get yourself back in the R.F.S. or you'll know about it!"

"Scourge, I would rather cut my arm off then dare try to mutiny against you!" shrieked Fiona "I am not attempting to get the drop on you, the R.F.S. are nothing to me anymore, I'm a villain now and that's that!"

"Good." said Scourge "Makes you smarter then the others. Second: How strong are you babe?"

Fiona seemed to have missed the fact Scourge called her babe as she answered him without saying anything about being called babe.

"I'm strong enough to defend myself." said Fiona "I once beat up a tough cop named General Chipper in order to save myself from getting arrested. He's pretty strong for a chipmunk."

"Yeah he is." muttered Scourge, remembering his time in prison before he escaped "So you're strong are ya? That's good, I don't take wimps in my gang."

"You don't need to tell me." said Fiona "However, I think I need a little bit of training though so I'll be a little tougher then before. After all, I need all the strength I can get if I'm going up against my former comrades."

"Training eh?" mused Scourge "Well that can be arranged Fiona. First though, let's see how hard you can hit."

"OK." said Fiona agreeably "What do you want me to do?"

"Kick Ginger as hard as you possibly can." ordered Scourge with a sadistic grin on his face.

"WHAT?" shrieked Ginger "Scourge, when I joined you, this is not what I signed up for! I wanted to be your sidekick, not your punching bag!"

"Oh grow up Ginger and know your place." snapped Scourge "Fiona, kick him as hard as you can!"

Fiona didn't see much point in just kicking Ginger for the hell of it but if she was to show Scourge how hard she could kick, she had to do it. She drew her foot back and kicked Ginger right in the tender spot. Ginger screamed like a five year old girl and he fell onto his knees, clutching his tender spot. If there was anyone who kicked him in the groin harder then anybody who's ever done it, it would have to be Fiona. Scourge could kick him pretty hard but Fiona's shoes had steel toe caps so that made things all the more painful. Scourge just laughed like a school bully at Ginger.

"Oh Fiona that was priceless!" he cackled, wiping a tear out of his

eye "You can kick pretty hard…for a girl that is."

"Um…thank you?" said Fiona, slightly offended by the remark but didn't dare show it in fear of angering Scourge "So what do you want me to do now? Punch Ginger as hard as I can?"

"No, I think Ginger's had enough abuse to him for one day." said Scourge in a fake tone of sympathy "I think I'll give him a rest now. What I do want you to do though is punch ME as hard as you can and I'll be able to see how tough you are."

"What?" exclaimed Fiona "I can't punch you Scourge, you'll cripple me for this!"

"No I won't babe." said Scourge "I'm a tough guy, I can take Sonic's spin-dashes so a punch won't be that bad. Go on Fiona, hit me as hard as you can and prove to me you're tough enough to be on my side!"

Fiona gulped nervously and clenched her fists feebly. She really didn't want to punch Scourge but she had to otherwise she'd never convince Scourge she was tough enough for him. With reluctance and a heavy sigh, Fiona drew her arm back and feebly thumped Scourge on the shoulder. Scourge just laughed at her.

"Is that the best you can do?" he sneered "Punch me harder you weakling!"

Fiona frowned at Scourge and she drew her arm back. Without a moment's hesitance, she socked him directly in the face, actually knocking the stunned hedgehog off of his feet and onto his back! Fiona gasped at what she had just done and began fearing the worst. She instantly knelt down beside Scourge and began panicking.

"Scourge? I'm sorry, I didn't mean to punch you that hard! Don't kill me for this!" shrieked Fiona.

Scourge just sat up straight and felt his cheek which was throbbing like mad, ignoring Fiona's worries.

"No one's ever hit me as hard as that before…" he mused to himself

and then he said to Fiona "Good punch Fi. You've got the power of a man in ya."

"I have?" said Fiona, relieved that Scourge wasn't going to deck her for punching him "Well I guess being on the run 24/7 pays off for you."

"Well Fiona, you're tough enough to be in my gang." said Scourge happily "I'm glad you've joined me. But there's more to being strong then just punching and kicking very hard. How well can you fight Fi?"

"I dunno really." said Fiona "I haven't had many fights and most of my missions with the R.F.S. ended up with me needing to be rescued."

"Well in that case, maybe me and you should have a friendly contest to see how well you can fight." suggested Scourge "Don't worry Fi, I'll go easy on ya just because you're my sidekick."

Fiona wasn't so sure about this idea. For all she knew, Scourge could be lying through his teeth and end up cutting loose on her but she would never prove how good at fighting she was unless she showed Scourge her fighting skills. So whether she wanted to or not, she would have to fight Scourge. Thank goodness it was only a training match and not a serious fight.

"OK Scourge, I accept." said Fiona "I'll warn you though, I may give you a few nasty bruises."

"Go ahead, I can take it." bragged Scourge.

Scourge and Fiona stared each other down and bent down in battle ready stances. Ginger had recovered from his very painful encounter with Fiona's foot just in time to watch the fight. Scourge and Fiona then lunged at each other, ready to show off their fighting abilities…

Back in Chun-Nan, the fight between Shadow and the kung-fu masters was only getting more hectic by the second. Bladefeather

and Mushu were pretty surprised as to how well the black hedgehog was holding out against their kung-fu strength. No matter how hard they hit him, the black hedgehog was still standing and fighting. Shadow gave Bladefeather an uppercut to the beak that startled the falcon momentarily and then Shadow grabbed Bladefeather's wing and flipped him over onto his back. Shadow then threw Bladefeather straight into Mushu and the falcon knocked the iguana off his feet and onto his back. Bladefeather wasn't down for long though, being a kung-fu master he had a lot of stamina. He picked himself up and summoned a pair of daggers to his hands.

"Right, that is it!" growled Bladefeather "This abysmal conflict has gone on for too long! It's time to end this variance with my signature move!"

He then spun himself around like a spinning top and began shooting daggers in every direction at once. Mushu ducked down to the ground so he wouldn't get skewered by the daggers and Shadow just teleported out of Bladefeather's way. He reappeared above the spinning falcon, using his jet shoes to hover momentarily and then he dropkicked the falcon, stopping his dangerous move and bringing the falcon down onto his back. Bladefeather dropped whatever daggers he was about to throw and he groaned in anger.

"Just give up already feather brain!" growled Shadow "You can't beat me! I'm too powerful! Now stop being such a fool and lay-off or I'm going to have to seriously hurt you, even though I don't really want to have to right now!"

"Nothing is too vigorous for a kung-fu master!" retorted Bladefeather "We'll fathom you eventually dark warrior!"

Shadow just scoffed and prepared to kick Bladefeather's head in an attempt to knock him out so he could leave but Mushu appeared from nowhere and landed a powerful punch to Shadow's face, knocking the black hedgehog off of Bladefeather and sending him rolling across the ground. Mushu helped Bladefeather back to his feet and the two kung-fu masters prepared to continue fighting. Shadow picked himself up and was just about to start fighting again until he was spin-dashed from behind by Sonic the Hedgehog. The super speedy hero had finally arrived at Chun-Nan at last. Shadow

looked up at Sonic and gritted his teeth in anger.

"Sonic!" he growled.

"Hey Shadow." said Sonic with a mocking wave "What's the occasion? You on vacation or something?"

"Sonic the Hedgehog." said Bladefeather in a respecting tone "How magnanimous it is to see you again noble warrior."

"Hey Bladefeather." said Sonic "What's Shadow doing to bother you two then?"

"Well the canaille decided to take it upon himself to wreck Emperor Tai's statue, which Mushu and I have spent long callous hours making and it almost ended up killing Princess Matilda in the process so we took it upon ourselves to educate the boorish little brat with some heavily needed manners. Amazingly, he's managing to hold his own against us. He's a very vigorous fighter with an unbearable tone of fiduciary in his bloodstream."

"Yeah, Shadow's a toughie." said Sonic "My friends and I have been in conflict with him this past day and we thought we finally defeated him once and for all but somehow he's still alive."

"Unfortunately for you." put in Shadow, spin-dashing Sonic in the back and knocking him over "Your pink hedgehog friend almost killed me and she caused me to have some memory loss! I can't remember anything other then my name, your name and the battle in the construction yard so I decided to run around and ask some questions to see if anyone knows anything about my past and I ended up in a fight with those two kung-fu guys. Now you're here, I may as well make you pay for almost killing me Sonic the Hedgehog!"

Sonic had listened to what Shadow had said to him. He's lost his memory and can only remember his name and his own name? Maybe Sonic could use that to his advantage and probably convince Shadow to join him.

"Hey Shadow." said Sonic "I've got some good news for ya."

"Make it quick." said Shadow "I'm running out of patience."

"You know that you have some lost purpose or something like that?" asked Sonic.

"Yeah?" asked Shadow.

"Well I know what your purpose is." lied Sonic "Your purpose is to protect Mobius from Dr. Eggman. You was created for that very purpose Shadow and we're going to help you complete your objective."

Shadow seemed to take this in well but something didn't seem right about it. There seemed to be a catch somewhere.

"If I'm supposed to protect this planet…then why did you and your friends try to kill me?" asked Shadow.

Sonic pulled a worried face at Shadow. He'd been caught in the act! Shadow wasn't buying any of it!

"Uh…um…" thought Sonic desperately. He couldn't come up with any lie to tell Shadow.

"You're lying to me aren't you?" said Shadow coldly "My purpose is something entirely different isn't it?"

"No!" protested Sonic "Your purpose is to protect Mobius! I swear it!"

"Then why did you and your friends fight me in the construction yard?" demanded Shadow angrily "You must have had a reason of some sorts! Is it because you envy me or something?"

Sonic tried to come up with a convincing lie for Shadow but he couldn't come up with one. Shadow then marched up to Sonic and grabbed the hedgehog around the neck. He hoisted Sonic up to his height and clenched his fist.

"You're a deceiving little hedgehog Sonic and I am going to whup you for this!" yelled Shadow, preparing to punch Sonic's daylights out.

"Put the hedgehog down." ordered a female voice Shadow was unfamiliar with.

Shadow strangely did as he was told and he faced the person who told him to put Sonic down. To Sonic, Bladefeather and Mushu's surprise, it was Princess Matilda standing before Shadow with a brave face on. She didn't look afraid of Shadow and she didn't look afraid to fight either. Shadow stared at Matilda in wonder but he shook it off and glared at her.

"Look lady, this fight is with me and Sonic only." declared Shadow "If I were you, I'd stay out of it. You wouldn't want to get hurt do you?"

"I cannot stand idly by and let you beat up innocent people dark warrior." said Matilda calmly "I am going to finish off this fight."

"Princess, don't be such a senile little fool!" cried Bladefeather "You're not able to fight!"

Matilda ignored the falcon's pleas and continued.

"I don't want to have to resort to fighting though dark warrior." said Matilda softly "We can settle this peacefully and I wish to do just that. Please stop beating up these nice people and leave Chun-Nan and you can save everybody a lot of grief."

"I'm not going to take orders from you!" snarled Shadow "And if you're going to get in my way then I'll be forced to hurt you! Do the sensible thing and step down and I won't have to harm you."

Matilda refused to move. She just casually flipped her hair to the side and stood there, waiting to make a move. Shadow got mad and he skated up to the mongoose in the purple dress, ready to beat the snot out of her. Shadow raised his fist and…Matilda lashed out and grabbed him by the neck with one arm. She lifted Shadow off the ground and then slammed him onto the ground. Shadow gasped in surprise at what had just happened. Matilda then threw Shadow backwards a few feet. Shadow skidded to a halt and ran back towards Matilda. Matilda just stood there and waited for him to come. Shadow was about to attack but Matilda gave Shadow a tremendous uppercut to the chin that felt like an iron fist and seemed

to knock a lot of sense out of Shadow. He staggered backwards and fell onto his back in stunned surprise. Shadow tried to pick himself up but Matilda pinned him down with her foot.

"Please, for your sake, stay down." she said bluntly.

Sonic's jaw dropped in surprise. This was absolutely unbelievable. Shadow just got subdued by Princess Matilda with little to no effort! The blue hedgehog didn't know what to say about that unbelievable act.

"Wow! You guys didn't tell me Matilda could fight!" blurted Sonic.

"Even we didn't know that!" exclaimed Bladefeather "Matilda my blossom flower, however did you learn how to fight like that? You've never shown any fighting abilities or even spoke of having any before!"

"That's because I was supposed to keep this trait secret." said Matilda "But circumstances have forced me to reveal myself. And in answer to your earlier question, I've been given kung-fu lessons in secret since I was five. My daddy took me to a top-secret kung-fu school that nobody knows about and I was trained by a vigilante kung-fu teacher who never shows himself to others and has forbidden me to mention him by name. The reason for this is should anyone attack the Pagoda of Prosperity and I'm the only one around, I can fight them off and they'll never expect it as I don't look like a kung-fu warrior of any kind."

"You must have underwent some very vigorous and callous training Matilda because you're stronger then me and Mushu." complimented Bladefeather "But that just mystifies me as to why you never thought of fighting Zira or me and Mushu when we were forced to work for her."

"Because I couldn't bear to hurt two dear friends of mine." said Matilda "The thought of doing so was too awful. And I'm not at Zira's level of kung-fu yet. I'm still in training and thus, fighting Zira at my current level would guarantee me getting my neck broken so it wasn't the case of I didn't think of fighting Zira, it was the case of I COULDN'T fight her. Hopefully after I train some more, I'll reach her

level of kung-fu and be able to take her on, provided she ever escapes from prison that is."

"I see." said Bladefeather "Still, you with kung-fu skills is a startling revelation but in a meritorious way. I bet your father would be glorified at your valour today."

"He probably would." said Matilda, looking down at the pinned Shadow the Hedgehog under her foot "But I wish I didn't have to resort to this. There was easily a way to settle this peacefully. Pity dark warrior here was too obstinate to back down when he had the chance."

Shadow just glared at the mongoose princess but said nothing at all.

"Well now you've just taken down Shadow for me, I'll happily take him back to Mobotropolis so he can stand trial for all the crimes he's done." said Sonic the Hedgehog "Thanks for your help Matilda. You're way past cool."

"Thank you hero of the west." said Matilda with a slight blush on her beautiful face.

But before Sonic could attempt to apprehend Shadow, a laser blast shot from nowhere and blew him, Bladefeather, Mushu and Matilda away. The shot accidentally caught Shadow too and blew him away. They all landed in a heap and Sonic looked up to see who it was. It was none other then his sworn enemy Dr. Eggman who was flying in his Egg-Mobile with his snivelling sidekick Alonzo. The Egg-Mobile had its laser cannons deployed and it kept them pointed threateningly at Sonic, Matilda, Bladefeather and Mushu. Shadow picked himself up and stared at Dr. Eggman in wonder. He looked familiar to him somehow and so did Alonzo and Eggman's Egg-Mobile. Had he seen them before? Bladefeather, Mushu and Matilda had no idea who Eggman was seeing as he's not been anywhere near Chun-Nan the entire time he's been on Mobius but they immediately assumed he was bad news so they prepared to fight. Sonic picked himself up and frowned at his arch enemy.

"Hello there Sonic the Hedgehog!" Dr. Eggman announced in a stupidly loud manner.

"Eggman!" yelled Sonic "What are you doing here?"

"So I take it this is the nefarious Dr. Eggman that is trying to throw Mobius into a pernicious state hedgehog?" asked Bladefeather, holding two daggers by their blades and preparing to throw them.

"You got that right feathers." said Sonic "This is the man I've been in conflict with for months on end and he's the man who wants to turn Mobius into Robo-topia."

"You got that right Sonic." sneered Dr. Eggman "To your delight though, I'm not here for a fight. I'm just looking for my dear Shadow the Hedgehog and now I've found him, I'll be going now."

Shadow's eyes widened a little. The memories were coming back to him. Dr. Eggman was his supposed creator and he claims his purpose is to destroy all of Mobius and help him take it over! He'd gotten his lost purpose back again! But if that was the case then why did Dr. Eggman shoot him as well as the others? Maybe it was by accident so Shadow didn't let the question bother him. He was just pleased to get his memories back.

"Doctor." said Shadow slowly.

"Hello Shadow, my glorious creation." said Dr. Eggman with a big smile on his face "So nice to see you're alright. Now come along, you need some rest and I've got building work to be getting on with."

Shadow got to his feet and walked over to Dr. Eggman. Sonic just stared at him confusedly.

"Huh?" mused Sonic "I thought Shadow butt said he'd lost all memories except for his name, my name and the fight in the construction yard!"

"If I were to guess hero from the west, maybe Shadow recognizes Eggman and it's brought some of his memory back." suggested Matilda as Shadow climbed into the Egg-Mobile "I didn't know the dark warrior was working with Dr. Eggman though."

"Eggman claims to have created him." said Sonic "I'm not really sure if it's true though I mean, Eggman creates robots, not live Mobians!

Then again, Eggman can be unpredictable sometimes and I bet he wanted to try something new so he made Shadow. But one thing bugs me…" he said, thinking hard "How does Shadow have Chaos abilities such as Chaos Blast when Eggman hasn't got any Chaos Emeralds to give him those abilities? He'd need a Chaos Emerald or two to experiment with so he can give Shadow the powers during his creation."

"If that is the case then that must mean the boy is being deceived." said Bladefeather "No matter though, Mushu here will make Dr. Eggman spill the rice on us."

"How?" asked Sonic.

Bladefeather just smiled and turned to Mushu who was watching Shadow and Eggman as still as a statue and as silent as a grave.

"Seize him old friend." he ordered.

Mushu nodded at Bladefeather and he leaped into the air in a ninja manner. He somersaulted and landed on the Egg-Mobile just behind Eggman, making the vehicle wobble about slightly and he turned around to he was looking down at Eggman. Before Eggman could do anything, Mushu grabbed Eggman's arm and forced it behind his back, making the fat scientist scream in pain. Shadow tried to help Dr. Eggman but Mushu whacked him away with his tail and wrapped his other arm around Dr. Eggman's neck, putting him in a headlock. Bladefeather stood forward with Sonic by his side.

"OK Dr. Eggman, you answer whatever question Sonic has and you'd better answer it truthfully or Mushu will take it upon himself to break your arm." threatened Bladefeather "Don't make me admonish you again."

Dr. Eggman just whimpered in Mushu's tough grasp. He didn't say anything.

"Alright egg-brains." said Sonic "Did you create Shadow the Hedgehog or not?"

Dr. Eggman refused to answer at first but then Mushu gave his arm

a very sharp twist and Eggman yelped in pain. If he wanted to save himself a broken arm then he had to answer.

"OK, OK! I admit it!" shrieked Dr. Eggman "I didn't create Shadow! I found him beside a capsule with Rouge the Bat and I decided to manipulate him into my own goals after learning he had no memory!"

Mushu let go of his arm and jumped back over to Bladefeather. Dr. Eggman gasped for breath. Shadow stared at Dr. Eggman in fury. He could feel the Chaos Energies surging through his veins and his blood boiled.

"You…you lied to me?" he growled "You're…not my creator?"

"Yes Shadow, I lied to you." said Dr. Eggman "But no hard feelings about that right?"

He smiled weakly at Shadow, hoping that it would tempt Shadow not to attack him. Shadow didn't buy Eggman's act and his first response was to spin-dash Eggman's Egg-Mobile into pieces in blind rage. Dr. Eggman yelped as his machine was torn to pieces bit by bit and reduced to a mess of metal, circuitry and fragments. Eggman found himself lying on the ground looking up at the sky and Alonzo found himself doing the same thing. Shadow then glared at Dr. Eggman with his fiery red eyes and he raised his arm, preparing to harm Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman covered his face in fear and whimpered as Shadow prepared to harm him. But Shadow just lowered his arm and pointed sharply at him.

"You're not worth it." he said coldly "But I will get my own back on you doctor. From now on, I am against you and I will do what I can to bring your empire down and that is a promise! Now get out of here before I change my mind!"

Dr. Eggman did not need a second warning. He immediately picked himself up and Alonzo picked himself up too.

"Alonzo, carry me back to Robotropolis!" ordered Dr. Eggman.

"Carry yourself back to Robotropolis you lazy git!" snorted Alonzo,

zipping off on his two little wheels.

Dr. Eggman grumbled at his sidekick but said nothing and just ran after his fleeing minion. Shadow just stood there with his arms folded and an angry scowl on his face as the two villains fled for it. He then looked down at his feet in despair. He thought he'd found his lost purpose but now Eggman turned out to be a lie, he was back to square one.

"I can't believe the doctor tricked me like this." muttered Shadow "He didn't create me after all. But if he didn't create me then who did? And if my purpose is not to destroy Mobius then what is my purpose?"

Matilda strode over to Shadow and looked the black hedgehog in the eye. Shadow looked back at Matilda, wondering if she was going to hurt him again but the fair and kind-hearted mongoose just put her hands on his shoulders and spoke to him.

"You may have a lost purpose but that can be a good thing dark warrior." said Matilda softly "If you have no purpose then you can decide what your purpose can be and you have all the freedom you wish. If you want my advice I say, you choose who you want to be Shadow, you don't have to be what everyone else wants you to be, you be who you wish to be."

Shadow took in Matilda's advice very well and he thought it over. She had some very valid points there. Maybe Shadow didn't need to have a purpose assigned to him. He could just be his own person and no one could rule over his life. Shadow then made up his mind and he looked at Sonic the Hedgehog.

"Blue hedgehog, after taking the mongoose's advice I have decided this." he said to Sonic "I will fight against Eggman and make him pay for deceiving me like this. This does not make us allies, but we are not enemies either. I will go my own ways and help you the best I can. And while I'm at it, I'll see if I can find the true origins of my past."

"Suit yourself Shadow." said Sonic casually "Can't wait to see you on the battlefield."

Shadow just smiled dryly at Sonic and he skated off at top speed on his jet shoes.

"So long Sonic." Shadow called to him over his shoulder "Until the next time."

Sonic just waved his former enemy goodbye. Shadow skated off into the distance, disappearing from sight. Sonic and Matilda watched Shadow disappear and after he left, Sonic spoke up.

"Well that was a pretty easy day for me." said Sonic "Just wait till the guys back home hear the good news. Shadow's no longer on Eggman's side."

"The dark warrior is certainly shrouded in mystery." said Matilda "I bet there's more to him then we know about. Do you think you'll see him again Sonic?"

"Oh yes Matilda." said Sonic "Some day…"

But when that would be was a mystery. For now, Sonic had to wish Shadow luck and hope that he would eventually find what he had been looking for. At least he was no longer an enemy but that didn't mean Eggman was beaten yet, Eggman would be back and who knows what sinister trick he had hiding up his sleeves…

Meanwhile, Scourge and Fiona had been having a pretty intense fight with one another. Fiona had started off rather feebly and was getting beaten pretty easily by Scourge and the evil hedgehog let loose an onslaught of insults to deliberately make her mad and thus, make her more determined to beat him. The more Scourge insulted Fiona, the more effort she seemed to be putting into her fight and to Scourge's surprise, the fox was holding her own against him now. Fiona was proving to be tougher then she made herself out to be. Ginger had been enjoying the fight and wondered who was going to win. Fiona kicked at Scourge but the green hedgehog leaped out of her way and jumped towards her. He kicked her in the face and sent her staggering backwards. Fiona clutched her face and then suddenly ended up getting a face full of punches from Scourge.

Fiona thought back with a kick to the gut but Scourge easily recovered from the blow and kicked at Fiona, missing by inches as Fiona dodged him. Fiona kicked Scourge in the back, knocking Scourge onto his back and she tried to pin him down but Scourge reached behind him and grabbed Fiona's arm. He then flipped Fiona over his head and onto her back. Fiona picked herself up and lunged at Scourge but she unfortunately missed after Scourge ducked. Scourge then kneed Fiona in the gut and elbowed her on the back at the same time, giving Fiona a double dose of pain and the green hedgehog dropkicked her in the head, knocking Fiona off her feet and sending her rolling across the ground. The red vixen was truly battered and beaten and despite her best efforts, her strength was beginning to falter. Fiona tried and failed to get back to her feet and Scourge advanced on her menacingly with an evil grin on his face.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he crowed "Pathetic, absolutely pathetic Fiona! You have no skills whatsoever! You punch hard but you fall even harder! No wonder you were a lame Royal Fighter! I bet Sonic the Hedgehog would be very disappointed in you if he were watching this fight. You are a failure Fiona and that's all you'll ever be!"

Secretly, he was impressed at how Fiona had managed to hold out against him the past few minutes but he wanted Fiona to try harder so he tried the insults once again in order to make Fiona angry and desperate to beat him. Fiona was getting mad at Scourge's insults and somehow, she was getting her strength back.

"So Fi, got anything to say before I kick you out of this gang?" sneered Scourge.

"I…am…not…PATHETIC!" screeched Fiona.

She leaped back onto her feet and socked Scourge directly in the face before the hedgehog could even see her coming. But that didn't stop Fiona. She began punching Scourge over and over and over, not giving him a chance to fight back as she was moving much too fast for him to keep up with. Then Fiona yelled loudly and walloped Scourge in the face with a powerful kick, sending him falling onto his back and causing his sunglasses to fall off. The kick seemed to overwhelm Scourge as he was too stunned to get back up. He didn't

know Fiona could be so strong when she wanted to be. Fiona then pinned Scourge down to the ground and began having a hissy fit at the green hedgehog.

"How's this for pathetic Mr. Egotist?" yelled Fiona angrily "Now you'd better stop insulting me or I'm gonna do worse to you!"

Scourge shook off the amazing blow Fiona had dealt him and he looked at her. Fiona just remained scowling at the green hedgehog. Scourge grinned evilly at Fiona.

"You know what?" he said to her "You do know how to fight after all. That was brilliant stuff Fi! You really are ready to join me."

"Oh? I…I am?" said Fiona in surprise "Um…thank you."

She then released Scourge and helped the green hedgehog back onto his feet. Ginger applauded Fiona with a gormless grin on his face.

"Bravo Fiona! Well done!" he cheered "You belong with us now!"

"Thank you squirt." said Fiona sarcastically "So Scourge what do we do now?"

"We wait until tomorrow." said Scourge, lightly rubbing his arm "Me and you beat each other pretty badly so I think we need to chill out a moment. Besides, we have the element of surprise as no one expects us to be coming so we can let the plan sit aside for a while. Tomorrow, as they say, is just another day."

Fiona nodded agreeably. She couldn't wait to return to Royal HQ and get her own back on her former comrades for making her miserable and making her life turn into hell for her. And now she was teamed up with the baddest of bad, Scourge the Hedgehog, her revenge was certain and Sonic and friends would pay very dearly indeed…

Footnotes:

*** See the Chun-Nan saga (Stories 52-56)**

With inspiration from Ultimate Black Ace, I gave this chapter a slight rewrite which involves Mushu getting Eggman to crack in a more realistic way though I have chosen not to rewrite Matilda's role though as I can decide who strong she is and if I want her to be able to beat Shadow then that's what I'm going to do. Not to mention, I don't believe in princesses who can't fend for themselves as that is so cliché and sexist so that's why I made Matilda a badass. If apologize if anyone has a problem with this but I'm not changing Matilda's character whatsoever.

HQ Heist Part 1

Story 64: HQ Heist Part 1: Heroes Out to Sea

"Trust the Council of Acorn to assign me with a mission involving water!" moaned Sonic the Hedgehog as the fighter jet that his best friend Tails the twin-tailed fox was flying soared towards a huge oil rig in the distance.

"Sonic, we're not even going into the water so don't sweat about it." said Tails without turning around to Sonic who was in the seat behind him.

A few hours ago, the Council of Acorn, Castle Acorn's government house had received a message from one of the Royal Fighter groups abroad saying that a huge oil rig under the command of Dr. Eggman had been detected 80,000 miles out into sea and Sonic, Tails and Ruben the Water Panther were the only ones available for the missions right now so Tails had taken an R.F.S. fighter jet and was now flying towards the rig's coordinates with Sonic and Ruben joining him. Needless to say, Sonic seemed more worried about the fact they were flying over an endless stretch of water then the fact they were heading towards Dr. Eggman territory thousands of miles out into sea. Ruben was baffled by Sonic's worries and wondered what was up with the hedgehog.

"Water's a wonderful thing Sonic." said Ruben "Why ever do you seem so worried about it?"

"Well there's the main course of "I can't swim" served with a side order of "I hate getting wet"." replied Sonic "And the fact we're thousands of miles out into sea isn't very settling to me."

"Look Sonic, our mission is to blow Eggman's oil rig up and that doesn't require us going underwater so stop worrying!" snapped Tails "We'll be on the oil rig which stands a good height above the water so you're safe as safe can get Sonic."

"Ehk! Wrong answer!" jeered Sonic jokingly "I don't think an oil rig

under Eggman's control is gonna be very safe for any of us."

"Um…yeah you're right Sonic." said Tails, feeling a little daft for not thinking about that obvious fact "I mean the place will be crawling with Eggman robots great and small. I wouldn't be too surprised if Eggman himself is here so we're gonna have to be extra careful on this mission."

"Careful?" sneered Sonic "That's a new word to me. What does it mean?"

"Sonic!" snapped Ruben "Be serious here! An oil rig is gonna be very dangerous territory and you know it so stop acting so laid back!"

"Oh relax Ruben." scoffed Sonic, putting his hands behind his head and folding his legs in a casual manner "My super speed, your water powers and Tails' quick thinking will make this mission a walk in the park. Eggman's robots have no chance against the three of us."

"I'm just glad Shadow the Hedgehog won't be helping Eggman since according to you, he abandoned Eggman after discovering the fact he's not his creator." Tails said to Sonic "This mission will be a whole of a lot easier for us without that unbeatable experiment on Eggman's side."

"I wouldn't say Shadow's unbeatable since Princess Matilda made easy work out of him." noted Sonic, remembering how swiftly Matilda had managed to subdue Shadow during his ruckus in Chun-Nan yesterday.

"I'm still amazed to hear that Matilda's able to fight!" exclaimed Ruben "Even I didn't know Matilda was a kung-fu warrior! I wonder who trained her to become a warrior?"

Before Sonic could give any answer, the R.F.S. jet was stricken by a laser and the whole jet rocked to the side, making everybody cry out in surprise. Tails thrust the levers to the side to stabilize the jet and get it flying in the correct position once again.

"Whoa! That's some mondo shooting!" blurted Sonic "What's going

on Tails?"

Tails peered at the jet's amazing radar which could pick up even the tiniest things and to his horror, there were a fleet of robotical planes detected and according to the radar, they were coming towards them at top speed!

"It's a fleet of Eggman robots!" shrieked Tails "We're being ambushed!"

"I should have known Eggman would launch an attack on us before we can even touch down." muttered Ruben "An oil rig is too precious for him. Oil powers machines after all."

"And that's why we're going to destroy it." said Sonic "So ol' eggy won't have any oil to give to his robots. I hope we can destroy the oil rig without damaging the environment, I mean oil isn't exactly water's best friend is it?"

"We'll have to think on that later!" cried Tails "We need to evade the Eggman robots that are shooting at us!"

He turned the jet around and began flying away from the oil rig and seven red jet-shaped Eggman robots flew after the jet. The Eggman robots were shaped like Eurofighter Typhoons with eyes in the cockpit window and they had sentient minds so they were able to think and fly around without a pilot. They didn't even need a pilot; they could do everything a normal fighter jet could do on their own. The lead Eggman-jet, which was coloured gold instead of red, was the fastest of the Eggman-jets and in no time, it was directly on the R.F.S. jet's tail. The Eggman-jet began shooting at the R.F.S. jet with built-in lasers on either side of the nose cone. Tails was a skilled pilot and he managed to manoeuvre the R.F.S. jet around and around and even in circles through the air to avoid being shot at. Tails then pressed a button on the control pad and a laser gun deployed from underneath the R.F.S. jet. It rotated around and pointed directly at the pursuing Eggman-jet. Tails pressed some buttons on the control levers with his thumbs and the laser gun began firing rapidly at the Eggman-jet. The Eggman-jet, unfortunately, was just as good a flier as Tails was and it managed to evade the gun's shots. The Eggman-jet had more then just lasers

to fire at the R.F.S. jet. It had missiles stored under its wings and it fired a missile at the R.F.S. jet. To Tails' bad luck, the missile was a homing missile so it would keep following the R.F.S. jet until it finally hit it and destroyed it. But Tails knew how to stop the missile. He fired the laser gun and the gun shot the missile. The missile exploded the moment it was hit and the Eggman-jet flew straight into the explosion. The Eggman jet couldn't see the R.F.S. jet through the fire and smoke it had just flown into but the main worry for the robotic jet was the debris and shrapnel from the missile that would likely be flying towards it so it flew straight up out of the fireball that started to die down. Tails looked at his radar to see the Eggman-jet flying straight up, meaning to him that the explosion of the missile getting stricken by his laser didn't destroy it. But Tails had more to worry about. The other six Eggman-jets were flying around towards the R.F.S. jet head on. Tails cried out in surprise and pulled on the levers. The jet soared up into the air and began flying over the Eggman-jets. The Eggman-jets flew straight past the R.F.S. jet as it soared over them. The Eggman-jets circled around and began shooting at the R.F.S. jet as rapidly as they could. The R.F.S. jet began firing back but one jet with one gun wouldn't put up much of a fight against six jets all armed with a laser on each side of their nose cones. The lead Eggman-jet joined its group and began firing at the R.F.S. jet along with its comrades. The R.F.S. jet kept firing back at the attackers and it managed to actually shoot one of the jets and destroy it but Tails knew he wouldn't be able to hold out well against six other jets. He had to land on the oil rig and escape the fleet immediately. But landing on the oil rig without getting shot down wouldn't be an easy task. It would take a lot of skill to get past the fleet without losing the jet in the process.

"Tails, I think we should land!" cried Ruben "We can't get keep up this chase forever!"

"I think I have an idea!" said Tails as he manoeuvred out of the way of another laser blast "Sonic, can you spin-dash all the Eggman-jets?"

"I sure can!" said Sonic with a reassuring smile on his face "Just open up the cockpit and I'll be able to spin-dash these jokers!"

Tails nodded and opened the cockpit window. Sonic climbed out of

the cockpit and on top of the jet's fuselage. Sonic could feel the wind whooshing past him as he crawled across the top of the jet. Sonic then leaped into the air and spin-dashed towards the lead Eggman-jet as it flew towards the R.F.S. jet. Sonic cleaved straight through the golden jet-shaped robot as it tried to shoot down the R.F.S. jet and the Eggman-jet was reduced to bits and pieces that fell down from the sky and into the sea below, never to be found again. But Sonic didn't stop there, he headed towards another Eggman-jet while in spin-dash and he destroyed that one too. But even Sonic's spin-dashes have a limited range and he soon ran out so he made a leap for another Eggman-jet and he managed to grab onto the jet-shaped robot's wing as it flew past him. The Eggman-jet failed to notice it had Dr. Eggman's worst enemy clinging onto its wing and continued to try and shoot down the R.F.S. jet with its lasers. Unfortunately for the jet, another Eggman-jet saw Sonic clinging onto the jet's wing and it aimed at Sonic, hoping to destroy him. Sonic leaped off the Eggman-jet he was on, leaving the other one to accidentally shoot it to pieces. Sonic spin-dashed towards the firing jet and destroyed it with one fell swoop. The last two jets realized what was going on so they stopped chasing the R.F.S. jet and flew towards Sonic who was spin-dashing towards them. Sonic destroyed one jet and then bounced onto the other, destroying it and putting an end to the Eggman-jet squad. Sonic laughed at his victory and used his homing attack to make a frantic leap towards the oncoming R.F.S. jet. He managed to land on the jet's cockpit window and he gave a thumbs up sign to Tails. Tails beamed with joy.

"Well done Sonic!" he congratulated.

"Thank you, you're too kind." joked Sonic "Now can we land on this oil rig already? I can't bear to be above water for a second longer!"

Tails just sighed in annoyance and he flew the jet towards the oil rig. The oil rig was enormous. It was twice the size of Earth's largest oil rig. It looked pretty much like your average oil rig only it carried Dr. Eggman's infamous Eggman Empire logo on the stations and towers mounted on the rig. Sonic pulled a face. He despised that logo and the fact it had Eggman's face on it just added to the doctor's egotism. He was going to have a lot of fun destroying the rig that's

for sure. And the very thought of preventing Eggman from having oil supplies for his precious robot army made the blue hedgehog hoot with laughter. The R.F.S. jet flew around an unoccupied area of the rig and landed on the enormous station. The moment the jet came to a halt, Sonic leaped off of the cockpit window and onto the steel floors of the rig. It felt good to be back on solid ground. Tails and Ruben climbed out of the jet and Tails slung a bag of detonators on his shoulder. They were going to use the detonators to destroy the oil rig. Sonic poked his head around the side of the building they were parked behind. He could see swarms of Eggman robots working like crazy, carrying this and that and running here and there. Only two robots didn't appear to be working though and they were Alonzo the Butler Bot, Eggman's scheming minion and Mecha Rouge, Eggman's latest addition to his army. Alonzo was obviously in charge of the oil rig and he was barking commands every five seconds as robots ran past him frantically doing their jobs. Mecha Rouge just stood beside him as silent as a statue.

"You there! Load that crate onto the Eggman ocean liners!" barked Alonzo to an Eggman robot carrying a crate "We've got an order to fill and we cannot delay! Eggman wants his oil and he wants it now so get a move on!"

The robot nodded quickly and ran off like a jackrabbit. Alonzo then shouted at another Eggman robot.

"You! Start loading the crates faster!" he yelled "We're on a tight schedule here and if we're so much as a second late, Eggman will have our necks!"

"Yes-sir." droned the robot, running off to do his job.

Alonzo then turned to Mecha Rouge, who had been doing absolutely nothing the whole time the rig had been in operation today. The fact that she was doing nothing made Alonzo livid.

"Why are you standing around doing nothing you lazy wreck?" he shouted "Get down to the oil tanks and start filling up the oil barrels to load into the crates so my crate loaders can load the Eggman ships!"

"I o-bey." droned the roboticized bat, flying off down to the oil tanks stored in the legs of the oil rig.

Alonzo only made Mecha Rouge do that so she had something to do. Whenever the little butler bot was in charge, Alonzo's head ended up being too big for his body. He was very bossy and big-headed whenever Eggman put him in charge of anything and he didn't like to see robots doing nothing so even if there was no need to assign a job to anybody, he would assign the robot a job just so it was doing some work. The Eggman Empire wouldn't be a pleasant place to be if Alonzo ran the empire instead of Dr. Eggman. Sonic had been watching the whole thing go off and he was amazed at the sight of so many robots running around doing this and that. He was surprised at the fact Alonzo was in charge of the operation more then anything but Alonzo was never much of a threat to the hedgehog so Sonic didn't let that bother him. Regardless, Alonzo would be a dangerous foe since he had thousands of minions on his side to do the bidding for him so Sonic couldn't act rashly on this, he would reluctantly have to take this nice and slow or risk getting caught. Sonic turned back to his friends.

"You may not believe this but, Alonzo's in charge of this joint." reported Sonic.

"Alonzo? Seriously?" sneered Ruben "If that snooty moron's in charge then this rig is as good as destroyed!"

"Um…I'm gonna say yes and no for that." said Sonic "While Alonzo's no biggie for us, he's got a tonne of Eggman robots on his side and he appears to have a roboticized Rouge the Bat on his side too."

"Roboticized…what?" piped Tails, his twin tails straightening in surprise "Rouge is a robot now?"

"Looks like it." said Sonic "I guess Rouge did something to upset ol' eggy man and Eggman roboticized her to get his own back. Rouge is a toughie in battle so Mecha Rouge is gonna be no easier."

"Well that's not good to know." said Tails "Mecha Rouge will be a threat to us and a whole station of Eggman robots are sure to overwhelm us. If we're to do this mission, I think the best approach

would to be to do the whole mission secretly. We'll have to sneak past everybody and set up these detonators." he showed Sonic the bag he had on his shoulder "We can set them up anywhere we like, the oil rig will be destroyed regardless of position. These are strong detonators after all. Mandy says you can level a skyscraper with just two of these."

"Sweet." said Sonic "But if we blow this joint up, the oil's gonna spill into the ocean and oil spills are a mondo bad thing. I should know, I've seen an oil spillage before, it's not a pretty sight."

"Then how can we do this mission without spilling the oil everywhere?" wondered Tails.

"Don't ask me." said Ruben "My water powers won't be any good against oil. If we could maybe empty the rig's oil supplies before destroying the rig then we won't do any harm to the ocean."

"That would require finding out where the oil is kept." noted Sonic "Although I overheard lord snooty-face saying they're loading the oil onto some Eggman ocean liners."

"Then maybe we should let Alonzo load the oil and ship it to Eggman so when we destroy the rig, we won't spill any oil anywhere." suggested Tails.

"If that's the best way to do this mission without damaging the environment then we should do that." said Sonic "Although we're gonna have to wait around for the ships to finish being loaded. And waiting is not one of my favourite things to do you know."

"Well whether you like waiting or not, you're gonna have to do it." said Ruben sternly "The purpose of this mission is to destroy the rig, not destroy the rig and make a mess in the ocean so if letting Eggman's forces empty the oil supplies and ship it off is the only way of doing so then we're gonna do that."

"OK Mr. Water Squirter." said Sonic hastily waving his arms around "No need to get touchy."

Ruben sighed and glanced over at Tails.

"How you can stand this hedgehog really mystifies me." he said.

"Sonic can be hard to reason with sometimes but he means well." said Tails "You're just gonna have to be patient with him Ruben."

Then suddenly, Tails felt the cold steel of a gun barrel being pressed against the back of his head and his first response was to raise his hands in fright. Sonic and Ruben jumped in surprise and looked at what was threatening Tails. A huge Eggman robot with shoulders that curved inwards, a visor for eyes, spiked head, huge arms and small legs was pointing a sniper rifle at Tails. It looked deathly serious and it seemed desperate to shoot the poor fox.

"Do-not-move-in-tru-ders." droned the sniper bot "Or-this-fox-will-lose-his-life."

But a robot armed with a sniper rifle was the least of Sonic's worries right now. All the workers had heard the sniper bot warning Sonic and they all ran over to the back of the station to see what was going on. Alonzo wondered why the workers were all running off somewhere and he followed them to see where they were going. The worker bots surrounded Sonic, Ruben and Tails and they all pointed their guns at the Mobians. One robot marched over to Tails and snatched the bag of detonators from him. Alonzo's face brightened at the sight of his surrounded enemies and he pushed and shoved his way through the crowd to get to Sonic and friends. Sonic turned around and glared at Alonzo whereas Alonzo just smiled back at him evilly.

"Well, well, well." he purred "It seems I have some intruders on my oil rig. Well Sonic, do you know what happens to Mobians who stick their ugly, furry faces where they don't belong?"

"I'm gonna take a wild guess and say we get killed." muttered Sonic.

"You read my mind hedgehog." sneered Alonzo sarcastically "Because that's exactly what's going to happen. Before that though, what are you doing here?"

"You don't tell us anything so we're not gonna tell you anything." said Sonic "But we are gonna get out of here. Ruben, be a pal and

drench these tin soldiers will you?"

"With pleasure." said Ruben, cracking his knuckles "Here comes a tidal wave Alonzo!"

He swiped his arms forward and sent a tidal wave whooshing over all the robots. The wave knocked all the robots over and they all slid across the deck of the rig. Amazingly though, they didn't malfunction and explode. Ruben couldn't believe his eyes and Sonic & Tails just joined in with Ruben's surprise.

"Wha…wha?" he blustered "Don't tell me everybody on this rig is waterproof!"

"You're absolutely right." sneered a sopping wet Alonzo as he picked himself up "What good is a robot in the middle of the ocean if it's not water resilient? Your powers are useless water panther."

"I may not be able to short circuit you but water is useful for more things then short circuiting robots Alonzo." said Ruben, pointing at Alonzo and blasting him with a jet of water.

Alonzo was sent hurling backwards and he crashed into a stack of oil barrels. The barrels were sent scattering all over the deck and Alonzo groaned like a wailing ghost. The sniper bot aimed its sniper rifle at Ruben and it shot at him. The sniper blast hit the ground just inches behind Ruben and Ruben was sent hurling into the air. He landed sharply on his back and the impact somehow caused his purple aqua-collar to unclip and come off. The collar rolled with a clatter across the deck and Alonzo grabbed it. Ruben got back to his feet and realized his collar had fallen off. Alonzo waved it at him teasingly.

"Hey! Give that back pinhead!" yelled Ruben, lunging for Alonzo but missing as Alonzo stepped to the side.

"Hey! I find that term offensive!" grumbled Alonzo "And if this collar is important to you then I won't give it back. I think I'll wear it on my wrist if you don't mind."

Ruben tried to nab Alonzo and snatch his collar back but the sniper

bot shot at Ruben and hit him. Ruben was stricken by the blast and he was sent sprawling across the deck. Sonic and Tails could see that Ruben needed help so they ran in to help the water panther. Unfortunately, the sniper bot shot at them and hit the ground just behind them. Sonic and Tails flew through the air and landed right on top of Ruben just as he was trying to get back to his feet. The Mobians were in a heap and the Eggman robots all ran over to them. Sonic had only just stood up but he was tackled down to the ground by a horde of Eggman robots. Tails and Ruben were quickly subdued as well and in no time, all three Mobians were restrained and pinned down to the ground. The sniper bot decided to add insult to injury by destroying the R.F.S. jet with one blast of the sniper rifle. The jet erupted into flames and debris, overwhelming the Mobians with shock. They were trapped on the oil rig now the jet was destroyed, they wouldn't be able to get off the rig now. Alonzo admired the destroyed jet for a moment and then he turned his attention to the Mobians. He had Ruben's aqua-collar clipped around his wrist. He thought it looked nice on him and it gave him great pleasure to see Ruben's angry face when he showed it to him.

"Well my moronic Mobians, you've been captured, by me!" gloated Alonzo "That's a bonus for me! Dr. Eggman will be amazed at my excellence when he sees you three in my grasp."

"Oh stop boasting you big-head." muttered Sonic "You didn't even capture us, your cronies here did."

Alonzo scowled at Sonic but said nothing.

"Just take those fools to the detention room." ordered Alonzo "I'll tend to them shortly; I've got some last minute stacks of barrels to load onto the ships."

The robots obeyed and they dragged Sonic, Tails and Ruben away whereas Alonzo zipped off to see to the barrel loading.

"Great!" muttered Sonic "We haven't been on this thing for five minutes and already we're in trouble!"

"Don't worry Sonic." said Tails "We'll get out of this. I know we will."

"Pity Alonzo nicked my aqua collar." muttered Ruben "I have a feeling I'm gonna need my H2o powers right now."

Sonic sighed in a defeated tone as the robots dragged him, Tails and Ruben away. Things looked grim for Sonic and friends now but things were about to get even grimmer for the Mobians back home…

Back in Mobotropolis, fellow Royal Fighter Mandy Mouse was in the lab of Royal HQ and keeping an eye on Sonic's progress at the oil rig. She couldn't see what was going on but she was managing to keep in touch with Sonic by looking at the computer's radar and speaking through a microphone attached to an earpiece she was wearing. To her amazement though, not long after Sonic, Tails and Ruben had touched down on the oil rig, the comlink started to go static and the R.F.S. jet had disappeared from the radar, suggesting that Sonic was in trouble. Mandy decided to see what was going on so she spoke into the microphone.

"Hey blue dude, do you read me?" she asked "Is everything alright? Sonic? Hello?"

Mandy received no answer. The mouse began to fear the worst. She took the ear piece off and set it down on the desk. He ears drooped down in despair.

"It…it can't be!" she spluttered "Sonic, Tails and Ruben can't be dead! They've only been on that thing for about five minutes!"

She stared back at the radar. It was displaying Sonic, Tails and Ruben on the radar, much to Mandy's relief but the dots representing them were surrounded by masses of red dots, presumably representing Eggman robots. That meant Sonic, Tails and Ruben were alive but were surrounded by Eggman robots. They were probably in trouble or even worse, captured. Mandy didn't let that worry her though. She knew that Sonic could destroy Eggman's robots easily so Sonic would get out of this scrape in no time. She just wondered why the comlink had gone static and why the R.F.S. jet had disappeared off the radar.

"I do hope Eggman's forces didn't destroy the jet they flew in." she said to herself "Otherwise they're stuck on that oil rig. But the jet isn't on the radar so it probably is destroyed! I think we may have to send some reinforcements otherwise Sonic, Tails and Ruben are trapped on that rig."

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in." said Mandy with her eyes still fixed on the monitors.

The door opened without any noise at all and in stepped Wilson the Dog, Mandy's boyfriend and spinning blade wielder.

"Hello Mandy." said Wilson, walking up to the purple mouse who kept her eyes glued to the computer monitor "How's everything going?"

"From the looks of the radar, blue dude's surrounded by Eggman robots and the jet appears to be destroyed." reported Mandy.

"The jet's destroyed?" shrieked Wilson "How are Sonic, Tails and Ruben gonna get off the oil rig once they complete their mission?"

"Tails could probably fly them off but the poor kid can't fly forever." said Mandy "We're gonna have to send someone to back them up."

"Well I can't go because I'm needed for over duties." said Wilson "Why can't you go?" he asked.

"Because I'm needed here to keep an eye on Royal HQ." noted Mandy "You and I both know we cannot leave Royal HQ unguarded, someone must be on guard at all times."

"Oh right," said Wilson, thinking quickly again "Hmm…maybe we can send the Chaotix?" he suggested "I'm sure one of them knows how to pilot a plane."

"I'll give them a try then." said Mandy.

She tapped some keys on the keyboard the monitor displayed a symbol of a ringing phone and the words "Awaiting call". The phone ring symbol then vanished after a few rings and was replaced by a

still-image of Vector the Crocodile, Team Chaotix's boss.

"Yo this is Vector, head of the Chaotix Detective Agency, how may we help you?" asked Vector.

"Sonic, Tails and Ruben have gone on a mission and I think they need help." said Mandy "Can anyone in your team fly a plane?"

"Um…no why?" asked Vector.

"Sonic, Tails and Ruben are on an oil rig 80,000 miles out into sea." explained Mandy.

"Is that so?" asked Vector "Well we own a speedboat so we could use that instead. Can you tell me where this oil rig is?"

Mandy paused for a moment as she studied the map of Mobius that was displayed on the monitors. The map showed her the oil rig just 80,000 miles northwest from Kingdom Valley which was a forty-five minute drive away from Mobotropolis.

"It's 80,000 miles northwest from Kingdom Valley." replied Mandy "I'm sure you'll be able to get there."

"We will be able to Mandy." said Vector "Thanks for your call and we'll let you know when we get there. Chao!"

And with that, Vector hung up.

"Well that's a relief." said Wilson "That Chaotix are able to help us after all. Sonic, Tails and Ruben are as good as saved now."

"I just hope they'll be able to complete the mission and hold out long enough for the Chaotix to arrive." said Mandy concernedly "We must destroy that oil rig or Eggman will continue getting oil supplies for his robots."

"True that." said Wilson "Well I'm off to meet up with Geoffrey and Bunnie." he added, turning to go "They're helping with repairs to Castle Acorn after Eggman damaged it* and I want to help them. See you later gorgeous."

"See you cute stuff." said Mandy sweetly as Wilson left the lab.

Mandy was now alone in the lab. There was nothing for the mouse to do accept keep watch on the monitors and see how Sonic and friends were doing. She felt bad at the fact she was unable to help her friends but she felt good at the fact she'd managed to get help for Sonic. The Chaotix would easily be able to help Sonic on his mission and since they had a speedboat, they'd be able to get Sonic, Tails and Ruben off the oil rig safely so all wasn't lost yet. It all depended on the sheer hope that the Chaotix would make it in time and Sonic and friends were alright.

But that would be the least of Mandy's worries right now. Just outside Royal HQ, three evil mercenaries arrived just outside the hi-tech building. These three were a dangerous trio indeed, well one wasn't dangerous but the other two were. There was Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic's evil brother with an unwavering hunger for world domination, Fiona Fox, Royal Fighter quitter and recent turncoat and Ginger the Fox, Tails' dorky cousin with a poor view on the world and an obnoxious personality. Scourge admired Royal HQ for a moment, grinning evilly and flipping his red sunglasses over his blue eyes. Fiona took a quick glance at Scourge while he wasn't focused on her. She'd only just realized how dreamy Scourge looked when he put on that fiercely evil grin that made him look like a cannibalistic serial killer. In fact, ever since she'd joined him, Fiona had been finding herself falling for Scourge but she didn't want to show it in fear of embarrassing him, angering him or humiliating him. She had a sneaky feeling that Scourge probably did have a fondness for her, hence the reason he called her pet names like "babe" and "Fi". As for Ginger, she just saw him as an annoying little kid who loves to hang out with the big boys and she wished that Scourge would just get rid of the ginger furred twerp already.

"Here it is Fiona and Ginger." purred Scourge "Royal HQ, the main base of operations for that wimpy Royal Fighters Service my brother works for. I bet this feels like visiting a long lost home again doesn't it Fi?"

"This is not my home anymore, it never was." scoffed Fiona "I'd rather burn the place down."

"Well once Royal HQ has served the purpose I need it for then I'll be happy to arrange that." said Scourge with a smirk on his evil face "Fiona, you and Ginger get in there and secure the lab. I'll be out here keeping out any outside help such as Sonic the dork-hog."

"Do I have to work with snot-face?" whined Fiona.

"Yes you do Fiona." said Ginger rudely "Now come on my dear, our victory awaits us through these doors."

"Oh knock it off and talk properly you worm!" snapped Scourge "You don't speak to your superiors like that!"

Ginger scowled at Scourge and just stormed through the doors with Fiona following him. Scourge stood guard outside the doors and waited for someone to try and get past him. He had a feeling he'd be waiting for a while so he breathed in deeply, folded his arms and stood there. He would get bored eventually but he was waiting for a reason so he had to try and ignore his boredom.

In Royal HQ, Ginger began to think angry thoughts in his head. Ever since Scourge's failed attempt to conquer Castle Acorn**, Scourge had been treating him horribly. Scourge saw Ginger as a potential sidekick at first but now, Scourge saw Ginger as an annoying little kid that followed him everywhere and was nothing more then a punching bag to him. Ginger also had a feeling that Fiona joining the team might affect his friendship with Scourge. Scourge seemed to be treating Fiona nicely but he was treating Ginger poorly. Ginger then began wondering if joining Scourge was a good idea in the first place. Well if joining Scourge meant revenge on his cousin then it would be worth putting up with the abuse until Tails was put in his lowly place and he was above his cousin so Ginger decided not to bother about the subject anymore. He and Fiona wondered down the corridor until they found the lab, the most important room in Royal HQ. Fiona and Ginger crouched down on the floor beside the door and they began talking in whispers.

"You go in there first and warm anyone in there up for me." whispered Fiona "Then I'll come in and give them all a shock."

"Brilliant strategy Fiona." whispered Ginger "I'll signal for you to

come by curling the tips of my twin tails."

"OK then, get in there and just do whatever you like." hissed Fiona "Don't mess up or Scourge will have our necks. Got it?"

"Do you even need to ask Fiona?" sniffed Ginger, opening the door of Royal HQ quietly and tip-toeing into the lab.

Ginger closed the door behind him and walked up to Mandy, who was standing up and peering at one of the computer monitors, while making no effort to be quiet whatsoever. He wanted Mandy to hear him after all. To his delight, Mandy did hear him. Even though Ginger wasn't making much noise, Mandy's sensitive ears picked up the sound of his smart black shoes. She didn't turn away from the monitor though.

"Wilson, you're back already." she said without turning around "That was fast. Was Castle Acorn not as damaged as it was speculated? "

Ginger didn't answer Mandy. Instead, he gave Mandy's legs a swift roundhouse kick, taking them out from underneath her and causing the mouse to fall onto her side with a sharp thump that winded her. Mandy coughed and rolled onto her back to see Ginger smirking at her rudely. Mandy scowled at him.

"Hey, what's your problem kid?" she demanded angrily "I only mistook you for someone else, you didn't need to trip me up for it!"

"I did need to mouse girl because I am here to take this base from you." announced Ginger "I was ordered to do so by Scourge the Hedgehog whom to your delight, is not here right now." he lied, wanting to keep Scourge's presence secret "Once I take over this base, he'll be there to congratulate me."

"Scourge the Hedgehog." mused Mandy "I've heard about him. Isn't he Sonic's evil brother or something? Wants to take over the world or something along those lines?""

"Correct." said Ginger "I however, am Ginger the Fox, Tails' cousin and the only person on Mobius with a brain. I am Scourge's loyal sidekick and I am taking Royal HQ for him."

"Over my dead body!" yelled Mandy, leaping onto her feet and slugging Ginger in the stomach.

She then grabbed Ginger by the neck and tossed him into a wall. Ginger hit the wall and fell back down to the floor. Fiona opened the door a crack and peeked into the lab. To her dismay, Ginger was already getting his butt whupped. Ginger leaped back onto his feet and tried to attack Mandy but the mouse was much too skilled for someone as abysmal as Ginger. Ginger swiped at Mandy with his tails only to miss and get kicked in the shoulder by Ginger. Ginger was thrown against the wall and Mandy cornered him. Desperately, Ginger curled the tips of his tails to signal Fiona's turn to come in. Fiona got the signal and ran into the lab. Mandy glared down at Ginger with her yellow eyes.

"OK you little brat, you get out of here and I won't have to hurt you." she said coldly "I don't like hurting children so please don't make me have to hurt you."

Fiona reached out and tapped Mandy on the shoulder. Mandy turned around and to her surprise, Fiona Fox was standing there with a casual smile on her face. Mandy lit up like a sunrise.

"Fiona!" she said in surprise "You're back! Guess you couldn't take being a quitter anymore."

"You could say that Mandy girl." said Fiona smoothly.

"Well Ginger, looks like the odds are against you aren't they?" sneered Mandy "You can't possibly beat two of us can you?"

"Oh it's not me who needs to beat two opponents up." crowed Ginger with a gormless smirk on his face.

"Oh really?" said Mandy mockingly "I guess you need counting lessons young man because there's me and Fiona…"

Before she could finish saying anything, Fiona drew her arm back and walloped Mandy in the face as hard as she could. The horrified mouse cried out in pain and fell onto her hands and knees, clutching her face. Ginger laughed at Mandy and Fiona cracked her knuckles.

"I couldn't take being a quitter anymore Mandy." sneered Fiona, pulling on Mandy's tail and yanking her back onto her feet "But I couldn't go back to the good life either."

She punched Mandy as hard as she could again. Mandy spluttered after that punch and Fiona then grabbed Mandy by the arms and slammed her against the wall as hard as she could. She then slammed Mandy against the wall again, making the mouse gasp and Fiona pinned Mandy's arms against the wall, preventing her from moving. Mandy struggled in Fiona's grasp but the vixen was somehow, managing to hold her there.

"Ugh…why Fiona? Why?" blustered Mandy, trying to struggle free.

"My life is in a rut and it's all because of you guys!" shouted Fiona, kneeing Mandy sharply in the stomach, making Mandy cough and spluttered hoarsely "You along with Geoffrey lowered my self esteem with your backlashes and made me quit! Ever since the day I quit, I've been stealing to eat and evading the cops! This service offers nothing to me, you offer nothing to me and neither does that overrated blue idiot Sonic! I'm with Scourge the Hedgehog now! He offers me revenge on you for what you've done to me and he offers me power! I will not rest until the whole Royal Fighters Service goes up in flames and with Scourge the Hedgehog, I can make that happen!"

"So lost you are." said Mandy smoothly "We didn't make you quit, you made yourself quit. You could have easily tried to redeem yourself but you were too sad and angry to do so, so you threw your life away and decided to run off with the villains to get the quick reward. Ultimate cowardice in my opinion."

"Shut up!" screeched Fiona, slamming Mandy against the wall again "You don't know what it feels like to have no money and have to live in the middle of the stinking woods while having to steal my own food and avoid getting caught by the cops! If you were in my shoes I bet you'd do the same thing!"

"No I wouldn't." said Mandy, glaring at Fiona "I would try and improve my life instead of throwing it away. But since you're too clouded to even try, I guess I'll have to knock some sense into you."

She then proceeded to head butt Fiona directly in the nose. Fiona screamed in pain, let go of Mandy and clutched her nose, a tear coming out of her eye as she grimaced. Mandy then punched Fiona in the face as hard as she could, then she stood on her hands, flipped over and landed a powerful kick blow onto Fiona, knocking the vixen onto her back. Fiona tried to get up but Mandy pinned Fiona down with her foot. She didn't keep Fiona down for long. Fiona kicked Mandy in the backside, causing the mouse to fall forward and onto her face. Fiona picked herself up and kick-slammed Mandy on the back. The mouse tail-whipped Fiona on the hand, making the vixen grimace and suck her hand better and then Mandy clasped her hands together and walloped Fiona in the cheek. Fiona staggered backwards and fell against the computer desk. Mandy tried to attack Fiona but Ginger distracted her with an attempted attack. He flew towards Mandy and punched at her, forcing her to duck and cause Ginger to miss. Fiona lunged at Mandy but Mandy gave Fiona an uppercut to the chin that caused the vixen to fall back against the computer desk and groan in pain. Mandy then pressed a button on the control pad and held it in.

"Attention Royal Fighters! Royal HQ has been compromised! Immediate assistance required!" shrieked Mandy.

"Help can't help you." sneered Fiona, leaping onto her feet and seizing Mandy by the waist.

She carried Mandy away from the desk and threw her into the wall. Mandy crashed into the wall and fell down to the floor. The mouse picked herself up and lunged at the treacherous vixen. Fiona and Mandy grappled hands with each other and pushed on each other's arms as they tried to over power each other.

"My head man Scourge is outside Royal HQ and he'll make short work of whatever reinforcements there are so you're stuck with me sunshine." crowed Fiona.

"Then I guess I'll have the pleasure of beating the snot out of you!" growled Mandy, kicking Fiona in the thigh.

Fiona bent down and grimaced and Mandy gave Fiona a sucker punch that brought her down onto the floor. Mandy tried to attack

Fiona again but Ginger sneaked up behind Mandy and yanked on her ears.

"Ouch!" she cried, elbowing Ginger in the eye "Don't pull my ears you wretched boy!"

"Ow!" retorted Ginger, clutching his eye. "Don't elbow me in the eye you wretched girl!"

Mandy's response was to grab Ginger and hold him in front of herself as Fiona tried to punch her again. Fiona punched Ginger in the mouth and the punch definitely seemed to hurt Ginger. He lost a couple of teeth and he cried out in pain.

"Ow my teeth!" he winced.

"Sorry Ginger." said Fiona sarcastically.

Mandy threw Ginger to the side and tried to punch Fiona in the eye but Fiona bent over backwards to dodge the attack and then she flung herself forward, smacking Mandy in the face with her head. Mandy was brought down onto her back and Fiona tried to grab her but Mandy blocked her and the girls began grappling with each other. Fiona was trying to keep Mandy on the floor and Mandy was trying to push Fiona off herself. As she struggled, she couldn't help but think to herself.

I wish blue dude wasn't out to sea on an oil rig right now!

As of this moment, Sonic was definitely needed but he wasn't there so she would have to deal with this threat herself. Luckily she had backup but…

…the only thing preventing help from coming was Scourge the Hedgehog. Wilson and two other fighters Geoffrey St. John the Skunk and Bunnie Rabbot had received Mandy's distress signal and they abandoned all help they offered for the repairs to Castle Acorn in order to save Royal HQ.

"I can't believe it!" cried Wilson "I turn my back for a few minutes and

Royal HQ's under attack! I hope Mandy's OK."

"She can handle herself." assured Geoffrey "But I will make the blokes who are doing this pay for daring to hurt our friend and take over our base!"

"Ah wonder who's behind it all?" wondered Bunnie "It can't be Shadow-hog, sugah-hog says he's on our side, sorta."

"And it can't be the Eggman bloke because he'll likely be repairing his base after we blew it up***." noted Geoffrey.

"And I don't think it can possibly be Marik the Martian." said Wilson "Shadow broke his arm**** the other day and a broken arm takes a while to heal so he won't be up and at em yet."

"Then who could it possibly be?" wondered Geoffrey as he, Bunnie and Wilson finally arrived at Royal HQ.

Geoffrey sound found the answer to his question. There, standing guard in front of Royal HQ's doors, was Scourge the Hedgehog. He smirked at the trio and kept his sunglasses over his eyes. Behind his sunglasses lay a villainous scowl that could make the faint-hearted shudder. Scourge's presence seemed to shock Wilson, Geoffrey and Bunnie to the point they didn't know what to do but they quickly snapped out of it.

"Hello worms." said Scourge dryly.

"Scourge the Hedgehog." said Geoffrey bluntly "I might have been able to guess since you were the last suspect on my list."

"Oh suck it skunk boy." snapped Scourge "And don't bother telling me why you're here because I know. You're here to save Royal HQ from me and stop me taking over the world, yadda, yadda."

"Thanks for that." said Wilson, deploying his trademark spinning blade weapon "Now what have you done with Mandy?"

"Mandy?" said Scourge, not knowing who Wilson was talking about since he never learnt Mandy's name yet "Who's she then?"

"My girlfriend." said Wilson "And she's in Royal HQ. You better not have hurt her or else!"

"Well if your girlfriend's in there then chances are, Fiona and Ginger are dealing with her." replied Scourge "I did order them to deal with anybody in there after all."

Geoffrey, Bunnie and Wilson were taken aback by what Scourge had just said.

"Fiona?" blurted Bunnie "Fiona's back and…she's betrayed us and joined you?"

"That's the right answer." said Scourge in a joking manner "Now onto your next question, how hard does my spin-dash feel?"

He then proceeded to spin-dash Bunnie directly in the gut, knocking Bunnie backwards for a few feet. The Rabbot lay on her back, rubbing her tummy better. Scourge stood over her with a smirk on his face. Bunnie just looked back up at Scourge and scowled at him.

"So ya'll managed to get Fiona to join you." she said "Not surprising since she quit on us. So I guess we're gonna have to beat you and her up."

"Correct cyborg features." sneered Scourge "But you're not getting into Royal HQ, you're stuck out here with me. If you can beat me then you can get in there and help your friend but that's not gonna happen since I'm the strongest being on the planet!"

"We'll see about that mate." said Geoffrey, loading his arm mounted crossbow weapon and firing a stun-dart at Scourge.

Scourge leaped out of the way, causing the dart to miss and hit the ground.

"Nice try skunk boy but you can't get the drop on me twice." he crowed, remembering the time Geoffrey subdued him with a dart which resulted in his defeat after his first attempt on Castle Acorn.

"Then I guess it's up to my fists!" yelled Geoffrey, lunging at Scourge and punching at him but missing after Scourge dodged him.

Bunnie got back to her feet and gave Scourge an uppercut with her robot arm. Scourge retaliated with a punch to the jaw on Bunnie Rabbot. Bunnie punched Scourge back and Scourge roundhouse kicked Bunnie in the legs, tripping the Rabbot up and bringing her down onto her back. Geoffrey tackled Scourge from behind and knocked the green hedgehog down onto his stomach. Geoffrey forced Scourge's arm behind his back and pinned him down. Bunnie picked herself up and pointed at Wilson.

"Wilson, ya'll go and help Mandy." she ordered "We've got this."

"You sure?" asked Wilson unsurely.

"Positive sugah." said Bunnie "Ah'm tough enough to beat lil ol' Scourge here and Geoffrey will be able to subdue him with a dart or two."

Wilson was convinced that Bunnie was right and he ran into the headquarters. Scourge wrestled his arm out of Geoffrey's grasp and he punched him in the face with the side of his fist. Geoffrey tried to pin Scourge back down but Scourge managed to push the skunk off of himself and get back to his feet. He just managed to catch sight of Wilson running through the doors and into the building. Despite this, he didn't bother about the dog since he didn't think Wilson would be able to help out much in the HQ. Instead, he decided to keep fighting Bunnie and Geoffrey in order to keep them out of Royal HQ so they can't help Wilson and Mandy. Fiona and Ginger wouldn't be able to hold their own against four people at once, especially Ginger since he had no fighting skills or strength whatsoever. Geoffrey lunged at Scourge with a punch but the hedgehog grabbed Geoffrey's hand and twisted it sharply to the right. Geoffrey yelped and tried to get Scourge to let go of him but Scourge just held on tighter, squeezing harder and harder. Bunnie punched Scourge, causing him to let go of Geoffrey and sending him skidding across his side. Bunnie tried to attack Scourge again but Scourge kicked at her, knocking her backwards. Geoffrey fired a dart at Scourge but Scourge jumped out of the dart's way and spin-dashed towards Geoffrey. Geoffrey leaped out of Scourge's way and the green hedgehog skidded to a halt. Scourge spin-dashed back towards Geoffrey but Bunnie punched him away, leaving Scourge to spin-dash into the ground. Scourge picked himself up and charged into

Bunnie. He grabbed her and they fell to the ground in roly-poly. Scourge and Bunnie rolled over and over until Scourge jumped up and threw Bunnie straight into Royal HQ. Geoffrey grabbed Scourge by the ankles and tripped him up. Scourge fell on his face and Geoffrey, still holding Scourge's ankles, tossed him away. Scourge landed on his feet and charged towards Geoffrey. Geoffrey got ready to punch Scourge but Scourge leaped into the air and dropkicked Geoffrey in the head. The skunk fell onto his back and Scourge pinned the skunk down on the ground.

"If I were you stinky, I would cease this futile effort to stop me and surrender." crowed Scourge "You can't beat me, I'm everything Sonic is only stronger."

"We will not surrender to you!" yelled Bunnie, walloping Scourge with her robot arm.

Scourge hurled through the air and crashed into the wall of Royal HQ. Scourge pulled himself out of the wall and ran towards Bunnie in a mad dash. Bunnie just stuck her foot out and caused Scourge to trip over. Scourge landed on his face and grumbled to himself. Bunnie grabbed Scourge by the jacket and hoisted him up to her height.

"Ya'll get outta here before you hurt yourself Scourge." warned Bunnie "Ya'll failed to become king before so ya'll will fail again."

"Do you guys ever shut up?" grumbled Scourge, head butting Bunnie in the forehead and causing her to let go of him.

Scourge then proceeded to elbow Bunnie in the gut and then punched her in the muzzle with the back of his fist. Bunnie tried to react but Scourge was too fast and he grabbed her by the arm and hurled her over onto her back. But he didn't stop there, he began to spin Bunnie around in a circle and then he tossed her straight into Geoffrey who was trying to help Bunnie. Scourge laughed at his downed opponents.

"Since you're too stupid to surrender to my awesome power, I'm going to have to beat you both black and blue." said Scourge smoothly "Brace yourselves, this is going to hurt."

He spin-dashed towards Bunnie and Geoffrey before they could get up…

Meanwhile, Team Chaotix had followed Mandy's directions and they were soon out to sea on their speedboat. Espio the Chameleon, the Chaotix ninja and spy, was driving the boat whereas Vector was keeping an eye out for the oil rig and Charmy Bee, the Chaotix klutz, was just whooping with joy and getting on Vector's nerves. The speedboat's powerful motor roared louder then a pride of lions as the light but speedy marine craft rocketed through the endless stretch of the ocean. They had been travelling across the ocean for thirty minutes by now and at long last, they spotted the oil rig. Vector pointed straight ahead.

"I think that's our location boys." said Vector "Head over there Espio."

"Roger that." said Espio.

He continued driving straight forward and the speedboat headed towards the enormous oil rig. In a matter of moments, the speedboat arrived at the oil rig and Espio parked the boat directly under the oil rig and next to one of the legs that kept the station up. Espio killed the motor and the speedboat fell into silence. The Chaotix looked straight up at the oil rig above their heads and then at the red and yellow ocean liners that were held up to the station and wondered what to do.

"So Vector, goy any bright ideas?" jeered Charmy.

"Oh don't take the mess Charmy!" growled Vector "I think Espio will be the best man for this job. You get up on the station and find out where Sonic, Tails and Ruben are and get them off of this station."

"Roger." said Espio "I will go invisible so no one will see me."

He proceeded to do just that, turn invisible and he stepped out of the boat and began to walk up the leg of the oil rig they were parked near. Being a chameleon, Espio was able to climb up smooth

surfaces without any problems at all. Vector and Charmy couldn't see Espio for he was invisible but they knew where he was heading. Espio climbed up onto the station while still invisible and Charmy looked at Vector.

"So, what are we gonna do?" asked Charmy.

"Sit there and wait." said Vector "Espio's the only one who can do this quietly and we'll just get found out or something so we have to let Espio do this on his own."

"Aw!" grumbled Charmy "Boring! I wanna go up there and help Espio!"

"Charmy, be quiet or I'll throw you into the water!" growled Vector.

Vector should have known better then to raise his voice in Eggman territory for his shouting had ended up alerting some Eggman robots of his and Charmy's presence. Some Eggman robots equipped with jet packs and giant blaster rifles flew down to Vector and Charmy and they pointed their guns at the crocodile and bee. Charmy cried out in surprise and Vector raised his fists, ready for a fight. Trouble was, they were on water and a speedboat wasn't really the best place to have a fight on. Vector knew he would have a lot of trouble taking out the robots without a decent place to stand on. Charmy didn't have to worry about that since he could fly but he wouldn't be able to hold his own against so many robots.

"Raise-your-hands-pris-o-ner." ordered an Eggman robot, its rifle primed and ready to shoot Vector and Charmy.

Vector knew a fight was futile so he wasn't on the right terrain and Charmy wouldn't be much help. So reluctantly, he held his hands up in surrender. Charmy raised his hands in surrender too. The Eggman robots were pleased to see Vector and Charmy succumbing to their numbers and they reached out to seize the prisoners and take them to the detention room. Espio had heard the commotion and looked down to see what was happening, staying invisible so he wouldn't be found out. He wasn't pleased to see Eggman robots flying up to the oil rig with Vector and Charmy in their grasp but since he was still free he'd be able to help them. The

robots flew past the invisible Espio and the ninja chameleon leaped onto the back of one robot. The robot felt Espio land on him and it turned around to see what it was, only to find no one was there so it shrugged and continued flying off. Espio was now being taken to where the robots were going, in that case, he'd be able to free his friends. He wondered if Sonic, Tails and Ruben were in a similar position…

Sonic, Tails and Ruben had been thrown into a room with no windows and a glass door, making it look like a prison cell in an MPD station. Their hands had been cuffed behind their backs and to their dismay, they were laser cuffs so they couldn't break them and since Ruben had lost his aqua-collar, he couldn't use his water powers to short-circuit the cuffs. They were stuck in the cell with no means of escape. Alonzo peered through the door, pleased to see his enemies completely defeated and unable to escape. He laughed at them.

"Oh what pleasure it is to see you three lovely Mobians all locked up like wild animals." he sneered "If only Dr. Eggman could have luck like this. But his stupidity always gets in the way of his victory. Good thing I'm a whole lot smarter then him so your deaths will be certain this time…"

"Blah, blah, blah. Shut up Alonzo!" moaned Sonic "You're getting on my nerves!"

"You shut up hedgehog!" snapped Alonzo "I'm in charge of this rig so you answer to me!"

"We'll never answer to you!" retorted Tails, struggling feebly in his bonds "Now let us go!"

"What do you think I am? Mentally unstable?" scoffed Alonzo "You must think I have five bolts in my head loose if you think I'm going to so much as think about letting you go! You're all staying there and that's that!"

Then suddenly, further up the corridor, a door opened and Alonzo

could hear the sound of robotic feet clanking down the corridor. Alonzo turned around to see what was going on. Sonic, Tails and Ruben began wondering what was going on and they soon found their answer. The robots that had captured arrived in the detention area with Vector and Charmy bound up in laser cuffs and they opened the cell door and threw them straight into the cell. Vector and Charmy crashed into Sonic and Ruben and knocked them on their backs. Sonic gasped in surprise whereas Alonzo just smiled as he shut the door again.

"Vector? Charmy?" cried Sonic "What are you two doing here?"

"We can't explain right now." whispered Vector "Wait until the pointy slop bucket's gone."

"More prisoners!" cheered Alonzo "How wonderful! I recognize you two and all." he added, pointing at Charmy and Vector "You're the Chaotix if I remember correctly."

Vector didn't answer him.

"I though there was three people on your team though." noted Alonzo "Where's the chameleon?"

"We're not telling." said Charmy "And you'll never find him, he's invisible."

"Is he?" mused Alonzo "Well, I have a brilliant way of finding an invisible chameleon. A splodge of oil should render him visible easily. Everybody, get out there and find that chameleon!" ordered Alonzo.

"Yes-sir." droned the robots.

They all left the room in search of Espio. Alonzo pressed a button on the wall and then said to the prisoners.

"I feel it is pointless for me to say that Eggman doesn't want me to get rid of you for him. But Eggman's not here so I don't care what he wants me to do, I can do what I like here. I'm going to kill you all and I'll lie to Dr. Eggman by saying you all drowned in an attempt to destroy this oil rig."

"Oh yeah?" said Sonic "How are you gonna do that then?"

The moment he said that, two holes opened up in the wall and thick black oil began pouring out of the holes like water coming out of a tap and spilling all over the floor. Everybody gasped in horror at what was happening.

"You'll all drown in oil." chortled Alonzo "Back on Earth, Eggman's home planet, oil spillages killed many animals and now it's going to kill you five. I would stay and watch your oily demise but I've got duties to attend to. Bye, bye and have fun swimming in oil instead of water!"

Alonzo chortled to himself and wheeled out of the room, leaving the prisoners behind in the cell which was beginning to fill up with oil. It looked like this would be the end of Sonic the Hedgehog as the oil continued pouring and pouring all over the floor and beginning to rise up to their ankles…

Footnotes:

***See Stories 59 & 60**

**** See Stories 33-35**

***** See Story 61**

****** See Story 57**

Talk about being caught between a rock and a hard place! Sonic, Tails, Ruben, Vector and Charmy are about to become victims of the dreaded oil and Royal HQ is under siege! What the heck's gonna happen next? Join me next time for more awesomeness! Reviews are welcome.

Author's note: I Re-uploaded this chapter due to a tiny mistake I made. The mistake is the cell has a barred door and is filling up with oil. If the cell had a barred door then the oil would just run

out through the door and it wouldn't fill up the cell and drown everybody so I corrected the mistake by making it a glass door instead of a barred door. Just thought I'd inform you before you question me about it. :)

HQ Heist Part 2

Story 65: HQ Heist Part 2: No Help Can Come

Sonic the Hedgehog looked around the room desperately for a way out as more and more oil began to spill into the cell. The oil was rising fast and everybody's feet were covered by the thick, gooey oil that was filling the cell up. The only way out, of course, was the door but it was likely to be Diamond Glass and Sonic couldn't spin-dash with his arms cuffed behind his back so he wouldn't be able to break the door down. Vector the Crocodile, despite having his arms cuffed behind his back, was still able to use some of his strength. He bashed his shoulder against the door in an effort to break it but all he was doing is just giving himself shoulder ache. After one last failed attempt to bash the door down, Vector stopped trying and he panted.

"That's one tough door!" he panted "I didn't even lay a scratch on that thing!"

"It's Diamond Glass! I knew it!" muttered Sonic "We're never getting out of here now!"

"If I was to die right now, I'd much rather be drowning in water then oil right now." wailed Ruben "If only that pin-headed moron didn't steal my aqua-collar! I could short circuit our cuffs and probably get us out of here at the same time."

"I don't think you could Ruben." said Tails unsupportively "There's nothing to short circuit here except our laser cuffs so we'd still be trapped."

"I don't wanna die! I don't wanna die!" shrieked Charmy frantically "When's Espio gonna hurry up and save us? He's not captured!"

"I dunno Charmy." said Vector "Maybe Espio doesn't know where we are and is trying to find us."

"He'd better do it quickly because this oil's rising higher and higher!"

cried Sonic, looking down at his legs which were now submerged by the oil.

The oil was pouring faster and faster every second, meaning the room was filling with oil faster and faster. Things were beginning to look desperate now. There was no way out, no way of escape and no hope for the trapped Mobians. The room was beginning to fill up with oil and it was filling up faster and faster. In a matter of moments, the oil was now up to everybody's chests. Once it reached their heads then that would be the end of it. Seeing as they were going to die, Sonic decided to give his last words.

"Guys, if we don't make it out of here then I want you to know, that you're all way past cool." said Sonic "Especially you Tails."

"Thank you Sonic." said Tails "You're the best friend I've ever had."

Sonic just smiled feebly at Tails as the oil began to rise up to their chins. Everybody knew they'd be unable to escape the oil so they just decided to hold their breath and let the oil submerge them. They all did so as the oil rose up to their mouths. Seconds later, the oil rose over their heads and completely submerged everybody. They were all holding their breaths but they wouldn't be able to hold them forever. Once they released it, they'd drown and choke in the lethal oil they were submerged in. But then suddenly when it looked like the end was nigh, the oil stopped pouring into the room and suddenly all ran out into the corridor, taking Sonic and friends with it. They were swept out of the door and down the corridor and into a wall. The oil was all over the floor and Sonic, Tails, Ruben, Vector and Charmy were covered from head to toe in oil. Anyone seeing them would think they had black fur or in Vector's case, scales. Sonic picked himself up and shook the oil off his head.

"What just happened?" he asked, squeezing some oil out of his quills.

"The door just opened and all the oil spilled out." said Tails, wagging his twin tails to shake the oil off "Why did that happen though?"

"Because I opened it." came a deep voice that Vector and Charmy were all too familiar with.

There, standing at the control pad next to the cell door, was none other then Espio the Chameleon. He had finally managed to find the detention room and had opened the cell door to let everybody out. Vector and Charmy let out cries of joy.

"Espio you amazing little ninja you!" cheered Vector "I knew you'd save us!"

"We were about to drown in oil!" shrieked Charmy "What kept ya?"

"Well while I was invisible, I saw some Eggman robots carrying you and Charmy away," explained Espio "So I hoped onto the back of one robot but it didn't carry me to the detention room. Only the ones carrying you two did so I had to find the room myself. And when I eventually found it, I had to hack into the door's code which took me a while so I apologize for taking so long."

"Better late then never as they say." said Ruben "Now, can you get us out of these cuffs?"

"I can indeed water panther." said Espio.

He pulled a ninja knife out of his glove and stabbed the small metal sphere that wrapped the lasers around Ruben's wrists. The cuffs were destroyed and they turned off, freeing Ruben's arms. Espio did the same to everybody else. Now they were all free but they were all sticky and covered in oil. Espio just looked at them grimly.

"I hope you're not gonna ask me to give you all a bath." he muttered.

"We aren't actually." said Sonic "But we need to get this oil off or we're gonna leave some very sticky clues for Alonzo to pick up."

"Good thing I smuggled this from Alonzo when I was looking for the detention room." said Espio, holding up his arm and showing Ruben something.

Ruben peered at Espio's wrist and to his delight; he saw his aqua-collar attached to it. Ruben eagerly unclipped it and snapped it onto his neck. He could feel the whoosh of an ocean wave surge through his veins after he clipped the collar back on.

"You retrieved my aqua-collar!" he said happily "Thank you Espio, but how did you know it was mine and that it wasn't just a part of Alonzo?"

"I've never seen Alonzo with a purple wrist before and I've heard all about water panthers and what there powers are and what powers them." explained Espio "Not to mention, nobody I know wears a collar so I instantly knew it was yours."

"Wow, you're smart." complimented Ruben "Well mother always said chameleons have unmatched intelligence."

Now Ruben had his aqua-collar back on, he could use his water powers once again. He waved a hand at Sonic and Tails and sent a wave of water sweeping over them. Tails laughed like a child being squirted by a hose pipe whereas Sonic cried like a cat that's been in water. That one wave of water managed to get all of the oil off their fur and Sonic and Tails were squeaky clean now.

"Thanks Ruben." said Tails, admiring his now clean fur.

"As much as I hate getting wet, I'm glad to be rid of that oil." said Sonic, shaking his quills dry "I'd rather be wet then be covered oil."

Ruben beamed like a sunrise and he then proceeded to sweep a wave of water over Vector and Charmy. Vector enjoyed that wave since he was a crocodile and crocodiles love water and Charmy was as happy as kid in a swimming pool. That wave of water had managed to clean Vector and Charmy good and now there was not a splodge of oil on them. Now all that was left was Ruben himself. Ruben pointed at his cranium and drenched himself with water as if he was in a shower. Now Ruben was all cleaned and he was pleased to be looking at his blue fur and purple stripes once again.

"Much better." said Ruben "So now we're free, what do we do now? Do we continue the mission?"

"I don't think we can." said Tails "The robots stole my bag of detonators."

"Why do you have a bag of detonators?" asked Charmy "Are you

planning to blow something up?"

"We're supposed to blow this oil rig up so Eggman can't get any oil for his robots." said Sonic "But we got caught and then you ended up getting caught. Speaking of which, why are you here anyway?"

"Mandy noticed something was wrong so she asked for us to go and see what we could do." explained Vector "We've got a speedboat for you to get off this station with."

"Sweet." said Sonic "Our jet's destroyed so your speedboat is the only way off the rig. But we can't leave the rig without completing the mission. We need to get the bag of detonators back so we can complete the mission."

"Let's just hope Alonzo hasn't gotten rid of the bag." said Tails "Or we'll never be able to blow the rig up."

"In that case, you all stay there and I'll see if I can find it." said Espio "Those robots will never see me."

He then proceeded to turn invisible and walk out of the room. Sonic, Tails, Vector, Charmy and Ruben stayed put in the oil stained detention room, waiting for Espio to return and hopefully, have the bag of detonators with him. If the bag was gone then they would have no choice but to abandon the mission and retreat back to Mobotropolis. Sonic was not the kind of person who liked to leave missions uncompleted so he hoped that Espio would be able to find the bag or he would have to explain why they had returned to Mobotropolis without completing the mission…

"Urgh!" cried Mandy as she was thrown against a wall once again.

The fight in Royal HQ had not been a pleasant fight for poor Mandy Mouse these past few minutes. She had managed to hold her own against the R.F.S. traitor Fiona Fox but her little helper Ginger the Fox, Tails' cousin, had been helping Fiona by distracting Mandy and giving Fiona the chance to go to town on the mouse. As of this moment, Mandy was finding it pretty hard to hold on and after that

slam in the wall, Fiona grabbed Mandy by the neck and began to throttle Mandy. Mandy gasped hoarsely and she tried to get Fiona's hands off her throat but the vixen was just too strong for her. Mandy had been weakened quite considerably thanks to Ginger's distractions and Fiona's violent fighting so her attempts to get Fiona off of her neck were futile. Fiona flashed Mandy a sick, twisted grin as she attempt to throttle the mouse to death.

"How about that Mandy?" she sneered "You've survived giant killer robots made by Dr. Eggman and this is how it ends, you get throttled by your former comrade! Isn't that a sad way to go you mousey moron?"

"Hurk…Ugh!" choked Mandy as she tried to get Fiona to let go "Fiona…please…don't do this…let…go of me…"

"I don't think so." said Fiona "You're one of the ones I want revenge on the most so therefore, I'm getting rid of you first. I bet you regret chastising me for my failures now don't you?"

"Ack! Fiona…every bad…thing I said…" croaked Mandy weakly "I… take it all back…OK? Just…please stop…doing this and come… back to…us…" she pleaded.

"That's not gonna work on me now Mandy!" yelled Fiona "I'm with Scourge now and nothing is going to change that! Especially you!"

Mandy just gave Fiona a feeble, pleading expression as the vixen continued to throttle her. Ginger began cheering like a kid who's watching his big brother beat a bully up for him.

"Give it to her Fiona! Throttle that mouse!" he cheered evilly "Make her choke!"

"I am doing you dweeb." snapped Fiona "Shut up and let me concentrate!"

She was suddenly interrupted by someone grabbing her by the shoulder, hauling her away from Mandy and holding a long thin blade to her throat. It was none other then Mandy's boyfriend Wilson the Dog with his trademark weapon, the spinning blade, and he held

Fiona at blade point. Mandy's battered face brightened up at the sight of Wilson with Fiona in his grasp and holding his weapon close to her throat. Fiona struggled feebly in Wilson's tough grasp but that just prompted the dog to hold the blade even closer to her neck. Fiona gulped nervously, if she continued to struggle, Wilson would likely behead her so she stopped struggling.

"Don't move traitor!" yelled Wilson "You have got a lot of explaining to do for this Fiona Fox!"

"You let Fiona go!" shouted Ginger, trying to punch Wilson.

"You stay out of this kid!" retorted Wilson, kicking Ginger before he could get him.

Ginger fell down on the floor, writhing in pain. Wilson turned his attention back to Mandy, who was just picking herself up and rubbing her left arm slightly. Despite Fiona's beatings, she still had the strength to stand up.

"Thank you Wilson." said Mandy "You saved my life."

"Anything for you Mandy girl." said Wilson kindly "Now do me a favour and get me a pair of laser cuffs. This treacherous vixen could do with a timeout."

Mandy ran out of the room and headed to the storage room where the laser cuffs were kept. Ginger picked himself up and tried again to punch Wilson but Wilson heard him coming and he turned around with Fiona still in his grasp. Ginger lunged at Wilson but since Fiona was in front of the dog, he accidentally punched Fiona in the belly. Fiona gasped and spluttered after the punch. Despite Ginger's inability to fight, he could punch pretty hard. Ginger suddenly realized his mistake and was quick to apologize.

"Fiona! I'm sorry, I was trying to hit the dog!" he shrieked.

"Just…shut up and stand back before you do anything else wrong!" wheezed Fiona.

Ginger reluctantly did as he was told and he stepped back from Wilson. Wilson kept the blade held to Fiona's throat and his other

arm wrapped around her to ensure she would never get away. Fiona tried to find a way out of this tough spot without getting her head cut off but Wilson was holding her in such a way that escape would be futile. She could try and stamp on Wilson's feet but Wilson would probably slit her throat accidentally so she decided not to risk it.

"I like your new attitude by the way Wilson." said Fiona sarcastically "Couldn't take being a wimp anymore?"

"I maybe faint hearted but I know when to be brave." said Wilson grimly "And besides, you don't scare me so I can take you on with no worries at all."

"Cute." muttered Fiona "Bet you wouldn't be like this if Scourge was attacking you right now. Speaking of which, how did you get past him?"

"Bunnie and Geoffrey are keeping him busy outside." explained Wilson "I managed to sneak past and make it in here to help Mandy."

Just as he said Mandy's name, the mouse returned into the lab with a pair of laser cuff spheres. Ginger then suddenly took the opportunity to try and trip Mandy up and steal the laser cuffs by tackling her from the side but Mandy was quick to see him and she tripped him up. Ginger landed on his face and Mandy forced his arms behind his back. She placed the laser cuff sphere in-between his wrists and the sphere emitted a laser that wrapped around the fox's wrists. Ginger was stuck now and laser cuffs couldn't be broken so he would never get free. Now Ginger was subdued, Mandy strode over to Fiona and Wilson turned the fox around. Mandy forced Fiona's arms behind her back and placed the laser cuff sphere in-between Fiona's wrists. The lasers wrapped around Fiona's wrists and the fox found herself unable to move her arms. She was completely stuck just like Ginger was. Mandy then proceeded to roughly push Fiona against the wall and sit her down. Ginger was placed next to Fiona by Wilson. The two foxes scowled at Wilson and Mandy angrily but the dog and mouse just smirked at them back. They then gave each other a high-five.

"That's those two dealt with." said Wilson "What do we do now?"

"I would say help Bunnie and Geoffrey but I can't leave those two alone in Royal HQ." noted Mandy "I know they're restrained but even a restrained villain can cause some damage. I think we should stay here until someone from the MPD can pick them up. Maybe Melchett the Hedgehog or something."

"I'll make a call immediately." said Wilson.

He ran over to the computer monitors and prepared to make a call to the MPD station in Empire City. But before Wilson could say a single word, Fiona jumped back to her feet and rammed Mandy in the side before the mouse could do anything. She dropped the remote that worked the laser cuffs and Fiona quickly pressed a button on the remote with her foot. The laser cuffs switched off, freeing Fiona and Ginger's arms and Fiona grabbed Mandy in a chokehold. Mandy gagged and struggled but Fiona's grasp was too stronger for her, especially since she had been weakened by Fiona earlier. Ginger picked up one of the laser cuff spheres and forced Mandy's arms behind her back while Fiona held her. The lasers activated and wrapped around Mandy's wrists. Now Mandy would never be able to get free. Wilson immediately saw what was happening and he pointed his spinning blade at Fiona.

"Let Mandy go or I'll run you through so much people can use you as a knife block!" he yelled.

"You stand down or I'll break her neck!" threatened Fiona, making a threatening gesture with her arms "It's possible to do so in this position you know!"

"Wilson, don't give in, call someone for help!" shrieked Mandy.

Fiona tightened her grip, making Mandy gag even harder.

"Be quiet!" she yelled "So Wilson, do you want to try and stop me and lose your pretty little girlfriend? Or will you sit and stay like a good little doggy?"

"You've got five seconds!" said Ginger evilly.

He held his left hand out and began counting. Wilson began to fret.

What should he do? He couldn't give up and let the two foxes take over Royal HQ. Then again, once Bunnie and Geoffrey defeated Scourge, they would be able to stop Fiona and Ginger so it didn't matter if he gave up, they still had hope.

"Five…" Ginger's thumb curled into the palm of his hand "Four…" down went his pinkie. "Three…" down went another finger "Two…" he now only had two fingers up "One…"

"Stop! I give!" blustered Wilson "Please for the love of god, don't kill Mandy!"

"Good boy." taunted Fiona "Now…sit." she ordered in her best dog-owner-giving-a-command voice

Wilson did what he was told and he sat down on the floor like a dog usually would do. He grumbled to himself. He hated being given pet dog like commands, it annoyed him. The moment Wilson sat down, Ginger ran over to him and put the laser cuffs on his wrists. Now Wilson was subdued, Fiona dragged Mandy over to a door in the right hand corner of the lab. She flung the door open and threw Mandy inside. Ginger tried to carry Wilson but he couldn't because he was too weak so Fiona gave him a hand. They two foxes threw Wilson into the room and they shut the door. Fiona turned a notch on the door, locking it and trapping Wilson and Mandy in the room. The room Wilson and Mandy were in was merely an empty closet so they wouldn't find anything useful to use. Fiona laughed to herself and dusted her hands off. She straightened her hair and walked over to the computer monitors. She sat down in a chair and looked at the screen. The monitors hadn't changed one little bit; they looked just the same as they always did. When she was on the team, she always did like the lab but now she wasn't a Royal Fighter anymore, the lab meant nothing to her. She just casually sat in the chair and relaxed.

"Now Wilson and Mandy are taken care of, all we have to do is wait for Scourgey boy to beat up Bunnie and Geoffrey and this base is ours." she said smoothly.

"Why does Scourge want this base anyway?" wondered Ginger "Isn't he trying to take over the world? How's a mere base gonna

help him?"

"Scourge will explain once he's got the place." snapped Fiona "Scourge knows what he's doing, I think, and we have to do what he says or get thrashed by him."

Ginger nodded in agreement, he knew what would happen if he disobeyed Scourge. Ginger then began to wonder how Scourge was doing right now outside of Royal HQ…

…and knowing the little twerp, he'd probably be thrilled at what was going on if he was outside watching it right now. Scourge the Hedgehog was managing to put up an excellent fight against Geoffrey St. John and Bunnie Rabbot. Geoffrey wasn't really much of a challenge for Scourge whereas Bunnie was the one he had to worry about. Bunnie's incredible strength made her a tough opponent for Scourge. Scourge spin-dashed towards Bunnie but the Rabbot activated her force field generator to shield herself from the attack. Scourge bounced off the force field and landed behind Bunnie. Scourge charged at Bunnie but the Rabbot smacked him away with her robot arm. Scourge landed on his face and ended up getting a mouthful of dirt. Geoffrey quickly loaded his crossbow and attempted once again to stun Scourge with a stun dart but Scourge quickly recovered and dodged the dart. Scourge charged at Geoffrey but the skunk dodged his attack by leaping out of the way. Scourge skidded to a halt and charged at Geoffrey again. Geoffrey grabbed Scourge by the shoulders and kneed him in the stomach. Then he gave Scourge an upwards chop that seemed to stun Scourge momentarily. Then before Scourge could attack again, Geoffrey punched him as hard as he could. Scourge flew backwards and landed on his back. Despite that beating, he still wasn't down. Being Sonic's brother paid off for Scourge, especially since he had Sonic's moves and stamina. It was hard for anyone to bring Sonic down so Scourge would be just as difficult. Geoffrey panted and groaned as Scourge got up again.

"This is ludicrous! The bloke's still up and at it despite our best efforts!" grumbled Geoffrey.

"Well we can't give up sugah." said Bunnie "Royal HQ's dependin' on us to save it from Scourge, Fiona and Ginger. If we let them have it then the Kingdom of Mobotropolis is doomed!"

"I can't subdue the bloke with my darts as he's just too fast for them." said Geoffrey "We've gotta tire him out or summet. Or maybe you pin him down and I shoot him."

"Ah'll try mah best Geoff." said Bunnie "Ah hope ah can do this."

"With your strength you'll be able to subdue Scourge easily." Geoffrey assured the Rabbot "It's just getting hold of him that's the hard part…"

"You got that right sucker!" taunted Scourge, spin-dashing Geoffrey in the head.

The skunk was knocked right off his feet. Bunnie tried to punch Scourge but Scourge ducked and let Bunnie have it in the gut. Bunnie doubled over in pain and Scourge proceeded to uppercut Bunnie while she was bent over clutching her tummy. Bunnie clutched her face and Scourge then grabbed her organic arm and gave it a sharp twist. He wrapped his other arm around Bunnie's neck, putting her in a chokehold. Bunnie gagged and fought to ignore the pain in her organic right arm which Scourge was twisting. Scourge laughed at Bunnie's pain and then decided to taunt her to add insult to injury.

"You could have saved yourself all of this pain if you had chosen to succumb to me Rabbot." sneered Scourge "As a matter of fact, who's the pea-brain who decided to give you a bad pun as a name? Sonic's no doubt, he's always making the bad jokes."

"Urk! Mah name has always been Bunnie!" gagged Bunnie as Scourge's grip tightened "Everybody just nicknamed me Bunnie Rabbot because of mah robot parts!"

"Yeah as if I couldn't guess." snorted Scourge sarcastically "Now, are you going to surrender? Or do I have to break your arm in order to make you do so?"

Scourge didn't get an answer from the Rabbot for Geoffrey had taken this opportunity to finally shoot Scourge with a stun-dart. The dart embedded itself in Scourge's back and the green hedgehog cried out in surprise as he felt a sudden pin prick. He then let go of Bunnie Rabbot and collapsed to the ground in a deep slumber. Geoffrey smirked at the subdued hedgehog.

"Good thing I got him too." said Geoffrey "That was my last stun dart."

"Ah'm glad Scourge is finally down now." said Bunnie "Now we can haul his ugly butt to jail where he belongs."

"I'm taking the blighter to jail, you can help Wilson and Mandy take down that traitor Fiona and Scourge's sidekick Ginger." said Geoffrey, picking Scourge up and draping him on his shoulder "Hopefully the dart's effects will keep him asleep until I get him to an MPD station."

To Geoffrey's bad luck though, Scourge suddenly woke up and booted him in the head, causing Geoffrey to drop Scourge and fall on his face. Scourge pinned the skunk down on the ground with his foot, grinning evilly at the skunk. Geoffrey turned his head around to look over his shoulder at Scourge, who was pinning him down to the ground.

"N-n-no way!" piped Geoffrey "How did my dart's effect wear off so quickly?"

"The thick leather of my jacket stopped the dart from fully going in." sneered Scourge, pulling the dart out of his back and throwing it away "Only the tip went into my back and it gave me a quick shock that made me collapse. Now you can't stun me anymore since according to you, this was your last one."

"Oh damn it!" muttered Geoffrey.

"Well ah guess we have to keep on fightin' then." said Bunnie "Put em up Scourge!" she yelled, raising her arms and getting ready to fight.

"Whatever you say Rabbot." said Scourge, releasing Geoffrey and raising his fists.

Scourge and Bunnie ran towards each other with their fists raised but Scourge ran at sonic speed so he got to Bunnie quicker and he punched her first, directly in the shoulder. Bunnie clutched her shoulder but had no time to react for Scourge attacked again by doing a back flip directly in front of her, which in turn caused Bunnie to get kicked in the face as his feet swung past her. Bunnie fell onto her bottom but she was quickly back on her feet and she punched at Scourge, only to miss and get rammed in the side by the green hedgehog. Bunnie retaliated with a wallop to the face from her robot arm. Scourge grunted after the punch and he fell onto his side. Bunnie then proceeded to grab Scourge's ankles, swing him over onto his other side and slam him on the ground. Unfortunately, Scourge took the opportunity to roll into a spin-dash while Bunnie was still holding him, causing her to let go of Scourge. Scourge propelled forward and then ricocheted back towards Bunnie. The Rabbot deployed her force-field generator and surrounded herself with a pink force field. Scourge bounced off the force field and crashed into the ground behind Bunnie. Scourge picked himself up only to get tackled down to the ground by Geoffrey. Geoffrey then grabbed Scourge in a headlock. Scourge gagged and tried to wriggle free but Geoffrey managed to hold onto Scourge.

"Let go of me wretch!" yelled Scourge.

"Oh I don't think so Scourge." said Geoffrey "You're beaten and that's all there is to it. Bunnie, get me some laser cuffs now!" he ordered.

"OK Geoff." said Bunnie, running off to Royal HQ to get the laser cuffs.

She didn't get far though. The moment Bunnie opened the door to Royal HQ, Fiona leaped out of the building and tackled her down to the ground. Ginger just stood behind Fiona waiting to do something. Bunnie just stared up at Fiona and frowned at her. Fiona just smirked at her back.

"Going somewhere Bunnie?" sneered Fiona "I don't think so."

"Fiona!" growled Geoffrey "I was wondering when you'd show up! What have you done with Wilson and Mandy you traitor?"

"Oh they're just locked away safely in a closet somewhere in the HQ." replied Fiona "They're alright don't worry, it's just they can't help you."

"You locked them in a closet?" blurted Geoffrey "Oh that's going too far! When I get my hands on you Fiona you'll be sorry you double-crossed us like this!"

"Oh shut up Geoffrey and let go of Scourge." ordered Fiona.

"No chance Fiona!" retorted Geoffrey, tightening his grip on Scourge which in turn made Scourge gag "Scourge is going to prison and you'll be joining him!"

"As if." snorted Fiona, running towards Geoffrey as fast as she could go.

Geoffrey held Scourge in front of himself, leaving Fiona to accidentally kick Scourge in the face. After Fiona's incredible kick, Geoffrey elbowed Scourge in the back of the head, knocking the green hedgehog down and leaving him with a slight headache. Fiona realized what she had just done accidentally and she bent down to help Scourge.

"Scourge baby I didn't mean to kick you!" she cried "I was aiming for Geoffrey."

"I know Fi." snapped Scourge "Now stop embarrassing me and get your act together!"

Fiona nodded and was about to get back up until Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and pointed it at the vixen's head. Fiona was forced to stay down on her knees with her hands up. Scourge could see where this was going so he stayed down on his knees and raised his hands. Bunnie was pleased to see that her threatening gesture was working.

"Thanks ya'll." she said to Scourge and Fiona "Now stay there if ya'll know what's good for you."

Unfortunately, Ginger took the opportunity to fly up to Bunnie and yank on her ears. Bunnie screeched in pain and tried to whack Ginger away but Ginger was just out of her reach. Fiona immediately leaped onto her feet and let Bunnie have it in the gut with a powerful kick. Ginger let go of Bunnie's ears and the Rabbot fell down on her back. Geoffrey tried to help her but Scourge fisted the skunk in the back of the head, bringing Geoffrey down on his hands and knees. He laughed at the downed skunk and rabbit.

"You can hardly handle me so let's see how well you handle all three of us." crowed Scourge.

"Suit yerself mate." said Geoffrey challengingly "Come on Bunnie, let's beat these blighters!"

"Sho' nuff." said Bunnie, picking herself up and getting ready to fight.

Scourge, Fiona and Ginger all prepared to attack while Bunnie and Geoffrey waited for the right moment to lunge. Then all five Mobians charged towards each other and the fight began. All hell was going to break loose at this very minute…

Meanwhile, Eggman's oil rig was bustling with workers. The robots were rushing around here and there loading the final supplies for the rig's next shipping to Robotropolis, Eggman's robotical city and base of operations. Alonzo the Butler Bot, Eggman's snooty sidekick barked orders at the rushing workers as they carried barrels and barrels of oil to the huge ocean liners held above the water on the sides of the oil rig. Once the cargo was loaded, the ships would drop into the ocean and set sail to shore. Once the ships arrived at shore, the robots would then carry the oil themselves to Robotropolis and deliver it to Dr. Eggman personally. Alonzo was pleased to see how quickly everybody was working, especially Mecha Rouge for she was the fastest worker of them all. Mecha Rouge's swift flying allowed her to go back and forth really quickly and her great strength allowed her to carry more barrels then the average Eggman worker robots. The ocean liners would be ready to launch in a matter of minutes and Eggman would get his new oil supplies for his robot armies in no time. As Mecha Rouge loaded another stash of barrels,

Alonzo began to mutter to himself.

"It's nice to be in charge of something for once." he said "It'll be much better when I'm in charge of not just a mere oil rig, but the entire Eggman Empire. And once my little project which I've safely hidden in the back-up base and codenamed: Project Annihilation is complete, my rule over my master's empire is certain."

Mecha Rouge then flew up towards Alonzo and stood to attention in front of the pointy-headed robot. Alonzo scowled at her.

"Why aren't you working?" he snapped.

"I-have-a-re-port." droned Mecha Rouge "The-first-Eggman-ocean-liner-is-ready-for-launch."

"Is it now?" said Alonzo happily "Well let's launch the ship while we wait for the others to get loaded."

Alonzo turned around and zipped over to the clamps that held the ships above the water below. Alonzo pressed a button on the control pad and the clamps released the first ocean liner. The huge orange and yellow ship dropped down from the oil rig's height and landed with a giant splash on the water below. After the giant splash had died down, the ship immediately went into motion and began pulling away from the oil rig. Despite the ship's immense size that matched that of an Earth oil tanker, it was surprisingly fast, moving at a speed of thirty knots. Eggman was capable of building many a brilliant invention, especially ocean liners that could move at a greater speed then the average ocean liner. The ship would arrive at shore in half an hour with Eggman's weekly supplies. Alonzo watched the ocean liner pull away and he smiled to himself.

"I love it when everything runs like clockwork." he said to himself "Everything's running as expected and Sonic and his friends can't stop me since I've drowned them all in oil. Maybe I should check on them in a minute to see the aftermath. I bet I'll get a very oily sight…"

As he talked to himself, an invisible Espio the Chameleon sneaked past him and tiptoed through a door and into a room. The room was

completely empty save for a tonne of supplies. These ranged from empty barrels waiting to be filled with oil, crates the barrels were to be stored in after being filled and weapons for the robots to arm themselves with. Espio turned visible, for no one was in the room so he wouldn't be caught by anybody, and he observed his surroundings. He saw a peg on the wall and there was a bag hanging on the wall. Espio crept over to the peg and grabbed the bag. He unzipped the bag and looked into it. The bag was full of detonators. This must be the bag of detonators Tails had been talking about earlier. He, Sonic and Ruben needed the bag to complete their mission so Espio zipped the bag back up and unhooked it off the hook. He then turned himself invisible again and slung the bag on his shoulder. Sadly, he couldn't turn the bag invisible so anyone who spotted him would notice the bag was seemingly floating by itself and he'd get caught but Espio was skilled in getting out of tight situations so he didn't have to worry too much about getting found out. Espio then decided to do something else before leaving. He unzipped the bag once again, took one detonator out of the bag and dropped it into a barrel. That was one detonator set up for the oil rig's destruction. He would let Tails do the rest. Espio opened the door and let himself out of the room. He looked both ways to make sure the coast was clear and he ran off as fast as his feet could carry him. Alonzo heard a slight pitter-patter of Espio's feet as the chameleon ran for his life but he shook it off, dismissing it as nothing to bother about. He turned his attention back to the ocean liners, which were near to being fully loaded. The second liner would be ready for launch in no time and soon that one would be on it's way to deliver the oil supplies to Dr. Eggman.

Espio ran all the way back to the detention room and he let himself into the room. He quickly closed the door behind him and ran down the corridor. He came to a stop as he saw the door that led to the cell Alonzo had locked everybody in and he opened it. He turned himself visible and ran into the cell room. Sonic and friends were pleased to see Espio had successfully managed to retrieve Tails' bag of detonators. The ninja chameleon handed the bag over to Tails and Tails took the bag from Espio and slung it on his shoulder.

"Thanks Espio." said Tails.

"No problem." said Espio "We need to be quick though. Alonzo's already launched one ocean liner and right now as we speak, it's heading to shore to deliver some oil supplies to supposedly Dr. Eggman. I've already hidden one of the detonators in a storage room."

"Nice one Es but we're actually waiting until all the ships are launched." explained Sonic "It's so we can blow the rig up without causing an oil spill into the ocean. You know how bad oil spills are."

"Yeah, oil's icky stuff!" gagged Charmy, making sickly noises as he thought about it "We don't wanna spill that stuff into the nice clean ocean do we?"

"Of course not." said Tails "So how many ships are being loaded with oil Espio?"

"I think I saw about four ships being loaded." said Espio as he though about it "One's already gone so there's three ships left to be loaded."

"That shouldn't take too long." said Sonic "While we're waiting, we can load the detonators and then get off the rig. Once we're off the rig, we can set the charges to blow and the rig will be in pieces!"

"I just hope those robots haven't sunk my little speedboat yet." said Vector grimly "I have a horrible feeling that they have though."

"You set the detonators and I'll see if our speedboat's still there." said Espio, turning invisible once again.

The invisible chameleon left the room and Sonic and friends followed him. Tails took two detonators out of the bag and attached them neatly to a wall each before leaving the room. The detonators had to be placed strategically in several different places on the oil rig in order for the explosion to be more devastating. Now the detonators had been planted, Tails followed everybody else out of the detention area. The Mobians left the detention area and found themselves on the main deck of the oil rig. Sonic bent down on one knee and poked his head around the corner of the structure they were hiding behind. There were workers rushing around loading the

final supplies on the ships. The second ocean liner had already been launched and now the third ship was nearing completion. They couldn't set the detonators anywhere on the decks as they would be spotted in no time so they had to go somewhere else.

"Hey guys, I think we should go somewhere else." said Sonic "There's too many robots out there, we'll be caught instantly."

"I'll just set one detonator right here." said Tails, attaching a detonator to the wall on their side.

The detonator attached nicely to the wall and was ready for activation.

"So where shall we go now?" asked Vector.

"Maybe down there." said Ruben, pointing to an unoccupied section of the oil rig "There's no one working over there."

Everybody ran across the decks and towards the unoccupied area. This area was just another section of the oil rig. There were clamps to hold a ship on the side barrier and there was a barrel filling station where the barrels could be filled with oil. All one had to do was put the barrel under the huge oil tank that was held a few feet off the ground and the oil tank would fill the barrel with oil through a hose nozzle that pointed straight down to the ground. Since no barrels needed filling, no one needed to operate this area. Sonic was pleased with their good luck right now.

"This area will do." said Sonic "Start setting up detonators Tails before someone catches us."

"OK." said Tails.

"I'll keep watch." said Ruben as Tails ran off to set the detonators up "Any robot that sees us will get swept away by my water waves."

"Good idea Ruben." said Sonic "After all, water is a robot's worst enemy."

Tails took a detonator out of the bag and flew up to the oil tank. He placed the detonator on the tank and flew back down to the deck.

He placed another detonator on an empty crate that would be full of barrels had they not been filled already and then he flew off to place another detonator. He placed three on different sections of the side barriers and he placed one near the oil tank. He placed two on random parts of the deck and attached a final one to the wall of the structure. Tails felt that that was enough detonators for this area and decided it was time to move on.

"That's enough for this bit." said Tails "Let's move on."

"OK Tails." said Sonic "Come on Ruben." he called to the water panther.

Ruben obeyed and ran off with Sonic and friends as they headed to another section of the oil rig.

"I have a good idea on where to place the detonators." said Ruben as Sonic and friends ran for it "How about you place a few detonators on the legs of the station itself? I bet that'll do some damage to the rig."

"Good idea Ruben." said Tails "I'll do that then."

He twisted his tails around one another and took flight. He flew off the decks and down towards the water below the rig. Tails flew towards one of the oil rig's legs and fished out a detonator from the bag on his shoulder. Tails attached the detonator onto the leg and then began to wonder if he should attach anymore on. Tails looked into his bag. He only had six detonators left. He decided to attach a detonator to each leg. He had already attached on so he flew off to attach another. He flew all the way around under the oil rig, attaching a detonator each to the other three legs of the rig and then he decided to attach the last three detonators at random points under the oil rig above him. That was all of the detonators set up at last. Now all they had to do was get off the rig and they could set the whole station to go kaboom. Tails was suddenly startled by an enormous splash that came seemingly from nowhere. The third ocean liner had just been launched and it sped off across the ocean to its designated destination. Tails watched the ship sail away before flying out from under the oil rig and back onto the decks. Just as he flew back on the decks, he suddenly realized something. The

Chaotix said they had arrived on a speedboat. While flying around under the rig, he didn't see a speedboat of any kind. That obviously meant their only means of escape had been foiled. Tails landed on the decks and spoke to Sonic.

"Sonic, I've set the last of the detonators but while I was under the rig, I didn't see any speedboats." reported Tails.

"Didn't see any speedboats?" repeated Sonic "That must mean the Eggman robots must have sunk it or something. Well that's just great! We lose the jet and now we lose a speedboat! How are we gonna get off this rig now?"

"I dunno Sonic. I'm stumped." said Vector, shrugging sadly.

Then suddenly out of nowhere, Espio the Chameleon reappeared beside Vector, making the crocodile jump slightly.

"I'm sorry to report that the speedboat is gone Vector." said Espio "We can't get off."

"Thanks Espio but Tails already told us that." said Vector.

"Oh." said Espio "That unfortunate turn of events means we're stuck here now."

"I've set all the detonators to go but I can't set them off if we're still on here, I'll kill us all." said Tails sadly "We must find another way off this thing."

"Maybe we could stowaway on one of the ocean liners that's delivering oil to Eggman." suggested Sonic.

"That's not a bad thought." said Ruben "We're gonna have to be quick though, there's only one left and I think it's about ready to launch."

"In that case, let's do it to it!" yelled Sonic.

He ran off at his trademark speed and charged towards the last remaining ocean liner which was just about ready to go. The others ran after him, desperate to catch the ship. Sonic charged through

some worker robots and straight past Alonzo. The butler bot was whisked off his wheels and sent rolling across the decks like a missile on its side. Alonzo picked himself up and stared in disbelief.

"Sonic's alive?" he gurgled "Impossible! He should have drowned in oil right now!"

Sonic leaped onto a worker bot's head and leaped onto the ocean liner which had just finished being loaded with oil barrels. Unfortunately, he didn't get to stay on. Mecha Rouge spotted Sonic on the oil rig and she flew up towards Sonic. She grabbed the hedgehog by the arms and flew him off the ocean liner. Alonzo ran over to the side barriers and quickly released the docking clamps that were holding the ocean liner above the water so that the ship could deliver the oil supplies and eliminate any hopes of escape for Sonic and friends. Tails, Ruben and the Chaotix arrived just in time to see the ocean liner pull away from the oil rig at full speed.

"No! We're too late!" cried Tails "We missed the ship!"

"Indeed you did my mangy Mobians." said Alonzo with a gloating smirk on his metal face "Now you're stuck here with me. What a delightful turn of events this is. Although I'm quite mystified as to how you managed to survive the cell of oil though." he added grimly.

"I helped them at the last minute." said Espio, deploying a shuriken and getting ready to throw it "Now you tell us how we get off this rig or I'll disembowel you bit by bit!"

"You will do absolutely nothing chameleon boy." said Alonzo "Unless you want Sonic to meet a watery grave."

Everybody turned around and saw Mecha Rouge holding Sonic by his arms above the water. The roboticized bat was getting ready to drop Sonic. Sonic squirmed in the Robian bat's tough metallic grasp but a Robian had a tight grasp so Sonic wouldn't be able to get free no matter how hard he struggled.

"Sonic!" cried Tails helplessly.

"Ha, ha, ha." chortled Alonzo dryly "So Mobians, do you surrender?

Or does Sonic end up becoming another victim of the deadly water? Make your choice and do it quick because I'm not a patient robot you know."

"I've already made my choice and I say none of the above!" yelled Ruben, thrusting his arm forward and letting Alonzo have it with a wave of water.

Alonzo was sent hurling backwards and he slid all the way to the other side of the decks and flying over the side barrier. He just managed to grab onto the barrier and save himself from plunging into the ocean waters. Now Alonzo was distracted, Ruben turned his attention to Mecha Rouge. He aimed at her and fired a jet of water out of both his hands but the roboticized bat let go of Sonic and flew out of Ruben's way, causing the water panther to miss and Sonic to fall into the ocean. Tails watched in horror and he immediately leaped over the barrier and twisted his tails around one another. He flew down to the waters just as Sonic landed in the water and he grabbed Sonic's hand just as the hedgehog was submerging under the ocean. Tails pulled Sonic quickly out of the water and flew him back up to the oil rig but Mecha Rouge screw-kicked him from behind, causing Tails and Sonic to fall back into the water. Espio and Charmy decided to distract Mecha Rouge so Tails could have a chance to save Sonic. Espio threw shuriken at Mecha Rouge and Charmy flew around the Robian bat to keep her attention diverted. Charmy then shook his butt at Mecha Rouge in a taunting manner, prompting the bat to try and catch him. Charmy flew away with Mecha Rouge chasing after him. Now Mecha Rouge was distracted, Tails could now fly Sonic to safety. He flew out of the water with Sonic in tow and he landed back on the decks of the oil rig. He settled Sonic down and the blue hedgehog coughed and spluttered.

"Cough! Thanks Tails!" he gasped "I thought I was done for!"

"Don't mention it Sonic." said Tails happily "And it makes a nice change for me having to be saved from drowning all the time*."

"Yeah, talk about irony." agreed Sonic.

Alonzo had managed to pull himself back onto the rig and he charged towards Sonic in a mad rage. He had his sharp metal

fingers bared and he was yelling a very bad sounding battle cry. Sonic just promptly gave Alonzo an uppercut as the robot servant tried to attack him. Alonzo hurled backwards and landed with a clang on his back.

"When will you learn to get a life Alonzo?" muttered Sonic.

Alonzo picked himself up and glared at him.

"Right! That is it!" he grumbled "If I can't drown you then I guess I'll have to destroy you! Eggman robots! KILL HIM!" he bellowed at the top of his portly gentlemanly like voice.

All the Eggman worker robots surrounded Sonic and friends and pointed their weapons at them. Mecha Rouge saw the robots surrounding Sonic and friends and she gave up on the chase after Charmy and flew down to join them. Charmy could sense what was happening and he flew down to join his friends. The robots all prepared to fire whereas Sonic and friends prepared to cut loose. One thing's for sure is that the oil rig was about to become a battlefield of dangerous proportions once the fists started flying and the lasers started firing…

"Ha, ha, ha! Take that again wimps!" cackled Scourge as he dropkicked Bunnie Rabbot into the ground.

Now Fiona and Ginger were helping Scourge in his fight, Geoffrey and Bunnie were having a hard time keeping up with the trio of enemies. Scourge had already given them a hard time but now he had helpers, this time was getting even harder. Every time Geoffrey or Bunnie struck a vigorous blow on Scourge or Fiona, Ginger would be on hand to attack them from behind and distract them, giving Scourge and Fiona a chance to fight back. And fighting Ginger wasn't much of an option as he was hard to get hold of and Scourge and Fiona seized every possible opportunity they had to attack their enemies so they had to keep their attention cleanly focused on Scourge and Fiona. But even that was becoming difficult as Ginger just carried on and on being a pain in the backside for Geoffrey and Bunnie. As Geoffrey was knocked down once again by Scourge, the

skunk grumbled to himself.

"I wish I hadn't used up all my stun darts! I could stun all three of them if I had a dart spare!"

"I wish sugah-hog was here." grunted Bunnie "He could help us beat those three easily."

"Speaking of Sonic, where is he?" asked Fiona, grabbing Bunnie's ears and giving them a yank, making Bunnie squeal "It's not like him to not help his friends is it?"

"Sonic's elsewhere right now!" grunted Bunnie, elbowing Fiona in the gut to make her let go of her ears "He's on a mission but when he gets back, you'll end up wishin' you hadn't messed with us!"

"By the time Sonic gets back, I'll be victorious and you'll be ground into the dirt!" bellowed Scourge, spin-dashing Bunnie in the head and knocking her down.

Geoffrey jumped up and tried to attack Scourge but the green hedgehog dodged Geoffrey's attack and slugged the skunk in the stomach. Bunnie got to her feet and was about to help Geoffrey until Ginger came from nowhere in another attempt to distract her. Bunnie heard him coming and preceded to uppercut the fox with her metal arm before he could even lay a finger on her. That attack seemed to knock a lot of sense out of Ginger as he suddenly found himself lying on his back wondering which way was up. Now Ginger was finally out, Bunnie and Geoffrey could fight without distraction. Even then, their chances for victory were slim at the best. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and blasted Scourge with it. Scourge hurtled backwards and charged back towards Bunnie. Geoffrey rammed Scourge in the side before he could even get close to Bunnie. Fiona tried to attack Geoffrey with a kick but Geoffrey grabbed Fiona's leg and tripped her up. Fiona suddenly found herself lying on her back and Geoffrey tossed her away. Scourge picked himself up and growled angrily.

"That's it! Time for the Death Tornado!" he yelled.

He ran around Bunnie and Geoffrey in a circle and supersonic

speed. Geoffrey and Bunnie knew what was coming for they had been taken down by Scourge's Death Tornado before**. They had to get out and fast before the move could be completed but once Scourge's Death Tornado began, there was no way out. As Scourge picked up speed, he became a giant green blur circling around endlessly. Bunnie grabbed hold of Geoffrey and tried to fly him out of the tornado but as Scourge picked up speed faster and faster, the wind currents in the centre of the tornado became too strong for Bunnie to over come and she found herself spinning around and around in Scourge's deadly tornado move. After a minute or two, Bunnie and Geoffrey hurled out of the tornado and crashed into the ground. Scourge stopped running around and came to a halt. He panted heavily. Doing a Sonic Tornado move often left him worn out but his enemies seemed to be defeated at last. Bunnie and Geoffrey couldn't get up. They weren't even awake, they had been knocked out by the blow. Fiona bent down and helped Scourge stand back up.

"There you are Scourge." said Fiona "I must say, brilliant idea to use the Sonic Tornado on them. You've finally beat them."

"Thank you Fiona." said Scourge "And by the way it's Death Tornado, not Sonic Tornado. Death Tornado sounds cooler."

"Sorry." said Fiona quickly "So shall we lock up Geoffrey and Bunnie just like I locked up Wilson and Mandy?"

"Yes." said Scourge "They'll be important for this master plan of mine."

With that said, Scourge and Fiona picked up the unconscious Bunnie and Geoffrey and carried them into Royal HQ. Ginger just remained lying on the ground where he was. Scourge came back out of Royal HQ and dragged Ginger into the building by his hair. Scourge and Fiona carried Bunnie and Geoffrey into the lab and Fiona put a pair of laser cuffs on them both. Now Geoffrey and Bunnie were bound up, Fiona threw them both into the closet along where Wilson and Mandy had been locked up in. Fiona locked the door and sighed happily.

"Everything's going like clockwork isn't it Scourge?" she said.

"You got that right babe." said Scourge with an evil grin on his face "Sonic's not here to stop us, we've locked up some Royal Fighters and now the HQ is ours. Now it's time for the next part of my scheme. Get me any of the prisoners we have."

Fiona obeyed and unlocked the door. She went into the closet and dragged Mandy out of it. The mouse was confused as to why she was suddenly being let out of the closet but she had a feeling it wasn't for a good purpose. Scourge glowered at Mandy with his cold blue eyes.

"OK mouse girl, you're necessary for the next part of my master plan." he said "You better do as I say or you won't live to see the next day."

"I have no choice." said Mandy glumly "I'm all beaten and bound up so I'm gonna have to do what you say, even though I'm not happy to do so. So what do you want me to do?"

"Call any of the Royal Fighter sub-groups abroad." said Scourge "Fiona, which one do you think mouse girl should call?"

"I recommend Grand Metropolis." suggested Fiona "I've heard that they're a good team."

"In that case, call the Royal Fighters of Grand Metropolis." Scourge said to Mandy sharply "They'll do nicely for the next stage of my master plan…"

What Scourge needed a Royal Fighter group for, Mandy didn't know but she could tell that it was not for a good cause…

Footnotes:

*** Remember the four times Tails has nearly drowned in this story? Well I'll refresh your memory: See Stories 11, 25, 37 and 38 for all those times**

**** See Story 35**

Well when things go wrong, they can go REALLY wrong! Sonic and friends are still trapped on the oil rig and Scourge has taken over Royal HQ! What's Scourge's next move and can Sonic get off the rig in time to save everybody? Or has the end of the Royal Fighters Service just begun...? Reviews are welcome.

HQ Heist Part 3

Story 66: HQ Heist Part 3: Scourge in Charge

Royal HQ.

A proud base of operations for the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis.

And now it was in the control of the insidious hedgehog Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic's evil and conquest hungry brother. He was accompanied by Fiona Fox, a beautiful young vixen who had betrayed everybody she once worked for just to get her own back on the R.F.S. and Ginger the Fox, Tails' moronic cousin whom had a passion for getting beaten up and being used as a punching bag by Scourge whenever the hedgehog was in a bad mood. They had just beaten up fellow fighter Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Bunnie Rabbot, Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse and locked them all in an empty closet in the lab. Mandy had been taken out of the closet and was being forced against her will to make a call to one of the R.F.S. groups in the other countries. Mandy couldn't type anything on the keyboard since her arms were cuffed behind her back by unbreakable laser cuffs so Fiona had to make the call instead. Mandy, with Scourge holding her by the neck threateningly, told Fiona the phone number to General Bostock, the leader of the Royal Fighters of Grand Metropolis and Fiona typed it in on the keyboard.

"OK toots, once somebody answers the phone, you tell them to come over here at once." hissed Scourge, tightening his grip on Mandy's neck to make her choke "Try not to sound scared and try to sound urgent and in need of assistance, pretend I'm not here throttling you right now or you'll know about it. Capisce?"

"Yes Scourge." said Mandy glumly "Let go of me please."

Scourge let Mandy go. He knew that Mandy wouldn't dare try anything funny so he didn't need to hold her by the neck to make her cave in to him. After Fiona dialled the number on the keyboard, the computer monitors displayed the phone ringing symbol and the sound of a phone ringing rung around the room. The ringing stopped

after three rounds and the phone ringing symbol disappeared and in it's place, was displayed a picture of General Bostock. His voice rung out through the monitors.

"Hello, this is General Bostock, leader of the Grand Metropolis Royal Fighters, how may I help you?" he asked gruffly.

"Bostock, this is Mandy Mouse speaking." said Mandy in her best impression of a fighter in peril right now "Royal HQ is under siege and I need some back up. Please can you come and help?"

"We'll be over as fast as we can." Bostock answered "We're more then happy to help a good friend of ours."

The image of Bostock disappeared and the sound of a phone hanging up was heard. Scourge smiled happily and he dragged Mandy back over to the closet. He opened it and threw Mandy back inside. He locked it and cackled happily.

"Excellent!" he cackled "Everything is running smoother then a shiny metal floor! When this Bostock guy arrives, he'll have to do as I tell him or the fighters will die!"

"I really do applaud your efforts Scourge." said Fiona in a congratulating tone "This plan of yours is sheer genius. You're smarter then that fat loser Dr. Eggman."

"Of course I am Fiona." gloated Scourge "I am the strongest, fastest and smartest being on Mobius and make no mistake about that! It's thanks to my superior traits that I will be on top of the world in a matter of moments!"

"And because Sonic isn't here, he can't stop us." said Ginger pointlessly.

"Stop being rhetorical Ginger!" snapped Scourge "And even though my dweeby brother will be back soon, which I hope he won't be, we'll be too much for him. No one, not even Sonic can stop me now!"

From the looks of things, it seemed that Scourge was right. The situation did seem pretty hopeless now and if Sonic didn't get home

in time then Scourge would be bathing in victory right now…

"Yow! Watch it with that thing! You almost hit me!" shrieked Sonic the Hedgehog as a robot armed with a sniper rifle tried to shoot him.

Things were getting chaotically hectic on the oil rig. The Mobians and robots had erupted into battle and the decks of the oil rig were now a huge battlefield for Eggman's forces and the Mobians. Alonzo, being the coward he is, had just run into the storage room to hide from the colossal battle that was raging on the decks. Lasers fired here and there and Sonic and friends threw punches, kicks and whatever attacks they had. Ruben the Water Panther had made short work of some of the robots by squirting water at them so hard they were swept overboard and sent crashing into the water but the remaining robots had managed to work out what Ruben's tactics were so they stayed away from the side barriers to avoid getting pushed over the edge by Ruben's water powers and since they were water proof, Ruben couldn't squirt them and short circuit them here and there. Ruben squirted a few jets of water at the robots and he managed to knock them off their feet and send them sliding over to the side barriers but the robots just managed to get back onto their feet and run away from the side barriers before Ruben could try and knock them overboard. Ruben could see that his water powers weren't going to help him at this point so he decided to use his novice style ninjutsu and kung fu instead. Two robots armed with rocket launchers on their wrists fired a missile each at Ruben but the water panther gave one of the missiles an uppercut, knocking it backwards and sending it crashing into the other missile, causing them to explode. Ruben leaped back to avoid getting hit by the explosion. The two robots ran forwards to try and attack Ruben but the water panther leaped over them, causing them to crash into each other and fall over one another. Ruben grabbed one robot and gave it a kung-fu style punch, sending the robot crashing head first into the side barrier, crushing its head and killing the robot. The other robot swiped at Ruben but it missed and Ruben seized its arm. He kicked the robot in the side, causing it to fall down on one knee and Ruben pounded the robot's head with its own arm. Ruben then finished it off by kicking it ninja style and sending the robot hurling

into the side barrier. It hit the barrier too hard and ended up flying over the edge and into the water where it smashed into pieces due to how hard it hit the water.

As for the Chaotix, they were having a relatively easy time. Swarms of robots tried to attack them but Espio's ninjutsu, Vector's strength and Charmy's aerial skills were making them too hard to attack. Whenever a robot of any kind got close to Vector, the crocodile just socked them in the face with his fists and destroyed them. Espio threw shuriken at the robots and brought them down in a matter of seconds and Charmy, due to his flying speed, just caused a lot of robots to accidentally shoot themselves when trying to shoot him and Charmy let the robots have it with his stinger. His stinger was very effective against the robots despite not being so large. A gang of large robots armed with sniper rifles similar to the one that caused Ruben to lose his water collar earlier* stomped onto the decks and they began rapidly shooting at the Chaotix in an attempt to kill them. Vector ran for cover whereas Charmy Bee stayed airborne and Espio dodged the sniper blasts with little effort. Vector picked up the body of a dead robot and he threw it at one of the sniper drones. The sniper drone stopped firing long enough to smack the body away. That gave Vector the changed to grab the sniper drone's weapon with his big enormous jaws and yank it out of the robot's hands. He held the gun like a baseball bat and he hammered the robot with it. After about five enormous whacks, he ended up smashing the sniper rifle to pieces. The sniper drone punched Vector with its enormous metal fist and the crocodile was sent flying backwards. Espio avenged Vector by throwing a pair of shuriken at the robot's head. The shuriken exploded on cue and the sniper drone was brought down on its back, smoke pouring out of the dead robot's body where the head once was. Another sniper drone was furious at what just happened and it pointed its sniper rifle at Espio in an attempt to shoot him but Charmy Bee kick slammed it in the back of the head, causing the robot to stagger forwards and nearly fall over. That attack alerted Espio and he pulled out a dagger out of his glove. He threw the dagger at the robot's head and the dagger plunged straight through the sniper drone's face. The resulting attack brought the sniper drone down at last. Vector got back to his feet and tore of one of the dead sniper drone's arms. He ran up to a pair of them that were shooting at him and he walloped one of the

drones with the robot arm he had. The sniper drone dropped its sniper rifle and Vector grabbed the rifle. He bashed the robot with it, breaking the sniper rifle in the process again and he bashed the robot with the robot arm again. The other sniper drone tried to shoot Vector but Vector tripped the first drone up by walloping its legs, causing it to fall in front of him and take the blast meant for Vector. The drone was destroyed by the blast. The drone was furious that Vector had caused it to kill it's own team mate and it tried to shoot the crocodile but it missed and Vector charged shoulder first into the robot's legs, tripping it up and bringing it down on it's stomach. Espio threw a shuriken at the drone and the shuriken embedded itself into the sniper drone's head. It exploded shortly after embedding itself into the drone's head, killing the drone. The Chaotix all cheered happily at their success but they had to get back into the battle quickly as more robots were coming by the second.

Sonic and Tails were teaming up together for the horde of robots that were coming for them. Sonic made short work of any robot attacking him by spin-dashing them into pieces and Tails helped by distracting them with his aerial skills. A robot armed with a mace tried to hammer Tails with it but it missed as Tails flew out of the way and it hit the deck instead, leaving a very nasty dent in it. Tails tail-whipped the mace bot and distracted it long enough for Sonic to spin-dash the robot into pieces. Five sniper drones surrounded the blue hedgehog and pointed their snipers at him. Sonic however just leaped out of their way before the robots could shoot him. He then ran around the sniper drones in a perfect circle. The drones began to wonder what Sonic was doing. The blue hedgehog was using his all powerful Sonic Tornado move. He ran around and around and around the five robots until he became a blue blur. The blur expanded upwards and became a tornado. The five robots were swept up in the tornado and sent spinning around and around. The sniper drones were thrown out of the tornado and sent crashing down on the decks were they smashed into pieces. Sonic stopped running around and the tornado faded away into nothing. Sonic looked with satisfaction at his work and he chuckled to himself.

"The Sonic Tornado never fails does it Sonic ol' boy?" he said to himself.

Tails landed beside Sonic and the two best friends gave each other a hi-five.

"Way past awesome Sonic!" cheered Tails.

"Thank you Tails." said Sonic "Sadly, this isn't over yet. There's more robots coming by the second and we still haven't got a way off of this rig."

"I'm sure we'll find a way Sonic." said Tails "There must be another means of escape somewhere."

Their discussion was interrupted by a robot armed with a hammer. It swung it's hammer down and tried to squash Tails and Sonic into the deck but they dodged the attack and the robot hit the deck instead, leaving a very large dent in it.

"Hey! We're trying to have a private discussion here!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing the robot in the head and sending it staggering backwards.

As for Alonzo, he was watching the battle from inside the storage room and he wasn't pleased to see that Eggman's forces were sorely losing. He clenched his metal fists and grumbled angrily.

"How hard is it to kill a stupid little hedgehog?" he moaned "Cannon drones!" he bellowed into a communicator "Get onto the decks and KILL that filthy, stinking, wretched rodent of a hedgehog NOW!"

Shortly after bellowing the order, some new robots trundled onto the decks. These robots looked like actual wheeled cannons only they had optics built on top and they were all coloured a brilliant gold colour. The cannon drones all wheeled onto the decks and pointed their weapons at the Mobians. Before they fired though, Alonzo gave another order.

"Mecha Rouge!" he barked into his communicator "Stop standing idly by and help the other robots!"

Mecha Rouge, who had been standing on a high structure and watching the battle rage on below her obeyed and she flew down towards the battling Mobians and robots. The cannon drones had all

lined up and they fired their cannons at the Mobians. The Chaotix saw the cannon blasts coming and they dodged the attacks. The cannons hit the decks and blew a hole in them. Sonic and Tails dodged the attacks aiming at them and Ruben knocked the cannon blast aiming at him away with a wave of water. The cannon drones fired again but Sonic dodged the attack and Ruben managed to grab one of the blasts. One of the kung-fu lessons he had taken had taught him how to grab powerful blasts and throw them away so he was capable of doing just that. Ruben threw the cannon blast directly back at one of the cannon drones and the cannon-shaped robot was destroyed instantly. Alonzo poked his head out of the door and was getting mad at the fact his attacks weren't working.

"Kill that hedgehog! Somebody kill him!" bellowed Alonzo.

The cannon drones doubled their efforts by firing more and more cannon blasts while taking care not to hit their own comrades. Sonic was miles too fast for the cannon blasts so he managed to dodge them all and Ruben just grabbed them and threw them away or threw them at the structures on the oil rig just to damage the station. The Chaotix were having an easy time dodging the cannon blasts due to Espio's speed and Charmy's flying skills. Unfortunately, Mecha Rouge took the liberty of interfering. The roboticized bat screw-kicked Vector and knocked the crocodile over. A cannon drone seized its chance and fired at Vector. Ruben jumped in just in time to catch the blast and save Vector from getting hit. Ruben then proceeded to throw the blast at Mecha Rouge but the roboticized bat dodged the attack and the blast hurled straight into the water. Mecha Rogue flew down and grabbed Ruben by the arms. She threw the panther into the water and did a sharp U-turn around back to the oil rig to attack somebody else. It would take more then throwing Ruben into the ocean to bring him down as the water panther used his water powers to shoot himself out of the water and back onto the decks. Sonic just managed to dodge another onslaught of cannon blasts but Mecha Rouge had decided to target him next. The mecha-bat screw-kicked Sonic and knocked him over. Sonic punched at Mecha Rouge but he missed and Mecha Rouge kicked him in the forehead. She then deployed a pair of laser cannons out of her forearms and began rapidly shooting at Sonic. Sonic dodged the blasts and spin-dashed Mecha Rouge. The

mecha-bat was sent hurling backwards but she skidded to a halt and charged back towards Sonic. She was abruptly halted as a cannon drone tried to shoot Sonic but it missed and hit a pile of dead robots, sending robot parts flying everywhere. Mecha Rouge then resumed her attack. She rammed Sonic in the side with her head and then clawed him across the chest. Sonic yelped in pain and dropkicked Mecha Rouge in the face.

"I think I preferred you when you were flesh and blood Rouge!" puffed Sonic as he blocked an attempted slash attack from Mecha Rouge "I wonder why Eggman roboticized you? I thought you were on his side! Well given your treacherous nature, I bet Eggman roboticized you to make sure you stay on his side." he added as Mecha Rouge tried to claw him again.

Mecha Rouge just ignored Sonic and kneed him in the gut. Sonic kicked Mecha Rouge back and tried to knee her in the gut but kneeing a robot in the stomach is a daft move because the attack would hurt an organic being more then it would hurt a robot and Sonic found that out as he found himself bent down on one knee while rubbing his throbbing one better. Mecha Rouge kicked Sonic while he was down and sent him sprawling across the decks. She then shot Sonic with her lasers but her lasers weren't lethal enough to kill, just hurt so Sonic found himself clutching his side after Rouge shot him. Sonic tried to pick himself back up but Mecha Rouge shot him again, forcing him back down. Tails flew in from behind and kick-slammed Rouge from behind. Mecha Rouge was brought down on her stomach and Tails helped Sonic back onto his feet.

"Thanks bud." said Sonic.

"You're welcome." said Tails "I wonder why Dr. Eggman roboticized Rouge anyway? Rouge is on his side now?"

"According to Knuckles, you can never trust that bat." said Sonic grimly "She's the kind that lies and manipulates to get what she wants and Eggman probably caught onto that so he probably roboticized Rouge while he had the chance to make sure she stays on his side."

"Well liar, thief and deceiver or not, Rouge is an innocent Mobian

and we can't leave her like this." said Tails "We've got to de-roboticize her."

"We'll do just that whenever we get the chance." said Sonic "Until then, we've gotta keep fighting her."

"Sonic! LOOK OUT!" shrieked Ruben from further up the decks.

Sonic and Tails turned into Ruben's direction and saw a cannon blast from a cannon drone coming towards them. The blast was clearly aimed for Sonic as it was hurling towards him at blinding speed. Tails pushed Sonic out of the way and took the blast himself. The blast hit the poor fox and he was sent hurling backwards into the side barrier. Tails was thrown over the side and sent hurling towards the water but Charmy Bee saw him and flew after him. Charmy managed to catch Tails just before he could land into the ocean and the bee carried him back onto the decks. He gently lay Tails down on the deck and stared in horror at what had just happened to Tails. Sonic got to his feet and ran over to him. Ruben could see that Sonic needed some cover so he decided to distract the cannon drones. The cannon drones fired again but Ruben grabbed two of the blasts and throw them at the drones, blowing them up as they hit them. While Ruben kept the drones at bay, Sonic and the Chaotix looked over poor Tails.

"Poor Tails. He doesn't look so good." said Charmy sadly, a rare expression for the happy go-lucky bee.

Tails had been horribly burnt by the blast and he appeared to have been knocked out. His fur had been blackened and there were red patches in some places. These were the seriously burnt parts. Tails wasn't breathing but his heart was till beating. The fox was alive but he wouldn't be if he stayed on the rig with all the cannon blasts going on. Sonic looked at Tails sadly and felt like he was about to tear up.

"Tails?" he said, his lips trembling "You…you OK buddy…?"

Tails didn't answer. Sonic could feel himself shaking with fear. Fear over the fact his best friend maybe dead. Tears were forming in the hedgehog's eyes.

"You guys…he's not…dead…is he?" asked Sonic shakily.

Espio felt Tails' wrist to see if he could feel a pulse. He felt it but very weakly.

"He's still alive but if we don't get off this rig and get him to a hospital then he won't make it." said Espio grimly.

"Then we've gotta get off the oil rig and now." declared Sonic "I can't risk the lives of anyone else."

"But we can't get off the rig." said Vector helplessly "Our speedboat's gone, the ocean liners are gone and there's no other mode of transport here."

"I can't fly us all the way back to shore." said Charmy "I'll never make it, it's too far away and I'll get tired before I can get there."

"There must be another way off!" yelled Sonic "Alonzo must have another way of escaping! I mean, what if his boats sunk and he wouldn't be able to escape?"

"That's a good point." said Vector "Maybe he has a jet or something."

"I'll search the oil rig and see what I can find." said Espio, turning invisible "Try and hold on for me."

"We'll try Espio." said Sonic as the invisible chameleon ran off to see what he could find.

"I'll protect Tails." said Vector, picking up the unconscious fox "Charmy, you help Sonic and Ruben."

"OK boss." said Charmy loyally "I'll help Sonic and Ruben smash those dorky bots for ya!"

With that said, Sonic charged back into battle with Charmy Bee buzzing after him. There were only a few cannon drones left and Ruben was getting worn out after catching all their cannon blasts and throwing them back at them. He had managed to destroy one more drone but after that, he fell down on his knees and began

gasping for breath.

"Gasp! Why does that move always tire me out after a while?" he puffed.

The cannon drones seized the opportunity to shoot Ruben and kill him but Sonic stepped in and spin-dashed them all into pieces. The cannon drones were all completely destroyed. Charmy Bee just laughed like an idiot.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's always funny when you destroy robots Sonic!" he laughed.

"You know what Charmy, I agree with you." said Sonic "I especially enjoy Eggman's reactions when I smash his baby toys."

Alonzo saw the destruction of the last remaining cannon drones and he was livid with rage. The butler bot looked like he was about to lose his wick right now.

"Is it really that difficult to kill a hedgehog?" he grumbled "Well that's it! Send out of the next batch of cannon drones and then send in the heavy duty units!" he bellowed into his communicator.

After Alonzo gave that order, more cannon drones wheeled onto the decks but they were accompanied by some huge, bulky robots armed with hand held rotary cannons. They looked like they were seriously armoured and looked tough to beat. Sonic, Ruben and Charmy stared in disbelief at the giant heavy duty units. They robots all glared at Sonic with their visor eyes and they pointed their rotary cannons at the Mobians.

"Yikes! Look at the size of that pea-shooter!" shrieked Charmy "It looks deadly!"

"Run for it!" shouted Ruben frantically.

The heavy unit drones fired their cannons and let loose an astonishing round of bullets in a matter of seconds. The cannon drones joined in with the shooting by firing their cannon blasts. Ruben heard one coming and he grabbed one of the blasts double-quick. He threw the blast at one of the heavy units and the drone

was destroyed by the blast. The robots continued firing rounds of bullets and cannon blasts respectively with Alonzo standing behind them and barking orders.

"Kill them! Kill them all!" he bellowed.

The robots kept up the pace and Sonic, Charmy and Ruben tried their hardest to dodge the attacks that were raining all over them. Unfortunately, Charmy got hit in the wing by a bullet and he was brought crashing down onto the deck. Ruben scooped the bee up and dived for cover behind a pile of debris. Sonic dived for cover behind a structure where Vector was hiding with the still unconscious Tails. The robots could see that Sonic and friends were hiding so they stopped firing and advanced on them. Sonic could hear them all coming.

"OK, now this is ridiculous!" blurted Sonic "We'll never get past these robots!"

"I don't think even I'll be able to keep this up." said Ruben "I can't keep catching cannon blasts and throwing them back, It wears me out and pretty soon, I'll end up being vulnerable. My water powers aren't much good seeing as they're water proof and all I do is knock them over more then anything."

"I can't fly anymore because my wing got shot." muttered Charmy "Stupid robots."

"Where is that Espio?" wondered Vector "We need a way off and we need it now!"

"Vector, Espio has no idea where to look for a way off the rig so he could be on this search for hours." retorted Sonic "I don't think we'll last that long though."

"So you're saying we're dead then?" asked Ruben "That's it? You're giving up?"

"I'm not giving up, I'm just pointing out we can't keep this up forever." corrected Sonic "We'll be dead if we keep this up and even if we destroy this lot, Alonzo will probably send even more robots."

Then suddenly, the Mobians all heard something coming out from under the rig. They ran over to the side barrier and peered over it. What they saw was a sight they would never have expected to see in a million years. There was Espio, down on the water in a large pod shaped marine-craft. It was an emergency escape pod used for escapes should the rig be destroyed or something go horribly wrong and the occupants need to evacuate.

"I found an escape pod!" Espio called up to everyone "Get in before someone shoots at me!"

The only trouble was, the oil rig was high up and there was a guarantee that should the Mobians jump, they might miss the pod and land straight into the water and really hurt themselves. Ruben however had an idea. He summoned a wave of water and scooped Sonic up with it. The wave sloped down from the rig to the pod and Sonic slid down from the rig and into the pod. Vector and Charmy followed Sonic down to the pod but Ruben decided to do one last thing before escaping. The cannon drones and heavy units had finally caught up with them and the cannon drone fired at Ruben. Ruben caught the blast and threw it straight back at the drone. The blast destroyed the drone and the other robots found themselves being covered by smoke and fire. They couldn't see a thing so Ruben had the perfect chance to escape. He jumped off the rig and fired jets of water to slow down his fall. He landed into the pod and Espio closed the hatch. The escape pod sped away from the rig as fast as it could go. Sonic then remembered the detonators they had set up and he looked in the bag that Tails still had around his shoulder. He found the remote that activated the detonators and he pressed the activate button. The detonators that Tails had planted all over the oil rig went off all at once and the rig erupted into a colossal fireball that seemed to reach to the stars. Mecha Rouge had flown Alonzo off the rig before he could get caught in the explosion but the oil rig had been reduced to a fiery wreck of debris and shrapnel that floated around on the ocean waters. The fire that the oil rig had erupted in would be burning for a while. Alonzo looked over his shoulder as Mecha Rouge flew him away and he groaned to himself.

"I hate that hedgehog!" he bellowed "Oh my gosh! I sound just like

my feeble headed master! Damn it!" he cursed.

Mecha Rouge ignored him and flew the butler bot back home to Robotropolis.

As for Sonic and friends, they had watched the oil rig explode and they were pleased to see that they had completed their mission. Sonic wiped his forehead and sighed heavily.

"I am NEVER going on an oil rig again!" he puffed "That was way too close!"

"At least we've stopped Eggman from getting anymore oil for his robots." noted Ruben "It would have been nicer if things went to plan though."

"I'm just glad that everybody made it off alive." said Sonic, looking at Tails who was still unconscious but he was breathing at last "When we get to shore, we need to get Tails and Charmy to the hospital."

"I don't need to go to the hospital!" protested Charmy.

"Yes you do Mr!" growled Vector "Your wing's in bad shape!"

Charmy fumed to himself but said nothing.

"I hope everything's alright at home." said Sonic "If not then I'm gonna be very mad right now!"

The escape pod continued cruising through the water the Mobians headed home for Mobotropolis. But they wouldn't be getting a welcome back greeting unfortunately…

Back in Mobotropolis, General Bostock and his right hand man Commander Mortimer had arrived at Royal HQ at long last. They parked their hover car beside the base and they armed themselves with a Tommy gun each. The two chipmunks tip-toed up to the doors of the base and they pressed themselves against it.

"OK Mortimer." whispered Bostock "We should expect hostile

resistance from whatever it is that's attacking the base so keep your senses alert and you gun ready or we're toast. You got that?"

"Every word of it sir." said Mortimer, priming his Tommy gun.

"Excellent Commander." whispered Bostock "Now, on the count of three, we burst through the door and order the villains to surrender. Ready?"

"What a dumb question to ask, of course I'm ready Bostock!" scoffed Mortimer.

"Very well then." said Bostock, preparing to charge through the door "Three…two…one!"

The two chipmunks burst through the door and raised their guns, ready to blast the invaders. They didn't see anybody around though, the corridors were completely empty. They had a feeling the invader was either lying in wait for them or fighting Mandy in another room. The two chipmunks crept through the corridor as quietly as they could and they came across the lab. Bostock decided to check the lab first as when it came to hi-tech bases, the enemy often targeted the lab as the lab is a very important room for any base. Bostock burst into the lab and raised his Tommy gun. To his surprise, he saw Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox and Ginger the Fox all standing there with big grins on their faces. Bostock looked at them funny and Mortimer poked his head into the lab to see what was going on.

"Eh? Who are you three and where's Mandy?" asked Bostock, lowering his weapon.

"Oh Mandy's in good hands don't worry." lied Fiona "And in answer to your first question, I'm Fiona, this is Scourge and this is Ginger." she introduced, pointing to herself, to Scourge and Ginger as she said the names.

"Are you new recruits for the R.F.S.?" asked Mortimer.

"Well I wouldn't say new since I used to be one of you." said Fiona smoothly "And Scourge and Ginger aren't new recruits."

"If that's the case then what are you doing on R.F.S. property?"

demanded Bostock angrily "The rules of the service clearly state only members of the R.F.S. can access bases and labs and other places under the service."

"We're here to take over Mobotropolis." said Scourge, flipping his sunglasses over his eyes to make himself look darker and slightly eerie "We've just taken over the HQ and now we're going to move onto Castle Acorn."

"You what?" blustered Bostock, raising his weapon and itching to fire it "You can't do that! I'm gonna have to court martial you three for this!"

"I'm gonna take this moment to try and figure out what the hell "court martial" means." said Scourge in a sneering tone "While I'm at it though, I'm gonna give you the run down on what's going to happen here."

"The only thing that's going to happen around here is you three standing trial for trespassing on R.F.S. property!" bellowed Mortimer "Now stand down before we shower you all with bullets!"

"Heroes say the stupidest things don't they Scourge?" sneered Ginger.

"Not as stupid as the things you say fool." snapped Scourge "Now guys, before you start popping my guts full of lead, I've got an announcement."

Before he could say anything, there was a slight pounding noise coming from the closet in the corner of the lab. Bunnie had gotten to her feet and began pounding on the door with her shoulder. Bostock heard it and looked in the closet's direction.

"What was that?" he asked.

"Four fellow Royal Fighters." answered Fiona "Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy are in that closet and they'll die unless you agree to Scourge's terms."

"Not on my watch!" yelled Bostock, pushing past Scourge and running to the closet.

He was about to unlock the door and wrench it open until he spotted something attached to the door. It was a red rectangular shaped object with a string attached between the wall and the edge of the door. The object had a skull and crossbones logo on it. Bostock let go of the handle and stared at the object. Scourge could see what Bostock was looking at and he grinned evilly.

"I see you've just worked out we've rigged the door." crowed Scourge "As you can see, there's a bomb attached to the door and the pull cord is stretched between the door and the wall. If you dare try to open that door, the cord pulls and…well, I guess you can imagine what gruesome event happens next general!"

He then proceeded to laugh like a maniac while Bostock stared at him in horror.

In the closet, Bunnie heard what Scourge had just said to Bostock and she was horrified to hear that.

"Yer not gonna believe this Geoff but Scourge has done rigged the door with a bomb!" she blurted to the skunk "We can't get outta here without blowing ourselves up!"

"The door's rigged?" cried Geoffrey "Blimey, that Scourge bloke's clever isn't he?"

"A lot cleverer then I though." muttered Wilson "Now how can we get out of here?"

"Hopefully Bostock and Mortimer will have a way." hoped Mandy "Otherwise we're stuck in here forever."

Outside the closet, Bostock pointed his gun at Scourge and prepared to shoot Scourge like mad.

"You let those poor souls go!" he bellowed "Trust me, you don't want me to pull the trigger to this thing!"

"And trust me, you don't wanna make me set off that bomb." Scourge snarled softly "If you two squares don't do as I command or make any attempts to break those losers out of the closet then I'll set off the bomb. You don't wanna be in the building when it goes off

do ya?"

Bostock's arms began to tremble as he prepared to shoot Scourge. He could easily just shoot Scourge and end this charade right now but even then, Fiona or Ginger could possibly set off the bomb just before he could shoot them. Scourge scowled at Bostock and decided to confiscate his weapon. He zipped up to Bostock and snatched his Tommy gun. He then preceded to spin-dash it into pieces. Mortimer fired several rounds at Scourge but the supersonic hedgehog dodged the bullets with ease and charged into Mortimer. Mortimer was sent flying backwards into the wall and Scourge broke his weapon. Bostock and Mortimer were both weapon-less now. Scourge dusted off his hands and glared at Bostock.

"I'm giving you my last warning slob!" he growled "Give in to my demands or that bomb goes off! I mean it!"

Bostock stared helplessly at Scourge. He couldn't give in to a villain's demands but on the other hand, he had no choice. If he didn't do as Scourge said, the R.F.S. would lose some very valuable team members and Royal HQ would be destroyed. Royal HQ was too valuable and so were the captives so Bostock had no choice but to surrender. He raised his hands to show Scourge that he was surrendering.

"OK, we give." grumbled Bostock gruffly "What do you want?"

Scourge grinned like a demon at Bostock.

"You will go over to Castle Acorn and kill everybody in it." he hissed at them "And you'd better do so otherwise this base goes kaboom."

Bostock looked like he was about to erupt on the inside. Scourge wanted him to kill everybody in Castle Acorn? This hedgehog was one vile, malicious monster of a hedgehog wasn't he? Bostock definitely didn't want to do this but he had no choice. If he didn't cede to Scourge's demands, four brave-hearted heroes would lose their lives and Royal HQ would be gone. Even though he knew he was going to regret this, Bostock had to do it. He couldn't risk costing the lives of some fellow Royal Fighters.

"Very well Scourge." muttered Bostock "Me and Mortimer will see to it that Castle Acorn has no one alive in it."

"Good." snapped Scourge "Now get to it before I spin-dash your spines into bits!"

"How can we kill the residents of Castle Acorn if you've just broken our weapons?" demanded Mortimer.

"Arm yourselves with new weapons then you dolts!" snapped Scourge "Just get to the given task and get to it NOW!"

Bostock and Mortimer hurried out of the lab with Fiona following them. Fiona led them to the weapons storage room and let them choose a weapon. She had a remote that activated the bomb with her for in case Bostock and Mortimer attempted to mutiny against her and Scourge at the last possible second. Bostock and Mortimer armed themselves with hand held rotary cannons, a very heavy duty weapon that fired many rounds a second and could do a great deal of damage and they left the weapons storage room. The two chipmunks immediately ran out of Royal HQ and headed to Castle Acorn. Fiona watched them leave before returning to the lab to give Scourge the news.

"Those two idiots are on their way to Castle Acorn." reported Fiona "They're going to do what you've told them."

"Good, good, good." purred Scourge "This plan is working beautifully! Why didn't I ever do this plan in the first place? It's evil, diabolical and brilliant!"

"As brilliant as it is Scourge, I see a flaw in your plan." said Ginger "What if the chipmunk guys evacuate the residents of the castle without us knowing about it? They'll be able to trick us and the plan will be all for naught!"

"You didn't need to tell me that you moron because I already thought about that!" lied Scourge "Fiona can watch them on the lab's computers since she'll know how to work those things. I'm no good on a computer. If we catch them trying to deviate then we'll just push them back into place with a threat or two."

"Oh." said Ginger "You really are clever Scourge."

"I know! STOP BEING RHETORICAL!" bellowed Scourge at the top of his voice.

"Sorry!" squeaked Ginger.

Fiona immediately set herself on the lab's computers and she taped on the keyboard. The monitors displayed an image of the glorious Castle Acorn. Fiona then taped some more keys on the keyboard and the monitor displayed an image of what was going on inside of Castle Acorn. She then managed to get several screens to display, every screen showing a different room of Castle Acorn. The treacherous vixen smiled darkly at her success.

"Ha, ha! I've managed to hack into Castle Acorn's security cameras!" cheered Fiona "Now we can see what they're doing no matter what room they're in!"

"Good job Fi." applauded Scourge "Now that'll make those two do the mission against all haste. They'll kill the Castle Acorn residents, including that stupid queen Sally Acorn and they'll have to stand trial for it, and while that's happening, I will crown myself the new King of Mobotropolis and all of Mobius will bow beneath my feet!"

The captive fighters had heard everything from inside the closet and what they had heard only horrified them.

"I can't believe it!" cried Bunnie "Scourge is forcin' poor Bostock and Mortimer against their will to kill the people of Castle Acorn!"

"That Scourge is a devil!" shrieked Wilson "No wait, he's not a devil, he is THE devil! He's going to take over Castle Acorn and rule the world!"

"Well mates, I think this is it." muttered Geoffrey "I can't see anyway out of this one."

"We're bound in laser cuffs and locked in a closet that's rigged with a bomb so we can't escape." grumbled Mandy "Blue dude's away with Tails and Ruben and the Chaotix are helping them and we can't call Amy Rose while we're in here so we can't call for help. All we can do

is hope Sonic can get back in time or the end of Castle Acorn is certain."

"Somehow, I doubt even Sonic can save us now." said Geoffrey glumly "Well how about that then mates? We survived the deadliest of Eggman robots and we get defeated by Sonic's brother. Well I guess Eggman's not that big a threat to us if a Mobian can get closer to victory then he can."

"Well at least that means Mobians are better then his species." said Mandy for no particular reason "It would have been better if it was a good Mobian proving that theory though."

"Ah agree sugah." said Bunnie "Ah liked it better when Eggman was the only villain we had to worry about."

"Well sadly, that isn't the case." said Wilson grimly "Our time is up and Scourge is going to become king of the world. What a way to go."

The others just exchanged sad, pitying glances. It seemed that all hope for them was gone and nothing could stop Scourge now. In a matter of moments, Scourge would be crowning himself king and Sonic would be too late to stop him…

Bostock and Mortimer arrived at Castle Acorn and sneaked inside without anybody seeing them. They closed the door behind themselves and looked around. They were in the giant hallway and Queen Sally didn't appear to be anywhere in sight. Nor did anyone else in the castle. It was just the two of them alone in the hallway together. Bostock then began talking to Mortimer rather quietly.

"Alright Mortimer, now we're out of Scourge's sight, we can worm our way out of this." said Bostock "We tell the Queen and her staff to evacuate the castle and we bring back fake evidence to suggest their deaths and once Scourge is fooled and the moment he lowers his guard, we kill him and rescue our trapped comrades."

"You are utterly brilliant Bostock but somehow, I doubt Scourge is

stupid enough to fall for fake evidence." noted Mortimer "We'll have to work hard on it being convincing."

"Agreed." said Bostock "Trouble is, what can we use for fake evidence? Maybe when I search the rooms for the queen I'll find something."

The two chipmunks tip-toed through the hallway and headed for the staircase until Mortimer noticed something.

"Hey! That security camera up there's watching us!" he blurted, pointing up at the ceiling above the entrance to the room at the top of the staircase.

Bostock looked in Mortimer's direction and noticed a security camera mounted on the ceiling and it was pointing straight at them. Bostock stepped back down the stairs, watching the security camera as he backed away. Then Bostock ran to the right. The camera rotated and pointed at him. Bostock ran back to where he was before. The camera followed him. It was as if the security camera was watching his every movement and no matter where he went, the camera would follow him.

"I think Scourge is using the cameras to watch us." said Bostock grimly "He's on to us! He's making sure we do the task he's given us!"

"Well can't we just shoot all the cameras and stop him spying on us?" suggested Mortimer stupidly.

"Has your brain been consumed by a black hole?" snapped Bostock "If we take out the cameras, Scourge will realize what we're up to and he'll blow up Royal HQ and kill the captives! We have no choice but to do this repugnant mission or risk losing an important base and some good friends of ours."

"I am so going to regret this." muttered Mortimer priming his rotary cannon and readying it.

"I've never had something to regret so badly since the time I betrayed you all and sold you to the late Mistress of Darkness, AKA

Marion Mouse**." grumbled Bostock, loading his rotary cannon.

"My mind still heaves thinking about that." muttered Mortimer.

"You go found the Council of Acorn Mortimer, I'll deal with the Queen and her lady-in-waiting." ordered Bostock.

"Yes sir." said Mortimer "Let's pray someone will save us from having to do this." he added sadly as he ran down the staircase and ran off to another room.

Bostock nodded sorrowfully as he ran through a door and pounded down a corridor. He could feel his eyes burning with tears as he searched for Queen Sally Acorn and her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx. He really didn't want to do the mission but he couldn't let Scourge kill some fellow fighters and blow up an important base so whether he liked it or not, he had to do it otherwise Scourge would kill the captive fighters.

Further down the corridor, Sally and Nicole were having a relaxing time in the lounge together. Sally was looking out of the window and watching the construction work going on a few feet away from the castle. New Mobotropolis was nearing completion and the new city was looking fabulous. It would be an excellent replacement for Old Mobotropolis which Dr. Eggman had completely destroyed*** and hopefully, it wouldn't get destroyed in the same way Old Mobotropolis did. Nicole could see what Sally was looking at and she got up from the comfortable chair she was sitting in and looked out of the window with her best friend.

"New Mobotropolis is looking good isn't it Sally?" she asked politely.

"It sure is Nicole." said Sally with a smile "I can't wait for it to be finished. I bet my parents would love to have seen New Mobotropolis completed." she added with a downhearted tone in her voice.

"I think they would have love it too Sally." said Nicole supportively "And I bet they'd love to see how well you're doing in their place."

"I know they would." said Sally "I just can't help missing them though. They shouldn't be dead**** and I shouldn't be ruling New Mobotropolis, I should still be a princess and my parents should be ruling over New Mobotropolis while I patiently await my turn to rule. I wish that awful creature Marik the Martian didn't kill them though, they didn't deserve to be killed, especially by an alien creature that I've never heard about before."

Sally could feel herself beginning to well up. Despite being Queen for Mobotropolis now, Sally's self esteem hadn't been notoriously high. At times she'd feel confident in herself but other times, she'd get memories of Marik's savage murdering of her parents and she'd feel down on herself. Nicole had tried endlessly to raise Sally's spirit but her attempts were just in vain. Nicole didn't see much point in trying now since Sally would just shrug off her words of kindness.

"Nicole?" asked Sally "Do you think I'm not fit to be queen?"

"Do I think you're…why ever would you think something like that?" asked Nicole as if Sally had just asked her a daft question like 'Do apples have money inside them?'

"I mean, I try my hardest to follow my parent's footsteps but I just can't stop feeling like I shouldn't be in this position right now." explained Sally "I really feel like I'm too inexperienced and too young for this duty and I should probably stand down and let someone takeover my position."

"Sally, giving up like that is not a good example to set for your subjects." said Nicole sternly "If your parents were in your shoes, I don't think they'd relinquish their titles like that would they?"

"No, they'd stay strong no matter what." mumbled Sally.

"Exactly, so you should be strong, for them." said Nicole supportively "Please Sally, for me, promise you'll be strong for your parents and all your subjects. Promise?"

Sally looked at Nicole, the lynx looking back at her with huge pleading eyes. Whenever Nicole did those eyes, Sally couldn't help but succumb to her friend. This time, Sally didn't try to resist, she

knew Nicole was right and the best thing to do would be to stay strong for her parents.

"OK Nicole. I promise." said Sally truthfully.

"Thank you Sally." said Nicole, giving her friend a hug "I knew you'd pull through eventually."

"I couldn't have done it without you Nicole." said Sally happily.

Their tender moment was rudely interrupted by the sound of a door being kicked open and in burst Bostock, armed with a rotary cannon and looked sorry for himself. Sally and Nicole jumped and they stared at the chipmunk in the combat fatigues and giant gun. He just glared at them.

"Hello General Bostock of Grand Metropolis." said Sally politely "What's the meaning of this?"

"I'm sorry to say this your majesty, but with great reluctance, I hereby discharge you from duty." said Bostock grimly.

He pointed the rotary cannon at Sally and pulled the trigger. Nicole immediately sprung into action as the cannon's barrel spun away and several rounds were fired at the squirrel queen. Sally and Nicole pressed themselves down on the floor as Bostock blindly began firing a dozen bullets at once. The bullets ripped through the walls and made holes in everything Bostock fired at. The chipmunk general was so blinded by grief and reluctance he wasn't really trying to aim at Sally and he was just firing at anything he liked. Bostock stopped firing the bullets and let Sally get to her feet.

"Bostock! I demand an explanation for this!" shouted Sally "Why are you trying to kill me?"

"I cannot explain." said Bostock feebly "He is watching us and if I don't do this task, they'll die."

"He?" asked Nicole "Who's "he" and what do you mean by "they"?"

Bostock ignored her. He pointed his weapon at the lynx and fired a dozen rounds. Nicole dropped down on the floor to dodge the blasts

and she kicked a chair towards Bostock. The chair hit Bostock and knocked him over, causing him to drop his gun. Nicole grabbed the weapon quickly and threw it out of the window where it landed with a heavy crash on the ground and broke in two.

"Sally! Get out of here now!" ordered Nicole "I'll cover you!"

"You be careful Nicole!" cried Sally as she ran out of the room.

She charged down the corridor as fast as she possibly could whereas Nicole stayed with Bostock. Bostock threw the chair away and tried to run after Sally but Nicole abruptly locked the door, trapping herself in the lounge with Bostock.

"You will have to go through me first Bostock." she said coldly.

"So be it." said Bostock gruffly "I apologize for this but I have no choice. I am sorry Nicole, but I have to do this."

He then proceeded to slug Nicole very sharply in the stomach. The lynx wheezed loudly and she was brought down on her knees gasping and choking. She felt like someone had hit her with a purse full of bricks. Now Nicole had been subdued, Bostock flung the lynx onto her shoulder and unlocked the door. He let himself out of the lounge and ran down the corridor. He charged down the staircase and ran into Mortimer.

"Mortimer, did you find the council?" asked Bostock.

"Nope." said Mortimer "They're not here. I guess the council has a day off or something today. Why have you got the lady-in-waiting with you?" he added, pointing at Nicole who was draped over Bostock's shoulder "Scourge wants us to kill EVERYBODY in Castle Acorn so we have to kill Nicole as well."

"Scourge?" wheezed Nicole "You mean he's making you do this?"

"I'll let him explain everything to you dear." said Bostock. He turned back to Mortimer and said "I'm taking Nicole because the Queen has escaped and hopefully, she'll be able to tell us where he is."

"I see." said Mortimer "I hope Scourge won't kill us for this."

Bostock nodded and carried Nicole out of Castle Acorn and to Royal HQ with Mortimer following him. Sally had not left Castle Acorn like Nicole had told her to, instead she had hidden around the corner and watched to see what was going on. She watched Bostock carry Nicole to Royal HQ and waited until Bostock and Mortimer had gone inside. The moment the chipmunks went inside, Sally ran over to Royal HQ and crept inside. She crept down to the lab and dropped down on the floor next to the door. She listened out as Bostock and Mortimer dropped the still winded Nicole on the floor at Scourge's feet. Scourge was not happy to see that Bostock had just brought a resident of Castle Acorn to him.

"You morons!" he bellowed "I told you to kill everybody in Castle Acorn! Not bring the lady-in-waiting to me! Did I fail to give you the details clearly enough?"

"We're sorry Scourge but…" began Mortimer.

"Do you want Scourge to blow up Royal HQ and kill Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy?" asked Fiona coldly "Because it seems like it."

"We've…we've brought her here for a reason Scourge." reported Bostock "I tried to kill the Queen but Nicole distracted me and told her to run somewhere. I thought it would be best to bring her to you and make her tell you where she's told Sally to run to."

"Really?" purred Scourge, clearly happy at the thought of making someone talk "In that case, I think an interrogation is in hand for the lynx here." he said sadistically.

Nicole stared in fright at Scourge and her ears drooped back in fear.

"P-please Scourge, I-I don't know where S-Sally is." she said truthfully "I told her to run for her life so she could be a-a-anywhere."

"We'll see about that babe." sneered Scourge "Fiona, tie the brat up, Ginger, get me a couple of tasers. I'll make this lynx talk if it's the last thing I do!"

Fiona obeyed and grabbed Nicole by the arms and hauled her onto

her feet whereas Ginger ran out of the lab and into the storage room to get two tasers. Sally could see that she had to flee for it before she got caught. She got to her feet, ran out of Royal HQ and ran for her life.

"I can't believe it." she said to herself as she ran as fast as she could through New Mobotropolis and into the grassy meadows that surrounded it "Scourge has taken over Royal HQ, Ginger's with him, Fiona appears to be a traitor, they've taken over Royal HQ, forced Bostock and Mortimer to work for them and now they're going to torture poor Nicole over something she doesn't know! I need to get some help and fast! But Sonic, Tails and Ruben are not back from the oil rig mission yet and four of the best fighters are captives! Maybe Amy Rose and he friends Cream and Cosmo can help." she thought "Yes, I'll call them! They're all I've got left!"

Luckily, Sally knew where Amy lived so she headed to Knothole Village to get the hammer swinging heroine. If Amy, Cream and Cosmo couldn't stop Scourge then they'd have to wait for Sonic to come home and even then, he'd probably be too late to do anything…

Footnotes:

***See Story 64**

**** Who can forget the epic first arc from the spin-off title *Tales from Mobius* ?**

***** It happened a LOOOOONNNNNGGGG way back! Story 2 to be precise! That IS a long time ago isn't it? (Man I feel old! LOL)**

****** Unfortunately they are. See Story 21 for more details**

Sonic has FINALLY made it off the oil rig! But is he too late to save Royal HQ and his friends? What's Scourge going to do to Nicole and can Team Rose save the day? And can Ginger stop being rhetorical? Tune in next time for the epic conclusion to

HQ Heist...! Reviews are welcome as usual :)

HQ Heist Part 4

Story 67: HQ Heist Part 4: Taking Back The Base

Scourge the Hedgehog watched with creepy satisfaction as Fiona Fox snapped a pair of hands cuffs on Nicole the Lynx's wrist. She snapped one cuff on Nicole's wrist, raised her arm over her head and attached the other cuff to a bar attached to the wall. Fiona then proceeded to do the same to Nicole's other arm. Nicole was now handcuffed by her arms to the wall and unable to get free. Bostock and Mortimer watched with pity as poor Nicole was bound up like that and waiting interrogation. The lynx looked terrified and seeing her frightened face made Bostock and Mortimer feel really bad about themselves for bringing her to Scourge.

"Is this really necessary?" asked Bostock gruffly.

"The best way to make somebody talk is to hurt them." snapped Scourge "How else can I make the lady-in-waiting talk? Ask her nicely? You can't get information out of people just by asking them, they're not gonna be stupid enough to tell you what you want! Unless they're weak willed of course but I doubt lynx girl will be willing to tell me where the Queen is."

"I can't tell you where Sally is because I have no idea." said Nicole truthfully "Please un-cuff me."

"I will once you've told me what I want to know toots." said Scourge dryly.

"I swear upon my soul it's the truth!" cried Nicole desperately "I only told Sally to run for her life! She could be anywhere by now!"

"And you're going to tell us where she is!" yelled Scourge, jamming his face into Nicole's in order to scare her "Where is that Ginger with the tasers I required?" he yelled again.

"I'm here Scourge! Calm down!" yelled Ginger the Fox, running quickly into the lab with a taser in each hand.

He'd had a hard time finding the tasers but he'd finally found them. He threw the tasers to Scourge and Scourge passed them over to Fiona. Fiona looked at the tasers wondering why Scourge gave them to her.

"Why are you giving me the tasers?" asked Fiona.

"Because I'm letting you zap the poor lynx with them." said Scourge with a creepy grin on his face.

"OK then." said Fiona "You just tell me when to do it and then when to stop."

"Whatever." said Scourge "OK lynx girl…"

"My name is Nicole." interrupted Nicole crossly "Please use it."

"OK, Nicole!" repeated Scourge, using Nicole's name this time "I'm going to ask you really nicely now, where is Queen Sally?"

"How many times do I have to say it?" grumbled Nicole "I don't know! Do you not understand the meaning of those words?"

"I do Nics and do you understand the meaning of these words: I'm not buying your bad act toots?" snapped Scourge "Fiona, taser her!"

Fiona obeyed and pressed the two tasers against Nicole's tummy. She turned them on and Nicole was zapped by a very painful electric shock from the two tasers. Nicole screamed at the top of her voice as electricity surged up her tummy. Her screams could even be heard by the captive Mobians in the bomb-rigged closet. Geoffrey St. John the Skunk had been listening to what was going on outside and what he was hearing wasn't very pleasant.

"I can't believe this! They're torturing poor Nicole!" reported Geoffrey.

"That Scourge has no heart hasn't he?" shrieked Wilson the Dog "How could anyone hurt that kind-hearted lynx?"

"Why are they torturing her?" asked Mandy Mouse.

"Scourge seems to have an idea that Nicole knows where Sally Acorn's hiding." explained Geoffrey "Nicole claims to have told her to run for it so she doesn't know where the Queen is. I believe her but Scourge doesn't seem to be in the mood for believing poor Nicole."

"If ah wasn't trapped in this closet ah would be whopping Scourge's ugly butt into Spagonia right now!" yelled Bunnie Rabbot "That devil-hog deserves a good beating for what he's done to us and poor Nicole!"

"We wouldn't be trapped in this closet if it wasn't rigged with a bomb." muttered Mandy "Oh how I wish blue dude was here right now! Why did he have to be away at the same time Scourge had to take-over Royal HQ?"

"Well nobody knew this was going to happen did they?" said Wilson grimly "Scourge just by sheer coincidence picked a good time to unfurl his plan. And it's a really good plan too because it's actually working."

"Ah hope Queen Sally Acorn's gettin' some help right now." said Bunnie softly "We really need some help right now."

Outside the closet, Scourge had told Fiona to stop what she was doing and the vixen stopped zapping Nicole with the tasers. She held the tasers away from Nicole and waited for Scourge to tell her to use them again. Nicole gasped and spluttered for breath. Her tummy felt like someone had shoved a million needles into it due to how much the tasers hurt. Scourge then grabbed Nicole's ears and yanked on them sharply. Nicole fought hard to avoid giving Scourge the satisfaction of hearing her scream. Scourge let go of Nicole's ears and then grabbed her face.

"Nicole, when I want the location of Queen Sally, I want it!" shouted Scourge "Now tell me where the Queen's hiding and you'll save yourself a lot of pain!"

"I keep telling you, I have no idea!" said Nicole hoarsely "Why won't you believe me?"

"Because you must think I'm bone-headed if you think I'm going to

believe you!" snapped Scourge "If you told Sally to run for it before the chipmunk guys could get her then you must know where she is!"

"How can I possibly know where Sally is if I just told her to run for it?" retorted Nicole.

Scourge was about to argue back until he suddenly realized that Nicole was right. Regardless, he still wasn't willing to believe her, he was too stubborn for that.

"Fiona, taser her again!" ordered Scourge.

"No! Please! Not again!" whimpered Nicole, tugging desperately on her handcuffs.

Fiona ignored the lynx and zapped her again with the tasers. Nicole screamed loudly once again as the tasers painfully shocked her tummy. Bostock and Mortimer looked at each other, wishing they could do something about the situation.

"I can't bear to watch Nicole getting tortured." said Bostock with sympathy "I'm out of here."

"Same here." said Mortimer.

The two chipmunks ran out of the lab in order to get away from the horrible scene before them. Scourge raised his hand as a sign of telling Fiona to stop and the vixen did as she was told. She stopped zapping Nicole and the lynx stopped screaming in pain. The lynx stared down at the floor, panting and gasping.

"For the last time, WHERE IS QUEEN SALLY?" bellowed Scourge, making sure he yelled loud enough to hurt Nicole's long sensitive ears.

Nicole just remained silent and kicked Scourge in the stomach. Scourge doubled over and spluttered hoarsely. Nicole was quite a good kicker and Scourge didn't take long to figure that out after such a powerful kick. Scourge glared at Nicole whereas Nicole glared back. The lynx wasn't afraid to stand up to the supersonic bad guy at all. Scourge just turned his back on Nicole and walked away.

"Make her talk Fiona. Whatever it takes." he hissed at her.

Fiona nodded and switched on the tasers. Nicole decided it would be futile to resist so she just let Fiona zap her once again. Nicole wouldn't talk because she had no idea where Sally could possibly be. She just hoped Scourge would finally get the message although it didn't seem likely given his obstinate nature…

Meanwhile, Sonic the Hedgehog and friends had finally made it back to shore after their near death experience on the oil rig and they had run all the way through Kingdom Valley and back to Mobotropolis. It had been a long run but they all eventually made it back to Mobotropolis. They all arrived at the under construction New Mobotropolis. Sonic stretched and sighed happily.

"I can't tell ya how good it is to be back on solid ground again." said Sonic, tapping the ground with his foot "Can't stand being around so much water you know."

"Yeah, just a pity not everybody's in good condition." said Ruben the Water Panther, noting that Tails, Sonic's best friend and mechanic, was still unconscious after being hit by a cannon blast back on the rig.

"Should we take Tails and Charmy to the hospital?" asked Vector the Crocodile, leader of Team Chaotix.

"I don't need to go to the hospital!" moaned Charmy Bee, the Team Chaotix youngster who had gotten his wings shot by a robot back on the rig.

"Yes you do and that's final!" yelled Vector angrily.

"Tails needs medical attention and he needs it desperately." said Ruben, feeling the unconscious fox's pulse "His heartbeat is getting weaker and weaker."

"In that case, you take Tails to the hospital and take care of him for me." ordered Sonic "Vector, you take Charmy. Espio, you go with them if you want."

"If it's alright with you Sonic I'd like to stay here and report to the Council of Acorn about our mission on the oil rig." said Espio.

"OK then." said Sonic "The Council needs to know on your involvement with the mission and how you saved us all from drowning and managed to get us off the oil rig."

With that said, Ruben and Vector left, the crocodile carrying Tails and Charmy in each arm and they left for Empire City, the nearest city to Mobotropolis since New Mobotropolis hadn't been completed yet and there wasn't a hospital ready yet. The moment Vector and Ruben left with Charmy and Tails, Sonic and Espio headed off to Castle Acorn.

"I wonder what Queen Sally's gonna think about our success in disabling that oil rig?" wondered Sonic.

"I bet she'll be most pleased with us." said Espio "She always is when we have good news to deliver."

Before Sonic and Espio could arrive at Castle Acorn however, they heard the sound of feet pounding through the grass towards them. Sonic and Espio turned to their left and saw Queen Sally Acorn running towards them with Amy Rose, Sonic's biggest fan and hammer swinger, Cream the Rabbit, Amy's best friend and overly polite cutie and Cosmo the Seedrian, Tails' leafy extra-terrestrial girlfriend following her. They all looked frantic and like something bad was going on and that made Sonic wonder what was the matter.

"Hey girls, what's the occasion?" asked Sonic hastily "You having a slumber party or something?"

"God I wish." muttered Amy, summoning her trademark Piko-Piko Hammer to her hands.

"Sonic, I'm so glad you're back at last!" blustered Sally, brushing her hair out from over her eyes "You'll not believe what's happened here while you were gone!"

"What's going on like?" asked Sonic, fearing what the news was.

"According to Miss Sally, your nasty brother Scourge has taken over

Royal HQ!" squeaked Cream.

"And he's holding Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy hostage!" added Cosmo.

"Scourge…what?" blurted Sonic "He's holding…what?"

The shock he'd just received from the news the girls had just given him was enough to knock him over with a feather. Even Espio was shocked at what had happened. He remembered Scourge all too well from the time he, Vector and Charmy almost caused Sonic and Tails to spontaneously combust in Spagonia*. Sonic snapped out of his shocked state and managed to speak properly.

"So Scourge has taken over Royal HQ and is holding four of my friends hostage?" asked Sonic, making sure he got the details right.

"That's right." said Sally "And that's not all. Fiona Fox has joined Scourge, Ginger's with him right now, they've got Bostock and Mortimer to do their bidding and they're torturing poor Nicole to try and make her reveal my whereabouts!"

"What? That's mondo un-cool!" shouted Sonic "Scourge is going down for this! As for Fiona, I'll make sure she regrets betraying us like this!"

"Who's Fiona?" asked Amy, hoping Fiona wouldn't turn out to be some old flame of Sonic's or something like that.

"Former Royal Fighter." said Sonic bluntly "She quitted the service because she was always getting caught and she felt like she was useless. I didn't think she'd betray us and join Scourge though. Since she's a traitor though, I'm gonna have to kick her butt for it. Let's go over to Royal HQ, kick Scourge's butt out of the base and save our friends!"

"Sonic, we can't just barge into Royal HQ!" shrieked Sally "Scourge has five potential hostages, seven even, if he wants to include Bostock and Mortimer that is! The odds are against us here! If we try to save everybody, Scourge will kill them all!"

"In that case, we need a plan." thought Sonic with a finger to his lips

"We need to save the hostages in order to attack Scourge without any hinders. One of us may have to distract Scourge while someone else frees the hostages."

"I'll be the distraction." volunteered Espio, bowing nobly "I'll turn invisible and attack him from behind. He'll think someone's trying to attack him and he'll look for me. While he does that, you all can save the hostages and we can save Royal HQ from Scourge's evil grasp."

"Espio, this plan may just work." said Sally "It's a little risky but it's a risk we've gotta take if we wanna stop Scourge from taking over the entire R.F.S."

"We'll wait outside the headquarters and you call for us when you're ready." said Sonic, cracking his knuckles and smiling heroically "I am so looking forward to kicking Scourge's butt once again!"

"Hopefully after you kick Scourge's butt, you can haul him back to jail and hopefully he'll STAY there!" declared Amy, twirling her hammer around.

"Amy, don't twirl your hammer around." said Sonic with his hands up defensively "You make me nervous."

"Can I twirl it in front of Scourge?" asked Amy.

"Do you even need to ask?" laughed Sonic. He then turned to Espio and said "Good luck in there buddy."

"Thank you Sonic." said Espio "Let us hope we can beat Scourge this time."

Espio then proceeded to turn invisible. He walked off to Royal HQ with everybody following the sound of his footsteps. They all arrived at the headquarters and Espio sneaked quietly through the door. To anyone watching, it would have looked like the door had just opened and closed all by itself. Sonic and the girls just remained outside and lay low, waiting for Espio to signal them to come in and battle Scourge. Sonic was looking forward to this match, he just hoped he'd be able to beat him this time…

In the lab of Royal HQ, Nicole's pained screams died down as Fiona finished shocking her yet again with the twin tasers she had been given. Nicole looked terrible. Her tummy was slightly singed and blackened from the constant shocking and she seemed to have great trouble keeping her head up and her eyes open. If she wasn't handcuffed to the wall by her arms she would have slumped onto the floor against the wall right now. Fiona appeared to be getting ticked off right now. She had been shocking Nicole for ten minutes and the lynx still refused to talk. Fiona threw the tasers angrily onto the floor and she grabbed Nicole by the neck, just about throttling her. She shook her head furiously while screaming at her.

"What do I have to do to make you crack long ears?" she yelled "Will you tell me where the Queen is or do I have to push this interrogation to an even more painful stage?"

She stopped shaking Nicole's head and gave the lynx a moment to breathe. Nicole raised her head, seemingly struggling to do so, and looked at Fiona with tears in her eyes.

"Fiona…please…" she sobbed feebly, struggling to speak clearly "I…don't know….where Sally is…Please…stop hurting…me…I can't…tell…you anything!"

Fiona looked at the snivelling lynx and she put a finger to her lips. She thought for a moment and decided that Nicole wasn't worth her time anymore. Fiona turned away and left the bound up lynx to cry to herself and she wondered over to Scourge and Ginger, who appeared to be leafing through the Royal Fighters Service's personal records on the computer monitors. Scourge had decided to see if he could find any weaknesses in the Royal Fighters and use them against them. Scourge and Ginger seemed to be amused at what they had learnt about the fighters.

"So the dog in the closet, Wilson by name, is a bit of a skitter bug is he?" chortled Scourge "That's helpful, I know how to beat him swiftly then! I find it odd how he's in love with the mouse girl, Mandy her name is apparently. A dog and a mouse is an odd pair isn't it? Still, that could be helpful too."

"Especially in an interrogation." said Ginger sadistically "I'm thrilled

to find out that Tails is afraid of ghosts and thunder! When Halloween comes, I'll give him a good spook or two!"

"Sonic's lame twin-tailed friend is afraid of ghosts?" snorted Scourge "What a baby! Ghosts aren't real! And I already knew about his fear of thunder after the time I nearly killed him and Sonic in Spagonia**."

"Really?" said Ginger "Pity you never told me, I could have used this easily to get my own back on my dweeby mistake of a cousin!"

"Ginger, is Tails really all you're bothered about?" scoffed Scourge "You don't hold grudges on many people do ya? I have a grudge on just about anyone who's against me, Sonic being the main one."

"Ahem. Excuse me a minute." interrupted Fiona politely.

"What is it babes? I'm busy!" snapped Scourge.

"I've zapped that weak-bodied lynx Nicole for ten minutes straight and she still won't crack." reported Fiona "I don't mean to sound supportive of her but, I'm actually convinced she doesn't know anything. Anyone in her position would have cracked by now but Nicole won't talk and when she does she just tells me the same thing over and over, she doesn't know where the queen is and she can't tell us anything."

Scourge frowned at Fiona's report but decided not to do anything about it since Nicole was just getting them nowhere.

"So what if Nicole doesn't know where Sally is?" grumbled Scourge "If we can't get Nicole to lead us to Sally then we'll have to get Nicole to lead Sally to us. We'll hold her ransom and demand for the queen to come and surrender herself to us or Nicole will die."

"Good idea Scourge." said Fiona "Should I stuff her in the closet with the others?"

"Nah, leave her where she is." said Scourge "I like her like that." he added with a sinister grin, suggesting he had a demonic fondness of seeing bound up women.

Nicole had unfortunately heard everything and she was not pleased

to hear that she was going to be used as bait to draw Sally out. Why ever did she have to get kidnapped by Bostock? If she'd managed to fend off the chipmunk general then none of this would have happened! As Scourge continued researching about the Royal Fighters, the invisible Espio had crept into the lab as silently as he could and he took note of his surroundings. He saw Nicole cuffed to the wall and he saw the closet in the corner of the lab rigged with what was supposedly a bomb. Espio guessed that Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy were in the closet, there was no other reason for the closet to be rigged with a bomb. He had to get Scourge out of the room and disable the bomb and get everybody out. And he had a cunning plan. Scourge stopped researching and he strode away from the computer monitors. Ginger followed him for no particular reason and Scourge strode up to the barely conscious Nicole. The lynx kept her head lowered and her gaze fixed onto the floor. Scourge made sure he was a good few steps away from Nicole so the lynx couldn't kick him again.

"Well Nics, since you can't tell me where Sally is, I'll have to get Sally to come to you." he said "I'm pretty sure she'll happily come out of hiding just to save someone as pretty as you. You are a good friend of hers according to your profile on the computer monitors so you'll be perfect bait for that foolish queen."

Nicole just kept her mouth closed and decided not to speak, she felt it was best not to. Espio, still invisible, crept up behind Scourge and punched the green hedgehog in the back of the head. Scourge was so startled he almost fell over. He held his hands out and they hit the floor, stopping him from falling on his face. Nicole wondered why Scourge had just seemingly flung himself onto the floor. Scourge straightened himself up and turned around sharply. Ginger was standing behind him and he appeared to be admiring his gloves for some reason. Scourge glared at Ginger. He thought the fox had punched him so he decided to get his own back.

"Hey! Dork!" he yelled at the ginger furred fox.

"You talkin' to me?" asked Ginger, looking up from his hands.

"Yes I am runt!" snapped Scourge "Why the hell did you just punch me?"

"I most certainly did not punch you at all!" retorted Ginger "I would rather smile and wave at my overrated cousin then punch you!"

"Well you're the only one standing behind me so you must have punched me!" bellowed Scourge "I couldn't have just been punched by thin air!"

Scourge then proceeded to sock Ginger in the face. Nicole's face tensed up and she made a hissing "Oooh!" noise as if thinking "Boy that's gotta hurt!" and imagining Scourge punching her like that. Ginger lay on the floor staring up at the ceiling and rubbing his throbbing face. Scourge turned back to Nicole and cleared his throat.

"Now where was I Nicky? Oh yes." he said "Once I kill Queen Sally and become King of Mobius, I'll personally make you my slave girl…"

Espio thumped Scourge in the back of the head on again. Scourge ended up falling on his face and landing in front of Nicole's feet. Scourge found himself staring at Nicole's feet for a moment before picking himself up and scowling at Ginger again.

"Stop thumping me you disloyal ninny hammered twit!" he roared at Ginger.

"Stop blaming me for these mysterious attacks!" shouted Ginger "I'm not punching you at all!"

"Fiona! Is Ginger attacking me from behind?" demanded Scourge furiously.

"I'd love to say yes but that'd be a lie." said Fiona "I was watching closely when you got punched the second time and Ginger was nowhere near you. Something punched you but I couldn't see anybody. I think there's an invisible person in here."

Just as she said the last part of the sentence, the invisible Espio sneaked up to Fiona and tripped the vixen up. Fiona screamed as her legs suddenly ended up flying up in the air and she fell on the floor with a thud. Scourge stared in utter astonishment at what just

happened. He clearly saw that Fiona had been tripped up by thin air. There clearly was an invisible person in the lab.

"Fiona? Ginger? I think there's an invisible man in here!" squeaked Scourge "And I think it wants us outta here!"

Ginger suddenly found himself being kicked from behind by an invisible Espio and to add insult to injury, Espio grabbed Ginger's twin tails and he spun Ginger around and around in a circle. To Scourge and Fiona, it looked like Ginger was being twirled around by thin air. Espio let go of Ginger and the fox landed with a slam into the wall. Ginger slid down the wall and slumped on the floor. He groaned like a zombie. Scourge began to get nervous. There was clearly an invisible man in here and he hadn't had any experience in dealing with invisible opponents so he was completely unprepared for Espio's attacks. Regardless, Scourge didn't know what the word fear meant (he actually does, he's too stubborn to admit it) so he raised his fists challengingly and yelled.

"Hey invisible guy! Show yourself you limey coward!" he roared "Only a coward uses invisibility to win his battles!"

Espio ignored Scourge and grabbed the hedgehog by the collar of his jacket. The ninja chameleon threw Scourge straight into the wall and the green hedgehog crashed into it head first, smashing his sunglasses in the process. Scourge picked himself up only to get slugged in the stomach by Espio. Nicole had been watching the whole kerfumble with wonder as to her; it looked like Scourge was getting beaten up by thin air. Scourge lay on the floor clutching his stomach and Espio then proceeded to yank on Scourge's quills. Unfortunately, Fiona had an idea on how to find Espio. She watched as the invisible chameleon yanked on Scourge's quills and she lunged out in a flying kick. She hit Espio in the head and the chameleon was sent hurling into the wall. That attack caused Espio to turn visible. Scourge picked himself up and saw Espio, lying near the door rubbing his head. Scourge's blood boiled like a stew in a witch's cauldron.

"YOU!" he bellowed "You're one of the guys that foiled my attempt on Sonic's life in Spagonia!"

"Yes, Yes I was." said Espio coldly "And now I am going to foil your attempt to take over the kingdom."

"Oh are ya?" sneered Scourge "I doubt that! I'll make chameleon soup outta ya when I'm through with you!"

"Sonic! NOW!" yelled Espio, poking his head out of the door and yelling down the corridor.

Sonic and the girls heard the message and they burst into Royal HQ immediately. They ran into the lab and they glared angrily at Scourge, Fiona and Ginger. Bostock and Mortimer had seen them come in and they were thrilled to bits to see help had finally arrived. Even Nicole's face brightened at the sight of Sonic and her friend Sally Acorn. Sonic folded his arms and smirked at Scourge.

"Hi Scourge! Am I interrupting anything?" sneered Sonic.

"Sonic, you showed up at last brother!" snorted Scourge "Good thing too, I was beginning to worry about you. I was worried that something terrible had happened to you and you wouldn't be coming to watch me take over Mobius."

"My heart bleeds for you." scoffed Sonic "Now get your ugly mug out of Royal HQ now and things won't get unpleasant!"

"Especially for you!" added Sally, pointing sharply at Scourge "I can't begin to describe what punishments the Council of Acorn will come up with for you, you vile devil-hog!"

"Cute." sniffed Scourge sarcastically "I have an announcement though. I have four of your friends locked up in that closet over there." he said, pointing to the closet in the corner of the lab.

Sonic spotted it and he zipped over to the closer before anyone could blink. Sonic was about to open the door and free everybody until he noticed the bomb attached to the door with the string stretched over the gap between the door and the wall. Sonic instantly managed to work out it was a bomb and he stepped back from the door.

"As you can see, the closet is rigged with a bomb." crowed Scourge

"If you dare try to open the door and save your friends, the bomb will go off and kill you all. And it'll destroy Royal HQ but that doesn't matter to you does it?"

"You're one sick twisted hedgehog Scourge!" yelled Sonic "I find it impossible to believe I'm related to you!"

"And I find it impossible to believe I'm related to you!" retorted Scourge "Now stand down and surrender or Fiona will set the bomb off!"

With that said, Fiona showed everybody the remote control for the bomb in her hand. Amy saw it and tried to hammer Fiona and steal the remote but Fiona made her stand back by threatening to press the button.

"Stand down sugar-girl!" she warned "Or the bomb goes off!"

Amy stayed where she was and she lowered her hammer. Sonic folded his arms and glared at Fiona.

"So why did you decided to betray us then Fiona?" he demanded angrily "I thought you were better then this!"

"I betrayed you because being good got me nowhere!" snapped Fiona "I defer to the dark side and look where I am now! I'm on the winning side and soon to become Queen Fiona, assistant ruler to King Scourge of Mobius! Scourge offers me power and glory! What do you losers offer me? Nothing! Nothing at all that's what! And don't you dare try to get me to change my mind because it won't work Sonic! I sucked as a hero and all it did was cause me grief and misery I am never going back to that sad, miserable life I once had!"

"Wow, you really are a miserable, misled wreck aren't you?" sniffed Amy "No wonder Sonic never talked about you before."

Fiona decided to ignore Amy's insult as Amy wasn't worth it.

"So Sonic, are you going to stand down or do I get to blow this dump up?" asked Fiona threateningly.

"Do I get to choose neither?" asked Sonic.

Before Fiona could retort to him, Sonic suddenly yelled "Oh Espio!"

Fiona pulled a face at Sonic, wondering what was going on and before she could find out, an invisible Espio kicked her from behind, knocking the vixen into the floor and he snatched the remote. Espio turned visible and broke the remote in front of Fiona's face with one fell ninja style chop. The remote collapsed onto the ground in pieces.

"No!" screamed Fiona.

"Yes Fiona, you can't set the bomb off now." sneered Sonic "Now if you'll excuse me," he said, zipping off towards the closet "I'll be getting everybody out of the closet now."

Unfortunately, he didn't make it for Scourge had run after him and had rammed him into the wall. Sonic crashed into the wall and fell onto the ground, groaning to himself in pain.

"At the end of this day, you'll be joining everybody in the closet!" yelled Scourge, seizing Sonic by his quills and lifting him up by them.

He threw Sonic against the wall and pinned him there by his throat. Scourge was going to attempt to throttle Sonic to death now. Fortunately for Sonic, Bostock and Mortimer burst in and decided to interfere with Scourge's plans. Mortimer pointed his rotary gun at Scourge and yelled at him.

"Release Sonic or you get a back full of bullets!" he ordered.

Scourge grumbled under his breath. He should have known that Bostock and Mortimer would mutiny against him at the first available opportunity but somehow, he failed to see that coming. Regardless, Scourge wasn't willing to let a guy armed with a gun beat him so Scourge let go of Sonic, turned around and spin-dashed Mortimer in the gut before Mortimer could even get ready to pull the trigger. Scourge was as fast as Sonic after all. Mortimer hurtled backwards and crashed just inches in front of a wall. Mortimer picked himself up only to get spin-dashed by Scourge again. His weapon was in the way so Scourge ended up breaking the huge rotary gun into pieces,

leaving Mortimer weapon-less now. The chipmunk commander wasn't pleased to be weapon-less so he tried to attack Scourge by punching him but Scourge grabbed Mortimer's arm and swung him over onto his back. Mortimer tensed up as a sharp flood of pain surged through his back. Sonic's first reaction as to spin-dash Scourge in the gut and knock him off of Mortimer. Scourge retaliated by spin-dashing Sonic back. Fiona and Ginger tried to step in and help Scourge but Espio threw some shuriken at the foxes to keep them back. Fiona and Ginger stopped what they were doing and ran away as the sharp, deadly ninja stars hurled towards them and tried to slash them. Sally Acorn ran over to the bound up Nicole and set to trying to free the lynx. Unfortunately, the handcuffs were too tough for Sally to break and they needed a key to open them so Sally couldn't free Nicole. Espio could see that Sally needed help freeing Nicole so he threw a shuriken at the chain in between the handcuffs. The shuriken broke the chain on the handcuffs holding Nicole's right arm to the bar on the wall, freeing the lynx's right arm. Espio proceeded to do the same to the other pair of handcuffs, freeing Nicole's left arm as well. Nicole was pleased to be free at last and she rubbed her wrists tenderly to ease the pain better. Nicole was still pained from her torture though and Sally could sense that by how Nicole seemed to be trying really hard to stay standing up.

"Nicole, are you alright?" asked Sally concernedly.

"I'm…I'm OK Sally." said Nicole weakly "Just a little weak from being zapped in the stomach by a taser for ten minutes straight."

"I can't believe Scourge was heartless enough to do that to you Nicole!" blurted Sally "You shouldn't have had to suffer like that! I'm so sorry I couldn't help you!"

"Sally, you and I both know I'm the only one who can fight out of us two so you couldn't do anything about it anyway." said Nicole "But thanks for getting back up to come and save me and get Royal HQ back."

"You're welcome Nicole." said Sally with a smile "I'm just glad Sonic finally made it back from his mission on the oil rig or we would never get Royal HQ back. I wonder where Tails and Ruben are."

"I'm sure Sonic can explain it to us later." said Nicole "Right now, I think we should leave, this is no place for us two."

"No Nicole, we're staying here and helping Sonic." said Sally "I wish to get my own back on Scourge for trying to usurp me once again."

"OK Sally." said Nicole "We'll stand and fight then."

"How cute, the Royals are getting their royal hands dirty!" sneered Fiona, kicking Sally in the back and knocking her over "Oh well, that just means Scourge gets to beat the royals up as well!"

"You leave the Queen alone Fiona!" yelled Nicole, elbowing the vixen in the gut.

Fiona doubled over in pain, amazed as to how powerful that elbow in the gut from Nicole was. Before Fiona could recover, Nicole socked the fox in the face and then proceeded to grab her by the arm and toss her over onto her back. Ginger tried to help Fiona but Nicole gave Ginger an uppercut to the chin and the ginger furred fox fell over onto his back. Ginger picked himself up and tried to attack Nicole but Nicole put a hand on Ginger's shoulder and kneed him in the gut. Ginger wheezed loudly and he slumped on the floor, clutching his aching belly. Fiona got back to her feet and tried to attack Nicole by leaping at her with her foot stretched out to kick but Nicole smacked Fiona's foot, causing the fox to flip over backwards and land on her front on the floor. Despite Nicole's best efforts, she wouldn't be able to keep it up as she was weakened from the taser torture earlier. The lynx fell down on one knee and panted. Fiona picked herself up and was pleased to see Nicole had succumbed to them. Fiona ran up to Nicole, ready to let her have it but Sally kicked the vixen from the side and sent her skidding across the floor. Sally helped Nicole back to her feet and they wondered off into a corner to stay out of the battle. Fiona and Ginger tried to attack them but Espio grabbed their tails and threw them both into the wall. Espio decided it would be best that he fought Fiona and Ginger for the time being since Sonic, Team Rose and the two chipmunks were busy with Scourge. Fiona and Ginger tried once again to attack Sally and Nicole but Espio stepped in and let them have it with his ninjutsu skills. He gave Fiona and upwards chop and he walloped Ginger in the face with a sideways chop. Fiona kicked Espio in the

back and then yanked on his tail. Espio kicked Fiona in the legs, tripping her up and bringing her down on the floor. Ginger punched at Espio but Espio dodged the attack and then smacked Ginger in the face with a ninja-style punch. Espio then proceeded to kick Ginger in the legs, elbow him in the back and then throw him into the wall. Fiona tackled Espio from the back and punched him in the face. Espio punched Fiona back and then drew out a dagger and pointed it at Fiona's throat. Fiona instantly raised her hands and stood down. Unfortunately, Ginger tried to distract Espio by attacking him from behind. Espio heard Ginger coming so he leaped out of his way and caused Ginger to crash into Fiona. The foxes rolled across the floor in a heap. Espio then grabbed their heads and bashed them together just to stun them. The resulting head bash just ended up knocking them both out instead. Now the foxes were defeated, Espio could see to getting the trapped Royal Fighters out of the closet.

Meanwhile, Sonic and Scourge were in a heated battle with Team Rose and the two chipmunks providing additional help. Scourge clasped his fists together and walloped Sonic in the stomach, causing Sonic to fall down on the floor and gasp hoarsely. Scourge tried to do something else to Sonic but Amy whacked him with her Piko-Piko hammer and sent him crashing into the wall. Scourge pulled himself out of the wall but before he could attack, Cosmo grabbed a cuboid object from a table in the corner of the lab and threw it at Scourge. The cube hit Scourge in the forehead and the green hedgehog gripped his throbbing head, rubbing it furiously to ease the pain. Cream threw Cheese at Scourge but Scourge grabbed the Chao before he could hit him and he threw Cheese away. Cream flew towards Scourge and kick-slammed him in the face only to get walloped by Scourge's fist. Amy tried to hammer Scourge into the floor with her hammer but Scourge elbowed her in the gut, causing her to drop her hammer and fall on her knees, gasping hoarsely. Cosmo picked up Amy's hammer and threw it at Scourge but Scourge smacked the hammer away and spin-dashed the poor Seedrian. Cosmo crashed into the wall and she grimaced in pain. Scourge then grabbed Cosmo by the throat and hoisted her off the floor. Cream tried to help Cosmo but Scourge grabbed Cream by the head and slammed Cosmo into her. Scourge then kicked the two girls away, causing them to roll over on the floor in a heap together.

Sonic spin-dashed Scourge in the back and knocked him over. Sonic grabbed Scourge by the jacket and slammed him into the wall. He then picked up Amy's hammer and tossed it to the pink hedgehog. Amy caught it and tried to wallop Scourge with it. She missed and Scourge kicked Amy in the head. Sonic grabbed Scourge in a chokehold and held him back. Amy then proceeded to whack Scourge three times in the stomach with her hammer as hard as she could. She then walloped Scourge in the face with her hammer. Scourge growled and he wrestled himself out of Sonic's grip. He gave Amy an uppercut that seemed to bedazzle the hedgehog and he punched Sonic in the side of his head. Sonic spin-dashed Scourge and then homing attacked him. Scourge was sent hurling into the table in the corner of the lab and he broke the table after crashing into it. Sonic then pinned Scourge to the broken remains of the table with his foot and glared at him.

"Give up Scourge, you can't win!" declared Sonic.

"Says who?" snorted Scourge.

He grabbed Sonic by the ankle and threw Sonic's leg upwards, causing the blue hedgehog to fall backwards. Scourge leaped to his feet and grabbed Sonic by the throat.

"Royal HQ is mine Sonic!" snarled Scourge "Get outta here before you end up becoming a blue furry mess staining the floors!"

"Eat mallet Scourge!" yelled Amy, walloping Scourge with her hammer.

Scourge skidded across the floor on his side. Amy helped Sonic back onto his feet.

"We need help." said Amy "Scourge is too powerful for us."

"No worries Miss Rose." said Cream "Mr. Espio's trying to get the trapped fighters out of the closet right now."

She pointed to the closet where Espio was kneeling down by the door and trying to remove the bomb from the door. Scourge saw him and he ran over to Espio. Espio heard Scourge coming but he was

too late to react and Scourge grabbed Espio by the neck. He threw Espio away and he grabbed the door handle. Sonic ran up to him but Scourge threatened to open the door and made him stop.

"Dare come a step closer and I'll open the door and set the bomb off!" threatened Scourge.

Sonic was itching to beat the snot out of Scourge but he couldn't let the green hedgehog set the bomb off. It would kill everybody and destroy Royal HQ. Espio however, had a last resort. He threw a shuriken at the bomb and the shuriken embedded itself into the bomb. The bomb sparked and made a horrible noise and everybody braced themselves, fearing it would actually go off. But the bomb didn't do anything else. Scourge just scowled and unlocked the door. He opened the door and…nothing happened. Espio's shuriken had short-circuited the bomb and broken it. The bomb would never go off now. Scourge scowled even harder and he locked the door back up.

"So what if you've broken the bomb, you'll never get past me!" boasted Scourge.

"Wanna bet Scourgey Wourgey?" sneered Sonic.

"Don't call me that blue!" snarled Scourge.

"Call you what Scourgey Wourgey?" snickered Sonic.

Scourge got mad and charged towards Sonic. Sonic just stood to the side, stuck his foot and tripped Scourge over. Scourge fell over and rolled across the floor like a football. Scourge crashed into the wall face first.

"Someone get Geoff, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy out of there now!" yelled Sonic.

Cosmo obliged and she ran over to the closet. Scourge tried to catch her but Sonic ran in his way, grabbed him and carried him away from the closet. Sonic threw Scourge into the wall but Scourge bounced off the wall and spin-dashed Sonic away. Cosmo quickly unlocked the door and flung it open. Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and

Mandy instantly burst out of the closet before Scourge could stop them.

"Boy does it fell good to be out of that closet!" gasped Geoffrey "I can't stand being in the dark for so long!"

"Thank you Cosmo." said Mandy "I don't think I could have taken it any longer in that closet!"

"You're welcome." said Cosmo politely.

Sonic spin-dashed Scourge away and ran over to his freed friends. He noticed that they were all bound up in laser cuffs and he groaned in annoyance.

"Laser cuffs?" he whined "Oh that's just great! You can't fight with your arms behind your back like that!"

"How do we turn them off?" asked Amy.

"There's a remote for the cuffs." said Wilson "I don't know what Fiona did with it though after she put the cuffs on us."

"Is that it over there?" asked Cream, pointing to a blue remote lying on the floor near the broken table.

"It is." said Sonic, quickly running over to it and pressing a button on the remote.

Everybody's laser cuffs switched off and Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy were now free to fight once again. Scourge just leaped in and landed upside down in a hand stand in between Wilson and Mandy and he did a split kick, walloping them both with his feet.

"Throw as many chumps at me as you can, I'll take you ALL on if I have to!" bellowed Scourge, elbowing Bunnie in the gut and then giving Geoffrey and uppercut to the back.

Bunnie punched Scourge with her robot arm and sent him crashing into the wall. Wilson deployed his spinning blade weapon and he threw it at Scourge. Scourge dodged the weapon and tried to attack Wilson but Geoffrey and Mandy double-teamed him with a kick

each. Scourge crashed into the floor and Bunnie picked him up. She threw him towards Sonic and Sonic spin-dashed Scourge upwards, slamming him into the ceiling and cracking it slightly. Sonic landed on the floor and let Scourge break free from the ceiling and crash down on the floor. Scourge picked himself up and spin-dashed Bunnie, Wilson, Geoffrey and Mandy all at once. Sonic spin-dashed Scourge but Scourge was in spin-dash so they bounced off of each other. Scourge and Sonic spin-dashed and bounced off of each other over and over until Scourge finally overpowered Sonic and pile-dived him into the floor. Wilson threw his weapon at Scourge only to miss and get kicked in the gut by Scourge. Mandy tried to attack but Scourge grabbed her arm and flung her over onto her back. Bostock and Mortimer charged towards Scourge with Espio and Team Rose joining them. Scourge jumped out of their way and caused everybody to crash into each other, causing a great big kerfumble as Bostock, Mortimer, Espio and Team Rose ended up in a tangled heap on the floor. Scourge laughed at them only to get spin-dashed from behind by Sonic. Scourge spin-dashed Sonic back only to get an uppercut from behind by Bunnie Rabbot. Scourge got mad and growled angrily. He could see that this fight was going to end every badly for him so he had to use his piece de resistance. He began to run around Sonic and the tangled heap of Team Rose, Espio and the two chipmunks in a circle at top speed. Sonic could see what Scourge was doing so he ran around Scourge in a circle at top speed. The two hedgehogs began running around each other at stop speed, forming a blue and green blur around each other. Team Rose, Espio and the twp chipmunks could see that a Sonic Tornado was coming so they all ran out of the centre before they could get caught up in the tornado. Sonic and Scourge continued circling around each other until they ended up forming a blue and green tornado and spun around and around at a terrific speed. The tornado spun and spun until Sonic and Scourge ended up throwing each other out of the tornado and into a wall each. Thy both crashed into the wall and slumped down on the floor. Scourge appeared to be knocked out whereas Sonic just appeared to be tired and worn out. Seeing as Scourge had finally been subdued, Bostock grabbed a two laser cuff spheres that were lying on the floor after Sonic had turned them off and released his friends. He put Scourge's arms behind his back and cuffed them with the laser cuffs. He then put the other sphere in-between Scourge's ankles and the lasers wrapped

themselves around Scourge's ankles. Scourge would be unable to move now when he eventually woke up. Mortimer noticed the still knocked out Fiona and Ginger so he grabbed a pair of laser cuff spheres and cuffed Fiona and Ginger while they were still unconscious. Scourge and his whole team had now been defeated and subdued. The heroes had won at long last.

"Well that's that then." said Bostock gruffly "I'm so glad this crisis is over."

"We've got Freedom HQ back!" cheered Bunnie "We defeated Scourge! We've won the day!"

"Actually Bunnie, I wouldn't say we defeated Scourge." said Geoffrey "Sonic did. His Sonic Tornado managed to overpower the blighter at long last."

"It seems to have tired poor Sonic out though." noted Cosmo, looking at Sonic who was lying against the wall trying to get up.

Sally ran over to Sonic and helped the hedgehog back onto his feet.

"Whew! That was way past cool!" gasped Sonic "Me and Scourge using our Sonic Tornados together! I can't believe we even managed to do something like that! I kinda wonder why it seemed to have hurt Scourge more then it hurt me though."

"Just be thankful that it did." said Sally "We've won, the day is saved and Royal HQ is free from Scourge's wrath!"

"Yeah it is." agreed Sonic "We beat Scourge again! And now somebody has decided to laser cuff him, we can call old Melchett the Hedgehog to take him away and haul his ugly butt back to jail!"

"And hopefully he'll stay there." huffed Nicole.

"I think ol Melchy will have learnt from his mistakes and will try harder to make sure Scourge stays in jail." assured Sonic "Let's call him before Scourge wakes up."

No sooner had Melchett the Hedgehog, chief of police and head of the MPD station of Empire City, been called, he arrived at Royal HQ with his goofy sidekick Big Dave the Gopher and his assistant General Chipper the Chipmunk beside him. General Chipper loaded Fiona and Ginger into his police hover car and Melchett stuffed Scourge into his car. Scourge had come to and he was not pleased to see that he was going back to prison. He glared at Sonic who was smirking triumphantly at him.

"This isn't over yet blue!" snarled Scourge "I'll be back and trust me, the next time we meet will be the last time!"

"Well in that case don't hold your breath." sneered Sonic "I think you're gonna be in jail for a long time."

"He will be Sonic." said Melchett briskly "Scourge will be dead by the time his sentence is up! And don't think you'll escape again Scourge because I have a cell specially prepared for you! And even though the control collar has been outlawed, I have allowed myself to borrow one from Mr. Florenzi and I'll use it on Scourge so he can't use his powers to escape. I think I should make the control collar legal again since they can be useful in keeping criminals in order."

Melchett closed the car door and climbed into the driver's seat.

"So long Sonic." said Melchett "And thanks again for giving Scourge back to me. I'll make sure he stays in prison this time."

"And I'll be counting on you to keep your word." said Sonic "So long for now Melchett."

Melchett waved goodbye and he drove away with Scourge grumbling to himself in the back seat of the car. General Chipper followed him in his car with Fiona and Ginger grumbling to themselves. Sonic and friends watched as Melchett drove away into the distance. He sighed happily to himself.

"And that, I believe, is the end of Scourge the Hedgehog." he said "Thank goodness. I never have to worry about him anymore."

"He's definitely a guy I hope to never encounter again." muttered

Mandy "He's worse then Dr. Eggman."

"I even think he's worse then that Marik bloke." muttered Geoffrey "Scourge is one heck of a scoundrel isn't he?"

"Well he's gone for now." said Sally "The kingdom is safe at last. By the way Sonic." she suddenly asked "Did you succeed in destroying Eggman's oil rig?"

"I did indeed your majesty." said Sonic with a bow "Although Tails almost died on the mission."

"I was about to ask about Tails and Ruben." said Sally "Where are they?"

"Ruben took Tails to hospital after we arrived back here." said Sonic "They're at a hospital in Empire City. I wanna go see how my little bro is doing right now. Hey Cosmo, you wanna come?"

"Sure." said Cosmo "I'm sure Tails would be thrilled to see me again."

With that said, Sonic picked Cosmo up bridal style and he ran off at top speed to Empire City. Everybody just stood and watched him go. Now Royal HQ was saved, everybody could go back to their normal business and plan for their next fight with the real enemy, Dr. Eggman…

Sonic and Cosmo arrived at the hospital in Empire City where Ruben and Vector had taken Tails and Charmy. Sonic found the room Ruben and Tails were in and he and Cosmo went into the room. Ruben's face brightened at the sight of them.

"Sonic!" beamed Ruben "What kept you? I was beginning to think you weren't coming."

"I got sidetracked." said Sonic "I'll explain later. How's Tails doing?" he asked.

"Tails hasn't stirred at all since the oil rig incident but he's still alive."

said Ruben "He's just resting for now and the doctor's say he should make a steady recovery."

Sonic and Cosmo went over to Tails' bed and peered at him. Tails had bandages wrapped around his torso and tails and he was lying there sleeping. He was breathing nice and steadily and the heartbeat monitor showed that his heart was still beating. Tails was alive but Sonic wasn't happy to see Tails all bandaged up and hurt. Cosmo gently touched Tails' hand and stared sadly at him.

"What happened to him?" she asked.

"He got hit by a cannon blast." explained Sonic "He took the blast that was meant for me. Doing so almost got him killed but it did some good as if that were me on that bed right now, Royal HQ would still be under Scourge's control."

"So Tails inadvertently ended up saving the day." said Cosmo "I bet he never expected that to happen. I wish he was awake though."

"I wish he was too Cosmo." said Sonic "I hate it when Tails' is out of it."

Then suddenly, Tails' head twitched to the side and he began to moan sleepily. Sonic, Cosmo and Ruben stared at Tails as the fox began to wake up. Tails' eyes opened slightly and he turned his head to one side. He groaned drowsily.

"Hrrrrmmm….I'm dead…" he whispered hoarsely to himself "I'm up in heaven with the angels now."

"Tails." said Cosmo soothingly "It's me cute stuff. Cosmo."

"Cosmo?" mumbled Tails "Are you dead too?"

"No Tails, I'm alive and so are you." said Cosmo sweetly "You're in hospital."

"I…I am?" said Tails, sitting up.

A sharp surge of pain flooded up his back and he was forced to lie back down in his bed.

"Take it easy bro, you got hurt pretty bad." said Sonic "That cannon blast almost killed you. I'm thrilled you're still alive buddy."

"I'm glad I'm alive too Sonic." whispered Tails "How long will I be here for?"

"You should make a steady recovery Tails." explained Ruben "The doctors said you'll be OK in a few days time. Amazing really, I would have expected a cannon blast to do more damage then that."

"I'm glad you're OK though Tails." said Cosmo, kissing the fox's hand affectionately.

"I'm glad I'm OK too." said Tails weakly "So Sonic, did we do it? Did we destroy the rig?"

"It was a close call but we did it Tails." said Sonic "Eggman's rig is a sad wreckage floating in the middle of the ocean."

"Yay!" cheered Tails feebly which caused him to cough loudly.

"Sssh, Sssh, Sssh, take it easy Tails." said Cosmo softly "You're still recovering."

"Sorry." said Tails "So did I miss anything while I was out Sonic?"

"Well Scourge, Fiona and Ginger had taken over Royal HQ and captured some of our friends so I had to stop him." said Sonic.

"Who's Fiona and what happened at Royal HQ?" asked Tails.

"Well it's a long story bro." said Sonic "But I'll tell you it anyway and let you hear what you missed out on while you were passed out…"

Footnotes:

*** See Story 29**

**** Again, see Story 29**

And that's the HQ Heist saga! Scourge, Fiona and Ginger are in jail and Sonic is victorious! But that doesn't mean they won't be back. And Sonic's got more then just Scourge to worry about next time as a familair for returns... Reviews are welcome.

Tune into the spin-off title* Tales from Mobius *to learnt the life and times of Fiona Fox! Coming soon!

Thanks once again for all my reviews and thanks for being patient with the slower updates. You guys are ace!

A Gun For Hire Part 1

Story 68: A Gun For Hire Part 1

Quiet days were a rarity for treasure hunter Lennox Meers the Meerkat as he was the leader of a team of treasure hunters that worked for a treasure hunting organization but right now, Lennox was just sitting at his desk, leaning back lazily with his feet up and drumming his fingers on the desk. He was waiting for his bosses to give him an assignment but so far, he didn't have any tasks to do. Lennox Meers was a cream coloured meerkat with black ears and a brown tail tip. He wore a brown wide brimmed hat with a black stripe on it, a spiked collar around his neck, a golden belt, long brown gloves a black cloak that covered his arms but only came down to the back of his knees and brown shoes with metal attachments at the toes. Lennox was the leader of Team Diamond, a team that worked for an organization called H.U.N.T. H.U.N.T. stood for "Hidden and Unified Nations in Treasure Hunting" and he went around Mobius hunting for treasures and doing missions for his bosses. He had his own team and his team mates were a notorious bunch of criminals and treasure hunters. One was a sexy female purple raccoon named Roxy and she had red hair which was styled in a pony tail and black and cream stripes around her eyes. She wore long black gloves and a black bodysuit that came up to the chest and thick leather boots. Her tail had black stripes. The other was a huge muscular orange rabbit named Owen Pounder. Owen only wore gloves and a green vest. He had a white cotton tail and a mullet. He was the brawn of the group but was surprisingly clever for a brute. He was often mocked for being a rabbit since rabbits are cute and cuddly so not many people took him seriously…until he gave them an uppercut that is. The last was a grey furred bat named Alistair Drakken who didn't wear any clothes but he wore a metallic mask. His face had been horribly disfigured and scarred in an accident so he wore the mask to hide his hideous face. The mask had a microphone in it that amplified his voice and made it sound deep, intimidating and ominous so he scared a lot of people that way. He was the flier of the group. He was fast as lightening and impossible to keep up with in the sky. These four were a dangerous

treasure hunting team for anyone who had the misfortune to meet them. Right now, it didn't seem like anyone would have the misfortune of meeting them because they didn't have any tasks to do. They were all just lounging around the office waiting for something to happen save for Owen who was elsewhere right now. As time slowly ticked by, Lennox continued lazing around in his chair and drumming his fingers on his desk. He couldn't stand boredom and he wished his bosses would give him a task to do already. Lennox slammed his hand on his desk and sighed in annoyance.

"Lazy days, you can't help but hate them can't you?" he sighed.

His voice was deep and commanding which made him sound very intimidating for a meerkat.

"You're telling me Lenny." sighed Roxy who had removed her gloves and appeared to be checking out her nails "That's the only thing wrong with being a treasure hunter, when there's no treasure to hunt, you've got nothing to do."

"You got that right hot stuff and don't call me Lenny." snapped Lennox "It's Lennox, not Lenny, understood?"

"Yes." sighed Roxy in annoyance.

There were times where her leader's attitude just got under her skin and made her mad. Still, it was suicide to argue with the leader so Roxy didn't say anything more. She just put her gloves back on and began humming to herself. As for Alistair, he was just hanging upside down from the ceiling and snoring away. Alistair had a habit of sleeping when he had nothing to do but when he was given a mission, he was wide awake and would stay like that until the mission was completed. Lennox wondered how Alistair could sleep so much and yet in battle, show no signs of being sleepy at all. Then suddenly, just as it seemed boredom would continue to consume him, Owen burst into the office. He looked frantic and he scared Lennox so much the meerkat almost feel out of his chair. He gripped his hat tightly before it could fall off. Owen's frantic behaviour even woke up Alistair and he ended up falling off the ceiling and onto the floor where he groaned an ominous groan of pain.

"What on Mobius is the matter Owen?" cried Lennox "You're not having a repeat of the time you found an onion ring in your French fries are ya?"

"Um…that's one thing." said the brutish rabbit quickly "But I've got something more important to tell you. There's a woman who wishes to see us."

"Is there?" said Lennox, raising an eyebrow "Well let her in then."

"OK." said Owen, leaving the room to let the visitor in.

Lennox beamed to himself. Finally, this boredom would be over! Lennox moved his feet off the desk and sat up nicely so he would look presentable and not like a lazy person. Owen returned into the office with the visitor. The visitor was none other then the notorious bounty hunter Lola Gunn! She had once been hired to kill Sonic and Tails* and ended up getting thrown in jail only to escape with help from Marik the Martian**. Lola hadn't been active as of recently but now, she was paying a visit to the most dangerous treasure hunting group ever. Lennox stared at Lola in admiration.

"Hello beautiful." he said flirtingly, raising the brim of his hat so he could get a better look at Lola.

"Don't start with that nonsense." snapped Lola "I didn't come here to have stupid little boys hitting on me."

"Man you mean business woman!" laughed Roxy "I think me and you will get along just fine."

Lola ignored the raccoon and kept her steely gaze on Lennox, the meerkat waiting to hear what the skunk in the bodysuit had to say.

"I am Lola Gunn, a bounty hunter." she introduced herself "You may have heard of me…"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Bounty hunter?" asked Lennox "Sorry missy but we don't dabble with your kind, we're Team Diamond, a team that works for H.U.N.T., Hidden and Unified Nations in Treasure Hunting, and we hunt for profits, not kill for profits. If you want us for anything bounty hunter related then you can leave."

"I'm not here to give you a bounty hunter task." said Lola hastily "I'm here to make an amend."

"Are ya?" purred Lennox "Well before you make your amend, I have a question for ya. How did you find us in the first place?"

"I have my ways." said Lola bluntly "And now here's my amend: I wish to form an alliance with you four."

"An alliance?" asked Alistair in his deep growly voice which was made even more deep and growly by his mask "What kind of alliance would that be then?"

"I'm hoping that you four can help me get some much needed payback on somebody." said Lola "Somebody that you may have heard of."

"You want revenge eh?" mused Lennox "Well, we don't kill people unless necessary but this maybe a necessary kill you're requesting for us."

"Who do you want revenge on?" asked Owen.

"Sonic the Hedgehog." Lola answered in a vapid tone.

The whole team gasped in unison at that response, surprising Lola a little as she wasn't expecting them to have heard of Sonic. Lennox lowered the brim of his hat and began muttering crossly.

"I've heard of that hedgehog." he muttered "Then again, who hasn't? He's the hot shot Hero of Mobius who foils the schemes of Dr. Eggman. We fear ever running into him and having our schemes ruined by him so we have been plotting death on the hedgehog to prevent him from ever getting in our way."

"Sonic doesn't know us yet but there might be a time he will." said Roxy "So we plan to get rid of him before he can discover us and stop us from doing what we do best, hunting treasures and stealing priceless jewels. Why do you want revenge on Sonic honey?"

"He foiled my attempts to kill him and his twin-tailed friend for the biggest bounty of my career and I wish to kill him to get my own

back." explained Lola "I can't do it alone though so I've come to you guys for help."

"If you wish for us to help you kill Sonic then we accept without second thought." boomed Alistair.

"I'm so glad you see it my way." beamed Lola.

"We don't work for free though Lola." said Lennox coldly "I expect a sack full of gold from you when this job is over. Think you can get us one?"

"Definitely." said Lola "I have plenty of gold from my previous kills so once Sonic is dead, I'll give you a sack full of gold. So will you four help me get the head of Sonic the Hedgehog?"

"Yes!" yelled the team in unison.

Lola chuckled at their response.

"Then let's get started…" she said in a low sinister tone of voice…

"Boy does it feel good to be up and at them again!" cried Tails as he kicked the football towards Ruben the Water Panther.

Two weeks had passed since the destruction of Eggman's oil rig and the foiling of Scourge's takeover of Royal HQ and Tails had made a steady road to recovery while in hospital. He had just recently been released as he was now fit enough to leave the hospital and he was just as good as new now. To celebrate Tails' release from the hospital, Sonic had gathered some of his friends around for a game of football. He, Tails, Ruben, Cream and Charmy made one team while Amy, Cosmo, Espio, Vector and Bunnie Rabbot made the other. Geoffrey St. John, Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse stood on the sidelines and watched the game play unfold before them. They had set up the pitch just outside the back of Royal HQ and they had used a two pairs of cones to mark the goals. The game play was even sided so far but just because it was like that now didn't mean the tides wouldn't turn in anybody's favour. Tails had just kicked the ball to Ruben and the water panther, who had

removed his aqua collar and given to Geoffrey for safe keeping so he couldn't use his water powers to cheat, dribbled on with the ball at his feet. Despite being a newcomer to football, Ruben appeared to be getting the hang of it really quickly. Cream ran beside Ruben, waiting for the panther to pass the ball to her. Bunnie and Amy chased down Ruben for the ball. Ruben could see that he wouldn't be able to keep the ball away from them for long so he passed the ball over to Cream. Cream caught the ball and dribbled on. Bunnie Rabbot caught up with Cream and snatched the ball off of her. She then dribbled away from her goal and towards the other goal. Sonic was the goalie for his team as it wouldn't be fair if he was playing due to his speed and Espio was the goalie for his team. Bunnie dribbled past Charmy and Charmy chased after Bunnie. The cyborg rabbit kicked the ball away from Charmy and towards Cosmo. The Seedrian flinched fearfully and ended up missing the ball. Cosmo was a newcomer to football and she didn't really like the idea of kicking a ball around as it could hurt somebody. Tails seized his chance and grabbed the ball after Cosmo missed it. Vector tried to steal the ball from Tails but Tails passed it to Cream and Cream passed it onto Ruben before Bunnie could grab it. Ruben then proceeded to kick the ball straight past Espio into goal. Sonic's team had scored another point!

"Yay!" cheered Sonic's team.

Espio slunk off to retrieve the ball. The chameleon grabbed the ball and he returned to the pitch with it.

"Sonic's team is now winning 10-9." announced Geoffrey as he was the referee "We have five minutes left of the match. Play on."

The skunk blew his whistle and Espio kicked the ball back into the pitch. The ball bounced off the ground and headed towards Cosmo. The nervous Seedrian didn't want the ball so she quickly kicked it away…and accidentally gave it to Tails. The fox grabbed the ball and ran off with it. Amy fumed angrily.

"Cosmo, you're supposed to pass to one of your team mates!" she yelled.

"I'm sorry Amy, I wasn't thinking properly." whimpered Cosmo

"Please don't smash me for this!"

""Just get back in the game Cosmo!" snapped Amy, running off to chase down Tails.

Tails dribbled as quickly as he could with Amy furiously trying to keep up with him. Tails looked over his shoulder and saw Amy coming to him. She wouldn't catch him in time so Tails was free to just kick the ball into the goal right now. Tails kicked the ball but Espio caught it in his hands.

"Nice save mate!" congratulated Geoffrey.

Espio just grinned and threw the ball back into play. Vector caught it and the crocodile lumbered off with the ball. He wasn't as fast as the other players so Tails, Ruben, Cream and Charmy could catch him up easily. Charmy ran after Vector and made an attempt to seize the ball. Vector booted the ball away and Charmy tripped over after attempting to kick it. Amy caught the ball and she dribbled away as Cream chased her down. Cream could not run as fast as Amy so she wouldn't be able to catch her. Amy dribbled on but was forced to make a pass as Tails tried to tackle her from the side. Amy passed the ball onto Bunnie and the Rabbot kicked it straight past Sonic into goal. Amy's team cheered. Sonic just slumped on the grass and grumbled.

"Nice try sugah hog!" laughed Bunnie.

Sonic picked himself up and grabbed the ball.

"Good shot Bunnie." said Sonic "You're pretty much the only one who can get past me!"

"Well ah am a sharp striker ain't I?" said Bunnie.

"Hence the reason I'm glad you're on my team." boasted Amy.

Geoffrey blew his whistle.

"Score is ten all." he said "We have two minutes left, this will be the decider. Play on!"

He blew his whistle and Sonic threw the ball onto the pitch. The ball bounced off the ground and Charmy caught it. Vector and Amy charged towards Charmy and the bee panicked. He kicked the ball accidentally into the side lines and the ball hit poor Mandy on the head. The ball rolled back into the field and the mouse grumbled, rubbing her throbbing head.

"This is why I hate football!" she moaned "The ball freaking hurts when it hits you!"

"At least you're not playing Mandy." said Wilson, kicking the ball back into play "You're more likely to get hurt on the pitch then on the sidelines.

Mandy nodded agreeably. She hadn't had a pleasant experience with football growing up so she despised the sport with all her heart but she respected those who enjoyed it as she was not an opinionated character who forced her opinions on everybody. As for the football, Cosmo now had it but this time, she kicked it to one of her team mates. Bunnie caught the ball and ran towards the goal. Ruben charged past Bunnie and seized the ball. Ruben ran away from his goal and dribbled towards the other goal where Espio stood, waiting to catch it should he kick it to him. Vector lumbered after Ruben but he wasn't quite fast enough to catch him. Ruben passed the ball to Charmy and Charmy dribbled on. Amy seized the ball from Charmy and kicked it towards Vector. The crocodile attempted to capture it but he had his jaws wide open and he ended up catching the ball in his jaws instead. Vector spat the ball out and Bunnie caught it. She dribbled on but she accidentally got the ball caught under her foot and she fell over. Charmy seized the ball and passed it onto Cream before Amy could catch him and Cream kicked it towards Tails. Tails then made the killer shot and kicked the ball straight past Espio and into the goal. Tails punched the air excitedly.

"Yay!" he cheered "I did it!"

Amy's team just clapped.

"Well done Tails." said Amy.

"Good shot sugah." applauded Bunnie.

Geoffrey blew his whistle.

"Time!" he called "Sonic's team wins 11-10. Well played mates. Very well done all of you. Good match."

The players all shook hands with each other and congratulated their efforts. It had been a good game of football.

"That was a lot of fun." said Sonic "We should do this more often."

"I like how this was a game to celebrate my release from the hospital and I ended up scoring the winning goal." said Tails.

"How did you end up hospitalized anyway?" asked Amy.

"You know the oil rig mission me, Sonic and Ruben went on two weeks ago?" said Tails "Well during that mission, Sonic almost got hit by a cannon blast but I pushed him out of the way and took the blast meant for him. It was kind of bone-headed though since I almost died after that."

"But it was so selfless and brave of you." said Cosmo, wrapping her arms around Tails' arm and making the twin-tailed fox blush "I love people who are selfless and brave. Sonic must be proud to have a friend like you Tails."

"I am indeed Cosmo." said Sonic "Without Tails, I'd pretty much be dead already. I can't count all the times he's saved my life already. He saved me from Scream Roller the day I first met him*** de-roboticized me when I was Mecha Sonic****, he saved me from drowning***** and saved me from getting hit by a cannon blast. And I'm sure there are some other things I haven't mentioned that Tails has done to save my life."

"Yeah, the time I fixed the altered timeline caused by Metal Sonic using Eggman's time-altering machine******." said Tails.

Sonic gave Tails a puzzled look.

"Pardon?" he said.

Tails was about to answer until he remembered that nobody remembered that cataclysmic event except him since he set time right and erased the altered timeline from existence so he didn't answer that question.

"Never mind." said Tails quickly.

Sonic decided to move on to a different subject now. He turned to Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy.

"So how's the old base doing since Scourge's heist guys?" he asked.

"Well we managed to clean up the mess Scourge, Fiona and Ginger made and the base is fully operational now." said Mandy "Bostock and Mortimer are pardoned and Castle Acorn has been repaired from whatever damages Bostock and Mortimer did when they were forced to try and kill everybody inside."

"I wish I was there to help." muttered Tails, pouting "I would have loved to beat Ginger up again."

"Well Tails, he's in jail now where he belongs so you can laugh in his face about it." said Sonic with a wink.

"I'm glad I haven't met Ginger yet." said Cosmo "He sounds like a horrible person."

"He is Cosmo." said Tails grimly "He did some horrible things to me as a kid and he wants me dead now! I'll never forget the time he tried to kill me*******! I'm glad I'll never see him again now he's in jail."

"I'm glad Scourge is in jail so he can't try to kill my Sonic anymore!" shouted Amy "One a side note my handsome hero, who's Fiona Fox? You seem familiar with her. Is she an old friend of yours?"

"She was an old friend of mine." said Sonic bitterly "She used to be a Royal Fighter but after eight months of service, she quit on us because she felt like she was useless and didn't deserve to be on the team. Why she's hooked up with Scourge though is beyond me. Does she really think going with Scourge will improve her life?"

"Well it certainly won't!" yelled Amy "Going with Scourge is throwing her life away! That green jerk will just make her life worse!"

"I'm more confused as to the fact Scourge even took her in." said Sonic "Maybe Fiona wanted revenge on us and Scourge is using her to his advantage. I feel sorry for Fiona. I feel the poor fox is being manipulated by my jerk of a brother."

"I wouldn't try talking sense into her." said Mandy grimly "I tried and she just wouldn't listen to me. Fiona's lost to us now."

"Not like I care." muttered Geoffrey, folding his arms "That girl was useless to us and all she did was hinder us, not help us."

"Well Fiona got her comeuppance along with Scourge." said Ruben "They're both living in a dark lonely prison cell now. Maybe a few years in jail may put some sense back into her."

"I hope so." said Sonic "So, who's up for another game?"

Everybody except Team Chaotix raised their hands.

"What's up Chaotix?" asked Sonic.

"We've gotta shoot now Sonic." said Vector "We need to be back at the office to make sure we're there in case we've gotta case. We are detectives after all."

"OK then Chaotix." said Sonic "I'll see you later then."

"So long Sonic." said Vector with a wave "We'll see you again some time."

Vector, Espio and Charmy all left Royal HQ behind and headed back to Stardom Village. Charmy's wing had been fixed after it got shot on the oil rig so the bee could fly once again. He flew beside Espio and Vector as they walked away. The moment Team Chaotix left, Sonic spoke up.

"What game should we play now?" asked Sonic.

"I have a basketball in the storage room." said Wilson "Maybe we

can play basketball."

"Do we have any hoops?" asked Cream.

"We do indeed." said Wilson "I'll go and get the equipment. I'll be right back."

And with that, the dog ran into Royal HQ to get the basketball equipment so he and his friends could play a game or two…

Meanwhile, Lola had told her new cronies where Sonic the Hedgehog lived and the treasure hunters had immediately set off to find it. Lola had been to Sonic's house when she tried to kill Tails before so she wouldn't forget where her enemy lived. Team Diamond had searched all over Green Hill Zone and while it had been a long search for Sonic's house, they had eventually managed to find the place. The house was only one storey with pale yellow walls, a blue door, two windows and a blue roof. The very look of the house surprised Lennox as he was expecting Sonic to live in a fancier house then that. He had even pictured Sonic living in a mansion before they arrived. Regardless, Lola knew where Sonic lived so this must be the place.

"So this is where the hot shot hero lives?" murmured Lennox "Pretty drab looking for the dwelling of such a famous figure of Mobius."

"Oh well, if this is his house then it's his house." said Roxy "Let's break in and kill the hedgehog."

Lennox grabbed Roxy by the hair and pulled her to him. He glared into the raccoon's frightened eyes.

"I give the orders around here! Got it?" he snarled.

"Yes sir!" squeaked Roxy.

The meerkat in the wide brimmed hat and short cape let go of Roxy and the raccoon immediately began flattening her hair down as some of it stood up after Lennox had grabbed her by it. Lennox turned to Owen.

"Break the door down Owen." he ordered, pulling a revolver out of his cloak pocket.

"With pleasure boss!" said Owen with a brutish grin on his face.

He cracked his knuckles and marched over to the door. Alistair and Roxy armed themselves with weapons, ready to kill Sonic. Roxy was armed with a black baton and Alistair was armed with some arm mounted blades that pointed backwards. Owen clenched his fist and began to swing his arm around and around. He aimed for the door, drew his spinning arm back and…stopped what he was doing and just simply grabbed the door handle. He yanked the door off its hinges and threw it away, laughing like a thug. Lennox, Roxy and Alistair all charged into the house, brandishing their weapons and they scanned the living room. Lennox kept his revolver pointed and crept silently around the room. Roxy crept into the kitchen with her bat raised. She searched the entire room, even under the sink for Sonic the Hedgehog. Alistair crept into the bedroom and searched through it, tearing up the bedcovers and searching through the cupboards as he did so. Lennox remained in the living room and looked everywhere. He couldn't find a soul inside the room anywhere. The meerkat began to grow suspicious and he sat down on the sofa. He rested his chin on his hand and his brilliant mind began to buzz with theories on where Sonic could possibly be. Roxy and Alistair returned into the living room. Roxy's face was glum whereas Alistair, you couldn't tell what expression he had on his face since he wore a mask but he was probably annoyed right now.

"There's nobody here." said Roxy, attaching the bat to a strap on her back and sitting down on the sofa beside Lennox.

"The house is empty sir." droned Alistair, sitting beside Lennox "Sonic must be out or something."

"Indeed he is." said Lennox, putting his revolver away and frowning "This house is one storey and it only has three rooms. He can't possibly be hiding anywhere else. There's nowhere else to hide."

Owen stuck his head through the door frame.

"Found him?" he asked.

"No Owen we haven't found him." snapped Lennox "Sonic's not here."

"Then where the heck can that rat be?" blurted Owen desperately "There's no other house in Green Hill Zone! He could be anywhere, maybe in the forest somewhere!"

"Well Lola Gunn has a job for us to do so we have to find that miserable rodent." said Lennox "The hedgehog must be somewhere. I hope he's not fighting that Dr. Eggman villain. If that's the case we'll never find him now."

"I have one theory on where that blue idiot could be." said Roxy all of the sudden "Maybe he's at Castle Acorn. Sonic's bound to be good friends with the royals so maybe he's visiting them or something."

"Somehow, I doubt he'll be at a castle but there's no harm in looking." rumbled Alistair "If he's not there then we'll hold the royals hostage and demand for Sonic's location."

"In that case, we'll go to Castle Acorn and search for him there." said Lennox, getting up from the sofa "I can still remember that glorious time where we broke into Castle Acorn and robbed the place eighteen years ago." he said with a dark smile on his face

"That was a good heist wasn't it?" purred Roxy "Especially as that was my first outing with you boys."

Lennox nodded, remembering how well Roxy had done on her first mission when joining H.U.N.T. Lennox, Roxy and Alistair left the house and Owen put the door back into place. He couldn't fix the door but it didn't matter since Sonic would have no idea who broke the door. Team Diamond left Sonic's house behind and they headed off through the forest.

"Where are we going boss?" asked Owen.

"To Castle Acorn." said Lennox "We're going to see if Sonic's there and if he isn't, we'll force the royals to help us find him."

Owen smiled evilly.

"I love it when we blackmail people." he purred darkly "It's a lot of fun watching people cower in fear as we threaten them!"

Lennox just nodded and the four treasure hunters headed on through the forest on their way to Castle Acorn. Sonic may not be home but he maybe at Castle Acorn and once they found him, they would capture him and bring him to Lola Gunn and she would shoot him dead…

Back at Royal HQ, Sonic and friends had just had a basketball match. The match had been Sonic, Bunnie, Wilson and Cosmo vs. Amy, Mandy, Ruben and Cream with Geoffrey being referee once again (Geoffrey's not much of a sports person.) Sonic's team had won yet again with a score of 40-36. The moment the basketball game was over, Wilson tidied the equipment away. Sonic sighed happily.

"Two great games, what more could we ask for?" he wondered.

"Makes a change from constantly fighting Dr. Eggman." said Amy brightly "It feels good to be having some time to ourselves and just doing what we want."

"Sadly, this can't last." said Tails "Eggman will undoubtedly attack again and we'll end up in another fight with him."

"So we'd best make the most of this while we can." said Sonic "Maybe after we've had a spot of lunch, we can have a baseball game or something."

"Oh no you don't Sonic the Hedgehog!" yelled Amy, pointing at Sonic "A game of baseball isn't really fair if you play as you'll easily be the fastest midfielder on the pitch! The other team will have no chance!"

"OK, I'll think of something else to play." said Sonic, wondering into the headquarters "While I'm at it, I'll see what's going on in the lab."

Sonic wondered into the headquarters. Wilson, Ruben, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Mandy had gone into the headquarters to keep the

laboratory running and see if there were any missions for them or any messages waiting for them. Tails, Amy, Cream and Cosmo stayed outside.

"While we're waiting for lunch to be ready, why don't we have our own baseball game?" asked Amy "We can use my hammer as a bat and we can have two teams with two players each. Me and Cream vs. Tails and Cosmo, how about that Tails."

"Whatever you say Amy." said Tails "Me and Cosmo will take you down Amy!" he declared with a competitive grin on his face.

"I don't wanna take anyone down." said Cosmo quietly.

"Cosmo, we're not gonna literally take them down!" laughed Tails "We're just having a bit of fun that's all."

"I'll be the first to bat." said Amy "Cosmo, you bowl."

"I bowl? What does that mean?" asked Cosmo.

The Seedrians didn't play baseball or sports of any kind so Cosmo had no idea what the rules of sports games were and what certain words meant.

"It means you throw the ball you ditz!" grumbled Amy.

"Go easy on her Miss Rose, she's new to sports." said Cream.

Amy said nothing more and she got ready to bat. Tails ran inside and got a baseball from the games room. A minute later, Tails returned to the pitch with a baseball in his hand. He stood in the middle of the pitch that Amy had made with a few cones marking where the home runners should run when they hit the ball. Tails gave the ball to Cosmo and Cosmo stood in Tails' place while the fox stood further back in midfield position. Amy bent down in a batting position and prepared to whack the ball with her giant red and yellow hammer. Cosmo drew her arm back and threw the ball about ten inches away from her. Cosmo hadn't been concentrating properly and thus, ended up doing the weak throw. Amy fumed angrily at Cosmo's feeble effort. The Seedrian could throw a wok at somebody and hit them so surely she could throw a baseball!

"Cosmo, throw harder you wimp!" yelled Amy.

"Sorry!" cried Cosmo, running over to the ball and picking it up.

She ran back into position and she threw the ball, much harder this time. Amy swung her hammer and hit the ball. The ball shot into the air like a bullet being fired up at the sky and the pink hedgehog ran around the cones while Tails ran off to try and catch the ball as it fell back down to Earth. Tails managed to catch the ball and he ran back towards the pitch. Amy had just run all the way around the pitch and she was about to give it a second go but she saw Tails coming towards her so she stopped to save herself from being caught out. Tails threw the ball back to Cosmo but the Seedrian wasn't ready and she ended up getting hit in the forehead by the ball. Cosmo cried in pain and she clutched her forehead. Tails immediately panicked and he ran over to comfort his girlfriend. Amy just face-palmed herself. How did Cosmo manage to miss a shot like that? The Seedrian needed a lot of practice she could tell. Tails bent down beside Cosmo and patted her on the back.

"I'm sorry Cosmo, did I hurt you?" he asked.

"A little." said Cosmo, rubbing her forehead "It was my fault; I should have been watching what you was doing."

"I'll try and make sure I don't hit you next time." said Tails, handing the ball back to Cosmo "Just make sure you're ready to catch it."

"OK." said Cosmo, standing back up.

"My team has one run." announced Amy "You'd best hope you can hit better then I can. Cream, it's your turn to bat now." said Amy, handing her Piko-Piko hammer over to Cream.

Cream took the hammer and wondered onto the pitch. It only just dawned on Cream on how heavy Amy's hammer was and the rabbit girl began to worry that she wouldn't be able to swing it properly. Cosmo got ready to throw the ball.

"I'm sorry if I hit you at all Cream." said Cosmo.

"Don't worry Cosmo." said Cream sweetly "I won't get mad."

Cosmo threw the ball at Cream and the rabbit swung the bat a fraction to early and missed the ball. Amy caught the ball and Cream just saved himself from falling over due to the weight of the hammer.

"Strike!" yelled Amy.

She threw the ball back to Cosmo and Cosmo caught it this time. Cream got ready to bat and Cosmo got ready to bowl. Cosmo threw the ball at Cream and the rabbit tried to hit it. She missed again and Amy caught it.

"Strike!" yelled Amy.

She threw the ball back to Cosmo and the Seedrian caught it in her hands. Cream prepared to swing one last time. Cosmo threw the ball and Cream missed it yet again. She swung the hammer too hard and she ended up falling over. Amy caught the ball.

"Strike!" yelled Amy "Batter out!"

"Aw, I failed." muttered Cream, slinking off and giving Amy her hammer back.

"Never mind Cream, there's always next time." said Amy reassuringly as she prepared to bat again.

Meanwhile, Team Diamond had arrived at Mobotropolis at long last and they headed towards Castle Acorn. Seeing the castle again brought back some fond memories to Lennox as he remembered an old heist on the castle sometime ago. The four hunters were about to go into Castle Acorn until they noticed Tails, Cosmo, Amy and Cream playing baseball near Royal HQ. The very scene made Lennox curious and he and his team mates wondered over to investigate. They headed away from Castle Acorn and towards Royal HQ which was only a few paces away. The four hunters hid behind a corner of the building and they watched the baseball game unfold before them. Cosmo threw the ball at Amy and Amy whacked the ball high into the air. Tails ran off to try and catch the ball and Amy ran around the pitch.

"Who are those four twerps then?" asked Roxy.

"They look like little kids to me." said Owen "Who they belong to I dunno but I know I've never seen them before."

"I don't know who the rabbit and plant creature are but I know who that twin-tailed fox and that pink hedgehog are." said Lennox "They're Tails and Amy."

"Who are they" asked Alistair.

"Friends of Sonic the Hedgehog." said Lennox "I've heard of them just like I've heard of Sonic. Tails is Sonic's friend and Amy is Sonic's would-be-girlfriend. If those two are here then Sonic can't be far."

"This gives me an idea." said Owen "Why don't we kidnap Tails and Amy and use them to draw Sonic out and when he comes to save them, we can get him!"

"Great idea Owen." said Roxy "I have a better idea though; we kidnap Tails and Amy and bring them to Lola Gunn. Then once Sonic comes to rescue them, Lola can just shoot him the moment he arrives."

"Good thinking you two." said Lennox "But we can't kidnap them here. We'll create a scene and catch the attention of anybody that's possibly in this building."

"In that case, you three hide in the forest and I'll lure them to you." said Roxy "Once I bring them to you, you all pounce on them and tie them up. Then we bring them to Lola Gunn."

"Good plan Roxy." droned Alistair "We'll wait for you on the outskirts of Green Hill Zone."

"Let's go boys and wait for Roxy to bring Tails and Amy to us." said Lennox, getting up and running off.

Lennox, Owen and Alistair all left Royal HQ and ran back to Green Hill Zone. The moment the boys left, Roxy rubbed her hands together and crept out of her hiding place. Cream was getting ready for another bowl and Cosmo was preparing to throw the ball. Before anyone could do anything, Roxy began shrieking at the top of her

voice.

"Help!" she cried "Oh please, somebody help me!"

Cream and Cosmo stopped what they were doing and Tails and Amy looked at Roxy. The raccoon stared helplessly at the four friends. She continued to shriek.

"I'm in need of help!" she cried "Can any of you four nice people help a poor, helpless woman such as myself?"

"Well sure miss." said Tails "What's the problem?"

"My mother's been kidnapped by an Eggman robot!" lied Roxy "She needs help and I can't do anything about it! I've heard about you and how heroic you are little boy and I've heard about how heroic you are as well miss. Can you two help me?"

Despite being a treasure hunter, Roxy happened to be an exceptionally good actress. In fact, she once trained to be in actress but went bankrupt before her career could go anywhere, hence the reason she's with H.U.N.T. now. Her acting seemed to be paying off because Amy seemed to be buying her act.

"Well if there's an Eggman robot that needs pounding then me and Tails can help you!" declared Amy, taking her hammer from Cream and swinging it heftily "Come on Tails, this poor girl needs help!"

"Shouldn't we get Sonic to help us?" asked Tails.

"No Tails, we can handle this ourselves." boasted Amy "Besides, if I can save a poor woman's mother by myself then Sonic will be fawning over me, impressed with my heroism!"

Tails just face-palmed himself whereas Roxy just smirked at Amy.

These kids are such dunce heads! laughed Roxy in her mind *Especially the pink hedgehog girl! This was much easier then I thought!*

"So miss…" began Amy.

"My name is Roxy." introduced Roxy.

"Nice to meet you Roxy." said Amy "I'm Amy Rose, Sonic's girlfriend…"

"Would-be-girlfriend." corrected Tails.

Amy frowned at Tails and the fox recoiled quickly. The look Amy gave to Tails could kill somebody it was that scary. Amy kept her temper in and turned back to Roxy, leaving Tails to breathe a sigh of relief.

"As I was saying, we'll help save your mother." said Amy "Can you show us where Dr. Eggman went?"

"Sure." lied Roxy "He took my mother that way. Follow me." she said, pointing to Green Hill Zone.

Roxy bounded off with Amy and Tails running after her. Cream and Cosmo just stood there and watched Amy and Tails follow Roxy off to Green Hill Zone. Cosmo began to think to herself. Something seemed awfully suspicious here. Anyone usually crying for help would call for Sonic wouldn't they? Why did she pick Tails and Amy? And how did Roxy even manage to find Royal HQ? Something didn't add up here.

"Cosmo, should we tell Mr. Sonic about this?" asked Cream.

"No Cream, Tails and Amy can tell him everything." said Cosmo "Although I wonder why Roxy picked Tails and Amy to help her in particular."

"Maybe they were the first people she ran into and thought they could help." suggested Cream "After all, she did say she had heard of their heroism."

"I know Cream." said Cosmo "It's just, something seems a little bit wrong here. Maybe it's just me I dunno. Let's get some lunch and we'll wait for them to come back."

So Cosmo and Cream left the custom made baseball pitch and went into Royal HQ where lunch was just being served.

Down at Green Hill Zone, Roxy, Tails and Amy arrived in the outskirts of the forest. They all stopped for a quick breather before carrying on.

"So this is where Eggman took your mother?" asked Amy.

"Yes." puffed Roxy "He went through the forest and I think he's waiting to get me too. You two go first, I'll watch your backs."

"OK." said Amy "Tails, let's go."

Amy kept her Piko-Piko hammer ready and she, Tails and Roxy crept into the forest. Amy and Tails kept their senses on high alert for any sign of an Eggman robot or Eggman himself. Amy seemed really keen on doing this whereas Tails looked a little nervous. He had been tagged by Eggman robots in the forest before******** so he feared this would happen again. Nevertheless, Amy was on his side so he at least had some back up and Amy was extremely capable of taking care of herself, especially since she had that big scary hammer so he would be OK. As Amy and Tails crept into the forest, Roxy just stood there and waited as they crept on. She then cupped her hands around her mouth and yelled.

"Now boys!"

Before Tails and Amy could figure out what Roxy just said, Lennox, Alistair and Owen leaped down from the tree branches and they surrounded them. Lennox drew out two revolvers and pointed them at Tails and Amy. Owen flexed his biceps and Alistair bared his fearsome claws. Tails and Amy stood back-to-back and they prepared for a fight.

"Who are you three creeps then?" demanded Amy furiously.

"That is classified information." snapped Lennox "All you must know is we're here to kidnap you and hold you hostage."

"And I happen to be with these three lovely boys." sneered Roxy, walking up to her team mates.

"You're with them…so you tricked us!" shouted Tails "This whole thing was a trap! How could you?"

"We're mercenaries kid, it's our job to trick people." snapped Roxy "Get them boys."

"Roxy, do I have to remind you yet again I give the commands?" snapped Lennox.

"No sir." muttered Roxy.

"Get them team mates!" ordered Lennox.

Owen raised his arms and he advanced menacingly on Amy. Amy furiously whacked the muscular rabbit with her Piko-Piko hammer, sending him flying backwards and crashing into a tree, which he ended up knocking over. The tree crashed onto the ground, taking several smaller trees with it.

"Don't you dare touch me you dirty bunny!" shrieked Amy.

Alistair pounced on Amy from behind and he wrapped his arms around her. Tails grabbed Alistair's ears and he yanked on them, causing Alistair to yelp an ominous, groaning sounding yelp and let go of Amy. Amy walloped Alistair as hard as she could with her hammer and Tails grabbed her by the arms.

"Quick, let's get outta here before they catch us!" cried Tails, twisting his tails around one another and taking flight.

He carried Amy off the ground and up through the trees. Lennox furiously tried to shoot them with his twin revolvers but he missed every shot and Roxy couldn't help because she didn't have a gun. Tails and Amy disappeared through the trees and Tails flew on away from Green Hill Zone and towards Royal HQ. Lennox began to get mad.

"Don't just stand there Alistair! GET THEM!" he bellowed.

"Yes master." droned Alistair, flapping his fearsome wings and swooping after Tails and Amy.

No one in the world could fly faster then Alistair, not even kung-fu master Bladefeather the Falcon so Tails and Amy were toast up in the sky. Tails pressed on as he neared Mobotropolis but Alistair

caught up with him and tackled him from behind. Tails and Amy plummeted down to the ground like a bird that's just been shot dead. Tails and Amy crashed into the ground and Alistair flew down after them. He grabbed them by the scruffs of their necks and he carried them back to Green Hill Zone. Upon arrival though, Amy whacked Alistair's leg with her hammer, causing Alistair to let go of her and she fell down towards the trees below her. Tails thumped Alistair's other leg with his fist and Alistair let go of him. Tails flew down to catch Amy but he was a little too late. Amy ended up getting caught in a tree branch by her dress. Anyone seeing this would probably burst out laughing. Amy began to glow red with embarrassment as now she was stuck in a tree by her dress, people down below would be able to see her knickers. Tails flew over to Amy and he unhooked her dress from the tree. Before he could fly down and put Amy down, Alistair charged into Tails and walloped him. Tails found himself plummeting to the ground yet again and he crashed into a pile of leaves with Amy crashing on top of him. Alistair swooped down to grab Tails and Amy but Amy walloped him with her hammer before he could even touch them. Alistair hurtled over them and crashed face first into a tree. His mask saved him a lot of pain. Roxy ran up to Amy and she drew out her baton. The raccoon in the bodysuit swung her bat at Amy but the pink hedgehog blocked the blow with her hammer. Tails got to his feet and left Amy to battle Roxy. The two girls whacked each other's weapons.

"A bat? Is that all you've got?" snorted Amy.

"I could say the same about that stupid hammer of yours!" retorted Roxy, pushing Amy away and trying to whack her with her baton.

Amy whacked the bat before it could hit her. She hit it so hard that she knocked it out of Roxy's hands. But the racoon didn't seem the least bit worried. Amy tried to whack Roxy with her hammer but the racoon dropkicked her in the face, causing her to drop the hammer. Roxy grabbed it and Amy backed away fearfully. The racoon held the hammer above her head and was about to let Amy have it until Tails tackled her in the legs, causing Roxy to fall over onto her stomach. Amy grabbed her hammer and tried to hammer Roxy's head in but Owen Pounder, who had recovered from Amy's earlier attack, appeared from nowhere and let Amy have it with an

enormous punch. Amy was sent hurling backwards and she skidded to a halt on her back. Tails retaliated with a kick to the gut but Owen was so solidly built, he didn't even feel that attack. He grabbed Tails by the head and slammed him down on the ground. Then he tossed Tails away. Tails landed on his feet and he flew towards Owen, ready to attack but Alistair tackled him yet again.

"You're just too easy kid." he jeered as Tails crashed into the ground yet again.

Tails tried to get up but Owen seized him and held him with both hands. The super-strong bunny's grasp was much too tough for Tails to get out of. Amy saw Tails was in trouble and she ran over to help him but Lennox stepped in and stood in her way. Amy tried to hammer Lennox but she missed as the meerkat dodged. Lennox then put a foot on Amy's hammer and pinned it down. Amy tried to wrench her hammer out from under Lennox's foot but the meerkat just pointed a revolver at her head. Amy immediately freaked and froze to the spot.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you girl." snarled Lennox menacingly "I can't imagine you'll have much of a chance of surviving a bullet through your head."

Amy had no choice but to surrender. She let go of her hammer and raised her hands in surrender. Now Amy had surrendered, Roxy stood in and forced both of her arms behind her back. She tied them together with rope and forced Amy down on her knees. Lennox just picked up her hammer and threw it away. As for Tails, Alistair and Owen had tied his hands behind his back and forced him down on his knees. Now Tails and Amy were subdued, Lennox pulled something out of his pocket and he spoke into it.

"Lola Gunn are you there?" he asked.

He got an answer that only he could hear as he had the device to his ear.

"We have two special guests I think you'd like to see." he said "And they're your key to Sonic's demise."

Lola laughed darkly on the other side of the device. She then said something to Lennox.

"We're in Green Hill Zone." said Lennox "We're in the area facing Mobotropolis. You shouldn't have much trouble finding us."

He then put the device away. Tails and Amy hadn't heard a thing Lennox was saying but they had a feeling that call he just made wasn't a very pleasant one. Amy glared furiously at Lennox.

"OK meerkat, why have you kidnapped us?" she demanded.

"Didn't I already tell you?" snapped Lennox "We're holding you two hostage. That's why we've kidnapped you."

"Why are you holding us hostage?" asked Tails nervously.

"We'll let our little friend tell you." said Owen.

"And what little friend might that be then?" asked Amy.

Just as she said that, something whooshing through the leaves and branches darted over their heads. The thing then leaped into the air, did a somersault and landed on the ground in front of Tails and Amy. It was of course, Lola Gunn. The bounty hunter turned around and faced Team Diamond's captives. Amy immediately got angry and she glared at the skunk.

"You!" she screamed.

"That's right pinkie, it's me again." sneered Lola "Thought you'd seen the last of me?"

"You know her?" asked Tails.

"Yes I do." said Amy bitterly "She was the bounty hunter Eggman hired to kill you that night you almost died!"

"Sh-sh-she is?" squeaked Tails.

"I am indeed little boy." said Lola "Eggman hired me to kill you and Sonic that night. I almost succeeded too but Sonic and his poorly

dressed girlfriend her decided to stop me."

"I am not poorly dressed!" snapped Amy.

"Little girl, you need to learn that adults have a much better sense in fashion then little teenagers like you." said Lola coldly.

"So have you come to kill me again?" asked Tails nervously.

"Not this time boy." said Lola flatly "I want revenge on Sonic the Hedgehog for costing me the biggest bounty of my career and you two are going to bring him to me."

"Are we heck?" screeched Amy, trying to attack Lola but the bounty hunter just pulled a pistol out of her pouch and pointed it at her.

Lola always had spare weapons and although Sonic had broken her pistols during a fight with him, she had equipped herself with spares and in her backpack, she had a spare rifle too. Amy stayed down on her knees and shook like a leaf.

"The only reason you're still alive is because I need you right now." purred Lola in a chilling voice "Don't make me have to decide you're useless to me."

"OK!" squeaked Amy.

"Here's a question I have Lola." said Tails "Who are these guys?"

He motioned to Team Diamond who stood behind him and Amy with dirty glares on their faces.

"I'm sorry boy but I can't tell you." said Lola "These guys wish to remain anonymous to you. All I can say is I've formed an alliance with these four to help me kill Sonic. I'm usually solo but with Sonic, I need reinforcements so I hired them to help me. We all want Sonic dead so all of us benefit from the hedgehog's death. Lennox, gag them both." she ordered.

Lennox obeyed and he pulled a pair of blindfolds out of his cloak pocket. He wrapped a blindfold each around Tails and Amy's mouths. Now the fox and hedgehog couldn't speak. All they could do

was make muffled noises from behind their gags. Lola then lowered the straps on her backpack and bent over backwards so the backpack would fall off. The backpack slid off her back and onto the ground. She then opened one of the side pockets on the backpack and she pulled out a notepad and a pen. She scribbled a note and then handed it over to Alistair.

"Take this to Sonic's house and give it to Sonic." she ordered.

"But Sonic isn't home." noted Alistair.

"I'd deliver it to that building next door to Castle Acorn." said Roxy "Chances are, Sonic's there since we found these two there." she motioned to Tails and Amy.

"Then deliver it there then." ordered Lola impatiently "If Sonic isn't there then just tell whoever's at that building to give it to Sonic."

"Yes Lola." droned Alistair.

He held the note in his clawed feet and he flew off to Royal HQ. Lola watched as Alistair flew away and she turned back to her backpack. She unzipped the backpack and pulled out her new rifle which was in half so it would fit in the backpack. She clipped the rifle halves together to make it whole and she put the backpack back on her back. She held the rifle and pointed it menacingly at Tails and Amy. The two captives panicked. Lola laughed and turned the rifle away from them.

"I'm not gonna shoot you two…yet." she said "But once Sonic arrives, he'll be dead before he gets within a few feet of you. I really must thank you four for helping me in my revenge."

"Don't mention it Lola." said Lennox "We're just happy to help you kill someone we want to kill. Once Sonic's gone, we won't have to worry about him foiling our heists."

Lola just grinned dryly. All she had to do was wait for Sonic to come and then, she could shoot the hedgehog dead…

Alistair arrived at Royal HQ but instead of knocking on the door and giving the note to whoever was in the headquarters; he just slipped the note under the door and flew away. He didn't see any point in just handing the note to anybody so he decided to just let someone find it and give it to Sonic. He hoped that Lola wouldn't be kept waiting for long. In the headquarters, the Royal Fighters were having a spot of lunch and they were just finishing their meal until Mandy heard the note being slipped under the door. Mice have excellent hearing after all and Mandy could easily hear a tiny noise like that. Mandy left the table and spotted the note lying at the foot of the door. She picked the note up and looked at it. It said it was for Sonic so Mandy took the note over to the table and passed it to Sonic, who had just eaten his last chilli-dog.

"Hey blue dude, you've got a letter." said Mandy, passing the note to Sonic.

"A letter? For me?" said Sonic in surprise "Well that was unexpected. I wonder who it's from."

He took the note from Mandy and he read it. What he read made his heart stop and his stomach do a back flip. The note read these terrifying words all written by the hand of Lola Gun:

Dear Sonic,

This is a note from Lola Gunn, your old enemy. I have kidnapped two of your friends. I have kidnapped the twin-tailed fox whom I tried to kill once and your poorly dressed girlfriend. I am holding them against their will in Green Hill Zone. If you want to see them alive then come to Green Hill Zone, alone and unarmed and face me. You have one hour. DON'T keep me waiting! If you do then your friends will end up lying on the ground dead with their blood staining the grass! The clock is ticking…

Yours hoping to put a bullet in your head, Lola Gunn (Bang, bang, bang! I shoot to kill and kill for profits!)

Footnotes:

*** See Stories 26-27**

**** And then see *Tales from Mobius Arc 3 Marik the Prisoner***

***** Waaaaaaaaaaay back in Story 4! I feel ancient now!**

******All the way back in Story 14**

******* See Story 65**

******** See the legendary Story 50**

********* Indeed the dork did in Story 35!**

********** See Story 3, which feels an eternity away now**

Lola Gunn is back and she means buisness! Can Sonic save Tails and Amy? Or will he just end up with a bullet in his head? Tune in next time as a desperate rescue mission is put into action...Reviews are welcome.

A Gun For Hire Part 2

Story 69: A Gun For Hire Part 2

"Dear Sonic, This is a note from Lola Gunn, your old enemy. I have kidnapped two of your friends. I have kidnapped the twin-tailed fox whom I tried to kill once and your poorly dressed girlfriend. I am holding them against their will in Green Hill Zone. If you want to see them alive then come to Green Hill Zone, alone and unarmed and face me. You have one hour. DON'T keep me waiting! If you do then your friends will end up lying on the ground dead with their blood staining the grass! The clock is ticking…Yours hoping to put a bullet in your head, Lola Gunn Bang, bang, bang! I shoot to kill and kill for profits!" Sonic the Hedgehog read out loud as he read the note that had mysteriously ended up on the doorstep.

"Who's Lola Gunn?" asked Mandy Mouse.

"A bounty hunter who almost killed Tails one time*." said Sonic "Me and Amy managed to fend her off and save Tails with some help from Mariah the Medicine Cat. It appears she's back though."

"And she's got Tails and Amy!" squealed Cream the Rabbit.

"And she'll kill them unless you go to her!" cried Cosmo the Seedrian.

"According to the note, I have to face her alone and unarmed." said Sonic, looking at the killer note again.

"Why does this Lola Gunn person only want you sugah-hog?" asked Bunnie Rabbot "Did ya'll tick her off really badly or somethin?"

"I wouldn't be surprised if I did." said Sonic grimly "I did stop her from killing me and Tails so she probably has a score to settle with me. Well if Lola wants a pounding, she'll get one!"

Sonic jumped up from his chair, not bothering about knocking it over and he stormed off to the door.

"Nobody kidnaps my friends and holds them hostage!" grumbled Sonic "I'm gonna spin-dash Lola so hard she'll have permanent memory loss!"

Sonic was about to storm out of the door and charge off until Geoffrey St. John stopped him by grabbing the hedgehog's arm and holding him back.

"Have you back flipped of Intelligence Mountain and swan-dived into Lake Stupid mate?" cried Geoffrey "You can't go and face that bounty hunter alone!"

"And why not Geoffrey?" snapped Sonic.

"Think about it mate, she wants you and you alone." noted Geoffrey "Doesn't that sound a little suspicious?"

"No, it sounds like Lola's inviting me to a party and I don't wanna be late!" retorted Sonic "Now let me go Geoffrey St. John!"

"No mate!" said Geoffrey sternly, tightening his grip on Sonic's arm "This whole thing sounds and smells like a booby trap and I'm not letting you run into it! If you do, you'll just end up with a head full of bullets!"

"Well then what am I supposed to do?" demanded Sonic "Sit there and hope Lola changes her mind?"

"No." said Geoffrey "You sit down and wait. I'll go and confront this Lola Gunn woman myself."

"Why Mr. St. John?" asked Cream politely.

"I'm gonna see if I can reason with her." said Geoffrey "See if I can get her to back down or summet. Hopefully get her to let Tails and Amy go and abandon her goals."

"Some how, I can't see that happening." said Wilson the Dog "Bounty hunters aren't exactly the easiest to reason with."

"Well we don't know if we don't try." said Geoffrey "If all else fails, I'll call you blokes for help."

"Yeah right, that'll work." snorted Mandy "How will we be able to hear you from here to Green Hill Zone? We're not exactly next door to it are we?"

"I'll equip myself with this little device." said Geoffrey, showing everybody a ring shaped device with a button on it "When I press this button, it'll sound an alarm off in the lab and that'll mean I need your help."

"Sounds like a plan sugah." said Bunnie brightly "Ah hope it works."

"OK then mates, I'll be off." said Geoffrey "Wish me luck, I'm gonna need a lot of it."

Geoffrey was just about to head out of the door until Cosmo left the table and ran up to him. The skunk looked at her in wonder.

"What do you want flower?" he asked.

"I wish to come with you too." said Cosmo "I want to be there for poor Tails and I'll see if I can help you reason with Lola."

"Oh no Cosmo, you're not going." said Sonic sternly "I'm not risking you getting caught either. I can rely on Geoffrey as he's had experience in sticky situations but you're not exactly the world's greatest fighter are you? Heck, you can't even punch somebody."

"Sonic mate, the lass is with me." assured Geoffrey "She'll be fine. Not to mention, if we give her something to throw at Lola, she'll catch the bounty hunter completely off guard once she throws it at her!"

"What can I throw at Lola?" asked Cosmo.

"A wok maybe." suggested Sonic "You threw one at an enemy in Chun-Nan** and it worked perfectly."

"Nah, a wok's too conspicuous." said Wilson "Take this baseball." he said, tossing one to Cosmo.

The Seedrian caught it in her hands.

"A baseball? How classic." muttered Mandy "Yet again, it's always a good distraction."

Cosmo slipped the baseball a pocket on the back of her white and green skirt.

"We'll call ya when we need you mates." said Geoffrey "See ya later."

"Good luck Mr. St. John." said Cream sweetly.

"We've got ya back." said Sonic "I hope you can save Tails and Amy."

Geoffrey nodded and he and Cosmo left Royal HQ and headed off to Green Hill Zone. The moment the two left, Cream immediately asked.

"Do you think Mr. St. John and Cosmo will be alright?"

"I wish I was going." muttered Sonic "But Geoffrey's sure Lola's got a trap set for me and he's willing to spring it. At least he's got a way of calling us if he needs us. Let's just hope Geoffrey can get Lola to stand down and let Tails and Amy go."

Sonic had a strong feeling in his gut that Lola wasn't the type of person that could be reasoned with. He had a feeling that Lola would just kill Geoffrey and Cosmo without listening to a word they had to say…

Meanwhile in Green Hill Zone, Lola Gunn was pacing around and around, clearly bored, as she waited for Sonic to arrive. Tails and Amy remained on their knees, bound and gagged and growing more nervous minute after minute. Team Diamond just sat by a tree and waited for something to happen. Alistair was hanging upside down on a tree branch like all bats do. Every few minutes, Lola would pass Tails and Amy and threateningly point her rifle at them, just to make them jump in fright. She got bored of doing this though so to make things more fun, she pointed her rifle at them and then shot just narrowly above their heads just to scare them. The blast singed their

craniums and Tails and Amy began to shake like a bunch of leaves blowing about in the wind. Lola clearly appeared to be enjoying this. After all, her favourite toy is a gun after all. After singeing Tails and Amy's craniums, Lola rested on her rifle as if it was a cane and she sighed to herself.

"This is why I prefer to hunt my victims rather then wait for them to come to me." she muttered "I don't have to put up with this agonizing wait."

"Lola, do keep it in mind that Sonic might not be at that building yet and the note is just waiting for him to read it." noted Lennox Meers the Meerkat "For all we know, we could be waiting for a while. I wouldn't be too surprised if we ended up waiting until dusk…"

"Oh shut up you rejected car insurance website mascot!" snapped Lola "Sonic's a speedy boy and once he finally reads that note, he'll be here in a matter of seconds! Green Hill Zone's only a hearty jog away from that building next to Castle Acorn."

"I know." muttered Lennox, lowering his hat to shade his eyes from the sunlight "I'm just saying, Sonic could be anywhere right now."

"I wouldn't be shocked if it turned out he's fighting an Eggman robot again." muttered Roxy the Raccoon "That's all he ever does isn't it?"

"If that's the scenario then I'll be waiting for a long time." grumbled Lola "Maybe it would have been wise enough to find Sonic and give him the note so I know he will have read it and will be on his way to save his poor little friends."

She gave a steely gaze to Tails and Amy. The captive fox and hedgehog just mumbled behind their gags and gave Lola a worried look. Their expressions didn't seem to melt Lola's stony heart at all as she just glared harder at them.

"Don't give me that look you two." snarled Lola, pointing her rifle at them "You'll make me sick!"

Tails and Amy decided that angering Lola would be suicide so they stopped looking at her with worried expressions. Just when it

seemed that the wait would continue, Roxy leaped to her feet and cupped her hands around her eyes. She could see Geoffrey and Cosmo coming towards them but she couldn't tell what they were as they were too far away.

"Hey guys, there's two individuals coming towards us." announced Roxy.

"Is Sonic one of them?" asked Lola hopefully.

"No, it looks like a skunk and a thing coming." said Roxy, trying as hard as she could to make them out.

"Oh well, I'll just add them to our hostage collection." said Lola dryly "You know what they say, the more the merrier. The more hostages we have, the quicker we'll draw Sonic out of hiding."

"In that case, we'll hide and you tell us when to ambush them Lola." said Lennox, hiding behind the tree his team were sitting by "Hide Team Diamond!" he ordered to his cronies.

Alistair heard him and he straightened himself up on the tree branch he was hanging from. Roxy hid beside Lennox and Owen hid behind some thick bushes. Lola just stood there with her rifle by her side. Shortly after Team Diamond hid themselves, Geoffrey and Cosmo finally arrived on the scene, earning some muffled cries of excitement from Tails and Amy. Geoffrey and Cosmo stopped in their tracks and the skunk glared at Lola. Lola glared back, her gaze like Medusa's. Geoffrey just folded his arms and kept on a straight face.

"So you're Lola Gunn I presume?" he said "You're much prettier then I thought you'd be."

"Oh shut up!" snapped Lola "I'm in no mood for being flirted with!"

She pointed the rifle at Geoffrey but the skunk didn't look the least bit bothered.

"Who are you anyway?" demanded Lola.

"The name's Geoffrey St. John." introduced Geoffrey "Royal Fighter.

And this is Cosmo the Seedrian, she's not from this planet."

"I can see that." said Lola coldly, staring at Cosmo with loathing "She's a freak! Look at her! She's got rosebuds for ears and leaves for hair! She looks like a mutant flower bed!"

Cosmo looked like she had been shot through the heart after hearing those insults. The Seedrian was not going to let Lola get away with this, she was going to make a stand and she was going to do it now.

"I'm not a freak!" she yelled at Lola "Just because I look different to you doesn't mean I'm a freak! I don't think your kind are freaks because they look different so don't call me a freak because I look different!"

Tails made a muffled sound that sounded like he was trying to say "Yeah! You tell her Cosmo!". Lola just thumped Tails on the head with the barrel of her rifle.

"How dare you snap it me you little creature!" growled Lola "No one speaks to me like that!"

She pointed her rifle at Cosmo and prepared to shoot her until Geoffrey ran in and grabbed the rifle's barrel. He shoved it upwards, causing Lola to shoot up at the sky and Geoffrey kicked Lola in the stomach, causing her to let go of the rifle. Geoffrey pointed the rifle at her and kept her down on the ground. Lola just glared at Geoffrey but stayed where she was.

"We read the note you gave us Lola." said Geoffrey "And I can see what your little plot is. You want to draw Sonic out and then shoot him don't you?"

"Wow, an intelligent boy! I'm so shocked to actually be face to face with one!" said Lola sarcastically clapping at Geoffrey "Yes Geoff, I want to kill Sonic the Hedgehog in revenge for preventing me from killing his twin-tailed friend. And I'm not about to let you and your pet freak stop me!"

"Get your facts straight trigger girl, Cosmo is not my pet and she's

not a freak!" snapped Geoffrey "She's a person like we are and if you don't stop bad-mouthing her I'll fire this blasted thing!"

"Go ahead, shoot me." dared Lola "We Mobians have been shooting each other for years now, why not add another Mobian on the list of shot Mobians?"

Geoffrey's finger itched to pull the trigger but his mind told him no so the skunk didn't shoot Lola. He lowered the rifle slightly.

"I'm not gonna shoot you luv." said Geoffrey "I'm not like you. But I am gonna free Tails and Amy and haul you to a police station where you'll do time for your crimes!"

"Yeah right, I was incarcerated once and I escaped***." sneered Lola "No one can capture me and keep me under lockdown."

"Oh we'll see about that lass." said Geoffrey "Now come quietly and this won't get difficult."

"Things won't get difficult for me, but they will for you." snorted Lola "Team Diamond! Get him!" she yelled.

Team Diamond leaped out of their hiding place and Owen Pounder seized Geoffrey by wrapping his arms around the underneath of Geoffrey's arms and hoisting him off the ground, causing him to drop Lola's rifle. Lola grabbed the rifle and pointed it at Geoffrey and Lennox stood beside her. Roxy and Alistair stood behind Cosmo menacingly and the Seedrian stood still. Geoffrey struggled in Owen's grasp but the rabbit was much too tough. Alistair grabbed Geoffrey's arm and spotted the device on his wrist. Alistair took it off and crushed it in his claws.

"There, now you can't call for back-up." he rumbled.

"Oh damn it!" muttered Geoffrey "So who are these four clowns then?" he asked Lola.

"We are a classified team with a classified career." said Lennox bluntly "Who we are and what we do is none of your nosey business Royal Fighter."

"All you need to know is we're helping Lola kill Sonic so he can't get in our way later." said Owen, tightening his grip on Geoffrey's arms "And she's going to reward us handsomely for it!"

"So you're bounty hunters too?" asked Cosmo.

"No." said Lennox "Our real job is classified child so don't you dare ask me for it. You're not getting that information from me."

"Right." said Geoffrey "I won't ask then. So Lola, what are ya gonna do with me?"

"Take me to Sonic the Hedgehog Geoffrey St. Jackass or I'll kill the hostages." threatened Lola, pointing her long rifle at Tails' head, making the fox shudder "This is your only warning, if you refuse, I'll shoot them."

Tails and Amy began to shake with fear. Geoffrey decided now was the time for trying to make Lola stand down.

"Lola, you don't have to do this mate." said Geoffrey "You don't have to be a bounty hunter, there are better ways in the world to get money then just killing people and getting rewarded for it you know."

"No there isn't." said Lola coldly "The only way to get profits is to hunt for it."

"That is so wrong Lola!" cried Geoffrey "I'm part of the R.F.S. and I get paid for it. And what about all the other blokes in the world who do jobs? Do they get profit from their work?"

"Not enough of it." said Lola icily "Bounty hunting is where the highest price is. That's why I became a bounty hunter. I'm obsessed with money and I always felt the jobs on offer never offered enough. Bounty hunting offers lots and lots so I became a bounty hunter and now I'm one of the richest, if not the richest, girl on the planet! I got that my way, not yours and I do not plan to change that!"

"If you're obsessed with money you should have joined us." said Lennox "We've got more money then you can possibly imagine."

"Hmm…" mused Lola "I'll think on that." she said. She turned back

to Geoffrey and said "Got any more feeble junk to throw at me?"

"Yeah actually." said Geoffrey "Why are you so obsessed with killing people?"

Lola fumed. She hated it when people asked her that question. Regardless, she decided to answer the skunk.

"I used to be part of a street gang when I was younger." she said "We all played with guns and loved to shoot things as we pleased. We then decided to shoot somebody for the fun of it. I loved it, the sight of a person getting shot by my very gun seems to give me a huge rush of adrenaline and a huge feeling of excitement so we decided to just go around shooting what we liked. One day though, my whole gang was shot by the cops in a fierce gun fight. I barely escaped with my life although I still have the scars from the bullet wounds I received in my shoulders and back and I vowed that I would shoot anybody I liked, especially cops just to avenge my gang. And being a bounty hunter means I get paid to shoot people so I got the job and the rest is history."

"Wow, you let a gun rule your life girl." muttered Geoffrey "You are one sad skunk."

"Maybe I am." said Lola, flicking her long white hair back over her shoulder "But why do I care? I enjoy it and I don't plan on stopping. Now, bring me Sonic the Hedgehog or the hostages will end up staining the grass with their blood!"

As much as Geoffrey was determined to save Tails and Amy, he was not willing to let Lola kill Sonic the Hedgehog. He refused to talk. He remained tight lipped and put on a serious face. Lola fumed at him.

"Fine, have it your way." she muttered.

Lola pointed her rifle at Tails and Amy and she prepared to shoot them both until Cosmo stepped forward and got down on her knees.

"Wait!" she begged, her eyes filling with tears "Please Miss Gunn, don't kill my friends! Please I beg you! I'm down on my knees and

begging for mercy, please don't make me beg any harder!"

"You can shut up you alien freak!" snapped Lola "I'm not interested in what an extraterrestrial has to say."

"Lola, please, if you have any pity in your heart, don't kill Tails and Amy!" begged Cosmo, her eyes becoming a waterfall as tears trickled down her cheeks "I know you have a grudge on Sonic but that doesn't mean you have to kill the innocent! Tails and Amy shouldn't have to die because Sonic did what was right! And Sonic shouldn't die for stopping you from killing Tails for money! You don't have to kill somebody just for getting in your way Lola! Please, have mercy and please leave my friends alone!"

Cosmo's begs and pleas for mercy just made Lola even angrier. She was itching to shoot Cosmo right now. Yet seeing the snivelling Seedrian beg for mercy over Tails and Amy made Lola decided to do something just to hurt her. Lola turned to Lennox.

"Hey Lennox. Who should I kill first?" she asked.

"I dunno Lola." said Lennox "I think I'll let The Decider make the choice for us."

"Ah yes! The Decider!" cheered Owen "I love The Decider!"

He lifted his hat off his head and pulled a small golden coin out from the black stripe around the top of the hat which was really a black band. Lennox put his hat back on his head and held the coin in front of Cosmo. The side Cosmo could see had an image of Alicia Acorn, Sally's mother's face on it.

"He dies." he pointed at Tails.

He turned the coin around and showed Cosmo the other side which had an image of a crown on it.

"She dies." he pointed at Amy "Let's hope the coin doesn't pick the one you want to live the most."

Cosmo just stared at the meerkat, petrified with shock. Lola wasn't going to listen to her and instead was going to let Lennox decide

who she should kill first! So much for reasoning with her! Lennox placed the coin on his thumb and finger and he flicked the coin into the air with his thumb. The coin spun around five times in the air and Lennox caught it in his hand. Lennox placed the coin on the top of his other hand and he lifted his hand up to see the coin. It had landed Alicia Acorn side up.

"Heads." said Lennox, placing the coin back in his hat "Tails dies."

Cosmo felt like someone had just ripped her entire head off.

"No!" she wailed "Please! Anything but that! Not Tails!"

Lola ignored the snivelling Seedrian and she pointed the rifle at Tails' head. Tails began to sweat madly and he struggled in his bonds but try as he might, he couldn't get free. Lola prepared to pull the trigger until Cosmo, out of sheer desperation, fished the baseball out of her back pocket and threw it straight into Lola's eye. The bounty hunter cried in pain and she clutched her throbbing eye. Geoffrey kicked Owen in the knee in order to make the rabbit let go of him and he pushed Owen away. Geoffrey pounced on Lola and tackled her to the ground. Lola pushed on Geoffrey to try and get the skunk off of herself but Geoffrey was too strong for her. Owen stomped onto the scene and tried to punch Geoffrey but the skunk heard him coming so he moved out of the way, causing Owen to miss and accidentally punch Lola instead. The punch was so hard, it almost knocked Lola out. She felt like she was about to die right now.

"Sorry Lola." said Owen, picking her up "It wasn't my fault, I tried to hit the skunk guy."

As for Geoffrey, he quickly untied Tails and Amy and the two took their gags off.

"You two, run to Royal HQ and get Sonic!" ordered Geoffrey "Cosmo, you go with them! I'll keep these jerks busy!"

"OK Mr. St. John." said Cosmo.

"Be careful Geoffrey." said Tails, grabbing Cosmo by the arms and

carrying her off the ground as he flew into the air with his twirling twin tails.

Amy grabbed Cosmo's ankles and Tails ended up carrying her as well as Cosmo. The fox flew off as fast as he could with the girls in tow. Lennox clenched his fists angrily.

"Alistair! Stop them!" he ordered.

Alistair obeyed and flew off after Tails, Amy and Cosmo. Geoffrey tried to stop the bat but Roxy lunged at him and gabbed his legs, tripping the skunk up. The raccoon took the bat off her back and tried to whack Geoffrey with it but Geoffrey grabbed Roxy's wrist and held her arm in place, preventing her from hitting him. Geoffrey pushed Roxy off of himself and got back to his feet. Roxy tried to batter him yet again but Geoffrey dodged the bat attack and he punched Roxy in the face.

"Sorry luv, I don't usually treat girls this way." said Geoffrey "Only bad girls."

He then proceeded to punch Roxy again. Roxy spiralled around in a dizzy circle and she crashed near a tree. She fell down on her side and groaned in pain. Owen got to his feet and gave Geoffrey an uppercut so hard, Geoffrey felt like his entire jaw had shattered to pieces like a broken window. The skunk hurled through the air and landed painfully on his side. Owen ran up to Geoffrey but the skunk managed to shake off the blow to him earlier and he aimed his crossbow at the muscular rabbit. He fired a stun dart at Owen and the dart hit Owen in the neck. The dart stunned Owen and the rabbit fell onto his stomach in a deep sleep. Lennox immediately drew out his twin revolvers and he pointed them at Geoffrey. Geoffrey just smirked at him.

"Heh! I like the twin revolvers. They match your cowboy hat." he mocked, taking note of Lennox's wide brimmed hat.

"Do not mock my attire and weaponry you little stinker!" snapped Lennox "I will blast you without hesitance unless you surrender!"

"Suit yourself mate." said Geoffrey, aiming his crossbow at Lennox's

face "Think you can shoot me before I can shoot you?"

But to add insult to injury, Lola Gunn showed up from nowhere and pointed her rifle at Geoffrey St. John. The skunk froze and stared helplessly at the two enemies pointing guns at him. His arm shook nervously.

"Heh. A little…um…Mexican stand-off we seem to…have…" he said nervously, sweating a little "And it…seems to be…one…sided… against me…"

"Enough with the bad jokes skunk!" snapped Lola "Surrender or we'll blow your head off!"

Geoffrey raised his arms in surrender, knowing he couldn't possibly hope to win against two people pointing a gun at him. He could possibly shoot one first but then he'd get shot by the other so it was useless. However, the Royal Fighter had a sneaky trick up his sleeve. Lola and Lennox lowered their guns and prepared to grab him until Geoffrey aimed his crossbow at them and fired a flash-bomb in their eyes. The flash blinded them both for a moment and they clutched their eyes.

"Sorry. I left the flash on." joked Geoffrey "That shot should make a good photo though."

He then proceeded to uppercut Lola in the chin before she could regain her vision. Lola landed sharply on her side and dropped her rifle. Geoffrey grabbed the rifle and walloped Lennox with it before the meerkat could regain his vision. He then smacked a tree with the rifle and ended up breaking it just to stop Lola from using it. Unfortunately, that didn't mean Lola was weapon-less. She still had her twin pistols by her side. Lola regained her vision and fired her twin-pistols at Geoffrey. The skunk dodged the blasts from the pistols but Lola started rapidly firing in an attempt to tag him. Geoffrey began firing darts back in order to slow Lola down. Lola kept stopping her rapid fire to dodge the darts and Geoffrey ran for it. Unfortunately, he didn't get far. Roxy appeared from nowhere and tripped him by taking his legs out from underneath him. Geoffrey landed on his stomach and Roxy sat on his back. She grabbed his arm and forced it behind his back, making him yelp in pain. Roxy

then proceeded to twist his arm to hurt him even more. Geoffrey cried in pain but he wasn't going to give up so easily.

"Give up hot shot?" sneered Roxy.

"Nah mate, you're just getting me warmed up!" sneered Geoffrey, wrenching his arm out of Roxy's grip.

He then raised his leg backwards and the heel of his boot smacked Roxy in the back. Roxy rolled off of Geoffrey and the skunk got back to his feet. He grabbed Roxy in a chokehold and he began to vigorously rub his knuckles on Roxy's cranium, making the raccoon squeal loudly.

"Ow! Ow! Stop it you wretch! You're ruining my hair!" shrieked Roxy.

"So what? You can just fix it later luv." sneered Geoffrey.

Then suddenly, someone grabbed him by the neck and hoisted him off the ground, causing him to let go of Roxy. It was Owen Pounder! The rabbit was awake at last! The dart's effects had worn off and he was looking very angry. Owen grabbed Geoffrey's ankles and slammed him on the ground as if Geoffrey was a roll of newspaper being used to swat a fly. Owen then tossed Geoffrey away and the skunk ended up crashing into the ground rather sharply on his side. The skunk groaned in pain and he tried to get up but the bones in his body didn't seem to want to knit right now. Lennox strode up to Geoffrey and he pointed his twin revolvers at him.

"Do. not. move." he said slowly and coldly.

Seeing as Geoffrey was too weak to fight, he had no choice but to surrender. Geoffrey raised his arms in a forfeit. Lennox then grabbed Geoffrey and quickly tied him up with the ropes used for Tails and Amy earlier. He tied Geoffrey's arms behind his back and he wrapped some rope around the skunk's body just to make sure he was more secure. The skunk bent down on his knees and fumed as Lennox finished tying him up. He was going to be a hostage now unless Tails, Amy and Cosmo got help.

Meanwhile, Tails, Amy and Cosmo had escaped Green Hill Zone

and were on their way to Royal HQ but Alistair Drakken had caught up with them and Alistair grabbed Tails' arms with his clawed feet. Doing this caused Tails to let go of Amy and Cosmo. Cosmo's skirt spread out, causing her to float down to the ground and Amy remained holding onto Cosmo's ankles so Cosmo would float down with her and they both wouldn't crash. Alistair carried Tails up into the sky, the fox trying to get free by spinning his tails faster and faster to pull himself out of Alistair's grip.

"Ugh! Let me go!" cried Tails "Let me go!"

"No chance cretin." growled Alistair in his modified voice "You're coming back to Green Hill Zone with me. Can't have you tattling on us and bringing in reinforcements can we?"

"Let go of me!" ordered Tails, squirming madly "If you wasn't holding me right now I'd pound your ugly head in!"

"Silence you irksome little runt!" snapped Alistair "Or I'll swoop into the ground and use you as a cushion!"

Then suddenly, he was hit in the backside by something very hard. It was none other then Amy's infamous Piko-Piko hammer. Amy had summoned it from airspace (she can do that you know) and had thrown it at Alistair's bottom in order to make him let go of Tails. The blow had done just that and now Tails was free, he walloped Alistair's masked face with his fist. Big mistake as all that did was hurt Tails' fist.

"Ow!" he cried "What's your face made out of? Titanium Alloy?"

"This is a mask cretin." rumbled Alistair lowly "I wear it to hide my horribly disfigured face. It also makes my voice more intimidating."

"No it doesn't!" retorted Tails, kicked Alistair in the face this time "It makes you sound like a dork who's trying to sound cool!"

Alistair retaliated with a slash to the cheek on Tails. Tails screamed in pain as his cheek streamed with blood from three fresh cuts. Alistair then dropkicked Tails and sent him falling down to the ground. Cosmo ran forward and caught Tails in her arms. The two

ended up falling over each other and stopping with Cosmo on top of Tails. The two stared at each other in a loving trance. If they weren't in danger now, this moment would have been perfect. Alistair swooped down and grabbed Cosmo by the waist. Amy threw a hammer at him but she missed and Alistair carried Cosmo up into the sky.

"Surrender now or I'll drop her!" he threatened.

"Go ahead!" sniffed Amy "Tails will just catch her before she can crash down stupid!"

"Well in that case, I'll kill her instead!" growled Alistair Drakken evilly "I'm sure my razor sharp claws will pierce her soft little neck really easily!"

"No!" cried Tails, flying up into the sky after Alistair "Let her go you creep!"

"You asked for her child then here she is!" roared Alistair, throwing Cosmo straight into Tails.

Cosmo crashed into Tails and the two ended up falling down to the ground again. Tails and Cosmo crashed into the ground and the impact was so hard, it appeared to have knocked them out. Alistair cackled evilly, his deep, growling laugh rumbled through the sky as he cackled. He swooped down and tried to grab Tails and Cosmo but Amy stopped him by trying to hammer his face in. She missed and Alistair swiped at her with his wing. The attack stunned Amy momentarily but the pink hedgehog recovered and tried to wallop him with her hammer. She missed again and Alistair grabbed her by her bangs. He lifted Amy off the ground and he slammed her down into it. Amy tried to wallop Alistair again but the bat caught her hammer in his hands and yanked it out of her hands. He then grabbed Amy by the arms and carried her back to Green Hill Zone. He flew back into the forest and he carried Amy over to where his team mates and Lola Gunn were. He let go of Amy and sent her falling down to the ground like a falling tree branch. Owen caught her and sat her next to the tied up Geoffrey St. John. Alistair then proceeded to fly back out of Green Hill Zone and pick up Tails and Cosmo. He grabbed Tails with one foot and he grabbed Cosmo with

the other. He carried them both back to Green Hill Zone and he dropped them off at Lola and his team mate's location. Tails and Cosmo were both knocked out so they wouldn't be going anywhere. Team Diamond didn't have anymore rope with them so Lennox tied Amy's arms behind her back with the blindfold he had used to gag her earlier. As for Tails and Cosmo, he put their arms behind their backs and tied them together with the blindfold he'd used to gag Tails earlier. They were long blindfolds after all so it was long enough to tie two people's hands together. Amy fumed angrily.

"Man! How many times am I gonna play the damsel in distress today?" she moaned.

"Well that's just great!" muttered Geoffrey "You got caught before you could get Sonic for help! Now we're never going to get out of this are we?"

"SILENCE!" bellowed Lennox, pointing his twin revolvers at the skunk.

Geoffrey stopped talking and he remained on his knees, still as a statue and silent as a grave. Amy did the same. Lola Gunn marched up to the four captives and she drew out her twin pistols.

"Thank you for that feeble escape attempt Geoff." she said coldly "Now I have more hostages. Sonic will have to come out now he knows four of his friends are captives."

"Just you wait you trigger-happy witch!" snapped Amy "Sonic will spin-dash you into mush Lola!"

"Fat chance of that pinkie." muttered Lola "Sonic will surrender himself and I will shoot him dead. And once Sonic's dead, I'll kill you four just to add insult to injury. And once that's over, I'll be satisfied at long last and I can get back to my daily business. I really do have my new friends to thank though, this wouldn't have been possible without them."

"We're just happy to help you rid yourself of an enemy we wish to be rid of." said Lennox "Once Sonic's gone, we'll move onto Eggman as he's also a threat. Sonic's just a bigger one so he should be killed

first which is why we're helping you Lola."

"I know Lennox." said Lola "And I thank you for it. Thanks to you, Sonic will end up being a stuffed head mounted on my wall."

The two villains cackled evilly in unison. They could just imagine the glorious scene of Sonic getting shot dead by Lola's pistols, completing Lola's revenge and giving Team Diamond fewer threats to worry about…

Back at Royal HQ, Sonic, Bunnie, Cream, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben had all been sitting around waiting for Geoffrey to call them. The wait had been absolute torture for them and Sonic's already short patience was beginning to wear thin. Geoffrey should have called him by now. Something must have gone wrong, very, very wrong. Sonic stamped his foot furiously and got up to his feet.

"That's it! I'm outta here!" he said furiously.

He was about to run off until Bunnie grabbed him by the arm.

"Wait sugah-hog!" she cried "Ya'll can't go and face that Lola Gunn person!"

"Bunnie, Geoffrey hasn't called us yet so he must be in trouble!" retorted Sonic "Now let go of me, I'm going to help him!"

"Sugah-hog, if ya'll go and face Lola Gunn, she might shoot ya." noted Bunnie.

"Nah she won't." boasted Sonic "Eggman's best robots couldn't shoot me, I'm just too fast for them and I'm much too fast for Lola Gunn!"

"But Mr. Sonic, she has Tails and Amy hostage." noted Cream "It's likely she'll kill them if you don't surrender to her."

"Then what am I supposed to do Cream?" demanded Sonic furiously "Just stand there and keep Lola waiting? That's real helpful that is!"

"Boys! Girls! Settle down!" cried Mandy, slamming the table with her hands "If it's really helpful to you lot, I have a plan."

"You do?" said Wilson in surprise "What is it then?"

"Gather around everybody." said Mandy.

Everybody leaned over the table and Mandy began talking to them in whispers. Sonic stood up straight and smiled.

"Mandy, that's a brilliant plan." said Sonic with a thumbs up "Let's go everybody! Our friends need some help!"

With that said, everybody ran out of Royal HQ and headed towards Green Hill Zone where Lola was waiting for them…

In Green Hill Zone, Lola Gunn was waiting for Sonic to come for Tails and Amy just like the note she'd sent to him had stated him to. Tails and Cosmo had come to only to see they had been tied together by a blindfold and they were at Lola Gunn's mercy yet again. The minute the two had woken up, Lola pointed her twin pistols at them just to make them jump. Scaring the living daylights out of her victims had brought strange fascination to the bounty-hunter skunk. Geoffrey was not amused with Lola's sadistic ways at all.

"Oy! Leave the poor kids alone!" yelled Geoffrey defensively.

"Shut up or I'll start picking on you St. John!" snapped Lola, pointing her pistols at Geoffrey's face.

Geoffrey didn't flinch or show any signs of fear. After eight months of heavy conflict with Dr. Eggman, he was used to having guns pointed at him by now.

"Once Sonic is finally dead, I think I'll kill you first." said Lola "You don't half irritate me Geoffrey!"

"I could say the same about you lass." muttered Geoffrey.

Lola decided not to kill the skunk right now as she wanted to have the satisfaction of watching his horrified face when she shot Sonic dead. Roxy the Raccoon suddenly leaped to her feet and peered into the distance. She could see Sonic the Hedgehog coming.

"Hey Lola, you can quit moaning about waiting now, Sonic's coming." announced Roxy.

"It's about time." muttered Lola "That blue idiot's not as fast as he claims to be."

Sonic zoomed through the trees and ran up to where Lola Gunn and Team Diamond were. He screeched to a halt, accidentally flinging soil all over Roxy who didn't think to stand out of the way as he zoomed past and he glared angrily at Lola Gunn. Lola glared back.

"Hello Sonic." she purred, flicking her hair to the side.

"Hello Lola." muttered Sonic "I guess you're up to no good again eh?"

"I am you blue twerp." said Lola with a dark grin on her face "I have four of your friends as you can see and if you don't stand down and pay the price for what you did to me, I will take it upon myself to kill them all."

"Yeah, I kinda guessed that after the unsubtle note you gave me." snapped Sonic "I have my own proposition. You let the hostages go and then I'll surrender."

Lola pretended to think for a moment before answering sharply "No."

"Fine, then nobody's happy." sneered Sonic "I won't stand down unless you let the hostages go."

"Then I'll make you stand down!" yelled Lola "Owen, grab him!"

Owen Pounder obeyed and he grabbed Sonic with his huge hands. He hoisted him off the ground and held him at arm's length away from him. Sonic squirmed in Owen's tough grasp but the muscular rabbit was much too tough, even for him. Lennox, Roxy and Alistair all showed themselves to Sonic and Sonic stared at them all.

"Who are they then? Your clubhouse buddies?" he jeered at Lola, earning an angry glare from the skunk.

"We are a classified team with a classified career." said Lennox "We wish to kill you so you cannot get in the way of our schemes so we teamed up with Lola Gunn to help bring you down."

"How can I get in your way if I don't even know who you all are?" demanded Sonic.

"You might wise up and discover us." noted Lennox "As secretive as we are, it isn't impossible for us to be found out so we wish to kill you. And since you want stand down for Lola, we will make you stand down for Lola."

He pulled out his twin revolvers and pointed them at Sonic. Lola pointed her twin pistols at Sonic and since Owen had Sonic subdued, the blue hedgehog couldn't move or run away at all. He was trapped. The hostages began to fear for poor Sonic.

"No! Please don't do it!" begged Tails.

"Don't kill Sonic! Please!" begged Amy.

Lola and Lennox ignored the pleading hostages and they were about to shoot Sonic until Sonic yelled at the top of his voice "Now team!" and out of nowhere, Cream & Cheese, Wilson, Mandy, Bunnie and Ruben all jumped out and pounced on Lola and Team Diamond. Mandy's plan was to let Sonic pretend to give himself up while they hid and when Sonic gave the signal, they pounced on the mercenaries. Bunnie dropkicked Owen in the back of the head, causing him to drop Sonic and Sonic leaped away from him. He zipped over to the hostages and he cut their bonds loose, freeing them all. Amy was the first to react, leaping on Sonic and grasping him in a hug.

"Sonic! You came to save us! Thank you, thank you, thank you!" she squealed, squeezing Sonic hard enough to rupture his lungs.

"Amy, can you thank me later? NOW IS NOT THE TIME!" screamed Sonic.

Amy let Sonic go and she summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand. She and Sonic ran into battle, followed by Geoffrey and Tails. Unfortunately, Tails was yet again, pile-dived by Alistair Drakken. The fox glared angrily at the mask wearing bat.

"Me and you have some unfinished business little boy." growled Alistair.

"Funny, I was going to say the same about you!" retorted Tails, throwing a punch at Alistair.

Alistair blocked the punch and threw Tails' arm to the side, causing him to fall over. Cream decided to help Tails but Alistair smacked her with his wing and sent her sprawling.

"Fools! No flier on Mobius can match me!" he crowed, flapping his wings and flying off. Tails and Cream flew after Alistair but the speedy bat was already miles ahead of them, they would never catch the bat.

Down on the ground, Sonic, Amy, Geoffrey, Cosmo, Bunnie, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben all brawled it out with the rest of Team Diamond and Lola Gunn. Sonic and Amy were fighting Lola as they had unfinished business with her and the rest thought Team Diamond. Owen and Bunnie had gotten themselves into a boxing match, punching at each other and walloping each other in the face. Bunnie's punches were harder due to the fact her left arm was robotic but only her left arm was powerful. Owen had two powerful arms being as he worked out so he could give Bunnie a powerful punch with both fists and not just one. So whereas Bunnie could punch harder, Owen could throw more powerful punches as he had both fists to work with. Regardless, this was an even sided boxing match at the moment. As for Roxy, she and Mandy began to duke it out with each other with Roxy trying to hit Mandy with her bat but the mouse was too tough for Roxy. Roxy tried to bat Mandy but the mouse grabbed the bat, threw her arm aside and then kneed Roxy in the gut. Roxy gasped hoarsely as all the air in her lungs was sucked out of her. Wilson unsheathed his trademark spinning blade weapon and he held one of the blades at Roxy's throat in order to make her surrender. As for Lennox, he kept shooting rapidly at Ruben but the water panther kept dodging his attacks and he leaped

into the air and dropkicked the meerkat in the face. Lennox fell onto his back and his hat fell off. Lennox grabbed his hat and put it back onto his head. He tried to grab his revolvers but Ruben squirted him with a huge jet of water, knocking Lennox back a few inches. As for Lola, she kept trying to shoot Sonic but the hedgehog was much too fast for her so she kept missing. Amy tried to wallop Lola with her hammer but she dodged the hammer strike and drop-kicked Amy in the face. Sonic spin-dashed Lola and knocked her over. He stole her twin pistols before she could grab them and he gave them to Amy. Amy threw the pistols on the ground and smashed them with her hammer. Lola had no weapons now. Lola leaped back to her feet and screamed angrily. She tried to punch Sonic in blind fury but trying to blindly attack somebody guarantees more of a chance of failing miserably then winning. Sonic put a hand on Lola's head and flipped himself over her. He landed behind her and punched her onto her stomach.

"Hey Gun-girl! If you're having so much trouble dealing with me, call your clubhouse buddies for help!" jeered Sonic.

"They are not my buddies!" screamed Lola "They are cannon fodder for me! I only need them to help me kill you and once I've done so, I'll kill them all so I don't have to pay them later!"

Unfortunately for her, Lennox overheard her and the look on his face was impossible to describe to you. Lola clasped her hands over her mouth in shock.

"Oops." she mumbled.

Lennox glared at Lola and he stomped over to her. Lola looked back at him with fear in her eyes. Never in her life had Lola been scared of anything.

"You…you plot to…kill us after you kill Sonic?" snarled Lennox "Your talk of…paying us was a pretence?"

"Y-y-y-yes." squeaked Lola "But I've changed my mind! I'm not going to now…"

"Save your lies bounty-hunter!" bellowed Lennox "This is why we

don't dabble with bounty hunters! They can never be trusted! Well no one plots death on us and lives with it!"

He then proceeded to point his twin revolvers and Lola and shoot her rapidly. He shot Lola six times in the chest and neck and the bounty hunter skunk collapsed on the ground, dead at long last. Sonic was shocked to have seen all this happen. Still, at least he didn't have to worry about Lola anymore but he didn't want her dead, he just wanted her incarcerated that's all. Sonic glared angrily at Lennox.

"Hey creep! I don't like people who kill others!" he yelled "True Lola's an enemy of mine but I didn't want her dead!"

"What you want is insignificant to what we want." snapped Lennox "Now if you don't mind, I'll be escaping right now as this whole operation is compromised."

And with that, Lennox proceeded to flee for it. Sonic ran after the meerkat in the wide brimmed hat and short cloak, desperate to not let him get away. Lennox wanted Sonic dead so he may as well try and get him arrested so he'd have less threats to deal with. Lennox looked over his shoulder and saw Sonic running after him. Lennox pointed his revolvers behind him and began to rapidly fire at Sonic in an attempt to slow him down but when you can run at supersonic speeds, nothing can stop you. Sonic effortlessly dodged all the bullets fired at him and he leaped into the air. He spin-dashed Lennox, causing him to drop his revolvers and Sonic stomped on them both.

"Why do I love to smash guns so much?" wondered Sonic as he broke the two revolvers.

Lennox got back to his feet and Sonic tried to attack him. He punched at Lennox but Lennox grabbed Sonic's fist. Sonic punched at him with his other arm but Lennox grabbed his other fist. Now he had Sonic's fists stalled, he head-butted the hedgehog in the forehead, making Sonic cry in pain and then, while still holding Sonic, he kneed him in the gut. Sonic double over in pain and Lennox kicked Sonic over onto his side. Lennox's steel toe attachments made the kicks all the more painful. Lennox laughed

maliciously as he kicked the downed Sonic repeatedly.

"Ha, ha, ha! You're the hero of Mobius hedgehog?" he sneered, kicking Sonic and sending him rolling across the ground "You're pathetic!"

He kicked him again.

"You're much weaker then I had anticipated!"

Another kick on poor Sonic.

"My organization shouldn't even be worried about you!"

He kicked Sonic the hardest he could possibly kick.

"Oh well, it means your demise at our hands will be all the more easier." crowed Lennox, kicking Sonic one final time.

Sonic grimaced in pain and he tried to stand up but Lennox pinned him down with his foot. Lennox drew out a shot gun he had kept spare in his cloak and he pointed it at Sonic's head.

"So, any last words before I blow your puny little brain out?" he purred.

"No but Amy might have something to say." said Sonic.

"What?" blurted Lennox.

Then suddenly, Amy appeared from behind and she walloped Lennox with her hammer as hard as she possible could. Lennox yelled at the top of his voice as he hurtled away from Sonic and he crashed head-first into a tree. Amy helped Sonic up onto his feet.

"Are you OK?" she asked nervously.

"I am now you're on the scene." said Sonic "You're a life saver Amy, D'ya know that?"

"Yes Sonic." beamed Amy "I do."

As for Lennox, the bedraggled meerkat picked himself up after his

crash into the tree and he rubbed his head better. He could see that this battle was not going to end well for his team at all so he had to flee for it.

"Team Diamond! Retreat!" he yelled.

Roxy heard the order and she pushed Wilson's blade away from her neck. She ran off after Lennox. Owen punched Bunnie to the side and ran off after Roxy. Alistair threw Tails and Cream down into the ground and flew after Owen. The whole treasure hunting team fled as fast their legs would let them and Sonic just watched as Team Diamond fled for it. He decided to let them go as they were not worth it right now. Amy just stuck her nose in the air.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" she sniffed "I hope those creeps never show up again!"

"I know one creep who'll never show up again." said Sonic "Lola Gunn now the meerkat guy just killed her."

He and Amy walked back to the others and Amy saw Lola's dead body which was just lying there. Seeing Lola dead didn't bring any emotions of any kind at all to Amy as she hated her. All she said to that was.

"Humph! She deserved to get shot! She's been shooting people all her life so she deserved that!"

"Maybe she did." said Sonic "At least no one has to worry about her anymore."

"But we still have those four guys to worry about." noted Tails, clutching arm and rubbing it better "Who are they and who do they work for?"

"No idea Tails." said Sonic "They say they're classified. My best guess is to watch out for those four next time. They look like a dangerous group and they might even be worse then Lola."

"Worse or not, we'll bring them blokes down next time we meet them!" declared Geoffrey.

"You said it Geoff!" laughed Sonic "Now let's go home and forget about this whole affair.

And with that, everybody left Green Hill Zone and headed back to Royal HQ to get back to their normal business. As they headed home, Sonic couldn't get this one thought out of his head.

Who are Team Diamond? Who do they work for? And what do they want? …

Footnotes:

*** See Stories 26-27**

**** See Story 52 for one hilarious moment with Cosmo and a wok!**

***** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 3: Marik the Prisoner***

Lola Gunn is dead and Team Diamond have fled! When will they be back? Who knows? Join me next time as we have a solo story for a change. Read and Review.

Thanks once again for all your reviews guys. :)

An Unexpected Surprise

Story 70: An Unexpected Surprise

No sooner had the whole Lola Gunn and Team Diamond conspiracy been foiled, Sonic the Hedgehog had been requested to meet one of the older R.F.S. groups aboard. Apparently, the Northern Royal Fighters, a group stationed in Nekronopolis had requested for Sonic to come and see them as they had a surprise for him. Sonic responded to the call without hesitation and he, along with his best friend Tails and his self-proclaimed girlfriend Amy Rose had set off for Nekronopolis, a city in the north of Mobius, hence the team's name. The Northern Royal Fighters were a skilled group of infiltrators and soldiers consisting of a mongoose named Miranda, a rat named Kari, an eagle named Kate and two chipmunks named Thunder & Bolt.

Miranda was a fit bodied thirty-eight year old yellow-furred mongoose with long flowering hair that split in two halfway down behind her. She wore a backless, strapped black shirt with matching black trousers, chunky black boots with a red stripe on them and a belt with two attachments that wound around her thighs. She wore two steel bands around her upper arms and steel wristbands around her wrists. Miranda was the leader of the team and she carried her rank with pride and dedication but she had a good heart and cared deeply for her team mates.

Kari was a beautiful nineteen year old white furred rat who had ginger hair that curled up at the back. She wore a smart white shirt with a collar on, a skimpy little dark green skirt and a pair of purple slippers. She was a mechanic and could fix any broken down vehicle in a matter of seconds. She wasn't as advanced as Tails though as she was just learning mechanics but she was pretty good at her level. Kari had had a rough time growing up as rats on Mobius have a bad reputation and she was often teased and tormented for being a rat. Some people even had trouble trusting her because she was a rat but Miranda saw good in her and took her into the team to boost her self-esteem.

Kate was a green feathered eagle with a golden coloured beak and feathers that stood up in a spiky-like hairstyle. She only wore a red vest and some gym trousers. She was one of the world's strongest women, being on par with the likes of Knuckles the Echidna. Her muscles showed almost as much as Owen Pounder's. Kate wasn't much of a talker either, only talking when she felt like it or needed to. She and Miranda were friends in school so when Kate signed up for the R.F.S., Miranda happily accepted her.

Thunder & Bolt were a pair of chipmunk brothers. Thunder was orange furred with a yellow lightening bolt on his forehead. He wore claret gloves and white trainers with a thunder-bolt symbol on the sides. Bolt was red furred with two yellow bolts on his forehead. He wore yellow gloves with blue trainers that had a thin lightening deco on the sides. The two were fun-loving brothers who told bad jokes among each other. They seriously annoyed Miranda but she had to put up with them so she forced herself to tolerate their bad comedy. Despite their bad comedy, they were useful in battle as combined; they could emit a deadly lightening attack that helped the Northern Fighters greatly in battle so Miranda didn't mind them being on the team. She just didn't like their bad jokes.

As of this moment, the team were waiting for Sonic to arrive. Miranda was on watch-out with a pair of binoculars. She could see far into the distance but she couldn't see Sonic anywhere yet. Kari, Kate, Thunder & Bolt were still at the camp, waiting for Miranda to return. Miranda had been on look-out for a long time. That long time had come to an end for at long last; Miranda saw Sonic, Tails and Amy coming. She had met Sonic during the eight months they had been fighting Eggman but she hadn't met Tails and Amy yet so she didn't know who they were but she assumed they were friends as they were with Sonic. Sonic arrived at the Northern Royal Fighter's camp and he skidded to a halt just in front of Miranda. Tails, who had been flying after Sonic and carrying Amy, put Amy down and touched down beside Sonic. Miranda put the binoculars away and she grasped Sonic in a hug.

"Ah Sonic the Hedgehog you handsome little devil!" laughed Miranda "It's so good to see you again young man!"

"Same to you Miranda." said Sonic with a wink "You've never looked

better."

"Ha, ha! Same charmer as always! You haven't changed one little bit since the last time we met haven't you Sonic?" said Miranda brightly.

"Nah ah Miranda, the hedgehog is here to stay." said Sonic.

"Excuse me Sonic, do you mind telling us who she is?" asked Amy, a little miffed seeing Sonic and Miranda hugging each other.

"Not at all Amy." said Sonic "This is Miranda Mongoose, leader of the Northern Royal Fighters."

"I first met Sonic seven months ago." said Miranda "If I recall correctly, he saved my life from the roboticizer didn't you little boy?" she added, teasingly stroking his forehead.

"I did indeed." said Sonic with a cocky grin on his face "And after that, you joined the R.F.S. and got your own team and everything."

"Indeed." said Miranda "So who are your friends Sonic?"

"This young man here is my best friend Tails." said Sonic, pointing to Tails "I saved his life from Dr. Eggman* and he's been on my side since that faithful day."

"I've saved Sonic's life many times just like he's saved my life many times and I'm a mechanic and inventor." said Tails "Although my inventions haven't helped much."

"A mechanic eh?" mused Miranda "I think you and Kari are going to be good friends little Tails."

"My name is Amy Rose." said Amy, introducing herself "I'm Sonic's biggest fan and soon-to-be-love interest."

"Nice to meet you Amy Rose." said Miranda, shaking the young girl's hand "Are you and Sonic…ahem…together?"

"Not yet but we soon will be, make no mistake on that!" boasted Amy "He took me on a date once** and I hope to have another date with him soon!"

Miranda chuckled at Amy's claim whereas Sonic just fumed to himself. So much for downplaying the fan-girly behaviour! Oh well, Amy meant well and didn't mean any harm so Sonic decided to let it slide.

"If you and Sonic become a couple, you will be the luckiest girl in the world." said Miranda "I wish I was a few years younger so I could be with Sonic. I'm too old for him though. A thirty-eight year old and a fifteen year old is not an ideal couple after all."

"So Miranda." said Sonic quickly before this conversation could get uncomfortable "What do you wish to see me for?"

"Oh of course, I want to show you something!" said Miranda with a hearty chuckle "Well, come this way with me. Your friends can come as well."

Miranda led Sonic, Tails and Amy back to her private camp where her team mates were waiting for her. The camp just had a few large tents that were larger and much more sturdy and comfortable then the average camper's tent and there was also a bench laden with tools, a tool box, some equipment used for exercise and a box with covered with a cloth. Kari, Kate, Thunder and Bolt saw Miranda coming with Sonic, Tails and Amy and they all ran up to greet them. Sonic immediately said hi to the team mates and they began to erupt in conversation.

"Hiya Sonic!" said Kari excitedly "Long time no see!"

"Same to you Kari." said Sonic with a wink "How's it going Kate?" he said to the muscular eagle in the red vest.

Kate just waved and smiled at the hedgehog. Amy looked at Kate's huge biceps and grinned at her.

"I think me and you are going to get on just fine Kate." she said with a friendly smile on her face.

Kate looked down and smiled at Amy. Amy looked like she was going to be a good friend of hers. Thunder and Bolt began jumping about with excitement.

"Hey Sonic, it's good to have you in our neighbourhood again!" cried Thunder.

"It's good for anybody to have him in their neighbourhood!" laughed Bolt.

And with that, the two would-be-comedians burst out laughing. Sonic just weakly forced himself to laugh at the bad joke Miranda fumed at the two chipmunks.

"Quiet everybody!" she yelled in her strictest, sternest voice "Settle down! Give the guest some room to breathe!"

Everybody stopped huddling around Sonic and they settled down into silence. Now everybody had calmed down, Miranda spoke again.

"As you can, Sonic has returned." said Miranda happily "He's brought some friends of his with him. Their names are Tails and Amy and I'm sure they're going to be good company. Now, as you all know, we've brought him here to see something of ours. Kari, can you bring the thing we want to show Sonic?"

"Yes Miranda." said Kari politely.

She skipped over to the bench and grabbed the box with the cloth over it. Sonic, Tails and Amy looked at the strange box Kari was carrying. What could possibly be in that box?

"What's that?" asked Tails.

"A jack-in-the-box!" joked Bolt.

"Shut up Bolt." muttered Miranda "You know what it is you poor joker."

Kari, with a great strain had managed to carry the box over to Sonic. Whatever was in the box must be heavy as Kari seemed to have trouble carrying it. Kari put the box down, panting heavily, and she looked up at Sonic.

"We believe you maybe amazed at what's in here." puffed Kari.

She grabbed the cloth and pulled it off of the box, revealing it to actually be a cage. Sonic, Tails and Amy all stared in horror at what was in the cage. Their jaws dropped and their eyes widened in shock. Sonic almost felt like falling over at what he was suddenly looking at. The cage contained none other then Sonic's metallic nemesis, arch-enemy and robot-duplicate Metal Sonic! He was heavily damaged and scarred but he was still in one piece at least. He appeared to have been shut off as his eyes were blank. Sonic was so shocked at this he fell over onto his bottom. He couldn't keep his eyes off Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic had presumably perished after Egg-Timer was destroyed*** but he was here, sitting in a cage in the possession of Miranda Mongoose and her team and offline. Sonic began to gasp and splutter in shock.

"No…No…It…It can't be!" he cried "Not…Metal Sonic!"

"I had a feeling you'd be familiar with this creation." said Miranda grimly, looking at the cage "It looks like a creation of Dr. Eggman's."

"It is!" shrieked Tails "It's Metal Sonic, Eggman's deadliest creation ever! He can copy data and he can match Sonic in battle! He was destroyed the time we destroyed Egg-Timer though! How can he possibly be alive?"

"Well Tails it's quite clear he lived the destruction of this "Egg-Timer" because a few weeks ago, something fell from the sky and landed in my tent." explained Miranda "It just lay there dented, battle-scarred and damaged and we wondered what it was. We thought it was of importance so we kept it and decided to try and get it online again. We haven't had any luck though and we decided to call you and see if you could give us a hand."

"Why do you want to get Metal Sonic online?" asked Sonic "He's a demon! He'll kill us all if you wake him up!"

"He will?" shrieked the chipmunk brothers.

"We wanted to get, um "Metal Sonic", online so we could use him against Dr. Eggman." explained Kari "We immediately assumed he was an Eggman robot seeing as he looks like he's based on you so we thought we could use him. I can't get him online though. He's too

damaged and I can't fix him either. I'm not skilled enough."

"Use Metal Sonic against Eggman…" mused Sonic "Hmm…"

Tails looked at Sonic uneasily. The hedgehog was clearly supporting Kari's idea here.

"Sonic? You're not thinking what I think you're thinking are you?" asked Tails.

"I am." said Sonic "Miranda and her team have a brilliant idea here. Use Metal Sonic against Dr. Eggman! If we used Metal Sonic, the only creation of his that stands a chance against me, against Eggman then Eggman's defeat is certain!"

"Is it?" asked Miranda unsurely, clearly not that convinced about Sonic's statement "Is this "Metal Sonic" thing is powerful as you claim it to be?"

"It is Miranda." said Amy "Fifteen of us could barely lay a finger on him and even after Sonic took him on a worldwide trip, he still managed to beat us all****."

"And he can copy people's data." noted Tails "So once we sick him on Eggman, he'll copy Eggman's data and use his strengths and weaknesses against him. This perfect opportunity to end this war is too good to pass up. We have to get Metal Sonic on our side."

"Perfect opportunity to end this war?" mused Miranda "Well, it appears finding Metal Sonic and keeping him for ourselves was for a great cause. How about that? My team has gotten us a weapon that can end this war for us. I bet we'll get a lot of medals for this."

"Medals?" piped Thunder, his ears pricking up "I hope I get a gold one!"

"I wouldn't be too surprised if you got a gold medal for the Most Annoying Soldier in the R.F.S." snapped Miranda "So Sonic, will you help us get Metal Sonic back online so we can use him against Eggman?"

"Don't see why not Miranda girl." said Sonic "After all, Metal Sonic is

too tough for me so Eggman has no chance. Tails, I think you have a job to do."

Tails beamed with pride as he showed Sonic his trademark screwdriver. He would be the one to fix Metal Sonic, turn him good and make him a member of the R.F.S. The only problem was… would he be able to do it?

An hour later, Metal Sonic had been released from his cage and was lying on his front with Tails and Kari doing some fixing on his back. Sonic, Amy, Miranda, Kate and the chipmunk brothers just sat by the camp tents and talked to each other as they waited for Tails and Kari to fix Metal Sonic. Sonic was telling Miranda about his past adventures and the new friends he had made other time.

"…so then Scourge gets real mad at us because his plan is failing and then he tries to use a Sonic Tornado on my friends." explained Sonic, telling the Northern Royal Fighters about his recent victory over the insidious Scourge the Hedgehog***** "My friends escape and I use a Sonic Tornado on Scourge's Sonic Tornado. We build up a huge tornado between us and it gets larger and more ferocious until…BAM! We knock ourselves out of the tornado and crash into the wall! Scourge got it harder then me and it ended up knocking him out. We put him and his cronies in laser cuffs, call the cops and now Scourge is back in jail! It feels good to beat my brother up for some reason although I wish I could get him to redeem himself."

"Some minds just cannot be swayed." muttered Miranda "I'm horrified to hear Fiona Fox has betrayed us and run off with this Scourge person. Traitors are the worst kind of scum in the world. Anyone who betrays the good and joins the bad should be drawn and quartered in my opinion!"

"Eww!" gagged Amy Rose "How gross!"

"What? By drawn and quartered, she means she draws a knife and then cuts a quarter of a person's body off!" joked Thunder and Bolt.

They burst out laughing at their stupid joke. Kate just grabbed the

chipmunk's heads and bashed them together to shut them up. The two chipmunks groaned in pain and they rubbed their throbbing heads again. Miranda resisted the urge to groan in annoyance.

"Those two wannabe comedians still an annoyance to you Miranda?" asked Sonic.

"Yes young man." muttered Miranda "They drive me crazy with their horrible jokes! Why do they even try? They never make us laugh."

"At least they have a sense of humour." said Amy supportively "Its better then having no humour at all."

"I suppose that's right Amy." said Miranda agreeably "It means things can never get dull around here when Thunder and Bolt have a quip or two."

"Yeah." said Amy, turning to Kate "So Kate, what do you do?"

Kate didn't answer Amy. Instead she just pulled a muscle.

"Um yes, I can see you have large biceps Kate. Can you answer my question pleaser?" asked Amy.

"Kate's a quiet woman Amy." said Miranda "She only talks if she feels like it. I'm used to it though as we were school friends growing up. Kate's our power member Amy and she is one tough eagle. If you ever join us on a mission against Eggman she'll be able to show you how strong she is."

"I look forward to seeing that." said Amy "I bet she makes short work out of those stupid Eggman robots with her strength!"

"She does Amy and believe me, I've seen it." said Sonic "So Miranda, has anything exciting to you happened while I've been having my fun?"

"Well last month, my team led a raid on an Eggman robot-production factory stationed in Megapolis and with help from that delightful fellow Thomas Tiger, we completely destroyed the factory." explained Miranda "It was one of the greatest moments of my R.F.S. career. Something else exciting also happened shortly after our

victory over the factory…"

While everybody talked away, Tails and Kari worked on Metal Sonic. They both had screwdrivers and they had opened up a compartment in the back of Metal Sonic's head. They had also opened up his back to see if anything needed fixing. The open compartment of Metal Sonic's head showed that there was a lot of fried circuitry inside. The destruction of Egg-Timer had done a good deal of damage to Metal Sonic after all both inside and out side. Tails was amazed that Metal Sonic's limbs were still attached to his body despite his internal damages. Tails and Kari immediately began to poke around the damaged circuitry in the back of Metal Sonic's head.

"These internal wires are fried to the core." said Kari "If we could solder these wires back together, I bet Metal Sonic would power back up."

"I was beginning to think the same thing." said Tails "I'm sure the wires in his head are the most important pieces of circuitry in his body. His head is the largest part of his body so most of his circuitry will be in his head."

"You are one smart little boy do you know that?" giggled Kari, stroking Tails' head playfully "And so young too! Who educated you?"

"I dunno." said Tails, ruffling the fur on his head and straightening his bangs "I was just…born with this ability to understand technology and its complex structures and workings. I think I'm gifted with the ability to fix and repair stuff as well as understand the complexities of technology. You seem pretty smart at this stuff yourself Kari."

"Oh I'm only a mechanic." said Kari, picking up a soldering iron and switching it on "You, apparently, can actually invent things. I can't do something like that. I can only fix things, not build things from scratch. If you asked me to build a car, I'd fail miserably at it."

"Being able to fix stuff is good enough you know Kari." said Tails supportively as he tweaked with something on Metal Sonic's back with his screwdriver "Being able to fix things is important if you have

technical equipment. If your team has a broken computer or anything, a mechanic will be needed to fix it."

"I know Tails." said Kari with a smile "I love being a mechanic and I'm glad I can use my skills to help my friends in their missions."

She began to soldering the fried and snapped wires in the back of Metal Sonic's head back together. The soldering iron poured some hot soldering metal over the wires and when it set, the wires would be back together. Tails continued to tweak with some of the circuitry and panelling on Metal Sonic's back. He had a feeling some important circuitry would be in Metal Sonic's back so he decided to see if he could fix it. He poked some panels with his screwdriver and pulled any bad wires out of Metal Sonic's back with a pair of pliers, one of his favourite tools. Tails set the wires down on the bench and fumbled about some more.

"So what kind of things have you made for the R.F.S.?" asked Kari out of interest.

"Oh I once made a machine that allowed me to eavesdrop on Dr. Eggman******once but that ended up almost getting me killed." said Tails with a sad expression on his face "I don't wanna talk about it. I also made a plane called the Tornado but that ended up getting destroyed by Metal Sonic. I've never had the time to rebuild it."

"You've built an entire plane from scratch?" blurted Kari "That is so cool! I envy you Tails!"

"Please, don't Kari." said Tails with a blush on his white muzzle "I don't like making people jealous."

"I was just kidding Tails." said Kari, patting him on the back with her free hand "But still, being able to build a plane from scratch takes some serious skill to do doesn't it?"

"Yeah." said Tails, tweaking with something on Metal Sonic's back "I just wish I had the time to rebuild it. When you're the sidekick of the Hero of Mobius, time is short. Oh well, I love being with Sonic and helping him on his missions so I don't mind."

Tails then suddenly tweaked something on Metal Sonic's back with his screwdriver and that seemed to awaken Metal Sonic as the whole body shuddered and his black visor was alit with two red eyes. Tails and Kari jumped in surprise and Kari dropped her soldering iron onto the ground. Metal Sonic's scratched and dented arms began to twitch and he pushed himself up onto his knees, making a ominous whirring and clanking noise as his joints all began to clank and clink into life. Sparks began to fly out of his back as he began to move. Tails and Kari stepped back in fright, wondering what was going to happen.

"What did you do Tails?" shrieked Kari.

"I dunno! I must have tweaked something accidentally!" cried Tails "At least he's awake now! But is he still evil?"

Metal Sonic looked at Tails, his neck joints making a loud hissing and clanking noise as his head turned around to look at him. Despite Metal Sonic's horrendous body damage, he still remembered what had happened to him back at Robotropolis with the destruction of Egg-Timer and Tails foiling his altered timeline which he had created with Egg-Timer*******. Tails' pupils shrunk in fear and his ears dropped back. He could tell Metal Sonic wasn't pleased with him. Metal Sonic made a horrible, grating, monstrous noise that sounded like a weak, feeble electronic roar and he leaped off the bench and onto Tails. Despite Metal Sonic's damages, he was still going to be a tough opponent. Metal Sonic then proceeded to throttle Tails and attempt to kill the poor fox. Kari panicked and began to whack him with a spanner. Metal Sonic felt the blow and that first whack from the spanner made steam pour from his back and sparks fly. Metal Sonic let go of Tails and turned to Kari. Kari tried to whack Metal Sonic again but Metal Sonic grabbed the wrench and snatched it off of her. He whacked her in the leg and knocked her over. Kari landed sharply on her shoulder and she grimaced in pain. Metal Sonic then proceeded to try and whack Kari on the head with the spanner but Miranda, who had seen the commotion happening, had leaped to her feet and drawn out an electro-prod she wielded. She pounced on Metal Sonic and stabbed him in the neck with the front end of the prod. She activated it and Metal Sonic found himself being overwhelmed by an onslaught of electricity. The electro-prod

unfortunately had too high a voltage for a barely alive robot like Metal Sonic and the electricity ended up blowing a fuse inside Metal Sonic's damaged body and ended up putting Metal Sonic back into shutdown. The robot lay before Kari, motionless and as alive as a rotting carcass. Miranda collapsed the rod into itself and hooked it back onto her belt. She held a hand out and helped Kari get back onto her feet. Tails picked himself up and put his hands behind his back in shame.

"What happened Kari?" asked Miranda coldly.

"We were trying to fix Metal Sonic and he just suddenly came online and attacked us!" cried Kari, rubbing the horrible bruise on her thigh that had been caused by Metal Sonic whacking her with the spanner.

"It was my fault Miss Miranda." said Tails glumly "I accidentally tweaked something in him and it ended up putting him back online. I'm sorry this happened."

"It's OK little boy." said Miranda kindly "You didn't know what was going to happen. I still want Metal Sonic to be fixed but try not to put him back online until we can find a way to change his allegiance. OK?"

"Yes Miranda." said Kari.

"Good." said Miranda "I hope you can succeed this time."

She left Tails and Kari behind to fix Metal Sonic and rejoined Sonic, Amy, Kate and the chipmunk brothers. Tails and Kari just scooped up Metal Sonic and settled him back down on the bench. It appeared they would have to start again from scratch. This time, they had to try and avoid switching him back on…

Many hours had passed. So many in fact that it was dusk now. The sun was beginning to set and the sky turned a brilliant mix of pink and orange as night was coming. Miranda lit a campfire to keep everybody warm and to light up the camp so everybody could still

see what they were doing. Tails and Kari had been working hours on end, not stopping once for a break, on the unconscious Metal Sonic. It had been a painstaking and nerve-racking process as Tails feared he would accidentally switch Metal Sonic back on so Miranda had stood guard with her electro-prod at the ready in case she had to shut him off again. But Metal Sonic hadn't once stirred since the little mishap earlier and Tails and Kari had finally managed to fix the robot. His armour needed replacing as it was still dented, scarred and damaged but his internal mechanisms were fully repaired at last. The only thing to do now was find a way to change Metal Sonic's allegiance and get him to work for Sonic instead of Dr. Eggman. Now Tails and Kari had fixed Metal Sonic, they left the repaired robot to lay there on the workbench and they wandered over to the campfire where Miranda and Sonic were frying a sausage each for their suppers. The sausage was on a stick and the two Mobians held the sticks over the fire so the fire could cook the sausages. Luckily for Sonic, they had bread cobs so he could make a hot dog out of his.

"Hey Miranda, you wouldn't happen to have chilli-sauce would you?" asked Sonic.

"Oh no dear Sonic, none of us here are fond of chilli or any kind of spice." said Miranda "Especially Kate, spices bring her out in a rash."

"Aw!" muttered Sonic "No chilli-dogs for me this time. Amy, remind me to bring a can of chilli-sauce next time we visit these guys."

"OK." said Amy, she then looked over at Miranda and said "Sonic's favourite food is chilli-dogs after all."

"I think I managed to guess after his less-then-thrilled reaction to me saying we don't have chilli-sauce." said Miranda "Had I known of his fondness of chilli-dogs, I'd have some chilli-sauce especially for him."

Tails and Kari arrived at the campfire and sat down by the lovely, warm fire.

"Hey guys, we've managed to fix Metal Sonic at long last." reported

Tails.

"You've managed to fix Metal Sonic at long last?" echoed Sonic "Sweet! Now all we have to do is get the metal moron to change allegiances and work for us."

"How we're going to do something like that is beyond my realm of calculation." said Kari glumly "I have no idea how we're going to get him to work for us."

"We'll think of someway Kari." said Miranda supportively, looking at her sausage and noticing how brown it was now after being held over the fire for a while "There's always a way for something, even if finding it out isn't instantly. We'll find out how somehow."

She then proceeded to chomp on her sausage. It was properly cooked for it tasted how it should do.

"You got any ideas Tails?" asked Amy "I mean, when it comes to ways out or ideas, it's usually you who comes up with them."

"I may have one idea." said Tails slowly "Does anybody have a data-stick?"

"I do." said Kari "Why?"

"If we could upload some data on heroism into Metal Sonic's mind, we could re-programme him into being a hero instead of a villain." suggested Tails "I'm sure with a data-stick, I'd be able to do something like that."

"That young man, is a brilliant idea." said Miranda, who had just finished her sausage "Sonic, how you managed to find such an intelligent young man will forever mystify me."

"Eh, me finding Tails was just a very lucky and very timely coincidence." said Sonic with a casual grin on his face "I remain ever thankful I saved his life."

"And I remain ever thankful you took me in when no one else would." said Tails brightly "You've made my life perfect Sonic."

"What can I say? I'm just happy to make people's lives better." said Sonic "So, how are we gonna get some hero data to upload to Metal Sonic then?"

"Hmm…I don't really know." said Tails "But I'm determined to find a way. We can't give up now, not while we're so close to having Dr. Eggman's greatest weapon on our side…"

While Tails and the others talked to each other, something strange began to happen over on the workbench. Metal Sonic, who was laying offline on the bench suddenly, began to twitch slightly. His black visor was alight with two red eyes and he was beginning to move. Miranda's shock had put him in quite a coma but Tails and Kari's repairs on him had inadvertently helped him to recover from the shock quicker! Metal Sonic pushed himself up onto his knees and he turned his head around to see what was happening. He saw Sonic, Tails, Amy and the Northern Royal Fighters chatting to one another. He remembered Sonic and how much of a thorn in his side he was. He also remembered Tails and how he had foiled his plans and altered timeline. Metal Sonic got to his feet and hopped off the bench. He then proceeded to creep silently over to the Mobians. Thunder spotted him however and was quick to react.

"Hey Miranda! The robot's moving!" he cried.

"Don't be ludicrous Thunder, I shocked that robot hard enough to keep him shut off until we switch him back on." said Miranda "He can't possibly be moving right now."

"But he is Miranda!" shrieked Thunder.

"My brother's right, he's moving and for once, we're not kidding!" blurted Bolt.

Miranda sighed but she looked to her left to see if Metal Sonic was indeed moving and to her amazement, he was. Everybody else looked at Metal Sonic and surely enough, saw him creeping up towards them. Metal Sonic could see that he had just been found out so now was the time to just blatantly attack his enemies. Metal Sonic charged straight at Sonic in a spin-dash and he was sent hurling away from the campfire and into a tent. Sonic ripped straight

through the tent and brought it crashing down on him.

"Aw! We needed that!" whined Thunder & Bolt.

Metal Sonic made a grating noise that sounded like he was trying to cackle but due to his un-repaired voice box, it came out as a screeching, clanking noise. Miranda deployed her electro prod and she switched it on. She tried to taser Metal Sonic yet again but Metal Sonic was ready for her. He grabbed the prod, snatched it out of Miranda's hands and tripped her up with it. Now Miranda was done, Metal Sonic proceeded to taser Miranda in the neck with her own prod. The electro prod's voltage was extremely high and if an organic being was zapped by it for too long, it would end up killing the victim and Metal Sonic knew that just by scanning the weapon's data. He intended to taser Miranda until she was killed but he didn't get the glory of succeeding as Amy Rose proceeded to sneak up behind him and hammer the insidious metal clone away. The electro prod hurtled into the campfire and Miranda passed out. The prod's electricity was still on and it ended up making the campfire bigger by igniting some of the wood it was burning. Amy pulled Miranda away from the expanding fire before it could burn her and Kate fished the scorched and burnt electro-prod out of the fire. It wouldn't work now since it had fragile circuits and a good campfire could easily burn the circuits out. Kari stared grimly at the burnt weapon.

"Looks like I'm going to have to fix that." she said "Hey Amy, how's Miranda?" she then asked in a very worried tone.

"She's OK, just knocked out." said Amy, feeling Miranda's pulse "That electro-prod is a serious weapon isn't it?"

"It's deadlier on organic beings then metal beings." said Kari gravely "Miranda's weapon can kill somebody in thirty seconds should they be shocked for so long. Miranda's just lucky you were there to save her or she would be dead!"

"And it would be our fault." said Tails glumly "After all, me and you fixed Metal Sonic and therefore, brought this madness on your camp."

"Well we brought this madness so I guess we'll have to fix it Tails."

said Kari bravely "I'll destroy that Metal Sonic thing if it's the last thing I do!"

Trying to destroy Metal Sonic seemed like it would be the last thing Kari would do as Metal Sonic had just picked himself up from Amy's attack and now he set his sights on the rat in the short skirt. Metal Sonic spin-dashed Kari and sent her hurling away and into the workbench. Metal Sonic then tried to attack Kari but Kate stepped in and gave Metal Sonic a giant uppercut that almost tore his head off. Metal Sonic landed with a clunk a few feet away from the others. Metal Sonic picked himself up only to get a spin-dash from Sonic. That spin-dash made Metal Sonic's head spin. Sonic then stood over Metal Sonic and smirked at his metal nemesis.

"Hey Metal Sonic, it's so good to be tussling with you again!" he sneered "I bet you won't fight so well now you're all busted up! True Tails and Kari fixed you but not all of you so you'll be a lot easier to handle then usual."

Metal Sonic's response was a laser blast from his torso. Sonic hurtled backwards and landed directly in front of the campfire. Metal Sonic then grabbed Sonic's quills and tried to shove Sonic's face into the fire. Sonic felt the searing hot heat as his face neared the blazing hot campfire. Sonic desperately tried to push away but Metal Sonic, even in his semi-repaired state, was still too strong for him. He was inching Sonic closer and closer to the fire. Any moment, Sonic would get burnt alive and sizzled like a lamb kebab. Thunder and Bolt stood together side by side and tensed up their bodies. They then fired a powerful, electrical bolt at Metal Sonic and they almost zapped him but Metal Sonic lifted Sonic up and used him as a shield, causing Sonic to get electrocuted by the chipmunk brothers. Sonic yelped as he was zapped and electrocuted by Thunder and Bolt and Metal Sonic, just stared at the chipmunk brothers on the other side of the campfire and scanned their data. He succeeded so now he would have electrical powers. Thunder and Bolt could see that they were zapping Sonic accidentally so they stopped what they were doing. Metal Sonic lowered Sonic and threw him into the campfire. Sonic leaped out of the fire before he could get seriously burnt and he ran around in a frantic circle to cool himself off. Metal Sonic just promptly spin-dashed Sonic while he

was cooling off and he crashed into Miranda's tent. Metal Sonic advanced on Sonic with his claws bared but Thunder and Bolt zapped him with a quick bolt of electricity.

"Take that!" yelled Thunder, throwing a lightening bolt at Metal Sonic.

"We'll make a lightening rod out of you!" yelled Bolt, throwing a lightening bolt at Metal Sonic like a javelin.

The bolts hit Metal Sonic and due to his still damaged armour, they didn't harmlessly bounce off. They actually hurt him this time and left a few scars on his back. Metal Sonic turned around furiously and thrust his hands out. He then proceeded to zap Thunder and Bolt with a powerful surge of electricity. Thunder and Bolt weren't immune to other electrical attacks so they ended up getting painfully zapped by Metal Sonic. Kate stepped in and tried to uppercut Metal Sonic again but Metal Sonic grabbed her by the vest with one arm and tossed her into Thunder and Bolt while he still zapped them with his other arm. The green feathered eagle crashed into the two chipmunks and knocked them over like a bowling ball knocking the skittles over. Metal Sonic then proceeded to zap the three Mobians all at once. Kate squawked and Thunder and Bolt yelled loudly as Metal Sonic began to electrocute them again. Tails took to the skies with his twirling twin-tails and he socked Metal Sonic in the side of the head. Tails felt relieved he didn't repair Metal Sonic's armour so it was easier to damage him now and he could punch Metal Sonic without hurting himself. Metal Sonic's first response was to spin-dash Tails and knock him out of the sky. Then Metal Sonic blasted Tails with his torso laser and then he electrocuted the poor fox all at once! He really wanted to kill Tails for erasing his altered timeline and depriving him of his paradise. Kari saved the fox's life by grabbing a large wrench from the workbench and then whacking Metal Sonic with it. She jammed the wrench into Metal Sonic's neck and pinned him down to the ground. Metal Sonic gripped the wrench and tried to wrench it out from around his neck but he couldn't. Kari pressed on hard to make sure that Metal Sonic couldn't get free.

"Stop this!" she yelled "You demonic monster of science, stop hurting my friends or I'll smash you to pieces!"

When Kari was mad, she became a completely different person that only came out when she was mad. Metal Sonic however, was not going to succumb to a mere mechanical rat. He just gripped the wrench and proceeded to electrocute the wrench. The wrench acted like a lightening rod and the electrical attacks surged up the wrench and zapped Kari's hands, causing her to yelp and fling the wrench into the air as she grabbed her throbbing hands. Metal Sonic leaped onto his feet and took Kari's legs out from underneath her, tripping her up and bringing her onto her back. Kari gasped as her back and the ground made sharp contact with one another. Metal Sonic bared his claws and prepared to kill Kari until Tails kick-slammed him in the head, knocking him backwards. Sonic, who had recovered from his earlier onslaught and near-death experience with the campfire, spin-dashed Metal Sonic onto his face. A few bolts fell out of Metal Sonic's body and clattered on the ground. Sonic tried to spin-dashed Metal Sonic again but Metal Sonic blasted him from behind with his back laser. Tails tried to attack Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic grabbed his ankles and slammed him on the ground. Kate the Eagle tried to help Tails but Metal Sonic used Tails like a bat and whacked Kate with him. Then Metal Sonic electrocuted them both. Thunder and Bolt teamed up and tried to zap Metal Sonic with their combined attacks but Metal Sonic leaped out of their way before their attacks could hit him. Metal Sonic spin-dashed Thunder and Bolt and then grabbed them by their necks. He bashed their heads together and tossed them both into Sonic, who was trying to attack Metal Sonic. The hedgehog and chipmunks groaned in pain.

"Man, even when he's almost been blown up, he's still tough to beat!" grunted Sonic.

"I bet this guy could take on the entire R.F.S. and beat them all." muttered Thunder.

"I agree." murmured Bolt "This guy's a toughie."

"He won't hold forever." said Tails "We'll beat him eventually."

"But will we last that long?" shrieked Thunder "I bet we'll end up as a bunch of punching bags after this fight is over!"

Metal Sonic then preceded to spin-dash all the downed Mobians and

then blast Sonic with the laser in his torso. Sonic rolled across the ground and grunted in pain after that attack. Metal Sonic aimed the palm of his hands at Sonic and he zapped Sonic with a painful electrical attack. Tails tried to attack Metal Sonic from behind but Metal Sonic blasted him with his back laser. Kate rammed Metal Sonic from the side and knocked him away from Sonic. Amy, who had been watching over the knocked-out Miranda, decided to step in and she summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand. She ran over to Metal Sonic and prepared to hammer him in. Sonic ran towards Metal Sonic, ready to spin-dash him. Metal Sonic just dodged and leaved Amy to accidentally whack Sonic with her big hammer of death. Sonic didn't even know what had hit him. Not even Dr. Eggman's battle armour******** had hit him as hard as that. Sonic landed sharply on his side. Amy put a hand to her mouth in horror at what she had just done. Metal Sonic then grabbed Amy by the throat and slammed her onto the ground. Kari tried to help Amy but Metal Sonic gave her an uppercut to the chin and knocked her back. Sonic tried to spin-dash Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic spin-dashed him away. Sonic and Metal Sonic both spin-dashed each other and then they did it again. Sonic overpowered Metal Sonic as he was in better condition and Metal Sonic landed with a crunch on the ground. Some nuts and bolts fell out of his back and onto the ground. Metal Sonic was getting weaker and weaker by the second due to the fact he wasn't one-hundred percent repaired yet. He had to resort to desperate measures and fast. Sonic, Tails, Amy, Kari, Thunder and Bolt charged towards Metal Sonic in an attempt to destroy Metal Sonic at long last but Metal Sonic let loose a huge lightning attack. Everybody was electrocuted at once and they all screamed in pain. But Metal Sonic didn't stop there; he decided to keep it up in the hope that it would eventually kill them all. The electrocuted Mobians were screaming so loudly, Miranda ended up coming too and waking up. She sat up groggily and looked at what Metal Sonic was doing. She was horrified at what she was seeing. They were all being electrocuted! She had to do something and fast! Kate the Eagle wondered up to Miranda and bent down to her.

"Shall we get the heavy artillery?" she asked.

"Yes Kate." said Miranda "I'll go and get the heavy weapons. You stop Metal Sonic from electrocuting everybody."

"Yes Miranda." said Kate.

Miranda leaped onto her feet and ran into a tent that hadn't been wrecked yet. Kate ran over to Metal Sonic, who was still electrocuting everybody and she punched Metal Sonic as hard as she could. Metal Sonic felt like he had been hit by a robotical train as he hurtled backwards a good distance. The electric attacks stopped and Sonic, Tails, Amy, Kari and the chipmunks dropped down onto the ground, gasping for breath. The electrical attacks had drained them of what energy they had left and they were too weak to fight now. Sonic grunted and grimaced as he still felt static electricity surging up his fur.

"Guh! Uggh! I think…I preferred it…when Metal Sonic…couldn't use electric…attacks!" grunted Sonic.

"How…is he able…to do this…anyway?" gasped Amy "He…couldn't before…"

"I think…he copied…Thunder…and…Bolt's…data…" grimaced Tails, clutching his arms "Only…they have…electric attacks…"

Metal Sonic had picked himself up from Kate's amazing attack and he strode back over to his victims. Now they were too weak to fight, he could just easily kill them right now. Kate stood defensively in front of the Mobians and she prepared to fight. Metal Sonic just prepared to electrocute Kate until suddenly; Miranda Mongoose appeared onto the scene with a very large gun in her hands. The gun was designed similar to a handheld rotary cannon but it didn't fire bullets, it fired lasers instead.

"Die you vile monster!" snarled Miranda.

She fired the gun at Metal Sonic and Metal Sonic was blasted by a huge plasma cannon blast. The blast was so powerful; it ended up destroying him and blasting him to pieces! If Metal Sonic had been fully repaired, he would have survived the attack but he wasn't so he was destroyed. Metal Sonic lay down on the ground in bits and pieces. Miranda sighed with relief and she put the heavy weapon down by her side.

"It's destroyed! At last!" she gasped.

Sonic, with a great strain and struggle, managed to pick himself up and he stared at Metal Sonic's miserable remains. What was once an invincible robot with no weaknesses whatsoever had finally been reduced to bits and pieces. Now Metal Sonic could never bother Sonic again…unless Eggman built another Metal Sonic that is.

"Sweet!" gasped Sonic with a cough "You destroyed…Metal Sonic!"

"I know." said Miranda "But I wish I didn't have to. We could have used him against Eggman."

"We had no choice Miranda." said Amy weakly "Metal Sonic… couldn't be stopped…it was a case…of kill or be killed…"

"Yes it was Amy." said Miranda "Metal Sonic wanted to kill us so we had to kill him first."

"Oh well." said Sonic "We'll find a different way to destroy Dr. Fat-man."

"Yes…we will." said Tails "There's always…a way to solve something…and we'll find a way…to stop Eggman once and…for all…even if it means doing so without…Metal Sonic."

The Mobians all just stared at Metal Sonic's smoking and littered remains. Metal Sonic was a danger to them so they had to destroy him. And yet, he could have changed the war forever. Still, it couldn't have been avoided. They had destroyed him and now they had to find a different way to destroy Dr. Eggman's empire and kick him out of Mobius for good. But tomorrow, a greater enemy then even Dr. Eggman would finally make his move and the lives of Mobians everywhere would be in great peril…

Footnotes:

***See Story 3**

****He did indeed in Story 48. It didn't end well though…**

***** See Story 51**

****** See the Metal Sonic saga Stories 30-32**

******* See Story 67**

******** You didn't think I'd bring up Story 16 did you?**

********* See the unforgettable milestone phenomena Story 50**

********** Remember the battle armour from Story 20?**

Well...I bet you never saw THAT coming did you? Metal Sonic returning! Savour this moment though...this is the last you're going to see of him. :(Join me next time as we gear up to my next milestone: STORY 75! Reviews are welcome.

P.S. I re-uploaded this chapter to remove a grammer mistake and so I can ask Chaos Kai X something. You know you was wondering if you could use Marion in your fanfic? Who do you mean by Marion? Did you mean Miranda but put Marion by mistake or do you really mean Marion? Please answer, I'm confused as heck!

Rights for the Land Part 1

Story 71: Rights for the Land Part 1: The Unwanted Returns

" *Imperator Ix!" boomed the voice of the famed guardian Locke the Echidna, father of Knuckles the Echidna and Guardian of Angel Island "Stop this madness! It isn't worth all this malice and warfare just to put Angel Island back in it's crater!"*

" *Silence underling!" bellowed Imperator Ix, ruler of Angel Island "I will not accede to the words of a mere guardian! Angel Island goes back on the ground and that is all there is to it! I am the ruler and I say it descends back into it's place!"*

Angel Island had been raised off the ground to save Echidnaopolis from being hit by a comet and the echidnas became accustomed to life in the air. Imperator Ix, didn't like Angel Island being in the air as it was such an eyesore but the elders refused to let him down the island. In mad rage, the insidious Imperator slaughtered the elders and had decided to down Angel Island once and for all, whether anyone liked it or not. Imperator Ix used his magical powers on Locke and blasted him away from the emerald shrine. Locke landed sharply on his back and grunted as Ix stepped up the shrine and towards the Master Emerald. A young Knuckles the Echidna just watched, bewildered and completely overwhelmed at what was going on. Ix had reached the Master Emerald and he touched the giant green gem with his hand.

" *I shall remove this magnanimous gem from it's shrine and make the island fall!" declared Ix "If Angel Island won't float back down, I'll make it fall down!"*

" *You can't do that Ix!" protested Locke "You'll kill everybody on the island, the island will destroy itself if it falls!"*

" *Then let the weak and foolish perish and the strong and mighty live on!" snapped Ix, pointing his staff at the Master Emerald and preparing to use his powers to remove the emerald from it's plinth "I'll just rebuild Angel Island and make it my own fortress! None shall*

oppose me and I shall be the most invincible being on the planet!"

He bellowed with laughter as Chaos Energy crackled around his body and he began to conduct his spell. Locke did not want Imperator Ix to cause the island to fall so he desperately resorted to one last method. Chaos Control. He ran up the shrine and recited the famous emerald chant.

" *The servers are the seventh chaos! Chaos is power enriched by the heart! The server exists to unify the chaos!" he chanted "Chaos…"*

" *What are you doing fool?" blurted Ix.*

" *CONTROL!" cried Locke.*

Imperator Ix wailed hoarsely as his entire body froze up and he ended up being frozen in time. Ix wouldn't be frozen forever but he would be frozen for a while. Locke's brother, Dr. Finitevus stood forward and snapped his bandaged fingers. A warp ring opened up under Ix and he fell through it. Ix disappeared from sight, never to be seen again.

" *I have sent him into the darkest areas of the planet." said Dr. Finitevus "We'll never see him again Locke."*

Locke could only nod weakly as his body felt limp and he fell to the ground. His Chaos Control on Ix had been pushed to the limit as Ix was so powerful and the result was sapping his life away. Knuckles ran over to his dad and hugged him sadly.

"Dad! Are you alright?" he cried.

" *He's losing the will to live dear nephew." muttered Finitevus sadly "I think his Chaos Powers have used up too much of his energy."*

" *No!" wailed Knuckles "Father can't die, he just can't!"*

" *I'm sorry but he is Knuckles." said Dr. Finitevus sadly "I wish I could help him but it is too late. Locke, do you have any last requests before you join the elders in the afterlife?"*

" *Yes…" wheezed Locke "Raise…my son in…my name…and make…him…the new…guardian…of…Angel…Island…"*

" *Yes Locke." said Dr. Finitevus.*

" *Knuckles…you…be a…good…boy for…your Uncle…Finitevus… now…" gasped Locke as his heartbeat began to get slower and slower "Pro…tect…the Master…Emerald…become…the new… guardian…and defend…the emerald…from…anyone…who…tries… to…attack…it…"*

Knuckles nodded sadly as Locke closed his eyes and breathed his last breath. Knuckles hugged the dead body of his father and sobbed loudly. Dr. Finitevus just shed a tear and looked sadly at his dead brother. Locke had been a great guardian but now his time was up and it was time for Knuckles to rise in his steed. It would be a long time but Knuckles would rise up and take his father's place and become just as great a guardian as his father before him…

That whole scene had never stopped haunting the guardian of the Master Emerald, Knuckles the Echidna. His father had come and passed just like that. He was only a kid the time his father died and he had to grow up without him. He had become the Guardian of Angel Island and was the protector of the Master Emerald, but he still couldn't help but miss his father. Dr. Finitevus, his uncle, had disappeared before his training was complete and he was never seen again. Where he was and what he was doing was far beyond Knuckles but since he hadn't called Knuckles or let him know how he was doing, chances are he was probably dead. Regardless, Knuckles had carried his position with honour and pride and he couldn't let his deceased relatives continue to haunt his mind or he would lose focus and mess up on his job. Yet at certain times, mostly quiet ones, Knuckles was haunted by that vision of Ix's last scene on Angel Island and Locke's final hour. He shed a small tear and he wiped it away as he thought about that depressing day.

"Oh dad, I wish you were still here now." said Knuckles sadly "I bet you would be proud at how Angel Island has been since Ix's disappearance and how I've progressed since my childhood. I bet

you'd be very proud at my guardian skills."

Knuckles breathed in the still fresh air and gazed out into the horizon. Angel Island offered a fantastic view for anyone on the island. You could see all the way to Kingdom Valley from where Knuckles was. Unfortunately, Knuckles wouldn't have time to enjoy the phenomenal view for suddenly, eight strange warriors appeared from airspace and surrounded the Master Emerald shrine. These strangers were not like any being Knuckles had seen before. They were creatures all suited up in combat armour consisting of a black one piece suit with a helmet with a weird blue logo and heavy attachment on the back, wristbands and black boots. Their right arms had a cannon that was presumably attached onto their arms. They had zigzag tails similar to the tails of the echidnas and mongooses. They looked like a formidable group of marauders and it was quite clear they were not here to fool around or say hi, it looked like they were here for the Master Emerald. Knuckles flexed his muscles and clenched his fists. He gritted his teeth and glared at the marauders down below him. The marauders all aimed their cannon arms at Knuckles and they prepared to shoot at him.

"Guardian of Angel Island! Surrender the Master Emerald and we will not be forced to use heavy force on you!" growled one of the marauders, his voice deep and gravely.

"Not on your lives you weirdoes!" yelled Knuckles "Who are you and where did you come from?" he demanded.

"That is of no importance to you." snapped another marauder, his voice higher then the first but equally as growly "Just surrender the Master Emerald to us and we won't inflict pain of any kind to you."

"No!" bellowed Knuckles "You can all get off this island or I will leave permanent fist marks on your ugly faces!"

The marauders immediately began to open fire with their arm cannons. They fired big, blue plasma cannon blasts and Knuckles dodged them all by leaping off the shrine and lunging towards them. He struck the nearest marauder and socked it in the face. The marauder was knocked onto its back. Another marauder tried to blast Knuckles but Knuckles grabbed its arm and threw it into

another marauder. The two marauders ended up rolling over each other. Three marauders shot at Knuckles but Knuckles dodged their attacks and gave on of the three marauders an uppercut that almost took its helmet off. He then grabbed the other two marauders by the heads and conked them together. The marauders clutched their heads and groaned in pain. Knuckles punched them both and sent them hurling towards the edge of the island. The last three marauders blasted at Knuckles. Knuckles dodged their blasts, just narrowly, and he socked one of them in the face. The other two marauders gave Knuckles an uppercut each with their normal arms and then one of them kicked Knuckles in the gut. Knuckles gasped in surprise but he recovered quickly from that attack and he kicked the marauder in the face. The last two blasted Knuckles with their cannons and sent him crashing into the shrine. Knuckles pulled himself free from the shrine and he threw a chunk of slab that had fallen from the imprint of himself in the stone at one of the marauders. The stone smashed against the marauder's head and knocked it out. The last marauder fired desperately at Knuckles, only to miss and Knuckles grabbed it by the arm. He swung the marauder onto its back with a heavy slam. The marauder gasped and spluttered as pain flooded up its back. Knuckles then grabbed the marauder by the neck and jammed his face into the marauder's face.

"Who are you?" he demanded "And where did you come from?"

"We are the Nocturnus Clan and we came from this very island Knuckles the Echidna." came a soft, feminine voice from behind.

Knuckles let go of the marauder and turned around only to find a new marauder had just appeared from nowhere. This marauder was a suited warrior like the others but this one had goat like horns on its helmet, two curved structures around the eye section, a weird looking logo on the forehead, no arm cannon and pink outlines around the logo and some of the white strips on its boots. Its wrist bands glowed pink in the middle. Knuckles glared at the new arrival angrily.

"Who might YOU be then? The man in charge?" he demanded.

"Woman, in charge." snapped the marauder "I am Procurator Shade

of the Nocturnus Clan and we are here to prepare this island for Imperator Ix's arrival."

Knuckles' eyes widened in shock. He knew Shade and he also knew she was the daughter of Imperator Ix. If she was here…then Ix's return was inevitable! The echidna sorcerer was returning to ruin the lives of everybody on Angel Island! Well no way was he going to let him!

"So Shade, you've decided to return and avenge your dear old daddy!" sneered Knuckles "What's with the weird get up? You really think the fancy dress costumes will make you any more intimidating?"

"Our attire was designed especially for us by Lord Ix himself." said Shade grimly, pressing a button on her wristband that made her helmet shrink away into the middle, revealing her true head underneath. The helmet was now just a headband. Shade had lilac eyes, thin single eyelashes and her fur was orange instead of red. Her quills were tied together by the headband and they had peach tips.

"These outfits give us advanced strength and weaponry." continued Shade "So we shall be even more powerful foes then we were before. Your pathetic father may have banished us from Angel Island along with Lord Ix the day he was defeated but now he's gone, our take-over of this island is inevitable. Do not try to resist or we will be forced to exterminate you Knuckles."

"Shade, your father doesn't belong on this island anymore!" yelled Knuckles "And neither does your scum! Get off Angel Island or I'll have to punch you off!"

Shade just stood there and scowled at Knuckles coldly with her lilac eyes. Knuckles immediately got mad so he ran over to Shade and raised his fist. He was about to punch Shade directly in the face but Shade lashed out and grabbed his arm before he could hit. She then touched something on her hip and she and Knuckles were engulfed in a bright pink flash. Then they vanished into thin air, leaving Shade's minions behind on Angel Island. Shade and Knuckles then re-appeared down on the ground, off of Angel Island completely,

leaving the Master Emerald prone to capture by Shade's minions who were still on the island. Knuckles shook his head and looked up only to see that he was no longer on Angel Island. He growled furiously at Shade.

"You witch! What did you do?" he demanded furiously.

"I warped us down here with my warp belt." explained Shade "Now your business is with me and me alone."

"You warp me back up there right now Shade!" bellowed Knuckles, grabbing Shade's arm and squeezing it "If you don't, I'll make sure my fists really, REALLY hurt you!"

"You're not going back up there guardian." said Shade coldly "You're staying down here. While my friends prime the island for Ix's arrival, I will keep you as far away from the Master Emerald as possible. When the time is right, we shall call Lord Ix into the play and the Nocturnus Clan's takeover of Angel Island, and Lord Ix's revenge, can commence."

"Over my mangled, twisted, rotting corpse!" retorted Knuckles.

He then proceeded to let go of Shade's arm and wallop her in the face with a powerful punch. The female suited echidna hurtled backwards and landed a good distance away. Shade leaped back onto her feet and watched as Knuckles charged up to her. Shade just charged back and lowered her head. Knuckles lunged forward with his fist but Shade had bent down so he missed and Shade rammed Knuckles in the gut with her shoulder. Knuckles gasped and doubled over, giving Shade the opportunity to elbow him on the back of his head. Knuckles soon found himself being pinned to the ground by Shade's foot. She drew out a pair of weapons, which were a pair of blades she held in each hand, and she pointed one at Knuckles' neck.

"I tried to warn you guardian." said Shade dryly "Now you shall suffer the consequences. Nocturnus, begin the chant." she said into a comlink she had hidden under her head band.

"Yes Procurator Shade." came the voice of one of her marauders.

"Chant? What chant?" asked Knuckles.

"The corruption chant." said Shade "Ix's evil, twisted version of the Master Emerald chant. When chanted enough times, the Master Emerald shall be a power house of dark Chaos Energy, just perfect for my father's return."

Knuckles freaked and he pushed Shade off of himself. The two echidnas then charged at each other and locked into combat while on Angel Island, the Nocturnus soldiers had pointed their arm cannons at the Master Emerald and were firing some sort of energy beam at it. The beams didn't destroy the Master Emerald, they were feeding the Master Emerald, feeding it some decidedly corrupt Chaos Power in order to make it a gem full of dark power for when Ix finally arrived…

"yawn! Top of the morning everybody." yawned Sonic as he climbed out of the tent and had a good stretch.

After the Metal Sonic mishap, Sonic, Tails and Amy had stayed overnight at the Northern Royal Fighters' camp as it was too late for them to go back. Two tents had been wrecked by Metal Sonic so the boys all shared one tent and the girls shared another. It was morning now and everybody was just having a spot of breakfast. Miranda Mongoose, the team leader, had gotten the campfire going again and had cooked bacon and eggs for everybody. Not a word was spoken as everybody ate their breakfast. Miranda was delighted to hear a chorus of "Mmms" from Sonic, Tails and Amy. That obviously meant they were enjoying her cooking. Her cooking was popular amongst her team, hence the reason she was always doing it at meal times. Sonic finished his breakfast and gave Miranda a thumbs up.

"You're one way past cool cook Miranda." he said "That was delicious!"

"Think nothing of it handsome." said Miranda "Only the best cooking for the best hero I say."

"So Miranda, what's on the activities list?" asked Sonic.

"Well we don't have any orders right now so I suppose we can lie back a little and chill out." said Miranda.

"Thanks Miranda but I'm not much of a lounging-around-doing-nothing type of person so I'll just go for a jog if you don't mind." said Sonic, leaping onto his feet and preparing to run off.

Before he could do anything, Kate the Eagle, the Northern Fighter's silent powerhouse, handed a letter to Miranda. The mongoose took the letter and she opened it. She peered at the letter and read it. She made some "Mmms" and "Oooh's" as she read the letter. But when she got to the last part, her whole body seemed to freeze up as if the letter had some paralyzing effect on her. Something about the letter seemed to be disturbing Miranda as she looked deathly scared all of the sudden. Sonic and Amy looked at each other and began to wonder what was up with Miranda all of the sudden.

"Um, Miranda? What's wrong?" asked Amy.

Miranda snapped out of her petrified state and looked up from the letter.

"This letter has a mix of good and bad news in it." said Miranda slowly.

"So what does the letter say?" asked Tails as he took a bite out of a fried egg.

"One of my star agents has found a Dr. Eggman robot production factory." explained Miranda "There's just one problem…it's in Black Acropolis!"

Sonic, Tails and Amy just stared at each other in wonder. They had never heard of this Black Acropolis before so they were curious to find out what it was.

"What's so bad about Black Acropolis then?" asked Sonic.

"Black Acropolis is the most dangerous place on Mobius." explained Kari the Rat, the team mechanic "It has two active volcanoes that

erupt every five weeks, lava geysers are everywhere and its hell for anyone there! The ground is constantly covered by molten lava, which cools down and dries up and becomes hard black stone, hence the name Black Acropolis, but even that cannot stop the lava geysers coming through and toasting anyone that unluckily happens to be in the path of one! Many people call it the "Apocalypse Zone" as all that seems to happen in Black Acropolis is volcano eruptions, earthquakes and lava geysers! Nobody lives in that place as it is just not safe!"

"Well if Black Acropolis is that dangerous then why in the name of Chaos Emeralds did Eggman build a factory there?" blurted Sonic.

"Simple." said Tails "Because Black Acropolis is such a danger zone, no one will think of going there to wreck his robot production factory. Not to mention, Eggman must have some kind of protection as he's not stupid enough to build a valuable factory in the middle of a volcano zone."

"Good point Tails." said Sonic "Well, if it's a robot factory run by ol Eggers himself then I shall take the liberties of paying it a visit and wrecking it."

"Sonic! You can't go to Black Acropolis!" cried Thunder "It's suicide to go there and me and Bolt should know! We've been there before!"

"And we're not kidding!" shrieked Bolt "I still have burn marks on my back from that lava geyser that almost got me!"

"Well you two are still alive so you must have made it out somehow." noted Amy.

"We just got lucky!" snapped Thunder "We may not be so lucky the next time we go!"

"We are not going to Black Acropolis and that's that!" said Bolt, folding his arms and turning his back on everybody.

"As weird as it is saying this, I think the boys are right for once." said Miranda "Black Acropolis is just too dangerous. We can't go there, we'll end up in a fiery grave if we go there."

"But if we let the factory stay intact, Eggman will continue to get more robots." noted Sonic "We must destroy that factory!"

"If we try to destroy that factory, we may end up dying in the process!" shrieked Miranda.

Then all of the sudden, the mongoose's mood changed rather quickly and she suddenly calmed down.

"Then again, if we do die trying to destroy Eggman's factory, we will die for a good cause." mused Miranda "I mean, when I signed up for the Royal Fighters Service I swore that I would fight to the end, not matter what that end might be."

"So I take it we're going to this Black Acropolis?" asked Tails.

"Yes we are." said Miranda "We are going to destroy that Eggman factory, even if we die trying."

"NO!" cried Thunder and Bolt "ARE YOU CRAZY MIRANDA? We can't go to Black Acropolis!"

"We can, and we are." said Miranda coldly "And if you two don't come I'll kick you both out of this team. Understood."

"Er…yes Miranda." said Thunder and Bolt together.

"Good." said Miranda "Get packing everybody, we're going to Black Acropolis."

With that said, she got to her feet and she ran off to one of the still intact tents to pack some supplies they would need for the mission. Kari decided to go and pack some things as well. Kate remained where she was and Thunder and Bolt got up and strode off somewhere so they would let their worries out. Sonic, Tails and Amy just looked at each other and exchanged concerning glances.

"Do you think we'll…make it out of Black Acropolis alive Sonic?" asked Amy nervously.

"I haven't a doubt in my mind Ames." said Sonic "We've survived Eggman robots and such. Some lousy volcanoes are nothing to us."

"You can easily say something like that Sonic but the reality is never the same as what you speculate." noted Tails "Although I'd agree that it's gonna take more than a volcano to bring us down."

"You said it Tails." said Sonic "Just wait till Eggman finds out his precious factory is destroyed once we wreck it! He'll go absolutely coconuts!"

"I bet he will!" giggled Amy "That Eggman's factory is going down!"

Sonic was easily looking forward to this mission. Another Eggman robot production factory was just waiting to be destroyed by him. Pity he didn't know about the REAL danger that was happening right now…

Back at Angel Island, things were getting hectic by the second. Knuckles and Shade were locked in combat down below and the Nocturnus Clan were up on the island feeding the Master Emerald dark Chaos Energy so their master Imperator Ix would be able to use it against his enemies. As they fed the dark Chaos Energy to the Master Emerald, the Marauders began chanting a darker version of the Master Emerald chant that the guardian had to recite to the Master Emerald.

"The servants are the seventh Chaos." the suited echidnas chanted "Chaos is power controlled by our will. The server exists to enslave the Chaos."

They began to chant this chant over and over as they fed the Master Emerald dark Chaos Energy. The Master Emerald itself was trying to stop the dark Chaos Energy from corrupting it but the Nocturnus clan had overwhelmed it with their energy beams and their Chaos chant. If they kept this up, the Master Emerald would be a powerhouse of dark Chaos Energy.

On the ground, Knuckles dodged a couple of blade swipes from Shade and punched her as hard as he possibly could, sending Shade skidding backwards. Shade brought herself to a stop by plunging one of her blades into the ground and she charged back to

Knuckles. Her blades began to glow purple at the tips and she swung them at Knuckles.

"Blade Rush!" she yelled.

She swung the blades and Knuckles was stricken by an energy wave from Shade's weapons. Knuckles stumbled over and fell onto his back. Shade then put her weapons away and she grabbed one of Knuckles' ankles. She then swung Knuckles over onto his stomach and slammed him as hard as she could. Knuckles could feel the wind in his body being knocked out of him as his furry little body made sharp contact with the hard stony ground he and Shade stood upon. But Shade didn't stop there, she then proceeded to throw Knuckles away for twenty feet and send him skidding across the terrain. Knuckles' skid was so painful, he felt like his entire back had been ripped off. He lay there groaning in pain and grimacing tensely as he felt his sore back. Shade warped herself over to Knuckles with her warp belt and she drew out her blades. She stared coldly at Knuckles, the echidna guardian only able to stare helplessly back at her.

"Shade. For the good of the echidna race, don't let your dad take over Angel Island!" begged Knuckles "Please, your dad's gonna bring more harm than good if he makes it over here!"

"Lord Ix wishes to have his throne back." said Shade in a tone of loyalty "He does not wish to harm anybody, he just wants to be ruler of Angel Island again like he should be."

"Shade, he was dethroned for a reason!" retorted Knuckles "He mutinied against us! He tried to break the rules, slaughtered the elders and tried to make the island drop! He'll try and do the exact same thing if he gets back on Angel Island!"

"For a guardian, you are so blind to reality." snapped Shade "Lord Ix may have done those things before, but he does not wish to repeat his previous ambitions. All he wants is to be ruler of Angel Island again and once he's ruler, he'll be happy, the Nocturnus clan will be respected like it should be and Angel Island will have a stronger guardian then you. In the sense that Ix will be the guardian."

"Well if that's the case then what's the dark Chaos Energy for?" asked Knuckles suspiciously.

"Lord Ix does not wish for me to reveal that fact to you." said Shade grimly "This question of yours shall be taken to your grave guardian."

Shade then proceeded to raise her blades up and prepare to swiftly slice Knuckles' head off with one hefty cleave of the blades. Knuckles was not going to let the daughter of Imperator Ix kill him so before Shade could kill him, he grabbed her arms and held them at arm's length away from his neck. He then picked himself up and he and Shade struggled against each other. Shade tried hard to slice Knuckles' head off but Knuckles was too strong for her. He kept her arms held firmly away from him. Knuckles then proceeded to head butt Shade in the nose, causing her to drop her blades and clutch her nose in pain. Knuckles then leaped up and dropkicked Shade in the forehead, knocking her onto her back. Knuckles grabbed Shade's dropped blades and he held them against the female echidna's throat. Shade lay pinned against the ground with her own weapon's pressed against her throat. The female echidna had no method of escape now. She didn't even dare use her warp belt in case Knuckles stopped her. Shade just glared at Knuckles with her lilac eyes. Knuckles had only just realized how beautiful Shade's eyes looked but now was not the time for admiration; Shade was the enemy so he had to deal with her, pretty eyes or not.

"Go ahead. Kill me guardian." dared Shade "Your father almost killed my father so how fitting is it that Locke's son is the one that kills Ix's daughter?"

"I would kill you if I didn't need you and believe me, I REALLY need you!" growled Knuckles "Warp me back up to Angel Island now! Or I'll…"

He pushed harder on Shade's neck with the blades he'd stolen off of her as a threatening gesture. Shade just scowled at Knuckles but she ceded to his demands, seeing as how she had no choice. It was either let the good guy win or lose her head. She touched her hip and Knuckles and Shade were once again, engulfed in a bright pink flash. The pink flash consumed them and they vanished into thin air.

The two echidnas then reappeared back onto Angel Island, right where the emerald shrine was. Knuckles looked away from Shade and saw the Nocturnus echidnas chanting their evil chant and feeding the Master Emerald dark Chaos Energy. The Nocturnus echidnas did not seem to have noticed that Shade and Knuckles were back on Angel Island. They were still chanting their chant.

"The servants are the seventh Chaos." they continued "Chaos is power controlled by our will…"

Now Knuckles was back on Angel Island, he could stop those echidnas. All he had to do was move them away from the Master Emerald and chant his chant to block out the dark Chaos Energy they had been feeding the emerald with. Knuckles dropped Shade's weapons and ran over to the Nocturnus echidnas. He punched one away from the emerald and sent it hurling into another echidna. Knuckles grabbed another echidna and threw him straight off the island and onto the ground below where he met his death. The last five echidnas stopped what they were going and they began shooting at Knuckles. Knuckles grabbed one echidna by the arm and threw him off the shrine. He grabbed two others by their arms and slammed them both together, dazing them both. He threw them off the shrine and he took out the last two echidnas by upper-cutting them both off of the shrine. He then pressed his hands against the Master Emerald and quickly began to chant as the emerald's glorious green glow was beginning to change to black.

"The servers are the seventh Chaos! Chaos is power enriched by the heart! The server exists to unify the Chaos!" he quickly chanted.

The blackness of the Master Emerald stopped getting greater and the whole thing seemed to ground to a halt as Knuckles chanted the emerald chant. It would take a few more chants then that to work so Knuckles decided to keep it up. He began chanting a second time but before he could finish, Shade suddenly pounced on him from behind and activated her warp belt. Yet again, they were engulfed in a bright flash of pink and they disappeared into thin air. The Nocturnus echidnas all picked themselves up and they continued with what they were going. Because they were one echidna short now, their process would talk a little longer then planned now but they didn't care, they were too keen to get the job done. Down on

the ground, Knuckles and Shade reappeared and Knuckles shot Shade a death glare.

"OK! That does it! Stop it with the cheap warp belt trickery and stand down Shade!" yelled Knuckles "Get me back up there right now!"

"No." said Shade "You're staying down here and that's the end of it. I do wish I didn't leave my weapons behind but I don't need them for this fight. I will still defeat you anyway."

"We'll see about that Shade!" yelled Knuckles "When I'm finished with you, Ix won't even recognize you!"

With that said, Knuckles and Shade charged at each other like mad bulls and they punched each other in the face. They sent each other skidding backwards and they ground to a halt. The two echidnas charged at each other again in a mono y mono style and they leaped into the air. They linked arms with one another in midair and they both landed down on the ground whilst holding each other's arms. They pushed on each other, trying to gain the upper hand on each other while the Nocturnus Clan up on Angel Island continued their corruption chant. If Knuckles didn't get back on Angel Island soon, the Master Emerald would be corrupted and full of dark Chaos Energy and Angel Island would be ripe for the plucking for Imperator Ix…

Meanwhile, Sonic and friends had all packed for the journey and without a moment to lose, they had set off to Black Acropolis. Thunder and Bolt both led the way as they knew where Black Acropolis was and in a matter of thirty whole minutes, they arrived at the so-called Apocalypse Zone. They all stopped in front of a fence with a gate that was chained shut. The gate had a big heavy red sign on it saying "DANGER: KEEP OUT!" in big black letters. Black Acropolis was a danger to anyone going near it after all so the fence was there to keep anybody out of the zone. Sonic peered through the gaps in the fence and saw the lava geysers spewing out of the ground and shooting up into the air like a normal geyser shoots water into the air. The lava rained back down onto the ground, hissing loudly as the lava drops settled onto the hard, black, rocky

terrain that surrounded it. The terrain, as mentioned by Kari, was made up of dried-up lava from all the past eruptions of the two volcanoes the zone had to offer and it had all become black and rocky. Sonic could also see the two volcanoes that Kari had mentioned. They were enormous, even bigger then Mount Adabat in Adabat and they were rumbling like mad. Sonic could feel the vibrations in his feet from the active volcanoes rumbling and getting ready to erupt again. Seeing Black Acropolis in person suddenly made Sonic feel nervous. Maybe come here wasn't such a good idea after all. But if Eggman managed to build an entire factory in Black Acropolis and come out alive then surely they could make it out alive. Not to mention Thunder and Bolt made it out alive when they went there so there was a chance that they could make it out alive too. Amy peered through the gaps in the fence and saw what Sonic was looking at. Seeing the volcanoes and lava geysers made Amy feel nervous too. She remembered her last encounter with a volcano* and since then, she had hoped never to go near one ever again. But now, they had to go in a forbidden zone with not only one volcano, but TWO volcanoes and a lot of lava geysers too!

"Oh Sonic, I don't wanna go in there!" whimpered Amy, hugging Sonic's arm to calm her nerves "It looks scary in there! There's volcanoes and lava and everything in there! I don't wanna go in there!"

"Amy, chill. We'll be alright." said Sonic, although secretly he was just as nervous as Amy was "Especially since the hedgehog is with you. I'm so fast, those volcanoes won't get a drop of lava on me."

"But nobody else can run like you Sonic." said Tails "So we'd be more vulnerable targets for the lava then you would be."

"Don't worry guys, I have a plan." said Sonic "I'll go in first and see if I can find Egg-Brains' little clubhouse and then I'll run back and get you all one by one and I'll quickly run you all to the factory before the volcanoes or the geysers can get you."

"I like that idea." said Miranda "Why didn't I think of that?"

"I guess I think as fast as I run." boasted Sonic "Everybody wait here, I'll find the factory."

With that said, Sonic knocked the gates down with one hefty spin-dash and he zoomed into the danger zone while everybody else stayed put and waited for Sonic to come back. Now the gates had been knocked down, Black Acropolis' nightmarish scenery was all the more visible to everybody. Tails saw the lava geysers shooting up into the air like fiery water fountains and he was well scared by the geysers. So scared in fact, he looked like his heart would bust its way through his ribcage. The geysers seemed to scare poor Tails greatly, especially the loud noise they made as they spewed up into the air. It sounded like an underground creature roaring up at the surface. Kari could see poor Tails was frightened half to death so she put her hands on his shoulders and spoke softly to him.

"Don't be scared Tails." she said softly "The geysers can't get us as long as we stay on the other side of the fence."

"I know. I know." said Tails, feeling his pounding chest and gasping for breath "It's just, they look so scary and that noise they make is spine-tingling! I'm gonna have nightmares for weeks after this!"

"There's no need to be scared of the geysers Tails." said Amy "My Sonic will protect us. He said it himself, when he comes back for us, he'll carry us over to Eggman's factory at top speed so the lava can't get us. Nothing can get my Sonic since he's so fast! He's one dashing hedgehog in more ways then one I always say." she suddenly said dreamily.

Thunder and Bolt looked at each other awkwardly, their minds abuzz with a joke they could make out of this. They failed.

"Tails is Amy always like this when it comes to Sonic?" asked Kari.

"She is." said Tails "They don't call her Sonic's biggest fan for nothing. She wishes to marry him although I myself can't see that happening as Sonic seems to find her annoying and is always running away from her."

"What did you just say Tails?" snarled Amy, her face going red with rage.

"Nothing!" squeaked Tails, sweat dropping nervously.

"Hey look, Amy's turned red!" cried Thunder with a silly grin on his face "Looks like someone's getting hot under the collar!

"And I thought the lava was the only thing that was hot around here!" laughed Bolt.

The two chipmunk brothers burst into loud obnoxious laughter. Their laughter just made Amy even angrier. She summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hands and she marched up to Thunder and Bolt with her eyes burning. Miranda grabbed Amy by the arm and held her back.

"No Amy." she said "Attacking someone for angering you is not the right thing to do. Leave Thunder and Bolt to have their fun. They're only joking."

"But…they…yes Miranda." said Amy, putting her hammer away.

Then suddenly, Amy heard the sound of Sonic the Hedgehog running back towards them. He sped through Black Acropolis and back to the gates. Amy's face brightened.

"He look, Sonic's back!" she cried.

"That didn't take long." said Tails "I guess Eggman's factory isn't as well hidden as I thought it would be. Either that or it's Sonic's super speed that enabled him to find it so fast."

Unfortunately, Sonic was stopped dead in his tracks. A lava geyser erupted from the ground and spewed straight up into the sky directly in front of him. Sonic could feel the heat on his face as the lava shot up into the sky. But the lava geyser did more then just shoot lava up and bring Sonic to a halt. The ground beneath his feet suddenly cracked and broke away from the hard, rocky terrain and Sonic suddenly found himself drifting away from the others and down a lava current that led towards one of the two volcanoes! The Mobians watched horrified as Sonic drifted down the river of lava that was on the other side of the rocky terrain, now visible to them since the ground had broken away. There was nothing nearby for Sonic to leap on. He was completely stranded on a chunk of rock in the middle of a lava river. Amy looked like somebody was about to stab

her in the heart.

"THERE'S A RIVER OF LAVA HERE?" shrieked Amy.

"Um…did I forget to mention that?" asked Kari nervously, noticing she'd missed out the lava river when she talked about Black Acropolis earlier.

"Yes you did actually." said Tails crossly "But that doesn't matter, Sonic's in trouble! We need to stop him before he drifts to that volcano! Who knows what's gonna happen to him when he reaches it!"

"I had a sneaky feeling I'd end up needing a grappling hook for this." muttered Miranda, pulling one out of a backpack she was carrying on her back.

Miranda ran into the fiery death zone and ran to the part where the ground had broken away. Sonic was a good distance away from them now. He was much too far to jump off the slab of rock he was floating away on and he didn't want to risk a spin-dash in case of missing miserably and getting a fiery end to his life. Miranda stared helplessly at the drifting hedgehog and prayed hard that she had enough rope to each him. Miranda swung the hook end of the rope around in a circle, spinning it as fast as she could and she threw the hook towards Sonic as hard as she could. There was only just enough rope to reach Sonic and Sonic grabbed the hook as it hurtled to him. He gave Miranda a thumbs up sign to signal to her that he'd caught it. The mongoose sighed with relief.

"Thank goodness for that!" she puffed "Kate, you pull Sonic to shore!" she ordered to her green feathered friend "You're strong enough for this job!"

Kate obeyed and she wondered into Black Acropolis. She ran over to where Miranda was standing and she took the rope from Miranda's hands. Then using her mighty strength with which she was famous for, Kate pulled the rope towards her and began to pull the slab of rock back to shore. Sonic was a good distance away so it would take some time. Sonic held on tight to the slab as Kate pulled him to shore. In a matter of minutes, Sonic would be back on solid

ground and then he and the others could destroy Eggman's factory. But then more trouble arouse. Some lava suddenly shot up from within the lava river just behind Sonic's slab, breaking a small chunk off and making the slab smaller. The river had geysers underneath it and they liked to randomly shoot up at any point possible. The lava that spewed up behind Sonic rained down over the hedgehog. Sonic curled up into a ball to avoid getting hit by the lava drops. Unfortunately, one of the lava drops hit the rope and burnt straight through it! The rope snapped and Kate found herself staggering backwards and landing on her back. Sonic ended up drifting back down the river of lava. Sonic began to grow increasingly worried. He was on a slab of rock, drifting down a river of lava and heading towards an active volcano! He'd be fried hedgehog if he didn't get off the slab and fast. The only trouble was, there was nowhere to leap onto, Sonic couldn't paddle the slab as he'd just end up scorching his fingers and there was nothing to paddle the slab with so he was stuck drifting down the lava. Sonic clutched the edges of the slab desperately as he continued heading towards the volcano.

"Well, I survive conflicts with Eggman robots, a sadistic Martian, my own brother, a robot faker, a genetic experiment hedgehog, a kung fu leopard, a bounty hunter, four mystery guys, a giant robot made up out of three others and this is how it ends!" said Sonic grimly "I get killed by a volcano! I bet no one would expect the fate of Sonic the Hedgehog to be like this!"

Back on the shore Kate picked herself up and Miranda watched helplessly as Sonic drifted off into the river. There was no hope for Sonic now. Her grappling hook had been burnt and she didn't have any spare. Kate could easily fly over and grab Sonic but the lava geysers posed a huge threat for the eagle so she decided not to risk it. Tails however, had other ideas. He twisted his tails around one another and he flew into Black Acropolis. He flew past Miranda and Kate and headed towards Sonic on the slab. Miranda saw the young boy flying into danger and immediately freaked. While she wasn't a mother, Miranda had a very big regard for kid's safety. If a kid was in danger or was risking his/her life, Miranda acted like a worried mother.

"Tails! Come back!" she cried "It's too dangerous! You might get hit

by the lava geysers!"

"Don't worry Miss Miranda." said Tails "I'll be fine. I'm a good flier and I'll keep an eye out for…"

He suddenly ended up getting a lava geyser spew up right in front of his face. Tails screamed in terror as he felt the heat of the lava on his face. The lava stopped spewing and Tails quickly flew forward to avoid getting rained on by the lava that fell back down into the river. Tails flew down towards the slab of rock that Sonic was on. Sonic saw Tails coming towards him and he beamed happily.

"Tails, get me off of this thing before I become lava chow!" cried Sonic.

"I am doing!" retorted Tails as he headed towards Sonic.

But then something else decided to happen and make things more difficult for Sonic. A lava geyser erupted straight underneath the slab of rock he was on and the hedgehog was catapulted into the air, startling Tails and making him inch backwards. The lava shot Sonic straight into the air and sent him flying off the slab of rock. The slab fell back down and landed in the river where it bobbed back to the surface, glowing red from the heat of the lava. Sonic however, was sent hurling towards the lava nearer to the shore but he wasn't falling quite near enough. He was heading towards the lava just inches in front of the shore. Sonic saw his life flash before his eyes just as he began to head towards the lava. But before he could meet a fiery end, Kate the Eagle flew up and grabbed Sonic with her talons before he could land in the lava. The eagle manoeuvred around quickly just as another lava geyser shot up behind them and she carried Sonic to shore. Tails flew quickly back to shore, relieved to see that Sonic was saved at last. Kate put Sonic down and Sonic gasped for breath, seeing as how breathing in high temperatures wasn't easy and now he was in a cooler place, it was easier to breathe. Tails landed on the ground, relieved to be back to sure and pleased to see Sonic was OK. Sonic looked at Kate and smiled thankfully at the often quiet eagle.

"Thanks a bunch Kate." said Sonic "I appreciate it."

"No thanks necessary." said Kate softly "Any friend of Miranda's is worthy of saving."

Now Sonic was back to shore, Amy ran into Black Acropolis, completely ignoring the dangers the zone had to offer for her and she hugged Sonic tightly, almost suffocating the poor hedgehog.

"Sonic, I was so worried!" she cried happily "I thought you were done for but Ohmigosh you made it out alive again!"

"Amy, I'd be very thankful if you'd stop trying to suffocate me right now!" yelped Sonic "I can't breathe!"

"Sorry." said Amy, quickly letting go of Sonic and giving the hedgehog space to breathe "It's just, when you're in trouble, the fan-girl side of me gets the best of me and I can't help myself when you get saved."

"That's understandable." said Sonic understandably "Now I'm safe and sound, I'll just run you all over to the factory before anyone can get hit by any lava geysers."

Just as he said that, another geyser shot out from behind him, making him jump and leap into Amy's arms without him realizing it in a frightened manner.

"You know what, I'm getting tired of these geysers and their disturbingly good timing!" he gasped crossly.

He then suddenly realized he had leaped into Amy's arms and he quickly leaped back out of them. Amy however, seemed thrilled at the fact that Sonic had just done that, even if it was accidentally. Sonic fought hard to keep himself from blushing. Thunder and Bolt however, burst out laughing at Sonic's little moment.

"OK, as I was saying." said Sonic "Time to go to Eggman's stupid little robot factory."

He grabbed Tails by the hand and zipped off to the factory at top speed. A few seconds later he came back for Amy and carried her to the factory at top speed. He then came back for Miranda and carried her to the factory, then Kari, then Kate and finally Thunder and Bolt.

He had done the whole thing in just thirty seconds. Now the heroes all found themselves at Dr. Eggman's factory which was hidden in a rocky cannon behind one of the volcanoes. The surrounding cliffs that stretched up behind the volcano were shaped in an unusual way which enabled them to stop too much lava seeping over the edges and into the canyon below, which was probably why Eggman built the factory here in the first place. The factory itself was pretty large, not unusual by factory standards and it was coloured red, bronze, silver and yellow in a lot of places. The factory had the Eggman Empire logo on it and thick black smoke seeped out through giant funnels on top of the building. The factory was surrounded by a red force field. The force field was obviously there to protect the factory from lava flows and geysers. That explained how Eggman had managed to build a factory in Black Acropolis and prevent it from being stricken by lava. Sonic was impressed by Eggman's intelligence, the fat scientist wasn't such a klutz after all.

"A force field!" he said "Of course! That's how the factory can be in a place like this and remain standing!"

"That field obviously keeps the lava off of it and protects it from lava geysers." said Tails "Eggman thought of everything didn't he?"

"He did." muttered Miranda, not amused at all by Eggman's cleverness "Unfortunately for us, we can't get in there and destroy the blasted factory."

"Who says we can't?" sneered Sonic "The hedgehog has a front door for you all!"

"Where?" asked Kari.

"Here." said Sonic.

He spin-dashed into the ground and cleaved his way through the black, hardened, dried up lava from past eruptions that they were standing on. Sonic dug down a little and then he went straight forward underground. Then he reappeared by spin-dashing up through the ground and to the surface on the other side of the force field. The Northern Royal Fighters were amazed by that act of Sonic's.

"Brilliant! Brilliant that is!" cheered Bolt "It's a good thing he's on our side isn't it Miranda?"

"It certainly is." said Miranda with a bright smile on her pretty face "Now, let's crawl through Sonic's tunnel and join him inside the force field."

Tails and Amy went first. They got down on their hands and knees and they crawled into Sonic's tunnel. After a minute or so, they crawled to the end of Sonic's tunnel and Sonic helped them climb out of the tunnel and onto the surface. The Northern Royal Fighters then went in one at once. Luckily for Kate, Sonic had made the tunnel large enough for her to crawl in as she was a rather large eagle and she'd get stuck if it was only big enough for the others and not her as well. After another minute, they made it to the end of the tunnel and Sonic helped them onto the surface. Everybody was now inside the force field and free to walk straight into Eggman's factory and demolish it. The only thing was, since there was a force field over the factory, the fumes had nowhere to go as the force field was trapping them in so the air around the factory was completely and utterly toxic. Bad enough to kill if they breathed in too much of it so they had to get into the factory and fast. Luckily, the door was just inches from where they were so Sonic spin-dashed the door open and they all ran inside before they could choke to death on the polluted air outside. Sonic closed the doors to keep the pollution out and he coughed loudly.

"Ugh! Hack! Splutter!" he choked "Well…cough!...I never took Eggman to be a pollution lover! That air is death to anyone outside the factory but in the force field!"

"Not surprising really considering everything's sealed in the force field so the fumes have nowhere to go." noted Kari "Not to mention, this factory has been here for goodness knows how long so all those fumes have just been spewing out day after day and making the air worse."

"Talk about a design flaw." muttered Sonic "Oh well, toxic air's not going to give anybody grief here, considering the fact it's a robot factory so nobody needs to breathe in here."

"So what do we do now Sonic?" asked Amy.

"Blow the place sky-high." said Sonic "Or we could just switch off the force field and let the volcanoes finish it off for us."

"I think the latter is the best idea." said Kari "We'll have a better chance of making it out alive if we just turn the force field off and let the volcano erupt and destroy it."

"So that will be our objective." said Miranda "We'd best find the control room and find out how to shut off the shield."

"OK then team." said Sonic with a thumbs up "Let's do it to it everybody."

And with that, the team ran down the long stretching corridor and looked for the control room. This mission looked like it was going to be an easy one for them. A rarity for the R.F.S. But even the simplest looking situations had some horrible twist in store for them that would throw the mission into catastrophe and this factory had one that was lying in wait for them…

Back in Downunda, the very place Angel Island resided, Knuckles and Shade were fighting furiously while up on the island, the Nocturnus Echidnas were finishing off their corruption operation. The Master Emerald was pitch black and swimming in dark Chaos Energy now. It would take a lot of chanting to cleanse the Master Emerald from dark energy now. Knuckles was too focused on his fight with Shade to notice what was going on up on Angel Island. He and Shade punched at each other while defending the other's blows. Shade tried to roundhouse kick Knuckles in the head but the guardian bent over backwards to dodge the kick. Knuckles then grabbed Shade's foot and threw her leg upwards, causing the Procurator to fall backwards and onto her back. Knuckles tried to attack Shade again but Shade leaned back on her hands and sprang herself foot first into Knuckles' stomach. Knuckles doubled over and wheezed loudly but his gasping was quickly interrupted by Shade elbowing him on the cranium and then kicking him away. Knuckles picked himself up and dodged an oncoming blow from

Shade. Knuckles jumped past Shade and roundhouse kicked her in the back of the head and knocked her over. Shade jumped back to her feet and punched Knuckles in the shoulder. Knuckles punched Shade back, in the waist and Shade clutched her waist, trying to fight the pain she was feeling now. Knuckles drew his arm back and gave the distracted echidna an uppercut that sent her hurling through the air like a tossed stone. Shade landed very sharply on her back and she grimaced tensely as pain flooded up her back. Knuckles advanced on Shade as she lay on the ground staring up at the sky in excruciating pain. Shade pushed herself up into a sitting position and she glared at Knuckles with he lilac eyes as the echidna guardian advanced on her.

"It's over Shade!" growled Knuckles "Give it up! You can't win! I'm too strong for you!"

"So it seems." said Shade dryly, picking herself up and staggering a little as she tried to get her footing.

"This battle is over." said Knuckles "Warp me back onto Angel Island right now! And this time, leave me on Angel Island!"

Shade just touched her hip and she vanished in a bright pink flash. Knuckles watched this happen and he growled angrily. He clenched his fists and gritted his teeth.

"Shade you coward!" he bellowed "Stop it with the teleporting and fight me you Nocturnus scum!"

Just after he said that, the Procurator reappeared behind him and pile-dived him in the back before he could realize what was happening. Knuckles fell onto his back and Shade pinned him down with her foot. Knuckles then felt the cold steel of a blade being pressed against his neck.

"Let me guess, you went to get your weapons." muttered Knuckles.

"Yes, I fight better with them." said Shade, pressing on of her blades against Knuckles' neck "Now don't move."

She raised her blades and prepared to behead Knuckles was once

again but Knuckles reached out behind him, grabbed Shade's leg and tripped her up. Shade fell onto her back and Knuckles picked himself up. He tried to punch Shade but the Nocturnus echidna rolled out of the way, leaving Knuckles to punch the ground instead. Shade then used her Blade Rush attack on Knuckles and Knuckles was swept off his feet by the energy wave from Shade's blades. Shade then tried to cleave Knuckles in two with her blades but she missed as Knuckles rolled out of her way and Knuckles tried to kick her but Shade blocked the attack with her blades. Knuckles punched at Shade but Shade ducked and slashed his arm with her blades. Knuckles grabbed his arm and yelled loudly in pain. Shade took the opportunity to kick Knuckles while he was gripping his arm in pain. Knuckles lay on his side, clutching his arm and Shade tried to cleave him in two again but Knuckles dodged her attacks. He then grabbed Shade's arm and punched her in the hip. This is in turn, ended up activating her Warp Belt. The two echidnas ended up disappearing in a bright pink flash and they reappeared back onto Angel Island, the exact place Knuckles wanted to be on right now. They appeared just paces away from the shrine and Shade doubled over, clutching her hip. Knuckles smirked triumphantly at Shade.

"Ha! I'm back on Angel Island Shade!" Knuckles cackled.

"Ugh! I can see that." grunted Shade "You've broken my Warp Belt so now I can't warp you back down!"

"Even better." sneered Knuckles "So now nothing can stop me from…"

He turned around and froze in horror at what he saw. The Nocturnus Echidnas had just finished their ritual and the Master Emerald was no longer a brilliant green colour. It was completely black in colour. The emerald had been filled from top to bottom with dark Chaos Energy. Dark Chaos Energy was a more dangerous force to be reckoned with then ordinary Chaos Energy due to its evil and destructive nature and Knuckles would need to chant quite a lot to cleanse the Master Emerald. That is, if he would be able to cleanse the Master Emerald! Knuckles was so shocked at this sudden turn of events, he couldn't speak. Shade however, was pleased with this. Her clan had succeeded. Now her father, Imperator Ix could finally show up. She touched the side of her headband.

"Father?" said Shade "It is time."

The moment she said that, a massive bright flash appeared from nowhere and blew Knuckles away. Knuckles skidded to a halt on his back and he picked himself up only to see the one thing he never wanted to see again. Imperator Ix himself! Ix was a formidable figure to anyone that laid their eyes upon him. He was dressed from head to foot in armour. His armour was dark purple and unusually designed. He had gold wrist cuffs with thin blue decals, heavy boots with gold armour pieces at the toes and heels, and he had two long flowing structures on the front of his armour tipped with light blue symbols. He had a flowing cape at the back which was vaguely arrow shaped at the end and he had a heavy gold collar. He wore a helmet with three long prongs that were curved and pointed behind him. He carried a staff that had an almost complete circular structure at the end. The helmet had glowing light blue eyes, presumably the eyes of Ix himself. If he wasn't wearing his helmet right now, you could probably see a smirk of pure evil on his face. Knuckles just stared in horror at the Imperator that stood before him. After all these years, he was back at last and here to ruin the lives of everybody on Angel Island! The Nocturnus Echidnas bowed down to Ix respectfully and so did Shade. Ix raised his staff triumphantly and bellowed out in his big, deep, booming voice.

"I am Imperator Ix! I have been wrongfully banished from this island and I have come back to claim it and become the ruler of Angel Island once again!"

Footnotes:

***See Story 41**

This...does...not...look...good...Imperator Ix is back, the Master Emerald has been corrupted and Sonic is way out of Knuckles' reach right now! How can he save Angel Island now? Find out next time on Sonic the Hedgehog: Heroes of Mobius! Read and Review.

P.S. So sorry for the delay! I've been focusing more on Tales from Mobius recently as I've been behind on it. I'm all caught up now and from now on, you'll get a pattern like this: Heroes of Mobius, Tales from Mobius, Heroes of Mobius, Tales from Mobius and so on. It won't be like that all the time though, only when I have a Tales from Mobius arc in mind.

Rights for the Land Part 2

Story 72: Rights for the Land Part 2: An Imperator's Claim

Knuckles the Echidna, Guardian of Angel Island and protector of the Master Emerald sat on the ground and stared in horror as his worst nightmare stood before him in front of the Master Emerald. The insidious Imperator Ix, traitor of Angel Island and the very person who slaughtered the elders, the leaders of the island, and tried to make the island fall was back and ready for revenge! The Nocturnus Clan all bowed down to him with Shade the Echidna up front. She was Ix's daughter and the most loyal out of the clan to their master after all.

"Lord Ix." said Shade "It is an honour to have you back on this very island with us."

"At ease Shade." boomed Ix gently "We have more pressing matters at hand right now."

Shade obeyed and she stood to attention. The Nocturnus Echidnas did the same and Ix stepped down from the shrine and strode up towards Knuckles. His cold blue eyes were like ice as he stared down at Knuckles. Knuckles was usually a brave soul but the sight of Imperator Ix physically terrified him. He had been scared of Ix when he was a kid and he was still scared of the Imperator now. But he couldn't let his fear of Imperator Ix stop him from saving Angel Island, he had to stand up to Ix and kick him out of Angel Island before Angel Island fell into turmoil. Knuckles picked himself up and raised his fists, trying not to shake with fear. But Ix could sense his fear and he laughed at the frightened guardian.

"This is the new guardian of Angel Island?" he sneered "Ha, ha, ha! It's only Locke's little boy and I can see he doesn't have Locke's courage in his bloodstream at all! He's shaking like a leaf at the mere sight of me!"

"Ix! You are trespassing on sacred grounds!" yelled Knuckles, trying to hide his fear "You know what the penalty is for returning to Angel

Island even though you've been banished from it!"

"Yes I do worm." snorted Ix, slamming his staff down on the ground ""He who is banished and returns to this island is met with execution" is the scared oath of the elders. But there ARE no elders this time around! I killed them all so they cannot execute me Knuckles!"

"I know they can't, but I can!" bellowed Knuckles, leaping at Imperator Ix with his fists bared and ready to strike.

Ix just merely whacked him away with his staff and Knuckles was sent skidding across the ground and near the edge of the island. Ix's staff was a powerful weapon and not one to be taken lightly. Knuckles picked himself up and prepared to fight again as Ix advanced on him menacingly. Shade followed him with her blades at the ready. She wanted to see if she could help her father deal with Knuckles.

"So Ix, how did you manage to comeback then?" asked Knuckles "Uncle Finitevus sent you to the darkest areas of Mobius if I recall."

"Correct Knuckles." boomed Ix "Your bothersome uncle used a warp ring and sent me into the deepest cave on Mobius which is 500 miles deep. However, Shade and the Nocturnus Clan used a warp ring they'd stolen from Angel Island to get to the cave and bring me back to the surface. I was frozen in Chaos Control for a while though but the Nocturnus Clan used their dark Chaos Energy to break your father's spell and I was free. I thought it would be better to lay low for a while so I went back to the cave is was destined to rot in with the Nocturnus clan and I began tutoring them and training them to be powerful, strong and swift so they'd be well prepared for whoever is guarding Angel Island right now. Ten years past and now I'm back on Angel Island with my Nocturnus clan beautifully trained and ready to destroy you!"

"Yeah right, the Nocturnus Clan can barely lay a finger on me!" sneered Knuckles "I'm too tough for your precious clan! Only Shade is a real challenge for me and yet she can't beat me so your training hasn't paid off at all Ix!"

"Oh but it has mite." crowed Ix "I now have a Master Emerald full of dark Chaos Energy thanks to my minions and now I have a powerhouse of dark Chaos Energy, I shall be invincible and anyone who dares to use the Master Emerald will end up joining my side!"

"Are you saying that the Master Emerald will turn anybody who tries to use it evil now?" shrieked Knuckles, his dreadlocks quivering with rage "You sick monster! I'll smash you for this!"

He punched at Ix but Ix just caught his fist and threw it to the side. He then swiftly tripped Knuckles up with one smack to the legs from his staff and Knuckles was quickly brought down on his back. Ix then proceeded to kick Knuckles so hard he fell off the side of Angel Island but he gripped on quickly before he could fall down. Ix strode up to Knuckles and stared down at the helpless echidna that clung onto the ledge for dear life. Knuckles looked back at him fearfully, hoping Ix wasn't going to do what it looked like he was going to do.

"No! Please! Don't do it!" begged Knuckles.

"My plan is in motion. I will not let a bothersome speck of dust like you get in my way now." boomed Ix coldly.

He then proceeded to stomp on Knuckles' fingers and cause him to let go of the ledge he was clinging onto and fall off Angel Island. Knuckles screamed at the top of his voice as he plunged down to the ground and fell presumably to his death. Ix bellowed with laughter as Knuckles disappeared from sight and he turned around and walked away from the ledge, his long cape trailing behind him as he walked. Shade followed him.

"What do we do now master?" asked Shade "Now Knuckles is gone and the Master Emerald is ours, what's our next task?"

Ix looked at his daughter with his icy blue eyes.

"We kill all the other guardians." he said "I know Angel Island well enough to know that there is never only one guardian. There will always be back up guardians and we are going to destroy them. Once the guardians are all dead, Angel Island will be mine once again and no one can stop me because I am too powerful, Locke is

dead and the Master Emerald will just increase my army instead of giving anyone a fighting chance!"

"Yes father, Angel Island will be yours at last." said Shade loyally "The echidnas of this island will be very sorry they banished us all like this."

"They will indeed Shade." said Ix evilly "Now come forth Nocturnus! We have some guardians to kill and my chaos energies are giving me an idea on where they are!"

With that said, Ix and the Nocturnus clan all marched on into the forest in search of the back-up guardians of Angel Island. With Knuckles gone, those poor guardians wouldn't have an ounce of a chance against such a powerful echidna in armour with immense levels of Chaos Energies…

Meanwhile in Black Acropolis, the land of obsidian, Sonic the Hedgehog, Tails the Fox and Amy Rose and their news friends the Northern Royal Fighters had broken into an Eggman robot production factory which was located in this death zone and shielded by a force-field to prevent it from being consumed by lava should a volcano erupt. They were looking for the control room so they could shut off the force-field and let the factory get destroyed by a volcano eruption. According to Kari though, the volcanoes erupted every five weeks so when they would erupt was anyone's guess right now. The lava geysers were likelier to finish off the robot factory as they were always erupting and spewing out lava. So far in their search, the heroes hadn't found anything but the control room was bound to be somewhere so they continued to look. Tails opened a door and poked his head inside. The room he was looking in was just an empty closet. He shut it again.

"This isn't the control room." said Tails.

"Huh, the control room's definitely well hidden." said Sonic "None of the rooms in this corridor are the one we're looking for."

"It's probably down another corridor or near the back of the factory."

suggested the Northern Royal Fighter team-leader Miranda Mongoose "It has to be somewhere, every factory has a control room. You can't run a factory without one."

"I agree." said the Northern Royal Fighter mechanic Kari the Rat "I think we'll split up so we can speed up our search. Sonic, you, Tails and Amy go right, we will go left."

"Suit yourself Kari." said Sonic casually "If any of you need me, just give me a call and I'll be with you faster then you can say "Chilli-dogs."

"I believe that easily since you can run at the speed of sound." chuckled Miranda "OK teams, let's split up and search these corridors. We must find the control room quick before Dr. Eggman finds out we're here."

With that said, Sonic, Tails and Amy went down a corridor in the right and the Northern Royal Fighters went down a corridor in the left. The corridor the Northern Royal Fighters were searching through didn't seem to have as many doors as the first corridor they looked down. This obviously meant that there weren't many rooms to look in. It seemed that Miranda and her team wouldn't need to look through many rooms as there weren't as many as the first corridor.

"OK team, let's start searching." said Miranda, creeping over to the nearest door and opening it.

Kari the Rat, Kate the Eagle and the chipmunk brothers Thunder and Bolt did as they were told and they picked whatever door they came across and looked in it to see if they could find the control room. Every door the Northern Royal Fighters looked in was either empty or nothing of interest. After checking one last door, Thunder closed it and turned to Miranda who had just looked in another room.

"None of these rooms are what we're looking for." said Thunder "I don't think the control room is in this corridor."

"I agree with you Thunder." said Miranda, closing the door after

she'd finished looking into the room she was looking in "Well, at least Sonic doesn't have to look down here once we tell him the control room isn't in this corridor…"

Then suddenly, the floor opened up underneath the fighters and they all found themselves suddenly falling down into the floor! The floor had opened up and the Northern Royal Fighters found themselves in a pit that was ten feet deep and featureless save for four walls and the floor. Miranda picked herself up and shook her head.

"Well, I didn't see that coming." she muttered "But what do you expect in a robot production factory owned by Dr. Eggman?"

"It's gonna take more then a lousy pit to keep us down!" declared Bolt "Kate can easily fly us all out of here!"

The green feathered eagle nodded in agreement. Unfortunately, things decided to get worse for the trapped fighters. The top of the pit, which was their only way out, was suddenly blocked by flame jets that spouted out from flamethrowers built into the walls near the top of the pit! There was no way the Northern Royal Fighters could possibly escape from the pit now there were flame jets blocking the way! They'd sooner be burnt alive should they try to escape. Miranda stared at the jets despairingly. They were well and truly stuck in the pit now. Then suddenly, the flamethrowers started to slowly descend down the walls and towards the trapped fighters. The flamethrowers had a track that led down to the bottom of the pit and they slowly began to slide down towards Miranda and her team. Once they reached the bottom, the whole team would be burnt alive! They had to escape now and their only hope was Sonic, Tails and Amy. Miranda cupped her hands around her mouth and screamed as loud as she possibly could, hoping that Sonic would hear her.

"SONIC! HELP US!" she screamed.

Sonic, who was further down the corridor and looking in a room, faintly heard Miranda shrieking and he poked his head out of the room he was looking in. Tails and Amy both heard the screaming too.

"That sounds like Miranda." said Tails "I think her team may have run into some trouble!"

"It sure does sound that way." said Sonic grimly "I should have expected something like this to happen in a robot production factory built by Dr. Egg-Brains."

So with that said, Sonic ran out of the room he was looking in and he zipped down the corridor to the pit in the floor where Miranda's team was trapped. Unfortunately, the factory decided to add insult to injury by activating another trap. Flame jets built into the ceiling aimed straight down at the floor and they activated, spewing blazing hot fire out towards the floor. Sonic quickly stopped himself and leaped back before he could run into the flames. Sonic stared up at the jets helplessly. The flame-jets had blocked his way with a wall of fire. Any attempts to get through would just result in a very badly burnt body or worse. But Sonic was not going to sit idly by and let his friends get toasted in a pit. He was going to save Miranda's group, even if he burnt himself alive trying to do so. Tails and Amy saw the flame jets and stared in horror at them.

"Flame jets in the ceiling! How are we gonna get past them without barbequing ourselves?" shrieked Amy.

"I have an idea." said Sonic "Amy, throw your hammer at the jets."

"O.K." said Amy, easily seeing what Sonic's bright idea was.

Amy summoned her trademark Piko-Piko Hammer to her hands and she threw it like a boomerang at the flame jets. The hammer smashed three of them as it hit them and they switched off, leaving a gap in the wall of fire for Sonic, Tails and Amy to easily walk through without any harm whatsoever. Sonic, Tails and Amy ran through the gap and they arrived at the pit that the Northern Royal Fighters were trapped in and they stared down into the pit. The flame jets were descending down towards the trapped fighters. The jets were already halfway down the pit. Another five feet and the Northern Royal Fighters would be toasted! Sonic stared at his trapped friends helplessly. Amy wouldn't be able to smash the jets as they were too far down for her to reach with her hammer. They had to shut them off in someway or another.

"Sonic, how are we gonna stop those flame jets from reaching Miranda and her team?" asked Amy desperately.

"We have to shut them off." said Sonic "Tails, see if you can find a way to turn those jets off!"

"OK Sonic." said Tails, scanning the walls for any possible controls for the flame jets.

It didn't take long for Tails to find the control panel. It was located on a wall near to the pit. The control panel was there so that should an Eggman robot or anyone affiliated with Eggman accidentally fall in, the person in charge of the factory could use the panel to shut off the trap. Unfortunately for Tails, it would only work for any of Eggman's staff in the factory or Dr. Eggman himself so he wouldn't be able to use it to shut off the trap. Tails pressed some keys desperately on the panel but the control panel refused to let him in. He couldn't shut off the trap with the control. Tails however, had an idea.

"Amy, can you whack this control panel for me?" asked Tails.

"Sure but why?" asked Amy, raising her Piko-Piko hammer "Doesn't that control panel work the flamethrowers in the pit?"

"It does but I can't use it, it won't respond to me." replied Tails "I'm sure that we can shut it off if you destroy the control panel."

"Let's hope it works." said Amy, readying herself for a hammer strike.

She swung her big, beefy hammer and smashed the control panel with one big whack of the hammer. The panel was completely busted and it fell off the wall and onto the floor with a soft thunk. The moment the control pad broke away, the flame jets in the pit turned off just as they were a few inches above the Northern Royal Fighter's heads. They would have been burnt alive if Tails' idea didn't work. Sonic peered down the pit and was pleased to see that the jets had turned off and Miranda's group was safe once again.

"Tails, Amy, you did it!" cried Sonic.

"I know we did." said Tails modestly "I'm kinda amazed it worked in all honesty."

Now the flame jets were off, Kate the Eagle proceeded to flap her wings and fly off the floor of the pit. She grabbed Miranda by the arms with her talons and flew her off the floor. She carried Miranda out of the pit and flew back down for the others. She grabbed Kari by the arms and carried her out of the pit and then she went back down for Thunder and Bolt. Thunder grabbed one of Kate's legs and Bolt grabbed the other and Kate proceeded to effortlessly carry them both out of the pit. Thunder and Bolt weren't very heavy after all. Now everybody was out of the pit, Miranda gave Tails and Amy a hug each to say thanks for their efforts.

"Thank you so much you two!" said Miranda breathlessly "We were about to be toast down in that pit until you two managed to shut the flame jets off!"

"You're welcome Miranda." said Tails "I'm just glad Amy has a big hammer with her at all times."

He then motioned over to the control pad to show Miranda what he meant.

"Now everyone's safe, we can continue looking for the control room." said Sonic "But we'd best keep our eyes open for more booby traps as I have a feeling in my quills that there's bound to be more in this factory."

"Cor-rect-hedge-hog." droned a metallic, feminine voice that made everybody jump out of their skins "There-are-other-traps-in-this-factory-and-I-am-one-of-them."

Further up the corridor, a metallic figure emerged from one of the rooms and advanced on the Mobians menacingly. It was none other than Mecha Rouge, Rouge the Bat in a robotic body. Rouge had been roboticized by Dr. Eggman a few weeks ago* so now she was a mindless drone under Eggman's control. Right now, it seemed that she was in charge of the robot factory as she was here to deal with Sonic and friends. Sonic bent down in a battle ready stance.

"So Mecha Rouge, I take it your in charge of this joint?"

"A-ffir-ma-tive." droned Mecha Rouge "Dr.-Egg-man-has-put-me-in-charge-of-this-fac-tory. He-has-al-so-ordered-me-to-elim-in-ate-any-intruders. The-fire-traps-failed-so-I-will-des-troy-you-all-my-self."

"So I take it you're the one who tried to burn my friends alive." said Sonic in a calm but firm voice "Seriously not cool Rouge! Not that you can help it really as you've been roboticized and forced to serve Dr. Eggman."

"That's a Robian?" asked Kari.

"It is." said Sonic "And some day soon, I'm gonna get Rouge out of that robot body. Right now, I don't think I can so we'll just have to fight her if we wanna get to the control room and shut the force-field off."

Mega Rouge bared her claws and charged towards Sonic. Sonic just spin-dashed Mecha Rouge in the gut and sent her flying backwards into a wall. Mecha Rouge pulled herself free from the wall and charged towards Sonic again. Sonic tried to spin-dash Mecha Rouge again but the roboticized bat dodged his attack and Sonic ended up accidentally spin-dashing the ceiling. Amy tried to hammer Mecha Rouge into the ground but Mecha Rouge dodged her hammer and kicked Amy in the head, making her let go of the hammer and sending her rolling across the floor. Tails tried to attack Mecha Rouge but Mecha Rouge grabbed Tails by the arm before he could punch her and he swung him into the floor. Miranda stepped in with a flying kick to the head that knocked Mecha Rouge onto her side.

"Looks like we're in for a tough battle here." she muttered "If only Metal Sonic didn't break my electro-prod**, I could do with that weapon on me right now."

"Remind me to fix the weapon once we get home." said Kari.

Mecha Rouge picked herself up and tried to claw Miranda across the belly but the mongoose dodged the attack with a quick step backwards. Kate stepped in and gave Mecha Rouge an uppercut

that almost took the Robian bat's head off. Mecha Rouge spun around in a dizzy circle and collapsed onto the floor. Kate advanced on the dazed Mecha Rouge and was about to smash her to pieces until Sonic stopped her.

"No Kate, don't destroy her!" yelled Sonic "She's a roboticized Mobian! We want to de-roboticize her, not destroy her!"

Kate understood what Sonic was talking about and she held back. Sonic grabbed the dazed and confused Mecha Rouge by the shoulder and hoisted her up onto her feet. The Robian didn't seem to know which way was up. Kate's uppercut had clearly taken effect on her.

"Wow, you hit her pretty hard Kate." said Sonic "I don't think she'll be up and at em any time soon. Let's leave her lying around while we turn the force-field off."

Unfortunately for Sonic, Mecha Rouge recovered a lot quicker than he anticipated. Mecha Rouge suddenly took flight while Sonic was still holding her and she used her screw-kick attack. Because Sonic was holding on to her, the hedgehog was spun-around by Mecha Rouge and thrown off of her and straight into the still open pit. Sonic landed with a crash at the bottom of the pit. A ten foot deep pit was not going to keep Sonic down for long or indeed any period of time at all. Sonic effortlessly leaped out of the pit and landed in front of Mecha Rouge, who was glaring at him with her icy blue optics.

"You wanna play rough huh?" sneered Sonic "I'll give you rough Mecha Rouge!"

With that said, Sonic and Mecha Rouge charged towards each other like a pair of bulls…

Back on Angel Island, all the Guardians on the island had gathered around and were discussing a few things about Angel Island and its current status. Like Imperator Ix had said earlier, Angel Island never had just one guardian. There was always a group of guardians, it's just that the guardian of highest authority would be the head

guardian and the current head guardian was, as we already know, Knuckles the Echidna. Once Knuckles' time was up, the next in line would take the line of duty and then the next and the next and so forth. It was a nicely balanced circle of guardians that would forever go on and guard the Master Emerald from all who tried to steal the powerful gem. Right now, all the guardians who were charged with guarding the emerald when Knuckles was granted a day-off, had gathered around a stone plinth with some stone benches circled around the plinth. This was their meeting place and it was located in the middle of the forests of Angel Island. An echidna named Harvey who was in his prime and had purple stripes on his dreadlocks, was in charge of the meeting and he began the discussion.

"Attention fellow guardians." he said "I have gathered you all here because there are some pressing matters we have to discuss about Angel Island. Are you all here?"

"Yes Harvey." said the group of echidnas, who were all different ages, heights, colours and appearances.

Harvey scanned the group of echidnas that sat around the plinth. He noticed that there was one missing.

"Where's Knuckles?" asked Harvey.

"I dunno." said an echidna named Garth who was maroon coloured and he wore a ragged brown robe "He must have forgotten that we were all going to have a meeting here."

"Wrong I'm afraid you ridiculous guardians!" boomed a terrible voice that they had all thought they had heard the last of years ago "Knuckles is a nasty stain on the ground below Angel Island thanks to me!"

The guardians all leaped up from their stony seats and stared in horror at the horrifying sight before them. Imperator Ix and the Nocturnus clan were standing before them with their weapons at the ready and they looked like they were ready to kill. Harvey's striped quills shook with fear. Like all the other people on Angel Island, he was scared stiff of Imperator Ix.

"N-n-n-no! Not you!" he cried.

"Yes, it is me Harvey." sneered Imperator Ix "I have returned and I have come to slaughter another group of echidnas! I bet you'll be a lot easier then the elders!"

The group of guardians all stared fearfully at Imperator Ix as his staff glowed a brilliant, sickly green colour and the Nocturnus clan's weapons all glowed an icy, cold blue colour…

As for Knuckles, despite falling off of Angel Island after Ix had stomped on his fingers, he had miraculously survived his terrifying plunge although the fall had left him bruised and knocked out. Had it not been for the Chaos Energy in his veins that he'd gotten from years of guarding the Master Emerald, he would be dead right now. He had finally come to after a few minutes of unconsciousness and he sat up straight while trying to get the bones in his body to knit. He rubbed his eyes to clear his blurred vision and he looked around, noticing that he wasn't on Angel Island anymore. He was lying in the ruins of Albion, a ruined little village that Angel Island loomed over. He picked himself up and stared up at Angel Island helplessly. He had to get back up onto the island and fast or Ix would tear the island apart.

"That insidious imperator!" growled Knuckles, clenching his fists "He can't keep me off Angel Island! I've gotta get back up there and warn the other guardians of Ix's return!"

Luckily for Knuckles, he had a warp ring with him which he always kept hidden somewhere in his dreadlocks. He pulled the warp ring out from behind his dreadlocks and he flicked it into the air. The ring spiralled in mid-air and then expanded to twice its size. The ring was now big enough for an echidna to easily walk through. Knuckles stepped through the warp ring and vanished from Albion and reappeared up on Angel Island through the other side. The ring shrunk and Knuckles picked it up and put it back in his dreadlocks. He had appeared at the meeting place for the guardians. He had remembered that they were going to have a meeting some time today so he warped himself to the place so he would be able to warn

them as they were bound to be gathering around by now. Unfortunately, Knuckles was too late. Much, much too late. After putting his warp ring away, he surveyed his surroundings and was met with a terrible sight. The meeting place had dead bodies of the guardians that took over for him on his days off lying everywhere. Some of them were lying on the stone benches around the plinth, one of them was on the plinth itself, and the rest were all lying on the grass. The guardians were all dead, even Harvey the next in line to the position after Knuckles. Knuckles was so horrified at what he was looking at, he wondered if he was still unconscious and was actually dreaming. He closed his eyes and rubbed them. He opened them again. He was not dreaming. He was staring at his guardian buddies, all lying on the ground dead as doornails. Knuckles was struggling to stay on his feet. He fell onto his knees and his lips trembled. He was now the last guardian on Angel Island alive. Angel Island only had one guardian now, meaning Knuckles was going to be severely limited with spare time and days-off now. Not only that, it would be harder for Knuckles to watch over everything on Angel Island since his friends wouldn't be around to help him watch over everything. Knuckles pounded the ground angrily.

"Ix that monster! He killed all the guardians!" he growled to himself "I'm the only guardian left now! I am so gonna kill that imperator once I get my hands on him!"

"I highly doubt that'll be possible." boomed the very voice that Knuckles was expecting to hear again "As I am all powerful and you are not powerful at all!"

Knuckles leaped onto his feet and backed away as Imperator Ix and the Nocturnus clan all leaped out of the bushes and trees that surrounded the meeting place. The Nocturnus Echidnas all aimed their weapons at Knuckles and Shade drew out her blades and prepared to fight the guardian. Knuckles had arrived just shortly after Ix had killed the guardians and the sound of a warp ring had stopped Ix in his tracks before he could leave so he and the Nocturnus had decided to lie in wait and ambush the one using the warp ring. Knuckles raised his fists and prepared for a fight. He gave Ix a look that could kill a sick deer. Ix just glared back at him, unimpressed with Knuckles' attempt at bravery.

"Well Knuckles, I shouldn't be too surprised you survived that horrific fall should I?" sighed Ix in annoyance "I should have known that all that Chaos Energy in your body would save you from death."

"That's right Ix." snarled Knuckles "Now I am gonna make you pay for killing the guardians!"

"No you will not." said Shade coldly, raising her weapons "You will stand down and obey Lord Ix or be exterminated."

"Threaten me all you like!" yelled Knuckles "I will never serve Ix! NEVER!"

"You'll only live to regret this." said Shade icily "Father, allow me to eliminate the guardian."

"No Shade." said Ix sternly "Knuckles is mine. I have a score to settle with his impudent father but since he's already dead, I'll just take my anger out on him instead."

"Whereas I am gonna do more then just take my anger out on you!" bellowed Knuckles charging towards Ix and screaming at the top of his voice.

Ix's staff glowed bright green and he walloped Knuckles with it before the echidna could touch him. Knuckles hurtled backwards and crashed into the stone plinth. He knocked the plinth over, the dead echidna lying on top of it falling off as it toppled over. Knuckles groaned and Ix advanced on him menacingly.

"Such a valorous streak you suddenly have guardian." scoffed Ix "And yet you're still so weak and frail compared to my might. Maybe it's because I have much more Chaos Energy in my veins then you do. Maybe you haven't been guarding the Master Emerald as well as you should be doing as he who guards the emerald well have masses of Chaos Energy in their bodies."

"I've been guarding the emerald plenty Imperator Ix!" yelled Knuckles, getting back to his feet "And I have plenty enough Chaos Energy to kick you off of my island!"

Knuckles' determination to rid Angel Island of Imperator Ix seemed

to bring new strength to the red echidna with the purple eyes as he picked himself up and charged towards Ix with his fists bared. Ix prepared to strike but Knuckles was too fast for him and he slugged Ix directly in the stomach. Ix was surprised by that incredibly powerful punch and he dropped his staff and doubled over after that powerful punch. Knuckles didn't stop there though. He proceeded to punch Ix repeatedly at a furious speed, landing blows all over his body and then Knuckles gave Ix and uppercut that almost knocked his helmet off. The armoured echidna stumbled over onto his back and rubbed his face. He picked himself up and glowered evilly at Knuckles.

"All right then…" he purred.

Knuckles grabbed Ix's staff and ran towards the Imperator with the staff in his hands. Ix held his arms in front of his face in an X shape and braced himself for impact. Knuckles whacked Ix with the staff and Ix was blown away by a surge of Chaos Energy that the staff contained. Ix skidded across the ground on his back and he came to a halt near a tree. Knuckles stared at the staff and noticed it was glowing green like the Master Emerald. Not only that, he could feel surges of Chaos Energy on the staff as he held it.

"Of course, the staff is your Chaos Energy power source!" deduced Knuckles "I bet without this weapon you're useless Imperator Ix!"

"Without my staff I am only slightly weakened." scoffed Ix as he picked himself up "I need that staff to use some of my powers. It doesn't matter if I don't have my staff, I can beat you with or without it guardian."

"We'll see about that." sneered Knuckles and he prepared to whack Ix with the staff again.

But before Knuckles could touch Imperator Ix, Shade leaped in and pile-dived him from behind, causing Knuckles to drop the staff onto the ground. Knuckles groaned hoarsely from that sudden attack and he tried to stop Shade from grabbing the staff by pouncing on her but Shade dodged his attack and she threw the staff over to Ix before Knuckles could try and take it from her. Ix grabbed the staff and he waved it, summoning Chaos Energy to his hands.

"Dark…Anomaly!" he bellowed.

He raised his staff above his head and a huge sphere of Chaos Energy extended out from the tip of the staff and towards Knuckles. Shade and the Nocturnus Echidnas stepped back so they wouldn't get hit by the attack. Knuckles tried to dodge the attack but the Dark Anomaly caught up to him and struck him. Knuckles was thrown through the air and he crashed near a bunch of bushes. Knuckles lay on the ground, grimacing in pain and trying to get back onto his feet. Ix's chaos powers were not to be taken lightly, they were immensely powerful and just one Dark Anomaly attack was enough to bring Knuckles down on his knees. Ix chortled with laughter at Knuckles as he tried to get up.

"It's like I always say about those who stand up to me." sneered Ix "They're nothing more than dust balls to sweep away. Shade, finish him off, I've had my fun now."

"Yes father, I mean Lord Ix." said Shade, bowing respectfully at Ix.

Shade drew out her blade weapons and she advanced on the downed echidna, ready to slice him to ribbons. Shade wondered why Ix tasked her with getting rid of Knuckles when he was so consistent on doing the dirty work himself. Regardless, Ix would be pleased to see his own daughter kill Knuckles, the only possible obstacle in his way now. Knuckles stared up at Shade helplessly as the Procurator prepared to execute him. Shade stared down at Knuckles with her lilac eyes and raised her weapons above her head, ready to execute Knuckles in cold blood. Knuckles could tell from the look in Shade's eyes that she had no second thoughts about doing this, she was going to do it just for Imperator Ix and nothing would deviate her from this. Shade swung her weapons down but before Shade could kill Knuckles, Knuckles pulled out his warp ring from behind his dreadlocks and he flicked it into the air, stopping Shade dead in her tracks and making her step back as the warp ring extended to twice its original size. The Nocturnus Echidnas seemed more surprised at the fact Knuckles had a warp ring then the fact Knuckles had just activated one. Knuckles dived through the warp ring quickly before anyone could stop him and the warp ring closed after him and vanished into thin air. Knuckles had warped himself away. As stubborn as the echidna was, he couldn't

beat Ix no matter what he did so he needed some back-up and he had gone to get some. Shade was still trying to figure out what had just happened and Imperator Ix strode up to his daughter with an angry look in his eye. Shade snapped out of her gaze and looked fearfully at Imperator Ix. She hated it when Ix was mad at her, he terrified her when he was angry.

"You stupid child! You let him escape!" snarled Ix "Who knows what that wretched guardian is doing now he's warped himself away from here!"

"I-I-I-I'm sorry…" stuttered Shade in fear.

"Never mind!" snapped Ix "Knuckles may have fled but that won't be of any consequence to us. This island is ours now and if Knuckles dares to return, I'll just kill him here and there. Nocturnus! Back to the Master Emerald all of you!"

The armour-clad group of echidnas obeyed their master and they left the meeting place. They headed on back to the Master Emerald, which was now rich with dark Chaos Energy and anyone who tried to use it would just end up falling to the dark side. Knuckles may have escaped, but anything he did now would just delay the inevitable. Ix was on top and there was no way Knuckles could stop him now…

"Well things are going nicely for once." said fellow Royal Fighter Mandy Mouse happily as she sketched some notes on a note pad "The Region of Rebellious Reptiles have fled, their leader is in jail and Castle Acorn hasn't been harmed the slightest in the entire attack. I still can't believe we did it all without the blue dude himself."

Things had been going smoothly since the Region of Rebellious Reptiles' attack on Castle Acorn***. Lord Sycorax was jailed, the Region had fled, the wreckage of Lord Sycorax's battleship had been cleared away and the Royal Fighters had no orders for anything right now so the Royal Fighters were having a much needed break, especially due to how intense the fight with the region had been. Bunnie Rabbot had suffered the worst of it being as how

she had been beaten to a pulp by Lord Sycorax himself but the Rabbot was already making a rapid recovery. Team Chaotix were rapidly recovering too from the whole ordeal. Mandy jotted down the notes and put the notepad down on the table. Her boyfriend and childhood friend Wilson the Dog was sitting at the table and sitting back and relaxing in his chair.

"I can't help but notice things have bee going our way since Shadow left Dr. Eggman." said Wilson "Sonic's destroyed his oil rig****, we managed to beat Scourge and incarcerate him at last***** and now we've managed to fend off a region of reptiles al by ourselves."

"It seems that Shadow ditching Eggman's given us a stroke of luck as we're having all the luck and the villains are having all the bad luck." said Mandy "I wonder how blue dude's doing in Nekronopolis with Miranda and her team? We haven't heard from him since yesterday."

"He's probably hooked up on a mission and he's just forgotten to inform us on what he's doing." suggested Wilson "No worries though, he'll call us when he needs us."

"Yeah." said Mandy agreeably "Sonic's smart enough to know when he needs us and he can call us with that little communicator he keeps under his glove if he needs our…"

She was rudely interrupted by a bright flash of gold and the terrified mouse almost leaped out of her fur. Wilson fell over in his chair in surprise and he quickly picked himself up just in time to see a warp ring appear in front of him and Mandy. Knuckles stepped out of the ring and into Royal HQ's lab, the exact place he wanted to be at right now. The warp ring shrunk behind him and he caught the ring in his hand before it could drop onto the floor. Knuckles put the warp ring back behind his dreadlocks and he surveyed his surroundings. Wilson and Mandy emerged from behind the table, relieved to see it was only Knuckles.

"Knuckles the Echidna, what a pleasant surprise." said Mandy slowly "What brings you to Royal HQ then?"

"I need to see Sonic the Hedgehog and fast." said Knuckles "I need

his help right now."

"Sonic's not here I'm afraid." said Wilson "He went to Nekronopolis yesterday and we haven't seen him since."

Knuckles grumbled under his breath.

"Do you know where in Nekronopolis he is so I can warp to him?" asked Knuckles.

"No but I'll find out." said Mandy, dashing over to the lab computers and sitting down at one.

She taped a few keys on the keyboard and in a matter of moments, she found where Sonic was and the screen showed her Sonic the Hedgehog's location. To her surprise, he wasn't in Nekronopolis; he was in Black Acropolis instead. The mouse didn't have time to wonder about it though, Knuckles needed Sonic's location and he needed it now.

"There he is." said Mandy "According to the computers here, he's in a building in Black Acropolis. What the heck is blue dude doing there I wonder? Black Acropolis is a death zone!"

"Maybe he and the Northern Royal Fighters are on a mission." suggested Wilson.

"Thanks for helping me out you two." said Knuckles "I'll be sure to give Sonic your regards once I reach him."

He tossed the warp ring into the air once again and the ring expanded to twice its size. Knuckles stepped through the warp ring and he vanished into thin air. The ring closed behind him and vanished in a bright golden flash, leaving Wilson and Mandy alone in the lab together again.

Back in Black Acropolis, the fight between Sonic and friends and Mecha Rouge was going wildly out of control for them. Mecha Rouge was a tough mech, almost as tough as Mecha Sonic. Rouge was already a pretty tough foe in flesh and blood but as a mech, she

was an even tougher foe. Sonic tried to spin-dash the roboticized bat but Mecha Rouge screw-kicked him before he could hit him and Sonic ended up crashing into the floor again. Tails tried to tackle Mecha Rouge from behind but the Robian bat grabbed him and threw him down into the floor. She then deployed her arm mounted lasers and aimed them at Tails. Before she could shoot him though, Thunder and Bolt stood together side by side and they tensed up their bodies. The fired a powerful jolt of electricity from their bodies and they zapped Mecha Rouge. It was painful enough when an organic being gets electrocuted by the chipmunk brothers but on a machine it was even MORE painful. The electricity surged up Mecha Rouge's circuits like an electrical current. It was almost as if Mecha Rouge had become a lightening rod. Unfortunately, even Thunder and Bolt's attacks were futile as Mecha Rouge fought the pain she was feeling from the electric attacks and she blasted them both with her laser cannons, causing Thunder and Bolt to stop shocking her and sending them both flying backwards and skidding across the floor. Mecha Rouge tried to attack them again but Amy pounced on her from behind and walloped her with her hammer. Mecha Rouge hurtled into the floor and left a very large dent in it. Before Mecha Rouge could get back up, Kate grabbed her by the wings and ripped them clean off her back! Mecha Rouge wailed and electronically altered wail. She had no wings now and if she got de-roboticized, she would be Rouge the Bat but with no wings. Mecha Rouge picked herself up and tried to attack the muscle-bound eagle woman but Kate socked the bat directly in the face and sent her flying backwards. Before she could land down on the floor, Sonic spin-dashed her and sent her flying directly into the still-open pit. The Robian bat landed at the bottom of the pit with a heavy clang. Kate then stood guard over the edge of the pit and glared down at Rouge with her eagle eyes. Miranda peered down the pit and saw Mecha Rouge just lying there, battered and beaten.

"Well that's that then." said Miranda with a heavy sigh "That was truly hectic! Kate, you stay here and make sure um…"Mecha Rouge" doesn't get away."

"She will not pass me." declared Kate with a grin on her beak.

She remained where she was and kept her steely gaze on Mecha

Rouge. Miranda left Kate to do that and she wondered back over to Sonic.

"Well now Mecha Rouge is dealt with, let's find that control room shall we?" she asked.

"You said it Miranda." said Sonic "And since Mecha Rouge is down and out, she can't hinder us anymore…"

Then suddenly, there was a bright gold flash that appeared from behind and Sonic leaped a foot into the air. The flash turned out to be just a warp ring and out of the warp ring appeared Knuckles the Echidna. The warp ring shrank down behind him and he caught it in his hand before it could drop onto the floor. Sonic was rather surprised to see Knuckles appear from nowhere.

"Hey Knucklehead!" he cried "What the heck are you doing here and how did you find us?"

"Wilson and Mandy helped me." explained Knuckles "And, as reluctant as I am to admit it, I'm here because I need your help Sonic!"

"What do you need little old me for?" asked Sonic.

"Imperator Ix has returned to Angel Island and he's causing chaos as we speak!" explained Knuckles frantically "He's corrupted the Master Emerald and filled it with dark Chaos Energy and he's kill all the guardians on the island! I'm the only one left now!"

Sonic couldn't believe what he was hearing. He had heard the story of Imperator Ix when he first visited Angel Island and he really didn't like the sound of that guy. And now he was back on Angel Island to wreck the lives of everybody on the island! Oh well, that just meant Sonic had another villain's butt to kick now.

"That is so un-cool!" yelled Sonic angrily "That Imperator Ix guy is gonna get a hedgehog style-thrashing courtesy of me! Knuckles, warp me, Tails and Amy over to Angel Island! We've got an evil echidna to stomp on!"

"Wait a minute." said Tails quickly "Who's Imperator Ix?"

"You're about to find out bud." said Sonic "Because we're going over to Angel Island to stop him!" he announced, smacking his fist onto his hand.

"But what about our mission?" asked Amy "We need to destroy this place so Eggman can't get any new robots from this factory."

"You three go and help your friend." said Miranda "We'll complete the mission without you."

"Are you sure?" asked Sonic "I won't be there to give you a speedy exit from Black Acropolis once you complete the mission you know."

"Kate will be our exit." said Miranda "She'll fly us high out of harm's way I can assure you."

"OK then." said Sonic "Good luck Miranda."

"Good luck to you too Sonic." said Miranda with a salute.

Knuckles tossed the warp ring into the air and the ring expanded to twice its size. Knuckles, Tails and Amy stepped through the warp ring and vanished from sight. Sonic gave the Northern Royal Fighters a wave goodbye and then he stepped through the warp ring. The ring shrunk down in size and vanished into thin-air…

Back on Angel Island, Imperator Ix and the Nocturnus Clan had gathered back around the tainted Master Emerald. The once beautiful, green, glowing gem was now a powerhouse of dark Chaos Energy. The Master Emerald was black and Dark Chaos Energy crackled around the giant gem. Ix hadn't had time to admire his minion's handiwork so he was pleased to get a moment to admire the Nocturnus Clan's success in corrupting the Master Emerald and turning it into an emerald with dark Chaos Energy. The Nocturnus Clan had gained Chaos Energy from the Master Emerald before they were exiled and Imperator Ix's training had boosted their power, hence the reason they've managed to corrupt the Master Emerald. Ix chortled quietly to himself.

"Look at this Shade." he purred "The Master Emerald is ours now. A

powerhouse of dark Chaos Energy just for us. And the best part is, nobody else can use its power against us as the dark Chaos Energy will just corrupt their weak little minds and turn them to my side!"

"I'm glad we've pleased you father." said Shade loyally "It's so good to see that everything is going our way. Even if I inadvertently let Knuckles flee via warp ring."

"The guardian is of secondary importance now." gloated Ix "He can't possibly stop me now I have his precious Master Emerald under my command and he can't possibly have any outside help as he has spent his whole life up here on this floating island…"

His gloating was cut short as a golden flash appeared just above the Master Emerald and a warp ring appeared through the flash. It opened up and out of the warp ring appeared Sonic the Hedgehog in a spin-dash. He spin-dashed straight into Imperator Ix and knocked him clean off the shrine. Ix landed with a heavy thud on his back and he dropped his staff. Sonic landed beside Ix and grabbed the staff before Ix could get it back. Tails, Amy and Knuckles appeared through the warp ring and Knuckles and Amy knocked the Nocturnus Echidnas off the shrine with their respective weapons. The warp ring closed behind them and it dropped onto the shrine. It pinged off the stairs and landed beside Shade. Shade quickly grabbed it and hid it in her pocket before anyone could see her. Ix picked himself up and glared at Sonic who was standing there holding his staff and smirking at him.

"Oh look, more dust for me to sweep away." snorted Ix, taking one look at Sonic, Tails and Amy "You must be really desperate to save your puny island Knuckles."

"We're more than dust Ixy." sneered Sonic "I am Sonic the Hedgehog, Hero of Mobius and a friend of Knuckles here. I hear you're trying to wreck Angel Island and I'm not happy when bad people try to make other people's lives miserable so I've decided to come here and stomp on you on Knuckles' behalf."

"You have a death wish if you think you have any remote chance against me!" snarled Ix "Give me back my Chaos Staff or I will have to ring your neck dustling!"

"Dustling? Puh! I've heard better comebacks from my own brother!" sneered Sonic "So you want this little trinket here?" he asked, waving the staff tauntingly at Ix "Well sorry…I don't believe in letting the bad-guys have their toys back! Especially if it's useful to them!"

He then proceeded to spin-dash the staff into pieces. Ix looked like he was going to explode through his armour as he watched Sonic destroy his beautiful weapon.

"NO!" he bellowed angrily "You insolent little scum-hog! That staff is my power source! Without it, I can't use my Chaos Energy and powers!"

"Really? That's nice." sneered Sonic "It means I kick your butt easier. Tails, Amy, you two deal with Ix's cronies here, me and Knuckles will take down Ix himself!"

"OK Sonic." said Tails.

So Tails and Amy charged towards the Nocturnus Echidnas and Sonic and Knuckles stared Ix down. Imperator Ix clenched his fists and he charged into battle. Unfortunately for Ix, he wasn't very skilled in physical combat. He was the kind of person who relied on his weapons and powers to do the dirty work for him so this fight would go horribly wrong for him. Ix punched at Sonic but Sonic leaped straight over him and kicked him in the back of the head as he hurtled over him. Ix fell flat on his face and just he picked himself up, Knuckles socked him directly in the face, leaving nasty cracks in his helmet. Knuckles didn't stop there though; he continuously punched Ix over and over, throwing punches harder and harder as he went on. Ix could feel the brute force of Knuckles' blows. Without his staff, he was a lot weaker and Knuckles' attacks hurt him a lot more than before.

"I. Want. You. Off. My. Island!" yelled Knuckles with every punch he threw at Ix.

Ix tried to fight back but Knuckles just launched his attacks to quickly and too powerfully for him to counter-attack. Sonic then proceeded to spin-dash Ix's legs from behind, tripping the insidious Imperator up and bringing him down on his back. Sonic smirked at Ix as the

Imperator tried to get back up.

"This guy's a joker! How are you having so much trouble with him?" sneered Sonic.

"We're only winning because he hasn't got his weapon anymore!" snapped Knuckles "You wouldn't be so cocky if he had his weapon with him right now!"

"Well it's a good thing I destroyed it then." said Sonic "Now Knuckles, you may do the honours."

"Thank you Sonic." said Knuckles, grabbing the battered Imperator by his cape and dragging him away.

Knuckles dragged Ix over to the edge of the island and without any second thoughts or even a moment's hesitation, he threw Ix straight over the edge and left him to fall off the island and down onto the ruins of Albion below. Ix crashed straight through a building and lay where he was, battered, beaten, humiliated and disgraced once again. Knuckles dusted his hands off and walked away from the edge of the island.

"Finally, we've gotten rid of him." said Knuckles "Now we've just got to get rid of the Nocturnus Clan."

"I guess the Nocturnus Clan are those guys in black who work for Ix." said Sonic, watching Tails and Amy fight the echidnas. Shade and Amy were engaged in combat whereas Tails flew around, taunting the other echidnas as they tried to shoot him with their gun arms.

"They are." said Knuckles "The one without a helmet is named Shade. She's Ix's daughter and the only one out of the clan to look out for."

"So I guess Shade's the toughest." said Sonic as Shade pile-dived Amy in the back and knocked her onto her stomach "OK, we'll take her down first."

"We don't need to." said Knuckles.

Knuckles marched forward and called out to the Nocturnus Echidnas.

"Hey, Nocturnus!" he yelled at the echidnas "Imperator Ix has been thrown off this island!"

"What?" blurted Shade as she kicked Amy in the leg and tripped her up.

"You heard me, Imperator Ix has been thrown off this island!" announced Knuckles "You jokers better get off my island and join him or you'll all end up suffering the same fate as Ix!"

Shade glowered at Knuckles. As much as she wanted to pile-dive Knuckles into the next oblivion, she knew the Nocturnus couldn't win without Imperator Ix on their side. They could barely hold their own against Knuckles so they had no chance against Sonic, Tails, Amy and Knuckles all at once. Shade sheathed her weapons and sighed furiously.

"Nocturnus! Retreat!" she ordered "We must recover our master!"

The Nocturnus Echidnas did as they were told, reluctantly that is, and they all fled the scene via their warp belts. Since Shade's was broken, another echidna had to hold her hand and warp away whilst holding her so she disappeared with the echidna. The Nocturnus Echidnas were gone and Ix was lying down on the ground in the ruins of Albion so Angel Island had been saved again. Everybody cheered happily at their success.

"We did it!" cheered Tails "We saved Angel Island!"

"And all too easy too." noted Sonic "Mind you, I think me destroy Ix's weapon helped an awful lot there. So Knuckles, Angel Island's safe now isn't it?"

"For now." said Knuckles grimly "I doubt a fall off an island would have been enough to kill someone like him. I bet he's still alive down there but now he's lost his weapon, he's nothing to us now. If he dares to return, I'll knock him out and throw him in a cell where he can rot and pay for his crimes against this island!"

"What's he done to Angel Island like?" asked Amy "Bad things?"

"Terrible things." muttered Knuckles "He slaughtered the elders and tried to lower Angel Island ten years ago. Now he's gone and slew the other guardians of the island so I'm the only one left and he's corrupted the Master Emerald!"

He pointed at the black gem which still crackled with Chaos Energy. Sonic almost did a back-flip in shock when he saw the black gem standing there on the shrine.

"What's he done to the M.E.?" shrieked Sonic.

"Filled it with dark Chaos Energy." muttered Knuckles "I'll need to recite the Master Emerald chant a good few times to cleanse the emerald."

"Well let's hope we can restore the Master Emerald back to normal bud." said Sonic "Who knows what's gonna happen if people try to use this thing if it has dark Chaos Energy?"

Even though Angel Island was safe and Knuckles was going to cleanse the Master Emerald of it's dark Chaos Energy, it wouldn't be long until Ix struck again and when Ix would strike would totally catch Sonic and friends off guard…

Footnotes:

***See Story 63**

**** See Story 70**

***** See *Tales From Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles***

****** See Story 66 for the full details**

******* See Story 67**

Tune into *Tales From Mobius* to see what happens to the Northern Royal Fighters!

Angel Island's saved and Ix has been overthrown! But how long will it be until he returns? Join me next time...Reviews are welcome.

Sorry for the delay readers, I've had eye problems recently but they've recovered and I'm getting back on track now so I'll be working a lot faster now.

Chaos Kai X: In answer to your question, i've taken your thought into consideration and I've decided. I'm not very keen on people borrowing my ideas and characters so sorry, you can't have Wilson, Mandy and Marion. No hard feelings buddy.

Rights for the Land Part 3

Story 73: Rights for the Land Part 3: Ix Strikes Back

"Please Lord Ix!" begged Shade the Echidna, Procurator of the Nocturnus Clan and daughter of the insidious Imperator Ix, nightmare of Angel Island "I didn't mean to…"

She suddenly cried out in pain as Imperator Ix backhanded her and sent her flying backwards. It was quite clear that Ix was not taking his most recent defeat lightly. He had returned to Angel Island after ten years of exile and just when it looked like he was going to emerge victorious, he ended up getting defeated by Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends and kicked off of Angel Island and into the ruins of Albion. Ix was so furious that he was taking his anger out on Shade right now. Shade picked herself up and stared fearfully at Ix as the imperator advanced on her menacingly.

"You let the guardian escape!" bellowed Ix, whacking Shade with his fist as hard as he possibly could.

Despite the fact he had lost his staff, he was still physically powerful, it's just he wouldn't be as powerful as he lost his chaos staff. Shade was sent hurling twenty feet across the ground and she came to a stop near a ruined building.

"Thus, your blunder allowed the guardian to get some back-up!" boomed Ix angrily, advancing on Shade again "And in turn, that back-up of Knuckles' has ended up delaying my victory! I've lost my weapon and I've been kicked out of Angel Island again!"

Shade stared up fearfully at Ix and she crawled backwards away from him on her bottom as Ix advanced on her with a look of death in his emotionless eyes.

"Father, I'm sorry!" cried Shade "I had no idea that Knuckles getting away was going to be such a costly mistake…GAH!" she cried as Ix slammed his foot down on her face, pinning her to the ground.

"I will not have my flawless return marred by your incompetence Shade!" bellowed Ix "Do you understand? DO YOU?"

He then proceeded to rub Shade's face with his foot.

"Yes father!" squeaked Shade "I'm sorry for my blunder! But I know how to set your plan back into motion!"

Ix was interested in hearing this sudden piece of news and he lifted his foot of Shade. He grabbed Shade by the neck and hoisted her up to his height. He glared at Shade with his icy blue eyes.

"Explain Shade…quickly!" snarled Ix, throttling her.

Shade said nothing. Instead, she reached for something in her pocket and she fished it out. She showed it to Ix. Ix stared at Shade's hand in surprise. The echidna had managed to get a warp ring! Ix snatched the warp ring off Shade and carelessly dropped her onto the ground. He stated at it in amazement.

"A warp ring! Excellent!" said Ix happily "I can warp myself back up onto the island and get a power boost from the Master Emerald! I may even be able to repair my weapon and then no one, not even that hedgehog vermin will be able to defeat me! How did you get this ring Shade?" he asked.

"I grabbed it after it pinged off the shrine after Knuckles arrived back with his reinforcements." said Shade, picking herself up and rubbing her throat better.

"Good." said Ix, staring at the warp ring with his icy blue eyes "If Knuckles doesn't have a warp ring then he can't use it to bring in any more reinforcements against me. Well Shade, your blunder has been a costly one, but thanks to you swiping this warp ring, we'll get back on track in no time at all…"

"The servers are the seventh chaos!" Knuckles the Echidna chanted at the top of his voice as loud as he could as he stood before the corrupted Master Emerald and tried his hardest to cleanse it of the Dark Chaos Energy it had been filled with. "Chaos is power enriched

by the heart! The user exists to unify the chaos!"

Ever since Ix's exit, Knuckles had spent the past hour or so trying to cleanse the Master Emerald of it's Dark Chaos Energy that Ix and the Nocturnus had filled it with, making it a powerhouse of Dark Chaos Energy for Ix and the Nocturnus to use. Unfortunately, Knuckles' efforts seemed to be in vain as no matter how hard he chanted and tried to reach into the Chaos Energy inside the Master Emerald, he just couldn't seem to overpower the Dark Chaos Energy inside. The Master Emerald just stayed as it was, it's sickly black glow not dying down the slightest. Knuckles stopped chanting and he panted loudly and tiredly. All he had done now was wear himself ragged. He was completely worn out with constantly chanting as loud as he could for an hour. Sonic the Hedgehog, his best friend Tails the Fox and self-proclaimed girlfriend Amy Rose had watched him helplessly as Knuckles tried to cleanse the Master Emerald. Sadly, the echidna's efforts just didn't pay off. The Master Emerald was still a Dark Chaos powerhouse and Knuckles' attempts hadn't made any change on it at all.

"It's not working!" whined Amy "The Master Emerald's still black!"

"I dunno what Ix did to the emerald but he's sure done a good job on it." said Sonic grimly "No matter how hard Knuckles chants, he just can't seem to change the emerald. It's as if Ix has locked him out of the M.E. and Knuckles can't access it or something like that."

"Is that even possible?" asked Tails unsurely.

"I dunno, it's just a guess." said Sonic.

"It is possible to lock the emerald's power but I don't think Ix has the power to do that." said Knuckles "You need a lot of power to lock the Master Emerald and I don't think even a chaos powerhouse like Ix can do something like that."

"So if it's not locked or anything then why can't you cleanse the emerald of its Dark Chaos Energy?" asked Tails.

"Dark Chaos Energy is extremely powerful stuff and it's hard to get rid of if there's too much of it." explained Knuckles "We need more

chaos power and we need it now or the Master Emerald is unsafe for anyone to use."

"How about the Chaos Emeralds?" asked Amy suddenly "They have lots of chaos power and they're on this island so we can just get them and use them to save the Master Emerald. They'll be powerful enough won't they?"

Knuckles thought on that for a moment. He remembered that Sonic had sent the Chaos Emeralds to Angel Island after using them to stop Charcaronda from splitting Mobius apart* and he had put them under heavy lockdown. The seven Chaos Emeralds were very powerful and if Knuckles used them, they could provide him with enough power to save the Master Emerald.

"Amy, that's it!" cried Knuckles "The Chaos Emeralds will provide us with more than enough power to save the Master Emerald!"

"It's good to see you using your head for something other then thinking about me for once!" chuckled Sonic.

"Thank you boys." said Amy with a prideful look on her face "Just happy to help that's all."

But before anyone could do anything at all, a warp ring opened up behind Knuckles, making the echidna jump in alarm. Knuckles stared in surprise at the warp ring and before he knew it, Shade shot out of the warp ring and drew out her twin blade weapons. She slashed at Knuckles with them.

"Blade Rush!" she yelled as she struck Knuckles with an energy wave and knocked him off the shrine.

Knuckles landed rather sharply on his back and Tails and Amy quickly ran over to pick him up. Sonic stared up at the emerald shrine as the Nocturnus Echidnas began to pile out of the warp ring behind Shade, who stood guard in front of the Master Emerald with a cold look in her lilac eyes. After the last of the Nocturnus emerged from the Master Emerald, Imperator Ix himself appeared through the warp ring, cackling like a demented convict. He stood onto of the Master Emerald and glared down at his enemies. Knuckles gritted

his teeth and clenched his fists.

"Ix! Shade!" he yelled "You fiends, how did you manage to get a warp ring? You don't carry one with you!"

"I stole yours after you appeared through it with your back-up earlier." sneered Shade, holding up the warp ring for Knuckles to see "How fitting we use your own warp-ring to help us destroy you."

Knuckles stared in horror at the warp ring in Shade's hand and he quickly felt behind his dreadlocks. There was no warp ring hidden behind his dreadlocks like there should be. Shade wasn't kidding; she actually had his warp ring! And thus, she had been able to use it to warp herself, Ix and the Nocturnus back onto the island!

"Oh snap!" griped Knuckles "I must have forgotten to grab my warp ring after me, Sonic, Tails and Amy arrived here!"

"Way to let your worst enemies get back on your island knucklehead!" grumbled Sonic "Now I've gotta kick them all back off the island again!"

"You will not escort me off of this flying island Sonic!" boasted Ix "You may have destroyed my weapon, but I have an even greater weapon in mind and I'm standing on it right now!"

The Nocturnus Echidnas all stood to the side to show that Ix was standing on top of the corrupted Master Emerald. That very sight alone seemed to petrify Knuckles. The Master Emerald was powerful enough but a Dark Chaos Master Emerald was too much! They'd never be able to defeat Imperator Ix if he used the emerald's power!

"Sonic, get Ix off the Master Emerald before he can use it!" screamed Knuckles.

"No problem rad red." said Sonic in a cocky tone.

Sonic spin-dashed towards Imperator Ix but Shade jumped up in front of Ix and Blade Rushed the hedgehog before he could hit Ix. The hedgehog was sent crashing into the ground where he churned his way through the grass and dirt and ended up lying in a tiny little

crater he had just carved because of his spin-dash. Before anyone could make any other attempts to stop Imperator Ix, the armour clad echidna thrust his hands down and he bent down so he could touch the Master Emerald. The moment his hands made contact with the Master Emerald, a giant surge of Dark Chaos Energy surged up his arms and around his body. The arrogant imperator began to feel an overwhelming surge of power sweeping over him as he began to absorb some Dark Chaos Energy from the corrupted Master Emerald he stood upon. Ix began to bellow with laughter as he began to grow stronger and stronger. Shade decided to add insult to injury by leaping off the shrine and running over to where the remains of Ix's broken Chaos Staff lay. She grabbed all the pieces and ran back over to Ix before anyone could stop her. She then threw the pieces at Ix and the imperator caught them in his hand. Laughing loudly, Ix clenched his fists, the pieces of his staff in one hand and he thrust them together. The pieces in his hand began to glow brightly and then expand out into his other hand. He spread his hands apart and as he did that, the pieces expanded in the space between his hands and form a familiar shape. The bright glow died down, revealing a newly regenerated Chaos Staff he was now holding. Sonic picked himself up from his hedgehog-sized crater and he stared in disbelief at the Dark Chaos powered Imperator Ix that was now standing on the Master Emerald. His appearance was still the same but his eyes had changed from blue to black and a black glowing aurora surrounded him. That was what happened to those who used Dark Chaos Energy. Ix was dangerous already but with Dark Chaos Energy, he was now even deadlier then before, especially since he had his weapon back. Ix spun his staff around in a circle and he boomed with laughter.

"The power…the unbelievable power!" he roared "All this Dark Chaos Energy mixed in with the power of the Master Emerald! I am now even more powerful then ever before!"

"We'll see about that Ixy!" shouted Sonic, spin-dashing towards Ix.

"Dark Anomaly!" bellowed Ix, waving his staff.

A huge sphere of Chaos Energy expanded out from the tip of his staff and hurtled towards Sonic. The sphere hit Sonic and Sonic was thrown backwards. Sonic bounced off the ground and almost fell

over the edge of Angel Island. He just managed to grab the ledge and hold on tight before he could fall. Ix leaped off the Master Emerald and landed on the ground, pounding it with his staff and creating a huge wave of Chaos Energy that blew Knuckles, Amy and Tails away. The three were thrown into the nearby woods by the shockwave and Ix chortled at them.

"You worms!" he boomed "You don't have a hope against a being of Dark Chaos Energy! Dark Chaos Energy is an invincible power created by those who have Chaos Energy and a dark heart! Nothing can stand against it! Your attempts will be in vain against…"

"Blah, blah, blah, shut up Ix!" snapped Sonic, spin-dashing the Dark Chaos Lord in the back of his head.

Ix barely felt that attack but he did bend over after the attack. Sonic grabbed Ix's staff and tried to yank it out of his grasp. But try as he might, Sonic's attempts were like a mouse trying to pull an elephant; Ix's grasp was just too strong for him. Ix sneered at Sonic with his black eyes and he pushed Sonic over onto his back, causing Sonic to fall over and let go of his staff. Ix spun his staff around and raised it above his head, ready to cave Sonic's head in with a powerful chaos slam. Before Ix could even hit Sonic, Amy pounced on Ix and hammered his head in with her Piko-Piko hammer.

"Don't you dare touch my Sonic you demon!" screeched Amy, hammering Ix as hard as she could.

But Amy's hammer hits were like trying to smash a titanium block. Ix just didn't feel the pain due to his Dark Chaos Energy and the Dark Chaos Energy he had was slightly defending him from the attacks. Ix decided that he'd had enough of letting Amy tickle him with her puny hammer attacks and he blew her away with a surge of Chaos Energy. Amy hurtled backwards and landed on her back. Ix advanced on Amy with his staff at the ready. Amy quickly picked herself up and she raised her hammer. Ix swung his staff and Amy swung her hammer. The two mighty weapons clashed against each other but Ix's staff was so much more powerful then Amy's insignificant Piko-Piko hammer. Ix's staff ploughed through Amy's hammer as if he was whacking a sandcastle and Amy's hammer was reduced to pieces. Amy stared in horror at her destroyed

weapon and Ix suddenly lashed out and grabbed her by the neck. Amy gagged and Ix hoisted her up to his height.

"Put me down!" yelled Amy "Don't make me have to cut loose on you!"

"You are such a flaccid minded fool little girl." sneered Ix "I have all the power now and you are powerless to stop me. And you can't use the Master Emerald's power against me because Dark Chaos Energy corrupts anyone who tries to use it so you should make the logical choice and surrender."

"Never!" yelled Amy, summoning a new hammer to her hand.

She whacked Ix's arm, causing Ix to drop Amy and Amy tried to take Ix's legs out from underneath him but her hammer attacks were useless against a Dark Chaos Lord like Ix. Ix whacked Amy with her staff, breaking her hammer yet again and sending her flying into a tree. Amy crashed straight through the leaves and came to a top on a thick branch. Tails flew in and grabbed Ix's staff. He tried to pull it out of Ix's grasp but a being as young and weak as Tails would not fare well against an armour wearing echidna with a Chaos Staff. Ix swung his staff down with Tails still holding onto it and he whacked the ground with Tails facing it so Tails ended up being slammed on the ground and blasted by a chaos shockwave that almost tore his skin off. The attack overwhelmed Tails so much he almost passed out. Ix raised his staff and prepared to let Tails have it again but Sonic spin-dashed Ix from behind and knocked him over.

"Hey Ix, leave the poor kids alone!" yelled Sonic crossly "Fight someone who actually stands a chance against you! Namely me and Knuckles!"

"No one stands a chance against me underling!" gloated Ix, picking himself up and glowing an even darker glow "With Chaos Energy, I'm a threat, with Dark Chaos Energy, I am a death bringer! Spare yourselves a very painful death and grovel at my feet already!"

"I wouldn't grovel at Dr. Eggman's feet and he's a million times worse then you are Ix!" snapped Sonic "Albeit a lot easier to beat up that is but still, I'd rather let Eggman roboticize me then cave in to

you!"

"Then allow me to show you the error of your ways!" snarled Ix.

He thrust his staff forward and blasted Sonic with a giant blast of Chaos Energy that blew Sonic away and sent him crashing into the shrine. Sonic hit the shrine so hard he left a large imprint of himself in it and he felt like he'd crashed into a steel wall. Before Sonic could get up, Shade pressed her weapons against his neck and pinned him against the wall.

"Stay down unless you want to die hedgehog." said Shade icily.

Sonic couldn't really do anything without getting his head cut off so he was forced to submit to the female echidna with the thin eyelashes.

"So Shade, what evil goal does Ixy boy have then?" asked Sonic.

"He only wishes to have his island back." said Shade "He was ruler of Angel Island some time ago until he was wrongly dethroned for trying to lower the island. He wishes to be ruler of Angel Island again and the only way to succeed in getting his title back is to corrupt the Master Emerald and kill the guardians so no one can try and stop him."

"Huh, Ix is a bigger jerk then I thought he was." scoffed Sonic.

"You are going to regret saying that hedgehog!" snarled Shade, pressing her weapons against Sonic's neck harder "No one will disrespect Lord Ix and live to gloat about it!"

Before anything could happen, Knuckles grabbed Shade by her quills and yanked her away from Sonic. Shade squealed in pain and she dropped her weapons. Shade yanked her quills out of Knuckles' grasp and she tried to punch Knuckles but Knuckles dodged the attack, grabbed her by the arm and swung her over onto her back. Knuckles helped Sonic to get back onto his feet and the two charged towards Imperator Ix, who was just standing there watching what was going on. Sonic spin-dashed towards Ix and Knuckles prepared to smash his face in with his fists. Ix waved his staff and bellowed at

the top of his voice.

"Doom Orb!"

A green energy ball emitted out of his Chaos Staff and hurtled towards Sonic and Knuckles. The Doom Orb hit Sonic and Knuckles and knocked them over onto their sides as if it was a bowling ball and they were the skittles. Sonic tried to pick himself up but he still felt sore from crashing into the shrine so he found it hard to get back up. Knuckles picked himself up and he punched the ground. Huge chunks of earth shot up around him and Knuckles punched them towards Ix. Ix swung his sceptre and he smashed the earth chunks into pieces. Knuckles then homed in on Ix and socked him directly in the face. Ix fell backwards onto his back but he wasn't down for long. He picked himself up and he swung his staff at Knuckles. Knuckles dodged the attack and he punched at Ix again. He struck Ix all over his body but his attacks didn't seem to fathom Ix the slightest. The insidious imperator took the blows as if they were merely tickling him.

"Blast it Ix, fall already!" cried Knuckles, punching him harder and harder "Fall, fall, fall!"

Ix just gave Knuckles a chaos enhanced uppercut and sent Knuckles flying into the air and crashing down on his back. The attack left Knuckles' teeth and gums feeling very sore and his chin felt like it had no bones left. Ix laughed at Knuckles and he spun his staff around.

"Getting me to fall as an impossibility guardian!" crowed Ix "You clearly do not realize how powerful Dark Chaos Energy is do you?"

"I do…Ix!" grunted Knuckles, rubbing his face as the bones in his body began to knit again "But even Dark Chaos powered sorcerers fall eventually! And you'll fall sooner or later Ix! I just need to try harder!"

"Try all you like worm!" cackled Ix "I'll just sweep you away every time!"

He raised his staff and yelled.

"Dark Anomaly!"

The Dark Anomaly attack commenced again and Knuckles was blown away by a sphere of energy that expanded out of Ix's staff and struck him. Knuckles rolled across the ground and came to a stop near the edge of Angel Island. Sonic finally managed to pick himself up and he tried to help Knuckles by the Nocturnus Echidnas shot him with their gun arms. Sonic fell back down onto the ground and the Nocturnus Echidnas surrounded him. Ix looked over his shoulder to see what was going on and he was pleased to see that Sonic was down.

"Finish off that blue pest!" he ordered "Knuckles is my main target now."

"Yes Lord Ix." said the Nocturnus Echidnas.

They all aimed their gun arms at Sonic and they prepared to blast him into the next continent but Tails and Amy interfered by leaping in and hammering them and punching them away respectively. Sonic picked himself up and he spin-dashed two Nocturnus echidnas over. Shade decided to get involved and she Blade Rushed Amy with her two blade weapons. Amy found herself falling down on the ground and grimacing in pain. Tails tried to attack Shade but Shade dropkicked him into the ground and Blade Rushed him. Tails lay on the ground wondering which part of him to rub better. Shade then tried to cleave Tails in two with her weapons but Sonic spin-dashed her in the back and knocked her over. Shade dropped her weapons and Sonic quickly grabbed them. He ran over to Imperator Ix, who was advancing on Knuckles with his Chaos Staff glowing darkly, and he pounced on him. Ix spun around to see Sonic lunging towards him and he quickly raised his Chaos Staff to block Sonic's attack as he swung Shade's weapons at him. Shade's weapons clanged loudly against Ix's staff but they did no damage of any kind.

"Doom Orb!" bellowed Ix.

A green sphere emitted from Ix's staff and blew Sonic away from him. Sonic hurtled backwards and he landed sharply on his back. He dropped Shade's weapons and the female echidna quickly grabbed them before anyone could stop her. Knuckles managed to pick

himself up and he pounced on Ix. He landed on Ix's back and he wrapped his arms around his neck. Ix gagged as he suddenly felt himself being strangled by Knuckles. Ix just swiftly grabbed Knuckles, yanked him off himself and threw him at Sonic just as he was picking himself up. The echidna and hedgehog tumbled over each other and they lay in a heap on the ground together. Ix advanced on them with his black eyes blazing and his staff glowing. Sonic grunted and he straightened his ruffled quills.

"Man, Imperator Ix packs quite a punch when he has Dark Chaos Energy doesn't he?" gasped Sonic "We can't land a blow on him!"

"He's…too powerful!" grunted Knuckles "We…need some back-up!"

"Why don't we just use the Chaos Emeralds?" asked Sonic "I'm sure they'll give us the power we need."

"I don't wanna risk losing them to Ix like I lost my warp ring to Shade." explained Knuckles "I'll use the Chaos Emeralds as a last resort if I have to. We'll see if our friends can give us an extra edge first."

"Fine then, I'll just go back to Mobotropolis and get my buddies." said Sonic "Oh wait, no I can't. Because you lost your stinkin' warp ring knucklehead!" he snapped loudly.

"Well we'll just have to get it back then!" retorted Knuckles, pushing Sonic off of himself just as Shade was charging up to them with her blades glowing purple.

"Blade Rush!" she yelled and she swung at Knuckles.

A purple energy waved hurtled towards Knuckles. Knuckles jumped over the wave and he punched Shade directly in the face. Shade fell over onto her back and Knuckles pinned her down to the ground. He saw something gold and sparkly slightly sticking out of Shade's pocket and he quickly grabbed it and pulled it out of her pocket. It was his warp ring. Shade tried to snatch it back but Knuckles flicked the ring into the air and the warp ring expanded to twice its size. Shade pushed Knuckles off herself and she tried to get the warp ring back but Knuckles grabbed her by the leg and tripped her up.

"Sonic, get through that ring and get some back-up now!" yelled Knuckles.

"Way ahead of you Knuckie." said Sonic with a cocky grin on his face "You, Tails and Amy keep the party going for me."

Sonic then proceeded to jump through the warp ring just as a Nocturnus Echidna tried to shoot him. The warp ring vanished into thin air in a bright gold flash. Shade frowned hard enough to give herself a migraine.

"No! I let somebody get away again!" she cursed "I will crush you for this Knuckles!"

"Not unless I crush you first Shade!" growled Knuckles, upper cutting Shade so hard he almost tore her head off.

Ix suddenly appeared from behind and he whacked Knuckles with his staff. Knuckles ended up getting a face full of dirt once again.

"Your hedgehog friend has deserted you Knuckles!" he sneered "At least he knows that I am too powerful for him to defeat! Pity you didn't follow his example and you wouldn't be in this mess right now!"

Knuckles just ignored Ix and prepared to do battle once again…

The warp ring reappeared into the lab of Royal HQ, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters' headquarters and base of operations, and he was pleased to see all his friends were in the lab and staring at him in wonder. Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Bunnie Rabbot, Ruben the Water Panther, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Cosmo the Seedrian and Cream the Rabbit with her pet Chao Cheese were all there staring at Sonic as he appeared through the warp ring.

"Huh, we've had one warp ring visit already, I wasn't expecting another." said Mandy, referring to when Knuckles came to Royal HQ to find Sonic earlier.

"Hey guys and gals." said Sonic "So sorry for the abrupt visit…"

"So how did Nekronopolis go?" asked Geoffrey.

"Well apart from meeting Metal Sonic again** everything went alright." said Sonic "We went on a mission in Black Acropolis to destroy an Eggman factory but me, Tails and Amy had to go and help Knuckles save Angel Island from Imperator Ix so we left the Northern Royal Fighters to finish the mission which they managed to apparently. I assume you got their message just like I did?"

"We did indeed sugah-hog." said Bunnie brightly "Miranda told us everything and she told us the factory is now destroyed*** so Eggman has one robo-factory less to use."

"Yeah, that team is excellent isn't it?" said Sonic "Now here's the real reason I'm here. Angel Island's still under siege from Imperator Ix and we're having a bit of trouble dealing with him so I need your help, all of your help guys and gals."

Everybody looked at each other and thought for a moment.

"Who's Imperator Ix?" asked Cream nervously "Is he a bad person?"

"He's the guy who once tried to lower Angel Island back down and he got banished for it." explained Sonic "We have to stop him before he ruins Angel Island forever."

"Well if a friend of ours is in trouble then I'm willing to help him." said Ruben "Knuckles fought for my land with you**** so I shall fight for Knuckles' land with you Sonic.

"I like the way you think Ruben." said Sonic "Let's go everybody! Angel Island needs us!"

Sonic leaped back through the still open warp ring. Everybody else followed him through the warp ring and to Angel Island. The warp ring vanished into thin air and Royal HQ was now empty, devoid of anyone inside the building now they had all left to Angel Island.

Meanwhile, Knuckles, Tails and Amy were all ganging up on Imperator Ix but all they were doing was just ticking Imperator Ix off

really badly. Amy walloped him with her endless supply of hammers, Tails tail-whipped him with his twin tails and Knuckles punched him with his spiked fists. But all those attacks just seemed to make Ix mad and they didn't seem to be hurting him the slightest. Ix growled angrily and he whacked the ground with his staff.

"Dark Anomaly!" bellowed Ix.

Amy, Tails and Knuckles were suddenly blown away by a dark sphere of Chaos Energy that expanded out from Ix's chaos staff and around Ix himself. Tails, Amy and Knuckles all landed on the ground in a heap and before they could do anything, the Nocturnus Echidnas grabbed them and held them in place. Ix glared at them with his Chaos enhanced black eyes and he pointed his staff at his captives.

"Will you cease these futile attempts to fathom me?" snarled Ix "I am too powerful for you to defeat! All your attempts are doing is ensuring your deaths! You are giving me no choice but to kill you all and put you out of your pitiful misery!"

Knuckles, Tails and Amy could only stare helplessly at Ix as he prepared to destroy them with his Chaos Powers. The Nocturnus Echidnas held them in place as Ix prepared to execute the three of them. But before Ix could do anything of the sort, a warp ring appeared from nowhere and Sonic jumped out of it and spin-dashed Ix straight in his head. Ix fell over onto his side but he quickly managed to pick himself up. The Nocturnus Echidnas let go of Tails, Amy and Knuckles and they aimed their gun arms at what was coming out of the warp ring. Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson, Mandy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben all appeared through the warp ring and they bent down in battle ready stances. Shade kept her weapons raised and ready and the Nocturnus Echidnas prepared to attack. Ix glared at Sonic's little army with loathing.

"So this is why you left hedgehog?" scoffed Ix "You thought you could try Knuckles' plan again and see if it would work again? Well all you've done is given me some more dust to sweep away! My Dark Chaos Powers will send them all to their graves!"

"We'll see about that gruesome!" yelled Bunnie angrily.

She charged towards Ix and punched him directly in the face with her robotic left arm. Ix suddenly found himself being thrown off his feet and sent hurtling backwards into the Master Emerald shrine. Ix left a huge imprint of himself on the shrine and the Master Emerald wobbled slightly. Ix picked himself up and he rubbed his face better.

"Alright then…" he purred coldly.

Bunnie charged towards Imperator Ix again.

"There's more where that came from ugly!" she yelled "Here comes a…"

Ix suddenly lashed out and grabbed Bunnie's arm before she could punch him. Ix then sharply twisted Bunnie's arm to one side, making the Rabbot squeal in pain and crouch down on her knees. Ix cackled at Bunnie as he continued to make her scream. Geoffrey instantly got mad since he secretly fancied Bunnie and watching her get hurt seemed to spark a large fire in his heart so he charged towards Ix with his crossbow primed and ready.

"You let go of Bunnie you blighter!" shouted Geoffrey angrily.

"Know your place skunk!" snarled Shade, tackling Geoffrey from the side and knocking him over.

Geoffrey fell down on the ground and Shade pinned him down with her foot.

"So who might you be luv?" asked Geoffrey snidely.

"I am Procurator Shade of the Nocturnus Clan." introduced Shade "Daughter of the great Lord Ix and soon to be assistant ruler of Angel Island as Imperator Ix rules Angel Island itself."

"Not gonna happen Shade!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing Shade off Geoffrey and sending her flying into a Nocturnus Echidna.

As for Bunnie, Ix continued to twist her arm and make her yelp. He twisted her arm so hard Bunnie felt like he was going to snap it in two. But before Ix could even do such a thing, Ruben blasted him with a jet of water. Ix was sent skidding backwards as Ruben's water

powers pushed him away from Bunnie. Bunnie shook her arm to ease the pain and she turned her arm into a cannon. She blasted Ix with her cannon and sent him staggering. Ix shook himself dry and he glared at Ruben and Bunnie, his Chaos Powers making a sinister dark aurora around him. Ruben stood forward and pointed at him.

"We have helped Sonic in many of his adventures and we will help him in this one." said Ruben slowly "We will fight you to the last warrior and if you want to save yourself an onslaught of painful resistance then I suggest you leave now Imperator Ix."

"Bold words coming from a puny little water panther!" cackled Ix "I've not seen a water panther for a while so it's quite the honour of meeting one again. No matter, we can do without your pesky water powers water panther!"

He pointed his staff at Ruben's neck and he fired a bolt of Chaos Energy at it. Ruben was hit by the blast and he was thrown onto his back by the attack. His purple aqua-collar had come undone by the attack and it lay on the grass before Ix. Ix picked up the aqua-collar and he crushed it into little bits. Ruben picked himself up and stared in horror as Ix dropped the pieces of his aqua-collar onto the grass. Ruben quickly felt his neck and surely enough, he felt no collar there. He had been cut off from his water powers now he lost his collar.

"My…my collar! You destroy my collar!" gasped Ruben.

"Exactly dustling!" sneered Ix "Now you can't use your pesky powers against me! Now taste the raw power of Dark Chaos Energy!"

He pointed his staff at Ruben and Bunnie and the two were blasted in the face by raw Chaos energy that blasted out of Ix's staff. Ruben and Bunnie were almost catapulted straight off the island but they just landed on the ground in front of the ledge. Wilson and Mandy pounced on Ix and double-teamed him with a bunch of kicks and punches but Ix whacked them away effortlessly with his staff. Amy, Cream and Cosmo gathered together and decided to do their team move.

"Ok girls, let's do the Twirling Hammer-Batter move!" ordered Amy

"Just like we did on Shadow *****!"

"Right!" said Cream and Cosmo in unison.

Sonic snickered mockingly at his pink furred fan.

"Twirling Hammer-Batter?" sneered Sonic "Ha, ha, ha! And I thought "Hammer-and-Hedgehog" was corny enough! You need to come up with better attack names Amy!"

Amy resisted the urge to bash Sonic's brains out of his ears with her hammer. Instead, she prepared to attack. Cream flew up off the ground with her big floppy ears and she carried Cosmo off the ground with her. Cosmo grabbed Amy and Cream lifted her off the ground. Amy held her hammer tightly and Cream flew over towards Imperator Ix who appeared to be trying to break Geoffrey's arm. He twisted it sharply behind the skunk's back and made him yelp. Cream spun Amy and Cosmo around and around in mid-air and she edged towards Imperator Ix. Unfortunately, Ix saw them coming and he let go of Geoffrey. He aimed his staff at the girls and he blasted them out of the sky with a Doom Orb. Cream, Cosmo and Amy rained down onto the ground and they all lay there writhing in pain. Geoffrey picked the opportunity to shoot Ix with a dart. The dart pinged off Ix's armour harmlessly and Ix waved his staff at Geoffrey. Geoffrey leaped out of the way just as Ix tried to let him have it with Dark Chaos Energy. Bunnie and Ruben, who had picked themselves up, leaped in and both let him have it in the face with a flying kick. Ix was brought down onto his knees and he dropped his staff. Sonic zipped over at top speed and he grabbed Ix's staff. He tried to spin-dash into pieces but the moment he tried to spin-dash it into bits, the staff reacted with a sudden burst of Chaos Energy that threw Sonic away from it. Sonic was sent hurling backwards and he skidded across the ground very painfully on his bottom. Sonic lay there on the ground rubbing his sore bottom. Ix picked himself up and he picked up his staff.

"Fools!" he crowed "Dark Chaos Energy reacts rather violently to those who try to destroy it! My staff is invulnerable to non-Chaos Energy!"

"Well that sucks." muttered Sonic.

"Weapon or no weapon, we'll take you down Ix!" bellowed Knuckles "Everybody, let's all attack him at once! That'll bring him down!"

Everybody obeyed and they all charged towards Imperator Ix. Ix just stood there and waited for them to attack him. The moment everybody was within three feet of him, he banged his staff on the ground and bellowed.

"Dark…ANOMALY!"

And he let loose his largest Dark Anomaly attack yet. The energy sphere he unleashed was the size of thirty basketballs all put together and the sphere expanded out of his staff and blew everybody away. Everybody hurtled through the air and they rained down onto the ground near the nearby woods. They all lay there wondering which parts they should rub first and they did a chorus of groaning. Knuckles tried to pick himself up, straining and grimacing tensely as he did so.

"Can't…let…Ix…win…" he grunted.

The seven Nocturnus Echidnas all marched up to Sonic and friends and they aimed their gun-arms at the defeated fighters. Knuckles could only stare helplessly at them as they prepared to fire. Shade just watched them, glaring at Knuckles with her lilac eyes.

"I tried to warn you guardian." she said coldly "Just a pity your hubris got in the way of your senses."

She raised her arm and flung it forward as a sign to fire. The Nocturnus Echidnas all fired at the defeated fighters, knocking them out and putting them into a deep sleep…

An eternity seemed to pass while Knuckles was all blackened out but really only several hours had passed. Night had fallen and the moon had risen above Angel Island. Knuckles opened his eyes and was surprised to see it was night time. He groaned wearily and groggily and he sat up. He began to wonder where he was and he looked around with his still blurry vision. He quickly managed to

regain his vision and he could see that he was not on Angel Island anymore. Instead, he was in the huge crater that was left after Angel Island had risen from the ground. They were directly underneath Angel Island and if it ever came back down, he would be squished. Knuckles then found out he was not the only one in the crater. Sonic and his friends were also in the crater, still knocked out and sound asleep. They were all in chains too. Their hands were cuffed tightly behind their backs and their legs were cuffed together. Knuckles quickly realized that he was in chains too. He instantly worked out how this had happened and he clenched his teeth angrily.

"Ix! I'll kill that echidna once I get my hands on him!" he growled.

"Knuckles! You're awake!" boomed a voice that he did not want to hear right now.

Imperator Ix and Shade were down in the crater with Knuckles and Sonic's friends and Ix grabbed Knuckles by his quills. He hauled him off the ground and held him up to his height.

"Ix!" growled Knuckles "You'd better not have done anything to Angel Island or I'll…"

"Save the pathetic threats for later Knuckles." sneered Imperator Ix "I have done nothing to Angel Island while you were blacked out… yet. And now you're awake, you'll witness what I'm really going to do to the island guardian…!"

Footnotes:

*** See Story 45**

**** See Story 70**

***** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 8: The Sentinel Blockade* Part 1**

****** See the epic Chun-Nan saga (Stories 52-56)!**

******* See Story 59**

Ix has beaten everybody into submission and is ready to carry on with his plan! But what is it? Find out in the explosive finale next time! Reviews are welcome.

Rights for the Land Part 4

Story 74: Rights for the Land Part 4: Fight for the Angel

Angel Island, an island notorious for the fact it floated in the air unlike all other islands was in great peril. The traitor of Angel Island, Imperator Ix and his minions, the Nocturnus Clan, had come back after years of hiding and now they had subjugated the island and killed all the guardians on the island except for Knuckles the Echidna, the guardian of the Master Emerald. Knuckles along with Sonic the Hedgehog and friends had tried valiantly to bring Ix down but their efforts had been of no hindrance to Ix's plan in anyway. That was because the insidious Imperator had powered himself up with Dark Chaos Energy, a very deadly force that wasn't to be reckoned with. The Nocturnus had filled the Master Emerald with Dark Chaos Energy and now Ix had the horrific power running through his veins. He had defeated Sonic, Knuckles and all their friends and now they were in chains and lying in the crater which indicated where Angel Island once sat before it rose into the sky via the Master Emerald's power. Knuckles lay on his knees and glared up at Imperator Ix, hatred very visible in the echidna's purple eyes.

"So Imperator Ix, what do you plan to do to Angel Island then?" asked Knuckles "Remove the Master Emerald and then make the island fall on us?"

"That wouldn't have been a bad idea guardian." sneered Ix wickedly "But I have greater plans for the island then merely dropping it on you."

"And what might they be then?" asked Knuckles.

Ix just pointed his Chaos Staff at Knuckles, the tip glowing a very dark black colour as Chaos Energy swirled around it.

"You will see guardian." said Ix coldly "I am not telling you what plans I have, I think it would be more amusing to watch your horrified expression once I carry them out."

Knuckles began to wonder what Ix was talking about. Horrified expression once he carries them out? What was Ix planning to do to Angel Island anyway?

"What more can you do to Angel Island?" cried Knuckles frantically "You've corrupted the Master Emerald, killed all the Guardians and thrown me off of it a couple of times already, what more can you do?"

"Much more." said Ix bluntly "You'll see for once the moon is high, my plan will be in motion and you'll find out what I plan to do to Angel Island."

Knuckles looked up at the moon which shone like a bright white pearl in the night sky. It was already high but Ix probably meant even higher then that. What did Ix need the moon for anyway?

"I must prepare for my grand plan Knuckles." said Imperator Ix "So I'll be going now. Shade, keep an eye on the prisoners and make sure they do not get away."

"Yes Lord Ix." said Procurator Shade of the Nocturnus Clan with a salute.

And with that, Imperator Ix swung his staff around and he showered himself with Dark Chaos Energy. The energy wrapped around him like a boa constrictor wrapping around its prey and Ix was engulfed by the energy. Then in a big black flash, Imperator Ix vanished from sight, leaving Shade and the Nocturnus to guard Knuckles and his friends. The moment Ix left, Sonic came to and he pushed himself up onto his bottom and he shook his head. He was still a bit shaken from Ix's Dark Anomaly attack earlier.

"Oogah…that was one mondo energy ball wasn't it…?" he slurred sleepily.

"Sonic." said Knuckles "You're up. And at a bad time too."

"Why, what's going on?" asked Sonic.

He then noticed his hands were cuffed behind his back and his legs were cuffed together. He then looked up and noticed that Angel

Island was looming right above them and they were in the crater of Angel Island.

"Oh right." said Sonic in realization.

Then all of Sonic's friends woke up from their pass out and they sat up straight. They were as follows, Tails the Twin-Tailed Fox, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Bunnie Rabbot, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse and Ruben the Water Panther. They all quickly realized that they were in a bad situation right now and now was probably the time to try and break free and flee for it.

"What's happening?" asked Tails "How did this happen to us?"

"I'm guessing that creep Imperator Ix did this." muttered Amy "It couldn't be anyone else!"

"Why are we in this crater and right under Angel Island?" squeaked Cream worriedly, looking up at the island "Is Ix going to drop Angel Island on us?"

"No he's not." said Knuckles grimly "But he has some sort of plan for Angel Island and I wish I knew what it was."

"Where is he?" asked Sonic.

"Up on Angel Island." said Knuckles "Preparing for his grand plan."

"That's right guardian." said Shade in a cold voice "Lord Ix will carry out his plan and you are all powerless to stop him as you are bound and broken before us."

"Bound maybe but not broken." said Knuckles grimly "Now Shade, tell us what Ix is planning to do up there."

"Why would I do something so foolish guardian?" said Shade dryly.

"We can't do anything about it now so there's no harm in telling us." said Knuckles, noting the fact that he and his friends were in chains "We can't stop Ix's plan whatever it is so really, there's no reason why you shouldn't tell us."

Sonic began to wonder what Knuckles was plotting here. Did he have some sort of escape plan and was trying to get Shade to tell him what Ix was doing so he could escape and stop his plan? Sonic decided to wait and find out what was going on. Shade considered for a moment. On the one hand, explaining a villain's plan to the enemy was always guaranteed to end in failure for the villain and that it would be best not to tell them anything. On the other hand, Knuckles and friends couldn't do anything about it even if they did know what Ix was doing. They were in chains and they had no way of getting up to Angel Island so what harm could telling them do? They were powerless and stranded below so giving them information on Ix's plan would do no good to them at all. Shade sighed and then spoke to Knuckles.

"Once the moon is at its highest, Ix's Dark Chaos Energy will be at its strongest." explained Shade "Dark Chaos Energy reacts to moonlight much better then sunlight. And once the moon is at its highest and his power is at its strongest, he will use the power…to destroy Angel Island."

Meanwhile in Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman was working like crazy on something or another. He had been doing so for weeks since the time Shadow the Hedgehog had left him* and he had hardly took a break or so. It was almost as if he was going off the deep end or something but he was obviously not working like mad for nothing, what he was working on must be huge and when he unleashed it, it would be a shock to anyone watching. He had fixed his headquarters from the damages done to it the time the Royal Fighters invaded it** at last and now he was working on something else. His sidekick Alonzo the Butler Bot had also been working on something of his own. He had been using the backup headquarters to build his secret project. So far, Dr. Eggman had been completely in the dark about this project and by the time he knew about it, he would be too late to stop him. As Alonzo worked on his project, he began to wonder what was Dr. Eggman doing out there. He had been working like crazy on something and the fat scientist hadn't told Alonzo anything about it. Presumably he wanted Alonzo to be surprised or he just couldn't be bothered to explain anything to him.

Regardless, Alonzo put those thoughts to the side and kept working on his project. He began to weld some panels together and he made them into a shape of some sorts.

"That fat idiot maybe working on something beyond epic or whatever but what I'm doing will knock his socks off." he said to himself "And the best thing is, he's too distracted in his own work to notice that I'm doing something behind his back. And when I unleash my secret project, I will take of the Eggman Empire and Dr. Eggman will be a nasty stain on the wall somewhere…"

Then suddenly, he was interrupted by a call from Dr. Eggman. The butler-bot jumped in alarm and he stopped what he was doing.

"Alonzo, are you keeping an eye on the city as I've instructed?" came Dr. Eggman's gravely voice from over the intercom.

"Um…yes master." lied Alonzo, pretending to read the computer monitors for the city's current status "Everything appears to be going well so far. The city is in tip-top shape for your master plan sir."

"Excellent." said Dr. Eggman "This plan of mine is so brilliant you would be lost for words at its brilliance."

"I do wish you'd tell me what it is you're planning." muttered Alonzo.

"I've told you a million times already, it's a surprise!" roared Dr. Eggman "Now stop grumbling and keep an eye on the city's progress as I finish things off for the master plan!"

"Yes sir." said Alonzo in a fake tone of loyalty.

Dr. Eggman switched off, leaving Alonzo to do what he liked now. Alonzo continued welding pieces together.

"Whatever that fat idiot's planning I don't know but I bet it's going to fail." purred Alonzo "And if it doesn't, perhaps I can HELP it fail…"

He cackled softly to himself as he continued to do his work…

Meanwhile, Knuckles and the others were speechless at the shocking revelation Shade had just given them. Imperator Ix was planning to destroy Angel Island! Knuckles was so shocked he thought he would die of shock.

"Ix is going to destroy Angel Island?" shrieked Knuckles, unable to believe what Shade had just said to him "You're…you're bluffing! You're bluffing Shade! Please tell me you're bluffing!"

"Why ever would I bluff?" scoffed Shade "Bluffing got people nowhere so I do not bluff. What I'm saying is the truth. Lord Ix plans to destroy Angel Island."

"Why?" asked Cosmo "Why does he want to destroy Angel Island?"

"Because Angel Island owes nothing to him." explained Shade "When Angel Island arose to avoid the comet that would have rendered us extinct, none of us expected for the elders to actually leave it floating in the air where it would be an easy target for anybody who see it. All Ix was doing was trying to lower the island so he could prevent it from sticking out like a sore thumb and then get attacked or invaded or whatever but the elders refused his offer, the idiots, and Knuckles' oaf of a father Locke threw Ix into the darkest corners of Mobius. Me along with my clan ended up joining him so Ix decided that if he can't have Angel Island then nobody can so he made it his top priority to destroy Angel Island in revenge for what the island's residents have done to him."

"Shade, do you realize the catastrophes that can happen if Ix destroys the island?" cried Knuckles "Everybody on the island will be killed and who knows what damage the falling debris is going to do! You can't let your father do this!"

"I am not letting him do this." retorted Shade "He's doing it himself; all I did was merely help him on his way to accomplishing his goals. That's all the Nocturnus did, help Lord Ix and now he's where he is, he can get his revenge and then he will be avenged and satisfied at long last."

"Shade, you and I both know that that's a lie!" yelled Knuckles "Ix will not stop there and you know it! He's crazy with Dark Chaos

Energy, who knows what he's gonna do after destroying Angel Island! I wouldn't be too surprised if he went on to destroy the entire planet!"

"Ix maybe mad and thirsty for vengeance but he's not that mad." said Shade "He's not going to go that far in his plans."

"He might do Shade!" cried Knuckles "You know what Dark Chaos Energy can do to you, make you crazy and hungry for destruction! If we don't stop Ix right now the fate of Mobius will be at stake here, not just Angel Island!"

Shade's eyes widened in surprise. She knew a lot about Dark Chaos Energy but she didn't know that Dark Chaos Energy was THAT dangerous! Maybe her father had gone off the deep end after all…

"Impossible…" gasped Shade "That…can't be true…"

"It is Shade!" yelled Knuckles "Ix will lose his mind and he'll do more then destroy Angel Island! We've gotta stop him now before he goes too far!"

"We can't stop Ix!" shouted Shade, swiping a hand at Knuckles but missing a she bent back to dodge the attack "He's full of Dark Chaos Energy and is unbeatable! You maybe willing to throw your lives away for Mobius but…I'm not." she said in a sudden solemn tone of voice "I refuse to face my father. I've been abused by him far too much in my life, I will not be abused again."

"Huh?" said Sonic in wonder "You've been abused by him? What do you mean?"

"My childhood was a living nightmare for me." said Shade, her cold and steely gaze turning into a very down-hearted gaze that showed there was a lot more to Shade then her tough, loyal personality "All my life I've been Ix's punching bag. Every time I stood out of line he would beat me with his Chaos Staff. My mother was a little worried about my wellbeing but all Ix did was ignore her pleas and continue beating me. He believed that all children should be severely disciplined if you want total loyalty from them so all through my childhood to my teen years to even now, he just beat me and

abused me over and over again. I really didn't understand what it was I did that made him beat me so much. I often thought he just wanted to use me as stress relief as he had nothing else. And after the exile of Lord Ix and the Nocturnus, the abuse continued some more with more beating and even death threats. I was a slave to Ix and I obeyed his every order and served him faithfully. I hate Ix with all my heart and I wish nothing more then to betray him and leave him at last so I can be free from his tyranny. But if I do, he'll kill me so I can't betray him. I really didn't want to help him destroy Angel Island but I had no choice. I have to serve him or I die, no second thoughts. There's nothing I can do and there's no hope of freedom for me. I'm just…Ix's little pet doomed to be his punching bag forever…"

And with that, Shade concluded with a tear trickling out of her eye. She wiped it away and tried to hold back anymore tears that her eyes were welling up with. Sonic and Knuckles were both pretty surprised by that sudden revelation. Shade's story seemed completely unusual for someone like her. At least it explained why she was so loyal to Ix. Loyal to Ix out of complete fear.

"Man…I never knew you had it that bad Shade." said Knuckles quietly.

"Of course you didn't." said Shade icily "You didn't grow up with me."

"I know." said Knuckles "But here's the thing Shade. If you don't stand up to Ix then your life won't improve. It will just get worse and worse and the only person who can stop all that abuse from Ix is you."

Shade got cross and she drew out her twin blades. She pressed them against Knuckles' throat and scowled at him.

"I can't!" she screamed "Ix will kill me if I dare to double-cross him and I am not willing to die just for trying to do something so foolish! I don't care what you say Knuckles, I can't betray Ix, I can't turn my back on him! I have to be at his beck and call or I die! There's nothing I can do about it and there's nothing nobody can do about it!"

"Yes there is Shade." said Sonic "If you let us go, we'll stomp on Ix for you. We'll rid you of Ix and then you can be free at last. And don't worry about Ix finding out about you helping us, we can just say that we broke free so he'll not suspect you at all."

Shade's hands quivered and her eyes narrowed to tiny slits of torment. She was feeling torn between her loyalty and her ambitions as of this moment. Sonic had a good idea there but she still wasn't brave enough to betray Ix. She wanted to be free of Ix but being free of Ix would ensure her death so she couldn't betray him. But if she didn't then she would put up with being Ix's punching bag forever. Shade just sighed heavily and she lowered her arms. Knuckles' face began to light up in hope that Shade was going to comply. But Shade still had that cold look in her eye so things were looking a little creepy now.

"Turn around Knuckles." she ordered.

Knuckles did as he was told and he turned his back on Shade. Shade then raised one of her blades above her head. Sonic's eyes widened in horror. Shade hadn't taken in what he had said! She was going to kill Knuckles!

"Shade No!" cried Sonic.

Shade ignored Sonic and she swung the blade down at Knuckles and…sliced the chain connecting the handcuffs to pieces. Knuckles' arms were now free of their hold and the handcuffs ended up lying on the ground in pieces. She then turned Knuckles back around and sliced the cuffs around his ankles to pieces. Knuckles couldn't believe his eyes. Shade had just cut him loose! Shade then turned to the Nocturnus Echidnas.

"Release them." she ordered.

"Yes Procurator." said one of the echidnas.

The seven Nocturnus Echidnas all wondered over to the others and they freed them from their bonds. Knuckles rubbed his wrists and looked at Shade.

"Um…thanks." said Knuckles gratefully "But…why are you doing this?"

"Your words of encouragement and Sonic's idea has made me decide that I can't be Ix's mindless servant anymore." explained Shade "I have to stand to him and if I fight alongside you and your friends, I am more likely to triumph over Ix and then I'll be free from him at last. Not to mention I won't let Ix destroy the world after he finishes with Angel Island. If he goes that far that is."

"I'm so glad you've come to your senses Shade." said Knuckles happily "Now we've got to get up to Angel Island and fast! The moon's almost at it's highest!" he added, looking up at the sky and noticing the moon was almost at its highest point.

"But we don't have a warp ring." said Tails "I bet Ix confiscated Knuckles' after we were all knocked out."

"Ix does have Knuckles' warp ring." said Shade "And my warp belt is still broken so I can't warp you all up there. However, my Nocturnus comrades still have working warp belts so they can warp you up there."

"But there's seven of them and eleven of us." said Geoffrey "How can them blokes warp us all up there?"

"If you hold onto the echidnas as they activate the warp belts, you'll teleport with them and they can take more then one person." said Shade.

"I see." said Geoffrey.

So a Nocturnus Echidna took two people at once to save having to warp back and forth for them. Sonic and Tails held onto one echidna, Knuckles and Amy held onto another, Cream and Cosmo held onto another, Bunnie and Geoffrey held onto another, Wilson and Mandy held onto another and Ruben and Shade held onto another. The last echidna didn't have anyone to warp with him. The Nocturnus Echidnas all activated their warp rings with the Mobian heroes holding onto them and the seven echidnas all vanished into thin air with a bright blue flash, taking the Mobians with them. They

had set their coordinates to Angel Island and now they were warping all the way up onto the island right now…

Up on the island, Ix was surrounded by Dark Chaos Energy that seemed to burn around him. Anyone that saw him would probably think he was on fire only the flames were black instead of orange. Ix was standing on the Master Emerald and patiently waiting for the moon to be at the highest it would go in the night sky when it was out. The moon literally had a few minutes left. Ix began to cackle and rock uncontrollably back and forth as the wait carried on.

"Yes…Yes…" he cackled insanely "A few more minutes to go and… my Dark Chaos Energy…will be at its strongest and Angel Island will be decimated! Once I destroy Angel Island, I think I'll move onto other places like Mobotropolis or Grand Metropolis or that disgusting Central City! I'll destroy whatever I like and I'll destroy everything until I find a place willing to bow to my feet! If not, then I'll just turn Mobius into a speck of dust that will aimlessly float through space forever! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

As he boomed with laughter, Chaos Energy circled around him in glee as if the Dark Chaos Energy in his veins was as excited as he was. Dark Chaos Energy had a way of reacting to certain emotions after all. He held his Chaos Staff at the ready and he peered at the moon again. One more minute left and then it would be time. He levitated into the air and he hovered over Angel Island with his staff poised and ready to activate.

"Say goodbye Angel Island!" laughed Imperator Ix "You'll pay for all the indignity you've ever caused me! You'll wish you hadn't exiled the great me at all and you'll wish you had listened to me! But it's too late for that now! You'll be nothing but boulders piled up on the ground with the population staining the earth with their dead bodies! The Day of Reckoning is here for you Angel Island and I am the cause of it!"

He raised his staff and began to charge up a super powerful attack that he would unleash on Angel Island and then destroy it. He could feel the Dark Chaos Energy surging up his veins as he prepared to

unleash it all onto Angel Island. The moon had finally risen to its highest point, meaning Imperator Ix's power was now at its strongest. Angel Island would not stand a chance against him now. But before Ix could do anything at all, seven bright blue flashes appeared around the Master Emerald shrine, causing Ix to stop what he was doing and look down to see what was happening. Ix touched down on the ground and to his surprise he saw Shade and the Nocturnus Clan surrounding the shrine with Sonic, Knuckles and friends at their side. This very sight made Ix wild with rage.

"Shade? Nocturnus?" he blurted "What are you doing on Angel Island with our prisoners by your side?"

"We have freed the prisoners so they can help us destroy you." said Shade in a brave voice, a voice she never thought she'd use when talking to Imperator Ix "We have decided to turn on you and help Knuckles stop you from destroying Angel Island."

Imperator Ix thought his ears had fallen off. This couldn't be! Shade and the Nocturnus had decided to double-cross him? Had all these years of abusing her been in vain? Well, now he could show Shade what happens to those who try to betray him! Ix's staff began to glow a very sinister black colour and his eyes narrowed to evil slits.

"You wretched child!" he roared "You dare to double-cross the great Imperator Ix? Do you not remember all the years of abuse you've received from me? Or did I beat you so hard I gave you memory loss?"

"I do remember all those years." said Shade "And I've decided I'll put up with it no more. I will not by your slave anymore Ix, I will be free from you at last. Nocturnus, shoot him!" she ordered.

The Nocturnus Echidnas obeyed and they fired their gun arms at Imperator Ix. The gun blasts all hit Imperator Ix but the insidious Imperator took the blows as if they were nothing.

"Fools! I am invulnerable now I have Dark Chaos Energy!" he gloated. "You cannot destroy me!"

But the Nocturnus blasting him was just a distraction so that Sonic

and friends could get in closer to Ix. The eleven fighters all surrounded Ix and they leaped on him Ix suddenly found himself being piled on and then pushed down to the ground by the Royal Fighters. Ix tried to throw them off himself but their combined efforts were too much for him. Before he knew it, he was down on his knees and Sonic and friends all pinned him down.

"Keep him down!" yelled Knuckles "Don't let him get back up!"

"We are doing but how's this supposed to work?" asked Mandy.

"If we keep him down, he can't use his powers and then someone can try and steal his staff." explained Knuckles "Shade, grab it before he…"

But before Knuckles could say anything else, Ix shouted

"Dark…ANOMALY!"

And a huge sphere of Dark Chaos Energy threw everybody off of himself and sent them flying backwards a good distance. Some of the fighters nearly fell off of Angel Island but they just managed to avoid falling to their deaths. Ix stood back up and he growled angrily at his opponents.

"You all have a death wish if you think you stand an ounce of a chance against me!" he crowed "Moonlight is when Dark Chaos Energy is at its strongest! You were all no match for me in the daylight so what chance do you have against me at night worms?"

"We'll do whatever it takes to bring you down Ix!" yelled Knuckles "No matter what time of day it is!"

"Nocturnus, bring him down!" ordered Shade, deploying her twin blades "Do whatever you can to stop our crazy leader from destroying this place!"

The Nocturnus Echidnas obeyed their new leader and they began shooting at Ix frantically but the shots just seemed to bounce off of Ix as if he was surrounded by a force field. The Nocturnus closed in on Ix, shooting more and more rapidly but Ix swung his staff around and knocked them all away with one swipe of the staff. The Nocturnus

Echidnas were thrown backwards and they skidded to a halt by the Master Emerald shrine. Shade leaped and her blades began to glow purple.

"Blade Rush!" she yelled, swinging at Imperator Ix.

She struck him several times over and began to swing her weapons rapidly at Ix, trying her hardest to make sure he couldn't fight back as she fought too quickly for him to keep up. But even that tactic was futile as Ix could easily repel Shade with his powers. He blew Shade away with a blast of Dark Chaos Energy and the traitor skidded to a halt a few feet away. The Nocturnus all leaped on Ix and cut loose on him with their fighting skills. They punched and they kicked Ix furiously while also shooting him at the same time. But all that did was just annoy Ix more then anything as he didn't even appear to be taking their shots.

"All your attempts are doing is vexing me!" yelled Ix "You cannot defeat me so you may as well cease these futile attempts."

"We will not cede to you former maser." said on Nocturnus Echidna "Our alliance is with Shade now and we have seen the error of your ways thanks to Knuckles so we will not rest until you're defeated."

"Well you will not live to see me get defeated!" boomed Imperator Ix "Because I am going to put you all to rest right now!"

And with that he walloped the seven Nocturnus Echidnas with his staff as if they were golf balls and his staff was golf club. The Nocturnus Echidnas hurled through the air and over the edge of Angel Island. Much like their eighth member earlier today*** they all fell to their deaths. Shade watched as her comrades all fell to their deaths. She was horrified by the scene before her. She had known those echidnas for a long time and now they were dead, she had just lost some of the only friends she had in life.

"No!" she cried "Not…my clan! I'm the last of the Nocturnus now!"

"The Nocturnus has diminished to merely one now." said Imperator Ix wickedly "How about that for a turn of events? I killed all but one guardian and now I've killed all but one Nocturnus? Well now the

Nocturnus is quickly going to become extinct when I'm finished with you Shade!"

He swung his staff at Shade and he tried to hammer her head in but the Procurator dodged the attack and leaped backwards. Shade deployed her helmet in order to protect her head from Ix's attacks and she leaped towards Ix with her blades ready. With a loud war cry, Shade ran over to Ix and slashed at him with her blades. The attack didn't hurt Ix and Ix swung his staff at Shade. Shade swung her weapons and the two weapons made a mighty clang sound as they hit each other. Shade and Ix clashed weapons with each other and Ix swung his staff at Shade, trying to hit her in the head but Shade ducked and Ix missed. Shade gave Ix an uppercut that sent him staggering backwards and she roundhouse kicked him while in midair. Ix turned to the side after that kick but he quickly retaliated with a whack to the face from his staff. Shade held her weapons together and she swiped them both at Ix, increasing the power of her Blade Rush technique. Ix staggered backwards but he wasn't down. He swiped at Shade but he missed again and the two echidnas clashed weapons with each other again. They then clashed weapons and their weapons crossed at face level.

"I once said that the only way to have a truly loyal child was to constantly discipline them." said Ix "It appears I was drastically wrong as you are not loyal to me at all!"

"Your abuse just made me desperate to leave you Ix." said Shade "All I needed was some inspiration to betray you and I got it from Knuckles and Sonic. Once I defeat you, I'll be free from your tyranny at last."

"You will never be free from me Shade!" bellowed Ix "As long as I live, you never be free and you will never defeat me!"

Shade just promptly slashed Ix across the face with her blades. Ix was wearing a helmet so the attack didn't affect him as much as it could have but the blade had left a nasty gash above his eyes. Shade then proceeded to kick Ix in the gut and then trip him up with a roundhouse kick to the legs. Ix fell onto his back and Shade grabbed his staff. She tried to yank it out of her father's grasp but Ix was just too strong for Shade. Ix held on tightly to his staff and he

activated a burst of Dark Chaos Energy that threw Shade away from him and sent her crashing into the Master Emerald shrine. Ix then picked himself up and advanced towards Shade only to get spin-dashed from behind by Sonic. Sonic and friends had recovered from Ix's earlier attack and now they were ready to team up against the insidious Imperator. Sonic spin-dashed towards Imperator Ix again but Ix fired a Doom Orb at him and Sonic was blasted backwards. Tails then landed an attack of his own flying towards Imperator Ix foot first and then kick-slamming him in the face. The attack worked and Ix fell over backwards. Ix picked himself up but Tails kicked him from behind again. Ix staggered forward and Tails made a grab for Ix's staff. He missed and Ix whacked him from behind with it. Tails hurtled into the ground and he groaned in pain as the sheer force of Dark Chaos Energy overwhelmed him. Ix then tried to hammer Tails into the ground but Ruben leaped into the air, did a twirl in mid air and landed an amazing roundhouse kick to the face that stunned Ix for a moment. Ix dropped his staff and he fell down on one knee. Ruben grabbed the staff and tried to whack Ix with it but Ix held up his arm and blocked the attack. Ix then socked Ruben in the gut and snatched his staff back. He tried to whack Ruben but Ruben dodged his attack and he jumped up to his height. He then began to rapidly kick Imperator Ix in the head while he was level with his face like a ninja would be able to. Ix grunted as Ruben forced him backwards with rapid kicks and Ruben kept it up until Ix was literally pushed back to the edge of Angel Island. Ruben fell back down to the ground and before Ix could do anything, Ruben tripped him up and Ix fell over the edge. Ix suddenly found himself falling back down to the ground once again. Ruben panted and beamed proudly at his success. Sonic and Tails had seen the whole thing and they were impressed.

"Whoo hoo! You rock Ruben!" cheered Sonic.

"Thank you." said Ruben with a polite bow "Just because I am missing my aqua-collar, it doesn't mean I'm no threat. My novice style ninjutsu and kung fu really pays off when I use it."

"Sadly water panther, I don't think Ix is defeated yet." said Shade "He has Dark Chaos Energy so he's probably…"

Before she could finish her sentence, Imperator Ix suddenly

appeared from below and he soared through the air like an angry eagle. He landed back on Angel Island with Dark Chaos Energy crackling around his body like crazy and he looked very angry indeed. Ruben's ears drooped back in fear, unable to believe he had failed to defeat him.

"A fall of an island is not going to be of much harm to me underlings!" sneered Ix "I can levitate with Dark Chaos Energy and even if I couldn't, the fall wouldn't kill me because my power will defend me from the impact!"

"Well I guess we'll just have to beat you black and blue then Ixy!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing the Imperator once again.

But Ix didn't even feel that blow. Sonic's spin-dashes were nothing to him now because of his increased power. Knuckles charged towards Imperator Ix and he threw some punches at Ix. But Ix blocked every blow Knuckles threw at him with his staff. Then Ix threw a punch of his own and he sent Knuckles hurling backwards for thirty meters. Amy and Cream double-teamed Imperator Ix by launching attacks of their own. Amy hammered Ix in the back and Cream threw her pet Chaos Cheese like a baseball at Ix. But Amy's hammers didn't even tickle Imperator Ix and throwing Cheese at Ix seemed to hurt Cheese more then Ix. The poor Chao rubbed his throbbing head and cooed dizzily. Ix turned around and blasted Amy and Cream away with a Chaos Blast. Cosmo, seeing as how she wouldn't really be of any help, didn't dare fight Ix but she did have a method of distraction in mind. She scooped up some soil from the grass beneath her feet and she made a mud ball the size of a human heart with it. Ix turned around and saw her on her knees scooping soil and decided to deal with the Seedrian. Cosmo stared at him fearfully with her ocean blue eyes. Ix just scoffed at Cosmo with his black eyes.

"I've never seen a creature like you before." said Imperator Ix "But judging by your appearance, I'd guess you're a plant creature. Does that mean you die any differently to the others?"

Cosmo just promptly threw the mud ball at Ix. The soil hit Ix's eyes and the Imperator was momentarily blinded by the soil. Ix rubbed his eyes furiously to try and get the soil out of them but while he was doing that, Knuckles and Bunnie Rabbot both decided to punch Ix

together. They were the hardest hitters of the R.F.S. so their combined punches made the onslaught even deadlier and more painful. As powerful as Ix was, even that attack made him gasp in surprise. Bunnie and Knuckles then began to cut loose on Imperator Ix with a furry of punches each. Knuckles hit Ix all over his lower body and Bunnie hit him all over his upper body. Ix couldn't fight back because they were attacking too quickly and too strongly and he still couldn't see properly because of Cosmo's mud ball. Knuckles and Bunnie then both gave Ix an uppercut and Ix was sent hurling backwards through the air. Bunnie converted her arm into a cannon and she shoot at him frantically before he could land on the ground. The blasts hit Ix and the Imperator spiralled in mid-air after those shots and he landed very painfully on the ground. But given his Dark Chaos Energy, he wasn't as affected by the impact as he could have been. While Ix was down, Geoffrey St. John primed his arm-mounted crossbow and he shot a stun-dart at Ix. But the dart just disintegrated before it could even touch Ix. Ix picked himself up and roared furiously. His roar could have woken up the entire planet. Knuckles and Bunnie ran towards Ix, ready to take him down again but Ix blew them away with a Chaos Blast. Geoffrey then tried his combat skills on Ix by punching him as hard as he could but Ix kicked the skunk in the gut and then yanked on his white hair. He forced Geoffrey down on the ground and stomped on his back. The skunk yelled a terrible scream of pain. Ix then prepared to smash Geoffrey's head in but Wilson threw his double-bladed pole, also known as a spinning blade weapon, at Ix. The weapon clipped Ix on this side of his helmet and left a long scratch on it but the weapon didn't hurt him. Ix spun around and fired a Doom Orb at Wilson. The dog yelped in fear and scurried away before it could hit him. Mandy went onto the offensive with some brass knuckle attachments she had taken with her and she let loose a flurry of punches on Ix. Ix took the punches despite Mandy's best efforts and he punched Mandy in the gut. Mandy wheezed loudly and she fell down on her knees. Ix's punches felt like being hit by a baseball bat due to his Chaos Energy. Mandy doubled over and coughed loudly. She sounded like she was about to hack up a fist sized hairball due to how throatily she coughed. Ix then walloped Mandy with his Chaos Staff and sent the mouse hurling through the air. She landed sharply on her back and she groaned as if she had stomach ache. Wilson was horrified at that sight and he ran over to his girlfriend.

"Mandy! Are you alright?" cried Wilson, bending down and lifting Mandy's body upright so she was in a sitting position.

"Urgh, I feel like I've been hit by a bull." croaked Mandy hoarsely "That Imperitor Ix guy packs one heck of a punch."

"It's pronounced "Imperator" Mandy." corrected Wilson "And I do agree, Ix packs a punch. How can we possibly stop him?"

"Beats me." said Mandy, rubbing her stomach better "But I'm sure we'll tire that guy out eventually if we keep trying."

Secretly though, she had doubts they were even going to make it in this battle. As for Imperator Ix, Knuckles, Bunnie and Amy teamed up on him with their respective attacks but all they did was irritate him more then anything and Ix blew them away with yet another Chaos Blast. Knuckles landed on his back, Bunnie landed on her stomach and Amy crashed into the Master Emerald Shrine. Sonic spin-dashed Ix in the head but that attack didn't hurt Ix at all. Sonic then swerved around and homing attacked Ix in the back. Ix fell over onto his stomach and Sonic punched the back of his head. Ix however yelled

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

and he teleported out from underneath Sonic. Sonic stared in surprise as Ix vanished from underneath him. Ix reappeared behind Sonic and he pile-dived the hedgehog in the back. Shade Blade-Rushed Ix but even that attack didn't seem to hurt him. Ix hammered Shade in the stomach with his staff and Shade hurtled backwards into a tree in the nearby woods. Ruben tried some of his kung-fu skills on Ix but Ix whacked the water panther away and sent him crashing into the ground. Cosmo tried to distract Ix by throwing another mud ball at him but Ix destroyed the mud ball before it could even hit him. He then zapped Cosmo with a bolt of Chaos Energy and the Seedrian hurtled backwards. Tails stared in horror at Ix attacking Cosmo. Just seeing his love interest get hurt made him want to rip Ix to shreds. Tails charged angrily at Ix and he head-butted him in the back. Ix fell onto his stomach and Tails leaped over the Imperator and over to Cosmo.

"Cosmo!" cried Tails "Are you OK? Did Ix hurt you too much?"

"I'm…OK Tails." said Cosmo weakly "I just wish I was able to help you fight Ix. I'm of no help in this battle."

"I know you can't fight Cosmo but you can still help us." said Tails "You're good at distracting enemies so if you can keep Ix's attention off of us, we'll be able to land a good blow or two on him."

"You have a point Tails." said Cosmo "I'll try and make sure I don't get hit by him again."

Ix tried to zap Tails and Cosmo with a bolt of Dark Chaos Energy but the two managed to dodge the attack before they could be hit. Cosmo grabbed a large stone and quickly threw it at Ix. Ix whacked the stone away and Tails took the opportunity to pile-dive Ix in the stomach before he could ready himself. Ix tried to attack Tails but Cream flew in his way with Cheese flying beside her. The two flew around Ix and kept his attention diverted. Ix just tapped the ground with his staff and blew Cream and Cheese away from himself. Knuckles and Shade then pounced on Ix and they knocked him down onto his back. Knuckles and Shade fisted him as hard as they could but Ix teleported away from them with a Chaos Control and he reappeared behind them. Shade quickly defended herself with her blades before Ix could wallop her with his staff but Ix used his other arm to uppercut Shade into the air. He then grabbed Shade's leg just as she hurtled backwards and he slammed her on top of Knuckles. The two echidnas lay on top of each other, grimacing in pain. Sonic, Tails, Amy, Wilson, Mandy, Bunnie, Ruben and Geoffrey all charged towards Ix at once, ready to go to town on him but Ix raised his staff and boomed at the top of his voice

"Dark… **ANOMALY** !"

Another Dark Anomaly attack emitted out from his staff and the sphere of Chaos Energy blew the attackers away like leaves in the wind. Everybody landed in various spots around the island. Sonic, Tails and Amy lay near the edge of the island, Bunnie, Geoffrey and Ruben lay near the Master Emerald shrine and Wilson almost fell off the ledge but Mandy quickly grabbed him and pulled him back up. Ix cackled triumphantly and Dark Chaos Energy crackled around his

body like crazy. He was preparing to launch another Dark Anomaly attack on his enemies and when he launched this one, the fight would end terribly for everybody…

Meanwhile in Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman had been interrupted from his work by an urgent call from his servant bot Alonzo. Dr. Eggman fumed at the fact he had been interrupted and he left an Eggman robot to finish off his work. Dr. Eggman went into the backup headquarters where Alonzo was and he found Alonzo sitting at a computer and watching the monitors. Alonzo had decided to take a break from his secret project and he decided to see what Sonic was up to just for the sake of it. He had been watching the fight on Angel Island and what he had been watching amazed him. Dr. Eggman sat down beside Alonzo and fumed.

"Why have you interrupted my work Alonzo?" demanded Dr. Eggman crossly.

"I'm so sorry I did so sir." said Alonzo "It's just that the monitors are picking up large levels of Chaos Energy coming from Angel Island and I decided to see what was going on. Look."

Dr. Eggman peered at the monitor Alonzo was watching and his eyes widened at what he was looking at. The Master Emerald had turned black in colour and Imperator Ix was fending off Sonic and friends with ease. The Chaos Energy readings on the monitors were all pointed to Imperator Ix. Eggman looked at the readings and he couldn't believe what the readings were saying. Imperator Ix had insane levels of Chaos Energy. The readings were well over nine thousand and Ix looked incredibly powerful to say the least. Dr. Eggman smiled widely at what he was watching.

"My, my what a powerful creature that is!" he cried "And the Chaos Energy readings are off the scale! I bet once my secret project is done, I'll be able to bring that creature down and then I'll siphon all of its energy! All that energy will provide marvellous power for my city! Not to mention, the Master Emerald will be ripe for the plucking as well."

"Well let's just hope Sonic and friends don't suddenly turn the tables and beat that creature or we'll lose the opportunity to steal its power." said Alonzo as he watched Ix pummel Sonic again "That thing has insane power, the readings are still going crazy trying to label it! We must steal that energy so Robotropolis will be even more powerful."

"Well if Sonic does defeat that thing then I've only got the Master Emerald to worry about." muttered Dr. Eggman "Oh well, one Chaos Powerhouse will be better then none so it won't matter too much if that creature gets defeated."

Dr. Eggman and Alonzo stayed sat where they were and they continued to watch the epic battle on Angel Island as it raged on…

Back on Angel Island, Sonic and friends picked themselves up and ran onto the offensive once again. Sonic spin-dashed Ix, Tails tail-whipped Ix, Knuckles punched him, Amy hammered him, Cream and Cheese distracted him, Wilson and Mandy double-teamed him, Geoffrey fired darts at him, Ruben kung-fu kicked him, Bunnie gave him an uppercut, Cosmo distracted him and Shade Blade Rushed him. But all those attacks, no matter how strong, powerful or well launched they were, just didn't harm Ix in anyway. Ix took the many blows and he blew them away with another Chaos Blast. Everybody hurtled into the air and crashed down onto the ground once again. Ix laughed at his puny opponents.

"You pathetic mongrels!" he crowed "You do realize that my power far succeeds yours? Knuckles is the only one with Chaos Energy but because of his inferior skills and power, he has no idea how to use it against me and neither of you have Chaos Energy so you will never be able to fathom me!"

"You know what; I am getting sick of that overly arrogant attitude of his." muttered Sonic, rubbing his back better "Gloat, gloat, gloat. Does he ever shut up?"

"Ix never tires of boasting." muttered Knuckles, rubbing his dreadlocks "But he has every right to boast. He's too powerful. We

can't possibly defeat him with all that Dark Chaos Energy he has. We need a plan we need it fast before Ix decides to destroy the world."

"We can't use the Master Emerald as Ix has corrupted it." muttered Sonic "That was our best option. So we're gonna have to use the seven Chaos Emeralds."

"As much as I'm not willing to lose them to Ix, we're gonna have to use them." said Knuckles "It's a good thing I know where they are. They're in a tomb in the woods."

"I would go along and speedily get the emeralds so we can take Ix down quicker but I dunno where the tomb is." said Sonic "You'll have to guide me Knuckles."

"OK then Sonic." said Knuckles, holding Sonic's hand "Run into the woods and keeping going straight until I tell you to stop."

"No problem Knuckles." said Sonic "Let's do it to it!"

And with that, he ran off as fast as he could with Knuckles in tow, leaving his friends to keep Ix busy. Geoffrey saw Sonic running off with Knuckles in hand and he fumed.

"Humph, real nice!" he grumbled "Sonic's abandoned us! I oughta give that hedgehog a good telling off at the end of the day!"

"Geoffrey, Sonic would never do that." said Tails "He's probably going to get the Chaos Emeralds. If you remember, Sonic did send them there after his super showdown the other week****."

"Oh right." said Geoffrey "I bet the Chaos Emeralds will give us the edge we need in this battle."

"They will Geoffrey." said Tails "That Horda, Borda and Rorda combo-bot was destroyed by the emerald's power so Ix will have no chance."

He suddenly cried and dodged an attack from Imperator Ix. The Imperator swung his staff at him but he missed. Everybody else kept on fighting Ix to give Sonic and Knuckles time to get the Chaos

Emeralds.

Deep in the woods, Sonic kept running at his trademark speed with Knuckles holding onto him. Sonic kept his eye open for anything that looked like a tomb as he kept running. After a minute or so, Knuckles told Sonic to stop running and the hedgehog skidded to a halt. They had come across a huge slab of stone set in the ground. Knuckles stepped forward and he pressed on the stone. The stone shrunk down into the ground about sixty centimetres and then slid away into the earth. The seven Chaos Emeralds were all sitting in a stone bed at the bottom of the tomb, all shining brighter then the stars in the sky. Seeing the emeralds again made Sonic feel good for some reason. The emeralds had that kind of effect on him for some reason.

"So that's the tomb." said Sonic "And the Chaos Emeralds are nicely hidden in there. Well, I'll just grab them and go Super Sonic on Ix right now if you don't mind."

"You're not using the emeralds to defeat Ix Sonic." said Knuckles "I am."

"You are?" said Sonic doubtfully "Can you go super or something?"

"Sort of." said Knuckles "When a Chaos Powered being uses the emerald, they become a Chaos being. My father told me that and he should know because he's done it before. I even witnessed that event."

"OK then." said Sonic "Seems fitting for you to defeat Ixy since he's your arch nemesis."

Knuckles grabbed the seven Chaos Emeralds and he held them out at arm's length. The emeralds hovered above his hands and they suddenly began to circle around his body. Knuckles closed his eyes and he began to chant to himself.

"The servers are the seventh chaos." he chanted "Chaos is power enriched by the heart. The server exists to unify the chaos."

The Master Emerald chant worked on the Chaos Emeralds since the Chaos Emeralds were just shorter versions of the Master Emerald. The Chaos Emeralds continued to circle around Knuckles' body faster and faster until they became a bright colourful blur around his body. Knuckles' red fur then suddenly began to turn into a dark Chaos Energy green colour. The Chaos Emeralds vanished from sight and Knuckles levitated off the ground. He was completely green in colour save for his gloves and shoes and the white crescent mark on his chest and he had a green glowing aurora around his body. Sonic whistled in amazement at Knuckles' transformation.

"Neat." said Sonic "So that's a Chaos being I guess."

"Yes it is Sonic." said Knuckles "I am now Chaos Knuckles and Imperator Ix is in for an onslaught of Chaos powered beating from me!"

Knuckles then shot off at top speed, leaving Sonic behind in the woods and he headed towards the Master Emerald shrine. Sonic ran off through the woods after Chaos Knuckles, eager to watch the battle between Knuckles and Ix…

Meanwhile, Ix had completely wiped the floor with everybody. Tails, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben all lay on the ground defeated and barely conscious. Shade was still on her feet and she tried one last desperate attack but Ix whacked her away and sent her crashing into the shrine. Shade winced in pain and she pressed her back against the shrine. Ix advanced on her menacingly with his staff at the ready. Shade stared fearfully at Ix with her back against the shrine. She was trapped and she had nowhere to run. Ix was going to kill her and there was no way she could escape from this inevitable fate. Ix pointed the staff at Shade, the tip glowing brightly with a black aurora.

"Your resistance has fallen, your Nocturnus comrades are deceased and you are powerless to stop me." gloated Ix "You should have thought twice before you decided to betray me."

"I have no regrets Ix." said Shade "I'm glad I betrayed you. It gave

me a lot of glory to fight against you and show you my gratitude for your abuse in my childhood."

""You really are flaccid minded Shade." snorted Ix "Well; I'll take it upon myself to put you down for good."

He raised his staff and prepared to kill Shade once and for all. Shade just closed her eyes and waited for the killer blow, knowing what was coming and that she couldn't stop Ix from killing her. But before Ix could even so much as touch Shade, Chaos Knuckles arrived on the scene and blasted Ix with a blast of Chaos Energy. Ix hurtled through the air and he crashed face first into the ground. Ix picked himself up and stared in horror at the mere sight of Chaos Knuckles. Knuckles levitated just above the Master Emerald with his dreadlocks waving about as Chaos Energy surged up his body. Everybody picked themselves up and they stared in wonder at Chaos Knuckles. Sonic arrived on the scene at last and he eagerly awaited for the battle to begin. Ix backed away fearfully, staring at Knuckles in horror.

"No! That's impossible!" blurted Ix in fear "You can't be a Chaos Being! The Master Emerald is corrupted so you can't use it!"

"I didn't use it." said Knuckles bluntly "I used the seven Chaos Emeralds. My dad fused the emeralds all together so there are now seven instead of thousands and I will use their power to destroy you Ix!"

"No!" shrieked Ix "You can't! You can't possibly have that kind of power from seven mere gems!"

"Maybe not." said Knuckles "But I will hinder your power by freeing the Master Emerald from your spell!"

Knuckles held his hands out and then began to chant.

"The servers are the seventh chaos." he chanted "Chaos is power enriched by the heart. The server exists to unify the chaos. Master Emerald, cleanse yourself from the Dark Chaos Energy! Don't fall victim to its evil power! Expel the dark powers and be pure once again!"

The Master Emerald began to glow bright enough to lighten up the entire planet. Ix shielded his eyes as the dark Chaos Energy in the Master Emerald suddenly shoot out of the Master Emerald and disintegrated into thin air. The Master Emerald's black colour died down into its lush, beautiful green colour once again and the dark Chaos Energy in the Master Emerald vanished into atoms, never to be used again. Ix's eyes returned back to their normal icy blue colour and his Chaos powers had diminished back to his original power. Ix roared in anger.

"NOOOOOOOOOO!" he screamed "YOU VILE LITTLE WORM! YOU'VE DESTROYED MY DARK CHAOS ENERGY! **I WILL RIP YOU APART FOR THIS GUARDIAN!** "

And with that, Ix leaped up to Knuckles with his staff blazing with Chaos Energy. Since the dark Chaos Energy in the Master Emerald was gone, the dark Chaos Energy in him had diminished too so he only had Chaos Energy now. Knuckles wasn't the least bit intimidated by the sinister Imperator. Ix was nothing to him now he had been severely weakened. But Knuckles wasn't going to destroy Ix, he was going to send him away. Knuckles held his arms out and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

The whole world around Imperator Ix suddenly froze in mid-air as if someone had whipped out a TV remote and put him on pause. Ix was frozen in time and he would be stuck like that for a while. Ix looked like he was leaping towards Knuckles and had just stopped in mid-leap. Knuckles then yelled

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

again and a huge portal opened up behind Imperator Ix. Knuckles grabbed Ix's Chaos Staff and yanked it out of the frozen Imperator's hands. He then chaos-punched Ix straight in the face and the stalled Imperator hurtled backwards and into the portal. The portal swallowed Ix up and then closed the moment he went through it. Knuckles was pleased to see Imperator Ix was gone for good now and he destroyed Ix's Chaos Staff by breaking it into pieces. Knuckles lowered down to the ground and his green Chaos fur

changed back to its natural red colour. The seven Chaos Emeralds reappeared and they lay down on the ground at Knuckles' feet. Knuckles was back to normal now and Imperator Ix was gone.

"Whoo hoo! Way past cool Knuckles!" cried Sonic "What did you do to Ix?"

"I've sent him into the void." said Knuckles "My dad says it's a zone where evil spirits and nefarious demons live and play so I though it would be fitting to send Ix there. I've broken his Chaos Staff so now he can't leave the void, he'll be stuck there until the day he dies. Just what he deserves."

Then suddenly, to his amazement, Shade ran up to the heroic echidna and she threw her arms around him, grasping him in a tight hug. Knuckles couldn't believe it, Shade was hugging him. And to think they were sworn enemies earlier!

"I'm…I'm free!" cried Shade with joy "Free from that demon forever! Thank you so much Knuckles! Thank you for everything. I don't know how I can repay you for all you've done today."

"Don't mention it Shade." said Knuckles "It was for the good of Angel Island. Just a pity your clan is dead though and my guardian friends are all dead. You've got no one around you and I'm gonna have to guard the Master Emerald on my own."

"Maybe I can be a guardian." suggested Shade "Maybe me and you can both be guardians and we can protect the Master Emerald together."

"That's a great idea Shade." said Knuckles "Angel Island needs more then one guardian."

"So I guess everything's OK now." said Sonic.

"It is Sonic." said Knuckles "Angel Island is safe at last and Imperator Ix is gone forever. Angel Island has no threats now."

"Except Dr. Eggman but he's manageable." said Sonic "I have no idea what that fat idiot's doing now but I bet it'll be nothing to worry about."

If only he was correct…

Back in Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman was pleased to see Imperator Ix lose the battle but he didn't let it gnaw at him. He stood up from his chair and walked away from the monitors.

"What a surprise." he muttered "Sonic and friends came out on top. Oh well."

"Pity the creature lose, it would have given us a lot of Chaos power." said Alonzo.

"The Master Emerald is still ripe for the picking and my project is almost complete." said Dr. Eggman with an insidious smile on his moustached face "Tomorrow morning, I'll steal the emerald and Angel Island will end up becoming the new city of Atlantis!"

He hooted with laughter to himself as he left the room behind. Alonzo still had no idea what Eggman's plan was but he had a feeling it was going to be epically evil and epically amazing once he put it into action…

Footnotes:

*** See Story 63**

**** See Stories 60-61**

***** One Nocturnus Echidna died already in Story 71**

****** See Story 45**

Angel Island is safe and Imperator Ix is gone forever! But that doesn't mean the day is done yet! Dr. Eggman has some sinister plot up his sleeve! What could he possibly be planning? Well all the answers await you in the very next

chapter which happens to be my THIRD milestone! DON'T MISS IT IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU! Reviews are welcome.

To sonicthekittiekat12: what's your favourite Heroes of Mobius story so far?

P.S. I'm going away to Southampton for my birthday on Friday and I won't be back till Monday so I won't get to do any writing over the weekend (aww!) so don't expect any updates in a hurry. See you later!

The Fallen Angel

I'm great! I'm incredible! Y'know why readers? Because I am on my THIRD MILESTONE! (Cheers and throws streamers everywhere) I must have been working hard if I've managed to get so far and yet I have so much more to come! For now, enjoy this milestone phenomena that is bound to go down in history as one of my most memorable stories ever...!

Story 75 *: The Fallen Angel*

The next morning dawned bright and sunny. The sun rose slowly into the sky, waking up the sleepy citizens of Mobius with its warm, bright, happy light and the darkness of the night sky diminished into nothingness as the moon set and the sun rose. A sun-rise was not usually the kind of thing that mad-scientist and Mobius enemy Dr. Eggman would be pleased to wake up to but right now for some strange reason, he was standing at a window in his recently repaired headquarters and smiling widely and evilly like he always did. He stroked his moustache casually and he cackled quietly to himself.

"Aaaah…" he said to himself "It looks like today is going to be bright and sunny. Just the perfect day for Angel Island's demise and my greatest invention to be put into action."

He walked away from the window and he sat down in his chair. He folded his legs and he whistled quietly to himself. His robot-forces were just finishing the final touches on his great invention and in a minute or so; it would be put into action. Dr. Eggman pressed a button on the arm to his chair and a loud bleeping sound was heard. This was the wake-up call for his servant-bot and lackey, Alonzo the Butler Bot. Alonzo, who was sitting in the corner with his eyes closed and his arms and wheels folded away to make it look like he was a missile just sitting there in the corner, booted himself up and he zipped over to Dr. Eggman quickly. He saluted to his master in a fake sign of loyalty.

"Good morning master." said Alonzo brightly "Did you sleep well sir?"

"I could hardly sleep last night due to my excitement." said Dr. Eggman "I'm so excited about my big plan that I keep feeling all wobbly and tingly just thinking about it!"

"I wish I knew what it was you were excited about master." said Alonzo grimly; still hurt over the fact his master hadn't breathed a word about his plan to him.

"Alonzo, how many sodding times do I have to tell you?" growled Dr. Eggman "It's a surprise and I want not just Sonic surprised by it but I want you to be surprised by it so you'll appreciate my genius even more!"

"Sorry I asked sir." said Alonzo quickly "I will not bring it up again."

"Don't fuss over the matter Alonzo, it's almost ready anyway." said Dr. Eggman "My workers have a few finishing touches to go and then it's ready. While we're waiting for my plan to be ready Alonzo, you can fetch me my breakfast. I can't conquer the world on an empty stomach after all."

"Right away sir." said Alonzo, quickly zipping out of the room to fetch Eggman's first meal of the day.

The moment Alonzo left, Dr. Eggman continued to grin maliciously to himself. He began stroking his big bushy moustache again and he muttered to himself.

"The fools back on bonny old planet Earth who decided to shut my lab down and exile me under the suspicion that I was insane will regret their foolish mistake once they see this genius in motion." purred Dr. Eggman "Once I unleash this on Mobius, I'll return back to my home planet and show those accursed G.U.N. folk that I really am a genius and not as insane as they made me out as!"

After Eggman finished talking to himself, Alonzo reappeared into the room with his breakfast on a tray. Dr. Eggman's breakfast usually consisted of two slices of salami, a piece of toast, two fried eggs, a

doughnut and a glass of orange juice (no wonder he's so fat!). The meats and eggs were genetically made seeing as Eggman didn't have a farm anywhere in Robotropolis nor did he have an endless supply of Earth food with him. Dr. Eggman grinned even wider and his mouth watered. He picked up his knife and fork and he quickly tucked into his breakfast. He stuck a piece of salami into his fat, wobbly cheeks and he chewed it oh so slowly so as to savour its flavour.

"Oooooh I just love this kind of breakfast." he said to himself "Just fit for a genius!"

"I know." said Alonzo "You have it all the time. It's a wonder as to how you're not getting any fatter then normal now."

"I will thank you very, VERY kindly for not commenting on my body Alonzo!" snarled Dr. Eggman, pointing his knife at him "We humans are very sensitive about our bodies you know!"

"Well if you're so sensitive about your appearance then why don't you trim your waistline already?" muttered Alonzo.

"I've got better things to do then watch my weight!" snapped Dr. Eggman "Now shut up and let me enjoy my breakfast in peace!"

"OK master, I shall leave you to munch in private." said Alonzo, slowly trundling away from Dr. Eggman and leaving him to eat his incredibly unhealthy breakfast.

As Dr. Eggman continued to nosh, Alonzo left the room and waited for the door to close behind him. The door closed behind him and Alonzo trundled down the quiet, empty corridors in no particular direction. As Alonzo trundled down the corridors, he began to think to himself.

What is that fat moron planning? he thought in his mind *Well whatever it is, it'll fail miserably and if it doesn't, then maybe I can help it on it's way…after all, there's nothing like a failure to prove I'm smarter then Dr. Eggman. And if he does win, which is really unlikely, I'll just take his victory from him with my own secret project…*

He couldn't wait to see Dr. Eggman's face once he unleashed his secret project which he had spent all his working hours building and keeping it secret. When he unleashed it, not even Sonic the Hedgehog would be able to stop him and then he would overthrow his stupid master and be the ruler of the Eggman Empire…

Back on Angel Island, Knuckles the Echidna had gathered up the pieces of Ruben the Water Panther's destroyed Aqua-Collar and he lay the pieces on top of the Master Emerald, which had just recently been cleansed of Dark Chaos Energy. Angel Island was still recuperating from Imperator Ix's invasion but it was already recovering from the insidious Imperator's evil. Imperator Ix had been sent to the void by Chaos Knuckles so he would never return and now Knuckles was fixing Ruben's destroyed aqua-collar. Ix had destroyed it yesterday and in turn had left Ruben unable to use his water powers but the Master Emerald's power would fix it in an instant just as Ix had used it to fix his Chaos Staff after Sonic had broken it. After a while of green glows and energy surges, the pieces put themselves back together and they reformed the familiar shape of Ruben's aqua-collar. It was all nicely fixed as if it had never been broken. Knuckles picked the collar up off the Master Emerald and he passed it over to Ruben. The water panther eagerly caught it and he quickly snapped it back around his neck. Ruben felt a tremendous wave of water flow through his veins as he clipped his collar back on. He felt just like a water panther again.

"Thank you Knuckles." said Ruben "I was afraid I'd be cut off from my water powers permanently."

"No problem Ruben." said Knuckles "The Master Emerald's power has made some improvements to your collar while fixing it. The power of the Master Emerald has made the collar indestructible. It can never be broken again but you'll still have to be careful not to lose it as it won't stop the collar from coming undone."

"OK Knuckles." said Ruben "I'll remember that. At least I won't have to worry about it getting destroyed again."

He felt his collar happily. It was still warm from the Master Emerald's

energies merging the pieces back together. Sonic the Hedgehog and the rest of his friends were having a chill-out around the Master Emerald shrine. The fight with Imperator Ix last night had left them feeling tired and worn out so they had spent the night on the flying island. They had decided to stay a little longer on the island as there was no hurry to get back home and right now, they were around the emerald shrine and enjoying the peace and quiet up on the floating beauty. Tails the twin-tailed fox, Sonic's best friend and mechanic, was sitting on the ledge with his love-interest Cosmo the Seedrian by his side. The two were gazing out into the distance and seeing what they could see from where they were. Cosmo remembered her first visit to Angel Island and how much she had loved it* and looking back on it again, it was still as beautiful as ever.

"Isn't the view of Angel Island just beautiful Tails?" asked Cosmo sweetly.

"Not as beautiful as you Cosmo." said Tails without even realizing it.

Cosmo giggled a flattered giggle at Tails' flirting remark. The fox began to wonder what was so funny until he suddenly realized he had just said something aloud unknowingly. He went bright red in the face but he tried his best to hide it.

"Tails, you say some of the nicest things you do." said Cosmo brightly "But am I really more beautiful then the scenery around us?"

"Um…" said Tails, trying hard not to trip over his words as he spoke "Y-y-y-yeah…y-y-you are Cosmo…I think…you're more beautiful… then all I've ever…s-s-seen…"

"Tails, I'm not that pretty in all honesty." said Cosmo modestly "There are Seedrians on my home world who are much prettier then me, especially my older sister Galaxina."

"I didn't know you had a sister Cosmo." said Tails.

"You do know." said Cosmo "I miss her as much as I miss my parents. Galaxina is a wonderful sister and the best I could ask for. I wish she was here with me right now, I feel empty without her with me. At least I know she'll be alright as she didn't get sidetracked by

the Martian that attacked my pod and she possibly made it to my planet's twin planet."

"I bet she made it too." said Tails, putting a hand on Cosmo's shoulder "I bet your sister is safe on the twin-planet with all the other Seedrian children that were evacuated. And I'm sure they miss you as much as you miss them."

"I know they miss me." said Cosmo sadly "We Seedrians have a high social structure after all and we care deeply for one another. That's why we're such a peaceful race, we get along better then any other race in the galaxy. Just a pity nobody else can follow our example, Martians in particular."

"Well nobody's perfect." said Tails casually "Still, the other races out there could at least try to get along. We Mobians mostly get along but like any other planet, we have people who are just unbelievably evil like Lola Gunn, Zira the Ruthless, those four guys who won't give us their names** and of course, Scourge the Hedgehog and his cronies."

"Hmm." said Cosmo "At least I'm around good Mobians such as Sonic the Hedgehog and you Tails and I can rely on you all to stop me from feeling lonely and afraid while I'm here. You particularly as you're so wonderful and kind to me."

She then wrapped her arms around Tails and warmly embraced him. Her head rested on his soft furry chest and she could hear Tails' lovely little heartbeat. Tails felt hot with bashfulness as Cosmo hugged him and Tails hugged her back. He liked the way Cosmo's arms felt around his body right now and he didn't want to break up this loving moment. If he could, he would keep this hug going forever. Unfortunately, Amy Rose, Sonic's hammer-waving fan-girl saw the two cuddling each other lovingly and she immediately got jealous.

"Aww, that's so adorable!" she squealed delightedly "But it's so unfair at the same time! How does Cosmo get a boy so easily and I'm just stuck at square one?"

She then turned to Sonic who appeared to be trying to ignore her.

He kept his attention focused ahead of himself. Amy grabbed Sonic's arm and shook it furiously.

"Hey Sonic, why don't you embrace me lovingly just like Tails does with Cosmo?" she wailed "Do you not love me or something? Or are you not a hugging person like I am?"

"Amy, I like you but only as a friend at the moment." muttered Sonic "Maybe I'll grow a fondness for you as I go along but for now, just be patient with me will ya?"

"OK. Sorry Sonic." said Amy quickly "It's just seeing Tails and Cosmo having a tender moment with each other makes me feel a little…um…jealous as I'm having no luck with my love-life so far and Cosmo's got it easy."

"Well maybe if you mature more and obsessed less maybe I'd be willing to give you a chance Amy." said Sonic, trying his best not to lose his cool "I thought you remembered the deal we made after me and you destroy Egg-Cobra anyway***."

"Oh yeah." said Amy as she remembered that she had promised not to obsess over Sonic and give him his space "Sorry, I just forget from time to time. I'll try not to forget this time."

"That's cool Amy." said Sonic with a thumbs up.

Amy beamed with pride. Any nice comment from Sonic was good enough for her. As for Wilson the Dog, a long time Royal Fighter and friend of Sonic's, he had been telling his girlfriend Mandy Mouse about the Chaos Emeralds seeing as she had been replaced by an Automaton during the Chaos Emerald hunt the other month**** and therefore, had no idea what a Chaos Emerald was. Mandy held the purple one in her hands and was awestruck by its unbelievable beauty. The other six were sitting around the Master Emerald at the top of the shrine. She began to wish she had taken part in this hunt as she stared at the emerald. It was one beautiful gem. Despite her tomboy personality, Mandy still had a girly side hidden deep inside her and when it came to gems, that girly side showed as clear as crystal. Wilson told Mandy the story behind the Chaos Emeralds, which he like the others had heard from Knuckles, and what the

emerald's power was like.

"So let me get this straight." said Mandy "This is a Chaos Emerald, there are seven of them, all differently coloured and when you have all seven, a miracle's supposed to happen."

"That's right." said Wilson "And when Sonic uses them, a miracle does happen. He turns super and becomes super strong and powerful."

"Does he turn gold like he did the time he saved us from Egg-Squid after he was de-roboticized*****?" asked Mandy "That looked pretty super."

"He does." said Wilson "Although according to him, he used the Master Emerald's power when he did that. The Master Emerald works the same way the Chaos Emeralds do as according to Knuckles, it's just a super-sized Chaos Emerald really."

"I see." said Mandy, staring back at the glorious purple Chaos Emerald in her hands "I wish I'd taken part in the Chaos Emerald hunt with you. These gems are gorgeous. They're so beautiful I wish I could keep one of them. It'd look good in my bedroom I bet."

Knuckles looked at Mandy after she said that and he thought on that subject for a moment.

"Hmm…I don't see the problem with letting someone have a Chaos Emerald." he said to himself "After all, if someone managed to find them and tried to steal them, they'd only get six of them and they'd have a hard time tracking down the seventh. So I guess Mandy can keep one…"

He looked back at Mandy and said to the purple mouse.

"Mandy, you may keep one of the emeralds but ONLY if you take good care of it and make sure NO ONE gets their hands on it." said Knuckles.

"Oh thank you Knuckles!" said Mandy happily, clutching the emerald to her chest "Are you sure about this though? Is there no problem whatsoever?"

"There is no problem." said Knuckles "You can have one of them but you must take good care of it or I'll have to confiscate it from you."

"Don't worry about it Knuckles." said Mandy "I'm one of the toughest fighters around and I take great care of my possessions; no one will be stealing anything from me! Especially Wilson when he tries to pinch one of my music CDs when I'm not looking." she added with a sly smirk at the orange furred dog.

"Mandy! I told you not to bring that up!" blurted Wilson with a groan "I hate it when you bring that up!"

"Well as long as it helps you to get the message which is "don't try to pinch my belongings", I'll keep bringing it up cute stuff." chuckled Mandy, teasingly giving Wilson a noogie-noogie on the head.

Wilson just laughed as Mandy playfully noogied him. As for fellow fighter Geoffrey St. John and his good friend Bunnie Rabbot, the cyborg rabbit, they sat together on the other side of the shrine and they looked up at the sky together.

"Boy does it feel good to relax a little." said Geoffrey "We could do with a rest what with what we've been through recently."

"Ah know, we've been darn busy lately haven't we?" said Bunnie "Me and you tangle with mah former friend Ravage Bloodfang******, Sonic fights a kung-fu mistress*******, then we tangle with Shadow the Hedgehog********, then Scourge tries to take over Royal HQ********, then we tussle with some bounty-hunters**********, then while Sonic's away, we deal with some reptilian anarchists********** and finally we take part in the fight against Imperator Ix. We could do with a rest we could."

"Sadly though, I don't think we're gonna get it." muttered Geoffrey "I can't shake this nagging feeling in my big black bushy tail that Dr. Eggman's plotting summet and is waiting to unleash it at this moment. He's been quiet for two whole weeks so that alone is not a good sign for us."

"Dr. Eggman can throw what he likes at us." said Bunnie bravely "We'll just smash them all to bits! Nothin' is too strong for us to beat

after all! So ah wouldn't worry too much about it Geoffrey."

Bunnie would take those words back once Eggman showed Sonic and friends what he had planned for them…

Back at Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman had finished his breakfast and he lay back in his chair and sighed happily. All he had to do was wait for work to be finished and then his plan could finally be put into motion. Luckily, he wasn't kept waiting for long. For the moment he began to relax, he got a call from one of his robot workers. Dr. Eggman answered it immediately.

"Dr.-Egg-Man-our-work-is-com-plete." droned the worker "Your-plan-can-comm-ence-now."

Dr. Eggman grinned so wide his smile almost popped off the sides of his face.

"Thank you worker." said Dr. Eggman "Get to your stations everybody, the flight of Robotropolis is about to begin!"

The moment Dr. Eggman gave the command, all of the robot workers in the city began rushing around frantically, quickly trying to get to their work stations before Eggman's plan could commence. Dr. Eggman thumped a button his chair arm and the alarm for Alonzo bleeped loudly. Alonzo, who was on the second floor of Eggman's headquarters, heard the alarm and he quickly rushed back up to the top floor. He made it up there in a matter of seconds and he stopped just beside Dr. Eggman's chair. He quickly saluted his fat master.

"You called sir?" he asked politely.

"My plan is ready to go Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman with a very wide grin on his face "So now you can finally see what my plan is."

"I hope it's going to be good." said Alonzo "And let's both hope that it actually works."

"It WILL work Alonzo you titanium tin-head!" snapped Dr. Eggman

"And I should know because this is all MY work and everything I build ALWAYS works!"

"Yes they do." said Alonzo "Just a darn pity they can never beat that blasted hedgehog."

"Well THIS will beat that blasted hedgehog!" crowed Dr. Eggman "Because this will be too powerful for even Sonic to best!"

And with that he slammed a button on his chair arm and a control pad extended up from the floor and positioned itself directly in front of him. Dr. Eggman pressed a few buttons on this control pad, which Alonzo wondered to himself why it was even there, and then he pulled a lever on the pad. The moment the lever was pulled, Robotropolis suddenly began to shake as if an earthquake had hit it. Alonzo yelped and he grabbed the edges of Eggman's chair to stop himself from falling over. Dr. Eggman didn't seem worried at all, it was quite clear he knew what was really going on. A tremendously loud sound could be heard from underneath the city itself. It sounded like jet turbines powering up and getting ready to blast off. Robotropolis began to shake ever more furiously as this powering up noise got louder and louder and louder. Then, there was a tremendous noise as Robotropolis suddenly began to break away from the ground. The entire city began to slowly lift up from the ground and break away from its housing spot! Huge chunks of rocks, dirt and rubble rained down on the crater Robotropolis left behind as it began to rise up off the ground like a ship taking off. The whole city had somehow been transformed from a plain old robot city to a flying fortress! The underneath of Robotropolis had ten gigantic jet turbines the size of the Titanics' funnels that had been attached underneath the city and they easily had enough power to keep a whole city airborne. Robotropolis had pretty much become a floating island just like Angel Island. There was a crater the size of London City left that showed where Robotropolis once sat and it was a lot deeper then it would have been as the worker bots had to dig some of the earth away in order to make room for the jet turbines they had fitted. Alonzo could not believe his eyes. Dr. Eggman had managed to get an entire city to fly! He really was a genius! This was just as amazing as Egg-Timer! Maybe Dr. Eggman wasn't such an idiot after all…

"Are you impressed Alonzo?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"Yes!" blurted Alonzo "I'm blooming impressed I am! You've some how managed to get Robotropolis…to…to…fly! The whole thing's a flying fortress! This is beyond genius Dr. Eggman! This is…a miracle among men! The entire galaxy even!"

"It is isn't it Alonzo?" said Dr. Eggman while stroking his bushy moustache "And G.U.N. thought it couldn't be done! But here I am now, in this flying city of mine ready to conquer Mobius with it! Once I conquer Mobius, I'll fly this thing to Earth and conquer Earth with it! Then G.U.N. will be sorry they messed with me!"

He cackled like a demented hyena and he thrust the levers forward. The jet turbines roared louder then those of a jumbo jet and the flying city that Robotropolis had been transformed into began to fly forwards and head off to its designated target: Angel Island…

Back on Angel Island, Shade the Echidna, last of the Nocturnus and former lackey of Imperator Ix, emerged from the nearby woods and joined Sonic and friends around the emerald shrine. Knuckles looked pleased to see her. After Ix's defeat, Shade had decided to redeem herself for her crimes by joining Knuckles in guardian duties since Ix had killed all the guardians and Knuckles was the only one left. Shade was the only one of the Nocturnus Clan left so it seemed fitting for her and Knuckles to be joint guardians of Angel Island.

"Hey Shade." said Knuckles with a grin on his face "How's the guardian memorial coming on?"

"I've finished it." said Shade "Now the residents of Angel Island can pay their respects for those poor guardians by visiting the memorial. I am so sorry that Ix killed them all Knuckles. I hope the memorial will be one way of making up for it."

"You don't need to be sorry Shade." said Knuckles, putting a hand on the female echidna's shoulder "You couldn't do anything about Ix and nobody could stop him from doing what he did. At least he's gone for good now so he can't destroy Angel Island."

"I know." said Shade "I'm so glad to be free from that demon at last. No more will I have to be afraid of him or being killed by him. Ix is a thing of the past now and I owe it all to you Knuckles."

"Aw thanks Shade." said Knuckles modestly "I'm so glad that me and you don't have to kick each other's teeth in anymore."

Shade just gave the echidna a sly smirk and a sneaky expression on her pretty face.

"I know, but me and you could still have a friendly duel just to see who's the mightier echidna out of us." she said teasingly.

"Yeah and that will be me!" boasted Knuckles, flexing his muscles and clenching his fists.

"That will be decided between the two of us guardian." said Shade coyly "But not now. Another time perhaps."

"Yeah." said Knuckles casually "I'm not in the mood for kicking any butts right now."

Sonic just smirked to himself as he saw the two echidnas talking to each other.

"Heh, I think Knuckles has just found his female counterpart." he chuckled to himself "I wouldn't be too surprised if those two end up getting hitched."

"I just hope Shade can be trusted." said Amy grimly "She IS Ix's daughter after all so who knows what she's up to."

"Oh Amy, you love to assume don't you?" muttered Sonic "Shade betrayed Ix, sided with us and joined in on our battle against Ix so why would she be up to anything?"

"There's a tiny possibility that she's putting up an act just to trick us and is plotting to rescue Ix from the void." thought Amy "But maybe that's just me being too cautious."

"It is little girl." said Shade coldly.

Unfortunately for Amy, she had overheard her talking to Sonic and she was shocked to hear that Amy had doubts against her and her allegiance. Shade stared Amy directly in the eye and she narrowed her eyes into furious slits of anger.

"Don't you dare accuse me of deception!" she snarled angrily, pointing sharply at Amy "When I wanted to be free from Ix, I meant it! I only did the things I did before because Ix forced me to! I never wanted to be a villain and now Ix is gone, I don't have to be a villain anymore so don't you dare accuse me of trying to deceive you all!"

"OK! OK! I'm sorry Shade!" cried Amy, quickly recoiling "Please don't punch me in the face or Blade Rush me or something along those lines!"

"That's something I would have done when I was Ix's lackey." muttered Shade "Now I'm free, I don't need to resort to needless violence just because I'm angry so I won't hurt you just for upsetting me Amy."

Amy sighed with relief. She definitely liked a good Shade much better then an evil Shade. She just needed to stop being so suspicious about her. Knuckles just put a hand on Shade's shoulder to sooth her angry nerves.

"Take it easy on Amy Shade." said Knuckles "She's been known to jump to conclusions a lot. I should know because Sonic tells me."

"I see." said Shade "I'll try to be more patient with her next time."

"And Amy is going to try and be more trustworthy of others isn't she?" asked Sonic teasingly, nudging Amy playfully with his elbow.

"Yes Sonic." muttered Amy through gritted teeth, resisting the urge to crack Sonic's head open with her hammer.

Amy's good friend Cream the Rabbit sat by the shrine with all the others and she picked some of the bright colourful flowers that grew around the back of the shrine and admired their beauty. She loved flowers after all, especially when it came to smelling them. Her pet Chao Cheese danced happily through the flower patch. He cooed

ever so happily. Chao were flower lovers too and Cheese was no exception.

"Chao! Chao!" cooed Cheese happily.

"I know Cheese, these are some really pretty flowers aren't they?" said Cream, looking at a blue and white flower she held in her hand "I think I'll take some of these home and give them to mother. She'll love them."

Cheese nodded in agreement. But the Chao's smile suddenly ran away from his face as a low ominous rumble was heard in the distance. Nobody else could hear it at the moment but Cheese could. Chao have very sensitive hearing and can detect danger long before anyone else can. Cheese began to wonder what was going on and the Chao fluttered around the flower patch. Then he fluttered over to the edge of Angel Island and he peered into the distance. The Chao stared in horror at what he saw. He could see the gigantic shape that was Robotropolis flying in the air coming towards the island slowly but steadily. Even though the Northern Border of Megapolis was a long way away, you could see pretty far on top of Angel Island and Robotropolis had some strong jet turbines so it was coming to them at a decent speed. It would arrive in a matter of minutes. Cheese began to squeal like a frightened mouse and he flew around in blind panic like a frightened bee. Cream dropped her flowers and she ran over to Cheese, wondering if there was something wrong with Cheese. She gently grabbed the Chao, being careful not to grab him too roughly as Chao are sensitive and delicate.

"Cheese, whatever is the matter?" asked Cream nervously "Is there something wrong?"

"Chao! Chao! Chao!" squealed Cheese, waving an arm in the direction he'd seen Robotropolis flying to them.

Cream let go of Cheese and she looked in Cheese's direction. She saw Robotropolis coming to them and her ears straightened in surprise. The rabbit's eyes shrank down into nervous pupils of fear.

"Oh no!" she squealed "There's something really big coming towards

us!"

But that was just the beginning of their worries. As Robotropolis flew closer and closer to Angel Island, it began to make loud ominous rumbles that echoed through the sky and made the buildings and scenery down below shake slightly. The rumble caught everybody's attention and they all leapt back onto their feet, wondering what the heck was going on.

"What's that noise?" cried Mandy, clutching the purple Chaos Emerald to her tighter then ever.

"It must be an earthquake!" cried Wilson "Not that it'll affect us as we're up here but I feel sorry for everybody down below!"

"I don't think it's an earthquake." said Shade "I can feel the rumbles even from up here. If it was an earthquake, we wouldn't even be feeling it."

"Then I guess it's something we don't know about." said Sonic "Let's check it out."

"Sonic, I think I've just found out what all the rumbles are about." said Tails, staring in horror at what was coming towards them "There's something really large coming towards us!"

"Say what?" asked Sonic, peering into the distance.

He could see what Tails was looking at and his eyes widened in surprise. What he saw was the very city that Dr. Eggman lived in, Robotropolis, hovering in the air like Angel Island and coming straight to them! It looked like a flying fortress and just seeing this amazing sight made Sonic wonder if he was dreaming. He quickly rubbed his eyes and blinked furiously. Then he looked again. He was not dreaming, he was actually looking at a flying city! Everybody stared in surprise at this unbelievable sight that befell them. Robotropolis, Eggman's city and base of operations, was actually flying in the air and coming towards them! Nobody knew what to do in this situation except stare in wonder. Tails and Cosmo hugged each other fearfully. Wilson and Mandy decided to do the same thing and so did Geoffrey and Bunnie. Cream held Cheese very

tightly, the Chaos burying his head into her chest and Ruben just stood there, unable to move or speak. The water panther had seen many strange things in his life but none like this. Sonic, Knuckles and Shade bent down in battle ready stances and prepared to face whatever it was they were up against. After a few minutes, the floating city that Robotropolis had become arrived at Angel Island and stopped directly in front of the floating island. Everybody gaped at it, amazed at the sight and intimidated by its enormous size. Robotropolis dwarfed Angel Island easily. If the city attacked the island, the island would have no chance against it. Nobody could speak for a minute or so due to the unbelievable appearance of Robotropolis right now.

"Well trim my quills!" blurted Sonic "It's Robotropolis and it's… floating! Just like Angel Island!

"Maybe that's what that blighter was doing for two weeks!" grumbled Geoffrey "Turning Robotropolis into a flying fortress! The whole blinkin' city's airborne!"

"You know this flying city?" asked Shade.

"We do Shade." said Knuckles grimly "It's Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman's city and base of operations."

"Dr. Eggman…" mused Shade "Isn't he the very tyrant that is warring it out with Mobius right now?"

"Bingo Shade." said Sonic "Dr. Eggman's the one that we're all fighting against to prevent him from conquering our planet!"

"I see." said Shade "I heard much about him while I was in exile along with Ix and my clan. He didn't sound like much but judging by the fact his city is now airborne, I guess I underestimated him. What could he possibly be planning to do with his flying city?"

"I bet it's going to destroy Angel Island with us on it!" shrieked Ruben "We have to get off of this island and fast before we get obliterated!"

"What? And give Eggman the satisfaction of destroying Angel

Island?" snorted Sonic "Over my dead body! I'd rather wait for the sky to fall then let Eggman destroy this place!"

"Just because his city is flying it doesn't mean Eggman's going to win!" yelled Knuckles "We'll just use my warp ring to warp ourselves onto the city and destroy it…"

He reached for behind his dreadlocks only to find out there was no warp ring behind them like their usually was. Knuckles then suddenly remembered something. He face-palmed himself angrily.

"Damn it! I forgot to retrieve my warp ring from Imperator Ix before I sent him into the void!" he moaned "I've lost my warp ring forever now!"

"Way to go knuckle-brain!" grumbled Sonic "I bet when Ix wakes up from his Chaos-Control he's gonna use it to warp himself back here and make chilli-sauce out of us all!"

"Nah, he needs a Super Warp Ring to get out of the void." said Knuckles "Warp rings can only cover considerable distances, they can't travel between zones. Only a Super Warp Ring can so Ix is still stuck even if he has my warp ring. Unfortunately, we can't warp ourselves onto Robotropolis because I don't have a warp ring!"

"And my warp belt is still broken." muttered Shade "I can't warp you over either."

"No problemo." said Sonic with a cocky grin on his face "We'll warp ourselves onto Robotropolis with Chaos Control. We have seven shiny trump cards and one really big shiny trump card right here so Chaos Control is easily our only option now."

"Brilliant idea Sonic!" Tails commented "One of Chaos Control's many abilities is teleportation so we can use them to warp ourselves onto Robotropolis."

But before anyone could do anything, a huge image projected out from Eggman's headquarters in the centre of the city and extended out to the front of the city so Sonic and friends could see it. The image had Dr. Eggman's face on it and he had a grin on his face

that was so wide it was a wonder to anyone how it wasn't poking out of the edges of his face right now.

"Greetings Sonic and friends." he announced loudly to his enemies "Welcome to the maiden flight of Robotropolis, my old city converted into a flying fortress that has power unmatched by anything! As you can see, I really have outdone myself haven't I? I've managed to get my whole city to fly, much like how you Mobians had some how gotten Angel Island to fly!"

"Yeah, yeah, we're all really impressed by your amazing work Dr. Eggman." said Sonic who was clearly not amused at Eggman's bragging "Now do as a favour and get your flying city out of here before we have to destroy it and make you really angry again!"

"Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho Sonic you moron of nature!" laughed Dr. Eggman "Did you really think I spent all this time and effort making this city able to fly just so you can tell me to go away? Not on your miserable life! Robotropolis' flight is all part of my brand new evil plan, a plan that will go down in histories as one of my biggest triumphs ever!"

"Yeah right." scoffed Sonic "What are you gonna do like? Make Robotropolis sit on top of Angel Island?"

"No Sonic, I am going to do this!" yelled Dr. Eggman.

The holographic image of Dr. Eggman's face disappeared and Robotropolis suddenly began to go forwards. It flew forwards straight into Angel Island. It bumped the island furiously and everybody was thrown off their feet by the force of the bump. But Robotropolis didn't stop there, it continued to move forward and it started to push Angel Island. Angel Island was slowly but surely being pushed by Robotropolis. Angel Island was soon shifted away from above the crater it once sat in before it rose into the sky and being shifted to a different location by Robotropolis. Everybody picked themselves up and they quickly found out what was going on. They could feel Angel Island being pushed right under their feet.

"Tails, what's happening?" asked Cosmo worriedly, clutching Tails tightly by the shoulders.

"Eggman's making Robotropolis push Angel Island for some reason." explained Tails "Why is he doing this and what's he up to?"

"Whatever he's up to, I don't like it." said Sonic "Eggman must be pushing Angel Island for a reason and it isn't gonna be a good one! Well I'm gonna stop him before he continues pushing the island!"

"You'd better Sonic because if Eggman keeps this up, the island won't be able to stand the pressure anymore and it'll shake apart!" cried Knuckles.

Sonic did not need to be asked twice. He curled up into a spiky ball and he spin-dashed towards Robotropolis. Because Robotropolis was up close to Angel Island, Sonic could easily leap onto the city now so one spin-dash would be all he needed to get onto the flying city. But before Sonic could make it over the iron fence and gates (which had been taken with the city), Sonic hit what appeared to be an invisible wall and he ended up hurtling back onto Angel Island. He crashed into the shrine and made the Master Emerald shudder slightly. The emerald didn't fall off luckily. Sonic picked himself up ad grumbled as he rubbed his head.

"Oogah woogah, Eggman's shielded the city!" he yelled "I can't get onto Robotropolis!"

"Then we'll just have to warp ourselves onto the flying city with Chaos Control!" yelled Knuckles "Do your thing Sonic!"

Sonic obliged and he leaped onto the Master Emerald shrine and on top of the Master Emerald. But before Sonic could do anything at all, Robotropolis made Angel Island jerk slightly and Sonic fell off the shrine and onto the grass below him. Bits of earth underneath Angel Island began to rain down onto the ground after that sudden jerk. If Robotropolis kept doing that, Angel Island would crumble to bits like a broken sandcastle. Geoffrey peered into the distance and he noticed that he could now see the ocean from where he was. When Angel Island was in its original position, you could not see the ocean and the more Angel Island was pushed, the closer the ocean was to them. That obviously meant Robotropolis was attempting to push Angel Island over the ocean. That was not a very good sign at all. If Robotropolis was pushing Angel Island over the ocean then that

meant…Eggman was probably attempting to sink it!

"Hey mates!" cried Geoffrey "The bloke's pushing us towards the ocean! I think I have an idea on what the blighter's up to!"

"What's that then Geoffrey?" asked Sonic, rubbing his bottom from after he fell off the shrine.

"I think he's planning to sink Angel Island with us on it!" explained Geoffrey.

"Oh my gosh!" cried Tails "He's planning to sink Angel Island?"

"That's a bit extreme, even for Dr. Eggman." muttered Sonic.

"I think there's more then just us in trouble if Angel Island sinks." said Mandy, watching the ocean get bigger and bigger as they were pushed ever closer to it "If this thing falls into the ocean, it's gonna cause the world's largest tidal wave and many of Mobius' countries and cities will be completely submerged and everybody below will drown!"

"Well we've GOT to stop him now!" cried Wilson, drawing out his trademark spinning blade weapon "Sonic, use that Chaos Control thing to get us on the city now!"

"OK, you don't have to tell me Wilson!" muttered Sonic.

But even more trouble began. Before Sonic could use the Master Emerald's power, a huge structure suddenly began to telescope up from the centre of Robotropolis and form a shape. Everybody watched the thing extend and they began to wonder what Eggman was up to now. The structure stopped extending for it had reached its full height and it was forming a shape that looked like a giant magnet that a battleship would usually have. The magnet was wider then Earth's largest satellite dish and taller then the Eiffel Tower. The magnet then suddenly began to reach forward until it was looming over the front half of Robotropolis as if it was an arm reach to grab something. The magnet stopped reaching forward and it stood still, looming above the gates of Robotropolis. And then it activated. The magnet made a loud humming sound as it activated

and it aimed directly at the emerald shrine. At first, nothing seemed to happen but suddenly without warning, the six Chaos Emeralds surrounding the Master Emerald began to lift off the shrine slightly. Shade spotted this and her lilac eyes widened in surprise, a rare expression for the tough, no nonsense echidna to use.

"Knuckles, that magnet on Robotropolis is attracting the Chaos Emeralds!" yelled Shade.

"It's what?" cried Knuckles.

Mandy clutched the purple Chaos Emerald even tighter and kept away from the magnet's power as the other six Chaos Emeralds began to lift off the shrine. Then they all shot forward towards the magnet like piece of metal being attracted and they stuck to the magnet before anyone could make a leap for them. But then things started to get even more worrisome for the heroes. For not only the Chaos Emeralds were being attracted by the magnet, the Master Emerald was too! It began to lift slowly off the shrine and towards the magnet! Knuckles gasped in shock and he leaped onto the shrine. He grabbed the Master Emerald and he held it back. But the magnet was too strong. It continued to pull the Master Emerald forward. Shade could see Knuckles needed help and she joined Knuckles in keeping the emerald down. The magnet was still too strong and the two echidnas could barely keep the Master Emerald from lifting away.

"Urrrggghhh…no!" cried Knuckles as he gripped the emerald ever tighter "I'm not letting Eggman steal the Master Emerald! We must save it!"

"We need more help!" cried Shade "We're not strong enough!"

"We'll help." said Ruben, leaping onto the shrine ad clutching the Master Emerald with the two echidnas "Come on everybody! Pin the emerald down and don't let Eggman get it!"

Within a matter of seconds, everybody was up onto the emerald shrine faster then you could say "honorificabilitudinitatibus" and they all pinned the Master Emerald down to the shrine the best they could as the magnet continued to try and pull it towards itself. Mandy

however, stayed back from the shrine as she didn't want to lose the only Chaos Emerald they had left and she kept it close to her chest. Amy Rose decided to try something out. She summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand and aimed at the magnet. She threw the hammer at the magnet like a boomerang and the huge yellow and red mallet spiralled towards the magnet. The hammer hit the magnet but it didn't destroy it, it harmlessly pinged off of it and it fell down to the ground, not that Amy was bothered as she could summon hammers from airspace. Amy fumed angrily at the fact her plan failed. But that was the least of her worries now. Despite the combined strength of Sonic and friends, the Master Emerald was still being attracted by the magnet and all their combined strength did was just keep the Master Emerald from being pulled to it. They wouldn't be able to keep this up forever though so they needed to do something and fast. Luckily, Knuckles had an idea.

"Hey everybody!" grunted Knuckles "Push the Master Emerald off the shrine and roll it away from the magnet's range! Once we've done that, we can destroy the magnet and get the Chaos Emeralds back and save the Master Emerald from it!"

"Sounds like a plan Knuckles, let's do it to it!" yelled Sonic "Push everybody! Push!"

With that said, everybody began to push the Master Emerald towards the edge of the shrine. Knuckles, Shade, Ruben and Cream were near the edge already so they pulled the emerald to them while the others pushed while being careful not to fall off. Knuckles felt behind him with his foot and he felt the steps to the shrine. He stepped down the steps with Shade, Ruben and Cream keeping the Master Emerald steady as the others pushed it down the steps. If they stopped pushing, the Master Emerald would be attracted by the magnet so the ones pushing still had to push. Sonic, Tails, Amy, Cosmo, Wilson, Geoffrey and Bunnie all pushed as hard as they possibly could, trying to fight the strength of the magnet pulling the emerald as well as the weight of the emerald. Up on Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman watched this performance grimly as the city continued pushing Angel Island and the magnet tried to attract the Master Emerald. He wasn't pleased to see that Sonic and friends were keeping the Master Emerald out of his grasp and he thumped the

arms of his chair angrily.

"No, no, no!" he cried "This cannot be! Sonic and friends are keeping the emerald out of the magnet's pull and are pushing it away from it! No! My plan is working so beautifully, I already have the Chaos Emeralds I can't lose my chance to get the Master Emerald!"

"Have you got a way of fixing this problem Eggman?" asked Alonzo.

"Yes!" growled Dr. Eggman "I'll just increase the magnet's power!"

He thrust a lever on the control pad forward and the magnet's attraction pull suddenly increased drastically. Sonic and friends had just gotten the Master Emerald down the first few steps of the shrine until suddenly, the magnet's pull increased and the Master Emerald began to push them back. The range of the magnet also increased too and Mandy could feel the emerald in her hands being tugged slightly so she stepped further back to get out of its range. The Master Emerald began to push Sonic and friends back across the shrine and the Mobians just tried pushing ever harder. They felt like they were trying to push a fully grown elephant due to how strong the magnet's pull on the Master Emerald was. Knuckles, Shade, Ruben and Cream tried pulling harder as Sonic and friends tried pushing but their efforts were futile. The magnet's pull was just too strong. Sonic then suddenly gave way and he fell forward onto his face. That was enough to weaken the push of everybody and the Master Emerald was suddenly yanked from the Mobian's grasps. Knuckles, Shade, Ruben and Cream all fell forward as the Master Emerald was pulled from them and it hurtled over Sonic, Tails, Amy, Cosmo, Wilson, Geoffrey and Bunnie's heads. The Master Emerald sailed through the air and it attached itself straight onto the magnet. Now that was done, the magnet retracted back into it's original housing spot before anyone could try and retrieve the emeralds and it retracted back down into the ground, taking the emeralds with it. Dr. Eggman had successfully stolen the Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald. Not only that, Robotropolis had finished pushing the island over the ocean. Angel Island now loomed over the wide stretching waters that surrounded the many countries of Mobius. If Angel Island fell then countries such as Downunda would end up becoming the city of Atlantis. And now the Master Emerald had been

stolen, there was a likely chance that it would happen. Robotropolis hovered slowly away from Angel Island and Dr. Eggman's face reappeared in front of the city in holographic form. Dr. Eggman laughed gloatingly at his defeated enemies. Sonic just scowled angrily at Dr. Eggman. He looked like he was about ready to kill him now.

"I bet you didn't expect that to happen did you my ridiculous resistors?" crowed Dr. Eggman "I've stolen all the emeralds and pushed Angel Island over the ocean! If I remember correctly, doesn't the Master Emerald keep Angel Island afloat or something like that?"

"It does Eggman and now you've stolen it it's going to fall!" bellowed Knuckles angrily "You give the emerald back now or I'll tear your city to the ground bit by bit!"

"Oh Knuckles, why ever would I put all this time and effort into stealing the emeralds just so you can have them back afterwards?" sneered Eggman "I'm not stupid you know! I need these emeralds for much dire purposes then you Mobian mongrels do so they're mine now! I hope you enjoy your dip into the ocean because it's probably the last thing you'll get once the island drops! T.T.F.N Mobians! And that of course stands for "Ta, Ta for now!"!"

He exploded with laughter and the holo-image of his face switched off. Robotropolis, with a mighty roar of the jet turbines, turned around and left Angel Island. It flew away from the doomed island and left it to drop into the ocean like a falling stone. After a matter of minutes, Robotropolis disappeared into the distance and Sonic and friends were just left standing around wondering what to do.

"What are we gonna do Mr. Sonic?" squealed Cream "Angel Island' s going to fall into the ocean and we're going down with it! We're all gonna die aren't we?"

"Not if we can all get off this thing before it falls." said Sonic "You, Tails and Bunnie can easily fly us all off in a jiffy so we're safe."

"But what about Angel Island?" asked Ruben "The island's going to fall and it'll cause a tidal wave that'll sweep over everything it can

reach! We can't let Angel Island submerge our countries and kill everybody! We need to save the island or half of Mobius will be underwater!"

"Angel Island's lost to us Ruben." muttered Knuckles in an obviously defeated tone as he punched the floor of the shrine angrily "The Master Emerald and all the Chaos Emeralds have been stolen and they're the only things that can keep it afloat. It won't float with anything else so the island is doomed!"

"Not yet Knuckles." purred Mandy with a sly grin on her face.

"What do you mean you crazy mouse?" cried Knuckles frantically "All the emeralds have been stolen so Angel Island won't float now they're gone!"

"Not all of them have been stolen knuckle boy." crowed Mandy, proudly showing Knuckles the purple Chaos Emerald she had been allowed to keep by him personally.

Knuckles's jaw dropped in surprise.

"Oh…my…gosh!" he blurted "You…you managed to save one of them Mandy! You've saved the whole island!"

"Well you did say I could keep this emerald and I kept hold of it the whole time." said Mandy casually "So it's a good thing you let me otherwise Mobius would be getting submerged right now."

"No wonder I love you so much Mandy." said Wilson proudly with a look of totally joy on his face "You are an amazing girl you are."

"Oh please Wilson, I saved us all because of my love for jewels and Knuckles's generosity." said Mandy modestly "It wasn't because of how "amazing" I am."

"No matter, you're still amazing to me." said Wilson kindly.

Mandy just giggled at Wilson's comment and she wondered over to the Master Emerald shrine. She placed the purple Chaos Emerald in the centre of the shrine and she stepped back from it. The emerald began to glow a bright violet colour. That meant the Chaos

Emerald's power was working and it was keeping the island afloat just like the Master Emerald did.

"Will this Chaos Emerald be enough to keep Angel Island afloat?" asked Mandy.

"Angel Island will stay afloat with even a fragment of a Chaos Emerald." said Knuckles "Chaos Emeralds are powerful no matter how small they are, it's just the Master Emerald has more power because it's larger and can be used for other things such as cleansing Dark Chaos Energy and keeping the island from being pushed downwards."

"So as long as the Chaos Emerald is on the shrine, it'll stay afloat." said Mandy "Wow, those gems really are amazing aren't they?"

"They certainly are." said Shade "Pity they can be used for bad just as much as they can be used for good as Imperator Ix demonstrated for us yesterday."

"I know." said Knuckles "That's one of the reasons my father merged them into seven. Thousands of Chaos Emeralds would be too much for even Sonic in his super form or me in my Chaos form to handle should somebody have them all and since there are less Chaos Emeralds now, less people can use them for evil. Although it would be nice if we had thousands of spare Chaos Emeralds should we lose the seven there are now so we'd never run out."

"Oh well, there's seven Chaos Emeralds and that's all there is to it." said Sonic "Now we've got to get to Robotropolis and get the emeralds back before Eggman can use their power for anything bad!"

"I know." said Knuckles "We'll use the purple Chaos Emerald Mandy saved to Chaos Control ourselves over to the city. Once there, we'll get them all back and Chaos Control ourselves back here."

"Sounds like we have a plan then." said Sonic "In that case, let's go everybody! We've got some emeralds to save from Eggman's clutches!"

With that said, everybody prepared for this perilous mission. Sonic leaped onto the shrine, touched the Chaos Emerald and he yelled at the top of his voice.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

The purple Chaos Emerald glowed a very bright violet glow that could have blinded anybody. Then the emerald's glow died down and a portal opened up in mid-air. On the other side of that portal would be either inside Robotropolis, outside of Robotropolis or hundreds of feet away from Robotropolis. Either way, they'd be at Robotropolis no matter what happened.

"Robotropolis is on the other side of that portal guys!" announced Sonic "Let's do it to it everybody! The fate of Mobius is in our hands now!"

And with that, Sonic quickly leaped through the portal. Tails twisted his tails around one another and they spun around like a helicopter's rotor blades. He flew into the portal after Sonic. Amy climbed up the shrine and she leaped into the portal after Tails. Cream flapped her ears and took flight. She flew into the portal after Amy and Cosmo leaped in after Cream by climbing up the shrine and leaping through it. Bunnie activated her rockets in her roboticized feet and she flew into the portal. Ruben did a somersault and leaped into the portal. Geoffrey leaped into the portal after Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy both leaped into the portal together and Shade climbed up the shrine and leaped into the portal after them. Knuckles took one last look at Angel Island before he left.

"Don't worry Angel Island, I'll save you." he said "The Master Emerald will be retrieved and you will be back over the land where you belong."

With that said, Knuckles leaped off the shrine and straight through the portal, leaving the purple Chaos Emerald behind on the shrine to keep the island afloat. The portal closed behind Knuckles and vanished into thin air, leaving no trace of its existence anywhere on the island…

Meanwhile, Robotropolis had returned back to the Northern Border of Megapolis and it had settled back down onto the ground where it belonged. It slotted neatly back into the crater that was left in the ground after it had taken off and it looked like it had never flown or moved from it's spot at all. Now the city had landed, Dr. Eggman got up from his chair and he began to crow to himself.

"Brilliant with a big capital B!" he said to himself "Absolutely brilliant! Absolutely B-R-I-L-L-I-A-N-T! Brilliant! The plan worked to absolute and complete perfection! I really am a genius! An absolute genius! I am really the most brilliant mind in the universe! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"I know you are master." said Alonzo in a fake tone of loyalty "You got Robotropolis to fly and now you've stolen the Master Emerald and the Chaos Emeralds. The question is what was all this for anyway?"

"Well I wanted to get rid of Angel Island so that even if Sonic managed to save the Master Emerald, there's no Angel Island to deliver it back to so his save will be all for naught." explained Dr. Eggman "And I wanted to use the power of the emeralds to power up my city and hidden Egg-Fleet so they'll be unstoppable!"

"You have a hidden Egg-Fleet?" piped Alonzo "Well blow my circuits! How long have you had a hidden fleet for?"

"Since Robotropolis was first built." said Dr. Eggman "I had my robots secretly build a fleet of battleships after Robotropolis' construction so that as a last resort I can use them to destroy the cities of Mobius and roboticize everybody in one fell swoop! They're hiding in a hidden hangar bay on Robotropolis' left hand side and waiting to be launched! And with the power of the emeralds I've just stolen, they'll be even stronger and harder to destroy so Sonic and friends won't have an ounce of a chance against my brilliance! Mobius will tremble before me once my fleet begins its maiden voyage at long last!

"Why didn't you tell me about this before?" asked Alonzo.

"I didn't think you'd be thrilled." said Dr. Eggman "And I wanted it to

be another surprise but I've gone and spoilt it for you now."

"Oh don't worry, I'll still act surprised when I see it in motion." said Alonzo.

"Very well." said Dr. Eggman "Now, let's see our horde shall we?"

Alonzo nodded and the two went into an elevator. The elevator took them all the way down to the bottom floor of Eggman's headquarters and once the elevator arrived, Eggman and Alonzo stepped out of it and they wondered into the room. There, in the centre of the room displayed proudly before them were the Master Emerald and the Chaos Emeralds. They all glowed a bright, powerful, majestic glow in unison and Dr. Eggman was amazed at their brightness. He strode over to them proudly and he admired them with awe.

"Look at them Alonzo!" he purred "All these powerful gems are now in my grasp! The seven Chaos Emeralds gave Egg-Dragon plenty of power********** so imagine how much power all seven emeralds and the Master Emerald will be together!"

"No one will defeat us with all that power." said Alonzo lowly "Not even Sonic the Hedgehog or his friends or even his enemies Marik the Martian and Scourge the Hedgehog."

"I know Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman evilly "Eight emeralds all brimming with power and they're all…"

He was suddenly cut off when he noticed something was wrong. He looked at the glorious, glowing emeralds and he counted them. He only had seven emeralds when he should have eight, seven Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald. There was a Chaos Emerald missing for Mandy had saved one from being stolen. Dr. Eggman immediately began to throw a fit of anger.

"NO!" he bellowed whiningly "THIS CANNOT BE! I'M MISSING A CHAOS EMERALD! AND JUST WHEN IT LOOKED LIKE MY VICTORY WAS CERTAIN! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!"

"There's a Chaos Emerald missing?" asked Alonzo "How is that possible?"

"I bet Sonic or one of his friends managed to save it from the magnet's pull!" raged Dr. Eggman "I bet they're using the emerald to keep Angel Island afloat or something like that! The Chaos Emeralds are very similar to the Master Emerald so I bet they can keep the island afloat! Not to mention Sonic and friends can Chaos Control themselves over here with the Chaos Emerald and try and steal these back from me!"

"Well we should prepare for their arrival sir." said Alonzo "We'll be one step ahead of them then."

"I know." said Eggman "Get Silver Sonic online, get Katherine and Mecha Rouge into position and order my troops to prepare themselves for Sonic and his friends' arrival!"

"Yes sir!" said Alonzo, zipping off quickly on his little wheels.

He zoomed up into the elevator and took it back up to the top floor where the controls were so he could give the orders and prepare Silver Sonic for action. As he took the elevator up to the room, Alonzo began to think to himself about Eggman's recent revelations and what he'd just been told. The news on him having a hidden fleet of ships seemed to interest him a lot.

So the fat man has a fleet does he? he purred to himself *Well, that revelation can play into my plans easily. Once Eggman launches that fleet, he'll be going down with it and I can make my move while he's gone! Excellent! I'm getting a lot of good fortune recently aren't I?*

Alonzo smiled to himself as the elevator reached the top floor and the door opened up to let him into the control room. He was looking forward to the launch of Eggman's fleet. It was just a wonder on when he was going to launch it. Until then, he'd have to keep playing servant bot and once the fleet was in motion, he could make his deadly move at long last…

Just outside the gates of Robotropolis, a Chaos Portal opened up and Sonic the Hedgehog leaped out of it. He stopped just in front of

the gates and realized that the portal had taken them to just outside the city gates. He looked down at his feet and noticed he was standing firmly upon solid ground, meaning the city had landed back in it's original spot and was no longer in the air. Shortly after Sonic had appeared through the portal, all the others that followed him appeared just behind him out of the still open portal. The moment the last Mobian had appeared through the portal, the portal closed behind them and vanished into thin air.

"OK everybody, we're here." said Sonic the Hedgehog "Eggman's stinkin' city Robotropolis back in its original place before it was able to fly."

"Whether it's in the air or on the ground we can all agree it's still a hideous place." scoffed Mandy, sticking her tongue out at the city "I always hate it when I have to set foot in this place."

"Well whether you like it or not luv, we have to set foot in Robotropolis." said Geoffrey "The emeralds that Eggman has stolen are on the other side of those gates and we need to get them back or Eggman will use them for some unknown purpose that could spell doom on us all."

"I know." said Mandy "If the Master Emerald can keep a whole island afloat then who knows what else it can be used for?"

"That's why we're gonna get the Master Emerald and the Chaos Emeralds back guys and gals." said Sonic determinedly "And I have a plan. We'll all go into the city and create as much ruckus as possible and Shade will go in and find the emeralds and retrieve them."

"Me?" said Shade in surprise "I'm honoured hedgehog but why have you given me the task of retrieving the emeralds?"

"I thought you'd wanna do the hero thing for today since you're one of us now and no longer Ix's lackey." said Sonic "Seems fair for you to save the emeralds on your first mission with the good guys doesn't it?"

"It does." said Shade "Thank you Sonic. I'll try not to let the team

down on this mission."

"Don't sweat it Shade." said Sonic supportively "You've got all your new friends behind ya so you won't fail."

Shade had a feeling that Sonic was right. Sonic and all his friends would be watching her back so she wouldn't have to worry about failing because if she failed, Sonic or one of his friends would be able to back her up in no time.

"OK then team, let's do it to it." said Sonic "Bunnie, if you please." he added, steeping to the side and bowing down with his arm pointed at the gates.

"It'll be mah pleasure sugah-hog." said Bunnie, flexing her robot arm.

She drew her powerful robotic limb back and she swiftly punched the iron gates clean open, leaving Robotropolis exposed for Sonic and friends.

"After you Sonic." said Bunnie politely.

"Suit yourself Bunnie." said Sonic "Let's go everybody!"

With that said, he charged into the city at his trademark speed and everybody else ran after him as fast as they could. The robot population of Robotropolis were already on guard, primed and ready for Sonic's arrival. Now he and his friends had arrived, they began to let loose an array of laser fire at the team. Sonic wasn't too surprised by the sudden attacks as he had a feeling Eggman knew he was already coming, nor was he even intimidated by them. Sonic spin-dashed through the air and he destroyed a couple of Egg-Pawns. The Egg-Pawns fell off the building they stood upon and fell down to the ground. Sonic landed on the ground and he turned around to face his team.

"Tails, Knuckles, Shade, you three come with me into Eggman's base!" ordered Sonic "Everybody else, keep the locals occupied!"

Tails, Knuckles and Shade obeyed Sonic's order and they ran forward towards Sonic. That just left Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Ruben,

Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey and Bunnie to cause as much trouble as they possibly could. Sonic zoomed on towards Eggman's base with Tails flying after him and the two echidnas to run after him as fast as they could. The robot forces tried to stop the hedgehog, fox and echidnas from getting to Eggman's base but Bunnie flew into the air and blasted them with her arm cannon. The robots were obliterated by Bunnie's powerful attacks.

"Yee-Haw!" cheered Bunnie as she flew around in the air like a happy little bird "There's nothin' better then smashing Eggman's play things! Ha, ha, ha!"

She flew off to attack some other robots. Five Egg-Pawns all armed with lances and shields charged up to Ruben, ready to stick their lances into his tiny little body and skewer him like a kebab. But Ruben thrust his arms forward and let them have it with a wave of water. The Egg-Pawns were all swept off their feet and sent sliding across the ground but they didn't malfunction as Eggman had made all his robots water proof knowing that Ruben would be a danger to him because of his powers.

"I may not be able to short-circuit you robots." said Ruben as two more Egg-Pawns ran up to him ready to skewer him with their lances "But it doesn't mean I can't push you all around as much as I like!"

He thrust his arm up as if he was throwing a baseball in underarm and the two Egg-Pawns ended up getting it directly in the face with a ball of water. The two were knocked off their feet and before they could get up, Ruben jumped on them and stomped on their heads, killing them instantly. Another Egg-Pawn tried to seize Ruben but the water panther tail-whipped the robot and knocked it off its feet. Getting tail-whipped by Ruben was like getting whipped by an actual whip. Ruben then proceeded to stomp on that pawn's head just to destroy it and leave it offline. As for Amy, she summoned her trademark Piko-Piko hammer to her hand and she waited for four robots that looked like praying mantises with Gatling guns on their backs and blades for hands to come towards her. The mantis bots buzzed loudly as neared Amy and they prepared to slice her to bite-size chunks. Amy leaped into the air and hammered one of the mantis bots in the head, sending it spiralling into one of its comrades

and knocking it out of the sky. The stricken mantis crashed into the ground side-first and lay there, beaten and useless. The mantis bot that Amy had hammered regained its senses and tried to attack Amy again. However, Cream threw Cheese at the mantis bot and the Chao knocked the mantis right out of the sky. It crashed onto the ground and Amy hammered its head into pieces. The last two mantis bots crept up behind Amy and they attempted to chop her to pieces with their blade hands. Before they could get close enough, Cosmo scooped up some debris from the other mantis bots and she threw the pieces at the oncoming duo. The pieces hit the mantis bots directly in the optics, destroying them and rendering them unable to see. The stricken robots flew around in blind circled and before they knew what was happening, they collided in mid-air and they ended up destroying each other and falling to the ground in pieces. Amy saw what Cosmo had done and she was impressed.

"Nice going Cosmo." said Amy with a thumbs up Sonic style "You took them out just by blinding them."

"Thank you Amy." said Cosmo "I guess Sonic was right when he said to me all I need is something to throw and I'm good to go."

"You certainly are." said Amy "Now let's show some of these goons our Twirling-Hammer-Batter move shall we?"

"Yes Miss Rose." said Cream "Although you really need to come up with a better name for it like Mr. Sonic says. Twirling-Hammer-Batter sounds a bit cheesy."

Amy resisted the urge to crack Cream's head open for that. Cream flapped her long floppy ears and she flew off the ground. She grabbed Cosmo and picked her up off the ground and Cosmo grabbed Amy as Cream lifted her off the ground. Cream was now carrying Cosmo and Amy off the ground. Amy held her hammer tightly and waited for Cream to start spinning her and Cosmo around. A group of Egg-Pawns armed with laser pistols instead of lances this time and more mantis-bots advanced on the girls. Cream started to spin Cosmo and Amy around in a perfect circle the moment the robots began to get close to them. Cream edged towards the robots as she spun Cosmo and Amy around and Amy hammered the robots that were foolish enough to stand still and wait

for something to happen. The Egg-Pawns were sent flying into the air and they crashed into a couple of buildings. The mantis-bots had no better luck as they were quickly destroyed by the girl's incredible attack the moment they flew in too close to them. Cream stopped spinning the girls around and she put them down on the ground. Amy punched the air with her first in triumph.

"Oh yeah! Team Rose rules!" she cheered.

Cosmo and Cream just looked at each other in wonder.

"Team Rose?" questioned Cosmo.

"Maybe Amy's giving us a team name now." suggested Cream "I don't mind, Team Rose sounds nice I think."

Cosmo nodded agreeably. She, Amy and Cream were like a team after all what with the three of them forming an attack together and Team Rose was a fitting name as rose was the name of a flower, something Cosmo liked and Amy's surname was Rose so Team Rose was staying. As for Wilson and Mandy, the two were having no trouble against the robots trying to attack them. Mandy had slipped on her brass knuckle attachments which she still had with her and those attachments made her able to punch robots without giving herself a sore first. She let loose a flurry of punches on an Egg-Pawn drone armed with a mallet. She punched the robot in the face, heavily denting it thanks to her knuckle attachments and then she kicked it in the gut. The robot double over and croaked robotically and Mandy slammed downwards on the back of the robot's head, just about taking its head off. The robot dropped its mallet and Mandy picked it up. Luckily for her, the mallet was just light enough for her to use so she smashed the Egg-Pawn to pieces with it. The Egg-Pawn lay in pieces on the ground. Another Egg-Pawn tried to shoot her but Mandy threw the mallet at it and the mallet knocked the Egg-Pawn over. Mandy ran up to the downed Egg-Pawn and furiously punched its face in. The knuckle attachments made her punches all the more harder and Mandy managed to kill the robot after punching its face in so hard she caused damage to its electronic brain in its head and that in turn made the Egg-Pawn go offline. Mandy smirked triumphantly but her victory was short-lived. Two giant Egg-Pawns armed with really big mallets stomped into the

battle and they looked furious with Mandy. They raised their hammers and they tried to smash the mouse into pieces. Mandy leaped back and left the robots to leave a hammer imprint on the ground.

"Yikes!" she cried "I won't be able to take guys THAT big on, even with my knuckle attachments! I'm gonna have to use my brain for this if I'm to defeat them."

But Mandy wouldn't need to do so as Wilson stepped in with his trademark spinning blade weapon. He threw the weapon at an Egg-Pawn's hammer and the spinning blade weapon chopped the hammer's head off its stick, rendering the giant weapon useless. The weapon boomeranged back to Wilson and the dog threw it again, this time at the other Egg-Pawn's hammer. The double-bladed pole chopped the hammer's head off and left the Egg-Pawn with a useless hammer. The two Egg-Pawns grumbled furiously and they tried to whack Wilson with the hammer sticks they were left with. Wilson yelped and he dodged their attack. The two sticks slammed on the ground just as Wilson dodged and the dog jumped onto one of the Egg-Pawn's arms. He threw his spinning-blade at the Egg-Pawn's optics and the weapon impaled itself into the pawn's optics. The Egg-Pawn was blinded and it immediately began to panic. Wilson grabbed his weapon and yanked it out of the pawn's optics. The Egg-Pawn began to flail its hammer stick around madly. Wilson leaped off the Egg-Pawn, leaving it to blindly flail about and wave its stick everywhere. The other Egg-Pawn stupidly whacked the blind Egg-Pawn with its stick just to try and calm it down but it ended up knocking the Egg-Pawn out instead. The blind Egg-Pawn lay on its back, offline for the time-being. The other Egg-Pawn began to look around for Wilson and Mandy but the dog and mouse were behind it so it wouldn't find them. Wilson threw his weapon at the Egg-Pawn and the weapon carved its head in two as it sawed its way through it. The Egg-Pawn collapsed onto the ground, dead as a doornail. Wilson and Mandy gave off a pair of triumphant smirks and they high-fived each other.

"That's why we're such a good team Wilson." said Mandy brightly "Our weapons are great but our team-spirit is even greater."

"I couldn't have said that better myself gorgeous." said Wilson with a

wide grin on his face "When we're together, no Eggman robot has a chance against us."

Not far from where they were, Geoffrey St. John was taking on a group of robots that were shaped like gophers and they were armed with sharp teeth and claws. They were not Robians but they were equally as deadly. The gophers swiped at Geoffrey but the skunk dodged their attacks with ease and the skunk fired some darts at them. The darts embedded themselves into the thick armour hide of the robo-gophers and they exploded in unison after Geoffrey pressed a button on his crossbow to make them go off. The robo-gophers were destroyed by the darts the moment they exploded. The skunk smirked at them as they collapsed to the ground, smoking heavily.

"Eggman robots: they're fun to destroy." he sneered to himself.

A bunch of Egg-Pawns ran up to Geoffrey and they attempted to skewer him with their lances but they missed as the skunk dodged them and Geoffrey drop-kicked two of them in the back. The two Egg-Pawns fell over onto their faces and they dropped their lances. Geoffrey kicked them both into the other charging Egg-Pawns and they bowled the charging pawns over. Geoffrey fired a dart into one of the Egg-Pawns' head and he set it off to explode. The dart exploded and the Egg-Pawn was destroyed. Three Egg-Pawns tried to kill Geoffrey but Geoffrey gave one of them an upwards chop that startled the bot momentarily and then he grabbed it by its arm. He threw the pawn into another pawn and the two bowled over one another. The skunk laughed at the pathetic Egg-Pawns, he had this fight in the bag easily. He just hoped Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Shade were having as easy a time as he and the others were.

As for Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Shade, they had busted effortlessly into Eggman's headquarters and they found themselves in a huge empty room. Sonic knew he couldn't trust this place, especially after the Mecha fight he had during the Egg-Timer mission********** so he kept his senses alert.

"OK Shade, since you're saving the day you go on ahead." ordered

Sonic "We'll keep any possible rabble off your back."

"Very well." said Shade "I'll do my best Sonic the Hedgehog."

So Shade ran on and disappeared through a door and out of sight. As Shade disappeared, Knuckles looked at Sonic unsurely.

"Are you sure about sending Shade on her own like that?" asked Knuckles "She hasn't had an experience with Eggman like we have so she won't be as prepared as we are."

"Shade can kick your butt so I can safely say she'll have no problems with Eggman Knuckie." said Sonic casually "Besides, we'll be keeping Eggman's forces busy so he won't see Shade coming."

"Let's hope your right because if you aren't, I'll slaughter you Sonic!" growled Knuckles.

"Whatever." said Sonic cheekily.

Then suddenly, Dr. Eggman's voice boomed from an intercom somewhere in the room, making everybody jump.

"Hello once again Sonic, Tails and Knuckles!" boomed Dr. Eggman, his voice rumbling around the room like an annoying noise "Should I be surprised as to why you're all here, trespassing on my property again?"

"No Egghead." scoffed Sonic "You give us our emeralds back and we'll postpone our daily robot-destroying for the day."

"If you want my emeralds Sonic, you'll have to take them!" sneered Dr. Eggman "And unluckily for you, I have a huge obstacle for you to overcome!"

Just as he said that, the wall on the far side of the room suddenly began trembling and then suddenly, it caved in and fell down to the ground. Out of the wall emerged a terrifying robot that stared down at them ominously with its evil optics. It was an eight foot tall robot that strongly resembled Sonic the Hedgehog. It had orange eyes that burned in a black visor, huge sharp blades on its head and back instead of quills, large clawed hands, a sharp black nose, red feet

with a pair of small wheels on either foot, gold details around the legs and a very shiny silver coat of metal. This behemoth of a machine was of course, Silver Sonic, Metal Sonic's pet robot from his altered timeline which no longer existed thanks to Tails erasing it. Dr. Eggman still remembered Silver Sonic as he had memory of the alter timeline just like Tails and he had decided to rebuild it as he thought the design was lethal enough to take on Sonic. Tails almost had a heart-attack at the sight of the machine as many bad memories began to come back to him but he knew that Sonic wouldn't know what Silver Sonic was as the altered timeline was erased and Sonic didn't exist in it so he never got to see Silver Sonic. Instead, he acted like he'd never seen the robot before. Sonic however, looked strangely excited as Silver Sonic loomed above him.

"Oh yeah! Now we're talking! A proper robot for me to tango with!" chuckled Sonic "This is going to be awesome!"

"You won't think it's so awesome when Silver Sonic cleaves you in two Sonic!" crowed Dr. Eggman "Silver Sonic, dissect them bit by bit!"

Silver Sonic obeyed and it spin-dashed towards Team Sonic. Sonic leaped out of its way just as the huge spin-dashing machine hurtled past him. It was like dancing death with a saw-blade as Silver Sonic hurtled past him. Silver Sonic skidded to a halt and he charged back towards Sonic. Knuckles leaped into the air and gave the huge machine an upper-cut to the chin. Silver Sonic rubbed its chin and he clawed at Knuckles. Silver Sonic missed Knuckles completely and Knuckles grabbed its claws. He pulled on Silver Sonic's claws and pulled the machine down on its knees. Silver Sonic was quick to react though by lifting it's arm off the ground, taking Knuckles with it as Knuckles didn't let go of it's claws, and he stood up to his full height. Silver Sonic grabbed Knuckles with his other hand and it proceeded to try and squeeze the echidna to death. Sonic spin-dashed Silver Sonic in the head and knocked him over onto his back. Silver Sonic dropped Knuckles as he toppled over and the echidna landed on his feet. Silver Sonic picked himself up and looked around for Sonic. Tails flew in and kick-slammed the robot in the forehead. Silver Sonic wasn't affected by the attack whatsoever

and he swatted Tails out of the air and into the floor. Tails landed painfully on the floor and Silver Sonic raised his foot, ready to squash him flat. Sonic spin-dashed Silver Sonic's leg and caused the machine to lose balance. Silver Sonic fell over onto its side and it groaned a robotic groan. Silver Sonic picked himself up and Sonic spin-dashed towards him. Silver Sonic grabbed Sonic while he was in spin-dash and the silver Sonic clone threw Sonic into a wall. Knuckles punched at Silver Sonic's foot but the machine wasn't affected by the attack and he kicked Knuckles away for the attack. Knuckles hurtled through the air and he landed painfully on his back. Silver Sonic then spin-dashed towards Knuckles but Sonic spin-dashed Silver Sonic in the side and knocked him off course. Silver Sonic instead ended up crashing into the wall, going straight through it and leaving a huge hole in it. Silver Sonic picked himself out of the hole and he stomped towards Sonic. Sonic spin-dashed Silver Sonic in the chest but all that did was make Silver Sonic stagger. Sonic spin-dashed Silver Sonic again but Silver Sonic swatted him away. Tails tried to distract Silver Sonic by flying in front of his visor and blocking his vision but he failed as Silver Sonic leaned forward and head-butted him. Tails hurtled straight down towards the ground but Sonic caught him quickly before he could crash into the floor. Tails groaned dizzily and Sonic helped him to stand up.

"That's one tough bot isn't it Tails?" asked Sonic.

"It sure is." said Tails "Not to mention big and scary too. Eggman's put a lot of effort into this one hasn't he?"

"It's no Metal Sonic but it's still a toughie." said Sonic "We'll destroy that thing if we carry on trying. Or at least we could try and hold out until Shade retrieves the emeralds and then we can just flee for it."

"I hope we can last that long." said Tails as Silver Sonic started playing cat-and-mouse with Knuckles.

Silver Sonic chased Knuckles around the room but he couldn't catch him. Knuckles gave up the chase and he leaped into the air. He pile-dived Silver Sonic in the pelvis section and Silver Sonic ended up falling over onto his face. Knuckles then grabbed Silver Sonic's arm and tried to tear it off but Silver Sonic raised his arm and flung Knuckles away. Knuckles crashed into a wall and Silver Sonic

picked himself up. Sonic spin-dashed Silver Sonic in the shoulder and knocked him backwards slightly. Tails tried to attack Silver Sonic again but Silver Sonic clawed at him and narrowly missed, making the fox retreat quickly. Sonic and Silver Sonic then spin-dashed towards each other but Silver Sonic, being the bigger opponent, easily had the stronger spin-dash and Silver Sonic sent Sonic hurling into a corner. Sonic crashed into the corner and he grimaced in pain. Silver Sonic the advanced on Sonic with his claws bared. Sonic picked himself up and prepared to attack Silver Sonic once again as the robot prepared to snatch him up and slaughter him…

Further down the corridor, Shade the Echidna was still running around in search for the emeralds. She had no idea where to look for the emeralds but she was determined to find them, no matter what the problem was. Seeing as she had no idea where the emeralds could possibly be, Shade decided to just search in anything she came across. She came across a door as she ran down the corridor and she flung it open. The room was just a storage room full of robot parts and toolkits. Shade closed the door and ran on further down the corridor. She came across another door and she flung it open. This door led to a room that was completely empty. Shade sighed exasperatedly and she slammed the door shut. Shade ran on even further down the corridor. She came across two large doors marked with the Eggman Empire logo and she decided to look through them. The door had a control pad which was the only way to open the door. Shade knew she wouldn't be able to open the door with the pad as she had no idea what the code could possibly be so instead she drew out her twin blade weapons and she Blade Rushed the door down. After one quick Blade Rush attack, the doors were busted down and Shade was free to go into the room. A glorious sight met her beautiful lilac eyes. The Master Emerald and the six Chaos Emeralds Eggman had stolen were all sitting there in the middle of the room, just waiting for her to retrieve.

"I've found the emeralds." Shade said to herself "But I don't feel good about this situation. It looks too easy. I don't know Dr. Eggman but I have a feeling he's not the kind of person who would willingly

leave things out in the open for Sonic and his friends to take. There must be some kind of trap in here and I don't want to spring it. I'll have to be very careful here."

So Shade kept her blades at the ready and she crept into the room as silently as she possibly could. Her senses were on high alert for any possible signs of a booby trap or anything that could trigger a booby trap. The room appeared to be completely normal but Shade knew that just because everything looked normal it didn't mean it was. For all she knew, there could be an invisible trigger or something. She continued to creep slowly into the room with her blades raised. There didn't appear to be any traps and she was very nearly at the emeralds. Just a few more steps and she could grab them. But before Shade could get any closer, two robots jumped down from the ceiling and they stood guard in front of the emeralds. Shade leapt back and she raised her weapons. The two robots were Mecha Rouge, Eggman's roboticized lackey, and Katherine, Eggman's female warden bot from the now destroyed Sentinel Blockade. Mecha Rouge had had her wings repaired from her scuffle with the Northern Royal Fighters and Katherine had been repaired from the destruction of the Sentinel Blockade so the two robots were in fully working order once again. Shade was not intimidated by the robots in anyway. She just saw them as pathetic obstacles for her to step on.

"So this is the security in here." said Shade as she observed them "They seem adequate enough. No matter, I have a task to do and I will not back down from it."

With that said, she leaped towards the robots and her blade weapons began to glow purple.

"Blade Rush!" she yelled, slashing the two robots with her energy enhances blades.

Mecha Rouge and Katherine were both stricken by the attack and they were sent hurling to the side. Shade leaped onto the Master Emerald but before she could do anything with it, Katherine fired a bladed-disc at her. The disc skimmed Shade across the chest, leaving a long thin tear in her black bodysuit and making the echidna scream in pain. She clutched her chest and felt the long thin cut that

Katherine had just made with her attack. Mecha Rouge leaped up and screw-kicked Shade in the back, knocking her clean off the Master Emerald.

"Sorry-hon-ey-but-the-Master-Emerald-be-longs-to-Dr.-Egg-Man." droned Mecha Rouge "You-will-keep-off-it-or-I-will-tear-your-limbs-off."

Shade picked herself up and gave Mecha Rouge an epic death glare that could give any faint-hearted person a heart attack due to how scary she looked.

"The Master Emerald belongs to Angel Island and I am taking it back." said Shade coldly "Do not make me have to resort to violence because I will exterminate you both if you try to stop me!"

"You-are-the-one-that-is-going-to-be-ex-ter-min-ated." droned Mecha Rouge "Pre-pare-to-have-your-limbs-torn-off-foolish-echidna."

She bared her claws and advanced on Shade menacingly. Shade just raised her weapons and prepared to do battle.

"Fine, you have chosen your fate." she said icily "Don't say I didn't give you a chance to comply."

Mecha Rouge leaped on Shade with her claws out. She grabbed Shade by the arms and the two ended up falling onto the floor. They skidded across it briefly before Shade managed to push her lower body up off the floor and shove Mecha Rouge off of herself with her feet. Mecha Rouge ended up hurling into a wall and she slid slowly back down to the floor. Shade leaped back onto her feet just as Katherine ran up to her, ready to tear her to pieces. Shade slammed her weapons together and gave Katherine an uppercut with them both. The weapons left very long, deep cuts on Katherine's face and chest and the warden bot groaned robotically in pain. Shade then roundhouse kicked Katherine and sent the silent fem-bot falling down onto the floor. Mecha Rouge screw-kicked Shade from behind and knocked the Nocturnus survivor on to her stomach. Mecha Rouge then grabbed Shade's arm and she pulled on it. She pressed Shade's body down to the floor by putting her foot on her back and

while holding Shade down, she pulled on her arm. She was trying to tear it clean out of its socket. Shade clenched her teeth and she grimaced tensely, trying to ignore the pain in her arm as Mecha Rouge pulled on it and tried to tear it off. Shade however, still had one of her blades in her hand. She aimed it at Mecha Rouge and she swung the blade at her. A pink energy wave hurtled into Mecha Rouge's face and the roboticized-jewel thief let go of Shade's arm to rub her face better. Shade picked herself up and she roundhouse punched Mecha Rouge directly in the face. Katherine fired some bladed-discs at Shade but the echidna dodged them and she Blade Rushed Katherine. Katherine staggered backwards and bumped into a wall. Desperate not to receive anymore damage, Katherine activated her built-in force field generator. A red sphere of energy surrounded Katherine and made her immune to any attacks now. Shade however, was not impressed by this. Just because Katherine had a barrier, it didn't mean she was invincible now. Mecha Rouge flew towards Shade and attempted to grab her. Shade dodged Mecha Rouge's attack and left her to crash straight into Katherine's barrier. The Robian bat ricocheted straight off the barrier and skidded painfully on the floor. Shade ran over to the emeralds and she grabbed the red Chaos Emerald. Katherine shortened her barrier and she ran over to Shade with her claws bared. Mecha Rouge picked herself up and she charged towards Shade. Shade thrust the Chaos Emerald in front of herself and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

The moment she yelled "Chaos Control!" time around Mecha Rouge and Katherine suddenly seemed to slow to a stop. The two robotic women were suddenly frozen in time and they stopped in mid-charge, unable to move. Shade smirked at the frozen fem-bots.

"Well now that threat's taken care of, I can take the emeralds back." she said to herself "But the Master Emerald's weight and size will only slow down our getaway so we can't carry them out of here. There is a solution to this problem though." she added as she suddenly had an idea "I'll just warp them back to the island."

With that said, she thrust the Chaos Emerald up above her head and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

The emerald glowed a bright crimson red and then a Chaos Portal opened up in mid-air. Shade was pleased to see that the Chaos Control did what she wanted it to do and she gathered all six Chaos Emeralds into her arms. She leaped through the portal with the emeralds in her arms and she reappeared through the portal onto Angel Island. She landed straight on top of the emerald shrine and she lay the emeralds down around the side of the shrine. She then leaped back through the portal and reappeared back in the room in Eggman's headquarters. She then ran over to the back of the Master Emerald and she pushed on the giant heavy green gem. The Master Emerald was rather heavy and hard to push but Shade couldn't give up now. The Chaos Portal wouldn't stay open any longer so she had to push it through before it closed. Not to mention the Chaos Control on Katherine and Mecha Rouge wouldn't last any longer, it would wear off anytime soon so she had to hurry before it did. Using all the strength she had in her, Shade began to push the Master Emerald towards the Chaos Portal. Grunting heavily and pushing hard, she finally managed to push the heavy gem through the portal. Shade panted and gasped tiredly for a minute and she wiped her forehead. Then she leapt through the portal just before it could close. The moment she left, the Chaos Control around Mecha Rouge and Katherine wore off and they shot straight down into the floor. They skidded to a painful halt and the two fem-bots groaned in defeat, clearly not pleased that they had just failed their task which was guard the emeralds.

As for Shade, she reappeared on the emerald shrine on Angel Island and she pushed the Master Emerald into place. Now the purple Chaos Emerald Mandy had saved didn't need to keep the island afloat anymore because the Master Emerald was back in its rightful place. Shade huffed and she beamed at herself.

"I've saved the emeralds." she said to herself "Now I'd best go back and tell the others and get them out of Robotropolis."

She picked up the blue Chaos Emerald this time and she used yet another Chaos Control. A Chaos Portal opened up in mid-air and Shade jumped through it. On the other side of the portal was the room in which Sonic, Tails and Knuckles were duking it out with the

mighty Silver Sonic and Shade appeared right in the middle of the fight. She saw Sonic spin-dashing Silver Sonic in the head only to not leave a mark of any kind on the behemoth of a Sonic clone and Silver Sonic retaliated with an attempted kick but he missed as Sonic ducked. Shade ran over to Sonic and she called out to him.

"Sonic! I've found the emeralds and sent them back to Angel Island!" called Shade "The mission is complete!"

"Really?" said Sonic as Silver Sonic missed an attempted claw attack on him "Sweet! Well done Shade! Come on Tails and Knuckles, we're outta here!"

"Aw, I'm not done with tiny over here!" muttered Knuckles as he fisted Silver Sonic directly in the shin.

"Come on Knuckles!" exclaimed Tails, flying after Sonic and Shade as they ran for it.

Knuckles sighed loudly and he ran after the fleeing Mobians. Silver Sonic just stood there and let them escape. He could sense that the Mobians were retreating and he had successfully managed to scare them off. He truly was a mighty machine, a machine too mighty for even Sonic the Hedgehog.

Outside, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben were still making a mess out of Eggman's forces outside. But exhaustion was evident on their faces as they all appeared to be worn out from constantly attacking and destroying robots that just seemed to come and come endlessly no matter how many they destroyed. Luckily, they wouldn't have to keep it up any longer for Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Shade all emerged from within Eggman's headquarters and Shade had a Chaos Emerald in her hand. That ment the mission was complete and they were all getting out of here. Shade thrust the emerald ahead of herself as she ran and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

A Chaos Portal appeared once again just ahead of them and they all ran towards it as fast as they could. Sonic, due to his trademark

speed, made it first and he jumped through the portal. Tails, Knuckles and Shade were the next to go through and the rest followed shortly afterwards just before a bunch of robots could try and attack them. The portal vanished into thin air, leaving the robots to stand there, baffled and wonder what had just happened. Back in Eggman's headquarters, Dr. Eggman put a finger to his lips and he began to muse to himself.

"Sonic and friends just retreated." he said to himself "And with a Chaos Control too. That means…"

"They've successfully managed to retrieve all the emeralds?" asked Alonzo.

"No, it means they've stolen ONE of my emeralds." said Dr. Eggman "I'm kinda surprised they left after only stealing one though. Oh well, at least I still have the power of the…"

Before he could finish his sentence, he was interrupted by a call from Mecha Rouge.

"Dr.-Egg-Man." she droned "I-hate-to-be-the-bearer-of-bad-news-but-all-the-emeralds-are-gone. A-fe-male-echid-na-in-a-head-band-and-balck-body-suit-stole-them-all."

Dr. Eggman looked like he was going to die of shock. His whole body began to tremble angrily and his moustache quivered in rage. Alonzo freaked, he could sense a very violent temper tantrum coming from Dr. Eggman any minute now. But instead of throwing an epic fit, Dr. Eggman suddenly calmed down and took a deep breath.

"So what if they stole my emeralds back?" he muttered "I've still got my hidden Egg-Fleet to launch and I'll launch it first thing tomorrow morning! Then I'll tell my fleet to lay siege to everything in sight and then Sonic and friends will be sorry they messed with Dr. Ivo Eggman!"

And you'll be sorry you treated me like scrap. Alonzo thought in his mind as he began to formulate a plan in his evil mind.

Once Eggman launched that fleet, he'd be going down with it tomorrow and then he could unleash his secret project…

Back on Angel Island, everybody was standing around the Master Emerald shrine and staring at the Master Emerald, all glowing and shining brightly again and back in it's normal place. Everybody was happy to see that their mission had been a total success.

"Well, talk about an eventful day hey guys?" asked Sonic "Eggman makes Robotropolis fly and steals all the emeralds but we got them all back as quickly as he stole them. Royal Fighters rock!"

"Yeah!" everybody cheered in unison.

"But one thing I'd definitely like to say is I can't take the credit for today's victory." said Sonic truthfully "The credit for today's victory all goes to our new friend Shade the Echidna. Let's have a three cheers for her!"

"Please hedgehog, I don't want you to make a celebration about me." said Shade politely "I'm just glad I succeeded in my first mission as one of you instead of Ix's lackey."

"OK then forget about the cheers." said Sonic "But I will say congratulations Shade. You've proven yourself an honouree Royal Fighter."

He held his hand out for Shade to shake.

"Thank you Sonic." said Shade, shaking Sonic's hand.

"Talk about girl power today." Mandy said "I save Angel Island from falling and Shade retrieves all the emeralds. Proves that boys aren't the only ones who can save the day." she added teasingly, grinning at Sonic.

"You got that right Mandy." said Sonic, taking Mandy's statement lightly "I guess "Girl Power" has an all new meaning now."

Mandy just laughed at Sonic's joke.

"We may have won today Sonic, but I wouldn't get too comfortable." said Knuckles sternly "Dr. Eggman's not going to be pleased when he finds out we've gotten our emeralds back and he's going to try whatever he can to get them all back. So I'd keep on your toes if I were you."

"Don't sweat it Knuckie, I'll be ready for Baldy Mc Nose Hair." sneered Sonic "I always am."

But he wouldn't be ready for the arrival of Dr. Eggman's insidious fleet tomorrow for he had no idea about it and it's launch was unknown to him….

Footnotes

*** See the very first milestone Story 25**

**** He's talking about Team Diamond, the treasure hunters who work for H.U.N.T.**

***** Rewind all the way back to Story 15 to refresh your memories!**

****** Who can possibly forget THAT epic saga? (Stories 36-43)**

******* I wasn't expecting to bring up the last part of the Mecha Sonic saga! (Story 14)**

******** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 4: Trouble in Adabat***

********* See the Chun-Nan saga (Stories 52-56)**

********** See the Shadow saga (Stories 57-63)**

*********** See the HQ Heist saga (Stories 64-67)**

************ See Stories 68-69**

*************And then see *Tales from Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles* (I think I'm done)**

********** **See Story 43 (I was wrong!)**

********** **See Story 50 (I think I'm done for REAL this time!)**

And that's my milestone people! Is it better then the first two? Just as good? Worse? Tell me what you think. And get ready to fasten your seatbelts because the road to Story 100 is going to be one EPIC ride from here! We'll have betrayals, new characters, new developments, plot twists and epic adventures that only Sonic the Hedgehog is capable of having! Read and Review.

Eggman's Fleet

Story 76: Eggman's Fleet

Dr. Eggman spent most of the afternoon and evening cleaning up the mess in his city that Sonic and friends made while trying to get the stolen emeralds back which they successfully did. There were so many dead robots and so much debris everywhere that Dr. Eggman took till the next morning to clean it all up. By the next morning, Robotropolis was all spic-and-span once again and the fat scientist was pleased to his city all free of robot debris. He sat in his chair and he admired his city through the giant window in the room which was large enough for him to see all of Robotropolis ahead of him. The day dawned once again, bright and sunny. Eggman liked it when it was a sunny day, it made wrecking the Mobian's lives all the more enjoyable as on a nice day, more people would be out in the open and he'd be terrifying more citizens. Just the perfect day to unleash his new Egg-Fleet which he'd been hiding for months now. He stroked his moustache as he thought to himself.

"Aaaah, what a perfect day to launch my Egg-Fleet." he sighed to himself "I can't wait to see Sonic's expression when I launch this fleet and lay siege to every city on Mobius with it! And to add insult to injury, I have roboticizer guns in every ship so once I flush out all the Mobians from their homes, I can roboticize them all in one fell swoop! This will be a red letter day for me. A "coup d'état" to coin a French phrase. Ha, ha, ha."

He could just picture the destruction his fleet was going to cause once it launched already. He pressed a button on his arm chair and a bleep sound was heard.

"Alonzo! Get in here now!" ordered Dr. Eggman.

The moment he gave the command, the door on the far side of the room opened up and in whizzed Eggman's pointy headed robot, Alonzo the Butler Bot. The subversive servant whizzed up to Dr. Eggman and saluted to him.

"Yes oh glorious master and soon to be world conqueror?" asked Alonzo.

"I'm launching the Egg-Fleet now." reported Dr. Eggman "Get yourself ready for the launch! Mobius is about to succumb to me!"

"Yes sir." said Alonzo "I hope you don't mind me asking sir but, are you going to make Robotropolis fly again and make it part of the Egg-Fleet? A flying city is bound to be a great addition to any fleet."

"That would be a nice idea Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman admittedly "But I don't want to risk losing Robotropolis. Sonic is a troublesome little critter and his friends are equally as troublesome and even though I'm certain my fleet is invincible, anything could happen and I don't want to lose Robotropolis. I've lost the city once* before and I will not lose it again!"

"Playing it safe are we?" mused Alonzo "That is unusual for you master. Oh well, better safe then sorry as they always say."

"You are absolutely correct Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman with a big smile on his hideous, moustachioed face "Losing Robotropolis would be a bigger loss then say my entire fleet or my robot army so I do not want the city to crash and burn, even if it is unlikely to happen when it's in motion."

He stood up from his chair and he headed off to the elevator. He and Alonzo went into the elevator and the elevator took them all the way down to the bottom floor of Eggman's headquarters. The elevator arrived at the bottom floor in a matter of seconds and Eggman and Alonzo left the elevator. Dr. Eggman then wandered over to the far side of the room and he opened up a trap door in the floor. He and Alonzo climbed down the ladder and they ended up in an underground hangar bay that was large enough to fit eighty jumbo jets in it. The hangar bay stretched for miles around and in the bay were more then fifty enormous battleships. The ships were huge and long and they had an aquatic theme going on with them as many of the ships were shaped like aquatic creatures. There were purple ships shaped like manta rays, red ships shaped like sharks, blue ships shaped like sawfishes and the very flagship of the fleet was the largest of them all and shaped like a whale shark. All of the

ships were loaded with an onslaught of gun turrets and weapons and they all looked like they had tremendous power behind them. Alonzo gaped in amazement at the tremendous size of this fleet. How Eggman had managed to keep it hidden he would never know. No matter for he had a plan to dispose of his foolish master once and for all. He had a stash of bombs hidden in his side compartment and he was going to use the bombs to bring Eggman's flagship down. He didn't want to destroy the entire fleet as he had a feeling the fleet would be of good use to him once he overthrew Eggman. As Dr. Eggman walked towards his flagship, Alonzo gaped and gawped at the battleships as he went past them. They were absolutely amazing and he couldn't wait to see Dr. Eggman use them before he took the fleet for himself. Dr. Eggman arrived at his flagship and he climbed up the ladder on the side of the whale-shark shaped vessel that led up to the cockpit. Once he and Alonzo were inside the cockpit, Eggman closed the hatch and he sat down at the controls of the behemoth of a machine.

"How does my fleet look Alonzo?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"It looks…phenomenal." gasped Alonzo "How did your worker bots build all these in secret?"

"They're amazing robots Alonzo, built by the hands of a genius that's why." gloated Dr. Eggman "Now sit back, relax and watch as I lay siege to Central City just to give the fleet a test drive! After that, we attack Mobotropolis!"

"I can just imagine that hedgehog's face once this fleet casts its shadow over the puny little remains of Mobotropolis." sneered Alonzo "It'll be one face I'd love to photograph and put in the photo album that's for sure!"

"It will Alonzo." said Dr. Eggman, pressing a button on the control panel.

That button activated the hangar doors above their heads and the doors, with a loud ominous whirr and groaning creak began to open up above the fleet. Bits of earth and dirt began to trickle down the edges of the doors and rain down on to the floor. The darkness of the hangar bay was chased away as the doors opened and the

brightness of day began to seep into the bay and brighten it up. The doors finished opening and they stopped with a loud hiss and a clunk. Dr. Eggman then pressed another button on the control panel.

"Egg-Fleet! Commence launch!" he bellowed into the intercom on the control panel beside the button he pressed.

The whole fleet responded to his command. They didn't need pilots after all sans the flagship, they were robotic battleships that were capable of flying by themselves and all they needed was a simple command and they were away. The whole fleet began to power up and their engines exploded with noise as the fleet was awakened. The flagship, which Dr. Eggman was housed in, was the first to ascend. With a roar of the rockets loud enough to awaken the dead, the massive ship began to rise up off the floor and ascend from the hangar bay and into the open air. The flagship ascended up and up until it was out of the hangar bay and into the brightness and the fresh air of outside. The entire population of Robotropolis stopped what they were doing and they looked up at the sky only to see a huge whale-shark shaped battleship up in the sky ready to fly off and destroy a city or even a continent. Shortly after the flagship was up in the air, the rest of the fleet began to rise up and join it in the sky. Their engines roared tremendously loud as the whole fleet began to ascend into the sky above them. In a matter of minutes, all forty-nine aquatic shaped ships were up in the sky with the gigantic behemoth of a flagship that loomed proudly in the centre of this incredible fleet. The hangar bay doors in the ground closed up after the ships all left, leaving no evidence of them ever opening up and unleashing a bunch of ships from within. The robots of Robotropolis were stunned to say the least and they were impressed at their master's work. The moment the whole fleet was in the air, the ships all began to slowly thrust their engines and press forward onto Central City, their first target of the day. With a thrust of the engines, the ships all began to fly forward and leave Robotropolis behind. They pressed onto the colossal metropolis of Central City, the largest city on Mobius. Dr. Eggman smiled darkly as his fleet pressed forward.

"It's like a dream come true." he purred to himself "I can't wait to see what Sonic thinks of this. Heck, once I conquer Mobius, I'll fly this

fleet back to Earth and unleash it on G.U.N. and they'll suffer for all the indignity they've ever caused me!"

Eggman began to picture his return to his home planet in his evil little mind. While he did that, Alonzo sneaked out of the cockpit and he closed the door behind him. He trundled down the corridor and began looking for places to set up his bombs. Eggman would go down before he would even reach Mobotropolis when Alonzo was finished…

Meanwhile at Royal HQ, Sonic the Hedgehog and friends were chilling out in the rest room, a room where the occupants could entertain themselves or sit back and relax in on a slow day. The room had a table tennis, a TV, comfortable sofas and chairs to lie in, musical instruments such as rock guitars and a drum kit and a book shelf for people who loved to read. Sonic's best friend Tails the twin-tailed fox however, was in the lab with their newest friend Shade the Echidna, Imperator Ix's former henchwoman. Shade had decided now she had the time, she could get her broken warp belt fixed and Tails kindly offered to fix it for her. He sat at the table with a toolkit by his side and he began to fix the warp belt with Shade giving him directions and info on how to properly fix it. A good few hours later, Tails had finally fixed the warp belt. He wiped his forehead and he put his tools away.

"Here you go Shade, its all fixed." said Tails, handing the device back to Shade.

"Thank you little one." said Shade, putting the belt back around her waist.

When attached, the belt camouflaged on her bodysuit and looked just like a part of her suit so you wouldn't be able to tell she was wearing a belt at all.

"It got damaged quite a bit didn't it?" asked Tails "What happened to it?"

"Knuckles broke it by punching it during the whole Imperator Ix

fiasco**." explained Shade "Warp belts are pretty easy to damage unfortunately so in battle, I will have to make sure the belt doesn't get damaged or I won't be able to use it."

"So are you going to test it to see if it works?" asked Tails, looking a little nervous all of the sudden.

"I am." said Shade "I am warping myself back to Angel Island so I can join Knuckles in his guardian duties. If I vanish in a bright pink flash then that means the belt is working."

"I hope it works." said Tails.

"If it doesn't then we'll have to look at it again and see what went wrong." said Shade.

She touched the side of her hip and the Nocturnus Echidna suddenly vanished from the room in a bright pink flash. The flash disappeared into nothingness, leaving no trace of Shade's presence in the lab. That obviously meant the warp belt had worked and Shade was probably back on Angel Island right now. Tails beamed at himself.

"I did it." he said happily "I fixed Shade's warp belt. I was kind worried that I hadn't fixed it properly due to the fact its technology like none I've seen before. I'm glad all went well though."

With a satisfied feeling in his stomach, Tails left the lab and wondered off into the rest room to see how the others were doing. Fellow fighters Wilson the Dog and his gorgeous girlfriend Mandy Mouse were both watching a movie together. It was, of course, an action movie that looked like something Michael Bay would have directed as Mandy was a big fan of action movies and it was her turn to pick one this time. Wilson didn't like action movies as much but all he wanted to see was Mandy enjoying herself so he just sat down and pretended to enjoy it whenever Mandy put one on. Sonic the Hedgehog was sitting in a comfy chair away from the TV and chilling out. Ruben the Water Panther and Bunnie Rabbot were playing table-tennis with one another. Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian and Geoffrey St. John weren't in the rest room, they were outside playing dodge ball.

"Hey Sonic." said Tails brightly.

"How's it going big guy?" asked Sonic, looking up at Tails who was standing in the doorway.

"It's going great Sonic." said Tails happily "I've just fixed Shade's warp belt and it works perfectly. She's just warped herself back to Angel Island with no problems at all."

"That's way past cool Tails." said Sonic "I knew you'd be able to fix Shade's warp belt as no one can tinker with technology better then you can."

"Well I wouldn't say "nobody" since there's bound to be someone out there better then me." said Tails, wandering into the rest room and sitting in a comfy chair next to Sonic "But thanks for the compliment anyway."

"Don't mention it." said Sonic casually.

As for Wilson and Mandy, the film they were watching together was on an action scene now and Mandy clearly appeared to be enjoying it as she was constantly shrieking delightedly whenever something really cool happened.

"Oh yeah! Awesome!" shrieked Mandy "I love this kind of stuff!"

"Yes, I know." said Wilson who was trying his hardest to keep himself from hiding his face from the intensity of the scene that was playing right now. Wilson couldn't really stand highly intense action scenes like this, he'd much rather be watching a movie that was more on story then action and explosions.

"Hey sugah, do ya'll mind keepin' the hollerin' down a little?" asked Bunnie politely "Me and Ruben can't concentrate on our game with ya'll shrieking like that."

"OK, sorry Bunnie." said Mandy "I get caught up in these movies pretty easily and I can't help myself when I get invested in the cool action scenes."

"Ah can see that." said Bunnie as she batted the tiny little ball back

over to Ruben with her table tennis bat.

The ball made a clattering noise as it pinged up off the table and over the net onto Ruben's side. Ruben swung his bat but he missed and the ball landed with a clatter on the floor. Ruben picked up the ball and he fumed at his bad luck.

"Ya'll ain't very good at this are ya Ruben?" asked Bunnie "Ya'll just keep missin' the ball every time. Our score is twenty-five nil right now."

"Table tennis isn't a very popular sport in Chun-Nan Bunnie." said Ruben as he put his bat down on the table "Heck, we water-panthers aren't really sports people so I didn't grow up playing sports of any kind, even the ones native to Chun-Nan. I'm amazed I did well at Aero-ball the first time I played it***. Oh well, there's always something you're not going to be good at my mother always said to me."

"That's too right Ruben." said Bunnie, putting her bat down on the table "Mah mother once said to me "There's always somethin' that someone will be better then you at". Ah maybe better at sports then ya'll Ruben but ah bet there's things yer better then me at."

"Maybe there is." said Ruben "I bet swimming is one of them. No Mobian alive can swim better then a water-panther."

"Ah'm not a good swimmer anyway." said Bunnie modestly "Ah certainly wouldn't be able to swim now ah have these robot parts," she added, looking at her robotic left arm and robotic legs "If ah went into water, ah'd blow mah self up ah bet as they ain't water proof or anything."

"Well when we're in battle, I'd best make sure I don't accidentally drench you." said Ruben "Or I'll make one heck of a mess out of you."

Bunnie could only nod agreeably. That would not be a pleasant gaff at all if Ruben accidentally squirted her with water instead of Eggman's minions. But Ruben seemed capable at hitting what he was supposed to hit so this gaff would never happen. Suddenly, the

door burst open and in ran Nicole the Lynx, Castle Acorn's lady-in-waiting. She looked frantic as if the sky was raining with meteors all of the sudden. Sonic and Tails leaped out of their chairs in surprise and Wilson and Mandy looked away from their film to see what Nicole was going to tell them. Mandy quickly paused the film so the noise of the TV wouldn't distract her.

"Hey Nicole, what's up?" asked Sonic "You look like you've just seen a zombie or something."

"We've just received a distress signal from Central City!" cried Nicole, looking at a sheet of paper she had in her hand and reading aloud from it "They say there's a huge fleet of ships coming towards them and it's obviously intending to open fire on the city!"

"A fleet of ships?" squeaked Wilson "I do hope they aren't alien ships!"

""Somehow, that doesn't seem likely Wilson." said Mandy "Even if aliens do exist. I bet they're Eggman ships. After all, he had one when he invaded Mobius eight months ago**** so he's probably built some more to unleash on us."

"A fleet of ships sounds exactly like something Eggman would build." said Sonic grimly "If there's a fleet built by Eggman then it can't mean any good whatsoever. We've got to stop that fleet before it targets Mobotropolis or any other place."

"So are we going to stop that fleet Sonic?" asked Tails.

"Do you even need to ask?" said Sonic snidely "Tails, you, Ruben and Bunnie are coming with me. We are going to bring down Eggman's fleet before he does any harm with it!"

"Why are you bringing us in particular?" asked Ruben.

"Tails is smart, Bunnie's strong and you can short circuit something with your water powers." explained Sonic "Those combined with my super speed means Eggman has no chance against us."

"Ya'll got that right sugah!" said Bunnie hotly "Eggman won't know what hit him when we invade his fleet!"

"You said it Bunnie." said Sonic "Let's go everybody!"

Sonic zipped out of the room at top speed with Tails taking flight and following him, Bunnie running after him and Ruben running after her. The four ran outside and Sonic picked up speed as he headed off to Central City. Tails flew up into the air and he followed Sonic as fast as he could. Bunnie activated the jets in her roboticized feet and took flight, flying after Tails and Sonic. Ruben propelled himself into the air with his water powers and he made a trial of water in the air to keep himself airborne. He surfed on his water trials after Tails and Bunnie as they flew after Sonic. Geoffrey and the girls stopped what they were doing and they began to wonder where Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben were going in such a hurry. They deduced that Sonic, Tails, Ruben and Bunnie obviously had a mission to do and they were off to carry it out so they decided not to wonder about it and keep playing dodge ball, knowing that whatever was going on, Sonic would stop it and set things right easily. As for Sonic, he knew the way to Central City easily so he would be there in no time. He just hoped he'd be in time to save Central City from Eggman's fleet before it could level the city much like the first battleship levelled Mobotropolis…

Sonic, Tails, Ruben and Bunnie arrived at Central City in a matter of minutes. The colossal metropolis had just finished repairing the damages Marik the Martian had done to it when he went on a rampage in it during the Chaos Emerald hunt***** and now it looked like it was going to get damaged all over again as Eggman's insidious new fleet loomed over the giant city, poised and ready to turn the city into a wasteland that would do little more then show anybody where a city once stood. Sonic stared up at the enormous fleet. Fifty aquatic themed ships looming in the sky above the city and ready to strike at the first available opportunity. They were incredible, especially the flagship which looked like it was large enough to sit on top of the whole of Central City and squash it flat. Sonic could hardly believe his green eyes. He was not expecting anything like this at all. He had had many visions on the fleet on his way to Central City but none of his visions did the real thing any justice whatsoever. Tails and Bunnie stood in midair and gawped at

what they were looking at and Ruben was so surprised he almost forgot to keep himself afloat with his water powers.

"Oh…mah…stars!" gasped Bunnie "That fleet is…unbelievable! It's…its gigantic!"

"I don't think anything we say will do it justice Bunnie." said Ruben grimly "We cannot let Dr. Eggman keep this fleet. We have to destroy it before he can use it."

"You got that right Ruben." said Sonic "That fleet could level the whole of Mobius if we don't do anything about it!"

"I think I have an idea." said Tails "Sonic, you will confront the flagship, which is likely to be that giant, whale thing in the middle of it and bring it down. Me, Bunnie and Ruben will distract all the other ships by taking out their weapons. Once we've done that, we'll fly over and join you in destroying the flagship."

"Tails, that plan is just too good." said Sonic with a thumbs up "It is going to succeed brilliantly for us. We'll be able to add this to our list of "brilliant successes" once this fleet crashes down."

"Thanks Sonic." said Tails modestly "Come on team, let's give Eggman a friendly greeting shall we?"

"Yes!" cried Bunnie and Ruben together.

"Hey! Stop stealing my thunder Tails!" laughed Sonic, grabbing Tails and giving him a noogie-noogie "It's my job to make the quips around here!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! Stop it Sonic! I'm sorry! I won't do it again! Ha, ha, ha!" guffawed Tails as Sonic noogied him roughly.

"Don't sweat it, I'm just kidding with ya like I always do." said Sonic, letting go of Tails "Let's do it to it buddies!" he yelled, pointing straight up at the flagship.

Bunnie took flight without a second's hesitance and Ruben shot himself straight up into the air with a gush of water he aimed down at the ground. Tails grabbed Sonic by the hands and he flew the

hedgehog up into the air after Bunnie and Ruben. The first ship in the fleet they came across was one of the red shark-shaped ones, the most common ship design in the fleet. Tails threw Sonic forward like a dodge ball and Sonic spin-dashed towards the ship. He bounced off it and he hurtled into the air. He ricocheted off another ship and hurtled towards another. He continued to keep this up and he wouldn't stop until he reached the flagship, which was many ships away from him at the moment. Tails, Bunnie and Ruben just landed on a ship each and decided to start sabotaging everything Tails and Ruben had landed on a shark shaped ship each and Bunnie landed on a manta-ray shaped ship. The moment the Mobians landed on the ships, their weapons went into motion and they aimed at the intruders. On Tails' ship, the ship's cannon turrets all aimed at the little fox and they began to fire at him. Tails unfortunately had no way of counter-attacking the weapons or even damaging the ship itself as he had no weapons or special powers of any kind. All he could do was fly out of the missile's way and let them strike down on the deck and blow a hole on the fuselage. The ship's gun turrets began shooting rapidly at Tails but the fox was much too quick for them. The missiles all missed him and hit the deck instead. Explosions began to tear their way through the fuselage of the ship as the missiles hit the deck. The ship was inadvertently destroying itself as it tried to attack Tails. After another missile missed and struck the deck, the ship ended up damaging itself so much that it couldn't even fly anymore. The ship began to droop downwards and then point down at the ground. Tails flew off the ship quickly as the damaged ship began to plummet down to the ground. The ship, billowing with smoke and flames, plunged straight down and landed with a crash on the outskirts of Central City. Tails noticed that if they brought the entire fleet crashing down then it would just crash down on top of Central City and destroy the place so he decided making the ships bring themselves down was not a wise move. He flew over to Ruben, who was on a shark-shaped ship and squirting water at the gun turrets. Unfortunately, his water powers didn't seem to be short-circuiting the turrets as he was hoping they would do. Tails landed behind Ruben and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Yes?" asked Ruben, turning around and facing Tails.

"I wouldn't recommend trying to make the ships fall." said Tails "They'll land on the city and destroy it. I'd focus on just destroying the weapons and rendering the ships harmless."

"If that's what you suggest then I'll follow it to the letter." said Ruben "I hope Bunnie gets the message or works it out for herself."

He then squirted more water at the gun turrets that were trying to shoot at him. Tails decided to keep the missiles away from Ruben by flying in the air and whizzing around the gun turrets in order to catch their attention. The gun turrets turned away from Ruben and they began to shoot at Tails instead. Tails dodged the missile attacks and he flew around to evade some more incoming missiles. Ruben realized that his water powers weren't short circuiting the gun-turrets so he decided to try something else. He leaped into the air and did a kung-fu style kick on the gun-turret. All he ended up doing was sending himself falling backwards onto the deck as the gun turret was way too strong for Ruben's novice-style kung-fu. He picked himself up and he grumbled to himself.

"Where's Bladefeather and Mushu when you need them?" he muttered "They'd destroy that thing in a dice! Heck, maybe Princess Matilda could be of some use as according to Sonic, she knows kung-fu and was able to subdue someone as strong as Shadow with little effort! Looks like I'm just gonna have to keep trying until I get somewhere."

He then leaped up to his feet and he punched the massive gun-turret. He was hoping to punch a hole into the weapon and drench its circuits but the turret's hide was much too tough for someone like Ruben to penetrate. He would have to punch really, really hard if he was to make any progress and being a novice style kung-fu and ninjutsu learner, he wasn't strong enough for this kind of thing. At least Tails was doing some good and keeping the missiles off of him.

As for Bunnie, she had it easy. All she had to do was fly in the air, deploy her arm cannon and shoot the gun-turrets. She destroyed the gun turrets on the manta-ray ship she'd landed on in a matter of moments and the ship was rendered weapon-less. All it would be able to do now was stand there and look imposing.

"Yee-Haw!" cheered Bunnie "No destroying cities for you ya gruesome little battleship! Although there's like a zillion more to go." she added despairingly, noticing the other forty-eight ships in the fleet "No matter, ah'll take all their weapons out!"

She flew away from the weapon-less manta-ray ship and flew over to the ship Tails and Ruben were on. She could see they were having trouble so she aimed her cannon at the gun-turrets and fired at them. The gun-turrets were destroyed instantly with a few shots of Bunnie's powerful cannon arm. Tails landed back down on the deck, happy that there were no more missiles firing at him and it was safe to land. Bunnie landed down on the deck beside Tails and Ruben.

"Howdy boys." she said "How's it goin'?"

"Not too good." muttered Ruben "My water powers can't short-circuit the turret and it's too strong for me to damage with my kung-fu and ninjutsu. I'm useless on this mission."

"Me too." said Tails "All I can do is distract the weapons and make them shoot something else. I could make the turrets accidentally destroy the decks and being the ship down but we can't do that without bringing the ships down on Central City."

"Well that's not very fortunate for lil' ol us." said Bunnie despairingly "Looks like it's all up ta me to destroy the ship's weapons."

"Don't forget we've still got Sonic to bring the flagship down." noted Ruben "The good thing is, the flagship's a good distance away from the city so Sonic can bring it down without harming it in anyway."

"Let's hope sugah-hog can actually bring the durn flagship down or we're done for." said Bunnie.

She took flight and flew off to another ship. Tails took flight and flew after her and Ruben propelled himself into the air with his water powers. They all headed to another ship, ready to disarm it and render it useless.

Meanwhile, Sonic had made it onto a sawfish shaped ship. He landed on the ship's really long nose, brimming with gun-turrets that

were all ready to shoot at him. Eggman's flagship was behind this ship. Once he ploughed his way through this one, he could leap onto the ship and stop it dead in its tracks. Sonic zoomed up the sawfish ship's nose at top speed, avoiding the many gun turrets with ease. He made it to the bridge of the ship's nose and he leaped up onto the top of the ship. The gun turrets nearest to the start of the ship's nose aimed up at Sonic and they fired at him but Sonic zoomed off, leaving the missiles to shoot the ship's "forehead" instead. The missiles only left some nasty dents and holes in the ship but it was still flight capable and since the turrets couldn't sense Sonic anymore, they stopped firing. Sonic ran across the top of the ship until he reached the tail and he leaped off the ship's tail in spectacular fashion. He spin-dashed through the air and he landed on the nose of the flagship in perfect fashion. He ran across the decks of the ship and he headed towards the cockpit, which was located on a large tower near the rear of the ship. The tower had gun turrets and missile launchers and it had a replica of Dr. Eggman right on the spire at the top. The cockpit tower was as tall as a six storey building so it would be a long climb for anyone. The ship's enormous length meant Sonic had quite a long way to run but he would run the distance in no time as he was super-fast. Dr. Eggman could see Sonic running towards the cockpit tower at top speed, effortlessly avoiding his gun-turrets as he ran.

"That infernal hedgehog has decided to try and stop my fleet has he?" he growled "Well I've got a way of dealing with him!"

He thumped a button on his control panel.

Outside, Sonic was almost at the cockpit tower but before he could reach the tower, a huge silver bladed ball ripped its way through the floor and burst up onto the deck straight in front of Sonic. The silver ball hit Sonic and sent him hurling backwards. This ball was, of course, a spin-dashing Silver Sonic. The huge silver Sonic robot was back from the heist in Robotropolis yesterday and it was ready for another Sonic showdown. Sonic picked himself up and he glared at Silver Sonic.

"So you're back Silver Sonic?" he said "Good, that means I get to stomp on you this time!"

But before Sonic could even do anything, he was tackled from behind by a black spin-dash. This spin-dash belonged to a robot that looked exactly the same as Metal Sonic only differently coloured. It was black instead of blue and it had yellow lines around its feet. Its face was yellow and there were yellow strips on its forehead. This robot was known as Metal Sonic 3.0 and it was twice as deadly as the original Metal Sonic. The only difference other then the colour scheme was it wasn't a sentient robot, meaning it was unwaveringly loyal to Dr. Eggman so unlike Metal Sonic, Metal Sonic 3.0 wouldn't betray him. It also had no voice, meaning it was physically unable to speak whatsoever. It only knew one thing: destroy Sonic the Hedgehog. Sonic picked himself up and stared at the new Metal Sonic bot.

"Huh, decided to rebuild Metal Sonic and give him a new paint job eh Eggman?" mused Sonic "You really are getting lazy aren't you? Oh well, at least I get to tussle with my old robot faker once again!"

Sonic spin-dashed towards Metal Sonic 3.0 but Metal Sonic 3.0 held his arms up in a cross shape and blocked the blow. Then he leaned back onto his back and he swung his legs up and over, sending Sonic hurtling over him and crashing onto the deck a few feet away from him. Sonic picked himself up just as Silver Sonic plodded up to him. Silver Sonic raised his fist and tried to punch Sonic but the blue blur dodged the blow, leaving Silver Sonic to miss and make a dent on the floor. Sonic then ran around the back of Silver Sonic and he spin-dash the giant Sonic duplicate in the back, knocking it onto its front. Metal Sonic 3.0 got the drop of Sonic with another spin-dash and Sonic ended up crashing down on the decks with a heavy clang on the metal. Sonic picked himself up just as Metal Sonic 3.0 was preparing to attack him again. Sonic jumped out of the re-coloured Metal Sonic's way and Metal Sonic 3.0 landed firmly on the floor just as Sonic dodged. Sonic then grabbed Metal Sonic 3.0's head, flipped himself up and over the robot duplicate and then threw Metal Sonic 3.0 over his head and onto its back in front of him. Silver Sonic then suddenly got the drop on Sonic with a tremendous backhand. Sonic hurtled a good few feet up the deck and he crashed into a gun turret. Metal Sonic 3.0 sped over towards Sonic as fast as he could go but Sonic picked himself up and spin-dash Metal Sonic 3.0 before he could get close to him. Metal Sonic 3.0

landed on the decks with a heavy clunk that would have destroyed any normal robot easily. Sonic zoomed up to Metal Sonic 3.0 and he leaped off of Metal Sonic 3.0 as if he was a spring and the blue hedgehog spin-dashed towards Silver Sonic. Silver Sonic just jumped upwards and caught Sonic in his hands as if he was catching a basketball and he slam-dunked Sonic into the floor. Sonic groaned in pain after that powerful slam and Silver Sonic picked him up. He threw Sonic through the air like a rag doll and Metal Sonic 3.0 leaped up, clasped his fists together and slammed Sonic down into the floor with him. Sonic hit the floor and he grimaced in pain. Fighting one Sonic robot clone was bad enough but fighting two metal fakers was just taking the chilli-dogs now. Regardless, Sonic didn't know the meaning of the word "surrender" so he continued the fight. Sonic picked himself up, only to get spin-dash back down by Metal Sonic 3.0. Sonic picked himself up again and he kicked Metal Sonic 3.0 in the head. The Metal Sonic re-colour was sent staggering backwards but he quickly regained his balance and he charged towards Sonic again. Sonic leaped over Metal Sonic 3.0 and dropkicked him in the back of the head, knocking him down on his front. Sonic landed back on his feet but Silver Sonic clawed at him and just managed to catch him on the ear. Sonic yelped in pain and he clutched his ear, which felt like it had just been torn off even though it was still on his head luckily. Silver Sonic then tried to kick Sonic but Sonic spin-dashed Silver Sonic and knocked the giant robot off his feet and onto his back. Metal Sonic 3.0 was quick to blast him out of the sky with a quick blast of the torso laser, one of the original Metal Sonic's favoured weapons, and Sonic found himself crashing down once again. Sonic picked himself back up but Metal Sonic 3.0 grabbed Sonic and threw him towards Silver Sonic. Silver Sonic backhanded Sonic straight into the cockpit tower and Sonic ended up leaving an imprint of himself on the tall building. Metal Sonic 3.0 flew over to Sonic and he grabbed the hedgehog by the quills. He peeled him off of the wall and he tossed him over his shoulder carelessly. Sonic landed face-first back on the decks below. He looked like he was unable to keep this fight going any longer. He was bruised, he had cuts and he was having great trouble just trying to get up onto his knees. Silver Sonic advanced on Sonic menacingly with his claws bared. He was about to pick Sonic up and finish him off until Eggman cut in.

"Silver Sonic! Throw that hedgehog off of my flagship!" ordered Dr. Eggman "Let him become a nasty stain on the ground below! That's more then what that filthy blue rat deserves!"

Silver Sonic obeyed and he picked up the injured Sonic. He plodded over to the edge of the flagship and he held his arm out at full length. Then he spun his entire torso around a full 360 degrees while holding Sonic and when he picked up top speed, he let go of Sonic and the blue hedgehog was sent hurling off the flagship. He hurtled past a ship that was in front of the flagship and he began to plummet down to the ground which was miles down below. To his incredible luck though, Bunnie saw him and she flew down as fast as she could in order to save him. She had a feeling she wasn't going to be fast enough so she extended her robotic arm's length until it was enough to reach Sonic and grab him. She retracted her arm back to its original length and she flew back onto the ship she was on with Sonic in tow. Bunnie touched down and put Sonic down on the decks. Tails and Ruben stared at him in disbelief.

"Wha…what happened to him?" asked Tails.

"Ah dunno sugah." said Bunnie "Ah saw him fallin' so ah just flew down to catch the dashin' sugah hog before he could meet his untimely end."

Sonic managed to pick himself up at last and he rubbed his aching body.

"Ugh! Hey guys…" he murmured "You're not gonna believe this… but Dr. Eggman has Silver Sonic and a Metal Sonic re-colour guarding his flagship!"

"Silver Sonic and a Metal Sonic re-colour?" squeaked Tails "Oh man! How can we bring the flagship down now? Metal Sonic was bad enough but Metal Sonic AND Silver Sonic together? We can't possibly win against them!"

"Tails, haven't you heard the old saying "Nothing is impossible."?" asked Ruben "You can take down anything Eggman throws at you so you can take down two Sonic robot duplicates if you put your all into it."

"I appreciate you trying to raise my hopes Ruben but fifteen of us at once couldn't take down the original Metal Sonic." noted Tails "So Metal Sonic and a giant silver Sonic clone with blades on it's back is going to be one heck of a battle for us, a battle that we can't possibly win."

"With an attitude like that, you certainly won't win." said Ruben sternly "You should never think negatively in the heat of the battle, think positively and you'll come out on top in the end."

"Well I suppose you have a point Ruben…" mused Tails "Sonic always thinks positively in battle and he comes out on top in the end…"

"Hey guys, I don't…mean to cut the chatter…or anything but have you noticed that Eggman's flagship is…right over Central City now?" asked Sonic.

Tails, Bunnie and Ruben stared at the gigantic flagship that was just a few ships away from them. The flagship had finally made it over Central City and it was ready to unleash a rain of blasters on the city below. Dr. Eggman smiled widely to himself from inside the cockpit of his flagship as he monitored the fleet's progress.

"Valiant effort Sonic and friends." he said to himself "You tried to take out my ship's weapons and render my fleet harmless. Just a pity for you that all my ships have back-up weapons and you haven't managed to even get through half the fleet yet! Your valiant efforts have been valiantly in vain and now you'll witness a gruelling defeat! Egg-Fleet…FIRE!" he bellowed at the top of his voice.

Since the entire fleet was programmed to respond to his voice, the fleet began to fire their weapons at the helpless city of Central City down below. Any ship that had had its gun-turrets destroyed already deployed plasma cannons from underneath their hull and began shooting at the city below whereas any ship that still had gun turrets fired down at the city with them. Central City began to crumble and go up in flames the moment the entire fleet began to fire down at it. The sky seemed to rain with laser cannon fire and not one laser blast missed its target. Every blast fired hit the city and the blast brought the target up in flames or sent it crumbling down to the

ground, raining debris down on the ground as it titled. The largest city on Mobius was now beginning to fall under the onslaught of firepower from the ships looming above it. The Mobians stared down in horror at what was happening. They had failed their mission. Central City was being completely destroyed before their very eyes.

"NO!" cried Sonic helplessly "We've failed! The fleet's destroying Central City!"

"It sure is sugah-hog." said Bunnie "But that don't mean we can't destroy the fleet before it destroys another city. We've gotta destroy that fleet or Mobius will be a planet-sized wasteland!"

"You got that right Bunnie." said Sonic, trying to stand up "Let's do it…"

But before he could finish what he was saying, Silver Sonic leaped up into the air and spin-dashed towards the ship that Sonic, Tails, Ruben and Bunnie were standing on. Dr. Eggman had ordered him to terminate the Mobians by taking them down with the ship. That was guaranteed to finish them off. The eight-foot tall silver machine hurtled towards the ship like a spinning bladed ball and in no time at all, it ploughed through the shark shaped ship like a football through a window. The ship crumbled underneath the Mobian's feet and Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben found themselves plummeting down to the ground from hundreds of feet up. The ship's debris rained down on the bombarded Central City and destroyed any buildings it landed on. Before the Mobians could make a very unpleasant confrontation with the ground, Tails got his tails spinning double quick and he caught Sonic by the hand. Bunnie quickly activated her jets and she caught Ruben in her arms. The two began to fly away from the fleet but a saw-fish ship spotted them and it fired its many nose cannons at the fleeing Mobians. Bunnie was about to activate her force-field generator until a laser blast caught her on the leg and the Rabbot found herself plummeting down to the ground. She did eventually manage to convert her robot arm into a force-field generator and surround herself with a force-field to defend herself and Ruben from the impact of the inevitable crash into the ground below. She held Ruben tight to her chest as the two were about to crash into the ground. The two crashed into the ground like a falling rock but the force-field protected them both from the bone crunching

impact. Tails saw the stricken Bunnie and Ruben and he flew down after them with Sonic in tow. As for the Egg-Fleet, it had completely levelled Central City and all in a matter of seconds, even though a ship had been destroyed and many of them had had their gun-turrets destroyed. The flagship in particular had done much damage due to the fact it had the most amount of weapons of any ship in the fleet. Central City had been reduced from a marvellous metropolis to a smouldering wreck of tangled metal, burning shrapnel and gigantic chunks of debris that was larger then the average household. Anybody in the city would have easily been killed by the rain of fire from the fleet but the city had been abandoned the moment the fleet was seen coming so there were no casualties at all, not that Eggman would care as he wanted to roboticize the population, not wipe it out. As for Dr. Eggman, he leaped up from his seat and he began to dance about and cheer like a child that's just gotten a super bike for his birthday.

"Bwah ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" cackled Dr. Eggman "What a brilliant success! Mobius' largest city is now a smouldering eyesore that will not be pleasing for anybody to look at! My fleet is a great success and because of Silver Sonic and Metal Sonic 3.0, Sonic can't touch me! Now, it's time we went to Mobotropolis and showed that royal brat Sally Acorn how this thing works!"

He sat back down in his chair and he took control once again. The flagship began to turn around and it headed away from the devastation of Central City that continued to burn wildly. The whole fleet followed him. The Egg-Fleet picked up speed so they could quickly get away from Sonic and be ahead of him, giving them time to get away and leave Sonic behind until he caught up again. Tails and Sonic watched disappointedly as the Egg-Fleet left them behind to commiserate over their defeat. Bunnie switched off her force-field and she sat up straight, rubbing her neck tenderly. Ruben rubbed his tail and tenderly stroked his back to ease the pain.

"Ah can't believe it." said Bunnie gloomily "We lost. Eggman has won. The fleet's destroyed Central City and now it's gonna destroy somethin' else."

"Eggman's taking no…prisoners this time…is he?" grunted Sonic, rubbing his shoulder "He's built a huge fleet and has…just decided

to level the largest city on Mobius! He must have taken…yesterday's defeat really badly hasn't he?"

"It sure does seem like it." muttered Tails "How can we possibly stop him now? The fleet has back-up weapons so our efforts to disarm it are in vain and the flagship is guarded by Silver Sonic and Metal Sonic Mk II or whatever you wanna call it so Sonic has his hands full."

"And here's me thinking this whole thing would just be a walk in the park with us on the job." said Ruben grimly "My mother was right to say to me "Never assume that everything will be easy, in life even the easiest sounding things can be harder then they're made out to be"."

"Well I'm not willing to sit…by and let Eggman use that fleet to turn Mobius into a death zone!" declared Sonic "I maybe a little roughened up…but I've still got enough juice in me to…defeat Eggman once again!"

"We're gonna need everybody if we wanna destroy that fleet." said Tails "All our comrades, Knuckles and Shade and even Sally, Nicole and the R.F.S. groups abroad. We alone just simply aren't enough."

"Then let's go back to Royal HQ and rally everybody up!" yelled Sonic "Come on everybody let's go!"

Sonic jogged off and suddenly tripped over himself. He was still feeling a little limp from the beating he'd received from two killer Sonic robot clones earlier so he wasn't in the best condition to run.

"Ugh…stupid Sonic-bots…" he muttered "I'm too roughened up to run properly."

"You'll have to take it slow Sonic." said Tails "Besides, even if you could run, you'd have to hold back for poor Bunnie as she can't fly now she's had her leg shot by the fleet."

Bunnie showed Sonic her blackened robot foot and ankle. The jet in the sole of her foot was completely mangled, twisted and wrecked. Bunnie could barely walk with that injured foot of hers, let alone fly.

This was going to be a long trek home indeed. Sonic stared grimly at Bunnie's injury.

"That looks really bad Bunnie." said Sonic "I think Tails better carry you. I'll still run but I'll slow down a bit so I don't trip and Ruben can just do his water surfing thing he does."

"Sounds alright to me sugah-hog." said Bunnie as Tails took flight and held her gently by the hand "Let's hope we get home in time to rally everybody before the fleet strikes again."

"Somehow, I don't think we will." said Ruben grimly "I have a nasty feeling the fleet might target Mobotropolis next."

"Let's hope that nasty feeling of yours is just you worrying too much." said Sonic "I will go berserk if the Egg-Fleet levels Mobotropolis before it can even finish being re-built."

So without wasting anymore time, Sonic sped off at half-speed and Tails flew into the air with Bunnie holding tight to his hands. Ruben propelled himself into the air with his water powers and he surfed along the trial of water he began to make in mid-air after the blue hedgehog. Sonic was beginning to get his footing back so he was able to run at half his normal speed at least but he wasn't ready to run at full speed yet so he decided to slowly but steadily pick up speed as he ran after the fleet. Once he caught up to the fleet, he would tear it apart bit by bit before it could harm another city…

Back in Royal HQ, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Amy, Cream and Cosmo had all gathered up into the lab to monitor the Egg-Fleet's position and see what it was doing. To their horror it was coming towards Mobotropolis and it would be there in a matter of minutes. Wilson, who was watching the radar with Geoffrey beside him, almost died of shock when he saw the radar.

"Yipe! The fleet's coming to Mobotropolis!" he squealed "It's going to level the place and take us with it!"

"No it isn't mate." said Geoffrey with a determined expression on his

face "Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben may have failed to stop the fleet but we're not! We're gonna bring that fleet down and hopefully the four will catch up to it and join in with us so we can finish it off faster."

"Geoffrey boy, I don't mean to be unsupportive but what good can we do against that fleet if Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben couldn't stop it?" asked Mandy.

"We'll think of something luv." said Geoffrey with a dashing smirk on his face "Little Cream the Rabbit can fly us up onto the ships one by one and once we're on there, we cause as much damage as possible."

"I bet that stupid fleet won't stand up to my Piko-Piko hammer!" declared Amy, summoning her dreaded weapon to her hand and swinging it around heftily.

"And I bet we can do some damage if me and Mandy have a belt full of bombs each." said Wilson "Although poor Cream and Cosmo won't be able to do much good on the fleet."

"We'll just give you our support." said Cream "Keep you going on the mission maybe."

"That seems to be your best option." said Mandy "Now we have a plan, let's carry it out!"

With that said, the Mobians all left the lab and they charged out of Royal HQ to face the fleet when it arrived. They all stood guard a few paces in front of Castle Acorn and they waited for the Egg-Fleet to arrive and try to attack Mobotropolis. Queen Sally Acorn and Nicole the Lynx looked out of the window only to see the Royal Fighters waiting to spring into action. Sally had a feeling she knew what they were waiting for, the Egg-Fleet's arrival. She had been dreading the arrival of Eggman's fleet and now it seemed it would be coming to Mobotropolis to level the place. All she could do now was stand by and hope the Royal Fighters could stop the fleet dead in its tracks. As for the Egg-Fleet, it was looming over Green Hill Zone and heading towards Mobotropolis. Dr. Eggman grinned widely as the fleet neared Mobotropolis.

"Aaaah Mobotropolis, this is where it all began******." he sighed to himself "I failed to destroy Castle Acorn the time my first battleship levelled the city but I shall not fail this time. My fleet has many ships so Castle Acorn will not survive this encounter!"

Unbeknownst to Dr. Eggman, Alonzo had just been around the entire flagship setting up bombs during the Central City siege and right now, he'd just finished setting up the last bomb. He set the charges and he chortled to himself.

"Oh Alonzo, you sly old devil." he said to himself "Dr. Eggman's flagship, as colossal as it is, will not survive this at all. Now all I need to do is flee in an escape pod and set the bombs to go."

Luckily for Alonzo, he had found the escape pods on his way around the ship so he knew where to find one easily. Alonzo set the bombs to blow in five minutes, more then enough time for him to flee for his life. The moment the timer on the bombs started, he zoomed off to the escape pod compartment as fast as his little wheels would let him. He found the compartment and he jumped into the nearest escape pod. He booted the pod up and set it to eject. The pod ejected from its port and it rocketed out into the open air of the outside world. The pod flew away from the flagship and it headed off back to Robotropolis. Alonzo had many plans for the city once he arrived back at it. Alonzo began to chuckle dryly to himself.

"Dr. Eggman's reign of terror is over…and Alonzo's reign of terror will begin!" he beamed to himself "I'll be on top of the world and Dr. Eggman will either be dead or rotting in a prison cell somewhere in a Mobian city and all because of my brilliance."

He hooted with laughter to himself as the pod left the fleet behind and headed off to Robotropolis. Back on Eggman's flagship, the bombs all went off and they exploded in unison, ripping their way effortlessly through the entire ship's hull and mangling the steelwork and the fuselage as the explosions tore their way through the ship. A huge fireball began to rage it's way through the ship and smoke billowed out into the air. The explosions rocked the giant flagship to the side and Dr. Eggman yelped in surprise.

"What the devil?" he cried "My ship's exploding! NOOOOOOO! THIS

CAN'T BE! MY FLEET IS FLAWLESS, WHY IS MY SHIP EXPLODING?"

This was not the time to start moaning angrily to himself, now was the time to flee for his life or he would go down with his ship. He ran over to the cockpit door and he tried to pull it open. But the door wouldn't open. Alonzo had locked it in order to trap him in the cockpit and preventing him from escaping. Eggman thumped the button on the wall desperately but Alonzo had put the door under tight lockdown so only the controls outside would open it. Dr. Eggman began to fume angrily.

"Alonzo!" he bellowed "Help me! The door will not open! I'm trapped and the ship is falling to the ground!"

But there was no answer as Alonzo had left him behind on the ship and was on his way to Robotropolis.

"Alonzo? Where are you?" bellowed Dr. Eggman "Get here now and help me!"

Still no answer. Dr. Eggman began to wonder where his loyal servant was. Now was not the time for wondering though as the ship was going up in flames and he was going down with it. He quickly ran over to the cockpit controls and he slammed on a button.

"Attention Egg-Fleet! Fall back to Robotropolis!" he bellowed "Repeat: Fall back to Robotropolis!"

The whole fleet obeyed Dr. Eggman's command and the mass of ships slowly turned around and flew away from Mobotropolis and flew away back to Robotropolis, leaving the stricken flagship to erupt like a volcano with explosions and began to sink down to the ground. The Royal Fighters were watching this whole scene with amazement. They did not see that coming at all but they were glad it was happening.

"Look, that ship's exploding!" cried Cream "And the rest of the fleet's retreating!"

"Maybe Sonic managed to do some damage after all." said Amy

"What a guy."

"Either that or he's in that ship as we speak and is tearing it apart from the inside." suggested Cosmo "Either way, it's lucky for us that his fleet is in turmoil now."

The whole flagship began to dive down nose-first towards the ground. It made an ominous creaking noise as it hurtled over the forests of Green Hill Zone and straight towards the meadow in between Mobotropolis and Green Hill Zone. The ship crashed straight into the ground and erupted into a blaze of fire that scaled every-building in the world. It was like watching a volcano erupt as the fire and smoke climbed to great heights. Dr. Eggman however, had managed to escape from the cockpit the moment the ship crashed. He had had an extra escape route installed in the cockpit. It involved him sitting in a rocket powered chair and hurtling through the window and out of the cockpit. However, before he could land on the ground, the force of the explosion threw the chair off-balance and Eggman began to dizzily spin around towards the ground. He crash landed on the ground and skidded to a very painful halt on the grass. The Royal Fighters saw the whole thing and they ran towards the meadow to apprehend the evil man once and for all. Sally and Nicole joined them as they wanted the satisfaction of humiliating Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman picked himself up and rubbed the dirt off his face. He looked over his shoulder and stared sadly at his destroyed flagship, now a smouldering wreck burning like crazy in a meadow in front of Mobotropolis. It looked pretty much like the destroyed Central City now. Dr. Eggman's moustache drooped down in misery and his mouth drooped at the corners.

"My…my flagship…it's ruined!" he wailed "And just when my fleet looked so promising! Oh why is my life a constant crud-storm for me?"

"Because villains never win in the long run you insidious, pot-bellied demon!" yelled Sally Acorn in a cold tone of voice.

Dr. Eggman squealed at the top of his voice and he saw Sally, Nicole and the Royal Fighters standing before him with very angry expressions on their faces. They looked like they were about ready to kill him now. Dr. Eggman began to gibber like an idiot in fear.

"Well Eggman, your fleet has failed and you're completely at our mercy now." said Sally with a cruel smirk on her face "How swiftly things have changed huh?"

"This maybe a big set-back for me but I'm not down yet!" yelled Dr. Eggman "I'm running back to Robotropolis and once I've given my fleet a diagnostic test to make sure the ships are safe to use again, I'll be back and…"

"Oh shut the bloody hell up you annoying, fat devil!" snarled Mandy, storming up to Dr. Eggman and punching him in the face as hard as she possibly could.

Dr. Eggman fell over onto his back and clutched his throbbing nose. Mandy had fists of steel and he knew it from the first time she'd punched him. That punch felt more like being hit by a purse full of bricks. The Royal Fighters stood over the downed Dr. Eggman and Sally folded her arms and gave him a stern look.

"I've longed to say this for a while now." said Sally with a clear tone of triumph in her voice "You are under arrest for attempted anarchism, terrorism and world domination Dr. Eggman."

Geoffrey St. John stood forward and pulled a laser-cuff sphere out of his backpack. He forced Eggman's arms behind his back and he put the sphere in between his wrists. The sphere activated the lasers and they wrapped around Eggman's wrists. The fat scientist was subdued now. He had no hope of escape, he was a prisoner of the Mobians and doomed to rot in a prison cell forever. The moment Geoffrey cuffed Eggman, Sonic, Tails, Ruben and Bunnie finally arrived on the scene and were pretty amazed to see Eggman's flagship in flames and Eggman arrested. Sonic skidded to a halt and he surveyed the scene around him.

"Whoa…what did you guys do to the ship?" cried Sonic.

"We didn't do anything blue dude." said Mandy "The ship just…blew up itself for some reason. We assumed that was your doing but since you've just arrived here I guess you had nothing to do with the ship's destruction."

"We weren't." said Tails "Eggman got the best of us. I guess he just had a technical problem and his ship crashed down."

"It's a good thing it did happen though because we've now arrested Dr. Eggman!" cheered Wilson "The war is over at long last! We've won! We've won! Mobius is free once again!"

"You said it Wilson buddy." said Sonic with a thumbs up at the orange dog "Eggman is now going to rot in a prison cell and we will be free from his terror at long last."

Dr. Eggman just scowled and said nothing. Geoffrey and Wilson dragged Dr. Eggman away, ready to set him up at a MPD station and put him in a lonely old prison cell forever. Sonic just smugly waved goodbye to Dr. Eggman as he was dragged away. Dr. Eggman had been defeated at long last and Mobius was free to recuperate from Eggman's blows and conquest attempts at long last…or was it…?

Footnotes:

***See Story 28 to find out what happened to the first Robotropolis**

**** See Story 71**

***** See Story 50**

****** Of course, she's talking about the prologue story that started it all!**

******* See Story 42**

******** It did all the way back in the prologue story!**

Dr. Eggman has been defeated and arrested! HOORAY! But how long will THAT victory last? And what is Alonzo plotting to do now he's gotten his master arrested? Tune in next time as

Sonic and friends celebrate Eggman's imprisonment. Read and Review.

Jailed Egg

Story 77: Jailed Egg

"Extra! Extra! Dr. Eggman has been arrested and thrown in jail! Read all about it!" hollered the newspaper man as he ran down the busy streets of Empire City, holding out newspapers and handing them out to anyone willing to buy one.

Dr. Eggman's imprisonment seemed to have a glorious effect on the Mobians as the moment the news was announced, the entire population exploded into cheer and applause. The fat man had finally been defeated and now they could go back to their normal lives and forget all about Dr. Eggman's tyranny. Three such Mobians were pleased to read all about Eggman's capture. These three were the Chaotix, Espio the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile and Charmy Bee. They were taking a stroll down Empire City and the moment they heard the hollering newspaper man, they decided that they had to read all about this. Vector received a copy from the man and he, Espio and Charmy immediately began to read the page about Eggman's imprisonment.

"Global terror and would-be-world-conqueror Dr. Eggman attempted to destroy Mobotropolis with a fleet of ships," read Vector "But his ship exploded and crash landed and the moment he was catapulted out of the wreckage, Queen Sally Acorn and the Royal Fighters arrested him on the spot, not before Royal Fighter Mandy Mouse decided to use his face for stress relief."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! Mandy punched Eggman in the face again!*" laughed Charmy.

"Well that was an unexpected turn of events wasn't it?" asked Espio "Eggman's ship just exploded and that in turn ended up getting him caught and arrested. Good for us at least."

"It sure is Espio." beamed Vector, smiling as wide as a crocodile possibly could "Dr. Eggman's evil is over at last and we Mobians stand triumphant. I knew we'd be able to defeat him eventually."

"I can imagine that whiny baby's grumpy face right now as he sits in his boring prison cell being bored while we're free bees and still able to have fun and play around! Wheeeeee!" cheered Charmy, doing some back flips in mid-air (when you can fly, back flips are no problem.)

"Yeah, I bet Eggman's REALLY mad about this!" laughed Vector "And to think that he'll be in the same prison as Scourge the Hedgehog and Lord Sycorax too, seems fitting for that evil genius doesn't it?"

"Having Sonic's evil brother and your anarchist dad as cellmates is VERY fitting in my opinion." said Espio "They're all as evil as each other."

"You know what boys, I think we should go over to Royal HQ and see what Sonic and his buddies are up to." said Vector "What do you say?"

"I say let's go!" cried Charmy "Sonic's loads of fun! Yippee!"

"Then off to Royal HQ we go then." said Vector, strolling off down the street.

Espio and Charmy followed the crocodile as he headed off to Royal HQ back in Mobotropolis. He couldn't wait to say hi to his friends and hear what they had to say about this delightful turn of events…

Dr. Eggman had not had a good time right now. He had been beaten by the cops, changed into prison fatigues and now he was being put in his cell where he would spend the rest of his life in. Melchett the Hedgehog, the chief policeman in the MPD Station pushed Dr. Eggman roughly into the cell blockade and he steered him towards his cell, which was right at the back of the blockade and the only empty cell right now. Dr. Eggman just fumed to himself. A prisoner of his sworn enemies! How humiliating! Being a prisoner of G.U.N. back on Earth was nowhere near this humiliating! To make it worse however, some of Sonic or his friend's enemies were in the same blockade as him. There was, of course, Sonic's evil brother Scourge

the Hedgehog, his girlfriend Fiona Fox, also a Royal Fighter traitor, and their snivelling sidekick Ginger the Fox, Tails' cousin. They were in a cell near to Dr. Eggman's. There was also Vector's evil father and region leader Lord Sycorax. He had been arrested after his failed attempt to destroy Castle Acorn** and he had not been enjoying his time in prison at all. But they weren't the only ones, there was also Mr. Florenzi and his sidekicks Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza, agents of Dr. Eggman and the ones that sold Amy Rose to him***. And finally, there were Marcus and Celia Punch, also agents of Dr. Eggman and the ones who enslaved Ruben the Water Panther before he met Sonic and friends****. Even though they had made a clean getaway from the camp when Alonzo trashed it with Egg-Peacock, they were captured a few days later after accidentally running into Melchett the Hedgehog while he was on duty so now they had been arrested as Melchett knew too well about their unspeakable evil. It surprised Dr. Eggman at the fact so many villains he knew were incarcerated along with him, save for Lord Sycorax as he hadn't met him yet. Everybody seemed surprised at the fact Dr. Eggman was in their neighbourhood and they instantly started an uproar.

"Well pull my tail!" gasped Fiona, pressed her nose against the glass door of her cell "It's Dr. Eggman!"

"The gluttonous gut ball appears to have been arrested much like we have." said Ginger "He's one of us now."

"Way to point out the obvious you poop-stain!" snarled Scourge, whacking Ginger with his hand "We can see that Eggman's been arrested you dope-head!"

"Sorry." muttered Ginger, rubbing his head.

"I must say, I wasn't expecting that fat moron to join us anytime soon." murmured Scourge as he watched Dr. Eggman get pushed by Melchett towards his cell.

"Hey Eggman, did that accursed hedgehog Sonic spin-dash your inventions to pieces and kick you your huge flabby backside?" sneered Mr. Polikaza.

"And we thought you were invincible Dr. Eggman!" cackled Mr. Wazikaza.

The two lizards began to laugh like hyenas at Eggman.

"Show some respect you two clowns!" snarled Mr. Florenzi, thumping the two lizards on the head "We were agents of his once remember?"

"Yes Mr. Florenzi." muttered Wazikaza and Polikaza, rubbing their heads tenderly.

"Dr. Eggman incarcerated?" mused Celia "This is a surprise isn't it Marcus dear?"

"Of course!" muttered Marcus.

"So this is the insidious Dr. Eggman is it?" mused Lord Sycorax "He's a lot less intimidating then I thought he would be. How anyone fears this sorry excuse for a villain is beyond my realms of deduction."

"Silence all of you!" snarled Melchett as he pushed Dr. Eggman "Eggman's fortunate arrestment does not mean you can cause an uproar! You are all forbidden to talk to this disgusting slime ball and if I catch any of you communicating with him or plotting with him, you will all receive a very painful punishment from me and Big Dave, is that clear?"

"Yes Melchett." lied the inmates.

Melchett huffed and he shoved Dr. Eggman into the empty cell. He closed the glass door behind Eggman, trapping the gluttonous scientist in the cell. Dr. Eggman sat against the wall and folded his arms, scowling so hard his face looked like it was about to burst in anger.

"I hope you'll enjoy your stay you monster." said Melchett coldly "Because you're going to be here for a VERY long time. So long in fact your lifespan will have expired by the time your sentence is up. That'll teach you to try and conquer our planet and roboticize all of us."

With that said, Melchett left Dr. Eggman to sulk in his cell and he left the cell blockade in a huff. The door clanged shut behind him, leaving the inmates to do nothing but sit around and talk.

"So egg-head, how did you get thrown in here then?" asked Scourge "Sonic finally stomp you into submission or something?"

"Amazingly enough, no." muttered Dr. Eggman "I unleashed my new Egg-Fleet on Central City and completely levelled the place…"

"You levelled Central City?" gasped Fiona "Wow! That is incredible! You levelled the world's largest city!"

"Yes I did." said Dr. Eggman "I then targeted Mobotropolis afterwards but before I could even reach the damn place, my ship suddenly exploded and crash-landed. I managed to get out of the cockpit but the force of the explosion messed up my landing and I crashed down onto the ground. Queen Sally and the Royal Fighters then took it upon themselves to arrest me and throw me in the brink here. What a humiliating defeat that is for me!"

"You're telling me." muttered Scourge "Me and my sidekicks here got foiled by Sonic during a heist on Royal HQ that almost worked***** until he showed up. Now we're in here and Melchett's clamped a control collar on me in order to inhibit my powers."

He pulled on the golden collar that was tightly clamped around his neck.

"The moron's considering lifting the ban on control collars unfortunately." muttered Scourge "So now any villain with super powers will have no chance of escape."

"How unfortunate for you." muttered Dr. Eggman "As for you Fiona, I haven't seen you in a while. Where have you been lately?"

"On the run that's where." muttered Fiona "I quit the Royal Fighters after only eight months of brawling it out with you****** and I ended up becoming a poor homeless street rat, having to steal to eat and constantly on the run from the cops. I met Scourge here and decided to go with him as he offers me more then the Royal Fighters

ever did and I have no regrets."

"So you're a traitor eh?" purred Dr. Eggman "No wonder I had one Royal Fighter less to deal with. Just a pity you had to go with Scourge though…"

"I heard that doc!" snarled Scourge.

"So you did." muttered Eggman sarcastically "Congratulations. As for the ginger coloured fox with you, who is he?" he asked, pointing at Ginger "He reminds me heavily of Tails only he looks a little smarter looking in appearance."

"I am Ginger." introduced Ginger "Tails' far superior cousin…"

"And a big wormy toad who follows me around and is just there to be my punching bag." interrupted Scourge "That's all you need to know doc egg."

"Oy! I was telling him who I am Scourge! You had no right interrupt me!" wailed Ginger

"Oh shove an apple down your throat already!" muttered Scourge, shoving Ginger into a wall.

"I didn't know Tails had a cousin." murmured Dr. Eggman "Good thing he's not on Sonic's side, two twin-tailed foxes would be too much for me to handle just like two supersonic hedgehogs would be too much for me too handle."

"You got that right doc." sneered Scourge.

Dr. Eggman then turned his attention to his former agents who were about two cells away from his cell. Marcus and Celia were on his left side and Mr. Florenzi was on his right side.

"I remember you lot." he said to the Mobian sellers "You captured Mobians for me and sold them to me so I could roboticize them."

"Yes we did." said Mr. Florenzi "I'm so glad you remembered all our hard work just to get you what you wanted."

"Just a pity you can't spare any of your "precious time" to help your dear agents Eggman!" growled Celia "We worked hard for you and this is how you repay us? By leaving us to rot in a prison cell? Some gratitude you have flabby! Once I get out of this cell, I will whip you to death!"

"Do not bore me with petty threats Celia." scoffed Dr. Eggman "The first rule of the Eggman Empire is your agent only serves you until he is killed or incarcerated and when that happens, you just get another agent. I've got better things to do then bust your silly little hide out of prison so you may as well get used to life in here."

Celia looked like she was going to go rabid with rage at this very moment.

"You &*%^£$%^! I will rip your guts out for that!" roared Celia.

Marcus just grabbed his angry wife and held her tightly to himself to clam her down. Celia just flung her fists in blind rage, not even noticing that Marcus was squeezing her tightly. Dr. Eggman ignored the raging slave-trainer and he turned his attention onto Lord Sycorax. The Region leader was slumping against a wall and grumbling to himself.

"As for you." he said "I do not believe our paths have crossed before. Who might you be then?"

Lord Sycorax was surprised at the fact Eggman was paying attention to him and he stood up.

"I am Lord Sycorax." explained Lord Sycorax "Leader of the Region of Rebellious Reptiles, a region created by me that destroys whatever we reptiles rebel against, hence the reason it is called the Region of Rebellious Reptiles, and we seek to purge the world of democracy as we despise politics and I've destroyed many political landmarks, including the Palace of Soleanna, and I almost added Castle Acorn to my ever growing list of destroyed political landmarks until Vector and his team showed up and destroyed my ship and caused me to get arrested! My henchmen haven't been arrested though so they'll likely be plotting to rescue me and…"

"Oh SHUT UP!" bellowed Scourge "Eggman only asked for your name you dumb animal! He didn't ask for you to go on and on about yourself!"

"Well how can I properly introduce myself if I don't tell him what my career is?" snapped Lord Sycorax "Besides, I can talk as much as I want to! There's no law saying there's a limit on how much you can say in a day you know!"

"Yeah, just a pity there's a limit on how much our ears can stand your never-ending bragging." muttered Scourge "You could brag for Mobius you could."

"I certainly could!" boasted Lord Sycorax "No one is a better bragger then I am! Heck, no one is better then anything then I am! I am the best villain that's ever existed! I'm strong, I'm mighty and I'm amazingly good looking too so I'm the best there is!"

"Yeah right, if you're the best there is then how come you're in a dull, boring prison cell stuck with nothing to do but idolize yourself?" sneered Fiona.

"You can shut your accursed mouth you wretched vixen!" snarled Lord Sycorax "I'm only here because of a minor setback in my plans! I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that setback whereas you lot are here because you are either not as amazing as I am or you're just too puny to face your resisters!"

"That's a lot of talk coming from a crocodile with a mouth so big you could put a house in it." jeered Scourge "Maybe his mouth is stronger then his muscles!"

The entire cell blockade erupted into shrieks of laughter at Scourge's joke. Lord Sycorax began to fume angrily. So angrily in fact steam poured out of his ears and his face turned redder then the pits of Hell itself. He thumped the glass door angrily but without his strength-enhancing gauntlets, he wasn't strong enough to break the door.

"I'll make you eat those poorly chosen words you walking pin cushion!" snarled Lord Sycorax "At lunchtime, me and you will have

a showdown on the yard to prove that I am the most amazing villain in the prison!"

"Go ahead." said Scourge casually "You'll only regret it when you end up littering the ground with your broken teeth."

Lord Sycorax roared loudly in frustration and he turned his back on Scourge angrily. He began to swear very badly to himself. Scourge just snickered at him and he turned his back on the Region leader. Fiona sat beside him with a concerned look on her face.

"Scourge baby, you can't fight this guy!" she said worriedly "He'll kill you! You can't use your speed or powers because of that control collar! He'll snap you in half!"

"No he won't." sneered Scourge "I have two very loyal helpers who can watch my back and give me some extra muscle in this fight."

It didn't take Fiona long to work out what he meant.

"Oh, you mean us." said Fiona, motioning to herself and Ginger "Well I'll be happy to kick that jerk's teeth in for you."

She wrapped her arms coyly around Scourge and nuzzled his cheek with her muzzle. Scourge clearly appeared to be enjoying that feeling he was getting from Fiona cuddling him.

"I know you will Fiona." said Scourge "And as pathetic as Ginger is, I'm sure he'll be useful in this battle."

"I certainly will Scourge." boasted Ginger "I'll trip him up or fly around in his face to distract him while you and Fiona pound him into submission. Genius."

"I know." said Scourge "It's genius because I thought of it. I can't wait till lunchtime. Lord Sycorax is going to look like such a fool at the end of the day!"

The three convicts began laughing to themselves at the very thought of Lord Sycorax being humiliated. As for Dr. Eggman, he had turned his back on everybody and he sat in the corner, thinking away like crazy to himself. He was wondering why his ship crashed and where

his snivelling servant bot was right now.

"That ship I built is flawless!" he grumbled to himself "However did it end up exploding and crashing down? The ship was programmed to warn me if there were any technical difficulties at all so it couldn't have been a fault! There must have been something wrong or someone sabotaged the ship."

He began to think some more on this subject.

"And why was the cockpit door locked when I tried to escape?" he asked himself "I didn't lock it at all and it doesn't lock itself. And why didn't Alonzo respond to my call when I ordered him to come?" "Alonzo never ignores me, he comes whenever I call him. Unless…"

His mind suddenly ticked.

"Unless he wasn't even ON the ship!" he deduced "Of course! He left me alone in the cockpit! He must have locked me in and fled from the ship! But Alonzo's loyal to me! He couldn't have been responsible for that! But…"

He began to think on all the times Alonzo muttered angrily when he was mean to him or got angry at him. Not to mention Alonzo would readily insult him at the first available opportunity. So maybe Alonzo wasn't as loyal as he thought he was. Eggman suddenly realized what was going on now. His loyal servant bot had betrayed him! He was the cause of his arrestment and crash down! There was no one else who could have possibly done it! Eggman's mind ticked so loud you'd think there was a clock in his head.

"That's it!" he cried "Alonzo caused my ship to crash! He must have sabotaged it and caused it to explode and he got out in the confusion! There was no one else on the ship so it MUST have been Alonzo! I bet that little twerp's run away all the way back to Robotropolis and is planning to take over my position! Well, that pointy headed twit has got another thing coming!"

He cackled to himself and he rolled up his glove, revealing a watch device he had managed to hide from the cops. The device was a remote control device for Metal Sonic 3.0 and when Eggman

switched the watch on, the robot Sonic clone activated and did whatever Eggman commanded him to do. The watch was displaying Metal Sonic 3.0's function status so that meant he had survived the crash and was buried underneath tonnes of metal and debris from the wreckage. Metal Sonic 3.0 was just as strong as the original Metal Sonic after all so it would take more then a ship crash to destroy him. Eggman switched on the watch device and waited for Metal Sonic 3.0 to come and save him from his imprisonment.

As for Metal Sonic 3.0, the wreckage of Eggman's flagship had been taken to a scrap yard in Megapolis so the Metal Sonic clone was a long way away from Empire Cityright now. Not that it would be a problem as Metal Sonic 3.0 had all the abilities of the original Metal Sonic, including his super speed so he would be inEmpireCityin record time. Metal Sonic 3.0 burst his way effortlessly through the wreckage of the ship and he dusted himself off. He had gotten Eggman's call and he pinpointed where Dr. Eggman was at this time. Now he knew where his master was, the loyal, insentient robot could save his master from the Mobian prison he had been thrown in. Metal Sonic 3.0 activated his jetpack and he rocketed off into the distance in search of his master. The poor cops at Empire City wouldn't stand a chance once he arrived at the MPD station…

Meanwhile in Robotropolis, Alonzo had arrived back and he had gathered all the robots of Robotropolis into Eggman's main headquarters for a meeting. The headquarters couldn't quite fit all the robots into one room so many of them stayed outside and listened to Alonzo's testimony through intercoms outside. Mecha Rouge, Eggman's roboticized lackey and Katherine, Eggman's silent fem-bot stood at the front and waited as Alonzo stood on a stage before the robot population of Robotropolis. The butler bot was very pleased with himself at what he had just done but he did his best not to show his glee to the audience or they would get suspicious. He put on a fake sad face and pretended to feel sadden by Dr. Eggman's loss. He had no idea if the fat scientist had EVEN survived the ship crash so for all Alonzo knew, he could be dead or what not. Alonzo cleared his throat and spoke into the microphone on the stage that he adjusted to his height.

"Attention robots of the Eggman Empire." he announced in his snooty, portly gentlemen voice that echoed around the room as he spoke into the mike "I have some very unfortunate news for you all."

"What-might-that-be-then?" asked Mecha Rouge.

"Dr. Eggman's flagship, the flagship to his Egg-Fleet, exploded and crashed down on the ground at the feet of Mobotropolis." explained Alonzo "Dr. Eggman…unfortunately perished in the crash."

The whole population of Robotropolis erupted into a robotical chorus of robotical gasping.

"This is *impossible* !" cried a voice Katherine played to Alonzo " **Dr. Eggman** is glorious AND POWERFUL! He can't **possibly** be *dead now* !"

"Unfortunately my silent fem-bot who needs recorded voices to speak for her, he has." said Alonzo with a sneer on his face "No one can survive a ship crash. There is however a ray of light shining through the darkness of this tragedy my friends."

"What-do-you-mean-by-that?" asked Mecha Rouge.

"Now Dr. Eggman has passed away, I will take his place as leader of the Eggman Empire." announced Alonzo.

The crowd fell silent for a moment and then suddenly, they burst out into a robotical chorus of robotical laughter. Alonzo's face fell at that response.

"You-are-not-able-to-lead-us-Alonzo." jeered an Egg-Pawn "You-are-only-a-ser-vant-bot."

"So what if I am?" snapped Alonzo "I'm way more intelligent then Dr. Eggman and I'm his right-hand man, therefore I'm the only one capable of taking over from Dr. Eggman!"

"We-will-not-take-orders-from-a-mere-ser-vant-bot." said an Egg-Pawn firmly "And-you-can-not-make-us."

"Oh but I can and I will." said Alonzo darkly, opening a side

compartment on his body and pulling out a data-stick "On this data-stick, I have a virus that I'll upload into you all and once I do, you'll all explode. Unless…you want to follow my orders?"

The robots all suddenly bowed down to the two-wheeled missile shaped robot.

"Alonzo's our leader! Alonzo's our leader!" they all chanted desperately.

"That's better." said Alonzo, putting the data-stick back in his side-compartment "However, to ensure total loyalty to me, I will re-alter your programming so you'll obey only me. Any attempts to resist will result in my uploading the virus into you all so do not try to resist me."

"Yes-Alonzo." droned the crowd.

"And now I'm leader, I demand the Eggman Empire logo to be changed to suit my image as it is my empire now." said Alonzo, scowling at the very thought of the current Eggman Empire logo.

"Yes-Alonzo." droned the crowd.

"And while you're at it, I'll be changing my appearance so I look more like a robot leader to you all." said Alonzo "You're all dismissed and you may get to work now. See you all in a tick everybody!"

The crowd of robots all filed out at once and they left the headquarters, leaving Alonzo alone on the stage to stand there basking in glory to himself. He began to do a little dance of joy to himself.

"Yes! This Empire is mine now!" he cheered to himself "Now I can unleash my secret project on Mobius and become Alonzo, ruler of Mobius and leader of the Eggman Empire!"

Alonzo began to picture himself standing on top of a pile of dead Mobian bodies with his arms raised in triumph and cackling like a demon to himself…

Meanwhile, Team Chaotix had arrived at Royal HQ and the first thing they noticed was that there appeared to be loud music booming from inside the building. It sounded like something was going on in there. Vector could hear the music coming from inside the headquarters (despite the fact he always has his trademark earphones playing 24/7) and he began to wonder what was going on in there.

"Hey boys, do you hear that?" asked Vector.

"It sounds like a party." said Charmy with a big smile on his face "Let's go in and see what it's about!"

"I have a strong feeling I know what its about." said Espio.

"Well if it's a party, I'll be glad to join in." said Vector, walking into Royal HQ "We could do with some fun we could."

Vector, Espio and Charmy all walked into Royal HQ together and they followed the sound of the music, which was notoriously louder once they were inside the building. They followed the sound to the lab and they stepped inside. A wonderful sight met their eyes the moment they opened the door. The lab was decorated with party balloons, banners and streamers and disco-lights were flashing everywhere and bouncing off the walls and floors as the music played and the disco-ball slowly rotated around suspended from the ceiling. There were even tables of food and drinks in the corner. The banners that hung from the walls said in big neon red letters "VICTORY OVER EGGMAN!" That obviously meant this party was about the defeat of Dr. Eggman and his recent incarceration. Everybody they knew was at this party. Sonic the Hedgehog, Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Ruben the Water Panther and even Sonic's newest friend Shade the Echidna whom the Chaotix hadn't met yet. Tails, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben were all having a boogie together in time to the disco music that blared around the room whereas Sonic was chatting to Bunnie Rabbot while drinking a cup of punch.

"This party is way past cool isn't it Bunnie?" said Sonic, raising his

voice so he could be heard over the music.

"It sure is sugah-hog!" beamed Bunnie, sipping some punch "And ah'm so glad it's about our victory over Eggman! Makes it all the more worth celebratin' doesn't it?"

"It certainly does." said Sonic "Boy I can just imagine that fat idiot grumbling like an idiot to himself in prison right now."

"Hey Sonic!" cried Vector as he, Espio and Charmy walked into the lab.

Sonic looked away from Bunnie and saw Team Chaotix coming towards him.

"Hey! The Chaotix have come to join the party!" cried Sonic "Even better! Hi Chaotix!" he said with a wave to them.

"Hi Sonic." said Vector "Me and the boys have just read about Eggman's incarceration and we decided to come over here to see what you were up to. Looks like we were just in time for a party."

"You got that right Vector." said Sonic "We've having this party for obvious reasons I don't need to explain and everybody's having a whale of time! Look all around you!"

The Chaotix observed their surroundings and they noticed all the happy faces in the lab as they danced about and partied like mad. Tails, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben were having a great time dancing with each other and everybody else seemed to be standing around talking or drinking or eating. Eggman's defeat had clearly brought joy to everybody's face right now and the Chaotix were more then pleased at this.

"Hey Vector, can I join Tails and the girls in dancing?" asked Charmy "I love to boogie!"

"Whatever you want Charmy." beamed Vector "It's a party after all so you enjoy yourself you little rascal!"

Charmy did a cartwheel in the air and he cheered like a fan at a football game that's just seen the team he's supporting score a goal.

Charmy flew over to Tails, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben and joined in with the dancing. Cream was delighted to see the Chaotix had come and she began to dance with Charmy as the music played a different track. It played a rather loud, rocky tune that could get the biggest of sourpusses jamming and rocking in time to the music. As for Sonic, Knuckles and Shade came up to the hedgehog and Sonic turned to face them.

"So Sonic, how did Eggman get defeated then?" asked Knuckles "We haven't heard anything about it yet."

"Well I kinda missed it so all I know is what I've been told." said Sonic "Apparently, the flagship to Eggman's new Egg-Fleet suddenly exploded and crashed down in the meadow outside of Mobotropolis and Eggman was quickly arrested after he ejected from the ship and landed at the feet of Queen Sally Acorn."

"So after all these months of fighting and destroying his robots, Eggman gets defeated by a technical fault." sneered Knuckles "Pretty lame way for him to go isn't it?"

"It doesn't matter how Eggman got defeated, as long as he got defeated." noted Shade "Now his tyranny is over, we can put the whole conflict behind us and continue with our daily lives as if he never came here."

"It's gonna take a while for us to recuperate but we'll get there." said Sonic reassuringly "And while we're doing that, Eggman will be stuck in a prison cell with nothing to do but put grief on himself. Just what he deserves in my opinion."

"So what will the R.F.S. do now Eggman's defeated?" asked Knuckles "Eggman's defeat kinda makes you guys obsolete now doesn't it?"

"Nah, we've still got enemies like Marik the Martian and those four guys that teamed up with the late Lola Gunn to finish off." noted Sonic "And Eggman's servant bot Alonzo is likely still alive as his body was never found in the wreckage of Eggman's ship. Not that we should be worried as Alonzo's no threat."

"Alonzo may not be a threat but he might make himself one." noted Espio "He is Eggman's servant bot after all and being a robot, he could make all kinds of upgrades and improvements to himself to make himself a threat."

"I probably might." said Sonic casually "But we'll stomp on him before he gets a chance. Tomorrow, the R.F.S. are gonna storm Robotropolis and wipe it off the map so we won't have any reminders of Dr. Eggman around. While doing that, they're also gonna de-roboticize any Robian they see in the city."

"Sounds good." said Vector. He turned his attention to Shade. "As for you miss, are you new here? We haven't seen you before."

"I am new here." said Shade "My name is Shade the Echidna, newly appointed assistant guardian ofAngelIsland. I'm anAngelIslandresident but I've only just become a guardian."

She didn't really want to go into exposition mode about her shady past and Imperator Ix as the Chaotix wouldn't understand so she just gave them that piece of information.

"Nice to meet you Shade." said Vector politely "My name's Vector, this is Espio and the dancing bee over there is Charmy." he pointed over to Charmy who was dancing the Macarena with Tails, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben "Together, we're Team Chaotix." finished Vector.

"You look like a formidable trio." said Shade "I may have to see you three in battle some day."

"Trust me, you'll be impressed with us Shade!" boasted Vector, flexing his biceps and growling in a manly matter.

"Vector, don't show off to the new arrival." muttered Espio, hiding his face in shame.

Vector quickly stopped what he was doing, almost going red in the face. Shade didn't say anything about it and just turned her attention back to Sonic.

"So hedgehog, how long is this party going to last?" she asked.

"As long as you want it to Shade." said Sonic "After all, no one's gonna ruin our fun right now!"

But just as Sonic said that, the music suddenly stopped playing and everything fell into a weird silence. The dancers groaned crossly as they were enjoying the music very much.

"Hey, who sent the radio to the graveyard?" moaned Mandy.

"Is there a technical fault?" asked Wilson.

"The lab's computer doesn't seem to be registering any faults." said Tails as he peered at the computer monitors on the wall.

The music was playing on the computers as there was no radio in the lab. The computer suddenly flashed into life and the face of Queen Sally Acorn appeared on it.

"Hey Queenie, what's the big idea interrupting our party?" griped Sonic "We were enjoying ourselves here!"

"Yes, I'm pretty sure you were." said Sally "I'm sorry about this but I've just seen a black Metal Sonic zoom past here and head off in Empire City's direction!" she shrieked "I have a nasty feeling it's going to bust him out of prison!"

The entire room erupted into a chorus of gasping in horror.

"I bet it's that Metal Sonic re-colour I though on Eggman's fleet!" muttered Sonic "It must have survived the ship's crash and is hoping to save Dr. Eggman! Will, the hedgehog has something to say about this! And the hedgehog says "Eggman is staying in that prison and I'll make sure he stays there! Even if I die trying!"!"

"Then go already Sonic!" yelled Knuckles "EmpireCityneeds you now!"

"OK then Knuckie." said Sonic "Bye everybody! Get ready to start partying again as this prison escape is going to be foiled!"

Sonic zoomed out of the lab and headed off to Empire City to stop Metal Sonic 3.0 from breaking Eggman out.

"Eggman's not escaping!" yelled Sonic to himself "Eggman's NOT escaping!"

Meanwhile, Metal Sonic 3.0 had arrived at Empire City after a good long hour of hovering there with his jet-pack and the first thing that happened upon his arrival was that every cop in the Mobian Police Department burst out of the station and formed a blockade with their hover cars and they got their weapons ready. They clocked their guns and pointed them at the oncoming Metal Sonic re-colour. Metal Sonic 3.0 zoomed into view and he bared his claws. The policemen all fired their guns at Metal Sonic 3.0 but being a robot, the bullets had no effect on Metal Sonic 3.0 at all. Metal Sonic 3.0 then curled up into a ball and he spin-dashed straight through the blockade. He dented the police cars or sent them flying and he sent the policemen in the blockade flying everywhere. Some of the policemen landed very sharply on the road and ended up breaking their backs whereas others were crushed by the cars that had been sent flying and ended up landing on top of them. General Melchett couldn't believe the sheer power behind Metal Sonic 3.0. He'd just ploughed through a police blockade as if it was nothing! How could they stop that thing now? General Melchett desperately fired his pistol at Metal Sonic 3.0 but the bullets bounced harmlessly of the Sonic duplicate's armour. Metal Sonic 3.0 clawed Melchett across the chest and knocked the four-spiked hedgehog off his feet. Melchett lay on the ground, writhing in pain and he clutched his throbbing chest. Metal Sonic 3.0 flew over to the MPD station and he blasted his way into the station. General Chipper, Melchett's assistant who was sitting at the check in desk, leaped in surprise at the burst in and he instantly whipped out his pistol. But before he could even use it, Metal Sonic 3.0 blasted General Chipper and sent him crashing into a wall. The crash was heard even by the prisoners in the cell blockade and they began to wonder about the noise.

"What the sand-hill is going on out there?" cried Lord Sycorax

"Sounds like someone's having a brawl out there!" cried Scourge happily "Pity I'm not part of it! I love kicking people's asses!"

Suddenly, the cell blockade door was ripped off it's hinged and

tossed aside by Metal Sonic 3.0. The Metal Sonic clone stood there menacingly with its red eyes glowing ominously. Dr. Eggman smiled as wide as he could at the Metal Sonic re-colour. The prisoners all stared in wonder at Metal Sonic 3.0.

"I guess this is your toy then?" asked Fiona.

"It certainly is." sneered Dr. Eggman "And it's also MY ticket out of here!"

Metal Sonic 3.0 suddenly shot up the isle and spin-dashed the glass door into a million pieces. Dr. Eggman shielded his face to make sure no glass would land on his face. The remains of Eggman's cell door lay on the floor in shards and pieces on the floor. Dr. Eggman began to cackle madly at the top of his voice.

"Yes! YES! Dr. Ivo Eggman is free to roboticize all of Mobius once again!" he cheered at the top of his voice.

"That's real cute Eggy Many." muttered Scourge "Now do you mind breaking us out as well?"

"I certainly DO mind!" growled Dr. Eggman "None of you are my allies or worth breaking out at all! Scourge, you destroyed the first Robotropolis*******, Fiona, you used to be a Royal Fighter, Mr. Florenzi, I can't be bothered, Marcus and Celia, I don't like you and Lord Sycorax, I have no idea what you're like but I know you're going to be my enemy so I will not break anybody out!"

"You get us out of here or I will rip your spleen out and shove it down your throat!" roared Celia, scratching her door angrily.

"How can you do that when you're trapped and I'm not?" sneered Dr. Eggman "Now, shut up everybody while I flee from here!"

"Nobody's fleeing from anywhere!" came a voice that Dr. Eggman was very annoyed to hear right now.

Sonic the Hedgehog had finally arrived at the MPD station and he stood there, leaning against the doorway with his arms folded and a cocky smirk on his face.

"Hi there Eggman, I wasn't expecting you to plan a prison break any time soon." he said casually.

"Well I am known for my contingency Sonic." said Eggman "I made this remote-watch device to call Metal Sonic 3.0 at will and since I need him, I called him here and now he's breaking me out of here!"

"Yeah that's real nice Eggman." said Sonic "Just one problem though…there's going to be a million angry faces once you escape from here so therefore, I have no choice but to stomp on your Metal Sonic re-colour and prevent you from escaping."

"We'll see about that Sonic!" roared Dr. Eggman "Metal Sonic 3.0, kill him!"

Metal Sonic 3.0 obeyed and charged towards Sonic at top speed. Sonic just scoffed and he charged towards Metal Sonic 3.0. Sonic had to win this fight or the biggest evil on Mobius would be back to throw the planet into relapse just as it was beginning to recuperate…

Footnotes:

***Remember the first time she did it in Story 53? Of course you do!**

**** I bet you remember *Tales from Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles* don't you?**

***** See Stories 46-47**

****** And then see Stories 48-49**

******* See Stories 64-67**

******** Going way back here! Story 3 that is!**

********* See Story 28**

Looks like Eggman's going to escape shortly after being incarcerated! Talk about a short prison life! Can Sonic stop Eggman from escaping or is Eggman destined to escape? And what the bloody hell is going to happen to Alonzo once Eggman arrives back? AND WHAT THE HELL IS ALONZO'S SECRET PROJECT? WHY AM I ASKING THESE STUPID QUESTIONS? JUST READ THE NEXT BLOODY CHAPTER TO FIND OUT! Read and Review.

Breakout!

Story 78: Breakout!

The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and Team Chaotix were all gathered around the lab's computer monitors and tensely waiting for any news on Eggman's attempted break-out. Tails, the twin-tailed fox with the mind of a mechanical genius, was taping on the keyboards frantically and see if he could get a visual on the MPD station of Empire City so they could see what was going on at the prison. After a while of taping on keys and fumbling through the screens, Tails managed to hack into one of the security cameras in the cell blockade and they finally managed to get a visual of the prison brawl that was going on in the station.

"Hey guys! I've got a visual!" cried Tails.

"What's going on? Has Eggman escaped yet? Is Sonic there to stop him?" asked the Chaotix junior member Charmy Bee, buzzing around frantically.

"Well it appears that Sonic made it in time and is fighting that black Metal Sonic Queen Sally spotted earlier." said Tails, staring intently at the screen.

The visual contact he had managed to get was showing him the fight between Sonic and Metal Sonic 3.0. The fight looked intense with both opponents spin-dashing each other and trying to beat each other's brains out whilst also trying to avoid accidentally crashing into a cell door so they wouldn't break it and free another prisoner. The fight looked pretty even sided so far. Everybody stared intently at the screen along with Tails.

"Oh blue dude, please don't fail!" begged fellow fighter Mandy Mouse as she watched the fight "Please, PLEASE don't fail!"

"Of course he won't fail." Wilson the Dog reassured the mouse "He's Sonic the Hedgehog; he always wins in the end."

"You got that right Wilson but did you forget about the fact the original Metal Sonic was a match for fifteen of us at once so Sonic won't have a chance against this Metal Sonic re-colour!" cried Knuckles the Echidna, Angel Island guardian "Unless of course, that Metal Sonic is weaker then the original."

"It seems like it because Sonic's putting up a much better fight then against the original Metal Sonic." said Tails "Or maybe he's just had plenty of practice fighting the original Metal Sonic, he knows how to fight this one."

"Either way, Sonic must defeat that thing or Eggman will be unleashed on Mobius once again and we'll have to defeat him all over again!" shrieked Knuckles.

Tails nodded agreeably. He turned his attention back to the battle, his stomach tightening in worry. Sonic just had to win this fight or Dr. Eggman would escape and Mobius will not recuperate from all his evil like it was beginning to do…

Back at the prison, Sonic the Hedgehog and Metal Sonic 3.0 were fighting each other like mad. Dr. Eggman watched the whole fight while remaining in his cell so he wouldn't be in the way of the battle. The convicts in the cell blockade, Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox, Ginger the Fox, Lord Sycorax, Marcus and Celia Punch, Mr. Florenzi, Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza were all watching the fight and commenting on whenever Metal Sonic 3.0 began to pulverize Sonic into the dirt. After all, no evil doer liked Sonic the Hedgehog, even ones that haven't met him yet such as Lord Sycorax and the Punches. Sonic leaped onto the wall just above Mr. Florenzi's cell door and he homing-attacked Metal Sonic 3.0. Metal Sonic 3.0 retaliated with a punch to the face. Then the insidious Metal Sonic re-colour clawed at Sonic, almost slashing him across the face but Sonic bent over backwards to dodge the swipe. Sonic then kicked Metal Sonic 3.0 in the gut and sent him hurling backwards towards Dr. Eggman's cell. Because Dr. Eggman's cell door was broken, Metal Sonic 3.0 went straight into the cell and crashed into the wall at the back of the cell. Dr. Eggman had stepped to the side so he avoided getting hit. Dr. Eggman grabbed Metal Sonic 3.0 and hauled

him to his feet.

"Stop messing around and kill that rodent already!" roared Dr. Eggman.

Metal Sonic 3.0 obeyed and he charged over to Sonic at top speed. He spin-dashed Sonic and knocked him down into the floor. The convicts laughed at Sonic as he was ground into the dirt by Metal Sonic 3.0.

"Awesome! Do it again black Metal Sonic!" cried Scourge happily.

"How does it feel to be on the losing edge of this battle Sonic?" sneered Polikaza with his nose pressed against the door and a big toothy grin on his ugly, scaly face.

"I bet it feels horrible to Mr. "I'm invincible because I can run fast and I can beat Dr. Eggman but no one else can."!" crowed Wazikaza.

The two lizards began to laugh like playing schoolchildren at the supersonic blue hedgehog. Sonic grumbled to himself as he picked himself up.

"Shut up lizards." muttered Sonic "Unless you wanna say anything useful that is."

The two lizards just folded their arms and glared at Sonic with their yellow and amber coloured eyes respectively. Sonic charged towards Metal Sonic 3.0 once again and the robot Sonic clone swiped at him with it's claws. Sonic did a leap-frog over Metal Sonic 3.0 and he landed behind him. Metal Sonic 3.0 was about to let Sonic have it with a whack to the face but Sonic dropkicked Metal Sonic 3.0 in the chin and knocked him over.

"You're good Metal Sonic 3.0 or whatever it is Eggman calls you, but nowhere near as good as the original Metal Sonic." crowed Sonic "The original Metal Sonic would be pounding my hide into the ground already. You can't even get close to matching that kind of power."

Metal Sonic 3.0 just promptly let Sonic have it in the face with his torso laser. Sonic was blasted by the laser and sent hurling into

Eggman's cell. Dr. Eggman decided to add insult to injury by leaping up and bouncing Sonic away with his big flabby belly. Sonic hit Eggman's gut and he was sent hurling away by the sheer flabbiness of his fat tummy. Sonic hurtled back towards Metal Sonic 3.0 and the Sonic robot leaped up, clasped his fists together and whacked Sonic down onto the floor with them. Sonic hit the floor so hard his face felt like it was going to crumble to pieces. The convicts laughed at him again. This was quite the show for them and they were enjoying it.

"Hey guys!" yelled Lord Sycorax "I bet you 100 Mobiums that the Eggman robot beats Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"You're on!" laughed Scourge "I couldn't handle a Metal Sonic when I fought one* and I'm more powerful then Sonic so if I can't beat a Metal Sonic then Sonic is bound to lose!"

"I put double on Sonic." muttered Mr Florenzi "He always wins."

Sonic wasn't too pleased to hear some of his enemies wagering bets on his fight with Metal Sonic 3.0 right now.

"What do you think this place is? A casino?" sneered Sonic "You haven't got any money to bet so you can't go wagering bets on me!"

"Shut up Sonic." snapped Mr. Florenzi.

"No I don't think I will." retorted Sonic "The hedgehog is free to speak as much as he wants to…"

You'd think by know Sonic would have learnt not to start bragging in the middle of a battle for Metal Sonic 3.0 suddenly spin-dashed him in the gut and sent him flying out of the cell blockade. Sonic skidded to a halt and charged back into the cell blockade before Metal Sonic 3.0 could run for it.

"I've really got to keep my attention focused!" muttered Sonic "This is the fight of my life here! Eggman's escape hangs in the balance and I can't let him escape after all our hard work to bring him down!"

Sonic then proceeded to spin-dash into Metal Sonic 3.0's torso and send him hurling backwards a good few feet. Metal Sonic 3.0

however bounded off the walls and hurtled back towards Sonic. He rammed into Sonic and the two ended up rolling over each other on the floor. Metal Sonic 3.0 however managed to roll upright, leap up off the floor and throw Sonic over his head. Sonic crashed into the floor again and Metal Sonic 3.0 tried to shoot him with his torso laser. Sonic rolled out of the way and left Metal Sonic 3.0 to shoot the floor. Sonic leaped back onto his feet and he grabbed Metal Sonic 3.0's shoulders. He flipped himself up over Metal Sonic 3.0's head while still holding him by the shoulders and as he landed on his feet behind Metal Sonic 3.0, he hoisted the Sonic duplicate above his head and slammed him down onto his back in front of him. Sonic then proceeded to kick Metal Sonic 3.0 and send him skidding into a wall. Metal Sonic 3.0 crashed head first into the wall and it droned a robotical drone of pain to itself. Dr. Eggman began to get furious. He'd put all his time and effort into making Metal Sonic 3.0 stronger then even the original Metal Sonic and he was getting beaten by Sonic! Where had he gone wrong? Sonic stood before Dr. Eggman and he smirked an unusually dark smirk at the fat scientist. Dr. Eggman began to grow nervous. Was Sonic going to attack him?

"Well Eggman, looks like your Metal Sonic replacement has failed you." gloated Sonic "I've just kicked it's shiny metal butt all the way to kingdom come whereas the original Metal Sonic could hold out against me and fourteen others. Looks like you're losing your edge."

"I am not losing my edge!" roared Dr. Eggman "You've just…um… improved since the last time you met Metal Sonic that's all!"

"Yeah right." snorted Sonic "I fought Metal Sonic when he was badly crippled and just about dead and I still couldn't defeat him** so this new Metal Sonic is nothing compared to the original!"

"What are you talking about Sonic?" snapped Dr. Eggman "Metal Sonic was always in good condition when you fought him so you didn't fight an almost dead Metal Sonic at all!"

"I can't be bothered to explain doc." said Sonic "Now your Metal Sonic 3.0 is down, we can take him to the scrap yard where he can rust and you get to stay in prison where you belong. We may need to put you in a new cell though since your cell door's in itty bitty bite-sized pieces." he added, noting the shards of glass that was once a

glass door that kept Eggman trapped in the cell unable to do any harm to do anybody.

But just as Sonic was talking to Dr. Eggman, Metal Sonic 3.0 rose back up, his red optics blazing with hatred and he bared his claws. Metal Sonic 3.0 then suddenly grabbed Sonic by the throat and hoisted him up off the floor. Sonic gagged and he clutched Metal Sonic 3.0's arm desperately. Metal Sonic 3.0 just held Sonic clean off the floor, his emotionless red optics glazing straight at the helpless hedgehog in his grasp. Dr. Eggman sneered at the throttled hedgehog.

"You really should learn to check twice before you assume you've won Sonic." sneered Dr. Eggman "Maybe you'll actually get somewhere and not into more trouble. Metal Sonic 3.0, kill him!"

Metal Sonic 3.0 obeyed and he tightened his grip on Sonic's neck. Sonic began to gag even louder and he could feel the air in his lungs depleting. He was slowly but surely being throttled to death. Sonic desperately tried something to save himself from being choked to death. He began to rapidly move his feet as if he was running and his feet moved back and forth so fast they became a red blur underneath him. His rapidly moving feet hit Metal Sonic 3.0 rapidly in the chest and the killer Eggman robot was forced to drop Sonic after getting one hit too many from the hedgehog. Sonic dropped down and he punched Metal Sonic 3.0 as hard as he could. Metal Sonic 3.0 retaliated with an uppercut to the chin and Sonic ended up hurling straight up into the ceiling. He hit the ceiling head first and he landed back down on the floor bottom first. Sonic rubbed his throbbing cranium and Metal Sonic 3.0 pounced on him. Metal Sonic 3.0 pinned Sonic down to the floor and he raised his hand. He bared his claws and aimed straight for Sonic's chest. But before Metal Sonic 3.0 could plunged his claws into Sonic's body, Sonic grabbed his arm and blocked the attack. He then pushed Metal Sonic 3.0 off of himself and leaped back onto his feet. Metal Sonic 3.0 tired to spin-dash Sonic but Sonic jumped out of the way. Big mistake though as Metal Sonic 3.0 ended up accidentally spin-dashing into Scourge the Hedgehog's cell door! Metal Sonic 3.0 broke the door into a thousand pieces, freeing Scourge, Fiona and Ginger all at once! Dr. Eggman immediately fumed angrily at his Sonic robot

clone.

"You idiot! You wasn't supposed to free Scourge the Hedgehog as well as me!" he yelled angrily at Metal Sonic 3.0.

Metal Sonic 3.0 just leaped back towards Sonic and tried to attack him again. As for Scourge, he Fiona and Ginger stepped out of their cell and they beamed happily. Scourge punched the air triumphantly.

"Hell yeah! I'm free at last baby!" he cheered.

" **We're** free you mean Scourge." correct Ginger.

"Whatever." snapped Scourge "You and Fiona go and find our confiscated clothes while I join Metal Sonic in his battle with Sonic. Once you're all changed you can join me in the battle if you want."

"You can't join this battle Scourge!" shrieked Fiona "You've got a control collar on! You can't use your powers and speed!"

"I'll trick Metal Sonic into breaking it." said Scourge "Now go and get our clothes! I'm not staying in these prison fatigues any longer!"

"Neither am I." muttered Fiona "They're itchy and uncomfortable."

Fiona and Ginger ran past the brawling Sonic and Metal Sonic 3.0 and the two foxes ran out of the cell blockade and looked around for the room where confiscated items were kept. As for Scourge, he stood there and watched Sonic and Metal Sonic 3.0 fight each other. Sonic was clearly getting annoyed at the fact his evil brother was now free as well as Dr. Eggman.

"OK freeing Eggman's one thing Metal Sonic the Second but freeing Scourge and his fox friends is going to far!" yelled Sonic "I'll scrap you for this!"

Metal Sonic 3.0 just smacked Sonic away and sent him skidding across the floor. He was about to attack again until Scourge stopped him.

"Hey Metal Sonic!" he yelled "Shoot me! I'm an enemy of Dr.

Eggman's as well! Shoot me if you want! Go on! I'm wide open!"

Metal Sonic 3.0 did as he was told eerily enough and he fired his torso cannon at Scourge. Scourge turned around and bent down so the laser would hit him in the back of the neck. The collar would protect him from the blast so it wouldn't kill him luckily enough. The blast struck Scourge's neck and the control collar was fried and broken by the attack. The collar opened up and fell onto the floor with a clatter. Scourge could suddenly feel his power surging back through his veins as the collar was removed. He was back in the business at last. Dr. Eggman face-palmed himself angrily whereas Scourge just cheered happily.

"Stop helping my enemies and destroy Sonic Metal Sonic 3.0!" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

"Relax fatty, I'm not gonna bother about you right now." Scourge reassured the fat moustachioed villain "My fight's with Sonic at this moment so you and Metal Sonic 3.0 or whatever it is can clear off out of here while I get my revenge."

Dr. Eggman couldn't believe his ears. Scourge was actually letting him escape? Scourge really did have a grudge on Sonic didn't he? He was going to willingly let Eggman escape while he fights Sonic to the death? Eggman would have to remember this day as he'd probably never get help like this from anyone ever again.

"I'm stunned you're going to help me Scourge." said Dr. Eggman "But I'm grateful at the least. That doesn't mean I'm going to accept you as an ally or anything!"

"Whatever." said Scourge "I've got all the allies I need anyway. I'm gonna stomp on you later though, I'm only letting you get out of here because A: It's to annoy Sonic and B: Because I know I can defeat you so letting you escape is not going to be costly on my part at all so get out of here before I suddenly decide you're staying here!"

"Thank you Scourge." said Dr. Eggman "I'll remember this as I roboticize all of Mobius, including you and your allies!"

"Sure thing doc." said Scourge casually "I'll have conquered the

world before then anyway."

Dr. Eggman threw Scourge a dirty look and he ran past the brawling Sonic and Metal Sonic 3.0 as fast as his skinny legs would let him. Sonic punched Metal Sonic 3.0 away and he saw Dr. Eggman fleeing for it. He tried to run after him but Metal Sonic 3.0 grabbed the blue hedgehog by his quills and threw him over his shoulder. Sonic landed smack bang at the feet of Scourge the Hedgehog. Metal Sonic 3.0 was about to attack Sonic again but Dr. Eggman stopped him dead in his tracks.

"Metal Sonic 3.0! Pack it in now! We're leaving!" yelled Dr. Eggman.

Metal Sonic 3.0 obeyed and he flew after Dr. Eggman. Sonic picked himself up and stared in horror as Dr. Eggman fled for it.

"No!" he cried "I can't let you get away!"

He tried to run after Eggman but Scourge spin-dashed him and knocked him onto his face. Sonic grumbled and he rubbed his head better. He picked himself up and Scourge glared at him with his icy blue eyes.

"Not only is Eggman not escaping, you're not escaping either!" yelled Sonic "I'm kinda annoyed I accidentally caused Metal Sonic 3.0 to break your door down so I guess I'll have to stop you too Scourge!"

"Try all you want King of the Wusses!" taunted Scourge "We all know who the strongest of the hedgehogs is! Me of course!"

"One question though." said Sonic hastily "Why are you letting Eggman escape? You hate him and you wanna conquer Mobius! Eggman's gonna be a big obstacle for you so you should be helping me keep him locked up Scourge!"

"I'm only doing it just to get on your nerves Sonic!" cackled Scourge "He's no threat to me that Eggman! You can make easy work out of his stuff so I can make even EASIER work out of him so letting him escape is not going to be costly for me at all!"

"You'll regret it when Eggman ends up roboticizing everybody!"

yelled Sonic "That is if he can actually build something capable of defeating me."

Sonic charged towards Scourge but Scourge leaped over Sonic's head and kicked him as he sailed over. Sonic ended up crashing down onto the floor face first and Scourge laughed at him.

"Boy does it feel good to kick your ass again Sonic!" crowed Scourge "Especially as I don't have a control collar on anymore!"

Suddenly, before the fight could continue, Fiona and Ginger reappeared into the cell blockade. They had ditched their prison fatigues and changed back into their original outfits. They had found their confiscated items at last and retrieved them. Ginger only wore gloves and shoes so he didn't need to change at all whereas Fiona was back into her black crop top, trousers and belt skirt. She was wearing Scourge's trademark leather jacket and sunglasses.

"Hey Scourge baby, we've got your stuff back." said Fiona, taking the jacket and sunglasses off and handing them over to her evil boyfriend.

"Thanks Fi, you're a star baddie you are." said Scourge snidely, tearing his prison fatigues off and throwing them onto the floor.

He put on his leather jacket and he perched his sunglasses above his eyes like he usually did. Scourge was now back in his bad-boy attire and ready to kick some Sonic butt once again. Sonic picked himself up and he scowled at the three convicts he was not pleased to be fighting once again.

"Wowee, you're back in your lame jacket again." muttered Sonic "Now can you step aside and let me stop Eggman before he gets back to Robotropolis?"

"No can do Sonic!" sneered Scourge "I wanna stomp on you until you die so you're gonna have to get past me first wimp!"

"As you wish." said Sonic "I promise I won't spin-dash you too hard!"

"And I promise you won't leave this prison alive!" yelled Scourge.

Sonic and Scourge charged towards each other at the blink of an eye with their fists forward, ready for a punch. They both punched each other in the face and sent each other skidding backwards. Sonic was the first to attack again with a homing attack on Scourge. Scourge fell onto his back but he quickly picked himself up and head-butted Sonic just as he was about to leap away for another attack. Sonic clutched his face in pain and Scourge suddenly grabbed him by the waist. He zoomed off towards Eggman's now empty cell at the end of the room and he threw Sonic as hard as he could at the wall. Sonic crashed straight through the wall and crashed his way through the other side. The other side of the wall led straight into the exercise yard. Sonic crashed down into the yard and he lay on the ground, wondering whether he should rub himself better or lay there groaning in pain. Scourge cackled at his brilliant attack and he jumped through the hole in the wall Sonic had made after being thrown into it. Scourge landed just a few feet ahead of Sonic in the exercise yard and he quickly turned around to face his blue nemesis. Sonic was just picking himself up and Scourge advanced on him menacingly. Fiona and Ginger meanwhile, decided they would join this battle as they hated Sonic too. Ginger put his hands around Fiona's waist, took flight and carried her out of the cell blockade, through the hole in the wall and out onto the exercise yard outside. The bright sunny sky suddenly turned dark with dull grey clouds and the sun was swallowed up by the dull grey clouds that had just come in and changed the mood of the outside. There was a tremendous booming thunder-clap and all of the sudden, it started to rain. Rain sprinkled down over everything down below and thunder clapped once again. Sonic and Scourge stared each other down with rain trickling down their faces and down their bodies into their shoes and gloves. Fiona and Ginger stood behind either side of Sonic, preparing to ambush him.

"Let's end this." hissed Scourge.

"I plan to." said Sonic in a soft tone of voice "This'll end with me victorious and you back in prison fatigues."

Then suddenly, Fiona and Ginger both pounced on Sonic from behind and the double-teamed him with a pair of kicks to the back. Sonic yelped in surprise as he was suddenly pushed onto his

stomach by the two foxes. Sonic picked himself back up and he roundhouse kicked Ginger in the jaw. The fox ended up getting a face full of dirt and due to the falling rain making the dirt wet and more solid, he ended up getting a very dirty face. Fiona kicked Sonic in the shoulder and then went for a roundhouse punch to the jaw. Sonic staggered backwards, clutching his face. Fiona tried to attack Sonic again but Fiona spin-dashed her directly in the gut.

"Bet you regret betraying us now eh Fiona?" said Sonic as Fiona ended up skidding across the ground and making a pile of dirt behind her head "Because if you were still on my side, I wouldn't have to do that to ya!"

"I have NO regrets betraying you at all you blue twerp!" yelled Fiona "I got nothing from the R.F.S. so you guys are nothing to me!"

"And what about Scourge?" asked Sonic "All you got from him was a prison sentence. Doesn't that make you worse off then before?"

"SHUT UP!" screamed Fiona, punching Sonic directly in the eye.

Sonic clutched his throbbing eye in pain and he grimaced, trying to fight the pain. Fiona then tried to attack Sonic again in blind rage but Sonic just grabbed Fiona by her wrist and hurled her over onto her back. Fiona tried hard to fight the sudden surge of pain flowing up her back after that slam onto the ground.

"Well if you won't listen to reason Fiona then I'm sorry but I've gotta do this." said Sonic sadly "I wish you wouldn't make me have to though."

"Quit beating up my girlfriend you asshole!" yelled Scourge, giving Sonic an uppercut from behind that sent him hurling forward in a rainbow arch.

Sonic landed on his face and he grumbled to himself. He picked himself up and jumped out of the way just as Scourge lunged for him. Scourge missed Sonic and Sonic ran off at top speed. Scourge ran off after him at top speed. The two supersonic hedgehogs ran around the exercise yard at supersonic speed. They ran about two laps with Fiona and Ginger watching them run around and around

the perimeter and as they ran, they kept spin-dashing at each other. However, Scourge eventually managed to overpower Sonic by leaping into the air and dropkicking him into the ground.

"Ha! At last! Eat dirt wimpo!" cackled Scourge as Sonic ended up with a face full of dirt once again.

Sonic picked himself up and braced himself for another attack Ginger flew in and tried to attack Sonic but Sonic head-slammed him with his fist and knocked him down once again. Then he grabbed Ginger by his tails and swung him around like he was throwing the hammer at the Olympics. Scourge spin-dashed towards Sonic but Sonic whacked him away from Ginger and sent him cleaving straight into the ground. Fiona tried to attack Sonic but Sonic threw Ginger straight at her. The two foxes ended up rolling over each other on the ground, getting very dirty indeed from the wet gravel and dirt. Sonic panted heavily and he wiped his forehead. This whole thing was beginning to tire him out now. He'd just been in a lengthy battle with Metal Sonic 3.0 and now he was against his own brother, Tails' cousin and a Royal Fighter traitor. He had a feeling he wouldn't be able to keep this up forever but he'd have to if he wanted any chance of getting Eggman back in his cell and stopping Scourge, Fiona and Ginger from escaping along with Eggman. Scourge suddenly spin-dashed Sonic from behind and knocked him over. Sonic retaliated with a backwards flip and as he brought his feet up and over, he walloped Scourge with them and knocked him onto his back. Scourge growled furiously and the two hedgehogs charged towards each other at top speed…

Meanwhile in Royal HQ, the Royal Fighters had been watching the whole fight from the visual contact Tails had managed to get up from the prison security cameras and they were horrified at everything that had been going on in the prison. Scourge, Fiona and Ginger's accidental break out and Metal Sonic 3.0 running off with Dr. Eggman in tow was enough for them all to swoon over in horror. Tails stared intently at the screen, hoping he could pinpoint where Dr. Eggman was at this minute. He searched furiously, so furiously in fact he looked like he was going to have a nervous breakdown.

"Tails, have you found Dr. Eggman yet?" asked Cream the Rabbit worriedly.

"Not yet Cream." said Tails, his eyes glued to the screen like a mad computer gamer.

Tails taped a few more keys on the keyboard and he finally managed to find Dr. Eggman's current location. He and Metal Sonic 3.0 had left Empire City and were on their way to Castle Acorn right now.

"There they are!" reported Tails "They're coming this way at two o' clock high!"

"Well since they're coming to us I'll be happy to go out there and give that monster ANOTHER punch in the face!" Mandy said with a creepily evil grin on her pretty face as she cracked her knuckles.

"No Mandy sweetheart, Eggman's got a Metal Sonic with him, you won't have a chance." said Wilson, putting his hands on Mandy's shoulders to stop her from going anywhere.

"Then what are we supposed to do then Wilson?" snapped Mandy "Wait for him to zoom by and wave bye to us?"

"No of course not!" exclaimed Wilson "It's just directly confronting him while he has a Metal Sonic with him would be suicide as Metal Sonic is too tough for us to defeat, especially without Sonic by our side."

"I have a plan everybody." announced Shade.

"Do you?" asked Mandy.

"I do." said Shade "I will go out there and wait for Dr. Eggman to come to me. When he gets close enough, I'll leap onto him and warp him back into the prison with my warp belt. The minute I warp away, you all can run off to the prison to help Sonic fight that green look-alike of his and while you're all doing that, I will warp Metal Sonic away from Eggman so Metal Sonic can't help him again."

"Shade, I can't even begin to say how brilliant that plan is." said

Knuckles "I knew you betraying Ix would be a fortunate turn of events for us."

"Thank you guardian." said Shade "Everybody wait here until I warp Dr. Eggman away. When I vanish, you can all run to Empire City and join me at the prison."

"Be careful out there Shade." said Tails.

Shade just walked on out of the lab and headed off outside of Royal HQ. Shade left the building and stood outside of it about ten paces away from the front door. She peered into the distance and saw what appeared to be jet fumes coming afar. It was Metal Sonic 3.0 zooming away from Empire City and heading towards Castle Acorn and Royal HQ at a terrific speed with Dr. Eggman riding on his back. Dr. Eggman clearly appeared to be enjoying the ride as he was waving his hands around and cheering triumphantly. Shade remained still and waited for Dr. Eggman to come to her. Metal Sonic 3.0 was getting closer and closer by the second due to the fact it had Sonic's trademark super speed and any minute now, it would zoom straight past Castle Acorn and Royal HQ and head off to Robotropolis to deliver Eggman back home. Dr. Eggman didn't seem to notice as Shade as Metal Sonic 3.0 neared Royal HQ. Shade bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to jump. Metal Sonic 3.0 was now a few yards away from Royal HQ. Metal Sonic 3.0 pressed on and on and Shade finally sprang herself into the air. Metal Sonic 3.0 zoomed straight up to Shade just as she leaped and Shade landed directly on top of Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman stopped cheering and blubbered madly at the female echidna that had suddenly jumped onto his face.

"What in the mechanical mind is going on?" he yelped.

Shade just touched her hip and she, Eggman and Metal Sonic 3.0 were engulfed in a bright pink flash. The three then suddenly vanished into thin air, leaving no trace of their existence at all. Tails, who had poked his head out of the door and watched the whole thing, signalled to the others it was time to go and he ran out of the door, his tails twirling around in helicopter fashion and propelling him into the air. Everybody else followed the young fox out of Royal HQ and they all ran off to Empire City to help Sonic fight Scourge and

prevent him from escaping much like Dr. Eggman was trying to do now.

Back at the prison, Shade, Eggman and Metal Sonic 3.0 reappeared back in the cell blockade in a bright pink flash that startled the prisoners in the cells. Metal Sonic 3.0 landed back on his feet, Dr. Eggman fell onto his back and Shade stood before Metal Sonic 3.0, ready to fight him. Dr. Eggman picked himself up and observed his surroundings. He couldn't believe his eyes. He was back in prison! Shade had used her warp belt to warp him back into the prison just as he was escaping! Dr. Eggman began to fume angrily and he pounded the floor in frustration. The other inmates sneered mockingly at him.

"What's the matter Eggman?" crowed Lord Sycorax "You got teleported back by a puny little echidna girl? How humiliating! Especially since it's a girl that's done this to you!"

Shade scowled at Lord Sycorax, clearly offended by what he had just said.

"Dare talk about girls like that again and I'll Blade Rush you into pieces!" she said coldly.

"Am I supposed to be intimidated?" purred Lord Sycorax mockingly "Because if I am then you're failing miserably at intimidating me young lady!"

"Oh just shut up Lord Sycorax." moaned Mr. Florenzi "You should never underestimate the women, many are stronger then they appear."

The Region leader shut up at said nothing more. Shade and Metal Sonic 3.0 stared each other down, ready to beat the tar out of each other. Shade activated her helmet to protect her head from Metal Sonic 3.0. She had watched the fight with Sonic back at Royal HQ so she knew what to expect from the killer robot clone. She drew out her two blades and prepared to fight. Metal Sonic 3.0 immediately pounced on Shade and knocked her down onto the floor. Shade got

ready to activate her warp belt but before she could touch her hip, Metal Sonic 3.0 grabbed her hand and kept it away from her hip. He then detected where the warp belt was and he grabbed it. He proceeded to rip the belt off of Shade's armour and he leaped away from Shade with the belt in his hands. Shade picked herself up and lunged towards Metal Sonic 3.0 but Metal Sonic 3.0 held the belt in front of him, scanned it and then blasted it with his torso laser. Shade leaped out of the way of the blast and looked on in horror as her belt crumbled to pieces in Metal Sonic 3.0's claws. Metal Sonic 3.0 had destroyed it. Shade could feel her anger burning in her veins at that.

"You destroyed my warp belt!" yelled Shade "So in turn, I'll destroy you Metal Sonic!"

Shade lunged for Metal Sonic 3.0 but Metal Sonic 3.0 teleported before she could even hit him. Metal Sonic 3.0 had scanned Shade's warp belt so now he had the ability to teleport at will now. Shade couldn't believe her eyes as Metal Sonic 3.0 vanished before her, causing her to land on the floor feet first and look around wildly.

"The robot can teleport now?" she mused to herself "How is that possible? It didn't do so before?"

"That's because it scanned your belt little girl." explained Dr. Eggman "Your belt allows you to teleport at will and now Metal Sonic 3.0 has scanned it, he can teleport at will now. Whatever you can do, he'll just scan you and mimic your moves much like the original Metal Sonic scanned the data of Sonic and fourteen of his friends. You'll never be able to defeat it!"

"Maybe so but I might be able to silence the robot by removing its head with my blades." said Shade, raising her blades at the ready.

Metal Sonic 3.0 then suddenly reappeared behind Shade and blasted her with his torso laser. Shade found herself being thrown off her feet and sent skidding across the floor. Dr. Eggman stepped to the side as Shade skidded past her and the echidna came to a stop just outside his former cell. Metal Sonic 3.0 then grabbed Dr. Eggman by his hand and Dr. Eggman waved at Shade.

"Tell Sonic I wish doom on him will you?" sneered Dr. Eggman.

Metal Sonic 3.0 then teleported out of the prison with Dr. Eggman in tow. Shade picked herself up and retracted her helmet into her headband, revealing her face once again. She couldn't believe how horribly her plan had backfired on her. Dr. Eggman was now free once again and it was her fault for giving Metal Sonic 3.0 the opportunity to scan her warp belt. And now her's was destroyed, she couldn't use it anymore, she would never teleport again. Shade slumped against the wall and began to grumble to herself.

"I can't believe how horribly that back-fired!" she ranted at herself "Instead of re-incarcerating Dr. Eggman, I ended up helping him escape even quicker! Had I known that Metal Sonic robot could scan data, I wouldn't have tried this plan!"

She then heard the sound of two hedgehogs spin-dashing each other and knocking each other onto the ground. Shade ran into Eggman's empty cell and looked out through the hole in the wall Scourge and Sonic had made after crashing through it. She saw Sonic and Scourge fighting each other with Fiona and Ginger hoping to get involved as well. Scourge was clearly winning this battle and if Shade didn't do anything about it, Scourge would likely kill Sonic in the end so she had to get involved in this fight and fast. Shade did an amazing somersault through the air and landed down on the exercise yard feet first just as Scourge spin-dashed Sonic into the ground once again. Sonic looked like he had taken quite a beating and he couldn't keep this fight up any longer. Scourge laughed at Sonic as the blue hedgehog lay there on the ground, defeated and helpless to stop him.

"Look at you Sonic! When you've got your playhouse buddies by your side, you can barely keep up with me and on your own, you have no chance!" mocked Scourge "Well since you haven't got any shadows to hide behind, I'll kill you now! I bet my foot will crush your puny skull really easily!"

Scourge lifted his foot up and literally prepared to stomp on Sonic's head! But before Scourge could deliver the killing blow, Shade swiped her blades and sent a pink energy wave hurling towards Scourge. Scourge was stricken by the wave and sent hurling

backwards. The leather jacket wearing hedgehog picked himself up and growled angrily at Shade, who ran over to help Sonic back onto his feet.

"Who are you toots?" snarled Scourge.

"I am Shade the Echidna, co-guardian of Angel Island and friend of Sonic the Hedgehog." said Shade "Any enemy of Sonic's is an enemy of mine so I will help him put you back in your cell you Sonic clone!"

"Ok first off brat-face, I'm not a clone and my name is Scourge the Hedgehog!" snapped Scourge "And second off, anyone who dares to stand to me gets a crushed head so I'll be happy to give you one Shade the Echidna!"

"I wouldn't be too sure on that Scourge." sneered Sonic "Shade can fight Knuckles to a stand still and Knuckles is one tough cookie so I can't guarantee you'll beat Shade that easily."

"I guess we'll have to find out won't we Sonic?" growled Scourge "Get ready for a double-dose of…"

Before Scourge could do anything at all, Sonic's friends all suddenly jumped over the prison walls and landed in the exercise yard, ready to beat the tar out of Scourge, Fiona and Ginger. Sonic's face brightened at the sight of Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben all here to help him defeat his evil brother and his fox sidekicks and put them back in prison. Scourge's face fell at the fight of all the Mobian Heroes standing there before him, ready to give him a black eye. He knew he was tough but he didn't want to risk losing this battle and end up getting arrested and have another control collar clamped on him while he was so close to escaping so he decided now would be the best time to flee for his life.

"On second thoughts, let's run like hell!" cried Scourge "Ginger, grab Fiona and carry her over the wall! We're outta here!"

With that said, Ginger took flight and grabbed Fiona by her arms. He lifted her off the ground and flew towards the prison walls. Scourge

zoomed over to the walls and jumped over before anyone could stop him. Before Ginger could get over the walls however, Tails flew up after Ginger and kick-slammed him in the backside. This caused Ginger to let go of Fiona and Fiona ended up falling down to the ground. Scourge quickly caught her and ran off with her at top speed. Ginger followed them quickly, rubbing his sore bum. Tails dusted his hands off and huffed, satisfied with that attack on his wormy cousin. He flew back over to Sonic and stood affectionately by his side.

"Sonic? Are you alright?" asked Tails "Scourge roughed you up pretty bad didn't he?"

"A little." said Sonic, rubbing his quills "But I feel more sore over the fact my evil brother's free once again to cause trouble for me again. As well as Dr. Eggman. Can't believe he managed to escape so shortly after being imprisoned!"

"Nah, Shade managed to catch Eggman and warp him back here." said Knuckles proudly "Didn't you Shade?"

"I did but Metal Sonic scanned my warp belt and teleported himself and Eggman out of the prison again." said Shade glumly "Not before destroying my warp belt after scanning it."

"What?" cried Knuckles "You're kidding aren't you Shade?"

"No I'm not guardian." said Shade even more glumly "I'm deathly serious. Eggman's probably back in Robotropolis right now and I can't warp us over because my warp belt is destroyed."

"Well if we want to get Dr. Eggman back in prison, we'll have to go over to Robotropolis ourselves." declared Sonic "Come on everybody! We're not letting Eggman stay free a minute longer!"

With that said, everybody jumped or flew back over the prison walls and they headed off to Robotropolis. Dr. Eggman may have escaped but he was going back into that prison cell before he could taste freedom for real….

Footnotes:

*** See Story 32**

**** I bet you remember Metal Sonic's last appearance in Story 70 don't you?**

Talk about a bad day for Sonic and friends! Dr. Eggman and Scourge the Hedgehog have escaped from prison! What's gonna happen next? And will Sonic and friends put Eggman back in his lowly place or has the fat man got a sinister trick up his sleeve in mind for the hedgehog? Only one way to find out, tune in to the next chapter of Sonic the Hedgehog: Heroes of Mobius! Read and Review.

Thanks once again for your reviews you lovely people. I don't know how I could go on without them! :) And yes Kratos Pwns, I am British, not American, I'm so glad you've worked it out good mate. LOL

Deadly is the Turncoat

Story 79: Deadly is the Turncoat

Dr. Eggman and Metal Sonic 3.0 had reappeared back in Dr. Eggman's headquarters in Robotropolis, the very city Eggman lived in. The moment the escaped scientist materialized into the headquarters, he quick rushed into his cabin and changed out of his prison fatigues and into his traditional red, white and black outfit. Now Eggman was back in his proper clothes, he stormed off to his head office and burst through the door in rage. His traitorous servant bot Alonzo the Butler Bot was sitting in his chair and the moment Eggman burst into the room, Alonzo jumped a foot into the air.

" **ALONZO!** " roared Dr. Eggman "I'D LIKE A WORD WITH YOU TREACHEROUS LITTLE TIN-HEAD!"

Alonzo nervously wheeled over to Dr. Eggman, who stood there with his arms folded and with Metal Sonic 3.0 standing there beside him, waiting to punish the traitor of Robotropolis for his crimes.

"Dr. Eggman!" squeaked Alonzo "You're, you're…you're alive! You survived the ship crash! Praise the manufacturer! It is a miracle!"

"It'll be a miracle alright Alonzo if you get any mercy from me!" roared Dr. Eggman "I've worked it out you little traitor!"

"Traitor?" scoffed Alonzo as if he'd never heard of such a word "Why master, I'm your loyal servant bot and I was built to serve you faithfully and loyally! I don't know what the word traitor means so why ever would I betray you sir?"

"Don't talk stupid language Alonzo!" snapped Dr. Eggman "I know all about your treachery now! How you sabotaged my ship and locked me in the cockpit in a failed attempt to murder me! Instead, I got arrested and now you're going around Robotropolis and acting like you own the place! Well Alonzo, even if your failed assassination attempt had worked, you wouldn't be in charge of the Eggman Empire! You never will be! I'd assign the job to my strongest

creations such as Metal Sonic or my Eggman copies so you wouldn't get anything from my demise!"

"Dr. Eggman, how could you say that about me?" gasped Alonzo "I would never try to kill you sir!"

"Then explain to me where you were on the ship at the time it exploded!" yelled Dr. Eggman "You didn't answer my call when I called for help and you're suddenly back at Robotropolis even though you were on the ship with me at the time! Care to explain that?"

Alonzo's face fell. Dr. Eggman had seen through his little plot! His plan was in jeopardy and he had been exposed! Oh calamity! Nevertheless, Alonzo wasn't going to go down without a fight. He'd had enough of Dr. Eggman and he was going to reveal what he truly thought of his oafish master.

"OK I admit it you gormless, gluttonous glop head!" sighed Alonzo "I'm a traitor, I sabotaged your ship , I tried to kill you, I got you arrested and I'm plotting to take control of your city so all the robots will obey me instead of you. There I said it! Happy now you blasted belly bouncer?"

Dr. Eggman was about to tear himself apart in rage at what Alonzo had just revealed to him. His moustache straightened angrily, his face turned redder then a ripe strawberry and steam poured out of his ears.

"HOW DARE YOU YOUR TIN-PLATED, YELLOW-BELLIED, RUDE, OBNOXIOUS, SNOOTY, SNOOBY, MORONIC, METAL, CHROME, STOOGE OF A MACHINE!" screamed Dr. Eggman "YOU HAVE CROSSED THE LINE YOU MISTAKE OF SCIENCE! TRYING TO KILL ME IS BAD ENOUGH BUT TRYING TO TAKE CONTROL OF MY CITY IS GOING TOO FAR! YOU DON'T DESERVE TO LIVE FOR THAT YOU TRAITOR!"

He turned to Metal Sonic 3.0 furiously and yelled at him.

"Kill that pin-headed turncoat!"

Metal Sonic 3.0 obeyed and he aimed his torso cannon at Alonzo. Alonzo instantly freaked and began begging like a mad man.

"No master! Wait, Stop! I'm sorry! I didn't mean what I did! I'll by a good robot for you! I'll make up for what I've done to you! Please! Don't scrap me!" screamed Alonzo.

Dr. Eggman ignored his pleading servant and turned his back on him. Metal Sonic 3.0 blasted Alonzo to pieces with one shot of his torso cannon. Alonzo was reduced to atoms by the attack and since his vital mechanisms and head were destroyed, he wouldn't be able to put himself back together and comeback. Alonzo was gone for good now. Dr. Eggman wiped away a brief tear from his eye and he sat back down in his chair.

"Oh Alonzo." he said to himself "You were a good friend of mine. We've been together since childhood and we've been through thick and thin for many years now. And yet, you've betrayed me and I've been forced to destroy you. Oh well, I've learnt a lesson now. When you have a servant, don't give it a sentient mind like Metal Sonic 3.0. At least Katherine can be trusted to have a sentient mind as she's not as sentient as Alonzo was and all my Robians are bound to my whims so they can't betray me. Now Alonzo's gone, maybe I should promote Katherine to my servant bot or maybe I should promote Metal Sonic 3.0 as he's the strongest."

"You will not be promoting anybody Dr. Eggman!" came a fierce sounding voice from the shadows in the corners of the room.

Dr. Eggman jumped out of his skin and he turned around only to see a strange shape coming out of the shadows towards him. It was a robot but it wasn't a robot built by Dr. Eggman. This robot was pretty lethal looking and looked deathly serious. It had a crest section above its black visor which was a diamond shape with an amber gem in the centre, bull-shaped horns on either side and a horn that pointed straight behind it. It had red optics and a white mouth with separation strips painted on it to look like a toothy grin. It had pointed shoulder pads, each with two points and it had a giant green orb in it's torso with a heart-beat signal on it. It had sharp elbows and three claws on each hand. It had curved feet that pointed upwards a little like elf shoes and it was coloured grey, gold, green

and red. It had four tentacles on its back. One had a saw blade that was sharper then even flint, one had a pair of scissor like blades that could chop anything in half, one had an axe blade that could chop through the toughest substances and one had a cannon that could blast through anything. The robot looked terrifying and Dr. Eggman began to shake with fear at the sight of it.

"W-w-who are y-y-you?" he stammered, sweating rainfalls down his head.

"I am the new and improved Alonzo Dr. Ivo Eggman!" said the robot, speaking with Alonzo's voice only heavily altered to sound more monstrous "For days on end, I've been building this new body for myself secretly in your back-up headquarters while you worked on making Robotropolis fly* and repairing the headquarters from the Royal Fighter's siege on it**! What do you think? It's pretty cutthroat isn't it?"

"Well i-i-if y-y-you're the r-real Alonzo then what-d-d-did Metal Sonic 3.0 just destroy?" squeaked Eggman.

"Just a little clone I made of myself to keep you in the dark until I was ready to come out in my new body." sneered Alonzo "I've been in this body all the while you've been imprisoned and now you've escaped just in time to see it."

"Well I don't like you like that!" yelled Dr. Eggman "Metal Sonic 3.0! Destroy that traitor!"

Metal Sonic 3.0 flew towards Alonzo and prepared to destroy the new Alonzo. Alonzo just smirked at Metal Sonic 3.0 and aimed his cannon tentacle at him. The cannon fired and Metal Sonic 3.0 was destroyed instantly by the blast. The robot was reduced to atoms by that one blast. Dr. Eggman couldn't believe his eyes. Alonzo had built himself a pretty powerful new body hadn't he? One blast reduced his strongest robot to atoms! Dr. Eggman began to really sweat in fear now. So much he began to look like he'd just come out of the bath. Alonzo advanced on Dr. Eggman menacingly with his saw tentacle and scissor tentacle raised menacingly.

"You cannot destroy me Dr. Eggman." purred Alonzo "My new body

is invulnerable. I've borrowed several elements from your previous robots. The invulnerability of Metal Sonic, the firepower of E-123 Omega, the agility of Egg-Raptor, the flight abilities of Egg-Peacock and of course, the mind of yours truly me. It is invincible to the attacks of every Royal Fighter in the service and every robot you've created so you will NEVER be able to destroy me and regain control of Robotropolis. Robotropolis is mine now and soon the whole world shall be in my metallic grasp!"

"Alonzo!" cried Dr. Eggman "Please don't betray me! That new body of yours is pure genius; don't waste all it's potential on your own personal gain! Me and you together can now conquer Mobius and rule it together as master and minion! With this genius of a new body for you, well conquer Mobius in a matter of minutes! Seconds even!"

"No master." said Alonzo coldly, holding his saw blade close to Eggman's throat "Never again shall I be your snivelling minion. I'm tired of being your punching bag. You never appreciated a thing I did master. All you did was abuse me and treat me like an idiot! Well now I have this body, I am the superior being and you are MY snivelling minion! But so you can't betray me, I'll kill you before you get a chance to stab me in the back."

He raised up the saw blade tentacle and activated the saw. It squealed a very piercing, ominous squeal that made Dr. Eggman shiver. Alonzo aimed it at Dr. Eggman's neck and prepared to slice his throat open. Dr. Eggman began to shake madly in his chair.

"Alonzo please!" begged Dr. Eggman "If you want an apology for all my abuse then you've got it! I'm sorry I treated you like dirt and I'll respect you now you've shown me what you're capable of!"

"You should have apologized to me months ago Dr. Eggman!" yelled Alonzo angrily "But you're too late now!"

He inched the saw blade ever closer to Dr. Eggman's neck. But before Alonzo could kill the fat villain, an alarm started blaring through the room and around the entire base. It was a full out red alert and that meant one thing. Intruders were coming to Robotropolis and presumably plotting to destroy the city and take Dr. Eggman back into custody.

"Talk about bad timing." muttered Alonzo, switching his saw blade off and pulling it away from Dr. Eggman "I've got intruders. Not doubt its Sonic and his playgroup band coming here to arrest you again Dr. Eggman. Well I'm going out to fight them all and show you the true power of my new body! You sit here like a good boy and watch me as I do what you couldn't do, kill Sonic the Hedgehog!"

He turned Dr. Eggman around so he was facing the monitors and he put on a visual contact that showed Dr. Eggman the outside of Robotropolis and beyond the gates of the city. Dr. Eggman stayed sat where he was and waited for the battle to begin. Alonzo left the room and locked it, trapping Dr. Eggman in the room and leaving him with nothing to do but sit there and watch Alonzo's battle with Sonic and friends. If Alonzo's body was as good as he said it was then Sonic and friends would have no chance against it whatsoever…

Outside of the gates of Robotropolis, the notorious Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends were running towards Robotropolis, all ready to barge into the city, destroy any resistance and throw Dr. Eggman back into prison. They had finally managed to arrest the evil dictator of a scientist only for him to escape shortly afterwards after Metal Sonic 3.0 broke him out*** and they weren't about to let Dr. Eggman stay free for very long. They were going to recapture him and even if it killed them, they would get Eggman back in prison for good this time. Sonic screeched to a halt and all his friends stopped beside him just outside the gates. Anyone who was flying, such as Tails the Fox, Cream the Rabbit and Bunnie Rabbot touched down beside Sonic and the blue hedgehog gazed up at the thick iron gates of Robotropolis grimly. He really hated those gates, especially as they were too tough for him to spin-dash down and they were a symbol of Dr. Eggman's iron-fisted grip on any of the Mobians he'd managed to roboticize as well as a symbol of Robotropolis, the very city Dr. Eggman lived in.

"Ugh, Robotropolis." muttered Sonic, sticking his tongue out "I always get sick of seeing this place."

"We all do." muttered Angel Island Guardian Knuckles the Echidna

"It's a ugly stain on the face of Mobius that symbolizes Eggman's tyranny and his love for robots. At least we only come here to destroy it and not look at it."

"And destroying this place always makes me feel better." said Sonic with a smirk on his face "Even though we're not here to destroy Robotropolis, I'll be very happy to spin-dash it to bits once we arrest Eggman again so even if he gets away, he's got nowhere to run and hide in and we'll catch him even easier."

"But what about Metal Sonic 3.0?" asked Tails "He's as strong as the original Metal Sonic so we won't get past him so easily. Especially as he's now got the ability to warp at will because he scanned…"

"Don't you dare mention anything about my blunder earlier!" snapped Shade the Echidna, newly appointed co-guardian of Angel Island, fiercely "I don't like it when people bring up a mistake that I've made!"

"Sorry." said Tails, recoiling "Ahem, because he scanned you-know-what, so he'll be even harder to get hold of." he finished, making sure not to mention the words "warp belt" in front of Shade as she was angry enough as it was.

"We'll think of something." said Sonic casually "Maybe I could stall it and Shade could slice its head off with her blade weapons."

"I'd be happy to oblige hedgehog." said Shade coldly; raising her blade weapons "I want to pay that thing back for destroying my warp belt."

"And you shall get your payback dear Shade." said Sonic brightly "Bunnie, be a pal and punch that stupid gate down will ya?"

"Ya'll don't have to ask me twice sugah-hog." said Bunnie brightly, cracking her knuckles readily.

Knuckles frowned at the Rabbot as she strolled over to the gates and prepared to punch them down. He really want to prove that he was the toughest one in the bunch but now was not the time for

showing off so he decided to leave it this time. Bunnie drew her robotic arm back and punched the iron gates as hard as she possibly could. The gates were pounded open by that one punch from the beautiful but powerful rabbit cyborg with the powerful robo-left arm. Bunnie however got a rather surprising sight after punching the gates open. Instead of thousands of Dr. Eggman robots waiting to decimate Sonic and friends, there was just one robot with three horns on it's head, three claws on each hand, curved feet and four tentacles on it's back standing there with it's arms folded and it's tentacles wiggling sinisterly like a bunch of snakes slithering about through the grass. This was of course, Weaponized Alonzo but Sonic and friends didn't know that, they just saw it as a brand new Eggman robot for them to destroy. Bunnie stepped back, hesitantly. Alonzo looked eerie to her.

"What in the hoo-hah is that?" gasped Bunnie "It's a creepy little critter ain't it?"

"Nah, it's a trash can waiting for me to soften my sneakers on." said Sonic "OK big guy, this can get really ugly or this can be handled quietly. Be a good robot and stand down and we won't have to rip you to pieces! We've only got time to bother with Dr. Eggman and that's saying a lot!"

"Dr. Eggman is unavailable right now hedgehog." growled Alonzo in his monstrously modified voice "He's being kept prisoner in his own quarters, watching the screens as I decimate you and your friends Sonic! And once I've littered the ground with your corpses, I'll stain the walls with Eggman's blood and guts!"

Sonic hesitated a moment. This robot didn't seem very loyal to Dr. Eggman did it? What was this robot and why did it want to kill Eggman?

"That's pretty big talk coming from a freaky looking machine." said Sonic slowly "Who are you and why do you wanna kill Egg Brains?"

"It's me, Eggman's loyal servant bot Alonzo hedgehog." said Alonzo, pointing to himself with his axe-bladed tentacle "You must surely remember me don't you?"

Sonic couldn't believe his ears. Neither could anyone else for that matter. They all gaped in surprise at the robot that stood before them, waving its tentacles.

"No way! That's Alonzo?" shrieked Tails.

"He looks way scarier then before!" squealed Amy Rose, Sonic's number one fan-girl and hammer hitter.

"What did you do to yourself?" asked Ruben the Water Panther, former Chun-Nan resident "Did you build yourself a new batch of weapons or something?"

"No you walking water-fountain." sneered Alonzo "I built myself a brand new body and I've uploaded myself into it. My original body is gone forever and this is my appearance from now on. No longer am I a snivelling servant bot that is useful only for fetching tea trays and offering advice. I am now a machine of destruction and the only thing in this world capable of destroying Sonic the Hedgehog and his playschool buddies!"

"Yeah right, you may look scary as heck now you snooty moron but that doesn't mean you're stronger then the blue dude himself!" sneered Mandy Mouse, a veteran fighter with a fondness for punching Eggman in the face, slipping on her brass knuckle attachments she still had with her "Heck, I bet you're just the same as before Alonzo, only scarier in that new body!"

"Well Mandy, we'll see about that won't we?" sneered Alonzo, his metallic grin flashing at the Mobians "Ready to challenge me mongrels?"

"You betcha!" scoffed Sonic "Bunnie, you start this fight off!"

"Way ahead of ya sugah-hog!" exclaimed Bunnie delightedly "Yee-haw!"

Bunnie charged over to Alonzo and she drew her robot arm back. She lunged at Alonzo with her metal fist but Alonzo put his hands behind his back and blocked the attack with his saw tentacle. Bunnie punched again but Alonzo locked it with his scissor tentacle. Bunnie

tried another punch but Alonzo blocked it once again with his axe tentacle. Bunnie tried a fourth punch but Alonzo blocked it with his cannon tentacle. Alonzo then proceeded to sheath his tentacles by withdrawing them into his back and he grabbed Bunnie by the neck with his claws. Bunnie gagged and spluttered loudly and she struggled in the newly built servant bot's grasp.

"Hack! Urk! Let me go gruesome!" gagged Bunnie, thumping his arm feebly with her robot arm.

Alonzo grinned sadistically at Bunnie and then proceeded to hurl her straight into the forced open iron gates that were directly nearby. Bunnie hit the gate very hard and slumped on the ground dopily. That attack had left her stunned and wondering which way was up. Alonzo chortled to himself and he deployed his tentacles again. He switched on his saw blade tentacle, the blade squealing menacingly as it spun around at around 500,000 RPM. He grabbed Bunnie by the shoulder, hoisted her to his height and pinned her against the gate.

"Heads, you lose Rabbot!" he sneered as he inched the blade near Bunnie's neck.

Bunnie squirmed furiously in the grip of the weaponized butler bot as the saw blade neared her throat. Before Alonzo could dissect the Rabbot though, Sonic spin-dashed Alonzo's tentacle and chopped it straight off, the saw-blade automatically switching off after it was chopped. Alonzo growled angrily and he threw the Rabbot away. He then stepped out of Robotropolis, closed the gates and lunged up at Sonic just as he jumped back over the gate. Alonzo swiped at him with his axe-blade but he missed and Sonic spin-dashed him in the gut. The attack didn't seem to affect Alonzo in anyway. Heck, he didn't even FEEL the spin-dash! It was as if he was never spin-dashed! Alonzo just smacked Sonic away with his cannon tentacle and sent the hedgehog hurling into the ground. Alonzo landed in front of the hedgehog with his remaining three tentacles wiggling about sinisterly. Sonic picked himself up and bent down in a battle-ready stance.

"Not bad Alonzo, you're now able to fight." said Sonic smugly "Big deal. I've just chopped one of your tentacles to pieces so you've got

less to fight with now!"

"That's were you're horribly and utterly wrong hedgehog." sneered Alonzo "I knew my tentacles wouldn't be immune to being dissected so I decided to equip myself with Egg-Squid's infamous ability."

He then proceeded to withdraw his chopped tentacle and then suddenly grow out a new one! Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse couldn't believe their eyes. They remembered Egg-Squid and how it had the ability to grow a new tentacle after losing one and to see Alonzo have that ability was just too unbelievable for them. Even Sonic couldn't believe his eyes.

"Well…note to self, do not chop his tentacles up or he'll just grow a new one!" cried Sonic.

"Correct hedgehog." sneered Alonzo "And the interesting thing is every time I grow a new tentacle, it gets a new weapon too. This new tentacle now has a syringe on it that'll inject poison into you should I grab a hold of any of you and stick it through your arm."

Just as he said that, a giant syringe like object burst its way through the tip of the tentacle. Now Alonzo had a syringe, scissor blades, axe blades and a cannon as weapons now. The very sight of the syringe made everybody feel nervous.

"Oooh! I hate injections!" whimpered Cream the Rabbit, the youngest of Sonic's friends.

"Well in that case, I'll make sure your appointment comes first little one!" cackled Alonzo evilly, raising the syringe menacingly.

He then proceeded to advance menacingly on Cream with the syringe tentacle raised up high. Cream stared in horror at the giant needle and began to back away fearfully. Her pet Chao Cheese, the one thing she never went anywhere without, decided to stick up for his terrified owner. Cheese flew straight at Alonzo's tentacle and fisted it. But a body as strong as Alonzo's new body could easily withstand the feeble blows of something as pathetic as Cheese the Chao. Alonzo smacked Cheese away with his tentacle and continued to advance on Cream. Before he could grab the terrified

rabbit, Amy Rose leaped in and hammered Alonzo's head in with her trademark Piko-Piko hammer.

"Dare touch Cream and I'll smash you to tiny little bits you devilish creature!" screamed Amy, whacking Alonzo again with her hammer.

"Oh I'm so sorry." sneered Alonzo as he stood there taking Amy's blows as if they were nothing "I had no idea you cared so much for the little rabbit. In that case, I'll give you BOTH an injection!"

His axe tentacle lashed out and sliced Amy's hammer clean in two. Amy stared in horror at her beheaded hammer and instantly grew worried. Alonzo then grabbed Amy and held her arm out. He aimed his syringe tentacle at Amy and jabbed it into her arm. Before he could inject any of the poison into her veins though, Sonic the Hedgehog spin-dashed the tentacle into pieces once again. Alonzo threw Amy away and retracted his damaged tentacle. A new one shot back out of the socket once again and this time, the tentacle was tipped with a drill bit that could drill through any surface. Sonic spin-dashed towards Alonzo again but Alonzo grabbed the spin-dashing hedgehog and threw him away like a basketball. Sonic ended up cleaving his way into the ground as he ended up spin-dashing into it. Wilson and Mandy were the next to jump in on the attack. Wilson deployed his trademark spinning-blade weapon and he slashed at Alonzo with it. The attack left no damage whatsoever on the weaponized servant-bot. Wilson tried another attack but his weapon didn't leave any damage on his armour. Alonzo cackled at the dog's feeble attempts to eviscerate him.

"Oopsy, silly me. Did I forget to mention this body is invulnerable?" crowed Alonzo "You'll never be able to damage me you foolish cretins! Hit me all you want, I'll take your attacks easily!"

"You may be invulnerable but even invulnerable beings have some kind of weak spot!" yelled Wilson as he slashed at Alonzo again "And we'll find it somehow!"

Alonzo just lunged at him with the axe tentacle, prompting Wilson to jump back in fright. Wilson then threw his spinning blade at Alonzo but instead of cleaving straight through him like it would do on any other robot, it just pinged off his armour and ricocheted back to him.

The dog caught the weapon and shivered fearfully. It was quite clear Alonzo was too tough for him to penetrate. Alonzo tried to grab Wilson with the scissor tentacle but Wilson dodged and sliced the tentacle in half. Alonzo just retracted the sliced tentacle and a new one burst out of its socket. This one was now tipped with a hammer that could smash through the hardest substances on Mobius, especially Diamond Glass. Alonzo tried to hammer Wilson with the hammer tentacle but Wilson leaped back and he sheathed his weapon. He leaped in and dropkicked Alonzo in the face but the weaponized traitor to Eggman took the blow as if it didn't even happen and he punched Wilson away with his fist. Mandy leaped in and began to furiously punch at Alonzo with her brass knuckle attachments. But punch as hard as she dare, the mouse couldn't lay a dent on Alonzo's indestructible armour. Alonzo tried to hammer her with the hammer tentacle but Mandy leaped up just as the hammer came down and she landed on top of the hammer. She punched Alonzo directly in the face but all that did was end up cracking her knuckle attachments. Mandy stared at her cracked knuckle attachments and couldn't believe how strong Alonzo was.

"OK! I take back everything I said earlier!" she squeaked.

Alonzo laughed and raised his hammer up, causing Mandy to fall off and onto his back. Alonzo then activated the drill tentacle and prepared to drill a hole in Mandy's chest. But the mouse kicked the tentacle away before it could even get close to her and she kangaroo kicked Alonzo in the gut, knocking the invulnerable killing machine onto his back. She picked herself up and ran to him before he could get back up. Alonzo had only just sat up by the time Mandy reached him and she walloped him in the face with a roundhouse kick. Alonzo lay back down on the ground but he wasn't done for long. He rolled out of Mandy's way before she could punch him and he slashed her in the side with his drill tentacle. Mandy cried out in pain and she clutched her side. Her battle costume now had a tear in it from when Alonzo had slashed her and blood began to trickle out of the fresh cut. Alonzo then proceeded to give Mandy an upwards kick that sent her hurling backwards and she landed rather sharply on her back while still clutching her side. The mouse wasn't in fighting condition now; the pain in her side was too great for her to stand up properly. Alonzo hooted with laughter and he advanced on

the injured mouse with his drill and hammer tentacles ready to kill her. Before he could get anywhere near Mandy however, Knuckles leaped in and gave Alonzo a powerful uppercut that made him stagger backwards. Alonzo shook off the attack and he blasted at Knuckles with his blaster cannon tentacle. Knuckles dodged the dangerous blast and he charged towards Alonzo. Alonzo tried to chop him up with the axe tentacle but he missed every attack and Knuckles grabbed the tentacle with the blaster on it. He ripped the tentacle clean out of its socket and walloped Alonzo with it. Alonzo just grabbed the tentacle and snatched it off Knuckles. He threw it away and a new tentacle appeared in place of the one Knuckles had just ripped out. This tentacle was now tipped with a spiked mace and it looked deathly serious. Everyone in this battle would have to avoid the mace at all costs. Knuckles lunged at Alonzo and punched him as hard as he could but Alonzo took the blows as if they were nothing to him. He was invulnerable now so no attack would hurt him, even ones that knocked him over. Alonzo withdrew his tentacles and he grabbed Knuckles by his wrists. He then lifted Knuckles up off the ground and slammed him back down onto it as if he was a roll of newspaper being used to swat a fly. Alonzo then proceeded to throw Knuckles away and send him flying and before Knuckles could land back down on the ground, Alonzo deployed one of his tentacles, but he didn't deploy its weapon, and he batted the echidna guardian with the tentacle just as he was about to land on the ground. Knuckles was sent hurling through the air like a batted baseball and he landed very painfully on the ground face first. Shade was livid with rage at the sight of her guardian friend getting hurt and she leaped on Alonzo with her weapons blazing. She Blade Rushed Alonzo but the attack just tickled him more then anything. Alonzo then put his hand on Shade's back, bent her down and kneed her straight in the gut. Shade gasped hoarsely at the vicious attack and Alonzo deployed his hammer tentacle and walloped her with it. The attack almost knocked her entire head off. Shade landed on her side and clutched her throbbing face. She decided it would be wiser to deploy her helmet in order to protect her head from such powerful attacks. She deployed her helmet and picked herself up. Alonzo hadn't seen Shade with her helmet on before so he was mildly surprised at the fact Shade had a helmet. No matter, he would still destroy her anyway. Shade ran over to Alonzo as fast as she could. Alonzo swiped at her with the hammer tentacle but Shade

jumped into the air, did a somersault and landed foot first onto his head. Alonzo bent backwards slightly and Shade sliced both of his horns off with her twin blade weapons. Now Alonzo only had one left. Shade landed behind Alonzo and Blade-Rushed him in the back. Alonzo just kicked backwards and knocked Shade onto her back. He withdrew his tentacles to prevent Shade from chopping them off as he'd had enough of losing them already. Shade Blade-Rushed at Alonzo again but Alonzo slugged her in the stomach as hard as he possibly could. Shade fell down on to the ground, wheezing hoarsely. That punch felt almost as hard as Imperator Ix's attacks. Alonzo chortled with laughter and he kicked Shade away. Alonzo deployed his mace tentacle and he raised it above his head. He advanced on Shade menacingly.

"You're the one who took the Master Emerald and the Chaos Emeralds back after Eggman stole them**** aren't you?" purred Alonzo "Mecha Rouge described you as a female echidna in a black body suit with a headband and you fit that description so I bet she was talking about you."

"You're right Alonzo." puffed Shade weakly "I am the one that retrieved the emeralds back after your master stole them with his flying city. What of it?"

"That just gives me more of a reason to kill you my dear." sneered Alonzo "Those emeralds could have been very valuable to me and you took them away. No matter, I know where Angel Island is so I can just get them back and you and Knuckles won't be there to stop me."

He then proceeded to aim his mace at Shade and prepare to swing it down on her. Shade would not have a chance against the solid spiky ball of steel so she'd be dead in a millisecond. Before Alonzo could club Shade into the ground with his mace however, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk leaped in and dropkicked Alonzo in the face. Alonzo staggered backwards but he quickly regained his balance and he withdrew his tentacle. Geoffrey stood there before him in a battle-ready stance, ready to cut loose on him.

"I like the new body mate." said Geoffrey "Gives us a reason to fear you instead of sneer at you. And it also gives us a reason to destroy

you more then ever."

"That'll be highly unlikely Geoffrey St. Jumping Jacks." snorted Alonzo "I'm invulnerable now, you cannot destroy me."

"Oh we'll see about that mate." said Geoffrey with a smirk on his face "Smile for the camera."

He aimed his arm-mounted crossbow and activated a flash bomb in Alonzo's optics. The bright light made Alonzo yelp and he clutched his optics to get the flash out of them. While he was distracted, Geoffrey ran behind Alonzo, loaded his crossbow full of bomb-darts and he fired four of them into his back. He then activated the trigger and the darts all exploded in unison. Alonzo was thrown onto his stomach by the blast and he wailed in pain. Geoffrey punched the air in triumph.

"Ha, Ha! Yes! I killed the bloke!" he cheered.

If only he was right. Despite the powerful blast of the darts, Alonzo was STILL functional! Heck, he picked himself up and turned back around to face Geoffrey as if nothing had happened! His back didn't even have a speck of damage anywhere on it! The bomb-darts hadn't worked at all! Geoffrey was about to have a seizure in shock at that sight before him.

"Which part of "I'm invulnerable" did you fail to comprehend Geoffrey St. Jackass?" scoffed Alonzo "Nothing can destroy me, not even your puny darts."

He then proceeded to deploy his hammer tentacle and give Geoffrey and uppercut with it. The hammer blow sent Geoffrey hurling through the air and the skunk landed rather sharply on his back. Geoffrey groaned like a ghoul in pain as he rubbed his throbbing back. Alonzo chortled to himself and he deployed his other tentacles. He decided to be really sadistic and kill Geoffrey with all four of his weapons instead of one. But before he could get anywhere near Geoffrey, Ruben the Water-Panther leaped in and squirted him with a jet of water. Alonzo was pushed backwards by the attack and he ended up dripping wet from that attack. But he was waterproof so the attack didn't short-circuit him, not surprising

to Ruben as he expected that from Alonzo. Alonzo growled angrily at Ruben. He had a very big grudge on the water panther, mostly due to the fact his water powers could be dangerous to any mechanical life form and he was determined to get rid of him more then anything. Ruben let Alonzo have another jet of water in the face but Alonzo took the blast and he began to push against the jet of water Ruben was firing at him. Alonzo was so powerful, he even managed to push his way straight through the water and get closer and closer to Ruben. Ruben could see his water powers weren't going to work so he stopped squirting water at Alonzo and he leaped into the air. He tried to drop-kick Alonzo but Alonzo walloped him with the hammer tentacle and knocked him straight down. He then raised the axe tentacle up high and prepared to chop him into pieces. But Ruben wasn't going down so easily. He squirted Alonzo with a jet of water and threw him off-balance and just as regained his balance, Tails flew in and kick-slammed him in the face. Alonzo quickly picked himself up and scratched Tails on the shoulder with the drill-tentacle. Tails yelped in pain and he clutched his throbbing shoulder. This distracted Tails long enough for Alonzo to knock him straight down into the ground with a whack of the hammer. Tails lay on the ground grimacing tensely in pain while still clutching his shoulder. Alonzo activated his drill and prepared to drill Tails through like a plank of wood. Before Alonzo could touch Tails however, Sonic spin-dashed him directly in the head. Alonzo fell onto his side but he wasn't down for long. He picked himself up, withdrew is tentacles and he deployed some arm-cannons he also had as weapons. He began to rapidly shoot at Sonic as the hedgehog ran around him but being supersonic; Sonic was too fast for Alonzo. Sonic spin-dashed towards Alonzo again but Alonzo withdrew his arm cannons and punched Sonic away. Knuckles and Shade both leaped on Alonzo's back and they pile-dived him with several powerful punches and Blade Rushes respectively but Alonzo just grabbed them by their quills and threw them away. Ruben jumped in with a desperate ninja kick but Alonzo grabbed him and threw him over his shoulder. Geoffrey, Wilson and Mandy attempted to triple-team Alonzo but Alonzo walloped them all away with his hammer tentacle and sent them sprawling on the ground. Bunnie Rabbot flew in and walloped Alonzo in the back of his head with her robot fist. Alonzo quickly picked himself up and gave Bunnie Rabbot a bone-shattering uppercut to the chin that almost took the Rabbot's head

off. Bunnie fell down onto her side and clutched her sore chin. Amy, Cream and Cosmo flew in towards Alonzo in their team attack formation. They were attempting to use Amy's Twirling-Hammer Batter move on him (yes, that move REALLY needs a better name!). Alonzo just sneered at the foolish females and he blasted them out of the sky with one shot of his arm cannons. Amy, Cream and Cosmo all fell down onto the ground in unison and they groaned in pain. Alonzo chortled at his defeated enemies.

"Look at you foolish Mobians." he sneered "You can take down Dr. Eggman's biggest and best machines but you can't take down me in a new body. I really have improved myself haven't I? Well, it's time I killed you all. I can just see my former master's face now when I kill you all, thus succeeding in doing the one thing Dr. Eggman never could!"

"Yeah, I bet he's gonna be real mad at the fact his snivelling minion beat yours truly but he didn't." muttered Sonic as Alonzo advanced on him with his tentacles bared and weapons at the ready.

Alonzo ignored Sonic's grim remark and he activated the drill bit on his first tentacle. The drill whirred eerily as it spun around at a terrific speed and Alonzo edged it towards Sonic's forehead.

"Now let's see if your brain looks any different to a human brain." purred Alonzo sadistically as the drill inched closer to Sonic's head.

But before Alonzo could even began to stick the drill through Sonic's head, he was spin-dashed in the side by a black and red blur and sent hurling backwards a good few feet. Alonzo landed with a heavy clunk on his side and he lay there, groaning to himself. As for Sonic, he picked himself up and was met with a pleasant sight. There, standing before him with his back turned on him and staring squarely at Alonzo was none other then Shadow the Hedgehog, a genetic experiment with a lost purpose and a former nemesis of Sonic's. Sonic's eyes widened in surprise and his face brightened.

"Hey Shadow!" cried Sonic "This is a surprise isn't it?"

"Humph." muttered Shadow, looking away from Alonzo and over to Sonic "Hello blue hedgehog. It seems you've got your hands full."

"We have." said Sonic, motioning to his friends as they picked themselves up and dusted themselves off "We were just having a pretty tight battle with Alonzo over there and he's wiping the floor with us. Where did you suddenly spring from Shadow boy?"

"Ever since the last time we met***** I've been looking for clues to my true origins and I haven't come close whatsoever." muttered Shadow "All I've done since then is wander around aimlessly while searching for any possible answer to my past, helped a Royal Fighter group save their leader and destroyed a prison blockade belonging to Dr. Eggman himself*******. Since then, it's been nothing but aimless wandering and then all of the sudden, I end up coming across Robotropolis and I saw a new robot about to kill you so I decided to step in and save your life. After all, I'm still grateful to you for exposing Dr. Eggman as a fake to me."

"That's real nice Shadow boy." said Sonic brightly "And I'm grateful you've just saved my hide from Alonzo over there."

"Alonzo?" mused Shadow, looking back at Alonzo, who had just picked himself up and his tentacles were waving about angrily "That's not Alonzo, he looks like a missile with wheels and arms. He doesn't look like that."

"Well Shadow, it is me." growled Alonzo "I've changed my appearance so I'll be fit to rule the Eggman Empire and destroy Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"Rule the Eggman Empire?" Shadow mused again, a ray of hope lighting up in his stomach "Does that mean…you've betrayed Dr. Eggman as well?"

"I have Shadow." said Alonzo dryly "I've betrayed Eggman because I cannot stand his incompetence and I'm more deserving of being in charge of the Empire then he is so I've overthrown Dr. Eggman and I'll be in charge of Robotropolis from now on."

"Is that so?" said Shadow "Well Alonzo, instead of trying to replace Dr. Eggman, you could put that new body to better use. Why don't you use that thing for good instead of bad Alonzo? Heck, why don't you join me Alonzo? I know how you feel about Eggman since I've

seen the bad he's done to you during my time as his unwilling ally and you know how I feel about being misused and deceived by him so you and I would be a good team up. Together, we can make Eggman pay for all the misery he's caused us and we can destroy him once and for all."

Alonzo just frowned at Shadow as if his very proposition physically repulsed him and left a bad feeling in his circuits.

"I would rather be scraped then join the enemy Shadow the Hedgehog!" snarled Alonzo "I am never going to side with the Mobians, especially all the times they've made me look stupid and given Eggman a reason to use me as a punching bag! And I especially have a grudge on you Shadow since you ratted me out to Dr. Eggman after I used Egg Raptor to try and kill Sonic******* and I ended up being wrongfully punished for it so I'm especially going to slaughter you Shadow!"

Shadow frowned very eerily at Alonzo, furious the treacherous butler bot had refused to accept his proposal and wanted to kill him and the Mobians. He bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to do battle.

"In that case Alonzo, prepare to stain the ground with your own oil." said Shadow in a very cold voice.

"You'll be the one staining the ground Shadow!" cackled Alonzo "Especially since my new body is invulnerable and Sonic plus twelve can't even lay a dent on me so you will have no chance."

"We'll see about that Alonzo." snorted Shadow "I'm the Ultimate Life Form, I'm built to be perfect and I can defeat anybody I come across so I will defeat you easily!"

Alonzo smirked at Shadow and he lunged at him with his tentacles raised. Shadow lunged towards Alonzo and the two fisted each other…

Meanwhile in Eggman's headquarters, the imprisoned Dr. Eggman

had sat there and watched the entire fight between Alonzo and the Royal Fighters and he was absolutely gobsmacked at the sheer power of Alonzo and his new body. He'd been given heavy blows by his resisters and yet he had no dents or grievous damage whatsoever save for severed horns and severed tentacles although the latter were replaceable as he could grow new ones and he was now going toe-to-toe with Shadow the Hedgehog. Dr. Eggman just grew ever more worried about Alonzo and the power he now possessed in that new body of his and he had to destroy Alonzo before he defeated Sonic and friends and ended up controlling the Eggman Empire. Dr. Eggman switched off the computer monitors and he stood up from his chair.

"Alonzo, you've impressed me." he said to himself "Just a pity you've decided to turn on me. Oh well, I know how to destroy you since nobody else can seem to lay a dent on you."

He picked up a communicator device and dialled a few buttons on it. He put the device to his ear and spoke into it.

"Hello Katherine dear." said Dr. Eggman "I've been locked in my quarters by that traitor Alonzo. Could you be a good girl and open the door for me?"

Eggman's response was a beep from the silent warden-bot. Luckily for Dr. Eggman; Katherine was just outside of his headquarters and he could hear her strolling up to the door. Katherine stared at the key-pad and she pressed the control buttons on the keypad beside the door. She managed to break the code as she knew the codes to everything in Robotropolis and the door opened up. Dr. Eggman beamed happily and he strode out of his quarters.

"Thank you Katherine." said Dr. Eggman, patting the fem-bot on the shoulder "You're a wonderful robot you are. So what's the status of Robotropolis?"

Katherine played a recording of Alonzo's voice to Dr. Eggman. The recording was from what Alonzo had said to the entire population of Robotropolis earlier.

"That's better." the recording said as she played it "However, to

ensure total loyalty to me, I will re-alter your programming so you'll obey only me. Any attempts to resist will result in my uploading the virus into you all so do not try to resist me."

Dr. Eggman fumed at that revelation.

"Has he re-altered the programming yet?" he asked.

Katherine shook her head from side-to-side. Dr. Eggman smiled darkly at his female sidekick.

"I guess he hasn't had the time to do so yet." said Dr. Eggman "Too busy uploading himself into his new body and hasn't yet got around to re-altering the programming of Robotropolis so I'm still in control. But that's not helpful as Alonzo is more powerful then Sonic and his friends all at once so my robot population will be no match for him. I however have one thing that'll definitely destroy Alonzo and give me something else to be proud about. Do you know what that is my dear Katherine?"

Katherine shook her head from side-to-side again. Dr. Eggman smiled even wider and looked very eerie indeed right now.

"I have a giant roboticizer chamber on the middle floor in this base." said Dr. Eggman "It works just like any other roboticizer out there only it can be modified to spread its waves out a very large distance. In other words, I'm going to modify the king-sized roboticizer to roboticize all of Mobius in one fell sweep! And do you know what happens if a robot gets hit by a roboticizer wave?"

Katherine just played an audio clip of an explosion going off. Dr. Eggman laughed at the fact Katherine had just answered correctly and with a brilliant way of communication too.

"That's right, it explodes!" he cackled "Alonzo will be fried metal when I activate my modified roboticizer! Not only will that happen, I'll roboticize everybody on Mobius and have a huge army of Robians to boot! I feel like such a moron for the fact I haven't used it yet but I'm a scientist, I'm always seeking to create things and I'm so fond of inventing things, I end up forgetting about some of my older projects. Oh well, better late then never as they say. Come on Katherine, let's

go and modify the roboticizer chamber."

Katherine nodded silently and she followed Dr. Eggman down the corridor. Dr. Eggman dialled some numbers on his communicator and he spoke into it.

"Mecha Rouge? Tell all the robots of Robotropolis to retreat back into my headquarters." ordered Dr. Eggman "I've got a brand new plan that I'm going to unleash on Mobius right now."

"I-o-bey." came the roboticized voice of Mecha Rouge, Rouge the Bat in robot's clothing.

Dr. Eggman put the communicator away and smiled widely to himself.

"I feel like an absolute idiot for not doing this in the first place." said Dr. Eggman "But now I've remembered it, I can use it and finally conquer this planet! I may have delayed my own victory but a delayed victory is better then no victory as they say. And I'll get rid of that traitor Alonzo as well since not even his invulnerable body can withstand the roboticizer's powerful waves!"

Dr. Eggman began to cackle to himself as he and Katherine headed off to the king-sized roboticizer that Eggman had been talking about. Dr. Eggman couldn't wait to see what Mobius looked like when he modified his roboticizer to be a worldwide roboticizer and unleashed it on Mobius…

Outside of Robotropolis, Alonzo and Shadow were brawling it out with each other and at a very vicious and speedy pace too. Shadow punched Alonzo as hard as he could but Alonzo took the punch effortlessly and punched Shadow back even harder. Shadow skidded backwards a little and he charged back at Alonzo. The two fighter then began to punch and elbow each other as rapidly and as callously as they possibly could. They struck many vigorous blows on each other at rapid speed but no one could seem to get the best of one another. Shadow then roundhouse kicked Alonzo in the chest and Alonzo roundhouse kicked him back. Alonzo then walloped

Shadow with the mace tentacle and Shadow ended up hurling backwards a few paces. The attack had left a few nasty cuts on the side of his head and behind his ear. He wiped the trickling blood away and he zoomed back towards Alonzo. Alonzo just smirked at Shadow and hammered him with the hammer tentacle. Shadow hurled through the air in a rainbow arch and he landed painfully on the ground. Shadow picked himself up and spin-dashed Alonzo's top two tentacles in half. The hammer and drill tentacle halves lay on the ground, motionless and useless. Alonzo just withdrew the remaining halves and drew out a new pair of tentacles. One had an air rifle barrel and one had a studded club. Shadow couldn't believe his eyes at the sight of Alonzo growing new tentacles but he didn't let that distract him. Shadow zoomed towards Alonzo again, his face frowning so hard it looked like he was going to burst. Alonzo shot at Shadow with the rifle tentacle but Shadow dodged every blast with ease and he upwards kicked Alonzo directly in the face. That attack left a large scratch on Alonzo's face and it knocked him over. Alonzo lay there on his back, clutching his face in pain. Shadow tried to kick-slam Alonzo's gut but Alonzo walloped him away with his club tentacle. Alonzo picked himself up and then tried to butcher Shadow to pieces with his axe tentacle, the only original tentacle that remained. Shadow dodged the axe attacks and he threw four Chaos Spears at Alonzo. The Chaos Spears ricocheted off Alonzo's tough armour and Alonzo fired at him with the rifle tentacle. Shadow dodged the blasts once again and he spin-dashed at Alonzo but Alonzo caught him in his hands and threw him away as if he was a basketball. Shadow ended up cleaving his way into the ground before coming to a stop. Alonzo sheathed his tentacles and he deployed his arm cannons. He advanced on Shadow and prepared to shoot the black hedgehog. But Shadow picked himself up and he spin-dashed Alonzo in the chest. Alonzo hurtled backwards and he ended up skidding very painfully on his back. Shadow ran over to Alonzo at top speed and he threw some Chaos Spears at the weaponized servant bot as he ran to him. Alonzo just stood up and walked over to Shadow with the Chaos Spears deflecting off his invulnerable armour. Shadow leaped into the air and prepared to spin-dash Alonzo but Alonzo blasted him away with his arm cannons. Shadow landed on his feet and skidded backwards slightly. Alonzo rapidly fired at Shadow but Shadow ran through the blasts as if they were nothing and he gave Alonzo a terrific uppercut

that sent Alonzo hurling through the air in an amazing arch. But before Alonzo could land back on the ground, he activated some jets in his feet and he flew towards Shadow at top speed. Alonzo grabbed Shadow by his quills and carried him up into the air. Shadow squirmed in Alonzo's tough grasp as he was carried into the air by the deadly traitor. Alonzo carried Shadow up about one-hundred feet into the air and he let go of Shadow's quills. Shadow plummeted straight down to the ground like a falling stone. Shadow landed very painfully on the ground and he lay where he landed, wondering what had just happened and which way was up. Alonzo landed back down on the ground and he pointed the rifle tentacle at Shadow's chest.

"Some ultimate life form." he sneered "Prepare to be an ultimate corpse staining the ground with his blood Shadow the Hedgehog!"

But before Alonzo could pull the trigger and end Shadow's life, Sonic spin-dashed Alonzo and knocked him over.

"Quit trying to kill my friends Alonzo!" yelled Sonic "Hey everybody, all attack him at once! That'll bring him down for sure!"

Sonic's friends agreed and they all charged towards Alonzo as quickly as they could. Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Shade, Wilson and Mandy charged at him from the front and left, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Ruben and Shadow all charged at him from the back and right, forming a huge circle that was closing in on Alonzo. Alonzo sneered at his enemies and he let them come to him. The Mobians all pounced on Alonzo but just before they could dog-pile on him, Alonzo activated a giant green wave of concentrated energy out from the huge orb in his chest. The wave spread out from all around Alonzo and struck the Mobians like an ocean wave at the seaside. The Mobians were all sent hurling backwards in every direction and sent sprawling all around Alonzo, who cackled evilly at his downed victims. Shadow and Sonic landed beside each other and the two hedgehogs groaned weakly.

"He's…he's too powerful." grunted Shadow "That body of his is clearly designed to match all of us. I bet he can even match Eggman's greatest creations easily.

"I do wish we had Team Chaotix with us but they're back at Royal HQ as someone needs to keep an eye on the place when no one's at home." puffed Sonic "But I doubt even they would be of much help to us now. Heck, I bet Alonzo's body is designed to match the entire R.F.S. so any of the groups abroad would be no match for him!"

"Then how are we going to destroy him then?" asked Shadow desperately "He'll kill us all if we don't do something!"

"I have an idea." said Sonic "I'll use the power of the seven Chaos Emeralds to destroy that fiend. He hasn't been in direct contact with me in super form so I bet he isn't built to match Super Sonic."

Shadow's mind suddenly blanked out at the mention of Chaos Emeralds and he began to hear a voice in his head again.

The Chaos Emeralds have great power Shadow. the voice boomed in his head like a sinister gong *With them, you'll be even more powerful and you shall lead us to complete and total victory...*

Shadow's mind suddenly switched back on and he shook his head.

"So where are the Chaos Emeralds then?" asked Shadow.

"All the way in Downunda." said Sonic "Which is a very long hearty jog away but with my super speed, I'll be there and back in no time. You all distract Alonzo while I get the emeralds."

"Very well blue hedgehog." said Shadow grimly "Just pray that this miracle of yours actually works and saves us all or I'll have a reason to soften my knuckles on you."

"Trust me Shadow, we're as good as saved with those emeralds." said Sonic "Well, adios for the time being!"

With that said, Sonic zoomed off like a rocket car and he sped off into the distance as fast as he could. Shadow picked himself up and prepared to do battle once again. Alonzo advanced on Shadow with his weapons blazing.

"Well, well, well Shadow." sneered Alonzo "Sonic has decided to

turn chicken and run for his life it seems. Will you do the same?"

"Not on your life Alonzo!" snarled Shadow "Let's continue this battle!"

"If you're so ready to have an early grave Shadow then I'll be happy to arrange your funeral." sneered Alonzo.

He cackled like a demon and swung his mace tentacle at Shadow at a blinding speed…

Footnotes:

***See the milestone epic Story 75**

**** And then See Story 61**

***** I hope you didn't miss out on all the fun in Stories 76-78!**

****** Talking about Story 75 again (It really is a great milestone!)**

******* See Story 63**

******** Remember *Tales from Mobius Arc 8: The Sentinel Blockade* at all?**

********* See Story 59**

Alonzo really means buisness in that new body of his! Will he succeed in killing the Mobians and becoming ruler of Mobius? Can Sonic use the emerald's power to save everybody? And what is Dr. Eggman up to now? Find out next time as the conclusion to this battle rages on! Read and Review :)

Worldwide Roboticizer

Story 80: World Wide Roboticizer

Worldwide hero and fastest thing alive, Sonic the Hedgehog had just fled an intense battle between him, his friends and Dr. Eggman's treacherous servant-bot Alonzo, who had recently upgraded himself into a walking, sentient engine of chaos and malice. He wasn't fleeing the battle out of cowardice though as fleeing in cowardice was the last thing he would ever do in the midst of a battle. He was fleeing the battle because he had a cunning plan in mind. Alonzo's upgrades had made him resilient to battle-damage of any kind and no matter what blows he and his friends threw at Alonzo, he just took them easily and struck back even stronger. Not even Shadow the Hedgehog was a match for Alonzo so Sonic needed help and luckily, he had the perfect plan. He was going to use the legendary seven Chaos Emeralds to turn Super Sonic and defeat Alonzo as Alonzo couldn't possibly have built his new body to be strong enough to resist him in super form as Alonzo hadn't seen him in super form enough to study him and do some research on him. He'd only seen him in super form once and even then, Alonzo had only seen him in that form briefly* so he couldn't have made his new body resistant to super-forms. After a while of running, Sonic finally arrived at the famous Angel Island, the island that floated in the sky and was the home of Knuckles the Echidna, the guardian of Angel Island. The seven Chaos Emeralds were up on that island and all Sonic had to do was get up onto the island. Unfortunately, he didn't have a warp ring with him so he couldn't warp himself up onto the island. Sonic had another way of getting up onto the island though. He curled up into a ball and he spin-dashed up onto the island instead. He landed right beside the Master Emerald shrine and he gazed out into the horizon. Angel Island's views were spectacular and the blue hedgehog always enjoyed seeing them when he was up on the floating island.

"This view never gets old." he said to himself "But now's not the time for sight-seeing. I've got an upgraded butler bot to destroy."

With that said, Sonic zoomed off into the nearby woods and searched for the tomb the Chaos Emeralds were hidden in. Knuckles had once shown him the way during the battle with Imperator Ix** so he knew where he was going. He ran forward into the woods a good few feet and then he skidded to a halt. He turned to his right and saw the familiar slab of stone in the ground. That was the tomb the Chaos Emeralds were in. It kept them hidden, safe and prevented their power from being detected by anything so no one would find them there. Sonic wandered up to the stone and he pressed on it with his foot. The stone slid down into the ground about sixty centimetres and slid away, revealing the bright colourful glows of the seven Chaos Emeralds. Sonic beamed at the sight of them. The very sight of the Chaos Emeralds made him feel good on the inside and he liked that feeling. Sonic picked up the seven Chaos Emeralds and admired them.

"Aaaah you seven little beauties, it's a good thing you're always around when we need you." said Sonic happily "And we really need you now. It's time for my super form to come out and play."

Sonic raised his arms and held the Chaos Emeralds above his head. The seven Chaos Emeralds glowed brightly and they slowly levitated out of Sonic's hands. They all began to circle around Sonic at a slow pace at first. Sonic closed his eyes and waited for the magic to happen. The Chaos Emeralds slowly circled around Sonic and then slowly and steadily, they began to pick up speed. The Chaos Emeralds circled around Sonic faster and faster and faster until they were nothing more then a colourful blur circling around the supersonic hedgehog. Then suddenly, the Chaos Emeralds vanished into thin air and Sonic's cobalt blue fur changed into a brilliant golden colour. His spines all pointed up behind him, giving him a cool looking "hairstyle" and his eyes turned red. Super Sonic had come out once again and was here to save all of Mobius with his brilliant super powers. Super Sonic opened is eyes and he smiled cockily to himself.

"Oh yeah, Super Sonic is here to save the day once again!" he announced to himself "Look out Alonzo, Super Sonic is here to make a scrap pile outta ya!"

Super Sonic rocketed up into the sky faster then a space shuttle and

he charged off away from Angel Island and towards Robotropolis where Weaponized Alonzo and his friends were still brawling it out with each other. Alonzo would be in for a shock when he arrived on the scene…

Back at Robotropolis, Shadow the Hedgehog and Sonic's friends Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Shade the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Bunnie Rabbot and Ruben the Water Panther were keeping Alonzo busy just like Sonic had told them to. Shadow had informed everybody what Sonic was up to so they knew that Sonic hadn't deserted them and was just getting the Chaos Emeralds so he could turn super and defeat Alonzo. Their combined efforts were keeping Alonzo on his toes at the least but Alonzo was still too tough for them. Their efforts more or less seemed to annoy him rather then hurt him. Shadow threw a Chaos Spear at Alonzo but Alonzo took the attack as his armour was too strong for a mere Chaos Spear to penetrate and he hammered Shadow with the club tentacle he had right now. Shadow hurtled through the air like a rag doll and he hit the ground in a very awkward position that would break any normal person's back but being the ultimate life form, he was still alright after that crippling blow. Wilson and Mandy then double-teamed Alonzo with their respective weapons. Wilson slashed at him with his spinning blade weapon and Mandy fisted him with her brass knuckle attachments. One may have been cracked but it was still effective and still usable at the most. Despite these valiant attacks, Alonzo took them as if they were nothing. He withdrew his tentacles and he gave Mandy a painful uppercut to the chin that almost took her head off. Wilson's temper flared up and he slashed at Alonzo even more furiously. Hurting Mandy was the only way you could get this dog to crack. But Wilson just ended up breaking one of the blades to his double-bladed pole weapon in his rage. Alonzo's armour was just too strong and excessive use of striking it against his invulnerable armour led to the blade being broken. He only had one blade left and that wouldn't be of much use to him at this point in time. Alonzo sneered at Wilson and tried to shoot him with the air-rifle tentacle after deploying it. Wilson jumped out of the way of it's gun fire and he

sliced the tentacle in two with the only remaining blade his spinning blade had. The rifle fell onto the ground, now completely useless to Alonzo. Alonzo grumbled, clearly fed up with having his tentacles constantly chopped off. He sheathed the tentacle and grew out a new tentacle that had a boxing glove made of steel on the end. Alonzo punched Wilson with the fist of steel he now had. Wilson flew through the air and landed sharply on his back. Mandy got mad and she punched Alonzo directly in the optic. But even Alonzo's optics were invulnerable so blinding him was not an option. Alonzo kneed the mouse in the gut and then attempted to butcher her into bite-sized chunks with the axe tentacle, the only tentacle he was yet to lose, but before he could do so, Shade jumped in and Blade Rushed him in the face. Alonzo fell onto his side, leaving Mandy to kneel down on the ground and clutch her aching gut. Shade then began to furiously Blade-Rush Alonzo over and over but the attacks weren't doing any harm of any kind to the invulnerable robot. Alonzo gave Shade an uppercut to the chin that would have knocked her helmet off if it was like any normal helmet and Shade hurled through the air in a rainbow arch, veered to the left and landed sharply on her stomach. Alonzo withdrew his tentacles again and deployed his arm cannons. He decided that it would be nice to give those weapons some glory instead of constantly relying on his tentacles and fists. Knuckles charged towards Alonzo like an angry bull, his fists bared and ready to attack. He leaped into the air and punched the ground. Several chunks of earth shot up from the ground and Knuckles punched and kicked the debris straight at Alonzo. Alonzo shot the debris into pieces with his arm cannons but there was on particularly large chunk of debris that his blasters wouldn't destroy in time. He sheathed his cannons and drew out an arm blade out of his left arm that he had as a surprise weapon. He charged into the earth chunk and sliced it in two like a slice of cheese. Knuckles leaped into the air and gave Alonzo an uppercut just as he was about to land on him but Alonzo flipped himself backwards so he landed on his feet after the attack. Knuckles charged at Alonzo and tried to punch him but Alonzo swiped his arm blade at him forcing him to hastily retreat. Amy leaped in and hammered the blade into pieces with one smack of the Piko-Piko hammer. Alonzo growled angrily and back-handed her twenty feet across the battlefield. Cream flew in front of Alonzo in an attempt to distract him but Alonzo deployed his arm cannon and shot Cream clean out of the sky. Cream landed rather painfully

on the ground. Cosmo however, picked one of the pieces of Alonzo's smashed arm blade. It was the half with the tip of the blade. Cosmo threw the blade at Alonzo like a dart and the blade embedded itself straight into his optic. Alonzo screamed in pain and he pulled the blade out. He now only had one optic left. If he lost that one, he would be blind and unable to fight properly. Geoffrey and Bunnie took advantage of Cosmo's distraction and they both double-teamed Alonzo with a pair of roundhouse kicks that tripped him up. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and blasted him in the face but the blast didn't kill Alonzo. Alonzo blasted Bunnie back and sent her hurling backwards thirty feet. Geoffrey grabbed Alonzo in a chokehold and tried to rip his head off but Alonzo broke out of the hold and elbowed Geoffrey rather painfully in the back. The skunk was brought down on the ground, panting and gasping. Alonzo then tried to shoot Geoffrey in the head but Ruben leaped in and kung-fu kicked Alonzo in the face, knocking him down on his back. Ruben then drenched Alonzo with water in an attempt to keep him down but Alonzo ploughed through the water jets and blasted Ruben away. Ruben sprung back with a ninja style attack on Alonzo but Alonzo grabbed Ruben and threw him down onto the ground. Alonzo chortled at his pitiful resisters and he deployed his tentacles.

"There's one big problem with you foolish Mobians." he sneered "You're all too valorous for your own good and that is going to be your downfall right now."

"Does that snooty moron ever stop bragging?" grunted Mandy, still rubbing her stomach better.

"He brags more then Scourge and Imperator Ix." muttered Wilson.

"I will thank you kindly for not commenting on my arrogance you two idiots." snapped Alonzo "Now, I shall kill you all and after that, I'll hunt down that coward Sonic the Hedgehog and kill him as well. I'll start with you first Shadow the Hedgehog."

He raised all four tentacles and advanced menacingly on Shadow. Just to be cruel, he was going to kill the black hedgehog experiment with all four of his weapons. He would fist him with the boxing glove, club him with the club, chop him with the axe and spike him with the mace. Not even the Ultimate Life form would survive four different

weapons making dead meat out of him. Shadow just lay there on the ground, staring up at Alonzo and waiting for the weaponized servant bot to bludgeon and club him into the ground with his four tentacles. Alonzo just grinned maliciously at Shadow, clearly looking forward to this right now.

"You should have fled along with Sonic Shadow." sneered Alonzo "Proves Sonic is the superior hedgehog as he has the brains to abandon this fight."

He raised his club and fist tentacles and prepared to bring them both down on Shadow at once. But just as he swung them down on the black hedgehog, Shadow teleported out from beneath Alonzo, leaving Alonzo to hammer the ground and leave cracks in it. Alonzo growled furiously and then suddenly, he was knocked down onto the ground by a kick from Shadow the Hedgehog, who had just reappeared behind him.

"I never flee from a fight." snarled Shadow "And I'm not fleeing from this one until you're nothing but scrap iron glistening in the sunlight."

He then suddenly grabbed his inhibitor rings and removed them both one at a time.

"Stand back everybody." ordered Shadow "I'm unleashing my Chaos Blast on that monster."

Sonic's friends did as they were told and they picked themselves up and limped away from Shadow and Alonzo. Alonzo could see Shadow was preparing to unleash his Chaos Blast but the invulnerable robot didn't seem the least bit worried for some eerie reason. Shadow tensed up very slightly and his black furred body suddenly began to glow red. He glowed ever so bright and tensed up tighter and tighter until…

"Chaos… **BLASSSSSTTTTT!** " bellowed Shadow, throwing his arms out to the side and unleashing all the Chaos Energy in his body.

Giant red waves of concentrated energy exploded out from Shadow and expanded all around him. Luckily, Sonic's friends were out of

range so they didn't get caught up in the blast. The blast engulfed Alonzo and sent him flying backwards a good distance away from Shadow the Hedgehog. The blast raged on for thirty seconds and then suddenly, all the Chaos Energy died away and Shadow's fur returned to it's natural black colour. The genetic experiment gasped and panted for breath as unleashing his energy tired him out and he fell down on his knees. He grabbed his inhibitor rings and snapped them back on his wrists. He smirked cockily and wandered up to where Alonzo had just crashed.

"Well Alonzo, as powerful as you were, I bet you couldn't survive that." he said to himself as he walked over to the downed robot.

But Shadow was met with a terrible shock when he arrived at Alonzo's body. Despite the sheer power of the Chaos Blast, Alonzo's body was STILL intact! He hadn't received a single bit of damage save for his tentacles, which had all been torn off in the blast, and he was still in good condition! Alonzo picked himself up, laughing demonically at the horrified hedgehog.

"I guess the word "invulnerable" is a foreign word to you Shadow the Hedgehog." sneered Alonzo "I cannot be damaged, I cannot be destroyed and your attacks are useless against me. When building this body, I specially built it for the likes of you as well as Sonic and his foolish friends. My defeat and your victory is impossible Shadow whereas my victory and your defeat is imminent. Quit trying to destroy me and just surrender to me already! If you do I MIGHT spare your worthless lives and make you all my pets. You can all live in a dungeon together and I'll be free to abuse and humiliate you all I like while I rule over Mobius with an iron fist and dance on Dr. Eggman's grave!"

"I'd rather get beaten up by that kung-fu princess from Chun-Nan then surrender to you Alonzo!" yelled Shadow, pointing sharply at him "We'll destroy that stupid body of yours, even if we kill ourselves trying."

"Well in that case, there's no point in trying because just merely fighting me is suicide in it's own rights." snorted Alonzo "Well since you're all asking me to sign your death warrants, I'll be happy to sign them without a moment's hesitance!"

Out of his back, appeared four new tentacles. All four of them had blaster cannons on them. One was a cannon that fired stun-discs, one was a disintegrator cannon, one was a fire cannon and one was a cannon that fired electrical bolts. Shadow just gritted his teeth and prepared to do battle. He bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to beat the pudding out of the invulnerable servant bot. Sonic's friends however, ran up to Shadow and all stood behind him in battle ready stances. All ready to get into the action. Shadow was rather surprised at the support he was getting right now.

"We'll all fight together and bring you down Alonzo!" yelled Knuckles, baring his fists.

"We've taken down Eggman robots that were more threatening then you Alonzo!" yelled Tails "We'll take you down as well!"

"We're the heroes, we always come out on top in the end!" yelled Amy, twirling her Piko-Piko hammer around menacingly.

Alonzo just snorted with laughter at his oppressors. He pointed his tentacles at his opponents and deployed an arm blade out of his right arm. On his left arm, he deployed an arm cannon. He was one weapons heavy robot now with four tentacles armed with cannons, a blade and an arm cannon to boot. But that didn't scare anybody, they were willing to risk their lives for Alonzo's defeat, no matter the cost. But before anyone could throw a single punch, a bright golden glow appeared from over the horizon and rocketed towards them. The glow caught everybody's attention and they turned to see the bright golden glow. Alonzo grumbled at the blinding light that was coming towards them.

"What now?" he grumbled "More fools for me to use as target practice?"

"No Alonzo, I think your demise is here." said Geoffrey with a sly grin on his handsome face.

The glow arrived on the scene at last and there everybody could see who was causing the golden glow. It was none other then Super Sonic, Sonic's super form and he was here to destroy Alonzo and save everybody at long last. Alonzo's tentacles drooped down in

despair and his only remaining optic widened in horror. Everybody else immediately began cheering at the sight of Super Sonic save for Shade and Ruben as they hadn't seen Sonic in super form yet.

"Sonic! You've powered yourself up with the Chaos Emeralds!" cried Tails "Now Alonzo's doomed to defeat!"

"You got that right Tails." said Super Sonic "Super Sonic is here to make scrap metal out of Alonzo!"

"Um Tails, what's happened to Sonic?" asked Ruben "He looks different and he seems to be super powerful now."

"The seven Chaos Emeralds give the user the ability to use their power for good or evil." explained Tails "Sonic is able to go super with them and he's way past awesome in that form."

"Well let's hope none of our deadliest foes can super power like Sonic can or we will have our hands full." muttered Ruben "Still, nice that our greatest hero Sonic has such an ability."

As for Alonzo, he was shaking like mad at the mere sight of Super Sonic. He had seen him before when he made short work of Egg-Squid after being de-roboticized and he had hoped never to see him in that form again.

"No! No! Not a super form!" whimpered Alonzo "Anything but that Sonic the Hedgehog! Anything but the super form!"

"Sorry Alonzo but the super form is here to play." sneered Sonic "I can't beat you on my own, my friends and Shadow can't beat you so I need to go super to destroy you so you can just sit tight and prepare for destruction."

As for Shadow, Sonic's super form seemed to be provoking a train of thoughts in his head. It's as if the very sight seemed familiar to him. He blanked out again and began hearing that mysterious voice in his head. But this time, it wasn't a strange blackout for him, it was a memory from his creation.

" *Your creation is almost complete Shadow the Hedgehog.* boomed the voice in his head as the memory played in his head like a movie

I just need to equip you with the ability to use Chaos Powers."

And with that, his creator showed the half awake Shadow the Hedgehog a bright red Chaos Emerald.

" *The Chaos Emeralds have many great powers." explained the figure "I'm going to use this emerald to give you the ability to use Chaos Powers such as the mighty Chaos Blast. These powers will be enhanced to greater levels when you actually hold one. There are many emeralds and if you can get enough of them, you'll be able to turn super like many other beings are capable of doing…"*

The memory ended right there and Shadow entered another train of thoughts.

"That's how I'm familiar with the mere mention of Chaos Emeralds." he said to himself "One was present during my creation and my creator used it to give me these powers I have! Does this mean…I'll be able to turn super like Sonic…can?"

"What was that Shadow?" asked Amy curiously.

"I've remembered something from my past." explained Shadow "My creator used a Chaos Emerald to equip me with the Chaos Powers I have. He says if I get enough I can go super. Maybe I can use those seven Chaos Emeralds Sonic has and turn super myself."

"Super Shadow eh?" mused Geoffrey "Can't wait to see THAT in action. He'll be Super Sonic plus ten in power!"

Shadow ignored Geoffrey's remark and he charged up to Super Sonic. The super-powered hedgehog was about to go to town on Alonzo but Shadow stopped him before he could land a blow on him. Super Sonic hesitated and remained still.

"Shadow, what are you doing?" asked Super Sonic "I'm the only one capable of stopping Alonzo now I have the power of the Chaos Emeralds flowing through me!"

"I know." said Shadow "I've just remembered something from my creation. According to the memory I've just had, I can go super with the Chaos Emeralds just like you can!"

"Ya…you can?" said Super Sonic in surprise "Are…are you sure about that?"

"I'm more then sure faker!" snapped Shadow "Give me the Chaos Emeralds and let me show you that I'm correct!"

"But Shadow, I'm just about to destroy Alonzo, I think you turning super's just pointless right now." said Super Sonic.

"I'm not just going to destroy Alonzo." said Shadow "I'm going to destroy Robotropolis too and with super powers, I'll lay siege to Eggman's accursed city! That'll be the perfect revenge against that liar who dared to trick me into thinking I was his creation!"

"Well, I didn't think you held a grudge on Eggman THAT badly." said Super Sonic "OK Shadow, let's see if you really can turn super like I have."

Super Sonic held his arms out and the seven Chaos Emeralds appeared out from behind him. Alonzo instantly tried to grab them but Super Sonic blew him away with an energy wave that expanded out from his body. Shadow stared at the seven beautiful gems as they hovered slowly towards him. He definitely recognized their appearance, the red one in particular looked familiar to him. That meant his vision earlier wasn't his mind playing tricks on him, he had definitely seen the Chaos Emeralds before and one was definitely present at the time of his creation. But would he be able to use them the way his creator had intended? There was only one way to find out. He reached out to touch the seven Chaos Emeralds but before he could lay a finger on them, the Chaos Emeralds began to slowly circle around Shadow in unison. Shadow stood where he was, the Chaos Emeralds circling around him slow at first but then beginning to pick up speed. Shadow closed his eyes and tensed up his body as the seven Chaos Emeralds began to pick up speed and spin quickly around him. Everybody watching shielded their eyes and feared what was going to happen as the Chaos Emeralds engulfed Shadow in a bright light. Would something go horribly wrong and he would actually get killed by the emeralds or would he turn into an evil super form or something along those lines? Luckily, neither seemed to happen as Shadow began to raise off the ground, his body glowing intensely as the emeralds vanished from sight. The

light died down, revealing Super Shadow in all his glory. His fur had become a brilliant lemon-yellow kind of colour but his stripes and eyes were still red. His spines didn't change their position unlike Super Sonic. Super Sonic stared in amazement at Super Shadow. He was amazed that Shadow's transformation had actually worked and he was now super-powered like he was. Super Shadow looked at himself in amazement. He too was amazed his transformation had worked. He looked himself over and was pleased that his creator's intentions had paid off here.

"It…it worked!" cried Super Shadow "I'm now Super Shadow! Now I can finish off that annoying servant bot Alonzo and destroy Eggman's city along with Eggman himself!"

"I'm amazed that actually worked." said Super Sonic, staring at Super Shadow in amazement "I wasn't expecting it to work for some reason. Oh well, now you're super, you can join me in kicking Alonzo's sorry butt."

"With pleasure faker." said Super Shadow with a smirk on his face.

"No! No!" shrieked Alonzo "Don't do it! Please! I beg of you Mobians! Have mercy on me!"

"Now why should we have mercy on you when you don't have mercy on us?" snapped Super Sonic "It doesn't work like that Alonzo! You're going down, Eggman's going down and that's all there is to it! Ready Super Shadow?"

"Ready when you are." said Super Shadow cockily.

The two golden hedgehogs curled up into golden spiky balls and they began to spin around in mid-air. Alonzo quickly sheathed his tentacles and shielded his face with his arms. Super Sonic and Super Shadow both spin-dashed towards Alonzo…and they both ricocheted straight off of him and shot straight up into the air! Super Sonic and Super Shadow stopped dead in their tracks and looked at Alonzo in wonder. Sonic's friends did a chorus of horrified gasps of disbelief at what had just happened. Alonzo's end was nigh and yet he was STILL alive! What was going on now? That's when they both notices something strange about Alonzo. He was covered in a

translucent green force-field that shielded him from any possible attack. Alonzo broke down in hysterical evil laughter at the two super hedgehogs.

"You super powered fools! Ha, ha, ha, ha! You super powered fools! Wah ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" he crowed at the horrified super hedgehogs "I KNEW you'd rely on those puny Chaos Emeralds to vanquish me so I equipped myself with a Chaos Barrier to prevent you from hurting me Super Sonic!"

"A Chaos Barrier? How on Mobius can you possibly know how to use a Chaos Barrier?" asked Super Sonic hastily "You don't have a Chaos Emerald with you!"

"I know but I have an alternative instead." said Alonzo with a sly grin on his face "After Dr. Eggman stole the Master Emerald and the Chaos Emeralds with Robotropolis***, I chipped off a piece of the Master Emerald and experimented with the fragment shortly before Eggman unleashed his fleet****. Then after returning back to Robotropolis, I equipped my new body with the fragment so now I have all the powers of a Chaos Emerald. I chose not to use them yet because I was saving the fragment for your super form Sonic. And now you're super powered, I need to use the emerald's powers."

That very statement made Knuckles livid with rage. He was heavily tempted to pile-dive Alonzo into a pulp now.

"You chipped off a piece of the Master Emerald so you can use it's power for your own needs?" he bellowed "I will rip you apart for that you demon of science!"

He tried to charge over to Alonzo but Shade grabbed him and held him back.

"Knuckles no! That's suicide!" she yelled at him.

Knuckles ignored Shade and tried to run over to Alonzo and destroy him. As for Super Sonic and Super Shadow, they clenched their fists and prepared to attack Alonzo once again.

"OK Alonzo, building a body that can match us all blow for blow is

bad enough but using the Master Emerald's power against us is downright diabolical! I am so gonna stomp all over you for that!" yelled Super Sonic angrily.

"The only thing you'll be stomping on is this barrier hedge-swine!" sneered Alonzo, taking flight and joining the super hedgehogs in the sky "This barrier will protect me from anything you throw at me and the experiments and upgrades I've done to it will make this barrier stay up until I shut it down so you'll never penetrate me!"

"Prepare to be proven wrong!" yelled Super Shadow, charging over to Alonzo at top speed.

Alonzo merely sneered at Super Shadow and he held out his arms.

"Chaos…CONTROL!" he yelled at the top of his voice.

Super Shadow suddenly ground to a halt before he could even hit Alonzo. Time froze around him and he stopped right in front of Alonzo. Super Shadow was completely frozen in time in front of the weaponized butler bot. Alonzo cackled at Super Shadow and he dropkicked the frozen super hedgehog straight down into the ground. The Chaos Control wore off and Super Shadow crashed into the ground. Due to being super powered, the crash looked more lethal then it actually was as the super waves made a small crater around him. Super Sonic couldn't believe his eyes.

"No way! You can use Chaos Control?" blurted Super Sonic.

"Precisely." sneered Alonzo "I have a Master Emerald fragment in me and the Master Emerald is merely a super-sized Chaos Emerald so I have all the powers of a Chaos Emerald. They may not be as powerful as yours as I have a tiny emerald fragment and you have seven Chaos Emeralds but no matter, my Chaos Barrier will keep you from touching me."

"Oh yeah?" growled Super Sonic "Well I'm gonna prove you wrong Alonzo!"

Super Sonic spin-dashed at Alonzo but Alonzo teleported out of his way with a Chaos Control. Super Sonic stopped hastily just as

Alonzo reappeared behind him and dropkicked him in the back. Super Sonic grunted in pain and Alonzo switched off the Chaos Barrier for a moment so he could fire his four cannoned tentacles at him. His tentacles fired a mix of fire, electrical bolts, stun discs and disintegration beams at Super Sonic. Super Sonic took all the blasts as if they were nothing and he spin-dashed Alonzo viciously in the gut before he could switch the Chaos Barrier back on. Alonzo hurtled backwards and he quickly switched the Chaos Barrier back on. It wouldn't be a rise idea to let the barrier down, even for a minute as Super Sonic was so fast so he decided to keep it up from now on. Super Sonic sneered at Alonzo.

"Nice try Alonzee but I'm invulnerable in this form." jeered Super Sonic "Your weapons are useless to you now."

"I may not be able to use my weapons on you Sonic but I've still got my Chaos Powers." noted Alonzo "If I can't blast you to pieces then I'll have to use my Chaos Powers on you instead. I'll vanquish you yet hedgehog!"

"Whatever." sighed Super Sonic.

Before anyone could attack though, Super Shadow shot up from the ground and spin-dashed Alonzo straight from underneath. Alonzo ended up hurling through air and spinning around in his Chaos Barrier like a person in an inflatable bubble. He eventually came to a halt and regained his balance but everything seemed to spin around him even though he was standing still. Alonzo shook it off and regained his senses, only to get double-teamed by super charges from Super Sonic and Super Shadow. Alonzo hurtled backwards as if he'd just been hit by a jumbo jet and he just managed to keep himself from falling down to the ground. Super Sonic and Super Shadow spin-dashed towards Alonzo but Alonzo charged towards them and his Chaos Barrier caused them both to ricochet off of him as he ploughed through them both. Super Sonic and Super Shadow stopped themselves from hurling into the ground and they charged back up to Alonzo. Alonzo held out his arms and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

But instead of time slowing down and freezing them in mid-air or

teleporting him, a portal opened up in front of Alonzo and Super Sonic and Super Shadow accidentally charged straight through it before they could realize what was going on. The two rocketed through the portal and the portal closed up after them, earning a chorus of horrified gasps from Sonic's friends down below.

"That creep just warped them away!" bellowed Knuckles, still trying to break out of Shade's grasp "Why I oughta!"

"Relax Knuckles, the two super hedgehogs will just Chaos Control themselves back here." noted Shade "Alonzo hasn't won this battle yet."

"I know." said Knuckles "But if Alonzo keeps doing that, then the two won't get to land a blow on him and if he keeps it up for a long enough time, their super powers will run out!"

"Come again?" asked Amy.

"A super form's power is limited time wise." explained Knuckles "Sonic and Shadow can't remain super forever and if Alonzo just keeps Chaos Controlling them away from the battlefield, thus causing them to Chaos Control back and waste their time, their power will run out and Alonzo will kill them both!"

"I bet that's what Alonzo's intending to do." muttered Tails "After all, he claims to have experiment on the Master Emerald fragment he chipped off so he obviously knows the pros and cons of Chaos Energy."

"Well blue dude had better make sure he doesn't run out of time or Alonzo will never be defeated." murmured Mandy grimly, glaring at Alonzo who was waiting for the super hedgehogs to reappear.

"I have faith in Sonic and Shadow." said Wilson "I know they can do this eventually. Now they know what Alonzo's planning, they'll be more weary of it this time."

Unfortunately, that didn't seem to be the case. Super Sonic and Super Shadow both warped themselves back onto the battlefield and they spin-dashed towards Alonzo. Alonzo held out his arms and

yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" once again and a portal opened up straight in front of him.

Super Sonic and Super Shadow both spin-dashed through the portal and disappeared from the battle-field. The portal took them to Holoska, one of the coldest places on Mobius and the only place on Mobius Eggman couldn't occupy as it was too cold for any robots to function properly. They would freeze in a matter of minutes here. Super Sonic and Super Shadow both spin-dashed into a huge pile of snow and sent the snow hurtling everywhere. They both picked themselves up and realized what had happened. They had been warped away once again. They had been warped from the Northern Border of Megapolis to Holoska. Alonzo had tricked them again.

"Damn it!" cursed Super Shadow, kicking some snow furiously "He got us again!"

"I have a sneaky feeling that Alonzo intends to keep doing this until our super forms run out." Super Sonic deduced "Our super forms can't last forever."

"Well in that case, we need to change our tactics." Super Shadow decided "We can't keep charging at Alonzo in hope of bursting his Chaos Barrier. He'll just keep warping us away."

"I have an idea." said Super Sonic.

He held his arms out and yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" and he and Super Shadow vanished into thin air.

Back at Robotropolis, Alonzo was waiting for the two super hedgehogs to return so he could warp them away again. But the two hedgehogs didn't reappear in front of him as he'd expected them to. Instead, they reappeared behind Alonzo and they both pile-dived him in the back. Alonzo hurtled down into the ground and made a crater the size of a living room due to his Chaos Barrier making the crash even deadlier. While Alonzo was down, Super Shadow began to furiously throw a bunch of super powered Chaos Spears at Alonzo. The spears all ricocheted off of his Chaos Barrier but the attacks were very powerful and every Chaos Spear thrown made a very loud noise when it hit the Chaos Barrier, making Alonzo wince

at the noise and cover his audio-receptors. Since he was too caught up in blocking out the noise, he couldn't prepare himself for another attack. Super Sonic and Super Shadow both rocketed down to the ground and they charged straight into Alonzo's Chaos Barrier. The two super hedgehogs' attack was so powerful they ended up pushing Alonzo straight down into the ground like a drill drilling through the earth. The three fighters ended up going down deep into the underground until Super Sonic and Super Shadow decided to stop. They didn't want to push Alonzo straight into the planet's core as Chaos Energy could possibly have a negative effect on it and the result would be apocalyptic. They had pushed Alonzo down about Alonzo growled furiously at them and he tried to charged at them but the two hedgehogs warped out of his way, leaving Alonzo to charge straight up the tunnel Super Sonic and Super Shadow had made after pushing him down. Alonzo rocketed out of the tunnel and into the daylight outside. He flew back up into the air, only to get dropkicked back down into the hole by Super Sonic and Super Shadow. They had reappeared above the hole in the ground they had made and kicked Alonzo back down it. Alonzo went straight down the hole and came to a halt at the bottom. Alonzo could see that the super hedgehogs had a plan and he wouldn't be getting out of the hole any time soon so he decided to Chaos Control his way out of the hole instead of charge out of it. Super Sonic and Super Shadow both waited for Alonzo to come back down the hole so they could kick him back down it. But Alonzo appeared behind them, switched off his Chaos Barrier and slammed them both on their heads with his fists. Super Sonic and Super Shadow hurtled down a few feet before regaining balance and charging back up to Alonzo. Alonzo switched his Chaos Barrier back on and the super hedgehogs charged into the shield. Alonzo was sent hurling backwards but he regained his balance and charged back at the super hedgehogs. He bowled them both over as if he was a bowling ball and they were the skittles. Super Sonic and Super Shadow regained their senses and they both spin-dashed at Alonzo's Chaos Barrier. They didn't penetrate the shield again but they left Alonzo slightly stunned from the noise they made after banging against it. Shadow threw a bunch of Chaos Spears at Alonzo but they all pinged off the barrier, albeit a little callously and Alonzo was knocked backwards a few feet. Alonzo however, decided to try another tactic. He thrust his arms out and yelled at the top of his

voice.

"Chaos… **BLAST!** "

And much like what Shadow the Hedgehog could do, he unleashed a giant wave of raw Chaos Energy from his body and it spread out all around him. Super Sonic and Super Shadow were both stricken by the blast but they weren't hurt as they were invulnerable in their super forms. They were thrown backwards a good distance but they stopped themselves and regained their balance. They both glared angrily at Alonzo, who just glared at them back with a smirk on his face.

"Did you really think is wasn't going to be able to use a Chaos Blast?" smirked Alonzo "I can use all the Chaos Powers there is because of this Master Emerald fragment so whatever you can do, I can do as well."

"Not necessarily Alonzo." said Super Sonic "I can't use powers Shadow can use and he can't use powers I can use so there's some kind of Chaos Power you won't be able to use Alonzo."

"Is that so?" purred Alonzo "No matter, I have the power I need to vanquish you both."

Super Sonic and Super Shadow had had enough of Alonzo's boasting so they charged towards him at a blinding speed, ready to knock him out of the sky once again…

Meanwhile, Dr. Eggman had been working like crazy on his king-sized roboticizer in the roboticizer chamber which was located in the centre of his headquarters. The roboticizer pod was egg-shaped (no surprise there) and it was taller then even Silver Sonic. The roboticizer worked just like any other roboticizer but it was more advanced technology wise and it could fit about ten Mobians in there at once, maybe more depending on the sizes of the captives. The roboticizer could also roboticize people much faster then the average roboticizer pod and as Eggman had explained earlier, it could be modified to spread it's waves out and cover a large

distance. Eggman was altering the pod so it's waves would sweep all over Mobius and turn everybody into a mindless Robian, bent on serving him faithfully and with no freewill whatsoever. All of Mobius would be on his side and they would have to do as he said for they had no choice. Their freewill diminished when they were roboticized so no one would be able to resist his control. Eggman could easily have modified the pod and roboticized all of Mobius already but he had been so caught up in his newer projects and other inventions that he forgot all about it but now he'd remembered it, he was going to use it without a moment's hesitation. None of his previous plans had worked against that meddlesome hedgehog so this was his best option. Not to mention it was the only way he could defeat Alonzo as when you roboticize something that's already a robot, it explodes so Alonzo would be toast out there. Dr. Eggman began fiddling around with the pod's complex circuitry and adjusted the power to the roboticizer pod.

"OK if I just adjust the power cells running through the centre generator of the roboticizer pod and then re-wire these wires to higher voltage cells then the king-sized roboticizer should be capable of worldwide roboticization." he mused to himself as he re-wired some wires to some ports that had higher voltage then the other ports.

The process had been exhausting and Eggman had been at it since he'd escaped from his quarters which Alonzo had locked him in. He had no idea what was going on outside of Robotropolis but he didn't care. The fight between Sonic, Shadow, the Royal Fighters and Alonzo wouldn't change anything. He was going to roboticize all of Mobius and nothing could stop him now for no one knew what he was even up to. As Eggman worked, his female sidekick Katherine stood there sinisterly like a gargoyle and just watched him work. She then suddenly received a message from Mecha Rouge, who was of course, a roboticized Rouge the Bat, and she bleeped to catch Dr. Eggman's attention. Eggman lifted up his projective visor and shut off his welding tool.

"Yes my dear Katherine?" asked Dr. Eggman "What is it?"

Katherine, since she didn't have her own voice, played the message Mecha Rouge had just sent to her.

"Hey-Kath-er-ine-honey. Play-this-mess-age-for-Dr.-Egg-Man." the message played "All-the-robots-of-Robo-trop-o-lis-have-taken-refu gee-in-your-head-qaurters-as-ins-truc-ted."

The audio clip stopped playing and Katherine's sinister silence returned. Dr. Eggman beamed happily and continued to work.

"Thank you Katherine." said Dr. Eggman "I would kick myself if I activated this roboticizer and ended up destroying Robotropolis' entire population at the same time! Now everybody's in my headquarters, they're safe from the roboticizer and they will not be effected by it once I activate it."

Katherine nodded understandingly. Dr. Eggman lowered his visor and began to do some more welding. He was almost finished at last and once he finished welding, he could fire the roboticizer and Mobius would be his at long last. His victory may have been delayed by his own actions but it would be a victory worth waiting for once he finally got it.

"Katherine, be a good girl and look out of the window will you?" asked Dr. Eggman "I want to know what's going on out there. See if Alonzo's ground Sonic and friends into the dirt yet."

Katherine nodded understandingly. Dr. Eggman lowered his visor and began to do some more welding. He was almost finished at last and once he finished welding, he could fire the roboticizer and Mobius would be his at long last. His victory may have been delayed by his own actions but it would be a victory worth waiting for once he finally got it.

"Katherine, be a good girl and look out of the window will you?" asked Dr. Eggman "I want to know what's going on out there. See if Alonzo's ground Sonic and friends into the dirt yet."

Katherine obeyed and strode silently over to the small circle window on the other side of the chamber. Katherine peered through the window and saw what was going on. Super Sonic and Super Shadow were having an air-to-air showdown with the newly weaponized Alonzo and all they seemed to be doing were playing dodgem cars with each other as they were just charging into each

other and bumping each other over and over. Katherine's keen vision zoomed in on Super Sonic and Super Shadow and she photographed them. She had a feeling the photo would bear some importance sometime in the future. She strode back over to Dr. Eggman and bleeped at him. Dr. Eggman stopped working again and waited for Katherine to report to him. Katherine bent forwards until her face was almost touching Eggman's and she played the recorded fight to him on her visor. She then showed Eggman the photo of Super Sonic and Super Shadow she'd taken. Eggman stared grimly at the photograph and then he smiled widely to himself.

"So Sonic's gone super has he?" he purred "Alonzo's tougher then I thought. I'm kind of surprised that Shadow can go super too. Oh well, if Sonic's super then that means the Chaos Emeralds are with them so once I roboticize everybody, I can get the Chaos Emeralds too! I'll use their power for my fleet, which needs a new battleship and then I can return to Earth and lay siege to the planet! That'll show G.U.N. how much of a great scientist I am and how kicking me out was such a big mistake!"

He chortled to himself and continued applying the finishing touches to his king-sized roboticizer. Sonic and this so-called G.U.N. would pay dearly for all the indignity he had ever been caused in his life…

Outside, the fight between Alonzo, Super Sonic and Super Shadow was getting more and more intense by the second. Super Sonic and Super Shadow not only had Alonzo to worry about, they had time to worry about as their super forms wouldn't last forever and a considerable amount of time had already passed since the battle had started so they could run out any time soon. They had tried everything but Alonzo's Chaos Barrier was just impervious to any attack they threw at him. All they could do really as knock him out of the sky and slam him into the ground but all that did was just slow Alonzo down for a while more then anything. Right now, they were just charging at each other over and over and bashing each other away as if they were flying dodgem cars. Sonic's friends all watched the fight intensely on the ground, watching the fights zoom back and forth at each other. They were growing increasingly nervous as the

fight went on and on. They had no idea who was going to win as the fight was a close call so far.

"Amy, who's winning?" asked Cream nervously, her pet Chao Cheese fluttering restlessly beside her.

"I can't tell." said Amy "It looks like they're evenly sided from where we are."

"It is even sided Amy." said Ruben grimly "Alonzo can't really attack the super hedgehogs as he has that force field around him and Sonic and Shadow can't really hurt Alonzo because of that force-field. All they can do is play dodgems with each other up there."

"There must be some way to beat that darn Alonzo even tho' he has that dun Chaos Barrier." said Bunnie worriedly "Knuckles, yer a Chaos expert, how do you stop a Chaos Barrier?" she asked desperately.

"A Chaos Barrier can't be stopped." muttered Knuckles "But like a super form, it doesn't last forever. Chaos Barriers only last a minute when used but Alonzo's done something to the Master Emerald fragment he has and has made it so his Chaos Barrier will last as long as he likes."

"How he accomplished that, I'll never know." said Tails "Even I wouldn't be able to do something like that and I'm a technical genius myself."

"So ya'll are tellin' me that Chaos Barrier's can't be stopped sugah?" shrieked Bunnie "Oh mah stars, the super hogs have no chance against Alonzo now!"

"I'm afraid so." muttered Knuckles "If only Eggman didn't use Robotropolis to steal the Master Emerald then none of this would have happened!"

"I think the best option would be to trick Alonzo into turning the barrier off and give Sonic and Shadow a chance to destroy him." suggested Cosmo "But how can we trick him into doing so?"

"Hopefully Sonic and Shadow will come up with something." said

Amy supportively "But they'll need to do it soon or their super forms will run out and they'll be unable to defeat Alonzo."

Back up in the sky, Super Sonic ricocheted off of Alonzo's barrier once again and hurtled to the side. Super Shadow dropkicked Alonzo and sent him hurling into the ground once again but Alonzo just recovered and rocketed back up into the sky. He bowled Super Shadow over and then switched his barrier off so he could dropkick Super Shadow down into the ground. He switched the barrier back on just as Super Sonic zoomed towards him and walloped him. Alonzo hurtled through the air like a tossed basketball and he took a moment to regain his senses. Just as he was doing that, Super Shadow rocketed up underneath him and sent him flying straight up like a missile. Alonzo zoomed straight back down and hit Super Shadow like a coconut falling from a palm tree. Super Shadow spun dizzily through the air just as Super Sonic spin-dashed Alonzo and struck him. Super Shadow recovered from the attack and threw twenty Chaos Spears at Alonzo. The spears hit Alonzo all at once and Alonzo was left stunned and bedraggled after the sheer noise they made after striking his barrier. Before Alonzo could regain his senses though, Super Sonic and Super Shadow both spin-dashed him and sent him hurling into the horizon. Alonzo crashed into something beyond the horizon and it would take him a while to catch up again. While Alonzo was out of the action for the moment, Super Sonic and Super Shadow quickly talked tactics.

"We can't penetrate that stupid barrier of his." moaned Super Sonic "And I can feel my super powers starting to falter. I think my super form's running out. We need a plan and we need it fast."

"I think I have an idea." said Super Shadow "Maybe we can use a Chaos Control on the emerald fragment in Alonzo and warp it out of his circuits. That way, he'll be unable to use a Chaos Barrier or any other Chaos Power."

"I'm not sure if it'll work Shadow." said Super Sonic "But it's worth a shot."

Just as they finished talking, Alonzo blasted out of the horizon and roared towards the two super hedgehogs at a speed that could rival even Sonic when he wasn't super. Super Sonic and Super Shadow

braced themselves and waited for Alonzo hit them. Alonzo almost got them but the two hedgehogs leaped out of his way and Super Shadow tried out his idea.

"Chaos…CONTROL!" he yelled as Alonzo zoomed underneath him.

Nothing seemed to happen at first but shortly after Super Shadow had yelled Chaos Control, Alonzo's Chaos Barrier suddenly switched off and the Master Emerald fragment he had stolen suddenly appeared in Super Shadow's hands. Super Shadow promptly crushed the fragment in his hands so Alonzo wouldn't be able to get it back. As for Alonzo, he had suddenly realized what was going on and he instantly freaked. His emerald fragment had disappeared and he couldn't use his Chaos Barrier anymore! He was dead metal now!

"No! No! NO!" he squealed "This cannot be! I've lost my fragment somehow! I can't use my Chaos Powers anymore!"

"That's right Alonzo." sneered Super Shadow "I warped the emerald fragment out of your systems with a Chaos Control and I've just destroyed it! You're powerless against us now!"

"Well I can't believe it actually worked." said Super Sonic "Now Alonzo's powered down, we can finally destroy that demon robot!"

Alonzo began to panic madly as if he was about to suddenly self-destruct in a certain time-limit. If he could sweat, he'd be sweating like crazy now.

"No! NO! My reign of terror can't end now! Not like this!" whimpered Alonzo "Please don't destroy me super hedgehogs!"

Super Sonic and Super Shadow weren't having any of it. They super charged towards Alonzo but Alonzo ducked, causing them to miss and he quickly flew down to the ground in hope of finding somewhere to hide until they powered down. But Super Sonic and Super Shadow were much too fast for Alonzo and they caught up with him. They both spin-dashed Alonzo into the ground. Alonzo's invulnerable body took the crash easily but it wouldn't take Super Sonic and Super Shadow's attacks at all, they were too powerful.

Super Sonic and Super Shadow charged towards Alonzo, ready to finish him off at long last. Sonic's friends watched on eagerly, waiting for Alonzo's destruction to happen. Then terrible luck suddenly struck them. Just as Super Sonic and Super Shadow were about to destroy Alonzo once and for all, their super forms suddenly wore out and they powered down! Sonic's quills returned to their normal style, his fur turned back from gold to blue and his eyes turned back to green. Shadow's fur changed from lemon-yellow back to black so he was now black and red once again. Sonic and Shadow both crashed down on to the ground as they had powered down in mid-charge and they ended up getting their faces buried in a mound of dirt. The Chaos Emeralds appeared and lay beside Sonic and Shadow. Sonic's friends stared in horror at that unlucky and unbelievable turn of events that had just unfolded before their very eyes. Just as Alonzo's demise was imminent, the hedgehogs had run out of super power and had just powered down! Alonzo had won and they had lost! Now there was no hope left for the Mobians! Alonzo picked himself up and stared happily at the powered down hedgehogs. He erupted into a maniacal chorus of hysterical evil laughter.

"You're too late! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" he cackled uncontrollably "YOU'RE TOO LATE! Bwah ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Your super forms have run out and you're powerless to stop me! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Sonic lifted his face out of the dirt and pounded the ground furiously.

"Damn it! No!" he wailed "We were so close and now we've just run out of juice! We'll never stop Alonzo now!"

"How right you are hedgehog!" crowed Alonzo "Now I'm going to kill you both before anything else can happen! Prepare for a very graphic demise you two!"

He deployed his four tentacles and pointed the cannons at the end of them at Sonic and Shadow. Sonic and Shadow lay there helplessly as Alonzo prepared to vaporize them with a mixture of fire, electrical bolts, stun-discs and disintegration beams. Sonic's friends could do nothing but watch as Alonzo was about to kill the two supersonic hedgehogs in one fell swoop. But then more trouble began. Just as Alonzo was about to kill Sonic and Shadow, Dr.

Eggman had finished modifying his king-sized roboticizer at long last and he activated it!

"Let my worldwide roboticization process…COMMENCE!" he bellowed as he pressed the start button.

The king-sized roboticizer lit up and whirred loud enough to be heard all over Robotropolis. The roboticizer pod beamed with a blinding light and a huge wave swept out from the pod and expanded through the walls of the chamber and outside of the headquarters. The wave swept over Robotropolis but seeing as there were no robots about, they weren't effected by the wave and there was no one else in the city so the wave didn't do anything. It did however catch the attention of the Mobians and Alonzo. Alonzo looked up from his victims and stared at the oncoming roboticizer wave. The Mobians grew increasingly nervous at the oncoming wave.

"What's that Miss Rose?" squeaked Cream.

"I dunno." said Amy "But it looks dangerous and it looks like it's coming for us! We've gotta get out of the way now! Who knows what it can do!"

Tails and Bunnie immediately took to the skies by flying away. Ruben shot himself into the air with his water powers just as the roboticizer wave came towards them. Everybody else tried running for their lives but the wave caught up to them and swept straight through them. Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey all got hit by the wave and they fell onto their knees. Their skin began to turn into metal, their blood transformed into oil and their eyes began to morph into optics before your very eyes. Alonzo's optics widened in horror for he knew what the wave was.

"Oh no…it's a roboticizer wave!" he screamed "I've got to get out of the way before…"

He began to back away but he was too late. The wave swept straight through Alonzo and due to the fact he was already a robot, he exploded into smithereens. And that was the end of Eggman's

snivelling servant bot. His remains littered the spot he had just exploded on. As for Sonic and Shadow, they hadn't been hit by the wave as they were lying on the ground and the wave was too high above the ground to hit them so they were spared roboticization much like Tails, Bunnie and Ruben. The wave however didn't stop where it was. It swept onwards and it would continue to do so until all of Mobius was roboticized. The roboticizer wave was like a giant circle that expanded out from Robotropolis and it swept over all four corners of the globe and once it had finished it's task, it would vanish into thin air. The wave continued on until it disappeared into the horizon where it would roboticize everything it came across. Sonic picked himself up and dusted himself off. He looked at the exploded remains of Alonzo. He was pleased to see Alonzo was finally dead but he began to wonder how it happened.

"Hey Shadow, Alonzo just exploded." said Sonic.

"Did he?" asked Shadow, picking himself up from the dirt mound he'd made "Good. But what happened to him?"

"We know." said Tails just as he, Bunnie and Ruben lowered down to the ground "Some kind of wave came out of nowhere and when it hit Alonzo, he exploded."

"Some kind of wave?" mused Sonic "I wonder what kind of wave that was."

He soon found the answer when he heard a vicious robotical sound coming from nowhere. Sonic, Shadow, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben all stared in horror at the sight that befall their eyes. Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey were no long flesh and bone! They were robots! They had been roboticized and were now Robians! They advanced menacingly on the surviving Mobians with their metal claws bared and their metal teeth glistening like knives in a drawer.

"I th-th-th-think i-i-it was a r-r-roboticizer wave!" stammered Tails "Our f-f-friends got hit b-b-by the w-w-wave too and now t-t-they're suddenly r-r-robots!"

"Oh great! Just when things are looking up, things go wrong again!"

moaned Sonic "What has that Eggman done now?"

He backed away hastily as his roboticized friends advanced on him. First a fleet of ships destroys Central City, then Eggman escapes prison, then Alonzo builds a new body strong enough to match him and his friends and now his friends were roboticized! What more could go wrong for poor Sonic now…?

Footnotes:

***See Story 14**

**** See Story 74**

***** See Story 75**

****** See Story 76**

This just isn't Sonic's day is it? Now all of Mobius is roboticized and Sonic has no way of saving everybody...or hasn't he? Join me as the* Planet of Steel saga *begins! This is one saga you will be MAD to miss! Reviews are welcome.

P.S. I read your review PreyMeetsPred and I'll try my hardest to use the phrase "But before" a little less in the future. Glad you like the story though! Nice to hear you're enjoying it like everyone else is! :)

Planet of Steel Part 1

Story 81: Planet of Steel Part 1: Robot Utopia

"Yikes!" yelped Sonic the Hedgehog as Mecha Knuckles tried to fist him into the ground with his metal spiked fists "Watch it Knuckles, you could hurt somebody with a fist like that!"

The roboticized echidna just snarled at Sonic and tried to deck him with another punch. Sonic's friends sans Tails the Fox, Bunnie Rabbot, Ruben the Water Panther and his friendly rival Shadow the Hedgehog had been roboticized by Dr. Eggman and his newly modified roboticizer pod in the roboticizer chamber in the centre of his headquarters. The process had destroyed Eggman's treacherous servant bot Alonzo for good and it had turned Knuckles the Echidna, Shade the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse and Geoffrey St. John into mindless, loyal, robotical servants that obeyed only one person, Dr. Eggman. But that wasn't the worst part, the worst part is the roboticizer wave had swept over the entire planet and every single Mobian on Mobius had been turned into a mindless mechanical machine. Anything that was already a robot however was destroyed by the wave, such as Eggman's portable roboticizer that Tails had stolen a long while back*. Luckily for Mobius, there weren't many robots around so there weren't many things exploding at least. But the roboticizer had done the damage and now Eggman had nearly the entire population of Mobius under his iron-fisted rule. He wasn't too pleased that Sonic, Tails, Bunnie, Ruben and Shadow had dodged the wave and avoided being roboticized so he ordered Sonic's roboticized friends, the closest Robians currently to them, to catch them and bring them to the roboticizer chamber so they could be roboticized and they could join his endless army of Robians. Mecha Knuckles swiped his spiked fists at Sonic but Sonic back flipped away from him, causing Mecha Knuckles to miss. However, Mecha Knuckles had an attack the real Knuckles could never EVER do. He aimed his fist at Sonic and extended it. The fist extended on a long wire out of it's wrist socket and it walloped Sonic directly in the face. Sonic landed on his back, clutching his face in pain.

"Ouch! Oh, Good f…." his voice trailed off as he covered his mouth to prevent Tails from hearing him swear at that punch "…that hurt! I can easily say Mecha Knuckles is a much better puncher then normal Knuckles!"

Mecha Knuckles advanced on Sonic menacingly with his spiked fists bared and ready to pound Sonic into the dirt. His red optics burned like the pits of hell as he glared Sonic down. Sonic just picked himself up and leapfrogged over Mecha Knuckles' head.

"I really don't wanna have to do this Knuckie, but I have to now you're a Robian." said Sonic as he landed behind Mecha Knuckles and tripped him up.

Mecha Knuckles landed sharply on his back and Sonic was about to stomp on him and knocked him out but Mecha Amy ran in and walloped him with her stainless steel Piko-Piko Hammer (yes, even as a robot she can pull hammers from airspace! Don't ask me how!). Sonic hurtled through the air like a golf ball and he landed sharply on his back. So sharply he almost broke it. He lay there on the ground, trying to get the bones in his body to knit so he could continue fighting.

"And I thought Amy's hammer was bad enough as it was already!" grumbled Sonic "Mecha Amy with a steel hammer is even worse!"

Meanwhile, Shadow bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to do battle with Mecha Wilson and Mecha Mandy. The roboticized dog and mouse prepared to lunge at Shadow and rip him to pieces. Shadow summoned some Chaos Spears to his hands and prepared to throw them.

"You two are gonna regret it when I trash you just like Sonic trashes Eggman's puny robots!" snarled Shadow.

"No shadow-hog!" cried Bunnie, grabbing him by the arm and holding him back "Don't smash them! They're our friends transformed into robots by Eggman's roboticizer! If ya'll destroy em, you'll kill the real them and we'll never be able to save them so please don't destroy em sugah!"

Shadow lowered his arms and Bunnie let go of him.

"I understand." said Shadow softly "Thank you for the warning Bunnie."

His Chaos Spears disappeared into thin air and he raised his fists.

"Since I can't destroy you robo-Mobians, I'll have to go easy on you two!" yelled Shadow "Bring it on robo-Wilson and robo-Mandy!"

Mecha Wilson and Mecha Mandy both pounced on Shadow and they pinned him to the ground like a pair of lionesses pinning their prey down as they tore it apart. Shadow teleported out from underneath them and he reappeared behind them. He kicked Mecha Wilson and Mecha Mandy both in the backsides and sent them hurling into Alonzo's remains. Mecha Wilson picked up one of Alonzo's tentacles and tried to whip Shadow with it but Shadow spin-dashed it in two and whacked Wilson while still spin-dashing. He slowed himself down as he hit Mecha Wilson so he wouldn't accidentally destroy him. Mecha Wilson hurtled through the air like a thrown rock. Shadow dusted his hands off but before he could ready himself, Mecha Mandy tail-whipped him with her steel tail, which had the ability to extend at will so the tail-whip was much harder now her tail was longer. Shadow hurtled into the dirt face-first and ended up with a face full of soil. Shadow picked himself up and charged back at Mecha Mandy. He homing attacked her and knocked her onto her back only to get an uppercut from Mecha Wilson. Mecha Wilson deployed his spinning blade weapon, which still had one blade since Alonzo had broken one of them and was now a brilliant chrome build after the roboticization, and he swiped at Shadow with it. Shadow stepped back and then got an uppercut from behind by Mecha Mandy. Shadow fell onto his knees and groaned exasperatedly as Mecha Wilson and Mecha Mandy advanced on him with their fists raised. Shadow teleported from underneath them yet again and he reappeared away from them. He prepared to charge at them once again. As for Tails, he was having an air-to-air showdown with Mecha Cream, Mecha Cheese and Mecha Cosmo. Mecha Cream could still fly by flapping her ears much like the real Cream only hers were far more powerful then Cream's ears and since she was a robot, she didn't have to worry about tiring out. She could stay airborne as long as she liked. Mecha Cheese was more of a pest

then a real foe as he just zoomed around and fisted Tails whenever he got the opportunity. As for Mecha Cosmo, she had the ability to spin her petal like skirt around like helicopter rotors and due to the fact clothes became metal as well as flesh and bone, Mecha Cosmo's metal skirt were like proper rotor blades and Tails tried to avoid getting too close to the spinning skirt or he would be sliced open. Tails flew over Mecha Cosmo and dropkicked her in the head, causing the roboticized Seedrian to make a sudden nose dive towards the ground.

"Sorry Cosmo!" cried Tails as Mecha Cosmo crashed into the ground.

Suddenly, Mecha Cream roundhouse punched Tails straight in the jaw and sent the fox spiralling out of control. Tails regained control with a desperate spin of his tails and he flew back towards Mecha Cream. Mecha Cheese however, flew in from underneath and rocketed straight up into Tails' chin. Tails stopped where he was and he rubbed himself better just as Mecha Cream swooped towards him. Tails held his hands up and caught Mecha Cream's hands in them. The two fliers clutched hands with one another and they began to push against each other. It was like an air-to-air test of strength of sort. Tails desperately pushed on Mecha Cream but Mecha Cosmo swooped up and rammed him from behind. Tails hurtled straight down into the ground face-first and he groaned in pain. His face and back were hurting a lot from that attack, but his heart was hurting the most as it was the love of his life attacking him and he couldn't bare to fight his girlfriend. Mecha Cosmo charged towards Tails but Tails grabbed her by the arms and held her there. He stared hopelessly into Mecha Cosmo's icy blue optics. Mecha Cosmo just glowered at him, showing no emotion whatsoever.

"Cosmo, I'll get you out of that robot body!" declared Tails "I promise you, you will be freed from that metal cage you're in and we'll be together again! But since I can't help you now, I'm sorry but I'm gonna have to fight you!"

He pushed Mecha Cosmo away roughly and sent her skidding across the ground on her bottom. Mecha Cream suddenly swooped in from behind and grabbed Tails by his arms. He carried Tails into the sky and then threw him straight down into the ground once

again.

As for Bunnie and Ruben, they were tussling with Mecha Shade and Mecha Geoffrey respectively. Ruben refrained from using his water powers as he feared the Robians weren't immune to water like Eggman's proper robot creations were and in order to resist the temptation, he removed his aqua collar and gave it to Bunnie for safe keeping. Bunnie clamped the collar around her neck as she had nowhere to put it right now. It didn't fit her as well as it did Ruben as Ruben's neck was thicker but it was a good enough fit as it was. Now Ruben couldn't use his water powers and accidentally short-circuit the Robians he got in battle with. Ruben and Mecha Shade got into a pretty vicious fist-fight. Ruben, being a novice ninja and kung-fu learner, was able to punch Mecha Shade rapidly all over her body but Mecha Shade's were harder due to her fists being metal so the fight was pretty even sided so far. Mecha Shade however, decided to give up the fist fight and draw out her twin blades, which were already metal so they were unchanged from the roboticizer's effects. She Blade-Rushed Rubens straight in the chest and the water panther found himself lying on the ground clutching it in pain. If Mecha Shade did that again, she would cut him open and the result would be pretty grisly. Ruben back-flipped away from Mecha Shade just as she tried to Blade Rush him again and Ruben dropkicked her in the head.

"I know it's dis-honouree to fight one's friends." Ruben said to himself "But in these cases, it can't be helped. I hope there's a way to reverse what Eggman's done and turn everybody back to normal or I'm gonna have to fight them forever."

Mecha Shade pounced on Ruben and roundhouse kick him in the face while in the jump. Ruben fell down onto his back and grimaced in pain. Mecha Shade tried to slash Ruben open but Ruben kangaroo kicked her away and then proceeded to leap up onto his feet and ninja kick Mecha Shade in the hips. Mecha Shade struck back with a vigorous blow to the gut and sent him hurling back a few feet. Ruben picked himself up and prepared to do battle again.

As for Bunnie, she wasn't wanting to fight Mecha Geoffrey for she was eternally grateful to the skunk for saving her from being completely roboticized** but she had no choice but to fight him as

Mecha Geoffrey began firing at her with his arm-mounted crossbow. Mecha Geoffrey fired actual laser bolts instead of darts like the real Geoffrey did as his crossbow had been roboticized too. Mecha Geoffrey fired furiously at Bunnie but the Rabbot dodged the blasts and fired her own arm cannon at Mecha Geoffrey. The blast sent Mecha Geoffrey hurling backwards head-over-heels a few feet before the skunk came to a halt.

"Oh Geoffrey, ah'm so sorry." said Bunnie sadly, wiping away a brief tear that tried to trickled down her face without her noticing it "Ya'll saved me from roboticization, albeit not all of mah body," she looked at her robotic left arm and legs "But ah couldn't save ya'll from roboticization since Eggman caught us off guard. Well maybe if we can find a way to change ya'll back to normal ah can return a lifelong favour ah owe you Geoffrey St. John!"

Mecha Geoffrey picked himself up and charged at Bunnie Rabbot like a mad bull. The Rabbot was too late to react and Mecha Geoffrey rammed her in the stomach. Bunnie wheezed in pain and fell down on her knees while trying to catch her breath. Mecha Geoffrey took the opportunity to elbow her straight in the neck and knock her flat onto her stomach. He then kick Bunnie as hard as he could and sent Bunnie rolling away from him. Bunnie rolled about thirty feet away from Mecha Geoffrey and she came to a halt on her side, rubbing the back of her neck tenderly with her organic hand. Mecha Geoffrey advanced on Bunnie sinisterly with his arm-mounted crossbow primed and ready. He prepared to shoot Bunnie with it but Bunnie picked herself up and socked Mecha Geoffrey straight in the face with a mighty punch from her robotic arm. Mecha Geoffrey was so stunned by the blow, he didn't know what hit him. He lay there on the ground looking up at the blue cloudy sky above him. Bunnie panted exhaustedly and she stared at Mecha Geoffrey. The roboticized skunk didn't seem to be moving right now. Bunnie had clearly knocked him out. At least she wouldn't have to fight him any longer so Bunnie walked away from Mecha Geoffrey, still feeling sorry for the skunk. Just as she was walking away from Mecha Geoffrey though, Mecha Shade threw Ruben straight into Bunnie and the water-panther knocked her clean off her feet. The two Mobians fell over each other and they lay on the ground, tangled up in one another. Ruben and Bunnie both picked themselves up and

they dusted themselves off.

"Sorry about that Bunnie." said Ruben.

"It's alright Ruben." Bunnie insisted "Those Mechas are good aimers ain't they?"

"They are." muttered Ruben "And they're pretty darn powerful. I can't land a decent blow on them without them striking back at me even harder!"

"I think we should all git outta here." said Bunnie "Before our own friends end up killin' us or we end up accidentally killin' them."

"I can't imagine Sonic and Shadow being too contempt with this idea." said Ruben grimly as he ran off as fast as he could.

He ran past Sonic who was still getting his hide kicked in by Mecha Knuckles. The roboticized echidna was too strong for the super sonic hedgehog. Mecha Knuckles pinned Sonic down to the ground and prepared to use Sonic's head for stress relief but Ruben stopped in his track and ran over to help Sonic. He leaped into the air and roundhouse kicked Mecha Knuckles in the head and knocked him onto. Mecha Knuckles didn't even know what had hit him as he lay there on his side wondering what had happened to him. Sonic picked himself up and he straightened his quills out.

"Thanks for the save Ruben." said Sonic gratefully.

"You're welcome." said Ruben "I hope you don't mind me suggesting so but I think we should run for it. Our roboticized friends are too powerful for us to take out."

Sonic stared at Ruben as if he'd just turned into a turnip right in front of his eyes.

"What? We can't leave our friends behind!" protested Sonic "Who knows what Eggman's gonna do to them?"

"I can't begin to imagine what horrors Eggman's gonna put them through." said Ruben sympathetically "But if we stay here and get our hides caved in, we won't be around to save them so we've gotta

get outta here and change tactics if we're going to save them!"

"As much as I dislike your idea Ruben, it's the best thing to do right now." said Sonic dully "After all, I can't really fight these guys to the best of my ability in fear of destroying them and if we keep this up, they'll destroy us."

"Exactly." said Ruben "That's why we've got to retreat. We can't do anything about the situation right now so we've got to retreat and plan a counter attack for later."

With that said, Sonic and Ruben both ran for it before Mecha Knuckles could get back up and attack them. Sonic then remembered he hadn't gathered up the Chaos Emeralds yet so he zipped back to pick them up and then he ran off again.

"Tails, Bunnie, Shadow! We're leaving now!" Sonic called over to them "Come on!"

Tails didn't hesitate even for a minute. He flew weakly away from Mecha Cosmo and Mecha Cream before they could clobber him again and joined the fleeing hedgehog and water panther. Bunnie was already on the retreat as she was the one who suggested a retreat in the first place so she flew after the fleeing Mobians as fast as she could. Shadow spin-dashed Mecha Wilson and Mecha Mandy away one last time and ran off after Sonic and the others. He wasn't very pleased at the fact he had to retreat but he wouldn't be able to take out the Robians by himself and he couldn't destroy them otherwise he'd kill Sonic's friends so retreat was the best option until they could come up with a plan to counter attack these Robians. The surviving Mobians all fled the scene as fast as they could go and the Mechas prepared to run after them and chase them down until Dr. Eggman stopped them.

"Don't bother my dear Robians, you'll never catch them." Dr. Eggman said to them "Fall back into my headquarters.

The Mechas obeyed their fat master and they turned around and marched back into Robotropolis. The gates had been knocked over so they were free to just simply march into the city simple as. They marched through the city and into Eggman's headquarters. Dr.

Eggman was already in the main hall waiting for them with a big smile on his moustached face. His female servant bot Katherine stood beside him as silent as a grave and Mecha Rouge, a Mobian who had already been roboticized some time ago*** stood by his other side. Dr. Eggman admired his Mechas with deep satisfaction. He had managed to roboticize nearly all of Sonic's friends with his king-sized roboticizer. He was only missing Sonic himself, Shadow, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben but he would get them sooner or later. He had billions of robot slaves right now thanks to the wonderful effects of his king-sized roboticizer so he would catch those five easily. Mecha Knuckles, Mecha Shade, Mecha Wilson, Mecha Mandy, Mecha Geoffrey, Mecha Amy, Mecha Cream and Mecha Cosmo all lined up before Dr. Eggman and the fat scientist paced up and down, admiring them with great admiration.

"What a beauty you lot are!" he purred "I've not only managed to roboticize all of Mobius but I've gotten some of Sonic's most notorious friends too! I've managed to roboticize Knuckles the Echidna: The guardian of Angel Island and fist thrower." he said as he walked pass Mecha Knuckles.

"Wilson the Dog: A dog with a faint heart mixed with a brave heart that unfortunately overpowers his skittish side." he said as he passed Mecha Wilson.

"Mandy Mouse: A troublesome pest with a tomboyish streak and an obsession with using my face for stress relief too." he spat as he passed Mecha Mandy "I made an Automaton**** copy out of you and it got me a Chaos Emerald. Now I have the real thing trapped in a robot body and ready to serve me. I think I'll make you use Sonic's face for stress relief instead of me!" he chortled to himself as he moved onto Mecha Geoffrey.

"Geoffrey St. John: A courageous fighter with a low sense of trust in him and a keen crossbow user." he said as he walked past Mecha Geoffrey.

"Amy Rose: Sonic's supposed girlfriend with an unhealthy obsession over him and an even unhealthier obsession of waving that big meaty hammer around!" he sneered as he passed Mecha Amy "At least she'll be waving it at Sonic instead of me now."

"Cream the Rabbit and her pet Chao Cheese: A pathetic pair of softies that are more of an annoyance then a threat." scoffed Dr. Eggman as he looked at Mecha Cream and Mecha Cheese "I once roboticized your mother***** Cream and now I've roboticized her again since all of Mobius has been roboticized and this time, I have the daughter to join her! You two will be much more useful now you're robots instead of organic beings." he said as he walked onto Mecha Cosmo.

"Cosmo the…something." said Dr. Eggman as he passed Mecha Cosmo "I have no idea what you are Cosmo but you're definitely one of my most unique Robians in my army. I'll take extra special care of you Cosmo."

He came to Mecha Shade and stopped in front of her, his steely gaze fixed on her.

"And finally, Shade the Echidna I believe your name is." said Dr. Eggman "Sonic referred to you as Shade so I guess that's your name. Nevertheless, you seem to be a recent edition to Sonic's team as I've only just recently been in contact with you. According to what I heard when I watched the fight with Alonzo, you managed to retrieve the Master Emerald and the Chaos Emeralds after I used Robotropolis to steal them****** so your roboticization is one thing for me to be proud of so now I can make you pay for robbing me from my ultimate power source."

He walked away from the line and turned towards Katherine.

"Katherine, what's Alonzo's current status?" he asked.

Katherine displayed an image of a gravestone on her visor as a sign of saying "He's dead". Dr. Eggman smiled so wide, not even his big bushy moustache could hide it.

"So now the traitor is dead and you're my new sidekick Katherine." beamed Dr. Eggman "I knew Alonzo wouldn't survive the roboticizer wave when it activated. I look forward to having you as my new sidekick Katherine." he said brightly.

Katherine nodded agreeably.

"What's the status of the roboticization process?" asked Dr. Eggman.

Katherine emitted a holographic image out of her visor that showed the planet of Mobius and it's current status. None of the scenery had changed but Dr. Eggman could sort that out easily but the entire population sans the five that had dodged the wave had become Robians. His king-sized roboticizer had worked to perfection! Everybody on Mobius was his mindless robotical slave and now that had happened, he could conquer Mobius at last and build his robotical paradise! At long last, he'd finally won this war with the Mobians! Dr. Eggman cheered and cackled like a crazy maniac in triumph at his victory.

"YES! It worked!" he cackled "It absolutely and totally worked! All of Mobius is mine to control and the Eggman Empire can finally be built at last! I've finally managed to conquer a planet at long last! Sometime soon, I think I'll return to Earth and conquer that with my king-sized roboticizer just for the fun of it. After all, I owe Earth a lot of pain and suffering for the indignity they've caused me before I left!"

His face suddenly fell.

"However, Sonic, Shadow, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben haven't been roboticized and Sonic and Shadow are dangerous enough as they are." he muttered "I can't let them stay untouched otherwise they'll ruin my plans and trump my victory. Henceforth, none of you wonderful Robians will rest until you capture the five dodgers and bring them to me so I can roboticize them! Katherine, send this message to EVERY Robian on the planet! Make this your number 1 priority: capture Sonic the Hedgehog, Shadow the Hedgehog, Tails the twin-tailed fox, Bunnie Rabbot and Ruben the Water Panther and bring them back to Robotropolis! This order cannot be countermanded and it'll be your only priority until they are captured!"

Katherine recorded every single word Eggman had said to her and she sent the message to all the Robians of the world. The Robians all got the message and they instantly began the search for Sonic, Shadow, Tails, Ruben and Bunnie. The whole situation now would pretty much be Sonic the Hedgehog vs. the world with the obvious

winner being the world should Sonic get into battle with the billions of Robians Eggman had on his side…

Meanwhile, Sonic, Shadow, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben had retreated all the way back to Sonic's little house in Green Hill Zone. Despite the fact it wasn't a very large house (it's only one storey high) it had enough room for the five roboticization dodgers and it was frankly, the only real hiding place they had since all of Mobius had been roboticized by Dr. Eggman and the whole population had been ordered to find the survivors and capture them. Sonic and the others didn't know for sure that all of Mobius had been roboticized but they had a few strong hints as on their way back to Sonic's house, they passed an awful lot of Robians as they ran through Empire City and through the under-construction New Mobotropolis. It was quite clear that Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey weren't the only ones that had been roboticized when the wave activated. Sonic could hardly believe what had just happened. Eggman had somehow managed to roboticize everybody with that one wave that came out of his headquarters. He began wondering how Eggman did it. He sat down on his comfy little sofa and began racking his brain like crazy for a possible answer.

"How did that creep do it?" Sonic asked himself desperately "How did Eggman manage to make a roboticizer that could spread it's waves out and sweep over the entire planet?"

"I don't know Sonic." said Tails, who was sitting at his work desk and racking his brain for a plan that could save everybody "Dr. Eggman is capable of building many things. We'll never know how he manages to build most of them."

Can't argue with you on that one buddy." said Sonic casually "But one thing's for sure, I am gonna march over to Robotropolis and make that Eggman pay for roboticizing all of Mobius! That is, if he HAS roboticized all of Mobius."

"Ah have a strong feeling that Eggman has roboticized everybody and not just some of our friends sugah-hog." said Bunnie, who was sitting beside Sonic on the sofa "Ah flew up out of the wave's way

and ah watched it go off into the distance so it probably went on to roboticize everybody else."

"Yeah, and when we ran through Empire City, every single person there, including old walrus face Melchett the Hedgehog, had been turned into a Robian!" exclaimed Sonic "And even though I didn't check Castle Acorn, I think I saw a roboticized Sally Acorn and Nicole the Lynx staring at us through the window. So it's obvious the wave went on further then we expected."

"I think roboticizing all of Mobius is exactly the kind of thing Dr. Eggman would do." said Ruben "Given his love for robots and his unhealthy obsession with kidnapping innocents and roboticizing them, it makes sense that he would actually roboticize everybody on Mobius."

"How he did I'll never know." said Sonic "Maybe when we storm his place to find a way of de-roboticizing everybody, we'll find out."

"If Eggman has a roboticizer then we must be able to set it in reverse." said Shadow, who was standing beside the sofa with his arms folded, a typical manner for Shadow "But one thing puzzles me. Why did Alonzo explode when he got hit by the roboticizer wave?"

"Simple." said Tails, turning around so he could speak clearly to Shadow "He's already a robot and roboticizers turn organic beings into robots so it's gonna have a nasty side-effect on a robot. I always wondered what would happen if a robot got roboticized and now I know, it explodes into smithereens."

"If only we had a roboticizer that could do what Eggman's did." murmured Sonic "We could activate it on Robotropolis and the whole place would be blown back to the stone age."

"If roboticizer roboticizes something that's already a robot…" Bunnie mused to herself "And the whole world has been roboticized, then that means my old friends from the Peace Gatherers are…dead!"

"Beg pardon?" asked Sonic.

"When ah was younger, ah used to be part of a Peace Gathering group." explained Bunnie "Ah met them again during mah visit to Adabat with Geoffrey******* but they had been roboticized by Eggman. Ravage Bloodfang, another member of the group who hadn't been roboticized, managed to get them under his control but if that roboticizer went on to roboticize the entire planet then mah old friends are a smouldering pile of robot parts!"

"That is unfortunate." said Ruben sympathetically "Now your old friends will never have a chance of being de-roboticized since they've been destroyed by it."

"Ah know." said Bunnie sadly "I'll never see mah old friends again. Except Ravage of course but he's now mah enemy so that's nothin' to be pleased at."

"Well Bunnie, I never knew that about you." said Sonic, who had listened to Bunnie's story and was rather surprised to know these new things about her "And I can see why you're upset about this. Your old friends are dead since that roboticizer's roboticized the whole world and it destroys anything that's already a robot."

"Unfortunately, that means the portable roboticizer robot I stole from Eggman's destroyed too." muttered Tails "We could have used that to de-roboticize everybody."

"I don't think we would have had too much luck with it anyway." said Sonic "So we're gonna have to break into Eggman's base, find that roboticizer he used and set it in reverse so it'll de-roboticize the entire planet."

"As much as I'd be willing to help you on this faker I can't help but notice one tiny problem." said Shadow "What's the population of Mobius?" he asked. He wouldn't know since he was new to Mobius.

"No idea." said Sonic truthfully.

"On average, about three billion." estimated Tails "That's what most estimates say."

"Right, Eggman has billions of Robians and there's only five of us."

noted Shadow "How can we possibly hope to have any chance against such a vast army? It's pretty much us five vs. the entire world and as powerful as I am, I don't think even I will be able to defeat that many robots! And I won't be able to use my full power on them as I'll probably accidentally destroy them and kill the Mobian within so I'll have to hold back. We have no chance at this blue hedgehog, Eggman has beaten us and there's nothing we can do about it!"

"Nothing we can do about it?" sneered Sonic "What a weird sentence. What does it mean?"

Shadow just scowled at Sonic and looked like he was about ready to kill him.

"There's no such thing as "There's nothing we can do about it"." said Sonic "You forget me and you are the fastest things alive. We'll dodge those Robians easy peasy, they'll never catch us and we'll be in Eggman's headquarters before you can say "Chaos Emeralds"."

"Hmm, you're right." said Shadow "Me and you can run at supersonic speeds after all. We'll just run as fast as we can and plough our way to Robotropolis. The Robians won't catch us and we'll be at Eggman's city before he even knows it."

"Somehow, I don't think "run as fast as you can" is really the best idea." said Ruben "I mean, what are me, Tails and Bunnie gonna do to dodge the Robians? We can't run anywhere near as fast as you can Sonic and Shadow and flying just makes us an eyesore and easy prey for flying Robians."

"Hmm…that is a good point Ruben." said Sonic thoughtfully "I know Tails and Bunnie are keen aerial aces when it comes to flying but they can get tired after excessive flying and Robians don't get tired so they'll stand no chance when they tire out. And you Ruben, you need to use your water powers to surf through the air so you'll be unable to defend yourself."

"In that case, we leave them behind and we do this ourselves Sonic." said Shadow, not giving a tinker's toot about Tails, Bunnie and Ruben whatsoever.

"No Shadow." said Sonic sternly "If we're gonna save the world then we need to work together on this. Tails and his technical mind can help us greatly in this mission and Bunnie and Ruben are keen fighters, their skills can help us should we need them."

"But you heard what Ruben just said Sonic." noted Shadow crossly "He clearly stated he, Tails and Bunnie can't keep up with us on foot and in the air, they pretty much scream "Hit me!" at everybody so they'll just slow us down!"

"Not necessarily shadow-hog." said Bunnie hastily "You and sugah-hog can carry us to Robotropolis. At your super-speeds, no one will hit us and we won't be an eyesore for the Robians."

Shadow fumed grumpily. He was not keen on the idea of carrying people about at all but like it or not, he would have to do it as it was the only way to bring the others with him while making sure they didn't slow him and Sonic down or catch the attention of the Robians. He folded his arms and sighed quietly.

"Sonic, what do you think of this idea then?" asked Shadow.

"I think we should go ahead with it." said Sonic "We'll run to Robotropolis as fast as we can to avoid getting tackled by Robians and we'll carry Tails, Bunnie and Ruben with us to save them the pain of running after us and lagging behind. Once we get to Robotropolis, we find that roboticizer Eggman used, set it in reverse and de-roboticize everybody. Mobius will be saved and Eggman will be free to cry in a corner over his failure yet again." he added with a big mischievous grin on his face.

Shadow smiled darkly at the very thought of Eggman crying in a corner like a little baby after Sonic de-roboticized everybody and saved the day once again. He still had a bitter hatred of Eggman after deceiving him the way he did before so whatever happened to Eggman would always give Shadow a good feeling inside. Suddenly, as if out of the norm, Sonic's front door rattled loudly and was then suddenly ripped clean off it's hinges! The door was torn away and tossed aside carelessly by something and the whole thing had made everybody jump out of their seats. A green crocodile shaped robot wearing metallic earphones that seemed more like an

attachment then actual earphones stormed into the house and grabbed Sonic by his throat. It was of course, Mecha Vector, a roboticized Vector the Crocodile. He along with Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee had been in Royal HQ monitoring the place while Sonic and friends tried to throw Eggman back into prison. Unfortunately for Team Chaotix, they were amongst the billions of victims that fell to Eggman's roboticization and now they were the Mecha Chaotix, a trio of Robians hell bent on serving Eggman and serving their priorities and their number one priority, of course, was capture the only five Mobians left in existence as was all other Robians. Mecha Vector scanned Sonic as the blue hedgehog squirmed in his tight grasp and he clenched his silver teeth.

"Sonic-the-Hedge-hog-Pri-ority-One." he droned at him "I-have-de-tec-ted-you-and-found-you-at-last."

"Congratulations…I'm sure…hurk!" gagged Sonic "Lemme…guess! Ack! You…used the computers of Royal HQ…to find my house!"

"Cor-rect." droned Mecha Vector "I-have-found-the-last-Mobians-in-exis-tence. Now-I-shall-take-you-to-Dr.-Eggman-and-let-him-ro-bot-i-cize-you-all."

"In yer dreams ugly!" yelled Bunnie, walloping Mecha Vector with her robot arm as hard as she dared to.

Mecha Vector hurtled across the room and crashed straight through a window. The window shattered into pieces and Mecha Vector found himself lying outside the house on his head, wondering what had just hit him.

"Bunnie, when this is over, you're paying for that!" joked Sonic.

"Sorry sugah-hog." said Bunnie, ear ears drooping down sadly.

"I'm just kidding Bunnie." said Sonic "Now let's scraper before…"

Before Sonic could go anywhere, Mecha Espio leaped into the house and ninja kicked Sonic in the face. Sonic hurtled into a wall and lay against it, groaning in pain. Mecha Espio drew out some

shuriken and he threw a pair at Sonic's wrists. The shuriken pinned Sonic's arms to the wall, trapping him and preventing him from moving. He squirmed in the tough grasp of the shuriken but they were embedded to deeply into the wall for him to move. Tails tried to help Sonic but Mecha Espio threw some shuriken at Tails' wrists and they pinned *him* to the wall. And to add insult to injury, Mecha Espio threw some shuriken at Bunnie's wrists and ankles and he ended up pinning her to the wall. To make double sure she didn't break free, Mecha Espio threw some more shuriken at Bunnie's legs and left arm so now Bunnie had about six shuriken pinning her left arm to the wall and eight shuriken on each leg pinning her legs to the wall. Not even someone as powerful as Bunnie would be able to break out of that. Bunnie and Tails squirmed and struggled in the shuriken pinning their limbs to the wall but they were embedded too deeply for them to break free. Ruben leaped in and tried to engage Mecha Espio in a fist fight but Mecha Espio threw him into a wall and pinned him to the wall with yet more shuriken. Now Ruben was trapped against the wall too. Mecha Espio was pleased to see his tactic had worked and he strode up to the trapped hedgehog, fox and rabbit. Mecha Charmy buzzed into the house after him. Mecha Espio cracked his metal knuckles and he drew his arm back. He was going to knock Sonic, Tails, Ruben and Bunnie out one at a time so he could take them to Dr. Eggman for roboticization. They wouldn't be able to resist the Mecha-Chaotix if they were knocked out so the trapped Mobians were as good as captured now. But there was one tiny problem. The Mecha Chaotix hadn't trapped Shadow so Shadow leaped onto Mecha Espio and dropkicked him in the head. Mecha Espio fell onto his side and Shadow grabbed him by his tail. He threw Mecha Espio out through the open front door and Mecha Espio skidded roughly across the grass. Mecha Charmy buzzed angrily and tried to attack Shadow but Shadow spin-dashed Mecha Charmy and knocked the roboticized bee out. Now the Mecha Chaotix were knocked out, Shadow sought to freeing everybody. He pulled all of the shuriken out of the wall and freed Sonic, Tails, Ruben and Bunnie.

"Thanks Shadow." said Sonic "I can't believe the Mecha Chaotix were dopey enough to forget you."

"Don't mention it blue hedgehog." said Shadow "Let's run before any

other Robians find us!"

With that said, Sonic and Shadow charged out of the front door… and got piled-dived by two more Robians lying in wait for them. These two were Mecha Sally and Mecha Nicole, a roboticized Queen Sally Acorn and Nicole the Lynx respectively. Mecha Sally looked like a robot squirrel in a metal purple dress as Sally was wearing a purple dress during the roboticization process whereas Mecha Nicole looked like a robot lynx in a purple toga, Nicole's trademark outfit. Despite being robots, they still looked beautiful but they looked far deadlier in these metal bodies. Sonic and Shadow picked themselves up and stared at the two Mechas standing before them.

"Who are these two then?" asked Shadow.

"A roboticized Sally Acorn, the Queen of Mobotropolis, and Nicole, Sally's lady-in-waiting." said Sonic "They both know where I live so they wouldn't have too much trouble finding me, even if they are Robians now."

"Are they ones to look out for?" asked Shadow.

"Well Sally isn't really much of a fighter but Nicole is." said Sonic "Since they've been roboticized, I'm guessing their strength has been enhanced so yeah, we should probably avoid them."

Unfortunately, the Mecha Chaotix had just come to and they surrounded Sonic and Shadow. Now Sonic and Shadow were surrounded by the Mecha Chaotix, Mecha Sally and Mecha Nicole. This was not the kind of situation Sonic wanted to get caught up in but now, he was surrounded by five possibly deadly Robians, especially the Mecha Chaotix. He would have to escape them and fast. Mecha Sally stood forward and gave the command.

"Mechas. Get-them!" she droned, pointing a clawed finger at Sonic.

The others obeyed and the Mecha Chaotix leaped on Sonic and Shadow. Shadow gave Mecha Charmy and Mecha Espio an uppercut each before they could even land on him and Sonic roundhouse kicked Mecha Vector before he could nab him. Mecha

Nicole leaped into the air, did an elegant twirl and drill-attacked Sonic and Shadow both together. The two hedgehogs were thrown onto their backs by the roboticized lynx but they weren't down for long. Sonic punched at Mecha Nicole but Mecha Nicole caught the punch in her own metal hand and she head-butted Sonic straight in the forehead. Sonic cried out in agonizing pain and he clutched his head, which began to throb insanely. Mecha Nicole took the opportunity to gut-kick Sonic and then elbow slam him on his head. She tried to attack Sonic again but Shadow threw a Chaos Spear at Mecha Nicole and the spear just skimmed her on the head. Mecha Nicole looked up at Shadow furiously and drill-attacked him but Shadow ducked and jumped up, knocking Mecha Nicole onto the ground. Mecha Vector sneaked up behind Shadow and sucker-punched him directly in the back of his head. Shadow hurtled across the ground and landed painfully on his face. He skidded sharply and made a mound of dirt which his face was now buried in. Mecha Vector tried to grab Shadow but Tails ran out of the house and gave the robotic crocodile a flying punch to the head that seemed to knock a few screws loose as Mecha Vector slumped dizzily onto the ground. Bunnie and Ruben joined in the battle but before they could help anybody, Mecha Sally drill-attacked them. She knocked them both onto the ground and grabbed Bunnie in a painful chokehold. She forced her organic arm behind her back and sharply twisted it, earning a pained scream from the rabbit cyborg.

"Say-un-cle! Say-it!" yelled Mecha Sally, tightening her grip on Bunnie to the point the Rabbot was struggling to breathe.

Ruben leaped onto Mecha Sally and cupped his hands around her optics, blinding the roboticized queen for a minute. Mecha Sally let go of Bunnie and tried to swat Ruben off her head. This gave Bunnie the perfect opportunity to gut-punch Mecha Sally and grab her in a chokehold to get her own back. She twisted Mecha Sally's arm behind her back, being careful not to rip it off in the process and made sure she had a tight hold on her.

"Now you say uncle Sally-girl!" crowed Bunnie as she held Mecha Sally firmly in a chokehold.

However, Mecha Charmy cupped his hands together and slammed them on Bunnie's head, dazing the Rabbot slightly and making her

release Mecha Sally. Mecha Sally too the perfect opportunity to roundhouse kick Bunnie in the face and knocked her down onto her side. Tails flew in and kick-slammed Mecha Charmy down onto the ground and he tail-whipped Mecha Sally in the face. Mecha Espio jumped in and elbowed Tails in the back, knocking him down onto the ground sharply. Ruben cupped his hands together and slammed Mecha Espio with his fists. Mecha Espio wobbled about slightly before regaining his balance and preparing to fight. Ruben tried to kung-fu chop Mecha Espio but Mecha Espio blocked his attack with his arm and gut-punched Ruben. Ruben wheezed louder then an old person with lung cancer and he doubled over onto the floor. Mecha Espio then attempted to knock Ruben out with a hefty punch to the back of his head but Sonic spin-dashed him onto his side before he could even touch him. Mecha Espio skidded roughly across his side and he groaned a robotical groan. Sonic smirked at Mecha Espio but Mecha Vector fist slammed Sonic on his cranium and made the hedgehog stagger onto his knees dizzily. Mecha Vector grabbed Sonic and was about to knock him out until Shadow kicked Mecha Vector in the gut and made him drop Sonic. Shadow gave Mecha Vector a powerful uppercut that almost took his jaw off and the roboticized crocodile staggered backwards. Mecha Charmy buzzed in and grabbed Shadow by his quills. He carried Shadow off the ground as if he weighed nothing and he threw him down onto the ground with a slam. Tails flew after Mecha Charmy and tried to tackle him out of the sky but Mecha Charmy dodged Tails and aerial aced him. Tails cried out in pain and just managed to keep himself airborne but Mecha Charmy tackled him from behind and sent him hurling into the ground. Bunnie caught Tails in her arms before he could land on the ground only to get kicked in the back of the head by Mecha Sally. Mecha Sally pinned Bunnie to the ground with her foot and prevented the Rabbot from getting back up. Tails tried to help Bunnie but Mecha Sally backhanded him in the back of the head and knocked him onto his stomach. Bunnie elbowed Mecha Sally in the foot and caused her to topple over onto her side. Mecha Nicole tried to drill-attack Bunnie but Bunnie threw Mecha Sally into Mecha Nicole. The two girls collided with each other and they sprawled on the ground. Mecha Espio did an amazing ninja flip and he roundhouse kicked Bunnie down onto her face. Ruben roundhouse kicked Espio back and gave him a ninja style chop to the face. Mecha Vector grabbed Ruben by his head and tossed him

into a nearby tree. Ruben hit the tree back first upside down so he slid down onto the ground and came to a stop on top of his head. Mecha Vector punched the palm of his other hand as he advanced on Ruben and he prepared to pound Ruben's daylights out. Before he could lay a finger on Ruben though, Shadow homing attacked Mecha Vector and knocked him onto his back. Mecha Nicole got the drop on Shadow with a drill-attack and after knocking Shadow onto his face, she grabbed him by his quills, tossed him up into the air and gave him an uppercut before he could land on the ground. Shadow hurtled through the air in a neat rainbow arch and he landed painfully on his side. Mecha Nicole smirked at Shadow and ran over to him.

"Come-to-ma-ma-Mo-bian." she droned as she ran towards Shadow with her claws bared.

She would have grabbed Shadow and knocked him out if it wasn't for Sonic leaping in and ramming her from the side. The side-slam sent Mecha Nicole hurling into a tree and Sonic smiled cockily at her.

"Run to daddy!" smirked Sonic.

The joke was on him though as Mecha Vector roundhouse punched him in the back of the head and then grabbed him in a chokehold as he was stunned.

"Say-un-cle! Say-it!" yelled Mecha Vector as he tightened his grip on Sonic.

Bunnie pounced on Mecha Vector from behind and elbowed him with her robot arm. Mecha Vector gagged and he let go of Sonic. Mecha Vector tried to punch Bunnie but Bunnie grabbed him by his arm and threw him over her shoulder and onto his back. That slam seemed to have stunned Mecha Vector as he lay there wondering what to do next. Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and prepared to knock him out with a cannon blast but Mecha Espio threw a shuriken at her and the shuriken skimmed her organic shoulder, leaving a deep bloody cut that streamed with blood. Bunnie yelped and transformed her cannon arm back to a normal arm so she could clutch her organic arm and rub it better. Mecha Espio prepared to let

her have it with another shuriken but Shadow spin-dashed him away and sent him hurling into Sonic's house. Shadow panted slightly.

"We can't keep this fight up forever." said Shadow "Those Robians are strong and we can't use our best attacks or we'll destroy them. However, I think I have a way of distracting them for a while…"

A bright idea crept into his head like a spider creeping down a plughole. He knew exactly what to do now. He ran back into Sonic's house and grabbed one of the seven Chaos Emeralds. Sonic had brought them home with him as he hadn't had time to return them to Angel Island yet. Shadow ran back out with the Chaos Emerald and joined the battle again. Sonic was going toe-to-toe with Mecha Sally, Ruben and Mecha Espio were in a fist fight, Bunnie was having a wrestling match with Mecha Vector and Tails was being teamed up on by Mecha Charmy and Mecha Nicole. Shadow thrust the emerald in front of himself and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

The yellow Chaos Emerald glowed a bright yellow gleam as he said that and bright flash engulfed him. Nothing seemed to happen at first but before anyone knew it, time began to slow down around the Mechas and then suddenly, stop altogether. The Mechas were frozen in time by Shadow's Chaos Control and they would be like that for a while until the Chaos Control wore off. Shadow smirked at the frozen Mechas, pleased that his plan had worked. Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben stared at the frozen Mechas in amazement and they all looked at Shadow, who was holding the yellow Chaos Emerald in his hand.

"Sweet Shadow!" complimented Sonic "I'm amazed I didn't think of using the Chaos Emeralds before! You froze them with a Chaos Control!"

"Exactly." said Shadow "So now we don't have to fight them, and they can't fight us. Nobody gets hurt and we can get away before that Chaos Control wears off. Gather around me everybody and I'll warp us to Robotropolis with this Chaos Emerald."

"Oh no Shadow, we're NOT using a Chaos Emerald to get to

Robotropolis." said Sonic hastily, snatching the gem from Shadow's hand "As much as I'd love to use a Chaos Emerald to help us in our mission, I don't wanna risk losing it to Egg-Brains. He has billions of foot-soldiers now he's roboticized everybody on Mobius so there's a possibility any of them could snatch that emerald from us so sorry Shadow, it's a no-go on the Chaos Emeralds."

"Humph, fine." muttered Shadow, scowling angrily at Sonic "Just don't come crying to me when you end up needing one!"

"We won't end up needing one." said Sonic, tossing the emerald to Tails who ran off to his house and put the emerald back in the living room with the others "Eggman won't see us coming due to how fast we are and we'll be in his city before he knows about it."

"We'll see about that won't we faker?" snorted Shadow, folding his arms and huffing to himself.

Sonic just glared at Shadow but he had the sense to not say anything that could rile the genetic experiment as Shadow could kick his butt all the way to Nekronopolis if he wanted to.

"OK guys, we're off to Robotropolis to de-roboticize everybody." announced Sonic "Tails, I'll carry you and Ruben. Shadow you carry Bunnie."

Shadow obeyed and he picked Bunnie up bridal style. The Rabbot wrapped her arms tightly around Shadow to make sure she was holding on good and tight. As for Sonic, he just held Tails and Ruben's hands each and prepared to run for it.

"You ready guys?" asked Sonic.

"Whenever you are Sonic." said Tails determinedly.

"I'm ready for anything when it comes to saving the world." said Ruben.

"Then let's juice everybody!" yelled Sonic, revving his feet up to the point where they were nothing but red blurs underneath him.

He zoomed off at top speed with Tails and Ruben flying behind him.

Shadow bent down and he charged off after Sonic. He skated along the floor as if he was on ice thanks to his hover shoes and he caught up to Sonic in no time as he was faster then Sonic. Bunnie couldn't help but squeal with delight as Shadow ran for it.

"Whoo, hoo! Ya'll are pretty fast Shadow!" she cried excitedly "Yee-Haw!"

"I know I am." gloated Shadow "Thanks for your comment Bunnie."

The two supersonic hedgehogs zoomed off through Green Hill Zone and they headed off to Robotropolis which was all the way in the Northern Border of Megapolis. Dr. Eggman would get one heck of a surprise once they came knocking on his door and they stormed the place so they could find the roboticizer and de-roboticize everybody with it…

Meanwhile in Robotropolis, Dr. Eggman was giving Mecha Knuckles, Mecha Shade, Mecha Wilson, Mecha Mandy, Mecha Geoffrey, Mecha Amy and Mecha Cream a nice little polish each just to make them look nice and shiny for when he builds the Eggman Empire all over Mobius. He was on Mecha Geoffrey now and he was polishing the roboticized skunk so he would be shinier then a sunbeam.

"This polish is really doing wonders for you glorious Mechas isn't it?" asked Dr. Eggman "You all look amazing already and I haven't even done everybody yet. Although in order to defeat the only Mobians still alive, maybe I should give you all adjustments of some kind. Maybe I should weaponize all of the Robians and that way, you'll all be invincible and nobody will be able to stop you. Not even G.U.N. back on Earth. Boy will I show them what I'm capable of!"

His work was interrupted by the arrival of Katherine who strode into the room quietly and stood to attention, waiting for Dr. Eggman to ask her what it was she was here for. Dr. Eggman stopped polishing Mecha Geoffrey and he looked at Katherine.

"Yes my dear?" he asked.

Katherine played a recorded message sent to her by Mecha Sally. The Chaos Control had worn off at last and Mecha Sally wasn't pleased to see her group had failed to catch Sonic, Shadow, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben but she had an idea on where they were now so she sent a message to Katherine for Eggman to hear.

"Dr.-Egg-Man. I'm-sorry-to-in-form-you-but-me-Mecha-Nicole-and-the-Mecha-Chaotix-have-failed-to-catch-Sonic-and-friends." the message played "But-this-unit-is-sure-that-they-are-coming-to-Ro-bo-trop-o-lis-to-try-and-ruin-your-plans."

The message stopped and Katherine fell back into silence. Dr. Eggman grinned wickedly at the fembot. This piece of news didn't seem to worry him the slightest.

"I KNEW those foolish survivors would dare to try and de-roboticize Mobius!" sneered Dr. Eggman "Well to their shock, I've prepared for their arrival! They'll be inviting themselves to roboticization Katherine once they arrive here!"

Katherine turned her head to one side in a manner that suggested she had no idea what Eggman was talking about.

"You'll see Katherine, you'll see." Dr. Eggman reassured her "Until then, sit back and enjoy the show and boy what a show this'll be!"

He grinned a sinister, evil grin that could make the devil himself shudder in fear…

Meanwhile, due to the sheer speed of Sonic and Shadow, they zipped by every single Robian they came across and nobody could catch them because they were too fast. It was pretty much blink and you'll miss them for the Robians, they lunged but they were past them before they could nab them. In a matter of minutes, Sonic and Shadow both arrived at Robotropolis, Eggman's robotical city and the one place they both hated with all their hearts. The gates hadn't been repaired from the whole fiasco with Alonzo earlier so they just zoomed through the gates without a moment's hesitance. The whole population of Robotropolis saw them coming but they couldn't do

anything about the two hedgehog's super speed. Sonic and Shadow ploughed through them like a snowplough through snow and the robots were sent hurling through the air in a comical fashion. They all crashed into various buildings and objects around the city after being thrown into them by the supersonic hedgehog duo. Sonic and Shadow finally came to a halt once they ran inside Dr. Eggman's headquarters. Shadow put Bunnie down and Sonic let go of Tails and Ruben's hands.

"Oh mah stars, that was awesome!" shrieked Bunnie "We should do this again sometime shadow-hog!"

"Well I'll be happy to arrange another time we can do this." said Shadow with a dark smile on his face "Gives me more excuses to trash Eggman's little toys after all."

"This is it everybody." said Tails "Eggman's headquarters. We're gonna have to remain vigilant as there's no telling what kind of trap Eggman has. Anything could happen here so we're gonna have to keep our senses alert."

"Especially since Eggman has our roboticized friends here no doubt." said Ruben "Chances are, Eggman could be willing to set them on us just to rub salt into this already colossal wound we and the planet have."

"You two are absolutely right." said Sonic "Keep an eye out for any trick-of-the-trade. We'll stick together and look for this roboticizer. Shadow, you used to live here, do you have any idea where Eggman might keep a roboticizer?"

"I believe he said something about a chamber on the middle floor when he gave me a tour of this base." thought Shadow "I think it was a roboticizer chamber, I'm not entirely sure though, I could be wrong."

"And since Eggman's rebuilt this from the time my friends wrecked it********, it could have changed." thought Sonic "We'll look on the middle floor then just to see if you're right or wrong. Let's take one of the elevators over there."

The Mobians all ran over to an elevator at the back of the room and they went into it. Tails pressed a button on the elevator that said "centre floor" and the elevator's doors closed, sealing them inside it. The elevator began to rise up off the floor and up to the upper floors of Eggman's base. The elevator took them past five floors before finally reaching the middle floor. The elevator opened and the Mobians stepped cautiously out. They were in a large corridor that led in three different directions. There didn't appear to be anybody around. No Robians of any kind and not even a guard bot. The whole corridor looked empty.

"This is weird, Eggman's security is usually tighter then this." said Sonic.

"I have a tingle in my tail that suggests Eggman's lying in wait for us." said Ruben wearily "We're gonna have to be careful around here."

The Mobians left the elevator and they went straight up the corridor that led onwards. All clear so far. The Mobians crept quietly and cautiously while keeping an eye out for danger but they couldn't see any so far. Then they came across an iron door on their left hand side. The door a dull metallic grey colour and was marked with black and yellow warning stripes and it had a huge circular doorknob. A door like this heavily implied that what was on the other side was probably very dangerous. Shadow decided to see what was in the room so he spun the doorknob around and around until the door opened.

"Let's see what's in here then." said Shadow.

"Be careful Shadow." warned Tails, his twin-tails twitching slightly.

Shadow opened the door to it's fullest and he looked inside. There he saw, in the middle of the room, was a giant egg-shaped pod. Shadow had no idea what the pod possibly did but he had a feeling it was the roboticizer he was looking for. Shadow stepped into the room…and suddenly got hit by a blast from the roboticizer pod! Dr. Eggman, the crafty villain, had programmed the pod to roboticize any Mobian that stepped into the room, thus preventing them from getting close to the machine so they could destroy it and also give

him more Robians! Shadow was being roboticized right in front of Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben's horrified eyes!

"No Shadow!" cried Sonic helplessly.

It was too late. Shadow's black fur was turning into black metal, his eyes were turning into a black visor with glowing red optics, his hands were becoming claws and his gloves and shoes became steel. The roboticizer beam stopped blasting him and the roboticized Shadow the Hedgehog rose up from the floor. He turned to face his victims, his red optics glowing ominously. Shadow the Hedgehog was no more, he was now MECHA SHADOW, possibly the strongest Robian in Eggman's army and he looked like he was ready to kill. Mecha Shadow bared his claws at the horrified Mobians that stood before him.

"Mecha-Shadow-on-line." he droned in a deep robotical voice "Sonic-the-Hedge-hog: Priority-one. Com-men-cing-ass-ault."

He advanced menacingly on the horrified Mobians and they could do nothing but back away in fear as Mecha Shadow prepared to kill them…

Footnotes:

***It WAS a long while back! Story 13 to be precise!**

**** All the way back in Story 1 that happened! Am I taking a trip down memory lane in this story or something? LOL**

*****See Story 63**

****** He kidnapped Mandy all the way back in Story 31 and replaced her with an Automaton that was later revealed in Story 40 remember?**

******* See Story 16**

******** See Story 75, a milestone to remember**

********* See *Tales from Mobius Arc 4: Trouble in Adabat***

********** See Story 60**

OMG SHADOW'S BEEN ROBOTICIZED! OH MY GOD! IT'S THE END OF THE LINE FOR OUR HEROES! THEY'RE ALL GONNA DIE! GAME OVER MAN! GAME OVER! How can Sonic and friends possibly survive Mecha Shadow? And how can they de-roboticize all of Mobius if they can't even get near the roboticizer? Well, we're gonna find out in the next story aren't we? Stay tuned... Read and Review.

Planet of Steel Part 2

Story 82: Planet of Steel Part 2: Trouble for the Heroes

"Just when I thought this day couldn't get any worse, Shadow goes and gets roboticized!" cried Sonic the Hedgehog as Mecha Shadow advanced on them with his claws bared "Having to fight normal Shadow was bad enough but Mecha Shadow's gonna be too much!"

Sonic and the last remaining Mobians Tails the twin-tailed fox, Ruben the Water Panther and Bunnie Rabbot had gone to Robotropolis in hopes of de-roboticizing all of Mobius and freeing every last citizen from Eggman's iron-fisted control. Unfortunately, Shadow the Hedgehog had just ended up getting roboticized, bringing the Mobian team down to just four and causing them to lose their strongest member. Mecha Shadow continued to advance on Sonic and friends with his claws ready to grab them and take them to the roboticizer. Sonic decided that backing away from him wasn't going to be of any help so the hedgehog spin-dashed Mecha Shadow in the gut. Mecha Shadow was sent flying backwards into a wall. The roboticized hedgehog picked himself up and bent down in a battle-ready stance. He glared at Sonic with his red optics. Sonic bent down in a battle-ready stance too.

"Shadow, if you can still hear me in there, try and fight Eggman's control over you!" yelled Sonic "Don't let Eggman win this Shadow, fight it! You hate Dr. Eggman and you're never ever gonna let him defeat you! Don't let him defeat you now Shadow! Please! Fight it! Help us save the world, don't help Eggman conquer it!"

"You-are-try-ing-to-ration-a-lize-with-this-unit?" droned Mecha Shadow "Where-were-you-when-they-were-hand-ing-the-brains-out?"

"Hey! I find that term offensive!" yelled Sonic "I get enough of Sally saying that to me when I do something reckless in a Royal Fighter mission! Bring it on Mecha Bozo!"

Mecha Shadow eerily enough, obeyed that command and he spin-

dashed Sonic directly in the gut. Sonic flew backwards into a wall and left a huge imprint of himself on it. Mecha Shadow prepared to attack again but Bunnie stood in his way and gave him an uppercut strong enough to nearly take his head off. Mecha Shadow hurtled through the air in a perfect rainbow arch and he landed sharply on his back. He skidded across the floor briefly and he lay there droning to himself.

"Ah think we should git on outta here sugah-hog." said Bunnie "Before Mecha Shadow gets any uglier."

"No, I'm not backing outta this one!" yelled Sonic "Not while we're so close to saving everybody! We'll fight Mecha Shadow until he's knocked out and then we find a way to set that roboticizer in reverse."

"But Sonic, we can't even get in that room without getting zapped, look what happened to Shadow!" exclaimed Tails, pointing at Mecha Shadow just as he was getting back up "He got zapped by a roboticizer beam the moment he walked into the room! That must mean we can't get in there without getting roboticized!"

"Well this bites!" muttered Sonic "Walking into that room is pretty much an invitation to being roboticized! How can we save the world now?"

"We may have to think on that later because Mecha Shadow looks pretty angry!" screamed Ruben, his tail shaking like mad as Mecha Shadow picked himself up and he turned to face the Mobians angrily.

Mecha Shadow spin-dashed the Mobians and sent them flying all around the corridor. Sonic spin-dashed Mecha Shadow back but Mecha Shadow wasn't affected much by the attack and he kicked Sonic as viciously as he could. Sonic retaliated with a left hook on Mecha Shadow's face but Mecha Shadow struck back hard with a right hook to Sonic's face. Sonic roundhouse kicked at Mecha Shadow but Mecha Shadow bent over backwards and dodged the attack. He then deployed some plasma cannons underneath his arms and he fired at Sonic. Sonic was hit by the blast and sent flying across the corridor. Mecha Shadow then skated towards Sonic and

he grabbed the hedgehog. Mecha Shadow leaped to the wall and ploughed his way through it as if it was nothing. Mecha Shadow then somersaulted in the air and he held Sonic high above his head. He then proceeded to throw Sonic straight through the air, over Robotropolis and over the gates of Robotropolis like a baseball. Sonic landed painfully on the ground and skidded to a very painful stop. He had some nasty grazes on his face from that attack and he was left wondering which part of him to rub better. He felt like pain was consuming his body right now. Mecha Shadow rocketed towards Sonic with the jets in his feet he now had and he held his hands out, ready to grab Sonic and take him to Eggman.

"Sonic-the-Hedge-hog: Priority-One." droned Mecha Shadow "Commencing capture."

Sonic could only lie there helplessly and wait for Mecha Shadow to grab him. Mecha Shadow was just a few feet away from grabbing Sonic and just as he was about to grab him, Bunnie flew out of the hole in the wall he made and flew in Mecha Shadow's way. She grabbed Mecha Shadow and carried him away from Sonic as fast as her rockets would let her. Sonic sat up weakly and he smiled at the Rabbot.

"Oh Bunnie, I can always count on you can't I?" he said, rubbing his grazed face better.

Bunnie zoomed straight up into the sky with Mecha Shadow in her arms and she flew as high as she dared to go and the height she dared to go was high enough to be a good distance off the ground but not high enough to pass out from the thin air in the atmosphere. Bunnie flew up and up until she knew she was high enough and then she flew straight back down. She flew down as fast as she flew up and the ground was beginning to catch up with her as she flew back down with Mecha Shadow in her arms. Unfortunately, Mecha Shadow managed to break out of Bunnie's hold by praising her arms apart and punching her in the cheek. He then rearranged positions so now HE was flying towards the ground with BUNNIE in his arms. Bunnie squirmed in the tough grasp of Mecha Shadow but try as she might, she just wasn't strong enough against an opponent such as this one. Mecha Shadow reach the ground at last and he ascended up before he could nose dive into it but he slammed Bunnie down as

hard as he possibly could just as he began to ascend. Bunnie felt the full force of the impact and she lay on the ground, feeling like she'd just crashed into a truck.

"Oooooh mah stars…" she groaned groggily "That was one heck of a slam!"

Mecha Shadow did an impressive U-turn in the air and flew back to where Bunnie was lying. The roboticized hedgehog landed before Bunnie and he deployed a pair of plasma cannons he had, much like the infamous Mecha Sonic from a while back. He pointed them straight at Bunnie's face. The Rabbot stared at the in horror, her ears sticking up straight in alarm. Mecha Shadow prepared to let Bunnie have it with his plasma cannons. The Rabbot couldn't do anything to stop Mecha Shadow from killing her so all she could do was lie on the ground and wait for Mecha Shadow to blow her head off.

"Don't! Please don't do it!" begged Bunnie.

Mecha Shadow was having none of it. He was loyal to Dr. Eggman only and nobody else's orders would work on him. His plasma cannons prepared to let Bunnie have it directly in the head but just as they were powering up, Tails leaped on Mecha Shadow and covered his optics with his hands. Mecha Shadow immediately went on a mad firing episode due to the fact he couldn't see anything and his first response was just to shoot in any random direction and hope to hit someone in blind luck. Seeing as Mecha Shadow was distracted, Bunnie picked herself up, straining heavily as she forced herself onto her feet and she staggered, very slowly, away from him. Tails, despite Mecha Shadow's heavy squirming and mad firing, managed to hold onto Mecha Shadow's head and keep his optics covered. Mecha Shadow couldn't see anything with Tails' hands over his optics so Sonic and friends would have more of an advantage over the Mecha-genetic experiment hedgehog.

"Ruben, beat him up while I have his eyes covered!" yelled Tails.

The water panther, who had used his water powers to get down from Eggman's headquarters and over Robotropolis, ran up to Mecha Shadow as fast as his legs would let him. Unfortunately,

Mecha Shadow grabbed Tails by his wrists and let the fox have it with a powerful, painful electrical shock that surged up his small body and made him scream at the top of his voice. Ruben leaped into the air, did a fancy ninja twirl and hurtled foot-first towards Mecha Shadow just as he finished shocking Tails. Mecha Shadow threw the injured fox off of his head and straight into Ruben, knocking him clean out of the sky and sending him sprawling on the ground. Tails lay on the ground, panting heavily. Faint smoke drifted up from his fur due to the sheer power of the electrical shock Mecha Shadow had given him. Had he shocked him any longer, the shock would have killed him so Tails was lucky to be alive. Ruben lifted the front half of his body up with his arms and he saw the barely conscious Tails lying just in front of him.

"Tails, are you alright?" asked Ruben with a heavy tone of concern in his voice.

"I'm…I'm…I'm…fine…" whispered Tails hoarsely "I've…just had a…painful electric…shock…"

"I know, from Mecha Shadow." said Ruben "I'll trickle some water on you to make you feel better."

"No…Ruben I'm…fine honest…" said Tails feebly as Ruben put his hands gently on his back.

"You most certainly are not Tails old buddy." said Ruben sternly "That shock's done a number on you! You need some soothing done little guy."

Ruben closed his eyes and focused as he let water trickled out from the palms of his hands and all over Tails' lovely yellow fur. The cool chill from Ruben's water began to make Tails feel much better already. Unfortunately, it seemed bath time was over as Mecha Shadow ran towards the two Mobians with his claws bared. Ruben freaked and accidentally let Mecha Shadow have it with a jet of water. But he wouldn't have to worry about getting Mecha Shadow wet as Mecha Shadow had a shield generator in his torso and he activated it, shielding himself from the jet of water Ruben accidentally shot at him. Ruben stopped squirting Mecha Shadow and stared in surprise at Mecha Shadow. He was relieved to see he

didn't drench him as Mecha Shadow, like all the other Robians, wasn't water proof so squirting him would have destroyed him had Mecha Shadow not defended himself. But that meant Mecha Shadow had a defence system and it would be impossible to hurt him. However, Mecha Shadow was just as cocky as the real Shadow so he wouldn't be a coward and rely on his shield unless necessary so he wouldn't be using it much. Mecha Shadow switched off his shield and prepared to do battle.

"Well, I'm glad I don't have to worry about accidentally drenching him." said Ruben "Just an inconvenience he has a way of blocking our attacks."

"Then we'd…best attack him before…he can use another shield." said Tails, forcing himself back onto his feet and bending down in a battle-ready stance.

"You got that right." said Ruben "And luckily for me, I happen to be exceptionally quick in battle so Mecha Shadow won't see me coming in time to raise his shield!"

He ran towards Mecha Shadow and top speed and jumped into the air. He did an amazing somersault and he landed foot-first on top of Mecha Shadow's head. The attack made Mecha Shadow fall over onto his knees and he grumbled a robotical groan. Ruben landed behind Mecha Shadow and he pounced on him but Mecha Shadow backhanded him across the battlefield before he could even get near him. Ruben skidded painfully across his side and grimaced in pain. He picked himself up and waited for Mecha Shadow to come to him. Mecha Shadow skated towards him much like the real Shadow did and he fired his plasma cannons at him. Ruben performed a tactic her performed on the oil-rig heist a while ago*. He grabbed the cannon blasts in his hands and threw them away. The blasts hit the ground and made cannon blast shaped holes in the ground. Martial arts masters were capable of catching anything in their hands due to how amazing and mysteriously powerful they were. Ruben tried to resist the urge to throw the cannon blasts at Mecha Shadow as they would likely destroy him. He focused hard on throwing them to the side as Mecha Shadow fired them at him. Mecha Shadow however, skated closer and closer to Ruben. So close in fact, catching cannon blasts was not an option anymore so Ruben decided to let Mecha

Shadow have it with in uppercut to the chin. Mecha Shadow staggered backwards and he rubbed his metallic chin better. Ruben leaped into the air and just as he was at Mecha Shadow's eye height, he rapidly kicked Mecha Shadow in the face. As he did that, Mecha Shadow was forced backwards by the attacking water panther and Ruben delivered all of his blows strongly and accurately. Unfortunately, Mecha Shadow decided to unleash a Chaos Blast on Ruben. Even when roboticized, he could use a Chaos Blast and due to the enhancements of his robotic body, he could use it without removing his inhibitor rings. Ruben was hit by the blast and sent hurling through the air like a dart hurling towards the dartboard. Ruben landed very painfully on the ground in a position that looked like he about broke his back in the process. Ruben lay uncomfortably on his side and tried to get his spine to bend and knit properly. Even as a robot, Shadow's Chaos Blast was something to worry about so Mecha Shadow had to be taken down as quickly as possible. Mecha Shadow smirked at Ruben and he deployed his plasma cannons. He aimed them at Ruben and he prepared to shoot the poor water panther. Ruben couldn't do anything as he was too hurt to get back up. He tried to get up onto his feet but the pain in his back was too much for him. Mecha Shadow prepared to blast Ruben and kill him but Sonic, who had recovered from his earlier onslaught, spin-dashed Mecha Shadow in the back and knocked him onto his face. Sonic quickly leaped over to Ruben and he helped him stand back on his feet. The water panther rubbed his throbbing back tenderly.

"You OK bud?" asked Sonic.

"Once my spine doesn't feel like an unstable Jenga blocks tower I'll be fine." muttered Ruben "I landed rather awkwardly after being blasted by Mecha Shadow's Chaos Blast. Mecha Shadow seems to have all the powers of Shadow the Hedgehog plus additional weapons. He's not going to be easy to defeat."

"He wasn't easy to defeat when he was Shadow so Mecha Shadow's going to be even more of a problem." muttered Sonic "We can't stay here and fight him or he'll kill us all. We've gotta get outta here."

"But what about Shadow? We can't leave him behind." protested

Ruben "Mother always told me "Never to leave a valuable comrade behind in the heat of battle. It's the ultimate dishonour and it destroys friendships as they'll feel betrayed and abandoned."."

"As much as I agree with what your mother says Ruben, we have to leave." said Sonic "Mecha Shadow is too powerful for us and we're just gonna get mashed into chilli-sauce if we carry on. Besides, Shadow's a robot now, he hasn't got any emotions or thoughts about us being pals, he won't give a darn about being left behind."

"Of course." said Ruben "His old memories are non-existent because of his roboticization."

"Correct." said Sonic "I'll gather up Tails and Bunnie and then we'll scram for it."

But Mecha Shadow had other ideas. Before Sonic could even turn around and run off, Mecha Shadow spin-dashed Sonic and sent him hurling over Ruben's head. Sonic landed rather sharply on his stomach and he grimaced in pain. Sonic picked himself up and scowled at Mecha Shadow.

"Do you mind hitting me when I'm actually ready for you Shadow-Butt?" snapped Sonic "It really is annoying when you villains tag me by surprise!"

"Your-child-ish-quips-will-get-you-no-where-Sonic." droned Mecha Shadow "Stand-down-or-I-will-ex-ter-min-ate-you."

"Exterminate me?" laughed Sonic "What do you think you are? An exterminator? Well you aren't killing any annoying little pests today Shadow!"

Sonic jumped up and gave Mecha Shadow an upper-kick to the face. Mecha Shadow retaliated with a powerful backhand that sent Sonic hurling for ten meters. Mecha Shadow then proceeded to throw some Chaos Spears at Sonic. He was still capable of doing that despite being a Robian now. The Chaos Spears it Sonic and singed his arms and legs just as he stood up. Sonic grumbled to himself and he spin-dashed towards Mecha Shadow. Mecha Shadow spin-dashed too and the two hedgehogs bounced off each

other. They spin-dashed towards each other and ricocheted off of each other again. They spin-dashed towards each other once again but Mecha Shadow overpowered Sonic and sent him hurling into the ground. Bunnie sneaked up behind Mecha Shadow and she grabbed him by the shoulder. Mecha Shadow grabbed Bunnie and hurled her over onto her back. The Rabbot picked herself up and sucker-punched Mecha Shadow directly in the face. Mecha Shadow retaliated with a punch to the gut and then a punch to the face on Bunnie. Bunnie rubbed her nose better and she lifted her left leg up. She drew her leg back and kicked Mecha Shadow in the torso at full force. Mecha Shadow skidded backwards but he was back on the attack. He spin-dashed towards Bunnie but instead of spin-dashing her directly, he aimed down at the ground and cleaved his way straight through it. He churned through the rock solid earth and sent chunks flying behind him. He dug straight down into the ground and vanished from sight. Bunnie raised her fists and waited for Mecha Shadow to come back up to the surface. But Mecha Shadow didn't come back to the surface. His hands reach out from the ground behind and he grabbed Bunnie by her ankles. He pulled Bunnie straight down into the ground until only her shoulders and head were sticking out of the ground. He dug his way back up from the ground and buried Bunnie with earth and rock. Bunnie was now firmly fixed into the ground with no way of escaping. She couldn't move and she couldn't break free. She was stuck fast. Bunnie squirmed and struggled but she couldn't move at all. She was firmly buried in the hole Mecha Shadow made trapped her in. She was absolutely powerless. Mecha Shadow smirked at the trapped Rabbot and he prepared to blast her with his cannons. Tails however had recovered from the painful electrical shock and he flew towards Mecha Shadow. He had picked up some stones Mecha Shadow sent flying after he dug into the ground and he threw the stones at Mecha Shadow. The stones pinged off Mecha Shadow's armour and he spun around angrily. He began shooting at Tails but Tails flew around to dodge the blasts. Mecha Shadow growled a robotical growl and he chased after Tails, leaving Bunnie to try and squirm free from the hole she was trapped in. But try as she might, not even her great strength could get her out of this. She looked around for help. Sonic and Tails were occupied with Mecha Shadow whereas Ruben wasn't doing anything right now.

"Nnngh! Nugh! Ugh! Ruben! Ah'm stuck! Help me!" cried Bunnie pitifully as she struggled.

Ruben instantly ran over to Bunnie he surveyed her current situation. He frowned at the burial and wondered how he was going to get Bunnie out of this.

"How's that for misfortune?" he muttered "You've been solidly buried by Mecha Shadow. I don't think I'd be able to dig you free Bunnie. Unless of course, I made the earth softer by giving it a little drench."

"But what if yo' water trickles down mah body and short-circuits mah robot parts?" squeaked Bunnie "Ah'll go up in smoke sugah!"

"Damn it! You're right!" groaned Ruben, smacking his forehead "Your robot parts aren't water proof! I guess I'm going to have to dig you out regardless of how hard this earth is."

He bent down on his knees and tried digging around Bunnie's shoulders. The earth was too thick and solid for Ruben's fingers to scratch through. Ruben maybe a keen digger but he couldn't dig through anything. The thick, solid earth was made worse by the stones that Mecha Shadow had used to bury Bunnie and trap her. Ruben chipped away pitifully at the earth but he couldn't make any progress.

"It's no good, the earth's too thick." he grumbled.

"Then how ah'm ah gonna git outta here?" wailed Bunnie.

"Maybe you could try shooting yourself out with your jets?" suggested Ruben "You know? Those jets you have in your roboticized feet? Surely they're powerful enough to blast you out like a firework?"

"Ah'll try sugah." said Bunnie uncertainly.

She activated her jets. Jet fumes blazed out from the soles of her feet, which were buried with the rest of her body, and they tried to push Bunnie up out of the ground. Bunnie's jets were powerful engines and Bunnie knew it from using them so much. Not even being buried up to her shoulders could stop them. With a mighty

strain and push of the jets, Bunnie popped straight out of the ground like a rocket. She flew up into the air but she stopped herself and flew back down to the ground. Bunnie flexed her arms and wriggled her metal toes. She beamed with pride. She was free from that hole at last!

"Ah'm free! Yee-Haw!" she squealed, punching the air with her robot arm "Thanks ya'll little Ruben!" she cried, giving the water panther a tight hug of appreciation.

"Think nothing of it." said Ruben modestly as Bunnie put him down "We water panthers lover to help others and right now, I want to help Sonic stall Mecha Shadow long enough for us to retreat."

"Well then sugah, let's go and help sugah-hog then!" cried Bunnie happily.

She and Ruben charged over to Mecha Shadow, who as fending off double-attacks from Sonic and Tails. Bunnie and Ruben both jumped towards Mecha Shadow and they prepared to punch him but Mecha Shadow threw Chaos Spears at them both. Bunnie and Ruben were both stricken by the Chaos Spears and they landed sharply on their sides. Sonic and Tails both attacked Mecha Shadow with a pair of kicks that knocked him onto his back.

"Well Tails, it seems Shadow doesn't want us to leave." said Sonic.

"It seems so." said Tails grimly "Guess we're gonna have to fight for our getaway."

Mecha Shadow picked himself up and prepared to do battle once again. The four Mobians formed a square around him and they prepared to leap on him…

Meanwhile in Eggman's headquarters, Dr. Eggman was awaiting updates from his worldwide Robian army. He was sitting back in his chair and relaxing peacefully. He couldn't stop grinning to himself and thinking about his most recent victory over Sonic and his friends. After months of fighting, he'd finally managed to roboticize

all of Mobius and become ruler of Mobius. His reign hadn't been off to a good start as there were five Mobians left to roboticize. He didn't know about Shadow's roboticization yet so he thought he still had five Mobians to deal with. It didn't matter how many Mobians he had to deal with. He had billions of robot slaves so five measly Mobians had no chance against him, even if one of the only remaining Mobians was Sonic the Hedgehog, his primary nemesis. Not even Sonic and his invincible nature could stop him now.

"A worldwide Robian army." he said to himself "I still wonder to myself why I never used that roboticizer to it's full power in the first place. I feel stupid for delaying my victory but it doesn't matter now I've finally gotten it. Mobius is mine and soon, I'll return home to bonny old Earth and make that mine too! Sonic can try all he wants to stop me in my tracks, he will never defeat me now!"

His gloating was interrupted by the arrival of his faithful new sidekick, Katherine the Fem-bot, former prison warden of the Sentinel Blockade which was destroyed by Shadow the Hedgehog**. Katherine clanked up silently to Dr. Eggman and she tapped him on the shoulder to catch his attention. Dr. Eggman got up from his seat and he turned around to face his sleek, sadistic and loyal servant-bot who was filling in the space the late Alonzo the Butler Bot once filled.

"Katherine my beautiful little servant." said Dr. Eggman with a wide smile on his face "Am I to assume you're here to tell me something?"

Katherine nodded her faceless, horned head.

"What do you wish to tell your glorious master Dr. Eggman then?" asked Dr. Eggman.

Katherine didn't say anything for she had no voice of her own. She grabbed Dr. Eggman by the hand and led him towards a window. Katherine came up to a large window and she pointed into the distance. Dr. Eggman peered into the distance but he couldn't quite see what Katherine was pointing at.

"I can't see Katherine sweetie, an you photograph this for me?"

asked Dr. Eggman "You can zoom in on what you're looking at what with your camera like abilities I installed in you."

Katherine looked back into the distance and zoomed her vision in on the battle going on outside Robotropolis' gates. She kept her vision squarely on Mecha Shadow and she photographed him. She then turned to Dr. Eggman and showed her the picture of Mecha Shadow by projecting her photo into a hologram out of her visor. Dr. Eggman's reaction was predictable to say the least. His glasses almost fell off his nose in surprise.

"Oh…my…gosh…with a big fat G!" he blurted, fighting hard to catch his breath "Shadow…

Shadow has been roboticized? Oh ho, ho, ho, ho! What a brilliant turn of events this is! Shadow the Hedgehog is mine once again and unlike the real Shadow, Mecha Shadow will be loyal to me and me only! Now I've got Shadow AND Rouge under my control once again!"

Katherine just nodded silently in agreement.

"I knew programming the roboticizer to roboticize any Mobian that tries to get into the chamber was a good idea." said Dr. Eggman "Just a pity it didn't get everybody at once. Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben will now what my game is now and they won't fall for the trick like Shadow did. Oh well, Mecha Shadow will pile-dive them like there's no tomorrow and he'll deliver them to me to be roboticized. THEN total victory will be mine!"

Katherine played an assortment of pre-recorded voices to Dr. Eggman. The voices ranged from a showgirl to an army general to a navy commander.

"I recommend *sending in* **reinforcements so we have** *A BETTER CHANCE* of capturing **THE HEDGEHOG** sir." the voices said.

Dr. Eggman put a finger to his lips and thought on that idea for a moment.

"Katherine, as strong as Mecha Shadow will be, I think he could do

with some back up." said Dr. Eggman "I'll set Mechas Knuckles, Shade, Wilson, Mandy, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Geoffrey and Rouge out all at once to assist Mecha Shadow. Sonic will never defeat all of them, especially as Shadow is now on my side and not his. Give the order to the Mechas I've just mentioned Katherine. Tell them to assist Mecha Shadow immediately. If you want, you can join in the battle too as you're combat-worthy enough to fight Sonic."

Katherine obeyed and she sent Dr. Eggman's message, which she recorded while he was talking, to the fore mentioned Mechas. Sonic's fight was just about to get even harder now Eggman was sending all of these Robians and Katherine to get him…

Back outside, Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben tried all fighting Mecha Shadow at once. After all, Mecha Shadow was likely to have trouble fighting everybody at once, regardless of how powerful he was. Despite that idea, Mecha Shadow was still holding his own against them and due to being a powerful robot, he had tremendous stamina and endurance so knocking him down and keeping him down was far easier side then done. Sonic and Mecha Shadow linked arms with one another and they pushed on each other as hard as they could. They tried to overpower one another in this pushing match of theirs. Since Mecha Shadow was occupied with Sonic, that gave Bunnie the perfect opportunity to leap in and round house punch him with her robotic fist. Mecha Shadow staggered away from Sonic, who then decided to spin-dash Mecha Shadow and knock him over onto his back. Mecha Shadow picked himself up, only to get tripped up by Ruben who roundhouse kicked him in the legs. Mecha Shadow tried to get back up but Bunnie pounded him on his cranium and knocked him back down. She pinned Mecha Shadow down with her foot and transformed her robot arm into a cannon. She pointed the cannon at Mecha Shadow and prepared to pull the trigger.

"Stay down if you know what's good for you ugly!" she yelled at him, keeping her cannon pointed at Mecha Shadow's head.

" 'Snicker!' Ha, ha, ha! You wouldn't say that to Shadow boy if he was his old self Bunnie!" giggled Sonic, tickled by Bunnie's little

remark.

"Ah wouldn't dream of it sugah." said Bunnie with a grin on her beautiful face "Since poor Shadow's been roboticized, he doesn't mind what ah say to him."

Mecha Shadow suddenly elbowed Bunnie in the leg and knocked her off his back. Mecha Shadow picked himself up and grabbed Bunnie by the throat. He hoisted the Rabbot up to his height and glared at her with his red glowing optics.

"I-do-mind-what-you-say-to-me-cyborg." growled Mecha Shadow "And-I-say-I-do-not-tol-er-ate-your-child-ish-in-sults. I-will-ex-ter-min-ate-you-for-that."

He bared his claws and tried to plunge them into Bunnie's chest but Bunnie kicked him in the stomach and made him drop her onto the floor. Bunnie transformed her cannon back into a hand and she gut-punched Mecha Shadow. Mecha Shadow retaliated by slashing Bunnie across the chest. Bunnie screamed a blood-curdling cry of pain and she clutched her chest, which had four red, vicious cuts trickling with blood. Mecha Shadow took the opportunity to gut-punch Bunnie and then kick her with an upwards kick that knocked the Rabbot over onto her back. He prepared to slash her again but Tails flew in behind him and roundhouse kicked him in the head while hovering behind him. Mecha Shadow swiped at Tails but he missed and Ruben pile-dived him in the back. Mecha Shadow retaliated with a callous elbow to the gut that made Ruben wheeze so loudly he sounded like he was going to hack up his own lungs. Mecha Shadow blasted at Ruben with his plasma cannons but Ruben leaped out of the way of the blasts. The force of the impact sent Ruben hurling through the air in a cartwheel fashion and he landed sharply on his back. Tails flew in and punched Mecha Shadow as he whizzed past and Mecha Shadow almost fell onto his side. Mecha Shadow activated some jets he had in his feet and he flew up after Tails. Tails panicked and he tried to fly away from Mecha Shadow but Mecha Shadow was too fast for him and he caught the fox in his claws. He flew down towards the ground and slammed Tails down on the ground like a rugby ball. Tails lay on the ground in excruciating pain and he tried rubbing himself better. Mecha Shadow stood before Tails and he prepared to blast him but

Sonic spin-dashed him in the side just as his cannons were primed and ready. Mecha Shadow skidded across the ground and he spin-dashed Sonic. Sonic hurtled backwards and he landed painfully on his bottom. Sonic rubbed his sore bum better and he prepared to do battle once again. Mecha Shadow threw a Chaos Spear at Sonic but Sonic dodged the spear and spin-dashed towards Mecha Shadow. Mecha Shadow caught Sonic in his hands and threw him straight into the ground. Sonic cleaved his way through the ground until he stopped and he back flipped out of the hole he made. He landed behind Mecha Shadow and he spin-dashed him in the back. Mecha Shadow landed with a sharp clunk on his stomach and he groaned in pain. Sonic tried to pile-dive him in the back but Mecha Shadow warped out of his way and re-appeared away from Sonic. Sonic charged towards Mecha Shadow but Mecha Shadow leaped over Sonic and spin-dashed into the ground. He dug straight down in the ground and disappeared from sight. Sonic kept his senses alert for Mecha Shadow coming back up and he waited for him to re-appear. As you would expect, Mecha Shadow came straight up through the ground underneath Sonic and the hedgehog hurtled up into the air. Mecha Shadow stopped the spin-dash and he cupped his hands together. He slammed them down on Sonic's head and sent him hurling into the ground below. Before he could fly down to the ground and deck him some more, Bunnie fired at him and shot him clean out of the sky. Mecha Shadow landed with a heavy clunk on the ground that left him with dents on his torso and his left arm was singed and burned. Some panelling had been chipped away by the blast so you could see some of the circuitry in his arm. Mecha Shadow glowered at his injury and he snarled like a rabid dog. He picked himself up and prepared to do battle with the last four Mobians in existence. Sonic picked himself up from the ground where he landed and he, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben lined up together and they prepared to continue the battle.

"Stop this battle already Mecha Shadow!" yelled Sonic "We wanna leave this place, not fight you so stop fighting us and let us leave already!"

"Neg-a-tive-Sonic." growled Mecha Shadow "I-must-cap-ture-you-all-and-give-you-to-Dr.-Egg-Man-and-let-him-ro-bot-i-cize-you-all-and-com-plete-his-Robian-army. This-fight-will-go-on-until-you-are-

all-captured."

"Well tough crud buddy, you ain't getting your hands on us!" retorted Sonic "Stand down and let us go!"

Mecha Shadow refused to move. He just raised his arms and prepared to blast them to slag. Sonic sniffed at him and he prepared to fight on.

"Go ahead, you'll only wish you did as you were told Mecha Shadow!" grumbled Sonic.

But then at this very moment, Dr. Eggman's reinforcements for Mecha Shadow all decided to show up and join the battle. Out from Robotropolis flew Mecha Knuckles, Mecha Shade, Mecha Rouge, Mecha Amy, Mecha Cream, Mecha Cosmo, Mecha Wilson, Mecha Mandy and Mecha Geoffrey and they all touched down and formed a circle around the Mobians, surrounding them and keeping them contained. Mecha Shadow smirked a metallic smirk at the cornered Mobians.

"Looks-like-the-odds-are-evened." he sneered.

The Mechas all prepared to unleash hell on the Mobians by bending down in battle-ready stances and readying their weapons. Sonic's quills drooped down in despair and he lowered his fists.

"Well, this wasn't what I expected to happen!" he spluttered "All our friends are joining in this fight!"

To make things even worse, Katherine flew out from Robotropolis and touched down just in front of Sonic the Hedgehog. The hedgehog stepped back and stared at Katherine as she turned around to face him. She stared at Sonic with her emotionless, blank, empty, cactus shaped visor. The visor suddenly lit up and it showed Dr. Eggman's face and Dr. Eggman's voice rang out from Katherine's audio-receptors.

"Well if it isn't Sonic the Hedgehog, here to foil my schemes again!" sneered Dr. Eggman "Only you seem to be caught between a rock and a hard place right now! What misfortune for you eh Sonic?"

"You could say that Eggo." muttered Sonic "Who's the female robot that's talking with your voice that's standing before me?"

"This is my new servant bot Katherine." explained Dr. Eggman "She used to be a prison warden for a prison run by me personally. Shadow destroyed it though and Alonzo's dead so now I have to use her as my servant bot. She's much better then Alonzo as she is loyal, is able to fight and she cannot annoy me with stupid quips and insults as she's unable to speak."

"So she's mute?" mused Sonic "Fine by me, Alonzo was annoying whenever he spoke so Kat here can't annoy me. Anyway, I'm really disappointed in you for daring to roboticize all of Mobius at once! How did you do it you monster? Finally decided to make a roboticizer big enough to do so?"

"I did actually." said Dr. Eggman "When Robotropolis was built, I had a giant roboticizer stored in the centre of the base and I modified it to spread it's waves out all over the planet. And now I have a worldwide Robian army at my beck and call! How's that for genius Sonic?"

"This isn't genius! This is evil Dr. Eggman!" shouted Tails angrily "I'm shocked to see you can use something as wonderful as science for such unspeakable evil! How could you abuse the magic of science like this?"

"Tails, people use their skills for different things." snapped Dr. Eggman "I fortunately, know how to use my scientific know how to it's best potential and look where it's got me, a worldwide army of Robians ready to serve me and make me ruler of the world!"

"Why can't you use your genius for good things Dr. Eggman?" screeched Tails angrily "You're such a clever person you are and your genius could bring great peace to Mobius and improve the lifestyles of races everywhere!"

"Because there's nothing worth using science for that can be considered "good" on any terms." said Dr. Eggman grimly "Besides, using my science for my personal gain's given me much more then what using it for good would ever get me so I'm never going to do

something so weak and foolish as that little Tails!"

Tails just fumed angrily at Dr. Eggman, disgusted how he was using his scientific knowledge for evil purposes instead of good like he should be doing.

"Mechas, seize those Mobians and bring them to me!" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

His image switched off and Katherine's visor returned to being black. The fem-bot bared her long, thin, sharp claws. She advanced slowly on Sonic and friends and prepared to grab them. The others advanced on the Mobians too with their claws bared and ready to grab them. Sonic, Tails, Bunnie and Ruben all stood together, back-to-back and staring helplessly at the Robians coming to them.

"What are we gonna do Sonic?" asked Tails worriedly.

"I'll tell you what we're gonna do." said Sonic "I'm gonna blow these guys away! You, Bunnie and Ruben get outta here now! I'll keep them busy!"

"You can't possibly take them all on at once sugah-hog!" screeched Bunnie "They'll rip ya'll to little bits!"

"I'm not taking them all on at once." said Sonic "I'm gonna blow them away with a Sonic Tornado. That'll buy us enough time to escape now you, Tails and Ruben get outta here now!"

Tails, Bunnie and Ruben obeyed and they escaped from the circle of Robians. Tails and Bunnie flew out of the circle whereas Ruben catapulted himself out with a jet of water and he landed outside of the Robian circle. The Robians continued advancing on Sonic though as they were more focused on him then the others. Sonic however, ran around them in a supersonic circle. He ran around the Robians so fast that he became a big blue, circular blur circling around the Robians at a terrific speed. The Robians didn't know what to do about this so they just waited to see what Sonic was doing. Sonic ran around them faster and faster until the circle began to expand upwards into a tornado. This was the Sonic Tornado, one of Sonic's best moves and one he only used in desperate situations

as it tired him out afterwards. The tornado grabbed everybody with the speed and power of the winds inside and the Robians all spun around and around in the tornado. Sonic didn't keep it going for much longer as he didn't want to accidentally destroy the Robians in the process. He stopped spinning and waited for the tornado to die down. The tornado drifted away and the Robians all collapsed on the ground dizzily and they lay there, wondering what to do right now. Now the Robians were defeated, Sonic ran for it as fast as he possibly could. He charged away from Robotropolis at top speed and Bunnie, Tails and Ruben followed him with their respective transport methods. They all fled the scene and left the Robians and Katherine to do nothing but lie there and wonder what the heck they were supposed to be doing. They were just too dizzy. Dr. Eggman had seen what had happened from inside his headquarters and he growled to himself.

"Damn that rodent! Damn that rodent again and damn all his friends!" he roared angrily "He's managed to evade me again! Well he can run all he likes, he'll never be safe from me! I have Robians all over the world! He can run but he cannot hide from me! All my Robians have been ordered to find him so they'll be on the look out for him! I'll catch him eventually, it's just a matter of time until he falls victim to my Robian army!"

He cackled to himself as he pictured Sonic's captured in his evil little head…

As for Sonic, he and the others had retreated to the Great Forest, home of the legendary Lake of Rings, the one place on Mobius Eggman knew nothing about so it would take a while for his Robian army to find them here. They all sat down by the lake's edge and they watched the calm still water that made them feel a lot more relaxed then before. Ruben, due to his love for water, decided to go for a dip in the lake to ease his pain and bruises from the earlier battle. He removed his gloves and boots and left them on the lake side and he went into the lake up to his neck. He sighed happily and he put his hands behind his head.

"Aaaah that feels good." he said "Nothing like a soothing dip in a

lake to soothe the pain I've received from the battle."

"Better enjoy it while you can Ruben." muttered Tails "Because when Eggman makes Mobius his at last, he'll turn all traces of water into oil."

"I gathered that would be something he would do." said Ruben quietly as he let his radiant blue fur have a good soak "So I'll make the most of this little dip while I can."

"You don't need to Ruben." said Sonic "Because we're gonna save everybody! We're gonna save Mobius from Eggman's tyranny and we're gonna de-roboticize everybody!"

"Sonic, you can't be serious about this!" blurted Tails.

"I am serious Tails and you've been with me long enough to know when I'm serious." snapped Sonic.

"But Sonic, this is impossible!" cried Tails "There's billions of Mobians all under Eggman's control, some our friends, the rest aren't, and there's only four of us! How can WE possibly standing against such a vast army? Especially since Shadow's now on Eggman's side and he got roboticized the moment he tried to enter the roboticizer chamber! We are beaten and Eggman has won and there's nothing we can do about it!"

Sonic grabbed Tails firmly by the shoulders and he jammed his face into his.

"There's no such thing as impossible." said Sonic dryly "Nothing's impossible Tails and you know it."

"But…" protested Tails.

"Was it impossible to save me when I was roboticized?***" asked Sonic sharply "Was it impossible to stop Horda, Borda and Rorda when they tried to split the planet apart****? Was it impossible to save me from Marik's energy diamond voodoo*****? Was it impossible to stop Imperator Ix from destroying the world with his Dark Chaos Energy******?"

"No but…" began Tails

"NOTHING is impossible Tails!" repeated Sonic loudly "It is not impossible to stop Dr. Eggman from having Mobius under his control! Especially as I have a plan!"

"You do sugah-hog?" piped Bunnie "What might that be then?"

"I am going over to Robotropolis to let myself be roboticized." said Sonic.

Tails, Bunnie and Ruben stared at Sonic as if he'd just said something stupid.

"WHAT?" they all screamed in unison.

"Sugah-hog! You can't do that! You'll be Eggman's mindless minion again!" screeched Bunnie.

"Wrong Bunnie." sneered Sonic "Because I have something that'll let me keep my free will."

"What's that then?" asked Tails eagerly.

Sonic didn't say anything. He just pointed at the lake, which was bubbling in the centre. a magical ring was going to appear at any minute now. Ruben saw the bubbling and he swam over to it. A ring shot out from the waters, it's radiant golden glow earning a stargazed stare from everybody who saw it. Ruben jumped up and grabbed the ring before it could go back down into the water. Ruben swam back to shore with it and he gave it to Sonic. Sonic showed them the ring that had come up from the water.

"This." said Sonic "It restored my mind back to normal when it got mutated by Marik's diamond so it'll restore my freewill when I get roboticized."

"Why do you need to roboticize yourself?" asked Tails.

"So I can trick Eggman into thinking he's got me and then I'll unleash hell on his headquarters." explained Sonic "Not to mention, I'll be strong enough to match the Robians. While I'm doing that, you'll be

sabotaging the roboticizer and getting it to de-roboticize everybody."

"But won't we get roboticize once we step into the room like Shadow did?" asked Ruben.

"You will." said Sonic "Which is why I'm going to let you all use this ring to restore your freewill as well as mine. We'll be the only Robians on Mobius that are disloyal to Dr. Eggman."

"Sonic, that is the best plan you've ever come up with." said Tails.

"Thank you Tails." said Sonic with pride "Now let's kick back for a minute and then we can go over to Robotropolis and end this madness once and for all!"

Sonic's plan was brilliant and it was sure to work. Many things could go horribly wrong in this plan though. It was risky but it was their best option and they had to take it or Mobius would be a robot planet forever…

Footnotes:

***See Stories 64-66**

**** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 8: The Sentinel Blockade***

***** See Stories 12-14**

****** See Story 45**

******* See Story 25**

******** See Stories 71-74**

Sonic has a plan but will it work? Maybe it will or maybe it won't find out for yourself next time on Heroes of Mobius! Reviews are welcome (why wouldn't they be?) Lol.

Planet of Steel Part 3

Story 83: Planet of Steel Part 3: Battle of the Mechas

Dr. Eggman was sitting in his headquarters basking in glory over his most recent victory. He had managed to roboticize all of Mobius at once, save for four Mobians, and he was now on top of his game at this very moment. His greatest enemy Sonic the Hedgehog had been forced into hiding due to the recent events that have been happening and Dr. Eggman had ordered all the Robians of Mobius to go and find Sonic and bring him to Robotropolis for roboticization. His friends Tails the twin-tailed fox, Bunnie Rabbot the partially roboticized rabbit and Ruben the Water Panther had survived being roboticized too so the Robians were on the look out for them too. Once they found the last four Mobians left in existence, they would take them to Robotropolis and Dr. Eggman would wipe out the Mobian race by roboticizing them and at long last, he will have won this silly little war game of his and conquered Mobius at long last. He was considering renaming the planet "Robius" much like how roboticized-Mobians were called "Robians" so calling Mobius "Robius" would be very fitting indeed. Despite his glorious victory, Dr. Eggman couldn't stop letting Sonic's escape gnaw at his head like a dog on a bone. Even though he was sure to win what with having billions of minions under his control, he couldn't help but think Sonic would somehow come out on top in the end since Sonic always wins in the long run. But that was mostly due to outside interference or Sonic's friends being a pain and since Sonic only had three left, he wasn't going to get as much help as he usually did. Still, he had to capture Sonic before he stopped him once again. He turned to face his robotic woman servant Katherine, who stood motionlessly beside him as silent as a grave.

"Any news from my Robian army?" asked Dr. Eggman.

Katherine shook her head. Dr. Eggman grumbled to himself impatiently.

"How hard is it to find one slaggin' hedgehog?" he grumbled to

himself "Sonic can't hide anywhere from me, I have the entire population of Mobius under control! There's Robians no matter where he runs so how is he evading me all this time?"

He tugged on his moustache in frustration.

"I know I've won at last but with Sonic on the loose, I can't relax yet!" he whined "Sonic's making me feel all jittery and uneasy due to the fact he's still at large and I haven't managed to get the Chaos Emeralds off him yet so he might use them in someway or another to save the day! Or he might have some kind of plan and he'll use it to stop me and save his stupid little planet! I must get that hedgehog or…"

Katherine suddenly interrupted Dr. Eggman by playing a recorded sound effect from an old children's cartoon.

"Relax will ya?" played the sound "Stress ain't good for ya health ya know!"

Dr. Eggman stopped fretting and he settled down in his chair.

"Sorry Katherine." said Dr. Eggman "I really shouldn't worry at all. Sonic can't possibly beat me now. He's not smart enough to think of a way to get past my roboticizer. If he tries to get in it, he'll just get roboticized just like Shadow did. So even if he has a plan, it won't work. Total extinction of the Mobian race is inevitable and I shall have the biggest robot army known to all the galaxy!"

Katherine nodded in agreement.

"Maybe I should send Mecha Shadow to apprehend the hedgehog." thought Dr. Eggman "He's bound to get him. Mecha Shadow is my most powerful Robian of all."

Katherine then suddenly displayed a holographic image from her visor and showed Dr. Eggman a Robian's visual contact. Dr. Eggman could see whatever this Robian was seeing right now. And this Robian could see Sonic the Hedgehog zooming towards him with Tails, Bunnie and Ruben following him with their respective transportation methods. They zoomed past the Robian at top speed

and they whizzed off into the distance. The Robian ran after them but it soon lost them due to their superior speed. Dr. Eggman stroked his moustache and thought to himself.

"Is Sonic coming back to Robotropolis?" he thought to himself "If that's the case then why is he doing that? Has he finally admitted defeat so he's coming to let himself get roboticized? I hope that's the case or I am going to flip real badly if he's trying to stop me even though he knows he can't! Katherine, keep an eye on his position!"

Katherine obeyed and she tracked Sonic's coordinates. The map on her visor showed he was indeed heading for Robotropolis. Dr. Eggman could see the map on her visor and he realized his theory was correct, Sonic was coming to Robotropolis, coming to get HIM or coming to give himself up. He hoped it was the latter because an angry Sonic the Hedgehog was the last thing he needed to ruin his day right now…

Outside, Sonic the Hedgehog was zooming towards Robotropolis at top speed with no sign of slowing down or stopping. He had a plan and he was desperate to carry it out so he was going to use the full potential of his speed to get to the robot city. Tails and Bunnie were flying closely behind him with Ruben surfing on water after him. The three were doing a good job at keeping up with Sonic despite the fact he was going at his fastest speed right now (His top speed is 768 miles per hour). Sonic held on tightly to the ring while making sure he didn't accidentally activate it's power and end up using it all up by the time he reached Robotropolis. As for Robotropolis, It was only a few yards away now and with Sonic's amazing speed, he would make it there in no time. The gates to Robotropolis still hadn't been repaired from when Bunnie knocked them down before the fight with Weaponized Alonzo* so Sonic and the others were free to just zoom straight through them and into the city. They zoomed straight through the gates and past any robots stupid enough to stand in their way. The robots were either knocked over by the wind Sonic crated when running fast or sent flying through the air in a comical fashion. The Mobians zoomed straight towards Eggman's headquarters and they invited themselves inside the base by knocking the door down again. Now inside the base, the Mobians

headed to the lift they used from earlier and they went straight inside it. Tails pressed the button that said "centre floor" and the lift took them straight up to the centre floor, the very floor the roboticizer chamber was kept on. The moment the lift opened, the Mobians darted out of the lift and ran down the corridor to the steel door that contained the roboticizer pod that Eggman had used to roboticize the entire planet. Sonic stopped in front of the door and he prepared to open it.

"OK you guys, this is it." said Sonic "The moment I open this door and step into the room, I will become Mecha Sonic once again. And if all goes well, this ring will prevent me from losing my freewill."

"Mecha Sonic once again?" asked Ruben "Am I right in saying you've been roboticized before?"

"I sure have Ruben." said Sonic grimly as the bad memories from his time as Mecha Sonic flooded his head like a raging current "Eggman had a portable roboticizer machine that roboticized me**. I was turned from world's greatest hero to world's greatest villain in one swift zap. Tails managed to de-roboticize me by setting the machine in reverse and Mecha Sonic was gone for good. But now it's time for him to come out and play once again, this time as a good guy."

"Hey Sonic, ah've just realized somethin' here." said Bunnie quickly "If ah let mah self get roboticized won't mah already roboticized arm and legs explode since a roboticizer destroys anything that's already mechanical?"

Sonic thought for a moment on that.

"Hmm…that is a thought." said Sonic "Hopefully, the roboticizer will get confused and think you're a Robian or something like that. Either way, keep your shield generator handy and activate it when you step into the room just in case."

"OK sugah-hog." said Bunnie, deploying her shield generator which she rarely used.

"Or maybe you can just come with me and help me catch Eggman's

attention." suggested Sonic quickly "Yeah, that'd be much better. Me and you can cause a riot while Tails and Ruben set the roboticizer in reverse."

"I like that idea much bettah." said Bunnie, putting her shield generator away.

"Right everybody, here goes nothing!" cried Sonic, holding his breath and closing his eyes.

He gave the ring to Tails as he didn't want the ring to get roboticized too as he stepped into the room. He opened the chamber door and he stepped into the room. The moment he did, he was hit by a roboticizer beam that fired from the egg-shaped roboticizer pod in the centre of the room. Sonic yelped as he was hit by the blast and he fell onto his knees. His cobalt fur began to change into metal and his eyes turned into red emotionless optics. His quills straightened and became metal and pointy and even his gloves and shoes turned metal. Mecha Sonic had returned and he was ready to serve Dr. Eggman. Only Sonic had a way of getting his freewill so he wouldn't be back to cause trouble again. Mecha Sonic glared at Tails, Bunnie and Ruben and he advanced on them with his claws bared.

"Mobians-Priority-One." he droned "Com-men-cing-capture."

Tails immediately thrust the magical ring at Mecha Sonic and the roboticized hedgehog snatched it off of him, thinking it would be of some use to Dr. Eggman. The moment he touched the ring though, the ring glowed a radiant golden glow and it's energy surged up Mecha Sonic's circuits like an electrical current. The ring, as Amy Rose had once stated, had a negative effect on evil life and it was going to erase Mecha Sonic's evil mind and restore it back to normal. Unfortunately, the energy the ring was feeding him seemed to be a little too much as Mecha Sonic's optics were fuzzing, his body was shaking violently and he appeared to be smoking slightly. Tails immediately freaked at that sight.

"Oh no! The power's too much! It's gonna destroy him!" shrieked Tails "Get it off him!"

He lunged at Mecha Sonic and grabbed the ring frantically. He

yanked it out of Mecha Sonic's metallic grasp and the energy stopped surging up Mecha Sonic's body. Mecha Sonic collapsed onto his knees and panted heavily, the smoke fading away as it trailed out of his body. Mecha Sonic picked himself up and he rubbed his head better.

"Oooh I think that was a little too much juice for my liking!" he spluttered in his natural organic voice instead of a monotone robotic voice "Wait a minute, my voice!" he cried, clutching his throat "It's not robotic sounding! That means it must have worked! I've got my freewill back!"

"Yippee!" cried Tails happily "Your plan's working to perfection Sonic!"

"I had a feeling it would." gloated Mecha Sonic, rubbing his sharp, pointy, metal nose "Those rings freed me from Marik's Energy Diamond side effect so it was gonna free me from a Robian body. Although I'm still a robot, I can do what I like and no one can boss me around!"

"The good thing is since we took the ring off you before it could kill you, it's got some power left for me and Ruben." said Tails "We'll roboticize ourselves so we can get in the room and we'll see to setting the roboticizer in reverse."

"You do that then." said Mecha Sonic "Me and Bunnie are gonna keep Egg Brains diverted so he doesn't send anyone to stop you."

"Good luck Sonic and Bunnie." said Tails "You'll need it out there."

"I'll be just fine Tails." said Mecha Sonic cheekily "It's Eggman who needs the luck out here! Come on Bunnie, I'll pretend I've captured you and I'm escorting you to the roboticizer camber."

"OK sugah-hog." said Bunnie, running off down the corridor as if she was running away in terror from Mecha Sonic.

Mecha Sonic chuckled and he chased after Bunnie, pretending he was trying to catch her. The two ran into the elevator and in order to make Mecha Sonic's pursuit of Bunnie look more realistic and

believable, Bunnie punched her way through the top of the elevator and rocketed straight up the shaft with Mecha Sonic flying after her, keeping up with her effortlessly. If Eggman was watching this now, which he was, he would just see it as Bunnie desperately trying to escape from Mecha Sonic before he could take her to be roboticized. Tails and Ruben just laughed to themselves at how much of an act Bunnie and Mecha Sonic were putting on right now. This act would have fooled them had they not known they were only pretending.

"I never took Sonic and Bunnie to be good actors." said Ruben "Maybe they should get a career in film once this war is over."

"Perhaps." said Tails "OK, it's our turn to be roboticized. It's the only way we'll get in that room without it zapping us."

"You go first." said Ruben "I'll hand you the ring once you've finished and I'll take it off you before it gets to be too much for you."

"Alright then Ruben." said Tails, stepping into the room.

The roboticizer chamber powered up and the pod shot at Tails the moment he so much as stuck his toe into the room (it's THAT sensitive! You could stick your EYELASH in the room and it would zap you!) Tails was hit by the roboticizer beam and he fell onto his knees. His yellow fur turned into yellow armour, his trademark twin-tails became metallic and bladed at the tips, his eyes became optics and his insides became circuitry and mechanisms. Tails was now Mecha Tails and even though he was a roboticized eight-year old fox, he looked pretty scary and dangerous. His twin-tails looked more like rotor blades then tails now and his cold, icy blue optics made him look deathly serious for a kid robot. Ruben was just glad he wouldn't have to fight Mecha Tails as he had a way of restoring his freewill. Mecha Tails bared his claws at Ruben and he advanced on him but Ruben gave him the magical ring. Mecha Tails snatched it off of him but before he could throw it away, the ring's power activated and surged up his circuitry. Mecha Tails' optics went fuzzy and his metallic body began to shake vigorously. Just as his body began to steam under the onslaught, Ruben snatched the ring back off of him. Mecha Tails collapsed onto his knees and he spluttered briefly. The smoke drifted away into the air and he picked himself

up. He rubbed his metal cranium and he groaned in his normal voice instead of a robotical voice.

"I never…wanna do that again." said Mecha Tails weakly "Oh well, at least I've got my freewill back. I never thought I'd get to see what I look like as a robot but now I do."

He admired himself all over. He felt his sharp, pointy bangs, his metal claws, his metal skin and even his twin tails, which were bladed and not as articulate as his real tails.

"Gosh! I'm like a walking blade factory!" cried Mecha Tails "I'm sharp all over! Just imagine if I tried to hug Cosmo, I'd cut her clean open!"

"Well since Cosmo's a robot, you won't have to worry about that." noted Ruben "Now it's my turn to become a robot. Hold the ring for me."

Mecha Tails took the ring off Ruben. The ring didn't do anything to him because his freewill had been restored so the ring knew it had done it's duty. Ruben stepped into the roboticizer chamber and was met with a blast from the roboticizer pod. Ruben fell onto his knees as he began to transform into a robot thanks to the blast. His glorious blue fur began to become metal, his tail became sharp and metallic, his eyes turned into optics and his aqua-collar changed into metal too. Ruben was now Mecha Ruben and he had a unique feature installed in him. That being his fingers were like hose pipes and he'd be able to squirt water out of them as if he was a water shooting robot of some kind. Mecha Ruben turned around and saw Mecha Tails. In his mechanical mind, he just saw Mecha Tails as some kind of lackey so he didn't attempt to capture him or attack him. Mecha Tails handed Mecha Ruben the ring and Mecha Ruben took it, thinking it was going to be of some importance. The moment he touched the ring, the ring's power activated on him and Mecha Ruben was stricken by the golden radiance of the ring's power. Mecha Tails waited for Mecha Ruben to start smoking and after a few seconds, he began to smoke slightly so Mecha Tails quickly snatched the ring off Mecha Ruben and snapped it in two as they wouldn't need it anymore and leaving it lying around for Dr. Eggman to pick up was pretty much an invitation to suicide. Mecha Ruben shook himself off and he felt himself all over.

"That ring's power sure works." he said in his normal, proper voice "I'm myself again. Hey, I think I look good as a robot." he said as he admired his metallic body, sharp tail and steel gloves "I really do don't I? I wonder if I can still use my water powers?"

He pointed at the wall behind Mecha Tails and he squirted some water out of the nozzle in his metal finger. His fingers were like built in hose pipes and Mecha Ruben seemed to be fascinated with that little instalment.

"Nice, this roboticization thought of everything." he said with awe "Just a pity I won't be able to stay like this as we're gonna de-roboticize everybody."

"That's right." said Mecha Tails, casually strolling into the roboticizer chamber "Now we're Robians, the roboticizer doesn't need to roboticize us and we can go in without any worries."

"I'm glad I have my freewill back otherwise I'd be talking in monotone like everybody else." said Mecha Ruben, following Mecha Tails into the chamber "And monotone's a pain to listen to as the person talking to you sounds like his speech is being slowed down for the sole purpose of annoying you."

"I never understood why robots talked like that." said Mecha Tails "And yet I'm a mechanical genius so I should know."

He and Mecha Ruben were now in the roboticizer chamber which only had one feature, the giant egg-shaped pod in the centre of the room. Now they had their freewill back, they could act under their own orders and set the roboticizer in reverse, a task that would have been impossible for them to do had they still been under Eggman's control as he wouldn't be stupid enough to order his own Robians to de-roboticize everybody. Mecha Tails and Mecha Ruben looked unsurely at the giant roboticizer pod that loomed above them.

"OK…where to start?" asked Mecha Ruben.

"We're gonna have to set the pod in reverse." explained Mecha Tails "The settings to this pod must be somewhere around here…"

He scanned the pod's control panel for any possible button or dial that could change the settings on the pod. Mecha Tails had no idea what he should try as he didn't know this machine and how it worked but he couldn't just try any control on the pod. If he did something stupid like accidentally activate the roboticizer then Mobian kind would be extinct in one clean sweep of the waves and he and Ruben would be the only Mobians left as they were in the chamber so they wouldn't be affected. Although they were Robians now so Mobian kind would be gone forever if he did something like that accidentally so Mecha Tails didn't trust himself to touch any of the controls in fear of doing something like that by accident. Mecha Ruben had some kind of idea though. He kicked a panel on the side of the pod and the panel fell straight into the pod.

"Maybe you can change the settings in here?" suggested Mecha Ruben.

Mecha Tails stepped over to where Mecha Ruben was standing and he looked at the kicked in panel. Inside the pod, he could see a lot of circuitry but there was enough room for people to go inside and work on it. Mecha Tails got down on his knees and crawled inside.

"I'll see what I can do in here." said Mecha Tails "Keep an eye out for danger Ruben."

Mecha Ruben obeyed and he kept his optics fixed squarely on the door. If anyone was going to try and stop him and Mecha Tails from saving the world, he would let them have it with a jet of water, unless it was a Robian of course which in that case he would just beat the tar out of them and keep them out of the room. He began to wonder how Mecha Sonic and Bunnie were doing right now and if Eggman had caught on to their act yet. If he had then there could be a chance the plan would fall into chaos and Mobius would never be saved from Eggman's tyranny…

Meanwhile, Mecha Sonic had finally managed to "capture" Bunnie Rabbot and he was bringing her to Dr. Eggman to report he'd managed to capture her. Bunnie had her arms behind her back as if Mecha Sonic had put a pair of cuffs on her although really, Bunnie

had nothing on her wrists right now. Mecha Sonic took Bunnie into the elevator and they took it up to the top floor where Dr. Eggman was stationed.

"Okay sugah-hog, when do we spring into action?" asked Bunnie, whispering quietly to him.

"We do it to it the moment Dr. Eggman orders me to take you to the chamber." said Mecha Sonic "We'll shoot at him but not actually hit him and get Dr. Eggman to stick Mecha Shadow or anyone else on us. Then we just fight them the best we can while keeping everyone's attention on us so Eggman won't notice Tails and Ruben in the chamber."

"OK sugah-hog." said Bunnie with a wink that could charm any man "Ah've got ya'll. We do as much damage as we can in order to distract everybody."

The elevator stopped ascending and it pinged as it's doors opened up. To Sonic and Bunnie's surprise however, Katherine was standing there and waiting for them as if she knew they were coming. Dr. Eggman had seen them coming up the elevator and he sent Katherine to fetch Mecha Sonic and bring him to him. Mecha Sonic stood to attention while holding on tightly to Bunnie's shoulders, the Rabbot pretending to struggle in his grasp.

"Let go of me you robo-hog!" yelled Bunnie as she pretended to try and break free.

Mecha Sonic just held onto her even tighter. He stared straight into Katherine's visor and he spoke in a fake monotone voice. Since he had his freewill back, he didn't sound like a robot anymore so he had to speak in monotone purposely this time.

"I-have-cap-tured-one-of-the-sur-viv-ing-Mobians." he droned while trying to sound like a robot "I-have-come-to-take-her-to-Dr.-Egg-man-so-he-may-de-cide-her-fate."

Katherine, despite her intelligence, fell for the act due to how good it was and she wondered off down the corridor, leading Mecha Sonic to Dr. Eggman. Mecha Sonic roughly pushed Bunnie as he followed

Katherine to Eggman's headquarters. Katherine led them down a corridor and she turned to the left. She led them to the end of this corridor and she opened the door. The door opened and Katherine led Mecha Sonic and Bunnie into the room. This was Dr. Eggman's quarters and the fat scientist looked very pleased to see them to say the least. He sat there in his chair and he grinned happily.

"Well isn't this a surprise?" he purred to himself "Sonic the Hedgehog has given himself up to me and has allowed himself to be roboticized! And he's bought Bunnie Rabbot with him too! Even better!"

Mecha Sonic strode up to Dr. Eggman while clutching Bunnie Rabbot's shoulders. Bunnie continued to struggle in his grasp as Mecha Sonic steered her towards the fat man himself.

"Git off of me Mecha Sonic!" screeched Bunnie "Ya'll will be sorry ya messed with me!"

"Si-lence-pris-o-ner." snapped Mecha Sonic.

He stopped in front of Dr. Eggman and he "reported" to him.

"Mas-ter-I-have-cap-tured-the-Rab-bot." droned Mecha Sonic.

"Excellent!" cried Dr. Eggman "I'm so glad you've given yourself up to me Sonic and made the right choice in roboticizing yourself! You're gonna be much better off on my side then trying to beat an army of billions."

"I-do-not-under-stand-what-you-are-talk-ing-about." droned Mecha Sonic, hoping that that was the right thing for him to say right now as Robians don't usually have memories of what's happened prior to their conversion so he should pretend he didn't know anything prior to his roboticization.

"Of course you don't." said Dr. Eggman "Robians have no memories prior to their conversion. Oh well never mind, do you have the other two Mobians that dodged roboticization?" he asked.

"A-ffir-ma-tive." droned Mecha Sonic "The-Mobian-you-know-as-"Tails"-and-the-Mobian-you-know-as-"Ruben"-have-given-them-

selves-up-and-allowed-me-to-ro-bot-i-cize-them. The-Rab-bot-here-will-not-comply-so-I-had-to-cap-ture-her-and-bring-her-to-you-so-you-can-deal-with-her."

"Now isn't that wonderful?" purred Dr. Eggman "Tails has given himself up too. I'm not fully familiar with Ruben though. Is he the blue guy with the water powers?"

"A-ffir-ma-tive." droned Mecha Sonic.

"Well now he can be a water-powered robot." said Dr. Eggman "He might be good for putting out fires should I get any. Anyway, thank you for capturing Bunnie for me Mecha Sonic. Take her to the chamber and let her get roboticized. I'll have to de-roboticize her first as her robot parts will explode if I roboticize her now then I'll roboticize her all over again."

"Ya'll can't do this to me Dr. Eggman!" yelled Bunnie, trying to lunge at Eggman but Mecha Sonic held her back hastily "Ah'll whup yer backside all the way to Holoska for this!"

"Oh shut up Bunnie if you know what's good for you." snapped Dr. Eggman "Mecha Sonic, escort her down to the chamber if you please."

"Yes-sir-your-word-is-law." droned Mecha Sonic, turning around and dragging Bunnie away to the door.

Dr. Eggman smiled happily to himself and he turned around in his chair. He put his hands behind his head and he sighed with joy.

"The Mobians are extinct at last." said Dr. Eggman "I'm amazed Sonic gave himself up at long last. At least it proves he does have a brain and he knows how to use it properly at long last. What a great joy it is to have my most hated nemesis as my evil minion once again! Only this time, he'll STAY as my evil minion!"

"Ehk! Wrong answer!" Mecha Sonic sneered at Dr. Eggman from the other side of the room.

"I beg your pardon Mecha Sonic?" demanded Dr. Eggman angrily, turning around to face Mecha Sonic.

Mecha Sonic let go of Bunnie and he spin-dashed Dr. Eggman, knocking the chair off it's stand and sending Eggman skidding across the floor while still in the chair. He crashed into the wall and he groaned in pain. Katherine tried to react but Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and she pointed it at Katherine's face.

"Stay where you are sugah!" ordered Bunnie "This lil' ol' cannon of mine isn't a force to be reckoned with!"

Katherine reluctantly stayed where she was but she didn't raise her hands or anything, she just remained standing still, staring directly at Bunnie. As for Dr. Eggman, Mecha Sonic grabbed him by his uniform and hoisted him up to his height, his red optics glowing red with rage at him.

"Mecha Sonic! What is the meaning of this? I command you to release me!" he bellowed at him.

"Sorry doc, but this unit isn't programmed to obey you." sneered Mecha Sonic "Mecha Sonic plays by his own rules."

"What? You're speaking with your normal voice!" cried Dr. Eggman "That means you've gotten your freewill back! You slime ball, how did you manage to do it?"

"Let's just say I know a very good place that's very helpful to me." said Mecha Sonic, not wanting to give Eggman the location of the Lake of Rings as that was beyond stupid "Did you really think I'd let myself get roboticized without having a way of worming myself around it? Even Big Dave from the MPD isn't THAT stupid! Now I'm here as Mecha Sonic but with my freewill back, I'm gonna de-roboticize your worldwide army!"

"You most certainly are not!" bellowed Dr. Eggman "Mecha Shadow, get in here now!" he ordered at the top of his grating old voice.

Mecha Sonic just proceeded to throw Dr. Eggman into a wall as Eggman wasn't his main worry right now. Dr. Eggman crashed into the wall and he groaned loudly. Katherine turned around and ran over to Eggman. Bunnie shot at her but Katherine activated her built in shield generator and the blast was deflected by the barrier.

Bunnie fumed to herself as she didn't know Katherine could protect herself from attacks. Katherine switched off her barrier and she helped Dr. Eggman up. Mecha Sonic deployed his arm blasters and he aimed them at Dr. Eggman and Katherine.

"Nah, ah, ah Eggman, you're staying here and watching this fight just so I can rub my victory in your face." said Mecha Sonic "I always get a kick outta that."

Then suddenly, before he could even notice, Mecha Shadow spin-dashed him from the side and knocked him down onto the floor. Mecha Sonic and Mecha Shadow sprawled onto the floor but Mecha Sonic kicked Mecha Shadow off of himself and sent him hurling over onto his back.

"He-hey! Mecha Shadow's come to play!" cheered Mecha Sonic "I'm so-so against you as an organic being so let's see how you fare up to me as a robot!"

"You-will-pe-rish-for-this-you-mis-cre-ant." growled Mecha Shadow, picking himself up and preparing to do battle "How-dare-you-de-ceive-Dr.-Egg-Man-like-this!"

"Huh, I miss the times you actually wish doom on ol' eggers instead of worshipping him." muttered Mecha Sonic "Maybe I can knock some sense into that mindwiped head of yours!"

Mecha Sonic fired his blasters at Mecha Shadow but Mecha Shadow dodged the attacks and blasted him with his plasma cannons. One blast singed Mecha Sonic on the shoulder and the roboticized hedgehog grimaced in pain.

"Ouch! The bad thing about having my freewill back is I'm capable of feeling pain again!" muttered Mecha Sonic "Oh well, no pain no game as they always say!"

Mecha Sonic spin-dashed towards Mecha Shadow but Mecha Shadow kicked upwards and struck him like a football. Mecha Sonic hurtled straight up into the ceiling and he cracked it heavily. Bits of metal fell down onto the floor and Mecha Sonic fell back down rather heavily on the floor. He picked himself up and charged towards

Mecha Shadow. They both punched each other in the face and they skidded backwards away from each other. Mecha Shadow charged up to Mecha Sonic and rammed him with his shoulder. Mecha Sonic punched Mecha Shadow in the face and then tried to punch him again but Mecha Shadow blocked the blow with his arm. He gut punched Mecha Sonic and then head-slammed him with his fist but Mecha Sonic retaliated with an uppercut to the chin and a ram of the shoulder. Mecha Shadow kneed Mecha Sonic in the gut and Mecha Sonic head-butted Mecha Shadow in the chest. They both punched at each other at a speed that could rival the greatest of ninjas while also blocking each other's blows. Mecha Sonic then tried to roundhouse kick Mecha Shadow in the face but Mecha Shadow bent over backwards and dodged the attack. He caught Mecha Sonic's leg and forced it back down onto the floor. He then proceeded to elbow Mecha Sonic in the back of the neck and knock him down onto the floor. Mecha Shadow summoned a Chaos Spear to his hand and he prepared to stab Mecha Sonic with it but Bunnie Rabbot shot him with her arm cannon. The blast knocked Mecha Shadow down onto the floor and he rubbed his singed back. Mecha Shadow picked himself up and he shot Bunnie in the leg with his plasma cannon. Bunnie fell down onto her knee and she groaned in pain. Mecha Shadow ran over to Bunnie but Mecha Sonic spin-dashed him in the back before he could touch Bunnie. Mecha Sonic pinned Mecha Shadow down to the floor but he didn't keep him down for long. Mecha Shadow head-butted him in the face which in turn made Mecha Sonic let go of him in order to clutch his face. Mecha Shadow kangaroo kicked him in the stomach and sent him hurling into a wall. Mecha Shadow picked himself up and prepared to deck Mecha Sonic but Bunnie ran up behind him and clouted him one with her robot fist. Mecha Shadow ended up skidding across the floor on his face. While all this was happening, Dr. Eggman and Katherine sneaked out of the room and away from the battle, leaving Mecha Shadow to deal with Mecha Sonic and Bunnie. The moment they escaped the room, Dr. Eggman grumbled to himself.

"How did Sonic manage to get his freewill back?" he ranted "How, how, how? It's impossible to get your freewill back! Oh wait, no it isn't. Mecha Vanilla got hers back after a sharp knock on the head a while back*** but Sonic hasn't had a knock on the head so how did he get HIS freewill back?"

Katherine just shrugged at Dr. Eggman in a gesture that said "I dunno.".

"I'm beginning to wonder if Mecha Tails and Mecha Ruben have done what Sonic's done and managed to get their freewill back!" grumbled Dr. Eggman "Although Mecha Sonic claims they gave themselves up, I'm not willing to believe him since he hasn't given himself up! If Sonic hasn't given himself up then Tails won't have either. Katherine, can you pinpoint their location at all?"

Katherine nodded silently.

"Then go to wherever it is there are and see if they've got their freewill back." ordered Dr. Eggman "I can't have two rouge Robians running loose in my base along with Mecha Sonic and Bunnie Rabbot!"

Katherine obeyed her master and she wandered slowly down the corridor to find Mecha Tails and Mecha Ruben. To their unfortunate luck, she knew where they were as Katherine was able to find any robot anywhere in the base as she was given brilliant tracking devices that could locate any of Eggman's robots, robot or Robian anywhere no matter where they were. Dr. Eggman watched as Katherine went to the lift and went down to the lower floors as they were already on the top floor. The moment she disappeared, Dr. Eggman opened the door a crack and he peeked into the room to see the battle between Mecha Sonic, Bunnie and Mecha Shadow. The fight seemed to be even sided so far. Bunnie gave Mecha Shadow a tremendous uppercut that almost took his head off and Mecha Shadow staggered backwards. Mecha Shadow retaliated with a right hook to the face and then he kicked Bunnie in the gut. Bunnie wheezed like a person with asthma and she doubled over in pain. This was the only flaw with being part organic and part robot, she still had soft spots and only her legs and arm were really that hard. Mecha Shadow smirked at Bunnie and he dropkicked Bunnie in the face, sending her rolling across the floor to the wall on the other side of the room. Mecha Shadow then tried to grab her again but Mecha Sonic tackled him as if he was a rugby player stopping his rival from scoring with the ball. The two roboticized hedgehogs sprawled onto the floor and Mecha Sonic was the first to get up. Mecha Shadow lunged at him but Mecha Sonic grabbed him and

threw him straight into the wall. Mecha Shadow picked himself up and threw a Chaos Spear at Mecha Sonic. The spear struck Mecha Sonic and he staggered for a moment but he managed to remain standing somehow. Mecha Shadow threw another Chaos Spear at Mecha Sonic and the spear chipped him on his shoulder. Mecha Sonic grimaced in pain and retaliated with a blast of his blasters. The laser blast singed Mecha Shadow on his shoulder and before he had time to retaliate, Mecha Sonic leaped towards him and kick-slammed him in the gut. Mecha Shadow hurtled into a wall and left an impressive dent shaped like himself on the wall. Mecha Shadow growled at Mecha Sonic menacingly and he spin-dashed Mecha Sonic. Mecha Sonic landed with a clunk on the floor and he groaned in pain. Mecha Shadow then blasted Mecha Sonic with his plasma cannons again and Mecha Sonic groaned in even more pain. Bunnie however interfered by extending her robotic fist and walloping Mecha Shadow in the face. Mecha Shadow fell onto his side and he clutched his face in pain. Bunnie helped Mecha Sonic back onto his feet.

"How long do ya'll plan to keep this fight up for Sonic?" asked Bunnie.

"Until Tails and Ruben de-roboticize everybody." said Mecha Sonic "That is…IF we can last that long."

"Ah'm sure we will Sonic." said Bunnie "Ya'll are much strong now you're a robot and ah'm powerful enough to keep up with Shadow. "

"Then let's keep it up." said Mecha Sonic "After all, Eggman has no idea what Tails and Ruben are doing right now so he won't do anything about them."

With that said, he and Bunnie ran over to Mecha Shadow to further engage him in battle. Sonic had no idea if Tails and Ruben were doing any good down in the roboticizer chamber but he had a feeling they were making progress…

…and making progress they were. Mecha Tails had been changing the circuitry around inside the pod in hopes of setting it to de-

roboticize the planet instead or roboticize it. He was taking his time though as he couldn't afford a screw-up of any kind during this process. Anything could go wrong when fiddling about with unknown circuitry so he had to deal with this nice and easily. While Mecha Tails had been working on the roboticizer pod, Mecha Ruben had been standing guard at the door to make sure nobody gets in the room and tries to stop them from saving Mobius. So far, not a single robot had come down their way. It seemed that Mecha Tails and Mecha Ruben were in for an easy time right now.

"How's everything Ruben?" asked Mecha Tails from inside the pod.

"Still clear." reported Mecha Ruben "I guess Sonic and Bunnie are keeping everybody occupied right now. I'm amazed how easy a time we're having."

"Well we have Sonic to thank for that." noted Mecha Tails as he pulled a cable out and put it in a different slot "He came up with the plan that's doing wonders for us so when we de-roboticize all of Mobius, we have Sonic to thank."

"We certainly do." said Mecha Ruben "How goes the process in there?"

"I think things are going well." said Mecha Tails as he mixed up some more wires "I'm mostly just switching cables and wires around to see if that works but I'm sure there's something else I must do before I fire this thing."

"How's mixing up wires and cables supposed to set it in reverse?" asked Mecha Ruben "Isn't that more like screwing the machine up then setting it in reverse?"

"Maybe it is but the idea behind it really is that these wires made the roboticizer do what it did didn't they?" explained Mecha Tails "So if I match them up to different ports, maybe they'll make the roboticizer do the opposite of what it's supposed to do when I fire it."

"Um…that makes sense…I guess." murmured Ruben "In all of Chun-Nan, I'll never understand technology." he moaned with a slight face-palm.

"I know what you're like Ruben." said Mecha Tails as he mixed up some more circuitry "Not everyone can understand technology. A lot of people I talk to don't really understand what I'm saying although maybe it's just me talking technical when I could make things a lot simpler to understand by talking normally to them."

"I bet that would be a lot better." said Mecha Ruben "I bet it's annoying when no one understands what you're…"

Before he could finish speaking, the elevator at the beginning of the corridor pinged and the doors opened up. Katherine walked slowly out of the elevator and she headed towards the roboticizer chamber. Mecha Ruben jumped in surprise and he held his hands out, ready to squirt her with water.

"Tails, we've got company!" shrieked Mecha Ruben.

"Oh no, not now!" groaned Mecha Tails "I'm not finished yet! Who is it? Any of our friends?"

"No, it's a feminine looking robot with a black visor and spikes above her head." explained Mecha Ruben "I think it's that robot that Eggman talked to us through earlier."

"I believe Eggman said her name was Katherine." thought Mecha Tails "His new servant bot to replace Alonzo now he's a scrap pile****. Can you please keep her busy while I finish my work?"

"Tails, you didn't even need to ask." said Mecha Ruben "We water panthers love to help others, no matter what the problem is."

Katherine continued advancing down the corridor nice and slowly. Her vision was fixed squarely on Mecha Ruben, who was clearly preparing to squirt her. Mecha Ruben fired a jet of water at Katherine but the silent fem-bot activated her shield generator. This in turn surrounded her with a force-field and Ruben's water splashed against it. The roboticized water panther was so shocked he felt like he was going to malfunction.

"Tails, you're not gonna believe this but Katherine has a force-field!" cried Mecha Ruben.

"I guess your water powers are out of bounds then." muttered Mecha Tails "Try whatever you can, just keep her away from me until I've finished with this!"

"No problem Tails." said Mecha Ruben, cracking his metal knuckles "I'll just have to use my novice level ninjutsu and kung-fu on her instead."

So Mecha Ruben charged towards Katherine, who just stood there ominously and waited for him to come. Mecha Ruben leaped into the air, stretched his foot out and hurtled towards her foot-first. But Katherine raised her hands and fired some bladed discs at Mecha Ruben. The discs slashed Mecha Ruben across his legs, throwing his attack off balance and sending him crashing onto the floor. Mecha Ruben picked himself up and pounced on Katherine. Katherine shortened her barrier to the point it was only a red outline around her and she backhanded Mecha Ruben into the wall. Mecha Ruben stood back up and squirted Katherine with a jet of water. The barrier still protected her but it was only a red outline around her so it didn't stop the water attacks from throwing her off her feet and onto the floor. Katherine skidded across the floor and came to a stop near the hole in the wall Mecha Shadow had made earlier when he jumped through it with Sonic in tow. Katherine picked herself up but Mecha Ruben squirted her again. This jet of water was actually strong enough to push her straight through the hole in the wall and send her falling down to the ground! Katherine fell out of the hole and plummeted from the centre of Eggman's headquarters to the ground. Mecha Ruben cheered happily and he stuck his head back in the chamber.

"Hey Tails, I've defeated Katherine!" he reported "I pushed her through the hole in the wall Mecha Shadow made earlier and she's probably smashed to pieces on the ground now."

"Well done Ruben." said Mecha Tails from inside the roboticizer pod "Now I can finish this thing without any interruptions."

Unfortunately, he was wrong. Katherine had the ability to fly via jets in her feet and she flew straight back up to the hole in the wall and she drill-attacked Mecha Ruben as she leaped in. Mecha Ruben yelped in surprise and found himself being thrown onto the floor by

the servant bot. She pinned him down and tried to rip him apart but Mecha Ruben kept her arms at bay.

"What's going on?" asked Mecha Tails, sticking his head out from the pod to see what was happening.

"Apparently, Katherine can fly!" cried Mecha Ruben as Katherine tried to grab him and tear him to pieces "She's not down yet! She's come back!"

Katherine tried to grab Mecha Ruben's head but Mecha Ruben held her arms at bay and stopped her from grabbing him. Mecha Ruben then proceeded to head-butt Katherine and make her let go of him. Mecha Ruben then kangaroo kicked her in order to keep her away from him and he leaped back onto his feet. Mecha Ruben tried to squirt Katherine and knock her over but Katherine expanded the barrier's size in order to stop it from pushing her. Katherine raised her hands and fired bladed discs at Mecha Ruben. Mecha Ruben back-flipped away from the firing discs but one managed to clip him on the ear. Mecha Ruben grimaced in pain but he charged back towards Katherine. He leaped into the air and began to rapidly kick Katherine but the barrier was preventing him from doing any serious harm to her. Katherine expanded the barrier even more to threw Mecha Ruben away and she wondered into the roboticizer chamber. Mecha Ruben freaked and ran after her. Inside the roboticizer pod, Mecha Tails could hear her coming so he stayed inside and remained hidden. Katherine kept her keen vision open for Mecha Tails as she had a feeling he was somewhere in the room. That was when she spotted the kicked in panel on the pod. She instantly worked out Mecha Tails was in there and she shortened her barrier so she could get down on her hands and knees and crawl inside to get Mecha Tails. But before she could get in, Mecha Ruben grabbed her by the legs and dragged her away. He then proceeded to throw the fem-bot straight into a wall. Katherine's vision went funny and she began to making groaning, whirring, beeping noises. The barrier had protected her from the full force of the slam but she was still a little dazed from that onslaught. Mecha Ruben then grabbed Katherine by the arm and threw her outside the chamber. He quickly closed the door and locked it. The door had the same kind of handle it had on the outside so it could be locked inside and outside. That

would keep Katherine out for a while.

"Whew! Thank goodness that's over!" he sighed with relief "Katherine won't get in here now I've locked the door. I bet that door can resist many attacks, maybe even Sonic's spin-dash."

"You've locked Katherine out of the chamber?" asked Mecha Tails "That's great, she'll never get us now. Although we'll need to get out of here when we activate the roboticizer or we won't get effected by the waves."

"Once you've finished and you've set it to go, I'll let us outta here." said Mecha Ruben "Are you almost finished?"

"I am." said Mecha Tails "Just a few more things to change around and then we can give it a test drive."

Hopefully, Mecha Tails' changes would work and the roboticizer would de-roboticize everybody once it activated…

Meanwhile, Mecha Sonic, Bunnie and Mecha Shadow were still in combat with each other.

The fight so far seemed to be slightly in Mecha Sonic and Bunnie's favour and that was mostly due to the fact Mecha Shadow was having to fight two people at once and he was a little worn out from the earlier battle so Mecha Sonic and Bunnie were beginning to overpower him. Mecha Shadow tried to spin-dash Mecha Sonic but Mecha Sonic dodged him and spin-dashed him in the back just as he unfolded from his spin-dash. Mecha Shadow was sent hurling splat into the wall by Mecha Sonic. The roboticized hedgehog grumbled angrily and he threw a Chaos Spear at Mecha Sonic but Mecha Sonic dodged the attack and blasted him with his blaster cannons. Mecha Shadow grimaced in pain and he spin-dashed Mecha Sonic in the torso. Bunnie Rabbot retaliated with an uppercut to the side of Mecha Shadow's head that almost took it clean off. Mecha Shadow retaliated with a furious punch to the face that nearly cracked all of Bunnie's teeth but the Rabbot kicked him squarely in the gut and made him double over. Mecha Shadow grabbed

Bunnie's leg and then proceeded to electrocute her but before he could do any serious damage, Mecha Sonic side-kicked him and knocked him away from Bunnie. Dr. Eggman had been watching the whole fight and he was not pleased to see that his greatest Robian was being bested by a roboticized Sonic the Hedgehog and a still partially roboticized Bunnie Rabbot. He was not going to let Sonic win this one, not while he was so close to victory so he bellowed into his wrist communicator.

"Mechas Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey, get in here and finish off that infernal hedgehog now!" he ordered hastily.

The Mechas obeyed his orders and they all rushed up to the top floor of Eggman's headquarters in order to help their master and stop Sonic the Hedgehog before he ruined everything. As for the battle, Mecha Shadow roundhouse kicked Mecha Sonic in the legs and tripped him up. He stomped on Mecha Sonic's head and attempted to crush him but Bunnie stopped him from stomping him again by giving Mecha Shadow an uppercut that threw him into the wall. He left an impressive dent on the wall that was shaped like his face. Mecha Shadow threw a couple of Chaos Spears at Mecha Sonic and Bunnie and they were both stricken by the attack. Mecha Sonic retaliated with a blast of his blaster cannons. The blasts struck Mecha Shadow and brought him down onto his knees. Before he could do anything, Mecha Sonic ran over to him and grabbed him by the wrist. He then proceeded to do the one thing he did to Bunnie when he was Mecha Sonic. Electrocute him. Mecha Sonic sent electricity surging up Mecha Shadow's circuits and the roboticized ultimate life form screamed in pain as painful electricity bit at his vital parts. Mecha Sonic decided to stop shocking him as he didn't want to accidentally kill Mecha Shadow so he switched of his electric powers and left Mecha Shadow to faint onto the floor. Mecha Shadow was offline for the time being thanks to Mecha Sonic. His visor was pitch black and his optics had switched off. Mecha Sonic smirked at Mecha Shadow and he turned to Bunnie.

"Just think of all the trouble I could have saved us if I did that in the first place." he said.

"Ah know sugah-hog." said Bunnie "Seeing ya'll do that reminds me

of the time you kicked mah sorry butt the first time you were roboticized."

"Yeah, you almost beat me but in unleashed that on you at the last second to finish you off." said Mecha Sonic "Since I'm good now, I won't be shocking you anytime soon. By the way, where's Eggman?"

"He must have escaped while we were fightin' Mecha Shadow." said Bunnie "Ah bet he's…"

Just as she was about to complete her sentence, eight Robians suddenly burst into the room and they surrounded Mecha Sonic and Bunnie quickly. They were of course, Mechas Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey. They were all here to aid Mecha Shadow and finish off Mecha Sonic and Bunnie. The two stared at their opponents in despair.

"…called for some back up." finished Bunnie glumly.

Mecha Sonic suddenly grew nervous. He had not anticipated this to happen. He didn't want to fight his friends despite the fact they had been roboticized. Shadow didn't count as they weren't really allies, more like friendly rivals so Sonic had no trouble fighting him. His friends however, were another matter.

"Um…hi guys?" said Mecha Sonic nervously "Look, if I were all of you, I'd stand down, really I would. I don't wanna fight any of you and you won't wanna fight me so just stay where you are and…"

Mecha Knuckles just promptly ran up to him and sucker-punched him directly in the face. That attack threw Mecha Sonic onto his back and he lay there like a defeated wrestling opponent. He clutched his face, which would have been hurting even more had he not been roboticized.

"Good god that hurt!" grunted Mecha Sonic "I'm gonna spin-dash you so much your dreadlocks will fall off!"

With that said, he spin-dashed Mecha Knuckles and threw him into a wall.

"I really don't wanna fight any of you guys so please, for our sake,

don't try and kill me okay?" asked Mecha Sonic.

Mecha Wilson and Mecha Mandy both promptly kicked him in the back and knocked him onto his stomach.

"Guess there's no reasoning with you." said Mecha Sonic "Okay, if you want roughing up, I'll be happy to oblige!"

He stood up on his hands and split-kicked Mecha Wilson and Mecha Mandy in the face each. He leaped into the air just as Mecha Shade attempted to Blade Rush him and he leapfrogged over Mecha Shade and he landed foot first on Mecha Geoffrey's face. Mecha Amy tried to hammer Mecha Sonic with her metal Piko-Piko hammer but Bunnie grabbed her by the shoulders and threw her away across the floor. Mecha Cream flew in and tackled Bunnie in the legs, brining the cyborg down onto the floor where Mecha Cosmo promptly stomped on her. Bunnie punched Mecha Cosmo away and picked herself up, only to be knocked down by Mecha Cream again. Mecha Sonic spin-dashed Mecha Cream and knocked her down onto the floor but Mecha Knuckles leaped in and roundhouse punched him in the face. Mecha Sonic staggered over onto his bottom and he rubbed his face better. To make things worse however, Mecha Shadow had finally come to and he was ready for action! Mecha Sonic groaned in annoyance and he dodged a spin-dash from Mecha Shadow.

"I REALLY hope Tails and Ruben have finished setting the roboticizer in reverse!" cried Mecha Sonic as he ducked to dodge an attack from Mecha Mandy.

Mecha Sonic didn't need to hope because right now, Mecha Tails had almost finished the set-up. He had a few more circuitry to set up and then the roboticizer would be ready for fire. Hopefully, it would de-roboticize everybody as intended and not do something like blow up in his face. He switched around the wires on another volt box and he turned some dials on the main power generator in the centre of the machine. After doing that, he wiped his metal forehead (even though he didn't need to because robots don't sweat) and he crawled out from the innards of the roboticizer pod.

"I think it's about done." said Mecha Tails "Hopefully, it'll be set in reverse and it'll de-roboticize everybody once it's fired."

"I've got my metal fingers crossed that this works." said Mecha Ruben, crossing his fingers "Tails, give it a shot and see what happens."

Mecha Tails obeyed and he was just about to activate the roboticizer until something started to make a loud clanging noise on the outside of the door. It was Katherine. The robot had woken up at last and now she was trying to get into the chamber to stop Mecha Tails from sabotaging the machine. She punched the door as hard as she could but she couldn't break it down. Mecha Tails listened to the heavy clanging that Katherine was making outside.

"Katherine's up! She's trying to get in and kill us!" cried Mecha Tails.

"Well don't just stand there, activate the roboticizer!" screamed Mecha Ruben "Before she can get in!"

Mecha Tails obeyed quickly and he pressed the start button. The moment he did, Mecha Ruben ran over to the door and he unlocked it. He flung it open and whacked Katherine away with it. Then he and Mecha Tails charged out of the chamber so they could get hit by the roboticizer waves when the pod activated. The roboticizer pod lit up and it activated it's waves. A big white wave that completely circled the pod spread out from the chamber and swept through the corridors, Eggman's quarters, and then through the whole of Robotropolis. Mecha Tails and Mecha Ruben were stricken by the blast and they fell onto their knees. Then, just as they had hoped, they began to change back to normal. Their metal bodies turned back to fur and skin, their innards became flesh, blood and bone once again and their optics turned back into eyes. Tails picked himself up and he admired himself all over. He was no longer sharp, metallic and pointy. He was cute, cuddly and fluffy again. He hugged his twin-tails happily and cheered.

"Yippee! I'm me again! Yeah!" cried Tails "It worked, I can't believe it, my tampering set it in reverse and it works!"

Ruben picked himself up and he admired himself all over. He was

back to being furry again and he didn't have hose nozzles for fingers anymore.

"Boy does it feel good to be flesh and blood again." he said happily "Although I quite enjoyed being a robot."

As for the wave, it continued to sweep over Robotropolis and the Mechas fighting in the top floor were stricken by the wave. Mecha Sonic tripped over in surprise as the wave struck him and he began to transform back to normal. So did everybody else in the room as the wave swept through the room. Bunnie Rabbot dodged the wave as she didn't want to be de-roboticized otherwise she'd be useless. Mecha Knuckles turned back into Knuckles the Echidna, Mecha Shade returned to being Shade the Echidna, Mecha Amy became Amy Rose once again, Mecha Cream turned back into Cream the Rabbit, Mecha Cosmo transformed back into Cosmo the Seedrian again, Mecha Wilson returned to being Wilson the Dog, Mecha Mandy became Mandy Mouse and Mecha Geoffrey turned back into Geoffrey St. John. They all picked themselves up and felt themselves all over, relieved they were flesh and blood once again. As for the waves, they didn't stop there. They swept on and on until they went all over Mobius and back. Every single Robian was de-roboticized by the waves and they were all returned to their natural flesh and blood forms once again. Mobius was no longer a robot paradise. It was now a planet full of furry little Mobians once again. All the Mobians cheered with delight and some went so far as to scream it to the world how happy they were that this miracle had happened and they were back to normal. Mobius had returned to it's former glory. Dr. Eggman couldn't believe what he was watching and he went wild with rage. His beautiful robot-topia was crumbling before him in one fell sweep of the roboticizer waves.

"NOOOOO!" he bellowed "EVERYBODY'S BEING DE-ROBOTICIZED! RAAAGGGH! CURSE THAT FILTHY, STINKING TWIN-TAILED FOX! HE'S SET MY ROBOTICIZER IN REVERSE AND NOW IT'S…IT'S…GARAAAAGGHHH!"

Dr. Eggman was so angry right now, he was beginning to lose his sanity. He ran over to the elevator and quickly shut himself in it. He pressed the down button frantically and the elevator took him down.

"Katherine, you're joining me in my underground bunker!" cried Dr. Eggman "I don't feel so good right now and I need a good, long rest before I can fight that…that…that…h-h-hedge-h-h-hog…"

He was so livid with rage, consumed by anger and tormented by shock that Eggman was having trouble speaking properly. He was just building up more and more rage as the elevator took him down and down to the bottom floors as he thought about his unbelievable failure. As a matter of fact, as he reached the bottom floor, he finally cracked and went berserk with rage and despair completely dominating his body. he threw his arms up in the air and let off a horrible roar of anguish and agony.

" **GYYYYY….AAAARRRRRRGGGGGGGHHHHHH!** "

The sound was horrendous and anyone who heard it would have been terrified by that noise had they heard it. Dr. Eggman fell onto his side and he curled up into a ball. He began to babble to himself like an idiot. He was drooling like crazy, even more so then Kang and Kodos the Aliens. He had completely lost his mind now thanks to Tails de-roboticized everybody. He had become SO close to completely conquering Mobius and now in a blink of an eye, he was back to square one! To make matters worse, Tails' tampering hadn't done the roboticizer much good and the moment it had finished, it malfunctioned and blew a fuse. The roboticizer pod was now rendered completely useless and functionless. The blown fuse however sparked off another explosion inside the pod and the entire circuitry in the pod was suddenly fried and destroyed beyond repair by that electrical fire. The roboticizer pod was never going to be used ever again. As for Katherine, she hovered down the elevator shaft and opened up a shaft in the elevator's roof so she could hover down it. She saw her master cuddling himself on the floor, shaking uncontrollably and mumbling gibberish to himself. Katherine grabbed Eggman by the scruff of his shirt and he dragged the insane fat man away to his underground bunker so he could rest and recuperate from this horrible defeat of his.

Back up on the top floor, Sonic's friends were still in glamour over the fact they were now back to normal. They couldn't stop feeling themselves and admiring their restored bodies.

"I'm me again!" squealed Mandy happily as she felt her hips "Praise the lord, I'm me again!"

"I'm flesh and blood again!" cried Wilson "Boy does it feel good to be me again! I hated that robot-casing I was trapped in!"

"Blimey, we're all Mobian again!" cheered Geoffrey "That Eggman blighter's been foiled once again!"

"I did not enjoy being a robot." said Shade as she admired her figure, which was back to normal now "I'm so glad that someone's managed to de-roboticize us all."

"Looks like Sonic did it." said Knuckles as he looked at his trademark spiked fists, which were now back to normal like the rest of him "He's de-roboticized us all."

"Of course he did it you silly echidna!" giggled Amy "He's Sonic the Hedgehog, he's always saving our lives!"

"As much as I'd be happy to take the praise Amy, I'm not responsible for this." said Sonic casually as he felt his quills "I only helped. Tails and Ruben are the real heroes. They set the roboticizer in reverse so they deserve the praise."

"Where are they so we can give them our thanks Mr. Sonic?" asked Cream politely.

"They're in the roboticizer chamber." said Sonic "Which is on the centre floor of this place…"

Just as he said that, the elevator pinged and out of it came Tails and Ruben. They had taken the elevator up to the top floor so they could see their de-roboticized friends. They entered the room and everybody met them with praise and thanks. Cosmo threw her arms around Tails and embraced him lovingly.

"You've saved us all you wonderful boy!" cried Cosmo "Thank you so much Tails!"

"Aaaaw Cosmo." said Tails bashfully, hugging her back "You're welcome. You all are everybody." he said to everyone in the room.

"Thanks to Sonic's quick thinking, a perfectly executed plan and Tails' techno skills, we've managed to de-roboticize the planet just as Dr. Eggman had roboticized it." said Ruben proudly.

"I can't believe the doctor did that to us!" growled Shadow angrily, thumping the wall angrily "He roboticized everyone on Mobius and attempted to use us as his personal army! He even roboticized me! I am gonna kill that fat ^%&*£ now! Where is he?"

"He's gone Shadow." said Sonic "We have no idea where he is."

"Well then, I am gonna tear this place apart until I do find him!" roared Shadow "Everybody, get outta here before you go down with this building!"

"Whatever you say Shadow." said Sonic "I think we should do what he says guys. Come one, let's skadoodle."

With that said, all the Mobians left the room and went onto exit Dr. Eggman headquarters, leaving Shadow alone to try and find Dr. Eggman and kill him for daring to roboticize the entire planet.

Shadow wouldn't have much luck though because Dr. Eggman and Katherine were in his underground bunker, a place that couldn't be picked up on radar and was secretly hidden. They would never find it no matter how hard they tried. Dr. Eggman was still cuddling himself and babbling uncontrollably to himself with Katherine rocking him back and forth gently as if he was a baby in a cradle.

"No…can't…not…why…how…did…curse…hedgehog…" he blubbered to himself "…almost…won…how…did…I….lose…hate… Sonic…gonna…destroy…him…narf…nuff…glub…glab…glab… glump…Alonzo…you're…fired!...you…traitor….roboticize… everybody…"

Katherine just listened to his mad rambling while rocking him gently. Dr. Eggman needed a nice, long rest before he went back into action and when he did, he would be ready and revenge would be lurking around the corner once he was back in the action…

Footnotes:

***See Story 78**

****As remembered in the classic Mecha Sonic saga (Stories 12-14)**

***** See Story 19**

****** See Story 80**

Mobius has been de-roboticized and Dr. Eggman has lost his marbles! But how long will it take for him to return to sanity? And what will he be plotting next? You'll have to wait though because some other villains will take the antagonist spotlight for a while now Eggman's resting. See ya soon! Read and Review.

By the way, two new characters will appear in the next chapter. Can you guess who they are? Are they...

A: Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat

B: Mighty the Armadillo and Ray the Flying Squirrel

C: Gerald Robotnik and Maria Robotnik

D: There's actually three and it's the Babylon Rouges

E: Two OCs

or

F: Bean the Dynamite and Bark the Polar Bear?

Take your pick!

Sol Search Part 1

Story 84: Sol Search Part 1: Future Tense

Death.

The most worrying part of life was of course death. The minute you are born, you know you will die eventually. Everything lives from life to death and death is always the main thing people worry about whether it be untimely or as expected. Unfortunately for Mobius, it had a future full of death. Two-hundred years into the future, Mobius is nothing but disdain and obsidian. Cities were destroyed and buildings had either crumbled or fallen into despair, roads were cracked or full of potholes and large lumps of concrete sticking up from the road, forests were bare and dead and lush grassland had been reduced to miserable wastelands. Few oceans remained, making water scarce on Mobius and food was scarce too, many of it having to be rationed just to be fair on the others. There were few signs of life with few individuals still alive and struggling to live their lives in this post-apocalyptic world. Two of these individuals were the only remaining Mobians with super powers. One of them was a hedgehog named Silver. He had silver fur, hence his name, white chest fur that expanded around his neck, two large quills on the back of his head, five quills in the shape of a palm leaf above his eyes, yellow eyes with black stripes around them, white gloves with cyan symbols on the palms and back, dark blue boots with gold at the top, a white stripe on them and cyan toes. The gold on his boots and gloves had cyan trimmings that glowed. Silver was an extraordinary hedgehog in the sense that he had psychokinesis as a special power instead of super speed like many others before him. Silver could lift and move things with his powers, levitate through the air and throw waves of psychic energy at his opponents. His best friend was the other only remaining super-powered Mobian. Her name was Blaze the Cat and she was a very beautiful looking cat. She had once been a princess of a country but she relinquished her title due to the fact there was so little life left and there was nothing to rule over so she was no longer a princess or a ruler of any kind. Blaze had purple fur and she wore a dark purple coat with fuzzy

cuffs, white tights, red and white high-heeled shoes which were fuzzy around the ankles and she had her hair done up above her head with a red bobble. She had a red gem on her forehead and she had a zigzag tail which was dark purple at the tip. Blaze had fire powers and could start and end fires. She was pretty much the world's greatest bonfire lighter and fire-fighter all at once. She was now the fastest thing currently alive now Sonic the Hedgehog no longer lived, although she was nowhere near as fast as Sonic, she was still very fast. She was feisty, powerful and caring, especially for Silver, her best friend. She was a guardian just like Knuckles, guardian of the legendary Sol Emeralds. Their origins were shadowed in mystery but Blaze knew they were dangerous to anyone who abused their powers so she protected them from any villainous life-forms that could possibly be lucking out there. The Sol Emerald were rectangular in shape and had powers like the Chaos Emerald, only with fire powers added. They resided on Angel Island, which had fallen thanks to the cataclysm that doomed this future and now rested in the only ocean left on Mobius. Right now, Silver and Blaze were delivering food rations out to those too weak to leave their homes or get their own food. Silver levitated around the wrecked city of Nekronopolis, his birthplace, and he delivered his daily supplies to the poor people of Mobius. He delivered a hamper of food to a poor family that was dressed completely in rags and perishing with starvation and malnutrition right now. They were delighted to see the kind hearted psychic hedgehog that delivered the hamper to them.

"Oh bless you sir!" said the mother of the family, who was dressed in rags like the rest of her family was "Bless you for your kindness to us poor people!"

"No thanks necessary." said Silver casually "I'm just doing my job. Making sure the last of the Mobians can live long enough to keep our race alive."

Silver waved goodbye to the family and he flew away from them. That was his last delivery and now he flew back to Angel Island, one of his favourite places to sit on and relax in. Blaze the Cat had finished her deliveries and she joined him back on the island. Silver and Blaze both sat on the emerald shrine, which had a slab for the

Sol Emeralds to sit in, and they stared despairingly at the wreck of their home planet. What could have caused such a disaster that left their home in ruins and the Mobians struggling for survival? And why did it happen? Who caused it? What caused it? Could it be prevented? They had no idea but since they day they were born, they were determined to find out what had destroyed their future and ruined Mobian life everywhere.

"Our home is such a wreck." moaned Silver "I bet two-hundred years ago, it was lush and beautiful!"

"I dream about what life in the past was like too Silver." said Blaze, sharing his despair "But sadly, we can't get that same life the past Mobians once had. We have ways of travelling to the past so we can see what Mobius is like but what's the point of going if we don't know how to prevent the apocalypse that claimed it in the first place?"

"There isn't." said Silver "So I've decided I'm gonna do some research and find out what's ruined our world. I found a library with books that are mostly intact so I can look there and see what facts I can find."

"That's pretty hopeful of you Silver but I doubt there will be a book containing the disaster that caused Mobius' destruction." said Blaze glumly "I could be wrong of course but I wouldn't be too hopeful on that yet."

"Oh Blaze, there's bound to be some book in that library that has the answers." said Silver determinedly "And mark my words, I'll read the entire library if I have to if it means finding out what's caused all this!"

He motioned to the ruins of Nekronopolis on the shore. The city had once been a proud metropolis and home of the Northern Royal Fighters two-hundred years ago. Now it was almost nothing with few citizens living in it. Silver had been born here and his life had been rough due to the scarcity of food and water and lack of proper resources since everything was a wreck. Yet he was still alive now and willing to do whatever it takes to save Mobius and his future.

"Well Silver, I'm willing to help you if it means fixing the damages

done to our world." said Blaze with a friendly smile on her face "Once we find out what's caused this, we'll warp back in time and stop this event from happening."

"With my powers combined with your speed, nothing will stop us!" declared Silver "The future will be as good as saved with us on the case!"

"I sincerely agree with that." said Blaze "Although it'll beg the question why the legendary Sonic the Hedgehog couldn't prevent this in the first place."

"Maybe it happened after he died." thought Silver "I've read a lot about Sonic the Hedgehog and I doubt he'd be able to stop something like this happening. I'd love to meet him in person though."

"I think I would too Silver." said Blaze "He sounds like an incredible person from what I've heard about him."

"Legend says he could run faster then the speed of sound and smash through anything by curling up into a ball and churning through his opponents." said Silver "I wonder if he actually is that fast."

Suddenly, a warp ring appeared from behind Silver and Blaze only it wasn't gold, this one was black and was surrounded by a dark aurora. This warp ring had clearly been cursed or corrupted by some evil life-form from another place. Silver and Blaze turned around and saw the black warp ring. Then out of the warp ring jumped a strange creature. This creature was a robotic looking mouse with silver armour, neon purple visor, neon purple stripes under the visor and a neon purple stripe around the base of the tail. It was pretty featureless save for those neon bits and it had long sharp claws. It didn't look very friendly either. It looked deathly serious and like it was ready to kill someone. The robo-mouse stared at Silver and Blaze in a manner that suggested it was observing them. Silver and Blaze didn't know what to think of this strange new arrival but they had a feeling it meant trouble so they bent down and prepared to do battle with it. Silvers' hands began to glow with psychic energy and Blaze's hands surrounded themselves with fire.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" demanded Silver hastily.

The robo-mouse didn't answer him. It just turned it's head to one side as if it didn't even understand English. Silver and Blaze looked at each other.

"Um, I don't think it understands us." said Blaze slowly "Or maybe it can't even speak."

"If that's the case, it can't tell us what it is and what it's doing here." said Silver "Either way, it's not staying here. It doesn't look friendly so it can't be there to help us. Let's send it back to where it came from!"

The robo-mouse suddenly sprung and swiped at Silver with it's sharp metal claws. Silver leaped back in surprise and he held his hands out. His body was surrounded by a teal outline and the mouse-bot was suddenly halted by psychic energy. The robo-mouse was stuck and it couldn't move at all due to Silver's great power. Silver then proceeded to throw the robo-mouse off the shrine and onto the ground below. Blaze jumped down and hit the robo-mouse with a fiery kick that knocked it to the edge of the island. Falling off was no longer a danger as Angel Island was in the ocean instead of floating above the ground but the robo-mouse wasn't resistant to water so it didn't want to fall in. The robo-mouse picked himself up and fired a pair of lasers out of it's eyes at Silver and Blaze as they charged towards him. The blasts hit Silver and Blaze and they were both suddenly frozen to the spot. The lasers were freezing beams and Silver and Blaze wouldn't be moving for about sixty seconds. That was more then enough time for the robo-mouse to run past them and leap onto the emerald shrine. It observed the slab on the shrine with the seven Sol Emeralds. It grabbed the emeralds and snatched them off the shrine. It gathered them all up into it's arms and it summoned a black warp ring from nowhere. Unfortunately, the freezing lasers wore off and Silver and Blaze were able to move again. They noticed the robo-mouse was attempting to escape through it's dark warp ring with the Sol Emeralds. Blaze instantly growled with fury at the sight of that.

"It's stealing the Sol Emeralds!" she screamed "How dare it?"

"We've gotta stop it before it escapes!" exclaimed Silver "Let's get it!"

Silver and Blaze charged towards the robo-mouse just as it stepped through the warp ring. The warp ring was just starting to close but Silver used his psychic powers to hold the ring open long enough for him and Blaze to leap through it. Blaze went first and Silver followed just as it began to close. What they ended up in was a nightmarish portal tunnel, the gap between the leaving and arriving destinations of the warp ring. A usual warp rings' portal tunnel felt great to anyone using it but this one felt awful. It was all dark, corrupted and twisted, full of blurry red and black images sweeping back and forth and terrific speeds that made Silver and Blaze feel like they were going to get motion sickness in it.

"Urgh! Oh god this is awful!" spluttered Silver "My Super Warp Ring feels much better then this!"

"At least we can follow that thing before it gets away with my Sol Emeralds!" screeched Blaze "As a matter of facts, there it is!"

The robo-mouse was walking steadily to the end of the portal tunnel. At the end of the tunnel was the door to the mouse-bot's destination. And that destination was going to be the robo-mouse's home zone. Blaze zoomed up towards the robo-mouse in a wave of fire and she grabbed the robo-mouse from behind. The robo-mouse fell down as Blaze tackled it and it dropped the Sol Emeralds. Dropping things in the portal tunnel was never a sensible idea as there was no floor or anything, you just hovered through the tunnel so any inanimate object would just fall out of the tunnel and end up somewhere else. The robo-mouse noticed it had dropped the Sol Emeralds and it switched around the location of the warp ring to where the emeralds were going to end up. Now it was going to end up somewhere else instead of it's intended destination. The robo-mouse knocked Blaze off of itself by whacking her in the face and it leaped through the end of the tunnel. Silver and Blaze followed it and they appeared through the warp ring. They fell onto the ground, coughing hoarsely and spluttering so loudly, you'd think they were about to hack up a hairball each. The robo-mouse however, had decided to dart off quickly before Silver and Blaze could regain their senses and catch it. Silver and Blaze stopped coughing long enough to say something.

"Hurk…never again!" cried Silver "That was terrible!"

"Hugh! Ugh! Koff!" I'm glad our warp rings don't feel anywhere near as bad as that!" choked Blaze, clutching her throat "I wonder where we…"

She opened her eyes and noticed she was now kneeling down on grass. Real green grass, the one thing that didn't exist in the future because of Mobius' unknown destruction. Blaze stared at the grass in surprise. She felt it with her hands and sniffed it.

"Grass? Real grass?" mused Blaze "This can't be, grass doesn't exist anymore…"

"Then we obviously aren't in our world anymore." noted Silver, standing up and admiring the scenery around him "Feast your eyes on this Blaze!"

Blaze stood up and gaped at her surroundings. The two future Mobians were standing in the middle of a beautiful forest complete with real living trees brimming with healthy green leaves, real green grass that covered the ground, real bushes with healthy green leaves and colourful fruit growing on the trees and bushes. This forest was the Great Forest, home of the legendary Lake of Rings and a place of interest to Sonic the Hedgehog. All of this didn't exist anymore thanks to the thing that ruined Mobius' future and seeing a real life healthy forest in all it's glory was just an amazement to the two Mobians standing there now. They were amazed with what they were looking at. Never before had they seen a real living forest being as everything but the citizens currently alive was dead in their future.

"Look at this…" gasped Blaze "We're in an…actual forest. A real living forest."

"I know." said Silver "Everything looks so beautiful in here! Much better then back home! And look at the sky up there! Nice and blue with white clouds floating in them!" he added, pointing up at the sky which was a brilliant blue colour and not constantly red and yellow like the future "Oh I've dreamed of living in a world like this!"

The silver hedgehog was glad to see a perfect looking world for once instead of going around and seeing nothing but ruin and despair. He was well pleased with this.

"I have a feeling this is either another zone…" mused Blaze "Or we've gone back in time. This maybe Mobius in the past. Possibly two-hundred years ago."

"Well the scent is a little familiar to our world." said Silver, inhaling deeply through his nose "This maybe past Mobius. We'll have to ask somebody about this."

"We don't have time for that Silver." said Blaze "The seven Sol Emeralds fell though the portal tunnel while we were in that warp ring and the robo-mouse thing brought us out here instead of where it was heading. I saw the ring at the end change location before we came out of it and if it's brought us here, the mouse-bot must think the emeralds have ended up here. We must find the emeralds before that thing does. Who knows what it wants the emeralds for and what it wants them for are likely catastrophic."

"OK Blaze, we'll search for that robot mouse thing and the Sol Emeralds." said Silver "But where do we start? I mean, they fell out of the portal tunnel so they could be anywhere on this planet. Heck, one of them might even be in the planet's core for all we know!"

"The emeralds fell together, they weren't scattered or anything so they'll all end up in the same location, only apart from each other." noted Blaze "They're all probably in this very forest. Let's get searching."

With that said, Silver and Blaze began looking around the forest for the Sol Emeralds and the robo-mouse. Unfortunately for them, Sonic's extra-terrestrial enemy Marik the Martian had been snoozing in a tree branch just above their heads and their arrival had woken him up. Ever since Shadow had broken his arm*, Marik had decided to hide in the Great Forest until he was ready to come out and attack and now two new Mobians had caught his attention. He had listened in on their location and he had been fascinated with what they were talking about. Those so-called "Sol Emeralds" sounded fascinating to say the least and he grinned maliciously to himself.

"Those Sol Emeralds sound interesting." mused Marik "If those two morons are so desperate to find them then they must be of some importance to them. And an object of great importance is always going to be valuable to someone as dark and evil as myself. Well, I think I'll go and find them if they think they're around here. If I heard correctly, there's seven of them. Funny really considering there's seven Chaos Emeralds. Maybe the emeralds are like Chaos Emeralds only with different powers. I'll find out once I find them and use them for my own personal gain."

Marik leaped down from the tree and he landed on the ground. He then proceeded to wander off into the forest in search of the Sol Emeralds. He couldn't wait to see what they could do and how he could use them to destroy Mobius, if they had the power of course. Unfortunately for Marik, a certain trio of villains had heard been eavesdropping on Silver and Blaze like he was and they were after the emeralds too. The fur was going to fly very badly once this hunt was on….

"Hey Geoffrey ol' boy, how's things been going since Tails managed to de-roboticize all of Mobius?" asked Sonic the Hedgehog, hero of Mobius and fastest thing alive.

A whole day had passed since the de-roboticization of Mobius and the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis had settled back into Royal HQ after their most recent adventure. The headquarters was back in proper operation and Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas had returned back to Angel Island, taking with them the seven Chaos Emeralds that Sonic had used in an attempt to defeat weaponzied Alonzo before he was destroyed by the roboticization of Mobius**

"Well according to this report mate," reported Geoffrey St. John the skunk, fellow Royal Fighter and one notorious for finding it difficult to trust new people as he read from a piece of paper in his hand "All the Mobians are back to normal and the Royal Fighters Service is back in proper gear. Shadow the Hedgehog, poor bloke, hasn't managed to find Dr. Eggman yet but he decided to tear down Robotropolis in his search and the robot city is now in ruins once again."

"Well if Scourge could wreck it*** then Shadow could wreck it just as easily." sighed Sonic "At least it'll slow Eggman down for a while as he was to repair Robotropolis all over again."

"That is if the bloke can dare to show his face again after this crippling defeat of his." snickered Geoffrey.

"Trust me Geoffrey, Eggman's still gonna show his ugly face no matter how bad he loses." muttered Sonic "I mean, his defeat at mine and Knuckles' hands**** when we had that showdown should have shaken him pretty badly but he still sprung back. And he still won't give-up despite the fact we took back the stolen emeralds the time he made Robotropolis fly*****. Now Shadow's taken it down, it will never fly again."

"Yeah that's right." said Geoffrey "And I see your points on Eggman coming back no matter what we throw at him. Well all I say about this is, we'll defeat that blighter even if we kill ourselves trying!" he declared, pounding the air with his gloved fist.

"And I'll be very happy to die for the good of Mobian kind." said Sonic "But given my speed and our team spirit, I'll live to tell the tale. The tale of Eggman's defeat and how we destroyed him for good."

"That'll be summet great to tell me kids, should I ever get any." said Geoffrey as he pictured a lovely thought in his head.

Suddenly, they were interrupted by a beeping noise on the monitors of Royal HQ. Mandy Mouse, the tomboy rodent of the team with a valorous streak as big as her devotion to duty, was watching the monitors and she picked up the thing it was detecting.

"Hey blue dude, come over here!" called Mandy "The monitors are going crazy here!"

Sonic zipped over and stood behind Mandy's chair. The mouse was taping furiously on the keyboard and tracking the trace of the signal the monitors were picking up.

"I'm getting strange readings from seven different places in the Great Forest." said Mandy as she stared at the flashing screen in

front of her "They look like chaos signatures but the Chaos Emeralds are back on Angel Island. Including the purple one I wanted to keep but decided it would be better if it stayed on the island."

"That is strange." said Sonic "Seven objects giving off chaos signatures even though the Chaos Emeralds are on Angel Island. They can't be more Chaos Emeralds because there's only seven left. We've gotta investigate this and fast. Geoffrey, get Tails, Cosmo and Wilson. Me, you, Mandy and them are going to investigate this strange thing."

"But who's gonna keep an eye on the base Sonic?" asked Geoffrey.

"The other girls can." said Sonic "Bunnie, Amy and Cream are gonna be great guards for Royal HQ."

"Well if Bunnie, Amy and Cream are staying, why is Cosmo coming?" asked Mandy "No offence to the sweet little girl but, she's not exactly fighter material is she?"

"I just feel that Tails and Cosmo should have some adventure time together." said Sonic "Those crazy lovebirds haven't had an adventure together recently have they?"

"You really do have a big heart for your mates don't you lad?" said Geoffrey, pleased at how selfless Sonic was.

"Well the hedgehog's heart is bigger then anything else on his body." said Sonic casually "Even his head. Let's get going and investigate this strange signal the monitors are picking up before someone else gets them."

With that said, Geoffrey left the lab and went off to get Wilson, Tails and Cosmo. Mandy left the lab to arm herself with some weapons as she had a feeling she was going to need them. Sonic hung around and waited until everybody was ready. He began to wonder on what he was going to find in the Great Forest and what they could possibly be. If they weren't Chaos Emeralds then what could they be…?

Meanwhile, Marik the Martian had been taking a nice steady stroll through the Great Forest in search for the Sol Emeralds. He didn't really know what he was looking for as he had no idea what the Sol Emeralds looked like but he was sure he'd be able to tell if they were the Sol Emeralds since the Great Forest doesn't have emeralds of any kind in it. Marik had kept his beady orange eyes open for any sight of an emerald. He hadn't found a single thing yet and he'd been ploughing through bushes and climbing up trees in his search for them. After searching in another tree, he climbed down and grumbled to himself.

"Well, if those Sol Emeralds are hiding in this forest, they've picked good places." he muttered to himself "I haven't found anything yet and I've been searching for ten minutes straight!"

He scratched the bark of the tree he'd just looked up angrily, leaving thick claws marks on it that was a clear sign that he'd been near here. Marik strolled off and pushed his way through another bush. Then suddenly, he saw something glistening on the ground. Marik ran over to the glistening thing and he looked at it. It was a green rectangular shaped emerald embedded slightly in the ground. Marik stared at it in thought. Was this a Sol Emerald? It must be as he didn't know any other emeralds that looked like that. Marik rubbed his hands greedily and he grabbed the emerald. He yanked it out of the ground and held it up to his face. The Martian grinned maliciously to himself. He'd found the first Sol Emerald! Now he had six more to find.

"So this must be a Sol Emerald." said Marik to himself "It feels like a Chaos Emerald only it has a curious fiery touch to it. Maybe it's a fire-powered emerald of some kind. Oh well, I cannot wait to use this on my enemies!"

Then suddenly, he heard something rush though the bushes. Marik jumped and he bared his metal claws. He scanned the scenery and waited for the assailant to come out. Everything seemed clear so far though. He must have heard somebody running through the forest on a hearty jog or something. But just as Marik began to feel that there was nothing to worry about, somebody jumped on him and pile-dived him into the ground, making him drop the Sol Emerald. The thing that attacked him jumped over him and grabbed the Sol

Emerald. The attacker was none other then Scourge the Hedgehog's sexy girlfriend and Royal Fighter traitor Fiona Fox. The vixen shot a seductive pose at Marik while holding the emerald close to her chest. She put on a fake expression of sweetness to the angry Martian.

"For me?" she purred sarcastically "How kind of you, you really shouldn't have."

Marik leaped up onto his feet and he punched Fiona directly in the stomach. Fiona doubled over, wheezing heavily and she dropped the Sol Emerald. Marik grabbed it and he stuffed it in his jacket and he zipped the pocket up.

"I didn't!" snarled Marik "Who are you then you little slut?"

"Oh ho, ho! Cheeky are we?" chuckled Fiona "I like boys with a bit of attitude in them! The name's Fiona Fox by the way gruesome. What's yours?"

"Marik the Martian." said Marik "Sonic's worst enemy and soon to be destroyer of Mobius!"

"Wrong I'm afraid." said Fiona, roundhouse kicking Marik in the legs and tripping him up "My boy Scourge the Hedgehog is Sonic's worst enemy and soon to be conqueror of Mobius. You don't even look good enough to be Sonic's worst enemy."

Marik's expression became very fierce at the mere mention of Scourge's name. It was as if the name had a bad ring to it.

"Scourge the Hedgehog?" snarled Marik "You're with Scourge the Hedgehog?"

"Yes I am." said Fiona, stomping on the Martian's back as hard as she could "What of it?"

"I, unfortunately, know Scourge!" growled Marik, rolling over and kangaroo kicking Fiona in the legs "I had a bad time with that big-headed hog troll the time I got arrested****** and I've been looking forward to ripping his obnoxious little head off! If you're associated with him then I'm afraid I'm going to have to kill you too Fiona!"

"If you're on Scourge's bad side then I'm afraid I'm gonna have to kick your ass Marik." sneered Fiona "Why don't you make this easy on the both of us and give me that emerald so we can avoid an unnecessary fight and unnecessary pain?"

"Martians do NOT back down from a fight!" bellowed Marik, punching Fiona in the face "And I will not surrender this emerald to you! It's mine and I'm going to find the other six and use them to destroy Mobius once and for all!"

Fiona rubbed her face better and she scowled at Marik.

"I guess me, Scourge and Ginger weren't the only ones eavesdropping on that odd hedgehog and cat couple earlier." she muttered "That just means we get some annoying competition from an alien freak."

Marik took offence to that and she dropkicked Fiona in the face and knocked her down onto her back. The angry vixen picked herself up and roundhouse kicked Marik in the legs. Marik fell onto his back and Fiona went for his jacket. Marik moved out of the way and picked himself up. He tried to roundhouse punch Fiona in the face but Fiona ducked and kneed him in the gut. The vixen then proceeded to push Marik down onto the ground and kick him away. Marik picked himself up and swiped his arm at Fiona. The vixen found herself being knocked off her feet by an energy wave but she wasn't down for long. She picked herself up and kicked Marik in the face. Marik fell onto his back and Fiona attempted to grab the emerald from his jacket but Marik grabbed her arm with his metal hand and gave her a painful electric shock. Fiona screamed at the top of her voice as electricity surged up her arm and through her body. Marik gripped on tightly so Fiona couldn't get away. Fiona grimaced and screamed as she was shocked and she finally collapsed onto the ground. Marik had shocked her to the point she fell unconscious. Marik picked himself up and he sneered at her.

"You were absolutely pathetic." he crowed "Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got emeralds to find. I would kill you but you're not worth my time and resources, you're too pathetic."

And with that, he left the unconscious Fiona behind to lie on the

ground while he searched for the other Sol Emeralds. The moment he left though, Scourge the Hedgehog and his wormy sidekick Ginger the Fox arrived on the scene. They saw the unconscious Fiona lying on the ground after Marik had shocked her. Scourge's face contorted with anger and shock. He stomped over to Fiona and hauled her up onto her feet. He slapped her face repeatedly to wake her up.

"Wake up Fiona! This isn't the time for a nap!" bellowed Scourge "We've gotta find those Sol Emerald thingies before someone else does!"

Fiona came to from Marik's painful electric shock and she groaned sleepily. She rubbed her throbbing cheeks, which had gone red from Scourge slapping her repeatedly to wake her up. She stared straight into Scourge's eyes and noticed her boyfriend wasn't exactly pleased with her.

"Fiona, what happened?" demanded Scourge angrily "Why are you sleeping on the job?"

"Scourge baby, I was not sleeping on the job." snapped Fiona "I found the first of them Sol Emerald things the hedgehog and cat were talking about earlier but a creep named Marik the Martian shocked me into submission. He claims to know you so I bet you know who I'm talking about."

"I do actually sweet thing." said Scourge crossly, folding his arms and scowling hard enough to scare a fully grown Siberian Tiger "Me and Marik met each other in prison the other month and he dared to challenge me! I guess he escaped then if you ran into him a moment ago."

"Excuse me Scourge, pardon my asking but who is Marik the Martian?" asked Ginger.

"Do you even read the newspapers kid?" snapped Scourge angrily "How in the hell of it can you not know who Marik is? He's a regular headline hitter! Everybody's heard of him!"

"I do read newspapers but I usually tear them up in anger whenever

I see Sonic and Tails getting praised for their good deeds." Ginger confessed meekly.

"In that case, I won't bother telling you as you don't give a crap about anything else." muttered Scourge "Come on Fiona and Ginger! Marik may have the first Sol Emerald but we'll get the rest! That hedgehog kid with the stupid haircut said there were seven and Marik has one so there must be six left to find."

"And we'll get them first and get the one from Marik afterwards." said Fiona.

With that said, Scourge and his cronies wondered off through the Great Forest in search for the Sol Emeralds. Scourge couldn't wait to get into a fight with Marik and kick his backside to make him pay for standing up to him in prison the other time. And since he'd beefed himself up all the times he'd been absent from the battle, he'd floor Marik easily…

Meanwhile, Sonic the Hedgehog, Tails the twin-tailed fox, Cosmo the Seedrian, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse were in the Great Forest in search of the Sol Emeralds. Unlike Marik and Scourge, they didn't know what they were looking for, all the knew was it had Chaos Energy like the Chaos Emeralds. Tails had brought his handheld chaos tracker, a device he'd used to find the Lake of Rings and the Chaos Emeralds******* on the occasions they needed them so they could find the Sol Emeralds. Luckily for the Mobians, Mandy had uploaded the coordinates the computers had picked up to the tracker so they knew where to find the emeralds.

"So Tails, how close are we to the first thing that's been picked up on our monitors?" asked Sonic.

"Well, we're not that far away now." said Tails "It's a good few paces ahead of us according to this tracker. However, the tracker's showing one of the dots moving in a certain direction. I have a feeling somebody else is looking for these chaos energy things that we've picked up too."

"Let's hope it's not Marik or Scourge or those guys that worked with Lola Gunn before they shot her********." said Sonic "Anyone of them could be interested in findings like this. And if it's an artefact with Chaos Energy then it's going to be dangerous in their hands."

"I'm amazed with haven't seen that Marik blighter in a while." said Geoffrey as he kept his eyes opened for the Sol Emeralds "He got his arm broken by Shadow then he vanished. I guess he took that defeat pretty hard and decided to opt out of the battle for a while."

"I just hope we don't run into that demon while we're out here." said Cosmo, shuddering at the mere thought of Marik "I hate Marik, he scares me and his sadism makes me sick. I know hate's a strong word but I really do have no love for that sadistic peace hater."

"Cosmo, chill girl." said Sonic with a reassuring smile on his face "We all hate Marik too so you can say what you like about him. We don't mind."

"I'll never forget the time I bit him on the arm." said Wilson as he thought back to the time they were on Cutthroat Jim's ship during the Chaos Emerald hunt********* "I wouldn't mind doing that to him again should we meet that Martian again."

"You bit Marik on the arm?" piped Mandy "Aw! I wish I was here to see it but I was replaced by an Automaton at the time so I missed it! I love it when you do something as cool as that Wilson."

"I know you do, although I don't usually enjoy biting people." muttered Wilson "It's barbaric and savage. But with villains like Dr. Eggman, Scourge or Marik I'll make an exception."

"Hey guys, I think we've found the first object!" cried Tails as his tracker started to go crazy. It beeped as frantically it sounded like it was having a malfunction and it's screen was going haywire.

They had come across a rosebush on their left hand side and the tracker was saying the emerald was in the bush. Cosmo ran over to the bush and she stuck her hand inside it, trying her best to avoid the sharp thorns of the roses. She fumbled about in the bush for a moment until finally, her hands closed around something hard. The

moment she touched it, she felt a slight temperature rise and her hand felt like there was a fire inside it. Cosmo lifted the thing out and showed it to everybody. She had found the red Sol Emerald, the hottest of the Sol Emeralds. Everybody stared at the emerald in wonder, entranced by it's beauty and it's unusual shape.

"What is it?" asked Geoffrey.

"It feels like a Chaos Emerald." said Cosmo "I'm getting this same warm, loving feeling a Chaos Emerald gives off, only with an added fiery streak that makes it feel slightly hot. But it doesn't look like a Chaos Emerald."

"It's definitely not one I've seen." said Sonic "And I don't think Knuckles will know what it is either. It's definitely not something from Angel Island."

"Maybe it's a mystical gem that's yet to be discovered." suggested Mandy "After all, science is always revealing something new day after day isn't it?"

Then suddenly, a huge wave of fire rushed by Cosmo and made her fall over onto her bottom in surprise. Sonic and friends leaped back and stared at the wave of fire, amazed by the heat and how suddenly it appeared. Something came out of the fire and stood before Cosmo, the Seedrian staring up in fright at the thing in the fire. It was, of course Blaze the Cat and she looked furious to say the least. She glared at Cosmo with her steely yellow eyes and noticed she had a Sol Emerald in her hands.

"Give me that Sol Emerald and I won't have to burn you alive little one!" snarled Blaze, the fire behind her still blazing brilliantly and madly.

Cosmo, shaking like a million leaves didn't hesitate for a minute and she got back onto her feet. She kept her gaze fixed straight on Blaze and she handed Blaze the Sol Emerald, her hands shaking terribly. Blaze was slightly taken aback by the fact someone actually listened to her and gave her the Sol Emerald when asked first time but she kept her steel gaze on. She snatched the emerald off Cosmo and narrowed her eyes to a glower.

"Thank you." she said ""If any of you are thinking about looking for the other Sol Emeralds then back off now. I will show no mercy if you're looking for my emeralds!"

"Hey! Who the hell do you think you are you fiery jerk?" snapped Mandy angrily, storming up to Blaze and prodding her sharply in the chest "Throwing fire around like that and threatening to burn an innocent little kid alive? Who the hell do you think you are?"

"I am Blaze the Cat, Guardian of the Sol Emeralds and resident of future Mobius." said Blaze bluntly "I will roast anybody who dares to keep the Sol Emeralds for themselves."

"Oh will you now?" said Mandy coldly "Well, I strongly object to people throwing their weight around and being nasty to children so you can either apologize for your actions or I will use your face for stress relief!"

"You have the nerve to tell me off for throwing my weight around and yet you threaten to assault me?" screeched Blaze "You've got a lot of nerve in you young lady!"

"Girls! Girls! Timeout! Now!" shouted Sonic hastily, making a timeout sign with his hands "We're getting off on the wrong foot here!"

Mandy and Blaze just glared at each other but they didn't unleash hell on each other. Mandy stood down and retreated away from Blaze, her scowl still fixed on the pyrokinetic kitty in the purple coat. Glad to see that the fight had been aborted, Sonic stood forward and spoke.

"Look miss, we have no idea what a Sol Emerald is and we're not hoping to keep them for ourselves." said Sonic "Our scanners detected them and we're looking for them to see what they are. We had no idea they belonged to you. We're sorry if it looks like we're trying to find them for ourselves."

Blaze took in what Sonic said and relaxed her expression. She snapped her fingers and the fire wall behind her disappeared from sight.

"I'm sorry for my actions hedgehog." she said slowly "I'm just too overly jumpy whenever I see somebody other then me or people I know with my Sol Emeralds."

"I'll say you are!" retorted Mandy "Throwing fire around like that as if it's Bonfire Night and scaring the living cuss outta us!"

"Look, I said I was sorry OK?" snapped Blaze "I didn't mean for it to go like this. I just…have a fiery temper and I can't help myself when I lose it."

"I understood miss." said Sonic "I know a red echidna and a pink girl hedgehog with tempers even worse then yours. Who are you by the way?"

"Blaze the Cat." said Blaze "I'm the guardian of the Sol Emeralds and I come from two-hundred years in the future."

The Mobians all gawped at the purple cat that stood before them, earning an awkward expression from Blaze.

"You're from the future?" gasped Tails "That's awesome! I always had a feeling time travel was possible and now I've just found out it is indeed true! There's a person from the future standing right before us!"

"If you're from the future lass then why are you here?" asked Geoffrey.

"A robotic looking creature shaped like a mouse stole the Sol Emeralds and tried to make off with them." explained Blaze "While we were in the warp ring portal tunnel, I caused it to drop the emeralds and they fell out of the portal and randomly ended up here. Me and my friend Silver are looking for them right now."

"Who's Silver?" asked Sonic.

Then as if right on cue, Silver ran in from nowhere and ran up to Blaze.

"Hey Blaze, what's going on?" asked Silver.

He spotted the Mobians standing before them and he realized what was going on. They had found some locals at last and to Silver's relief, they were Mobians so that meant they were on Mobius and in the past.

"Well at least now I know we're in past Mobius." said Silver "Who are these guys?"

"I dunno but they've found a Sol Emerald for us." said Blaze, showing Silver the red Sol Emerald she know had.

"Thanks for that guys." said Silver "Who are you?"

"I'm Sonic." said Sonic, pointing to himself "Sonic the Hedgehog. These are my friends Tails, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey." he said, pointing to them as he introduced them.

"Sonic?" gasped Silver " **The** Sonic the Hedgehog?"

"Yes." said Sonic "Is that surprising like?"

"It's an absolute honour to meet you in person Sonic." said Silver, bowing down respectfully to Sonic as if he was a loyal knave bowing to his king "I've heard many legends about you and I've dreamed of meeting you."

"Huh, even in the future I have fans!" chuckled Sonic "Guess the hedgehog's legacy lives on!"

"Oh brother!" muttered Geoffrey, face-palming himself in annoyance.

"So I guess you're Blaze's friend then?" asked Sonic "Silver she says your name is."

"I am." said Silver "I'm Silver the Hedgehog, psychokinetic hedgehog from the future and friend of Blaze the Cat here."

"Psychoka-whatsit?" asked Mandy in confusion.

"I have psychic powers." said Silver plainly "Watch this."

He held his hands out and they glowed a teal colour. Then suddenly,

Sonic, Tails, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey all lifted up off the ground for a few feet as if they were being picked up by invisible hands.

"Cool!" cried Mandy in excitement "He can lift things without touching them!"

"You don't see many psychic beings around do you?" asked Wilson.

Silver then lowered his arms and he put the Mobians back down on the ground. Sonic gave him a thumbs up sign.

"Suh-weet!" he said "Psychic powers aren't very common these days. What other powers do Mobians from the future have?"

"Not many I'm afraid." said Silver solemnly, his quills drooping against his head in despair "Me and Blaze are the only super-powered Mobians left."

"Oh." said Sonic "So what's the future like then?"

"A wreck." sighed Blaze sadly "Everything's destroyed. Cities are in turmoil, few oceans exist and all plant life is dead. Angel Island rests in the ocean, few Mobians still live and the sky forever burns red and orange."

Everybody jaw-dropped at Silver and Blaze and they looked at each other nervously. The future's a wreck? Does that mean in two-hundred years, something wrecks Mobius? What could possibly be the cause of it?

"So the future's a wreck?" asked Sonic "What happened?"

"We don't know." said Silver "But I'm gonna find out and prevent the destruction from ever happening!"

"Well let's hope you do." said Wilson "I don't feel good knowing that Mobius is in turmoil in the future."

"That's not important right now mates." said Geoffrey "You two, do you mind tellin' us what a Sol Emerald is and why they're important to you?"

"A Sol Emerald is the future version of the Chaos Emeralds which I'm sure you all know about." explained Blaze "My mother was a fire queen before she passed away and left me to take the throne. She owned the seven Chaos Emeralds but the fiery powers in her heart and soul transformed them after she touched them. The Chaos Emeralds became cursed with the Spirit of the Pyro that lived in my mother and they were transformed forever. They even changed shape for unknown reasons. From then on, mother called them the Sol Emeralds and made it her solemn vow that she would pass the emeralds on to the next of her kin and then they would be passed on to her children's children and so forth. I am the current guardian now and I cannot dishonour my mother's vow by losing the Sol Emeralds now so I HAVE to find them before they end up destroying Mobius NOW and we'll cease to exist because of it."

"Well if you need to find your emeralds so badly then we'll help you without a moment's hesitance." said Sonic happily "The hedgehog helps people of all kinds, even the future kind."

"Um Sonic, are you sure yer willing to trust these two?" asked Geoffrey unsurely "Especially with how Blaze greeted us?"

"Oh Geoffrey, lighten up old boy!" groaned Sonic "These two are on our side, they want to make sure our world's future doesn't die and they don't want any evil-doers to get the Sol Emeralds as they can be dangerous in their hands so whether you like it or not, we're helping them!"

""Just don't expect me to get on with cat woman there!" grumbled Mandy crossly, still feeling sore over what Blaze did earlier.

"I'm not expecting you to." said Sonic "OK Silver and Blaze, Tails here has a tracker and it has the hiding places of your Sol Emeralds. If you follow our lead, you'll find them all no problem."

"With all the stuff legend says about you Sonic, I'm willing to trust you all the way." said Silver eagerly "You've already found one for us so I'm willing to trust you to help us find the rest."

"Very nice." said Sonic "OK guys and girls, let's do it to it! We've got our future kind to help!"

So the Mobians stopped standing around and they carried on with their search. Tails went in front and he glanced at the tracker. Sonic and Silver walked behind him, Geoffrey and Wilson walked behind them, Mandy and Blaze walked behind them (with their arms folded and gazes kept away from each other) and Cosmo followed them all from behind. With the picked up coordinates and Tails' tracker, the Sol Emeralds were as good as found…if only there weren't two different villains looking for them too!

Meanwhile, Scourge, Fiona and Ginger had been on the lookout for the other Sol Emeralds but as bad luck would have it, they hadn't stumbled across a single thing yet. They had been searching frantically only to find absolutely nothing. Unfortunately for Scourge, whiny little Ginger was beginning to get grouchy.

"Scourge, we've been searching this stupid forest for hours!" he whined "How about resting the legs?"

"We've been searching for ten minutes!" grumbled Scourge "And we will not rest until we found those damn emeralds so shut up unless you wanna say something helpful you mud eater!"

"I do not eat mud!" screamed Ginger.

"Shut up for god's sake!" bellowed Scourge, clamping Ginger's mouth shut hastily "Do you WANT Marik or Sonic to find us? No! So shut up before I rip your liver out and stuff it back down your throat!"

Ginger gulped nervously and kept his mouth shut. Angering Scourge was never a wise idea.

"Hey Scourge, I can see something in that lake over there." said Fiona, pointing to a lake they had come across on their search.

This was the Lake of Rings, a magical lake that produced magic power rings every twenty-four hours. In the lake, the blue Sol Emerald, the coldest of the Sol Emeralds was floating in it. Scourge, Fiona and Ginger ran over to the edge of the lake and stared at the floating Sol Emerald. The emerald was too far out in the water for

them to reach so they couldn't grab it.

"I bet that's the Sol Emerald things that couple was talking about earlier." said Scourge "We've found one at last."

"Pity it's too far out into the lake." said Fiona grimly "We can't get the emerald."

"OK then, Ginger, you get in that lake and get that Sol Emerald." ordered Scourge.

"Me?" squeaked Ginger "But I cannot swim Scourge! I'll drown if I go in there!"

"Well I can't swim either so I can't get it." said Scourge crossly "Fiona, you get it."

"OK Scourge." said Fiona, sticking her nose in the air and giving a smug expression to Ginger, making him cross.

Fiona dived gracefully into the lake and went down for a little bit before coming back up for air. She then proceeded to swim over to where the Sol Emerald was. She effortlessly managed to push herself through the water with every paddle of her arms. At last, she managed to reach the emerald and she grabbed it quickly. She then proceeded to throw the emerald onto the bank nearest to her and she swam back to shore. Scourge zipped over and picked up the Sol Emerald. Fiona reached the bank and Scourge helped her to climb out of the water. Fiona then proceeded to shake herself dry, making sure all the water went over Ginger and not Scourge, and she flattened down her ruffled up fur. As for Scourge, he was staring at the Sol Emerald and he was amazed by it.

"Look at this beauty we've fished outta the lake!" cried Scourge "It feels like a Chaos Emerald but it has a fiery tone to it. I can't wait to see what this baby does!"

But before Scourge could do anything else, he was stricken from behind by a sudden jolt of electricity. Scourge yelped in pain as electricity surged up his body and he dropped the Sol Emerald. The thing stopped zapping him and Scourge fell down onto his knees.

The thing that had zapped him was of course, Marik the Martian and he leaped out of his hiding place and booted Scourge straight into the lake. Scourge shot straight into the lake with a splash and he sank straight down. He wasn't down for long, he popped back up to the surface and flailed his arms around madly.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! Have a nice "dip" Scourge!" cackled Marik "And thanks so much for finding this Sol Emerald for me!" he added, picking up the Sol Emerald that Scourge had found.

He opened up his jacket and stuffed the emerald into another pocket on the other side of his jacket. Ginger flew over to the Lake of Rings where Scourge was furiously flailing his arms and trying to swim without success as like Sonic, he couldn't swim. Ginger hovered down and attempted to grab Scourge but Marik zapped him and made him fall into the lake as well. Ginger landed beside Scourge and splashed water all over him. Scourge and Ginger were not flailing about madly, trying to keep their heads above water and not drown. Marik just laughed at the two drowning villains.

"Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" he guffawed "Oh what joy it is to watch a loathsome rival of mine paddle pitifully in a failed attempt to escape a watery grave! Well, maybe I can make it even WORSE for them by electrocuting the water!"

He pointed his metal claws at the lake and prepared to zap the water. The result would be an outrageous nature death toll. Scourge, Ginger and everything that lived in the lake would be killed by the electrical surge Marik produced and the lake would look more like a graveyard once Marik did that. Before he could do so, Fiona ran up behind him and booted him straight into the water. Marik tumbled into the water with a splash and he sank down briefly before coming back up. Fiona then proceeded to leap back into the water and swim over to Scourge and Ginger. She grabbed Scourge's hand, Ginger grabbed Scourge's hand and Fiona swam back to shore, towing the two villains with her. Fiona made it to the shore and she pushed Scourge to the shore so he could climb out. Fiona then climbed out after him with Ginger holding on to her. The trio shook themselves dry and they ran for it as the lake wasn't a safe location for a fight. Marik growled angrily and he climbed out of the water. He ran after them with his jet shoes blazing and rocketing him

towards Scourge. The Martian effortlessly caught up with Scourge and he leaped up into the air. He stretched out his foot and he dropkicked him straight into the ground as he sailed past him. Marik landed on his feet and he faced Scourge with a dark expression on his face. It was quite clear he wasn't happy to see the evil green hedgehog again. Scourge picked himself up and he raised his fist. The expression he had could give a dragon nightmares for life.

"You!" snarled Scourge.

"You!" snarled Marik "I was hoping I'd meet you again soon Scourge the Scoundrel Hog! My mind still heaves over all the bad things you did to me in prison and I want to rip your innards out for it!"

"And I wanna stomp on you until we can use you as a doormat to wipe my feet on!" yelled Scourge "I have a score to settle with you Marik! You tried to ruin my reputation and you wouldn't do as instructed when I gave you some orders!"

"Nobody orders me around except my superiors back on Mars!" bellowed Marik "Your laws and rules bear no hold over me as I do not hail from this accursed planet!"

"Oh yeah?" snapped Scourge "Well if you're on our planet then you obey OUR rules, or should I say MY rules as I'm going to be king of the world when I use all the Sol Emeralds on it!"

"If I were to guess, you eavesdropped on that same odd hedgehog and cat couple I eavesdropped on and found out about their so-called Sol Emeralds." sniffed Marik "I cannot believe we were in the same place at once and we missed each other. Well now we've met each other again, I can tear you apart!"

"Pry I don't tear you apart first!" roared Scourge.

Marik and Scourge charged towards each other like mad bulls and they linked arms with one another. They clenched each other's hands and they pushed on each other. Marik however, decided to kick Scourge in the groin to make him cave in first and he did just that. Scourge yelped in pain and he clutched his tender spot. This gave Marik the perfect opportunity to backhand him in the head and

knock him onto his side. Fiona and Ginger were about to step in and help Scourge but the green hedgehog stopped them.

"Don't you dare interfere foxes!" yelled Scourge angrily "Marik's mine and I will finish him myself!"

Fiona and Ginger didn't dare to answer back to him. They stepped back and left Scourge and Marik to unleash their masculinity on each other. Scourge spin-dashed Marik straight in the gut and sent him flying backwards. The Martian crashed straight into a tree. Marik lay by the foot of the tree and he grumbled furiously. Scourge tried to spin-dash Marik again but Marik dodged the attack and elbowed him directly in the neck. Scourge gagged and he fell onto his side. Marik then proceeded to kick Scourge and send him rolling across the ground. Scourge picked himself up and charged towards Marik. Marik charged towards them and they collided in mid-air. They landed back down on the ground and prepared to unleash hell on each other…

Meanwhile, Sonic and friends were still searching for the Sol Emeralds. They hadn't found anything yet and Tails noticed something peculiar on the tracker. He peered at it and wondered what was going on. The line halted since Tails had stopped to see what was going on, on his tracker. Sonic tried to peer over Tails' shoulder and see what was happening.

"Yo Tails, is everything OK?" he asked.

"I'm fine Sonic it's just my tracker's displaying something odd." said Tails "There's two dots close together, the dots representing the Sol Emeralds, and they're moving around like crazy."

"Has somebody found two Sol Emeralds before we did?" asked Silver "And if so, who has?"

"Beats me." said Sonic "I wonder why they're moving around like crazy. Has the person who's found them decided to do some exercise or is he in battle with somebody or…what?"

"Well when we find this person, we'll find out what is happening." said Blaze "But that'll have to wait, my Sol Emerald senses another gem nearby."

"I think it's right to get that feeling." said Tails "There's another Sol Emerald near from where we are." said Tails, peering at the tracker and ignoring the two moving dots "We may as well get that one while we're near."

"And when we get that one, we'll find the person who's found those two." said Silver "I hope it's a friendly person like you guys."

"I hope so too." said Sonic "Although I have a bad feeling it might be an enemy of mine…"

Unbeknown to the Mobians, up in a tree above their heads, the mysterious mouse bot that had stolen the Sol Emeralds was watching them from above and it was displaying some words in it's visor. It scanned Sonic the Hedgehog and it's visor displayed it's readings.

SCAN DATA COMPLETE

DESIGNATION: MOBIAN HEDGEHOG

ANALYSIS: BEARS HEAVY RESEMBLANCE TO SONIC THE HEDGEHOG NEGA

PRIORITIZING: CONSIDERED DANGEROUS. MAY BECOME THREAT TO MASTER'S RULE. COMMENCE ATTACK MODE…

Footnotes:

***See Story 57**

**** See Stories 77-83 for the whole saga of traitorous butler bots and worldwide roboticizations!**

***** See Story 28**

****** See Story 20**

******* See Story 75**

******** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 3: Marik the Prisoner***

********* See Story 25 and the Chaos Emeralds saga (Stories 36-42) respectively**

********** Remember Team Diamond from Stories 68-69?**

*********** See Stories 37-38**

Dum, dum, DUUUUMMMM! Looks like Sonic's gonna have his hands full here! Will he find all the Sol Emeralds? Will Scourge and Marik kill each other? And what's the deal with the mouse-bot? Tune in for the next thrilling part to this epic saga! Read and Review.

Congratulations to those who correctly guessed Silver and Blaze were going to appear in this. Good guesses guys! :)

Sol Search Part 2

Story 85: Sol Search Part 2: Doors To Other Worlds

SCAN DATA COMPLETE

DESIGNATION: MOBIAN HEDGEHOG

ANALYSIS: BEARS HEAVY RESEMBLANCE TO SONIC THE HEDGEHOG NEGA

PRIORITIZING: CONSIDERED DANGEROUS. MAY BECOME THREAT TO MASTER'S RULE. COMMENCE ATTACK MODE

With that analysis, the mouse-bot leaped down from the tree it was perched on and it headed towards Sonic the Hedgehog with it's claws opened and ready to grab him. Sonic heard it coming and he turned around and spotted it. He was too late to react and the mouse-bot knocked him down onto the ground. The mouse-bot pinned him down and tired to slice him apart with it's claws but Sonic kept the robo-mouse's arms away from him. Silver the Hedgehog, future resident of Mobius, thrust his arms forward and halted the robo-mouse with his psychic powers. He lifted the bot off Sonic and hurled it into a tree. The mouse-bot crashed head first into the tree and lay on the ground, wondering which way was up and what it had just crashed into. The mouse-bot picked itself up and it glared at the Mobians that stood before it. Everybody stood around the mouse-bot and they stared at it in wonder.

"What in the name of Mobotropolis is that?" cried Wilson the Dog, master of the spinning blade weapon.

"It looks like a Robian mouse." said his girlfriend, Mandy Mouse "But it doesn't look like it belongs to Dr. Eggman."

"It doesn't." said Sonic bluntly "All of Mobius was de-roboticized*, the Robians are extinct and the Mobians are here to stay so that is NOT Dr. Eggman's Robian there."

"That's the thing that stole the Sol Emeralds in the first place." said Blaze the Cat coldly "It's because of that thing we're here to find them again! I'll tear it apart!"

"Wait luv." said Geoffrey St. John hastily "Before you do that, let's see what we can find out about this thing. Maybe we can find out why it stole yer emeralds in the first place."

"It doesn't speak." said Silver "It can't tell us anything."

"In that case, let's smash the blighter." said Geoffrey, priming his trademark arm-mounted crossbow.

Before anyone could do anything, the mouse-bot fired some stasis beams at the Mobians and they were all suddenly frozen to the spot by the beams. Everyone but Sonic the Hedgehog that is as he jumped out of the way before he could get it. The mouse-bot clawed at him but Sonic dodged the attack and spin-dashed it directly in the gut. The mouse-bot landed with a clunk at the foot of a tree. The mouse-bot picked itself up and it extended it's already long tail. It then proceeded to try and whip Sonic with it but Sonic jumped over the tail-whip and he spin-dashed the mouse-bot again. The mouse-bot was sent hurling into another tree and that move shook it dearly. The mouse-bot looked like it was having great trouble standing up. Sonic stood before the mouse-bot and he folded his arms while glaring at it.

"OK silver streak, care to explain yourself or do I get to beat the tar outta ya some more?" asked Sonic sternly.

The mouse-bot just retaliated with an uppercut to the chin that sent Sonic hurling through the air and landing on his back. The mouse-bot was about to grab Sonic and kill him but the stasis beams wore off and Sonic's friends were able to move again. His best friend Tails the twin-tailed fox twisted his tails around one another and he flew towards the mouse-bot. He kicked it in the head and knocked it away from Sonic. The mouse-bot picked itself up and tried to attack again but Blaze engulfed it in a jet of fire. The mouse-bot began to panic as it was overwhelmed with blazing, searing heat. The mouse-bot leaped out of Blaze's fiery attack and it scampered away.

"It's fleeing for it's life!" cried Silver "Don't let it escape!"

Sonic picked himself up and he zoomed after the mouse-bot at his trademark speed. Silver and Blaze were well impressed by the hedgehog's speed. Legend had said he could run fast, but they had no idea on HOW fast he could run and seeing him move at supersonic speed for real was just amazing to them.

"No wonder they called him "Sonic"!" said Silver in astonishment "He really can run fast!"

"He makes me look slow." said Blaze "And I'm a pretty fast mover myself."

Sonic chased after the mouse-bot and he had almost caught up to it. But the mouse-bot had other ideas. It was going to use it's escape route. It summoned a black warp ring out from nowhere and it leaped straight through it. Sonic was not about to let it get away so he leaped through the warp ring after the mouse-bot just as the tip of it's tail disappeared into the ring. Sonic's friends ran as fast as they could after Sonic and they tried to catch the warp ring but they were too late the minute Sonic leaped through it. It disappeared into thin air before they could get within ten feet of it. Sonic and the mouse-bot were now on their way to another zone through a black warp ring. Silver cursed his bad luck and Blaze clenched her fists angrily. She wanted to destroy that thing for stealing the Sol Emeralds in the first place but she missed her chance. Now it had escaped and was going to another zone.

"Damn! We were too slow!" griped Silver "That thing's gone and fled to who-knows-where and Sonic's followed it so who knows where he's gonna end up too!"

"Can't we follow him?" asked Tails "Do you have any method of space travel or something?"

"I have a Super Warp Ring back home and I don't have it on me right now." muttered Silver.

"The Sol Emeralds are capable of transportation abilities too." said Blaze "But I need all seven in order for them to work."

"So the only way we can follow Sonic to wherever that thing's taking him is find all the Sol Emeralds?" asked Cosmo.

"Yes." said Blaze "We must find them all if we're to help Sonic get back to this zone and timeline."

"Well then let's stop yapping about and get on with it!" yelled Geoffrey impatiently "Sonic can't wait forever ya know!"

"OK Mr. St. John, we will." said Tails, peering at his handheld tracker "Now, there appears to be one a good few paces from where we are now." he said as he noticed a dot quite close to their current position "Let's get that one."

"And there was one near to where we were before that mouse-bot attacked us so we should get that one too." said Mandy.

"Me and Blaze will get it while you get the other one." said Silver "Tails, care to give us directions?"

"It was a few paces away from the tree the mouse-bot was on." said Tails, peering at the tracker and reading the coordinates "Keep searching until you find it."

With that said, Silver and Blaze ran back over to the tree the mouse-bot had been sitting on before it attacked Sonic. Tails, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey just continued on to where the other located emerald was hiding. As they walked on to find the Sol Emerald, Tails couldn't help but wonder to himself where Sonic was going to end up and what was going to happen to him when he arrived there…

As for Sonic, the mouse-bot's warp ring opened up and the mouse-bot leaped straight out of it. Sonic came hurling out of the warp ring and he landed rather sharply on his side. He ended up grazing his shoulder and he grimaced in pain. The mouse-bot scampered away quickly before Sonic could get back up. Sonic's mind had been completely messed up by the warp ring's awful portal tunnel and he was having trouble regaining his senses. His mind was still

swimming around him with black and red images flashing before him.

Urgh! God! That was horrible!" he spluttered "What kind of warp ring does this guy use? Koff, Koff!"

He shook his head furiously to regain his senses and he steadily picked himself up. His knees were still knocking and his head hadn't been quite cleared yet. He clutched his throbbing arm and rubbed it tenderly.

"Never again do I wanna go through that thing!" said Sonic hoarsely "That thing could make a guy sick that…could…"

His voice trailed off as he finally regained his senses and he managed to get a view on the scenery around him. He was in a city much like Mobotropolis before Dr. Eggman reduced it to a nasty stain on the face of the planet** only it looked completely metallic and silver in colour. In fact, everything was metallic in appearance and the population appeared to be full of robots. There were robots marching left and right, robots hovering in hover cars and robots flying over in planes and jets. The buildings and robots looked pretty dark and evil in appearance, giving Sonic the feeling he wasn't an a friendly environment. The sky was a dark, brooding mixture of black and purple and the appearance of the city looked more like an evil metropolis then a nice, welcoming city. Sonic had a feeling he was in villainous territory right now and now would be a good time to leg it and quick before someone nabbed him.

"Where am I?" wondered Sonic as he surveyed the scenery around him "It looks like Mobotropolis only dark and evil…and conquered. It looks like the whole place was roboticized or something like that. Silver and Blaze didn't describe their world looking like this so at least this isn't future Mobius or something like that. Is this…another zone altogether?"

He didn't have time to wonder though. He was going to get spotted any minute by the zillions of robots that were moving in and out of the city so he had to get out of the way and fast. Sonic zipped off down an alleyway and he stopped at the end of it. Nobody would see him now. He sat down against the wall and thought hard to

himself. All he had to do now was lay low and try to think of a way to get back home. He was not going to stay here a second longer. The robots of this zone would likely rip him to shreds. Yet the very appearance of the city he was faced with bugged him and he couldn't help but wonder about it.

"Judging by the appearance of that mouse-bot I followed and the appearances of the robots out and about I'd guess this is where the mouse-bot lives." Sonic deduced "I wonder what is this world though and why it looks so evil and robotical? Does this Mobius have an Eggman too and it's conquered the world unlike the Eggman of this zone? I really hope there's some one I can get some answers from around here."

"Hey! Psst! You there!" hissed a female voice that Sonic was familiar with "Get over here now!"

Sonic turned his head and looked down the alleyway on the left of where he was. There was a shadowy figure hiding in the darkness of the shadows. Sonic couldn't make out the figure but it looked slightly feminine in appearance. Not to mention the voice sounded familiar to him.

"Who me?" asked Sonic, pointing to himself.

"Yes you!" hissed the figure "Come on before you get spotted!"

Sonic didn't really know if he should do as the figure says but being as he was trapped on a strange world with no way out, he had to trust the figure and see what happened. Sonic got up to his feet and he wondered cautiously over to the figure. The moment he stepped into the shadows, the figure grabbed his hand and yanked him down the alleyway. Then the figure came across a sewer lid in the ground behind a building the alleyway stretched behind and she opened the lid quickly. She yanked him down the sewer hole, the lid clanging shut behind them. Sonic and the figure all slid down a slide that the sewer lid led to and they slid down into a room that the slide led to. They shot off the end of the slide and they landed on a soft mattress that was conveniently placed for them to have a soft landing. Sonic and the figure picked themselves up and he dusted himself off.

"Sheesh, if you wanted me to come with you, you could have just asked!" griped Sonic "I like to be prepared for…"

His voiced trailed off as he saw what the figure looked like. The lights were on so now he could see what she looked like. To his amazement, the figure was none-other then an alternative version of Amy Rose, his fan-crazed hammer hitter! Unlike the prime Amy Rose, this Amy wore a black leather long sleeved shirt that revealed her belly and she wore leather trousers with a big buckled belt wrapped around her waist. She wore black leather boots too. Her quills were much longer then prime Amy and she had no bangs and no hair band behind her ears. She looked a hell of a lot sexier then prime Amy, much to Sonic's delight (hee, hee, hee!) and her fur was a slighter darker pink then prime Amy. Sonic wolf-whistled at her.

"If only Amy looked like *this* in my zone!" he blurted without knowing about it.

As for the alter Amy, she looked surprised to see Sonic the Hedgehog standing before her as if she'd never met him before. Then suddenly, without warning, she threw her arms around Sonic and grasped him in a tight hug. Sonic gasped in surprise but he didn't fight the bug strangely enough. He was just enjoying the feeling of being hugged by a sexier alternate version of Amy Rose.

"Oh my gosh! Sonia Nega, I can't believe it's you!" cried the alter Amy, crying with happy tears "We all thought you were dead but you're alive! What a miracle it is!"

"Wha what?" blurted Sonic "Look miss, I have no idea what's going on but you've got the wrong hedgehog."

"I…I have?" said the alter Amy, looking directly into Sonic's eyes and looking disappointed.

"Yeah, my name is not Sonic Nega or something like that." said Sonic "It's just Sonic the Hedgehog and I don't live in this zone. I come from a planet called Mobius in the prime zone."

"A Prime Zoner?" said the alter Amy sadly "Name doesn't end in Nega? Oh gosh, it isn't you then Sonic Nega. I'm so sorry for that sir,

I thought you were Sonic Nega."

She broke up the hug and turned her back on Sonic with embarrassment. Sonic could tell that this alter Amy had problems of some kind so he decided to see what was wrong.

"You OK miss?" asked Sonic.

"I'm fine Prime Zoner, really." insisted the alter Amy "I'm just embarrassed I got you mixed up for my Sonic. You and Sonic Nega look incredibly alike. In fact, you're practically twins."

"So I guess I have an alternate counterpart on this world." said Sonic "Care to clear all this up to me as I have no idea where I am?"

"Certainly Sonic Prime." said the alter Amy "My name is Amy Rose Nega and this is Mobius Nega, the closest planet in the multi-verse to matching Mobius Prime in looks and reputation. Everybody's last name is Nega and we have all the strengths and weaknesses of our prime zone counterparts with some slight alterations."

"Mobius Nega eh?" said Sonic "That doesn't sound bad. Nice name really. So what happened to Sonic Nega then? When you hugged me, you said something about thinking he was dead."

"He is." said Amy Nega sadly, looking down at her feet "Last month, Sonic Nega tried to stop Dr. Eggman Nega from conquering Mobius and the resulting mission ended with Eggman Nega's headquarters exploding and Eggman Nega was the only one who made it out alive. Sonic Nega…perished in the explosion and Eggman Nega conquered the world. We've been suffering at his hands for weeks on end. Everything has been metallized and everything is under Eggman Nega's control. Me and my team are the only Mobians left and we're the only ones who can stand against his tyranny now."

"Since I have an Eggman in my zone, I'm guessing Dr. Eggman Nega is pretty much like prime Eggman." said Sonic "Only he "metallizes" things instead of "roboticizing" them. What's metallizing like?"

"A metallizer is like a roboticizer from the prime zone only it fires

beams that turned everything into metal life forms." said Amy Nega "Metal life forms are pretty much organic beings with metal skin and robot-like personalities and abilities. Eggman Nega has metallized everything except us. Even the forests are metal!"

"I guess that explains the mouse-bot that invaded my zone." muttered Sonic "It works for Eggman Nega I bet. But why did it come to Mobius Prime? And why did it go to the future to steal some emeralds I wonder?"

"Beg pardon?" asked Amy Nega "One of Eggman Nega's cronies invaded your zone?"

"Correct." said Sonic "Two Mobians from my zone's future met a mouse-bot and it stole their Sol Emeralds. They caused it to lose them and they ended up in my present timeline and it tried to get us but I chased it back to this zone and that's how I got here."

"Hmm…" said Amy Nega "Maybe it thought those "Sol Emeralds" were Chaos Emeralds and it's trying to get them for Eggman Nega. My best spy Tails Nega claims that Eggman Nega's plotting to get Chaos Emeralds from other versions of Mobius so he can make himself even more powerful and he'll rule the entire multi-verse. Maybe that's why it invaded future Mobius Prime."

"Maybe." thought Sonic "Anyways, do you have a way of getting me back home at all?"

"Sure." said Amy Nega "I have a Super Warp Ring. It was a birthday present from Sonic Nega before he…ahem…died. Why? Do you wanna just leave and go home?"

"I do." said Sonic "But I'm gonna help you and your aforementioned team save your world from Eggman Nega's territory. I maybe the hero of Mobius but I'm willing to become the hero of another Mobius. I'll help you save your world in Sonic Nega's name. I've had plenty of practice with Dr. Eggman so I'll be able to stop Eggman Nega easily."

Amy Nega stared at Sonic as if he'd just suddenly descended from heaven.

"You…you will?" gasped Amy Nega, putting her hands to her chest "You're gonna…save our world?"

"You betcha." said Sonic, putting an arm around Amy Nega sneakily "I believe in freedom for all beings everywhere, even in other zones. I'm gonna make sure that your world is free from Dr. Eggman Nega's tyranny."

Amy Nega's response was to throw her arms around Sonic and hug him again.

"Oh thank you! Thank you so much!" cried Amy Nega happily "I can't believe you're willing to risk your life just to save an alternate version of your own world! How can I ever repay you for this unbelievable kindness?"

"No need to repay me." said Sonic "Heroism and freedom is what this hedgehog fights for. Now, may I meet your team?"

"Of course." said Amy Nega happily "They'll love to meet you! They're missing Sonic Nega as much as I am!"

With that said, Amy Nega hurriedly dragged Sonic down the corridor and headed to another room in this large, dark, damp sewer. Sonic had no idea what Eggman Nega was going to be like but he had a feeling he was going to enjoy kicking his backside much like he enjoyed kicking Dr. Eggman's backside back in the Prime Zone…

Back in the prime zone, two of Sonic's deadliest enemies were still kicking the tar out of each other. These two were Sonic's evil brother Scourge the Hedgehog and Sonic's other-worldly foe Marik the Martian. They hated each other as much as they hated Sonic the Hedgehog and Scourge wasn't pleased Marik was interfering with his Sol Emerald hunt so he and Marik were fighting for them. Marik already had two Sol Emeralds, one of which he stole from Scourge and Scourge wanted them both desperately. As of now though, Marik was absolutely kicking Scourge's backside. Marik had been doing plenty of exercise whenever he was absent from conflicts with Sonic whereas Scourge, not so much so Marik was on par with

Scourge strength wise but not quite Shadow the Hedgehog's strength yet. Scourge tried to roundhouse kick Marik in the head but he missed and Marik grabbed his leg. He threw his leg up and knocked him onto his side. Scourge picked himself up and he spin-dashed at Marik but Marik ducked and Scourge ended up spin-dashing a tree in two. The tree began to fall down and almost land right on top of Marik but Marik dodged the falling tree and left it to crash onto the ground. Scourge then picked the opportunity to spin-dash Marik directly in the back and knock him down onto his face. Marik picked himself up only to get a punch to the face from Scourge. Marik staggered backwards, clutching his face and he grumbled to himself. Scourge then tried to homing attack Marik but Marik did a back flip and he kicked Scourge away as his legs swung up and over. Scourge landed on his feet and he zoomed off in an attempt to get Marik to chase him and hopefully, wear him down. But Marik's jet shoes didn't require for him to run. All he had to do was activate them and he slid along the ground with them so he wouldn't get tired by using them anyway. Scourge and Marik ran around the perimeter while hitting each other over and over. The suddenly, Marik leaped into the air just as Scourge jumped over the fallen tree and Marik dropkicked him straight down into the ground where he got a face full of dirt.

"Ha, ha, ha! At last! Eat dirt you mongrel!" cackled Marik as he landed back down on his feet.

Scourge's wormy little sidekick Ginger the Fox decided enough was enough and he was going to help Scourge in this fight. Ginger ran over to Marik and grabbed him by his arm. Marik shot the lame fox a death glare that could mentally scar anyone for life, even the bravest of hearts.

"Stop! Enough! Quit beating up my friend or I shall have to castigate you very badly!" threatened Ginger.

"You want a piece of this too dork?" snarled Marik "Here you go!"

He grabbed Ginger by his arms and threw him straight over his shoulder and onto his back. The opinionated jerk picked himself and pulled a pathetic looking angry face at Scourge. The face looked more funny then serious.

"Big mistake!" growled Ginger.

Ginger ran towards Marik while crying an hilarious sounding battle cry (seriously, with his dopey voice, how can he possibly sound intimidating?). Marik just yawned as if he'd never seen something so boring and he backhanded him straight into a tree face-first. Ginger picked himself up and he charged at Marik again but Marik bent over backwards and swung his foot up, sending Ginger hurling over himself and onto the ground face-first. Ginger pounded the ground in fury and he tried to tail-whip Marik as he leaped up and swung his tails at him but Marik just caught his tails and slammed Ginger onto the ground while holding them. He then swung Ginger over onto his back, then onto his front and then onto his back again. Scourge got back to his feet and realized that Ginger was doing his work for him so he tried to attack Marik again but Marik swung Ginger directly into Scourge. The two villains ended up rolling over the ground on top of each other and Scourge kicked Ginger off of himself.

"You stupid kid!" snarled Scourge "What did I tell you? This is MY fight and I'll win it MYSELF! You can't even beat a stupid little lady-in-waiting so you have no chance against Marik Ginger so unless you want to die, STAY OUT OF THIS!"

"Yes Scourge." said Ginger weakly.

Then suddenly, Marik leaped in-between them and did a split-kick that knocked them both onto their sides. Marik then grabbed Ginger by the throat and pinned him against a tree, his metal claws squeezing tightly around his throat. Ginger gagged hoarsely and he squirmed in Marik's tough grasp. Scourge tried to help Ginger but Marik knocked him away with an energy wave. Marik then glared straight into Ginger's hazel eyes.

"If there's anything I despise more then obnoxious supersonic hedgehogs, it's grubby little worms who interfere with people's battles!" growled Marik "And just for that, you will now end up finding out what your internal organs look like!"

"No! Not the innards! Anything but the innards!" squeaked Ginger desperately as Marik put his organic hand around his throat and drew his metal hand back, ready to plunge his claws into Ginger's

body and rip his organs out.

Before Marik could kill Ginger though, Fiona Fox stepped in and kicked Marik away from him. Marik ended up skidding painfully across his side and he groaned in pain as pain seared up his arm.

"Oh thank you for saving my life Fiona!" cried Ginger happily.

"I didn't do it to save you worm!" snapped Fiona "I did it for Scourge and to prove I'm more capable then you are!"

Ginger scowled at Fiona and he folded his arms, pouting like a little baby. Fiona then proceeded to charge towards Marik and leap towards him with her foot stretched out so she could kick Marik. The Martian however picked himself up and swatted Fiona away before she could land foot first on his face. Fiona landed on the ground and she was about to pick herself up but Marik aimed a metal finger at her an zapped her back down onto her stomach. Fiona grunted in pain and Marik kicked her as hard as he could. Marik scowled angrily at her.

"I bet Scourge is here hoping he can beat me up to avenge his little girlfriend who came crying to him because I zapped you into submission!" growled Marik "Well I can't stand wimpy little cowards who go crying to their loved ones just because they got their backsides handed to them so I'll make sure you snap like a twig Fiona!"

He pointed his metal claws at Fiona and prepared to zap her again but Scourge spin-dashed Marik in the back and knocked him straight over onto his face. Marik picked himself up but Fiona roundhouse kicked him in the back and knocked him over again. Scourge then proceeded to kick Marik as hard as he could, sending the Martian rolling across the ground for a moment. Marik leaped back onto his feet and he dropkicked Scourge in the face and hit Fiona with an energy wave both at the same time, knocking them both other onto their backs. Marik however, forced Scourge back onto his feet and began to roundhouse punch him repeatedly in the face, his punches getting harder and harder with every punch he threw. Scourge gasped and cried out in pain as he was punched and Marik punched him so hard he actually spat out some drops of blood! Scourge

coughed hoarsely and Marik then proceeded to uppercut Scourge into the air and send him flying straight into a tree. Fiona elbowed Marik directly in the back and then she swept him off his feet with one hefty whip of the tail. Ginger, foolishly trying to get involved, flew towards Marik and attempted to grab him but Marik zapped Ginger out of the sky and he leaped back onto his feet. He gave Fiona a left hook that caused her to spit out a tooth and cough heavily and then he gave her a right hook that just about knocked her out. Fiona staggered and almost fell down but amazingly, she managed to stay standing and she gut-punched Marik before he could punch her again. Marik retaliated with a kick to the groin that made Fiona gasp in pain and clutch her tender spot. Marik then proceeded to put his hand on Fiona's shoulder, drag her forward and then knee her in the gut as hard as he could. Fiona gasped hoarsely and Marik then decided to add insult to injury by slashing her across the belly. Four fresh cuts stretched across Fiona's bare belly and quite frankly, ruined her appearance. Fiona looked down at her belly and couldn't believe the cuts Marik had given her. Marik then decided to uppercut Fiona into the air and send her crashing down near a tree where all she could do was sit there and grunt heavily as if she was dying right now. Ginger was furious with the fact Marik was beating up his friends and he foolishly tried to attack Marik again. He swiped his twin-tails at Marik but Marik caught them and pulled on them, pulling Ginger towards him. Marik elbow-thrusted Ginger in the back and made him wheeze and then he backhanded him in the back of his head. Ginger fell onto his knees and coughed heavily. Marik then booted Ginger in the backside and sent him skidding across the ground, making a mound of dirt that covered his face. Ginger groaned in pain and Marik smirked at him.

"Oh how the mighty have fallen Scourge!" he crowed "You went from powerful, brutish inmates to siding with a pair of foxes who quite frankly, have no battle skills whatsoever! You should be ashamed you ever teamed up with them vermin-hog!"

"SHUT UP MARIK!" roared Scourge, spin-dashing angrily towards Marik.

Marik just smirked at Scourge and he leaped up and kicked him down into the ground, causing him to churn his way through the soil.

Scourge lay there, grumbling to himself and muttering dirt words that cannot be mentioned (like you really care!). Marik stomped on Scourge's back as hard as he could and then he grabbed Scourge by his quills. He lifted Scourge up to his height and glowered into his eyes.

"Really? Shut up? Is that your best comeback?" sneered Marik "I've heard better comebacks from Cosmo the Seedrian and she's a bloody pacifist!"

"Are you going to beat the tar outta me or are you gonna just taunt me?" asked Scourge grumpily.

"I would do the first option but I think I've had enough of making you suffer." said Marik casually "Besides, now you know you can't beat me, you'll think twice before daring to take me on won't you?"

Scourge didn't answer Marik, prompting the Martian to just throw him on the ground and stand before him with his arms folded.

"You remember when we first met I proposed an alliance*** Scourge?" asked Marik.

"Yeah." said Scourge dryly "So what?"

"Well I'm willing to propose an alliance again." said Marik with an evil smirk on his face "Just think of the possibilities we have working together instead of fighting each other and getting nowhere. My strength combined with your powers and we're both intelligent and capable of fighting Sonic to a standstill. If we team up, Sonic has no chance against us!"

"But if we team up, you'll be wanting to share power with me and I wanna rule Mobius by myself!" yelled Scourge "I'm not sharing power with anybody!"

"I don't want power, I merely want destruction." said Marik casually "We could split the planet in half. On your half, you're king of the world and you do as you see fit whereas on my half, I get to blow up as much stuff as I possibly can. And the best part is, nobody will be able to stop us."

Scourge put a finger to his chin and he thought on this possibility. On the one hand, he hated Marik and would sooner kill him then join up with him. On the other hand, he wasn't going to get any Sol Emeralds if all he did was futilely fight with Marik and just get his butt kicked. Not to mention if he kept doing so, he wouldn't be ready to fight Sonic and he would end up getting incarcerated again. So an alliance seemed pretty good right now. Not to mention, he could stab Marik in the back later and take the emeralds and Mobius for himself. Scourge decided he would play along with this so he picked himself up and held his hand out for Marik to shake.

"Marik, I cannot believe I didn't say yes the first time." said Scourge "I accept your alliance."

"Good boy Scourge." said Marik, shaking Scourge's hand "I'm so glad you've decided to actually use that old rust bucket in your head you call a brain to good effect at long last. You will not regret this one little bit!"

"Yeah, yeah whatever." sighed Scourge "Just knock off the insults will ya?"

Marik just scowled at Scourge but he said nothing about it.

"So, we're now allies Scourge." said Marik "And I will not abide to any of you attempting to stab me in the back! If you do then I'll make sure your deaths go down in history as the grisliest deaths ever!"

"And we won't abide YOU stabbing US in the back either Marik!" snapped Fiona "You'd better not be making this alliance just so you can use us to help you find all the Sol Emeralds!"

"Trust me Fiona, I would never try something as predictable as that." sneered Marik "We Martians are more subtle then that. Anyways, since I have two Sol Emeralds, we'll be able to find the other ones easily."

He pulled the green Sol Emerald out from his jacket and showed it to Scourge, Fiona and Ginger.

"These things work like Chaos Emeralds." explained Marik "They

glow brighter and brighter when you get near one and I should know, I've worked with Chaos Emeralds before****. Curiously enough, the Sol Emerald has a strange fiery tone to it, it gets warmer as you near another emerald as well as glows brighter."

"Not surprising really as "Sol" translates to the word "Sun" in many languages." said Fiona.

"Heh, so that means they're called "Sun Emeralds" if you translate it to English." said Scourge "Maybe that's where the fiery tone comes from. OK Marik, since you have the Sol Emeralds, you can lead us to the next emerald."

"Don't worry I will my green-furred ally." said Marik in a voice dripping with fake friendliness "The rest of the Sol Emeralds could be anywhere so don't get stroppy with me if we take a while."

With that said, the villains all wondered off in a random direction with Marik leading the group and holding out the Sol Emerald so he could find another one. One they found all six, they could bring great destruction to Mobius and they would be on top of the world at long last…

Back on Mobius Nega, Amy Nega took Sonic to see her team mates. They were all gathered around in a lonely little room further down the sewer that had been converted into a living room for them. There wasn't much in the room save for a ragged old sofa, a table that looked like it was about to become nothing but splinters, and a fridge that was covered in grease and dirt stains and didn't seem to be very functional. It was the only place of sanctuary the last Mobians of Mobius Nega had, even if it wasn't very glamorous. Amy Nega told Sonic to wait a moment while she went in and greeted everyone. She opened the door and let herself in. As expected, her team mates were all in the room waiting for her to return. Her team mates consisted of alternate versions of Tails the Fox, Scourge the Hedgehog, Miranda Mongoose, Geoffrey St. John and Bunnie Rabbot. Their names were obviously Tails Nega, Scourge Nega, Miranda Nega, Geoffrey Nega and Bunnie Nega respectively as everybody's last name was Nega on this alternate version of

Mobius. Tails Nega looked pretty much like Prime Tails only he wore a black leather jacket and fingerless gloves. He was the brains of the team as well as Mobius Nega's greatest spy and he was the one who found out what Eggman Nega was planning to do next. Scourge Nega looked exactly the same as Prime Scourge only he wasn't evil, his voice was different and his leather jacket was white with blue flames on it. He didn't even have Scourge's trademark sunglasses. He was Sonic Nega's brother and he was as distraught over his death as anyone else was but he decided to carry on in his brother's name and fill the gap that was left in the team after his death. Miranda Nega had the same figure and age as Prime Miranda only she wore a purple jumpsuit and chrome earrings. She was the weapons expert and knew every weapon inside and out. Geoffrey Nega looked the same as Prime Geoffrey only he had his hair in a more suave style then the three haired style Prime Geoffrey had and he wore a vest and blue chunky boots. He still had an arm-mounted crossbow but unlike Prime Geoffrey, he had two. Geoffrey Nega was the strategist of the team and his strategic expertise was unmatched by any. Bunnie Nega looked pretty much the same as Bunnie Rabbot only she wore a purple sleeveless shirt and a pair of shorts. Her legs were organic but both her lower arms and hands were metal. She had been partially metallized much like how Prime Bunnie was partially roboticized. This in turn gave her greater strength then any individual, making her the strength of the team only she wasn't as brutish as other Mobians fuelled on strength. In all honesty, she was quite gentle when not in battle. Sonic poked his head slightly around the door and he saw Amy Nega's team mates. He thought they looked like a very impressive team for anyone to be in charge of. Everybody in the room leaped up onto their feet and they ran over to their team leader. They immediately began to bombard Amy Nega with welcome backs and questions.

"Amy, you're back!" cried Tails Nega.

"How did it go sugah?" asked Bunnie Nega.

"Did ya find out anything?" asked Geoffrey Nega.

"Is Eggman Nega plotting to do anything?" asked Scourge Nega.

"Is Eggman Nega even doing anything right now?" asked Miranda

Nega.

"Guys, guys, easy there!" laughed Amy Nega, waving her arms hastily "Give me chance to breathe will you?"

The Mobians took a step back and gave Amy Nega some personal space. Now her team mates had calmed down, Amy Nega spoke.

"Eggman Nega seems quiet right now." she reported "He's not making any attempts to find us yet and his minions are just roaming around his city aimlessly. I guess he's too focused on his multi-verse Chaos Emerald hunt which Tails claims is his next plot."

"Well it's nice that Eggman Nega's giving us some privacy at last." said Geoffrey Nega grimly "But we can only hope that he'll lower his guard to the point we can just step in and overthrow him."

"Is that all you've got to tell us Amy?" asked Tails Nega.

"No actually little Tails." said Amy Nega "We've got a visitor from the Prime Zone who's decided to help us on our mission to purge the world from Eggman's tyranny."

She stood to the side and held out her hands in an "here he is" fashion and Sonic stepped into the room. He casually waved to everybody in the room.

"Hey there everybody." said Sonic.

The Freedom Fighters stared at Sonic in amazement. It was an amazing sight for them, seeing Sonic the Hedgehog standing before them being as the Sonic in their world was dead. It was almost like seeing Sonic Nega once again.

"Oh mah stars!" blurted Bunnie Nega "It's Sonic the Hedgehog! And from the Prime Zone no less!"

"He looks just like Sonic Nega." said Scourge Nega as he noted Sonic's appearance "The only difference really is the scent. Prime Zoners always smell different to the Mobians here."

"I can't believe we're actually looking at a Prime Zoner!" said

Miranda Nega in surprise "I never thought I'd see the day a Prime Zoner comes to our zone at last!"

"Um guys? Can we cut down on the fanfare?" asked Sonic "You're making me feel weird as I'm from another zone and I'm supposedly "dead" on this zone."

"Sorry Sonic Prime." said Tails Nega "We're just so happy to see someone with such a great resemblance to our great hero Sonic Nega right now. We greatly miss him so seeing someone with such a great resemblance makes us feel good again."

"I see." said Sonic "By the way, no need to introduce yourselves as you look like people I know back in my zone and I can pretty much gather your names as according to Amy Nega here, all your names end in Nega."

"Right mate." said Geoffrey Nega "You don't need to use our last names all the time just to let you know. You can just use our first names to save yourself having to call us things like "Tails Nega" or "Geoffrey Nega" over and over."

"Fair enough." said Sonic "So guys, do you wanna know how I got here?"

"We do." said Miranda Nega "How did a Prime Zone such as yourself get to our zone?"

"I didn't really come here." explained Sonic truthfully "I followed a mouse-bot here. The mouse-bot came to future Mobius and stole some emeralds and accidentally dropped them in present Mobius, my time zone, and I tried to catch it. It summoned a warp ring and went through it and I followed it straight to this zone. And now Amy's told me the story of your world, I've decided I will not leave until your planet is free from Eggman Nega and his metallizing madness."

"You…you wanna help us?" piped Bunnie Nega in surprise "Oh mah stars…ah don't know what to say about that!"

"I do!" cried Scourge Nega with great excitement evident in his voice "I say, Rock on bro! It'll be great having you on our side to fill in

Sonic Nega's place as we fight for the people's freedom and make Dr. Eggman Nega suffer for all the ruination he's brought to Mobius Nega!"

"Thanks." said Sonic "If only the Scourge back home was like you are Scourge Nega."

"What do you mean?" asked Scourge Nega "Is my Prime counterpart lame or something?"

"No, he's evil and he's incredibly power hungry, selfish and greedy." explained Sonic "But don't worry, he doesn't know about Mobius Nega, much like how I didn't until now, so you won't ever get to meet him."

"Well that's a relief!" cried Scourge Nega "My Prime counterpart sounds like someone who needs his butt kicking and I'd be happy to arrange that!"

"Scourge, please." said Amy Nega "We will not interfere with the Prime Zone as you know interfering with the most important zone in the multi-verse can be catastrophic."

"Oh yeah." said Scourge Nega grimly "Pity really, I'd love to help Sonic trump my Prime counterpart."

"So guys, have you got any plans on how to stop Eggman Nega and de-metallize everybody?" asked Sonic, quickly changing the subject.

"We have actually." said Amy Nega "And since you're here to help us, you can join in with this plan. Tails, explain the plan if you please."

Tails Nega obeyed his team leader and he pulled out a long roll of paper. He set out the paper on the table and Sonic peered at it. The paper showed plans of Eggman Nega's city and on the back, there were plans of his base. There were some drawn figures on the map to show where the Freedom Fighters would attack and break in while avoiding Eggman Nega's forces.

"Here's our basic idea." said Tails Nega "We're gonna bring Amy's Super Warp Ring with us and use it to send all the Chaos Emeralds

he's likely stolen from the other zones back to their zones and after we've done that, we'll fight him to the death and after we defeat him, we set his metallizer machine in reverse and de-metallize everybody."

"That sounds good enough to me." said Sonic "So how will this plan go without fail then?"

"I left the strategy work to Geoffrey here." said Amy Nega "He's the strategist expert in this team."

"That's right luv." said Geoffrey Nega, stepping in and pointing at several pointers on the plans Tails Nega had before him "Here's our set-up Sonic: Me, Miranda and Bunnie are the best shooters of the group so we'll come in first and create a diversion by shooting madly at his forces in order to keep Eggman Nega's minions occupied. We'll enter the city through this point here…" he pointed at a point on the map he'd marked which showed where the team would enter the city and attack "…as that's one of the city's blind spots and then me, Miranda and Bunnie will unleash hell on the place. While we're going that, Amy, Tails, Scourge will go in next and as Eggman Nega will mostly be focused on us, he won't see them coming and then they can carry out Tails' plan. being as you're in this now, you can join Amy's squadron and help make a fool out of Eggman Nega."

"I'm glad I'll be doing that then." said Sonic with a smirk "I've just recently sent Dr. Eggman into hiding***** so I'll be happy to kick an alternative version of Eggman's butt for you. I promise you that Mobius Nega will be free once you lot and me storm his base and save everybody."

"I trust you one-hundred percent on that Sonic." said Amy Nega with a supportive grin on her pretty face "I'm so grateful that you're gonna help us save the world from Eggman Nega's tyranny."

"Like I said, I believe in freedom for all living things everywhere, no matter what town, country, planet, zone they live in." said Sonic "And I'm not going home until Mobius Nega can freely breathe a whiff of fresh air once again. So when do we start?"

"Since you're so eager, I think we should start now." said Amy Nega

"Miranda, got the weapons ready for us?"

"You betcha Amy." said Miranda Nega, showing Amy Nega some weapons she'd prepared for them "I'm using the Plasma Ion Cannon as it's my personal favourite." she said, showing Amy Nega and Sonic a huge, heavy blaster cannon that looked like it packed quite a punch and it was held underarm like the handheld rotary cannon "Geoffrey has his arm-mounted crossbows so he can use them and Bunnie can use the weapons she has built into her metallized arms. You, Tails and Scourge are gonna use these wrist-mounted lasers I built for you."

She handed Amy Nega some wrist mounted lasers that could be worn on the wrist like a watch and it fired laser blasts from the small gun barrel that was mounted on the wrist belt. Amy, Tails and Scourge Nega all attached the weapons onto their wrists and they primed them.

"I'm sorry to say I don't have any weapons for you Sonic Prime." said Miranda Nega "I only make weapons for this team so I don't have anything for you to use."

"Don't sweat it Miranda, I don't prefer weapons anyway." said Sonic "I much prefer to use my super speed and abilities, I don't need a gun or anything. Wouldn't be caught dead using one anyway."

"Suit yourself young man." said Miranda Nega "So, now you're all armed and ready, we can go when Amy gives the command."

"And I say, we attack now." said Amy Nega without a moment's hesitation "Freedom returns to Mobius Nega right now everybody!"

With that said, the Freedom Fighters all cheered in unison and they all left the room with their weapons ready and they followed the sewer tunnels out into the open so they could put an end to Dr. Eggman Nega's unspeakable evil at long last. Sonic had a feeling he was going to enjoy this mission dearly as the Freedom Fighters went out into battle…

Back in the Prime Zone, Silver, Blaze, Tails, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey were prowling around for the last remaining Sol Emeralds. They had found the two Sol Emeralds Tails had picked up on the scanner and Geoffrey stored them in his backpack along with the red emerald Cosmo found earlier so they could hide them from anyone who could possibly be wanting them for evil purposes. The two emeralds they had found were purple and yellow respectively. Marik had the blue and green ones already so that meant only the grey and cyan ones were left. The Mobians continued their trek through the Great Forest while keeping an eye out for Sol Emeralds. Tails peered at the tracker and the tracker was telling him that another Sol Emerald was near a fast running river just a few paces from their direction.

"OK guys, the next emerald is that way." said Tails, pointing to the north-east "It's supposedly near a fast running river so we'd best get it before it falls in."

"That tracker of yours sure is useful isn't it?" asked Silver "It seems to know where all the Sol Emeralds are even though they're new to you all."

"Well the computer monitors back at Royal HQ tracked their position and Mandy downloaded the coordinates to this handheld tracker I have so we'd be able to find them." explained Tails "So no matter where the Sol Emeralds are, it'll track them."

"So you could say it's thanks to me that we're even able to find your emeralds after all." said Mandy with a smug expression on her face more at Blaze then anybody.

"Yes, it is." said Blaze tersely "Me and Silver are both grateful to you Mandy. Thanks to you, we can find our emeralds."

"You're welcome." said Mandy smugly, trying to make Blaze frown just for the fun of it.

"Mandy, don't try and tease the fire-powered kitty." sighed Wilson "You know how dangerous she can be."

"I'm not trying to tease her." said Mandy "I'm just telling Blaze that

I'm the reason we can find her emeralds and that I'm glad she's grateful to us."

"Sure you are." muttered Wilson who clearly knew how Mandy felt about Blaze due to their less-then pleasant first meeting earlier.

"Could you blokes keep it down back there so Tails can concentrate?" asked Geoffrey, looking over his shoulder "I'm really sure he'd love some peace and quiet as he tracks those Sol Emeralds."

"No it's O.K. Mr. St. John, really." said Tails insistently "They're not bothering me. I didn't even know they were talking because I'm so engrossed in this right now."

"So you shut off from everybody else when you're really focused on something." said Geoffrey "Pity not everybody can do that, it'd do some good for everybody."

Tails didn't answer the skunk, he just continued to walk on with the rest following him closely behind. The tracker's screen was displaying a dot that was getting a little larger as he got closer to the Sol Emerald. They were getting closer to the river where the Sol Emerald was said to be near. The group continued walking through the forest as Tails wondered on to the river as he followed the tracker. After a minute of walking, they finally came across the river the Sol Emerald was located near. The river was a long, wide stretch of running water that channelled through the forest and it was running pretty fast. Everybody stopped in their tracks and observed the fast flowing river they had come across, except Tails who continued to walk on towards the river with his eyes glued to the tracker. He so engrossed in it that he didn't even notice they had found the river.

"Tails, look out!" cried Cosmo "You're heading for the river!"

"What river?" asked Tails, looking up from the tracker and over his shoulder as Cosmo called him.

He didn't notice how close to the river he was wondering and since he wasn't watching where he was going, he fell straight into the

water with a rather comical splash. Tails lay in the fast flowing river with water dripping from his face, whiskers and bangs. He grumbled furiously to himself as he picked himself up and scrambled out of the lake. His fur was soaking wet, his bangs lay flat against his forehead and his gloves and socks were drenched. His feet made a squelching noise as every time they touched the ground due to how wet his socks were. He looked pretty funny and the others had to admit it. Tails shook himself dry rather furiously until his fur all puffed up and made him look like a big, yellow, furry dust ball with shoes. Now he looked EVEN funnier. The others couldn't contain themselves any longer, they all burst out laughing at poor Tails. Blaze wasn't much of a laugher though and when she did laugh, it was more of a slight chuckle then a good hearty laugh. Tails fumed at his friends as they laughed at him.

"It's not funny!" whinged Tails as he flattened his fur down "How would you like it if you all fell into a lake and I laughed at you for it?"

"Oh lighten up Tails, we're only kidding' with ya!" chuckled Geoffrey.

"I'm sorry Tails." giggled Cosmo as she calmed her laughter down "I just couldn't resist."

"You really oughta watch where you're going little guy." said Silver "You never know what you'll run into one day."

"He actually ended up falling in a quagmire due to the fact he wasn't watching where he was going******." said Wilson, recalling the famous Chaos Emerald hunt that happened months ago "After narrowly surviving drowning in that thing, you'd think he'd be more cautious."

"Wilson! I told you not to bring that up!" whined Tails angrily "I hate being reminded of that embarrassing moment that almost cost me my life!"

"Sorry." said Wilson with an annoyed scowl on his face.

"It's a pity you fell into that lake Tails." said Mandy grimly "The tracker's short-circuited in the water. We can't find the rest of the Sol Emeralds now."

Tails suddenly realized what Mandy was talking about. He peered at the tracking device, which was no longer working due to the fact it had been in the water and water and electricity didn't mix. Tails slapped himself on the head in annoyance. He couldn't believe he'd just messed up on the mission so badly right now.

"Oh gosh!" fumed Tails "The tracker's broken! How can we find the rest of the Sol Emeralds now?"

"The Sol Emeralds work similar to Chaos Emeralds." said Blaze "They glow brighter when you get near one and they also get hotter as you near another emerald."

"So we can just use the three Sol Emeralds we already have instead." said Cosmo "And we've found where another one is hiding so we can use that as well."

"Speaking of the emerald that Tails said was near here, where is it?" asked Geoffrey.

"It's right there on that fallen log." said Silver, pointing further up the river.

There was a fallen log lying across the river just further up from where the Mobians were right now. There was a grey Sol Emerald lying inside a hole in the log. It was glowing rather brightly due to the sunlight reflecting off it's shiny surface. Silver levitated off the ground and he flew towards the fallen log. Mandy bent over to Wilson and whispered into his ear.

"I envy that hedgehog." she said "I wish I has psychic powers so I could lift and move things and levitate at will."

"That would be cool wouldn't it?" Wilson whispered back "And it'd help us out dearly in our fight with Dr. Eggman."

Further up the river, Silver touched down on the log and he stuck his hand down the hole in the log. His hand felt around for the Sol Emerald and his fingers lightly brushed against it as he fumbled about. His hand turned to the Sol Emerald and he tried to grab it but he accidentally pushed it towards a hole in the bottom of the log that

it was sitting near and the emerald fell through it and straight into the river. The fast flowing current of the river carried the Sol Emerald down the river and Silver looked up from the log to see what was going on. The Sol Emerald had fell out of the log and was being carried down the river at a fast pace. Blaze saw the emerald going down the river and she ran across the bank to try and get it. Silver remained standing on the log and he held out his hands. He tried to grab the emerald with his psychokinesis but the emerald was too far down the river for him to reach so he had to levitate off the log and hover after it. He followed the emerald as it was floating down the river. Silver held out his hands and the emerald was surrounded by a teal glow. It lifted out of the water and Silver dragged it towards him with his psychic powers. He then tossed the emerald to Blaze, who was on the bank beside him and she caught it in her hands. Silver levitated back over to the bank and he touched down beside Blaze.

"Whew! I almost lost that one." said Silver, whipping some sweat off his forehead.

"With your psychic powers, you'll never lose anything Silver." said Blaze "Now we have four Sol Emeralds all nicely retrieved."

"That means we have three more to find." said Silver "And because Tail's tracker is broken, we won't be able to immediately find them. We'll have to use the other Sol Emeralds to find them."

"I'll use this one to find the others." said Blaze "Although if I recall, Tails said two of them were moving about, meaning somebody probably already has them. They'll be harder to find as we don't know where that person is right now. He could be in an entirely different place for all we know."

"Regardless of where two of the only Sol Emeralds left to find are, we must find them so we can use them to warp our way into the zone Sonic followed that thing to." said Tails "I'm getting really worried on what might be happening to him right now. He might be in trouble or captured or something like that."

"Tails, you know well enough that Sonic doesn't get in trouble, he causes trouble." said Mandy in a reassuring manner "I'm sure the

blue dude's alright. But you're right on the fact we need those Sol Emeralds or he'll be stuck in another zone forever."

"And lord knows how bad that'll be since he won't be able to help us fight Dr. Eggman." said Geoffrey, thinking about what the war with Eggman was going to be like if Sonic wasn't going to be able to join them.

"Well let's carry on with the search." said Silver "We've only got three emeralds left and then we can save Sonic. Don't worry Tails, we'll help save your friend much like how you're helping us find the emeralds."

Tails just gave Silver a friendly smile and he nodded agreeably. It was nice to see how kind Silver and Blaze were, even though they were from an apocalyptic future and way to ahead of their time to exist in their lifetimes and how they were willing to help save Sonic from being trapped in another zone. The Mobians all went onto find the last three Sol Emeralds so that they could teleport to the zone Sonic was trapped on and Silver and Blaze could return back to their home time and keep the Sol Emeralds out of villainous reach. Tails couldn't help but wonder what was happening to Sonic right now…

Back on Mobius Nega, the Freedom Fighters had all left the safety of their sewer hideout and they hid around the outskirts of Eggman Nega's city, which turned out to be the city that resembled Mobotropolis Sonic had come across earlier. They all crouched down behind a building and they poked their heads around the corner to see what was going on in the city. All they could see right now were metallized Mobians patrolling the area with some of Eggman Nega's robots joining them. The Eggman Nega robots looked like giant Egg Pawns only they were coloured black, red and yellow and they were armed with giant mallets. They had the Eggman Nega logo on their torsos, which looked like a black and yellow image of Dr. Eggman's face only the goggles were differently designed compared to Prime Eggman's Eggman Empire logo. Sonic had a feeling he was going to hate Eggman Nega just as much as Dr. Eggman and seeing the metallized Mobians made him feel sorry for all those that had had their lives snatched from them by the

heartless metal, loving madman and converted into metal beings. Sonic looked at the Freedom Fighters and he could read their expressions clearly. They were pretty disgusted with this sight too.

"So this is were the Eggman lives is it?" asked Sonic.

"It certainly is." said Amy Nega, scowling tensely as if the very image of Eggman Nega and his troops annoyed her immensely "This is where that metal-loving, freedom snatching freak lives and we're going to finish him off!"

"I'm glad I'm helping you lot with this." said Sonic "Those metallized Mobians are making me feel sorry for this world. All those innocent people converted into metal beings just for the pleasure of one man, much like how Dr. Eggman in my zone wants to roboticize everybody."

"Ah remember when ah almost ended up becoming one of them." said Bunnie Nega, her face full of fear and she seemed to be shaking slightly "Ah was kidnapped by the mad man and he attempted to metallize me. Ah was saved by Scourge Nega but mah lower arms got metallized already. At least ah get to use these weapons against Eggman Nega instead of mah friends. Ah wonder what ah look like on the Prime Zone."

"Your prime counter part is partially roboticized and has robotic legs and a robotic left arm." explained Sonic "She's one remarkable fighter and a great friend. You two would get on like sisters I bet."

"Ah think ah agree with you there sugah-hog." said Bunnie Nega with a bright grin on her face "Mah prime counterpart sounds great!"

"So Amy, when do we start the party?" asked Scourge Nega.

"In two minutes." said Amy Nega "Geoffrey, Miranda and Bunnie will cause a ruckus and me, you, Sonic and Tails will get the fat man himself. I can't wait to see the look on his face when we overthrow him at last!"

"Funny enough Amy Nega, I can't either." said Sonic "I bet Eggman Nega will be just as fun as Eggman Prime."

As the seconds ticked away for ambush time, Sonic began to picture his epic battle with Eggman Nega and how he would make a monkey out of him much like how he makes a monkey out of Dr. Eggman back on the prime zone…

Footnotes:

***See Story 83**

**** See Story 2 (We're going back a LOOOONNNGGGG way here!)**

***** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 3: Marik the Prisoner***

****** See the Chaos Emeralds saga (Stories 36-42)**

******* See Story 83**

******** See Story 38**

That's a lot of stuff going on in one simple story isn't it? Marik and Scourge are partners (we all know how long THAT'LL last though!), Sonic's teamed up with alternate versions of some of his friends to overthrow Dr. Eggman Nega and Silver, Blaze and Sonic's friends have almost found all the Sol Emeralds! What's gonna happen next? Tune in next time for part 3...Read and Review.

I say Kratos Pwns, you cut yourself off halfway through your last review. What was you going to say?

The Dark Side of the World 1

Story 86: The Dark Side of the World Part 1

Mobius Nega, said to be the closest planet in the multi-verse to matching Mobius Prime had been taken over by Dr. Eggman Nega and the planet was nothing more then a metal paradise for machine lovers anywhere. His robots combined with the metallized population of Mobians made Dr. Eggman Nega a very formidable foe for anybody in the multi-verse and the mad genius was up to something big right now. But what he didn't know was that his enemies, the Freedom Fighters, were hiding on the outskirts of his very city and preparing to strike. Amy Nega, the Nega-version of Amy Rose and team-leader, was counting down from two minutes and she had almost finished counting down. Her team had a plan and it was ascertain to work, especially as they were teamed up with Sonic the Hedgehog, the hero of Mobius Prime, who was willing to help them save their world without a moment's hesitance. Sonic hated the sound of Eggman Nega so he was willing to kick his flabby backside for the Nega-Mobians of Mobius Nega. Sonic waited patiently as Amy Nega counted down the last few seconds. Amy's team mates, Tails Nega, Scourge Nega, Geoffrey Nega, Miranda Nega and Bunnie Nega, were all poised and prepared for the ambush. Geoffrey, Miranda and Bunnie Nega were going to start by causing a ruckus with their weapons and Amy Nega, Sonic, Scourge Nega and Tails Nega were all going to storm Eggman Nega's base and being as Amy Nega had a super warp ring, there entry was pretty much guaranteed.

"Ten…nine…eight…seven…six…" Amy Nega counted down as the last seconds ticked away "Five…four…three…two…one…OK guys, it's time to attack. Geoffrey, Miranda and Bunnie, GO!"

The skunk, mongoose and rabbit did not wait to be asked twice. They leaped out from their hiding places with their weapons at the ready. Geoffrey Nega had his twin arm-mounted crossbows, Miranda Nega had a giant plasma cannon that was held underarms and Bunnie Nega had her metallized lower arms with all her

weaponry being contained in her hands. Geoffrey Nega struck the first blow by firing a multitude of fireballs from his crossbows and the fireballs struck the first Egg-Pawn they came across. The balls sent the giant robot wobbling about precariously before it suddenly fell over onto it's back and dropped it's hammer. The metallized Mobians and Egg-Pawns on site saw what was going on and they instantly joined in with the battle. The metallized Mobians all began firing stasis beams at the attacking Mobians but Bunnie Nega activated a force field from her hands that blocked the blasts and saved herself and her friends from being frozen. Bunnie Nega then proceeded to fire stasis beams of her own from their palms of her metal hands. That was the primary weapon of the metallized Mobians after all and she was capable of using it due to the fact her arms were partly metallized. She shot three oncoming metal-Mobians and they all froze to the spot the moment they were stricken by the blast.

"Ah'm sorry fellas but ah'm afraid ah have to do this." said Bunnie Nega pityingly to the stasis-locked metal-Mobians "Until we can de-metallize you all, ah have to fight ya'll."

She should have known better then to stand around feeling sorry for the metal-Mobians for a metallized gorilla leaped on Bunnie Nega from behind and grabbed her in a very painful chokehold. Being held in a chokehold by a metallized Mobian was pretty much one way of being throttled to death in a millisecond due to how hard and how tough their grasp was.

"Ack! Let go of me ya big ape!" yelped Bunnie Nega, kicking the metal-gorilla furiously in the shin.

But metal-life forms are incapable of feeling pain so Bunnie Nega's attempts more tickled him then anything. The metal-gorilla let go of Bunnie Nega and then gave the rabbit a tremendous uppercut that sent her hurling through the air. Miranda Nega retaliated by firing at the metal-gorilla. Her gun was set to stun-mode so she wouldn't kill the metal-gorilla. The metal-gorilla was stunned and knocked out and it fell onto the floor. Miranda Nega reloaded the cannon and set it back to kill mode for the Egg-Pawns.

"It really is a pity you had to get metallized Darwin." said Miranda

Nega to the metal-gorilla "You were one great Freedom Fighter. At least we'll be able to get you out of that metal casing at last."

The mongoose in the purple jumpsuit ran off to join Geoffrey Nega in battle with some Egg-Pawns. The giant robots swung their mighty hammers at the skunk but Geoffrey Nega dodged their attacks and he fired at the Egg-Pawns with his crossbows. The fireballs struck two Egg-Pawns and they both staggered clumsily backwards and clanged comically against each other. Miranda Nega then stepped in to finish them off with the plasma cannon. She fired two blasts, one at each Egg Pawn, and the two robots were destroyed in an instant. Another Egg Pawn sneaked up behind Miranda Nega and prepared to hammer her into the ground but the weapons-expert heard it coming and she span around and blasted it in the head, killing it instantly and reducing it to scrap parts. She smirked at the destroyed Egg-Pawn.

"Ha, ha, ha! There's more where this came from!" she laughed mockingly "You robots haven't seen anything yet!"

"Miranda luv, stay focused." Geoffrey Nega reminded her "We need to keep on our toes here, we're in Eggman Nega territory and anything can happen."

Just as he said the word "happen" something did happen. A metallized spider suddenly jumped out of nowhere and prayed Geoffrey Nega with some web out of it's hands (Mobian spiders have hands by the way). Geoffrey Nega was stricken by the web and thrown against the wall where the web stuck to it and trapped him against the wall. The skunk squirmed furiously in the tough grasp of the web. Miranda Nega instantly began to open fire on the metal-spider, her weapon set back to stun mode, but the metal-spider was much too fast for her. Mobian spiders are very agile and their agility is unmatched by any. The metal-spider jumped around like a flea, dodging every shot Miranda Nega fired at it. Then suddenly, the metal-spider sprayed web at Miranda Nega but the mongoose leaned forward to dodge the web. She began to fire again at the metal-spider but she still couldn't hit it. Then the metal-spider sprayed web at her again, this time, actually snagging her and pinning her against the wall too. Now she and Geoffrey Nega were trapped thanks to the metal-spider's webbing. The metal-

spider advanced on them menacingly with it's long, thin, sharp, metal legs raised and ready to eviscerate them. The skunk and mongoose could only stare at the metal-spider in horror as it prepared to kill them. But before it could touch them, Scourge Nega leaped in and spin-dashed the metal-spider away from them. He then spin-dashed their webbing in two, freeing them from the wall and putting them back into action.

"Thanks Scourge." said Geoffrey Nega.

"Anytime bud." said Scourge Nega "Those metal-spiders really are a pain aren't they? I wish they were on our side."

"Unfortunately, they're not." said Miranda Nega, picking up her plasma cannon "Now, you go with Amy and stop that madman once and for all just like we planned."

"No probs Miranda." said Scourge Nega, running off to join Amy, Sonic and Tails.

As for the three, Amy Nega and Tails Nega were shooting at any oncoming Egg-Pawns in order to keep them away from themselves. Their wrist lasers maybe small but they were powerful and the Egg-Pawns were destroyed the moment they were stricken. Sonic just did his trademark spin-dash attack on the Egg-Pawns and reduced them to smithereens after cleaving through them effortlessly.

"Whoo hoo! These guys are no better then my Eggman's bots!" laughed Sonic "I knew I was going to enjoy this!"

Sonic spin-dashed an Egg-Pawn's hammer into pieces just as it was about to smash him into the ground and Sonic then homing-attacked it in the back, knocking it over and leaving it vulnerable for Tails Nega and Amy Nega. The two Mobians blasted the robot into pieces with their wrist mounted lasers. Sonic landed beside them and looked at the remains of the Egg-Pawns they'd just smashed.

"Those lasers really pack a punch don't they?" asked Sonic.

"Well Miranda made them and any weapon she makes is usually powerful." said Tails Nega "You want something with a powerful

blast, you can count on her to make it."

"Seems so." said Sonic "Although I'm curious as to why Amy isn't using her Piko-Piko hammer for this."

"Why am I not using the what-what hammer?" asked Amy Nega with a confused expression on her face.

"Piko-Piko hammer." explained Sonic "Your prime counterpart can pull great big hammers out of airspace and use them to batter foes into the ground with them. Surely you can do that to."

"I can't actually." said Amy Nega "I've never had the ability to pull hammers out of airspace. Not to mention, why would I use a hammer anyway? Hammers are big, clumsy weapons that can slow you down in the heat of the battle so I prefer lighter weapons such as these wrist mounted lasers we have now."

"Try telling that to your prime counterpart." sniggered Sonic as he imagined Amy Nega telling Prime Amy that hammers were no good in battle, only to get a furious response from her.

Amy Nega turned to face Scourge Nega, who had just ran up to them and he stood upon the remains of the Egg-Pawns that had just been smashed.

"How's Geoffrey, Miranda and Bunnie doing then?" asked Amy Nega.

"They seem to have things under control here." said Scourge Nega, surveying the battle that was going on behind their backs "I don't think we have to worry too much about them."

"Well in that case, it's time to storm Eggman Nega's quarters." said Amy Nega, fishing out her Super Warp Ring and flicking it up into the air.

The Super Warp Ring expanded to three times it's normal size and it floated above the ground slightly. Tails and Scourge Nega instantly ran into the warp ring whereas Sonic hesitated for a moment. He looked back on Geoffrey, Miranda and Bunnie Nega fighting for their lives against the metallized Mobians and Egg-Pawns. Bunnie Nega

stasis-locked any metal-Mobians that tried to attack as they lunged for them, leaving Geoffrey and Miranda Nega to fight the Egg-Pawns. They seemed to have the battle under control but Sonic felt like he should stay and help them. Then again, he was needed for the battle with Dr. Eggman Nega so he was stuck with two choices, help the others fend off the reinforcements or help Amy Nega dethrone Eggman Nega. Amy Nega was about to step through the warp ring until she noticed that Sonic wasn't coming with her.

"Sonic, come on!" yelled Amy Nega "We're gonna overthrow Eggman Nega now!"

"I know." said Sonic "It's just, are you sure Geoffrey, Miranda and Bunnie will be OK on their own?"

"They'll be fine Sonic, I know they will." said Amy Nega reassuringly "They've done this kind of thing before. Now come on!"

That was all Sonic needed to hear. Sonic decided to go with Amy Nega and he leaped through the warp ring. The warp ring closed behind them and vanished into thin air. Sonic and Amy Nega reappeared through the other side of the warp ring and they landed behind Scourge and Tails Nega. They stood up straight and Sonic took a little look around. The warp ring had taken him inside a base that looked very much like Dr. Eggman's base only it had the Eggman Nega logo instead and there was a chair designed more like a throne then a simple chair to sit in. And in that throne was the mad man himself, Dr. Eggman Nega. He turned around and faced his opponents with a dark, steely glare from behind his glasses. Had he not been wearing any glasses, you could see a look that could rival Medusa's stone, cold glare. Eggman Nega, much like the Nega-Mobians, looked different to his Prime counter part. He wore a red suit with a white stripe down the middle, his shoes were black and yellow in stripe form a little like a bumblebee, he wore a black coat with tails at the back and yellow stripes around the upper arms and yellow pieces near the shoulders. His big, bushy moustache was grey instead of brown and he wore futuristic looking goggles on his head which was a one piece visor instead of two individual eye pieces. His glasses were different looking too. Despite all this, he had the exact same shape and size as Dr. Eggman Prime. He was pretty much Dr. Eggman with new clothes and a grey moustache.

One thing Sonic noticed about Eggman Nega is he had jars and jars full of Chaos Emeralds on his control panels behind him. The Chaos Emeralds were glowing ever so brightly and there appeared to be about thirty-five Chaos Emeralds, seven in each jar and all from different zones too. The jars were labelled so Eggman Nega knew which zone they were from. Tails Nega was clearly right about Eggman Nega's next plan being to snatch all the Chaos Emeralds in the multi-verse.

"Well, well, look who's decided to show up and be a nuisance for me once again." sighed Dr. Eggman Nega in an annoyed tone "Amy Rose Nega and her band of puny Freedom Fighters dare to stand to me even though their precious Sonic Nega, their only hope against me, is dead."

"You can kill or metallize as many of us as you want Eggman Nega!" yelled Amy Nega "I will carry on until you bite the dust you fat tyrant!"

"Oh, ho, ho, ho!" cackled Eggman Nega mockingly "How valorous of you my dear. I like that kind of attitude in my enemies, it makes them more fun to tangle with."

"We'll show you how much "fun" we can be Eggman Nega!" yelled Sonic "You took over this world, metallized the population and now you're stealing Chaos Emeralds from other zones! In the name of all the people of the multi-verse, you are going down tubby!"

Eggman Nega just cackled with laughter.

"Oh please, I killed one Sonic already, don't give me the satisfaction of killing another." he chortled "You'll just break Amy's little heart even more when you fall at my hand much like Sonic Nega did. So tell me, other-zone Sonic, which zone are you from then? I killed Sonic Nega so you can't be Sonic Nega."

"That's right chubby." said Sonic "And you're nuts if you think I'm gonna tell you what zone I'm from. You're going nowhere near it!"

"Oh is that so?" sneered Eggman Nega "Well, once I kill you and your friends, I'll take it upon myself to scan your corpse and find out

what zone you're from. Then I can pay your zone a visit and tell them that I killed their Sonic the Hedgehog."

"Nobody's getting killed today ugly mug!" yelled Tails Nega "Except you! We're gonna take you and your empire down and de-metallize everybody!"

"Oh are you now?" scoffed Eggman Nega "That's real nice. Just a pity you'll never get the satisfaction of defeating me. I'm just too cunning and powerful for you."

"We'll see about that." muttered Scourge Nega "So tell us, why are you stealing all the Chaos Emeralds of the multi-verse?"

"Because that is my big plan that'll guarantee me total domination of not just Mobius Nega, but the entire multi-verse!" cackled Eggman Nega "You see, I am going to gather up all the Chaos Emeralds of the multi-verse and use their power to reshape the multi-verse as I see fit! Just seven of these gems are powerful enough and given how many zones there are, I'll be a god with seven Chaos Emeralds from every zone in the multi-verse! I've already raided five zones with my metal Mobians and there's still many more to come! I'm a bit disappointed Metal Mandy failed to come back with any from the zone I sent her to. That zone must have a tough resistance. Never mind, I'll raid it again another time and once I have every Chaos Emerald in the multi-verse, I shall become ruler of the multi-verse! I'll be able to bend the rules of reality itself and change the course of history for all eternity!"

With that said, he erupted into enormous shrieks of laughter that made him sound even crazier then his prime counterpart. Sonic couldn't believe everything Eggman Nega had just informed them about. Not only was the mouse-bot who tried to raid future Mobius a metallized version of Mandy Mouse, one of his good friends from the prime zone, but it was attempting to deliver the Sol Emeralds to Eggman Nega so he could use all the powers of the multi-verse's Chaos Emeralds to become a god and reshape the universe as he sees fit? He's even more insane then Dr. Eggman ever was!

"Wow…you're crazy." Sonic just simply said, almost lost for words on the sheer insanity of Eggman Nega's scheme.

"I know, I get that all the time." said Dr. Eggman Nega casually "So, are you going to try and stop me Sonic or are you gonna stand down and allow me to carry out my nefarious scheme?"

"Do I even need to answer?" sniffed Sonic "You're going down Eggman Nega! Here comes a supersonic spin-dash to that ugly beer-gut of yours!"

With that said, Sonic spin-dashed directly towards Eggman Nega without thinking on the possibility of a trap lying around like there was bound to be. Eggman Nega grinned widely and he pressed a button on the side of his chair. A small gun came out of the arm of the chair and pointed at the spin-dashing hedgehog. It zapped Sonic and the hedgehog suddenly disappeared into thin air. It was as if he was blasted to atoms by the blast. The others gasped in surprise at what just happened and Eggman Nega then proceeded to do the same to the others. Amy, Tails and Scourge Nega were all blasted to atoms by Eggman Nega's chair cannon. Only, they weren't blasted to smithereens. The beam fired at them was actually a transmat beam and it had teleported them to another section of the base. Unfortunately for them, Amy Nega dropped her Super Warp Ring as they were teleported by the transmat beam, meaning they couldn't use it to warp back up into Eggman Nega's quarters. Sonic and the Nega-Mobians reappeared in the centre of Eggman Nega's base, which was just a big empty room that had no features save for the walls and a door in the middle of the wall on their left hand side. The room was round and didn't have any corners, meaning it was a round room. Sonic picked himself up and surveyed his new surroundings. He was very narked at the fact he'd just been teleported into another room by Eggman Nega just as he was about to attack him. He should have expected the fat scientist to have some trick up his sleeve, his prime counterpart often did.

"Of all the annoying things to happen!" he grumbled "We've been teleported into an empty room by Eggman Nega! I should have known he'd have some trick hiding somewhere! My prime counterpart often does and I usually fall for it!"

"Sonic Nega fell for Eggman Nega's tricks too." said Amy Nega grimly, dusting herself off "Unfortunately, the last one he ended up falling for cost him his life."

"That's how Sonic Nega died? Eggman Nega tricked him and the trick was deadly enough to kill him?" asked Sonic "I believe you said Eggman Nega's headquarters exploded so if I were to guess, Eggman Nega tricked Sonic Nega into coming to his base and then he blew it up with him inside."

"That's absolutely correct Sonic." said Amy Nega "Eggman Nega blew up his own base just to kill Sonic. That's how mad he is, he'll gladly injure himself if it means getting rid of us."

"Regardless, we've gotta get outta here and back to his quarters before we lose the chance to defeat him." said Tails Nega "Amy, use your warp ring to warp us back up to his quarters."

Amy Nega obeyed and she reached for her warp ring, only to realize she didn't have it with her right now. She instantly freaked and fumbled around herself frantically.

"Oh no! My warp ring!" shrieked Amy Nega "I must have dropped it the moment I got teleported by that transmat beam!"

"Well now we've GOT to get outta here." muttered Scourge Nega "Who knows what Eggman Nega's gonna do with our warp ring. Sonic, me and you will spin-dash through the ceiling and make an escape route for us. Tails will then fly Amy out through the hole in the roof we make and then we can climb back up to the top floor where that scum Eggman Nega is stationed."

"OK then Scourge." said Sonic "Let's go in three…"

Before he could so much as countdown to the next number, Eggman Nega's voice boomed out from an inter-com in the room.

"Oh dear my foolish Freedom Fighters, it appears I've gotten the drop on you again!" he taunted "I've teleported you to my fighting arena, the very room where I pit my newest machines against each other just to see how strong they are and how they hold up to my older machines. You see, I'm a man who only fights if I deem my opponents worth of it. If you win this little contest of mine then I shall happily challenge you to a battle other-zone Sonic. The winner takes Mobius Nega and the loser shall become a messy, horrid stain on

the walls of my base."

"Fair enough." said Sonic "I love exercise before battle. What's the challenge then fatty?"

"You will fight one of my best inventions and if you can defeat it then I'll challenge you for the planet Sonic." explained Dr. Eggman Nega "And your opponent shall be…SHADOW SONIC!"

"Shadow Sonic huh?" mused Sonic "Who's he then?"

Just as he asked that, something crashed it's way through the door and brought some of the wall down with it. It was a giant robot that was the spitting image of Silver Sonic, a fierce opponent Sonic had tussled with before* only it was black instead of silver, the gold around it's legs was purple, it's feet were purple, it's muzzle was purple but it's optics were still red. The bladed spines on it's back and head were black in the middle and silver around the sides. It looked like a very dangerous and shadowy foe and Sonic could tell he was in the fight of his life here. The Nega-Mobians seemed to be poop-your-pants terrified of it as they stared at it in horror.

"Oh…that's Shadow Sonic." said Sonic "A re-colour of Silver Sonic, a junk heap I know from my zone."

"I should have guessed Eggman Nega was going to use that!" squealed Amy Nega "He used it to level Empire City last week so it would make sense for him to use it on us!"

"That thing levelled Empire City?" blurted Sonic "Now I've got more reasons to be afraid of that thing!"

"Whether it's scary or not, we have to smash it to fragments or we'll never save Mobius Nega." noted Scourge Nega "He won't challenge us unless we defeat it so we'd best stomp on it before our plan goes kaput!"

"I definitely like you better then my zone's Scourge." said Sonic, making sure he didn't say the word "prime" as he didn't want Eggman Nega to know what zone he came from "You heard him guys, let's send that thing to the scrap yard!"

"Oh yeah!" cried Amy and Tails Nega, readying their wrist mounted lasers for the battle.

The Mobians prepared to do battle as Shadow Sonic bared it's jet black claws and prepared to snatch them up and rip them to bite-sized pieces. Sonic charged towards the Silver Sonic re-colour and Shadow Sonic prepared to attack back as the supersonic hedgehog zoomed towards him at top speed…

Back in the prime zone, Scourge the Hedgehog and Marik the Martian, enemies of Sonic the Hedgehog who were also enemies of each other, were looking for more Sol Emeralds together. Marik already had two but unbeknownst to them, Sonic's friends had four so they thought they only had five left to find whereas really, there was only one emerald left to find. Marik was leading the group with the green Sol Emerald in his hand so they could tell if they were getting closer to it as Sol Emeralds glowed when they neared other emeralds much like the Chaos Emeralds did. Unfortunately for poor Marik, Scourge's useless sidekick Ginger the Fox who was amazingly enough, related to Tails (it really is unbelievable isn't it?) was talking away as if he was a talk machine for no particular reason. Marik was getting pretty annoyed by him as Ginger continued to blab.

"So Marik, you're a Martian according to Scourge." said Ginger "What are Martians like? Are they dark, villainous beings like Scourge the Hedgehog or are they like Sonic? Heroic and brainless? You certainly don't seem to be, you're downright dark. How did you get that metal hand? Did you lose it? Did someone cut if off? I bet you're mad you lost it. Did Sonic cause you to lose it? Speaking of Sonic, how are you doing against him? Are you on top of your game against him or is he beating you right now? Unfortunately for us, Sonic's on top of his game against me and Scourge right now. Oh and Fiona too, she's not long since joined us. She's a traitor to the R.F.S. by the way and she and Scourge seem to be in a relationship. Luckily, they've got room for me in their hearts and I do my best to impress them. Do you wanna know how we met? I ran into an alleyway to escape some angry citizens and I met Scourge in the alley way. Boy am I glad I did because I wouldn't

be in this glorious partnership with him. He promises me my own castle when he takes over Mobius and I'm gonna lock Tails up in the dungeons once it's built. Tails is my cousin by the way and I hate him. Have you met him? I bet you have as you know Sonic and I bet you hate him too. Me and you could roughen him up pretty badly together and boy will I enjoy that…"

Marik just promptly swung around and backhanded Ginger into a tree. The neat-haired fox landed slap bang into a tree and he slid back down to the ground while groaning like a ghoul.

"Do you ever SHUT UP?" bellowed Marik "I harbour no interest in your flaccid life little one and not one thing you've got to say is of interest to me so unless you've got something interesting to say, SHUT THE HELL UP FOR MARS' SAKE!"

"Sorry." said Ginger, picking himself up and walking back over to Marik "I was just hoping to get to know you and I wanted you to get to know me a little better. I only wanted to have a conversation."

"Look runt, if I wanted to know anything about you, and lord knows why I ever would, I would have asked you something!" snapped Marik "But I'm not invigorated in you the slightest so I do not wish to know you in anyway!"

He then turned to Scourge and scowled at him.

"How you are able to stomach this boy without getting a headache mystifies me!" he grumbled to the green hedgehog in the leather jacket.

"I only have him to use for stress relief." said Scourge admittedly "I don't view him highly or even see him as much good. He's only here to be my punching bag, nothing more."

Ginger looked like someone had just torn his heart right out of his chest. He couldn't believe what he was hearing from Scourge right now.

"I'm…I'm just your punching bag?" he whimpered pathetically "I'm… not really your…friend and sidekick?"

"You only just realized that?" scoffed Fiona, pulling an "I'm not impressed" look with her hands on her hips.

"Ginger, face it buddy, you're only there to give me someone to punch whenever I'm in a bad mood." said Scourge crossly "You maybe useful occasionally but your role with me is just my punching bag so get used to it or quit me. You won't wanna do the latter because you'll just end up worse off then you are now."

"You got that right." muttered Ginger "A simpering nobody plotting revenge on my sorry excuse for a cousin. I'd much rather have you kick the cuss outta me then be a nobody."

"There you go." said Scourge "Now stop complaining or I'll kick you outta my gang."

"If I were you, I'd just do it already." muttered Fiona "He's a nuisance to us."

"Ah, he's not THAT bad, he just needs a little prompting when he's going overboard." said Scourge.

He then turned to face Marik only to find that the Martian had gone off without them. The Martian had had enough of waiting around for Scourge, Fiona and Ginger to finish talking so he just left them while searching for the Sol Emerald. That instantly riled Scourge and the hedgehog zoomed up to Marik, who wasn't that far away from them right now. Scourge screeched to a halt and stopped right in front of Marik, the Martian jumping backwards in surprise at Scourge stopping in front of him.

"Where do you think you're going Marik?" growled Scourge "I hope you're not betraying us already and…"

"Scourge, Scourge, Scourge!" yelled Marik hastily, waving his hands around "Cool it! I got tired of waiting for you all to stop talking so I continued without you. If we want to find the other Sol Emeralds then we MUST get a move on! Somebody else could be on the look out for them and if we keep stalling, Sonic might step in and stick his nose in where he's not wanted!"

"Oh right." said Scourge "Sorry about that. We'll try not to stall ourselves this time."

"Good." spat Marik savagely "I hate to be kept waiting."

With that said, he and Scourge carried on searching. Fiona and Ginger ran up to the two as they had been left behind and they caught up to them in a matter of seconds. Now the group was back together and searching for the Sol Emeralds. They wouldn't have to be searching for long though as a few paces later, the Sol Emerald in Marik's hand began to glow very brightly. The light was almost bright enough to engulf his hand, that must mean they were pretty close to the next emerald. Marik and Scourge were pretty surprised at that.

"The emerald's glowing brighter." said Marik "The next emerald must be somewhere nearby."

"I'm amazed we're that close to it." said Scourge "It's glowing so brightly, it's as if we're practically next to it. Where could that emerald be hiding?"

"Why don't you two dweebs try looking above your heads?" asked Fiona, pointing straight up at a tree branch that stretched just above their heads.

There was a tree next to Marik and Scourge and a branch was stretched out above their heads. Scourge and Marik looked up at the branch and they noticed that the cyan Sol Emerald was lying on it. It was sitting between the branches so it wasn't going anywhere right now, that is unless someone climbed up the tree branch and shook it vigorously. Marik and Scourge looked back down and they stared straight at Fiona.

"Well spotted." said Scourge in a simple manner.

"Thank you Scourge." said Fiona coyly "I'm glad to be of your service."

Ginger fumed at the smug little vixen in the belly-top and belted skirt. Fiona didn't half wind him up with how she was in Scourge's good

books and he was only a punching bag and he'd love to make a fool out of Fiona and get into Scourge's good books. But that would have to wait as he didn't have a decent plan yet. As for Marik and Scourge, they stared at the tree branch and they wondered how they were going to get the Sol Emerald down from it.

"That Sol Emerald's pretty high up and far out over the ground." Scourge noted as he surveyed the tree branch "One of us is going to have to climb up that tree, get across the branch and nab that emerald."

"Either that, or you can just spin-dash the tree branch in two Scourge." sneered Marik "I thought you would have come up with that yourself."

"I did actually." lied Scourge, pretending he had "I just…wondered if you thought of that too. Oh well, now you've suggested it, I'll do just that."

Scourge curled up into a ball and he span around like a saw blade. He revved up until he was at top speed and…Marik just swiped his arm and hit the tree branch with an energy wave before Scourge could even lunge himself at it. The energy wave hit the tree branch and cleaved it in two, leaving Scourge to propel himself at the tree branch and shoot through the air right past it. The tree branch fell onto the ground, the Sol Emerald clattering nosily on the ground towards Marik's feet. Scourge hurtled through the air and he crashed into a tree about four trees away from Marik. The tree fell straight down from the force of Scourge's spin-dash and brought several other trees near it down to the ground too. The noise the falling trees made as they fell to the ground, bark tearing in two and roots being ripped out of the ground, was ear-splittingly awesome. The trees lay on the ground, no longer tall, proud standing plants full of branches and leaves and Scourge lay amongst the fallen timber. The green hedgehog grumbled furiously to himself whereas Marik picked up the Sol Emerald and stuffed it in a pocket on the inside of his pocket, which was empty as Marik already had one Sol Emerald out. Marik then surveyed the mess Scourge had accidentally made thanks to him and he just sneered at him, clearly pleased he'd caused Scourge to knock a tree down as he hated trees.

"Oops, I'm so sorry Scourge." said Marik in voice dripping with a fake apologetic tone "I should have said "timber!" as you knocked those trees down!"

He then proceeded to laugh at Scourge mockingly and gratingly, hoping to wind up the evil, green hedgehog. Fiona fumed at Marik and she slapped him in the back of the head, causing Marik to stagger forwards and almost fall over. He steadied himself and he glared at Fiona. The look he had could have given a Tyrannosaurus Rex a heart-attack.

"Why did you do that?" he snarled, itching to rip Fiona's head off right now.

"Because I'm not happy at the fact you've just made my baby look like a total idiot." said Fiona coldly "I thought we were allies now so I will not abide to you making Scourge look stupid. The kid, I don't give a damn but you mess with Scourge and you mess with me, got it?"

"Oh fie upon you Fiona!" snapped Marik, throwing his hand down as if he was dismissing her "I was only having a bit of fun! Martians like to have fun too you know! Not to mention I still feel a little sore over what Scourge did to me before. Martians tend to hold grudges for a while so even though we're allies, it'll take a while until I don't feel vengeful against Scourge anymore."

"Boy you Martians aren't very sociable are you?" asked Fiona snidely, hoping that she wasn't going to annoy Marik too much.

"In all honesty, we're only sociable with each other Fiona." said Marik "We don't really get on well with other species. Anyway, we now have three Sol Emeralds, that means we have four more left to find."

"That's nice and please can you let Scourge get the next one this time?" asked Fiona "You already have three so it'll be fair that Scourge gets one next."

"Since we're allies now, it doesn't really matter who gets them." said Marik "But I'll make sure your Scourgey-Poos gets at least one

emerald. But he'll have to be on his feet as I may get them nice and quick once I see one."

Fiona just folded her arms and stuck her nose in the air, not really bothered with what Marik had said. As for Scourge, he had picked himself up from the fallen trees and stomped back over to Marik. He was covered in bark chips and splinters and leaves clung onto his jacket sleeves. Scourge looked very angry with Marik but he resisted the urge to mash him to pieces. He sighed deeply and relaxed himself. He just glared at Marik and said to him:

"While I'm not pleased you made me miss the branch Marik, I'm glad we now have the Sol Emerald. Shall we find the rest?"

"Be my guest Scourge." said Marik with a sarcastic grin on his face "The last four Sol Emeralds await us somewhere in this forest."

With that said, Marik, Scourge and Fiona walked off in a random direction, Marik holding a Sol Emerald out in order to find the others. Ginger however, heard something rustling through the bushes a good distance away from them and he wondered what it was. Ginger abandoned the group and he ran off in the opposite direction. He wanted to know what the noise was so he followed the sound of rustling that he'd heard. He pushed his way through several bushes until he came to the source of the noise. He dived behind a thorn bush (and carelessly prickled himself on the thorns, the big idiot) and he peeked through some gaps in the bush to see what he could see. To his surprise, he saw Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, the futuristic couple he, Fiona and Scourge had eavesdropped on earlier and found out about the Sol Emeralds due to this. Blaze had the grey Sol Emerald they'd just recently found in her hand and she and Silver were using it to find the other Sol Emeralds. Sonic's friends Tails the twin-tailed fox, Cosmo the Seedrian, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse and Geoffrey St. John the Skunk were following them and looking for Sol Emeralds too. The moment Ginger saw Tails, his fur stood up on end angrily and his tails straightened. It was as if the very sight of Tails angered him.

"My loathsome cousin is in these woods?" he hissed to himself "With some friends? And that odd couple we spied on is with them too? And the very, very odd looking feline has a Sol Emerald? Boy will

Scourge be mad at this! I do hope Sonic the Hedgehog isn't with them, that'll make things even worse although I highly suspect he'll be with them too."

He kept low behind the bush and made sure no one could hear him as he spied on the searching Mobians. Silver and Blaze were on the look out for the Sol Emeralds with Blaze holding out the grey one and hoping for it to start glowing as she was desperate to find the others. Unfortunately, Tails and the others were getting a little worn out. They looked flushed what with constantly walking around for hours on end and having no rest for a while. Blaze looked over her shoulder and noticed that the others were looking tired, much to her annoyance as she really wanted to find the Sol Emeralds before someone else did. Regardless, they wouldn't find the Sol Emeralds if they were too tired to do so and rest was good for you so Blaze decided now would be a good time to fall out for a minute.

"Silver, I think we should rest." said Blaze "Tails and his group look flushed."

"OK Blaze." said Silver "We shouldn't push them too far just because we need to find the Sol Emeralds."

"Guys, we're going to take a break for a minute." said Blaze "We'll continue searching in a few minutes."

With that said, Tails and the others all sat down onto the ground and they took a quick breather.

"Thank you Blaze." said Tails, rubbing his aching feet "My feet are killing me. How long have wee been walking for?"

"Too blooming long if you want my opinion." muttered Geoffrey as he wiped his forehead and took his backpack off, the pack lying down on the ground beside him "I feel like I've walked five-hundred miles and yet, I think we've only been walking for an hour or so."

"Well that just shows how well hidden the Sol Emeralds are." said Mandy grimly "They'll take all day to find at this rate. It's amazing how just falling through a portal tunnel spaced them so far apart."

"Either that or it's the fact somebody seems to have found two of them already and we just haven't found him or her yet." noted Wilson "And the third one we need to find seems to be in a good hiding place as that doesn't seem to have been found as far as I know."

"If only I didn't fall into the river and short-circuit the tracker!" Tails grumbled, fisting the ground beside him "We would have found them all by now! I know we've got four Sol Emeralds we can use to find the other emeralds but with the tracker, we knew where they were as the coordinates displayed on Royal HQ's computers were uploaded to it and we just had to walk to them."

"Tails, just because we lost the tracker, it doesn't mean we'll never find the last three emeralds." said Cosmo, wrapping her arms around him affectionately and making the fox feel warm inside "If we keep trying, we'll find them eventually. I believe we will."

"It's nice to see how supportive you are little plant person." said Blaze, taking note of how Cosmo didn't seem like the giving up kind "But believing won't find the Sol Emeralds any faster I'm afraid."

"Lighten up will you?" snapped Mandy "If Cosmo wants to believe then let her. Don't go trying to crush her spirits will you? It's not good to lower children's self-esteem you know."

"I'm not trying to lower her self-esteem." retorted Blaze "I'm stating what's true. You can't find things any easier just be believing in it and Cosmo needs to know that. It's better to know the facts then get caught up in some silly fantasy."

"Boy, you really are a sourpuss aren't you?" sniffed Mandy "Who raised you up then? An even bigger sourpuss?"

That did it, Blaze lost her cool and her hands were alit with flames. She picked herself up and stood over Mandy, preparing to let her have it with her flames.

"You take that back you rat!" snarled Blaze.

That did it, Mandy leaped onto her feet and glowered at Blaze, not

intimidated by the fire in her hands the slightest.

"Don't you dare call me a rat you hothead!" yelled Mandy "It's no wonder you're so fired up, those fire powers must be making you hot under the collar!"

"Don't comment on my fire powers mouse-girl!" snapped Blaze "Or you'll end up feeling them all over your face!"

The two were about to unleash hell on each other until Silver leaped onto his feet and stepped in to stop the girls from killing each other.

"Girls, knock it off or I'll use my psychokinesis to bash your heads together!" shouted Silver, his hands glowing with a psychic teal glow "We're supposed to be allies, not enemies for heaven's sake!"

Blaze and Mandy just retreated away from each other and they sat back down onto the ground, staring daggers at each other. Wilson folded his arms and fumed at his girlfriend.

"Geez Mandy, what are you trying to do?" groaned Wilson "Start a fight?"

"No I'm bloody well not!" snapped Mandy, turning her back on everybody and fuming to herself "I just wish that stupid cat would cool down already! She gets on my damning nerves she does!"

"Mandy luv, take it easy on Blaze will ya?" asked Geoffrey "She and Silver come from a post-apocalyptic future so they're bound to be a little shaky aren't they? And some mouse-bot nicked their emeralds and lost them in our zone so they've got a lot on their plate right now. Just think about it for a second luv."

Mandy just sighed but she took in Geoffrey's statement and thought about it. Living in a devastated world was bound to put heavy stress on anyone who lived in it so Mandy couldn't really blame Blaze for being a bit edgy and dull-spirited. Not to mention a devastated world was hardly anything to be hopeful about so Blaze's low views on believing in things couldn't really be helped and her very own Sol Emeralds had been stolen and dropped into another world so that was bound to put even more stress on the cat. She was clearly

misunderstanding the cat a little and she began to feel bad for it.

"You're right Geoff." said Mandy softly "I bet Blaze has a lot on her shoulders due to the fact Mobius in the future, according to her, is a wreck. Maybe I should stop being such a jerk to her. I'll make it up to her when she cools down, I don't think she's in the mood for an apology right now."

"I think that's the right thing to do Mandy-girl." said Wilson gently "I'm glad you're not so sore over her anymore."

Mandy just nodded agreeably. All she needed really were those few words Geoffrey had said and now she understood Blaze's problems and why she had a fiery temper. As for Blaze, she and Silver were having a little talk themselves.

"Blaze, you've gotta take it easy around these guys." said Silver "They don't know what we're going through and what our problems are so you shouldn't get mad at them just because they seem misunderstood about us. Not to mention, I bet seeing two future Mobians is overwhelming enough as it is for them."

"I know what you mean Silver." sighed Blaze "It's just with what's going on recently, it's hard to keep myself under control. And I don't see why that mouse still seems to have a grudge on me even though I apologized for my earlier actions. Maybe she's on of those types that needs a while before they can forgive you or something?"

"Possibly." said Silver "I'm sure you and Mandy can work it out and make up at last. Until then, we have to work together and try to put our differences aside for the time being or we'll never find the last three Sol Emeralds."

While they had been talking, Ginger had been staring from behind the thorn bush at Geoffrey's backpack, which was lying beside the skunk and the top of the pack was open so Ginger could see what was inside it. And to his utmost surprise, there were three Sol Emeralds in it! The fox was so surprised that he almost squealed in astonishment but that would give him away so he kept himself quiet. Instead, he whispered to himself.

"Sonic's friends…have the last four Sol Emeralds we need?" he squeaked in excitement "Oh what serendipity! What marvellous serendipity! Marik finds three over a course of time whereas I, the brilliant Ginger the Fox, have found four all in one go! I really am an amazing boy aren't I? Just wait till Scourge sees all these when I deliver them to him! He'll make me his best friend for life and then I'll no longer be his punching bag! But how can I get them all and throw them off the trail?"

He thought to himself and he racked his brain several times over for an idea. He could of course just steal the backpack but then he'd only have three emeralds as Blaze had one with her and Geoffrey was bound to get suspicious once he noticed his backpack was missing. And it was bound to be hard to steal the grey Sol Emerald as Blaze was holding it with her and she was sure to notice him if he was trying to steal it. Then Ginger noticed some rather chunky stones lying near the thorn bush he was hiding behind. They were roughly the same size as a Sol Emerald and the weight was sure to be similar at the most, smiliar enough to be mistake for a Sol Emerald. Ginger knew what he was going to do now. He lay down on his tummy and he crawled across the ground as if he was a giant, furry, twin-tailed caterpillar. He crawled ever so quietly, so quietly in fact that nobody, not even Mandy and her excellent ears could hear him crawling towards Geoffrey. The ginger fox slid himself across until he reached Geoffrey's backpack and he grabbed it. Nobody seemed to notice, they were too busy talking to each other. Ginger then carefully stuck his hand inside and he took the Sol Emeralds out of it, making sure he didn't make a single noise. He put the emeralds on his tails and they balanced perfectly on them. Ginger then crawled backwards away from Geoffrey while carrying the Sol Emeralds on his tails. He crawled all the way back to the thorn bush and put the emeralds down. He glared bitterly at the yellow and purple ones as he considered purple to be a girls only colour (how wrong is he on that?) and yellow reminded him bitterly of Tails. In fact, Ginger pretty much had a prejudice against anything yellow due to the fact it reminded him of Tails' fur colour. He quite fancied the red one though. He loved red as in his opinion, it says you are strong, mighty and masculine (which it doesn't). Now Ginger had the Sol Emeralds, he grabbed three rocks, balanced them on his tails and crawled quietly back over to Geoffrey's back

pack. He reached the backpack and he put the rocks in them. Geoffrey wouldn't notice he'd been robbed until it was too late thanks to those rocks. Ginger grinned stupidly to himself and he crawled behind a nearby bush. He crawled behind the bushes ever so quietly as he edged his way towards Blaze the Cat. He made it to Blaze but kept behind the bush in order to keep himself scarce. He observed her from behind the bush and noticed that the grey Sol Emerald was lying just next to her. It was near enough for Ginger to just reach out and grab it. The fox rubbed his hands greedily and he reached out to grab the emerald ever so quietly. Unfortunately, Tails spotted his hand and he alerted Blaze to him.

"Blaze, someone's reaching for your emerald!" he cried.

Blaze was up on her feet in a millisecond and she noticed Ginger's fingers closing around the Sol Emerald. She grabbed Ginger's hand and burnt it with her fiery fingertips. Ginger yelped like a person who's just plopped his hand on the cooker while it was on and he furiously blew on his hand in order to cool it down. While doing so, Ginger accidentally fell out of the bush, revealing himself to the group and earning a very angry expression from Tails in particular. The fox picked himself up and stared at everybody, nervous about the fact he'd just been found out and a bunch of angry faces were staring at him right now. He looked like he was just about to poop himself in fear.

"Um…hi guys?" squeaked Ginger in a very funny, high pitched voice that made him sound like he was on helium.

"Ginger!" growled Tails "You scum-bucket, what are you doing here?"

"You know this kid?" asked Silver.

"Unfortunately." muttered Tails "He's…a rival of mine that I wished I'd never seen in all my life."

"You are such a liar Tails!" snapped Ginger "I'm your cousin, not just your rival! We are related you know!"

"You may say we are but I refuse to acknowledge you as such

because of how selfish, mean and horrible you are, especially to me when I was younger!" snapped Tails "You are not my cousin, and I am not related to you in anyway! You're just a big bullying rival of mine and I am going to make you wish you'd never been born when I'm through with you!"

"You want a pounding then I'll give you one!" yelled Ginger, charging towards Tails with his fists bared.

Tails leaped out of Ginger's way and dropkicked him in the back of the head as the opinionated twin-tailed fox ran past him. Ginger ended up hurling into a thorn bush and he got prickled very badly by the sharp, dense thorns. The fox yelped in pain and he landed painfully on his bottom. Tails then proceeded to leap on Ginger, pin him down and punch him repeatedly in the face.

"This is for ruining my life two years ago!" screeched Tails, pounding Ginger on the bridge of his nose, making the fox squeal in pain "And for all you've done under Scourge's orders!" he punched him again, making him squeal once more "And for being a horrible person!" he punched him again, giving the fox a nose bleed.

Silver and Blaze took note of what Tails was doing and they began to assume Ginger was clearly not on Tails' good side at all.

"Wow, those two really don't like each other do they?" asked Silver.

"Well according to what he's told us, Ginger abused him when he was younger and made life hard for him." said Cosmo "And he's working for Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic's evil brother so that makes Tails hate him even more."

"Sonic has an evil brother?" questioned Silver "I didn't think someone of his nature would ever have an evil relative at all!"

"If he's working for a villain then we can assume he's here to cause trouble." said Blaze "Tails seems to have him under control though so we can just leave him to it."

Tails gave Ginger one last punch and then he threw the fox straight into a tree. Ginger coughed and spluttered hoarsely as pain flooded

up his body. Tails had punched him pretty hard and his face was laden with bruises. His nose was bleeding and he had a bump on his forehead. Tails however, didn't seem to be finished with Ginger yet. He advanced on the ginger fox and prepared to deck him again but Ginger tripped him up with one swipe of his tails. Tails landed on his back and Ginger stomped on his stomach, making the poor fox wheeze heavily. Ginger then proceeded to fly towards Blaze and snatch the Sol Emerald out of her hand. He then flew off as fast as he could with Blaze rapidly throwing fire at him.

"You give that back to me right now!" screamed Blaze.

Ginger's response was to shake his bum at her. Ginger then flew over to the thorn bush, picked up the other three Sol Emeralds and flew off as fast as he could. This prompted Silver and Blaze to run after him as fast as they could. Silver levitated off the ground and flew after Ginger whereas Blaze ran after him. Tails and the others joined him, running after the ginger fox as fast as they could. Ginger flew desperately through the forest, trying to avoid flying into a tree accidentally. His heart was racing like mad and his tails were spinning around faster then a helicopter's propeller blade. Ginger weaved his way through the trees in an attempt to slow everybody down but Silver was equally at good at flying as he was so he was catching up to him easily. Unfortunately, before Silver could even catch Ginger, Scourge appeared from nowhere and spin-dashed him out of the sky. Silver landed rather painfully on his back and he grimaced. Scourge landed before Silver and Ginger flew down beside him. Marik and Fiona showed up from nowhere too and they stared down at Silver.

"Hey, it's the guy with the funny quill-do we spied on earlier!" piped Fiona.

"I spied on him too." said Marik "I bet he's here to be a pain for us."

Silver picked himself up and stared angrily at the villains standing before him. As for the others, they caught up to Silver and they couldn't believe their eyes as they saw Scourge, Fiona and Marik standing there, ready to cause trouble. As for Ginger, he handed Scourge the four Sol Emeralds he'd just stolen.

"Scourge, you won't believe this." said Ginger "I've just found the last four Sol Emeralds and got them for you. Now we have all seven! Aren't I amazing?"

Geoffrey stared in horror at the Sol Emeralds and he tore his backpack off his back and looked in it, only to find rocks inside it. He just spilled the rocks onto the ground and he grumbled to himself.

"The bloke robbed us and we didn't even realize it." he muttered "Now Scourge has all seven Sol Emeralds according to Ginger."

He then glowered at Ginger, who handed Scourge the emeralds and beamed with pride. But instead of praising Ginger, Scourge backhanded him directly into a tree angrily, earning a sadistic chuckle from Marik.

"You moron!" he bellowed "You went off without us and then you go and lead Sonic's friends right to us! Do you realize what you were thinking Ginger?"

"But…I got the emeralds…" protested Ginger.

"And you've lead Sonic's friends right to us!" snarled Scourge "Our cover's blown and now we're gonna have them getting in our way and trying to stop us from making off with the emeralds! You've messed up big Ginger!"

Ginger couldn't believe what Scourge was saying to him. Scourge was criticizing him instead of praising him? Was there anyway to get in Scourge's good books at all? As for Scourge, he turned to face the Mobians and he smirked at them.

"Hey up guys and girls." he said "Nice of you to drop by and get your butts kicked by yours truly, Scourge the Hedgehog. Where's Sonic?"

"He's…elsewhere." said Tails "But we'll stop you and Marik on his behalf!"

"Oh really fox boy?" sneered Marik "I doubt that'll be happening for we have these."

He pulled out the three Sol Emeralds in his jacket and Scourge

showed them the four Ginger had just stolen from them.

"All seven of your emeralds silver boy and cat girl." purred Marik "How about that then?"

Silver and Blaze only glared at the two villains as they smirked triumphantly at them with the Sol Emeralds in their hands…

Back on Mobius Nega, Sonic and the Nega-Mobians were in a very tight battle with the monstrous Shadow Sonic, the Nega-version of Silver Sonic from the prime zone. Shadow Sonic was every bit as brutal, murderous and lethal as Silver Sonic but the one thing that made him stand out from Silver Sonic was this eerie ability it had. It could shadow-meld, meaning it could disappear into shadows and reappear out of another one so that once Sonic or the Nega-Mobians tried to attack it, it just sank down into a shadow, reappeared out of another one and nabbed them. The fight had been pretty tense and Sonic was beginning to doubt if they could actually defeat it right now. Sonic spin-dashed towards Shadow Sonic but Shadow Sonic backhanded him into the wall, causing him to crash into it and leave a nasty dent in it. Sonic groaned in annoyance and he pulled himself out of the wall. Scourge Nega spin-dashed Shadow Sonic in the face and sent it staggering backwards. Shadow Sonic quickly regained its balance just as Scourge Nega was about to spin-dash it again. Shadow Sonic stepped into a shadow and he shadow-melded into the shadow once again. It shrank right down into the shadow as if it was melting into a shadowy puddle. Scourge Nega hit the shadow just as Shadow Sonic disappeared. Scourge Nega quickly leaped away from the shadow and ran for it but Shadow Sonic reappeared through a shadow in the ceiling and it spin-dashed him. It chipped him across the side and the green hedgehog in the white leather jacket cried out in pain as it swept over his body like an ocean wave on a hot sunny day at the beach. Scourge Nega lay on the floor, clutching his arm and grunting in pain. Amy Nega aimed her wrist mounted laser at Shadow Sonic's head. She fired at it and the shot hit home but it just pinged harmlessly off his armour. Shadow Sonic glared at Amy Nega and he advanced on her menacingly. Amy Nega began firing her laser at him furiously but the shots just

continued to ping harmlessly off of Shadow Sonic's tough armour. His armour could deflect cannon blasts it was that strong. Amy Nega instantly panicked and she began to run around the room furiously.

"They're no good! The lasers are no good!" she screamed "We need another weapon!"

"We don't have any other weapons." noted Tails Nega "And the others are outside keeping Eggman Nega's forces at bay so they can't help us. I bet their weapons won't be any good against that thing anyway."

"Then we'll just have to hope Sonic and Scourge can spin-dash that thing to pieces." said Amy Nega as she avoided a claw attack from Shadow Sonic.

Sonic and Scourge Nega both spin-dashed Shadow Sonic together and they sent the huge, black and purple machine sprawling across the floor. Shadow Sonic picked himself up and he spin-dashed towards Sonic and Scourge Nega. The two hedgehogs dodged it's attack and Shadow Sonic screeched to a halt. Sonic tried to spin-dash Shadow Sonic but Shadow Sonic grabbed him and threw him into a wall. Scourge Nega spin-dashed it in the shoulder and knocked it to the side but Shadow Sonic regained his balance and he kicked Scourge Nega straight into the ceiling. Tails Nega flew into Shadow Sonic's optics and he covered them. Shadow Sonic couldn't see a thing at all with the fox in the leather jacket covering it's optics. Shadow Sonic attempted to swat Tails Nega but Tails Nega flew out of it's way, causing it to clout itself on the head and knock itself onto it's back. Amy Nega then proceeded to shoot some of Shadow Sonic's bladed quills on the back of it's head with her laser. The lasers hit the blades and cracked them slightly. Anymore clear shots like that and they would break. Shadow Sonic picked himself up and stomped the ground, making Amy Nega fall over onto her back. He then proceeded to advance on Amy Nega and raise his foot, preparing to squash her like a crawly little insect. Amy Nega covered her eyes and feared the worst as fate began to claim her life. Sonic however, spin-dashed Shadow Sonic's leg and knocked him over onto his back. The whole room seemed to shake as it fell onto it's back. Sonic then helped Amy Nega onto her feet and the pink hedgehog beamed at him.

"Thank you Sonic Prime." she said "You saved my life, much like how Sonic Nega usually does when we're in a scrap."

"Don't mention it Ames." said Sonic casually "It's my job to save people's lives. Besides, I often save the Amy on my zone's life so it figure I should save yours as well."

Shadow Sonic decided to interrupt this moment and stand back up with it's claws bared and optics narrowed onto Sonic and Amy Nega. Amy Nega shot a laser at it's optics and that stunned him momentarily. Shadow Sonic rubbed it's optics better and while it did that, Sonic spin-dashed it directly in the groin but being as robots can't feel pain, it didn't feel any pain from that very painful and powerful attack. Shadow Sonic bent down and prepared to snatch Sonic up but Scourge Nega spin-dashed it in the bottom and knocked it over onto it's face. Shadow Sonic stood up on all fours and scampered nosily over to another shadow. It shadow-melded once again and disappeared into the shadow. The Mobians kept their senses alert as they prepared for it to suddenly appear from nowhere again. Shadow Sonic however, stealthily reappeared from a shadow behind Tails Nega and he backhanded the fox across the room. The fox hit the wall at enough force to smash a brick and Tails Nega suddenly found himself passing out from that attack. Amy Nega ran over to the fox to see if he was alright while the hedgehogs continued to attack Shadow Sonic. Scourge Nega dropkicked Shadow Sonic in the face and then roundhouse kicked him in the cheek before he could fall back down to the floor.

"Nobody hurts my late brother's little buddy like that!" he yelled "Prepare to feel the thunder bolt brain!"

Scourge Nega then proceeded to spin-dash Shadow Sonic directly in the cranium. That attack dented it slightly but not seriously. Shadow Sonic then proceeded to backhand Scourge Nega directly into the wall. Sonic spin-dashed Shadow Sonic in the leg but Shadow Sonic kicked him away and the hedgehog landed slap bang into the wall. He groaned furiously and he pulled himself out of the wall.

"This guy's a toughie." he muttered to himself "He's like Silver Sonic, only with the ability to disappear into the shadows. I never did beat

Silver Sonic so can I beat this guy? Of course you can Sonic! You've beaten giant robots capable of cracking planets apart**, although I was super for that, so you can defeat this guy easily! I will not let Amy Nega down. I've gotta help save her world and restore it back to normal or Dr. Eggman Nega will steal all the Chaos Emeralds of the multi-verse and rule all of space and time itself!"

Sonic picked himself up and zoomed towards Shadow Sonic, ready to continue the battle and throw another punch or two at the giant, black Silver Sonic re colour that was the only thing preventing him from having an audience with Dr. Eggman Nega…

Footnotes:

***See Stories 75 and 76 for the occasions**

****See Story 45**

Talk about intense! Sonic's having a hard time on Mobius Nega and Scourge and Marik have all the Sol Emeralds! Looks like there's going to be some serious combat going on next time! Join me next time for the explosive finale to this inter-stellar, zone hopping saga! Reviews are welcome. Speaking of reviews, I've almost got 100! WHOO! GO FIGURE! :)

For Numbah 006: You'll find out what a Devatron is in time my friend. Keep reading!

The Dark Side of the World 2

Story 87: The Dark Side of the World Part 2

Today had been pretty darn busy for our hero Sonic the Hedgehog. First he went on a search for the Sol Emeralds after Royal HQ picked them up, then he meets Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, two dwellers from a post apocalyptic future (which worries him right now), then he chases a mouse-bot to another zone, then he meets alternate counterparts of some of his friends and then he joins them in their crusade against the nefarious and mad Dr. Eggman Nega, the alternate counterpart of Dr. Eggman, Sonic's flabby and rotund foe. Eggman Nega was plotting the craziest scheme in the history of crazy schemes too, stealing Chaos Emeralds from every time zone and plotting to use them to reshape the multi-verse as he sees fit and becoming ruler of it. Right now, he was in an epic tussle with a Silver Sonic re-colour known as Shadow Sonic, a robot that could shadow-meld as well as do everything Silver Sonic could. If Sonic won then he and Eggman Nega would have a battle for the planet but Shadow Sonic was on top of the game right now. Tails Nega had been knocked out, Amy Nega couldn't really do anything about it and her team mates Miranda, Geoffrey and Bunnie Nega were outside keeping the crowds of metallized-Mobians and Egg-Pawns busy, meaning only Sonic and Scourge Nega could really fight the machine. But even Sonic and Scourge Nega's best efforts were not match for the invincible, shadow melding machine. Sonic homing attack Shadow Sonic but Shadow Sonic head-butted him and sent him flying into the floor. Scourge Nega climbed up it's arm and kick-slammed him in the face but Shadow Sonic took the impact and flicked Scourge Nega off as if he was a scrawny little fly begging to be flicked off one's shoulder. Scourge Nega crashed into a wall and he grimaced in pain. Sonic spin-dashed towards Shadow Sonic but Shadow Sonic shadow-melded into the shadows once again and it vanished into the darkness of the shadows in a fashion that looked like it was being submerged into water. Sonic stopped and landed on the shadow, prompting Shadow Sonic to quickly reappear from right underneath his feet and send him flying into the ceiling as he emerged from

underneath him. Sonic's face contorted with hurt as pain swept over his body. He felt like he'd just been smashed to pieces. Shadow Sonic however, leaped up off the floor, grabbed Sonic, peeled him off the wall and slam-dunked him directly on the floor. This caused Amy Nega to scream in anguish and her eyes brimmed with tears. It was almost like Sonic Nega was going to get killed all over again for her due to the fact Sonic was the spitting image of his Nega-counterpart. Shadow Sonic made a strange noise that made it sound like it was laughing and it prepared to stomp on the downed hedgehog but Scourge Nega spin-dashed him an knocked him off his feet. Shadow Sonic landed sharply on it's side and it made an electronic wailing sound. Amy Nega ran over to Sonic and helped him up affectionately.

"Oh Sonic are you alright?" she shrieked exasperatedly "Please be OK! I don't wanna see another Sonic die under my watch again!"

Sonic's response was to weakly open his eyes and make a pained noise that made it sound like just using his vocal chords to some effect was physically painful to him. Amy Nega beamed happily, glad to see Sonic was alive but he was in pretty bad shape. He didn't look like he was able to keep this battle up any longer.

"Ugggghhhhh…..groaned Sonic, clutching his forehead "Crud that hurt! That Shadow Sonic…ugh! really packs quite a few punches doesn't he?"

"Well like I said, he completely levelled Empire City." said Amy Nega "It's a dangerous machine and none have defeated it yet. I'm just thankful that with you and Scourge Nega teaming up, we're actually putting up a decent battle against it. We couldn't do this well before."

"Well Amy Nega, I'm gonna be the first to take it down." claimed Sonic "I have a tactic that might just work."

Sonic ran over to Scourge Nega, a little slower then usual as he was banged up, and he began to run around the black, Sonic-esque machine. Shadow Sonic stopped what he was doing and he followed Sonic as he ran around him. Scourge Nega watched Sonic run and instantly knew what he was up to.

"Oh yeah! The Sonic Tornado!" cried Scourge Nega "Count me in!"

With that said, he ran around Shadow Sonic and joined him in making the Sonic Tornado. Shadow Sonic began to wonder what was going on and it tried to shadow-meld but there were no shadows anywhere so it couldn't. Sonic and Scourge Nega ran around Shadow Sonic at full supersonic speed until they were nothing more then green and blue blurs circling around him. Shadow Sonic was then picked up the winds the two hedgehogs were creating and slowly began to spin around. The blurs expanded upwards and became a blue and green tornado that circled around and around at a blinding speed. Shadow Sonic was then thrown around and around by the Sonic Tornado before finally, he was catapulted out of the tornado and thrown straight into a wall. The crash into the wall was so hard that the blades on the back of it's head snapped in two due to the fact Amy Nega had weakened them earlier with her laser attacks and it's back blades were deeply embedded into the wall, rendering Shadow Sonic stuck into the wall. The attack seemed to have shaken it severely though as it just stood there in a mindless manner and then it's head flopped down, suggesting it had been knocked out. Sonic however, wanted the machine destroyed and now it was knocked out, he had a perfect opportunity to do so. He and Scourge Nega then proceeded to spin-dash Shadow Sonic's unconscious body over and over in hopes of eventually destroying the machine. After a good round of spin-dashing for a minute or so, Sonic and Scourge Nega finally managed to penetrate Shadow Sonic. They left heavy dents on it's body and Sonic then decided to cleave straight through it's head, sawing it on half and killing the machine in an instant. Shadow Sonic would not be functioning again in a hurry, it was offline at last. Sonic and Scourge Nega high-fived each other and they cheered happily.

"Whoo! Heck yeah!" cried Sonic "We destroyed it at last!"

"That Sonic Tornado worked to perfection!" cheered Scourge Nega "We totally knocked that thing out and then we spin-dashed it to tiny little bits!"

"Well done you two magnificent hedgehogs." said Amy Nega, hugging them both happily "We won the challenge and now Sonic gets to challenge Eggman Nega for our freedom."

"I bet he's gonna win." said Scourge Nega "Hey Sonic, give Eggman Nega a good pounding for me will ya?"

"Don't sweat it Scourgey, I will." said Sonic.

Then suddenly, a giant robot materialized into the room and stood before Sonic and friends. They stared in surprise at the robot that had just appeared into the room. Even Tails Nega finally woke up despite passing out earlier and he gaped at the robot that was now in the room and standing before them. The robot was a giant bulky machine with insect like features. It had insect legs on it's ribs and back, it had huge zigzag shaped legs, bulky arms with blades on the sides and a mace and shield in place of hands. The head was shaped like Eggman Nega's head and Eggman Nega was housed inside this giant robot.

"Marvellous work Sonic my friend." Eggman Nega's voice boomed out from inside the casing "You've passed my test with amazing skill and efficiency and now, as we promised, here I am standing before you in my robot battle armour. I prefer to call it the Nega-Buster and it's my own personal set of weapons and fighting abilities."

"So I guess I'll be fighting you in that then?" asked Sonic "Fair enough. Let's do it to it then!"

"Yes let's my dear hedgehog of a hearty and heroic nature." purred Eggman Nega "Let's fight each other and win the ultimate prize which is the world of course. I warn you though Sonic that you won't walk out of this fight alive as this armour is built to match Sonic Nega's abilities in everyway. You may not be Sonic Nega but your abilities are the same so it'll match you too."

"We'll see about that Eggman Nega." said Sonic "Your Nega-Buster is going to be Nega-Busted!"

And with that, the two lunged for each other and they prepared to do battle with each other. Amy Nega, Scourge Nega and Tails Nega could only watch as the two engaged in combat and they were all thinking the same thing to themselves.

Please Sonic, defeat Eggman Nega and free us from his tyranny…

Back on the Prime Zone, two of Sonic's deadliest enemies Scourge the Hedgehog and Marik the Martian, accompanied by Scourge's sidekicks Fiona Fox and Ginger the Fox, had just managed to capture all seven Sol Emeralds, futuristic Chaos Emeralds with fire powers, and now they stood before the futuristic couple that owned them, Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat. Sonic's friends Tails, Cosmo, Geoffrey Wilson and Mandy were with them and they weren't pleased at all to see two of Sonic's big named bad guys standing before them. Marik was holding the Sol Emeralds in his hands and he was grinning wickedly at them. The Mobians hesitated, wondering what Marik was going to do with the emeralds.

"What's the matter mongrels?" sneered Marik "Too scared of me now I have some fiery gems in my hands right now?"

"How do you know about their fiery power freak?" demanded Silver angrily.

"Well the fact you can feel a curious fiery streak as you touch these emeralds was a big give-away." noted Marik "And the fact they're called "Sol Emeralds" adds to the theory too. Before you even ask how we know about these gems, me and Scourge both eavesdropped on you after you came from that warp ring with that strange looking mouse bot."

"You scum!" yelled Blaze furiously, summoning fire to her hands "Spying on us and then hunting for my emeralds yourselves? I will show you four black hearted fiends no mercy unless you hand over those emeralds now!"

"You really don't give us enough credit do ya toots?" sneered Scourge "We've worked hard finding these babies and now you want us to just hand them over? You've got a death wish if you think we're gonna be stupid enough to do that!"

"Well if you won't give us the Sol Emeralds then we'll fight you for them." said Mandy with a daring expression on her face "Winner takes all, loser stands small and all that stuff. "Do you accept?"

"Without a moment's hesitation." said Scourge with a devilish grin on his face that could make a lion feel nervous "I like a good battle before it take over the world. Not to mention, it gives me an excuse to beat up Sonic's playhouse club just to annoy him."

"I accept too." said Marik, putting the Sol Emeralds down on the ground and preparing to fight "I have scores to settle with each of you. Accept you two as I've only just met you." he said to Silver and Blaze "Who are you two by the way?"

"Silver the Hedgehog." introduced Silver.

"Blaze the Cat." introduced Blaze.

"Oh, that's too bad." said Marik "However, I hate all Mobians as we Martians only love races who fantasise warfare and destruction and you Mobians are the antithesis of war-loving."

"Martian?" mused Silver "What's a Martian?"

"I would give you the necessary exposition to educate your young mind silver boy but now's not the time for it." snapped Marik "Now is the time for a battle."

"So be it." said Blaze coldly, preparing to let her new enemies have a face full of fire "You'll only regret not giving us the Sol Emeralds and ending this peacefully."

"You guys can have Scourge and Marik." said Tails bluntly "Ginger's mine." he added with a death glare squarely aimed at his loathsome cousin who only glared at him back.

"And Fiona's mine." said Mandy with a glower at the red vixen "I still wanna teach her a lesson for betraying us all and running off with Scourge."

"So that leaves Scourge and Marik to us then." said Geoffrey St. John "Fair enough, either of those blokes will do nicely for me."

So now the fight was settled, the opponents all prepared to deck each other. Tails and Ginger faced each other and prepared to beat the tar out of each other, Fiona and Mandy prepared to have one

hell of a catfight and Scourge and Marik prepared to unleash hell on Silver, Blaze, Wilson and Geoffrey. Cosmo decided to stay out of this as she didn't like violence and wasn't much of a fighter. She respectfully stood back from the fighters as they prepared to attack each other and fight for the Sol Emeralds.

"Let's go guys, for Silver and Blaze and our future!" cried Tails in a leader-like fashion.

"Let's go guys, for world domination!" yelled Scourge in a very intimidating manner and pointing straight forward menacingly with his teeth clenched and bared.

Nobody needed to say anything else. The Mobians all lunged for one another and engaged in battle. Curiously enough though, Marik just stood there and watched as the fight broke out, an unusual motive for the Martian as he was usually the first to run into battle. He watched as Scourge began to battle Silver, Blaze, Geoffrey and Wilson all at once, Mandy and Fiona as they linked arms and began to push on each other and Tails and Ginger as they flew into the sky and began to kick each other's brains out. Scourge punched Silver in the gut, kicked Blaze in the legs and tripped her up and then did a split-kick in-between Geoffrey and Wilson, knocking them both onto their sides. Silver however, grabbed Scourge with his psychokinesis and he threw Scourge into a bush. The green hedgehog leaped back out in a spin-dash but Silver stopped him in his tracks with another psychic hold. He threw Scourge straight into Ginger, knocking him out of the sky and giving Tails a chance to punch Ginger in the nose. Scourge picked himself up and lunged back towards his opponents, only to get a fiery kick from Blaze that sent him sprawling on the ground. Geoffrey ran in and kicked Scourge over onto his back but the green hedgehog picked himself up and head-butted Geoffrey in the gut. He then pulled Geoffrey close to himself and kneed him in the gut. The skunk wheezed louder then somebody having an asthma attack. Wilson drew out his spinning blade weapon and he tried to slice Scourge into ribbons with it. Scourge dodged Wilson's attack but Silver knocked him over with a psychic wave that he swiped at him. The green hedgehog growled angrily and he shot a death glare at Marik, who was just standing there watching him with a big, evil smirk on his face.

"Marik you *&$%^! Help me!" roared Scourge "I'm getting my ass kicked here!"

"And that's why I'm enjoying this." sneered Marik "Watching you getting your arse kicked is quite an amusing novelty for me. Not to mention…I have emeralds to take!"

He then proceeded to scoop up all seven Sol Emeralds and run off with them as fast as he could on his golden jet shoes! Scourge looked like somebody had just stabbed him in the groin. He could feel himself bubbling with rage. Marik had only been *pretending* to work with him all the time so he could make off with the goods! And to think he had been bone idle enough to believe that Martian even for a second! He really wanted to kill that Martian now.

"YOU &%^$&!" he bellowed "I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!"

He tried to run after Marik but Silver stopped him dead in his tracks with a psychic hold he summoned. Scourge tried to move but Silver's hold over him was much too strong. Few people could actually break through Silver's psychokinesis. As for Marik, Cosmo had seen him jolt off with the Sol Emeralds and she didn't want Marik to get away with them. Not to mention, she had a score to settle with Marik due to the fact the Martians were at war with her kind. Cosmo grabbed one of the stones Ginger had stuffed in Geoffrey's backpack and she ran off after Marik. Tails tail-whipped Ginger away and noticed that Cosmo was running after Marik the Martian. The fox was horrified at this and he tried to fly after her.

"Cosmo! Come back!" cried Tails "Marik will kill you!"

He was suddenly pounced on by Ginger who then proceeded to throw him down onto the ground. Ginger flew towards Tails with a stupid expression on his face and he tried to grab him by the throat but Tails kicked him in the gut and knocked him down. Tails then leaped back onto his feet and gave Ginger an uppercut to the chin that almost shattered his jaw.

"Somebody please help Cosmo before Marik kills her!" screamed Tails "I'm tied up with Ginger right now!"

"I'll do it." said Silver, throwing Scourge head first into a tree with his psychic powers.

Silver left Scourge with the others while he chased after Marik and Cosmo. He levitated off the ground and flew after them at top speed.

Further up the forest, Marik looked over his shoulder and noticed Cosmo was chasing him. The Seedrian's tiredness was evident as she appeared to be panting so hard you'd think she had already run a mile or so despite the fact they'd only been running for a minute. The Martian grinned to himself and he did a wild U-turn that almost sent him skidding across the ground on his side. He dropped the Sol Emeralds and charged towards Cosmo and rammed straight into her, causing her to drop the stone and he pinned the Seedrian straight against a tree. The Seedrian squirmed in the Martian's grasp as he squashed her up against the tree. Marik flashed her a twisted, sadistic grin that could give anybody nightmares, even the bravest of people and he bared his sharp metal claws. Cosmo shivered like a person standing in the Arctic with no clothes on and she stared straight at Marik's claws.

"This may not be the day I take Sonic's heart." crooned Marik "But it'll be the day I take yours!"

He drew his arm backwards and prepared to plunge them into the terrified Seedrian's chest until he was hit by a psychically enhanced punch from Silver who finally caught up to him and Cosmo ambushed him from the side. Marik skidded roughly across his side and he groaned in annoyance. Marik leaped onto his feet and he pounced on Silver but Silver stopped him directly in his path with his psychokinesis. Marik was completely frozen now, unable to so much as bat an eyelid and surrounded by the familiar teal glow of Silver the Hedgehog. Silver then proceeded to curve his fingers, raise his hands and hold them close together. Marik then clutched his head in agony as if Silver was crushing it with invisible hands that clasped tightly around his head and began squeezing it. Marik yelped in pain and he tried to clutch his head but Silver's psychic hold was preventing him from doing so.

"Ouch! Ow! Stop it you wretch!" squealed Marik "You're giving me a migraine!"

Silver ignored him and continued psychically squeezing Marik's head. Then, after all that squeezing, Marik finally passed out and Silver let him go. Marik dropped down onto the ground and he lay there, unconscious and motionless. Cosmo was relieved to see the Martian down and she stepped up to Silver.

"Thank you so much." said Cosmo sweetly "You saved my life."

"You're welcome Cosmo." said Silver casually "So is this Marik the Martian here someone to worry about?"

"He is." said Cosmo "He's a war-loving demon with a prejudice against peace and will do anything to take it from us. He's very powerful, being able to fight many of Sonic's friends to a stand still and even Sonic himself so he must be contained."

"In that case, I'll hinder him in someway in order to make it easier for you to fight him." said Silver.

He looked at Marik's jet shoes and recognized them as such immediately due to the jets in the soles of the shoes. He'd only seen pictures of jet shoes from books he read about past technology and he wished he could see them in action. And yet, he was going to break them right now. Silver aimed his hands at Marik's shows and they were surrounded by a teal glow. Silver concentrated hard on the shoes with his eyes closed and he clenched his fists. The shoes then suddenly sparked and hissed louder then a snake pit. Marik's jet shoes had been disabled. The Martian was not going to be able to use them for flying or quick getaways anymore (even though he couldn't use them for flying anymore anyway*). Marik would be stuck to just merely walking and running normally now. Silver smirked at Marik and he walked away from him.

"Marik's jet shoes are disabled." said Silver "You'll catch him a lot easier now next time you face him."

"Why are you just leaving Marik behind then?" asked Cosmo "Why aren't you detaining him?"

"We don't have the time for that now Cosmo." said Silver, picking up the Sol Emeralds with his psychokinesis and bringing them to

himself "Sonic's trapped in another world and we need to help him and your friends may need help taking down Scourge. You look after the Sol Emeralds while I fight Scourge." he said to the Seedrian "When we reach the battlefield, you hide behind a bush and keep the emeralds close to you while I help defeat Scourge."

"OK Silver." said Cosmo "Thank you for everything you've just done for me and my friends now."

"Anytime Cosmo, anytime." said Silver, levitating off the ground and flying through the forest with the Sol Emeralds around him.

Cosmo ran after him as quickly as she possibly could, leaving Marik to just lie there on the ground in unconsciousness. Silver had squeezed his head pretty tight so he would be asleep for a while now.

Back at the battlefield, the fights were all getting more and more intense as they went on. Scourge was keeping everybody he was fighting on their toes, Tails and Ginger were still battering each other's brains out and Fiona and Mandy's fight was beginning to get more and more vicious as they battled. Fiona swiped at Mandy and tried to scratch her face like women fighting each other usually do but Mandy dodged the attack and kicked Fiona in the gut. Fiona gasped in pain and she retaliated with a twirl around and then a roundhouse kick to the face. Mandy gripped her face and she quickly rubbed it better just as Fiona punched her in the jaw. Mandy retaliated with a furious left hook that made Fiona stagger and she did a roundhouse kick to the face on Fiona. Fiona glowered at Mandy and she stomped on her foot furiously. Mandy grimaced in pain and she clutched her foot, only for Fiona to roundhouse kick her in the legs and bring her down onto her back. Fiona then tried to stomp on Mandy's face but the mouse caught her foot and tripped her up. Fiona landed on her face beside Mandy and Mandy clasped her fists together and then slammed them on Fiona's back. She picked herself up and kicked Fiona onto her back. Fiona picked herself up and she fist-slammed Mandy in the gut. Then she grabbed Mandy in a chokehold and began to throttle her. Mandy gagged loudly but she managed to get free by biting Fiona on the arm. Fiona screamed in pain and let go of Mandy, giving the purple-furred mouse a chance to ram her with her shoulder and knock her

into a bush. Mandy then took a moment to slip on her brass knuckle attachments (which were fixed from the fight with Alonzo**) and she waited for Fiona to get back to her feet. Fiona stood back up and she lunged at Mandy. Mandy launched a sucker punch that almost broke Fiona's jawbone. Fiona fell to the ground, clutching her jaw and grimacing tensely as if just touching it was painful. Mandy stood over Fiona and put her hands on her hips in a stern manner.

"I'm disgusted how low you're still willing to stoop you filthy traitor." she hissed angrily "As if trying to subjugate Royal HQ*** wasn't enough, you're now trying to steal seven emeralds that belong to a couple from the future so Scourge can use them for his own nefarious purposes. When will you be satisfied Fiona?"

"I'll be satisfied when the R.F.S. goes up in flames, all it's members are buried in a graveyard and Scourge is ruler of the world." snapped Fiona, picking herself up and preparing to do battle again "Your death is one thing I'll be satisfied with. You and Geoffrey lowered my self-esteem and made me quit so you brought this on yourselves you mousey moron."

"We brought nothing on ourselves wretch!" snapped Mandy "The fact you wouldn't take our constructive criticisms to heart and use them to improve yourself is the reason you quit! Not us! What happened to you before you met Scourge was brought upon by one person and that is you Fiona!"

That statement just seemed to make Fiona go rabid with rage.

"Liar!" barked Fiona, lunging on Mandy and knocking the mouse on to the ground.

The mouse however raised her legs and threw Fiona off herself. Fiona landed on her back painfully and Mandy picked herself up, ready to attack again. Fiona stood up and spun around with a vicious kick to the jaw that left a nasty mark on Mandy's cheek and one of her teeth ended up being chipped. Mandy retaliated with an uppercut that was made all the more harder by her brass knuckle attachments. Fiona uppercut Mandy back and then elbowed her in the chest. She then backhanded Mandy onto the ground and stomped on her shoulder. Mandy screamed a bloodcurdling scream

of anguish as pain flooded up her arm like a raging rapid. Fiona tried to stomp on Mandy's face but the mouse wrapped her yellow tail around her other leg and tripped the vixen up. Mandy then swung her leg down on Fiona's belly while she was down and Fiona wheezed ever so hoarsely. Mandy picked herself up and she grabbed Fiona by the arms. She hoisted Fiona onto her feet and leaned back on one leg. She then shot her leg outwards and sent Fiona hurling backwards into a bush. The mouse ran over to the vixen and prepared to deck her again.

Meanwhile, Scourge was beginning to get on top of the battle now Silver wasn't here. He spin-dashed Blaze and sent her hurling into a tree and then he jumped over to Wilson. He gave Wilson a right hook to the jaw and then an uppercut to the chin that actually sent Wilson hurling into the air and ended up getting him stuck on a tree branch! Geoffrey stepped in and he punched Scourge in the collarbone. He then spun around and tail-whipped Scourge in the legs and tripped him up. He tried to grab Scourge but Scourge kangaroo kicked the skunk in the abdomen. Geoffrey retaliated by firing a flash bomb out of his arm-mounted crossbow in Scourge's eyes, blinding the hedgehog for a moment. Geoffrey took advantage of Scourge's distracted nature to give Scourge a left and right hook each to the face and then a roundhouse kick to the shoulder that threw Scourge to the side. Scourge opened his eyes and he rubbed them to get his vision back. Geoffrey charged up to Scourge and prepared to deck him but Scourge spin-dash Geoffrey and sent him flying into a tree. As for Blaze, she leaped up the tree Wilson was stuck in and helped him get down and the two charged over to Scourge. Scourge back-flipped and he kicked them both as his legs swung up and over during the flip. Scourge then swung his arm around in a perfect circle and walloped Wilson with his fist. Blaze retaliated by throwing fire into Scourge's face, scorching the hedgehog slightly but she kept her fire under control so she wouldn't burn the surroundings accidentally.

"You may look like Sonic the Hedgehog and have his abilities but you will not win this fight." said Blaze, giving Scourge a fiery uppercut that sent him hurling through the air "Our combined strength will be too great for you."

"In your dreams toots!" yelled Scourge, homing attacking Blaze in the head and knocking her over "I can beat Sonic and all of his friends easily, this tiny group is nothing compared to me as Sonic hasn't bought enough playhouse buddies with him! Heck, Sonic himself isn't here and he's the only one who has a chance against me so you're all no match for me!"

"We're plenty enough to handle you Scourge!" retorted Wilson, slashing at Scourge with his double-bladed pole weapon, also known as the spinning blade weapon "Sonic may not be here and we may not be a full house but we've still got enough strength to bring you down!"

He then butted Scourge above his eye with the section of his weapon where the blade started. Scourge yelped in pain and he clutched his bleeding brow. Wilson then proceeded to kick Scourge in the abdomen and knock him down onto his bottom. Scourge roared furiously and he spin-dashed Wilson in the gut. Geoffrey fired a dart at Scourge but the dart just skimmed past the very tip of his quills. Scourge's response was to punch Geoffrey in the bridge of his nose and then kick him in the thighs. However, Silver the Hedgehog and Cosmo the Seedrian finally arrived on the scene and Silver swept Scourge off his feet with a wave of psychic energy. Scourge landed on his face and he grumbled furiously to himself. Cosmo dived behind a thick bush and kept low down to the ground with the Sol Emeralds close to her and out of sight. Scourge picked himself up and he bared his teeth at Silver as if he was some kind of wild animal.

"Quit it with the psychic powers already kid!" he yelled, spin-dashing Silver in the head and knocking him onto his back "You're getting on my freaking nerves with it!"

"Fine I'll use my fists instead!" yelled Silver, giving Scourge a psychic-enhanced punch that sent him hurling through the air like a rag doll.

As for Tails and Ginger, no surprises here, Tails had the fight completely in his favour. He flew circles around Ginger, dizzying the poor fox and leaving him feeling woozy and then Tails aerial attacked Ginger from behind, sending Ginger hurling into the ground

face-first like a sky-diver that went sky-diving without a parachute and just fell to the ground instead of floating down. Tails then flew down to the ground and elbow-thrusted Ginger in the back. Ginger wheezed ever so loudly and he rubbed his back tenderly. Tails then kicked Ginger as viciously as he could, sending him rolling across the ground and the fox came to a stop near a bush. Tails then advanced on Ginger with his fists clenched and his gaze narrowed to a freaky looking scowl. The fox was never usually like this, even against Dr. Eggman His extreme hatred for Ginger is what was making him act more brutal then usual and he really wanted to make Ginger suffer for all the indignity he'd caused him four years ago. Ginger stared at Tails with fear evident in his eyes. The fox really wasn't going to give him a break was he?

"Wait Tails! Wait!" begged Ginger "You've beaten me up good and bad! You've shown me how much you appreciate my treatment of you when you was four, what more do you want? Are you not satisfied yet?"

"I'll be satisfied once you end up back in prison where you and Scourge belong!" yelled Tails in an uncharacteristically cold voice that made him sound pretty darn threatening for an eight year old fox pup "You did the worst you could to me, even though I made it clear you'd proven your point and you still wouldn't give up so you're one to talk about being satisfied!"

"Tails! Wait! If you want an apology for everything I've done to you then I'm sorry OK?" shrieked Ginger.

"No you're not!" retorted Tails, grabbing Ginger by his fur and hoisting him onto his feet "If you think you can trick me into lowering my guard so you can go to town on me then forget it! I'm not as stupid as you are!"

He then proceeded to uppercut Ginger straight into a bush. Unfortunately for Tails, the bush just happened to be the one Cosmo was hiding in with the Sol Emeralds and Ginger instantly made a grab for them, causing Cosmo to leap out of the bush in fright while holding the Sol Emeralds close to her. Ginger leaped out of the bush too, trying to grab the Sol Emeralds from her.

"Give me those Sol Emeralds you freak of nature!" yelled Ginger.

That did it. Cosmo was sick and tired of villains commenting on the fact she was different to them so she promptly threw a Sol Emerald straight at Ginger's head. The result was Ginger lying on the ground, knocked out with a dopey grin on his face. Tails was glad to see Ginger was all knocked out at last and he ran over to Cosmo to see if she was alright.

"Cosmo, you OK?" asked Tails "What are you doing in that bush?"

"Silver told me to hide in there with the Sol Emeralds." explained Cosmo "Silver managed to catch Marik and stop him from escaping with the Sol Emeralds and I'm keeping them out of view."

"That's great Cosmo." said Tails, hugging her lovingly "But where's Marik?"

"Knocked out thanks to Silver's psychic energy." said Cosmo "Silver disabled his jet shoes so he can't make any quick getaways anymore."

"That'll make him a lot easier to catch." said Tails with a smile on his face "Now get back into the bush before…"

But just as Tails was giving Cosmo an order, Scourge spotted the Sol Emeralds in Cosmo's hands and he spin-dashed Tails and Cosmo like a bowling ball hitting the skittles at the end of the alley. Tails and Cosmo were sent sprawling on the ground and the Sol Emeralds lay in a heap between the two of them. Scourge glowered at the two and he advanced on them menacingly. The two could only crawl away from them on their backs, staring straight at Scourge.

"I've worked hard trying to get those gems." he snarled "I've had to face Marik for two of them, then he cons me into working for him, then he beats me to another one, then my lousy sidekick abandons us and finds your Sol Emeralds and then Marik tries to run off with all seven of them! Now you've got them back, I insist that you hand them over and it won't have to squash your heads!"

"No please! Leave us alone and don't hurt us!" begged Cosmo, clutching the emeralds tight to her chest.

"Back off Scourge or I'll have to fight you myself!" yelled Tails bravely.

"Don't be a twerp. I'm too powerful!" sneered Scourge "Sonic can't stand to me so what hope do you have runt?"

Then suddenly, he began to hear the sound of roots being torn out of the ground. He turned around and saw Silver literally using his psychokinesis to tear a thin, tall silver birch tree out of the ground! Scourge stared in horror as Silver ripped the tree straight out of the ground with his psychic powers and then proceeded to wallop Scourge with it! Had the tree been a normal sized tree with the usual thickness a tree has, that would have killed him. Scourge hurtled through the air as if he'd just been hit by a giant baseball bat and he landed rather painfully on his back. Scourge just lay there, grimacing in pain and he couldn't feel his limbs for a moment or two. All he could do is lie there and wonder what he had just been hit by. Silver threw the tree away and he lowered himself to the ground. Cosmo took a moment to feel sorry for the tree (she loves plants and she has a telepathic link with them) and then she stood back up to thank Silver.

"Thank you Silver." said Cosmo.

"That was so cool!" cried Tails "You just pulled that tree out of the ground and smacked Scourge with it! Those psychic powers of yours are so handy!"

"Aw it's nothing really." said Silver modestly "My psychokinesis maybe handy but it takes great skill to master it and lifting objects as big as that makes my head hurt at times so I don't usually try lifting trees or objects along those sizes." he said as he rubbed his head which was throbbing slightly.

"Well at least you saved our lives and the Sol Emeralds." said Tails with gratitude "Thanks Silver."

Silver just smiled casually. Cosmo scooped up all the seven Sol

Emeralds and she dived back into the bush with them. Just as she disappeared into the bush though, Scourge finally managed to pick himself up and he looked furious to say the least at Silver. He clenched his fists and his teeth very tensely. So tensely you could see his teeth wobbling under the strain Scourge was putting them through and if he wasn't wearing gloves, you could probably see how white his hands were from clenching them so hard.

"I'll tear your bleeding head off for that palm-tree head!" roared Scourge.

"Bring it on then you miscreant!" dared Silver, making a "come get some" gesture with his hand.

Scourge didn't hesitate. He and Silver ran up to each other yelling battle cries and they punched at each other…

The fighting arena housed in the centre of Dr. Eggman Nega's base was alive with activity. Combat activity that is. And the combatants were Sonic the Hedgehog and Dr. Eggman Nega. Their fight had just begun and the whole thing seemed to be even-sided so far with Sonic getting a good hit or two on the Nega-buster armour and the Nega-buster striking back good and hard with it's many limbs and powerful weapons which were in place of actual hands. Amy, Tails and Scourge Nega could only watch the battle from the sidelines as this was Sonic's fight only and Dr. Eggman Nega had said he would challenge Sonic and no one else. As much as they were willing to defeat Dr. Eggman Nega, Amy Nega didn't believe in defying deals that had been made and decided she and the others would only get involved if the battle was going seriously awry for Sonic. Sonic spin-dashed at Eggman Nega but Eggman Nega struck him down with one of the insect legs on the Nega-buster's back. Sonic lay on the floor, grumbling to himself and he stood back up. The Nega-buster tried to mace Sonic into the ground, the mace extending out of it's wrist socket on a long steel pole built into it's arm, but Sonic dodged the attack and the mace hit the floor, denting it heavily. Sonic swallowed hard at the sight of the giant dent. You could fill the dent with water and bathe an infant in it, it was that big. The Nega-Buster then suddenly charged towards Sonic and whacked him with the

shield. Sonic hurtled backwards into a wall and he gasped as he hit it at the force of a football being kicked into the net. Sonic caught his breath again and he spin-dashed the Nega-buster in the torso and sent it flying backwards into a wall. The Nega-buster stood back up and it's mace extended out of it's wrist socket. It swung the mace at Sonic but it missed and Sonic tried to spin-dash the extending pole connecting the mace to the arm but he just bounced back off it due to the fact it was built to match Sonic in everyway, even the little parts. The Nega-buster swung upwards and clouted Sonic in the chin with the pole. The mace retracted back into it's wrist socket and it lashed out at Sonic again with an insect leg. Sonic just spin-dashed the leg in two, much to Eggman Nega's annoyance.

"That's one big, bad battle armour Neggy." said Sonic in an impressed manner "Not bad really. Kinda challenging actually. And here's me thinking this fight was going to be generic like my battles with your prime counterpart."

"I wonder why that is then you blasted, manic, perpetually, moving animal." scoffed Eggman Nega, striking Sonic again with an insect leg on the Nega-buster's rib "Is it because he focuses too much on big clumsy blasters and not on a well structured, highly functional killing machine with battering and bladed weapons appropriately equipped for the job like I do? Some scientist he is if that's the case."

"You mean to tell me this thing hasn't got any guns on it?" asked Sonic as he somersaulted over the Nega-buster and landed behind it "Good, I'm sick of guns and blasters."

He spin-dashed the Nega-buster in the back and sent it hurling forward across the room. It bounced heavily and nosily off the floor and landed with a clunk upside down against the wall. The machine self-righted itself and it lunged at Sonic with the mace once again, the huge spiked weapon extending out of the wrist socket.

"You'll end up being sick of maces and shields when I've reduced you to being a nasty stain on the floor other-zone Sonic." sneered Eggman Nega as the mace missed Sonic and retracted back to the wrist section "These weapons were specially designed to be compatible with this machine, withstand any attacks from Sonic

Nega, or indeed any other Sonic as they're all the same power wise, and the insect legs on the back and ribs are built to be more of a distraction then anything as well as give this armour the ability to scale smooth and large surfaces so I'll be able to follow you no matter what wall you run up. Not to mention it has flying capabilities," he added, the Nega-buster armour activating jets in it's feet and rising up off the ground slightly "And matches Sonic Nega's super speed in flight so you can run as fast as you can, I will catch you."

He flew towards Sonic and swung the mace down at Sonic. Sonic jumped out of the way but he lightly scratched his hip on one of the mace's spikes and ended up having a stinging, thin cut just above his thigh. Sonic grimaced in pain and he clutched his bleeding hip. The Nega-buster took the perfect opportunity to wallop Sonic with the shield and send him flying slap bang into a wall. Sonic pulled himself out of the wall and he spin-dashed the Nega-buster in the shoulder but he pinged off it's tough, indestructible armour harmlessly. Sonic landed back on his feet and prepared to attack again. The Nega-buster touched back down on the floor and advanced on Sonic menacingly. Eggman Nega continued to provide the gloating exposition he was in earlier.

"Didn't you hear me earlier you blue twerp?" sneered Eggman Nega from inside the armour "This armour is built to withstand Sonic Nega's attacks and being as your powers are exactly the same as Sonic Nega's you have no chance against it either. As I said, all the Sonics of the multi-verse are the same power wise. Pretty bland and repetitive if you want my opinion, every Sonic in the multi-verse has the exact same power, attack and force. Pity you Sonics don't have much variation, I bet you'd be more interesting otherwise."

"Whatever you flabby exposition machine." muttered Sonic "So, Amy tells me you conquered the world last month. Is that how long you've been ruler of the world? A whole month? Right?"

"Correct oh hedgehog of vapid nature." said Eggman Nega, throwing the shield at Sonic like a Frisbee only to miss as Sonic jumped over it and kicked it down onto the ground "I conquered Mobius Nega last month and my rule has been unrivalled since then. Sonic Nega's death made it all the more easy for me to take over."

Sonic grabbed the shield and he lifted it up off the ground and above his head. He then jumped into the air and kicked it towards the Nega-buster. The Nega-buster just raised it's arm and caught the shield in it's wrist notch and it neatly attached there. The Nega-buster now had it's shield back. The Nega-buster's insect legs all lunged towards Sonic at once, extending to twice their normal length and they batted Sonic all over his body and then into a wall, earning a horrified gasp from the on-looking Nega-Mobians that were forbidden to interfere.

"After conquering Mobius Nega." continued Eggman Nega, his battle armour stomping up to Sonic nosily with it's big, clumpy metal feet "The rest was straight forward for me. Metallizing the entire population save for the six Freedom Fighters who foolishly dare to oppose me despite the fact they know they can't win, and building my Egg-Pawns to increase my forces. Right now, I'm carrying out my greatest plan ever, which you already know as I explained it to you earlier."

"Yeah, yeah, stealing the multi-verse's entire Chaos Emerald supply and using them to become a god." muttered Sonic, straightening his quills and standing back up "Why did you take over the world anyway? Were you like Eggman and had no other planet to live on so you decided to live here?"

"Wrong actually." said Eggman Nega, the Nega-buster jumping up and showing the side of it's arm to Sonic so it would cleave him into with the arm blade on the side as it landed on top of him "I went on a space voyage and landed on Mobius Nega. I originate from Earth Nega and I was hoping to find alien life in this big, lonely universe."

He was cut off as the Nega-buster landed arm first on the floor only to miss Sonic with the arm-blade as he zipped out of the way and drop kicked it in the side, knocking the battle-armour onto it's shoulder.

"I came across Mobius Nega and explored the planet, with permission from the rulers that is." continued Eggman Nega "You'll know who they are as every Mobius in the multi-verse has the same people on it. After exploring Mobius Nega, I deduced that the planet was too cutesy and fluffy for my tastes, not helped by the fact I

despise animal kind so I decided to take over the planet and metallize everybody. The humans back home weren't pleased with what I did so they declared me an outlaw and threatened to hunt me down but I've sent some forces back home to metallize Earth Nega and prevent anyone from foiling my paradise. Now no one can stand to my genius and I'll be on top of the multi-verse once I get every single Chaos Emerald."

The Nega-buster picked itself up and swiped at Sonic with the shield. Sonic ducked and spin-dashed the Nega-buster in the head, knocking it over onto it's back. The Nega-buster pushed itself back onto it's feet with the insect legs on it's back and Eggman Nega narrowed his gaze from behind the view visor.

"There's one person standing before you Chubby St. Fattykins and that's me." said Sonic "Sonic the Hedgehog, Hero of Mobius Prime and soon to be saviour of Mobius Nega!"

"Mobius Prime?" mused Eggman Nega "Does that mean you hail from the prime zone young man?"

Sonic clouted himself furiously on the head in annoyance.

"Oh chilli-sauce!" he grumbled "I wasn't supposed to tell him that!"

"So you're a Prime Zoner Sonic?" purred Eggman Nega "I'm fighting the prime Sonic the Hedgehog? Does that mean when I defeat you, your defeat will be the most special of all as the prime zone is the most important zone in the multi-verse and the very zone the all other zones depend on for stability and existence?"

"You'll not beat me!" yelled Sonic furiously "I've beaten Eggman machines that were way more creative and scary looking then your puny Nega-buster so you'll be no harder!"

He spin-dashed towards the Nega-buster but the Nega-buster raised it's shield and Sonic pinged off it like a bullet ricocheting off of cold hard steel. The Nega-buster then suddenly jumped up and dropkicked Sonic down into the floor.

"Sonic Prime my dear fatuous fool of unwavering debility, no one

can stand to a figure of unmatched intelligence." sneered Eggman Nega "My IQ is 320 after all. I'm yet to find anyone in the multi-verse with a higher IQ then that."

Sonic fumed at Eggman Nega and he spin-dashed towards the Nega-buster furiously. The Nega-buster whacked Sonic away with an insect leg on it's back and Sonic ended up flying into the ceiling. Sonic pulled himself free from the ceiling and he fell from the ceiling and onto the Nega-buster's head feet first. The Nega-buster fell forward and landed with a clunk face first onto the floor. The Nega-buster suddenly got it's own back by entwining Sonic with an insect leg and throwing him off it's head and right at Amy Nega's feet. Amy Nega quickly helped him up and Sonic charged back into the battle. The Nega-buster suddenly extended it's mace out of the wrist section and smacked Sonic as if it was a fist in a punching glove gun like you'd see in an old kid's cartoon. Luckily for Sonic, he didn't get hit by the spikes of the mace, he was hit by the gaps between the mace so he was hit rather then skewered at least. Sonic grimaced in pain and he tried to picked himself up but he couldn't really find the strength to do so. The Nega-buster stomped up to Sonic and then kicked him across the room like a football. Sonic landed with a rather sickening crunch on his back that made it sound like his spine had just snapped. Amy Nega gasped and held her breath, hoping that Sonic was OK. Sonic staggered wobbly onto his feet, rubbing his back which was slightly twisted and he twisted to one side to get the bones in his back to knit again. However, the Nega-buster suddenly appeared from behind and walloped him with the shield. Sonic hit the wall and before he could get away, the Nega-buster squashed him up against the wall with the shield. However, instead of squishing Sonic like an ant against the wall, he only embedded Sonic into it instead. Eggman Nega was rather surprised at that turnout.

"Well, you seem to be able to survive being squashed." he analyzed "You must be full of Chaos Energy or Ring Energy. I studied their powers and I found out people who are excessively in contact with a Chaos Emerald or power ring gets some energy in their veins that makes their body stronger then the average organic being. That's unfortunate for you because I get to toy with you longer then should be reasonable!"

He then proceeded to use an insect leg like a crowbar and pull Sonic out of the wall. Sonic fell heavily onto the floor and he groaned ghoulishly as if he'd just woken up from a serious hangover. The Nega-buster clubbed Sonic with the mace, sheathing the spikes as Eggman Nega wanted to toy with him for a minute before killing him at last, and Sonic hurtled into the air. The Nega-buster then caught Sonic on it's shield and tossed it back over to the mace hand. He then proceeded to wallop Sonic back and forth with the mace and shield as if he was playing a sick, twisted, demented version of keepy-uppy with him. Amy Nega watched the battle with sickening horror and could hardly bear to watch any longer.

"This is horrible! Sonic's getting his butt kicked out here!" she wailed in anguish.

"We've gotta help him!" declared Scourge Nega "I don't care if this fight's only between Sonic and Eggman Nega, I'm getting my hands dirty whether they want me to or not!"

"Let's just hope you live long enough to clean them afterwards." snickered Tails Nega.

With that said, Amy, Tails and Scourge Nega all charged into the fray and they began to attack the Nega-buster just as it was doing some more keepy-uppy with Sonic. Scourge Nega spin-dashed the Nega-buster in the back and sent it hurling into the wall. Sonic fell down to the floor but Tails Nega grabbed him and lowered him gently down to the floor. Eggman Nega growled furiously and the Nega-buster turned around to face the Nega-Mobians.

"You festering bunch of canailles!" he growled "This is mine and Sonic's fight only, you have no right to interfere with us!"

"We don't care!" yelled Amy Nega, firing her wrist mounted laser at the Nega-buster "We're not losing another Sonic to you! You're going down and we are gonna make sure you do go down at last!"

The lasers however only pinged off of the Nega-buster's armour harmlessly. The Nega-buster retaliated by stomping the ground, making Amy Nega fall over and it was about to mace her into the ground but Tails Nega flew into the visor and covered it, preventing

Eggman Nega from seeing properly. Eggman Nega fumed at the fox in the leather jacket and he swatted him off the visor with an insect leg. Scourge Nega spin-dashed it in half and then kicked the Nega-buster's visor, cracking it heavily. One more attack and it would break, leaving Eggman Nega vulnerable. The Nega-buster gave Scourge Nega an uppercut with it's mace, which still had the spikes sheathed, and Scourge Nega hurled into a wall at the back of the room. The mace unsheathed it's spikes and the Nega-Buster stomped nosily over to Scourge. It's mace extended out and aimed at Scourge but Scourge Nega spin-dashed it in the torso, causing it to stagger backwards and fall onto it's back. This in turn made the mace swung straight up and smash a hole in the ceiling and as it was still extending, it smashed it's way straight up all the way to the top floor which was five floors away from the fighting arena he was in now. The Nega-buster retracted it's mace and it threw the shield at Scourge Nega like a Frisbee. The shield may have looked smooth but unfortunately for Scourge Nega, it was sharp all around as if it was a giant smooth circular saw disc and it sliced Scourge Nega completely in two! Scourge Nega's torso and legs were separated from each other and they lay just a few inches apart from each other, completely lifeless now. Amy Nega stared in horror at the deceased Scourge Nega.

"No! Scourge!" wailed Amy Nega in anguish "Not you too!"

She then suddenly had to dive out of the way as the Nega-buster tried to mace her into the floor but she dodged the attack and the mace dented the floor. Amy Nega fired her wrist laser pitifully at the Nega-buster but the laser attacks were pathetic at best against it's powerful armour. The Nega-buster then stomped off after Amy Nega. The pink hedgehog in the leather clothing screamed in terror and she ran around the room with Eggman Nega chasing after her furiously, trying as hard as he could to mace her into the floor. As for Sonic, he weakly picked himself up, feeling battered and beaten all over and he watched as the Nega-buster chased Amy Nega all the way around the room while trying to catch her. Sonic tried to run after her but he fell onto the floor after only three strides and he groaned to himself.

"Ugh…Nugh…Gah…I can't…keep this up…any more…" panted

Sonic weakly "I…need a Chaos…Emerald…but I haven't…got any with…"

He stopped and paused for a moment. Wait a minute. He didn't have a Chaos Emerald with him, but that didn't mean there weren't any here at all! Eggman Nega had thirty-five Chaos Emeralds in his quarters, all stolen from other zones! He could use an emerald or two to stop Eggman Nega! But how could he reach the Chaos Emeralds if he was too weak to run up the walls and up to the top floor? That was when Sonic noticed Tails Nega trying feebly to stop the Nega-buster by blasting it pathetically with his wrist mounted laser. Sonic then realized what he had to do. He forced himself up onto his feet and he weakly called over to Tails Nega.

"Hey…cough, cough! Tails…I need you buddy!" he croaked.

Tails Nega stopped dead in his tracks and he flew over to Sonic as fast as he could.

"What is it Sonic?" asked Tails Nega "You have a plan?"

"I do." grunted Sonic, rubbing his arm better "Fly me up…to the top floor so…I can get a Chaos Emerald. I'm going to use…them to defeat Eggman Nega!"

"OK." said Tails Nega "Are you sure you're willing to use any of the thirty-five he already has? I mean, they're from different zones so they could have a sinister side-effect on you."

"They're our last option and I'm…willing to take it." grunted Sonic "Fly me…up there now!"

Tails Nega obeyed and he grabbed Sonic by his arms. He flew Sonic straight up off the floor and up through the holes in the ceiling caused by the Nega-Buster's mace, leaving the Nega-buster to play cat and mouse with poor Amy Nega. Tails Nega flew all the way up to the top floor with Sonic in tow and he put Sonic down on the floor. They were now back up in Eggman Nega's control room where the thirty-five stolen Chaos Emeralds were placed, seven in each jar, on the control pad. Tails Nega ran over to the control pad and looked at the labels on the jars to see which zone each of the seven emeralds

came from.

"Let's see here…" he said as he read the labels on the five jars on the control pad "Beta Zone, Dark Zone, Heavenly Zone, Gamma Zone and the Underworld Zone. Underworld and Dark Zone Chaos Emeralds are bound to be bad as those two zones are nothing but pure evil so I don't recommend using the emeralds from those two zones."

"Then…give me…a jar from…the other three zones." grunted Sonic.

OK then." said Tails Nega, grabbing a jar labelled "Heavenly Zone" and opening the lid "Take these Chaos Emeralds. Any object from the Heavenly Zone has a very pleasing effect on the user, especially the Chaos Emeralds. These will do wonders for you."

He tossed the open jar to Sonic and the battered hedgehog just managed to grab it. He tipped the jaw up and spilled the Chaos Emeralds out onto the floor. The Chaos Emeralds were exactly the same shape and colours as their prime counterparts only they seemed a lot more sparkly and they had a faint golden heavenly aurora floating around them as they sparkled in unison. Sonic stood before the emeralds and prepared to use their power to turn Super Sonic once again. The Chaos Emeralds began to raise slowly off the floor and they began to slowly circle around Sonic the Hedgehog as he prepared to use their power. Sonic then suddenly began to feel different. His injuries were fading away and his body was transforming back to what it looked like before the fight with Eggman Nega. Then, the emeralds began to pick up speed around Sonic, becoming a big colourful blur around him as they did so. Sonic's fur then began to turn gold and his quills pointed straight up. He had become Super Sonic once again but there was some slight differences to this Super Sonic. He had sparkling auroras all around him and he had a curious heavenly vibe flowing through his veins that made him feel spectacular. Tails Nega stared in amazement at Super Sonic, he had never seen a super form before. He hadn't even seen Sonic Nega do it as they hadn't managed to find their zone's Chaos Emeralds and use them against Eggman Nega.

"Wow!" cried Tails Nega "An actual super form! I can't believe I'm actually looking at one!"

"You'd better believe it because Super Sonic is what you're looking at Tails." said Super Sonic "Now let's scramble that bad egg down there!"

With that said, he charged straight back down to the fighting arena where the Nega-buster had run poor Amy Nega down to exhaustion and now it had her cornered against the wall and completely at it's mercy. The Freedom Fighter leader could only stare at the Nega-buster, horrified at the fact it was coming for her and preparing to kill her. Her heart was thumping against her ribcage like a jackhammer against concrete. There was nowhere to run now. And nowhere to hide so all she could do was sit there and wait for Eggman Nega to crush her. The Nega-buster raised it's mace and prepared to smash her into the ground.

"Your puny resistance was an amusing novelty for a short period of time my dear." purred Eggman Nega from inside the Nega-buster "But your entertainment value has expired and now you shall join your precious Sonic Nega in the afterlife."

Amy Nega could only close her eyes and wait for the killer blow. The Nega-buster brought the mace swinging down on the cornered hedgehog…and then suddenly got smashed to smithereens after something charged straight through it like a train crashing into a building. It was Super Sonic. He did a wild U-turn and he charged straight back at the Nega-buster, pushing it straight backwards and bashing it violently against the wall. Amy Nega opened her eyes and was surprised to see she was still alive. She turned to her right and saw Super Sonic beating the circuitry out of the Nega-buster. She couldn't believe her eyes.

"Sonic…just turned…super?" she gasped "He must have gotten some Chaos Emeralds from up in Eggman's control room and is now using them to wipe the floor with that creep! Way to go Sonic Prime!" she cheered loudly at the super powered hedgehog.

Eggman Nega's reaction to Super Sonic was the exact opposite.

"No! You've…turned super!" shrieked Eggman Nega "I haven't designed this machine to best a super form! Curse me for having some Chaos Emeralds for you to use!"

"Yes Eggman Nega, you have every right to feel like a complete imbecile right now." sneered Super Sonic "Now wave goodbye to your stupid, annoying battle armour!"

With that said, Super Sonic charged into the Nega-buster and with swift and merciless efficiency, he tore the battle armour apart bit by bit as he smashed through it effortlessly. He spin-dashed it's arms off, charged through it's torso, kicked it's head off and punched all the other parts of the machine, every blow he threw destroying the part he attacked. Eggman Nega cried out in agony as his beautiful creation was reduced to smithereens in the blink of an eye. Amy Nega and Tails Nega were pretty surprised at how powerful Super Sonic was but they were enjoying watching Super Sonic destroy Eggman Nega's machine bit by bit. After Super Sonic reduced Eggman Nega's machine to tiny pieces, Super Sonic then grabbed Eggman Nega himself and glared straight into his eyes. The fat scientist began to feel nervous all of the sudden. What was Super Sonic going to do to him now he had destroyed his machine?

"Sonic, what are you going to do to me?" shrieked Eggman Nega.

"I'm going to do something one of my buddies did in order to get rid of one of his enemies." said Super Sonic "I'm sending you to the void. You can join Imperator Ix in there and I'm sure he'll be a great play buddy for you so you won't be too furious."

He then yelled at the stop of his voice "Chaos…CONTROL!" and a Chaos Portal opened up in mid-air. The portal led to the void, a zone that was described by Knuckles to be a zone where evil spirits live and play. Super Sonic flashed Eggman Nega a smirking grin and then he threw the fat man straight through the portal out of the Nega-zone and into the void.

"I'll get you for this Sonic Prime!" declared Eggman Nega as he hurtled through the portal "I'll get you for thiiiiiiissssss….."

His voice trailed off as he disappeared through the portal and the portal closed behind him. Super Sonic powered down and returned back to normal Sonic. His golden fur faded back to blue and his quills flopped back down. He felt himself all over and noticed he felt like he hadn't been in a battle whatsoever. The Chaos Emeralds

from the Heavenly Zone really did have a good effect on him just like Tails Nega said it would. As for Amy and Tails Nega, they couldn't believe what had just happened. Sonic had just turned super, defeated Eggman Nega and thrown him into the void! He was gone forever and Mobius Nega was free at last! Amy Nega was so overwhelmed with joy that she threw her arms around Sonic and kissed him gratefully on the lips. Sonic was awestruck by that sudden hug and kiss and he didn't know whether he should return it or just let Amy Nega cuddle him. One thing's for sure, he'd better not tell Amy Prime about this or she would kill him without a moment's hesitation. Amy Nega broke the kiss and let go of Sonic.

"You did it you fantastic little Prime Zoner!" she squealed excitedly "You've defeated Eggman Nega and rid us of his tyranny forever! I don't know what to say about this! Thank you so much for all you've done Sonic Prime!"

"Oh shucks Amy, I was just doing what I would have done back on my zone." said Sonic casually "Fought to the bitter end and saved everybody's hides. So now Eggman Nega's gone, what's next for you Freedom Fighters? You gonna de-metallize everybody?"

"We certainly are." said Tails Nega "His worldwide metallizer is still functional and I know how to work it so I'll just get that functioning and activate it."

"After that, we're gonna hold a funeral for poor Scourge Nega over there." said Amy Nega, pointing to Scourge Nega's dissected body "And then we're gonna have a worldwide celebration to celebrate Mobius Nega's return to a free world. We'll make sure that you get the credit you deserve Sonic."

"Sounds good to me." said Sonic casually "Say Tails, did you retrieve Amy Nega's warp ring at all while we were up there?"

"I did." said Tails Nega, taking the super warp ring out of his pocket and giving it to Sonic "So now you can go home and tell everybody about what you've done while you were here."

"I'll make sure I tell them every detail." said Sonic "Well I'll be off now as my buddies back home are gonna be missing me like crazy."

He flicked the warp ring into the air and it expanded to twice it's size, just the right height for Sonic to go through. On the other side of the warp ring was Mobius Prime, his home zone. Sonic half stepped through the warp ring and he waved goodbye to Amy and Tails Nega.

"Bye Amy Nega." said Sonic.

"Bye Sonic Prime." said Amy Nega, waving to him "Thanks for everything. Especially bringing our freedom back."

Sonic smiled at the alternate Amy and he disappeared through the warp ring. The warp ring vanished into thin air, leaving no trace of it's existence and leaving Amy and Tails Nega to de-metallize Mobius Nega and bring the world back to normal…

Back on Mobius Prime, the fight between Scourge, Fiona and Sonic's friends was beginning to get pretty one-sided right now and by one-sided I mean the heroes were winning. Scourge had been throwing excessively good blows here and there but Silver's psychokinesis had given them the edge in this battle and as the battle went on, Scourge began to falter under the pressure caused by Silver, Geoffrey, Wilson and Blaze attacking him all at once. Geoffrey and Wilson double-teamed him with some powerful kicks each, Silver grabbed him with his psychokinesis and slammed him down into the ground and Blaze threw fire at him. Scourge staggered wildly and he was finding it hard to stand up properly due to how weak he had become from the heavy attacks that were being thrown at him. And to add insult to injury, Mandy grabbed Fiona by her tail and swung her directly into Scourge, causing Scourge and Fiona to sprawl on the ground and end up getting tangled up with each other. Scourge and Fiona untangled themselves and they picked themselves up, ready to fight again. The Mobians all just stood there, ready to unleash hell on him again.

"Give it up Scourge, you have no chance against us!" yelled Silver.

You can't keep hold of the Sol Emeralds Scourge." said Blaze "We have won and you have lost. Surrender yourselves and flee the

battle before things get really unpleasant."

"Things will get unpleasant alright wimps!" bellowed Scourge angrily "Unpleasant for you lot that is! Get ready for a Death Tornado!"

"Death what?" asked Silver.

"Death Tornado." said Tails "It's like Sonic's Sonic Tornado only Scourge give it a new name and now you're gonna find out what it does!"

But before Scourge could even began to use the Death Tornado, a warp ring opened up from nowhere and Sonic the Hedgehog leaped out of it. He kicked Scourge down on the ground and stood before him with his fists clenched. Sonic's friends, Silver and Blaze were gobsmacked by Sonic's sudden arrival and even Scourge appeared to be surprised at that sudden appearance from his annoying, goody-goody, two-shoes brother.

"Who ordered a butt-whopping with a side order of me kicking the crud outta ya?" sneered Sonic as he looked down at Scourge.

"Sonic!" cried Tails happily "You're back!"

"I am indeed." said Sonic "And it appears I'm just in time to kick Scourge's backside. Lemme guess, he's here to steal the Sol Emeralds from us."

"Actually, we were just leaving." said Scourge, weakly picking himself up and running off, picking up the unconscious Ginger and fleeing the scene at top speed.

Fiona Fox followed him as fast as she could possibly run. Scourge really hated retreating but he knew he couldn't win this battle. He was just too weakened from the beating he'd received earlier and Sonic was going to ensure his defeat so he thought it would be best to run away and heal from his beating. As for Marik the Martian, he'd woken up from Silver's psychic knockout and he trudged slowly back to the battlefield so he could get the Sol Emeralds back only to see Scourge and Fiona running like hell. They were so keen to get out of here, they didn't even notice Marik as they ran past him and fled the

scene. Marik began to wonder what was going on and he continued on to the battlefield. He peeked from behind the bushes and his eyes widened at the sight of Sonic the Hedgehog standing there greeting his friends again.

"Blast it all!" cursed Marik "Sonic's arrived on the scene and he's scared Scourge and his cronies off! I think it's best I made myself scarce too as I don't feel so good."

He clutched his head and rubbed it tenderly.

"That psychic hedgehog's given me a migraine." he moaned "I'd best flee and hide until I feel well enough to battle again."

He then prepared to activate his jet shoes and flee the scene. He ran for a few paces and…tripped over and fell onto his face. His jet shoes didn't activate. He tried again but he fell over again. His jet shoes weren't working for some reason. He couldn't jet himself out of the forest. He looked at the soles of his jet shoes and noticed the bent jet nozzles that Silver had caused by disabling them with his psychokinesis.

"My jet shoes!" he blurted "That silver idiot must have broken them! Now I've got to run normally instead of jetting out of here! What a nuisance this is going to be!"

He then proceeded to run out of the forest instead of jetting out of the forest before anyone could spot him. Marik would return someday but when he would was anyone's guess…

As for the Mobians, they were all greeting Sonic and explaining everything that had been going off to him.

"Blue dude, you made it back!" cried Mandy.

"Where did that mouse-bot take you?" asked Wilson "Did you end up in another zone?"

"What was it like mate?" asked Geoffrey "Was it brilliant or horrible?"

"I ended up on Mobius Nega, an alternate version of Mobius." explained Sonic "I met alternate counterparts of Amy, Tails,

Geoffrey, Scourge, Miranda and Bunnie and I helped them defeat their Dr. Eggman. The mouse-bot was a Mobian that had been turned into a metal being and it had been sent to Silver and Blaze's time to steal the Sol Emeralds for Eggman Nega. I sent him to the void now and the Nega-Mobians are gonna turn everybody back to normal so you won't have to worry about them trying to steal the Sol Emeralds again Silver and Blaze."

"That's good to know." said Blaze "We've managed to get all the Sol Emeralds but we got caught up in a fight with Scourge and Marik."

"I knocked Marik out and disabled his jet shoes." explained Silver "He's probably awake and gone by now but next time you fight him, you'll catch him a lot easier."

"Really? Sweet! Thanks for that Silver." said Sonic "When we catch Marik, I'll make sure I give you my regards."

"No thanks necessary Sonic." said Blaze "We're just happy to help the Mobians of the past even though it won't really change our future. Now we have the Sol Emeralds back, we can transport ourselves back to the future and do some extensive studying to see if we can find out what caused the destruction of our world."

"Good luck with that then you two." said Sonic.

"Will we ever see you again?" asked Cosmo, coming out of the bush and handing Blaze the Sol Emeralds.

"Maybe." said Blaze "We will meet again someday. But until then, may you all have happy lives and enjoy the current timeline."

"Oh we will." said Sonic "Make no mistake about that. See you around Silver and Blaze."

"Goodbye Sonic." said Silver "And don't worry, we'll save our future and give Mobius a happier ending."

With that said, Blaze held up one of the Sol Emeralds while Silver held the others and she and Silver were suddenly surrounded by fire as Blaze tapped into their power. The fire burnt for a second before fanning out and disappearing into nothingness, leaving no trace of

Silver and Blaze whatsoever. Now Silver and Blaze had gone, Sonic and friends could go back to Royal HQ and tell their other friends what they had been up to this whole time. They left the area of forest they were in and they headed off back to Royal HQ.

"What a day this has been." said Sonic "We meet two Mobians from the future, help them find their lost emeralds, I end up fighting against an alternate version of Eggman in order to save an alternate version of Mobius from his tyranny and you guys fight Scourge and Marik for the emeralds."

"It wasn't an easy fight blue dude." said Mandy "But we made it in the end and you arrived just in time to provide the piece de resistance."

"I sure did." said Sonic "So, you guys interested in knowing how I defeated Eggman Nega…?"

Footnotes:

***Marik's been unable to fly since his jet shoes got damaged after his ship blew up in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 2* remember?**

**** They broke when Mandy tried to punch Alonzo with them in Story 79**

***** See Stories 64-67**

So long Silver and Blaze! We will meet them again sometime soon though so don't worry, they'll be back! The Sol Emeralds are saved and Mobius Nega has been saved too. What could possibly happen next? Only I know that and you'll find out next time! Read and Review.

Redemption

Story 88: Redemption

"Please Scourge the Hedgehog!" whimpered Ginger the Fox, Tails' wimpy cousin and pathetic excuse for a sidekick "I didn't mean to…"

His pleas were cut off as Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic's evil brother and would-be-world-conqueror, backhanded him rather sharply across the face and made him stagger. Scourge was absolutely furious with the runty little squirt due to how badly he'd botched up his most recent outing with Sonic and friends. His girlfriend, the sexy, treacherous Fiona Fox just stood by watching Scourge smack Ginger around like a piñata with sadistic satisfaction. She hated Ginger just as much as Scourge did as she just saw him as a dork and a waste of space and seeing him get smacked while begging for mercy just made her feel better about their recent loss.

"You Ginger, are a terrible, terrible sidekick!" roared Scourge, backhanding Ginger a good few feet across the ground and sending him sprawling onto his stomach "Not only did you fail to make a good impression against that loser Marik the Martian, you blatantly wondered off without my orders to find some Sol Emeralds, only to lead Sonic's friends and that future couple right to us! The day was going so well until that happened and now, because of you, we got our backsides kicked, I GOT HIT BY A MOTHERSLAGGIN' TREE BECAUSE OF THAT SILVER JERK! and you made a complete fool of yourself! You got your ass handed to you by your own cousin and then knocked out by that soppy plant thing! Do you have any notion of how utterly useless you are?"

"Scourge wait, I…" protested Ginger.

"You were useless before too!" continued Scourge "You couldn't beat Nicole, you gave the game away the time we got Sonic and Tails arrested* which in turn ended up botching that plan, you didn't really help out much during the raid on Royal HQ**, one of my best

plans ever, and now you've just botched up this Sol Emerald hunt! And you have the nerve to call yourself a sidekick?"

"Scourge please!" begged Ginger "I'm sorry for all my goof ups in the past! I'm just inexperienced and I need some lessons that's all! And the reason I went off to look for the Sol Emeralds earlier was so I could prove to you I'm more then just a punching bag!"

Scourge's response was to stomp on Ginger's face and pin him to the ground with his foot. The hedgehog's rage was uncontrollable right now.

"You are nothing more then a punching bag Ginger!" roared Scourge "You are a pathetic punching bag for me and that's all you'll ever be! Do you understand? Well? DO YOU?"

He began to vigorously rub his foot on Ginger's face, making the fox squeal.

"Yes Scourge!" whimpered Ginger "I've got it! I'm just your smack-around toy and nothing more! Please stop beating me up!"

Scourge lifted his foot off Ginger's face and he grabbed Ginger by his neck. The fox looked into Scourge's eyes with absolute horror. Was Scourge going to kill him?

"Good." said Scourge "Now get this. You're services are no longer required in this gang."

"WHAT?" screamed Ginger in a stupid voice "You mean you're kicking me out of your gang?"

"Yes I am runt!" snarled Scourge, throwing Ginger back onto the ground "You're a hindrance to me, you're pathetic, useless and just can't do anything right! You're an embarrassment to me and I regret ever recruiting you in the first place you mistake of nature!"

"No! Please! Don't kick me out!" begged Ginger, his eyes streaming with tears "I'll improve myself and be of great help to you! Honest! I'll do anything for you! Just please don't kick me out! I still want revenge on…"

"GET THE *&%$ OUT OF MY SIGHT YOU SLAGGING LITTLE WIMP!" screamed Scourge "I'M SICK OF YOU AND I WANT YOU TO GET OUT OF MY LIFE FOREVER YOU USELESS, PATHETIC LITTLE GERM!"

That bellow scared the living daylights out of Ginger and all the fox could do was shiver in fear at Scourge as the hedgehog glared at him coldly with his heartless blue eyes. The green hedgehog wasn't kidding. He was being deathly serious now. He didn't want Ginger anymore and Ginger was not going to be able to reason with him.

"Very…well…" sniffed Ginger, hardly able to contain his sobs "I'll… go…now…Scourge…I'm sorry…I…messed…up…on…you.."

The young fox with the styled whiskers and neat black hair picked himself up and legged it out of here as fast as he could. His eyes were so full of tears though, he had no idea where he was going and tripped over several times. Scourge turned his back on Ginger, not even wanting to watch him leave his life forever. He just strode away with Fiona by his side.

"Good riddance." said Fiona coyly "That kid was a waste of time anyway."

"In all honesty, he did seem to have good potential." muttered Scourge, thinking back to their first meeting "But in the end, he was just a waste of good manipulating. Ginger was absolutely pathetic and I'm glad I've finally gotten rid of him. Now he can quite screwing up my plans and I can just rely on you now babe."

"Yes you can, because I am actually useful and able to take care of myself." said Fiona, coyly playing with one of Scourge's quills teasingly "I'll be twice the sidekick Ginger ever was."

"Not to mention, you're hot as hell and loyal to me." said Scourge with a flashy grin on his face "It's no wonder I've somehow found enough love in my heart for something other then conquest."

"I know." said Fiona "I'm still amazed you willingly listened to my stories*** when I told you them and you're willing to improve my life for me."

"Anything for the hottest and baddest girl I've ever met." said Scourge dashingly "As a matter of fact, come here hot stuff for a little smooching will ya?"

"Certainly Scourge." said Fiona in a flirtatious manner "I'm all yours."

She then allowed Scourge to warp his arms around her waist, gracefully tip her backwards, making her giggle slightly, and then lock lips with her. Fiona wrapped her arms around Scourge's shoulders and returned the kiss. The two villains were kissing and cuddling each other right now and anyone coming by, hero or villain, would probably find this irresistibly adorable despite the fact they were both villains. Now Scourge had released his anger on Ginger, he could take the time to cool off with Fiona and rest up for the next time they fought Sonic the Hedgehog.

Meanwhile, Ginger had run a good distance away from Scourge and Fiona and he disappeared into the nearby forests. He finally stopped running, sat down on the ground against a tree and wailed for the planet to himself. He couldn't believe what had just happened right now. Scourge the Hedgehog, his best chance at getting his own back on his cousin Tails, had just kicked him out of his gang and was just going to go off with Fiona now because he though he was a screw-up. Why was his life constantly filled with ruination? First Tails causes his parents to move him to Central City, where despite his wealthy home, he wasn't happy due to the fact he hated city folk, and now he joins the baddest of bad in his quest to conquer Mobius only to get tossed away like yesterday's leftovers and left with nothing but himself now. Ginger was so upset that he could hardly contain himself as he sobbed like a little baby to himself (I bet you don't give a dozy about him do ya?). As Ginger sobbed to himself, only one thing was on his mind right now. Redemption and Revenge. He was going to get revenge on Tails and his friends once and for all, but he was also going to redeem himself in Scourge's eyes and be welcomed back into the group. He was thinking of a plan so brilliant and so marvellous that he would even end up being more loved then Fiona and Scourge would declare him the best sidekick ever.

"I'll…I'll get my revenge on those…dweebs!" sobbed Ginger, sniffing loudly "And I'll redeem myself…in Scourge's eyes too! Make no

mistake on that! I, Ginger the Fox, shall redeem myself!"

The only trouble was…how? How could he possibly get revenge on the Royal Fighters? He couldn't fight very well and Sonic the Hedgehog was bound to be too good for him so beating the snot out of everybody was out of the question completely. He didn't have any particular plan right now but the fox was determined to try and come up with some way of getting revenge on the Royal Fighters, especially Tails, and redeeming himself to the point Scourge let him back in. He stopped snivelling and sobbing to himself and he began to rack his brain for any possible idea that could help him out here. But being as Ginger was about as smart as a newborn infant, that was going to be a very tricky task for him. It could take him a while until he finally had a brilliant idea that could assert his place back in Scourge's gang and help him conquer the world. Ginger's stubbornness however was the only thing that was keeping him going and he was not going to give up until he had a brilliant idea of some kind…

Two days passed since the Sol Emerald hunt and the R.F.S. were having it pretty slow right now. Dr. Eggman was still in hiding after being driven to insanity after his worldwide roboticization plot had been foiled****, Marik had gone back into hiding thanks to Silver the Hedgehog giving him a headache and ruining his jet shoes, Scourge had retreated and likely wasn't going to come out for a while and other villains were still locked away safely in prison. At long last, the Royal Fighters could catch a break. A quiet, easy time was not an easy thing to come across these days due to Dr. Eggman's endless folly and the comings and goings of other villains so the hero of Mobius, Sonic the Hedgehog, was going to make the most of it. Right now, he was chilling out in Royal HQ's lab along with one of his good friends Geoffrey St. John the Skunk.

"Good morning Geoff." said Sonic as he entered the lab with a cheery wave to the skunk.

"G'day Sonic." Geoffrey waved back in a friendly manner "Nice day out there isn't it?"

"Yep." said Sonic "All this sunshine makes me wanna run marathons around Mobius and back. By the way, you seen Wilson and Mandy anywhere? I haven't seen them yet. Are they coming in late or something?"

"Nah, they've gone to Grand Metropolis mate*****." explained Geoffrey "Mandy wants to visit her sister's grave the poor girl."

"Oh." said Sonic "OK then. I believe Mandy mentioned having a sister before. What was her name again? Mary? Mary-Anne? Um…"

"Marion." corrected Geoffrey.

"Thanks." said Sonic "How did Mandy's sister die anyway?"

"During Wilson and Mandy's time in Grand Metropolis******, Mandy found out that Dr. Eggman had turned her sister evil." explained Geoffrey "She turned back good after her own minion double-crossed her but Marion ended up losing her life after destroying a giant drill. The debris crushed her and poor Mandy was devastated. I know all this from me mate Wilson, he told me the whole thing before they left."

"Right." said Sonic who had listened to what Geoffrey was saying and began to feel sorry for Mandy now "That must really suck for poor Mandy. Losing her sister just after she gets her back. I wonder what Marion was like? I bet she would have joined the R.F.S. along with Mandy so she could be with her sister and fight against Dr. Eggman."

"I haven't a doubt in my mind that's exactly what Marion would've done." said Geoffrey "Mandy tells me Marion was very loyal to her growing up so Marion would probably want to follow her sister's path, which is not a bad path to follow at all I mean look where Mandy's getting being a Royal Fighter."

"She's amongst good people and much like me and the others, is beloved amongst the people." said Sonic "I bet Marion would be thrilled with the attention and glory her sister's getting now. Anyways, let's change the subject now out of respect for Mandy," he said quickly "How's things going right now?"

"Well mate, everything seems to be going smoothly right now." said Geoffrey brightly "Dr. Eggman's not up to anything right now, Marik and Scourge have gone and there's nothing to report from the R.F.S. so it appears we're gonna have an easy time for once."

"That's cool." said Sonic "We could do with an easy day for once, what with all the action and excitement we get endorsed in half the time. And now might be the perfect time for me and Amy to have our date."

Geoffrey looked at Sonic and tried not to snicker mockingly at him. Regardless, he couldn't really keep the snarky little grin off his face.

"Yer havin' a date with little Amy Rose?" asked Geoffrey.

"Yeah, Amy wasn't too pleased when Dr. Eggman ruined our first one******* so I promised her we'd have another one on a slow day and right now seems like a good time to have it."

"Well whatever you do, don't get too comfortable with her on this date Sonic." snickered Geoffrey "You don't want the little girl to go overboard with joy on ya and end up making you look like a total nelly do you mate?"

The skunk then broke down laughing at himself with Sonic just glaring at him in an "Am I supposed to be amused?" fashion. Geoffrey caught Sonic's eye and his laughing slowed down to a nervous laughter and then stopped altogether.

"Ahem," he said weakly "Sorry mate, just teasing ya."

"That's what I thought you was doing." muttered Sonic "Well, since I've got nothing to do right now, I may as well take Amy on this date. I know how much I'm going to kick myself for this afterwards but at least it'll make Amy happy."

"You have a good time mate and try not to get embarrassed by Amy will ya?" snickered Geoffrey "It'll break the girl's heart to see you not enjoying yourself."

"I'm not promising you on that." muttered Sonic "It's pretty hard not to get embarrassed by one of your biggest fan girls after all."

With that said, Sonic left the lab, leaving Geoffrey alone to keep an eye on Royal HQ. Geoffrey remained sitting at the computer monitors and keeping an eye on them for any changes in activity, not that he was expecting any of course. As he monitored the lab, one thing wouldn't stop nagging him in his thoughts. Where was Dr. Eggman and what evil could he possibly be plotting as they dealt with other threats? True their latest triumph over him had sent him into hiding but Geoffrey knew Eggman too well and he knew Eggman never stayed hidden for long. Eggman would hide for a good period of time and then come out and attack so he was liable to do so again. Regardless, Geoffrey couldn't let his thoughts bring down his mood and spoil this nice easy day so he decided to put those thoughts to the side and just enjoy the peace while they had it.

"You maybe hiding again you blighter." muttered Geoffrey "But we'll be ready for ya when you come out and attack us again. And the next time we face ya, we'll defeat ya at last."

Geoffrey then picked himself up out of the chair and strolled out of the lab, seeing as everything was normal and there was nothing going on. He headed on down to the rest room, the room where the residents of Royal HQ rested and played games or watched television to keep themselves occupied on slow days.

"I wonder how me mates in the rest room are doin' then." Geoffrey thought to himself as he went into the room to see how the others were getting on.

Meanwhile, Ginger the Fox (the poor sod) was trudging glumly to Mobotropolis all by himself. Two days past and he hadn't come up with the perfect plan yet, not surprising considering his stupidity and how coming up with ideas is not one of his strong points. He just couldn't think of any way he could redeem himself in Scourge's eyes. It seemed that he was going to be on his lonesome for the rest of his life and Scourge was never going to take him back into his gang. As the fox headed to Mobotropolis, he couldn't stop moaning to himself (I hope you've brought earplugs because this is going to get seriously annoying now!).

"I've thought as hard as I possibly can and I can't come up with a plan." he winged to himself "I don't know why but I can't think of

anything good enough to win my place back in Scourge's gang. Guess it's just marvellous me all on my lonesome now. I've got no home to go to as Eggman's levelled Central City******** so I'm now going to be a trampy little vagabond now. Oh well, I may not have an idea on how to redeem myself but that doesn't mean I can't still ruin Tails' life under my own motivations. Next time I meet Tails, I'll make sure that stupid little tramp suffers for all the indignity he's caused me over the years! I'll physically and mentally torment him and then I'll…"

His voice trailed off as he passed Royal HQ and caught sight of it. Ginger stopped walking and he stared at Royal HQ intently with his big hazel eyes. The fox was beginning to get some memories just looking at the place. Memories of the near-successful heist on Royal HQ that was foiled by an untimely arrival from Sonic the Hedgehog and ended up getting him, Scourge and Fiona arrested. Royal HQ was the ultimate headquarters for the R.F.S. and it had zillions of helpful info in it. Ginger remembered when he and Scourge read the Royal Fighter's personal records on the computer monitors during the heist. Maybe there was some helpful info he could use in Royal HQ against his enemies. Info that could…get him back in Scourge's good books! That's when Ginger had the first brilliant idea the little twerp's ever had in his miserable life.

"Eureka!" he squealed at the top of his voice "That's it! That's how I redeem myself in Scourge's eyes! Royal HQ's going to have some useful information I can use to help him get one step ahead of Sonic and friends! Hallelujah I'm a genius!"

With that said he rocketed over to Royal HQ excitedly but before he charged through the door and let himself in, he stopped himself and calmed himself down. He couldn't lose his head in this. Royal HQ was bound to be choc-a-bloc with security and if he got caught, he was mincemeat so he had to take this operation nice and slowly. Ginger gripped the door handle and he opened it ever so slightly. Nothing happened and the coast was clear so he stepped inside the headquarters and he closed the door behind himself. Ginger was now inside Royal HQ once again. The fox could feel himself going giddy with excitement. His best plan ever was about to commence and in a matter of minutes, Scourge was going to be begging Ginger

to rejoin him. Ginger looked both ways before making his way down the corridor. He headed to the lab and he let himself in, being extra cautious for in case anyone was in there. The lab was empty so he closed the door behind him and skipped over to the computer monitors. Ginger sat down at the computer and he tapped a few keys quickly.

"Now let's see what this clever little fox can find." he said to himself as he looked for the personal records.

He changed the screen from the radar system to the menu screen and he filed through the screens until he found the personal records section. Ginger felt a twinge of glee in his stomach as he got them up. Before he could start filing through the records, he spotted something interesting. There weren't just records about the Royal Fighters themselves. There were records on places on Mobius that could prove useful to him in some way or another and there was a record file titled "Mysterious artefacts". Ginger was very interested in that file so he scrolled down to it and pressed the enter key on it. The file expanded up to size and gave Ginger a list of contents. The list consisted of information about the Chaos Emeralds, the Master Emerald, Angel Island, the Lake of Rings, the Sceptre of Fates and the Sol Emeralds, a recent addition to the data records. Ginger ignored the Sol Emeralds file, knowing that they were long gone now, and he scrolled up to the Chaos Emeralds file. He pressed enter on it and the file opened up, giving Ginger all the info that the Royal Fighters had gathered on the Chaos Emeralds since their discovery. The file read…

Chaos Emeralds

Physical appearance: Seven differently coloured emeralds

Physical description: These seven mystery gems used to come in clusters of thousands but the former Angel Island guardian Locke the Echidna fused them together to make seven of them. The Chaos Emeralds reside on Angel Island and are guarded by Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas.

Abilities: They have Chaos Energy and it reacts in ways depending on the user. Sonic the Hedgehog has been known to

go super with the seven gems when they all come together and so has Shadow the Hedgehog. No one else has been known to go super with the Chaos Emeralds but it is presumably possible that others can use their power to go super too.

Ginger had read the whole article and he was fascinated to the bone about the Chaos Emeralds. A big smile appeared on his horrible little face. He had a great idea bubbling inside his puny little head right now. An idea that was bound to put Scourge on top and get him back in his gang at last.

"Oh, ho, ho, ho! This is too delicious!" snickered Ginger "These Chaos Emeralds are just the thing to get Scourge the power he needs to conquer the world! Once I lead him to the emeralds, he'll be begging me to join him again! Oh yes! This plan is perfect and it's bound to work! But how can I keep Sonic and friends busy while Scourge looks for the Chaos Emeralds? Knowing that blue fool, he'll catch onto Scourge somehow and then stop him before he even finds the emeralds."

He began to think to himself on a possible distraction that was bound to keep Sonic and friends busy until Scourge found the emeralds and became super. Then Ginger had another great idea (I think I'm going to die of shock if he has another great idea!).

"The MPD station in Empire City!" he exclaimed in excitement "That's it! I'll break into the prison, free the inmates and leave them to cause a riot! That'll keep Sonic and friends plenty busy enough! Oh ho, ho, ho! I am a genius! A complete and utter genius! Scourge is going to be really impressed with this stroke of genius I've just had!"

Ginger leaped out of the computer chair, knocking it over accidentally and not thinking to pick it back up the big idiot, and he charged out of the lab at lightening speed. He left the door open and didn't think to close it after him. Ginger then ran down the corridor and out of the entrance door as fast as he could. Ginger left Royal HQ behind and he skipped off merrily to Empire City as fast as his legs could carry him. He had a brilliant plan all beautifully pieced together and that plan was going to ensure Scourge's victory and Ginger's return to Scourge's gang as the green hedgehog's sidekick.

Just a pity the gormless little fox pup had left a rather messy scene behind him which was going to get him found out. And to make things worse, he hadn't checked for security cameras and a small camera hiding in the shadows of the ceiling corners and recorded everything that had been going on so Ginger was so busted thanks to his stupidity. Since the Royal Fighters were in the rest room right now, they weren't going to find out about this for a while. It was a only a matter of time until someone actually went into the lab and discovered what Ginger had been up to and it would be his own fault for not being more careful. Not that Ginger would notice as he was too stupid to think of that kind of stuff. To him, it would just be a case of the R.F.S. catching on to what was going on and then trying to stop him and Scourge from conquering Mobius. Even if that did happen, they wouldn't be able stop Scourge from using the Chaos Emeralds to become super and then use his powers to lay siege to the planet and conquer it at long last…

The Empire City MPD station was not an unfamiliar sight to Ginger as he arrived at the prison and flew onto the roof so he could break in unnoticed. After all, he had spent a short while in it after getting arrested after the failure of the Royal HQ heist. He remembered all the inmates in the prison, mostly due to the fact they used him as stress relief much like how Scourge uses him as stress relief in the exercise yard. He especially remembered the bunch of inmates he, Scourge and Fiona were stuck with in their blockade. Marcus and Celia Punch, Mr. Florenzi and his sidekicks Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza and Lord Sycorax, all dangerous mercenaries and enemies of Sonic the Hedgehog or his friends to some degree as they had had bad encounters with Sonic and friends and gotten arrested by them. The Punches were leaders of a slave camp that got foiled by Tails, Cosmo and Ruben*********, Mr. Florenzi and his henchmen were people who sold slaves to Dr. Eggman and they got foiled by Sonic, Tails, Cosmo and Wilson**********and Lord Sycorax was the leader of a group of reptilian anarchists who seek to purge the world of democracy and he was foiled by Team Chaotix***********. All of them would be great prisoners to break out of the prison so Ginger made it his top priority to find their cells and release them more then anybody. Ginger paced across the rooftop

and wondered how he was going to get into the prison. There was always a way into a place, top or bottom and Ginger knew it. After pacing for a while, he found a ventilation shaft in the right hand corner of the roof and he crawled through it. He crawled though the shaft on his hands and knees and he kept an eye out for the prisoners he was looking for.

"Ugh, I hate crawling!" he muttered to himself "It makes me feel like a little baby!"

But he knew he had to put up with it as he needed to crawl through the shaft, it was too small to stand up in, even on all fours. Ginger carried on crawling quietly through the shaft until he saw a grate on his right hand side. He peered through the grate and he saw the very prisoners he was looking for. They were all being escorted back to their cells right now by General Chipper, a chipmunk policeman with a great reputation amongst police folk and Melchett the Hedgehog's assistant. The Punches were already away in their cells whereas Lord Sycorax and Mr. Florenzi were just getting locked back up. The fat rat and the insidious politic hater were put into their respective cells by General Chipper and their cell doors closed shut behind them as they were put back into the cells. General Chipper only gave the inmates a dirty glare that suggested he hated this particular bunch of inmates and escorting them back was an annoyance and a displeasure to him.

"Boy I hate this bunch." the chipmunk muttered to himself as he walked out of the cell blockade "They're a horrible hybrid of slave traders and anarchists and they don't half creep me out when I'm near them. Oh well, at least they know better then to try and escape unlike Scourge, Marik and Lola Gunn so I can rest easy around them, or at least I think I can…"

His voice trailed out of the room as he left the cell blockade and shut the door behind him, leaving the inmates to do nothing but talk to one another in their cells. Celia Punch slumped against a wall and she fumed to herself.

"Know better then to try and escape!" she snorted "Puh, that cop's a right idiot if he thinks we're content being in here for the rest of our lives! We're going to get out of here some day soon aren't we

Marcus?"

"Of course!" said Marcus, the big brute of a dog folding his arms and fuming to himself.

"I'm in with you on that one Punches." said Lord Sycorax casually, leaning back against the wall with his hands behind his head "I'm not staying an inmate for the rest of my life. I've got many more parliaments to purge and I can't do it if I'm locked up in here! I still wonder what's taking my idiot reptile minions so long to break me out of this joint? You'd think with loyalty as great as theirs, they'd be on the task of breaking me out immediately!"

"Probably." said Mr. Florenzi "But didn't it occur to you that maybe your reptile friends aren't as loyal as you thought they were and they're actually running your region themselves now you're incarcerated?"

"How dare you suggest something so fatuous!" bellowed Lord Sycorax angrily, leaping onto his feet and pounding his cell door "My reptiles would never stab me in the back! Ever! I'm the reason the region exists! I formed the region so rebellious reptiles can get what they want! They joined me so I can satisfy their rebellious needs, why ever would they want to betray me?"

"From that handy hint, I can definitely say, they have no reason." said Mr. Polikaza "They're probably planning to rescue you soon Lord Sycorax."

"Yeah, maybe they don't know where you are so that's why they're taking so long." suggested Mr. Wazikaza "After all, you could be in any MPD station right now for all they know."

Lord Sycorax didn't say anything else. He just slumped back against the wall and grumbled to himself. Ginger decided know was the time to make his big entrance so he looked all around the cell blockade to make sure the coast was clear and he kicked the grate in so he could fly into the room. The grate fell down from the vent shaft and it landed with a loud clutter on the ground, startling everybody in the room. Ginger then flew out of the shaft and he landed on the floor. Everybody got to their feet and they pressed their faces against their

cell doors to see who it was. They were quite surprised to see a familiar face in the cell blockade right now.

"Good whipping gracious! It's Ginger the Fox! Scourge's snivelling sidekick!" blurted Celia "What on Mobius is that little brat doing back here?"

"Hey Ginger boy, good to see you again!" cackled Polikaza "We've missed you buddy!"

"Yeah, missed softening our knuckles on your puny, furry face!" cackled Wazikaza.

The two lizards then burst out into hysterical laughter that rang through the room like a horrible, throaty, cackling laugh that more annoyed everybody then anything. Ginger fumed at the inmates but he kept himself under control and he quickly relaxed himself. Polikaza and Wazikaza stopped laughing and they stared at Ginger, wondering why he wasn't saying anything to them right now.

"It's good to see you glorious inmates again." lied Ginger, a slimy little smirk spreading out across his face like a knife spreading butter on bread "Especially as I've come to free you from your prison cells."

Everybody gave off a rather comical gasp and a chorus of expressions that made them look like they'd just received a painful wedgie each.

"I cannot believe my ears!" blurted Lord Sycorax "We've treated you like pure garbage all the time you've been here Ginger, we've even been mean to Scourge and Fiona occasionally while they were here too and…you're breaking us out?"

"Yes I am." said Ginger "But I'm only doing this because it fits into my given task. You see, Scourge has given me the task of letting you out of your cells so you can cause a prison riot and distract Sonic and friends while he powers himself up with some mystical gems." he lied.

"And why, may I ask, is he doing that then?" asked Mr. Florenzi "What if we don't want to distract Sonic for him?"

"Oh you will you dolts." sneered Ginger "Once Scourge goes super with the mystical gems he's looking for, he's going to conquer the world and make it a paradise for villains everywhere and you're all invited to be a part of his new world."

"We are?" blurted the inmates.

"Indeed." fibbed Ginger, strolling over to Mr. Florenzi's cell door and surveying the control pad beside it "Scourge loves you guys after all and he wants his new vision of Mobius to be perfect for all of you. But you must do as I'm instructing you or he will not let you all join him in his conquest."

He pressed the open button on the control pad and Mr. Florenzi's cell door opened up, freeing the rat and his hench-lizards from the cell they were locked up in. They eagerly scurried out and waited as Ginger went around opening the other cell doors. As Ginger opened up Lord Sycorax's cell door, he spoke again.

"You lot can make this diversion even greater by going around and freeing all the other inmates." he explained "Free everybody in the prison and cause a diversion so great that Sonic will just HAVE to come and stop you all from getting away. If you can do that for my good friend Scourge then he'll allow you all to join him in his evil kingdom once he conquers Mobius."

"Well I'm definitely in on this one runt!" cackled Lord Sycorax as he stepped out of his opened cell, flashing his big white teeth at him "I love causing distractions, it helps a lot in getaways. Once I make it back to the Region of Rebellious Reptiles, I'll make sure to give my comrades your regards Ginger."

"No need to." said Ginger "Just doing what Scourge the Hedgehog instructed me to do."

He opened up the Punch's cell door and the two dogs scampered out of the cell in a flash.

"Thanks ever so much Ginger." said Celia "I guess me and Marcus misjudged you and Scourge a little didn't we Marcus?"

"Of course!" agreed Marcus with a big smile on his face.

"Well I must be going now." said Ginger, flying up to the ventilation shaft "I've got to meet up with Scourge as he takes over the world after all. Remember, free everybody in the prison and cause the biggest riot you can possibly conjure up!"

"We will do Ginger!" barked Mr. Wazikaza "Thanks for everything! You're my mate for life now!"

"Same here Ginger dude!" cried Mr. Polikaza.

Ginger just smiled dryly at his "friends" and he disappeared quickly into the vent shaft, leaving the freed inmates to conjure up the riot that was going to overwhelm the prison itself and draw Sonic and friends out to stop it, leaving Scourge to just stroll over to Angel Island and get those Chaos Emeralds. As Ginger furiously crawled back through the shaft, he began to cackle stupidly to himself.

"I can't believe those dolts fell for it!" he laughed "There's no way in hell Scourge will share power with any of those idiots! Boy will they feel stupid when Scourge takes all the power himself and refuses to share it with them!"

He could just picture their reactions in his foul little mind right now as he crawled out of the ventilation shaft and into the open air that awaited him outside. All he had to do now was find Scourge and tell him about the Chaos Emeralds and Angel Island so Scourge could go super and conquer the world at long last…

Back at Royal HQ, Geoffrey St. John left the rest room and he wondered back over to the lab. He had been in the rest room for quite a while and he felt like he needed to be back on duty right now. His secret love interest Bunnie Rabbot, the cyborg rabbit with a heart of a lion and the strength of an ox, followed him to the lab. The skunk was quite surprised as he wasn't expecting anybody to come to the lab with him but he didn't mind. In his case, Bunnie could follow him anywhere for all he liked. It was just a pity he didn't have the guts to tell Bunnie how he truly felt about her yet. Ironic given his

bravery on the battlefield and yet he couldn't tell a girl rabbit that he fancied her. The Rabbot however, appeared to be showing some concern over the skunk as she followed him to the lab.

"Geoffrey, ah hope ya'll don't mind me sayin' but, don't ya'll think yer gettin' yourself a little on edge here?" Bunnie asked "Ah mean, ya'll can't stay out of the lab for long and ya'll keep goin' back into it as if ya'll keep expecting somethin' bad to happen."

"That's not the case at all luv." said Geoffrey, a hint of annoyance in his voice as he spoke "It's our duty as Royal Fighters to keep watch at all times. We have to man this base and we have to be on the alert for danger. That's why I keep going back into the lab."

"Well hon, maybe ya'll could let someone else be on lab duty for a change." suggested Bunnie "Ya'll don't have to be on lab duty all the time Geoff, we can man the lab too ya'll know."

"You know what Bunnie, you're right." said Geoffrey "I shouldn't keep myself up on my toes all the time, I should let the others have a turn on lab duty. And since you're concerned about me working myself to the bone, maybe you'd like to look up on the lab this time Bunnie."

"Ah do." said Bunnie "Ya'll rest yerself Geoffrey and I'll be on lab duty for now."

"OK luv, do you know what you're doing in the lab?" Geoffrey asked.

"I sure do sugah." said Bunnie "Ah've gotta just sit at the computer monitors and keep an eye out for anythin' suspicious goin' on."

"That's absolutely right." said Geoffrey "Well, I guess I can leave you to it then. Just give me a call if you need me at all luv."

"Will do Geoff." said Bunnie, heading off to the lab as Geoffrey turned around and went back into the rest room to meet with the others again.

Geoffrey went into the rest room and Bunnie went into the lab, noticing that the door was strangely open for some reason although that could probably just be Geoffrey forgetting to close it earlier so

she shrugged it off. However, as Bunnie stepped into the lab, she noticed something that seemed odd to her. The computer chair had been knocked over and hadn't been picked back up. She could understand Geoffrey accidentally leaving the door open but leaving a chair knocked over and not picking it up was definitely out of his character. Geoffrey would never leave a chair knocked over, especially as it can provide a lot of hazards for anyone in the headquarters. Bunnie ran over to the chair and she picked it up.

"Now that is strange, who in their right mind leaves a chair knocked over, especially in a place like this?" she wondered to herself.

She then spotted something on the computer monitors saying "Emergency. See recorded camera footage.". That obviously meant the security camera had picked up something sinister and that it meant trouble for the heroes. Bunnie sat down in front of the computer monitors and she played the recorded camera footage from the hidden security cameras in the base. The footage recorded was from half an hour ago and it showed Ginger sneaking into the base and reading the data records on the Chaos Emeralds although Bunnie couldn't quite tell what he was reading due to the amateurish quality of the camera. All she could tell was that he was reading something and whatever he was reading clearly seemed to be delighting him as he was jumping for joy about it. Was Ginger looking up vital information to give to Scourge the Hedgehog? If that was the case then Ginger had to be captured immediately!

"Oh mah stars!" blurted Bunnie "Ginger darn broke into the lab and is reading somethin' on the monitors? He must be reading the data records so he can find some helpful information to give to Scourge! Ah've gotta warn everybody about this!"

But before Bunnie could do anything, a telephone icon showed up on the computer screens and the sound of a phone ringing emitted through the speakers on the control pad. It was quite clear that Royal HQ had an urgent call right now and Bunnie answered it to see what was going on.

"Howdy there, this is Bunnie Rabbot, member of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters." she said to the caller "How may ah help you?"

"Thank goodness you've answered our call!" yelped the voice of Melchett the Hedgehog, the world's most stubborn cop "The Empire City MPD station is in chaos! Absolute chaos! We've got a massive prison riot on our hands and we need you Royal Fighters to come and help us! We can't keep up with the attacking inmates!"

"Oh mah stars!" shrieked Bunnie "We'll be over as quick as we can sugah!"

She hung up on Melchett and she darted out of the lab as fast as she possibly could. She ran out of the lab, down the corridor and she burst into the rest room where Geoffrey, Tails, Cosmo, Cream and Ruben were resting in. Her burst in was so frantic and sudden, everybody almost leaped straight up into the ceiling.

"Bunnie, what's wrong?" asked Tails "Is Eggman attacking again?"

"No, there's a prison riot goin' on at Empire City and Melchett needs our help!" exclaimed Bunnie "The poor cops are havin' a hard time over there!"

"Crikey, we get a moment to relax and then something goes complete belly up on us!" moaned Geoffrey.

"Oh well, if it's a prison riot we're dealing with then this'll be a snap." said Ruben "A bunch of inmates shouldn't be too hard for us to handle."

"That is true Ruben but you forget that some of the inmates at that prison are enemies we've all dealt with over time." noted Tails "There's Mr. Florenzi, the Punches and that Lord Sycorax guy Geoffrey told me and Sonic about. Those guys are gonna be a handful for us, especially Mr. Florenzi's minions as they know the spine-dash move and according to Bunnie, Lord Sycorax was strong enough to floor her so he'll be one to watch out for."

"Wrong actually." said Ruben "Vector told us he was wearing strength enhancing arm gauntlets that made him stronger then usual and he broke them both so he'll be considerably weaker now."

"Well that's helpful." said Tails "Do you think we should interrupt

Sonic and Amy's date and bring them over to deal with the riot?"

"I definitely say we should." said Geoffrey, whipping out a communications device out of one of his belt pouches and turning it on "Sonic will deal with those inmates in a millisecond, therefore making our job a whole lot easier."

He put the communicator to his ear and he spoke into it.

"Sonic mate? Do you copy?" the skunk asked.

"Sure do Geoff." said Sonic, who was using the communicator he always had on his wrist hidden by his glove "What's going on?"

"Empire City's got a prison riot on their hands and we're going over to stop it." explained Geoffrey "We might need you and Amy for this."

"OK Geoff, me and Amy will be over there as fast as we can." said Sonic "Although I have a nasty feeling Amy may get a little bit grouchy over the fact our date's being interrupted by a prison riot."

"Well she can just take it out on the inmates then." snickered Geoffrey "We're going to set off anytime now, you join us as quick as you can."

With that said, he shut the communicator off and he put it away.

"OK mates, let's go and give them blokes a good beating shall we?" cried Geoffrey, priming his arm mounted crossbow, ready for combat.

"Do you even need to ask?" laughed Ruben "Let's do it to it already!"

With that said, everybody ran out of the rest room and out of Royal HQ itself. They headed off to Empire City and they left Royal HQ behind. This prison riot had to be contained before anyone got seriously hurt or killed by the rioting inmates. They also had to contain the incident before any inmates actually escaped the prison, putting innocent lives at risk once again…

Meanwhile, Ginger was flying through the clear blue skies of Mobius while searching for Scourge and Fiona. Due to the fact it had been two days since he'd been kicked out and he had no idea where the green menace could possibly be right now, he had a feeling he'd be flying around for quite a long time. At least he was flying, that meant he had much more of a chance finding Scourge then he would on ground. Ginger had been flying around for a good few minutes now and he hadn't found Scourge yet. The black haired, ginger furred fox began groaning to himself as he flew over another village and saw no sign of Scourge anywhere. He couldn't complain too much though as he was bound to have a hard time finding Scourge as he had no idea where he was right now. Luckily for Ginger, he wouldn't have to be flying any longer as he flew over some nearby woods and he spotted Scourge and Fiona making out behind a tree. The sight disgusted Ginger to some degree as he was the kind of person who considered love revolting but he quickly shrugged it off as he needed to tell Scourge what was going on now. Ginger flew down to the ground and he landed rather nosily behind Scourge. That made Scourge leap up onto his feet and off of Fiona. Scourge turned around sharply and he instantly entered rant mode.

"Oi! Punk! Do you mind interrupting me when I'm making out with my girlfriend here?" roared Scourge "Honestly, can't a guy get ANY privacy around here?"

He then calmed down quick enough to realize that he was yelling at Ginger. Scourge stared at the ginger fox with the hazel eyes in disbelief and his jaw dropped open. Fiona picked herself up and stared at ginger with him.

"Ginger?" she said slowly "Wha…what are you doing here you little brat? I thought Scourge kicked you out!"

"I thought I did too!" growled Scourge "Well since Ginger hasn't got the bloody message, I guess I'll have to deck him ten times to Holoska and MAKE him get the message!"

He clenched his fists and prepared to break Ginger's teeth until the fox held up his hands worriedly to stop him.

"Wait! Wait!" he cried hastily "Don't punch me in the face! Please!

I've come back to you because I have a plan that'll get you on top of the world Scourge!"

"Sure you do kid." snarled Scourge "Now get outta my sight already! I've had enough of you, you walking failure!"

"No really I have!" exclaimed Ginger "I sneaked into Royal HQ and I found some very vital information for you! There are seven gems called Chaos Emeralds on a place called Angel Island and Sonic can go super with them so maybe you can go super with them too. I've caused a prison break in Empire City to keep Sonic and friends distracted so you'll have no distractions and you can just find the emeralds and use them to destroy Sonic and friends once and for all!"

Scourge thought he was going to swoon over in shock. Ginger, the world's poorest excuse for an evil sidekick had actually found some vital information for him and caused a prison break to distract Sonic and friends? Maybe Ginger wasn't so useless after all! Scourge relaxed himself and he slowly spoke to the ginger furred fox.

"Ginger, I can't believe I'm saying this but…that plan of yours far exceeds your usual standards!" he gasped "You've officially stopped being useless and have actually done something useful for once! Well done Ginger!"

"Thank you Scourge." said Ginger with a smug expression on his punchable face "Does this mean I'm back in your gang now?"

"We'll see about that." said Scourge "If this plan actually ends up working then you can join me again. If not, then you get kicked out again."

"Yes Scourge." said Ginger "So, do you know where Angel Island is Scourge?"

"I do indeed Ginger." said Scourge "It's in Downunda and it floats above the ground so it'll be pretty hard to miss. As well as those so-called Chaos Emeralds, there's a giant green emerald called the Master Emerald on that island and I can just use that to go super to save having to find the Chaos Emeralds as I have no idea where on

Angel Island they can be."

"Are you sure the Master Emerald can make you go super?" asked Ginger.

"It can." said Scourge "The Master Emerald's just a great big Chaos Emerald so it has all the powers of a Chaos Emerald only more as it's bigger and I should know, I've visited Angel Island before and learnt about that emerald during my time on it."

"So are we going to Downunda then?" asked Fiona.

"Yes we are baby cakes." said Scourge, scooping her up bridal style and preparing to run off at top speed "Super powered me, here I come!"

Scourge rocketed off at the speed of an ascending space shuttle and he ran off to Downunda with Ginger flying after him as fast as he could.

One long run later and Scourge arrived at Downunda at long last with his two fox friends. Scourge carried on running through Downunda until he came across the unforgettable, unbelievable sight of the floating beauty that is Angel Island. Fiona and Ginger had never seen Angel Island before so they were blown over with amazement at the mere sight of it. An island that floats in the air never failed to amaze anybody, even the hard to please. Ginger was so amazed at the sight of Angel Island he almost fell over onto the ground but he kept himself airborne amazingly enough. Scourge stopped just underneath Angel Island and Ginger grabbed him under his arms. The ginger furred fox carried Scourge off the ground and Scourge held tight to Fiona as he was carried up towards Angel Island. Fiona tried her best not to look down as the ground began to shrink away as she and Scourge were carried up to Angel Island. Angel Island's height was quite dizzying after all. Ginger carried his two friends up onto the island and he landed just on the edge of the floating island. The Master Emerald shrine was just ahead of them and the Master Emerald was perched above it nice and neatly, sparkling like a million suns all at once. The foxes were astonished by the sight of this giant green gem whereas Scourge just smiled like a ravenously hungry wolf that's just spotted it's dinner. He

remembered the Master Emerald as if he'd just seen it yesterday.

"There it is foxes." he said darkly "The Master Emerald. The very gem that changed me into what I am now."

"It's amazing." said Fiona in awe "What a glorious looking gem this is. It's certainly going to make you all mighty and powerful Scourge. Good thing clever Ginger here gave us the idea to come here and use it."

Ginger smiled brightly, clearly flattered at the fact he just got called clever by Fiona, Scourge's girlfriend who hated him just as much as Scourge himself did. However, before Scourge could get anywhere near the Master Emerald, the echidna guardians Knuckles and Shade suddenly appeared from the nearby woods and they charged towards Scourge and the foxes angrily. Knuckles had his fists clenched and Shade had her trademark twin blades in hand. Scourge turned around and saw the oncoming echidnas. He was so surprised at their sudden arrival that he forgot to ready himself for battle.

"Hey! You three! Get away from the Master Emerald!" bellowed Knuckles, pouncing towards Scourge angrily.

He socked Scourge in the face with his right fist and then gave him an uppercut with his left fist. The uppercut sent Scourge hurling clean over the shrine and he landed sharply on his back about twenty feet away from Knuckles. Fiona glared at Ginger angrily and she grabbed him by his neck.

"You asshole!" she snarled "Why didn't you warn us about these two? That thing you read must have told you the Chaos Emeralds were going to be guarded or something!"

"It did, I just forgot about them!" squeaked Ginger "I'm sorry about that!"

"Geez, even at your best you screw up on us!" moaned Fiona, throwing Ginger straight at Shade who was preparing to attack her "You're such a big fail that if we look up the word fail in the dictionary, we're gonna find you under it! I was wrong to call you

clever a moment ago Ginger!"

Ginger fumed at himself for this big mess-up of his as Shade pushed him away and readied herself for battle. She glared at Fiona with her cold, lilac eyes and she raised her blades.

"Trust me madam, you do not want to fight me." Shade warned her icily.

"Oh I think I do sweetheart." sneered Fiona "Come and have a piece of Fiona Fox you headband wearing nutter!"

One thing you must never do to Shade is insult her headband. The furious female echidna charged at Fiona and Blade Rushed the fox across the torso. Fiona cried out in pain and she staggered backwards, clutching her body and wincing in pain. Shade put her weapons away and she let Fiona have it in the face with a furious kick. The vixen was sent staggering backwards and Shade let her have it with another roundhouse kick that sent Fiona hurling backwards into the Master Emerald shrine. Fiona winced in pain as she hit the hard stone work the shrine was built out of and she wobbly picked herself up. Shade charged towards Fiona again but the vixen turned around, ran up the shrine and flipped over behind Shade as the echidna tried to attack her. She landed behind Shade and elbowed her in the back, knocking Shade into the shrine face first. Shade grimaced in pain and Fiona grabbed her by her arms. She kneed Shade in the back and then punched her onto her side. Fiona then tried to attack Shade again but Shade rolled out of the way, leaving Fiona to punch the ground and she picked herself up. Shade quickly twisted around and kneed Fiona directly in the gut. She then picked Fiona up and tossed her towards the edge of the island, making sure she didn't throw her too hard and send her hurling over edge. Fiona skidded to a halt on her side and the vixen groaned to herself in annoyance.

"If we survive this, I'm gonna kill that bratty little beast for this!" she grumbled to herself.

Meanwhile, Scourge and Knuckles were having a tense tussle with one another. The red echidna punched at Scourge furiously like an angry boxer whereas Scourge kept dodging the spike-fisted

echidna's blows. Scourge was much too fast for Knuckles and that earlier blow on him was only because he wasn't ready for Knuckles and now he was, Knuckles could barely land a punch on him. Knuckles launched a sucker punch at Scourge but Scourge leapfrogged over Knuckles, flipped himself over while still holding onto Knuckles' head and the moment he landed on his feet, he threw Knuckles over onto his back. Knuckles skidded sharply across the ground and he grimaced in pain. Scourge cackled at Knuckles and he spin-dashed the echidna guardian before he could get back up.

"Not much of a guardian are you?" he jeered "You can't even land a blow on me!"

"Just you wait Scourge!" growled Knuckles "I'll punch you so hard your grandchildren will have a migraine!"

"Cute." snorted Scourge "Here's hedgehog in your face knuckle-head!"

With that said, the green hedgehog spin-dashed towards Knuckles again just as the echidna picked himself up and readied himself for an attack from the insidious hedgehog…

Meanwhile at the Empire City MPD station, the prison was in complete and utter chaos. Every single inmate in the prison had just been freed by Lord Sycorax, the Punches and Mr. Florenzi and now the inmates were turning the prison upside down. They ran all around the prison, smashing things, breaking windows and attacking cops. Some ran around the exercise yard and the prison blockades while some decided to beat up the cops just for good measure. Some inmates even managed to steal the cop's guns and kill the cops with them! Some inmates even ran into the confiscated items room to see what good stuff they could snatch and take with them as they escaped from the prison. Melchett the Hedgehog, the chief officer and his assistant big Dave the Gopher were having trouble keeping up with the escaping inmates and so was poor General Chipper. Melchett decided he wasn't taking any prisoners so he pulled out a pistol of his own and began shooting any inmate that

dare to come near him. This was a matter of life and death here and he had to kill the inmates in order to save himself. One inmate charged towards Melchett in a crazed fashion but Melchett shot the inmate dead before he could even grab him. Big Dave didn't have a gun, mainly because the fat idiot didn't know how to use one, but he had great strength at his side so he just knocked any attacking inmates out as they tried to attack him. He bashed two female inmate's heads together and knocked them both out.

"Hee, hee, hee! This is fun!" he laughed in his usual stupid manner.

"This is NOT fun you big galoot!" snarled Melchett "This is a matter of life and flipping death here! Stop laughing like a dingbat and get knocking the inmates out! Kill the blasted thugs if you have to!"

Then suddenly, he was spine-dashed from behind by Misters Wazikaza and Polikaza. The grey furred hedgehog was thrown off his feet and into a wall where he crashed into it with a heavy crashed that made something go crick inside him. The attack had just thrown out his back and the chief officer was now finding it hard to stand up.

"Oooh! Me back!" winced Melchett as he rubbed his throbbing back better.

Lord Sycorax then advanced on Melchett menacingly and the giant crocodile grabbed Melchett by his throat. He smiled maniacally at Melchett, his teeth glistening like knives in a drawer as he grinned evilly at Melchett. The grey hedgehog stared into Lord Sycorax's eyes fearfully.

"You know what Melchett, I think you'll taste very nice!" cackled Lord Sycorax "I'm going to enjoy chewing on you, you feeble excuse for a cop!"

He opened his enormous jaws and he prepared to chomp down on Melchett's head but before he could close his jaws around Melchett's head, Sonic the Hedgehog suddenly appeared from nowhere and spin-dashed him from behind. Lord Sycorax hurtled forward and crashed into a wall head first and then he lay on the floor, dazed and confused from that surprising attack on him. Sonic

stood before Lord Sycorax and he folded his arms at him.

"I'm very disappointed in you inmates." He said in a calm and collected manner "I get a break for five minutes and you lot go rioting around the place. I thought you knew better then that guys and girls."

He was then suddenly spine-dashed from behind by Polikaza and Wazikaza and thrown onto his face by the two lizards.

"Ha, ha, ha! Got you Sonic!" they both cackled at him "You should learn to pay more attention in future you blue twerp!"

Then suddenly, it was their turn to get ambushed from behind. Amy Rose had sneaked up behind them and proceeded to wallop them with her trademark Piko-Piko hammer. The two lizards were sent hurling across the room and into a wall were they both let out a chorus of bedraggled groans. The pink hedgehog sniffed at them and she twirled her hammer around.

"That's for kidnapping me and selling me to Eggman you freaks!" she screeched at them "Now where's Mr. Florenzi so I can give him one for my kidnapping too?"

Just as she said that, Mr. Florenzi appeared suddenly from behind and he grabbed Amy's arm. Amy yanked it out of the fat rat's grasp and she walloped him with her Piko-Piko hammer. Mr. Florenzi hurtled across the room and he bounced sharply off the floor and into a door, which came off its hinges as he crashed into it. Amy smirked at the rat, satisfied she'd paid him back for what he did to her. As for Tails, Cream, Cosmo, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben, they all arrived onto the scene and they immediately began to battle with the inmates in order to contain the riot and stop them from escaping. Geoffrey began rapidly firing a sizable supply of stun-darts at the inmates in order to put them to sleep, Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and threatened the inmates with it in order to make them back down. One foolish inmate tried to get the drop on her with a stolen pistol but Bunnie heard him so she turned around and shot his pistol, destroying it and making the inmate surrender immediately. Bunnie then pointed her arm cannon at a group of inmates and she forced them back into the cell blockade by

advancing on them menacingly with the cannon deployed. Tails, Cream and Cosmo joined Sonic and Amy in their fights with the main six inmates. Sonic and Tails teamed up against the lizard henchmen whereas Team Rose teamed up on Lord Sycorax. Amy hammered Lord Sycorax as furiously as she could, earning an annoyed growl from Lord Sycorax. The crocodile snapped his jaws at Amy, making her jump back hastily and he socked her directly in the face. Cream attacked him from behind and her pet Chao Cheese fisted Lord Sycorax in the eyes in order to distract him. Lord Sycorax yelped in pain and Cosmo added insult to injury by kicking him in the shin. Lord Sycorax began to furiously leap up and down while clutching his shin and Amy tripped him up by hammering his legs out from underneath him. Lord Sycorax landed sharply on his shoulder and the furious region leader growled furiously, humiliated at the fact he was getting bested by a trio of girls, two of them not even in their teens yet. Lord Sycorax tried to pick himself up but Amy hammered him on his head, knocking him clean out in one hit. As for Ruben, he had a score to settle with Marcus and Celia as he had been a slave in their camp once and they had horribly whipped him, leaving scars on his back that he longed to be rid of. Marcus tried to pound Ruben into a pulp but the water panther was miles too fast for him. He dodged Marcus's attack and roundhouse kicked him in the head. Marcus clutched his forehead and Ruben squirted him with a jet of water that sent him hurling into a cell blockade. Celia tried to attack Ruben from behind but Ruben grabbed her by the legs and swung her into a cell blockade with Marcus. Ruben ran into the blockade and pushed the Punches into an empty cell with his water powers. The Punches were pushed into the cell and Ruben closed it quickly before they could even get away, trapping them once again. He then ran out of the blockade to join in with the main battle. Sonic and Tails were getting overpowered by Polikaza and Wazikaza once again due to their spine-dashes but they were managing to keep up with them at least this time. Sonic actually managed to spin-dash both lizards this time around. The lizards quickly got back on track and they spine-dashed Sonic again. Ruben however got the drop on them with a wave of water that knocked them down onto the floor. They tried to get back up but Ruben squirted them with a jet of water that actually pinned them down to the floor. That gave Sonic the perfect opportunity to spin-dash them both into a pulp. The lizards were knocked out by Sonic's excessive

spin-dashing and they slumped on the floor, soaking wet and battered and bruised.

"Thanks Ruben." said Sonic with a thumbs up at the water panther.

"It was an honour bringing those two down for you." said Ruben with a polite bow at the hedgehog.

"I'm sure it was." said Sonic "So Tails, how's things going right now?"

"Well Geoffrey's stunning inmates and taking them back to their cells, Bunnie appears to be scaring inmates back into their cells with her cannon and Team Rose have just knocked out that crocodile guy that me, you and Amy haven't met since we were at Nekronopolis the time he attacked Castle Acorn."

"I'm amazed him and his group of reptile buddies had the nerve to attack Castle Acorn while I was gone." muttered Sonic "At least my buddies, Queen Sally herself and Team Chaotix managed to stop them without me. Pity I wasn't there to see them beat those reptiles."

"Well mate, you missed out sadly." said Geoffrey "If Lord Sycorax ever gets away though, we'll make sure you get to fight him this time."

"That sounds great Geoffrey." said Sonic "We've got plenty more inmates to put away though so let's do it to it guys!"

Sonic, Tails and Geoffrey ran back into the battle to deal with the remaining inmates who were still free and causing trouble for the cops. Sonic was amazed at how quickly he and his friends were dealing with this riot. Everything would be back under control in no time. But a prison riot would be the least of Sonic's worries right now…

Back on Angel Island, Knuckles and Shade were struggling to keep up with Scourge the Hedgehog and his foxy sidekicks Fiona and Ginger. Fiona and Ginger were no contest for the two echidnas, it was Scourge who was the real one to be worried about. Scourge

was too fast for the two echidna guardians to land a blow on and every time they actually managed to hit him, Scourge just came back at them with an even more powerful blow. Shade Blade Rushed Scourge but Scourge shrugged the attack off and he kicked Shade in the gut. Shade doubled over, wheezing heavily and Scourge decided to uppercut her into the air. Shade hurled through the air in a clean rainbow arch and she landed sharply on her side. Knuckles immediately got furious and he gave Scourge another uppercut that sent him hurling through the air. Scourge picked himself up just as Knuckles charged towards him and the green hedgehog kicked him furiously in the gut. Knuckles was sent hurling into the shrine at a force so great that the Master Emerald actually shuddered slightly. Scourge then spin-dashed Knuckles, embedding him slightly into the shrine in order to get him stuck and slow him down for a moment. Shade picked herself up and tried to assist her friend but Fiona slammed her on the head with her fists clasped together and she grabbed Shade in a chokehold. She made sure her hold on Shade was nice and tight so she couldn't get away.

"Not so fast sunshine." she purred smoothly "Scourge needs that emerald's power in order to turn super and take over the world."

"Well me and Knuckles aren't going to let him!" yelled Shade, elbowing Fiona in the gut and then grabbing her arm.

She tossed Fiona onto her back at the force of a baseball bat being whacked on a table, making Fiona groan in pain. Shade ran over to Scourge, who was punching the trapped Knuckles as furiously as he could while he was stuck in the shrine. Ginger tried to stop Shade but Shade kicked him down onto the ground before he could grab her and she drew out her twin blades. She Blade Rushed Scourge and knocked him away from Knuckles. Shade skidded to a halt in front of Knuckles and she pulled him out of the wall. Knuckles dusted himself off and smiled graciously at Shade.

"Thanks Shade." said Knuckles.

"Don't mention it." said Shade "According to the vixen, Scourge, whom I'm assuming is probably that green hedgehog in the leather jacket, is plotting to use the Master Emerald's power to turn super and take over Mobius."

Knuckles just stared at Shade in surprise.

"I think I've heard of Scourge." said Knuckles "He's Sonic's evil brother and the green hedgehog we're fighting right now looks like Sonic so I assume that's Scourge. And since Scourge has all the powers of Sonic himself…then he probably can go super just like Sonic can!"

"And now, we're just about to find out if I can go super!" yelled Scourge from above their heads.

Knuckles and Shade turned around and stared up at the Master Emerald. To their horror, Scourge was perched on top of the emerald! He'd climbed onto the shrine while the echidnas we're talking to each other and now he was on top of the Master Emerald! As Scourge stood on the Master Emerald, green Chaos Energy began to surround him and Scourge was suddenly engulfed in a huge ball of green light. Knuckles tried to leap onto the shrine and knock Scourge off but the Chaos energy blew him away and knocked him back down onto the ground. The green energy died down, revealing a brand new Scourge the Hedgehog that now stood upon the Master Emerald. Scourge had become super thanks to the Master Emerald's power! Scourge's quills pointed up much like Super Sonic's did but his fur was a dark, malevolent shade of purple instead of gold. His eyes were now a fiery red, swimming in pools of black, the flames on his leather jacket had changed from red to blue and the green parts of his shoes changed from green to pink. Fiona and Ginger stared in amazement at this super powered Scourge that now stood upon the emerald shrine. Super Scourge admired himself all over and he grinned maliciously to himself.

"Now this feels very super indeed!" he cackled as the power of the Master Emerald flowed through his veins…

Footnotes:

***See Stories 33-35**

**** See Stories 64-67**

***** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 5: The Life and Times of Fiona Fox***

****** See Stories 80-83**

******* Tune into the newest *Tales from Mobius* arc to find out what's happening with Wilson and Mandy!**

******** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 1: The Malicious Metropolis Masquerade* for the whole story**

HOLY SHIT! SCOURGE HAS GONE SUPER! WE'RE ALL DOOMED! DOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMED! HOW THE RUDDY HELL ARE SONIC AND FRIENDS GOING TO SURVIVE THIS ENCOUNTER THEN? Join me next time for one hell of a showdown with Sonic and Super Scourge! Reviews are welcome.

Super Scourge

Story 89: Super Scourge

The guardians of AngelIsland, Knuckles the Echidna and Shade the Echidna, could only stare in sheer horror at the sight that befell them above the Master Emerald. Sonic's evil brother and arch-enemy Scourge the Hedgehog had just hopped onto the Master Emerald and used it's power to turn himself super! He was now Super Scourge and was likely, going to be invincible and impossible to defeat now! Scourge alone was bad enough but Super Scourge was going to be way too much for Sonic the Hedgehog and friends once he got his hands on them! At first, all Super Scourge did was just stand on the Master Emerald and admire himself all over, clearly pleased with his super form. He never knew he could do that and now he knew he could, he was going to use it to make Mobius his at last. Super Scourge grinned maliciously to himself as he felt the Chaos Energy in his veins surge through is body like an electrical current.

"The power…the absolute and unfathomable…power!" he cackled to himself "Oh yeah baby, this is what I'm talking about! I'm now Super Scourge, soon to be the destroyer of Sonic the Hedgehog and conqueror of Mobius!"

"Not on your life devil-hog!" snarled Shade, deploying her twin blades and preparing to let Super Scourge have it until Knuckles grabbed her by the tail and held her back.

"Have you lost your mind Shade?" yelled Knuckles "We can't possibly take on Super Scourge by ourselves! I should know! I've battled two different supers already* and got trashed by both of them!"

"But we can't just leave him like this!" blurted Shade "He'll use all his power to level the planet and do worse then even Imperator Ix can ever hope to do!"

"Hey you two! Shut up will ya?" yelled Super Scourge, super-

charging straight through both Knuckles and Shade and sending them hurling through the air like tossed tones.

Knuckles landed rather sharply on his stomach and Shade landed awkwardly on her back. The resulting impacts left both echidnas feeling very pained and they found it hard to get back up. Super Scourge cackled sadistically at the two echidnas and he spin-dashed them both just to add insult to injury. Getting spin-dashed by a super-powered hedgehog was like getting hit by a monster truck. Knuckles and Shade were both thrown against the edge of AngelIsland but they somehow managed to keep themselves from falling over the edge and down to the ground down below. Knuckles and Shade picked themselves up but instead of attacking Super Scourge, they stood down and didn't make any attempts to attack whatsoever. Super Scourge just decided they weren't worth his time so he flew away from the echidnas and over to his two fox sidekicks. His gorgeous girlfriend Fiona Fox was marvelling with amazement at Super Scourge whereas Ginger the Fox, Tails' mistake of a cousin and an embarrassment to life itself could hardly believe what he'd just helped Scourge accomplish right now. He was so happy with himself he thought he was going to collapse in amazement.

"How's this for super then foxes?" asked Super Scourge, his toothy grin wider then that of a crocodile's.

"Hot. as. hell!" blurted Fiona excitedly "You look gorgeous in purple Scourge! Not to mention your super powers make you even cooler then before! No wonder I've got the hots for ya baby!"

"Yes, you've got good taste in men sweet cakes." sneered Super Scourge, winking at Fiona and then turning his attention from Fiona and onto Ginger "As for you dork, thanks for helping me make this possible. You gave me the idea to turn super and now here I am, the most powerful being on Mobius now made even more powerful. Thank you."

"You're ever so welcome Scourge." said Ginger in a very pompous and obnoxious manner that made Fiona grumble at him.

"However…" said Super Scourge coldly.

He then suddenly grabbed Ginger by his tails and tied them up in a big knot that would be impossible for Ginger to undo. Ginger began to wonder what was going on and Super Scourge suddenly grabbed him by his neck and flew high up of AngelIsland and higher up into the clear blue sky up above. The ground was miles down below them and it was going to be a very long drop for anybody falling from this height. Fiona, Knuckles and Shade looked up at Super Scourge and Ginger shook furiously, wondering what Super Scourge was doing. Super Scourge glared at Ginger with his fiery red eyes. The look he had could kill somebody.

"You almost botched this up by forgetting to warn us about the guardians!" snarled Super Scourge "Their interference was a minor bump in the road but still, I'm not about to let you screw up on me again Ginger!"

"I'm not going to screw up on you Scourge!" protested Ginger "I've helped make this possible! I'm the reason you're super now! How can I screw up on this?"

"I dunno but you'll screw up somehow." muttered Super Scourge "You always do. And so you can't screw up on me again, I've decided that I'm going to kill you, hence the reason we're hundreds of feet above ground and I've tied your tails together."

"WHAT?" screamed Ginger "I HELP YOU BECOME SUPER SCOURGE AND THIS IS THE THANKS I GET? YOU'RE BLOODY UNGRATEFUL SCOURGE THE HEDGEHOG!"

"Yes I am." said Super Scourge with a very sadistic looking grin on his face "It's nothing personal Ginger, it's just to prevent you from being my downfall again. You've botched up my plans before, but never again shall I fall because of your incompetence!"

He then proceeded to fly over to some very sharp looking rocks that were hundreds of feet down below him. These were really rocky canyons off the coast of Downunda and Super Scourge thought that this would be the perfect place to drop Ginger. The ground certainly wouldn't be much of a cushion for him once he let go of him. Ginger looked down nervously and he gulped at the rocks down below. Super Scourge flashed Ginger a malicious, malevolent grin that

made him shudder and then he proceeded to let go of Ginger's neck. Ginger screamed a bloodcurdling scream as he plummeted down hundreds and hundreds of feet from the sky and down onto the rocky canyons below. The fox plummeted at the speed of a falling aeroplane. Ginger's tails were tied together in a knot so he couldn't fly at all. There was no hope of survival for Ginger at all, he plummeted down and down from the sky and towards the sharp, rocky canyons that awaited him on the ground. Ginger's screams died down as he disappeared from sight and landed with a very bloody splat on the rocky grounds below. It was impossible to see Ginger's splattered body from Super Scourge's height so Super Scourge flew down to double-check and see if Ginger was dead. Super Scourge flew down to the rocky canyons and saw the grisly remains of Ginger's dead body. The fall had indeed killed him and the rocks had just made the death all the more gruesome and bloody. So gruesome I don't want to describe to you what his dead body looks like now. You might puke violently if I did so. Suffice it to say, Ginger's all over the place now (get it?). Super Scourge grinned wickedly at what had become of his gormless sidekick and he flew back onto AngelIsland. Super Scourge landed on the island and he picked Fiona up bridal style. The vixen wrapped her arms tightly around Super Scourge, noticing how much warmer her suddenly felt as she hugged him, and she could feel the super charges in his super powered body on her arms. It was a pretty amazing feeling for her and she liked it.

"I can't believe you just did that." said Fiona coyly "You just killed Ginger."

"Yes I did and I have no regrets babe." said Super Scourge "He's useless so I decided to get rid of him. You're not useless so you live Fiona. Henceforth, you officially replace Ginger as my sidekick Fiona Fox."

"So I'm your girlfriend and your sidekick?" said Fiona "I like that. So what do we do now handsome?"

"Well Ginger caused a prison riot in EmpireCity to keep my dweeby brother occupied while I get some extra juice so I guess Sonic will be there right now." said Super Scourge "Let's go over to the MPD station and give Sonic and friends a warm welcome!"

With that said, Super Scourge rocketed off of AngelIsland at a speed that made even the famous supersonic plane Concorde look slow in comparison and he headed off to EmpireCity where Sonic and friends would be waiting for him. Unfortunately for him, Knuckles and Shade had heard where he was heading and they had a plan on how to stop him now.

"Scourge is heading for Empire City." said Knuckles "According to what he says, Sonic should be there dealing with a prison riot that his ginger sidekick caused."

"In that case, we use the Chaos Emeralds to Chaos Control ourselves over to the Empire City MPD station and we give the emeralds over to Sonic so he can use them to defeat Super Scourge." said Shade.

"I'll go get the emeralds Shade." said Knuckles "You warp yourself over with the Master Emerald and warn Sonic that Scourge is coming and he's all super powered."

"Got it." said Shade, rushing over to the Master Emerald shrine as quick as she could.

Knuckles darted off into the nearby woods and searched for the tomb the Chaos Emeralds were hidden in. Super Scourge was bound to be incredibly fast like all super forms were and for all Knuckles knew, he could be halfway to EmpireCity by now so he had to hurry. Shade was likelier to get to Empire City first as she was going to use the Master Emerald and it was just on top of the shrine. Shade ran up onto the shrine and she touched the Master Emerald with her left hand.

"Chaos…CONTROL!" she yelled at the top of her voice.

The Master Emerald had a brief moment of bright green flashing and then a Chaos Portal opened up just above the Master Emerald. Shade quickly leaped through the portal and prayed it would take her to EmpireCity just as she wanted it to. If she was too late to warn Sonic then Super Scourge might have pretty much already won…

Back at EmpireCity, the prison riot had pretty much been dealt with by now. It had been crazy and frantic thanks to Ginger the Fox freeing the six deadliest inmates, Lord Sycorax, Mr. Florenzi, his hench-lizards Mr. Polikaza and Mr. Wazikaza, Celia Punch and her husband Marcus Punch, and telling them to free the others to create a big riot but now Sonic and friends were on the case, the riot was being brought under control now. The inmates had been beaten by Sonic and friends and forced back into their cells or taken back into them. Tails the twin-tailed fox helped Sonic bring down the inmates, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk had sedated most of the inmates and dragged their sleeping bodies back to their cells, Bunnie Rabbot had forced some inmates back into their cells by threatening them with her arm cannon, Ruben the Water Panther drenched some inmates with his water powers and used them to push them into some empty cells and Team Rose (Amy Rose, Cosmo the Seedrian and Cream the Rabbit)'s teamwork overpowered the rioting inmates easily. The six main inmates to worry about had been put back in their cells and now the rest of the prison population was beginning to get put back away along with them. The prison's chief officer Melchett the Hedgehog was pleased so see that Sonic and friends were dealing with the riot so swiftly and easily and sooner or later, everything was going to be back to normal. He still couldn't help but ponder on what had caused the riot in the first place.

"Well done Royal Fighters." applauded Melchett the Hedgehog "Your contribution to the MPD is to be commended."

"No problem Melchy." said Sonic casually "We're just happy to help out whenever help calls for us."

"Just a stinkin' pity that this stupid prison riot had to happen while me and Sonic were having a date!" whined Amy as she knocked another inmate out with her always dangerous Piko-Piko hammer "Sonic took me to have a gorgeous dinner with him at Stardom Valley and then this stupid riot happens and we had to come and help knock a dozen bells off of this jokers and get them back in their cells! I hope they're willing to apologize for interrupting what was going to be a good day out with my handsome hero!"

"Some how Amy Rose, I doubt a bunch of vicious, brutal, sadistic convicts are going to be willing to apologize for starting a riot on the

same day you and Sonic decided to have a date." muttered Ruben "Convicts don't give a prawn cracker over anything they don't."

"Too bad for them!" sniffed Amy angrily.

"One thing I can't stop wondering is how did that riot start in the first place?" asked Cream "I thought these cells were impossible to break out of."

"They are child." said Melchett dryly "I bet someone sneaked into the cell blockade and opened the doors to the big six's cells and then they decided to add insult to injury by letting everybody else out just to make things worse and try to hinder us while they escaped."

"Well why don't we ask any of the big six and see if they can tell us anything?" suggested Sonic.

"You do just that." said Melchett "I'm not going anywhere near the inmates until things quieten down for a bit. I'm a little too shaky right now thanks to this ever-so sudden riot."

With that said, Sonic and Tails wondered into the cell blockade that contained the big six and they glowered sternly at the inmates who had just been put back in their cells and locked up now. Lord Sycorax had come to from Amy's knock-out and he wasn't pleased to see he was back in his cell so shortly after breaking out. The rest just scowled at Sonic and they slumped against the walls to their cells with their arms folded and their bottom lips sticking out. Sonic took a deep breathe and then he spoke to the inmates.

"Right, which of you naughty little convicts would like to tell me who started this riot?" asked Sonic in a short, plain and simple manner that was unusually emotionless for the hedgehog to use.

"Why does it matter to you squirt?" sniffed Celia "You've just ended the riot so it doesn't matter who started it!"

"Yes it does!" retorted Tails angrily "The person may start another riot so we wanna know who it is so we can find him and arrest him for this!"

"Very well then, I'll tell you cubby." muttered Lord Sycorax in a bored

manner "It was Ginger the Fox, I believe you know him as he's Scourge the Hedgehog's sidekick and Scourge is related to Sonic."

Tails looked like a dagger had just plunged into his stomach. Sonic wore the same expression he did. The hedgehog couldn't believe that Tails' dweeby, useless cousin had started this riot.

"Ginger did this?" squealed Tails "My poor excuse for a cousin started this riot? I can't believe my ears!"

"Neither can I." said Sonic "Ginger didn't seem like much the first time I tangled with him** so how could he have started this."

"He snuck in through the ventilation shaft and broke into our blockade." explained Mr. Florenzi "He then proceeded to open our doors and he told us to start a riot to distract you while he powers himself up with some mystical gems and makes Mobius a paradise for us villains. Ginger told us so himself."

"Oooooh, I'm gonna KILL him for this!" yelled Tails angrily "Just wait until I get my hands on that big headed, pompous, pretentious little jerk! He won't know what hit him when I'm through with that miscreant!"

"Tails buddy, chill for a minute." said Sonic quickly "I'm not finished with the inmates yet. Ahem, what do you mean "while Scourge powers himself up with some mystical gems."?" he asked the inmates again.

"We don't know." said Lord Sycorax "He just said Scourge is powering himself up with some mystical gems. We don't know what he means by that though but he claims Scourge is gonna use them to turn super, conquer Mobius and make it a paradise for villains, fiends and baddies everywhere."

Sonic had a sickening feeling in his stomach after hearing this from the egotistical crocodile. Scourge using mystical gems to turn super? Those mystical gems wouldn't happen to be the Chaos Emeralds would they? If so, how did Scourge come to know about them and how were they going to stop him now he was super? His face turned ashen at the very thought of Super Scourge. This day

was just starting to get hideous now.

"I think I get this now." Sonic said, trying not to splutter as he spoke.

"What? What do you mean?" asked Tails "Please tell me Sonic. Please."

"Ginger started this prison riot as a ruse to keep us occupied while Scourge uses these so-called mystical gems to power himself up!" choked Sonic "And I have a horrible feeling in my bones that they might be the C-C-Chaos Emeralds!"

"Ah think you might be right sugah." said Bunnie Rabbot, walking into the cell blockade.

She had overheard the conversation and decided to inform Sonic of what she'd found out earlier.

"Before we got the call to stop the prison riot," explained Bunnie "Ah saw some security footage of Ginger reading something off the computer monitors in Royal HQ's lab. He seemed awfully happy about what he was readin' and now he tells the inmates about mystical gems, ah think it's quite clear he was readin' about the Chaos Emeralds and is probably tellin' Scourge about them as we speak!"

Sonic and Tails looked like they'd just fallen into the pits of hell and climbed back out again.

"Oh no!" cried Tails "Oh no, no, no! Ginger knows about the Chaos Emeralds and now Scourge is gonna turn super with them once he finds them! I am so gonna kill that cretin now!"

"Well now the pieces have been put together and we know what's going on, I can safely say Ginger's officially become something to worry about." said Sonic "No wonder he's on Scourge's side, he's a pretty capable sidekick it seems. Well let's no waste anymore time! We've gotta get to AngelIsland and fast before Scourge can find the Chaos Emeralds!"

"But Sonic, we've been so caught up with this prison riot there's no way we'll get to Angel Island first!" wailed Tails "Scourge is probably

already there right now!"

"Then we'd best go over to the old floating beauty and kick him off, if Knuckles and Shade haven't done so already." said Sonic.

"Funny ya'll should mention Shade darlin'." said Bunnie, looking over her shoulder and noticing a bright flash of light behind her "She's just come through a Chaos Portal."

Sonic's first reaction was to rush out of the cell blockade with Tails and Bunnie behind him and he skidded to a halt just before Shade, who had come out of her Chaos Control and was dusting herself off. Everybody was staring at Shade, wondering what the echidna in the headband had come to EmpireCity for.

"Good afternoon Shade." said Cream, curtseying politely to her "What brings you here then?"

"You're all in grave danger!" shrieked Shade "Scourge has just used the Master Emerald to turn super and he's coming here to vanquish you all!"

The whole room erupted into a chorus of horrified gasps from the Royal Fighters and even Melchett as the idea of Super Scourge didn't sound good to him. Sonic's face turned snow white with horror and he could barely keep himself from shuddering.

"Sc-Sc-Scourge has t-t-turned s-s-super?" he squeaked "Oh…Oh no! We're too late! Scourge is now Super Scourge! We're all gonna be turned into chilli-sauce right now!"

"All is not lost hedgehog." said Shade "Knuckles is going to Chaos Control himself over here with the Chaos Emeralds and he's going to give them to you so you can turn super and face him in battle."

"Oh that's a relief." said Sonic, feeling his pounding heart "Still, we've gotta evacuate the place before…"

Before he could even so much as breathe another word out of his mouth, a bright purple flash emitted from nowhere and a giant ball of purple energy ripped it's way through the walls of the prison and blasted the place to smithereens. It was as if a giant bomb had

suddenly appeared from nowhere and gone off, bombing the entire prison to smithereens. The whole prison had just been swiftly reduced to nothing but steel debris and rocks by that sudden purple energy ball. The Royal Fighters had been sent hurling through the air by this attack and they all lay in the pile of debris that the prison had just been reduced to. All the inmates except for Lord Sycorax and a few stragglers were killed in the crumbling debris and falling shrapnel. Not that that would be of any concern to anybody as they were convicts and nobody loves a convict. All the officers save Melchett, Big Dave and General Chipper were dead too. Sonic weakly pushed himself up onto his knees and he rubbed his quills affectionately, wondering what in the world had just hit them. He soon got his answer when he saw a purple super-powered hedgehog hovering before him with Fiona Fox in his arms. It was of course, Super Scourge, and he was grinning like a swamp troll at Sonic. The blue hedgehog thought he was going to die of shock right now at the very sight of Super Scourge. His invincible brother had now just become even MORE invincible! Super Scourge put Fiona down and he began to crow at Sonic.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he cackled "Let no obnoxious quip be spoken! Let no light of heroism shine from your buddies! And let this day be feared for all those who witness the tyranny of SUPER SCOURGE! THE ULTIMATE POWER AND MOST INVINCIBLE BEING IN ALL OF EXISTANCE!"

He then bellowed with a loud, raspy, masculine sounding laughter that could make your ears whimper under the strain they were put under due to the volume of it and your bones rattle like tools in a toolbox. Sonic could do nothing more then stare in horror at Super Scourge. Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, heroes from the future, had mentioned Mobius was a wreck in the future. Was Super Scourge the cause of Mobius' destruction in the future? Was Super Scourge the coming apocalypse? Sonic had no idea but it seemed very likely so Super Scourge had to be stopped at any cost.

"Scourge…you've turned super!" gasped Sonic hoarsely "I…I…I can't believe what I'm seeing!"

"Well you'd better believe it you blue twerp because it's true!" sneered Super Scourge "I am Scourge the Hedgehog no more, I am

Super Scourge, the ultimate villain and your downfall hero of Mobius! Prepare for a super style thrashing king of the wimps!"

"Super or not, I'm gonna stop you Scourge!" yelled Sonic determinedly, even though he knew in the back of his mind taking on Super Scourge was pretty much like knocking on suicide's door and rushing inside to willingly kill yourself on any death trap that was possibly set up for you "I can't let you conquer Mobius and ruin everybody's lives! Here's hedgehog in your eye Scourge the Devil-hog!"

With that said, Sonic curled up into a blue spiky ball and he spin-dashed towards the super-powered demon-hog in a pitiful yet determined attempt to floor him. Super Scourge just smirked coolly at Sonic and he smacked him away with his hand, sending him hurling into the ground face first. Sonic groaned like a ghoul in a graveyard and he lay on the ground, wondering which part of him to rub better. Fiona laughed mockingly at him and she stomped on the hedgehog's back, making Sonic splutter hoarsely.

"Not so tough when your brother's on top of the game are ya Sonic the Sucker-hog?" jeered Fiona.

"You shut up…and stay outta this!" croaked Sonic "I'm pretty sure Super Scourge doesn't want you…to do the dirty work for him!"

"Fiona can contribute to my ultimate victory if she wants to moron!" retorted Super Scourge "Now shut up and lay still while I crack your fracking head open!"

"You leave Sonic alone!" yelled Tails bravely, flying in to stop Super Scourge from killing Sonic in one fell swoop.

Super Scourge turned around and saw Tails flying foolishly but bravely towards him with a very determined yet annoying look in his eyes. Super Scourge scowled at Tails in an annoyed manner and he grabbed the fox by his neck. Tails gagged hoarsely as Super Scourge's fingers wrapped tightly around his neck like a boa constrictor wrapping it's long, tough, muscular body around it's pray. Super Scourge flashed Tails a very sinister grin that suggested he was going to snap him in two and Tails just stared back at him

fearfully, his ears drooping back in fear and his body shaking furiously.

"Since I'm feeling generous Tails, I'm going to give you a last bit of good news before you die." said Super Scourge "Your lousy cousin is dead. I decided I wouldn't put up with his uselessness anymore so I just dropped him onto some rocky canyons and kill him. I bet that's really pleasing to hear isn't it?"

Tails was more surprised then thrilled to hear this piece of news though as Tails knew it was wrong to be happy when someone died, hated or not.

"You…killed Ginger?" blurted Tails "Gosh…I never thought you'd do that to him…at least he can't bother me anymore or be a pain for me anymore or mess my life up anymore."

"Yeah, yeah, you're free from his crap and you're happy he's dead, blah, blah, blah, yadda, yadda, yadda." Super Scourge mockingly blabbered out "Just a pity for you, you won't live long enough to dance on his grave as you're going to join him in the afterlife you mutant brat!"

"No! Please! No Scourge! No!" whimpered Tails as Super Scourge drew his arm back and prepared to punch his way directly through his head like a wrecking ball through a brick wall.

Super Scourge ignored him and prepared to launch his attack. Tails covered his eyes in fear and braced himself for the killer impact that would claim his life and send him up to heaven with the angels at long last. Before Super Scourge could even finish Tails off though, Bunnie Rabbot charged in and gave him an uppercut from behind with her powerful robotic left arm. Due to being super though, Super Scourge didn't even feel the attack! Bunnie punched at him again ever so furiously, trying to knock him out or something but Super Scourge just hovered on the spot, still holding Tails and taking the blows that Bunnie desperately launched at him. It was as if she was trying to knock a statue over with no success whatsoever. Super Scourge dropped Tails and he turned around to face Bunnie, who was still frantically punching at him. The Rabbot showed no signs of giving up though, she continued her onslaughts on the super

powered hedgehog, despite the fact they weren't even tickling him.

"You wanna punch doll face?" sneered Super Scourge "Well here you go then!"

He then proceeded to give Bunnie an uppercut strong enough to break steel and the resulting onslaught sent Bunnie hurling through the air in a rainbow arch that stretched over a fair distance. Bunnie spun through the air as she hurtled and she landed sharply on her side, grazing her organic right arm as she skidded to a halt and she lay on the ground, wondering what had just hit her. The Rabbot clutched her aching jaw, which felt like it was close to breaking, and she remained down for her sake. Super Scourge cackled at Bunnie and he was just about to beat the tar out of her again until Amy stepped in and began frantically walloping him with her Piko-Piko hammer.

"Oh no you don't you creep!" yelled Amy, bashing Super Scourge's head like crazy only to no avail "It's bad enough your sidekick Ginger started a prison riot and interrupted my date with Sonic, I'm not having you making it worse!"

"Boo hoo! I'm shedding tears for you!" snorted Super Scourge sarcastically "It breaks my stony little heart to hear this sad little story of yours! NOT!"

He then kicked Amy's hammer clean out of her hands and spin-dashed her directly in the stomach. That spin-dash was almost strong enough to plough straight through her like a rock through a window. Amy hurtled backwards and she landed ever so sharply on a pile of debris. So sharply in fact she almost broke her back in the process! Amy winced in pain and she tenderly rubbed her back better, the throb in it so bad that it would take a while for her to recover. Ruben decided to attack next by throwing waves of water at Super Scourge. Pretty foolish as water wasn't going to have any effect on a super form whatsoever. All it was going to do was get Super Scourge wet. Super Scourge faced Ruben and then ploughed through his water waves as if they weren't even there and he super-charged him. Ruben hurled backwards and he landed straight on top of Melchett, knocking the police hog onto his back. Melchett picked himself up and tried the very foolish tactic of just shooting him. He

whipped out his pistol and he began to rapidly fire at Super Scourge. But when you're super, you're invulnerable and nothing stops you. The bullets ricocheted off of Super Scourge as if he was bullet proof and Super Scourge sneered at him.

"Nice try doofus but I'm invulnerable in this form." he crowed "Nothing can hurt me, not even your lame guns!"

He then proceeded to super spin-dash Melchett in the gut and knock the pistol straight out of his hand. Super Scourge broke the pistol and he prepared to kill Melchett but Geoffrey stepped in and fired some stun-darts at Super Scourge. The darts whizzed towards Super Scourge but the moment they hit him, they just disintegrated into atoms. The super aurora surrounding Super Scourge was making it impossible for darts of any kind to touch him. Even if a stun-dart did hit him it wouldn't work, the super power in Scourge's veins would be too strong for the stun-dart to have an effect on him. Geoffrey couldn't believe that his darts weren't working. Super Scourge then proceeded to charge at Geoffrey and knock him over and then he stomped on him while he was down. Geoffrey wheezed ever so hoarsely as all the air in his lungs was about to leave him. Cream and her pet Chaos Cheese stepped into save Geoffrey but Super Scourge could already hear them coming. He just roundhouse kicked them both out of the air and onto the ground just in front of a pile of debris. Super Scourge touched down behind Cream and he grabbed her by the head. He slammed her head on a chunk of debris, leaving a large cut on her forehead and making the poor rabbit cry.

"Why does Sonic have you kids on his team?" jeered Super Scourge "You're the embodiment of uselessness! Ginger was way more competent then you ever were long ears and he was a walking example of the word fail!"

"Stop hurting Cream and leave her alone!" yelled Cosmo, throwing a rock at Super Scourge in vain hope of knocking him out.

The rock just smashed against Super Scourge and broke into pieces as if it was glass being thrown against a wall. Super Scourge didn't really feel the attack but he felt that Cosmo needed to pay for that so he let go of Cream's head and he spin-dashed Cosmo. Cosmo cried

out in pain as she was spin-dashed by Super Scourge and she landed slap-bang into a fallen wall. Cosmo sat where she was with her back against the debris, shaking like a leaf. Her pupils narrowed down to tiny dots of fear as Super Scourge stood before her.

"As for you, you alien brat!" growled Super Scourge "Once I take over Mobius and make it a kingdom fit for myself, you can be part of a freak circus I have planned. I'm pretty sure you'll be the star attraction and everybody will love to sneer at you. You'll look even worse though when I leave an imprint of my shoe on your face!"

He then raised his foot and prepared to stomp on Cosmo's face (ouch!) but Tails leaped on him from behind and cupped his hands over his eyes.

"Touch Cosmo and you'll be sorry Scourge!" screamed Tails.

"Oh I'll be sorry alright." snarled Super Scourge "Sorry I haven't killed you and Sonic yet!"

He effortlessly shrugged Tails off his shoulders, causing the fox to let go of him and then he sucker-punched him across the debris of the prison and into a slab of steel that lay standing face up on the ground. Tails hit the slab and it fell over onto it's back after he hit it. Shade leaped in with an attempted Blade Rush attack on Scourge but the attack didn't even tickle him. Shade swiped her blades at him furiously but Super Scourge took the blows as if they were nothing. Super Scourge then proceeded to give her an upper-kick that sent Shade hurling straight up into the air like a rocket. She hurtled up a great distance, so great a distance that once she fell back down, the fall would kill her. Shade began to hurtle back down to the ground but Bunnie was on hand to catch her before she could become a nasty stain on the ground. She flew up into the air with the aid of her rockets and she caught the falling echidna in her arms. Bunnie put Shade back down on the ground and then proceeded to fight Super Scourge again. She deployed her arm cannon and began blasting at Super Scourge like a mad gunman. The blasts just hit Super Scourge but he took them without any effect. Super Scourge folded his arms and smirked at the cyborg rabbit mockingly.

"This tickles!" he crowed "You'll never hurt me you morons because

I'm invulnerable! Invulnerable means NOTHNG stops me!"

He then curled up into a super-powered spiky ball and he spin-dashed Bunnie Rabbot directly in the gut. Bunnie was knocked down onto her back and she wheezed hoarsely. Super Scourge was about to attack her again until Sonic spin-dashed him from behind, the attack not even so much as making him bend forward. Super Scourge retaliated with a punch from the side of his fist and knocked Sonic back down onto the ground. Sonic picked himself up and spin-dashed him again. He just bounced off of Super Scourge as if he was a ping-pong ball bouncing off a wall. Super Scourge spin-dashed him back and knocked him down. Amy pounced on him with yet another hammer attack but, as you'd expect, the attack didn't even tickle him. Super Scourge swiped furiously at Amy and destroyed her hammer the moment his fist hit it. The hammer crumbled to bits in Amy's hands. Amy gibbered like an idiot for a moment and then she turned around and ran away but Super Scourge flew after her and kick-slammed her down onto the ground. Ruben leaped in to save her with a kung-fu kick to the jaw but not even kung-fu was going to be a match for Super Scourge. The kick felt like nothing to him. Super Scourge cupped his fists together and he slammed Ruben on the top of his head, knocking him down onto his knees. Super Scourge then proceeded to kick Ruben in the gut and knock him onto his back. Tails and Cream double-teamed him from behind with some flying punches each but Super Scourge roundhouse kicked them both out of the sky in one fell swoop. Geoffrey tried another pitiful attempt to sedate Super Scourge but his darts just couldn't snag him. They kept disintegrating before they could touch him. Super Scourge laughed mockingly at Geoffrey and he spin-dashed him as hard as he possibly could. Fiona, who was taking shelter behind some debris, had been watching the entire fight and was getting some sick, twisted, sadistic pleasure in watching Super Scourge beat the living daylights out of her former friends. Just watching this fight made Fiona smile like an evil witch. Scourge was awesome before and Super Scourge was even more awesome.

"Oh boy this is too enjoyable!" laughed Fiona "My baby is finally gaining an edge on those losers! Falling for him and joining him was the right thing for me to do it seems, otherwise I'd probably end up

like Sonic and his bunch of brats right now!"

She laughed to herself as Super Scourge dropkicked Sonic into the ground. As Sonic hit the ground, he groaned to himself and he picked himself up, straining to do so due to how weakened by the fight he was.

"It's a good thing Wilson and Mandy did go to Grand Metropolis*** otherwise they'd be getting their butts kicked as well!" muttered Sonic "Where is that Knuckles already? I thought Shade said he was coming with the Chaos Emeralds!"

He was then suddenly spin-dashed and knocked back down onto his stomach by Super Scourge, the super-powered hedgehog cackling maniacally as he did so. Sonic was now lying flat on his stomach completely at Super Scourge's mercy. Super Scourge peered down at Sonic and he flashed him a sick twisted grin that could give Count Dracula the willies.

"Well king of the wusses, it's been fun kicking your ass but now it's time to finish your ass." crooned Super Scourge, raising his foot and preparing to bring it down on Sonic's head.

The resulting stomp would end up splattering Sonic's brain all over the place and the hedgehog would be dead in a millisecond. But before Super Scourge could even so much as think about bringing his foot down, a Chaos Portal opened up behind him and Knuckles the Echidna lunged out of it, putting down the Chaos Emeralds which he'd brought with him and tackling Super Scourge from behind. Super Scourge hurtled forward as if he had just been hit by a train and he and Knuckles bounced off the ground. Knuckles raised Super Scourge above his head just as they propelled into the air again and he threw Super Scourge straight at a pile of debris, the impact causing more harm to the debris pile then Super Scourge himself. Sonic weakly pushed himself up onto his knees and his face brightened at the mere sight of Knuckles.

"Ha, ha! Ol' knucklehead's come at last!" cheered Sonic "It took him long enough didn't it?"

Super Scourge picked himself up from within the debris and he

growled at Knuckles angrily. He clenched his fists and bared his teeth like an angry gorilla.

"You just had to come and spoil my fun didn't ya knucklehead?" snarled Super Scourge "Just for that, you can be wasted too!"

With that said, Super Scourge charged into Knuckles and he grabbed him. Super Scourge lifted Knuckles high above his head and then he tossed Knuckles directly into Sonic, the echidna knocking the hedgehog off his feet as he crashed into him. The two were sent rolling over one another and they came to a stop just in front of the Chaos Emeralds, which were lying on the ground after Knuckles had leaped through the Chaos Portal. Sonic and Knuckles picked themselves up, Knuckles having an easier time then Sonic as Sonic was weakened a little. Knuckles picked up the Chaos Emeralds and he handed them over to Sonic.

"I've brought the seven Chaos Emeralds so you can match Scourge in battle." explained Knuckles "Now for Mobius' sake, use them already before Super Scourge wastes this planet!"

"Did you even need to instruct me?" sneered Sonic.

He took the Chaos Emeralds from Knuckles and he closed his eyes. He thought about going super and as he did so, the Chaos Emeralds levitated up out of his hands and they began to spin around his body in unison. Super Scourge saw what was going on and he tried to stop Sonic but the Chaos Emeralds formed a barrier around Sonic to protect him while he powered up so Super Scourge couldn't stop him. The Chaos Emeralds began to pick up speed as they circled around him until they became nothing more then colourful blurs around Sonic's body. Sonic himself then began to levitate off the ground as the emeralds continued spinning around. His quills straightened up and his fur turned gold. He was Super Sonic once again. Super Scourge growled furiously at his golden furred brother, angry that he was going to try and stop him with his own super form. Super Sonic smirked at his brother mockingly.

"We're more alike then it seems eh Scourgey Wourgey?" sneered Super Sonic.

"Super or not, you're still lame Sonic!" yelled Super Scourge "And don't call me Scourgey Wourgey!"

"Why not Scourgey Wourgey?" jeered Super Sonic.

Super Scourge growled furiously and he spin-dashed Super Sonic directly in the gut. Super Sonic was sent hurling through the air but he quickly regained himself and he charged back towards Super Scourge. Super Scourge bent over backwards and he swung his legs up as Super Sonic hurtled over him, sending the super-powered hedgehog hurling into the ground. Super Sonic crashed into the ground face first, leaving a large imprint of his face on the ground. Super Scourge then proceeded to spin-dash him in the back, making Super Sonic gasp hoarsely.

"See Sonic? Even in super form, I'm still the best!" crowed Super Scourge "You were barely a challenge for me as Sonic and even as Super Sonic, you're still no contest!"

He grabbed Super Sonic by his quills and tossed him through the air like someone throwing a Frisbee. Super Sonic spiralled dizzily through the air and he crashed into some debris. Super Sonic picked himself up and he spin-dashed Super Scourge as furiously as he could. Super Scourge cart-wheeled through the air after that attack and Super Sonic grabbed him in a chokehold. In order to avoid endangering the lives of everybody in EmpireCity, Super Sonic decided to take this battle elsewhere. He rocketed through the sky and flew away from EmpireCity. Everybody watched as Super Sonic left with Super Scourge in tow. Even Fiona was watching and she wasn't happy to see Super Sonic dragging Super Scourge away.

"Where are they going?" asked Tails.

"If I know my Sonic well enough, I think he's taking Super Scourge away from here so their battle can't ruin the city anymore then the MPD station has been ruined." suggested Amy "Where they're gonna end up is anyone's guess."

"Well we just wait until Sonic returns." said Knuckles "That is…if he does."

"Don't get your hopes up losers." scoffed Fiona "Scourge has got this in the bag, he's way stronger then Sonic is."

"You can shut up you treacherous slut!" snapped Geoffrey angrily "That Scourge bloke will never win, Sonic always comes out on top in the end so he'll win this fight!"

"Wow, you really are blinded by admiration aren't you?" taunted Fiona.

"Says the one who treats Scourge like the Messiah!" retorted Amy.

"Hey, excuse me for supporting the winning side here sugar plum." sneered Fiona "And by winning side, I obviously mean Scourge of course."

Amy summoned a new Piko-Piko hammer out of airspace and she was about to deck Fiona with it until Ruben stopped her. Ruben could see what Fiona was trying to do and he didn't want Amy to fall for it too.

"Amy, restrain yourself!" he ordered "You know better then to let yourself be taunted by Scourge's minions."

"Minion?" gasped Fiona in disgust "I'll have you know that I am not just Scourge's little minion you stupid little cat! Me and Scourge are in love with each other and Scourge doesn't see me as his little soldier, he sees me as his girlfriend and the one person who's more special to him then anybody!"

"Wow, I can't believe you've fooled yourself into believing that tosh." muttered Geoffrey.

That did it, Fiona went wild with rage. She tried to lunge at Geoffrey but Amy was on hand to hammer her away from the skunk. Fiona landed rather sharply on her back and she groaned in pain. The vixen picked herself up and decided to leg it but Amy wasn't willing to let her get away so easily. Fiona was on Scourge's side and anyone affiliated with Scourge had to be detained so Amy ran after Fiona, hoping to catch her and bring her to justice. She chased after Fiona with her hammer raised high above her head. Fiona however

bent down and grabbed something just as she was running off. Amy didn't see it but Ruben did. The water panther grew concerned for the pink hedgehog and he ran after her, a horrible feeling on what Fiona was plotting creeping into his mind.

"Amy! Don't be a fool! Get back here!" yelled Ruben desperately.

Amy ignored him and she continued running after Fiona. The vixen was rather swift and agile so she wasn't going to be an easy villain to capture. She leaped over piles of rubble and debris and she dived into the surrounding city blocks in order to lose Amy. Amy followed her to the best of her ability but Fiona was too fast for her. Within a moment or two, Fiona soon lost Amy and she hid for cover in an alleyway. Amy ran past Fiona's hiding place and she slowed down to a stop, panting heavily and rubbing her sides which were beginning to strain from the sprinting she was doing.

"Hey…Fiona…!" she panted "Come out…and face me you wretch! If Scourge can…fight Sonic then you…can fight me!"

Fiona eerily enough did as she was told and she emerged from the alleyway. She tapped Amy on the shoulder and Amy spun around to face her. Fiona then grabbed Amy by the shoulder and plunged something sharp straight into her belly! Amy gasped ever so hoarsely as she felt her stomach being penetrated. Fiona had grabbed a sharp piece of shrapnel from the wreckage of the MPD station and she'd just stabbed Amy with it. Fiona smiled sadistically at Amy and she pulled the shrapnel out of Amy's stomach, the sharp piece of debris now drenched in blood. Amy grabbed her stomach and she collapsed onto the floor, dropping her hammer and struggling to breathe. She began making hoarse gasps if she was drowning on dry land.

"Sorry I had to do this sugar-plum but it's the only way I can get Sonic's bunch of nerds off my back while I catch up with my baby." said Fiona "See ya around…if you survive this that is."

She then lightly smacked Amy on the cheek and knocked her onto her side. Amy continued to hoarsely gasp in pain as her stomach began dribbling with blood from the small but serious wound Fiona had inflicted on her. Fiona then turned around and ran like hell,

leaving Amy to lie on the ground in defeat and on the verge of passing out. Fiona had no idea where Scourge was going to be right now but she was going to do a length around the planet if it meant finding him and watching him pummel Sonic to bits. The moment Fiona left, Ruben caught up with Amy and he found the poor girl lying on the ground clutching her bleeding stomach. The water panther was horrified and he instantly ran to her side. He picked Amy up and surveyed the horrible stab wound on her stomach. Her glove was stained with blood from keeping her hand over it and the wound was still bleeding.

"Holy whirlpools!" blustered Ruben "What did that witch just do to you?"

"She…cough! cough!...stabbed me…with…a piece of…shrapnel…" croaked Amy weakly, her voice making it sound like she was having trouble speaking.

"I knew something bad was going to happen the moment I saw her pick something up!" shrieked Ruben "We've gotta get you to the hospital and fast! Good thing I know where one is in this city!"

He ran off with Amy in his arms, the pink hedgehog coughing loudly and throatily as the wound continued to bleed and the pain began to increase. Ruben picked up his pace. He was not going to let Sonic's self-proclaimed girlfriend die at the hands of Scourge's girlfriend, he was going to save her in Sonic's name. He just hoped that Sonic would come back from the fight with Super Scourge that was going on goodness knows where right now…

Meanwhile, Super Sonic had dragged Super Scourge all the way over to Downunda and he threw the purple furred super hedgehog down onto the ground in grand slam fashion. Super Scourge hit the ground and made a crater the size of an Apatosaurus's footprint around him. Super Scourge picked himself up and he prepared to do battle.

"Why'd ya pick Downunda then lame brain?" asked Super Scourge.

"So that when this fight is over, I can put the Chaos Emeralds back where they belong." explained Super Sonic "And Downunda has the space we need for this fight."

"You are so lame, do you know that?" taunted Super Scourge "Re-locating our fight just so we don't hurt anybody or ruin any cities in the process! You need to learn that being eco-friendly never gets you anywhere!"

"Never hurts to care for the environment." said Super Sonic casually "Now prepare for a super-powered black eye Scourge!"

He rocketed towards Super Scourge and literally fisted him directly in the eye! Super Scourge roared in pain and he clutched his eye. Even though he was super, other super forms could hurt him. Super Scourge growled like a lion and he spin-dashed Super Sonic as hard as he could. Super Sonic cart wheeled backwards through the air and Super Scourge dropkicked him into the ground. Super Sonic hit the ground considerably hard and he left a crater in the ground from the impact. Super Sonic tried to pick himself up but Super Scourge charged into Super Sonic and rammed him directly in the gut. The attack was so powerful he and Super Sonic ended up ploughing straight through the ground and they ended up in some kind of cavern. They didn't stay for long though. Super Scourge gave Super Sonic an uppercut that sent him hurling straight back up through the hole they had made from ploughing through the ground. Super Sonic hurtled up through the hole and Super Scourge spin-dashed him to add insult to injury. The two remerged from within the ground and into the fresh air outside once again. Super Sonic hurled through the air in a rainbow arch after coming out of the hole and he landed painfully on his side, the impact not hurting him much due to his invulnerability. Super Sonic picked himself up and he charged back towards Super Scourge but Super Scourge dodged Super Sonic's attack and dropkicked him down into the ground once again. Super Sonic landed slap-bang into the ground front first and Super Scourge slammed himself down onto his back. Super Sonic gasped in pain and he rubbed his back furiously. Super Scourge grabbed Super Sonic from behind and then suddenly threw him into the air like a tennis ball. Super Sonic spiralled through the air, crying out as he did so and Super Scourge spin-dashed him out of the sky once

again.

"Ha, ha, ha! This isn't a fight, this is exercise!" taunted Super Scourge.

Super Sonic regained his balance and he fumed angrily at his brother. How was Super Scourge besting him so easily? Was it because Scourge was stronger then he was in their natural state? Regardless, Super Sonic was not going to let Super Scourge defeat him. He had to stop him before he ravaged Mobius with his super powers. Super Sonic picked himself up and he spin-dashed towards Super Scourge. He struck Super Scourge in the face and knocked his sunglasses clean off his head. Super Scourge frantically flew after them and he caught them, only to get spin-dashed from behind by Super Sonic. Super Scourge crashed into the ground but he wasn't down for long. He picked himself up and he charged towards Super Sonic furiously Super Sonic however, held his arms out and yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" and he teleported out of Super Scourge's path. He reappeared behind Super Scourge and he dropkicked him in the back. Super Scourge retaliated with an uppercut to the chin that would've broken Super Sonic's jaw if he wasn't super right now. Super Scourge punched Super Sonic in the face and then he fist slammed him on the head. Super Sonic tried to attack back but Super Scourge yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" and froze time around Super Sonic for a moment. Super Sonic was stuck in his current position and he couldn't move. Super Scourge flew behind Super Sonic and he roundhouse kicked him out of the sky. Super Sonic crashed into the ground and he ploughed straight through it, making a hole in the ground but he didn't end up going right through into the cavern like before. Super Sonic flew back out of the hole, only to get rammed by Super Scourge and sent spiralling through the air. Super Scourge elbowed Super Sonic in the back and then kicked him in the jaw. Super Sonic retaliated with an uppercut and then an upwards kick to the face and then he added a gut punch and a left and right hook each to his attacks. Super Scourge head-butted Super Sonic, the onslaught making Super Sonic grip his head and rub it furiously, giving Super Scourge the opportunity to ram Super Sonic out of the sky. Super Sonic rocketed into Super Scourge and knocked him backwards through the sky. Super Sonic then clasped his hands together and walloped Super

Scourge with them. Super Scourge growled furiously and he clenched his fists. He tensed himself up and his body began to glow brighter then normal. Super Sonic knew what that meant and he tried to fly away but Super Scourge let out all the energy he was building up and bellowed.

"Chaos… **BLASSSSTTTT!** "

He released all the energy from within his super aurora and he blasted Super Sonic with raw Chaos Energy. Super Sonic hurtled through the air as if he'd been hit by an explosion and he came to a halt a good distance away from Super Scourge. Super Sonic grabbed his arm and he panted heavily after that attack. Super Scourge cackled at him and he spin-dashed Super Sonic out of the sky once again. Super Sonic was sent hurling into the ground yet again. Super Scourge continued to laugh maniacally as he hovered over Super Sonic in triumph.

"Ha!" he sneered "Even in super form, you're no match for me wimp! Let's face it Sonic, no matter what you do, I'll always be better then you!"

"In your dreams Scourge!" retorted Sonic "If you're better then me then how come I always win?"

"Because Ginger kept screwing up on me and your friends keep interfering with our battles." noted Super Scourge "Now Ginger can't screw up on me because he's dead and your friends ain't here, you have no chance against me. Now, are you ready to give in or do I get to beat you up some more?"

"How about "C" -none of the above?" asked Super Sonic, kicking Super Scourge in the tender spot.

Super Scourge yelped in pain but he wasn't in as much pain as he would have been if he wasn't super powered and he quickly retaliated with a roundhouse punch to the jaw. Super Scourge then proceeded to pound Super Sonic swiftly and mercilessly all over his body and every punch he threw just got harder and harder. Poor Super Sonic couldn't keep up with him and he found himself getting horribly pummelled by Super Scourge. Super Scourge then back

flipped and walloped Super Sonic with his feet as they flipped up and over. Super Scourge then light-dashed Super Sonic and knocked him down onto the ground. Super Sonic light-dashed him back and sent him in a spin through the air. The two then flew backwards away from each other and they light-dashed each other. They both bounced off of each other but they wheeled around and did it again. Anyone watching this incredible display down below would feel like they were watching a light show with a golden and purple light constantly bouncing off of one another. Super Sonic and Super Scourge were light-dashing each other so fast, so hard and so brilliantly that they just looked like beams of light rapidly soaring through the sky at the speed of light. Super Sonic and Super Scourge light-dashed each other repeatedly over and over until eventually, Super Scourge overpowered Super Sonic and he dropkicked him out of the sky.

"Eat dirt blue!" he jeered as Super Sonic got yet another mouth full of dirt down below.

Super Sonic picked himself up but before he could even prepare himself, Super Scourge grabbed him from behind and he carried Super Sonic up into the air. He carried Super Sonic up a good few feet before stopping and throwing Super Sonic straight down into the ground. Super Sonic however, teleported using Chaos Control and reappeared behind Super Scourge before he could hit the ground. Super Sonic spin-dashed Super Scourge from behind and the two ended up crashing into the ground together. Super Scourge grumbled furiously and he picked himself up. Super Sonic leaped into the air and kicked him in the head, knocking him over onto his back. Super Scourge however, jumped into the air like a kangaroo and he head butted Super Sonic in the forehead. Super Sonic yelped in pain and Super Scourge then proceeded to gut punch Super Sonic and then roundhouse kick him in the head. Super Sonic groaned in pain and Super Scourge then fist slammed him down onto the ground and viciously kicked him across the ground. Super Sonic got back to his feet and then spin-dashed Super Scourge as hard as he could. Super Scourge spin-dashed Super Sonic back but Super Sonic was on hand to spin-dash Super Scourge from behind and then kick him in the back. Super Scourge tried to grab Super Sonic but Super Sonic used a Chaos Control on him and made him

slow down. Slow down to the point that he appeared to be moving a fraction of a millimetre every second. Super Sonic then took the opportunity to spin-dash Super Scourge repeatedly all over his body while he was stuck in a Chaos Control and just as the Chaos Control wore off, Super Sonic kick-slammed Super Sonic in the head. He then grabbed Super Scourge in a chokehold and held him there as he tightly wrapped his arm around his throat.

"Say uncle Scourgey Wourgey!" said Super Sonic as he tightened his grip "Say it!"

"Don't…call…me…SCOURGEY WOURGEY!" thundered Super Scourge.

He warped himself out of Super Sonic's grasp with a Chaos Control and he reappeared behind Super Sonic. He let loose a flurry of super fast punches, kicks and light dashes all over Super Sonic in blind rage. He was going so fast that Super Sonic couldn't even see him. The poor hedgehog was getting overwhelmed by Super Scourge's rapid attacks and Super Scourge then decided to add insult to injury by Chaos Blasting him once again. This blast was even worse then the first one he did due to how angry he was. Chaos Blasts got worse depending on emotions after all. Super Sonic was thrown through the sky and he crashed onto the ground face first. He skidded to a very painful halt on his face and he lay on the ground, panting heavily and trying to pick himself up. Despite his super powers, he just couldn't defeat Super Scourge. He was too powerful for him and right now, he was having trouble getting back up. Super Scourge stood before Super Sonic and he laughed maniacally at him.

"Wah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" he cackled "I win! I win! Hell yeah baby! Whoo hoo! I've finally beaten my stupid brother! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Super Sonic managed to push himself onto his back and he stared weakly and pathetically at Super Scourge. Super Scourge glowered at Super Sonic and he grinned maliciously at him.

"At long last, I've beaten you blue!" sneered Super Scourge "Now it's time to finish you off…FOR GOOD! It was fun while it lasted at least but now your time has come. Say hello to Ginger for me, not that

you'll want to."

He was just about to pummel Super Sonic once again until something strange happened. Before he could launch a single punch, his purple fur began to fade away back into green. His clothes began to change back to their normal colour and his strength began to fade away. He dropped down onto the ground and the super aurora disappeared into thin air. His super form had run out! Super Scourge had spent too much of his time gloating and showing off and therefore, wasted his super form. He really should have killed Ginger afterwards instead of before and he really should of gloated less. After all, arrogance was his biggest weakness. Scourge picked himself up and he looked at himself. He was back to normal and his super form had gone.

"NOOOO!" he bellowed in agony "NO, NO, NO, NOOOOOO! I WAS SO CLOSE TO VICTORY AND NOW MY SUPER FORM RUNS OUT! WHY DIDN'T THAT IDIOT GINGER WARN ME MY SUPER FORM WASN'T GOING TO LAST FOREVER? HE READ ABOUT THE CHAOS EMERALDS SO HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEIR SIDE EFFECTS!"

"Well I guess Ginger didn't pay enough attention to detail and you just couldn't stop gloating long enough to finish me." sneered Super Sonic "Since I turned super after you did though, mine won't run out yet and now I can use it to beat the cuss outta ya!"

"No! Please! Don't!" begged Scourge pathetically "Don't do this to me!"

"Why not Scourgey Wourgey?" jeered Super Sonic "You've just beaten me to a pulp and then tried to kill me so why shouldn't I beat you up then?"

Scourge couldn't think of a suitable enough answer so instead, he decided to randomly yell something to distract him.

"Hey look! Dr. Eggman's behind you!" he cried dramatically, pointing behind Super Sonic.

"What?" blurted Super Sonic, turning around and looking around for

Dr. Eggman.

While Super Sonic was distracted, Scourge took the opportunity to run like hell. He zipped away from the battlefield at supersonic speed. So fast that he was gone the moment Super Sonic turned around to deal with him again. Super Sonic cursed himself for letting Scourge get away and he powered himself down. There was no point wasting a super form trying to find Scourge when he could use his power for something more useful. Besides, he didn't see where Scourge had run off to so Scourge could be anywhere right now and he'd run out by the time he found him. Sonic's golden fur faded back to blue and the Chaos Energy in him faded away. The Chaos Emeralds appeared from nowhere and they settled down at his feet. Sonic scuffed his feet crossly and he moaned to himself.

"Darn it! Scourge evades me again!" he muttered "When will I eventually catch my wayward brother? Oh if only we never visited AngelIsland in the first place and I wouldn't be in this never-ending conflict of good vs. evil with him! I much preferred our sibling rivalry then our hero-villain rivalry! Oh well, I'll get Scourge eventually, it's only a matter of time until…"

His voice trailed off as he looked in the direction of the hole in the ground that led to the cavern they'd briefly ended up in earlier. There was a bright flash coming from inside the cavern. Sonic wondered what it was so he wandered over to the hole and jumped down it. It was a long drop but a long drop was no problem for Sonic. He fell down the hole and he finally arrived at the bottom of it. He was back in the cavern that he and Scourge briefly dug down to during the super fight. The only thing was, the cavern had something inside it. Something that Sonic could hardly believe he was looking at.

"Get. a. load. of. these!" he stammered as he surveyed the cavern.

The cavern was full of colourful clusters of what appeared to be chunks of emeralds all fused together. They were the colours of the Chaos Emeralds and they were all flashing in a beautiful, bright glow together…

Footnotes:

***He's talking about Super Mecha Sonic from story 14 and Dark Chaos Powered Imperator Ix from Stories 73-74 respectively**

**** See Story 35**

***** Wilson and Mandy are otherwise engaged as you've seen in *Tales from Mobius Arc 10: Pain in Megapolis***

Talk about an eventful day! Scourge turns super, Ginger's dead, some minor villains are dead, Amy's in hospital and Sonic's just found something interesting! What's he found and what's their story? Join me next time as we begin a brand new saga that's filled to the brim with emeralds! Reviews are welcome.

Emeralds Part 1

Story 90: Emeralds Part 1: Mysteries in Clusters

The hero of Mobius, Sonic the Hedgehog, had just been in an epic battle of supers with his evil brother Scourge the Hedgehog. Sonic had taken a tremendous beating but due to the fact he transformed much later then Scourge did and Scourge wouldn't stop gloating and bragging about himself, Scourge ran out of super power, leaving Sonic victorious and Scourge to run away and fight another day. Sonic would have been trying to catch Scourge right now but something had caught his attention. During the fight, the two had ended up digging into a deep cavern and Sonic had found something of great interest in the cavern. The cavern was full of colourful clusters. They were spiky, colourful, sparkly, glowing chunks of what appeared to be Chaos Emeralds all fused together. They were all glowing in unison and the cavern was alight with their flashes. Were they not here, the cavern would be pitch black now. Sonic stared at the sparkly clusters in awe and he wondered over to a large one curiously. He reached out a hand and he touched one of the clusters. It felt exactly like a Chaos Emerald. The surface, the texture and even the energies inside felt exactly the same as a Chaos Emerald. This was more then surreal enough for Sonic to think he was going mad. There were only seven Chaos Emeralds now, how could these clusters possibly exist? The Chaos Emeralds had all been fused into seven so where did these come from? Sonic had many questions and he needed to know the answers or he was going to drive himself crazy. Sonic knew exactly who to ask though. The guardian of Angel Island himself, Knuckles the Echidna. He was an expert on the Chaos Emeralds so he was bound to know what these were and where they came from.

"So you mystery clusters, where did you come from and how can you possibly be here since there's only seven Chaos Emeralds left?" mused Sonic.

He wandered away from the cluster he was touching and he looked around for a small cluster. Most of the ones in the cavern were way

too large for him to carry and it would be awkward considering how jagged they were so he would need one that was travel size for his convenience. Luckily for him, the clusters weren't all the same size. Some were enormous, some were big and some were small and after looking around the cavern for a while, Sonic found a cluster that was the size of his hand. It was quite clear some clusters had more emeralds fused together then others. Sonic picked up the emerald cluster and he wandered back over to the hole in the ceiling.

"Now's the time to find out what the story behind these clusters are." said Sonic.

He curled himself up into a spiky ball and he spin-dashed out of the cavern by zooming up through the hole while he was in a spin-dash. He shot up through the hole and back outside into the fresh air of day up above. Sonic landed on his feet and he looked at the emerald cluster he was now holding. He then noticed the seven Chaos Emeralds lying on the ground after the super battle had been over and they were all glowing brighter then ever due to the fact the cluster was near them. The cluster was glowing too, meaning that they were definitely Chaos Emeralds fused together to make a cluster. But where did they come from? Sonic had to get to the bottom of this, something was not quite right around here.

"I though Knuckie said his dad fused the Chaos Emeralds together to make only seven." Sonic said to himself "Seems more like his dad fused the Chaos Emeralds together to make these clusters and only seven of them didn't get fused together. I smell something fishy around here. I bet Knuckles knows something about this. And if he does, maybe he can explain the purpose of these clusters. If not then his dad's definitely hiding something from all of us, even his own son."

Before he could wonder to himself any further, his sidekick and best friend Tails the Fox suddenly appeared from nowhere flying through the air with his twin-tails. The fox looked frantic. He was acting like the sky was falling. Tails flew down and landed straight in front of Sonic, breathing heavily and gasping for breath.

"Sonic! Gasp, pant, Thank goodness I've found you!" he exclaimed,

panting heavily "I've been looking all over for you!"

His attention was suddenly diverted at the emerald cluster Sonic had in his hand.

"What the heck is that?" asked Tails.

"A mystery, that's what it is." said Sonic "Now, what's up Tails?"

"Fiona stabbed Amy while you and Scourge were fighting!" exclaimed Tails "Amy's in the hospital right now but she's in bad shape! You've gotta come see her quickly!"

Sonic could hardly believe what he had heard. Fiona stabbed Amy while he and Scourge were having a battle of the supers? How about that, he leaves his friends alone for five minutes and now one of them ends up hospitalized! Sonic had to get home and quick to see if Amy was OK. Amy would want him to be at her side right now.

"Thanks for that Tails, I'll be home as soon as possible." said Sonic "Can you put the Chaos Emeralds back on Angel Island for me since you can actually get up there?"

"Yes Sonic." said Tails "I'll join you as soon as they're back on the island."

With that said, Sonic rocketed off at top speed, leaving Tails behind to pick up the Chaos Emeralds and carry them back to the magical floating island known as Angel Island. As Sonic ran on back to Empire City, he began to wonder how bad a shape Amy was in and if she was going to live. It looked like the mystery of the emerald clusters would have to wait as his self-proclaimed girlfriend was horribly wounded and likely in need of his presence now…

Back at Empire City, Ruben the Water Panther had quickly rushed the wounded Amy Rose to hospital and in a good amount of time, the pink hedgehog had been put into a room and was being seen to by the medics double quick. The others, Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey St. John arrived at the hospital to see Amy. They

gathered around her bed to look at the wounded hedgehog to see if she was alright. Amy's entire torso had been wrapped from the chest down to her waist in bandages and she was just lying on the bed, sleeping like a baby. A heart monitor beside her was beeping slowly, indicating her heartbeat wasn't very strong right now. She had lost quite a bit of blood from that stab to the stomach from Fiona and if she didn't receive any medical care, she was not going to make it out alive. As Amy slept on the bed, the others exchanged worrying glances amongst each other. Cream and Cosmo were the most worried as they were Amy's best friends. Cream in particular was on the verge of tears as Amy was like a sister to her and had looked after her during the times her mother had been roboticized* so seeing her friend lying there wrapped in bandages and clinging onto life like a man dangling from a cliff was too much for the rabbit to handle. A nurse was seeing to Amy's current condition right now. The nurse was a female woodchuck with blonde hair and a traditional nurse's outfit. She looked very grim as she monitored poor Amy. Cream tugged the nurse's skirt nervously and the nurse looked at her.

"E-excuse me miss." said Cream, trying not to sob "I-I-Is Amy g-going to live?"

The nurse gave Cream an expression that wasn't very reassuring to her. She looked grave.

"It's hard to say dear." said the nurse sadly "The wound seems only superficial but it's actually a lot worse then it looks. That stab poor Amy has received was close to fatal and it's possible it may end up claiming her life unless we can do something. What on Mobius happened to the poor child?"

"She got stabbed by a piece of shrapnel while trying to catch a villain." explained Ruben "The villain picked it up from the rubble of the now destroyed MPD station and stabbed her with it. I found her bleeding like mad so I rushed her here as quick as I could."

"And that was very good of you little boy but even then, the situation seems very grim right now." said the nurse, feeling Amy's chest to see how her breathing was "That stab was pretty serious and she's lost a lot of blood. Unless we can do something about it, she'll die."

That piece of news was not reassuring to anybody. This made them grow more concerned for poor Amy and Cream ended up breaking down in tears at the very thought of losing Amy. Cosmo hugged Cream as if she was a caring sister trying to calm her younger sister down and she shed a tear or two with her.

"Oh no!" wailed Cream "Amy can't die! I don't want her to! I don't want Amy to die!"

"Hopefully, she'll pull through but I'm not betting on it." said the nurse glumly "If Amy does survive, it'll mostly be by pure good luck and I don't think it's on her side right now."

She noted the heart monitor in how it seemed to be beeping slower and slower by the second. The gaps In between beeps got longer and longer. Amy's situation seemed very desperate right now. Ruben then suddenly got cross and he kicked the wall furiously to let his temper out.

"Why didn't that stupid girl listen to me?" grumbled Ruben "I told her to come back and she blatantly ignored me and ended up getting stabbed by Fiona! I could have saved her all this but she didn't listen to me and got stabbed! I hope she pulls through so I can give her a good telling off for not keeping herself under control when I told her to!"

"Ruben mate, take it easy." said Geoffrey "Amy's a stubborn little girl and she needs to work on it. You can't go chastising the little girl because all yer gonna do is upset her and the last thing she needs right now is upsetting."

"I know Geoffrey it's just I wish people would listen to me when I warn them." said Ruben "You all forget I do hail from Chun-Nan and children in Chun-Nan who get trained in martial arts tend to mature pretty quickly and have intelligence greater then you give us credit for. I knew the moment Fiona began taunting us that she was trying to goad someone into attacking her so she could inflict pain on them and probably kill them and I was only trying to save Amy from falling into that trap."

"I see." said Geoffrey "But you need to remember this ain't Chun-

Nan and the citizens here do behave differently to you so you can't expect everybody to listen to ya just because you think you're right."

"I'll try and keep that in mind in the future." said Ruben "As of now, I dearly hope that Amy makes it or I will feel sorry for her and all her friends."

Geoffrey nodded in agreement as everybody continued to stare in despair at Amy, still sleeping on the bed and breathing very faintly. Cream couldn't stop crying so Cosmo led the rabbit away from the bed and sat her down on a chair in the corner. The heart monitor beside Amy's bed stopped beeping slower and slower every minute but it was still beeping slowly with long pauses between the beeps. Her heartbeat had stopped getting weaker but it was still weak right now. The nurse continued to monitor Amy as her friends stared at her sadly. Then suddenly, just when the room was going to be entirely consumed by doom and gloom, Sonic the Hedgehog finally arrived into the room and skidded to a halt just outside of Amy's room, the emerald cluster still glowing in his hands. Sonic stepped into Amy's room carefully and he noticed that all his friends were in the room as well. Everybody's faces brightened at the sight of Sonic arriving into the room at last.

"Sonic, you made it back you speedy little daredevil hog!" laughed Knuckles playfully "We was beginning to think Super Scourge had gotten the best of ya!"

"He almost did actually." said Sonic "But his super form ran out, luckily for me, and now he's running away like a coward. Where he is now is anyone's guess but Super Scourge is no more at least."

He then stopped and noticed that everybody was staring awkwardly at him. Sonic turned his head to one side and pulled a confused expression at his friends.

"What are you all staring at then?" asked Sonic.

"What the hoo-hah is that ya'll have in yer hands sugah-hog?" asked Bunnie, pointing at Sonic's emerald cluster that he had brought all the way back to Empire City with him.

Sonic looked down at the still sparkling cluster in his hands and realized what they were staring at.

"Oh this?" said Sonic "I'll explain later, now's not the time. Where's Amy?"

"Right here Sonic." said the nurse.

Sonic walked over to Amy's bedside and he looked at the wounded hedgehog. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. Amy was wrapped from the chest down to her waist in bandages, hooked up to a heart monitor and sleeping, her breathing very weak and raspy as she snoozed away. Fiona had clearly stabbed her pretty bad because Amy looked like she was on the verge of death right now.

"Oh…my…gosh!" gasped Sonic "What did Fiona do to her? Stab her with a fricken sword? I can't believe that traitor stooped so low as to do something like this!"

"It's horrible! Absolutely horrible!" sobbed Cream, her tears raining down her cheeks and staining the fur under her cheeks "Amy's going to die unless she can be saved! I don't want Amy to die! I don't wanna lose my best friend!"

Sonic looked pityingly at the sobbing rabbit and felt like he wanted to shed a tear with her. Cream's sobs were saddening and depressing enough to make even the toughest man cry. Sonic looked back over at Amy and put a hand on her hand, which just sat beside her not moving or anything. The hedgehog's quills dropped back in sorrow.

"Ames? Can you hear me?" asked Sonic "If you can then you must know I'm sorry I wasn't there for you when Fiona did this. I wish I could have been there to save you but Scourge had me occupied. I really hope that we can save you in some…way…"

His voice trailed off as he looked back at the emerald cluster he had with him. If this was a cluster of Chaos Emerald pieces then it must have the same powers as a Chaos Emerald. If that was the case then…

"Wait a minute! We do have a way!" exclaimed Sonic excitedly "Hey

Knuckles, can a Chaos Emerald heal the sick and injured?"

"They can indeed." said Knuckles "They have an ability known as Chaos Regeneration which heals all wounds and puts the person back to normal. But that's not a Chaos Emerald you have with you so that won't work."

"Correction, it will." said Sonic "This is a cluster of Chaos Emeralds this is and I should know because it feels like a Chaos Emerald and it glows brightly when near other Chaos Emeralds. Believe me, I've tried it."

Knuckles and Shade both gave Sonic a look of total gobsmack. The two echidnas didn't know what to say about this.

"But…but that's impossible!" cried Knuckles "There's only seven Chaos Emeralds left so how can that be a Chaos Emerald cluster?"

"I was hoping you could answer me that." muttered Sonic "But it seems you're such a knucklehead, you don't know anything about these clusters. How about you Shade?"

"I don't know anything about that cluster either." said Shade "I thought there were only seven emeralds left, there can't possibly be clusters of Chaos Emeralds."

"Well, there is and if you don't believe me, I'll show ya once we heal Amy." said Sonic "There's am underground cavern full of them in Downunda and that's where this came from."

Knuckles and Shade began to think about this mystery cluster. Where did it come from and how could it be? There were only seven Chaos Emeralds left. Had there been a mistake? Were the clusters artificial or were there more Chaos Emeralds then Locke thought there had been.

"I think somebody's been hiding something from me and my dad!" growled Knuckles "Well I'll show him or her once I get my hands on them!"

"Easy Knuckles." said Shade "I don't think anybody's hiding anything from us. Maybe, your dad made a mistake or something when he

listed the Chaos Emeralds. Maybe nobody on Angel Island knows about the clusters and they think the seven Chaos Emeralds are all there is."

"But dad used his Chaos Energies to fuse them all into seven!" exclaimed Knuckles "There shouldn't be any left! Those clusters shouldn't exist!"

"Well, they do." said Sonic "So I guess your dad made a very messy job of fusing the emeralds together or he missed a few. Now keep quiet while I heal Amy with this."

"No Sonic!" protested Knuckles "You have no idea what that cluster might do! It might be too much for…"

Sonic ignored the protesting echidna and she held the cluster above Amy's body and he yelled at the top of his voice.

"Chaos…REGENERATION!"

The moment he yelled that, the chaos cluster glowed brighter then all seven Chaos Emeralds and the room was engulfed in a bright, flashing light. Everybody shielded their eyes from the blinding, dazzling light that filled the room top to bottom. Anyone coming by the room now would probably be dazzled too by the bright light that filled the room. After a while of flashing, the light died down and faded away, leaving everybody able to open their eyes and see again. The chaos cluster had died down to just sparkling now. Sonic opened his eyes and he lowered the cluster. Had it worked? At first, nothing seemed to have changed. Then suddenly, the heart monitor was beginning to beep a little faster then before. The beep got faster and faster until it stopped increasing and was now beeping at the normal steady pace it should be beeping at. Amy's heartbeat was getting stronger. In fact, Amy herself was beginning to stir sleepily. Her fingers twitched for a moment and then her whole arm began to move. Then, Amy began to sit up on the bed, much to the bewilderment of the nurse and everybody in the room. Amy stretched slightly and she sat up nice and straight. Her eyes opened and she looked around the room. She noticed she was wrapped in bandages and she looked to her side, noticing Sonic standing there. Sonic couldn't believe his eyes. Amy was all better now! The Chaos

Regeneration had worked! Amy was going to live after all! As for Amy, her face brightened at the sight of her handsome hero standing there at her bedside.

"Sonic!" she squealed "Oh I'm so glad you're here to see me!" she grasped Sonic in a tight hug like she usually did when she met him.

"Oh she's better alright." muttered Sonic "That Chaos Regeneration really packs a wallop doesn't it?"

"Chaos Regeneration is unbelievable in more ways then one Sonic." said Shade "You have no idea what kind of wounds it can heal."

"Well boy were we lucky." said Sonic brightly "So Ames, how do you feel now?"

"I feel fine now." said Amy, fleeing her bandaged torso all over "In fact…I feel more then fine…I feel great! I feel like Fiona never stabbed me! What did you do to me Sonic?"

"I only used a Chaos Regeneration on ya." said Sonic casually "I used this in order to save you."

He showed Amy the mysterious chaos cluster that had just saved her life right now. Amy didn't know what to say about the cluster other then.

"Wow. That thing's beautiful. What is it and where did you get it?"

"It's a cluster of Chaos Emeralds and I found it in an underground cavern in Downunda." explained Sonic "We're not sure how this is possibly as there's only seven Chaos Emeralds."

"Hmm…" mused Amy "Maybe there's more Chaos Emeralds then we thought there were."

"Well whatever it is, me and Shade are investigating them." said Knuckles "I'm getting to the bottom of this and no one is going to get in my way! Sonic, care to show me where the clusters are?"

"I sure can." said Sonic "You just follow me and I'll lead you right to them."

"You'll have to take it slow though Sonic as you can't carry me and that cluster at the same time and I can't run as fast as you." said Knuckles.

"Oh, do I have to?" moaned Sonic "I hate going slow."

Luckily for Sonic, it didn't seem he'd need to as Tails had finally arrived back at Empire City and he found Sonic and friends in Amy's room. Sonic beamed happily at the arrival of Tails.

"Tails, you made it back!" cried Sonic "You can carry Knuckles and follow me to Downunda."

"We're going back to Downunda?" blurted Tails tiredly "What for?"

"To investigate these." said Sonic, showing Tails the cluster "Come on bud, we don't have all day."

With that said, Sonic, Tails and Knuckles all ran out of the hospital as quick as flashes and they set courses for Downunda, leaving the others to take Amy home and await further updates. It was good to see that Amy's life had been saved and yet there was more going on then they thought there was. How can these emerald clusters exist? And where did they come from if there's only seven Chaos Emeralds…?

Unfortunately for Sonic and friends, somebody had picked up the Chaos Energy signatures coming from the emerald clusters in the cavern. That somebody was Dr. Eggman's silent but deadly minion Katherine the Fem-bot, Eggman's replacement servant for the treacherous Alonzo the Butler Bot. Katherine had been spending all this time looking after Dr. Eggman after his mind had just snapped like a twig** and now she'd just detected huge spikes of Chaos Energy coming from Downunda. Her radar senses were on par with the strongest of satellites so she'd pick up anything. Katherine decided to investigate this strange sudden energy spike but Dr. Eggman was still insane and babbling like an idiot to himself so he wouldn't be able to come with her. Katherine looked at her snivelling master who was still gibbering to himself. It pained her to see her

master reduced to this mad state.

"Herp, derp, nerp, nope, nap, dap, bananafish, I can has cheeseburger? Hate that hedgehog, why machine no workie-derkie?" he blubbered stupidly to himself "It's over 9000, arrow to the knee, this is Sparta, tearing me apart, Chuck Norris, Dinkleberg, dorp, derp, dap, dip, nip, nap, nerp, norp, na, na, na, na, na, where's my Tails Doll? Gorpie Dorpie Candyfloss…"

Katherine shook her head in disappointment at her master. He'd been resting for a while and he still seemed to be off the deep end. This was going to be one long road to recovery. Katherine decided she'd do this mission without Dr. Eggman. She left her master alone to continue blubbing and rocking about uncontrollably in his quarters while she investigated the chaos energy signatures. She would bring a squad with her for back up. Katherine was going to find the source of this Chaos Energy signature, bring it to Dr. Eggman and hopefully, please him with it once he came back from the brink. She just hoped that Sonic and friends weren't going to interfere with her.

Meanwhile, Scourge the Hedgehog had returned to Downunda after fleeing the super fight. He had retreated under the idea of leaving Sonic to either power down or run out of super power and then deck him ten times to Spagonia. Unfortunately for Scourge, Sonic had already gone so his plan hadn't worked. He stomped the ground furiously and began cursing to himself.

"&%£*!" he swore "Sonic's just gone and run away! Weird though considering he's just beaten me. Why did he suddenly turn chicken and run? Maybe there's something going on back at his home or something. Oh well, he'll have powered down by now so I can just go and spin-dash him into a pulp once I get my hands on him! I can't believe I failed to kill him even though I was so close! Well the next time I face him, I will not fail! I will proper kill him this time!"

Scourge then proceeded to trudge grumpily through the plains of Downunda, not noticing the hole that led to the chaos cluster cavern underground that he and Super Sonic had made during the super battle. He didn't walk for long though. He heard the sound of

pounding feet coming towards him and he stopped dead in his tracks. Was it Sonic or one of his friends coming to beat the cuss out of him? He had no idea but he braced himself to attack. Then suddenly, he saw what was making that noise. It was only his girlfriend, the treacherous ex-Royal Fighter vixen Fiona Fox running towards him. The vixen had finally found Scourge and she ran over to him, panting heavily. Scourge beamed and lowered his fists, pleased to see it was Fiona. Fiona caught up to Scourge and she threw herself into Scourge's arms, wrapping her arms around him tightly and lovingly.

"Scourge! I've…pant…found you…at last…puff!" panted Fiona "I've…been running all over…looking…for you!"

"Well you found me at last sweet thing." said Scourge happily "Good thing you didn't arrive in time to see me lose to Super Sonic otherwise you would have died of disappointment."

"You what?" squealed Fiona as she was just catching her breath back "You…you lost? How?"

"I ran out of super power just as I was about to kill Sonic!" grumbled Scourge "Can you believe it? Of all the embarrassing defeats I could have! I run out of super power! Why didn't that dork Ginger warn me that Chaos Emeralds had a side effect like this? He read about them so he should know that their power isn't everlasting! Even as I've killed him, his uselessness still strikes on me! Well at least he can't screw up anymore now he's dead."

"Agreed." said Fiona "Although we can all agree had you killed Ginger AFTER you defeated Sonic then you wouldn't have run out of power at the wrong time." she noted.

"Yeah, so it's mine and Ginger's faults more or less." grumbled Scourge "Well, everybody makes mistakes, even awesome guys like me, and now I've learnt from that mistake, I shan't make it again!"

"I'm glad about that hon." said Fiona "And you'll be glad to hear about this. I stabbed Amy in the gut while I made my getaway from Empire City."

Scourge's face twisted into an expression of unwavering devilishness. It was quite clear the hedgehog was fascinated to hear this. His sunglasses nearly fell off his face after making that expression.

"You stabbed Sonic's prissy little fan-brat?" he exclaimed happily "Whoa! I didn't know you were THAT badass Fiona! No wonder I'm keeping you alive instead of Ginger! Ginger could never do anything so cool! I beat that's why Sonic's gone and left instead of trying to get me. He's running home to give his girlfriend a get better kiss no doubt."

"Well only heroes get to be so soppy." sneered Fiona "We villains are much tougher then they are. While they're distracted by horror, despair and heartbreak over poor Amy, we should kick their teeth in."

"Good idea Fi." said Scourge "I'm gonna march straight over to Empire City and…"

His voice trailed off when he began to walk by the hole in the ground and he noticed a bright flash coming from inside the hole. Scourge stopped dead in his tracks and he stared at the hole, wondering what could possibly be down it. Whatever it was, it was likely to be mystical as it was glowing brightly. Scourge stared down the hole and noticed some bright lights coming from inside. Fiona noticed Scourge seemed interested in what was down the hole and she stood behind him.

"Scourge? Hunky chops? What's up?" she asked concernedly.

"There's summet glowing down here." replied Scourge "And I'm going to find out what it is. Come on babes."

He hopped down the hole and slid all the way down to the bottom. Fiona followed him quickly, wondering what Scourge had seen. The two villains arrived at the bottom of the hole and they found themselves inside an underground cavern. The moment they arrived in the cavern, the first thing they did was gape in awe at what they were met with. The cavern was full of clusters. Clusters of Chaos Emeralds all sparkling in unison to make the cavern alight with a

bright, beautiful, colourful aurora. Scourge couldn't believe what he was seeing. The clusters looked amazing and they looked familiar too. Familiar in the sense that they glowed like the Master Emerald and they were all made of Chaos Emerald pieces. Scourge had seen the Chaos Emeralds briefly before Sonic used them to turn super so he knew what he was looking at.

"Dog…gone!" gasped Scourge "Will ya look at these for starters Fi?"

"Yes. They're quite amazing aren't they?" said Fiona, staring at a huge cluster just beside her "But what are they?"

"They look like clusters." said Scourge, picking a small one the size of his head up and looking at it in admiration "Clusters of…Chaos Emeralds. When I touch these, I feel this surge of Chaos Energy on my hands much like I do when I touch the Master Emerald. I saw what the Chaos Emeralds looked like and what colour they were before Sonic turned super so I know that these are Chaos Emeralds. After all, there's only one Master Emerald so these wouldn't be clusters of Master Emeralds."

"Well Scourge, you've just found your new power supply." said Fiona "You can use these to turn super and destroy Sonic and friends."

"Maybe." said Scourge "Depends if these clusters work like they should do. By the way, I'm not going to launch another attack just so shortly after getting beaten again, Sonic and friends will expect that so I say we take these things, hide for a while and then use them and because we'll have all these clusters, who know what power I shall possess with them!"

"That is a nice idea Scourge." said Fiona "One thing though, we don't wanna dig up these clusters ourselves and attract the attention of Sonic and friends. We must get somebody else to dig these up for us."

"And who, may I ask, do you suggest we con for this job then?" asked Scourge, putting the cluster down.

"A man named Porthos the Rabbit." explained Fiona "I met him once before I joined the R.F.S., three years ago to be more precise. He's

a miner and is fascinated with echidna history for some reason (guess he's got a thing for echidnas or something) and he leads a group of miners that expert in mining artefacts and ancient echidna relics. They'll be perfect for this job. Anyone coming by will just see it as another mining expedition and Sonic and friends won't suspect anything at all."

"Fiona, you're a good luck charm." said Scourge with a big grin on his evil face.

"Thank you baby." said Fiona "So we hire Porthos and his crew, get them to mine these up, then we take them and hide and then you use them to conquer the world."

"I like this plan." said Scourge evilly "Let's go and find this Port holes the Rabbit then and get him to dig these up."

"Porthos." corrected Fiona.

"Whatever." sniffed Scourge.

Scourge and Fiona climbed up through the hole in the ceiling and up through it to fresh air up above. They left the cavern behind and climbed up and out of the hole that led to it. As soon as they were out of the hole, they both ran for it as fast as they could. Scourge carried Fiona in his arms so she wouldn't lag behind as he ran off at top speed. However, of all the sheer coincidences, the moment Scourge and Fiona left, Sonic, Tails and Knuckles arrived on the scene and they stopped just in front of the hole in the ground that led to the cavern. Sonic leaped down it with Tails and Knuckles following him. They all landed at the bottom of the hole and found themselves inside the mystery cavern once again. Tails and Knuckles stared in awe at the clusters of Chaos Emeralds that Sonic had been telling them about. The very sight of them was enough to make them think they were seeing things but nope, they were actually looking at clusters of Chaos Emeralds. Sonic put the cluster he had with him down and he folded his arms while putting on a smug expression.

"What did I tell ya guys?" he said.

"This…this is unbelievable!" cried Tails "A whole cavern choc-a-bloc of Chaos Emerald clusters! I can't believe my eyes!"

"Neither can I." said Knuckles, touching one of the huge clusters and feeling the Chaos Energy inside them "These are definitely Chaos Emeralds they're made of. They look like that someone just took hundreds of Chaos Emeralds and bashed them all together to make these. But who did and how? They're only seven left."

"Well maybe somebody got a lot of emeralds and fused them together to make these clusters without anyone knowing." suggested Tails "Your dad probably didn't even know about these and thought he'd fused them all together to make seven when there was actually hundreds more to go."

"When the Chaos Emeralds were around before they became seven, there were seventy thousand of them." said Knuckles "I guess dad didn't fuse all seventy thousand of them to make the seven Chaos Emeralds. He must have missed a good thousand or so as they've been used to make these clusters. Who knows how many clusters there are in this cavern?"

"Well let's count them shall we?" joked Sonic.

"No." said Knuckles "It doesn't matter. Well, if these clusters are Chaos Emerald clusters then the best choice would be to make sure none of our greatest enemies get these."

"Just seven Chaos Emeralds are enough to give me super power and one of these clusters was enough to heal Amy Rose in one flash so who knows what kind of power a cluster made up of other Chaos Emeralds has." said Sonic "Come one, let's leave this place and bury it and forget these ever existed."

"That would be the best idea." said Knuckles "It'll prevent anyone from finding out about these."

"But it's nothing but rock ground up there." noted Tails "How can we bury the hole up above when there's nothing to bury it with?"

"Hmm…you do have a point Tails." said Sonic "We'll think of

something. Until then, I think we should return to Royal HQ and give the R.F.S. the rundown on what's happened today."

With that said, Sonic, Tails and Knuckles climbed up through the hole and out of the cluster cavern. They climbed up to the surface and headed off for home. Sonic was determined to find a way of making sure the clusters would be hidden for good but there was nothing to bury the hole with and sticking a rock in it wasn't a very good idea as it would like weird and out of place. Sonic was just thankful that Scourge didn't know about the clusters. Only…he did and now he and Fiona were hiring a group of miners to dig up the emerald clusters so he could use them for his own personal gain…

Meanwhile, Fiona had taken Scourge to a small house in a village called Furville, a village very similar to Knothole only it was larger and had houses more then huts. It's appearance as similar to that of Spagonia with it's somewhat old looking houses and stylistically tiled rooftops. Furville was located at the very end of the Great Forest and Fiona knew where it was, even though she'd only ever been to the village once. The moment Fiona and Scourge had arrived at Furville, Fiona had looked around for the house of Porthos the Rabbit and luckily for her, she remembered where it was and she found it. The house was pretty standard looking and had nice floor beds on the window sills all brimming with flowers. Fiona knocked on the door politely and waited for Porthos to answer it. The door opened and there stood an adult Mobian rabbit who curiously enough, was coloured the same as Cream and Vanilla the Rabbits. He however, had ginger shaggy hair that curled around the bases of his ears and looked pretty messy and yet he seemed to be a rather gentlemanly kind of character given his appearance. He had a cane with him which looked very wealthy and he wore a smart shirt, a brown waistcoat and smart claret shoes with gold buckles. He wore a pair of spectacles that looked quite glamorous too with gleaming red rims. His eyes were even browner then those of Cream and Vanilla's. Porthos' face brightened up at the sight of a familiar face on his door step.

"Hello there Fiona girl." beamed Porthos happily, his voice was rich and smooth sounding "My, you look lovely, three years past and

now you look like a possible contestant for a beauty pageant."

"It's nice to see you again Porthos." lied Fiona, shaking the rabbit's hand in fake friendliness "How's your mining team by the way?"

"On standby as we haven't got any mining tasks to do my dear." said Porthos "Why do you ask anyway?"

"Because me and my boyfriend Scourge here have a task that you and your crew will be happy to take up." said Fiona with a bright smile on her face.

"Really? What kind of task would that be then?" asked Porthos eagerly.

"A little something involving…Chaos Emeralds…" said Scourge casually.

Back at Royal HQ, the headquarters of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, the Royal Fighters had gone back to Royal HQ as Geoffrey felt like the base needed a check-up and they needed to document today's event's for the Royal Fighter vaults. Due to the fact Amy had been cured so miraculously by the emerald cluster, she had been let out of the hospital immediately and was pleased to be back at Royal HQ with all her friends. Everybody sans Geoffrey were chilling out in the rest room. Geoffrey was typing up a journal about today's events on the computer monitors in the lab. Not long after everybody had settled down, Sonic, Tails and Knuckles had arrived back at Royal HQ and they joined the others in the rest room. The Mobians were all just sat on the sofas and relaxing more then anything right now so Sonic, Tails and Knuckles joined them.

"Hey boys, you're back." said Amy cheerfully.

"Well noticed Amy." said Sonic cheekily "So, what's going on in the ol' base then?"

"Geoffrey's only documenting today's events and that's it really." said Bunnie "How did Downunda go for ya'll then?"

"It's mysterious to say the least." muttered Knuckles "There's an underground cavern full of clusters and clusters of Chaos Emeralds. It's pretty unbelievable I say, clusters of what appear to be hundreds of Chaos Emeralds fused together and yet dad fused them all together to make the seven we have today. We've come to the conclusion that dad probably missed some emeralds when he fused them together."

"That is the likeliest scenario." said Tails "There's no other way those clusters can possibly exist."

"I guess Knuckles' dad made a mistake when he thought he'd fused them all together to make seven." mused Cosmo "Even the best of us can make mistakes after all."

"Still though, to miss hundreds of Chaos Emeralds that have somehow been used to make clusters?" murmured Knuckles "That's a lot for any of us to take in isn't it? Especially me as I've grown up believing there are only seven Chaos Emeralds on Angel Island."

"Oh well, at least those clusters are hidden in a good place, no one will find them." said Ruben.

"And yet I found them." noted Sonic "Although that was mostly a giant coincidence courtesy of Super Me and Super Scourge. There's a hole in the ground with faint light flashing that's bound to catch anyone's attention however so I think we should bury the hole and try to hide them forever before Eggman or Marik or Scourge or some other villain finds them."

"Wouldn't it be better to just take the clusters and hide them on Angel Island along with the Chaos Emeralds?" asked Cream "I'm sure Mr. Knuckles can find a good hiding spot for them."

"That is a good idea Cream." said Knuckles "The island has many hidden tombs, they'll definitely be good places to hide the clusters. The tombs can hide energy signatures so no one will detect them. I just hope there'll be enough tombs to hide them in as there's quite a lot of clusters in that cavern, some big and some small."

"Well maybe if there isn't enough tombs to fit them all in, we can just

smash them down to size and that way they'll definitely fit in those tombs!" yelled Amy in a strangely boisterous and tough sounding manner.

"Maybe." said Sonic "Just depends if we can smash emerald clusters that's all. By the way, are you alright Ames? Your hands are shaking." he added.

Amy looked down at her hands and noticed that strangely enough, her hands did indeed appear to be trembling slightly. The hedgehog had been feeling a little different from that Chaos Regeneration, different in a strange way. She'd been feeling strangely contained and felt like she had a lot of energy to unleash and burn off. Almost as if she has this tremendous urge to beat somebody up. Amy wasn't really sure why she was feeling like this but she didn't want to worry everybody so she decided to cover up her strange feeling.

"I'm fine Sonic, just surviving near death jitters I guess." said Amy "After all, getting stabbed by Fiona and then saved by an emerald cluster is still amazing to say the least."

"It is." said Sonic "I hope we meet Fiona again so I can make her pay for this."

"That nasty woman Fiona deserves to rot in a cell with Scourge for what she did to Amy!" squealed Cream angrily "She almost killed Amy and killing people is a horrible thing to do! Absolutely horrible!"

"Whoa, I never took you to be the kind of person to wish doom on somebody." said Shade "You always seemed like the polite and thoughtful kind to me little rabbit."

"I am Shade, it's just sometimes I do lose my temper although it's only very rare for me to do so." said Cream "I hate getting mad, it hurts my head when I get mad."

Then suddenly, Geoffrey burst into the rest room, his eyes wide open and wild and his expression as frantic as a lucky person who's just survived a wolf attack.

"Geoffrey, what's the matter sugah?" asked Bunnie "Ya'll look like

there's a tornado goin' on out there!"

"You blokes aren't gonna believe this!" cried Geoffrey frantically "Wilson and Mandy are coming back from their outing in Megapolis*** and they're under attack from Eggman's new servant bot and her forces in the fields outside Mobotropolis!"

"Katherine?" blurted Sonic as he knew what Geoffrey meant by "new servant bot" "She's attacking Wilson and Mandy. What's she doing attacking my friends without Eggman giving her orders? Has Eggman decided to come out at last?"

"Well whatever she's here for, let's go over there and kick her ass!" yelled Amy "Come on, let's smash those tin-heads!"

She then darted out of the rest room, carelessly pushing past Geoffrey and knocking him onto his back. The hedgehog charged out of Royal HQ and headed for the surrounding grasslands outside. Geoffrey picked himself up and wondered what was up with Amy.

"Man, what's she been taking since her recovery?" asked Geoffrey "She's strangely eager for a battle. She usually follows behind you before rushing into battle Sonic."

"Yeah, she did seem kinda restless as her hands were shaky earlier." said Sonic "I'll keep an eye on her just to be double sure she's OK."

So Sonic decided to run out of Royal HQ and follow Amy to make sure the pink hedgehog didn't lose her head out there. What was with the sudden ego boost and how bad was it going to be? Hopefully not too bad or Amy was going to end up worse off then she was before the Chaos Regeneration…

"How dare you metal morons wreck my beautiful hover car!" screeched fellow fighter Mandy Mouse as she dropkicked an Egg-Pawn armed with a blaster gun in the face "I built that thing from scratch and now I've got to drag it to the garage and build it all over again now you've just destroyed it!"

After dealing with Marik the Martian in Megapolis, Wilson and Mandy had returned back to Mobotropolis to tell their friends what had been going on while they were away but unfortunately, Katherine and her squadron had caught them before they could arrive at the under construction new city. Katherine was going to investigate the Chaos Energy signatures but Wilson and Mandy's arrivals had distracted her so she decided to deal with them first and hopefully kill them just to make Eggman feel better. Eggman did hate Sonic and all his friends so killing them was going to make the demented, mind-broken scientist a little happier then he was now. So Katherine had ordered her Egg-Pawns to attack the two fighters as Mandy's car hovered across the grasslands and the Egg-Pawns blasted it to smithereens. Wilson and Mandy had avoided betting killed by the blasts by jumping out of the car but Mandy's sleek and shiny hover car was now in bits and pieces. It was a blazing wreck that would end up scorching the grass and leave a horrible black stain where it burnt like a log fire. Mandy was well and truly cheesed off at this and she immediately began to beat the cuss out of the Egg-Pawns. Wilson joined in with his trademark double-bladed pole weapon, aka the spinning blade, at the ready. Two Egg-Pawns began shooting at Wilson but Wilson threw his weapon at the Egg-Pawns and sliced them to ribbons. The weapon boomeranged back to him and he caught it in his hand.

"Nobody wrecks my girlfriend's car and upsets her under my watch!" yelled Wilson "I've had enough trouble from a Martian trying to kill me, I don't need you lot getting on our nerves now!"

An Egg-Pawn sneaked up behind Wilson and attempted to skewer it with a lance weapon it was armed with but Mandy fist-slammed it on the head with both fists and sent it in a daze. Then she kicked it in the head and knocked it over onto it's back. Mandy snatched the lanced and stabbed the Egg-Pawn in the chest with it. Katherine however got the drop on Mandy by sneaking up behind her and giving her an uppercut from behind. Mandy hurtled over the Egg-Pawn and she landed with a heavy thud on the ground. The mouse grumbled angrily and she threw the lance at Katherine. Katherine caught the lance and threw it back at her. The lance skimmed Mandy across the arm, earning a pained shriek from the mouse and she clutched her arm in pain.

"Yeouch!" she grunted "I think I preferred it when Eggman had a sidekick who couldn't fight!"

"I can't believe I'm saying this, but I prefer Alonzo over Katherine." muttered Wilson "Alonzo was more pathetic at least."

"Well Alonzo's gone now and this witch bot will go down with him!" screeched Mandy, slipping on her trademark brass knuckle attachments and preparing for battle "Come on Wilson, for blue dude and the others!"

"For Sonic and friends!" Wilson declared hotly.

Katherine just advanced on the dog and mouse slowly with her hands raised, ready to fire some bladed discs at the two Royal Fighters. But before she could even touch them, Amy Rose leaped in from nowhere and roundhouse punched the fem-bot sidekick in the back of the head. Katherine hurtled forward and skidded across the ground on her face. Wilson and Mandy were slightly taken aback at the sudden attack from Amy, considering she never really relied on her fists, only her hammer but they didn't mind, they were glad the cavalry had just arrived.

"Amy, you've decided to come and help us!" cried Mandy.

"I sure have dudes." said Amy, cracking her knuckles "And boy am I in the mood for ripping some robots apart! Watch this you two!"

Three Egg-Pawns charged towards Amy as fast as they could. They were armed with jousts and shields and they prepared to skewer Amy like a kebab. Amy just smiled confidently at the two robots and charged at them. Wilson yelped in fright, fearing Amy was inviting herself to be skewered. But Amy just grabbed one of the Egg-Paw's jousts and yanked it clean out of it's hands! Amy threw the joust away, the weapon hitting Katherine in the back of the head and knocking her back over, and she unleashed hell on the Egg-Pawn. She punched it at a force even greater then that of Knuckles! Her punches left dents all over the Egg-Pawn's rotund and steel body and she seemed to be damaging it greatly. The Egg-Pawn groaned under the pressure Amy was putting it under as she punched it so furiously. Amy then punched it so hard, her fist went straight through

the pawn's armour! Amy cackled dementedly and she ripped the robot's circuits clean out of it's chassis. The robot collapsed onto the ground, dead as anything. The other two Egg-Pawns tried to skewer Amy but Amy back flipped over one robot and kicked it in the back, causing it to drop it's joust. It turned around and blocked Amy's attack with it's shield but Amy just yanked the shield straight out of the robot's hands. She whacked the Egg-Pawn with the shield and then jumped on it's head. She grabbed it's head and ripped it clean off it's body! The Egg-Pawn collapsed onto the ground, functionless and dead. The third Egg-Pawn tried to kill Amy but Amy dived down onto her back and slid under the charging robot's joust. She kicked the Egg-Pawn in the groin section and the Egg-Pawn fell onto it's back. Amy then plunged her hand through the Egg-Pawn's back and ripped out some vital circuitry. The Egg-Pawn collapsed onto the ground, completely dead. Wilson and Mandy had watched the whole fight in awe. They were completely gobsmacked at what they were witnessing.

"Whoa! Who decided to put Amy on steroids while we were gone?" gasped Mandy.

"She's a blinkin demon!" shrieked Wilson "She's not even using her hammer to smash these robots, she's just tearing them apart with her bare hands!"

"Well whatever it is that's given Amy a strength boost, I want it." chuckled Mandy "I wanna be as badass as she's being right now."

Amy smashed yet another Egg-Pawn to pieces with her bare fists and she kicked it's head around, laughing as she did so.

"Ha, ha, ha! This feels awesome!" she squealed "I haven't had this much fun in ages! Send in more Egg-Pawns! I wanna destroy more of them!"

As for Katherine, she picked herself up and noticed her squadron was in pieces. The fem-bot was astonished by the fact her squad had just got trashed by Amy and the hedgehog was only using her bare fists for this. She didn't remember her being this strong. If Amy could do this to her Egg-Pawns then now was probably the best time to run for it. Amy however, wanted to smash another robot. She

charged towards Katherine and she gave the fem-bot a tremendous uppercut that sent Katherine hurling up into the air for about thirty feet and then she hurtled all the way back down to the ground. Amy then leaped into the air and dropkicked Katherine down into the ground before she could return to the ground. Katherine landed with a clunk on the ground and she lay on the grass, wondering what on Mobius had just hit her. Katherine picked herself up and deployed her force-field in order to save herself. She had to escape now before Amy destroyed her. The Chaos Energy signature would have to wait as she didn't want to get turned into scrap right now. Katherine ran off as fast as her legs would let her with her force-field deployed so she could save herself getting attacked. Amy just watched as Katherine ran for it as fast as she could. She smirked at the fleeing robot and pulled rude faces at her.

"Yah boo! You suck! Go home and cry to your daddy Dr. Eggman Kathy girl!" she jeered "That'll teach you to come out here and attack my friends like this!"

"Amy, that was so incredible!" Mandy praised excitedly "How on Mobius did you do that? You're only good enough to wield a hammer, not punch a robot to death! What food have you been eating recently?"

"I'm…I'm not sure really." said Amy, feeling her biceps "I got stabbed by Fiona and Sonic healed me with a Chaos Regeneration and then all of the sudden, I have an urge to smash robots and I've gotten new strength. I also feel a little more brutish then usual."

"Well I definitely like this Amy a lot better then the old one." said Mandy "She's actually badass this time around."

"Eh, I preferred her when she just used the hammer." said Wilson casually "But that was pretty cool nonetheless."

Then suddenly, Sonic the Hedgehog arrived on the scene at last and he skidded to a halt, surprised to see the fact there was a pile of destroyed Egg-Pawns around Amy, Wilson and Mandy. He wasn't pleased to see they hadn't saved an Egg-Pawn for him.

"Well guys, got too caught up in the action did ya?" chuckled Sonic

"Couldn't be bothered to save an Egg-Pawn for your old buddy Sonic?"

"You're not gonna believe this blue dude but only Amy did this." said Mandy "She smashed these robots to pieces and didn't even use her hammer. She used her bare hands for this and is quite frankly, even stronger then Knuckles now! Believe me, we watched the whole thing!"

"Amy's using her fists now?" blurted Sonic "Well, Amy's definitely changed from that Chaos Regeneration hasn't she? She's never used her fists before."

"What's a Chaos Regeneration?" asked Wilson.

"I'll explain everything back at Royal HQ." said Sonic "And while we're at it, I think we should run Amy through a diagnostic test to see if there's been any change in her at all."

"I'm fine Sonic really." protested Amy "I feel great and I feel ready to smash something else!"

"That worries me." said Sonic "You're not that smash happy and I wanna know what's made you so masculine all of the sudden."

With that said, Sonic, Amy, Wilson and Mandy all walked back to Royal HQ. Sonic began to think on Amy's sudden strength enhancement and ego-boost. Had the emerald cluster changed Amy after healing her? If so then was there a way to change her back? If not then would it continue to affect Amy? And would it be…for the worse…?

Footnotes:

***See Story 16**

**** You all remember Story 83 don't you?**

***** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 10: Pain in Megapolis***

So Sonic's found clusters of Chaos Emeralds and Scourge is planning to dig them up. Not to mention it's given Amy an ego-boost! What's gonna happen next? And will the truth behind these clusters finall be revealed? Tune into part two of this epic saga...Reviews are welcome.

P.S. Sorry MetaGalleom but there will be no elements from the Genesis era of Sonic the Hedgehog in this story as I haven't played them and therefore, know nothing about them. Don't be too disappointed.

Emeralds Part 2

Story 91: Emeralds Part 2: Chaotic Clusters

"So let me get this straight." said Angel Island guardian Knuckles the Echidna "Amy ran out to help you two defeat Katherine and her squadron and she annihilated them with her bare hands?"

"You got that right knuckle boy." said Mandy Mouse, a tomboy mouse with the heart of a lion "Amy didn't once use her hammer, she just busted those Egg-Pawns up with her bare hands. She punched them and kicked them and even managed to break through their armour and tear their fricken circuits out as if they were nothing! She's officially become totally awesome now!"

"Maybe a little too awesome." said Wilson the Dog, a dog with a skittish side but bravery to balance it out "I'm actually kind of creeped out by this. Amy's a hammer swinging berserker and then she suddenly decides she can smash robots with her bare hands now. That's just weird."

"Watch who you're calling berserker sunshine or I'll soften my knuckles on your face dog!" snarled Amy fiercely.

Once Sonic the Hedgehog and friends arrived back at Royal HQ, they took her to the medical bay and began to run a test on her to see if they could find out how Amy had suddenly gotten stronger. Amy was lying down on a bed and having and X-ray done on her to see if they could find any change in her. Amy lay still on the bed as the X-ray slowly began to sweep over her, scanning her body and feeding the results to the computer screen beside the bed. Tails the twin-tailed fox, Sonic's best friend and faithful sidekick, was on the computer and reading what the X-ray tests were picking up from their diagnostic scan on Amy. Amy's best friend, Cream the Rabbit, stood behind Tails nervously and she had her hands clasped together.

"Tails? Is Amy alright?" asked Cream nervously.

"Hold on a minute Cream, the scan's almost complete." said Tails without even turning around.

The X-ray scan had finally finished scanning Amy and the apparatus raised off of the bed and settled back down beside Amy's bed. The hedgehog sat up, relieved she was now able to do so. Tails began taping on the keyboard and he read the picked up results from the scan. What the scan had picked up was pretty surprising to him. He hadn't expected this to happen at all. His eyes almost popped out of their sockets in astonishment.

"I…I don't believe it!" blustered Tails.

"Why? What's up kiddo?" asked Mandy concernedly.

"Amy's body is full from head to toe with Chaos Energy!" exclaimed Tails "Look at the scan results on the screen here!"

Wilson, Mandy, Cream and Knuckles all peered at the computer screen and read the same thing that Tails was reading. The scan was showing Amy's body with all funny colours on it. The colours were the same colours as the seven Chaos Emeralds and the scan test labelled it as "Change in DNA". It was quite clear that Amy's DNA had been altered in some way or another and it was even more clear who the main culprit is. Amy had been completely fine until the Chaos Regeneration so it was obvious the emerald cluster was to blame for this.

"Well give me a collar, how did this happen?" asked Wilson.

"Sonic used a cluster of Chaos Emeralds to perform a Chaos Regeneration and heal her stab wound which she received from Fiona." explained Knuckles "It's quite clear the cluster had a side effect when healing her."

"A good side effect at least." said Mandy "She's a lot stronger now and can floor a robot in seconds. Amy's got the strength to take down the Eggman Empire at last! She can literally be our winning card in this war game!"

"Yes, perhaps." said Knuckles "But I think the cluster's effected her

a little too much for my liking. She's far too restless and cocky now. I mean look at her, she can't even sit still!"

Everybody looked at Amy who was still sitting on the bed and jittering about like a crazy thing. Amy was never like this, sit around too long and she fidgets like there's no tomorrow, before. The cluster had clearly affected her in more ways then one.

"She'll simmer down eventually." said Mandy "Being full of Chaos Energy's a new thing for her so she just needs a minute to settle down and get used to it."

"I hope you're right Mandy." said Knuckles "But one thing I don't get is why does the cluster have a side effect? If you use Chaos Regeneration on somebody, it just heals you and there, all better."

"But what do they usually use Chaos Regeneration with?" asked Wilson "Just a plain old Chaos Emerald?"

"Yes." said Knuckles "The Chaos Emeralds have no side effect when they heal somebody. So I guess the clusters work differently to the Chaos Emeralds. Not surprising as they're hundreds of Chaos Emeralds fused into one."

"But I thought you said your dad fused the Chaos Emeralds into seven." noted Wilson "How are those so-called clusters even here? There's only seven Chaos Emeralds left."

"Well obviously there isn't Wilson boy." said Mandy, gripping his cheek in-between her finger and thumb and playfully shaking it "I guess Knuckles' dad must have missed a good lot of emeralds when fusing them together."

"That's what we've concluded ourselves." muttered Knuckles "But I'm still having a hard time factoring all this in…"

"Will you guys stop yapping away like idiots already!" snapped Amy angrily "Gosh, you're boring me to death here!"

She leaped off of the bed and began strutting about impatiently, earning a glare from Wilson, Mandy and Knuckles.

"I'm getting bored of just sitting around and doing nothing!" moaned Amy "Sitting around isn't fun, smashing Eggman robots is fun! I wanna smash something! I wanna smash something!"

She then proceeded to pass by the computer and then smash the keyboard with her fist in an impatient rage. The keyboard was in bits and pieces from that one slam. Amy clearly was getting too big for her boots here. Tails glanced at the broken keyboard and immediately fumed at her.

"Amy! I needed that!" shouted Tails angrily, motioning to the broken keyboard.

"But I didn't wanna smash that." said Amy quickly "Sorry Tails."

"Look Amy, you may have a strength boost thanks to some chaos, cluster thingy but that gives you no reason to start throwing your weight around and whining like a bored little brat!" yelled Mandy angrily "You need to control yourself missy before you mess with the wrong crowd!"

"Oh, ho, ho, ho! Are you challenging me punk?" asked Amy, raising her fists and preparing to deck the mouse to Kingdom Valley and back "I dare you to challenge me!"

"I'm not challenging you Amy, I'm just telling you to keep yourself under control before you hurt somebody!" retorted Mandy "I think this Chaos Energy's getting to your head now."

"The only thing getting to my head is this boredom!" whined Amy "I wanna do some fighting! Go on, why don't me and you have a friendly tussle Mandy? Come on! It'll be fun!"

"Are you out of your mind?" shrieked Mandy "I'm not getting into a fight with you! You'll deck me!"

"Oh come on, I won't hurt you that badly!" said Amy, still preparing to fight "Come on Mandy, give me some excitement! I need some right now!"

"Amy, you clam down this minute or I'll throttle you!" shouted Mandy, grabbing Amy by the shoulders and trying to push her down onto the

bed.

"Get off me!" yelled Amy, punching Mandy in the face as hard as she could.

The mouse was thrown onto the floor by the attack. This earned a horrified gasp from everybody. Mandy gasped in shock and she clutched her throbbing cheek, unable to believe that Amy had just blatantly punched her like this. Despite the Chaos Energy making Amy obnoxious and battle-loving, there still seemed to be the real her hidden inside as Amy suddenly felt horrible for what she just did. As for Wilson, he helped Mandy stand back up and hugged her in a comforting manner. He then glared at Amy like a watchdog.

"Amy you jerk, you just punched Mandy!" yelled Wilson crossly "What has gotten into you?"

"I-I-I-I'm so, so sorry Wilson!" stammered Amy "I-I-I d-don't know-know what I-I-I'm do-doing. Oh my gosh! This Chaos Energy enhancement's making me a monster! We've gotta get this stuff outta me before I hurt somebody else!" she wailed.

"But how are we gonna do that?" asked Cream "You can't just get rid of Chaos Energy can you?"

"There might be one possible way." suggested Tails "We could give Amy an injection and remove the Chaos Energy that way."

"Well you'd better do it already!" shouted Mandy, still clutching her cheek "This girl's getting too big for her boots right now! I preferred her when she wasn't Chaos powered!"

With that said, she stormed out of the medical room in a huff. Wilson followed her, hoping to calm the mouse down. This in turn made Amy feel horrible. As big as her ego and strength boost was, she felt bad for the fact she'd just punched one of her friends in temper. She had to get rid of the Chaos Energy in her veins before she hurt somebody else. And yet, she still felt like she needed to punch somebody.

"Hey Amy, do you want me to remove the Chaos Energy from you

now?" asked Tails.

"I'm going to find somebody to use for stress relief first, then you can do so." said Amy "I wanna let off some steam right now."

"I don't think that'll be a good idea Miss Rose." said Cream "What if you…"

"Shut up Cream." muttered Amy, storming past the rabbit in a huff and out of the medical room before anyone can stop her.

Knuckles, Tails and Cream all looked at each other, wondering if they should do something about Amy right now. The hedgehog was only looking for somebody to punch but…what if she picked the wrong person? Still, Amy may be power enhanced but she wasn't stupid. She wasn't going to pick a fight with somebody she couldn't beat. And that power she had was going to give her the strength needed to defend herself so there was no need to worry about her. Or was there…?

Meanwhile, Scourge the Hedgehog and Fiona Fox had led Porthos the Rabbit and his mining crew to the hole in the ground that led to the cavern of Chaos Clusters. The mining crew had set up walls of lines and a sign saying "Mining Area. Keep out" and were setting up explosives so they wouldn't have to dig all the way down to the cavern, instead they could just blow their way inside. They had about ten stacks of dynamite, each stack containing ten sticks and they all had the same fuse. The fuse was connected to all one hundred sticks of dynamite and all the mining crew had to do was light the fuse and the dynamite sticks would explode. Porthos over watched the process with Scourge and Fiona standing beside him. A miner who was a beaver in traditional miner's attire ran up to Porthos and asked him something.

"The dynamite's all set up, do you want us to light the fuse?" asked the beaver.

"Fire away Malcolm." said Porthos briskly.

Malcolm nodded and he ran back over to the dynamite sticks. He ordered everybody to get out of the way as he was going to light the fuse and set the dynamite off. The miners all cleared the area as quickly as they could. Now the miners had run away from the site, Malcolm pulled a box of matches out of his pocket. He struck the side of the box with the match and the match lit up with a small flame. Malcolm lightly tipped the edge of the fuse with the match and the fuse was alight with a flame. Malcolm shook the match until the flame ran out and he ran for it as the fuse hissed ominously and the flame burnt through the fuse. Everybody prepared for the explosion as the fuse got shorter and shorter and the flame spread out to all the dynamite stacks. The fuse reached the dynamite sticks and the whole supply went off in a terrifically loud, deafening, dazzling, amazing explosion that ripped through the earth they were placed upon and went up in a giant cloud of smoke. Everybody turned away from the explosion whereas Scourge, creepily enough, just stood there and watched the explosion as if it wasn't even bothering him. Heck, he was actually enjoying it! He was imagining himself blowing things he didn't like up as he conquered Mobius with all the power he was going to get from his lovely Chaos Clusters. The explosion had finally finished and the smoke died down, revealing a massive hole in the ground that the explosion had caused. The hole was enormous, spanning about the width of three tennis courts and it was big enough to show off ALL of the clusters. There were a great number of clusters in the cavern, about a hundred or so and they were all going to be Scourge's. The miners were all gobsmacked at what the cavern had to offer them. The clusters looked incredible, incredibly beautiful that is. Porthos couldn't believe his eyes either. This was history in the making for his mining crew! Never before had they mined so much Chaos Emeralds before! This was going to be a good moment for his mining crew he could tell.

"OK men, you may begin mining those clusters now." said Porthos "Mine every single cluster and do not leave any of them behind."

"Yes Porthos." said the miners.

They threw rope leaders down into the open cavern and they began to climb down into the cavern with their tools with them. They had pickaxes, giant drills and various other tools for this mining process.

They all climbed down to the bottom of the leaders and instantly got to work on mining the clusters. While Scourge would have preferred to spin-dash these clusters up himself, he knew the mining process would make it seem more like an innocent scene and it would draw no attention to Scourge and Fiona at all. They would be in the clear and no one would know about them until it was too late. As for Porthos, his eyes were gleaming with joy and he looked very happy to be here right now.

"I don't know how much I can thank you two for leading my group to these clusters." said Porthos "I'm a sucker for echidna architect, history and technology and these clusters will be a prime edition to my collection. I just hope that me and my miners will have enough storage space for them."

"You're welcome Porthos." said Fiona with a subtle smirk on her face "As for storage space, you shouldn't worry too much about it, you'll find some room."

"Maybe the best option would be to just carve the clusters down to size." said Scourge "And by the way, can me and Fiona have a cluster each as a token of saying thanks?"

"Certainly, you two deserve a cluster." said Porthos brightly "You've helped us make history in the making here so you deserve a reward."

I certainly do and it'll be a lot more then just ONE cluster! snickered Scourge in his thoughts.

"One more thing Porthos." said Fiona quickly "If anyone asks about this, can you not mention us? We don't want everyone to make a fuss over us for helping you find all these clusters."

"Very well, if you two wish to remain anonymous I shall grant that wish." said Porthos "I'll just take all the credit for this if you two don't wish to be mentioned for your contribution to this find."

Scourge and Fiona just nodded at him. As Scourge and Fiona watched the mining process go on, Scourge began to picture himself using the clusters to great effect and becoming a mass powered

being of unimaginable power with them…

Back at Royal HQ, everybody was waiting around in the lab wondering where Amy was right now and how long it was going to take her to come back. She was only looking for somebody to use for stress relief but she didn't particularly specify who she wanted to use for stress relief. Nor did she really specify how long she was going to be out for. The wait was beginning to make Cream very nervous in particular. Amy was her best friend and the closest thing to a sister she has in the world so Amy being out on her lonesome for minutes on end was nerve-racking for her. The rabbit could hardly stop fidgeting and worrying about Amy as time ticked by. Cosmo sat beside Cream and tried to soothe the rabbit's overly jumpy nerves but not even she could get Cream to stop worrying. Even Cheese, her pet Chao, couldn't get Cream to lighten up right now. She was just too worried about Amy right now. Tails could see that Cream was in a very depressed mood right now and didn't feel that he should interfere with Cream so he kept himself to himself and left Cream to Cosmo. Knuckles was just sitting around wondering what to do while still thinking about the clusters and their mysterious nature. He was still having a hard time believing his dad had missed several hundred Chaos Emeralds while fusing them together to make seven. How could a guardian as famous and powerful and wise as Locke the Echidna miss so many emeralds or make a mistake like this? It didn't seem humanly possible, there had to be some other reason for their presence. Maybe the clusters were artificial Chaos Emeralds. But if they were then why would they be all hiding in a cavern? Maybe they were hidden there after they were created? Knuckles had no idea and thinking on this pressing mystery was beginning to drive him crazy. His brain began to ache from constantly thinking about them and he thumped himself on the head angrily. Tails instantly picked up that Knuckles was in a bit of a mood so he decided to try and cool him down.

"Knuckles, what's the matter?" asked Tails "You worried about Amy too?"

"I'm concerned for her but I can't stop thinking about those clusters." muttered Knuckles grumpily, rubbing his head "I know we've come

to a conclusion but I still have a hard time factoring all this in. My dad was one of the greatest guardians ever, how could he possibly miss several hundred Chaos Emeralds while fusing them all together to make seven? He'd never make a mistake like this, ever!"

"Maybe he did." suggested Tails "Everyone makes mistakes, even the best of us. Heck, even Sonic makes mistakes and he's the hero of Mobius after all."

"I know that Tails but my dad was an expert on Chaos Emeralds, he'd never make a mistake as big as missing several emeralds while fusing them together!" retorted Knuckles "I wish I knew the truth behind these clusters but I don't and it's driving me crazy!"

He then proceeded to grip the sides of his head and pull an expression that made him look very stressful and unsettled. He was in total confusion right now and he couldn't help it, the clusters were bugging him like mad too much for him to think about something else. Before Tails could try and settle Knuckles down, Sonic walked into the lab and noticed that there seemed to be some discomfort among his friends.

"Hey there everybody." said Sonic.

"Hi Sonic." said Tails "How's Mandy right now after Amy punched her?"

"Still fuming about it but she looks OK." said Sonic "She's not hurt too bad it seems. I still wonder why did Amy do that to her? It's not like her to just blatantly punch people like that, even if they are manhandling her."

"We know it isn't." wailed Cream miserably, the poor rabbit looking like she was about to cry again "That's why we're so worried about her, she might hurt somebody else if we don't help her!"

"Tails, do you know what's up with Amy?" asked Sonic, knowing that his twin-tailed friend had probably found out something was wrong with Amy.

"I do." said Tails "After you took her to the medic room, we

performed an X-ray scan on her and the results came up with this interesting and actually kind of surreal change in her body. Her body's full of Chaos Energy and it's making her more powerful, violent, obstinate, masculine and restless. She still has her real self hidden under the new personality change she has and her mood swings change constantly from her normal self to Chaos self. She wants us to remove the Chaos Energy from her body so she won't keep being so aggressive and battle-loving but she wants to let off some steam first so she's gone out to find someone to punch."

"And you let her go and do so?" asked Sonic in a tone that made it sound like he was stupefied by that idea.

"Um…yes?" said Tails weakly, feeling a little nervous over what Sonic's reaction might be to this.

"Do you realize how boneheaded that is?" shrieked Sonic angrily, making Tails shrink back in fear "What if Amy decides to attack someone entirely innocent or something like that? Heck, what if she tries to attack Scourge and Fiona! They'll cripple her if that happens!"

"N-n-not necessarily-S-Sonic." stammered Tails "Amy's still got her senses and that, she knows that she shouldn't hurt innocent people and that attacking Scourge maybe a bad idea. She maybe altered but she's not stupid, she's still got a brain Sonic."

"That's not very reassuring to me." muttered Sonic, folding his arms "Amy's adrenaline quota may kick in and make her wanna punch someone too tough for her. Then again, she did destroy all those Egg-Pawns barehanded so I guess I shouldn't worry too much about her…"

"We don't need to anyway." said Tails "The computers here are picking up the Chaos Energy in her body so we can monitor her position from here. If she needs help, we'll get to it instantly so she's not going to be in too much trouble luckily."

"Yes, luckily." said Sonic grimly "I still think we should have removed that Chaos Energy anyway and got back the real Amy Rose. Oh well, when she comes back, we can do so and our worries are

over."

"I still wonder why the clusters had such a side effect." said Knuckles "I mean a normal Chaos Emerald has no side effects when a Chaos Regeneration is performed."

"Yeah but those clusters are made up of SEVERAL Chaos Emeralds remember?" noted Sonic "Each cluster must at least have a hundred emeralds in them so who knows how much power all those emeralds have?"

"We're just lucky nobody knows about the clusters but us." said Tails "Who knows what catastrophes could happen if Eggman or Scourge or Marik or whoever found them? The world would be over for us if that happened."

"You got that right buddy." said Sonic agreeably "That's one reason why I wish to bury that hole so no one will see the bright, flashing lights coming from the cavern below. I just wish I had a way of burying the hole without it looking odd and out of place."

"We should put a rock over the hole." suggested Knuckles "That'll hide the clusters."

"Yeah but a rock's gonna look outta place in the middle of some plains." noted Sonic "I'll think of one way to make sure nobody finds those clusters. In the meantime, let's just sit back and hope Amy will come back sometime soon so we can get rid of that Chaos Energy."

Everybody nodded agreeably. This wait was going to be stomach tightening for everybody as they waited for Amy to come back from wherever it was she was at right now…

Three whole hours passed and Amy had sprinted all the way from Mobotropolis to Downunda. The Chaos Energy in her body was making her surprisingly more agile and speedy in comparison to her old self, her speed was almost on par with Sonic's right now. Amy was amazed at what the Chaos Energy in her body had done to her. She was stronger then Knuckles and almost as fast as Sonic now.

Should she really get rid of the Chaos Energy in her veins and lose this power or should she stay put and kick villain butts for everybody? It was a tough decision to make especially as both choices had consequences. Losing the power would make her back to being only strong enough to smash things with a hammer but if she kept the energy, she would never be able to rest and would continue feeling like she wanted to punch somebody. She'd just punched Mandy and she didn't want to punch anybody else. And yet, her new strength could possibly be the key to Mobius' freedom due to the fact she could smash Egg-Pawns barehanded and they could barely lay a finger on her. She had no idea what to do now but whatever choice she made had consequences so either way, she loses. Keep the energy and she possibly loses her friends. Get rid of it and she loses her strength and speed. That's pretty much how it would turn out. As Amy ran through Downunda, she began to feel even more battle ready then before. Battle ready to the point that she wanted to take on an entire army by herself.

"Three hours of running about and I haven't found my punching bag yet!" grumbled Amy "What does a girl have to do to get some stress relief around here?"

However, it seemed that she would get someone to punch sooner or later. Her running around Mobius had brought her to the mining camp Porthos the Rabbit was leading. Amy screeched to a halt and watched the scene before her. The area was sealed off with lines on poles saying "Mining Area. Keep Out." and the miners were mining down a cavern that had been blown open by a good bunch of dynamite earlier. The miners were mining up the Chaos Clusters and it seemed like an odious process right now. The energy of the Chaos Clusters made something flare up in Amy's body and she clutched her chest in pain. The Chaos Energy in her body was reacting to the clusters and Amy could sense it. The pain quickly died away though so it was nothing to worry about.

"I'm feeling Chaos Energy coming from that cavern." she said to herself "Is there a bunch of Chaos Emeralds in that cavern? I'd best check it out. I bet there's more of them clusters that Sonic used to heal me down there."

Amy then proceeded to invite herself onto the site. She climbed over

the lines and headed off towards the cavern. Two miners spotted her however and they ran up to Amy and stopped her dead in her tracks hastily.

"Hold it right there love." said one miner "This is a restricted area. The line clearly says "keep out" and you've just crossed it so I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to leave sunshine."

Amy grabbed both the miners by their collars and pulled them down to her height with a steely look in her eye. She looked like she was about to slaughter then both. The Chaos Energy was kicking in again and making her angry for no particular reason.

"Who are you calling sunshine buster?" she growled crossly "And do I look like an "out of bounds" person to you? I'm investigating this cavern and you two can get out of my way!"

With that said, she bashed both their heads together and knocked them out instantly. The two miners collapsed onto the ground in a daze and they lay beside each other, seeing stars twirling above their heads. Amy stuck her nose in the air and she marched on towards the cavern. The Chaos Energy in her veins began to flow more and more as she got closer to the clusters. She could feel the energy bubbling inside her as she neared the cavern. There must be a lot of clusters down there if the energy inside her was fizzling like mad. Amy walked to the edge of the cavern and she peered down the deep hole in the ground that had been made by the dynamite blowing the earth up. Amy almost jaw-dropped at the sight she saw down in the cavern. There were a hundred clusters down there, all glowing in unison and there were miners down there mining up the clusters. They were using drills and picks to dig them up from the earth and it seemed like a very tough process right now. The miners looked like they were working their pants off down there. In the three hours they had been working, only about two clusters had been successfully mined up so far and one of them was because Sonic had already removed it from it's place earlier. Amy couldn't believe how many clusters there were in that cavern. Sonic was going to be amazed indeed once he saw all these. However, Amy also noticed something else down in the cavern. Fiona Fox was down in the cavern also and she was talking to a miner who was leaning against the wall and waiting for his turn to mine as there were no tools free

for him right now.

"While my baby maybe a little obnoxious and obstinate, there's something about that devilish grin and bad boy attitude that makes me fall head over heels for him." said Fiona "Scourge is one sexy boy in my opinion and there's no one else better then he is."

"Fiona!" blurted Amy in surprise "What's that witch doing down there? Oh well, I owe her a headache for trying to kill me earlier! And hopefully Scourge is here too so I can make him pay for all the crud he's done to Mobius!"

With that said, Amy proceeded to leap from the edge of the cavern and hurtle down into the cavern below. She landed directly in front of Fiona and the miner, cracking the ground as she did so and making the miner leap about a foot in the air in surprise. Fiona seemed more surprised at the fact Amy had come here more then anything but she didn't show it. She just bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to cut loose on Amy. She smirked at her wickedly.

"Amy, you survived your near fatal stab!" she crooned "How unfortunate, that just means I have to finish you off again."

Amy just cracked her knuckles and gave Fiona a steely look that could melt ice…

Meanwhile, Scourge and Porthos were standing in a section of the cavern that was well out of the way of the mining process outside. Unfortunately, Scourge was beginning to get impatient. He had no idea about mining and how long it usually takes to complete the process so the wait was beginning to get to him.

"Hey Port holes, how long is this gonna take?" moaned Scourge.

"My name is Porthos young man, not Port holes." said Porthos "This process will take a long time yet. There's about a hundred of those clusters in the cavern and we can't mine at the speed of light you know. This'll take a day or two, maybe even a week at the most. We maybe mining for several weeks but it doesn't matter, it'll be worth it for all those clusters to add to my growing collection of echidna history and architecture."

"Well in that case me and Fiona will go and leave you and your men to it." said Scourge "There's nothing for us to do here. We'll be back when you've finished so we can collect our reward."

And by "reward" Scourge obviously meant the entire lot of clusters, not just the one Porthos was going to give him. Scourge really would have preferred it if he was digging up the clusters himself as he could just spin-dash them down to size and dig them out of the ground that way but Fiona did want this process to seem more like an innocent act so the miners were called upon to dig the clusters up and to make sure she and Scourge stay in the clear until it was time to strike. Unfortunately for him, it seemed somebody had already caught up on the act. Fiona Fox suddenly appeared from nowhere and plodded up to Scourge and Porthos. Only, Fiona wasn't actually walking. In fact, she wasn't even conscious. She had been beaten to submission by Amy Rose and looked worse for wear to say the least. Her eyes were both bruised, there was a trickle of blood coming from her lip and she was bruised everywhere. The only reason she was still standing was because Amy was holding her up. She let go of Fiona and the battered vixen fell down onto the ground, unconscious but alive and beaten. Scourge and Porthos both stared in horror at the state of Fiona. Amy walked out from behind Fiona and she smirked at Scourge.

"Hoo-aah!" she yelled and struck an "Oh yeah!" pose before the horrified Mobians.

"Scourge? Who is that?" asked Porthos, pointing his cane at Amy and shaking slightly.

"Just some punk I know named Amy who's sticking her nose in where it doesn't belong." muttered Scourge "And she's gonna get a broken skull for beating up my girlfriend!"

"Oh no Scourge, you're the one who's getting a broken skull!" yelled Amy challengingly.

She then proceeded to sprint towards Scourge and then leap into the air. She yelled a fearsome battle cry and sucker punched Scourge straight in the middle of his face. The punch was like being hit by a sack full of rocks. Scourge cried out in pain as he was sent

hurling backwards and into a wall, making Porthos leap back in surprise and grow ever more worried. Scourge grumbled furiously as he pulled himself out of the wall and felt his throbbing face. His lip was slightly bleeding and he wiped the blood away with his hand, staining his white glove with the blood. He looked at his stained glove for a minute and then turned back to Amy.

"All right then." he hissed in a dangerously soft voice that could make any tough guy whimper in fear.

Amy just saw that as an invitation to kicking the snot out of him so she charged up to Scourge again and prepared to deck him all the way to Holoska.

"For Sonic the Hedge…" she cried out as she lunged a punch at Scourge.

Things suddenly took a turn for the worse from there though. She lunged at Scourge with a powerful punch and…Scourge just grabbed her fist and sharply twisted her arm to one side. Despite being Chaos Powered, she still had no chance against Scourge. Amy screamed in pain as Scourge twisted her arm. She tried to yank her hand out of Scourge's grasp but Scourge's grip was too tight for her. As Scourge held Amy in place while still keeping her arm twisted to one side, he observed her and mused to himself.

"Amy's a lot more spirited then I remember." said Scourge "She never fights with her fists, it's always with that stupid hammer of hers. I don't remember her being this strong either. Not to mention she recovered from Fiona's stab impossibly fast too. She should still be in hospital right now."

"Chaos Regeneration perhaps?" suggested Porthos "Chaos Emeralds can be used to heal the sick and the wounded with Chaos Regeneration."

"Maybe." said Scourge, still holding Amy's arm and making her scream "But what's made her stronger? Does Chaos Regeneration have a side effect that increases strength once it's been used?"

"I'm not entirely sure on that one." said Porthos "Either way, we've

got to do something about it before that beastly girl beats anyone else up."

With that said Scourge clenched his other fist and slugged Amy in the stomach as hard as he could. Amy wheezed heavily as she felt that punch and then Scourge conked her on the head with both fists. Amy fell down onto the ground with a heavy slam that knocked her out. The poor girl was lying on the ground completely unconscious and beaten at the hands of Scourge the Hedgehog. Scourge smiled sadistically at the beaten hedgehog and he turned to Porthos.

"Here she is for you Porty." he said "Now find out how she's suddenly gotten all beefed up."

Porthos knelt down beside the unconscious Amy and he pulled something out of his pocket. It was a small device of some kind that looked like a traditional scanning device. It was silver in colour and the screen was round. He scanned Amy with it and the scanner picked up all the Chaos Energy in her body she'd received from the cluster Sonic had used to save her earlier. The scanner was beeping ever so furiously just picking up the Chaos Energy in Amy's body. Porthos looked stunned to say the least at that find.

"I don't believe it!" he blurted "The child's full of Chaos Energy!"

"You what?" piped Scourge.

"The scanner's picking up high levels of Chaos Energy in the child's bloodstream." explained Porthos "Somehow, she's gotten Chaos Energy in her body and it's beginning to take it's toll on her. I bet it's the Chaos Energy that's making her stronger then you claim she normally is. And here's the interesting part, the Chaos Energy's growing stronger and stronger as time goes in. It's already increasing by the second according to the scanner. If it increases anymore she'll…become godlike and have Chaos Powers greater then you could ever imagine!"

"Well then let's get rid of it before she does become godlike Port holes!" yelled Scourge crossly.

"For the last time, it's Porthos, not Port holes!" snapped Porthos

crossly.

"Whatever." muttered Scourge.

Porthos then pulled something else out of his pocket. It was a syringe with a long thin needle and it had a more hi-tech look to it then a normal syringe. Porthos stuck the syringe into Amy's neck and he extracted the Chaos Energy in her body with it by pulling on the plunger and the needle sucked up the Chaos Energy in her veins. After that, Porthos pulled the needle out of Amy's neck and left her to just lie on the ground while still unconscious. Porthos peered at the syringe, noticing that it was full of colourful liquid, all the colours of the seven Chaos Emeralds and flashing constantly between colours. This was amazing to him and he could hardly believe it.

"Fascinating." said Porthos "The Chaos Energy in her has turned into liquid form and constantly flashes between the seven different colours the emeralds are. Chaos Energy can adapt to solid or liquid forms depending on the substance at the time and since this was in the child's body, it turned to liquid form to go with her bloodstream. I still wonder how all this got into her in the first place."

"Maybe someone used all seven Chaos Emeralds at once to Chaos Regenerate her and the side effect was it gave her Chaos Energy, I dunno." said Scourge "But what I do know is that I've gotta try this stuff!"

He then proceeded to snatch Porthos' syringe off him, much to the rabbit's horror and he instantly freaked as Scourge prepared to inject himself with the Chaos Energy. His ears stood on end and his eyes widened in fright.

"No! Scourge no! Do not inject yourself with that Chaos Energy! You don't know what it'll do!" screamed Porthos desperately.

Scourge ignored him and he plunged the syringe into his arm. He pushed on the plunger and the Chaos Energy in the syringe flushed straight down into his arm. Scourge had injected himself with the Chaos Energy extracted from Amy. The moment the syringe was empty and the energy was inside his body, he dropped the syringe

on the ground and began to grip the back of his neck and hold his head down low. Porthos stood back in fear, fearing what catastrophe was going to happen now Scourge had injected himself with Chaos Energy. Scourge tensed up very tightly for a moment as he felt his body changing and then he threw his arms out to the side, looked straight up at the ceiling and he bellowed a loud, fearsome, blood-curdling roar that echoed through the cavern as the Chaos Energy in his body began to take effect on him…

Back at Royal HQ, Sonic was beginning to lose his patience. He paced back and forth impatiently as time ticked by. Amy had been gone for three hours straight and she hadn't come back at all. Tails had been monitoring her position thanks to the computer monitors picking up her Chaos Energy but they weren't much good as you couldn't see what Amy was doing right now. Sonic was beginning to worry about her. Had she gotten herself in trouble? Was she in a massive fight with somebody and still hadn't beaten the opponent yet? Anyhow, he had a bad feeling about Amy and he had to find out what was going on with her.

"That's it! I'm outta here!" yelled Sonic crossly.

He prepared to run off until Knuckles grabbed him and held him back.

"Hold it right there Sonic." said Knuckles "Do you want Amy to get mad at you and deck you one for coming to help her when she doesn't want it?"

"I don't care Knuckles!" retorted Sonic "Amy's obviously in trouble as she's been gone for far too long and I'm going to find her whether she likes it or not!"

"I'm beginning to concur with Sonic here." said Tails "I'm beginning to feel worried for her too. Amy should have found somebody to punch by now and she hasn't come back. We should find her before she winds up in serious trouble."

"I wouldn't go after her alone though." said Knuckles "You may need

some back up to tie her down in case she's in a bad mood."

"OK then, everybody on the team's coming along." said Sonic "Especially Mandy as Amy owes her an apology for earlier."

"We're going to find Miss Rose?" asked Cream happily "I hope she's alright when we find her."

"There's no telling what she's up to right now." said Cosmo glumly "Tails, do you know where Amy is right now?"

"Curiously enough, she's in Downunda." said Tails, peering at the computer monitors and pin-pointing her location "Downunda is a long way away from Mobotropolis, any normal person can't possibly walk there in three hours. Is Amy super fast as well as super strong now?"

"Maybe." said Sonic "We'll find out once we watch her. Tails, Knuckles, Cream, Cosmo, you get the others. I'm gonna get a hover saucer so that nobody has to carry anyone. It'll be faster for everyone to go to Downunda on saucer."

Tails, Knuckles, Cream and Cosmo obeyed and they ran out of the lab to fetch Sonic's other friends. Sonic dashed out of Royal HQ to fetch a hover saucer. Luckily, he knew where they were kept, all the way around the back of the headquarters in a storage garage that couldn't be accessed from inside the headquarters. Sonic ran into the garage and nabbed a large, silver hover saucer that could easily fit him and his ten friends. As Sonic powered the saucer up and pulled it around to the front so his friends could climb into it, he began to hope that Amy was alright right now, otherwise he would never live this down if Amy got hurt because he wasn't there for her…

Back in the cluster cavern in Downunda, Scourge had finished roaring out as the Chaos Energy he'd just injected himself with had finally simmered down and he bent over will staring at his hands and panting heavily as if he was going to have an asthma attack. Porthos still kept his distance from Scourge as he feared some bad

was going to happen to Scourge. Scourge stood up straight and he felt his arms. He could feel the Chaos Energy pulsing through his veins as if it was just his own blood and he could feel his strength increasing by the second. He also felt awesome and invincible too and he had this sudden urge to smash some skulls and break some spines. The biggest change and the only visual change on Scourge from the Chaos Power he'd added to his bloodstream was that his eyes were now flashing with the seven colours of the Chaos Emeralds. Every ten seconds or so, they would change colour from blue to yellow to cyan to purple to red to green and then grey. The Chaos Energy had a stronger effect on Scourge then Amy did because he'd already been in contact with Chaos Energy previously when he had a personality change after touching the Master Emerald the first time he visited Angel Island and when he used the Master Emerald to turn super earlier*. Scourge could hardly contain the feeling he had right now, this was overwhelming to say the least. The Chaos Energy Amy had really was something wasn't it? He couldn't wait to test it out on his enemies.

"The power…I…I…I can't believe this power…" stammered Scourge in a sinister voice and a maniacal grin on his face that made him look crazily and insanely demented all at once, his arms were trembling like crazy as he felt the energy rushing through his veins like a fast flowing river "I feel…incredible…I feel like…I can dominate the world right there…and I feel like I have the power to do so…and also…I FEEL LIKE A CHAOS POWERED DEMON OF UNFATHOMABLE POWER!"

He began to cackle maniacally at the top of his voice. His cackles echoed around the cavern like loud ringing bells and he was cackling so madly he fell down on his knees and clutched his sides. Porthos was convinced that Scourge meant trouble and that he had gone completely off the deep end and had to be detained immediately. He pulled the top of his cane upwards and revealed a long sharp, shining sword inside. His cane was really a swordstick and he carried it with him because he always felt like he was going to need it. He pointed the sword at Scourge and prepared to run him through with it.

"Scourge, you've gone absolutely crazy." said Porthos "I'm afraid I'm

going to have to stop you in your tracks."

He drew the sword back and prepared to stab Scourge with it but Scourge grabbed the sword and snapped it in two with his bare hands, not receiving so much as a cut as the Chaos Energy in his veins made him invulnerable now. Porthos gaped in shock at his snapped sword and he sheathed the remains so it was now a cane again. He began to back away fearfully, wondering if Scourge was going to attack him or even kill him. His ears drooped down in fear and he began to tremble. Scourge glared at him and he advanced on Porthos menacingly with his teeth clenched and his fists clenched.

"You just tried to kill me didn't you Porthos?" snarled Scourge "Will just for that, I'm going to have to finish you off you dirty rabbit!"

"No! Scourge don't! No! Have mercy on me!" pleaded Porthos "You wouldn't terminate a defenceless citizen such as my self would you?"

"The only person that matters in life is me!" bellowed Scourge "And Fiona too! Nobody else matters so yes, I would terminate a defenceless person such as yourself, especially as you just tried to run me through with a sword!"

He grabbed Porthos by his collar and he hoisted the rabbit off the ground. Porthos squirmed furiously as Scourge lifted him off the ground. Scourge flashed him a heart-stopping death glare and the proceeded to throw Porthos directly into a rocky wall. Porthos cried out in pain as he hit the hard rocky wall and pain flooded up his body. Porthos slumped on the ground and groaned in agony as pain swept over him. Scourge cackled sadistically and he advanced on Porthos menacingly. But something stopped him dead in his tracks. All of Porthos' miners had heard Scourge cackling like mad and bellowing at Porthos so they ran in to see what was going on only to find Scourge about to kill Porthos. They also saw Fiona's battered body and Amy's unconscious body, making it look like to them at least that Scourge had beaten them both up. The miners could see that Scourge was nothing but trouble so they raised their pickaxes and prepared to let Scourge have it. They charged towards Scourge and prepared to kill him with their pickaxes but Scourge curled up

into a ball and spin-dashed them all at once in a big green, blurry, flourish. The Chaos Energy had made him even faster and he spin-dashed all the men into submission in a matter of seconds. All of Porthos' men lay on the ground unconscious and beaten into submission. Scourge began to cackle sadistically and maniacally after doing that.

"All this power!" he cried to himself "Look what it's done to me! I'm faster then even Sonic now and one spin-dash is enough to knock those stupid miners out! Boy will Sonic be in for a treat when I get my hands on him!"

He then noticed Fiona's battered and beaten body still lying on the rocky floors of the cavern. He walked over to Fiona and he put his hands on Fiona's back. Since he had Chaos Energy in his body, maybe he could do the kind of things you could do with a Chaos Emerald.

"Chaos…REGENERATION!" he bellowed at the top of his voice.

As he bellowed that, his eyes began to flash with a bright beam of light and a flash came out from his hands and engulfed the beaten Fiona's body. The cavern was filled with a bright flash for a moment before dying down into nothingness afterwards. Scourge looked at Fiona and noticed some changes already. Fiona's eyes were no longer bruised, her bruises had gone and her lip had healed. The regeneration had worked. Fiona mumbled sleepily for a moment before waking up and getting up onto her knees. She looked at Scourge and beamed happily at him.

"Scourge." she said "What happened? I feel like Amy's beating earlier didn't happen to me."

"I used a Chaos Regeneration on you." said Scourge with a grin on his face "Me and Porthos found out that Amy was full of Chaos Energy and Porthos extracted it from her. I then stole the injection and gave myself the Chaos Energy. I'm glad I did because I feel GLORIOUS AND AWESOME ALL AT ONCE!"

"That's just plain awesome Scourge." said Fiona "So, what do we do now? All the miners have been knocked out, likely your doing, and

Amy's still here. Should we finish them off?"

"Nah, we've got better things to do right now." said Scourge "Mine all these clusters and then use them to conquer the world. In fact, to be EVEN MORE powerful, I'll take the clusters to Angel Island and combine their power with the Master Emerald and Chaos Emeralds! That way I'll be invincible and no one will match me!"

"Well we'd best get to it then." said Fiona "Amazing how Amy's contributed into our plans to beautifully isn't it?"

"It is isn't it?" purred Scourge "Now Fiona, stand back and watch your man dig these babies up."

With that said, Scourge cracked his knuckles and he spin-dashed towards the Chaos Clusters that awaited them in the mining area of the cavern. Scourge spin-dashed the ground beneath the cluster and he churned into it like a saw blade going through wood. He carved straight around the base of the cluster, making it able to be lifted out of the ground and due to the Chaos Energy enhancing his strength, he was now able to lift things way heavier then himself. He picked up the huge cluster with one hand (that's how strong he is now!) and he was just about to carry it out of the cavern until he heard something. It was the sound of a hover saucer coming to the cavern. Scourge tossed the cluster over his shoulder where it landed on the ground with a heavy clunk and he jumped out of the cavern. An annoying sight met his eyes. There was a hover saucer coming to the cavern and the saucer had Sonic and his ten team mates. Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Shade, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben were all there and they looked like they were ready for action. The moment Scourge showed himself to everybody, Sonic instantly went berserk with shock.

"No way! Scourge is in the Cluster Cavern?" shrieked Sonic "How the heck did HE find it then?"

"How he found it doesn't matter!" yelled Knuckles "We'll beat him up like always! Prepare to attack everybody!"

But unfortunately, they were too late for that. Scourge had already prepared to attack. He curled up into a green spiky ball and he spin-

dashed the hover saucer as hard as he could, throwing everybody out of it and destroying it in an instant. All the Royal Fighters fell onto the ground and they grimaced tensely after that onslaught. Sonic picked himself up and prepared to battle with Scourge.

"Hey Scourge, I was wondering how long it would take you to show up after your humiliating defeat in our super battle." sneered Sonic.

"Well Sonic, I'm full of surprises aren't I?" crowed Scourge "And I've come back with an energy that's ever lasting! I got hold of Amy Rose and stole the Chaos Energy in her body! So now I'm a Chaos Powered DEMON!"

Sonic thought his quills were going to fall off. Scourge had stolen Amy's Chaos Energy? So now he had the energy the Chaos Cluster had given Amy? The energy had made Amy bad enough but Scourge was going to be straight up psychopathic! Now Sonic HAD to kick Scourge's backside before he slaughtered everybody!

"You took the Chaos Energy Amy had?" asked Sonic "Oh I could just flatten your face with my shiny red sneakers right now!"

"You're the one who's getting a flattened head wimp!" bellowed Scourge "Now, care to explain to me where Amy's Chaos Energy came from?"

"The Chaos Clusters of course." said Sonic "I used one to save her life after Fiona nearly killed her and it gave her Chaos Energy as a side effect and now you're going to use it for your own nefarious needs!"

"Yes I am!" crowed Scourge "So all this energy came from ONE Chaos Cluster? Does that mean when I get them all, I'll be godlike with their power?"

"You're not getting a whiff of anymore Chaos Energy you freak!" thundered Knuckles, running up to Scourge and preparing to punch him.

Scourge flashed Knuckles an eerie grin that could make anybody feel uneasy around him and he gave Knuckles a terrific uppercut

that sent him hurling through the air. Shade gasped in horror and she ran after the hurling Knuckles so she could catch him. Scourge then proceeded to go into a mad spin-dash frenzy and he spin-dashed everybody all at once. He walloped Sonic, he bashed Tails, he bonked Cream, he walloped Cosmo, he spin-dashed Wilson, he bashed Mandy, he bonked Geoffrey, he slammed Bunnie, he spin-dashed Ruben and then he let Shade have it just as Knuckles was hurling back down to the ground. Everybody was sent hurling across the terrain and they landed sharply on their backs in excruciating pain. Sonic picked himself up and spin-dashed towards Scourge but Scourge spin-dashed Sonic back and sent him hurling into the cavern. Scourge followed him and he spin-dashed Sonic into a wall. Sonic cried out as he himself being slammed against hard sharp rocks. Scourge wasn't finished with him though, he grabbed Sonic and hurled him across the cavern and into a cluster. Sonic proper shrieked with pain as he hit the cluster and he slumped back down onto the ground. Scourge was about to make Sonic suffer again but Sonic leaped out of his way, causing Scourge to accidentally spin-dash the cluster into pieces. A shard of the shattered cluster caught Sonic on the arm and he screamed in pain as a large cut began to trickle with blood on his arm. Scourge spin-dashed Sonic and then pinned him to the ground, flashing a demonic toothy grin that rivalled a crocodile's at him.

"You know what they say blue "Turnabout is Fair Play"." sneered Scourge "You've made me suffer enough times as it is so now you can suffer for all you've done to me!"

"Scourge wait!" cried Sonic "We can settle this nice and easily between just the two of us."

"Can we?" growled Scourge "Explain then Sonic, quickly because I can only hold back for so long."

"Me and you can fight one on one with just us two and no interferences." said Sonic "We can fight in a wide open area and far away from the clusters so no one can use them to cheat. This will be the showdown you've wanted Scourge and we can fight it."

Scourge thought for a moment on that interesting proposition.

"You know what blue? I like that idea." said Scourge "Meet me underneath Angel Island in half an hour and not second later. That'll give you enough time to say your last words to your wimpy friends before I crush your head like a grape!"

"Whatever." said Sonic, not really amused by Scourge's boasting.

With that said, Scourge turned around and ran over to Fiona who was still in the cavern. He picked Fiona up and leaped out of the cavern with her in his arms. Sonic watched as Scourge left the cavern and he picked himself up. Instead of following Scourge, he looked around for Amy as he had a feeling she was still in the cavern. Scourge had taken the energy from her so she must still be here. Luckily for him, Amy was. She was lying on the ground, still unconscious from Scourge's attack earlier. Sonic ran over to Amy and he picked her up. He looked at her sadly, wishing this had never happened.

"Oh Amy, I wish I was there to stop Scourge from stealing your Chaos Energy." said Sonic "I should have gone with you when you left and now this has happened. At least you'll be back to normal now Scourge has taken your Chaos Energy."

"Hello? Is someone there?" asked the voice of Porthos the Rabbit "I'm sure I can here somebody."

"Who's there?" asked Sonic quickly, bracing himself for another battle while still holding Amy.

Porthos picked himself up and emerged from the pile of knocked out miners and coming up to Sonic. He looked very shaken from his experience with Scourge earlier. Sonic realized it was only an innocent man and he was no harm at all.

"My name is Porthos the Rabbit." said Porthos "I was tricked into helping Scourge mine these Chaos Clusters and he stole that girl's Chaos Energy after I extracted it and now he's a crazy psychopath. I'm so sorry I've done this sir."

"No need to be Porty." said Sonic "Scourge tricked you, you had no idea so it wasn't your fault this happened. Although I kinda question

the fact you have no idea Scourge is evil already."

"I don't read or watch the news." Porthos admitted "And I don't really get out much so I don't hear what goes on in the world. I do know that you're the famous Sonic the Hedgehog though as even my miners I've heard of you. Is the pink girl here a friend of yours?"

"She is." said Sonic "I bet she came here to stop Scourge but she failed unfortunately and Scourge tricked you into giving him her Chaos Energy which was given to her by a Chaos Cluster. I used one to Chaos Regenerate her before you ask and the side effect was, it gave her Chaos Energy."

"Interesting." said Porthos "Those clusters power up somebody when a Chaos Regeneration is used. I'm learning more about Chaos Emeralds as this day goes on."

"Great I'm sure." said Sonic dully "Listen, I've got a fight with Scourge that'll seal the fate of the world depending on who wins and I need to get to it double quick. You take Amy out of the cavern and join my friends. If you see a twin-tailed yellow furred fox, two echidnas, a rabbit, a plant like creature, a skunk, a cyborg rabbit, a dog, a mouse and a water panther, they're my friends. You stay with them and tell them I'm fighting Scourge under Angel Island and they have to wait for my return. Got it?"

"To the letter Sonic." said Porthos, taking the unconscious Amy from Sonic "I sincerely hope that you beat that mad hedgehog!"

"I will Porty, I've had practice with him." said Sonic with an assuring smile on his face.

With that said, Porthos ran off to a rope leader so he could climb out of the cavern with Amy on his shoulder. As for Sonic, seeing as Scourge was powered by the energy from the clusters, he figured that he would have to do the same so he could match him. Sonic wandered over to a Chaos Cluster, touched it and yelled at the top of his voice.

"Chaos…REGENERATION!"

The cluster flashed brightly as he did so and he began to feel himself being pumped with Chaos Energy. The Chaos Regeneration healed the cut on his arm and the pain from Scourge's other attacks earlier. And much like with Amy, it had filled him with a bonus stash of Chaos Energy, just the amount needed to counter-attack Scourge. Sonic had had plenty of experience with Chaos Energy before so he could handle this power very well. Not to mention his strong heart and goodwill made the power more controllable and he didn't feel brutish or anything. He still felt the same, just a little stronger and a lot fresher then normal. Sonic smirked to himself as he felt the energy in his veins he'd gained from the Chaos Cluster.

"OK Scourge, let's see how you like a little bit of Chaos-Powered thrashing then." he gloated to himself "After all…Turnabout is Fair Play as you said."

With that said, Sonic rushed out of the cavern and rocketed off to Angel Island, preparing to battle with Scourge and vanquish the demon hog once and for all…

Footnotes:

***See Stories 89-90**

Oh my god people! This is it! Sonic vs. Scourge! The ultimate showdown! Will Sonic emerge victorious or will Scourge vanquish him once and for all? Find out in part three to this heart-racing saga! Read and Review as I always ask. :)

Emeralds Part 3

Story 92: Emeralds Part 3: Revelations by the Thousand

Scourge the Hedgehog, brother of worldwide hero and supersonic fighter Sonic the Hedgehog and would-be world conqueror was awaiting for his brother to show up for the final-showdown he had promised him. Scourge had recently given himself a dose of Chaos Energy which had been extracted from Amy Rose, hammer swinging heroine and Sonic's would-be girlfriend, by a rabbit named Porthos who was in charge of a mining group. The energy in turn had been given to Amy by the mysterious Chaos Clusters that Sonic had found in an underground cavern and Scourge was now full of it and he was slowly but steadily becoming a mad Chaos-Powered being of unfathomable power and uncontrollable rage. He and his girlfriend Fiona Fox waited for Sonic underneath Angel Island, a floating landmark and one of Sonic's most favourite places on Mobius to go. The Master Emerald and Chaos Emeralds were on the island and Scourge was hoping to use those emeralds and the Chaos Clusters to increase his power even more to the point where not even gods would be able to stop him. Scourge just stood there near the crater that marked where Angel Island used to be, his eyes glowing brightly and constantly flashing between the colours of the seven Chaos Emeralds every ten seconds. Fiona had gone down into the crater to take cover as this fight was not going to be pretty at all. She did however peek over the edge of the crater so she could see what was going on. She wanted to witness Scourge's final victory over Sonic firsthand so she wanted to watch this fight and see how it turns out. A good ten minutes had passed by before Sonic finally arrived on the scene. Scourge's face twisted into a cruel, evil smirk of pure concentrated villainy as Sonic arrived. He clenched his fists and prepared to beat the living snot out of Sonic. Sonic skidded to a halt about fifty feet away from Scourge and he called over to him.

"OK Scourge! This is it! Our final battle!" called Sonic "The battle that'll determine who will stand and who will fall!"

"And that outcome of course will be me standing and you falling!" retorted Scourge "You haven't a ghost of a chance against me! I'm infused with the very MIGHT! I'm full of Chaos Energy from the Chaos Clusters so you will not defeat me!"

"I know." said Sonic "That's why I gave MYSELF a dose of Chaos Energy too. A Chaos Regeneration from the Chaos Clusters has put me on par with you now so this fight will be nice and even sided!"

"Good, that'll make this battle more enjoyable when I break your bones Sonic!" cackled Scourge "Brace yourself because this'll be the biggest beat down you'll ever receive in your miserable, wasted life!"

"Let's do it to it bro." said Sonic smoothly, bending down in a battle ready stance with a confident smirk on his face.

Scourge bent down into a battle ready stance too and he prepared to charge towards Sonic. Fiona's face widened into an excited grin as the battle was about to commence.

"Go get em Scourge!" she cheered to herself.

Scourge heard her and that just made him feel even greater having the support of his girlfriend to keep him going. Scourge and Sonic stared each other down and they both clenched their fists. They then revved their feet up and they charged towards each other at the speed of running cheetahs, screaming loud battle cries as they charged towards each other. They then leaped into the air, drew their arms back and lunged towards each other fist first as they hurled through the air like graceful gymnasts…

Meanwhile, Sonic's friends Tails the twin-tailed fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Shade the Echidna, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot and Ruben the Water Panther all picked themselves up from the severe beating Scourge had given each of them in his mad Chaos Powered rage. Scourge had given them a good beating and all at blinding speed due to the Chaos Energy making him super

fast, even faster then before. Cosmo appeared to be struggling to get up though so Tails staggered over to help her up.

"Up you get Cosmo." said Tails, putting her arm around his shoulder and helping Cosmo onto her feet.

"Thank you Tails." said Cosmo weakly "Scourge has gotten even more powerful now hasn't he?"

"He has." said Tails "He stole Amy's Chaos Energy and it's now flowing through his veins. I guess he had some kind of injection with him if he managed to steal Amy's Chaos Energy."

"Does that mean Amy will be back to normal?" asked Cosmo.

"I hope so." said Tails "Although I don't see why she won't be so I would bet on it easily."

"Let's hope Amy is back to normal so she doesn't go punching anybody again." muttered Mandy, still sore over what Amy did to her earlier "Although it'd be much better if Scourge didn't steal it from her. He's even worse then Amy is." she added bitterly as she rubbed her hips better.

"Amy was bad enough with that stuff in her, Scourge is downright psychotic, I mean he beat us all up in a matter of seconds!" cried Wilson, rubbing his muzzle better "Oh I wish Sonic never found those so-called Chaos Clusters in the first place! None of this would have happened otherwise."

"But Mr. Wilson, if Sonic never found the clusters then he wouldn't have saved Amy with it so it was good Mr. Sonic found those clusters." said Cream "It was good he found them but it isn't good Scourge found them too."

"It certainly isn't." muttered Geoffrey, clutching his aching head "Now the bloke's gonna lay siege to everything in sight with no one to stop him. Unless Sonic can use the Chaos Emeralds on Angel Island to go super and kick his arse already."

"Speaking of Sonic, where is he?" asked Knuckles, rubbing his arms "Has he gone to Angel Island already?"

"Let us hope he has so he can end this nightmare already." said Shade, adjusting her headband as it was now drooping over her eyes after that beating Scourge had given her "Dark Chaos powered Imperator Ix was a trip to hell and back*, Chaos powered Scourge is likely going to be just as bad so we must stop him and fast before Mobius becomes a worldwide wasteland."

"I dunno if that'll be possible sugah." said Bunnie doubtfully, lightly stroking her ears to ease the pain a little "Ah mean Sonic couldn't beat Scourge no matter how many times he fought him. Even with our help he's still too strong and according to sugah-hog, even in super form Scourge almost got the best of him so ah doubt Sonic will be able to stop Scourge now."

"Bunnie, the best thing to do is not lose faith in our valiant crusader." said Ruben, readjusting his aqua-collar as it had gone crooked after the beating he received "If we're to beat Scourge, it'd be best to remain faithful to one another and not lose hope. After all, our spirit and valour always comes out on top of out conflicts."

"I'm with Ruben on this." said Tails "I believe in Sonic, no matter what the situation is like. Sonic can do this, I know he can."

"Um, excuse me everybody but a rabbit appears to be coming our way." said Cosmo, pointing to an oncoming Porthos the Rabbit.

Porthos had done what Sonic had told him and run off to find his friends while carrying a still unconscious Amy Rose in his arms. He reached Sonic's friends and he dropped down onto his knees, panting heavily. He put Amy down on the ground and he picked himself back up while rubbing his chest. He had come down with a chest pain after all that running.

"Pant! Whew, this running doesn't do me any good no more these days!" he puffed "Gasp…hello there, you're friends of Sonic the hedgehog aren't you?"

"We are." said Tails "How do you know that and who are you?"

"Sonic told me what kind of species you all are and you fit his descriptions." explained Porthos "And in answer to your second

question, I am Porthos the Rabbit, leader of a mining group from Furville. I was tricked into helping Scourge and Fiona mine the Chaos Clusters and now Scourge has used your friend Amy here's Chaos Energy to power himself up. Sonic has gone to fight him under Angel Island and you're to stay here until he comes back. He told me to tell you that."

Everybody murmured amongst each other whereas Knuckles just blurted out angrily.

"Sonic and Scourge are fighting under Angel Island?" he shrieked "Scourge is gonna steal the Master Emerald if he wins this! I've gotta get over to the island and defend it now!"

"No Knuckles." said Shade hastily, holding him back "Scourge is too powerful and according to Porthos, Sonic has commanded us to wait until he returns. Besides, I'm sure the hedgehog has a plan in mind if he's fighting at Angel Island. Maybe he's going to turn super and defeat him for good."

Knuckles calmed down and took in Shade's suggestion. It wasn't a bad suggestion and if that was Sonic's plan then it was going to work…if he could find a way of getting onto Angel Island without a warp ring. Then Knuckles remembered Sonic could leap good and high so he could leap up and reach the island if he had to so he didn't have to worry about that. As for Porthos, he suddenly caught sight of Cream and he stared at her. Cream looked back at Porthos and wondered why the well-dressed rabbit was looking at her funny. It seemed that Porthos was either surprised at the sight of her or he was familiar with her in some way or another.

"Oh. Hello Mr. Porthos." said Cream politely "Why are you staring at me?"

"Good saints alive!" cried Porthos "It's you Cream the Rabbit! Six years pass by and all of the sudden, I end up meeting you proper! I never thought this day would come!"

Everybody stared at Porthos in wonder. Cream in particular stared at him even harder, wondering how he knew her even though she and him had never met before.

"I beg your pardon sir, but how do you know my name?" asked Cream.

"Chao, Chao?" piped her pet Chao Cheese.

"You also have a pet Chao." noted Porthos "Very interesting. Anyways dear, the reason I know your name…is because I am a relative of yours. I am…your father."

Cream thought she was going to die of shock right there. Everybody else gasped in a chorus of astonished gasps at him. Porthos just looked down at the ground as if he wasn't very pleased with himself over something.

"Y-y-y-you're m-m-my…father?" blurted Cream in surprise "I-I-I-I have a father? Oh…Oh my gosh! I-I-I can't believe it! All this time I actually have a father? My mother claimed to not know what happened to my father and I've spent my life thinking the same thing! If you're my father then why haven't you been in my life for six years? Why did mother not talk about you?"

"I bet dear Vanilla never spoke about me because she has no idea I'm still alive." said Porthos in a somewhat depressed and regretful tone "You see, I haven't been in your life for six years because I opted out of it."

"Why?" asked Cream nervously "Did you not like mother anymore?"

"No my child, I still love Vanilla." said Porthos sadly, his expression getting even sadder "I opted out of your life and hers…because I can't bear to face her again. Let's start at the beginning: I met Vanilla at a coco shop one day and we had a hot chocolate together. We talked to each other and then began falling in love with each other and a few years later, we married and settled down in a nice cosy home in Stardom Village. Soon after our marriage, Vanilla announced to me she was expecting a baby and I was over the moon with joy. I've always wanted a child and I was finally going to get one.

But then a whole day before you were finally born, our life together ended. I had a boy's night out with my friends in a pub while Vanilla

had a ladies' night out with her friends. I stupidly got myself deathly drunk and had a violent rage in the pub. I then left the pub and collapsed in an alleyway. I was too close to the wall when I collapsed and I banged my head on it. I was knocked out for a while and it was afternoon the next day by the time I woke up. I realized that Vanilla would be expecting you that very day so I decided to rush home as quickly as I could. I found a newspaper on my way back with a headline saying that I hadn't come back from my night out and that Vanilla had given birth to you that very morning. I wanted to tell Vanilla that I was still alive. But then I remembered last night. I began to feel ashamed of myself. I began to wonder what would Vanilla say about it and felt like I couldn't bear to face her anymore. She would never forgive me for this. I wrecked a pub in a drunken rage and missed the birth of my own daughter. I had been a terrible husband and I did not deserve to be a father for my appalling actions so instead of coming home, I decided to remain out of Vanilla's life for good and let her wonder what had happened to me.

I changed my image and dressed smartly so people would see me as a well-mannered upper-class gentlemen and I got a job at a mining company in Furville. And now, after all these years, I get to see you for real Cream. Just a pity that I've had to hide from Vanilla and you all these years because I let you both down thanks to a stupid incident. I'm so, so deeply sorry for what's happened and that you've had to go all this while without me in your life Cream."

He finished his statement and revelation with a single tear that trickled down his face. As for Cream, she had listened to Porthos' story and couldn't believe that this is what had happened to her father all along. Vanilla didn't know what happened to him because he led her to believe that by hiding from her after vanishing out of her life two weeks before her birth. Cream was still so overwhelmed to hear she even had a father but she was willing to accept him in the family despite what he'd done to ruin his own life and leave Vanilla under the pretence he was dead for all her life. Cream took Porthos' hand and looked up at him with big brown innocent eyes. Porthos looked down at her from his height and tried not to look ashamed to be here right now.

"I know you're sorry for yourself dad and you can't bear to face mother again but if you don't, all you're gonna do is make yourself even sadder and you're only gonna feel bad for the rest of your life." said Cream "You've got to show yourself to mother again and tell her what happened to you and that you're very sorry about it. You can't hide from her forever."

"I don't want to hide from her." Porthos admitted sadly "It's just, I can't bear to lose her either. I fear that she'll leave me due to the fact I ended up going on a drunken rage and then ended up knocking myself out which in turn, caused me to miss the birth of my own daughter. I've been a terrible husband to Vanilla and I can never go back to her."

"Yes you can." said Cream supportively "I'm sure mother will understand what happened to you and she'll forgive you for what you did. After all, you didn't mean those things to happen and you regret it happening. Also, mother's a very forgiving person so she'll easily forgive you dad."

Porthos just looked Cream squarely in the eyes and began to feel funny. It was as if Cream's puppy-dog eyes were having some sort of effect on him that was making him feel all sorry for her and that the only way to make her expression change was to do what she wanted. Porthos then though about what Cream said to him. If he hides from Vanilla forever then he'll never feel better about himself and Vanilla may not be very happy without him right now. Not to mention, he'd always wanted a child of his own and if he remained hidden from Vanilla and Cream then he'd never get to be a father. Porthos decided that he had to fix his life and be the father Cream never had and make it up to Vanilla.

"Cream, I think you're right." said Porthos "I must fix my life or I'll never feel better. I can't stay hidden forever. Once this crisis with Scourge and his Chaos Power is over, I'll go straight over to Vanilla and make it up to her."

"That's great daddy!" cried Cream happily "Mother will be so thrilled to see that you're still alive when she sees you again!"

As for Sonic's friends, they didn't really know what to do except feel

happy for Cream fright now.

"Aw, that's so sweet." said Mandy happily "Cream's gotten her father back and he's going to make it up to her mother. It fills my heart with joy to see families getting back together again."

"Same here." said Wilson ""I'm glad to see Cream's getting her family back at last."

"As touching as this reunion is." said Knuckles grimly "If Sonic doesn't beat Scourge then it'll be a short-lived reunion."

Everybody agreed with him on that one. Cream's gotten her father back at long last but if Scourge beat Sonic and dominated the world then this reunion would be over as quick as it happened…

Sonic and Scourge hurled towards each other in their amazing leap and they punched each other in the face. Their punches were enough to shatter their jawbones and the force of their punches sent them hurling backwards across the battlefield. Sonic and Scourge both skidded to a halt and they charged back at each other. They drew their arms back and they punched at each other again. This time, their fists hit each other. Sonic and Scourge then began to rapidly punch at each other at a speed that could rival ninjas and they struck each other at various places all over their bodies with their punches. The two hedgehogs then wizened up to one another and they began to effectively block each other's blows. Sonic lunged at Scourge with an uppercut but Scourge blocked it and he tried to left hook Sonic in the face but Sonic blocked that one. Sonic lunged a right hook but Scourge blocked it with his arm and then Scourge tired to uppercut Sonic but Sonic blocked that attack. Sonic tried to roundhouse kick Scourge in the head but Scourge bent over backwards to dodge the attack. Just as Sonic's leg swept over Scourge, Scourge swiped his arm upwards and hit Sonic's leg, knocking him onto his back. Scourge then tried to stomp on Sonic but Sonic rolled out of the way, leaving Scourge to stomp the ground instead. Sonic picked himself up and he kicked Scourge in the legs, taking them out from underneath him and bringing him down on the ground. Sonic then tried to stomp on Scourge but Scourge rolled out

of Sonic's way and leaped back onto his feet. He homing attacked Sonic but Sonic wasn't down for long. He regained his balance and homing attacked Scourge back. Scourge growled furiously and he ran backwards a good distance and then charged back towards Sonic. Sonic could see what Scourge was up to so he charged back at him. The two hedgehogs then spin-dashed towards each other and they struck each other at an incredible force that could break rocks. Sonic and Scourge were both sent hurling backwards a good distance across the battlefield and they screeched to a halt. Sonic charged towards Scourge at top speed but Scourge was ready for him. He waited until Sonic was almost up to him and then he leaped over him. He dropkicked Sonic in the back of the head, knocking the cobalt blue hedgehog down onto his face. Sonic ended up skidding rather painfully across the ground on his face, leaving very bad scrape marks on his face. Scourge then grabbed Sonic by his quills and he zoomed around the battlefield, carrying Sonic by his quills. He then jumped up onto the underside of Angel Island, which was a giant rocky point, and he chucked Sonic through the air and down towards the ground. Sonic however, flipped himself over so his feet were facing the ground and he landed on the ground feet first like he wanted to. He skidded backwards slightly but he quickly stopped himself. Scourge spin-dashed towards Sonic but Sonic back-flipped and kicked him as his legs swung up and over, sending Scourge hurling into the ground. Scourge picked himself up and lunged at Sonic. Sonic and Scourge linked arms with one another and they pushed on each other, trying to get the best of one another. They both gritted their teeth at each other and grunted as they pushed on each other's arms.

"Looks like that Chaos Energy from the clusters has done you some good blue boy." sneered Scourge "That just means I get to toy with you for longer then should be reasonable. Good, I feared this final battle was going to be boring!"

"Well you thought wrong rainbow eyes!" sneered Sonic "Speaking of which, why does the Chaos Energy make your eyes flash between the colours of the seven Chaos Emeralds?"

"I guess it reacts to differently certain people." said Scourge "But I don't care, it's reacting to me in a good way, a way that'll ensure

your downfall!"

"I wouldn't bet on that you green twerp!" retorted Sonic.

He then proceeded to head-butt Scourge in the forehead, causing Scourge to let go of his hands and grip his face. Sonic then jumped up and kick-slammed Scourge in the gut, knocking the green hedgehog down onto his back. Sonic then pounced on Scourge but as he landed on him, Scourge swung his legs up, throwing Sonic off himself and onto his back. Scourge picked himself up and spin-dashed Sonic before he could even so much as bat an eyelid. Sonic picked himself up just in time to dodge a spin-dash from Scourge and he spin-dashed the green hedgehog back. Scourge retaliated with a kick to the face that sent Sonic staggering and he lunged a couple of punches at Sonic but Sonic blocked them both. Sonic threw a gut-punch at Scourge but Scourge blocked the attack and retaliated with a roundhouse punch to the jaw. Sonic took a moment from the battle to rub his throbbing jaw better and he let Scourge have it with a roundhouse kick to the legs. Scourge was brought down onto his back and Sonic stomped on his stomach. Scourge gasped hoarsely as he felt all the air in his lungs depleting from that heavy stomp. Sonic then tried to punch Scourge in the face but Scourge grabbed the punch and got back onto his feet while still gripping Sonic's fist. He squeezed Sonic's fist as hard as he could in hope of making the hedgehog cry in pain but Sonic was too strong for that kind of pain now thanks to the Chaos Energy. Instead he fought Scourge's attempt to hurt him. Scourge growled furiously, not pleased to see his attack wasn't working and he kneed Sonic in the gut. Sonic doubled over while gasping heavily. Scourge then walloped Sonic around the head, sending Sonic in a dizzy stagger backwards but he didn't fall over. Sonic and Scourge bent down in battle ready stances, ready to deliver the next blow until a clap of thunder interrupted them. They looked up at the sky and saw a flash of lightening. Shortly afterwards, it started to throw it down with rain. Rain sprinkled over everything and turned the once dry ground into wet ground. Water trickled down the two hedgehog's fur and into their gloves and shoes. Sonic and Scourge looked back at each other and they prepared to continue the battle. Thunder boomed through the sky once again and lightening flashed briefly, lighting up the battlefield for a second. Sonic and Scourge then charged

towards each other at supersonic speed and they spin-dashed each other. Their attack just sent each other flying backwards and they lunged for each other again. They bounced off of each other like two footballs being kicked at each other and they hurled backwards. They spin-dashed towards each other and spin-dashed each other again. They kept this up for a good while until Scourge finally overpowered Sonic by dropkicking him into the ground. Sonic picked himself up and dodged just as Scourge spin-dashed at him again. Sonic elbow-thrusted him in the back and knocked him down onto his stomach. Sonic grabbed Scourge by his jacket before he could get up and he tossed him across the battlefield as if he was a stone. Scourge flipped himself up and over to she would land on his feet and he did so, skidding backwards as he landed. Sonic charged up to Scourge but Scourge kicked some rainwater into his eyes. Sonic was left blinded by the attack and Scourge gave him a couple of left and right hooks each and then a kick to the gut that sent Sonic skidding backwards. Sonic wiped the rainwater out of his eyes and he charged back towards Scourge. Thunder boomed once again and lightening flashed, giving Sonic an eerie look for a brief moment. He leaped into the air and elbow-thrusted Scourge in the face. Scourge amazingly managed to remain standing after that attack but Sonic didn't stop there. He spin-dashed Scourge in the back and knocked him down onto his hands and knees. Sonic then stood before Scourge and glowered at him, rain trickling down his face and body. Scourge picked himself up and growled at him like a savage dog.

"I can definitely say this fight's a lot more fun then our other encounters blue." said Scourge grimly "It almost feels bad that one of us will have to end it sooner or later. Oh well, you know what they say "It was fun while it lasted"."

"Yes Scourge and I'll only be fun for me as I'll come out on top at the end of this." said Sonic "I always do in my battles!"

"Wrong actually." said Scourge "Did you forget the times I've beaten you before? I beat you outside Eggman's city**, then I beat you again in Spagonia***, then I beat you during that jungle tussle with Metal Sonic**** and I beat you the time I briefly subjugated Castle Acorn too*****, you only won that day because your friends

interfered. Oh and need I forget our super throw down******? I beat you even in super form! You only won that one because I ran out at an inconvenient time but I still beat you then! The only time you ever beat me properly and on your own was during my HQ heist******* but that's it, every other time we've fought, I've come out on top but you only win because your friends interfere or Ginger screws up on me! Well Ginger's dead and your friends ain't here so I'll defeat you, this time for good!"

"Not on your life Scourge!" yelled Sonic.

Sonic lunged at Scourge with an amazing kick to the gut that sent him hurling backwards but Scourge kept his balance and remained standing up after that skid. Sonic then charged towards Scourge and prepared to spin-dash him but Scourge spin-dashed him first and knocked him down. He then hauled Sonic back onto his feet and punched him in the face several times over. Sonic staggered backwards while rubbing his face better and Scourge leaned back on one leg, drew his leg back and kicked Sonic as hard as he could. Sonic hurled backwards but he landed on his feet and stopped himself. He then charged towards Scourge yet again. Scourge waited for him and prepared to attack him again. But Sonic got the first blow this time. Sonic leaped into the air and spin-dashed Scourge as hard as he possibly could. He spin-dashed Scourge so hard that the green hedgehog was sent hurling into the crater of Angel Island! He crashed onto the ground and Fiona slid down the wall to see how he was. Sonic then leaped into the cavern after him and he landed beside Scourge. No rain could land on Sonic and Scourge now they were under Angel Island. The island sheltered them like a giant umbrella so they would be nice and dry for the rest of the fight. Sonic grabbed a handful of dirt and slapped it on Scourge's eyes. Scourge cried out in pain and Fiona tried to attack Sonic in order to help Scourge but Sonic grabbed her leg and threw her away from him.

"Sorry Fiona, this is our fight." said Sonic dryly "And Scourge doesn't want anyone but us two in it."

Scourge picked himself up, the green hedgehog completely blinded by the dirt Sonic had slapped on him and he couldn't see anything. Sonic took this as an opportunity to go to town on him while he was

unable to fight back. Sonic ran up to Scourge and threw as many punches as he possibly could. A curious thing happened though. With every punch Sonic threw, Scourge spat out colourful drops of salvia. It was as if even his salvia was full of Chaos Energy! Sonic kept up the punching though, not once faltering or slowing down. He punched Scourge in the cheek, making him spit out colourful drops of salvia as he did so, then he punched him in the gut, then the jaw and then in the nose. After those punches, Scourge ended up with a nosebleed but his blood was coloured like the Chaos Emeralds instead of red like it should be. Scourge wiped his nose clean but Sonic punched him in the cheek yet again. Scourge staggered backwards and he wiped his eyes better. He got the dirt out of his eyes and he could now see again. Unfortunately, Sonic was on the attack and he didn't have time to brace himself. Sonic gave Scourge a powerful uppercut to the chin that sent him hurling through the air in a rainbow arch and crashing down onto the ground. Scourge spat out a tooth and some colourful salvia and he sat up just as Sonic advanced on him. Thunder clapped and boomed through the sky like an explosion and lightening flashed again, making Sonic look eerie again. Sonic raised his foot and pressed it on Scourge's torso, forcing him back onto the ground in a lying down position and he glowered at him. His face curled into a smirk that looked rather sinister on Sonic's face. Scourge stared at him with his ever flashing eyes that continued to change colour.

"No…this can't be…I'm Scourge the Hedgehog! The most powerful being in the world! I can't be defeated now! Not while Chaos Energy pulses through my veins!"

"Well Scourge, you've just been defeated." said Sonic, raising his foot of Scourge and drawing his arm back, ready to let Scourge have it big time "You may have Chaos Energy in your veins, but I also have Chaos Energy in my veins and since I use it properly, that makes me the better hedgehog. Now brace yourself, this'll hurt big time."

Scourge stared in horror at Sonic's fist. Sonic was going to kill him now wasn't he? Probably not as Sonic was not the killing type. He was probably going to knock him out and then get rid of his Chaos Energy and then throw Scourge back in a prison cell. And that was

exactly what Sonic was intending to do now. Fiona could only watch pitifully as Sonic prepared to knock Scourge out. Sonic gave Scourge a triumphant grin and then he lunged at him with his fist… and his grin twisted into an open hole of shock. Scourge was sitting up and he'd managed to catch Sonic's fist in his hands! Scourge smirked at Sonic and he opened his eyes. His eyes were even brighter then before now, bright to the point they were blank canvases of endlessly changing colours. The Chaos Energy inside him was changing and was getting even stronger, much like it did in Amy. Scourge had had his Chaos Energy longer then Sonic's so his was reaching the mature stage faster then Sonic's was. Sonic's wasn't even changing yet as he'd gotten his recently so Scourge was now stronger then Sonic. Scourge picked himself up while still holding Sonic's fist and he kept on his wicked grin. He then yelled something.

"Chaos…REGENERATION!"

After he yelled that, he glowed brightly as if he was an actual Chaos Emerald and his injuries from earlier disappeared into thin air. It was as if Scourge now had the ability to heal himself! He looked perfectly fine now, as if he hadn't been fighting a moment ago! Sonic began to look nervous as Scourge squeezed on his fist, making him yelped and grimace in pain. His grin spread into a wide smirk of pure concentrated evil now.

"Interesting!" cried Scourge "Over a period of time, the power from the clusters increases and you become a living Chaos Emerald! I can heal myself now! And I can use other powers the Chaos Emeralds have too! Now how was it you put it Sonic? "Brace yourself, this'll hurt big time."? Well, THIS will hurt big time!"

He then let go of Sonic's fist and bellowed at the top of his voice.

"Chaos… **BLASSSTTTT!** "

He threw his arms out and huge red beams of pure concentrated energy exploded out from Scourge's body in similar fashion to Shadow the Hedgehog and Sonic was thrown backwards by the blasts. Sonic hurled backwards and crashed into the wall of the crater. Scourge warped over to Sonic and gave him an uppercut that

sent him hurling out of the crater and out into the rain again. Sonic skidded across the wet ground a good distance before coming to a painful halt. Scourge teleported out of the crater and right above Sonic. Sonic lay on the ground face-first and beaten to the point he couldn't fight anymore. Fiona climbed out of the crater and waited for Scourge to kill Sonic.

"Yes, yes!" You've got him Scourge! Kill him quick!" cried Fiona.

Scourge ignored Fiona but he prepared to kill Sonic anyway. Scourge turned Sonic over onto his back and slammed his foot on Sonic's stomach, making the blue hedgehog gasp hoarsely and wheeze like a person with asthma. Scourge glowered at Sonic, his bright flashing eyes looking like pure devil eyes that flashed from green to blue to cyan to red to purple to yellow and grey and his face twisted into a smile that made the craziest of man look sane in comparison.

"Thanks for all this fun Sonic!" cackled Scourge, his voice echoing for some reason as he spoke "But now the time has come for you to die. Brace yourself, this'll hurt big time!"

He then threw his arms up into the air and was about to yell Chaos Blast until suddenly, a black and red blur spin-dashed him in the gut and sent him hurling backwards. It was Shadow the Hedgehog! The genetic experiment that looked Mobian had shown up to save Sonic's hide from Scourge the Hedgehog! Scourge picked himself up and he growled at Shadow furiously.

"Who the heck are you stripes?" growled Scourge.

"I am Shadow, Shadow the Hedgehog." said Shadow darkly "And I'm here to save the one person I'm reluctant to call a friend. I could suddenly sense heavy spikes of Chaos Energy so I decided to investigate and now I find an evil Sonic look-alike attempting to kill him. I owe Sonic for exposing Eggman as a fake so now I can repay that debt."

"Cute, real cute stripy." muttered Scourge "Well have I got news for you Shadow boy, I'm Sonic's brother Scourge the Hedgehog and I am gonna kick your ass for interfering with me!"

He charged towards Shadow and prepared to attack him but Shadow leaped out of his way and spin-dashed him in the back. He grabbed Scourge's arms and forced them behind his back but being as Scourge was heavily Chaos Powered, he didn't even feel the pain from it. Shadow pulled a face that suggested there was something about Scourge that interested him.

"Fascinating, you're full of Chaos Energy." said Shadow "I can feel it inside you. You feel like a Chaos Emerald. Does this mean I can use you like one?"

He then yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" and Scourge glowed ever so brightly, bright even to blind even the sharpest of eyes. Grabbing a Chaos Powered Mobian and then using Chaos Control was not a good thing for the Chaos Powered Mobian, because it worked on the Chaos Powered Mobian instead of anybody else. Scourge was now stuck in a Chaos Control thanks to Shadow but he wouldn't stay stuck for long. He was frozen in time and he wasn't going to be frozen for long. Shadow decided that since Scourge was full of Chaos Energy and like a Chaos Emerald, it'd be unwise to battle him any further until he got an emerald or two. Not to mention Sonic was in bad shape so it was best to get Sonic off the battlefield and fast. Shadow ran over to the injured Sonic and he picked him up. Sonic opened his eyes and stared at Shadow, almost unable to believe Shadow was here right now.

"H…Hey Sh…Shadow…" grunted Sonic "Good…to…see you… again…"

"Hello again blue hedgehog." said Shadow "I've just frozen your brother Scourge with a Chaos Control and I'm getting you out of here before it wears off."

Before Sonic could say anything else, Shadow ran off as fast as he could. He skated across the terrain on his jet shoes and he left Scourge behind. The moment Shadow left, Scourge's Chaos Control wore off and he was now able to move again. Scourge picked himself up and he roared in frustration. He was so close to killing Sonic and yet he'd failed thanks to Shadow stepping in and getting in his way. Thunder boomed and lightening flashed as if the weather was sharing his anger with him.

"I FINALLY BEAT HIM AT LONG LAST AND SONIC WAS AT MY MERCY!" thundered Scourge "I WAS SO CLOSE TO KILLING HIM AND YET SOMEONE DECIDES TO STEP IN AND GET IN MY WAY! HOW COME NO MATTER HOW CLOSE I GET TO KILLING SONIC I ALWAYS GET FOILED AT THE LAST MINUTE?"

He then suddenly calmed down eerily enough and his rage died down into happiness. He was suddenly happy and seemed pleased over something.

"No matter though. This interference is a minor bump in the road." crooned Scourge "I'm a living Chaos Emerald now and I'll use my power to conquer the world! I'll use a Chaos Control to bring the Chaos Clusters over to Angel Island and fuse them all with the Master Emerald and Chaos Emeralds. I'LL BE A CHAOS POWERED GOD OF UNMATCHABLE POWER!"

He then began to below out with loud grating laughter that echoed around the battlefield. Sonic maybe still alive but that wasn't going to change anything. Scourge was now the most powerful thing on Mobius and soon he was going to be the most powerful thing in the universe once he tried out his plan…

Meanwhile, Sonic's friends had all decided to take shelter in the cavern of the Chaos Clusters from the pouring rain and booming thunder outside. Poor Tails was not enjoying this at all as he was deathly afraid of lightening. Every time it flashed, the poor fox just about jumped out of his skin. In order to make sure Tails couldn't see the lightning, he went deeper into the parts of the cavern that were covered. Cosmo went with him in order to comfort the frightened fox. As for the others, Porthos was hugging Cream in a comforting manner as Cream didn't really like thunder (rabbits have sensitive ears and thunder hurts her ears) and the rest were standing at the entrance waiting for Sonic to come back. As for poor Amy, she had finally come to (she got woken up by a thunderclap) and after waking up, Tails and Porthos had given her the rundown on what had been happening while she was out. Amy was intrigued to say the least, especially at the fact Porthos and Cream were related and she felt herself all over. She felt completely normal now.

She was no longer twitchy and brutish feeling. She was good old Amy Rose again thanks to Scourge stealing her Chaos Energy.

"Well it's good to have good old me back again." said Amy happily "Although it's a pity I had to lose my energy to Scourge. I should have stayed at Royal HQ and then none of this would have happened. I'm sorry this has happened everybody."

"Amy, don't put all the grief on yourself." said Ruben gently "None of us could have anticipated this to happen. You had no idea you was going to run into Scourge and Fiona did you? Although like you said, it would have been better if you stayed at Royal HQ and removed the Chaos Energy in the first place. But you were full of Chaos Energy and it made you impatient and restless, you couldn't really help yourself so it's not all your fault."

"I'm glad you see it that way Ruben." said Amy "You really are a good friend you are."

"Well one tries." said Ruben casually "Thanks for your compliment."

"You're welcome." said Amy "On thing I must say is, I didn't know Cream had a dad." she said, looking at Porthos.

After waking up, Cream had told her Porthos was her dad.

"I didn't even know ether." said Cream "I'm glad though that he's willing to come back into the family and make it up to mother."

She hugged her father and beamed brightly at him. Amy sort of smiled with Cream, glad to see she was getting a long lost parent back.

"As for Sonic, I hope he's OK." said Amy, changing the subject now "I mean, Sonic doesn't have any power from the clusters unlike Scourge who stole the power I got so Sonic's gonna have a hard time."

"Scourge can give Sonic as hard a time as he dares!" yelled Tails "Sonic will beat him! Sonic always wins in the end so he'll win this one!"

"The two are fighting at Angel Island so Sonic's got some trump cards on his side." noted Knuckles "He could easily use the Master Emerald or the Chaos Emeralds to give himself a bit of an edge over Scourge."

"Unfortunately, that means Scourge can too." said Shade grimly "Taking Scourge to Angel Island was a foolish idea and I think it'll end up costing Sonic dearly."

"I wouldn't bet on that Shade." said Mandy, peering outside and at the cavern tops "Blue dude's coming our way and Shadow's with him!"

"Sonic AND Shadow are coming?" piped Amy "Oh my gosh, Shadow's back! I wouldn't have expected that to happen!"

Tails, Amy, Ruben and Cosmo ran over to the mouth of the caverns and they looked up at the cavern tops outside. Shadow had found the cavern of Chaos Clusters and he was carrying an injured Sonic the Hedgehog on his shoulder. Shadow leaped down into the cavern and he met up with the others. He put Sonic down on the ground, the blue hedgehog trying his hardest to stay standing, and Amy ran over to him. She hugged Sonic happily, making sure she didn't hug him too hard as she could see he was hurt, and Sonic sort of hugged her back.

"Sonic, you're alive!" cried Amy "Thank goodness, I was beginning to worry about you!"

"Thanks for…the concern Amy…" croaked Sonic, coughing heavily as Amy and he broke up the hug "But remember…it's gonna take a lot…to bring this hedgehog down…"

"And took a lot, it looks like you did." said Wilson "Scourge really got the best of you that time didn't he?"

"In all…honesty…I ALMOST…beat that green psychopath." said Sonic weakly "But his Chaos Energy…increased and now…he's become… a living Chaos Emerald…he can use Chaos Blast and Chaos…Regeneration without needing a…Chaos Emerald now…he almost killed me but Shadow boy…came in and saved me. Which

reminds me…thanks for the save Shadow." he added.

"Don't mention it blue hedgehog." said Shadow dryly "I was only returning the favour I owed you after you led me out of deception. This doesn't make us allies though."

"Yeah, yeah I know…" said Sonic mockingly "We don't…want folks thinking…we're good buddies…do we?"

"Humph." said Shadow dismissively "So, what's been going on here then?" he asked everybody "And what are these strange clusters that feel like Chaos Emeralds?"

He motioned to the glowing Chaos Clusters that sparkled like a million stars in this dark cavern. Tails decided that he would provide the necessary exposition to Shadow.

"Well after my stupid cousin helped Scourge become super, Sonic and him had a super battle and Sonic ended up finding this cavern." explained Tails "He took one of the clusters home and healed Amy with it as she was injured by Scourge's girlfriend Fiona Fox, more on those two later. Amy however ended up with a dose of Chaos Energy after she was healed by it. It made her stronger, faster and more boisterous. Unfortunately, Scourge tricked a miner into extracting the energy from her and he put it in himself so now he's a Chaos Powered maniac. As for Scourge, he's…"

"I know young fox, he told me himself, he's Sonic's brother." interrupted Shadow "I must say, I didn't think Sonic had an evil relative. If anything, I didn't even think he had relatives. Never mind that though, this Scourge is just another threat to Mobius that must be detained. He's a living Chaos Emerald now and he'll likely use that power to destroy the world. I can't find answers to my past if he kills us all so I'll happily help you bring him down."

"That's good…to hear Shadow." said Sonic.

"You would say that." muttered Shadow "So little fox, what are these clusters then and where did they come from?"

"We're not entirely sure." said Tails, putting his hand to his head and

rubbing it with his finger "There used to be thousands of Chaos Emeralds but Knuckles's dad fused them together to make seven and yet these are clusters of real live Chaos Emeralds. Each cluster seems to have at least a hundred Chaos Emeralds each and there's about a hundred in this cavern alone. If Knuckles's dad did fuse them all together to make seven then they shouldn't even exist so they're a mystery to us."

"Although we've concluded that maybe Knuckles's dad missed some and they've been hidden all these years." said Shade "Although even I myself am finding it hard buying that."

"Indeed." said Shadow "And according to Tails, if you heal yourself with one, it fills you with Chaos Energy."

"It sure does…Shadow…" said Sonic "All it does…at first is make you stronger…and fresher…but as with Scourge…over time it increases and you…become a living Chaos Emerald. In fact, let's see if it's worked with me…"

He then picked himself up weakly and he said out loud, but not shouted as he was too weak to shout:

"Chaos…Regeneration."

As he said that, he glowed brightly as if he was a Chaos Emerald. Sonic's body flashed a dazzling light for a moment before dying back down to his normal self and revealing what he looked like now. The Chaos Regeneration had worked. He was completely back to normal now and he was completely fine looking. It was as if his injures were never there and his fight with Scourge had never happened. Sonic admired himself all over and he flexed his muscles.

"Suh-weet!" he cried "I can heal myself without needing a Chaos Emerald! Awesome!"

"You have more Chaos Power then me!" cried Shadow "I can't do this kind of stuff without a Chaos Emerald!"

"Well Shadow, if you're jealous, why don't you touch one of the

clusters and join me?" snickered Sonic "After all, I beat Scourge will have a lot of trouble beating TWO Chaos Powered hedgehogs!"

"I think we should all try this stuff." said Mandy "We'll be invincible Chaos Powered heroes that'll topple Eggman's Empire and defeat any villain that dares mess with us."

"I'm not so sure on that Mandy gal." said Bunnie doubtfully "It didn't mix well with Amy so it won't mix well with us."

"That just begs the question of why does it work on Sonic better then on me?" asked Amy.

"I guess my experience with Chaos Power before might have something to do with it?" suggested Sonic "I dunno. Either way, I can control the power and I bet Knuckles and Shadow can as they both have experience with Chaos Energy so they're the best ones to join me really."

"If you say so blue hedgehog then I'll willingly do so." said Shadow "Scourge must be stopped before he leaves your world in ruination."

But before anyone could do anything, Sonic heard the sound of someone coming to the cavern at super speed. It was Scourge! He had come back to collect the clusters for his grand plan! Scourge leaped into the cavern and he landed amidst the pile of Chaos Clusters. Everybody stared at him in shock and Sonic and Shadow prepared to wipe the floor with him.

"Hey Scourge, you've come back to finish me off I guess." said Sonic.

"Wrong!" yelled Scourge "I'm here for something else! I'm a bit narked that you've managed to heal yourself though. I guess your powers have increased too."

"You betcha Scourge!" sneered Sonic "I'm now a living Chaos Emerald like you are Scourge! Our powers are equal again! Now let's have a good ol' tussle for old time's sake shall we?"

"Nah, I've got plans to carry out first." said Scourge "And I need these babies for them."

He then thrust his hands out and bellowed at the top of his raspy, tough guy voice.

"Chaos… **CONTROL!** "

The room filled with an enormous bright flashing glow that filled the entire cavern from top to bottom. The Chaos Clusters all glowed in unison together and then all of the sudden, they along with Scourge vanished from sight. The flash died down and the cavern returned to it's gloomy, rocky state. The only thing different now was the fact the Chaos Clusters had disappeared and so had Scourge the Hedgehog. Scourge had Chaos Controlled himself and the clusters out of the cavern and onto Angel Island but Sonic and friends didn't know that. For all they knew, Scourge could be anywhere right now.

"Why that creep!" cried Sonic "He just took all the Chaos Clusters and legged it!"

"But why would Scourge take the clusters and then run?" wondered Shadow "Wouldn't it make more sense for him to just destroy us now with them?"

"It would." said Knuckles grimly "I have an idea on what Scourge is plotting to do with them though. He's either going to use them all on himself, or he's going to use them all along with the Master Emerald and Chaos Emeralds!"

"I think knucklehead maybe right on that!" cried Sonic "Scourge may well be plotting to do something like that! But what will happen if all that Chaos Energy is used together? I mean eight emeralds and one hundred clusters? That's quite a lot of power, what will happen if all that's mixed together?"

"Something devastating I bet." said Knuckles "We must stop him and fast! Sonic, since you're a living Chaos Emerald now, you warp us all over to Angel Island!"

Sonic immediately did what he was told and he initiated his own Chaos Control. He thrust his arms forward and yelled.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

He and all his friends glowed very brightly for a moment, their flashes brightening the caverns again, before vanishing into thin air. As Sonic vanished, he began to wonder something to himself. What would happen if Scourge used all those emeralds? Would it destroy Mobius? Would this be the crisis Silver and Blaze were wondering about that destroyed the future? If so, could it be stopped? Sonic had no idea but he couldn't take his chances. He had to stop Scourge before he went overboard with Chaos Energy.

Meanwhile, Scourge and the Chaos Clusters all appeared on Angel Island around the Master Emerald shrine. One hundred shiny clusters of Chaos Emeralds all lay around the shrine in a big circle, all sparkling like the stars in space. Fiona, who had been warped up onto the island by Scourge already, stared at the Chaos Clusters and she couldn't believe her eyes at the sight of all these clusters all out of the cavern and around the Master Emerald shrine. Scourge stepped up the Master Emerald shrine and stood on top of the Master Emerald. He looked very pleased with himself and he looked like he was ready to enjoy this.

"Wow Scourge, you got all the clusters!" cried Fiona "That Chaos Control really works doesn't it?"

"Works perfectly with a big P Fiona." said Scourge with a maniacal grin on his face "I now have all the clusters and I'm gonna use all their power and the Master Emerald's power. I have no idea where the Chaos Emeralds are but it doesn't matter. These will be enough anyway. Now let's see what happens when I do this…"

Scourge then tensed himself up and began to think about going super. The Master Emerald glowed very brightly and all the Chaos Clusters began to glow in unison with the Master Emerald. Scourge found himself being surrounded by a phenomenal light and the emeralds all began to flash in a dazzling manner. It was almost as if Scourge was turning himself into a light show. Just as Scourge was beginning to power up though, Sonic and friends all appeared on Angel Island and they were met with a terrible sight. Scourge was using the Master Emerald's power and the Chaos Cluster's power all at once to power himself up. A fusion of Chaos Power was

commencing because of this. Sonic and Knuckles both shared horrified gasps, Sonic because Scourge had beaten them to it and Knuckles because he knew what was happening.

"Oh no! I can't be too late!" cried Sonic "No! Scourge beat us to it!"

"It's just as I feared!" screamed Knuckles "Scourge is using a Chaos Fusion! He's fusing the power of the Master Emerald and the Chaos Clusters all together to make one! He'll become a Chaos Powered god with all that power!"

Fortunately, Knuckles was wrong. Just as Scourge began to feel himself turning super, the Master Emerald suddenly shattered under him and he was thrown off the shrine by an invisible force. Scourge crashed onto the ground at Sonic's feet and he groaned heavily. Then something else happen. Two strange colourful clouds of sparkling energy began to trial out of Sonic and Scourge's bodies and towards the fusion of Chaos Power. The entity was sapping them dry of their Chaos Energy, bringing them back to their normal selves! After a minute or so, Sonic and Scourge were drained dry of their Chaos Energy and the entity finished with them. But it didn't stop there. The Chaos Clusters were all dragged into this swirling dervish of Chaos Energy and reduced to fragments that vanished within the fusing power. Everybody watched on in awe as something began to happen from the remains of the Master Emerald. Out from the remains rose a giant watery serpent like creature. The creature was colossal and it looked reptilian like. It had many tentacles that grew from the base of the creature. It's back had a lot of spikes that went down it's back and it had a fin on it's head containing something organic looking that was presumably the creature's brain. It's mouth extended far beyond it's eyes and was full of razor sharp teeth. It had green reptilian eyes and was blue in colour. It looked like it was made up of water, an aqueous life form to be exact and it's upper body had a more solid look then the rest, presumably made of compressed water. This creature was none like any anyone had seen before and it looked like an absolute nightmare. The Chaos Energy spirals all vaporized into thin air, leaving only the creature behind. Everybody stared at this water creature, wondering what on Mobius it was. The creature glowered down at it's victims and roared a deafening screechy roar that could terrify even the

bravest of souls. Thunder boomed and lightening flashed through the sky, making the creature look incredibly scary at one point. Rain sprinkled down over it but being as it was made of water, it just absorbed the drops as if it was eating the rain as it hammered down on the ground and anyone out in it. The creature stopped roaring and communicated to the Mobians via a telepathic link to their heads so they could understand what it was saying. In their minds, the creature spoke in an ominous, booming voice that seemed fitting for a creature this size.

"I AM CHAOS, THE GOD OF DESTRUCTION!" it boomed "I HAVE BEEN SEALED IN THE MASTER EMERALD FOR AN ETERNITY AND NOW I AM FREE! THANKS TO THE POWER OF THE CLUSTERS, I AM NOW AT THE PERFECT STAGE! SO ALL LIVING BEINGS SHALL TREMBLE UNDER THE TERROR OF PERFECT CHAOS!"

Footnotes:

*** Who remembers all the hell our heroes went through in the Imperator Ix saga (Stories 71-74)?**

**** See Story 28**

***** See Story 29**

****** See Story 32**

******* See Story 35**

******** See Story 89**

Ohmigod! Ohmigod! Ohmigod! OH MY F*ING GOD! PERFECT CHAOS? WHAT'S HE DOING HERE AND HOW DOES HE FIT INTO ALL THIS? All the answers, including the origin of the clusters await you in the next and final part to this epic saga! Reviews are welcome.***

P.S. Bet you didn't see THAT coming! Porthos being Cream's dad! Well since nobody can be bothered to give Cream a dad, I thought I'd give her one. After all, I care more about character development then even Ian Flynn does.

P.P.S I loved your review PROJECT 1-21-18-9-1-19. I'm glad you're enjoying it so much. Just out of interest, what are your top ten favourite chapters so far? Please answer if you can. :)

I reuploaded this chapter because as ChristianSoldier5 pointed out, I made a bit of a goof with Porthos' back story so I altered it to be more realistic and believable. Is this any better?

Emeralds Part 4

Story 93: Emeralds Part 4: Chaos Rising

Angel Island, a floating landmark and one of the most famous sights on Mobius was now in grave danger along with everybody on it. Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic the Hedgehog's evil brother and would-be-world conqueror, had attempted to use a Chaos Fusion, using the power of the hundred Chaos Clusters found in the caverns and the Master Emerald but things had gone horribly wrong. The Master Emerald shattered to pieces and a huge aqueous monster emerged from the remains and it looked like it was ready to destroy everything in it's path. The creature called itself Perfect Chaos and it looked none to friendly to say the least. Sonic and his friends Tails, Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cosmo, Cream, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Ruben, Shadow and Cream's recently discovered father Porthos all stared at the giant behemoth that loomed before them. Scourge and his girlfriend Fiona didn't know what to think about this. Was this creature going to fit into their plans perfectly or should Scourge be sorry he woke it up. Perfect Chaos screeched a loud roar that echoed through the rainy skies like thunder.

"Scourge! What have you done?" shrieked Sonic.

"I…I dunno! I didn't plan for…this to happen!" cried Scourge "What the hell's going on around here?"

"I don't know either." said Knuckles "But I'm gonna find out!"

He then stepped forward and yelled at Perfect Chaos, the enormous creature looming above the Mobians with it's immense height.

"Hey! Chaos!" he bellowed "Who are you and where did you come from?"

Perfect Chaos lowered his huge head and glowered at Knuckles with his green reptilian eyes. The creature scowled at him at first but he answered him anyway.

"I AM CHAOS, THE GOD OF DESTRUCTION GUARDIAN." he boomed, whenever he spoke, his mouth didn't move as his roars were being translated to English for the Mobians via a telepathic link he was using so they could understand him "I AM AS OLD AS TIME ITSELF AND I COME FROM THE SEEDS OF THE VERY CHAOS ENERGY THAT MAKES THE CHAOS EMERALDS WHAT THEY ARE."

"What do you mean?" asked Shade, stepping up beside Knuckles and joining in on the conversation.

"BACK IN THE BEGINNING OF MOBIUS' TIME, THE CHAOS EMERALDS EXISTED." explained Perfect Chaos "LYING BURIED IN THE GROUND FOR CENTURIES. I WAS ONLY CHAOS ENERGY AT THE TIME. THEN THE FIRST ECHIDNA GUARDIANS DUG UP ALL THE SEVENTY THOUSAND CHAOS EMERALDS THAT EXISTED AND TRIED TO USE THEIR POWER. THEY WERE INEXPERIENCED THOUGH AS THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THE CHAOS EMERALDS HAD EVER BEEN USED SO SOMETHING WENT TERRIBLY WRONG AND I WAS FORMED FROM THAT CATASTROPHE. THE CHAOS ENERGY FUSED TOGETHER POORLY AND THE ENERGY ENDED UP FORMING INTO ME. NOW I AM A CHAOS ENTITY WITH A PASSION FOR DESTRUCTION AND I WILL NOT ALLOW MYSELF TO BE HALTED BY YET ANOTHER ECHIDNA GUARDIAN!"

He snarled menacingly at Knuckles, baring his sharp white teeth as he did so. Knuckles and Shade leaped back in surprise but they didn't show much signs of fear at him. Sonic then stood forward and decided to ask the giant serpent like water creature something.

"OK, what do you mean by "Halted by yet another echidna guardian"?" asked Sonic "What happened when you were first created?"

"I RAMPAGED ACROSS THE GLOBE, DESTROYING IN MY PATH." continued Perfect Chaos, his eyes narrowing down at the hedgehog "I CAUSED FLOODS, TIDAL WAVES AND WRECKED ALL THE CIVILIZATIONS I CAME ACROSS. THEN THE FIRST ECHIDNA GUARDIANS DISCOVERED THE LARGEST OF THE CHAOS EMERALDS WHICH YOU NOW KNOW AS…THE

MASTER EMERALD. THEY SEALED ME WITHIN THE GEM WITH A CHAOS CHANT THEY FORMED THEMSELVES AND I'VE REMAINED TRAPPED IN HERE SINCE."

"Huh, how's that for embarrassment?" snickered Sonic "Chaos, the big, powerful, almighty god of destruction got beaten by a bunch of echidnas who were learning how to use the Chaos Emeralds properly. You oughta be ashamed of yourself Chaos."

"Sonic, don't taunt the damn thing! Do you want to get us all killed?" shrieked Wilson.

"Do I even have to answer that one?" muttered Sonic.

"Hey Chaos, I have a question." said Tails, flying up to the creature and facing it face to face "Where did the Chaos Clusters come from? Knuckles' dad fused all the Chaos Emeralds into seven, or so he says."

Perfect Chaos stared at Tails for a moment as if he asked him something stupid like "Do jellyfish have fingers and toes?" and then he opened his enormous jaws and bellowed with laughter. Tails freaked out and he flew back down to the ground in terror double-quick, fearing Perfect Chaos was going to do something to him. Perfect Chaos stopped laughing and he looked back down at the Mobians. His huge jaws strangely curled up into a sinister smile.

"SUCH POOR, MISGUIDED, DECEIVED FOOLS!" he cackled "THE CHAOS EMERALDS WERE NEVER FUSED TOGETHER TO MAKE ONLY SEVEN! THIS IS THE TRUE STORY AND I SHOULD KNOW BECAUSE DESPITE BEING TRAPPED IN THE MASTER EMERALD, I HAVE CONNECTIONS TO THE OTHER EMERALDS AND COULD SEE AND HEAR WHAT WAS GOING ON WHILE I WAS IMPRISONED: THE GUARDIAN KNOWN AS LOCKE WONDERED IF THE CHAOS EMERALDS COULD BE FUSED TOGETHER TO MAKE GREATER POWER. A TEAM OF SCIENTISTS UNDER HIS WATCH BEGAN TO EXPERIMENT WITH THE GEMS AND THEN SOMEHOW, THEY MANAGED TO FUSE A HUNDRED EMERALDS TOGETHER AND MAKE A CLUSTER OF EMERALDS. LOCKE LIKED THE IDEA SO HE HAD ALL BUT SEVEN CHAOS EMERALDS FUSED TOGETHER TO

MAKE MORE CLUSTERS. HE LEFT ONLY SEVEN OUT OF THIS BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT TO GET RID OF A VALUABLE PIECE OF ECHIDNA HISTORY. AFTER THE FUSION PROCESS, THEY HAD A HUNDRED CHAOS CLUSTERS AND THEY ABUSED THE POWER THEY POSESSED. THEY ENDED UP LAYING WASTE TO ANGEL ISLAND AFTER LOSING CONTROL OVER THE CLUSTERS AND LOCKE WAS SO ASHAMED OF HIMSELF, HE ORDERED THE CLUSTERS TO BE HIDDEN FOREVER AND THAT THE NEXT GENERATION OF ECHIDNAS WOULD NOT BE TOLD THIS STORY AS HE WANTED TO HIDE HIS SHAME FOREVER. EVEN IMPERATOR IX REMAINED SILENT ABOUT THE WHOLE THING." he added with a sinister glance over to Shade as he knew Shade didn't know the true story about the Chaos Emeralds either.

Knuckles and Shade both stared at each other in shock at what they had just heard. Their fathers had lied to them? All their lives they had been told a false story about the Chaos Emeralds just so the echidnas before them could hide their shame? Knuckles didn't really know what to think about that one. Should he be mad at Locke for deceiving him or was Locke in the right to lie to everybody? Echidnas may be prideful and everything but prideful to the point of hiding their own shame when they messed up? Clearly there was more to the generation before Knuckles and Shade that they knew about!

"So you mean to tell me that the story of the Chaos Emeralds I've been told was all lies?" cried Knuckles.

"Lies told to us so that we would not learn of our superior's shame?" piped Shade "Why don't they want us to know their shame?"

"YOU ECHIDNAS ARE FAR TOO PRIDEFUL." explained Perfect Chaos "BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR BANEFUL ACTS IS TOO BIG A WOUND ON YOUR PRIDE AND LOCKE DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT HE WAS BEHIND THE DISASTER WITH THE CLUSTERS BECAUSE HE FEARED YOU WOULD ACCUSE HIM OF BEING A VILLIAN AND REFUSE TO ACCEPT HIM AS A FATHER, ALTHOUGHT MOST OF HIS SECRECY COMES FROM HIS PRIDE AND HOW HE WANTED TO LEAVE IT BEHIND HIM."

"Whoa, no offence to you red dude but your dad's a bit of a jerk isn't he?" asked Mandy, hoping dearly she wasn't offending the echidna.

"I'm beginning to agree with you Mandy." grumbled Knuckles "Keeping secrets from me just because he's too ashamed of himself for that mistake he made! And to think he's the man I looked up to as a kid! If he wasn't dead right now, I'd love to have a good word with my dad!"

"I'd love to do the same to your dad too." muttered Shade "I fell for his lies too when I was young and the Nocturnus and Ix used to live on Angel Island before we were banished. I used to think we echidnas were decent creatures but now, I'm not so sure after hearing a tale like this."

Porthos had taken this information in and thought to himself. He was learning so much about the echidnas and Chaos Emeralds today wasn't he? He did have a fondness for echidna tech and history after all so this was all interesting to him. As for Sonic, he decided to step in on this.

"OK, so the Chaos Emeralds weren't fused into seven, they were fused together to make the one hundred clusters there were before Chaos ate them and they were hidden in the cavern in order to hide the echidna's big goof up they had with them." said Sonic, making sure he'd understood everything correctly "Is that right?"

"Yes." growled Knuckles, still sore over the whole revelation.

"So now Chaos is free from the Master Emerald, what's it going to do now?" asked Shadow.

Even though he was talking to Knuckles, Perfect Chaos answered for him.

"I'M GOING TO LAY SEIGE TO THE PLANET." he boomed to the Mobians with a devilish, crocodile like smile on his reptilian face "I RECOMMEND ABANDONING THE PLANET AS THERE WILL BE NOTHING LEFT WHEN I'M FINISHED."

" **WHAT?** " screamed the Mobians in unison.

"Wait a minute! Wait you can't!" cried Tails.

"There are millions of lives on this planet!" protested Cosmo "You can't just destroy them!"

"I CAN AND I WILL YOU INSOLENT TERMITES!" roared Perfect Chaos "I AM CHAOS, YOU ARE VERMIN AND I WILL DESTROY EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE UNTIL THE WORLD IS AN ENDLESS OCEAN JUST FIT FOR A CHAOS GOD LIKE ME!"

With that said, Perfect Chaos turned away from the Mobians and he dived down from Angel Island and towards the ground below as if he was leaping into an ocean. Being as he was made of water, Perfect Chaos hit the ground and turned into a giant puddle that spanned the size of ten swimming pools and he reformed his terrifying shape once again. After doing so, Perfect Chaos roared as loud as he possibly could, his roars echoing through the terrain and thunder booming along with his roars, and he began to create a flood out of nowhere. He surrounded the plains with water and the water expanded on to the city of Downunda and beyond. If they didn't stop Perfect Chaos now, Mobius would be like the city of Atlantis, only worldwide. Sonic stared at Perfect Chaos and as he did so, a dreadful though crept into his head. Was Perfect Chaos responsible for the disaster in the future that Silver and Blaze were trying to prevent? If so then could it be stopped? If not then was this going to be the end of him and his friends? Sonic had no idea but he was determined to stop Perfect Chaos before he carried out his nefarious goals. As for Scourge, he stared in horror at what was going on and for the first time in his life, he felt regret and guilt. He wanted to conquer the world not destroy and now because of him, Mobius was going to become a memory of the past.

"Oh my gosh!" cried Scourge "Chaos is going to destroy the planet and it's all my fault! I didn't want to destroy the world, I wanted to rule it! How can I rule the world if it's destroyed?"

"You can't babe!" squealed Fiona as she watched Chaos turn the plains of Downunda into a new ocean "That's how!"

"Thanks for waking up the doomsday monster Scourge!" yelled Sonic crossly, smacking Scourge across the chops and knocking

him over "Now allow me to put it back to sleep, permanently!"

"No Sonic!" yelled Scourge, picking himself up "I woke the beast up so I'll defeat it!"

"Nah ah, no way Scourge!" said Sonic sternly "You've brought this apocalypse upon us, I'm not gonna let you make things worse! I'll defeat Perfect Chaos!"

"You're too weak Sonic, I'm the strongest of you fools so I'LL defeat Perfect Chaos thank you!" snapped Scourge "And that's final!"

"If you two can't be bothered to stop bickering, I'LL defeat this accursed monster!" yelled Shadow, leaping off of Angel Island and spin-dashing towards Perfect Chaos.

Sonic and Scourge stopped arguing with each other and they watched as Shadow hurled towards Perfect Chaos. He spin-dashed Perfect Chaos directly in the neck but being as he was made of water, he went straight through him and he didn't hurt him. Perfect Chaos roared at him and he smacked Shadow away with his tentacle. Shadow hurled through the air and landed with a splash in the water around Perfect Chaos. Shadow, like Sonic, couldn't swim but he didn't need to. He used his jet shoes to rocket himself up and out of the water and now he hovered above the water's surface. Shadow skated across the water on his jet shoes and he began throwing Chaos Spears at Perfect Chaos as desperately as he could. The Chaos Spears just went straight through Perfect Chaos without even hurting him. Perfect Chaos opened his enormous jaws and fired clusters of pink energy balls out of his mouth. The energy balls sailed towards Shadow but Shadow dodged the attacks, the pink energy balls splashing into the water as they missed him, sending water hurling everywhere. Thunder boomed and lightening flashed behind Perfect Chaos as Shadow headed towards him. The rain hammered vigorously in his face but Shadow didn't let that stop him. He leaped up into the air and spin-dashed Chaos in the face. The face area was more solid then the rest of him so Shadow actually did hit him proper this time but an attack like that only made Perfect Chaos growl in annoyance more then anything. Perfect Chaos smacked Shadow in the back with his tentacle and sent him hurling towards the water again. But just to add insult to injury,

Perfect Chaos smacked him back up into the air with another tentacle. Perfect Chaos had many tentacles to play with after all so he could smack Shadow around as much as he liked. He smacked Shadow towards another one of his tentacles and then he threw Shadow back onto Angel Island where he crashed into the Master Emerald shrine. He crashed into the shrine so hard that he left a heavy dent in the stonework and he made the pieces of the Master Emerald judder slightly. Shadow groaned in pain and he picked himself up, rubbing his sore face.

"Hey Shads, you OK?" asked Sonic, helping him back up.

"My face feels like it's going to shatter like glass but other then that, I'm good." muttered Shadow "That thing is immense! You can't even hurt it! It's made of water, you just go straight through it! It's head is actually solid but even attacking it's head doesn't work! It's surrounded by water so there's no safe place to stand when you fight against it! This fight is going to be the fight of our lives!"

"I'll say it is!" cried Sonic "I hate water, I hate getting wet and I can't swim so I'll fare no good against that thing! However, I'm gonna try as hard as I can! I'm not letting Perfect Chaos turn Mobius into a water world!"

"Maybe I can help." said Ruben "I'm a water panther and I have the ability to control water. Maybe I can fight the creature with it's own water."

"Yeah but how's water gonna stop something that's already made of water?" asked Sonic "Isn't that like trying to fight fire literally with fire?"

"It is but I can be a great distraction for it." explained Ruben "I'll use it's water against it to give you a chance to launch a good blow on it."

"If all else fails then we should use the Chaos Emeralds and go super." said Sonic "Me and Shadow in our super forms will defeat it."

"Make that you, Shadow AND me!" put in Scourge "I'm joining in with this conflict! I'm not going to destroy the very world I strive to

rule!"

"OK then Scourgey Wourgey, we'll play nicely for now." said Sonic "This truce is on up until Perfect Chaos's defeat and then we can dance all we like."

"I like that blue." said Scourge "Now let's go and stop that thing already!"

"Knuckles, you get the Chaos Emeralds ready for us to use." ordered Sonic "Me, Shadow and Scourge are gonna tussle with Perfect Chaos with Ruben providing distractions."

Knuckles did as he was told and he ran off to fetch the Chaos Emeralds from their hidden tomb. As for the three hedgehogs, they all spin-dashed towards Perfect Chaos, who was continuing to expand his watery wasteland. Perfect Chaos was then suddenly showered with spin-dashes by Sonic, Shadow and Scourge, the three hedgehogs hitting him in several places all over his body. Perfect Chaos just took the blows as if they were nothing. The blows seemed to be annoying him more then hurting him. Perfect Chaos roared in an irritated manner and he walloped the three hedgehogs with his tentacles. Sonic, Scourge and Shadow all hurled backwards like thrown stones but Ruben swan-dived into the ocean Chaos was creating and using his powers, he managed to move the water away and make a patch of dry land for the hedgehogs to land on. Sonic, Shadow and Scourge landed on the dry patch Ruben had just made and Sonic gave him a thumbs up.

"Thanks Ruben." said Sonic.

"I hate to say it, but nice powers kid." said Scourge "We don't have to worry about drowning now."

"I'm in agreement." said Shadow with a smile that wasn't really readable.

"Thank you." said Ruben "You're all welcome. It's an honour to fight alongside you. Sonic more then you and Scourge though Shadow but that's beside the point."

"I know what you mean." said Shadow, remembering the times where he was falsely their enemy when he should be their ally* "Now let's take this beast down once and for all!"

He, Sonic and Scourge leaped out of the dry patch Ruben had made and they spin-dashed towards Perfect Chaos again. Perfect Chaos saw Ruben moving his water out of the way and he sent a wave sweeping over Ruben. Ruben saw the wave coming and he propelled himself up into the air with a powerful jet of water, causing the wave to miss him. Ruben pointed his hands at Perfect Chaos and he squirted him in the eyes, blinding the serpent like chaos being briefly and giving the hedgehogs a good opportunity to attack him. Sonic spin-dashed Perfect Chaos in the head but the attack didn't seem to do any harm to him. Perfect Chaos regained his vision and he began firing energy bullets from the spikes on its back. The bullets rained over his surroundings and some aimed at the attacking hedgehogs. Perfect Chaos was more likely to hit himself as the hedgehogs were too fast for him to tag but Perfect Chaos was not going to hurt himself as he was made of water. One energy bullet however managed to hit Scourge and the green hedgehog found himself falling down to the waters below. Perfect Chaos however added insult to injury by whacking Scourge with his tentacle. Scourge hurled across the battlefield and he was about to land into the water with a splash but Ruben caught him by summoning a wave up from the waters that caught Scourge like a baseball. As much as he was reluctant to save Scourge, he knew that the heroes could do with all the heavy hitters they could get and Scourge was on their side for once so he had to help him too. Scourge picked himself up and he spin-dashed towards Perfect Chaos again. Perfect Chaos whacked Scourge away with his tentacle once again, sending Scourge hurling towards the water again but Shadow caught him and hovered above the water with his hover skates. Perfect Chaos growled angrily at them and he fired a bunch of pink energy balls at the two hedgehogs. Shadow sped out of the way, leaving the balls to splash into the water instead. Ruben dipped his hands in the water and concentrated very hard on the water around him. All water panthers had the ability to manipulate and control the water and bend it to their whims and that was exactly what Ruben was doing now.

"Oh mighty water, I am in need of your help." he chanted to himself "I summon you to aid me in this battle. I summon you to help vanquish the forces of evil and bring good back to the land!"

As he chanted this, a huge wave of water began to raise up from where he was and it expanded up and up to the size of Perfect Chaos. Sonic skated down Perfect Chaos's tentacle and he watched what Ruben was doing. He was amazed to see the little water panther making a wave so big. He whistled in an impressed manner at him.

"Suh-weet!" he blurted "When you're surrounded by water, you become a force to be reckoned with!"

Ruben continued to concentrate on the wave he was building up out of the water. Perfect Chaos turned his huge head to one side and saw the wave Ruben was building up. Seeing someone trying to use his own water against him made the Chaos being livid with rage. Ruben smirked at Chaos and he threw the wave at him. Perfect Chaos however, had complete control over the water like Ruben did so he just told the wave to break and the wave shrunk back down into the water. Ruben stared in horror at his failed attack.

"Oh no! He can control the water too!" cried Ruben in dismay "Well let's just see who has the better control over it then!"

He dipped his hands back into the water and he summoned a whirlpool out of nowhere. The whirlpool was just a vain attempt to suck Perfect Chaos in and spin him around a good bit which would hopefully dizzy him and make him a bit sloppy when it came to attacking and leave him open for Sonic and friends. But Perfect Chaos just took control of the whirlpool himself and expanded it upwards into a water tornado. Perfect Chaos was a hundred times stronger then Ruben as he was pure Chaos Energy in water form and he was in his perfect stage, making him at his strongest so Ruben would not win this water war with him at all. Ruben could only stare in defeat at Perfect Chaos as he used his own weapon against him. The water tornado spun through the waters and it picked Ruben up in its fast swirling force. Ruben was whisked out of the water and spun around and around in the water tornado. Ruben tried to stop the water tornado but Perfect Chaos's control over it

was too strong for the poor water panther. Perfect Chaos then brought the tornado over to himself so that it could pick up the hedgehogs as well. Perfect Chaos dipped down into the water, leaving the attacking hedgehogs to fall for a moment and then get swept away into the spinning water tornado. Sonic, Shadow, Scourge and Ruben were all whirled around and around at an amazing speed by the menacing water tornado and Perfect Chaos just watched them with eerily sadistic fashion, clearly enjoying this little water ride he was giving the heroes right now. After a while of spinning them around, he threw the heroes out of the tornado and into the water with a splash. The tornado then vanished into thin air and the water returned to normal. He watched the waters, waiting to see if the heroes were going to show up at all. Ruben emerged from underneath the water and he gasped for breath. He then used his water powers to raise Sonic, Shadow and Scourge out of the water so they could get their breath back. Sonic, Scourge and Shadow emerged from under the water and to the surface for fresh air thanks to Ruben raising them out. They were lying on a water board that Ruben was making to keep them above it. The hedgehogs picked themselves up and they shook themselves dry, not that it was necessary as they were just going to get wet again. Sonic picked himself up and he stared grimly at Perfect Chaos. That creature was one tough beast wasn't he? Nevertheless, Sonic didn't know the meaning of the words "Give up." so he decided to carry on with this fight. Sonic curled up into a blue spiky ball and he rocketed towards Perfect Chaos. He spin-dashed him in the snout but the attack didn't even tickle him. Shadow added insult to injury by throwing Chaos Spears at Perfect Chaos but even those attack were in vain. The Chaos Spears just went straight through Perfect Chaos's aqueous body and any that hit him on the head just ricocheted off of it. Perfect Chaos blasted Shadow with an energy ball and Shadow was thrown into the water. Scourge leaped off of Ruben's water board so Ruben could save Shadow. Ruben rose Shadow out of the water again while Scourge spin-dashed Perfect Chaos in the head. The attack only made Chaos grumble in annoyance. Scourge then somersault through the air and sailed back down to the ground. He positioned himself as he fell back down and he skated across one of Perfect Chaos's tentacles. He skated across the tentacle and then right up Perfect Chaos's body. He rocketed straight up into the air and he curled up into a green spiky ball. He spin-dashed straight

down and he ploughed through Perfect Chaos's cranium and came out through his lower jaw. That attack seemed to make Perfect Chaos wince in pain but Scourge couldn't really tell from his position. he landed back in the water but he moved his feet at supersonic speed so he could run across the water and stay above surface. As for Ruben, he had noticed Scourge seemed to hurt Chaos by attacking him through the cranium so he decided to aim for that. He summoned some huge water torpedoes from the waters and he threw them at Perfect Chaos. Perfect Chaos just took control of the torpedoes and made them dissolve into drops of water. Perfect Chaos then poured salt on the wound by summoning a wave and sending it rushing over Ruben. Poor Ruben was swept away by the wave. Perfect Chaos then stretched out one of his tentacles and he flicked Ruben in the air with it. Ruben rocketed straight up into the air, screaming at the top of his lungs as he flew up and then he fell back down. Perfect Chaos smiled eerily at him and he walloped Ruben with his tentacle. Ruben was stricken by the giant tentacle and he hurtled back onto Angel Island and straight past the Master Emerald shrine. He landed rather sharply on the ground and he grimaced in pain. Cosmo was quick to run over to him and kneel down by his side as she was a good friend of Ruben's and Ruben fancied her despite the fact she was with Tails.

"Ruben! Are you OK?" asked Cosmo worriedly "Are you hurt? Please get up."

She began to shake the pained water panther gently. Ruben grunted in pain and the water panther picked himself up. He rubbed his throbbing arms and back and he gritted his teeth in pain.

"As mother always said…never fight someone with better water powers then you." muttered Ruben.

"Ruben, you're OK." said Cosmo delightedly "You're one brave water panther to face that thing. You've done the best you can out there."

"Yeah, but it's not enough." said Ruben grimly "Perfect Chaos is stronger then I am, my powers aren't enough. His control over water is better then mine."

"Well at least you can actually FIGHT that thing along with the hedgehogs!" shrieked Fiona "We can't! We haven't got the right kind of power to face that thing!"

"I'll say." muttered Geoffrey "Any attack launched on it goes straight through it so Knuckles, Shade, Bunnie, Wilson, Amy and my weapons won't work on it, Mandy, Cream, Cosmo and Fiona haven't even got any weapons to fight that thing with so Sonic, Scourge and Shadow are all we've got. Knuckles is getting the Chaos Emeralds so the hedgehogs can use them to go super if they need to."

"And if their super form can't beat Chaos then what in the hoo-hah can?" shrieked Bunnie "We'll be in more trouble then a tied up cattle in a cattle farm if they can't stop it!"

"Precisely." muttered Geoffrey as he watched Perfect Chaos smack the hedgehogs around with his tentacles again.

Sonic, Scourge and Shadow got fed up of feebly spin-dashing Perfect Chaos so they ran away from the huge monster and thought on other possibilities. They needed to change tactics and fast or Perfect Chaos was going to win. As Sonic sped across the water's surface and ran rings around Perfect Chaos, he began to wonder how they could possibly hurt an aqueous being. Perfect Chaos watched the running hedgehogs and he tried to whack them with his tentacles as they ran past him. But Sonic, Shadow and Scourge were way too fast for him so he missed every shot. Sonic jumped over a tentacle, skated across another one and then ran back across the water's surface, looking for a possible weak spot on Perfect Chaos. Then Sonic noticed Chaos's brain that was stored in the fin on his head. Sonic didn't know what it was but being as it was the only organic and solid looking thing on his body, Sonic had the idea that hitting that would hurt the creature.

"Hey Scourge! Shadow!" he called over to the hedgehogs "I've got an idea! Hit that organic looking thing in the fin on Chaos's head if you can! That looks like a weak spot!"

"Got it." said Shadow.

"OK blue." said Scourge.

The three hedgehogs stopped running around like headless chickens and they spin-dashed towards Perfect Chaos's brain. Perfect Chaos saw them coming but he didn't know that they were heading for his brain. The three hedgehogs hurled into his head and they hit his brain. Perfect Chaos screamed in pain and he bellowed a roaring bellow of agony as they hit his weak spot. The moment they did so, his body structure seemed to weaken and almost dissolve away into the water. The hedgehogs hurled out from the back of Perfect Chaos's head and they zoomed across the water in order to stay above water. They noticed Perfect Chaos was screaming roaring screams of pain. That meant they'd found Chaos's weak point.

"Ha, ha! We've found it's weak spot!" cried Sonic "Let's keep hitting it and see if that stops him!"

"You don't have to tell me twice wimp!" cackled Scourge, eagerly spin-dashing towards Perfect Chaos again.

Perfect Chaos however ducked, causing Scourge to miss and he walloped him with his tentacle, sending the green hedgehog hurling back onto Angel Island. Shadow threw a Chaos Spear at Chaos's brain but the spears narrowly missed it as Perfect Chaos's head shifted. Perfect Chaos fired a pink ball of energy at Shadow. The ball hit Shadow and he was sent hurling across the oceanic battlefield. Perfect Chaos then grabbed him with a tentacle and he threw Shadow back onto Angel Island. Sonic was the only one left now. Sonic ran up Perfect Chaos's back and he headed for the fin on Perfect Chaos's head. Perfect Chaos however, began firing energy bullets out from the spikes on his back and he aimed at Sonic. The bullets hit Sonic and he was sent hurling over Perfect Chaos's head. Perfect Chaos caught him with his tentacle and he threw him over onto Angel Island. The creature bellowed a loud roar that sounded a bit like a laugh at the same time with triumph. In order to save himself further onslaughts, Perfect Chaos decided to unleash it's ultimate attack. A huge energy beam that fired from his mouth. This beam could destroy a battle station in one blast so Angel Island would be obliterated. Luckily for the Mobians, he needed to power this attack up so they had chance to get off but Angel Island wouldn't survive the attack. Perfect Chaos opened his

mouth and his energy beam began to build up inside his mouth. As for the hedgehogs, they picked themselves up and they all groaned a chorus of pained groans.

"Man! That thing's tough!" grunted Sonic "We've found it's weak spot but it's still too tough for us!"

"That thing just doesn't wanna die does it?" grumbled Scourge "It's more stubborn then you wuss!"

Sonic glared at Scourge but he said nothing.

"Where's Knuckles with those Chaos Emeralds already?" moaned Shadow crossly "We need to go super now!"

"You were right to say now Shadow because Perfect Chaos is gearing up for another attack!" shrieked Tails "It's preparing to fire something out of his mouth!"

Everybody stared at Perfect Chaos as his energy beam began to build up in the back of his throat and prepared to fire. Sonic could sense that this attack was going to be bad, very, very bad. And not just very, very bad, very, island obliterating bad. If Knuckles didn't hurry up then Mobius would lose a famous landmark. Luckily though, it didn't seem that they'd be waiting for the Chaos Emeralds any longer. Knuckles finally showed up with the seven Chaos Emeralds in hand and he threw them over to the three hedgehogs.

"Here are the Chaos Emeralds!" he cried "Now listen to me because this is our best plan of success: when you turn super, do what you can to subdue it and then open a Chaos Portal. Once you've done that, Chaos Control it into the portal and close it. That way we'll be rid of Chaos for good."

"Good idea Knuckie but where do you want the portal to lead to?" asked Sonic.

"The void." said Knuckles "Chaos can be Imperator Ix's headache now."

"And Dr. Eggman Nega's too." added Sonic "OK guys, let's do it to it!"

With that said, Sonic, Shadow and Scourge all stood around one another and they willed for the Chaos Emeralds to turn them super just as Perfect Chaos's ultimate attack was finishing building up. The Chaos Emeralds circled around the hedgehogs at top speed and they spun faster and faster until they became a colourful blur surrounding the trio of hedgehogs. Their bodies began to glow brightly as the Chaos Emeralds became a blur around them. Perfect Chaos's attack finished building up and he fired his energy beam towards Angel Island. However, the Chaos Emeralds formed a protective barrier around Angel Island as he fired and the barrier blocked his incredible attack. Everybody shielded their eyes from the sheer brightness of the energy beam making contact with the Chaos Barrier. Perfect Chaos stopped what he was doing and he stared in surprise at Angel Island. The Chaos Emeralds had finished circling around and they disappeared into thin air. Sonic, Shadow and Scourge were all in their super forms now. Super Sonic with his radiant golden fur, Super Shadow with his bright lemon-yellow fur and Super Scourge with his malevolent purple fur and black and red eyes. Perfect Chaos was so shocked at the sight of super forms on Angel Island he thought he was going to dissolve into a puddle. His reptilian eyes widened in surprise. Super Sonic, Super Shadow and Super Scourge all smirked at Perfect Chaos evilly as they felt the Chaos Energy from the Chaos Emeralds flow through their veins.

"Get ready for a super style thrashing Perfect Chaos!" jeered Super Sonic.

With that said, Super Sonic, Super Shadow and Super Scourge all charged towards Perfect Chaos at a blinding speed. Perfect Chaos fired some pink energy balls and some energy bullets at the super hedgehogs but being as they were invincible, they ploughed straight through the attacks as if they were nothing at all. Perfect Chaos however, was not going down so easily. He walloped the three super hedgehogs with his tentacles and knocked them down into the waters. They weren't down for long though, they emerged from the waters and they charged towards Perfect Chaos again. Perfect Chaos tried to whack them with his tentacles again but the super hedgehogs just spin-dashed them in two as he tried to hit them. Desperate to save himself, Perfect Chaos ducked down into the water, leaving them to zoom over his head and as they zoomed

over, he remerged from the waters and snapped his jaws at them, making the super hedgehogs quickly zip out of the way before they could get chomped to bits. Perfect Chaos growled in annoyance and he threw a tidal wave over Super Sonic, Super Shadow and Super Scourge. The super hedgehogs ploughed through the wave and they charged towards Perfect Chaos's head mounted fin. The super hedgehogs all charged straight into Perfect Chaos's head and they attacked his brain. They began to spin-dash him and super charged him all over his body and brain, making the giant serpent like creature bellow in pain. Its screeching roars indicated it's agony heavily as he was being bombarded over and over by the super hedgehogs. Perfect Chaos couldn't fight back with three super hedgehogs bombarding him relentlessly all over his body and hitting his weak point at the same time. Perfect Chaos wailed in pain and he sunk down into the waters he created. The supers had beaten him back at long last and Super Sonic decided to initiate the next part of Knuckles's plan.

"OK guys, time for a Chaos Control." said Super Sonic, raising his hands ready to perform the move "We're sending this thing to the void!"

"Let's do it on the count of three." said Super Shadow, raising his hands ready.

"One…two…three!" cried Super Scourge, raising his hands ready as well.

"Chaos…CONTROL!" the three hedgehogs all cried out in unison.

As they yelled that, a bright flash of energy appeared from nowhere and a Chaos Portal opened up in midair. The portal led directly to the void, the current residence of the insidious Imperator Ix and the inter-dimensional villain Dr. Eggman Nega. Now the void was going to be home to Perfect Chaos. The super hedgehogs performed another Chaos Control, this time, on Perfect Chaos himself. There was no way of getting Perfect Chaos through the portal so they had to warp him into the portal. Perfect Chaos glowed brightly like a million Chaos Emeralds and then he, and the water he created, vanished into thin air. The super hedgehogs could briefly see Perfect Chaos's face through the portal as he appeared inside it,

meaning he was now in the void. Perfect Chaos had been defeated at long last and now he was no longer a threat to Mobius or life anywhere else. Now the deed had been done, Super Sonic closed the portal up, trapping Perfect Chaos in the void for good. The supers all hovered back over to Angel Island and they powered down, reverting back to their normal selves once again. The rain stopped, the clouds drifted away and the bright, warm sunlight returned to Downunda once again. The moment their super forms disappeared, the others greeted them with cheers and cries of joy.

"Hooray! You three marvellous hedgehogs did it!" squealed Mandy, squeezing Sonic into a bear hug that could rival Amy's bear hugs "You defeated Perfect Chaos!"

"You've saved the whole world from the Chaos God of Destruction!" cheered Wilson "Well done you three!"

"I knew you could do it!" cried Tails "And you did! Chaos is now stuck in the void for good!"

"You honour us all with your heroism and bravery!" cheered Ruben.

"You did it Scourge!" cheered Fiona "I'm reluctant to cheer for Sonic and Shadow but as they were on our side, I'll congratulate them too."

"Now that is strange coming out of you luv." snickered Geoffrey "Congratulating the good guys as well. Pity we can't expect it more often. Hee, hee, hee!"

Fiona ignored the skunk's remark.

"Well guys and gals, that was cathartic as heck but we made it." said Sonic, wiping his forehead "Perfect Chaos is now gonna spend an eternity in the void and Mobius can sleep happily tonight. Now Scourge." he said, pointing to his evil brother "Care to finish this off between us? Me and Shadow would love to fight with you right now."

"Nah, I've had enough for one day." said Scourge "Besides, you helped me undo my mistake so as a way of saying thanks, I'm

gonna go and rest up for a while. But don't think I'm staying off the villain thing, I'll be back and I'll make Mobius mine at long last."

"And I shall be waiting for you." said Sonic casually "See ya around Scourge."

With that said, Scourge scooped Fiona up into his arms and he jumped off of Angel Island. He landed on the ground down below and he zoomed off into the distance to go into hiding until his next nefarious encounter with Sonic and friends. The moment Scourge disappeared over the horizon, Amy spoke up to Sonic.

"Do you think that was wise Sonic?" she asked "Letting Scourge go like that?"

"Probably not but he helped us beat Chaos so I owe him one just this once." said Sonic "Besides, the next time we face, I'll wipe the floor with him, believe me I will."

"Ha, ha! I know you will Sonic!" laughed Tails.

Sonic laughed with him and he playfully ruffled the fox's fur on his head. As for Shadow, he stepped towards Sonic and the genetic experiment with the mystery past spoke to him. Sonic faced Shadow as he spoke to him.

"I'll be going too blue hedgehog." said Shadow "I've still got answers as to who I am to find and now the threat has been dealt with, I can search peacefully now."

"OK Shadow." said Sonic "See ya around and thanks for your help."

Shadow just gave Sonic a snide but friendly smirk and he leaped off of Angel Island. He landed on the ground down below and he activated his jet shoes. He skated off into the distance and continued his ongoing mission of finding out his true origins. Sonic and friends watched as Shadow the Hedgehog sped away into the distance and they all waved him goodbye. Shadow skated off and disappeared over the horizon, heading goodness knows where for now. The moment Shadow left, Sonic turned around and cupped his hands around one another.

"OK, now Chaos has been beaten and Scourge has bugged off for a while now, there's two more matters to deal with right now." said Sonic.

"What matters are those then?" asked Knuckles unsurely.

"You and Shade will have to find a way to fix the Master Emerald now Scourge broke it." said Sonic, noting that the Master Emerald was now in pieces thanks to Scourge waking up Chaos from his prison with that disastrous Chaos Fusion that started this whole mess in the first place.

"Don't worry about the island falling Sonic if that's your concern." said Knuckles "Even in pieces, the Master Emerald's power lives on, Angel Island will stay afloat. However, I'm not living a valuable relic from Angel Island lay in pieces. Shade, me and you are gonna fix this thing."

"Yes guardian." said Shade.

The two echidnas stepped up the Master Emerald shrine and to the Master Emerald pieces. The pieces all glittered like stars on the shrine before them. Knuckles and Shade held hands with one another and they looked into each other's eyes. They both nodded at each other as if to say "Ready" and they held their arms out.

"Chaos…REGENERATION!" they cried at the top of their voices.

As they yelled that, the Master Emerald's pieces all glowed very brightly and became white instead of green. Then the pieces levitated off the ground slightly and they began to spiral around one another. The pieces began to circle around at a lightening fast speed and they kept this up until they became nothing more then white, glowing blurs. Then the pieces edged towards each other and began building the familiar shape that is the Master Emerald before the Mobian's very eyes. The pieces all fused back together and the Master Emerald was fixed. It glowed its malevolent green glow once again and it lowered back down onto the shrine. The Master Emerald was repaired and Angel Island was back to normal. Knuckles and Shade lowered their arms and they panted a little.

"We…we did it." puffed Knuckles "The Master Emerald is fixed."

"The only difference now is if it breaks again, we won't have to worry about Chaos waking up." said Shade "He's stuck in the void now and the Master Emerald is no longer a prison for him."

"Yeah." said Knuckles "I think I can see why dad and the echidnas before us told us that fake story about the Chaos Emeralds. The clusters were hidden to not only hide their shame, but probably to prevent Chaos from being awakened as Scourge tried to use the Master Emerald and the Chaos Clusters and he ended up freeing him. While I'm not pleased I've been living on lies all my life, it was for the better."

"Yes, it was for the better." said Shade "Although this makes me wonder if Ix knew about this as well, why didn't he attempt to wake Chaos up? He wanted to destroy Angel Island and Chaos could have done that easily for him."

"You know Ix, he's an "I can do everything myself" kind of guy, he would never rely on a beast to do his dirty work." said Knuckles "He's way too full of himself to succumb to that level."

"Yes, he is." said Shade "Ix was a very arrogant echidna after all."

"He was." said Knuckles "So Sonic, what's the other matter that needs dealing with?"

"Seeing if Cream's dad wants to go back to her mother." replied Sonic, looking over at Porthos.

The smartly dressed rabbit looked nervous. Six years of being absent from Vanilla's life and he was going to meet her again, mostly for Cream though. Would the reunion go well or was it going to end really badly for him…?

A while later, Sonic took Cream and Porthos over to Cream's new home in Knothole. Vanilla had decided to move there so Cream and Amy could remain close as they were great friends now**. Porthos looked at Vanilla's new home and hummed in an impressed manner

to himself.

"So Vanilla moved from Stardom Village to here?" he said "I must say, she hasn't picked a bad little village has she? Knothole's glorious."

"I know it is father." said Cream "Me and mother moved here so I can remain close to Miss Rose, she's my best friend after all."

"I never would have guessed you and the pink hedgehog were such good friends Cream." said Porthos "When did you two first meet?"

"We met during a time Dr. Eggman captured mother and I came to her looking for help***." explained Cream.

"She was looking for me at the time and Amy took her to me." added Sonic "I offered to help save Vanilla but she got roboticized before we could save her. Thankfully, we managed to restore her freewill**** and we de-roboticized her at last so she's back to normal Porty."

"Thank heavens for that!" cried Porthos "I can't even think to imagine what it would be like if Vanilla was still a robot now! Well Cream, do you think I can do this?" he asked nervously.

"Of course you can." said Cream supportively "I'm sure mother will forgive you for leaving her. Mother is a very forgiving person."

"I know she is." said Porthos.

He still looked somewhat not ready for this yet. He pulled on his collar and he adjusted his specs. Cream opened the door and let herself into the house. She then cooed out to Vanilla.

"Mother, there's someone who wants to see you." she said.

Porthos glanced over at Sonic as if he was like saying to him "Oh god, help me!" Sonic just gave him an expression that suggested he was saying "Go on, you can do it." Porthos took that lightly and he thought to himself that he could do this. Cream scampered back out of the house with Vanilla following her, wondering what her daughter had to show her. The moment she stepped out of the house, her

eyes caught sight of Porthos and she stared at him in astonishment. Porthos just stared shyly back at her, pleased to see that despite the fact he hadn't seen her for a while, Vanilla still looked beautiful to him. Vanilla stepped up to Porthos, her eyes staring straight into his as if she was in some kind of trance and his eyes were the cause of it. She reached out a hand and she lightly touched Porthos' face with her fingers.

"P-P-Porthos?" she blurted aloud after a minute of stunned silence "I-I-Is…is it r-really you?"

"It is Vanilla." said Porthos, taking Vanilla's hand in his own "I'm alive and I'm back at last."

That was all Vanilla needed to hear. The rabbit in the dress threw her arms around Porthos and she grasped him tightly in a hug. Her eyes filled with tears, happy tears that is. Cream watched this moment with delight, pleased to see this was already going so well. It was nice to see her parents back together at long last after so many years apart.

"Oh my goodness, it's you!" cried Vanilla "What happened to you? All my friends and I thought you were dead!"

"I'll explain everything later dear." said Porthos, stroking Vanilla's ears "Right now, I'm enjoying the moment too much."

"It's so good to see you again though Porthos." said Vanilla as she warmly embraced her husband "Now Cream can have the dad I longed for her to have. However did you find him Cream?"

Cream didn't know what to say or how to tell Vanilla the story so Sonic stepped in for her.

"No worries Vanilla, the hedgehog can explain everything…" said Sonic reassuringly, earning an interested expression from Vanilla...

As touching as this reunion was and as refreshing as it is to know that the danger is over, that didn't mean everything was all butterflies and rainbows now. In fact, an old danger might just return.

Perfect Chaos may have turned the clusters into Chaos Energy and absorbed them, but tiny little fragments remained of them. There were twenty fragments of Chaos Clusters left and they were all lying around on the ground beneath Angel Island. That wasn't the problem though, the problem was that Dr. Eggman's new servant bot, the sleek, slender and sadistic Katherine, had found them. She'd picked up their energy signatures again and investigated the area to see what she could find. And what she found were fragments of the Chaos Clusters that were left after the Chaos Fusion. Katherine picked one of the fragments up and observed it. The cluster was brimming with Chaos Energy and there were twenty of them lying around. These fragments were going to be useful for the Eggman Empire, very useful indeed. Just imagine how much power the Egg-Fleet (which hasn't been destroyed yet, only the flagship has remember?*****) was going to have if she equipped the fleet with the fragments! And maybe Katherine could use them for more then just a power supply, maybe she could restore Eggman's lost sanity at long last. If she could do that then Sonic's arch-enemy and Mobius' biggest villain would be back to cause trouble and freedom for Mobians anywhere was going to diminish once again…

Footnotes:

*** As remembered in the unforgettable Shadow saga (Stories 57-64)**

**** You may remember Vanilla suggesting moving to Knothole all the way back in Story 25 and in *Tales from Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles* it's confirmed they've moved there**

***** See Story 16, Cream's debut story**

****** See Story 19**

******* See Story 76**

WHOA! SONIC, SHADOW AND SCOURGE VS. PERFECT

CHAOS? I THINK MY BRAIN JUST EXPLODED FROM PURE CONCENTRATED EPICNESS! Oh well, the emeralds arc is over now but this story isn't! Oh no! Far, FAR from it! Especially as Eggman's return looks imminent! What's gonna happen next? Join me next time as Sonic and Amy investigate some "Cold Chills". Before that though, let's tune into Tales from Mobius where the mysterious super spy Sora Sumdac ends up going head to head with a certain reptilian group we know too well... Read and Review.

Hey Kratos Pwns, Chaos Kai X, Thomas Homles II, Numbuh 006, MetaGalleom and writingisawesome24, just for the fun of it, can any of you guys give me YOUR top ten best chapters of Heroes of Mobius? As for you PROJECT 1-21-18-9-1-19 can you list your top ten favourite OCs (original characters) in this story? It"l be much appreciated if you can! :)

Cold Chills

Story 94: Cold Chills

"Gosh! I knew White Acropolis was gonna be cold but not THIS cold!" moaned Sonic the Hedgehog as he trudged grumpily though the thick snow of the White Acropolis mountains.

"Of course it's gonna be cold Sonic! It's White Acropolis, what did you think the weather was gonna be like?" snapped his self-proclaimed girlfriend Amy Rose the Hedgehog.

A whole month had passed since the Region of Rebellious Reptile's attack on Castle Acorn* and the new year had arrived. It was now the year 2143 but Sonic and Amy weren't spending their time celebrating the new year, they were going on a mission in White Acropolis that had been assigned to them by the Council of Acorn. White Acropolis was, as it's name suggested, completely white. That was because they were huge mountains that stretched up into the clouds and it was always snowy there. Never on Mobius would you find a place snowier then White Acropolis although Holoska was colder then White Acropolis. There was a village in White Acropolis and a few trees here and there and the villagers had been complaining about surreal and strange goings on in the village so Sonic and Amy had been sent there to find out what was happening as no one else was available. Sonic had put on a woolly coat with a fur tipped hood and a long green and red scarf that trailed behind him in the snow. Amy was wearing a thick brown coat with a fur tipped hood and she had her hood raised right now. The hood kept her ears nice and warm and the coat protected her mostly from the cold. Sonic's coat appeared to be keeping him warm too although he was still feeling the cold around his sneakers as he hadn't put on any thick footwear to keep his feet warm. Regardless, no snowstorm was going to keep Sonic down so he continued trudging through the snowy wastelands of White Acropolis. The chilling wind bit at their noses as it blew past them. Sonic rubbed his nose as he felt it beginning to run and he pulled his hood closer over his head.

"White Acropolis: Snowiest place on Mobius. Officially listed in the record books as such." muttered Sonic "And we get sent here to investigate some odd goings on at the village. I'm amazed there's any civilization here at all! I guess some Mobians like the cold."

"Some Mobians do like the cold my handsome hero." said Amy "That's why there's people who live in places like Holoska and White Acropolis. As for the village, I wonder what is it that's getting the villagers so worked up? Is Dr. Eggman picking on them now?"

"Well Dr. Eggman fits the "surreal and strange" quota but he's been around for too long to be labelled as "strange goings on"." thought Sonic aloud "Not to mention a place this cold might not be so good for the ol' Eggman robots. This must be something else. And we're gonna find out what it is."

"Whoever it is that's bothering the villagers had better watch out!" cried Amy "Cause they're gonna get a thrashing courtesy of me, Amy Rose, Royal Fighter and Sonic's biggest fan and love interest!"

"Please don't yell that out loud Amy." muttered Sonic "It's embarrassing."

"Sorry." said Amy quickly, putting her hands behind her back and blushing scarlet. If she blushed anymore, she'd start melting the snow around her.

"OK Amy, do you still have the map for the village in this snowy wasteland?" asked Sonic, keeping his hood drooped slightly over his eyes.

"I do indeed sweetie." said Amy, fishing the map out of her pocket and unfolding it "The village should be to the northwest of our current position according to this. We shouldn't be much longer now."

"Good." said Sonic "I'm looking forward to having a little sit down in a nice warm house! This cold's getting to me! If the snow wasn't so deep I'd be running through this thing at top speed! At supersonic speed, even the cold can't keep up with me."

"I'm pretty sure the cold can't keep up with you." said Amy "Now let's keep going before we end up becoming part of the scenery shall we?"

"Be my guest Amy." snickered Sonic "I'm the one that's wanting to get warm again after all."

Amy laughed at Sonic's remark and the two continued to trudge through the deep snow of this barren snow topia up in the mountains. As the hedgehogs headed off to the northwest of their current position to the village, Amy spotted something further down the mountain. The thing looked like a white hedgehog in an ice blue robe and it appeared to be building a rather eerie looking snowman. Strange, Amy thought as she looked at the hedgehog. This hedgehog looked…familiar to her…familiar…in a bad way…but why? Then something went click in Amy's head and she began to see a memory in her head from several years ago when she was only six…

The helpless little child that is Amy Rose could only kneel down on the icy floors cuddling herself and shivering like mad in the sheer cold of the room she was now trapped in. She had been stripped completely of her clothes, leaving her naked and shivering on the floors of this icy room she was in. The fact she was naked made her even colder, so cold in fact Amy could practically feel herself beginning to freeze over already. Why was she here? Who had taken her here and what did the kidnapper want with her? She would soon find the answers to those questions as a sinister shape began to ascend from the icy floors and become a solid entity. The thing was a slender bodied, white hedgehog with snow and ice powers. Her fur was as white as snow and she had icy blue stripes and markings on her long, drooping, wavy quills that flowed like natural hair instead of hedgehog quills. She had thirteen quills on her head and none on her back. She wore an icy blue robe with a golden piece under her neck that slightly stuck out over her shoulders. The tips of her long sleeves were dark blue in colour and there was a dark blue image on the hem with blue spheres representing snow drops. She had light blue eye-shadow and she wore a silver belt with a glowing blue gem in the middle. Her

fingernails were long and sharp, almost like claws and her eyes were as cold as the ice itself. Amy stared at the hedgehog and shivered with fear as well as from the cold now. She looked like a witch from a child's nightmare and Amy didn't like her straight away. The hedgehog glowered at her with her icy blue eyes and she placed a hand as cold as a blizzard on her head, making her even colder.

" *How's this then little Amy Rose?" purred the hedgehog, her voice was rough, deep and raspy sounding, making her sound rather scary "Too cold? Aw…poor sweet child…perhaps I should make it even…colder…"*

Amy could only stare helplessly at the ice cold hedgehog that stood over her with her hand pressed on her head. If only her mother was here now…

Amy's little vision was interrupted by the sound of Sonic's voice.

"Hey! Amy! What's keeping ya?" called Sonic "You're not frozen already are ya?"

Amy switched back to reality and she shook her head and blinked her eyes. She stopped staring at the white hedgehog down below and she turned around to face Sonic.

"I'm fine Sonic, I just blanked out for a moment. Sorry." said Amy, running up to him as fast as she possibly could in this thick blanket of snow that covered the mountain tops.

Sonic began to wonder what just made Amy randomly blank out like that. He then just waved it off, deducing that it was the cold that did it as the cold can sometimes have a strange effect on you. Amy caught up with Sonic and the two hedgehogs continued to trudge through the snow the best they possibly could. As for the white hedgehog, she'd heard Sonic and Amy's voice further up the mountain and she stopped building her snowman. She looked up at the ledges above and caught a brief glimpse of pink fur up on the ledge. The hedgehog's eyes narrowed down to slits of pure steel

and she clenched her fists.

"It appears I have a Rose in my territory." she growled to herself in her rough, husky voice "And I have a feeling that this is a Rose I've plucked before."

With that said, she put her arms to the side and she melted down into the snow. It was a bit like shadow melding only she was melding into the snow. She vanished deep down into the thick, white blanket that covered the mountains of White Acropolis and she would reappear somewhere else in the mountain tops. And then she would have Amy once she reappeared…

An hour later, Sonic and Amy finally reached the village of White Acropolis. The village seemed to be mostly composed of log cabins and they all seemed to be strong enough to withstand the howling winds and snowstorms that frequently hit the mountain tops. They looked like warm and inviting places so this village was going to be a place worth visiting. Glad they'd found it at last, Sonic and Amy trudged heavily through the snow, trying their best not to let the deepness of it slow them down. The wind began to blow more fiercely and snow began to fall down again, some snowflakes actually hitting Sonic and Amy in the eyes and making them squint briefly to get the snow out. The weather in white acropolis was never pleasant, and when the winds did eventually die out, they never stayed silent for long, they were quick to pick up the pace again as was the falling snow that continued to blanket the place days on end. Sonic lowered his head so he couldn't get any more snow in his eyes and he continued heaving his way through the snow. The wind bit at him furiously but the hedgehog fought the chilliness of the weather and pressed on. Eggman robots couldn't bring him down, Marik the Martian couldn't bring him down and not even Scourge the Hedgehog, his own brother, could bring him down so the cold was not going to bring him down either. After a few hard minutes of trudging through snow as deep as a kid's swimming pool, they reached the village and headed to the first log cabin they came across.

"Does it really matter who we visit here?" asked Amy.

"Well since the whole village is up in arms over these so-called "surreal-and-strange goings on" I guess we can ask anybody here." said Sonic "Let's see what this guy knows then."

Sonic and Amy walked onto the porch of the log cabin and Sonic knocked on the door. The door opened a crack and a nervous voice rang out from behind it.

"If you're that crazy ice witch lady then go away!" squealed the voice "I have nothing of your possession!"

Sonic and Amy stared at each other in wonder. What on Mobius was that guy talking about? Crazy ice with lady? Maybe this was what they were looking for? The whole "crazy ice witch lady" seemed familiar to Amy though but she tried to make it look like she had no idea what the cabin owner was talking about in order to avoid any awkward expressions from Sonic. Sonic and Amy looked back at the door and Sonic cleared his throat.

"Ahem, look sir, we're not crazy ice witch ladies." said Sonic "I'm Sonic the Hedgehog and this is Amy Rose, my biggest fan but don't mock it will ya? We're here to sort out this village's "surreal and strange goings on" problem."

The door opened even more and a head poked out through it and observed Sonic and Amy from head to toe. The owner of this cabin was a Mobian snow leopard with icy blue spots all over his snow white fur. He was wearing a blue smoking gown and he had a look of worry on his face that suggested he'd seen plenty of the so-called "surreal and strange goings on" in the snowy mountaintops. The snow leopard looked relived to be seeing actual Mobians on his door step and he opened the door fully.

"Oh thank goodness!" cried the snow leopard "I was afraid that witch was back! Instead, I get two hedgehogs hoping to sort out the village's problem! Come in you two."

He stood to the side and invited Sonic and Amy into his cabin. Sonic and Amy walked in and wiped their feet on the door mat to get the snow off and the snow leopard led them over to a large sofa covered in deer fur that was nice, thick and comfy to sit in as well as warm

and inviting. The whole cabin was nice and warm and it looked very homey and inviting to anyone who walked into it. There was a cheerful, burning fire on the fireplace that lit the room up nicely. Sonic and Amy sat down on the sofa in front of the glorious fire, relieved to be in a warm place at last. The snow leopard closed the door to shut out the howling wind outside, wondered over to the two hedgehogs and he sat on a chair beside the sofa that, like the sofa, was covered in deer fur and had antlers sticking up behind it. His face looked more relaxed now he had good company in his humble home.

"Welcome to my home Sonic and Amy." said the snow leopard "I'm amazed that I have the world famous Sonic and his girlfriend in my presence, today must be my lucky day."

"You got that right spotty." said Sonic "And by the way, Amy's not my girlfriend, we're just…friends."

Amy fumed at Sonic crossly and she folded her arms. Someday, that hedgehog was going to accept her as his girlfriend whether he liked it or not! Sonic ignored her, he felt it was best to do this as an angry Amy wasn't a nice thing to look at.

"I beg your pardon." said the snow leopard, clearing his throat "My name is Rama the Snow Leopard by the way. I'm just a local resident of White Acropolis like all snow leopards are."

"Yeah, this place and Holoska are the only places we can find snow leopards around." said Sonic "So, Rama, what's going on around here then?"

"We've heard complaints of "surreal and strange goings on" here." said Amy "What might they be then?"

"Something completely out of the norm." said Rama grimly, clasping his hands together and staring at his fire "White Acropolis has been a nice peaceful village for many years but now somebody's creeping through the village and disturbing everybody's peace and fun."

"Creeping around the village eh?" said Sonic "That sounds pretty freaky. Who is this "creeper" then?"

"A white hedgehog in icy blue robes with ice blue markings on her quills." said Rama shakily "She looks like a witch and she has strange powers."

That made Amy stare hard at the snow leopard in horror. White hedgehog in icy blue robes with ice blue markings on her quills? This definitely sounded familiar to her. In fact, she'd definitely met this person before! She remembered it all to well. She continued to listen to Rama to see what else he had to say.

"That hedgehog is not Mobian." said Rama "She's a witch from another world. Her powers are unnatural, and I mean unnatural as ice powers are no natural powers amongst us Mobians."

"What kind of powers does this hedgehog have?" asked Sonic.

"She can manipulate the snow and ice and make it do what she likes such as grow hands out the ground and make icicles appear out the ground." explained Rama "She can also dissolve into the snow and reappear at will anywhere in the snow. She can also create snowstorms and ice showers and use them to deadly effect. It's demonic and freakish, powers like that cannot possibly exist, even amongst us snow dwellers and it's scary that she stalks the village constantly ruining our lives…"

All this was giving Amy another bad vision from childhood. She switched off and stared into space as she remembered an encounter with this ice hedgehog Rama spoke of…

Little Amy Rose trudged through the freshly fallen snow as she walked home happily from a long, hard day at school. Now school was over, she could make the most of the snow and have as much fun as she wishes. Building snowmen, making igloos and having snowball fights with her school friends. Oh how she loved the snow when it came! She was glad that it didn't happen all the time though as the snow would get pretty darn boring and miserable after a while. Like they all say "make the most of what you've got when you've got it" and Amy planned to make the most of the snow while it had fallen. Unfortunately, Amy's fun was not going to begin for as

she skipped past a row of dustbins, a pair of female hands with long, sharp, ice blue fingernails suddenly appeared out from underneath the snow and they grasped Amy's ankles and tripped her up. Amy fell down on her stomach into the snow and the hands began to pull her down into the snow covered ground. Amy gripped the snow and tried to stop the thing from pulling her but the hands were too strong. They began to pull her down under the snow. Amy screamed in terror and began crying for help.

" *Mommy! Help!" squealed Amy.*

But it was no use. Amy was too far away from her home for her mother to hear her. She was in trouble now with no one to help her. The thing finished pulled her down beneath the snow and Amy suddenly found herself in the middle of an underground room made completely of ice. It was as if she'd just been pulled down into an icy underground lair. Amy picked herself up and turned around to face her kidnapper. The kidnapper was a white hedgehog with many quills and ice blue robes. The look in her eyes was colder then the ice itself and Amy began to shiver at the sight of her.

" *Wh-wh-wh-who a-a-a-are y-y-y-you?" whimpered Amy, shivering in fear.*

" *I, dear Amy Rose, am Blizzard the Hedgehog." answered the hedgehog "And you are going to be here with me for a while."*

She then grabbed Amy's coat and tore it open, revealing Amy's school uniform underneath. She ripped the coat off Amy and tossed it across the room carelessly. She flashed Amy a pure, heartless, sadistic grin as she grabbed her jumper and prepared to tear it off of her…

"Hey Amy. What's up?" asked Sonic, nudging her slightly and snapping her out of her train of thoughts "You look a million miles away."

"Huh? Wha…what?" asked Amy, shaking her head and snapping back into reality.

"You blanked out for a minute Ames." said Sonic "Is there something wrong?"

"No Sonic, I'm fine really." said Amy "I'm just…remembering happy winter moments from my preteen years that's all."

"Huh, you hate the cold and yet you remember enjoying it." murmured Sonic "Although winters in Knothole are nowhere near as cold as White Acropolis."

"Yeah." said Amy "So Rama, what were you saying a minute ago?"

"I said, the reason the ice witch keeps creeping around the village from time to time is because she's looking for something." explained Rama "She's looking for some kind of gem that attaches to her belt. She claims the gem gives her the ability to freeze people and summon ice weapons out of her hands. Without it, she can't freeze anything and she's more snow then ice power wise."

"How did she lose it?" asked Amy.

"Well she claims a snowstorm stole it and she's wondering if anybody here's found it." said Rama "I have however…"

He paused as he reached into his pocket and pulled out an icicle shaped gem that was ice blue in colour and felt cold to the touch. He showed Sonic and Amy the gem. The two hedgehogs stared at it and Amy's eyes widened in alarm as she recognized that gem. She'd seen it on the ice hedgehog's belt the time she was kidnapped by her and now Rama had it in his possession.

"…I was mesmerized by the beauty of this thing." said Rama "So I decided to keep it. I didn't dare give it back to that witch as she can't possibly be wanting it for good if she wants to freeze people. The witch has gone all around the village only to find out no one has it and yet she still comes around looking for it, wondering if anyone's found it yet. We want that witch to go away and leave us alone as we're sick of being disturbed by her. She's creepy and eerie and we want her gone."

"Well if you want her gone then maybe you should give her what she

wants." suggested Sonic "Maybe this so-called ice hedgehog witch isn't that bad a person and will probably be happier when she gets what she wants…"

"No! You can't let her have it!" exclaimed Amy suddenly "You just can't!"

Sonic and Rama stared at Amy in surprise, wondering why she'd just suddenly blurted out at them like that. Was there something about this witch she knew or something?

"Why not Amy?" asked Sonic "Is there something you know about this ice witch person?"

"There…there is actually…" said Amy, looking down at her feet "I didn't wanna talk about it but I guess I'm gonna have to now."

"You know the witch?" blurted Rama "Please tell me about her and what you know!"

"OK." said Amy "It's not a happy story though."

"Don't worry, I'm man enough." said Sonic snidely "So what do you know about this witch then?"

Before Amy could so much as breathe a word out of her mouth though, an onslaught of icicles shot through the window, shattering it to pieces and embedding themselves into the wall. The pieces of glass littered the floor and the howling winds outside put Rama's fire out, turning the log cabin from warm to cold in a millisecond and everybody leaped up in surprise. The ice hedgehog had come by Rama's cabin and had been watching them through the window and she was mad to see that Rama had her gem so she launched that attack to grab some attention. After that attack, Sonic leaped out of the broken window and prepared to confront the witch. However, as he leaped through the window and landed on the snow outside, the witch was nowhere to be seen. She'd just…vanished into thin air as if she was never there! Sonic stood up and looked around wondering where the witch had suddenly disappeared to.

"Huh? She's gone." said Sonic "Why did she just break a window

and then dash off? Something ain't right here…"

"Sonic! Look out!" cried Amy, pointing at his feet.

Sonic turned around and looked down at his feet just as a pair of hands reached up and closed around his ankles. Sonic yelped as the sheer coldness of the hands shot up his legs and made him shiver and he was pulled down onto his stomach. Sonic gripped the snow and tried to stop himself from being pulled down into the snow. Amy leaped out of the cabin window and ran over to Sonic. She grabbed Sonic's arms desperately and pulled on them. She tried to tug Sonic out of the hand's grasp but they were too strong and her attempts were only feebly slowing down Sonic's descent into the snow.

"Amy! Forget about me!" cried Sonic "Run and get outta here! I'll fight my way outta this!"

"No Sonic! I'm not letting Blizzard get you like she got me eight years ago!" grunted Amy, pulling harder on Sonic's arms.

"Wait what?" blurted Sonic.

Amy had no time to explain as she was trying her hardest to pull Sonic out of the grasp of the hands that were pulling him down into the thick blanket of snow. As hard as she tried, her efforts were futile and soon the hands completely pulled Sonic out of Amy's grasp and down under the snow. Sonic disappeared from sight as he was pulled down underneath the blanket of snow and the snow reformed itself, making itself look like nothing had happened. Amy picked herself up and wailed loudly.

"No! No, no, no, no!" she cried "Blizzard's gotten Sonic! That witch is gonna do something terrible to him, I know she is! I've gotta stop that witch before she gets her icy hands on him!"

Rama stuck his head out of the window and wondered what Amy was talking about.

"Amy, what's going on?" asked Rama "Where's Sonic gone?"

"Blizzard has pulled him under the snow and I'm going to get him out

of there!" Amy called back to him "And nothing is gonna stop me!"

She then proceeded to furiously dig into the snow at the very spot Sonic was pulled down into. Rama could only watch as Amy began digging in the snow. She began throwing chunks of snow over her shoulder as she dug into it, desperate to save her precious Sonic the Hedgehog. The hedgehog had gotten her like this eight years ago and she had had a pretty bad experience with the ice witch and she was not about to let Sonic suffer the same torture she'd had from that ice cold hedgehog…

Down under the snow, Sonic found himself in an underground lair made completely of ice. The ice glistened like diamonds and there were icicles sticking out of the ground and jutting out from the ceiling. There didn't seem to be much else other then ice walls, ice ceiling and icicles everywhere. Sonic began to shiver to himself. This ice lair was like being inside an iceberg, very cold and very slippy and icy.

"Brrr…it's colder underground then it is above ground!" shivered Sonic "Although how did I end up in a room made of ice when I got pulled under the snow?"

"Because I have made this lair with my own powers under the snow above ground little boy." growled a raspy, female voice that sounded very frightening and seemed to be coming from everywhere at once.

Sonic jumped and began looking around, wondering where the voice was coming from. He kept his serious face on and showed no signs of fear.

"Hey, who's there?" asked Sonic "Are you the one whose dragged me down here?"

"I am you little fool." came the husky voice again "And you will not see daylight again until you give me what I desire."

"Look, lady, I like to see my foes before making amends with them so show yourself!" ordered Sonic "I really hate villains who hide and

make their voices sound like they're coming from everywhere at once! It's annoying!"

Just after Sonic yelled that, the found of footsteps came from a cave hole on the other side of the room. Sonic looked at the cave hole and prepared to do battle with whatever it was he was up against. The thing stepped out of the shadows and into the light of her lair, showing herself to Sonic. Sonic stared at his kidnapper and was amazed at what he was looking at. The person was a slender bodied, white hedgehog with white fur, icy blue stripes and markings on her long, drooping, wavy quills, icy blue robe with a dark blue image on the hem with blue spheres representing snow drops, a golden piece under her neck that slightly stuck out over her shoulders, light blue eye-shadow, a silver belt with a circular piece that should have a gem there only it was missing so it was plain. Her face contorted with loathing and she looked extremely grumpy and cold. Sonic kept his gaze fixed on the hedgehog and he prepared to spin-dash the living ice out of her.

"Who are you and what do you want with me?" demanded Sonic.

"I am Blizzard the Hedgehog." growled Blizzard crossly "And I want what belongs to me back you blue furred cretin. Give me what I want and I promise you'll leave this place without a speck of ice on your puny body."

"If I were to guess, you've got me because you think I have your little ice gem, is that right?" asked Sonic, lowering his arms and standing up straight.

"Yes." said Blizzard "I saw you, Amy and Rama together with it and I'll be so happy if you can give it back to me."

"OK Blizzie, let me get two things clear here." said Sonic, holding his hands out hastily "One, I don't have the gem. Rama still has it. Two, what do you want it for anyway? According to Rama, you can freeze things instantly with that gem. Isn't freezing people to death kind of, you know, evil?"

"Evil?" shouted Blizzard as if the word "evil" was extremely offensive to her "How dare you suggest such a disgraceful thing like that! I am

not evil, I just want my powers at their best so I can be an ice witch once again. Once I have my gem, I'll leave this village alone and they can forget I ever existed."

"So that's why you keep picking on the village, you just want your gem back, is that it?" asked Sonic slowly.

"Yes you little fool." snarled Blizzard in a grouchy tone "Once I have it back, this village will never so me again as I harbour no interest at all in this puny little village above our heads."

"I see." said Sonic "So, if you're not evil then what do you do with your ice powers then?"

"Mostly for carving sculptures and making snowmen my boy." said Blizzard, walking closer to Sonic "And getting rid of any annoyances I encounter like that fat moron you're at war with."

"You mean Dr. Eggman?" said Sonic , staring into Blizzard's ice cold eyes "Does Dr. Eggman come around here at all?"

"I haven't met the fat moron himself but I've seen devices that look like his doing." explained Blizzard "They've taken it upon themselves to wreck my snow art and try to make a mess out of White Acropolis. They shortly freeze and dysfunction after a while though due to how cold it is and no Eggman robots have shown up since then."

"Aren't you the lucky one?" muttered Sonic "So Blizzard, if you let me outta this place, I'll get your gem back and give it to you but you must promise that you won't bother the people of the village and scare them with your creepy powers again or you won't get it back. Deal?"

"I've said already that the village is of no interest to me." snapped Blizzard "Return what is mine and you will never see me again."

"OK then." said Sonic "So…how do we get outta this joint?"

Before Blizzard could say anything though, the sound of something pounding against the ice above their heads. Sonic and Blizzard's heads shot up at the ceiling and they stared at the thing pounding the ice heavily. It looked vaguely like Amy and she was using her

Piko-Piko hammer to smash the ice. Amy had dug all the way through the snow only to find out that the entrance to Blizzard's lair had been sealed off by a thick sheet of ice so she summoned her trademark weapon to her hand and began smashing it. After a few heavy pounds, Amy broke through the ice and fell into Blizzard's lair. Ice rained down on the ground and Sonic and Blizzard stood back as Amy fell into the lair. She landed on her feet and stood before Blizzard in a battle ready stance. She had her hammer raised and ready and her face contorted with loathing. Blizzard's cold, evil face twisted into a very creepy, sinister grin at the mere sight of Amy standing before her all grown up from their last encounter (well, she's still a teen as she's only fourteen but you get what a mean).

"Amy Rose." she purred darkly "How wonderful it is to see your putrid, pink hide in the flesh again after eight years."

"Blizzard!" growled Amy, itching to hammer the ice witch's head in "You're still as ugly as you are the last time we met! Now you let Sonic go and I won't use your head for stress relief!"

"Do you seriously think I'm going to be intimidated by a big, meaty hammer?" sneered Blizzard "Hammers are silly little weapons that exist primarily to give immature little brats like you something to smash things with."

"I'll show you just how "silly" this hammer really is!" yelled Amy.

"Whoa! Whoa! Time out girls!" yelled Sonic hastily, making a time out sign with his hands, stopping the girls dead in their tracks "OK, how in the name of Mobotropolis do you know each other? Explanation please! The hedgehog's getting confused here!"

"We met each other eight years ago on a cold winter's day." explained Amy "I was only six at the time. Blizzard kidnapped me and dragged me down into her icy lair where she…she…did terrible things to me…

Ten whole minutes had passed since Blizzard had dragged Amy down under the snow and into her lair and poor Amy was getting

colder and colder by the second. Not helped by the fact Blizzard had stripped her naked and left her kneeling on the floor shivering like crazy. The poor girl was slowly but surely, freezing to death down here. Blizzard stared at the shivering hedgehog as if seeing people cold brought her some sick satisfaction and she began circling around Amy slowly in a creepy manner.

" *Do try to understand my child that this isn't personal." said Blizzard with a cold smile on her face that made Amy feel nervous "This is merely for revenge."*

Amy tried to speak but she was too cold to even do that. Blizzard could gather what Amy was trying to say anyway so she spoke to her.

" *I've had a bad time with your parents Amy." growled Blizzard, her face drooping into a horrible scowl "So bad a time that I killed one of them. You father Aramis Rose was killed at my hands and I wish to kill your mother, Donna Rose, next. I would explain why I hate your parents but you're too stupid to comprehend all this so I won't waste time giving you the necessary exposition."*

Amy didn't appear to have any idea what Blizzard was talking about and Blizzard could see it on her face. The ice witch then flashed her a very witchy grin that could make even the bravest of kids faint with shock.

" *Since I want to kill your mommy Amy, I've taken it upon myself to leave a message in the snow for her." explained Blizzard "I can manipulate the snow and do what I like with it, even write messages in it. On your house doorstep now, there'll be a message in the snow saying "Dear Donna, I, Blizzard, have your daughter and you must come to me alone if you wish to see her again. I am located near a row of dustbins three houses from where you are. Come and get her if you think you're brave enough!" and no doubt about it, she'll come here hoping to rescue her precious little Amy-kins."*

She grabbed Amy's cheek and shook her face tauntingly. Blizzard's touch was as cold as ice.

" *That's why I've kidnapped you, so you can lead Donna right to*

me." continued Blizzard "And the reason I've removed your clothing and left you shivering here is because I want to use you as stress relief. I rue anyone in the Rose family due to their horrid treatment of me, even the offspring and newborns so anyone in your family is my enemy Amy. You probably don't understand that do you?"

Amy shook her head. She did have no idea what Blizzard was talking about. Then suddenly, somebody broke through the ice ceiling above their heads and fell into the lair. It was Amy's mother, Donna Rose. Donna was a pink hedgehog in a policewoman's uniform as she was a policewoman and she looked furious to see her daughter cold and naked in Blizzard the Hedgehog's parlour. Blizzard's face curled into a devilish grin of pure concentrated evil.

" Ah, Donna. I guess you got my message then?" purred Blizzard wickedly.

" I have you ice powered piece of filth!" snarled Donna, whipping out a pistol and pointing it straight at Blizzard's head "You let Amy go now and I won't have to resort to murder!"

" Oh come on Donna, I murdered your husband so why don't you just shoot me now and avenge poor Aramis?" asked Blizzard tauntingly "Turnabout is Fair Play as they say…"

" I know, but two wrongs don't make a right." said Donna grimly "Put your hands up Blizzard, now!"

Eerily enough, Blizzard did as she was told. She raised her hands and stood there, not doing anything as Donna pointed her pistol at her. After Blizzard did that, Donna whipped a walkie talkie off her belt and spoke into it.

" Hello boys, this is Officer Donna here." she said "I've found Blizzard the Hedgehog and I'm gonna need some backup for this. We're near a row of dustbins at house no. 225 on Flynn St. and I've marked my position with a pink flag. Come as quick as you can. Oh and bring a nice thick blanket too. My daughter's…in a state of undress right now."

She switched off and put the walkie-talkie away. Blizzard's face

contorted with rage. She lowered her arms and clenched her fists and teeth angrily.

" *You treacherous pink slime ball!" roared Blizzard "I ordered you to come alone!"*

" *I did come alone, but you didn't say I couldn't call for backup." retorted Donna "Now put your hands back up or I'll shoot you!"*

Blizzard ignored her. Instead, she melted down into the icy floors beneath her feet and disappeared from sight. Donna tried to shoot her before she could disappear but she was too late. The bullet ricocheted off the floor and embedded itself into the wall. Donna looked around desperately for Blizzard, wondering where the ice witch had gone to. Then suddenly, Blizzard reappeared from the floor just in front of Donna and she grabbed the pink officer hedgehog. Blizzard placed a hand over Donna's heart and a sharp icicle shot out of her hand and went straight through her chest. Donna gasped in pain as she felt the sharp icicle go through her and her head flopped back lifelessly. Her eyes closed and her breath gave away. Donna was dead. Amy stared in horror and tried to cry out in anguish but she was too cold to do so. Blizzard sheathed the icicle and left Donna to collapse lifelessly onto the floor. Amy was so horrified at what had just happened she began to wail and whimper like mad. Blizzard glowered at the snivelling child and decided to finish her off too.

" *Since the cops are coming, I may as well just get rid of you and be off already." muttered Blizzard.*

Amy stared in horror at Blizzard as the ice witch advanced on her menacingly, her eyes streaming with tears. But before she could so much as touch Amy, police officers broke in through the ceiling and they fell into Blizzard's lair. They all began rapidly firing their guns at her. Blizzard turned around and roared in annoyance at the shooting cops and she melted down into the ice in order to save herself. Not even an ice witch could take on so many cops at once, especially as they all had guns. Blizzard disappeared from view and fled for it in the ice. The cops all fumed angrily at their bad luck and they put their weapons away. One cop scooped up poor Amy and wrapped her up in the requested blanket Donna had asked for to cover her up

and stop her from feeling cold anymore. Amy felt relieved to be wrapped up nice and warm at last but her poor mother was dead. The cops picked up Donna's dead body and they carried her out of the lair so they could throw a funeral for her. As Amy stared at Donna's dead body, she continued to sob uncontrollably in the officer's arms. Blizzard had killed her parents and now she was going to live her life on her own from now on…

"…and that's what happened." said Amy, choking back tears from that horrifying memory "Blizzard killed my mom just like she supposedly kill my dad. I was traumatized for a while and since that day, I grew to hate the cold. I stayed indoors every winter in fear of Blizzard coming to get me again and I always made sure I was warm all the time. I was raised by my grandparents and they helped me escape the ashes of that day and I moved on from then and became the happy hearted but sometimes bad tempered girl I am now. And now here I am face to face with that witch again and stopping her from getting rid of you like she got rid of my parents. Now I can make her pay for nearly scarring me for life that cold-hearted demon in hedgehog's clothing who takes great pleasure in murdering innocent people like my parents!"

Sonic had listened to Amy's story intently and he scowled at Blizzard, unable to believe he had been lied to all this time.

"So you ARE evil Blizzard!" yelled Sonic, pointing sharply at the ice witch "You lied to me! And to think I believed you for a second there! Well get ready for a supersonic spin-dash ice breath!"

"How dare you talk to me in that disapproving tone you little brat!" snarled Blizzard "I am NOT evil! I am just getting some well-deserved justice against those who loathe me that's all!"

"Oh yeah, real nice. And killing Amy's parents and traumatizing her for a while is getting justice huh? That doesn't sound evil in the slightest of ways!" snapped Sonic crossly "Now it's time for YOU to start spilling Blizzie! Why did you kill Amy's parents and why do you hate her family so much?"

Blizzard's face narrowed down into a scowl of pure hatred as she remembered the times with Amy's parents she'd had. Unpleasant times that is. She glowered at Sonic and Amy and then spoke.

"Since Amy is old enough to understand, I shall reveal my reasons for killing her parents as she was too young to understand before." said Blizzard slowly "I killed your parents because I hated them. They hated me too but my hatred for them was brought upon themselves. I did nothing to get them to hate me but they hated me anyway."

"Why?" asked Amy.

"Because your parents are stubborn, racist scrubs who have a hatred of anything unusual such as me." explained Blizzard "I am an ice witch as you already know and they considered my ice powers to be freakish and unnatural and because of this, they treated me like absolute garbage all because I was different! I became a member of the Council of Acorn along with Aramis, Amy's father, and he would not stop insulting me and getting on at me all the time. Every time I suggested something, he would always disagree with me and start scoffing at me. He and his stupid wife Donna, Amy's mother, just wouldn't stop being racist to me and they kept up the insults and pathetic bullying. One day at the council meeting, Aramis verbally insulted me in a very nasty way, nasty as in cursing and swearing at me, when I suggested something useful to the city and he then decided to splatter my robes with mud when no one was looking."

"You're lying Blizzard!" screamed Amy "My mom told me dad was a wonderful person! He'd never do anything like that!"

"How misguided and manipulated you are then if you believe such pretences!" snarled Blizzard "I speak the truth here and don't you dare disbelieve me just because I killed your parents! Donna lied to you about your father because she wanted you to hate me and feel that I'm the villain when really, it was their own fault this happened! Anyway, after that day I long to forget, I killed Aramis in front of the Council of Acorn by penetrating his hateful little heart with an icicle. He deserved that, that racist, scornful little thorn in my side was practically begging for it so I did it! I was then arrested by Donna and put into a cell. I just froze the door, shattered it and escaped of

course and then came that day I met you Amy. I knew who you were and who's daughter you were after spying on your mother after you were born so six years later, I decided to take out my anger on you and freeze you to death just to get back at Donna for the insults and daring to arrest me. And then I killed Donna and decided to hide out here for a time until I made my next move."

Sonic was quite surprised to hear all this. Amy's dad was a jerk? Her mother was a jerk too and Blizzard killed them mainly because they were rotten to her? If you met Amy in person then you'd never expect her to have parents like THAT! Still…

"So you killed Amy's parents just because they were jerks to you?" asked Sonic "I know it's not nice to be bullied and they had no right to be a jerk to you because you were different but killing them was not the answer! You could have always resigned from the council and lived somewhere else! I mean, you could have lived here instead! White Acropolis is perfect for you and no one can be mean to you and therefore, everybody's happy so what you did Blizzard was even more wrong then what they did to you!"

"You are begging for a penetrated heart here you loathsome rat!" snarled Blizzard "You'd be wise not to speak to me like that! This is my domain and you are vulnerable here so unless you want to die, I'd drop that irksome attitude of yours Sonic!"

"Whatever." said Sonic "So Blizzard, what's your next move then when you've finally decided that hiding's not fun anymore?"

"As if I'm going to tell you that Sonic!" growled Blizzard "You'll find out soon enough. Now, you two get out of my lair and deliver me my ice gem and I promise you'll leave alive! I'm reluctant to spare you though Amy as you make me think of your loathsome parents so I'd take this opportunity while you have it!"

"We're not going to give you your gem back Blizzard!" screeched Amy "But I am gonna bash your brains out! This is for mom and dad!"

She yelled a loud battle cry and she ran up to Blizzard, preparing to hammer her into the ground. Blizzard just melted down into the

ground and disappeared into the icy floors beneath their feet. Amy tried to stop herself but she skidded on the ice and slipped. She landed sharply on her back and she grimaced in pain. Blizzard remerged from the ice and she raised her hands.

"I may not be able to freeze you at a single touch or use my ice weapons Amy now my gem's gone," said Blizzard coldly "But my powers are still too much for you to handle. Brace yourself because this shower is going to hurt very badly…"

With that said, she thrust her arms forward and began throwing icicles at Amy. Amy picked herself up and she began hammering the icicles away with her Piko-Piko hammer. Amy charged through the ice shower, hammering the icicles away as she did so, and she leaped into the air. Blizzard summoned an icicle to her hand and she threw it straight at Amy's chest. Amy blocked the icicle with her hammer and she landed just in front of Blizzard. She hammered Blizzard once and then gave her an uppercut with the huge mallet. Blizzard spiralled through the air but she landed on the wall and clung to it like a spider. She roared fiercely at Amy and she leaped off the wall. She spun around in mid-air, becoming a whirlwind as she spun at a speed faster then Sonic, and she struck Amy. She sent the pink hedgehog hurling through the air and crashing directly into the wall. Amy screamed as pain flooded through her body and she clutched her back in pain. A tear of pain trickled down her face for a minute. Blizzard landed in front of Amy and she summoned some sharp icicles to her hands. She flashed Amy a terrible grin that made her look pretty fierce for a hedgehog. She prepared to impale Amy with the icicles but Sonic spin-dashed towards her. Blizzard threw the icicles at Sonic instead. The icicles were shattered instantly by Sonic's spin-dash but Blizzard had many tricks up her sleeve. She shrunk down into the ice, leaving Sonic to accidentally spin-dash Amy instead. Amy screamed loud enough to bring the icicles in the ceiling falling down.

"OW! Sonic, you just spin-dashed me!" wailed Amy.

"Sorry." said Sonic "Blizzard gave me the slip that's all. Where is she now…"

Just as he said that, Blizzard reappeared directly underneath him

and sent him flying across the room into a wall. Sonic picked himself up and spin-dashed towards Blizzard again but Blizzard summoned a wall of ice from the ground and shielded herself with it. Sonic spin-dashed the wall and bounced straight off of it.

"Ouch! Hey! Blizzard that's cheating!" yelled Sonic, skidding to a halt only to slip and fall onto his face due to the slippery ice "Using walls of ice to defend yourself like this!"

"As I've mentioned already, this is my domain hedgehog." growled Blizzard "I'm without limitations here. I can manipulate the snow and the ice to my whims and do as I please with it. If I wanted to, I could even start an avalanche but that won't be of much use to me in a room full of solid ice."

"Well if you're gonna cheat then I'll just do what I can." said Sonic "For Amy, for the villagers of White Acropolis, you are going down Blizzard!"

Sonic spin-dashed towards Blizzard again but Blizzard blocked his attack again with a wall of ice she summoned from the ground. Amy jumped in behind Blizzard and hammered Blizzard directly into the wall. Blizzard groaned in pain as her head sharply knocked against the solid wall of ice she had made. Blizzard turned around sharply and swatted Amy across the face with her hand. Amy fell onto her side and before she could get up, Blizzard summoned a long, thick stick of ice and it wrapped around Amy's body. It formed the shape of what looked like a clamp and it trapped Amy to the floor. She was completely stuck and unable to move now. Amy squirmed in the grasp of the ice clamp but she could not move. Blizzard summoned and icicle to her hand and she prepared to stab Amy in the neck with it but Sonic spin-dashed her directly in the back. Blizzard fell over Amy and she dropped the icicle. Sonic grabbed Blizzard's quills and he threw her face first into a wall. Blizzard groaned in excruciating pain. Despite being an ice witch, even she wasn't immune to how hard the ice was. Blizzard picked herself up and saw Sonic preparing to homing attack him. He charged towards Blizzard and aimed his feet at her but Blizzard swiped her arms forward and blew him away with a powerful gust of wind she summoned from nowhere. Sonic hurtled across the lair and he crashed into the wall. Blizzard then attempted to kill the subdued Amy yet again but Sonic

threw a chunk of ice from the section of ceiling Amy broke through at her. The chunk struck Blizzard in the head and knocked her down onto her back. The attack left Blizzard with a thin cut above her eye and it began to bleed. Blizzard felt the cut and scowled at Sonic, clearly annoyed at the fact her beautiful white fur was now stained with blood. Sonic broke the ice-clamp trapping Amy to the floor with a spin-dash and Amy was able to stand back up again. Unfortunately, Blizzard had other ideas. She summoned a pair of giant hands made of ice right beneath them and the hands grabbed Sonic and Amy. Sonic and Amy were now trapped in the grasps of two giant ice hands. Blizzard cackled at them wickedly and she made the hands extend up from the floor and into the ceiling. Sonic and Amy's heads were facing the ceiling so when they smashed into the ceiling, poor Sonic and Amy ended up getting a right headache from that onslaught. Blizzard then made the hands slam Sonic and Amy onto the ground and the two hedgehogs ended up lying on the ground in pain and unable to stand back up. Blizzard cackled at the two hedgehogs and she stood before them.

"There you see? You cannot defeat me while you're in snow and ice territory." sneered Blizzard "I am unbeatable here and you two are fools to challenge me! Now, get to the surface and order Rama to give me my gem back and I won't have to kill you both."

"We won't give you your gem back!" retorted Amy "And you haven't beaten us yet! You're going down!"

With that said, Amy leaped onto her feet and she walloped Blizzard as hard as she possibly could. Blizzard hurtled through the air and she landed painfully on her side. She skidded across the floor and crashed straight into the wall head first. The impact of the crash seemed to knock her out cold. Amy ran over to Blizzard, being careful not to slip, and she knelt down beside Blizzard. She poked her in the cheek to see if she'd react to it. Blizzard didn't stir. Amy poked her again, a little harder. Blizzard still didn't stir. The attack she'd launched on her appeared to have knocked her clean out. How long she'd be knocked out was anyone's guess but Amy knew that they had to flee for it while they could or Blizzard was going to wake up very furious indeed.

"Blizzard's knocked out Sonic." said Amy "Let's get outta here."

"Fine by me." said Sonic "I can't stand it down here anymore. But what about Blizzard and the village of White Acropolis? Blizzard will just wake up and start harassing the villagers for her gem again."

"Wrong Sonic." said Amy "We're gonna take Blizzard's gem back to New Mobotropolis, destroy it and Rama will tell her that the gem's been lost and it's gone forever."

"I hope Blizzie Lizzie buys that." said Sonic "Or we will be making right chilli-sauce outta this. Come on Ames, let's scraper and make off with the gem already.

With that said, Sonic grabbed Amy's hand and he leaped out through the hole in the ceiling and out of Blizzard's ice lair. Unfortunately for him, just as he left, Blizzard came to and her eyes opened up slightly…

After leaving the ice lair, Sonic and Amy quick ran into Rama's house and took Blizzard's ice gem. They had explained that for the good of everybody, they were going to destroy Blizzard's gem so that she'd stop bothering the village and she wouldn't be too big a threat without it. With the gem destroyed, Blizzard would probably stop bothering everybody and remain in hiding permanently. Rama had decided that it would be better to get rid of them gem so he gave it Sonic and Amy. Amy stuffed it in her pocket and the two hedgehogs began trudging through the snow back home to New Mobotropolis.

"As much as I'd have loved to bring the knocked out Blizzard to a prison cell where she can rot," muttered Amy "It was probably better if we didn't because if Blizzard escaped then she'd end up being a threat to New Mobotropolis. She's bad enough as she is here, we can't have her messing up our home city."

"Especially as the newly rebuilt Mobotropolis is almost finished." said Sonic "We don't want Blizzard messing up the city as it's so close to being finished."

"Yeah." said Amy "By the way Sonic, do you wanna know why I

never told you about my past before?"

"I do." said Sonic "Why did you never talk about your past before to anybody?"

"Because it was too sad and horrible for me to bring up." said Amy "I wanted to forget that horrible day and move on so whenever I brought up my parents, I'd talk about them as if they were alive just to make me feel better and less lonely. But I guess I can't keep pretending my parents are alive or I will never be able to move on without them. Maybe it was better if I talked to someone about my past so I wouldn't feel so self-contained and depressed all the time."

"Well after hearing what Blizzard did to you Amy, I am gonna make your life better." said Sonic kindly "I'm gonna treat you better then I did before and I'm gonna help you get out of the ashes of your tragedy. And if Blizzard ever tries to hurt you again, I'll hurt her back, for you Ames."

"You…you will?" asked Amy "Oh Sonic…thank you! I…I can't believe this! You're gonna do this for me?"

"Sure." said Sonic "I'm the kind who believes in making people's lives better and helping them get over their losses."

"Oh Sonic, no wonder I love you so much!" cried Amy, throwing her arms around Sonic and kissing him on the cheek, making Sonic blush redder then a rose bush.

"Amy!" cried Sonic playfully "Take it easy on the mushy will ya?"

"Sorry Sonic, I'm just so overwhelmed with joy now I can't help myself." said Amy "Thank you for caring and understanding about my past tragedy."

"No problem Amy." said Sonic.

Then suddenly, Blizzard stuck her hand out from under the snow and she grabbed Amy's foot in order to make her trip over. She knew that Amy had the gem after spying on the hedgehogs from under the snow. Amy tripped over and the gem, unbeknownst to her, fell out of her pocket and lay in the snow. Sonic helped Amy back

onto her feet and Amy brushed snow off herself. As she brushed snow off herself, she covered the gem unknowingly so she and Sonic had no idea about it. This gave Blizzard the perfect opportunity to pull the gem down under the snow and into her ice lair.

"You alright Ames?" asked Sonic "You just tripped there."

"I must have hit a stone." Amy deduced "Never mind, let's get going."

The hedgehogs continued on through the snowy land of White Acropolis and headed off for home to New Mobotropolis. Back in Blizzard's ice lair, Blizzard grinned wickedly to herself and she reattached her gem to her belt. In order to make sure it stayed on her belt, Blizzard froze it around the edges, sticking the gem to her belt and because Blizzard was cold and the gem was cold, the ice wouldn't melt. It would stay there permanently now. Blizzard cackled to herself as she felt her ice powers increase.

"I have my gem at last." she crowed "Now my powers are at their strongest and I can commence with my motives. I shall march over to Mobotropolis, take over Castle Acorn and rule over Mobotropolis myself. Since I'll be able to make the laws, I'll make anyone named Rose suffer and I can get revenge on the two hedgehogs who dare to assault me…"

New Mobotropolis was in for a lot of trouble when Blizzard decided to come out of hiding and make her sinister move at long last…

Footnotes:

*** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles* for the whole story!**

Wow...Blizzard's kinda fed up isn't she? And it looks like she's going to try and take over Mobotropolis just as the replacement is almsot finished! What on Mobius is possibly***

gonna happen next? Join me next time for "The Kingdom of Ice"! Reviews are welcome.

P.S. No writingisawesome24 I do not accept ideas for characters. I prefer to use my own

The Kingdom of Ice

Story 95: The Kingdom of Ice

Unbeknownst to anybody, while Sonic the Hedgehog and Amy Rose had been in White Acropolis dealing with new foe Blizzard the Hedgehog, Dr. Eggman's sinister fem-bot sidekick Katherine had been preparing a little experiment in Dr. Eggman's underground headquarters. Six whole months had passed since Eggman's reduction to insanity* and when Katherine had found the last remaining fragments of the Chaos Clusters** and now Katherine was preparing to use the power of the cluster fragments to restore Eggman's sanity. Now for those of you wondering what's been taking Katherine so long to do so then here's your answer: Katherine feared that if she just went flat out with the fragments and tried to restore Eggman's mind with them without really knowing how to use them, something terrible would happen and Eggman may end up worse for wear or even dead so she ran several tests with the fragments first on other things like useless robots or captured Mobians. The testing had been an odious process and that wasn't the only thing keeping Katherine busy. She'd been rebuilding Dr. Eggman's destroyed flagship from his Egg-Fleet. When Alonzo, Eggman's first sidekick betrayed him, he caused the flagship to crash and burn*** and while Eggman had been out of his mind, Katherine had retrieved the remains from the scrap yard and had been rebuilding the flagship while also adding new things to it to make it even stronger. So you can see what took Katherine so long to try and restore Eggman's sanity can't you? Well, Katherine had finished testing the emerald fragments and came up with positive results and had some spare time so now was the time to bring Dr. Eggman back from the brink. Katherine sat Dr. Eggman down in his chair, the fat scientist still babbling like an idiot to himself and saying some really stupid stuff that quite frankly, I'm amazed they made it into this story!

"Ginger nuts, EM3 divided by the square root of the propulsion factor equals…socks!, need to wash my clunky, cheeseburgers do not come with celery sticks, hate that hedgehog, 2 + 2 = carrots,

relish is the most important thing in life, no Alonzo that's my cookie, El Gran Gordo, flabby face, penguins fly south for the winter, the Animaniacs are scary, look on the briiiight side of life, worms, I am your father, what'cho talkin' about?, Sonic is a menace, ponies!, Falcon…Punch!, wakka-dakka. all your base are belong to us…"

Quite a lot of gibberish isn't it? Katherine ignored her gibbering master, knowing that what he was muttering was pure gobblefunk and she put a helmet on Eggman's head as he sat in the chair. Eggman was so busy gibbering to himself, he didn't even notice the helmet being put on. The helmet was wired up to a machine containing the emerald fragments and the machine would extract the energies from the fragments and transfer it to the helmet. The Chaos Energy would then hopefully, restore Eggman's sanity. Katherine flicked the switch and the machine whirred into life. Dr. Eggman was so busy talking about cabbage and pants to himself that he didn't even notice what was going on. The machine began to extract the Chaos Energy from the emerald fragments and the energy flushed through the connection pipes and into the helmet. The helmet was now full of Chaos Energy and Dr. Eggman suddenly began jittering and shaking like mad as the Chaos Energy began to seep into his head. He looked like he was being struck by lightening at this very minute. After thirty seconds, Katherine decided enough was enough and she switched the machine off, leaving Dr. Eggman to slump in his chair and pull a dopey expression. His tongue drooped out the side of his mouth and he made a very silly noise. Katherine stared at Dr. Eggman worriedly, wondering if six months of testing hadn't worked as well as she'd anticipated. Then suddenly, Dr. Eggman stirred and he woke up. He sat up in his chair and he readjusted his glasses. He then stood up from his chair and breathed in deeply. Then he let it out again.

"Aaaah…" he said to himself "What a good rest that was. Now I'm completely recharged and ready to get revenge on Sonic and friends for ruining my robot utopia!"

He then turned around and saw Katherine standing there as still as a statue. If she had a face, she'd be beaming with excitement right now.

"Oh hello Katherine." said Dr. Eggman brightly "How's things been

while I've been napping?"

Katherine didn't answer Dr. Eggman. Instead, she took the scientist by the hand and led him to the main hangar bay, which was part of this underground lair that Eggman had to take refuge in. After all, Shadow had torn Robotropolis to the ground trying to find him**** so Eggman only had this lair to hide in and do his work in. As Katherine led Dr. Eggman to the hangar bay, Eggman decided to ask something.

"Where are we Katherine?" asked Dr. Eggman "We're not in Robotropolis are we?"

Katherine shook her head. She showed Dr. Eggman an image on her visor that showed Robotropolis was no longer standing. It was completely wrecked and was now just a ghastly sight staining the scenery. Dr. Eggman fumed to himself at that sight.

"So Robotropolis is destroyed again?" muttered Dr. Eggman "What a pain in the diode this is! I'm getting tired of rebuilding that city over and over so I won't bother rebuilding it again. From now on, my place of refuge is here in my underground bunker. This is my underground bunker isn't it?"

Katherine nodded.

"Well from now on, my plans will be formed and my machines will be built in here." said Dr. Eggman "I'll rebuild Robotropolis once I take over the world. Now Katherine, what is it you're wanting to show me?"

Katherine didn't answer Dr. Eggman. She continued leading Eggman to the hangar bay until they finally reached it. Katherine opened the door and led Eggman into the hangar bay. The moment Dr. Eggman walked into the hangar bay, his eyes widened so wide his glasses couldn't hide them and his jaw dropped. For there in the hangar bay amongst his Egg-Fleet, was the fleet's flagship all being rebuilt and nearing completion. The Eggman robots were working like mad on the flagship, hoping to finish it in time so they could please their master. Dr. Eggman could hardly believe what was going on right now. Katherine had taken it upon herself to rebuild the

Egg-Fleet's flagship? It really felt good to know he had a loyal sidekick for once, unlike Alonzo who decided to betray him.

"Well…this is a pleasant surprise Katherine!" blurted Dr. Eggman "You're rebuilding my fleet's flagship! Thank you so much you wonderful little girl!"

Katherine just bowed politely to him as if she was a knave bowing to her king. Dr. Eggman smiled widely and he looked back at his almost finished flagship.

"From the looks of things, this thing will be finished within a week." deduced Dr. Eggman "Speaking of weeks, how long has it been since the destruction of my Robian world Katherine?"

Katherine held up six long thin fingers to Dr. Eggman and Eggman decided to guess what she meant by six.

"Six…days?" he asked.

Katherine shook her head.

"Six…weeks?" asked Dr. Eggman.

Katherine shook her head again.

"Six…months?" asked Dr. Eggman.

Katherine nodded.

"Holy galoshes! I've been out for six months? SIX WHOLE months?" cried Dr. Eggman with his hands on his head "What happened to me? I must have had one heck of a nap if six months have passed! No matter, once my Egg-Fleet's flagship is complete, I can make up the lost time and wipe Sonic out once and for all! Then I'll roboticize the world again and make everybody my Robian slaves once again!"

He then proceeded to bellow with loud grating laughter that echoed through the hangar bay like a haunting ghost laugh…

A week passed since the visit to White Acropolis and right now in the beautiful village of Knothole, Sonic's hammer-swinging girlfriend (sort of) Amy Rose was staring at herself in a mirror and combing her quill hair. New Mobotropolis, the city that was to replace the Old Mobotropolis after Dr. Eggman destroyed it***** had finally been completed after months and months of construction and Queen Sally Acorn was hosting the grand opening ceremony for the new city. All the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were going to be there including Sonic the Hedgehog, his twin-tailed sidekick Tails the Fox, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Bunnie Rabbot and Ruben the Water Panther and Amy was looking forward to it immensely, especially as Sonic had promised she could stand next to him in the crowd. Just standing next to Sonic and breathing the same air as him was glorious enough for a fan like Amy Rose. Not only were the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters going to be at the ceremony but Angel island residents Knuckles the Echidna and Shade the Echidna were going to be there amongst Sonic and friends and all the citizens who used to live in Old Mobotropolis were going to be there too, especially as they could all return back home at long last after spending a long time living in Empire City for the time being. Even citizens from Knothole were gong to see the ceremony such as Mariah the Medicine Cat, Cream's parents Vanilla and Porthos and a few others as they were interested in seeing the new city. As Amy finished combing herself, she preened at herself in the mirror and hummed happily to herself.

"Oooh, you look gorgeous Amy." Amy cooed to herself "Just right for the grand opening ceremony. I can't wait to see New Mobotropolis. I bet it'll be the perfect city to replace the old one and I bet my Sonic will love it too as he lived in Mobotropolis."

Amy stood up from her chair and she did a happy twirl across the room.

"What a beautiful day it is and I'm gonna enjoy every moment of it." she trilled to herself "Especially as I'm with my Sonic in the crowd. Hee, hee, hee! And best of all, that stupid Dr. Eggman won't be ruining anything as he can't be bothered to show his ugly face right now. Six months pass and he hasn't bothered us so he won't bother

us now. Things are finally looking up for us."

With that said, Amy prance about happily and skipped out of the door. The moment she left the house though, she was blasted by a beam of ice that threw her backwards and froze her to the door! Amy gasped in shock and she struggled as hard as she possibly could. Her entire torso and arms were covered by a thick sheet of ice that would take a while to melt in this warm weather so she was going to be stuck for a while. Only her head, hands and legs weren't frozen but that wasn't going to be of much help to the pink hedgehog. Amy squirmed and struggled but the ice sheet was way too strong. She couldn't get free, she could hardly even move at all. She was frozen to the door and completely stuck. Amy began to panic, her heart was pounding. Oh on today of all days, some crud begins to happen! And unfortunately, Amy had a horrible idea on who it was. As Amy struggled furiously in the ice sheet, a familiar white-furred hedgehog in blue robes appeared from nowhere. It was none other then Amy's arch-enemy Blizzard the Hedgehog! The ice witch had decided she'd had enough of hiding and was on her way to New Mobotropolis to take the city for herself and she just happened to come across Amy on the way so she decided to deal with her first. Amy's eyes widened in horror and then they frowned fiercely at the ice witch that stood before her. Her teeth gritted and her hands clenched in rage.

"Blizzard!" she growled "How dare you freeze me to my front door! Release me and I won't have to give you a headache afterwards!"

"You are in no condition to give me orders my feeble-minded clot head." sneered Blizzard, a hideous smirk on her elegant face "Especially as I am now back to my full power now I have my gem back…"

She showed Amy the glorious shining ice gem that was now neatly attached back onto her belt and frozen on so it wouldn't detach from her belt again. Amy groaned to herself in annoyance, cursing her bad luck as she did so.

"Of all the unfortunate things to happen, you've gotten your gem back!" whined Amy "I had a feeling you did when I realized I'd suddenly lost it! If I were to guess, you were the one who tripped me

up and it must have fell out of my pocket as I tripped."

"That's right Amy." gloated Blizzard "You're not as stupid as you pretend to be. Now I can freeze at a single touch again, I can carry out my motivations and because I've been hiding for eight years, nobody will suspect me as everybody will have forgotten about me."

"Wrong Blizzard, I didn't forget about you!" screeched Amy "And I bet Queen Sally will remember you as you used to be on the council and her parents will have likely mentioned you or talked to her about you!"

"So what if they might recognize me?" snapped Blizzard "They cannot stop me, I have ice powers and the Acorns have nothing. Mobotropolis is mine and nothing can stand in my way!"

"You wish Blizzard!" yelled Amy "Sonic will be at the grand opening of New Mobotropolis and so will the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis! You're toast Blizzard!"

"I sure wish I knew what prattle you're talking about girl." muttered Blizzard "Who are the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis and what do you mean by "grand opening of New Mobotropolis"?"

"Dr. Eggman destroyed the original Mobotropolis and the city's been rebuilt and named New Mobotropolis doofus!" snapped Amy "And the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis are a team of Royal Fighters working for the Royal Fighters Service. You really have been hiding to well haven't you? You know nothing about what's been going on since you've gone into hiding."

"Well after I killed your mother, I fled to White Acropolis and I've spent eight years there." said Blizzard "So I was bound to know nothing about what's been happening at Mobotropolis in my absence. Oh well, New Mobotropolis will suffice beautifully. I shall march over to the city, freeze any resistance, force Queen Sally to stand down and hand over her crown and then I shall make the city what it should be. And once I'm in charge, you shall spend the rest of your miserable life in the dungeons with nothing by icicles for company." she crooned darkly, jamming her face into Amy's face "And anyone named "Rose" shall be forced into slavery and made to

suffer as that family name haunts me like a bad dream. You just wait here for me Amy and I'll return when I'm queen. I wouldn't hold my breath though as I'll be queen by the time that ice melts in this warm weather. Goodbye Amy Rose, I look forward to seeing you again when I'm the new ruler of New Mobotropolis!"

With that said, she decided to leave a thin scratch on Amy's cheek just to be mean to her. She scratched Amy's cheek with one sharp fingernail. The cut she left from that scratch was long, thin and trickling with blood. Blizzard cackled evilly at Amy and she turned her back on the trapped hedgehog. Blizzard strode away pride fully, leaving Amy frozen to her front door and unable to do anything but struggle and grunt. As Blizzard left, Amy scowled at her and she screamed at the top of her lungs.

" **BLIZAAAAAARRRRRDDDDDD!** "

Her screaming was pitiful though as Blizzard was going to leave her like this and there was no one around to stop her. Now Blizzard could freeze again, Sonic and the Royal Fighters were in for one heck of a grand opening ceremony…

New Mobotropolis.

A beautiful replacement for the old Mobotropolis that had been destroyed stood proudly in the place of the old city and everybody stared at it in awe. The buildings were marvellously constructed and put together, there was a long ring of wall around the city that was presumably for something like maybe keeping intruders out, there was an entrance gate on the fence for people to get in and out of the city and there were conveniences of every kind such as an airport, a hospital, an MPD station for the convicts and even restaurants, theatres, cinema, churches and parks to stroll and play in. Nobody could really see the new city in proper detail due to the fence blocking their view but they could see some of the buildings stretching up into the sky due to how tall they were. Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends couldn't wait to see New Mobotropolis when it finally opened. Sonic, Bunnie, Wilson and Mandy in particular as they were former citizens of Old Mobotropolis and they

were looking forward to seeing what their new homes looked like.

"I can't see much over the fence." said Sonic "But I bet the city's gonna be good. It's just a pity Ruben decided to opt outta this."

"Yeah, according to you he's gone back home to Chun-Nan to see how it's doing right now******." said Tails "I can see why he's not interested in seeing New Mobotropolis though as he doesn't even live in our country. His own country is more important to him then ours after all."

"That's one way of putting it I suppose Tails." said Sonic "Although Ruben left Chun-Nan to escape his sorrows and he's joined the R.F.S. so he technically does live in our country now. Oh well, it never hurts to visit your hold home once in a while. He can see New Mobotropolis when he gets back."

"I'm sure Ruben will love it when he sees it." said Cosmo, wrapping her arms around Tails' arm and making him blush "I know I'm going to love this city. It looks like it's going to be a lovely place."

"I bet it's gonna be great too Cosmo." said Tails, fighting the blush on his face before Cosmo could see it "Although I bet there won't be a house for me and you as we don't live in Mobotropolis."

"I'll share my new house with you if that's the likeliest scenario." said Sonic "As for you two," he added, pointing to Knuckles and Shade "What's made you wanna see New Mobotropolis? You live in Downunda."

"I know we do Sonic but there's no harm in seeing one of the most important cities on Mobius all nicely rebuilt is there?" said Knuckles "Not to mention, we felt it would be nice of us to see one of our little buddies on this special day and give this new city our best wishes as one of our buddies lives here."

"You're too kind Knuckles." laughed Sonic "And here's me thinking you were the embodiment of solitude."

Knuckles resisted the urge to snap at Sonic for that remark. The blue hedgehog was only kidding with him after all and he had trained

himself to bear the hedgehog's obnoxious quips. As for Shade, she didn't really think much to Sonic's humour as she wasn't much of a humour person. Sonic left the echidnas to themselves and he turned to Wilson. The dog looked strangely nervous all of the sudden as if something was biting at him. Sonic picked up the signs immediately and he decided to see what was bothering the poor dog.

"Hey Wilson? Wassup?" asked Sonic "You look like a dog who's been told off for doing it's…"

"Sonic, please don't make that joke, I've heard it once too many." said Wilson hastily "As much as I'm looking forward to seeing New Mobotropolis, there's something on my mind."

"Such as?" asked Sonic.

Wilson just plunged his hand into his pocket and he fished something out of it. He showed Sonic his fist and he opened it. A small brown box sat in the middle of his palm and Wilson opened the box to show what was inside. The box contained a small ring with a purple diamond on it. Sonic instantly knew what Wilson was worked up about just looking at the ring.

"Oh I get it." he said "You're planning to get engaged. Engaged to be married. And do I get a prize for guessing who the lucky girl is?"

"If you want one then yes." chuckled Wilson "I've decided after ten years with the love of my life, Mandy Mouse, that I want to marry her and live my life in New Mobotropolis as a husband."

He looked over at Mandy Mouse who was talking with some of the Old Mobotropolis residents and having a good laugh with them. Wilson sighed happily at the sight of his gorgeous girlfriend.

"How I love her." he said "Those cute round ears of hers, those lovely yellow eyes, that gorgeous slender body and radiant purple fur, how could I not fall for her? Not to mention she helped me feel better about myself when no one else would. I was bullied for my fur colour and so was she and the two of us together put an end to the bullying and now nobody torments anybody for fur colour anymore. There's no one else for me, only Mandy is the right girl for me and

now I want to marry her."

"I was kinda wondering when you two would eventually get hitched." said Sonic "And you picked quite a good day to get engaged. The city opens up and the first thing that'll happen in it is a marriage. So what are you so worked up for then?"

"You know how it is Sonic." said Wilson, putting the ring back in his pocket "You have glorious images of married life but then when you want to get into it, you feel like a complete wreck. I'm just nervous on how this'll all turn out. Maybe Mandy won't be ready for a married life or maybe she won't want to get married or…"

"Wilson, Wilson, Wilson buddy." said Sonic, putting a hand on his shoulder "Don't tell yourself stuff that won't happen. If you wanna marry Mandy then you're gonna have to put your all into this. If you want, I'll back you up on this to give you extra-support. You and Mandy love each other and I know that when you pop the question, Mandy will say yes in an instant. There's no reason why you two shouldn't get hitched."

"Thank you Sonic." said Wilson with a smile "I'm so glad I have a friend as cool as you."

"Ah, I'm just being me." said Sonic casually "Helping people when they need it, no matter what the situation is. Even engagement matters. You know when Tails and Cosmo are old enough to get married, I bet Tails will be coming to me for help."

The two Mobians laughed at Sonic's little remark. However, their laughter was brought to an abrupt halt when a sudden wind blew through the crowd and made everybody feel strangely cold for a second there. Sonic shivered and he wrapped his arms around himself.

"Brrr…where did that sudden draft come from?" he asked "There's no wind today."

"I dunno." said Wilson.

"Hey Wilson, hey blue dude, did you feel that sudden chill for a

second there?" asked Mandy, shaking herself off "What happened there?"

"I dunno but if it happens again then I'll be concerned about something strange going on around here." muttered Sonic "And it better not happen now or…"

Before Sonic could say anything else, a big gust of icy wind blew over the crowd outside the city and Blizzard the Hedgehog materialized into view. She stood before the city gates and she smirked at the crowd that waited for the ceremony to begin. Sonic's eyes widened in shock, unable to believe that Blizzard had decided to show herself again so shortly after their first meeting.

"M-M-Mr. Sonic? Who's that evil looking woman?" asked Cream worriedly.

"That's Blizzard the Hedgehog." muttered Sonic "Me and Amy met her at White Acropolis last week and she tried to kill the both of us! She killed Amy's parents when she was only six and she's been in hiding for eight months and now she's decided to show herself!"

"She killed poor Amy's parents?" asked Bunnie in alarm "She never said anything about them being dead when she talked to me about em*******."

"Well Amy didn't want to feel they were dead so she pretended they were alive whenever she bought em up." said Sonic "But never mind that now! That hedgehog's an evil ice witch and she can't be here for good things!"

As for Blizzard, she made an announcement to the frightened citizens of Old Mobotropolis who couldn't help but stare at her in horror.

"Greetings citizens of Old Mobotropolis!" she barked at the top of her rough, raspy voice "I am Blizzard the Hedgehog, former councillor of Castle Acorn and now I am here to become the Queen of New Mobotropolis. The Acorn Family may have been a good family to rule over the city but now is the time for a change my people. I will be every bit as good as the Acorn Family, only better

and I shall make New Mobotropolis an even greater city then it already is! All you have to do is support me in my claims and you shall have what you all deserve, freedom, prosperity and a ruler who will honour the wills of every budding citizen, even the lowest ones such as the poor. If you support me citizens of Mobotropolis, I promise you that you shall all be honoured, free and…protected." she added with a sinister purr in her voice "Unlike the Acorn Family, I shall protect you all from the menace of Dr. Eggman and his barbaric machinations. I have the power to finish off that old goat and if you chose me to replace Queen Sally, you will be getting closer to being free from Eggman's tyranny!"

The crowd murmured amongst each other, wondering if Blizzard actually meant what she was saying. Sonic face-palmed himself in annoyance, unable to believe the audience were seriously looking like they were believing this obviously evil hedgehog so he leaped in front of Blizzard and addressed the crowd himself.

"Hey guys and gals!" yelled Sonic "Don't listen to this witch! Blizzard is evil and if you support her in this, you're gonna make things even worse then they already are!"

Blizzard scowled at Sonic and promptly prodded him in the back. The moment she poked Sonic though, he froze stiff on the spot, much to everybody's horror. Sonic was now an ice statue just standing there completely frozen and he'd remain like this until Blizzard released him or someone broke the ice.

"I'll thank you for not interrupting seminal matters here hedgehog." she snarled crossly.

She then looked back at the crowd and announced to them again.

"Do not head Sonic's words my people." she said "I am NOT evil, I'm just looking out for the people of Mobotropolis and hoping to carry out their best interests. Sonic here may have been fighting Dr. Eggman for months on end but is Mobius anymore free then it was before the fat man arrived?"

The crowd hesitated and began talking amongst each other. Blizzard smiled icily. Things were beginning to go her way so far, her

beautiful plan was working!

"Whereas me, as you've just witnessed, I can freeze people in an instant." she said, prodding the frozen Sonic in the back and unfreezing him so she could get in the people's good side "Once I get my hands on Dr. Eggman, he'll become an iceberg! Can your present ruler do something like that? Huh? Of course not! The Acorn Family are poor simpering fools who have no powers of any kind and can't be bothered to get their royal hands dirty whereas I can not only rule your city but I can also protect this city. And I'll do a much better job then your current heroes the Royal Fighters." she added, smirking at Sonic as he lay on the ground shaking himself off "I can just freeze all your enemies and attackers in an instant and once they're frozen, I can bring them in and you'll never have to worry about them again. So tell me people, do you want a queen who can't defend the one city she rules over or do you want a queen who can not only protect you all, but actually end this stupid war with Eggman?"

The crowd seemed to be lightening up to her but they were still debating amongst each other. Blizzard was pleased to see the crowd appeared to be buying her act. Hopefully, they'd start cheering for her and Sally would be forced to stand down. Blizzard turned her back on everybody and headed towards the city gates.

"I'll consult with Queen Sally right now." said Blizzard "Let me know when you've made up your minds."

With that said, Blizzard leaped over the walls and into the city. The moment she landed, she pointed at the gates and froze them solid in an instant. She was not taking her chances with Sonic and friends so she was going to try her best to keep them out. In order to ensure them being unable to get in, she created an ice dome around the city so now the whole thing just looked like a dome of solid ice with a ring of wall surrounding it. Blizzard smiled to herself as she headed for Castle Acorn.

"Everything is going beautifully…" she purred to herself "Those poor, simple fools will be wanting me as ruler in an instant after hearing my lies and Queen Sally will have to stand down. The reign of Queen Blizzard the Hedgehog begins shortly…"

On the other side of the ice dome, Sonic picked himself up and began furiously spin-dashing at it. But the dome was made of solid, thick ice, thicker then cement blocks and just as hard, Sonic would never get through ice as thick as that. The ice would eventually melt but with Blizzard, ice took longer to melt then normal, especially with how thick it was so by the time it melted, it would be too late. After another failed spin-dash, Sonic grumbled to himself.

"Hey everybody, help me break through this thing will ya?" Sonic asked the crowd and his friends "We've gotta stop Blizzard before she harms Sally!"

"I don't know Sonic…" mused Knuckles "Do you think we should stop Blizzard? I mean, she seems to have good intentions and all…"

"Oh puh-lease!" groaned Sonic "Don't tell me you seriously believe that Blizzard's here to do good things? Blizzard is evil and I should know, me and Amy met her last week!"

"What's so evil about her?" asked Tails.

"Well she killed Amy's dad, who used to be a councillor for Castle Acorn," he made sure everybody heard that one and that certainly seemed to shaken everybody up "Kidnapped Amy as a kid and attempted to freeze her to death and then she killed Amy's mother, who used to be a cop, and ended up traumatizing poor Amy for a while. Does that sound like the kind of queen you want everybody? If you don't believe me, ask Amy herself, she told me the whole story."

The crowd went back to feeling nervous about Blizzard again. She definitely didn't sound as good as she claimed to be! Maybe supporting her was a bad idea after all? As for Sonic, something went click in his head and he realized something.

"Oh no…Amy! She's not here yet!" cried Sonic "Blizzard must have gotten her already! I'm going over to Knothole to see if she's OK pronto!"

"You find Amy blue dude, we'll try and break through the frozen gates." said Mandy, slipping on her trademark brass knuckle

attachments.

With that said, Sonic the Hedgehog raced off at his trademark supersonic speed while his friends sought to trying to bust the frozen gate down. Mandy, Knuckles and Bunnie all began punching furiously at the gates while Geoffrey fired darts at it, Tails, and Cream kicked at it, Wilson slashed at it with his spinning blade weapon, Shade Blade Rushed it and Cosmo just sort of joined in with Tails and Cream on the kicking although it wouldn't do her any good given how weak she was. They had to get through the gates and fast before Blizzard could stir up a royal conspiracy inside Castle Acorn. If that happened the New Mobotropolis would be off to a rotten grand opening indeed…

Due to his super speed, Sonic arrived at Knothole in a matter of minutes and the moment he set foot in the beautiful village, he began looking around furiously for Amy. He zipped from house to house as quickly as he could; looking into the houses and wondering if Amy was there or anywhere around at all.

"Amy! Amy?" called Sonic as he looked around in the houses "Where are you? Are you OK?"

He wasn't looking around for long until he heard a familiar voice calling over to him.

"Sonic! Over here!" cried Amy.

Sonic heard Amy's voice and he ran over to Amy's trademark pink house with red roof. To his surprise, the house was still in one piece, meaning Blizzard obviously wasn't that bothered about Amy today as she was trying to take New Mobotropolis for herself. But one thing out of the ordinary was the obvious fact that Amy was frozen to the door. She had been spending the past few minutes trying to free herself but she just couldn't break free. The ice was too thick. Sonic stared at the ice sheet over Amy's torso and he couldn't believe what Blizzard had done to Amy.

"Amy, thank goodness Blizzard hasn't killed you!" gasped Sonic "But

she's frozen you to the door. No wonder you haven't arrived at the grand opening ceremony yet, you're stuck fast!"

"Oh Sonic, you must get me out of this and fast!" screeched Amy "Blizzard's plotting to take over New Mobotropolis and overthrow Sally Acorn!"

"Yeah, I think I already know that thanks." muttered Sonic "Blizzard almost had the crowd fooled for a second but I've told them the truth so they're not falling for her ploys. Now, how do I get you outta this? I don't wanna spin-dash you free in fear of causing more damage then I'd like to."

"Use this." said Amy, summoning her trademark Piko-Piko hammer to her unfrozen hands.

Given her arms were frozen and only her hands were free, she wouldn't be able to use the hammer to its best effect so Sonic had to use it. Sonic took the hammer from Amy, surprised at how heavy it was and he began wondering how Amy was even able to lift the darn thing, and he raised it above his head, making sure he didn't fall over from the weight of the hammer.

"So you want me to smash you free with this?" said Sonic "No problemo. Apologies if this hurts you by the way."

"I promise I won't hammer you if it hurts Sonic." said Amy reassuringly "Just get me outta this!"

Sonic snidely smiled at Amy and he swung the hammer as hard as he possibly could. He whacked the middle of the ice sheet and it cracked heavily under the heavy hit of the hammer. The ice sheet cracked so heavily that it just shattered like glass and fell to pieces around Amy's feet. Amy flexed her arms and did a few stretches, relieved to be free from her door at last. Sonic passed Amy her hammer and Amy took it eagerly.

"Thank you my cute little Sonic." cooed Amy playfully "I can always count on you to get me out of a scrape."

"Anytime Ames." said Sonic, trying to keep himself from blushing at

Amy's little pet name "Now let's kick Blizzard's icy hide outta our new city before she wrecks it shall we?"

"Do you even need to ask?" asked Amy, twirling her hammer around menacingly "I have many scores to settle with that witch! Especially as she killed mom and dad and nearly scarred me for life!"

"In that case, it's juice and jam time!" yelled Sonic excitedly "Hold on Ames, I'm going supersonic now!"

With that said, Sonic grabbed Amy's arm and charged off back to New Mobotropolis with the pink hedgehog squealing like mad behind him in excitement. Sonic hoped that things weren't already going south back at New Mobotropolis or he would be in a bad mood…

Back at New Mobotropolis, Queen Sally Acorn and her beautiful lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx were in the council room with the Council of Acorn members standing before her. The council was discussing about the new city and its features before the grand opening began. The Queen and council were looking forward to the opening of the new city as well as what people's thoughts of it were going to be.

"So the city's all fully completed and its facilities are installed and ready." said Sally as she read reports made by the construction crew of New Mobotropolis "Everybody's homes are up and running and the facilities in the homes all work as should do. Everything is safe and everything's been properly tested to make sure it's safe."

"So with a clean report like that, I see no reason to keep the citizens waiting any longer Sally." said Nicole "Let's begin the opening ceremony already."

"I was going to say the same thing myself Nicole." said Sally with a warm smile on her face "Councillors, are you ready for the ceremony?"

"Whenever you are your majesty." said the council members.

"Then let's get this grand opening started already." said Sally "I bet the eager citizens are dying of excitement on the other side of the gates."

"They will be Sally." said Nicole "All those poor Mobotropolis citizens get their homes back after all this time and there's new facilities, especially our secret defence system which I can't wait to show everybody."

"I can't wait for it either." said Sally "Especially as it was your idea Nicole. It's been tested so we know it works and I bet the citizens will be amazed at it when…"

Before she could say anything more, the door flung open and in stormed Blizzard the Hedgehog. An icy chill drifted into the room and made everything feel a little colder as she stepped into the room. Sally and Nicole looked like they were about to faint with shock whereas the council members looked astonished to see a stranger like her walk into the room like this. Blizzard sneered at the terrified squirrel and lynx and she smirked at the council. How pathetic it looked to her, when she was on the council, it looked a lot better then this bunch.

"Good morning Sally Acorn." purred Blizzard in an eerily polite tone, a very unusual tone for the ice witch.

"B-B-Blizzard the Hedgehog?" screamed Sally "Oh no, not her!"

"I remember her!" shrieked Nicole "She used to be on the council and she killed Aramis Rose because he kept bullying her!"

"Oh whoopee, you remember me!" applauded Blizzard sarcastically, clapping at them in a mocking manner "So nice to see your brains are still functioning. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Well now, I've come out of hiding after eight years of doing so and I've come to take what is mine… New Mobotropolis!"

"You are out of your bloody mind if you think we're going to relinquish the city to you freak!" snorted Hamlin, the council douche bag and rude little porker, storming up to Blizzard furiously "We will not let you have New Mobotropolis! There's a little thing called

authority and paperwork that you'll need if you want this city and we…"

Blizzard just promptly froze Hamlin to the spot as if he was just a ham in the fridge, only colder. The silly little pig was beginning to get on her nerves now.

"I didn't ask you, you porky little runt of the litter!" snarled Blizzard, smacking the frozen Hamlin sharply and knocking him onto his side.

She walked up to Sally Acorn and stared her directly in the eye. Sally nervously took a step back and Blizzard advanced on her menacingly. Sally kept backing away from the ice witch until suddenly, she found herself with her back pressed against the council bench. She stared straight into Blizzard's eyes and began to shake with fear. Her heart was pounding like mad. Was Blizzard going to kill her? Blizzard grabbed Sally's face, the squirrel shivering in the touch due to the fact Blizzard was cold inside and out.

"Please, oh please, don't kill me Blizzard!" begged Sally "I haven't pressed any charges against you, I'm not planning to arrest you or anything…"

"Clam down my child, I do not wish to inflict harm of even the smallest kind on your weak, delicate little body." crooned Blizzard "Before we get to business though, where's Alicia and Maximilian, your mother and father? Shouldn't they be here if this is a council meeting?"

"They're dead." explained Sally, still shaking "An alien killed them******** so I'm in charge now."

"No wonder Amy referred to you as "Queen" instead of "Princess"." mused Blizzard, letting go of Sally's face and giving the squirrel breathing space "Anyways, Queen Sally Acorn, I am here to get what is mine. New Mobotropolis. I am going to respectfully demand you relinquish your title and hand it over to me otherwise you'll end up feeling and icicle through your heart."

"Blizzard, I know all about you from mom and dad." said Sally bluntly but bravely "And I know how "overly ambitious" and how much of a

"dreamer" and "power hungry person" you are and I will not hand over the kingdom to someone like you, especially as you killed a councillor and a cop, both of which were fellow Royal Fighter Amy Rose's parents. You can either get out of my castle before things get unpleasant or face arrest."

Blizzard cackled with dark, evil, raspy laughter that made the whole council shiver in fear.

"So that's how it's going to be is it Sally?" sneered Blizzard "Well Sally, perhaps you'd love to hear the opinions of your fellow citizens."

"What do you mean?" hissed Nicole furiously, itching to beat the snot out of the ice witch.

"I've had a little pep talk with the citizens and I've told them the truth about me and you." explained Blizzard "Truth as in, you are unfit to rule a kingdom as you can't even protect anybody from Eggman's threats. You have to rely on your so-called "Royal Fighters" to do the dirty work. A proper ruler should do everything him or herself, not risk the safety of his or her people just so he or she can stay cooped up in their little luxury house, living a life of opulence while everybody else risks life and limb for their safety and wellbeing! Whereas I, I fill those quotas. I can stop the Eggman right there and end this conflict between Mobius and him whereas you cannot and now the people will be begging to have me on the throne!"

"Forget it Blizzard!" yelled Sally "I'm not letting you rule this kingdom! You're EVIL and you're gonna use your power for your own needs, not the welfare of everybody else! You can freeze me for all I care! I am not giving my crown to someone who will abuse their power for their own cruel, evil needs!"

Blizzard scowled at Sally, her fists tensing tightly and her eyes twitching furiously.

"Oh you are so unwise Sally…" growled Blizzard "Refusal to obey my orders will result in terrible punishment for you…"

Meanwhile, outside the city gates of New Mobotropolis, the Royal Fighters were still trying to break through the frozen gates. They had been trying valiantly for the past few minutes but try as they might, they couldn't break the ice down. It was just too solid and thick. After another punch, Knuckles began to pant and grumble to himself.

"This is useless!" he growled "We can't break the stupid ice! It's too thick!"

"Our combined efforts just simply aren't enough." said Cosmo despairingly "How can we get through the gates if the ice is too strong?"

"If there wasn't an ice dome over the city, me and Cream could just fly everybody over the walls." said Tails grimly "What are we gonna do now?"

"Hmm…" mused Mandy as she observed the frozen gates. A brilliant idea was creping into her head "We can't get through the gates or over the walls due to the ice dome which is likely to be as strong…but maybe we can get **under** the gates." she deduced with a snap of the fingers

"Get under the gates? As is dig under it" asked Wilson "That's a great idea Mandy! Blizzard didn't think about that did she? Let's tunnel under the gate!"

"I'll do the digging." said Knuckles "We echidnas are brilliant at it."

With that said, Knuckles began to punch at the soil at the foot of the gate and he began to dig furiously through the soil with his spiky fists. Shade joined in as she could dig well too and the two echidnas were going to dig under much better if they were doing this together. Knuckles and Shade were digging very fast, so fast in fact that they managed to dig a sizable tunnel under the frozen gates in a good amount of time and now everybody could crawl under it. Blizzard never really though of freezing things and making the ice expand down underground so tunnelling under was impossible so this little overlooking of details was going to be a costly one on her part. Now the tunnel had been dug, Tails, Knuckles, Shade, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy, Bunnie and Geoffrey all crawled under the frozen

gates and into New Mobotropolis. The moment they got into the city though, they were met with the newly built replacement for Old Mobotropolis. The city looked incredible to them and if this wasn't a bad time right now, they would be admiring the city in an instant and checking it out already.

"Wow!" cried Tails "New Mobotropolis looks incredible!"

"I'll say it does young fox." said Shade "Your hedgehog friend has a good replacement for his old home. I wouldn't mind living here if I didn't have duties to Angel Island."

"If everything was alright right now, I'd be trying to find out where my new house is." said Mandy "But unfortunately, there's an ice witch trying to usurp the queen and rule the city."

"And all on the day New Mobotropolis opens and I plan to marry you." muttered Wilson crossly to himself.

"Excuse me?" asked Mandy.

"Nothing." said Wilson quickly "Let's stop that ice witch already!"

"I think we should wait until Sonic and Amy arrive first mate." said Geoffrey "We'll need them in a fight against an ice powered maniac like her."

"Come to think of it, here they come now." said Bunnie, flying up to the ice dome and looking through it.

On the other side of the walls, Sonic and Amy arrived at New Mobotropolis and Sonic screeched to a halt. He and Amy didn't see the tunnel under the frozen gate. They were just looking at the frozen gate and the ice dome stopping anyone from getting into the city. Sonic curled up into a ball and Amy raised her hammer up high.

"The old hammer-and-hedgehog trick will work on that frozen gate." said Amy "Get ready Sonic, I'm gonna hit you extra-hard to make sure we break through!"

"I'm ready Amy." said Sonic "And I really wish you'd come up with a better name for a move so awesome! Hammer-and-hedgehog is so

corny!"

"I'll hammer you into the ground if you don't shut up!" snapped Amy "Now ready…steady…GO!"

With that said, Sonic spun as fast as he could in a spin-dash and Amy walloped him at her hardest. Sonic hurtled into the frozen gate and he ploughed straight through it as if it was a ball through glass. The ice shattered into pieces and Sonic hurled into New Mobotropolis. Now the gate had been broken down, anybody could get into the city again. Sonic skidded to a halt before his startled friends and he stared at them in surprise. Amy ran into the city and stared at her friends in disbelief.

"How the heck did you get through the frozen gate?" asked Sonic.

"We tunnelled under the gate." said Mandy with a bright smile on her face "It was all my idea ad our echidna buddies carried it out beautifully."

"Why didn't I think of that?" muttered Sonic "Oh well, now we're in New Mobotropolis, we can stop Blizzard the Hedgehog before she harms anybody!"

"Wrong Sonic." said Amy "I'm stopping Blizzard the Hedgehog. She's mine! You're staying here and waiting for me."

"Amy, I am not letting you face that demon alone!" snapped Sonic sternly "She traumatized you for a while and killed your parents! I'm not letting her harm you in any other way!"

"She won't harm me." gloated Amy, a smug expression on her face "She's in our territory not hers, she can't use her powers to their best as theirs not snow anywhere for her to use against us. Not to mention I have a hammer so I can smash all her ice weapons and everything. I'll be fine."

"Amy luv, I think Sonic has a point here." said Geoffrey "She can freeze things in an instant I mean just look at the gate and the dome she's made. She'll freeze you instantly if she gets you Amy."

"Please Miss Rose, let us help you!" begged Cream "You can't face

Blizzard alone!"

"I can and I will!" snapped Amy "And you can't stop me now get outta my way everybody! Blizzard's mine and that's final!"

With that said, Amy stormed past Sonic and friends and flounced off to Castle Acorn, not caring what anybody wanted or said to her, her hammer in hand and ready for battle. Sonic and friends could only watch helplessly as Amy stormed off to Castle Acorn by herself.

"We should stop her before she gets hurt!" cried Mandy "Amy's gonna get herself killed here!"

"Yeah well if I see so much as ONE icicle come out of Castle Acorn then I'm coming in after her!" yelled Sonic "I really don't wanna leave Amy to do this herself but she has personal grudges on Blizzard so I guess it's fair she should take on Blizzard to make her pay for the pains she's caused her."

"I just hope Amy makes it out alive." muttered Knuckles "If not, I will slaughter that witch in hedgehog's clothing!"

Sonic and friends really wanted to help Amy finish Blizzard off but Amy wanted to do it herself so they stayed put and waited for the outcome. If Amy needed help, they'd give it to her and Sonic had a feeling Amy was going to need help in this match as Blizzard was way stronger then she was…

Back in Castle Acorn, Sally and Blizzard were beginning to get into a heated argument right now with Nicole and the Council members watching on worriedly, wondering what the outcome was going to be. The council room was ringing with the two women screaming at each other and debating over who should be ruler or not.

"You do realize how big a fool you're being don't you Sally?" yelled Blizzard "An opportunity to help save the world from the Eggman's threats is knocking at your doorstep and you refuse to take it!"

"We're doing just fine against Dr. Eggman Blizzard!" snapped Sally "Sonic and friends foiled his worldwide roboticizer six months ago

and we haven't seen him since so we don't need you to help us!"

"Well if you haven't seen him in a while then doesn't it occur to you he might be hiding and plotting his next move?" noted Blizzard "And have you made any attempts to apprehend the vile man after his last encounter with Sonic and friends? Of course you haven't because you don't know the first thing about the safety of the citizens! You're too caught up in your own silly little world to bother about what's going on now and if Eggman comes out of hiding to attack much like I have, then we all know who's fault that will be then!"

"You can say what you like Blizzard!" shouted Sally "Heck, you can defeat Dr. Eggman and end this war with him for all I care, I'm not letting someone as evil as you rule New Mobotropolis! Besides, it's in the provisional constitution section I paragraph 89: "only those of a royal family are eligible to rule the kingdom, the only exception is if all royal family members are dead and a replacement is required." so you'll never get a chance to rule New Mobotropolis! Now get out of my castle now Blizzard!"

That did it. Blizzard lost her already short temper and she backhanded Sally across the room as viciously as she could. Sally hurled across the room and landed slap bang into the wall much to the horror of everybody in the room.

"YOU get out! I've had enough!" roared Blizzard, summoning an ice sword from nowhere and brandishing it menacingly.

The sword was made of solid ice but was as sharp as anything and had a lot of icicles near the hand guard. Blizzard stormed up to Sally and prepared to cleave her in two with the ice sword but Nicole stood in the ice witch's way and shielded Sally. Blizzard hesitated and she glared at the young lynx in the purple toga furiously.

"Get out of my way!" snarled Blizzard.

"No Blizzard!" said Nicole bravely "I'm not letting you kill Sally! You'll have to get through me first!"

"I'll be happy to arrange your funeral then you poor, pathetic, weak minded child!" growled Blizzard "Then once I've finished you off, I

shall slaughter the queen and take the crown off her corpse since she won't hand it over to me!"

"Or you can leave the royals alone and face me instead!" screeched a voice that Blizzard knew too well.

Blizzard turned away from Nicole and she stared at the doors which had been flung open and there stood Amy Rose, hammer brandished and a vengeful look in her lovely jade eyes. Sally and Nicole looked stunned to see Amy here whereas Blizzard looked downright gobsmacked to see her hated nemesis standing there before them even though she sealed the city off so no one could disturb them. Regardless, Blizzard hid her astonishment and she put on her usual evil, icy glare.

"Amy Rose." muttered Blizzard coldly "You've just had to show up and interfere with seminal matters here didn't you?"

"Of course I did!" yelled Amy "You're trying to take a kingdom that isn't yours and you're trying to kill Sally and Nicole! Not to mention I still owe you a headache for killing mom and dad! I know they were mean to you as you say they are but killing them was inexcusable so prepare for an extra large hammer wallop Blizzard!"

"Good, I was hoping to add another Rose to the death list." cackled Blizzard wickedly "And you will be even more special then your scornful parents as you're a Royal Fighter apparently. So is Sonic not helping you on this one?"

"This is a battle between us two only." said Amy bluntly "Now put up or shut up witch!"

"Gladly you pink scum!" cackled Blizzard, raising her sword and preparing to twirl it.

Amy did not wait even for a second. She charged towards Blizzard and she swung her mighty hammer at her. Blizzard blocked the attack with her ice sword and she swung the sword at Amy. Amy jumped back, causing Blizzard to miss and she bopped the hedgehog on the head just as she swung at her again. Blizzard growled crossly and she rubbed her throbbing head. Amy leaped

behind Blizzard and she walloped her in the back, causing Blizzard to hurl forwards and crash into the doors at the end of the room. Blizzard knocked them both down and she lay on the floor, grumbling savagely to herself. She picked herself up and Amy leaped at her again. Blizzard swiped at her with the sword and she slashed her directly across the belly. Amy screamed in pain and she doubled over, clutching her stomach. There as a long thin cut straight across it now after that attack. Blizzard cackled at Amy and she prepared to chop her in two with the sword but Amy rolled out of the way before she could hit her. Amy thought the stinging pain in her belly and she got back into the fight. She swung her hammer at Blizzard and Blizzard swung her sword at Amy, the two weapons clashing nosily off each other. They clashed weapons again and again and struck several blows at each other. Amy then tried to kick Blizzard in the gut but Blizzard leaned to one side, causing her to miss. Blizzard fisted Amy directly in the eye, leaving the hedgehog to scream in pain and clutch her eye. Blizzard slashed at her again with her sword, catching her on the arm this time and leaving a rather long cut on it. Amy growled in an exasperated manner and she walloped Blizzard with her hammer. Blizzard staggered backwards but she regained herself and began swinging her sword at her again. She and Amy clashed weapons but Amy caught Blizzard off guard by hammering her sword on the top side, breaking the blade and rendering Blizzard weapon less. Blizzard scowled at Amy and she summoned another ice sword from nowhere. With that ice gem of hers, she could summon ice weapons at will so Amy could break as many as she wished, she'd just summon a new one. Amy tried to smash Blizzard's ice sword again but Blizzard dodged her attack and whacked Amy in the back with the flat side of her sword. Amy cried out in pain and she fell onto her knees. Blizzard tried to stab Amy with the sword but Amy blocked the attack with her hammer and she hammered it out of Blizzard's hands before she could ready herself again. The sword skidded across the floor and crashed into the wall. Instead of retrieving it, Blizzard just summoned a new sword to her hand and she slashed at Amy with it. Amy walloped Blizzard in the face with her hammer and then in the gut But Blizzard got her own back by grabbing the hammer with her hand and freezing it. Blizzard snatched the hammer out of Amy's grasp and she cleaved it in two with the sword. But Amy could summon hammers from airspace so she wouldn't be rendered

weapon less anytime soon. Amy summoned a new hammer to her hand and she swiped at Blizzard with it. Blizzard back flipped away from Amy and she made her sword disappear. She thrust her arms forward and sent a shower of sharp icicles hurling towards Amy. Amy ran through the shower, hammering the icicles away as they neared her. Blizzard scowled at her, furious to see her icicle shower wasn't working so instead, Blizzard thrust her arms forward and blew Amy away with a gust of icy wind (now you know why she's called "Blizzard" don't you?). Amy was propelled backwards through the room and sent crashing into the archway above the doors. After that hit, Amy fell back down to the floor and grimaced in pain. Blizzard didn't often resort to winds but when she did, they were a force to be reckoned with. Amy picked herself up, straining hard as she did so and Blizzard advanced on her with a cold smile on her face.

"Thank you for that little exercise Amy." crowed Blizzard "I've quite enjoyed this little workout. "But now I've had my fun, I'll just put you out of your misery already."

She raised the sword above her head and brought it swinging down on Amy. But Amy recovered just in time and blocked the attack with her hammer.

"I'll never fall at your hands Blizzard!" hissed Amy determinedly.

With that said, the two hedgehogs began clashing weapons with each other once again, progressing the fight. This fight was going to go on for longer then people thought but no matter what happens in the fight, it was going to end badly for Amy as Blizzard was clearly the stronger opponent and was waiting for the right moment to strike…

"Oh this walk is murder on my legs!" moaned none other then Marik the Martian as he trudged through the plains of Megapolis grumpily to himself "How I wish my jet shoes were still working!"

Ever since his defeat at the hands of Mandy Mouse*********, Marik had just been trudging around Megapolis aimlessly, wondering what

to do as he was hiding yet again and waiting for the right moment to strike. As you can see, Marik's still grumpy about his disabled jet shoes. After all, he can't move around the landscape as quickly as he could do with them and he hates walking a lot as going slow and doing something boring wasn't Marik's cup of tea, he liked the exciting and dangerous yet evil stuff. Just as Marik was about to start complaining again, he noticed something and he stopped dead in his tracks. Marik stared at what he had just come across on his little trek. What he had come across was the sorry remains of Robotropolis. The city used to be Eggman's base of operations but now it was an enormous wreckage of steel, iron and machinery that just ruined the scenery for anybody walking around. Marik's evil face curled into a sadistic smile. He loved destruction after all and seeing a destroyed city always made him feel happy.

"So, it appears someone's destroyed a city huh?" mused Marik "Pity I wasn't there to join in, I would have loved to tear the place to the ground! But what city is this and what's it doing in the middle of nowhere? It looks a little out of place here…"

Then suddenly, something cut Marik off in the middle of his speech. It was an ominous rumble that filled the plains of the Northern Border of Megapolis and Marik could feel the ground shaking beneath his feet.

"What in the name of Jupiter is happening around here?" cried Marik "Is it an earthquake? If it is then it's time I fled for it!"

But it was not an earthquake. It was Dr. Eggman's underground hangar bay opening up so the Egg-Fleet could leave the bay and fly up into the sky. Marik watched in amazement as the ground seemed to open up directly next to the wreckage of Robotropolis. The ground opened up in the manner of two doors, bits of earth and soil falling into the hangar bay as they opened. After the doors finished opening, Marik ran over to the open doors and peeked inside the hangar bay. What he saw was an incredible sight for him. Dr. Eggman's flagship for the Egg-Fleet had been completed at last and now the Egg-Fleet was preparing for launch. Marik gaped at the flagship, unable to believe how large it was. This machine must have enormous firepower! He simply must have it!

"Look at that beauty of a flying machine!" cried Marik "I simply must have this ship! I'll lay siege to Mobius in an instant with this thing!"

So Marik decided he was going to hijack the ship. Marik leaped down into the hangar bay and he landed on the ship's fuselage. He took cover behind a gun turret on the huge vessel and waited as the flagship began to rise up from the hangar bay and into the open air of the outside world. Marik held on tight as the flagship flew up into the sky. To Marik's surprise though, there wasn't just one ship. As the flagship flew into the sky, it was followed by forty-nine other ships. Any that had been lost during the fleet's first outing had been rebuilt as well as the flagship so now all fifty ships were back in action and fully functional. Marik was slightly puzzled as to why the ships most resembled aquatic life but he didn't let that bother him, he was just too amazed at the fact he was now in the middle of a fleet.

"So there's a whole fleet of these eh?" he purred to himself, trying to make himself heard over the ship's engine "Nice, I could do with a fleet like this. I'm not too keen on the aquatic theme though so I may have to destroy them and rebuild them in a more suitable image."

As Marik began to picture himself taking control of the fleet in his foul little mind, the fleet flew away from the hangar bay and headed off to New Mobotropolis. In the cockpit, Dr. Eggman sat comfortably in his chair and he steered the ships to New Mobotropolis. Eggman smiled as widely as he could to himself. His fleet was back in action and now he was going to finish Sonic off for good. Katherine stood beside him as still as a statue and as silent as a grave, patiently awaiting orders.

"Thanks ever so much for rebuilding my fleet Katherine." said Dr. Eggman happily "I'm so glad that you're loyal to me unlike Alonzo. Now this fleet is airborne again, I will finish those Royal Fighters off once and for all! Royal HQ and Castle Acorn will join Mobotropolis in wreckage when I'm finished with them!"

He then laughed to himself as he pictured the destruction of Mobotropolis' last remaining building and the Royal Fighter's base of operations in his head. Sonic wouldn't stand a chance once the fleet arrived on his home turf…

Footnotes:

***See Story 83**

****And then see Story 93**

***** And THEN see Story 76**

****** As mentioned in Story 84**

******* See Story 2 (This story will NEVER stop being brought up will it?)**

******** Tune into Tales from Mobius to see the newest arc which will show us what Ruben's getting up to back in Chun-Nan!**

********* Indeed she didn't in Story 41**

********** See Story 21**

*********** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 10: Pain in Megapolis***

What an opening for New Mobotropolis! Blizzard's trying to take it over and now Eggman's gonna try and destroy it! Can Sonic and friends save for day or is this day gonna end VERY badly for them? STAY TUNED! Reviews are welcome and now if you'll excuse me, I'm gonna try and work out how the heck 2 + 2 can possibly equal carrots...

P.S. Yes Chaos Kai X, you may choose the entire series! Well if you can't pick your favourite chapters, then can you pick your top ten favourite OCs in this story then?

City Attack Part 1

Story 96: City Attack Part 1

New Mobotropolis was off to a great opening (not!). Before the grand opening ceremony even starts, former councillor Blizzard the Hedgehog returns and tries to subjugate the city for herself and now she and Amy Rose are in heated combat with one another. The two hedgehogs had been battling pretty fiercely these past few minutes and the residents of Castle Acorn could only watch as they waited for the battle to end and the winner to emerge. Amy and Blizzard clashed weapons with each other once more. Amy's Piko-Piko hammer and Blizzard's ice sword clashed nosily off of each other as they hit each other. Amy swung her hammer at Blizzard but Blizzard ducked and slashed Amy across the arm with her sword. Amy grimaced in pain and she clutched her throbbing arm. She'd already received a stomach cut, she didn't need an arm cut too.

"Quit cutting me Blizzard!" yelled Amy crossly.

She then proceeded to smash Blizzard's ice sword to pieces just as she prepared to stab her with it. The sword was reduced to ice shards and Blizzard growled furiously at Amy.

"Quit smashing my swords Amy!" snarled Blizzard.

Given her ice powers, Blizzard just summoned a new sword to her hand and she swiped at Amy with it. Amy leaped back to dodge the attack and she gave Blizzard an uppercut with her hammer. Blizzard staggered backwards and fell onto her back. She clutched her throbbing face and she picked herself up ever so slowly. Amy ran over to Blizzard but Blizzard swiped her arms and blew Amy away with a huge gust of icy wind. Amy hurled across the room, landed on the council bench and then fell off it and landed behind it rather heavily. The whole impact sounded rather painful and the council members made an "Ooh, that must have hurt!" gesture. Queen Sally Acorn and Nicole the Lynx just watched in horror as Blizzard cackled menacingly and went around the back of the council bench to

presumably kill Amy. Amy picked herself up, moaning in pain and rubbing her throbbing back. That onslaught had done a number on her and now she was feeling a little too weak to stand up and fight the ice witch. She tried to pick herself up but she just found herself slumping back onto the floor. Blizzard smacked Amy in the face and knocked her down onto her back. Blizzard then pointed her sword at Amy's throat, the pink hedgehog gulping nervously and shivering at the mere sight of it. Her heart began to pound and her head began sweating like mad.

"You should have stayed in Knothole Amy." purred Blizzard in a voice colder then even her ice powers "That way you would have avoided your coming death. But you were eager to throw your life away for the greater good and I was willing to take it, especially as you're a Rose and I hate the Rose family for their treatment of me! Now, prepare yourself Amy, this will hurt either a lot or a little."

"No! Wait Blizzard please!" begged Amy desperately "Don't do this! Don't do this! Please!"

Blizzard ignored Amy and prepared to plunge the sword into the pink hedgehog's heart. Amy covered her eyes and whimpered in fear. Death was coming for her and it served her right for being so foolish. She should have let Sonic and friends help her but her stubborn nature and ego got the best of her and now she was going to die because of it. Pity she wouldn't be able to learn from that mistake because she was going to die now! But just as Blizzard lunged forward with the sword, Nicole ran around behind the bench and grabbed her in a chokehold. Blizzard gagged and she dropped her sword in surprise. The ice witch struggled in the lynx's tough grasp. Nicole was much stronger then Blizzard was given how Blizzard only relied on her powers for fighting and didn't know any combat skills of any kind whereas Nicole knew how to fight and constantly trained to stay in shape so physically, Nicole was stronger then Blizzard.

"Wretched child!" growled Blizzard "Release me at once!"

"Not on your life Blizzard!" grunted Nicole as she tried to keep her hold on Blizzard "You took Amy's parents, I won't let you take Amy as well!"

As Nicole held Blizzard into place, Amy suddenly had an idea. Blizzard was vulnerable now and she couldn't fight back so Amy could just snatch the gem off her belt and render her unable to use ice weapons or freeze people! Amy picked herself up and grabbed the gem on Blizzard's belt. She tried to pull it off but since Blizzard froze it onto her belt, it wouldn't budge. It was firmly fixed to the belt and Amy was unable to remove it.

"Hey! What's the big idea?" asked Amy "Your gem won't come off!"

Blizzard kicked Amy and made her let go of the belt. She then proceeded to summon an ice dagger to her hand and scratch Nicole's thigh with it in order to make her let go of her. Nicole screamed in pain and she let go of Blizzard so she could clutch her thigh which now had a small, thin cut that trickled with blood. It wasn't a serious cut luckily but Blizzard only held back because she wasn't interested in Nicole and only wanted her to let go of her. Blizzard elbowed Nicole away and she picked up her ice sword. She pointed it at Amy just as the hedgehog was standing back up and brandishing her hammer.

"I've frozen my gem to my belt." explained Blizzard "And since ice witches are cold on the outside and inside, the ice will not be melting anytime soon. My icy aura will keep the gem frozen to my belt so you shall never render me unable to freeze people or use my swords and other ice weapons."

"More's the pity." muttered Amy "I guess I'll have to rip that stupid belt off your waist then if I can't take the gem off!"

"Try it and you will suffer badly." snarled Blizzard icily.

The two hedgehogs then lunged at each other and they clashed weapons yet again. They then proceeded to push on each other's weapons and try to force the other onto the floor. It was going to be one heck of a sumo match now. But just as they were pushing on each other, a faint roaring sound could be heard outside the city of New Mobotropolis.

"Hey Blizzard! Stop roaring will you?" yelled Amy crossly.

"I'm not roaring!" snapped Blizzard

"Well someone's roaring!" retorted Amy.

The two hedgehogs then stopped what they were doing and they stared at each other in shock. The roaring sound was getting louder and it was not coming from anyone in the room. It was coming from outside up in the sky and it wasn't an animalistic roar either. It was…

"That's not the roar of a Mobian." said Amy slowly.

"It sounds more like…the roaring of…engines!" blurted Blizzard.

The two hedgehogs abandoned their weapons and they darted to the window and fast. Sally, Nicole and the council were wondering what was going on so they ran over to the window to see what was up. Blizzard unfroze Hamlin the Pig so he could see what was going on too. Everybody gathered to the windows and to their horror, the Egg-Fleet was coming towards New Mobotropolis and it looked like it was ready to attack! Sally almost fell over backwards and she fought to keep herself standing.

"Oh my gosh!" gurgled Sally "Eggman's fleet is back and he's rebuilt his flagship!"

"You mean to inform me that that fleet out there belongs to Dr. Eggman?" asked Blizzard.

"You got that right ice breath." muttered Amy "The Egg-Fleet attacked before but the flagship mysteriously blew up before it could reach us. Given how Eggman's sidekick Alonzo betrayed him, I'm willing to bet it was him that did it but now he's dead, I can't guarantee Eggman's ship will be blowing up again."

"So it appears that Eggman returns again." said Blizzard "Good. Now I can show the citizens of New Mobotropolis what a TRUE ruler of a kingdom should do!"

Before anyone could stop her, Blizzard darted out of the room as fast as she could possibly run and headed on out into the city. Amy, Sally and Nicole chased after the ice witch as fast as they could and the council stayed where they were. Blizzard was up to something

and it couldn't possibly be any good. After Blizzard, Amy, Sally and Nicole ran outside, they ran up to Sonic the Hedgehog and friends, who were all staring up at the oncoming Egg-Fleet in horror. Sonic looked more horrified at the fact the flagship had been repaired then anything but the whole fleet being back was horrifying enough in it's own right. The poor citizens of New Mobotropolis were all scared by the oncoming fleet and since Sonic and Amy had busted the gates down, they ran into the city to take cover from the fleet. But that wouldn't do them any good as the Egg-Fleet would just level the place in a millisecond. As Sonic watched the fleet coming in, memories of Mobotropolis' destruction crept into his head like a spider in a bath.

"Oh man! New Mobotropolis is ready for opening and now Eggman's come to level the place!" muttered Sonic "Can this day get any worse?"

"Um blue dude? I wouldn't tempt fate like that." said one of his fellow friends Mandy Mouse "You never know what might happen."

"Eh." said Sonic casually "I wonder what took Eggman so long to come out of hiding then? Guess he finally got over his losses the last time we met him."

"Well it took him a while didn't it?" asked Tails the Fox, Sonic's twin-tailed sidekick "Six whole months have went by without him and now he comes out with his fleet. Maybe that's what he's been doing this whole time, rebuilding his flagship and ships he lost when we tried to stop it."

"Perhaps." said fellow fighter Geoffrey St. John the Skunk "I bet the bloke's surprised to see that Mobotropolis has been rebuilt and now he's likely gonna level it again with that darn fleet. Talk about fate being unkind to us!"

"Eggman's ships won't even lay a scratch on New Mobotropolis." said Sally slyly "We've installed some new features into the new city that'll protect us from anything Eggman throws at us."

"Really?" asked Sonic "What are those new features then?"

"Nicole's secret defence system." explained Sally "Nicole, demonstrate the defence system if you please."

"Yes Sally." said Nicole, taking a small silver bead off one of her ponytails.

The bead was really the controls for the defence system in disguise. After removing the bead, Nicole lightly squeezed it and it extended into a stick shape with a button on the end. The stick could transform from stick to sphere anytime Nicole liked and since she kept in on her hair, she'd always have it when the city needed it and she didn't have to worry about losing it, there were other means of activating the system without the control stick. There were touch pads around the city that only the rulers of New Mobotropolis could use and the moment you touched one of the pads, the system activated. Nicole pressed the button on the stick and a force field extended out from the surrounding walls and covered the city like a string of cling film being wrapped around cheese. The force field was colourless and couldn't be seen and the only way you knew it was on was when it activated, there was a bright flash that disappeared after the shield was activated. The crowd went "Ooh" in awe and Sonic whistled in an impressed manner.

"Im-pressive!" cried Sonic excitedly "A force field to defend the city from harm! Sally, you're a genius!"

"Thank you Sonic." giggled Sally in a flattered manner "Although really, it was Nicole who came up with the idea of defence systems and the team of inventors we hired were a great help to us, helping to bring this idea to life."

"In that case, way past cool Nicole!" congratulated Sonic, giving her his trademark thumbs up sign.

"This shield will protect the city from Eggman's fleet!" cheered Tails "Hooray!"

"Nice one luv." said Geoffrey with a wink of the eye "That defence system was a brilliant idea."

Nicole blushed with pleasure and she put her hands behind her back

shyly.

"Why…um…thank you…" said Nicole bashfully "I'm flattered by your compliments."

"So what if the city has a force field?" retorted Blizzard in an annoyed manner "That doesn't mean we're safe! That Eggman will not give up until he destroys the city so raising a force field is likely to agitate him more then anything! All you're doing is provoking him you pea-minded mongrels and he'll try everything he can to bring the shield down! You'd better hope that the shield is as strong as you want it to be or we will be in trouble!"

"Nobody asked for your opinion Miss Creepy Snow Hog!" snapped Mandy "So you can shut up for starters or you'll feel my brass knuckle attachments!" she raised her fists menacingly and threatened to punch Blizzard in the face.

"Yeah! What she says!" put in Wilson, pointing his spinning blade weapon at Blizzard.

"So Miss Sally, how strong is the shield?" asked Cream curiously.

"Strong enough to hold off Eggman's fleet that's for sure." said Sally brightly.

"But if Eggman was to take the kamikaze route and maybe drive the fleet into the shield then we'd be dead." said Nicole gravely "The inventors claim that the shield can't hold off heavy onslaughts like a battleship or a meteor crashing into it so we'd best hope Eggman doesn't get that idea."

"Oh come on Nicole, Eggman's not that stupid or crazy!" snickered Sonic "He's not gonna drive his precious fleet straight into the shield!"

"Regardless of what his stratagem is, we must rid our city from the Eggman and his baneful machines." noted Blizzard "Otherwise we won't get any peace around here! And since you heroes can't so much as get rid of the fat moron, I shall have the honours of doing it myself."

"Oh really Blizzie?" sneered Sonic "What makes you think you have a better chance of defeating Eggman then us then?"

"The fact I can freeze people." gloated Blizzard "I'll just freeze the entire fleet in an instant and then shatter it while it's frozen. After that, I will have done the one thing you and your Royal Fighters never could Sally Acorn, get rid of Dr. Eggman!"

"OK then Blizzard, if you're so mighty and powerful then get rid of Eggman for us." said Sally grimly "Do us a favour and save us the dirty work and do something good for a change."

"I'm glad you're viewing this in a positive manner." said Blizzard sarcastically "However Sally, I'm willing to barter on something. If I can get rid of Dr. Eggman, which I know I will, you must relinquish your crown to me and stand down as Queen of New Mobotropolis. If I fail however then I get nothing and I'll have to try my luck some other time."

"Don't make that deal Sally!" screeched Amy "Blizzard will do terrible things if she becomes queen!"

Sally ignored Amy and strangely enough, shook hands with Blizzard as if she was accepting the deal.

"Deal." said Sally.

"Very well then!" exclaimed Blizzard happily "Now stand back and watch as I turn Eggman's fleet into a fleet of ice sculptures!"

With that said, Blizzard ran past the crowd of citizens, towards the busted down gates and out of the city to deal with Dr. Eggman. Sonic watched as Blizzard fled the city and he looked at Sally as if the squirrel queen was growing another head.

"Sal, please tell me you're not losing your mind!" cried Sonic "What if Blizzard wins? Then we'll have to play servant for the bad guy and this hedgehog will not be pleased with it!"

Sally just gave Sonic a sly smile and she showed Sonic her other hand which she'd hidden behind her back. Her fingers were crossed which meant she was lying about the whole thing and Blizzard had

just been gypped. Sonic's eyes widened slightly and his lips curled into a mischievous little smile.

"Oh, ho, ho, ho! The ol' finger crossing trick!" laughed Sonic "So you didn't agree to it after all!"

"I lied to Blizzard just to get her to shut up already." said Sally "Did you seriously think that I'd be willing to surrender my kingdom to a witch like her? My parents kept me well informed on her and I'm not letting someone who killed a councillor and a cop rule New Mobotropolis."

"I'm glad you see it my way Sally." beamed Amy "So what are we gonna do then?"

"You will all get up to Eggman's fleet and try as hard as you can to bring it down before Blizzard does." said Sally "Make Blizzard look like a total fool and prove to the citizens of New Mobotropolis that you all are the ones who can defeat Dr. Eggman and not Blizzard. That way Blizzard won't be seen as much good in the public eye and your reputations won't be ruined by her."

"Say no more Sally." said Sonic with a cocky smirk on his face "The hedgehog is on it. Royal Fighters, let's do it to it!"

The Royal Fighters did not wait to be asked twice. They all ran off out of the city and into the open where Eggman's fleet loomed ominously above the city, casting it's shadow on the ground below. All fifty aquatic themed ships were armed and ready to fire down on the shielded city. Sonic stared up at the fleet and wondered what was keeping Eggman up there. You'd think his first response would be to open fire already but instead, he was waiting. Maybe he was so shocked at the fact Mobotropolis had just been rebuilt that he couldn't do anything for a minute. Nevertheless, Eggman had to be taken down otherwise the fleet would be a bother for the heroes and they'd never get any peace. Tails twisted his tails around one another and he took flight. He grabbed Sonic and Knuckles by one arm each and carried them off the ground and up towards the Egg-Fleet. Cream flapped her ears and took flight too. She carried Amy and Cosmo off the ground ad up towards the Egg-Fleet too and finally, Bunnie activated her rocket jets and she carried Wilson,

Mandy, Geoffrey and Shade all off the ground. She had extended her robot arm so she could carry Wilson and Mandy on one side, Geoffrey clung onto her back and she carried Shade under the other arm. The Mobians all flew up towards the Egg-Fleet, ready to take it down. Blizzard however, was already up there and preparing to freeze it. Blizzard was capable of flight too, using the blustery, icy winds she was capable of creating to levitate off the ground and fly in the sky. Blizzard decided to take down the flagship first so she flew past all the other ships and headed towards the flagship.

"Goodness, that fat moron builds a lot doesn't he?" she mused to herself as she flew past all the ships in front of the flagship "Well when I'm finished with him, he won't be building anything anymore! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

As for Dr. Eggman, he was sitting comfortably in the pilot's seat of the flagship with his sidekick Katherine the Fem-Bot beside him and he peered at the screens to see if the fleet had arrived at Royal HQ yet. To his surprise, there wasn't just Castle Acorn and Royal HQ at the location. Mobotropolis, the very first city he destroyed, had been rebuilt and was now proudly standing were the wreckage of the original Mobotropolis had once been. Boy had he missed out on a lot since his dive into insanity!

"Well, things have changed over the six months I've missed out on." said Dr. Eggman "Mobotropolis has been rebuilt and seems to have some slight new features like that ring wall around the city. Oh well, I've destroyed it before! I'll destroy it again! Egg-Fleet!" he bellowed "Aim all your weapons down at Mobotropolis and decimate it!"

The fleet obeyed the evil (omelette) dictator's orders and their cannons all aimed down and pointed at New Mobotropolis, ready to destroy it. Then, after their aim was set, the cannons began firing down at the newly rebuilt city. But, as we already know, the city was surrounded by a force field so the gun shots just ricocheted off the shield harmlessly and did no damage of any kind. As the fleet began shooting down at New Mobotropolis, all fifty ships showering the city with cannon blasts that could level the city in seconds if it wasn't defended, Sonic and friends touched down on the first ship of the fleet, which was one of the red shark shaped ships, and Sonic took charge.

"OK, we've gotta take these ships down in order to weaken the flagship's defences and then we take out Eggman himself." said Sonic "We'll split up so we can take the ships down quicker. Me, Tails and Knuckles will stay here, the rest of you, sort your teams out and cause some damage."

The Royal Fighters did what Sonic told them to and they split up into teams. Team One was Sonic, Tails and Knuckles, Team Two was Amy, Cream and Cosmo, Team Three was Bunnie, Geoffrey and Shade and Team Four was just Wilson and Mandy. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles remained where they are whereas the other teams began moving onto other ships. Team Two leaped onto one of the purple manta ray shaped ships and they began to attack that one, Team Three leaped onto a sawfish shaped ship and Team Four went onto another shark ship. Now the teams had picked their ships, they began to cut loose and do as much damage as they possibly could to their targets. As the teams began to do their damage, Blizzard landed on the flagship, which was several ships behind the ships Sonic and friends were attacking and she touched the deck of the ship with her hands.

"What a large ship this is." she said to herself "This really will be a brilliant ice statue for me to display in my upcoming kingdom!"

She cackled to herself and then began to freeze the deck of the ship. The floor beneath her began to turn to ice and then spread all over the ship. Dr. Eggman immediately saw what Blizzard was doing through the window of the cockpit and he leaped to his feet in surprise. Seeing a strange white hedgehog freezing his ship was not what he was expecting to encounter right now.

"Holy steel girders!" blurted Eggman "There's a hedgehog in robes on my ship and it's freezing it! Katherine, stop that hedgehog and quick before my ship becomes a popsicle!"

Katherine nodded silently and she pressed a button on the control pad. Outside on the decks, Blizzard had almost frozen the entire front of the ship until something came up from the floor and up onto the deck of the ship. It was none other then Dr. Eggman's deadliest creation and strongest robot ever Metal Sonic! Katherine had rebuilt Metal Sonic during Eggman's time in insanity and had used the

same tech used to make Metal Sonic 3.0 so he was completely loyal to Dr. Eggman unlike the previous model who hijacked Egg-Timer and used it to make the world in his image. Dr. Eggman stared at the screen that showed him what was going on outside and he beamed in surprise.

"Oh Katherine you wonderful girl!" cried Eggman, hugging Katherine without realizing it "You've rebuilt Metal Sonic for me! Thank you so much you lovely little fem-bot!"

Katherine just said nothing and took the praise from her master. How she loved it when she was praised by Eggman for her good deeds. Out on the decks of the ship, Metal Sonic stared at Blizzard ominously with his red optics and Blizzard stared back at him. Metal Sonic then began to scan Blizzard and copy her data much like how the original Sonic did so.

"Analyzing:" he droned in his deep robotical voice "Data scan complete: Subject lists as Mobian. Abilities: Ice and Snow power. Threat level: considered high. Prioritizing: must decimate target."

"Who are you strange robot?" asked Blizzard.

"Identification: Metal Sonic." explained Metal Sonic "Position: loyal robot servant of Dr. Eggman."

"Well I am Blizzard the Hedgehog, ice witch and soon to be ruler of New Mobotropolis!" announced Blizzard loudly "And you and your doctor will be an ice sculpture in my new kingdom when I am crowned Queen of New Mobotropolis!"

With that said, Blizzard held her hand out and a sharp icicle extended out of the palm of her hand and extended towards Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic just held his hand up and made the icicle shatter into pieces. Metal Sonic had scanned Blizzard's data so he had all the abilities Blizzard had. He could manipulate ice and snow and do anything Blizzard could do. Even prevent himself from being frozen as he would just unfreeze himself with his powers. Blizzard gawped in shock at the fact Metal Sonic had just stopped her icicle in mid-attack. Metal Sonic marched ominously up to Blizzard, his optics burning with rage at her.

"Analysis: subject wishes to harm master and I." droned Metal Sonic "Prioritizing: must eliminate threat."

With that said, Metal Sonic lunged out at Blizzard and slugged her directly in the stomach. Blizzard made an epically hilarious face as she was slugged and she wheezed heavily in pain. That punch was almost strong enough to plough it's way through her flesh. Blizzard fell down onto the floor and she coughed heavily. Metal Sonic stared down at her and he kicked the ice witch as hard as he could, sending Blizzard rolling across the decks of the ship. Metal Sonic held his hands out and made the ice covering the front of the ship shatter and disappear so the ship was no longer frozen. Blizzard picked herself up and she lunged at Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic lunged at her and the two began to tussle with one another. Metal Sonic smacked Blizzard down onto the decks and the ice witch groaned in pain. Before Blizzard could stand back up though, Metal Sonic blasted her with his torso laser and the ice witch was thrown across the battlefield. Unbeknownst to the two, Marik the Martian, who had stowed away on Eggman's flagship as the fleet launched earlier, was hiding behind a gun turret and he was watching the fight with great interest. He was enjoying it dearly and he was rooting for Metal Sonic as Blizzard was attempting to freeze the ship and if she froze it, he wouldn't be able to use it so he wanted Metal Sonic to win. Metal Sonic gave Blizzard an uppercut that sent her hurling into a gun turret and she hit it with a heavy crash. Marik punched the air and cheered happily.

"Whoo hah! Go Metal Sonic! Give that white snow hedgehog thing another one for me!" cried Marik "Make her suffer for trying to freeze a ship I'm attempting to steal now!"

Metal Sonic didn't hear the happy Martian's cheers but he continued to wipe the floor with Blizzard. He slammed her down onto the decks again by grabbing her arm and swinging her over onto her back and then he threw her across the deck. Marik stayed hidden and continued watching, enjoying this fight immensely.

Meanwhile, the four teams were doing well at destroying Eggman's ships upfront. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles were one destructive trio when they were together and the shark ships they attacked had no chance. Sonic spin-dashed the gun turrets into pieces and Knuckles

punched the turrets into scrap metal. Sonic and Tails then did something they don't usually do. They curled up into balls and Knuckles grabbed them. He leaped into the air and threw Sonic and Tails at the ship. The ship was destroyed in an instant and Tails grabbed Sonic and Knuckles before they could fall to the ground along with the destroyed ship. He flew them onto the next ship and they kept up their team attacks. Sonic and Knuckles destroyed the ship's turrets again and then Sonic and Tails curled up into balls after the turrets were destroyed.

"We three should work together more often!" laughed Sonic as Knuckles prepared to throw him and Tails again "We're mondo epic together aren't we?"

"You could say that Sonic." said Knuckles cockily "It's a good thing I'm amazingly strong isn't it? If not then this attack wouldn't work as well as it does!"

Knuckles leaped into the air and threw Sonic and Tails at the ship again. The ship was destroyed instantly by the amazing attack and the remains fell down to the ground. Further up the fleet, Team Rose were dealing with the manta-ray shaped ships that were just behind the shark ship squadron Team Sonic were dealing with. The ship's turrets began firing at the girls but Cream avoided the shots and she put Amy and Cosmo down on the ship so they could take it down. Cream and Cosmo weren't really of much help as they weren't that strong or had any abilities or weapons so it was Amy who did mostly everything with her trademark Piko-Piko hammer. Amy smashed the turrets with her hammer, rendering the ship weapon-less and then the girls formed together to perform the team's signature move, the Twirling-Hammer Batter (yes, I think this name is corny too!). Cream spun Cosmo and Amy around in mid-air and Amy hammered the ship, knocking it out of the sky and sending it falling down to the ground. Bunnie, Geoffrey and Shade were dealing with the sawfish squadron of ships that were behind the manta rays. They were the only ships standing between this team and the flagship so Bunnie, Geoffrey and Shade were going to get past the centre one and then get onto the flagship. Bunnie carried her team mates over to the ship and they landed on the ship's long nose. The nose was full of gun turrets and they all began firing at Bunnie, Geoffrey and Shade.

Bunnie deployed her shield generator and she blocked all the shots. Her shield generator was stronger then it seemed but it wouldn't hold off the relentless bombardment of cannon shots forever.

"Geoffrey! Do ya'll have some explodin' darts darlin'?" asked Bunnie.

"I certainly do babe." said Geoffrey, loading his crossbow with exploding darts "You and Shade keep the turrets busy and I'll set them up."

"Then after the turrets are destroyed, we can destroy the ship and get to the flagship." said Shade, deploying her trademark twin blade weapons.

So Bunnie and Shade ran across the nose of the ship and headed towards the colossal vessel itself. The gun turrets followed them and started shooting at Bunnie and Shade but Bunnie's shield was still deployed so she and Shade were safe from attack at least. Geoffrey smirked happily to himself and he began firing darts at the gun turrets while running after the girls. He used up the supply he'd loaded himself with and then he set off the exploding darts. The darts exploded and the gun turrets were destroyed in an instant. The force of the explosion destroyed the turrets further back and rendered the ship weapon-less. Over on the flagship, Marik saw the explosion on the sawfish ship and he wondered what was happening so he left his hiding place, ran across the decks and straight past the still brawling Metal Sonic and Blizzard the Hedgehog, and over to the edge of the ship. He could see the explosions destroying the gun turrets and he instantly realized that he wasn't the only uninvited guest in the Egg-Fleet.

"Saboteurs!" cried Marik "They're wrecking the fleet! I must stop them before they finish it off and leave me with nothing to steal!"

He then proceeded to leap into the air and sail towards the ship in front of the flagship. It didn't appear as if he was going to make it but just as it looked like he was going to plummet to the ground, he stretched a hand out and grabbed the tail fin at the back of the ship. He pulled himself up onto the fin and jumped down onto the top of the ship. He was just about to dart forward but Shade jumped up and landed on top of the ship. She, Bunnie and Geoffrey were going

to destroy the ship and Shade was going to take topside while Bunnie and Geoffrey messed it up on the inside. However, before Shade could do anything, she spotted Marik standing guard on the ship and he looked like he was ready for a battle. Shade raised her weapons and prepared to fight.

"Who are you?" she demanded "Identify yourself!"

"Indeed woman!" snickered Marik mockingly "Know your enemy. I am Marik the Martian, alien invader from Mars and nemesis of Sonic the Hedgehog! Who might you be then pretty one?"

"I am Shade the Echidna, secondary guardian of Angel Island and friend of Sonic and Knuckles." Shade introduced "If you're helping Eggman to destroy New Mobotropolis then stand down or face my blades!"

Marik laughed at Shade and he bent down in a battle ready stance, ready to pounce on the echidna.

"I am not in league with that idiot Dr. Eggman at all!" cackled Marik "I am my own person and I wish to turn Mobius into a war zone filled with nothing but violence, death and despair and I will not let some pretty girl in a head band and pretentious battle suit stand in my way! Stand down or have your heart torn out! Simple as!"

"I choose to do neither." said Shade "You will not destroy New Mobotropolis and you will not destroy Mobius either."

Marik then suddenly charged forwards and rammed Shade in the stomach, almost knocking her off the top of the ship and back down onto the nose. Shade picked herself up and Blade Rushed Marik. Marik was stricken by the pink energy waves and he was sent hurling off his feet and onto his back. Shade tried to attack again but Marik picked himself up, grabbed Shade's arm and slammed her into the decorative dorsal fin of the ship. Shade retaliated with a roundhouse kick to the face that sent Marik staggering for a minute and she slashed him across the face with her blades. Marik took a moment of the battle to lightly stroke his face and feel the long thin cut over his mouth and under his eye that Shade had just made on him and he growled at her. Marik swiped his arms and knocked

Shade off her feet with an energy wave and Shade crashed into the dorsal fin feature again.

"You cannot stop me!" cried Marik, kicking Shade across the top of the ship and almost sending her falling off "I am a Martian, one of the most powerful beings in the galaxy and I will level this planet and purge it of all things peaceful and happy! Eggman's fleet here will help be greatly in my plans and I will take it for myself! I can't do that if you fools are going to destroy the ships so now I'm going to stop you from stopping me from destroying New Mobotropolis!"

Shade picked herself up and she lunged at Marik with another Blade Rush. Marik dodged and he scratched Shade across the rib with his metal claws. Shade grimaced and she clutched her throbbing rib. Marik didn't stop to let her rest though. He rammed Shade with his shoulder and knocked her into the dorsal fin again and then he grabbed the echidna by the legs and tripped her up. Shade was brought down onto her stomach and Marik tossed her over onto the flagship as if he was throwing the hammer for the Olympics.

"There! You can be Metal Sonic's headache now!" cackled Marik.

Shade hurled through the air like a rag doll and she crashed straight into Blizzard on the flagship. Metal Sonic had been wiping the floor with the ice witch and now Shade had just crashed into her. The two girls lay on the decks, groaning in pain. Metal Sonic stared at Shade and began wondering where she came from but he quickly dismissed her as an enemy, given how she was a Mobian, and he decided to finish her and Blizzard off both at once. Metal Sonic raised his arm, stretched it across himself and then backhanded Shade and Blizzard both together off the flagship! The two girls were sent hurling off the ship and they plummeted towards the ground. Marik watched this and cackled with glee, pleased to see the two girls falling, hopefully to him, to their deaths. Bunnie however spotted Shade and Blizzard falling out through a window in the ship and she smashed through the window quickly to fly after Shade. Geoffrey looked through the broken window to see what was happening and saw Bunnie flying after Shade. Bunnie made it just in the nick of time and she caught Shade halfway down to the ground. She didn't bother about Blizzard though as Blizzard was evil so she left Blizzard to fall and she carried Shade back to the ship. Blizzard

landed on the ground with a heavy crash but the fall didn't kill her as she was made of stronger stuff then a normal person. Ice witches or wizards have tougher skeletons then normal people thanks to their ice powers strengthening their bones and making them like thick chunks of ice so the fall didn't kill her. In New Mobotropolis, Sally and Nicole had seen Blizzard falling so they decided to go over and see what had happened to her. They ran out of the city and over to the battered and beaten ice witch that lay on the grass of the meadows surrounding New Mobotropolis. Blizzard was so beaten that she couldn't even stand up. Sally and Nicole stopped just in front of Blizzard and they looked down at the white furred hedgehog. Sally folded her arms and smirked smugly at Blizzard.

"Well, well, well Blizzard." she sneered "It seems you can't defeat Dr. Eggman after all. Look at you, you've been beaten like a cod! What's been going on up there?"

"Shut…up…Sally!" growled Blizzard, grunting heavily and trying to stand up but failing. "At…least…I'm…trying…to stop…it! You… wouldn't…dare…set…foot…up…there…and do the…dirty…work yourself you…royal little…brat!"

"Believe me Blizzard, if I had to go up there and stop Dr. Eggman then I would." said Sally dryly "Nevertheless, you lose the deal Blizzard and I keep my crown now get out of here."

"I would…if…I could walk…" grumbled Blizzard "I'm…too weak…to get…up now…"

"Then you can rest there for a minute." said Nicole "While you're doing that, you can watch Sonic and friends do what you've just failed to do and stop Eggman's fleet."

"WHAT?" cried Blizzard "Those…morons are…up there…too?"

"Yes." said Sally "I knew you was going to fail. Eggman would easily have some trick up his sleeve that not even ice powers could stop so I sent them up there to stop Dr. Eggman because I know they can do it and I believe they can do it unlike you who's had no experience with that evil man at first hand and relies solely on ice powers to do the dirty work."

"I…hate…you!" snarled Blizzard viciously.

"Dully noted." said Sally casually "Let's get back in the city Nicole and leave poor Blizzard to sulk to herself."

With that said, Sally and Nicole just promptly left Blizzard behind to lie on the ground and feel humiliated. She'd failed to win the deal and now she was being made a total fool out of by Sonic and friends as they were going to finish the job for her. As angry as Blizzard was, she couldn't do anything about it because she was too weak to move so she just had to grit her teeth and bare the humiliation of today. Still, there was always next time she could seize the throne of Castle Acorn so once this charade was open, she could go back into hiding and plan her next move on New Mobotropolis. She wasn't going to get the city today but she was going to get it some other day and no one could make any mistake on that.

Meanwhile, up on Eggman's fleet, Bunnie touched back down onto the nose of the sawfish ship she, Geoffrey and Shade were sabotaging and she looked at the beaten Shade she was carrying in her arms. She lay Shade down on the deck and Shade sat up, grimacing in pain. Geoffrey ran out onto the deck to see what was going on and he saw Shade picking herself up. She rubbed her head tenderly and she felt her stinging rib which was still throbbing from Marik's attack earlier.

"Shade! Sugah, what happened to you?" asked Bunnie concernedly "Please tell us sugah."

"Yeah, I wanna make the bloke who did this to ya pay dearly for darin' to knock you off the ship and nearly get you killed!" cried Geoffrey, loading his crossbow with a stun dart.

"I was…assaulted by a Martian named Marik…" said Shade weakly "He wants to steal…the fleet and destroy the world…with it…"

"Marik?" shrieked Bunnie "Marik the Martian? Oh mah stars! What's that psychopath doin' up here?"

"Well Shade claims the blighter's trying to hijack the fleet and use it for his purposes." said Geoffrey "Well we ain't gonna let him are we?

Let's get the Martian and knock him off the ship and see how he likes it!"

"Where is he Shade?" asked Bunnie "Is he on this ship?"

"I don't know." said Shade "I'm not sure if he's still here or if he's moved."

It was the latter, Marik had moved back onto the flagship. He was going to get rid of Metal Sonic so Metal Sonic wouldn't be able to get in his way. Metal Sonic saw Marik coming towards him but before the robot Sonic clone could do anything at all, Marik leaped on Metal Sonic and grasped him with his metal hand. He then proceeded to painfully electrocute Metal Sonic with his electrical abilities. As powerful as Metal Sonic was, not even he could stand being brutally electrocuted by Marik the Martian. Marik kept the electrocution up until Metal Sonic eventually short circuited and passed out onto the deck. Metal Sonic would need some good repair work done on him now Marik had just broken him. Marik cackled gleefully and he kicked Metal Sonic off of the ship. Metal Sonic plummeted down to the ground and crashed there. The crash broke him into several pieces, leaving him completely useless now. Marik cackled to himself and he began to walk off to the cockpit of the ship.

"That Metal Sonic is nowhere near as good as he was the first time I met him." he said to himself "Either I've improved or he's weakened. Oh well, I've gotten rid of him and since there are saboteurs on the fleet, I'd best take it before everything goes belly up."

However, just as Marik was about to make his move, he heard the sound of two Mobians jumping off of the ships in front of the flagship and onto the flagship itself. Marik turned around and saw that these two were none other then Wilson and Mandy! Given how Wilson and Mandy weren't really equipped with weapons that could destroy a ship, they decided to have the pleasure of getting rid of Dr. Eggman so they jumped across the ships until they reached the flagship. It had been a long trek but they'd made it at last only to find they now had an obstacle to deal with. Mandy was pleased to see it was Marik the Martian so now she could beat him up for almost killing Wilson in Megapolis and escaping before she and Wilson could arrest him. Marik was rather surprised to see the two were up on the fleet with

him but he scoffed it off, not really caring that two of Sonic's friends where now going to challenge him on the flagship. He just smiled wickedly at the two and prepared for battle.

"Well, isn't this an interesting twist of fate?" asked Marik "Wilson the Dog and Mandy the Mouse show up and are now going to foolishly attempt to stop me from taking over Eggman's fleet! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! How cruel fate can be…for you two that is!"

"Marik!" snarled Mandy, itching to punch him in the face right now "I wasn't expecting to see your ugly face on Eggman's ugly fleet! I'm glad I am though so now I can kick the snot out of you for almost killing Wilson and escaping arrest!"

"Oh Mandy really, you still hold a grudge on me for that?" sneered Marik "You Mobians are as bad as I am, holding unhealthy grudges for a while and then getting into trouble because of it. Good, that means you Mobians have a bit of Martian in you after all."

"We are nothing like you malicious Martians!" growled Wilson, deploying his spinning blade weapon and itching to throw it "We Mobians have honour and humility, the two things you Martians lack and we have compassion for those we love and care for! That makes us better then you freaks by a long shot!"

"I hardly think the words "Mobians", "better", "then" and "Martians" can go in the same sentence together because we Martians are better then you Mobians in everyway!" crowed Marik "We're stronger, more powerful and way more intelligent then any of you! Now you two back off and let me hijack Eggman's fleet or you will end up finding out what your hearts look like!"

"In your dreams freak!" shouted Mandy "Your face will have a permanent imprint of my fist on it once I'm finished with you! Wilson, let's get him!"

"You said it Mandy girl!" yelled Wilson "For New Mobotropolis!"

The two Mobians cried out loud, fearsome battle cries and they charged towards Marik both together. Marik clenched his fists and waited to see what was going to happen. Mandy ran towards Marik

from the right and Wilson ran towards Marik from the left. They both prepared to let the Martian have it with their weapons but Marik ducked, leaving Mandy to punch Wilson directly in the face and send him hurling across the deck on his side. Wilson clutched his cheek and he whimpered in pain, making a noise similar to a dog that's just had it's tail trapped in the door. Mandy gasped in horror and she ran over to help her boyfriend.

"Oh my god! Wilson I'm so sorry!" shrieked Mandy "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to punch you! Are you OK? Please be OK!"

"Ow!" whined Wilson "Those knuckle attachments are lethal! I didn't know brass could be that hard! Ouch, ooh that hurt!"

Mandy helped Wilson to stand back up onto his feet but just as Wilson was helped back up, Marik knocked him and Mandy over with a wave of energy. The energy wave swept over them and knocked them onto their stomachs. Marik dusted his hands off and marched over to the two Mobians. His face contorted with loathing.

"I did give you a chance to live you two." he growled "But since you've decided to exploit it by foolishly trying to take me on even though you both know I'm too powerful, I guess you want me to kill you both don't you?"

Mandy leaped back onto her feet and socked Marik in the face. She then proceeded to sock him in the face repeatedly and make him back away across the decks.

"Take that! And that! And that!" screamed Mandy as she let Marik have it continuously "You. will. not. destroy. our. planet!"

She then finished off her onslaught of punches with an uppercut to the chin that sent Marik hurling through the air and crashing down further up the decks. Marik landed on his back with a heavy thud and he screeched to a halt. He felt his face, which felt like it was going to shatter into a million pieces like glass, and he growled in annoyance. Those knuckle attachments were a pain in the arse for him and they really did hurt. But it was going to take a lot more then that to bring him down. Marik picked himself up and wiped away a trickle of blood from the corner of his lip.

"Very well, you've signed your death warrants." he said coldly.

He charged over to Wilson and Mandy and let fly a bunch of electrical jolts from his metal claws. Wilson and Mandy dodged the attacks and Wilson threw his spinning blade at him. Marik lowered his head and the spinning weapon pinged harmlessly off his helmet. The weapon boomeranged back to Wilson and he caught it in his hand. Wilson then slashed at Marik with it but Marik bent over backwards to dodge the attack and he head butted Wilson in the torso. Wilson was sent skidding backwards but he managed to stay on his feet. Marik ran towards Wilson but Wilson swiped at him with the spinning blade and caught him just across the chest with the tip of the blade. Marik roared in pain and he clutched his chest. Wilson put the weapon away and he grabbed Marik by the shoulder. He pulled him forward and kneed him in the gut and then kicked him towards Mandy. Marik tried to pick himself up but Mandy grabbed him by the jacket and tossed him towards the edge of the ship. Marik stopped himself just before he could fall off the ship and he pointed a metal claw as sharp as a flint at Wilson and Mandy. He fired a jolt of electricity and he zapped Wilson in the legs to trip him up. Mandy tried to attack him but Marik zapped her in the legs and tripped her up. The dog and mouse just picked themselves back up but Marik charged over to them, leaped in the air, hurled through them and split-kicked them both onto their sides as he soared between the two. Marik grabbed Wilson by the ankles before the dog could get back up and he slammed him on top of Mandy as if he was a newspaper being used to swat a fly. The two Mobians cried out in pain and Marik kicked both of them as hard as he could. Mandy was the first to get back up and she charged towards Marik, screaming a bloodcurdling battle cry as she did so. Marik lunged for her and tried to seize her but Mandy jumped up, somersaulted over him and landed behind him. The mouse then lunged at Marik with a sucker punch and got him straight in the mouth. Marik staggered backwards, clutching his sore mouth and he scowled at Mandy. Mandy just stood before him and made a "come here" gesture with her hand. Marik was about to oblige when suddenly, Wilson grabbed him from behind and held his spinning blade weapon close to his throat. The dog was attempting to make Marik surrender but the Martian wasn't giving in so easily. He grabbed Wilson's arm with his metal hand and electrocuted him, making the dog let go of him and

shake his arm about to ease the pain. Marik the slashed Wilson across the face with his metal claws, gut punched him and roundhouse kicked him in the face. The dog was brought down onto his back and he dropped his weapon. Marik seized it and attempted to stab Wilson with it but Mandy stepped in and grabbed the weapon before Marik could make the killer blow. Marik and Mandy then began to fight over the spinning blade. The two pulled on it as hard as they could but neither one could pull the weapon out of the other's grasp. This was going to be one heck of a tug of war match. But Marik decided to cheat by pointing at Mandy's hips and then firing a jolt of electricity at them. Mandy squealed in pain and she let go of the spinning blade to rub her hips better. Marik saw the opportunity to whack Mandy in the forehead with the flat side of the blade and knock her onto her back. He then prepared to stab her but Wilson jumped on him from behind and pinned him down onto the floor. Marik picked herself up and helped Wilson pin Marik down. Marik tried to get up but Wilson and Mandy were too tough for him. They were pinning him quite securely so the Martian couldn't move.

"We've got him down!" cried Wilson.

"I can see we have!" grunted Mandy as she forced Marik's arms down onto the floor "Now we keep him here until Sonic and the others can get here and then we can all finish him off together!"

"You loathsome pests! Release me at once!" growled Marik.

"I'd have to have been born in the Stupid Kennels to do something like that!" jeered Wilson "You're not going anywhere freak!"

"Kindly refrain from referring to me as a freak!" snarled Marik "Just because I'm not your kind, it doesn't mean I'm a freak! Cosmo's not your kind but you don't call her a freak do you?"

"No because Cosmo is actually our friend." said Mandy "You're not so we can call you what we like! Now shut up or taste my brass knuckles Marik!"

Marik just grumbled under his breath and continued trying to get up only to be forced down by Wilson and Mandy. Meanwhile, in the cockpit of this enormous flagship, Dr. Eggman was beginning to

wonder what was going on outside so he asked his servant bot Katherine about the current status of the fleet.

"Katherine! Status report!" barked Eggman.

Katherine, who was wired up into the fleet's mainframe and could see what the ships could see, began doing a thorough search through the fleet to see what was happening and came up with her report. She typed her report on the keyboard and the screen displayed what she was typing to Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman read Katherine's report aloud to himself and he wasn't pleased with what it had to say.

"Sonic and friends are destroying the fleet's front squadron and are making their way towards the flagship," he read "The white hedgehog has been beaten but Metal Sonic has been destroyed, the fleet's weapons aren't destroying Mobotropolis down below because it's shielded and Wilson and Mandy are on the decks of the flagship right now."

The fat scientist with the big bushy moustache began growling in anger to himself.

"Curse those meddlesome Mobians!" he roared in anger "I'll deal with those pests! Katherine, do you have any other deadly machines you can throw at them?"

Katherine nodded and showed Dr. Eggman some schematics to two machines she had also built during Eggman's time in insanity. The schematics were for Silver Sonic, a machine that had seen much action already, and a completely new machine called Titan Metal Sonic. Eggman liked Katherine's idea and he stroked his moustache with purring with delight.

"So you've rebuilt Silver Sonic as well as Metal Sonic and made a new Metal Sonic altogether?" he said "I like this Katherine! You're getting a promotion at the end of this day! Launch Titan Metal Sonic and Silver Sonic now! Titan will attack Mobotropolis and Silver will destroy Wilson and Mandy!"

Katherine obeyed and she pressed a button on the keyboard that

launched the respective projects.

Outside the flagship, Team Sonic and Team Rose had destroyed all the ships that surrounded the front of the flagship and made it to the sawfish ship Bunnie, Geoffrey and Shade were on. Sonic skidded to a halt and he smiled triumphantly to himself.

"Oh yeah! Whoo! That was cathartic!" cried Sonic "Now it's time to tango on the flagship of the fleet itself, Eggman's flagship of the Egg-Fleet!"

"If only we were all in this together the first time the fleet was launched." said Tails "Then we could have prevented it from destroying Central City."

"Yeah we could have." muttered Sonic, thinking back to that day he longed to forget "But that was then and this is now. Let's get over there and stop Eggman from firing at our city and trying in vain to destroy it!"

"I'm amazed the shields are holding up so well." said Knuckles as he watched the rest of the fleet fire at the city and fail to get through the shield "Guess they're as strong as Nicole says they are."

"Hey Mr. Sonic and Mr. Knuckles." said Cream "Excuse me for interrupting but…what's that?" she shrieked, pointing at the flagship.

Sonic, Knuckles and the rest looked at what Cream was pointing at. Out from the top of the flagship launched a giant red sphere and it hurled through the air, soared over the sawfish ships that guarded the flagship and it headed down towards New Mobotropolis. The Royal Fighters all ran over to the edge of the ship's nose to see where the thing was going to land and it landed directly in front of the gates of New Mobotropolis. The sphere then began to transform from a sphere into something enormous and terrifying. The sphere formed a giant torso with huge arms, small legs and a head. The head was a mix of a cat and a hedgehog and it vaguely resembled Metal Sonic to some degree. The rest of the body resembled Metal Sonic to some degree and it's main colour scheme was red and silver. It was one colossal beast of a machine and it had to be destroyed and fast. This machine was Titan Metal Sonic and it was

ready for destruction. The Mobians couldn't believe their eyes.

"Whoa! Eggman just built a giant red Metal Sonic and launched it at the city?" exclaimed Sonic "I didn't think Eggman was in THAT bad a mood today!"

"That thing looks like it's there to attack New Mobotropolis!" cried Bunnie "Ah know the shield will keep it out of the city but it might try and bring em down some how!"

"That's gotta be what it's doing down there!" yelled Amy "It's probably trying to kill the shields so Eggman has the city wide open for destruction! Well let's tear it apart!"

"But what about the fleet?" asked Cosmo "Shouldn't we finish the fleet off first?"

"That red Metal Sonic thing is the one to worry about Cosmo, not the fleet!" said Sonic "The shields will hold the fleet off but that robot's gonna try and take the shields out no doubt so we've gotta stop that first!"

"Has anybody seen Wilson and Mandy?" asked Geoffrey.

"They're hopefully on the flagship already." said Sonic "They can prepare the fleet for destruction while we get rid of that Metal Sonic bot. Let's do it to it team!"

Sonic and friends all leaped off of the sawfish ship and the flying members caught their team mates and flew them down to the ground to deal with Titan Metal Sonic. Back on the flagship, Silver Sonic spin-dashed his way up through the floors and onto the deck of the ship. Wilson and Mandy were so surprised by that sudden turn of events that they let go of Marik and leaped back. Marik picked himself up and stared up at Silver Sonic in surprise. The huge silver machine with the bladed quills on it's back and head glowered at the intruders with it's fiery orange optics. Wilson and Mandy had never seen Silver Sonic before so this machine was new to them, same with Marik.

"What is this?" asked Marik "Another Metal Sonic?"

"No." said Wilson "But whatever that is, it's terrifying and it's gonna slaughter us!"

And it seemed Silver Sonic was going to do just that as he advanced on the intruders menacingly, his feet making the floor shake as he stomped towards them and prepared to tear them apart limb from limb…

Honestly, can Sonic catch a break anymore? Now he's got to deal with the rest of Eggman's fleet and a giant red Metal Sonic and up on the flagship, Wilson and Mandy have to deal with Silver Sonic! How's all THIS gonna turn out then? Join me next time for the epic conclusion! Reviews are welcome.

P.S. LOL! I didn't realize the Seedrian and Martian war had so many similarities to World War II KratosPwns! Consider this a case of "any similarities to real-life events portrayed in this story are entirely coincidental"! Ha, ha, ha!

P.P.S. You may have noticed there aren't any footnotes in this chapter. Well, I've just got tired of putting them on and Christiansoldier5 complained about them so I've decided to abandon the footnotes for the rest of the story. But like you care about that! XD I'm pretty sure you don't need them anyway! ;)

City Attack Part 2

Story 97: City Attack Part 2

New Mobotropolis, a brand spanking new replacement for Old Mobotropolis was not off to a good opening. First Blizzard the Hedgehog, former councillor and Amy's arch-rival tried to snatch the throne off Queen Sally Acorn and then Dr. Eggman comes out of his insanity (thanks to Katherine, his servant bot) and invades with his Egg-Fleet and now Eggman sends Titan Metal Sonic to try and lower the city's shields and leave the city wide open for Eggman's fleet, which is now missing half it's defences because of Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends so only half the fleet was left to finish it off. Titan Metal Sonic opened it's giant metal jaws and bellowed a tremendous, thunderous roar that echoed around the surrounding meadows of New Mobotropolis and it was so thunderous that the citizens of New Mobotropolis could feel the ground vibrating beneath their feet. Titan Metal Sonic raised his enormous arms and he began to pound furiously against the shield. The banging of his fists against the barrier made a horrible, pounding noise that boomed through the city and made everybody clutch their ears to drown the noise out. The noise was so incredible it felt like that Titan Metal Sonic was going to get the city to shake itself apart just by making a lot of noise. The terrified citizens began running around screaming in terror and looking for places to hide. Even though they knew Titan Metal Sonic couldn't get them, that still didn't stop the giant robot from scaring the living cuss out of them so they tried to find a hiding place from it. Sally and Nicole took refuge back in Castle Acorn and they watched the colossal beast of a machine pound away at the shields like a heavyweight boxer cutting loose on his opponent.

"In the name of the Acorn family, what kind of beast is that?" shrieked Sally.

"It looks like a giant red Metal Sonic." said Nicole "And I think it's trying to break the shields and leave New Mobotropolis wide open for the Egg-Fleet."

"Yeah, I kinda noticed from the heavy banging of the shields it's doing." said Sally "It can't get through though no matter how hard it tries. Eggman's whole fleet can't break through so that thing has no chance. Unless it finds out where the shield generator is."

"The shield generator is hidden safely behind the castle." said Nicole "You'd have to dig underground in order to get the generator. There's no chance of it getting destroyed while the shields are up."

"Then let's hope that thing doesn't find out where it is and work out how to get to it." said Sally gravely "Although I doubt that thing's even sentient. It's just a mindless beast, not an intelligent killing machine like the original Metal Sonic was. It'll never work out how to get to the generator."

Sally was right on that one. Titan Metal Sonic was an insentient robot, it did not have a brain like Metal Sonic did so even if it managed to find the generator, it wasn't clever enough to figure out how to get to it. Still though, Titan Metal Sonic knew only one thing: destroy. And destroy New Mobotropolis it was going to, even though it couldn't break through the shields. Titan Metal Sonic continued pounding like crazy at the shield but it's attempt were futile as the shield was just too powerful. Just as Titan Metal Sonic was beginning to lose his patience and get pounding even more, it was spin-dashed in the back of his head by none other then Sonic the Hedgehog. The Royal Fighters had made it back down to the ground and now they were going to take the giant red Metal Sonic duplicate down before it could cause any damage. Titan Metal Sonic hardly felt that attack given his excellent build and hide but that attack was still enough to tick it off. Titan Metal Sonic stopped attacking the shields and it turned around to face it's opponents. Down at it's feet stood Sonic the Hedgehog, Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Shade the Echidna, Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey St. John the Skunk and they were all ready to take down Titan Metal Sonic. Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse were still up on Eggman's flagship so they weren't joining in with this battle. Sonic stared up at Titan Metal Sonic with his arms folded and a confident smirk on his face.

"So it appears I've got a giant Metal Sonic re-colour to take down." said Sonic "Well at least it's better then the first Metal Sonic re-

colour Eggman threw at me in the sense that it actually looks different to the original. Oh well, it's a Metal Sonic all the same and we're gonna take it down!"

"A-a-are you s-sure Mr. Sonic?" asked Cream nervously "That thing's a-awfully b-b-big!"

"So what if it is?" snapped Amy "The bigger they are, the harder they fall you know! And besides, my Sonic has taken down machines bigger then that before so this is no contest!"

"Amy's right! That thing is gonna be fit for the junkyard when we're through with it!" yelled Knuckles, flexing his muscles and preparing for battle "Let's tear that thing apart!"

"Knuckles, you took the words right outta my mouth." said Sonic with a snarky grin on his face "Let's do it to it everybody!"

Sonic and Knuckles were the first to attack by charging towards the giant robot and spin-dashing and punching it respectively. Sonic clouted it right in the face with a spin-dash and Knuckles leaped onto it's legs and began pounding them like mad. His spiked fists weren't making much progress so far but if he kept it up, he would cause some damage eventually. Titan Metal Sonic growled in annoyance and it swatted Sonic away before the hedgehog could make another spin-dash on him. It then noticed that Knuckles was punching it's left thigh so it reached out a with a giant hand and flicked Knuckles away. Knuckles was sent flying off Titan Metal Sonic's thigh and he landed rather sharply on his back. So sharply in fact, the echidna felt like his back had just about broken but it hadn't fortunately for him. Knuckles grimaced in pain and he sat up, rubbing his aching back.

"Urgh! I should have…expected that thing to pack a punch…given it's size and all…" he muttered to himself.

Sonic landed on his feet after being swatted by Titan Metal Sonic but the supersonic hedgehog was not down for the count yet. He revved his feet up and ran towards Titan Metal Sonic at breakneck speed. Titan Metal Sonic was too busy glowering at Sonic's friends to notice him so Sonic managed to get the drop on him this time

around. He spin-dashed Titan Metal Sonic in the head and the colossal machine of death staggered backwards and fell against the shields. Sally and Nicole forgot the shields were up and they braced themselves for impact, thinking he was going to fall back and crash onto the city, only to realize that the shields were still up and Titan Metal Sonic had just been knocked backwards onto it and the shield was stopping him from landing on top of the city. Titan Metal Sonic picked itself up and it roared in annoyance. Sonic landed on top of the city barrier behind Titan Metal Sonic and he spin-dashed it in the back of it's head. Titan Metal Sonic staggered forward and nearly fell over, causing the others to run like hell and get out of the giant beast's way before he could crash down on top of them. Titan Metal Sonic managed to regain it's balance and it watched out for another sonic spin-dash. Sonic the Hedgehog landed down on the ground after that attack, ran for it, did a wild U-turn and charged towards Titan Metal Sonic. Sonic then launched himself at Titan Metal Sonic for another spin-dash but Titan Metal Sonic was ready for him. It held out a clawed hand the size of a small car and it grabbed Sonic just as he was spin-dashing towards it. Titan Metal Sonic then rotated it's entire torso section around to save turning all the way around and it slammed Sonic against the shield as if it was a person swatting a fly on the kitchen table with his/her hand. Sonic cried out in pain as he was squished against the shield and since the shields were see through, everybody in the shielded city could see that attack and feel Sonic's pain. Titan Metal Sonic then lifted it's hand away from Sonic and left him lying on the dome shaped barrier that shielded all of New Mobotropolis, wondering which part of him to rub better. Titan Metal Sonic rotated it's body back to the front so it could face the others again. Knuckles had just picked himself up and he saw what Titan Metal Sonic did to poor Sonic. He instantly lost his wick and he bared his spiky fists.

"How dare you hurt Sonic!" bellowed Knuckles "I'm gonna rip your arms off for that!"

He then proceeded to charge towards Titan Metal Sonic but Titan Metal Sonic raised a foot as big as a Peterbilt truck and stomped the ground, making it shake under his weight and Knuckles ended up falling over from that attack. Titan Metal Sonic raised it's foot again and prepared to squash Knuckles flat with it but Bunnie Rabbot flew

in under it's foot and pressed both hands against it. She then boosted the power to her jets and began to push against Titan Metal Sonic's foot. Titan Metal Sonic tried to push down and squash both Bunnie and Knuckles but Bunnie's strength was just enough to keep it at bay long enough for Knuckles to move out of the way and escape being squashed by the giant robot. Knuckles quickly darted out of Titan Metal Sonic's way and Bunnie flew out from underneath it's foot, causing Titan Metal Sonic's foot to shoot forward and stomp the ground suddenly. The ground shook and the robot staggered briefly before regaining balance and preparing for it's next attack. Bunnie flew up to Titan Metal Sonic's face and she began blasting away at it with her arm cannon. The shots didn't seem to affect Titan Metal Sonic in anyway though, they just bounced off of it's tough armour harmlessly. However, Bunnie had an idea that maybe she could blind it if she took it's optics out. She aimed a powerful blast at Titan Metal Sonic's optic and prepared to shoot it out but Titan Metal Sonic lowered it's head, causing her to shoot it in the forehead instead. The shot didn't affect Titan Metal Sonic and the giant robot retaliated by clenching it's fist and smacking Bunnie out of the sky with it. Bunnie hurtled down to the ground like a bird that's just been shot by a hunter but Geoffrey was on hand to catch the Rabbot. Even though he couldn't tell Bunnie how much he fancied her, he could still save her backside in the heat of the battle. Geoffrey leaped up and caught Bunnie bridal style before she could crash into the ground. The two ended up rolling around each other on the ground and they both came to a halt with Geoffrey lying on top of Bunnie. This position would have been more appropriate in another time and now was not that time so Geoffrey quickly scooted off of the stricken Rabbot and he helped her get back to her feet. Bunnie felt her throbbing head and began to slur droopily.

"Oohee! Mah head's still swimmin' from that attack!" piped Bunnie dizzily "Ooh what a wallop that was!"

"Are you OK babe?" asked Geoffrey, oblivious to the fact he'd just used the word "babe" on her.

"Ah'm a little shaken hon but ah'll live." said Bunnie, getting her balance back and putting a hand on Geoffrey's shoulder "Thanks for catchin' me by the way."

"No problem Bunnie." said Geoffrey "Anything to maintain the welfare of a beautiful woman such as yourself."

That comment clearly seemed to flatter Bunnie and the Rabbot giggled with appreciation at that. The skunk began to blush scarlet to himself, unable to believe he'd actually managed to say those words aloud. But now was not the time for flirting with one another, Titan Metal Sonic was still functional and ready to kill and it was about to stomp Bunnie and Geoffrey into the ground but Knuckles leaped up and punched it in the leg, throwing the machine off balance and bringing it down onto it's side. Titan Metal Sonic landed with a heavy thud and the ground shook violently beneath the Mobian's feet. Knuckles punched the air triumphantly and laughed at Titan Metal Sonic.

"Oh yeah! What a punch!" he cried "Take that you giant Metal Sonic thing!"

But not even an attack like that was going to keep Titan Metal Sonic down for long. The machine was strong enough to resist tiny attacks like that so it picked itself up and roared demonically at his attackers. Knuckles grumbled furiously and he prepared to attack again.

"Damn, that thing just doesn't die does it?" he grumbled.

"It is a giant Metal Sonic robot." said Bunnie "It's gonna be difficult to bring down a machine like that."

"As difficult as it'll be, we'll get there eventually Bunnie." said Geoffrey, loading his crossbow with an exploding dart "Come on mates! We're not giving into that blighter now are we?"

Knuckles and Bunnie shook their heads as if to say "No of course not!" and they charged back into the battle…

Meanwhile, up in the air above New Mobotropolis, Silver Sonic was dealing with the flagship intruders, Wilson and Mandy and the extraterrestrial villain Marik the Marian who was hoping to hijack the fleet and was now having to help his enemies get through one of the guards for the sake of his life. Neither one had been in combat with

Silver Sonic nor had they even seen him before so Silver Sonic was a new menace for them. Silver Sonic clawed at Wilson and Mandy with it's giant metal claws but the dog and mouse managed to dodged the heavy attack and run for it. Marik jumped on Silver Sonic's arm and tried to electrocute him but Silver Sonic swatted him clean off his arm and the Martian was thrown off of Silver Sonic and towards the edge of the flagship. Marik almost fell off the ship but Mandy ran over to him and grabbed him by his sleeve. She hauled Marik back onto the ship's deck and Marik dusted himself off.

"Thank you Mandy." said Marik with a heavy tone of bitterness in his voice "But…why did you save my life?"

"As begrudging as I am to admit it," muttered Mandy bitterly "We need all the help we can get in this battle and I think you'll help us defeat that silver bladed hedgehog bot given how strong you are and how you have electrical powers that can probably short-circuit that thing so I had to save your life there."

"I appreciate the save very much mouse girl." said Marik "But don't expect me to return the favour! I'm only looking out for myself and myself only! You watch your back and I'll watch mine!"

"Humph! Suit yourself Mr. Ungrateful!" spat Mandy, clearly huffed at the fact Marik was not being very gracious to her.

As for Wilson, Silver Sonic was so scary that the dog couldn't even fight him. He just kept running around the decks like a dog chasing another dog around the field. Silver Sonic kept trying to catch him but Wilson kept dodging his attacks. When Wilson was in panic like mad and run like hell mode, nothing could hit him. Not even Sonic in his spin-dashes so Silver Sonic was going to have a hard time snagging him. Wilson kept running around crazily until Mandy yelled at him angrily.

"Oy! Wilson! Will you stop arsing about and fight the bloody robot will you?" she shouted at her boyfriend.

"I am NOT fighting that bloody thing!" screamed Wilson as Silver Sonic clawed at him again but missed "I'll never be able to take that scary bladed thing on! It'll cut me in half!"

"And if you don't fight it Wilson it'll kill us all and then we can't stop Eggman and his fleet so quit the yellow-dog act and fight already!" shouted Mandy "Otherwise I'll make you have to do it and believe me, you won't want the latter to happen!"

Wilson stopped running around in circles and he screeched to a halt. He suddenly realized that Mandy was right. If he didn't help fight against Silver Sonic then he, Mandy and Marik were pretty much dead and if he got killed then he'd never be able to propose to Mandy at last so he had to fight.

"Thanks for talking some sense into me Mandy dear!" Wilson called over to his purple-furred girlfriend.

"You're welcome." said Mandy coyly "Now show that thing what your famous spinning blade weapon can do!"

With that said, Wilson deployed his trademark spinning blade weapon and he threw it at Silver Sonic. The blade chipped Silver Sonic on his ear and Silver Sonic made a mechanical noise that sounded like a groan of pain. The blade boomeranged back to Wilson and he caught it in his hand, pleased to see he'd managed to hit Silver Sonic. But that attack was far from effective. It was only Silver Sonic's ear it had managed to hit and it's not like the ear was needed for anything as it was more for decoration then anything. Silver Sonic glowered at Wilson with his orange optics and he spin-dashed towards him. Wilson yelped in fright and he scurried out of the way, leaving Silver Sonic to crash through the deck and back into the ship's interior. Silver Sonic quickly leaped back up onto the decks and he looked around for his next victim. Marik decided to distract Silver Sonic while Mandy carefully took position behind Silver Sonic and she waited for the right moment to strike. Silver Sonic lowered his arm and bent down in a battle ready stance as he and Marik prepared to duke it out. Mandy jumped up and grabbed onto Silver Sonic's claw. She pulled herself onto the robot's hand and climbed up his arm just as Silver Sonic charged towards Marik. Silver Sonic lunged at Marik but he missed and Marik zapped him on the leg with a jolt of electricity. Silver Sonic flinched and glared at Marik but Mandy climbed onto his head and drew her arm back. She stood directly in front of Silver Sonic's face and aimed at his black visor.

"Hey silver dude, here's mouse in your eye!" she cried out with a courageous smirk on her face.

She then proceeded to punch Silver Sonic directly in the optic and because she was wearing brass knuckle attachments, the attack was made all the more harder and the punch actually ended up cracking Silver Sonic's visor over his right optic! Silver Sonic made a robotical noise that sounded like a growl of fury and he tried to smack Mandy but Mandy jumped off of Silver Sonic, causing the robot to smack himself in the face and knock himself over. Mandy landed down on her feet and she smirked at the giant silver robot.

"Ha! This thing is pretty dumb isn't it?" she sneered "It fell for one of the oldest tricks in the book! This will be a piece of cake this will."

"I doubt Sonic has much trouble against that thing." said Wilson agreeably ""It's a very stupid robot. It's all size and scariness and no brain. Eggman really needs to work harder on his machines."

"Yes but let's be thankful he doesn't otherwise we'd be in a right royal mess if he did." said Mandy coyly "Now, enough chinwag and let's…"

Just as she was about to finish her sentence, Silver Sonic suddenly leaped back to his feet and kicked Mandy as hard as he could! The mouse hurtled through the air and she landed slap bang into the cockpit tower. Wilson stared in horror at the stricken mouse and he ran over to her just as she began to slide down to the ground. Marik just stood there and laughed at them and then decided to take down Silver Sonic himself, leaving Wilson to comfort Mandy. Silver Sonic pounded over to Wilson and Mandy but Marik leaped onto Silver Sonic's back and he dug his metal claws into his tough steel hide.

"Feel this for comfort you silver, Sonic, giant, robot, creature thing!" he exclaimed as he activated his electrical attacks and let Silver Sonic have it with all the voltage in his voltage compactor.

Silver Sonic felt that sudden surge of electricity coming from Marik's robot hand and the giant machine began to make an electronic wailing sound. For some really odd reason, Eggman makes it so his robots can feel pain. One theory behind this could probably stem

from the fact that his robots are all Eggman has now he's no longer amongst human kind and the more human-like they are, the better although it'd be much better if your machines didn't feel pain so that when they get attacked, they won't be distracted by the pain they feel and just be able to carry on without a problem. Sadly for Silver Sonic, this wasn't the case as Marik was electrocuting him and he could feel the pain from that dearly. Marik began to cackle demonically as he let Silver Sonic have it with his electrical attacks. But Silver Sonic wasn't going to malfunction and short-circuit yet. He began to fight the pain in his circuits and he spun around into a spin-dash. As Marik was clinging onto Silver Sonic's back, he was spun around with Silver Sonic. Silver Sonic kept up the spin-dash until Marik was eventually thrown off of him and Marik hurtled across the decks and crashed face-first into the cockpit tower. Marik slid back down to the floor and he groaned like a ghoul in a church graveyard. He clutched his face and he began slurring to himself.

"Oooooh I feel like this planet's doing a spin all around me…" he droned "Stupid spin-dashing robot!"

Silver Sonic uncurled from his spin-dash and he stood towering over Marik with his orange optics glaring at him. He reached out with a giant clawed hand and he grabbed Marik. He lifted the Martian up to his height and he glowered at him. Marik struggled in the grasp of the giant silver Sonic clone but try as he might, he was not getting out of this one. Not even a being as strong as Marik would be getting out of the grasp of a giant silver Sonic robot. If Silver Sonic had a mouth, he would probably be smirking at Marik right now. Marik continued to squirm in Silver Sonic's grasp but he just couldn't get free. The robot was too powerful for him. As for Wilson and Mandy, Wilson had helped poor Mandy get back up onto her feet and the mouse rubbed herself better. That kick had done a number on her but surprisingly, she was alright. They both noticed that Marik was in need of help right now so they ran back into the battle. Wilson threw his spinning blade at Silver Sonic's head and the blade chipped him above his visor. Silver Sonic flinched and he threw Marik down rather sharply onto the decks. He glowered at Wilson and Mandy and he advanced on them, his heavy feet making the decks shudder as he stomped towards them. Wilson however was ready for him. He threw his spinning blade weapon at Silver Sonic's

thigh and the weapon cleaved his thigh clean in two! Silver Sonic's leg had been severed and he was now stuck with just one leg. His right leg lay down on it's side and Silver Sonic fell down onto his hands and only remaining knee. Now it was down to their level, Mandy ran forward and fisted him in the other side of his visor, cracking that and leaving him with cracks over both optics. Now Silver Sonic was not only missing a leg but he was also semi-blinded at the same time. He couldn't really see properly with cracks over both his optics. But the giant silver killing machine was not down for the count yet. Just because he had one leg, it didn't mean he couldn't spin-dash. Silver Sonic curled up into a silver-bladed ball of pure lethalness and he spin-dashed towards the Mobians. Wilson and Mandy legged it double quick, scrambling frantically to get away from the robot. Marik just stood there and watched the Mobians run around like rabbits as Silver Sonic tried to spin-dash them and cleave them to pieces. Up in the flagship's cockpit however, Dr. Eggman was watching the two battles going on and he was liking how well his two machines were holding out although he could see that now Silver Sonic was missing a leg, he wouldn't be much of a threat for much longer and would need assistance.

"Titan Metal Sonic appears to be holding out well against Sonic and friends." noted Eggman "But it can't get through the shields and Silver Sonic's going strong but has had it's right leg severed so it won't be able to hold out much longer. Silver Sonic will need some help dealing with that infernal dog, that infernal mouse and that infernal Martian!"

He then turned to face his female sidekick Katherine and he smiled widely at her.

"Katherine, would you care to get down there and help Silver Sonic smite those intruders?" he asked sweetly.

Katherine nodded, clearly happy to get an assignment like this.

"Then total them Katherine!" bellowed Dr. Eggman excitedly.

Katherine's response was to play a voice clip of General Woundwort from the classic movie *Watership Down* .

"I'll tear out every throat in the place!" said the clip she played.

Dr. Eggman hooted with laughter at that response and he opened the windows so Katherine could leap out and attack. Katherine leaped out of the windows and played a voice clip of *Transformers Prime* Breakdown laughing as she leapt out of the window. She hurtled down from the cockpit window and towards the decks with her arms and legs to the side so she could hurl down to the ground quicker. She landed down on the decks with heavy force and she landed directly near Marik so the force of the impact ended up throwing him across the decks. Marik luckily however, managed to land on his feet and he skidded to a halt. Marik bent down in a battle ready stance and he glared at the attacker. Katherine got up to her feet and she glared at Marik with her emotionless, black visor while bending down in a battle ready stance. She was surprised to see a life-form on the ship that wasn't a Mobian but she didn't care, she was going to kill it all the same. Marik's eyes widened a little at the sight of another Eggman robot on the flagship but he didn't care, it just meant he's got another robot to smash up that's all and he would go through Eggman's entire army if it meant finally getting to the flagship and hijacking the fleet.

"What's this? Another Eggman robot?" mused Marik as he observed the sleek and slender Katherine "Looks like this robot supposed to be a female given it's feminine appearance. Does that mean it'll smash any differently to the other robots? Let's find out shall we?"

Marik charged towards Katherine, roaring at the top of his voice as he did so. Katherine just stood there and waited for Marik to attack. If she had a face there would probably be a smug smirk on it. Marik leaped into the air and propelled himself towards Katherine but the former warden-bot activated her barrier and Marik bounced straight off of it and hurtled backwards. He landed rather painfully on his back and he skidded backwards across the decks on it. He picked himself up, wincing in pain and he growled in annoyance to himself.

"A force-field?" he grumbled "Well that's just cheating! That fem-bot is begging to find out what her circuitry looks like now! I'll destroy her even if I have to break through the force-field to do so!"

With that said, Marik ran towards Katherine again and he fired a bolt

of electricity at her. Katherine kept the force-field up and the force-field deflected the attack. Katherine then shortened the barrier until it was only a red outline all around her body. While you can now hit her when she's like this, you cannot damage her because the barrier still protects her. Marik charged into Katherine and he slugged her in the stomach as hard as he possibly could. He then punched her in the face as viciously as he could and then leaped up, spun around and kicked her in the face and knocked her down. Katherine wasn't down for long though, she was soon back up on her feet and she began firing bladed discs at Marik. Marik dodged the discs as they fired at him and he swiped his arm and sent an energy wave sweeping towards Katherine. The wave destroyed all her bladed discs and it swept over Katherine, knocking her over onto her back. Marik ran quickly over to Katherine and he tried to attack her but Katherine kangaroo kicked him in the gut, sending him flying backwards and crashing down rather sharply on his back. Katherine picked herself up and she clasped her hands together. Marik leaped back onto his feet and he ran towards Katherine as quick as he could. Katherine thrust her arms forward and she let fly a huge laser blast from the palms of her hands. The blast hit Marik and he was thrown backwards by the attack. He landed on his back and rolled across the decks backwards until he came to a halt on his front. Marik lay there moaning in annoyance.

"This robot is a nuisance!" he growled to himself "I'm so gonna enjoy destroying it when I'm finished with it!"

He was just beginning to pick himself up when Katherine suddenly began to charge at him. Marik got up just in time and he leaped up and dropkicked the fem-bot in the head, knocking her down onto her back and he stood on top of her as she was knocked down. Marik got off of Katherine, grabbed her by the arms and threw her across the deck as if she was a chunk of rubbish being thrown away. Katherine spiralled across the deck and she landed with a heavy clunk further up the decks. If her barrier wasn't still on, she'd probably be broken now. Katherine picked herself up and she began firing bladed discs at Marik again. Marik just swiped his arms and destroyed them all with an energy wave. He then charged towards Katherine and drew his arm back for a powerful punch. Katherine just stood there and waited for the Martian to come to her. Then she

lashed out and blocked Marik's punch with the side of her arm. Marik just gritted his teeth at her and he began to push on Katherine's arm with the side of his own arm.

"Persistent little brat aren't you?" he grumbled through gritted teeth "And I can't help but notice a lack of communication from you. You don't seem fond of talking do you? I'm the only one giving the mid-battle banter out of us two!"

Katherine nodded as if she was saying "Yes" to Marik's question.

"Oh well, I always liked the silent type more anyway." said Marik "They're less annoying to beat up in battle because they don't irk me with stupid quips and clichéd phrases! Not to mention back on Mars I have an uncle named Zarondight who's mute and he's a hell of a lot better then you are girl bot!"

Katherine's response was to push Marik away and then swipe at him. Marik dodged and the two began pounding at each other while Wilson and Mandy continued being chased by Silver Sonic in the background. These two fights were going to get pretty hectic as they continued on…

Meanwhile, back on the ground, Sonic and friends were still having a hard time with Titan Metal Sonic. No matter what attacks they threw at the colossal machine, he just kept coming back and didn't seem to get so much as a scratch from their attacks. Sonic spin-dashed at Titan Metal Sonic the hardest he possibly could but his attacks seemed to be more annoying Titan Metal Sonic then hurting him and even at his hardest, Sonic couldn't seem to hurt him in anyway. Titan Metal Sonic grabbed Sonic before he could fall back down to the ground and he tossed him into the New Mobotropolis barrier. The citizens of New Mobotropolis made a wincing expression and an "Oooooh!" sound as if they could feel the pain from that blow. Titan Metal Sonic was about to attack Sonic again until Tails flew in front of his optics and covered one of them. Titan Metal Sonic tried to get Tails but Tails flew out of his way, causing Titan Metal Sonic to clout himself in the face. Titan Metal Sonic grumbled furiously and he tried to nab Tails but the little fox flew away from him as quickly as he could. Amy, Cream and Cosmo were next to attack the giant monster with their signature team

move, the Twirling-Hammer Batter. Cream spun the two girls around and inched closer and closer to Titan Metal Sonic's head. Titan Metal Sonic saw the girls coming but he was too late to react. Amy's hammer hit Titan Metal Sonic and the giant machine staggered backwards and bumped into the barrier. The impact made a loud sound as if someone had burst a giant balloon above the city. Sally and Nicole held their ears and they watched as Titan Metal Sonic picked himself up again.

"Thank goodness the shields are strong enough to hold." said Sally shakily "Just imagine what would happen if that thing fell onto the city and it wasn't shielded! New Mobotropolis would end up having the shortest stand of any city in Mobian history!"

"Yes Sally." said Nicole agreeably "We're lucky Eggman hasn't got a robot the size of his own fleet or this city would be doomed."

Back outside, Titan Metal Sonic as back in the game but was now being double-teamed by Knuckles and Shade. Knuckles climbed up Titan Metal Sonic and gave the giant robot some hefty uppercuts while Shade blade rushed it several times over. But not even the attacks of the echidnas seemed to be having much effect on Titan Metal Sonic. The machine's armour was just too tough for them. Titan Metal Sonic raised his leg and threatened to squash Shade flat, causing Shade to run like heck and get away from it. Titan Metal Sonic then picked Knuckles off of it's torso and flicked him away as if he was a red spiny bogey. Knuckles hurled through the air but Tails was on hand to catch him and he did so before the echidna could become a nasty stain on the ground. Geoffrey was next to attack by firing exploding darts at the machine and setting them off in unison. The darts embedded themselves into Titan Metal Sonic's torso section and they exploded in chorus as they hit their target. Titan Metal Sonic roared in anguish as his entire torso section was cloaked with smoke that drifted from the explosions and spiralled around him. Geoffrey began to get a tingle of hope in his stomach for Titan Metal Sonic appeared to have been obliterated by his exploding darts. But, as bad luck would have it, not even Geoffrey's darts were working! The smoke drifted away, revealing a still in good condition and very much alive looking Titan Metal Sonic! Titan Metal Sonic bore down over the horrified skunk and he roared at him.

Geoffrey immediately turned chicken and ran for it. Bunnie Rabbot flew in and distracted Titan Metal Sonic by giving him an uppercut to the chin and sending him staggering nosily backwards. Geoffrey skidded to a halt and everybody else gathered around him.

"Blimey!" cried Geoffrey "No matter what attack we throw at the darn thing it's still standing! Even my exploding darts aren't working against it!"

"This thing's pretty tough!" grunted Sonic "How are we gonna defeat it if we can't even lay a ding in it's armour?"

"I bet that thing's invulnerable!" wailed Tails "We'll never penetrate it if it IS invulnerable!"

"Well it doesn't matter how strong that thing is, we're gonna beat it and bring it down!" declared Sonic "There's no way I'm letting that thing stay functioning! We're just gonna have to hit it as hard as we possibly can!"

"But no matter how hard we hit it, it just keeps standin' back up sugah-hog." noted Bunnie "How can we defeat it if it keeps shrugging off our attacks?"

"If we keep going at it, we might damage it at long last." suggested Sonic.

"Or maybe we could try bringing it down onto it's back where it'll be vulnerable and then we cut loose as much as we can on it." thought Tails "That might be our best option."

"Tails, I think that idea might just work." said Sonic "Bunnie, Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, you all take topside, the rest of us will take bottom side."

"You've got it Sonic." said Knuckles, bashing his fists together.

With that said, Bunnie and Team Rose all flew up to Titan Metal Sonic's head to provide the necessary distractions with Knuckles and Shade climbing up after them. Sonic, Geoffrey and Tails remained down on the ground at the feet of Titan Metal Sonic. Bunnie began to cut loose on Titan Metal Sonic's head with an array

of cannon blasts from her arm cannon. The shoots bounced harmlessly off Titan Metal Sonic's armour but they were distracting him well enough for the others to attack. Team Rose did their signature move, Knuckles punched Titan Metal Sonic as hard as he could and Shade Blade-Rushed it as many times as she could. Titan Metal Sonic began to roar in annoyance. All those attacks coming from all angles was getting a bit too much for him to take. Then Sonic began to add insult to injury by attacking Titan Metal Sonic in the legs with a spin-dash. He spin-dashed his legs as much as he could and Geoffrey fired some stun darts at the legs just to provide extra pain as Titan Metal Sonic would be too big for the darts to have any effect. Tails joined in with Sonic and began to kick Titan Metal Sonic in the legs and the giant machine began to feel his legs giving way underneath him. The onslaughts being given to him on his head and his legs were too much for the giant machine. Titan Metal Sonic then suddenly fell forward and landed with a heavy crash on his front. The ground shook furiously under the sheer weight of the machine crashing down on it. Titan Metal Sonic was now down on it's hands and knees and Sonic and friends began to cut loose on him while he was down. Their attacks didn't seem to be damaging the machine yet but they might get there eventually if they kept going. However, Sonic and friends didn't count on the fact they had one shiny trump card on the field that could have helped them dearly in this match and that trump card was the insidious ice witch Blizzard the Hedgehog. She had passed out from her injures given to her by Metal Sonic but Titan Metal Sonic crashing onto the ground had woken her up with a start and the ice witch was now back on her feet in an instant. She saw Titan Metal Sonic and was absolutely gobsmacked to see such a giant machine trying to break through to New Mobotropolis. She could see that Sonic and friends had things under control but Blizzard wanted the throne of New Mobotropolis and she had to defend the city and stop Dr. Eggman in order to get the crown as she and Sally had made a deal on that (a deal Sally lied about as you remember).

"Well…it appears that there's a giant robot trying to break through the shields of New Mobotropolis." purred Blizzard "Now's my chance to redeem myself and prove to the wretched Queen Sally that I can defeat the Eggman after all."

Blizzard then attempted to run up to Titan Metal Sonic but her injuries from earlier kicked in and she tripped over. She fell back onto her knees and she panted heavily.

"Graah!" she grunted "Curse that Metal Sonic for pounding me to a pulp! I'm too weak to fight it! However, I'm not too weak to use my powers…"

With that said, Blizzard forced herself back up onto her feet and she wondered slowly over to Titan Metal Sonic instead of running to it. Sonic and friends seemed to be on top of the battle at long last as they were all attacking Titan Metal Sonic and amazingly enough, managing to keep it down. They still weren't causing any damage to the robot but their attacks appeared to be effecting it in someway as Titan Metal Sonic was having a hard time trying to get back up. If Sonic and friends kept this up then they might finally penetrate Titan Metal Sonic and defeat him. Blizzard watched the fight with a cruel smirk on her face and she rose her hands up.

"As impressive as this display of heroism is," Blizzard said to herself "It isn't enough. I shall finish it off. With a blizzard of icy winds!"

With that said, she thrust her arms forward and sent a huge gust of icy winds sailing towards Sonic and friends and Titan Metal Sonic. Sonic stopped spin-dashing Titan Metal Sonic and realized that Blizzard was back on her feet and letting loose a breeze of icy winds. Everybody was too late to get out of the way though. The winds swept over the Mobians and Titan Metal Sonic and the moment the winds touched them, they froze instantly. Titan Metal Sonic and the Mobians were now all ice statues and frozen stiff. Sally and Nicole had seen all this and they were horrified. They ran out of the safety of New Mobotropolis to confront Blizzard, who was cackling like mad to herself at her success. She had just defeated Titan Metal Sonic and frozen her enemies at the same time.

"I did it! I defeated the Eggman's giant robot!" crowed Blizzard "I did what Sonic and his bunch of morons couldn't do! Now all I have to do is get back up to the fleet and…"

"Blizzard!" yelled Sally crossly as she and Nicole stormed up to her.

Blizzard saw the squirrel coming towards her and she twisted her face into a polite grin.

"Your majesty." she crooned sarcastically "How nice of you to come out of hiding and commend me for my brilliant efforts in stopping the giant robot."

"I'm not here to commend you at all Blizzard!" snapped Sally "I'm here to chastise you!"

"I beg your pardon?" said Blizzard, a tone of shock evident in her voice.

"What did you think you were doing out there?" shrieked Nicole "Not only did you freeze the giant robot but you froze Sonic and friends as well!"

She and Sally both motioned to the frozen Mobians that all stood upon or next to Titan Metal Sonic. Blizzard just snorted at them and she folded her arms.

"Just a minor mistake in the heat of the battle I assure you." said Blizzard coldly.

"Minor?" screamed Sally "Blizzard, the ends do not justify the means here! You can't just go freezing our team of heroes just so you can prove to us you can help defeat Dr. Eggman! Besides, if you wanna be ruler of New Mobotropolis then you should set a good example in front of the citizens! What do you think they'll say about you freezing Sonic and friends?"

"They're dispensable!" snapped Blizzard angrily "We do not need those pathetic bunch of morons to protect our city! I'm all that's necessary! I can do what they cannot do and that's defeat the Eggman once and for all!"

"Yeah right, you did a brilliant job of THAT earlier!" said Sally sarcastically "Brilliant as in, got the snot kicked out of you by something and then thrown off the flagship! Yeah, that sounds like you can REALLY take down Dr. Eggman by yourself!"

"A minor setback I assure you." purred Blizzard "Once I get back up

there, the fleet will be nothing but ice sculptures."

"Blizzard, Sonic and friends are adequate enough for the job!" yelled Nicole "They've destroyed half the fleet and were keeping the giant robot from trying to lower the shields and leave us prone! You on the other hand just got beaten up and thrown off the ship! Sonic and friends are more then capable of doing this whereas you are not!"

"As much as we appreciate the fact you've stopped the giant robot, we won't ignore the fact you've frozen our Royal Fighters." said Sally with a cold expression on her face "Unfreeze them at once or I will place you under arrest!"

Blizzard growled at the two ladies but she restrained herself and did as she was told. She snapped her fingers and caused the ice around the Mobians to shatter and break into pieces, freeing them from their icy hold. The Mobians all shook themselves off and began rubbing themselves to warm themselves up a little.

"Brrr, so that's what being frozen feels like!" said Sonic as he tried to warm himself up.

"Cold and stiff, just as I thought." shivered Amy "Stupid Blizzard for interfering with our battle!"

"Thank you." said Sally with her arms folded and a smirk on her face.

Blizzard really hated it when Sally smirked at her like that, it just annoyed her to some degree and Sally was beginning to get on her nerves now. In order to get her own back on the ungrateful squirrel queen, Blizzard decided to be mean and unfreeze Titan Metal Sonic. She snapped her fingers and the ice around Titan Metal Sonic broke away. Titan Metal Sonic was unfrozen and ready to cause mayhem once again. He picked himself up and bellowed at the top of it's voice box. Sally stared up at Titan Metal Sonic in horror and then she glared at Blizzard.

"How dare you Blizzard!" she shouted "You freeze him again right now!"

"No you ungrateful little royal brat!" snarled Blizzard "Since you're too blinded with pride to praise me for my efforts, I've decided that I won't waste my time here and I'll let you clean up the mess! If your heroes are really as good as you say they are then they can defeat the giant robot! And if they can't then don't come crying to me! Don't say I didn't warn you when I said that I can do what those hapless halfwits couldn't do! Good day wretch!"

With that said, Blizzard turned her back on everybody and flew away from the scenery with a gust of icy wind, leaving Sonic and crew to take down Titan Metal Sonic themselves. Sally was so furious with Blizzard's treachery that she almost went wild with rage. Nicole put a hand on her best friend's shoulder and spoke softly to her.

"Let it go Sally." said Nicole "Blizzard will get her comeuppance someday."

"I look forward to that day!" said Sally crossly "That witch just makes me even prouder of myself for not agreeing to that stupid deal she made earlier!"

"I'm glad you didn't agree to it too." said Nicole "Now let's get out of here before the giant robot gets us."

Sally did not wait to be asked twice. She and Nicole both ran for it back into New Mobotropolis while Sonic and friends continued to fight Titan Metal Sonic. Blizzard had just made things harder for the heroes now she'd unfrozen Titan Metal Sonic and put him back into the battle. But Sonic and friends had a tactic that was working earlier so they would just have to do it again and hope they get somewhere this time…

Meanwhile, back on Eggman's flagship, things weren't going so well. Wilson and Mandy were still being chased around by the spin-dashing Silver Sonic and to make things worse, Silver Sonic wasn't stopping, he just kept spin-dashing in hopes of eventually hitting the Mobians. He was missing a leg though so spin-dashing until he eventually hits his opponents was the best he could do. As for Marik and Katherine, their fight seemed even sided. Neither opponent could seem to gain the upper hand on each other. Katherine kept her barrier up so Marik couldn't damage her but Marik was a

stubborn creature who didn't give up so Katherine could defend herself all she liked, Marik wasn't going to give up on trying to destroy her. Marik kicked Katherine in the head and made the fembot stagger backwards but Katherine retaliated with an uppercut to the chin that knocked Marik onto his back. Katherine then lunged forward and tried to grab Marik by the throat. Marik grabbed Katherine's arm and he pulled her forwards. He kicked Katherine in the stomach and sent her flying across the decks. Marik then picked himself up and ran over to Katherine. Katherine saw Marik coming and she prepared to attack. Marik lunged forward and prepared to attack Katherine but Katherine smacked him in the face and sent him sprawling on the decks. Marik was about to get back up until he suddenly had an idea. In order to destroy Katherine, he had to get her to turn her barrier off. And the only way to do that was make her think he'd won so instead of getting back up and attacking, he remained lying down on the deck and waited to see what was going to happen. Katherine marched up to Marik and she observed him. The Martian didn't move at all. It appeared to her that she'd knocked Marik out from that attack. That meant she had won the match and could finish off Marik once and for all. Katherine shut off her barrier, reached out and grabbed Marik by his collar. She hoisted the Martian up to her height but the moment she did that, Marik opened his eyes and zapped Katherine in the torso with a jolt of electricity from all five digits on his metal hand. Katherine dropped him and played a pre-recorded clip of someone wailing in pain at the top of their voice. Marik grinned wickedly and continued to zap her. Katherine was a strong robot but not even she could survive a vicious electrical jolt like this. Marik then suddenly threw his arm out to the side and sent Katherine hurling across the decks and over the edge of the flagship. Katherine fell off the flagship and fell down to the ground. As she fell, she played the famous Goofy Holler to add to the fall. She crashed onto the ground down below and broke into many pieces. Katherine was completely destroyed and Marik was pleased with this. He began clapping his hands and cackling like mad.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! I destroyed the robot!" he crowed "I knew Eggman's junk bots were no match for me! Martians are the best!"

Up in the cockpit of the giant vessel, Dr. Eggman looked at the

computer monitors and he wasn't pleased to see Marik had just destroyed Katherine.

"How dare that Martian destroy my lovely Katherine?" he growled "And after all the hard work she's done for me when I was out of it! Well I'll show him! Silver Sonic is still at large and I can just rebuild her! Egg-Pawns, gather up Katherine's remains and bring them to me!"

The onboard Egg-Pawns obeyed Eggman's order and using built-in jet packs, they flew out of the flagship and down to the ground to gather up the destroyed remains of Katherine. As for Marik, he didn't even notice the Egg-Pawns going down to get Katherine's remains. He was watching Wilson and Mandy get chased around by Silver Sonic and was clearly enjoying it. He was going to happily sit around and wait until Silver Sonic finally snuffed them and then he was going to get rid of Silver Sonic himself. Silver Sonic spin-dashed towards Wilson and Mandy again, the dog and mouse narrowly dodging the attack, and he crashed into the floor, leaving a huge dent in it. Silver Sonic unrolled from the spin-dash and he balanced wobbly on his one leg, picking himself up from the dent in the floor and steadying himself for another attack. Wilson and Mandy stared at the giant robot and wondered what to do.

"Hey Mandy, got any ideas?" asked Wilson "That giant robot's spin-dash is lethal and if it gets us, we're done for!"

"I dunno cute stuff." said Mandy helplessly "We need to bring this ship down but that robot's getting in our way and despite having one leg, it stays in spin-dash mode so we can't attack it without getting dissected."

Then suddenly, the mouse had a bright idea.

"Maybe we could get that robot…to do our job for us." she thought aloud to herself.

"Excuse me?" said Wilson, not really sure what Mandy meant.

"You wait there Wilson, I have an idea." said Mandy.

Wilson did as he was told and he waited where he was. Mandy then suddenly darted off towards Silver Sonic and ran straight past him. Wilson almost gasped in surprise, wondering what on Mobius his girlfriend was up to. Silver Sonic saw Mandy running across the decks and he wondered what the mouse was doing. Mandy then came to a halt near the cockpit tower of the flagship and she began taunting Silver Sonic by putting her fingers to her ears and wriggling them.

"Hey blade back! Come and get me!" she jeered "Or are you too useless with that one leg of yours?"

That remark offended Silver Sonic and the robot's response was to spin-dash towards her. Mandy grinned at herself, pleased to see the plan was working and she leaped out of Silver Sonic's way. Silver Sonic ploughed straight through the cockpit tower of the flagship and made a giant hole in it. Unfortunately for the flagship, Silver Sonic didn't stop there. He began churning through the machinery of the ship and causing major damage to the ship inside out. Silver Sonic thought he'd hit Mandy and was spin-dashing her as viciously as possible, that's why he kept going. He ploughed straight through the machinery until finally, he ended up inside a corridor inside the ship. Silver Sonic soon realized that he hadn't hit Mandy after all and he spin-dashed his way back to the surface. He was a stupid machine and it was not programmed to think so it didn't think that spin-dashing his way through the ship to get back to the surface was a bad idea, which it was. What made things even worse was the fact Silver Sonic was spin-dashing straight up and going straight up led to the cockpit itself and a lot of the important machinery and vital mechanisms were in the way up to the cockpit. Silver Sonic churned through machinery, circuitry and floors and ceilings until he made it up into the cockpit and spin-dashed his way straight through it. Dr. Eggman leaped out of his seat in sheer fright after that attack and wondered what the heck was going on. He turned around and saw Silver Sonic spin-dashing his way through the ceiling of the cockpit.

"What in the name of science are you doing Silver Sonic?" shrieked Dr. Eggman.

Silver Sonic ignored him and spin-dashed back down towards the decks. Dr. Eggman shrugged off that surprise and he got back to the

controls of the ship. Only, Silver Sonic had caused a heck of a lot of damage to the interior of the flagship and spin-dashing his way up through the cockpit had damaged the controls. The ship couldn't be controlled and Silver Sonic had churned through a fuel tank on his way up so the ship was losing fuel and fast. Dr. Eggman almost went crazy with shock at that turnout. Katherine had just rebuilt his flagship and now Silver Sonic had damaged it in his stupidity and the ship was going to crash down! Of all the annoying things to happen!

"Stupid Silver Sonic!" whined Dr. Eggman "He's gone and damaged the ship's vital mechanisms! It's going to crash! I'm going to get out of here!"

With that said, Dr. Eggman ran off to the escape pods so he could get out of this alive and he called over to his fleet via a communicator he wore on his wrist.

"Attention Egg-Fleet! The flagship's been compromised!" he cried "Fall back to Megapolis now!"

The fleet obeyed his commands and the remaining ships in the fleet all turned around and flew away from New Mobotropolis and headed back to Megapolis, leaving the doomed flagship to fall down and crash onto the ground below. Eggman and the Egg-Pawns who retrieved Katherine's remains all got into escape pods and they flew away from the ship and headed back to Megapolis where Eggman would go into hiding again and plot his next sinister move. It looked like Eggman was going to get back into the swing of things after finally getting his sanity back and yet his flagship was going to crash down and he was retreating. Well his next plan was not going to fail when he decided to attack again…

On the decks of the flagship, Wilson and Mandy noticed that the flagship's defences appeared to be retreating as they were turning around and flying away from New Mobotropolis. Marik noticed this too and wondered what was going on. Why was this amazing fleet fleeing? Had something gone wrong? He soon got his answer when the ship suddenly shuddered as something exploded inside the ship. The damaged fuel tank was leaking fuel and the leaking fuel had been ignited by a stray spark caused by Silver Sonic churning

everything in two and now the fuel was exploding inside the ship and making it shudder and sink down. Wilson and Mandy could feel the ship sinking down under their feet and they began to grow worried. It seemed that they were going to go down with the ship as the ship began to sink down and head towards the ground down below.

"I think my plan worked too well!" cried Mandy "That robot's damaged the ship to the point it begins falling!"

"We've got to get off of here and fast!" shrieked Wilson "But how?"

"Sonic and the others are down on the ground!" noted Mandy "Sonic will send someone to fly up and get us as they can see this thing falling down!"

As for Marik, he was not pleased to hear that the flagship was crashing down thanks to Mandy tricking Silver Sonic into damaging the ship. So much for hijacking the fleet! Looks like he'll have to change plans! Unlike Wilson and Mandy though, Marik was going to get off now and he was going to get off by jumping off the flagship. Martians can survive long falls due to their tough bodies after all. Marik had survived falling off a cliff so jumping off a ship wasn't going to do much harm, especially as the ship was beginning to fall to the ground. Marik waited until the ship was halfway down to the ground and then he jumped straight off the ship and hurled down to the ground. Wilson and Mandy saw him jump off and they ran over to the edge of the ship to see what was going to become of him. Marik hurled down to the ground and he landed on his feet. The fall made him fall down onto his knees and grimace slightly as pain surged up his feet but he was mostly OK despite that long fall. He then picked himself up and ran for his life.

"Curse that stupid mouse for ruining everything!" growled Marik in annoyance "I was so hoping I could hijack Eggman's fleet! Oh well, I'll get Sonic and friends next time!"

Marik disappeared into the forests of Green Hill Zone as he fled the scene. When he was going to attack again as anyone's guess but when he came back, he would come back good and hard. As for Sonic and friends, they noticed that Eggman's ship was crashing down but luckily for them, it wasn't going to crash down on top of

them, it was a good distance away from them and yet this turnout provided a perfect opportunity for them to get rid of Titan Metal Sonic. If they could bait the robot into running into the falling ship's path then the ship would destroy Titan Metal Sonic as it crashed down on Titan Metal Sonic. Sonic spin-dashed Titan Metal Sonic in the back of his head and taunted it by pulling down the bottom part of his eye and sticking his tongue out at it. Titan Metal Sonic growled furiously and he tried to grab Sonic but Sonic dodged his attack and ran towards the falling flagship. Titan Metal Sonic ran after Sonic, the ground shaking furiously with every footstep. Bunnie Rabbot activated the rockets in her roboticized feet and flew towards the flagship to get Wilson and Mandy off as she knew they were still on there. Bunnie made it to the falling vessel and she extended her robot arm so she could wrap it around Wilson and Mandy both together. After doing that, she flew straight off the flagship. As for Sonic, he got Titan Metal Sonic directly underneath the falling flagship and sprinted off as fast as he could. Titan Metal Sonic wondered where Sonic had just gotten to and he saw him running back to New Mobotropolis. The giant machine roared furiously and ran back towards the city but the ship crashed down directly on top of him, destroying him instantly and reducing the machine to a tangled, mangled heap of scrap metal. The ship crashed down onto the ground and exploded into a terrific fireball of smoke and flames. The debris of the ship littered the ground and smoke billowed out of the destroyed ship. Silver Sonic had been destroyed in the crash too so he was no longer a threat. The wrecked remains of Titan Metal Sonic lay underneath the ship. Sonic and friends stared at the wrecked flagship and Bunnie landed down behind them with Wilson and Mandy in tow. She unwrapped them and they stared at the destroyed ship.

"Whoa! Eggman's flagship's crashed down again!" sneered Sonic "Who's responsible for this then?"

"I am." said Mandy "I tricked one of Eggman's robots into accidentally damaging the ships' mechanisms and the robot did the damage needed to bring it down. Eggman's fleet's in retreat and his flagship's down so New Mobotropolis can sleep easy tonight."

"You got that right Mandy." said Sonic "Also helped by the fact the

giant Metal Sonic got destroyed by the crashing ship and Blizzard's gone away for now. We've won Royal Fighters! New Mobotropolis lives!"

"Wait a minute." said Shade quickly "What about Marik? Did he perish in the crash?"

"Marik?" blurted Sonic "Marik was on the flagship of the Egg-Fleet?"

"Yes, the freaky dude wanted to hijack the fleet and use it for himself." muttered Mandy "Me and Wilson started fighting him but Eggman distracted us with the robot I tricked into damaging the ship. The little freak escaped alive though so he'll be back."

"Oh well, never mind." said Sonic "Marik doesn't worry me anymore. We'll beat him for good next time he sticks his ugly face in where he's not wanted."

"I'm glad Marik failed to hijack the fleet." said Cosmo "He would cause a lot of malice if he had the fleet under his control. I do wish Marik would just leave Mobius already, although he doesn't have a ship so that won't be possible."

"You know what Cosmo, I think next time I meet Marik, I'll Chaos Control him back to his home planet." said Sonic "Then we won't have to put up with his farce anymore."

"Well Marik's fled and Eggman's retreated so now we can kick back and celebrate the opening of New Mobotropolis properly." said Tails "And explore the new city while we're at it."

"One moment." said Wilson "There's one thing I have to get off my chest first."

Sonic wondered what that could be but he didn't take long to find out. Wilson was going to propose to Mandy at long last! Wilson took Mandy's hand into his and he stared lovingly into Mandy's eyes.

"Mandy. There's something I have to ask you…." said Wilson, a knot tightening in his stomach as he prepared to pop the question to his girlfriend at long last…

Yeah, yeah I know! Weak cliffhanger I know! But not every cliffhanger can be intense. Besides, the next two stories will be taking it easy as we gear up for Story 100 so you can excuse this weak cliffhanger. So what's gonna happen next? Stay tuned for Story 98...Read and Review but no flames and insulting reviews. They will not be accepted.

P.S. Still enjoying this BlackStormNomad?

P.P.S Just out of interest PROJECT 1-21-18-9-1-19 can you list your reasons as to why your top ten fave OCs in this story are your favourites?

P.P.P.S I say Chaos Kai X, you still haven't answered my question on who your favourite OCs in this story are. Can you please answer?

Marriage Part 1

Story 98: Marriage Part 1: One Wedding and a Search

Things had been hectic between Sonic the Hedgehog and friends recently. First Blizzard the Hedgehog ruins the grand opening ceremony of New Mobotropolis, the replacement city for Old Mobotropolis, then Dr. Eggman comes in his fleet and attempts to destroy the city and Marik the Martian stows away on the ship, hoping to hijack it. Thanks to the quick thinking of Mandy Mouse though, she'd gotten Silver Sonic to accidentally damage the ship to the point it crashed and burned and Eggman had retreated along with the remains of his fleet and Marik had fled the scene alive. Right now, Wilson was going to pop the question to Mandy at long last. He took Mandy's hand into his and stared into her eyes lovingly. How beautiful her eyes looked to him.

"Mandy. There's something I have to ask you." said Wilson the Dog, a knot tightening in his stomach as he prepared to pop the question to his girlfriend at long last.

"Yes Wilson, what is it?" asked Mandy.

Wilson let go of Mandy's hand and he stuck his hand into his pocket. He fished out the box he'd been hiding in there and he showed it to Mandy. The mouse began to feel wobbly all over. Was Wilson doing what she thought he was doing? Wilson could feel his heart pounding against his chest. He gulped and he opened the box, revealing the ring that was kept safely inside it.

"I would be…most…most honoured i-i-if…if you would give me…the honour…of becoming my wife." said Wilson slowly "Mandy Mouse… will you…marry me?"

The mouse gasped in surprise and she took the ring from Wilson. Her face beamed at the purple diamond that was on the ring. It was a beautiful ring and she couldn't believe that Wilson was finally asking her to marry him!

"Oh! Oh Wilson…I…I thought you'd never ask!" gasped Mandy, her eyes filling with happy tears "I accept without a moment's hesitance!"

With that said, she threw her arms around Wilson and grasped him into a hug. Wilson was so happy right now he thought he was going to burst like an over pumped balloon. He hugged Mandy back and the two kissed each other affectionately. Sonic and friends all had different reactions to this. Sonic punched the air happily and yelled "Whoo! Way to go Wilson!", Tails beamed with happiness, Amy put her hands to her mouth in surprise and gasped, Cream beamed as wide as she could and began to feel tears of happiness well up in her eyes, Knuckles and Shade both stared at the couple in surprise but they smiled for them, Geoffrey yelled "Alright mate! You go for it!" and Bunnie could do nothing more then say "Oh mah stars!" at the two Mobians. What a turnout this was! After pushing back Eggman's fleet, New Mobotropolis now begins it's city life with a wedding! And not just any wedding but the wedding of two of Mobotropolis' most notorious Royal Fighters! This was a good end to any day this was and Sonic couldn't help but feel proud of Wilson for gathering up the courage to finally ask his girlfriend to marry him. The dog had a lot more courage then he gave himself credit for.

"Holy chilli-sauce, we've been fighting together for months on end and you two finally get hitched!" chuckled Sonic, giving Wilson a friendly knuckle punch "I never thought I'd see that day come."

"Well you're not the only one who can surprise everybody." said Wilson with a big cheesy grin on his face "In all honesty, I never though I'd have the courage to pop the question at last. Seeing your heroism and courage did inspire me a little over the months though and when I thought the time was right, I proposed and now I'm about to become a husband! I'm so happy I could just fly to the moon and back!"

"Well if we had a rocket somewhere then we'd be happy to arrange that." snickered Sonic "Well done Wilson for mustering up this much courage for so long."

"Thank you." said Wilson brightly "You've been such a good friend to me Sonic."

"Well that's what the hedgehog does best, be as good a friend as he possibly can." said Sonic with pride.

As for Mandy, all the girls were losing themselves with excitement over her.

"We're so happy for you Miss Mandy!" squealed Cream, giving the mouse a hug "You and Mr. Wilson are gonna be a lovely couple and I wish you all the best in your married life!"

"Aw you're such a sweetheart little Creamy girl." chuckled Mandy, hugging her back "Thank you. You know what, I didn't think Wilson was going to propose. Ever since I turned eighteen I had dreams of me and him in marriage and I was waiting for him to pop the question as the man always has to do it. As I waited and waited though I began thinking to myself "If Wilson doesn't propose already, I'll have to do it myself!"."

That little statement made all the girls laugh.

"Well Wilson beat ya'll to it Mandy-gal." said Bunnie "And now you two will be a happily married Royal Fighter couple. Ah can't congratulate ya'll enough on this."

"You don't need to." said Mandy casually, patting Bunnie on the shoulder "All I need is the support of all my friends, that's enough congrats for me."

Amy then chimed in on this conversation and the pink hedgehog was bouncing up and down with excitement. She was bouncing so much you'd think she'd needed restraining or something.

"Oh Mandy, this is so exciting!" squealed Amy "We need to get you a dress, and everyone will dress nice and Ohmigosh, we're gonna be so GIRL!"

"Ha, ha, ha, simmer down Amy!" chuckled Mandy "We've only just got engaged! But we won't wait long for this wedding, I think we should get married by next month, which is a couple of weeks away. That'll be more the enough time to prepare for this wedding."

"I'm in agreement on that." said Wilson, putting his arms around his

fiancée "The sooner we get married the better. Next month it shall be then."

"And I look forward to every minute of it." said Mandy, tapping Wilson's nose playfully.

The happily engaged couple then embraced each other once again, earning a chorus of "Awws" from everybody. Tails in particular seemed touched by the whole affair.

"Aww, they're so wonderful together." he said "I'm glad they're getting married."

"I can see you are little buddy." said Sonic "So when can we fill you and Cosmo in for marriage then?"

Tails blushed scarlet and his tails straightened in surprise. Cosmo was blushing too. She had heard Sonic's little remark and was a little embarrassed by that.

"Um…uh…we're still just kids yet Sonic…" said Tails slowly, fighting to keep himself from blushing even further "We're…too young to get married. We'll have to…um…wait until…we're…older…"

"Are you sure me and Tails can even get married?" asked Cosmo in confusion "I mean, we're not exactly the…ahem…same species are we?"

"So what? Wilson and Mandy aren't the same species and they're getting married." noted Sonic.

"But they both come from the same planet at least Sonic." said Cosmo "I'm a Seedrian and Tails is a Mobian. I'm not from this world. Do you think a marriage between us would work?"

"If you want my view on this, I say no matter what species you are, true love triumphs in the end." said Sonic "I think you two would be a perfect couple when you're older."

"I'd love to marry Cosmo." said Tails quietly, blushing even harder "She's so beautiful…"

That little compliment set Cosmo off in a flattered giggle that made Tails' face turn even redder and he could feel himself getting warm from the embarrassment.

"That's so nice of you to say Tails." said Cosmo "I'm amazed that even though I'm not the same species as you, you fancy me. I really wish I knew what to say about this."

"You don't have to say anything Cosmo." said Tails "But I know what to say now, next month will be a treat for you as you get to see a proper Mobian wedding. What were weddings like on your planet Cosmo?"

"The same as all the other weddings on other worlds." said Cosmo "Our weddings are no different to the others. I look forward to seeing a Mobian wedding though, it'll be lovely for me to see one while I'm here."

"And trust me, you're gonna love it." said Sonic with an assuring grin on his face "There'll be people dressed smartly, lots of confetti, long boring talks and a buffet at the end."

"It all sounds nice." said Cosmo "I look forward to Wilson and Mandy's wedding."

"Hey blue dude." said Mandy, chipping in suddenly on the conversation "Me and Wilson are wondering if you would love to be our best man for this wedding.

"Best man huh?" thought Sonic "Well, as long as you don't pick Amy to be the bridesmaid then I'll accept."

"Aw Sonic, don't be cruel to poor Amy!" giggled Mandy, playfully rubbing the hedgehog's head and making him giggle.

"Ha, ha, ha! Stop it! I was just kidding!" laughed Sonic as Mandy ruffled his fur "I'll happily be your best man regardless of who the bridesmaid is!"

"Well that's wonderful to know because we've already picked Amy to be the bridesmaid." sneered Mandy.

"I should have seen that coming." snickered Sonic "Oh well, me and Amy will be a good best man and bridesmaid each so there's no harm done on that one."

"Yeah." said Mandy. She then looked up from Sonic and over to Knuckles and Shade who were watching all this and she decided to ask them something.

"So you two, would you mind coming to our wedding?" she asked.

"We maybe the only ones left on Angel Island to guard the Master Emerald but we will take a day off duty to see you two get married." said Knuckles "Me and Shade don't mind wishing our good friends well just for one day so we'll happily come."

"How nice of you rad red." snickered Sonic "So when can we expect you and Shade to make it official then?"

"We're just friends right now Sonic." said Knuckles "But should me and Shade consider a married life, I'll give you a shout out."

"And if we do wish to get married then you and your friends will be treated with a proper echidna style wedding." said Shade "You may like how we echidnas do ceremonies like this."

"Sounds interesting." said Sonic "But until that day comes, let's just sit back and enjoy the wedding of Wilson and Mandy."

He looked back over at the happy couple, pleased to see that they were finally getting hitched. Sonic had been with the dog and mouse for months on end and become great friends with them and now he was going to be seeing their marriage. Even though Sonic wasn't as much on the soppy side as say Amy or anyone else, he was looking forward to this marriage, especially as it was something nice and not Eggman related for once. It was about time they were owed a break, especially with all the hell they just went through earlier with Blizzard and the Egg-Fleet so it was going to be nice to kick back and relax for a change. Only one though bugged Sonic though. If only Ruben the Water Panther was here to see this now but he was in Chun-Nan and catching up on things right now*. Still, Ruben would come home eventually and then Sonic would fill him in on everything once

he returned. The next month was going to be a month worth waiting for when the wedding day finally arrived…

Next month, which was only a couple of weeks away from the day Wilson proposed, arrived at long last and the preparations for the wedding were already well underway. The New Mobotropolis Church was open and ready for it's first ever wedding, the wedding reception was nicely set up for after the ceremony and the guests were all preparing for the big day, as well as the bride and groom. Mandy was being seen to by the girls. The girls were had all gathered around into Mandy's house, a house built especially for her during the building of New Mobotropolis and they were helping Mandy prepare for probably the biggest day of her life. During the time between the proposal and the wedding, Mandy had bought a beautiful radiant wedding dress that was pure snow white in colour, made of satin and full of glitter. There was a trim of silver around the waist and Mandy had accompanying gloves that went up to her elbows. She had a tiara on her head with an accompanying veil that drooped down behind her head. Now her wedding day was here, she was now putting on her wedding clothes with the girls helping her. Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Bunnie were all there and Cream had even invited her mother Vanilla to help out with the preparation. Mandy stood in the middle of her living room with her arms out to the side. The girls helped her get the dress to look just right and they helped tie some ribbons around the waist section.

"I can't thank you girls enough for offering to help me prepare for my wedding." said Mandy graciously "You're all so generous, especially you Mrs. Rabbit."

"You're quite welcome Mandy dear." said Vanilla brightly "I love helping people out and when Cream announced to me one of her friends was getting married I knew I had to come over and help out."

"I appreciate your contribution dearly." said Mandy with a smile on her face "So, um, how are you and Porthos getting along since you got back together after that fateful day where he ended up finding us and Cream?"

"We're doing fine love." said Vanilla as she tied another ribbon on Mandy's dress "Ever since Porthos came back, I've been up in the clouds with joy. I'm still a little mad that he abandoned me and Cream just because he did something bad and didn't want to face me for it but I love him too much to care about it. The day he disappeared still burns in the back of my head like a raging fire though. When he didn't come home from his man's night out, I called the police about it and they searched and searched for Porthos but no matter how hard they tried…they just couldn't find him." she paused to stifle a sob that was itching to come out of her mouth "I was so crushed when they came to me and said Porthos still hadn't been found and that he was likely dead. I thought Cream would grow up without a father and that I would have to be alone for the rest of my life."

"And yet, we found my daddy again and I managed to convince him to come back to the family." said Cream brightly "I'm so happy that happened, it's so wonderful to see mother looking so happy again."

Cream was wearing a lovely white dress and carrying a basket of flowers. She had been picked to be the flower girl for the wedding and Vanilla had taught her everything she needed to know about being a flower girl so she wouldn't mess up on the job.

"I'm sure it is Cream." said Mandy kindly "Seeing you get your father back didn't half fill my heart with joy. I love seeing families get back together, it's just such a wonderful sight."

"Hey Mandy, what kind of shoes would you like to wear?" asked Amy who was holding a pair of slippers in her hand.

She was dressed in a white satin dress laced with taffeta and had a pink sash with a bow around the waist. This was her bridesmaid outfit and she looked stunning in it to say the least. She couldn't wait to see what Sonic thought to her bridesmaid outfit when the wedding began.

"Oh Amy, I don't wear shoes with dresses." said Mandy, looking down at her feet and wriggling her toes "I don't like the way they look together. Call it a picky little preference if you will but that's just what I'm like with dresses and footwear. I wear one or the other, never

both together."

"OK then." said Amy "It's not unusual for the bride to go to the wedding barefoot. I have heard many brides who did that."

"So have I." said Mandy "My mother told me she went to her wedding barefoot too so maybe I got this preference from her. Not that it matters or anything. I just hope Wilson watches where he's putting his feet because if he steps on my feet during the wedding I'll be sure to let him know about it!"

Amy and Cream couldn't help but chuckle at that joke.

"OK, your dress is looking just about ready." said Amy as she tied the back of the dress together "Ready to see yourself Mandy?"

"I sure am." said Mandy "Cosmo, can you fetch the mirror please?"

"Yes Mandy." said Cosmo, scuttling over to get a large mirror on wheels that sat in the corner of the room waiting to be looked in.

Cosmo was wearing a lovely looking white dress that was satin and had pink ribbons and bows around the torso section and lower section. She grabbed the mirror and pulled it over to Mandy so she could look into it and admire herself. Mandy looked into the mirror. A beautiful purple furred mouse in a satin dress full of glitter and ribbons and tiara looked back at her. The mouse was her of course and Mandy began to admire herself all over. She looked absolutely gorgeous and she knew it. The dress worked well with her slender curvy body and the glitter on the dress sparkled like diamonds, making her look truly glamorous. Mandy did a little twirl and the dress twirled around radiantly along with her. The mouse was so pleased with her appearance she didn't know what to say about herself other then:

"Boy is Wilson in for a treat!" she laughed "I look like I'm about ready to take the Mobotropolis Beauty Queen title from Nicole!"

"You look gorgeous Mandy!" trilled Cream excitedly "You look simply wonderful!"

"Ah couldn't agree more little Cream." said Bunnie brightly. "Ah've

never seen Mandy lookin' so mighty dang fine before. She's a proper beautiful mouse isn't she?"

Bunnie was wearing a radiant peach dress made of silk that complimented her figure beautifully and looked as nice as all the other dresses the other girls were wearing.

"She is." said Cosmo "Mandy looks lovely in that dress. It's lovely to see that the Mobian race has good taste in clothing just like the Seedrians do."

"I can just imagine what a Seedrian wedding dress looks like." chuckled Mandy "Long and glowing and covered in petals. I bet it looks and smells very nice."

"They do." said Cosmo "I think you'd look very good in a Seedrian dress if you ever wore one."

"I'm sure I would but I have no means of space travel and even if I did, I dunno where your planet is so we'll never find out." said Mandy "Anyway, I cannot wait to see what Wilson thinks to my dress when I show up at the church. I think he'll faint at the sight of me!"

"If he does then I'll be on hand to wake him up." said Amy reassuringly "I'll have a bucket of water on standby should he faint in amazement at you."

That set all the girls off. They all burst out laughing at Amy's joke, filling the room with the sound of hearty chuckles that heavily indicated how happy they were.

Meanwhile, at Wilson's house, the orange furred dog was being seen to by the boys Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Geoffrey St. John and Cream's father Porthos the Rabbit. Sonic and Tails were both wearing black tuxedoes with a red flower on the heart side of their chests and a red bow tie around their necks. They both looked very smart and Sonic had to admit, it looked strange to see him looking so gentlemanly and like a proper best man when he was usually a reckless, fast running jokester who crushed Eggman robots and

made fools out of his enemies. It looked strange seeing Tails look so smart too, especially as he was only a kid but Tails liked the way he looked. He had been picked to be the page boy for the wedding, meaning he had to carry the wedding rings on a satin cushion and give them to the bride and groom when the vicar called for them. Tails had been practicing being a page boy so he wouldn't gaff on this and do something stupid like drop the rings and the cushion and look absolutely foolish. As for Knuckles, he was wearing tradition echidna attire which consisted of a tan coloured robe with green gems around the neck section and big tan boots. Geoffrey was dressed in a black tuxedo, black trousers and smart black shoes and he wore a black tie around his neck. He looked proper nice for the wedding and he looked pleased with himself. Wilson, the groom of the wedding, was wearing a black tuxedo with matching black tie but his tuxedo had tails unlike Sonic, Tails and Geoffrey's. He wore smart black trousers and smart black shoes to go with the tuxedo. He had a rose in his breast pocket that smelt wonderful and he had gold cufflinks. He also had a top hat that he decided to wear just for show more then anything. He looked proper gentlemanly and anyone looking at him would hardly get the idea that he was a Royal Fighter in another time. Despite his smart, handsome appearance, he was a nervous wreck right now. Weddings had that effect on anyone getting married, you're a nervous wreck but once the wedding happens, you feel much better and the nervous feeling goes away. Wilson put the top hat on his head and looked at himself in the mirror. He couldn't believe how great he looked and he looked forward to seeing Mandy's reaction to his appearance when he showed up at the wedding.

"Goodness me, I'm one smart looking doggy!" he cried at himself in the mirror "Mandy's gonna love this!"

"I bet she will." said Sonic supportively "You look great Wilson."

"You don't look so bad yourself Sonic." said Wilson "You look like a proper best man you do. It feels strange seeing you look all smart looking for once Sonic and yet it strangely suits you to some degree."

"Eh, I look OK I guess." said Sonic, adjusting his bow tie "I wouldn't wanna dress like this all the time though, I'm glad it's a special

occasion only thing."

"I like the way I look in a tuxedo." said Tails as he admired himself all over "I wouldn't mind dressing like this more often. I'm glad you picked me to be the page boy Wilson and don't worry, I won't mess up on you."

"I'm not worried about that Tails." said Wilson "It's the wedding I'm nervous about! I'm so nervous right now I feel like I'm gonna drop dead! Why is it you always dream of being married and when it happens you have a stomach full of knots just before it happens?"

"I wondered the same thing too when I had my marriage to Vanilla." said Porthos "You want to get married and yet the whole thing makes you feel like you're going to burst. One way I managed to save myself from worrying myself silly was to take deep breaths and say to myself "Everything will be fine, everything will be fine." over and over. It worked like a charm and when I arrived at the church, I'd forgotten I was even nervous to begin with."

"I'll try that." said Wilson, adjusting the rose on his tuxedo and the brim of his top hat "I bet it'll work on me if it worked on you Porthos."

"Just out of interest, how's things been with you and Vanilla after you got back together at last?" asked Sonic.

"When I explained to Vanilla my reason for opting out of her life she looked like she was going to scream bloody murder at me!" said Porthos with a slight chuckle "But she looked into my eyes and saw how sorry I was and she forgave me in an instant. Vanilla's a very forgiving person and I feel fortunate that I married a woman like that. It feels so good to be back with my wife again and I get to raise the daughter I looked forward to but missed out on because of my silly gaff six years ago that could have easily been resolved by me just coming clean instead of hiding for the rest of my life."

"Well that's nice to know." said Sonic "But there's one thing else I'd love to know. Where the heck is Ruben? It's been two weeks and he hasn't come back from his visit to Chun-Nan! What has that water panther been getting up to since his visit back there? He said he was visiting there for a while and a couple of weeks have gone by!

Then again, he didn't specify how long a while he was wanting to go for but I think two weeks is a little too long for a while. Something must be up with him."

"Maybe Ruben's just having such a good time and has lost track of time." suggested Tails.

"That seems a little bizarre though Tails, I don't think Ruben would forget about us for two whole weeks!" noted Sonic "There's something going on at Chun-Nan and I'm gonna find out what it is."

"But Sonic mate, what about the wedding?" asked Geoffrey "It's due on sometime soon. If you go off to find Ruben you'll be late for the wedding."

"No I won't Geoffrey." said Sonic "The wedding isn't for a good few hours yet, and I can run at the speed of sound so I'll be at Chun-Nan and back again in time for the marriage of my two good buddies."

"Let's hope you're right Sonic or Wilson and Mandy will not be happy with you for walking out on them." said Knuckles sternly.

"Knuckles, I'm right here." said Wilson, clearing his throat "Sonic, I don't mind if you miss the wedding, the welfare of a friend is more important then anything in the world. If Mandy asks where you are, I'll just tell her where you are and what you're doing, she'll understand."

"Thanks Wilson." said Sonic graciously "I know that I'll find Ruben in time and I'll be back in time for your wedding. You can count on the hedgehog to be back in double quick time."

"I know I can." beamed Wilson "I hope you find Ruben, I'm beginning to wonder what's happening to him over at Chun-Nan."

"I wouldn't wear your best man outfit though as you might get it dirty while looking around for Ruben." said Tails

Sonic agreed with Tails and he removed his best man clothes. The last thing he wanted was to show up at his two friend's wedding with his clothes in tatters and covered in dirt. He folded the clothes up neatly and set them down on the sofa. He then prepared to leave

the house and look for Ruben in Chun-Nan.

"I'll be off to find Ruben." said Sonic "I'll be back as soon as possible."

"Good luck Sonic." said Tails "And be careful out there."

"Careful? What's that?" sneered Sonic "Oh well, see you later everybody! I'll be back faster then you can say "chilli dogs"!"

With that said, Sonic charged out of Wilson's house, right through the city of New Mobotropolis, through the city gates and out into the surrounding meadows and off through Green Hill Zone. Chun-Nan maybe far away but when you can run at the speed of sound, distance is no worrying matter. Sonic would be at Chun-Nan in a few minutes and then he can start searching for Ruben and find out what's been keeping him for two whole weeks…

A good while later, Sonic arrived at hilltop in Chun-Nan and he skidded to a halt so he could quick admire the beautiful view he was met with on top of the hill. He peered into the distance and smiled at the beauty of the country.

"Aah Chun-Nan." said Sonic with a sigh "This country never stops looking so beautiful. I could get used to a view like this."

But now was not the time to be sight seeing. He had a friend to find and had to be home in a good amount of time before Wilson and Mandy's wedding started. He had no idea where Ruben could possibly be in this country but he had a good idea on where to start. The Pagoda of Prosperity, home of Chun-Nan's rulers Emperor Tai and Princess Matilda. They'd probably know where Ruben was. Sonic sped off at supersonic speeds and he ran through the village of Chun-Nan, earning some surprised gasps from the villagers as he ran by and almost blew them over with the winds he made from running at super speeds. Sonic luckily remembered where the Pagoda of Prosperity was after being led there by Ruben the first time he'd met Tai and Matilda. In a matter of seconds he arrived at the Pagoda of Prosperity and he knocked on the door politely. He

waited for a moment, tapping his foot impatiently as he waited and the door slid open. Matilda was the one answering it and to her surprise, Sonic the Hedgehog was standing there and waiting to meet her.

"Oh my goodness." she said with a smile on her face "It's the hero of the west himself again. What a wonderful surprise this is."

"Thanks Matilda." said Sonic with a bow "You look great as always. How's the ol' kung-fu coming on by the way?"

"It's coming on great thanks." said Matilda "I'm almost at the expert stage now. I've got a few more lessons yet to complete and then I'll be at the highest level of kung-fu."

"Now that sounds cool." said Sonic "May I come in and meet the emperor?"

"Sure. A hero such as yourself is always welcome on royal grounds speedy warrior." said Matilda politely, letting Sonic inside her radiant home.

Sonic stepped inside and he looked all over the pagoda, admiring the rooms and kitchen as he walked over to a big soft cushion to sit on. The pagoda still looked glamorous and he proper felt at home here. Sonic sat down and respectfully waited for the emperor to come.

"Daddy. Sonic the Hedgehog is here." said Matilda.

Tai, who was in the back garden meditating, came back into the pagoda and he wandered into the living room where none other then Sonic the Hedgehog was waiting for him. It surprised the old mongoose to see Sonic here and he wondered what the hero of Mobius could possibly be here for.

"Well slay the dragons!" he blurted "It's Sonic the Hedgehog! What an honour it is to have you visiting us again hero of the west."

"Thanks emperor." said Sonic casually "I'm honoured just to be welcomed here. So how's things been going since we've last met?"

"Quite a lot Sonic." said Tai briskly "My daughter helped to stop the Yīnyǐng Mao clan and a traitor amongst the governors from assassinating me and replacing me with someone they wanted as emperor last year** and she's also helped to prevent Zira the Ruthless from escaping prison. Unfortunately, she couldn't stop Fong Zarr from escaping the prison."

"So Fong Zarr got arrested but he's escaped?" said Sonic "Well that's not good. The ninja leader of the Yīnyǐng Mao clan's now free to cause trouble again."

"Me and the kung-fu masters can handle him easily." said Matilda in a determined tone "Fong Zarr's no match for us."

"I'll say he isn't, Mushu made short work of him after Zira was defeated." noted Sonic "Anyways, do you know where Ruben is? He told me he was visiting Chun-Nan again and he's been gone for too long. And two of my friends are getting married so I wanna find Ruben and bring him back in time for the marriage."

"Ruben's been spending these past couple of weeks looking for a traitor amongst the water panthers." said Matilda, her face was grave "You see, a friend of his from another water panther clan named Hydra has been stealing every water panther in Chun-Nan's aqua-collars. Ruben himself got robbed and he's trying as hard as he can to find Hydra."

"Oh my gosh!" cried Sonic "Ruben's had his collar stolen by a friend of his? Well I hope Ruben can find that Hydra guy and give him what for! Turning his back on his own kind and stealing all their aqua-collars? How dirty can you get?"

"I know. Even I cannot believe this." muttered Tai "If you want to know where Ruben is, he's gone to the great plains that are just beyond the village of Chun-Nan. He's looking for Hydra there. If you stand outside and face the east side, you should see the plains and you should go there. Watch out for the spider caves though. You do not want to get caught by them."

"Ruben's in the plains and I've gotta stay clear of the spider caves." said Sonic "Got it. Thanks a lot emperor. I'll find Ruben and

hopefully tempt him to come home for the marriage and then we can come back and look for his aqua-collar."

"You don't need to worry about what's going on here Sonic." said Matilda reassuringly "Me, daddy and the kung-fu masters are looking for Hydra so you can leave it to us to find the aqua-collars while you deal with Dr. Eggman."

"OK, but I might just nose around and look if I have nothing better to do." said Sonic "Anything for a friend after all. See you later and if I don't come back then I've probably found Ruben and gone home."

With that said, Sonic got up and left the Pagoda of Prosperity. He faced the east side of the pagoda and saw the plains that Emperor Tai was talking about that stretched into the horizon and beyond. Sonic and Ruben had crossed those plains after going off to the Raiju clan's territory to ask for their help in defeating Zira so this wasn't unfamiliar territory for him. Sonic revved up his speedy feet and he charged away from the pagoda of headed off towards the plains where Ruben was said to be. Sonic hope this search would be easy for him as he didn't have time for a long search. Wilson and Mandy's wedding was due in a good amount of time so he had to find Ruben nice and quickly or he would miss it and the two wouldn't be too pleased at the fact their own best man missed their wedding…

Sonic arrived at the plains and he skidded to a halt. The plains seemed to go on forever and were pretty featureless save for cracked rocky grounds that stretched everywhere. They looked like that due to the lack of vegetation here and droughts mainly happened around here. Sonic couldn't see any caves around so he didn't see what the deal about the spider caves was. Regardless, he didn't know the land like the actual residents of Chun-Nan did so he had to take the emperor's advice for granted. Sonic began walking through the plains, calling out at the top of his voice.

"Ruben!" called Sonic, his voice echoing around the featureless plains "Ruben! Hey Ruben buddy! Where are you?"

No answer. Ruben wasn't around it seemed so Sonic would have to start searching all around the plains in hopes of finding him. Sonic picked up speed and began jogging around the plains like an Olympic sprinter.

"Ruben!" cried Sonic "Answer me Ruben old buddy! Ruben! Ruben!"

Still no answer. These plains were large and Sonic had no idea how long it had been since Ruben had been in here so Ruben could be anywhere. He could be out for miles for all Sonic knew but given Sonic's super speed, he'd be able to run around the plains quickly and find Ruben in a good amount of time. But if he went too fast he might accidentally miss Ruben since it was harder to see when going fast as the whole world became a blur around you when you ran at a good speed, especially a supersonic speed like Sonic so Sonic jogged around at a nice steady pace instead of running at top speed so should he see Ruben, he can stop quickly and he'd be likelier to see him. Sonic continued jogging through the plains and he cupped his hands around his mouth.

"Ruben!" cried Sonic "Where are you? Ruben!"

His voice continued echoing around the plains as he called out as loud as he could. He continued to jog at a quick pace and he headed for two large rocks that stood up side by side as if they were traffic posts. Big mistake though. Sonic ran in-between the rocks… and ended up running into some large sticky web and getting all tangled up in it! Sonic writhed about in the web, making disgusted sounds as he got tangled up in the web and he tripped up and fell down onto the ground. Sonic picked himself up and began to tear the sticky web off of himself.

"Urgh! Web!" he muttered with disgust as he tore it off of himself and shook his hands to get the web off them "Must be a spider trap! The caves must be nearby here so I'd best skedaddle before I…"

Then suddenly, Sonic was struck by a spout of web and thrown back against one of the tall rocks! The web pinned Sonic to the rock and he struggled in the grasp of the sticky web that tightly bound him to the rock. Sonic pulled and pulled but the web was much too strong for him. He pulled on his arms and he grunted with effort as he

strained to get out of the web but he couldn't. The web was too strong and Sonic couldn't cut himself free as he didn't have any sharp objects on him and the web had firmly fixed him to the rock so he couldn't curl up into a ball and spin-dash himself free. He was stuck fast and he couldn't get free.

"Gyah! Urgh, Hurgh! Nyagh! Grrrr!" grunted Sonic as he tried to break free "Of all the rotten luck! I get trussed up in web! Urrrggghhh!" he growled as he pulled very hard on the web "Can't I do anything without getting in trouble these days?"

Then suddenly, a spider leg shot out from nowhere and stabbed the ground just at Sonic's feet. Sonic jumped and he looked up at the owner of the leg. There, standing before him with an evil look on it's beady pink eyes was a live Mobian spider. Mobian spiders look like actual spiders but they only have four legs instead of eight and they have two front limbs that acted as arms and had scythes or pincers for hands. They were also huge, some growing to be eleven feet tall if they were lucky! This spider was a female spider that stood about eight foot tall with two curved horns on either side of it's head and three spikes on top of her head. It had a thin neck and sharp scythes for hands with additional spikes near the base of her hands. She had spiked knees and a large abdomen that was especially good at web spinning. Her fangs were long and sharp and her mouth had a red outlining that made it look like she had lipstick on. Her skin was a fiery crimson colour and the tips of her scythe hands had purple markings and her back and abdomen had many strange yellow and purple markings. The markings on her abdomen looked a little like a web. The spider hissed evilly and she went straight up into Sonic's face, clearly showing that she had no respect for personal space. She licked her lips and stared at Sonic, green saliva dripping from her fangs and tongue.

"Well, isn't this a surprise?" purred the spider, her voice exactly the same as that of the *Transformers Prime* character Airachnid "I've already caught one luscious snack for my starving children and now I've just caught another one. My children shall have a delicious dinner tonight."

"Sorry missy, but hedgehog's off the menu." said Sonic "I haven't got time to stay for dinner, I've got a friend to find and if you can just let

me outta this web then I can be on my way and you and me can forget we've ever met each other."

"No little hedgehog." purred the spider, her eyes narrowing down evilly "I've caught you in my web and we spiders eat what we catch."

Sonic just tugged on his web even harder.

"Forget it you web spinning freak, you're not eating me!" yelled Sonic "Let me go or I'll give you a hedgehog style pounding!"

"I hardly think someone in a position like yours is in any position to give me orders." fumed the spider "Do you know who I am boy?"

"No!" snapped Sonic "And should I care?"

"Yes you should you foolish little brat." snarled the spider "I am Gina the Spider Queen, leader of the Spiders of Anarchy and I'm having you for dinner tonight."

"Oh geez, not another group of anarchists!" muttered Sonic "We've already got a group of anarchistic reptiles, I don't have the patience for anarchistic spiders too!"

"And I don't have the patience for your annoying and obstinate nature blue boy." muttered Gina "Now stand still while I take you to my cave."

Sonic did not stay still. Instead, he turned his head and began to saw away at the web near his shoulders with his quills. He managed to cut a bit of the web open with his quills and he wrestled his arm out of the grasp of the web. Gina's eyes widened and she slashed at him with her scythe hands but Sonic moved his arm out of the way, causing Gina to miss and accidentally slice his web open. Sonic wrestled his way out of the web and he spin-dashed the giant spider as hard as he could. Gina was sent hurling backwards and she landed rather sharply on her back. The spider groaned in pain and Sonic ran away from her as fast as he possibly could. Gina picked herself up and she scuttled after him on her four long thin legs. Spiders were fast but Gina was nowhere near fast enough to catch Sonic. As Sonic sped away from her and Gina gave chase, the

spider began to grumble to herself.

"How fast is this bothersome, manic bit of prey?" grumbled Gina "This is the fastest creature I've ever come across. That'll make eating him all that more special!"

Gina may not be fast enough to catch Sonic but she had ways of keeping up with him. She leaped up into the air as high as she could and she landed on the ground a few feet behind Sonic. Sonic did a wild U-turn and he spin-dashed Gina again just to slow her down and give him a chance to lose her. Gina fell down onto her stomach and Sonic ran away but Gina shot a web at him. The web wrapped around his ankles and tripped him up. Sonic fell down onto his face and Gina ran over to him so she could grab him. Sonic turned around onto his back and he swung his legs upwards, kicking Gina in the face. Gina growled at Sonic and she slashed at him. Sonic moved out of the way and began to tug on the web around his ankles so he could run again. This just gave Gina the perfect opportunity to spin a web around Sonic and trap him like a fly. Sonic was wrapped in web all around his body and his muzzle was covered in web so he couldn't speak or call for help. Sonic looked a bit like a mummy now and he wriggled and writhed like a caterpillar as he tried to get out of the sticky web. He called out but the web around his mouth kept him quiet. All he could do was make muffled yells and groans as he tried to get out of the web. Gina laughed softly at Sonic and she stroked his head with her scythe hand in a seductive manner.

"Please don't resist little boy." she purred seductively "You'll only make yourself tired and stringy and I don't like stringy food."

"Mmmf! Hurmmf! Grummf Umpf!" grumbled Sonic, his voice muffled by the web around his muzzle.

"What's that? I can't understand you with that web around your mouth." sneered Gina "Oh well, I think I can guess what you're going to say anyway. Do you know what I say? I say, it's time for dinner boy. My children will enjoy feasting on you, especially as you have this unusual ability of super speed. That'll make you taste wonderful."

Sonic continued his pitiful struggling but no matter how hard he tried, he just couldn't get free. Gina laughed at Sonic's pitiful struggling and she picked up the webbed up hedgehog. She draped Sonic on her back and scuttled off back to her cave where she and her children were going to feast on him. So not only would Sonic be late for the wedding of Wilson and Mandy, he would end up missing it as he was going to get killed and eaten alive by a group of spiders…

Footnotes:

***See *Tales from Mobius Arc 12: The Water Panther Plunder* for the full story.**

**** Remember *Tales from Mobius Arc 6: The Five Festivals of Holy Honour* ?**

Not your traditional wedding story is it? I mean this wedding story has SPIIIIDERS in it! Oh wait, Doctor Who's done it, never mind! XD So is Sonic going to be a meal for the spiders and end up missing his friend's wedding? Or will he get out at the last minute, find Ruben and get home? Well, there's only one thing for it. STAY TUNED OF COURSE!

To Pandamonium: I'm not sure how long this'll be in all honesty. I have ideas that might take me well beyond even 200! Sonic's just so easy to write stories for it's unbelievable! Oh well, I'm glad you're enjoying it.

So PROJECT 1-21-18-9-1-19, what do you think of the recent chapters of Heroes of Mobius then? Still going strong? Do tell, I'm eager to know! :)

P.S. I know I said I was dropping the footnotes but I think they'll be necessary for anyone who's reading this and NOT Tales from Mobius at the same time so there will only be footnotes when an event from Tales from Mobius is being brought up. Hope that makes sense.

Marriage Part 2

Story 99: Marriage Part 2: Late for the Ceremony

Wilson the Dog, fellow Royal Fighter and groom, looked nervously at the clock that hung proudly above his fireplace. It read quarter past three. The wedding was due on in another thirty minutes and Sonic the Hedgehog hadn't returned from Chun-Nan yet. He'd been gone for only fifteen minutes already so that wasn't something to be worried about. Sonic could get from Mobotropolis to Chun-Nan in a matter of minutes so if he managed to find Ruben now, he'd be back in record time but it wasn't Sonic that Wilson was just worried about. It was of course, his own wedding. Weddings are always something to look forward to but when they finally happen, your stomach ties into so many knots it's a wonder that any of your food gets through it in the end. Wilson nervously adjusted his top hat and began to gibber to himself.

"It's almost here, it's almost here, it's almost here!" he squeaked nervously to himself "Oh boy, I hope this goes right for me and Mandy! This is supposed to be the best day of our lives and if anything goes wrong then I will never live this down!"

"Wilson mate, take it easy on yerself, all yer doin' is making yerself stress over nothing." said Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, a good friend of Wilson's and a good Royal Fighter "Nothing's gonna go wrong. No bad guys are around and if they try to attack, we have the secret defence systems that have been installed in this new city so we can keep out any attempts to ruin the wedding so relax Wilson."

"I bloomin' wish I could!" piped Wilson "I wish Sonic hadn't left to find Ruben! He knows how to clam me down when my stomach's all knotted up like rope!"

"Well mate, Sonic's left to find Ruben I'm afraid." said Geoffrey "And I'm glad he is too, we don't want our little friend missing out on your wedding do we?"

"No we don't." said Wilson "I wonder what's kept Ruben for two

weeks? I bet Sonic will find out once he finds him."

"I know Sonic will find Ruben, but will he find him in time?" wondered Tails "Sonic maybe fast but Ruben could be anywhere in a country as big as Chun-Nan so Sonic may have a tough time finding him."

"Don't worry about Sonic Tails." said Knuckles, putting a hand on his foxy friend's shoulder "He can handle himself and he'll be back in time. If he's not then I may have to give him a few bumps for missing out on his own friend's wedding!"

"Knuckles!" yelled Tails.

"Just kidding!" snickered Knuckles "If Sonic's late, we all know why that is and we can forgive him for it."

"I just hope he comes back with Ruben." said Tails "I'm actually missing the water panther and so is Cosmo. She's worried sick about him."

"Well little Tails, we all know that Sonic will be back with your missing friend." said Porthos the Rabbit, Cream's long lost father, kindly "The hedgehog has never let anybody down has he?"

"No Porthos." said Tails "He hasn't so he won't let us down this time."

"I agree." said Wilson, fumbling about with his tie to make sure it felt just right on him "Sonic will be back and we won't have to have a wedding without a best man."

Unfortunately, that didn't seem likely as Sonic was a little tied up at the moment…

Back in Chun-Nan, Sonic the Hedgehog had been taken to the spider caves, home of the Spiders of Anarchy and he was now hanging upside down from the ceiling by a strand of web wrapped around his feet. That was how spiders stored their food before eating it, they hung them upside down and then when feeding time

came, they cut them loose and brought them down to the ground and then they devoured you at piranha speed. Sonic was tightly trussed up in web all over his body and his muzzle was covered in web as if he was gagged and he dangled upside down like a chrysalis. Sonic struggled in the thick, sticky grasp of the web but try as he might, he just couldn't get free. Web was much too strong for him to break out of. Sonic eventually gave up on his struggling and he looked around the cave. He saw nothing but web strands and crevasses where spider offspring slept in. Then Sonic noticed something as he looked around the cave. He wasn't the only one here. There was another victim all trussed up in web and hanging upside down from the ceiling like he was. And that victim was none other then Ruben the Water Panther! He'd been caught by the spiders just shortly after Sonic began looking for him in the plains and now he was all webbed up and waiting to be devoured by the insidious spiders. So now Sonic had finally found Ruben, it was just a matter of getting out of here that was now the problem! Ruben may know martial arts but not even he can break out of web and Sonic certainly couldn't break out of web so it seemed the two Mobians were doomed to become a spider's dinner. As Sonic continued to struggle, making muffled noises as he did so, Gina the Spider Queen stepped into the room and licked her slimy lips. Sonic stopped struggling and stared at Gina. His eyes narrowed down to pure slits of rage and anger.

"Feeling comfortable yet hedgehog?" purred Gina in a voice dripping with fake sweetness "I do hope you are because you won't be feeling comfortable for much longer."

"Mmmmf! Umpf! Grumpf!" muttered Sonic from under his web gag.

"Oh for goodness sake, I really shouldn't gag my prey when they want to speak to me." muttered Gina "If it'll make you feel better, I'll let you say your last words hedgehog."

With that said, Gina stepped over to Sonic and she slashed his gag open, giving the hedgehog the ability to speak again.

"Gasp!" cried Sonic as he was now able to breathe through his mouth again "Thanks. Now Gina, I've got a few things to say to you! One: I can't believe you've got my little buddy Ruben and two: you

let us both go now and there won't be any trouble!"

"How can there be any trouble when nobody's around to save you hedgehog?" sneered Gina "You're stuck with me boy and that's all there is to it I'm afraid. You should have known better then to wander through these plains alone and walk right into one of my traps. You could have avoided this you know."

"Ok first off, I don't live here." snapped Sonic "I come from New Mobotropolis so therefore, how was I supposed to know there was a spider trap anywhere and two, my name's not just "hedgehog", I'm Sonic the Hedgehog, the hero of Mobius and if you don't let me go now then I'll have to go supersonic on you and kick your big fat abdomen!"

Gina was slightly offended by the fact Sonic called her abdomen big (It's like saying she's got a big arse since the abdomen is pretty much the spider's backside) but she seemed surprised at the fact she had the world famous Sonic the Hedgehog at her mercy.

"How droll this is, I have the world famous Sonic the Hedgehog in my parlour?" she purred "Well, this catch just got even more special. Ha, ha, ha, ha. I'm so going to enjoy sinking my fangs into your puny little neck boy."

"Look lady, you're making a big mistake eating me!" yelled Sonic "I have friends who will be very upset to hear that you've eaten me and if you eat me, I can't stop Dr. Eggman from taking over Mobius and if he takes over Mobius, you will all be robot spiders that serve his every will so you can't eat me!"

"I can boy and Eggman's no concern of ours." said Gina with a sly smirk on her hideous face "If he comes into my parlour, I'll just web him alive and eat him. Given his size, he'll last my children a whole week once we eat that fat dictator from another world."

"No you won't Gina!" retorted Sonic "Eggman was giant killer robots that are we bigger then even the biggest spider! He'll squash you all flat or put you and your children in the roboticizer! If you want to survive and avoid being robots then let me and Ruben go and that way, we can prevent Eggman from harming anybody, even freaks

like you!"

One thing you must never do to a spider is call it a freak. Calling a spider a freak is almost like swearing at it to them and Gina was very offended to have been called a freak by Sonic the Hedgehog so she hissed angrily and frowned at him with her blank pink eyes.

"How dare you call me a freak!" snarled Gina "We spiders are people too and just because were scary looking, it doesn't mean we're freaks! It's no wonder we're anarchists, the people of Chun-Nan and even the government of Chun-Nan hates us and thinks we're heathens, freaks and savages!"

"I can't imagine why." muttered Sonic.

"You're lucky I'm patient enough to overlook that insult of yours." snapped Gina "Anyway, the people of Chun-Nan hate us and think we're an abomination to Chun-Nan life. We spiders took offence to that so we began trying to kill everybody and replace the government with a government of spiders but the kung-fu warriors beat us and that stupid oaf of an emperor Dalon Tai sent us all into exile for what we did. During my time in exile, I've been forced to live in this dark, lonely cave catching whatever comes by the caves and eating them just to keep my strength up. It's a hard life down here and…my poor, poor children are absolutely starving."

With that said, she motioned over to the crevasse on the left side of the cave and called for her children. The children heard her and they all crawled out of the crevasse and up towards their mother. There were hundreds of hungry baby spiders, all of them the same colour as Gina and they were barely the size she was. They were only about as large as Sonic's foot. They had some growing up to do but given lack of food in this life of exile, they would take a while to grow up and become as big as their mother. The spiders all looked up at Sonic and their fangs began dripping with green saliva. It looked like they were dribbling toxic waste. They were all eager to eat the hedgehog and they began making excited squeals of pleasure at the mere sight of food above their heads. Sonic just made a disgusted face and didn't look at them.

"Look at them Sonic, only tiny little innocent babies and they barely

have enough food to go around all of them." said Gina sadly "It breaks my heart to think that…that…they may never get to reach the adult stage and become like me. They're such sad, hungry little souls and the fact I can never get enough food for them is just heartbreaking. Surely you can understand how desperate my situation is."

"I can but I don't care." muttered Sonic "You spiders brought this on yourselves by making everybody hate you so I think you all deserve this kind of punishment. If you want to survive Gina, I suggest you quite your life of anarchism and redeem yourself in the emperor's eyes. I'm sure he'll be willing to give you a second chance."

"He will never give me and my children a second chance!" snapped Gina "Nobody likes us, they hate us and they would sooner skewer me alive then think of letting me into their society! The only way we spiders can have any respect is if the country is run by spiders! I plan to rob Chun-Nan of it's scornful government and replace it with a government of spiders. I shall make myself the empress in place of Emperor Tai and then the spider race shall finally have the glory, respect and dignity we deserve!"

"Yeah Gina, you do realize you're just giving me a reason to stomp on you?" said Sonic coldly, not a usual manner for him to use.

Gina gritted her teeth and she glowered at Sonic. The hedgehog was beginning to get on her nerves now.

"That's it blue boy, it's time for the feast." growled Gina, raising her arm up and preparing to slice Sonic's web strand so he would fall down to the ground and get eaten by her children "Then you'll see what happens to those who bad talk us spiders!"

For the first time in his life, Sonic began to feel terrified. He was just about to become a spider's lunch and therefore, he'd end up missing the wedding of Wilson and Mandy and he'd be dead so he wouldn't be able to defeat Dr. Eggman and bring peace back to Mobius. He had to save himself and fast. Maybe he could stall Gina for long enough to think of an escape plan.

"Hey Gina, wait!" cried Sonic "Before you dine on me, can me and

Ruben have one last conversation between us? Privately? Just think of it as us saying our last words."

Gina thought for a moment on that matter. Should she bother to let Sonic have a private conversation with Ruben or should she just eat him already? Gina thought and then came up with her answer.

"Very well." she said "You may have one last talk with your friend. After all, nothing like delaying a kill in order to raise their fear levels before me and my children devour them."

With that said, Gina wondered over to Ruben and sliced open his web gag so the water panther may speak again. Ruben, who was sleeping at the time, woke up as he suddenly began to feel himself breathing through his mouth again and looked around, wondering what was happening. He noticed his web gag had gone so he was now able to speak. He then saw Sonic all webbed up and in his position and he almost fainted with shock (although given how he's hanging upside down, it's kind of hard to faint isn't it?).

"Sonic?" blurted Ruben.

"Hey Ruben." said Sonic casually "Nice place for a reunion isn't it?"

Gina interrupted them.

"I'll give you two as long as you need but don't think about dragging your conversation for a needlessly long amount of time." she sad dryly "If you drag for too long, I'll come in and finish you both off. Have a nice last conversation boys."

Gina laughed softly to herself and she crawled out of the room and further up the cave. Her children all crawled back into their sleeping hole and waited until their mother said it was OK to come out again. Now the cave was empty of all spiders, Sonic and Ruben began their conversation.

"Sonic, I'm glad to see you, although it'd be much better if you weren't all webbed up like I am." said Ruben "What the heck are you doing here anyway?"

"I'm sightseeing, what do you think I'm doing?" snapped Sonic "You

were gone for far too long and I got worried about you so I decided to come and look for you. I've found you now but now I'm all in a tangle as you can see. Talk about unlucky!"

Ruben's ears drooped against his head and he looked sad.

"I'm so sorry about this Sonic." said Ruben sadly "I should have come home and told you but I got so caught up in my search for Hydra and the stolen aqua-collars that I forgot about all of you. I'm so sorry, please forgive me."

"I do already Ruben." said Sonic "I understand your predicament. I met the emperor when I arrived here and he told me all about what's been going on with you. Something about a friend of yours stealing every water panther's aqua-collars, you included."

"Yes." said Ruben "Hydra betrayed us all and it's thanks to him the water panther race is now just a panther race. I so wish to get my collar back but I just can't find Hydra anywhere. I should just give up and leave it to the kung-fu masters."

"I wouldn't say you should give up Ruben but once we get outta this, you can take a break from your search if you want." said Sonic "It's not good for your health if you keep pushing yourself to the bone and don't rest you know. If I get any spare time, I'll help you find the thief."

"Thanks Sonic." said Ruben graciously "So, what have I missed out on while I've been looking for my stolen collar?"

"Quite a lot." said Sonic "First the opening of New Mobotropolis, then Blizzard the Hedgehog comes and tries to ransack the place, then Eggman comes out of hiding and attacks only to fail because the city has a shield and now Wilson and Mandy are getting married."

"Wilson and Mandy are getting married?" blurted Ruben in surprise "Aw, that's wonderful! I feel so happy for them now! If only I wasn't all webbed up and then I could go and wish them well! Looks like me and you are going to miss the wedding though as we're about ready to become a spider's dinner."

"No we're not Ruben." said Sonic determinedly "We're getting outta here. No spider's chowing down on this hedgehog! Not today, not any other day, not ever!"

Sonic then proceeded to feebly struggle in the web again. He may not be strong enough to get out of the web but he wasn't going to give up. He was getting out of this cave alive along with Ruben and nothing was going to stop him…

…but Sonic would have to hurry up because the wedding was about to commence at last! There was only fifteen minutes left and everybody was already beginning to pile into the New Mobotropolis Church for the ceremony. Everybody at this wedding was dressed nicely in smart tuxedos or looking absolutely beautiful in long flowing dresses. Four of the guests were Wilson and Mandy's parents and they were eagerly anticipating this marriage. To the citizens, this wasn't a wedding to be missed after all as it was the wedding of the century, the wedding of two of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, the wedding of Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse. The New Mobotropolis Church was an unusual church. It didn't look like a traditional church. True it had a spire and a bell and a clock on it like all churches did but it was all made of steel and looked hi-tech and modern instead of old and ancient. Still, it was a church and that was were Wilson and Mandy were going to have their marriage. Wilson had arrived at the church first and he was waiting for Mandy to arrive. Tails stood beside him patiently with a cushion in his hands. The cushion had the wedding rings on them. The wedding rings were both gold in colour and one had an orange gem and the other had a purple gem. It was clear which ring was for which Mobian. Knuckles was standing beside Wilson too. He was waiting for Shade the Echidna, co-guardian of Angel Island, to arrive. She had no idea on how to dress for weddings so she had gone to Team Chaotix for ideas. Geoffrey and Bunnie had already gone inside the church. As the boys waited, the knot in Wilson's stomach began to tighten ever more.

"The wedding begins shortly and Sonic's still not back!" piped Wilson "What's keeping him?"

"Wilson, not even Sonic can find someone in two seconds flat." said Knuckles "He'll find Ruben eventually but don't keep expecting him to be here so soon. You should just focus on the wedding and nothing more or you'll end up making a fool out of yourself."

"I know." said Wilson "I'll try what Porthos told me to do, tell myself everything will be fine. Tails, you got the wedding rings?" he asked.

"Yes Wilson." said Tails, a tone of annoyance evident in his voice "Stop asking me, they're not going anywhere. They're safe and sound."

"Sorry." said Wilson "I worry too much for my own good at times. I should just calm down already."

"Hey look, here comes Shade and Team Chaotix." said Knuckles "Looks like they got Shade something to wear after all."

"I'm so glad Team Chaotix could come." said Wilson "I remember the time they helped me and Mandy take down a communications tower during the time Robotropolis still stood. I wonder how they've been recently."

Team Chaotix, a trio of Mobians consisting of Espio the Chameleon, Charmy Bee and their boss Vector the Crocodile came up to the church with Shade following them from behind. The Chaotix were all dressed in tuxedos and bow ties and they all looked very smart despite the fact they were a bunch of ragtag detectives and occasional fighters. Charmy didn't look so happy to be dressed like this.

"Aw this tuxedo sucks!" whined Charmy "I look like a ninny! Why did I have to dress like this?"

"Because that's how people dress at weddings now shut up Charmy!" snapped Vector in his grizzly voice "It was very kind of Wilson and Mandy to invite us here and I want you to behave Charmy or else!"

"You don't want to make our good friends look like idiots do you?" asked Espio sternly.

"No, I suppose not." muttered Charmy "OK, I'll behave Vector."

"Good." said Vector grimly "You'll know about it if you do misbehave at this wedding Charmy!"

"Hi Vector, Hi Espio, Hi Charmy." said Tails with a polite wave and a big smile on his face "You all look nice."

"Thanks Tails." said Vector brightly "You look nice too. Are you the page boy of this wedding?"

"I am, how did you guess?" asked Tails.

"Well you've got the wedding rings on a cushion so it was kind of an easy hint." said Vector casually "So who's the best man supposed to be Wilson?"

"Sonic. But he's not here right now." said Wilson glumly "He's looking for Ruben as he's gone back to Chun-Nan and has been gone for too long so he's worried about Ruben's wellbeing."

"Well let's hope he finds Ruben and brings him back here in time for the wedding or he'll miss it." said Espio grimly.

As for Knuckles, he caught sight of Shade standing Team Chaotix and looking shy and he went around to have a look at his partner. What he saw was an unusual sight for him. Shade was not in her Nocturnus battle armour. Instead, she was wearing a ravishingly beautiful black dress with no sleeves and shoulder straps that had purple sparkling glitter. She wore long black gloves and black shoes with high heels. She still had her trademark headband on. Shade looked incredible and Knuckles could hardly keep his eyes off the female echidna. Never before had he seen Shade looking so beautiful before. The combat suit did compliment her figure enough but seeing her in a dress just made her look even better. Shade however, didn't look too pleased with herself.

"Wow! Shade, you look amazing!" cried Knuckles.

"Thanks, you're too kind." muttered Shade "I don't really like this get up. I preferred my combat suit. But I suppose that I don't look too bad in this. I do like the colour and these gloves are rather nice."

"Shade, you look great, that's all that matters." said Knuckles "I can't believe how well a dress does you justice."

Shade fought to keep herself from blushing at the guardian's comments.

"You…you're…you're one flattering echidna Knuckles." said Shade bashfully "Thank you…"

"Don't mention it Shade." said Knuckles casually "I'm only saying what's true."

That just made Shade blush even harder. Vector and Charmy saw this and they both laughed at the echidnas.

"I bet those two will be getting hitched sometime soon!" sniggered Vector "Look at Knuckles go all lovey, dovey over her! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Knuckles and Shade sitting in a tree!" jeered Charmy "K-I-S-S-I-N…"

Knuckles and Shade both glowered at Charmy furiously, stopping the bee dead in his tracks and making him feel nervous.

"…G?" he squeaked nervously.

"Don't do that again Charmy." muttered Knuckles "Or I'll give you a knuckle sandwich if you do!"

"Was that pun intended?" snickered Vector.

Knuckles resisted the urge to break Vector's teeth for that bad joke. He restrained himself and just held hands with Shade. The two echidnas marched straight into the church along with Team Chaotix, leaving Wilson and Tails to wait for the bride to arrive. No sooner had the echidnas and Team Chaotix walked into the church, Mandy Mouse finally arrived at the church with Amy Rose, the bridesmaid, and Cream the Rabbit, the flower girl, walking beside her. Cosmo the Seedrian was with them too. Wilson caught sight of Mandy and he stared at his fiancée. He knew Mandy was beautiful but he didn't know that the purple-furred mouse could look so good in a wedding dress. The glitter on the dress and the tiara on her head made her

look somewhat cute to him. Mandy's beauty seemed to put Wilson in some sort of trance as he stared at her like a dog that's got it's eye on something. He was completely frozen and his eyes were opened so wide, they looked like they were going to pop out of their sockets. Tails looked at Wilson and he tugged on the tails of his tuxedo to wake him up. Wilson snapped out of his trance and he regained himself. He cleared his throat and straightened his collar. Mandy came up to Wilson with a bright smile on her face. The dog could feel his heart beginning to pound.

"Hello there Wilson." said Mandy with a giggle "What's the matter? Do I look too good for you?"

"Uh no…no, not at all!" cried Wilson "You could never look too good for me! What I was meaning to say was…you…uh…you uh…you look…um…uh…wonderful!" he gasped aloud, wishing he had something less clichéd to say "You look like a descendant from heaven itself."

"Aw ha, ha!" giggled Mandy in a flattered manner "You're so charming and adorable when you're in a complimentary mood Wilson! Thank you, I really do look gorgeous don't I?"

"I don't even think the word "gorgeous" does you justice." said Wilson without even realizing what he'd just said.

"You're too charming for me Wilson, you really are!" chuckled Mandy "You look great by the way. I love the top hat, it's kinda cute and smart looking on you."

Wilson grinned from ear to ear and he adjusted his hat as he chuckled in a flattered manner.

"Thank…thank you Mandy." said Wilson "I…I knew you'd…you'd love…love it."

"Hey Wilson, sorry to interrupt this lovely tender moment but where's Sonic?" asked Amy "Shouldn't he be here already?"

"He's worried about Ruben so he's gone to Chun-Nan to find him." explained Wilson "He'll be back as soon as possible."

"Well I'm glad blue dude's on the case." said Mandy "Ruben's been gone for two weeks and he hasn't returned. I hope Sonic finds him. If he comes back late, I don't mind. At least he's not dropping out on us for no reason. If he finds Ruben and comes back at all then that'll more then make up for him missing the wedding, if he does that is."

"Unfortunately, I think he is going to miss the wedding." said Wilson sadly "It's due on in minutes and he's not back. He maybe super fast but I don't think even his super speed will help him this time around."

"Let's not worry too much about blue dude and focus on our wedding cute stuff." said Mandy, tapping Wilson's nose playfully "Sonic can take care of himself so there's nothing to worry about."

"I hope Sonic does make it back." said Amy glumly "I was hoping he could see me in my bridesmaid outfit and comment on how pretty I look."

"Enough chit-chat already, it's time to start." said Mandy "Come on Wilson, our big moment's here."

With that said, Wilson and Mandy held hands and stared lovingly into each other's eyes as they walked into the church. They were met with the wonderful, chiming sound of organ music playing the traditional wedding theme as they walked inside…

Da, da, da duuuuum, da, da, da duuuuuuum…

Back at Chun-Nan, Sonic continued to pitifully struggle in his web bonds but try as he might, he was still going nowhere. Ruben just watched Sonic's pitiful performance with a bored expression on his face as if watching Sonic try to get free of the web was literally boring him to death now. As Sonic groaned and struggled some more, Ruben finally snapped at him, clearly having enough of watching this pitiful performance.

"Sonic, just give up already!" yelled Ruben "You can't break free! This is web you're in! Nothing can break free of web, not even a kung-fu master!"

"You maybe willing to give up Ruben but I'm not!" snapped Sonic "It's gonna take more then web to get me to give in!"

"I'm not willing to give up you obstinate little pinhead, I'm merely stating the facts." retorted Ruben "I'd love to try and break free but there's not point in trying because it's impossible to break free of web! I doubt even Zira the Ruthless, Conquering Storm or even Matilda could break outta this!"

"Oh come on Ruben, web can't be that strong!" grunted Sonic as he writhed about again.

"Sonic, those spiders can drag down people many times their size with their web." said Ruben "I should know, I've seen it happen once before when I was only five. Web is one of the strongest substances on Mobius and definitely the stickiest substance on Mobius, we're never getting outta this!"

"I don't care what you say about web Ruben, I don't give up, no matter how tough the situation is!" retorted Sonic "There'll be a way outta this and I'm gonna keep trying until I can find it!"

Then suddenly, Gina the Spider Queen stormed back into the room and stabbed the ground with her legs in order to catch Sonic's attention. Sonic stopped his pitiful struggling and he turned around to look at Gina. Ruben looked at Gina too and he pulled a worried face at her. Gina looked a little fed up right now. She had heard Sonic struggling and she could see what he was up to. The whole conversation nonsense was just a failed attempt to ruse her into leaving him alone so he could break free and escape.

"Time's up boy." muttered Gina "It's time for the feast. And don't do anymore of your feeble begging because I ain't buying it again."

Sonic just scowled at Gina as the spider crawled up the wall and stretched out a long thin leg towards the strand of web holding him upside down. Gina sliced the strand in two and caused Sonic to fall down to the ground. Sonic had shifted his body to the side slightly so he would land on his side instead of his head as falling on his head was not going to be pleasant for him at all. Sonic groaned as he felt pain flood up his side. Gina stood towering over Sonic and she

smiled wickedly at the webbed up hedgehog.

"Since my children come first, I'll let them eat first." she said "I'll eat your water panther friend while my children eat you. Oh children, it's dinner time!" she called out to her hideous offspring.

"No!" wailed Ruben "No please, don't eat Sonic!"

Gina ignored Ruben's pleas and stood watching as her children came out of their sleeping place and began to surround Sonic. Sonic just rolled onto his stomach and wriggled around, trying to push himself upright. He had one idea on how to escape this predicament that was hopefully going to work. Sonic pushed himself up onto his knees and the spider children all began to crawl up to him. Some spiders crawled up Sonic's body and they began to tear the web around his body away. Spiders do not eat their own web after all and in order to get to the juicy tender flesh of Sonic, they had to cut him open first and then feast. The spider children all began to tear the web off of Sonic with ease as they prepared to dine on him. Sonic smirked confidently at the spiders whereas Ruben looked like he was going to have a heart-attack at the sight of spider children crawling over Sonic and preparing to eat him alive. However, this was not going to happen. The moment the spider children finished tearing Sonic's web off, Sonic curled into a spiky ball and spin-dashed, throwing the spiders off of himself and sending them hurling across the room like rag dolls. The spiders hit the wall and the impact caused them to pass out. The spider children, despite how ravenously hungry they were, retreated in an instant. They were scared of the spin-dashing hedgehog and they didn't want him to hurt them. Sonic laughed at the spiders and he spin-dashed the horrified Gina in the face, knocking her over.

"Your stupid children should have just eaten me head first before un-webbing me you silly spider!" jeered Sonic "Now you're gonna see what happens if you got on the wrong side of Sonic the Hedgehog!"

Gina picked herself up and slashed at Sonic with one of her legs.

"Blasted, wretched, fast moving animal!" she cursed in annoyance "I'll tear you to shreds for that!"

Sonic jumped over Gina's slashing leg and he spin-dashed the spider directly in the abdomen. Gina squealed in pain and she looked at her throbbing abdomen. Sonic's attack had hurt it badly, so badly in fact that it felt painful just spinning a web. Gina tried to spin a web but the pain in her abdomen was too great and she winced as she tried to spin a web.

"Urgh! My abdomen!" she wailed "It hurts too much to spin a web! You stupid boy! You'll pay dearly for that!"

"Oh shut up already spider-girl!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing Gina yet again and clouting her into the wall "You're boring me to death here!"

Gina cried out in anguish as she was smacked against the wall by the spin-dashing Sonic. Now the spider queen was stunned, Sonic could see to freeing Ruben and fleeing for it. Sonic spin-dashed the strand of web holding Ruben upside down and Ruben fell down to the ground. He landed on his side and groaned in pain. Sonic landed beside Ruben and he tore the web open. It was much easier to tear web off of someone then actually break out of it when you got stuck in it. Ruben was now free of the web and Sonic and he could escape with their lives. Ruben picked himself up and he hugged Sonic graciously.

"Thank you so much Sonic!" cried Ruben "And here's me thinking we were done for!"

"Well Ruben, when the hedgehog's around, you should never give up hope." said Sonic with a thumbs up at the water panther "I'm an ace at getting people out of scraps after all."

"Sure was clever to react the moment the children tore your web away." said Ruben "That could set an example for all the other people of Chun-Nan who fear getting caught by spiders."

"I think I just got lucky because I can spin-dash." said Sonic "So, you still got that warp ring Knuckles gave you so you could come here?"

"I do indeed." said Ruben, taking the warp ring out of his glove and preparing to activate it "We can just warp ourselves back to New

Mobotropolis and get ready for Wilson and Mandy's wedding. I do hope we're not too late."

"I don't think we are Ruben." said Sonic "Give me the ring so I can warp us to the right place. I know exactly where to go after all."

Ruben was about to hand over the warp ring to Sonic until a strand of web shot out of nowhere and seized the warp ring. The web snatched the ring out of Ruben's hand and brought it to the spider that fired the web. This spider was a little taller then Gina and he was a lot more broader and scarier looking then her. His horns and spikes were longer, his eyes were red, his skin was an even darker crimson then Gina's and his fangs were longer and sharper then her's. He was Gina's husband but in the spider world, only the females have royal titles and such so he was just another spider, not a king spider or something like that. Gina picked herself up from Sonic's earlier onslaught and she sneered at Sonic.

"You know what blue boy?" said Gina smugly "You mess with the spider queen, you mess with my darling husband. I wouldn't get into a fight with him though, he's much stronger and faster then I am. Dak, eviscerate those bothersome bits of prey!"

"With pleasure your majesty." growled Dak, his voice was rather grand and gravely sounding at the same time.

Dak screeched a loud, horrible spider screech and he pounced on Sonic and Ruben. Sonic and Ruben both dived for cover as the enormous spider crashed onto the ground and picked himself up for another attack. Dak hissed at Sonic and Ruben and Sonic spin-dashed at him. Dak just whacked Sonic away with his leg and Sonic hit the ground in a rather awkward position. The attack had hurt him dearly and he felt like he could hardly move without pain flaring up his body. Dak crawled up to Sonic and he bared his glistening fang.

"The penalty of assaulting my wife is instant death hedgehog." growled Dak "And I shall have the honours of killing you."

He raised his scythe hands up above his head and prepared to slice Sonic to ribbons but Ruben leaped into the air and dropkicked Dak in the back of the head, knocking him down onto his front and giving

Sonic time to stand back up and get back into the battle. Dak picked himself up and snarled at Ruben. Ruben just bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to do battle.

"Touch Sonic and you get a water panther style pounding ugly butt!" yelled Ruben bravely.

"I hardly think a water panther who's missing his aqua-collar can give me a water panther style pounding." scoffed Dak.

"Don't you dare comment on my missing collar!" shouted Ruben.

With that said, he and Sonic both launched some attacks on Dak from front and behind respectively…

Back at New Mobotropolis, the wedding ceremony was finally beginning. The guests were all seated and the vicar stood at the counter, waiting to begin the marriage. The vicar was a Mobian badger who was dressed in traditional vicar attire. He wore a cross around his neck, hinting heavily at his religious character. Wilson and Mandy walked up to the counter hand in hand and they stood before the vicar. They looked around the room, looking at the guests they had seeing their marriage. Team Chaotix, Knuckles, Shade, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Cosmo were all sitting at the front row on the right side of them. On the left side sat Wilson and Mandy's parents, who had been de-roboticized after Tails had set Eggman's infamous worldwide roboticizer in reverse and de-roboticized the entire planet after Eggman had briefly roboticized the whole world. The four adults were crying happy tears at the sight of their respective children getting married at long last. Amy stood to the side and waited as the ceremony was about to commence. Tails stood with Amy and waited to give out the rings. The organ player stopped playing the music and the whole church fell into silence. The vicar got out the book of vows and prepared to begin the speech.

"People of New Mobotropolis." said the vicar "We have all gathered here to witness the marriage of two very special individuals. These two have risked life and limb to maintain the welfare of innocent lives anyway. These two take part in the ongoing crusade against our

enemy, the Eggman, and it is thanks to their courage, selflessness and dedication to duty that we can enjoy this very special day. They have risked so much for us so now we commend them for their efforts by celebrating their marriage this day…"

As the vicar droned, Wilson looked nervously at the entrance door, wondering if Sonic was gonna burst through it at the last minute and be here just in time. The door stayed shut. Sonic still hadn't come back yet. Wilson was beginning to wonder if Sonic was coming back at all. Amy and Tails seemed to be sharing the same expression as Wilson as they stood to the side and waited.

Marriage is the union of husband and wife in heart, body and mind. It is intended for their mutual joy – and for the help and comfort given on another in prosperity and adversity. But more importantly, it is a means through which a stable and loving environment may be attained.

"Through marriage, Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse make a commitment together to face their disappointments, embrace their dreams, realize their hopes, and accept each other's failures." the vicar continued "Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse will promise one another to aspire to these ideals throughout their lives together, through mutual understanding, openness, and sensitivity to each other.

We are here today, before God, because marriage is one of his most sacred wishes, to witness the joining in marriage of Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse. This occasion marks the celebration of love and commitment with which this man and this woman begin their life together. And now, through me, he joins you together in one of the holiest bonds."

He then turned to Mandy.

"Do you, Mandy Mouse, take Wilson the Dog to be your lawfully wedded husband?" he asked.

"I do." said Mandy with a happy tear in her eye.

"And do you, Wilson the Dog, take Mandy Mouse to be your lawfully

wedded wife?" asked the vicar.

"I…I do." said Wilson, fighting to keep himself from shaking.

"If anyone has any reason why these two should not be joined, let them speak now or forever hold his piece." said the vicar.

The church was silent and nobody said anything. After all, there was no reason Wilson and Mandy shouldn't be married so nobody could really say they shouldn't be married. The vicar continued.

"May I have the rings please?" he asked, looking at Tails.

Tails stepped shyly forward and he handed the vicar the cushion with the rings on. The vicar took the rings and gave them to Wilson and Mandy. Wilson took Mandy's hand and slipped the ring with the purple gem onto her finger.

"W-w-with th-this ring. I th-thee wed." said Wilson shakily.

Mandy proceeded to do the same to Wilson. She slipped the orange gemmed ring on his finger.

"With this ring. I thee wed." said Mandy.

This earned a chorus of awes from the crowd. The vicar then delivered the final sentence.

"I now pronounce you, husband and wife." said the vicar with a smile on his face "You may kiss the bride."

Wilson did not wait even for a minute. He and Mandy deeply embraced each other as the audience cheered for the newly wed couple. Some of the guests, one of them being Amy, broken down crying happy tears as this was such a happy and touching union. Wilson and Mandy were finally married and now they could live their lives as a happy couple…

…if only Sonic and Ruben could have seen this but right now, they're being perused by spiders! Dak swiped furiously at the

hedgehog and water panther with his long, fearsome legs but the two Mobians dodged the attack and Ruben gave Dak a ninja style kick in the head. Dak growled furiously and he rubbed his throbbing head. Sonic spin-dashed towards Dak but the enormous spider turned around and spun a web at him. Sonic ploughed through the spinning web with ease given how sharp he was in spin-dash mode, and he whacked Dak's abdomen as hard as he could. As Sonic hit Dak's abdomen, he left a long gash across the side, making Dak scream in pain. His abdomen began to leak a sickly green coloured liquid. That was his blood. Mobian spiders have green blood instead of red. Dak roared furiously at his cut abdomen and he tried to spin another web at Sonic but now his abdomen hurt too much to spin a web. He winced in pain and just decided to fight with his limbs. Sonic spin-dashed towards Dak again but Dak bounced out of his way by propelling himself over the hedgehog with his legs and Sonic hit the ground instead. Dak grabbed Sonic and he scuttled up the ceiling with Sonic in his arms. Then he threw Sonic directly into a wall. Sonic hit the wall and went straight through it. Sonic groaned in pain and he felt limp all over. Crashing into rock really does hurt after all. REALLY does hurt. Dak cackled at Sonic and he scuttled eagerly over to Sonic with his jaws wide open. Ruben leaped in and kicked Dak in the head. Then the water panther began to unleash a flurry of ninja style attacks on the spider. He chopped him, he punched him, he kicked him and then he uppercut him all at once. Dak squealed in pain and he stepped back. Ruben ran underneath Dak and jumped straight up into his belly. He hit Dak as hard as he could and the spider made a horrible pained noise. Ruben ran out from underneath Dak and sneered at him.

"Had enough gruesome?" he snickered.

"The only thing I've had enough of is your irritable resistance!" growled Dak, clutching his stomach "I may not be able to spin a web but I can still kill you and your hedgehog friend!"

"Oh yeah? Well you'll have to catch us first slowpoke!" taunted Ruben, leaped straight over Dak and pile-diving him in the back.

Dak was forced down onto the ground and Ruben ran up his abdomen. He was about to attack again until he noticed that his warp ring was stuck to Dak's abdomen after he'd stolen it from him

with a web attack. Ruben beamed happily and he was about to retrieve the warp ring until Gina pounced on him and knocked him off of Dak. Gina pinned Ruben down and tried to bite him but Ruben grabbed her neck and held her head away. A spider bite was fatal and Ruben did not want to get killed right now so he did his best to keep Gina's fangs away from him. Sonic picked himself up from that wall slam earlier and he noticed Ruben needed some help. He sped towards Gina and jumped on her back as if she was a trampoline. Gina gasped hoarsely and she began rubbing her throbbing back. Ruben was now free to get up and attack again. He roundhouse kicked Gina in the face and knocked her down onto her side. Dak had just stood up from Ruben's earlier attack and he wondered where the two Mobians were. Ruben ran behind Dak and snatched the warp ring right off of his abdomen. He called over to Sonic, who was preparing to deal with Dak.

"Sonic! I've got the warp ring back!" called Ruben.

"Ace Ruben! Toss it over to me and we can get outta here!" Sonic called back to him.

Dak lunged at him but Sonic dodged and kicked him in the shoulder. Ruben threw the warp ring over to Sonic and Sonic caught it in his hand. Sonic thought of Wilson's house in New Mobotropolis and he flicked the warp ring into the air. The ring spun around several times and then expanded to twice it's actual size. Sonic and Ruben eagerly dived through the warp ring, leaving Dak and Gina to stare at them in horror as their dinner escaped them. The warp ring shrunk down into nothingness the moment Sonic and Ruben disappeared. Gina roared in rage and she slashed Dak right across the face, leaving a long slash across his face that would later become a scar.

"You idiot! You let them escape!" shouted Gina.

"My apologies your highness." said Dak, bowing down to his wife "I beg for your forgiveness."

"You can have it if you can actually catch some prey." muttered Gina "Set up another spider trap and we'll see what we can catch this time."

Dak obeyed and he left the spider caves to carry out his wife's instructions…

As for Sonic and Ruben, the warp ring took them to Wilson's house just as Sonic wanted. The warp ring opened up and Sonic and Ruben exited it. After they left the warp ring, it shrunk down to size and Ruben tucked it away in his glove. Sonic ran over to the sofa and quickly put on his best man's outfit (he dresses as fast as he runs). Now Sonic was in uniform, he grabbed Ruben and ran out of the house as quick as he could. He knew the way to the church as he had had the grand tour of New Mobotropolis not long ago.

"Wait Sonic! I haven't got anything suitable to wear for this wedding!" cried Ruben as Sonic ran off at super speed.

"No time for that Ruben!" Sonic called over to him "The wedding must be starting any minute…"

He then screeched to a halt and stared at the church in surprise. Everybody was filing out of the church and heading to the nearby hotel for the wedding reception party. That meant the wedding was over and Sonic had missed it! Sonic moaned in annoyance to himself and he stomped the ground angrily.

"Damn it! We missed it!" moaned Sonic "Stupid spiders for keeping me at bay for a while!"

"Sonic, the spiders may have caused us to miss the wedding but that doesn't mean we've missed everything." said Ruben softly "We can join in at the wedding reception party instead. At least we were in time for that."

"You're right Ruben." said Sonic "So I guess I was in time for something at least. Also, the spider's capturing me was a good thing in some way. If they didn't capture me, I would never have found you Ruben."

"That's a good point." said Ruben "So in a way, we can thank the spiders. It's thanks to them that you found me and got me back

home safe and sound and just in time to wish Wilson and Mandy well."

"Yeah." said Sonic "And as promised, if I get any spare time, I'll help you look for your treacherous, aqua-collar stealing friend Ruben."

"I know." said Ruben "But now, we kick back and relax. Now let's meet everybody before we end up missing the wedding reception as well."

With that said, Sonic and Ruben ran over to the crowd and Sonic called over to Wilson and Mandy. The dog and mouse heard them coming and they turned to see Sonic and Ruben coming towards them. All of Sonic's friends saw them too and their faces lit up.

"Sonic!" cried Tails "You're back! And so is Ruben! You found him at last!"

"We were beginning to think you weren't going to come back!" trilled Amy.

"What kept you Sonic?" asked Knuckles "The wedding's over now."

"Spiders." muttered Sonic "Nuff said. I'm so sorry I missed the wedding Wilson and Mandy." he said to the newly married couple "I got caught by spiders and it took me a while to break out of their web and…"

"Blue dude, we understand." said Mandy softly "You had to find Ruben because he was missing and now he's back, that's all that matters. Besides, you're in time for the wedding reception at least so you didn't miss everything."

"I know, that's something good at least." said Sonic happily "So, now I'm here I may as well say "Congratulations you two" and "Hope you enjoy the married life"."

"Thank you Sonic." said Wilson "Now let's go and enjoy the reception party shall we? This ceremony's not over yet."

With that said everybody went on to the hotel for the wedding reception party…

Miles away from Mobius, a huge, colossal, malevolent spaceship cruised through the empty void known as space and headed off to goodness knows where. The spaceship was very intimidating looking and anyone seeing this would faint with shock. It was heavily armoured in shiny chrome and had many weapons and four wings. It's jet boosters were unmatched by any ship in the galaxy. This ship acted as a home-away-from-home for it's insidious occupants. The pilot of this ship was an alien robotical creature sitting in a throne who's appearance as unlike any ever seen before. His head was vaguely emerald shaped with four horns, two on the top of his head and two from the side, a sharp pointed beak in place of a mouth, three spikes on each shoulder, a V-shaped visor with a holographic reptilian eye in the centre, a backpack like structure with two bull-shaped horns protruding from the top and chicken-walker legs with spiked feet. He wore a ragged, navy blue shoulder cape on his right shoulder. This alien was the leader of an insidious race, a race dedicated to conquest and power and right now, he was marking his next target. Beside him stood another alien robot who was the second in command of the race. This one had horns that grew down the sides of his head and curved inwards and pointed at his torso, chicken walked legs, two sharp claws on each foot, a differently built torso with different details to the leader, spikes on the top of his head and a fierce looking mouth. His most distinguishing feature were his wings. His wings were metallic silver and razor sharp around all edges and he could use them beautifully in flight and he could fly silently and stealthily. As the ship cruised through space, winged robot pointed at the scanners that were picking up something.

"Devion my lord." growled the winged robot, his voice was gravely sounding and he sounded like someone who was about to rip your head off "Our scanners are picking up another planet in this region of space. This is a planet called…Mobius."

The lead robot, who's name apparently was Devion (pronounced dee-vee-on) looked at the scanners and his visor narrowed into an evil slit of pure devilishness. He tapped the arms of his throne softly and he turned to his second in command.

"Mobius shall be our next target." purred Devion, his voice was low and cold sounding and made him sound rather sinister "Set the ship's course to Mobius Raicor. We shall now add Mobius to my universe-sized collection."

"Yes Devion." said Raicor (pronounced rye-core).

Raicor set the ship to go to Mobius and Devion began crooning to himself.

"Fourteen planets have been successfully subjugated under my planet conquering reign." said Devion lowly "Now I'm going to make it fifteen. Mobius shall be the next planet to succumb to the might of the Devatron race…"

Mobius maybe having a happy time right now, but that happiness was about to end once the Devatrons came to Mobius and invaded it, hoping to conquer it and make it a Devatron paradise along with all the other planets who have fell to their might…

Look out Sonic! Looks like you've got aliens coming your way! Who are the Devatrons and what are they here for? Join me next time for the titanic milestone spectacular, Story 100 as the Devatron saga begins!

Before anyone starts wondering "Why are you using the Devatrons again when you've done a trilogy about them already?" I'll tell you. The Devatrons were intended to be my greatest villains ever. But due to my incompetence as a writer before I got better, I executed them very badly and made them a bunch of punchable, unlikable Mary-Sues. So, I'm giving them another chance in this story and I'm going to make them better villains, take away their upgrading abilities and make it so you can actually kill them, it's just hard to do so, and they have a more plausible weakness. Not to mention I'm giving them a reason for their motivation. Trust me, the Devatrons will be much better villains this time around and they will put the Devatron trilogy versions of the characters to shame. I used Marik again in this story to better develop him and improve his

character so now I'm doing the same with the Devatrons. I h ope you all understand this.

The Devatron Invasion

I...am...INCREDIBLE! It's a fact! I'm incredible! I mean, I'm on my ONE HUNDREDTH episode of Heroes of Mobius! How cool is that? (throws a wild party and begins disco-dancing to "Celebrate the Times") Well given how easy it is to come up with ideas for a Sonic story, it's not that hard to believe really. Oh well, I've made it to my fourth milestone and I'm sure to make it to my fifth milestone! Until then, let's enjoy this milestone phenomena which is the beginning of what is destined to be one of this story's most memorable sagas...

Story 100: *The Devatron Invasion*

A few days had passed since the Devatron ship had picked up Mobius on it's scanners and now the ship had arrived at Mobius at long last. The huge, colossal, chrome beast of a spaceship entered Mobius' atmosphere, the tips of it's wings glowing a bright red tinge as it began to pass through the atmosphere. The ship made it through Mobius' atmosphere and now it was flying through the bright blue skies of Mobius and looking for a suitable place touch down. The ship was flying over Megapolis, the hiding place of Dr. Eggman, the enemy of Mobius and all there was around were nothing but empty plains that stretched on for miles around. This was easily a good place to settle down in as there were no witnesses around and there was no signs of civilization so the Devatrons shouldn't expect a resistance from the locals so quickly. The Devatron ship hovered over the plains of Megapolis and then it slowly began to descend down to the ground. It's engines roared loudly as the ship descended and prepared to touch down. The ship gently touched down onto the ground and the engines died down into silence. The Devatrons had landed and their invasion was about to begin. The Devatron leader, Devion, stood up from his throne and peered through the windows of the ship and observed the scenery around him. The ship had landed on rocky plains with not much around and no signs of life. They had picked an excellent spot to camp out in.

Devion's V-shaped visor narrowed down to a thin, evil slit that looked like it was sharp enough to cut through something.

"So this is Mobius, one of the most notorious planets in this region of space." mused Devion as he surveyed the view "Looks very similar to other planets I've conquered. It's description matches that of the planet known as Earth almost to a T too. The only difference being inhabitants. This will be an enjoyable takeover I can see already."

He stopped looking out of the windows and he turned around to face his second in command, Raicor, the only Devatron in existence to have wings.

"Raicor, is *the Doombringer* stabilized and fully operational?" he barked.

"Yes Devion." said Raicor with a bow " *The Doombringer* is ready for campus activity and all systems are fully functional and awaiting use my lord."

"Excellent Raicor." said Devion dryly "Now my take over of this planet begins and I can add it to my collection of conquered worlds."

He walked away from the windows and wondered over to a Devatron who manned the controls to the ship, apparently known as *The Doombringer* . This Devatron was armoured in chrome much like Devion and Raicor were but he wasn't as fearsome looking as they were. He had the same arms as Devion as Raicor but everything else was different. He had three claws on each foot, different details on his torso and legs to Devion and Raicor and on his back, he had a pair of cannons that were spiked at the tips and looked like they packed a lot of firepower. His head was an unusual shape and had bull-shaped horns on either side. In place of a mouth, he had a mouth plate that moved up and down when he spoke. This Devatron was fanatically loyal to Devion, so loyal in fact it's actually kind of creepy in some sense.

"Tronic, activate *The Doombringer* 's satellite scrambling device." ordered Devion "I'm ready to send my message to the people of this world."

"At once my glorious lord Devion." droned Tronic, his voice all musical sounding much like Soundwave from *Transformers* .

Tronic pressed a button on the control pad and a satellite dish telescoped out from the top of the ship and formed the familiar shape of a satellite dish. After it had finished forming it's shape, it pointed up at the sky and began to fire out rays of discs out from the point in the centre of the dish. Devion cackled darkly to himself and he sat down in his control throne as the satellite dish did it's work.

"Every television system, every image projector, every computing device and every communications device on this planet will be displaying my image on them." crooned Devion "And everyone on this planet will hear what cryptic words I have to say to them. I do hope that they're willing to surrender to me. If not, then I'll be forced to slay them all. I hope they offer a good challenge, I like a nice long battle before I conquer a good planet."

Devion was going to be in for one heck of a crusade with Sonic and friends but given his superior technology and build, he was likely to win this one and Mobius would be his along with the other fourteen planets he had under his nefarious control…

The New Mobotropolis Coliseum was packed to the brim with excited attendees as tonight's show prepared to begin. A few days after the successful marriage of Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse, two of New Mobotropolis' most notorious Royal Fighters, world famous rock singer Sandy the Ferret had decided to host a tribute concert in honour of the R.F.S. and all the good they've done for Mobius over the years. All the Royal Fighters were there, including those from other regions on Mobius. There were the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, The Megapolis Royal Fighters, The Northern Royal Fighters, The Downunda Royal Fighters, The Grand Metropolis Royal Fighters and even the Adabat Royal Fighters. They were all in the audience and waiting for the tribute to begin. Even Queen Sally Acorn and her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx and even Sonic's good friends Team Chaotix were attending this concert that was destined to go down in history as one of the greatest concerts ever. The tribute was going to consist of songs written especially for the

R.F.S. and then the Royal Fighters were all going to go on stage and give a speech to the crowd. Sonic the Hedgehog, the super speedy hero of Mobius was looking forward to this tribute. People would be cheering for him and congratulating him on his heroism and selflessness. He couldn't wait for the speech too, he had a good idea on what to say to the crowd and what he said would be an inspiration to everybody. Sonic was sitting in-between his best friend Tails the twin-tailed fox and his would-be love interest Amy Rose. All his other friends were here too and sitting on either side of him in a line. They were eagerly awaiting the concert to start too.

"Can you believe that a famous singer's throwing a tribute for the R.F.S.?" asked Tails.

"Not really lil' bro." said Sonic casually with a snide smile on his face "I had a feeling we'd get songs written about us someday and from the looks of things, we are."

"This is so exciting!" shrieked Amy happily "I'm a fan of Sandy the Ferret's music and now she's gonna sing all about us! I'm so buying the album when this concert's over! They're selling the album in the souvenir stands after the show after all and I'm buying it instantly!"

"I think I'll get myself a copy too." said Sonic "Give Royal HQ something awesome to play when we're chilling out in the rest room."

"What's good about this concert is that it's a tribute to our heroism and nobody will be wrecking it." said Tails brightly "Especially Eggman as he's gone back to his hidey hole. I bet when he hears people listening to Sandy's songs, he'll go berserk."

"I can just imagine his face right now." sniggered Sonic "I look forward to the second song in the concert which is titled "We Hate The Egg Man". That song's gonna make us all laugh out loud I bet!"

"Of course it will!" laughed Amy "It's gonna take the mess outta that fat dumbo Eggman! I bet that's the song I'll enjoy the most!"

"I know that's the song I'm gonna enjoy the most!" laughed Tails "I bet you're gonna enjoy it too Cosmo." he said to his girlfriend Cosmo

the Seedrian who was sitting on his other side.

"It's not really nice to enjoy the mockery of others, but Dr. Eggman doesn't deserve to have a nice song written about him and nobody likes him so there's no harm done at least." said Cosmo thoughtfully "I bet this concert's going to be enjoyable."

"It's all about us Cosmo, of course it's going to be enjoyable." said Sonic reassuringly "And it looks like it's about to begin. Here comes Sandy the Ferret."

Everybody focused their attention on the stage and surely enough, they saw Sandy the Ferret waltzing up onto the stage, looking very confident and looking very ready for this concert. Sandy was a coca brown ferret and she wore a red crop top, a navy blue skirt and red high heeled shoes. She wore glittering silver earrings and had green eye shadow on her eyelids. It was pretty easy to see how this singer ended up getting so famous. Sandy walked up to the microphone and she spoke into it.

"Good evening people of New Mobotropolis." she said "It's so lovely to see all you wonderful people here, especially the Royal Fighters themselves who are eagerly anticipating this tribute that I have put together for them out of the kindness of my own heart. Well now you're all here, it's time to bring the house down tonight! Are you all ready to ROCK?"

"YEAAAAHHH!" squealed the crowd.

"I said ARE YOU READY TO ROCK?" screamed Sandy even louder.

" **YEAAAAAHHHH!** " squealed the crowd even louder.

"That's what I like to hear!" cried Sandy "Now let's get on with the rocking and the rolling already! DJ! Hit it!"

But before any music could begin, the huge TV screen that loomed above the stage and projected images of the stage stopped flashing and began to go fuzzy instead. Sandy looked up at the screen and wondered what was going on. The crowd stared in wonder at the

stage and began murmuring amongst each other about the static screen.

"Oy! What's going on here?" yelled Sandy "Faulty wiring job again?"

Then suddenly, the screen flashed back into life but instead of the stage, it was showing an image of Devion's sleek, shiny, evil face. Thanks to satellite scrambling device, everybody on Mobius was seeing and hearing this. Everybody gasped in horror at the sight of the chrome monster and Sonic stared hard at it, wondering what it was.

"Attention people of Mobius." Devion's voice boomed around the coliseum like thunder "I have hacked into your satellite systems in order to deliver this message to you."

The crowd began murmuring amongst each other and they waited for Devion to begin his testimony.

"I am Devion, leader of the Devatron race." Devion continued in his chilling, deep voice "Also know as Devion the Dreaded. I come to your world to claim it as my own. I have fourteen worlds already under my control and yours will join them. You shall not be harmed though. If you relinquish the planet to me calmly and peacefully, you will be allowed to co-exist peacefully amongst my Devatrons. Any resistance will be met with strict and merciless penance and all fighting me will ensure is your destruction. However, as I'm a lenient being, I'm giving you the chance to prove that your world doesn't need my Devatrons to improve it. Send your mightiest warrior to me and I shall challenge the warrior in a battle. If he wins then I shall leave this planet and go home to my own world, the chrome planet of Deaveron. If I win then I commence with my ambitions. Here are my coordinates," the screen changed from an image of Devion to a map displaying his current coordinates to the crowd of Mobians and a few seconds later, the screen changed back to Devion's face "If you're valorous enough to challenge me then send your warrior to these coordinates and we shall fight for the right to ruling Mobius. Take your time, I'm a very patient robot and I'll happily wait for you to make your minds up."

With that said, Devion's face disappeared and the screen went static

again and then flashed back into life, completely back to normal and looking like nothing had happened. Now Devion's message was over, the crowd began murmuring amongst each other. Devion had just given them a cryptic message and now they were debating on what to do about it.

"What should we do?"

"Should we surrender to the scary robot?"

"We should kick his shiny metal ass!"

"But he says we can live along side him when he conquers the planet so he won't kill us."

"Mobius doesn't belong to him! He can get his own planet! He already has fourteen under his rule!"

"But he says he'll kills us if we resist."

"He won't! We'll kill him first!"

"He might be too powerful for us! He has fourteen worlds under his rule so what chance do we stand against him?"

Upon the row of seats where the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters all sat in a line together, Sonic and friends began conversing between each other about this pressing situation.

"Well, looks like some scary robot that ISN'T built by Dr. Eggman wants to take over our world huh?" muttered Sonic "In his dreams! This Devion guy can pack up his bags and go home! We're not surrendering Mobius to him!"

"But Sonic, he says he has fourteen planets under his control!" exclaimed Tails "That's one serious bad guy if he has fourteen worlds at his beck and call and serving him like there's no tomorrow! If he can conquer fourteen planets then what hope do we have against him?"

"Tails, we've taken on bad guys much worse then those Devatron jerks." said Sonic "We can take them easily. Besides, he's a robot.

And what happens when you pit a robot against me huh?"

"You spin-dash it to smithereens!" squealed Amy happily.

"That's right." said Sonic smugly "Those Devatrons are dead with me on the case. But if they're as bad as they say they are then maybe I should bring the Chaos Emeralds as a power boost just in case."

"So are you gonna fight Devion for Mobius then?" asked Tails.

"You bet I am!" laughed Sonic "I've been keeping this world safe from Eggman's bone-headed schemes for months on end! The Devatrons are just gonna be exercise to keep me on top form while Eggman's hiding! You come with me and get the Chaos Emeralds while I go to Megapolis and take Devion's stupid challenge. When I signal you like this," Sonic gave Tails a thumbs up sign "That means I need the Chaos Emeralds and you give them to me. Got it?"

"Every bit of it Sonic." said Tails "Let's go and kick some Devatron butt already!"

"Now that's my kind of talk!" laughed Sonic "Let's do it to it Tails!"

With that said, Sonic and Tails leaped out of their seats and headed out of the coliseum. Sonic sped out through the entrance gates whereas Tails just flew over the stadium. Everybody watched as the two headed off to face Devion and determine the fate of Mobius. Everybody had total faith in Sonic given how he's the hero of the planet and he never fails to save everybody, he was going to have this in the bag. But since the audience had no way of seeing this fight though, all they could do was hold their breath and wait for any updates from Sonic and Tails…

While Sonic headed off for Megapolis and Tails flew to Downunda to get the Chaos Emeralds, Devion stood on top of *The Doombringer* and he awaited his challenger with Raicor and Tronic standing beside him. His ragged, navy blue shoulder cape blew gracefully in the gentle winds that were blowing through Megapolis. That cape

belonged to a leader on one of the fourteen planets he'd conquered and just wearing it made him feel powerful and intimidating. As Devion waited for his challenger, he began to think about his planet conquering reign that had been going on for years and years.

"Tengon, Krococ, Springfield, Mov, Kliptos, Koron, Alderoth, Cygnus X-25, Cyrus, Sram, Soleo, Seerah-Ix and Horaak. All under my nefarious control." purred Devion "And soon, this planet shall be added to my list. Mobius looks promising at least, I've heard many legends about it, one of them being the planet has seven mystical gems of unfathomable power. Now we're here, we can see how true those legends are."

"I bet this planet will be just as easy to take over as all the others." said Raicor gruffly "The only planet that's offered us any challenge was Krococ and even then, the planet's guardians, the Knights of Krococ, fell at our very might!"

"Do not underestimate a planet that doesn't look like it has much to offer Raicor." said Devion coldly "Mobius is one of the most noteworthy worlds in this region of space so it must be a planet that offers a good challenge for us. I hope the people of this planet are worth sparing and using as slaves for my vast army as I set one up here."

"I wonder what the inhabitants of this planet are like." thought Raicor "Are they a species that offer us a challenge or are they just pathetic little beings much like the residents of Springfield?"

"We'll hopefully find that out for ourselves when the people send us their mightiest warrior and I fight it for the planet." crooned Devion "I'll be amazed if they buy my ruse of leaving the planet if I lose the battle. If I do lose then I'll just order my entire squadron onboard *The Doombringer* to eliminate this warrior they send. After all, it takes many men to take down just one of us so one man will not have much chance against a whole squadron of Devatrons. So either way, no matter the turnout of this battle, I win."

"You are most certainly correct Devion my lord." droned Tronic in his musical voice "We Devatrons always win our battles in the end. True we may get setbacks and we may get some here but we always win

in the end."

"We do indeed." said Devion agreeably "I'm amazed as to how successful we've been in this planet conquering reign. True there maybe someone out there better then me and I may meet my match some day but until that day, I shall continue to make the universe suffer for trying to destroy us and rob us of our rightful place as the supreme beings in the universe!"

"I couldn't agree more Devion!" agreed Raicor "We were once a race devoted to good and bringing peace to the universe and our invulnerability, intelligence and technology made us quite capable of fulfilling our duties and what was the universe's response? They tried to destroy us and prove we weren't so tough! The universe envied us and they ended up destroying our great King Hardigm (pronounced har-dime)! The universe doesn't want us so why should we bother doing our bit for the people of the universe if they don't even like us?"

"You are right on that Raicor." muttered Devion "And after Hardigm's unfortunate passing at the hands of the Knights of Krococ, I began my planet conquering reign and now here we are, fourteen worlds subjugated and becoming Devatron paradises as we speak. The universe brought this misery on itself after all. "Turnabout is Fair Play" as they say…"

"Devion, there is a rapidly moving object heading towards the ship." droned Tronic "Speed calculation: Seven-hundred and Sixty-five miles per hour."

"How is a life form of any kind able to operate and motion at such a blisteringly fast pace?" blurted Devion "It doesn't even seem remotely possible for anything in the galaxy to move that fast without the aid of transport! Looks like Mobius has a right to have such a famous reputation amongst the planets of this region of space."

Devion, Raicor and Tronic all wondered over to the side of *The Doombringer* and they looked into the distance where they saw a dust of cloud coming towards the ship. It was, of course, Sonic the Hedgehog. He could see *The Doombringer* and he headed towards it at top speed. Devion watched him running and the Devatron

leader was surprised to see a small furry being like Sonic move on his feet so fast. He began to wonder how it was even possible. Maybe after he defeated Sonic in battle he could dissect him and find out how he worked. Sonic stopped running and he jumped straight up into the air. He landed on a sloped area of *The Doombringer* 's hull and he ran up to the top of the ship where Devion, the contender, stood waiting for him. Sonic hurled up into the air, did an amazing somersault and landed down on his feet right in front of Devion and his cronies. Sonic stood up straight and dusted himself off.

"Hello there Devatrons, no need to comment on my entrance, I already know how good it was." said Sonic snidely.

"So are you the planet's contender for it's freedom then blue furred being of fast operating nature?" purred Devion, glaring at Sonic with his evil red visor and holographic eye.

"You bet I am Devion!" said Sonic smugly "I'm Sonic, Sonic the Hedgehog, Hero of Mobius and the kicker of many evil butts! Believe me, I've kicked so many evil butts in my life I think my sneakers are close to getting worn out!"

"Sonic the Hedgehog." said Devion dryly "So I take it this is an animal inhabited world is it?"

"Depends on your definition of "animals" really." said Sonic "I say people, others say animals but I don't care what I'm called really."

"Indeed." purred Devion "And I like your extremely fitting name. "Sonic". A name like that tells me that you can move at an incredibly fast motion. And seeing you arrive here, I can see how fast you can move. Such a warrior is to be commended for having this kind of attribute. But I'm not here to flatter you, I'm here to challenge you for the fate of your world. Are you ready for this challenge Sonic?"

"I'm ready for anything Devion!" yelled Sonic bravely "You have no idea what's coming to you!"

"And you have no idea what's coming to you." said Devion coldly.

"I have some idea." joked Sonic "Anyways, I thought I'd warn you about something. I have a special nack for smashing robots so you'd better brace yourselves for this. It might hurt a little."

With that said, Sonic spin-dashed towards Devion. The Devatron leader just stood there with his arms folded and he waited for him to come. Sonic hit Devion and…bounced directly off of his armour! The attack didn't do any damage to Devion! All it did was make him stagger a little! Sonic landed on his feet and he stared at Devion in surprise. He couldn't believe his attack hadn't worked. The Devatron leader laughed hauntingly at him.

"Valiant assault hedgehog and I must praise you on the power and force behind it." crowed Devion "But I am nigh-invulnerable. Your attacks, no matter how vigorous will not penetrate me. And whether we can be penetrated or not is our secret. You will have to find it out yourself hedgehog as I am not an unintelligent being who gives away vital secrets out of sheer stupidity."

"Oh man!" muttered Sonic "A being with nigh-invulnerability? Geez, and I thought this was gonna be easy! Well this isn't the first surprise I've head in my life! Oh well, invulnerable or not, I'll still stomp on you Devion! I've come out on top of every conflict I've had in my life time and I'll come out on top of this one!"

"That will be determined by this very battle." said Devion coldly "Let us begin so we can determine the fate of this planet and who gets it."

Sonic did not wait to be asked twice. He charged towards Devion and leaped over him. Devion however leaped up after him just as the hedgehog sailed over his head and he grabbed Sonic in his two thumbed hands. He then proceeded to slam Sonic down onto the fuselage of *The Doombringer* as hard as he could. He didn't let go of Sonic after that attack. He swung Sonic over onto his back and then onto his stomach. He then threw Sonic a good distance across the fuselage of *The Doombringer* and the hedgehog landed painfully on his back and skidded across the chrome bodywork. Sonic came to a halt and he picked himself up, rubbing himself better.

"Nice attack Devion." said Sonic "But I'm just getting warmed up!"

Devion ran towards Sonic with his right fist bared. He tried to punch Sonic but Sonic leaped out of his way, causing him to miss and punch the chrome plating beneath his feet instead. Before Devion had chance to regain himself and prepare for another attack, Sonic spin-dashed him from behind and knocked him over. He maybe invulnerable but it isn't impossible to knock him down after all. Devion picked himself up just as Sonic heeled around and spin-dashed towards him from the front this time. Devion bent over backwards and left Sonic to hurl over him like a football whizzing over the goal net. Sonic uncurled from his spin-dash and landed on his feet, skidding to a halt and he swerved around for another attack. However, Devion managed to get the drop on him this time. He uppercut Sonic into the air and the hedgehog hurled across *The Doombringer's* topsidein a rainbow arch. He landed painfully on his face and he got a nasty scrape on his cheek from the shiny chrome plating on the ship's fuselage. Sonic took a pause from the battle so he could rub his cheek better, giving Devion time to run towards him and prepare for another attack. Devion leaped into the air and stretched out his legs. He shot down towards the ground feet first and he almost hit Sonic but Sonic rolled out of his way, causing him to crash into the chrome plating and leave a little dent on the spot he'd just landed on. Devion briefly paused from the battle so he could scowl at the dent he'd left on *The Doombringer* and he turned around, facing Sonic directly in the eye. The two bent down in battle ready stances and preparing to lunge at each other. Sonic lunged first by lashing out a punch but Devion grabbed his fist and held him into place. He then sharply twisted Sonic's arm to one side, so sharply in fact it pulled him over onto his side. Sonic yanked his hand out of Devion's grip and he picked himself up, only to get punched across the fuselage again. Sonic landed on his back but he quickly flung himself back onto his feet and he zoomed towards Devion. He jumped up and dropkicked Devion directly in the forehead. Devion staggered backwards and Sonic spin-dashed him in the gut, knocking him down onto his back and sending him skidding across the topside of *The Doombringer* . Devion picked himself up and Sonic jumped over him. As he sailed over he grabbed Devion's cape and pulled it over his head, covering his visor and blinding him for a moment. Devion yanked the cape off of his head and he proceeded to remove the item of clothing altogether so Sonic couldn't distract him again. Sonic lunged forward with a

kick to the head but all the kick did was make Devion grumble more then hurt him. Sonic then punched Devion's stomach…and hurt his fists. Sonic sucked on it tenderly to ease the pain, giving Devion the perfect opportunity to knee him in the face and send him falling backwards. Before Sonic could get back up, Devion kicked him as hard as he could. Sonic was thrown over onto his stomach and he groaned in pain. Devion then pinned his arm down with his foot and glowered at him with his evil red visor.

"Excellent fighting skills hedgehog." said Devion dryly "Your super speed plays a big part in your attacks being strikingly effective but to actually be able to control yourself at such speed and use it to full effect is definitely an effort that even we Devatrons cannot ignore."

"Thanks…I suppose." muttered Sonic "You don't fight so bad yourself. Although it's kinda cheating how you're invulnerable and everything I mean, how can I defeat you if I can't even hurt you?"

Devion didn't answer Sonic. He wasn't the kind of villain who relies heavily on mid-battle banter and annoying quips a lot to annoy his victims. He only spoke if he was commenting on someone's fighting skills whenever he was in battle. Devion just reached into the structure on his back and drew out a huge, sharp, golden sword with a curved blade and a chrome X shape near the tip. He rose the sword above his head and then tried to cleave Sonic in two with it. Sonic jumped in fright and he moved out of the way and fast. Devion growled in annoyance and he slashed at Sonic with the sword. He missed as Sonic jumped away but Devion swung the sword at Sonic again and struck the chrome as he tried to slice him in two. Sonic leaped over Devion in a graceful manner but Devion slashed at him and nicked him on one of his quills. Sonic landed on his feet and he felt one of this quills, which had been slightly trimmed now.

"Hey! That's not fair!" cried Sonic "Who says you get a sword and I don't?"

"I never said you didn't get a weapon Sonic." noted Devion "You just didn't bring one. And besides, when did playing fair ever win you anything? I take full advantage over my opponents and that's why I defeat them so easily. Given your super speed, my sword is rather obsolete in this match so it'd be better to save it for later."

So Devion sheathed the sword and went back to hand-to-hand combat. After all, why use a weapon if you can't hit somebody with it? Sonic was too fast so it'd be better to use the sword when he was beaten and pinned down or something. Now Devion had sheathed his weapon, Sonic went back on the offensive. He charged towards Devion and he socked him directly in the face. Devion staggered for a moment but he regained himself and he pecked Sonic on the forehead with his beak. Sonic screamed in pain and clutched the bleeding cut on his forehead that Devion had just left after that attack. Devion then slugged Sonic as hard as he could in the stomach. A punch from Devion was like getting whacked in the stomach with a crowbar, only worse. After that crippling stomach blow, Devion kicked upwards and knocked Sonic onto his back. Then Devion stomped on Sonic and kicked him across the fuselage. Sonic crashed into a structure on top of *The Doombringer* and he groaned in pain, wondering what had just hit him. He rubbed his head better and tried to pick himself up. He managed to push himself into a sitting position but that was all he managed to do before Devion lashed out and grabbed him by his neck. Sonic gagged and choked as Devion hoisted him up to his height. Devion narrowed his visor down to an evil slit of unfathomable villainy and if he had a mouth, he'd probably be smirking right now. Sonic looked nervous and his ears drooped back against his head. Was Devion going to kill him? Devion laughed softly at Sonic and then he proceeded to throw Sonic clean off *The Doombringer* ! Sonic plummeted down to the ground, screaming as he did so. Devion watched as Sonic plummeted down from the top of his chrome vessel and headed towards the ground. *The Doombringer* was a high up ship and falling off of it and down to the ground below would easily kill somebody. But, unfortunately for Devion, Sonic had some help coming. Tails, who had gone all the way to Downunda and gotten the Chaos Emeralds, was flying to Megapolis and he was just coming to *The Doombringer* and he noticed Sonic plummeting down to the ground. Tails dropped the emeralds and he quickly flew over to Sonic and caught him in his hands. Devion's visor widened at the sight of assistance for the hedgehog but he kept his cool and watched on, waiting to see what was going to happen next. Tails lowered Sonic down to the ground and Sonic smiled weakly at him.

"Just in time…Tails." said Sonic feebly "You saved my life."

"You're welcome Sonic." said Tails "I've got the Chaos Emeralds for you. Do you need them now?"

"Yes." said Sonic "Devion's a lean, mean, nigh-invulnerable machine and he's a keen fighter too. I can't defeat him!"

"D-D-Devion's invulnerable?" squeaked Tails "Oh no! No wonder you can't beat him! Invulnerable means it's impossible to hurt or damage somebody so you'll definitely need the Chaos Emeralds for this!"

"Yeah, I'm invulnerable in super form and Devion's only nigh-invulnerable." said Sonic "That makes me the stronger opponent. Let's kick those Devatron jerks outta Mobius before they can claim it as their own!"

With that said, Sonic ran over to the dropped Chaos Emeralds and he tapped into their power. He willed for the power of the Chaos Emeralds and the seven glowing gems levitated off the ground and began to circle around Sonic slowly and steadily. The emeralds then began to pick up speed as they circled around Sonic and they spun so fast, they became a rainbow blur around Sonic. Then the emeralds disappeared and Sonic became the golden-furred, red-eyed entity known as Super Sonic once again. Super Sonic smirked happily and he flew to the top of *The Doombringer* . The Devatrons stared in horror at Sonic and they backed away fearfully. Super Sonic touched down and stood before Devion, Raicor and Tronic with a rather evil look in his eyes, an unusual look for Sonic to have.

"What do ya think Devion?" sneered Super Sonic "Cool isn't it?"

"So you use seven mystical gems to turn super." mused Devion "Very good…the rumours were true after all. Mobius will definitely be an excellent prize for me when I conquer it."

"Fat chance of that Deva-freaks!" yelled Super Sonic "I'm invulnerable in this form and super powered! You've got no chance against me in this form Devion! Give up while you still can!"

"I've heard of planets that have mystical relics, artefacts and gems that power them up in unimaginable ways." said Devion coldly

"That's why for future landings, I've installed a little contingency plan in this ship…"

He then turned sharply to Tonic and barked at him "Now Tronic!"

Tronic obeyed and he pulled a little stick device from his waist and pressed a button on it. After pressing the button, two cannons extended out from the inside of *The Doombringer* and they pointed directly at Super Sonic. Super Sonic stared at the cannons, wondering what on Mobius they were and the cannons fired at him. But they weren't laser beams, they were electrical energy beams and they zapped Super Sonic. Somehow, the beams were actually hurting him though. Super Sonic cried out in pain and Tails watched the whole scene in horror. He was so shocked he thought his heart would give out on him.

"Urgh! Aaaargh! What…are…you…doing…nugh! Devion?" grunted Super Sonic.

"Draining your power." purred Devion wickedly "These are energy siphoning turrets. Designed to drain anything mystical, enchanted or powerful of it's power and render them useless to anyone. Such a pity, those emeralds of yours might have been good prizes for me."

The energy siphoning turrets continued their evil work on poor Super Sonic. The super powered hedgehog was being drained of all power and the Chaos Emeralds were beginning to lose their colour as they were being robbed of their magnificent power and energy. Tails decided he couldn't stand by and let this happen to Sonic so he flew over to one of the turrets and desperately looked for a way to sabotage them. But he didn't have any tools with him so he wouldn't be able to sabotage them at all. The turrets were free to commence with their evil function and Tails was powerless to do anything about it. All he could do was watch helplessly as the Chaos Emeralds were drained dry of their power. The turrets eventually finished doing their work and Sonic, who was now back to normal, collapsed onto his knees and then fell forward onto his hands. He began to pant heavily, relieved that this torture was over at last but it wasn't all's well for him. He was too weak to continue the battle and the Chaos Emeralds had been drained completely dry of their Chaos Energy. The beautiful sparkling emeralds had lost their radiant colour and

light too. They were a lifeless grey colour and when you touched them, all you felt was just the glass the emeralds were made of, nothing more. Sonic picked up one of the Chaos Emeralds and he stared at it in horror.

"Y-y-you…you drained the…Chaos Emeralds of their…energy!" cried Sonic.

"How observant of you to notice the obvious hedgehog." said Devion sarcastically as he picked up his cape and reattached it to his shoulder "And what's really wonderful is that once an item of mystical and magical nature is drained of it's energy, the energy is recycled into fuel for *The Doombringer* so I must commend you for giving us some more fuel for our ship."

"So you're telling us that the Chaos Emerald's energy is being recycled into fuel for your vessel?" shrieked Tails "Your tech's quite amazing isn't it?"

"Tails! Don't flatter them!" snapped Sonic.

"Yes, our technology is far beyond anything you'll see on other worlds." gloated Devion "We had glorious tech since the day the Devatrons first came into existence and now it continues to be of use to us to this day. Now then," he glared down at Sonic and he picked him up "It appears that the victor of this battle is me hedgehog. Therefore, I get to commence with my ambitions. You and your twin-tailed friend who you refer to as "Tails" had better go home and give everybody the bad news. Tell them to prepare for my take over and tell them not to resist because if they don't, I'll allow them to live and if they do, I'll slaughter every one of you without hesitance!"

"Oh Devion please!" begged Tails "We can't give up the planet to you! We've been fighting hard for Mobius' freedom for months, we can't just throw that all away and let you have our world! That'd be disrespectful to everybody on Mobius! Not to mention, we're freedom loving beings and all we want is to live in peace! We can't have that kind of freedom we want if you're ruling over us!"

"If I was capable of experiencing the putrid emotion known as "guilt"

and "sorrow" then I'd be shedding an lubricants for you." said Devion coldly "But those emotions don't register in my programming so I feel nothing for you furry little creatures. Now then, you two do as I ask or Sonic ends up going back to his home minus his throat."

He then proceeded to lightly touch Sonic's throat as if he was preparing to tear it out. Tails stared at Sonic worriedly and he began to think fast. He didn't want Sonic to die and if Sonic did die then they'd never defeat the Devatrons so it'd be best to do as he's told and leave and give his friends back home the bad news then to keep standing up to Devion like this.

"OK, we'll go." said Tails "Just please don't hurt Sonic!"

"Thank you." muttered Devion, dropping Sonic carelessly onto the ground "Before you go though, I'll be taking these emeralds of yours."

With that said, he reached down and gathered up the power-drained Chaos Emeralds and stuffed them in a pocket the cloak had.

"I know these gems are going to be of no use to me given how I've just siphoned their energy but I cannot risk you using something to re-power them as you'll likely have that kind of tech." explained Devion "I wouldn't risk trying to retrieve them here and now as you are likely to lose your lives in the process."

"We're not gonna try and get them back now!" snapped Tails "But we will get them back someday and we will beat you Devion! You and your buddies will never conquer our world!"

"Just silence your accursed lips already and get off my ship!" snarled Devion "All you're doing is vexing me to the point I feel like breaking you both!"

That was more then enough for Tails to get going and buzz off already. Tails picked up the still weakened Sonic the Hedgehog and twisted his tails around one another. He flew off of *The Doombringer* and headed back home to New Mobotropolis. Devion watched the fox leave and he began musing to himself.

"This planet is full of extraordinary beings isn't it?" he purred "That little furry thing carrying Sonic accomplishes the impossible feat of being able to travel through the air without the aid of wings of any kind. He just rapidly moves those two tails around in a circle and they propel him into the air as if they're rotor blades. Those creatures are definitely a species worth sparing, provided they cooperate that is."

"I have a strong feeling they won't Devion." said Raicor gruffly "The yellow one was quite obstinate and Sonic has a high level of spirit and valour in him. Who knows what the rest of the creatures are like?"

"If they're as good as Sonic is then they should provide a nice, worthy challenge for me when I begin my take over." purred Devion "After all, I don't like battles that offer nothing for us…"

As Devion began to picture his take over of Mobius in his evil mind, he began to wonder what the rest of the Mobians were like and what powers they had. If they were as amazing as Sonic was then this planet was going to be one glorious prize for him and a worthy addition to his planet-sized collection…

Back at New Mobotropolis, Sally Acorn, Nicole the Lynx and the entire R.F.S. were all waiting outside the gates of New Mobotropolis for Sonic and Tails to return from the fight with Devion. They had been gone for quite a while and they were all getting worried about them.

"The suspense is killing me!" whined Sally "I do wish I knew what was going on over in Megapolis already!"

"Sally, clam down." said Nicole affectionately "Sonic and Tails will return and hopefully they'll be back with good news. Sonic always comes out on top so he'll come out on top of this one."

"I know Nicole but Devion claims to have fourteen planets subjugated and under his control." noted Sally "He must have unbelievable power behind him if he has fourteen whole planets at

his beck and call! If he has that kind of power then we're done for!"

"No we're not!" yelled Amy "Sonic always wins! We always win! Those Devatron freaks are not gonna take over our world!"

"Hey everybody, blue dude and Tails are back at last." said Mandy, pointing to the forests of Green Hill Zone.

Everybody looked in Mandy's direction and surely enough, they saw Sonic and Tails coming towards them, Tails carrying Sonic and looking a little worn out. Tails couldn't fly forever and he did tire after a while so who could blame him for looking worn out? Everybody looked a little nervous when they saw Sonic looking weak and beaten. Had he lost the fight? Or had he won and had only been beaten heavily during the fight? Tails flew over to everybody and, panting and gasping, he put Sonic down on the ground and he fell down onto his hands and knees, trying to get his breath back. Sally knelt down before Tails and spoke to him.

"Boys, you're back thank goodness!" said Sally "Please tell me you have good news."

"I'm…afraid not…Sally…" puffed Tails "Sonic…lost the battle…the Chaos Emeralds have been…power drained and…stolen from us… and Devion's gonna…proceed with his ambitions…"

Everybody's reaction to that was legendary. They couldn't believe what they were hearing. Sonic had lost and the Chaos Emeralds had been power drained and stolen? Looks like Mobius is in for the fight of it's life here! Knuckles seemed very ticked off at the fact the emeralds had been power drained and stolen by Devion.

"Tails, would you care to explain how Devion managed to get the emeralds in the first place?" growled Knuckles furiously.

"I-I-it w-was Sonic's idea Knuckles!" whimpered Tails "He-He thought h-he'd need them since D-D-Devion sounded v-very p-p-powerful! He did and all b-b-but Devion had prepared for this since he'd h-heard legends about th-th-this planet h-having mystical gems and d-drained them with e-energy siphoning turrets! Please don't punch me Knuckles, it wasn't our fault this happened! We didn't

think this would happen!"

He curled up fearfully and waited for Knuckles to flip on him. However, amazingly enough, the echidna with the spiked fists restrained himself and didn't do anything to him. Instead, he relaxed himself and put a hand on Tails' shoulder. His expression was a lot friendlier looking now.

"I understand Tails, you and Sonic were caught off guard by that Devion guy." said Knuckles "The fact he has something that can drain something of it's power is enough to catch ME off guard! Well we can't let that happen to something like the Master Emerald so to avoid the Master Emerald sharing the same fate, we'd best not use that to help us. But one thing we must do is get the Chaos Emeralds back and re-power them with the Master Emerald."

"And we must push the Devatrons off our doorstep." said Sally determinedly "The R.F.S. has been tussling with Dr. Eggman for far too long to have to put up with another attempt to take over our world! Sonic may have failed but the entire R.F.S. is here so they can't possibly take on all of us! Royal Fighters, we're gonna take the battle to them!"

"We're gonna fight the Devatrons ourselves I gather?" said Nicole "Well I'm willing to fight no matter the cost. Those Devatrons must be stopped."

"You're right Nicole." said Sally "Tails, you take Sonic to Royal HQ and let him rest. We're all gonna go over to Megapolis and fight those Devatrons back."

"Yes Sally." said Tails, carrying Sonic into New Mobotropolis.

"No…I can still…fight…" muttered Sonic weakly.

"No you can't Sonic." said Tails "You're too weak. The R.F.S. will deal with the Devatrons I'm sure so don't worry about them."

As Tails took Sonic away, Knuckles activated a warp ring that he'd given to Ruben when he went back to Chun-Nan briefly* and the warp ring extended to twice it's size. The warp ring would take

everybody over to Megapolis where the Devatrons were hiding. The warp ring couldn't extend any higher so the Royal Fighters all marched through it in single file. As they marched through the warp ring and warped from New Mobotropolis to Megapolis, one thing ran through their minds: No matter the cost, no matter the odds, the Devatrons had to be stopped and they had to give it their all in this battle or Mobius was doomed to be a Devatron paradise alongside the fourteen other worlds they'd conquered…

Devion watched from on top of *The Doombringer* as the R.F.S. marched through the warp ring and into Megapolis. He sneered at the Mobians that were coming through to the terrain he was camping out in, thinking on how foolish they were to dare put up a resistance against him but one thing he couldn't help but admire was the warp ring. Never had he seen tech like this before and he began to wonder how the warp ring could possibly exist. It didn't look like it was made by science of any kind, it looked more mystical and enchanted. Maybe it was a magical item? Whatever it was, Devion knew that he could do with one of those.

"This technology of theirs is astounding." Devion complimented "They have rings that can transport them from place to place. How is this possible? No matter, I could do with one of those teleporter ring devices. Just imagine me warping us over from planet to planet with that ring. We'd never need to travel through space in *The Doombringer* ever again."

"Yes but our forces would be lacking without *The Doombringer* ." noted Raicor "We could just use the ring to warp *The Doombringer* itself from planet to planet. Save us a lot of refuelling it would."

"Somehow, I doubt a device as magnanimous as this teleporter ring will be capable of transporting vehicular structures given how it expands to a size adequate to only those furry creatures." Devion theorized "Still, we could definitely do with one of those ring devices or whatever they are. But enough of that, it's time to show those foolish creatures what happens when they resist me. Tronic! Order the entire crew of *The Doombringer* to meet me outside immediately!" he barked at his loyal servant.

"Yes Devion. Right away Devion." droned Tronic.

Tronic stood on a platform that took him back down into *The Doombringer* 's interior and he commenced with Devion's orders. As for Devion himself, he leaped elegantly off of *The Doombringer* and he somersaulted in mid-air. The R.F.S., which had finished coming through the warp ring, all stopped dead in their tracks as they watched Devion hurl down from the sky. Devion landed very powerfully on the ground, so powerfully in fact he made the ground crack beneath his feet and some parts of it stuck up in bug chunks! Raicor did things a lot less violently though. He just unclipped his wings, spread them out and flew down to the ground behind Devion. After landing, he clipped his wings back together, forming the cape that he was known for, and he stood silently by Devion's right shoulder, waiting for orders. The R.F.S. backed away a little nervously from Devion and Raicor but Sally wasn't so intimidated. She stepped forward bravely and cleared her throat.

"Devion, we are the Royal Fighter's Service, Mobius' stronghold against any evil threat and any attempts at world domination." announced Sally "I am the woman in charge of the organization after my predecessors, my parents, passed away. I am Queen Sally Acorn and I will throw everything I can at you if it means getting rid of you and keeping our much desired freedom."

Devion just snorted at Sally as if the whole speech just sounded corny and half-assed to him.

"Petty speeches aside, your "Royal Fighters" look like quite the group don't they Queen Sally?" purred Devion "How meritorious, I feared I was going to get a feeble resistance that isn't even worth stomping on. You creatures definitely do seem like a species worth sparing and keeping for slave labour."

"Please do not call us "creatures" Devion." said Sally coldly "We take that as an insult. You may refer to us as "Mobians" if you will as that is what the name of our species is."

"Very well then, "Mobians" it shall be from now on." snapped Devion in a voice with a vague hint of annoyance in it "Anyways, I'm going to kindly ask for you to not risk your lives by trying to push me and

my soldiers out of your world Sally. I do not wish to have to slaughter you all so needlessly when this take over can commence peacefully and without a minute of unwarranted bloodshed."

"We will not let you have Mobius!" snapped Sally "This is OUR planet, not yours and we will not let you have it! We've been fighting for freedom against another other-world enemy named Dr. Eggman and we will happily fight for freedom against you chrome-plated freaks!"

"Do not use that childish term on me just because we are not your kind my child." snarled Devion "That'll just ensure your death. So it's like that is it?" he added with a growl in his voice "If you won't relinquish the planet to us then we have to fight you for it?"

"Yes." said Sally "Or to avoid unnecessary conflicts between two different species, you can just pack up and get out of here!"

"I don't travel light years through the cosmos of space just to be told to remove myself from the planet." said Devion coldly "I came here to conquer and if you won't let this take over commence without conflict then so be it! I tried to give you a fair chance but you exploited it and now you shall all be taken to your graves by me and my army!"

Just as he said the word "army" the sound of marching metal feet rang out from inside *The Doombringer* . The R.F.S. grew worried, wondering what that sound was. They soon found out what the sound was as the things making the sound stepped out of the darkness of *The Doombringer* 's interiors and into the bright sunlight of the outside world. The things making that noise were Devion's soldiers, ordinary Devatrons if you will. Tronic was with them. The soldiers couldn't compare to the leaders looks wise but they were still something to fear. Devatron soldiers looked like humanoid robots with a pair of horns on the side of their heads, muzzle-like structures in place of a mouth with sharp fangs protruding from the sides, twin cannons on their backs, spiked shoulders, three clawed hands with two clawed thumbs, a V-shaped visor with a singular holographic eye and reptilian pupil, three clawed feet and every Devatron was coated in an invulnerable chrome armour that shined like the stars in bright light. That wasn't all though. There were two

more Devatron leaders amongst them. One Devatron had a head more helmet like in appearance with four spikes on them. It was rather tough looking in appearance although not as tough looking as Devion. It had two large jets on its back, each with two spikes on them. It still had the trademark V-shaped visor with holographic eye in the middle. His name was Triton and he had one of the most fearsome weapons in the Devatron fleet. A saw blade on a stick, known as the saw stick. Many had fallen to him via this mighty weapon. The other Devatron next to Triton had a crest that was attached to his forehead and pointed behind him, two spikes on either side of it's head, two toed feet and a back pack structure with four spikes on it, two top and two bottom. His name was Steelor and he was an assassin. His arsenal consisted of a saw blade on his arm and a handle bar shaped weapon with two blades on it. The whole army looked formidable and Sally could see how Devion got his job done. The whole R.F.S. seemed a little nervous about fighting them. Devion however, was not going to wait for them to start. He liked starting the fight himself so he gave the order.

"Devatrons, attack and slaughter every last Mobian on the battle field!"

The Devatron soldiers did as they were told immediately and they all charged towards the Royal Fighters. The Royal Fighters of Grand Metropolis and Downunda went on the offensive first. General Bostock and Commander Mortimer began unleashing a good round of bullets from their rifles that they'd brought with them with Mr. Staffer and Gerald adding extra support by shooting at them with some revolvers. Given their invulnerability though, the Devatrons just walked through the shower of bullets as if they were nothing. The bullets pinged harmlessly off their armour and the soldiers marched ever closer. The firing Mobians began to back off, still shooting desperately at the Devatrons but making no impact on them.

"Our guns don't work!" shrieked Bostock "Mortimer, try the grenades!"

Mortimer obeyed and he tore a grenade off of his belt. He pulled the stick out and he chucked it at Triton. Triton just stood there and let the grenade hit him. The grenade hit Triton and it exploded. But the

grenade didn't harm Triton in anyway! The Devatron leader just took the blast as if it were nothing! The grenades didn't work! Triton just laughed at Mortimer and he prepared to use his weapon.

"That tickled." he crowed, his voice very masculine and tough sounding, fitting for a Devatron like him.

He then swung his arm and sent the saw blade flying off of the stick. Bostock and Mortimer ducked but Mr. Staffer and Gerald weren't so lucky. The saw blade sliced their heads clean off their bodies, killing them and bringing the resistance down two soldiers. The headless bodies of Mr. Staffer and Gerald lay on the ground, their blood staining the earth they lay on. Sally looked horrified at this and she gave the command.

"Come on Royal Fighters! Go for it!" she screamed "Fight for our freedom!"

The entire R.F.S. obeyed and they ran into battle without a moment's hesitance. Devion decided to divide the Devatrons up a little and he sorted the squadron out into groups. He'd lead one squad, Raicor would lead another, Tronic would lead another, Steelor would lead another and Triton would lead another. That would make things nice and even so each leader got a go at somebody. Devion's group took on the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and the Chaotix. Raicor's group went for the Northern Royal Fighters, Triton's went for the Adabat Royal Fighters, Steelor's went for the Megapolis Royal Fighters and Tronic's went for the Grand Metropolis Royal Fighters. The battle field was now in complete chaos with Mobians and Devatrons alike beating the tar out of each other and fighting for the planet.

Devion's group and the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were putting their all into this match. Since the team was incomplete without Sonic and Tails there, this match wasn't going to be as easy for them as it would be with those two helping out. Knuckles and his partner Shade took on Devion while the rest took on the soldiers. Wilson drew out his trademark spinning blade weapon and he cut loose on a Devatron soldier. He slashed at it as hard as he could but his weapon was ultimately useless given the soldier's invulnerable armour. Wilson slashed at it again and then tried to stab it but the

Devatron block the attack with it's arm and it kicked Wilson away. Wilson retaliated with a roundhouse kick to the head but all that did was make the Devatron stagger more then anything. A kick was nothing to an invulnerable killing machine. Wilson growled exasperatedly and he slashed at the Devatron again pitifully. As for his wife, Mandy had slipped on her brass knuckle attachments and she began to punch the Devatron soldier she was fighting as furiously as possible. But try as she might, not even brass knuckle attachments were any good against a Devatron soldier. She punched it as hard as she could but the Devatron just took the attacks as if they were merely tickling it. The Devatron then proceeded to uppercut Mandy in the face and knock her down. Mandy quickly picked herself up and punched it in the muzzle but the attack yielded no results. The Devatron gut punched Mandy and then uppercut her again. Mandy staggered backwards, rubbing her tummy better, and she and Wilson ended up backing up to one another.

"We finally get married and the first thing we do as a couple is fight for our lives!" muttered Wilson "Aren't we the special ones?"

"Yeah, real special." muttered Mandy "What are those things made of? Our weapons are useless! They're like weaponized Alonzo! They take every blow we throw at them!"

"I'm guessing they're invulnerable." said Wilson "But there must be some weak spot on these guys. Try breaking their eyes, I bet that'll hinder them in some way."

"Hinder them, maybe but destroy them, definitely not." noted Mandy "But if they're flying blind then that'll give us some edge on them."

So Wilson and Mandy decided to try that idea. Mandy leaped up to the Devatron she was fighting and she punched it directly in the visor at full force. The Devatron staggered slightly and it glowered at Mandy. Then suddenly, it's visor cracked. The crack was quite serious too. The Devatron's vision was impaired now and it couldn't see properly. The Devatron began to stagger around and flail madly. Mandy decided to finish it off by giving it an uppercut to the chin and knock it down onto it's back. The Devatron lay on it's back, flailing around and wondering why it couldn't see. Mandy punched it in the

visor again, cracking it even more and blinding the soldier completely. But her victory wasn't to last. The soldier fighting Wilson knocked Wilson out of the way and blasted Mandy in the back with it's back cannons. Furious to see his wife being attacked like that, Wilson stabbed the Devatron in the visor and blinded it with his spinning blade weapon. But not only did Wilson blind it, the blade went straight through the Devatron's head and killed it! Wilson yanked the blade out of the soldier's visor and the Devatron collapsed onto the ground, dead as anything. Wilson stared at it in amazement.

"The visor's it's weak point!" cried Wilson "That's it! We've got a way of defeating them!"

"Let's hope it works in our favour." muttered Mandy as she linked arms with another Devatron and began to fight it "Or we're really screwed out here."

As for the others, they were engaged with Devatron soldiers themselves. Amy, Cream and Cosmo all formed together to perform their signature move on the Devatrons. Cream swung Amy and Cosmo around and Amy hammered the Devatron soldiers away. But not even her hammer attacks could penetrate the Devatron's tough armour. After getting hit by her, the soldiers picked themselves up and began shooting at Team Rose with their back mounted cannons. Cream managed to dodge the attacks by flying out of their way but one Devatron leaped up and tackled her right out of the sky. Cream, Cosmo and Amy all fell down to the ground in a heap and the Devatrons prepared to attack them but Geoffrey St. John fired some exploding darts at them. The darts hit them and exploded upon impact but the darts had no effect on the invulnerable Devatrons. Geoffrey looked stunned to say the least at the fact his darts hadn't worked so he decided to just rely on his fighting skills. Bunnie was having an easier time then everybody due to her robotic limbs and enhanced strength. She punched one Devatron soldier as furiously as possible with her robotic left arm but another Devatron soldier got the drop on her with a powerful dropkick that brought her down onto her knees. The Devatron then grabbed Bunnie by the ears and slammed her right on top of Geoffrey. The two Mobians lay sprawled on top of each other, groaning in pain. The Devatron then

deployed an arm cannon and prepared to blast the two to slag but Ruben jumped in and kicked it's arm, causing it to shoot up at the sky instead. Ruben then went all ninja on the Devatron, kicking it and punching it at speeds accomplished only by ninjas no matter what level they were. The Devatron growled furiously at Ruben but Ruben was moving too fast for it to react so it couldn't fight back. Ruben kicked the soldier down onto the ground but he got blasted in the back by another Devatron soldier. Bunnie jumped in and clobbered the soldier with one hefty punch but it's invulnerable armour held out against the attack. One Devatron conked Bunnie on the head with both it's fists clenched together and the Rabbot was in a daze. The soldier then grabbed Bunnie in a chokehold and prepared to snap her neck but Vector the Crocodile grabbed it by the horns and threw it over onto another Devatron soldier. Espio the Chameleon threw some shuriken at the Devatron soldiers but they just pinged harmlessly off their tough armour. Even if they did embed themselves into the Devatrons, the explosions they emitted wouldn't be of much help. Espio decided to just his ninjutsu on the Devatron soldiers. Invulnerability didn't stop the Devatrons from getting clobbered after all, all it did was prevent them from being damaged by the attacks. Charmy Bee just sort of flew around and distracted the Devatrons for his friends as he wasn't of much use in a battle like this. His sting was useless and he wasn't very strong so he was better off as the distraction more then anything. He kicked one Devatron in the back of the head, causing it to spin around and swipe at him and give Vector a chance to deck it in the back before it could fight back again. As for Knuckles and Shade, they were both in combat with Devion and were doing their best against the insidious leader but even their best efforts weren't enough. Devion uppercut Shade into the air and he grabbed Knuckles by his dreadlocks. He swung Knuckles over onto his back and then he swung him upwards, brought him back down and raised his leg so he ended up slamming Knuckles on his own leg (ouch!). Knuckles groaned in pain and he rubbed himself better. Devion was about to deck Knuckles until Shade stepped in and blocked his attack with her twin blades. Devion pushed Shade away and drew out his golden sword. The two then began to sword fight with one another, their weapons clashing heavily as they hit each other. Shade Blade-Rushed Devion but Devion sliced through the attack with his sword and clashed weapons with Shade again. Now Shade had Devion

distracted, Knuckles could step in and do what he could. He pounced on Devion and punched him in the back of the head, distracting him a little and giving Shade time to slash him but her blades were useless against Devion's tough armour. Devion kicked Shade away and slashed at Knuckles with his sword. Knuckles dodged the attack and the two prepared to fight some more.

Raicor's group was fighting the Northern Royal Fighters which consisted of Miranda Mongoose, Kari the Rat, Kate the Eagle and the chipmunk brothers Thunder and Bolt. Miranda had her electro prod weapon at the ready and she lunged at Raicor with the prod switched on. Raicor just swatted her away and left the mongoose to land painfully on her back. Miranda picked herself up and thrust the prod at Raicor. She hit him but the prod didn't electrocute Raicor as she'd hoped it would. His chrome armour protected him from the prod's effects. Raicor drew out his own weapon, which was a staff with three prongs on both ends and he swiped at Miranda with it. Miranda screamed and she leaped back hastily. Raicor stabbed at Miranda but he missed the mongoose and Miranda tried to zap him with the prod again but it had no effect on him. Raicor laughed at her and he walloped her with the staff. Kate, who was wrestling with some Devatron soldiers, sensed her friend was in trouble so she pushed the soldiers away and ran over to help Miranda. Raicor tried to stab Miranda with his staff but Kate stepped in and grabbed the staff. She pushed back on Raicor and the two ended up having a sumo match with one another. Miranda could see that Kate had this covered and she tried a sneak attack on Raicor. She ran around behind Raicor and jabbed him in the neck with the prod. The prod zapped Raicor but given his tough build, it only felt like a zap rather then a flat out electrical shock. Raicor pushed Kate away and walloped Miranda with his staff yet again. As for Kari and the chipmunk brothers, they weren't having it so easy. Kari wasn't a very strong rat and she only had a crowbar for a weapon. Thunder and Bolt had the best chance with their electrical attacks but even they were ineffective against the Devatron army. Kari whacked one Devatron in the back of it's leg with her crowbar and she brought it down onto one knee. She then whacked the Devatron on it's head as hard as she possibly could but the Devatron took the heavy blows and then tripped her up by smacking one of her legs out from underneath her. The Devatron then snatched Kari's weapon off her

and it prepared to smash Kari with the crowbar. Thunder and Bolt saved her by throwing thunder bolts at it and making it stagger. It dropped the crowbar and Kari got it back. She whacked the Devatron in the visor and cracked it, blinding the chrome covered machine. But blinding it wasn't going to be much as it was still functioning and more Devatrons were coming in to deal with the Northern Royal Fighters.

Triton and his team were dealing with the Adabat Royal Fighters, a team that had been newly recruited and was seeing it's first real major battle since the team had formed. Scott Lynx and his girlfriend Jessica Cougar (about flippin' time those two appeared in the main story isn't it?) Launched the first attacks by summoning energy to their hands and they punched at Triton. Their energy-enhanced punches were powerful, but not even those attacks could penetrate Devatron armour. Their punches more annoyed Triton then anything. Triton sneered at the lynx and cougar's futile attempts and he swiped at them with his saw stick. Scott and Jessica ducked, causing Triton to miss and Scott gave Triton an energy enhanced uppercut. Triton was knocked down on his back but he wasn't down for long. Jessica tried to attack him but Triton kicked her away and leaped back onto his feet. Triton swiped at Jessica and his saw stick nicked her on the cheek, leaving a long thin cut that started from the edge of her cheek and finished at the corner of her mouth. The cougar winced in pain and Triton was about to kill her but Scott leaped in and pounced on him like a tiger lunging for a deer. Scott brought Triton down on his back but Triton swung his legs up and pushed Scott straight off of him. The two stood back up and Scott punched at Triton with his energy enhanced fists again. Triton took the blows and then began to fight back. His punches however, were hard enough as they were and Scott soon found that out. Triton gut-punched him, then he elbowed him in the back of his head and then he uppercut the lynx into the air. Jessica watched on horrified and she began throwing energy spears at Triton. But not even those could penetrate the Devatron's tough hide. Triton scowled at her and just promptly blasted her with his own arm cannon. As for Felix the Peacock and Taran the Lynx, they were having a decidedly easier time then Scott and Jessica. Felix flew around whacking Devatron soldiers with his tail feather clubs and Taran blasted them with the laser cannon he'd found and kept after their last outing with Ravage

Bloodfang**. The blasts didn't do any damage to the Devatrons but they were powerful enough to knock them down. After knocking them down, Taran decided to aim for their visors as that was the likeliest weak spot on them. Taran ran over to one downed Devatron soldier and blasted it in the visor. But given how powerful the cannon was, the blast killed the soldier as it went through it's visor and then through it's head. Taran smiled, he had a way of killing the Devatrons! But that wasn't going to be of much help to him as he was outnumbered and the soldiers were likely to catch on to Taran's act. Felix had an easier time blinding the Devatrons though as he could just fly by them and whack them in the visor with his tail feather clubs. But one Devatron soldier shot him down with one blast of it's arm cannon and Felix was brought down to the ground, groaning in pain.

Steelor's group was against the Megapolis Royal Fighters. There weren't really many of them, just Field Marshal Thomas Tiger and his messenger woman Kiara the Cheetah. In order to boost up their numbers, Sally and Nicole decided to help them out. Thomas went for Steelor himself while the girls kept the rabble off his back. Thomas and Steelor began to exchange punches of various kinds, gut punches, roundhouse punches, uppercuts and right and left hooks respectively, on each other with Steelor's punched being the most powerful given how he's a robot. Thomas punched Steelor in the visor but his punch wasn't enough to crack it. Steelor retaliated by activating the spinning four-bladed saw on his arm and he nicked Thomas on the shoulder with it. Thomas screamed in pain and he kicked Steelor in the gut as hard as he could. The Devatron was sent skidding backwards but he regained himself and drew out his handlebar sword weapon. He slashed at Thomas with it but he missed and Thomas grabbed his wrist, trying to make him drop the weapon. Steelor chipper him on the shoulder again in order to make him let go of him and as Thomas did that, Steelor thrust the weapon at Thomas' neck and he pushed him down onto the ground. The two blades embedded themselves into the ground and the handlebar shape of the weapon kept Thomas down. It was almost like he had been stapled to the ground by a giant stapler. That was Steelor's main method of killing, trap the opponent by doing what he'd just down and then slice them open with the saw blade. But before Steelor could even so much as activate his saw blade, Kiara

abandoned her opponent and leaped in for Thomas. She dropkicked him in the head and brought him down onto his back. Now he was down, Kiara grabbed Steelor's sword and yanked it out of the ground, freeing Thomas and allowing him to stand back up. The moment Thomas did though, Steelor uppercut Kiara into the air and sent her crashing down at the feet of another Devatron soldier. The soldier just promptly kicked her as hard as he could before she could stand back up. Sally and Nicole weren't having much luck with their opponents. Sally wasn't a very skilled fighter and Nicole wasn't very powerful. Any attack they launched was more of an annoyance to the Devatrons then anything. Sally kicked at one soldier but the attack didn't even make it flinch and the Devatron backhanded her across the terrain. Sally landed painfully on her back and she grimaced tensely. The soldier grabbed Sally by the ankle and then swung her over onto her front as if she was a fly swatter being used to swat a pesky fly. The attack left Sally feeling like every bone in her body had just cracked. The Devatron then proceeded to fling Sally as far as he could across the terrain and Sally came to a halt near a large rock. The squirrel queen backed up against the rock nervously as the Devatron marched over to her and prepared to kill her. It drew out a bronze coloured scimitar and he aimed for Sally's heart. But just as it seemed Sally would be joining her parents up in heaven, Nicole leaped on the Devatron's back and covered it's visor. The Devatron flailed about madly and tried to chop Nicole to pieces with it's scimitar. It swung the sword at her but Nicole leaped off her back, causing the Devatron to conk itself on the head with the scimitar. The Devatron fumed angrily and it swiped at Nicole with the scimitar. Nicole back flipped away and she rammed the Devatron in the gut. But all that did was give her a sore shoulder given how the Devatron was made of chrome and invulnerable and she was only a fleshling. The Devatron slashed Nicole across the tummy with it's sword, causing Nicole to double over and wince tensely. The Devatron then tried to slice Nicole in two with the scimitar but Sally kicked it in the back of the head, prompting the Devatron to spin around and try to slice her in two again.

Finally, Tronic and his team were against Bostock and Mortimer. Bostock and Mortimer weren't really much of a challenge as they relied heavily on their weapons and didn't really excel in the hand-to-hand combat area. Their weapons were useless though as the

Devatrons were invulnerable so Tronic and his team didn't have much of a challenge. All Bostock and Mortimer could do really was throw grenades at them and hope the grenades would destroy them. But, their efforts were ultimately futile at most as the Devatrons just walked through the explosions as if they were nothing. Tronic drew out a long thin blade from his arm and he slashed at Bostock. Bostock dodged and he threw a grenade at Tronic's head. The blast distracted Tronic long enough for Bostock to flee for it. He primed his rifle and decided to try and see if he could blind the Devatrons. One soldier came forward with it's claws bared and it tried to grab Bostock but the chipmunk dodged its attack and he shot the Devatron in the visor. The bullet cracked the Devatron's visor and left it blinded. Mortimer could see his partner had a tactic and he tried the same thing. But his aim wasn't quite as good as Bostock's so it was harder for him to hit where he was aiming. He fired at the Devatrons but his aim wasn't quite with him and he missed their visor. One Devatron bent forward and blasted Mortimer with it's back mounted cannons. Mortimer was sent hurling forwards and he landed on his side and skidded to a halt, the impact leaving tears on his sleeve. The Devatron cackled at Mortimer and it ran towards him. Mortimer picked himself up and smacked the Devatron with his rifle. Big mistake as all that did was end up breaking the weapon and leaving him weapon-less! The Devatron snickered at him and he uppercut Mortimer as hard as he could. Bostock could see his friend was in need of assistance so he abandoned his fight with Tronic and ran off to help Mortimer. The Devatron soldier turned around and Bostock shot it in the visor. The visor cracked and the Devatron was rendered enable to see. Bostock pushed the Devatron over onto it's back and he helped Mortimer up onto his feet. But Tronic bent down and blasted both chipmunks with his back cannons. The chipmunks were thrown off their feet and sent sprawling across the landscape.

Back over to Sally and Nicole, they back out of the battle and observed what was going on around them. The Royal Fighters were beginning to tire in this battle of flesh and steel, organics vs. mechanics and furry beings vs. metal beings. The Devatron's invulnerability just rendered them incapable of receiving damage of any kind and although the Devatrons had a weak spot, and a pretty helpful one at that for the Mobians, they were outnumbered. Devion

had an army sized squadron in *The Doombringer* , the Royal Fighters had come with just the highest ranking members of various teams and not the whole army. The Royal Fighters were getting tired and the Devatrons were beginning to overpower them. If they were to defeat the Devatrons, they would have to retreat and come back in bigger numbers or find an even more helpful weakness to them. The Royal Fighters would beat the Devatrons someday soon, but not now. They were just too weak and outnumbered as they are now.

"Nicole, this battle is going horribly against us." said Sally worriedly "The Devatrons are too powerful and we're lacking in numbers. Despite their weakness, their visors, their big numbers are getting too much for our soldiers."

"We have to get out of here and fast." said Nicole "You activate the warp ring and I'll tell everybody to run for it."

Sally obeyed and she flicked the warp ring into the air. The warp ring expanded to twice it's size and it awaited for it's travellers to go through it. Now the escape route was ready, Nicole ran over and called over to everybody.

"Royal Fighters! Retreat!" yelled Nicole "Fall back! We need a change of strategy!"

Everybody heeded Nicole's call and they quickly abandoned their fights and ran towards the warp ring. Everybody filed up in single file and they began darting through the warp ring as fast as possible with Sally and Nicole the first to go through. Devion could see the Mobians retreating and he had a wicked idea. Maybe he could follow them through the warp ring and find out where they're heading. Then he could steal the warp ring and bring his army over to their residence with it. Devion ran after the Mobians as fast as he could, hoping to catch up to them and run through the ring with them. Knuckles saw Devion coming and he punched the ground beneath his feet. He made several chunks of earth stick up and he tossed them straight at Devion. The chunks threw Devion off of his feet and he landed with a heavy clunk on his back. Devion wasn't down for long though. He picked himself up, unsheathed his sword and he ran towards the warp ring. All the Mobians had run through it and

save Knuckles who was just catching up to them. Devion was a fast runner and he was just catching up to Knuckles as the warp ring began to shrink down in size. Knuckles leaped through the warp ring in record time and Devion leaped after him but the warp ring disappeared, leaving Devion to land back down on the ground and strike it with his golden sword. Devion growled in rage, furious at the fact he'd just failed to follow the Mobians and he picked himself up, wrenching the golden sword out of the ground and sheathing it.

"The Mobians chose to play it safe and flee for their wretched lives." muttered Devion "Ultimate cowardice but also the wisest thing for them to do as we were going to win anyway."

"Those Mobians aren't worth our time!" grumbled Steelor, his voice raspy and tough sounding a bit like Scourge the Hedgehog "Let's just conquer the planet and not bother with the furry beasts!"

"No Steelor." said Devion coldly "Those Mobians will not allow us to commence with our ambitions peacefully. They will go to great lengths to ensure our departure from this world so if we're to conquer the planet, we shall have to slaughter them. A pity, those Mobians would have been better as slaves as they're quite extraordinary and striking. But a Devatron's got to do what a Devatron's got to do when conquering a planet. If the Mobians want to throw their lives away then we'll let them, it's them who will be regretting all this in the end."

"So when shall we commence with the take over Devion?" asked Raicor.

"We will not be taking any action against the planet until I deem the time to be perfect." said Devion "We shall brainstorm and see if we can come up with a suitable plan that'll dampen the Mobian's spirits a little and then we shall strike and take over this world. Mobius will be a fine addition to my collection of worlds and the Devatrons shall settle nicely on a world as meritorious as this."

Devion then began to softly cackle to himself as he pictured Mobius' conversion from animal world to Devatron world in his head. The Devatrons had made a good impression on the Mobians and driven them back for now and the next time they fought, the Mobians would

fall and the Devatrons would stand tall after the titanic battle was over…

Footnotes:

*** As we've just seen in *Tales from Mobius Arc 12: The Water Panther Plunder***

**** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 9: New Recruits***

Whew! What an intro for the Devatrons! Sonic's gonna have his work cut out for him isn't he? How's he gonna win this crusade of epic proportions then? Well join me on a wild ride as we partake in the Devatron saga, a saga that'll last FIFTEEN parts! Can you keep up readers? I sure hope so!

Thanks to everybody who's reviewed, favourited and followed this story through thick and thin. It's thanks to you all I could make it this far and I hope to continue pleasing you all with this story.

Heroes and Treason Part 1

Story 101: Heroes and Treason Part 1: Duty Calls

After the R.F.S had returned home to New Mobotropolis, the whole team rested up for the rest of the day and come the next day, Queen Sally Acorn had gathered the Council of Acorn together to discuss about their newest threats, the Devatrons. They had just landed in Megapolis and seek to conquer Mobius much like how they've already conquered fourteen planets. The R.F.S. had tried to push them away but their attempts had been in vain and they had ultimately been forced to retreat. Now Sally and the Council were conversing about how they should deal with the Devatron threat. Sonic the Hedgehog and friends were at this meeting to voice any opinions of theirs.

"OK everyone, the council meeting is in session." announced Sally "We're all gathered around here to discuss about our newest threat…the Devatrons."

The council members murmured amongst each other.

"So, what do we know about the Devatrons as of current?" asked Sally.

"I know plenty." said Sonic, steeping forward and addressing the council "They're a bunch of insidious robots who love to conquer worlds, are nigh-invulnerable and are pretty tough to beat. It's impossible to so much as hurt those guys. And they have energy draining weapons. They drained the Chaos Emeralds of their energy and now the Devatrons have them so we can't restore their power, although I'm not really sure if we can even do that. Those Devatrons are powerful, smart guys and they're way bigger threats then even Dr. Eggman.

Sally could only nod agreeably as Sonic gave his statement.

"They are Sonic." she said gravely "The Devatrons are difficult to damage and they completely overwhelmed us in the end. The

Downunda Royal Fighters Mr. Staffer and Gerald lost their lives in the battle and we barely made it out of that battle alive. We do have one way of defeating them though," she added "Their visors are the weak spot but even then, all we do really is blind them. Wilson claims that if you blind them by stabbing them in the eye it kills them as the blade goes through the visor and into it's head."

"So we have a way of taking them down?" said Sonic, beaming "Alright! We're gonna get somewhere!"

"But not many of us are armed with swords or other bladed weapons." noted Sally "And the Devatrons are likely to be all the wiser about us after we've managed to kill a few of the soldiers yesterday so it may be harder to hit them in their vulnerable point. Not to mention when we fought them we were outnumbered in that match. If we fought them again then we might have a chance against them but Devion's got goodness knows what in that ship of his, he might have a production factory or something and he'll just make more and more Devatrons to outnumber us and overwhelm us."

"So we have an edge on them but it's not that helpful to us." muttered Sonic "That bites."

"What do you think we should do Sally?" asked Tails the twin-tailed fox.

"Given how the Devatrons are the stronger beings," mused Sally "And how we don't really have much of an advantage over them and their weakness isn't that helpful of one, I say we take no action against the Devatrons until we come up with a good battle plan and until we can find out a bit more about the Devatrons."

"What?" cried Sonic "Sally, that's mondo bone-headed there! If we take no action against the Devatrons they'll wreck the planet and take it over!"

"Sonic the Hedgehog will know his place and think carefully before he speaks!" snapped the council douche-bag Hamlin the Pig.

"Hamlin, please I can handle this." snapped Sally "I don't need you

being rude to the Hero of Mobius."

Hamlin just snorted at Sally and folded his arms. Sally glared at the pig and then she looked back at Sonic.

"Sonic, the idea is that we can't fight the Devatrons without knowing how to counter their invulnerability." explained Sally "It'd be better to strike from the shadows then do something as predictable as unleash a full onslaught on him. I'm sure spies such as Sora Sumdac or even Espio the Chameleon are willing to infiltrate Devion's ship and find whatever helpful information they can to use against the Devatrons. The idea is a good one Sonic."

"Maybe so but what if they can't find the information we need?" asked Sonic "And what if the information isn't as helpful as we think it is? And what do you think Devion's gonna be doing while we play it like ninjas and strike from the shadows? He's probably attacking innocent people right now! We should just go full out on him before he harms anybody!"

"And what good what that do us?" asked Sally sternly "We can't beat them and all we're gonna do is get ourselves killed if we just take the direct approach. It'd be better to infiltrate them and use the information against them then just flat out attack them. The council will now vote on this proposal. All in favour of taking the subtle approach against the Devatrons?" she asked the members of the council.

Predictably enough, the entire council voted "Yay" given as how they all thought it was a good idea. It was in a way as the Devatrons wouldn't expect the Mobians to try something as subtle as that, infiltrate *The Doombringer* and use whatever information they could find against them. It was just a matter of if they could find the right information or if they could find ANY information at all. Sonic however, didn't like this idea.

"I still think we should stand up and fight those Devatrons!" yelled Sonic "Infiltrating them is a good idea but I don't think we should take no action against them whatsoever! I mean, what if we NEED to fight them and what if the infiltration plan doesn't work or…"

"Sonic, that is quite enough out of you young man." said Sally sternly "Nobody is to fight any of the Devatrons and that's all there is to it. We are to see if we can infiltrate the ship and see what information we can use against them. If anybody, that means you too Sonic, goes against our vote, then you will be arrested and put on trial and the jury will decide your fate. Is that clear?"

"Yes your majesty." said the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters.

"Good." said Sally grimly "This meeting is over."

With that said, everybody got up from their seats and left the council room, the Council of Acorn included. As the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters left the room, Sonic began grumbling to himself under his breath. He really didn't like the whole idea of doing the subtle approach and not taking action of any kind against the Devatrons, the whole idea just sounded bone idle to him but that was mainly due to the fact Sonic's a hands-on kind of person rather then a take it nice and slow kind of guy.

"Sonic sweetie, please stop grumbling." said Amy Rose with a voice of concern "I know you don't like the council's idea but we have to do as they say."

"I know Amy, I just hate it when the council thinks that not engaging the enemy is a good idea." muttered Sonic "Remember the time when they didn't want us to fight Shadow when he was evil? I still can't get over how stupid that idea was and now they think we shouldn't fight the Devatrons! True they are invulnerable but I'm willing to fight as hard as I can against them, regardless of how strong they are."

"But Sonic, if we can't even harm the Devatrons then how can we defeat them?" asked Knuckles the Echidna "The council's idea is a good one. Although it'd be better to have at least SOMEONE fighting the Devatrons. We should have someone keeping the Devatrons busy while the infiltrators do their work…"

"You know the council needs to reform when Knuckles' ideas are better then theirs!" snorted Sonic "Knuckles, your idea is much better then theirs. We could keep the Devatrons busy while the

infiltrators do their stuff. Therefore, the Devatrons don't get to attack anybody or touch any places of residence and the infiltrators do their work without getting found out. I hope the council will consider that idea Knuckles."

"Well we need to wait until the next council meeting." said Geoffrey St. John "And that's not gonna be until maybe tomorrow or summet."

"Then we wait until then and we suggest Knuckles' idea to them." said Sonic "If they're not too stubborn to admit that their idea isn't as good as Knuckles' that is."

As the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters talked to each other, they failed to notice a shadowy robed figure sneaking out of the castle and towards Mobotropolis downhill…

Meanwhile on *The Doombringer* , Devion was doing some sword play with some of his soldiers in the training room of the colossal vessel. Even though they were robots, even a Devatron needed to train and keep active otherwise their servos wouldn't be in tip-top shape and their fighting skills would be sloppy. The Devatrons had lost a few of their soldiers already yesterday and Devion was not about to let any other Devatron lost their lives in this crusade. Not that it mattered given how the ship has a production line and Devion could just make more soldiers at the flick of a switch but Devion hated losing his soldiers, even a small number of them and he didn't want to have to resort to making new ones with his production line as it would make him look needy, desperate and helpless and that would ruin his insidious image and nefarious reputation. Devion removed his cape and drew out his golden sword and three Devatron soldiers who were training with him drew out a sword each. Their swords were made of chrome and they were silver in colour much like the Devatrons themselves. They were more standard looking then Devion's sword although the blade was broad near the hand guard of the sword. One Devatron soldier charged towards Devion with his sword raised above it's head. Devion just promptly lashed out with his sword and slashed the Devatron across the stomach. Given it's invulnerability though, the sword didn't damage it in anyway. It just made the Devatron flinch in pain and

back off. Devion grabbed the Devatron's sword and yanked it out of it's head. He pushed the Devatron down and pinned it to the floor with both swords pressed against it's throat. Another Devatron lunged on Devion from behind and tried to attack him with it's sword but Devion heard it coming and he slashed at it with both swords. The Devatron was knocked off balance and it landed awkwardly on it's face. If that had happened to an organic being, chances are the impact would have broken it's neck. Devion gave the Devatron soldier his sword back and sheathed his own. The Devatron attacked Devion with it's sword but Devion grabbed the blade with his hands and threw it to the side, throwing the Devatron off balance and causing it to fall down onto the floor. The third Devatron tried to attack Devion but Devion kicked backwards and just as his foot hit the Devatron soldier in the gut, he flipped over, taking the Devatron with him and threw it down onto the floor ahead of him. The Devatron soldier groaned in pain and Devion decided to add insult to injury by kicking it again. Never show anyone any mercy, not even your own foot soldiers was the way Devion worked. The soldiers were lucky this was only a training match otherwise they'd be dead now. The other two Devatrons grabbed their swords and they tried to attack Devion but Devion deployed his arm cannons and blasted them both away. The two soldiers were thrown down onto their backs and Devion drew out his golden sword. He put his foot down on one soldier and pointed the sword straight at it's visor. The Devatron stared at the sword in fear and Devion narrowed his gaze at the helpless soldier.

"That was an abysmal performance you three." muttered Devion "Truly abysmal. Your main method of attack stems from charging at the opponent with the weapon raised above your head. Not a wise choice of attack. You shouldn't focus so heavily on your attacks and focus more on your battle skills. Remember my words of wisdom "To have great strength, one needs great skill to balance it out" my soldiers. The weapon is not the most important aspect of battle, it is the arm that wields it. I suggest you three get that message in your brain receptors or you'll all be scrap metal out there."

"Yes Devion." droned the soldiers.

Devion sheathed his sword and he let the soldier beneath him stand

up again.

"Excellent." purred Devion "You three are excused from the training room now."

The Devatron soldiers bowed respectfully to their leader and they left the training room. Devion picked his cape back up and he reattached it to his shoulder. Devion left the training room and he went up to the cockpit of *The Doombringer* . Tronic and Raicor were waiting for him and the moment Devion entered the cockpit, they bowed to him respectfully.

"Lord Devion." droned Tronic loyally.

"At ease Tronic and Raicor." said Devion with the raise of a hand "Raicor, status report."

"All activity is quiet right now." reported Raicor "No Mobian resistance has been detected as of current and the dead Devatrons are being rebuilt and will be fully functional again some time soon."

"Thank you Raicor." said Devion, sitting down in his chrome throne and tapping the arms "I'm amazed how much spirit and valour those furry creatures have in them. The battle they put up yesterday was quite valiant. It's quite clear that Mobius definitely has more to offer for us then we initially thought. It's takeover will be a worthy one."

"What fate shall befall the Mobians when our takeover is complete?" asked Raicor.

"It depends on the Mobians themselves." said Devion coldly "If they do not abide to becoming slaves then we will just vanquish all of them. If they do then they will be spared. I do hope it'll be the latter as the Mobians are too worthy a race to destroy."

Then suddenly, Devion's crowing and gloating was cut off by an alarm blaring through *The Doombringer* . Devion began to wonder what the emergency was.

"Tronic! What is going on?" demanded Devion fiercely.

"Checking in now my lord." droned Tronic.

Tronic tapped on the keypad and peered at the screens as he began searching for what it was that set the alarm off. He soon found it. A mysterious robed and hooded figure stood outside *The Doombringer* and was waiting to be let in. A hover saucer was parked nearby, suggesting he had used it to travel here. Tronic activated the ship's scans to see what it was. The scans registered it as "Mobian" meaning they had a Mobian intruder in their territory.

"Scans confirm Mobian intruder outside *The Doombringer* ." droned Tronic "The Mobian is alone though so it cannot be here under hostile intentions."

Devion put a clawed finger to his beak and scratched it in thought.

"Why would those foolish furry creatures come to us alone?" he wondered "I must investigate on this mysterious situation. Raicor, you keep the ship running."

"Yes Devion." said Raicor.

Devion got up from his throne and he wondered out of the cockpit to deal with the mystery intruder. Raicor took Devion's place and sat in the throne so he could keep the ship running. Devion went down to the lower areas of the ship and he opened the cargo doors so he could step outside *The Doombringer* and confront this intruder. A docking ramp lowered down to the ground and Devion walked down it. The robed figure was beside the ramp and Devion strode up to it. The figure stepped backwards a little fearfully. Devion glowered at the figure with his V-shaped visor. The look he had could paralyze somebody in a similar fashion to Medusa turning someone to stone with her killer stare.

"Why do you curse my territory with your presence here lone one?" snarled Devion "You have a death wish if you think that you alone can get me to remove myself and my army off your accursed planet!"

"P-P-Please D-Devion." stammered the figure "I come here under peaceful terms. I-I have no intentions of the hostile kind at all."

"That already makes you the smartest Mobian I've seen so far on

this planet." muttered Devion "So if you are not here to hinder me in anyway then what is the reason for your unwanted presence here then?"

"I come here to wager an alliance." said the figure "You see, I'm sick of the way I'm treated amongst my people so I wish to get my own back on those idiots who don't appreciate me at all."

Devion thought for a moment. A poor soul who's unappreciated and treated unfairly comes to him proposing an alliance? He must be desperate if he's coming to the one who threatens Mobius' peace and freedom. Devion could do with an alliance like this. It could help him dearly.

"You proposal is noted." said Devion "But give me a reason as to why I should accept it."

"Because I have valuable information." said the figure "Information that'll ensure your victory over the Royal Fighters."

"Information?" purred Devion "I like the sound of that. Speak on."

"The Council of Acorn proposed that the Royal Fighters take no action against you all and instead will try to infiltrate you from the shadows." explained the figure "Sonic doesn't like the idea though and if he we can get him to fight you, everybody will think he's rebelled against the council's wishes and he will get arrested and charged."

"That is a brilliant idea." Devion complimented "Frame the hero of this planet for treason and while they're busy chastising him, we can attack them and they will not be prepared for us because they're going to be distracted by a crime that Sonic hasn't committed under his own will."

"That's the idea." said the figure "I can tell you where Sonic and friends all live too. They live in a city called New Mobotropolis and if you bring that ship of yours, you can level the city while they're shooting Sonic down in court."

"Indeed." said Devion "So I can find the city though, I wish for you to

wear this tracking beacon,"

He paused for a moment and he reached into his cloak pocket and pulled out a tracking beacon. He gave it to the figure and the figure took it and hid it in his robe pocket.

"Do not activate the beacon until Sonic is on trial." said Devion sternly "The beacon will display your coordinates to us and we will find this "New Mobotropolis" and tear it to the ground. Or even better, kick the Mobians out and take it for ourselves just to dampen their spirit and valour and maybe even their hopes."

"That would be the better option Devion." said the figure "Make the heroes suffer by taking their city and dampen their spirits. I'm gonna enjoy seeing the people of New Mobotropolis suffer for the way they dare to treat me."

"I admire your ambitions mystery Mobian." said Devion "And I like where this alliance will be heading. I accept your alliance without second thought."

Devion and the figure shook hands with one another and concluded business. The alliance was made and the two of them would benefit most nicely from it. Very nicely indeed.

"So how do you intend to get Sonic to come over to *The Doombringer* ?" asked Devion "The hedgehog will likely be unwilling to break the council's rules."

"I'll trick him." said the figure "I'm going to steal the warp ring they have and trick Sonic into running through it and into your ship. Once he arrives, you can engage him in battle and once the Royal Fighters realize he's gone, they'll come over here looking for him as there's nowhere else he'd probably be at. Since Sonic didn't like the council's idea, the queen's first instincts will be he's fighting you and going against the council's vote."

"Proves how flaccid they are in the brain department." muttered Devion "Jumping to conclusions like that and assuming one thing because of another. Are you Mobians usually like that?"

"Yes." said the figure "Sonic and his friend Tails were once framed for robbery and everybody believed that Sonic had actually done it so they'll easily fall for this trick of ours."

"Sounds to me like you Mobians have courage and special abilities but no common sense." crowed Devion "This takeover will be easier then I thought."

He and the figure began to cackle at each other as they pictured Sonic behind bars and New Mobotropolis being under Devatron control…

Back at New Mobotropolis, Sonic was having a conversation with his good friend Miranda Mongoose, leader of the Northern Royal Fighters. Given how the Devatron threat was big enough to need all the groups at once, the other groups were still here to aid the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters in this big battle of theirs.

"So how's the ol' team shaping up then Miranda?" asked Sonic.

"We've been just fine since we last met thank you Sonic." said Miranda "Kari's still as helpful as ever, Kate's still going strong and Thunder and Bolt are still Thunder and Bolt. It was so nice of you to ask though young man."

"You're welcome." said Sonic "By the way, you heard what the council's just decided on?"

"The whole service knows what the council's just decided on." said Miranda "Queen Sally told us all. We're not to engage the enemy and instead, everybody will work on infiltration instead of the direct approach. I personally think the idea has merit but I don't think we shouldn't not fight them at all. Those Devatrons might attack and we will HAVE to fight them."

"I know." muttered Sonic "Knuckles came up with a much better idea though. Someone should fight the Devatrons and keep them occupied while the guys doing the sabotaging work do their stuff. Wouldn't that be better? The Devatrons don't get to attack anybody

or anything and the infiltrators won't like get caught or something and they won't know what's hit them?"

"That idea is indeed a brilliant one." said Miranda "Knuckles clearly has more brains then he seems to have. Whether the council will approve or not remains to be seen but I bet they'll like it much better then their other proposal."

"I know they will." said Sonic snidely "It's too good an idea to pass up. I just hope the Devatrons aren't doing anything right now or I will be furious."

"If those Devatrons are doing something then Sally will likely dispatch any willing saboteurs to get the information we need to counter-attack those vicious chrome monsters." Miranda suggested although she herself wasn't entirely sure on how this whole thing was going to play out should the Devatrons attack again "Until the Devatrons attack, we can't really guess how things will play out."

"Although it sure would be nice if it was us launching the first blow instead of us waiting for the Devatrons to attack first." muttered Sonic "But hey, if we're lucky we can sabotage the Devatrons before they even leave their ship."

"Yes, maybe we will." said Miranda "Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to get back to my team members."

With that said, Miranda and Sonic gave each other a friendly hug and Miranda left to see how her team was getting on. Sonic waved Miranda goodbye and he wondered off through the city with no particular place in mind. He just wanted a wander around to keep his mind off the Devatrons and the council's decision. He couldn't stop thinking about how beautiful New Mobotropolis looked and how worthy a replacement it was for the original Mobotropolis. He really did admire the look of the new city. Just a pity he never really had the time to settle down and get used to it given how fate keeps throwing things at him like a caveman throwing rocks at a trapped woolly mammoth. What Sonic wouldn't give to have a moment to settle down and get used to his new home but given current events, that would have to wait. All this really did bring a new meaning to the phrase "No rest for the weary".

"Eh, the Devatrons maybe threatening Mobius' freedom but they'll never get this place." said Sonic "Given how it has a shield and everything. They won't be able to lay a claw on New Mobotropolis when they attack. If only all the other places were as fortunate to have defence systems like ours and then the Devatrons wouldn't be able to attack any city at all."

As Sonic wondered around the city, the robed figure that had met up with Devion and made the alliance with him poked his head around the corner of a nearby building and watched Sonic wonder around aimlessly. If the figure's hood wasn't concealing his identity then you could probably see some kind of evil smirk on his face. After meeting up with Devion, the figure had returned home in his hover saucer and after returning home, he stole Knuckles' warp ring and now he was going to use it to send Sonic over to *The Doombringer* and frame the hedgehog for treason. The figure sneaked up to Sonic as quietly as he could, making sure to keep a low profile and that Sonic couldn't hear him. It seemed to be working because Sonic continued walking on and didn't show any signs of being aware he was being followed. The figure was doing an excellent job of sneaking up on him quietly after all. I doubt even someone with hearing as good as Rouge the Bat would have heard him. The figure then flicked the warp ring into the air and the ring spiralled over Sonic's head and landed in front of him. The warp ring expanded up to size and Sonic stopped dead in his tracks at the sight of the warp ring.

"Huh?" said Sonic confusedly "Where did the warp ring come from?"

Before Sonic could do anything else, the figure pushed him straight through the warp ring. Sonic went straight through the warp ring and vanished from sight. The warp ring shrunk down into nothingness and vanished into thin air. Sonic was on his way to *The Doombringer* now and Devion would be waiting for him. The figure snickered to himself and ran off as fast as he could.

"The plan is in motion!" the figure said with glee "Sonic's gonna be framed and I'm gonna get my revenge! This is going to be a good day for me, it really is!"

The figure could just see Sonic in court right now…

The warp ring opened up and Sonic flew straight out of it. He landed on his face and skidded across the shiny chrome floors of *The Doombringer* . Sonic groaned like a ghoul and he picked himself up, wondering what had just happened to him. The warp ring closed up and it fell to the floor with a ping. Sonic looked around and realized that he was no longer in New Mobotropolis. He was in a shiny chrome room but he had no idea where this room was.

"Where am I?" asked Sonic, rubbing his face better and surveying his surroundings "And why did a warp ring just open up randomly in front of me? And why did someone push me through it? And why did it bring me here? Did the guy who pushed me through it use the warp ring? If so then why did the guy make the warp ring bring me here?"

"I can answer all of your questions hedgehog." droned a spine-chilling voice that made Sonic's skin crawl.

Sonic knew that voice. It was Devion's voice! Sonic suddenly worked out where he was. He was on *The Doombringer* ! The guy who pushed him through the warp ring was obviously intending to get him killed or something! Sonic braced himself for an inevitable attack and looked around, wondering where Devion was. Devion emerged from a shadowy corner of the room he was in and he glowered at Sonic with his red V-shaped visor. Sonic glared back at Devion and he gritted his teeth.

"You!" cried Sonic "I didn't think I'd be seeing you again so quickly Devion! Now can you explain to me why somebody used a warp ring to bring me onto your ship?"

"Certainly hedgehog." purred Devion "One of your own has turned traitor and has brought you over to *The Doombringer* so I may eliminate you. Such a shame for you isn't it? One of your own decides to aid me in my conquest."

Sonic thought his heart was going to leap up into his throat and fall back down into his chest again. A traitor? A traitor amongst the Royal Fighters? Or a traitor among something else helping the

Devatrons? How dare that person! Once Sonic found out who this mystery traitor was, he was going to spin-dash him into a pulp a dozen times over!

"One of my own has turned traitor?" asked Sonic nervously "Who?"

"I do not know." said Devion "The Mobian was dressed in a hooded robe to conceal his identity so whom this traitor among you is, is a mystery to even me. I doubt it'll be any of your Royal Fighter friends given how they all fought against me and my soldiers. It must be one of the lesser, more cowardly Mobians. It might even be somebody you don't know so I wouldn't worry too much about it. Now my agent has brought you here, I can eliminate you and lower the hopes of Mobians everywhere."

"In your dreams Devion!" yelled Sonic determinedly "I'm the fastest thing alive and I smash many a robot in my time! True you maybe nigh-invulnerable but I bet if I keep spin-dashing you I'll maybe penetrate you eventually. You're only "nigh-invulnerable" so that means there's some chance of damaging you."

"The last time I was damaged in battle Sonic, it took fifty men all armed with machine guns to put so much as a dent on me." sneered Devion "I doubt your spin-dashes will get through to me no matter how many times you hit me."

"Wanna put that to the test chrome-dome?" sneered Sonic.

Devion's response was to deploy his arm cannons and shoot at Sonic. Sonic dodged the blasts with ease and the blasts did nothing more then scorch the floor.

"Ha! Missed me!" jeered Sonic.

Devion blasted at Sonic again but Sonic effortlessly dodged the attacks given his trademark speed once again.

"Oh, so close but you still missed!" taunted Sonic.

Devion blasted at Sonic again but Sonic dodged the blasts with ease and stuck his tongue out at Devion.

"Three strikes and you're out!" snickered Sonic.

Devion could see what Sonic was up to. He was relying on mid-battle banter to annoy him and make him lose focus while Sonic remained cool and collected. Devion had fallen for that trick before and he was not falling for it again. So instead of shooting at Sonic again, Devion put his arm cannons away and instead decided to rely on his fists. Devion charged towards Sonic and he tried to punch the hedgehog but Sonic moved out of Devion's way and dropkicked him in the shoulder. Devion swatted at Sonic but he missed and Sonic rammed Devion in the gut. Devion kneed Sonic and then elbow-thrusted him on the head. Sonic went all dopey for a split-second and Devion back-handed him directly into a wall. Sonic crashed slap-bang into the wall and he slid down the wall and onto the floor, wondering which way was up. Sonic picked himself up and tried to regain his senses but Devion ran up to him and punched him in the face and since he was so close to the wall, Devion ended up punching Sonic's head into the wall. Being slammed into a wall was painful enough but being punched in the face and slammed into a wall both at once was extreme pain. Devion grabbed Sonic's face and hoisted him off the floor. Sonic made muffled noises and he struggled in Devion's grasp. Devion slammed him against the wall again and then he threw Sonic across the room. If Devion wasn't sticking to the plan, he would have just drawn his sword and killed Sonic already but he had to leave Sonic alive so that the Council of Acorn could put him on trial and then he could attack them while they were distracted. Sonic picked himself up and he rubbed his aching body. Never before had he experienced so much pain from a robot before. Eggman's robots were pretty serious but Devion was just downright demonic. Devion ran up to Sonic and he attempted to grab him but Sonic spin-dashed Devion and the hedgehog ricocheted off of his tough armour. Devion staggered backwards but he regained himself and he braced himself for another attack from Sonic. Sonic spin-dashed Devion again but his attack did nothing to him other then make him stagger. Sonic bounced off of a wall and spin-dashed Devion again but Devion was ready for it and he held his arms up so the hedgehog's attack didn't even make him stagger as he ricocheted off of the invulnerable robot. Sonic skidded across the floor on his feet and he ground to a halt, panting and frowning at Devion.

"You know what Devion I'll give you credit." said Sonic "Of all the foes I've ever faced in my life, you're the only one I have to worry about."

"What an honouree comment that is, I appreciate your compliment." sneered Devion "Being the only villain that you outright fear is quite an accomplishment for me."

"I don't fear you Devion but you're one I have to worry about due to your nigh-invulnerability." retorted Sonic "But not even you can lower my self-esteem! I'll beat you even if I take a million years to finally beat you!"

"How tiresome your quotes of valour and banter are quickly becoming." fumed Devion "Will you cease the unnecessary mid-battle banter and just fight already?"

"Fine then." said Sonic "We shall fight in silence."

With that said, Sonic propelled himself towards Devion but Devion raised his foot and Sonic hit it. Devion flipped himself up and over with Sonic on his foot and he threw Sonic over himself and across the room as he flipped over. Sonic crashed into the wall again and he fell with a heavy thunk onto the floor. If Sonic wasn't so strong and full of Chaos Energy that gave him a body greater then that of the average Mobian then Sonic would likely have broken some bones after falling down onto the floor. Sonic pushed himself up onto his knees and he grunted in pain.

"Urgh! I'm gonna feel really sore tomorrow!" muttered Sonic "Devion's freaking lethal!"

Devion charged up to Sonic and tired to attack him again but Sonic kicked him in the leg and tripped him up. Devion landed on the floor and his beak ended up embedding itself into it. Devion pulled himself free but Sonic jumped on his back and knocked him back down onto his stomach. Sonic grabbed Devion's cloak and he pulled it over his head again, blinding Devion for a moment. Devion took the cloak off of his head so he could see again and he removed the cloak so Sonic couldn't do it again. Devion elbowed Sonic off of himself and Sonic landed heavily down onto the floor. Devion picked

himself up, grabbed Sonic's ankles and threw him into a wall. Sonic hit the wall and he lay against it in pain. Sonic then noticed the warp ring that had brought him here and he tried to grab it so he could use it to escape but Devion shot the warp ring with his arm cannon and destroyed it. Sonic gasped in horror at the destroyed warp ring and he looked up at Devion as the Devatron leader advanced on him.

"You're not going anywhere hedgehog." snarled Devion "This fight finishes and that's the end of it. Pity I had to destroy your warp ring device, it could have been useful to me."

"Well Devion, if you want this match to be a match to the death then I'll happily play it." said Sonic "You'll only regret it when I spin-dash your chrome backside to bits, once I finally penetrate you that is."

Sonic then charged at Devion and stepped on his head. He bounced off Devion and landed behind him. Sonic then spin-dashed Devion and slammed him against the wall. Devion retaliated with a furious swipe that sent Sonic hurling across the room and he skidded roughly across the floor. The skid left Sonic with a serious red scrape burn on his cheek that looked painful even to the touch. Sonic only just managed to stand back up but Devion pile-dived him and brought him down again. Devion picked Sonic up and slammed him down on his knee, making the hedgehog gasp in pain.

"It's amazing you're able to deal with this much punishment." Devion analyzed "Anyone in your position would have been broken by now."

"I've used magical rings and Chaos Emeralds over time and they supply me with a tiny bit of energy that strengthens my body and makes me more endurable." explained Sonic "So that means you get to toy with me a lot more before I'm finally down."

"You really are a fascinating warrior hedgehog." Devion complimented "It's just a pity I have to kill you."

Devion slammed Sonic down on the floor and then kicked him as hard as he could. Sonic rolled across the floor and Devion was about to stomp on him but Sonic rolled out Devion's way and Sonic pile-dived him down onto the floor. As he knocked Devion down, he

began hoping that someone would come here and help him escape from this ship before Devion killed him or seriously injured him…

Meanwhile at Royal HQ, Tails walked into the rest room where all the others were sitting around relaxing as they had nothing to do right now. He had been looking for Sonic and he was wondering if they had seen him anywhere.

"Hey guys, any of you seen Sonic?" asked Tails.

"Sorry bud but I haven't seen him since the council meeting was over." said Knuckles.

"I ain't seen him either mate." said Geoffrey.

"I'm sure he's around here somewhere." said Amy "You'll just have to keep looking for him. Heck, I'll help you look for him if you want."

"Thanks Amy." said Tails as Amy got up to join Tails in his search for Sonic.

"What are you looking for Sonic for anyway?" asked Amy.

"It's just I haven't seen him since the council's meeting was over and I'm wondering how he is." said Tails "That combined with the fact he feels sore over the council's decision is worrying me a little."

"Oh Tails I'm sure he's fine." said Amy reassuringly "Sonic's probably trying to occupy himself since we haven't got anything to do right now. But let's look for him and see if we can find out what Sonic's up to."

"You know, if you want to find him any quicker mates, you can just use the computers in the lab and track him down that way." said Geoffrey "It'll save all the hassle and you get to find him faster."

"OK Mr. St. John, I'll find him by using the lab's computers." said Tails "Thanks for the suggestion."

With that said, Tails and Amy exited the rest room and they

wandered over into the lab, Tails' favourite room in the entire base. Tails sat down to the computer and he tapped some keys on the keyboard. He ordered the computer to track Sonic's current location. Hi-tech computers like these were excellent for pin-pointing someone's exact coordinates. Tails tapped on some more keys and then waited to see what results the computers would give him. The screen flickered for a moment and then it displayed Sonic's current coordinates. A blue dot on the screen represented Sonic and his surroundings were displayed in green. The result made Tails and Amy's blood run cold.

"Oh my gosh! He's in Megapolis and he's on Devion's ship!" screeched Tails.

"What the heck is he doing over there?" exclaimed Amy "Didn't the council say we can't fight the Devatrons? Why is Sonic doing this?"

"I dunno." said Tails "It seems out of the ordinary for Sonic to willingly commit treason like this. We've gotta get him back and fast before the Devatrons kill him!"

So Tails and Amy jolted out of the lab and ran back into the rest room. Everybody could see they didn't have good news for them given their worried expressions on their faces.

"Everybody! You won't believe this!" cried Tails "Sonic's over at Megapolis and he's on Devion's ship!"

"Say what?" blurted Knuckles in surprise, nearly falling off the sofa as he did so.

"Oh mah stars!" cried Bunnie "What's sugah-hog doin' over at Devion's ship? Is he tryin' to git himself killed?"

"Not only that, he's committing treason too!" grumbled Geoffrey "The council clearly voted no action to be taken against the Devatrons and Sonic goes and takes action against them anyway!"

"That doesn't sound like Sonic to me." said Ruben the Water Panther "Sonic's not the kind of guy who'd willingly commit treason just so he can do what he likes."

"Well whatever's happening, we need to get him back and fast!" declared Knuckles, reaching into his dreadlocks to get the warp ring they'd been using "I'll just use my warp ring and…"

But to the echidna's horror, the warp ring wasn't in his dreadlocks! It was gone! Knuckles searched frantically, flicking his dreadlocks about and jumping up and down to see if it would fall out but he found nothing.

"My warp ring's gone!" cried Knuckles "Sonic must have it! He must have stolen my warp ring without me knowing about it and then used it to go over to Devion's ship so he can face him!"

"But why would Sonic do something as nuts as that?" asked Wilson the Dog "Sonic maybe reckless but he's not gormless. He knows he can't beat the Devatrons on his own. Heck, Devion beat him yesterday so Sonic wouldn't dare do something as stupid as that since he knows he can't win!

"Something doesn't sound right here." muttered Mandy Mouse "Sonic went over to meet Miranda Mongoose and we went over to the rest room of Royal HQ. How could he have stolen the warp ring if we didn't even go to the same room together?"

"He probably swiped it before we went to the rest room while we weren't looking." suggested Shade the Echidna "Sonic is fast so he could easily steal a warp ring without any of us looking or noticing."

"But Mr. Sonic would never steal from his own friends." said Cream the Rabbit "I know he wouldn't! Sonic's a good person, he'd never steal things that don't belong to him!"

"I agree with Cream." said Cosmo "Sonic wouldn't steal things from his own friends. But regardless, we have to get him back home before the Devatrons kill him. Hopefully he can explain everything to us when he gets back."

"I hope he can!" growled Knuckles "Nobody takes my warp rings and uses them for stupid purposes under my watch! I wouldn't be too surprised if Devion has it already and is going to use it against us!"

"Knuckles, we don't know if Sonic DID steal the warp ring or not." noted Tails "So don't just assume that he stole it, we don't know the full details yet."

"Let's stop standing around doing nothing and save blue dude's backside from those Deva-freaks already!" yelled Mandy crossly "He's probably getting his speedy backside handed to him right now!"

"I concur with my wife there." said Wilson with a grin on his face "Let's go already!"

"But how are we quickly gonna get over to Megapolis without the warp ring?" asked Cosmo "We can't run fast like Sonic does, we don't have the Chaos Emeralds to do Chaos Control with as Devion has them and they're power drained so we can't use them anyway and we don't have any other warp rings."

"I'll take my car although it can only fit five people in it." said Mandy "The rest will have to take hover saucers from the Royal Fighter hangar."

"Me, Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream and Cosmo will use the saucer." said Tails "You, Wilson, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben can use your car Mandy."

"Sounds good to me." said Mandy "Let's get going and get Sonic back over here and grill him on what's going on."

With that said, the Royal Fighters ran out of Royal HQ and headed outside towards the Royal Fighter Hangar to get the respective vehicles. As they did so, Tails began hoping that things weren't what they seemed right now as the very idea of Sonic committing treason just didn't sound right to him…

Back on *The Doombringer* , Sonic and Devion's fight continued to get more and more hectic by the second. Devion was still on top of this match and as the fight progressed, Sonic began to tire down and his attacks became weaker. After all, Devion's stamina matched

his invulnerability and since Sonic couldn't damage Devion, he couldn't weaken Devion and get on top of him. Sonic spin-dashed at Devion but given how Sonic was faltering, the attack was only half as good as it usually was and it didn't even make Devion stagger. Devion cackled at Sonic and he drew out his golden sword. Since Sonic was slowing down, he might have an easier chance of catching him and slicing him to pieces with his sword. Devion charged up to Sonic and he tried to cleave Sonic in two with his sword. Sonic jumped over the sword and Devion missed. Sonic kicked Devion in the beak and made the Devatron leader flinch. Devion retaliated furiously with a slash of the sword. He managed to nick Sonic across the arm and Sonic screamed in pain. The cut on his arm began trickling with blood and it began stinging like crazy. But Sonic wasn't going to let a mere cut on his arm bring him down so he continued his fight. Sonic spin-dashed Devion from behind and Devion found himself being thrown forward onto his hands and Sonic then ran off to the other side of the room. There was a door at either end of the room and they were both locked. Sonic tried to spin-dash the door down but he wasn't at his strongest and the doors were pretty tough so his attack failed. Devion ran up to Sonic and slashed him across the eye with his sword. Sonic clutched his eye and let out a terrible cry of anguish as he felt the long thin cut across his eye. That cut would later became a faint scar once it healed. Devion wasn't finished yet though. He slashed at Sonic and nicked him across the cheek with the sword. He didn't aim for any of Sonic's vital points as he wasn't supposed to kill him but he didn't hold back on his attacks as that would make Sonic suspicious and it would make this fight seem more real and not just part of the ruse. Sonic backed against the wall and stared up at Devion as the Devatron leader prepared to cleave Sonic in two. He pointed the sword at Sonic and the hedgehog found himself shivering.

"Now then Hero of Mobius, given my rare moments of generosity, I'm going to let you decide how I kill you." said Devion "Should I just slit your throat and finish you off already? Or should I take the more painful approach? Maybe carve out your heart and show it to you as you die? Or maybe plunge my sword into your stomach and let you slowly bleed to death so you suffer more?"

"If I'm to die at all Devion." said Sonic, wiping away the blood from

the cut on his cheek "It'd be peacefully in my sleep. I'm not dieing at your hands you chrome-plated monster!"

With that said, Sonic ducked down and he rolled out from between Devion and the wall. Devion tried to slice Sonic in two as he rolled away but he was a fraction too late and he just nicked Sonic on his fur. The attack didn't harm Sonic at all and the hedgehog picked himself up, ignoring the stinging pain in his arm and eye. The cuts had stopped bleeding but they were still stinging irritably. Devion fumed at Sonic and he slashed at him again with the sword. Sonic back flipped away from Devion and then spin-dashed towards him. He hit Devion in the gut and slammed him against the wall, causing him to drop his sword and before Devion could pick it up, Sonic grabbed it and tried to attack him with it. Devion raised his arm up and Sonic hit it with the sword. The sword didn't do any damage and Devion whacked it out of Sonic's hand. The sword spun across the floor and hit the wall. Sonic and Devion decided that the sword wasn't really worth fighting over so they left it and continued to fight each other.

Outside *The Doombringer* , Sonic's friends all arrived at Megapolis and they pulled up to the side of *The Doombringer* . What a sight it was for them and how huge it looked up close. Mandy, Wilson, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben got out of the hover car and Geoffrey primed his trademark arm mounted crossbow. He aimed it at the ship and he fired ten exploding darts into it. The Mobians all took shelter behind their vehicles and Geoffrey activated the darts. The darts all exploded at once and they blew a hole in *The Doombringer* 's armour. It was only a small hole that wouldn't effect the ship in anyway, even if it was in flight but the Mobians were only blowing a hole in it so they could get into the ship, they weren't damaging it to hinder the Devatrons. As the darts exploded, Devion and Sonic stopped their battle and Sonic instantly ran for it. The battle was going to end badly for him anyway so he may as well flee for his live and fight again another day. Devion had an idea on what was happening. Sonic's friends had come over to save him but in order to keep up the pretence, he pretended to chase after Sonic. He ran after him as fast as he could but Sonic was way too fast for even someone as powerful as him so Sonic managed to get away nice and quickly. Sonic leaped through the hole in the wall and he landed

before his friends. He stared in surprise at the fact his friends were here but he smiled graciously at them.

"Hey everybody, you've come to get me!" cried Sonic "Thanks everybody!"

"I wouldn't say thanks mate." said Geoffrey "We've come to save you and bring you back home so we can grill you on what's been going on."

"Huh? Wha?" asked Sonic, confused on what the skunk meant.

"We found out via Royal HQ's computer monitors that you've gone over to Megapolis." explained Tails "And you're on Devion's ship and fighting him which is what we were told NOT to do."

"In other words, we think that you're committing treason Sonic!" growled Knuckles "And another thing! My warp ring's gone and I bet you have it don't you? You stole my warp ring and used it to get over here didn't you?"

"Guys, wait please!" cried Sonic, waving his hands hastily "I can explain everything! Honest!"

"We know ya'll can sugah-hog." said Bunnie "But we need to get ya'll home so that ya'll can clear things up with us and everybody and prove yer not guilty. Ah for one know ya'll ain't."

"I concur with Bunnie." said Ruben "I believe all this was a set up."

"It was." said Sonic "I'll explain everything when we get back, I promise you. I can get this all cleared up."

"We know you can." said Tails "We can count on you to tell the truth. Let's hope everybody believes you though."

With that said, Sonic joined Tails and his group in the hover saucer while Mandy's group got back into her car and the two vehicles started up and zoomed off back to New Mobotropolis. Devion watched the Royal Fighters flee for their lives and bring Sonic home where he was going to be grilled about current events and hopefully, prove himself innocent.

"So now the heroes flee back to their city to test Sonic on the truth." crooned Devion "The plan is in motion and my agent can now reveal to me New Mobotropolis' location. I look forward to taking over the city and kicking the heroes out of it so that I may dampen their hopes and overbearing valour and spirit. This agent of mine has really been a big help to me and it's thanks to him that my conquest shall begin…"

He began cackling to himself as he picture New Mobotropolis under his rule in his evil head. No matter how the trial turned out, nobody wins as Devion will get New Mobotropolis and the Mobians would be forced out of hiding and be vulnerable for the dastardly Devatrons…

Well, this isn't going to go down well! Sonic's being grilled and Devion's anonymous agent is poised to strike! Will this plan succeed and can Sonic prove himself not guilty in time to take down the Devatrons? Stay tuned for the next part of this lengthy saga!

So Chaos Kai X, is this story still holding out for ya? I'm curious to know what you think of it currently.

P.S. I was a little dissatisfied with the original chapter so I re-wrote it and re-uploaded it. Is this version better?

Heroes and Treason Part 2

Story 102: Heroes and Treason Part 2: The Trial of Sonic the Hedgehog

The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had returned to New Mobotropolis and they took Sonic the Hedgehog back to Royal HQ. After arriving back home with Sonic, the Royal Fighters explained everything to Queen Sally Acorn and the squirrel queen wasn't pleased to find out what had happened so she decided to put Sonic on trial and see if he was guilty or not. Sonic had desperately tried to explain himself but Sally refused to listen and told him to just save it for the court. She wasn't in a listening mood right now as she was so mad at the very though of Sonic disobeying the council again. Sonic didn't really mind as he knew he had a perfect explanation for everything and the court would see him as not guilty. The trial didn't start until tomorrow though so Sonic and friends had to wait in Royal HQ until then. Everybody gathered together into the rest room and waited for Sonic to explain everything to them. Sonic bandaged up his cut arm and put a plaster on the cut on his cheek and he spoke to his friends.

"So, if I've gathered correctly, you think that I stole Knuckles' warp ring and used it to go over to *The Doombringer* and face Devion and therefore, go against the council's vote and commit treason?" asked Sonic.

"Yes." said Tails the twin-tailed fox.

"Well guys, I'm afraid you've got it all wrong." said Sonic "I had just had a conversation with Miranda Mongoose and I was wondering around Mobotropolis, trying to keep my mind off the Devatrons and then a warp ring appeared straight in front of me and something or someone pushed me straight through it. Honestly guys, that's how it happened."

"It is?" said Tails "Thank goodness, and here's me foolishly thinking you'd gone the bone idle route for a minute there! At least we can safely say you're not guilty."

"Wrong actually Tails." said Geoffrey St. John the Skunk "Sonic mate, how do we know that you're telling the truth? I mean a warp ring can't just appear from nowhere and who in their right mind would use a warp ring and send you over to Devion's ship? Everybody in the city loves you, they wouldn't be trying to kill you mate!"

"Well there's obviously one person who doesn't like me." muttered Sonic "Because I was pushed through a warp ring sent over to *The Doombringer* . Either someone's double-crossing us or there's one of my enemies working for them and trying to get me killed by them. I wouldn't be surprised if Dr. Eggman or Marik the Martian were working with Devion. Scourge, he'd probably make an alliance with him just so he can beat me and then he'd try and stab Devion in the back afterwards. Either way, someone's working for the Devatrons."

"Sonic, you may have been pushed through the warp ring but that doesn't necessarily mean someone deliberately did it." said Wilson the Dog, recently wed Royal Fighter "Someone might have done it by accident or maybe you were pushed through by something rather then someone."

"Accidents may happen but I don't think the warp ring was there by accident." noted Mandy Mouse, Wilson's wife "Warp rings don't just appear, someone has to have activated it so I don't think Sonic was pushed through the warp ring and sent over to *The Doombringer* by accident I mean, who would do something as bone-headed as that?"

"I think the whole thing was a set-up." said Ruben the Water Panther, whom unfortunately is still missing his aqua-collar "Someone's obviously trying to kill Sonic and at the same time, is making it look like he's committing treason. The person doing this probably didn't wager on Sonic getting saved and was probably trying the former rather then the latter. Either way, he's almost succeeded on both grounds."

"Yeah, Devion almost killed me and you all believed for a minute I was committing treason." said Sonic grumpily "Whoever it is that's shoved me through a warp ring is gonna pay for it big time! Speaking of the warp ring, I'm sorry to announce that Devion's destroyed it. I tried to use it to get back here but he shot it and

destroyed it before I could use it."

Knuckles was not pleased to hear this at all. He was so furious, his face went a very dark red, darker then the rest of his body.

"Well, whoever it was that shoved you through my warp ring is gonna get a nice helping heaping of my spiked knuckles now!" he growled "That was the only warp ring I had left on Angel Island and now it's gone! We can't use it anymore now!"

"I know, and warp rings are helpful." muttered Sonic "I'm glad you all believe that I'm not guilty by the way. You guys really are good friends. I just hope the court will be merciful and willing to believe me."

"Of course they will Sonic sweetie." said Amy Rose reassuringly, hugging Sonic lovingly and making Sonic groan "You're the hero of Mobius, why would they have a hard time believing you?"

"Because I've had a history of disobeying the council's orders so they might not be so willing to listen to me." muttered Sonic "Most times I've disobeyed the council, I've gotten away with it because I was in the right. Others, I got strikes against me and if the council finds me guilty this time then I'm off to prison. If you have more then five strikes against you, it's four months in prison for you. I already have four strikes against me, if I don't pull through this one then the Hero of Mobius will have to be out of action for a while."

"If the council declares you guilty then that'll make them the biggest band of dumbasses in New Mobotropolis." grumbled Mandy "If you're locked up then who's gonna save everybody from the Devatrons?"

"Precisely." said Sonic crossly "So I have to win this case or I'm toast!"

"I hope I'm not offending you Sonic but, your government isn't a very strong one is it?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian.

"You're too right on that Cosmo." said Sonic "The Council of Acorn are pretty stupid. If they declare me guilty then I'll officially lose all

respect I had for them."

"In order to make sure you do win, I suggest that you get a defendant who knows you're innocent and knows how to argue against the Council of Acorn and beat them." said Mandy with a sly grin on her face and the wink of an eye.

"I like that idea Mandy." said Sonic brightly "And since you've had a history of arguing with the council and beating them, I think you can be my defendant in this trial. I can count on you to prove me innocent."

"Blue dude, you've made the right choice." said Mandy, stroking Sonic's head playfully "With me as defendant, you're as good as saved out there."

Sonic laughed as Mandy ruffled his fur and he couldn't help but agree with Mandy. The mouse was going to be a brilliant defendant for him and this trial was going to go perfectly in his favour…

The next day arrived and over in Megapolis, *The Doombringer* was receiving a message from someone. The message was coming from Devion's agent, the very person who set up this whole conspiracy and Devion entered the cockpit to see what the message was. The message was a set of coordinates displaying the agent's current location. The coordinates were displayed on *The Doombringer* 's main computer monitors and they showed Devion that the agent's current location was in New Mobotropolis, the very city that Sonic and friends resided in and the very city Devion had to capture. Devion sat down in his throne and surveyed the screens that displayed his agent's current coordinates. This meant to him the agent had activated the tracking beacon he'd given to him yesterday. Devion cackled to himself, pleased to see that his agent had just given him the location of New Mobotropolis. Now his takeover could begin.

"The agent's tracking beacon is on." said Devion "And according to the beacon's location, New Mobotropolis is approximately sixty miles away from our current position and is to the north-west of where we

are. Excellent, now the takeover can commence. I can just imagine the Mobian's expressions when I enter their city and take it for my own."

"Once we take over New Mobotropolis Devion, what do you suppose we should do with the agent?" asked his second in command Raicor "Should we keep him for further use or just get rid of him?"

"We shall keep the agent until his usefulness value expires and then he can join the other Mobians in extinction." purred Devion "Why keep an agent if he's of no use to you? I have nothing to offer him and he offers nothing to me so once he's fulfilled his usefulness quota, he will be exterminated."

Devion rotated his throne around and he face his loyal servant Tronic, who was waiting for Devion to give him orders.

"Tronic, upload the agent's displayed coordinates into *The Doombringer* 's navigational systems." ordered Devion "And then take off. We're going to pay our new enemies a visit."

"At once oh glorious master Devion." droned Tronic (Like I said, he's one loyal sod!).

Tronic tapped some keys on the control pad and uploaded the agent's current coordinates into *The Doombringer* so the ship knew where it was heading. The coordinates were quickly uploaded and Tronic set the ship to auto-pilot and ordered it to take off. There was no need to pilot *The Doombringer* over a short distance after all so they may as well set it to auto-pilot as they flew off to New Mobotropolis. With a roar of it's formidable engines, the colossal vessel powered up and began to rise up off the ground. Slowly and steadily, *The Doombringer* rose up off the ground and it loomed above it in the bright blue sky like a hummingbird hovering over something. *The Doombringer* rotated to the north-west and then the engines kicked into full gear and the ship began to pull away from where it was and fly off to New Mobotropolis. Little did the Devatrons know, their take-off was being watched and recorded by none other then Dr. Eggman's servant bot Katherine. She had been sent up to the surface by Dr. Eggman to see how things were going topside

and she had just come across *The Doombringer* . Katherine recorded every minute of *The Doombringer* 's ascent into the sky and departure from Megapolis and she sent the recorded footage to her insidious master, who was still hiding in his underground bunker. Dr. Eggman watched the footage of *The Doombringer* taking off and he was amazed by the giant chrome vessel.

"That ship is beyond anything in the entire Egg-Fleet alone!" blurted Dr. Eggman "Highly powered engines, solid structural build, very strong looking armour, elegant take-offs and it flies beautifully! This ship definitely doesn't belong to the Mobians! It must come from another world. Well this blasted universe is big enough as it is, there's bound to be plenty of alien races I'm yet to meet in this empty void known as space. Katherine!" he barked "If that ship returns, you will sneak aboard and spy on it! Find out who the occupants are and see if you can eliminate them so that I may take that glorious vessel for myself!"

Katherine nodded and she returned to the bunker for other duties. Dr. Eggman hadn't really been on the uptake recently, hence the reason he doesn't know about the Devatrons. Since his failure to level New Mobotropolis last month, he had been working like mad on his next project and hadn't been paying much attention to the monitors to see what's going on outside the bunker. Also, the bunker was soundproof so Eggman didn't even hear *The Doombringer* landing or the fight with the R.F.S. and the Devatrons the other day. He'd only come to know of *The Doombringer* after sending Katherine out on patrol and the first thing she had come across was *The Doombringer* and now Eggman wanted to know more about it and see if he can take it for himself. Although given how he can't even take care of a speedy, blue hedgehog, chances are he is mince-meat in a battle against invulnerable chrome-armoured robots…

Back in New Mobotropolis, the trial of Sonic the Hedgehog was about to begin. The trial was being held in the Castle Acorn courtroom. Sally Acorn was the judge in this trial with Councillor Hamlin as the prosecutor and Mandy Mouse as the defendant. The other council members Julian, Penelope and Dylan were members

of the jury and the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were just sitting on the sides and watching this case. The Northern Royal Fighters were watching the case too. The other groups were on patrol. Sally sat at the bench and banged the hammer on the counter.

"Order, order please." she said "Honourable judge Queen Sally Acorn will pass judgement in today's case. Councillor Hamlin Pig will prosecute while Royal Fighter and recently married Mandy Mouse will act as the accused's defendant. The court is in session and we may now begin the trial."

Hamlin stood forward and he spoke to Sonic, who sat on a stool before Queen Sally and he had his arms folded and a scowl on his face. He was not happy to be here and he was even less happy at the fact Hamlin was the prosecutor.

"Friends, Council Members, Royal Fighters and her majesty the Queen, we're all gathered here today for the trial of Sonic the Hedgehog." Hamlin announced to everybody in the room.

"I'm amazed you've just noticed." snickered Sonic "Been admiring yourself too much to notice why we're here Hamlin?"

Even though Sonic was the accused, the court couldn't help but snigger at his clever remark. Hamlin fumed angrily and he pointed sharply at Sonic.

"The accused will kindly refrain from resorting to stupid banter!" snapped Hamlin "The court is no place for jokes you know!"

"I do know, I've been on trial before you stupid pig!" snapped Sonic.

"The accused will also kindly refrain from insulting the prosecutor!" grumbled Hamlin "Now where was I? Oh yes, Sonic the Hedgehog. You stand before the court under the suspicion of repudiating the council's orders and committing treason under your own freewill. How do you plead?"

"Not guilty of course." retorted Sonic "Why would I be guilty of something I haven't done?"

"You went over to Megapolis and fought the Devatrons!" shouted

Hamlin "Which is the very thing the council decided we should NOT do! That's going against the council's vote and committing treason! You are guilty!"

"Heck no I'm not." said Sonic "Allow me to tell you what really happened out there."

"No." said Hamlin "You'll only fill the court with lies you reckless little…"

"Objection!" yelled Mandy "Let the accused speak his peace you selfish little porker!"

"We pigs find that term offensive Mandy!" snapped Hamlin "And I will not allow the accused to speak. People who disobey council orders like Sonic usually does will only come out with lies and nobody likes a liar do they?"

"OK then." said Mandy, folding her arms and glaring at Hamlin "Then let's do it this way then."

She looked at Sonic and spoke to him.

"Does the accused promise on behalf of the court to speak the truth and nothing more?" she asked.

"I do." said Sonic brightly.

"There you go then." said Mandy with a smug expression at Hamlin "Now accused, what is the true story behind this conspiracy that's been going on with you and a warp ring?"

"Well, I'd just had a conversation with Miranda Mongoose, leader of the Northern Royal Fighters as you all know," explained Sonic "And then I went for a walk around the city to keep my mind off the Devatrons until suddenly, a warp ring appeared in front of me and something or someone pushed me through it. I ended up on Devion's ship, which is known by the corniest of all names, *The Doombringer* , and I tried to use the warp ring to get back here but Devion destroyed it and I got caught up in battle with him. Then my friends came and rescued me and I told them everything. I tried to tell Sally the truth but she wouldn't have it and told me to just save it

for the court. Now you've heard it Sally, do you wish you'd listened to me now?"

Sally put a finger to her lips and mused for a moment. Sonic did appear to be telling the truth and since he'd promised to speak the truth, there was no way he could possibly be lying. Looks like things weren't what they seemed after all.

"Well, that sounded interesting." said Sally "Definitely not what I was expecting to hear from Sonic."

"Yes indeed." said Hamlin crossly "However there's one thing, after you got warped over to *The Doombringer* and your warp ring got destroyed, did you try to flee the ship alive? I think your injuries speak for themselves Sonic."

He motioned to Sonic's bandaged arm and plastered cheek. Sonic fumed at Hamlin, wondering why the pig was bothering to notify his injuries from the battle yesterday.

"So even if Sonic didn't willingly go over to *The Doombringer* , he's STILL committing treason!" declared Hamlin "He didn't try to escape from the ship and instead fought Devion, which is what the council decided we WOULDN'T do! So Sonic is still in the wrong here!"

"No he isn't you ignorant slab of bacon!" snapped Mandy "Devion fought Sonic first and Sonic's fighting was obviously self defence as Devion was attacking him! The council agreed on not taking action against Devion but did the order say anything about DEFENDING yourself against them?"

Hamlin tried to argue back but he suddenly realized that he had no answer, nor did he have anything that could trump what Mandy had just said. The mouse had got him there. Mandy smirked at him and she continued her testimony.

"That's what I thought." sniffed Mandy "And anyway, I'm pretty sure blue dude tried to escape from *The Doombringer* but because Devion had destroyed his warp ring, he couldn't use the warp ring to get away and since Devion had engaged Sonic in battle, Sonic couldn't get away because Devion wasn't letting him. Isn't that right

Sonic?"

"To the letter Mandy gal." said Sonic "I did try to flee the ship but Devion had locked me and himself into a secure room and the doors were too tough to break down so I couldn't escape even if I wanted to. So you see, I'm not guilty of anything at all. Someone pushed me through the warp ring and sent me to *The Doombringer* and I tried to get out but Devion made it hard for me so I'm in the right for once."

"In the right my trotter!" retorted Hamlin "If someone DID push you through the warp ring then why would they send you over to the territory of our enemies? Are you concluding that somebody in New Mobotropolis is a traitor and is trying to kill you? Well I'm appalled to think that you'd think such a horrible thing! Everybody in this city is a decent person and they would never do something like that to the one person who's been saving their silly lives over and over for two years going on three now! So Sonic, your statement is perjured and I conclude that you are indeed the guilty one."

"Hamlin you gormless little hambone! Sonic promised on behalf of the court to speak the truth and he has done so!" screamed Mandy "Why are you having such a hard time factoring all this in?"

"Because unlike you, you gullible little mouse, I'm not content with believing everything Mr. Hero Hog says just because he's the Hero of Mobius!" retorted Hamlin "Even heroes are capable of lying to us and I believe Sonic's statement is all lies! He may have promised on behalf of the court to speak the truth but just remember that words can be said but that doesn't necessarily mean the speaker of those words actually means them. Anyone can say something like that and be lying about it so I do not believe what Sonic says!"

"Well if you're going to be that obstinate and pig-headed then maybe you'd like to call forth a witness or two and see if their stories match Sonic's or yours!" growled Mandy through gritted teeth "There's lots of people in New Mobotropolis, I'm sure somebody saw what happened with him and the warp ring!"

"Very well then." said Hamlin "Who in this courtroom witnessed Sonic, presumably, getting pushed through a warp ring?"

Fellow Northern Royal Fighter Kari the Rat raised her hand.

"Very well, will Miss Kari the Rat stand forward and speak her piece to the court then?" asked Hamlin.

Kari got shyly to her feet and she strode over to the bench and stood before Sonic, Mandy and Hamlin.

"So Kari, as you're a witness to this whole thing, what did you see?" asked Mandy curiously, hoping that what Kari had seen matched Sonic's description.

"Well, Miranda had finished talking to Sonic and she came back to me, Kate and the chipmunk brothers." explained Kari "However, I'd left to see if I could buy a new screwdriver as mine had worn down and I didn't have a spare on me before Miranda came back. I went around looking for a tool shop as I'm sure this city has one and then…I saw a figure dressed in robes pushing Sonic through a warp ring. And please don't accuse me of lying just because rats are known for that kind of stuff. I'm not like those rats, I am a rat with a sense of decency."

"Yes you are." said Mandy with a proud smile on her face.

Kari beamed and she walked back over to the sidelines and sat back down next to Miranda and Kate. The mongoose and eagle both smiled at her for her contribution to this session.

"So there you go Hamlin, we have a witness who's statement matches that of Sonic's so he is not guilty." said Mandy.

Hamlin, sweating madly, tried desperately to say something to counter attack this but try as he might, he couldn't think of anyway to trump Mandy this time. He was well and truly beaten and he didn't like that at all. He hated losing but since he couldn't beat Mandy, there was no point prolonging this trial so he reluctantly admitted defeat. He grumbled to himself and he turned his back on everybody.

"Fine! I'm beaten!" he grumbled "Congratulations Mandy Mouse!"

"Thank you." sneered Mandy "So your majesty, what do you think

about all this?"

Sally thought about everything that had been said in the court and she decided it was time to deliver her verdict.

"I, the judge, concur with Mandy and Sonic." she announced "Sonic has spoken his side of the story and we have witness statements that prove him truthful and in the right. While we do not know who it was that tried to get Sonic killed and if he's still around, we do know that Sonic did not willingly go over to *The Doombringer* and fight the Devatrons under his own expense. Henceforth, I can happily declare the defendant Sonic the Hedgehog, not guilty of treason. All charges against him are to be dropped and this case is now dismissed."

She banged the hammer on the counter and Sonic whooped with joy.

"Whoo-hah! The court believes me and I'm declared not guilty!" cheered Sonic "I'm off scot-free again!"

"In your face you jerky pig!" jeered Amy Rose from the sidelines, sticking her tongue out at Hamlin.

"Well done Mandy!" cheered Wilson, giving his wife a congratulating hug.

"Oh come on Wilson, Hamlin's not that hard to beat in a court case." sneered Mandy, returning the hug "But thanks anyway."

However, their celebrating was not to last. For just as the court case had been closed, *The Doombringer* arrived at New Mobotropolis. The huge vessel cast it's shadow over the city and it loomed above New Mobotropolis ominously. It just hung there in the sky and hovered above the ground. Devion and Raicor were standing on top of *The Doombringer* and they peered down at the city. Devion snorted at it. New Mobotropolis didn't look like much to him but then again, nothing on any other world looks like anything to him.

"So this is the residential housing of Sonic the Hedgehog is it?" purred Devion "How droll of him to reside in such a vapid looking city. Once I take it as my own, I shall improve it dearly. That

ludicrous looking ring wall around the city definitely has to go."

"I agree with you on that Devion." said Raicor "Sonic's home city is truly a festering pile of insipidity. Allow me the honour of preparing the city for take over my lord."

"No Raicor." said Devion, removing his cloak and handing it to Raicor "I shall do the honours myself. A true leader does not rely so heavily on his minions to carry out everything for him. You stand by and when I give the order, you, Tronic, Steelor, Triton and the whole army onboard *The Doombringer* will descend down to the city and attack it with me."

"Understood my lord." said Raicor gruffly "I bid you good fortune down there."

"I do not need fortune of any kind in this fight." crowed Devion "Luck is a ludicrous thing to believe in after all."

With that said, Devion ran forwards towards the edge of *The Doombringer* and he proceeded to jump up onto a point on the ship and leap straight off of it. He plummeted down to the ground, cackling maniacally as he did so. He put his arms to the side in order to make his fall faster and he plummeted from *The Doombringer* and towards the city underneath it like a missile being fired to it's target. Being invulnerable, this fall was going to do nothing to him. Devion crashed down very heavily and powerfully into the ground just behind Team Chaotix, who were on patrol with the other Royal Fighter groups, and Espio, Charmy and Vector were sent hurling forwards and they crashed into the ground further away from where Devion had just landed. It had almost been like someone dropped a bomb behind them. As for the crash, it was so incredible that everybody in the courtroom had heard it.

"What the sand hill was that?" shrieked Sally's lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx.

"I don't know." said Sally "Let's see what it was."

Everybody charged over to the window and they peered out of it whereas Hamlin, curiously enough, stayed where he was and began

smirking evilly to himself. Outside, Espio, Vector and Charmy all picked themselves up and looked at the thing that had crashed down behind them. The dust that flew up from the impact hadn't finished clearing away yet so Devion's appearance was obscured.

"Holy galoshes, who's dropping bombs on us?" shrieked Charmy.

"I don't think that was a bomb Charmy." said Espio, summoning shuriken to his hands and preparing to throw them.

The chameleon, bee and crocodile all prepared to fight whoever this possible attacker was. The dust finally cleared and Devion stood up from that jump he'd just done. Devion bared his claws and he glowered at Team Chaotix. The trio was so shocked at the mere sight of Devion, they almost leaped out of their skins and did a somersault backwards and then landed back into them.

"EEK!" squealed Charmy "It's that scary Devatron leader guy!"

"How did he find us?" cried Vector "Never mind, it doesn't matter! Let's kick this guy out of New Mobotropolis!"

"But Vector, didn't the council vote to not take action against Devion?" asked Espio.

"They did but they didn't say we can't stop them from invading the city!" retorted Vector in a grizzly tone "So let's push this guy outta here!"

With that said, Vector, Espio and Charmy all charged towards Devion and they prepared to deck the Devatron leader. Devion just lunged at them and prepared to deck them. As for the others, they couldn't believe what they were seeing. Devion and *The Doombringer* had come to New Mobotropolis and were now attempting to take the city over! As if this week couldn't get any worse!

"I can't believe it! It's Devion and he's brought his ship with him!" exclaimed Sally.

"This can't be! Devion doesn't know where we live!" cried Sonic "How can he possibly know where this place is!"

"It doesn't matter!" cried Sally "Nicole, raise the shields and fast before *The Doombringer* can do anything!"

"At once Sally." said Nicole, taking the silver sphere off her hair strand and preparing to activate the city's defence systems.

But before she could press a single button or even make the sphere extend in size, Hamlin suddenly lashed forward and snatched the sphere from Nicole's hand. He then proceeded to smash the sphere by stomping on it with his trotters. The controls to the city's shields were completely destroyed now. Nicole gasped in horror at what Hamlin had just done and she scowled at him.

"Hamlin you crazy nutter!" shrieked Nicole "Why did you just do that?

"So the Devatrons may conquer New Mobotropolis." explained Hamlin with a maniac grin on his face "As you can see, I am in league with them now."

The entire courtroom exploded into a surprise chorus of horrified gasps and wide-eyed stares at the pig.

"You…you…you're with the Devatrons?" cried Tails.

"Why doesn't that bloody surprise me?" sighed Mandy crossly "He's a douche bag, of course he'd do something like this!"

"Correct you are Mandy dear." sneered Hamlin "You see, I'm sick to death of the way you morons treat me and how you don't appreciate my counselling efforts so I decided to just give up trying to do my bit for you ungrateful *^&$%! and aligned myself with Devion. I took the council's recent vote to advantage by stealing the warp ring we'd been using and sending Sonic through it and over to *The Doombringer* so that it'd look like he was committing treason. Since you morons would expect something like that, it worked and Sonic ended up being put on trial. But the faith of Sonic's friends was a little stronger then I'd anticipated and it helped Sonic win this case. Anyway, the court case was only a distraction while Devion and his troops get here. And they couldn't have found you without me using this…"

He reached into his pocket and showed everybody the tracking beacon Devion had given him. It was glowing with a red light on the top, meaning it was on. Sally was so shocked she felt like she was going to swoon over any second now. She quickly regained herself and scowled at Hamlin. Despite being a pretty little queen, she knew how to make epic death glares.

"You porky little scoundrel!" snarled Sally "You've set this whole thing up just so the Devatrons could find us and take over the city or destroy it depending on their motivations! You, Hamlin the Pig, are officially out of the Council of Acorn and you will be spending time in a cold lonely prison cell for this treachery!"

"Oh no I will not." sneered Hamlin "I'm going off with my new buddies, the Devatrons, and I'll be idly sitting by and watching as you morons get what you deserve. And don't think about using the touch pads to raise the shields as I've taken the liberty of disabling them all while you were sleeping last night."

"So we can't raise the shields whatsoever?" blurted Nicole "The touch pads are disabled and you've just destroyed the controls! We're doomed now!"

"Yes you are." said Hamlin "And so I don't get any annoying resistance as I make a clean getaway…"

He yanked out a spherical object from his pocket and he threw it down at the floor. He covered his snout up and ran for it just as the object exploded and emitted a faint, misty gas that had a horrible smell. He charged through the door and locked it, leaving everybody trapped in the room with this gas he'd just made after throwing the bomb. He cackled to himself as he ran for it and left everybody to choke on the gas. Everybody began to cough and splutter as the gas drifted around the courtroom and they all began to feel woozy and sleepy all of the sudden. Sonic could feel his legs giving out underneath him and he dropped down onto his knees.

"Hurk! A-hugh! It's sleeping gas!" he spluttered.

"That rotten little porker!" choked Mandy as she began to pass out "I'll kill him for this I'll…kill…him…for…this…"

Then everything went black as the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, Northern Royal Fighters, Queen and lady-in-waiting all fell down onto the floor and fell asleep from the effects of the gas bomb. They would be asleep for a very long time and by the time they all woke up, Devion would be bringing in his forces and conquering New Mobotropolis by now.

Outside Castle Acorn, Hamlin ran away from the castle, still cackling madly to himself, and he saw Devion taking on Team Chaotix and wiping the floor with all of them. Devion grabbed Vector by his jaws and clamped them shut. He then lifted Vector off the ground by his jaws and threw him across the perimeter. Vector crashed into a house and he groaned in pain. The impact of his crash had left the wall of the house dented and the resident of the house didn't look too pleased but given what was going on now, he didn't really care about it. Vector picked himself up only to get rammed by Devion. Devion bashed Vector as hard as he could by ramming him with his shoulder. The spikes on his shoulder pierced Vector's skin a bit and left large cuts on his chest. Vector cried out but Devion rammed him again. Vector growled like a crocodile fighting a rival crocodile and he grabbed Devion's face with his hand. He pushed on Devion and began to wrestle with him, pushing him away from himself and the house he was pinned against. However, Devion won the sumo match by throwing Vector up into the air and sending him hurling over him and crashing down a few feet behind him. Charmy instantly got mad and he attacked Devion as furiously as he could with his stinger. The sting had no effect on Devion's invulnerable armour of course and Devion elbowed Charmy in the helmet. The spike on his elbow left a hideous dent on Charmy's helmet and Charmy groaned in pain. He clutched his head where the dent on his helmet was and was about to start crying due to how much it hurt. Devion didn't even give Charmy the chance to sob though. The ruthless leader lunged forward and grabbed Charmy. He then slammed him down onto the ground like a rugby player getting a touchdown in a rugby match. Charmy squealed in pain and began sobbing in pain. Devion just scowled at the simpering bee and prepared to squash him with one stomp of the foot. Espio stepped in with a pair of kunai in hand and he stabbed Devion in the leg with them. But an attack like that wasn't going to work on an invulnerable robot. The daggers broke instantly and Espio stared at his broken kunai in horror.

"No! My…my weapons have f-f-failed!" stammered Espio "What is this guy made…?"

Devion backhanded him across the face and sent Espio hurling into an oncoming Vector the Crocodile. The two reptiles ended up sprawling over each other and they lay on the ground, wondering what had hit them so hard.

"Urgh…I can't believe I'm saying this Espio…" muttered Vector "But…I miss Lord Sycorax!"

"At least that guy isn't an invulnerable robot!" cried Espio "Devion's unreal! Everything we throw at him just doesn't work! How can we defeat him!"

"We'll get him eventually!" Vector declared courageously "We know one weakness he has! Try hitting him in his eye! It worked on his soldiers so it'll work on him!"

Espio nodded and he stood back up. He and Vector charged towards Devion again but the Devatron leader reached behind him and pulled out a large hand-held rotary cannon he had latched onto his back the whole time. Devion primed the cannon and began firing at Espio and Vector as madly as he could. Espio and Vector immediately turned turtle and ran for it as Devion began spraying bullets everywhere. The bullets ripped holes into buildings, shattered windows and made the earth leap up in surprise as they hit what they were aimed at. Devion cackled to himself as he scared off the two reptiles and he stopped firing his cannon so he could save some ammo. Now Devion had a moment to spare, Hamlin ran over to Devion and got his attention.

"Devion, it's me, your agent." said Hamlin "The plan is working beautifully! You've arrived and now you're getting the city ready for take over! Oh and you may like this, Sonic and friends are asleep in the castle thanks to me knocking them out with a sleeping gas bomb!"

"Now devious work like that is worth of commendation." praised Devion "You are a fine agent you are, um…"

"Hamlin."

"Horrid name." muttered Devion "You are a fine agent Hamlin. I'm so pleased you made the right choice by joining the winning side. I shall see to it that you are rewarded handsomely for your participation in Mobius' downfall."

"Thank you Devion." said Hamlin.

"As you are not safe out here, I'm beaming you back up to *The Doombringer* and that way, no one can arrest you." said Devion "Tronic! Activate transportation beams at our agent's coordinates!" he barked after touching the side of his head and activating a comlink he had in his head.

Tronic obeyed and he monitored the screens to see where Hamlin was. His tracking beacon was still on so Tronic knew where he was aiming at. Tronic activated *The Doombringer* 's transportation beams and a yellow beam fired down onto Hamlin. The moment the beam touched Hamlin, the pig levitated up off the ground and went straight up the beam and into *The Doombringer* . Hamlin waved Devion goodbye as he was transported up onto the Devatron ship. The ship had brought Hamlin up and the transportation beams switched off. Now Devion could continue with the battle. He readied his weapon and was about to fire it until a member of the Castle Acorn Royal Guards ran up to him with a machine gun in his hand. Devion glowered at the guard and decided not to waste valuable ammo on a mere castle guard. He put his rotary cannon away and he grabbed the guard by his arms. He then held the guard by his left arm and head and proceeded to peck him directly in the neck. His beak went straight through the guard's neck and he was killed instantly. Blood poured out of the gaping hole in the guard's neck. Devion dropped the dead guard and left him to stain the ground with his blood. He strode off, wondering if there was going to be anymore resistance in bound. Then suddenly, Team Chaotix and Bostock and Mortimer, the Grand Metropolis Royal Fighters, charged out of nowhere and they ran towards Devion. Thomas Tiger and Kiara the Cheetah, the Megapolis Royal Fighters, decided to join in too. Devion just got out his rotary cannon and began spraying more bullets at the attackers. This was more then enough to make the Royal Fighters back down and run for it. But Kiara was a fast moving

Mobian so she dodged the bullets and continued running towards Devion. Devion wasn't pleased to see there was a Mobian that was equally as fast moving as Sonic was and he tried to hit her with the rotary cannon. Kiara dodged every shot and she leaped into the air. She dropkicked Devion in the face and knocked him down onto his feet. He dropped his rotary cannon and Kiara seized it. She threw the heavy weapon over to Team Chaotix and Espio threw some shuriken at the cannon. The shuriken embedded themselves into the cannon and they exploded on impact, causing the cannon to blow to smithereens and become useless to anyone now. Devion picked himself up and growled furiously at the fact he'd just lost a weapon. He slashed Kiara across the chest with his chrome claws and Kiara was brought down onto her knees. Kiara clutched her chest and Devion prepared to attack her again but Thomas stepped in and uppercut Devion in the chin. The attack almost broke his beak off. Devion staggered backwards and Thomas began to cut loose on him some more. He punched the Devatron leader as furiously as possible but Devion soon caught up with him. He caught one of Thomas's punches and then proceeded to slug the tiger in the stomach as hard as he could. Thomas doubled over in pain and Devion grabbed the tiger. He held the tiger high up above his head and swung the tiger down onto his knee as hard as he could. There was a horrible cracking sound and Thomas squealed in pain. Devion had just broken his back. Thomas was now useless to anyone in the service and was likely to be in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Thomas lay on the ground, broken and unable to continue fighting. Devion had broken the lower part of his back so he wouldn't be able to feel his legs anymore. Devion sneered at Thomas and he picked the crippled tiger up.

"You Mobians have high valour and incredible spirit and yet you break as easily as all the other fleshlings in the universe." crowed Devion "I highly doubt all Mobians will be this easy to break though."

"You got that right chrome head!" yelled Vector, leaping in and socking Devion directly in the face "You'll never break us for starters!"

Devion was thrown straight into the wall of Castle Acorn by that attack. Espio and Charmy charged in for another attack and so did

Bostock and Mortimer. They were armed with a pair of clubs each as projectile weapons were useless and a sharp weapon wasn't going to be of much use to them either so a solid weapon like a club was bound to last them longer in the battle and be of better use to them. Devion just waited for them to come and prepared to clobber all of them. He lunged forward and the Royal Fighters braced themselves for the attack.

Meanwhile, the Adabat Royal Fighters noticed what was going on and they were running through the city and towards Castle Acorn where the fight was going on. Team Chaotix and the Megapolis Royal Fighters were in need of assistance out here and they were the only other ones around right now so they decided to join in on this fight.

"Come on team!" yelled Scott Lynx "This may not be our home, but we're gonna help the citizens of New Mobotropolis beat back those Devatrons!"

"We heed your order Scott." said Felix the Peacock who was flying behind Scott "Although a verily question the absence of Sonic and his team of Royal Fighters on the battlefield. Shouldn't they be contributing too? This is their place of residence isn't it?"

"Maybe something's going on with them." suggested Scott's girlfriend, Jessica Cougar who was running beside Scott "We'll find out when this fight's over."

"I just hope the bloomin' shields are raised!" cried Scott's brother, Taran the Lynx who was running behind Scott and Jessica "I remember Sonic telling us summet about this city having defence systems and I'm just curious if the shields are raised. If not then that ship's gonna blow us all back to Adabat!"

"Given how it's only a barrier with no colour whatsoever, there's no way of telling." said Scott "Felix, fly up in the sky and see if you can reach the ship. If you can then that means the shield's aren't raised."

"At once my friend." said Felix, flying up into the sky and heading towards *The Doombringer* .

If the shields were raised then Felix shouldn't be able to fly up to *The Doombringer* . The peacock flew up towards the colossal chrome battleship that loomed ominously over New Mobotropolis. And to the peacock's surprise, he didn't bump into anything invisible on his way up to the ship. He just continued to go on and on upwards. That meant the shields weren't raised and something was wrong. Unfortunately for Felix, Raicor spotted him and he deployed his arm cannon furiously. He pointed the cannon at Felix and prepared to blast his feathers off.

"Halt cretin!" snarled Raicor "Nobody tries to get aboard *The Doombringer* !"

With that said, he shot at Felix but the peacock dodged the blast. The blast rocketed down to the ground and hit a building and blew a hole in it. Had the shields been raised then the blast wouldn't have even touched the building or gotten within twenty feet of it. After seeing that little blast, Scott and Jessica instantly deduced that the shields weren't up. And that was not a good sign at all.

"The shields aren't raised!" cried Scott "Are Sonic and friends insane? There's a big ship of death up there and they leave themselves unprotected? I thought they were supposed to be the big heroes of this city and they don't even defend themselves in dire situations like this?"

"Scott, there's obviously something wrong." said Jessica softly "I know Sonic and friends wouldn't be so bone idle as to leave themselves prone. Let's see if we can find out what the problem is."

"I say we should!" yelled Scott "Maybe I can yell in Sonic's face and find out what he's playing at in a time like this!"

So Team Adabat continued to run towards Castle Acorn with Felix catching up to them as fast as his wings would let him. They didn't get much further though for Jessica spotted one of the security touch pads mounted on the wall of a house. This touch pad was supposed to be used as a back up if the controls to the defence systems were destroyed. Jessica was interested in the touch pad and she bent down to see what it was. The pad had the words "Defence system touch pad" sculpted above the pad itself and

Jessica knew what the words meant.

"How convenient, there's touch pads around the city so people can use them to activate the shields." said Jessica "Let's see if this works."

Jessica put her hand on the control pad. But, as Hamlin had disabled them all, the touch pad didn't do anything. If it was working, it would have beeped but it made no noise whatsoever. This made the cougar wonder what was going on.

"That's strange, it doesn't work." she mused "Maybe it's broken or something? Felix, fly over to the building next to Castle Acorn and see if you can find a toolbox or something. I'm going to see why this thing's not working."

"I shall carry that order out to the letter dear Jessica." said Felix, flapping his wings and flying off to Royal HQ.

Given how all the other R.F.S. teams were staying in New Mobotropolis to help with the Devatron threat, they had been given the tour of New Mobotropolis so they could get used to the place as they might be here a while so Jessica knew what Royal HQ was and that it would possibly contain something like a toolbox. Their headquarters at home did so Royal HQ would easily contain one. Felix kept well out of the way of the fight between Devion, Team Chaotix, Kiara the Cheetah and Castle Acorn's Royal Guards as he didn't want to get caught up in the fight while carrying out an order. Luckily for him, Devion didn't see him and he made it to Royal HQ. Felix opened the door and he went inside the headquarters. Felix hadn't really toured Royal HQ so he didn't know where everything was but he was looking to see if there was a tool box around and he was going to find one, even if he had to tear the place up from the inside out to do so. Felix went down the corridor and peeked into the lab. After seeing that this was a laboratory, he began looking around as a laboratory was likely to have a toolbox somewhere. Felix looked over at a table in the corner of the lab and he saw a red toolbox all full of tools, sitting there and waiting to be used. It belonged to Tails and whenever Tails wanted to build something in the lab, he would use this toolbox. Felix grabbed the toolbox with his talons and he carried it out of Royal HQ by flying slightly above the

floor and out of the doors. He exited the headquarters and he flew back over towards his team mates, avoiding the big battle as he did so. He swooped over to his team mates and he delivered the toolbox to Jessica, who took it off of him and smiled graciously at the peacock.

"Thank you Felix." said Jessica "Now let's see what's up with this touch pad."

She fumbled around in the toolbox, the tools rattling loudly as she searched through them, and she pulled out a screwdriver. She undid the screws on the touchpad and she pulled the cover away from the pad. She set the pad down beside her and peered into the very innards of the pad. A cable that connected together in the centre of the pad had been unclipped. That was the central cable that made the pad work. Jessica was amazed at how simple this all was and she clipped the wire back together. She then proceeded to screw the cover back on and the touchpad screen lit up with a faint blue glow. That must mean it was working now. Jessica beamed happily and she placed her hand on the touch pad…and it still didn't work. The pad just bleeped and went red and said "Non-royal handprint. Access denied.". That was more then enough to make the cougar face palm herself in annoyance.

"Oh you've got to be kidding me!" she groaned "Only the royals can use this thing?"

"Now that really IS stupid!" grumbled Scott "How can we raise the bloody shields now?"

"Well if only the royals can use this then maybe we should get the queen and get her to activate this." suggested Taran.

"We don't have time for that." said Jessica "The Devatron ship could attack any minute now. We have to raise the shields and fast. But how can we activate them if we can't use the touch pads?"

"Is it possible to change the settings and make it so anyone can use it?" asked Felix.

"I'll see if it is." said Jessica, unscrewing the cover yet again.

She set the cover down beside her and she peered into the touch pad's innards yet again. She could see a lot of wiring and circuitry inside. She then saw a cube shape thing at the back of the pad. It was the settings drive for the touch pad but Jessica had no idea on what it was. She looked at the cube and wondered if it was important. She didn't want to remove the cube in fear of damaging the pad beyond repair so she didn't touch it. She did see a button on the side that was labelled in tiny writing "System reboot. Only use if you wish to alter settings.". Jessica couldn't make much of the writing out but she could see the words "System Reboot" so she decided to cross her fingers and hope this worked. She pressed the button on the cube and the pad bleeped for a second. Jessica then screwed the cover back on and the touch pad flashed into life again with the words "System Online. Change Settings?" Jessica beamed happily. She'd managed to change the settings so the touch pad would work for anyone now. Jessica touched the pad with her finger on the "No" option on the screen and the settings screen went away, leaving the touch pad blank once again. Jessica then placed her hand on the touch pad and the shields activated. A domed invisible barrier covered New Mobotropolis, protecting it from *The Doombringer* and any other outside attack. Jessica punched the air triumphantly.

"Yes! I did it! The shields are raised!" she cheered.

"So now Devion and his forces can't join in the fight." said Scott "Makes me wonder why they're buying their time in the first place."

"I am thankful that those baneful villains didn't take the full initiative." said Felix "Otherwise we'd be in one heck of a horrifying situation."

"We may have stopped the others from getting in but now we've got to get Devion out of here." noted Taran "He's still in the city!"

"Jessica, you stay here and prepared to lower the shields when we prepare to throw out Devion." said Scott "I'll blind the guy and the crocodile will throw him out."

Jessica nodded and remained where she was along with Felix and Taran. Scott summoned energy to his hands and he ran over to the big fight going on near Castle Acorn. It wasn't looking good right

now. Team Chaotix, Bostock, Mortimer and Kiara the Cheetah were still holding out but they were getting beaten to a pulp and Devion had killed every single Royal Guard on site. Team Chaotix, Bostock and Mortimer and Kiara were all that were left to deal with Devion. Bostock and Mortimer weren't really of much help and Devion beat them easily. Team Chaotix and Kiara were the only real challenges for him as Team Chaotix kept using their skill to fight him and Kiara used her speed to get the better of him. Devion growled furiously as Kiara dropkicked him again and he drew out his golden sword.

"You Mobians are beginning to vex me to the point my tolerance for you has decimated!" he snarled angrily "I shall now proceed to slit open every body in the place!"

"Oy! Devion!" yelled Scott as he ran towards him "Here's energy in your eye!"

Devion turned to face the running lynx and Scott threw an energy sphere straight at Devion's visor. The sphere blasted Devion straight in the visor and Devion roared in pain. He staggered backwards and crashed into the wall, clutching his face and wincing in pain. The attack had blinded him and smoke poured out of his cracked visor. Devion looked around frantically, horrified at the fact he could no longer see.

"My vision is impaired!" shrieked Devion "I cannot see! You Mobians have blinded me! I'll destroy every last one of you for that!"

"Sure you will." sneered Vector "Now shut the hell up already!"

He then socked Devion straight in the face and knocked him against the wall of Castle Acorn. Vector punched him as hard as he could in the face and then punched him in the beak, bending it slightly as he did so. He then picked Devion up with both arms and ran over towards the ring wall surrounding the city with the Devatron leader in tow. Scott could see that it was time to get rid of Devion so he called over to Jessica.

"Jessica! Lower the shields!" he called to her.

Jessica gave him the thumbs up sign and she touched the touch

pad again. The shields switched off and Vector began to spin around in a circle with Devion in his arms. He spun around as fast as he possibly could and then he threw Devion straight over the wall. Devion hurled over the wall like a baseball being smacked out the arena in a home run and he landed with a heavy clunk on the ground outside. Any normal robot would have been smashed by a crash like that. Now Devion was out of the city, Jessica touched the touch pad again and raised the city's shields. Now Devion wouldn't be able to get back in the city. Devion picked himself up but he was still unable to see so he didn't dare do anything else. Raicor had seen Devion being thrown out of the city so he deployed his wings and flew down to the ground to aid his leader. He landed beside Devion and instantly noticed that Devion's visor had been destroyed.

"Devion!" cried Raicor "You're blinded! We must get you back up to *The Doombringer* now! You cannot fight while you're blinded!"

"Spare me your concerns Raicor and order *The Doombringer* to level the city!" retorted Devion.

Raicor obeyed and he contacted *The Doombringer* .

"Tronic, fire the ship's cannons and destroy the whole city!" he ordered gruffly.

Tronic obeyed and he activated *The Doombringer* 's cannons. Several large cannons telescoped out from the sides of *The Doombringer* and they aimed down at New Mobotropolis. The cannons fired down at the city but since the shields had been raised, the cannons ricocheted off of the shields and didn't do any damage to New Mobotropolis whatsoever. Raicor couldn't believe his eye. The city was shielded! They couldn't destroy New Mobotropolis! The whole invasion had failed and they had to fall back since they hadn't prepared for this!

"Devion, the city is shielded!" cried Raicor "We cannot destroy the city!"

"How can this be?" yelled Devion "I jumped off the ship and into the city and I didn't hit any barriers or force fields on my way down! Well since they know of my presence, they likely raised the shields while I

was fighting. But why didn't our agent tell us about this? The lack of this vital piece of information has just cost us this invasion! We need to fall back and rethink our methods!"

"I agree Devion." said Raicor "No point in wasting *The Doombringer* 's power when we cannot even enter the enemy's territory."

With that said, Raicor grabbed Devion by his arms and carried him back up to *The Doombringer* with a mighty flap of his wings. After Devion arrived back onto the ship, he ordered Tronic to pilot *The Doombringer* back to Megapolis and Tronic did so. *The Doombringer* turned around slowly to the left and it flew away from New Mobotropolis and headed off back to Megapolis where it had parked originally. Back in Castle Acorn, the effects of the sleeping bomb had worn off already and Sonic picked himself up. He heard the sound of *The Doombringer* 's engines going in full throttle and he ran over to the window to see what was happening. To his surprise, *The Doombringer* was leaving and he looked down at the city to see if Devion was gone too. He saw no signs of the Devatron leader. That meant Devion was gone and the Devatrons were retreating.

"Funny." mused Sonic "Devion and his goons are retreating. Why are they doing that? They have us at their mercy!"

"Huh? What?" mumbled Tails who was still waking up.

"Sonic just said the Devatrons are retreating." said Amy "That is strange. Why are they suddenly fleeing for it?"

"I'm glad they are retreating." said Knuckles "But even I'm wondering why."

"Hey Sonic!" Vector called up to the hedgehog "Down here! We can tell you everything!"

Sonic looked down at the ground and he saw Team Chaotix and the Adabat Royal Fighters looking up at him.

"Hey guys." said Sonic "Sorry me and my buddies couldn't join you in the fight against the Devatrons. Hamlin double-crossed us and knocked us out with sleeping gas."

"Hamlin? You mean that pig guy on the council?" asked Vector.

"One of the Council of Acorn members is a traitor?" exclaimed Espio "I shall have his hide for this!"

"I think he's long gone now Espio." muttered Charmy "If he knocked Sonic out then maybe he got away. I wouldn't be too surprised if he's on the Devatron ship right now."

"Forget about him." said Vector "Anyway, while you were sleeping, we all fought Devion and Scott managed to blind him." he called up to Sonic.

"Jessica then got a touch pad working again and altered the settings so we could use it as well and we threw Devion out of the city and rose the shields to prevent him from getting back in." explained Scott "That's why they're retreating."

"Suh-weet!" said Sonic with a thumbs up to his friends "You beat Devion and threw him out of the city and got the shields up! Way past cool work guys!"

"Sadly, our victory isn't on a high note." said Kiara sadly "Devion broke Thomas's back and all the castle guards have been killed. Your queen's gonna need more guards and the Megapolis Royal Fighters are gonna have to fight without Thomas helping us from now on."

Sonic looked down and saw Kiara kneeling beside the broken tiger and helping him to sit up. Thomas winced in pain and he looked to be in serious discomfort. Sonic also saw the dead bodies of the Castle Acorn Royal Guards. all of them had holes in their necks and their blood stained the ground beneath them red. This fight had been pretty intense and Sonic began to feel bad at the fact he wasn't able to help given how he was knocked out earlier.

"I'm sorry to hear that Kiara." said Sonic "I'm sure Sally can find some new guards. As for Thomas, we'll make sure the guy gets a good wheelchair and the R.F.S. can pay their respects for him."

"That sounds nice." said Kiara "Thank you Sonic."

"Think nothing of it." said Sonic casually "See you all later."

He stepped back from the window and he turned to face his friends.

"So Devion's been beaten but the Megapolis Royal Fighters have a crippled leader now." said Sonic "That really sucks for the Megapolis Royal Fighters and I bet Devion's gonna be back and he'll try to lower the shields so he can destroy us."

"Well we'll be ready for him should he try something like this." said Sally determinedly "We will defend our home under any circumstance and we will not let the Devatrons destroy us all. I may have said we won't take action against the Devatrons, but I've decided that idea wasn't a very good one so I renounce the council's vote from earlier. Tomorrow, we will make sure the Devatrons don't find the shield generator and three volunteers will go over to *The Doombringer* and infiltrate the ship for information we can use against those chrome monsters."

"I like the sound of that Sal." said Sonic happily "Tomorrow's gonna be much better for us I bet. Those Devatrons won't know what's hit them…"

Meanwhile, *The Doombringer* had just arrived back at Megapolis and touched down in the place it had landed the day it arrived. Devion had quickly gotten his visor and beak repaired and now he was chastising Hamlin for not telling him about New Mobotropolis' defence systems.

"P-P-Please Devion!" cried Hamlin "I didn't mean to…"

Devion backhanded him across the face and knocked him down onto the floor. Hamlin clutched his face and winced in pain. Devion loom above him and stared at him coldly with his newly repaired visor.

"You wanted to aid the Devatrons in conquest and yet you fail to give us all the required facts for our conquest!" snarled Devion, picking Hamlin up and staring straight into his terrified eyes "Why

did you not inform us on New Mobotropolis' defence systems? That piece of information could have been vital and since you didn't give it us, the lack of that information cost me the whole invasion attack and my sword!"

"I'm sorry Devion!" cried Hamlin "I just forgot that's all! But I disabled the defence systems anyway so I didn't need to inform you about it!"

"And yet they were still able to raise the shields and prevent me from breaching their territory!" snarled Devion "Had we been prepared for this, we could have breached their shields and destroyed them anyway! You have failed me dearly Hamlin!"

"I'm sorry Devion! Really I am!" cried Hamlin "Please, give me another chance! I can redeem myself, I promise I can!"

"That promise is already broken." said Devion coldly "Because you won't get a chance to redeem yourself."

Hamlin's heart seized up and the pig began sweating like…well…a pig. Devion threw him down onto the ground and turned to Triton, one of his loyal minions and squad leaders.

"Triton, deliver our failed agent his penance." he barked at him.

"With pleasure Devion." said Triton darkly, grabbing Hamlin by his uniform and dragging him away.

Hamlin was going to be executed for his failure. Devion hated it when agents fail him so he kills them before they can fail him again.

"No! Wait! No please don't!" squealed Hamlin "No Devion! Help! Please! NOOOOOOOOOO…."

His screams were drowned out by the door closing as Triton left the room with the snivelling pig in tow. Now that was dealt with, Devion turned to Raicor and stared straight into his visor.

"You Raicor, will go to the city tomorrow morning and find the shield generator to New Mobotropolis." said Devion "And you will destroy it and leave the city prone."

"Yes Devion." said Raicor "I am honoured to receive such an imperative task. I shall not fail you unlike our agent."

"You had better hope you succeed." said Devion coldly "For your sake…"

He showed Raicor his sharp claws to give the Devatron an idea on what he meant. Raicor could see Devion's point and he bowed to his leader. Tomorrow, he was going to destroy the shield generator and New Mobotropolis would be wide open for the Devatron army…

Talk about "All in a day's work"! Sonic gets put on trial, then the city gets attacked, a traitor is exposed and Sonic's friends emerge victorious! But how long will this victory last? Will Raicor lower the city's shields? Or will Sonic win this one? And what's Dr. Eggman gonna do now he knows of these new visitors? Tune in as Sonic defends some "Valuable Resources"!

P.S. Hey ProwerPower85. What are YOUR top ten favourite chapters in this story?

P.P.S. Hamlin does NOT belong to me! He is a character from the Archie Sonic the Hedgehog comics whom I have an incredible dislike to. The guy was just an annoying douchebag to me and I only put him in this story so I could kill the bastard. Perfect revenge I say! So, how's the saga looking so far guys?

Valuable Resources

Story 103: Valuable Resources

"So Miranda, how does it feel for you and your team to be picked to defend the shield generator from an inevitable Devatron attack?" asked Sonic the Hedgehog as the Northern Royal Fighters began setting up the defence around the back of New Mobotropolis.

Tomorrow had come and the R.F.S. had been pretty busy this morning. The respective Royal Fighter teams had called for their resources so now all the teams had their foot soldiers to boost their numbers and give them an edge against the Devatrons as they had been outnumbered the last time they had a big battle. Now the whole R.F.S. was here, Queen Sally elected one of the teams to defend the shield generator for New Mobotropolis' defence systems. True the generator was in the city itself, just behind Castle Acorn, but there still needed to be some defence so they could push the Devatrons back and not give them a chance to find a way into the city and destroy the generator. The Northern Royal Fighters, Miranda Mongoose, Kari the Rat, Kate the Eagle and the chipmunk brothers Thunder and Bolt, had been picked for this mission and since the team's reinforcements were all there, the team had more numbers and had a better chance of standing against the Devatrons. Sonic decided to join in with them as he had nothing better to do and the team may need his super speed for this. The other teams were to wait in the city until the Northern Royal Fighters needed some extra help. As for infiltrating *The Doombringer* , Tails the twin-tailed fox and Kiara the Cheetah from the Megapolis Royal Fighters had been chosen for the mission and Cosmo the Seedrian decided to go along with Tails and Kiara as she wanted to help out and she thought she could be of good use in an infiltration mission. Tails had been sceptical about this but he decided to let Cosmo come along anyway as Cosmo hadn't really been on many missions with Sonic or anyone else for a while. Tails, Cosmo and Kiara were already on their way to *The Doombringer* and thanks to Kiara's speed, they'd be there in no time at all. Right now, Sonic was with Miranda and her team while the foot soldiers set up the defences.

They had all armed themselves with machine guns and Tommy guns and they had shields which they all used to form a wall together. The soldiers stood together with their shields together and their guns resting on top of the shields. It was a good defensive set up and hopefully, it would work. The shields of New Mobotropolis were already up so no Devatron would be getting into the city.

"I feel privileged really to have such an imperative task." said Miranda "But it's a bit nerve racking at the same time since we're going to be fending off a squadron of invulnerable robots."

"Our first fight with them didn't go too well." said Kari grimly "We may have found out a weakness of theirs, they can be easily blinded, but since they know that we know their weakness, they might be harder to get. And we don't know any other weakness they might have so we're pretty much flying blind out here."

"That, sadly enough, is pretty true Kari." said Sonic glumly "Blinding a Devatron doesn't do much other then have them wondering around like headless chickens and wondering where they are. My buddy Wilson tells me that if you like stab one in the visor with a blade or something, you will kill it but we don't have any swords on us. If we need the other teams to help us then Wilson can use his spinning blade weapon to kill a Devatron or two hopefully."

"One thing I dread to think about is how many Devatrons we may end up facing!" piped Thunder "We might end up fighting the whole army if we're unlucky enough!"

"I don't care how many Devatrons we end up facing, we'll fight them all off if we have to." said Bolt "I'll electrocute every last Devatron if it means keeping New Mobotropolis shielded and stopping those chrome monsters from taking over the planet."

"Huh, that's unusual." said Sonic with a snarky grin on his face "Usually in a situation like this, you'd be cracking jokes like I do."

"Well Miranda's taught us that there's a time and a place for jokes." said Thunder "And now is not the time."

"Now's the time to be serious." said Bolt "After the battle, me and

Thunder can start taking the mess out of those stupid Devatrons like we do whenever we beat our enemies."

"And I will be joining in." said Sonic.

"Sonic! Team mates!" cried Miranda "There's a Devatron coming towards us!"

Everybody looked out into the distance and surely enough, they saw none other then the Devatron second-in-command, Raicor. Raicor was striding menacingly towards the defences. He had been sent to destroy the shield generator and he looked like he was ready to dish out some punishment. Sonic pulled a confused face at the sight of Raicor.

"Why is there only one Devatron?" asked Sonic "Is Devion so egotistical he thinks he can beat us all with just one Devatron?"

"Maybe." said Miranda grimly "I remember that one too. My team fought him and he's almost as powerful as Devion is."

"I remember him too." said Sonic "Dunno what his name is but I saw him standing beside Devion when I first fought Devion on *The Doombringer* . Since he's by Devion's side I'm guessing he's important."

"He's unusual too." said Kari "He's the only Devatron who appears to have wings. So he maybe harder to defeat then the others as he'll just fly out of the way of our shots."

"Well since he's here to obviously destroy the shield generator, we have to stop him!" cried Miranda "Everybody, start firing at the Devatron!"

The foot soldiers all obeyed Miranda's order and they began shooting at Raicor. Raicor was showered by bullets but, as you'd expect, the bullets had no effect on Raicor. Raicor just walked through the bullets as if they were nothing. To him, it was like getting showered by pebbles instead of bullets. Raicor sneered at the feeble resistance he was met with.

"A pitiful effort from pitiful beings with pitiful weapons." Raicor

taunted gruffly in his gravely voice "I shall take it upon myself to put this pitiful resistance out of it's pitiful misery."

Raicor then deployed both of his arm cannons and set them to cannon mode instead of laser mode. He fired a pair of cannonballs at the defensive wall set up by the Northern Royal Fighters and the cannonballs hit the Royal Fighters. The foot soldiers, Sonic and Miranda's team were all sent flying backwards by the powerful blasts and they all crashed into the wall behind them that surrounded New Mobotropolis. The impact was pretty hard and the Mobians almost felt like they'd broken a bone or two after that. Raicor began cackling gleefully at his successful attack. He threw his arms up and began crowing at the top of his voice.

"Ah ha, ha, ha, ha! I am an asteroid and you are a spaceship!" he laughed "I strike you and I blow you all away!"

The Royal Fighters had all been shaken by the attack but Sonic wasn't down for long. Sonic picked himself up and lunged at Raicor.

"We're not going down this easily!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing Raicor in the head "You're not getting anywhere near the shield generator Deva-dork!"

"Your insults are truly pathetic." sneered Raicor, backhanding Sonic into the wall "I've heard better taunts and banter from the people of the planet Springfield and they gave into us faster then any other race we've fought! Since you do not know my name, I shall give it to you. I am Raicor, Devion's second in command and the very Devatron sent for this mission."

"Raicor eh?" said Sonic, rubbing himself better "You Devatrons have interesting names I must say. Well then Raicor, you saw what I'm capable of doing as I fought Devion on your ship so you know what to expect from me."

"I do indeed hedgehog." sneered Raicor "And as my strength is almost on par with Devion's, you will have no chance against me."

"We'll see about that." said Sonic "You ready Miranda and friends?" he asked the Northern Royal Fighters.

"As ready as you are." said Miranda, pulling out her electro-prod and activating it.

With that said, Sonic and the Northern Royal Fighters all pounced on Raicor and the Devatron second-in-command braced himself to attack…

Meanwhile in the Northern Border of Megapolis, Kiara the Cheetah, Tails the Fox and Cosmo the Seedrian all arrived at the landing site of the insidious Devatron battleship known as *The Doombringer* . They dived behind a rock and they peeked over the edge of the rock to look at *The Doombringer* . It amazed Kiara and Tails to no end on how colossal the vessel was and how eerie it looked as well. *The Doombringer* was so scary looking that Cosmo began shivering at the sight of it. Cosmo stopped looking at the ship and she hugged Tails for comfort. Tails returned the hug and he could feel the shivering Seedrian against his furry chest.

"That ship…it's so scary looking." whimpered Cosmo "It's a horrible looking ship. I can't believe I wanted to take part in this."

"Well Cosmo, once we get on the ship you won't have to worry about *The Doombringer* 's appearance." said Tails "How does it look so far Kiara?"

"Looks all clear to me." said Kiara as she observed the scenery and noted that there was no one around at this point in time "I think we can get to the ship and get on it nice and easily."

"Are their any docking ramps open or not?" asked Tails "We can't get on *The Doombringer* if there's nothing open."

Kiara observed the ship and to her disappointment, there was nothing open. No doors, no docking ramps, no nothing. There was no way on the ship as of now.

"There's nothing open Tails." said Kiara "Our break-in maybe a little harder then we thought."

"We'll have to wait here until one of those Devatrons open a docking

ramp and then we can get in." said Tails, letting go of Cosmo as the Seedrian had calmed down a bit now "We can't bomb our way inside as we don't have any weapons on us and even if we had, bombing our way in wouldn't be a good idea as it'd be likely to catch the attention of Devion and his cronies. This whole mission has to be subtle after all…"

"Wait a minute Tails." said Cosmo "What about that hole we blew in the ship when we rescued Sonic the other day? We could get in that way."

"Cosmo, it's been a couple of days since then, the Devatrons will have fixed it already." noted Tails.

"I think you're right kiddo." said Kiara "I can't see any holes on the ship although we're not really that close to it so it's not that easy to see anyway."

"Then we stick around and wait until a docking ramp lowers." said Tails "I hope that won't take too long."

"Or we can trick them into letting us in." said Kiara with a sly grin on her face.

Tails looked at Kiara as if she'd just grown an extra set of arms out of her back. He had no idea what the cheetah was on about. Kiara then suddenly grabbed Tails and Cosmo and she zoomed out from behind the rocks and towards *The Doombringer* . The moment the Mobians got near the ship, the ever-alert scanners picked up their presences and an alarm sounded off in the cockpit. Devion, who was sitting in his throne and resting, sat up straight with a start and looked around quickly.

"The alarm system has activated." he said "Tronic, find out what's setting the alarms off!"

Tronic obeyed and traced the source of the alarm trigger. Funny enough, he couldn't see anything on the computer monitors. There was no one around and everything seemed perfectly normal. That was because Kiara, Tails and Cosmo were hiding under *The Doombringer* and the security cameras couldn't see them. There

were none stationed under *The Doombringer* either so Tronic couldn't trace the source of the alarm trigger.

"Everything seems perfectly fine my lord." droned Tronic in his musical voice "There are no intruders inbound."

"Then why are the alarms sounding?" wondered Devion "They don't go off for no reason. Send Steelor to patrol the area and find out what's going on."

"Yes my lord." droned Tronic.

He touched the side of his head and activated his comlink so he could communicate to the Devatron sub-leader.

"Steelor, Devion requests that you go outside and investigate the area as the alarms are sounding for unknown reason." Tronic said to him.

"You got it Tronic." said Steelor in his raspy tough guy voice.

Steelor pulled out his trademark handlebar sword weapon and deployed his spinning saw blade. He went over to the docking ramps of the ship and he lowered one so he could go outside. The ramp lowered down to the ground and Steelor strode down the ramp with his weapons at the ready. He made it to the bottom of the ramp and he began looking around the scenery, looking for what was setting off the alarms. The moment Steelor walked away from the ramp, Kiara, Tails and Cosmo ran quietly up the ramp and into *The Doombringer* . Steelor heard their footsteps and he looked up at the ramp only to see nothing there. He dismissed it as him just hearing things. He looked around under *The Doombringer* to see if there were any intruders hiding under the ship. He couldn't see anything under the ship and there didn't appear to be anyone around. Steelor walked out from under *The Doombringer* and he searched the surrounding terrain for any intruders. The only thing around right now was him and *The Doombringer* . There was no one else around. Everything was perfectly clear. Steelor sheathed his weapons and he strode back up the docking ramp, a bit disappointed this search had been for nothing.

"Devion." said Steelor "I've looked around and I can't see anything around here at all. Maybe some Mobian casually strode by the ship and set the alarms off unwittingly."

"Whatever it was that set the alarms off, it must have gone now because the alarms have stopped now." said Devion "Remain alert though in case anything else comes around or Sonic and his miserable bunch of fools attempt to attack *The Doombringer* and defeat us."

"I'll be amazed if those furry freaks even dare to do something as bone-headed as that." sneered Steelor "They know they can't beat us so why dare to do something they can't do?"

"Because the Mobians are obstinate, valorous and above all, high-spirited." noted Devion "I highly doubt that they'll be willing to succumb to our might so easily and they're likely going to be very persistent threats so we can't expect them to submit to us as easily as we'd like them to."

"I've gotcha Lord Devion." said Steelor "I'll remain vigilant my lord. If I see a Mobian, I'll slice them to ribbons."

So Steelor closed the docking ramp behind him and strode down the corridors. Kiara, Tails and Cosmo, who were hiding behind a wall, watched as Steelor went down the corridors and out of view and they began creeping up another corridor and searching for anything interesting.

"I'm amazed that worked so well." whispered Kiara "We're on *The Doombringer* ! You know what, those Devatrons really need a better name for this thing I mean, come on! *The Doombringer* ? That's the corniest name I've ever heard for a ship!"

"I'm sure they called the ship that name for a reason." noted Tails "It's a giant ship that brings doom to any planet it lands on so the name's extremely fitting, not corny Kiara."

"Whatever." said Kiara dismissively "I still say it's a cheesy name."

"Forgive me for asking so Kiara but, how long have you been a

Royal Fighter?" asked Cosmo as the infiltrators crept quietly down the corridor.

"I only joined last year Cosmo." said Kiara quietly "I'm a rookie but I'm quite good for my level. At least that's what Field Marshal Thomas thinks."

"You must be good for a rookie because according to Wilson and Mandy, you took down Marik the Martian all by yourself*." said Tails "And he's enough to give Sonic a hard time."

"Well I didn't really beat Marik, I just ran him into exhaustion and then laser-cuffed him." Kiara admitted modestly "I'm a bit disappointed he got away though, I was looking forward to seeing him do time for killing some of Thomas's men and nearly killing Wilson. I bet next time Sonic faces him he'll take that freak down. I hope he does too because aliens scare me."

"Oh." said Cosmo, looking a little hurt at that statement "I guess I scare you then Kiara since I'm an alien, to you that is."

"No, no, no, no! Not at all Cosmo!" said Kiara "Please don't take it that way, I'm not scared of you Cosmo. You're a good person and you're not a scary looking alien so you don't scare me. I'm sorry if it sounded like I was offending you."

"I understand." said Cosmo "I'm sorry I took what you said the wrong way."

"Girls, can we please stop gossiping?" asked Tails impatiently "We've got a mission to do here. We've gotta infiltrate this ship and see what information we can find that can help us in our battle with the Devatrons."

"Sorry." said Kiara "I have a habit of getting carried away in a discussion."

"That's alright." said Tails reassuringly "Now let's see if we can find any rooms that look like they may be of some help to us."

So Tails, Cosmo and Kiara continued to creep down the hallway, being weary of any Devatrons around and being as quiet as possible

so they wouldn't get caught. However, they were in for a surprise here. For outside *The Doombringer* , Dr. Eggman had sent his sleek, female sidekick robot Katherine out to infiltrate the ship and see if she can get it for Dr. Eggman. As Katherine walked up to *The Doombringer* , Dr. Eggman gave her a message.

"Katherine, find out who owns this ship and then destroy them all." ordered Dr. Eggman "I MUST have that ship and do not let me down Katherine or you shall end up being used for stress relief! Got it?"

Katherine nodded and she continued to walk up to *The Doombringer* . Unlike the Mobians, she couldn't be picked up on radar as she had signal scrambling devices to throw radars and detection systems off of her. Katherine walked under *The Doombringer* and she looked up at the ship's underbelly. She raised her arm and her arm extended up until she reached the underbelly of the ship. She then stuck her claws into the tough chrome armouring and she carved out a neat circle in the underside of the ship. She pulled the piece of chrome away and she pulled herself up into the ship. Katherine was now aboard *The Doombringer* and she could begin her assassination attempts. Katherine strode across the room and to a door at the end of the room. She was in the cargo hold of the ship and had to get to the upper floors. Katherine had no idea what she was gonna come across on this ship as she opened the door and left the cargo hold, but she had a feeling this mission was going to be a hectic one for her…

Back at New Mobotropolis, the fight had barely begun and already Raicor was on top of the battle. All of the foot soldiers had been going in first in an attempt weaken Raicor and give the more important Royal Fighters like Sonic and Miranda's team an edge on him. Unfortunately, their attempts had all been in vain as they weren't strong enough to take on a Devatron as strong as Raicor and Raicor had had experience taking on large numbers and coming out on top. A bunch of cannon fodder like mere foot soldiers were no match for them. Raicor had pretty much taken them all out already. There were only two soldiers left and they began showering Raicor with bullets from their machine guns. They desperately tried to hit Raicor's visor but Raicor kept raising his wings and shielding his

face with them. His wings were on hinges that allowed them to reach over in front of him and they were as tough as his body was so no bullet would get through them. Raicor lowered his wings and he advanced on one of the soldiers. The soldier panicked and began to batter Raicor with his gun. Raicor took the weapon and snatched it off of him. Then Raicor grabbed the soldier and proceeded to plunge his claws into the soldiers throat and tear it! The soldier was killed instantly and Raicor dropped him down onto the ground, blood pouring out through the hole in his throat and trickling slightly out of his mouth. The last soldier, who was a woman, tried to blind Raicor with her gun but Raicor shielded his face with his win again. Then he deployed his arm cannon and shot the soldier. The soldier was thrown into the air and she landed in a very awkward position that ended up snapping her neck. She was down and out of the battle permanently now. Raicor cackled, pleased to see all the cannon fodder had been dealt with. Now all he had to get through was Sonic the Hedgehog and Miranda Mongoose's team. Sonic leaped towards Raicor and he landed a powerful kick slam on the Devatron's face. Raicor stumbled backwards but he managed to keep himself standing somehow. Sonic spin-dashed at Raicor again but Raicor shielded himself with his wings, causing Sonic to bounce harmlessly off of himself and his attack didn't affect Raicor the slightest. It didn't even push him backwards a little. Raicor unshielded himself and he pulled out a small pole like thing off his back. The pole expanded in length and three prongs protruded out of each end. This was Raicor's trademark weapon, a six pronged staff, three prongs on either end. Raicor pointed the staff at Sonic and he prepared to run him through with it.

"All your foot soldiers have fallen to me in minutes and now you and your friends shall fall." crowed Raicor "Prepare to meet your maker Sonic the Hedgehog."

Raicor lunged at Sonic with the staff but Sonic jumped out of the way and landed beside Raicor. He clenched his fists and prepared to charge into Raicor.

"I've survived your leader Raicor! Twice in fact!" yelled Sonic "You won't kill me Raicor!"

Sonic then spin-dashed Raicor in the shoulder and made the

Devatron second-in-command stagger a little. Raicor swung his staff at Sonic but Sonic ducked, causing Raicor to miss and Sonic homing-attacked him. Raicor was knocked down onto his back and Miranda whipped out her electro-prod. She switched it on and before Raicor could stand back up, Miranda prodded Raicor in the neck with it and let him have it with a mighty jolt of electricity. The prod was set to it's highest voltage level. If she used it on a normal person he'd be dead in one zap. But, given the Devatron's nigh-invulnerability, Raicor wasn't effected by the zap. If anything, Raicor seemed to be ENJOYING it! Raicor stood back up with Miranda still zapping him but the prod wasn't doing any damage to him whatsoever. Raicor began to cackle at the mongoose as she tried pitifully to hurt him.

"A valiant attack young woman." sneered Raicor "But electricity does not harm Devatrons. Our bodies contain transformer devices known as Delta-Chrome Electro-Converters. It absorbs electricity and makes us feel stronger so all you're doing is making me stronger woman, not weaker. You cannot harm me with that puny weapon of yours."

Miranda immediately yanked the prod away from Raicor and quickly put it away. The mongoose in the backless shirt and chunky boots raised her fists and decided to change tactics as her weapon was assisting Raicor instead of hindering him.

"Fine, if I cannot shock you then I shall have to beat you." said Miranda bravely.

With that said, Miranda tried to punch Raicor in the face but all she ended up doing was giving herself a sore fist. She wasn't as strong as say Knuckles or Bunnie so punching metal wasn't a wise move for her. Miranda sucked on her fist furiously in order to ease the pain but Raicor put his weapon away, grabbed the mongoose and hoisted her off the ground by her neck. The mongoose began squirming in terror as Raicor glowered at her with his red visor.

"Your physical assaults are as feeble as your weapons female." jeered Raicor "Perhaps I should put you out of your misery so your feebleness can cease to embarrass you and your team further?"

"No! Oh god please no! No!" whimpered Miranda as Raicor closed his other hand around her head.

The insidious Devatron was just about to snap Miranda's neck in two. Miranda began kicking Raicor as viciously as she could but Raicor didn't even feel the kicks. All Miranda was doing was making a lot of noise as her boots kept clanging against his chrome armour. Raicor decided to just finish off Miranda already and he prepared to snap Miranda's neck. But before Raicor could make the killer blow, a pair of feathery arms wrapped around his neck and grabbed him in a chokehold. It was Kate the Eagle! The eagle hauled Raicor backwards and made him drop Miranda down onto the ground. Kate held Raicor into a very strong chokehold and she tried to snap Raicor's neck in two.

"Don't. Ever. Threaten my friend!" she snarled as she held Raicor good and tight.

Raicor growled at Kate and scratched her arm in an attempt to make her let go of him. The eagle fought the pain and she tossed Raicor straight into the wall of New Mobotropolis. But the shields were already up and even the ring wall around the city was shielded so Raicor didn't crash into it and leave a dent in it. He just hit the shields and bounced off of it. Raicor picked himself up and he growled at Kate. Kate wiped away the blood that trickled down her arm, which had three gashes in it after Raicor scratched it, and she charged towards Raicor. Raicor deployed his arm cannons and blasted Kate away with one brilliant shot. The eagle hurled backwards and landed on the ground. She skidded to a very painful halt that made her grimace in excruciating pain. Her back was grazed and the grazes stung like crazy. Raicor charged towards Kate but Thunder and Bolt both charged in and tackled him in the legs. Their twin attacks tripped Raicor up and the two chipmunks summoned lightening bolts to their hands.

"Good tackle!" cried Thunder.

"Now let's stab the blighter in the visor and blind him before he gets up!" cried Bolt.

The two chipmunks ran over to Raicor's head and they prepared to

blind him. But Raicor swung his wings forward in an attempt to shield his head and because Thunder and Bolt were standing too close, Raicor conked both of them each with his wings. They dropped their bolts and they rubbed their heads better. Raicor then grabbed their bolts and stabbed them both with the bolts. But as they were lightening bolts, all it did was zap them painfully and make them leap a foot in the air each.

"Yeouch!" cried Thunder "Now I know how our victims feel!"

"Pity lightening powered beings aren't immune to their own power!" cried Bolt.

Raicor grabbed the two chipmunks and he bashed them both together. Thunder and Bolt both made gormless faces and stupid noises and Raicor threw them both into the air. Then he deployed his arm cannons and blasted them both out of the sky and down to the ground. Thunder and Bolt both lay on the ground feeling singed and sore. Raicor cackled at the lightening brothers but before he could do anything else to them, Kari the Rat charged in and began to whack him in the back with a large wrench. She was hoping to break his wings off and she whacked Raicor as hard as she dared.

"You chrome plated monster!" she squealed "I'll see you de-activated and destroyed you demons of science!"

Raicor turned around and grabbed the wrench. He yanked it out of Kari's hands and proceeded to snap the large tool in two with his bare hands, making Kari feel nervous and she backed away quickly.

"We're hardly demons of science considering we use it to it's best ability and we do not waste our scientific technology and knowledge unlike many other species in the universe." said Raicor dryly "It's thanks to our scientific technology and knowledge that we're such successful planter conquerors and our science shall help us again here."

"It's guys like you that make me disgusted over the fact science can do as much bad as it can good!" shrieked Kari "I almost feel ashamed that I follow science and technology!"

"Oh spare me your heartfelt speeches you verminous little rat." snarled Raicor, whacking Kari was hard as he could with his clawed hand "I harbour no interest in what you feel about science."

"Much like how we harbour no interest in giving ourselves up to you!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing Raicor in the back of his head and knocking him down onto his hands and knees.

Raicor picked himself up but to his confusion, Sonic began running circles around him at top speed for some reason. Sonic was running so quickly he pretty much became a blue ring blur around Raicor and the Devatron began wondering what was happening.

"Hedgehog, there is no logic to this motion of yours." he said "Why are you doing this bizarre run around me?"

He soon found out his answer. Sonic was digging a hole around him as part of his plan. Sonic had dug a hole under Raicor and the earth underneath Raicor caved in and the Devatron fell into the hole. Sonic then buried Raicor up to his shoulders and made sure the earth around him was nice and solid so he couldn't get away. Raicor was trapped or so it seemed right now. Sonic stood beside Raicor and smirked at him.

"Since we can't put a ding in your armour, I thought I'd take you out of commission until I can think of something better." said Sonic "And I've got an idea. Since you're buried and immobilized, we can blind you and you can't do anything about it because you're stuck."

He then called over to Thunder and Bolt.

"Hey chipmunks! Blind Raicor while he's immobilized!" he called.

"No probs Sonic." said Thunder, summoning another lightning bolt to his hand.

Bolt did the same and the chipmunks ran over to the buried Raicor. As they did so, Sonic continued to further taunt Raicor.

"Maybe after we blind you, we could leave you like this and grow a garden around you." said Sonic "We could have some carrots grow around you and some string beans grow around your horns and

maybe we can name it "The Deva-Garden" or something."

His crowing was brought to an abrupt end as Raicor began to strain with effort. He was attempting to pull himself free from his earth prison he was encased in. Sonic instantly stepped back and sensed that things were about to go wrong. Thunder and Bolt stopped running towards Raicor and they put away their lightening bolts, wondering what was happening. Raicor then suddenly pulled his arms out from the earth and he threw them up, sending chunks of soil and earth flying everywhere. To add more to this earth eruption he was making, he raised his wings and sent soil flying into Sonic and the chipmunk brother's faces. Raicor pulled himself out of the hole in the ground and he bore over Sonic with his wings still raised to make himself look more intimidating. Sonic had to admit it that Raicor did look pretty fierce but cool with his wings raised up.

"Your intelligence is greater then what your appearance and attitude suggests." Raicor complimented "But ultimately, you keep relying on ideas that are doomed to failure to defeat me and that is why you lose hedgehog."

He then grabbed Sonic and threw him straight into poor Kari, who was just getting ready to carry on fighting. Sonic knocked Kari off her feet and the two Mobians ended up sprawling on the ground on top of each other. Now Sonic was out of the way, Raicor flapped his wings and flew onto the shield of New Mobotropolis. As the shield was just a dome shaped force field, Raicor could just easily walk on it like a fly scuttling across a window. Raicor was looking for the shield generator and he had a feeling he'd find it if he walked across the force field and surveyed the city for anything that looked like a generator. He then noticed a large silver cube behind Castle Acorn. It had flickering red lights and it appeared to be activated. This must be the shield generator. Raicor cackled gleefully. He'd found the generator! Now all he had to do was get IN the city and then destroy it! But how was he going to do that? Raicor was sure he'd find a way but he knew neither of his weapons would help him get into the city. He flew back down to the ground and he drew out his six pronged staff again.

"Clever of the Mobians to station the shield generator within the city itself." murmured Raicor "No on can get in and attack it while the

shields are up. However, nothing stands between a Devatron and it's mission and I have one way of entry that is bound to work."

He plunged one end of the staff into the ground at the foot of the wall and he began to dig a hole at the foot of the wall. He scraped away three lots of soil and then he put his staff away again. He began to dig with his claws but Sonic spin-dashed him in the back before he could dig any further. Raicor turned around sharply and deployed his arm cannons. Sonic tried to spin-dashed Raicor again but Raicor blasted him and knocked him down onto the ground. Raicor put his cannons away and he grabbed Sonic by his quills. He then slammed Sonic against the wall and Sonic felt the full strength of the shields as he was slammed against them. Raicor then drew out his staff again and he pinned Sonic down to the ground with two of the prongs around his neck. Sonic tried to free himself but Raicor was too strong for him.

"Cease your futile resistance hedgehog." growled Raicor "I'm sure your flaccid mind can comprehend from the current activity going on that you are unable to fathom me."

"Urk! Gyyyaaaarrrrghhh!" grunted Sonic as he tried to keep himself from being throttled by the staff "Raicor, you need to comprehend this! I don't give up! I'll never give up! We're not letting you win and that's all there is to it! Hurk!"

"You Mobians truly are the embodiment of obstinacy." snarled Raicor "And that shall be your downfall. We'll weaken that overbearing fiduciary of yours hedgehog, it's just a matter of time until you realize that you cannot win."

His crowing was cut off by a sudden punch to the face from Kate the Eagle. Raicor was thrown away from Sonic and Kate yanked his staff away from Sonic so the hedgehog could now stand again. Kate threw the staff at Raicor but Raicor caught it and he pointed it at Kate. Kate then suddenly surprised Raicor by drawing out Devion's sword from behind her. She had had the sword tied to her back the whole time and she decided now was a good time to use it. Raicor kept his staff pointed at Kate and the two prepared to lunge at each other.

"How did you manage to get Devion's sword?" asked Raicor.

"Well according to one of my buddies, he dropped it after getting blinded by Scott Lynx." explained Sonic "And since Devion got thrown out, he didn't get a chance to get his sword back and now we're gonna use it on you."

"Then it appears I have to destroy the shield generator and retrieve Devion's valued weapon at the same time." muttered Raicor "Prepare to fight me feathered one."

Kate obliged and she ran towards Raicor with the sword raised above her head…

Back on *The Doombringer* , Kiara, Tails and Cosmo had been searching through many corridors and were doing surprisingly well considering they're in unfamiliar territory and there's lots of Devatrons around. They hadn't been caught yet and they were still looking for a room of significance to them. Most of the rooms they'd looked in were either full of Devatrons, machinery or just training rooms for the soldiers. Still, it never hurt to look in various places and get to know the place up and down. It would be helpful to them should they attempt this again.

"Hey Cosmo, have you found any important rooms yet?" whispered Kiara.

"I'm sorry Kiara but I haven't." Cosmo whispered back "The two rooms in this section of the corridor are empty and are of no use to us."

"This is getting really annoying now." muttered Tails quietly "We've been searching this stinkin' vessel for minutes on end and nothing looks valuable to us. Sonic was right to think maybe an infiltration mission would result in nothing…"

"Tails honey, please stop moaning." said Kiara softly "We've barely gotten through the lower floors yet, we've got many more floors of this chrome dome to go yet so don't get irritated when we've barely

begun."

"Sorry." whispered Tails "I'm just expecting us to find what we're looking for so soon a bit like what Sonic does when he's looking for something."

"I can see why you two get on so well then." chuckled Kiara "Anyway, let's try the upper floors and see what we find up there."

"We should try the very top floors." suggested Cosmo "That's were all the important stuff is likely to be."

"Good idea Cosmo, but we haven't got a means of getting up there." said Tails.

"We have." said Kiara "I've found a lift over there. Come on."

She pointed to a door in the wall a few feet from where they were and the three Mobians crept over to it. Kiara looked both ways first and then she pressed a button on the control pad. The doors opened and the three Mobians stepped into the lift. The doors closed and Kiara looked at the keypad on the wall next to her. There was a button pointing up and Kiara decided to press that and see where it took them. The lift obeyed the button's command and it began to descend up from the current floor it was on and went straight up to the top floor of *The Doombringer* . The Mobians could feel it under their feet how fast the lift was going. Devatron lifts are very fast after all. The lift reached the top floor of *The Doombringer* and the doors opened. Tails cautiously stepped out and looked both ways to make sure the coast was clear. There was no one around so Tails signalled for Cosmo and Kiara to come out. The trio stepped out of the elevator and crept down the corridor.

"You know what? I can imagine Sora from the M.S.I.U. doing something like this." said Tails "It'd be of great help if she was actually here with us right now. She's a super spy and she'd help us greatly."

"Who's Sora?" asked Kiara.

"A super spy who helped us stop the Region of Rebellious Reptiles

from wrecking the Annual Acorn Awards last year**." explained Cosmo "Tails feels like he knows her for some reason."

"You're right Cosmo." said Tails "And next time we see her, I'm gonna find out why I feel familiar with her. But now, we're infiltrating *The Doombringer* so I should focus on that now."

"Yes, that would be helpful." said Kiara impatiently.

The trio stopped talking and continued being stealthy. They crept down the quiet chrome corridors and they kept their eyes open for anything that looked interesting. They kept their senses alert for any signs of Devatrons around too. Unbeknownst to them though, they were heading towards the cockpit where Devion and Tronic were stationed currently. Not that it'd be anything to worry about as they had no idea about it. Tails looked over his shoulder and made sure there was nothing coming behind him. Then suddenly, as he was looking behind himself, he bumped into something and he instantly braced himself to attack. He raised his fists and stared at what he'd just bumped into. It was Katherine! Katherine had reached the top floor and was just looking around for anything important and now she'd just bumped into Tails. Tails lowered his fists and stared at the fembot in surprise.

"Katherine?!" blurted Tails "Wha…What?! What the heck are you doing here?!"

Katherine didn't answer him. Instead she stared ominously at him with her emotionless black visor.

"Who the hell is that?" asked Kiara.

"Dr. Eggman's new servant bot." said Cosmo "He's retired Alonzo and has decided to have Katherine instead. Katherine's a lot worse then Alonzo is according to Sonic and the Northern Royal Fighters."

"Well if she's Eggman's loyal clanker then let's smash it!" yelled Kiara "Anything that belongs to Eggman deserves to get torn apart as a sign of how much we despise him!"

"No Kiara, we can't do that or we're gonna get ourselves found out."

said Tails "Katherine, please step down for the sake of everybody here. We're here to infiltrate *The Doombringer* and you're obviously here to do something similar and we don't wanna get caught so please don't start a fight with us."

Katherine ignored Tails' pleas and decided to get rid of the trio. She wanted to get the ship for Eggman and if these three were infiltrating it then she had to get rid of them before they did any damage or find out anything important so that should Eggman get it, they'd be ready to take it down and capturing *The Doombringer* would have been all for naught. Katherine lunged forward and she slashed Tails across the face with her long thin claws. Tails screamed in pain and Katherine threw him into a wall. Kiara instantly reacted and she pounced on Katherine. She dropkicked the servant bot and then began to rapidly punch the silent fem-bot.

"Oy! You pick on my friends, you pick on me you tin-plated freak!" she squealed "We've got a mission to do and we can do without you getting in the bleeding way!"

Katherine just activated her shield generator and she repelled Kiara away with her barrier activating and spreading out. Kiara hurtled backwards across the corridor and she landed with a clunk on the floor. The cheetah lay on the floor with pain flooding through her back. Tails picked himself up from the wall slam earlier and he flew towards Katherine. He dropkicked her in the head and knocked her down onto the floor. Katherine picked herself up and rubbed her head better.

"Katherine, please don't do this!" yelled Tails "You're gonna get us all found out and likely killed if you fight us like this! Stand down and leave us alone already!"

Katherine refused to obey Tails and instead, fired a bladed disc at him. The disc skimmed him across the shoulder at the base of his neck. Tails cried out and he gripped his bleeding neck. Katherine then proceeded to uppercut Tails into a wall and the fox hit the wall with a heavy thud. Tails stared fearfully at Katherine and he kept his back pressed against the wall as the vicious servant bot advanced on him.

"Katherine, why won't you listen to me?" asked Tails "Do you WANT to get us found out or something? Please stop this!"

"Tails for god's sake! Stop trying to reason with her!" screeched Kiara, leaping in and kicking Katherine in the head "She's an Eggman robot and she wants to kill us so just smash the bitch already!"

"Kiara, we're on an infiltration mission." noted Tails "Starting a fight in the hallways is NOT infiltrating! It's attracting attention, which is what we DON'T want to do right now! That's why I keep trying to reason with her and get her to stop fighting us!"

"Well it's not working so stop trying and just kick her ass in!" yelled Kiara, throwing Katherine into a wall.

Katherine played an audio clip of a beat growling and she ran towards Kiara but Cosmo stuck her leg out and tripped the servant bot up. Katherine fell down onto her front and Kiara began stomping on Katherine's head in an attempt to destroy it. Katherine activated her barrier in order to save herself and Kiara found herself stomping on a barrier. Katherine picked herself up, switched off her barrier and grabbed Kiara by her neck. The servant bot then proceeded to throw Kiara straight into the door to the cockpit that was just inches away from where they were now. Kiara hit the door with a loud thud and that attracted the attention of Devion, who was sitting in his throne and awaiting updates from Raicor. Devion leaped out of his throne and he looked at the door.

"What in the name of Deaveron is going on out there?!" he snarled "If there are two soldiers fighting each other again I shall have to eviscerate them both! Tronic, keep an eye on things while in investigate what's happening outside."

Tronic obeyed and remained seated while Devion stormed over to the door and opened it. He stepped out of the cockpit only to find Tails, Cosmo, Kiara and Katherine all brawling with each other in his corridors. The four intruders stopped fighting and they stared at Devion in terror. Devion was livid and if he had a face capable of expressing any emotion known to mankind, his face would be legendary.

"INTRUDERS!" roared Devion "How dare you heathens invade my territory?! Well none of you will leave *The Doombringer* alive!"

He reached into his back pack and pulled out a new sword he had to temporarily replace his old one which he'd lost during his attack on New Mobotropolis yesterday. This sword was only silver in colour and looked a little like a Scottish claymore and it wasn't as impressive as his golden one but it had to do until he got his old sword back. Tails scowled at Katherine and he kicked her in the shin as hard as he could in temper. Katherine glared at him but did nothing.

"Way to go you dumbass!" snapped Kiara "You've given us away you stupid robot!"

"Our mission's compromised now Katherine!" yelled Tails angrily "And I bet yours is too! This is why you should have listened to me instead of beating the snot out of us all!"

"We've got to get out of here before Devion kills us all!" screeched Cosmo as Devion swung his sword at them and tried to cleave them all in two.

They all dodged and Devion hit the floor instead. Kiara scooped Tails and Cosmo up under each arm and she ran for it as fast as her legs would let her. Devion roared loudly and he ran after them as fast as he could go. But not even Devion could match cheetah speed. He was falling behind miserably but he wasn't about to let that stop him from slaughtering them all. Seeing as Devion was after the Mobians, Katherine ran down the other corridor and made her get away. She took a lift down to the bottom floor and when the lift arrived, she ran out of the lift and towards the hole in the floor she'd made to get into the ship in the first place. She leaped down the hole and ran away from *The Doombringer* as fast as she could, furious that her mission had been compromised and she'd had to retreat. She hoped Dr. Eggman was going to be merciful to her as the fat doctor didn't like failure and probably wasn't going to be happy with this failure of hers. Back on *The Doombringer* , Kiara was managing to lose Devion but the corridors seemed to go on forever. She couldn't keep running forever as cheetahs tire out after awhile of running so she had to get out eventually. Kiara looked over her

shoulder to see how far behind Devion was. Devion was so far behind, she couldn't see him. Now was a good moment to stop and see if she could find a way off this thing before Devion caught up to them as going at her speed, she couldn't see anything as the walls all became a blur when she ran at top speed. Kiara screeched to a halt and she put Tails and Cosmo down.

"Kiara, why are you stopping?!" cried Tails "Devion's gonna catch up to us!"

"I'm looking for a way off this joint!" retorted Kiara "I can't see any lifts around here and I bet Devion's gonna call for back up to help him catch us so the lifts will likely all be full of Devatrons so we can't use them anyway. There must be a way off somewhere…"

"How about that window up there?" asked Cosmo, pointing to a window that loomed above the corridor.

Tails and Kiara looked up at the window and noticed that Cosmo had found their escape route.

"Good spotting Cosmo." said Tails "Let's get out that way."

Kiara jumped up to the window and she kicked it as hard as she could. The window shattered into tiny shards of glass and Kiara looked through the window. The height they were at was not a good height to jump off. They were on the top floor of *The Doombringer* and *The Doombringer* was a colossal vessel so they were going to be very high up from where they were. Kiara didn't dare jump out in case she crippled herself down below. Tails grabbed Cosmo by the arm and he flew himself and her out of the window. He then grabbed Kiara by the arm and lifted her away from the window and out into the open air of the outside world just as Devion caught up to them. Devion leaped up to the window and looked outside, only to see that the intruders were retreating. Tails but down Kiara and Cosmo and the cheetah zoomed off with them in tow again. Devion would never catch them now. He growled furiously at the fact he'd just failed to catch the intruders and he dropped back down onto the floor. He sheathed his sword and activated his comlink.

"Tronic! We've had intruders on the ship!" he barked "Run a

diagnostic test for any sign of sabotage!"

"Yes Lord Devion." droned Tronic.

Tronic paused for a moment as he ran the scan. Devion patiently waited for Tronic to give him the report as he ran the scan. A minute later, Tronic spoke to him again.

"Scans show all clear." droned Tronic "The ship has not been sabotaged in anyway. The intruders have not caused any harm to the ship other then a broken window and a hole in the underbelly."

"Then they've failed their mission, which was obviously infiltrate our ship and hinder us." said Devion as he walked back up the corridors and back to the cockpit "Those Mobians are trying rather old fashioned tactics aren't they? Just about every planet I've landed on has attempted to sabotage *The Doombringer* and none have prevailed. Still, we're going to have to keep up our excellent security if we're to prevent this from happening again."

While furious the intruders had escaped, Devion was pleased that they hadn't managed to do anything while aboard *The Doombringer* . But there was no doubt the Mobians would try this again so he would have to remain vigilant and keep his senses alert for any signs of intrusion from now on…

Back at New Mobotropolis, Kate and Raicor were engaged in a heavy fight. Kate was using Devion's golden sword and Raicor was using his staff. The two clashed weapons heavily and their fight appeared to be even sided so far. Nobody had managed to get the other with their weapons and they were doing a good job of defending themselves from oncoming attacks from the other. Raicor tried to slash Kate with the prongs of his staff but Kate blocked the attack with the swing of the sword and she struck Raicor on the arm with the sword. But not even Devion's sword could penetrate a Devatron's armour. Raicor retaliated by whacking Kate in the face with the staff and the eagle staggered backwards. Raicor then slashed Kate across the stomach with his staff and made the eagle double over in pain. Raicor then tried to finish her off but Kate

blocked his attack with the sword. However, Raicor had the sword's blade in between the prongs of his staff and Raicor gave his staff a sharp jerk that ended up wrenching the sword out of Kate's grasp and sending it flying up into the air. Raicor lunged up and grabbed the sword and he attacked it to his back under his wings, which were clipped together to form his cape again.

"Thanks ever so much for letting me have Devion's sword back." sneered Raicor "Now that's one matter over with, I can now try to destroy your shield generator."

Kate screeched a fearsome eagle screech and she charged towards Raicor. Raicor just pointed his staff at her and prepared to skewer her but Kate dodged the attack and she roundhouse punched Raicor in the face. she then tried to punch him in the visor and hopefully crack it but Raicor pushed her away and then quickly swerved around and raised his staff to block a spin-dash attack from Sonic. Sonic bounced back and he charged at Raicor again but Raicor kicked him away and sent him skidding backwards. Thunder and Bolt tried to bring Raicor down by throwing lightening bolts at him but the bolts ricocheted off his armour and did no harm to Raicor. Raicor deployed one of his arm cannons and he blasted the two chipmunks away. Miranda then foolishly ran in and grabbed Raicor's staff. She tried to yank it out of his hands but Raicor effortlessly shoved her aside and stormed off towards New Mobotropolis. he put his staff away and began to claw away at the earth at the foot of the ring wall that surrounded New Mobotropolis. Sonic helped Miranda get back up onto her feet and the two stared helplessly at Raicor as he began to dig his way under the wall.

"This is stupid!" cried Sonic "We hit him with everything we've got and he's STILL standing!"

"I know have a hatred of invulnerable beings." puffed Miranda "I'm useless against him, Kari's even more useless, Thunder and Bolt's aim isn't good enough to blind him and Kate's the only one out of my team who can stand up to him and even she can't stop him. We can't win this fight."

"Well we can't just stand here and let Raicor dig his way into the city." said Sonic "He's found the shield generator so once he gets

under the wall, he's gonna destroy it and leave us vulnerable for *The Doombringer* . We've gotta do something."

"I know." said Miranda "And we've got something. Let's call in the other teams."

"Aha!" said Sonic "You've got it Miranda! I bet not even Raicor can't take down the whole R.F.S. if they all come out at once and face him! Especially as the whole service is here and instead of the important members who were invited to the concert the day Devion arrived."

Miranda whipped out a communications device and she called Queen Sally Acorn with it.

"Hello? Queen Sally?" she asked "We're going to need the other teams out here. We're having problems out here."

"OK Miranda, I'll give the message out immediately." said Sally "You may have to hold on as the soldiers arm themselves with the right weapons."

"We'll do our best." said Miranda.

She put the device away and informed Sonic on what she'd been told.

"Back up's coming but we've gotta wait while they arm themselves." she said.

"That shouldn't take too long." said Sonic "We'll hold on until they arrive. Right now, we've gotta stop Raicor from digging under the wall before our backup can come."

Luckily for Sonic and Miranda, Kate was already on it. Kate tackled Raicor from the side and knocked him away from the wall to stop him from digging. Raicor picked himself up and drew out his staff again. He lunged at Kate and Kate braced herself. Raicor tried to attack her but Kate grabbed the staff and held it in place. The two then began to fight each other over the staff. They both pulled and pushed on the staff, trying their hardest to wrench it from either one's grasp. Unfortunately, Kate lost and Raicor managed to wrench

the staff out of the eagle's grasp…and then Raicor twirled the staff around and plunged it straight into Kate's stomach! The end of the staff went straight through her gut and came out of her back! The eagle screeched in pain and had a look of shock on her face as she was penetrated. Miranda and Sonic stared in horror at this and Miranda was about to lose her mind with horror.

Kate! No!" screamed Miranda.

Raicor cackled evilly and he kicked Kate straight off his staff. The eagle collapsed down onto the ground, staring up at the sky and clutching the hole in her stomach. She was bleeding like mad and quickly losing the will to live. Miranda bolted towards Kate and she threw herself down on the ground beside her fallen friend. Kari and the chipmunk brothers joined her and they stared at their friend who was slowly beginning to die. Sonic respectfully stayed back and let Kate's friends gather around her. Miranda held Kate's hand and began wailing to her.

"Kate! Can you hear me?!" she wailed, her eyes flowing with tears "Please, don't die on me! Don't die Kate! Please tell me you're going to be alright! Kate? Kate!"

The eagle only had enough strength in her to turn her head to Miranda and smile weakly at her.

"Good…bye…Miranda…" she breathed out weakly.

And with that, the eagle gave out her last breath and closed her eyes. Kate was dead. Miranda let out a horrified gasp and she lost her mind with grief. She began to wail into her hands and howl sadly.

"NO! No, no, no, no!" she sobbed "Oh Kate! You're dead! My best friend is dead! This team will never be the same again without you! Oh why did this have to happen to you Kate?!"

She continued to sob uncontrollably beside Kate's dead body. Kari, Thunder and Bolt couldn't help but shed a tear for their deceased friend. They knew how well Miranda and Kate got along and they felt her heartbreak. Even Sonic could feel the pain Miranda was feeling

right now and he shed a tear himself. Kate had once saved his life during his time in Black Acropolis with the Northern Royal Fighters and he owed her one. But since the eagle was now dead, he couldn't return the favour. Raicor watched the snivelling mongoose grieve over Kate and the whole scenario seemed to disgust him.

"You Mobians are just like the other races we've beaten and subjugated." he crowed "You all rely heavily on the disgusting emotion known as love. Love is the weakest of all emotions and we Devatrons thankfully are incapable of feeling such a putrid emotion. No wonder we're so strong, we do not get distracted by heartbreak, grief and loss."

"Hey! Shut up Raicor!" yelled Sonic "Can't you see poor Miranda's crying her heart out here?! You've just killed her best friend! Of course she's sad about it and she can do without you belittling love right now!"

"I do not care what you Mobians feel." snapped Raicor "And if Miranda is so upset about her friend's death then maybe I should kill her and give her the pleasure of reuniting with her fallen comrade."

He pointed his staff at Miranda and he prepared to kill the heartbroken mongoose. Miranda saw this and she freaked at the sight of the staff.

"No! Please don't!" cried Miranda "Don't kill me too!"

Raicor ignored Miranda and prepared to put the mongoose out of her misery. Raicor was ready to plunge the staff into Miranda and Miranda covered her still wet eyes fearfully. Sonic was ready to stop Raicor but something beat him too it. A rocket roared onto the scene and struck Raicor in the chest. Raicor staggered backwards and he fell onto his back. Sonic looked to see where the rocket had come from and to his delight, it came from an R.F.S. soldier who was wielding a rocket launcher. The other teams had come to join in the battle at last! Pity they weren't in time to save Kate though. The whole R.F.S. ran onto the scene and they began bombarding Raicor with bullets and rockets. Raicor shielded himself with his wings and he growled in annoyance.

"Raaaaarrrrggghhhhh!" he roared "Curse those filthy stinking Mobians for having back up! As mighty as I am, even I can't take on such a big army by myself! I need to retreat in order to save myself! I hope Devion understands."

With that said, Raicor turned turtle and ran for it as fast as he could. He hated retreating but even he knew when he was beaten so he had to flee for it. Raicor deployed his mighty wings and he flew away as fast as he could before he could get overwhelmed. The R.F.S. soldiers kept firing madly at him but their weapons didn't hit him and Raicor was too high up and too far away for them to get him now so they stopped firing.

"Now that's how you scare a Devatron off!" taunted Amy Rose "Pity he had to run for it before I could hammer him!"

"You'll get him next time Amy." Knuckles the Echidna assured the pink hedgehog "For now, we can breathe a sigh of relief as the Devatron threat is pushed back and the shield generator remains safe."

"I question why Devion only sent one Devatron out to get the generator." said Shade the Echidna "Did he think he only needed one to do so?"

"I dunno luv." said Geoffrey St. John "But I bet they'll be back in bigger numbers next time so we'd best be ready for it."

"Hey guys?" said Cream the Rabbit "I'm afraid we've been stricken by tragedy. Look."

She pointed at the dead body of Kate the Eagle. Amy saw Kate's dead body and she put her hands to her mouth in shock.

"Kate!" screamed Amy "Oh no! What happened to her?!"

"Raicor stabbed her." said Sonic "And unfortunately, the attack killed her. We may have pushed Raicor back, but we've lost a valuable comrade not just to the Northern Royal Fighters, but to the entire R.F.S. itself. Kate was a credit to the service with her strength and bravery and I should know because during the eight months I fought

before I met Tails, Knuckles and you and Cream, I've seen her fight and she fought well. The R.F.S. has lost a great member."

He then looked over at Miranda who was still sobbing over Kate's death. Kari, Thunder and Bolt all gave her a group hug to make her feel better.

"And nobody feels the pain more then Miranda does." said Sonic.

"I know." said Amy sadly "She and Kate were old school friends and now Miranda's lost her. I bet she'll never recover from this tragedy."

"She will eventually." said Sonic "But for now, we've gotta let Miranda get to grips with herself and only she can do that. We can't make her move on, she'll move on under her own steam."

"That is well said Sonic." said Sally "We shall throw a funeral for poor Kate the Eagle later today and pay our respects to her. Let's get back in the city and prepare the funeral."

With that said, the whole R.F.S. went back into New Mobotropolis and Sonic and Amy helped Kari, Thunder, Bolt and Miranda carry Kate's body into the city so she could be put to rest. This victory had been a pretty solemn one. They'd stopped Raicor but they'd lost a Royal Fighter and Sonic had a terrible feeling that they might lose another if the Devatrons keep coming at them. They were bound to be back and this time, in large numbers and there was bound to be a bigger death toll then just the one death they've had today…

Footnotes:

See *Tales from Mobius Arc 10: Pain in Megapolis

**** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles***

OMG! A CHARACTER DEATH! Bet you didn't expect that! Well this isn't the first time so it's nothing special really. Anyway, talk about a double dose of crap for Sonic and friends! Kate's

dead and the infiltration mission has gone belly up! WHAT MORE CRAP CAN HAPPEN TO THEM?! Oh wait, I shouldn't ask that as I'm giving fate some ideas...Anyway, things only get worse for Sonic and friends as Devion unleashes his new weapon(No it's not Chrome Blaster before any of you readers of the Devatron trilogy think that!)

Devatrons Unleashed!

Story 104: Devatrons Unleashed!

Raicor, the Devatron second-in-command nervously approached the cockpit of *The Doombringer* , the very place Devion was often stationed in when he wasn't in battle. He was worried on what Devion was going to do to him as he'd failed his mission and had been forced to retreat. Despite their cruelty and sadism, even Devatrons were capable of expressing fear and Devion often gave people who failed cruel punishments or even death so Raicor really wasn't looking forward to facing Devion right now but he had to do his duty and report to Devion so he didn't let his fear drag him down and he entered the cockpit. Devion was standing in front of a window and peering out into the distance with his back turned on everybody. Raicor walked slowly up to Devion, his circuitry humming rapidly like a racing heartbeat as he did so.

"D-D-Devion m-my lord." stammered Raicor nervously.

"I take it from the unsubtle tone of fright in your voice that you have not returned to *The Doombringer* with good news to deliver to me." said Devion coldly without even turning around.

"W-w-well Devion I-I have good and bad news for you." said Raicor "First the bad news. I-I-I-I…I've f-f-failed m-my mission L-Lord Devion. The Mobians have increased their numbers and I was forced to retreat…"

Devion's reaction to that was to turn around at a blinding speed and backhand Raicor across the cockpit as hard as he could. Raicor hurtled across the room and he crashed into the wall, leaving a massive dent in it. Devion then stormed up to Raicor and he seized the Devatron by his neck. He slammed against the wall and throttled him.

"You miserable chrome-plated failure!" snarled Devion "Did I not make it clear on what your comeuppance would be if you failed your mission Raicor?!"

"You did Devion!" cried Raicor "I didn't want to retreat but I had to! The Mobians were all armed with rockets and bullets and there were hundreds of them all wielding those weapons and only one of me! I couldn't possible fight off such a vast army by myself, even if my strength is on par with yours!"

"I see." said Devion coldly. "Those Mobians are definitely doubling their efforts I can see. So, what light have you got to break up the darkness then since you claim to have news of a good and bad nature?"

"Well I have several good things to tell you my lord." said Raicor as Devion let go of him "First, I've managed to retrieve your sword…"

He reached behind his back and pulled out Devion's trademark golden sword and presented it to him like a servant presenting a brave knight his sword. Devion took the sword from Raicor and he sheathed it into his backpack.

"Well done Raicor." said Devion "It feels good to have my sword back in my possession. So what else have you got to say?"

"I've managed to kill a Royal Fighter." explained Raicor "And in doing so, I've provoked an emotional breakdown for that Royal Fighter's leader. Sadly it wasn't Sonic but I bet Sonic and his friends will be distracted by the loss of that fighter and we can use this very moment to strike them while they're not prepared for us."

"Why do fleshlings have to have the misfortune of experiencing such a disgusting emotion I wonder." mused Devion, scowling "Love is so revolting and scornful I am mystified as to why organic creatures think so highly of it. All it does is make them weak and when their loved ones die, they get consumed by grief, despair and heartbreak to the point where it kills them."

"I couldn't agree more Devion." said Raicor "And finally, I've found the shield generator. It is behind the castle structure in the city of New Mobotropolis itself."

"Is it?" purred Devion "Clever of those Mobian mongrels to station the generator within the walls of their very city. When the shields are

up, we have no chance of getting inside."

"We do my lord." said Raicor "We can dig under the wall itself and into the city."

"Indeed Raicor." said Devion "And what better Devatron to recruit for this task then our secret and most powerful weapon?"

"Secret and most powerful…you don't mean…?" said Raicor nervously.

"Yes I do Raicor…" purred Devion darkly as he left the cockpit and strode on down the corridors with Raicor following him.

Devion and Raicor went into one of the lifts and they took the lift down to the bottom floor of *The Doombringer* . The lift arrived and Devion and Raicor took a corridor that led to a giant door marked with warning stripes. It was quite clear this room was dangerous and only the most experienced and careful of Devatrons such as the leaders can go in it. Devion pressed his hand against the handprint pad beside the door and the door opened up. He and Raicor walked through the door and they found themselves standing on a balcony that loomed over something very big and very lethal. This room contained the Devatron's secret weapon and it was a giant monstrous behemoth of a Devatron that looked like it wasn't even the same species. It was about as big as three double-decker buses piled on top of one another and had six enormous legs tipped with three claws that had spikes at the tips. It had twin-cannons on it's back, a long tail that was almost as long as the EmpireStateBuilding is tall and tipped with spikes, a neck laden with spikes and a head that contained a row of spikes behind it and two long thin structures that formed horn shapes on the top spike on it's head. In place of a mouth, it had a grotesque maw of spikes that sort of resembled teeth and it had the Devatron's trademark V-shaped visor that glowed red and looked pretty hellish. Devion looked down at the monster with glee and he then entered exposition mode.

"Our own secret weapon, constructed by the very hands of the late King Hardigm himself." he said "The Deva-Beast. The main reason we win many of our battles. It's colossal size makes it impossible to take down and it has digging abilities unmatched by anything in the

galaxy. It's limbs have the capacity of extending to five times their normal length so it'll easily get us into the city so we can destroy the shield generator."

"As much as I love the Deva-Beast Devion, don't you think using it is a bit of an overkill?" asked Raicor "We don't want to destroy New Mobotropolis as taking it over and running the city will dampen the hero's spirits more then if we destroy it. The Deva-Beast will easily destroy New Mobotropolis given it's immense size."

"I know Raicor." said Devion "The Deva-Beast will only dig a tunnel under the walls of New Mobotropolis and then it'll distract Sonic and his Royal Fighter cronies while I crawl through the tunnel and take the liberty of destroying the generator myself. The Deva-Beast is only the distraction Raicor. Once I take down the shield generator, I will contact you and you will bring *The Doombringer* over to New Mobotropolis and then our takeover can begin."

"That plan sounds like it's going to work to perfection my lord." said Raicor "Shall we unleash the Deva-Beast then?"

"We shall indeed Raicor." said Devion, pulling a lever on the wall that opened up a huge door in the wall that allowed the Deva-Beast to go outside.

The Deva-Beast heard the door opening. That was always a sign to it that it was time for it to come out. The Deva-Beast stood up and looked outside, wondering what it was going to be needed for. Devion leaped down from the balcony and he landed on the Deva-Beast's back. The Deva-Beast could sense that it' master had a task for it. Devion stood behind the Deva-Beast's head and he spoke to it.

"My dear pet, I have an imperative task for you." said Devion, talking softly to it as if he was a dog owner sweet-talking to his dog "I need your help breaching enemy territory and you will also keep the resistance at bay while I leave them prone to us."

The Deva-Beast liked the sound of that. It loved malice and mayhem and it was easily going to enjoy this task.

"Our enemies reside in a city sixty miles away from our current position and to the north-west of where we are." said Devion "Follow those instructions and go there my glorious weapon of mass destruction! Go forth Deva-Beast!"

The Deva-Beast let out a thunderous roar that made *The Doombringer* shake and it leaped out of it's resting place and into the outside world of Mobius. It dug down into the ground and headed off in Devion's directions. Devion had gone down into a special compartment of the Deva-Beast that allowed him to ride safely inside it while it was digging. After all, he needed to keep control of the Deva-Beast and make sure it didn't go out of control as a beast this big needed to be kept under tight watch. The Deva-Beast disappeared down into the ground and headed off to New Mobotropolis. Sonic and friends were doomed once this monster of a Devatron arrived at the city and attacked. New Mobotropolis was as good as captured for the Devatrons…

Meanwhile over in New Mobotropolis, the recently deceased Kate the Eagle, the strongwoman of the Northern Royal Fighters and best friend of the team leader Miranda Mongoose had just been put to rest in the New Mobotropolis cemetery. Queen Sally Acorn had hosted the funeral and everybody attending had paid their respects to the fallen eagle. Sonic the Hedgehog had decided to go last as he wasn't that keen on funerals and wanted the atmosphere to die down a bit so it didn't get to him. After everybody had left, Sonic went over to Kate's grave and laid down a bouquet of flowers at her grave. Kate's headstone said "Here Lies Kate the Eagle, a credit to the R.F.S. and brave woman who fell in the heat of the battle. May she rest in peace and have good luck in the afterlife." Sonic looked at the stone and his face fell. He neatly lay the bouquet near the headstone and he spoke to it.

"Kate, you were way past cool." said Sonic "You were as tough as many people I know, especially Knuckles, and you saved my life once. I've been meaning to return the favour one day but now you're dead, I can't do that. But I promise you that we'll defeat the Devatrons and make sure your death wasn't in vain. I'll take care of Miranda for you and that I do mean. The hedgehog gives his word

Kate that Miranda, Kari, Thunder and Bolt will be just fine."

Sonic then stood up from Kate's grave and he left the cemetery, trying not to let the gloomy atmosphere of the place bring him down. As Sonic left the cemetery, he turned to the left and headed to Royal HQ that stood proudly on the hill beside Castle Acorn. Royal HQ was probably the only place that offered him any joy right now. Ever since the Devatrons had landed, things just hadn't been going his way. He fails to beat Devion's challenge and get the Devatrons to leave, then a councillor betrays everybody and tries to frame him and get New Mobotropolis conquered, Field Marshal Thomas Tiger gets crippled for life by Devion so the Megapolis Royal Fighters have to fight their battles without him from now on, Castle Acorn loses it's guards and now Kate the Eagle gets killed in a battle to defend the shield generator and the Devatrons are likely to come back and unleash hell on everybody and this time in big numbers. Sonic never thought he'd come to this…but he actually found himself MISSING Dr. Eggman now! At least he could handle Dr. Eggman, the Devatrons were way too much for him and the R.F.S. right now. They were invulnerable robots that have amazing tech, a big army and a giant battleship at their disposal whereas Eggman was only a human being with killer robots that were easy to smash and could never beat him…well maybe one or two could but that was besides the point. Eggman was a shadow of a threat in comparison to Devion and Sonic would rather be fighting the evil (omelette) dictator right now instead of a bunch of invulnerable robots that can only be beaten by being blinded. But since the Devatrons were here, he'd have to fight them first before continuing the war with Dr. Eggman. They were by far the bigger threat and Eggman was likely to still be hiding and waiting to make his next move right now so he wasn't something to worry about. If anything, the Devatrons would kill him should he come out and join in. Sonic put those thoughts to the side as he entered Royal HQ and went into the rest room where his friends Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Shade, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben were waiting for him.

"Hey Sonic." said Tails, pleased to see him "Have you paid your respects to Kate yet?"

"I sure have Tails." said Sonic "Lay down a nice bouquet for her. That's the most she deserves for her hard work."

"The pitying thing is me, Tails, Knuckles, Cream, Cosmo, Shade and Ruben barely knew her." said Amy sadly "Well me and Tails know Kate more then the others but still it really is a pity that the others didn't really get to know Kate better. Kate was cool just like Miranda and her team and me and her were gonna get along just fine. And now she's dead."

"I feel sorry for poor Miranda." said Wilson who was polishing his spinning blade weapon "She's lost her mind with grief and hasn't stopped wailing since the tragedy happened. I have a feeling the death of her good friend's gonna get to her really badly."

"I'd love to give some support to Miranda." said his wife Mandy "She needs it right now. But I think Miranda's not in the mood for seeing anybody right now so we should just let her simmer down and come to grips with herself before we start interfering with her."

"Aye, the poor lass will move on some day soon but we can't rush that." said Geoffrey "Miranda will have to come to grips herself and I think the support of her team mates is all she really needs right now. I'm sure Kari and the chipmunk brothers will be of great help to her in getting out of the ashes of this tragedy."

"While I feel sorry about the death of your friend, I think we should put it behind us and focus on the more important tasks now." said Knuckles "Like defeating the Devatrons."

"Yeah Knuckles but we're not really sure how we can defeat them." said Sonic "They're invulnerable, blinding them isn't really that helpful to us and the leaders are harder to hit. Not to mention if we kill a soldier Devion will probably just make another as he's a robot and he probably makes his soldiers."

"I feel bad that the infiltration mission went horribly wrong." muttered Tails, thumping the sofa arm angrily as he thought back on the mission he, Cosmo and Kiara went on earlier "Me, Cosmo and Kiara were doing just fine until Katherine sticks her ugly face in where it doesn't belong and she gives us away by blatantly ignoring me and

starting a fight with me and Kiara!"

"I wonder what Katherine was doing on *The Doombringer* in the first place." wondered Ruben "Does Eggman want to get rid of the Devatrons as well?"

"Ah dunno sugah, ah doubt Eggman knows anythin' about the dang Devatrons Ruben." said Bunnie Rabbot unsurely "Although they have landed in Megapolis and he's only in the Northern Border…"

"Well if Katherine's been nosing around on *The Doombringer* it means that Eggman's on our side for once." said Sonic "And that is a good thing. Makes a change from him constantly trying to roboticize us all and take over Mobius but I bet he's not doing this for a good cause if he is on our side."

"If anything, Eggman likely only wants to get rid ofthe Devatrons just so he doesn't have a threat to his tyranny." grumbled Knuckles "He's not gonna be doing it for us that's for sure!"

"Either way, we should not stop Eggman from helping us if he wishes to do so." said Shade "It'd be better to have him help us then hinder us or do nothing at all."

"I agree with Miss Shade." said Cream "If Eggman helps us fight the Devatrons then we might have a better chance against them. As my mother likes to say "The more the merrier" and "Many hands make light work"."

"While you are right in a way Cream I do not think Eggman's going to be very helpful." said Cosmo "Eggman can't even beat us and he builds machines many times larger then we are and are capable of doing damage as great as what the Devatrons are capable of. The Devatrons would beat him easily."

"You're right on the money there Cosmo." said Sonic "But that ain't gonna stop ol' Egg-Butt from trying as he never gives up on us. Still, I think it'd be interesting to see Eggman and the Devatrons actually fight each other…"

The conversation was interrupted by a rumble they could feel

beneath their feet and the sound of something erupting from underneath the surface outside the city. The sound that followed it was a loud screeching roar that made the buildings shake and the ground tremble. Sonic wondered what the noise was so he dashed out of Royal HQ to see what was going on outside the city walls.

"Hey guys! Come one!" cried Sonic "Something's attacking and we're gonna find out what it is!"

Sonic's friends all got up and ran after the supersonic hedgehog to see what all this noise was and if it was a dangerous threat. The other R.F.S. teams had heard what was going on and they all ran out to see what it was. Queen Sally had heard all the noises too and fearing it to be a Devatron attack, ordered her lady-in-waiting Nicole to raise the city shields. Even though Councillor Hamlin (who is thankfully now dead) managed to destroy the controls for the shields, Nicole had a spare control sphere so she could still raise the shields. She took the sphere off her hair, pressed on it and it extended to stick shape. She pressed the button on the stick and the shields raised over the city again. But with what they're about to face, even the city shields wouldn't be of much help to them. Sonic, the Royal Fighters, Sally and Nicole all ran out to face whatever it was that was making all the noise and what they were met with was enough to blow them all the way to Holoska and back. The Deva-Beast had arrived at last and it stood before the city of New Mobotropolis, bellowing thunderous roars that were loud enough to create tremors. Sonic couldn't believe what he was looking at. A colossal six-legged machine that looked like it was capable of causing major damage to anything in it's path. It was the biggest machine Sonic had ever seen in his life. Nothing Eggman had ever built could compare to a creature of this size. All the Royal Fighters looked nervous. They weren't really sure if they should fight the behemoth or run like hell like a bunch of chickens.

"Ho…ly…Chaos!" cried Sonic "What in the name of Mobius is that thing?!"

"Isn't it obvious blue dude?!" shrieked Mandy "A giant Devatron weapon of mass destruction that is here to bring New Mobotropolis down to the ground!"

"That thing is colossal!" blurted Knuckles "I didn't think the Devatrons had something as big as this!"

"That thing could be the size of MountAdabat for all I care!" yelled the Team Chaotix boss Vector the Crocodile "We've gotta stop that thing before it tries to bring down New Mobotropolis!"

"I'm sure the shields are raised already but I doubt even they will do as much good against that thing." said Tails.

"So let's bring it down before it touches the city!" yelled Sonic "Devatron or not, that thing's going down!"

"I wouldn't get too in over your obnoxious little head hedgehog." purred a deep, chilling voice that Sonic really didn't want to hear again right now "If you're not careful, you'll end up going to an early grave."

Sonic began to wonder where the voice was coming from. He then saw something raising up from the Deva-Beast's back and that something was, of course, Devion the Dreaded himself. Devion stood proudly above the Mobians on the back of the Deva-Beast and he glowered down at the Mobians that looked up at him.

"My dear Mobians, you are now witnessing the Devatron's secret and best weapon." crowed Devion "This is the Deva-Beast, a marvellous invention created by the hands of our first leader King Hardigm before he was killed. The Deva-Beast is the main reason we win all our battles and none who have faced it have lived to speak about it. And now you get the privilege of facing this meritorious monster of ours Mobians. Let's see if you can become the first beings to face the Deva-Beast and live."

"Well that sounds like quite a challenge there Devion." said Sonic snidely "And I accept it on behalf of our recently deceased friend Kate the Eagle. Your Deva-Beast thing is gonna be a Deva-scrap pile!"

"We shall see about that Sonic." sneered Devion, leaping off the Deva-Beast and onto the ground "Deva-Beast! Attack!"

The Deva-Beast roared at the top of it's voice and it raised two of it's six legs. The Royal Fighters all ran out of the way as the giant behemoth slammed it's front feet down on the ground. That slam was enough to bring an entire village down. The Royal Fighters were well and truly shaken by that attack and they fell off their feet due to the ground shaking violently beneath them. Sonic picked himself up however and he stared straight at the Deva-Beast. He had a look of total determination on his face. Determination to not let this day get any worse and let the Devatrons beat them.

"Bring it on big guy!" dared Sonic "I've taken on robots many times my size in the past so you'll be no different! Even if you are a Devatron!"

With that said Sonic spin-dashed towards the Deva-Beast's head at full force…

Meanwhile in Megapolis, Katherine was reporting to Dr. Eggman about her infiltration mission earlier and how it had failed and how she'd been forced to retreat. Dr. Eggman had listened to her report and he wasn't pleased with her failure to infiltrate the ship and claim it for him.

"Well Katherine, I can't say I'm proud of you." muttered Eggman, standing up to his full height and glowering straight into Katherine's visor, making the servant bot stand backwards and look nervous "You're supposed to get that ship for me and then you decided to start a fight with Tails and two of his accomplices! Why didn't you stand down when Tails asked you Katherine?! You could have saved yourself this failure and yet you let yourself get found out!"

"I was *fighting them* BECAUSE **they were on the ship *and they were*** obviously INTENDING TO sabotage **the ship** ." played seven different voice clips that Katherine had recorded.

"That's the likeliest reason they were on the ship." said Eggman, stroking his moustache "But rather then starting a fight Katherine, you should have just let them go and then shot a bladed disc or two into their backs and killed them while they were unprepared for you.

Oh well, since the Mobians have gone you can try again and this time without interference. Before you go though," he said quickly "Did you find out anything about the shop before you botched up Katherine?"

Katherine nodded and she played what she'd recorded while on *The Doombringer* . She projected the image in her visor so Eggman could see more clearly. Eggman watched the projected recording very closely as Katherine played it to him. He saw the fight Katherine was having with Tails, Cosmo and Kiara and then he saw Devion storming out of the cockpit and realizing he had intruders on the ship. Eggman ordered Katherine to pause the recording so he could get a closer look at Devion. Katherine paused the recording and Eggman stared at Devion in wonder. He had never seen anything like him before and he definitely didn't belong on Mobius, meaning he was from another world much like he was. Eggman could hardly keep his eyes off the image Katherine showed him.

"In the name of the science, what kind of robot is that?!" shrieked Dr. Eggman "I-I-I-It's an un-un-unusual looking th-thing isn't it?! What is it Katherine?"

Katherine just shrugged. She had no idea as she had been forced to retreat before she could find out anything about the ship. Dr. Eggman fumed at her, not pleased she didn't know what it was and he looked back at the image.

"It's definitely not of Earth origin." said Dr. Eggman as he analyzed Devion's appearance "And it doesn't appear to be of Mobius origin either. It must be a robot from another world. I wonder who created it? Or maybe it's an alien robot and nobody owns it. I must find out more about these robots. Katherine, you get back over to the ship and demand to see the robot who owns the ship. I want to have a little chat with it and I'll have it through you so that should things get ugly, I won't get hurt by them."

Katherine nodded and she left the secret bunker. She was so loyal to Eggman that she would willingly risk getting destroy and dissected for him. She didn't really care about Eggman taking the cowardly route and using her to communicate to the Devatrons, Eggman's life mattered more then hers after all. Katherine stepped

out into the open air of the outside world and she walked slowly off to *The Doombringer* which wasn't very far away from Eggman's bunker. Since the infiltration mission earlier, the Devatrons had decided to double security to make sure it doesn't happen again. And by double security, Raicor had placed Triton and a squadron of guards outside to guard *The Doombringer* and make sure no one gets in. Some guards stood beside him, some guards stood on the other side of *The Doombringer* and some stood underneath it. No one was getting into the ship now without any Devatron spotting them. Triton had his saw stick at the ready and he was itching to use it. He looked both ways to make sure the coast was still clear. However, as he turned to his left, he spotted Katherine coming towards them. Strange he thought it was for one single robot to dare come to their territory and presumably start battling them. Nevertheless, this robot had to be destroyed before it could cause any trouble for him. Triton stood guard with his saw stick at the ready and be boomed at Katherine in his deep, masculine voice.

"Halt! You trespass on Devatron territory mystery robot! I am going to kindly demand that you leave or I will have to eviscerate you!"

The Devatron guards beside him all deployed their arm cannons and they prepared to blow Katherine sky-high. Katherine stopped in her tracks and she raised her arms in surrender. She wasn't here to fight after all, she was here to learn more about the Devatrons for Eggman and Eggman wanted a conversation with the leader. Triton was slightly taken aback at the fact the robot was surrendering to him but he didn't let it get to him. It had to be some kind of trick and years of conquering planets had taught him to be weary of people who claim they surrender as more often then not, they're actually lying. The Devatron guards surrounded Katherine and they kept their weapons pointed at her in case she tried anything funny. Triton went up to Katherine and he glowered at her, wondering what she was here for.

"Why do you curse Devatron territory with your foul presence little robot and then surrender to us?" growled Triton, holding the saw stick directly at her throat.

Katherine responded by playing a clip of someone saying "Take me to your leader."

Triton stared at Katherine, wondering what she wanted to see Devion for. Maybe she was brokering an alliance much like Hamlin did the other day? If she was then maybe she'd be a better agent then Hamlin was.

"Our leader is fighting Sonic the Hedgehog right now." said Triton "But you may see our second-in-command instead as he's here. Do not try anything foolish or you will end up finding out what your circuits look like."

Katherine nodded understandably as she wasn't even here to fight the Devatrons. The Devatrons took Katherine onto *The Doombringer* and they led her all the way to the cockpit where Raicor was stationed currently. Triton opened the cockpit door and he took Katherine inside and ordered the guards to get back to their duties while he and Raicor deal with her. Raicor, who was standing by a window and looking out of it and thinking demonic thoughts to himself, turned around and saw Triton with Katherine standing in front of him and not looking the least bit intimidated for she was a robot incapable of feeling or expressing emotions. Raicor advanced on Katherine menacingly and he glared down at her from his height. Katherine looked up at him.

"Who is this Triton?" demanded Raicor "And why have you brought her here?"

"She seems to come on peaceful terms as she didn't show any hostile intentions when she came here." explained Triton "And she wants to see our leader but since he's not here, you'll have to see what she wants instead."

"Very well." said Raicor "As I am in charge when Devion's away, I shall see what this robot wants."

Katherine then surprised Raicor by emitting a holographic image of Dr. Eggman sitting in his chair back at the underground bunker he resided in out of her visor. Raicor stepped back and looked at the holo-image, unable to believe what he was looking at.

"A human?!" he cried "This cannot be! We are not on Earth and we are not in Earth's galaxy yet! How can a human be here?!"

"That is a good question my mysterious friend." said Dr. Eggman "And here is your answer, I got kicked out of my world due to the doomsday devices and weapons of mass destruction I made and I've been forced to find civilization elsewhere and I've picked Mobius to be my new home."

"Have you human?" snorted Raicor "While to your displeasure, we are here to claim Mobius for ourselves and if you seek to get in our way then we will respond with brute force!"

"Oh fie." said Dr. Eggman "I've only just discovered you guys, why would I want to get in your way? Speaking of you guys, what are you and where do you come from?"

"We are the Devatrons." answered Raicor "The mightiest race of alien robotical life forms in the universe and we hail from the planet of Deaveron, a planet that you humans as far as we know, haven't discovered yet. We are the conqueror of fourteen worlds and we seek to add this planet to our ever-growing collection. We also wish to conquer ALL the planets in the known galaxy, especially yours human. Once we're done with Mobius, we will be targeting Earth next."

"How delightful." said Eggman sarcastically "I harbour no love for Earth anymore due to how ungrateful they are for my genius so you can do what you like with it. Blow it up for all I care. Anyway, Devatron, are you the leader that my servant bot's requested to see?"

"Negative." said Raicor "I am merely the second-in-command although I would love to be the leader someday. My name is Raicor. Who are you human?"

"I am Dr. Eggman, Sonic the Hedgehog's arch-nemesis and the very person he's been at war with over the past few years." explained Eggman "I've come close to defeating him on several occasions with my genius inventions and killer robots. I really am a genius you know. I've even built a machine capable of manipulating time itself! Unfortunately, one of my wayward inventions hijacked it and to prevent it from happening again, I've neglected from rebuilding it."

"A time manipulating machine?" mused Raicor "That is not new to us. That invention has already been done."

"It…it has?!" squeaked Eggman miserably, not happy to see that his Egg-Timer machine wasn't as original as he thought it was.

"It has." said Raicor "The people of the planet Kliptos first invented a time manipulator and they tried to use it to wipe us out of existence. We destroyed the machine and in order to prevent the machine from being duplicated, they wiped out any plans they have of the machine so we cannot make one ourselves. Not that we need one as relying on technology to do the work for you is not the Devatron way and is ultimate cowardice."

"Humph!" muttered Eggman, clearly offended by this "Well Devatrons, my technology is greater then any human and it can help you defeat Sonic the Hedgehog so don't sneer at me for relying on technology to do my dirty work."

"If your tech is as great as you say it is then you would have defeated Sonic by now." said Raicor coldly, folding his arms and glaring at him "You claim to have been in contact with him for years and yet he lives to face us now. Your tech cannot be that good if Sonic still lives."

"It is Raicor, I swear it is!" cried Eggman "It's just I need to make a machine capable of taking down Sonic the Hedgehog! I've built a couple of machines capable of this such as Metal Sonic and a suit of battle armour that can beat Sonic but his friends get in the way and…"

"You are clearly an incompetent foe for Sonic if a bunch of furry animals are capable of defeating your inventions." growled Raicor "If we agree to have you use your tech to help us then we're pretty much signing ourselves up for defeat. We will fight this battle by ourselves Dr. Eggman. Our invulnerability, superior tech and battle skills combined with our unmatched intelligence will win us this battle, not your poor excuse for technology."

"Raicor, please hear me out!" begged Eggman "If me and you team up Devatrons then Sonic's defeat is certain! You see, I've been

fighting Sonic longer then you have. I know what he's capable of and what he can do. Come on Devatrons, trust ol' Eggman on this will you? I can help you defeat Sonic the Hedgehog and all you have to do is make this alliance with me. I assure you, me and you can defeat Sonic together."

Raicor put a claw to his muzzle and he thought on this matter for a moment. It didn't take him long to make up his mind thought as he didn't like this idea at all. Allying themselves with Eggman wouldn't change anything. They'd still conquer the planet and it'd be by themselves so Eggman was pretty much being obsolete in all this. Not to mention his technology was incapable of defeating a bunch of furry animals so it would he of no use to him. Not to mention Eggman would likely try and betray them later as a lot of alliances the Devatrons made ended this way and Raicor was not falling into that trap again. Raicor gave out his answer in an exasperated sigh.

"Ugh, I haven't got time for this nonsense!" he snarled.

"Shall I destroy the robot sir?" asked Triton eagerly.

"Yes." said Raicor "I do not wish to have technology of the incompetent kind in my presence. Nor do I wish to prolong this conversation with this flaccid little human who's tech is incapable of defeating small furry animals."

"No wait please!" begged Eggman "We'd make a good team together we would! We'd…"

He was abruptly cut off by Triton who sliced Katherine to pieces with his saw-stick. He sliced her head off, severed her limbs and then cleaved her torso in two. Katherine was reduced to scrap metal and her remains littered the floor at Triton's feet. Raicor glared down at the remains and he looked back up at Triton.

"Clean that up." he ordered.

Triton obeyed and cleaned up Katherine's remains. He then took the remains away so they could be recycled into chrome for any new soldiers that were going to be made. Raicor turned his back on everyone and went back to staring out the window. What a waste of

time this had been. Oh well, it wasn't anything to worry about as Eggman was likely to have no chance against the Devatrons if he can't even beat Sonic and friends like they could. Eggman could fight them for all Raicor cared, the Devatrons would just have to eviscerate him as well as Sonic and friends which would be good for them as it would give the Devatrons their first insight on what a fight with a human's going to be like as they plan to invade Earth after Mobius. Raicor had a feeling Eggman was going to be very easy to take down…

Back in the bunker, Eggman stared at his screen, which had gone static now Katherine had been destroyed. Eggman got angry and he thumped the control pad in rage. If he wasn't wearing glasses, you could see a pool of fire in his eyes. He sat back in his chair and gritted his teeth. His face went red and steam poured out of his ears.

"How dare those stupid Devatrons turn down my offer and how dare they destroy my lovely Katherine!" roared Eggman angrily "Well just for that, I'm helping Sonic take them down! After all, I can't make my new home here if they take it over! Those Devatrons have just made themselves a new enemy now! Before I fight them though, I'm going to rebuild Katherine and then I'm going to bring back some inventions that were destroyed by Egg-Timer when it exploded…"

With that said, Dr. Eggman ran off to his inventing table and immediately set to rebuilding Katherine from scratch. He couldn't wait to join Sonic in with this battle against the Devatrons. He'd show those vain, egotistical chrome jerks how good his technology really is…

Back at Mobotropolis, Sonic got smacked down into the ground by a powerful whack from the Deva-Beast's long tail. The whole fight with the Deva-Beast had been going completely against the Mobians. The Deva-Beast's large size combined with it's many limbs, twin cannons and digging capabilities made it a pretty hard foe for anyone to get a decent shot at. Sonic had been spin-dashing the Deva-Beast as hard as he could but his spin-dashes were in vain as the Deva-Beast was just as invulnerable as the Devatrons were. None of the other Royal Fighters could really fight the Deva-Beast,

only a select few could fight the monster along with Sonic. Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Shade, Bunnie, Ruben, Team Chaotix and Team Adabat were the only ones who could really fight it. The rest could only watch helplessly as the fights tried to bring down the colossal Deva-Beast. As Sonic lay on the ground trying to pick himself up, he began muttering to himself.

"Gah! That thing's tough!" he grunted "It puts the Devatrons themselves to shame! Oh how I wish I had the Chaos Emeralds with me but they've been power-drained and Devion has them so they're out of the question!"

As for the others, they were all throwing attacks all over the Deva-Beast. Knuckles and Shade were on it's back and they began to attack it's head. Shade Blade-Rushed the Deva-Beast's head several times over with her twin blades and Knuckles throw his punches as hard as he possibly could at the Deva-Beast. The attacked did not harm the Deva-Beast in anyway. Knuckles and Shade then tried to attack it in the visor to see if it could be blinded as easily as the other Devatrons. Knuckles ran down it's head and attempted to punch it in the visor but the Deva-Beast shook Knuckles off it's head and he fell down onto the ground. Shade tried to attack it in the visor but the Deva-Beast shook her off too. Shade fell down onto the ground beside Knuckles. Team Chaotix tried one of their signature moves. Espio and Charmy curled up into balls and Vector grabbed them with his jaws he then spun around as fast as he could and let go of them. Espio and Charmy hurled towards the Deva-Beast and they both ricocheted off it's head. Espio and Charmy hurtled back towards Vector but they uncurled from their ball forms and they landed on the ground just before they could accidentally hit him. The Deva-Beast stamped one of it's six feet and made the ground shake, causing Team Chaotix to fall over. Bunnie Rabbot was next to give it a go. She probably had the best chance of success against the colossal behemoth. She flew up to the Deva-Beast's visor and she deployed her arm cannon. She began shooting the Deva-Beast's visor but the Deva-Beast lowered it's head so that the shots would hit it's forehead instead. Bunnie flew down lower so she could shoot at the Deva-Beast's visor but the Deva-Beast pointed it's tail forward and it extended to twice it's normal length. The tail hit Bunnie like an extending fist and she was

thrown down from the sky and onto the ground. Bunnie winced in pain as she hit the ground. Amy tired a few futile attacks by using her trademark Piko-Piko hammer to hammer the Deva-Beast's feet. The Deva-Beast didn't even feel the attack though. Amy grew frustrated with the monster extremely quickly and she threw her hammer at the Deva-Beast's head in rage. The hammer hit the Deva-Beast on the cheek but it the attack was futile and didn't harm it in anyway. The Deva-Beast did see the hammer fall down to the ground after it hit it and it looked to see where the hammer had come from. It saw Amy running over to pick up her hammer and it raised one of it's legs. It was about to bring it's foot down on top of Amy Rose and squish her flat but Sonic leaped in and pushed Amy out the way before it could squash her. The Deva-Beast's foot made the ground shake yet again. The Deva-Beast growled furiously at Sonic for interfering with it's kill and it aimed it's top mounted cannons at Sonic but before it could blast him, Tails flew in front of the Deva-Beast and covered it's visor. The Deva-Beast shook it's head furiously to get Tails off it's visor. Tails flew off the Deva-Beast's visor and he began making rude faces at it in order to get it to chase him and give Sonic time to launch a surprise attack. The Deva-Beast followed Tails as he flew away, plodding slowly after him. It's huge size did make it rather slow but only above ground. Underground it could move at the speed of slight. Now the Deva-Beast was distracted, Sonic and Amy decided to use the Hammer-and-Hedgehog move. Sonic curled up into a ball and Amy raised her hammer high above her head. Sonic prepared to spin-dash and Amy whacked him as hard as she could. Sonic zoomed through the air and he hit the Deva-Beast in the back of it's head between some of it's spikes. The Deva-Beast felt that and it turned around to see what had attacked it. Sonic however was still in spin-dash and he did a giant heel turn and came back at the Deva-Beast. He spin-dashed it in the back of it's head again and he landed beside Amy.

"Whew! I never get tired of that attack!" whooped Sonic "As corny as it's name is, it's still an awesome move!"

"As good as the Hammer-and-Hedgehog move is," said Amy "It doesn't appear to be doing as much damage as I'd hoped it would. That Deva-Beast thing still appears unscathed."

"What do you expect Amy?" asked Sonic "It's like a Devatron plus 100! Of course we're not hurting it! But that's not stopping me from trying! We'll bring it down somehow!"

Before anyone could launch another attack though, the Deva-Beast raised it's tail in scorpion fashion and then lashed forward with it. The tail expanded to several times it's length and it dug straight down into the ground about two feet away from the walls of New Mobotropolis. The Deva-Beast was doing what it had been ordered to do, dig a way in to the city for Devion so it was using it's tail to dig a tunnel under the wall for Devion to crawl through and get into New Mobotropolis so he could lower the shield generator and leave the city prone for the Devatrons. The tails dug straight under the wall and then the tip of the tail popped up from under the ground, startling some of the citizens in the city. The tail then retracted back down through the tunnel and out the hole and it returned to it's normal length. Sonic began to wonder what was going on. Why would the Deva-Beast only dig a hole with it's tail and then just retract it?

"I dunno what you're doing Deva-Beast but you're not digging your way into NewMobotropolis!" yelled Sonic, running underneath the Deva-Beast and then spin-dashing it in the underside.

The Deva-Beast wasn't harmed by the attack but it did not want Sonic underneath it and spin-dashing it as the underside was a vulnerable spot for the Deva-Beast. It couldn't attack anyone directly under it as it couldn't see them and didn't have weapons under it to take them out. The Deva-Beast leaped into the air and then dug it's way down into the ground, leaving a giant hole in it as it disappeared into the earth. The Mobians had a feeling the Deva-Beast was going to pop up from underneath them so they all ran for it before it could come back up. The Deva-Beast exploded up from under the ground just inches beside NewMobotropolis, sending earth flying everywhere and it stood before the Mobians. In order to keep it away from the city, the Mobians fled for it and got the Deva-Beast to follow them away from NewMobotropolis. The Deva-Beast was only doing this as it hadn't been ordered to destroy the city. If it had, it would have ignored the Mobians and went on with destroying the city. The Deva-Beast chased the Mobians and as it did that, Devion

ran over to the tunnel it had dug for him with it's tail. Devion got down onto his knees and he crawled through the tunnel under the wall. He crawled under the wall and came up through the exit. He was in New Mobotropolis once again and now he could take down the shield generator without any resistance as it was all outside fighting the Deva-Beast.

"I'm in their city at last." purred Devion "Now if I remember…Raicor said the generator was behind the castle structure of this city. And if I remember, it's right over…there."

He spotted Castle Acorn and knew where he was heading. Devion ran over to Castle Acorn as fast as he could, earning some horrified gasps from the citizens of NewMobotropolis. How he enjoyed hearing the gasps of his victims. Devion arrived at the castle and he ran around to the back of the castle. He saw a silver cube with flickering red lights that sat behind the castle well out of harm's way. It hummed quietly, meaning it was functioning. Devion cackled to himself and he drew out his trademark golden sword.

"There it is." said Devion dryly "Now it's time to open up the doors to this city and allow my glorious army to enter the territory of my enemies…"

Devion held his sword in reverse grip and he raised it above his head. He then plunged the sword into the shield generator like a knife being plunged into a wedge of cheese. The generator made a groaning whirring noise and it sparked a little as the sword was plunged into it. The lights stopped flickering and the generator fell silent. The shields lowered, leaving NewMobotropolis vulnerable for a Devatron attack. Devion couldn't tell if the shields were down though for they were invisible so in order to make sure the shields *were* down, Devion deployed his arm cannon and he fired straight up at the sky to see if his shot would hit anything. His shot went straight up into the sky and it didn't ricochet off anything or hit anything, it just kept going on. The shields were indeed down and Devion's takeover could now begin. Devion touched the side of his head and he contacted Raicor.

"Raicor, this is Devion." he said "NewMobotropolis is prone now. You may bring *The Doombringer* over here and we can take the city

for ourselves."

"That's excellent news Devion." said Raicor " *The Doombringer* will arrive as soon as it can."

Devion switched off his comlink and waited for his glorious ship to arrive. He was really pleased to see things were going his way and he was winning against the Mobians.

As for the Deva-Beast, the Mobians were still fighting against it. The Mobians had led the Deva-Beast a good distance away from NewMobotropolis and they began to cut loose on it again. Sonic had the idea that they should all attack it from underneath as it was vulnerable to being attacked from underneath. Scott, Jessica, Felix and Taran, who all formed Team Adabat, all ran underneath the Deva-Beast and they launched all kind of attacks at it. Scott and Jessica threw energy spears at the underbelly, Felix clubbed it in the back of it's legs and Taran shot at the underbelly with his handheld laser cannon. The Deva-Beast could feel this onslaught happening right underneath it but it couldn't do anything about it for the underside was it's biggest blind spot. The Deva-Beast began to stamp it's feet in order to make the attackers underneath stop what they were doing and run for it. It's stomping made the ground shake and Team Adabat fell onto their backs. Ruben however leaped in and dropkicked the Deva-Beast in the visor, making it stop what it was doing and shake it's head furiously. Ruben then unleashed one of his ninjutsu moves on the Deva-Beast. He rapidly kicked the Deva-Beast as hard as he could but his attacks were in vain and the Deva-Beast swung it's head and knocked Ruben down onto the ground. Ruben skidded backwards and he frowned at the Deva-Beast.

"It seems my ninjutsu won't work on you." he panted "Well let's see what you think to a nice big jet of water…"

He then cut himself off mid sentence as he remembered that he was still missing his aqua-collar and he felt his neck, which didn't have a collar clamped around it like it should do.

"…oh yeah…" said Ruben "My collar got stolen. Stupid Hydra!" he grumbled as he thought back to that fateful day it got stolen by

someone he thought was his friend.

But it wasn't like his water powers would have been of much help as the Devatrons were invulnerable and water was not going to work on them so Ruben would be no better with his aqua-collar. Although his water powers would have been a good distraction if he was able to use them. The Deva-Beast loomed over Ruben and the water-panther stared up at the Deva-Beast in terror. The sheer size of the gigantic robot made Ruben feel nervous but he wasn't about to back down so easily. He had stood up to Zira the Ruthless before and he was going to stand up to the Deva-Beast. And it seemed he would get some help as Bunnie and Team Chaotix came in to join him. Espio and Charmy curled up into balls again and Vector grabbed them with his jaws while Bunnie picked Ruben up and flew up into the air with him. Bunnie had an idea on some kind of powerful move that might work. Down on the ground, Vector throw Espio and Charmy at the Deva-Beast's visor but the Deva-Beast lowered it's head, causing them to hit it's forehead instead. Espio and Charmy ricocheted off the Deva-Beast's head and they both landed on the ground. Bunnie however, began to swing Ruben around in a circle as fast as she could. The Deva-Beast looked up, wondering what Bunnie was doing. Bunnie then threw Ruben straight at the Deva-Beast and Ruben swung his feet forward so he'd hi the Deva-Beast feet first. He hit the Deva-Beast directly in the visor and the beast roared at the top of it's voice box. The visor was it's weak point as it was on any other Devatron. Sadly, Bunnie and Ruben's attack had only made a tiny crack on the visor that was so small you'd have to stand really close in order to see it so the attack didn't make much progress. The Deva-Beast got furious and it began to fire rapidly at the Mobians with it's back mounted cannons. Laser blasts showered the ground and the Deva-Beast rotated one of it's cannons around. It kept one cannon pointing forward and one pointing backwards so it could shoot in both directions and it rotated it's cannons about ninety degrees and back so it could fire at the sides as well as front and back. The Royal Fighters all scattered, making sure they didn't get shot by the blasts and they didn't dare charge under the Deva-Beast as it would just move out the way or stomp and make them fall over. Sonic dodged all the blasts with ease due to his superior speed whereas the others were manoeuvring as fast as they could in order to escape being shot. It wasn't an easy task though as they

weren't as fast as Sonic. Then suddenly, it seemed tragedy was striking once again as one of the Deva-Beast's shots struck Vector in the back and knocked him clean off his feet! Vector was thrown across the landscape and he came to a halt on his side, his back singed and burnt with thin whiffs of smoke drifting away from it. The crocodile also passed out from that attack. Charmy and Espio stopped what they were doing and they saw the injured Vector lying a good distance away from them. Their faces contorted with horror and their hearts felt faint. Espio and Charmy ran over to Vector as fast as they could.

"Vector!" squealed Charmy "Oh no! Vector!"

"Vector! Are you alright?!" cried Espio.

Sonic screeched to a halt and he saw Espio and Charmy running towards Vector. Sonic zoomed over to the Chaotix and he saw Vector lying on the ground, passed out and injured. Sonic could feel himself about to fall down to his knees in shock as Espio and Charmy stood over Vector.

"Oh god!" gasped Sonic "Oh no, no, no please no! We've lost one Royal Fighter already please don't make it two!"

Charmy however was losing his mind with shock. The bee began tearing up over Vector's unconscious body and he wailed at the top of his voice.

"Vector! Vector wake up! Please wake up!" wailed Charmy "You can't die! You're our boss! We can't work without you! I can't work without you! You're the closest thing to a dad I have after my colony kicked me out! Please wake up!"

Espio grabbed Vector's arm and he touched his wrist for any sign of a pulse. To Espio's relief, he felt a very weak pulse. Vector was alive! But unconscious and badly injured and he was probably going to be asleep for a while. He'd need some medical care or he wouldn't be waking up at all.

"He's alive Charmy." said Espio with relief "But barely. If he doesn't get any medical treatment, he may not wake up."

"He's alive?!" cried Charmy "Thank goodness! We've gotta get him to a hospital and fast before he does die!"

"I'll zoom Vector over to the New Mobotropolis Medical Centre immediately." said Sonic "You hold on for me until I get back."

But Sonic wouldn't be taking anyone anywhere for before he could run off, *The Doombringer* suddenly appeared from nowhere and began flying over their heads and towards NewMobotropolis. Sonic stared up at the ship and he looked like he was about to go insane at the mere sight of it.

"Holy heck!" shrieked Sonic "It's *The Doombringer* ! Devion's brought in the cavalry and it's heading towards NewMobotropolis!"

"Don't worry about it Sonic." said Sally, running up to Sonic so she could see how Vector was "Nicole's raised the shields so they won't be harming the city at all."

But Sally was horribly wrong. *The Doombringer* loomed above New Mobotropolis and after it found a good place to hover, it opened up a deployment shaft in it's underbelly and it began to drop Devatron soldiers down into the very city of New Mobotropolis, including Raicor, Tronic, Triton and Steelor. Since the shields had been taken down, the Devatrons landed in the city and they began to roar menacingly at the terrified citizens of New Mobotropolis. The citizens fled for it as fast as they could and the Devatrons chased after them. Devion stood before the falling Devatron soldiers on the hill Castle Acorn resided on and he began to cackle maniacally as the Devatron invasion of New Mobotropolis finally began. Raicor, Tronic, Triton and Steelor all landed beside Devion and they watched the takeover begin. Outside the city, Sonic folded his arms and glared at Sally in an unimpressed manner whereas Sally stared in horror at the deploying Devatrons that descended from under *The Doombringer* .

"You were saying?" he said with a scowl.

"Bu-bu-but I-I-I don't understand!" blurted Sally "N-N-Nicole r-raised the shields! I kn-know she-she did! I watched her d-d-do it b-b-before we ran out to-to-to see what the n-n-noises were!"

"Well either Nicole's controls didn't work or Devion somehow got into the city and destroyed the generator." said Sonic.

"It's the latter Sonic." said Nicole grimly "I can see Devion standing next to Castle Acorn watching his invasion commence. I guess that's why he came with the Deva-Beast, so he could break into the city while the Deva-Beast distracted us."

"I should have gotten suspicious when it dug a hole under the wall with it's tail." muttered Sonic "It was digging a tunnel FOR Devion, it wasn't trying to do it itself! Gosh I feel so stupid for failing to realize this! Well let's kick the Devatrons out of NewMobotropolis before they wreck the place!"

"But Sonic we…"

Sally didn't even get a chance to finish off what she was saying before Sonic ran off towards New Mobotropolis. Sally sighed in an exasperated manner and she ran after Sonic. The rest of the Royal Fighters ran off after Sonic and Sally. Devion could see Sonic coming and he and Raicor ran towards the city wall. Raicor grabbed Devion and flew him over the wall with one flap of his mighty wings. He then threw Devion towards Sonic and Devion hit the ground foot first, creating a massive shockwave that threw Sonic backwards and made Sally stop dead in her tracks. The Royal Fighters all stood together before Devion and Raicor and they prepared to do battle. Devion just folded his arms and calmly glared at the Mobians that prepared to attack him. Behind him, *The Doombringer* had finished deploying all the soldiers and the ship, which was on auto-pilot hovered away from the city and landed down on the ground beside it. The Deva-Beast plodded over to *The Doombringer* and it stood by, awaiting any further orders now it's first priority had been completed.

"Well Mobians, it appears that the tides of victory has swept over us today." crowed Devion "I have lowered your shields and now I've taken your city. It also appears I have injured one of your own…" he added, noting the knocked Vector who was being carried by Espio and Charmy "Quite the heel turn for you isn't it Mobians? You manage to push me out of the city and then Raicor kills one of your soldiers and I take your city. You could have saved yourself all this

unnecessary bloodshed if you'd just relinquished yourselves to me already."

"If you think we're gonna roll over to you conceited, arrogant, narcissistic jerks then forget it!" yelled Mandy bravely "You get out of our city before I punch your faces off!"

"Mandy, don't!" cried Wilson, holding her back "Don't agitate them or they'll kill you!"

"Amazing how much valour you Mobians really have." muttered Devion "We're on the winning streak and you still come out with obnoxious battle talk that makes you all sound childish and foolish. WellMobians, this city is mine now and I am in charge. My first act as ruler of New Mobotropolis is to have you all exiled to the wilderness and anyone still in the city… will either be used to make Devatron soldiers or just kept as prisoners for us to have fun with."

"You can't do this you sick, twisted, sadistic chrome-plated monsters!" yelled Sally "You can't just claim the city as your own just because you've invaded it and…"

Devion just promptly backhanded Sally in the head and knocked her crown off her head. Sally fell down onto the ground and her crown landed at Devion's feet. Devion then proceeded to smash the crown by stomping on it. Sally gasped in horror at her destroyed crown which was now in pieces under Devion's foot.

"No! Not my crown!" shrieked Sally "That's a symbol of honour and humility and it was passed down to me after my parents were killed!"

"Never before have I heard such nonsense." muttered Devion "Using a crown as a symbol of honour when it should symbolize something much more worthy such as power and conquest. Anyway, you Mobians are relieved of your citizenship here and you will remove yourselves from my new territory or I will order my entire army to blow the city to fragments and slaughter every last Mobian in the place. You have been warned and I would not recommend exploiting it."

Sonic was caught between a rock and a hard place here. On the

one hand, he was not letting the Devatrons keep NewMobotropolis for themselves. On the other hand they didn't have a choice. They were outnumbered, outgunned and not at their strongest. They'd lost Kate the Eagle and the Downunda Royal Fighters, Thomas Tiger was incapable of fighting due to his broken back and Vector had just been injured, they could not afford to lose anyone else. Not to mention that they always had next time and maybe they could rethink their methods a little. Sonic would get NewMobotropolis back…but not now. They just couldn't now. They were worn out and weak, they would need to come back when they were feeling stronger. Sonic breathed in deeply and he sighed loudly.

"Fine, we'll go." said Sonic "But once we've rested, we'll be back and we'll kick your shiny metal ass outta Mobius for good Devion! Just remember that this is only the beginning Devion and this battle is far from over!"

"Once again your words of courage fall flat upon the leader of the Devatron race." muttered Devion "Remove yourselves from my sight already before you vex me to my breaking point."

Sonic scoffed at Devion and he stormed off.

"Let's go everybody." muttered Sonic "We'll rest up and then we'll get the city back."

The Royal Fighters obeyed Sonic and they went off after him, including Sally and Nicole. The Royal Fighters all left the city behind in Devion's evil hands and headed off to the one place they would be safe in…Knothole. Sonic looked back over his shoulder at the Devatron conquered NewMobotropolis and his face drooped into a grim expression. Today had been terrible for them. The loss of Kate the Eagle was bad enough as it was and now they've lost New Mobotropolis to the Devatrons. These were dark times for the R.F.S. and Sonic had a feeling it might get worse. What the Devatrons were going to do next was anyone's guess but Sonic was not about to let the Devatrons strike again. He WAS going to get NewMobotropolis back, but how he was going to accomplish it was a mystery even to him. But Sonic was not about to give up and he was going to do whatever it takes to save NewMobotropolis. Even if it cost him his own life trying…

What a double dose of crap that's been happening eh guys? Sonic's lost New Mobotropolis and Dr. Eggman's failed to make the alliance of a lifetime! Looks like the Devatrons are gonna be a little harder to defeat then we thought! What's gonna happen next? Join me next time as "Foes Become Friends"...

P.S. Numbuh006, you have indeed read all the chapters to this story. I was talking about my first three fanfics I uploaded onto this site when I mentioned "The Devatron Trilogy" previously so I hope that clears things up for you.

P.P.S. Hey Pandemonium! What are YOUR top ten favourite chapters? I'm interested in what your ten favs are.

Foes Become Friends Part 1

Story 105: Foes Become Friends Part 1: All The Help We Can Get

The dark, dull grey of the vapid skies above Mobius were miserable enough as they were with their dark, brooding and gloomy atmosphere and the pouring rain that fell from the skies just made things more dreary and miserable but not even this could darken Mobius' day any further then it already had been. A whole day had passed since the Devatrons had taken New Mobotropolis for themselves and exiled the Royal Fighters to the wilderness and things had been downright horrible for the Mobians. The Royal Fighters were stuck in Knothole and the forests of Green Hill Zone until they could get the city back and the helpless citizens of New Mobotropolis were all being rounded up and locked up in the Devatron ship, *The Doombringer* until the Devatron leader Devion could decide what to do with them. It was a depressing sight for many and the fact the famed hero Sonic the Hedgehog wasn't here to help them out meant they had no hope left in their hearts for rescue. Some still prayed that Sonic and the Royal Fighters would save them but others had just accepted that this was their fate, to be a Devatron prisoner and live in a city where they ruled supreme and they could not do anything about it. One person would be thrilled to see this kind of misery and horror happening to the Mobians right now though and he was walking through the rain and to New Mobotropolis, ignoring the trickling rain that ran down his helmet and onto his jacket. This person was the nefarious Marik the Martian. He'd rested up nicely from the whole ordeal on Eggman's Egg Fleet last month and he was back and ready for revenge. Marik had something very grisly planned for Sonic and it involved him tearing out the hedgehog's heart and keeping it as a trophy and since the Mobians were unprepared for him, he could get the drop on them easily. He remembered that New Mobotropolis was shielded after seeing the Egg-Fleet's weapons bounce off it harmlessly so he knew jumping over the wall was likely to be out of the question. Then again if there wasn't any threats going on then there would be no reason for the shields to be up so he could jump over the wall after all. As Marik trudged through the wet, muddy fields that surrounded

New Mobotropolis, rain trickling off his helmet and down the back of his neck and into his jacket, he observed NewMobotropolis and grinned to himself wickedly.

"There it is, New Mobotropolis." purred Marik "I remember walking through the city when it was still under construction the day I had my first walk about on the planet. The very day I murdered the Acorn Parents and tried to subjugate Castle Acorn and become king so I could make this planet how I liked. And now it's completed and waiting to be destroyed by me. Sonic will not see me coming this time around and when I strike, he shall have a gaping hole in the middle of his chest after I tear our his bleeding heart! It'll make a nice display piece on my bedroom shelf should I finally return to Mars. I may not have a way off the planet but Sonic has a way, those Chaos Emeralds that I tried to get. After I kill Sonic, I shall find the Chaos Emeralds, steal them and then use them to warp me back to Mars so I can get my friends and family to help me destroy Mobius. I've come to realize that I cannot destroy this world on my own, even if I am powerful and I can fight Sonic and friends to a standstill. One Martian does not yield enough muscle to destroy a planet. Sonic's death can be considered my last victory before I leave Mobius and it'll make the Martian invasion of Mobius all the more easy for my friends and family when they invade the planet and lay waste to it."

He then paused for a moment and thought to himself about something.

"Although there's always Scourge and Shadow who are very much like Sonic so I may have to kill them too." muttered Marik "Shadow's like Sonic plus ten and Scourge is like the mirror image of Sonic so they'll have to die too. One supersonic hedgehog is enough but three is too much and just killing Sonic won't be enough to clear any resistance that can stand up to the Martians. Scourge is a nuisance and Shadow actually broke my arm so I must get rid of those two as well. Yes, after I kill Sonic I shall hunt Shadow and Scourge down and kill them too. Then the Martian invasion will be able to operate without resistance! I can hardly wait for this…"

His bragging and crowing was brought to an abrupt halt when his evil orange eyes caught sight of something that made his heart

seize up and his blood freeze. He saw *The Doombringer* parked next to New Mobotropolis and he could see Devatron soldiers pushing prisoners up the boarding ramp and into the ship so they could be locked up until further notice. Marik recognized *The Doombringer* instantly for he had seen the ship before and he almost went mad with horror.

"The Doombringer?! Here?! On Mobius?!" shrieked Marik "Oh Tyrahko, this cannot be! The Devatrons have invaded Mobius now?! Why must my life be a hurricane of misfortune on this miserable mud ball of a planet?! I MUST get off this stupid little world now the Devatrons are here! My dad, my uncle and his strongest men couldn't take down those chrome-plated freaks so what chance to I have?! Then again…"

Marik thought to himself for a moment. Maybe some good fortune could come out of the Devatron's invasion of Mobius after all. Hopefully he could persuade the Devatrons into letting him join them in their conquest and get revenge on the Mobians while he's at it. And maybe he could sabotage the Devatrons behind their backs and destroy them, thus becoming the first being to actually defeat a Devatron. So the Devatron's invasion was a glorious piece of serendipity, not misfortune. Marik would benefit from this alliance beautifully and since he'd be trusted by the Devatrons, he could get into the heart of the army and destroy them from the inside out without them suspecting a thing! Marik just hoped the Devatrons wouldn't play hard to get or this plan would end up being all for naught and just thinking it up would have been a waste of time. Marik ran over to NewMobotropolis as fast as he could (he'd be running faster if his jet shoes weren't still disabled) and he leaped over the wall. His leap wasn't quite enough to clear the wall but he just managed to grip the top of the wall with his metal claws. Marik then threw himself over the wall and he landed on the ground. He was inside NewMobotropolis and he took shelter behind a bunch of bushes in somebody's garden. He watched from behind the bushes as Devatron soldiers clamped heavy cuffs on the wrists of the miserable Mobians and began dragging them away to *The Doombringer* . Marik grinned wickedly as he heard the snivels and sobs of the captured citizens. How he loved it when people cried, pity it wasn't him making them cry, that would have been infinitely

better.

"Move it you miserable mongrels!" bellowed Triton who was clearly looking fed up with the Mobians "Move it! And cease it with your disdained vocal sounds will you?! It's vexing me heavily it is!"

Since Devatrons were incapable of feeling sadness, Triton didn't understand why the Mobians were sobbing and making this kind of noise but he did know that it was annoying and he hated it. All the Devatrons hated it too. The Devatrons continued to move the Mobians aboard the ship. Marik was enjoying all this and he licked his lips gleefully. This was like watching a movie to him, highly entertaining and thoroughly worth watching but what made it even better was the obvious fact that it was real and not fictional like movies were.

"It appears the Devatrons have subjugated New Mobotropolis already." purred Marik "Not surprising considering they're invulnerable robots who have many planets under their rule. How many did they conquer again and have they conquered anymore since we first met them? Oh well, Mobius will be added to their list and I love it!"

Marik then heard two Devatrons conversing with each other and he looked over to the Devatrons. Those two were Devion and his second-in-command Raicor. Marik remembered the two Devatrons as if he'd only seen them yesterday. They were there the time the Martians had met them. Devion and Raicor were having a conversation with each other, rain trickling down their armour and onto the ground. Water was of no concern to a Devatron as they were not only invulnerable, but they were waterproof too. Their armour wouldn't rust and the water wouldn't harm their circuitry.

"Raicor, status report." ordered Devion.

"The population of New Mobotropolis has almost been entirely moved onto *The Doombringer* ." explained Raicor "We've got a few more citizens left and then the work is done. What do you wish for us to do next Devion?"

"After this I shall have all the Mobians killed and their remains will be

recycled into chrome for any new soldiers for the Devatron army." said Devion "Then after that, I shall spread the Devatrons all over Mobius and have the invasion squads conquer the other regions of Mobius. Then after that, the planet shall finally be mine and I win yet another world for the Devatron race."

"Very well my lord." said Raicor "But what about the Royal Fighters? Are you sure exiling them was a good idea? They may just come back and try to destroy us again."

"Raicor my overly-anxious winged warrior, Sonic and his friends will not stop us." crowed Devion "Should they attack I'll unleash the Deva-Beast on them again. The Deva-Beast was enough to stop them yesterday so it shall stop them again. Anyway, once I begin to conquer the other regions of Mobius they will have no chance against me for my army will be too much for them all to handle."

"I still think we should have slaughtered them already instead of letting them go." muttered Raicor grimly.

"Are you questioning my motions?!" snarled Devion, grabbing Raicor by the throat and jamming his face into his "Do not question your leader Raicor or I shall remove your main power cell! Destroying Sonic and friends here and there is not enough! I'm allowing them to exist so that I may entertain myself by toying with their weak little minds and dampening their loathsome spirits. I'll push them to their breaking point and then I shall finish them off. It'll be a shame to do so as Sonic is a meritorious being and I admire his battle skills and bravery. But good things must come to an end as they say and Sonic shall come to his end but only when I decide. We can kill Sonic anytime, it's just more entertaining to prolong his existence and toy with him before we deliver the killing blow."

Raicor felt that all this was ridiculous (which it was but hey, that's villains for you, always prolonging the hero's existence just so they can get some sadistic entertainment) but he didn't dare question Devion in fear of having his circuitry torn out.

"I understand Devion." lied Raicor "I shall not prolong this discussion."

"Very good Raicor." said Devion dryly "You are dismissed to *The Doombringer* . Your job is to divide the prisoners evenly so that there won't be any overcrowded cells."

Raicor obeyed and he turned around and left Devion to his work while he went to *The Doombringer* to do his job. As he walked away, he began to say something quietly to himself.

"Just you wait Devion." he said to himself "I shall take you down and then I shall take the position of leadership for myself and I will exceed your skill in leadership easily as I am not foolish enough to prolong the hero's existence for sadistic pleasure like you do…"

Unfortunately, Devion seemed to have heard him.

"What was that?" demanded Devion fiercely "My audio-receptors didn't quite pick up on what words were coming out of your vocal processor Raicor."

"Nothing Devion." said Raicor quickly "Just talking to myself that's all."

"Well refrain from doing so Raicor." said Devion coldly "A habit of this kind makes you look delirious and I do not tolerate any hints of insanity in my army."

Raicor nodded and he walked off to *The Doombringer* without saying another word in case Devion heard him again. As Raicor left, a female racoon in a yellow strapped dress tugged on Devion's cape and Devion glowered at her. He yanked his cape out of her grasp as if just the idea of something that wasn't a Devatron touching his capewas vile to him.

"What do you want prisoner?" snarled Devion.

"Oh Devion please have mercy on us Devatrons!" begged the woman feebly "We haven't done anything to you so why are you doing these terrible things to us?"

"My dear Mobian." said Devion coldly "I have no understanding of this concept you refer to as "mercy" and these things I am doing to you are for a good cause I assure you. The Devatrons cannot be

defeated and if Devatrons reside here, Mobius will never be threatened by anything and the planet shall have peace. The Devatron soldiers I will import here will keep you all safe and your world will be strong enough to take on anything that threatens it. If you do not believe me then you can ask the fourteen other planets I've subjugated. I've conquered them and improved them so you can be certain that my conquest is for a good cause. Just a pity you had to be obstinate and resist me which brought all this unneeded violence and despair upon you. Don't say I wasn't trying to be fair Mobian…"

He then proceeded to smack the raccoon in the back of the head and push her back in line. The racoon joined another group of Mobians being led aboard *The Doombringer* and Devion watched her being led aboard. He still began wondering why that woman dared to beg to him for mercy, especially as he had no understanding of the word (seriously, he doesn't know what the word "mercy" means! He's THAT evil!). Meanwhile, Marik had decided he'd had enough of watching Mobians suffer (although he was really enjoying it) and he came out of his hiding place slowly and quietly.

"Well, it appears Sonic's having a hard time." mused Marik "Devion's taken over his city and has apparently exiled him. I must commend him on sadism though, allowing the hedgehog to exist for his own sadistic pleasure. That sounds like something Uncle Drago and his girlfriend Mercury usually do. Well, I think it's time to meet with Devion and make the alliance of a lifetime…"

Marik straightened out his sopping wet leather jacket and he strode proudly over to Devion. Devion saw Marik coming and he stared at him in surprise.

"What is this?!" he blurted "A Martian pride fully strides upon Mobian soil?! What is a Martian doing on a planet such as this one?!"

"I'm so glad you've asked Devion because I have an excellent answer." said Marik smoothly and calmly "I came here chasing a Seedrian child and I've been battling Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends for months and months on end."

"How do you know my name?" asked Devion.

"Don't you remember me Devion?" asked Marik "I was there the time YOU and YOUR soldiers invaded MY dad's ship while we were cruising and you raided our fuel supply! I'm Diablo's son Marik, the one who stood up to you and tried to tear your cape to shreds remember?"

Devion looked at his ragged navy blue cape and noticed some cuts in it that had been caused by Marik the Martian the time they met. Devion then realized what Marik was talking about and he remembered the day he and the Martians met.

"Oh yes, I recall now." said Devion "I stole your ship's fuel and killed your father's parents because they tried to resist me. Very well then, Marik the Martian, why do you curse my territory with your damning presence then?"

"Because I was to broker an alliance." said Marik "While I still harbour hard feelings over you killing Grandfather Thor and Grandmother Jupiter, I can set aside those feelings and make an alliance with you. We Martians are very powerful beings and I will be of good help to you Devion. I've been in contact with Sonic for a while so I know his every move and information like that can be of good help to you Devion."

"So you wish to ally yourself with me?" mused Devion "I have a feeling that this armistice doesn't come without pay so what do you want from me?"

"Nothing." said Marik casually "I just wish to help you conquer Mobius and you can help me get some revenge on Sonic and his snivelling band of preschool children. We can both benefit from this so nobody loses in this alliance. You win Mobius and I get my revenge and with my help, your victory is guaranteed Devion. I know things you don't know about Mobius and that information will be useful to you. You know what? Instead of conquering the world, we could destroy it couldn't we?" he said quickly "I mean, I seek to see this world burn like wildfire and I'm sure you enjoy destruction as much as I do so why don't we team up and destroy the world?"

Devion thought on this matter for a moment and then he gave his answer.

"This alliance sounds very tempting Marik and I would say yes to this…if destroying worlds was my motivation." said Devion dryly "I seek to better the planets of the universe, not destroy them. If I wanted to destroy planets then I would have done so to the fourteen planets I've already conquered."

"Oh, OK." said Marik, a little disappointed at this "Then we'll just conquer it together instead…"

"No Marik, there is no "we" in this conquest." said Devion coldly, drawing his sword out and pointing it at Marik's chest "I do not need the assistance of a Martian warrior in this conquest. Besides, given your malicious lifestyle and unhealthy prejudice against peace, you would not like what I have planned for this world. Once the Devatrons have conquered every planet in the galaxy, there shall be eternal peace throughout the universe and you will not like that so this alliance is pointless as only I will benefit from it."

"Well you could at least let me help you win just so I can get some revenge on the Mobians." pleaded Marik, sweating fearfully.

"I do not need help." muttered Devion dryly "I am on the winning streak as usual. I've pushed Sonic into the wilderness and his city has been compromised. I shall spread my reign to the other regions of Mobius and then Mobius shall be conquered. As for you…"

Devion then slashed Marik savagely across the chest with his golden sword and the Martian dropped down onto his back. Marik clutched his bleeding chest in pain and he grunted as he felt the sting of the cut.

"…remove yourself from Mobius and save yourself an otherworld death or perish along with the Mobians!" growled Devion "I do not wish to make an alliance with you and I will not hesitate to kill you if I have to!"

Marik decided that his presence here was just going to agitate Devion further and there was nothing else he could do here. Devion

didn't want to ally with him so he wouldn't waste time trying to sway his decision. Marik picked himself weakly and he staggered away from Devion. That slash had done a number on him and he was going to need to recover.

"I'll…go now…" grunted Marik as he limped over to the gates of the city with his hands pressed tightly against his chest as the cut began to sting more and more "I'm sorry I…wasted your time Devion…" he added sarcastically.

Devion just watched Marik leave and then he continued with his duties. Marik opened the gates of NewMobotropolis and he let himself out of the city. He staggered weakly away from the city and headed off to Green Hill Zone, the rain pouring harder and harder and the bitter cold stinging his drenched body and making the cut feel worse. He couldn't believe Devion refused his alliance! He could help Devion destroy the Mobians beautifully and he turns him down flat and slashes him across the chest! He'd get Devion for this. He'd get his revenge on that devious Devatron! And who better to recruit for his revenge plot then his own arch-nemesis Sonic the Hedgehog? He may play hard to get but Marik would convince him somehow to let him join in their battle against the Devatrons and that would serve Devion right…

Knothole, a rustic little village in the forests of Green Hill Zone and home place of the one and only Amy Rose was now being used a place for the R.F.S. to camp out in as they had been exiled from their city by the very invaders who wish to claim the planet as their own. Knothole wasn't a large village though and there was nowhere for any of the Royal Fighters to stay in. The houses were all taken although Amy was willing to share her house with Sonic and friends. The other Royal Fighter teams had to put up tents that the kind people of Knothole were gracious enough to lend to them to sleep in and shelter from the rain. There had to be a lot of tents put up given how many Royal Fighters there were but there was enough for them all luckily enough. The Royal Fighters all sat in their tents devising battle strategies while Sonic and friends camped out in Amy's house. Team Chaotix had gone to meet the Knothole nurse and miracle woman Mariah the Medicine Cat to see if she could help

Vector the Crocodile heal from his recent injuries. Vector was still passed out from earlier and Mariah was observing the wound in his back from the cannon shot the Deva-Beast had fired at him. Vector's scales had been horribly singed and blackened by the shot and the whole wound looked pretty serious. Vector was lucky to even be alive after that powerful shot to the back. Mariah looked disgusted by the wound and she tried not to cringe as she observed it.

"Miss Medicine Cat?" asked Charmy Bee nervously "I-I-Is Vector going t-to be…alright?"

"That wound on his back looks pretty serious young man." said Mariah softly "I'm amazed he's still alive. What happened to him?"

"He was shot in the back by a Devatron weapon." explained Espio the Chameleon "I trust you know what we're talking about as the Devatrons are likely to be worldwide news by now."

"I do indeed sir." said Mariah bitterly as if the Devatrons were so bad that just thinking about them made her cringe "That Devion person broadcasted his message all over Knothole. Every television, every computer, every mobile phone was playing his message and nothing we did could stop it. Those Devatrons must have amazing tech if they can somehow play a cryptic message on every screening and communications device on the planet. I wouldn't be too surprised if the whole world knows about the Devatrons now."

"You maybe right on that because the other Royal Fighter teams claim to have heard Devion's message too." said Espio "And we got it in the New Mobotropolis Coliseum. Unfortunately, I don't think Chun-Nan will know about the Devatrons as I've visited the country and there isn't a speck of technology anywhere in that country. They're very traditional and old fashioned after all so they don't have technology and machines of the modern kind so they won't have anyway of receiving Devion's message. Although word does travel fast around Chun-Nan and since the whole world knows about them, the people of Chun-Nan will hear about the Devatrons from somebody."

"Let us hope they do." said Mariah as she tenderly dabbed Vector's wound with a wet cloth "I'm pretty sure the kung-fu warriors of the

country will help us dearly against those Devatrons. I can't believe they've just taken over NewMobotropolis and exiled her majesty the Queen and all you heroes to Knothole! How horrible and vile this is!"

"We weren't exiled to Knothole." said Espio "We were exiled to the wilderness and Knothole is the best place we can reside in for now as it's in the wilderness."

"I see." said Mariah "Back on to your friend here, he'll need a good long rest as that wound heals up. I have a medicine that'll ease the pain and hopefully heal his wound. I can assure you your friend will be just fine in my capable hands."

"I know he's gonna be alright." said Charmy happily "Thanks for offering to take care of Vector Miss Mariah."

"You're welcome." said Mariah, turning Vector on his back and opening his jaws.

She got out the medicine she said Vector would need and she gently poured the contents down Vector's throat. Vector swallowed it and smacked his lips sleepily. The medicine would ease the pain in Vector's back and the wound would just recover naturally over the next few days. Espio and Charmy were just well chuffed that Vector was even alive after that powerful shot to the back from the Deva-Beast and he was going to pull through. At least something good was coming out of the doom and gloom Sonic and friends had been receiving recently although over at Amy's, the atmosphere was just as gloomy as it was outside. If you looked around Knothole for anything with an atmosphere as melancholy as the dull skies and the falling rain outside, Amy's house would be just the place to look. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were all here: Sonic the Hedgehog, Miles "Tails" Prower, Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Shade the Echidna, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot and Ruben the Water Panther as well as Queen Sally Acorn and Nicole the Lynx and neither of them looked that happy right now. Not that they had anything to be happy about being as the R.F.S. had lost a member, one member is crippled for life, Vector is injured and now they've been exiled from New Mobotropolis, which is now under Devatron control and there was nothing they could do about it. Sonic was

sitting in a chair and staring grimly out the window, watching the pouring rain trickle down the window pain. He could not stop thinking about New Mobotropolis, his new home after Dr. Eggman tore down the original Mobotropolis, being under Devion's control and he began having horrible thoughts about what Devion was doing over there now. It was bound to be terrible and just thinking about it made Sonic quiver angrily. How he hated those Devatrons! They made Eggman look like friendly competition in comparison! What he wouldn't give to get rid of the Devatrons and get back to trying to get rid of Dr. Eggman! But how could he? He couldn't destroy the Devatrons as they were invulnerable and they were just too clever and too strong for him. The Devatrons were already a serious threat as they were but the Deva-Beast was the cream of the crop for the R.F.S. They had no chance against a machine that's every bit like the Devatrons only larger and is capable of extending it's limbs and digging at the speed of light. True the Devatrons did have a weakness, they could be easily blinded, but that wasn't of much help to them and the Devatrons were robots, meaning they could be manufactured and produced on a mass scale so they were going to be continuously outnumbered no matter what they did. There had to be another more helpful weakness that they could use against the Devatrons and the only way they were going to find that out is infiltrate *The Doombringer* and we all know how well THAT went! It seemed that Sonic had met his match at long last and he'd found someone too strong for him. But not even that was going to make Sonic succumb yet. Sonic didn't know the meaning of the words "give up", "forfeit," "surrender", or any other word meaning the same thing so despite the fact he was on his toes right now, Sonic was not willing to cave in yet. Unfortunately, everybody else didn't seem to have his spirit right now. Everybody else seemed to have been dampened by the whole Devatron take over of NewMobotropolis.

"I can't believe it." said Sally, choking back tears "The Devatrons have taken our city and exiled us to the wilderness. Of all the misfortune we've encountered in our lives, nothing has ever been as bad as this! This is worse then anything Dr. Eggman's ever done! How are we ever going to recover from this?!"

"Oh Sally please don't lose faith." said Nicole gently, putting an arm around her best friend "This maybe a big setback but we'll come

around and get the city back. I assure you we will."

"No we won't Nicole." muttered Sally, a single tear rolling down her cheek as she prepared to cave in and break down crying "Those Devatrons are a million times the threat Eggman ever was. Eggman we can handle thanks to Sonic, the Devatrons are too much even for Sonic. They're invulnerable Nicole! How can we possible destroy them if we can't even penetrate their armour?! Everything we've tried so far just hasn't worked! The infiltration mission failed miserably according to Kiara, Tails and Cosmo and all our fights have ended with us fleeing for our lives or someone getting killed or injured! We can't win this fight! I'm sorry Nicole but we just can't! It's all over and the Devatrons are going to win! I may as well just abdicate myself and put an end to this malicious conflict in which we have no chance of winning!"

With that said, Sally got up from the chair she sat in and left the room, wailing a loud, depressing, downhearted wail. She shut the door behind herself so no one would hear her cries and Nicole just remained where she was, her ears drooping down in sorrow and her eyes brimming with tears. She felt like she wanted to cry with Sally but that wasn't going to do much so she kept it in and decided to leave Sally to herself for a moment. Mandy, who was sitting on a sofa with Wilson beside her, sighed to herself and she began muttering grumpily.

"How do you like that? We're on the losing end and the royals are the first to give up hope. Goes to show that the royals are never a good symbol of hope even when they say they are." she moaned.

"I dunno Mandy girl, Queen Sally may have a point there." mused Wilson "We keep losing to those Devatrons and they're like two steps ahead of us constantly and nothing we do seems to be of much help to us, even their weaknesses and we keep losing fighters either temporarily like Vector or permanently like Thomas Tiger and Kate. Maybe we cannot win and maybe the Devatrons are going to win…"

"What?!" shrieked Mandy "I can not believe what I am hearing!"

She stood up from the sofa furiously and grabbed Wilson by the

shoulders.

"Wilson the Dog, the man I've married and the man who's been at my side since day one of the R.F.S. suddenly decides to cave in just because we're on the loose end of the rope right now!" shouted Mandy angrily, making Wilson shrink back into the sofa in fear "Don't you dare give up on me now cute stuff! We maybe in dark times now but there's a single ray of hope waiting to shine through at any moment and if we give up now, there will never be a ray of hope shining on any of us ever again!"

"But Mandy…" squeaked Wilson.

"You listen to me Wilson!" snarled Mandy, jamming her face into his "I refuse to give into those Deva-Creeps! I would rather let myself get roboticized by Eggman then give up to the Devatrons! You may have lost hope like our majesty the Queen has but I haven't! I believe we can win this battle and although these are desperate times, we will get through them eventually and the only way we can do that is to act now and plot our next attack over the Devatrons!"

"Oh yeah, you said it Mandy!" cheered Amy, punching the air delightedly "If you're not willing to give up then neither am I!"

"I'm with you Miss Rose!" cried Cream "The heroes never lose!"

"I'm certainly not willing to give up!" agreed Knuckles, flexing his muscles "We echidnas have a solemn oath that I'm not willing to betray! "We, as part of the echidna race will plough our way through thick and thin in order to defeat our oppressors and save everybody everywhere."." he recited.

"And I'm not willing to betray the oath either." said Shade "I'm with you Knuckles, no matter the cost."

"You can count me in too." said Ruben "Things aren't exactly going well for me either. I've lost my aqua-collar and now I've lost my new home. But I'm not giving up on either of those. I know we can defeat the Devatrons eventually and if we don't then we lose Mobius for good and I will never get to find my aqua-collar if the Devatrons win."

"Ah ain't givin' up either sugah." said Bunnie affectionately "Things have been plenty hard for us but Eggman's givin' us a hard time too like the time he roboticized all of Mobius and only me, Sonic, Tails and Ruben were left. Even at that time, we didn't give up so ah ain't givin' up on this."

"Neither am I." said Geoffrey "Those blokes will end up wishing they hadn't tried to tangle with us! We will win this one!"

"You know what Mandy?" said Wilson "I think you've just talked some sense into me. I'm not backing out on this one. I'll fight for freedom like we've all been doing for months on end, for you, for Sonic, for everybody!"

"Now that's more like it." said Mandy happily, wrapping her arms around her husband "That's more like the man I fell for."

The happy couple then embraced each other warmly and lovingly. Tails and Cosmo watched with astonishment as their friends began to brighten up one at a time. Mandy had talked quite a lot of sense into them all hadn't she? Everybody seems to have forgotten that things aren't going so well for them now and everybody's about ready to get back in the battle! This certainly made Tails feel more hopeful and more willing to try and defeat the Devatrons.

"Well done Mandy." Tails said to himself "You've reinstated everybody's hope in defeating the Devatrons. Pity Sally didn't stick around to see this though."

"I'm sure when Sally feels better and comes out and sees everybody ready to defeat the Devatrons, her hope will be reinstated too." said Cosmo "I haven't lost any hope despite what's happened recently much like I haven't lost hope in my kind defeating the Martians in the Seedrian-Martian war back home."

"I'm really pleased to hear that Cosmo." said Tails, putting his arm around Cosmo and hugging her warmly "I haven't lost hope either and I bet Sonic hasn't too. Have you Sonic?"

Sonic finally stopped staring out the window and he turned around to face Tails and Cosmo. How sweet they looked when they hugged

each other he thought. The hedgehog, despite recent events, somehow managed to crack a smile on his face.

"I don't even know the meaning of "give up" Tails." said Sonic snidely "I've always got hope in me regardless of what goes on. We've had tough scrapes like this before such as the time Eggman roboticized everybody, or the time where Scourge woke Chaos up from his prison, or the time we fought Zira in Chun-Nan and especially all the times Eggman's come close to beating us and what happened in all of those? We came out on top of course! I even managed to save an alternate zone from it's version of Eggman and that zone's Eggman had already conquered the world when I visited! The Devatrons maybe winning so far but much like all our other conflicts, we will emerge victorious in this one. Just you wait and see Tails and Cosmo."

He then looked over at his other friends who thanks to Mandy had now gotten their hope back and were ready to kick some Devatron hide once again.

"Way past cool of Mandy to talk some sense into everyone." said Sonic happily "Nice to know I'm not the only one with a lot of spirit around here. She's so cool isn't she?"

"Mandy's one heck of a girl isn't she?" said Tails "She never loses hope in anything and always remains calm, collected and ready for action. You were lucky to have her on your team when the R.F.S. first started."

"I know I am." said Sonic "Now we've all got our faith back, I guess we can start brainstorming on what our next move against those Deva-jerks is gonna be…"

The front door suddenly swung open, making everybody jump a foot in the air and an injured and weak Marik the Martian staggered into the house and collapsed onto the floor, grunting heavily while clutching his still bleeding chest. Everybody stared at him in horror and Sonic zipped over to Marik and stood over him. Cosmo instantly panicked and she dived for cover behind the sofa to hide from Marik. Sally, who had finished wallowing in self pity, heard all the commotion and she ran out to see what was going on, only to see

the very person who killed her parents and forced her to take the throne too early. She stormed up beside Sonic and glowered down at Marik, who forced himself to sit up and he leaned against the wall. He looked up at Sonic and Sally's scowling faces and he just scoffed at them.

"I should have expected this kind of ceremony from you scoundrels." he muttered.

"Well, well, well. Look who should show his ugly face to us again but Marik the Stinkin' Martian!" said Sonic coldly.

"Marik you little demon, if you're here to harm any of us in anyway then so help me I'll…" growled Sally.

"Oh shut up you poor excuse for a Queen!" snapped Marik crossly "Didn't anyone ever tell you never to jump to conclusions?! If I was here to harm any of you then would I be here to do so while I myself have been harmed?!"

He lowered his hand and showed off the gash he'd received from Devion earlier. That made everybody stare at him and wonder what the heck had just happened.

"Who did this to you?" asked Sally.

"Who do you think genius?!" snapped Marik "Devion the Dreaded, leader of the Devatron race of course! You Mobians really don't have brains do you?!"

"I'll overlook that insult for the time being." muttered Sally through gritted teeth "In the meantime, care to fill us in on how this happened to you, how you found us and why you're here?"

"Well my dear royal dingbat, I was plotting doom on Sonic and friends again only to find out the Devatrons have taken over your city and kicked you all out into the wilderness." explained Marik "I've met the Devatrons before, they raided my ship's fuel supply while me and my family were cruising through space looking for more planets to ruin and they also killed my dear old grandparents. I tried to make an alliance with the Devatrons but Devion, the big idiot,

decided not to take it and he slashed me across the chest with his sword. In order to get my own back on those Devatrons, I've decided to join you all in your conflict so I looked for you and I made a lucky guess that you'd be somewhere in the forests. I come across this loathsome village and after spotting a pink and red house, I had a feeling you'd all be in there as the pink and red combo reminded me of that obnoxious little brat Amy Rose and it seemed like a house she would live in and now I've found you all."

"Congratulations, you're an excellent tracker yadda, yadda." muttered Sonic "So why do you want to join us then Marik? And why should we let you after all you've done to us?"

"Because I can help you dearly Sonic and I have information that I'll only give you if you let me join you." said Marik with a sly grin on his face "It's information regarding…what the Devatrons are plotting to do to your city's populace."

Sonic and Sally looked at each other. Should they trust the tiny psychopath on this? Marik had done many terrible things in the past like killing the Acorn parents, trying to subjugate the kingdom, kidnapping a bunch of Chao* tricking Tails into helping him escape from prison, trying to get the Chaos Emeralds, trying to get the Sol Emeralds, attempted to use a dormant Eggman weapon** and then attempting to hijack the Egg-Fleet. Should they really let him join them in this crusade against the Devatrons? Sonic was not willing to work with Marik under any circumstances given how you can never trust that Martian. Then again, they could use some extra help and Marik was powerful. And he had information that might help them and if they refused his offer then they'd never hear what he had to say. So despite his unwavering hatred of Marik, Sonic was going to have to swallow his pride and give into him. But just this once. Sonic take a deep breath and he gave Marik his answer.

"OK Marik, you can join us." said Sonic "But NO stabbing us in the back OK? And this had all better not be a trick or I'll hurt you worse then Devion already has!"

"Please Sonic, would I really be trying to trick you in THIS condition?" snapped Marik, pointing to the gash on his chest "If I was tricking you then I'd be in tip top shape! I do wish you'd all stop

being so distrusting towards me!"

"Well Marik given what you've done in the past it's no wonder we're not willing to trust you." snapped Sally "Now, as you've promised, tell us the information you think we should hear."

Marik just smiled wickedly and he spoke to his hated enemies.

"I snooped on Devion before trying to broker in alliance with him my enemies." explained Marik "Devion has escorted the entire population of NewMobotropolis aboard *The Doombringer* and is planning to slaughter them all and recycle their remains into chrome to make more Devatrons and then he's going to spread his reign to the other regions of your world."

That alone was enough to make everybody in the room gasp in horror, much to Marik's satisfaction. Marik continued.

"Here's the particularly grim part for you all." he said "Do you wanna know why Devion's prolonging your existence instead of just killing you all right now? He's allowing you to exist so that he may entertain himself. He's toying with you all for his own sick satisfaction and when Devion decides he's had enough, he'd going to finish you all off. If I were you I'd start planning his defeat already before Devion decides your entertainment value has expired. Otherwise you're all dead."

"That's sick!" yelled Amy crossly "The Devatrons are gonna toy with us just so they get some entertainment?! Well let me stroll over to New Mobotropolis and I'll show those creeps how "entertaining" I can be!"

"Absolutely not Amy." said Sally "You will stay here like everybody else will. Going straight over to the Devatrons is just going to guarantee your death."

Amy sat back down on the floor and fumed to herself. Cream patted Amy affectionately on her back in a hopeless attempt to calm her down. But when Amy was in a bad mood, nothing could calm her down. Sally turned back to Marik.

"Thank you for this information Marik." she said graciously "But don't start thinking this is going to make me change my mind about you."

"I'm not trying to sway your opinions on me my dear queen." sneered Marik "I'm helping you Mobians stop the Devatrons for my own pleasure. After all, I can't destroy your world if the Devatrons take if over can I?"

"Even before the Devatrons arrived, you couldn't destroy our world." muttered Sonic "Still, I appreciate the fact you wanna help us win this fight. Let's just hope you're tough enough to take on the Devatrons."

"Oh believe me Sonic, I will be." sneered Marik "I can fight you and your friends to a standstill so I'll put up a better fight against them then you ever will Sonic."

"We'll see about that Marik the Martian." muttered Sonic "Now then guys and gals," he turned away from Marik and strode over to his friends "Let's start brainstorming for we need a plan to get NewMobotropolis back and save all the citizens from the Devatrons."

Sonic and friends gathered around and they began planning for their next move against the Devatrons. As they did that, Nicole stood up from the chair she was sitting on and looked around for anything she could use to warp up Marik's wounds as Marik was now on their side and he needed bandaging up badly. She tapped Amy on the shoulder and interrupted her for a minute.

"Excuse me Amy, do you have a first-aid kit around at all?" she asked.

"Sure." said Amy "It's in the cabinet above the TV over there." she pointed at the other side of the room where a cabinet hung above the television.

Nicole went over to the cabinet and she looked in it. She found a green box saying "First-Aid" on at the back of the cabinet and she pulled it out. She ran back over to Marik and she unravelled some bandages. Sally, who was keeping an eye on Marik, could see what

Nicole was doing and she let her carry on with it as despite her hatred of Marik, it didn't mean she had to be needlessly cruel to him and stoop down to his level. Not to mention if Marik was joining them then he'd have to be in his best condition so he'd need some kind of hospitality so his wound would heal. Marik was surprised to see Nicole showing any shred of mercy towards him but he kept it in.

"I'm bandaging your wound up Marik." said Nicole "But this is only as a way of saying thank you for joining us and helping us in this fight. I hope you're not going to try and use my generosity against me Marik."

"Nicole, I would never do something like that." said Marik truthfully "Besides, I doubt I'd be able to manipulate you like that, even if I wanted to. After what happened last year you'll never trust me again."

"You're too right on that." muttered Nicole as she finished unravelling the bandages and got out a pair of scissors "Now remove your jacket please."

Marik, straining painfully, did as he was told and he removed his black leather jacket so Nicole could wrap the bandages around his upper torso to stop the gash on his chest from bleeding. Nicole then proceeded to warp the bandages around Marik's upper torso and under his arms. Marik grimaced as the gash began to sting but he was tough enough to deal with the pain so he kept it in. It sure was nice to be treated nicely by the Mobians for once, but this was only temporary. Once the Devatrons were dead, they'd be back to being enemies so Marik decided to enjoy this good treatment while he could as it wouldn't last forever…

Neither could the relative calm the heroes were having now for Devion decided to continue with his sadistic games of torture which he was using on Sonic and friends to break their spirits. He and Tronic had left NewMobotropolis and the two Devatrons were strolling over to Green Hill Zone. The rain had finally stopped much to Devion's pleasure as he hated it when it rained and the two stopped outside the forest entrance. Tronic had a tracking device with him and he looked at it. The device bleeped as he held it out ahead of him and scanned the forest terrain.

"Mobian life form presence detected." he droned in his musical voice "Residence: Some kind of forest village."

"So that's where the Royal Fighters have retreated to now I've exiled them from their city." purred Devion sadistically "Good. Now I've found them, the games can begin. And what better way to start off this game then burning down their only place of residence now their city is mine?"

He then reached behind his back and pulled out a huge cannon with a long barrel that was held underarm and spouted fired instead of bullets. It was a flamethrower and Devion was ready to use it. He primed the weapon and he aimed the flamethrower at the tree he stood in front of. It really was fortunate for him that the rain had stopped otherwise this attack wouldn't work for the rain would just put the fire out. Devion pulled the trigger and with one massive spurt of flames, he set the first three trees of the forest alight with fire and the heavy winds that were blowing carried the flames onto other trees and the fire began to spread faster then a swarm of locusts. Devion cackled to himself and he put the flamethrower back onto his back. He then proceeded to stride into the burning forests for he had something else other then burning Knothole down planned. Tronic stayed put and waited for Devion to come back out. As the fire began to spread and the forest was alight with flames, Devion began to cackle to himself.

"The surrounding growth will carry my glorious flames across themselves and the fire's reach will extend even to this so-called forest village they reside in." he purred "It's like King Hardigm once said "Fire is an excellent force of nature that can be carried and spread and the impacts fire leave are everlasting to anyone who experiences it." and now Sonic shall be another victim of the mighty fire. As well as a victim of the mighty Devatrons themselves."

The sheer speed the fires were spreading right now were incredible, mainly due to how many trees were around and how strong the blowing winds were. The winds blew the flames across the trees and they were all set alight. Each tree began to burn as the fires spread and sooner or alter, the fires reached Knothole and any citizens unlucky to be outside right now saw the coming flames and they began to panic. The citizens began running around like a disturbed

hive of bees and they were screaming at the top of their voices. Mariah and the Chaotix could hear the panicked screams and they began wondering what was happening.

"Why's everybody running around like crazy?" asked Charmy.

"I think we should go and see." said Espio.

Then suddenly, Vector's nostrils began twitching and he began sniffing the air. The unconscious crocodile was beginning to come around at last and he could smell something for his nostrils wouldn't stop twitching.

"Hrrrrmmm…" muttered Vector sleepily "Charmy…? Are you… burning my ham…again…?"

"Huh?" wondered Charmy "What's Vector on about?"

"He's coming around and he smells something." said Espio, sniffing the air "And so do I. It smells like…smoke!"

That did it. Mariah shot through the front door and she looked outside only to see a huge fire spreading through the trees and threatening to burn Knothole as the fires surrounded the village. The poor medicine cat nearly died of shock.

"Oh great heavens!" shrieked Mariah "The forest is on fire! You two, grab your friend and carry him out of here! We've got to get out of here before we all burn alive!"

Espio and Charmy did not wait to be asked twice. Espio grabbed Vector by his top half and Charmy grabbed him by his tail. They carried Vector out with Charmy in front and Espio behind. They tried to go as fast as possible as the fires were beginning to spread to the village itself. Mariah ran for it, not bothering to take any of her medicines with her as she was likely to perish in the fire just trying to fetch them all. All the citizens began to flee the soon-to-be-doomed village of Knothole just as the first house on Knothole was set alight by the spreading fire. Over at Amy's house, Sonic heard all the commotion going on outside and he peeked through the window to see what the stir-up was about. He quickly found out at the sight of

the surrounding trees on fire and the houses of Knothole beginning to catch fire as the flames began to spread. Sonic thought he was going to have a mental breakdown.

"Holy Chaos Emeralds!" shrieked Sonic "You're not gonna believe this everybody but the forest is on fire!"

"Oh no! Why now?!" wailed Tails "We haven't finished recuperating yet! And we haven't even begun to devise a plan yet!"

"Well we'd best skedaddle or we won't get to devise a plan!" cried Sonic "Everybody, evacuate the village while I put the flames out! My super speed will put out the fire easily!"

"Sonic, you're wasting your time!" cried Knuckles "This is no ordinary fire! This is a forest fire! You'll never put it all out!"

"Don't doubt the hedgehog Knuckles." said Sonic sternly "Now everybody, get going already!"

"If Hydra hadn't stolen my aqua-collar, I'd be helping you right now." muttered Ruben as he got up to leave "My water powers would overpower this fire easily."

All the Royal Fighters got up and fled for it as fast as they could with Sally and Nicole carrying Marik. Sonic ran outside to see how things were going now. All the citizens had evacuated their homes and fled for it deeper into the forest before the fire could catch up to them. All the Royal Fighters had evacuated too, abandoning their tents and leaving them to be swallowed up by the flames. Everybody had left and everybody was out of harm's way. Now Sonic could put out the fire before it could destroy all of Knothole. But before Sonic could so much as raise his leg, ready to run, Devion marched through the flames as if they were nothing to him and he barked at Sonic.

"I wouldn't try and put out this marvellous fire Sonic." he said coldly "Things can get very painful for you should you try."

"Devion!" yelled Sonic, bending down in a battle ready stance and preparing to fight "You couldn't leave us alone for one minute could ya? You've just had to come and wreck everything again! I bet it was

you who started this fire!"

"Looks like you exceed better in the art of guessing then the art of common sense hedgehog." sneered Devion "I am indeed the starter of this fire. It's all part of my little entertainment run before I finally decided to destroy you all."

"I'm not surprised." muttered Sonic "A little birdie told us what you're planning to do to the population of NewMobotropolis and what you're planning to do to us Devion and it's not gonna work! You'll never break us Devion! Despite what's happened, we still haven't given up and we still have hopes of defeating you!"

"So it seems I cannot break your overbearing valour and spirit hedgehog." said Devion coldly "But if I cannot break your spirit…"

Sonic lunged forward at Devion, yelling at the top of his voice, only to get elbowed viciously in the back by Devion and knocked down onto the ground. The hedgehog spluttered heavily and he tried to get back up but Devion grabbed Sonic and held him high above his head. Sonic squirmed and tried to get free but Devion didn't let go of him.

"…then I'll just break your body instead." Devion finished in a voice colder then ice.

He then proceeded to slam Sonic down back first onto his knee. Sonic felt his spine crack slightly and the blue hedgehog fell down onto the ground after Devion let go of him. Sonic grabbed his back and he winced in pain. Devion had just dislocated his spine but the Devatron leader thought he'd broken it. To Sonic's good luck, Devion hadn't slammed him down on his knee hard enough due to the fact Devion didn't think he'd need to slam him that hard. Still, Sonic would be unable to fight like this. Devion picked up the injured hedgehog and he tossed him through the fires that surrounded Knothole. Sonic landed outside the fire, pain sweeping over his body like an ocean wave and his back felt even worse. Devion cackled to himself, believing he had finally broken Sonic and made the Royal Fighter's chance of victory even more impossible.

"You and your friends may crusade valiantly hedgehog." crowed

Devion "But just remember, your assaults are ultimately useless against a wall of invulnerable chrome-plated robots. You strike and break against me and I strike and break my opponents. So if you so wish to prolong this war Sonic then send your friends to defeat me. You're only going to make this game of mine more entertaining and only I will be getting any entertainment value out of the whole thing."

Devion then turned around and walked back through the fire, leaving Sonic behind to lie on the ground and wince in excruciating pain. Never before had he suffered such pain and torment. Even Eggman hadn't hurt him as bad as this. Sonic was just thankful his back wasn't broken but it felt like it was to him due to how much it hurt. Sonic was in so much pain, he couldn't even move. All he could do was lie there and wait for the fire to spread and engulf him along with Knothole. But that didn't seem like it was going to happen for Tails flew in to fetch him. Tails was wondering how Sonic was doing and to his horror, Sonic was lying there crippled on the ground and in bad shape. Tails flew down and picked Sonic up. He carried the injured hedgehog away from the burning village and he flew off to where the others had evacuated. Tails looked helplessly over his shoulder as Knothole continued to burn under the forest fires. Devion had done it. He'd destroyed Knothole and crippled Sonic. And just when there was a beacon of hope amongst the Royal Fighters earlier. Tails couldn't help but feel sorry for the people of Knothole for they were now helpless, especially Amy and Mariah. Tails arrived back to the gathering point and he touched down on the ground with Sonic in his arms. Sonic's friends surrounded Tails and they all stared at Sonic in horror.

"What happened?" asked Amy, her eyes brimming with tears "What's up with Sonic? He looks hurt!"

"I don't know." said Tails "I came back to see if he had the fires under control and he's lying there in excruciating pain."

"Hey blue dude! What happened to you?" asked Mandy.

"Looks like somebody's crippled him." said Marik with a delighted smirk on his face.

"Devion…got me…" grunted Sonic "He…tried to…break me…like

he…broke Thomas…"

"Oh mah stars! Poor you sugah-hog!" cried a horrified Bunnie Rabbot "That horrible Devatron leader tried to break yer lil ol' back?! He looks like he hurt ya'll pretty bad!"

"He…has…" winced Sonic "My…spine…doesn't feel right…Argh! Ugh Gyaargh! Crud this hurts!"

The pain in his back continued to flare up. Mariah ran up to Sonic and instantly began observing the crippled hedgehog. A piece of vertebrae was sticking up in Sonic's back from that attack. It needed pushing back into place or Sonic was going to be in constant pain all his life and he wouldn't function properly.

"You spine's dislocated slightly." said Mariah "It needs popping back into place. Is there anyone around here who's exceptionally strong?"

"Well ah am Miss Medicine Cat." said Bunnie.

"I am too." said Knuckles "What needs doing?"

"Well all Sonic needs is a sharp hit and that should relocate his spine." said Mariah.

"What?!" cried Sonic "Don't do it! It's…ugh…gonna hurt real…bad!"

"I'll do it." said Knuckles "Bunnie's hit will be too hard, especially if she uses that cybernetic arm of hers."

Knuckles strode up to Sonic and he cracked his knuckles. Sonic could only lie there helplessly and brace himself for impact. Knuckles drew his arm back and he gave Sonic's back a good punch. There was a bit of a crick noise that was heard and Sonic screamed in pain. He reared up and grabbed his throbbing back and he winced as pain flooded up his back. He then noticed he couldn't feel the vertebrae sticking up anymore. Knuckles' punch had worked, his spine was back to normal but it would need some healing so Sonic couldn't get back into the action just yet. He'd need a good rest for now while his back fully healed.

"Ow! Thanks Knuckles!" grunted Sonic "I think that punch did it! My

spine feels…more right now."

"Sadly though Sonic, you won't be able to get back into the battle yet." said Mariah "Your spine needs to heal. I recommend having a good rest for a while before you do anything rash and reckless."

"Well that sucks!" muttered Sonic "I'm the defining hero of the R.F.S.! How can we possibly win this battle with the Devatrons without me?"

"By getting some assistance from someone who will be of excellent help to you." said a grating voice that sounded all too familiar to the Mobians.

Everybody looked to their left and they saw none other then Dr. Eggman hovering above the ground in his Egg-Pod with a newly rebuilt Katherine by his side. Everybody gasped at the sight of Eggman, including Marik who wasn't expecting to ever see him again. Eggman grinned happily at his enemies and he stepped down from his Egg-Pod.

"Hello there everybody." said Dr. Eggman brightly "Is there room for me in this battle with the Devatrons at all…?"

Footnotes:

*** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 2: The Cosmo and Cream Adventure***

**** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 10: Pain in Megapolis***

Looks like the alliances just keep on coming! Eggman's come to join in the fun now! Can the Mobians save the citizens of New Mobotroplis? And will they do it without Sonic? And will Eggman and Marik be of much help in this crusade? You're gonna have to find out yourselves next time on Sonic the Hedgehog: Heroes of Mobius!

P.S. Erin D. The Devatrons are NOT inspired by the Metarex. The two races don't even have anything in common! Any smiliarites is purely a coincidence but they are NOT, emphasis on not, inspired by the Metarex. I've seen your D.A. page by the way and your work's OK. Nice how a DeviantArt user is reading this fic.

Foes Become Friends Part 2

Story 106: Foes Become Friends Part 2: Unhelpful Allies

"Dr. Eggman?!" cried the Mobians in unison.

"Hello there everybody." said Dr. Eggman brightly "Is there room for me in this battle with the Devatrons at all?"

Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends had been through a lot of crud recently. The Devatrons invade Mobius, hoping to capture it along with fourteen other worlds they've captured, Sonic fails to beat Devion's challenge, a councillor gives Devion the location of NewMobotropolis, The Downunda Royal Fighters get killed, Thomas Tiger of Megapolis is crippled for life, Kate the Eagle gets killed, Vector gets injured, New Mobotropolis gets taken over, the populace is being rounded up to get converted into chrome for the Devatrons and now Knothole's been burnt to ashes by Devion, leaving the Royal Fighters nowhere to stay for they'd been exiled from New Mobotropolis and Knothole is ashes. And to round it all up, Sonic got crippled although not for life and even though a good punch from Knuckles fixed his spine, Sonic would have to stay out of the action while his back fully healed, leaving the Royal Fighters the pain of having to fight this battle without him. And now Sonic's arch-nemesis Dr. Eggman's just shown up and seems to be wanting to join the Mobians in this fight against the Devatrons.

"How do you know about the Devatrons Eggman?" asked Sonic.

"I sent Katherine to meet them." explained Dr. Eggman "You see, my monitors in my secret hiding place picked up the Devatron ship and I wanted to capture it and use it in my battle against you Mobians but my attempts were unsuccessful. I even tried to wager an alliance with the Devatrons themselves and they turned me down flat! How dare they! They even destroyed my beautiful Katherine so I've had to rebuild her again!"

He motioned to the rebuilt Katherine that remained standing in the Egg-Pod as silent as a statue. She looked just the same as before. It

was as if she'd never been destroyed.

"So since the Devatrons want to take over your world and won't let me join in with them, I decided I'll join you lot in bringing them down." said Dr. Eggman "Speaking of which, how's things been going between you and the Devatrons?"

"Terrible." muttered Sonic bitterly, rubbing his throbbing back "We've lost a few Royal Fighters, one of them being Kate the Eagle, Thomas Tiger is crippled for life, Vector's injured, a councillor sells us out to the Devatrons, we've lost New Mobotropolis, we've been exiled to the wilderness and now Knothole's been burnt down and I got crippled by Devion! Good old Knuckles managed to fix my back though but it still hurts and according to Mariah, I've gotta sit out of the action for a while until my back fully heals."

"Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho!" chortled Dr. Eggman "Now that IS quite the dilemma isn't it?! It's a pity I wasn't responsible for all this as that'd make it much better but this is just as enjoyable!"

"Here's the worst part though." muttered Mandy Mouse "According to the Creepy Little Midget over there," she pointed at Marik the Martian "Devion's rounding up the population of NewMobotropolis and is planning to make them into Devatrons! I bet it's like getting roboticized only worse and the whole thing just makes my fur quiver!"

"Now that will NOT do at all!" said Dr. Eggman crossly "If those Devatrons convert everybody into Devatrons then how can I roboticize you all and have my Robian army for my Eggman Empire?"

"So I guess you wanna call a truce with us then Egghead?" asked Sonic.

"Of course Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "The Devatrons refused my help and if they take over Mobius, I can never build my Eggman Empire here! Not to mention I've claimed Mobius as my own first so I get to take it over, not some silly bunch of chrome robots who claim to be invulnerable!"

"They claim to be invulnerable because they ARE invulnerable." said Tails "No matter what we throw at those creeps, we can't lay a dent on them. The only way to kill a Devatron is by impaling it through the visor with a bladed weapon of some kind but we don't have many bladed weapons so that isn't very helpful to us, and there's lots of them so we'd be overpowered easily if we tried to kill every last Devatron by impaling them through the visor."

"Well that bit of information could be helpful to some degree." mused Dr. Eggman "So Sonic, am I free to join you in your battle against the Devatrons? Or are you going to distrust me and leave me out, thus wiping out any potential help you can get in this battle?"

Sonic thought on that matter for a moment. He was willing to let Marik join them in the fight against the Devatrons so why not let Eggman join them too? Eggman was just as trustworthy as Marik, that is to say not very at all, so there was no reason not to let Eggman join them. Not to mention they need all the help they can get as he and Vector weren't fit for combat right now and could do with some replacements. Sonic decided what must be done. He was letting Eggman join them in the battle against the Devatrons. His technology might be of some use to the Devatrons given how he's spent a couple of years constantly battling it and at times had almost been bested by it.

"OK Eggman, we'll call truce for now." said Sonic, shaking Eggman's hand "You're part of this battle now and don't get any idea about backstabbing us or you'll know about it!"

"Sonic, Why would I go through all this trouble joining your side just to get the drop on you?" sneered Dr. Eggman as he finished shaking hands with Sonic "The Devatrons are the bigger threat right now and I must defeat them and I can only do that with the help of you and your friends. Once the Devatrons are gone though, that's when the truce is up."

"And then me and you can go back to beating the tar outta each other." said Sonic "Now that's all settled, we need a plan right now. We've gotta save the population of New Mobotropolis before Devion converts them all. But the Devatrons are too powerful and they'll be hard to get by. Also *The Doombringer* 's probably gonna be crawling

with Devatrons and it'll be hard to get past them all. That plus me being out of the action means this mission will be even harder."

"I have an idea." said Dr. Eggman "I've brought along two robots for such a mission."

"Let me guess, one of them is Metal Sonic isn't it?" asked Sonic.

"Correct." said Dr. Eggman "After he got destroyed during my fleet's first attack on New Mobotropolis, I rebuilt him and now he's ready to face the Devatrons. Katherine, deploy Metal Sonic."

Katherine obeyed and she pressed a button on the Egg Pod's control pad. A compartment in the Egg-Pod opened up and a blue sphere shot out from the compartment and transformed into the familiar shape of Metal Sonic right before the Royal Fighters. Sonic looked at Metal Sonic and he scowled at him. How he hated that robot and how he wished he'd be forever rid of him. Still, Metal Sonic was on his side for once as he was going to help fight the Devatrons.

"Metal Sonic shall fill in for you Sonic as he's every bit like you only better." said Dr. Eggman "Although I kinda question why you haven't asked Shadow to help you. I'm sure the Devatrons would have a hard time taking on two supersonic hedgehogs."

"We have no way of contacting Shadow so we can't ask him to help us." muttered Sonic "We're just gonna have to hope he drops by and decides to help us."

"Indeed." said Eggman "Anyway, Metal Sonic shall be your replacement in the rescue mission Sonic and my other robot, Silver Sonic, shall keep the Devatrons busy. A machine as large and powerful as Silver Sonic will easily keep those Devatrons busy."

"You've got Silver Sonic too?" said Tails "But how can you carry him with you in that tiny Egg-Pod? He's enormous!"

"I've given Silver Sonic the ability to shrink when he's in sleep mode." explained Dr. Eggman "When Silver Sonic curls up into a ball, he can shrink down to size for travel purposes. Once he's

awake, he'll expand back to his natural size."

"I didn't know humans were this clever." muttered Marik "Still, this kind of tech is impressive doctor. I feel fortunate to have you helping us after all."

"Thank you little Martian." said Dr. Eggman "Now we have a plan, shall we carry it out?"

"Whenever you're ready Dr. Eggman." said Queen Sally "While you and Silver Sonic distract the Devatrons, me, Nicole and the Royal Fighters shall all sneak aboard *The Doombringer* and rescue the populace of New Mobotropolis. And maybe sabotage something on the way and so we're stronger, all the teams will come and not just the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters. Are you all with me Royal Fighters?"

"YEAH!" cheered all the teams.

"Then let us carry out Eggman's plan and stop the Devatrons from converting the populace!" yelled Sally.

"Quick question Sal, we are we all gonna go once we rescue the citizens?" asked Sonic "NewMobotropolis is under Devatron control and Knothole's burnt to a crisp so where can everybody stay?"

"We'll relocate to Empire City." said Sally "Much like the populace did before when Eggman tore down the first Mobotropolis."

Eggman just smiled. Those were fond memories to him. Fond memories of his first impression on the Mobians when he arrived here two years ago.

"Now Royal Fighters, let's go and rescue the citizens of our lost city!" yelled Sally "Once the population is saved, we shall reside in EmpireCity to rest up and then once we're ready, we will take the battle to them!"

With that said Sally, Nicole, Dr. Eggman, Metal Sonic, Marik and all the Royal Fighter teams went off to carry out Eggman's plan. Sonic, Vector and Thomas stayed where they were as they couldn't fight. Sonic and Vector were injured and recovering and Thomas was

permanently broken so they couldn't fight right now. The foot soldiers of each Royal Fighter team had stayed behind too to protect Sonic, Vector, Thomas and the citizens of Knothole in case anything should happen like, a possible Devatron attack or something. Sonic lay against a tree next to Vector, who was waking up and rubbing himself better and he folded his arms.

"Boy is this gonna be boring." muttered Sonic "I'm gonna be just sitting around while everybody else fights for Mobius. Man I wish I never got my back crippled by Devion now!"

"At least your back could be fixed Sonic." said Thomas Tiger, who was in a wheelchair and looking pretty downhearted "Mine's been broken and nothing can fix a broken back. I'll just be stuck in this wheelchair needing assistance and just stuck giving orders. I'll never be able to fight again whereas you will be back in the battle sometime soon."

"I will be too once my wound heals." grunted Vector "I'm amazed I'm still alive despite being shot by that Deva-Beast thing! It hit me pretty hard! So what did I miss while I was knocked out Sonic?"

"A lot Vector." muttered Sonic "New Mobotropolis is under Devatron control and Knothole's been burnt down."

"Now that is a big bummer." muttered Vector "Good thing all the Royal Fighters and Eggman have gone to save the citizens before Devion does something terrible to them. I hope they'll make it."

"With two of our worst enemies joining us and a rebuilt Metal Sonic replacing me, they'll be fine Vector." Sonic assured the crocodile "I just hope Eggman's plan will work. That Silver Sonic robot is a good machine I'll admit but I'm not sure that'll be enough to keep the Devatrons busy for long."

"Well since we can't join in the action, all we can do is wait and see what happens." said Vector "And hope for the best as we could do with something good happening now."

Sonic agreed with Vector. With all the crud they'd been going through recently, they could do with some good fortune for once.

And hopefully with Eggman's help, they'd get it…

Over at New Mobotropolis, the very city that Sonic lived in and lost to the Devatrons, the Devatrons had finished rounding up the citizens of NewMobotropolis into the prison cells on *The Doombringer* and were ready to convert them all into Devatron soldiers. What a wound on the hearts of Sonic and friends that would be when they return to reclaim their city only to find it'll be a city minus any inhabitants and will be nothing more then an empty civilization needing people for it to function otherwise it'll be a huge waste of land and resources and serve no purpose on the planet Mobius. *The Doombringer* had many prison cells, so many in fact that not even the whole population of New Mobotropolis was enough to fill every single one. *The Doombringer* could quite easily carry half the population of Mobius in those cells given how many there were and how many people each cell could carry. Devion prowled down the cell corridor, listening happily to the cries and wails of his prisoners. How he loved to hear his victims cower and whimper in fear in his prison cells. It sure did feel good to be on the winning streak. The Mobians looked pretty promising when he first arrived and yet he was having a relatively easy time in defeating them. His capture of Mobius could quite clearly be one of his quickest takeovers ever if he kept this up. Devion stopped prowling and he stood ominously in front of a cell door. He opened the cell and he walked inside. The prisoners in the cell all cowered back against the wall as he entered. To them, Devion was the scariest thing they'd ever seen. Devion glowered at his prisoners with his red visor, happy to see them looking petrified at the mere sight of him.

"Citizens of New Mobotropolis." he said ominously to them in his deep chilling voice "It is time for you all to start a new life. A life encased in chrome armour."

He lunged forward and grabbed a brown-furred female racoon in a purple frilly dress and purple sandals by her hair. The racoon squealed in pain as she was hauled out of the cell by Devion. The prisoners began to wonder what Devion was going to do to the poor racoon as she was dragged out of the cell and taken away. Devion looked at the other prisoners over his shoulder and said one last

thing before closing the door.

"You are all to pay attention to the screens above the cell doors." he said coldly "They'll show you what fate awaits you all now and this female I have with me will be used as an example of what will happen to you."

He left the prison blockade and switched on all the TV screens above the prison cell doors inside the cells. The screens were there due to Devion's sadism. You see, he has great pleasure in terrifying his victims before he recycles them into chrome and likes to give them an example of what there is to come. He takes one victim and uses the unlucky victim as an example and the screens in the cells show the prisoners what will happen to them. All the prison cells that had prisoners in them had their screens switched on and the prisoners stared up at the screens, wondering what they were about to see. The screen showed them a rather eerie looking room with a rather large object shaped vaguely like a cauldron. There were lots of pods in the room too and they had robotical bodies in them. The bodies looked like protoforms of some kind and were waiting to be moulded into something. These protoforms were Devatron soldiers waiting to get their invulnerable chrome armour. This room was the Devatron Production Chamber, the very room where Devion made new soldiers for his ever growing army. The cauldron-shaped object in the chamber was full of searing hot liquid metal that bubbled and had steam drifting from it. This liquid metal would be poured onto the protoforms and then harden around the body, making the Devatron's trademark invulnerable chrome armour casing that made it so powerful and such a formidable foe. Once the liquid chrome set and formed the armour, there was no way of removing the armour. The Devatrons were encased in this chrome shell of theirs for life. That was how the Devatrons made new soldiers, the protoforms were made in the production facilities on the ship and the armour was added to them afterwards. And given how hot the liquid metal was, it could melt anything and that was how the Devatrons recycled their victims into chrome. The victim would be killed first and then thrown into the vat, the liquid chrome would melt them until there was nothing left and that victim's remains would end up becoming liquid chrome. The fourteen planets Devion had already subjugated were all suffering this kind of horror from the Devatron facilities installed

on them after their takeover. Devion arrived in the Devatron production chamber with his victim for the example he would be showing. Devion threw the racoon onto the floor and he drew out his golden sword. The racoon remained on the floor, staring fearfully up at Devion and shaking madly.

"No! Please!" whimpered the racoon "Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me! Please! Please! Help!"

Devion ignored the cowering racoon and he plunged his sword into the racoon's heart. The racoon was killed instantly and her body lay lifeless on the floor with blood trickling out of the hole in her chest. The response to that was a prison chamber full of gasping from the horrified prisoners who were watching this horror unfold in front of their eyes like a really terrifying horror film on the screens in their cells. Devion sheathed his blood-stained sword and he picked up the dead racoon. One reason he killed his victims before recycling them was so they couldn't escape from the vat once they were thrown in. This had happened before, some victims had escaped by using gadgets of some kind to avoid falling in and some escaped before they could even be thrown in so Devion had resorted to killing his victims before throwing them into the vat of liquid chrome so nobody could escape from it or avoid being thrown into it. Devion threw the dead racoon into the vat and her body sunk straight down into the searing hot liquid chrome. In a matter of minutes, the body would melt and since the victim was dead, it couldn't escape from it. The prisoners were horrified at this for it would be their turn next. They were all going to be slaughtered by Devion and then thrown into the vat of searing hot liquid chrome. The next batch of Devatrons that was to be created would end up wearing them as armour. What a gruesome thought that was for all the unlucky victims that were imprisoned on *The Doombringer* . Devion cackled to himself and he left the production chamber to get the rest of the prisoners so he could begin recycling them all. And since he'd crippled Sonic, no one would be able to stop him. But as Devion began to picture the slaughtering of his prisoners, *The Doombringer* 's alarm began blaring throughout the ship and Devion began groaning in annoyance to himself.

"Why must fate throw something at me just as I'm about to convert

this batch of prisoners?!" growled Devion "What is going on now?!"

So instead of heading down to the prison chamber, Devion stormed off to the docking ramps of *The Doombringer* and he opened one. The ramp lowered down to the ground and Devion stormed down it furiously, wondering what dared to interrupt him in his moment of glory. He soon found out as he stepped onto the ground and looked ahead of him. Dr. Eggman was standing there before him with his Egg-Pod beside him and a rather casual expression on his face. Devion's visor widened in surprise, mostly at the fact there was a human standing before him on Mobian turf. He didn't remember anything about Mobius having humans on it so he began to wonder how a human could possibly be here. Devion drew out his golden sword and he pointed it at Dr. Eggman. The evil (omelette) dictator didn't even flinch. He just kept up his cool attitude and remained smiling at him.

"So it appears a human stands before me even though this planet does not have humans on it." purred Devion "Explain yourself before I carve you to pieces human."

"I am Dr. Eggman, Sonic's worst enemy and soon-to-be-conqueror of this world." explained Dr. Eggman "I've been exiled from Earth so I've decided to make Mobius mine. You stupid Devatrons however have decided to come along and ruin all that by taking it for yourselves! I tried to bargain with you but your second-in-command made the mistake of turning me down flat and now I'm going to help Sonic get rid of you!"

"Ah, so you're this human that Raicor spoke to me about." mused Devion "He told me a human had tried to bargain with us and he turned the human down. Well since you've come crawling back claiming you're now on Sonic's side in this battle then I guess I'll have to kill you too. This'll be a good insight on what it'll be like to face a human as I am planning to take Earth next once Mobius is mine."

"I don't think you'll be getting Mobius Devion." sneered Dr. Eggman "For I have a surprise for you."

"And what surprise would that be?" asked Devion coldly.

Dr. Eggman just reached over to the Egg-Pod beside him and he pressed a button on the control pad. The Egg-Pod's upper half opened up and a huge silver ball shot out of the pod and spin-dashed Devion as hard as it could. Devion was sent hurling through the air and he crashed into the front-end of *The Doombringer* , catching the attention of Raicor, Tronic, Steelor and Triton who were in the cockpit right now. The four Devatron leaders stared outside the cockpit window, only to see Devion sliding down from the tip of *The Doombringer* 's nose and landing with a heavy clunk on the ground. Devion groaned in pain and he picked himself up, wondering what had hit him. The silver ball uncurled and formed the familiar shape of Silver Sonic, one of Eggman's deadliest killing machines. Silver Sonic clenched it's fists and glowered at Devion with it's fearsome red optics. Devion glared at Silver Sonic and he prepared to fight, removing his capebefore he did so.

"What abomination of science is that?!" he snarled fiercely.

"This is a machine of mine known as Silver Sonic." explained Dr. Eggman "A machine that is more than capable of fighting Sonic himself to a standstill. Raicor thinks my technology is weak so now as you fight him, I can show your second-in-command how great my technology really is!"

"As you wish." said Devion dryly "I shall take it upon myself to eviscerate your killing machine and show that not even human inventions can destroy the mighty Devatrons."

"Silver Sonic! Obliterate him!" bellowed Dr. Eggman.

Silver Sonic obeyed his master and it began running towards Devion. Dr. Eggman got in his Egg-Pod and reversed away from the fight. He was just going to sit on the sidelines and watch this titanic battle unfold before him. Devion charged at the eight foot tall killing machine and he leaped up into the air. He somersaulted and landed a powerful dropkick on Silver Sonic's head. Silver Sonic was knocked down onto it's back but it wasn't down for long. Silver Sonic got back to it's feet and he clawed at Devion. Devion dodged the attack and he jumped onto Silver Sonic's arm. He converted his arms into arm cannons and he began blasting Silver Sonic in the head. The blasts ricocheted off of Silver Sonic's head but they were

doing a little damage to him for as the blasts bounced off, they left black singes where they hit. If Devion kept this up he'd eventually penetrate Silver Sonic's tough armour and bring the tough machine crashing down. Silver Sonic just swung his arm up and sent Devion flying up into the air. Silver Sonic leaped up after him and swatted him down into the ground. Devion hit the ground with a heavy clunk but the Devatron leader was unharmed. Silver Sonic landed down directly in front of him and it clawed the Devatron leader. Devion staggered backwards but Silver Sonic didn't stop there. It clawed Devion again and then punched the Devatron leader as hard as it could. Devion was thrown down onto his back and before he could get up, Silver Sonic charged over to him and then he stomped on Devion. If Devion wasn't invulnerable then that attack would have killed him. Devion pulled himself out of the ground after that stomp had embedded him in it slightly and he began blasting at Silver Sonic again. Silver Sonic raised his arm to shield himself from the attacks and Devion decided to take advantage of this. He drew out his sword and he charged towards Silver Sonic. Silver Sonic lowered his arm only to see Devion coming at him with his sword and the Devatron leader began to slash at him furiously. Silver Sonic defended himself with his arm again but Devion's sword was a lot stronger then his cannon blasts. Devion was leaving heavy gashes on Silver Sonic's arm as he slashed at him. Silver Sonic swatted Devion away again but the Devatron leader wasn't down for long. He picked himself up and braced himself for another attack.

"You are a powerful machine Silver Sonic." said Devion "I must commend Eggman on this well constructed fighting machine. But I have had many experiences in fighting giant killing machines, mainly in the gladiator arenas back on Deaveron where me and my soldiers would fight giant Devatron machines built especially for the training matches so like all well constructed machines, you will fall at my elegant blade!"

Silver Sonic's reaction was to spin-dash Devion as hard as he could. Sonic's spin-dash was already a nuisance to Devion but this was an eight-foot tall robot with blades for spines and was made of metal so it was much more powerful then Sonic's spin-dash. Devion was sent hurling backwards from that attack and he landed heavily on the ground. The Devatron leader growled furiously and he picked

himself up…only to find that he had a thin gash that started from the base of his neck and reached down to his upper torso! A vaguely orange liquid began to trickle from the gash. That liquid was oil. Robots run on oil and so do Devatrons but their oil is different to ours and only this kind of oil can make them function. No other oil would make them work. If the Devatrons ran out of oil then they would shut off until they got new supplies. The fact Devion was shedding oil made him quiver with rage. Silver Sonic had actually managed to penetrate him! Well he was nigh-invulnerable, meaning that it is possible to damage him it's just very hard to do so. Given Silver Sonic's powerful spin-dash attacks, it's no wonder that only Silver Sonic has managed to penetrate Devion so far.

"Silver Sonic can penetrate me!" cried Devion in shock "This machine is definitely more powerful then I thought it was! I must destroy it before it destroys me!"

Devion stood back up with his sword in hand and he charged back towards Silver Sonic. Silver Sonic spin-dashed towards Devion again but Devion was ready for him. He ducked and Silver Sonic hurled over him. Silver Sonic screeched to a halt and it turned around to face Devion. It ran towards Devion again but Devion jumped up and slashed the silver robot across the face with his sword. Silver Sonic flinched and felt it's face. The attack had left a long gash across Silver Sonic's face. Devion jumped up and slammed the sword down on Silver Sonic's face. Silver Sonic swatted Devion away but Devion landed on his feet and he charged back towards Silver Sonic. Devion and Silver Sonic began swiping at each other. Devion attacked his sword and Silver Sonic attacked with his claws. The two swiped and slashed at each other as viciously as they could, their attacks making loud clangs and sparks flew as their weapons hit each other. As the fight went on, Dr. Eggman turned to a pile of bushes he was parked near and he spoke to the bushes.

"You can come out now." said Dr. Eggman "Silver Sonic's got what I think is the Devatron leader on the ropes."

The Royal Fighters were all hiding in the bushes and they had been waiting for Eggman to give them the all clear before they went into action. The Royal Fighters all crept quietly out of the bushes with

Metal Sonic leading them and they headed over to *The Doombringer* . They tried their hardest to keep their attention diverted from the fight between Silver Sonic and Devion. Marik failed however. As the Royal Fighters crept, Marik couldn't resist glancing over at the fight and seeing how it was going. Silver Sonic uppercut Devion into the air and almost took his beak off. Devion landed with a heavy clunk on his back but he picked himself back up and charged back towards Silver Sonic. Silver Sonic just clenched his fist and slammed Devion in the back of his head and knocked him onto his front. Marik cheered happily at that for he hated the Devatrons and seeing one getting thrashed was giving him great joy right now.

"Ha, ha! Give him another one giant silver bladed Sonic bot!" cried Marik.

"Marik will you shut up?!" hissed Tails, clasping his hand around Marik's mouth to quieten the Martian "Do you want to alert the Devatrons to our presence?!

"Oh fie Tails!" grumbled Marik, pushing Tails away from him " *The Doombringer* has scanners that pick up anything within ten yards of it! They'll know of our presence easily!"

"Well hopefully they'll be too distracted with the fight between Devion and Silver Sonic to bother about us." said Tails "Now keep your voice down and come on!"

"I don't take orders from you furry vermin!" snarled Marik "Just because we're allies, it doesn't mean I fall under your line of command Tails!"

"Oh shut up already!" groaned Tails "We've got a mission to do and I can do without you moaning at me!"

Marik decided not to prolong this argument as it was getting them nowhere. The Royal Fighters continued sneaking up to *The Doombringer* but for some reason, it's scanners didn't pick up their presence. That was because after Silver Sonic had sent Devion flying into the nose of *The Doombringer* , the impact had damaged the sensor beacon that was stored in the nose of the ship. Without it, *The Doombringer* wouldn't pick up anything so they could get

onboard without being detected. The docking ramp that Devion had lowered was still lowered being as Devion had forgotten to close it so the Royal Fighters sneaked up the ramp and onto the terrifying vessel that housed the Devatrons and their facilities. Sally began to feel a little nervous about this though being as how she'd heard Marik saying *The Doombringer* had scanners that could pick up anything within ten yards of it and yet there were no Devatrons here to stop them from carrying out their mission. The corridors were completely empty and there were no Devatrons around.

"This is weird." said Sally "I heard Marik saying to Tails the Devatron's ship has scanners with a great range and yet there's no one around. It's like they haven't picked us up on scanner or anything."

"Maybe their scanners aren't working or they're distracted by the battle with Devion and Silver Sonic?" suggested Nicole.

"I don't think so." said Kiara the Cheetah "When me, Tails and Cosmo got near that thing, a Devatron came outside looking for us. I doubt a battle would distract them like this and I don't think the scanners aren't working."

"Either way, I don't like this." said Sally "We need to remain alert and have distractions to keep any resistance away. Teams Megapolis, Adabat, Nekronopolis and Grand Metropolis will stay in this corridor and keep an eye out for Devatrons. Me, Nicole Team Mobotropolis, the Chaotix, Marik and Metal Sonic will look for the captive citizens."

"I'm up for it your majesty." said Miranda Mongoose, deploying her electro-prod "Anything to get back at them for killing Kate."

"We'll make sure no Devatron gets near you your highness." said General Bostock, priming his gun.

"Excellent." said Sally "We'll see you later and if we come back here with the people of New Mobotropolis behind us, that means we've completed the mission and it's time to flee. If we come back as we are then that means we've failed and we need to get out of here quickly."

"Understood." said Commander Mortimer "Good luck you lot."

"Good luck yourselves, you'll need it." replied Sally.

So the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, Royals, Chaotix and Villains all ran off down the corridor while the other teams remained where they were. Since Sally knew about prisons and the fact they were always at the bottom of something be it a castle or something like that, she took lead with Nicole beside her and Metal Sonic following her closely. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and Chaotix remained close and followed the squirrel queen through the corridors.

"It's a pity Sally doesn't do the Royal Fighter thing more often." muttered Mandy "She's doing pretty well at this. She seems to know exactly where we're going and her leadership skills are equally as good as Sonic's, maybe even better."

"You're right on that Mandy." said Wilson "I will always remember the time she actually joined us in pushing back the Region of Rebellious Reptile's first attack on Castle Acorn* and she actually took on the big muscular Komodo Dragon and actually beat him! She should be a Royal Fighter rather then a Queen I think."

"But if she does that then New Mobotropolis has no ruler." noted Ruben "Although Sally could always do both I suppose. Fight for freedom and rule the kingdom at the same time but doing two jobs at once would get very tiresome for her so it'd be best for Sally to do one job instead of two."

"Too right mate." said Geoffrey St. John "Although she always trains so that should she need to fight, she can do so and not end up being useless on the battle field. It's always important to defend yourself from oncoming attacks, even if you don't do much fighting."

"You Mobians talk too much." muttered Marik who was clearly getting annoyed with the Mobians conversing to each other behind him "Even more so then I! Shut up and focus on the bloody mission will you?!"

"You have no right to butt in Marik!" snapped Espio "Their conversation was between them and not you so you be quiet!"

"Yeah!" agreed Charmy "Shut up before I sting you!"

"Try it and you'll end up having that stinger down your throat you annoying little buzz bucket!" snarled Marik.

"Marik, we will not tolerate you threatening our comrades thank you." said Sally sternly without turning around.

"So sorry your highness." snorted Marik sarcastically.

"Of all the people we allow to join us, why did we have to take him?" muttered Tails in annoyance.

"At least he's helping us and not trying to kill us this time Tails so be grateful for that." said Cosmo "Please try and tolerate Marik for the time being. If we don't get along then we'll be a poor team and we won't be able to stop the Devatrons if we fight each other instead of them."

"OK Cosmo, I'll try and bear him until the truce is over." said Tails with a softer expression on his face.

Deep down though, Tails and Cosmo knew that Marik was going to be a right pain for them as the truce went on. Eggman was likely to be a bigger pain but he was more manageable whereas Marik was something to worry about so it'd be better not to start a fight with Marik then get the Martian to unleash hell on them all. The Royal Fighters continued creeping through the hall, this time in total silence, and they kept their senses alert for any sign of danger. Their eyes were wide open, their ears were on the alert and their noses were ready to smell out anything that would be a danger to them. But it seemed one person's senses were too alert. And that person was Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic stopped dead in his tracks and he turned his head to one side. He was looking down a corridor on the left hand side of this one they were in now and the corridor appeared to lead to what looked like a door at the end of the corridor. Metal Sonic wondered what this door was for so he abandoned the group and hovered down the other corridor to investigate. Knuckles spotted him and he yelled at Metal Sonic.

"Hey! Where the heck are you going Metal Sonic?!" yelled Knuckles

"Come back here! We're supposed to stick together!"

Metal Sonic ignored him and continued hovering down the corridor.

"Ah think we should leave him." said Bunnie Rabbot "Maybe Metal Sonic's investigatin' somethin' down there. For all we know, maybe Metal Sonic might find something useful for us."

"He'd better or he'll get Blade-Rushed to scrap for deserting us." muttered Shade, tightening her grip on her twin blades furiously.

So the Royal Fighters carried on down the corridor while Metal Sonic went his way. Metal Sonic reached the door at the end of the corridor and he opened it. He crept through the door and observed this room he was now in…

As for the others, Sally spotted what looked like a lift and she ran over to it.

"Tails, Cosmo, you two have already been on this ship." said Sally "Can you tell me if this is a lift or not?"

"It is." said Tails "In our first infiltration mission, me, Cosmo and Kiara took the lift to the top floor and Devion was up there so I assume important rooms like the cockpit are at the top. We need to go down though as the prison cells are likely to be at the bottom of *The Doombringer* ."

"You are correct Tails." said Marik "In the world of spacecraft, any spacecraft equipped with prison cells always have the cells built on the bottom floor of the ship and this ship will be no exception."

"Well let's hope you're right Mr. Know-It-All Spaceman." sneered Amy mockingly.

Charmy, Cream, Tails and Cosmo all giggled at that remark. Marik resisted the urge to slaughter them all and just gritted his teeth and bore the insult. He'd get Amy for that once the truce was over. Sally opened the lift and the Royal Fighters all piled into it. The lift was only just big enough to fit all twenty-one people in it at once. Now everybody was in, Tails pressed the button that took the lift down to the bottom floor of *The Doombringer* . The lift quickly took the

Mobians down to the bottom floor of the ship and the doors opened upon arrival. The Royal Fighters all piled out and found themselves in another corridor. This corridor led to all the rooms on the bottom floors of *The Doombringer* . The Mobians took the left side and hoped that they had guessed correctly on where the prison cells likely were. It seemed their guess was right for at the end of the left side of the corridor was a door with bars in it much like a standard prison cell door. The door was locked with a code that only the Devatrons knew though so there was no getting in nice and quietly. The Mobians would have to bust the door down and luckily, there were some hard hitters. Espio and Geoffrey stepped in first to weaken the door. Geoffrey fired a few explosive darts into the door and Espio threw some exploding shuriken into the door. The weapons all exploded together and the many explosions left the cell down heavily damaged and about ready to fall down. Knuckles and Bunnie then went next and they both punched the door down together. The door was thrown off it's hinges by the double punches the two hard-hitters threw. It landed with a heavy clang on the ground and Knuckles and Bunnie smiled at each other.

"Good punch." said Knuckles.

"Thanks sugah." said Bunnie "Ya'll are an amazing puncher yerself."

The Royal Fighters all went into the room and saw a whole bunch of prison cells, most of them empty as the Devatrons had plenty of them and only one city population was occupying any of the cells now. The prisoners in the cells all exploded with joy at the sight of the Royal Fighters for they knew rescue had come at last. There were fifty cells each containing about fifty prisoners in them and they were all crying out with joy.

"Well, we've found them." said Ruben "But how can we get them all out of here? That lift we took was barely big enough to fit all of us in so we won't be able to take them through the lift."

"And if we all go individually, we may end up taking too long." said Sally "And time may not be with us right now."

"If only we had my warp ring." muttered Knuckles "We could easily use that but according to Sonic, Devion destroyed it after Hamlin

sent him through it so we haven't got it!"

"And the Chaos Emeralds are all energy-drained and the Devatrons have them so we can't use them to teleport out of here." noted Cream "What are we gonna do?"

"I'm hoping that if we blow a hole in any of the walls in this chamber, it'll lead to directly outside *The Doombringer* ." said Geoffrey "First, let's get everybody out of their cells."

That wasn't a tough process at all. Knuckles and Bunnie all ran by the cell doors and using their great strength, they punched down the doors to the cells containing prisoners. Amy joined in using her Piko-Piko hammer. The cell doors were all busted down and all the citizens of NewMobotropolis were free. They all ran out of their cells quickly and began crying for joy at the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters. Now the cells were empty, Geoffrey wondered inside one and thought to himself.

"Is the outside world on the other side of this wall?" mused Geoffrey "There's only one way to find out…"

So the skunk primed his crossbow and fired his last remaining supply of exploding darts into the wall at the back of the cell. He ran out of the cell just before the darts went off. The darts all exploded and blew a hole in the wall. The hole the darts made was huge and as the smoke cleared away, Geoffrey could see daylight through the hole in the wall. His guess had been lucky! Outside was on the other side of the walls at the back of the cells! Now they could escort all the prisoners off the ship safely. Geoffrey peeked outside to see how high up they were. Given how the prison cells are at the bottom of *The Doombringer* , they weren't guaranteed to be very high up. In fact, the ground was only a small leap away. Everybody could get off *The Doombringer* easily without hurting themselves.

"OK mates, we can get outta here." said Geoffrey "Everybody through this hole I've made."

Nobody waited to be asked twice. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, Chaotix and New Mobotropolis citizens all ran towards the hole in the wall that Geoffrey had made. Before they all got off the ship

though, Sally tolled Tails to do something.

"Tails, you go back to the others and tell them the mission's complete and we have to get going now." she ordered.

"Yes Sally." said Tails, flying off out of the prison cell chamber to get the other Royal Fighter teams.

Everybody else just filed out through the hole in the back of the cell to freedom. The mission had been a complete success. It sure did feel good to win for once. But this victory of theirs was barely anything to get excited about. They still had a long way to go before they could win this battle with the Devatrons…

Meanwhile, Metal Sonic finished observing the room he'd just went into. This room was a very important room for *The Doombringer* . This room was where the fuel tanks were kept. *The Doombringer* 's fuel was in those tanks and Metal Sonic worked that out after giving the tanks a quick scan. Even though his mission was to save the population of New Mobotropolis, he could maybe sabotage the Devatrons as well. And now he'd found a very important room, he could hinder the Devatrons beautifully. Metal Sonic strode up to one of the fuel tanks and he blasted the tank with his torso cannon. The blast blew a hole in the tank and an orange coloured liquid began pouring out of the fuel tank. Metal Sonic then bent over backwards and activated his jetpack. The fumes of the jetpack set the leaking fuel alight and in a moment, the fuel tanks would explode. Devatron fuel was as flammable as any other fuel in the universe so the whole room would explode in minutes. Metal Sonic decided to get out of here and fast before the fuel exploded. Metal Sonic activated his jet pack and he flew out of the room and down the corridor as fast as he could. Due to the fact he was as fast as Sonic the Hedgehog, he could get out of here easily before the fuel tank exploded. But sadly, that's all that was going to happen. *The Doombringer* was built specially to withstand inside explosions so should anything malfunction and explode inside *The Doombringer* , that would be the only damage done. The explosion would not carry on and destroy the ship so setting fuel alight was not going to destroy the entire ship. All it was going to do was destroy the whole fuel tank storage

in the room, nothing more. And that's exactly what happened. The alighted fuel exploded into a terrific fireball that engulfed the entire room and destroyed everything inside it. The door was blasted down by the explosion and smoke billowed out from the room. Metal Sonic's sabotage may not have been as destructive as he'd hoped it would be but it was still a big wound on the Devatrons for their ship no longer had any fuel and the tanks were destroyed so there was nowhere to keep any fuel should the Devatrons get anymore. *The Doombringer* was grounded until the Devatrons could get anymore fuel and given they were on another planet, that was very unlikely…

Up in the cockpit of *The Doombringer* , an alarm started blaring throughout the cockpit and Raicor began wondering what was going on.

"Tronic! Find out what this alarm is all about!" bellowed Raicor.

Tronic obeyed and began tracing the source of the alarm. It didn't take him long to find out. He traced the alarm to the fuel room on the ship. Since the alarm was blaring because of something in the fuel room, that meant something bad had happened in the room and since it was the fuel room, that was not a good sign. Not a good sign at all.

"Something is happening in the fuel room." explained Tronic "We must investigate this matter immediately."

"I will investigate the fuel room." said Raicor "You, Steelor and Triton go outside and make sure that Devion walks out of his battle alive. We cannot afford to lose our leader after all."

Of course, Raicor was only doing this to keep up his "loyal second in command" act. He couldn't care less if Devion got dissected by Silver Sonic but if he told everyone not to do anything about it then they'd get suspicious about him and suspect him of committing treason. At least he didn't assign himself with saving Devion. Tronic obeyed Raicor's order and he, Triton and Steelor all left the cockpit and headed out of *The Doombringer* to help Devion with his battle while Raicor headed off to see what was happening in the fuel room.

Outside, Devion and Silver Sonic's battle was beginning to turn to Devion's favour. Silver Sonic was heavily dented, scarred and was beginning to get slower and slower due to the damages it'd received. Devion had a couple of bent spikes on his head and a thin crack on the right side of his visor. The crack wasn't over the holographic eye in the centre of his visor so he could still see properly at least. However, Silver Sonic had managed to break Devion's sword so Devion was having to fight with his arm cannons and bare hands. Silver Sonic swatted Devion, it's attack much weaker this time due to the damages it'd received, but Devion wasn't down for long. He leaped back up and he charged into Silver Sonic's torso. He knocked the giant silver Sonic clone down onto it's back and he pecked it in the chest. His beak went straight through the tough armour and left a hole in Silver Sonic's chest. Silver Sonic pushed Devion off of itself and it picked itself up. Devion was about to attack again but Silver Sonic slammed it's hand down on Devion. It then closed it's claws around Devion and threw the Devatron leader across the battlefield and the Devatron leader skidded to a halt on his back. Silver Sonic charged towards Devion but Devion picked himself up and he leaped into the air. He dropkicked Silver Sonic and knocked him down again. He then grabbed Silver Sonic's arms and ripped them both out of their sockets! Silver Sonic made a horrible screeching sound as his arms were ripped away by Devion. Devion threw the arms away and he plunged his claws into Silver Sonic's neck. He crushed Silver Sonic's neck and the machine was finally defeated and dead at last. Silver Sonic's optics went blank and the machine lay down dead by Devion's feet. Dr. Eggman couldn't believe his eyes. Silver Sonic was doing so well and yet Devion had just defeated him!

"NOOOOOOO!" shrieked Dr. Eggman "My glorious silver killing machine!"

Devion staggered tiredly away from the dead Silver Sonic. The fight had tired him out but he was still standing.

"Valiant effort there human." said Devion "Your machine was quite the fighter. Especially as it's one of the few machines that's ever managed to penetrate me. But even your machine of destruction is no match for me. Now I shall finish…you…"

He then suddenly felt limp and he collapsed down onto his knees. The fight had done a good deal on him, especially the gash that Silver Sonic had left on him after that powerful spin-dash he did earlier. Devion was too tried to do anything else and he needed to rest. Dr. Eggman decided to get out of here before Devion could get back up and kill him. Eggman leaped into his Egg-Pod and he zoomed away from Devion and into the forests of Green Hill Zone. The rest of the Royal Fighters had all left *The Doombringer* and they followed the fleeing Dr. Eggman into the forests. The Devatron leader watched Eggman get away and he growled furiously.

"Curse that machine for weakening me!" he grumbled "I could have killed my very first human but my injuries picked the inconvenient moment to overcome me!"

Tronic, Steelor and Triton suddenly came out of *The Doombringer* and they ran over to their weakened leader. They saw the dead body of Silver Sonic lying near him, meaning that Devion had won the match but he needed some help getting back to *The Doombringer* . Steelor and Triton helped Devion onto his feet and they put each of his arms around them. They helped their weakened leader stagger back to his ship. Tronic picked up his removed cape and followed them silently.

"Well done Devion. You won." said Triton.

"But that silver machine did a number on you didn't it?" said Steelor "It's actually managed to penetrate you slightly! That human is dangerous if his machines can penetrate us Devatrons!"

"The human's involvement in this battle will not help the Mobians defeat us." said Devion "If his machines can penetrate us then we shall fight them in large numbers and not alone from now on. I have a feeling Earth may offer us many a good challenge if this one human's put up a good impression against me."

"If all humans are like that then we will have our hands full when we invade it." said Triton "But we won't worry about that yet for we're dealing with Mobius right now."

The Devatrons arrived back at *The Doombringer* but before they

could step aboard, Raicor darted out of the ship and he screeched to a halt just in front of Devion.

"Devion!" shrieked Raicor "We've been sabotaged!"

"Explain that." demanded Devion.

"The entire fuel tank room has been destroyed and the prisoners have escaped!" cried Raicor "I have a feeling those Mobians did this while you were fighting the silver bladed machine!"

"How can this be?!" demanded Devion fiercely " *The Doombringer* should have detected their presence before they can even get near it! Those Mobians shouldn't have been able to get on without catching your attention!"

"I ran a diagnostic test and found out the sensor beacon is damaged." explained Raicor "You must have damaged it after the silver machine sent you flying into the nose of the ship."

"This day has been a string of unfortunate events for us indeed." muttered Devion "The sensor beacon gets damaged so you don't detect the Mobians coming to *The Doombringer* , I lose my batch of prisoners and the fuel tanks have been destroyed. We will need to do some imperative repairs immediately. Repair the fuel tanks and sensor beacon and then get some more fuel otherwise *The Doombringer* will be forever stranded on this world."

"How can we get more fuel?" asked Tronic.

"This planet will likely have a rocky structure of volcanic capabilities." said Devion "All planets containing organic life have them. We shall look for a volcano and drain it dry of it's lava so we can recycle it into fuel for our ship…"

Back in Green Hill Zone, everybody met up with Sonic, Vector and Thomas and Tails told them everything that had happened. Metal Sonic told Sonic what he'd just done too and Sonic was well impressed with what he'd just heard.

"Well, you've managed to save everybody and Metal Sonic blows up the Devatron's fuel supply?" said Sonic "Way past cool everybody! Just goes to show you don't need me for everything! Although I would have loved to have joined you all in this rescue mission and not have to be replaced by Metal Sonic."

"Well Sonic, Metal Sonic managed to hinder the Devatrons in ways we couldn't have." noted Tails "I'm thankful to Dr. Eggman for having Metal Sonic join us."

"It feels much better having him helping us instead of trying to kill us." said Knuckles.

"Don't get too used to it though Mobians for when the Devatrons are gone, Metal Sonic will be back to trying to kill you all." said Dr. Eggman "Still, I appreciate your compliments and gratitude. Thank you."

"Don't mention it." said Sally grimly "So now we've rescued the population of New Mobotropolis, we can relocate to EmpireCity and begin planning on getting New Mobotropolis back."

"I hope we can get our city back." muttered Sonic "I don't feel good knowing the Devatrons have my home city under their control. Well since it's empty now, they haven't got much have they? Just an empty city."

"If they do something like tear the city down and rebuilt it in their image then I will go berserk!" yelled Amy, fuming at the very thought of this happening.

"They could be planning to do something like that and that's why we need to get New Mobotropolis back." said Nicole "But not now. We need to get settled down in EmpireCity first for New Mobotropolis is subjugated and Knothole's been burnt down. Then we can start planning."

"And since the Devatrons have a damaged ship to fix, we can't expect them to start picking on us anytime soon." said Sonic "So we won't have to worry about them for a while. Although I wonder what their next move may be and when they'll carry it out…."

There was no telling what was going to happen next but Sonic knew the Devatrons would be up to no good once their ship was repaired. This battle wasn't over yet and unless they could think of a plan good enough to defeat the Devatrons then this battle would never be over…

Footnotes:

See *Tales from Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles

Finally! The heroes get a victory! But will it last? What's Devion gonna do next and will the Mobians get New Mobotropolis back? The only way to find that out is tune in next time for something VERY unexpected happens...

Unexpected Events

Story 107: Unexpected Events

A good couple of days had passed since the team up between Sonic, Eggman and Marik and the Royal Fighter teams had all finally managed to get settled down in EmpireCity. When the first Mobotropolis got destroyed, the citizens had all relocated to Empire City until New Mobotropolis had been completed and yet the citizens had all had to relocate yet again. It seemed people who live in Mobotropolis suffer more misfortune then any other city. At least unlike the first time, the city wasn't destroyed and once the Devatrons were defeated and kicked out of Mobius at last, they'd be able to get back to it in no time.

The Devatrons had been busy too while the Mobians were settling down in Empire City. They'd been repairing the damages done to *The Doombringer* and Devion was resting up from his fight with Silver Sonic. Devatrons were fast builders so it didn't take them long to repair the damages. The fuel tanks were a little difficult to rebuild though and even now, they were still being finished. They'd be finished by tonight but they wouldn't be of much use to the ship if they didn't have any fuel in them. Devion had already sorted that out though. He had sent Triton and Steelor out to find a volcano to drain dry of it's lava so they could recycle the lava into fuel. Devatrons were experts at recycling things after all. They could recycle pretty much anything into fuel given their superior technology and fine machinery. Triton and Steelor had left *The Doombringer* to carry out this mission immediately. They were piloting a flying vehicle that was used for hovering across the terrain on planets and sucking up things they need to recycle into fuel. The vehicles were large, were coloured a desert camouflage colour and they hovered above the ground. They had four wings, a turquoise cockpit window that gave them a splendid field of view because of how clear and large they were, twin cannons on either side and a vacuum pipe under them. The vacuum pipe was used for collecting whatever they needed to recycle into fuel. It would suck up what they need and store it all in the large containers attached to the back of the vehicle. The

containers were large enough to fit about eighty dead bodies in them so once they found a volcano to drain, they'd be carrying a lot of litres of lava and the vehicles were carrying four containers that could all be filled at once due to the vacuum pipe under the vehicle having a connection for all four containers each so they'd be going back to *The Doombringer* with a lot of lava. Triton and Steelor flew off in their vehicles and searched for a volcano. The vehicles had radars that could pick up lava substances so they'd find a volcano easily with them. Black Acropolis or Adabat were bound to be the places they'd be visiting as they were looking for volcanoes.

Meanwhile, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had gathered together in a big building known as the Empire Research Centre, one of the largest laboratories in the world. Tails was so amazed at the Empire Research Centre he almost went wild with excitement. This was like his dream laboratory and easily beat any laboratory he'd already seen such as the lab in Royal HQ. The laboratory was full of computer monitors and technology that would impress any science fan. The tools the lab had were incredible too. There were tools pretty much for anything the people who used the laboratory would be building. Even Dr. Eggman swallowed his pride and admitted that this lab was pretty impressive and was amazed at the fact the Mobians were as technically advanced as his own kind were. This would definitely be a place worth capturing once he got back to being Sonic's enemy. Marik the Martian thought the lab was impressive too although he kept saying the labs back on Mars, his home planet, were better then it. This lab would be a good place for the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters to camp out in for the time being. The people who owned the laboratory were more then happy to let the Royal Fighters use it for any of their purposes so they let them in. Tails could hardly contain his excitement with this laboratory and he began to babble excitedly at everything he saw.

"This lab is unbelievable!" he cried "It's got everything! Great tools! Jumbo computer monitors and equipment that beats anything I've seen before! I wish our lab back at Royal HQ was as cool as this! I think I'm gonna love this place!"

"We're all really proud for you Tails." muttered Marik sarcastically with his arms folded "Now stop your fanatic babbling already! You're

making yourself look stupid and your driving me crazy!"

"Oh shut up Marik! Tails is a mechanic and he loves technology so he can't help but get excited about this place!" snapped Amy "This place is like heaven to him! Honestly, can't you leave anybody alone Marik?!"

"I would if you didn't give me a reason to start griping at you!" retorted Marik "So get off my back Amy before I make you suffer for it!"

"You touch Amy and you'll regret it." said Sonic coldly.

"Oh Sonic, your threats mean nothing to me anymore." sneered Marik "They're as pathetic as you and your friends are so I'd quit it with the threatening attitude hedgehog."

The only thing stopping Sonic from spin-dashing Marik into a pulp was the fact he had to take it easy until his back finished healing from Devion dislocating his spine and Knuckles having to punch it back into place. Sonic restrained himself and didn't say anything else. Queen Sally groaned to herself, wondering why in the name of Mobius Sonic and friends couldn't stop bickering with Marik for more then two minutes. This alliance was clearly not going well since all they did was argue with each other.

"I think I'm beginning to regret this alliance with Marik." muttered Sally, putting her hand to her face and sighing exasperatedly "He does nothing but quarrel with Sonic and friends."

"I had no idea Martians were this quarrelsome." said Dr. Eggman "Or annoying for that matter. Marik brags more then I do and he never seems to know when to shut up either."

"Oh and you're no different?" snorted Marik "You brag to no end yourself and you never shut up on how great your technology is! Well if your technology was as good as you claim it to be then why didn't your Silver Sonic thing destroy Devion the other day?"

"I've never had a fight with a Devatron before so I have no idea on how good one was going to be!" retorted Dr. Eggman "I bet if I study

those beings more, I'll be able to build something strong enough to destroy those meddlesome machines once and for all!"

"I'd love to see you succeed in accomplishing that." snickered Marik.

"Are you mocking me?!" roared Dr. Eggman angrily, towering over Marik menacingly and raving straight into his face "Are you implying that I am incapable of accomplishing such a feat?!"

"You two, stop raving at each other before I get the Royal Fighters to kick your heads in!" shouted Sally "If we're to defeat the Devatrons then we have to get along and work as a team! If you keep fighting each other then we're gonna get nowhere in this battle!"

Dr. Eggman and Marik glared at each other tensely but they stopped their arguing and they turned their backs on one another.

"I think I preferred it when those two weren't anywhere near each other." Sonic whispered over to Tails "They're more annoying together then they are individually."

"I agree on that one." snickered Tails.

"Now we've settled this argument," said Sally "Allow me to introduce you all to this place. This is the Empire Research Centre and until we get NewMobotropolis back, this'll be our base of operations. Our "Royal HQ" if you will. The lab has everything we need for our services and the owners were more then happy to let us use this place for the time being. I highly recommend being careful in this lab as there is a lot of delicate stuff in here and if you're not careful, you may accidentally break something…"

Just as she was saying this, Cosmo the Seedrian looked over at a table laden with lots of glass containers and capsules that were filled with bright colourful liquid. Cosmo was quite fascinated with this stuff and she couldn't resist picking something up and looking at it. Unfortunately, as she reached for a test tube containing boiling blue water, she accidentally knocked a capsule over and the contents spilled all over the table top. The capsule rolled across the table and bumped into a container. The container was near the edge of the

table and the capsule knocked it clean off. The container landed on the floor and the contents inside made a loud bang as the container smashed to pieces. A cloud of red smoke drifted up from the broken container. Slithers of glass lay on the floor, twinkling in the light of the room. The knocked over capsule rolled off the table and smashed on the floor too. Cosmo put a hand to her mouth and went "Oops!" and accidentally dropped the test tube she had picked up as she reached out to clean up the mess she'd made. The test tube smashed to pieces and blue liquid flew over Cosmo's lovely white and green skirt. Cosmo's skirt was now stained with blue blobs and she was horrified at this. The Royal Fighters all stared in surprise at Cosmo whereas Marik just burst out laughing at her. Cosmo's clumsiness had stricken again and he thought it was very funny. Cosmo went red with shame as everybody glared at her.

"You clumsy great pudding!" yelled Mandy Mouse angrily "Didn't you hear Queen Sally saying we have to be careful in here?! Laboratories are not places to play in and the people who run the place won't be pleased to see broken equipment lying around!"

"I'm sorry everybody." said Cosmo glumly with her hands behind her back "It was an accident. Honest it was."

"Well Cosmo, you're going to have to be more careful in here." said Wilson the Dog "Laboratories have all kinds of things that can break easily and we can't do with having to pay for damages right now as we're in the middle of a battle."

"I'll try to be more careful." said Cosmo "And to make up for this, I'll clean up the mess if you want me to."

"That's very nice Cosmo but I think you've broken enough things already dear." said Nicole the Lynx softly "We'll clean up the mess ourselves thank you."

But there was no time to clean up any messes now. Before anything else could happen, one of the giant computer monitors began going static and then suddenly, somebody appeared on the monitor. It was a red furred ferret in a baseball cap and he looked like he was in need of help right now. The fear on his face was very perceptible to the Royal Fighters.

"Hello?! Hello?" said the ferret "Are the Adabat Royal Fighters here? We need them back in Adabat right now!"

"The Adabat Royal Fighters are with us but they're not here in this lab with us." said Sonic "Tell us what the matter is and I'll pass it on to them."

"OK then sir." said the ferret "You know them Devatron things that have come here to conquer Mobius?"

"You betcha." said Sonic "Let me guess, they're causing trouble in Adabat now aren't they?"

"They are!" shrieked the ferret "Two Devatrons have come here and they're attacking Mount Adabat! We think they're trying to do something terrible! Maybe even something apocalyptic if they're attacking a volcano! We need the help of anybody and fast! Please tell the Adabat Royal Fighters we need them right now!"

"I will do." said Sonic "Thanks for the message."

The ferret switched off and the screen went back to normal. Sonic turned back around to his friends.

"So it seems the Devatrons are up to no good again." said Sonic "Why are they attacking Adabat though? And why Mount Adabat in particular? What good's a volcano to them?"

"Whatever their motive is, it's not good." said Tails "We have to stop them and fast!"

"Tails, you, Amy and Knuckles will go with Team Adabat to stop those Devatrons." said Sonic "Eggman, since I'm still not in the right condition to fight, you can send Metal Sonic in my place and Marik, if you wanna help you can go too and make yourself useful for once."

"I'll go and save this "Adabat" just so I can get back at the Devatrons." said Marik "After all, I made this truce so I can help you beat the Devatrons so therefore, I shall keep true to my word and help you beat the Devatrons. I'll try and not bicker with your buddies too."

"You'd better try because I'm not in the mood for bickering with you." muttered Knuckles.

"Let's go everybody." said Tails eagerly, running off to deliver the news to Team Adabat "Adabat needs us now and we can't afford to waste any time."

Knuckles, Amy, Metal Sonic and Marik all ran after Tails. The fighters all left the lab and searched for Team Adabat so they could get going on this mission and stop the Devatrons from doing whatever it was they were up to over in Adabat. If they were attacking a volcano then that meant they were up to something disastrous and who knew what damage would be done if the Devatrons destroyed the volcano and all the lava spilled out into the environment. Adabat could well and truly be done for if they didn't stop the Devatrons from destroying Mount Adabat…

Shortly after getting the message, Knuckles, Tails, Amy, Metal Sonic and Marik met up with Team Adabat and explained everything to them. Team Adabat, consisting of Scott Lynx, Jessica Cougar, Taran the Lynx and Felix the Peacock, couldn't believe what was going on at their home country and they accepted this mission without a moment's hesitance. They'd been defending Adabat from the notorious Ravage Bloodfang for months on end so they were up for defending Adabat from the Devatrons easily. The Mobians all boarded a hover-saucer and they zoomed off to Adabat in it. The saucer was a fast vehicle and thanks to it's speed, they'd arrive at the sunny country in no time.

It took them half an hour, but the Mobians finally arrived at Adabat and the first thing Tails noticed was that all the citizens appeared to be evacuating the country since they feared something catastrophic was going to happen because the Devatrons were attacking Mount Adabat. The citizens all ran for it and they charged straight past the hover-saucer. Tails manoeuvred the saucer carefully so he wouldn't hit anybody as he tried to reach Mount Adabat.

"Everybody's running for their lives." Tails observed "I don't blame them, two Devatrons are attacking the local volcano. I think I'd run

for it too if my enemies were attacking a volcano."

"I still can't believe those Devatron freaks are doing this!" said Scott crossly "I mean attacking a volcano?! Do they have no shame?! Do they even realize the kind of damage they can do if they attack a volcano?!"

"I think they do Scott." said Jessica "They just don't care. The Devatrons care about only themselves after all. I think that's why they're attacking MountAdabat, because they wanna cause a lot of damage."

"But why would the Devatrons change targets so suddenly?" wondered Knuckles "They've still got us to deal with and since we rescued the population of New Mobotropolis the other day, you'd think their first mission would be to recapture everybody. Why are they attacking Adabat now?"

"Maybe they're planning to expand their forces to the other regions of Mobius and began conquering the entire planet?" suggested Taran "I dunno, I'm only guessing here. If they are expanding their conquest then why have they only sent two Devatrons? I doubt two Devatrons can take over Adabat."

"I have a feeling in the base of my tail-feathers that there is more to this horrible attack on Adabat then we know about." said Felix "We shall find the answers once we engage them."

"I'm sure we will Felix but not before I put a few dents in them first!" declared Amy, summoning her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand.

"How does she do that?" asked Scott "She just pulls hammers from nowhere!"

"We have no idea." said Tails modestly "She's probably magical. Although it'd be nicer if she was magical in more then just summoning hammers from nowhere."

"Pardon me?" asked Amy.

"Nothing." said Tails quickly.

"Hey Mobians, I'm going out on a limb here but, is that your volcano over there?" asked Marik, pointing out to sea.

Everybody looked in Marik's direction and they saw the unmistakable shape of Mount Adabat out in the distance. The volcano was still standing tall and proud but there were explosions going off all around it and rocks were sent hurling into the waters. Those explosions were being made by Steelor and Triton's vehicles firing their weapons at them. The Devatrons were clearly trying to penetrate the volcano and they were doing an excellent job at it, the Mount Adabat was already full of large holes and the Devatrons didn't appear to be stopping anytime soon.

"That's it. That's Mount Adabat. Well spotted Marik." said Tails.

"Those monsters are destroying it!" shrieked Jessica "We've gotta stop them and fast or Adabat will lose a famous landmark and if they hit the lava inside the volcano, they will cause a terrible explosion that might cause a lot of damage!"

"But what can we do?" asked Knuckles "This thing hasn't got weapons has it?"

"It hasn't but the saucer doesn't need weapons because we already have one." noted Tails "Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic, you go out and stop the Devatrons from wrecking Mount Adabat. We'll back you up."

Metal Sonic obeyed Tails' order and he flew out of the saucer. Metal Sonic left the Mobians behind and he headed out to Mount Adabat. Tails turned the saucer around the Mobians followed Metal Sonic, the vehicle hovering above the water as they went across it. As for Steelor and Triton, they'd finished making holes in Adabat and they decided it was now time to drain Mount Adabat dry of it's lava. The four containers would hopefully have enough room for all the lava in Mount Adabat. If not then it didn't matter because they'd have enough anyway. The vacuum pipe's extended out from under the vehicles and they went into the volcano. The Devatrons switched the pipes on and the pipes started their work. They began to suck up the lava in Mount Adabat. They were powerful vacuums too so the Devatrons would be done with this in no time.

"Looks like we're due for an easy time Steelor." said Triton "We're already draining the volcano and no one's interfering with us."

"Well the Mobians don't have a way of finding out what we're up to since they're stuck in the wilderness." crowed Steelor "They know nothing about what we're up to now. We'll be done before they can even find out."

"I agree Steelor and once Devion sees all this lava we'll be bringing back, he'll be well pleased with us!" laughed Triton "Unlike Raicor who couldn't even lower a shield generator, we will not fail this task. At times I think me and you are more capable at being Devion's right hand men then Raicor himself."

"Well it's not our place to questions positions and ranks in the Devatron army." noted Steelor "Raicor's second-in-command and we're not and we can't argue against it or we'll be executed. At least we're leaders of battle squads, that's good enough for me."

"Being leader of something is better then nothing I suppose." said Triton "Still, Devion will be pleased with us when we come back to *The Doombringer* with a fresh supply of lava to recycle in fuel for our ship. I hope the fuel thanks are mended at last so we can get to refuelling *The Doombringer* ."

Then suddenly, Triton's vehicle jerked slightly and Triton fought with the controls to get the hover vehicle stable again. Metal Sonic had blasted it from behind with his torso laser but Triton didn't know who it was. After he stabilized his vehicle, He opened the cockpit window and he stood on top of his vehicle.

"What in the name of Deaveron was that?!" he cried.

"Something with a lot of power I'm guessing." said Steelor, opening the cockpit window to his vehicle and standing atop of it "Whatever it is, we've got to destroy it before it interferes with our mission."

Triton and Steelor drew out their respective weapons and they looked out for the attacker. Triton held his saw-stick at the ready and kept a keen eye out for anything out of the norm. Then suddenly, Metal Sonic spin-dashed Triton directly off his vehicle and sent him

hurling down towards the water! But Devatrons were waterproof so water would have no effect on them. Triton however managed to avoid falling into the water anyway by activating his jetpack. Triton flew up into the air and he glared at Metal Sonic, who hovered in the air and prepared to do battle. The two airborne warriors were about ready to massacre each other.

"So what's this then?" snorted Triton "A robot Sonic clone? Puh! It looks even worse then Sonic himself! If I were to guess, that Dr. Eggman person who tried to ally himself with us built you didn't he?"

Metal Sonic nodded.

"Well in that case, I get to destroy ANOTHER Eggman robot then!" cackled Triton, thinking back to when he destroyed Katherine after Raicor turned down Eggman's proposal.

Triton charged towards Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic dodged the attack and he scanned Triton's data. Unfortunately, scanning Devatron data wouldn't be of any help to Metal Sonic given how there's not much to scan and the Devatrons were invulnerable by build, not magic or supernatural power so scanning Devatron data wouldn't make Metal Sonic invulnerable too. All it would do really is make Metal Sonic as strong as the Devatrons. Metal Sonic rocketed towards Triton but Triton swiped at him with his saw-stick. The weapon clipped Metal Sonic on the head and left a long scratch. Metal Sonic couldn't feel pain unlike Eggman's other robots so that attack didn't effect him in anyway. Metal Sonic retaliated by clawing at Triton but Triton raised his arm to defend himself from the attack. Metal Sonic kicked Triton and knocked him backwards but Triton came back at him and slashed him across the torso with his saw-stick. Metal Sonic then spin-dashed Triton and knocked the saw-stick out of his hand. The saw-stick landed directly in the pilot's seat of Triton's vehicle luckily so he wouldn't lose it in the sea. Triton go furious and he boosted his jetpacks. He rocketed towards Metal Sonic and rammed him directly out of the sky. Metal Sonic hurtled down towards the ground but he managed to position himself just right so he could stop himself from falling into the water with the aid of his jetpack. Metal Sonic stopped just centimetres above the water and he flew back up after Triton. Triton flew towards Metal Sonic and he rammed down again. Metal Sonic however, hurtled into the

base of Mount Adabat instead of the water. Metal Sonic picked himself up and spin-dashed Triton in the shoulder. The attack left a scratch on Triton's shoulder that was only superficial at best. Metal Sonic swerved around and he spin-dashed Triton again. Metal Sonic then grabbed Triton by the neck and he boosted his jetpack to maximum power. Metal Sonic rocketed into MountAdabat with Triton held in front of him. The two robots crashed straight through the rocky walls of MountAdabat but Metal Sonic didn't keep on going until they ended up in the lava crater of the volcano. He stopped before they could burst through the walls of the inside of the volcano and he turned around and rocketed back out, still holding Triton. He came out of the inside of MountAdabat and he threw Triton down into the base of MountAdabat. The crash sent chunks of rocks hurling into the air. The Mobians finally made it to MountAdabat and Tails stopped the saucer. They had seen the smack down and were well amazed at what Metal Sonic had just done.

"Wow! Metal Sonic got him!" cried Tails.

"And here's me thinking he'd be smashed to pieces in seconds!" blurted Marik "He's hit that Devatron good and hard!"

"We can only hope that that attack finished it off though." said Jessica grimly "They are invulnerable so I don't think throwing him into a volcano is going to get rid of the Devatron that easily."

Jessica, unfortunately, was right too. Despite that powerful attack, Triton was still functioning! The Devatron picked himself up and be brushed some rocks off of himself. He looked completely alright! He didn't have a dent or a scratch on him anywhere! Metal Sonic hovered down to Triton and couldn't believe his attack didn't work.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! Do you seriously think throwing me into a mountain is gonna break me?" sneered Triton "I've been thrown into titanium walls before and I've had chunks of meteor hit me and I've survived that blow! We Devatrons are just too tough for you to break so you may as well just give up already!"

Metal Sonic's response was to fly down to Triton and prepare to attack him. Triton cackled at him and he flew up towards Metal Sonic. He grabbed Metal Sonic and he carried him up into the sky.

Metal Sonic tried to break free but Triton's grasp was too much for him. He couldn't break free. Triton stopped flying up and he held Metal Sonic above his head.

"You threw me into a mountain? Well let's see how you like it!" crowed Triton, throwing Metal Sonic directly into Mount Adabat just as Metal Sonic had done so to him already.

Metal Sonic hurtled straight into Mount Adabat near the top of the volcano and the impact of his crash sent rocks flying everywhere. The attack had definitely hurt Metal Sonic more then it hurt Triton. Metal Sonic was dented and scarred from that attack. Metal Sonic pulled himself out of the crater he'd made in the mountain and he flew back towards Triton. Big mistake though for Triton just raised his leg and kick-slammed him down into the water. Metal Sonic landed straight into the water with a big splash but he was waterproof so he survived the dip into the ocean. Metal Sonic flew back out of the water and he spin-dashed Triton in the head again.

"Come on Metal Sonic! You can do it!" Tails said "Crush that Devatron!"

"How ironic it is for you to be cheering on your enemies instead of beating them up." snickered Marik "I bet it feels strange doesn't it?"

"Not as strange as having you on our side Marik." muttered Tails.

"I think Metal Sonic needs help." said Knuckles "He doesn't look like he can keep on fighting for much longer."

"If my jet shoes weren't broken and disabled, I'd fly up there and help Metal Sonic." said Marik "As is, I am grounded so I am of no help."

"I'll fly up there and help." said Felix, plucking two of his tail feathers and stiffening them into clubs "And since Tails has flying capabilities, he can assist me in assisting Metal Sonic."

"OK Felix, we'll help Metal Sonic." said Tails "Everybody else, see if you can get that other Devatron."

Tails twisted his tails around one another and he flew up into the sky

with Felix following him closely. They headed towards Triton just as he and Metal Sonic were engaged in a fist fight. Felix struck the first blow by flying into Triton and walloping him with his clubs. Triton hurtled forward but he regained his balance and turned around to glare at his attacker. Tails, Felix and Metal Sonic all hovered there, ready to beat him up and take him down.

"How marvellous, some Mobian flesh comes onto the scene." said Triton "Good, I was hoping I'd have something to soften my chrome knuckles on. So how did you Mobians come to know of our attack in this country then?"

"We're not telling you that Deva-Creep!" snapped Tails "All you should know is we're here to stop you from destroying Mount Adabat!"

"Oh fie upon you Mobians, we're not here to destroy the volcano at all." retorted Triton "We're here to drain it dry of it's lava. What we want the lava for is none of your business."

"So you're not here on pernicious purposes?" said Felix "You're here simply to empty Mount Adabat of it's lava substances? That is a relief."

"No it's not Felix." said Tails "They obviously want that lava for something and what they want it for is bound to be for something bad. We have to stop them from taking it."

"Just try it you cantankerous, fatuous little brat!" snarled Triton "I am one of Devion's strongest soldiers! I will take you all on if I have to!"

"If that is what you wish to do then so be it." said Felix "We'll all smite you together foul beast!"

Triton just cackled at them and the fighters all flew towards each other. Down below, Amy threw one of her Piko-Piko Hammers at Steelor's vehicle and the hammer sent the vehicle wobbling. Steelor almost fell off his vehicle but he managed to regain his balance and keep himself standing. Steelor jumped off of the vehicle and he landed on the base of Mount Adabat. He had his handlebar sword weapon and spinning saw at the ready. He saw Knuckles, Amy,

Marik, Scott, Jessica and Taran in the hover saucer and Amy steered the saucer close to Mount Adabat so they could get onto the volcano and fight Steelor. They all leaped out of the saucer and they prepared to do battle.

"So it appears we're going to have resistance after all." muttered Steelor "No matter, I'll get the honour of terminating some of Sonic's friends just to make Devion happy."

"You're the one that's getting terminated freak!" retorted Amy "Brace yourself for an horrendous beating courtesy of us!"

"If Sonic, your strongest warrior, can't beat our leader then what chance do you canailles have against us?" snorted Steelor "You'll all break as easily as Sonic did when our leader got him after burning the forest village down!"

"Guess again Devatron!" sneered Knuckles "Sonic's just fine. Devion didn't break him, he only dislocated his spine but I fixed it. He'll be back on the battlefield in no time!"

"So it appears Devion didn't break him after all." said Steelor grumpily "So what if he didn't? Sonic couldn't beat us before so he's nothing to worry about."

"I'll make you eat those words you jerk!" yelled Amy, rushing into hammer Steelor's head in.

Steelor lunged for Amy and they raised their weapons high above their heads as they prepared to attack each other…

Back on *The Doombringer* , Raicor was fixing the last of the fuel tanks. The Devatrons, surprisingly enough, were ahead of schedule in these repairs and were almost finished. Raicor fitted on some new parts on this fuel tank he was working on. As Raicor began working, the Devatron second-in-command began thinking to himself about recent events. And about Devion.

Why am I second-in-command to that fool Devion? he thought to himself *Devion is an incompetent leader! He relies heavily on*

sadism and breaking his opponent's spirits instead of just killing them already! We almost lost some of our battles because of Devion's stupidity! And now thanks to Devion not finishing Sonic and his friends off now, we lost a bunch of prisoners we could have executed! Devion needs to learn that he can't keep prolonging the hero's existence for his sadistic pleasure! He's giving the heroes ample time to strike back and if they do, they might strike back strongly and we may never win this conflict! Well I'm not putting up with Devion's poor leadership skills!

Raicor picked up a welding tool and in his anger, he crushed it in his claws instead of actually using it to weld the fuel tank's parts back together.

Granted under his rule we have fourteen worlds under our control but we came close to losing many of those conflicts! Raicor continued thinking to himself, throwing the crumpled tool down on the floor *And it's all because Devion's too sadistic for his own good! Under my rule, the Devatrons would win every conflict without ever coming close to losing! Under my rule, the Mobians would already be vanquished and Mobius would be ours already! Well no more! It's time I dropped the subtlety! It's time I got rid of that fool Devion and took his place as leader! And it's fortunate that I have the perfect method of getting rid of him…*

He began to cackle aloud to himself as he thought of his plan to overthrow Devion and take his position as leader. He was suddenly interrupted though by the sound of Devion's voice booming through an intercom in the fuel tank room. Devion clearly wanted him for something.

"Raicor! Meet me up in the cockpit immediately!" barked Devion.

"Yes my lord." said Raicor, putting down his tools and leaving the room as quickly as he could.

I will not prolong my act any longer. he thought to himself as he strode down the corridor to catch a lift up to the cockpit *I will do it now, get rid of Devion and let the Mobians have him so that I may have the satisfaction of seeing Devion humiliated and helpless! Then I shall destroy him along with the Mobians!*

It seemed Devion's days as leader were over for Raicor now had a plan and that plan was going to work, especially since Devion didn't know anything about this. Raicor opened up an elevator door and he stepped into the lift. The doors closed behind him and the lift took him straight up to the top floor of *The Doombringer* . The lift doors opened and Raicor stepped out of the lift. He strode up the corridors and he entered the cockpit where Devion was. He was standing in front of a window and staring directly out of it. Raicor walked up to Devion and he reached behind his back. He pulled out a small disc-shaped object and he patted Devion on the back, attaching the object to Devion's back. Devion began to wonder what Raicor was patting him on the back for. Raicor had never patted him on the back before.

"Why Raicor are you patting me on the back?" asked Devion coldly.

"I am merely showing my gratitude for your leadership skills by giving you a friendly pat my lord." lied Raicor.

"Well refrain from doing an action of this kind." said Devion with a voice colder then ice "Only the flaccid fleshling life forms do a ridiculous action like this."

"My apologies." said Raicor "I will not do it again. So why do you wish to have me in your presence then my lord?"

"I only wish to ask you how goes the work down in the fuel tank room." explained Devion.

"The repairs are almost finished." reported Raicor "The fuel tanks will be ready for when Steelor and Triton return here with the lava supplies we can recycle into fuel for the ship."

"Excellent Raicor." said Devion "As for Steelor and Triton, they've encountered resistance from the Mobians but they have the situation under control so far. How the Mobians have come to know of this I do not know. They've been exiled to the wilderness, there's no technology of any kind there to keep them up to date on the current situation."

"Those Mobians are full of surprises my lord." said Raicor "If I were

to guess, they've probably gone to another place where there's technology they can use to keep informed on what's going on. Maybe they've gone to another city."

"So they're violating their exile order huh?" growled Devion "Next time I see those loathsome Royal Fighters, I may have to punish them even further. I've already broken Sonic, I will break all the other fighters if I have to."

"That sounds good my lord." said Raicor, reaching into his back and pulling out a remote device for the disc object he'd placed on Devion's back "Those Mobians will wish they hadn't decided to defy us like this."

He then pressed a button on the remote and the disc-object emitted a powerful electromagnetic pulse that ran through Devion's circuitry. Devion let out a loud, haunting wail of anguish as he was electrocuted by the pulse. Even though electricity had no effect on Devion, EMP shocks were a different matter. And this pulse had been specifically made by Raicor to do one thing. Put him out of action. The pulse went through Devion's body and the Devatron leader felt like he was about to explode. The pulse finally stopped and Devion collapsed down onto the floor. The disc-object slid off his back and lay beside him, smoking slightly since it was now useless. It had done it's job and that was it. Devion tried to pick himself up…only to find out his arms wouldn't move! He couldn't even feel his arms and legs! His limbs had been disabled by the pulse! That was Raicor's plan all along, disable Devion so that he wouldn't be able to stand back up and he wouldn't be able to stand against Raicor.

"My…my limbs! I cannot feel them!" cried Devion "My body! It's…It's disabled! What…what's happened to me Raicor?!"

"You have been zapped by an electromagnetic pulse Devion." explained Raicor "A pulse with disabling capabilities. A pulse that I created."

"You…created?!" snarled Devion "You…you did this to me…didn't you?!"

"I did." sneered Raicor "I attached this EMP emitter to your back and disabled you with it. You will never move again Devion. The only thing that will move on you now is your eye. Not much of a leader now if you can't even move are you?"

"Why…why did you do this Raicor?!" growled Devion "I thought you were my loyal second-in-command! Why are you betraying me like this!"

"Believe me Devion, it's all for a good cause." Raicor assured Devion "Your heavy reliance on sadism has almost cost us many victories in the past and it's costing you now. If you'd just finished the Royal Fighters off instead of prolonging their existence for your pleasure, we wouldn't have lost those prisoners and have damaged fuel tanks. You are not good enough to be a leader Devion so I am taking command. I will do much better then you."

"You are not fit for command!" shouted Devion "You do not have the skills needed to lead the Devatrons! If you get rid of me, we will not be able to win this battle!"

"Oh we will Devion." said Raicor "Especially as I will just destroy the Mobians here and now instead of playing with them for sadistic pleasure. The Devatrons will prefer me over you once I lead them to victory on this planet!"

"The Devatrons will not accept you as leader Raicor!" growled Devion "They will execute you for treason and fix me up so that I may function again!"

"They will not." said Raicor "For I am handing you over to the Mobians and they will keep you prisoner. I will blame the Mobians for your disabling and the Devatrons will rely on me to "rescue you". Instead of rescuing you though, I will just kill you along with the Mobians. As invulnerable as we are, not even a Devatron will survive being hit by a missile or a bomb from this very ship. As I destroy them though, I will fool the ranks into thinking I destroyed you by accident and then they will rely on me to be leader."

"Raicor, if it wasn't for the fact I am disabled, I would tear out your circuitry and rip your armour open!" roared Devion.

"Well Devion," said Raicor, removing Devion's cape and attaching it to his own shoulder "You are disabled so you cannot stop me. Now I shall use *The Doombringer* 's scanners to find out where the Royal Fighters are so that I can give you to them. I'm sure they'll have a nice prison cell to put you in. I can almost see the humiliation on your face now as you end up being a prisoner for the Mobians."

"You do realize if you give me to the Mobians, they can use me against the Devatrons?!" retorted Devion "They may find out some vital information about the Devatrons if they use me for research!"

"It will not matter for I will destroy you and the Royal Fighters together." noted Raicor "They may use you for research but they will not get the time to use any information against me."

Raicor began tapping keys on the control pad and he set the scanners of *The Doombringer* to find out where the Royal Fighters were. The scanners found them and displayed their coordinates on the screen. Raicor cackled to himself.

"They're in another city." he said "Not far from this city. I can just fly you over to the other city and drop you off there."

Raicor grabbed the disabled body of Devion and he opened the cockpit windows. He spread out his mighty wings and he flew out of the cockpit and headed to EmpireCity. Little did Raicor realize is that someone was watching him leave and that someone was none other then Devion's most loyal minion Tronic who had just arrived in the cockpit in time to see Raicor leave with Devion in his arms. The Devatron began to wonder what was going on and began to suspect if there was a hint of treachery creeping around *The Doombringer* at this moment. So Tronic decided to investigate by looking at the recorded evidence from the security cameras around *The Doombringer* …

Back over at Adabat, the Mobians and Devatrons were all in combat with one another. Tails, Felix and Metal Sonic were having an air-to-air showdown with Triton while Knuckles, Amy, Scott, Jessica, Taran and Marik were fighting Steelor on the base of the volcano. Triton

retrieved his saw stick from his vehicle and he swiped it at his enemies. Tails and Felix ducked as Triton swung the weapon at him whereas Metal Sonic flew up to dodge it. Metal Sonic tried to dropkick Triton in the head but Triton blocked the attack by holding his weapon in front of his head so Metal Sonic hit the saw-stick instead. Triton walloped Metal Sonic with the saw-stick and sent him hurling into MountAdabat. That crash seemed to damage Metal Sonic even more. Metal Sonic looked like he wouldn't hold together much longer after that attack. Felix was next to attack the Devatron. Felix walloped Triton as hard as he could with his tail-feather clubs but try as he might, he couldn't harm Triton in anyway. His clubs were completely useless against the Devatron's invulnerable chrome armour. Felix then remembered that the Devatron weak spot is the visor so he aimed for Triton's visor. But Triton caught Felix's hands and made him drop the clubs. Then, while still holding Felix, he kneed the peacock directly in the gut and made him gasp. Then Triton threw Felix down into the water. Felix landed into the sea with a big splash but the peacock wasn't down for long. He came back up to the surface and he flew out of the water. Felix plucked two more tail-feathers and straightened them into clubs as he flew back up to Triton.

"I may have lost my clubs, but when you're a peacock, you always have spares." said Felix.

Triton saw the peacock coming towards him and he flew out of Felix's ways, causing Felix to zoom straight past him and continue straight up. Felix stopped flying up and he flew back down to Triton. He tried to club Triton in the visor again but Triton swung his saw stick at Felix and lightly nicked him across the face. The peacock squawked in pain and he clutched his face, which was trickling with blood from that thin cut Triton had left on him. Triton then held his saw stick with the flat side of the saw blade facing up. He raised the weapon above his head and he smacked Felix directly on the top of his head with it, sending Felix hurling into MountAdabat. Felix hit the volcano and the impact ended up leaving him weakened and unable to get back up. Triton cackled evilly and he put his saw-stick away. He deployed his arm cannons and he was about to shoot Felix until Tails sneaked up behind him and covered Triton's visor with his hands. Triton couldn't see now. The furious Devatron began flailing

about madly in a desperate attempt to throw Tails off of himself. Tails held on tight as Triton tried to get him off of his head.

"Blasted, wretched child! Remove your hands from my visor!" he ordered.

"No!" cried Tails "I'm gonna keep you distracted so Felix and Metal Sonic can have a clear shot at you!"

"In that case, I'll just use you to take the brunt of their attacks!" crooned Triton.

Before Tails could work out what he meant, Triton swung around for he heard Metal Sonic coming towards him with his fists raised. Triton bent forward so Tails was now in Metal Sonic's path and Metal Sonic punched Tails before he could stop himself. Metal Sonic's attack threw Tails directly off of Triton and he fell down to the ground. He just managed to stop himself from falling into the sea and the twin-tailed fox flew back up to Triton. His head was still swimming from that attack Metal Sonic accidentally launched on him. Triton cackled and he fired his arm cannons at Tails. Tails manoeuvred around the blasts as Triton fired them but they were just the distraction. Triton drew out his saw stick and he slashed Tails across the forehead with it. Tails screamed in pain and he gripped his bleeding forehead. It hurt so much that Tails couldn't even stay focused on the battle. Triton put both his feet together and he gave Tails a terrific kick that sent him hurling into MountAdabat. Tails hurled into the volcano and he lay in on the hard rocky surface of the volcano, groaning in pain. He still had his hand over the cut on his forehead and he grimaced tensely. Triton was just about to finish off Tails by flying towards him and preparing to cleave him in two with his saw stick but Metal Sonic grabbed Triton, flew towards MountAdabat and used him as a cushion as the two robots hurtled into the volcano. Triton was unharmed by the attack of course and he just backhanded Metal Sonic away from him. Metal Sonic hurled backwards and Triton flew after him, ready to dissect him with his saw stick.

Down below, Amy and Steelor clashed weapons with one another. Amy walloped Steelor with her Piko-Piko hammer and Steelor slashed at her with his handlebar sword. Amy defended herself with

her hammer but Steelor's weapon left some heavy gashes on the hammer. Amy tried to wallop Steelor again but Steelor just sliced the weapon into three parts. The hammer collapsed to pieces before Amy. Before she could summon another hammer though, Steelor pinned Amy against the wall and then he plunged his weapon into the wall on either side of Amy. The blades were pushed deep into the rocky wall and the handlebar shaped handle was around Amy's neck. The pink hedgehog was trapped against the wall thanks to the sword. Amy desperately tried to free herself but she couldn't pull the sword out of the wall, it was embedded to deeply and she was too weak to pull it out. Steelor stood ominously before Amy and he held his saw blade to Amy's face.

"Now let's see what a Mobian brain looks like." he crooned wickedly, activating the deadly weapon and preparing to cleave Amy's head clean open.

Before he could even do that though, Taran shot him with the handheld laser cannon he had. The blast pinged harmlessly off Steelor's armour but Steelor could do without someone shooting at him while he prepares to kill Amy so he switched off his saw blade and he deployed one of his arm cannons. He fired at Taran's weapon and the blast destroyed it instantly. Taran dropped the now useless weapon and instead, ran over to fight Steelor physically. But unlike his younger brother, Taran wasn't a very skilled fighter and was more of a shooter then anything. Steelor backhanded Taran straight into the water with one hefty smack. Taran fell into the water with a splash and Steelor cackled at him. But his victory wasn't to last. Scott and Jessica both stepped in and they began throwing energy spears at him.

"You may not be here to destroy our volcano, but we can't let you have it's lava!" yelled Scott "Who knows what you're gonna use it for!"

He had heard Triton mentioning this to Tails earlier so he now knew they weren't here to destroy the volcano. But stealing lava was a sign of something bad so Scott was determined not to let the Devatrons have it. His energy spears all ricocheted off of Steelor's armour but the lynx wasn't finished yet. He threw a mighty energy enhanced punch at Steelor and sent him hurling across the base of

the volcano. Steelor landed heavily on the other side of the base but he was back on his feet in no time and he charged towards Scott and Jessica. Jessica gave Steelor an energy enhanced uppercut that knocked Steelor down on his back but the vicious Devatron wasn't finished yet. Jessica tried to punch Steelor in the visor but Steelor grabbed Jessica's arm and activated his saw blade. He was about to chop Jessica's hand off but Jessica saved herself by throwing an energy spear into Steelor's visor with her other arm. The attack broke Steelor's visor and the Devatron screeched in pain. He was blinded and he could not see anything now.

"Yaarrgggghhhh! My vision is impaired!" roared Steelor "I will disembowel each and every one of you freaks for that!"

"And how can you do that if you can't even see us?" said Jessica smugly, giving Steelor an energy enhanced punch that threw him backwards again.

Steelor hit a solid lump of rock and he lay on the rocky terrain, wondering where he was. Marik and Knuckles decided to step in and finish off the blinded Devatron. But Steelor didn't need his vision to fight. Steelor had excellent audio receptors. His hearing was as good as his vision. Steelor had the best hearing of any Devatron, mainly because he used to practice fighting blind back on Deaveron. Marik jumped into the air and he was about to let Steelor have it but Steelor heard him coming and correctly predicted where he was. He uppercut Marik and sent him hurling into Knuckles. Marik landed directly on top of Knuckles and the echidna was knocked down onto his stomach with Marik on top of him. Knuckles pushed Marik off of himself and he ran up to Steelor. Knuckles began throwing punches at the blinded Devatron. Relying only on his hearing, Steelor blocked every single attack Knuckles threw at him and Steelor roundhouse kicked him into the sea. Knuckles splashed into the water but Knuckles managed to swim back to the volcano and he climbed out of the water. Steelor heard him coming out though so he ran over to him and kicked him back into the water. Marik leaped on Steelor and gave him a good electric shock with his metal hand. But, as Raicor stated to Miranda Mongoose, electricity doesn't hurt Devatrons, it makes them feel stronger. Steelor grabbed Marik and threw him into the wall.

"Nice try whoever that is." said Steelor "But electricity does not harm us. It enhances us."

"Well then I'll just have to change tactics then!" retorted Marik, throwing an energy wave at Steelor.

The wave swept over Steelor and the Devatron was thrown into the water. Steelor wasn't in there for long though. He leapt out of the water and he landed straight on top of Marik. Marik gagged at the top of his voice as Steelor stood on his back. Steelor activated his saw blade and he was about to cleave Marik in two but Knuckles came in and uppercut Steelor off of Marik.

"Thanks spiky fists." said Marik sarcastically.

"Don't mention it." muttered Knuckles "Just fight the Devatron already!"

But before they could continue the fight, the two hover-vehicles began bleeping. Steelor knew what that noise meant. It meant the cases were full and their mission was complete. They had the lava needed to recycle into fuel for *The Doombringer* . Steelor ran off and felt the side of the wall. He was looking for where Amy was and since he couldn't see, he had to feel for her. He kept going until his hand felt Amy's face. He'd found her and now that he had, he yanked his sword out of the wall, freeing Amy and giving him his weapon back. He leaped up into the air, following the sound of the bleeping, and he landed directly in the seat of his vehicle. He retracted the vacuum pipe and turned his vehicle around.

"We've got what we came for Mobians." crowed Steelor "So we shall now be leaving."

He closed the cockpit window and set his vehicle to auto-pilot back to *The Doombringer* . It would not be a good idea for him to fly his vehicle if he couldn't see where he was going so the auto-pilot would guide him instead. The Mobians could only watch helplessly as Steelor fled the scene. Triton saw Steelor leaving the volcano, meaning that the vehicles had gotten as much as they could carry and it was time to leave. Triton however decided to get rid of Metal Sonic first since Metal Sonic wouldn't let him go. Metal Sonic tried to

attack Triton again but Triton sliced him in two with his saw stick, destroying Metal Sonic and leaving him victorious. Triton flew down to his vehicle, seated himself, retracted the vacuum pipe and flew away as fast as he could. He began to cackle to himself as he left the Mobians behind.

"We win again!" he crowed "We've gotten what we've come for and the Mobians are left biting the dust! I can't wait to see Devion's face when he sees this glorious supply of lava we have!"

But as we all know, Devion won't BE there to congratulate Steelor and Triton when they come back to *The Doombringer* thanks to Raicor betraying him…

As for the Mobians, they were well distraught with this.

"I can't believe it! They got away!" moaned Scott, punching the wall furiously and making rocks fall as it was an energy enhanced punch.

"And with MountAdabat's lava!" added Jessica "I don't know what they want it for but it can't be good! I bet they're gonna use it as a weapon or something!"

"We can all agree on one thing though, the Devatrons won and we lost and it's all the fault of you morons!" blamed Marik "If you put a bit more effort into your fighting and maybe destroyed the vehicles first instead of fighting the Devatrons then this wouldn't have happened!"

"Look who's talking!" snapped Knuckles "You barely did anything yourself Marik and you didn't think to destroy their vehicles did you?!"

"I would have done if I didn't have to help you hapless halfwits in the battle instead!" retorted Marik "Face it, it's all your fault you failed!"

"You're to blame just as much as we are Marik!" ranted Knuckles "You didn't contribute much to the fight and you got your ass whupped just like we did!"

"Stop bickering all of you!" screamed Tails, flying weakly down to the base of the volcano "The Devatrons are getting away and all you're

doing is stalling for time by arguing with each other! We can't stop the Devatrons if all we do is argue!"

"Tails is right!" said Amy "We're supposed to be a team! Even if we don't like each other we should still work together!"

"Will you blasted Mobians knock it off with your pontificating already!" growled Marik "I do not care if we're supposed to be a team, it doesn't mean I'm going to act like a team player! I'm only in this to defeat the Devatrons! It doesn't mean I have to start playing nice to you all and start treating you like team mates!"

"Nobody said you had to." retorted Tails "But you can at least stop arguing with us all the time can't you?"

"I shall try and not to start quarrels with any of you next time." fumed Marik "Now let's return to Empire City so we can report to your queen about your failure."

Tails decided to say nothing more about this as all it was going to do was start another argument. The Mobians all climbed back into the hover saucer and they headed off back to Empire City where a big surprise was waiting for them…

Raicor arrived at Empire City at long last and he found the Empire Research Centre. He guessed the Royal Fighters would likely be in there so he threw Devion straight at the doors of the lab. Devion crashed through the doors and slid across the floor towards the Royal Fighters. Raicor flew away back to *The Doombringer* after doing that. Devion slid across the floor of the laboratory and he came to a stop just at the feet of Sonic the Hedgehog. Sonic looked down at Devion and he leaped backwards in surprise.

"Devion?!" he shrieked.

"Devion's here?!" cried Sally "Oh my gosh! Royal Fighters! Get him!"

"Cease your hostile intentions child, I am completely harmless now." muttered Devion.

"Yeah right and I'm the King of Robotropolis." muttered Sonic sarcastically.

"I am serious Sonic." said Devion "Raicor has betrayed me and has disabled my body. I cannot move at all. I am completely at your mercy now."

"How do we know you're not trying to fool us?" asked Nicole sternly.

"If I was functioning properly, would I by lying down at the feet of my enemies instead of standing tall before them?" noted Devion.

"Maybe not." said Nicole "But this maybe a clever act you're putting up to trick us. Well we are not falling for it."

"I assure you foolish girl, this is not a trick of any kind." said Devion, getting annoyed at the fact the Mobians were being obstinate "Raicor has betrayed me and disabled my body! I cannot move at all! He's intending to have you take me prisoner so that I may bear the humiliation of being your captive and then he's going to destroy you all and take me with you."

The Royal Fighters all looked at each other in disbelief. This seemed all seemed a little sudden. Raicor's loyal to Devion and then he stabs him in the back? Then again, they didn't know what went on with the Devatrons when they weren't in battle so they didn't know everything about Raicor. Not to mention, Raicor was planning to destroy them all and take Devion with them? The Mobians were grateful that Devion had given them this information but what could they do about it? *The Doombringer* likely had missiles or some other powerful weapon that would wipe them out so they'd have to sabotage this plan and fast.

"I think I believe you now Devion." said Sally "But why are you telling us what Raicor's up to? Don't you want to destroy us too?"

"I do but Raicor plans to destroy me as well." said Devion "So I want you Mobians to stop Raicor's plan so that I may live."

"We will stop Raicor's plan." said Sonic "But only so we can live, we won't be doing this for you Devion."

"I know." muttered Devion "So Sonic, tell me how you are still able to stand with a broken back?"

"You only dislocated it doofus, you didn't break my back." noted Sonic "Knuckles fixed it though but I have to wait until it heals first before I can get back to kicking your butts."

"It appears I should have put more force into my slam." said Devion dryly "I thought your back would break quite easily so I didn't think to slam you hard enough. A mistake I shall rectify once I can get my body functioning again."

"You won't get that chance Devion." said Sally sternly "For you will be confined in the Empire City MPD prison station. Wilson, Mandy, Bunnie and Geoffrey, take him down to the prison immediately."

The fours Royal Fighters obeyed Sally's command without a moment's hesitance. They all picked up Devion's disabled body and took him away to the MPD prison station. Even though it had been destroyed by Super Scourge during the time Scourge super powered himself, it had long since been rebuilt and was ready to take prisoners again. And Devion was going to be one of them. The moment Devion was taken away, Sonic turned to Sally.

"Why are you letting him live?" asked Sonic "Couldn't we just get Wilson to plunge his weapon into Devion's visor and kill him?"

"I want to see if he can be redeemed first." said Sally "If not, then I'll see if Tails can reprogram him. Devion is a robot so I'm sure he can be reprogrammed. If he can then we can win the Devatron war without anymore bloodshed and the Devatrons will end up being heroes instead of villains."

"Are you sure the Devatrons will just switch sides just because their leader's now a good guy?" asked Sonic unsurely.

"I hope that happens." said Sally "Otherwise we're just wasting time trying a plan that's doomed to fail."

Devion's captured certainly provided ample opportunities for the Mobians. But would any of them work? And would Devion's capture

be for the better? Or for the worse…?

Bet that was unexpected wasn't it? Um...maybe not THAT unexpected but hey, at least Devion's a prisoner now! But for how long? Join me next time in this ongoing saga...

Thanks for pointing out those errors I made in the previous chapter Kratos Pwns. I edited the previous chapter and re-uploaded it with the errors fixed. Thank you.

For Better Or For Worse

Story 108: For Better or For Worse

Steelor and Triton arrived back at *The Doombringer* with their supply of lava to recycle into fuel for the ship. The two Devatrons were well pleased that their mission had been a success and that they've managed to beat the Mobians, even though Steelor needed repairing because his visor was broken. Steelor and Triton flew to the side of *The Doombringer* and a door slid to the side, letting the two Devatrons into the ship. The two Devatrons flew into the ship's hangar bay, they landed their vehicles and they climbed out of them. They also detached the four containers at the back of the vehicles and began pushing the compartments to the exit of the hangar bay. Steelor pushed his compartments while following the sound of Triton's footsteps so he could deliver the containers to the fuel room. Steelor and Triton left the hangar bay and they took the compartments down the corridor and over to the fuel room. The repairs in the fuel room were finished at last and the fuel tanks could take the lava they had stolen from Mount Adabat. The two Devatrons arrived at the fuel room and they pushed the containers into a corner and they left them there for the time being. Some Devatron soldiers were already in the room. They wandered over to the containers and prepared to start recycling it into fuel. Triton left the fuel room with the blinded Steelor following him behind closely, using the sound of Triton's footsteps to guide him. The two Devatrons went into a lift and they took the lift up to the top floors of *The Doombringer* so they could report their success to Devion. The lift quickly whisked them up to the top floor and after arriving, the Devatrons left the lift and they headed to the cockpit. But to their surprise, when they arrived into the cockpit, only Raicor and Tronic were there. Raicor got up from Devion's throne and he faced Steelor and Triton whereas Tronic stayed where he was and remained silent.

"Steelor. Triton. I trust you justify your presences with news of the fortunate kind?" asked Raicor gruffly.

"We do Raicor." said Triton "We succeeded in our mission. We have eight containers full of lava and the Devatron soldiers in the fuel room are preparing to utilize it and convert it into fuel for *The Doombringer* ."

"Although we had a bit of resistance from those pesky Mobians." said Steelor, pointing to his broken visor.

"I can see you are blinded Steelor." said Raicor "I shall arrange for you to be repaired immediately."

"Where is Devion?" asked Triton, looking around the cockpit "We wish to report our success to him."

"I'm afraid that's when the good fortune ends." said Raicor in a fake tone of concern "The Mobians attacked Devion with an EMP bomb and they disabled his body. They've taken him prisoner and are hoping to extract information from him."

"What?!" shrieked the two Devatrons in unison.

"This is impossible! The mighty Devion is too powerful for any silly fleshling to get the best of!" cried Triton.

"Not to mention, how can the Mobians have EMP bombs?!" protested Steelor "They can't possibly have that technology! They don't look that technically advanced!"

"Remember what Devion says." noted Raicor " "Never underestimate the locals of the planets we invade. They will have many a surprising fact about them". And we have underestimated those Mobians. Their technology is greater then we gave it credit for."

"It appears so." grumbled Triton "Technically advanced or not, we have to rescue Devion from those heathens immediately before they crack Devion open and use him against us!"

"Indeed so." lied Raicor "Once *The Doombringer* is refuelled, we will take flight and invade the city they have evacuated to. With our ship and our forces, this rescue mission cannot possibly fail. The Mobians will be overwhelmed and their new hiding place will be

wiped out."

"Let us hope we can get going nice and quickly before those Mobian freaks start interrogating our leader." said Triton grimly.

"Somehow, I doubt the Mobians are that savage." thought Steelor "And even if they are, they'll never get Devion to crack."

"Still, a Devatron in the possession of the Mobians can be dangerous to us so we must rescue Devion." said Raicor "And we shall begin once *The Doombringer* is refuelled. Triton, you take Steelor to get repaired and then after you've done that, start preparing the troops for the attack force."

"Yes Raicor." said Triton, leading the blinded Steelor away.

Triton left the cockpit with Steelor following him and Raicor turned to Tronic.

"Tronic, you are in charge of the cockpit." he said "I am going to prepare for the invasion."

"Yes Raicor." droned Tronic.

Raicor left the cockpit, leaving Tronic alone to keep an eye on things. As for Tronic, he knew the truth about Raicor. He had seen the security camera footage and it clearly showed Raicor disabling Devion's body and then taking him away. Devion's capture was not a capture, it was Raicor selling Devion out to the Mobians and hoping to seize power. Well Tronic wasn't going to let Raicor get away with it. He was loyal to Devion and would only serve a leader who was given the position after the previous leader fell. He would not serve Raicor, he was going to rescue Devion. The reason he didn't tell Steelor and Triton the truth was because he feared Raicor would rip him apart for it and the two would likely not believe him anyway for they believed Raicor was loyal to Devion. Now he was alone, Tronic could carry out his escape plan. It involved getting Devion functional again and getting a Mobian in trouble at the same time. Tronic opened the cockpit windows and he climbed through the open windows. The windows closed behind him and Tronic leapt off of *The Doombringer* . He was rather high up but a long fall was

not going to do anything to him. Tronic landed on the ground and he headed off to Empire City. He used *The Doombringer's* scanners to find out where Raicor was heading with Devion and the scanners pin-pointed him at Empire City where Raicor dropped Devion off and returned back to the ship empty handed. Tronic had uploaded the coordinates into his own head. Because of this, he knew where Devion was and since Raicor wanted Devion to be a prisoner of the Mobians, that obviously meant Mobians would be here and then he could use one as a scapegoat for his plan. Raicor was going to be in serious trouble when Devion returned to *The Doombringer* fully functional once again…

Over in Empire City, Queen Sally Acorn decided to pay the disabled and imprisoned Devion a visit at the MPD station. The squirrel queen was feeling a little nervous about all this. Her heart was beginning to beat quickly. Would Devion listen to her? Or was she just trying to reason with someone who didn't care what anybody else had to say? Whatever happened, at least Devion couldn't hurt her since he was disabled. Sally entered the MPD station, and was met with a gracious salute from the policemen there.

"Your majesty." said Melchett the Hedgehog, the chief of the police of EmpireCity.

"At ease gentlemen." said Sally.

The police stopped saluting and they stood respectfully to the side as Sally headed off to the cell blockade. Melchett began wondering why Sally was here and what she wanted but he didn't dare interfere as you can't interfere with royal business. Sally entered the cell blockade and walked down the blockade until she found Devion's cell. Devion was sitting against the wall with his arms lying lifelessly beside him. How helpless he looked behind glass and with his body completely functionless sans his visor. It made Sally feel pretty good inside to have the Devatron leader all locked up in Mobian custody and the one she had to thank for that was Raicor, even though he was doing it for his own needs only. Sally took a deep breath and she opened the cell door. She walked into Devion's cell and Devion glared at her.

"Well, well." he crooned dryly "The high and mighty Queen of Mobotropolis steps down from her seat of royalty and descends down to the prisons to mock the lowly and imprisoned. You're just like all the other royals I've slaughtered in the past. Arrogant, vain and always showing off to the lowly life forms at the best available opportunity to make themselves feel grander."

"I am not here for any of those reasons you've stated Devion." said Sally coldly, sitting down in front of the disabled Devatron leader "I'm here to talk to you."

"And what pray tell could you possibly wish to converse to me about?" muttered Devion.

"About you Devion." said Sally gently "I've been wondering a few things about you so please, answer me this question: why are you like this? Why are you a planet conquering overlord? Why do you wanna do this to everybody?"

Devion sighed in annoyance, suggesting he was tired of answering this question. Sally wasn't the only person who's asked him this before.

"You are one of the many who's questioned me on this subject my child." answered Devion "And here is your answer…"

"Please tell." said Sally intently "I'm listening."

"Long ago, when time began, the Devatrons were created from the very core of Deaveron itself." explained Devion "We were primitive and much like any other machine existing at the time. I was merely a soldier at that time. Then, a hundred years later, enter our glorious ruler the great King Hardigm, the greatest Devatron ever to exist. Hardigm invented our invulnerable casings and strived to make us the perfect species. Hardigm had great visions of peace and prosperity throughout the universe and he felt that the Devatrons could make that happen given our intelligence, excellent sociability, strength, power and invulnerability so he strived to make us the greatest peace defenders of all time."

"Really?" said Sally in surprise "Wow, I never would have guessed

that about you Devion. What happened to change you all into murderous monsters though?"

"The universe happened." muttered Devion "But first, let us start at the time of our peace defending: After inventing our armour, Hardigm decided to give us all a test run. We invaded a planet named Valo, a planet full of malicious creatures that like to prey upon the weak and the infirm. We destroyed them all and Valo is now an empty planet devoid of any life. Hardigm was impressed with us and decided we were all fit to fight for peace. So we began helping other inferior races defeat their enemies while defending Deaveron from our enemies. But nobody was grateful to us for our efforts save a few individuals. They just saw us as sticking our hides in where they don't belong and that we have no right to interfere with our battles. Some races even thought we were villains and they tried to destroy us. I was livid with this but Hardigm insisted they were a little shaky since they have never met us before and they will grow accustomed to us over time. But they did not. They feared beings with power as great as ours would end up turning to the dark side and end up dooming them, not saving them. So some races began challenging us for superiority. We always won of course but then came the Knights of Krococ. They attacked us, thinking they were preventing a coming apocalypse by getting rid of us. We defeated them but…they killed King Hardigm."

Sally's eyes widened. As much as she hated Devion for his evil, she couldn't help but feel sorry for him. That must have been awful. He was only doing good for the universe and this is how they get repaid? By having their king killed? Some people are just so ungrateful aren't they?!

"After the death of King Hardigm, we were all distraught." continued Devion "I was more deeply affected by the death of our glorious king then anybody else. I vowed on the oil that flows in my circuitry to avenge King Hardigm. And that way involved wiping out everything in the universe and repopulating it with Devatrons. After Hardigm's death, I began to see the universe for that it is: uncivilized, savage and out of control. A void of space full species and races with nothing but greed, thirst for power and hunger for dominance in their foul hearts. We offered to protect the universe and they turned their

backs on us and scoffed at our attempts and tried to destroy us because they feared us. So I am going to return the favour by destroying them all and repopulating them with Devatrons. Once I have achieved my goal, I will avenge King Hardigm at long last and I shall fulfil his wishes. I shall bring eternal peace to the universe and nothing bad shall ever happen again."

Sally had been surprised by everything Devion had said. She would never have guessed in a million years that Devion's past was like this. She began to feel a little sorry for Devion. He was only trying to help protect everybody and the races of the universe just tried to destroy the Devatrons. But still, Devion was evil now and what he was doing was evil. She could not forget that.

"That was an interesting story Devion." said Sally "And I can see the pain you're feeling from neglect and the death of your king. But the ends do not justify the means. What you're doing may have good intentions, but it's still evil. You can't just kill everybody because you think you're the superior race and that everybody else is savage and uncivilized. I bet not every race in the universe has even done anything to you. I know from reading history books that no Mobian has ever had any conflict with Devatrons."

"Not every race has tired to terminate us but why give them the chance?" hissed Devion "They will all perish too. Every race in the universe must be converted into Devatron kind and the universe shall be at never-ending peace at long last."

"I know what you mean Devion but it's still wrong." said Sally, putting her hands on Devion's shoulders and staring directly into his visor "You're killing innocent alien races out there just because they tried to destroy you and they killed your king. Some maybe deserve it but you can't just take your anger out on everyone. Besides, wouldn't a universe full of nothing but Devatron life be a vapid place? I mean, you'd all look the same and every planet would have nothing but Devatrons. And what would you do once you've completed your goal? Everything in the universe has a purpose Devion and you're just taking them all away. So many purposes destroyed and what purpose will you have after the universe is full of nothing but Devatrons?"

"My purpose is to bring peace to the universe my child." said Devion coldly "And I will bring it in any means necessary. King Hardigm did not specify what needs I may take to achieving the Devatron goal so I may do whatever it takes to correct the universe and make it a prosperous place with no more warfare, bloodshed, crime and prejudice. And nothing, not even your pontificating, can divert my goals. I will wipe out every race in the universe and fulfil the Devatron purpose. Whether you like it or not you royal brat, I am going to make the universe a Devatron populated place and that is all there is to it."

Sally stared at Devion in horror. Her attempts had all been in vain! Despite her best arguments and valid points, Devion refused to deviate from his goals and reform himself! Devion clearly had no redemption in him! So much for reforming him! Sally was so angry with Devion she stood up very straight and kicked him in the chest as hard as she could. Then she pushed Devion over onto his side. Since he was disabled, Devion couldn't get back up. He was stuck lying there on his side.

"You horrible, chrome-plated monster!" yelled Sally "I try to reform you for the good of not just me, the Mobians and everybody else in the universe but for you as well and you refuse to listen to me and turn me down flat! It's clear there's no hope of redemption for you Devion! I hope Raicor does destroy you!"

And with that, Sally stormed angrily out of the cell and closed the door behind her. The glass door descended down and closed, preventing anyone from getting into Devion's cell. Sally left the cell blockade in a huff and headed back to the research centre. As for Devion, he could only lie on his side and mutter to himself.

"Unfortunately for you Queen of New Mobotropolis, you may get your wish." he murmured "And you will be destroyed WITH me once Raicor commences with his plan…"

Back at the Empire Research Centre, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and Team Chaotix were chilling out in the big laboratory. Tails appeared to be working on something and he was working

quite vigorously, not showing any signs of stopping or slowing down. The others were sitting down and waiting to do something and Vector, who was beginning to recover from his injuries, was listening to a song on his headphones (which did I mention he's always listening to? Even during battles?). The song was a song he, Espio and Charmy had made about themselves some time ago and he loved to listen to it (not surprising considering it' a song the Chaotix made about themselves!).

"Team Chaotix! They're detectives you want on your siiiiiide…" played the song as Vector listened to it *"They're directives, tracking down your criiiiime. Come along for the ride. The truth can run but not hide. For all the game is on now…"*

But Vector's song would have to wait for the moment for Sally Acorn stormed into the lab with a furious expression on her face. Sonic the Hedgehog could instantly tell from Sally's face that the meeting with Devion didn't end well.

"What's up Sally?" asked Sonic "Devion turn you down flat?"

"You bet he did!" grumbled Sally "I had Devion tell me about his past and I offered my thoughts on the subject and he refuses to reform! He just dismissed my claims as merely pontificating! I should have expected this to happen! A being as evil as him isn't capable of being reformed at all!"

"So much for that plan then." muttered Sonic "Well, I guess we'll have to try Plan B then, reprogram Devion."

"That's the only way we'll be able to turn Devion to our side." said Tails "Although I'm not sure how we're gonna be able to reprogram a Devatron. Heck, can Devatrons even be reprogrammed?"

"Well considering the Devatrons are robots and robots have to be programmed in order for them to do something, I assume they can be." thought Sally "But these are robots like no other so who knows what makes them tick."

"Well since Devion's a captive of ours, we can study him and find out." said Sonic "I bet Raicor's gonna feel really stupid when Devion

returns to *The Doombringer* with a change of personality. That is, if we can reprogram him at all."

"We'll do whatever it takes to defeat those Devatrons." said Knuckles "If we can't get Devion to reform himself and if we can't reprogram him then we'll have to do whatever we can to beat the Devatrons."

"If we do not do anything to stop the Devatrons, Raicor will destroy us all." said Shade "Devion said that he's planning to destroy us and take Devion with us and in order to do something like this, he may use that giant ship of theirs to destroy us."

" *The Doombringer* 's fuel tanks were destroyed by Metal Sonic." noted Amy "That ship's not flying any time soon so they can't use *The Doombringer* . They'll likely just all march over to EmpireCity and then bring the city down to the ground."

"And since Raicor knows where we are, he'll lead the Devatrons to us." said Ruben the water-panther "Although how Raicor found us, I'll never know."

"There's a lot of things about the Devatrons we'll never know Ruben mate." muttered Geoffrey St. John "Like how they're invulnerable and so technically advanced compared to other races."

"Speakin' of Devatrons…" said Bunnie Rabbot "There's one headin' towards the research centre right now!"

Bunnie was on monitor duty right now and the monitors had picked up Tronic coming to the centre and Bunnie was horrified to see this. The Royal Fighters were surprised to hear this and Sonic began thinking to himself.

"They're sending one Devatron again?" mused Sonic "You'd think after getting pushed back by sheer numbers, Raicor would use much wiser tactics."

"Something's up and it does not feel good at all." said Espio grimly.

"Well whatever's goin' on, ah'll deal with that Devatron before he can harm someone!" declared Bunnie "Ah feel like using a Devatron for

stress relief right now anyway!"

"You do that Bunnie but for heaven's sake, please be careful." said Sally "We can't afford to have anyone else stuck on the sidelines like Sonic, Vector and Thomas or have any more Royal Fighters lose their lives like Mr. Staffer, Gerald and Kate."

"Ah'll be alright Sally-girl." Bunnie assured the squirrel queen "Ah'm one of the toughest gals around. That Devatron won't know what hit it. If ah need help, ah'll just give ya'll a holler."

With that said, Bunnie ran out of the research centre as fast as her roboticized legs could carry her. Bunnie ran out into the open daylight and looked around for Tronic. She spotted him running towards the centre as fast as he could and the Rabbot went on the offensive. She leaped towards Tronic and tackled him down to the ground but Tronic grabbed the upper half of her robot arm and attached something to it. Bunnie failed to notice this for the device was rather small and she didn't feel it being attached to her. Bunnie pinned Tronic down to the ground and she drew her robot arm back. She punched Tronic in the face as hard as she could, her response being a rather musical sounding groan from Tronic, and she proceeded to do it again and again. She then aimed for Tronic's visor but Tronic grabbed Bunnie's fist and used his other arm to push her away. Tronic got back to his feet and he drew out a long thin blade from his arm. Bunnie bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to do battle.

"This should be fun!" she said cockily "Alright Devatron, ya'll can either git on outta here or get busted up by me!"

"I am here to rescue Devion, my glorious leader." droned Tronic "Raicor betrayed him and put him in your custody and I will not have that. Stand down or be slaughtered."

"So ah guess you ain't willing to leave." said Bunnie "Ya'll will end up wishin' you'd left though when ah'm through with you!"

Even though Tronic had completed his mission, he didn't want Bunnie or the Royal Fighters to get suspicious about him and if he just ran off after showing up, that would definitely look suspicious to

them and they'd probably start wondering what he was up to. In other words, he's keeping up his act in order to fool the Mobians into thinking there's nothing out of the ordinary going on. Bunnie charged towards Tronic but Tronic dodged Bunnie's attack and twirled around rather dangerously. Bunnie ducked in order to avoid Tronic's deadly blade and she tripped Tronic up with a swift kick to the legs. Tronic wasn't down for long though. He picked himself up and he swiped at Bunnie with his blade. Bunnie dodged and she gave Tronic a tremendous uppercut with her robot arm. The uppercut almost took his head off. Tronic shook his head and regained his senses and he retaliated by slashing Bunnie across the chest with his blade. Bunnie squealed in pain and she clutched her chest. Tronic had left a long cut all the way across it. Tronic took advantage of Bunnie clutching her chest in pain and he gave her an uppercut to the chin that sent her hurling through the air. Bunnie spiralled through the air and she landed painfully on her stomach. Tronic marched up to Bunnie and he pinned her down to the ground with his foot. He pointed the blade at Bunnie's head and pretended he was about to stab her.

"You will perish for your insolence cyborg creature." droned Tronic.

But Bunnie wasn't finished yet. She deployed her arm cannon and aimed over her shoulder at Tronic's torso. She blasted Tronic and the Devatron was sent staggering backwards by the power of the blast. Tronic shook off Bunnie's blast and he bent down onto his hands and knees. Bunnie picked herself up but Tronic blasted her with the cannons on his back. Bunnie was thrown across the terrain and she crashed into a lamppost. The force of the impact bent the lamppost and Bunnie groaned in pain. Tronic ran towards Bunnie but Bunnie leaped back onto her feet and she extended her robot arm. The arm extended in length and punched Tronic directly in the face. Tronic staggered backwards and he clutched his face, groaning to himself. Bunnie then decided to add insult to injury by activating her jet boosters and flying towards Tronic. She grabbed Tronic, flew up into the air and then proceeded to throw Tronic straight down into the ground. Tronic flipped himself over and he landed on the ground feet first. Bunnie flew down towards Tronic as fast as she could go. Tronic blasted at Bunnie with his back cannons but Bunnie dodged all the shots. She then drew her arm back and

roundhouse punched Tronic directly in the visor. Tronic was thrown off his feet and onto his back. That terrific punch had left Tronic with a cracked visor. He'd have to repair it quick before Raicor questioned him on it. Tronic decided he'd put up his convincing act long enough so he picked himself up and ran for it as quickly as he could. Despite his cracked visor, he could still see clear enough where he was going since the crack wasn't enough to obstruct his vision. Tronic left EmpireCity and quickly headed back to *The Doombringer* . Bunnie watched him leave and she smirked to herself.

"Ah sent him packing!" she laughed "He'll think twice before messin' with the Royal Fighters! Although he's probably gonna come back with some helpers and give me an even harder time then ah've already had now."

Bunnie went back into the research centre to report to her friends about her "victory" over Tronic. If only she knew the real reason why Tronic was here. Little did Bunnie know was that Tronic had set her up for his rescue plan to retrieve Devion from their custody and she would not be prepared for it…

Tronic arrived back at *The Doombringer* and he leaped up onto the ship's bow section and climbed through the cockpit windows and back into the cockpit. To his fortune, Raicor wasn't here but that didn't mean Raicor didn't know anything about what he had been up to. For all Tronic knew, Raicor might have been in the cockpit only to find him gone and was probably looking around the ship for him right now so Tronic had to make sure that Raicor didn't know he'd gone somewhere and that he wasn't looking for him or something. Tronic activated his comlink by touching the side of his head and he contacted Raicor.

"Raicor." droned Tronic.

"Yes Tronic? What is it?" asked Raicor "How are things going with you in the cockpit?"

Phew! Raicor didn't know he'd gone! Tronic was in the clear! If he

was capable of feeling excitement (an emotion Devatrons don't have) then he'd be having tingling feelings of joy in his circuitry.

"They are going marvellously." droned Tronic "Everything is running as normal."

"Thank you for your report Tronic." said Raicor gruffly "I hope you're ready for combat because first thing tomorrow morning, we are going to level the Mobian's new place of residence so that we may destroy them and rescue our glorious leader."

Tronic really wanted to stab Raicor in the neck for saying that. What a big fat liar he was that big-headed, arrogant, lying treacherous scum-bag! But if Tronic did try to take on Raicor, he'd be dead in ten seconds flat since Raicor was much stronger then he was so he couldn't get the satisfaction of doing so anyway. Instead, Tronic just kept up his little pretence.

"Yes Raicor." droned Tronic "Why may I ask, are we attacking tomorrow morning?"

" *The Doombringer* takes a while to convert lava in to fuel remember?" said Raicor " *The Doombringer* won't be operational until tomorrow morning and in order to make this attack a powerful, terrifying onslaught, we need *The Doombringer* . We'll destroy the Mobians much faster with it and we can save Devion without any problems at all."

"I comprehend the meaning of the situation now." droned Tronic "Thank you Raicor."

With that said, Tronic shut off his comlink. So the attack was tomorrow was it? That was a perfect opportunity for Tronic to commence with his plan! He would carry it out tonight and break Devion out of prison and then have him terminate Raicor for treason! But first, he had to make sure the device he'd planted on Bunnie's arm was going to work. Tronic went over to a storage compartment in the corner of the cockpit and he opened it. The compartment contained the controls for his device. The controls were in the shape of a standard television remote with one button on it and it was silver in colour much like the Devatrons themselves and there was a

screen that would show Tronic what the device was seeing if it was working. Tronic sat down in the cockpit seat and he prepared to test the device. Once he'd tested his device, he'd get his visor fixed before Raicor saw it and then tonight, if the device worked, he'd carry out his plan tonight. And this plan involved getting a Royal Fighter in trouble so that the others would be distracted by it and probably have a trial, and Devion's release from Mobian custody and return to the Devatron faction…

Back at the Empire Research Centre, Bunnie had reported her battle with Tronic to Sally and the Royal Fighters and they were delighted to hear Bunnie had pushed him back and sent him packing. They still couldn't stop wondering what Tronic was here for and why he came alone but they decided not to worry on the matter for it was nothing to be concerned about (or so they thought). Bunnie began wondering off to see how Cream and Cosmo were doing. They were sitting in the corner of the lab and talking to one another. But then the strangest thing happened to the Rabbot just as she was walking over to them. Bunnie's legs stopped directly in their path and Bunnie was left standing completely still. Bunnie looked down at her legs and began to wonder what was going on with them.

"What in the hoo-hah?" she wondered "Why are mah legs not movin'?"

They then started moving again, but not under Bunnie's will. They were moving because of Tronic. Tronic's device gave him total control over anything he planted it on be it mechanic or organic and once the device was activated, Tronic could make the person do what he wanted them to do with merely a thought. On Tronic's controls, he could see what Bunnie was looking at for the device could look in every direction. Bunnie was now facing a desk containing some tools. Tronic decided just to be cruel to make Bunnie destroy one. He then willed Bunnie's legs to start walking. Bunnie's legs carried her over to the desk and Tronic then willed Bunnie's robot arm to reach out and grab a tool. Bunnie stopped in front of the desk and she grabbed a welding tool with her robot arm.

"What are ya'll doin' robot parts?!" cried Bunnie "Ah don't wanna

pick a tool up! Ah don't even wanna be over here! I wanna be…"

Before she could say anything else, Tronic willed Bunnie's robot hand to crush the tool like a plastic cup. Bunnie's hand did exactly what Tronic had told it to. It crushed the welding tool and rendered it useless to anyone wishing to use it. Bunnie gasped in horror and Tronic switched the device off, now knowing it worked and his plan could commence tonight. Bunnie looked at the crumpled tool in her hand and began to wonder why her robot parts had been behaving so strangely.

"Oh no, why did mah arm do that?" she fretted "Ah don't think it's got a glitch or anything, is there somethin' wrong with me…?"

"Bunnie!" cried a voice she knew too well.

It was Tails. Bunnie turned around only to see a very angry looking Tails glaring at her with his arms folded and his foot tapping. Bunnie looked nervous and she smiled weakly at him.

"Um…howdy Tails?" she said pathetically.

"I needed that!" exclaimed Tails, throwing his arms out to the side in an exasperated manner.

"Oh…um…is this yours?" asked Bunnie, looking at the crumpled welding tool in her hand.

"No, it's the lab's but I needed it for my new invention!" griped Tails "Why did you just destroy it Bunnie?!"

"Oh Tails ah'm so sorry." said Bunnie guiltily, putting the tool down on the desk "Ah dunno why ah did it, mah arms and legs just suddenly started controllin' themselves and then mah arm just grabbed the tool and crumpled it."

"Bunnie, I find that hard to believe." said Tails in an uncharacteristically cold voice "Your limbs can't just control themselves, even if they are roboticized. You have total control over them so I doubt your limbs just controlled themselves and did that under their own freewill."

"But Tails, ah swear on mah lil' ol' soul that's what happened!" protested Bunnie.

"Well if it happens again then I'll run a diagnostic test on you to see what's wrong." said Tails "I hope there isn't anything wrong with your limbs Bunnie, you're a real asset to the team and we can't do with you having to be sidelined along with Sonic, Vector and Thomas should there be anything wrong with your limbs that is."

"Ah hope mah limbs are OK too." said Bunnie, rubbing her roboticized left arm and feeling a little shaky about the whole thing "Otherwise ah'm gonna start to get worried. Worried that mah roboticized limbs are takin' over mah body or somethin' horrible like that."

"That would be terrible." said Tails "We have our plates full with the Devatrons already, we don't need another problem to deal with. I wouldn't worry about it Bunnie, I'm sure your limbs are fine."

"Well they seem OK now." said Bunnie "Ah mean, ah can move them by mah self again. Maybe ah just had a weird glitch or somethin' earlier."

"Perhaps." said Tails "Now, since you've crushed the welding tool I was using, I need to get another one."

"If you want Tails, you can borrow mine." said Dr. Eggman kindly, who was working on building yet another Metal Sonic after Triton had sliced the previous model in two earlier "I don't need it anymore and since you're in need of one, I'm going to relinquish mine so you can use it."

"Um…thanks Eggman." said Tails, taking the tool from Eggman, amazed that the fat scientist was actually sharing his tools with him despite being his worst enemy.

"Don't mention it Tails." said Dr. Eggman, grinning widely "Since we're comrades, I feel I should offer them any assistance should they need any."

"I shouldn't get used to it though because once Devion and his

cronies are gone, we're gonna be back to smashing each other's heads in." muttered Tails as he went back to continue working on his invention.

Dr. Eggman just chortled at Tails' statement, knowing how true it really was. Tails began working on his invention while Eggman continued working on Metal Sonic. Bunnie left the two mechanics to their work and went over to Cosmo and Cream like she'd intended to before Tronic controlled her limbs. Even though the idea of losing control over her robot parts bothered Bunnie, she decided not to let it get to her since she didn't want to start worrying everybody and in this battle with the Devatrons, she had to focus and stay on task and not let her worries bring her down or she was going to be unprepared and unfocused on the battlefield. As for Tronic, he was looking forward to tonight. Really looking forward to it for it would secure Devion's release and get Bunnie in a lot of trouble…

Night time arrived and the daytime sky became dark and the stars began twinkling as bright as they always did when they came out. The moon was out and shining as bright as it always did. The Devatrons had all shut down for the night to preserve their power cells except for Raicor and Tronic. Raicor decided to stand guard outside *The Doombringer* and make sure nobody tries to attack the ship while the Devatrons are all sleeping. Tronic, was in the cockpit of *The Doombringer* and he was ready to unleash his plan. He had fixed his cracked visor at last so Raicor didn't suspect anything about him and he'd gone back to Empire City with a toolkit containing the tools needed to get Devion functioning again for he had been disabled by an EMP shock. He'd left the toolkit outside the city and gone back to *The Doombringer* before anyone could see him. The toolkit had been sitting there for the rest of the day and it was still there now, sitting alone in the fields around EmpireCity. The plan was all set up. Tronic had his scapegoat and he was completely in the clear. Raicor didn't suspect a thing about him and the Mobians didn't know anything either. Now was the time to bring Devion home and have Raicor terminated as punishment for his crimes against his glorious leader.

"Devion. You will be imprisoned no more." droned Tronic "Raicor

has taken what is yours and I am going to give it back to you."

He then pressed the silver button on the remote control and activated his device…

Over in the Empire Research Centre, the Royal Fighters were all sleeping in sleeping bags that had been generously donated to them. The centre didn't have any beds to sleep in so they all had to sleep in sleeping bags on the floor. Tails was quite pleased though. He liked sleeping in a room with the sound of machinery humming quietly in his ears. Everybody was snoozing quite peacefully in their bags, even Marik despite the fact he didn't really like sleeping on the floor. Eggman had been forced to sleep in another room because his snoring was way too loud for the Mobians to bear (he snores louder then a warthog). Unfortunately, Bunnie Rabbot, who was dressed in a pink night dress, wasn't going to get any sleep at all. Tronic's device had been activated and Tronic willed her to get up. Bunnie woke up immediately and she got out of her sleeping bag and crept quietly out of the lab. Bunnie left the lab and she began walking through the dark streets of EmpireCity. Bunnie began to wonder what was going on and she noticed she was walking through the streets and she was wide awake, meaning she was not sleep walking.

"Oh mah stars!" cried Bunnie "Mah limbs are doin' it again! They're controllin' themselves and now ah'm walking in the darkness of the night!"

Bunnie tried to stop herself only to find out she couldn't control her organic arm either. She couldn't even turn her head. Tronic's device had complete control over her entire body. Bunnie tried to cry out for help but Tronic willed her mouth to shut and it did. Bunnie couldn't open her mouth and speak. She was stuck in silence and had no control over her body whatsoever. Tronic made Bunnie walk on and on until she reached the outskirts of Empire City. Bunnie was very frightened. What was going on and why couldn't she stop herself? Was this all a really bad dream? Obviously not since she was awake already so what was happening? Was somebody controlling her body? If so then who was it? Bunnie had many thoughts and while she was thinking about who it could be, her body came to a halt and she bent down to pick something up. She'd walked out of the city

and into the meadows around Empire City where the toolkit was waiting for her. She'd picked up the toolkit and now Tronic willed her to go to the MPD station. Tronic had seen where the station was shortly after arriving at EmpireCity and since Raicor had dropped Devion off at EmpireCity to get imprisoned, he had a feeling this is where Devion is right now. Bunnie walked on an on through the city, wondering why she was doing this and what the tool kit was about.

What's goin' on? she whimpered in her thoughts *It's almost like mah body's controllin' itself and it's doin' something! Is my half-roboticization takin' effect on me and it's taken over mah body? Or is somebody controllin' me? If ah'm being controlled then who's doin' it and what are they making me do it for?*

Bunnie would soon find out for she had finally arrived at the MPD station and she marched inside. Melchett saw Bunnie coming into the station and he wondered what she was doing here.

"Hey you!" he said "What are you doing here in the middle of the night young lady? And in your pyjamas too! This isn't a sleepover club you know!"

Bunnie tried to speak but Tronic was keeping her mouth shut with his device. He then willed Bunnie to whack Melchett with the toolbox and knock out the stubborn, ego-driven hedgehog officer. And that's what she did. Bunnie swung the toolbox up and she whacked Melchett in the head with it. The attack knocked Melchett clean out and Bunnie marched on to the cell blockade. Bunnie entered the blockade and she walked down the blockade until she found Devion's cell. Tronic stopped her and made her turn around and face the control pad on the side of the door. He made Bunnie open the cell door and then walk into the cell with the toolkit in hand. Devion, who was still lying on his side, saw Bunnie coming to him and he began to wonder what was going on.

"Well, it appears a Royal Fighter has come to taunt me on my imprisonment before getting some much needed sleep." he muttered "Taunt away if you will, I am incapable of punishing you for it."

"Devion, I have come here to get you back online." Tronic's voice

droned from the device on Bunnie's arm.

"Tronic?" mused Devion "So my loyal servant knows of Raicor's treachery and has come to get me working again so that I may take my title back and kill Raicor for his treasonous ways? Truly meritorious this is. I do not believe in fate but it seems fate is on my side once again."

Bunnie couldn't believe this. A Devatron voice had just droned from somewhere and said he has come here to get him back online. That meant she was being controlled by a Devatron and the Devatron was using her to get Devion working again! Very clever she had to admit but it was going to get her into a lot of trouble for this once somebody spotted her.

"I must commend you on using a nuvo-body-controlling link on a Mobian in order to fix me without having to do it yourself and risk getting found out by Raicor." said Devion as Bunnie knelt down and rummaged through the tool box "That way the Mobians will accuse this cyborg specimen of treason and begin grilling her instead of trying to recapture me. Tronic, you will become my new second in command once Raicor is finished off."

"Thank you Devion." droned Tronic's voice from the device.

He made Bunnie pull out a strange looking tool that fired lasers. He made Bunnie aim the tool at Devion's chest and Bunnie activated the tool. A laser shot out and melted the edges of Devion's chest. Tronic made Bunnie drag the laser all around Devion's chest which caused the chest plate to fall off, exposing Devion's internal mechanisms. Tronic then made Bunnie reach into Devion's chest and pull out a very important battery for him, that had been fried to the core by the EMP shock Raicor had given him. Without this battery, the Devatrons could not function and were stuck having a motionless body with only their minds still functioning. Bunnie put down the battery and she reached into the toolbox. The toolbox contained a spare battery for Devion and once this was equipped into him, he would be completely functional once again. Bunnie inserted the battery into Devion's body and the Devatron leader felt a tremendous surge in his circuits for his body was becoming functional again. Now the battery was inserted, Tronic made Bunnie

put Devion's chest plate back over his chest and then make her use a welding tool to weld the panel back into place. Devatron welding was very quick and efficient so Devion's chest plate was back in place and it was as strong as it ever was. Devion cackled delightedly to himself and he stood back up onto his feet, which he could now feel again. He then began to move his arms and turn his head from side to side.

"Yes…" he crowed happily "I am functional once again! Devion the Dreaded has returned and now I shall deal with that traitor Raicor for plotting to terminate me and seize control over my army!"

He then glared at Bunnie, the Rabbot looking nervous as the Devatron leader looked at her coldly with his evil red visor.

"As for you…" he purred darkly "…you will go to sleep now. And face treason amongst your kind for getting me back online…"

He then proceeded to remove the nuvo-body-controlling link device from Bunnie's arm. Once the link was removed, the person wearing the link was instantly knocked out and would wake up a few minutes later with a bad feeling in their bones. Devion crushed the device in his claws so that Bunnie wouldn't be able to prove she was being controlled and he left his still open cell. He closed the cell behind him so that Bunnie would be trapped and be unable to follow him once she woke up. Devion strode through the blockade but he was quickly confronted by Melchett the Hedgehog, General Chipper and Big Dave. They all pointed their guns at him and they prepared to shoot him.

"Halt Devion!" cried Melchett "You will not leave this prison! You will get back into your cell or be destroyed! This will be your only warning!"

"And I do not heed your pathetic warning." muttered Devion, grabbing Melchett and hoisting him off the ground by his neck "For you cannot stop an invulnerable robotic life form with many planets conquered and under my control."

He then proceeded to crush Melchett's windpipe, killing the police officer instantly and reliving him of his duty. Melchett was no more

and the Empire City Mobian Police Department would need a new leader. General Chipper and Big Dave respectfully stood back and allowed Devion to leave for they did not want to get killed too and Devion didn't bother with them because he was not interested in them. He just wanted to get rid of Raicor and take his position in the Devatron army back. Devion left the MPD prison station and he ran off through the city of Empire City and headed back to *The Doombringer* .

"I hope you enjoyed your brief time as ruler Raicor." growled Devion "Because I am about to put an end to it..."

The moment Devion left, General Chipper called the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters as quickly as he could. He picked up the phone and he dialled their number. The computer monitors in the Empire Research Centre began ringing loudly, a sign that a phone was ringing and the call was for them. Everybody woke up and Sonic, with a yawn, answered the call.

"Hrrum…hello who is it?" said Sonic tiredly.

"You're not gonna believe this!" cried General Chipper "But I went to see the security cameras and I saw Bunnie Rabbot in Devion's cell and she appeared to be fixing him and getting him functional again! We were about to confront her but Devion had already left his cell at the time and now he's killed Melchett and fled for it! Bunnie I think is still in the cell right now!"

Sonic looked like he'd just been stabbed in the groin.

"Say what?!" cried Sonic "Bunnie's fixed Devion and helped him escape?! This can't be true! It can't be!"

"It is Sonic!" cried General Chipper "I saw it all on the security cameras!"

"And Bunnie's not here right now." added Marik, pointing to Bunnie's empty sleeping bag "So what does that tell you Sonic? Does it tell you that your bunny friend is not the friend you thought she was?"

Sonic looked over his shoulder and saw the empty sleeping bag.

That obviously meant General Chipper's story was true and Bunnie had indeed helped Devion escape and get his body functioning again. But why would she do that? That was so unlike her! Something was up and Sonic was determined to find out.

"General." said Sally "If Bunnie's still with you, bring her back here right now so we can grill her on this. I am going to get to the bottom of this before the Devatrons make their next move and before we have to declare an arrest for Bunnie."

"Yes your majesty." said General Chipper.

He hung up and the phone line went dead. Sally turned to Sonic with a grave look on her face.

"This can't be happening!" she said "Bunnie can't be…turning traitor!"

"I don't think she is." said Sonic "If I know Bunnie she'd never do anything like that. Something's up and we're gonna find out. I hope Bunnie is innocent otherwise one of our best Royal Fighters will have to be arrested and we lose yet another Royal Fighter in this battle."

Sally nodded agreeably. Devion's escape was horrifying enough as it was but the very thought of Bunnie turning traitor was even worse. Sally refused to believe that Bunnie was really turning traitor and really hoped that she could prove her innocence. If not then she would have to be arrested and would be doing a lot of time for freeing the leader of the most dangerous race of robots in the universe…

Did you really think Devion was going to stay arrested for long? Of course he wasn't! I'm not the writer to let the heroes stay victorious for long ha, ha, ha, ha! So Bunnie's gonna have a serious grilling and Raicor's gonna get fragged! Or is he? Join me next time for a duel for leadership with the Devatrons and a grilling session with the Mobians!

Hey Erin D., just out of interest, who are your top 10 favourite OCs in this story and why? Just interested! ;)

The Devatron Showdown

Story 109: The Devatron Showdown

Raicor was pacing around *The Doombringer* and keeping a keen eye out for intruders. The Devatrons had had many instances of their ship being attacked at night while they were sleeping and Raicor was certain the Mobians would probably try that tired old ambush scheme on them even though no such attempts had happened yet. Raicor had his trademark double-edged staff with three prongs on each end in hand and he was looking around for any late night attackers. Devatrons had excellent night vision and could see even in total darkness so nobody would be able to sneak up on a Devatron in the middle of the night without being spotted. But it was not total darkness this night, the moon was out and shining as brightly as it ever did. Raicor looked up at the moon and had thoughts on destroying it. The Devatrons had once destroyed a moon while cruising through space and recycled it's remains into Devatron fuel so maybe just to add insult to injury, they could destroy Mobius' moon and recycle it's remains into fuel, even though they already had some fuel now thanks to Triton and Steelor stealing some of Mount Adabat's lava. *The Doombringer* was nicely refuelled and ready to take off again after two days of being grounded and Raicor looked forward to laying siege to Empire City and destroying the Mobians. But Raicor wasn't even going to get that chance. As Raicor began to pace around the side of *The Doombringer* , he heard oncoming footsteps and he pointed his staff at the coming figure.

"Halt! Identify yourself!" he growled "Reveal yourself to me night figure or I will run you through!"

The figure stopped running and glowered at Raicor from the darkness of the night.

"You do not have to resort to petty threatening on me Raicor." said a cold, chilling voice that Raicor knew too well "You abhor me anyway so you may as well just run me through and be done with it."

Raicor's arms began to tremble. The figure stepped into the moonlight and revealed itself to be none other then Devion the Dreaded. Raicor looked like he was going to have the mechanical equivalent of a nervous breakdown.

"D-D-D-Devion?!" he stammered "Wh-wh-what? N-n-no! Th-th-this cannot be! I-I-I-I…"

"Disabled my body, took my rightful position and left me in the hands of the Mobians while you plotted their destruction and plotted to have me destroyed too?" finished Devion, folding his arms and glaring at Raicor with a cold eye "Yes, you did Raicor. But somebody you and I both know took control of a Mobian with a nuvo-body-controlling link and used the Mobian to get me operational again. That Mobian will be bearing the brunt of the Royal Fighter's accusations, meaning there will be no interruptions from our enemies as I rip you apart for trying to terminate me!"

He began to advance on Raicor menacingly, the Devatron second-in-command backing away nervously as Devion prepared to kill him. First though, Devion snatched his cape clean off of Raicor's shoulder and he threw it to the side so that it wouldn't get wrecked in the inevitable scuffle that might come should Raicor foolishly attempt to fight him. It didn't seem likely though for Raicor looked like he was too scared to fight him. He was just backing away as he advanced on him.

"Devion! Please!" begged Raicor, throwing himself down onto his knees at Devion's feet in an act of begging for mercy "I apologize for my attempts! I've realized my mistake and that I am not meant to be leader! I apologize for disabling you! Let me redeem myself! Please! I beg of you!"

But Devion was having none of it. He was not falling for Raicor's lines ever again. He drew out his trademark golden sword, which Raicor had been stupid enough to not confiscate it after disabling him, and he aimed directly for Raicor's eye. The only way to kill a Devatron was stab it through the visor since that was the only part on a Devatron that isn't invulnerable.

"Your pleas fall upon an individual with a dark personality and a cold

temper." said Devion dryly "You fooled me for years with your "loyal second-in-command" act but your cunning and subtle trickery will never gyp me again. Now face your sentence like a true Devatron you snivelling little coward!"

Raicor stopped begging and he awaited his fate, staring directly at the sword as Devion prepared to plunge it into his visor. Devion was amazed that Raicor wasn't even going to resist him and was just going to let him kill him. Devion decided not to waste anymore time and he drew his arm back, ready to make the kill. But Raicor had tricked him again. Before Devion could make the killer lunge, Raicor quickly deployed his arm cannons and he blasted him directly in the face with both cannons. Devion staggered backwards, clutching his smoking face and groaning at the top of his voice. Luckily, Raicor hadn't blinded him but a Devatron head isn't as strong as the rest of it's body so the attack was still very painful for Devion. Devion uncovered his face, only to get a terrific uppercut from Raicor that sent him hurling through the air and crashing down about twenty feet away. Devion picked himself up and he cricked his neck on both sides. Raicor picked up his six-pronged staff and he pointed it at Devion.

"I overthrew you for the good of the army Devion!" growled Raicor "Your sadistic ways have almost cost us in the past and it's gonna cost us now! Under my watch, the Devatrons will wipe out the Mobians in one mighty onslaught and we will have Mobius under our control! Do you want to stop me from achieving that?!"

"I'm all for you leading the Devatrons to victory Raicor." said Devion, strolling back over to Raicor and picking his sword back "But the ends do not justify the means. I will not tolerate you usurping me of my position just so you can get what you wish! I was planning to wipe out the Mobians eventually, I was just taking my time to give them the false hope that maybe they can defeat us at last and then wipe them out in the blink of the organic eye so you did not have to overthrow me so you can do it yourself!"

"Yes I did Devion!" snapped Raicor "Buying your time is foolish as it gives the enemy ample time to counter-attack and it makes our conquest much harder! If we just wiped them out immediately instead of picking and choosing times to destroy them then our

fights would be over much quicker! But under your rule, we cannot get that because you're too arrogant, sadistic and vain to just get it over with and you like to toy with the victims instead of finishing them off already!"

"There is no point to conquest if you do not enjoy yourself while you're at it." retorted Devion, pointing the sword at Raicor's staff and preparing to do battle "If we just won our battles nice and quickly then our path of conquest would be pretty vapid and insipid. That is why I prolong our victim's existence, so that I may enjoy their suffering and misery before I have the pleasure of taking the planet for myself and wiping them all out. That makes our reign of conquest all the more entertaining."

"To you maybe." snorted Raicor "Well I do not wish to follow your lead anymore! If we continue to follow you, we may meet our match and we will lose and fail to avenge King Hardigm! I will be a much better leader then you Devion and I will keep the title anyway I can! Even if I have to terminate you to do so!"

"Then spare me anymore of your pontificating and let this unnecessary battle commence." said Devion coldly "The victor takes leadership title and the defeated gets recycled into chrome for any upcoming soldiers for the army…"

Devion and Raicor drew their arms back and they lunged at each other with their weapons. All hell was about to break loose with the two strongest Devatrons in the entire fleet battling it out with each other and fighting for leadership of the Devatron race…

Meanwhile, Bunnie Rabbot had been delivered back to the Empire Research Centre by General Chipper. Upon arrival, Queen Sally Acorn had taken it upon herself to restrain Bunnie in case her body acted up and she did something else since it seemed she'd turned traitor and had helped Devion get back onto his feet and escape from prison. Bunnie was sat down in a chair with her arms cuffed behind her back and the choice of cuffs used were (of course) laser cuffs so Bunnie couldn't escape. To add more restraint, a pair of laser cuffs were place around Bunnie's ankles. Bunnie was really

worried about all this. She began wondering why she was being restrained like this and why her friends seemed a little mad at her save for a few.

"Is this really necessary Sally?" asked Sonic the Hedgehog.

"Well since it seems Bunnie's turned traitor Sonic, yes it is necessary." said Sally "I'm as reluctant as everyone else is to do this but it has to be done. Hopefully we can find out the whole truth from Bunnie now she's here."

"I still think you're all being idiots." muttered Sonic "We all know Bunnie would not intentionally free Devion and fix him up so he functions again."

"I know Bunnie wouldn't do something like that Sonic but we need to find out what's been going on with Bunnie so we can decide if she's innocent or not."

"If you want my opinion your majesty, you're wasting your time." grumbled Marik "Your cyborg friend is guilty as hell, she has no chance of proving herself innocent."

"And you Marik will shut up because you don't know what's going on either and you're just eager to jump to conclusions because you hate us." said Sally coldly.

"Whatever you royal ninny hammer." sighed Marik exasperatedly.

Sally scowled at Marik but she didn't talk back and instead, just looked at Bunnie. The cuffed up Rabbot could only look back at Sally with a worried expression on her face and her heart racing like mad. Bunnie really was worried on what was going to happen and what everybody was going to think of her being used to free Devion and if they would believe her.

"OK Bunnie." said Sally slowly.

"Sally-girl, please, ah'm innocent!" pleaded Bunnie "Please let me go. Ah didn't wanna help Devion, ah was being used ah swear! Please don't arrest me!"

"Bunnie, clam down please." said Sally "I'm going to ask you a simple question that's all."

But Marik decided to butt in since he was eager for the chance to prove a Mobian guilty of something.

"Why in the name of Mercury did you fix Devion and free him from prison you slimy little snake?!" he growled, pointing a claw as sharp as a spear tip at Bunnie's chest, threatening to stab her with it.

"Ah didn't do it under mah own intentions!" shrieked Bunnie.

"Yeah right and I'm the King of Pluto!" snorted Marik, jamming his face into Bunnie's "We heard from your officers that you went in there, knocked one of them out briefly, went into Devion's cell, fixed him and helped him escape! They saw their security tapes Bunnie and we have their eyewitness statements! You are guilty and you cannot convince me otherwise!"

"Marik please! Ah mean it!" protested Bunnie "Ah was forced into doin' this!"

"So what? You were blackmailed?" sniffed Marik "And here's me thinking you were one courageous Royal Fighter! You're brave enough to take me on but a measly blackmail is enough to make you squirm?! And who blackmailed you anyway? A Devatron?"

"No! Ah wasn't blackmailed at all!" cried Bunnie "Ah was controlled! The Devatron ah stopped from attack the centre earlier put some kind of body controllin' device on mah arm and he used it to control me and rescue Devion! Ah had no idea until ah heard his voice ringing out of mah arm and that's when ah realized ah was bein' controlled!"

"You Bunnie, are thicket then an asteroid storm if you think I'm going to believe such lies!" snapped Marik "If you were controlled by the Devatrons then where's this so-called "body controlling" device then? I see nothing on your arm Bunnie!"

"That's because Devion removed it after ah'd served mah purpose!" shrieked Bunnie.

"The accused: always coming up with crap excuses for anything!" snarled Marik, tipping Bunnie's chair backwards a little due to how far forward he was leaning into her "None of your officers seemed to have noticed Devion removing anything from you and someone as guilty and as subversive as you is not to be trusted! I do not believe a thing you say Bunnie! It's like my dad taught me "Never believe the accused. They are never truthful"!"

"But ah am truthful Marik!" argued Bunnie "Ah'm tellin' ya'll the truth! Ah was bein' controlled by a Devatron and the Devatron used me to free Devion and Devion removed the device after ah was finished!"

"You are going to have to do better then that to convince me you're innocent Bunnie!" snapped Marik "You have no proof you was body controlled and I highly doubt the Devatrons even have that kind of technology!"

"And how would you know Mr. Smarty-Ass?!" sniffed Amy "You only claim to have met the Devatrons once while you were out in space! You can't know everything about them!"

"Please do not offer your input Amy." growled Marik through clenched teeth "I'm trying to carry out a **PROPER** interrogation here!"

"Amy's right to ask you that though Marik!" shouted Tails "How would you know the Devatrons don't have body-controlling technology?!"

"I never stated I know they don't have that technology, I said I highly doubt they have it you moron!" retorted Marik "Besides, my dad's told me that body controlling devices are impossible to make and cannot exist so Bunnie's statement is therefore null and void!"

"Oh and you think that just because your dad said it?" snorted Knuckles "You think everything your dad says is right do you?"

"I bet he does because he's a little daddy's boy!" laughed Charmy Bee mockingly.

Vector and Espio laughed at their little friend whereas Marik began

to fume angrily. That little bit of mockery really riled him. Nobody called him a daddy's boy and lived to tell the tale!

"I will happily counter your argument Marik." sneered Dr. Eggman "I, the absolute genius I am, have spent many of my days tinkering with machinery and the various possibilities they have and we humans have calculated that a machine that can control bodies while difficult to make, it is not impossible to actually make one. We just do not have the technology to make that kind of device yet."

"Wow, you humans are thicker then what Martian legends about them make them out as!" grumbled Marik, his fists clenched and a throbbing vein appearing on his forehead in typical manga fashion "We Martians are years ahead of you disgusting humans technology wise and we're nowhere near close enough to making a device capable of that! Even Korark, the former best scientist of Mars can't make something like that so my dad IS right! Body-controlling devices are impossible to make!"

"They are not impossible to make Marik!" snapped Eggman "Neither humans, nor Martians it would seem, are advanced enough to make that kind of device that's all!"

"Would you two stop playing technology war and shut up?!" bellowed MandyMouse "This is getting us nowhere! Whether body-controlling devices are possible are not, we have no idea how technically advanced the Devatrons truly are so we can't even begin to assume Bunnie's right or wrong on this subject! If we maybe studied them, we would know but we don't so we can't make these stupid claims!"

Marik and Eggman stopped bickering with each other and they fumed at each other but they said nothing more and turned their backs on each other.

"And anyway, I believe Bunnie." said Mandy "I know Bunnie very well. I knew her before I even met blue dude and I know she would never, ever do something like that under her own intentions."

"I concur with Mandy." said Wilson the Dog "I've known Bunnie as long as she has and I know she hasn't got an evil bone in her body.

Even the roboticized parts."

"Aw thanks sugah." said Bunnie sweetly.

Wilson and Mandy just smiled at Bunnie. Marik however, was still not willing to give up (he's the embodiment of obstinacy, what did you expect?).

"Do keep it in mind you two clots that appearances can be deceptive." noted Marik "I learnt that lesson the hard way when a friend of my uncle's, who seemed to be a decent soul, betrayed him and tried to defy my dad's laws. The Devatron's appearances are definitely deceptive I mean, the second-in-command whom Devion refers to as Raicor seemed like Devion's most loyal sod and yet he betrayed him and gave him to us to keep as a prisoner! So Bunnie can quite easily be one of those deceptive people who uses her skills as a manipulator to make you think these things about her and then strike the moment you let your guards down!"

"Marik, ah'm no manipulator!" retorted Bunnie "Ah couldn't manipulate anybody even if ah wanted to! Ah doubt ah could even so much as manipulate Cream the Rabbit!"

"Pretty words Rabbot." scoffed Marik "But people speak many words and few words they say are actually true so you're not fooling me Bunnie!"

"Marik you jerk, why are you so convinced that Bunnie's evil?!" shouted Sonic "Bunnie doesn't know the meaning of the word "evil" so why are you trying to set it in stone that she's evil?"

"Because Sonic, unlike you poor gormless idiots, I am not going easy on her!" replied Marik, pointing sharply at him "In an interrogation, you should never believe your victims and you must never give into them or be fooled by their lies!"

"That's ridiculous!" argued Espio "What if the victim's actually telling the truth?!"

"Yeah, you shouldn't just conclude that just because they've done something wrong, it doesn't mean they're guilty!" put in Vector.

"You Martian freaks may do interrogations like that but you are on Mobian grounds and we do not do things the way you do!" snapped Geoffrey St. John "You will stop being so stubborn Marik and do things the way we Mobians do them!"

"Besides, why do you care about this anyway?" asked Sonic "You hate us! You should be thrilled at the idea of Bunnie going bad, which I know she's not!"

"I would be Sonic, if I wasn't fighting WITH you instead of AGAINST you!" argued Marik "I've allied myself with you now to help defeat the Devatrons and I will not tolerate anybody helping those chrome plated creeps! A traitor to you as a traitor to me at the same time Sonic so that's why I care about the whole thing! You should be thankful I'm thinking about you idiots for once!"

"You're not thinking about us at all Marik!" retorted Tails "You only care what you want and what you want is to prove Bunnie guilty just to make us mad!"

"I think I'm agreeing with Tails." said Shade coldly and then she pointed accusingly at Marik "And your desire to prove Bunnie guilty is making me suspicious. How do we know YOU'RE not the one who's been controlling Bunnie and making her free Devion and you're just playing prosecutor to hide yourself?"

"Are you begging to have your head ripped off Shade?!" roared Marik "Why the bloody hell would I be helping the Devatrons win when I'm on your side?!"

"Well you hate us more then you hate the Devatrons." noted Shade "And Knuckles tells me you're a bit of a deceiver so maybe you've deceived us into thinking you hate the Devatrons when you're on their side and you're actually trying to hinder us, not help us."

"Shade, think about it for a second there." said Marik, advancing on the echidna in the black headband and black bodysuit "Would I be working for the Devatrons when they want to bring peace to Mobius once they've conquered it?! I hate peace so why would I help the Devatrons bring peace to the world when I want to replace it all with warfare, malice and ruination?! And also why would I be on their

side after Devion SLASHED ME ACROSS THE FRIGGING CHEST?!"

He pointed to the scar he had from Devion slashing his chest with his sword. Shade face-palmed herself for not thinking about those facts and she muttered the word "stupid" under her breath.

"Your claims are invalid Shade and your argument was pointless!" growled Marik "Next time you want to argue with me, have a valid point instead of just giving me pure space crap!"

"OK! OK!" said Knuckles hastily "You've proven your point Marik! Shade's sorry she accused alright?!"

Shade shot Knuckles a glare, suggesting that she wasn't sorry she accused Marik after all.

"I apologize for digressing so needlessly Knuckles." said Marik "Now back onto Bunnie, if she can prove to me at all that her claims are true then I will be convinced she's innocent."

"How can ah prove ah'm innocent if Devion destroyed the only evidence ah had?" protested Bunnie desperately.

"That's your problem you filthy bunny!" retorted Marik "You can't prove yourself innocent so therefore, you are guilty of treachery and this interrogation is over!"

"Not so fast Marik." said Nicole the Lynx quickly "Maybe the security tapes at the MPD station can prove Bunnie right. If there's recorded evidence of another voice and Devion removing something from Bunnie's arm then that can prove Bunnie's innocent and her claims are true."

"That's a good idea Nicole." said Bunnie "Like ah said, when ah arrived in Devion's cell, a Devatron voice rang out from the device planted on mah arm and told him what was happening and after the Devatron made me fix Devion, Devion took the device off mah arm and for some reason, it knocked me out when it was removed."

"That might explain why you were sleeping when General Chipper dragged you back here." mused Sally.

"Here's something I've noticed that nobody else seems to have." put in Ruben the Water Panther.

"What might that be then Ruben?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian "Please tell us."

"Bunnie's body was just fine UNTIL she fought that one Devatron that came here this afternoon." noted Ruben "Then after that, she suddenly starts playing up and this happens. Earlier in the afternoon, she broke Tails' welding tool and supposedly claimed her limbs did it themselves and then all of the sudden, she goes down to the MPD station and frees Devion and claims to have been controlled. Doesn't this all seem like a weird coincidence to anyone? Or am I just over-analyzing everything?"

Everybody, even Marik stopped and thought for a moment on Ruben's analysis.

"Those are very good points Ruben." said Cosmo "Bunnie was OK until the Devatron fought her and then her body acts strange. That proves Bunnie's claims are correct."

"Miss Rabbot is innocent after all." said Cream happily "Hooray!"

"Chao!" piped in Cheese the Chao, Cream's little pet.

"Not it doesn't you disgusting little Seedrian!" growled Marik, jamming his face into Cosmo's face and making her feel nervous "How do we know that Bunnie and the Devatron weren't just fighting to put up a pretence and really, they're working together in helping Devion? That voice Bunnie claims to have heard from her arm must have obviously been a communicator, not a controlling device!"

"You stay away from Cosmo you creep!" yelled Tails, pushing Marik away from Cosmo "And what you're saying is pure stupidity Marik! Why would Bunnie be working with the Devatrons when they're trying to kill us all and conquer our planet?"

"Traitors can do very extreme things Tails, even betray their entire world and help someone conquer it or destroy it without a care for anyone." noted Marik "And while I don't know what Bunnie does

behind her backs, for all we know the Devatron she fought might have contacted her and asked for an alliance."

"If that happened, ah would have reported it to ya'll." retorted Bunnie "And ah would have said no to the alliance if ah had been offered it."

"You would say that wouldn't you riffraff?!" growled Marik.

"Marik! That's enough!" screamed Sally "We're going to study the recorded security camera footage from the MPD station and find out if Bunnie's claims are true and that's the end of it so everybody please be quiet!"

Marik fumed at Sally furiously, his eyes were twitching furiously and his fingers were itching to close around her throat and strangle her. But Marik did as he was told and he shut up while Sally phoned the MPD station. He just though Sally was wasting time and he looked forward to what happened when Sally's studies came up with nothing. Sally phoned the MPD station and General Chipper answered her.

"Hello?" he asked.

"Hi General Chipper, may we please see the recorded security footage of what happened a few minutes ago?" asked Sally "We're hoping to find out if Bunnie's innocent or not."

"OK." said General Chipper "I'm sending the footage directly to the computers of the centre which you're currently stationed in. You're wasting your time though. The footage won't tell you anything different from what we've stated."

Sally sighed loudly. Why did everybody but her and the Royal Fighters seem to be against Bunnie right now even though she's been on their side for months on end?! Sally hung up and General Chipper sent the tapes to the computer screens that flashed brightly in the darkness of the room. The tapes arrived in the email box and Sally opened the email. She clicked on a file marked "security tapes" and she played them. She watched the tapes very closely and kept a keen eye out for anything useful to her. One bit of footage was filmed from the front of Bunnie and it showed her knocking Melchett

out, and interestingly enough, looking very guilty about it. That must mean she didn't want to do that but had been forced to by something. Then she watched the next bit of footage. This was filmed in the cell blockade and the camera was facing Devion's cell. She couldn't quite see what was going on in Devion's cell since the camera was mounted in the ceiling and the position it was in didn't give Sally a clear view of inside the cell. The security footage had recorded audio too and Sally listened to it very closely. What she heard was concrete evidence that Bunnie was innocent:

"Well, it appears a Royal Fighter has come to taunt me on my imprisonment before getting some much needed sleep." came the voice of Devion from within his cell "Taunt away if you will, I am incapable of punishing you for it."

"Devion, I have come here to get you back online." came Tronic's voice which was ringing out from Devion's cell and from Bunnie's arm.

"Tronic?" mused Devion "So my loyal servant knows of Raicor's treachery and has come to get me working again so that I may take my title back and kill Raicor for his treasonous ways? Truly meritorious this is. I do not believe in fate but it seems fate is on my side once again."

Sally's eyes narrowed down to gleeful slits as if she was thinking "Bingo! to herself.

"I must commend you on using a nuvo-body-controlling link on a Mobian in order to fix me without having to do it yourself and risk getting found out by Raicor." came Devion's voice again "That way the Mobians will accuse this cyborg specimen of treason and begin grilling her instead of trying to recapture me. Tronic, you will become my new second in command once Raicor is finished off."

"Thank you Devion." droned Tronic's voice from the device.

The Mobians all gasped in surprise and they all smirked at Marik whereas Marik couldn't believe his ears. He'd been wrong about the whole thing and he'd failed to prove Bunnie guilty! It seems he can't beat Sonic and friends at ANYTHING, not even an interrogation!

Marik resisted the urge to throw a fit over this and instead, threw his arms up in defeat and wailed angrily.

"Fine! I was wrong! Mock me to the contents of your very hearts if you will!" he grumbled "Bunnie's innocent and I made a total fool out of myself! Go on! Mock me!"

"I would Marik but I don't think it's worth it now." snickered Sonic "I knew Bunnie was innocent all along and I'm glad all my friends agreed with me."

"And I'm glad I was right on the fact body-controllers can actually exist." gloated Dr. Eggman "I knew I was right about them. I'm amazed the Devatrons are the ones that have made them though, their technology is quite advanced isn't it?"

"Well, from that lovely piece of evidence," said Sally with a smile "We can safely declare Bunnie not guilty and she will not be arrested and put on trial for this."

With that said, she happily went over to Bunnie and un-cuffed her wrists and ankles. Bunnie stood up from the chair happily and the Royal Fighter all went over to give her some friendly hugs each to show how happy they were she was innocent.

"Ah'm so glad ya'll believe me now!" cried Bunnie "Thank ya'll for givin' me a chance and listening to me unlike Marik the Martian who was willing to have me arrested regardless of what ah said!"

"Don't mention it Bunnie." said Sonic "You all stood up for me when I was put on trial so I was returning the favour. Besides, I believe in all of my friends, even if it seems they're guilty. This hedgehog is always willing to listen to reason instead of jumping to stupid conclusions."

"Hooray! You're innocent!" cheered Cream "I'm so glad you were telling the truth!"

"I didn't lose faith in you at all Bunnie." said Cosmo.

"Nether did I luv." said Geoffrey with a sly smirk and a wink of the eye that made Bunnie blush "I knew you couldn't have done

something like that under your own motives."

"I'm more too glad over the fact Marik was sorely proven wrong then anything." said Knuckles with a smug smirk on his face "Still, I'm glad you were right Bunnie."

"Well everybody, now this silly business is over, let's all get back to sleep so that we can rest up and be ready to fight the Devatrons again tomorrow." said Sally "We're gonna need to be at our best if we're to start fighting the Devatrons again."

"I agree Sally…yawn…" yawned Sonic "If I don't get enough sleep, my running is not at it's best."

"You still can't fight anyway." noted Sally "Your back's not fully healed yet."

"Not to worry Sally." said Dr. Eggman "I have an invention that shall get Sonic back in fighting condition."

"Really?" said Sonic.

"Yes Sonic." said Eggman "Something I've been building in secret since I've been here in order to surprise you. You'll see what it is tomorrow."

"Sounds great Eggman." said Sonic "Well, goodnight everybody."

"Goodnight Sonic." said his friends as they crawled back down into their sleeping bags and prepared to fall back asleep.

Sonic lay down in his sleeping bag and closed his eyes. He couldn't wait to see what invention Eggman had built for him in order to get him back in fighting condition again. He hoped it would be effective and that it would work to perfection otherwise he wouldn't be in tip-top form. He began to wonder what was happening with Devion now he's free and probably back at *The Doombringer* . He imagined that since Raicor had overthrown Devion, they were likely beating the tar out of each other…

…and of course, that's what they were doing. Devion and Raicor were locked in mortal combat with each over the title of leadership. Tronic was watching the whole fight from the cockpit window. Devion and Raicor were evenly matched so far and they were just clashing weapons with each other at lightening speed. Devion swung his sword and Raicor swung his staff and they clashed loudly as they hit each other, sending sparks flying and the clash of their weapons ringing in their audio receptors. Devion raised his sword up high and he swung the sword downwards at Raicor. Raicor raised his staff and blocked the attack. Raicor then kicked Devion in the gut while their weapons were pushing against each other. Devion staggered backwards and Raicor tried to stab him in the visor but Devion blocked the attack with his sword. The prongs on Raicor's staff were around the blade of Devion's sword as Devion kept it away from his visor. Devion then sharply twisted his sword to one side and yanked the staff out of Raicor's grasp. The staff was thrown down onto the ground and Devion swung his sword at Raicor. Raicor blocked the blow with his arms held out in an X shape and he pushed Devion back. Raicor picked up his staff and he slashed Devion across the chest but given his invulnerability, it didn't do any damage. Raicor then thrust the staff at Devion's neck but Devion swung his sword upwards and blocked the attack. Devion slashed Raicor across the face with his sword, the tip of the sword just narrowly skimming his visor, and then he gut punched Raicor with his other hand. Raicor doubled over and Devion elbowed him down onto the ground. Raicor was now lying squat on the ground and Devion kicked him up into the air. As Raicor hurtled upward, Devion slashed at him and left a serious gash on Raicor's arm. Devion's sword was one of the few things that can come close to penetrating Devatron armour. Raicor landed painfully on the ground and he clutched his arm. Devion stood over Raicor and he prepared to slice Raicor's head clean off with his sword but Raicor caught the blade in-between his hands and stopped it before it could touch him. Raicor tugged on the sword and pulled Devion down on to the ground beside him. Raicor quickly leaped back up to his feet and he spread out his great chrome wings and he flew towards Devion with a mighty flap of the wings. Devion picked himself up but Raicor flew into him and grabbed him. He flew up into the air and he threw Devion directly into the ring wall around NewMobotropolis. Devion crashed into it and left a large imprint of himself on the wall. Devion

picked himself up and jumped out of the way just as Raicor dive-bombed towards him. Because of this, Raicor ended up crashing into the wall just as Devion dodged him and he almost went right through it. Before Raicor could get out of the wall, Devion grabbed Raicor by the neck, pulled him out of the wall and threw him across the battlefield. Raicor spiralled through the air and he crashed down and skidded to a halt. Devion began advancing towards Raicor with a killer look in his eye.

"Raicor, cease your senseless fight and just accept your penance already." said Devion "You know you cannot refute me."

"I will not accept my penance Devion!" retorted Raicor, picking himself up and turning around to face Devion "Why should I be destroyed when all I'm doing is looking out for the army and doing it a favour by disposing of you?!"

"Disposing of me will do more damage then good." said Devion coldly "And you're looking out for yourself Raicor. The army does not wish doom on me, only you do and I will not tolerate that among my ranks. Now stand down and face your sentence!"

Raicor just promptly deployed his arm cannons and shoot Devion in the legs. Devion's legs were taken out from underneath him and he was brought down onto his stomach. Raicor picked up his staff and he tried to plunge the staff into Devion's neck but Devion rolled out of the way, causing Raicor to embed it into the ground. Raicor tried to pull the staff out of the ground, giving Devion ample time to get back to his feet and retrieve his sword, which was lying nearby. Devion grabbed it and he charged towards Raicor with his sword raised above his head. Raicor yanked his staff out of the ground… only to have it sliced in two by Devion's sword. Raicor now had two three pronged weapons in hand because his staff had just been sliced in half. Devion lunged at Raicor with his sword but Raicor blocked himself with his staff halves. Raicor pushed Devion backwards and he put one of his staff halves away. Devion lunged at Raicor but Raicor caught his wrist with two of the prongs on his staff half, causing Devion to drop the sword, and he threw Devion over onto his back. Devion groaned in pain and he clutched his wrist. Raicor grabbed Devion's sword and prepared to kill the Devatron leader with it but Devion deployed his arm cannon and

shot Raicor in the face before he could make the killer blow. Raicor dropped Devion's sword and he clutched his face in agony. Devion grabbed his sword and he sheathed it. He lunged at Raicor and tackled the second-in-command down to the ground. He then stood up, still holding Raicor, and he threw Raicor into the hull of *The Doombringer* . Raicor picked himself up just as Devion ran towards him and prepared to punch him in the face. Raicor dodged the attack and kicked Devion in the beak. Devion clutched his beak in pain, giving Raicor time to roundhouse punch him a couple of times and then uppercut him. Devion retaliated with a roundhouse punch to the face and he grabbed Raicor by the shoulders. He pecked Raicor in the neck, the attack making Raicor cry out in pain but it didn't kill him since Devion didn't embed his beak into his neck far enough. Devion was about to peck him again but Raicor smacked him with the side of his head. Raicor then shrugged Devion off of him and he roundhouse punched him in the side of his head. Devion staggered backwards and Raicor leaped up and dropkicked Devion in the face. Devion was brought down onto his back and Raicor deployed his arm cannons. He began to shoot Devion relentlessly with his cannons but, given his invulnerability, the shots didn't do anything. They were powerful shots though and Devion was finding it hard to stand up and push his way through the shots. But the Devatron leader was not about to let his second-in-command defeat him so he willed himself to move on. Devion got back to his feet and he deployed his own arm cannons. He began firing back at Raicor and since his shots were stronger, they hurt Raicor more then Raicor's shots were hurting him. Devion then got a well aimed shot at Raicor's chest and he fired. The shot hit Raicor's chest and he was thrown backwards across the battlefield. Raicor landed on his back and he began to wonder what had hit him. Devion charged towards Raicor just as Raicor was standing back up and Devion gave him a powerful sucker punch to the muzzle that left a heavy dent and sent Raicor hurtling backwards. Raicor was now lying on his side and clutching his damaged muzzle. Devion advanced on Raicor and he drew out his sword.

"You've often had cases of trying to impress me Raicor." said Devion "And today, you have. Such a pity that I have to terminate you for treason against me."

He raised the sword high above his head and he prepared to slice Raicor's head off. But Raicor wasn't down yet. He deployed his arm cannon and he shot Devion's hands, making him drop the sword and clutch them in pain. Raicor then roundhouse punched Devion and sent him flying backwards across the battlefield. This gave Raicor enough time to retreat into *The Doombringer* . Raicor ran back onto the ship as fast as he could and Devion picked himself up. Devion growled furiously and he ran after Raicor. Tronic had a feeling Raicor was up to something so he left the cockpit and he ran over to the nearest lift possible and took it down to the bottom floors of *The Doombringer* . Devion entered the ship and he looked around for Raicor.

"Hiding from your enemies in your own territory is a sign of weakness Raicor!" said Devion "Do you want to be forever remembered as being a weak Devatron?!"

"I'm not hiding from you out of fear Devion." came the gruff voice of Raicor as Devion entered the ship "This is an ambush and you've fallen for it!"

He then leaped out of his hiding place and tackled Devion down to the floor. He picked Devion up and threw him into the wall. Raicor then drew out his two staff halves and he plunged them into the wall around Devion's wrists. This in turn pinned Devion to the wall and left him helpless and at Raicor's mercy. Raicor picked up Devion's sword and he pointed it directly at Devion's visor.

"Now Devion, I shall do what I should have done in the first place." growled Raicor gruffly "Killed you the moment I disabled you!"

Raicor drew the sword back and he was about to plunge it into Devion's visor but he was stopped by a couple of missiles that fired from nowhere and struck him in the side, throwing him off his feet. It was Tronic! Tronic had arrived at the bottom floor just in time and he hit Raicor with some missiles he fired from his back mounted cannons. Devion was pleased to see Tronic was still loyal to him and was helping him in this battle.

"Raicor. You will not kill our leader." droned Tronic.

Raicor picked himself up and he growled furiously.

"Tronic! Why are you attacking me?!" he demanded "I'm Devion's second-in-command! Any attack on me is treasonous!"

"I am attacking you because you wish to terminate Devion." droned Tronic "I found out after seeing you leave *The Doombringer* with Devion in hand and after I studied the security footage. You are a traitor Raicor and you will be destroyed for this."

"You haven't got the strength to defeat me Tronic so don't even try to stop me from getting rid of Devion!" growled Raicor.

Tronic just bent down and let Raicor have it with another round of missiles. Raicor was thrown backwards by the blasts and he groaned in pain. Tronic ran over to Devion and he pulled the staff halves out of the wall, freeing the Devatron leader.

"Tronic, your loyalty to me is commendable." said Devion "You will be a great replacement for Raicor. Now, it is time to finish him off."

Devion picked up his sword and he prepared to let Raicor have it. Raicor tried to stop Devion but Devion pinned him down with his foot and he prepared to finish him off. But just as Devion prepared to deliver the final blow, he stopped and he lowered the sword. Devion sheathed his sword and instead, just grabbed Raicor's head and gave it a sharp powerful yank only he was capable of doing, breaking a vital joint in his neck and killing him. Devion got off of Raicor and he picked up his dead body.

"Tronic, see to it that Raicor gets his neck repaired." ordered Devion "I have a change of plan for him."

"What might that be then?" asked Tronic.

"Reboot his memory core." said Devion "Wipe out all his memories and reboot his mind. Raicor will be back to being my loyal servant. And insert a commanding chip into his head to make sure that he stays loyal to me."

"Yes Devion." said Tronic loyally.

Tronic took Raicor's body from Devion and dragged it away. Raicor was too good to kill and leave dead so Devion had decided to kill him in a way that causes the least amount of damage and ensures a chance of bringing him back alive. And with the adjustments Tronic would be making, Raicor would be back to being loyal to him and this time he would STAY loyal to him and no longer try to kill him. And yet, Devion began to think that Raicor's points about his sadism getting the best of him were probably right. Devion went outside *The Doombringer* in order to fetch his cape and as he did so, he thought on a few things.

"Raicor was wrong to betray me but his points are somewhat legitimate." he mused to himself "Maybe my sadism does get the better of me. Perhaps I should do one of his methods and wipe out the Mobians instead of prolonging their existence and giving them time to counter-attack. They cannot defeat me but you shouldn't really take chances and risk losing it all. Tomorrow, the city they now reside in will burn and they will be all wiped out…"

Devion picked up his cape and he reattached it to his shoulder. His mind was made up. He would take a page from Raicor's books and get rid of Sonic and friends already instead of toying with them for his own amusement. Sonic and friends will burn tomorrow morning…

"Hey Shadow! I haven't seen you around since the world got de-roboticized." cooed Rouge the Bat as she flew down to meet up with Shadow the Hedgehog, a genetic experiment with a lost purpose.

"Hello Rouge. Long time no see." said Shadow dryly.

The next morning had come and Shadow was walking through the thick growth of the Tropical Jungle and Rouge had just caught up with him. Shadow had been spending the past month through the Tropical Jungle looking for answers to his past. Given his luck, he hadn't found a thing and he knew nothing about the Devatron invasion since the Tropical Jungle doesn't have any citizens to hear things from or anything electrical to hear Devion's message when he first arrived.

"So what are you doing around here handsome?" purred Rouge seductively as she landed down beside Shadow.

"I've spent this past month looking for answers to my past." explained Shadow "I've come up empty and I'm just about to search somewhere else. Yourself?"

"Well I was looking for a mysterious ancient artefact that I've heard of." explained Rouge "It's a golden key and it has an unknown power. Treasure hunters everywhere have been searching for it and they haven't found it yet but I'm gonna be the first to find that treasure. But there's something more important then treasure right now."

"Really? What's that then?" asked Shadow.

"Some alien robots known as the Devatrons have invaded Mobius and have taken over New Mobotropolis and are planning to conquer Mobius." explained Rouge "I heard some people over in Grand Metropolis talking about it and I couldn't believe my ears. I decided to read any news about them and those guys sound like they mean business. They've conquered Sonic's home city and forced the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters into exile. I've decided I'm gonna join in with this conflict but I decided to find you first. We're gonna need someone as strong as you fighting those Devatrons."

"So Mobius is under threat from a race of robots called the Devatrons and they've taken over Sonic's home?" mused Shadow "And they wish to conquer Mobius? We cannot allow that. I can't find answers to my past if Mobius is conquered by the Devatrons. I am gonna help Sonic and friends. I've helped them before and I will happily do it again, especially as we're no longer enemies. You coming Rouge?"

"Of course I am Shadow." said Rouge coyly "How can I find treasures and priceless artefacts if the world's conquered? Let's get going Shadow!"

Shadow agreed instantly and he grabbed Rouge's arm. He zoomed off on his jet shoes as fast as he could possibly go and he set course for New Mobotropolis. Sonic was going to get some much

needed assistance from him and Rouge and hopefully, they will be able to help turn the tides of the battle against the Devatrons…

Looks like Sonic's getting some assistance! But will Shadow and Rouge be able to help them? And is Devion gonna destroy Empire City and the Royal Fighters? Looks like you're gonna have to wait and find out next time...

Hey Pandamonium, what are your top 10 favourite OCs from this story? If you can, please answer.

So Erin D. I've read your fanfics and I must say, they're pretty good. Team Radical and The Wild Gang are cool OCs. I look forward to seeing your Sonic X-treme fic and I'm flattered to hear I've inspired you to make your own Sonic story!

Data on the Doombringer

Story 110: Data on the Doombringer

Despite their sleep being interrupted by Tronic using Bunnie to reactivate Devion and free him from prison, the Royal Fighters, Team Chaotix, Marik and Dr. Eggman had all had a decent sleep and they were all charged up and ready to fight the Devatrons once again. After everybody had woken up and gotten changed out of their night clothes, Dr. Eggman finished his new Metal Sonic model and got out his new invention for Sonic and he proudly showed it to him. The invention was merely a flexible steel rod with two clamps, one on top and one on bottom. Sonic looked at it and he wondered what on Mobius it could possibly do.

"This here Sonic is your ticket to being able to fight again while your back heals up." said Dr. Eggman, Metal Sonic standing silently beside him "It's a back-stabilizer. When you wear it, it'll provide corrective support for your back and allow you to fight as normal without any hindrance and without damaging the spine anymore then it already has been. It's flexible so you'll be able to spin-dash and do anything else you can do."

"Really?" said Sonic "Wow, you can build anything can't you doc?"

"Yes I can Sonic." said Dr. Eggman "I first built this back in 2135 in order to fix my grandfather Gerald Robotnik's back problem and I've built one for myself should I ever need it. And since you need one, I built one for you. Once the Devatrons are beaten and pushed back from Mobius though, I'll be taking it back so that I can hinder you. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coward." muttered Marik "Instead of fighting Sonic yourself, you're just going to take advantage of his crippled state? I know I'm evil but even I will not stoop down to that level! We Martians are not afraid to fight to the end and we would never do something as cowardly as that!"

"Shut up Marik." muttered Dr. Eggman.

"I'd like to see you try and get this back from me." said Sonic snidely, taking the device from Eggman "You'll never catch me. So how do I put this on?"

Eggman took the device back off Sonic and he made Sonic turn around. Eggman clamped the top clamp around Sonic's neck and the bottom clamp around his waist. The rod ran straight down Sonic's back as straight as a ruler. Sonic's back had never felt so straight before and Sonic felt much better with the device supporting his healing spine. Sonic began to do some stretches and like Eggman said, the device was flexible and it flexed with his body as he moved around.

"This is pretty cool Eggman." said Sonic "Thanks."

"It's pretty snazzy bristle nose but woe betide you should the device have some catch to it." warned Mandy Mouse "It better not be a mind controlling device in disguise or something like that!"

"Spare me your overly cautious tone Mandy." sneered Dr. Eggman "I can assure you it's not a mind controlling device. It is a back-stabilizer and it's used for stabilizing people with crippled backs like poor Sonic."

"Well do you think you could make one for Thomas Tiger from the Megapolis Royal Fighters since his lil' ol back is broken?" asked Bunnie.

"No Bunnie." said Dr. Eggman "It stabilizes crippled backs. It will not be of any use to anyone with a broken back. Besides, according to Sally, he was crippled at the base of his spine, meaning his legs are of no use to him anymore. All the back-stabilizer would do to Thomas is stabilize him, not have him functioning again."

"Oh right." said Bunnie "So poor Thomas will be forever crippled since broken backs can't be fixed."

"Nevertheless, we're very grateful to Dr. Eggman for making this thing for Sonic out of the kindness of his heart so that Sonic may fight again." said Sally "Although he's only doing it so that we may beat the Devatrons. I can only hope that that act of kindness

spreads to more then getting Sonic back in the game."

"Don't bet on it Sally." sneered Dr. Eggman.

"I'm not." said Sally "So, has anyone got any ideas on how we're gonna beat those Devatrons?"

"I have one." said Tails eagerly "And it involves my newest invention which I managed to finish before bedtime last night, even though a Devatron delayed my completion time by making Bunnie break the welder."

He showed everybody his new invention which looked like a metal backpack. It was box shaped and it had straps on it, meaning it was obviously intended to be worn like a backpack. It had an opening compartment for tools and such that could be stored inside and it had some kind of aerial wobbling around on the top. The Mobians seemed impressed by it whereas the villains weren't that convinced.

"Tails, as pretty as your gizmo looks, how exactly is that going to help us?" demanded Marik crossly "It's a metal backpack! What good is it to any of us?!"

"Well Marik, this "backpack" is actually a sensor scrambling relay carrier." explained Tails "It can scramble signals and radars of anything in the world and it can be doubled as a backpack. In the carrier…"

Tails opened the compartment and he took out what looked like a traditional USB drive only more hi-tech and futuristic looking with blue decals on it and a slot that had an unusual shape.

"…we have a size-adapting USB drive." Tails carried in "It's schematics are mostly the same as that of a normal USB drive but this drive has a slot that can change it's size and shape should it need to. It's equipped with sensors that immediately scan the slot it's being plugged into and the slot will transform into the size and shape needed to fit into slot so no matter where we go, we can plug this into anything."

"Fascinating." said Marik sarcastically "Now can you tell us why the

ruddy hell we need a jumping USB drive?!"

"Isn't it obvious Marik?" asked Knuckles "Tails is using that techno-doodad to get some information. Information that can help us beat the Devatrons."

"That's right Knuckles." said Tails "We're going on *The Doombringer* and with this handy dandy drive I've invented, we can plug it into *The Doombringer* 's mainframe and download any information they have and we will use it against them…if there's any helpful information in the ship's mainframe that is."

"And with Tails' little signal-scrambling backpack, the Devatrons will not see us coming because their ship's sensors won't pick us up." said Mandy brightly "Genius! The Devatrons won't see us coming! Ha, ha, ha! Oh they're in so much trouble now!" she added, cracking her knuckles.

"Time to pay them back for kicking us out of New Mobotropolis, exiling us to the wilderness, burning down Knothole, injuring Thomas, Vector and Sonic and killing Kate!" declared Wilson, deploying his spinning blade weapon "The Royal Fighters will win again!"

"And you will be having a couple more helping you win." came a deep, youthful sounding voice that sounded all too familiar to the heroes and villains in the research centre.

Everybody turned to face the door only to find Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat standing at it. They both entered the lab and Sonic stared at them in surprise. But his face brightened up at the sight of them and he ran over to greet Shadow.

"He-hey! Shadow!" laughed Sonic "Good to see you back again you walking powerhouse!"

"Good to see you too faker." said Shadow with a smirk on his face.

"Long time no see blue boy." cooed Rouge playfully "It feels good seeing you with my own eyes again after I was de-roboticized along with the rest of Mobius when Eggman roboticized it all."

"It's nice to see you back to normal again Rouge." said Sonic.

"Well if it isn't my former lackey!" sneered Dr. Eggman "Long time no see Shadow the Hedgehog. And Rouge the Bat too."

Shadow glowered at Dr. Eggman but he didn't bring himself to slaughter him on the spot even though he gravely desired to do so.

"Why is he here?" demanded Shadow angrily "Please do not tell me that you've allied yourself with him!"

"Wrong way round actually." said Shade the Echidna "Dr. Eggman is assisting us in defeating the Devatrons and so is Marik the Martian."

Shadow turned to face Marik, the Martian folding his arms and glaring at him. Shadow remembered Marik all too well, he was the first person he'd ever had a confrontation with and it ended well for him and not so well for Marik.

"Hello Shadow." growled Marik tensely.

"Hello Marik." smirked Shadow "How's the arm?"

Marik just frowned at Shadow and felt like he wanted to break HIS arm just for saying that to him. It pained him to think about the time Shadow had broken his arm after beating him.

"Yes, we all know each other, blah, blah, blah." said Sonic quickly "Why are you here Shadow and Rouge?"

"To help you beat the Devatrons of course Sonic." purred Rouge "Do you really think we're content with them conquering our world?"

"Well if you wanted to help us then what took you so long?" asked Sally "It's been eight days since they landed! The whole world knows about them since Devion broadcasted his message everywhere!"

"I've spent the whole time in the Tropical Jungle on my quest to find answers to my past." explained Shadow "I've only just heard about them now since the jungle has no locals to hear from and no technology to broadcast anything."

"And I've been treasure hunting." said Rouge "I heard about the Devatrons after overhearing some people talk about them in Grand Metropolis so I read the news about them and decided to come and help. I went looking for Shadow first since we're gonna need Shadow to help us in this fight."

"What have we missed out on besides the conquest of New Mobotropolis?" asked Shadow "Rouge knows about that and she told me about it."

"Well the Devatrons crippled one of the Megapolis Royal Fighters for life, they injured Vector but he's back on his fight and waiting to kick butt again, they crippled my back but Knuckles fixed it and now Eggman's given me this device to support my back while it heals, Kate the Eagle's dead and Knothole's been burnt down." explained Sonic "Oh and one of our councillors turned out to be a traitor although we haven't heard from him since and one of Devion's cronies disabled him and gave him to us to keep prisoner but another Devatron controlled Bunnie and used her to reactivate him and free him."

"You've been through quite a lot faker." said Shadow "And I'll give my sympathy for poor Kate the Eagle. I met her team before* and I helped rescue their leader Miranda when she got kidnapped as well as destroyed a prison blockade that Eggman runs. Kate was pretty cool and I'm sorry to hear about her death."

"I'm sure Miranda will appreciate that." said Sonic "Anyway, we're so glad that you're coming to join us. I've been thinking about recruiting you into the battle but we didn't have anyway to contact you so we pretty much just waited for you to come and join us."

"Well maybe you should give me some kind of communications device so that whenever you need me, you can give me a call and I will come and aid you in your fights." said Shadow "That would help all of us."

"Once we've carried out my plan, I'll make you an earpiece or something." said Tails.

"Oooh, we appear to have stumbled in on a plan shadow boy." said

Rouge coyly "So foxy boy, what plan has your genius mind concocted then?"

Tails blushed at Rouge's sly remark and he answered her question.

"Eh, heh, heh…ahem, the plan is," explained Tails "We're gonna sneak onto *The Doombringer* , the Devatron's ship, and we're gonna download their databases and see if any information about them can be helpful to us."

"Sounds like a great plan Tails." complimented Rouge "But won't the Devatrons spot us or something while we're on the ship? I bet that ship's full of them."

"Oh…I didn't think of that." said Tails despairingly.

"I have though." said Ruben the Water Panther.

"Aren't you supposed to be wearing a collar?" asked Shadow.

"I am but it's been stolen by someone whom I thought was my friend**." muttered Ruben "Once this Devatron thing's over, I'm going to search for it and get it back. Anyway, everybody but Sonic, Shadow, Tails and Rouge will act as a distraction. We will draw the Devatrons out of the ship and get them to chase us and then we hide and get them to hunt us down. They'll be too busy looking for us to bother about the infiltrators and if we rely on the element of surprise, we may stay on top of them."

"I like that plan." said Amy "I'm gonna hide in Green Hill Zone and Piko-whop them in the visor with my hammer!"

"As much as I'm going to hate playing coward, it's a good plan." said Marik "Provided no one gets killed by the Devatrons and provided we can actually get EVERYBODY to leave the ship!"

"I'm hoping we can at least get the leaders off the ship like Devion and Raicor and those two who stole some lava from MountAdabat." said Knuckles "They're the ones to look out for."

"And so is this so-called "Tronic" who controlled Bunnie and used her to free Devion." said Espio the Chameleon "We're best getting

rid of them in particular. If we can get the leaders off the ship and after us, Sonic, Shadow, Tails & Rouge will carry out the infiltration mission undetected."

"And since Eggman's on our side, Katherine won't get in the way and spoil everything like she did before." said Tails with a frown at Katherine who just stood silently beside Eggman along with Metal Sonic.

Katherine did not say anything to him.

"We will need a way of contacting each other." noted Nicole "I mean, how will we know when Sonic, Tails, Shadow & Rouge have completed their mission while we're hiding in Green Hill Zone?"

"That's a good point Nicole." said Tails "I remember seeing a box of ear pieces in the steel cabinet over there. We can use those."

Tails ran over to the cabinet with the sensor-scrambling rely carrier on his back. He opened the cabinet and he looked through the shelves to see if he could find a box of ear pieces like he remembered seeing. He found a box marked with the word "earpieces" and he pulled it down. The scientists who use the research centre often used earpieces so they could stay in touch all over the centre and communicate with any of the other research centres out there. Tails held the box out and everybody grabbed an earpiece each. They put the devices into their ears and switched them on.

"Once Sonic completes his mission, he will tell us and then I will pass the message on to somebody and that person will pass the message onto another person and so on." said Sally "Once we get the message, we will all flee for it as fast as we possibly can and come back here."

"So now we've got a plan, let's go and get some Deva-Data!" cried Vector "Especially since I'm feeling much better thanks to Mariah's medicine I've been taking!"

"Deva-Data?" snickered Charmy "Did you seriously just say that? Ha, ha, ha!"

Vector frowned at Charmy and felt the need to pummel him for that.

"I agree with Vector." said Sonic "Ladies, gentlemen, anti-heroes and villains in the room, let's go and get us some information!"

With that said, the Royal Fighters all left the research centre and ran off to New Mobotropolis in order to carry out Tails' beautiful plan. With Tails' gadgets and the Mobians playing victims of the hunt, this plan was going to be a success and the Mobians would have some information on the Devatrons. Information that would hopefully be of some use to them and would turn the tides of the war into the Mobian's favour…

Things were getting quite busy on *The Doombringer* . The Devatrons were all preparing for their forthcoming attack which would involve them all bombarding Empire City and destroying the Royal Fighters once and for all. Raicor, the treacherous second-in-command, had been fixed up and rebooted after being killed by Devion last night and he was a completely new Devatron after the modifications Tronic gave him. He was loyal to Devion and had none of his treasonous ways left in him. As punishment for his coup d'etat though, Raicor had been demoted to fifth in command with Tronic taking his place as second-in-command, Triton in third and Steelor in fourth but given Raicor's new personality, he didn't gave a darn about the whole thing. Onboard *The Doombringer* , the Devatron soldiers were all arming themselves and preparing for the titanic battle that would unfold once *The Doombringer* took off. Devion had taken some of Raicor's criticisms of him to heart and had decided he wasn't going to take anymore prisoners and now he was just going to finish them off. It was a pity for him he had to cut his fun short but he could always have fun somewhere else once Mobius was his. Maybe the humans from Earth, his next target, would be weaker and therefore, he could toy with them as much as he liked before destroying them.

"Tronic, my new second in command, are the soldiers ready for combat?" asked Devion.

"The soldiers are registering as fully armed up and waiting to

destroy the Mobians Devion." reported Tronic "They are reporting their statuses to me as they finish."

"Excellent work Tronic." said Devion " *The Doombringer* may take off and head to their new place of dwelling. Once there, we shall finally put the Mobians out of their misery before they can get a chance to spring back at me. They have no chance against me but as Raicor has pointed out, I should never take chances with my victims, especially with furry beings that have marvellous attributes like Sonic the Hedgehog."

"I understand Devion." said Tronic "We shall destroy the Royal Fighters and then finally, we shall conquer Mobius and add it to our cosmic collection."

"Indeed Tronic." said Devion "I will take great delight in joining my soldiers in the Mobian's defeat. Such misfortune that I failed to break Sonic but since he has been forced to the sidelines for recovery, he will be incapable of standing to us and providing the Royal Fighters any edge they can possibly get."

Tronic nodded agreeably. The Devatrons were nigh-invulnerable beings with amazing technology and great battle skills, the Mobians stood no chance against them even if some did have amazing powers. But, it seemed that the Mobians were bringing the battle to them because the alarms started blaring loudly, startling Devion for a brief moment. The alarms blared all around the ship and the Devatrons began to wonder what was going on.

"The alarms are sounding!" growled Devion "Are the Mobians daring to attack me before I make my big push?!"

"It seems that they are." droned Tronic "Let us see what is happening outside."

"Yes Tronic." said Devion, touching the side of his head with his claw and switching on his comlink.

"Steelor, Triton and Raicor! Bring a squadron of ten soldiers each with you!" ordered Devatron "I have a feeling we're going to have a resistance from the Mobians before we can begin our attack!"

"Yes Devion." answered Triton.

Devion switched off his comlink and he and Tronic headed off to the boarding ramps to confront the Mobians and finish them off. If it was the Royal Fighters then Devion could just finish them off right now and then use *The Doombringer* to destroy the rest of them. It would save the ship a job and if the Devatrons were doing it themselves then they can be 100% certain they've gotten rid of them whereas on *The Doombringer* , they'd possibly be likely to fail at killing them. Devion and Tronic lowered a boarding ramp and they stormed out of *The Doombringer* with Triton, Steelor and Raicor and thirty Devatron soldiers following them. Devion drew out his golden sword, Tronic drew out his arm blade, Raicor drew out his staff, Steelor drew out his handlebar sword and saw blade and Triton drew out his saw stick. The Devatron soldiers all deployed their arm cannons and they prepared to destroy the Mobians. After leaving *The Doombringer* , the boarding ramp closed behind them and the Devatrons were met with Sally Acorn, Nicole the Lynx, Dr. Eggman, Katherine, Metal Sonic, Marik, Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Espio, Vector, Charmy, Wilson, Mandy, Bunnie, Geoffrey and Ruben all at once. They were all standing before the Devatrons, ready to fight them all to the bitter end. Devion instantly noticed that Sonic and Tails were absent but he thought he knew why Sonic wasn't here and he theorized that Tails was probably at home keeping him company or something. Devion pointed his sword at Sally and his visor narrowed down to an evil slit that could fit through a closed venation blind.

"Mobians, you are violating your exile order." said Devion coldly "Remove yourselves from our territory before we decided to kill you all."

"I have a proposition Devion." said Sally "I wager a game between us both that'll determine the fate of Mobius."

"And what pray tell would that be then my foolish female?" hissed Devion.

"We will all hide in Green Hill Zone and you will hunt us down." said Sally "If you can successfully find, catch and kill us all then you get to keep New Mobotropolis and conquer the rest of the planet. If not then you must relinquish New Mobotropolis back to us."

"I will not participate in such foolish acts of child's play!" growled Devion "I am not wagering upon who gets New Mobotropolis and I am not wasting my valuable time just playing predator with you all! I will however be quite content just slaughtering you all on the spot right now. Devatrons…"

"Now Wilson & Mandy!" cried Sally before Devion could finish his sentence.

Wilson and Mandy both yanked a black sphere off their belts and they threw them at Devion's feet. The black spheres were smoke bombs and the moment they hit Devion's feet, they exploded and the Devatrons were covered in thick black smoke. But the Devatrons had keen vision and smoke wasn't going to blind them for long. The moment the smoke bombs had been thrown, the Mobians all ran for it as fast as they could. They darted off to Green Hill Zone just as the smoke cleared up. Devion spotted them just as they vanished into the forests of Green Hill Zone. Devion fumed angrily. If they wanted to be hunted then he'd happily give them the satisfaction! Not to mention it made their demise more entertaining for him. As Devion often says, "There's no point to conquest if you do not enjoy it".

"Those Mobians really are signing their death warrants with me." snarled Devion "If they want to play around like foolish little half forms then I will give them the satisfaction. We shall hunt them down and slaughter every last one of them and after that, we shall commence with our global onslaught."

He touched the side of his head and activated his comlink.

"Attention Devatrons on *The Doombringer* , put the ship on full security and high alert." ordered Devion "Me and the sub-leaders are going hunting."

"Yes Devion." droned one of the soldiers still on the ship.

Devion switched off his comlink and he barked to the sub-leaders and their squadrons "Devatrons, onwards to this forested area!"

The Devatrons all obeyed their leader and they ran off to Green Hill

Zone to hunt down the Mobians and terminate them. The moment the Devatrons entered Green Hill Zone though, Sonic, Tails, Shadow & Rouge all ran out of their hiding place and ran off towards *The Doombringer* . Sonic, Tails, Shadow & Rouge had been hiding in some thickly grown bushes and they had been ordered to wait there until the Devatrons came into Green Hill Zone. Sonic was pleased to see that Devion and the sub-leaders were all taking part in this hunt, that meant they had something less to worry about in this infiltration. The soldiers wouldn't be too much to worry about since they weren't as capable as the leaders (In the world of villainy, that's ALWAYS the case after all). Tails had his sensor scrambling rely carrier on his back so and it was switched on so *The Doombringer* wouldn't see them coming. As they ran off to *The Doombringer* , Sonic couldn't help but feel magnificent as he was running again for the first time since his back had been crippled. It sure did feel good to be on his own two feet and running at top speed once more. Sonic, Tails, Shadow & Rouge all arrived at *The Doombringer* and they hid under the magnificent but malevolent ship. They looked up at the underbelly above their heads and then they looked back down at each other.

"OK smart boy, how do we get inside?" asked Rouge.

"Well we can't use the boarding ramp since it's closed." said Tails glumly "And I didn't bring any weapons to cut our way into the ship. If only I had a laser stick or something…"

"Or you can use two supersonic hedgehogs that can both conveniently use a spin-dash." said Sonic with a snide grin on his face.

"And wouldn't you know it, you have two supersonic hedgehogs that can conveniently use a spin-dash." said Shadow, playing along with Sonic's joke.

"Oh my gosh! Shadow has a sense of humour!" said Sonic in mock shock "I can't believe my ears!"

Shadow snorted at Sonic for the bad joke but he brushed it off since Sonic was known for doing that and there was no sense in just punching him for it. Shadow and Sonic both curled up into balls and

they spin-dashed up into the underbelly of *The Doombringer* and busted a hole in it. The two hedgehogs landed on the floor of the ship and they looked around for any sign of a Devatron. They were in a long corridor that was empty of any Devatrons at all but it probably wasn't going to stay like that. They would have to be on their toes and keep moving in order to avoid giving the Devatrons a chance of finding them as they were likely to be roaming the corridors for any possible intruders. Devion wasn't here so *The Doombringer* was likely to be on high alert. Sonic and Shadow began creeping through the corridor while Tails and Rouge flew up through the hole in the underbelly made by Sonic & Shadow and they followed the two hedgehogs. The moment the fliers caught up, Sonic let Tails take the lead.

"OK everyone, Tails will lead us to the ship's cockpit since he's been in here before and he knows where it is." said Sonic.

"Why do we need to go to the ship's cockpit?" asked Shadow.

"That's probably where the ship's database is." suggested Tails "So we're going up to the top floor of *The Doombringer* to try the cockpit."

"And if it isn't in the cockpit I guess we're gonna try somewhere else." said Rouge "A ship this big has gotta have a database somewhere."

"Keep on the alert for any sign of Devatrons." said Sonic "Those guys are nigh-invulnerable so starting a battle with them is not gonna be a wise idea, especially since this ship's possibly crawling with Devatrons and they'll all overwhelm us with sheer numbers should they spot us."

"We'll keep that in mind Sonic." said Rouge "Provided Shadow doesn't get in over his head and tries to fight them all that is."

Shadow fumed at Rouge but said nothing. Sonic, Tails, Shadow and Rouge all began to creep down the corridor and they kept their eyes peeled for any signs of Devatrons or a lift they could take to the top floor. This mission was going to be a risky one but it was their best chance at victory they had. They needed information about the

Devatrons and *The Doombringer* was probably the only thing that was going to provide them with any so they needed to infiltrate the ship...

Meanwhile, the Mobians had all picked their hiding places in Green Hill Zone and they lay low and waited for the Devatrons to find them so they could ambush them. Some were hiding in bushes, some were hiding behind trees, up trees and even in holes in the ground. The Devatrons would be on one heck of a hunt in the forests of Green Hill Zone and they had about nineteen people to find. It's not like it was going to be a problem for the Devatrons given how they outnumber the Mobians (there's thirty soldiers and the five leaders) and they were much stronger then they were. But if this was a planned ambush then they had to be ready for them since the Mobians knew their weakness and they were likely going to ambush the Devatrons and blind them and, if they had any sharp weapons to stab them through the visor with, possibly kill them. Devion kept his sword at the ready and he began searching for his pitiful resisters. His keen visor scanned his surroundings and he kept note of any possible places the Mobians could leap out and surprise them. Devion looked up a tree, only to see no one there. He continued walking through the forest and he looked out for any of the Royal Fighters.

"You do realize with this putrid game you're playing that you're just delaying the inevitable?" said Devion "Your world will be mine and since your strongest fighter Sonic has been sidelined, you are all severely weakened and will be much easier to defeat. But given your stubbornness, I doubt you're willing to listen to me and will continue being needlessly obstinate."

He then turned to the sub-leaders and gave them an order.

"Steelor, you and your squad will go search this area of the forest." he pointed to his left hand side "Triton, you take your squad to this area," he pointed to his right "And Raicor, you will take your squad straight up the middle." he pointed straight up "Me and Tronic will remain here and search for those fatuous vermin."

"Yes Devion." said the sub-leaders.

Triton, Steelor and Raicor all took their squadrons to the designated areas while Devion and Tronic continued searching around for the Royal Fighters. He wasn't going to find any in this area he was in because the Royal Fighters had gone further into the forest. The sub-leaders were more likely to find the Royal Fighters then Devion and Tronic were. But that wasn't going to stop Devion from trying. He would find those Royal Fighters, even if he had to tear up all of Green Hill Zone to do it. He'd already burnt down Knothole, he would happily burn the whole forest down if necessary…

Triton and his squad were trudging through a section of the forest which had thicker growth then the area they had previously been in. They were bound to find a hiding Mobian around here since the hiding places in this section were just too good to pass up. Triton activated his saw stick and he began churning through thickly grown bushes, low hanging tree branches and vegetation that drooped over the path they were taking. If luck was on his side, he would probably slit a hiding Royal Fighter open while he was cutting things down. He very nearly did too because Amy was hiding behind a rose bush and Triton nearly sliced her head off as he cut through it but Amy had ducked just in time to avoid getting severed. Triton sliced through the rose bush with Amy just inches out of his way and he looked around for the Royal Fighters.

"Come out of your hiding places foolish fighters." boomed Triton "I promise you all your deaths won't be too gory for you all. I'll make sure you perish nice and quickly just to put you all out of your misery."

"Blah, blah, blah! Eat mallet you robotical demon!" shrieked Amy, leaping out of her hiding place and walloping Triton in the back of his head with her mallet.

Triton was thrown down onto the ground by the attack and to add insult to injury, Amy hammer a nearby tree down right on top of him. With one hefty smack, the thin, fragile tree that was withering from old age fell down on top of Triton, his squad leaping back in order to avoid getting crushed by it. Amy laughed at him and she began to run for it before she could get caught. But she heard the sound of

the tree being shifted and she looked over her shoulder…only to see an unharmed Triton pushing the tree directly off of him as if it weighed nothing! The impact didn't even dent him! Triton looked perfectly fine save for dirt stains and a few scratches! Amy put her hand to her mouth in shock and she almost dropped her hammer in horror.

"Oh my gosh! I knock a tree down on him and he's STILL intact?!" she shrieked "Those Devatrons really ARE invulnerable aren't they?!"

Triton grumbled at Amy and he picked up his saw stick.

"How care you try to crush me!" he snarled "I'm gonna cut your worthless little heart out of your chest with my saw stick for that!"

That little rant sickened Amy and made her run like hell. But that wasn't going to stop Triton from getting her. Triton swiped his stick and sent the saw blade hurling towards Amy. The saw blade clipped Amy on the leg and made her trip up. Amy winced in pain as her body made sharp contact with the ground and the sting from the lethal cut left on her leg was enough to make her cry but she held it in and just clutched her leg in pain. The saw boomeranged back to Triton and he caught it with the stick. He then advanced onto Amy with his ten soldiers behind him. Amy looked up at Triton in fear, unable to escape from him since her leg had been severely cut and it hurt too much for her to walk on it. Triton smirked at her and he activated his saw stick. The circular saw blade spun around at 250,000RPM and he inched it towards Amy's chest. Amy began to back away in fear. She crawled backwards while staring straight at the saw blade that threatened to claim her life. Her heart began to pound and her head began raining with sweat as Triton's blade inched closer to her.

"Help! Somebody help me!" she whimpered.

"Screeching for aid is futile pinkie." sneered Triton "Your friends are all hiding from us and they are not around to help you."

"Guess again Devatron!" yelled a grizzly voice that Amy was pleased to hear.

Triton was so surprised by that he had no time to ready himself for any possible attack. Vector the Crocodile leapt out of his hiding place and he pounced on Triton. The two landed on the ground but Triton threw Vector off of him by swinging his legs upwards and he sent him flying into a tree. The impact made Vector grimace since his back was still healing and the wound hurt to the touch. The Devatron soldiers all deployed their arm cannons and they aimed them at Vector but ten shurikens all shot out from nowhere and impaled themselves into the Devatron's visors. It was Espio's doing of course, he had been hiding with Vector and he was invisible at this moment so Triton had no idea where the shurikens came from. To add insult to injury, the shuriken all exploded at once, killing the Devatrons instantly for the explosions of the shuriken went into their heads and damaged some vital mechanisms in them. The ten soldiers Triton had all fell to the ground with smoke billowing out of their destroyed visors. Triton was livid with rage and he held his arm up to avoid any possible attack on him. Espio threw a shuriken at Triton but the shuriken pinged off his arm. However, the Chaotix had their back up plan and that was Charmy Bee. Charmy flew down from the tree he was hiding up and he aimed his stinger at Triton's visor. Unfortunately, Triton saw him coming and he leaped up into the air. He grabbed Charmy and threw him down to the ground. Charmy cried out in pain as he hit the ground and Triton was about to land on top of the bee until Vector leaped up and sucker-punched Triton away from Charmy. Triton landed on his side and skidded to a halt with a huge mound of dirt covering his shoulder. Triton picked himself up and he activated his weapon. Espio turned visible and he drew out a pair of kunai. Vector stood by Espio with his fists clenched and Charmy picked himself up and bent down in a battle ready stance.

"Clever tactics you're resorting to Mobians." purred Triton "I commend you on your intelligence. However, even those tactics won't help you. I'm too powerful and too clever for you and we can easily replace those fallen soldiers."

"I'm pretty sure you can gruesome but can the Devatrons replace you when you fall?" sneered Vector "Boys, let's get him!"

Vector, Charmy and Espio all charged towards Triton at once but

Triton aimed his saw stick at them and he swiped at them, forcing them all to duck. Triton then activated his jet boosters on his back and he took flight. He circled around behind the Chaotix and he tackled them all to the ground while slashing all three of them across the backs with his saw-stick. Espio, Vector and Charmy were thrown onto their stomachs and they clutched their stinging backs, which had long but thin cuts across them. Amy forced herself back onto her feet and she threw her Piko-Piko hammer at Triton. Triton saw the hammer coming towards him and he sliced the hammer in two with his saw-stick. Amy merely summoned another hammer and she threw it at Triton again but Triton sliced the hammer in two. Triton zoomed down towards the ground with his jet boosters and he rammed Amy to the ground by flying into her. Triton circled around and he landed back onto his feet. He ran towards Amy and Team Chaotix with his weapon in hand but Espio threw a shuriken at his visor. Triton quickly ducked in order to avoid the shuriken and he swung his weapon at the Chaotix. He missed and Vector gave him an uppercut that could make Lord Sycorax feel proud. Triton spiralled through the air from that attack and he crashed into a tree that fell down from the power of that hit and knocked down some other trees nearby. Triton was OK though and he was soon back onto his feet. Vector scooped Amy up and he ran for his life with Charmy and Espio running after him as quick as they could. Triton activated his jet boosters and he rocketed towards the Mobians but they jumped out of his way and they darted inside a nearby log that was big enough for them to sit up in. Triton halted himself and he turned around, only to see his victims were gone. They had obviously gone into hiding again but he wasn't falling for their trap again. He had a clever idea to draw them out. Triton flew up into a tree and he landed on a tree branch and shut off his jet boosters in order to make the Mobians think he'd given up and flown away. He sat still on the tree branch and he waited for the Mobians to come out of their hiding place. In the log, Amy, Vector, Espio and Charmy all waited for Triton to come looking for them but there was only silence. It seemed like Triton had possibly gone but they couldn't be too sure on that. It could be a trick. They listened out intently but they didn't hear anything.

"Do you think he's gone?" asked Charmy.

"I sincerely doubt that." said Espio "I'll turn invisible and see if he's still out there."

Espio turned invisible and he crept out of the log so he could look out for Triton without being spotted. Unfortunately for him, Triton could see the foot steps he was leaving in the dirt near the log. Triton activated his jet boosters and he rocketed towards the log the Mobians were hiding in. Espio jumped and he ran out of the way as Triton headed towards the log. He couldn't quite understand how Triton managed to spot him even though he was invisible. Triton landed directly in front of the log and he activated his saw-stick. He cleaved the log in two straight down the middle, forcing Amy, Vector and Charmy to flee out of the log. Espio lunged at Triton and he ninja-kicked him directly in the head but the attack didn't effect Triton. Triton gave Espio an uppercut that could rival a kung-fu master's and Espio was thrown onto the ground.

"Your running and hiding is getting you know where Mobians." taunted Triton "I'd cease your pitiful running and just fight already."

"If you want a fight then we'll be happy to give you one!" yelled Vector "Let's sick it to him boys!"

Vector and Charmy ran towards Triton with their fists clenched and Espio leaped back onto his feet and prepared to attack. Triton just raised his weapon and prepared to eviscerate them all…

Meanwhile, Steelor and his squadron were looking through a section of the forest that wasn't that thickly grown and had a lot of fallen trees. A lot of the Royal Fighters were hiding behind the fallen trees and they were waiting to attack. Steelor had his weapons at the ready and he prepared himself for any chance of an ambush that would strike out at him. The Devatron soldiers all deployed their gun arms and they kept their sensors alert. The squad all crept past a fallen tree, which unbeknownst to them had Wilson and Mandy hiding behind it. Wilson and Mandy poked their heads out from behind the fallen tree and they watched the Devatrons creep by them. Everything was going according to their plan.

"They haven't spotted us." whispered Wilson "Should we spring our trap?"

"Anytime you like cute stuff." said Mandy "You'd best hope your aim's as good as you need it to be."

Wilson nodded and he unsheathed his spinning blade weapon. He leaped out of his hiding place and he yelled out at the top of his voice.

"Hey Devatrons!"

Steelor and his squad stopped directly in their tracks and they turned around to face the orange dog in the combat suit. Wilson threw his spinning blade weapon like a javelin and it hurtled through the air and it impaled a Devatron straight in the visor, killing it instantly. The soldier fell down onto it's back, no longer functioning. Steelor growled furiously and Wilson ran over to the dead Devatron to retrieve his spinning blade. But the soldiers weren't willing to let him have it back. They all pointed their gun arms at Wilson and began shooting rapidly at him. Wilson yelped like a frightened dog and he ran for it as fast as he could. Mandy decided it was time she got her hands dirty and she leaped out of her hiding place. She had her brass knuckle attachments on and she ran towards the Devatrons with her fists clenched. The Devatrons saw her coming and they began shooting at her. Mandy somersaulted out of the way of the blasts and she turned around and ran away, getting the Devatrons to chase her. She was hoping they'd follow her and give Wilson a chance to retrieve his weapon but Steelor was a lot smarter then that. He grabbed Wilson's weapon and he yanked it out of the dead Devatron. But he wasn't going to keep it for long since Wilson and Mandy weren't the only ones he and his soldiers had to worry about. Marik the Martian, Metal Sonic, Katherine and Ruben were all nearby and they came out of their hiding places. Marik fired a jolt of electricity at Steelor and the zap made Steelor jump and drop Wilson's spinning blade. He turned around and charged towards Marik with his handlebar sword at the ready. This gave Wilson perfect time to retrieve his weapon and he ran off to help his wife. Metal Sonic, Katherine and Ruben all ran off after Wilson to help Mandy while Marik stayed with Steelor and did battle with him.

"So the Mobian's Martian friend is back again." snorted Steelor "As if that's gonna be of any help to them."

"You'll regret saying that when I make scrap metal out of you Devatron!" growled Marik.

He charged towards Steelor and he clawed him across the torso with his metal claws. But his claws didn't even lay a scratch on the Devatron's tough armour. Steelor sheathed his weapons and he gut punched Marik. Marik doubled over and he wheezed hoarsely in pain. Steelor picked Marik up by his head and he gut-punched him twice and then he threw him up into the air. He drew his arm back and roundhouse punched him into the ground just as he was coming back down. Marik crashed into the ground and he groaned in pain. Steelor drew out his handlebar sword and he prepared to pin Marik to the ground with it but Marik picked himself up and he knocked Steelor down with an energy wave. Steelor wasn't down for long. He picked himself up but Marik leaped up and kicked him in the gut. The attack sent Steelor hurling backwards but he skidded to a halt and he braced himself for another attack. Marik ran towards Steelor and he jumped into the air. He was about to let Steelor have it with an electrical shock (he doesn't know electricity doesn't work on them) but Steelor backhanded him with his free hand and knocked him down into the ground. Steelor then attempted to stab Marik with the handlebar sword but Marik leaped back up and he zapped Steelor in the visor. The attack appeared to hurt Steelor but his visor was OK. Marik then uppercut Steelor and kicked him hard in the leg. Steelor elbowed Marik directly on top of his head and knocked him down onto his knees and he kicked Marik across the ground. Marik landed on his feet and he was bent down in a ready-to-lunge pose. Steelor prepared to fight again while Marik leaped at him, snarling at the top of his voice…

As for the others, Mandy had been cornered by the soldiers. She was backed against a tree with the soldiers ready to shoot her and kill her. But Mandy wasn't scared at all. She just made some "come get some" gestures with her hands and dared them to do their worst.

"Go on. Shoot me." she dared "You'll only live to regret it since I have a cute little husband who will be very upset with you when you kill me."

The soldiers just scoffed off her warnings and they shot at her. Mandy ducked down quickly, causing them to shoot the tree and

knock it down to the ground. Mandy then leaped towards one Devatron soldier and she roundhouse punched it in the face. The soldier staggered backwards and Mandy kicked it into another soldier. The two soldiers ended up sprawling on the ground. One Devatron soldier retracted his cannon arms and he ran up towards Mandy. He punched at Mandy but Mandy dodged and punched the Devatron in the visor, cracking it and leaving it's vision unclear. Another soldier however sneaked up behind Mandy and grabbed her around the neck.

"Ack! Let me go you gruesome, malevolent monsters!" she gagged as the Devatron soldier grabbed her in a chokehold.

The Devatron obliged but not in the way she was hoping. The Devatron picked Mandy up with both hands and threw her towards another soldier. The Devatron leaped up and fist-slammed her into the ground. The mouse groaned in pain but the Devatrons didn't stop there. The soldier that had fist-slammed her kicked her as hard as he could and the Devatron that threw her to the soldier kicked her even harder. Then the two soldiers deployed their arm cannons and they prepared to shoot Mandy. But Wilson, Metal Sonic, Katherine & Ruben arrived just in time and they began attacking the nine soldiers. Wilson impaled one of the Devatrons that was about to shoot Mandy through the visor with his weapon and he killed it instantly.

"Nobody ever threatens my wife's well-being!" he yelled angrily.

The other Devatron that was about to kill Mandy growled at Wilson and it lunged at the dog. Wilson ducked and he tried to stab that Devatron in the visor but the soldier ducked, the blade of Wilson's weapon just skimming it above the visor. The Devatron soldier then gave Wilson an uppercut that sent the dog staggering backwards and then the soldier deployed his arm cannons and blasted Wilson off his feet. Wilson was thrown down onto the ground beside Mandy and he grimaced in pain. The Devatron then advanced on Wilson & Mandy and it was about to kill them both but Ruben jumped in and kung-fu kicked it away from them. Ruben then turned around and helped Wilson & Mandy get back to their feet.

"You two OK?" asked Ruben.

"Never better." murmured Mandy "At least that plan of yours is going reasonably well for us."

"Yes, we've managed to bring down a couple of soldiers and Espio tells me on my earpiece that he managed to wipe out one of the sub-leader's entire squad." said Ruben "I believe he said it was the Devatron who has that saw-stick weapon."

"That is cool." said Mandy "I wonder how the others will be doing with Devion & Raicor should those two find him."

"Well we'll find out from them since they've got ear pieces and they'll be able to contact us." said Ruben "In the meantime, we should continue fighting off those Devatrons."

With that said, Wilson, Mandy & Ruben ran off towards a trio of Devatrons that waited to snag them. The other five Devatron soldiers were fighting Metal Sonic & Katherine and they were losing badly. They kept trying to shoot the two robots but Metal Sonic was too fast for them to hit and Katherine deployed her barrier so they couldn't hit her. Katherine raised her hands and she fired some bladed discs at the soldiers but the discs just pinged harmlessly off their armour. However, the soldiers had an idea. Two soldiers ran up to Katherine and they kicked her barrier as hard as they could. This attack threw Katherine back as if she was a football being kicked towards the goal. Metal Sonic flew in and tackled the two soldiers down to the ground with a hefty spin-dash. The other three Devatron soldiers began shooting at Metal Sonic but Metal Sonic dodged their attacks and he spin-dashed the three soldiers all at once. The five soldiers all picked themselves up and they tried to shoot Metal Sonic but again, Metal Sonic dodged their attacks with ease and he spin-dashed them all again. One Devatron soldier landed at Katherine's feet and she shot it in the visor with a bladed disc before it could get back up. The soldier was now blinded but that wasn't going to stop it from trying to fight. The blinded soldier picked itself up and it began shooting in random directions. Metal Sonic decided to finish off the soldier by blasting it in the face with his torso laser. The beam of the laser went into the Devatron's visor and fried the mechanics in it's head, killing it instantly. But this gave the other four Devatron soldiers a chance to blast Metal Sonic in the back and throw him across the ground. Metal Sonic landed with a clunk on the ground

but before he could get back up, the Devatrons ran up to Metal Sonic and began stomping on him. Katherine however stepped in and saved him by leaping towards the Devatrons and using her deadly drill attack. The Devatrons were all thrown down onto the ground by the attack and Metal Sonic picked himself up. The two robots then charged towards the soldiers again and prepared to unleash hell on them all…

Meanwhile, Raicor's group had ventured all the way to the burnt down remains of Knothole. What had once been a proud forest village was now a smouldering wreck of burnt wood, ashes and destroyed homes. It pleased Raicor greatly to see this kind of ruination and he had a feeling that the Royal Fighters were hiding somewhere nearby since this was their place of dwelling after being exiled from New Mobotropolis. He was going to search this place and kill the Royal Fighters once he found them.

"Soldiers." said Raicor gruffly "Spread out and search this ruined village. The Royal Fighters could be hiding in the remains or somewhere nearby."

"Yes sir." droned the soldiers.

The Devatron soldiers all wondered over to the burnt down village of Knothole and began searching through the charred remains of the beautiful forest village. But what the Devatrons didn't know was that the Royal Fighters weren't hiding in the remains of Knothole at all. They were hiding in the surrounding growth and they were all watching the Devatrons search for them. Knuckles & Shade were watching Raicor as he searched for them and they were confused.

"Why is Raicor still alive?" asked Knuckles "You'd think that Devion would have terminated him for disabling him and then attempting to kill him."

"That's what we thought would have happened." said Shade "I guess Devion decided to let Raicor live and has maybe altered him so he's loyal to him again."

"Well loyal to him or not, Raicor's still going down especially as he plotted to destroy us as well as Devion!" growled Knuckles "You

ready Shade?"

"Ready as I'll always be." said Shade, drawing out her twin blades.

Knuckles & Shade then jumped out of their hiding place and they both pounced on Raicor. But Raicor turned around and grabbed them both and threw them into a burnt down home, sending ashes scattering everywhere. The soldiers were alerted by this but before they could attack, Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John, Cream, Sally & Nicole all appeared from nowhere and started fighting the Devatron soldiers. Dr. Eggman & Cosmo remained where they were since they couldn't fight. The soldiers immediately opened fire on the Royal Fighters but they all managed to dodge the blasts. Geoffrey began firing exploding darts at the Devatrons but the Devatrons managed to avoid getting hit in the visor since they had the feeling that's what the skunk was trying to do so the darts just ended up pinging off their armour. One soldier fired at Geoffrey's arm and destroyed his arm mounted crossbow, leaving Geoffrey weaponless. But Geoffrey wasn't down and out. He had battle skills on his side to make up for the lost weapon so Geoffrey ran forward to one of the Devatron soldiers and began whaling on it his hardest but the soldier took the blows as if they were nothing and it kneed Geoffrey in the gut. Bunnie however stepped in for Geoffrey and walloped the soldier in the back of its head with her robot arm. The soldier was thrown down onto its front and before it could attack again, Bunnie grabbed it by the neck with her organic hand and deployed her arm cannon. She aimed the cannon at the Devatron's visor and blasted it, killing the Devatron instantly. But one of the Devatron soldiers got the drop on Bunnie by blasting her robot arm. The attack didn't destroy it but it left her arm severely damaged. Bunnie cried out in pain and she clutched her robot arm. She then tried to blast the Devatron but her cannon arm wouldn't work. It was too damaged so Bunnie couldn't shoot anybody with it. Bunnie just retracted her cannon arm and decided to use her fist instead.

"Mah cannon maybe useless now but I can still give ya'll a good whoppin'!" she yelled.

She ran over to the Devatron soldier that blasted her and she gave it a tremendous uppercut to the face that almost took its head off. The soldier was thrown down onto its back but another soldier got the

drop on Bunnie by bending down and blasting her with the cannons on its back. Sally and Nicole then leaped in and double-teamed the soldier with a pair of kicks each but their attacks were useless against the Devatron. The soldier socked the two ladies in the face but Geoffrey stepped in and tripped it up. As for Cream, she had Devatron soldiers firing at her but she managed to dodge their attacks by flying around and she threw Cheese at the Devatrons to distract them. The soldiers were unaffected by the attack but Cheese was doing a good job of distracting them. Cream flew around behind one Devatron soldier and kicked it in the back. The Devatron spun around and blasted at the rabbit but Bunnie came in and punched it down onto its face.

Over to Knuckles & Shade, they were double-teaming Raicor with various attacks but neither of them were working on him. Raicor's tough armour protected him from their attacks and to shield himself even more, he used his wings for defence so the echidnas couldn't get to his visor. Knuckles roundhouse punched Raicor but Raicor's wings defended him from the attack and Raicor let Knuckles have it in the gut with a powerful punch. Shade slashed at Raicor but the attack only clipped his face and left a scratch that could easily be buffed later. Raicor kicked Shade as hard as he could and Shade was thrown backwards into a tree. Knuckles leaped onto Raicor's back and began whaling on him but Raicor grabbed Knuckles and threw him off of him.

"I've already killed one of your members, I'll be quite content with killing another!" crowed Raicor, drawing out his six-pronged staff (which had been fixed from the battle last night).

He ran over to Knuckles and prepared to plunge the staff into Knuckles' body but Knuckles acted first and he uppercut Raicor in the chin. He then punched Raicor's leg and brought him down on one knee. Knuckles then punched Raicor in the visor but the punch wasn't powerful enough to break it. Raicor elbowed Knuckles and knocked him down onto the ground but before he could do anything to the echidna, Shade leaped on him and began slashing him across the back with her blades. She was trying to slice his wings off but to no avail. Raicor swung the staff and knocked Shade off his back. He then attempted to stab Shade but Shade Blade-Rushed him and the

wave of pink energy hit him in the visor. The attack cracked it and left his vision a little unclear. But Raicor could still see well enough to fight and he slashed Shade with the prong of his staff. Shade clutched her face in pain as she felt the cut she now had on it and Raicor tried to finish her off but Knuckles leaped in and tackled Raicor to the ground, only to get thrown off by him. Shade then leaped in and began to Blade-Rush Raicor as madly as she possibly could. The attacks made Raicor back away but they weren't damaging him in anyway. Raicor decided enough was enough and he walloped Shade with his staff. Knuckles leaped in and pile-dived Raicor in the back, knocking him down onto the ground and Knuckles leaped over to the front of Raicor.

"You maybe plotting to destroy us Raicor but that's not gonna stop us from foiling that plan!" growled Knuckles.

"Devion is the one plotting to destroy you." said Raicor "I'm merely one of his players and I will be quite content being at Devion's side as he destroys you all and conquers Mobius."

It was quite clear to Knuckles that Raicor had indeed been altered by Devion, he doesn't even remember his own plan now! Still, Raicor had to be destroyed so Knuckles lunged at Raicor and prepared to deck him all the way to Kingdom Valley…

Meanwhile, Sonic, Tails, Shadow & Rouge had found a lift and they took it all the way up to the top floors of *The Doombringer* . They were having a relatively easy time at the moment given how careful they were being on this infiltration and how slowly they were taking it. But this didn't mean their mission was going to continue being easy. Security might be even tighter on the top floors of the ship. The lift arrived and the infiltrators stepped out of it once the doors opened.

"OK, where's the cockpit?" asked Shadow.

"It's just down this corridor." whispered Tails "Be nice and quiet, we don't know what we're gonna encounter around here…"

Shadow just promptly zoomed off and in the blink of an eye, he was at the cockpit. He opened the door to the cockpit and he looked inside. All clear. Shadow stepped out of the cockpit and he signalled the others to come to him. Sonic, Tails and Rouge all ran over to the cockpit and they went inside it. Shadow closed the door behind them and the Mobians began surveying their surroundings. Nothing but Devion's throne, pilot seats, controls and lots of machinery in this cockpit. There were no Devatrons around amazingly enough.

"This is weird, why aren't there any guards around the cockpit?" asked Tails.

"I dunno, maybe Devion doesn't think the cockpit needs guarding." suggested Sonic "Oh well, this makes our job a lot easier."

"So where will we be able to plug that drive of yours?" asked Rouge "I don't see anything it can plug into."

"There's one right there." said Tails, pointing at a drive slot on the arm of Devion's throne "Maybe that's where we can download any information about the Devatrons."

Tails took out the drive from his sensor-scrambler and the drive slot converted into the size and shape needed to plug into the slot on the arm the moment he held it near the slot. Tails plugged the drive into the slot and a screen came up from the arm. That was the Devatron database. Unfortunately, the information on the screen was written in an entirely different language. Devatrons merely adapted the English language from the other races in the universe. They originally spoke a language known as Devatronic and they write things in Devatronic so should their databases be compromised, no one would be able to read the information since nobody knew Devatronic. Sonic frowned at the screen

"What the heck is this?" asked Sonic "It's nothing but symbols and weird stuff!"

"I guess the Devatrons have another language and they write their information in it." suggested Tails "We'll translate it once we get back to Empire City. It must be important info if it's written in a different language."

"Is the drive downloading the info?" asked Shadow.

"It is Shadow and the drive will glow yellow when its finished." explained Tails "We might be here for a while; it depends on how much data is in this database."

The drive seemed to be doing an excellent job on downloading the Devatron database though. It had downloaded one file of info already and was moving onto the next. Unfortunately, a Devatron soldier was pacing down the corridor and it was heading towards the cockpit to check on it. It was in for a shock though once it entered and found it *The Doombringer* had intruders onboard…

See *Tales from Mobius Arc 8: The Sentinel Blockade

**** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 12: The Water Panther Plunder***

Oh dear! it looks like Sonic's in trouble! Can Tails finish downloading the Devatron database? Or is this plan going to go belly up for them? And how about the others? Will they survive? Tune in next time...

Heads up everyone: I'm now a member of deviantart and I've uploaded some pictures of my OCs. My username is the same as my username here. Once you've seen my pictures, tell me what you think of them if you can!

Going Beyond The Stars

Story 111: Going Beyond The Stars

Sonic the Hedgehog, his best friend and sidekick Tails and their two friends Shadow the Hedgehog & Rouge the Bat were all in the cockpit of the Devatron ship *The Doombringer* and they were downloading some information about the Devatrons from the ship's database. Unfortunately for them, a Devatron soldier was coming down the corridor and heading towards the cockpit to check up on it for it was on patrol duty. The Devatron soldier opened up the cockpit door and it stepped inside. The cockpit door opens up silently so the Mobians didn't hear the door opening up. The Devatron soldier couldn't believe it's visor when it stepped into the cockpit and saw that there were Mobians inside. It saw the drive in the slot and it was downloading the information from the database. The Devatron knew that it couldn't let them download anything from the database since the information on the database could be vital to the Mobians and help them defeat the Devatrons so it deployed it's cannon arm and aimed it at the back of Sonic's head. Unfortunately for the Devatron, Rouge heard it deploying it's cannon arm and she lunged at it with a mighty kick. The Devatron dodged the kick and it swiped at Rouge with it's claws but Rouge kicked the Devatron in the cannon arm. This attack though was a dreadful mistake. The kick had caused the Devatron to accidentally fire it's cannon arm and Rouge had unwittingly kicked the Devatron's arm so it was aiming at the throne arm where the drive was plugged in and downloading. The cannon blast hit the arm of Devion's throne, making Sonic, Shadow and Tails jump back in alarm and the blast destroyed the database in the arm of the throne. Electricity surged and crackled and a large hole had been left in the throne arm after that accidental attack. Thankfully, the drive was still intact…but the database had been fried to the core by the blast. The drive wasn't glowing yellow and Tails looked at the still projected screen. There was only one column of writing, that being the one file that had been downloaded already, and there was nothing else happening on the screen, meaning the download had been interrupted thanks to the Devatron accidentally shooting it and that one file was all they had. They could not get

anymore now the database had been destroyed.

"Oh no! The Devatron fried the database!" cried Tails "We can't download any more information then we've already got! That one file's all we've managed to download!"

"I can't begin to describe how much that sucks!" groaned Sonic "One lousy file of info is all we've got! Let's hope it's actually useful!"

As for the Devatron, Rouge screw-kicked it but the attack didn't even harm the soldier and the Devatron just promptly back-handed Rouge directly into a wall. Shadow was livid with rage and he summoned a Chaos Spear to his hand.

"Shadow, throw it at the Devatron's eye!" Tails instructed "That's it's weak spot!"

"Thank you Tails." said Shadow, drawing his arm back and aiming directly at the Devatron's visor.

The Devatron aimed it's cannon arm at Shadow and it prepared to blast him with it but Shadow threw his Chaos Spear at the Devatron before the Devatron could fire. The spear hit the Devatron in the visor and destroyed it. The Devatron wailed in pain as it was blinded and the spear had damaged some of it's mechanisms, leaving the Devatron in great pain.

"OK, what do we do now?" asked Shadow.

"Now we get outta here before more Devatrons come and before we lose the only bit of data we have." said Tails, yanking the drive out of the slot and putting it back into his sensor-scrambling relay carrier "I don't wanna risk this getting shot by a Devatron."

"Humph, I don't like running away from my enemies." muttered Shadow "But we can't lose the data we have. I can always fight those chrome cretins another time."

"You sure can Shadow." said Sonic "And so we don't run into any Devatrons while we escape, we shall get out through the window!"

With that said, Sonic and Shadow both spin-dashed the cockpit

window together and they shattered it to pieces. Now the cockpit window was smashed, the Mobians leapt through the broken window and they ran to the edge of the ship's nose. Tails grabbed Sonic, Rouge grabbed Shadow and the two fliers and they flew the two hedgehogs off the top of *The Doombringer* and they headed down to the ground. The moment they touched down on the ground, they ran off back to Empire City as fast as they could.

"Whew, we made it!" said Sonic "Now let's call the others and tell them mission accomplished…sort of."

"I really hope this one bit of data we have is gonna be really helpful to us." said Tails "If not then our plan's a failure because we can't go back and get some more data after the Devatron just destroyed the database."

"I'm sure those shiny boys will fix it." said Rouge "And then we can go back and download some more if we need to."

As they ran back to EmpireCity, Sonic activated his earpiece and he spoke into it.

"Yo Sally!" Sonic said into the earpiece "It's Sonic here, we've got some Devatron data and we're back off to Empire City."

Meanwhile, Sonic's friends were still fighting the Devatrons in Green Hill Zone. Knuckles, Shade, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Cream, Sally & Nicole were still in heated combat against the reformed Raicor and his nine Devatron servants he had left. They hadn't managed to kill anymore Devatrons since Bunnie's arm cannon had been damaged by a Devatron soldier so she couldn't shoot them, Geoffrey's exploding darts weren't hitting the Devatrons were Geoffrey wanted them to because the Devatrons kept dodging the shots and the girls didn't have any weapons to destroy any Devatrons with so they couldn't destroy any of them. Knuckles & Shade were teaming up against Raicor but Raicor was no mere soldier, he was one of the sub-leaders and although he had been demoted to fifth-in-command, he was a big problem for the Mobians. Knuckles & Shade had been fighting valiantly against him and trying hard to blind him and render

him vulnerable but Raicor kept defending himself with his wings so their attacks were ineffective against him and Raicor just struck back with much stronger attacks. Knuckles uppercut Raicor in the chin but the attack didn't seem to hurt him in anyway. Raicor retaliated with a much stronger uppercut that could have broken Knuckles' jaw bones had it been any harder. Shade was livid with rage and she began Blade-Rushing Raicor like mad but Raicor took every attack she threw at him. Raicor just laughed mockingly at Shade. He sheathed his staff and then he deployed his arm cannons. He blasted Shade and sent her flying backwards. Shade hurled through the air and landed back-first on the root of a tree. The blasts had left a few holes in her trademark Nocturnus armour and landing on the tree root had left her back feeling quite sore. Shade winced as she forced herself up into a sitting position and she rubbed her back affectionately. Raicor retracted his arm cannons and he drew out his staff again. He ran up to Shade and he prepared to stab her but Bunnie stepped in and gave Raicor a powerful punch that sent him flying backwards and into a tree. Raicor knocked the tree over but the tree fell forwards instead of backwards and it landed directly on top of him. Thinking that that had finished him off, Bunnie smirked triumphantly and she ran over to help Shade get back up onto her feet.

"Are ya'll alright sugah?" asked Bunnie.

"I'm a little bruised and I feel sore but I'm OK." said Shade, rubbing herself better "Raicor shot me and I landed on this tree root. Ugh!" she groaned as she felt her aching back "Landing on the root really hurt my back!"

"Well ah've caused Raicor to get squished by a tree so he can't bother us anymore." said Bunnie "But we've still got those durn Devatron soldiers to deal with…"

Then suddenly to Bunnie's horror, Raicor threw the fallen tree off himself and he stood back up onto his feet! He wasn't harmed the slightest from the tree falling on him and he didn't even look damaged despite the fact a tree had fallen on him! Bunnie nearly died of shock after witnessing that. Raicor growled at Bunnie and he raised his wings to make himself appear larger.

"It appears the fact about us being invulnerable has escaped your primitive minds." he sneered "Mere plant life cannot crush us! You could squash us with a boulder and we wouldn't be crushed! A tree falling on us is going to have no effect on us you simple-minded cretins!"

"Well will THIS have an effect on ya?!" cried Knuckles, leaping in and socking Raicor in the back of the head.

Raicor fell down onto his hands and knees and Knuckles sailed over him and landed in front of him. Knuckles quickly spun around and punched Raicor in the visor, cracking it even more and making Raicor's vision even more disorientated. Raicor growled for he could barely see properly now and Knuckles began to whale on him some more. But the Devatron soldiers, who had just finished beating up Sally & Nicole, saw that Raicor was in trouble and they all fired at Knuckles. The cannon blasts hit Knuckles and brought him down onto his knees. Raicor then kicked Knuckles as viciously as he could towards the Devatron soldiers so they could deal with him. Knuckles landed at the feet of one soldier and three of them began to stomp on him as viciously as they could as if they were birds stomping on a snake. Sally & Nicole weakly picked themselves up and they watched as Knuckles was getting pummelled by the Devatron soldiers. Geoffrey & Cream ran in to help the echidna and so did Bunnie & Shade but the soldiers began shooting at them to keep them back. Sally forced herself up onto her feet and she coughed heavily.

"Cough! Ugh…Nicole…we're gonna have to…abandon this fight." croaked Sally "We're losing badly out here…"

"I agree…Sally…" said Nicole, clutching her arm "We can't win against…them…the Devatrons are too swift…for Geoffrey to hit with his…exploding darts…Bunnie can't…shoot them and…we don't have weapons…that will be…able to kill them…we can't even blind them…because they're too much…for us…"

But just at that moment, Sally received a call from Sonic in her earpiece. She answered it.

"Hello?" she asked.

"Yo Sally!" came Sonic's voice "It's Sonic here, we've got some Devatron data and we're back off to Empire City."

"Yes!" said Sally weakly "We'll…nugh…be falling back to Empire City…now. Well done…Sonic…"

"Are you OK?" asked Sonic with concern in his voice.

"I'm fine…don't worry about me…" lied Sally "We'll…be coming back as soon…as possible Sonic."

With that said, Sonic switched off and Sally & Nicole started limping away.

"Guys…" said Sally as loud as she could despite her injured state "We're…falling back now!"

"Right now, falling back sounds good to me." said Geoffrey "Let's go mates!"

With that said, Knuckles, Shade, Bunnie, Geoffrey and Cream all abandoned the fight and they retreated along with Sally & Nicole. Cosmo and Dr. Eggman left their hiding place and they retreated along with the others. Unfortunately, Raicor wasn't content with letting them get away. He ran after the retreating Mobians with his soldiers following him close behind.

"Come back here Mobians!" growled Raicor "Come back and come to your deaths!"

"Not in a long shot mate!" cried Geoffrey, turning around and firing some exploding darts at some trees.

The darts all exploded in unison and the explosions caused the trees they had been fired at to fall down on top of the Devatrons. The Devatrons were now stuck under a pile of trees for the moment. This distracted the Devatrons long enough for the Mobians to get away. In order to speed things about, Knuckles & Geoffrey scooped up Sally & Nicole bridal style respectively and they ran off with the injured ladies in their arms. By the time they were gone, Raicor and his soldiers burst through the fallen trees and Raicor roared at the top of his voice, angered that he had failed to stop the Mobians from

escaping and kill them. He feared on what Devion would say to him when he reported on it…

Meanwhile, Wilson, Mandy, Ruben, Katherine, Metal Sonic & Marik were still in battle with Steelor and his remaining seven soldiers and the battle wasn't going too well for them. Steelor was far too strong for Marik and the Devatron soldiers were proving to be tough, efficient foes for the others. Metal Sonic was the only one who was making any progress in this battle and even then it wasn't much since the Devatron soldiers kept shooting at him in order to distract him and prevent him from shooting their visors. Metal Sonic flew towards one Devatron and attempted to punch it but the Devatron beat him to it and it punched Metal Sonic down into the ground. The soldier then attempted to blast Metal Sonic but Katherine stepped in and drill-attacked the Devatron. The Devatron was thrown onto it's side and before it could get up, Wilson stabbed it in the visor and killed it immediately. Now there were only six soldiers left. Mandy gave one soldier an enormous roundhouse punch to the face and then she roundhouse punched it again but the Devatron counterattacked with a roundhouse punch to the face of it's own. The punch made Mandy spit some drops of blood out and she was thrown down onto her side with her face throbbing madly. The Devatron clasped it's hands together and it tried to fist-slam Mandy on the head but Mandy dodged and then punched the Devatron in the visor, cracking it and leaving it's vision unclear. The Devatron immediately panicked and began shooting like crazy in a frantic fashion. This made Mandy throw herself down onto the ground in order to avoid getting shot as the Devatron went crazy. Wilson decided to finish it off before the Devatron shot anyone so he ran up to the frantically shooting Devatron and he threw his spinning blade at it. The blade hit the Devatron straight in the visor and finished it off. Now there were only five soldiers left. One Devatron soldier was furious with what Wilson did and it shot at Wilson with it's arm cannon. The blast hit the ground just at Wilson's feet and the dog was sent flying through the air. Wilson landed rather painfully on his side and he lay on the ground, clutching his shoulder and grimacing in pain. The Devatron ran towards Wilson and attempted to shoot him again but Ruben leapt in and gave the Devatron an enormous

kick to the head that sent it hurling into a tree headfirst. Ruben ran over to Wilson and he helped the dog get back to his feet.

"Are you alright?" asked Ruben.

"I'm OK." said Wilson "Thanks for the save though."

"You're welcome." said Ruben "Those Devatrons are giving us a hard time. I so wish I had my aqua-collar so I could just let them all have it with a giant wave of water and send them sprawling to distract them long enough for us to land a decent blow on them."

"That would be helpful." said Wilson "Just a shame your friend had to steal it."

"Yeah, so now I'm stuck just using my mix of ninjutsu and kung-fu on them." said Ruben "Oh well, I'll use any means necessary to beat those monsters."

"You two! Look out!" cried Mandy all of the sudden.

Wilson and Ruben looked over at Mandy to see what she was so scared about only to be hit by two giant cannon blasts from a Devatron soldier. It had bent over and shot them with it's back mounted cannons and the blasts threw Wilson and Ruben threw the air like they were rag dolls and they landed side by side a good few feet away from them. The blast had hurt the two quite badly and they appeared to have passed out from the attack. Mandy immediately grew worried for the two and she darted over to them as quickly as she possibly could. The Devatron soldier that had shot Wilson & Ruben bent over and prepared to shoot Mandy with it's back cannons but Metal Sonic spin-dashed it in the side and knocked it down before it could shoot her. Mandy ran over to Wilson and Ruben and she knelt down by their sides worriedly.

"Wilson! Ruben! Oh god, please be OK you two!" she fretted.

She put her head near Wilson's chest and listened for a heartbeat. She heard it. She did the same to Ruben and she managed to hear his heartbeat. The two were still alive luckily but that blast had hit them pretty bad. But it didn't seem to have hurt them too badly since

they were already coming around. Wilson put his hand to his head and he groaned as he felt a sudden surge of pain flare up in his brain. Ruben picked himself up and he rubbed his throbbing back. Mandy sighed with relief and she hugged Wilson affectionately.

"Oh thank goodness!" she cried "You're OK! I'm sorry my warning was too late."

"Don't fret about it…" said Wilson casually, trying to open both eyes but he could only open one eye "…that Devatron got a lucky shot… nugh!...a very lucky shot."

"I don't know if we can keep this up until Sonic and his team get the…Devatron data." said Ruben "I think we should…fall back."

"We probably should." murmured Mandy "You know we're in trouble when even Marik the Martian & Eggman's hench bots are having trouble against the Devatrons!"

Mandy couldn't be more right on this. Metal Sonic & Katherine were both failing to land any good shots on the Devatron soldiers and they were both getting damaged by them. Katherine may have a barrier that she can use to defend herself from the Devatrons but it wasn't helping her much since the Devatrons just kept kicking her around like a football so this had prompted Katherine to fight without the barrier and she ended up getting damaged by the Devatrons as a result. Marik was getting whooped by Steelor in his fight. The Devatron fourth-in-command was just too powerful for Marik. Marik's electricity was useless against Steelor since Devatrons like electricity and it makes them feel stronger instead of actually hurting them and his energy waves couldn't help him much since Steelor was invulnerable. Marik clawed at Steelor but Steelor swung his knee up into Marik's face and he sent the Martian staggering backwards. The attack had left Marik with a nasty cut across his forehead. Steelor cackled at Marik and he kicked the Martian before he could even retaliate. Marik was thrown down onto the ground and Steelor added insult to injury by stomping on him. Marik cried out in anguish as Steelor slammed his foot down on Marik's body. Steelor then plunged his sword into the ground and pinned Marik down with the handle-bar shape of it. The handlebar shape of the sword was around Marik's neck. Marik looked like he'd just been stapled down

to the ground now. Marik tried to pull the sword out the ground and free himself but Steelor put his foot on the sword and kept it there. Steelor then activated his saw-blade, the weapon squealing ominously as it spun around at 250,000 RPM.

"You Martians say many things about yourselves." crowed Steelor "And neither of them are true. You're as pathetic as the Mobians and now you shall join them in extinction!"

He inched the saw blade near Marik's face but Metal Sonic spin-dashed Steelor and knocked him away from the Martian. Steelor landed on his back and he skidded to a halt near a bunch of bushes. His skid had left a giant dirt mound. Steelor picked himself up only to get walloped by Metal Sonic again. Steelor however managed to grab Metal Sonic and slam him into a tree. Any normal robot would have been broken by that attack. Metal Sonic retaliated by punching Steelor and knocking him down onto the ground. While all this was happening, Marik yanked Steelor's sword out of the ground after a lot of tugging. Marik was now free to get back up and he had Steelor's weapon in hand. He ran towards Steelor and he raised the weapon above his head as he ran to him. But Steelor saw Marik coming and he threw Metal Sonic into Marik. Metal Sonic knocked Marik down to the ground and Marik dropped Steelor's sword. Steelor quickly ran over and grabbed it and he prepared to stab Marik with it but Metal Sonic picked himself up and spin-dashed Steelor in the chest. Steelor growled furiously and he sheathed his weapons and began blasting at him. Wilson, Mandy & Ruben ran over to help Metal Sonic and Marik but Mandy received a call from Sally in her ear piece.

"Mandy…? Are you there?" asked Sally.

"I'm here your highness." said Mandy "What's your story?"

"Sonic's…got what we wanted…" said Sally "We're retreating…it's time for you to retreat too…fall back to the research centre."

"Will do your Majesty." said Mandy.

Sally switched off and Mandy turned to Wilson.

"We're falling back now." she explained "Blue dude and his team have some Devatron data."

"That's great! We're getting somewhere in this match at last!"

"Marik! Metal Sonic! Katherine!" Ruben called over to them "We're retreating now!"

Marik fumed angrily since he hated retreating but he knew why they were retreating. Sally had said once Sonic got the data he'd call her and inform her on this and then she'd pass it onto the others and it was clear that his team had gotten the message so that meant Sonic had the data and it was time to fall back. Marik abandoned his fight with Steelor and he ran for it as fast as he could. Steelor tried to run after him but Metal Sonic flew into Steelor, grabbed him and carried him up into the air. He then proceeded to throw Steelor down into the ground as hard as he could. Steelor hit the ground and left a crater the size of a large bathtub as he hit it. This gave the Mobians plenty of time to retreat. Wilson, Mandy & Ruben all ran off after Marik and so did Katherine. Metal Sonic flew off after them and joined up with the retreat. The soldiers tried to stop them by shooting at them but the Mobians were too fast for them and they missed every shot they fired. The Mobians eventually disappeared into the growth of the forest and the soldiers gave up the chase. As for Steelor, who was a good few feet away from them all, picked himself up and he climbed out of the crater he'd made after being thrown into the ground. He dusted himself off and growled furiously.

"Why are those cowards fleeing for their lives after fighting so valiantly against us?" he wondered to himself "Did we truly overpower them or is there more to their wretched game then we know about…?"

Meanwhile, Triton was continuing to hold out against Amy and the Chaotix. Even though he was on his own and had no soldiers to distract the Mobians, he was still too powerful for them and he was on top of this match. Triton swiped at the Mobians with his saw-stick but they all dodged and Vector lunged at Triton with a powerful punch to the face. Triton staggered backwards and he clutched his

face. His visor was beginning to crack. It was only a small crack but it was surely going to get worse if Vector kept punching him. Vector ran in to deck Triton but Triton swiped his weapon at Vector and forced him back. Triton then sheathed his weapon and gave Vector a left and right hook each and then a gut punch that made Vector cry out hoarsely. Triton then grabbed Vector's jaws, clamped them shut, and he threw Vector into a tree. Vector roared in pain as his still-healing back flared up in pain. Triton drew out his weapon again and he prepared to slice Vector open but Espio kicked him in the legs and tripped him up. Amy then ran in and bopped Triton on the head several times with her Piko-Piko hammer in the vain hope she'd actually crush his head with her hammer. But that tactic was doomed to fail. Amy slammed the hammer on Triton's head but Triton rolled out of the way before Amy could bop him again and he blasted Amy in the gut with his cannon arm. Amy was thrown backwards and she went straight through a nearby bush, leaving a hole in it. Triton grabbed his saw stick and he picked himself up. He ran towards Amy but Charmy Bee flew towards him so Triton stopped and he sucker-punched Charmy in the face. Espio pounced on Triton only for Triton to effortlessly shrug the chameleon off of him. Triton kicked Espio as viciously as he could and he prepared to carve him to pieces with his saw-stick but Amy jumped in and knocked the weapon out of his hand with one fell smack of the Piko-Piko hammer. Triton's response was to gut punch Amy and then elbow-thrust her on the head. Vector charged in and he chomped Triton's arm with his jaws…only to hurt his teeth and make Vector cry out in anguish. Biting an invulnerable robot was never a wise move to make in the battlefield. Triton laughed at Vector's failed attack and he uppercut Vector across the battlefield. Espio was about to attack Triton but Sally called him on his earpiece and he answered it.

"Espio? Are you there?" asked Sally.

"Roger that." said Espio "Me, Vector, Charmy and Amy have are hands full right now. What's going on?"

"Sonic's…got the data…we need…" said Sally "We're all falling back to the research centre…get your team and Amy outta here and back to…the research…centre."

"Roger that." said Espio "We'll be back shortly."

Sally switched off and Espio called over to Vector and Charmy.

"Guys! We need to fall back now!" he called to them.

"Fall back?" asked Charmy "Does that mean Sonic's got the data thingy he requires?"

"Quiet Charmy!" hissed Vector seeing as Triton was still here and he probably heard that "Come on Amy! We're retreating now!"

"OK Vector." said Amy, running off as fast as she could.

Amy and the Chaotix fled the battlefield and they headed off out of Green Hill Zone and back to Empire City. Triton would have chased after them but he was a little mystified by Charmy's statement before the Mobians fell back so he didn't chase them. He put a claw to his chin and he mused to himself.

"What did that buzzing thing mean by "Does that mean Sonic's got the data thingy he requires"?" he wondered "Was Sonic doing something while we've been out here?"

Whatever Charmy meant by that, he knew it bared briefing when the Devatrons reported what had happened back at *The Doombringer* so he kept that thought in mind until he got back to *The Doombringer* .

Back at the Empire Research Centre, the Mobians had all gathered together around a table in the lab and Tails set his sensor scrambling relay carrier down on the table. He opened the carrier and he took out the USB drive.

"OK everybody I've got some good and bad news for you all." said Tails "The good news is we've got some Devatron data but the bad news is a Devatron shot the database and destroyed it before we could finish downloading it. We only have one file of data and it's written in a foreign language but we can fix that problem easily."

"Well that's just prime isn't it?!" moaned Marik, slamming the table with his fists "We go through all this trouble and all you morons manage to get is ONE lousy file of data?!"

"Marik! Cool it before I give you a black eye!" yelled Sonic "This one file of data might be of use to us!"

"And if it isn't?!" retorted Marik "Then our plan's pretty much screwed because a Devatron destroyed the database, meaning we can't get anymore data!"

"Not necessarily Marik." said Cosmo "Ships usually have a backup station for any data records and files should the database get terminated so I'm sure the Devatrons have a spare database somewhere on their ship."

"And how would you know that Cosmo?" snorted Marik "You don't know anything about ships so don't try to look clever in front of me!"

"You leave Cosmo alone Marik!" snapped Tails "I'm sure Cosmo knows plenty about ships don't ya Cosmo?"

"I do Tails." said Cosmo "My parents have a fleet which unfortunately got destroyed by the Martians before I was evacuated and I was taught on how ships work and ships usually have a backup station for their data should the original database be destroyed. I bet the Devatrons have one so if this file of data isn't useful then we can try again on *The Doombringer* and see if we can download the database that way."

"There you go Marik." sneered Sonic "Next time you'll probably listen to the very people who you're supposed to be working with not picking fights with!"

"Honestly, I though I was the one who'd be starting arguments out of us!" chortled Eggman "And I'm Sonic's number one enemy after all! Ho, ho, ho, ho!"

"Silence doctor." muttered Shadow "Nobody's interested in your poor sense of humour right now."

"Shadow's got that right." agreed Sonic "Now Tails, let's plug the ol'

drive in and see what handy bits of info we have on those Deva-dorks."

Tails ran over to the centre's main computer and he plugged the drive into the drive slot near the keyboard. The screen displayed the downloaded information but it was written in Devatronic so nobody could understand it. Everybody gathered around the computer and they looked at the screen, wondering what all the weird symbols and characters were.

"This is no good. We can't read this." said Knuckles "Why have the Devatrons written their information in a different language?! They speak English like we do!"

"I have no idea Knuckles." said Tails "Maybe so that if anybody steals their data, they can't read it and therefore make the information useless to them. I'm sure we'll be able to translate it. Can this computer translate foreign languages?"

"It should be able to." said Nicole "This is a research…centre and the researchers who use it will need to translate languages incase they're working in foreign places and need to translate foreign… notes or ancient text and the like."

"Let's see if this computer has what I need." said Tails.

He began to tap a few keys on the computer and he ran a search for any translating features the computer possibly had. To his luck, the computer had the programme he needed and he set it up. Now the programme was up, he ran it and he set it up to translate the Devatron data for them. He managed to get the programme to translate the Devatron data into English for everybody. Now they had translated the data, Tails looked at it and he read some of it aloud. This data was about one of the planets the Devatrons had conquered.

"It says here that this file is about a planet called Sram." read Tails "It's one of the fourteen planets the Devatrons have conquered and it's a good few light years away from where we are according to these coordinates."

He pointed to the screen which displayed Sram's coordinates.

"Interesting." muttered Eggman "Now how is that helpful in anyway?"

"Please let me continue Eggman." said Tails in a huff "Now where as I? Oh yeah: It also says the inhabitants of Sram are robots called the Startrons, relatives of the Devatrons and while they may not be as strong or as advanced as the Devatrons, they're still a powerful race and one to look out for and they should be kept under tight watch at all times."

"Startrons?" mused Sonic "Relatives of the Devatrons?"

"Yup." said Tails "Relatives as in cousins of the Devatrons in fact."

"The Devatrons have cousins?" chimed Rouge "What's next? The Devatrons have other kinds of relatives?"

"No, just the Startrons." said Tails, turning back to the computer "Anyway," he continued to read from the file "An elite group of Startrons led by the Startron leader General Klight have defied our laws and orders and they abandoned the planet after it had been conquered and it's imperative we find them before they start a new army of Startrons and try to take us over."

"So there's a group of Startrons out there who are hiding from the Devatrons?" asked Sonic "So we now know the Devatrons have relatives and a group of them are hiding. How does that help us?"

"It helps us in this simple way Sonic." said Tails "The Startrons are related to the Devatrons and their planet has been conquered by the Devatrons…so if we go over and MEET the Startrons and ask for them to help us beat the Devatrons then maybe we can put an end to this war. After all, they'll easily say yes since their world's been conquered."

"Tails, you have completely lost your marbles!" bellowed Marik "How in the name of Neptune can the Startrons possibly help us in this conflict?! THEIR PLANET'S BEEN CONQUERED BY THE DEVATRONS! That means the Devatrons are too strong for them

and the Startrons are useless against them! They can't help us at all!"

"Wrong Marik." said Tails "A group of Startrons, one of them their leader, are in hiding and I bet over the years they've been developing ways to defeat the Devatrons. Besides, they're related to the Devatrons so they must know their own cousin's weaknesses."

"And yet their planet still got conquered!" retorted Marik "So they still can't help us!"

"We don't know that for sure Marik but desperate times call for desperate measures and right now, we're very desperate and I'm willing to try anything." said Sally "We must meet the Startrons and see if they can be of any help to us in this battle."

"No Sally, we can't all go and meet the Startrons." noted Sonic "Nobody will be left to defend Mobius otherwise. Me and Tails will go and meet the Startrons. Tails will probably know how to pilot a spaceship and I'll need to give him some backup should he run into trouble."

"But Sonic, we need you to help us fight." said Sally "You're our best fighter, we can't win this without you."

"Ehk! Wrong!" said Sonic, tapping Sally's nose teasingly "Shadow will be my replacement and he's stronger then even me so he'll fill in for me while I'm meeting the Startrons with Tails."

"That's an excellent idea." said Shadow "I approve of it easily. I'll protect your people from the Devatrons until you get back Sonic and I promise you, everybody will be alive when you come back."

"You'd better keep to it faker or you'll be getting a very stern telling off from me!" taunted Sonic "I'm sure you'll do well to keep my friends safe and beat those Devatrons, especially with that Chaos Blast of yours."

"Speaking of Chaos, why haven't you used the Chaos Emeralds to destroy the Devatrons?" asked Shadow "If they're as powerful as you say they are then wouldn't the logical decision be to use the

Chaos Emeralds to destroy them?"

"Oh I tried that Shadow and Devion just drained the emeralds dry of their power before he could even touch him." muttered Sonic "And he's taken them so we can't restore their power and if we use the Master Emerald to power up then Devion will likely just power drain me again and they'll probably end up finding it so Knuckles doesn't want me to drag the Master Emerald into this just to be safe."

"So I will be incapable of using Chaos Control." said Shadow grimly "While you're in space, I'll see if I can retrieve the Chaos Emeralds and give them their power back."

"Well Shadow if you can do that then I will be happy." said Sonic "But then what's the point of powering them back up since Devion has turrets that can drain their power? If we re-power the emeralds and try to destroy him, he'll probably just use the turrets to drain their power again."

"So we're pretty much at square one." murmured Shadow "Still, we can't let the Devatrons keep the Chaos Emeralds or we'll never be able to re-power them so while you and Tails meet the Startrons, I'll try and see if I can retrieve them."

"And I wish you good luck with that Shadow." said Sonic, shaking Shadow's hand "So Sal, where can me and Tails find a spaceship?"

"Well there was the Central Space Centre in Central City but Eggman made short work of Central City with his Egg-Fleet last year," muttered Sally with a glare over to Eggman who only smiled and sweat-dropped "And the only other place I can think of is Station Canaveral in Station Square but I doubt they're really gonna lend you a spaceship just so you can meet the Devatron's cousins and get some help from them."

"Well Sal we're in desperate times and these times are calling for REALLY desperate measures so we're gonna have to try." said Sonic "Me and Tails need a spaceship if we're gonna meet the Startrons so we will be going over to Station Square and we're going to get ourselves a spaceship. I'm sure the guys who work there will understand why we need it."

"I agree with Sonic." said Ruben "Every other option we have is useless and I don't think we'll be able to retrieve the Chaos Emeralds so easily especially since we don't know where Devion's keeping them so we need to meet the Startrons and see if they can help us. They are related to the Devatrons and there's a group of them in hiding and they've probably got methods to beat them but we don't know if we don't find out so we've got to try it. If all else fails then we'll have to try the last resort."

Sally sighed to herself and she thought on this. Ruben did have a point, and a very valid one at that, and everything else they'd tried hadn't worked on the Devatrons. There's too many of them, they can reproduce and they're invulnerable so they can't even be destroy and the only method of killing them was pretty much useless since it took good shots to hit the Devatrons in the visor but they were getting good at dodging them and the Devatrons would eventually overpower them with sheer numbers so getting a spaceship and flying off to meet the Startrons and ask for their aid in this battle was all they had left.

"OK." said Sally "Royal Fighters, we're going to Station Canaveral. Let us hope the people working there can spare Sonic and Tails one."

"That's the spirit Sal." said Sonic "But here's one thing I've noticed. How can we find this General Klight and his group of Startrons if they've gone into hiding and the Devatrons are looking for them? They don't know where he is so how will we find them?"

"I dunno." said Tails "But if we upload their planet's coordinates to the spaceship and jump to hyper speed and arrive there then maybe we could sneak onto the planet, find any imprisoned Startrons and ask them where General Klight is."

"I dunno Tails, that sounds pretty risky to me." said Sonic "How will we be able to sneak onto a Devatron conquered planet? If Devion's ship can pick us up a mile away then I'm sure a planet full of Devatrons will spot a spaceship coming before we even arrive."

"No they won't." said Tails slyly "We've still got my sensor-scrambling relay carrier. All I have to do is boost it's signal

scrambling transmission and it'll stop our entire ship from being picked up on radar so they won't see us coming."

"Good idea but I'm sure they'll *see* us coming before we can land on the planet." noted Sonic "They may not pick us up on radar but that won't stop the Devatrons from seeing us coming. I bet the moment we arrive on the planet they'll just shoot us down."

"Oh yeah, of course they will." murmured Tails "If that does happen then we'll get out with an escape pod, all ships these days have one, and then we'll find the Startrons, get what we need and then steal a Devatron ship and find General Klight."

"That could work." noted Shade "But wouldn't the Startrons in hiding start attacking you once you arrive? You're in a Devatron ship so they'll think you're Devatrons and shoot you down."

"They might but once they do shoot us down and find out we're not Devatrons, they'll question us and we'll just tell them what's going on and they'll take us in to meet their leader." said Tails "Well I hope that's what they'll do."

"Well it's the only option we have." said Sonic "See if the Devatron's cousins can help us beat them. OK gang, let's do it to it!"

With that said the Royal Fighters all left the research centre and headed off to Station Square where Station Canaveral was located. This one bit of data they had may just be their ticket to victory against the Devatrons. If not then all hope was lost and Mobius was doomed forever…

Meanwhile, the Devatrons had all left Green Hill Zone and gone back to *The Doombringer* to report about what had happened on their hunt. Devion & Tronic, who had spent the entire time looking for the Mobians only not to find them at all, returned to *The Doombringer* and Devion listened to his sub-leaders as they reported to him. He was not pleased with their stories at all and he growled furiously.

"How is this possible?!" he roared as he strode past the sub-leaders who were all standing in a line "Raicor, Steelor, Triton, three of the best Devatrons in the entire fleet all go hunting for Mobians and do battle with them and yet all you've come back with is nothing more then an excuse! Tell me my sub-leaders! How hard can it be to vanquish a mere furry creature?! Only few of them actually have super powers so they can't all be difficult to defeat!"

"We're sorry my Lord." said Raicor "We shall double our efforts next time."

"You three had better do so otherwise you'll all be recycled into chrome and made into much more competent Devatrons." snarled Devion.

"Devion sir, may I say something?" asked Triton.

"This had better be of profound value Triton." muttered Devion "I'm already losing my patience with you, pray I don't lose any more of it."

"I was fighting the pink hammer-swinging Mobian, the purple ninja reptile thing, the large green reptile thing and the buzzing creature as you know." said Triton "And for some reason, as the Mobians were retreating, the buzzing thing said "Does this mean Sonic's got the data thingy he requires?". I have a feeling there was more to this hide-&-seek game then meets the optics."

"Sonic's…got the data he requires…?" mused Devion "This must mean…"

"I bet those Mobians orchestrated this game of theirs to distract us while Sonic and his twin-tailed accomplice, who also wasn't with the others, sneak onto our ship and steal our data!" cried Triton "In fact, there's a hole in the arm of your throne where the database is stored master!"

Triton pointed at Devion's throne, which had a hole in it from when the Devatron accidentally shot it. Devion looked at the hole in the throne and he fumed angrily. The whole thing had been a plot! Devion had been tricked! From the hole in the throne, he was getting the idea that the Mobians had possibly stolen the data and then

damaged the database so the Devatrons would lose it forever. How fortunate for them that they had a back-up database. Devion decided to see the security cameras to see what had been going on in *The Doombringer* while he had been away. Devion wandered over to the control pad and he pressed a button that showed him the recorded security footage from earlier. He saw none other then Sonic, Tails, Shadow & Rouge all gathered around his throne and downloading the data with a USB drive they had. Devion watched the footage up to the part where the Devatron accidentally shot the arm of Devion's throne. That obviously meant the Mobians didn't get much information but whatever they downloaded was bound to be vital to the Mobians. He had no idea what file of info they'd downloaded so for all Devion knew, it could be information about them or some other kind of information. Devion stopped playing the security footage.

"Your estimation happens to be correct Triton." muttered Devion "Sonic and his twin-tailed friend were infiltrating our ship and downloading our data while we were out hunting their friends. I have not seen this black and red creature before though," he pointed at Shadow "Who is he and where has he come from? And why does his appearance mirror that of Sonic's to a degree of so many angles? And who is this winged creature with the pink heart on her attire? Are these two new accomplices of Sonic's? No matter, they must be destroyed too if they're affiliated with Sonic in anyway."

Devion turned away from the screen and he faced his sub-leaders.

"We must destroy the Royal Fighters before they can use any data they've downloaded against us." declared Devion "Tronic, track down their position and then fly *The Doombringer* there so that we may annihilate them in a rain of firepower!"

"Yes Devion." droned Tronic.

Tronic went over to the cockpit seat and he sat down in it. He began taping keys on the keyboard and searching for the Royal Fighters. Devion sat down in his throne and he waited for Tronic to take off. Raicor, Triton & Steelor all stood beside Devion and they waited for the ship to take-off. Tronic taped some keys and he peered at the screen very closely as he searched for the Mobians. He eventually

found them and they appeared to be on the move because the dots representing them were moving. That's because the Royal Fighters were all in hover saucers sans Wilson & Mandy for they were in her hover car and they were off to Station Square.

"Found them." said Tronic "But they appear to be in motion. They must be heading somewhere."

"Well now we know where they are, we can follow them to where ever they're going." cackled Devion "Take flight Tronic! We will follow those Mobians and annihilate them all!"

"Yes my lord." droned Tronic.

He pressed a button on the control pad and he pulled some levers back. *The Doombringer* rose up from the ground and it began to ascend up and up into the sky. Tronic then pushed the thrust-levers forward and the jets of *The Doombringer* burned marvellously as they were pushed into their highest power and *The Doombringer* began to fly forwards. The malevolent vessel was now cruising through the air and Tronic followed the Mobians with the aid of *The Doombringer* 's tracking systems. Sonic and Tails maybe going on a space voyage, but if the Devatrons caught up to them, they may not even make it off the ground…

A good hour later, the Royal Fighters all arrived at Station Square and they headed through the giant city to Station Canaveral. It didn't take them long to arrive at the centre for Station Canaveral was quite near the outskirts of the city. Station Canaveral was truly a majestic sight for many. It was a super-modern space station with spaceships and space craft of any kind and space teams working 24/7 as they studied the mysterious realms of the world outside of Mobius. Tails was impressed with the look of the space station but he contained himself since now was not the time to be admiring things. Now was the time to operate with their only option to defeat the Devatrons and just hope it works. The Royal Fighters all pulled up to Station Canaveral and they all entered the marvellous space centre. Upon entry, they could see astronauts assembling new spacecraft and space equipment and they appeared to be working

quite vigorously. A man in a smart suit, who was a muskrat with brown fur and orange stripes on his face, saw the Royal Fighters and he ran over to them quickly. He was in charge of the space centre and he wasn't pleased to have visitors here.

"Hold it right there you lot." he said "Station Canaveral is not open to tourists and if you're not here to apply for a job interview then you can all leave."

"We beg your pardon." said Sally politely "But we're not tourists, we're the Royal Fighters of New Mobotropolis. I'm Queen Sally Acorn, the successor to my parents after they were killed."

She resisted the urge to say that "The Martian with us did it". The muskrat's expression appeared to soften up after hearing that.

"The Royal Fighters eh?" he said brightly "Well that is a pleasant surprise. Especially as the world famous Sonic the Hedgehog is here. Well that changes everything, a team of heroes is welcome to Station Canaveral at anytime they like."

"That sounds cool sir." said Sonic "We've come here for a favour though."

"What favour would that be then?" asked the muskrat.

"We think we have an idea on how to defeat the Devatrons and we need a spaceship." explained Tails "Please can we borrow one for our mission? We need one because we need to go into space for the mission."

"You have an idea on how to defeat the Devatrons do you?" said the muskrat with interest "Marvellous. Those robotic demons are plotting to conquer our world! Why ever do you need to go into space though?"

"Because our idea to defeat the Devatrons involves Sonic & Tails going into space and meeting some relatives of theirs who have been oppressed by the Devatrons." explained Nicole "We think those relatives of theirs mighty actually be able to help us defeat the Devatrons so we're going to try it out."

The muskrat thought on this matter for a moment before making up his mind.

"Well most of our ships are on loan right now but we do have one free." he said "And I'll be happy to lend it to you if it means defeating the Devatrons at long last. So how many of you are going on this voyage?"

"Just me and Tails." said Sonic "The others are gonna keep fighting the Devatrons until we get back."

"Well that's lucky because the only ship that's free can only fit a crew of up to five or six people." said the muskrat "Come along then Sonic & Tails and I'll take you to your ship."

Sonic & Tails did as they were told and they followed the muskrat off to their spaceship while the rest stayed behind. Unfortunately for the Royal Fighters, *The Doombringer* was just coming towards Station Square and it was poised to strike once it cast it's shadow over the magnificent city…

The muskrat led Sonic & Tails into Station Canaveral's hangar bay where only one spaceship was left since the others were being used by other astronauts either near Mobius are beyond. This spaceship wasn't a large spaceship given how it only has enough room for six people but it was still a good looking ship. It had ogival delta wings like a shuttle, a round nose cone and one large cockpit window. It was silver in colour, the tips of it's wings were blue and it had the Station Canaveral logo on both sides (the logo being a red & blue sphere with many stars near it and making the sphere look like it was deteriorating into starts). Tails was well impressed with the spaceship and he was glad that they had been given it.

"This is the ship you'll be given." said the muskrat "We call this one *The Silver Bullet* and it's one of the finest ships we have on offer. Due to it's small size though it only has one escape pod but it can fit the whole crew in so don't worry about it not having enough room. It has no weapons so don't get in a fight out in space if you can. It has state-of-the-art navigation systems so it'll easily be able to locate Mobius when you come back from your mission."

"Sounds great." said Sonic.

"So you two, do you know how to fly a spaceship?" asked the muskrat.

"I do." said Tails "When I was six, I studied the schematics of spaceships from a book my mom gave me for my birthday. Since then I've been studying spaceships quite frequently so I've got an idea on how to fly them."

"Besides, he can build and fly his own plane so I'm sure a spaceship's no challenge for him, is it Tails?" asked Sonic snidely with a cheeky grin on his face.

"He can build and fly a plane?!" blurted the muskrat "But the kid looks like he's not even ten yet! That's incredible! Such brilliance and at such a young age! Never before have I seen a kid blessed with genius like that! We could do with you working right here Tails! I bet you'd fit right in Station Canaveral!"

"Well when we've defeated the Devatrons and then Eggman afterwards and Mobius is at peace again I'll think about it." chuckled Tails.

"OK you two, when you get into *The Silver Bullet* , taxi to the runway and then take off. The ship will reach 300 miles in under a minute and it'll take you into space easily."

"OK sir." said Tails "We'll be back as soon as possible and hopefully, we'll have a way to defeat the Devatrons."

"We all hope you do too." said the muskrat "Good luck Sonic & Tails. Station Canaveral will await your return."

With that said, Sonic & Tails ran up the boarding steps and they entered *The Silver Bullet* . The boarding steeps wheeled away from the ship and Tails closed the boarding door. He and Sonic went into the cockpit and they were met with quite a sight. The spaceship had controls by the dozen and thousands of blinking lights, levers, buttons and switches that did goodness knows what. Luckily for them, the controls were all labelled for the newcomers who maybe

using the ship so Tails knew what controls he should and shouldn't be using. Sonic & Tails both seated themselves and they put on their seatbelts. Tails looked at the control pad and he gripped the steering column. He could feel himself tingling with excitement. Never before had he flown a spaceship and yet he'd studied vigorously for flying one and he'd dreamed of flying a real live spaceship. And now was going to be his chance. A dream come true for the young, intelligent little fox cub. Tails released the breaks on the spaceship and *The Silver Bullet* began to taxi out of the hangar bay and towards the spaceship runway. Unfortunately, it didn't seem they'd be getting any further. *The Doombringer* had finally arrived at Station Canaveral and it was ready to shoot them all down. The Royal Fighters all saw the colossal Devatron ship and they freaked immediately.

"No!" cried Sally " *The Doombringer* 's here! It must be here to stop Sonic & Tails from leaving Mobius!"

"But why would the Devatrons be doing that?" asked Cream "The Devatrons don't know that Mr. Sonic & Tails wanna meet their relatives, nor do they know we've got a bit of their data."

"I hate to break it to you kiddo but when we were on that ship, I kicked a Devatron and accidentally made it shoot the database which was in the arm of a chair in the cockpit so I think the Devatrons are gonna realize they've been sabotaged when they saw what damage I accidentally made a Devatron cause." said Rouge with a rather guilty look on her face "And the fact we broke through the cockpit window to get out of the ship might give them some ideas too."

"Well thanks to you Rouge, that blunder might have given the Devatrons the idea that we've stolen some of their data!" yelled Marik "And now they're here to stop us from using it against them! You Mobians really can't do anything without screwing up can you?!"

"Oh yeah and like you're any better?" sniffed Mandy "I haven't seen you hold up against a single Devatron since this truce and all you've done is try to get Bunnie arrested so at least we're doing some good around here!"

"Now, now sugah, don't start arguing with Marik." said Bunnie hastily "We've gotta stop the Devatrons before they attack the station!"

"And I will be able to do that." said Shadow "Bunnie, fly me up to *The Doombringer* and I'll remove my inhibitor rings. Hopefully, I'll be able to Chaos Blast the ship enough to critically damage it and either send them packing or make them fall."

"OK shadow-hog." said Bunnie "After all, ya'll have some durn destructive power in ya'll."

With that said, Bunnie grabbed Shadow and she flew the black hedgehog up to *The Doombringer* but just as Bunnie began to ascend up into the sky, *The Doombringer* fired a missile straight at Station Canaveral. The missile rocketed past Bunnie & Shadow, the Rabbot shrieking in fright and almost falling out of the sky in shock, and it hit the station, exploding into a brilliant ball of fire and rupturing a giant hole in the centre. The station was still standing but it wouldn't survive anymore shots should the Devatrons continue their assault. Down on the ground, Sonic & Tails were just on the runway but they saw the missile firing and hitting Station Canaveral and they were well horrified. What increased their horror was the mere sight of *The Doombringer* hovering over Station Square and getting ready to fire again.

"Oh no! The Devatrons have found us!" cried Tails "I bet they're trying to stop us before we can use the data we've stolen against them!"

"Why would they be doing that?" asked Sonic "They can't possibly know we've stolen any data! Oh wait…"

Sonic though for a moment and remembered the blinded Devatron that had tried to stop them in their mission. He theorized that the blinded Devatron probably told Devion, even though that wasn't the case.

"I think the Devatron that tried to stop us snitched on us." said Sonic "That's how they know."

"Either way, we've gotta take off before they shoot us!" screeched

Tails, ready to slam his foot on the throttle.

"But if we take off, we'll be easy prey for them!" noted Sonic " *The Doombringer* will just shoot us down if we try to take off!"

"Oh yeah, of course they will!" muttered Tails "Well let's hope our friends can do something to distract them long enough for us to get away!"

And luckily for Sonic & Tails, Bunnie & Shadow were doing just that. Bunnie flew Shadow to the top of *The Doombringer* and prepared to touch down just as *The Doombringer* was preparing to make another shot. Devion was sitting in his throne and watching as Tronic aimed the ship's missiles at *The Silver Bullet* . Tronic scanned the ship and found out the ship contained Mobian life on it.

"Devion, there's a ship on the runway preparing for take off." droned Tronic "There's Mobians inside."

"Destroy it." said Devion "Prevent that wretched excuse for actual space-going technology from ascending from the very ground beneath us and up to the void of space outside the planet."

Tronic obeyed and he prepared to fire the missiles. He was locking on target just as Shadow removed his inhibitor rings and handed them over to Bunnie. Bunnie quickly flew away from Shadow just as the black hedgehog's body began to glow a bright crimson red and energy flowed through his veins. He tensed up very tightly and he began to build up energy.

"Chaos… **BLAAASSSSSTTTTT!** " bellowed Shadow as he threw his arms out to the side and unleashed the power within him.

Chaos Energy exploded out from within his body and it ripped it's way through the tough chrome hull of *The Doombringer* . The Devatrons were well surprised by that sudden attack and the Chaos Blast continued to rip it's way through the ship and severely damage it. Sonic & Tails watched the whole thing from *The Silver Bullet* and they were will amazed by it.

"That's Chaos Blast!" cried Sonic "Shadow's damaging *The*

Doombringer !"

"Cool!" cried Tails "I bet Shadow's gonna end up destroying *The Doombringer* if he keeps this up! We can take-off now!"

Tails threw the thrusters forward and the ship's engines roared into life. *The Silver Bullet* began to move down he runway at a fast speed and it began to speed up and up as it went down the runway. *The Doombringer* fired a desperate missile at it but it missed and *The Silver Bullet* continued to rocket down the runway. The ship rocketed down the runway at 300 miles per hour and it began to ascend up into the air. *The Silver Bullet* took off at last and it flew up into the sky while Shadow's Chaos Blast continued to damage *The Doombringer* . On *The Doombringer* , Shadow finally finished his Chaos Blast and Bunnie flew down to collect him. She grabbed Shadow and flew off the ship with him in hand and his rings around her wrists. Shadow's Chaos Blast had done a critical amount of damage to *The Doombringer* . The top of the ship had a giant hole in it, some of the interior had been blown away and smoke billowed out from the top of it. *The Doombringer* only had enough energy left in it to remain flying and that was saying a lot since it was losing energy and fast. Devion growled furiously and he thumped the arms of his throne in anger.

"Those Mobians have critically damaged my ship yet again!" he fumed "Those loathsome little cretins are vexing me more then ever! They'd better not be wallowing in triumph yet because this battle is still not over! Tronic, take us back to New Mobotropolis and we'll begin repairs once we get back!"

"Yes sir." droned Tronic.

"As for that little spaceship that's taken off." muttered Devion "I shall put my forces on the planets under my control on full alert for it. Those Mobians must be destroyed. I do not know why two of them are leaving their own planet behind and are ascending up into space but I do not care. They must be destroyed otherwise."

He watched *The Silver Bullet* fly past his critically damaged vessel and head off into space. Devion knew that he had lost this battle and it was time to fall back. His reinforcements on the fourteen planets

he'd conquered already will hopefully get the ship. *The Doombringer* slowly began to turn around, smoke still billowing out from the top of it, and it left Station Square behind. Sonic & Tails looked out the cockpit window where they saw *The Doombringer* leaving Station Square and heading back to New Mobotropolis.

"Devion's packing up and going." said Sonic "Shadow did it. *The Doombringer* 's damaged and it won't be bothering anyone for a while. I bet that'll give my friends an edge on the Devatrons."

"It will, the Devatrons will be very busy fixing their ship, thus giving our friends the moment to strike them while they're vulnerable." said Tails "As for us, it's off to Sram we go and hopefully, the Startrons will help us defeat the Devatrons once and for all!"

Tails continued to push the ship upwards as it flew up towards the atmosphere. The space voyage was on and Sonic & Tails' adventure to Sram was about to begin. Would the Startrons be of any help to them? Would they make it back? And will the others survive without Sonic helping them? So many thoughts circled in Sonic's head like a roundabout that never stopped spinning. And fate had the answers to those questions. It would be a matter of time until they were revealed and they would hopefully be the answers Sonic wanted…

Ooooh ho, ho! This is getting intense now! Sonic & Tails are going to meet the Devatron's cousins! Will they be willing to comply though? Or are Sonic & Tails wasting their time? Tune in as we meet some "Victims of the Devatrons" next time!

Meanwhile, tune into the spin-off title* Tales from Mobius *as Sonic's friends try to hold out against the Devatrons until Sonic & Tails come back!

Victims of the Devatrons

Story 112: Victims of the Devatrons

Going into space is a dream of many individuals. Travelling into space, the very world outside of the planet you walked upon, forever continues to be a fascinating concept to many young minds and These young minds will dream and dream of going into space and seeing the stars and what Earth looks like from a distance. Many species of the galaxy had fulfilled this dream thanks to superior technology and space travel and get to live the dream of going into space. And now, Sonic the Hedgehog and his best friend Tails the twin-tailed fox have become another pair of individuals to go up into space. Their ship *The Silver Bullet* had taken them all the way up through Mobius' atmosphere and now they were leaving their glorious world behind and entering the vast empty void of space. Sonic and Tails looked out the window and they could see Mobius behind them. Mobius looked very much like Earth only it had slightly less water the Earth and thus, had a greener look to it. Sonic had always wondered what Mobius looked like from space and Tails, despite reading many books and seeing pictures of Mobius from space, had been fascinated with the idea of going up into space and seeing this for himself. The two were awe-struck and they could hardly keep their eyes away.

"This is way past cool isn't it buddy?" said Sonic "We're up in space looking down on Mobius. The planet looks just as cool from up here then it does down on the planet itself."

"I'm so amazed that we're up here right now on this very spaceship flying up into space." said Tails "I'd always dreamed of this and now my dream's come true at last. If only mom and dad could see this now."

His expression fell into a solemn one as he thought about his parents. He hadn't seen them since their roboticization and despite his life with Sonic, he had been missing them dearly and just bringing them up made him feel down. Sonic could see that Tails

had just ended up making himself feel sad so he decided to cheer him up. He patted the young fox on the back affectionately.

"I'm sure they would have loved to see you flying this spaceship." said Sonic gently "But I don't think they'd want you to start worrying about them while you've got a mission to do. Chin up Tails, we're gonna meet the Startrons and see if they can help us defeat the Devatrons. I need my best buddy at his best for this mission."

Tails looked up at Sonic and his solemn expression brightened up into a happy expression.

"You're right Sonic." said Tails "I can't get distracted now. The fate of Mobius depends on us now. Thank you Sonic."

He then hugged his best friend in gratitude for making him feel better. Sonic hugged him back, pleased to see he'd managed to cheer Tails up. It did pain him to see his friends looking miserable so he was always happy to make them feel better about themselves.

"You're welcome buddy." said Sonic "The hedgehog is always happy to cheer his friends up after all."

"I'm so glad I met someone with a heart as big as yours Sonic." said Tails happily "So, do you think we're ready to activate the hyper-drive and head off to Sram?"

"Whenever you're ready Tails." said Sonic.

So Sonic and Tails ran over to the control pad and they sat back down in their seats. The put on their seatbelts and Tails prepared to activate *The Silver Bullet* 's hyper drive. He had uploaded Sram's coordinates to the ship's navigation system with the aid of his size-adapting USB drive so the ship would take them to Sram once Tails activated the hyper drive. But before Tails could activate it, the radio communicator started going static, much to the surprise of Sonic & Tails.

"Whoa, the radio communicator's crackling!" cried Sonic in surprise.

"I think somebody's trying to contact us." said Tails "Let's see who it is."

The crackling stopped and the voice of none other then Queen Sally Acorn herself rang out from the communicator.

"Sonic? Tails? Can you hear me?" asked Sally "Are you two alright?"

"We're A-OK Sal." answered Sonic "I've really got to say that space is more amazing then you'd think it is. It's way past cool up here!"

"I can imagine it is." said Sally "So are you two preparing to go off to the Startron planet?"

"We are your majesty." said Tails "With the aid of my USB drive, I've uploaded Sram's coordinates from the data we downloaded into the ship's navigational systems. We're just preparing to jump into hyperspace now."

"Well it seems I was lucky enough to call you two then." said Sally "Well, I wish you two the best of luck and…"

But before Sally could finish, Amy Rose chipped in and spoke to Sonic & Tails.

"Sonic, we all wish you luck in your adventure and you'd better come back alive or we'll never win this stinkin' war!" she exclaimed.

"Don't sweat it Amy." said Sonic casually "I'll be back before you can say "Knothole."

"That's what I like to hear." said Amy happily "And don't worry about us Sonic, we'll be fine. Especially as we have Shadow helping us."

"Whoever said I was?" said Sonic snidely "I know you'll all hold on until me and Tails return. You guys are the greatest and if there's anyone I can count on to do my job for me, it's all the friends I have."

"We're all touched by your statement Sonic." said Sally "Thank you."

"No problem Sal." said Sonic "I've gotta go now though, we're preparing to activate the hyper-drive. See ya later everybody and remember, you're all way past cool…"

Tails switched the radio communicator off and he grabbed the lever for the hyper-drive. He pulled it outwards, twisted it to one side and prepared to push it back in. He looked over at Sonic.

"Ready?" he asked.

"I'm always ready." said Sonic "On to the Startron planet we go!"

Tails nodded and without further ado, he pushed the hyper-drive leader back into it's slot. The ship kicked into hyper gear and shot off into the vast emptiness of space faster then any supersonic aircraft on Earth. Sonic was overwhelmed with amazement as the ship zoomed off into hyperspace. He gripped the edges of his seat and whooped with joy. Tails clearly seemed to be enjoying this too for he was whooping with joy too.

"Whoo hoo!" cried Sonic "This is way past cool! Even I can't move as fast as this! Ye-ha!"

"I can't believe how awesome this is!" squealed Tails "We're moving so fast! We'll be at the Startron planet in two seconds flat at this rate!"

The Silver Bullet zoomed off at hyper-speed and headed off to it's set destination, the planet of Sram which was home to the Devatron's cousins, the Startrons. Hopefully they'd be able to help them defeat the Devatrons. If not then there was no hope left for anyone on Mobius…

Not long afterwards, *The Silver Bullet* came out of hyper-space and it slowed down to it's normal cruising speed. *The Silver Bullet* began to slowly fly through the void of space and headed towards a silver planet that was just ahead of it. This planet was ten times the size of Earth and was completely silver. The planet was also made of pure solid chrome like the Devatron planet of Deaveron. This planet was of course, Sram. Sram was pretty much the Devatron twin-planet and ever since the Devatron take-over of Sram, the planet had not changed a bit save for the fact the Devatrons were now in charge instead of the Startrons. Sonic and Tails stared at the silver sphere

that loomed in front of them and they looked over at each other.

"Well, I guess we're here." said Sonic slowly.

"Sram, the home of the Devatron's cousins and one of the fourteen planets the Devatrons have subjugated." said Tails, his expression drooping as he began to imagine the poor Startrons suffering under the Devatrons' chrome-fisted rule "They have a chance though since the data we stole states their leader, General Klight by name, is in hiding and is probably devising a strategy to defeat the Devatrons whereas nobody else who's worlds have been conquered do."

"And hopefully, the Startrons are gonna tell us where General Klight is so we can meet up with him and see if he can help us defeat the Devatrons." said Sonic.

"That's right." said Tails as *The Silver Bullet* cruised further and further towards the planet of Sram "Hold on tight, we're very likely to get shot down upon entering this planet."

"If we do get shot down, I'm hoping we make it out alive." said Sonic.

The Silver Bullet cruised onwards and it flew straight into the planet's atmosphere. *The Silver Bullet's* wings and nose cone began to glow a bright crimson red as the ship ploughed through the planet's atmosphere. After a minute or so, the ship finally made it through Sram's atmosphere and it began to fly elegantly through the skies of the planet, which were a dull bronze colour. Sonic & Tails were speechless at what they were looking at upon entering the planet. Sram had huge chrome cities that stretched on for miles around. The cities went all over the planet in fact. The buildings themselves had been changed to meet the Devatron quota but if you had seen Sram before the Devatrons took over, there wouldn't have been that much of a difference between then and now. Down on the ground Sonic & Tails could see Devatrons working away and forcing along their Startron slaves. The Startrons were made of chrome like the Devatrons but they were a completely different design. They resembled humanoids only their heads had five enormous red spikes jutting out from the top. They had a long sharp beak that was even longer then Devion's. They had two eyes instead of one and their eyes were permanently moulded into an angry expression so

they always looked angry. They had long pointed shoulders and five metal claws on each hand. A huge golden jetpack sat on their backs. Their feet were rather long like clown's shoes and to add to the effect, they were red like their eyes and spikes. They had an S-logo on their chests with a line going through the S. The Startrons weren't being treated too nicely either. Unlike the Devatrons, the Startrons weren't invulnerable so the Devatrons could torture them in many ways because of this. Some Devatrons stood guard and prodded the Startrons with electro-prods to get them moving and if any Startron dared to collapse during their work hour, they would be subjugated to an hour long torture session that many would consider to be downright brutal. Amazingly, no Devatron or Startron had seen *The Silver Bullet* yet but that was mostly because they were too busy keeping the Startrons in line and they couldn't hear *The Silver Bullet* because the machinery on the planet and the working Startrons was too loud for them to hear the ship's engines. It seemed that Sonic & Tails might be lucky enough to land on this planet without getting shot down. Sonic & Tails watched out the cockpit window as the Devatrons forced the Startrons to work harder.

"This is horrible." said Tails "Look at the way those poor Startrons are being abused."

"And to think they're actually related to the Devatrons." said Sonic "The Devatrons are treating them the same way they treat everybody else. The funny thing is, wouldn't you expect the Startrons to actually be on the Devatrons side and yet the Devatrons conquer their planet?"

"A lot of species in the galaxy don't work the way we think they would Sonic." said Tails "Just because they're related, it doesn't mean they have to get on with each other."

"Much like me and Scourge." said Sonic "So, where do you think we should land?"

"Down there." said Tails, pointing ahead of him "It's an unoccupied area and it doesn't look to be of any interest to the Devatrons or the Startrons. It'll hide us well."

The area Tails was talking about was merely an old Startron factory that had been abandoned and torn apart but the Devatrons hadn't bothered with it because they had enough factories as it was and they felt that the sight of a destroyed factory would just dampen the Startrons spirits further and make them succumb to their might. How big a mistake this would end up being on their part for Sonic & Tails were going to use it as a hiding place. The factory had no roof so Tails was free to manoeuvre *The Silver Bullet* towards the factory and just descend directly into it. *The Silver Bullet* hovered over the abandoned factory and it descended down into it nice and slowly. The dust that blanketed the old, abandoned machinery of the factory was sent flying up into the air as the ship neared the ground and it's fumes began to blow the dust around. *The Silver Bullet* eventually landed and Sonic & Tails unbuckled themselves from their seats.

"So Tails, do we need a suit or is the air of this planet not gonna kill us?" asked Sonic.

"I'm not too sure on that." said Tails "The air outside doesn't look deadly but we can't take chances out here so I think we should put a space suit on just in case."

So Sonic & Tails walked over to the storage compartment on their left hand side and they opened it up. The compartment contained some white space suits with red and blue loops on the arms and some space helmets for anyone using *The Silver Bullet* . Sonic & Tails put on the space suits and they activated the oxygen tanks.

"We can't stay out here for too long." said Tails, his voice slightly muffled by the space helmet "We only have an hour's worth of oxygen in the tanks according to the meter on them."

"Well Tails, with me on the case, we won't be too long out here." said Sonic.

Now they were suited up, Sonic & Tails stepped out of *The Silver Bullet* and into the world of Sram that awaited them outside. The moment Sonic & Tails set foot upon the floor of the abandoned factory they had parked their ship in, Sonic said something.

"It's one small step for man…and one giant LEAP for a hedgehog!"

he cried delightedly "Ha, I've always wanted to say that the day I ever went to another world."

"Keep your voice down Sonic!" hissed Tails "We can't get spotted out here or we're dead meat! There's lots of Devatrons out here and we're sure to get shot should they see or hear us!"

"Sorry Tails, the statement loses it's effect if you say it quietly." said Sonic "Now, where are we gonna find a Startron that's not surrounded by Devatrons here? It'll be better for us if we find one that's isolated or something so the Devatrons don't kill us."

Sonic & Tails walked across the empty area of the abandoned factory and they exited the building via the broken door at the end of the factory. It seemed rather eerie due to how empty and quiet it was around here and being as they were on a hostile world, Sonic & Tails couldn't be too cautious. They kept their senses alert for any possible sign of danger as they left the factory. There was none to be found so they carried on. Their surroundings had a lot of old Startron buildings, all bronze in colour, that had been run down and forcibly abandoned since the Devatrons weren't interested in using them. Sonic & Tails ran up to one building and they looked around the corner of it. What they saw was a line of Startrons slaving away for the Devatrons and being pushed along by their evil masters. They all had battle scars, cracks in their armour and wear and tear. It was quite clear they had been working for a long time and were just being pushed to their limits by the Devatrons for no reason other then sadistic pleasure. One Startron in the line collapsed from exhaustion and it was down on it's hands and knees. A Devatron soldier came up to the Startron and zapped it with a staff that emitted an electromagnetic pulse. The Startron screamed in pain as it was electrocuted and the Devatron then proceeded to kick it as hard as it could.

"Get up you Startron scum!" snarled the Devatron "You are forbidden to laze around! Come on! Get up!"

The Startron feebly forced itself back onto it's feet. It re-joined the line of Startrons and the Devatrons continued to force the line to move on. Sonic & Tails were livid at the sight of that and they really wanted to run in and stand up for the poor Startron.

"How could the Devatrons do this to their own cousins?" asked Tails "They have no shame in doing what they do don't they?"

"It would seem so." said Sonic "I'd love to bust a few Deva-heads while we're here but there's no way we're possibly gonna beat all them guys at once. The Devatrons will kill us if we dared to try and fight them all."

"I'm as reluctant as you are to stay out of this." said Tails "But we have a mission to do and if we get killed by the Devatrons then our friends back home will lose all hope on ever winning and the Devatrons will win."

Then suddenly, their conversation was interrupted by the sound of pounding metal feet. Sonic & Tails freaked and they both dived behind the corner of the building, fearing that a Devatron was coming. They could hear the pounding metal feet getting closer and closer to them. The sound got louder & louder until finally the sound stopped. Sonic & Tails wondered why that was and they peeked around the corner to see what was there. To their surprise and relief, it was none other then a Startron soldier. This soldier had bronze outlines around it's beak and it had a nasty crack in it's jet pack, suggesting it probably no longer worked. The Startron appeared to be hiding from the Devatrons since it was crouching down behind the building Sonic & Tails were hiding behind too. The Startron peeked around the corner and made sure that no one was watching it. Sonic & Tails decided to take their chance and speak to it. They crept out from behind their corner and sneaked up to the Startron.

"Hey! Psst!" hissed Sonic.

The Startron jumped and it deployed it's arm cannons. It spun around and pointed them directly at Sonic & Tails' heads. Sonic & Tails jumped in surprise and they instantly held their hands up.

"Whoa! Easy, easy, easy!" cried Tails "Please, don't shoot us! Please! We mean no harm!"

The Startron just glowered at the two Mobians with it's red reptilian looking eyes but it didn't shoot Sonic & Tails. It retracted it's cannon arms and stood up nice and straight, it's eyes still fixed on the

Mobians.

"Who are you furry freaks and why do you stride upon Startron territory?" growled the Startron.

It's voice was very gravely and would give you a sore throat if you tried to impersonate it. Sonic fumed at the Startron, clearly offended at the fact it just called him & Tails "freaks" and he stormed up to him angrily.

"Hey buster! I don't take kindly to being insulted so you take that back before I spin-dash you to bits!" yelled Sonic.

"You dare to threaten a Startron warrior?" snarled the Startron "Only fools would dare to battle us! The Devatrons are exceptions since they're more powerful then we are!"

"Look sir, we don't wanna harm you." said Tails "We're Mobians from the planet Mobius and we're here to ask for help from your leader."

The Startron gave Tails a cold stare. If it's eyes could change shape, they'd probably be widening.

"You wish to meet our leader?" said the Startron in surprise "Why ever would you want to meet our leader?!"

"The Devatrons have invaded our planet and are trying to conquer it." explained Tails "We've tried all we can but we can't defeat them. Me and Sonic infiltrated their ship *The Doombringer* and we downloaded some information about the Startrons and their Homeworld and we theorized that your leader General Klight might be able to help us since he's in hiding."

"You are right to theorize young one because General Klight is indeed in hiding and in the time he's been hiding, he's been devising a strategy to defeat the Devatrons and wipe them all out." said the Startron.

"Cool." said Sonic "So do you know where he is?"

"I do little "Mobians" but I'm not sure if I should relinquish such

information to you." said the Startron sternly "How do I know you're not working for the Devatrons and want to find General Klight so that you may terminate him?"

"You can trust us buddy." said Sonic "We're the heroes of our world and we only wanna stop the Devatrons from conquering our world."

"Please sir, we're not affiliated with the Devatrons." said Tails "We hate them as much as you do. Please help us out. I'm sure your leader would approve of this."

The Startron thought on this matter for a moment. It didn't take him long to make up his mind though.

"General Klight would approve." said the Startron "He's always happy to help a soul in need. Mobians, you have convinced me you're innocent party and I will supply General Klight's whereabouts to you."

"Neat-o!" said Sonic happily "Thanks Startron um….do you have a name?"

"Yes. My name is Lieutenant Stark and I am General Klight's most trusted advisor." said the Startron "I've been sent to Sram to monitor the Devatrons and see how things are going. My reports have mostly been the same but now, I've got a different story to tell him."

"So how do you get here then Stark?" asked Tails "Do you come by ship or something?"

"Not at all little one." said Stark "I have teleporting abilities. After General Klight and a group of Startrons escaped, we installed teleportation abilities into ourselves so we could warp back to Sram and our hiding place at will and see how things are going. Our teleport has no limits so we can teleport to anywhere we wish."

"So can you just teleport us over to General Klight then?" asked Sonic.

"No I cannot." said Stark gravely "We can only teleport ourselves. We cannot teleport and bring something with us. You will have to come by ship. Take me to your ship and I shall upload General

Klight's coordinates into the navigational systems so you may meet him. I will warp back to him and inform him of your arrival and explain your motives so he knows that he has innocent party coming to him."

"Sounds great." said Sonic "Now follow us, our ship's quite near to where we are now."

With that said, Sonic & Tails ran off with Lieutenant Stark running after them. The two Mobians led him to the abandoned factory where *The Silver Bullet* awaited them. Stark was impressed with the look of *The Silver Bullet* and he climbed up into the ship after Sonic & Tails. Sonic & Tails closed the hatch behind them so nobody else could get in. Sonic & Tails removed their spacesuits and Lieutenant Stark wandered over to the control panel.

"Will we still need our suits where General Klight is?" asked Sonic.

"No. The air he's in is habitable for you organic beings." said Lieutenant Stark "Now wait a moment while I upload the coordinates in your navigation system."

Sonic & Tails stood by while Lieutenant Stark uploaded the coordinates to General Klight's location in the ship's navigational system. A long wire extended out from his chest and it slotted itself into the control pad. That was how Startrons transferred information. Stark shut off for a moment while he uploaded the coordinates into the system. A few minutes later, Stark had finished his job and he re-activated. He stood up from the cockpit seats and he turned to face Sonic & Tails.

"The coordinates to General Klight's location are now uploaded." said Stark "Me and the General shall be waiting for you to arrive."

"Sure thing Starky." said Sonic "Thanks for everything. You're way past cool."

"A Startron is always willing to help those in need of assistance." said Stark "That is the life of a Startron. Just a pity our cousins didn't want to follow our lifestyle and betrayed us when they had a sudden heel turn all those years ago."

"It is a pity." said Sonic "You Startrons have more sense then the Devatrons."

"Indeed blue one." said Stark "Well I must go now. Goodbye for now."

With that said, he touched the Startron logo on his chest and he teleported into thin air. He was returning to General Klight right now and Sonic & Tails were soon going to join him. Sonic & Tails sat down in the cockpit seats and activated the thrusters to *The Silver Bullet. The Silver Bullet* could take off and land in two different ways. Like an aeroplane or like a helicopter. *The Silver Bullet* hovered up off the ground and then it began to descend up into the bronze coloured skies of Sram. Unfortunately, some Devatrons on the ground saw them taking off. They instantly grew suspicious at the sight of *The Silver Bullet* given how it wasn't even of their own make and design.

"What is that abomination?!" blurted on Devatron soldier.

"It is not one of ours!" snarled one soldier "We must shoot it down and see who owns it!"

The Devatron soldiers all deployed their arm cannons and they aimed at the ascending ship as it began to lift out of the factory. *The Silver Bullet* stopped ascending and it turned around so it could activate it's jet boosters and rocket off into space again. The Devatrons instantly began shooting at the ship. Their blasts soared towards *The Silver Bullet* but some of them missed and some hit it but didn't damage it in a way that was bad for the ship. The blasts just rocked the ship more then anything. Sonic & Tails cried out in surprise and Tails pulled on the controls to stabilize the ship.

"Holy mackerel Sonic!" cried Tails "Someone's shooting at us!"

"No prizes for guessing who that is then." muttered Sonic "Step on it before we get shot down Tails!"

Tails was about to activate the jet boosters and set the ship zooming off but just as be began to pull the lever, one of the Devatrons shot one of the ship's rocket boosters and damaged it. The attack made

the ship jerk heavily and Sonic & Tails would have fallen out of their seats if they hadn't been wearing their seatbelts. *The Silver Bullet* regained balance and Tails looked at the diagram of the ship that was displayed on a screen on the control pad. One of the rocket boosters was coloured in red on the diagram. That meant the damage done to it had been quite bad and it was out of use. Tails was horrified to see this.

"Oh no!" cried Tails "The Devatrons destroyed one of our rockets! We can't zoom away from here!"

"What's the fastest we can go?" asked Sonic.

"About medium speed at the most." Tails theorized "We can't afford to sustain any more damage or we're stuck here!"

"Then step it on quickly!" cried Sonic.

Tails pulled pack on the thrust levers and *The Silver Bullet* 's only remaining two rockets (it had three like a shuttle) kicked into gear. *The Silver Bullet* began to cruise away from the shooting Devatrons, moving at a considerably slower pace then before. The Devatrons continued to shoot madly at it but their efforts were in vain for *The Silver Bullet* was too high up for them to accurately hit and it was pulling away. The Devatrons kept shooting and shooting but *The Silver Bullet* was finally out of their reach and heading up into the planet's atmosphere. The Devatrons cursed their bad luck and they returned to their duties.

"We missed that ship!" moaned one Devatron.

"The ship is leaving so the owners of the ship obviously did not intend to interfere with us." said another Devatron "But what they were doing here mystifies me. We must send some Devatron scouts to track that ship down."

"I shall give the order immediately." said another Devatron.

The Devatron ran off to give the command. They would find that ship and once they did, they'd find out why it was here on Sram and what the occupants inside the ship were planning on doing. It seemed

that Sonic & Tails would have a lot on their plate right now…

A couple of hours later, Sonic & Tails finally arrived at General Klight's destination. The coordinates that Lieutenant Stark had uploaded into their navigation systems had taken them a long, long way away from Sram and through a treacherous asteroid field. It had been a tense flight through those asteroids but Tails had managed to steer them through it and now they were coming towards a particularly big asteroid at the end of the field. Tails manoeuvred the ship past the asteroid and flew on past the asteroids. What they ended up coming across was a small planet that was barely bigger then Pluto and was completely icy blue in colour. Despite the planet's small size, it could sustain life on it for it had water and it's own sun nearby. Tails looked at the navigation systems and it was telling him to continue moving forward. That obviously meant General Klight was on this small planet.

"Well Sonic, I think this is it." said Tails "General Klight's hiding place."

"No wonder he's hiding here." said Sonic "It's surrounded by asteroids and it looks quite small for a planet so the Devatrons aren't gonna expect to find him here are they?"

"I'm pretty sure I'd overlook that planet if I was searching for a runaway Startron." said Tails.

The Silver Bullet cruised on through the realms of space and it headed towards the small planet. It entered the planet's atmosphere, the tips of it's wings and nose cone glowing red as it did so, and the ship found itself cruising through a bright blue sky. They were inside the planet and Sonic noticed something immediately. The planet was fully covered in water with only tiny bits of land in sight. If someone came to this planet and sucked up all the water here and took it to Earth, they could flood every single country on the planet. Sonic felt like he was going to faint in his seat.

"Oh shucks!" moaned Sonic "The planet's a water planet! Now I REALLY know why General Klight's hiding here!"

"Don't complain Sonic." said Tails "There's some land around here and the navigation system is telling me to head to that big looking mountain over there."

Sonic & Tails looked ahead of them selves and they could see a rather big mountain that stood proudly above the mass amount of water that stretched for miles around the planet. The mountain had a wide ledge that stretched out a good distance from it. This ledge was used as a landing strip and Tails steered *The Silver Bullet* towards that. To their surprise, Lieutenant Stark was waiting for them on the ledge and he had another Startron with him. This Startron was General Klight himself. He had the same build as the Startron soldiers except his shoulder pads pointed upwards and had a black stripe on them, he had black stripes on his arms, black outlines around his beak and eyes and two metallic wing like structures from his shoulders. He carried an impressive looking staff in his hand that proudly had the Startron logo on it. Sonic & Tails could easily tell he was supposed to be the leader of the Startrons. *The Silver Bullet* closed in on the ledge and it landed down onto it just in front of Klight and Stark, the fumes of the ship making Klight's metal shoulder wings blow out behind him. The ship touched down and Sonic & Tails stepped out of it. They climbed down the boarding steps and they walked up to General Klight. The Startron General looked down at them with a cold look in his eyes.

"These are the individuals who wished to meet you my lord." said Stark.

General Klight pointed his staff at the two and Sonic & Tails jumped backwards.

"So you two have journeyed from afar to meet up with the very leader of the Startron race?" he boomed, his voice was considerably grander sounding then a Startron soldier's "Interesting. State your cases little furry ones."

"My name's Sonic the Hedgehog and this is my buddy Tails." said Sonic "We're from Mobius and we've come all this way to ask you guys to help us."

"Our world's being invaded by the Devatrons and we're desperate to

stop them." said Tails "We infiltrated their ship and got some data about you guys and we thought that you could help us."

General Klight held his staff back up and he put one hand on his hip.

"Well visitors from Mobius, you have come at a most perfect time." said General Klight "Come with me and you shall see what I mean. But first, do you swear on your very souls that you come on peaceful terms and you are not Devatron agents hoping to extract information out of me?"

"We're squeaky clean General." said Sonic truthfully "We hate the Devatrons, we don't want anything to do with them."

"Please trust us sir." said Tails "We're really honest here. We just wanna stop the Devatrons."

General Klight thought for a moment and then he answered.

"Your words have convinced me." said Klight "Startrons are excellent at sensing the words of truth and the words of liars and your words are completely truthful. You are free to see my hideout. Follow me and I shall explain to you on what I meant earlier."

General Klight led Sonic & Tails across the landing ledge and up to the mountain it was connected to. Sonic tried his best not to look down at the water that lapped at the foot of the ledge and mountain. They reached the start of the landing ledge and General Klight pressed on a rock that was sticking out. The rock was a secret button and pressing it opened up a secret door. A chunk of rock moved up and everybody went through it, the rock closing back down after they'd walked inside. Sonic & Tails looked around and they found out that they had just stumbled into a secret lair that the Startrons were now occupying. The lair was merely just a giant laboratory that had technology that was on par with the Devatrons' own technology and there were Startron soldiers working by the dozen. Tails, being the techno-geek he is, beamed like a sunrise and he was amazed with everything there. The working Startrons looked up from their duties and stared at Sonic & Tails but the two didn't seem to notice.

"Wow! Look at all this!" exclaimed Tails delightedly "This is incredible! Your technology looks so cool!"

"We are pleased to hear that our technology appeals to you my twin-tailed friend." said General Klight "The Startrons in the realms of technology are second only to our cousins the Devatrons."

"Speaking of which General, how did you and this group of Startrons escape the Devatrons anyway?" asked Sonic.

"I shall tell you the story Sonic, but first let's start at the beginning." said General Klight "Back during the times where the Devatrons were good, the Startrons were created from the core of Sram and we were lead by an emperor whereas the Devatrons were led by a king. We were created for the sole purpose of helping out those in need and the Startrons were willing to fulfil that vow in any mean's necessary. The Devatrons suddenly had a change of heart after King Hardigm, their ruler was killed by the Knights of Krococ and they began conquering planets. After conquering four planets, they targeted us next and they prevailed over us with their invulnerable armour and superior fighting skills. In the last days of our fight against the Devatrons, I sensed that we would eventually get defeated so I sought desperate methods to survive. And the only way to ensure survival was me and a group of the best Startrons flee the planet and devise a strategy to defeat the Devatrons. The Emperor Startron decided to remain behind and keep up the battle against the Devatrons. I tried to convince him to come but he refused. He preferred to die among his people then flee in cowardice. So me and my elite group fled Sram via warship and our Emperor covered for us with a big squadron of Startrons. Sadly, our glorious Emperor ended up being…terminated. After leaving Sram, we found this planet and given how it's small size makes it look like it cannot support life, nobody will expect to find us here so we settled down here to think on our methods."

"Interesting." said Sonic "So how long have you been here?"

"Eighty years." said General Klight "We've been spending most of our time trying to devise a tactic to defeat the Devatrons. The first thing we did was invent our teleportation devices so we could regularly check up on Sram and see how things were going. It pains

me to send Stark to do such tasks only to hear that the Devatrons still continue to abuse us all like this."

"Eighty years?!" blurted Tails "I guess devising a way to defeat the Devatrons isn't as simple as one would think isn't it?"

"No Tails, we haven't been spending this long trying to devise a method, we already have one." said General Klight "We've been this long because it's been an excruciating process trying to get it to work."

"So you have a method?" asked Sonic "What method is that then?"

General Klight didn't say anything. Instead, he walked over to a steel casket that was sitting on a table nearby and he opened it. The casket contained a spherical object that looked like it could shatter easily. General Klight took the object out and he showed it to Sonic & Tails. They both stared at it, wondering if it was some kind of bomb or something.

"This is a Negaton-Virus bomb." explained General Klight "It contains a virus that when released, has a spread of fifty yards and should devour anything that's made of Devatron chrome. Devatron chrome is a distinct material and the virus has been created to only effect that kind of material. Should it work, it should destroy the Devatron's armour and expose their exoskeletons and make them vulnerable and easy to destroy. The problem is that we've tried many times but the virus has been ineffective in our tries. We used our teleporters to sneak to Deaveron, steal a sample of Devatron chrome and then test the virus on it."

"And the virus didn't destroy it." said Sonic "Now that explains the eighty years you've spent here."

"We've spent most of our time just CREATING the virus." said General Klight "We've spent the past twenty years just trying to get it to work. Our last attempt was a month ago and we had some kind of success when the virus actually managed to leave scars on the chrome sample but it still wasn't the desired result. We've tinkered with the virus again and we're giving it yet another try. We're hoping we've got it right this time."

"Well I'm crossing my fingers for you." said Tails, crossing his fingers like so "Let's hope it works."

"If it works then we can FINALLY put an end to the Devatron's malevolent nature and malicious lifestyles once and for all." said General Klight.

"Wait a minute." said Sonic "If you're making a virus to kill the Devatrons…then does that make you as bad as them? I mean the Devatrons kill anyone for conquest and you're resorting to killing just to get rid of them. Isn't this genocide attempt kind of…wrong in some way?"

"Genocide is never right my furry friend." said General Klight softly "But there's no other way. Nothing can match the Devatron might. They're just too powerful and the only way we'll be free from them is if we destroy them. This virus, if it works, will save the entire universe and free everybody who's been conquered by the Devatrons."

"OK then." said Sonic "I'll let you guys off. After all, some people prefer to use violence and such as a last resort and that's what you're doing, using that virus as a last resort."

"Indeed Sonic." said General Klight "Now, you two stay where you are while I test the virus."

General Klight wondered over to a glass container that had a fresh new sample of Devatron chrome that had been stolen from Deaveron itself by Lieutenant Stark. General Klight knelt down to the container and he opened a latch on the bomb. He put the bomb in the container and he closed it to prevent the virus from spreading and drifting around the base. The bomb leaked a faint, violet mist that filled the whole container up and fogged it up, preventing anyone from seeing it. Sonic & Tails watched, their stomachs tightening as they waited for the result to be revealed. General Klight waited for a minute before finally sticking his hand into the container and retrieving the bomb. The bomb was now completely empty and the virus still drifted around inside the container. But it didn't last very long and another minute later, the mist died down and General Klight looked at the container. Sonic & Tails could feel themselves

trembling with worry. Had it worked? Was this another failure? They were keen to see the result. General Klight stared into the container as the virus drifted away and what he saw…was the sample of chrome still standing up nicely as it had been before but with a very noticeable difference. The sample was cracked very badly and it looked extremely brittle now. General Klight poked it with his claw and the sample crumbled to pieces after that one tiny prod. General Klight stood up and delivered the result to Sonic.

"While the virus still doesn't devour chrome…it makes it extremely brittle and easy to destroy." said General Klight "That's near enough to the desired result."

"Yes! It works!" cried Sonic "Whoo! Way past cool!"

"We can stop the Devatrons now!" cheered Tails "Mobius is saved at last!"

"That depends if the virus has the same effect on a proper functioning Devatron." said General Klight gravely "It may have made the sample brittle but the Devatrons are more then this small sample. We have no idea if it can just as easily dissolve a proper sized Devatron as it did this small sample."

"Well Klight, why don't you give me and Tails one of those bomb thingy's and we'll put it to the test?" asked Sonic "If it works, we'll let you know and then you can make some bombs and destroy the Devatrons."

General Klight had a think on this idea. Should he really risk the lives of two innocent over-world beings just for the Startron cause? This was not the Startron way but then again, trying it on Sram and it not working would risk him everything and Sonic & Tails were willing to try so he could let them. If they failed then the Startrons could take this into account and try and improve the virus once more. They'd been at this for eighty years now and they were finally making progress. They had to test this so General Klight decided to let them try it.

"I have taken your thought into consideration…and I approve of it." said General Klight "You and Tails may take one bomb and try it out

on the Devatrons invading your world. I shall give you this communications device so that you may inform me on the virus's effect."

He handed Sonic a futuristic looking ear piece that had the Startron logo on it. Sonic took the device and he put it on his ear. It surprisingly had a snug fit and didn't feel uncomfortable on him.

"Thanks." said Sonic "And thanks for everything General. You're way past cool you are."

"Your compliments are endearing and I appreciate them Sonic." said General Klight "Now, return to your home and help the Startrons get a step closer to the deaths of the Devatrons. Help us save the universe and free it from our treacherous cousin's might!"

"We will do sir." said Tails "We can't thank you enough for helping us out like this. We're forever in your debt General Klight."

"You do not need to thank us." said General Klight "We Startrons are just happy to help out. Now go you two. We will stand by and await your reports on the virus."

"OK General." said Sonic with a wave "See ya around. And let's hope this virus works!"

General Klight just saluted Sonic & Tails as they were leaving. Sonic & Tails left the lab with the Negaton-Virus Bomb in hand and General Klight watched them as they ran down to the end of the landing ledge and they boarded *The Silver Bullet* . *The Silver Bullet* 's engines roared into life and the ship took off from the ledge. It rotated around a full ninety degrees and it flew up into the sky. Klight watched it as it disappeared from view into the bright blue skies of this planet and Stark strode up to him.

"Did you really think those Mobians were trustworthy sir?" asked Stark.

"Yes." said Klight "I did. I sensed no lies in their statements. Those two were definitely an interesting pair and I hope that they carry out the bomb's test successfully. If the test is successful, we can finally

get rid of our cousins and restore peace to the universe. They deviated from their purpose but we shall not make that same mistake…"

Klight began to picture a future without Devatrons in his head. He was so looking forward to seeing Devion and his cronies all dead and crumbled to pieces by the very virus they created. What joy it would bring to the galaxy when the Devatrons were finally dead and unable to threaten anymore planets…

A few minutes later, Sonic & Tails were up in space again and they were cruising through the asteroid field that they had gotten through when they arrived at the planet. Tails was flying the ship and Sonic had the bomb on his lap. Sonic looked at the bomb and began to wonder what damage the virus could really cause.

"This bomb maybe our ticket to winning the battle against the Devatrons." said Sonic "But what if it doesn't work as well as it did on that test sample?"

"If it doesn't then the Startrons will just have to make another virus and see if that one works." said Tails "But I don't think we can hold out that long. We just have to cross our fingers and pray for the best."

"I'll say." murmured Sonic "I hope my friends are OK right now."

"I'm sure they're doing just fine." said Tails reassuringly "They've got Shadow helping them. Shadow will keep those Devatrons busy I'm sure."

But unfortunately, it seemed that Sonic & Tails would have more then just their friend's well-being back home to be concerned about. They exited the asteroid storm and found themselves staring at what appeared to be a fleet of chrome ships all close together and cruising through space in search of something. Sonic & Tails instantly guessed what they were due to their designs having similarities to *The Doombringer* .

"Oh no!" cried Sonic "There's a fleet of Devatron ships out there! And there's a lot of them too!"

"I think we've just went out of the frying pan into the fire!" shrieked Tails as the ships began to cruise in their direction…

Dedicated to Neil Armstrong

1930-2012

"He took one small step for man...and one GIANT LEAP for mankind."

Eek! Sonic & Tails are in trouble! There's a fleet of Devatron ships and I bet they're looking for them! Can they escape the fleet? Can they get home and use the virus on the Devatrons? And will it work?! Tune in as the three part finale to this saga begins...!

Meanwhile, tune in to* Tales from Mobius *for the last two parts of the current arc to see how Sonic's friends have been doing during this story!

The Tides of War Part 1

Story 113: The Tides of War Part 1: Turn Up For The Books

Things had finally been looking up for Sonic the Hedgehog after he and his sidekick Tails left Mobius to visit the Startrons and see if they could help the Mobians in their battle against the Devatrons. They had been given a Negatron Virus-Bomb, a weapon that contained a virus that would destroy the Devatron's armour and leave them vulnerable and easy to destroy. But just as they had been leaving Sram to go back home to Mobius, the two ended up coming across a fleet of Devatron ships. The Devatrons had been suspicious of their visit to Sram so they'd been on the look out for them and now it looked like they were going to catch them. There were hundreds of ships and they were all cruising towards *The Silver Bullet* , the ship that Sonic & Tails were in. Sonic & Tails stared in horror at the oncoming ships. It would take them a couple of minutes to get to them but once they did get to them, Sonic & Tails would be doomed. *The Silver Bullet* was used for space missions, not combat and thus, was not equipped with any weapons. They would be unable to fight the ships so they would just have to outrun the ships and luckily they would be able to since they had a hyper-drive. They would just have to get into the right place first as activating a hyper-drive when facing a fleet of ships was probably the stupidest thing you could ever do. As the ships cruised closer to *The Silver Bullet* , Sonic turned to Tails desperately.

"Tails! The Devatron ships are coming towards us! You got any ideas?!" asked Sonic.

"I have." said Tails "We can't fight the ships because our ship has no weapons. We're gonna try and outrun the Devatrons and once we get into the right place, we'll activate the hyper-drive. They'll be biting the dust once we do that!"

"But what if they have hyper-drives too?" asked Sonic "Then they'll end up following us to Mobius!"

"So what if they do?" sneered Tails "We've got the Startron weapon. We'll just use it to wipe them out as well as the ones on Mobius."

"And if the bomb doesn't work as planned?" noted Sonic, remembering that the Startrons weren't sure if the bomb would work as well on a live Devatron as it did on the test sample.

"Then we're in big trouble." said Tails, his ears flattening down to the sides of his head "Let's hope they don't have hyper-drives but knowing their technology, they'll probably have a hyper-drive in their ships."

"We should just hope that the Devatrons won't be able to track us once we activate the hyper-drive." said Sonic "Now Tails, I think we should floor it, the ships are getting closer!"

He was too right on that. The ships were almost up to them. They were a good few feet away yet and in a minute, they'd be directly up to them.

"Hold on tight Sonic, we're getting outta here!" cried Tails, grabbing the controls and turning the ship around.

The Silver Bullet rotated a full ninety degrees and it's rocket boosters kicked in. The ship began to speed away from the oncoming Devatron fleet. But one of it's rockets had been damaged earlier so it couldn't go at top speed. It could only go at a medium speed. The Devatrons in the ships that made up the fleet saw *The Silver Bullet* flying away and they activated their ship's rocket boosters.

"There's the ship we were looking for!" cried the leader of the fleet "Chase it down and destroy it! We must find out why it was on Sram!"

This Devatron was the fleet leader and it had the same standard Devatron appearance with the only difference to the soldiers being a new head with had two structures on either side of it's face with one point facing forward and three points protruding behind it. The fleet of ships picked up speed and they flew after *The Silver Bullet* . The Devatron ships could go at top speed and they were brilliant ships

which were far more technically advanced then any spaceship on Mobius so they'd catch up to *The Silver Bullet* easily. As the Devatron ships chased *The Silver Bullet* , the ships all flew away from the asteroid field and they headed on out into the void of space and beyond. Sonic watched as they headed away from the asteroid field and he looked back at Tails, who was pushing the ship to it's fullest, making it go as fast as he could. His heart was racing like mad and he was gripping the controls so hard he looked like he was going to accidentally crush them in the palms of his hands.

"Hey Tails, don't you think flying through the asteroid field might have been a good idea to lose them?" asked Sonic.

"It would but I'm not risking the Devatrons finding the planet the Startrons are hiding on and then terminating General Klight." said Tails "That could happen and the Startrons would be livid if General Klight got terminated and it was our fault."

"Good point there Tails." said Sonic "Hopefully if we come across another asteroid field, we can use it to slow the Devatrons down. I have a feeling they're gonna catch up to us anytime soon if we don't do something to slow them down."

He was right on that. The Devatron ships were beginning to catch up to him and Tails. The entire fleet began to open fire on *The Silver Bullet* . Laser fire began to zoom towards the ship and Tails steered the ship out of the way of the firing lasers to avoid getting hit by them. *The Silver Bullet* was a small ship and he could not afford to have it get damaged, especially as it was damaged in a way that was hindering them already. The ship would be going at top speed if it wasn't for the damaged rocket although even that wouldn't have helped since the Devatron ships were still faster then *The Silver Bullet* . If this chase continued though, the Devatrons would catch up to Sonic & Tails and then they would be doomed…

Meanwhile over in New Mobotropolis, the Royal Fighters had all been taken onboard *The Doombringer* after being knocked out by a Devatron laser grid. Despite their best efforts during Sonic & Tails' time in space, they had been sorely defeated* and now they were

being locked up in the Devatron prison cells were they would get to see their last words to each other and then they would all be executed in proper Devatron fashion. The cell blockade had been repaired from the time the Mobians broke in and rescued the citizens of New Mobotropolis and now all the Royal Fighter teams were imprisoned in the cells. There was no way out for any of them. Even Shadow the Hedgehog. He had been fitted with an inhibitor collar, a device the Devatrons had for containing rouge soldiers or dangerous prisoners. Shadow couldn't Chaos Blast his way out of the cell, he couldn't teleport out of the cell, he was stuck being just a perfectly normal being now. He had tried to remove the collar but it was invulnerable, like the Devatrons were, and it could not be removed by the user. That meant only a Devatron could take it off of him. The Royal Fighters had no way out of this predicament now. Sonic & Tails were their only hope and they were being pursued by Devatrons so the chances of them coming to the rescue were a hundred to one. This truly was, Mobius' darkest hour. The Mobians had fought long and hard against the Devatrons and yet they were about to be executed. Mobius was lost and the Devatrons had won. Mobius would be added to Devion's long list of conquered planets and then he could move onto another one. In the cells, there were up to four or five Royal Fighters in a cell and they were all restrained to the wall by clamps around their wrists and ankles that could only be opened via remote control so there was no getting out of them so easily. Sally & Nicole were in a cell together and they were both in tears. The fact that they'd been beaten and that they were going to be executed shortly made them so downhearted that they'd pretty much given up hope on everything, including the return of Sonic & Tails.

"I can't believe it Nicole." sobbed Sally, looking down at her feet and allowing the tears to flow down her furry cheeks and splash down onto her toes "All our time fighting Dr. Eggman and other threats such as Marik, Scourge and even Blizzard and this is how it ends for us. We're all going to be executed by the Devatrons! I feel so stupid for getting us all captured like this! I knew it was a trap and yet I ordered everybody to walk into the city! I should have known better then to just walk into NewMobotropolis when we have no idea what we're up against!"

"Sally, don't blame yourself." said Nicole, her sorrow getting worse and worse just listening to Sally beat herself up like this "We were all sure that the Devatrons were planning to trap us and yet we still fell for it. There was no telling what kind of trap the Devatrons laid for us. It's just unfortunate for us that we got caught in it. I will admit it was clever of the Devatrons to set up a trap involving a laser grid so that they could catch us all easily."

"That just further proves that the Devatrons were too clever for us." muttered Sally "Despite our best efforts, the Devatrons outsmarted us all in the end. The Devatrons have proven that they're more clever then us as well as stronger then us. They've won this battle and now Mobius is going to be conquered by the Devatrons."

"Sally don't lose hope." said Nicole gently "There's still Sonic & Tails out in space and meeting the Startrons. They'll arrive back home and save us all."

"No they won't Nicole." said Sally, the tears flowing even faster now "We'll all be dead…by the time they…sniff!...arrive back and…it'll be too late for…them…to…save Mobius!"

Sally then broke down crying even harder then before. The tears flowed like a waterfall down her cheeks and they dripped down onto her toes. Nicole began to feel even more depressed and felt like crying with Sally. She wanted to say something else but she didn't think it was worth saying anything else. Nothing she could say would be of any use or of any help. When Sally was depressed, there was no cheering her up. Nicole decided to keep quiet and not say anything more.

In another cell, Team Rose were all together and they were equally as depressed as Sally & Nicole were. Amy was the only one who remotely had any hope left in her heart and that's only because she's a big fan of Sonic. If she wasn't, she'd probably be as depressed as Cream & Cosmo.

"Oh Amy, this is it for us all!" wailed Cream "We're all gonna die at the hands of those horrible Devatron monsters!"

"This isn't how I wanted to go." sobbed Cosmo "Dying on another

world. Mother and father will never know what happened to me. If they win the war with the Martians they'll search the galaxy for me and they'll never find me. I can just…imagine their faces…right now…"

Cosmo could feel herself beginning to break down as she pictured the horrified look on her parent's faces when they discovered she was gone.

"And…I'll never get to tell Tails…how I feel about him…either." Cosmo added, feeling even sadder now and the tears in her eyes finally falling down her cheeks.

"Oh girls, don't be so depressed." said Amy "Sonic will save us. He always does remember?"

"I know Sonic's saved us before Amy but I don't think he'll be back in time." said Cosmo in a defeated tone "He and Tails have gone far away to meet the cousins of the Devatrons. I highly doubt they'll be back in time."

"I think I agree with Cosmo Miss Rose." said Cream reluctantly "I don't think Mr. Sonic will make it in time."

"I can't believe it, you two have given up all hope?!" blurted Amy "Well I must say I'm surprised at you girls! Sonic wouldn't give up hope, even if he was in our position, so we shouldn't give up on him! You might be convinced it's all over but I'm not! I believe Sonic will make it back in time and he'll save us all from the Devatrons!"

"Mr. Sonic might make it in time Miss Rose, it just seems unlikely that's all." mumbled Cream.

"Well just you wait Cream, Sonic will arrive in the nick of time and save us all before the Devatrons can execute us!" declared Amy "You'll see!"

Cream and Cosmo just looked down at their feet, much to Amy's chagrin. Even though she was still hopeful for Sonic's return to Mobius in the nick of time, she secretly began doubting if he would make it in time too. Sonic maybe fast but not that fast and he's in a

spaceship so that would slow him down a lot. Sonic & Tails could well be halfway across the galaxy by now and the Devatrons were preparing to execute them all. If Sonic made it in time then it would be a miracle.

Knuckles, Shade and the Chaotix had all been put together in another cell and rather then feeling downhearted, they were more trying to break out of the cell. Knuckles had struggled in his bonds vigorously and so was Vector but even their strength was not enough to get them out of this predicament. Shade, Espio & Charmy just watched them waste their strength, knowing that struggling was futile. They had tried themselves and they'd failed miserably. Knuckles & Vector continued to struggle in their chrome bonds and Charmy yawned, clearly bored with all this. They'd been at it for ten minutes and they were still trying. Would they just give up already?

"Hey you two, quit it will ya? You're just boring me to death now." muttered Charmy.

"Shut up Charmy!" snapped Vector "I am not willing to get executed by those Devatrons so I'm getting us all outta here!"

"Same here!" grunted Knuckles as he writhed about.

"Knuckles, we're never getting out of these bonds." said Shade "They're too tough. They're Devatron bonds too so they're likely to be as strong as they are."

"I don't care Shade!" shouted Knuckles "I'm not going down so easily! I'll break free of these bonds even if I have to struggle forever!"

"Boy will that be boring." muttered Charmy "Doing nothing but struggling forever, won't you get tired after awhile?"

"Shut up Charmy!" grumbled Knuckles.

"Charmy has a point though." said Espio "All you're gonna do is tire yourself out Knuckles. This feeble struggling won't get you anywhere."

"You can say that again." muttered Vector "None of us will be going

anywhere at this rate. We're chained up in a Devatron prison cell along with everybody else and we can't break free. How are we gonna get out of this one?"

"I don't know Vector." said Knuckles "But I think we can all agree that if I decided not to be too overly cautious and let Sonic use the Master Emerald to turn super then we could have ended this conflict already and we wouldn't be in this mess. I maybe the guardian of AngelIsland but at times, I think I'm too protective of the emerald for my own good! And once the Devatrons finish us off, who knows what they'll do to the Master Emerald once they find it?!"

"They'll just use it for fuel knowing them." murmured Shade "They stole the Chaos Emerald's power and use it for fuel so I can assume the same will be done to the Master Emerald."

"I bet you're right Shade." said Knuckles grimly "When the Devatrons are finished with us, they'll take over all of Mobius, even AngelIsland. And I won't be there to protect the island from them. Or the Master Emerald. I can just imagine what the Devatrons are gonna do to AngelIsland when they find it. It'll be a floating chrome island populated by Devatrons."

Shade nodded agreeably. Once the Royal Fighters were executed, none of Mobius would be safe, not even AngelIsland. The island had survived Imperator Ix but it won't survive the Devatrons when they discover the island and take it along with the rest of the world…

Over in another cell, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey & Bunnie were together and they were all as downhearted as the rest. Wilson and Mandy were chained next to each other and Bunnie and Geoffrey were chained next to each other and facing directly at Wilson & Mandy.

"How about that for poor rotten luck?" muttered Wilson "Me and you finally get married Mandy and before we can even settle down as a couple we end up as prisoners of the Devatrons and we're awaiting execution! How can fate be so kind and yet so cruel to us at the same time?"

"I don't know Wilson." said Mandy glumly "But I'm glad we got

married. So now we can die a couple. I do wanna say this Wilson, I'm glad that you'll be beside me as we get executed. You were the best boy a girl could ever ask for."

"Aw Mandy I'm happy to hear that." said Wilson happily "And I couldn't ask for a better person I could've married."

Geoffrey & Bunnie stared at the two and they were amazed to see the two were still able to express their love for each other despite the fact the Royal Fighter's time was coming for them. It didn't half make them feel better to see this though.

"Aw, they're so cute together." said Bunnie softly "No wonder they got married, they were just perfect for each other. Just a pity that we're all gonna die shortly."

"Yeah, it is a right pity." muttered Geoffrey "I can't believe it though. Months of fighting Dr. Eggman and it's the Devatrons that we're gonna fall to. Fate does have surprising twists and turns after all."

"Ah know sugah." said Bunnie "I do hope that sugah-hog and Tails make is back soon or we're all gonna be slaughtered by the Devatrons."

"Somehow, I doubt Sonic will make it." said Geoffrey "As begrudging as I am to say it, I think Sonic will be too late. We've had it. We're all doomed and Mobius is going to be a chrome paradise for the Devatrons. And when Sonic & Tails do return, they'll be killed on the spot."

"It sure does look that way Geoff." said Bunnie downheartedly "We're never gonna get outta this and sugah-hog might be too late to save us all."

"Too right." said Geoffrey "By the way Bunnie, since we're so close to death," he added, his face beginning to feel hot as he prepared to say the one thing he'd been wanting to say for months now "I want to tell you something."

"Yes? What is it?" asked Bunnie.

"I…uh I…" stammered Geoffrey as he tried to twist his lips and say

those words "I just want to say that uh…I…"

"Yes? Go on." said Bunnie "Ah'm listening."

Geoffrey swallowed a nervous lump before finally getting the words out.

"I…love you Bunnie." said Geoffrey, blushing bright red.

Bunnie, Wilson & Mandy were all amazed by that revelation. Geoffrey fancied Bunnie? All this time together, Geoffrey had a crush on Bunnie and it had taken him till now to reveal it. Bunnie's surprise quickly turned into a smile though.

"Oh Geoffrey, ya'll love me?" said Bunnie "Ah…ah'm speechless. Ya'll love me?"

"I do luv." said Geoffrey "I always have. When I first laid my eyes on you I fancied you. Even those robot parts couldn't hide your true beauty from me."

"Well Geoffrey, ah'm flattered by yer comments." said Bunnie, blushing a little "Ah've been quite fond of ya'll too. Ever since ya'll saved me from total roboticization, ah've been growin' a fondness for ya'll Geoffrey. Pity ya'll had to pick now to reveal your love for me."

"At least I can die happily now, happy I managed to confess my feelings at long last." said Geoffrey, content with himself for finally revealing his true feelings to Bunnie at long last.

Bunnie just smiled lovingly at Geoffrey. Geoffrey smiled back. If they weren't restrained to the wall, they'd probably by trying to kiss each other now. Wilson & Mandy were both touched by this heartfelt scene in front of them.

"Aw, Geoffrey and Bunnie love each other." said Wilson "I never would have expected them to ever be in love with each other. But I think they're just about right for each other."

"Geoffrey's a good man with a big heart and Bunnie's a strong woman with a caring personality." said Mandy "They're perfect for

each other. Such a shame that we're all gonna die soon so they won't even get to build their relationship."

Wilson could only nod agreeably. As heartfelt as this moment was, it was all for naught since the Devatrons were going to execute them soon. At least the two had finally decided to reveal their love for each other instead of keeping it secret so when they die, they can die knowing that they loved each other.

Speaking of the Devatrons, they had been watching this whole performance via the security cameras in the prison cells. Devion enjoyed listening to his victims wail and fret over their forthcoming fate before killing them. He had arrived back moments ago with the captured Dr. Eggman and he had put him in a cell of his own. Now he was in the cockpit of *The Doombringer* enjoying the Mobian's sorrows. He was sitting comfortably in his throne and sitting in total silence, totally engrossed in what was going on. The four sub-leaders were beside him and Triton was clearly getting annoyed with all this.

"Devion, how can you bear to listen to the prisoners emitting disdained and anguished vocal sounds?" moaned Triton "It's the most annoying audio entity that can tune through a Devatron's audio receptors!"

"Spare me your whining Triton." said Devion without even looking at him "The sorrows of a prisoner are very pleasing to my audio receptors. And for some reason, seeing a distressed prisoner brings much enjoyment to me."

"I enjoy it too Devion." said Steelor "Bringing misery to our victims is the way of the Devatrons after all. They deserved it too for daring to resist us all like this. I especially won't forgive them for what they did to our ship!"

"Speaking of the ship, how are *The Doombringer* 's repair coming along Tronic?" asked Devion.

"The ship's repairs are 60% complete Devion." droned Tronic "The ship will be flying again by tomorrow morning."

"Excellent Tronic." purred Devion " *The Doombringer* needs to be repaired so that once we kill the Royal Fighters, I may spread my reign to the other regions of Mobius and then we may return to space so that *The Doombringer* will take us to our next destination. Which will be the human planet of Earth."

"So Devion, when may the executions begin?" asked Raicor.

"Right now." said Devion darkly "Release the prisoners of their restraints and escort them all outside. We shall execute them in the traditional Devatron fashion, the execution circle."

"I always enjoy that." purred Triton, pulling out his saw-stick "I'm gonna chop up every one of those Royal Fighters for what they've done to us in this battle!"

"You will execute your designated victim Triton." said Devion coldly "The Devatrons deserve to have an even amount of victims to execute. Now prepare the circle, the prisoners are now ready to be executed."

"Yes sir." said the sub-leaders, all running off to the prison cells to get the Royal Fighters.

Devion got up himself and he left the cockpit to go outside and join the execution circle. The end of the Royal Fighters was coming at last and Mobius was going to become his at long last. The Devatrons had secured yet another victory in their ongoing planet conquering reign…

"Whew! That shot almost hit us!" yelped Sonic as a laser blast from one of the Devatron ships skimmed the underside of *The Silver Bullet* .

The chase through space was still going on and *The Silver Bullet* was only narrowly dodging all the attacks that the Devatron ships were firing at it. Tails' ace piloting skills were the only things saving the ship from disaster right now but even then, Tails knew that the Devatrons would snag them eventually and the ship would crash

and burn, taking them with it. Tails manoeuvred the ship around to dodge another blast that was fired at them. The poor fox looked like he was going to have a heart attack as he continued to pilot the ship and save it from getting hit. His teeth were clenched, his eyes were fixed firmly ahead of him and his forehead was raining with sweat. His hands were clenched tightly around the controls of the ship and he was gripping them so hard, if he wasn't wearing gloves you could see his hands beginning to go pale. His heart was thumping so heavily you could actually see his chest going up and down. The Devatron ships pursued *The Silver Bullet* closely and they continued to fire at it. Tails threw the controls to the left and *The Silver Bullet* banked sharply to the left, dodging all the fire from the pursuing Devatron fleet. The leader of the fleet was beginning to get annoyed with the ships not hitting *The Silver Bullet* and he barked to the commanders of the ships in the fleet.

"That ship is dodging all our firepower!" blasted the fleet leader "Lock your ship's weapons onto that ship and shoot it down!"

"Yes sir." said the ship commanders.

The fleet ceased it's relentless shower of laser fire for a moment as the pilots began to aim at their target. The fleet began to focus it's weapons on *The Silver Bullet* and they resumed firing. *The Silver Bullet* was now being showered from behind by laser fire and it was all missing the ship by mere inches. Tails began to breath very fast. He was panicked as hell and he was about to lose it. Sonic watched all the lasers narrowly miss the ship and he was amazed at the fact they hadn't been hit yet.

"Holy galoshes!" cried Sonic as one laser skimmed the fuselage of the ship and left a black singe mark on it "Those Devatrons really wanna catch us don't they?! They're missing us by inches! It's a miracle we haven't been hit yet!"

"I know!" shrieked Tails "But I don't think we'll survive out here much longer! We're close to getting hit by those ships and they're close behind us! I think I'm gonna lose my mind with panic out here!"

"Tails! Get a grip on yourself!" yelled Sonic "We need you to make sure we don't get shot by those Devatrons! If you start panicking

then we're both dead out here!"

Tails took in Sonic's words and he began to calm down a little. He breathed in deeply and he let it out again in a heavy sigh. His heartbeat began to slow down too and Tails looked over at Sonic, his expression much more settled now.

"You're right Sonic." said Tails "I can't lose my mind out here or we're gonna get shot for sure. We'll make it out alive. I know we will. We just need to find the right place to activate our hyper-drive."

"Well whatever you do, don't activate it here." said Sonic "There's a big field of asteroids out there."

Tails looked ahead of him and surely enough, he saw an asteroid field just ahead of them. This field was much bigger then the one that they went through to reach General Klight's hiding place. The asteroids in the field were bigger then a football pitch and flying into one of them would be a very unwise move. Tails' face brightened at the sight of it for some reason.

"Oh yes! That's just what we need!" he exclaimed delightedly "That asteroid field will slow the Devatrons down and give us somewhere to hide too! We'll lose them for sure in there!"

"Well just be careful in that field!" cried Sonic in a frenzied tone "We do not wanna accidentally fly into one of those rocks! We'd be chilli-sauce out there!"

Tails nodded and he stepped on that pedals. *The Silver Bullet* picked up speed and it headed towards the asteroid field. The Devatron fleet followed it but the leader of the fleet saw the asteroid field and realized something was up.

"The ship's flying towards an asteroid field!" growled the fleet leader "It's trying to lose us by going into it! Well an asteroid field will not slow down the Devatron fleet! We'll just blow up every last asteroid there is!"

The Devatron fleet aimed it's weapons at the asteroids in the asteroid field and the ships all began to fire at the asteroids. *The*

Silver Bullet flew over the asteroids and it began to fly onwards as the fleet's laser blasts began to destroy the asteroids, reducing them to smaller chunks of rock that drifted through the empty void of space. Sonic & Tails were gobsmacked by this. You'd think an asteroid field would make even a Devatron hesitant to follow it's enemies but instead, they're just destroying the field so that they have no obstacles in their way as they chase down *The Silver Bullet* .

"Oh my gosh! They're destroying the asteroids!" cried Tails as another asteroid was destroyed just behind them.

"I'll give them this, they're persistent!" grumbled Sonic "Those jerks just don't give up do they?! And I thought I was stubborn!"

"Well let's hope that once we get to the end of the field, we'll be in the right place to activate the hyper-drive and hyper-jump back home to Mobius!" shrieked Tails "Otherwise we're dead meat out here!"

Then suddenly, a horrendous clunk sound was heard as something big and heavy was thrown into the ship's fuselage and a giant dent formed in the wall just beside the boarding door. Sonic & Tails were well surprised by that and they turned around to see what it was. A piece of asteroid had flown into the ship as it was destroyed by the Devatron fleet. Smaller pieces of asteroid pinged harmlessly off the ship's armour and Sonic & Tails heard it. It sounded like someone dropping pebbles on a polycarbonate sheet.

"The debris of the asteroids is hitting the ship!" gasped Tails "If we don't get outta here, we might get hit by a really big piece of asteroid and it'll smash the ship to pieces!"

"It's amazing how far these bits of rock fly after an asteroid gets destroyed." said Sonic "We're a good height above the field and we still manage to get hit by the debris. So what can we do to avoid getting hit?"

"I've got one idea that might work." said Tails "I bet the Devatrons will be so busy tearing the asteroid field apart they won't notice if I fly off down under the field and head off to the left out of their sight."

"Well it's a possibility." said Sonic "It could work. Give it a shot buddy. I'm counting on you to get us outta here safe and sound."

Tails smiled with appreciation. He loved it when his friends counted on him. It made him feel very useful and helpful. He was not about to let Sonic down now. He was going to get them away from the Devatrons just long enough for them to escape back home to Mobius. Tails swerved the ship to the left and *The Silver Bullet* banked sharply to the left as so. The Devatrons were so busy shooting the asteroids, they didn't even see the ship. The explosions from the lasers destroying the asteroids helped to hide *The Silver Bullet* from them too so the Devatrons were unknowingly helping Sonic & Tails sneak past them. *The Silver Bullet* dived down towards the asteroid field and Tails manoeuvred the ship around the asteroids to avoid hitting them. *The Silver Bullet* carried on going until it reached the underside of the asteroid field and the ship stopped diving downwards. It rose up to the correct axis and it began to fly off to the left still, leaving the Devatron fleet behind to continued shooting asteroids and heading off to a clean open area of space so they could finally use the hyper-drive. Unfortunately for them, a Devatron commander in a ship near the back of the fleet noticed *The Silver Bullet* fleeing for it and it was surprised to see this. The ship had evaded them and it was getting away! The asteroid field had only been a distraction so the ship could get away from them! The commander spoke into a communicator on the control panel to the fleet leader.

"Sir! The ship's evaded us! It's to the left of our position and is heading away from the asteroid field!" it informed the fleet leader frantically.

The fleet leader ordered the fleet to stop firing and it looked to the left to see if the commander was right. It could just see a silver speck moving away from the asteroid field and heading off to seemingly nowhere in particular. The fleet leader was furious to see that it had been outsmarted by the pilots of the ship. Well all they were doing was delaying the inevitable. The Devatron fleet would still catch *The Silver Bullet* and they would still destroy it.

"Fleet! Follow that ship and destroy it!" barked the fleet leader.

The fleet obeyed and all the ships turned away from the asteroid field. The ships all began to follow *The Silver Bullet* and because they were faster then *The Silver Bullet* , they'd catch it easily. But *The Silver Bullet* was a good distance ahead of them and it was finally in the right place to activate the hyper-drive. There was nothing but a big empty void of space ahead of Sonic & Tails so they could activate the hyper-drive right here and be back home to Mobius at last.

"This looks like a good spot." said Sonic "What do you think Tails?"

"Well the ship's navigation system seems to agree with you Sonic." said Tails, peering at it "If we activate the hyper-drive now, we'll arrive past Mobius but we can just steer the ship around and head towards the planet. Hold on Sonic, we're ready to jump into hyper-space!"

"Home here we come at last!" cheered Sonic happily, holding on tightly to the virus-bomb.

Tails activated the ship's hyper-drive just as the Devatron fleet was beginning to catch up to it and the fleet fired it's weapons at *The Silver Bullet* . But *The Silver Bullet* rocketed off at the speed of light before the lasers could even touch it. The ship was long gone now and the fleet was never going to catch it. It was far out of their radar scans and it was heading back home to Mobius. The fleet leader roared in annoyance, angered at the fact *The Silver Bullet* had escaped them. There was nothing left to do now except return back to Sram and resume their original priorities. As for *The Silver Bullet* , only time would tell if it would get back in time for Sonic & Tails to save the Royal Fighters from execution back on Mobius…

…but it already seemed as if Sonic & Tails were too late for the Devatrons were already setting up the execution circle. All of the Mobians had been released from their cells and taken outside to be executed. They were all outside of New Mobotropolis for this since Devion felt that executing them all outside of their own city would be a fitting end for them all. All their arms were cuffed behind their backs with laser cuffs to stop them trying anything at the last minute

(as if it would do them any good trying to escape now anyway.) The prisoners had all been lined up and formed around in a big circle, hence the reason the Devatrons called it the execution circle. A circle of Devatrons stood behind the circle of Mobians so you know had two circles, a circle of Devatrons on the outside and a circle of Mobians on the inside. The Mobians were down on their knees, completely helpless at the feet of the Devatrons that stood behind them. Shadow began to grumble to himself as the execution was about to begin.

"I swear if I wasn't equipped with this collar I'd Chaos Blast every last Devatron out here!" he growled.

"Well Shadow, unfortunately you are." muttered Rouge who was kneeling beside Shadow "There's nothing we can do about it now. I just can't believe we're all gonna die right now. I'm beginning to wish I never joined in this conflict."

"Rouge, you would have ended up fighting them anyway." noted Shadow "After they've finished with us, they're gonna conquer all of Mobius so staying out of the whole fight wouldn't have made any difference."

"Oh yeah." muttered Rouge.

"If I die now though, I'll never find out who I am and who my creator is." murmured Shadow "And he'll never find me if he's looking for me."

"Poor him." said Rouge sarcastically "I do wonder where Marik is though. Was he not captured along with us?"

"No Rouge, the coward fled for his life by using one of MY Chaos Cluster fragments!" informed Dr. Eggman, still cross at Marik for abandoning them all like this "Marik's decided to abandon us all and leave us to the Devatrons! Can you believe that extra-terrestrial scoundrel?! And I though I was bad!"

Shadow and Rouge were livid to hear this.

"Marik left Mobius?!" snarled Shadow "Just so he can escape the

Devatrons and leave us all to perish?!"

"Well it's not like he was really that helpful in the first place." said Rouge grimly "Even if Marik didn't leave we'd still be in this mess so it's not that big a deal. Still kinda jerky for him to just leave us all like this just to save himself."

"Silence your accursed chattering!" roared Raicor who was standing behind Shadow, Rouge & Dr. Eggman "The prisoners are to remain quiet during the executions!"

Shadow, Rouge and Eggman stopped talking and remained silent since arguing with the Devatrons and talking back to them was not going to do them any good right now. The execution circle had all been set up and now the Devatrons were ready to commence with the killing. Devion, who had Sally Acorn kneeling in front of him, gave out the announcement to all the Devatrons in the vicinity.

"Devatrons, you have all gathered here to witness the execution of this heathen Mobians that kneel helpless before you." he announced "These wretched heroes are guilty for the crime of objecting and attempting to terminate us all and their sentence is death. We will all execute these vermin and they will set an example to the rest of Mobius what happens to those who dare to resist us."

Devion then looked over to a Devatron soldier who had General Bostock and Commander Mortimer by it's feet.

"Bring those two up." said Devion "They shall be the showing example to the rest of the Mobians."

The soldier obeyed and it brought Bostock and Mortimer to the centre of the circle, earning a pair of horrified gasps from Wilson & Mandy. Bostock and Mortimer both began pleading pitifully to the Devatrons.

"No wait! Please! Spare us all! If you let us live we'll surrender to you and be your slaves! We'll do whatever you want!" begged Bostock.

"Silence!" snarled the soldier.

"Please, have mercy on us all!" whimpered Mortimer "We're freedom

loving beings, all we want is to live in peace!"

"Only the Devatrons deserve peace you verminous beings." said Devion coldly, deploying his arm cannon and aiming it at the two chipmunks "We were built to bring peace and we're bringing it in any means necessary and those means are wiping out all the races of the universe and replacing them with us."

"You can't do this!" cried Bostock "That's evil, that's sick! You're not bringing peace, you're bringing calamity to…"

Bostock was cut off as Devion and three soldiers all began to open fire directly onto him. The blasts tore through Bostock's skin and flesh and the bombardment of laser fire was too much for him. Bostock collapsed onto the ground and Devion finished him off with a shot to the head. Bostock was dead and Mortimer was soon to join him. The Devatrons all opened fire on him too and Mortimer was now dead along with Bostock. Their bodies had black singes from the laser fire and blood poured from their wounds. Wilson & Mandy were both horrified to watch this for they were good friends with the two chipmunks. The two lowered their heads in sorrow. First the Downunda Royal Fighters, then Kate and now Bostock and Mortimer. Soon the rest of the Royal Fighters were to join them. A pair of soldiers came out into the circle and they carried away Bostock and Mortimer's bodies. Devion grabbed Sally by her hair, earning a shriek of pain from the queen squirrel, and she was yanked up onto her feet.

"You're next my child." hissed Devion "And I shall execute you myself. Your death will be an enjoyable one."

Devion dragged Sally out into the centre of the circle by her hair. Nicole watched in horror and she wanted to cry out for Sally but she was too shock to even speak. Devion threw Sally down onto the ground and he aimed his arm cannon at her head. Sally got up on her knees and she turned her head to face Devion.

"Any last words?" asked Devion coldly.

"Yes." said Sally "Devion, please reconsider your way of life. What you're doing is evil and immoral on so many levels. You're taking

away innocent freedom and innocent lives on planets everywhere and you're making the universe a vapid place. If you have any compassion left in your circuitry then please stop all this and reform yourselves."

"The Devatrons will not reform." said Devion dryly "The universe despised us and envied us and all they wanted was for us to perish. So we're returning the favour. This is who we are now and nothing you say will divert me from my ambitions."

"Oh Devion please! Listen to me!" begged Sally "It's all for your own good! If you continue this way you'll just bring death to yourselves! Anyone who lives a life of conquest and power just ends up worse off then they were before! Please Devion, if you reform yourself you'll benefit from this and so will everybody else…"

"Spare me your pontificating you poor simpering child." said Devion crossly, he was clearly getting annoyed by her pleas.

"Devion please! Have mercy!" shrieked Sally helplessly "Mercy!"

"I do not know the definition of this strange five-lettered word you Mobians use." said Devion "What does "mercy" mean anyway?"

"You don't know what we mean by mercy?!" cried Sally "You really have lost all sense of decency when you decided to turn evil after the death of your king!"

"Decency is a weak little bit of morality that the good-natured thrive on." said Devion "Decency means nothing to me now."

He aimed his arm cannon at Sally's head again and prepared to fire. Sally just gave up pleading to him and she turned away, her head facing the ground and she stared straight at the grass she knelt upon. Tears came to her eyes and Sally closed them, accepting her fate and realizing there was no way out of this. Nicole stared intensely at Devion as he prepared to kill Sally. Right now, the lynx felt like her heart was just going to abruptly stop beating.

"No please! Don't!" shrieked Nicole, trying to come forward but a Devatron soldier held her back.

Devion ignored her and the inside of his cannon began to glow bright yellow as his shot began to charge up. Sally could hear the ominous whirring sound of Devion's cannon powering up. In the blink of an eye, her head would be blasted clean off her shoulders. But just before Devion could deliver the killing blow, Raicor interrupted him.

"Devion! Look up there!" cried Raicor, pointing up at the sky.

Devion ceased his charging up and the inside of his cannon arm stopped glowing. Devion looked up at the sky and he saw *The Silver Bullet* just finishing entering Mobius' atmosphere and heading towards the ground. The ship had arrived back at Mobius at last and it had just flown through Mobius' atmosphere and was now coming in to land. Devion couldn't quite see the ship fully yet for it was too high up for him to make out the details. The Mobians and Dr. Eggman all looked up at the sky and they saw *The Silver Bullet* coming in. Devion began to wonder what it was.

"One of mine? Or one of theirs…?" he mused to himself.

"It must be one of theirs my lord." said Triton "We haven't ordered any reinforcements so it can't be one of our ships."

Triton was right on that one. As *The Silver Bullet* came in closer and closer, the details on the ship became clearer and clearer and Devion realized it was indeed, a Mobian ship and he recognized it too. It was the very ship that had evaded him after Shadow damaged *The Doombringer* . As for the Mobians, they could see that the ship was the very ship they had been waiting for since it had left with Sonic & Tails aboard.

"It's Sonic & Tails!" cried Amy delightedly "They're back at last! I knew they'd return in time to save us!"

"Indeed they have returned my foolish Mobian." sneered Devion "Returned to die with you all. Whatever reason they left Mobius for does not matter since they're back and I can terminate them along with all of you."

Devion then aimed his arm cannon up at *The Silver Bullet* and he

set it to cannonball mode. The Mobians stared at Devion in horror and they willed to stop him but they knew they couldn't. They were surrounded by Devatrons so anyone attempting to stop Devion would be shot instantly and their hands were cuffed behind their backs so what could they do? They could only remain on their knees and watch helplessly as Devion locked on target and fired at *The Silver Bullet* . A tremendous cannonball blast fired out of Devion's arm cannon and it whizzed towards *The Silver Bullet* at a blinding speed. Sonic & Tails were too late to dodge the blast and it ended up blowing off the entire right wing of the ship. *The Silver Bullet* began to spiral down to the ground out of control. The Mobians watched, horrified as the ship came hurtling down to the ground, pinning around wildly like a falling biplane. The ship then crashed into the ground and went up in flames as the fuel ignited from the impact. *The Silver Bullet* was no longer a sleek, hi-tech ship for space missions, it was a miserable wreckage of debris and fire. If Sonic & Tails were still in the ship then they would be dead. Nobody could survive a horrifying crash like this. Amy looked like she was about to die of shock as she watched the ship burn.

"NOOOO!" she screamed "SONIC! TAILS! NOOOOO!"

The rest of the prisoners were too shocked to even say anything. Their only hope of survival had just been shot down like a duck that's being hunted and went up in flames like a bonfire. Even Dr. Eggman was shocked by the whole thing. He would very much have liked it if HE had been the one who fired that killing blow. Devion admired the wreckage of the ship gleefully and he retracted his arm cannon. He turned around to face the others, clearly pleased to see their horrified faces.

"Now we're even." he purred "You wrecked my ship and now I've wrecked yours. And not only that, the hero of Mobius is dead at last so all hope you had is now gone."

"Oh yeah?! Well what if the hero of Mobius is still alive Devion?" came a voice that Devion never expected to hear again.

Everybody looked up at the sky and saw none other then Sonic & Tails up in the air alive and unharmed! Tails was flying by twisting his namesakes around and he had Sonic by the hand. Sonic had the

virus-bomb in his other hand. The Mobian's faces all brightened up at the sight of the two.

"Sonic! Tails! They're alive!" squealed Amy "Yippee!"

"Incredible!" blurted Knuckles "They made it!"

"How is this even logically possible?!" roared Devion in annoyance "You two were in the ship! You should be burning with it down on the ground!"

"We WERE in the ship for a moment." said Sonic "But once me and Tails saw that blast coming, we bailed out at the last minute just as the ship got hit. You almost got us Devion so be proud of yourself!"

"I'll be proud of myself once your pathetic life ceases to continue!" snarled Devion "Devatrons, shoot those two heathens now!"

"Wait a minute!" yelled Sonic "Before you start trying to kill me, I've got something to try out first."

He then proceeded to throw the virus-bomb down to the ground at Devion. Devion leaped backwards and the bomb shattered like a glass vase upon smashing into the ground. The moment the bomb was broken, the virus, which was a pale brown misty substance it contained drifted up into the air and the wind blew it towards the execution circle. Devion watched it and he wondered what was going on.

"What is your plan Sonic?" he asked suspiciously "You throw a spherical object at me and all it's done is emit a misty substance."

"Just watch the show Devion and you'll see." said Sonic as he and Tails touched down onto the ground.

Devion looked at the Devatrons in the circle and the virus drifted over them. The Devatrons didn't think it would harm them since they were invulnerable and they didn't breathe so they couldn't suffocate on it. But they were dead wrong. As the virus began to drift over the Devatrons, their armour began to crack like an eggshell. The Devatrons looked down at their bodies, horrified to see their armour cracking and flaking away like chrome paint. Their arms were

cracking, their torsos were cracking, their legs were cracking and their faces were cracking. The virus was eating away at their armour and it was destroying them bit by bit.

"What is this?!" shrieked Raicor "My armour is falling apart!"

"That mist is destroying us!" squealed Triton "How is this possible?!"

"I'm cracking!" wailed Steelor "My armour is falling apart like a faulty generator!"

Devion looked like he was about to go mental.

"What have you done?!" he snarled.

"Just given the Devatrons a taster of our new weapon, a little gift from your cousins known as a virus bomb." said Sonic "Me and Tails left to meet General Klight and he generously gave us that bomb. He'd been working on it for years and it's finally paid off for it's now destroying all your men's armour Devion!"

"That wretched general!" roared Devion "How dare General Klight make a virus that can destroy Devatron armour! When I find that scoundrel I will rip out every last bit of circuitry in his body!"

"That's not gonna happen Devion." said Sonic "Since you're gonna lose all your armour too!"

He then spin-dashed towards Devion but Devion dodged his attack and he ran for his life. Devion knew he was in trouble now. His men were losing their armour and Sonic was going to try and throw him into the virus as it was still around so he had to get away and fast. The virus wouldn't stay forever, it would eventually drift away like a dense fog and once it did, he'd be free to come out again. Sonic saw Devion trying to get away and he ran after Devion. Devion saw Sonic coming towards him at Sonic speed so he turned around, deployed his arm cannon and shot at him. It was still set to cannonball mode so Devion fired a cannonball at Sonic. The cannonball hit the ground at Sonic's feet and he was thrown backwards by the tremendous force of the blast. Sonic skidded across the ground backwards and he came to a stop just at the feet

of a Devatron soldier who's armour looked like it was about to fall off at any minute. The Devatrons weren't the only ones who were being effected by the virus though. The virus weakened the laser cuffs on all the prisoners and they were soon free in a matter of seconds. The sphere that generated the lasers was made of Devatron chrome and so was Shadow's inhibitor collar so Shadow managed to simply break the collar off his neck by pulling on it and it shattered like glass. The virus began to drift away into the wind though where it would eventually dissolve into the air and never be seen again. Devion had evaded the virus and *The Doombringer* was still at large so Devion could just replace all his fallen comrades but since Shadow was able to use his powers again, he could just Chaos Blast the ship to pieces and destroy Devion in an instant. As for the Devatrons that had been effected by the virus, Sonic's friends began to destroy them all in a matter of seconds given how their invulnerable chrome armour was no more and their exoskeletons were considerably weaker then their armour. Knuckles & Shade pounced on Raicor and they completely annihilated the winged Devatron once and for all. Bunnie Rabbot punched Tronic to pieces, finally getting pay back for what he did to her, Team Chaotix all teamed up on Triton and they tore him to pieces and Wilson & Mandy took down Steelor. The rest all took down the soldiers. Shadow Chaos Speared them, Rouge screw-kicked them, Amy hammered them, Scott & Jessica used their energy attacks on them, Miranda and Kari took them down by double-teaming them, Thunder & Bolt zapped them to pieces, Geoffrey blew them up with his exploding darts, Ruben smashed them with his martial arts skills and Kiara used her skills to destroy the weakened soldiers. Sonic & Tails watched this whole fiasco and they beamed happily.

"The virus worked like a charm." said Sonic "I would have preferred it if I didn't have to resort to this but it was the only way to stop them."

"Pity Devion's avoided the virus." said Tails "But we can handle him. Shadow can Chaos Blast him to bits and we can destroy *The Doombringer* too. The Devatrons will finally be defeated."

"Yup. And I can give ol' General Klight the good news." said Sonic, activating the earpiece he'd been given before leaving.

"Hey Klight, the bomb works like a charm, the Devatron's armour weakens and makes them easy to destroy." reported Sonic.

"Excellent!" cried General Klight delightedly "Thank you for carrying out this test Sonic. We're indebted to you for your contribution. Now we know the bomb definitely works, we can finally wipe out the Devatrons for good and bring peace back to the universe!"

"Good luck with that General." said Sonic.

"Thank you Sonic." said General Klight "Until the next time we meet, farewell and may peace return to your world."

"I wouldn't be too sure on that." muttered Sonic, thinking about Dr. Eggman and knowing what he'd get up to once this conflict was over.

He switched off the earpiece. Then suddenly, the ground began to shake beneath their feet. Sonic just managed to keep himself from falling over as the ground suddenly began to shake.

"Whoa! What's going on?!" cried Sonic.

"Is it an earthquake?!" exclaimed Tails "If so then why did it have to happen just as we're defeating the Devatrons?!"

It was not an earthquake though. The ground suddenly erupted under their feet and Sonic & Tails were thrown up into the air. The Royal Fighters all stared in horror as Sonic & Tails were thrown up into the air and then they plummeted down to the ground. Tails just managed to save himself & Sonic by twirling his tails around and catching Sonic before he could go splat. The dust cleared away from that sudden attack and it revealed that it was none other then the Deva-Beast! Devion had hidden it underground and it had been waiting there since the day NewMobotropolis had been taken over. And now it was here to attack once again! Devion stood proudly on the head of the Deva-Beast and he crowed at the Mobians that were blow the enormous monster.

"That virus your brought home was merely a minor setback in my conquest Sonic!" gloated Devion "Now it's gone, the Deva-Beast

and I are free to continue our offensive and I shall make up for this setback by destroying you all with the Deva-Beast!"

The Deva-Beast let out a thunderous roar that could have knocked several buildings down all at once…

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius* Arc 13 for the whole story!**

Good grief! The heroes finally score a winning point and yet it looks like "victory is slipping away"! Well let's see if it is doing so next time as the three part finale to this great saga continues...

The Tides of War Part 2

Story 114: The Tides of War Part 2: Victory is Slipping Away

Things had finally been looking up for Sonic the Hedgehog & friends. Just as the Royal Fighters were all about to be executed, Sonic & Tails arrived back to Mobius with a gift from the Startrons, the Devatron cousins. That gift was a simple bomb containing a virus that weakened the Devatron armour and made them vulnerable. The Devatron sub-leaders Raicor, Tronic, Triton and Steelor had all been terminated by the Royal Fighters thanks to the virus. But unfortunately, Devion still lived and the virus has gone so he was still free to make the hero's lives a living hell for them. And to add insult to injury, Devion had brought out his most fearsome weapon, the Deva-Beast. The Deva-Beast had helped him conquer New Mobotropolis thanks to it's enormous size and digging capabilities and now it was going to help him terminate the Mobians once and for all. His ship *The Doombringer* was still intact, despite repairs not being finished yet, so Devion could quite adequately replace the destroyed Devatrons. The virus-bomb had only been a minor bump in the road for Devion and now it was gone, the Devatrons could take back their victory and the heroes would be back to square one. The Deva-Beast roared at the top of it's voice and it stomped the ground with two of it's six legs. The Mobians all found themselves falling over onto the ground from that incredible stomp. Devion began to cackle at them from atop the Deva-Beast's head.

"So Mobians, you've managed to evade execution and Sonic has destroyed my sub-leaders and some of my soldiers with a virus created by our loathsome cousins." said Devion "But you have not won yet. This conflict is far from over. The Deva-Beast will slaughter you all and I will continue with my conquest!"

"We'll see about that Devion!" yelled Sonic courageously "We'll destroy that stupid beast of yours!"

"Sonic, have you lost your mind?!" shrieked Queen Sally Acorn "We

can't fight that thing! Last time we all fought it we couldn't so much as lay a scratch on it!"

"Sally, if we don't stop that Deva-Beast then we're back to square one in this conflict and Devion might actually end up beating us!" retorted Sonic "I don't care what you've gotta say, I'm gonna fight that thing and destroy it just like we've destroyed Devion's sub-leaders and some of his men!"

"We only succeeded in that one because of that virus-bomb the Startrons gave you." noted Sally "You didn't bring any spares and we won't know how to make the virus ourselves so we can't destroy them!"

"Sure we can Sal." said Sonic "We've got Shadow and his almighty Chaos Blast on our side haven't we? He'll make mincemeat of the Deva-Beast."

"You got that right Sonic." said Shadow, removing his inhibitor rings and handing them to Sonic "I'll run onto that beast's head and let it have it with a Chaos Blast."

Shadow skated off at top speed towards the colossal Deva-Beast and he began to glow red with Chaos Energy. Devion saw Shadow coming and he knew what the black hedgehog was planning to do so he decided to counter-attack before Shadow could use a Chaos Blast.

"Deva-Beast, strike him with your tail!" he ordered.

The Deva-Beast obeyed and it raised it's long tail up above it's body. Shadow leaped into the air and he tensed up as he prepared to unleash the Chaos Energy within him.

"Chaos…" he said.

But before he could land on top of the Deva-Beast's head, the Deva-Beast's tail lashed out at him and struck him like a stinging scorpion, throwing him backwards and sending him hurling towards the Mobians. The Mobians quickly dived for cover as an energy filled Shadow hurled towards them, ready to unleash his Chaos Blast.

Shadow hit the ground and he unleashed his Chaos Blast. A big red sphere of energy expanded out from within him and all he ended up doing was making a crater beneath him. The Chaos Energy soon died away and Shadow was left lying in the crater he'd made. Devion cackled evilly at Shadow and the Deva-Beast advanced on Shadow, hoping to stomp on him and squash him. But the Deva-Beast was rather slow when walking and Shadow was a few feet away from it so Sonic or somebody else was easily going to reach Shadow first and save him before he gets squashed. And that's exactly what happened. Sonic ran towards Shadow at top speed and he grabbed him just before the Deva-Beast could reach him. He then ran off with Shadow in tow. The Deva-Beast aimed it's tail at Sonic and the tail extended to twice it's normal length. The tail struck the ground just behind Sonic but it had missed and Sonic continued to run. The Deva-Beast retracted it's tail back to it's normal length and it plodded after him. But Sonic was already well ahead of the Deva-Beast and after running a good distance away from it, he put Shadow down and Shadow reattached his inhibitor rings.

"Thanks for the save Sonic." said Shadow as he clipped his right ring around his right wrist.

"No probs Shadow." said Sonic "I'm kinda surprised to see that Deva-Beast trump your Chaos Blast though. It simply swatted you away before you could finish unleashing it."

"Devion did the same thing when me and him battled during your time away." muttered Shadow "Devion knows my strongest move and he knows how to counter it so my Chaos Blast won't help anybody."

"That's one heck of a bummer right there." muttered Sonic "Your strongest attack and Devion knows how to counter attack it. We need a different strategy."

"If we could both turn super then we'd be able to destroy that thing and finish the Devatrons off for good." said Shadow "But the Chaos Emeralds are still in Devion's possession. We need to retrieve them first."

"We could always use the Master Emerald to go super but Devion

might follow us to Angel Island and power-drain the Master Emerald." noted Sonic "We also need to give the Chaos Emeralds their power back and I'm guessing the Master Emerald has that kind of power so let's retrieve the Chaos Emeralds and then we'll take them over to Angel Island and re-power them and then turn super with the Chaos and Master Emeralds. So Devion doesn't follow us to Angel Island, my friends will keep the Deva-Beast busy while me and you head over there."

"Good plan Sonic." said Shadow "You help your friends keep the Deva-Beast busy while I search for the Chaos Emeralds."

With that said, Shadow just teleported away without saying another word, leaving Sonic behind to continue battling the Deva-Beast. Sonic was surprised at the fact Shadow just promptly decided to do just that but he knew that Shadow would find the Chaos Emeralds and retrieve them so he and Shadow can take them to AngelIsland to get re-powered and then use them to destroy the Devatrons.

"Good luck with finding them Shadow." said Sonic "I'll keep Devion up on his toes until you find them."

Sonic ran over to his friends, who were all standing there staring at the colossal Deva-Beast and wondering what to do about it. The Deva-Beast towered over them and it raised it's tail, preparing to strike at them with it. Devion sneered at the helpless Mobians that stared up at the Deva-Beast and he prepared to give the command.

"How helpless those fools look at the feet of the mighty Deva-Beast." he crooned to himself "They know that Sonic's interference hasn't helped them at all and soon I will be back on top of this battle."

He then pointed down at the Royal Fighters and barked at the Deva-Beast.

"Deva-Beast, kill them all!"

The Deva-Beast obeyed and it's tail lunged towards them all. The Royal Fighters all scattered around like a frightened colony of ants and the tail struck the ground, narrowly missing Team Chaotix by

mere inches. Vector grabbed hold of the Deva-Beast's tail just as the Deva-Beast began to raise it's tail back up again. The Deva-Beast didn't seem to notice the crocodile holding onto it's tail as it raised it back up. Vector let go of the Deva-Beast's tail and he hurtled down towards Devion, who saw him coming towards him. Vector drew his arm back as he hurtled towards Devion and he prepared to punch him. Devion just drew his arm back and punched Vector as he hurtled towards him. Vector was thrown backwards across the Deva-Beast's back and he landed in-between the cannons on it's back. Devion deployed his arm-cannon and he aimed it at Vector. He shot at Vector but Vector dodged the attack and he ran towards Devion. He and Devion ended up linking arms with one another. Vector tried to push Devion off of the Deva-Beast's head but Devion managed to hold his ground and he pushed Vector back away from the Deva-Beast's neck and onto it's back.

"Hey Devion! I owe you a smashed head for what this giant metal pet of yours did to me!" growled Vector, remembering his unpleasant outcome from the last fight with it.

"It's remarkable you even survived such a blast from the Deva-Beast, and all in a short period of time." growled Devion "You Mobians must be experts in the realm of medical science if you managed to recover impossibly fast after bearing the brunt of the Deva-Beast."

"Well all you need to know is we have a little cat who's an expert in medicine who helped me recover." said Vector "Now prepare to be crushed Devion!"

Devion's response was to push Vector away and send him falling down onto his back. Vector picked himself up and he socked Devion directly in the face, nearly knocking him off of the Deva-Beast. Devion regained his balance and he uppercut Vector in the jaw. Vector rubbed his jaw and he growled in fury. He ran into Devion and tried to push him off of the Deva-Beast but Devion managed to keep Vector from pushing him off the giant Devatron monster. Devion wrestled Vector back and he then managed to grab him into a chokehold. Vector gagged as Devion wrapped his arm around his neck and began to choke him. Devion then proceeded to throw

Vector off of the Deva-Beast and send him plummeting down to the ground. Luckily for him, Charmy Bee was on hand to catch him before he could crash onto the ground. Charmy caught Vector by the hand and he lowered him down to the ground.

"Nice catch Charmy." said Vector.

"Thank you." said Charmy, beaming like a kid that's just been given a lollipop as a treat "How are we gonna stop this giant robot monster thingy?"

"Beats me." said Vector "But I'm not resting until Devion and that Deva-Beast are reduced to scrap metal! Especially as that thing shot me in the back and nearly killed me!"

The Deva-Beast looked down and it spotted Vector and Charmy. It raised one of it's feet and it was about to squash the two but Vector & Charmy both dived out of the way as the foot stomped down onto the ground. The result was an earth-shaking tremble that threw everybody down onto their backs. The Deva-Beast growled and it began searching around for unfortunate victims to squish or blast to bits. Sonic jumped towards the Deva-Beast and he spin-dashed it directly in the visor. Despite that being it's weak spot, the Deva-Beast's visor was not as easy to destroy as an ordinary Devatron's was. Given it's size and build, it was going to be stronger then an ordinary Devatron in practically every way. Sonic wasn't willing to give-up though. Sonic keeled around and he spin-dashed the Deva-Beast in the visor again. If he repeatedly hit it in the visor he might just smash it. The Deva-Beast wasn't too pleased with Sonic constantly spin-dashing it in the visor so it aimed its back mounted cannons at him. The Deva-Beast blasted at Sonic but Sonic, who had just landed on the ground, dodged the cannon shots and spin-dashed towards the Deva-Beast again. The Deva-Beast lowered it's head and Sonic ended up hitting Devion instead and knocking him clean off the top of the Deva-Beast. Sonic & Devion both plummeted down to the ground and they crashed with Sonic on top of Devion. Devion threw Sonic off of himself shortly after they landed and he picked himself up. Sonic spin-dashed towards Devion but Devion caught him in his hands and threw him at Tails, who was flying up towards the Deva-Beast in order to distract it. Sonic hit Tails and the two ended up plummeting down to the ground. The two crashed

onto the ground front first right next to each other. Tails sat up, wincing in pain, and Sonic got up, dusting himself off and then kneeling down to comfort Tails.

"Tails! You OK buddy?" asked Sonic nervously.

"Ow! Now I knew how your enemies feel!" whined Tails "That spin-dash of yours really hurt Sonic!"

"I'm sorry big guy, Devion threw me towards you while I was in a spin-dash." said Sonic, helping Tails back up onto his feet "Do you still feel up to the task or do you need to sit out of this one?"

"I'll be fine Sonic." Tails reassured his best friend with a cheery smile on his face "I've been hit by worse then a spin-dash before."

"That's cool." said Sonic "Now, can you help distract the Deva-Beast while I keep Devion occupied?" he asked "Shadow's on *The Doombringer* and he's looking for the Chaos Emeralds so we can take them to AngelIsland to get their power back."

"I certainly can." said Tails "And don't worry, I'll be careful against that thing."

"You'd better, we don't want you to end up like poor Vector after the first encounter." said Sonic, whizzing off to resume his fight with Devion.

Tails waved to Sonic and he twisted his tails around one another. He took flight and he flew towards the Deva-Beast to attack it. To his delight, there were already people on it right now. Bunnie Rabbot and Rouge the Bot were double-teaming the behemoth. Bunnie was flying around the Deva-Beast and punching it, extending her arm as she punched so she could hit it from a distance, and Rouge flew towards the monster and screw-kicked it in the visor. The two girls weren't pulling their punches either, they were attacking the visor relentlessly. But despite their best efforts, they couldn't seem to lay a crack in the Deva-Beast's visor. The Deva-Beast's visor was just too strong for them to penetrate. It would take them a while to finally penetrate it. The Deva-Beast was getting riled pretty badly by the attacking Bunnie & Rouge and it tried to swat them with it's tail but

the girls dodged the attack as it swung towards them. Bunnie wiped sweat off her forehead and aimed another punch at the Deva-Beast.

"Dang! Ah wish Tronic didn't damage mah arm cannon again and maybe ah could dish out the heavy artillery!" she grumbled "Instead, all ah can do is punch at that gruesome robot and mah best hits aren't even scratchin' that visor!"

"Me and you give it all we've got and we still can't blind it." muttered Rouge "What do you think we should do honey?"

"We should keep dishin' it out ah think!" declared Bunnie "We might blind it eventually if we keep hittin' it!"

"Let's hope we live that long." said Rouge dully.

The Deva-Beast then suddenly extended it's neck and it's head hurtled towards them like an oncoming train. Bunnie and Rouge tried to dodge it but the Deva-Beast just managed to hit them with the edges of it's head and send the girls spiralling down to the ground. Bunnie and Rouge managed to regain balance with the aid of their wings and jets respectively and they flew back up to the Deva-Beast. Tails joined up with them and he flew in front of the Deva-Beast's visor, hoping to distract it so that Bunnie & Rouge could hit it without the Deva-Beast retaliating. It was working too. Tails flew around the Deva-Beast's visor and kept it focused on him. Bunnie and Rouge attacked it in the visor again but the Deva-Beast immediately reacted by extending it's neck again and hitting all three of them. That attack sent Tails, Bunnie and Rouge all hurtling down to the ground and they landed on a soft patch of grass that cushioned their fall. The Deva-Beast stared squarely at them and decided to finish them off, aiming it's back mounted cannons at the three Mobians. But before it could attack, Shade the Echidna, Scott Lynx, Jessica Cougar and Thunder & Bolt all jumped in at once and they unleashed an onslaught of attacks on the Deva-Beast. Shade Blade-Rushed it, Scott & Jessica threw energy spears at it and Thunder & Bolt zapped it with their electrical attacks. The Deva-Beast could barely see who it was up against due to how many attacks were being launched at it and the attacks were obscuring it's vision. If they kept this onslaught up, the Deva-Beast's visor could well be shattered at last and it would be blinded. But the Deva-Beast

was not going to be defeated so easily. The Deva-Beast used it's six legs to launch itself into the air and it soared over the Mobians like a giant cannonball. It landed on it's front two legs and it began to start digging down into the ground, using it's feet like drills as it ploughed down through the soil and started digging down and down into the ground. As the Deva-Beast began to dig, it left an enormous hole in the ground. The hole was so big you could put two three-storey buildings in it. Shade instantly grew worried for the Deva-Beast could pop up from the ground at any time and given how deep down it was digging, there was no telling WHERE it would pop up.

"Everybody, keep your senses alert." ordered Shade "That thing's going to emerge from the ground and it'll likely emerge directly beneath us."

"I can just imagine what's gonna happen when that giant thing emerges from underground!" yelped Thunder worriedly.

"Yeah, we're gonna have the world's largest molehill!" whimpered Bolt, who for the first time had just made a joke and neither he or Thunder were laughing at it like they usually did "And we're gonna go sky-high if it comes up directly underneath us!"

"We'll hear it coming up and when we do, we can run for it before that thing gets us." said Scott "And then we can continue to attack it's visor…"

Then suddenly, the ground beneath them began to shake and Scott could hear a rumbling noise directly beneath his feet. The Deva-Beast was coming up to the surface!

"Holy smokes, it's coming! RUN!" screamed Scott.

Shade, Scott, Jessica and the chipmunk brothers run for their lives just as the Deva-Beast erupted through the earth and sent showers upon showers of earth and soil flying everywhere. The Deva-Beast spiralled through the air like a giant six-legged drill and it landed down on all six legs a good few feet away from the hole it had just come through. The Deva-Beast raised it's head and bellowed a thunderous, titanic roar that could have made Mount Adabat tremble. The Mobians staring up at it were Knuckles, Amy, Cream,

Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Ruben, Sally, Nicole, Miranda, Kari and Kiara. The Deva-Beast looked down at it's victims and it prepared to stomp on them. Amy summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand and threw it directly at the Deva-Beast's head as it prepared to stomp on them. The hammer pinged harmlessly off of it's head and it's stomp attack was uninterrupted. The Deva-Beast stomped the ground but the Mobians had already run clear before it could stomp on them. Knuckles ran over to one of the Deva-Beast's legs and he leaped onto it. Using his spiked fists, he climbed straight up the Deva-Beast's leg and up onto it's shoulder. Geoffrey distracted it by firing a bunch of darts at it, all of them pinging harmlessly off of it's invulnerable chrome armour of course. Amy joined in by throwing Piko-Piko hammers at the Deva-Beast's visor but her hammers couldn't do any damage at all. The Deva-Beast extended it's neck again and it's head shot forward and plunged into the ground in an attempt to smash the two with it's head. But instead, Amy and Geoffrey grabbed onto the Deva-Beast's head and the Deva-Beast raised it's head back up. Knuckles had just climbed onto the Deva-Beast's shoulder and he ran across it's neck and onto it's head. Now the Deva-Beast had three Mobians clinging onto it's head. Amy ran onto the Deva-Beast's visor and began to hammer it as hard as she could with her hammer. Geoffrey stomped on it with the heel of his boot and Knuckles punched it with his trademark spiked fists. The Deva-Beast didn't need to do much to get the Mobians off of it's head though. It lowered the front half of it's body down to the ground and then sharply jerked it's head up and sent the three flying straight up into the air. Knuckles, Amy and Geoffrey hurtled up into the air but Knuckles managed to save himself by spreading his dreadlocks out and entering gliding mode. He grabbed Amy and Geoffrey's hands and he glided down to the ground with the skunk and hedgehog in two. The Deva-Beast had other ideas though. It aimed it's tail at them and extended it. The tail extended to a great length and it was positioned directly under the gliding Knuckles. This in turn caused Knuckles to crash into it and now he, Amy and Geoffrey were clinging onto it's tail. The Deva-Beast then swiped it's tail and sent them all hurling across the battlefield and towards NewMobotropolis. Luckily for them, Tails, Bunnie & Rouge were on hand to save the three of them. Tails flew up into the air and caught Knuckles, Rouge caught Amy and Bunnie caught Geoffrey.

"Whew! Good catch luv." said Geoffrey, gasping for breath.

"Thanks sugah." said Bunnie brightly "Ya'll admitted how much you love me so I've gotta show how much ah love you Geoffrey St. John. Ya'll saved mah life before and now ah've saved yours."

Geoffrey nodded happily. Bunnie had returned the favour at long last and saved his life. No wonder he fell for the cyborg rabbit. Not only was she beautiful but she was a life saver too. The Deva-Beast growled in fury, furious to see it's attempt to kill them had just been thwarted and it shot at the fliers with it's back mounted cannons. Tails, Rouge and Bunnie all flew out of the way before they could get shot and the cannon blasts hit a random building in New Mobotropolis, blowing a giant chunk off the top of it. The fliers all flew down to the ground and they dropped off Knuckles, Geoffrey and Amy and they flew towards the Deva-Beast to continue their attack. The Deva-Beast was ready for them and it was poised, ready to strike at any attacking Mobian that dared come near it.

As for Sonic and Devion, the fight was going even sided so far. Sonic kept spin-dashing Devion but Devion was resisting all his blows and hitting Sonic back hard with his own attacks. Devion kicked Sonic away as he tried to spin-dash him again. Sonic landed on the ground and uncurled from his spin-dash so he could land on his feet. Sonic charged at Devion but Devion kicked upwards and hit Sonic before Sonic could hit him. Sonic was thrown onto his back but he picked himself up and he punched at Devion. Devion took the blows and all Sonic ended up doing was hurting his fists. Sonic shook his hands and he leaped back as Devion clawed at him. Then he and Devion ended up linking arms with one another.

"You destroyed the sub-leaders and some of my men Sonic!" snarled Devion "And with a weapon created by the Startrons no less! I will decimate you for this and your planet will suffer gravely for this crime of yours!"

"I'm committing no crime Devion!" retorted Sonic "I'm doing what's right! Defending Mobius from your evil take over Devion! As for your little army, I don't think you'll be in charge of any number of planets anymore since the Startrons are going to unleash their bombs on the universe and it'll wipe out every Devatron in the galaxy now they

know their little weapon works!"

Devion looked like someone had just ripped his circuits out of his chest.

"The Startrons are going to wipe out all the Devatrons with that virus-bomb that you used on my troops?!" he croaked, hardly able to believe what he had heard.

"Yes Devion!" said Sonic with a smug expression on his face "How about that? The mighty planet conquering Devatrons are gonna be wiped out by your cousins! Maybe if you tell the Devatrons to call off all invasion and conquest plans and play nice then maybe they'll stop and let you all live!"

"I will not succumb to those lowlife Startrons just because they possess a weapon that can decimate our armour and leave us prone!" snarled Devion "Once I conquer Mobius, I shall remake the Devatrons and make them immune to the virus somehow! Then I will find General Klight and wipe out his entire bomb supply and then destroy him myself! General Klight should know better then to mess with me and my troops, all of whom are renowned for their invulnerability, superior technology and unmatched fighting skills! Even you, Sonic the Hedgehog, have sufficient reason to respect my battle prowess! You should cede to me and relinquish this world to us instead of delaying the inevitable!"

"I'll never give up Devion!" snapped Sonic, spin-dashing him in the chest and knocking him back "I never will give up and I will never let you or any other evil win! I'm the hot-shot hero of this planet and heroes don't give up no matter what they're up against!"

Devion just picked himself up and deployed his arm cannons, glaring at Sonic with his red V-shaped visor.

"Then allow me to deliver your karma." he said coldly.

He aimed his arm cannon at Sonic and blasted at him, narrowly missing the hedgehog by mere inches. Sonic retaliated by leaping towards him and preparing to punch his daylights out…

Meanwhile, Shadow was skating through the halls of *The Doombringer* and searching for the Chaos Emeralds. Now Devion wasn't here to stop him like last time, he'd find the emeralds and no one would stand in his way, not even the Devatron soldiers for they weren't as big a threat as Devion and the sub-leaders. Shadow had skated through a good few hallways already, looking in the rooms on the current floor he was on while he was at it, and he was almost at the top floor. He skated to the end of the current hallway he was in and then he teleported up onto the next floor of the ship, which was two floors away from the top floor. Shadow skated through the corridor and looked in as many rooms as he could. He found nothing in any of the rooms he looked in and he skated to the end of the corridor. He teleported up onto the next floor of *The Doombringer* . The top floor was directly above him now. All he had to do was skate to the end of this corridor and then teleport again. Through all the corridors he'd been skating through, he hadn't seen any possible hiding places for the Chaos Emeralds. Most of the rooms he'd looked in while skating down the corridors were either of no use to him or were just full of Devatrons. His luck might just be about to change though for he saw a group of four Devatrons carrying a pile of chrome panels over to a hole in the wall of *The Doombringer* . The ship was still being repaired from the damage he'd caused earlier and it was almost done. If Shadow managed to find the Chaos Emeralds and Sonic was able to restore their power though, *The Doombringer* wouldn't even get finished for he and Sonic in their super forms could just as easily destroy it. The Devatrons saw Shadow coming towards them and they dropped their supplies. They began to shoot at Shadow with their arm cannons, trying to hit him before he could attack them. But Shadow was much too fast for them. He dodged their attacks with ease and he spin-dashed towards them all. He walloped all four Devatron soldiers and knocked them over. Two soldiers picked themselves up and they began shooting at Shadow but Shadow picked up one of the panels they were going to use to fix the hole in the wall and he threw it at the two soldiers. The panel hit them both directly in the sides of their heads and they clutched their heads, wondering what on Mobius had just hit them. Shadow then jumped up to their eye height and unleashed an onslaught of attacks on them all while yelling battle cries. The two soldiers were thrown backwards and they fell out through the hole in the wall. They plummeted from *The Doombringer*

and they crashed onto the ground. They survived the impact thanks to their invulnerable armour. The other two soldiers tried to attack Shadow but Shadow teleported out of their way and reappeared behind them. He threw a bunch of Chaos Spears at the Devatrons but his attack didn't phase them the slightest. The Devatrons shot at him but Shadow teleported out of their way and he reappeared just above their heads. He split-kicked them both and knocked them down onto the floor. Shadow then spin-dashed one of the Devatrons out through the hole in the wall and sent that one plummeting down from *The Doombringer* and onto the ground. The impact didn't effect the Devatron in anyway. It picked itself up, along with the other two that had fallen out of *The Doombringer* , and the three soldiers ran back onto *The Doombringer* via the boarding ramp which was deployed for the workers to come and go as they please. Back up on the next to top floor, Shadow stood over the last soldier fighting him with his foot on it's chest and he summoned a Chaos Spear to his hand.

"Alright you, tell me where Devion's keeping the Chaos Emeralds hidden and I won't have to blind you!" he threatened.

"Why are you asking me?" snorted the Devatron soldier "I don't know where Devion keeps anything! I don't even know what these so-called "Chaos Emeralds" you speak of are!"

"Don't play stupid with me Devatron!" snarled Shadow "You must know of the Chaos Emeralds! Sonic tells me that Devion de-powered them and took them for himself! He's keeping them somewhere on this vessel and you're going to tell me where they are!"

"I do not know where Devion's keeping your emeralds Mobian and even if I did, I do not know why I should tell you!" snapped the Devatron.

"Because if you don't, I will blind you with my Chaos Spear!" yelled Shadow "Now tell me where they are or so help me I will use this on you!"

"Spare me the petty threats Mobian!" retorted the Devatron "I really do not know where they are but if I were to guess, Devion's likely

holding them in the cockpit. Devion tends to hide things there when he's stolen them."

"Thank you." said Shadow coldly, his expression a perfect reminiscent of a stoic person.

He then proceeded to throw the Chaos Spear at the Devatron's visor and kill it. The Devatron was now dead and it lay on the floor with it's visor blackened and smoke seeping out of it. Shadow teleported up onto the top floor of *The Doombringer* and he searched for the cockpit. He remembered the way to it since he had been in it before. He should have known that the Chaos Emeralds were going to be kept in the cockpit. The cockpit was the least likely place to expect to find them and when it comes to searches, you'd often find the item you're looking for in an unlikely place. Shadow skated through the corridors until he found the cockpit and he skidded to a halt. The cockpit was closed but Shadow knew how to get in without opening the door. He just merely teleported into the room. Since the cockpit door was closed, no Devatron could see what Shadow was doing and they wouldn't suspect him of doing anything in there. Shadow looked around the cockpit, wondering where the Chaos Emeralds could possibly be hidden in a place like this.

"OK Chaos Emeralds…where are you?" wondered Shadow.

He wondered past Devion's throne and he looked all around the control pad. There didn't seem to be anything for the Chaos Emeralds to hide in so far. Maybe the Devatron soldier had been lying to him the entire time and they weren't in the cockpit. He then noticed a handle on the control panel and wondered what it was there for. He grabbed the handle and he pulled on it. To his surprise, a compartment opened up for that was what the handle was for. And in the compartment were none other then the Chaos Emeralds! Devion had put them back into the compartment after they had been used for his trap earlier. Shadow grinned happily for he had found them at last. Amazing how dull they looked without their amazing power and they were all now a dull grey instead of their respective colours. Well he and Sonic were going to sort that out now he'd found them. As part of the plan, they were now going to deliver the Chaos Emeralds over to AngelIsland and see if the Master Emerald could restore their power. Shadow gathered up all the Chaos

Emeralds and he teleported out of *The Doombringer* 's cockpit…

Back outside, the Royal Fighters were all putting their hardest into the fight with the Deva-Beast but their attempts were ultimately futile and they just could not phase the beast at all. The Deva-Beast just took all their attacks and fought back with stomps, cannon blasts and even digging. It was a miracle that none of the Mobians had even been hit or injured or even killed yet. Sonic's battle with Devion was beginning to go towards Devion once again as the fight continued and Sonic began to get tired whereas Devion was the lest bit worn out. Given how he is a robot, Devion does not need to breathe and therefore, doesn't tire out after excessive fighting. Sonic spin-dashed feebly towards Devion but Devion dodged his attack and smacked him down onto the ground. Sonic skidded across the ground painfully and come to a stop with a mound of dirt around his face and horrible scrap marks from the impact. Devion then stomped on Sonic's back before he could get back up and Sonic yelped in pain for his back had still not fully healed from after Knuckles had helped fix it after Devion had dislocated his spine. Devion then grabbed the back-supporting device that Dr. Eggman had equipped him with and he proceeded to rip it clean off of Sonic.

"This device supports your still healing back Sonic." sneered Devion "Now I've just broken it, let's see you fight me now. I bet your back still hasn't healed from the day I nearly broke it and that'll be a hindrance to you."

"I'll beat you Devion, back stabilizer or no back-stabilizer!" yelled Sonic.

He picked himself up and he spin-dashed towards Devion but Devion dodged the attack and Sonic uncurled from his spin-dash, landing on his feet and skidding backwards. Sonic was about to attack again but a sudden surge of pain ran up his back and he grimaced, clutching it.

"Ouch! I guess my back still hasn't healed!" he winced "Why is it when you break something it takes forever to heal?"

"That is just the function of the organic body Sonic." gloated Devion "When a fleshling creature breaks something, it takes a period of time for you to recuperate, thus leaving you vulnerable to attack from the enemy. We machine creatures though can merely just replace our broken parts and we'll be back to normal again with merely a switch of body parts. The fact we are machines instantly makes us the superior beings and you organic creatures have no hope of victory against me."

"For Chaos' sake, you gloat more then Eggman and Marik the Martian Devion!" muttered Sonic "Do you ever stop bragging?"

"I am not bragging Sonic, I am merely stating the facts of life, something that you cannot comprehend due to how flaccid your mind is." claimed Devion "Now, I failed to break you before Sonic…"

Sonic charged towards Devion but Devion socked him in the gut with a powerful punch. Sonic gasped hoarsely as he felt the air in his lungs began to deplete. Devion then smacked Sonic down onto the ground, making him cough and clutch his stomach in pain. Devion reached down and seized Sonic by his body. He hoisted the hedgehog above his head and he stuck his knee out. Sonic squirmed in Devion's grasp, desperate to get free before Devion could make the killer blow.

"No! No! Please! No Devion!" yelped Sonic.

"…so I shall break you now." said Devion "And this time, I'll make sure you really DO break!"

Devion was just about to slam Sonic down onto his knee again and this time actually break Sonic's back but before he could do so, something spin-dashed him in the back and sent him flying across the battlefield. He dropped Sonic as he was hit and he crashed into the ground about thirty feet away from him. He skidded to a halt and ended up with his face buried in a mound of dirt. The attacker was Shadow the Hedgehog of course. He had arrived just in time to save Sonic from getting his back broken by Devion. Shadow grabbed Sonic's hand and helped him stand back up.

"Thanks Shadow!" gasped Sonic "I was about to get my spine

snapped until you showed up!"

"You're welcome faker." said Shadow smugly "And look, I've found the Chaos Emeralds at last. Shall we commence with the next stage of your plan now?"

Sonic was gobsmacked to see the Chaos Emeralds once again. True it would be better if they weren't power drained but it was still good to see them again. Sonic's face brightened and he took three emeralds from Shadow so he didn't have to carry all seven at once.

"You betcha Shadow!" said Sonic with a cheeky smile on his face "Hey, how about we race each other there? Last one to Angel Island has to sit and watch the other turn super!"

"You astound me blue hedgehog." muttered Shadow "You manage to make a game out of just about every confrontation you get into."

"Well that's the fun of being the hero of Mobius to me." said Sonic "Having a little fun while I'm saving lives everywhere. Now let's go!"

With that said, Sonic zoomed off at top speed, leaving Shadow to choke on his dust momentarily. Shadow chuckled and he skated off after Sonic, desperate to catch up to him and beat him to Angel Island. He had been touring Mobius looking for answers so he knew where it was and he was going to beat Sonic there.

"I'll teach you to get a head start faker!" said Shadow with a cocky smile on his face.

Sonic & Shadow both ran off and they headed into Green Hill Zone. Devion picked himself up from Shadow's attack and he watched the two hedgehogs flee for it.

"Why are Sonic & Shadow fleeing the battle?" he wondered to himself "There is no logical reasoning behind their departure from the battlefield. Sonic insists he'll never give up and then he flees. He and Shadow are up to something and I'll have to catch them before they can do anything to stop me."

Devion then suddenly ran over to the Deva-Beast and he leaped up onto it's head just as it fended off attacks from Shade and Team

Adabat. Felix the Peacock had been whacking the Deva-Beast in the visor with his feather clubs but the moment Devion leaped onto the Deva-Beast's head and pointed his arm cannons at him, the peacock fled for it. The Deva-Beast looked up, pleased to see Devion back on it's head again and Devion gave the command.

"Deva-Beast! Sonic & Shadow are up to something and we must catch them!" he barked "Dig underground and follow them! With your expert tracking systems which allow you to track any moving heat signature no matter how fast or how far away, you'll catch them easily."

The Deva-Beast obeyed and it leaped up into the air. The Mobians all dived for cover as the colossal Deva-Beast soared through the air and it then landed on it's front two legs. The Deva-Beast dug down into the ground using it's feet like drills and it disappeared from view in a matter of minutes. The Deva-Beast was completely submerged underground and it began to dig straight forward, following the direction that Sonic & Shadow's heat signatures were heading. The Deva-Beast was incredibly fast when digging underground so it was likely to catch up to the two hedgehogs. The Royal Fighters watched as the Deva-Beast fled the battle scene underground. They couldn't quite understand what was going on.

"Now this situation merits upon puzzling motives." mused Felix "Why ever has that behemoth chosen to flee the battle when it is on top of the battle and has us on the ropes?"

"I'm not entirely sure on that one feathers." said Mandy "But we must catch it before it causes any damage to anything that gets in it's way."

"Has anyone seen Sonic & Shadow?" asked Wilson "They've gone too. I didn't see them run after the Deva-Beast so they can't be chasing it down."

"I saw them running off in the direction AngelIsland is." said Knuckles "Why they're doing this I am not sure but if that thing's following them, which I suspect it probably is, then we've gotta stop it before it arrives at Angel Island! Devion match find the Master Emerald and try to steal it once he arrives there!"

"What can we do to catch up to them?" asked Sally "We don't have any modes of transport on us and New Mobotropolis is fitted with a laser grid that'll zap us into submission upon entering the place so we can't get any modes of transport from New Mobotropolis. We're going to have to sit and wait this one out I'm afraid and hope Sonic and Shadow stop Devion from touching Angel Island."

"If only Hamlin hadn't used my warp ring to try and frame Sonic and then have it destroyed by Devion then maybe I could use that!" grumbled Knuckles "We'd all be over there in no time!"

"It's times like this I really need to equip myself with a new warp belt." muttered Shade "Metal Sonic destroyed my original and the Nocturnus Clan are all dead so I can't get one from them and I'm not sure how to build one since Imperator Ix never taught us the schematics of the warp belt and simply just gave us them pre-made and constructed."

"So there's no way we can get over to Angel Island and defend it from the Deva-Beast when it arrives there." muttered Knuckles "We've just gotta sit back and hope Sonic & Shadow can stop it."

"They'll use the Master Emerald to turn super Knuckles, they'll stop that thing." said Tails reassuringly "I know they will."

It seemed Tails was probably right but Devion still had more tricks hidden away and ready to unfold before Sonic & Shadow…

A short while later, Sonic & Shadow both arrived at Angel Island (Sonic won the race with Shadow by a whisker by the way), the home of Knuckles the Echidna and the Master Emerald. No matter how many times Sonic saw Angel Island, he continued to be amazed at it for it was truly a floating majestic beauty for anyone who saw it. Without a warp ring to warp up to the island or Tails to fly him up there, Sonic had no way of getting up onto the island but Shadow did. He grabbed hold of Sonic and he warped himself and Sonic up onto Angel Island. The two hedgehogs appeared just in front of the emerald shrine and they ran up the steps and up to the Master Emerald. The glorious glowing green gem never ceased to

astound Sonic and Shadow was fascinated with how much energy there was in the giant emerald and even more amazed at the fact the emerald was keeping Angel Island afloat.

"The Master Emerald is truly an amazing gem isn't it?" asked Shadow "How does this powerful relic keep the island afloat?"

"I dunno." said Sonic "I guess it's all that power it has. OK, let's see what happens if we put the Chaos Emeralds on top of the Master Emerald."

Sonic and Shadow both put all seven emeralds on top of the Master Emerald and they ran down the shrine to stand a good distance back for they were likely to be blinded by the dazzling light of the Chaos Emeralds getting their power back should it work. To the hedgehog's luck, what Sonic was hoping would happen ended up happening. The Chaos Emeralds reacted with the Master Emerald's power and they began to float up off the Master Emerald a few inches. The Master Emerald glowed brighter and brighter and the Chaos Emeralds were beginning to glow again too with trials of energy going up into them. The Master Emerald was literally feeding the Chaos Emeralds energy and powering them back up like a battery charger charging up some batteries. The Master Emerald was giving it's power to the Chaos Emeralds and re-powering them! Sonic's face brightened at the sight of the Chaos Emeralds powering back up.

"Whoo hoo! It's working!" cried Sonic "They're getting their power back!"

"Now the Chaos Emeralds can be used to go super again." said Shadow "And Devion's going to get scrapped once me and you turn super Sonic!"

"You bet they are!" laughed Sonic "As a matter of fact, let's power up and return home so we can finish this Devatron war once and for all!"

Shadow nodded and he and Sonic both jumped onto the Master Emerald. The Master Emerald now had two more individuals to feed power to. Sonic and Shadow both closed their eyes and let the

Master Emerald do it's work. Their fur began to change colour and their spines pointed upwards. Sonic turned a brilliant golden colour and Shadow's turned a radiant lemon-yellow colour. Sonic's eyes turned red whereas Shadow's remained as they were because they were already red. Super Sonic & Super Shadow were now standing above the Master Emerald and they were ready to save Mobius from the threat of the Devatrons once and for all. Super Sonic & Super Shadow levitated off the Master Emerald and they clenched their fists, feeling the Chaos Power that flowed through their veins. Super Sonic felt great in particular for the Chaos Energy in him had healed his back so he was back in proper fighting order again.

"Look out Devion! The super hedgehogs are in town and they're gonna smash your face in!" declared Super Sonic.

Little did they know that Devion was already coming their way and that the Deva-Beast had a surprise for the two of them…

Oh ho, ho! Ladies and gentlemen this is it! The Devatron saga comes to a close in an EXPLOSIVE finale next time! I'm actually kinda sad at that. :(Oh well it was fun while it lasted. So stay tuned as Super Sonic & Super Shadow bring an end to the Devatron's reign of terror at long last!

Hey RaliK360! What are your top ten favourite chapters in this story so far?

The Tides of War Part 3

Story 115: The Tides of War Part 3: War's End

Sonic the Hedgehog and Shadow the Hedgehog had made it to the mystical landmark that is Angel Island and they had restored the Chaos Emerald's power thanks to the Master Emerald. The Chaos Emeralds could now be used once again and Sonic and Shadow had used the Master Emerald to turn super. Super Sonic and Super Shadow were all super charged and ready to unleash their power on the Devatrons. Once they did that, the Devatron war would finally be over and then the Mobians could get back to dealing with Dr. Eggman and his crazy schemes of conquest. Super Sonic flexed his muscles and he felt the super power surge through his veins. It had never occurred to him how good it felt to have this super power surge through his body.

"Boy does it feel good to be able to go super again." said Super Sonic "Right Shadow, you ready to bust some Devatron heads?"

"Whenever you are Sonic." sneered Super Shadow, a cocky smirk spreading out onto his face.

The two super hedgehogs were ready to charge off and fly back to New Mobotropolis but something stopped them before they could leave. They looked down at the ground and they noticed bits of the ground appeared to stick up and form a long trial and the trial only just got longer and longer as it went along and began to get closer and closer to AngelIsland. It looked like something was digging towards them.

"What's that?" asked Super Sonic.

"I'm not sure but I think I can guess Sonic." said Super Shadow grimly.

And before Shadow could even do that, the thing erupted out from the ground, sending chunks and chunks of soil and earth showering everywhere as it emerged from beneath, and spiralled through the

air before landing down on it's own six feet. It was, of course, the Deva-Beast and it had Devion riding on the back of it's head. The Deva-Beast bellowed a thunderous roar and it looked up at Angel Island. Devion stared at the island and his attention was briefly focused on the island.

"This planet continues to amaze me." he mused to himself "It has an island that levitates above the ground somehow. This planet must have magical heritage of some kind."

His attention was quickly diverted from Angel Island and onto Super Sonic & Super Shadow for they charged towards him and the Deva-Beast and a brilliant speed through the air. The Deva-Beast jumped out of the way of the charging super hedgehogs and amazingly actually managed to evade them. The super hedgehogs swerved around and they glowered at Devion. The Devatron leader could only stare at them in horror as he saw them in their super mode.

"What is this?!" he blurted "You two have become super powered?! How is this possible?! I have deprave you of your Chaos Emeralds and power drained them! You cannot be in your super form Sonic!"

"Well Devion we got the emeralds back and we restored their power!" sneered Super Sonic "And I am not gonna tell you how we did it!"

"I do not need you to apprise me on this kind of information as I can guess how you did it." muttered Devion "That mystical island must have a powerful relic of some kind that you used to restore the emerald's power. And maybe that so called relic also keeps the island airborne too. This just means I have another location to target as I continue my conquest."

"You'll have to get through us first Devion!" growled Super Shadow "And I sincerely doubt that even a being as invulnerable as you will fall victim to our super power!"

"We Devatrons are not strong enough to resist super power." said Devion grimly "But the Deva-Beast is. Especially as he has a feature that has never seen action until now…"

"Oh great, Devion has yet another Plan B?!" blurted Super Sonic "What the heck might that be then?"

"Stand by and watch." said Devion "Deva-Beast, begin your conversion to battle mode!" he ordered.

The Deva-Beast obeyed and it lay down onto the ground, clearly preparing to do something amazing and shocking. It's back opened up like a pair of doors and something rose up from the inside of it's back. It looked like a golden suit of armour with an enormous pair of golden dragon like wings attached to it and a long golden dragon tail near the bottom at the back. The Deva-Beast's back closed back up and the suit of armour opened up as if it was getting ready to attach it self to the Deva-Beast and close around it's body. The Deva-Beast then suddenly began to change and shape shift. It's middle and back legs attached themselves together to form a giant pair of legs with three clawed feet. The Deva-Beast then stood up completely straight on it's new pair of legs and it's front legs formed a pair of arms with three clawed hands. The Deva-Beast's head even changed shape. The face extended a few inches in length and grew a mouth crammed with razor-sharp teeth underneath the muzzle section. Then finally, the suit of armour clamped itself onto the Deva-Beast's back and closed around the body, completely encasing the Deva-Beast's entire torso section. There was even a helmet for the Deva-Beast to wear with this suit of armour. The helmet neatly sat on top of the Deva-Beast's head and covered it, shielding it from any possible attack. There was even a see through visor cover that protected the visor from any attack. Devion was inside the Deva-Beast's head and he was a part of the transformed killing machine. He was the Deva-Beast's controller and brains now. Every action the Deva-Beast did would be completely of Devion's will and motives. The Deva-Beast roared loudly and the super hedgehogs stared at it in surprise. They were completely speechless at what the Deva-Beast had just transformed itself into.

"Holy Chaos Emeralds!" cried Super Sonic "The Deva-Beast just transformed!"

"It's now an armoured killing machine with wings and everything!" blurted Super Shadow.

"You are absolutely correct super hedgehogs." the Deva-Beast boomed with Devion's voice.

Whenever Devion spoke, the Deva-Beast's mouth moved up and down as if it was talking with Devion's voice.

"What you see before you is the grand debut of the Deva-Beast's battle mode." continued Devion "It is now the Deva-Dragon and it is the most invincible invention of the Devatron race. After King Hardigm had created the Deva-Beast, he installed these features into it which were meant to be used as a last resort. The Deva-Dragon is stronger, more powerful and is completely invulnerable now. The Devatrons are only nigh-invulnerable whereas the Deva-Dragon is absolutely impregnable and impervious to any attack. Even the super-powered ones. We've been lucky to not need the Deva-Dragon to finish our battles before but now you Mobians shall be the first to witness it's destructive and invincible power!"

"You're all big talk Devion!" taunted Super Sonic "Let's see if the Deva-Dragon lives up to your boasting!"

Super Sonic charged towards the Deva-Dragon at top speed and he prepared to plough straight through it's chest and out through it's back. But Super Sonic hit the golden suit of armour that the Deva-Dragon was encased in and he ricocheted directly off of it as if he was merely a pebble skimming off a glass window. Super Sonic ended up diving down into the ground like a meteorite and he groaned in pain. It was lucky for him he was super powered otherwise that impact would have been even more painful then it was now. Super Sonic picked himself up and he rubbed his face better. The Deva-Dragon peered down at Super Sonic and Devion laughed at him.

"I warned you Super Sonic, the Deva-Dragon cannot be penetrated by anything, even super powered beings." crowed Devion "You're just wasting your energy trying to destroy it. You'll never break the Deva-Dragon!"

"We'll see about that!" yelled Super Shadow, zooming towards the Deva-Dragon and drawing his arm back.

"Chaos…SPEAR!" bellowed Super Shadow.

He swiped his arm and sent a bunch of Chaos Spears hurling towards the Deva-Dragon but the spears all ricocheted off of the Deva-Dragon's invulnerable armour. The Deva-Dragon didn't even feel that attack. Devion laughed at Super Shadow and the Deva-Dragon swatted Super Shadow with one of it's hands. Super Shadow was sent hurling down into the ground. Super Shadow crashed into the ground and he was left grimacing in pain. The Deva-Dragon then lifted up it's enormous foot and it prepared to stomp down on Super Shadow with the foot. Super Shadow warped out of the way of the Deva-Dragon before it could stomp on him and he reappeared just behind the giant monster. Super Shadow spin-dashed the Deva-Dragon in the back but the attack was useless and Super Shadow just ended up ricocheting off of it's back. The Deva-Dragon didn't even feel that attack and it was looking around for Super Shadow. Super Sonic picked himself up and he spin-dashed the Deva-Dragon in the visor. But with the Deva-Dragon transformation for the Deva-Beast, even it's visor was shielded so the Deva-Beast's only weak spot was no longer a weak spot. Super Sonic spin-dashed off of the Deva-Dragon's visor and he hurled up into the air, spiralling crazily as if he was in a drunken daze.

"Oogah! The whole world's doing a spin-dash around me!" slurred Super Sonic woozily.

Devion laughed at Super Sonic yet again and he began to crow some more.

"The Deva-Dragon has no weak spots Sonic!" he gloated "The Deva-Dragon's design protects every part of it's body, including the visor. Any weakness the Deva-Beast once had is not a weakness to the Deva-Dragon! I was not bluffing when I said the Deva-Dragon is invincible. You will never destroy it and the Devatrons will finally destroy you Mobians once and for all!"

"Over my rotting carcass!" yelled Super Sonic.

Super Sonic spin-dashed at the Deva-Dragon again only to ricochet of it's armour again. The Deva-Dragon then opened up it's mouth and it fired an amazing electrical blast of energy at Super Sonic.

Super Sonic dodged the blast just narrowly and the blast hit the ground, leaving a giant crater in it. The Deva-Dragon fired at Super Sonic again but the blast missed Super Sonic and made another crater in the ground. Super Shadow attacked the Deva-Dragon from behind again but the attack was useless and the Deva-Dragon didn't feel it. The Deva-Dragon span around and glowered at Super Shadow with it's visor. The Deva-Dragon opened up it's mouth and it fired an electrical blast at Super Shadow. Super Shadow dodged the blast and he tried to super-charge into the Deva-Dragon's mouth, thinking that if he got inside the beast he could tear it apart from the inside out. But the Deva-Dragon closed it's mouth quickly before Super Shadow could get inside it. The Deva-Dragon then suddenly spun around and swatted Super Shadow with it's tail. Super Shadow hurled into the ground and he made a deep hole in it. The Deva-Dragon then suddenly turned it's attention to Angel Island. Devion decided it was time to see what secrets and mysteries AngelIsland had.

"Deva-Dragon!" barked Devion "Fly over to that levitating island! I wish to see how this island is capable of floating and I also wish to retrieve the Chaos Emeralds and destroy them for good."

The Deva-Dragon obeyed and it spread it's enormous wings. The Deva-Dragon's wingspan could stretch over four tennis courts. The Deva-Dragon swooped it's giant wings and it flew towards Angel Island. Super Sonic & Super Shadow watched the Deva-Dragon fly towards Angel Island and Super Sonic could only watch in horror as the giant Devatron monster headed towards the mystical floating island.

"Oh no! The Deva-Dragon is heading towards the island!" cried Super Sonic "We've gotta stop it before it destroys the island or something!"

"We can stop it quite easily." said Super Shadow.

Super Shadow then flew towards the Deva-Dragon at a blinding speed and he quickly caught up to it. Super Shadow landed on the Deva-Dragon and he yelled out loud.

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

The Deva-Dragon was suddenly engulfed in a bright flash of light as Super Shadow activated his Chaos Control. Devion began to wonder what was happening as he too was engulfed in the light. The Deva-Dragon then suddenly disappeared into thin air and the dazzling light that had engulfed it quickly died down afterwards. Super Sonic stared ahead of him, momentarily gobsmacked, and he was pleased to see what Super Shadow had just done. The Deva-Dragon had been warped away so it could not attack Angel Island and take back the Chaos Emeralds.

"Sweet Shadow! You teleported the Deva-Dragon away from Angel Island!" cried Super Sonic happily "But where have you gone to? I guess I'm gonna have to start teleporting and looking around for you."

Super Sonic then yelled out loud "Chaos…CONTROL!" and he disappeared in a bright flash of light, leaving no trace of his existence in the plains of Downunda. He had no idea where Super Shadow and the Deva-Dragon had teleported to but he was determined to find them so that he may finish off the battle with Devion and his ultimate weapon of death…

Back at New Mobotropolis, all the Royal Fighters were standing around and waiting for Sonic and Shadow to return from Angel Island and hoping dearly that the Deva-Beast wouldn't catch up to them and attack Angel Island. They had been gone for a few minutes already and Knuckles the Echidna was beginning to lose his patience. He was losing his mind with worry over what could possibly be happening over at Angel Island and if the Deva-Beast was going to destroy it.

"Urgh! I can't take the waiting anymore!" yelled Knuckles "We've gotta go to AngelIsland and see if everything's OK over there!"

"Knuckles, ease up will you?" asked Amy Rose crossly "Sonic and Shadow will mash that metal monster to itty bitty little bits when it catches up to them! Have you forgotten about the Master Emerald and what it can do? I bet over at Angel Island right now Sonic and Shadow are in their super forms and they're tearing that Deva-Beast

and Devion apart as we speak!"

"You do have the right to feel positive about this whole thing Amy but there's a number of things that could go wrong over there!" retorted Knuckles "What if the Deva-Beast catches Sonic and Shadow before they get to the island? What if it destroys the island before they can use the Master Emerald? And what if Devion decides to take the Master Emerald itself and use it's immense power against us?! The whole world will be in catastrophe if that happens! We've gotta go over there and…"

"Do what exactly? Stand around and stare helplessly at the Deva-Beast?" put in Mandy Mouse with a stern expression on her face and her hands on her hips "Because that's pretty much all we can do against that thing. Our attacks are useless against it and people such as myself can't even lay a finger on that thing so even if we do go over to Angel Island, how are we possibly gonna stop it from tearing it apart rock by rock?"

"We could distract the Deva-Beast and give Sonic & Shadow time to power up with the Master Emerald!" snapped Knuckles "But then that'll just big the question of whether they'll be able to destroy it, even in super form. They Devatrons are invulnerable and so is the Deva-Beast so will Super Sonic & Super Shadow be able to destroy the Deva-Beast?"

"Well if they just freeze it with a Chaos Control and then spin-dash it in the visor, the Deva-Beast will be history." noted Tails the Twin-Tailed Fox "Super Sonic & Super Shadow can easily do that with the power of Chaos in their veins."

"I think the best thing to do would be to sit back and hope for the best." said Queen Sally Acorn "We really cannot afford to lose this battle just as it was beginning to turn in our favour. That virus-bomb may have saved us all but all it ended up doing was delaying the inevitable. Devion can easily replace those that the bomb destroyed and we can't afford to have Sonic and Tails go back into space just to get another one, they barely arrived in time to save us and if we get captured again, we might not be so lucky."

"I agree Sally." said Nicole the Lynx "All we can do is hope that

Sonic and Shadow get to the Master Emerald and use it to destroy Devion and the Deva-Beast. Then all that's left to do is get rid of what's left of *The Doombringer* and all it's occupants inside."

The Royal Fighters agreed with the lynx. *The Doombringer* was still around and repairs were on the way to being completed anytime soon. The Devatrons still had their production chambers and other facilities that would get them back in the fight any time soon and if *The Doombringer* remained intact then the Devatrons would reproduce and have the Mobians on the ropes yet again. It seemed that *The Doombringer* 's destruction may well be inevitable though for a bright dazzling flash of light appeared from nowhere and everybody shielded their eyes from it with their hands or arms.

"Whoa! What's that light and where did it come from?!" cried Bunnie Rabbot.

"I have a feeling I know what it is babe!" said Geoffrey St. John, peeking through his fingers to see if his guess was right.

The dazzling light continued to flash for a few seconds before finally dying down and revealing none other then Super Shadow and the Deva-Dragon hovering in the air and staring each other down. The Royal Fighters were all amazed at the sight of the Deva-Dragon and they didn't know what to say about it. They were pleased to see Super Shadow but they began to wonder where Super Sonic was.

"What in the name of Spagonia is that?!" cried Wilson the Dog.

"It looks very scary and deadly!" whimpered Cream the Rabbit.

"Is that the Deva-Beast in a new form?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian.

"It must be." murmured Shade the Echidna "It could not be anything else. The Devatrons clearly have a lot of tricks in their circuitry."

"Does this make the Deva-Beast harder to defeat then before?" mused Ruben the Water Panther "That golden armour it's wearing looks like it can take a beating, a very big beating even."

"Oh phooey! It's a suit of armour! Super Shadow will destroy that thing easily!" sniffed Amy "I wonder where Sonic is though? Has he

not turned super too?"

"I'm sure he has, Shadow just used a Chaos Control to warp that thing away from Angel Island and back here so Sonic's likely looking for him now." said Tails "The one thing I'm wondering is how strong is this new form of the Deva-Beast and can Super Sonic and Super Shadow take it down?"

The Mobians were all about to find out for the battle was getting ready to continue up in the air. Devion observed his surroundings and he quickly found out he was back over at New Mobotropolis, the very home of Sonic and the very city he'd captured.

"We're back at New Mobotropolis." muttered Devion "You teleported me back here Shadow. Very clever of you to resort to such tactics in order to prevent me from going to that strange floating island. No matter. I remember it's location and once I rid this world of you and Sonic's hides then I shall go back to the island and find out what secrets it may hold."

"You will never get the chance to do that Devion!" growled Super Shadow, removing his inhibitor rings and holding them in each hand "For I am going to blow that Deva-Dragon of yours away!"

Devion just glowered at him, clearly not impressed with what was coming next. Did Sonic and Shadow not understand the meaning of "The Deva-Dragon cannot be penetrated by any being, even super forms"? Truly they were desperate beings and truly pitiful creatures if they continue to believe they can win when it is obvious that Devion is going to be the victor of this battle and that all their attempts are in vain. Super Shadow tensed up for a moment and then he threw his arms out to the side.

"Chaos… **BLAAAAAAASSSSSSSSTTTTTTT!** " he bellowed at the top of his voice.

A huge sphere of golden energy erupted out from Super Shadow's body and it blasted the Deva-Dragon head on. The Deva-Dragon just hovered there, taking the attack and remaining completely un-phased by the attack. Super Shadow unleashed all the energy he had in him and he desperately tried to make this Chaos Blast count

but try as he might, the attack just didn't work. The Deva-Dragon was completely unaffected by the whole attack. Super Shadow eventually finished his Chaos Blast and he clipped back on his inhibitor rings so that he could power back up. Super Shadow panted and he stared at the Deva-Dragon. He was gobsmacked at the fact the Deva-Dragon had just survived his most powerful attack without so much as a scratch on it. The Deva-Dragon then opened it's mouth and began to thunder with laughter as Devion laughed at Super Shadow's pitiful efforts.

"That attack did not even come close to harming the Deva-Dragon Shadow!" crowed Devion "That attack didn't even tickle it! Now do you see how powerful the Deva-Dragon truly is and that all you're doing is wearing yourself out as you battle it?"

He then continued to laugh manically at Super Shadow. Super Shadow could only stare at the Deva-Beast in horror, unable to believe his most powerful attack didn't even tickle the Deva-Dragon. The Chaos Blast was probably the only chance he had at destroying the behemoth and yet even that failed. If Super Shadow couldn't Chaos Blast the Deva-Dragon to bits then what could he do? The only option really was look for a weak spot on the Deva-Dragon and then attack it. But the Deva-Dragon's only likely weak spot was it's visor and that was now shielded by the visor cover on the helmet. If only he could remove the helmet and then super-charge into it's visor then perhaps he could do some damage to the Deva-Dragon and bring it down. Super Shadow clenched his fists and he charged towards the Deva-Dragon at top speed. Devion sneered at Super Shadow and the Deva-Dragon opened it's mouth. It fired a new attack this time though. Instead of a ball of electricity, it fired a spiral of searing hot lasers that were like fire. They made a shape similar to the DNA structure and they spiralled towards Super Shadow. Super Shadow didn't have time to get out of the way and he was stricken by the attack. His super-enhanced invulnerability saved him from too much damage but the attack still greatly affected him. Super Shadow was thrown down into the ground by the deadly attack.

"Shadow!" cried Rouge the Bat in horror.

The bat couldn't bear to watch Shadow get hurt like this. She

somewhat liked Shadow even though the two hadn't really been with each other that long and watching the Deva-Dragon floor him like this was becoming a pain to watch. Amy could see that Rouge looked immensely upset so she decided to comfort him.

"It's OK Rouge, Shadow's super. He'll easily have survived that attack." she said "And when he gets back up, he'll mash that Deva-Junkie to bits!"

"I hope so." said Rouge "Although Shadow's gonna have to work hard. That thing survived his Chaos-Blast and that's his strongest move. If the Chaos-Blast can't stop it then what will?"

A very good question was what Amy thought. She had no satisfying answer to give to Rouge though. Despite Super Shadow's best efforts, the Deva-Dragon remained un-phased by them. And where was Super Sonic when you needed him? Was he still looking for them? If he was then he'd better hurry up and arrive here so Super Shadow can get some much needed back-up. As for the Deva-Dragon, it flew down to the ground and stared down at the spot Super Shadow landed in. Devion was wondering if Super Shadow had survived that attack. There was a lot of smoke drifting up from where Super Shadow had landed. Maybe the attack had killed him. But just as Devion began to think that the Deva-Dragon's attack had succeeded, Super Shadow picked himself up and charged straight up into the Deva-Dragon's lower jaw. The charge knocked the Deva-Dragon's head backwards sharply but no damage was done and it remained standing. The Deva-Dragon stared eerily at Super Shadow, the super-powered hedgehog just scowling at him.

"Impressive, you survived the Deva-Dragon's attack." purred Devion "These Mobian super-forms are impressive entities aren't they?"

"Well I'm invulnerable in this form just like your beast is invulnerable Devion." said Super Shadow "You'll never kill me while I'm in this form!"

"I gathered as such." muttered Devion "But can you maintain your form for as long as you wish? Or is your power limited like most super-powered entities? If so then how long do you have until your power expires Shadow?"

Super Shadow thought to himself for a moment. True his super-form didn't last forever. He found that out the hard way when fighting a weaponized Alonzo. If he and Super Sonic didn't finish off the Deva-Dragon in time then their power would run out and they would be at the mercy of the Deva-Dragon. Super Shadow decided to pick up the pace and fast before his super-power expired. Super Shadow began throwing showers of Chaos Spears at the Deva-Dragon but they all pinged harmlessly off it's armour, not causing so much as a scratch on the Deva-Dragon. The Deva-Dragon retaliated by tail-whipping Super Shadow and sending him hurling all the way over into Green Hill Zone where he knocked a few trees over. Devion cackled darkly at Super Shadow and the Deva-Dragon took flight once again with a mighty flap of it's colossal wings. Just as it was flying up into the sky, a bright golden flash appeared from nowhere and Devion stared at it, the light not even blinding him given how he's a robot and robots can't be blinded by bright lights.

"So Sonic has caught up to us at last." he mused to himself "Good, now I may finish him off too."

Devion was right, the golden flash was Super Sonic. He'd finally managed to find them after doing several Chaos Controls to look for them. Devion decided to make the Deva-Dragon launch a sneak attack while he had the perfect chance. The Deva-Dragon opened up it's mouth and fired the spiralling laser attack at Super Sonic just as he finished materializing into existence. Super Sonic was hit by the attack and sent hurling away into Green Hill Zone where he landed directly next to Super Shadow. Super Sonic picked himself up and he shook his head.

"Whoa! Devion got the drop on me with a sneak attack!" he grunted "Cheating little demon!"

Super Shadow picked himself up and he looked to his right to see Super Sonic directly beside him.

"Well faker, you caught up at last." muttered Super Shadow "Now we can both finish off the Deva-Dragon together."

"We sure can Shadow, but there's one thing I must yell at you for." said Super Sonic "Why the heck did you warp the Deva-Dragon over

here?!" he yelled, grapping Super Shadow by his chest hair and jamming his face into his "Do you realize what's at stake now it's here?! My home city could well be destroyed and all my friends could get killed by the Deva-Dragon!"

"Well where did you want me to warp it to?!" snapped Super Shadow "It's not like it matters where we fight that thing as long as we destroy it! Besides, I brought it here so that we may immediately destroy *The Doombringer* after we finish off the Deva-Dragon."

"I see." said Super Sonic "Well we'd best hurry up and destroy that thing before our power runs out otherwise we're sitting ducks and Devion will have us at his mercy."

With that said, Super Sonic & Super Shadow both rocketed out of the forests of Green Hill Zone and they charged towards the Deva-Dragon. They both slammed straight into the Deva-Dragon's gut but despite the power of that charge, all they did was just ricochet off of the Deva-Beast's armour and dive-bomb into the ground. The Deva-Dragon looked down at Super Sonic and it opened its mouth. It fired an electrical energy ball at Super Sonic but Super Sonic warped out of it's way. The ball hit the ground and left a big mark of impact on it. Super Sonic charged towards the Deva-Dragon's visor but given it's protection from the visor cover on the helmet, Super Sonic didn't do any damage to it and just ended up skimming off of it like a pebble being skimmed across water. Super Sonic flew straight up into the sky and then he rocketed straight back down and hit the Deva-Dragon on the top of it's head. The Deva-Dragon's helmet took the attack and the colossal chrome monster head-butted Super Sonic just before he could fly away. Super Sonic hurtled down into the ground and went straight through it, leaving a hole and going down pretty deep before stopping. This made him think back to when Super Scourge sent him ploughing straight down into the ground which in turn caused him to discover the Chaos Clusters. Super Sonic flew back out of the hole and he spin-dashed the Deva-Dragon in the chest. The Deva-Dragon swiped at Super Sonic with a giant clawed hand but Super Sonic ducked and he spin-dashed it in the shoulder. The Deva-Dragon was unaffected by the spin-dash and he smacked Super Sonic away with a hefty swipe of its arm. Super Shadow flew back up into the sky and he fired a shower of

Chaos Spears at the Deva-Dragon. The Chaos Spears did no damage to the Deva-Dragon and the Deva-Dragon fired it's spiral laser attack at him. Super Shadow dodged the attack and he super charged towards the Deva-Dragon, hoping to zoom into it's mouth and down it's throat so that he could cause some damage to it from the inside out. Just before he could get into it's mouth though, the Deva-Dragon closed it and Super Shadow ended up bumping into it's jaw. Super Shadow gripped his head and shook himself off for a minute but the Deva-Dragon smacked him down into the ground with it's hand. Super Shadow crashed down into the ground and the Deva-Dragon prepared to stomp on him and squash him flat. But before it could do that, Super Sonic flew in under it's foot and he pushed up on it, stopping the Deva-Dragon from bringing it down on Super Shadow. Super Sonic put all his might into pushing the Deva-Dragon's foot and the Deva-Dragon tried to finish it's stomp. The Deva-Dragon seemed to be winning this pushing match though for Super Sonic was being pushed down towards the ground slowly but steadily. If Super Sonic lost this sumo match then he would be squashed flat like an insect. His super-empowered invulnerability would not save him from such a grisly fate. The Deva-Dragon pushed down on it's foot and it began to overpower Super Sonic but Super Shadow came in and pushed on it's foot too. Super Sonic and Super Shadow both pushed together and after a good strenuous effort, they managed to overpower the Deva-Dragon and they pushed it's foot upwards, causing it to topple over onto it's back and land on the ground with an earth-shaking thunk that could bring a whole city crumbling down. The impact caused all the Royal Fighters to all fall over onto their backs or bottoms. To them, it felt like an earthquake had just happened.

"Oohee!" cried Bunnie "Now that's an earthquake if ah ever felt one!"

"If that thing falls over anymore it'll shake the planet apart!" squeaked Vector the Crocodile "Super Sonic & Super Shadow best watch what they're doing in this fight!"

"I must admit, that thing is quite resilient isn't it?" mused Espio the Chameleon "Super Sonic and Super Shadow can't seem to phase it no matter what attacks they throw at it!"

"Does that mean they can't beat it?" asked Charmy Bee worriedly.

"It looks that way." said Tails grimly "But Sonic and Shadow will beat it somehow. Sonic always wins and Shadow's like Sonic with extra power. They'll come out on top of this. I know they will."

Tails could wish and believe all he liked though, it was evident that the Deva-Dragon was too strong for the super-hedgehogs and that it was going to win this battle. The Deva-Dragon picked itself up from that shove-over and it glowered at the super-hedgehogs with it's V-shaped visor. Devion in particular seemed pretty miffed at them for doing this even though merely shoving the Deva-Dragon over onto it's back wasn't going to do much of anything to it.

"Such strength in you super-powered hedgehogs." muttered Devion "The two of you combined can push the Deva-Dragon over onto it's back. This'll just make getting rid of you all the more enjoyable. And as for your precious Chaos Emeralds, if they can give you Mobians power as great as this then how much power do you think a Devatron can gain from them?"

"I bet the Chaos Emeralds wouldn't even work on you Devion." sneered Super Sonic "Although we've never really tried them on a robot yet so how would I know? Either way, you're not getting those emeralds back Devion! We've spent all this time trying to retrieve them and we're not gonna lose the Chaos Emeralds again!"

Super Sonic spin-dashed towards the Deva-Dragon yet again but the Deva-Dragon fired it's spiral laser attack at him. Super Sonic hit the lasers and he ploughed straight through them with his spin-dash. The Deva-Dragon however managed to overpower Super Sonic by strengthening it's attack. The spiral-lasers became larger and more powerful and to really add extra power, some electricity from it's electric energy attacks were added to it. As powerful as Super Sonic's spin-dash was, even that attack was too powerful for it. Super Sonic was thrown backwards by the combined attacks and he spiralled through the air dizzily before coming to a halt in mid-air and regaining his balance. He gasped and panted for breath.

"Hurgh! Devion's beginning to get on my nerves now!" he grumbled "It's time for a Sonic Overdrive!"

Super Sonic tensed up for a moment and began to build up all the

Chaos Energy he had inside him. He then curled up into a golden spiky ball and he rocketed towards the Deva-Dragon. He began to rapidly spin-dash it all over his body with enough force to bring a whole skyscraper to pieces. Super Sonic was going much to fast for the Deva-Dragon to attack back. Super Sonic let the Deva-Dragon have everything he had and after a minute of spin-dashing, he stopped his overdrive attack and he flew away from it so he could see what he'd done to it. To his horror, the Deva-Dragon was STILL unharmed and unaffected! Sonic's Sonic Overdrive hadn't done the slightest bit of damage to it! He'd given the Deva-Dragon everything he got and he STILL couldn't phase it! Devion wasn't kidding when he said the Deva-Dragon was invulnerable to anything, including super-powered beings! How on Mobius was he going to win this match now?

"No!" cried Super Sonic "Even my strongest attack doesn't do any good! How am I possibly gonna destroy that thing now?!"

Super Shadow flew in and decided to try another Chaos Blast on it. They had been giving the Deva-Dragon a good beating or so already and he and Sonic has used their strongest attacks on it already. Maybe all their fighting and super attacks were wearing the armour out and if he Chaos Blasted it again he'd make some progress on it. It was a risky gambit and a thought that could be completely wrong but Super Shadow wouldn't know if he was right unless he tried it. So Super Shadow removed his inhibitor rings and he unleashed his Chaos Blast once again. Super Sonic decided to add insult to injury by using another Sonic Overdrive. His and Super Shadow's strongest attacks together were bound to bring the Deva-Dragon down for sure. Super Shadow activated his Chaos Blast and Super Sonic activated his Sonic Overdrive. The Deva-Dragon was hit by a wave of raw Chaos Energy and Super Sonic's spin-dashes all at once and it couldn't fight back because Super Sonic was too fast and it couldn't really see where Super Shadow was. Super Shadow's Chaos Blast finally finished and wore out and Super Sonic finished his Sonic Overdrive. Super Shadow clipped his inhibitor rings back on and Super Sonic flew down beside him to see if their attacks had done anything to it. The two attacks had been valiant and powerful ones. But even they did not do any damage to the Deva-Dragon! The Deva-Dragon just stood there and looked as if

nothing had happened at all! Super Sonic & Super Shadow were frozen with horror and they could not speak. Devion delivered a haunting evil mocking laughter that just got under their skin.

"Why do you continue to press your offensive supers even though you know you cannot penetrate this giant, invulnerable wall of chrome I'm shielded by?" sneered Devion "All you're doing is wasting your energy and giving me some much deserved entertainment! Well as fun as this fight's been, I'm going to have to reluctantly end it. You know what they say after all: "It was fun while it lasted"."

The Deva-Dragon then lashed out and tail-whipped Super Sonic & Super Shadow. The two super hedgehogs were thrown backwards through the air and they crashed into the ground a few feet away from New Mobotropolis. They skidded to a very painful halt on their sides and the impact would have left scrape marks on their sides had they not been super-powered. Super Sonic picked himself up, rubbing his arm.

"Gyah! Urgh!" he grunted "Devion…has every right to gloat…that thing's too powerful!"

"We hit it with everything we have and we can't even scratch it!" fumed Super Shadow "That thing's impossible to destroy!"

"Well we need to stop that thing or the end of Mobius is upon us!" cried Super Sonic "We'll all be dead and the Devatrons will add Mobius to their cosmic collection! Maybe this might be the event that destroys the future that Silver and Blaze are wondering about…"

"I do have one idea but it keeps failing." muttered Super Shadow "I have a strong feeling if we attack it from inside then maybe we'll destroy the Deva-Dragon. But I can't get into it's mouth and I'm not sure what other method of getting inside we can use."

Super Sonic thought for a moment on this matter. Super Shadow had a brilliant idea and it was their best option. His super-form was beginning to run out so they had to try it or they would lose this match and Mobius would be conquered. And unlike Super Shadow, he knew exactly how to get inside the Deva-Dragon.

"Shadow you doofus!" jeered Super Sonic, slapping the super-powered hedgehog on the back "We can just Chaos Control ourselves into the Deva-Dragon's insides! I can't believe you didn't think of that one!"

"I'm amazed I didn't either." muttered Super Shadow "Well then, let's try it shall we?"

"Be my guest Shadow." said Super Sonic casually "And I'll let you do the honours. All you need to do is warp yourself into the Deva-Dragon and then Chaos-Blast it from the inside out. While you're doing that, I'll make mince-metal out of *The Doombringer* ."

"Very well faker, let's do it." said Super Shadow smugly.

He threw his arms out to the side and yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" and he disappeared into thin air. Super Sonic smiled cockily to himself and then he sped over to *The Doombringer* . The Deva-Dragon saw him heading towards *The Doombringer* and it flew over to the under-repaired ship and blocked it from Super Sonic. Super Sonic ended up crashing into the Deva-Dragon and spiralling down to the ground in a daze.

"I can see your little plot Sonic." Devion said coldly "And it will not work. For the Deva-Dragon will keep you away from my ship."

"I don't think it'll be doing that for long Devion." said Super Sonic "For your little pet's about to get a stomach ache."

"What prattle escapes your lips this time Sonic?!" snarled Devion "Devatrons are incapable of experiencing organic being pains and cramps since we are not primitive organics! You are starting to talk nonsense now!"

If only Devion knew what was really going on. Deep inside the Deva-Dragon's body, Super Shadow materialized into existence and he observed his surroundings. The scenery around him was pretty amazing. He was surrounded by wires, machinery and cogs of all kinds that all functioned in perfect motion to make the Deva-Dragon operate as flawlessly as it did. Super Shadow was inside the Deva-Dragon's body and now he could try out his plan.

"Say goodbye Devion." said Super Shadow with a wicked smile on his face.

Super Shadow removed his inhibitor rings once more and he activated yet another Chaos Blast. Super Shadow threw his arms out to the side and he unleashed a giant mass of Chaos Energy that swept through everything and began to destroy every last bit of machinery in the Deva-Dragon's enormous body. Every cog, every piston and every wire was fried instantly by the blast. The Deva-Dragon began to groan loudly in pain as the Chaos Blast began to destroy everything inside of it. The blast expanded up it's body and towards it's neck. Devion could sense that something was wrong and that the Deva-Dragon was about to become slag. The Deva-Dragon flailed about madly as it's internal mechanisms were vaporized from inside it's own body.

"What's happening?!" cried Devion "The Deva-Dragon's systems are failing! Something's attacking it from the inside!"

"Yep. And guess who it is." sneered Super Sonic "While you're at it, I'll get to destroying your ship now."

Super Sonic flew past the crippled Deva-Dragon and he charged towards *The Doombringer* . The Deva-Dragon tried to stop him but Super Shadow's Chaos Blast overcame the beast and prevented it from defending the ship. After a good few seconds of Chaos Blasting, the Deva-Dragon finally stopped functioning. It's visor went blank and it's wings and arms flopped down to it's sides. It's entire insides had been destroyed and it was now useless to Devion. The Deva-Dragon had been defeated and it was no longer a threat for the Mobians. The Chaos Blast wasn't finished though. It went up into the Deva-Dragon's head and blew all it's circuitry. Devion braced himself as the machinery around him began to explode.

"No, no, NOOOOO!" he bellowed "This cannot be possible! The Devatrons are the supreme beings in all of creation! We cannot be defeated! We are invincible! WE ARE THE ULTIMATE BEINGS!"

The Deva-Dragon then suddenly fell forward and it crashed down on top of the front half of *The Doombringer* , smashing it to pieces and leaving only half the ship intact. Super Sonic decided to finish the

job by using his Sonic Overdrive on the other half of *The Doombringer* . In a matter of mere seconds, the rest of *The Doombringer* was completely destroyed by Super Sonic and the ship, it's inhabitants and resources were no more at long last. The Devatrons had finally been destroyed and the Deva-Dragon was out of action for good now. There was only one thing left to do now though. Super Sonic looked over at New Mobotropolis. He could see the laser-grid generator that the Devatrons had set up in it and he instantly realized that it was not of Mobian design. He knew it was Devatron and he had to destroy. Super Sonic flew towards the laser-grid generator and he smashed straight through it, destroying the generator and allowing New Mobotropolis to be habitable again for the Mobians. Super Sonic & Super Shadow had finally done it. The Devatron battle was over and the Mobians had won yet again. Super Shadow teleported out of the Deva-Dragon's dead body and he landed down on the ground. Super Sonic touched down beside him and the two hedgehogs both powered down, their colours reverting back to normal and their spines going back to their original style. The two hedgehogs looked over at the wreckage of the Devatrons and they both smiled at it. The Royal Fighters were all amazed at this sudden turn around and they erupted into a chorus of cheering over the defeat of the Devatrons. Tails and Cosmo hugged each other, Knuckles and Shade hugged each other, Bunnie and Geoffrey bugged each other and the others all cheered triumphantly. Queen Sally could only cry happy tears for Sonic and Shadow. After days of battle, pain and loss, they'd finally won the war and emerged victorious. This match had been Sonic's biggest battle ever and he'd managed to pull a miracle card and emerge victorious. Sally could not commend Sonic enough on this victory. Unknown to the Mobians though, someone else was enjoying the defeat of the Devatrons and that person was Marik the Martian. Marik had decided to come back to Mobius and see who the winner of this war was and to his surprise, it was Sonic and friends. He stood upon the ring wall of New Mobotropolis and he admired the wreckage of the Devatrons.

"Sonic and friends win again." muttered Marik "Good, so now I can bring my family into this and we'll succeed where the Devatrons failed..."

He then whipped out the emerald fragment he'd stolen from Dr. Eggman and he used it to Chaos Control himself away from Mobius once again. He was going to the Seedrian planet Greengate so that he may finish off the war with the Seedrians and then convince his family to come to Mobius and wipe out Sonic and friends...

As for Sonic, he began to cheer over the defeat of the Devatrons.

"YES!" cheered Sonic triumphantly, punching the air "We did it! We beat the Devatrons at last!"

"All we had to do was super-power and destroy Devion's best weapon from the inside out and we won." said Shadow "We well and truly barely made it through this match alive. But we won and now the Devatrons will no longer be a threat to us."

"They won't be a threat to anyone anymore since General Klight and his Startron buddies are going to unleash their virus-bomb supplies on the entire Devatron race." said Sonic "On every planet they've conquered and the very planet they live on, the Devatrons will be dying and the universe will be safe from them at last."

Sonic and Shadow were then suddenly met with another kind of cheering. The cheering was coming from all the Royal Fighters and they ran over to congratulate the two hedgehogs.

"Way to go Sonic and Shadow!" screamed Amy delightedly.

"You two magnificent boys pulled through in the end." said Rouge coyly "Well done."

"I knew you two could do it!" cheered Tails "And you did! I can't believe you managed to turn this fight around but I'm glad you did! You saved all of Mobius and now we're free from the Devatrons!"

Queen Sally stood forward, her eyes still flowing with happy tears.

"You two have performed a miracle today." she said, wiping her eyes dry "I cannot commend you two enough for what you've just done. You've stopped our deadliest enemies to date and freed Mobius from the Devatrons. You two deserve a knighthood each. I shall see to it that you both get knighted later today for your actions

and bravery today."

"Knighthood eh?" mused Sonic "I think "Sir Sonic the Hedgehog" might be a good title for me. But I think I'll pass. I don't need a knighthood, the safety of all of you is what I really need."

"Thank you Sonic." said Sally happily "We will forever be grateful to you for your heroism and selflessness. Now then let's get into New Mobotropolis and hold a celebration for our victory today."

"That sounds cool." said Sonic "And since we've got the city back, the poor citizens can come back here and they'll get their homes back. And we can have Royal HQ back too!"

"I was just starting to like the Empire Research Centre." said Tails "But it'll be great to be home again."

"As for you Eggman." said Sonic, looking over at Dr. Eggman who was just beginning to walk away "When can I expect to see your gluttonous behind again?"

"Sooner then you think." said Dr. Eggman, stroking his moustache "I'll allow you to celebrate your victory over the Devatrons though. You're all deserving of that. After that though, I shall commence with my ambitions and I shall succeed where the Devatrons failed and take Mobius for my own!"

"Yeah right." said Sonic snidely "See you on the flip side fathead."

Dr. Eggman fumed at Sonic but he said nothing and walked off, leaving the Mobians to celebrate the Devatron's defeat. The Mobians all prepared to walk off to NewMobotropolis and begin the celebration. But unbeknownst to them, Devion was still alive! Only barely. His life signal was flickering and he barely had enough energy left in him to do anything. His body was dented, scorched and scarred and he could barely get up. He crawled out of the wreckage of the Deva-Dragon as feebly as he could and he lifted his head up. He saw Sonic walking away with his friends and he scowled at him. If he was to die then he was going to take Sonic with him. Devion deployed his arm cannon and he aimed it at Sonic's back. He then fired his last laser cannon blast and the blast

soared towards Sonic. The blast struck Sonic in the back and Sonic was thrown forward while shrieking in pain. He crashed down onto the ground a good few feet away from them and he closed his eyes. He was unconscious now and the blast had horribly singed his not-so-long-been-healed back. The Mobians all screamed in horror and they rushed over to Sonic as quick as they could. Devion, now devoid of any energy left to live after that shot, collapsed onto the ground and his visor went blank. He was dead at last and his tyranny was over. But he had left his mark on Sonic and now the hedgehog was clinging for life at this very moment. Tails, Amy and Sally all picked up Sonic's body and they began to cry over him.

"Sonic! Oh no! Something shot him! Is he alright?!" shrieked Amy, unable to control her sobbing.

"He's alive, barely." said Tails, feeling his pulse "We need to get him to hospital and fast or he'll die!"

"We'll need some medical staff since the city's empty of any citizens thanks to the Devatrons!" cried Sally "I'll get Mariah the Medicine Cat the moment we get Sonic in hospital! Everybody, get him to the hospital now!"

The Royal Fighters all obeyed and they ran into New Mobotropolis, Tails and Amy carrying Sonic's unconscious body gently as they rushed into the city. As for Dr. Eggman, he was pleased to see what had happened to Sonic and he sincerely hoped that that shot had killed him. But it was only too much to hope for that outcome and Sonic was likely to pull through. But Dr. Eggman had a great consultation prize though and he stared at it right now. The dead body of Devion the Dreaded, leader of the Devatrons, a race that was soon to become extinct. Dr. Eggman looked at Devion's body and he thought to himself about it. He smiled darkly and he reached out to grab the dead body…

An hour later, Sonic was set up into a room in the New Mobotropolis Hospital and Mariah the Medicine Cat had been quickly brought over to check over Sonic while all the citizens arrived back at New Mobotropolis and settled back down in their homes. Sonic was

bandaged up and lying in a bed, unconscious but alive. A heartbeat monitor was on and it determined that Sonic's heart was beating pretty weakly. The Royal Fighters from every team were gathered around Sonic's bed and praying with all their might that he was going to pull through. Mariah was beside Sonic and she poured some kind of medicine down Sonic's throat. She tipped Sonic's head back to make him swallow it and she turned to the others.

"Sonic…will pull through my friends." she said with an expression that couldn't really decide what emotion she had right now "But it'll be a while until he awakens. The medicine I've given him may accelerate his recover by only a little bit. We're just lucky he's even going to live."

"Thank you Mariah." said Sally "It's such a shame that we've been through all this and we can't even celebrate our victory right now because of what's happened to poor Sonic. At least we're all there for him and we'll help him pull through."

"Sonic, if you can hear me I'll let you know this." said Amy, weeping a little "I'll never leave your side Sonic between now and when you get better. I'll take good care of you and I'll make sure that no harm comes to you."

"We all will Sonic." said Tails, wiping away a tear and kneeling down beside the bed "You never leave our side Sonic and now we'll return the favour to you."

"I'm sure Sonic would be pleased to hear all this you two." said Nicole softly "After all, he deserves it for what he's been through for all of us these past couple of years."

"Hey guys?" chipped in the voice of Vector "Sorry to interrupt you all but…I think we're going to need another bed."

Everybody turned around to face Vector and they were all met with an unexpected surprise. Vector stood before them all and in his arms was the body of a very battered and very beaten Princess Matilda! Her hair was long and flowing instead of in a bun, her slippers were missing and her dress had tears in several places. Her body was bruised and laden with cuts, suggesting she had gotten

into a dreadful fight and barely made it out alive. She was also unconscious. While the Royal Fighters had been commiserating over Sonic, a visitor had called to New Mobotropolis and Vector had answered it only to see a Chun-Nan resident with a pull cart that carried the unconscious Matilda. Now Vector had brought her to the hospital to be treated. What had happened to her and why she had been brought all the way over here was anyone's guess but once she woke up, they'd soon find out. And the revelation was going to blow them all away…

Well folks, the Devatron saga's finally over :(and it's not ended well for our heroes. Sonic's out of bounds for a while and what does Princess Matilda have to do with all this? Well the answers await you over in **Tales from Mobius** ***so tune in to*** **Tales from Mobius** ***for the arc that'll explain everything! And after that, tune back in to this story as we "Return to Chun-Nan" and embark on a saga that does the unthinkable...a Sonic story WITHOUT Sonic...! (I don't mean without Sonic as in he's dead of course! I mean without Sonic as in he's out of bounds but he'll be back on his feet in the next saga!).***

I've re-uploaded this chapter because there was a bit I forgot to write in, that bit being Marik's one bit.

Return to Chun-Nan

Story 116: Return to Chun-Nan

A couple of hours later, Princess Matilda had been set up in another room and was lying comfortably on a hospital bed with a heartbeat monitor hooked up to her to monitor her condition. She had been changed into a hospital gown too. As Matilda slept away, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and the Chaotix all surrounded her bed and stared at her, wondering what had happened to her and why she was here. It seemed that no matter what happened to Sonic and friends, something was always happening. The Devatrons had finally been defeated and yet there was no time to celebrate because Sonic the Hedgehog had just taken a laser to the back from a dying Devion. And just as Sonic was receiving treatment from his wounds, a Chun-Nan resident comes to the city and delivers a battered and beaten Princess Matilda to them. The Royal Fighters and the Chaotix couldn't help but wonder what she was doing here and why she'd been brought here but once she woke up, Matilda could tell them everything and they'd find out what was going on at last. Mariah the Medicine Cat looked over the unconscious princess and she deduced that Matilda was still alive and she'd probably wake up soon.

"This poor woman will pull through and might even wake up soon everybody." said Mariah "I'm glad too, I'm beginning to wonder who this is and why she's been brought to us."

"That, Mariah, is the princess of Chun-Nan herself, Princess Dalon Matilda." explained Ruben the Water Panther, who was more shocked then anybody to see Matilda here right now "She's the only child of the country's current emperor, Dalon Tai, and she's made history by becoming the first ever princess to learn kung-fu. I should know, I've seen her fight before*."

"No way, that's the actual princess of Chun-Nan?!" piped Mandy Mouse "I never would have guessed! I've heard much about her, mostly from the blue dude himself that is, I never thought we'd end

up seeing her for real though."

"Nor I." said Wilson the Dog, Mandy's husband "I must say, she's prettier then I imagined."

"Totally in agreement there mate." said Geoffrey St. John the Skunk "But I'm having a hard time believing this girl knows kung-fu. She doesn't look like kung-fu material to me."

"Oh yeah Geoffrey? How would you know what a kung-fu warrior looks like?!" snapped Mandy crossly "She may not look like she knows martial arts of any kind but that doesn't mean she doesn't!"

"You're telling me." muttered Shadow the Hedgehog "Matilda surprised me when she ended up flooring me in a matter of seconds that time I attacked Chun-Nan."

"You're not serious are you Shadow?" snickered Rouge the Bat "You mean to tell me you, the all powerful Shadow the Hedgehog, got his butt kicked by the pretty little princess of Chun-Nan? I don't know what can be more humiliating then that!"

"Dare mock me again Rouge and you will end up finding your head slammed against the wall!" snarled Shadow.

Rouge jumped back in surprise and made sure she didn't purge Shadow's anger further.

"Let's settle down everybody." said Sally Acorn, the Queen of New Mobotropolis "I'll take Ruben's word on Matilda's battle prowess since he comes from the same country as her and has seen her in battle. Unfortunately, it seems that Matilda's met her match. The poor dear looks terrible."

"Who could have done this to her?" asked Tails the Fox, Sonic's twin-tailed friend and sidekick "Zira the Ruthless is in prison and Fong Zarr and his cronies aren't much of a threat. If Matilda can beat Shadow then those cats have no chance against her. And it certainly isn't Conquering Storm and her cronies because they're on our side."

"Yeah, they helped save Chun-Nan that time we visited." agreed

Amy Rose, hammer-wielding berserker and Sonic's would-be-girlfriend "So I'm not gonna even think of accusing that coolie-hat wearing lynx of doing this to Matilda. Maybe the Devatrons got to Chun-Nan and they attacked her."

"That's preposterous Amy, the Devatrons did not expand beyond New Mobotropolis." said Cosmo the Seedrian "The only other country they've attacked is Adabat and that was only to steal lava for their ship so they can't have done this to her."

"Especially since we've now destroyed them all." added Ruben "And I definitely don't think the Spiders of Anarchy did this to Matilda, they're mere hunters, scavengers and vermin. They couldn't get their web around Matilda if their lives depended on it."

"Spiders?" squeaked Cream the Rabbit "Chun-Nan has sp-sp-spiders?"

"Yes Cream." said Amy "If you remember Sonic saying so, they delayed his search for Ruben and he ended up missing Wilson and Mandy's wedding because of them. But I think Matilda would have known better then to dabble with spiders so I don't think they have anything to do with her current condition."

"I think we should stop guessing what's happened to Matilda and just wait for her to tell us herself." said Knuckles the Echidna "We won't find out anything until she wakes up."

"Ah'm just mighty furious that just after we defeat the dang Devatrons, somethin' else happens." muttered the Southern Belle of the team, Bunnie Rabbot "Can't we have a rest even for a minute? Ah mean it's bad enough we have sugah-hog unconscious and unavailable for us all, we really can't cope with somethin' else happening at this dark hour."

"Well that's hero life for you, there's no rest for anyone, even the weary." muttered Tails.

"Hey everybody, the princess is stirring a little." said Shade the Echidna.

Everybody stared at Matilda and watched as the princess began to stir a little in her sleep and the heartbeat on the heart monitor began to beep a little faster, indicating her heartbeat was getting stronger. Matilda was waking up at last. She began to mumble sleepily and the words she was mumbling were barely audible to the others.

"No…hmmm…mmmmf…Chun-Nan…mmmrrrff…no…mmmble…"

"What's she saying?" asked Knuckles.

"I think she's in a dream." suggested Cosmo "And it doesn't look too good, she looks very distressed suggesting from her mumbles and stirring."

"Hey, Matilda." said Ruben, leaning forward and whispering into Matilda's ear as she continued to stir "If you can hear me, wake up. Please wake up, we're anxious to see you."

"How's talking to the poor woman supposed to help?" asked Mandy "She's sleeping, she can't hear you Ruben."

"It is often said that the voice of someone familiar can guide a lost spirit back to it's home." explained Ruben "Talking to Matilda might help her come out of this."

"It seems to be working." said the Chaotix ninja, Espio the Chameleon, observing Matilda's stirring and mumbling and noticing a little change in it "She's beginning to come out of it."

"Keep talking Ruben, you'll wake her up eventually." said Vector the Crocodile, the Chaotix boss.

"How about I wake her up?" asked the Chaotix dingbat Charmy Bee "I'll get her up. I'll fly really close to her ear and scream "Wake Up!" as loud as I can."

"Don't you even think about it you idiot!" snarled Vector.

"Yes, shouting at her will only gonna startle the poor princess, she must wake up peacefully or she'll think she's under attack or something." said Ruben.

He looked over at Matilda and whispered into her ear "Wake up Matilda, your little buddy Ruben's here for you."

"Mmmm…Ruben…? Wha…huh…?" muttered Matilda, finally waking up much to the delight of Ruben.

Matilda's eyes opened at last and she observed her new surroundings. She suddenly realized she was no longer in Chun-Nan. She was in a hospital bed and surrounded by the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and the Chaotix. Matilda recognized a few faces such as Ruben, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream and Cosmo's but the rest were new to her. Matilda gasped in surprise and she began to sit up in the bed. A sudden surge of pain ran up her side and she grimaced in pain.

"Easy there love, you've received a very nasty wound in your side." said Mariah, reaching out to help her "I've stitched it up and it'll recover in a few days or weeks depending on how serious it is."

"Ugh…thank you…miss." said Matilda, settling down and looking at the others "Hello there everyone, can you please tell me where I am?"

"You're at the NewMobotropolisHospital your highness." said Sally Acorn softly "This is the home place of the Acorn Family and the notorious Sonic the Hedgehog. I believe you've met him already."

"I have." said Matilda "Well that's good to know, the cart man reached his destination at last and I made it. Where is Sonic right now? I don't see him with you."

"He's…" Tails began but he suddenly silenced himself as he couldn't bring himself to say those terrible words.

"He's in here too." said Sally sadly "He's in another room receiving treatment right now. He was shot in the back by a Devatron and he's unconscious but alive. We're not sure when he'll wake up."

"So Sonic's unavailable right now?" asked Matilda in a depressed tone "Oh no, I was hoping he could help me save Chun-Nan."

"Help you save Chun-Nan?" asked Amy "Matilda, what do you

mean?"

"Chun-Nan's in terrible danger right now." explained Matilda "I'm sorry to say this but…we were betrayed…"

"Betrayed?!" shrieked Ruben "By who?!"

"The Raiju Clan." muttered Matilda, scowling angrily and clenching her fists "The Raiju Clan were secretly evil and they've unleashed their evil plan on the country."

Ruben, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream and Cosmo were gobsmacked to say the least at this haunting revelation that Matilda had just delivered to them. They were so surprised they could hardly speak.

"Conquering Storm and her ninjas…were really evil?!" cried Tails.

"Oh my gosh!" shrieked Amy "That's horrible! Those dirty double-crossers backstabbed you?!"

"Oh I will make those guys pay for doing this!" growled Knuckles, punching his fists together.

"Um, pardon me sugah but, who are the Raiju Clan?" asked Bunnie "Ah'm afraid the rest of us don't know what yer talking about hon."

"Of course, my apologies, I should have started from the beginning." said Matilda "Ahem, the Raiju Clan are a clan of ninja lynxes and they are led by the Bride of the Conquering Storm…"

"Phsst! Are you real princess?!" snickered Mandy "Bride of the Conquering Storm?! What sick, twisted parent names their kid that?!"

"No Mandy, her name's just Conquering Storm." corrected Matilda " "Bride" is just her honouree title."

"Whatever, Conquering Storm's still a daft name to call someone." scoffed Mandy.

"I always wondered if it was her real name or is it a nickname she prefers." mused Matilda "Anyway, the Raiju Clan are pretty ruthless,

preferring might and strength over anything else. They've been plotting the take-over of Chun-Nan for years and they've finally made their move. They fooled us all into thinking they were defenders when really, they're conquerors. I tried to stop Conquering Storm but she was too powerful for me. She completely annihilated me and left me beaten and scarred. She's also the one who gave me this." she added, pointing to the horrible, red scar across her right eye.

"Eew! That's disgusting!" said Cream, sticking out her tongue and screwing her face up.

"This Conquering Storm woman must be serious if she did that to you!" blurted Wilson "That's one horrible scar you've got your grace!"

"I know." said Matilda "I now carry this scar as a reminder of what happens when I trust the wrong person. I probably should have seen their treachery coming as I kept having nightmares about an evil force ravaging Chun-Nan and I bet my nightmares were trying to warn me about the Raiju Clan. Seeing it all unfold, I think my nightmares were referring to the Raiju Clan, if only I'd seen that but I didn't and now they've stricken the country. The Raiju Clan's attack has been very successful unfortunately. The kung-fu masters are having trouble and even my mentor can't hold them off. Last I saw of him, he got knocked out by a nerve pinch so he's likely captured. I was sent away from Chun-Nan to receive medical care as Chun-Nan's not safe for me anymore. I'm also meant to deliver this cryptic message to Sonic and friends but Sonic's unfortunately unavailable as you've informed me so you'll have to save Chun-Nan without him."

"Not necessarily." said Shadow, standing forward so he can see Matilda "Sonic maybe unconscious right now but I'm still around and I will take Sonic's place in this mission to relive Chun-Nan of those oppressors."

Matilda turned to face Shadow and the moment she caught sight of him, her jaw dropped and her eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. Shadow stared back at Matilda, wondering why she was looking at him funny as if he had three heads or something.

"Oh…oh my…oh my gosh! It…it's you! Shadow warrior!" cried Matilda in surprise "I…I don't believe this! I didn't think I'd ever see you again Shadow!"

"Nor I princess." said Shadow with a dry smile on his face "I still remember that beating you gave me the time I was wrongly on Eggman's side. When you recover, I'd very much like a rematch with you Matilda."

"Ha, ha, ha. Well I'll be sure to arrange a rematch between us once I'm back on my feet." said Matilda brightly "Anyway, long time no see Shadow. How's your quest going?"

"On standby for the moment." explained Shadow "Had to help Sonic and friends stop the Devatrons. I trust you know of them as does everyone else?"

Matilda looked at Shadow as if he'd just said something stupid like "Is Saturn made of broccoli?". She had no idea what he was on about although she had heard about the Devatrons through rumours more than anything.

"Um…no." said Matilda "I'm unfamiliar with these so-called "Devatrons". But rumours spread about the planet being invaded by beings called Devatrons and we citizens of Chun-Nan were unsure why."

"I thought the Devatrons broadcasted their message all over Mobius, how can Chun-Nan not know of those brutes?" asked Mariah confusedly.

"Chun-Nan is devoid of any technology Mariah." explained Ruben "There's nowhere IN Chun-Nan for the Devatrons to broadcast their message. We haven't got screening devices and radios like you guys have so Chun-Nan couldn't hear about the Devatrons. The rumours they heard were likely picked up from gossiping citizens from nearer regions. Pity really, Matilda would have been of great help against the Devatrons but they're destroyed now so it doesn't matter."

"We're off track here anyway." interrupted Tails "Right now we

should be planning a trip to Chun-Nan and a rescue operation to save the country and stop that treacherous Raiju Clan. We've gotta save Chun-Nan from oppression or the country will never taste freedom again."

"Does this mean you'll help save my country?" beamed Matilda happily.

"Of course we are Matilda." said Tails reassuringly "Sonic would want us to save Chun-Nan. We saved it before and we'll save it again. Sonic would die if he heard Chun-Nan was under attack from a treacherous ninja clan."

"Are you sure this task will be applicable for you all?" asked Sally unsurely "I mean, you'll be up against a clan of ninjas. These ninjas maybe no worse then the Devatrons but, only a martial artist can defeat another martial artist as legend has often said."

"That's preposterous because I took on Bladefeather and Mushu and beat them both!" crowed Shadow "If I go in Sonic's place to Chun-Nan, I will wipe out all of those ninjas with one big Chaos Blast!"

"I quite fancy going to Chun-Nan but why the heck do you wanna go Shadow?" asked Rouge, wondering why Shadow would want to bother saving a country he once attacked.

"Because I got off on the wrong foot with the princess and the kung-fu warriors of Chun-Nan last time." muttered Shadow "I feel it's time I made it up to the country by helping save it. I've helped save the world from Perfect Chaos and the Devatrons, I think it's fair I help save Chun-Nan too. Not to mention, I'm the best replacement for Sonic you can ask for so I'll need to fill in the void for him."

"That's very thoughtful of you Shadow." said Sally "But if you all go to Chun-Nan then who will defend Sonic from the inevitable Eggman attack? He knows Sonic's weak, he knows he's vulnerable and he'll strike at any available opportunity while he can't stop him."

"The other teams will defend him for us." suggested Geoffrey "After all, the blokes and lasses from the other R.F.S. teams are still here

and guiding the populace back home, they'll be willing to defend Sonic in our stead."

"Let us hope they're fit for this kind of task." said Shade "We are the mightiest of the R.F.S. teams after all."

"So now all that's settled, we can go to Chun-Nan and bust some evil ninja heads!" bellowed Knuckles, clearly itching to get in on the action.

"Not right now Knuckles." said Tails "It's getting late outside and we're all worn out from the war with the Devatrons, we need to rest right now. We can't beat the Raiju Clan if we're all too tired to fight."

Knuckles fumed angrily, not happy with the fact they needed to sit on their backsides and rest up a moment before saving Chun-Nan from the Raiju Clan. But Tails was right, they can't save Chun-Nan if they're too tired to fight so they would have to wait until morning before making their move.

"Tails is right, we need a good rest before we can do anything about Chun-Nan." said Sally grimly "The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters will set off for Chun-Nan first thing tomorrow morning. I will be helping to return New Mobotropolis back to normal as well as fixing whatever damages the Devatrons may have done."

"Very well Queen of Mobotropolis, I will respect your decisions and I hope that you all can save Chun-Nan for me." said Matilda "If not then my country will forever be doomed to live a life of dominance and slavery."

"We'll do everything we can Matilda." said Sally softly "We will not leave your country to be ravaged by traitors. OK Royal Fighters, let's fall back. Return to your homes and have a goodnight's rest."

The Royal Fighters all obeyed and they left the hospital room to go back to their homes, which they hadn't been in for a while, where they would rest up and begin their mission to save Chun-Nan. As everybody left though, for some reason, Sally's lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx looked a little nervous all of the sudden. All of this talk about the Raiju Clan had brought back some kind of memories

to her. Memories of her past life before she joined the Castle Acorn staff. She tried her best to hide her expressions as she didn't want people asking her anything. Luckily for her, nobody seemed to notice her odd expression. She just went on her way like a normal person with Sally Acorn close by her side. As they all left Matilda alone in her room to rest and recover from her terrible injuries, Matilda sighed to herself and looked up at the ceiling.

"I hope Conquering Storm isn't causing too much harm to my friends, my dad and my master back home." she worried "Oh how it pains me to think about them in this dark time. Oh ancestors, please let them be alright."

She began to pray to her ancestors and hoped dearly that everything was alright back at Chun-Nan…

It hadn't been that long since the Raiju Clan had made it's insidious move on Chun-Nan** and yet as the sun disappeared behind the horizon and darkness blanketed the world for the night, the Raiju Clan had pretty much subjugated the whole village and the Pagoda of Prosperity, Matilda's home and place of royalty. The village was now full of Raiju Ninjas all out on patrol and rounding up the population of it together and assigning jobs for them. The population had pretty much just been entirely enslaved and were now going to be forced against their own will to do whatever it was the Raiju Clan wished them to do whether it was relevant to anything or simply just to be cruel to them. The Pagoda of Prosperity had been ransacked and all riches and treasures contained in the fabulously wealthy pagoda had been taken for the clan itself just to showcase it's superiority. The Pagoda had been left intact though since Conquering Storm didn't think it was deserving of destruction. She felt that maybe she could use it for something and that leaving it intact would lower the esteem of the citizens of Chun-Nan whenever they saw it. Just the sight of the ransacked and conquered Pagoda would be enough to lower anyone's hopes. All around the village, you would see a Raiju Ninja on patrol with a weapon of some kind be it spear, sword or mace and they would be ordering the poor citizens about. You would not however see Conquering Storm about for she was back at her fortress and waiting for updates from her

star ninja Dàfēng Rai. As a sign of her conquest, Conquering Storm was wearing a pair of golden shoulder pads that gleamed in the light and the shoulder pads were accompanied by a long, flowing black cape. Conquering Storm believed that conquerors should wear a cape after they've taken over the country and being as the Raiju Clan had pretty much already conquered Chun-Nan right now, now was the perfect time to be wearing the cape. Right now she was sitting in her throne and waiting for updates. She couldn't keep that evil grin of hers off her face as she kept thinking about the Raiju Clan's plan and how successful it had been. All those years of trickery had paid off beautifully. If only her dead parents, or "masters" as she preferred them as, could see her now.

"I've finally done it my masters." purred Conquering Storm "I've conquered Chun-Nan, just as you said we were destined for. Finally, me and my clan shall get the power we deserved, we shall get the power we fought for before Zira slaughtered my original clan and I will not abuse it unlike many fiends that have tried and failed to conquer this pathetic, weak country that relies too much on pathetic "honour" and "tranquillity" for it's way of life. The Raiju Clan has stricken…and it has won. My masters, I wish you could see this replacement clan of mine and how successful it's take-over has been. You would be so proud of me."

Her crowing was suddenly interrupted by a knock on the door and the caped conqueror decided to see who it was although she had a feeling she knew who it was.

"Enter." she ordered.

The doors opened up and in walked Rai, striding pride fully and looking very pleased with himself. The look on his face suggested he'd crushed somebody's skull and enjoyed it dearly. Conquering Storm's grin widened. Seeing Rai looking so pleased meant good news was coming to her and that's what she loved to hear from her star ninja. Rai bowed down at Conquering Storm's feet.

"My honoured matron." said Rai respectfully "I am honoured to say this to you, I justify my presence in your throne room with news of the fortunate kind."

"I sensed from your body movements and expressions." said Conquering Storm with a sly smirk on her evil face "So, deliver your testimony then."

"The population of the holy village has been fully rounded up and the empty Pagoda of Prosperity has been looted clean of it's riches." explained Rai "Slavery can be expected to commence tomorrow morning and with all the kung-fu warriors locked up and out of the way, no one can stop us."

"Excellent news Dàfēng Rai." said Conquering Storm happily "Any news of that little brat Matilda?"

"None my mistress." said Rai regrettably, not pleased he couldn't give Conquering Storm any news on the princess "She appears to have disappeared. We haven't seen her since your battle with her."

"Last I saw of her, she was being carted away and I strive to know where that brat is so that I may kill her!" growled Conquering Storm, standing up quickly and clenching her fists "Matilda maybe no match for me and she maybe weak and useless but if she's fled the country, she might rile up help from the outside and come back to challenge my position! I've worked this hard just to dethrone the emperor and take my rightful place as ruler of Chun-Nan, I can do without anybody trying to usurp my position! Rai, make it your top priority to find Matilda and bring her to me…alive! Alive so that I may have the honour of finishing her off myself!"

"Yes Ma'Am." said Rai with a heavy tone of loyalty in his voice.

"You may leave now." said Conquering Storm "I'm going down to my little dungeon to see how my "guests" are settling in."

Rai smiled wickedly, horrid thoughts about what Conquering Storm was going to do the prisoners filling his head. Rai got up off of his knee and he left the throne room to commence with his new priority, capture Matilda and bring her to Conquering Storm alive. The moment Rai left the room, Conquering Storm wondered off to a door in the far side of the throne room and she twisted some knobs on the door. The door was coded with Chinese characters and only she knew the code to open the door. She put in the code and the door

opened up, allowing her to stroll down into the dungeon. Conquering Storm walked down the steps that led to the dungeon at the bottom and she put in the code to that door. This door was coded too. Having two coded doors was definitely going to make this dungeon hard to break into and that's why Conquering Storm installed this feature into her fortress. Conquering Storm opened the door and strode into the dungeon in a very prideful manner. In the dungeon where her prisoners which were Bladefeather and Mushu, their mentor Master Gāng, Matilda's mentor Master Kai Zen (who had had his mask taken off, revealing his real face underneath and revealing his species to be a badger), Matilda's friend Li Moon and the emperor himself, Emperor Dalon Tai. They were all clamped to the wall by acupressure cuffs and they looked very grim and miserable. So would you be if you were chained up in a dark dungeon and your wrists and ankles were firmly clamped to the wall by cuffs that only got tighter the more you struggled. The prisoners all looked up at Conquering Storm and they all scowled at her. Conquering Storm didn't give a toot about their scowls and just decided to pontificate to them.

"It amazes me to no end that I've managed to capture Chun-Nan's only remaining kung-fu warriors and the emperor of Chun-Nan himself." she gloated "You all make fine prisoners you do and I cannot wait to start having fun with you all. And I do not mean fun as in the enjoyable kind…"

"We are very well aware on what type of fun you're referring to Conquering Storm." muttered Bladefeather crossly "Kindly cease your vexing round of bombast for we do not harbour any interest in hearing or even listening to any of it."

That response earned a kunai being pointed at Bladefeather's throat. Conquering Storm scowled at the falcon and wondered how he managed to keep up his rude, pompous manner even in this dark time.

"One would think being in chains and a dark environment would lower that overbearing cheek of yours." muttered Conquering Storm "Well, once I leave you like that for a few days, maybe you'll be more kindly disposed towards me."

"You could leave me like this forever and I would not succumb to you, you rapacious little serpentine." grumbled Bladefeather "You do not frighten me half as much as Zira did."

"And yet I have succeeded where Zira has failed foolish falcon." crowed Conquering Storm, sheathing the kunai and giving him a punch to the gut for punishment "I am soon-to-be ruler of Chun-Nan and Zira is stuck rotting away in the Lóng de dòngxué prison. You have every reason to fear me right now."

"Conquering Storm, please leave us alone." said Emperor Tai "Our imprisonment is punishment enough at your hands, you don't need to pour on the taunts just to upset us all."

"You will silence that pathetic mouth of yours emperor or I will see to it that you have both of your eyeballs torn out!" snarled Conquering Storm "You're in my domain emperor, you have been relieved of your royal seat. You no longer have command over anybody."

"That maybe so but I still have hope for Chun-Nan." said Tai dryly "My daughter escaped your clutches with help from Bladefeather, she will get help and she will bring an end to your dictatorship Conquering Storm. After that, you will end up wishing you hadn't decided to betray us."

"Yes, your lips are moving but all that emits out of your mouth is meaningless words that are as empty as a vase on sale in the market." muttered Conquering Storm "Emperor, your words mean nothing to me."

"Then you truly are lost traitor." muttered Kai Zen "Emperor Tai is trying to make you see what your actions are going to ultimately bring but you continue to let yourself be clouded by greed and power. If you had any decency then you would stop what you're doing and allow us all to live in peace."

"Do you honestly think I harbour any interest in what the mentor of Princess Matilda has to say to me?!" snarled Conquering Storm "You will remain silent in my presence vigilante warrior! Or can't you hold onto that title anymore given how your mask has been disposed of and your true identity revealed?" she smirked.

Kai said nothing more but he scrunched his face up into a very tense scowl that made it look like he was going to pop a blood vessel. Conquering Storm continued to gloat.

"And you're not the only mentor I have in my captivity." she sneered "I have the famed steel-quilled warrior Master Gāng too, whom I believe is Bladefeather and Mushu's mentor." she added, pulling a smug face at the porcupine.

"That is correct Madame." muttered Master Gāng "And I'm ashamed to see you commence with such appalling crimes Conquering Storm. You must have had a terrible mentor if this is what you've become."

"Don't you dare disgrace my masters by belittling them you old fool!" snarled Conquering Storm, kicking poor Master Gāng in the gut as hard as she could "My masters were excellent teachers and they're the reason I am the mighty and powerful warrior I am today! If you dare to say anymore insulting comments about them then I will see to it you die slowly and very painfully! I'll make it so painful you will scream for mercy as you die!"

Master Gāng couldn't say anything else for he was horribly winded by that kick and he was stuck coughing and spluttering for a moment. Bladefeather and Mushu were furious at Conquering Storm for doing this to their mentor but given their current status, they couldn't do a thing about it. Conquering Storm sniffed at Master Gāng and she turned her back on him.

"So as I've said, all of Chun-Nan's kung-fu warriors and their precious emperor are contained and at my mercy." she said "And I will not hold back on any of you when I decided to make you all suffer painfully for daring to resist me."

"Wait, I'm not a kung-fu warrior, I don't even know martial arts of any kind. Why did you imprison me?" asked Li Moon curiously.

"You're friends with Matilda, that's more then enough reason for me to punish you little girl." said Conquering Storm coldly "Anyone affiliated with that wretched princess deserves to be locked up in my eyes."

"Well you'll regret locking us all up like this you scum!" yelled Li Moon "When Matilda recovers from her injuries and comes back, she will make you pay for all you've done to us!"

"Little girl, you need to learn not to cling onto false hope as it is not healthy for you at all." snorted Conquering Storm "Matilda will be mine before she can even begin to recover. I've sent my best ninja to find her. He will capture her and bring her to me and then I will take it upon myself to kill her and force you all to witness this as she dies by my hand. How glorious it'll be to see you all stare in horror as your only hope becomes a victim of the Raiju Clan!"

"No! You can't do that to my little treasure Conquering Storm!" cried Tai in horror "Please spare her! If you take away my precious daughter then you will take my whole life away too!"

"I'll be happy to do so emperor." sneered Conquering Storm "Now, I believe my time with you has prolonged enough now. I'll leave you all in peace while I oversee the management of MY new Chun-Nan."

With that said, Conquering Storm left the dungeon and left her prisoners alone to do nothing but converse with each other. She was having the time of her life right now and the lynx in the coolie-hat couldn't get enough of the joy she was getting from her conquest right now. Everything was going so well it'd be hard to imagine if anybody could actually stop her right now. Conquering Storm was truly whipping up a storm that was conquering all of Chun-Nan and the storm showed no signs of stopping anytime soon. There was no hope for anyone in Chun-Nan now, they were all doomed to be slaves for the Raiju Clan forever…

The next morning arrived and the Royal Fighters were already setting off to go to Chun-Nan. They had all gone over to the hospital to pay Sonic and Matilda their farewells and they got ready to leave. The other Royal Fighter teams arrived at the hospital to keep watch on Sonic since Eggman was bound to try and attack him while he was weak. Team Nekronopolis, Adabat and Megapolis were all standing in Sonic's room and guarding him, even the crippled Thomas Tiger who was in a wheelchair and was pushed around by

Kiara the Cheetah. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters bade the other teams good luck in their mission and a fond farewell.

"Good luck in keeping Sonic safe Miranda." said Tails "We'll be back as soon as possible."

"Thank you Tails." said Miranda "We wish you good luck in your mission in Chun-Nan. It disgusts me to think that anyone would want to take over such a wonderful country."

"I'm disgusted by that too." said Tails "Those Raiju Ninjas must have no heart if they wanna conquer Chun-Nan and ruin everything for everyone."

"Well that's villains for you, they're always trying to ruin everything for everyone for their own selfish, evil needs." muttered Kiara "Much like Dr. Eggman and his evil robot army."

"I agree Kiara." said Tails "Well bye everybody, we'll see you later and I know you will all keep Sonic safe while he's in this comatose state."

"Oh you bet we will!" said Scott Lynx determinedly "Eggman will get nowhere near Sonic with us on guard!"

Tails beamed, pleased to see such dedication from the Royal Fighters and how willing they were to defend Sonic from the inevitable Eggman attack. With that all said and done, Tails left Sonic's room to join the others as they prepared to leave for Chun-Nan. Over in Matilda's room, Ruben decided to leave the princess a get-well soon gift. He'd gone out into the city and bought a bouquet of flowers for Matilda. He entered Matilda's room and he handed the recovering princess the bouquet. Matilda was touched to see Ruben bringing her such a wonderful gift, especially as she loved flowers.

"I bought these for you Matilda." said Ruben "It's a little get-well-soon present to show how much I long for your recovery your highness."

"Aw this bouquet is beautiful, thank you so much Ruben." said Matilda kindly "I never thought I'd see someone with a heart as big

as mine. Before you leave Ruben, there's something I forgot to tell you."

"What's that then?" asked Ruben "Is it about Hydra and the aqua-collars?"

"It is." said Matilda grimly "Conquering Storm revealed to me that she was the one behind the aqua-collar thefts. She just blackmailed Hydra into doing so."

Ruben was so shocked he thought he was going to collapse onto the floor. Given this whole revelation about the Raiju Clan's heel-turn, he should have worked that out already but it was still so shocking to hear this. At least that meant Hydra really was innocent after all and Ruben could forgive him for stealing his collar since he didn't do it under his own freewill.

"I had a feeling Hydra was innocent all along!" cried Ruben "No wonder he was acting all apologetic before he stole my collar! He stole it because he was forced to! Well, if I ever see Hydra again I'll help free him from the Raiju Clan's grasp!"

"I hope you can Ruben." said Matilda "Also, will you promise me on your word of honour that you'll get all the water panther's aqua-collars back?"

"I promise, I give my word of honour that as we fight the Raiju Clan, I will get every water panther's collar back." said Ruben "I'll put an end to this crime against the water panther race."

"I hope so." said Matilda "A race as sacred and honouree as yours doesn't deserve to be stripped of it's trademark power."

"No we do not." said Ruben "And I swear when I get my collar back I will give Conquering Storm one heck of a water blast! I'll sweep her away with one big jet of water I will!"

"I wish I could be there to see that." muttered Matilda "I owe Conquering Storm much for what she's done to me and my country. Her betrayal has wounded me more then anything that's ever happened to me before. Even more so then Governor Shen's

betrayal last year***."

"Well Princess Matilda, Conquering Storm may have inflicted these wounds on you but we Royal Fighters shall fix them by defeating Conquering Storm and her insidious clan." said Ruben "The Raiju Clan maybe powerful but we're not going to let that bring us down. We've defeated the Devatrons so we can defeat a clan of ninjas."

"That'll be easier said then done though." said Matilda grimly "Conquering Storm fared well against Zira and she can even give me a run for my money so she'll be no easy foe. And she knows the dreaded nerve pinch too so that makes her even deadlier. This maybe the battle of your life Ruben and I hope you get through it alive. My heart would stop beating if you and the Royal Fighters fall to the Raiju Clan."

"We'll win this fight princess." said Ruben reassuringly "We'll work out how to defeat those ninjas and we'll kick them out of Chun-Nan and restore peace to the country. I swear that I will not return until my former home is safe from those oppressors!"

"You dedication is on par with mine Ruben." said Matilda with a weak smile "I bet your old clan would be thrilled to see what you've become Ruben. A strong, determined little water panther who's heart is always in the right place."

"Yeah, I sure would love to see what mother would think to me now." said Ruben, looking down at the floor with his ears drooping down "Well anyway, I think I've stalled long enough, the others will be waiting for me. Goodbye Matilda. I'll see you when we return."

"I give everybody in the R.F.S. my sincere thanks for what you're going to do now and I wish good luck upon all of you." said Matilda softly "Please don't become Conquering Storm's next victims."

"I give my word of honour Matilda that we will return safe and sound." said Ruben with a bow "Goodbye."

With that said, Ruben dashed off to meet with the other Royal Fighter teams, leaving the hospitalized Matilda to lay back comfortably in her bed and smell the flowers in the bouquet she'd

been given by Ruben. The sweet odorous scent of the flowers definitely made her feel more relaxed. She'd need to do plenty of relaxing since she maybe in bed for a while yet. She'd recover eventually but it would take a while so all Matilda could do was lie back and patiently await her steady recovery…

Outside, the Royal Fighters had gotten out some modes of transport in order to get to Chun-Nan nice and quickly. There were two hover saucers with enough room for seven Mobians each, Wilson and Mandy were going in Mandy's hover car and Shadow was quite content with going on foot as he felt like transportation was just going to slow him down. One saucer had Tails at the controls and he had Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Bunnie and Geoffrey with him while the other saucer had Rouge and the Chaotix. Vector was at the controls of this one although Charmy wanted to drive it and the two had a bit of a squabble before Espio threatened to smack them silly if they didn't stop. They were all waiting around for Ruben to arrive as he gave Matilda his gift and farewells. After patiently waiting for a good couple of minutes, Ruben finally arrived at last and he hoped into the saucer with Rouge and the Chaotix in.

"You took your time kiddo." purred Rouge "Did you and the princess get too invested in your goodbyes huh?"

"We got carried away in discussion that's all." said Ruben "I'm ready to return to my old home and stop the Raiju Clan! Let's go Royal Fighters!"

"You said it Ruben." said Tails happily "You ready for this Shadow? I mean, this is your first time dealing with ninjas after all…"

"I'm ready for anything Tails." said Shadow "This "Raiju Clan" will be no obstacle for me. I'll Chaos Spear every last ninja!"

"We'll see about that won't we Shadow?" sneered Knuckles.

Shadow scowled at Knuckles but said nothing more. Now everybody was here, the Royal Fighters all set off for Chun-Nan. The hover-saucers kicked into gear and Mandy's hover-car zoomed off at the speed of a Formula-1 race car. Shadow activated his hover-shoes and he skated across the ground, following the vehicles since they

knew the way to Chun-Nan from here and they could lead him there. The Royal Fighters pulled away from New Mobotropolis and the vehicles hovered off into the distance, leaving New Mobotropolis behind and setting off for the holy country that was in need of their help…

Meanwhile, over in the Northern Border of Megapolis, the great scientist Dr. Eggman had been working busily for the past few hours. He hadn't had a moment's rest upon returning back home after the whole Devatron invasion had been foiled at last and he'd already managed to do a few things. One was fix up his female servant bot Katherine after she had been destroyed again and two was fix up the underground bunker from the damages the Devatrons had done after invading it. Katherine had been finished minutes ago and she was already activated and helping Dr. Eggman fix things up.

"I cannot believe the mess the Devatrons made after storming the place!" grumbled Dr. Eggman "Stupid chrome monsters! They even destroyed those Chaos Emerald fragments you found Katherine so I no longer have Chaos Power on my side! And woe betide Marik for stealing the only ones left so he can abandon us and flee back home! What I wouldn't give to throttle that Martian I would!"

Katherine nodded agreeably. Even though she had been destroyed before Marik had left Mobius, she still hated the sound of what Eggman was telling her. Marik had joined them in the battle against the Devatrons and then ditched them, how she wanted to make Marik suffer for that! But Marik was not important this time, there were more important matters at stake here.

"Well Marik's dead to me just like the Devatrons are." said Dr. Eggman "What's more important now is getting rid of Sonic the Hedgehog while he's weak."

Katherine titled her head to one side as if she was wondering what the heck Dr. Eggman was talking about. Eggman read her expression and he grinned widely.

"Sonic's been shot in the back by Devion and he's out of bounds at the moment Katherine." explained Dr. Eggman "So I'm going to kill him while he's weak and unconscious. He'll never emerge from his hospital bed Katherine! And look who I'm going to recruit for this devious task of mine…"

He directed Katherine's attention over to the wall at the end of the room where the dead body of Devion, the Devatron leader, was all propped up and leaning against it. His visor was blank as a sheet of paper and he showed no signs of life at all given how he was dead. Eggman had fixed his damages and given him a bit of a polish so he looked good as new again. All he needed now was a new brain and Eggman would have Devion back alive, fully functional and completely under his evil control now. Dr. Eggman grinned so wide it almost popped out of the sides of his face. Just imagine him using the deadliest enemy Sonic's ever faced against him and with Sonic hospitalized and in a coma, Eggman would kill Sonic easily and at the same time, he'd be giving Devion the honour of killing Sonic at the same time. Sonic's days were definitely numbered once Eggman got Devion back alive and set on the task to terminate him…

Footnotes:

*** Remember *Tales from Mobius Arc 12: The Water Panther Plunder* at all? Huh? Do ya? DO YA?!**

**** I trust you all saw that in the recent story *Tales from Mobius Arc 13: A Few Steps To A Conquering Storm* yes?**

***** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 6: The Five Festivals of Chun-Nan***

Oh dear, looks like Sonic's about to die before he wakes! Will Eggman get Devion back online? Can the Royal Fighters protecting him keep Sonic safe and stop Eggman? And can the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters save Chun-Nan? Well there's only one way to find out, tune into Part 2 where the action REALLY

picks up!

So everybody, now the Devatron saga's come and passed, what did you all think to it? Please share your thoughts if you wish, I'm interested in hearing your thoughts!

The Oncoming Storm

Story 117: The Oncoming Storm

A good, long amount of time had passed since the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters set off to save Chun-Nan from the Raiju Clan but they finally made it to the holy country and they pulled up their vehicles. The Mobians all stepped out of their vehicles and they looked out into the scenery ahead of them. They could see the village of Chun-Nan ahead of them. If it wasn't for the fact Chun-Nan was being subjugated by the Raiju Clan, Ruben the Water Panther would be feeling glad to be back home. But now was not the time for sight-seeing. Chun-Nan was being oppressed and they had to save it or the country was never going to be free or happy again. The village seemed OK from where the Mobians were standing right now but that was only because the Raiju Clan hadn't begun changing Chun-Nan into their image yet and from where they were, they couldn't see the Raiju Ninjas rounding up all the citizens and making them do whatever they want them to do. But that didn't mean they wouldn't have any ninjas to take out once they got down there.

"Well, we're here. My old home." said Ruben "Why is it every time I return to Chun-Nan, something bad happens? First water panthers are getting their collars stolen and now the country's taken over by the Raiju Clan?"

"It's just a weird coincidence Ruben." said Tails the twin-tailed fox "Hopefully next time we see Chun-Nan, nothing bad will be happening at all."

"Hey Ruben, if you're from Chun-Nan then why did you leave?" asked Rouge the Bat curiously.

"I don't wanna talk about it." said Ruben sadly, his ears drooping back in sorrow "It's a sad subject and thinking about it just upsets me."

"OK kiddo, sorry I asked." said Rouge affectionately, hoping she hadn't hurt Ruben by asking that.

"It's OK, you were curious." said Ruben "We Mobians are a curious race after all."

"So, has anybody formed a plan?" asked Shadow the Hedgehog "We'll be dealing with a clan of ninjas and from the sounds of things, they won't be easy prey so we'll need a plan."

"Well I have one that might work." mused Tails "I thought maybe we could sneak into the village, take down a ninja or two and then force him to lead us to Conquering Storm so we can stop her."

"You, Sonic, Knuckles, Amy, Cream and Cosmo have been here before Tails, don't you know where Conquering Storm is?" asked Geoffrey St. John.

"Well, no really as only Sonic and Ruben went to meet the Raiju Clan." said Tails downheartedly.

"Conquering Storm lives in a fortress beyond the Great Plains." explained Ruben "But we have to get through a couple of challenges. We have the Valley of Stepping Stones and the Plains of Deception. Both are death traps and we'll have to be careful when we get to them."

"Eesh, Conquering Storm's not much for visitors is she?" scoffed MandyMouse "Two areas full of death traps? Bit of an overkill isn't it?"

"It is." muttered Ruben "Me and Sonic barely made it out alive! Although if we all went, we'd have an easier time surviving as we actually have flying members with us. Tails, Bunnie, Cream and Rouge could just as easily fly us over the Valley of Stepping Stones but the Plains of Deception might have a surprise for flying people so that raises more problems…"

"Wait Ruben." said Shade the Echidna "I've just thought of something."

"What's that then?" asked Ruben.

"Is there an alternate route to the fortress?" asked Shade "I mean, what if Conquering Storm needed to go somewhere and she wanted

to avoid her own traps?"

"There is one actually." said Ruben, his mind suddenly going click "How could I forget? Conquering Storm took me and Sonic down an alternate route after we'd won her favour and she agreed to help us defeat Zira. But I've only been once so I don't remember the alternate route. I'm sorry everybody."

"Don't sweat it Ruben." said Amy Rose brightly "You can't just remember routes and pathways after only going through them once. Nobody can, unless they have photographic memories that is."

"I could try warping you all to the fortress." suggested Shadow "But I have limited range and I won't be able to carry all of you. Not to mention I need to know WHERE I'm teleporting otherwise I'll just get you all totally lost."

"That would really suck too." muttered Charmy Bee "I hate getting lost."

"Same here." said Espio the Chameleon "So warping wouldn't do us any good."

"So what are we gonna do then?" asked Knuckles "Just beat up a ninja, ask him where Conquering Storm is and if she's at her fortress, lead us the un booby-trapped way? Because we're all fresh outta ideas right now and that one's probably the only one that'll work."

Tails thought on that idea for a moment.

"I think Knuckles is right." said Tails "The Raiju Clan will now how to get to the fortress without going through the traps. We can get a ninja to lead us there, unless of course Conquering Storm's already around and we don't need to go to the fortress."

"Knuckles came up with a good idea? I'm genuinely shocked by this ordeal!" cried Rouge sarcastically "Please tell me I'm not going nuts because right now, I think I am!"

Knuckles scowled at Rouge. Why did that sassy bat have to constantly make fun of him and make him look like a total idiot?!

Knuckles clenched his fists and stomped towards Rouge.

"Rouge, dare joke like that again…" growled Knuckles "THEN I'LL TAKE YOUR HEAD AND SMASH IT AGAINST THE…" he suddenly bellowed aloud as he raised his fists.

"OK, OK! Thank you Knuckles, that'll be enough!" cried Tails, holding the echidna back by grabbing his dreadlocks.

"Rouge, don't make fun of Knuckles or you will answer to me as well as him!" growled Shade "Knuckles has told me much about you and how you've tormented him many times before so while I'm here, you'd better not mistreat him or you'll know about it!"

"OK tough girl, I'll play nice." said Rouge cheekily "I can see why Knuckles picked you over me as his girlfriend, you're as hot-headed as he is sunshine."

That statement made Knuckles and Shade both blush and fume with anger at the same time. Shade was really tempted to Blade-Rush Rouge to pieces right now and Knuckles was itching to bash the bat's brains out.

"Rouge hon, stop making fun of the echidnas will you?" asked Bunnie Rabbot "Teasing people isn't gonna get any of us anywhere sugah."

"Fine, I'll keep it to myself from now on." muttered Rouge, folding her arms and frowning a little before whispering to herself "Spoilsports."

"OK, now we know what we're doing, let's get down there and kick some ninja butt!" yelled Tails eagerly "Come on Royal Fighters, let's go!" he ordered, ready to sprint off.

"Who put him in charge?" snickered Rouge "I must say, despite being a kid, he seems adequate for being a leader."

Shadow sorted of nodded agreeably. Tails had a lot of leader qualities in him despite being only eight years old. So now the team had a plan, they all charged off down to the village of Chun-Nan that awaited them. It didn't the Mobians long to get to the village as it was a hearty jog away from where they had all parked their vehicles.

They were soon at the village and they sneaked around behind some of the buildings in it. The Royal Fighters all gathered around behind a wok shop and they peeked around the corner to get a look at what was going on. What they saw disgusted all of them, even Rouge. The Raiju Ninjas had rounded the whole population up like a herd of sheep and they were all fitted with handcuffs that looked really hard to break and very uncomfortable to wear. The citizens looked dearly miserable and some were even sobbing about their current dilemma. Conquering Storm's star student, Dàfēng Rai, strode proudly by the line of citizens and he began to make announcements to them all, not caring what any of them thought about the whole thing.

"OK citizens." boomed Rai in his grand voice "Here's the update for all you miserable cretins. You emperor has been dethroned as ruler of the country and he is in our captivity. Your princess is missing and hopefully dead. Conquering Storm is your new ruler now. If she ever shows her face around here then you must instantly bow down to her and refer to her as "Empress Conquering Storm", nothing less. Is that comprehended you lot?"

"Yes sir." muttered the crowd miserably.

"Good." said Rai "Now then, here's what our empress has assigned for you all." he added, taking out a list and reading it aloud to the crowd "You will knock down this old village and rebuild it in the Raiju Clan's image. The plans will be provided for the new village once the old one has been knocked down. You will not be allowed to rest from the work except for mealtimes. Anyone who attempts to flee, attempts to skive off the work, stands up to any of the Raiju Ninjas, insults us, talks back to us, ignores us and refuses to obey any given orders will be met with merciless punishment. The punishment you receive will be too graphic for you to handle so you'd best make sure they do not get assigned to you. Do you understand all that?"

"Yes sir." muttered the crowd.

"Good." said Rai, putting the list back in his sash "All of you wait here while a group of ninjas fetches the tools you'll need for the demolition work. I have other matters to attend to right now so I'm leaving you in the capable care of my clan mates here. Remember,

if you step out of line then they will punish you badly."

The crowd nodded miserably and they stood in line, waiting for the tools needed for the demolition work to be given to them. Rai strode off to do his given task which was search for Princess Matilda and bring her to Conquering Storm so that the bride of the clan may finish her off personally. The moment Rai left, some ninjas stood guard around the citizens to make sure they didn't do anything and they were all armed with spears. Seeing and hearing all this made Ruben quiver with rage. The Raiju Clan had definitely performed quite a heel turn since the last time they'd met. They were even worse then Zira! If Ruben wasn't missing his aqua-collar then he'd be sweeping the ninjas away with one big wave of water.

"Oooooh those Raiju Ninjas are making me mad!" fumed Ruben "How dare they do all of this to the people of Chun-Nan! I liked them better when they were on our side!"

"I think I do to." muttered Tails "So, it seems Conquering Storm isn't here and according to that big lynx, Emperor Tai is in their captivity so we'll have to get to their fortress now."

"And with any luck, one of those ninjas is going to help us." said Knuckles "So what should we do to get one's attention? Should we just knock one out and drag him back here?"

"Nah that'll attract attention." said Tails "We need to lure one towards us."

"And I shall do the luring." said Ruben "I'm sure a Raiju Ninja can't resist getting a water panther, especially as they were the ones behind the theft of our water-collars."

"I thought you said a friend of yours named Hydra did it?" said Amy with a puzzled look on her face.

"He did but according to Matilda, Conquering Storm blackmailed him into doing so." explained Ruben "I do hope he's OK though, I will go mad if Conquering Storm's hurt Hydra in anyway!"

"We'll search for your friend when we arrive at the fortress." said

Tails "Now let's lure in a ninja."

Ruben nodded and he stepped out from behind the wok shop. He grabbed a wok that was sitting on the counter nearby and he hid it behind his back. He looked around to see if there were any Raiju Ninjas nearby. There was one standing near the wok shop and he had his back turned so he couldn't see Ruben poking around the corner. Ruben crept up behind the ninja as quietly as he could. His novice-style ninjutsu helped him creep quietly towards the ninja without being heard. Ruben then smacked the ninja in the back with the wok and the ninja almost fell forward onto his knees. He turned around sharply and he glared at Ruben.

"Oy! What did you do that for cretin?!" he snarled.

Ruben didn't answer him. He just snickered at him and he bolted off behind the shop as fast as he could. The ninja drew out a katana and he followed Ruben behind the wok shop. He was not going to let an assault like that go unanswered, he was going to let Ruben have it and then let the others decide on his punishment. The moment he arrived around the back of the shop though, the Royal Fighters all pounced on him and began to pound the ninja into submission. Despite being a well-trained ninja, the ninja couldn't fend off so many people attacking him at once, especially as he'd been caught by surprise and wasn't given a chance to fight back. The Royal Fighters all pounded and beat the poor ninja and Bunnie Rabbot finished things off by forcing the ninja's arm behind his back and grabbing him into a chokehold.

"Ah wouldn't try to get away ninja." said Bunnie coldly "We might find it a little hard to contain ourselves if you do."

The ninja scowled at his attackers but he didn't try to escape since he was out numbered and it was going to be difficult to get away from this many people. The ninja stayed put and waited to see what the Royal Fighters were going to do with him.

"Who are you and what do you want?!" demanded the ninja fiercely.

"We're the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis and we wish to see your master." said Tails "You take us to Conquering Storm and we will let

you go."

"And take us the way that isn't booby-trapped too otherwise I'll pound you so badly they won't be able to identify your corpse!" snarled Shadow threateningly.

"Why do outsiders like you wish to meet up with our honoured matron?" asked the ninja.

"Never you mind, just take us there or else!" growled Knuckles "And don't bother calling for help too or I will give you a knuckle sandwich!"

The ninja fumed at the redhead echidna but he didn't say anything. The ninja thought on this offer and he came to this conclusion. Why not lead them to Conquering Storm? She'll just pound them all into submission once they meet with her. Conquering Storm could fight Matilda to a standstill so what chance did these guys have? He'd be quite happy to lead these fools to their doom so why not answer their wishes? They'd only regret it once they got there. The ninja relaxed his expression and he spoke.

"Very well, I shall answer your wishes." he said "I will take you to Conquering Storm but only if you give your word of honour that I am released once we get there."

"And you'd better give your word of honour that you won't double cross us or we won't accept." said Ruben sternly.

"You have it." lied the ninja.

"Then you have our word of honour you'll be freed once we get to the fortress." said Ruben "Now, lead the non-lethal way to Conquering Storm's temple if you please."

The ninja smirked at Ruben from behind the ninja mask he wore. Bunnie Rabbot let him go and the ninja led the Royal Fighters off to Conquering Storm's fortress the non-booby-trapped way. The Royal Fighters followed him and kept a cautious eye out for any signs of attempted ambushes and to make sure their ninja friend didn't try anything funny. But they wouldn't have to worry about that for Rai

had heard the commotion back behind the wok shop and he'd spied on the Royal Fighters to see what was going on. He wasn't pleased to see they were forcing one of the Raiju Clan's ninjas against his will to take them to Conquering Storm but he didn't let that bother him since they were all signing their death warrants wanting to meet Conquering Storm and all. And since he knew what was going on and where they were going, he and the rest of the clan could follow the Royal Fighters in silence and then ambush them before they can even get to Conquering Storm. She'd be so pleased to see a bunch of would-be anarchists beaten and defeated at her doorstep and awaiting punishment from her. What he wouldn't give to see Conquering Storm deal with those heathens in her own special way! Rai emerged from his hiding place and he walked over to the ninjas on guard.

"Attention Raiju Clan!" he barked "We have an interference in the works!"

The Raiju Ninjas stared at Rai and they began to wonder what was going on. It was worrying for any world-conqueror when there was an interference in the works. Especially as it meant that somebody was attempting to foil their plans.

"A group of outsiders who call themselves "The Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis" have shown up uninvited to this country and they're attempting to usurp us." announced Rai "They're forcing one of our own to lead them to Conquering Storm. This will not be a problem of course as Conquering Storm is unbeatable but we shall return to the fortress and stop those unwanted guests before they can get anywhere near our fortress. Conquering Storm will be pleased to see we have an interference that needs dealing with. She'll give out very good punishments for them I know they will."

The ninjas all agreed with what Rai was saying and they decided to go with his plan. Every ninja in the village joined up with Rai and the ninjas all ran off at the speed of light. Ninjas were swift and silent after all so the whole Raiju Clan could get back to the fortress before the Royal Fighters did. And what a surprise they would get when they arrived at the fortress, expecting to see Conquering Storm and maybe have a showdown with her only to see the entire Raiju Clan waiting to pound them and prepare them for Conquering Storm's

dungeon. This whole plan of the Royal Fighter's was going to blow up in their faces…

Meanwhile, back in Megapolis, Dr. Eggman and his servant bot Katherine were putting the finishing touches on the newly repaired but still dead body of Devion. As a big sign of his over-inflated ego, Eggman had even painted his trademark Eggman Empire logo on Devion's chest to show he was now on his side. Eggman was amazed with the technology behind the insidious Devatron leader, his body had schematics, circuitry and mechanisms beyond anything he'd ever seen before. And yet he, the magnificent, marvellous, mad, mad, mad, mad genius that he is, managed to fix him up and get him ready for action. If any other Devatron saw this, they'd probably be happy with Eggman for fixing up their leader. But they would not be happy to see Eggman was using Devion for his own purposes. They would see it as total and utter desecration. But Eggman wouldn't care. He had his own plans and Devion was going to help him. He knew how tough a Devatron could truly be after witnessing everything that had been going on recently. Having just one Devatron in his ranks instantly made him a force to be reckoned with. And right now, Devion was almost ready for reactivation. His body was perfectly ready for moving again, he just needed a new brain to function him. Eggman had fixed up Devion's brain but he had added his own special touches to it to make sure Devion was unwaveringly loyal to him. The modifications to Devion's brain gave Eggman total control over the Devatron leader and it could never be broken, overridden or countermanded. Devion was stuck as Eggman's pet killing machine forever once Eggman plugged it back into his head. Eggman opened up Devion's head and he plugged the modified computer brain that drove him back into the socket it fitted in. Eggman then closed up Devion's head and he smiled widely to himself.

"Oooooh Eggman you amaze even yourself." he purred, stroking his moustache "OK Katherine, throw the switch and breathe new life into this fallen foe! Let us bring him to life and give him a new purpose that will benefit us most dearly!"

Katherine nodded and she pulled the switch on the control pad. The

switch activated a power surge that tunnelled through some wires that were hooked up to Devion and they began to feed him power that would kick his dead body into gear and bring him back alive. Electricity began to cackle and dance around Devion in a crazy fashion, his body began to shake and the power feed began to get stronger and stronger as it continued. Dr. Eggman began to cackle madly as the power-feed began but Katherine stood back and feared if something was going to happen. It certainly looked like something was about to go wrong as the electricity began to dance about more wildly as the surge continued and Devion's body began to shake more violently but luckily for Eggman, nothing bad ended up happening. The power feed had finally been completed and Devion's body stopped shaking. The electricity ceased and vanished and everything went silent. Eggman and Katherine stared at Devion's body and wondered if the whole thing had worked or not. Devion remained still for a minute and then suddenly, his body kicked into gear. His V-shaped visor lit up and glowed red. His head lifted up and he began to move. Dr. Eggman grinned widely. Devion was awake and functioning at last! The Devatron leader had been successfully brought back from the dead and it was all thanks to Eggman's genius. But would Devion be loyal to him like he intended him to be? Or will his retooling be all for naught? Devion stood up straight and he turned to face Dr. Eggman. He strode over to the fat scientist with a cold look in his visor. Eggman began to feel nervous. What was Devion going to do to him? Devion stood before Eggman and…he bowed down to him.

"I am at your service and awaiting orders Dr. Eggman." Devion purred in his familiar deep, chilling voice.

Dr. Eggman was so surprised his moustache straightened. It worked! Eggman's modifications to Devion's brain had made Devion loyal to him! Devion was on Eggman's side! How glorious this was! Things were looking up for Dr. Eggman for once! Looks like stealing his dead body and repairing it was a good idea after all and it was going to pay off beautifully. Eggman was so giddy with excitement he could barely contain himself.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!" he cackled "How marvellous! Devion, the most evil and powerful thing that Sonic has ever encountered has been

brought back alive thanks to my scientific genius and he's willing to serve me! Oh Katherine, I'm so wowed by this I might just cry!"

Katherine just stood there as silent as a graveyard and said nothing. Dr. Eggman turned back to Devion and smiled maliciously.

"Welcome to the Eggman Empire Devion." said Dr. Eggman "You are now my servant and you will serve me in any means necessary. Do you understand?"

"Yes my master." droned Devion "So what task do you wish to bestow upon me doctor?"

"Before you died Devion, you managed to shoot Sonic in the back." announced Dr. Eggman "Do you remember him at all?"

"Yes." muttered Devion "He disgraced my kind and terminated me during my attempts at conquest! I wish to make that desecrater pay for his actions master!"

Eggman had salvaged much of Devion's memory so his motivation and passion for killing Sonic would be more extreme and he'd be willing to help Eggman be rid of the blue hedgehog. Luckily, Eggman had erased any memory of him from Devion's mind to avoid the possibility of the Devatron leader double-crossing him and his modifications to the computer brain made Devion think he was on Eggman's side.

"Well Devion, you've managed to get Sonic hospitalized but I strongly think that the hedgehog's going to live so we're going over to New Mobotropolis and finish him off ourselves." explained Dr. Eggman "I will distract any resistance with my army of Egg-Pawns while you sneak into the city and slaughter Sonic for me. Can you do that for me Devion?" he asked in a dark manner that made him sound very scary.

"I will carry that order out to the letter doctor." said Devion "Sonic will pay for his crimes against us! Do you have any idea on how we're going to get past the city's shields though?"

"We won't." said Dr. Eggman "I have a robot with digging capabilities

that'll dig under the wall and you will easily be able to crawl under the wall and get into the city that way. And don't worry about encountering any pesky resistance as my robot army and my assistant Katherine will be keeping them busy."

"I understand master." said Devion "So when shall we carry out this marvellous plan of yours?"

"Now." said Dr. Eggman proudly "Let's get going Devion for we have a hedgehog to get rid of before he gets a chance to recover!"

"Yes my master." said Devion loyally "I promise you I will return with the hedgehog's head in my claws."

Dr. Eggman beamed with pride, pleased to see Devion being so loyal to him instead of against him. This was going to be a day worth remembering for the fat scientist. Dr. Eggman led Devion and Katherine off to the hangar bay where his Egg-Fleet was kept. It was still minus the flagship though as Eggman hadn't had time to repair it. Eggman was not bringing the fleet though for he was only going to assassinate Sonic while he was weak and helpless. He needed some mode of transport though so Eggman decided to take one of the red shark-shaped ships in the fleet. The ship would provide an excellent way of retreating and it would deploy the Eggman robots needed for the distraction methods. The ship would fly above New Mobotropolis and then drop the robots down onto the ground for the plan. Eggman could just see it now as he, Devion and Katherine seated themselves in the small fleet-ship and prepared for take off. The moment everybody was seated, Eggman took controls of the ship and set it for take-off. The ceiling opened up above their heads and the ship began to ascend up out of the underground bunker and into the daylight sky outside. The ship rose out from the ground and it cruised away from the bunker and on towards NewMobotropolis. What a shock those Mobians would get when it arrived at the city and launched its attack…

Meanwhile, the captive ninja had led the Royal Fighters all the way to Conquering Storm's fortress through the non-lethal path to it and he stood still as they walked up the rocky stairway and into view of

the magnificent place of refuge for the Raiju Clan. The ninja stood to the side and held out an arm.

"Here you are chumps." he muttered "Our fortress. Conquering Storm is here if you wish to meet with her."

The Royal Fighters stared at the formidable, majestic fortress that loomed above them. They were well impressed at the place. It looked so imposing and yet so amazing at the same time. Ruben however already knew what it was like as he had seen it before and seeing it again brought back a few memories for him. He was amazed to see it still looking so grand and impressive. He wouldn't mind living in a place like this although he'd have to remake it a little and make it more friendly looking as he didn't do evil, imposing looking structures.

"I hate to give the villains a compliment but that thing's unreal!" cried Mandy "It's amazing looking!"

"No wonder the Raiju Clan lives here, it's perfect for them." said Wilson, gaping in awe at the fortress.

"It won't be for long for I will tear that thing down to the ground brick by brick once we stomp their leader into submission!" growled Shadow "I bet one powerful Chaos Blast will level the place easily."

"You will not destroy our honoured matron!" yelled the ninja "Conquering Storm will stomp you all into the dirt! The powerful and mighty Princess Matilda and even Zira the Ruthless are no match for her so you will not stand a chance against her!"

"Whatever mate, we'll be sure to let you know how we sorely defeated your leader." snickered Geoffrey St. John.

"And as promised, you may go free now." said Tails "But no double-crossing us, you have you word of honour after all."

"I am full aware of the promise I made." retorted the ninja "I do not need to be reminded."

With that said, the ninja ran off and left the Royal Fighters behind to deal with Conquering Storm. Little did he know was that he'd end up

coming back to them in a minute or two. As for the Royal Fighters, they crept up to the fortress, keeping an eye out for any attempts at an ambush and anyone lying in wait. There didn't seem to be anyone around so they crept up to the doors. The doors looked very solid and it would take a big pounding to knock them down. The Royal Fighters looked up at them and they began musing to one another.

"OK genius boy, how do we get through these doors?" asked Rouge.

"I dunno." said Tails "They look very strong. I bet they'll be hard to knock down."

"Well this looks like a job for lil ol' me then." said Bunnie "Ah can punch hard enough to smash an Eggman robot after all. Ah'll knock them down in a few hits or so."

"I agree on that babe but you can't knock them down by yourself." said Geoffrey, putting his hands on Bunnie's shoulders "I think Knuckles and any other hard hitters should join in."

"Or I can just Chaos Blast the doors down." said Shadow, preparing to remove his inhibitor rings.

"No Shadow, save that for when we really need it." said Tails "You can spin-dash the doors instead while Bunnie, Knuckles and Vector punch them. The four of you together will knock them down easily."

"Sounds good enough to me." said Shadow, cracking his knuckles "Let's get started then."

With that said, Bunnie, Vector and Knuckles instantly began to punch the doors as hard as they possibly could. As the three heavy hitters pounded away at the doors, Shadow spin-dashed at them, making sure to aim above their heads so he didn't spin-dash them instead. The combined efforts of the four were making a tumultuous scene and it seemed to be working for chips of paint were falling off the doors and cracks were beginning to appear in it. This whole thing attracted Conquering Storm's attention and the lynx stormed through the hallways, her cloak billowing out behind her as she

strode towards the doors.

"What on Mobius is going on out there?!" she growled "Can't I bask in luxury without anyone knocking on my front door?!"

As she was heading towards the door, Knuckles, Bunnie, Vector and Shadow finally managed to bust a hole into the door and Tails ordered them to stop for a minute. The four stopped their attacking and they stood back as Tails walked up to the door. Conquering Storm saw the hole that the Royal Fighters had made into the doors and she ran over to a window at ninja speed to see what was happening She was livid with rage to see she had some intruders on her doorstep. She didn't do anything though as she decided the element of surprise was the best idea right now so she lay low and waited for something to happen. As for Tails, he looked through the hole in the door and observed the scenery for any signs of Conquering Storm. She didn't appear to be anywhere in sight strangely enough.

"There's no sign of Conquering Storm." said Tails "She doesn't appear to be anywhere."

"Maybe she's not in?" suggested Cosmo "Or she's hiding somewhere. Either way, we must be careful. She could strike at any time."

"I do hope she's not hiding behind the door and waiting to ambush us." said Charmy, folding his arms "Because that will make me mad."

"Charmy you idiot, why would Conquering Storm do something as predictable as that?" asked Vector "Ninjas aren't stupid after all."

The irony of all this is that Charmy Bee is actually right, Conquering Storm was hiding behind the door and waiting to ambush the Royal Fighters. The fact that Vector scoffed this possibility off is a clear sign that Conquering Storm liked to do the unexpected and doing the expected can be very unexpected as some individuals wouldn't expect villains like Conquering Storm to do the expected as they're smarter then this. So despite doing what a lot of ambushers do which is hide behind the door and attack someone that way, they

wouldn't see this coming as the Royal Fighters would expect Conquering Storm to do something less predictable then this.

"They certainly aren't, ninjas are among the smartest of warriors depending on their training and discipline." said Espio "And the Raiju Clan seems like a well brought up clan from what we've heard from Matilda."

"Well wherever Conquering Storm is, it doesn't matter." said Ruben "Our primary task is to stop her and bring an end to the Raiju Clan's terror but I've been given a second objective by Matilda to retrieve the water panther's stolen aqua-collars so while we're here, I may as well fulfil that task and give myself my powers back."

With that said, Ruben instantly leaped through the hole in the door and into the fortress. Tails and Cosmo followed him into the fortress as they felt Ruben was rushing in a little recklessly here and that he would probably end up in trouble going in like this.

"Ruben wait up!" cried Tails.

"You can't just run in like this, you'll get in trouble!" called Cosmo.

As the two ran in after Ruben, Conquering Storm followed them as quietly as she could, hoping to ambush them and punish them for this intrusion. As for the others, they began to wonder if they should go in after the three or not.

"Hey, should we go in after them?" asked Knuckles.

"Yes you silly head!" snapped Mandy "Who knows what Ruben, Tails and Cosmo will run into in there? They really should have waited for a command before rushing in there, Ruben in particular since he should know better."

"Well then you blokes and lasses, let's get in there and catch up to those kids." said Geoffrey, clearly eager to get inside the fortress.

"Nobody will set so much as one foot into our fortress!" boomed a deep voice that made everybody leap in surprise.

The Royal Fighters turned around and saw none other then the

entire Raiju Clan standing before them with their weapons all at the ready. Rai stood up front and he had a flail in his hand. The ninjas all looked very angry to see intruders up at their fortress. The Royal Fighters all prepared to do battle.

"That ninja we nabbed double-crossed us. What a surprise." muttered Rouge "Tails should have known better then to let him go."

"Actually, we already knew what you were doing intruders thanks to a little spy work from me and the ninja you kidnapped just happened to run into us as we were following you." sneered Rai "And now we're all going to smash you to pieces in honour of our glorious master, the Bride of the Conquering Storm!"

"Is that so?" scoffed Mandy "Well I've got something to say about that ninjas, tell your master to change her name. Conquering Storm is the stupidest name I've ever heard."

The Royal Fighters couldn't help but snicker at that remark, especially Charmy. He was laughing his little head off. The Raiju Ninjas were none to pleased with that insult and they frowned at the purple mouse who dared to badmouth Conquering Storm.

"Mandy! Don't insult them you'll make them mad!" shrieked Wilson.

"Oh Wilson sweetie, they're already mad so I'm not doing them much harm." sighed Mandy.

"You are you little rat!" snarled Rai "Insulting our master is a grave offence and you will pay for it!"

"Did you just call me a rat?!" growled Mandy, clutching her fists and frowning angrily "If you did then I have one thing to say to you chump. Shadow, beat them into the ground!" she bellowed.

"With pleasure." said Shadow with a devious smirk on his face.

Now was the time to show the Royal Fighters how much better at the hero thing he could be then Sonic and now he could prove his superiority over Sonic by beating all those ninjas in a matter of seconds. How jealous Sonic would be when he heard about all this and how he, Shadow the Hedgehog, managed to fill in for him and

do better then he ever could. Shadow curled up into a ball and he spin-dashed towards all the ninjas. The ninjas dodged the spin-dash but Shadow did a huge U-turn and came right back at them, knocking them all down onto the ground. Rai stared at Shadow as he uncurled from his spin-dash and landed back onto his feet. This mysterious adversary was very much like Sonic only his spin-dash felt harder and stronger then Sonic's did. Who was he and how does he have powers like Sonic?

"Who are you hedgehog?" asked Rai, picking himself up and preparing to swing his flail around.

"I am Shadow, Shadow the Hedgehog." explained Shadow "That's all you need to know. I'm filling in for Sonic as he's out of bounds right now and I will make you ninjas wish you'd never tried to take over this country."

"Big talk little guy." muttered Rai, swinging the flail around in a circle "But big talk does not make a big warrior. You will be smashed in the name of our clan and our master and your anarchistic plans will cease to commence!"

With that said, Rai charged towards Shadow and he swung the flail at him. He almost hit Shadow but Shadow just managed to dodge the flail and it smacked into the ground. Shadow unleashed a series of attacks on Rai that sent the lynx staggering backwards. Shadow kicked Rai over onto his back but before he could do anything else, three ninjas jumped in and ambushed the black hedgehog. They all kicked Shadow at once and knocked him down onto the ground. Shadow picked himself up only to get a roundhouse kick to the legs that tripped him up and before he could fall down, another ninja leaped in and kicked him backwards. Shadow hurled backwards and he landed rather sharply on the first step of the rocky stairway to the fortress. Rouge was livid to see those ninjas do this to Shadow so she stepped in with a powerful screw-kick attack that sent all three ninjas hurling forwards onto their faces. Rai lunged at Rouge and tried to wallop her with his flail but he missed and Rouge tried to kick him but Rai grabbed her leg and just as Shadow skated towards him on his jet shoes, Rai smacked him with Rouge. Shadow was brought down onto his back and Rai carelessly tossed Rouge aside, earning a pained grunt from the bat. Shadow leaped back to his feet and he

spin-dashed Rai in the gut. He then threw some Chaos Spears at a few ninjas that tried to get the drop on him. But more ninjas leaped in and they jumped onto Shadow. They all piled down onto of the black hedgehog and pinned him down to the ground. Shadow however warped out from underneath them and reappeared behind them. He spin-dashed the ninjas and sent them sprawling like pins in a bowling alley. But Rai got the drop on him by walloping him with his flail and sending Shadow flying a good distance away from him. Shadow landed sharply on his side and he clutched his throbbing head in pain. The attack left him stunned and he was finding it a little hard to stand back up. Rai cackled at Shadow and he prepared to finish him off but Rouge screw-kicked the star-ninja in the back and knocked him down onto his stomach. Rouge tried to launch another attack on Rai but she was quickly drop-kicked by a trio of ninjas.

The Royal Fighters could see that Shadow and Rouge weren't enough so they had to get into this or they were toast. The Royal Fighters charged in to the fray and began to battle with the ninjas. Knuckles launched the first blow by gut-punching a ninja armed with a spear. The ninja retaliated by trying to hit Knuckles with his spear but Knuckles caught the spear in his hands and he yanked it out of the ninja's grasp. He butted the ninja with the flat end of the spear and then tripped him up by swiping it at his legs. However one ninja threw a shuriken at Knuckles and the shuriken tore a gash across Knuckles' shoulder. Knuckles screamed in pain and he clutched his bleeding shoulder. The spear wielding ninja he'd just been fighting saw fit to do the sweep-kick attack on him. He took Knuckles' legs out from underneath him by roundhouse kicking them and before Knuckles could land on the ground, the ninja kicked him and sent him hurling into the door of the fortress. Shade decided to pay the ninja back for doing that to Knuckles so she Blade-Rushed the ninja with her twin blade weapons and knocked him over. A ninja wielding a pair of nunchakus walloped Shade in the back of her knees with them, forcing Shade down onto her knees and then he walloped the armoured echidna in the head. Shade was brought down onto her side and the ninja tried to smack her with the nunchakus again but Shade deployed her helmet in order to protect her head from the attack. The nunchakus ended up smacking her helmet but doing no harm to the echidna. Shade picked herself up and kicked the ninja in the gut as hard as she possibly could.

As for Wilson and Mandy, they were doing battle with a pair of ninjas that were wielding twin katana blades and a bo-staff respectively. Wilson fought the katana ninja and Mandy fought the staff ninja. Wilson drew out his spinning-blade weapon and he clashed blades with the katana ninja. The clash of the blades ran through the fighter's ears. The ninja however soon had Wilson on the ropes as he twirled his katanas around at an amazing speed and Wilson backed away nervously because of this. The ninja swung the katanas at Wilson and their weapons clashed ever so violently. Wilson slashed at the ninja and almost knocked his katanas out of his hands. But the ninja kept hold of them and he slashed at Wilson, the attack getting blocked by Wilson's spinning blade. As for Mandy, all she had were her brass knuckle attachments and her opponent wielded a bo staff. It was short range vs. long range in this battle. The staff ninja tried to smack Mandy with his staff but Mandy dodged the attack and roundhouse punched the ninja in the face. The ninja thought for a moment his face had been smashed by the power of that punch, doubled by the brass knuckle attachments Mandy wore. The ninja quickly recovered and he used his staff to flip himself over behind Mandy. Before Mandy could react, the ninja walloped her in the back with his staff and the mouse was thrown down onto the ground. Mandy picked herself up only to get tripped up by the ninja's bo-staff as he whacked her legs with it. The ninja then tried to smack Mandy with the staff but Mandy rolled out of the way and picked herself up. She lunged at the ninja and punched him in the face again.

Bunnie and Geoffrey were in a similar predicament only they were fighting a pair of ninjas armed with a Naginata (a bladed bo-staff) and a kusarigama (or a chain-sickle whichever you prefer) respectively. Bunnie was fighting the ninja with the kusarigama. The ninja spun the end of the weapon around in a perfect circle and he threw it towards Bunnie. Bunnie dodged the attack and she extended her arm to twice it's length. She walloped the ninja in the face and sent it staggering backwards. The ninja regained his balance and he threw the bladed part of the kusarigama towards Bunnie. The blade skimmed Bunnie across her side and Bunnie grimaced for a minute. She quickly regained herself and she ran towards the ninja. However, the ninja leaped past Bunnie and wrapped her up in the kusarigama. Bunnie was now wrapped up by

the long chain of the kusarigama. She couldn't move her arms and the ninja could take advantage of this. The ninja pulled on the chain and pulled Bunnie towards himself. He then kicked Bunnie in the back as she was yanked towards him and Bunnie was thrown forward. The ninja pulled on the chain again and pulled Bunnie towards himself. However he stood to the side and Bunnie ended up flying past him and landing sharply on her back. Bunnie managed to break free of the kusarigama, which left the ninja with the sickle part and a much shorter chain. The ninja tried to slash Bunnie with the sickle part of the kusarigama but Bunnie dodged and elbowed the ninja in the gut. She then punched him in the face and tripped him up with a swift kick to the legs. As for Geoffrey, he began shooting as many darts as he possibly could at his opponent but the ninja kept dodging them all. He slashed at Geoffrey with his Naginata and he tore a gash in Geoffrey's trademark combat suit. Geoffrey punched at the ninja but the ninja blocked the punch with his hand and he butted Geoffrey in the gut with the flat end of the Naginata. Geoffrey doubled over and the ninja walloped him with his weapon. Geoffrey picked himself up and he punched at the ninja. The ninja blocked his attack but Geoffrey head-butted him in the face before the ninja could do anything else. Geoffrey then grabbed the Naginata and he tried to yank it out of the ninja's grasp. The ninja held on tight and kicked Geoffrey away. The skunk staggered backwards but he regained himself and he prepared to fight on.

Amy and Cream were paired up and having a tough time against some ninjas that were armed with all sorts of horrible weapons. One ninja armed with a pair of sais tried to stab Amy with them but Amy walloped him with her Piko-Piko hammer. The ninja landed on his back but he quickly leaped back onto his feet and threw his sais at Amy. Amy shielded her face with her hammer and the sais embedded themselves into the head of the hammer. The ninja leaped towards Amy and he grabbed the sais that were embedded in her hammer. He yanked them back out of the hammer and he slashed Amy's hands with them. Amy yelped in pain and she sucked on the fresh cuts that appeared on her hands. This gave the ninja ample time to kick Amy in the gut. Cream flew in behind the ninja and attempted to attack him but another ninja leaped in and kicked Cream down to the ground. The ninja then drew out a broadsword and he attempted to slice Cream in two with it. But Amy stopped the

ninja by throwing her Piko-Piko hammer at him and the hammer smacked the ninja down onto his side. Amy ran over to retrieve her hammer but the ninja she just hit by throwing it at him leaped up and kicked her away from the hammer. The ninja then picked up Amy's hammer and walloped Cream with it just as the rabbit flew in to stop him. Cream was sent crashing down and she wailed in pain. She really didn't like getting hit. Cheese, her pet Chao, was furious to see his owner get hurt like this so he flew in to attack the ninja but the ninja smacked him with Amy's hammer. Amy picked herself up and summoned another Piko-Piko hammer to her hand. This in turn led to her and the ninja having a hammer fight (I'm pretty sure it's as hilarious as it sounds). The two began to bash hammers with each other as hard as they could but the ninja won in the end for two more ninjas leaped in and ambushed Amy from behind. Cream tried to help but she was quickly ambushed by another ninja that was armed with a staff.

Espio, Vector and Charmy were locked in combat with a bunch of ninjas that were mostly armed with spears. The three of them weren't doing too bad against the ninjas mainly because of Vector's strength, Espio's ninjutsu and Charmy being a darn good distraction but they were having problems themselves. Vector socked a ninja in the face as hard as he could but two ninjas, both armed with staffs, hit Vector in the back as hard as they could and Vector yelped in pain. They then proceeded to trip Vector up with their staffs and bring the big, brawling crocodile down onto his back. Espio threw some shuriken at the ninjas and made them back down for a minute. Espio then landed between the staff-wielding ninjas and split-kicked them, knocking them both down onto their sides. One ninja threw a shuriken at Espio but Espio deflected it by throwing one of his own to stop it. The ninja attempted to throw another shuriken but Charmy flew in and rammed him in the gut by flying head first into it. The ninja was thrown backwards by the attack and Charmy buzzed off to distract another ninja. But he ended up getting dropkicked by another ninja and knocked down beside Vector, who was just picking himself up. Espio and another ninja began to punch at each other in typical ninja fashion but he was suddenly attacked from behind by another ninja he punched him in the back of the head. The ninja he was fighting slugged him in the stomach and kicked him over to Vector and Charmy. Espio spluttered and he drew out a

kunai knife.

"This clan is well trained." he mused "They're strong and powerful."

"They're no Devatrons or Eggman robots that's for certain but they're quite a handful." muttered Vector "This is one fight we'll have trouble winning I fear." he added as he watched Shadow and Rai brawl with each other some more.

"Well I'm not letting these loser ninjas beat us up! Let's keep fighting!" yelled Charmy determinedly "We will kick their butts all the way to Spagonia!"

"Easier said then done Charmy." said Vector "But I'm not one to back down from a situation like this so I'm gonna keep fighting!"

"Me too, for the glory of Chun-Nan!" cried Espio, throwing the kunai at a ninja.

The Chaotix lunged towards some ninjas and prepared to dish it out on them. This whole fight was getting chaotic and it didn't look like anybody was going to win this one. This fight could will go on forever with no clear victor in sight…

Meanwhile in the fortress itself, Ruben, Tails and Cosmo had run into the throne room and Tails finally managed to catch Ruben. He stopped Ruben dead in his tracks by grabbing his arm firmly and giving him a stern glare.

"Ruben, what are you thinking?" asked Tails "You can't charge into enemy territory like this! You'll get in trouble!"

"I'm sorry about this sudden charge in Tails but I gave my word of honour to Matilda that I'd retrieve the stolen aqua-collars." explained Ruben "And the Raiju Clan apparently were the ones behind the whole thing so while we're here, I may as well fulfil that task. And since Rai mentioned the emperor being in their captivity I think we should look for him in here too."

"I understand Ruben but you shouldn't recklessly run into these kind

of things." said Cosmo "Conquering Storm could be anywhere and waiting to strike at us."

"She doesn't appear to be here so there's nothing to fear." said Ruben casually "Now, you two start looking for the emperor while I look for the stolen aqua-collars."

"Before that Ruben, I'd like to point out that just because Conquering Storm doesn't appear to be here it doesn't mean she isn't here at all." noted Tails "Did you think about that one at all?"

"Um…no actually." said Ruben, his face falling "Oh I'm such a ditz!" he groaned, face-palming himself crossly "I'm so eager to get my aqua-collar back that I'm not thinking things through before I do anything! And that's bad since I should know better!"

"Well even the best of us make mistakes Ruben." said Tails reassuringly "Anyway, Conquering Storm probably doesn't know we're here so we should start looking for those aqua-collars and the emperor before she finds us. And if we need help, we have our friends still outside and they might join us in a minute so there's nothing to worry about."

"I agree Tails." said Cosmo "Now, where would Conquering Storm keep her prisoners in a place like this."

"A dungeon perhaps." suggested Ruben, looking around the room for any possible signs of the aqua-collars "But where exactly one is in a place like this is a mystery to me as I didn't get to see much of the place when I first visited it."

With that said, Tails and Cosmo started looking around for any possible entrances to a dungeon in the throne room while Ruben looked for the aqua-collars. Unbeknownst to them though, Conquering Storm was watching them from the doorway and she silently stepped into the throne room. she reached into a pocket on her cloak and pulled out a vicious looking weapon which was a scary looking kunai with sharp blades and a long chain that was wrapped around it. Conquering Storm removed her shoulder pads and cape so she could fight better and she unravelled the chain, ready to strike these intruders with her weapon. They would get one

heck of a shock when she suddenly sprung at them with the kunai and chain weapon she now wielded…

The battle for Chun-Nan has begun folks! Who will triumph and who will fall? And will Dr. Eggman succeed in his assassination attempt? Or is Devion no longer the robot he once was? Tune in as we continue this saga next time...

Hey Arena Luminati, how's things going in this story for ya? Still good? Also, why do you keep changing your name? It's getting confusing now...

The Storm Rages On

Story 118: The Storm Rages On

Tails, Cosmo and Ruben were in the Raiju Clan's fortress and they were searching for any possible entrances to a dungeon and the stolen aqua-collars. Their search hadn't come up with any results though and as of now, they were still looking around for those things. They wouldn't be searching for much longer though for the Raiju Clan leader, the Bride of the Conquering Storm, was sneaking up on them and getting ready to strike with her lethal weapon which was a kunai with chain. Being the ninja master she was, she managed to sneak up on the three as quietly as she possibly could. When you're a ninja, you can walk and run very quietly after all. Conquering Storm managed to get within ten feet of Tails before she started spinning the long chain around in a perfect circle. Tails heard the metallic clink of the chain and he turned around to see what it was. To his horror, it was Conquering Storm standing behind him, grinning maniacally and spinning a chain with a wicked looking blade on the end around. Conquering Storm threw the weapon at Tails and she nearly got him. Tails managed to dodge by leaping out of the way and leaving the kunai to embed itself into the ground. Conquering Storm tugged on the chain and yanked the weapon out of the ground. Tails frowned at Conquering Storm and clenched his fists.

"Hey! Watch it, you could hurt someone with that!" yelled Tails.

Conquering Storm ignored Tails and she swung the chain at Tails. Tails leaped over the chain as it swept over the ground and swept under his feet as he jumped up. Conquering Storm then began to spin the chain around again and she aimed for Tails. She threw the chain at Tails and the kunai almost struck him directly in the chest but Ruben leaped in and kicked the kunai away, causing it to hurl to the side and land on the ground. Conquering Storm withdrew the kunai and she prepared to spin the chain around again. Ruben bent down in a battle ready stance and he prepared to deck Conquering Storm.

"We meet again Conquering Storm." said Ruben coldly "This time though, we're on apposing sides."

"Yes we are little water panther." snorted Conquering Storm "And if I were to guess, that little brat of a princess reached you and informed you on what we Raiju Ninjas have done recently so that you can bring a small army and attempt to overthrow me Ruben?"

"Yes." said Ruben "I'm horrified to hear that you dared to betray Chun-Nan and try to seize power for yourself like this. I thought you had decency in you Conquering Storm but now I know that you and your ninjas are even worse then Zira is. In the name of the emperor and the princess, I will see you defeated and I will get my aqua-collar back!"

"You think too highly of yourself Ruben." sneered Conquering Storm "I am too powerful, I am one of Chun-Nan's mightiest forces! Zira the Ruthless and even Matilda herself are no match for me so what chance do you have Ruben? You may have reinforcements but do any of them know martial arts of any kind? And it seems most of it is not here. Are they still outside waiting to make their move?"

Ruben suddenly remembered the others and he began to wonder what they were up to outside. Were they waiting to come in? Or had Conquering Storm beaten them all to a pulp and was now coming to finish him, Tails and Cosmo off? He had no idea and he wasn't going to find out if he couldn't get past Conquering Storm. Ruben decided to shrug it off and focus on the current threat.

"My friends are probably still outside." said Ruben "And I'm sure they'll be waiting to make their entrance so you'd better watch out!"

"Maybe so." said Conquering Storm in a deadpan tone, spinning the kunai with chain around again "But that will not stop me from slaughtering all of you!"

With that said, she threw the kunai at Ruben but Ruben caught it in between his hands before it could strike his heart. Conquering Storm yanked the kunai out of Ruben's hands and she swung the chain at him. Ruben jumped over the chain and he lunged towards Conquering Storm with his leg stretched out. Conquering Storm

swung the chain upwards and whipped Ruben in the back before his kick could hit home. This caused Ruben to fly over Conquering Storm and land behind her. Conquering Storm then kicked Ruben as hard as she possibly could. Her iron-toed boots made that kick very painful and poor Ruben felt like he'd been smacked with a sack of rocks. Ruben grimaced in pain and he slowly began to pick himself up. Conquering Storm flashed a wicked smile at Ruben and she swung the kunai around again. She swung at Ruben and the kunai slashed Ruben across his side, leaving a very nasty gash on it. Ruben screamed a bloodcurdling scream and he fell down onto his side, clutching it and feeling the nasty gash. Tails and Cosmo stared at Ruben in horror and they instantly ran into help. But this just earned them a hefty whip of the chain from Conquering Storm as they ran towards Ruben and she swung it at them. Tails and Cosmo were sent hurling backwards and they landed on their backs. Conquering Storm stood over the injured Ruben and she prepared to deliver the killer blow.

"I can just imagine Matilda's face when I deliver her little servant boy back to her with his head severed!" cackled Conquering Storm "And that would serve her right for relying on mere children to do the dirty work for her!"

Conquering Storm swung the chain around again and aimed for Ruben's neck. Ruben could only stare back at Conquering Storm helplessly as she prepared to severe his head off. Tails picked himself up and he took flight with the aid of his namesakes. Tails flew towards Conquering Storm and he pile-dived the ninja master in the back. Conquering Storm dropped her weapon and she hurled over Ruben and onto her face. Conquering Storm picked herself up and she glowered at Tails. The glare quickly turned into surprise when she realized that Tails was flying and he was doing so by spinning his tails around in a circle.

"This is not possible!" she blurted "How are you able to fly by spinning your unnatural twin-tails around you little brat?!"

"I'm just special." said Tails "And I'm gonna use my flying skills to knock you down Conquering Storm! This is for hurting Ruben and stealing his aqua-collar!"

"It's humorous that you should bring up the aqua-collars fox boy." said Conquering Storm with a cruel smile on her face before Tails could attack "I'm glad Ruben is here because he in particular would love to hear this…do you know what happened to Hydra after he had served his purpose to me?"

"What?" asked Ruben nervously "What did happen to him?"

"I killed him." said Conquering Storm dryly, her wicked smile widening on her face "I blackmailed him into stealing every water panther's aqua-collar and after he had done so I killed him. He was surplus to requirements after he'd served his purpose and I couldn't let him go or he would give me away and I wanted to reveal myself to the public at just the right time so I couldn't let him live. So now thanks to me, Hydra will never get to apologize or make up for what he had been forced to do."

Ruben looked like someone had just plunged a katana blade into his heart. He could not believe what he was hearing. Conquering Storm had killed Hydra after he'd stolen every water panther's collar?! This was one of the worst things that had ever happened to him since Zira slaughtered his clan. Ruben could hardly feel his limbs right now, the shock of this revelation had made him go numb with horror. Tears welled up in his eyes and he stared down at the floor.

"You…you…you k…killed…Hydra?" gasped Ruben.

"Yes I did." said Conquering Storm with a prideful smile on her evil face "Like I said, he was surplus to requirements and letting him go would just have ended up with him telling on the clan like a little tattletale."

"I…I cannot…believe this!" choked Ruben, the tears falling down his face at last "Hydra…was one of my best friends…and you killed him!"

Ruben then put his face into his hands and let out a long, wailing cry that could make any stone-faced individual tear up. Cosmo knelt down beside Ruben and gave him a comforting hug while Conquering Storm watched with a cold expression.

"That's so terrible." said Cosmo sadly "Oh Ruben, I feel so sorry for you right now. Your friend got forced into doing something terrible and he's dead so he can't redeem himself. What have you done to deserve something like this?"

"I don't know…" sobbed Ruben "But I am going to avenge Hydra… Conquering Storm…" he suddenly said, lifting his head up and glaring at the ninja lynx in the coolie-hat "I swear on the blood of my deceased clan, on the blood of Hydra and the blood of everybody in Chun-Nan…I will make you pay for this!"

Ruben then suddenly picked himself up, ignoring the stinging pain in his side from the horrible gash he'd received, and he lunged at Conquering Storm. Conquering Storm laughed at Ruben and she back-flipped just as Ruben neared her. This in turn caused Ruben to get walloped by her legs as she went up and over. Ruben landed on his back and Conquering Storm stood before him. She was about to pounce on him but Tails flew in and pile-dived Conquering Storm in the back, knocking her down onto the floor. Conquering Storm picked herself up just as Tails flew in to attack again. She and Tails ended up locking hands with each other and Tails tried to push Conquering Storm backwards but Conquering Storm was too strong for Tails. She then suddenly swung Tails around and smacked Ruben with him as he tried to lunge at her again. Ruben and Tails both lay on the floor in a heap. Conquering Storm picked up her kunai with chain and she swung the chain around again. She was about to let Tails and Ruben have it but Cosmo stood in the way and held out her arms defensively. Conquering Storm hesitated for a moment and she stopped spinning the chain around.

"I won't allow you to hurt my friends." said Cosmo.

"And how do you plan to stop me from doing so freak?" snorted Conquering Storm, repulsed by Cosmo's otherworld appearance "You don't seem to be the fighting type little girl. In fact, you look even weaker then the fox and Ruben. You will be no obstacle for me."

With that said, Conquering Storm swung the kunai with chain around again and she swung it at Cosmo. She hit Cosmo in the side of her body with the chain and the weight of the kunai pulled it around and

around the Seedrian, wrapping her up in the chain and rendering her at Conquering Storm's mercy. Conquering Storm yanked on the chain, pulling Cosmo towards her and she kicked Cosmo away from her. The chain unravelled as Cosmo flew backwards and she crashed into a wall. Cosmo fell down onto the floor and she winced in pain. Tails was up on his feet in seconds and he rushed over to help Cosmo.

"Cosmo! Are you alright?" he asked worriedly as he ran over to her.

Ruben picked himself up and glared at Conquering Storm. Seeing Cosmo hurt just made him even angrier and more determined to beat Conquering Storm then ever.

"How dare you hurt Cosmo!" growled Ruben "Killing Hydra was bad enough but hurting a sweet little girl like Cosmo is going too far!"

"Oh I'm so terribly sorry about all that." sneered Conquering Storm, swinging the chain around again "Had I known that harming a freak like her would have angered you so much, I would have done worse to her then I already have done!"

With that said, Conquering Storm threw the kunai at Ruben but Ruben caught it before it could hit him. Conquering Storm however just swung the chain around and Ruben, still holding onto it, found himself being flung across the room and as he let go of the chain, he hurled through the air and crashed into a crate that sat in the corner of the throne room. To Conquering Storm's bad luck though, this was the crate that contained every single aqua-collar in Chun-Nan and as Ruben crashed into it, the crate fell over onto its side and the collars spilt all over the floor. Ruben wondered what he just crashed into and he suddenly realized he was sitting in a pile of aqua-collars. That alone made Ruben beam like a sunrise.

"Hey! I've found the stolen aqua-collars!" cried Ruben happily "How serendipitous this is! Now which one of these is mine?" he wondered, digging through the pile to find his collar.

Aqua-collars came in all shapes and sizes and were different shades of purple, violet and indigo so Ruben knew which collar he was looking for. It would take a while finding it though considering

every water panther in Chun-Nan minus the ones who had been given permanent water powers' collars were in the crate. Conquering Storm was not about to let Ruben find it though so she swung the chain around and aimed at Ruben.

"Get away from there you little brat!" she screamed, throwing the kunai at Ruben.

The kunai whooshed towards Ruben and it almost impaled him in the head but Ruben ducked just in time. The kunai ended up embedding itself in the wall as a result of this. Ruben quickly grabbed the kunai and he yanked it out of the wall. He then tried to snatch the weapon out of Conquering Storm's hands but Conquering Storm pulled on the chain and brought Ruben down onto the ground. Ruben refused to let go of the kunai so he kept hold of it and tried to yank it out of Conquering Storm's grasp. But pull as hard as he possibly can, he still couldn't snatch the weapon from Conquering Storm. Conquering Storm yanked on the weapon again and brought Ruben flying towards her. Conquering Storm kicked Ruben in the face with her heel as he hurled towards her. Ruben landed on the floor very sharply and he grimaced in pain. If only he was at a higher level of ninjutsu and maybe he would stand a chance against Conquering Storm but being only a novice and Conquering Storm being presumably a master or expert, he had no chance against her. Same with Tails and Cosmo. Tails flew in to attack Conquering Storm again but the ninja lynx pounded him down into the floor with little effort and Cosmo kept well away from her since she couldn't do anything against Conquering Storm. Conquering Storm picked up Tails and she held the kunai at the end of her chain up to the fox's throat.

"Now you will pay the price for daring to intrude on Raiju Clan soil little boy." she said coldly "And the rest of your resistance is next."

"Don't you dare kill me Conquering Storm or you will make my friends really angry!" warned Tails.

"Anger is hardly going to help your friends in a crusade against me and my clan foolish child." snorted Conquering Storm "So they can get angry all they like, it will not help them."

Conquering Storm then prepared top lunge the kunai into Tails' throat but suddenly, something came flying through the doors and into the throne room. It was her star ninja Dàfēng Rai. Shadow the Hedgehog had spin-dashed him into the fortress and now he'd spin-dashed him into the throne room of the place. Rai landed at Conquering Storm's feet and the lynx threw Tails down onto the floor.

"Rai! What is going on?" asked Conquering Storm.

"We have a resistance." muttered Rai, pointing at Shadow the Hedgehog who stood before the two lynxes and looked deathly serious.

Conquering Storm glowered at Shadow and she readied herself for the inevitable battle. Shadow bent down in a battle ready stance and he prepared to unleash hell on Conquering Storm. But Shadow wasn't going to be alone in this battle for the rest of the Royal Fighters quickly joined him. They had tried to abandon the battle and run after Shadow but the Raiju Clan chased after them and now everybody was in the throne room, ready to get into one big epic beat down. The Raiju Ninjas all stood behind Conquering Storm and prepared for battle while the Royal Fighters, looking a little beaten but still ready to fight, all stood together and prepared to do battle themselves. Tails, Ruben and Cosmo joined their side and they sneered at Conquering Storm.

"The gang's all here now Conquering Storm." gloated Ruben "This fight's going to get even harder for you now."

"If I were you, I would surrender before things get unpleasant." said Cosmo "Things really will get nasty for you if you don't stand down Conquering Storm."

"The Raiju Clan NEVER surrenders!" bellowed Conquering Storm "I have been waiting too long and working too hard for this moment and I will not allow you to foil our conquest! I will see you all slaughtered and kicked out of my fortress before the sun sets!"

"Is that so?" sneered Shadow "Well then, prepare yourself ninjas for you're in for the fight of your lives."

"Do you honestly think I'll be intimidated by a Sonic impersonator?" snorted Conquering Storm "Resembling Sonic's appearance to some degree does not make you imposing in anyway black hedgehog, especially as I do not fear Sonic himself!"

"I'm not trying to impersonate Sonic." corrected Shadow "I am Shadow the Hedgehog, a fifty year-old genetic experiment with a lost purpose and I am filling in for Sonic as he's out of bounds for now. And in the name of my forgotten creator, I will Chaos Blast you all into oblivion!"

With that said, Shadow rocketed towards Conquering Storm and Conquering Storm charged towards Shadow, swinging the kunai with chain around and preparing to strike at him. The Raiju Ninjas and the Royal Fighters all charged at each other and the big battle resumed. With Conquering Storm present now, would this make the battle even harder for the heroes or would it not make a difference? Time would tell as the battle raged on…

Meanwhile back at New Mobotropolis, things were considerably much quieter and nothing was going on at the moment. In the New Mobotropolis Hospital, the remaining Royal Fighter groups were keeping guard of the unconscious Sonic the Hedgehog and they were remaining good to their word for they hadn't left his room since the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had left. Mariah the Medicine Cat was still here too and she was monitoring Sonic's condition to see if he was getting better at all. The medicine she'd given him yesterday should be taking effect by now. Mariah looked over Sonic and observed the heartbeat monitor he was hooked up to. It was beeping a little faster then yesterday but it was still pretty weak. Mariah sat Sonic up and she unravelled his bandages to see if the wound in his back was healing up at all. The wound on Sonic's back was black and there were some wrinkles from where it was healing up from the scorch marks caused by the blast. The wound was beginning to heal but it would still be awhile before Sonic was back on his feet and fighting for Mobius again. Mariah bandaged Sonic back up and she gently lay him back down onto the bed. Miranda Mongoose of the Northern Royal Fighters stood forward and put her hand on Mariah's shoulder.

"I don't mean to intrude miss but how is Sonic doing now?" asked Miranda.

"He's still unconscious but he's still stable at least and his wound appears to be recovering." said Mariah "He'll wake up sometime soon but I'm not sure when so you'll have to be patient."

"I know, it's just that me and Sonic are such good friends that I can't help but worry about him." said Miranda, looking at Sonic with a sad expression on her face "Ever since he saved me from getting roboticized by Dr. Eggman all those months ago, he's been an inspiration to me. He inspired me to join the R.F.S. and he's inspired me in my duty as team leader. If Devion had finished him off then I would just fall apart like a broken statue."

"I'm still amazed that a dying Devatron still had the firepower to put Sonic in a coma." said Kari the Rat who had her trademark spanner with her to fight off any intruders "Those guys really are serious. At least we don't have to worry about them anymore."

"You got that right Kari." said Thunder the Chipmunk "The Devatrons are as dead as dingbats and we can mock them all we like now!"

"You said it brother!" chuckled Bolt the Chipmunk "Just a pity Kate couldn't be here to join us in the mocking."

Just mentioning her late friend's name made Miranda feel like tearing up again. The mongoose knew though that constantly crying over Kate's death wasn't going to change anything so she held it in this time. Kari frowned at Thunder and Bolt.

"You two, please don't bring up Kate while Miranda's here!" she hissed "You know how much her death has…"

"Kari, they were alright." said Miranda "I know you're looking out for me but don't tell them off for bringing up my late friend. They don't mean any harm after all. Besides, I've been teaching myself to not let it get to me as Kate won't come back if I continue to grieve and grieving isn't going to do me any good."

"You got that right hot stuff." said Scott Lynx, leader of Team Adabat "Me and Jessica lost our village and our homes to Ravage Bloodfang during our training sessions* and we've learnt that grieving won't bring it back, nor will it do us any good. We've done the best thing and moved on from that. We still hold the memories in our minds though and we hope for the village's reconstruction soon."

"At least you'll get your village back son, if it ever gets rebuilt." said Miranda "I however won't get Kate back. While I'm glad the Devatrons, including the one that killed Kate are all dead, I don't feel any different. I guess they're right when they say "Revenge never solves anything"."

"You can say that again Miranda." said Kiara the Cheetah, Royal Fighter rookie and resident of Megapolis "When Wilson and Mandy tried to help us stop Marik from killing our team**, Marik played Mandy's desire for revenge to his advantage and evaded our capture or so Mandy herself told us. Also despite beating Marik, I didn't feel that great about myself because I lost my temper and disobeyed Thomas' direct orders. He was only looking out for me and what I did was uncalled for. He did let me off for succeeding in capturing Marik but I still feel bad about disobeying Thomas and from now on, I will follow his orders as exactly. I don't ever wanna disobey him again."

"Well that's very good of you sweetheart." said Miranda "As for Thomas, how is he?"

"He's wheelchair bound for life thanks to Devion but he's still his old self thank goodness." said Kiara "He'll be stuck on the sidelines giving out orders but he won't let his broken back bring down his spirit and valour. I admire such dedication to duty and it makes me pleased to be a Royal Fighter under his command."

"That's so nice Kiara." said Jessica Cougar, Scott's girlfriend and member of Team Adabat "We're lucky to have a recruit like you in the service."

"Thank you Jessica." said Kiara in a flattered manner.

"You're welcome." said Jessica "So, how do you think Sonic's

friends are doing in saving Chun-Nan? That's what they're doing right now after all."

"I know one should not presume matters like this but I believe with all my heart that they're performing most wonderfully over in that holy country." said Felix the Peacock, one of the R.F.S.'s more sophisticated members "Especially since they have that Shadow person on their side. Shadow's battle prowess almost mirrors that of Sonic's so those oppressors that have subjugated Chun-Nan will stand no chance against him."

"It's easy enough to say that Felix but we can't possibly guess how things are going since we have no way of seeing how they're doing." said Taran, Scott's older brother "But the likely scenario is they're fine. If only we could join in then we could kick some evil butt over at Chun-Nan with them!"

"But then who would look over Sonic?" noted Jessica "We are here to defend him from the inevitable Eggman attack after all so it's better that we're here in New Mobotropolis instead of over at Chun-Nan helping Sonic's friends."

"Speaking of Eggman attack my friends…" said Felix, who was looking out of a window at that moment "The vile man has decided to launch his attack! A ship of his is coming towards the city at this very moment!"

That made everybody jump in surprise and run over to the window to see what was going on. And surely enough, they saw the fleet ship that Dr. Eggman had taken and it was coming towards New Mobotropolis. Luckily for the citizens, Queen Sally Acorn and her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx had seen the ship coming too and Nicole quickly raised the city's shields. The shield generator may have been destroyed by Devion during the Devatron war but it had just been repaired this morning so the shields were working once again. New Mobotropolis was shielded and completely safe from harm now. But levelling the city wasn't Eggman's plan so the shields wouldn't be a problem for him. Eggman's ship came to a halt just a few feet away from the city and it hovered in the air ominously. Eggman stroked his moustache and cackled to himself.

"Aah New Mobotropolis." purred Eggman "Mobotropolis' little replacement and new home of Sonic the Hedgehog. I look forward to levelling that city just like I levelled the original city! But we're not here to do that oh no, we're here to kill Sonic. And that plan is about to commence!"

Dr. Eggman pressed a button on the control pad and barked out "Eggman robots, deploy and attack!"

He then turned to Katherine and ordered "You deploy with them my dear, you'll lead the distraction."

Katherine nodded and she wondered off to find a platform to deploy from in the ship. Eggman and Devion were left in the cockpit and they stood by for the moment.

"When do I get deployed master?" asked Devion.

"When all the Royal Fighter teams come out and start battling my robots." explained Dr. Eggman "You remember what you have to do right?"

"Yes." said Devion "I will go to the city with a burrowing robot that will dig me under the city and then I will locate Sonic the Hedgehog and terminate him. Being as he is currently hospitalized, I know where I'm looking for him."

"That's right Devion." beamed Dr. Eggman "And I'm going to equip you with just the right tools for this job."

With that said, he got out a pair of arm gauntlets and he clamped them onto Devion's lower arms. The gauntlets were a very dark red with some gold on them. Devion looked at the gauntlets in confusion and wondered what they were.

"What kind of weapons do you equip me with master?" asked Devion.

"They're weapon gauntlets." explained Eggman "Both have a concealed laser blaster and when you clench your fist, blades come out. Give it a try."

Devion clenched his fists and surely enough, two blades came out of each gauntlet. They were a glistening silver colour and they looked lethal. Devion looked impressed with the weapons. Eggman had given Devion those since his golden sword was no more and he couldn't get his arm cannons fixed for they had been too damaged so Devion needed these weapons as replacements and they were bound to be suitable replacements for his original weapons.

"These weapons will do just nicely." he purred to himself "Thank you master."

"You're welcome Devion." said Eggman "Now standby until I say it's time to deploy."

Devion obeyed and he sheathed his blades by unclenching his fists (you have to keep your fists clenched in order to keep them deployed). Down on the ground, Eggman robots had deployed from the ship and they were all preparing to do some damage. The robots were all Egg-Pawns and they were armed with guns, shields and jousts like they usually were. Katherine was with them and she looked ready for business as usual. Seeing all this happen, Team Adabat, Team Nekronopolis and Kiara the Cheetah all left the hospital and ran outside the city in order to deal with this invasion force as well as keep Sonic safe. They all stood defensively in front of NewMobotropolis and they prepared to do battle with the Eggman robots. Katherine peered at the Royal Fighters they were up against and she sent an image of them to Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman looked at the image Katherine had given him and he mused for a minute.

"I recognize one of those teams." he said "There's Miranda's group minus the eagle, but who are the other teams? They're all new to me. And where's Sonic's team of Royal Fighters? Shouldn't they be defending Sonic?"

"That would be the most logical scenario." said Devion "Maybe they're planning an ambush."

"Maybe so." said Dr. Eggman "But I am not going to fall for it. When you get into New Mobotropolis Devion, search for Sonic's friends and see if they're lying in wait for us. If they're not then you may proceed with the killing."

"By your will." said Devion darkly.

Down on the ground, the Royal Fighters were preparing to charge at the robots. There maybe many of them but that was not going to bring them down anytime soon. Miranda pulled out her electro-prod and she twirled it around.

"Royal Fighters, we were assigned to defend Sonic and that is just what we're going to do." announced Miranda "Are you ready for this battle?"

"Yeah!" cried the others.

"Then let's show Eggman that we will do whatever it takes to keep Sonic safe from him!" yelled Miranda.

With that said, the Royal Fighters all charged towards the Eggman robots in proper war fashion, ready to do battle and destroy them all. Katherine and the Eggman robots charged towards the Royal Fighters and prepared to finish them off in the name of the Eggman Empire. This was going to be one heck of a battle that was about to commence between the two factions and it was all about poor Sonic the Hedgehog…

Back over at Chun-Nan, the Royal Fighters and the Raiju Clan were engaged in one heck of a battle right now. The whole throne room was full of flying ninjas and battling heroes and the whole thing looked serious and intense. Who was going to win this one? It didn't look like there was a clear winner so far given how even sided it was beginning to look. Even Conquering Storm was having an even-sided battle right now and that was with Shadow. Shadow may not know ninjutsu or any kind of martial-arts but his speed and Chaos Powers made him a foe unlike any Conquering Storm had ever faced before and that was why he was holding out well against the ninja lynx. Conquering Storm swung her kunai with chain at Shadow but Shadow spin-dashed it into pieces before it could hit him. He then propelled himself towards Conquering Storm and sent her flying backwards into a wall. Conquering Storm picked herself up and lunged at Shadow but Shadow teleported out of her way and

reappeared behind her. He spin-dashed Conquering Storm in the back and knocked her down onto the floor. Conquering Storm picked herself up but Shadow jumped in front of her, unleashing a flurry of attacks while grunting and yelling as he did them. This brought Conquering Storm down onto the floor again but she wasn't down for long. She picked herself up and unleashed a flurry of punches onto Shadow. To Shadow, her punches felt like getting hit by cinder blocks. She really was a powerful warrior after all. Conquering Storm then quickly tripped up Shadow by roundhouse kicking him in the legs. Shadow landed on his back and before he could pick himself up, Conquering Storm grabbed his ankles and tossed him up into the air. Shadow hurled up into the air and before he could land down onto the floor, Conquering Storm leaped up and kicked him as hard as she could. That sent Shadow hurling into the wall at the end of the room. Shadow picked himself up and teleported back over to Conquering Storm. He began to unleash a flurry of attacks onto Conquering Storm again but Conquering Storm began putting her trademark defensive tactics on display. She shielded herself with her arms and blocked every blow Shadow launched at her. But Shadow wasn't going down yet, he swiped the air with his arm and showered Conquering Storm with Chaos Spears. The spears all struck Conquering Storm and she was brought down onto one knee, grimacing in pain and fighting the sting of the cuts she'd received from them.

"Hurgh! You're like no other Shadow!" she grunted "Your supernatural powers give you the edge that my opponents before you never could get against me."

"Thank you." said Shadow smugly "I am the Ultimate Life Form after all and nothing is stronger then I am."

"We'll see about that." muttered Conquering Storm, pulling out a slew of daggers and throwing them at Shadow as rapidly as she could.

Shadow spin-dashed through all the daggers but Conquering Storm was ready for him this time. She bent over backwards and kicked upwards as Shadow hurled towards her. That caused Shadow to hurl over her and skid across the floor. Shadow remained on his feet and he zoomed at Conquering Storm. Conquering Storm just back

flipped and as her feet flung upwards, they walloped Shadow and knocked him down onto his back. Conquering Storm then tried to stomp on Shadow but Shadow rolled out of her way and picked himself up. Conquering Storm punched at him but Shadow dodged to the side, grabbed Conquering Storm's arm and flipped her over his shoulder and onto her back. He didn't let go of Conquering Storm though, he swung her over into a wall. The impact of the slam was so hard that there were cracks in it. Conquering Storm pulled herself out of the wall and she braced herself as Shadow prepared to attack again. Shadow spin-dashed towards Conquering Storm but Conquering Storm caught him in her arms and twirled him around into the wall. She slammed him as hard as she could, causing more cracks to appear in the wall. Conquering Storm didn't stop there though, she proceeded to knee Shadow in the back multiple times. If she kept this up then she might well break Shadow's back. But Shadow teleported out of the way before Conquering Storm could do so, leading to a rather comical case of Conquering Storm accidentally kneeing the wall and causing a bit of plaster to crumble down to the floor. Conquering Storm ignored the pain in her knee and she spotted Shadow just as he reappeared. Shadow punched at Conquering Storm but Conquering Storm caught Shadow's arm, twisted it sharply to one side and made him shout out in pain and then she viciously backhanded him into the wall. Shadow's head slammed into the wall and the hedgehog felt a little dazed and bedazzled after that. Conquering Storm then grabbed Shadow and pinned him to the wall. She glared into Shadow's crimson red eyes and gritted her teeth.

"I am going to make you all suffer for daring to stand up to the mightiest force in all of Chun-Nan." she growled softly "And I'll start by snapping you in two Shadow!"

"You'll have to beat me first!" retorted Shadow, kicking Conquering Storm in the gut and forcing her to let go of him.

Conquering Storm backed away and Shadow spin-dashed her, causing her to fly backwards and straight into the arms of Knuckles who was waiting to ambush her. Knuckles grasped Conquering Storm in a holding lock and he hoisted her off the ground. Conquering Storm flailed about madly, trying to get Knuckles to let

go of her. Knuckles managed to hold on tight though despite all this.

"Let go of me!" growled Conquering Storm, flinging her legs around while Knuckles carried her "I said…let GO of me!" she then shouted, kicking Knuckles in the shin as hard as her ninja skills allowed her to and making Knuckles cry out in pain.

Knuckles' grasp on her weakened and Conquering Storm broke free of the echidna. She grabbed Knuckles by the shoulders and hurled him across the room. Knuckles landed painfully on the floor and stopped at Shadow's feet. Knuckles quickly picked himself up and he and Shadow both charged towards Conquering Storm. Conquering Storm leaped towards them and as she sailed in between the two, she kicked out to the side and knocked them both down onto their sides. That attack left Knuckles and Shadow both grimacing in pain and clutching the sides of their heads. They weren't down for long though. They shook themselves off and got back to their feet. They lunged towards Conquering Storm together and Conquering Storm lunged towards them.

Meanwhile, the others were all tangled up with Dàfēng Rai and the Raiju ninjas. The fight was pretty much the same as it had been outside only Tails, Ruben and Cosmo were joining in with this one. Ruben got to put his ninjutsu skills to good use despite the gash in his side, Tails provided a great distraction for the ninjas which allowed the Royal Fighters to get the drop on them and Cosmo allowed Amy and Cream to do their team move on the ninjas, the Twirling-Hammer Batter (I think I should change that name, it's so corny!). Amy, Cream and Cosmo formed their usual attack formation and Cream began to spin Amy and Cosmo around. Amy summoned her Piko-Piko Hammer to her hand and Cream edged closer and closer to the attacking ninjas. The ninjas were instantly walloped by Amy's hammer and sent sprawling across the floor. The poor ninjas had no idea what had hit them. Amy, Cream and Cosmo all high-fived each other in triumph.

"Oh yeah that was ace!" cried Amy "Those ninjas had no idea what was coming to them!"

"That team move of ours always works doesn't it?" said Cream with a cute little smile on her face.

While that was a powerful move, it wasn't enough to keep the Raiju Ninjas down. The ninjas picked themselves back up and they were instantly back onto the attack. They lunged at Amy, Cream and Cosmo with their katanas but the girls managed to dodge them before they could get hit. Cream flew in and tried to kick a ninja in the head but the ninja struck first by upper-cutting her in the face and knocking her down. This enraged Amy and she tried to flatten the ninja into the ground with her hammer but the ninja sliced it in two with his katana. Amy gibbered like an idiot in fright and the ninja let her have it with a shoulder ram that sent her flying backwards. Another ninja tried to slice Cosmo to ribbons but Cosmo dodged his attack and grabbed the sliced up remains of Amy's hammer. She chucked them at the ninja but the ninja proceeded to slice them into even smaller chunks. Cosmo instantly knew from that that running away was a good option right now. She fled for it with the ninjas following her but Amy and Cream leaped in with their respective attacks and knocked them down.

While that was going on, Wilson, Mandy, Bunnie and Geoffrey were all taking on a slew of ninjas and they were fighting back-to-back right now. They were holding out surprisingly well in this match and the ninjas were slowly but steadily beginning to fall before them. It would still take a while until they were all defeated though as there were so many of them. Wilson clashed blades with a ninja wielding a broad sword. The ninja's sword-skills were incredible and Wilson was having a hard time keeping up with him. But as his weapon had two blades, he had two different angles to block from so he had a decent amount of defence on his side at least. The ninja aimed for Wilson's head but Wilson blocked it with his spinning blade weapon. He pushed the ninja backwards and then threw the spinning blade at the ninja. The ninja ducked and the spinning blade whooshed past him. It boomeranged back to Wilson and he caught it in his hands. Disappointed his attack didn't work, he resumed sword fighting with the ninja. Mandy was fighting some ninjas that were used to fighting with fists instead of weapons which was useful for Mandy as she only had knuckle attachments to fight with. The mouse was holding out OK against the ninjas but she was having a tough time keeping up with them as they're faster then she is. Geoffrey was fending the ninjas off with mostly his combat skills and his arm-mounted crossbow. He fired many darts at the ninjas to make them hesitate

and also, he used a flash bomb to distract them. But the poor skunk was running low on ammo so he couldn't keep this up forever. And that's where his combat skills came in. But even then, that wouldn't help him much in a battle against ninjas. The ninjas had way better skills then Geoffrey did and the poor skunk was finding himself beginning to get overwhelmed as a result. One ninja elbowed Geoffrey in the back and knocked the skunk down onto the floor. Another ninja drew out a Naginata and prepared to stab Geoffrey with it but Bunnie punched the ninja away before he could do so. Bunnie helped Geoffrey back onto his feet and the skunk smiled at the rabbit that he had fallen in love with.

"Thanks luv." said Geoffrey.

"Yer welcome sugah." said Bunnie with a sexy little wink to the skunk "Those dang ninjas are gettin' a little bothersome ain't they?"

"I never thought there'd be a day where I honestly miss fighting bloomin' Eggman robots." muttered Geoffrey "They're a lot easier to beat then these guys."

"Well if we can beat Eggman robots, we can beat these ninjas." said Bunnie "Let's go Geoffrey!"

Geoffrey agreed and the couple resumed fighting the Raiju ninjas.

Over to Shade, Rouge and the Chaotix, they were all fighting together and they were against ninjas of all shapes and sizes and with all sorts of weaponry. One ninja with a mace tried to club Rouge into the ground but the bat dodged the attack with ease and she screw-kicked the ninja in the face. Another ninja pounced on her and knocked her down onto the floor. Shade was quick to jump in and defend Rouge by drop-kicking the ninja and knocking him down onto his side. Shade drew out her twin-blades and she Blade-Rushed the ninja with them. A ninja wielding a pair of sais pounced on Shade and knocked her down onto the floor. He tried to plunge the sais into Shade's chest but Shade blocked the attack with her blades and pushed the ninja off of her so she could get back up. The two ended up clashing weapons with each other. Vector, Espio and Charmy were doing as well as they were doing earlier. Espio matched the ninjas blow for blow being as how he was a ninja too, Vector's

mighty strength helped him stay on top of the competition and Charmy continued to be a great distraction. Charmy buzzed past some ninjas and he smacked them in the back of their heads while giggling like a little child (oh wait, he is one! Ha, ha, ha!). However, that didn't work for long for a ninja leaped up and smacked him into the ground with a Bo staff. Charmy hit the floor and he whined in pain, clutching his aching head. The ninja was about to hit him again but Espio sent him scurrying back in fear by throwing a shower of shuriken at him. Another ninja with a Bo staff sneaked up behind Espio and butted him in the back with the flat end of the staff and Espio was knocked down onto his stomach. Before he could even pick himself up, another ninja grabbed his tail and chucked him into the wall. To their misfortune though, Espio had crashed into the dungeon door in the wall but Espio was stunned from the attack so he didn't realize where he'd crashed into. And the impact hadn't damaged the door in anyway so there was no harm done there. Vector saw what had happened to Espio and he retaliated with a roundhouse punch to the jaw on the ninja that had attacked Espio. A ninja with a kusarigama attempted to attack Vector but Vector caught the weapon in his hands and he snatched it from the ninja. He socked the ninja in the gut and brought him down onto the floor. But another ninja sneaked up behind Vector and tripped him up with a roundhouse kick to the legs that took them out from underneath Vector. The crocodile landed on the floor with a heavy thud that left him a little winded. Vector was struggling back up onto his feet but before he could do so, Rai suddenly leapt in and picked up Vector. He tossed him upwards and kicked him directly into Espio who was just picking himself up. The two reptiles lay in a heap at the foot of the dungeon door. Charmy buzzed over to his friends to see how they were.

"Vector, Espio! Are you guys OK?" asked Charmy.

"Just peachy." muttered Vector, picking himself up "Those ninjas are getting on my nerves now!"

"They're too powerful for us and there's too many of them." grumbled Espio "We can't keep this up much longer."

"Do you think we should skedaddle before…?" began Charmy but he stopped himself when he noticed something funny about the door

Vector and Espio were lying in front of.

It wasn't your average door, it had bars in it and some kind of knob that puts in a code that opens the door. Charmy began to feel suspicious about the door.

"Hey guys, am I incredibly thick or does that door look like a dungeon door?" asked Charmy.

Vector and Espio looked behind them and they realized what Charmy was on about. They were lying at the foot of a door that clearly looked like it led to a dungeon. The two reptiles looked at each other and then back over at Charmy.

"I think you might be right Charmy." said Vector "That must be a dungeon. I can recall one of those ninjas saying that the emperor was in their captivity so he might be in there."

"Let's see shall we?" asked Espio "And if he is in there, we will get him out of there. And who knows who else might be in that dungeon?"

"Well, let's break the door down and see who the Raiju Clan's holding captive shall we?" asked Vector "If luck's on our side, there might be someone who can help us in there."

With that said, Vector cracked his knuckles and he punched at the door. Espio joined in and the combined efforts of the two broke the door down in a few punches. Luckily for them, the Raiju Ninjas were too preoccupied to notice them so they could do this without getting spotted. Vector, Espio and Charmy sneaked down the steps and into the dungeon, wondering how many prisoners they might end up rescuing down there.

As for Conquering Storm, her ninjutsu skills were beginning to overpower Knuckles and Shadow despite their best efforts together. Knuckles and Shadow were beginning to tire out but Conquering Storm, thanks to her ninjutsu enhancing her stamina, was able to keep going. Knuckles punched at Conquering Storm but Conquering Storm dodged it with ease and she grabbed Knuckles' arm. She flipped the echidna over onto his back and slammed him on the floor

as hard as she possibly could. Shadow ran towards Conquering Storm but the lynx swung Knuckles around and whacked Shadow with him. The two were sent sprawling across the floor. Conquering Storm ran towards Shadow and Knuckles but Shadow picked himself up and spin-dashed at Conquering Storm. He hit her and knocked her down once again. Conquering Storm picked herself up but Shadow pounced on her from behind. He grabbed her by the shoulders with his hands, flipped himself over Conquering Storm while still holding onto her shoulders, and as his feet touched the ground he hoisted Conquering Storm off the floor and tossed her into a wall. Conquering Storm picked herself up just in time to block an attack from Knuckles. Conquering Storm slugged Knuckles in the gut, then slammed him on the head and then backhanded him across the room. Shadow threw some Chaos Spears at Conquering Storm but Conquering Storm dodged the spears and she rushed towards Shadow. She dropkicked Shadow in the face and the black hedgehog was brought down onto the floor again. Conquering Storm grabbed Shadow by the throat and she tossed him towards Rai. Rai punched Shadow before he could crash into him and Conquering Storm bent over backwards as Shadow headed towards her. Shadow hurled over Conquering Storm and Conquering Storm raised her leg up, kicking Shadow and sending him crashing down a few feet away from her. Shadow groaned in pain and the black hedgehog strained to get back up onto his feet. Conquering Storm advanced on Shadow and she prepared to beat him some more.

"Some ultimate life form you are." she scoffed "You're being bested by a ninja master such as myself. This whole fight is proving the Raiju Clan is truly the mightiest force in Chun-Nan."

Shadow cried out in rage and he tried to unleash hell on Conquering Storm but Conquering Storm grabbed his arms and began to punch him in the sides of his head as viciously as she could. The punches made Shadow feel light-headed and bedazzled. Being punched in the side of the head is very painful after all. Conquering Storm then knocked Shadow back down onto the floor and kicked him as viciously as she could.

"You should have stayed back at your home." sneered Conquering Storm "But even then, home wouldn't be very safe for you. I've

decided that if I am to keep my title as Ruler of Chun-Nan, I will have to conquer the whole world and eliminate any possible attempts at resistance. After all, if you and your pitiful bunch of friends are attempting to overthrow me, some other people might rally up against me. If I expand my conquest then maybe I can eliminate any possible resistance attempts against me."

"You couldn't possibly take over all of Mobius." snapped Shadow, picking himself up and clenching his fists "One person can't fight the whole world. And you'll never get to conquer the world for we will stop you before you get beyond Chun-Nan!"

With that said, Shadow suddenly threw a Chaos Spear at Conquering Storm's eyes and the attack blinded her momentarily. Conquering Storm screamed in pain and she clutched her throbbing eyes. Who knew a Chaos Spear to the eyes could be so painful. Shadow took the perfect opportunity to go to town on Conquering Storm. He unleashed a flurry of attacks on the blinded lynx and he added a couple of spin-dashes in there too. Conquering Storm was thrown down onto the floor and she was helpless against Shadow since her vision was distorted momentarily. She picked herself up but Shadow spin-dashed her and slammed her into the wall. Conquering Storm screamed in rage and she rubbed her eyes again. Her eyes were a little blackened around the edges from that Chaos Spear. That rub seemed to clear them up a little and she just managed to see Shadow coming towards her again. He punched at her but Conquering Storm dodged the punch and left Shadow to punch the wall instead. Conquering Storm and Shadow both glared at each other and they prepared to carry on fighting.

"You will snap like a spinal cord for that!" snarled Conquering Storm.

"Not if I snap you first!" retorted Shadow.

"Conquering Storm, your fight is no longer with the heroes of the west, it is now with me." came a raspy voice that Conquering Storm didn't expect to hear again.

The whole fight just suddenly seemed to ground to a halt after that voice was heard and the fighters all starred in disbelief at where the voice came from. Conquering Storm looked in the direction of the

voice and her jaw dropped. To her horror and shock, Matilda's mentor Master Kai was standing in the centre of the throne room with Bladefeather, Mushu, Master Gāng, Emperor Tai and Li Moon by his side. Team Chaotix had broken them free of their acupressure cuffs and they had come out of the dungeon to join in with the battle against the Raiju Clan. Master Kai had a deathly serious glare on his face and he looked like he was ready to kick some Raiju Clan butt right now. The odds were about to turn in the Royal Fighter's favour right now…

Back over at New Mobotropolis, Eggman's robots and the Royal Fighters were locked in combat and the Royal Fighters were winning. The Egg-Pawns were getting destroyed by the dozen by the Royal Fighters and only Katherine was doing any good against them because of her superior fighting skills and technology. Miranda, Kari, Thunder and Bolt were fighting Katherine and the main reason behind this is because they owed her much for what she did to Miranda the last time they met***. Katherine slashed at Miranda and almost caught the mongoose across the stomach but Miranda dodged the attack and she zapped Katherine in the wrist with her electro-prod. Katherine retracted her arm and she deployed her force-field to keep the attacks off of her. Thunder and Bolt began throwing lightening bolts at Katherine but they all ricocheted off the barrier. Katherine shortened the barrier so it was only a red outline around her body and she lunged at Thunder and Bolt. Thunder and Bolt dodged Katherine's attack and they zapped her in the back, knocking her down onto the ground. Kari stepped in and began to pound Katherine on the head as hard as she could with her spanner. But because Katherine had her force-field deployed, the spanner didn't do any damage to her. Katherine expanded her force-field and it sent Kari flying backwards. Miranda ran over to help Kari back onto her feet. Katherine shortened her force-field again and she and the Northern Royal Fighters began fighting again. Team Adabat and Kiara were stuck fighting Eggman robots though and while they could see the Northern Royal Fighters needed help fighting Katherine but they couldn't get to them because the Egg-Pawns were keeping them away from them. The Egg-Pawns weren't much competition but because there were many of them and they just kept

coming, Team Adabat and Kiara were forced to keep fighting them. Dr. Eggman watched the whole thing from up in his ship and he was pleased to see that his distraction was working.

"The distraction is working perfectly." said Dr. Eggman "Devion, I think it's time for you and the Burrow-bot to deploy and sneak into New Mobotropolis now."

"I agree master, now is the perfect time to strike." said Devion "I shall return to you with Sonic's head in my claws."

Dr. Eggman grinned widely at that very thought. Sonic was as good as dead, especially since Devion was the one that was going to be doing the dirty work. Devion left the cockpit and prepared to be deployed and Dr. Eggman steered the ship closer to the city so that he could drop Devion off and he could begin his assassination. Nobody would see this coming and nobody would be able to stop him once Devion was deployed and in the city, ready to kill Sonic once and for all while he was weak, unconscious and bed bound right now. Sonic's friends would have terrible news to come home to once they got back from Chun-Nan…

Footnotes:

*** Remember *Tales from Mobius Arc 9: New Recruits* ?**

**** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 10: Pain in Megapolis***

***** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 8: The Sentinel Blockade***

Well people, we're at the end of the saga! What's going to happen next? Can Master Kai Zen, the very person who's trained Matilda to the warrior she is now, defeat Conquering Storm? And can the Royal Fighters stop Devion before he kills Sonic? I dunno, we'll find out in the next chapter so stay tuned everybody!

Duelling the Storm

Story 119: Duelling the Storm

The Royal Fighters had launched their attempt in overthrowing the Raiju Clan and freeing Chun-Nan from their evil grasp. The plan wasn't going so well at the moment what with the Raiju Clan being very difficult to take down given their amazing battle prowess. Conquering Storm, their leader and been holding out surprisingly well too although Shadow had put up a reasonable fight against her. However, it seemed that things were going to turn in the heroes' favour for earlier in the fight, Team Chaotix had found the dungeon and had broken the prisoners out of it. Now the Raiju Clan had to deal with Master Kai Zen, the mentor of Princess Matilda, Bladefeather the Falcon, Matilda's boyfriend and dagger-thrower, Mushu the Iguana, the silent companion of Bladefeather and Master Gāng, their mentor. Emperor Tai, the emperor of Chun-Nan, and Li Moon, Matilda's friend, were here too but they weren't fighters so they were staying out of this one. Conquering Storm could hardly believe her eyes and she stared at her escaped prisoners in horror.

"How did…you…what?!" she cried "How did you…?"

"We were helped by a trio of heroes who refer to themselves as "Team Chaotix" Conquering Storm." explained Emperor Tai, motioning over to Vector, Espio and Charmy who just put on gormless grins and they waved tauntingly at the ninja lynx "They managed to find us during your battle with Sonic's friends."

"And now we're free from our captivity, I am going to finish you off myself Conquering Storm." said Kai, standing forward and pulling his hood up over his head.

"Um sir? Are you sure you can handle her by yourself?" asked Tails unsurely "I mean, she's very strong and powerful you know…"

"You needn't fret about this situation my little boy." said Bladefeather reassuringly "This man that stands before you is Master Kai Zen, a kung-fu expert and the mentor of our glorious Princess Matilda. He

can handle this."

"No way! That's Matilda's mentor?!" squeaked Ruben in an excited manner "Oh my gosh! I never thought I'd ever see the man behind Matilda's kung-fu skills in person!"

"Had things not taken these twists and turns, you would never have seen Kai in person since he is a vigilante kung-fu warrior." said Bladefeather "Meaning he always goes out in disguise, even when he's tutoring his pupils, and he only takes it off when he's alone. That kind of life makes him harder for the villains to track since they see a man in a mask and he could be anybody under it. Conquering Storm has relinquished him of that life now by revealing his face to us all so he's no longer a vigilante warrior."

"That's too bad for him." said Ruben "Oh well, he can make Conquering Storm pay for this now he's free! This is going to be great!"

"It certainly well Ruben." said Bladefeather, grinning sinisterly at the very thought of Conquering Storm being battered and beaten by Kai's own hand.

Kai and Conquering Storm stared each other down and they prepared to do battle.

"Why do you wish to fight me alone vigilante warrior?" asked Conquering Storm.

"Because I'm the only one who stands a chance against you." said Master Kai grimly "And I owe you much for taking away my life of vigilance by revealing my face to everybody. As such, I challenge you to a duel of honour. If I win, you relinquish Chun-Nan back to us. If I lose then we go back in your dungeon and you keep Chun-Nan forever."

"Kai Zen, I don't think that's a wise wager!" cried Emperor Tai "Don't make that deal! If you lose then we're all doomed!"

"Trust me your eminence, I don't make wagers I know I can't win." said Kai with a reassuring smirk on his face "So, do you except this

Conquering Storm?" he asked, turning back to face her.

"Without a moment's hesitance." said Conquering Storm coldly "We Raiju Ninjas love a good duel of honour. And I look forward to facing the mentor of Princess Matilda in battle. Maybe you're as pathetic as she is!"

"Matilda only lost because she's not yet at the expert stage of kung-fu." retorted Master Kai "But I am. So I will not be so easy to defeat. And besides, you only win your battles by having your ninjas by your side or relying heavily on cowardly tactics such as heavy reliance on blocking and defending yourself. I doubt someone like you could dare to face me without using cowardly moves at all."

That little taunt just made Conquering Storm mad. And that's just what Kai was trying to do. He knew Conquering Storm's weaknesses which was she's a bit of a cowardly fighter in how she constantly blocks and defends and her arrogance and temper are extremely high and using those against the opponent was always a good tactic to use in battle. It guaranteed the chances of you winning in a battle. Conquering Storm clenched her fists and she prepared to do battle.

"You insult my honour kung-fu master!" she growled "I am not a coward, my battle style is not cowardly and defeat you myself! Let's fight!"

"Whenever you're ready coward." said Kai dryly.

That did it. Conquering Storm lunged towards Master Kai and she prepared to deck him one. Kai lunged towards Conquering Storm and the two engaged in battle. This was going to be a battle of the epics and a battle that would determine the fate of Chun-Nan for everyone in the country. This was a battle that was going to be legendary and a battle that nobody would ever forget…

Meanwhile, the Royal Fighters and Eggman's robots were still locked in a deadly brawl with one another. The battle for Sonic's life was getting more intense by the second and despite the high

number of Eggman robots falling as the Royal Fighters smashed them to pieces, they just kept on coming. It wasn't helpful for the Royal Fighters that Eggman's fleet ship had a robot production chamber in it and that was why there were so many of them. The chamber hadn't been used so the robots couldn't keep on coming, they'd run out eventually but there was a good number of them already so the Royal Fighters would have to go through quite a lot of them before they were all destroyed. Katherine, Eggman's servant bot, continued to be a major problem for the Royal Fighters with her force-field and swift attacks. She was the only robot who posed any real threat for them right now and even then, she was only the distraction and she was being a very good one at that. Katherine had her barrier as a red outline around her body so she could use her fists on the Royal Fighters. Kiara the Cheetah leaped in and tried to kick Katherine but Katherine widened her barrier and sent Kiara bouncing off of it and flying backwards. Kiara landed on her back and she grumbled furiously. Katherine was beginning to get on her nerves now what with being so hard to hit and using that barrier so efficiently. Scott Lynx and Jessica Cougar tried to attack Katherine by throwing energy spears at her but Katherine kept her barrier deployed and the attacks ricocheted off of the barrier. Katherine then ran towards Scott and Jessica, jumped up into the air, shortened her barrier and then used her drill-attack on the two, sending them sprawling across the ground as she spiralled past them. Scott and Jessica were stunned by that attack and they couldn't help but wonder how Katherine was so powerful. Katherine ran back towards Scott and Jessica but Taran the Lynx stepped in and barged Katherine by ramming her from the side. The resulting barge knocked Katherine onto her side and Taran grabbed her by the neck before she could stand back up. Taran picked Katherine up and then tossed her over to Scott and Jessica. Scott and Jessica summoned energy to their hands and they both leaped up and socked Katherine as hard as they could as she hurled towards them. Katherine's barrier protected her but the power of the attacks left her a little shaken. If Scott and Jessica were any stronger, they might have broken straight through that barrier. Scott, Jessica and Taran all whooped with joy and they prepared to dish out more punishment for Katherine. Katherine picked herself up and suddenly found herself being bombarded by thunder bolts from Thunder and Bolt. Katherine expanded the barrier to keep the thunder bolts off of her

self and she fired bladed discs at the two chipmunks. Thunder and Bolt yelped in fright and they jumped to the side to avoid the discs. The two chipmunks then held hands and both of them together tried to give Katherine a big electric shock. The barrier protected Katherine though but the bright flash of the lightening prevented her from seeing anything, allowing Miranda Mongoose, Kari the Rat, Kiara, Scott, Jessica, Taran and Felix the Peacock to sneak up behind her and then all attack her at once. Katherine's barrier may provide good defence but all these people attacking at once was not what she was used to and the resulting attacks sent Katherine rolling forward in her barrier. She was like a guinea-pig in a ball. Katherine rolled around in the barrier for a good few metres and when she finally came to a stop, she lay on the ground, dazed and confused and wondering which way was up. That onslaught had left her feeling very dizzy and her vision was distorted. The Royal Fighters watched her and they prepared to let her have it once again.

"Good job everybody!" said Miranda "But Katherine's not finished yet so let's keep it up for a little longer!"

"Yes Miranda." said the others as Katherine began to pick herself up.

But the Royal Fighters would have something else to worry about now because Devion and the burrow-bot that he was paired up with had finally been deployed. Eggman's ship was hovering closer to the city and Devion fell down from the ship and directly in front of the ring wall that surrounded New Mobotropolis. The burrow-bot, which was a robot with a huge drill as big as a water trough and tank treads much like The Mole from *Thunderbirds* , landed beside him and it trundled up to the wall and looked for a place to start digging. Devion watched the battle with the Eggman robots and Katherine and he was pleased to see that the distraction was working so well. The Royal Fighters would never find him out or even see what he's doing right now. The burrow-bot found a good place to dig and it aimed its drill down at the foot of the wall. The burrow-bot then started digging. It's drill spun around and made a loud, ear-piercing squeal as it did so, and it began to sink down into the ground. The burrow-bot churned through the grass and soil as if it was nothing

and as it began to dig, it sunk down further and further into the ground. The robot's huge drill was making short-work of the earth and in a matter of moments, it began to dig under the wall and aim up for the other side of the wall. The burrow-bot eventually reached the surface on the other side of the wall and it dig straight up through it, leaving a large hole in the ground as it climbed up into the open air on the other side of the wall. Now the burrow-bot had done its work, Devion got down onto his knees and he crawled through the tunnel under the wall. He wriggled through it like a worm and he climbed up out of the tunnel and into the city of New Mobotropolis. It had been no less then a few days ago when he conquered the city and took it for himself and had been in charge of it until yesterday when Sonic and friends finally finished him off. The moment Devion emerged from the tunnel, the citizens of New Mobotropolis spotted him and they freaked out. They began to run around, screaming in terror at the very sight of Devion. They had not been expecting to see him again in a hurry so to see him alive and back in business scared the living daylights out of them. Devion just watched as the Mobians ran around, screaming in terror and he chuckled to himself.

"The sounds of a panicked individual are music to my audio-receptors." he purred softly to himself "Now…where might a hospital in this wretched excuse for a city be?"

Devion began to stalk through the city of New Mobotropolis while the burrow-bot trundled back through the tunnel under the wall and waited for Dr. Eggman to pick it up. Devion kept his sharp visor open and he looked everywhere for the New Mobotropolis Hospital. He had no idea what hospital he'd be looking for but he knew one when he saw one so he'd find it eventually. Especially as the New Mobotropolis Hospital is the ONLY hospital in New Mobotropolis. Devion searched and searched for the hospital. He didn't bother asking any citizens for help since they'd likely refuse to comply. He'd just have to find it himself. As Devion searched for the hospital, he passed Castle Acorn and he glared at it as he walked by. If he wasn't on an assassination mission, he'd be quite happy to destroy the castle. But that was for another time. He was only here to kill Sonic right now and that's what he was going to do. Unfortunately for Devion, Nicole the Lynx was looking out of the window and she saw Devion walking by. When she saw Devion, the lynx thought her

heart was going to stop.

"Devion?!" she shrieked "And he's back online?! But…but this can't be! We…we beat him yesterday!"

"What's going on Nicole?" asked Queen Sally Acorn, who was in the room with Nicole at this very moment.

"Devion's been repaired and is back alive!" shrieked Nicole "And he's here in the city right now!"

Sally thought she was going to die of shock right now. Sally charged over to the window and she looked out of it. The moment she saw Devion, prowling around and looking for the New Mobotropolis Hospital, she though she was going to go numb all over and then accidentally fall out of the window. Sally had been hoping to see the last of Devion but right now, he was back alive and ready to cause destruction.

"No…No! This…this is…impossible!" choked Sally "Devion was… defeated yesterday! He…he can't possibly be back!"

"I agree Sally." said Nicole "My best guess is someone must have taken his body and then rebuilt him and brought him back alive. And no prizes for guessing who that person is."

"Dr. Eggman." muttered Sally grimly "Well if that fat man thinks Devion is going to help him conquer our world then he's got another thing coming! Nicole, I'm going to change into something more suitable for a fight right now and after I've done that, we're going to face Devion together and stop him before he can do any harm."

"But…we can't face Devion!" shrieked Nicole "Have you forgotten how powerful he is?"

"No Nicole." said Sally grimly "But given how he was rebuilt by Eggman and NOT by a Devatron, he might not be as powerful as he used to be. And that will be our advantage over him."

With that said, Sally went into another room to change her clothes as an elegant queen's dress was not the right thing to go into battle in and she didn't want it to get wrecked. As Sally changed her

clothes, Nicole watched as Devion continued to look for the hospital. Devion still hadn't found it yet but he was not about to give up. He kept his visor open and he scanned his surroundings. He then spotted a tall, silver building with a shiny, silver hospital plus sign on it. That obviously meant that was a hospital. Devion had found it at last. Now all he had to do was find Sonic and kill him for Dr. Eggman. Devion ran off to the hospital as fast as he could. Nicole watched Devion run off and she quickly realized that he was heading to the New Mobotropolis Hospital. What a shock the lynx felt as she saw him heading to the hospital. It was clear to her on what Devion was up to and that made her more determined then ever to stop him. Devion arrived at the hospital and he punched his way through the door, not even bothering to open it. The people inside the hospital all panicked and they ran around in fear. Devion stormed over to the reception desk where a female wombat in a smart uniform sat and he thumped his fists on the desk.

"Tell me which room Sonic the Hedgehog resides in and I promise you, you will remain alive!" he thundered at the terrified wombat.

"H-h-h-h-he's on the third f-f-floor in r-r-r-room A-113!" shrieked the wombat, sweating madly.

Devion didn't say another word and he stormed off to find a lift so he could take it up to the third floor of the hospital, leaving the terrified wombat trembling in her seat as he left. He quickly found a lift and he pressed a button to open the doors. The doors opened up and Devion stepped into the lift. The doors closed and Devion pressed the button that took it up to the third floor. The lift whisked Devion up to the third floor of the hospital and the doors opened. Devion stepped out of the lift and he prowled through the corridors, looking for room A-113. He found room A-101 and he decided to follow the doors down the corridor until he got to room A-113. The numbers climbed up the number table as they went along so Devion would have no problem finding Sonic's room in this hospital. Devion strode down the corridors until he got to room A-113 and he opened the door. Mariah the Medicine Cat was still in the room and sitting beside Sonic. The moment she saw Devion, she leaped to her feet and she stared at Devion in horror. She backed away in fright and began to gibber in fear. Devion glowered at Mariah and he

advanced on her menacingly. He grabbed Mariah by her robe and he threw the elderly cat straight out of the room. Mariah landed outside the room, spluttering hoarsely and she tried to get back to her feet. Devion walked slowly up to Sonic's bed and he glared at him. Sonic was still unconscious from yesterday and he was breathing nice and slowly. The heart-beat monitor beeped in perfect rhythm but at this moment, Sonic's heart wouldn't be beating anymore. Devion cackled to himself and he clenched his fist, deploying the long sharp blades from his arm-mounted gauntlets. Devion aimed for Sonic's chest and he prepared to plunge the blades into Sonic's body but before he could deliver the killer blow, Sally and Nicole suddenly burst into the room and they jumped over Sonic's bed and onto Devion, bringing him down to the floor. Sally's new outfit she was wearing for this fight consisted of a black tank top, black shorts, a blue vest that was closed up, white gloves with blue bracelets around the wrists and a pair of blue boots. Sally and Nicole both tried to keep Devion down on the floor but the Devatron leader effortlessly threw them both off of himself. Devion raised his arm blades and he glowered at Sally and Nicole.

"I was expecting resistance." he muttered "And now it's here, I may as well get rid of it so that I may commence with my objective."

"Try all you like Devion!" yelled Sally bravely "We will NEVER let you kill Sonic! We will defend him from you and we will fight you to the bitter end if we have to!"

"Then allow me to deliver your karma you foolish females…" purred Devion dryly.

With that said, he lunged at Sally and nearly sliced her head off with his gauntlet blades. Sally ducked just in time to avoid losing her head and she kicked Devion in the stomach. All that did was give her a sore foot given how strong his armour was. She clutched her foot, grumbling to herself in annoyance, and Devion kicked her back. Nicole leaped in, stood up on her hands and began to kick Devion in the head furiously. Devion took all the blows but Nicole's rapid attacks were making it hard to retaliate and they were making him back away. Nicole spiralled around and jumped back onto her feet. She then tripped Devion up and brought him down onto his back. Devion was back on his feet in seconds and he slashed at Nicole

with his arm blades. Nicole bent over backwards to dodge the blades and she rammed Devion with her shoulder. Devion grabbed Nicole by her hair and threw her into a wall. Nicole slid down to the floor and she rubbed her head tenderly to subside the pain in her skull. Devion tried to stab her with his gauntlet blades but Sally jumped in from behind and kicked Devion in the back, using the sole of her foot this time so it would hurt less. Devion turned around sharply and tried to slice Sally in two but he missed and Sally tried to trip Devion up but Devion lifted his foot up to prevent her from tripping him up. This just left Sally sweeping the floor with her foot and nothing happening. Devion grabbed Sally by the back of her vest and he hoisted her up to his height. Devion then dropped Sally but before she could land on the floor, he kicked out and sent her hurling across the room. Sally crashed into the wall and lay beside Sonic's bed. Amazingly, Sonic was still asleep despite all this noise going on. Sally picked herself up and she and Nicole both leaped towards Devion. Devion slashed at them and left them both with a long cut across their faces each and they both fell down to the floor. Sally and Nicole both rubbed their faces and Devion add insult to injury by dropkicking them both. They were sent flipping over onto their backs and they scrunched their faces up as pain surged up their backs. Sally and Nicole picked themselves up and they braced themselves as Devion lunged at them again. Devion may not be the same Devion they'd fought the past few days but he was still deadly and if Sally and Nicole couldn't stop him then Sonic was dead meat. He'd be dead before he could wake from his coma…

Back over at Chun-Nan, Master Kai Zen and Conquering Storm were locked in mortal combat (yes, I just made that reference!) as they fought for Chun-Nan. The fight was as fast and as furious as a fight between a ninja and a kung-fu master always would be. And so far in this battle, Kai appeared to be winning. Given how Conquering Storm's been in battle for a good while already and Kai's only just started fighting, Kai had the advantage as Conquering Storm was wearing out from the previous battle and he was just getting warmed up. But despite this, Conquering Storm continued to be a powerful foe and was doing well to hold up against him. Conquering Storm tired to perform her sweep kick manoeuvre on Kai but the badger

jumped over Conquering Storm, landed behind her and kicked out backwards, knocking her down onto her stomach. Conquering Storm growled furiously and she leaped back onto her feet…only to get an uppercut to the face and get knocked down onto the floor again. Kai then grabbed Conquering Storm by the shirt and he threw the lynx across the room and into her own throne at the back of the room. Conquering Storm picked herself up and she leaped behind her throne. She kicked the throne towards Kai but all he did was stand there and let the throne come towards him. He then lashed out and destroyed the throne in one punch. Conquering Storm would need a new place to sit once this fight was over. But the throne did what Conquering Storm intended it to do, and that was be a good distraction, and as Kai destroyed it, she lunged towards him and rammed Kai in the gut. Kai ignored the pain and he slammed both of his fists on Conquering Storm's head. Conquering Storm retaliated with a flurry of ninja kicks but Kai managed to block them all. The Royal Fighters could only stand there and stare in surprise, amazed at how fast Kai was moving despite his old age. Conquering Storm grunted and growled in annoyance as she tried to hit Kai but the badger was just too fast for her and he blocked every move she threw at him. Ruben stared at Kai in amazement and he could easily see how he was Matilda's mentor. Kai was like Matilda if she was a lot faster and a lot more powerful. But that was because Kai was at the expert stage and Matilda was in-between. The expert stage of kung-fu made you as powerful as this after all. Conquering Storm finally stopped kicking at Kai and she tried another attack. She tried to nerve-pinch Master Kai and knock him out just like she had done before* as she took over Chun-Nan. But Kai grabbed Conquering Storm's fist and twisted her arm to one side. Conquering Storm yelped in pain and she punched Kai in the face with her other arm but that punch didn't seem to affect Kai much. Kai just calmly rubbed his cheek as if it was nothing much and he slugged Conquering Storm in the gut. Conquering Storm doubled over in pain and she tried to catch her breath. Kai didn't give her time though for he kicked Conquering Storm across the room. Conquering Storm landed at the feet of her star-ninja Dàfēng Rai and Rai bent down to help her up.

"Conquering Storm, you're struggling. May I assist you in this fight?" asked Rai.

"No! I can handle this!" snarled Conquering Storm "And this fight is between me and Kai only, none of you are allowed to interfere!"

"Yes Ma'Am." said Rai in a disappointed manner.

Conquering Storm picked herself up and she clenched her fists in rage. Kai rushed towards Conquering Storm and began to shower her with a rapid flurry of punches that were so fast, his fists were nothing but blurs. Conquering Storm resorted to her defensive tactics by blocking his attacks. But due to how fast Kai was moving, it was hard for her to block all of his attacks. Kai managed to get a few strikes on her here and there while Conquering Storm blocked all the other punches. Kai then roundhouse kicked Conquering Storm in the legs and tripped her up. Kai tried to attack her before she could get back up but Conquering Storm raised her legs and used them to keep Kai back. She then pushed Kai away with her legs and she leaped up onto her feet, swinging her head forward and delivering a terrible head butt to Kai's face. When you're a ninja, you have a skull like steel. Kai grimaced and he gripped his face in pain. That head-butt hurt like crazy and that was by far the most powerful attack Conquering Storm had launched on him in the whole fight. Conquering Storm took advantage of Rai's stunned nature and she began to rapidly punch and kick him in several places all over his body. Kai couldn't keep up with Conquering Storm for she was moving too quickly and he had not been ready for her. Conquering Storm delivered an uppercut, a left hook, a right hook, a kick to the gut and then she used her sweep kick attack. She took Kai's legs out from underneath him and tripped him up but before he could land on the floor, she kicked him across the room. Kai hurled across the room and he landed at the foot of the doors to the throne room. Kai wasn't in too much pain but that attack had been quite powerful and it had left him feeling a little beaten. The sweep kick was one of the most powerful attacks a ninja could learn after all and only ninjas knew this attack so he, a kung-fu master, wouldn't be able to use it against Conquering Storm. Conquering Storm cackled and she advanced on Kai Zen, ready to finish him off. But Kai wasn't down for the count yet. Kai leaped back onto his feet and he slammed the sides of Conquering Storm's face with his fists. That attack left Conquering Storm feeling dazed and light headed. Kai then tripped her up with a kick to the legs and before she landed on the ground,

Kai lashed out and punched her backwards a few feet. Conquering Storm landed on her back and she skidded to a painful halt. Conquering Storm picked herself up and decided enough was enough. She ran over to a random ninja standing by and she snatched his katana that he had in a scabbard on his back. Conquering Storm twirled the katana around and she ran towards Kai. Kai saw her coming and he flipped over Conquering Storm and landed behind her. Conquering Storm twirled around and tried to slice Kai in two with the katana. Kai dodged the katana and he kicked upwards, knocking Conquering Storm backwards. Conquering Storm kept her balance and she tried to slice Kai in two with the katana yet again. Kai dodged her attacks and as Conquering Storm lunged forward with another attempt chop, Kai grabbed her wrist and wrestled the katana out of her grip. The katana landed on the floor and Kai pushed Conquering Storm backwards. He then dashed forward and grabbed the katana. Conquering Storm saw this and she ran over to another ninja standing by. She snatched a kusarigama he was armed with and she twirled the sickle end of the weapon around. Kai twirled the katana around and prepared to fight. Conquering Storm threw the kusarigama at Kai Zen but the kung-fu master blocked the attack with the katana. Conquering Storm drew the weapon back and she twirled the other end which had a battering butt on it. Kai lashed at Conquering Storm with the katana but Conquering Storm dodged the attack and threw the butt end of the kusarigama at Kai. It walloped Kai in the eye and Kai cried out in pain. Conquering Storm then slashed Kai across the back with the sickle on the weapon and Kai cringed in pain again. Conquering Storm then wrapped Kai up with the chain of the kusarigama and pulled him down onto the floor. Kai struggled in the grasp of the chains and Conquering Storm picked up the katana she'd tried to use on him. She pointed the katana at Kai's face and smirked at him.

"An admirable performance mentor of Matilda…" she purred darkly "But now this conflict will end the way my conflict with Matilda should have ended before you interfered. And with you out of the way, Chun-Nan will be mine."

Conquering Storm then raised the katana and prepared to plunge it into Kai's face. But before she could kill him, Kai rolled out of the

way, leaving Conquering Storm to plunge the katana into the floor instead where it got stuck fast. Kai picked himself up and he managed to break out of the kusarigama. Conquering Storm tried to pull the katana out of the floor but it was embedded quite deep into the floor and it was getting hard to pull it out. Kai uppercut Conquering Storm into the air and sent her spiralling across the room. Kai then grabbed the katana and yanked it clean out of the floor simple as that. He tossed the katana back over to the Raiju Ninja that owned it since this was a fight that would be fought without weapons. Conquering Storm picked herself up and she cried out in rage. She ran towards Kai but Kai held his hand out and stopped Conquering Storm dead in her tracks by placing it on her forehead and holding her back. He then clapped Conquering Storm across the mouth and roundhouse punched her in the cheek, bringing her down onto the floor. Kai then grabbed Conquering Storm's ankle and threw her over onto her back with a slam. Kai then stomped on Conquering Storm's stomach and made her wheeze in pain. The badger glared at Conquering Storm with his aged but stern looking eyes.

"You have been poorly trained Conquering Storm." he said "You allow yourself to be consumed by your anger and pride and that is why you are losing this battle. Instead of clearing your mind and focusing on the battle, you just rush in and expect to win. If you don't lose your attitude then you will never win this fight."

Conquering Storm pushed Kai off of herself and she picked herself up. Her face was redder then the devil himself.

"You will take back everything you've just said when I'm through with you, you aged old wretch!" snarled Conquering Storm.

She then pounced on Kai, pinned him down to the floor and began to throttle the poor badger. Conquering Storm was attempting to throttle Kai to death. Kai however effortlessly wrenched Conquering Storm off of himself and pushed her off of himself. Kai leaped back onto his feet but Conquering Storm was ready for him and she slugged him as hard as she could. She then clenched her fists together and slammed them on the top of Kai's head, knocking him down onto his knees. Conquering Storm then kicked upwards and knocked Kai backwards. She jumped up into the air and attempted

to stomp on Kai but Kai rolled out of the way before Conquering Storm could stomp on him. Kai jumped up onto his feet and punched Conquering Storm in the face. Conquering Storm punched Kai back. Kai then tried to kick Conquering Storm but Conquering Storm raised her foot above Kai's leg as he kicked at her and then using her foot, stopped the kick and slammed it down onto the floor. Conquering Storm then uppercut Kai in the face and the only thing stopping him from staggering backwards was Conquering Storm holding his foot down with her foot. Conquering Storm raised her foot and then she roundhouse kicked Kai in the face. Kai was brought down onto the floor and Conquering Storm kicked him again, sending him sliding across the floor and coming to a stop at the feet of the Royal Fighters. Kai was beginning to wear out. His old age meant he would often tire quicker then a young warrior and he was struggling to get back up. Bladefeather and Mushu reached out and they helped Kai stand back up. The badger began to rub himself better, grunting and screwing his face up in pain. Conquering Storm laughed at Kai and she advanced towards him.

"I knew this would happen." she sneered "Your age is taking an effect on you. You're getting tired and my attacks are hurting more. You should have retired from fighting a long time ago old man."

Unbeknownst to her, while Bladefeather and Mushu were helping Kai stand back up, Bladefeather had sneaked a dagger into Kai's hand and Kai was holding the dagger right now. He kept his back turned and he stood up straight again. Some of his strength was beginning to come back to him now.

"A kung-fu master never retires Conquering Storm." said Kai "They fight until their lives are over. And my life is far from over…"

He then suddenly spun around and threw the dagger at Conquering Storm's thigh. The dagger plunged into Conquering Storm's thigh and the ninja lynx screamed a blood-curdling scream of pain. She pulled the dagger out of her thigh, the blade drenched with blood, and she tried to fight some more. But the wound in her thigh was already taking its toll on her. Conquering Storm staggered down onto one knee and try as she might, she couldn't get back to her feet. Kai then delivered one last kick to the face that knocked Conquering Storm over onto her back and he picked up

Bladefeather's blood-soaked dagger. He pointed the dagger at Conquering Storm's face and Conquering Storm glared at him. She could no longer prolong this fight. Her leg was injured and useless to her and she couldn't fight with just one leg so she could only do one last thing…

"I…yield." grumbled Conquering Storm.

"Wise choice Conquering Storm." said Kai with a dry smirk on his face.

He tossed the dagger back over to Bladefeather and Bladefeather put it away. Kai turned back to Conquering Storm.

"So as it turns out, I am victorious and Chun-Nan will be returned to the emperor." said Kai "And you can spend the rest of your life in the Lóng de dòngxué prison. In fact, your whole clan will spend the rest of their lives in the Lóng de dòngxué prison."

"No we will not!" thundered Rai, drawing out a made and preparing to smash Kai into the ground with it "You may have defeated our master but we will not let you take back Chun-Nan!"

"Yes you will." said Kai coldly "The wager for the duel of honour was if Conquering Storm lost then she would relinquish Chun-Nan back to us. She lost and so, the Raiju Clan must back down and we get Chun-Nan back."

"We maybe ruthless…but we're not without honour…" grunted Conquering Storm "Raiju Ninjas…stand down. We may have lost today but we will be back and we will take Chun-Nan back from the pathetic emperor and his bratty daughter."

"That day will never come." said Kai, nerve-pinching Conquering Storm and knocking her out.

Now that was dealt with, the Royal Fighters instantly began whooping for joy and congratulating Master Kai Zen for his efforts.

"You did it Master Kai!" cried Tails "That was so cool the way you fought Conquering Storm and beat her!"

"Your skills are insane! Where did you learn them from?" asked Amy.

"You beat that nasty, vile woman!" cheered Cream "Chun-Nan's safe from harm again!"

"Thank you ever so much for stopping the Raiju Clan." said Emperor Tai "I'm not sure how I can ever repay you for this sir."

"I seek no reward in my days of defending the country." said Kai "I only do what is necessary to keep the country safe and holy. And remember, I wouldn't have won that fight if it wasn't for these three helping us escape." he added, motioning to the Chaotix.

Had Vector, Charmy and Espio not found the dungeon and freed Master Kai and the others then none of this could have happened. That in a sense made them the heroes of the day. Vector, Charmy and Espio beamed proudly.

"How about that boys? We ended up saving the day for once." beamed Vector.

"If only Sonic could be here to see this." said Charmy "He'd be well happy with us!"

"Well now our job is done, we can return to Sonic and, if he's awake, inform him on everything." said Espio "And we'll be sure to inform the princess too."

"Speaking of my daughter, how is she?" asked Tai concernedly.

"She's fine." said Tails "We got her a room in the hospital back home and she's resting comfortably. Once she recovers, we'll return her to you."

"That will be splendid." said Tai "Thank you for taking care of her. I'm glad she managed to reach you otherwise you never would have known about all this and therefore, never would have been able to help us. Matilda has helped saved Chun-Nan."

"Yes, she has." said Tails "She'll be pleased to hear about all this. Hey, where's Ruben?" he suddenly asked as he noticed Ruben was

gone.

"I think you can guess." said Knuckles, motioning over to the pile of aqua-collars in the corner of the room.

Ruben had been searching through the entire pile of aqua-collars all the time they'd been fighting and at long last, he'd managed to find his collar. Ruben cried out like a happy little boy that's found a lost toy and he eagerly clamped his collar back around his neck. A surge went through his bloodstream like an ocean wave and Ruben pointed directly at the Raiju Ninjas. He squirted them all with a huge jet of water that sent them all sliding across the room and crashing into the wall at the end of the room. Rube cried out for joy and giggled inanely.

"I've got my aqua-collar back!" he cried out "Oh yes does it feel good to have this back!"

"Well Ruben's got his collar back and now he can squirt water again." said Amy "Good for him."

"We shall return all of those aqua-collars back to the respective water-panther clans." said Emperor Tai "They'll all be happy to find out we've retrieved their collars at last."

"It's just a pity Hydra can never make up for what he was forced to do." muttered Ruben, remembering what Conquering Storm had said about his friend earlier "Because Conquering Storm killed him."

"Hydra will be observing this from the heavens Ruben." said Bladefeather reassuringly "And he'll be relieved to see that we've gotten the aqua-collars back at last. Now then, what will be next for you heroes then?"

"Well we're gonna return to our home now and spread the good news." said Tails "Especially to Sonic and Matilda. We'll leave you guys to fix everything if that's OK with you."

"We will be fine child." said Kai "The Raiju Clan will be locked up, the oppressed will be freed and Chun-Nan can recuperate from this terror that it has experienced."

"OK." said Tails "Goodbye everybody and we'll see you some other time."

"You take care heroes of the west." said Emperor Tai "And don't forget to bring Matilda home when she recovers from her injuries."

"We won't." said Tails as he and the Royal Fighters left Conquering Storm's fortress and headed off to find their vehicles and get back to New Mobotropolis.

Now they had gone, the emperor and the kung-fu masters could start cleaning up the Raiju Clan's mess and delivering them all to the Lóng de dòngxué prison where they would spend the rest of their days along with Zira the Ruthless…

Back at New Mobotropolis, Sally and Nicole were still in battle with the fully repaired and awakened Devion and the battle was going horribly against them. Despite not being the same as before, Devion still had his excellent battle prowess and tough armour and Sally & Nicole didn't have any weapons on them so they couldn't really harm Devion in anyway. As of now, Sally and Nicole were tiring out and Devion was beginning to pound them into the ground. Devion threw Sally and Nicole into a wall and he deployed his gauntlet blades. He advanced on the princess and lady-in-waiting with his blades glistening in the light and ready to make the killer blow. Mariah watched on helplessly and she quickly whipped out a mobile phone that she'd kept on her in case of emergencies. It was quite clear at this moment that Sally and Nicole couldn't beat Devion on their own so she had to call the Royal Fighters and bring them back into the city. It didn't matter if they left Eggman alone for he was not the real threat now, the city's shields would keep him at bay so they could easily abandon fighting the Eggman robots and focus on Devion. Mariah punched in the number and she put the phone to her ear.

Outside the city gates, Miranda received Mariah's call through a communicator she wore on her belt. She was still fighting with Katherine though so she couldn't really answer it without having to keep Katherine at bay. Instead, she took the communicator off her belt and tossed it over to Kiara, who had just managed to destroy

another Eggman robot.

"Kiara! Answer this for me please!" cried Miranda as she threw the communicator over to her.

The cheetah caught the communicator in her hands and she put it to her ear.

"Hello, this is Kiara speaking, who is it?" asked Kiara.

"Tell the Royal Fighters to come back into the city!" shrieked Mariah "The hospital's been compromised by a fully-repaired and rebooted Devion! We need you all now!"

Kiara almost dropped the communicator in shock. She couldn't believe what she was hearing. Devion?! Back alive?! And he's in the hospital?! They had to stop him and fast before he tried to kill Sonic! Kiara switched off the communicator and she zipped over to Miranda. She handed the mongoose her communicator back and informed her on what Mariah had just said.

"Miranda! The hospital's been breached! We're needed back in the city!" cried Kiara.

"Oh no!" gasped Miranda "The hospital's been breached…Sonic… he'll be…"

Miranda realized what had to be done so she put her electro-prod back onto her belt and gave out the order.

"Royal Fighters! Fall back!" she ordered "There's danger in the city!"

All the Royal Fighters did as they were told and they stopped fighting the Eggman robots. They all ran back towards New Mobotropolis as fast as they could possibly run. Katherine stood there and watched them retreat. It was quite clear that someone had told them there was danger in the hospital and it had to be dealt with. No matter, Devion could handle them all easily. There was no trouble for the Eggman Empire now so letting them retreat wasn't going to do any harm at all. Devion would just finish them off himself and then Sonic would be dead at last…

Back in the hospital, Devion dealt a few more blows on Sally and Nicole and he slammed them both into the wall. He then grabbed them both by their throats and pinned them against the wall. His blades were sheathed at the moment for his fists weren't clenched. Sally and Nicole both struggled in the grasp of Devion, desperate to get free and fight back.

"Ack…Devion…please…let us…go…" choked Sally.

Devion ignored them and began to tighten his grip on the two ladies, hoping to throttle them both to death. His visor narrowed down to an evil slit that was so thin you could slide it through a letter-box.

"You tried to interfere with my objective and so you will suffer the consequences." said Devion coldly "My master Dr. Eggman will be very pleased when I return to him with Sonic's head in my claws."

Sally tried a last-minute attack to get free and save herself and Nicole from death. She kicked Devion in the gut as hard as she possibly could but Devion didn't even feel that attack. Devion tightened his grip some more. He was gripping Sally and Nicole's necks so tightly their faces began to turn blue. But they wouldn't be throttled anymore for the Royal Fighters had made it hack to the hospital and Felix the Peacock flew straight through a window with Scott and Jessica holding onto his legs. Devion let go of Sally and Nicole and he deployed his arm blades. He glared at the new attackers and he prepared to finish them off as well.

"More resistance." he muttered "That just means more lives for me to take."

"No lives will be lost today vile villain." said Felix "But you will be escorted out of the city."

With that said, Scott and Jessica both summoned energy to their hands and they threw some energy spears at Devion's visor. The spears both hit Devion in the visor and destroyed it, leaving Devion completely blinded. Devion staggered backwards and he crashed into the wall, growling furiously and clutching his face. Had he been his old self, he wouldn't have been so easy to hit. Eggman may have brought him back alive but Devion was not 100% like the Devion

they had fought before and that was why Devion was losing now. Now Devion was blinded, the Royal Fighters could take advantage of it. Felix began to whack Devion all over his body with his feather clubs but Devion took all the blows as if they were nothing. Devion deployed his arm blades again and he began to slash at Felix. He maybe blinded but he has other senses like hearing. Scott and Jessica sneaked behind Devion and they both gave the Devatron an energy-powered punch that sent Devion flying through the broken window and crashing down onto the ground outside of the hospital where Miranda, Kari, Thunder, Bolt, Kiara and Taran were all waiting for him. The moment Devion landed on the ground, the Royal Fighters all began to bombard him with attacks and they didn't hold back. Devion managed to get back to his feet and he pushed the Royal Fighters away from him. He could see that the whole mission was in a flummox now and he had to escape before he was destroyed. Devion ran off as fast as he could, the Royal Fighters running after him and desperately trying to catch up to him. They couldn't let Devion stay alive and they had to destroy him or he would continue to be a threat for the Mobians. Devion touched the side of his head and contacted Katherine.

"Katherine, I am in need of assistance! Come to me immediately!" he ordered.

He then suddenly collided with a random house and he fell over onto his side. Being blinded was going to be a problem for him when running from danger in a city like New Mobotropolis. But he would get help soon for Katherine found the tunnel the burrow-bot had dug under the city and she crawled through it and into New Mobotropolis. Devion picked himself up and ran off again, the Royal Fighters catching up to him. Thunder and Bolt threw some lightening bolts at the ground just behind Devion's feet, sending Devion tripping over onto the ground and skidding to a halt. But Devion wasn't down for long. He picked himself up, deployed his arm blades and he slashed furiously, forcing the Royal Fighters to keep away from him. Devion then deployed the concealed laser blasters in the gauntlets and he began shooting at them furiously. It was more a comical case of Devion shooting in ever direction since he couldn't see properly. But he was doing a good job of keeping the Royal Fighters away from him. His rapid and continuous fire was making it

hard to find an opening to get to the Devatron so the Royal Fighters couldn't get near him without getting shot. One shot nearly hit Kiara but the cheetah just managed to dodge the attack. Katherine, who had made it into the city, finally found Devion and she ran up to the Devatron. She had her barrier deployed and she leaped in front of Devion, defending him from any possible attack. Katherine then expanded her barrier so that now it was defending her AND Devion both together. Devion sensed that Katherine was here and he held onto Katherine so she could lead him away. Katherine ran off with Devion in tow, her barrier still deployed so nobody could hit her or Devion. The Royal Fighters weren't going to let Devion go so easily so they chased after Katherine. Scott, Jessica, Thunder and Bolt both began throwing energy spears and thunder bolts respectively at Katherine's barrier, the attacks making no impact on it. Katherine led Devion back over to the tunnel under the city and she made Devion go down on his knees. She directed Devion to crawl through the tunnel and stood in front of him as he made his escape, defending him with her barrier. Devion crawled out of the city and Katherine shortened her barrier so she could crawl out after him. The two robots were safely out of New Mobotropolis and they ran off towards Eggman's ship for pickup. Katherine sent a text message to Eggman, informing him of their failure and that they needed picking up. Eggman fumed angrily and he picked up Devion and Katherine with his fleet ship's ascending beam. While he wasn't pleased that the mission had been a failure, he knew it had been worth a try and there was always next time he could try and kill Sonic. And he'd make some improvements to his robots and Devion so that they would succeed in the next mission. The Royal Fighters could only watch helplessly as Eggman retreated from the scene. They'd failed to destroy Devion and Eggman was likely to upgrade him so he'd be even more invincible then ever, then he'd return and try to kill Sonic again.

"Ugh, we almost had him!" grumbled Miranda "Devion lives to fight another day and he'll return to kill Sonic again!"

"Well at least we saved him." said Kari in a positive manner "That's all that matters. We've kicked Devion out of New Mobotropolis and Sonic still lives. We've done our task and I'm sure Sonic's friends will be very gracious when they hear about all this."

"I'll say they will." said Scott "I'm amazed how easy that was though, Devion used to be a lot harder to defeat then this. I guess Eggman didn't quite rebuild him back to his former glory, luckily for us."

"That'll be one advantage we have over him." said Miranda brightly "And the next time Eggman and Devion attack, we'll make sure Devion doesn't leave alive."

Then suddenly, her communicator began buzzing and the mongoose answered it. She put it to her hear and listened intently to who was calling. It was Tails and he was telling Miranda that Chun-Nan was back under the emperor's rule, the Raiju Clan had been defeated and they were on their way back home. Miranda smiled happily and she switched off her communicator.

"Everybody, I have good news." said Miranda "Sonic's friends have succeeded in their mission and they're on their way back."

"I knew they would succeed!" cheered Thunder happily "Those guys can do anything when they get into it!"

"Yeah, and they've just proven they don't always need Sonic on their side." said Bolt "I bet Sonic will be thrilled to hear all this when he eventually wakes up."

Miranda nodded agreeably. This day had been truly wondrous for the Royal Fighters. Two victories in one day, what could be better for them…?

That evening, Sonic's friends had finally returned from Chun-Nan and they had been informed on everything that had been going on while they had been away. They were all surprised to hear that Devion was back but they were pleased to hear that they had done their task in defending Sonic from any attacks. Right now, they were all gathered around Sonic's bed again and watching to see if he would awake from his coma at last. Matilda had requested to see Sonic so Mariah had helped the injured princess out of her bed and into Sonic's room so she could see him. She was thrilled to hear that Chun-Nan was back to normal, Ruben had gotten his aqua-collar

back and the Raiju Clan were being imprisoned as of now. She couldn't wait to return home. But for now she'd have to rest and wait until she was well enough to walk about again before she could go home. For now, she could be here for poor Sonic. Mariah monitored Sonic's condition and she was amazed with what she was coming up with.

"Everyone, you won't believe this." said Mariah "The medicine I gave Sonic yesterday is beginning to take effect sooner then I thought it would and he's beginning to come around. He'll wake up in a few moments."

"He is?" piped Amy happily "Oh yay! Sonic's gonna wake up at last!"

"This day just keeps getting better." said Tails "We've saved Chun-Nan, our friends save Sonic and now he's gonna wake up."

"Let's all talk to him and help him wake up." said Matilda "That usually helps an injured person wake up. It worked with me so let's try with Sonic."

"OK." said Tails, leaning forward and speaking to Sonic "Sonic, please wake up, we're all dying to see you again."

"Come on Sonic, you've come back from worse before." said Amy, holding Sonic's hand "You're gonna be OK, please wake up."

"We're all here for you buddy just like you're always here for us." added Knuckles "Come back to us so we can all be together again."

Shadow decided he'd add something of his own so he bent down to Sonic and spoke to him.

"Wake up faker." he said "Or me and you will never get to prove who the ultimate is."

"Shadow!" snapped Amy.

"What?" asked Shadow "I'm just trying to help him too! If that doesn't wake him up, nothing will."

Just as he finished that sentence, Sonic began to stir in his sleep,

moaning drowsily to himself. Everybody stared at Sonic and their faces began to light up. It seemed to be working. Sonic was coming too at long last. Sonic continued to moan to himself and then, finally, after what seemed like an eternity, his eyes began to open. Sonic opened his eyes and he saw all his friends standing around him, looking very happy at the fact the hero of Mobius and their long time friend had come to at last. Sonic weakly smiled back at them all.

"Hey there…guys." he said weakly "What's…going on…here?"

"You got shot in the back by something, presumably Devion as he was dying, and we all brought you here to get better." said Tails, happy tears coming to his eyes "We're…we're all too happy to see you awake again…knowing that you're gonna live."

"Well…that's me for you…" said Sonic "The hedgehog…isn't going anywhere…anytime soon."

"You certainly aren't." said Amy, giving Sonic a loving kiss on the cheek, earning an annoyed expression from Sonic but he didn't mind too much as he knew Amy was just showing how happy she was right now "You're still with us and you will be for years to come."

Sonic smiled back at his happy friends and then, he looked over to his other side and noticed that Matilda was sitting there and loving this loving, tender moment between him and his friends.

"Ma…Matilda?" burbled Sonic "What…are you doing here…and where did you get…that hideous scar?"

Matilda's face fell and she put her hand over the scar over her eye.

"It's kind of a long story." said Matilda grimly.

"We'll all tell you it Sonic." said Tails "We'll tell you all what's been going on while you've been asleep all this time."

"OK then…" said Sonic with a cheeky grin on his face "What has the hedgehog been…missing out on?"

Sonic's friends and Matilda began to tell Sonic the whole story on what had been going on in his absence…

But happiness was not to last. For in space, a huge black comet began to sail through space and towards Mobius. This comet was the home of an insidious race of hideous, freaky aliens known as the Black Arms. The Black Arms were all black and red in colour with yellow eyes and they came in all shapes, sizes and forms. Some were humanoid and rather slim creatures, some were very muscular and very large and some had wings and flew around like birds or were giant worm creatures. They were a terrible race and anybody who met them feared them. Their leader was the ruthless, sadistic tyrant that threatened peace everywhere. And his name was Black Doom. Black Doom had two horns on his head, spikes on his cranium, three red eyes, two blank and one with a reptilian pupil, black wrinkly skin which indicated he was quite old and three fingers. He wore a tattered, brown robe with shoulder pads and he wore golden jewellery that made him look quite grand in appearance. He had no legs and just levitated above the ground like a ghoul. He looked very demonic and was pretty much the devil in anyone's eyes. Black Doom could see that the Black Comet was heading towards Mobius. It was not on a collision course. It would fly right past Mobius and disappear for another fifty years. But Black Doom had plans, sinister plans and he planned to make them once the comet sailed over Mobius.

"So…we approach this wretched mud ball of a planet once again." growled Black Doom, his voice very deep, growly and monstrous "At long last, we can finish what we started centuries ago. We have sparred with this planet time and again. And this time, Mobius will cease to exist…"

Footnotes:

***Remember *Tales from Mobius Arc 14: A Few Steps To A Conquering Storm* where she did just that?**

HOLY CRAP! BLACK DOOM'S COMING TO MOBIUS! What does

that mean for the Mobians?! Is this going to be the end?! Or can they defeat this new threat just like they have done with all the other threats? Tune in as we begin the road to 125 and a whole new saga starring the big bad aliens from the one video game everybody LOVES to hate...

And NO! The origin for Shadow will NOT be as obvious as it looks! You will be surprised with what it'll be...

Also, join me in* Tales from Mobius *as Silver and Blaze get their own arc!

Aliens and Origins

Story 120: Aliens and Origins

A whole week had passed since the destruction of the Devatrons and the defeat of the Raiju Clan and the Black Comet was finally beginning to pass over Mobius once again (it moves VERY slowly and it was a good few hundred miles away when we saw it in the previous chapter). The Black Comet was never a good sign for Mobius as it was home to the Black Arms, a race of insidious creatures that liked to cause malice and mayhem whenever their comet passed a planet. The Black Comet itself was no ordinary comet, it was the home of the Black Arms and was actually somewhat alive and techno-organic in nature. Standing inside the comet gives off the impression of being inside the body of a living organism, mostly with its pulsating growths, throat like halls, tentacles, organs and a viscous substance that only Death Leeches, the Black Arms offspring, and Black Annelids, a species of worm like creatures that were kept as pets, could live in. The Black Comet truly was a wonder to behold and anyone who saw it instantly grew scared for it meant the Black Arms were coming and they would bring death and destruction to them. Mobius was a popular target for the Black Arms mainly because Mobius was among one of the more challenging planets they came across. The Black Arms had battled Mobius five times already, coming back every fifty years to fight again, and this year, 2143, was going to be their sixth encounter with Mobius and the Black Arms looked forward to it. The Black Arms had more reasons to return to Mobius then simply having fun with them though, they intended to finish the Mobians off at long last and finish what they'd started as they were getting tired of them now and just wanted to put them out of their misery already. Also, they wanted to retrieve a few things that had been stolen from them in the Fifth Black Arms War which was all the way back in 2093 but more on that later. Right now, a huge Black Arms soldier plodded into Black Doom's lair. He was a Black Oak, a large, muscular species of Black Arms renowned for their strength and endurance. He had a scar across his chest that suggested he'd been in a rather bloody conflict and he had a large black and purple sword in a

scabbard on his back. This Black Oak was distinctive from the rest in that he was one of the few Black Arms soldiers to be sentient. The Black Arms were mostly like a hive of bees, just following their leader blindly with no questions about their orders or their leader. Few Black Arms soldiers such as this Black Oak we're with now actually had a sentient mind. The Black Oak strode up to Black Doom and he bowed down to his leader but Black Doom had his back turned and was looking through one of the viewing areas of the comet. He had a Black Warrior with him. They were the most common members of the Black Arms army. They were humanoid with no visible mouth, yellow eyes, black and red skin and two toed feet with claws. This one was sentient too.

"Black Doom my lord." said the Black Oak in a gruff voice "The army is primed and ready, we're almost ready to deploy. Just a few more hours and the comet will be over Mobius. I have also been sticking to my training and I'm ready for battle again sir."

"Excellent Oakron." growled Black Doom in his trademark growly voice "I'm glad to see my best soldier has been using his time wisely. Now our army is ready, we can strike Mobius again and this time, finish it off for good."

"Curse those disgusting furry dirt bags!" growled Oakron "And curse their rulers for giving me this!" he added, pointing to the scar on his chest "I will slice them all into bite-sized chunks and then feed them to the Black Annelids!"

"Yes my star soldier." purred Black Doom darkly "Today, we finish off what we started 250 years ago. I want them ALL wiped out when we invade!"

"I assure you that we will not fail you Black Doom." said Oakron loyally.

"I know." crooned Black Doom, his eyes narrowing down to evil slits "And this time, all Black Arms will get involvement, even the scientific kind. In this battle, you will be joined with my best scientist, Nyrah (pronounced nigh-RAH)."

Nyrah, the Black Warrior standing next to Black Doom, proudly

stood forward and took out his weapon, which was a ring gun, a gun that fired ring shaped beams and was very powerful. Oakron didn't seem very pleased with this assignment for some reason.

"Are you mad master?! I can't work with this scientific know-it-all!" cried Oakron "Working with a scientist is an insult to my honour! Particularly since this trash is as weak as the Mobians are!"

"Oh really?" sneered Nyrah, his voice exactly the same as Knockout's from *Transformers Prime* "Then how about me and you prove that theory by having a little contest?"

"I'll happily accept a challenge like that Nyrah!" yelled Oakron, looming over the puny Black Warrior and threatening to smash him to pieces "I will squash you flat you piece of…"

"I am NOT interested in your petty rivalry!" bellowed Black Doom, turning around to glare at Oakron "Nyrah has been on Mobius all five encounters we've had in the past and therefore, has more knowledge and experience then you do Oakron. Knowledge and experience that will help us in this forth-coming war. You two WILL work together or I will obliterate you both."

Oakron clenched his fists and he held in his anger. He instead let it out in a heavy sigh.

"Yes master." said Oakron dully "I will abide to your wishes."

"Good." snapped Black Doom gruffly "Now then, our first move is simple. The Black Comet will be over Mobius in a few hours. You, Nyrah and the Black Army will descend and ransack the popular Royal Grounds known as…Castle Acorn. You will ready the castle for my arrival and then I will descend to Mobius, take their ruler and hold that person hostage. If that does not make them back down then we will resort to brute force. These weak-minded Mobians deserve to bear the brunt of our army."

"That is an excellent plan master." said Nyrah supportively "And while we're down there, we can find the wayward Project: Shadow that we had been working on and get him back on our side. We know he's there after all since we sent him there to avoid losing him

to the Xorda."

"Yes." growled Black Doom "Shadow is either still in suspended animation or he's awake and already causing chaos as we speak. If he is then we will be in time to finish the job. Once we've gotten Shadow back, we will use him to find our stolen relics too."

"Indeed, your sword and your Black Chaos Emerald were stolen from us the last time we invaded and we had to abandon them because we were low on soldiers and resources at the time. Now we're back with an even bigger army, we will get them back easily and wipe those Mobians out."

"I look forward to that." said Oakron happily "I'll crush every Mobian skull there is when we get down there!"

"We shall indeed." said Black Doom darkly "Mobius will experience its last breath of life once we descend…"

The Black Arms began to picture that very thought in their heads. This invasion was an invasion that they were looking forward to and it would be the last invasion the Mobians would ever experience from them…

The future. People often wondered what the future would behold for them and what would happen several years onwards from the current year. Unfortunately for Mobius, the apocalypse had come and the planet had been in ruins for over two-hundred years. The Mobian populace had been declining since then and only a hundred Mobians remained. Food and water supplies were dwindling as time went on and the remaining Mobians were lucky they could even get any. Also since proper resources weren't available, reproduction was getting more difficult and any attempts to repair the damages done by this global disaster were in vain as many fell due to exhaustion or extreme weather just stopped them dead in their tracks. Speaking of the weather, it had been very different since the end of the world. Tornadoes often randomly appeared and went, sandstorms struck at the most unexpected of moments and heavy rain and thunderstorms appeared suddenly and lasted several days,

even weeks before finally subsiding. The rain was in someway keeping the last remaining Mobians alive since they just got some cups, jugs and bottles out and filled them with rainwater to drink so they were happy to see rain come. The only thing wrong with it being how long it lasted when they came. At least there were monthly gaps between the rainstorms. How a world so lush and beautiful was suddenly reduced to nothing more then a global wasteland with dwindling life was anyone's guess and only two people were trying to find out how it happened. They were, Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat. Silver and Blaze had been studying about Mobius' history and trying to find out when zero hour officially came for the planet 200 years ago. The official end date seemed to be some time in the year 2143 and they had the idea that a supposed Martian invasion of the planet might be responsible. They had tried to go back in time to prevent it only to accidentally end up on Greengate, the home of the Seedrian race, and get tangled up in the Martian and Seedrian war*. Their interference resulted in the death of Count Drago, Marik the Martian's uncle and the Martians had sworn revenge. The two Mobians had been hoping to try again and fix the future but other matters had been occupying them like starving survivors and extreme weather. Right now, Silver was floating through the cities that had become ruins by this disaster and returning home from his daily rounds of helping the less-capable Mobians. He and Blaze were special being as they were the ONLY super-powered beings left and that is why they were looking after the only remaining Mobians. Silver had a bit of trouble getting home though. A sandstorm had hit Nekronopolis again and Silver as having a tough time getting through it. He was wearing a pair of goggles which he'd brought with him since a sandstorm had been predicted earlier today and it was a good thing he had brought them otherwise his eyes would be full of sand and he wouldn't be able to see. Silver made a psychic bubble around himself in order to keep the sand off of him and he flew through the storm, looking for his home. If he wasn't protecting himself, the sandstorm would be shredding his skin by now. Blaze the Cat was already at Silver's home and waiting for him and she set her hands aflame so she could signal to Silver where he had to go. Silver peered through the blustering sandstorm and he saw a faint orange tinge in the distance. He guessed that was Blaze signalling to him and he headed towards the tinge. His guess was right and he eventually

reached Blaze. Blaze put out her fire and Silver landed on the ground, his psychic bubble disappearing and the teal glow around his body fading away as he stopped using his psychokinesis.

"Those sandstorms are a nuisance when you're trying to fly around and do your daily duties." muttered Silver "Oh well, I managed to deliver the last of the food supplies for the surviving Mobians Blaze."

"That's good Silver." said Blaze brightly but keeping her face straight "So now we've done our duties, we can try again to prevent the Martian invasion from happening."

"We know which date we need to be it but the best thing might be to warp to the date BEFORE May the 4th as we might have a better chance of preventing it." said Silver "We could warn Sonic and friends in advance and then they'll be ready for the invasion and they can stop it before it begins."

"That might be easier said then done Silver." said Blaze grimly "I just hope that killing Count Drago doesn't end up being the reason behind the Martian invasion otherwise we will have inadvertently ended up bringing the whole thing upon ourselves."

"I don't think that'll be the reason they decided to invade." said Silver "Especially as the invasion happened before we ended up interfering with the timeline anyway. I bet Marik's the one responsible for the invasion. He likely got beaten by Sonic and then ran home crying to his mommy and daddy and wants them to finish them off for him. The invasion will still happen regardless of Drago's well-being or at least that's how it seems to me."

"I think you're right Silver." said Blaze "But regardless on what started the whole invasion, we will end it before it begins and hopefully, that'll fix our future. If not then we will have to do more research on what caused this apocalypse."

"I know." said Silver, wandering over to a drawer in the corner of the old room they were in and opening it.

The drawer contained their only remaining means of time-travel now the Time Stone had been destroyed. A Super Warp Ring. It was like

a warp ring only you could travel through time with it and hop between zones and time with it. Silver thought about May the 3rd 2143 and he flicked the Super Warp Ring into the air. The ring expanded to several times its normal size and then it opened up with a gleaming golden glow. On the other side of the ring was Mobius 200 years in the past.

"Let's go Blaze!" cried Silver "For the future of Mobius, let us prevent the Martian invasion from happening!"

"Or at the most, stop it from being successful." said Blaze.

With that said, Silver and Blaze both leaped through the Super Warp Ring, leaving their time behind for the time being and warping directly to the past. Hopefully the Martian invasion would be the very thing that doomed their world and that stopping it would fix everything…

Back in the present day, Amy Rose was monitoring an exercising Sonic the Hedgehog. Just yesterday, Sonic had finally managed to get out of bed and in an attempt to shape him back up for battle, Amy decided to start giving him some exercises. Sonic was having his first session right now and needless to say, he didn't appear to be enjoying it much. In fact, he looked like he was very distressed and fed up. Sonic was lying on his side right now, his torso still bandaged up to keep his back in check, and he was attempting to do some leg lifts while his friends watched him, feeling very sorry for him. Sonic feebly tried to lift up his leg and Amy watched him impatiently with a commanding attitude in her. Sonic only just managed to lift his leg up before his leg started straining and it fell back down onto the ground. Amy glared at Sonic and barked at him.

"Leg higher Sonic the Hedgehog!" she yelled.

Sonic tried to lift his leg again but he only managed to lift it about half the height anyone can lift their legs and then it started straining and it flopped back down again. Amy fumed at him.

"Try harder Sonic!" she barked.

Sonic tried to lift his leg again but this time, he couldn't do it and after lifting it about an inch off the ground, it slumped back on the ground. Sonic felt like he was trying to lift a sack full of bricks with his leg. Never in his life had he felt so weak and pathetic but that was only because of his injuries courtesy of Devion the Devatron Leader. If he'd never been shot then he wouldn't be subjected to this kind of torture, being bossed around by Amy and being forced to exercise even though he was barely able to walk again.

"Sonic, do you call that a leg lift?!" snapped Amy "Because I do not! My granny can lift her legs higher then you! Try harder mister!"

"Amy, in case you haven't noticed, I've only JUST got out of my bed!" grumbled Sonic "I've only started walking again since yesterday and it's mostly staggering I can do at best! You can't expect me to start suddenly being fully functional again so soon after recovering!"

"Do not talk back to your instructor Sonic!" retorted Amy "Now get up off your lazy bum and start walking!"

Sonic grumbled to himself and he picked himself up. He then began to stagger a good few paces with Amy watching his every step with a death stare. Sonic's best friend, Tails the twin-tailed fox, just face-palmed himself and groaned in annoyance. Watching Sonic suffer at the hands of Amy Rose was just torment to him.

"Oh man, why did Amy have to do this to poor Sonic?" muttered Tails "Sonic can't start exercising so soon after getting out of his bed and leaving the hospital! He can barely walk so he shouldn't be forced to do this!"

"I wish Amy would let me use a Chaos Emerald to heal Sonic with a Chaos Regeneration." muttered Knuckles the Echidna "But after the whole Chaos Cluster frenzy last year, Amy doesn't want anybody to be using Chaos Regeneration in fear of side effects again. We all know what happened when Sonic used that cluster to heal her."

"But that was a Chaos Cluster, a Chaos Emerald works differently to those clusters." noted Cream the Rabbit "The Chaos Emeralds won't harm Mr. Sonic if we heal him with one."

"I know but Amy's just being one of those "Better safe then sorry" types and I won't disrespect her wishes as that will just tick her off and I don't like upsetting people I'm friends with." said Knuckles "So Sonic will have to recover on his own I'm afraid."

"If Amy makes him exercise like this though, Sonic'll end up back in his hospital bed!" snickered Geoffrey St. John.

The others snickered with him.

"If Amy starts forcing Matilda to exercise while she's only just recovering then I will show no mercy on her." said Ruben the Water Panther grumpily.

"Amy won't get that chance since some of Castle Acorn's staff have taken a hover-saucer and are escorting Matilda back to Chun-Nan so she can be back with her family and recover in a hospital at home." noted Cosmo the Seedrian "So don't worry about Matilda, she'll be safe from Amy's wrath."

That set everybody off again. They thought the last thing Cosmo said was pretty funny. Their laughing was cut short though as Sonic suddenly caved in from strain and he fell over onto his face. He lay on the ground, grumbling to himself and Amy stood over Sonic, tapping her foot.

"Come on Sonic, this is pathetic!" she screeched "You've barely walked more then ten paces! I've seen tortoises walk further then you and they're the slowest things alive!"

"Sorry Little Miss Bossy." retorted Sonic, trying to pick himself up but failing as he was too weak.

Mandy Mouse, the tomboy girl and heavy hitter of the R.F.S., had had enough of Amy making Sonic exercise when he was in no shape to walk about yet. Mandy strode forward and she put Sonic's arm around her shoulder. She helped Sonic back onto his feet and led him back to the others.

"Break time for you blue dude." said Mandy.

"Are you serious?!" cried Amy "We can't let Sonic have a rest! We

need him all shaped up and ready to fight Dr. Eggman again! Do you think Eggman's going to let Sonic have a rest?!"

"Amy, you can drop that attitude right now!" snapped Mandy "Sonic's not fit to be exercising and forcing an injured patient to do heavy work like exercising just as they're recovering will exasperate his injuries! Sonic NEEDS to rest or he'll NEVER recover!"

"I don't really like telling people off but I'll make an exception this time." said Cream "Amy, you need to let Mr. Sonic recover on his own and stop being so bossy!

Amy's face quickly changed from a stern, bossy expression to a guilty and disheartened expression. She began to realize that what she was doing was just pushing the injured Sonic too far and that she can't just expect Sonic to be functioning again so soon after getting out of bed. Sonic was still recovering and recovery takes time so Amy would have to give Sonic time to recover.

"Oh Sonic I'm…I'm so sorry for treating you like this." said Amy apologetically.

"It's cool Amy." said Sonic with a weak smile on his face "I understand why you're so jumpy. You're worried about Eggman coming in and trying to finish me off before I can recover so you want me back in shape so I can kick his big fat butt again. You mean well Amy but you're gonna have to be patient, I don't recover as fast as I can run you know!"

Amy snickered at Sonic's remark. Sonic maybe in a bad state so far but he still had his trademark humour at least. Sonic's humour and spirit would never die down, no matter what state he was in.

"Well Sonic, I'm gonna stop playing drill coach and I'll leave you to recover on your own." said Amy "I really should have known better then to do this to you."

"That'll be very nice Amy." said Sonic as Mandy helped him stagger over to the others on the sidelines where the rest of his friends were sitting.

But just as Mandy was helping Sonic to sit down with the others, a bright golden flash appeared from nowhere and made everybody jump in surprise. The golden flash belonged to a warp ring and the warp ring expanded up to twice its normal size. Out of the warp ring jumped Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, future friends of Sonic and co. They had successfully managed to use their Super Warp Ring to warp from their time to Mobius in the year 2143. Sonic stared at Silver and Blaze in surprise as the Super Warp Ring shrunk back down to size and they put their warp ring away. Silver and Blaze observed their surroundings and they realized they had arrived in the right place. It felt good to see Mobius looking to grand and lush in comparison to their dystopia that they unfortunately live in nowadays.

"Well, we made it." said Silver "Now we can save our future."

"Don't get too excited Silver." said Blaze "We're only taking a big gamble at most so don't think we're going to change everything just by preventing the…"

Her voice trailed off as she noticed Sonic and friends all sitting there and staring at her and Silver. Sonic's face brightened and their very appearances seemed to bring new strength to him as he stood up and staggered over to them to shake their hands.

"Silver! Blaze! Man is it good to see you future Mobians again!" cried Sonic happily.

"It's great to see you too Sonic." said Silver brightly "Although it'd be better if we weren't seeing you like this. The Devatron War must have been bad eh?"

"Huh, figures you'd know about The Devatron War." said Sonic grimly "You're from the future and I bet in the future there's books about the whole thing. Yeah, the Devatron war was pretty bad, I've only just been released from the hospital yesterday!"

"You look like you're recovering well though Sonic." said Blaze "To say you've only just been released from the hospital…"

"Hold on a minute there!" interrupted Amy "Excuse me for asking

Sonic but who are these two and how do you know them?"

"They're Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, Mobians from the future." introduced Sonic "Silver knows psychic powers and Blaze knows fire powers."

"Sounds cool." said Amy "When did you first meet then?"

"A robot from another zone stole my Sol Emeralds and after chasing it down, we accidentally ended up in your time and Sonic, Tails, Cosmo, Geoffrey, Wilson & Mandy helped us find them all." explained Blaze.

"I see." said Amy "Well my name's Amy Rose and I'm Sonic's girlfriend…soon-to-be girlfriend that is."

Sonic just fumed to himself. Would Amy stop claiming him like this?! They're not in a serious relationship yet! They hadn't even been dating that much yet! Well he knew what Amy was like so he let it slide. It was just in her character to be like this and she wouldn't be Amy Rose any other way.

"And we're Sonic's other friends." said Knuckles, stepping forward to greet the two "I'm Knuckles the Echidna, Guardian of Angel Island."

"Guardian? I'm one too." said Blaze "Guardian of the Sol Emeralds that is, what do you protect then?"

"The Master Emerald." explained Knuckles "On Angel Island in Downunda."

"I guard the Sol Emeralds there too." said Blaze "Although in the future, the Master Emerald is gone and Angel Island sits in an ocean off the cost of Nekronopolis."

Knuckles looked shocked. The Master Emerald is gone in the future and Angel Island has fallen? How did that happen? Hopefully now Silver and Blaze were here, they could probably help to prevent this from happening.

"And who are you lot then?" asked Silver, looking at the others.

"My name's Cream the Rabbit Mr. Silver." said Cream sweetly "How do you do?"

"Mah name's Bunnie Rabbot sugah." said Bunnie.

"I'm Ruben the Water Panther." said Ruben.

"And I'm Shade the Echidna." said Shade "I'm with Knuckles as co-guardian of Angel Island."

"It's nice to meet all of you." said Silver brightly "Meeting the friends and comrades of Sonic the Hedgehog is a great honour in so many ways."

"Flattering I'm sure." said Knuckles "So maybe you can tell us why you've travelled all the way to the past then you two?"

"Because the future is a wreck." explained Blaze "We're from 200 years in the future and the world's been a wreck for precisely this long. Me and Silver strive to find out what triggered this apocalypse and we think we've worked it out."

Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Bunnie, Ruben and Shade all looked at each other with discomforting expressions on their faces. Are Silver and Blaze implying that the world ends at some point in time, maybe THIS exact time? That really wasn't comforting for them in the slightest, what would that mean for all of them if that was what Silver and Blaze were hinting at?

"Ok then you two, what triggers the end of the world then?" asked Sonic "And when's the official doomsday date?"

"Well I began reading a book about Mobius' history." explained Silver, pulling out the book that he'd been reading and using for research "And it says on May the 4th 2143, the Martians invade Mobius and we think that might be the starting ember behind the disaster that dooms the future."

Sonic looked like he was going to faint. The Martians invade Mobius?! Did that mean Marik the Martian ran back to Mars and squealed on him and his friends so that his friends and family could help him destroy Mobius? What a suck-up! Then again, it'd be a job

taking down a bunch of Martians. Just Marik alone was a serious threat so how bad would a WHOLE FLEET of Martians be? Somehow, Sonic had a feeling that Silver and Blaze's research might be correct. The Martians dooming Mobius sounded plausible enough and now Silver and Blaze warned them that it was coming, they could prepare for their arrival and prevent the coming apocalypse…hopefully.

"So the Martians invade Mobius on May the 4th 2143?" asked Sonic "Well, it's 2143 now and it's May the 3rd. So the Martian invasion must happen tomorrow then."

"That was the idea." said Silver "We warped ourselves back in time a whole day before the invasion begins so we could warn you in advance. Now we've informed you all that the Martians are going to invade, you can prepare for their arrival and stop them before it begins."

"We're very grateful for your help guys but I think we need more details then just simply "The Martians are coming"." noted Mandy "Does anything happen once they invade?"

"Just read this whole section." said Silver, handing Mandy the book which he had turned to the pages about the Martian invasion already "That'll tell you what we know about it."

Mandy read the book very closely, trying her hardest to make out some of the words that had been smudged or faded thanks to deterioration over time. It was an old book after all and Mandy made sure she was careful with it as any wrong move could easily rip a page or two. Sonic and the others waited as Mandy read the book. After a minute or two, Mandy finally read the whole section dedicated to the Martian invasion, Mandy closed the book and handed it back to Silver. Silver put the book away.

"So the Martians invade and then they take over Castle Acorn?" asked Mandy "Well now we know they're going to do that, we can prevent that from happening. But how exactly does this prove that they're the cause of your dystopia? For all we know, we might stop them after they've taken over the castle. It's not helpful that the book sorta stops after the take over of Castle Acorn so there's some

helpful information that's missing and that information might have been helpful for all of us."

Silver couldn't help but agree with Mandy, he didn't have definite proof that the Martian invasion WAS the cause of Mobius' destruction, he was just going on by guesses from what he'd learnt.

"Well we're willing to guess that the Martian invasion is the cause of Mobius' destruction so we're testing that theory." said Silver "The best thing to do is shoot down the theories one by one until we get closer to the truth."

"And once you find out the truth, you can warp yourself to the right time and inform us about it." said Sonic brightly "Since you can time-travel, it won't matter what time of day, month or year it is, you'll always have the chance to tell us."

"That is true." said Blaze "And even though we've come here to tell you about the Martian invasion, me and Silver are gonna stay here until the invasion comes and goes just to see what happens and if we can help in anyway."

"Sounds good." said Tails "So Sonic, do you think we should tell Sally about all this? I'm sure she'd love to know that the Martians are coming."

"I agree." said Sonic "Although Silver and Blaze should tell her so let's bring them with us. Come on you two, we've gotta tell our queen about what you've found out, she'll know what to do about this."

Silver and Blaze nodded and they followed Sonic and friends off to Castle Acorn. Silver decided to help Sonic by carrying him with his psychokinesis as he was having trouble walking. Sonic was surrounded by a teal glow and he was floating above the ground. The Mobians all wandered off to Castle Acorn to apprise Sally Acorn on everything Silver and Blaze had told them. Sally was a smart woman, she would know exactly what to do about the Martian invasion and how to prepare for it before it began…

While all this was going on, Shadow the Hedgehog was sitting on a hilltop and listening to the gentle breeze that blew over the forest at the bottom of the hilltop he was sitting on. After Sonic finally managed to get out of bed yesterday, Shadow felt like he was no longer needed to fill in for him and despite protests from Queen Sally and the Royal Fighters to stay with them and join the R.F.S., Shadow declined as he had his quest to complete. And that quest was to find the answers to his mysterious past. Shadow just could not get those bothersome questions out of his head. Who was he? Why was he made into the image of a Mobian when after Devion experimented on him**, it was quite clear he was not Mobian? Who created him and what was his purpose in this big, lonely universe? His time on this planet hadn't been doing him much good as he'd barely found any useful information. The only thing he knew about himself now was that he was not Mobian, just made in the image of one, and that he was likely created by some other being. Shadow put a hand to his head and he sighed to himself as he continued to think on these questions and what the answers were.

"So many questions…" muttered Shadow "And yet there's no way of finding the answers. I've been all over this world ever since I was awakened from stasis and I know barely nothing about my past still. Anything I do know is thanks to Devion and his experiments rather then my little quest. How can I find the answers to my past if there are no answers to find here?"

Shadow lowered his hand and lay back on the long wavy grass that swayed in the gentle breezing wind. He stared up at the sky, realizing for the first time ever how beautiful it looked, and he continued to swim in his thoughts.

"Maybe I should forget about the whole thing…" he mused to himself "Maybe I should move on and be my own person like what Princess Matilda suggested. After all, I am kinda liking my life as it is now. I'd like it better if I didn't have so many questions bothering me but I can fix that easily, just simply stop thinking about it and let it all go."

He stopped talking to himself for a minute and he stared more intently at the sky this time around. His mind now had something new to focus on.

"I've never realized how beautiful the sky looks." he said to himself "I've been so caught up in my quest for the truth I've never had the time to admire the beauty of this planet. This may not be my home but I will happily make this my home now since I'm likely to never find out where I came from. And to think that scumbag Dr. Eggman tried to trick me into destroying Mobius. Well with me around and Sonic recovering from his injuries, he'll never get to desecrate this planet…"

His thoughts were interrupted by an unexpected arrival. It was none other then the first Mobian he ever saw after being awakened from that capsule he was found sleeping in, Rouge the Bat. Rouge had been going her own way again after the whole ordeal with the Devatrons and the Raiju Clan had finally been dealt with and she'd just happened to come across Shadow while hunting for treasure again (what did you expect? It's Rouge the Bat after all, she's always doing that!). Rouge swooped down beside Shadow and she sat down on the grass with him.

"Well, I didn't think I'd be running into you again in such a hurry Shadow boy." cooed Rouge teasingly.

"If I didn't know any better, I'd say you were looking for me." said Shadow with a mocking smirk on his face "Well you found me Rouge so what do you want?"

"I just wanted to see what you were up to." said Rouge modestly.

"I'm just kicking back and swimming in my thoughts right now." said Shadow, keeping his eyes fixed on the sky above him "What have you been up to?"

"I've been hunting for treasure again." said Rouge "There's a beautiful relic I've been looking for, for a while now. It's a golden key with rubies and sapphires in it and it's rumoured to have some kind of power, not that I care since I don't use gems for their powers, only for their beauty and for display."

"Mmm hmm…" mumbled Shadow, not really caring about what Rouge was on about "So shouldn't you be looking for this relic instead of hanging out with me?"

"I've got all the time in the world Shadow boy." said Rouge "I'll find it eventually, don't you worry. So…how's the quest for your past coming on then?"

"I'm wondering if I should keep searching for answers to my past or if I should just give up and move on." said Shadow "Over time, I'm growing to really like this world and I think I wanna make myself at home here. Mobius is a beautiful planet and since I've been made into the image of a Mobian, it makes sense for me to be living here."

"Well if you wanna live here then go ahead." said Rouge "You'll be accepted no problem given how you're a hero along with Sonic boy."

"No, Sonic's a hero." said Shadow "I've only contributed to his heroism, nothing more. Sonic has worked all his life to build this image for him and I will not be the one to take it from him. I maybe superior then him in every way but does that give me a legitimate excuse to steal his spotlight? I'll be accepted simply for aiding Sonic in his adventures and that will be all I need."

"Well Shadow, to me, you and Sonic are both heroes and are both as good as each other." said Rouge, batting her eyelids seductively at Shadow "I think you and Sonic are much better as friends then enemies."

"I do not consider us "friends"." muttered Shadow "More or less "acquaintances". But you are right, we're much better as "friends" then enemies. At least we won't have to go through that again since Eggman will never fool me into thinking I'm his again."

"Couldn't agree more." said Rouge "Speaking of Eggman, I bet…"

She was suddenly cut off by the arrival of something strange and eerie. Much like she had earlier, something suddenly appeared from nowhere and floated directly in front of Shadow and Rouge, making Rouge squeal in surprise and jump. Shadow leaped up to his feet and stared at the thing looking at him. It was a purple starfish like being with a red eye in the centre and dark purple tentacle tips. Shadow's mind was in a whirl just looking at it. Why did that thing look familiar to him all of the sudden? Had he seen it before? The starfish suddenly began to talk, and when it talked, it talked in Black

Doom's voice. The starfish was Doom's Eye, a little something Black Doom often sent out to watch someone from the comfort of his own home as well as project images of him and messages and such.

"Shadow. Right now, you are looking at my eye." growled Doom's Eye "And I have sent it to you to send you a cryptic message."

Shadow stood still and entered daydream mode. That voice was so familiar to him all of then sudden. Had he heard it before? In fact… that voice was very similar to the one he'd kept hearing in his head several times in the past. Could this be a sign that his creator was near and had finally found him? Or was his memory playing tricks on him?

"Shadow?" asked the Doom's Eye "Are you listening to me?"

Shadow snapped out of his daydream and he stared back at the starfish.

"I am now." said Shadow "Who are you and what message do you have for me?"

"You will find out soon enough." said Doom's Eye coldly "Right now, you must go to Castle Acorn. Then you shall get the rest of the message..."

Doom's Eye then suddenly flew away and vanished without a trace, leaving the bewildered Shadow the Hedgehog to stand there and wonder what he'd just been told. Rouge began to wonder what was going on too.

"What was that Shadow?" asked Rouge.

"Something…telling me…that I should go to Castle Acorn." said Shadow "And…then I'll get the rest of it's message. But who is it and what did it mean by "I'll find out soon enough"?"

"I dunno, but this whole thing seems fishy to me." muttered Rouge "I don't think we should listen to that starfish thing. It might be leading us into a trap."

"I'm willing to take that risk." said Shadow "Maybe that thing knows

something about my origins and it just wants to tell me them. I'm going to Castle Acorn to see what that thing wants to say to me."

With that said, Shadow skated off as fast as he could on his jet shoes. Rouge decided to tag along just to make sure Shadow didn't get into any trouble. The two Mobians ended up on their way to Castle Acorn to see what Doom's Eye wanted to tell Shadow. What was going on? And why was Doom's Eye interested in Shadow in particular? What was it going to tell him? And what did Castle Acorn have to do with all of this…?

They'd soon find out though for the whole thing was being set-up by Black Doom. He'd sent his eye out to find Shadow and now he'd found him, he had told Shadow to come to Castle Acorn, which was exactly where he was going to deploy his troops upon and begin the invasion. Now he could get Shadow back and have him aid the Black Arms in their conquest of Mobius. Black Doom cackled to himself as Doom's Eye returned to him and then disappeared into thin air.

"Shadow is coming back to us." he purred malevolently to himself "I may have lost him thanks to those miserable Xorda forcing me to abandon him in order to save him from falling into their tentacles but I have found him and now he will be coming back to the Black Arms. And just as we're ready to deploy too…"

Black Doom turned to face Nyrah and Oakron, who were standing behind him and waiting to be spoken to before they said anything.

"Are my forces ready?" asked Black Doom.

"We're ready when you are my lord." said Oakron in a prideful manner.

"Black Arms of all occupations are ready to deploy Black Doom and the comet is over Mobius at last." said Nyrah "We await your command."

"Good…" said Black Doom gruffly "Then let us descend down to this

miserable mud ball of a planet…and wipe out those pathetic Mobians once and for all! Black Arms…DEPLOY AND DESTROY!" he bellowed at the top of his terrifying voice.

The Black Arms all obeyed and they ran over to the deploying area of the Black Comet. The Black Comet was over Mobius so the Black Arms would descend straight down onto the planet. The Black Comet had a descending beam that would protect them from the planet's atmosphere so they could pass through it without a problem. The same couldn't be said for the comet itself as it's velocity wasn't powerful enough to pass through another planet's atmosphere. The comet would just be looming above Mobius and waiting to pick up the Black Arms when it was time to leave. And once they left, they'd be gone for another fifty years and then be back again to cause more trouble. But this was going to be their last encounter with Mobius as they were going to destroy it so the Black Comet would never pass by Mobius again after this…

Down on the planet below, Sonic and friends were gathered around in the throne room of Castle Acorn where Queen Sally Acorn sat in her throne with her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx beside her. Sally began to wonder what Sonic and friends were wanting to see her for and she was particularly interested in seeing who the new faces (Silver and Blaze) with them were. Silver and Blaze stood forward and they bowed down to Sally.

"Your majesty." said Blaze politely.

"Hello you two." said Sally "I don't believe I've seen you two before, may I have your names please?"

"Yes Queen Sally." said Silver "My name's Silver and this is Blaze. We're Mobians from the future and we've come to your time to deliver a cryptic warning that'll hopefully, save Mobius from future catastrophe."

"I've met them by the way." chimed in Sonic "Trust me Sal, these guys can totally be trusted and they really are future kind."

"I believe them anyway." said Sally "Time-travel was proven to be possible as far back as 2086 according to history books. So Silver and Blaze, what warning do you bring to us then?"

"Mobius is a wreck in the future and 200 years from now, we're barely surviving." explained Silver "We've been studying to find out what causes this disaster and we found out that on May the 4th 2143, the Martians invade Mobius and we think the Martian invasion might be the cause for Mobius' dystopia in the future."

Sally was so shocked to hear this she almost leaped out of her throne in the manner of someone jabbing her in the bottom with a pin. The Martians invade Mobius? Mobius is a wreck in the future? Possibility of the two being linked? This was terrible news to hear but at the same time, it was good to be hearing of this now so that they could prepare for this invasion and stop it before it begins. Sally relaxed herself and looked back at Silver and Blaze.

"So the Martians, Marik's people, invade Mobius on May the 4th this year?" asked Sally slowly.

"Yes." said Blaze grimly "This book is where we found out about it." she said as Silver took the book out to show Sally "It wasn't complete but it tells us that the Martians invade Mobius and at one point, they take over Castle Acorn and we didn't get anymore after that as there are some pages missing. But we're guessing that they destroy Mobius after they take over Castle Acorn so we've come back here to warn you about it and help you to prevent the Martian invasion from happening."

"I see." said Sally "Well we've had plenty of experiences with Martians, we've been battling one of them for a while before he disappeared during the Devatron war. I'm guessing you've heard of Marik the Martian since you're from the future and have likely read about him."

"We do." said Silver with a disgusted expression on his face "We even met the little creep the first time we met Sonic. We met him again when we tried to warn you about the Martian invasion the first time but we accidentally ended up on the Seedrian Homeworld…"

"You accidentally ended up on my home planet Greengate?" chipped in Cosmo in surprise "How's the war going between my kind and the Martians?"

"Seemed pretty even sided to me." said Silver "Me and Blaze ended up getting tangled up in it and…I accidentally killed Marik's uncle Count Drago."

Cosmo was surprised to hear this. She knew Count Drago all too well. Count Drago had once attempted to kidnap her and Galaxina and hold them hostage in exchange for the Seedrian's surrender. She was surprised to hear that Drago was dead now, hopefully that would help the Seedrians a bit in their war with the Martians.

"So Count Drago's dead?" asked Cosmo.

"Yes." said Blaze "I bet though that's going to be the main reason the Martians will be wanting to invade Mobius though. To avenge Count Drago as well as Marik since Marik's easily the one who suggested the whole idea."

"So if the Martians want to invade Mobius then…does that mean they win the war with the Seedrians?" asked Tails curiously.

"We're not sure." said Silver modestly "The book didn't have that information. Either the Seedrians win and the Martians leave to target Mobius next or the Martians win and they target Mobius next. Either outcome will result in the same for you all, the Martians will be coming and they'll want to kill all of you."

"Well, since you two wonderful people have come to the past to warn us of this coming event, we will prepare for the Martian's arrival." said Sally with a stern expression on her face and standing up from her throne "That invasion will be stopped before it can fully commence. It's May the 3rd now so we have the rest of this day to prepare for them. We should get all Royal Fighters to get out their best and heaviest weapons and we will set up…"

Before Sally could finish what she was saying, the roof caved in and rubble rained down on everybody in the throne room. Silver used his psychokinesis to stop the rubble from falling on top of everybody.

Now he'd caught them all, he gently lowered all the rubble down to the floor. After that sudden cave in, the Black Arms suddenly began to rain down from the sky, descending down a bright red beam of light that shone over Castle Acorn and they all landed in the throne room of Castle Acorn. Everybody immediately began panicking and backing away in fear as the Black Arms all rained down into the room and began snarling viciously. The Royal Fighters stared at the Black Arms in disbelief and wondered what they were. Sally stared at them in horror. She knew what they were. Her father had told her stories he'd heard about them and then shown her the history books written about them. Her heart turned to jelly, seeing the Black Arms in person for the first time and being as she was going to be one of the unfortunate royals that has to deal with them. As the Black Arms began to descend from the sky and into the throne room, Shadow and Rouge arrived at Castle Acorn and they ran into the throne room to see all the commotion. The moment Shadow saw the Black Arms though, he began to have some flashbacks. They looked familiar to him for some reason. He had the strangest feeling that… that…that he'd seen them before…were they his creators? Were they a race of aliens he'd seen before losing his memory? Whatever they were, they looked like they meant trouble and Shadow was not about to let them wreck the place. Shadow prepared to do battle and so did Rouge. The Royal Fighters saw them and they joined up with Rouge and Shadow, ready to fight off these strange, grotesque black creatures.

"What are those things?" asked Sonic.

"Definitely not Martians." said Tails grimly.

"Yeah, they're definitely not Martians." said Silver, his hands glowing teal as he prepared to use his powers "But I haven't seen or read about these guys so I couldn't tell you what they are."

"I guess that's why you didn't tell us we were having ANOTHER alien invasion before the Martians come!" grumbled Knuckles "That book of yours must have been missing pages about those guys!"

"It is." said Blaze, setting her hands alight with fire "There's no information about these strange black creatures we're dealing with right now. If there was then we would have told you about them

already."

"Well whatever they are, they need a good butt-kicking so let's pound them into the floor!" yelled Amy, summoning her Piko-Piko hammer to her hand.

But before anyone could start fighting, three more Black Arms descended from the sky and into Castle Acorn's throne room. They were Nyrah, who had his ring gun at the ready, Oakron, who already had his purple sword in hand, and Black Doom, who was looking as formidable as ever. Everybody stared at Black Doom in disbelief and they all hesitated, wondering what they should do as he descended from the sky. Sonic and Sally were both amazed at the appearance of the insidious Black Arms leader. Shadow stared at Black Doom contently and he began to think of something. Shadow's mind suddenly went click and memories began flooding back to him as he saw Black Doom coming down towards the Mobians. No wonder the Black Arms were looking familiar to him, he had SEEN them before! Especially Black Doom! He definitely remembered seeing Black Doom before. That was it! He'd seen the Black Arms before and now he was seeing them again! But why would he have seen them before? Maybe…

As Black Doom descended into the throne room, he held out his arms and boomed in his malevolent, growly, sinister voice.

"Attention Mobius! I am Black Doom, leader of the Black Arms race! The Black Arms have returned for the sixth time and this time will be the last time you will EVER see the Black Arms again!"

Footnotes:

As we've just seen in *Tales from Mobius: Arc 15: All's Fair in Warfare

****Devion experimented on Shadow in *Tales from Mobius Arc 13: Last Attempt at Victory* and found out he's not of Mobian origin**

OH CRAP! The Black Arms have invaded! What does this mean for our heroes? Is this new threat even worse then the Devatrons? Is this new threat unstoppable? Or can the Mobians triumph over the Black Arms? Tune in next time as the saga really kicks in next time...

Going Off The Rails

Story 121: Going off the Rails

Today was going to get very bad for the people of Mobius right now. The Black Arms, an ancient enemy of the Mobians, had returned to the planet after a fifty year absence and they were invading once again. They'd broken through the roof of Castle Acorn and rained down into the throne room of the castle. The throne room was now full of Black Arms and they were all ready to fight with Black Doom at the centre of them all. He had Nyrah and Oakron at his side. The Royal Fighters were all preparing to take on the Black Arms. Before any fighting could start though, Queen Sally Acorn stepped forward and calmly spoke to Black Doom.

"Black Doom, I have heard much about you and the Black Arms from the rulers before me." she said "I know that you have a long history with our world and you're probably here to start another war."

Black Doom turned around to face Sally. His three eyes narrowed down into an evil scowl at the sight of her. Did Mobius EVER get anyone else to rule the planet and not just have an Acorn ruling over Mobius all the time? Talk about lack of variation!

"I take it you're the current ruler of Mobotropolis now." growled Black Doom in his malevolent, dark voice.

"This is no longer Mobotropolis now." said Sally "It's New Mobotropolis. And yes, I am the current ruler of New Mobotropolis. My name is Queen Sally Acorn and…"

"You do not need to give me any more unnecessary details." interrupted Black Doom "That was all I needed. Oakron, seize the little brat and take her aboard the Black Comet!" he barked at his giant strongman.

With that said, Oakron sheathed his purple sword and he lashed out and grabbed Sally in a bear hug. Sally tried to squirm free of Oakron's grasp but the Black Arms soldier was miles too strong for

her. His grasp was like titanium clamps. Oakron then prepared to leave Castle Acorn with Sally in tow but before he could do so, Silver the Hedgehog stopped him dead in his tracks with a psychic hold. Oakron was completely immobilized by the future dweller's psychic powers. He was completely teal in colour thanks to Silver's psychic hold and Silver was frowning at him.

"You're not taking the queen anywhere!" yelled Silver.

Nyrah decided to help Oakron by shooting Silver with his ring gun. Silver was blasted from behind by a ring shaped blast and he was knocked off his feet. His psychic hold was broken and Oakron was free to move once again. With that said, Oakron dashed outside of Castle Acorn with Sally in his arms and he called up to the sky.

"Black Comet, beam me back up to you!" he ordered.

With that said, the Black Comet sent down a transporting beam and it shone down over Oakron. The beam carried Oakron up off the ground and back up through the sky and to the Black Comet. The Royal Fighters could only watch helplessly as Sally was taken away to the Black Comet. Sonic the Hedgehog glared at Black Doom and he staggered forward to him.

"You bring Sally back right now Black Doom or so help me I'll tear you to pieces!" screamed Sonic.

"You are in no position to order me around you obstinate fool." snarled Black Doom "Your queen is mine now and if you want her back then you must order a global surrender and hand yourselves over to the Black Arms."

"Yeah, uh-huh, not gonna happen creep!" yelled Sonic "We're not gonna cave in to you or your freaky Black Arms guys! You give Sally back to us or I will spin-dash every last one of you!"

"Don't be an idiot faker!" cried Shadow the Hedgehog "You can barely walk, you'll never take on Black Doom and win!"

"Well then Shadow, why don't YOU take him on then?" retorted Sonic "You're like me plus one and you're fit enough to fight, why

don't you fight Black Doom then?"

"Because Shadow is on MY side that's why." purred Black Doom.

The Mobians all stared at Black Doom in disbelief. Their jaws all dropped and then they stared at Shadow. Shadow looked just as horrified as they were. He? Shadow the Hedgehog? On Black Doom's side? What was that demon on about?!

"Wha…at?" burbled Tails the Fox.

"I'm on…your side?" blustered Shadow "What…what do you mean?"

Black Doom turned his head to one side and narrowed his eyes at Shadow.

"A sin it is for me to finally find my lost creation and he doesn't remember his roots." grumbled Black Doom "Well then Shadow, allow me to remind you, and fill all your Mobian friends in on the truth about you."

"Go on then Black Doom, I've been wandering around aimlessly trying to find answers to my past." said Shadow "Now tell it me."

Black Doom cackled lightly and then he began to speak.

"Shadow is my progeny all you miserable, misguided Mobians." explained Black Doom "You see, I came up with a plan to infiltrate Mobius and bring it down so that I may destroy it quicker the next time we invaded Mobius. That plan was make a false Mobian to live among you like an ordinary citizen. That false Mobian would then weaken your defence systems, bring down your government and power houses and then sabotage your military. Using the powers of Chaos that I had stolen from your Master Emerald the last time we invaded, some Mobian DNA, a Mobian exoskeleton and the blood of myself, I began to create Shadow the Hedgehog. I intended him to be my greatest weapon and thus, gave him Chaos Powers like the Chaos Blast and the Chaos Spear as well as super speed and an unwavering battle prowess. Unfortunately, the Xorda attacked us. I feared losing Shadow to them so I was forced to send him away. I sent him to Mobius with his mission in mind and seeing as he is here

now, I can safely assume he made it…albeit with his mission forgotten. Well Shadow, now I'm here and I have reminded you, you will join me in the destruction of this miserable excuse for a planet and it's life forms!"

Shadow looked like he'd just been hit by a meteor. Black Doom was his creator?! His purpose WAS to destroy Mobius after all? He'd been sent here to avoid being lost to the Xorda and he was supposed to be a weapon?! No wonder the Black Arms were familiar to him, he'd been created by them and he was supposed to serve them in their nefarious schemes against Mobius! So why did all of this feel wrong to him? Somehow, Shadow didn't feel that this could be the truth. Black Doom had to be lying, he just had to! This couldn't be right at all and yet it seemed to be.

"You're lying Black Doom!" cried Shadow "You can't be my creator and my purpose can't be to destroy Mobius!"

"I do not lie Shadow, I am delivering the truth to you." said Black Doom coldly "You are my weapon Shadow, you are my creation and most of all, my progeny. You were created from my blood and thus, were are biologically related. I will prove this to you right now…" he added, holding out his hand.

Shadow suddenly began to feel strange. His head began to throb and he was brought down onto his knees, groaning in pain. Rouge the Bat gasped in shock and she knelt down beside Shadow.

"Shadow! What's wrong?" asked Rouge worriedly.

"Black Doom's…making me submit to him…" grunted Shadow "How…how are you…doing this to…to me?"

"Simple mind control." said Black Doom plainly "If you're not immune to my mind control then that means you are Black Arms as I only have control over my Black Arms soldiers. Does this prove that you're my progeny now Shadow?"

Shadow was forced to admit it. Black Doom was right after all, he WAS his creation! Black Doom couldn't be doing this to him if he wasn't part Black Arms! So Black Doom was telling the truth after all!

The Royal Fighters were having a hard time believing this revelation and they all took turns in expressing their horror.

"This can't be!" shrieked Bunnie Rabbot "Shadow-hog's one of them?!"

"And the bloke looks like he belongs here because Black Doom made him that way?" added Geoffrey St. John.

"And his purpose is to destroy Mobius?!" exclaimed Wilson the Dog "Well…Dr. Eggman was right about one thing when he manipulated Shadow into joining him that time!"

"Only this time, Shadow's not being manipulated, it's the truth!" cried Mandy Mouse "Shadow's meant to be against us after all!"

"Well he's not!" retorted Sonic "Shadow's on our side now and he's helping us defeat Black Doom! Come on Shadow, let's beat this creep to a pulp!"

"Shadow will not be doing anything of the kind." growled Black Doom "He is mine and now he knows his true place, he will come back to me and help the Black Arms finish you all off once and for all."

"No…no I'm not!" grunted Shadow, trying to stand back up but Black Doom's mind control kept him down on his knees.

"What?!" growled Black Doom loudly "Shadow, you're my creation and your purpose is to destroy this planet! You will do as instructed!"

"No I won't!" yelled Shadow "Over time, I've grown quite accustomed to this planet! I like it here and I will not destroy it! I will destroy you instead Black Doom!"

"You dare to betray me Shadow?!" snarled Black Doom "And after I gave you life?! Looks like I will have to punish you until you swear fealty to me! I will not let my greatest creation turn on me like this!"

With that said, Black Doom increased his mind control over Shadow and made Shadow's head hurt to the point he passed out on the floor. Shadow was completely knocked out now thanks to Black

Doom. Black Doom hovered over to Shadow and he grabbed the knocked out hedgehog. Knuckles and Shade decided to help Shadow by leaping towards Black Doom and preparing to deck the alien leader fifty times to Kingdom Valley and back. But before they could even get anywhere near Black Doom, the insidious Black Arms leader teleported and disappeared into thin air, taking Shadow with him. The two echidnas landed on the floor and they fumed angrily to themselves. The Royal Fighters were all gobsmacked at this.

"He…He…He vanished!" squealed Cream the Rabbit in shock "And…he took Mr. Shadow with him too!"

"Black Doom's taken Shadow!" wailed Rouge "What is that evil creature going to do to him?"

"He's likely going to make Shadow evil again." murmured Blaze the Cat "We've got to find where Black Doom's disappeared to and rescue Shadow and Queen Sally from him."

"Black Doom told one of his cronies to go to something called "The Black Comet" I believe." said Tails "Maybe he's gone back there. And if it's a comet then it'll likely be up in space."

"No worries." said Knuckles "We'll just go over to Angel Island and get the Chaos Emeralds. We'll use the Chaos Emeralds to Chaos Control over to this Black Comet and get Shadow and Sally back."

But before anyone could so much as bat an eyelid, Nyrah and a group of Black Warriors with him suddenly opened fire on all the Royal Fighters with their ring guns. The Royal Fighters were all blasted across the room by the ring blasts and they all landed in a heap on top of each other at the foot of the wall. Nyrah smirked at the Royal Fighters.

"You will not be doing anything." he gloated "And thanks ever so much for telling us where the Chaos Emeralds are. We can steal them for ourselves and use them to find our stolen relics. I do hope you put up a feeble resistance though, we don't want our last war with the Mobians to be too easy do we? Come on lads, let's go and give Black Doom some good news!"

With that said, every Black Arms creature in the room ran outside of Castle Acorn and Nyrah ordered the Black Comet to beam them back up to into it. A red beam of light shone down over the Black Arms soldiers and they were all brought up into the sky and out of sight. There wasn't a single Black Arms soldier left in Castle Acorn now, they were all back on the Black Comet. Now the Black Arms soldiers had all gone, the Royal Fighters picked themselves up and the first thing they began doing was conversing among one another.

"The Black Creatures overheard our conversation!" cried Shade "They know where the Chaos Emeralds are and they're going to steal them!"

"They don't know EXACTLY where on Angel Island they are but I bet they won't take it easy on their search for them." grumbled Knuckles "We've gotta stop them before they can even begin looking for them."

"What did that Black Arms soldier mean by "stolen relics" though?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian in confusion "And why would they need the Chaos Emeralds to find them?"

"I can answer that." said Nicole the Lynx, standing forward with a worried expression on her face.

"OK then Nics, tell us what the Black Arms mean by "stolen relics" then." requested Sonic.

"According to the historical records we were given about the Black Arms, they have two powerful relics." explained Nicole "One was a sword capable of rising demons of any element out of the ground and the other was a Black Chaos Emerald, an artificially created Chaos Emerald that they made by stealing one Chaos Emerald from Angel Island and experimenting on it and turning it into their own evil gem of power. Of course, this was before the Chaos Emeralds were brought down to seven. Those relics were too powerful for us to let them have them so the last time they warred on Mobius, which was 2093, our armies made it their top priority to steal them. After stealing them, they were hidden in two remote places on the planet. The sword is at the end of Rail Canyon and the Black Chaos Emerald is hidden somewhere in Ocean Palace."

She then suddenly ran out of the room, presumably to fetch something. The Royal Fighters stood by and waited for a minute while Nicole went to get something. A few moments later, Nicole returned into the room, carrying a rolled up piece of paper under her arm. She unrolled the paper and showed it to the Royal Fighters. The paper was a map which gave directions to the stolen Black Arms relics. The Royal Fighters stared at the map carefully.

"This map will give you the directions you need to take in order to reach the relics." informed Nicole "We were given this map by the army for incase the Black Arms ever returned to Mobius, we could find the relics and use them against the Black Arms. Right now, I am entrusting you to find those relics and stop the Black Arms from wrecking our world."

"That'll be no problem at all Nicole but what about Shadow and Sally?" asked Sonic "We need to rescue them. And we also need to protect the Chaos Emeralds from the Black Arms since they know where they are now."

"Ah think we should divide our forces sugah-hog." suggested Bunnie "We can't do three things at once after all. One team should defend Angel Island, the other should rescue Shadow and Sally and the third should find those relics."

"Me and Shade are defending Angel Island for starters." said Knuckles "And Blaze can come with us as she's the future guardian of Angel Island. We'll give her the pleasure of defending a proper floating Angel Island."

"Oh um…I'll be happy to help you two." said Blaze, surprised that Knuckles was so quick to choose her for his team despite the fact they've barely met "I've never really had the chance to defend Angel Island from anything as there's nothing to threaten the island in the future so now will be my chance to put my guardian skills to good use."

"So which of us would be the best suited for rescuing Shadow & Sally and which of us would be best suited to finding those relics?" asked Sonic.

"Well maybe Bunnie, Geoffrey, Wilson, Mandy, Ruben, me and Cosmo should find the relics and the rest of you should go and save Shadow and Sally." suggested Tails "I'm sure they're good team-ups."

"So it's me, Silver, Amy, Cream and Rouge going up on that Black Comet." said Sonic "Unless Nicole wants to come as well."

"I do." said Nicole "I'm not going to sit by while Sally needs our help. But you're not going anywhere Sonic, you're in no condition to fight right now, you'll sit out of this one."

"Oh come on Nicole!" whined Sonic "These guys will need me! I have to come with them and help them beat the Black Arms…"

"Ebb, deb, deb!" said Nicole, holding a finger up in a stern manner "You're not going out into battle when you can barely walk Sonic! You're staying here in New Mobotropolis under the watch of Team Chaotix and that's the end of it!"

"But Nicole…" protested Sonic.

"I said that's the end of it!" snapped Nicole "Sally would say the same thing if she were here!"

Sonic closed his mouth and he stopped griping. Arguing with Nicole was not going to win anything for him. The best thing for him to do would be to do as he was told, much to his regret. Silver put a hand on Sonic's shoulder affectionately.

"Don't worry Sonic, I'll fill in for you." said Silver with a smile on his face "I may not be the new you or anything but my psychic powers will suffice."

"I know you'll fill in for me brilliantly." said Sonic, smiling back at Silver "If you managed to kill a Martian then those Black Arms will stand no chance against you."

Silver sort of nodded in agreement at Sonic.

"So then, now we've decided what we're going to do, let's go and do these tasks." said Nicole "Tails, your group will go to Rail Canyon

and find the sword relic. Take the map and you'll find it easily."

"Yes Nicole." said Tails, taking the map from Nicole and tucking it under his arm "I promise you we'll find those relics. And don't worry about me Sonic, I'll be OK with these guys…"

"I'm not worried Tails." said Sonic "I know that my friends will take good care of you and Cosmo and that you'll find the relics. We have the advantage after all."

"Knuckles and Silver, your groups will both go to Angel Island." said Nicole "When we all get there, Silver's group will Chaos Control themselves onto the Black Comet with the Chaos or Master Emeralds and then we'll try and save Shadow and Sally. Knuckles' group will make sure the emeralds don't fall into their hands."

"Um, that won't be necessary." said Silver "I can just warp us over to the Black Comet with this Super Warp Ring I have." he added, pulling out his Super Warp Ring.

"Oh." said Nicole "In that case, Silver will warp his group over to the comet with that warp ring."

"Good luck Blaze." said Silver, flicking the warp ring into the air.

"Thanks Silver." said Blaze "And good luck to you. And for goodness sake, please don't lose that warp ring."

Silver nodded as the Super Warp Ring expanded to several times it size. So now everybody knew what they were doing, they all set off to do their appointed tasks while Sonic remained where he was. Silver's group stepped through the warp ring and the other two groups ran off to their respective destinations. There was a lot of work to do right now but the Royal Fighters weren't going to let that bring them down that easily. They'd survived Eggman's worst creations, Scourge the Hedgehog, Marik the Martian and the Devatrons. They'd win this battle easily…or would they? The Black Arms didn't seem like your average villains and they looked deathly serious and seemed to have powerful weapons. Could they be beaten or would they be too powerful for them to defeat…?

Back on the Black Comet, Black Doom had taken Shadow to the science labs and he was working on getting Shadow back on his side. Shadow was placed in a capsule very similar to the one Rouge had found him in that fateful day she'd found him and he was in suspended animation. Shadow wouldn't wake up until Black Doom let him out of the capsule and it was very likely he was going to be in there for a while. Black Doom was not about to let Shadow mutiny against him. He'd made Shadow a weapon of the Black Arms that was meant to destroy Mobius and that's exactly what he was going to do. Such a pity that Shadow had been awakened before he could find him and then this wouldn't be happening right now. But every plan has it's bumps in the road and the best thing to do is to flatten them so Black Doom was going to ensure Shadow remained on his side. And how he was going to do that was remarkably simple, alter Shadow's mind and make him evil. Watching Black Doom was Queen Sally Acorn. She was being kept prisoner in this lab and she was bound to the wall by her arms and legs. Her arms were spread out but her legs were tightly bound together by a rock bind that was wrapped around both ankles. The way she looked made it look as if the wall was wrapping itself around her wrists and ankles for her bonds appeared to be made of rock and they appeared to have just come out of the wall. She was completely immobilized and was unable to do anything except watch Black Doom alter Shadow's mind. As Black Doom worked on Shadow, he began to talk aloud to himself.

"I finally relocate Shadow and the first thing he does is mutiny against me, or at the most, attempt to." growled Black Doom "Good thing I will be putting a stop to that by reconfiguring his mind. I shall simply add some dark thoughts into his head and reawaken him as the weapon I intended him to be."

"And then what? You'll unleash him upon the world and let him do your dirty work for you?" asked Sally in a cold manner.

Black Doom stopped what he was doing and he turned around and glared at Sally with his three eyes.

"I will thank you for not commenting at this moment in time you foolish female." he snarled "I am trying to work on my glorious weapon right now."

"I'm disgusted that you've even gone the extra mile here." said Sally "You made a genetic experiment in our image just so he could win our trust and then bring us down from the inside and all you do with Shadow now is treat him like some kind of tool instead of an extension of life itself. No one has the right to play god after all and nobody, artificially made or not, should be treated as a weapon or a tool of any kind."

Black Doom had told Sally Shadow's origin story after returning to the Black Comet so that's how she knows. Black Doom did his best to keep himself from ripping Sally apart right now. He was not pleased with Sally's opinions on him.

"You would be wise to spare me your pontificating princess otherwise you'll end up as another victim of the Black Arms." warned Black Doom.

"Threaten me all you like, you don't scare me Black Doom." scoffed Sally "We Mobians have won the last five wars we've had with you and your kind and I should know, I've read all about them in the history books as well as been told about them from the royals before me. You have no reason for me to fear you."

Black Doom, eerily enough, suddenly burst out laughing at Sally. His laugh was a sinister, growling laugh that could make even the strongest of wills feel nervous. Sally began to feel nervous right now. When villains began laughing at your taunts, that never meant anything good. Black Doom stopped laughing and he glowered back at Sally.

"You are so blinded by pride if you believe that your wretched kind ever had a chance against me and my kind!" crowed Black Doom "We Black Arms only allowed you Mobians to exist so that we may entertain ourselves. Of all the planets we've desecrated and brought ruination too, you were the most challenging and thus, the most entertaining to battle. We could only war with you all for a couple of weeks at most because the Black Comet never stops moving and if we never retreated back to it by the time it had finished passing over Mobius, we'd be stranded here and we'd have to wait another fifty years before it returns, not that you would have given us time to."

"So you've never finished us off before because we entertained you?" said Sally in shock, unable to believe all of this "Combined with the fact your comet never stops and after a period of time, you have to leave before it goes out of your teleportation range?"

"Correct." said Black Doom "We could have finished you off anytime we wanted but then our entertainment value would have diminished so we kept you alive for our own purposes. But after the fifth war, which in your time occurred in 2098, we lost our powerful relics and we nearly lost our lives for your forces had grown stronger. You're no longer entertaining, you're too dangerous for us so we've come to finish you off before you can terminate us all. And that is why we created Shadow to weaken your systems from within and prepare Mobius for our arrival. Unfortunately, that plan has failed so we need a quick change of plan. We'll destroy you all even if your forces haven't been weakened."

"You'll never kill us all Black Doom." said Sally coldly "We have powerful resources and powerful fighters on our side now. You will never destroy our world."

"We shall see about that." muttered Black Doom "Once Shadow is awakened, I shall send him out to find your Chaos Emeralds and bring them to me. With that kind of power, I will be unstoppable."

"And to your luck my liege, I know where to find them." interrupted Nyrah, striding into the lab pride fully "For I eavesdropped on a conversation between the Mobians and found out where they're being kept."

After Nyrah had returned to the Black Comet, he wandered around the place looking for Black Doom so he could give him the good news. Black Doom stopped looking at Sally and he looked at Nyrah, interested in hearing what the scientist had to say to him.

"Well then Nyrah, where are the Chaos Emeralds kept?" asked Black Doom.

"They're located on a place called Angel Island." explained Nyrah "I'm not too familiar with the island but I bet we'll find it easily."

"We will." purred Black Doom "Angel Island was where the echidna guardians gathered and where they had hundreds of Chaos Emeralds. I never bothered looking there again as I thought the Mobians would have been clever enough to relocate them now we know where they are. It appears they're not as clever as I thought they were."

"Don't get your hopes up though Black Doom." said Sally plainly "There's only seven left."

"They still wield great power no matter how many of them there are." said Black Doom "I shall find the seven Chaos Emeralds and use their power for my own."

"I suggest sending Shadow to get the emeralds once you've finished on him my lord." suggested Nyrah "He has the powers of Chaos in him so he'll be able to find them easily. While he's searching for the emeralds, we can find our stolen relics."

"Yes." said Black Doom agreeably "You and Oakron will take a squadron of Black Arms and find the relics. I will prepare Shadow for the raid of Angel Island."

Nyrah bowed down to Black Doom and then he left the room to gather up a search party. After Nyrah left, Black Doom looked back at Sally and he continued to crow at her.

"I shall have your Chaos Emeralds Queen of New Mobotropolis and I shall retrieve my relics." he gloated "And any resistance you have will be crushed by my own hands."

"You wish Black Doom." muttered Sally "The Royal Fighters will stop you dead in your tracks. They've stopped worse threats in the past, heck, we recently stopped the Devatrons! We'll stop you easily!"

"I have no idea what a "Devatron" is but I am unlike any threat you've faced before." snapped Black Doom "And you have better stop thinking so highly of yourself or you shall suffer painfully…"

With that said, Black Doom snapped his fingers and all of the sudden, a purple electrical shock emitted from Sally's bonds and

surged through her body. Sally screamed in pain as she was brutally electrocuted by her bonds. Black Doom hovered by and laughed sadistically at the imprisoned queen. Sally may have a lot of nerve standing up to him like this but he'd dampen that obnoxious spirit easily and Sally would swear fealty to him…

Back down on Mobius, Tails, Cosmo, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben had already arrived at Rail Canyon and Tails glanced at the map to see where the way to the relic was. Rail Canyon quite literally lived up to its name. It was a canyon full of iron rails that any visitors could grind on. Rail Canyon even had some amazing looking trains that ran around on the rails delivering supplies to various places that Rail Canyon was connected to. This did however come with a lot of hazards. The main one being that there was a massive drop from the rails as they were high up above the ground and they weaved through the canyons so anywhere you went on these rails meant you were in danger of falling to your death. Not a problem for this team though as Tails and Bunnie can both fly and Ruben has his water powers to keep himself above the ground. Wilson, Mandy, Cosmo and Geoffrey would be helped by the fliers simple as. As of this moment, the team were standing at the entrance to Rail Canyon, which was a neon lit sign saying "Welcome to Rail Canyon!" and also had some warning signs underneath the neon lit letters, and they were looking at the map. They had been studying the map very closely as they couldn't afford to make any mistakes in this mission. They had a powerful Black Arms relic to find and they had to find it fast before the Black Arms could make their move. As they looked at the map, Cosmo couldn't help but admire the fantastic sights of Rail Canyon around her. The canyons looked amazing to her. This place might have to be one of the most fascinating places on Mobius she'd ever seen.

"This place is really grand." said Cosmo as she watched a train going by in the distance "I don't think words could ever do this place justice."

"I agree with you there Cosmo." said Tails, looking up from the map and observing the scenery "This place really is grand. I'm amazed I haven't seen Rail Canyon before."

"This is a first for all of us mate." said Geoffrey "Neither of us have ever been to Rail Canyon before and I kinda wish we were here to sight-see instead of find some Black Arms relic, I wanna explore this place."

"Well Geoffrey hon, after we've defeated the Black Arms, maybe me and you could hang out here." said Bunnie teasingly, making the skunk blush "The two of us together could explore Rail Canyon and enjoy the beautiful scenery."

"I'll keep that in mind babe." said Geoffrey, trying not to blush any harder then he already was now "But right now, we've got some bloomin' relic to find."

"If ah heard Nicole correctly, the relic here is some kind o' sword." said Bunnie "Ah wonder what it can do and how powerful it might be?"

"Didn't Nicole say it could make demons of any element out of the ground?" asked Ruben.

"I believe she did." said Wilson "I'm not sure what she means by that though. I guess we'll find out once we find the sword and find out how to use it."

"I can just imagine how horrified Black Doom's going to be when he sees us with his precious relic and we're using it against his minions." snickered Mandy "That will be so funny to see!"

"So Tails, where do we need to go to find that sword?" asked Bunnie, peering at the map as Tails studied it.

"According to the map, the way to the relic is this red rail in the middle." said Tails, looking over the map and pointing at the red rail which ran down the middle with a blue and yellow rail on either side "That rail will take us to Bullet Station, which is where the relic is buried. It's not IN the station itself luckily, just buried somewhere nearby, maybe round the back or something."

"Sounds simple enough." said Geoffrey "Hopefully, we'll have no trouble and those Black Arms blokes won't interfere with us."

"Well since they don't know where the old army's buried their relics, they'll not come here looking for them." said Tails "We might have an easy mission for once. Let's go guys."

"But…none of us know how to grind." said Wilson with a worried face on "We've never been here before and haven't had any practice. How will we get across this canyon?"

"Well me and Bunnie can fly and Ruben can surf across water to keep himself in the air so we haven't got a problem." noted Tails "But you, Mandy, Geoffrey and Cosmo can't fly so you can't follow us. I can easily carry Cosmo and Bunnie could carry Geoffrey but will Ruben be able to carry anybody while using his water powers to stay above ground?"

"Not really." said Ruben "I need to concentrate when using my powers and it'll be hard to carry two people while also trying to use my powers. I'm not entirely sure if I can carry anybody on the water trail behind me either."

"We could always catch a train." suggested Bunnie "And ask the driver to take us to Bullet Station."

"We'll do that." said Tails "We'll catch a train and get to Bullet Station that way."

With that decided, the Mobians all searched around for a boarding station so they could catch one of the trains that ran through Rail Canyon. Unfortunately for them, a group of Black Arms had boarded hover-saucers and were flying around Mobius in search of the stolen relics and by sheer coincidence, they had decided to look around Rail Canyon. Whenever the Black Arms invaded Mobius, Rail Canyon often had a habit of being a popular target among them so it made sense for them to be here. Oakron and Nyrah were leading the pack and noticeably enough, Oakron and Nyrah seemed to be competing for the lead. They didn't get along well after all so they were going to be acting like this. The two flew dangerously close together and threatened to knock one another off the board. If the soldiers flying with them had sentient minds like they did, chances are they would be groaning in embarrassment at the two and wondering "Why are those two always at each other's throats? Why

can't they get along?" But they were all mindless drones and didn't really think about anything so they weren't thinking that at all. Oakron and Nyrah flew towards the canyon with the Black Arms soldiers following them closely behind. The two sentient minded Black Arms stopped competing with each other and they noticed something they weren't expecting. They saw Tails and his group filing into a station and waiting for a train to come. There was one on the way to the station right now. The Black Arms stopped flying towards the canyon and they remained hovering in the air on their boards, watching and waiting intently. Oakron grumbled to himself.

"Just what we need, Mobians to get in our way!" he griped.

"What could they possibly be here for?" wondered Nyrah "They couldn't possibly know that we were going to target this place in our relic search. Heck, they can't possibly know we're even looking for our stolen relics so why are they here?"

"Nyrah, think about this for a minute." snapped Oakron "They seem close to Castle Acorn and its inhabitants. It's likely they've learnt about our relics and it's even likelier they know where they are. Look, the twin-tailed thing even appears to have some kind of map." he added, pointing at Tails.

Nyrah peered down at the station and he noticed what Oakron had noticed too. Tails clearly seemed to have a map with him and the map must lead to somewhere. Maybe it led to their stolen relics. There was only one way they were going to find out though, ambush them and steal the map to see what it lead to. The Black Arms waited for a moment as the Rail Canyon Train pulled into the station. The Rail Canyon Train was a highly-armoured piece of machinery that ran on the rails of the canyon. The train was red and black in colour and had horns on it. The whole train looked considerably frightening in appearance because of this but that didn't make them any less popular among tourists who visited Rail Canyon. Oakron decided now was the time to strike as the train slowed to a stop in the station. Oakron zoomed down towards the station on his hover saucer and he held his hands out. The Mobians were about to board the train but Oakron ploughed straight through them like a bowling ball through skittles and he knocked them all over. The Mobians lay sprawled on the ground and Oakron hopped off his saucer. He

looked down at the Mobians and he noticed that Tails had dropped the map after he'd flown into him. Oakron reached down and grabbed the map. He then hopped back onto the hover saucer and he read the map. To his delight, it was indeed a map that led to the stolen relics! His job had just gotten a whole lot easier now.

"A map that leads to the relics?" purred Oakron "What serendipity this is. Thank you for this Mobians, you've just made my job a whole lot easier."

He then flew off on his hover saucer before anyone could stop him. Tails leaped onto his feet and cried out feebly.

"Hey! Give that back to me!" screeched Tails.

"No chance fur ball!" sneered Oakron "You'll have to catch me first!"

Tails seemed too happy to oblige. He twisted his tails around one another and he took flight. But before he could even fly away from the station, he was blasted in the back by a ring shaped blast from Nyrah's ring blaster weapon. Tails was thrown off the station and he landed on a rail. But the rails were pretty thin so Tails didn't stop on the rail, he began to slip off. Bunnie gasped in horror and tried to take flight and save Tails before he could plummet to his death but Nyrah blasted her in the back and sent her flying off the station and plummeting down to the ground below. Nyrah cackled delightedly as Bunnie and Tails began to fall to the ground, much to the horror of everybody else.

"So what will it be my indigenous idiots?" smirked Nyrah "Will you chase us down? Or save your friends?"

The others didn't know what to do. Bunnie and Tails were in danger and were going to make a very nasty stain at the bottom of the canyon once they landed there so they had to save them. But none of them could fly so they couldn't save them and if Ruben tried to use his water powers to save them, Nyrah would just blast him and send him plummeting to his death. But Nyrah was in for a surprise for Bunnie had managed to shake herself off as she plummeted and she activated her rocket jets in the soles of her roboticized feet. She flew down and managed to catch Tails before the two of them could

crash into the ground. Bunnie flew back up to the station with Tails in hand. Nyrah saw her coming and he tried to blast Bunnie again with his ring blaster. But before he could do so, Ruben squirted him with a jet of water and knocked him clean off his hover-saucer! Nyrah began to plummet down to the ground, a blood curdling scream coming out of his mouth as he plummeted down to the bottom of the canyon. Oakron sighed loudly and he flew down to catch Nyrah before he could land on the ground below. Oakron caught Nyrah and he flew back up to Nyrah's saucer. He put Nyrah on the saucer and the two Black Arms flew off, Oakron leading the way as he had the map. Nyrah looked over his shoulder and called out to his squadron.

"Black Arms, kill them!" he barked "And after you kill them, bring their bodies to Black Doom!"

The Black Arms soldiers obeyed and they all drew out weapons of various kinds. The Black Arms had a varied weapons cabinet after all. Some carried swords and some carried different kinds of laser guns. As Oakron and Nyrah made their getaway, the Black Arms flew down towards the station and began shooting at the Mobians. Bunnie flew on top of the train, which had finally stopped and was waiting to pick up somebody and activated her force-field generator to block all the blaster fire.

"Everybody, get in the train and tell the driver to take us to Bullet Station!" cried Bunnie "Ah'll hold off these vermin!"

The Mobians all obeyed and they ran into the train while Bunnie remained on top of the train and she put her force-field away. She deployed her arm cannon and began shooting at the Black Arms as madly as she could. The Black Arms all dodged Bunnie's cannon fire before they could get hit by them. Inside the train, the Mobians all darted to the front of the train and Tails ran into the cockpit to see the driver. The driver was a Mobian Giraffe with red spots and he looked surprised to see a little kid on the train and coming in to see him.

"Hello sonny Jim." said the driver "Where may I take you?"

"Bullet Station please and fast." blustered Tails "We need to get

there urgently."

"Very well, Bullet Station it is." said the driver, setting the train to go.

The train jerked slightly and then began to move forwards. Bunnie managed to keep her balance luckily as the train began to move. The train then picked up speed and began to zoom forward across the rails. Rail Canyon Trains were really fast, much faster then the trains we humans have. This train would get the Mobians to Bullet Station in a few minutes. But this train might end up going off the rails for the Black Arms soldiers flew after the speeding train and began shooting at it as madly as they could. The train maybe heavily armoured but even that would succumb to the Black Arms' weaponry eventually. Bunnie would put a stop to that though. Bunnie began shooting at the Black Arms soldiers that were shooting at the train. The Black Arms kept dodging her attacks and shooting at her and the train. They were not easy to hit as they were really skilled on the hover-saucers. Bunnie growled in frustration as she shot at the Black Arms and missed again. How could she shoot them down if they were so hard to hit? One Black Arms soldier that wielded a sword similar to Oakron's flew towards the train and tried to slice Bunnie in two with one deadly swipe. Bunnie activated her force-field generator and blocked the attack. The Black Arms soldier began to swing his sword madly at Bunnie, trying to penetrate her force-field but Bunnie held on and her force-field was too strong to be penetrated by a mere sword, alien design or not. Bunnie then shut off her force-field and leaped backwards just as the Black Arms slashed at her with his sword. Bunnie then punched the Black Arms by extending her robot fist and landing it squarely in the Black Arms soldier's gut. This in turn threw the Black Arms soldier off the hover-saucer and sent him falling down to his death. Bunnie leaped onto the hover-saucer and used it to fly closer to the other Black Arms soldiers. They began shooting at her but Bunnie deployed her force-field again and flew directly into the laser fire. The Black Arms soldiers could see their guns were not working and Bunnie was getting closer so they began to back away. Bunnie put her force-field away and she punched one Black Arms soldier off his hover-saucer. The Black Arms was sent plummeting down to his death at the bottom of the canyon. Bunnie then grabbed the hover-saucer and she threw it towards the other Black Arms soldiers that were trying

to shoot her. The hover-saucer cruised through the air like a Frisbee and it walloped several Black Arms soldiers as it was sent spinning towards them. The Black Arms were all knocked off their hover-saucers and they fell down into the deep rocky canyons below. Bunnie looked over at the rails and realized that the train was leaving her behind. Bunnie leaped off the hover-saucer, activated her rocket jets, and flew towards the train as fast as she could. There were ten Black Arms soldiers left and they all chased after Bunnie on their hover-saucers. They began to shoot at Bunnie with their laser guns. Bunnie looked over her shoulder and realized that she was being shot at. She began to weave through the air and dodge the attacks that were coming from behind her. Bunnie was only just managing to catch up to the train but a Black Arms soldier shot her in the foot before she could begin to touch down. The resulting blast had damaged her foot and left her spinning out of control just above the train. Bunnie screamed in terror as she spiralled towards the train and she fought for control. She landed sharply on her side and bounced across the train, making heavy thump noises as she was sent hurling across the train. The Mobians inside heard Bunnie and Geoffrey stuck his head out of the window to see what was going on. He saw Bunnie lying near the edge of the train and clutching her foot in pain.

"You alright luv?!" Geoffrey called out to her, trying to be heard over the tumultuous noise of the train cruising across the rails.

"Ah'm fine sugah." Bunnie called back "Just got ambushed from behind that's all! Those Black Arms will be sorry they messed with me!"

"I think I'll help you Bunnie." said Geoffrey, climbing out of the window and onto the roof of the train.

"Oy! You can't do that!" cried the driver, who could see Geoffrey climbing out of the window through a rear view mirror at the front of the train "That's illegal! Not to mention dangerous, you'll fall!"

Geoffrey blatantly ignored the driver and he stood beside his love interest as the Black Arms closed in for an attack. The Black Arms shot at Bunnie and Geoffrey but Bunnie defended herself and Geoffrey with a force-field. Bunnie then closed off the force-field and

Geoffrey began shooting darts rapidly at the Black Arms. The Black Arms dodged the darts and they shot back at Geoffrey. Geoffrey however managed to hit one of the hover-saucers with a dart and the dart short-circuited the saucer with an electromagnetic pulse shock. This in turn caused the Black Arms soldier to fall down to the ground since his saucer no longer worked. The remaining nine soldiers tried to surround Bunnie and Geoffrey and blast them to bits but Bunnie and Geoffrey got the first blow by kicking out at the soldiers closest to them. They were knocked off their saucers and sent falling to their deaths. There were only five left now. They decided to get off their hover-saucers and fight so they leaped off their saucers and onto the train. Bunnie and Geoffrey raised their arms and they bent down in a battle-ready stance, ready to pound them into submission. The Black Arms tried to shoot Bunnie and Geoffrey but the two lovers leapt out of the way, flipped over them and landed behind them. Bunnie punched one soldier smack in the face and sent him hurling across the train. The soldier nearly fell off the train but he managed to cling on and stay on the train. A Black Arms soldier that wielded a sword tried to slice Bunnie and Geoffrey in two but they dodged the attack and Geoffrey kicked the soldier in the head. The attack left the Black Arms soldier dazed and light-headed and he staggered back. Geoffrey then roundhouse kicked the soldier in the legs and tripped it up. The soldier landed painfully on his back and he dropped his sword. Geoffrey grabbed the sword and pointed it at the Black Arms soldier. Two Black Arms armed with ring guns got the drop on him though by blasting him across the train with ring-blasts. Geoffrey hurled across the train and landed with a heavy clunk on the roof above the driver. The driver began to grow increasingly worried for his passengers and wondered what was going on outside. Bunnie gasped in horror at Geoffrey and she ran over to the ring-gun wielding soldiers. They tried to blast Bunnie but Bunnie jumped out of their way and dropkicked them both in the head, knocking them both of the train and leaving her with only three Black Arms to deal with. The remaining three Black Arms sheathed their weapons and they raised their fists as Bunnie ran towards them. Bunnie punched one in the face and almost sent it falling off the train but the Black Arms kept his balance and retaliated with a gut-punch. Bunnie doubled over, gasping for breath, and another Black Arms soldier clasped his fists together and slammed them on the back of Bunnie's head, knocking her down onto her stomach.

Bunnie tried to get up but the Black Arms soldier stomped on her back and pinned her down with his foot. Bunnie could feel the razor sharp talons of the Black Arms soldier's foot pressing against her back. The Black Arms soldier then prepared to kill Bunnie but Geoffrey shot him in the neck with a dart and the Black Arms soldier was killed instantly. This in turn allowed Bunnie to get back to her feet and she roundhouse punched another Black Arms soldier in the face. The Black Arms soldier staggered backwards towards Geoffrey and Geoffrey kicked it towards Bunnie. Bunnie caught the Black Arms and threw him across the train. The Black Arms soldier hurled through the air and landed on the carriage at the back of the train. The third Black Arms soldier could see this was not going well so he decided to try something else. He leaped back on his hover-saucer and flew off down the rails ahead of the train. Bunnie could sense that the Black Arms was up to something so she took flight and flew after the soldier, leaving Geoffrey to deal with the only Black Arms left on the train. The Black Arms soldier still on the train drew out a sword that he wielded and he ran towards Geoffrey, roaring menacingly. Geoffrey just loaded his crossbow and fired at the Black Arms soldier. The Black Arms miraculously managed to dodge the shooting dart by leaning to the side and have the dart zoom past his head. The Black Arms soldier then swung his sword at Geoffrey and nearly cleaved the skunk in two but Geoffrey just managed to dodge the attack. Geoffrey kicked the Black Arms in the gut and made him double over and then Geoffrey grabbed it into a head lock. But the Black Arms soldier quickly wrestled himself free and he tried to push Geoffrey off the train but Geoffrey dodged and rammed the soldier with his shoulder. This in turn caused the Black Arms soldier to fall off the train and plummet to his death much like everybody else (at the end of the day, Rail Canyon's going to have a LOT of dead Black Arms to clear away aren't they?). Now that was dealt with, Geoffrey climbed down from the roof and back through the window. He was safely back in the train now but the train wasn't going to be safe for long.

Further down the rails, Bunnie was still giving chase to the Black Arms soldier that had flown away. Despite one of her feet being damaged, she was still flying well. She'd been training herself to fly with only one rocket and while it had been a wobbly process, she'd been getting the hang of it and now was giving chase to a Black

Arms soldier using only one rocket. The trouble with flying with one rocket was she was a little slower and she found herself beginning to veer slightly to the right at times, thus making it harder for her to catch up. As for the Black Arms soldier, he had a plan. A plan that would guarantee the deaths of the Mobians on the train. After flying a good distance away from the train, he stopped flying away, turned around and pointed his laser gun, which was long and red in colour, at the rails. The Black Arms soldier then suddenly began shooting at the rails! He fired several laser blasts at the rails and he began destroying bits of the rail one shot at a time. He kept on shooting until there was a twenty-foot gap between the rails and by that time, Bunnie had finally managed to catch up. She punched the Black Arms off his hover-saucer and sent him plummeting down to the ground. Now the last Black Arms was dead, Bunnie could see to the bigger problem, the destroyed rails. The train was heading towards the broken rails and it couldn't seem to stop in time. It was going much too fast. The driver was putting the brakes on but even that wouldn't save the train now. Bunnie gasped in shock and wondered what to do. The train was coming in fast. If she didn't do something the train would plummet off the rails and down to the ground below. Bunnie then had an idea on what to do. She flew towards the train as fast as her only remaining rocket would let her and she held her arms out. She pressed her hands against the train and put all her might into stopping it. She only had one rocket left so her push was considerably weaker then it would have been if both her rockets were intact. But Bunnie's strength combined with the train's brakes seemed to be working as the train was beginning to slow down. There was a horrible screech coming from the rails as the train's brakes fought to slow the train down. Bunnie thought her ears were going to explode from the sheer volume of the screeching brakes. But she fought the loud sound in her ears and focused on slowing the train down. All her hard work finally paid off for the train finally ground to a halt just inches away from the broken rails. Bunnie pulled herself up onto the top of the train and she panted like a dog in the summer.

"Phewee!" she gasped "Ah can't believe ah stopped the durn thing! Whew…"

The Mobians inside all stuck their heads out of the train's windows

and they began cheering for Bunnie.

"Well done Bunnie!" cheered Tails.

"You stopped the train from falling luv!" cried Geoffrey.

"You did it Bunnie!" exclaimed Wilson happily.

"Thanks everyone." puffed Bunnie, wiping sweat off her forehead "There's a big problem now though…how can we get to Bullet Station now the rails are out?"

The Mobians all stared at the broken rails. There was a twenty-foot gap between them thanks to the Black Arms soldier shooting it to bits. The train couldn't possibly get over a gap so big. They needed a new way of reaching Bullet Station. But there was only two fliers and Ruben couldn't carry anybody with him when surfing across his water so how could they carry everybody across the canyon to the station? Tails spotted the only remaining hover-saucer that was still floating about not far away from the rails and waiting to be used now it's pilot had gone. Tails then suddenly had a bright idea. Maybe they could use that to carry some of the none fliers to Bullet Station. Tails flew out of the train and he headed towards the hover-saucer. He grabbed the saucer and dragged it back over to the train.

"Hey guys, I've got an idea." said Tails "Wilson, Mandy, you two stand on this thing."

"Stand on that? Are you mental Tails?!" cried Wilson "We don't know how to work that thing!"

"I didn't say you had to fly it." said Tails "You and Mandy just stand on it. I'll fly Cosmo over to Bullet Station while Bunnie will carry Geoffrey. Bunnie will drag the hover saucer with her while you two stand on it."

"But we'll likely fall." noted Mandy "And I don't think that saucer can carry both of us at once. It doesn't look big enough."

"I've got a better idea." chimed in Cosmo "I'll sit on the hover-saucer while Bunnie tows it and Tails can carry Wilson and Mandy."

"Why didn't I think of that?" mused Tails "That's a good idea Cosmo."

"I sure hope you can carry both of us." said Mandy sternly "Or we will be plummeting to our deaths!"

"I can manage." said Tails, taking hold of Wilson's left hand and Mandy's right hand each and carrying them both out of the train "If i get tired, I'll just put you down on the rails and rest up for a minute. The rails have sections on the sides where we can stand on."

"Sounds like a plan mate, let's get going." said Geoffrey, climbing out of the train and onto the roof.

Bunnie took Geoffrey by the hand and then took flight. She extended her robot arm and grabbed the hover-saucer as Cosmo climbed out of the train and sat on it. Cosmo held on tight as Bunnie towed the hover-saucer with her. Tails flew off after them with Wilson and Mandy in each hand. Ruben fired a stream of water and surfed across it after his friends. The driver sat there in the train and his jaw dropped. He couldn't believe his eyes. He'd never seen Mobians with powers like this before. He was seeing miracles today. The Mobians all left the train behind and they followed the rails off to Bullet Station where the first Black Arms relic was hidden. Hopefully, they'd be there in time to snatch the relic before the Black Arms could use it...

Meanwhile, the Knuckles, Shade and Blaze had arrived back on Angel Island. They climbed up to the island and they instantly ran onto the Master Emerald shrine. The Master Emerald continued to glow radiantly. Blaze was amazed to see the Master Emerald in real life. To think that this is what the guardians before her used to guard before the Master Emerald vanished mysteriously and the Chaos Emeralds became the Sol Emeralds.

"I never expected the Master Emerald to be so glorious." said Blaze, putting her hand on the emerald "Pity it's gone in the future. That's why Angel Island sits in the waters off the coast of Nekronopolis."

"Why is the Master Emerald gone in the future?" asked Knuckles.

"I really don't know." said Blaze "Maybe I could study and find out about it when I return back to my time. When I find the answer, I'll inform you straight away so you can prevent it from happening."

"I'm grateful you're going to go to that trouble Blaze." said Knuckles brightly "No wonder you're the future guardian of Angel Island."

"I'm not much of one though because there's nothing to guard Angel Island from." muttered Blaze "Villains are extinct and any surviving Mobians are all good people. The possibility of Angel Island ever getting attacked in the future is a hundred to one so I haven't had much practice protecting anything from anyone."

"Now you're here, you'll get your chance." noted Shade, patting Blaze on the back affectionately "And I'm sure you'll be great Blaze as you apparantly have fire powers."

"I do and I'm a keen fighter." said Blaze "I managed to give some of Marik's family a run for their money when me and Silver accidentally ended up on Greengate."

"If you can fight Martians then those Black Arms will have no chance!" cackled Knuckles "They'll be as good as defeated when they show up here!"

"And it looks like they're coming right now!" cried Shade, drawing out her blades and looking off into the distance.

Knuckles and Blaze looked in Shade's direction and surely enough, they saw a group of Black Arms soldiers. This group consisted of Black Warriors, Black Oaks and Black Hawks. The Black Hawks were flying Black Arms and they had wings instead of arms, no legs and a long tail. There were lots of Black Arms here and it looked like the echidnas and Blaze were going to have their hands full...

Now that's what I call having your hands full! A relic hunt, an island to defend and a friend to save! Can the Mobians win all these and save the day? Or will the Black Arms emerge

victorious? Join me next time as we witness the "Power of the Black Arms"...

The Power of the Black Arms

Story 122: Power of the Black Arms

The Black Comet, the embodiment of surrealism. It looked like a huge black rock flying through space and yet had some rather organic like features such as pulsating growths, throat-like halls, tentacles, organs and a viscous substance. How such a thing could possibly exist was a mystery to anyone who set foot in it. And now a new group of individuals would start wondering the same thing any other person who set foot in the Black Comet wondered. That group was of course, the group of Mobians that had volunteered to go to the Black Comet and save their two kidnapped friends. The group had the futuristic, psychokinetic hedgehog Silver, Sonic's self-proclaimed girlfriend Amy Rose, the sweet and gentle Cream the Rabbit and her pet Chao Cheese, treasure hunter and part-time helper Rouge the Bat and the Acorn's lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx. Silver had warped the group over to the Black Comet with a Super Warp Ring and now the group was in a large hallway which had a lot of bridge ways across a viscous substance that looked toxic and was a purpley colour. Tentacle like structures lurked somewhere in the halls and they waited to lunge out and grab someone. The whole place looked like something out of a sci-fi horror film and Cream instantly began to whimper in fear. There was something about this place that gave the child the willies ever so badly. Rouge just snorted at Cream and wore an unimpressed look on her face.

"Care to tell me why we brought her along?" she muttered.

"Rouge, don't be mean to poor Cream!" snapped Amy "She's obviously terrified of this place and you wondering why we brought her with us isn't going to comfort her! I don't blame her though, this place is very eerie isn't it?"

"It certainly is." mused Silver, screwing his face up at his surroundings "It's like being in the belly of a giant space worm in here."

"Space worm?" questioned Amy curiously.

"They're a race of creatures that swim around through space and they gobble up asteroid fields." explained Silver "When I was born, one invaded Mobius and tried to eat the ruins of Nekronopolis. My dad stopped it with the psychic powers he eventually passed onto me. Being in this place makes me think of those voracious creatures for some reason."

"Fascinating." said Rouge sarcastically "Now, where might we find Shadow in a place like this?"

"There'll likely be some kind of prison in this place." said Nicole "You know what villain lairs are like, they've always got prisons of some kind."

"Too true." said Rouge "And I wouldn't be surprised if this comet has one."

"I might be thinking too hard on this but, is it weird how we're inside a comet up in space and yet we can still breathe?" asked Nicole "How are we able to breathe in this thing?"

"I'm stumped too." said Silver "But let's just be glad we can breathe in this. Now, let's start searching for Sally and Shadow. Black Doom must be doing terrible things to them as we speak so we've gotta save them and now."

So the Mobians began walking across the bridge ways and looking around for any signs of life. Despite being home to the Black Arms, there didn't seem to be any around currently. This made the Mobians feel somewhat nervous. Where were the Black Arms? Were they hiding and waiting to jump out and ambush them? Fat chance as they have no idea they're even here. Maybe they'd just picked a lucky spot when warping onto the Black Comet. Regardless, it would be best to remain vigilant in a surreal place like this. You never know what's going to happen in a place like this. As the Mobians walked across the bridge ways, Cream fought hard to keep her eyes off her surroundings. The comet's interiors really scared her and she couldn't bear to look at them. She focused her sights on Silver and Amy, who were walking ahead of her. Looking

at them instantly made her feel less afraid. But she was soon going to have something to be afraid of for out of the viscous substance that surrounded the bridge ways, a dark red, slimy tentacle suddenly shot up from the substance and wrapped itself around Amy's ankle. Amy screamed so loudly it's a miracle she didn't burst anybody's eardrums. The tentacle pulled Amy down onto her stomach and then proceeded to try and pull her into the toxic pool that surrounded the bridge ways. Amy screeched in terror and she tried to stop herself from being pulled into the pool.

"EEK! Help me!" squealed Amy "I'm gonna be pulled into the pool!"

Rouge, to everyone's surprise, was the first to leap in and help She screw-kicked the tentacle and made it let go of Amy. But the tentacle didn't give up there. It smacked Rouge back onto the bridge and then grabbed Amy again, this time wrapping itself around both of her ankles. Amy tried to hold on but the tentacle was inevitably winning this tug-of-war. Rouge tried to help again but another tentacle lashed out of the pool and wrapped itself around Rouge's body. Rouge cried out in horror and she flapped her wings furiously, hoping to pull herself out of the tentacle's grasp. The tentacle decided to make its job easier by smacking Rouge onto the bridge way. That attack left Rouge feeling shattered and thus, she couldn't fight back against the tentacle. The tentacle began to pull Rouge and Amy towards the toxic pool but Silver stopped them dead in their tracks with his psychokinesis.

"Hurgh! Let go of them!" grunted Silver as he fought the tentacles for Amy and Rouge "You're not taking them into that pool!"

Using his psychic powers, Silver managed to make the tentacles let go of Amy and Rouge. But before he could carry the two girls back towards the bridge way, another tentacle shot out of the pool and smacked Silver, sending him hurling backwards and almost falling off the bridge way but Silver managed to stop himself just in time. Cream flew up into the air and she caught Amy and Rouge's hands before they could fall into the pool. The three tentacles reached up to grab Cream but to their misfortune, Cream was too high up and the tentacles had reached their length so they couldn't reach Cream. Silver grabbed the tentacles with his psychokinesis and he forced them back down under the pool. The tentacles would likely come

back up again so Silver thought the best idea would be to move on. Silver ran off with Nicole running after him. Cream flew down to the bridge and put down Amy and Rouge. The girls then caught up with Silver and Nicole. They ran across the bridge way and ran into another hallway. The Mobians ended up slumping on the floor and gasping for breath.

"Whew! That was too close for comfort!" gasped Amy "Me and Rouge were about to be pulled down to a watery grave by those icky tentacles! Thanks for saving our lives Silver and Cream."

"You're very welcome Miss Rose." said Cream politely.

"It was nothing." said Silver casually "I do have to wonder what that stuff was though and why this comet has it. Do the Black Arms feed off of it?"

"Perhaps." thought Nicole "It couldn't be used for anything else. I do hope that those tentacles don't belong to a creature that lives in that stuff or we will be in trouble."

"I think the tentacles are just random growths throughout the comet." mused Silver "There's a lot of them around but they don't appear to belong to anything. I guess that's fortunate for us, we can do without any monsters trying to kill us right now."

"Silver honey, we're in a comet that's the home of these Black Arms creatures, we're gonna find a lot of monsters here don't you think?" retorted Rouge "But that will not stop me from finding Shadow." she added, getting to her feet "Those Black Creatures are not gonna turn him evil!"

"We may not know where to find Shadow but we'll find him eventually if we keep looking." said Silver, standing up with her "Let's get back to our search girls, your queen and Shadow can't wait…"

Before he could say anything else, he was blasted off his feet by a ring blast fired from a ring gun. Silver was thrown across the hall and he landed on his stomach a few feet away from the girls. The girls all gasped in horror but then they were suddenly blasted off their feet

by more ring blasts. During the episode with the tentacles, their screams had caught Black Doom's attention and he, along with some Black Warriors wielding ring-guns, came to investigate the scene. He'd found the Mobians and now his Black Warriors had blasted the Mobians off their feet and they were having problems getting back to their feet. Black Doom hovered over to the Mobians and glared at them with his three red eyes. He cackled at the Mobians that lay defeated before him.

"So, it appears I have intruders on my comet." he growled scarily "And it'll come as no surprise to me if you're here to save your queen and steal Shadow from me. Well you will not get that chance you foolish Mobians for I shall feed you to my glorious pet…"

He then ordered his Black Warriors to fire the ring guns again at the Mobians. This time, the guns were set to stun mode so the blasts would knock the Mobians out instead of sending them flying across the room. The Black Warriors fired the guns and the Mobians were all quickly knocked out by the blasts. Everything went black for them and Black Doom reached out to grab their unconscious bodies…

Meanwhile, over at Rail Canyon, Tails' group had finally arrived at Bullet Station. It had been a steady process but they'd made it eventually. And it was a good thing too because Tails was beginning to feel worn out from flying for so long while carrying Wilson and Mandy. Bunnie Rabbot had done pretty well carrying Geoffrey and towing Cosmo, who was riding on the hover-saucer, to say she was only flying with one rocket instead of two. Ruben surfed across the water trial he was making and he came down to the ground along with the others. The Mobians all touched down on Bullet Station, Tails puffing and panting and Cosmo stepping down off the saucer. Bullet Station was a huge station and on busy days in Rail Canyon, was usually crowded. But today was a slow day so in all likelihood, Bullet Station was probably empty. That would be fortunate because Nyrah and Oakron were at Bullet Station too and they were around the back digging up the first stolen Black Arms relic! The Mobians could hear the Black Arms digging away so they ran off around Bullet Station to find the source of the sound. They came to the back of the station and they peeked around the corner. There, they saw

Nyrah and Oakron with their hover saucers nearby and Oakron was chipping away at the ground with his sword. He had been going at it for a while now and was just beginning to uncover the relic. Nyrah lazily stood by, holding the map for the relics and watching Oakron put his back into it. From the looks of things, he was digging up a giant sword with a blade longer then he was tall and it had black lining around the edges and it gave off an ominous purple glow. Oakron chipped away another piece of the earth and he began to grumble to himself.

"I don't get it!" he said grumpily "All this chipping away with my sword…just to bring Black Doom another sword?" he motioned to the sword he was digging up now.

"Oakron you vacuous little Death Leech, have you forgotten what that relic is?!" snapped Nyrah "That's Doom's Sword, a weapon crafted by Black Doom himself! It has the ability to summon creatures of any element out of the ground depending on the terrain and surroundings and it was one of the two relics stolen from us last time we invaded! You were there when we lost that sword so how did you forget about it?!"

Oakron scratched his head absent-mindedly

"I'm not sure really." he mused aloud "Mind you, I don't have the sharpest memory out of all of us do I?"

He then continued digging up Doom's Sword with Nyrah shaking his head in annoyance. As Oakron continued chipping away, Tails watched him and began to wonder what was Nyrah on about. He didn't quite understand the sword's powers but he knew that they couldn't let that sword return to the Black Arms. They had to get it from them before they could use it. It's power was likely to be catastrophic.

"That sword belongs to Black Doom himself?" mused Tails "And it has the ability to summon creatures out of the ground? I don't understand what that means but I bet it's a deadly power."

"If that thing belongs to Ugly Face himself then it MUST be deadly." spat Mandy "We've got to get that sword off of them before they can

use it."

"What do ya'll think will be the best way of getting that durn sword back?" asked Bunnie Rabbot concernedly.

"When they pull that sword out of the ground, you will shoot it out of their hands Bunnie." said Tails "Then we'll jump out and grab it while keeping them at bay."

"Let's hope it works mate." said Geoffrey St. John, loading his arm-mounted crossbow "Or we're dead meat out there."

The Mobians patiently waited and watched as Oakron finished chipping away chunks of rock and unearthing the stolen relic. Doom's Sword had finally been unearthed and now the Black Arms could have it back at long last. Despite being buried here at Bullet Station for fifty years, the sword was still glowing malevolently and still looked as good as new. Oakron and Nyrah were well pleased with this. Oakron reached down and grabbed the sword's handle with both hands. He wrenched the sword out of its buried place and he lifted it up slowly and carefully, the sword's blade glowing brighter as it was in the hands of a Black Arms soldier. Oakron was dazzled by the sword and memories began to flood back into his head. Memories of seeing this sword in action. How he ever forgot about it was a mystery to him. Nyrah stared at it longingly too, remembering the many times Black Doom used it whenever they invaded Mobius or indeed any other planet. It felt good to have this relic back in their hands.

"Doom's Sword…so much power contained in this mighty weapon… I wish it was my sword." said Oakron, looking like he was in a trance of some kind.

"Just because it's Doom's Sword, it doesn't mean we're forbidden usage of it." noted Nyrah "We're granted permission to use the weapon should we ever be the ones to hold it right now, Black Doom said so."

"Oh right." muttered Oakron, clopping himself on the head in annoyance "I'm such a scatterbrain! As much as it humiliates me to be paired with a scientist like you, it's a good thing you are here

otherwise I'd just keep forgetting everything!"

"Yes, it is." sneered Nyrah.

Oakron glared at Nyrah but said nothing. Before the two could do anything else though, Bunnie Rabbot deployed her arm cannon and blasted the sword out of his hand. Oakron squealed in pain and he clutched his searing hand. The sword landed with a clang on the ground. Oakron tried to shot Bunnie with his ring gun but Bunnie deployed her force-field generator and activated a force-field. She blocked the attack and everybody ran in to stop the two Black Arms soldiers. Geoffrey fried several darts at Oakron and Nyrah and Wilson threw his spinning blade weapon at them. Oakron however drew out his own sword and sliced the double-bladed pole in two, leaving it useless as a spinning blade weapon. Wilson now had two blades to fight with but first he'd have to retrieve them for they lay just behind Oakron. Oakron swung his sword at Wilson but the dog jumped back and dodged the attack. Mandy ran in and began to punch Oakron as hard as she could with her brass knuckle attachments making her attacks harder. But punching Oakron was like punching a boulder. Even with the knuckle attachments on, Mandy's punches didn't seem to be making much of an impact. She felt like she was going to break her wrists if she punched any harder. Oakron laughed at Mandy and he attempted to slice her in two. But Wilson retrieved the two halves of his spinning blade weapon and he blocked Oakron's attack with the blades of his weapon. He and Oakron clashed weapons with each other a couple of times before Oakron swung at Wilson and broke the blades to pieces. Wilson yelped in fear and narrowly managed a big swing of Oakron's sword. Mandy ran in and uppercut the Black Oak in the face. Oakron didn't really feel that punch but he was not going to tolerate being punched by a Mobian so he punched Mandy back. The mouse was thrown backwards and she landed painfully on her back. Wilson growled furiously and he tried to bite Oakron's arm but Oakron's arm was too big for him to get his mouth around so he instead targeted his wrist. Wilson bit Oakron's wrist but even a powerful dog bite couldn't harm Oakron. Oakron flung Wilson off of his wrist and into the wall of the station. Oakron then attempted to cleave Wilson in two with his sword but Bunnie Rabbot came in and pile-dived Oakron into the ground. Nyrah attempted to shoot Bunnie with his ring gun but

Geoffrey ran in and forced Nyrah's gun upwards, causing him to shoot up at the sky instead. Nyrah fumed at Geoffrey and he tried to whack him with the gun but Geoffrey dodged and kicked Nyrah in the gut. Nyrah doubled over and Geoffrey then slammed both fists on top of his head. Nyrah was brought down on his knees and Geoffrey then snatched his ring gun. He pointed the gun at Oakron and blasted him with it. Oakron was thrown off his feet and sent sprawling on the ground. Bunnie was surprised at this and she gave Geoffrey a thumbs up.

"Good shot sugah!" she praised.

"Thanks luv." said Geoffrey modestly.

Nyrah picked himself up and he grabbed Geoffrey by the shoulders. He and Geoffrey suddenly ended up in a grapple and they were wrestling with each other. Nyrah was trying to get his gun back and Geoffrey was trying to keep it out of his grasp. Bunnie ran over to Nyrah and she walloped the Black Warrior scientist in the face with her robot arm. Nyrah was sent slamming into the wall and he lay at the foot of the wall, wondering which way was up. Oakron got back to his feet and he ran towards Geoffrey and Bunnie with his sword in hand ready to slice them to pieces. But Geoffrey and Bunnie both blasted him with their respective weapons, Geoffrey with Nyrah's ring gun and Bunnie with her arm cannon. That blast alone nearly sent Oakron flying off of Bullet Station but he managed to grip onto the edge of the platform and pull himself back up. Ruben then suddenly squirted him with a jet of water to distract him and give the others a chance to launch another attack. While all this was going on, Tails and Cosmo ran over to Doom's Sword and they tried to pick it up. Unfortunately for them, the sword was as heavy as it looked and they were having trouble trying to lift it up. Tails spun his tails around and tried to fly up with the sword with Cosmo helping him lift it. But try as they might, they weren't strong enough. They both strained to lift up the sword but they just couldn't lift it.

"Grrrr! Oh gosh this is heavy!" grunted Tails "How can Oakron even lift this?!"

"He's very strong I guess." grunted Cosmo as she tried pitifully to lift the sword.

"OY! Get away from that!" screamed Oakron, thundering towards the two children with his hands open and ready to snatch them up.

But before he could touch them, Geoffrey and Bunnie blasted him again. Oakron was sent sprawling across the ground and he grumbled in annoyance. But Nyrah kicked Geoffrey in the back and made him drop the gun before he could use it again. Nyrah scooped it up and he blasted Bunnie before she could get him. He then blasted Tails and Cosmo and sent them hurling away from Doom's Sword. Oakron picked himself up and seizing his chance, grabbed Doom's Sword and lifted it up with ease. The sword's blade glowed very brightly in his hands. Oakron cackled demonically and he pointed the sword into the air.

"I maybe absent-minded, but I definitely remember how this relic works!" he crowed "By the powers of the Black Arms!" he chanted as the sword glowed a deep purple colour "I summon thee creatures from thy depths! Fiends, demons, behemoths and monsters, I summon you to rid thee of thy villains! Arise my monsters! ARISE!"

As he bellowed the last word, the ground beneath them began to shake violently. The Mobians fought hard to keep standing as the ground began to shake beneath their feet. What was happening? Was Oakron causing an earthquake with Doom's Sword? Then suddenly, as the shaking got more and more violently, a huge rocky hand with long fingers shot up from the rocky ground surrounding Bullet Station. The Mobians were well and truly shocked by the sight of the hand but that wasn't all they were going to be dealing with for as the hand popped out of the ground, a body came up with it. The resulting creature was a huge, rocky golem with huge rocky arms, purple eyes and purple tinges in-between the rocky parts of it's body. It was thicker then a boulder and it was gigantic, reaching about twenty feet in height. The Mobians stood back from the rock creature as it bellowed a loud, thunderous roar.

"I guess that's what the Black Arms meant by it can rise creatures of any elements out of the ground!" shrieked Tails.

"That sword's made a creature made of rock just come up from nowhere!" exclaimed Ruben "I guess that's where the elemental side of the power comes from, we're on rocky ground right now so it's

rising up creatures made of rock and…"

"We get it Ruben!" snapped Mandy impatiently.

But that one creature wasn't all they were going to be dealing with. Two more rocky creatures rose up from the ground, one rising up directly under Bullet Station and tearing it's way through it. These two creatures differed from the first one. The second rock creature was more serpent like in appearance and had no arms. The third rock creature was more dragon-like in appearance and had no wings (it'd be hard to have a flying creature made of rock wouldn't it?). Three gigantic rock creatures now stood before the terrified Mobians and they roared at the top of their voices. Oakron and Nyrah were thrilled to see this and they hopped onto their hover-saucers.

"Hope you have a nice play with our new pets!" sneered Nyah "Now if you'll excuse us, we have the second relic to find!" he crowed, waving the map at the Mobians tauntingly.

The two Black Arms then whizzed off on their saucers, leaving the Mobians at the mercy of the rock creatures and heading off to Ocean Palace to find the next relic, the Black Chaos Emerald. The moment Nyrah and Oakron left, the rock creatures bellowed a thunderous roar and they opened their jaws. A bright purple beam began to build up in the back of their throats and they aimed at the Mobians. They instantly knew what they were doing and they ran for it before they could unleash their attack. The rock creatures fired a giant, purple blast out of their mouths and they almost hit the Mobians but they narrowly missed them. Their blasts though left a giant hole in the ground. The Mobians ran into Bullet Station as it would be safer for them to be in a more enclosed environment while fighting three giant rock creatures of different shapes and sizes. The serpent like creature slithered nosily into the station after them, it's slithering noisy because of the fact it's made of rocks. It fired spears of energy at the Mobians and tried to hit them but the Mobians were too quick. The spears all missed them. As the Mobians ran, they looked over their shoulders at the rock creatures and watched them lumber after them.

"How in heaven's name can we take those behemoths on?!"

shrieked Wilson.

"Stop shrieking Wilson! That's not going to help!" snapped Mandy.

"Wilson has a legitimate point though!" Ruben called to her "How can we fight those creatures? They're huge and made of rocks!"

"We've fought giant robots, which are made of metal, in the past Ruben! We'll stop those guys somehow!" retorted Mandy "Although I'm not sure how we'll do so without killing ourselves."

"Ruben hon, will yer water powers slow them varmints down at all?" asked Bunnie.

"Unfortunately no, earth swallows water after all." noted Ruben "Those rock creatures won't be effected at all."

"Well me and Bunnie still have our projectile weapons." put in Geoffrey "I'm sure we can blast those blokes down to size!"

"It's risky sugah-John but it's worth a shot." said Bunnie, screeching to a halt and deploying her arm cannon "Stay back everybody, me and Geoffrey are gonna try blastin' those creatures!"

"I'll distract them so you can get a clear shot!" Tails announced "Ruben, you can help distract them with me! Those water powers of yours will be a good distraction!"

"OK then!" Ruben called back.

Tails flew up to the rock creatures while Ruben ran towards them and prepared to shower them with a jet of water. Bunnie and Geoffrey weren't far behind them. Geoffrey ran after Ruben with his crossbow loaded with exploding darts and Bunnie flew after Tails with her arm cannon deployed. The rock creatures towered over the Mobians and they prepared to fire purple beams of energy at them. Tails flew in front of the Rock Golem's eyes and flew around in circles, keeping it distracted and keeping it's attention diverted. Bunnie took advantage of the situation and she began firing at the golem as rapidly as she could with her powerful arm cannon. Ruben squirted water at the Rock Dragon and the Rock Serpent and kept their attention focused on him. That gave Geoffrey chance to fire

some darts at the rock creatures. He aimed for the gaps between the rocky build of the creature's bodies. The darts embedded themselves into the softer spots of the creatures and they exploded on cue. The Rock Dragon and Rock Serpent roared in pain as the darts exploded around them. But to Geoffrey's horror, the darts didn't seem to do any damage to their tough, rocky bodies! They looked perfectly fine despite the power of the explosions! Bunnie's arm cannon didn't seem to be harming the Rock Golem either, the golem took all her blasts as if they were nothing and he swatted at her with a giant rocky arm. Bunnie dodged the attack and she kept firing. But her blasts just didn't seem to be affecting the Rock Golem. The Rock Golem fired back at her and made Bunnie fly back to avoid getting hit by it.

"Whoa!" screeched Bunnie "Tails, ah don't think our plan's working!"

"We'll break them eventually!" cried Tails, goading himself along with false hope just to keep himself going "Keep doing your hardest Bunnie and Geoffrey!"

So the two Mobians kept firing at the Rock Creatures, hoping to eventually break them and bring them crashing down into giant, rocky pieces on the ground…

Meanwhile on Angel Island, Knuckles, Shade and Blaze were engaged in battle with a squadron of Black Arms creatures. The squadron consisted of Black Oaks, Black Warriors and Black Hawks. The Black Warriors and Black Oaks all descended down to the island and they hopped off their hover saucers. The Black Hawks remained flying and they prepared to dive bomb the Mobians. A pair of Black Warriors pulled out a ring gun each and they shot at Knuckles. Knuckles dodged the deadly ring blast, leaving it to strike the Master Emerald shrine and knock some bits of stone off of it. Knuckles lunged at the Black Warrior and he socked it directly in the face. The Black Warrior was knocked onto his back and he dropped his rung gun. Knuckles grabbed the ring gun and he blasted the other Black Warrior with it. Two more Black Warriors fired their ring guns at him but Knuckles spun around and fired his ring gun. The blast of his gun blocked the blasts coming towards him

so nobody ended up getting hurt. Knuckles then tossed the ring gun aside and he ran to the two Black Warriors trying to shoot him. Knuckles leaped over the blasts and he landed in front of them both. He punched them both in the gut and brought them both down on one knee. Knuckles then punched them both in the necks, making them gag and cough hoarsely. A Black Oak lumbered towards Knuckles and then punched him as hard as he could, throwing Knuckles backwards and sending him crashing into the emerald shrine. The Black Oak ran towards Knuckles and prepared to deck him but Shade jumped in and Blade Rushed the Black Oak, knocking it down onto it's side with a sweep of a pink energy wave that came from her twin blade weapons. Shade had her helmet currently deployed to give herself some extra defence. A Black Hawk swooped down from the sky and attempted to aerial ace Shade. But Shade Blade-Rushed the Black Hawk before it could touch her and she brought it crashing down to the ground like a stricken bird. A Black Oak lumbered towards Shade and clasped it's fists together. It attempted to bash them down on top of Shade's head but Knuckles jumped in and pile-dived the Black Oak in the back. This brought it down onto the ground and Knuckles began to punch it as hard as he could in the back of the head, hoping to knock it out.

"Thank you for the save." said Shade.

"Anytime Shade." said Knuckles with a rather flashy grin on his face "A co-guardian as beautiful as you doesn't deserve to be pummelled by these Black Alien scum!"

Shade blushed at the fact Knuckles just called her beautiful. Ever since the whole incident with Imperator Ix, Knuckles had been seeming to grow feelings for Shade and Shade was secretly growing feelings for Knuckles. The two echidnas were secretly falling in love with each other and hopefully some time soon, they'd be able to reveal their love for each other. Now was not the time for they were fighting for their lives here. Moving over to Blaze, the pyrokinetic cat was showing the Black Arms why she's the future guardian of Angel Island and the guardian of the Sol Emeralds. Blaze threw fire at some Black Warriors and then she ploughed through them all with a fiery spin kick attack. The Black Warriors were sent sprawling across

the ground and Blaze spiralled towards a pair of Black Oaks, both armed with swords and looking really powerful. She blazed through them both and then threw fire in their faces. Blaze tripped them up by kicking them in the legs and taking them out from underneath them. As the Mobians fought however, the Black Hawks flew in towards the Master Emerald and they attempted to grab the emerald and fly off with it. A whole squadron of Black Hawks could easily carry the heavy emerald off the shrine and back to the Black Comet. They knew it was some kind of Chaos Emerald so that's why they were trying to steal it. Blaze saw the Black Hawks trying to steal the Master Emerald and she rocketed towards them.

"Hey! Get away from that!" she screeched.

She blazed all the Black Hawks with a spiral of fire and scared them all off. They all flew away in blind panic as fast as their wings would let them. Blaze scoffed at them and she looked down at the Master Emerald which she now stood on top of.

"So…this is what it feels like to actually be guarding Angel Island from something." she said "And this is what it feels like to be defending the long lost Master Emerald. I still can't help but wonder why it no longer exists in my time…?"

"Blaze, we can do with less talk and more guarding the Master Emerald and Chaos Emeralds from these Black Vermin!" bellowed Knuckles who was having a sumo session with a Black Oak.

Blaze snapped back into reality and she jumped off the Master Emerald. She spiralled towards the Black Oak Knuckles was fighting and she swept it off it's feet with one hefty ram of her spiral kick attack. A Black Warrior however snagged her with a ring gun and Blaze was brought down onto the ground at it's feet. Three more Black Warriors surrounded Blaze and they pointed their ring guns at her. Blaze pretended to look scared in order to fool them for a moment before setting herself alight and then letting the four Black Warriors all have it with a wave of blazing fire. The Black Warriors were thrown backwards and Blaze stomped on their dropped weapons, breaking them to pieces and leaving them useless to the Black Warriors. Knuckles and Shade were well impressed with the fiery feline and how she blew those Black Warriors away with a

wave of fire.

"Wow Blaze, you're incredible!" exclaimed Knuckles.

"You are most definitely worthy of being future guardian of Angel Island." complimented Shade "Very impressive skills and battle prowess."

"Thank you." said Blaze modestly "It feels good to actually be defending Angel Island in it's prime before the Master Emerald disappeared and the island fell off the coast of Nekronopolis. My skills are getting put into good use at last."

Knuckles and Shade nodded agreeably. Although they were still nervous about the whole mystery behind the disappearing Master Emerald in Mobius' future. But that was in the future and this was now, the present time so they couldn't focus on that at the moment, they had to focus on keeping the emeralds safe from the Black Arms. A Black Oak had lumbered over to the Master Emerald shrine and it was climbing up the steps to get the Master Emerald. It almost grabbed the emerald until Shade Blade-Rushed it in the back and made it turn around and glare at her furiously. Shade ran up the stairs of the emerald shrine and she jumped up at the Black Oak. She kicked it and knocked it back into the Master Emerald. The Black Oak NEARLY knocked it off the shrine. Shade then tripped the Black Oak up with a sweep of the leg and it ended up tumbling down the stairs and off the shrine. Shade remained on top of the shrine and she had her blades at the ready. Best to stay close to the Master Emerald so no one can get near it after all. Some Black Hawks dived down towards the Master Emerald like birds of prey and they attempted to attack Shade but Shade Blade-Rushed them and sent them falling down to the ground with a pink energy wave. One Black Hawk that wasn't part of the squad Shade had just downed flew towards Shade from behind and it charged into her, knocking her clean off the Master Emerald shrine. Shade landed flat on her face and she groaned in pain. The Black Hawk then started attacking her like an angry bird (please don't make any Angry Bird jokes!) would attack a human. Shade tried to fight off the creature but without her blades, which she'd dropped, it was considerably harder to fend off such a creature. Luckily for her, Blaze leaped in and kicked the Black Hawk away. The pyrokinetic cat took Shade's

hand and helped her back to her feet. The Black Hawk picked itself up and it flew towards Shade and Blaze but the two girls leaped up and they both kicked it down to the ground. A Black Warrior sneaked up behind Blaze and Shade and then it blasted the girls in the back with a ring gun it wielded. Shade and Blaze were thrown off their feet and sent sprawling across the ground. Knuckles took care of the Black Warrior by pile-diving it in the back and knocking it down. He snatched it's ring gun again and then he blasted the Black Warrior across the island. A couple of Black Oaks and three Black Warriors all ran towards Knuckles but Knuckles blasted them with the ring gun and, to his surprise, ended up sending the five Black Arms running towards him flying off the island and plummeting down to the ground! Knuckles was well flabbergasted by how powerful the gun was.

"Wah-hey!" blurted Knuckles in surprise "This thing really packs a wallop doesn't it?!"

After that blast, there were only six Black Warriors and four Black Oaks left on the island. The Black Hawks were OK for whenever they were knocked down they could just fly back up into the air and because they could fly, it was impossible to knock them off the island. The remaining Black Arms creatures still on the island looked a little nervous after seeing what Knuckles had done to the other Black Arms creatures in their squad. Knuckles pointed the ring gun at them and he prepared to fire it at them.

"Alright you vermin, get off of my island or I'll blast you off of it with this!" growled Knuckles, threatening to use the ring gun.

But a Black Hawk flew in behind Knuckles and knocked him down to the ground, causing him to drop the gun. The Black Warriors instantly began shooting at Knuckles with their ring guns and they attempted to blast him off the island. But before they could get Knuckles anywhere near the edge of the island, Blaze leaped in and blazed through the Black Warriors, knocking them all down onto the ground and causing them to drop their weapons. The Black Oaks lumbered towards Blaze but before they could touch her, Blaze held her hands out and summoned a ring of fire that surrounded all the remaining Black Warriors and Black Oaks. They were all trapped within a circle of blazing fire. The Black Arms in the circle of fire

didn't know what to do. Any attempt at breaking through would result in them getting burnt badly so they couldn't take that risk. Not that they would need to take such a risk anyway for Blaze shot more blazes of fire through the circle and she began blazing the Black Arms with her powerful pyrokinetic abilities The Black Arms made this strange, hoarse sounding squeal that sounded like a stuck pig as they were being burnt alive. The Black Hawk flock flew down and began charging and pecking at Blaze in an attempt to get her to stop what she was doing. Blaze threw fire at them and made them back off. The Black Arms in the circle of fire couldn't stand the fire any longer so they charged through the blazing wall that was keeping them in the centre of the circle. They all ran for their lives and they hopped back onto their parked hover-saucers. The mission was a flummox and they couldn't beat Knuckles, Shade and Blaze so they had to retreat. Black Doom was not going to be happy to see them come back to him empty handed but as they usually said, a failure now can lead to a success the next time. The next time they attacked Angel Island, they'd succeed in stealing the Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald and that was guaranteed for the next time they attacked, Black Doom would likely be coming with them to make sure they succeed this time. Knuckles, Shade and Blaze watched as the Black Arms all flew away on their hover saucers and the Black Hawks swooped after them as fast as their wings would let them. It made the three guardians feel good to see that they had succeeded in their mission to defend the Chaos and Master Emeralds from the Black Arms but they had the nasty feeling that they would be back to try again.

"Well that was easier then I anticipated." said Knuckles "But I'm not complaining, I'm happy we got rid of those creeps!"

"The three of us worked amazingly well together." said Shade with a rather deadpan smile on her face "And our combined efforts managed to push back those Black Creatures."

Blaze nodded agreeably.

"We may have won this one but I have a nasty feeling that they'll come back in larger numbers and probably bring Black Doom with them." muttered Blaze.

"The Black Creatures don't really seem to pose much of a liable threat so chances are that Black Doom won't be much harder to take down then the Black Arms themselves." theorized Shade.

"Yeah, I bet Black Doom's as soft as the rest of them!" crowed Knuckles "If he shows up, we'll roughen him up as much as we've roughen this lot up!"

"We shall see on that." said Blaze grimly "In the meantime, I wonder how the other two teams are doing in their tasks?"

"They're hopefully doing well like we are." said Shade "But something tells me they're probably in need of aid right now."

Shade couldn't be more right on that theory for Silver's team had been captured and Tails' team was fighting three giant rock monsters. Knuckles' team were lucky they had even succeeded in their mission but that success was likely to turn to failure for Black Doom could possibly try and attack the island himself and steal the Chaos Emeralds. If only Sonic wasn't still healing from his wounds at the hands of Devion then he could stand in and help out in some way…

Speaking of Sonic, he was in Royal HQ right now with Team Chaotix keeping an eye on him. Espio the Chameleon was on the computer monitors and he was monitoring the Royal Fighters' current positions via satellite views. He wasn't monitoring Silver's team for they were in the Black Comet and it would be hard to get a view inside the Black Comet without getting dangerously close to it. Vector the Crocodile and Charmy Bee were sitting around with Sonic and Sonic was telling them everything that was going on and what he had been told about the Black Arms' history and the relics.

"…and as of this moment, Tails and his team have taken a map Nicole gave them and they're hunting down these stolen relics so they can use them against the Black Arms." explained Sonic "The relics sound pretty funky too. One's a sword that can raise creatures up from the ground and one's a Black Chaos Emerald."

"OK, that's pretty creepy." said Vector "They have a Black Chaos Emerald?"

"Who knows what that can do." said Charmy "If it's a black Chaos Emerald then I bet it has evil powers."

"According to Nicole, that's exactly what it is." said Sonic "They artificially created it by stealing one from Angel Island and corrupting it into their own dark gem of power."

"So what will that mean? The super forms will be ugly and evil instead of awesome and heroic?" wondered Charmy.

"Maybe." said Vector "Those Black Arms guys sound like real jerks don't they? They've warred with us five times every fifty years and now they've come back to fight us again? Do they have anything better to do with their lives?"

"I think their lives centre around warring with planets they come across every fifty years." muttered Sonic "Sad life really. I kinda wish I could join in with taking them down though. Instead, I'm stuck here being babysat by you three, no offence."

"Aw, we know how you feel Sonic." said Charmy affectionately "It's boring having to sit around waiting for your body to recover. I had to sit around being bored while waiting for my wing to heal the time it got shot on that oil rig last year so I know what it's like to be stuck around doing nothing while your body heals."

"Unlike you though, Sonic can barely walk." murmured Vector "You only had a ripped wing that time so you could still function. Sonic can't so its worse for the poor guy then it was for you."

"I know." said Charmy glumly "You know what Sonic, maybe so you feel less bored, we could all play a game together. Or maybe we could tell some jokes. I've got a good one here…"

"It's not "What goes "zzub, zubb? A bee flying backwards" is it?" muttered Sonic with his hand on his face in a bored manner.

"What? It's a funny joke isn't it?" asked Charmy defensively.

"It's only funny to a bee Charmy." sighed Vector "Non-bees don't tend to find it as funny I'm afraid. I've got a better one…"

"Hey guys, sorry to interrupt you but I've got an announcement." said Espio, turning around and looking over his shoulder.

Vector and Charmy ran over to Espio whereas Sonic just limped over to the chameleon. They all peered over Espio's shoulder as the chameleon told them what he could make out from the images he was getting on the monitors.

"Angel Island looks like it's in the clear." said Espio, pointing to a monitor that showed Knuckles, Shade and Blaze standing guard around the Master Emerald and there didn't appear to be a single Black Arms creature in sight "Knuckles, Shade and that new woman appear to have succeeded in their mission for the Black Arms ran away from the island. Mind you, they're probably getting more soldiers and they're planning to come back and attack again."

"The Black Arms can send as many as they like, Knuckles, Shade and Blaze will keep pushing them back." gloated Sonic "If it gets too much for them, they can just simply use the Master Emerald to perform a Chaos Control and use it to beat them."

"Nobody's getting that emerald." said Vector with a big fat smile on his scaly lips.

"That's true." said Espio "Unfortunately, it seems Tails and his team have run into a bit of trouble. Look on this monitor."

Vector, Charmy and Sonic looked at the other monitor and noticed that Tails' team was under pressure from three giant rock creatures. The Rock Golem was at this moment, chasing Ruben around and trying to smash him. Bunnie and Geoffrey were both shooting at the Rock Serpent but their weapons were futile against its tough rocky hide. The Rock Dragon was shooting beams of energy at the others and trying to hit them but ultimately failing because of their speed. But the tides of this battle were going to turn against the Mobians very quickly if this carried on for the rock creatures simply wouldn't go down and the Mobians wouldn't be able to keep this up forever. Sonic knew they needed help and rather then sit around doing

nothing; he was going to sort it out. Whether Amy wanted him to or not, he was going to go straight to Angel Island and then use the Master Emerald to perform a Chaos Regeneration. He was needed right now and his body wasn't going to heal any faster so a Chaos Regeneration was in hand for him. Sonic limped away from the monitors as quietly as he could and he left Team Chaotix to themselves. He headed off to the Royal Fighter Hangar not far away from the headquarters to get a hover saucer to travel to Angel Island with. While Sonic sneaked away, Team Chaotix began chatting to themselves.

"What are those things?" asked Vector.

"They look like rock creatures!" squealed Charmy "And they look terrifying too! No wonder Tails' team are in trouble! They don't look easy to defeat!"

"Where did they come from?" asked Vector "They don't look like they're from Mobius and they don't match Sonic's description of the Black Arms so what are they?"

"Sonic said one of the relics the Black Arms had stolen from them was a sword that can raise creatures from the dead, or so I heard when he was talking to you two." said Espio "Maybe the Black Arms found the sword and rose those creatures up from the rocky ground around Bullet Station. It's just a theory but it's likely to be true."

"It probably is." said Vector "I hope Tails and his team can beat those things."

"It doesn't look like they can though." said Charmy in a concerned manner "Do you think they'll win Sonic?"

He turned to face Sonic only to find out he wasn't there. Sonic had gone. Charmy looked around wildly for Sonic and his stomach began to tingle with worry. Had Sonic gone off on his own to face the rock creatures? How reckless and foolish of him would THAT be since he can barely walk!

"Hey! Sonic's gone!" cried Charmy.

Espio and Vector jumped out of their seats and they stared at Charmy in horror.

"Sonic's gone?!" shrieked Vector.

Charmy nodded frantically.

"Can't believe it, a simple babysitting job and we botched it up." grumbled Espio "How humiliating this is!"

"I've got a nasty feeling on what he's up to!" exclaimed Vector "He's gonna try and help his friends! We have to stop him!"

With that said, Team Chaotix hurried out of the lab, through the corridors and out of Royal HQ. The moment they stepped out of Royal HQ though, they saw Sonic in a hover-saucer making his way through New Mobotropolis and off out of the city to who knows where. Vector put his hands to his head in panic.

"He's getting away! We've gotta catch him or we'll be toast for letting him sneak off on his own!" squealed Vector "Come on boys, let's follow him!"

Before Espio and Charmy could ask how they would follow him, Vector grabbed them by their hands and ran off to the Royal Fighter Hanger to grab a hover saucer. They entered the hanger and they grabbed the nearest hover-saucer they could find. They leaped into the saucer and they kicked it into gear. The hover-saucer rose up off the floor a few inches and it sped off out of the hangar bay. Vector was driving the saucer and he followed Sonic through New Mobotropolis and out through the city gates. Sonic was already a good distance ahead of them so he wouldn't notice he was being followed and Team Chaotix would take a while to catch up to him. Both saucers were going at full speed so Team Chaotix likely weren't going to catch up to Sonic since they couldn't go any faster. But they had been given the task of watching Sonic and they couldn't let him out of their sights or they would be in trouble so they had to follow him and stop him from doing what it looked like he was going to do…

Meanwhile, Silver the Hedgehog was beginning to come to after being knocked out by the Black Arms earlier. He sat up and he began to rub his head better for it was throbbing a little. Silver opened his eyes and he noticed that he was facing a wall. A dungeon wall that is. Black Doom had taken him and his team down to the dungeons and thrown them in there to perish. Sally was in there with them too. Silver noticed that Amy, Cream, Nicole, Rouge and Sally were in the room with him and for some curious reason, they were all backed against the wall in fear and staring straight ahead of themselves. The look on their faces suggested they were witnessing something terrible ahead of them. Silver was surprised to see Sally here, that meant they'd found her at last and their job was going to be much easier, but he was puzzled at the same time at their frightened expressions.

"Uh, hey girls." said Silver cautiously "Wh…what's up? Why are you looking so scared?"

"Look…behind you!" choked Sally hoarsely, pointing behind Silver. She was so frightened her voice was going funny.

Silver looked behind him and he saw what everybody was so scared about. They were being watched by a giant creature that was in this cell with them. The creature looked like a cross between a maggot and a giant. It had a huge blubbery body and relatively small wings which always made one wonder how it was able to fly despite the size of its body. It had a singular green eye in the centre of its face and giant jaws with mandible like jaws on the sides of its face. It had horns and small spikes on its head and back and it was black and red in colour. The creature looked very grotesque and horrifying in appearance and it began to roar at the sight of its victims. Doom's Eye was next to the creature and Doom's voice began to boom out from the little purple star-fish like creature.

"Glad to see you are awakened my prisoners." sneered Doom's Eye "Now you can face your punishment for sneaking onto my comet and trying to infiltrate it from the inside out while also trying to rescue Shadow from me."

"We'll see about that!" retorted Silver, reaching for his Super Warp Ring.

To his horror though, he couldn't find it. He searched all over himself but he couldn't find the warp ring at all. It was quite clear that it was gone and Black Doom had likely stolen it. As if Doom's Eye could read Silver's mind, he spoke to him.

"Do not bother about your warp ring, I stole it from you while you were knocked out." crowed Doom's Eye "You cannot escape from this dungeon. I will be willing to allow you the chance to live though. If you can defeat my glorious pet, the Black Bull, then you will be freed from here." he lied.

Black Doom was filling the heroes with false pretences and hope just so he could crush them in his own sadistic way.

"Fair enough challenge." said Silver "Bring it on then you gluttonous gut ball!" he yelled to Black Bull.

Doom's Eye flew away from the scene while Black Bull roared loudly and glowered at Silver with its single green eye. Black Bull opened its massive jaws and it began to breathe fire out at its victims. They were trapped in a dungeon with a giant Black Arms creature. There was no hope for the heroes now Black Bull was after them…

Well this is going well isn't it? The Black Arms have their first relic back and Silver's team is going to become food for the Black Bull! Will Sonic's idea work and will his contribution help? Or are they just fighting a losing battle? Tune in next time as the Black Chaos Emerald comes to frution...

So sorry for the delays everybody. I keep getting distracted by DeviantArt and...well I'm just being lazy so apologies for that. I'll try harder to juggle my two lives and keep bringing you Sonic the Hedgehog goodness on ethier site. Hope you understand and thanks for the support you give me by favouriting me and reviewing this story.

Black Chaos

Story 123: Black Chaos

I don't care.

Those three words seemed to swim around Sonic the Hedgehog's head in a repeated circle like goldfish swimming around in their bowl over and over.

I don't care. I don't care if Amy wants me to play it safe in case we get any side effects like we did with the Chaos Clusters, I'm healing myself with a Chaos Regeneration and no one is gonna stop me. I need to help my friends and nothing will stop me from saving them.

Sonic had seen the trouble some of his friends were in at Bullet Station. Tails, who was teamed up with Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben, were under peril from three giant rock creatures created by Doom's Sword, a relic of the Black Arms that Oakron and Nyrah had unfortunately managed to steal back. They needed help and nobody else could provide it for them for Shadow was captured and the others were in teams and on Angel Island and the Black Comet respectively so he had to fill in for now. He was still recovering from his injuries from the Devatron war and he could barely walk so he needed to heal himself with a Chaos Regeneration. And for that, he required a Chaos Emerald so he was going off to Angel Island to use the Master Emerald to heal himself. Amy had been against the idea after what had happened with the Chaos Clusters a year ago and she was worried that if they used a Chaos Regeneration again, there might be a side effect even though it would be the Chaos Emeralds or Master Emerald they'd be using and she didn't want to risk anything bad happening so she had wanted Sonic to recover naturally. At first, Sonic had been onboard with this as he didn't believe in deliberately going against his friend's wishes for his own needs. Amy was only looking out for him and he was willing to accept that. But for now, Sonic had to go against it since now was a desperate time and it was calling for desperate measures. So Sonic had sneaked away from Team Chaotix and

grabbed a hover-saucer. He was heading off to Angel Island right now and unbeknownst to him, Team Chaotix were trying to catch him since they had been assigned to baby-sit Sonic for he's unfit to battle and now he was escaping from them so they had to catch him or they would be in trouble. The big problem was they couldn't catch him since Sonic had had a big head start already and both saucers were at top speed to the Chaotix couldn't really catch up to him since they couldn't go any faster. So at best, they were just following him and making sure he didn't leave their sights. A long while passed by as the two hover-saucers cruised through the many places of Mobius and after that long while, Sonic finally reached Angel Island. His saucer cruised through the deserts of Downunda as he headed towards the giant floating island. The Chaotix could see that Sonic was heading towards Angel Island and the first thing they began wondering was what Sonic was coming here for.

"What the heck's Sonic come all this way for?" wondered Vector.

"He's up to something." said Charmy "I bet he's gonna use the Chaos Emeralds to turn super and make himself feel better and then fight the rock creatures in Bullet Station."

"If that's what he's up to then we have nothing to worry about." said Espio "But he could have told us if he was gonna do that, why did he have to sneak off?"

"I dunno what goes through Sonic's head but at least he never does anything bone-headed." said Vector "Oh well, we'll stick with him anyway and see if we can do anything to help."

Espio and Charmy nodded agreeably. They could rule out the theory that Sonic was doing something foolish and that he had a good idea. And how right they were to think that, except for the super part that is for Sonic hadn't thought of that, he'd just thought of using Chaos Regeneration to heal himself. Up on Angel Island, Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas and future Angel Island guardian Blaze the Cat could see two hover-saucers coming towards them and they began to wonder what it was. They knew it wasn't more Black Arms for the saucers weren't even of their design.

"There are two hover-saucers heading towards the island." observed

Shade "Who's piloting them?"

"I'm not entirely sure from here but the one in the lead looks like… like…Sonic…is driving it." said Knuckles, peering out over the edge of the island and looking as hard as he can "It's hard to tell from here."

"I wonder who's in the second saucer." mused Blaze "Is he being chased by a villain? Is he being followed by a villain or is that some kind of back up with him?"

"I think they're friendly." said Shade "But it's an estimate at best as we can't see too well from up here."

They'd sooner see who were in the saucers for they had finally reached Angel Island and Sonic had just set his saucer to fly up to the island, increasing the hovering capability with the thrust of a lever (he's driven one of these before during the eight months in-between before he met Tails). Team Chaotix didn't know how to do that though so their saucer was stuck on the ground with the three of them watching Sonic descend up to Angel Island. Charmy however took Espio by the hands and Vector held onto Espio's ankles as Charmy carried the two of them out of the saucer and up to Angel Island. As Charmy was carrying them up to the island, Sonic finished ascending and he steered the saucer up to the Master Emerald shrine. The three guardians were gobsmacked to see Sonic here and for a moment, they couldn't speak. As Sonic staggered out of the saucer and onto the emerald shrine, Knuckles finally regained his ability to speak.

"Sonic?! Well this is surprising." he said "What the heck are you doing here?! You're supposed to be back at Royal HQ getting some rest!"

"I've come here to use a Chaos Regeneration on myself and heal myself." retorted Sonic, trying as hard as he can to stay standing "I don't care what Amy says, I have to do this. Tails' team are in peril and I NEED to heal myself so I can help them."

"Really?" said Shade, her usually cold looking eyes widening a fraction "What kind of peril?"

"They're being attacked by giant rock creatures and they'll need me to stop them." explained Sonic "Me and Team Chaotix found that out after monitoring them through satellite in Royal HQ."

"Rock creatures?" spluttered Knuckles "Where did they come from? Are they Black Arms?"

"Possibly." said Sonic "They're at Bullet Station which is where Nicole said the first Black Arms relic was and the first relic if I recall was some sword doo-hicky that can raise creatures from the ground or something like that."

"So maybe the Black Arms got the relic first and they made the rock creatures with it." deduced Blaze "That can't be good at all. Let's hope they don't find the second relic."

Sonic nodded and then he touched the Master Emerald. Chaos Energy crackled between his fingers as he touched the Master Emerald. He then yelled at the top of his voice "Chaos… REGENERATION!" and the Master Emerald glowed a bright, fluorescent green colour. Team Chaotix had just touched down on Angel Island as Sonic was using Chaos Regeneration and they ended up shielding their eyes from the sheer brightness of the emerald's glow. The light died down after a while and Sonic stood up straight, stretching as much as he could. He began to feel much better now he'd just done that Chaos Regeneration. Boy was he glad he went with this idea now! Team Chaotix were pretty amazed at what they'd seen too.

"That was awesome! Do it again!" cried Charmy.

Sonic turned around in surprise and he stared at Team Chaotix in surprise. The echidnas and Blaze stared at Team Chaotix in surprise too.

"Team Chaotix?!" blustered Sonic "What are you guys doing here?"

"We got worried when you sneaked off and we thought you were going to rush into battle despite your injuries." explained Vector "So we followed you because we were concerned about you. Thankfully, you weren't going to do anything foolish. You just used the Master

Emerald's power to heal yourself that's all."

"Yeah, sorry I didn't tell you what I was doing." said Sonic with an apologetic look on his face and rubbing the back of his head nervously "I didn't think you'd understand and that you'd just try and keep me trapped in Royal HQ."

"It's alright, we shouldn't have jumped to conclusions." said Espio.

He then spotted Blaze and his eyes widened.

"Whom may I ask is the pretty woman there?" asked Espio.

Blaze blushed bright red.

"That would be Blaze, future guardian of Angel Island." said Sonic "She and her friend Silver are helping us beat the Black Arms.

"Any friend of Sonic's a friend of ours." said Vector happily "Hi Miss Blaze, I'm Vector and these two are Espio and Charmy. We're Team Chaotix and we're detectives and defenders of Mobius along with the Royal Fighters."

"Nice to meet you." said Blaze "It's been a while since I've ever seen a crocodile or a chameleon for the last ones died out last year. Last year in my time that is, not this time. And I've never seen anything like you before." she said to Charmy "I guess your kind went extinct before I was born."

That did not make Team Chaotix feel very comfortable at all. Sometime in the future, their kind goes extinct? How did that happen and how could they stop that from happening?

"O…K…" said Vector "So…care to explain a bit more on that for us? We don't understand you."

"While you do that, I'll be off to save Tails and his team." said Sonic "Wish me luck guys."

"You don't need it Sonic." said Knuckles "We all know you'll win as always."

"Before you go Sonic, I recommend taking the Chaos Emeralds." said Shade "If you need them to destroy these "rock creatures" then you'll have them on you. And I have a feeling you will need them, especially to go after the second relic once you've beaten the rock creatures."

"Good idea Shade." said Sonic "Wait here while I go get 'em."

With that said, he zipped off at top speed and rushed off to the tomb the Chaos Emeralds were hidden in. In a matter of seconds, he rushed back to the Master Emerald Shrine with all seven Chaos Emeralds in his hands. The seven glorious gems all glowed in unison and Blaze couldn't help but stare at them. To think the Sol Emeralds used to look like that before they became the Sol Emeralds. The Chaos Emeralds vanished away and Sonic leaped on top of the Master Emerald. With a touch of the emerald and a simple yell of "Chaos…CONTROL!", Sonic vanished into thin air with one bright flash of the Master Emerald. He was warping himself over to Bullet Station so that he may stop the Rock Creatures and save his friends from being killed by them. The only thing was… would he be able to stop them…even though he's healed himself and is ready for action again…?

Over to Bullet Station, the three rock creatures had the Mobians on the run. Despite their best efforts, they couldn't seem to hurt the rock creatures in anyway. Now the three of them were chasing the Mobians all around the station, wrecking it as they did so. The Rock Golem was after Ruben and Mandy, the Rock Serpent was after Tails, Cosmo and Wilson and the Rock Dragon was after Geoffrey and Bunnie. The rock creatures kept firing beams of energy at them from their mouths and trying to crush them with their rocky appendages. As the Rock Golem thundered after Ruben and Mandy, it bellowed at the top of it's voice and held it's hands out to grab them. The water panther and mouse were well terrified and they ran faster.

"Help! The Black Rocks are after us!" screeched Ruben.

"Stop calling them that! That's a stupid name!" snapped Mandy.

Ruben stopped talking and carried on running along with Mandy as the Rock Creature tried to grab them with it's rocky hands but it missed by centimetres. The impact of it's hands slamming onto the ground was enough to shake the ground and make Ruben and Mandy fall over. They quickly picked themselves up and ran after the others. The Mobians all joined back together as the Rock Creatures continued to pursue them. Tails, who was beginning to tire out, looked over his shoulder to see the Rock Creatures still chasing after them. They couldn't keep this up forever, they needed a plan and they needed it fast or they were toast.

"Tails! You got any ideas?" puffed Cosmo, who was visibly tired and looked like she could barely go on any longer.

"Not at the moment no!" Tails called over to her "But I'm thinking of one!"

"Then hurry up and come up with a plan, those things are gaining on us!" shrieked Wilson who looked the most panicked out of them all.

Tails was one of those people who thought better when he was calm and relaxed. Right now, he was panicked as all hell, scared out of his flippin' mind and running for his life so he couldn't focus and think properly right now. So thinking of a plan to stop the Rock Creatures might be a little difficult for the little twin-tailed fox since he found it harder to think when panicked and running for his life. Even if he wasn't being pursued right now, Tails didn't think he'd be able to come up with a plan to stop the Rock Creatures. They'd already tried one idea and that didn't work. Bunnie and Geoffrey's weapons just weren't strong enough to stop the giant Rock Creatures and he and the others couldn't do anything about them so how COULD they stop those giant rocky gestalts?! If only Sonic was fit enough to fight then maybe he could help them in this fight! But sadly, that was the case and Tails had to accept it. For now, they had to do the best they could to stay alive or be crushed by giant rocky creatures of various shapes and sizes. While the chase continued, Bunnie decided to try and distract them a little just to keep them off their backs for long enough to come up with a plan. Bunnie flew towards the Rock Serpent and she deployed her arm cannon. She saw two pools of dark purple in the places where eyes should be on the Rock Serpent's head. Maybe they were a weak spot and shooting them

could distract it a little. Bunnie shot the Rock Serpent in the purple spots on the creature's head. The Rock Serpent squealed in pain, clearly effected by the shots and it writhed about in pain for a moment. Bunnie beamed happily. She'd found a weak spot on it at last! But would shooting it in the eyes be enough to stop the Rock Creatures? Shooting it in the eyes didn't seem to be effecting the Rock Serpent fatally so maybe it wasn't a fatal weak spot. Still, they had some kind of distraction at least.

"Hey Tails! Ah durn found a weak spot on the creatures!" Bunnie called down to the others on the ground.

"Awesome! Keep them distracted while we come up with a plan to stop those things!" Tails called back to her as he dived behind a chunk of debris from the station.

The others dived behind the chunk with him to take cover while Bunnie kept the creatures distracted by shooting them in the weak spots. She blasted at the Rock Golem and hit it in the eyes. The Rock Golem clutched its eyes and it bellowed a thunderous roar of pain. The Rock Dragon tried to blast Bunnie with a spurt of energy from it's mouth but Bunnie flew out of the way and blasted it in the eyes. The Rock Dragon roared in pain and it began to stomp around in pain while clutching its eyes. Its stomps were enough to shake Bullet Station apart (provided it wasn't already being destroyed right now). The distractions were working but it was too much to hope that the creatures were going to be stopped just by shooting them in the eyes. Tails peered over the chunk of debris he and the others were hiding behind and then he looked back over at them.

"Alright, does anybody have an idea on how we might stop those Rock Creatures?" asked Tails.

"Well our weapons aren't working that's for sure." muttered Geoffrey "And I'm out of darts anyway so the original plan isn't going to work."

"And I'm not even gonna think about using my spinning blade weapon!" blurted Wilson "This thing won't work on creatures like those!"

"And I don't think I've got the weapons for it either." muttered Mandy,

looking at her knuckle attachments "What am I gonna do? Punch them to death?"

"If I were against say fire creatures or something, this would be easy." murmured Ruben "But my water's useless against rocks so I'm not much help."

"Neither am I." said Cosmo sadly "I'm of no use against those things."

"We're all pretty much useless against those things." said Tails grimly "Bunnie has the best chance against them and even then, I doubt she'll be able to break them with those cybernetics of hers. I doubt even Knuckles could break through them. Even Sonic or Shadow would probably struggle against them."

"If only Sonic was up and at em' instead of stuck on the sidelines he could get the blinkin' Chaos Emeralds, turn super and then knock ten bells out of them blighters!" grumbled Geoffrey "Same goes for Shadow but he's captured unfortunately."

"We could do with anyone's help right now." said Tails "We can't abandon this fight and leave them or they'll just destroy Rail Canyon and then move onto other places so…"

Before Tails could finish speaking, a bright flash of light appeared from nowhere and everybody peered from around the chunk of debris to see what it was. The light was so bright that they had to shield their eyes from the light so they didn't get blinded. The Rock Creatures stopped trying to kill Bunnie Rabbot and they stared at the flash of light that had suddenly appeared. This gave Bunnie the opportunity to sneak away from the creatures and join the others back on the ground. She flew down behind the debris to hide with them and she stared at the light, wondering what it was. The light died down, revealing none other then Sonic the Hedgehog, looking so much better now, standing there with his trademark cocky grin on his face. He surveyed his surroundings and realized that his Chaos Control had worked. He was in Bullet Station just where he wanted to be.

"Well, here I am." said Sonic "Now time to bash some boulder

demons!"

The others stared at each other and they didn't know what to think about this situation.

"It's Sonic! But what's he doing here?!" hissed Tails "He should be back at Royal HQ being babysat by Team Chaotix!"

"How did he get better so quickly?" asked Cosmo "He could barely walk before and yet, he's standing up perfectly without any support and he looks as fit as he usually is."

"The bloke did it didn't he?" muttered Geoffrey, face-palming himself in annoyance "He used a Chaos Regeneration didn't he?"

"Well I'm glad he did if that's the case!" cried Mandy delightedly "Now the blue dude can fight again and he can help us smash those rock creatures!"

"I hope he can." said Wilson "Or we are toast out here if he can't."

As for Sonic, he looked up at the giant Rock Creatures as they towered over him and they all roared at him. Deep inside, Sonic was scared stiff of the creatures and he felt like falling over in horror but he kept a straight face on and remained cool and collected as always. Sonic puts his hands on his sides and he smirked at the creatures.

"You guys are bigger then you looked on the computer monitors back at Royal HQ." he sneered "But I bet you're all size and no substance. I'll smash you to pebbles!"

Sonic spin-dashed towards the Rock Creatures. As he propelled himself towards the Rock Golem, he began to think to himself how good it felt to suddenly be doing a spin-dash again. He hadn't done one in ages and that was because of Devion putting him out of action. Sonic hit the Rock Golem in the head…and ricocheted clean off of it. The Rock Creatures were too strong for even Sonic to destroy. Sonic hurtled into what was left of the third wall of Bullet Station and he bounded off it and spin-dashed towards the Rock Serpent. The Rock Serpent smacked Sonic down into the ground

with its tail before he could get anywhere near it. Sonic picked himself up and shook his head. He'd only just healed himself and already he felt like his bones were ready to crack. The Rock Creatures were tougher then he had imagined. He needed some more power before he could destroy them. As Sonic thought on how to destroy them, the Rock Dragon opened it's rocky jaws and it blasted a beam of purple energy at Sonic. Sonic jumped back in surprise, his face a picture of hilarity as he was almost hit. The Rock Dragon then raised it's rocky tail and it tried to slam it down on Sonic. Sonic zipped out of the way and he spin-dashed the Rock Dragon in the eye. The Rock Dragon screeched in pain and it flailed about madly. The Rock Serpent opened it's jaws and tried to snatch Sonic up in them but Sonic dodged and left the Rock Serpent to accidentally crash into the Rock Dragon. The two Rock Creatures lay in a rocky, stony heap on the ground. The Rock Golem punched at Sonic but Sonic dodged and left it to punch the ground instead. That punch made the ground shake and the remains of Bullet Station began to tremble as if they were going to collapse down onto the ground. Sonic zoomed away from the creatures and he thought to himself for a minute. He couldn't destroy the creatures for they were too strong. How could he destroy them? Then suddenly he remembered. He'd brought the seven Chaos Emeralds with him! He could use them to destroy the creatures! But Sonic didn't want to use his super form just yet. He might need it for something more important then three giant gestalts made of rock. He pulled out the blue Chaos Emerald and he tapped into its power. How powerful could one Chaos Emerald on its own be? The Chaos Emerald glowed brightly as Sonic tapped into its power and he began to power up slightly. The Rock Creatures stared at the Chaos Emerald and they wondered what Sonic was going to do with it. Sonic then span into a super spin-dash and he hurtled towards the Rock Creatures. He smashed straight through the chest of the Rock Golem and he smashed it to bits instantly. The Rock Golem collapsed to the ground in giant chunks of rocks and the purple light inside of it died down into nothingness. Without Doom's Sword, the Rock Golem couldn't come back to life. As long as someone was there to use the sword, it could come back alive again. Sonic continued his super spin-dash and he destroyed the Rock Serpent and the Rock Dragon in a matter of seconds. The two creatures were reduced to giant chunks of rocks and they lay in a pile next to

the dead Rock Golem. The purple aurora in them died away and the creatures were nothing but a pile of rocks. Sonic landed on the ground and he smirked at the dead Rock Creatures.

"Nothing but a pile of rocks." sneered Sonic "Epic!"

"Sonic! You did it!" cried Tails, leaping out from behind the debris chunk and throwing himself into Sonic's arms for a brotherly hug "You destroyed the creatures!"

"Well done mate!" cheered Geoffrey.

"What an honourable feat that was!" exclaimed Ruben.

"You're amazing as always Sonic." said Cosmo "But how did you get better so quickly?"

"I used a Chaos Regeneration to heal myself." said Sonic "Went to Angel Island and used the Master Emerald to heal myself. I don't care if Amy didn't want me to do it, I had to or you guys would have been dead out there."

"Well I'm glad you went against her wishes, that was the right thing to do." said Mandy "I hope Amy will understand and be cool with this or I will slap her one!"

"I'm sure she'll understand Mandy, she's not that crazy." said Sonic snidely "So where did those creatures come from?"

"Ah'm sorry to say sugah hog but the Black Arms have got the first relic." said Bunnie sadly "They got Doom's Sword and they used it to raise these durn creatures out of the ground to slow us down while they go and get the second relic."

"And they stole the map too." said Tails downheartedly "So they know where to find the next relic. I'm so sorry we let you and the others down Sonic. Really I am."

"Dude, it's cool." said Sonic "You haven't let us down yet, we can still get that next relic. I have the Chaos Emeralds so I can just Chaos Control us all over to…wherever the next relic is. Where did Nicole say it was again?"

"Ocean Palace." informed Wilson "We need to get there and now. I bet they're digging up the next relic as we speak."

"OK then, to Ocean Palace we go!" said Sonic, holding up the Blue Chaos Emerald and yelling "Chaos…CONTROL!"

A Chaos Portal opened up in mid-air and the Mobians all jumped through it at once. The portal warped them away from the wrecked, ruined remains of Bullet Station and all the way over to Ocean Palace where the next relic, the Black Chaos Emerald, was going to be found. As they sailed through the portal tunnel, Sonic prayed that they had gotten there in time and that the Black Arms hadn't already found the relic and made off with it…

Meanwhile, on the Black Comet, the Black Bull was chasing its victims all around the dungeon and trying to roast them alive by breathing fire out of the pit of its throat. The fire that Black Bull breathed out at its victims was different from other fires for not only was it hot and deadly but it had a funny, musky sort of smell to it. Almost like it was poison fire. Who knew what happens when it touches you. Silver, Sally, Nicole, Amy, Cream and Rouge ran around the dungeon to avoid the Black Bull's deadly fire. If only Black Doom hadn't confiscated his warp ring then maybe he could get them out of here! But no, he had to fight off the Black Bull and hope Black Doom kept to his promise and freed them from this place. Despite being a huge, blubbery creature, the Black Bull was a scary foe and it was a surprisingly agile flier despite having wings relatively small in comparison to its huge body. Black Bull breathed fired at Silver but Silver used his psychokinesis to stop the fire and he threw it back at the Black Bull. The fire scolded Black Bull's face and it roared in pain. Doom's Eye, Black Doom's little way of watching things from the comfort of his own room, watched the fight and he was not pleased to see that Silver had a way of counter-attacking Black Bull's deadly attacks. But Black Bull would deal with Silver, it had other methods of attack. Black Bull roared angrily and it literally swooped towards Silver with its head lowered like a charging bull (maybe that's why it's called Black Bull). Black Bull rammed Silver and smashed him against the wall. Silver felt like he was being nailed into the wall by a giant hammer. Black Bull then

grabbed Silver in it's jaws and proceeded to try and eat him alive but Rouge screw-kicked it in the jaws and made it drop Silver. Black Bull snarled at Rouge and it breathed fire at the jewel-thieving bat. Rouge narrowly managed to dodge the fire, the tips of her wings getting lightly singed by it as it blazed past her. Rouge did a massive U-turn and she screw-kicked Black Bull in the face again. Black Bull spun around and walloped Rouge with its rear end (don't take that the wrong way readers). Rouge was sent hurling into the wall and she slid slowly down to the floor. That attack had left the bat a little stunned. Amy leaped in at the Black Bull and she walloped Black Bull with her Piko-Piko hammer. Black Bull barely felt that attack though. It was as if Amy didn't even hit it. Black Bull charged at Amy and tried to slam her against the wall but Amy jumped out of the way and then she hammered Black Bull in the side of the head. Black Bull turned its head towards Amy and breathed fire at her. Amy only just managed to avoid getting her fur singed off by throwing herself down onto the floor. She could feel the searing hot flames blaze over her on her skin. Cream and her pet Chao Cheese flew towards Black Bull and she punched it directly in the eye. Black Bull screeched in pain and it flailed around in pain. It didn't have limbs of any kind so rubbing its throbbing eye better was impossible for it. If this were any other person, Cream would be feeling ashamed of herself for hurting somebody but this was a Black Arms pet she was against so she didn't feel ashamed of punching it in the eye. Yet seeing it writhe around in pain made Cream think for a moment. The eye seemed to be a vulnerable spot so hitting it there would be the best idea. Cheese rolled up into a ball and Cream threw him at Black Bull's eye just as it stopped writhing around. Cheese hurtled straight into Black Bull's eye and Black Bull screeched in pain again. Doom's Eye was watching this whole fight and it was furious.

"Impossible! No one can defeat the Black Bull!" he roared "And yet they're winning so far! I shall have to send in some more threats for these pathetic Mobians to deal with…"

Back on the ground, Sally and Nicole were running together around the Black Bull and wondering what to do.

"That thing shrugs off most attacks but the eye seems to be a weak spot." observed Nicole "Cream keeps hitting it there and it

screeches in pain and writhes around."

"If only I had some kind of weapon then maybe I could join Cream in hitting it in the eye." muttered Sally "When all of this is over, I'm going to arm myself so I can fight better."

Then suddenly, the two women were surrounded by a teal glow and they were picked up off the ground by an invisible force. It was only Silver using his psychokinesis to lift Sally and Nicole up off the floor.

"You wanna hurt that thing so I'm helping you." said Silver with a wink "Clever idea eh?"

"Silver, we'd be goners without you." said Sally with a smile "Now launch me and Nicole at the Black Bull's eye, but not too hard."

"You got it your majesty." said Silver, drawing his arm back and then throwing it outwards as if he was throwing a baseball.

Sally and Nicole were thrown towards Black Bull and they raised their legs so they would hit it feet first in the eye as opposed to simply flying straight into it like a missile. Sally and Nicole both hit Black Bull directly in the eye and the force of the impact made it back off and screech a terrible screech of pain. Sally and Nicole were swiftly caught by Rouge before they could fall onto the floor and she lowered them down onto the ground. Black Bull writhed around in great pain and it smashed its head against the wall to rub its eye better. There was a loud rumbling noise as it rubbed its head against the rocky walls of the dungeon. Sally and Nicole beamed with pride at the fact they'd managed to hurt it.

"That was amazing!" cried Nicole happily "I wouldn't mind doing that again!"

"Despite the pain we've caused it, I don't think hitting it in the eye will necessarily beat it or bring it down." said Sally grimly "There must be a better way of taking it down."

"How about I hit it really hard?" asked Amy, brandishing her hammer and getting ready to use it.

"Hey girls, I think I can hear something coming from the foot of the

walls." said Rouge, who had her head turned and was listening out for something.

Black Doom had decided to send in more creatures to deal with the Mobians for Black Bull was being beaten at the moment. And that threat was a swarm of Death Leeches, the Black Arms offspring. They were crawling into the dungeon from the seams at the foot of the wall and the barred window in the ceiling of the dungeon. The Death Leeches were small pulsating purple blobs with three horns and one eye in the middle of their bodies. Bet you can't believe that those tiny, blobby things become Black Arms soldiers can you? The Death Leeches were capable of sticking to walls and they ate and devoured anything that resembled food to them. If they were desperately hungry, they would even turn cannibalistic and eat their own kind, albeit in large swarms so they can bring down the larger opponents. The girls all screwed their faces up at the Death Leeches and they stood back from them. Silver jumped in surprise and he backed away from them.

"Whoa! What are those disgusting creatures?!" he gagged.

"These are the dear off-spring of the Black Arms my prisoners." Black Doom's voice boomed out from Doom's Eye "They are the Death Leeches and they will devour you instantly if you do not fend them off. Which will you face? The Black Bull or the Death Leeches?"

"Hey, this isn't fair!" yelled Amy "You said we had to fend off Black Bull and that was it!"

"You lied to us! Lying to people is a bad thing to do you bad, bad alien!" squealed Cream.

"Spare me your unwanted remarks you foolish, feral beings." snarled Doom's Eye "I have altered the deal, pray I do not alter it any further. Now will you fend off the Black Bull or the Death Leeches?"

"We pick both!" retorted Silver, his hands glowing teal as he activated his psychokinesis.

He managed to pick up EVERY SINGLE Death Leech that was crawling into the room. The Death Leeches were now trapped in Silver's psychic hold and Silver held them all in place.

"Everybody, fight off Black Bull while I figure out what to do with these leeches!" yelled Silver.

Everybody obeyed and they leapt into action, leaving Silver to wonder what to do with the Death Leeches. Rouge flew towards Black Bull and screw-kicked it in the eye before it could attack her. Black Bull winced in pain but it recovered and it breathed fire at her. Rouge dodged the attack and she screw-kicked it in the side of the face. Black Bull opened its jaws and it tried to chomp on Rouge but the bat managed to dodge it before it could eat her. Black Bull growled in frustration and it charged directly into Rouge, hitting her with its forehead and slamming her against the wall. Cream threw Cheese at Black Bull's eye just as it backed away from the wall. Black Bull roared in pain again and it breathed fire at Cream. Cream squealed in terror and she flew away as quickly as possible. Rouge picked herself up and she took Sally and Nicole by the arms. She carried them into the air with a flap of the wings and she threw the two girls at Black Bull. They landed on Black Bull's head and they stomped on it's eye (ouch!). Black Bull thundered in pain and it shook Sally and Nicole off of its head. Sally was caught by Cream before she could crash into anything but to Silver's misfortune, Nicole crashed into him and made him lose his psychic hold over the Death Leeches. The Death Leeches all fell back down to the floor and they began to crawl towards Silver and Nicole. They squealed in delight and they prepared to eat them alive. Nicole shrieked in horror and she pressed her back against the wall in shock, her eyes fixed onto the Death Leeches and her face contorting with horror. She looked like a woman who was standing against the wall, terrified of a spider crawling across the floor.

"Eeek! Don't let those things near me!" she whimpered as one was about to crawl onto her foot.

"They're going nowhere!" yelled Silver, picking up all the Death Leeches with his psychokinesis again.

Nicole sighed with relief, knowing that they were safe from the Death

Leeches now. But what could Silver do with them? There was nowhere to throw them and they'd just come back even if he did throw them away. There was no sure way of getting rid of them and he had a nasty feeling killing them was easier said then done so how could they deal with them? Silver then remembered something. What did Black Doom say about them again? They devour their prey instantly if you do not fend them off? Maybe he could make them devour Black Bull instead. Silver drew his arm back and then he threw the Death Leeches at Black Bull as it was fending off Amy and Cream with its fiery breath. The Death Leeches all stuck to Black Bull and because they were ravenously hungry, they began to gnaw on Black Bull's scaly skin. Black Bull began to panic and it flew around in blind panic as the Death Leeches began to devour it at the speed of piranhas. Doom's Eye was livid to see all of this happen.

"No you fools! Don't devour the Black Bull! Devour your enemies!" bellowed Doom's Eye.

But when you're a hungry Death Leech, your hearing shuts off. All the Death Leeches were bothered about now is what a scrumptious feast they were having. Black Bull was huge and blubbery, they could all fill themselves up on it. Black Bull gave one last desperate scream as it fell down to the floor and breathed its last breath. The Death Leeches were too much for it and being as it had no limbs, it couldn't shake them all off so they effortlessly managed to eat their way through the flesh and into the soft, squishy parts. The Death Leeches were even eating the wings. Black Bull lay on the ground, dead as a doornail, and the Death Leeches all began to devour the carcass alive. Nicole began to feel sick just watching this and she threw herself into Sally's arms for comfort. Sally hugged Nicole back and she closed her eyes to look away from the grisly scene before them. Same happened with Cream and Amy. Even the normally calm and collected Rouge couldn't help but cringe at the scene before them and she looked away. Silver was disgusted too and he turned away as the Death Leeches began to eat their way into the Black Bull's internal organs. He almost regretted doing this as he didn't really like killing and this whole scene was disturbing and gross to him. He had a feeling he was in for some nightmares tonight. Doom's Eye was disgusted to see that Black Bull, his glorious pet, had been killed by his own offspring and he could see

he had to deal with the Mobians himself. Shadow was not ready for refurbishment yet so he didn't think of using him yet. Shadow would have to wait for the moment. Doom's Eye flew away while the Mobians weren't looking and it left the dungeon. A minute or so later, the Death Leeches finally finished eating Black Bull alive and they all crawled out of the dungeon. Every time Death Leeches finished eating, they went back into their sleeping spots to rest until they were hungry again (They eat and sleep until they grow up). All that was left of Black Bull was a pile of bones. Everybody stopped looking away from it and they stared at the bones left behind by the leeches.

"That was the most horrific thing…hurk…I've ever seen!" choked Nicole, her stomach turning in several places "I…I feel sick now…!"

Sally patted her on the back to make her feel better.

"Never again do I want to witness something like that." said Sally grimly "That was horrible."

"Just seeing something like that getting eaten alive…it's terrible." said Silver solemnly "I feel bad that I did this to the creature. But we had to have done that. "Kill or be killed" as they say."

"Don't worry Silver, it's OK." said Amy softly "Although yeah, that was pretty horrible. Now where's Black Doom so we can shove it in his face how we managed to kill his precious pet?"

"Right here." growled the familiar voice of Black Doom.

To the Mobian's shock, Black Doom materialized from nowhere and he loomed before them like a ghoul from a horror film. Black Doom narrowed his three eyes at the Mobians and he opened his hands. The Mobians took a step back.

"You have done well against the Black Bull." he growled in his malevolent, growly voice "Now you will face me for your freedom."

"Now wait just a minute, you said we could go if we beat the Black Bull!" shouted Silver.

"Oh Silver you gullible twerp, he's obviously lied to us." snapped

Rouge "He's been lying to us this whole time and I bet he's lying again."

"I speak the truth this time." said Black Doom coldly "If you can beat me, you may leave alive. Now come and face your karma Mobians! Unless you're too afraid to face the true wrath of the Black Arms race!"

Black Doom dared the Mobians to come at him while he was preparing to launch his attacks on them. The Mobians willingly obliged and they launched themselves towards Black Doom. This match was going to be a fight for their lives…

Ocean Palace, a beautiful landmark on the face of Mobius that stood proudly in the middle of the ocean as it's name suggested. The palace had many bridge ways that led to various areas of it and there were giant turtles carrying giant blocks on their shells. Ocean Palace was one of Mobius' most beloved landmarks and it had not been touched by Eggman or indeed any other villain on Mobius, meaning the residents there had a rather happy life of peace and tranquillity. If only all Mobians were this lucky. Ocean Palace wasn't densely populated and nowadays, not many people lived there, only about fifty-sixty citizens living in the palace. This could be a good sign though for not many people were going to be endangered by the two Black Arms that had arrived here. After finding the first relic in Rail Canyon, Oakron and Nyrah had left the canyon behind and they arrived at Ocean Palace to find their next relic. All the while the Royal Fighters had been fighting the giant Rock Creatures, the Black Arms had been tracking down the Black Chaos Emerald. They had found it after a while of searching. The Black Chaos Emerald had been inserted above the doorway of the main palace (if you don't understand I mean the large building you come across when you reach the goal at the end of the level in Sonic Heroes). The rulers of Ocean Palace had wanted it inserted there because they thought it looked grand looming above the door and shining whenever the sunlight stroked across it. Although really, there could have been a better hiding place to put a Black Chaos Emerald that had been stolen from the Black Arms. Nyrah whipped out his ring gun and he blasted the top of the palace doors, bringing the Black

Chaos Emerald down to the ground along with a bunch of rubble and stone from the arch above the door. The Chaos Emerald survived the blast of course for Chaos Emeralds can not be destroyed. The Chaos Emerald gave off a faint, dark glow from the rubble. Nyrah put his weapon away and he seized the emerald quickly, a glorious sensation streaming through his bloodstream as he picked it up.

"Those Mobians are as subtle as an asteroid field." crooned Nyrah "What an easy find this was."

"Yeah, they at least *hid* Doom's Sword when they stole it from us didn't they?" said Oakron "Hiding that Black Chaos Emerald in plain sight is not a very clever move is it? It's like they WANTED us to find it isn't it?"

"Maybe they worried they'd forget where they put it." sneered Nyrah "So hiding the Black Chaos Emerald in plain sight would help them remember where it is."

Oakron nodded.

"We're having an easy day aren't we?" crowed Oakron "We've taken back our wayward weapon Shadow and now we've gotten our relics back. Mobius' destruction is certain now. Just remind me though… what can the Black Chaos Emerald do?"

"It can do the same things an ordinary Chaos Emerald can do." explained Nyrah "Only we can use the energy of the emerald to blow our enemies away. And it can also corrupt a Chaos Emerald and turn it dark as well."

"Of course! How could I forget?!" groaned Oakron "I do wish I wasn't so absent-minded!"

"Well maybe I could use this Chaos Emerald to give you a better memory." joked Nyrah mockingly.

"Very funny Nyrah." muttered Oakron.

Then suddenly, a bright flash of light shone from nowhere and Nyrah and Oakron both leaped back in surprise, almost dropping the Black

Chaos Emerald. The light died away and there before them stood Sonic, Tails, Cosmo, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben. Nyrah and Oakron were so shocked they almost fainted.

"Wha…at?!" choked Nyrah "How did…?"

"I came in and used a Chaos Emerald to stop your little rock pets." sneered Sonic, showing Nyrah the Blue Chaos Emerald "And then I warped us all the way over here to stop you from getting the second relic as well as take back the first."

"Well you're too late rodent because we've found it!" sneered Oakron "Nyrah, let them have it!"

Nyrah thrust his arm forward, the Black Chaos Emerald in hand, and he yelled something different to what one usually yells when using a Chaos Emerald.

"Chaos…CORRUPTION!" he barked.

The Black Chaos Emerald gave off a very dark, evil aurora and a beam of black light shone out of the emerald and onto the blue Chaos Emerald Sonic had in his hand. Sonic jumped and he dropped the emerald. But that was just the beginning part. More beams of light shone from the Black Chaos Emerald and they pulled out the other six Chaos Emeralds to join the first one. The beams pulled the Chaos Emeralds away from Sonic and towards the Black Chaos Emerald. All seven Chaos Emeralds were being corrupted by the Black Chaos Emerald's sheer, raw power. Their beautiful colourful glows died down to a murky, eerie black and the presence they gave off was far more malevolent and dark then before. Sonic zoomed towards the Black Arms and tried to stop them but Oakron jumped in and punched Sonic away from Nyrah, sending him hurling to the side and almost falling into the water. Tails ran over to help Sonic back up. The others stared at the Black Chaos Emerald in total horror, its dark power transforming the Chaos Emeralds into Black Chaos Emeralds much like it. The Black Chaos Emerald finally finished what it was doing and the seven Chaos Emeralds, now all black in colour and full of dark power, fell to the ground. Oakron scooped them all up and he looked at them, his eyes full of glee.

"Still works. Ha, ha, ha! We have the last remaining Chaos Emeralds with us now!" crowed Oakron "Thanks for saving us the bother of finding them!"

"Eight Chaos Emeralds." said Nyrah tauntingly "Who knows how much power we're going to have now?"

"Ya'll give them back you ugly aliens!" yelled Bunnie, rocketing towards them with her robot arm drawn back and ready to punch.

Nyrah just simply held up the Black Chaos Emerald and yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" The resulting Chaos Control froze Bunnie in time and left her stuck in her running-and-ready-to-punch-your-face-off pose. Nyrah and Oakron quickly leaped onto their hover-saucers and they hovered away before anyone could stop them. Tails flew after them, desperately trying to catch them and snatch the relics and Chaos Emeralds back from them. But his attempts were futile for the hover-saucers could fly much faster then he could and they soon lost him. Tails tried desperately to catch up to them but he just couldn't. He quickly tired out and he flew back down to the ground in defeat. He was so out of breath he felt his lungs were going to explode. The Chaos Control on Bunnie wore off and she was able to move again. She looked around in horror, unable to believe Nyrah and Oakron had just managed to escape. Sonic looked pretty miserable at the fact they'd lost the seven Chaos Emeralds to the Black Arms AND failed to retrieve the stolen relics before they could. Could this day get any worse?! (probably shouldn't ask that!) Tails landed on the ground and he looked down at his feet, his ears flat against his head and his face full of sorrow.

"I'm sorry I couldn't catch them guys. They were too fast and I just couldn't keep up with them." he said.

"Don't sweat it Tails." said Sonic affectionately "This whole thing's my fault. I shouldn't have let those jerks take the Chaos Emeralds and corrupt them or whatever it is they've done to them. We're never gonna get those relics back now."

"We can blue dude." said Mandy "We'll just have to go to Angel Island and use the Master Emerald to warp ourselves onto their comet. Once up there, we can fight through the Black Arms and get

back the emeralds and relics."

"Mandy…you're a genius!" exclaimed Sonic "I could just stamp the word "genius" on your forehead right now! Come on guys, let's get to Angel Island!"

With that said, Sonic zipped off with Wilson and Mandy holding on to him. Tails carried Cosmo and flew after Sonic while Bunnie carried Geoffrey and Ruben surfed after them on the water surrounding Ocean Palace. They all left the water mounted palace and they headed off to Angel Island. The day was looking pretty bad so far but it seemed like there might be a good chance at turning the whole thing around in the Mobians' favour…

The Chaos Emeralds are lost the relics are retrieved! Looks like the Black Arms are turning this whole thing around! Maybe they will win after all? Or will Sonic and friends bounce back on them like they always do? Tune in next time as the build up to Story 125, my FIFTH milestone, begins...

So everybody, how's the whole Black Arms saga coming along? Am I doing well with them?

Plans Are Coming Together

Story 124:Plans Are Coming Together

It's not hard to see why Black Doom is the leader of the Black Arms race. Not only is his voice one of the scariest voices anyone anywhere in the cosmic entity of space will ever hear but his battle prowess and abilities make him a force to be reckoned with. And poor Silver the Hedgehog and his team were finding that out the hard way for they had to fight him. After tricking the Death Leeches into eating the Black Bull alive, Silver and his team were now forced to fight Black Doom for their freedom. Not that they're going to get it anyway for Black Doom's lying to them for his own amusement. And so far, Black Doom had them on the ropes. Black Doom's fighting style consisted heavily of using his abilities rather than hand-to-hand combat but should he get up close and personal, he will do so without a moment's hesitance. His abilities consist of flaming meteors he can summon from nowhere and throw at you, blades of fire had can slash at you with like swords and his most deadly attack, the Swift Strike, a boomerang like attack that swept across the floor and blew his opponents away. He could also teleport at will and emit after images of himself to confuse his enemies. Sounds pretty insane huh? The Mobians certainly thought so as they tried to fight off this twin-horned, legless demon. Amy Rose pounced on Black Doom and tried to hammer him with her Piko-Piko hammer but Black Doom teleported away and left her to hammer the ground instead. Amy growled in annoyance. Black Doom had been doing this persistently already and she was really starting to get irritated by him constantly teleporting. Black Doom reappeared behind Amy and back-handed her across the room. Amy hurled across the room and crashed into the wall. Cream the Rabbit threw Cheese at Black Doom but Black Doom simply caught the Chao in his hand and tossed him away. The one thing you must never do is hurt Cheese. Otherwise you get a ticked off Cream in your face. Cream lost it and she flew at Black Doom with a punch ready for him. But Black Doom back-handed her across the room before she could touch him. Cream hurled across the room and landed on top of Black Bull's remaining bones which had been left behind after the Death

Leeches ate it alive (am I trying to make this a horror story or something?!). Cream picked herself up and she grabbed a rib bone on the carcass. She snapped the bone off its socket and she flew towards Black Doom. She was going to use the bone as a club to hammer Black Doom's face into mush. But even wielding a weapon guarantees a slim chance at victory against Black Doom. Cream tried to wallop Black Doom in the face with the rib bone but Black Doom caught it in his hand, snatched it off of her and then proceeded to wallop *her* with the bone. Cream was knocked down onto the ground and she clutched her face in pain, whimpering to herself for that attack really hurt her. Black Doom then held the bone in the manner of a dagger and attempted to stab Cream with the pointy end of the bone. But Silver stopped him dead in his tracks with his psychokinesis. Black Doom was completely immobilized now, Silver had him right where he wants him.

"Ha, ha, ha! Got you now Black Doom!" crowed Silver "Bet you can't escape from a psychokinetic hold can you?"

"You underestimate my capabilities young one." scoffed Black Doom "You cannot stop me with a simple psychic hold."

He then proceeded to teleport out of Silver's psychic grasp! Just because you have psychokinesis, it doesn't mean you can stop someone from teleporting for teleporting is something triggered by will more than anything and you can't hold someone's will with psychokinesis. Silver was truly gobsmacked to see this happen. He didn't think that it was possible to teleport out of someone's grasp. But unfortunately it was and that was going to be Black Doom's trump card against him. Black Doom reappeared behind Silver and he threw a flaming meteor at him. Silver was struck in the back and thrown across the room and he came to a stop at the foot of the wall. Black Doom threw another meteor at Silver but Silver caught it with his psychic grip. But as he was doing that, Black Doom fired his strongest attack.

"On guard…SWIFT STRIKE!" he bellowed as he activated his swift strike attack.

Silver tried to stop it with his psychokinesis but he couldn't. The swift strike was too fast for him to react and too strong for him to stop so

he was promptly hit by the attack. Silver was thrown backwards into the wall, dropping the meteor he'd caught earlier. Black Doom cackled menacingly and he prepared to attack Silver again but Rouge screw-kicked him directly in the chest. Black Doom growled a pained, groaning growl as he clutched his chest in pain. Rouge Then grabbed the jewelled chains that hung from his armour and tugged on them, attempting to snatch them off of him.

"You wear such pretty jewels." crooned Rouge "I might have to take them for myself."

Black Doom just promptly teleported away from Rouge and reappeared behind her. He grabbed her by the neck and then threw her directly into the wall. He then grabbed her again and tossed her towards Black Bull's carcass. Unfortunately for Rouge, Black Doom had thrown her in such a way that she was heading towards the rib bones from above. If she didn't stop herself in time then she would get impaled on one of the rib bones and killed instantly. Luckily for her, Silver was on hand to catch her with his psychokinesis before she could land on any rib bones at all. Black Doom took the opportunity to throw meteors at the two before anything else could happen. Silver and Rouge were both hit by the meteors and slammed against the wall by them. Sally and Nicole took advantage of this by sneaking up behind Black Doom and then double-teaming him by leaping up and kicking him in the back together. Black Doom was brought down to the floor and just as he was getting up, Sally and Nicole both threw punches and kicks at him as hard as they could. Black Doom teleported out of their way and he reappeared behind them. He then struck the two with blades of fire and sent them hurling into a wall. The two girls weren't down for long, they picked themselves up and they charged towards Black Doom again. Black Doom just simply used his Swift Strike on them and blew them both away. Being stricken by Black Doom's strongest attack was like being hit by a train. Sally and Nicole sprawled on the floor and they groaned in pain. Black Doom summoned some flaming meteors and then he threw them at Sally and Nicole. But Silver stopped the meteors with his psychokinesis and he threw them back at Black Doom. Black Doom teleported out of the way and he reappeared just behind Silver. He used his Swift Strike on Silver and sent him flying into Sally just as she was standing back up. The two Mobians

lay in a heap on top of each other at the foot of the wall. Amy and Rouge ran in to try and attack Black Doom but Black Doom began making after images of himself to confuse the two. Amy hammered one after image, only to find out that it was not Black Doom and Rouge ended up falling for it too by screw-kicking an after image. Before they could work out which one was the real Black Doom, Black Doom struck them with blades of fire. Amy and Rouge were sent hurling through the air in a neat rainbow arch and they came crashing down on top of each other a few inches away from the wall. Cream flew in and tried to pummel Black Doom but Black Doom swatted her down into the floor. Cheese fluttered into his face and fisted him in his third eye, the one with the reptilian pupil. Black Doom groaned in pain and he grabbed Cheese before he could attack him again. He threw Cheese at Cream and then he used his Swift Strike on the poor rabbit. Nicole was horrified to see Black Doom hurt Cream like that so she decided to let him have it. She cart-wheeled towards him and then dropkicked Black Doom before he could attack again. Nicole then stood on her hands and kicked Black Doom in the gut. Black Doom clenched his fist and he socked Nicole directly in the face. He then uppercut Nicole into the air before she could attack again. Nicole hurled through the air in a rainbow arch and she landed on top of Silver before he could stand back up. Sally jumped up towards Black Doom and tried to punch Black Doom but Black Doom dodged the attack with ease, grabbed her by the leg as she soared past him and then threw her across the room and into Black Bull's remains. The result ended up scattering Black Bull's remaining bones all over the floor. A rib bone had pierced Sally's arm as she landed near it, leaving a long cut on it. It wasn't serious and Sally managed to ignore the pain in her arm. Silver, Rouge, Amy, Cream and Nicole all rushed towards Black Doom but Black Doom threw meteors at them all and then Swift Struck them just after the meteors all hit them. To add insult to already heavy injury, Black Doom let them have it with blades of fire too. The Mobians were all left sprawled across the floor and groaning in pain. Sally was the only one left standing. She picked up a rib bone from Black Bull's broken remains and she held it in the manner of a sword. She ran towards Black Doom, screaming loudly but Black Doom Swift-Struck her and knocked her off her feet. Black Doom then hovered over to the downed Queen of New Mobotropolis and he grabbed her by the neck. He hoisted her up to his height and

slammed her against the wall. Sally was now pinned to the wall by Black Doom. Sally struggled in his grasp but she had no way of getting out of such a tough grip. Black Doom began to cackle at Sally, clearly delighted with hers and everyone else's defeat.

"Your attempts to combat me are to be commended New Ruler of Mobotropolis." purred Black Doom, his voice rumbling through Sally's ears like a tremor "But you have all fallen to me and thus, you will not receive your freedom you pathetic fool."

"Ack…hurk…I bet…even if we…ack…did beat you…you wouldn't… let us…gack…go anyway!" choked Sally, trying to breathe while being strangled by Black Doom.

"You are much wiser then my other prisoners." complimented Black Doom "I get enjoyment out of filling my victims with false hope and pretences and then shatter it to pieces before them by leaving them imprisoned. And you Mobians will perish in this dungeon while I destroy your planet and wipe out your flaccid race. And then once Mobius is ashes and your kind are extinct…then you have my permission to die."

He tightened his grip on Sally's neck. The poor queen was struggling to breathe now. She was slowly but steadily being throttled to death.

"Gurk…you…you won't…win this Black Doom…ack!" gagged Sally, struggling to speak for how hard she was being throttled "We've… beaten you before…gack, hurk…ack…we can…do it again…ack!"

Black Doom fumed at Sally but he didn't lose his cool at her.

"I already explained to you that we *allowed* you to live those times." retorted Black Doom "This time, we're showing no mercy and that is why you will soon be extinct when we make our move…"

"Your eminence!" came a familiar voice above his head.

Black Doom looked up at the ceiling and saw none other then Oakron and Nyrah standing above the dungeon grate and looking down into the dungeon. They had finally made it back to the Black

Comet after escaping with the Chaos Emeralds and Black Arms relics and they had searched for Black Doom so they could give him the good news.

"Oakron? Nyrah?" said Black Doom in surprise "What have you returned to the Black Comet for?"

"We have succeeded in our mission my lord." said Nyrah "We wish to show you our success."

"I will join you in a moment." said Black Doom "Go to my throne room and I shall meet you there."

Oakron and Nyrah obeyed and they ran off to Black Doom's throne room. Black Doom looked back at Sally Acorn, who was just beginning to go purple in the face due to how much she was being strangled.

"It appears Oakron and Nyrah have succeeded in retrieving my relics that your disgusting kind confiscated from me the last time we came here." growled Black Doom gleefully "For they state that they've succeeded in their mission. Now there's no hope for you Mobians. You may as well accept defeat now for Mobius' Darkest and Final Hour is coming…"

He then finally let go of Sally and let her drop down onto the floor. Sally began gasping for breath and her face stopped going purple. Never before had she been strangled so badly. Had Black Doom done it any longer, she would have been dead already. Black Doom teleported out of the dungeon and left the defeated Mobians to rot in it. Sally clutched her neck and her breathing began to relax a little for she'd finally gotten her almost depleted breath back. Her heart sank like a ship with a hole in it. The Black Arms had gotten their relics back? That alone was very bad! Those relics were confiscated from them for a good reason. They were too powerful to leave them in the hands of villains like the Black Arms so they were stolen and hidden so they couldn't use them. And now they'd gotten them back somehow! It appeared the Black Arms were going to win after all. After Black Doom had left and Sally had gotten her breath back, Silver, Amy, Cream, Rouge and Nicole all gathered around Sally while trying to ignore their injuries.

"Well, Black Doom's certainly tougher then I thought." murmured Silver.

"He beat all of us without breaking a sweat." said Amy in dismay "How can we beat him now?"

"Maybe if he wasn't such a coward then we'd floor him easily." muttered Rouge "Stupid teleporting thing he does."

"I can't believe he was lying to us!" wailed Cream "Even if we won, he wasn't going to let us go anyway! How horrible!"

"What's more horrible is we're still trapped in this horrid dungeon." said Nicole in disgust "How can we get outta here?"

"If only Black Doom hadn't stolen my warp ring then I could just simply warp us out." fumed Silver "But unfortunately, that's the case. We need another escape route."

"I agree." wheezed Sally, her voice just starting to come back to her after getting her breath back "True the Black Arms have somehow gotten their relics back but that doesn't mean we're beaten yet. If we can get outta here, maybe we can stop them from using the relics before they can and we'll save Mobius and stop the Black Arms for good."

"And then we'll NEVER see them again!" huffed Amy "I think Mobius being invaded by them five times before was enough so we can do without them coming back again!"

"But how will we get out of here?" asked Nicole "There's no way of escape in here!"

"Actually, there is." said Silver with a smile on his face.

He held his hands out and they glowed a bright teal colour. His quills seemed to straighten and his body was surrounded by a teal glow. The grate in the ceiling was surrounded by a teal glow too and it seemed to shake a little as Silver focused his psychokinesis on it. It seemed that Silver was trying to break through the grate or something as that seemed to be the only way in and out of the dungeon aside from teleportation. Silver gritted his teeth and he

focused really hard on the grate, desperate to break through it or something. The grate's bars then suddenly began to bend. Silver was bending the bars with his psychokinesis. He continued to bend and bend the bars of the grate in the ceiling until eventually, he managed to break through the bars in the grate. They could easily escape out of the dungeon now. Silver then used his psychokinesis to carry all the girls with him as he flew up towards the now broken barred grate. He had the girls in single file so he could fly out with them all behind him. Now Silver had gotten himself and all the girls out of the dungeon, they could see to stopping the Black Arms from using the relics now. They had heard Black Doom mention he was going to the throne room so they had to look for a room that looked like a throne room and then ambush Black Doom and his cronies. But would they get there in time to stop them from using the relics…?

Angel Island had been at peace since the Black Arms' failed attempt to find and steal the Master and Chaos Emeralds. Knuckles and Shade were standing on the shrine and keeping an eye out for any further danger whereas Team Chaotix were talking with Blaze the Cat. They wanted to know a bit more about the future of Mobius after Blaze mentioned she was from the future. Blaze had been telling them quite a bit and they were intrigued by what they had been told.

"So you're the future Guardian of Angel Island huh?" said Vector in his usual grizzly voice "And the Chaos Emeralds are now known as the "Sol Emeralds" after being transformed by your mama?"

"That's right." said Blaze "And that is why I defend them, I must live on in my mother's name or I will shame the name of the Spirit of the Pyro. Since there's little life on Mobius in my time though, there's nothing to worry about. Still, I've got to guard them for anything can happen."

"Too true." said Espio "So what exactly happens to Mobius then? Why is it a wreck 200 years later?"

"That's what me and Silver are trying to work out." muttered Blaze

"We want to find out what dooms Mobius so we can fix our time and so me and Silver can have a better future. We think we've found out what dooms Mobius at the moment."

"So what do you think dooms Mobius then?" asked Charmy inquisitively "I bet it's awesome!"

"We found out that in this exact year, the Martians invade Mobius on May the 4th and we think that's what causes Mobius' apocalypse." explained Blaze "Me and Silver came to this time so we could warn you about it and hopefully change the future. If that doesn't work then we'll study some more until we find the answer and come back so we can prevent it from happening."

"I very much hope you and Silver succeed." said Espio "It doesn't feel good knowing that the world ends at some point in our lives."

"I'm more disturbed by the fact there are no bees in the future!" shrieked Charmy "And no crocodiles and chameleons! What happened to them?"

"Not sure about your kind Charmy since there's little to no information about bees in my time." said Blaze grimly "The chameleons and crocodiles went extinct because they competed with each other for reasons unknown and they literally fought each other to extinction."

Vector and Espio looked at each other uneasily. What a disturbing thought! The chameleons and crocodiles warred to extinction in the future?! Well you could count on one thing, they wouldn't be among those crocs and chameleons fighting each other in the future!

"Well that was certainly…nice to know." said Espio, pulling a face.

Blaze began to feel down. Perhaps telling the Mobians of the past what happens in the future was probably not the best thing to do as they all seem disturbed by it and they're not enjoying what they're hearing.

"You know what, I don't think I wanna know anymore about the future." said Charmy "Why don't we talk about something else

instead?"

But before a new conversation could start, Knuckles and Shade noticed something in the horizon. They both peered into the horizon and saw what looked like to them, a huge dust cloud coming towards Angel Island. Was it a sandstorm? Probably not as there was no wind around Downunda right now. The dust cloud continued to get closer and closer until Knuckles and Shade could see that it was indeed not a sandstorm, but just Sonic running at his usual trademark speed and whipping up a cloud of sand as he ran through the desert of Downunda. They could also see Tails and the team he took to find the relics with Sonic. The two echidnas began to wonder why Sonic and the others were coming to Angel Island. Had something gone wrong? Or were they here to deliver the good news? Sonic and friends arrived at Angel Island and Tails and Bunnie flew everybody up to the island one at a time save for Ruben who just simply used jets of water to shoot himself up onto the island. Tails and the others were a little surprised to see Team Chaotix there but they didn't waste time questioning it for there was no time for that. Knuckles and Shade hopped off the shrine and they ran over to greet Sonic and the others.

"Wasn't expecting you to come back so suddenly." said Knuckles "So since the others are with you, I take it you saved them from the Rock Creatures in Rail Canyon?"

"Correct Knuckles." said Sonic "But we stumbled into a bigger problem."

"Which is?" asked Shade.

"Oakron and Nyrah have both relics." muttered Tails "And they used the Black Chaos Emerald to corrupt the seven Chaos Emeralds and turn them dark as well."

Knuckles felt like someone had just plunged a sword into his heart.

"So…the Black Arms have got their relics back…and they used the Black Chaos Emerald, which is one of the two relics they have, to… corrupt the seven Chaos Emeralds…and turn them dark?!" spluttered Knuckles.

"Yes." said Tails, looking very sorry for himself indeed "We're so sorry Knuckles, we didn't mean to lose the Chaos Emeralds."

"Well sorry isn't good enough Tails!" shrieked Knuckles "THE BLACK ARMS HAVE ALL SEVEN CHAOS EMERALDS PLUS AN EXTRA ONE NOW! Who knows what kind of power they're gonna have with eight Chaos Emeralds all filled with Dark Chaos Energy?!"

"Knuckles, chill, breathe for a minute!" blustered Sonic "We have a plan! We've come back here so we can use the Master Emerald to warp ourselves onto the Black Comet and then get back the relics and Chaos Emeralds."

"That is the only way we'll get them back but…isn't that a little risky?" asked Shade "The Black Comet will be crawling with Black Arms and they won't be so easy to fight through. Not to mention they have the Chaos Emeralds so they can use them against us."

"It will be risky but there's no other way." said Sonic "We HAVE to take that risk. If we're lucky though, maybe Silver and his team will get them back for us. And maybe they've already saved Sally and Shadow up there right now. Oh well, we don't know until we get up there so let's do it."

With that said, Sonic and Knuckles climbed up the shrine and they touched the Master Emerald. With a simple yelling of the word "Chaos…CONTROL!", the two managed to open up a Chaos Portal above the Master Emerald. That portal would take them to the Black Comet, the very home of the Black Arms race. Sonic, Knuckles and all the others, including Team Chaotix, leaped through the portal together and the portal vanished from sight the moment they entered it. They would hopefully end up on the Black Comet and while there they could retrieve the relics and at the same time, maybe save Sally and Shadow. Provided they weren't too late that is…

While all this was going on, Black Doom had warped into the throne room so that he could see what Oakron and Nyrah wanted him for. Oakron and Nyrah were just standing to attention and were waiting

for Black Doom to speak to them. Black Doom loomed above the two Black Arms and he folded his arms. His three eyes were narrowed down to a cold glare that suggested "This had better be good or else!" to anyone looking at him.

"You request my presence because you claim to have completed your mission." growled Black Doom in his deep, growly voice "Is that correct?"

"Most certainly my lord." said Nyrah "Oakron, present the relics to our master."

"Yes Nyrah." said Oakron, standing forward and bending down on one knee, holding out the two relics and the corrupted seven Chaos Emeralds for Black Doom "We have retrieved our relics and stolen the last remaining Chaos Emeralds master. Using the Black Chaos Emerald, we've corrupted them and now we have eight Black Chaos Emeralds."

Black Doom felt like he wanted to explode with excitement and joy right now at the very sight of those relics and the corrupted Chaos Emeralds. But since he was a no-nonsense, level-headed kind of person, he did not show such emotions and instead just casually took the relics out of Oakron's hands and looked at them with glee. The Chaos Emeralds began to circle around his head and his sword began to glow a malevolent, radiant shade of purple. After all these years, these weapons of doom were finally back in his hands and he could use them for his plan to wipe out the Mobians and destroy them forever. Black Doom began to cackle like a demon as he held the relics.

"Yes! The weapons of the Black Arms are now in the hands of their rightful owners after fifty years of being in the hands of those vile Mobians!"

"I'm disgusted to think that all the Mobians did with our relics was bury them or stick them in a building of theirs and have it on display as if they were things to display or bury forever!" growled Oakron "How dare they mistreat our relics! I'm so glad we've got them back!"

"I'm on the same comet as you Oakron." said Nyrah "I'm much

delighted to have our relics back. I'm pleased they still work despite being out of use for fifty years."

"None of that matters anymore now my disciples." purred Black Doom, moving the Chaos Emeralds out into the centre of the throne room and brandishing Doom's Sword just above the circling emeralds. It was quite clear he was planning on doing something right now.

"Our relics are back in our possession now so we can commence with our plans." said Black Doom.

"Indeed we can." said Nyrah "So…how's Shadow coming along?"

"He's in stasis so far and I haven't gotten round to fixing him yet for I've had to deal with other matters." explained Black Doom "But we do not need him anymore. These will be all we need to ensure the Mobian's doom." he said, looking at his sword which seemed to be glowing even brighter as it was held near the Chaos Emeralds.

"Um…how master?" asked Oakron "How can your sword and the Black Chaos Emeralds doom Mobius?"

"You shall see." said Black Doom "For when my sword is fully re-powered by the Black Chaos Emeralds, I can begin a ritual that I have been planning since the day we lost Shadow. Mobius shall bear witness to the Ritual of Prosperity in a matter of moments…"

What he meant by that was a mystery to even Oakron and Nyrah but one could be certain that it was not going to be good at all. Who knew what the Ritual of Prosperity was possibly going to do when Black Doom unleashed it on the world…

Meanwhile, in a random area of the Black Comet, a Chaos Portal opened up a few feet above the ground and lit up the normally dark-lit atmosphere of the eerie, surreal surroundings of the alien space rock. Out of the portal jumped Sonic and all his friends one by one. After the last Mobian had jumped through the portal, the portal closed up behind them and vanished into thin air, leaving no trace of

its existence. The darkness returned to the area after the portal had vanished. Sonic and friends looked around and they observed their surroundings. The strange of the Black Comet was stunning to them and some didn't know what to make of it. It was that strange a place for them.

"Um…are we…in the right place?" said Blaze, screwing her face up at some of the tentacles on the walls of the comet.

"Urgh! This place is disgusting!" gagged Mandy as she saw another tentacle waving eerily at them "Are you sure this is where the Black Arms live?!"

"I wouldn't be too surprised luv." muttered Geoffrey "This place looks just about right for the blokes. They're equally as ugly and grotesque as this place."

"Sonic, are you sure we've been warped to the Black Comet?" asked Tails, feeling a little nervous by the grim, dark atmosphere of the room they were in "This doesn't look like we're in a comet, it looks more like an alien entity to me."

"I had the Black Comet on my mind when I performed that Chaos Control so we must be on the Black Comet." replied Sonic "Must say, it's freakier then I imagined..."

"When it comes to aliens, you never know what to expect." murmured Knuckles, punching a rock over just for the fun of punching something.

"I agree." said Shade "Even the Nocturnus Clan wasn't as strange and mysterious as this place."

"I think this place is awesome!" cried Charmy, buzzing around excitedly "It's like being in a level from a really cool video game! I wonder if there's a boss we have to fight in this place?"

"There likely will be and that "Boss" will be Black Doom himself." said Sonic "Now, let's see if we can find Shadow, Silver's team or Black Doom in this creepy place."

So the Mobians began searching around for those three different

things. They all kept their senses alert for even the tiniest hint of danger. In a place like this, you never know what to expect so the best thing to do was remain vigilant. Espio would particularly be good at this for vigilance was one of his strongest points. There didn't seem to be anyone around so there didn't seem to be anything to worry about. But you can't push your luck in a place like this, especially as it's unfamiliar territory and the home place of some evil aliens so Sonic and team didn't dare lower their senses. They kept their ears alert, their eyes open and their noses twitching. It'd be hard for anything to get by them now. Blaze looked around the surreal area they were in and just managed to avoid having a tentacle stroke across her back. Seeing how slimy it was made the pyrokinetic future guardian cringe and she was quick to move away. It disgusted her to think that this is where Silver and his team were to hopefully try and rescue Sally and Shadow but knowing Silver, he was OK and the others with him were likely OK under his watch. Sonic observed his surroundings and kept note of what he was looking at in his brain. He even pinpointed possible places any Black Arms could be hiding in so he'd be prepared for a possible ambush. Sonic began creeping backwards on tiptoe as he continued to search the area. Then suddenly, he bumped into something and he quickly spun around on his heel and raised his fists. The thing he'd bumped into had wheeled around and raised its fists too. To Sonic's relief though, it was none other than Silver the Hedgehog so he lowered his fists. Silver realized he was face-to-face with Sonic and he lowered his fists.

"Silver, I wasn't expecting to find you so quickly." said Sonic brightly.

"Sonic?" blurted Silver "What in the world are you doing here?! And with all the others too!"

"Sonic? Sonic's here?" piped Amy Rose who was further down the room.

She ran up to Silver and Sonic with Cream, Sally, Nicole and Rouge following her. The girls were well-pleased to see Sonic and the others here on the Black Comet with them now. Blaze ran to Silver and the two greeted each other with a friendly hug. Once the girls had reached the boys, Sally stared at Sonic in surprise and was the first to address the obvious elephant-in-the-room of this whole

situation.

"Sonic, what are you doing here and...how did you get better so quickly?!" gasped Sally.

"Hey Sal, good to see Silver and his team have rescued you." said Sonic "Anyway, Tails' team was in trouble in Rail Canyon and I had to help them out so I went off to Angel Island and used the Master Emerald to heal myself with a Chaos Regeneration so the hedgehog is back in business!"

"I see." said Sally "Very clever of you to think of such a tactic Sonic, well done. It's not often you think before acting."

"Ah I'm working on it Sal." said Sonic snarkily.

Amy was a little furious to hear that Sonic had gone against her wishes and used a Chaos Regeneration on himself. She hadn't wanted Sonic to perform one on himself in fear of having a repeat of the whole Chaos Clusters incident last year. Amy strode up to Sonic but instead of flipping and going mad, she took a deep breath and spoke to Sonic.

"I'm not pleased you ignored my concerns Sonic…but I understand why you had to do it." said Amy softly "Tails and his friends needed help according to you so you had to heal yourself in order to help them. So don't worry Sonic, I'm not mad at you for going against my wishes."

"Don't sweat it Amy." said Sonic, giving her a friendly hug "After all, you were only looking out for me that's all. But just remember that I know the Chaos Emeralds better then you do so I know for certain that there's no side effects from using a Chaos Regeneration with an ordinary Chaos Emerald."

"OK." said Amy "Thanks for being cool with me."

"Anytime." said Sonic "Now then, how has your team been doing Silver?"

"Poorly." muttered Silver "We were captured shortly after we arrived and we were thrown in a dungeon along with the Queen here. We

were going to be executed by Black Doom's pet monster Black Bull but we killed it and then Black Doom beat us all up himself."

"He looks like he gave you a good beating." said Tails grimly "You all look badly beaten." he added, taking notes of their bruises and battle marks.

"Black Doom's a serious guy." muttered Rouge, straightening her hair "He teleports every five seconds, throws meteors, slashes with fire blades and has some kind of attack called "Swift Strike". Even silver boy's psychic powers can't stop him for he just teleports out of his psychic grasp."

"Oh mah stars! Black Doom sounds worse then ah thought he was!" shrieked Bunnie.

"I'm beginning to wish we'd stayed at Royal HQ." murmured Vector grimly.

"So if that was the case, how did you escape the dungeon?" asked Ruben.

"When Black Doom left, I used my psychic powers to bend the bars to the dungeon and we sneaked out through them." explained Silver "And since then, we've been looking for Shadow and the throne room since Black Doom's gone there."

"Aha." said Sonic "And we've come here to see how you're doing as well as announce that…Black Doom's cronies retrieved their relics and used the Black Chaos Emerald to corrupt the Chaos Emeralds and turn them dark so we've come here to get them back."

"We already gathered Black Doom got his relics back when his minions announced they'd "succeeded in their mission"." said Sally "But we didn't know they'd corrupted the Chaos Emeralds and stolen them!" she cried in horror.

"Oh no! They're going to use the emeralds and the Black Chaos Emerald together to do something terrible, I know they are!" exclaimed Nicole "We've gotta get them back and fast!"

"I agree but first, let's find Shadow and rescue him." said Sonic "He'll

be able to help us track them down."

"Hey guys, do you think this looks like a doorway to another room?" asked Ruben who had just toddled off to look at a funny shaped rock in a wall not far away from the Mobians.

The Mobians all looked at Ruben and they saw the rock he was looking at. The rock looked like it could slide to the side like some kind of door. Ruben had every right to be suspicious about it. Maybe that rock WAS a door and it led to some kind of room. A room that hopefully Shadow was kept in right now. The Mobians all ran over to the rock and they observed it, wondering if it really was a door.

"What's made you look at this Ruben?" asked Mandy.

"I dunno, it just looks funny to me." said Ruben, rubbing the back of his head casually "It doesn't look like a real rock and it looks like it can move. So I have this sneaky feeling that this "rock" is really a door. What do you think?"

"It certainly looks like it can open." said Tails "Let's see if it can open."

Tails put his hands on the rock and tried pushing the rock aside. But the rock was too heavy for him to move so he couldn't push it. Knuckles and Bunnie stood forward and they took over from pushing the rock. They placed their hands upon the rock and they pushed on it. They just happened to be pushing from the right side and surely enough with their combined strength, they began to push the rock aside. Ruben's face lit up. He was right! It WAS a door! But what was behind it? Hopefully Shadow the Hedgehog but that was just wishful thinking pretty much. Bunnie and Knuckles finished bushing the rock aside and they peered into the room behind the rock. Everybody else peered in too. Behind the rock was the Black Arms science lab. It was a strange sight for anyone looking in it. The lab was rocky just like the rest of the comet was and there were stone tables with surreal looking equipment on display. Lots of bubbling liquid was in some stone carved pots, tubes and pans. Strange fumes rose from the equipment and filled the air. Tails screwed his face up in disgust. What an ugly science lab! He wouldn't be sitting foot in this atrocity! What a disgrace to science labs everywhere this

ugly room was! But there was something in the lab that would bring him into it whether he wanted to go in or not. And that something was a capsule and that capsule obviously contained the one person they were looking for. Rouge in particular worked out who was in it for the capsule was completely identical to the one she'd found Shadow lying in that fateful day last year.

"Guys, I think Shadow's in that capsule!" cried Rouge.

"He is." said Sally "This is the science lab and I should know, I was in here before Black Doom decided to feed me to the Black Bull."

"Well, we've managed to find Shadow!" cheered Sonic "Sweet! Now let's get him outta there and kick Black Doom's ghastly butt!"

"Wait Sonic." said Sally, holding him back "We don't know if Shadow's safe at all or not. I'm not sure if Black Doom's actually managed to alter him in anyway for he zapped me into unconsciousness and took me to the dungeon but we can't be too careful. Approach Shadow with caution and open the capsule carefully. If he displayed any hostile actions towards you, stop him from getting out of the capsule and close it quickly."

"Gotcha Sal." said Sonic "Knuckles, Bunnie, Silver, Blaze, you're really strong and powerful, you come in with me for incase Shadow tries to attack. We can restrain him and put him back in the capsule easily."

"OK." said Knuckles, Bunnie, Silver and Blaze.

So with that said, Sonic, Knuckles, Bunnie, Silver and Blaze all crept into the lab and up to the capsule where Shadow was in stasis and waiting to be released. They could see Shadow sleeping peacefully away in the capsule through the window in it. It looked pretty cosy for a capsule in there but Sonic couldn't imagine himself being content with being trapped in there like Shadow was. The capsule had a keypad to it just like the one Rouge had found him in. Sonic had no idea which ones would open the capsule so he just tapped every key he could at random. That somehow ended up opening the capsule and freeing Shadow from his forced slumber. The Mobians braced themselves for incase Shadow attacked them as it was likely

he's already been altered by Black Doom. But to their relief, Shadow just opened his eyes and sat up. He stretched as hard as he could and then looked at Sonic in surprise.

"S…Sonic?" he said quietly "How did…?"

"Long story Shadow boy." said Sonic "We've got more important things to worry about now. Out you get from this capsule." he added as he helped Shadow climb wobbly out of the capsule.

The fake Mobian was just getting his senses back so he was a little wobbly on his feet right now hence why Sonic was helping him climb out the capsule.

"Oogah…my head feels like it's doing loops all over." said Shadow groggily "Damn that Black Doom for knocking me out and putting me in that capsule! What was he planning to do with me?"

"He wanted to alter you and make you evil again." explained Sally "Believe me, he said so to me himself."

"He wanted to make me evil again?!" gasped Shadow "How dare he?! I'm quite happy the way I am and I will not let that demon take away my freedom! I refuse to help him destroy the very planet I've been very happy to call home! I'm not his weapon, I'm not his pet, I'm not his science experiment! He may claim I am but he's wrong to do so!"

He clenched his fists and stood up on his own without any support. He was so angry right now the Mobians were amazed he hadn't exploded yet. Shadow then suddenly began to form a speech so powerful and awe-inspiring you'd think he'd written and scripted it:

"I'm Shadow the Hedgehog, an experiment designed to mimic the Mobians for nefarious purposes and to destroy them simply because the Black Arms despise them." he announced "But I have seen the world through the eyes of a Mobian, my heart feels like it belongs here and I've grown quite accustomed to Mobius. I'm proud to live in this world and I will defend it from those Black Demons! Even if they have created me, I am rebelling against them and stopping them from destroying the one place I can call home! My old purpose is

dead, my new purpose is to be Mobius' defender! This is WHO I AM!"

The Mobians were well impressed with Shadow's testimony. His origins finally revealed and yet he's still on their side? Guess Shadow REALLY grew to like Mobius during his time on the planet! And how fortunate for them that this had been the turn out otherwise they would be dead right now wouldn't they? Sonic gave Shadow a well-earned thumbs up.

"That Shadow, is the coolest thing I've ever heard you say." said Sonic "I'm glad you're on our side. You've just proven you're not an experiment meant to be ordered around and forced to do what the master tells you. You are a REAL Mobian after all." he added with a wink.

Shadow smiled with pride.

"Thank you faker." said Shadow "That means a lot to me. And to think some time ago I was your enemy."

"Well that's behind us now." said Sonic "Right now, you're on our side and you're going to help us stop the Black Arms from bringing forth the end of the world."

"Yes I am." said Shadow "So does anyone know where Black Doom is so I can use his face for stress relief?!"

"Not really no." said Tails "But Black Doom has his relics and our Chaos Emeralds back so you can probably track him down by sensing the Chaos Emeralds' power."

Shadow was surprised to hear that Black Doom had the Chaos Emeralds but he was pleased to hear this at the same time since if the emeralds were here, that meant he could use them against Black Doom and REALLY make him suffer for daring to use him as a common tool and take away his much beloved freedom.

"I see." said Shadow "And I can feel the Chaos Energies right now. They feel…dark and corrupted for some reason."

"We'll explain on the way." said Sonic "Can you sense where they

are Shadow?"

"Yes." said Shadow "They're this way, follow me!"

With that said, Shadow skated out of the lab and the others ran after the speedy hedgehog as fast as they could. Sonic caught up with Shadow easily and the two hedgehogs led the pack down the corridor and through the Black Comet. Shadow the Hedgehog was free and he was ready to annihilate the Black Arms for good. But would they be in time to stop Black Doom's so-called "Ritual of Prosperity"? Or would Black Doom be activating it before they could stop him…?

This is it guys! The epic finale to the Black Arms saga is just around the corner and it's also my FIFTH milestone episode next time! Tune in for the epic finale which is also my 125th episode for Heroes of Mobius next time!

So ArenaLuminati, Kratos Pwns, Thomas Holmes II, doomxdesire94, blackstormnomad, christiansoldier5, banjobandicoot52, FatPizzaPie and RaliK360, what do you all think to this saga so far and how has this whole story been for you all these past couple of years?

Black Doom Rising

AM I INCREDIBLE OR WHAT?! Well...I made it people...125 episodes! And also FIVE milestones! And what better way to celebrate this occasion than with the finale to the Black Arms saga! Enjoy people for this is a milestone that you'll never forget!

Story 125: *Black Doom Rising*

The throne room was filled with a bright, malevolent, dazzling glow from Doom's Sword and the eight Black Chaos Emeralds that Black Doom now had in his possession. Black Doom had been using the Chaos Emeralds to add more power to Doom's Sword and make it a more powerful relic then ever before. The sword itself was already powerful what with being able to create creatures and rise them up from any surface but powering it up with eight Chaos Emeralds, one artificially made dark and corrupted by the Black Arms themselves and seven normal Chaos Emeralds all full of Dark Chaos Energy thanks to the original Black Chaos Emeralds, was bound to give it some other kind of power and make it a VERY dangerous relic. Black Doom was making a start to his so-called "Ritual of Prosperity" which he claims will be the start of Mobius' destruction. None of his subjects really knew what he was talking about, nor did they question Black Doom about it for they didn't have sentient minds and thus, no real reason to think about this. Oakron and Nyrah were the exceptions since they were sentient and thus, were allowed to wonder what Black Doom was up to. But they didn't question Black Doom on this since they trusted the insidious, twin-horned leader knew what he was doing. Black Doom had never let the Black Arms down before so he wasn't going to let them down now. They had a feeling that Black Doom's supposed ritual was going to be something good. After a while, Doom's Sword finally finished feeding off of the Chaos Emeralds and was now a super-powered relic of amazing capabilities. The sword glowed an even darker shade of purple and now had a trim of crystals all around the

blade and hand guard. At was almost like it had become a fusion between a sword and a Chaos Emerald after that whole scene. Black Doom cackled at his new and improved sword and he swung it around gleefully. A huge wave of energy swept out from that sword-swipe and it struck a wall at the other side of the throne room. The wave hit the wall and the wall began to crack after that attack. Oakron and Nyrah were amazed at this and they began to wonder if Black Doom was losing it for he had just hit a wall with the newly powered up weapon.

"Are you losing your sanity my liege?!" shrieked Nyrah.

"You've just used the Chaos Emeralds to…do something to your sword and now you're trying to wreck the place with it!" exclaimed Oakron "What's gotten into you master?!"

"Clam down your anxious nerves you fools." snapped Black Doom "That was merely a test of my new weapon. My Ritual of Prosperity has begun by fusing my sword with the power of the Chaos Emeralds, therefore making it a Chaos Sabre. I remember reading Mobian legends that said if you fuse a powerful relic with the power of the Chaos Emerald, you can make it a Chaos Weapon be it a sword, a shield or any kind of weapon. And now I have my Chaos Sabre. It has the same powers as before only more powerful and it has other kinds of abilities thanks to the Chaos Power it has been fused with."

"You are a genius Black Doom." said Nyrah "If only I'd known about this then maybe I could have made thousands of those sabres for all of us."

"I sure as heck would love to have a Chaos Sabre." said Oakron in an envious manner.

"Weapons like these are best left to the most powerful of wielders." said Black Doom grimly "For they will be less likely to wield it disastrously. You would not want to lose control of a weapon like this." he pointed the Chaos Sabre out to the side, a faint aurora drifting up from the sword after the swing "Now, it is time for Phase 2 of my ritual."

He then suddenly pointed the Chaos Sabre up at the ceiling, the eight Chaos Emeralds drifting up after it and circling around the mighty sword like circling vultures homing in on the rotting carcass they had been lucky enough to find. The emeralds all gave off a dark, eerie glow along with the Chaos Sabre and Black Doom yelled at the top of his growly voice.

"Chaos… **CONTROL!** "

With that said, the whole Black Comet was engulfed with a giant black light that made everything dark and everyone on the comet feel like a huge shadow was looming over them…

Further away from the throne room, the running Mobians had all heard Black Doom bellowing "Chaos….CONTROL!" aloud and they began to run even faster towards the throne room. Shadow had been leading them a good distance through the comet and right now, they were getting nearer to the throne room. The moment Shadow the Hedgehog had heard Black Doom bellow the terrible words, his heart quickened and his mind went abuzz with worry. What was Black Doom up to? What was he using a Chaos Control for? He was about to find out though for the corridor was engulfed in a black shadow and everything went pitch black, forcing all the Mobians to stop in their path and wait for the light to come back.

"Hey, who turned out the lights?!" cried Sonic the Hedgehog.

"Is this a Chaos Control with Dark Chaos Energy?" wondered Knuckles the Echidna "Makes sense since Black Doom's corrupted the Chaos Emeralds."

"It's definitely a Chaos Control." muttered Shadow "I heard him yelling "Chaos Control" aloud! But what's he doing?"

"I think we're gonna find out in a minute!" exclaimed Tails "And I bet it's not good!"

And good it certainly was not. The Black Comet had been engulfed

in a big black shadow by the insidious Chaos Control Black Doom was performing and then it suddenly vanished into thin air. There was no trace of its presence left in space after its disappearance. But the Black Comet hadn't just simply vanished into thin air and that was it, it had been warped out of it's place and *brought down* to Mobius itself! The Chaos Control had warped the Black Comet down to Mobius! The comet stood sinisterly in the Northern Border of Megapolis and the moment it touched down, something strange began to happen. Huge, rocky tentacles grew out of the sides of the comet and dug their way down into the ground. It was like the Black Comet was fusing itself into the ground. The rocky tentacles were like roots spiralling out into the ground and digging their way into the earth like the roots of a plant. All this commotion was quick to catch the attention of Dr. Eggman, Sonic's number one archenemy, who was in his secret bunker and was modifying Devion the Devatron to ensure he is completely unbeatable next time he faces Sonic. He'd been in hiding since Devion's failed attempt to assassinate Sonic while he was bed bound and he had given Devion a Diamond Glass cover for his visor so it would be tough to blind him this time and he'd also equipped Devion with more powerful blasts for his blade gauntlets which he still had attached to his arms. The new blasters could bring down a five-storey building in ONE shot. And now Devion would get the chance to put his new weapons to the test since something was going on and it didn't sound very good. A huge rumbling sound shook the room and Devion deployed his arm blades, ready to deal with who was making the noise. Dr. Eggman covered his ears and he grumbled to himself.

"What the sand hill is going on out there?!" he bellowed "Katherine, establish visual contact now!"

Katherine, Eggman's silent female minion, nodded ominously and she logged into the computer monitors that Dr. Eggman used to spy on his enemies. The computers switched into life and Katherine peered at them closely with her cactus shaped visor. Dr. Eggman looked over her shoulder and his jaw dropped at what he was looking at. The screen was showing him the Black Comet standing proudly in the middle of the plains above his head and it's root-like rocky tentacles spiralling down into the ground and fusing itself with the earth. The Black Comet looked even larger now it was down on

the ground. It was bigger then the Empire State Building itself. Dr. Eggman thought he was going to collapse over in shock at the mere sight of this comet. What on Mobius was it and what was it doing? Whatever it was up to, it wasn't good and Eggman had to get rid of it before it could interfere with his conquest. Why couldn't he just conquer Mobius just like that? Why must he keep having some kind of opposition?!

"What is that freak of nature?!" screamed Dr. Eggman in surprise "It looks like some giant, monster asteroid! It's up to no good and I can tell from the way it's fusing itself with the earth with those root things from its sides! It must be destroyed immediately! Devion, Katherine! Come with me to the Egg-Fleet! We're going to destroy that giant space rock or whatever it is!"

"Yes master." said Devion loyally (yes, Eggman's made the poor guy I right suck-up hasn't he?).

With that said, Dr. Eggman, Devion and Katherine all ran off to deal with the Black Comet. The Egg Fleet combined with Devion's new weaponry was sure to bring down the Black Comet and stop it dead in its tracks. Little did Eggman know was that there was more to this thing then met the eye and he was in for one heck of a battle as was Devion since he'd never seen or heard of the Black Arms before…

After the Black Comet had warped down to Mobius, the shadow that had been cast over the alien space rock disappeared and light returned to the rooms. The Mobians were now able to see again much to their delight but what they couldn't help but wonder is what the heck the Chaos Control had just done. They couldn't see outside the comet at all so goodness knows what had just happened right now.

"What was that, what just happened?" asked Amy Rose nervously.

"I have no idea…" said Sonic slowly "A Chaos Control happened and…I'm not sure what it's done. Has it moved us somewhere?"

"I wonder if they've moved the comet itself." said Shadow "And I

think I can guess where they've moved it…" he added with a furious growl.

"Look! We're back down on Mobius! Look!" shrieked Tails who had just found a huge crevasse in the wall that was so deep it actually reached the other side and you could see outside through it like a window (the crevasse is covered by a force field to keep the air in before you wonder why it hasn't sucked all the air out of the comet and suffocated everybody!).

The Mobians looked through the crevasse and they were gobsmacked at what they were seeing. The Black Comet was no longer in space, it was down on Mobius! The Chaos Control must have warped the Black Comet down to Mobius and now it was here, the Black Arms could all invade at once and since the comet was down on Mobius, it wouldn't be leaving anytime soon and the Black Arms could stay as long as they liked! This was NOT a good turn of events at all! Mobius' end looked like it was certainly near now. Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, future dwellers hoping to save their world, were beginning to worry too. Was this the cause of Mobius' downfall? Did the Black Arms destroy Mobius and not the Martians like they were thinking initially? No, it couldn't be! Why would the Martians have invaded Mobius if the Black Arms had destroyed it? Maybe the Black Arms wreck most of Mobius but get defeated at the last moment and the Martians arrive to finish the job? Who knew? But one thing for certain was they HAD to stop the Black Arms before they destroyed the world!

"Those Black Creatures just warped the comet down to the surface using Chaos Control!" gasped Sonic "Look! We're back on Mobius!"

"No…that's not possible!" gasped Rouge the Bat "How…did they manage to…do this?"

"Chaos Power is beyond what anyone can comprehend Rouge." muttered Shade the Echidna "Chaos Control can perform acts beyond what anyone can predict. I never thought it'd be able to warp an entire comet down to the surface of the planet."

"I wouldn't be surprised if we could warp Angel Island from place to place if Chaos Control can do this!" cried Knuckles "We've gotta

stop those Black Arms before they begin their invasion force!"

"I think we're too late." murmured Tails "It's already beginning."

He pointed outside at the ground below. Sonic and the others looked in Tails' direction and they saw what he was seeing. The Black Arms soldiers were already beginning to pile out of the Black Comet and they were running out in every direction. There seemed to be at least a million of them and they were spreading out in every direction of where they were now and running off into the distance to attack the other regions of Mobius. The plan was in motion and the invasion was on! The Mobians would have to act fast before the Black Arms began to wreck everything! Wilson the Dog however looked a little scared.

"YIPE!" he shrieked "The Black Arms are invading! Oh my gosh, it's the end of the world for us! We're all dead! We're all so dead we may as well dig our graves, write our wills and carve our tombstones right here right now! Oh god, what are we gonna do?!"

"Wilson the Dog! Calm down this minute!" yelled his wife, Mandy Mouse, grabbing the dog by his arm and holding him down "Get a hold of yourself for a minute mister! We have survived Dr. Eggman and all his robotic instruments of death, we have survived Marik the Martian, we have survived Scourge the Hedgehog AND we've even survived the bloody Devatrons and they were invulnerable! We are NOT going to die at the hands of this black alien freaks that hate our guts simply because they're evil! Do you get me?!"

"Yes!" squeaked Wilson, obviously scared at Mandy's anger right now.

"Good." said Mandy, letting Wilson go "Now then, shall we find Black Doom and give him what for everyone?"

"You don't even need to ask Mandy." said Shadow coldly "Come on! I can sense the Chaos Emeralds down there at the end of this corridor! I bet Black Doom's right there!"

So with that said, Shadow skated off down the corridor with his hover-shoes with the others running after him. It didn't take them

long to reach the end of the corridor for it was only a good few feet away and they were there in a couple of minutes. At the end of the corridor was a huge door that looked like it was made of hardened slime and was purple in colour. Shadow guessed that these doors possibly led to the throne room since the doors resembled doors to a usual throne room in a castle. There was only one way to find that out though, let themselves in so the Mobians all barged through the door and ran into the room. There they saw Black Doom, cackling maniacally with Oakron and Nyrah joining in and all eight Chaos Emeralds circling around in the centre of the room. The three Black Arms stopped their cackling and they turned around to see who it was that had just burst into the throne room so abruptly. Black Doom's three eyes all widened in shock when he saw that Shadow the Hedgehog was there and with all the Royal Fighters, including the ones he'd imprisoned, behind him.

"What is this?!" growled Black Doom furiously "How did you escape your capsule Shadow?! And how did you and your female comrades escape my dungeon silver one?!" he added, pointing at Silver.

"Let's just say you shouldn't leave a psychic-powered being alone in a room that has bars." sneered Silver, his hands glowing teal and getting ready to throw a psychic wave at Black Doom.

"And we found Shadow the Hedgehog when looking for you and released him from his prison." put in Sally "You should have hidden your laboratory better Black Doom."

"I'd like a serious word with you Black Creep!" growled Shadow, his spines quivering in rage "First of all, why have you warped the Black Comet down to the surface using Chaos Control?!"

"Because it was the only way we could transport our home down to Mobius." explained Black Doom "The comet's velocity isn't powerful enough to pass through another planet's atmosphere. The Chaos Emeralds amplify the space-time control powers of Chaos Control. We need them to charge to full power. It's the perfect plan! And now the comet is down on Mobius, we do not need to worry about it passing by the planet and have to forcibly forfeit our matches and go back to the comet before it goes out of range. Also, I can unleash my full armies and a few other surprises at the same time…"

"Thanks for all that information Black Doom, I now have MORE reasons to break your bones!" growled Shadow "And second of all, how dare you try to alter my mind?! I'm quite happy the way I am and I will NOT allow you to take away my freedom! I don't care if you're my creator, I am NOT going to be your weapon of mass destruction! I am not a weapon, I am a living being, I am…a Mobian just like the others! And I will not allow you to take that away from me! You are going down Black Doom!"

Black Doom was livid with rage to hear all of this.

"I created you to be the perfect agent and weapon and yet you rebel against me?!" snarled Black Doom "I gave you life Shadow and this is how you repay me?! Makes stealing you from that worthless human being all for nothing now…"

Shadow thought his ears had fallen off. What did Black Doom just say?

"Wh…at?" asked Shadow "What…did you say?"

"I think he said…he stole you from a human being." said Blaze uncertainly "What do you mean Black Doom?"

"I may have revealed Shadow's origins to you but I lied about me being the sole creator of him to try and convince him that he's on my side and he's my creation." admitted Black Doom "The actual fact is I stole him. He was being created by a human being named Gerald Robotnik who is renowned for his interest in the space-time continuum. We had passed over the Earth…"

"Earth? Isn't that where Dr. Eggman comes from?" asked Sonic.

"If this "Eggman" is a human being then yes it is." snapped Black Doom impatiently "Anyway, we had passed over the Earth after our last encounter with Mobius and we found out about Gerald's little pet project. He had been to Mobius and was fascinated with the planet's life forms there. He wanted one for himself but could not bring himself to kidnap an innocent Mobian and have it be his little pet against its will since he is a pathetic waste of life. So he decided to create one himself and that creation would have been you Shadow.

He wanted to genetically create a Mobian and have it be his pet for life. I saw a great opportunity to destroy Mobius so I stole you before Gerald could begin moulding you and I began to mould you into my own image and I added some extra things to you like some of my blood and some Chaos Energy. I had taken a human experiment and made it the perfect weapon for any alien race. Unfortunately, that weapon has decided to point itself towards its creator and I will destroy it before it can pull its trigger!"

Shadow the Hedgehog couldn't believe his ears. No wonder he felt that the first origin story wasn't true! It literally WASN'T true! He wasn't Black Doom's creation after all! He had in fact been created by the same species Dr. Eggman was! And his purpose was to be his creator's pet it seemed. Well Shadow wasn't going to be content with that! Alien Weapon or Human's Pet, he simply refused to fulfil *either* of those purposes. He has a new purpose now and it's to live peacefully among the Mobians and protect the world from harm. So now Shadow had learnt all the answers he needed and yet the answers weren't worth finding in the end. It turned out that all Shadow really wanted was to be his own person. He remembered the cryptic words that Princess Matilda had once told him after he found out Dr. Eggman *hadn't* created him…

"You may have a lost purpose but that can be a good thing dark warrior. If you have no purpose then you can decide what your purpose can be and you have all the freedom you wish. If you want my advice I say, you choose who you want to be Shadow, you don't have to be what everyone else wants you to be, you be who you wish to be."

And it looked like Shadow was more then willing to abide by Matilda's suggestions then he imagined. While Shadow was coming to grips with himself, the other Mobians began commenting.

"Shadow was created by Dr. Eggman's species?" piped Tails.

"And he was meant to be his creator's little lap dog?" added Sonic "Some life that is!"

"If this "Gerald Robotnik" wanted a Mobian he should have just come here." said Sally grimly "We would have been content with a

human who's fascinated by us to live among us like an ordinary citizen."

"Well Shadow won't need to worry about his creator anymore." growled Black Doom "I slaughtered him after I stole Shadow for my own. Even if I hadn't, time would have caught up with him for he was already in his elderly years so your original, intended purpose is gone forever Shadow. You could have taken my purpose but you defy my so I will have to destroy you, a big mistake in the face of the Black Comet that will easily be replaced by the weapons I have now!"

He then pointed his Chaos Sword at the Mobians and he swung the deadly blade at the speed of a professional swordsmen. A huge wave of energy swept out from the sword and hurled towards the Mobians. The Mobians all scattered and dodged the huge wave of energy as it swept past them and ploughed into the wall. Knuckles and Shade stared at the sword in horror and they were having a hard time believing this was possible.

"It can't be…" gasped Shade hoarsely.

"Black Doom's…got a Chaos Sabre?!" cried Knuckles.

"What's a Chaos Sabre?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian curiously.

"A mystical sword fused with Chaos Energy." explained Knuckles "If you fuse Chaos Energy with ANY powerful relic, it'll make a Chaos Weapon. And Black Doom's fused Chaos Energy with his own sword to make it a Chaos Sabre!"

"So Black Doom pretty much has a Chaos Powered sword now?" asked Sonic "Well I'm not gonna let that stop me!"

Sonic then tried to get up but for some strange reason, he couldn't move. He was suddenly frozen to the spot as if somebody had just squirted him with liquid nitrogen only the ice cannot be seen. Sonic tried as hard as he could but he just couldn't move. His whole body was frozen in this pose he was in (He's in an about to stand up position).

"Sonic! What's wrong?" asked Tails.

Then suddenly, HIS body froze up and HE couldn't move! Whatever had frozen Sonic had just frozen Tails now! But it didn't stop there, soon everybody else was suddenly frozen to the spot all of the sudden. It was as if somebody had just paralyzed them all at once. They were all stuck in the positions they were currently in (some of them are kneeling down on the ground and some are just standing up) and completely unable to move. Black Doom cackled at the frozen Mobians.

"A special weapon…this gas." he explained "Once released is quickly absorbed into your blood stream. In a moment, total paralysis will hit your nervous system. The end is near now…"

"Special…gas?" asked Sonic "But…I don't see any gas here!"

"This gas is invisible to the naked eye." explained Black Doom "But even if you could see it, you wouldn't be able to stop it from paralyzing you all right now."

"And just think on what will happen once we release our special gas into the atmosphere of Mobius." crooned Nyrah "The whole world will be defenceless against us!"

"Indeed." purred Black Doom.

As the two were gloating, a horde of Death Leeches began crawling into the room. They began squealing with delight at the sight of potential food in the throne room and that food was the frozen Mobians. Black Doom heard their delighted squeals and he cackled evilly.

"Ah my dear offspring, eat and devour these savoury dishes!" cackled Black Doom "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha…"

The Death Leeches all began crawling towards the paralyzed Mobians, eager to start eating them alive. The Mobians tried to move but they were all tuck to the spot where they were frozen. They just couldn't move thanks to the paralyzing gas. They were doomed to be devoured by a horde of Black Arms offspring.

"Ugh, I managed to save us from those things back in the dungeon but it seems I won't be saving us from the Death Leeches now!" cried Silver as the Death Leeches got nearer.

If Sally and Nicole weren't paralyzed, their faces would be scrunched up in disgust. The Death Leeches were just surrounding the Mobians and homing in on their prey. But there was an unexpected saviour among them. And that saviour was Shadow the Hedgehog. Due to the fact he was created from Black Doom's blood, he was part Black Arms and thus, completely capable of resisting the gas. Shadow stood up and he kicked the Death Leech nearest to him away. The leech hurled across the room and it hit the wall. Frightened, it panicked and slithered away, not intending to stay here a minute longer. The other leeches homed in one Shadow but Shadow merely stomped on them all and threw them away. The frightened leeches all slithered quickly away after being beaten up by Shadow. The Mobians were saved for now. Black Doom looked like he was about to blow a vessel.

"What…?!" he gasped.

"I was created with some of your blood right?" asked Shadow "So I'm part Black Arms because of this and because I'm part Black Arms, I am immune to your pathetic gas Black Doom!"

"Grrr…I should have prepared for that." grumbled Black Doom "No matter. I shall kill you myself Shadow the Hedgehog. I killed your original and intended creator after all so I will now kill the created!"

He swiped the air with his mighty Chaos Sabre but Shadow warped out of the way, leaving the wave to completely miss and strike the wall instead. The wall cracked heavily and bits of rock crumbled down onto the floor. Shadow reappeared directly in front of Black Doom and he walloped him in the face with a powerful kick. Black Doom backed off and he clutched his face in pain. Shadow then spin-dashed Black Doom in the gut, earning a growling groan from Black Doom. Black Doom swung the Chaos Sabre at Shadow but Shadow ducked and then threw a Chaos Spear at one of his eyes. Black Doom groaned in pain and he swung the Chaos Sabre at Shadow again. He just managed to catch Shadow across the shoulder and Shadow yelped in pain. Shadow clutched his shoulder

and tried to fight the pain in his arm. He then ran over to Oakron and stole his sword by leaping over him and yanking it out of it's sheath which was on Oakron's back.

"Oy! That's mine!" growled Oakron, trying to grab Shadow.

But Shadow simply slashed Oakron across the gut with the sword. The slash left on Oakron was a very deep wound and he began bleeding from the wound. Black Arms blood was green so green blood trickled out of the wound on Oakron's stomach. Nyrah was livid to see Shadow do that to his partner so he whipped out his ring gun and blasted at Shadow. Shadow dodged the blasts and he spin-dashed Nyrah into a wall. Nyrah laid at the foot of the wall, groaning in pain and wondering which part of him to rub better. Shadow then turned his attention back to Black Doom but Black Doom had decided to catch him off guard with an early attack. He swiped the air with the Chaos Sabre and Shadow was stricken by the massive energy wave that swept from it. Shadow was slammed against the wall and the wall began to crack even more from the sheer power of that wave. Black Doom swiped again but Shadow warped out of the wave's way and he reappeared behind Black Doom. He tried to stab Black Doom with Oakron's sword but Black Doom spun around and defended himself with the Chaos Sabre. The two then began to clash swords together, the blades making a mighty clash sound that rung around the room. Shadow and Black Doom clashed swords again and again, sparks flying off of them as the blades hit each other and then they crossed swords at face level. They both pushed on each other's swords and tried to knock one another down.

"You really should have joined me Shadow." growled Black Doom "You would have been quite welcome among us and you could be helping us to destroy this miserable excuse for a planet."

He then suddenly lashed out and grabbed Shadow by the neck. He hoisted the hedgehog up to his height and began throttling him as hard as he could. Shadow grunted in Black Doom's grasp and he tried to get free.

"Do you really think you'll be accepted among the Mobians?" sneered Black Doom "Especially as you were meant to destroy them? You're not even a real Mobian you do realize, you're just a

creation of a human being stolen by me and remoulded into my image and meant to imitate a Mobian. You are a pseudo-Mobian and they'll never accept a faker among their kind."

"Yes…they will!" grunted Shadow "Especially…since nobody…other then…Sonic and friends…knows who I really am!"

He then tried to slice Black Doom's arm off with his sword but Black Doom quickly teleported out of the way before Shadow could render him with one arm. Shadow grumbled furiously and he kept his sword ready for when Black Doom reappears to attack him. Black Doom reappeared behind Shadow and then tried to slice him in two but Shadow blocked the blow with his sword. Shadow then put the tip of the sword into the ground, hoisted himself up like he was pole vaulting with it and then kick-slammed Black Doom in the face. Shadow then proceeded to throw some Chaos Spears at Black Doom. The spears all hit Black Doom in several places all over his body. Black Doom groaned in pain and then he swiped the Chaos Sabre once again. A giant wave swept towards Shadow but Shadow warped out of the way before it could hit him. The wave struck another wall and cracked that as well. If Black Doom wasn't careful, he'd end up wrecking his own throne room but in all likelihood, he probably didn't care about that as all he wanted now was to kill Shadow. Shadow reappeared directly in front of Black Doom and he spin-dashed him in the face. Black Doom retaliated by throwing a flaming meteor at him. The meteor sent Shadow hurling into the wall with a heavy crash. Shadow picked himself up and he charged back towards Black Doom. Black Doom simply teleported out of the way and left Shadow to land down onto the floor. Black Doom reappeared behind Shadow and then struck Shadow with an energy wave from the Chaos Sabre. The wave slammed Shadow against the wall and made that wall begin to crack too. Shadow picked himself up and he charged towards Black Doom again, crying out a fearsome battle cry as he did so. Black Doom cried out too and the two ended up clashing blades with each other again. Shadow and Black Doom clashes swords with each other several times until Shadow decided to throw a Chaos Spear directly at Black Doom's third and centre eye. Black Doom growled ever so loudly in pain as the Chaos Spear struck his eye and he clutched it in pain. Shadow jumped at Black Doom and tried to cleave him in two but Black

Doom warped away before Shadow's sword could even touch him. Shadow growled in annoyance. He was getting pretty fed up of Black Doom teleporting constantly now. Black Doom reappeared and he used his most powerful attack on Shadow.

"On guard…SWIFT STRIKE!" he bellowed.

The Swift Strike swept across the floor and struck Shadow. Shadow was thrown against a wall by the Swift Strike but even that didn't keep him down. Shadow spin-dashed towards Black Doom but Black Doom swung the Chaos Sabre and knocked him down with an energy wave. Shadow picked himself up and he and Black Doom clashed swords again. But then something terrible happened. The two raised their swords high above their heads and they swung them down towards each other…and Black Doom's Chaos Sabre smashed Shadow's sword to pieces! Shadow gasped in horror at his destroyed sword, now completely useless to him. Black Doom cackled and he slammed Shadow against the wall with a wave from the Chaos Sabre. Shadow hit the wall and he lay against it, defeated and beaten. Black Doom levitated towards Shadow and he pointed the Chaos Sabre at him.

"It looks like I emerge victorious Shadow." sneered Black Doom "Now, allow me to bury the biggest mistake I have ever made in my life!"

He then raised the Chaos Sabre high above his head and prepared to kill Shadow with it. Sonic and his frozen friends could only watch helplessly as Shadow was about to have his life claimed by Black Doom. But before Black Doom could deliver the killing blow, a huge explosion erupted outside the comet and shook the room. Black Doom looked up at the ceiling in wonder.

"What was that?" he growled "Nyrah, establish visual contact!"

Nyrah obeyed and he got up some screens that the Black Comet had to show anybody what was going on outside of it. Black Doom peered at the screens and he was surprised at what he saw. The Black Comet was being attacked by the Egg Fleet. All of Eggman's remaining ships had taken flight and were now shooting at the Black Comet with their laser cannons. All the Black Arms outside and

heading off to cause havoc had stopped and returned to the comet so they could fight the Egg Fleet back but they were under attack from Eggman robots, Katherine and Devion and, of course, Eggman was winning so far. Devion simply breezed through the Black Arms as if they were nothing thanks to his invulnerable armour and his powerful new weapons Dr. Eggman had given him. Devion's powerful blasters that were contained with his blade gauntlets killed about three Black Arms soldiers at once they were that powerful. Katherine's force-field kept the Black Arms off of herself and she fought them off with her usual attacks and weapons. The Egg Fleet itself also joined in every now and then but its primary target was the Black Comet itself so most of its fire was directed at the Black Comet. Black Doom was livid to see somebody daring to attack him like this whereas Sonic and friends couldn't believe their eyes.

"No way! Eggman's helping us?!" cried Sonic.

"I don't think he's helping us, I think he's just attacking the comet because he doesn't want the Black Arms to deny him his opportunity at world takeover." guessed Tails.

"Well whatever his reason is, let's be glad he's on our side for once." said Knuckles "He's destroying the comet and stopping the Black Arms!"

"But…we're onboard and…he'll kill us all if he destroys the comet." noted Sally "We have to get outta here before we go down with the comet!"

"But we can't, we're still paralyzed by the gas!" shrieked Nicole "We're stuck here and we're all going to die along with the Black Arms once Eggman destroys this comet!"

"No you're not." said Black Doom coldly "I am going to stop that attacking fleet before it can destroy my comet! And I know exactly how to deal with a measly threat like this…"

Black Doom then teleported away and warped outside to face the Egg Fleet along with his minions outside. Oakron and Nyrah ran out of the throne room to join their master in the battle, leaving the Mobians to do nothing but remain where they are thanks to the gas.

Shadow picked himself up and ran over to the Mobians.

"The doctor's attack maybe able to bring the Black Arms down for a bit but I have a nasty feeling Black Doom has some trick up his sleeve that'll bend the battle in his favour." said Shadow "We have to get outta here and help the doctor win this one, as reluctant as I am to help the doctor with *anything* nowadays."

"But how can we help? We're still paralyzed by the gas." noted Sonic, trying to move "And Black Doom seems to be too powerful. What can…"

Then suddenly, the room shook violently after the Egg Fleet fired again and the ceiling started caving in. Huge chunks of rubble from the ceiling rained down onto the floor and some particularly large chunks headed towards the Mobians. If the Mobians didn't move and fast, they'd be crushed by the rubble. But before the Mobians could get buried by the ceiling that caved in on them, Silver suddenly stood up and he used his psychokinesis to stop the falling rubble! Everybody stared at Silver in surprise as the psychic hedgehog threw all the rubble away from them.

"Silver, how did you do that?" piped Sonic.

"I…I don't know…" said Silver, wriggling his fingers and then his toes "Somehow…I'm able to move again."

"You're not the only one Silver." said Blaze, she got up from her position and started moving around as normal as if nothing had happened to her earlier "I can move too."

Then suddenly, everybody got up and started moving again. They all wriggled their fingers as if it was the first time they'd ever moved them in their lives. Then they wriggled their toes, flexed their arms and legs and even wagged their tails (except Cosmo as she's not a Mobian).

"He-hey! We can all move again!" cried Sonic happily "That stupid never-freezing gas must have worn off!"

"I guess the gas was only temporary." murmured Tails "Lucky for us.

Now we can all get outta here before Eggman brings the house down on us."

"Before we leave," Shade said quickly "We have to get back the Chaos Emeralds and as luck would have it, Black Doom was stupid enough to leave them all behind, including his Black Chaos Emerald."

The Mobians looked at where Shade was pointing and surely enough, they spotted the eight Chaos Emeralds just lying about on the floor. Black Doom had simply left them there after the Ritual of Prosperity and forgotten about them since then. This was lucky for the Mobians since they could use them to destroy the Black Arms once and for all.

"The freak left the Chaos Emeralds behind?" mused Knuckles "How lucky for us. But the seven Chaos Emeralds are corrupted with Dark Chaos Energy as a result of the Black Chaos Emerald. I have no idea what would happen if we used a Dark Chaos Powered Emerald to go super with but I bet the result isn't going to be pleasant."

"So what do we do Knuckles?" asked Cosmo "Can we cleanse the emeralds of their corruption?"

"We sure can." said Knuckles "We'll just simply take the Chaos Emeralds over to AngelIsland and use the Master Emerald to cleanse them of the dark Chaos Energy. Maybe we could even cleanse the Black Chaos Emerald and have it be a normal Chaos Emerald again."

"But we're miles from AngelIsland and I don't recommend using a Chaos Control with a dark powered emerald to get there quickly, it might have a nasty side effect." said Shade cautiously.

"We don't need to." said Silver "I've just found where Black Doom's kept my stolen warp ring."

Silver had been looking around for his warp ring all the time they'd been talking and he found it lying discarded on a nearby rocky shelf on the wall (yes, Black Doom has shelves, what of it?). Black Doom had simply plonked it there after stealing it from Silver earlier. His

hands glowed teal and he used his psychic powers to bring the warp ring over to him.

"Our luck's just getting better by the second." said Knuckles "Silver, warp us over to AngelIsland so we can cleanse these Chaos Emeralds."

Silver obeyed and he flicked the warp ring up into the air. The ring expanded to twice its size and opened up a portal from the Black Comet to AngelIsland just as the comet was stricken by the Egg Fleet again. Rocks crumbled down from the ceiling above and onto the ground. Now the warp ring had been opened up, Knuckles and Shade scooped up the emeralds and the Mobians charged through it quickly and over to AngelIsland. The Mobians all leaped out through the warp ring and onto the familiar island of AngelIsland. Knuckles felt good being back on the island again after being on a hideous alien comet for so long and he and Shade ran up to the emerald shrine. They placed the eight Chaos Emeralds on the Master Emerald and the moment they were placed on top of the huge gem, the Chaos Emeralds all floated up and circled around the Master Emerald with green energy zapping them and feeding positive energy to the corrupted gems. Knuckles and Shade both began the chant for the Master Emerald to do its job.

"The servers are the seventh Chaos! Chaos is power enriched by the heart! The server exists to unify the Chaos! Master Emerald, cleanse these corrupted gems of their dark power and feed them the real, true power of Chaos!"

The Master Emerald seemed to willingly oblige to this order for it began feeding more energy to the Chaos Emeralds and all of them, including the black one, began to turn back to their natural colour. The Black Chaos Emerald changed from black to white. It had originally been a white Chaos Emerald before it had been experimented on by the Black Arms and changed into their evil gem of power. All eight Chaos Emeralds were soon cleansed of their corruption and turned back into powerful gems of gleaming light and Chaos Energy. The emeralds all levitated down towards Knuckles and Shade and they held them in their hands.

"That's much better." said Knuckles "And we have an extra emerald

now. I didn't know you could get white Chaos Emeralds though…"

"According to Ix, Chaos Emeralds had more colours then just the seven that exist currently." explained Shade " It's just nowadays, those colour emeralds such as white, black, orange and others are lost forever though, especially after the destruction of the Chaos Clusters during the whole battle with Chaos."

"I see." said Knuckles "Well then, Sonic, it's time for your super form to come out and play again."

"No it isn't." said Shadow, stepping forward and holding his hands out "I'll destroy Black Doom and his cronies."

"You will?" asked Sonic and Knuckles in unison.

"Yes." said Shadow "I was intended to be a pet but then I was stolen and made into a weapon and now I live to be a saviour. The Black Arms created me so I will destroy them and I will destroy them by myself."

"No Shadow, you can't fight them by yourself!" cried Rouge affectionately "What if the Black Arms are too tough for your super form? Heck, Black Doom has that Chaos Powered Sword, he could probably go super with it! Please don't go on your own!"

"I have to Rouge." said Shadow "Stopping the ones who give me life will be my best ever chance at redemption for what I did under Eggman's pretences. I was sent here by the Black Arms and I'll be the one to get rid of them."

"Well Shadow, I wish you good luck." said Sonic with a wink and a thumbs up "You give those alien freaks a beating for me!"

"I'll do more then that for you faker." said Shadow with a smirk, taking the Chaos Emeralds from Knuckles' hands.

"Good luck Shadow." said Tails supportively "I believe in you, you can do it."

"You want to defend Mobius, then get out there and defend Mobius for us shadow dude!" cried Mandy supportively.

"We're counting on you." said Wilson "And we know you'll win this fight."

"You've honoured us before by aiding in our victories, now honour us more by stopping the Black Arms!" cheered Ruben.

"Please Shadow, for our sake, for the sake of indigenous species everywhere…stop those vile creatures." said Sally.

"Your support is much appreciated." said Shadow happily "And don't worry your majesty, I will not return to this island until the Black Comet is nothing but pebbles. Well, it's time for me to go super. Look out Black Doom, I'm coming for you!"

Shadow tensed himself up and willed for his super form. The eight Chaos Emeralds all levitated out of Shadow's hands and they began to circle around him slowly at first and then faster and faster as they picked up speed. The eight Chaos Emeralds circled around faster and faster and faster until they were nothing more than a rainbow blur circling Shadow. Shadow's quills all pointed upwards and his fur turned the familiar lemon-yellow colour he always turned when he went super. Super Shadow was here once again and he was ready to bust up the Black Arms good and badly. Now Super Shadow's transformation was complete, the first thing he did was warp himself back over to the Northern Border of Megapolis where the Black Comet was stationed. The other Mobians could only standby and wait for Shadow's hopefully inevitable return from the battle. But they didn't have to wait for Silver just simply warped them all back over to the Northern Border of Megapolis with his warp ring so they could see the battle for themselves and see if Shadow was winning at all. The Mobians all stepped back through the warp ring and they found themselves at a considerably safe distance from the battle and looking at the Black Comet being bombarded by Egg Fleet ships' firepower and the Black Arm soldiers battling Devion, Katherine and Eggman robots. The battle was swinging in Dr. Eggman's favour easily thanks to the Egg Fleet, Katherine's defences and Devion's firepower. The Mobians were all amazed at this battle but they were strangely happy to be seeing Dr. Eggman winning.

"Well whadda ya know? The good doctor's winning!" gasped Sonic

"I never thought I'd be happy to see him winning though!"

"It's all thanks to Katherine's impenetrable force-field and Devion being on his side." noted Tails "Devion in particular appears to be helping out brilliantly here. He's blasting them all to bits as if they're nothing!"

He watched as Devion effortlessly vaporized a dozen Black Arms soldiers with a couple of powerful blasts from his arm gauntlets.

"We'd read about the Devatrons and this "Devion" person." muttered Blaze "But we didn't see a page detailing his turn to Eggman's side. This could prove problematic for you all…"

"Ah don't worry, we'll handle Devion." said Sonic "He hasn't got his invulnerable army with him anymore so he'll be easier to defeat this time. Right now, I'm quite happy to watch Devion blast those Black Creatures to bits."

"I bet not even their weaponry is a match for Devion." said Cream.

She was too right on that. None of the Black Arms' weapons had any kind of effect on Devion's invulnerable armour. Not even the ring guns. And thanks to the Diamond Glass sheet placed over Devion's visor by Eggman, he couldn't get blinded by them so he was even harder to defeat. And Katherine's barrier was surely enough, keeping the Black Arm's attacks off of herself and rendering herself incapable of being destroyed by them. But all of that was about to take a turn in the Black Arm's favour for Black Doom was now here to cause trouble and he did something that surprised the Mobians. He began fusing himself with the roots of the Black Comet and started transforming. He started transforming into a hideous behemoth that was unlike anything anybody had ever seen before in their lives. The resulting creature was a huge, towering monster with a very surreal appearance. The monster had two heads on either side of its torso in the image of a gargoyle. One head had Black Doom's trademark twin horizontal horns and the other had a single vertical horn. The lower part of its body was rooted to a large spiked boulder. It had very large wings and two arms that were double-jointed at the shoulder so the creature could use it's arms in either direction. On both heads, the creature had a singular yellow eye with

a reptilian like pupil in it and they both had horizontal jaws like the Black Bull did but without a lower jaw to go with it. Its torso also had strange spikes pointing down and it had the typical colours of the Black Arms race. This behemoth was known as Devil Doom and it was Black Doom's super form which he gained from fusing himself with the Black Comet's roots or some other kind of method. Black Doom had very rarely ever used this form and whenever he did use it, it resulted in terrible ruination everywhere for any planet who encountered it. To make things worse though, Doom's Chaos Sabre had formed with the creature during the transformation and the blade of the sword was now sticking up from the creature's back somewhere between the wings. That meant Devil Doom could still use the power of the Chaos Sabre and swing things in his favour! Devil Doom roared a thunderous roar that made Devion and Katherine stop what they were doing and stare at it in wonder. Dr. Eggman saw Devil Doom from the cockpit of the ship he was in and he almost fell out of his chair.

"What the blazes is that monstrosity?!" shrieked Dr. Eggman "That's the most surreal thing I've ever seen in my life! No matter, I'll destroy it easily! Egg Fleet, fire all cannons on that demon thing!"

The entire Egg Fleet obeyed and they all aimed their cannons at Devil Doom. But before they could even fire one single laser cannon, Devil Doom activated the Chaos Sabre's power and performed a Chaos Control on the Egg Fleet. The Egg Fleet was now completely frozen in time by the Chaos Control, giving Devil Doom the perfect opportunity to annihilate the entire fleet. Devil Doom used one of his abilities which was the ability to levitate the environment around him. He managed to telepathically rise up giant chunks of earth from the very ground beneath him and he simply threw them at the Egg Fleet ships, destroying them instantly. The Chaos Control wore off and Dr. Eggman could see that Devil Doom was destroying his fleet. The fleet began firing lasers at Devil Doom to stop him destroying anymore of the fleet but Devil Doom shielded himself with his wings and blocked the attacks. He then used the Chaos Sabre's original ability, raise creatures from the ground, to rise up a bunch of rock creatures from the plain environment of the Northern Border. Five giant rocky golems all formed from the Chaos Sabre's power and they joined in with destroying the Egg Fleet.

They threw their rocky weapons at the ships and destroyed them in a matter of seconds. The remaining Egg Fleet ships did all they could to try and destroy the Rock Creatures but their tough hides protected them from the attacks. Devil Doom then used the Chaos Sabre to fire some Chaos Spears at the Egg Fleet and destroy all but one of the ships left. Only Dr. Eggman's vessel remained and he decided to make a quick run for it before he could go down with his fleet. Eggman activated an escape pod and he fled his doomed vessel just as Devil Doom fired a Chaos Spear at it and destroyed it. Eggman's entire Egg Fleet was now completely obliterated. It had survived losing its flagship twice but it didn't survive this battle. The Black Arms were pleased to see that Devil Doom was helping them win this match whereas Katherine and Devion looked on in horror. Devion then immediately began firing at Devil Doom. Devil Doom is generally hard to hurt but Devion's powerful cannons managed to make the beast roar in pain. Devil Doom just opened his mouth and began breathing fire at Devion. But, being invulnerable, Devion took the fire as if it was nothing.

"It's going to take more than a pyrokinetic onslaught to bring me down." scoffed Devion.

He then leaped out of the way of the fire breath and shot Devil Doom in the eye on the twin-horned head, the one that was currently facing forward. Devion Doom cried in pain and then rotated around so his other head was facing forward. Devil Doom then fired some Chaos Spears at Devion from the Chaos Sabre in his back but Katherine jumped in front and blocked it with her force-field barrier. Devion leaped over Katherine and then shot Devil Doom in the eye again. Devil Doom cried out in pain and turned back around so his twin-horned head was facing forward. He then ordered the Rock Creatures to attack Devion and Katherine. The five Rock Creatures all bore down on Devion and reached out to grab the lone living Devatron but Devion began blasting them with his gauntlets. The shots didn't have much effect but they made the creatures back off. Devion then drew out his arm blades and tried to slice chunks of rock off one of the creature's legs but his blades had no effect on the creature's tough hide. So he sheathed his blades and began shooting as rapidly as he can at the Rock Creatures.

"These creatures a truly going to be a good test of my abilities." he said to himself "But in the name of my master, I will defeat them."

But Devion wouldn't have to defeat the Rock Creatures himself for Super Shadow had finally arrived on the scene and he ploughed straight through the first Rock Creature as if he was nothing but a sheet of paper. The Rock Creature crumbled down onto the ground in a pile of boulders and stones. Devion was surprised to see this but he was pleased at the same time to see Super Shadow was here to help them.

"I remember the super Mobians." he mused "Sonic and Shadow turned super and took down my Deva Dragon. Well these alien invaders have no chance of survival if a super-powered Mobian is here to stop them…"

Even Dr. Eggman was strangely pleased to see Super Shadow here and ready to take down Devil Doom.

"So Shadow's here to save the day, how marvellous." crooned Dr. Eggman "But why isn't Sonic saving the day with him?"

No matter what the reason for Sonic's absence was, Eggman was grateful to see at least Shadow on the scene to stop Devil Doom. Super Shadow destroyed the other four Rock Creatures in seconds, leaving nothing but a pile of boulders, and then he flew up towards Devil Doom. Devil Doom glared at Super Shadow with his singular yellow eye and he roared loudly at the top of his voice. Super Shadow didn't show any signs of fear at all. He just clenched his fists and prepared to do battle. Even though he didn't know that Devil Doom was Black Doom at first, he'd quickly managed to work out it was Black Doom after seeing the twin horizontal horns on the head currently facing forward. He wasn't the least bit intimidated by Devil Doom's appearance though, he just saw Black Doom in front of him and ready to be annihilated. He wasn't scared of Black Doom and he certainly wasn't scared of Devil Doom.

"Black Doom! You've come here with the intention of wiping out a whole world complete with indigenous species!" yelled Super Shadow "But I am here to stop you and I will completely annihilate you!"

Devil Doom roared a thunderous roar and he breathed fire at Super Shadow. Super Shadow ploughed effortlessly through the fire and he threw a Chaos Spear down Devil Doom's throat. Devil Doom gagged loudly and he rotated around so his one horned head was facing forward now. Devil Doom summoned some rocks from nowhere and the rocks all fired lasers at Super Shadow. Super Shadow was stricken by the lasers and sent flying backwards. Super Shadow then flew towards Devil Doom but Devil Doom activated a Chaos Control with the Chaos Sabre fused in his back. Time froze around Super Shadow and he froze where he was. Devil Doom took the perfect opportunity to swat Super Shadow down into the ground with a giant hand. Super Shadow slammed down into the ground and left a crater where he landed. Sonic and friends watched all this and they all went "Oooooooh!" as Super Shadow hit the ground. Super Shadow picked himself up and he charged back at Devil Doom. He spin-dashed Devil Doom in several places all over his body and began throwing Chaos Spears at him. Devil Doom shrieked loudly as he was bombarded by attacks and he warped away using a Chaos Control. He reappeared and then telepathically lifted up chunks of earth and threw them at Super Shadow. Super Shadow ploughed through the chunks as if they were nothing and he spin-dashed Devil Doom in the face. He wheeled around for another spin-dash but Devil Doom blocked the attack with his wing. Super Shadow bounced off his wing but he wasn't about to give up that easily. Super Shadow began throwing Chaos Spears at Devil Doom but Devil Doom shielded himself with both wings. Super Shadow saw his chance for a sneak attack and he spin-dashed Devil Doom's twin-horned head twice, one in the eye and one in the mouth. Devil Doom swatted at Super Shadow but he missed and Super Shadow spin-dashed his arm. Devil Doom summoned some laser-firing rocks again and the rocks fired at Super Shadow. Super Shadow was stricken by the lasers and sent spiralling through the air. Super Shadow growled furiously and he threw some Chaos Spears at Devil Doom. Devil Doom blocked the attacks with his wings but Super Shadow spin-dashed towards Devil Doom just as he uncovered his head and he spin-dashed him directly in the eye. Devil Doom roared loudly in pain and he rotated around so his single horned head was facing Super Shadow. He breathed fired at Super Shadow but the attack didn't harm Super Shadow in the slightest. Devil Doom however had other ideas. He used the Chaos Sabre on

his back to fire Chaos Spears at Super Shadow. Super Shadow was stricken by the spears and knocked down into the ground. Devion decided to help Super Shadow after watching him get knocked down so Devion began blasting Devil Doom with his gauntlet lasers. The lasers struck Devil Doom and made him screech in pain. Devil Doom telepathically raised up the remains of the Egg Fleet and threw the pieces at Devion. Devion just blasted the Egg Fleet debris to pieces with his gauntlet blasters (I did say earlier they can bring down a five storey building so ship debris's nothing to those blasters) and continued blasting Devil Doom. Devil Doom warped away and reappeared on the other side of the Black Comet. Super Shadow picked himself up and he warped over to where Devil Doom was. Super Shadow fired some Chaos Spears at Devil Doom but Devil Doom blocked the blows with his wings and breathed fire at Super Shadow. To make his attack even worse, Devil Doom combined his fire attacks with some Chaos Spears from the Chaos Sabre on his back. Super Shadow was stricken by scorching fire and sharp Chaos Spears. He was sent hurling backwards and he gasped for breath. He clutched his arms and he fought the pain that was slowly seeping over him. Despite his super-enhanced invulnerability, that attack was pretty powerful and did manage to hurt him a little. Super Shadow was not about to give up though, he was going to stop Devil Doom and nothing was going to bring him down. Super Shadow rocketed towards Devil Doom but Devil Doom summoned laser rocks and fired Chaos Spears along with the rocks that began firing lasers at Super Shadow. Super Shadow was bombarded by laser blasts and the Chaos Spears. Super Shadow was thrown down onto the ground by the powerful attack. Sonic and friends all gasped in shock at this and Rouge came close to breaking down.

"Oh no! Shadow!" wailed Rouge "I knew he wouldn't be able to take down Black Doom by himself!"

"Rouge, don't worry, Shadow will win." Sonic assured the distressed bat.

"Have faith in him Rouge, he's going to make it." said Amy comfortingly.

"I do have faith in him but…I'm worried that he'll get defeated and…

that Black Doom will kill him." said Rouge, a single tear trickling down her face "I really like Shadow and I don't want him to…"

"Rouge, Shadow survived the freaking Devatrons, Black Doom's no contest." said Sonic reassuringly "Don't sweat it, Shadow's as tough as they come, he'll beat Black Doom yet."

Rouge smiled at Sonic's comforting words. He was right, Black Doom was nothing compared to the Devatrons. Shadow was going to win. He just had to press on and find a way to bring down Devil Doom. Super Shadow picked himself up and he grunted in pain. Devil Doom was getting a little bothersome and he had to bring him down and fast. Luckily for him, Super Shadow had just come up with a brilliant idea. An idea that was guaranteed to bring down Devil Doom once and for all. Super Shadow rocketed towards Devil Doom and he threw several Chaos Spears at Devil Doom. The spears struck Devil Doom in several places all over his body and the Super Shadow spin-dashed him in the face. Devil Doom swatted at Super Shadow but he missed and Super Shadow decided to put his plan into action. He held out his hands and performed a Chaos Control to freeze Devil Doom in place so that he couldn't interrupt the next phase of his plan. Devil Doom was frozen in time and completely unable to move. Super Shadow smirked at him and he then removed his inhibitor rings from his wrists. Super Shadow began to glow a bright red after removing his rings and he tensed up very tightly. Sonic and friends beamed happily for they knew what was coming next. Super Shadow then thrusted his arms out and released all the energy inside of him.

"Chaos… **BLLLLLLLLLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAS SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSTTTTTTT TTTTTTTTTTT!** " thundered Super Shadow.

A titanic eruption of Chaos Energy exploded out from Super Shadow and engulfed Devil Doom in a bright flash. Devil Doom screamed in agony as he was torn apart atom by atom by the colossal blast from Super Shadow. Black Doom was now no more thanks to the Chaos Blast. The Chaos Blast went on to destroy the Black Comet and all the Black Arms soldiers, including Nyrah and Oarkon, that were still living. Devion, Katherine and Dr. Eggman had all run for cover before Super Shadow activated his Chaos Blast so they'd avoided

being obliterated by the enormous blast. This had by far been the biggest Chaos Blast ever unleashed by Shadow, super or not. After the Chaos Blast had finally died down, all that was left were pebbles of the Black Comet. The Chaos Blast had destroyed everything atom by atom and left virtually nothing behind. Super Shadow levitated back down to the ground and his super form died away, returning him back to normal. His fur was back to being black and his super aurora vanished. Shadow slumped down onto the ground and gasped for breath. That Chaos Blast had warn him out and he was pretty much completely power-drained. Sonic could see that Shadow was in need of aid right now so he zoomed over to Shadow and scooped up his inhibitor rings. He quickly clipped them back onto Shadow's wrists and Shadow's power began to return to him. Sonic helped Shadow back up onto his feet and the black hedgehog smiled at him.

"Thank you Sonic." said Shadow.

"Anytime Shadow." said Sonic "Let me be the first to say that…you were way past cool today. You have officially proven yourself deserving of being one of us."

"Thanks Sonic." said Shadow "Like I said, my original purpose is dead and my new purpose has been assigned to me. I'm Shadow the Hedgehog, Mobius defender in its battle for survival. Any threat, no matter the size, no matter the scale of it, will be dealt with by me and Mobius will survive. I've grown accustomed to this planet and I won't let anyone take it from me. I am here to tell you, to tell Black Doom, to tell everybody, to tell the world, to tell the universe that I am not a pet and I'm not a weapon or an infiltrator. I'm a Mobian, I'm a defender and I've just obliterated the entire Black Arms Race. THIS IS WHO I AM!"

"You said it Shadow!" said Sonic "Mobius is sure lucky to have you defending it along with us."

Shadow smiled graciously. But his praise wasn't about to end yet. The others ran over to Shadow and they all began cheering for him and congratulating him on his victory.

"You did it!" cheered Tails.

"You stopped Black Doom and his invasion! You've honoured us all today!" cried Ruben.

"Shadow dude, you're just as cool as blue dude himself, well done." said Mandy with a wink.

"I agree." said Wilson agreeably.

"Shadow, you have impressed us all!" cheered the Chaotix trio Vector, Espio and Charmy "Brilliant victory!"

"The world is saved and the Black Arms are dead!" cheered Cream "Mobius will live! Yay! I can't wait to tell mother and father!"

"I'm proud of what you've done today Shadow." said Cosmo sweetly "Thank you for all you've done."

"Thank you, all of you." said Shadow appreciatively "It makes me glad to hear all of your comments. I'm glad that we're all friends instead of enemies, it feels much better being on your side."

Rouge then suddenly ran in and threw her arms around Shadow, surprising the black hedgehog.

"I'm so glad you won Shadow." said Rouge tearfully "Thank you for saving us all…and thank you for surviving the match."

"You're welcome Rouge." said Shadow, hugging her back in a way of saying "thank you" "And thank you for waking me up from that pod last year. I'd never have experienced what it's like to live, to have a life and have something to live for if I was still stuck in there."

"You're so welcome Shadow." said Rouge in her usual coy manner "And then I thought I hadn't found anything that special."

Shadow chuckled dryly at her. Sally then stood forward and decided to give the genetic experiment her thanks.

"Shadow…you have made this Queen proud. You're officially a Mobian and I therefore grant you an honorary citizenship here on Mobius." said Sally happily "Welcome to Mobius, your official new home from this day forward."

"Thank you very much your majesty, I'm very honoured." said Shadow politely.

"I shall see to it that you get your own place of dwelling." said Sally "Maybe you could live in the city with us…"

"No, I'm quite happy to be roaming around freely your highness." said Shadow "But I'll be there to help you when you need me. I'll wear a communications device to that you can contact me when you need me. And even though I'm not gonna have a place to live, I'll still fall under your laws and mandates."

"Very well." said Sally "I'm quite happy with that. Now, we have something else to focus on now."

"What's that Sal gal?" asked Sonic.

"The oncoming Martian invasion tomorrow…" said Sally grimly.

The Black Arms may have been defeated at long last but Silver and Blaze had cryptically warned them about the Martians and tomorrow, the Martians would be coming and Mobius was about to get its third alien encounter…an encounter that was going to be a very tough one for the Mobians…

Well that's it people! The Black Arms saga is over and the Martian invasion is coming! Join me next time for the big event saga, "The Martian Invaision" is about to begin...

Meanwhile, tune into* Tales from Mobius *for we get the prolouge to the whole saga detailing the end of the Martian and Seedrian war! Who will emerge victorious...?

So EVERYBODY who's favourited and reviewed this story(that's right, EVERYBODY, even those who have never reviewed it yet), how has this story been for you these past years? What's been your favourite moment of the entire story and what is it that's made this story such a joy for you all to read? Feel free to comment away, I await your feedback.

Invasion of the Martians

Story 126: Invasion of the Martians

Through the vast, empty void that is space, a huge ship cruised gracefully through the stars and onto its intended destination. That ship, of course, was the Martian ship and as Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat foretold, it was coming to Mobius. After destroying Greengate*, the Martians had set course for Mobius and after a long time, they were beginning to arrive there. With help from Marik the Martian, for he knew the coordinates to it, the Martians had been able to find Mobius. As they began to near the planet, the Grand Warlord Diablo peered out of the window and observed Mobius as they neared it. Mobius looked pretty much how he imagined it and chances are, it was going to look just as bad when they got down onto the planet's surface.

"So this is it, Mobius." said Diablo softly to himself "Looks as vapid as most other peace-loving worlds we've desecrated over time."

"Well what do you expect dad? A lot of peace-loving worlds look the same don't they?" sighed Marik who was standing beside his dad and watching as the ship neared Mobius.

"They do until you touch down on them." noted Diablo "They mostly look the same on the outside but never on the inside. And judging from what you've described to me, Mobius isn't going to be like most other worlds we've invaded before."

"It certainly isn't going to be dad." muttered Marik "We've never invaded a planet who's population consists of humanoid animals before. Nor have we really encountered a world with super-powered beings. I can assure you though, with all the time I've spent on Mobius, the advantage will be ours for I've studied the world and taken note of the most relevant of things on it. Like the locations and names of cities and countries and the location of any powerful relics they have. Information like that will be our winning trump card in this new war we'll be starting."

Diablo smiled widely at those very words that Marik had just said.

"Indeed Marik." crooned Diablo "We'll destroy those Mobians and it'll be all thanks to you."

"Once we land on this pitiful planet, we'll make the Mobians pay for what they did to me…" Marik said as he looked at his metal hand "… and what they did to Uncle Drago. We will make them ALL pay."

"I promise you Marik, we won't leave this world until every last Mobian is exterminated!" declared Diablo "Nobody gets away with crippling one of our own's hand and then killing one of our own! Nobody!"

"Agreed." said Marik "But as I said before dad, you cannot underestimate the Mobians. That was my mistake during my time on there…" he added as he looked at his hand again "I severely underestimated those Mobian mongrels and I paid the price for it. I underestimated them so badly that I even thought the Devatrons had it in the bag with them. And even they fell to the might of the Mobians."

"That's the part that worries me." said Diablo grimly "If those freaks can take down the Devatrons then chances are, they'll put up a good fight against us."

"Yes but when fighting the Devatrons, they had to bugger off into space and get help in order to beat them, as well as use their precious Chaos Emeralds to stop them." noted Marik "That was the only reason they beat the Devatrons. That and the Devatrons didn't know what to expect when they invaded Mobius whereas we do. That's why we'll succeed where the Devatrons failed, we know the tricks of the trade, we know their secrets and we know their secret weapons. Thanks to me alone, we Martians understand the Mobians better then the Devatrons ever did."

"And that is the advantage we have." purred Diablo, grinning like a leprechaun "We will be able to anticipate their battle tactics and remove any advantages we have. For once we settle down, one of the first things we'll be doing is finding those…Chaos Emeralds as you call them. Unfortunately, you don't know that kind of

information."

"The most I know about the Chaos Emeralds is that they're very powerful, they can turn people super and there's seven of them." said Marik "But, now we've fixed the Visual-Mind Reader Link**, we could kidnap a Mobian and use it on them so we can find out where the Chaos Emeralds are hidden. Sonic or any of his friends would do, they'd have that kind of information."

"Very well, we shall make sure that happens during our invasion." said Diablo "So, tell me, how many friends does Sonic have and what are they like?"

"Sonic has many friends dad and they all vary in strength and power." explained Marik "Allow me to tell you about them one by one…"

As Marik prepared his VERY long exposition for Diablo, the ship continued cruising towards Mobius. Sooner or later it would enter the planet's atmosphere and then the invasion could begin…

Tomorrow had dawned on Mobius bright and sunny. Just the perfect kind of weather for anyone to relax, sunbathe or have fun in it and play games and exercise to their heart's content. Such a shame that the Martians were going to invade Mobius on this very day right now and spoil it for everybody. Luckily for the Royal Fighters Service, they had been warned by the future dwelling Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat first hand of the invasion so they were going to be well prepared for it. The moment everybody had woken up, Queen Sally Acorn had given the order for all Royal Fighter teams to come to New Mobotropolis immediately and bring their best supplies. Teams Nekronopolis, Adabat and Megapolis had gotten the order and had come over to New Mobotropolis with some big supplies. Sonic had decided to make their job easier by taking a Chaos Emerald and using a Chaos Control to open a Chaos Portal to give the teams a quick trip over to the city to save time for New Mobotropolis was far away from all of their respective places. The Chaos Control had been very helpful and now all the teams were here in New Mobotropolis, ready for action. Team Nekronopolis had

Miranda, Kari, Thunder & Bolt of course and they had a plethora of soldiers by their side. Miranda had armed herself with a handheld plasma cannon as she felt her electro-prod wasn't going to be very useful in this battle, Kari had her usual wrench and Thunder & Bolt didn't need anything for they had their electrical powers. Their men had brought weapons of many kinds, including wheeled cannons that could take down a skyscraper in a couple of shots. Team Adabat merely consisted of Scott Lynx and his team-mates Jessica Cougar, Taran the Lynx and Felix the Peacock. Adabat was a peaceful country and refused to have an army of any kind in the country but they didn't mind anyone from Adabat contributing to the R.F.S. so Team Adabat's supplies were limited. Luckily for them, the other teams had plenty of weapons should they need one and Taran had instantly armed himself with a large hand held rotary cannon. He'd also brought some ear plugs with him to drown the noise out for he couldn't stand loud noises. Scott and Jessica had their usual energy powers and Felix had his feather clubs. Team Megapolis consisted of the wheelchair-bound Thomas Tiger who could only give out orders and devise tactics since Devion had broken his back during the Devatron invasion and the beautiful rookie Kiara the Cheetah. Team Megapolis had lots of soldiers and heavy artillery too. They had brought wheeled cannons with them also so as you can imagine, the Martian army is in for a VERY nasty surprise once they touched down on Mobius. Sonic was well surprised with how much resources they now had with them. The Royal Fighters Service was well and truly ready for action.

"Now THAT'S how you prepare for battle!" gasped Sonic "We wouldn't be anywhere near this ready if we hadn't been worn in advanced about it. You and Blaze are the ones to thank for this preparation."

"Think nothing of it Sonic, we're just happy to help." said Silver casually.

"Yes we are, especially since we want to prevent the end of the world." said Blaze in her usual grim matter (Blaze isn't a very cheerful person as you know) "I just hope stopping this invasion will fix the future otherwise we're back to square one and we'll have to arrive and warn you of the coming apocalypse again."

"Well you keep researching and warning us and we'll shoot down your theories one by one until your future changes." said Sonic "And with our big, hulking army here, the Martians will be stopped easily."

"Let us hope so or we're all doomed." said Silver grimly.

Sonic nodded. As for the Royal Fighters, the leaders from each team came up to Sonic. Miranda and Scott walked up to the blue hedgehog whereas Thomas was wheeled over to Sonic by Kiara. Kiara was responsible for wheeling Thomas around now since Thomas wanted to test her on responsibility and hopefully make her a better soldier for she was still a little reckless.

"So Sonic, what's this all about buddy?" asked Scott "Something about a "Martian invasion" or something like that? I didn't really get what your queen was telling us."

"I'll let Silver tell you, he can explain it better then me." said Sonic.

Silver stood forward and Scott stared at him.

"Wow, you look cool!" he cried, taking Silver's hand and shaking it "Where have YOU been all this time?!"

"Nowhere because I don't exist in this timeline." said Silver "My name's Silver the Hedgehog and this is my friend Blaze the Cat."

Blaze stood forward and curtseyed politely.

"We're from the future and we're honoured to see the esteemed Royal Fighters Service in all its glory." she said.

"You're from the bloomin' future?!" exclaimed Kiara in amazement "Oh man that is so cool! I've always yearned to travel through time! It sounds so flippin' cool!"

"It is miss but you'd have to be careful how you go about it." said Silver sternly.

"Well then you two, welcome to the present." said Miranda politely "My name is Miranda Mongoose…"

"Yes, we know who you are." said Blaze "We've studied about the R.F.S. in our timeline and we've memorized most of your names and ranks. You're the leader of the Nekronopolis or "Northern" Royal Fighters team."

"Oh…" said Miranda, a little surprised "…you've done your research it seems."

"So if you two are from the future…" said Scott, putting a finger to his chin "Then why are you two here? How did you get here?"

"We came by Super Warp Ring." said Silver, holding up the magnificent ring for the team leaders to see "It's like a warp ring only super-powered and can allow you to travel through time and other zones."

"Could you open that thing and show us the future?" asked Kiara "I'd love to see it!"

"You'll be wishing you hadn't asked." muttered Silver, opening the warp ring for her.

Eagerly, Kiara stuck her head through the Super Warp Ring and saw what was on the other side of it. She saw the ruination of the future, the miserable remains of the various cities that once made Mobius' scenery and the stretching wastelands that reached out all around the world. The ruination of the future that is sadly, Silver & Blaze's home and will continue to be so unless the future gets fixed. Kiara's face was ashen. Her jaw dropped and her eyes nearly popped out of their sockets at what she saw. She couldn't believe what she was looking at. She almost felt like she was staring at another world. She slowly raised her head out of the warp ring and staggered backwards. Kiara started shaking like a leaf. Silver closed the warp ring and sympathetically put a hand on her shoulder. He could tell what Kiara was thinking just be looking at her horrified face. Kiara looked like she was about to have a shock-related heart-attack.

"I know, we're dismayed too." said Silver "And that's mine and Blaze's future no less. We have to live in that apocalypse zone that is Mobius' future. And that's why we're here, to fix the past and

improve the future. We're here to prevent Mobius' doom."

"I…I…c…can't…this…this can't…" gasped Kiara hoarsely, barely able to speak.

She sat down on Thomas's knees and the tiger stroked her back to calm her down.

"So you're telling us that the world ends at some point and you're here to stop it?" asked Scott "What's this got to do with this so-called "Martian invasion" we're getting worked up over?"

"Because they think the Martian invasion is the cause of Mobius' end." replied Sonic "They think if they can stop the Martians from winning then their future will be fixed which is good for both them and us. I can't stand the thought of the world ending."

"Well I hope with all my heart that defeating the Martians will fix your future you two." said Miranda with her hands over her chest.

"Thank you Miranda." said Blaze.

"I'm not convinced the Martians will be the ones to destroy the world." said Scott doubtfully "We stopped the friggin' Devatrons and they're the most powerful beings ever. The Martians can't be any worse then they are."

"Maybe the Martians have something they don't?" suggested Sonic "Either way, Silver and Blaze have helped us prepare for their invasion so we can stop them easier when they arrive. If we stop the Martians, it'll be thanks to them."

"It probably will be." said Scott "Well, I'll be joining back with my team to prepare for the invasion now. See ya."

With that, Scott wandered back over to his team mates to prepare for the invasion. Miranda, Kiara and Thomas rejoined their respective teams too. The Royal Fighter teams were setting up defences and an attack blockade. The wheeled cannons they'd brought with them were raised and pointed up at the sky. They were all standing in a line together. The soldiers had their weapons primed and ready and they waited to launch their readily prepared

assault. Sonic watched them all and then he wandered off to Royal HQ with Silver and Blaze.

"Well, I think I'll see my buddies in Royal HQ before the invasion begins." said Sonic casually "I wonder if they're preparing for the invasion at all. How long have we got until they arrive?"

"According to the book…" said Silver, looking at it again "They arrive at exactly one-thirty this afternoon and not a moment later. The arrival is described here as "a horrifying sight for anyone on Mobius for out of the clouds, a huge ship of extraterrestrial design and appearance appeared and loomed over the City of New Mobotropolis. Ploughing through the clouds, it headed towards the city and opened fire. Luckily the shields were raised in time and…"

"I think I get the picture Silver." said Sonic quickly "So all of this setting up weaponry and preparing with the Royal Fighters didn't happen until you and Blaze interfered?"

"Correct." said Blaze "This isn't how it should be happening but thanks to us, we've changed that and hopefully, that little change will help us win the inevitable battle and thwart the invasion."

"Even if it doesn't, we've got our shiny trump cards to defeat them with." noted Sonic "The eight Chaos Emeralds. It's funny how we had seven and now since the Black Arms invasion, we now have eight after we cleansed his Black Chaos Emerald…"

"That's a good point." mused Silver "So maybe we were worked up over nothing and the Martian invasion is indeed not the event that destroys our future…?"

The very mention of the Chaos Emeralds made Silver wonder about the Martians taking over Castle Acorn. He had very vague information on it given the book he'd been reading had pages missing. Maybe after the Martians take over Castle Acorn, Sonic and maybe Shadow as well just simply use the Chaos Emeralds to kick them all out of the castle? Perhaps the Martian invasion wasn't as bad as Silver and Blaze initially thought and maybe it wasn't the cause of their doomed future. But they didn't know the full details of the invasion so for all they knew, the Martians probably had a secret

weapon of their own or just get lucky and manage to beat everybody. But that's what he'd come here for, to be dead sure that Sonic and friends win the invasion and see if that changes anything in the future. If not, he'd just keep researching and see if he could find anymore information and find out what REALLY dooms his future. After all, Silver and Blaze had all the time in the world to do that since they can time travel. Sonic interrupted his train of thought.

"So, you two comin' to Royal HQ?" he asked "I don't believe you've really had the time to explore our headquarters given all we've been through."

"We'd like that very much Sonic." said Blaze politely "Lead the way."

With that said, Sonic ran off to Royal HQ, at a normal running speed so Blaze and Silver could keep up with him. As Silver ran after Sonic and Blaze, he looked at the book again. There was one name in the section on the Martian invasion that was bugging him and had him wondering something about the whole Martian invasion.

Who's Tyrahko? he thought to himself…

In Castle Acorn, the beautiful Queen Sally Acorn was preparing herself for the Martian's arrival. Ever since she'd gotten kidnapped during the Black Arms invasion, she'd decided she'd had enough of being an easy target and getting kidnapped. Thus she'd decided to push her training to the max. True she had performed admirably during the Region of Rebellious Reptiles' first invasion*** but she felt like she needed to train more and learn more skills. Her battle prowess was weak at best and she had no special powers to make her a threat to be reckoned with. Even Nicole could fight better than her and her battle prowess wasn't anything to write home about. So Sally was pushing her training beyond what she'd done before. She'd set up some targets, which were three tall poles with faces on them, for herself and she'd armed herself with a simple blue bo-staff. She was wearing the same outfit she had worn from Eggman's attempted assassination of Sonic while he was still bed bound from the Devatron invasion all the way through the Black Arms invasion for she felt that if she were to be more active on the battlefield now,

she should look less like a queen and more like a fighter and the tank-top, closed vest, gloves and shorts really helped give her that desired look. Sally breathed softly to herself and she raised the bo-staff. This was her first time ever wielding the weapon. She wasn't expecting to do well with it the first time. But if she were to beat the Martians, she'd have to try her hardest.

OK Sally-girl…here we go… she thought to herself.

Sally slowly began to twirl the bo-staff around. She'd done some twirling with sticks before for no real reason other than entertainment so she could twirl the bo-staff to perfection. She twirled and twirled until the bo-staff was nothing more then a blue blur around her constantly moving hands. Sally moved around while twirling the bo-staff and then she spun around a full 360 while still twirling the staff. Due to the fact she hadn't been practicing wielding weapons, she ended up losing control of the staff and she ended up dropping it onto the floor. Sally grumbled to herself and she picked the staff back up. She twirled it around again…and accidentally smacked her thigh with it.

"Yeow!" yelped Sally, clutching her sore thigh in pain and dropping the staff.

She rubbed her thigh better and then picked the staff back up.

"OK…let's do this right this time…" she mumbled to herself.

She twirled the staff around slowly at first. Then she picked up speed and then she twirled the staff around as fast as the first time. She spun around while still twirling the staff (and didn't drop it) and she ran over to her targets. She leaped up into the air while twirling the staff around and she smacked the face on the pole. The face fell off onto the floor. Sally then quickly spun around and accidentally dropped the staff again. Sally picked it up and twirled it around again. She then thrust the staff forward in a lunging motion and she hit the face on the other target. The face fell off onto the floor. Sally twirled the staff around again but she lost control of it and smacked herself in the face with it. Sally's first instinct from such a sharp wallop was to squeal in pain and she clutched her face, gritting her teeth and making a muffled "Ooooohhhhh!" noise through them. The

pain in her face was immense and it stung really badly. After her face recovered, Sally picked up the staff but instead of twirling it around, she whacked the third face off the third pole. The face shattered to pieces on the ground for it was merely made of plaster. Sally smiled happily but her smile quickly disappeared as she looked down at the staff in her hands.

"Sigh…this isn't going to be easy." she muttered, rubbing her face again "The staff will take time to master and I'm gonna have to try not to hit myself with it. If I'm to improve my fighting prowess, I really need to practice more. Pity I don't really have time since the Martians will be coming soon…"

She eyed the wealthy looking clock on the wall. It was beautifully sculpted with golden flowers and huge petals around the clock face. The hands had acorn shapes on them and they read exactly one-thirty, the specified time the Martians were going to arrive. Sally almost leapt out of her skin in surprise.

"Oh my gosh! It's one-thirty already?!" she exclaimed "And I've only just begun! I must have been so ready getting the R.F.S. riled up I didn't take track of time! The Martians could be…"

Then suddenly, as if fate knew what she was thinking, the doors flung open and in ran Sally's beautiful lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx. The lynx looked like she'd barely escaped from a ravenous pack of wolves. Sally turned around quickly and looked at her frightened lady-in-waiting.

"Nicole, are they…?" began Sally.

"Yes Sally, they're here!" shrieked Nicole, breathing frantically "The Martians are here! It's beginning, the invasion's beginning!"

"Then let us prevent another dark hour for our world." said Sally, raising the staff up high "The Devatrons, The Black Arms, all alien life forms that we've stopped. The Martians will be added to the list."

With that said, Sally and Nicole both ran out of Castle Acorn to deal with the Martians for the invasion was beginning and a new battle for Mobius was about to commence…

The Martian vessel ploughed through the atmosphere of Mobius like a plough through snow. The edges of the vessel glowed a radiant, aluminous red-orange colour as it entered the atmosphere. Marik smiled to himself as the ship entered Mobius. To him, it was like coming back to finish what he'd started, which was exactly what the Martians were all here for. As the ship entered Mobius, Marik beamed happily at the familiar sights, almost as if he'd missed Mobius and was glad to be back. It felt good to be here again, especially as they were going to destroy the Mobians once and for all. Diablo watched through the windows as the ship finished entering Mobius' atmosphere and started cruising down towards the ground. Diablo could see the City of New Mobotropolis just down below for they were heading towards it. Diablo could just make it out and was secretly impressed with the look of it. He'd never seen cities like this before.

"And so we're here, Mobius." he said "Marik, are you able to identify that residence down below?"

Marik peered through the window and he saw New Mobotropolis, the location he had wanted the Martians to show up at. He smiled maliciously as his evil eyes observed the city down on the ground.

"I can indeed dad. That is New Mobotropolis, the home city of Sonic the Hedgehog and the Royal Fighters I've described to you."

" "New Mobotropolis"?!" snorted Diablo "That's the stupidest name I've ever heard for a city! Why on Mars did they call it that?!"

"Because Mobians don't know how to name a city." said Marik grimly "Unlike us, we have great names for our cities like Kragok and Volderoth. Nevertheless, New Mobotropolis is where we will strike first. I hate to warn you though, the city is shielded. I remember watching Eggman's fleet feebly try to destroy the city only to utterly fail for it was shielded."

"We'll get past that shield Marik." declared Diablo "Should be a lot easier to get past then the Seedrian Palace Barrier we failed to get past back on Greengate."

"Speaking of Seedrians, I can't wait to tell Cosmo that her kind's dead!" cackled Marik "Even though the children are all still alive thanks to the Visual Mind-Reader link giving out on us and Galaxina being dead so we can't ever find out where they are, we'll tell her ALL the Seedrians are dead just to wound her feeble heart further."

"Well we Martians are renowned for our sadism Marik." said Diablo pride-fully "Now then, time to rally the troops. Tell Sycranna to land us and then join us once the ship's landed."

"Yes dad." said Marik, scuttling off to tell Sycranna, The Grand Pilot of the Martian fleet who had recently been promoted thanks to his intelligence, what Diablo had told him to tell him.

Down on the ground, the Royal Fighters all watched as the Martian ship came into view, ploughing through the clouds and lowering down to the ground. Kiara began to get nervous for she had a paralyzing fear of aliens.

"W-w-we're g-g-going to f-f-fight…aliens?!" she squeaked "And they're…Martians! I believe th-th-that M-M-Marik guy I s-s-stopped once…is a Martian! D-d-d-does that mean h-h-h-he's here and h-h-he's b-b-brought his f-f-family and f-f-friends here?"

"Indeed it seems so Kiara." said Thomas grimly "If I wasn't disabled, I would be blasting them all to bits with you and our men."

Kiara nodded and tried to put her phobia aside for the time being. Now was not the time to be afraid of aliens. As the Martian ship neared the ground, Sonic and his team ran out of Royal HQ and joined the blockade. Everyone was here. Shadow, Tails, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Knuckles, Shade, Rouge, Wilson, Mandy, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Ruben, Vector, Espio, Charmy Silver & Blaze were all here and they were ready for battle. Amy had her Piko-Piko hammer in hand, Cream had Cheese by her side, Knuckles clenched his fists, Shade drew out her blades, Wilson had his spinning blade weapon deployed and ready to taste Martian blood, Mandy had her knuckle attachments on and she'd also equipped herself with a shield for extra-defence, Bunnie had deployed her arm cannon already, Geoffrey had loaded his arm-mounted crossbow and Ruben was ready to give the Martians a good shower. Team Chaotix were

well ready for action, particularly Vector who was listening to The Good The Bad and The Ugly theme song on his earphones (very fitting battle music eh?). Shadow and Rouge, who had decided to stick around and join in with the Martian invasion, were ready too. Shadow had recently been accepted as an honorary Mobian and now was his first day as one. He'd get to show the whole R.F.S. that he was truly one of them now and defend the planet from yet another alien invasion. Rouge put her arm around Shadow's. She looked perceptibly nervous. Ever since Shadow had been getting more active in Royal Fighter activity such as the foiling the Devatron invasion, the take-over of Chun-Nan and the Black Arms invasion, she'd grown more and more attached to Shadow and would now get worried about him whenever he was about to get into a fight. She wasn't really sure why since you do not ever have to worry about Shadow in a fight for he's one of the strongest beings alive.

"You nervous Shadow?" asked Rouge.

"Not in the least." said Shadow casually "These Martians won't be a problem. I hope I get to break Marik's arm again. Maybe I'll get to break another Martian's arm too."

Rouge wasn't sure why Shadow was so fond of that memory but she couldn't help but smile at the thought of Shadow breaking Marik's arm again. As for the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, they watched the ship incoming and they all began conversing to one another.

"It's definitely them alright." whimpered Cosmo "And it's Diablo's ship no less. Why oh why did it have to be him in particular?"

"Who's Diablo? The leader of the Martians or something?" asked Tails, holding Cosmo's hand to calm her nerves.

"He's the Grand Warlord of the Martians and he's Marik's dad." said Cosmo "He's the Martian I fear the most next to Count Drago. But Silver and Blaze took care of Drago so we won't be seeing him anytime soon."

"I'm not surprised that freak ran crying to his dad about us." scoffed Mandy "Well at least he knew when he was beaten. Well what he's

not beckoning on is us beating his family as well."

"I hope we win this." said Wilson "Then maybe finally, me and you can settle down and enjoy our lives as a married couple. We haven't had time to enjoy being a couple since we got married."

"I can't begin to tell you how much a strive for at least a day of peace and quiet." muttered Mandy.

"Well we'll deal with Marik's flunkies and then maybe we'll get a break at last." said Sonic "So where's Sally and Nicole?"

"Here they come now." said Geoffrey, watching as Sally and Nicole ran towards them.

Sally watched as the Martian ship finished coming through the clouds and was getting ready to land. As she ran, she looked over at Nicole.

"Are the shields raised?" she asked.

"I raised them the moment I saw the Martian ship coming." puffed Nicole as she ran alongside Sally.

"Then we can start our assault." said Sally "Royal Fighters, OPEN FIRE!" she shouted as she ran out through the gates of the city and came to a halt in the blockade.

The Royal Fighters obeyed and they opened fire on the Martian ship with the wheel cannons. The cannons blasted away but the Martian ship managed to manoeuvre out of the way of their blasts thanks to Sycranna's skilled piloting. Sycranna gasped in surprise as cannon shots whizzed towards the ship. Diablo and Marik almost fell over as the ship manoeuvred out of the way of the oncoming cannon shots.

"What's happening?! Are we under attack?!" cried Diablo.

"We are indeed master!" gasped Sycranna's voice over the ship's intercom "The Mobians are firing at us with cannons!"

"How can this be?!" thundered Diablo "They couldn't possibly know we were coming and prepare an attack in advance for us!"

"I bet Silver and Blaze have come to this timeline and warned them we were coming so they could prepare for us and stop us from destroying them." grumbled Marik "There goes the advantage of surprise."

"We'll still beat them no matter what!" declared Diablo "Sycranna, land us before we get shot down! Martians, prepare for battle!"

"Yes Grand Warlord!" cried Sycranna over the intercom.

Sycranna thrust on the levers and steered the ship down towards the ground. He had the landing legs already deployed as the ship came in to land. The cannons kept on firing at the ship, desperate to shoot it down and maybe destroy it, thus ending the invasion before it began. But Sycranna's piloting skills were too good for the cannons to hit the ship, he manoeuvred out of the way of the cannon's fire effortlessly and headed down to land. But one cannon managed to skim the ship across the side and rip a huge gash across it. The ship shook but it wasn't effected too terribly by the attack. It still persisted in its landing phase. Sycranna pushed on the levers and finally managed to get the ship to descend down and come in to land. The ship landed down onto the ground, the cannons aiming down at it and preparing to fire. They fired at the ship but the ship fired its own cannons and blocked the cannon fire.

"Hold your fire!" ordered Sally, seeing that this wasn't going to get them anywhere.

The Royal Fighters ceased firing and the Martian ship hissed loudly as it finished its landing. The Royal Fighters all ran over to the huge Martian vessel and braced themselves as the landing ramp opened and came down to the ground with a thunk. Tails was the first to step forward. He was itching to thump Marik ten times to Downunda for daring to squeal on them and bring his army here. But nobody came down the ramp for a few seconds. A couple of minutes past and still nobody came out of the ship. Was the ship empty or were the Martians lying in wait for them? The Mobians remained vigilant for lowering their senses was not wise for any of them. Tails cautiously stepped closer to the boarding ramp. Cosmo stepped forward too, making sure to keep close to Tails. Then suddenly, Diablo charged out of the ship and he grabbed Cosmo by the face!

He hoisted the terrified Seedrian up to his height and cackled maniacally.

"Ha, ha, ha! Got you Last of the Seedrians!" he cackled.

"AAAIIIIIIEEEE!" screamed Cosmo, thumping Diablo's arm frantically "Get him off me! Get him off me!"

"I'll help you Cosmo!" cried Tails, flying up into the air with the aid of his namesakes and grabbing Cosmo by the legs. He tugged on Cosmo's legs while Diablo held onto Cosmo's face.

"Not like that, NOT LIKE THAT!" shrieked Cosmo frantically, her legs and face beginning to strain terribly as Tails and Diablo played tug-of-war with each other.

Diablo just effortlessly swung Tails down into the ground, his hand still clenched tightly around Cosmo's puny head. Sonic put a stop to that by spin-dashing Diablo in the chest, causing him to drop Cosmo. Diablo staggered backwards but he kept his evil smile on his face. Marik and his sister Sierra toddled off the ship and joined Diablo's side. So did their mother Natasha. Cosmo grew even more scared as she saw Natasha stand beside Diablo. She remembered Natasha all too well. Natasha had taken the lives of two of her cousins back on Greengate well before she was evacuated. Seeing her again really made her feel like wetting herself. Diablo folded his arms and boomed aloud with his terrible, deep voice.

"Attention citizens of Mobius!" he announced "I am Grand Warlord Diablo, leader of the Martians and we are here to deliver your sentence!"

"Really? Well sorry Diablo, we haven't got any court-cases going on right now so come back later." sneered Sonic.

Diablo pretended not to hear.

"You Mobians have been found guilty for causing grievous harm to my son Marik and taking the life of my brother, Count Drago!" he continued, glaring at Silver and Blaze as he said Count Drago's name "Your sentence is death and we will annihilate you all for what

you've done to us!"

"You're one to talk!" snapped Sally "Your son killed my parents, tried to kill me, tried to take over my kingdom and a whole lot of other terrible things! You have NO right to sentence us just because we've hurt ONE Martian and a couple from the future killed ONE Martian!"

"Well, what can we say honey? We're a very vengeful race." said Natasha snidely "Call us low-lives if you will but in our eyes, we're anything but that. Anyhow, Marik tells us that you're supposed to be the queen of this city?"

"I am indeed." said Sally "I am Queen Sally Acorn of the House of Acorn. I was forced to take the role way before I was ready, no thanks to your son Marik, and I order you all to leave this planet before things get needlessly unpleasant."

"Oh we can't do that sweetheart." sneered Natasha "You see, we hate peace and we're here to eliminate it, as well as make you pay for the harm you've caused Marik and the death of Count Drago. I'm sorry to say, we're staying right here and you will have to fight us off your world."

"So bet it, I gave you a chance to avoid pointless bloodshed." said Sally coldly "Royal Fighters, attack!"

"Before you do so, I've got something to tell your Seedrian friend." said Marik quickly, a big smile on his evil face.

"What could you possibly want to tell me?" asked Cosmo nervously.

Marik put his hands behind his back and grinned so widely, the edges of his mouth looked like they were going to pop out of the edges of his face.

"We won the war with your filthy kind." announced Marik "We planted a bomb in the core of your planet and blew it to smithereens! Not that we're proud of that since we don't like using cowardly tactics to win our battles but Count Nyder, Uncle Drago's replacement, had other ideas and went with the idea to blow up Greengate. Nevertheless, your kind are all dead! Before all that

though, we found the location of the evacuated children, thanks to your big sister Galaxina, and we slaughtered them too! You're now officially, the LAST of your kind Cosmo! How does THAT feel?!"

Obviously, the part about killing the children was a lie for they'd failed to find where the evacuated children were hiding and Diablo was going to let them live anyway so the Seedrian children could grow up and the Martians could have a do-over with the Seedrians and have the war end how they wanted it to end, but Cosmo bought it all. Her knees felt wobbly and her heart felt faint. Her eyes welled up with tears and her hands began trembling. All her kind was… dead?! She was the last of her kind?! The Martians had killed them all?! Cosmo was so horrified that she fell down on her knees and wailed her heart out. Marik just smirked at her, happy to hear the Seedrian cry.

"NOOOOO!" sobbed Cosmo.

Tails felt his heart tear in two as he watched Cosmo wail for Mobius. He felt so sorry for the little Seedrian. What had she ever done to deserve THIS?! All her kind was dead and her planet was gone?! On a lighter note, that meant she'd never have to leave Mobius and she could be his forever but Tails never wanted Cosmo to lose her family, friends, all her kind and her entire planet! Tails was so angry with the Martians for hurting his love interested like this that the little fox cub snapped like a twig and he flew towards Marik in blind rage.

"YOU MONSTERS! HOW COULD YOU DO THAT TO HER?!" he screamed.

Marik just zapped Tails with his metal hand and brought him down onto the ground.

"Cosmo asked for it!" snarled Marik "All of the Seedrians asked for it so we gave them what they asked for!"

"How did they "ask for it"?!" snapped Tails "And why do you have such a grudge on Cosmo? What has she ever done to you?"

"That's none of your business Tails!" growled Marik "I do have a reason for my grudge on Cosmo but I won't waste my time

explaining it to you, you won't care anyway."

"Enough pointless rambling!" bellowed Diablo "It's time to fight! Martians, ATTACK!"

With that said, all the Martians ran out of the ship and towards the Mobians. All the important Martians were there, Sycranna, the twins Dranzer & Obelisk, Mercury, Myra, Count Nyder and even Zarondight. They all charged into battle, ready to smash the Royal Fighters to bits. The Royal Fighters prepared to do battle too.

"Here we go Royal Fighters, the fight to strive off yet ANOTHER alien invasion begins!" cried Sally "Royal Fighters, attack and don't hold back!"

"Whoo-yeah, that's my kind of talk!" cheered Sonic as he zoomed towards Diablo.

With that said, the Royal Fighters all ran into battle with the Martians and they all started picking and choosing opponents as the battle commenced. Sonic decided to go for the head man. He ran towards Diablo and began circling him. Diablo managed to guess that this Mobian was Sonic given Marik had shown him a picture of Sonic once and he remembered his appearance from the picture. That and he was moving very fast. Sonic stopped running around the Grand Warlord and he spin-dashed Diablo in the armour but he just bounced harmlessly off of it. Sonic skidded across the grass and he gritted his teeth at the hulking leader of the Martians.

"Your armour's pretty tough, let's just see how many times I can spin-dash it before I put a ding or two in it!" yelled Sonic.

"You're wasting your time hedgehog." gloated Diablo as Sonic spin-dashed him again only to ping off of his armour harmlessly "My armour can withstand rockets! Your spinning attacks are useless against me!"

"OK then, if I can't ding your armour, I'll just go for a headshot!" jeered Sonic.

He spin-dashed Diablo directly in the head and made him stagger

backwards. Diablo gripped his head and he grunted furiously. He drew out his mace and attempted to smash Sonic with it but Sonic dodged him, causing him to hit the ground instead.

"Ooooh, you got a mace! Awesome, I don't often fight guys with maces!" laughed Sonic.

"Are you usually this annoying?!" growled Diablo.

"Well, maybe. Depends on your definition of "annoying"." sneered Sonic, kicking Diablo as hard as he could in the face "That one's for Cosmo by the way!"

Diablo shook off the pain in his face and he tried to wallop Sonic again but Sonic dodged his attack. Sonic spin-dashed towards Diablo but Diablo punched him away with a powerful fist. Sonic hurled backwards across the field and he landed with a heavy thud on the ground. Sonic grunted and he rubbed himself better. He picked himself up and charged back towards Diablo.

As for the Royal Fighters and the Martians, they were all fighting each other and various soldiers had picked certain enemies to battle. Sally, Nicole, Team Chaotix, Team Nekronopolis, Team Adabat and Team Megapolis (sans the disabled Thomas Tiger of course, he's still with the cannons) were all attacking the standard Martian soldiers whereas Team Mobotropolis were fighting off the big boys. Amy Cream and Cosmo were teaming up on Natasha, Tails was fighting Marik, Knuckles and Shade went for Dranzer and Obelisk respectively, Silver and Blaze were against Mercury (she knew they were Silver and Blaze because Marik had described them to her and they matched his descriptions so she's fighting them to avenge Count Drago), Count Nyder (whom has an eye patch over his left eye to cover his now missing eye, a punishment inflicted on him by Sycranna for disobeying Diablo's orders), was against Wilson and Mandy, Sierra and Geoffrey St. John were in a crossbow battle, Bunnie Rabbot had chosen to fight the silent Zarondight, Ruben was against Sycranna and Myra was against Shadow and Rouge. The whole battle was getting colossal and hectic already and it had only just really begun.

Tails tail-whipped Marik as hard as he could but Marik took the

attack no problem and he punched Tails in the face with his metal hand. Tails gripped his face in pain, giving Marik time to elbow-thrust Tails on the head and knock him down onto the ground. He then grabbed Tails by the scruff of his neck and gave him a powerful electrical shock. Tails screamed in pain as he was electrocuted by Marik and the sinister Martian threw him backwards across the battlefield. Tails skidded across the grass on his back but he was quickly back on his feet and he flew straight into Marik with his fists stretched out (it's like a flying punch really). Tails' fists socked Marik directly in the face and knocked him over but that didn't stop the furious fox. He grabbed Marik by the collar of his jacket and he threw Marik directly into the ship. Marik landed with a clunk on the ship and Tails flew towards him.

"For Cosmo's sake, I'll see you defeated Marik!" cried Tails.

Marik decided not to give him a retort since nowadays, mid-battle banter was lost on him. Gloating, boasting and crowing hadn't done him a bit of good all the time he was on Mobius before leaving so why bother now? Marik leaped up and kung-fu kicked Tails down onto the ship before he could touch him. Tails landed down on the thick, hard steel of the Martian ship and the two ended up getting into a fist fight on top of the huge vessel.

Team Rose weren't doing a bit of good against Natasha at all. The Grand War Mistress was far too skilled and agile for the girls to land a good blow on. Amy kept trying to whack Natasha with her hammer but she dodged every blow with ease and just walloped Amy with her spiked nunchakus. Cream tried to tackle Natasha but she dodged the attacks and elbowed Cream down onto the ground. Cosmo didn't even dare go near Natasha, she'd be no good against her! Amy walloped the ground again with her hammer as she tried and failed to hit Natasha.

"So who are you then ugly?!" asked Amy.

"Look who's talking." sneered Natasha "You're a ghastly sight for some yourself pinkie. I mean that dress, what self-respecting woman would prat around in that mistake of fashion?"

"Quit commenting on my clothes and answer my question!" retorted

Amy, trying to hammer Natasha again only to miss the agile Martian.

"The name's Natasha freak." said Natasha smoothly, kicking Amy in the gut "And I'm Marik's mother. My son's told me some very nasty stories about you freaks. Something about crippling his hand?"

She then kicked Amy in the head.

"So as you can imagine, I'm not very happy about that." continued Natasha "I'll have to cripple YOUR hand to see how YOU like it!"

"Don't touch Miss Rose!" squealed Cream, trying to punch Natasha only to get elbowed in the eye by the Grand War Mistress.

Amy could see that Natasha was too swift for them so she, Cream and Cosmo decided to use their team move, the Twirling-Hammer Batter (Amy STILL needs a better name for that attack!). Cream flew up into the air and carried Cosmo while Cosmo carried Amy and Amy held her hammer tightly. Cream spun the girls around and edged them towards Natasha…only for Natasha to jump up and kick all three of them down effortlessly. Amy, Cream and Cosmo all landed down onto the ground in a heap and Natasha stood over them triumphantly.

"Is that seriously the best you freaks have got?" she sneered "The Seedrians were more challenging then you are and they were the biggest pacifists in the galaxy!"

Amy growled in annoyance and she yet again, tried and failed to hit Natasha.

Knuckles and Shade were having a relatively even-sided tussle with the twins. Knuckles had picked Dranzer and Shade (who had her helmet already deployed) had picked Obelisk. The two Martians didn't even bother with their cannons since they didn't think they'd need them. Knuckles and Dranzer both punched each other in the face and then Dranzer gut-punched Knuckles. You can imagine a punch from a Martian wearing armour is going to hurt real bad. Knuckles retaliated by upper cutting Dranzer with both fists. The spikes on Knuckles' fists left some rather heavy scratches on Dranzer's face. Dranzer wiped the blood from the cuts and he

smirked at Knuckles.

"You pack quite a punch, I like that in an opponent." he crooned.

"Thank you, there's more where these come from Martian!" yelled Knuckles.

He lunged at Dranzer but Dranzer grabbed Knuckles' fists and he slammed him down onto the ground. As for Shade and Obelisk, Shade kept Blade-Rushing Obelisk but Obelisk took the blows with relative ease and he drew out his sword. He and Shade clashed weapons with each other as heavily as they could while also trying to tag one another.

"Impressive skills woman." boomed Obelisk "Good, I was wondering if you lot were as dangerous as Marik made you out as."

"You'll regret ever coming to Mobius you monsters." said Shade coldly, Blade- Rushing Obelisk in the gut.

Obelisk doubled over but he quickly recovered and they clashed blades once again.

Ruben and Bunnie were fighting their battles back to back pretty much. Bunnie had her arm cannon deployed and kept blasting at Zarondight but the messenger Martian was way too swift for Bunnie to hit. Seeing that her cannon wasn't going to work and if she kept blasting, she'd tire out from excessive use of her robot parts, Bunnie sheathed her arm cannon and instead just decided to have a traditional fist-fight with Zarondight. He punched at Zarondight but Zarondight blocked her blows and then gut-punched her. Bunnie quickly recovered and walloped Zarondight in the face. The punch left a nasty dent on Zarondight's helmet. Ruben kept squirting water at Sycranna but Sycranna ploughed through the water as if it was nothing. All it did was make him very wet and very annoyed. Sycranna had his rapier out and he kept trying to stab Ruben with it. Ruben dodged the attack with ease and he punched Sycranna in the face. Sycranna punched him back. Ruben squirted at him again but Sycranna leaped away from Ruben and ended up standing behind Bunnie, who was grappling with Zarondight right now. Without thinking, Ruben squirted water at Sycranna and Sycranna inevitably,

jumped out of the way. This caused Ruben to accidentally squirt Bunnie in the back and drench her. But that wasn't the worst part. The worst part was that Ruben's water short-circuited Bunnie's robot limbs, rendering her disabled and useless! She was stuck lying on the ground, defenceless and at the mercy of Zarondight who bared his claws and prepared to kill Bunnie. Shocked at his mistake, Ruben tried to help Bunnie but Sycranna grabbed his tail and threw him over into the ring wall around New Mobotropolis. Bunnie stared up at Zarondight helplessly as he prepared to pierce her neck with his claws. But before Zarondight could touch Bunnie, Kiara jumped in and rammed him away. She bent down and tried to help Bunnie stand up but given her short-circuited legs, she couldn't. She just fell back down onto the ground again.

"What's up? Why can't you stand Bunnie?" asked Kiara.

"Ruben accidentally drenched me and mah robot parts have short-circuited." said Bunnie grimly "Ah can't do anything now."

"I'll help you back into the city." said Kiara, scooping up Bunnie bridal style "Once this fight's over, we'll get you fixed."

Using her cheetah speed, Kiara ran quickly back into New Mobotropolis with Bunnie in hand. Sycranna and Zarondight watched as Kiara escorted Bunnie off the battlefield. Sycranna grinned evilly to himself.

"The cyborg woman's limbs malfunction when drenched in water?" he mused "That could be helpful to us…"

He was then suddenly kicked in the back of the head by a very angry Ruben.

"How dare you make me short-circuit Bunnie accidentally!" he growled "I'll drench you for that!"

Zarondight helped his friend by swatting Ruben off of Sycranna and back over into the wall. Sycranna picked himself up and the two Martians ran over to Ruben so they could finish him off together.

Over to Mercury who was shooting arrows at Silver and Blaze as

furiously as possible. Silver effortlessly caught all the arrows with his psychokinesis and threw them back at Mercury. Mercury dodged the arrows before they could hit her and they caused a tremendous explosion that blasted nearby Martians and Mobians off their feet. Silver gasped in surprise at this.

"Whoa, your arrows explode on impact?!" he exclaimed.

"Only when they hit inorganic matter!" snarled Mercury "And you will get one through your heart for killing my Count Drago! We loved each other, he gave me this bow as a birthday present and we were a happy couple together and yet you two killed him! I know it's you two for Marik described you two to me and you match his descriptions! He also tells me your names are Silver and Blaze!"

"That's right." said Blaze, throwing a fireball at Mercury only to miss as Mercury dodged and fired an arrow at her. Blaze dodged the arrow and continued "And we're sorry about Drago's death OK? We didn't intentionally kill him, Silver only wanted to beat him into submission. He didn't mean to kill him."

"As if I'm gonna believe that!" growled Mercury "Now stop moving around and face your sentences!"

She fired some more arrows at Silver and Blaze but Silver used his psychokinesis to throw them back at Mercury. Mercury dodged the arrows again and continued to fire arrows at the two Mobians.

All the other battles were getting intense and didn't appear to have a particular winner. Count Nyder was holding out well against Wilson & Mandy although they were putting up the best fight, Sierra and Geoffrey St. John were so skilled that they kept shooting at each other and missing for they dodged each other while shooting at each other and Shadow & Rouge were giving Myra a run for her money. Sally, Nicole, Team Chaotix and the other Royal Fighter teams were dealing with the Martian soldiers pretty well, especially Sally and her new bo-staff weapon but the Martian soldiers were picking off the Mobian soldiers rather easily. But despite all this, the Martians and Mobians were pretty even sided so far. This battle was going to go on for a while and it had no clear winner for the moment. Sonic spin-dashed Diablo in the shoulder but Diablo took the blow and he

walloped Sonic with his mace. Sonic hurled through the air and crashed into the landing leg of the Martian ship. Marik smacked Tails off the ship and sent him crashing down beside Sonic. Tails' fur was singed in places from the electrical attacks inflicted on him by Marik and he was struggling to get back up.

"Hey Tails, I don't know about you but I think Marik's dad is a bit of a handful!" grunted Sonic.

"Marik's still the same pain in the butt he was before." grunted Tails "I can barely land a blow on him."

"Well we're gonna have to keep going, we can't let the Martians win." said Sonic, picking himself up.

Then suddenly, Marik jumped down from the ship and tackled Sonic down to the ground from behind. Tails tail-whipped Marik off of Sonic but Diablo grabbed Tails by the head and threw him through the air. Tails came down with a heavy crash in the middle of the chaos with the various Martians and Mobians. Sonic fumed angrily at Diablo and he picked himself up. He spin-dashed at Diablo but again, his attacks were futile for he just bounced off of Diablo's armour.

As for Thomas Tiger, the disabled Field Marshal had an idea on how to swing this battle in the Mobian's favour. He wheeled over to one of the soldiers operating the wheeled-cannons they had brought with them for this attack.

"You there, you and your men aim the cannons at the Martian ship and open fire." ordered Thomas "Hopefully the sight of their ship under siege will make them back down."

"Yes sir." said the soldier, nodding.

All the soldiers operating the cannons lowered the barrels down until they were pointing directly at the Martian whip and then they open fired. Tumultuous blasts rocketed out from the barrels and hit the ship with impressive force, blowing holes in it and breaking the ship apart bit by bit. The tumultuous noise of the cannons blasting the ship caught the attention of everybody on the battlefield. The

Martians stopped fighting the Mobians and they all stared in horror as their ship was fired upon by the cannons. The cannons were firing quite persistently on the huge ship. Martian's hull was generally quite strong, able to withstand small asteroids, but the onslaught of cannon fire began breaking dents and small holes into the tough steel of the ship. If this cannon fire persisted, the ship would be broken to pieces. The Martians weren't prepared for such an attack and if the Mobians were ruthless enough, they'd probably start blasting at them with the cannons! They had to get out of here before their ship was torn apart and they'd be unable to leave Mobius once they'd finished with it. Not to mention the ship contained various supplies that would be helpful to them in this battle so they had to get it out of here and fast. For the sake of his ship, Diablo decided to give the one command he hated giving out.

"Martians! Fall back!" he bellowed "We have to get our ship out of here before it gets destroyed!"

The Martians obeyed instantly and they all fled back into the ship. Thomas Tiger gave the order to cease firing since his plan had worked and the Martians were retreating. After all, they didn't want to KILL the Martians, they just wanted to push them out of Mobius. Killing the Martians would make them no better then them. The Martians all retreated back into the ship as fast as they could and Sycranna scrambled quickly to the pilot's seat so he could take flight. The cannons remained aiming at the ships to make the Martians flee faster and that they were going to fire again, thus tempting them to pick up the pace. Despite all the heavy cannon fire, the ship was still in working order. The ship only had a few large holes and some scorch marks in places. The damage would be easy to fix once they left and touched down in another place. Now, the Martians had to flee the place before anymore damage could be done to them. Sycranna sat down in the pilot's seat and quickly started the ship up. The ship rose up off the ground slowly and steadily and the landing legs ascended back up into the ship. The ship turned around and flew away as quickly as it could. It soared over the forests of Green Hill Zone and vanished from sight. The Mobians watched as the Martian ship flew away.

"And that takes care of them." sneered Sonic "I'm amazed they gave

up so quickly."

"They haven't given up Sonic." muttered Cosmo grimly "They're falling back to save their ship and resources. They'll come back for more once the ship's repaired and they're prepared for a better attack."

"Well that bites." murmured Sonic "And the Martians are really tough too. This is going to be one long battle and chances are, they won't be so easy to scare off the next time. So Sal, what do we do now?"

"We fall back into the safety of the city for now and wait until the Martians attack again." said Sally "We're off to a good start already, let us hope we can keep it up once they attack again."

With that said, the Mobians all fell back into New Mobotropolis, the cannons remaining where they are for they were too big to fit through the city gates. The Martians had fled the battle and the Mobians had won so far but this victory wasn't to last for the Martians weren't going to give up so easily. This battle was only just beginning, the Mobians had been given a taster of the Martians and soon they were going to bear witness to their true wrath…

Footnotes:

***You can read all about it in the Tales from Mobius arc The Final Frontier**

**** If you remember from The Final Frontier in Tales from Mobius, it broke before Sycranna could find out where the Seedrian children were hiding**

***** As remembered in Tales from Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles**

Divide and Conquer Part 1

Story 127: Divide and Conquer Part 1: A Frigid Encounter

The Martian ship soared over the plains of Megapolis and it touched down in the middle of nowhere. It was miles away from the Northern Border so the hiding Dr. Eggman wouldn't pick them up on his monitors or see the ship above the surface. The ship's landing legs deployed and it touched down onto the sandy, rocky ground with a hiss as the legs touched down and the weight of the ship rested atop them like a plank of wood resting atop four upright poles. The moment the ship touched down, some Martian workers ran outside to fix the damages done to it by the cannon attacks earlier. They carried new armour panels on to the roof of the ship and using welding tools, they laid them down over the holes and welded them into place. As for the Martian warriors, Diablo was pacing up and down while the main Martians in the army all stood together in a line. Diablo clearly didn't seem pretty happy with this relatively embarrassing retreat of theirs.

"This is unacceptable!" roared Diablo "We've barely been on Mobius for more then a few minutes and already, we've retreated! Ugh, that element of surprise of theirs has already given them the advantage over us! Curse Silver and Blaze for coming to the present and squealing about us to their friends!"

"We should have known they would do that!" grumbled Marik furiously "So why didn't we?"

"Nobody's perfect Marik dear." said Natasha softly "Even we Martians are capable of making mistakes. And any mistake we make, we act off of. Mistakes build up to future success after all."

"I agree on that mommy." said Sierra.

"You are indeed right Natasha." said Diablo "But if we're to defeat those Mobians, were going to have to devise some tactics that are guaranteed to bring them down. We already know that New Mobotropolis is shielded thanks to Marik and the city is heavily

guarded. We can take down those cannons easily with the tanks but they won't penetrate a force field. We all know what happened when they were faced with a force field that shielded the Seedrian palace*."

The Martians all nodded agreeably as they remembered their ill-fated attempt to storm the Seedrian palace before Count Nyder blew up the planet.

"And knowing the Mobians, they'll be cowards and hide behind their shielded city while they let their cannons take our ship down should we try and attack." muttered Diablo "And even if we stop the cannons, we won't be able to break in. We'll find a way to get inside I assure you but I'd rather get the Mobians to come out and fight us man-to-man. How can we get them to leave the safety of their city and make them vulnerable I wonder?"

The Martians all thought for a moment on that pressing matter. It was indeed a good point. How could they get the Mobians out of New Mobotropolis, pick them off easily and bring down their forces so they could get an easy victory? If they could get the Royal Fighters away from New Mobotropolis, it would make it easier for them to find a way to break inside the city for there wouldn't be anybody to interfere with them as they investigated the city for a weak point and a way inside. The Martians racked their brains and wondered on how they Marik then suddenly had a brilliant idea. An absolutely brilliant and fantastic idea. An idea so brilliant and fantastic that it just might be the Martian's winning card before the war can really begin. Marik's face widened into a grin that just dripped with evil.

"Hallelujah! I've got it!" cried Marik, leaping a foot into the air and cheering madly.

"Please for the love of Tyrahko, don't do that Marik!" snapped Diablo "And don't say "Hallelujah!", we sound like idiots when we say that!"

"Sorry dad." said Marik "It's just…I have a cunning plan. A VERY cunning plan."

"Oh Marik, you wonderful boy! You've got an idea! Let's hear it

honey." said Natasha excitedly.

"How about we "divide and conquer"?" asked Marik "Divide our resources over the regions of Mobians and tempt the Royal Fighters to come out and fight each and everyone of us. They'll be forced to split up and fight each Martian so we can pick them off one by one. The remaining Martians can work on bringing down their defences and picking off any Royal Fighters still at home."

"Marik, that's a brilliant idea." complimented Dranzer, the blue-armoured Martian twin "We're bound to defeat the Mobians that way."

"But who's going to the different regions of Mobius?" asked Obelisk, the green-armoured Martian twin "And who's staying behind?"

"Everybody except Count Nyder will be part of the "divide and conquer" scheme." announced Diablo "Nyder will stay here and find a way into New Mobotropolis. And maybe find out the location of those Chaos Emeralds you've told me about Marik."

"Good idea dad." said Marik.

Nyder looked disappointed. He immediately began protesting.

"I'm staying behind?!" gasped Nyder "But sir, I wish to be part of the divide and conquer scheme! Please, allow me to go out there and terminate Mobians! Consider it me trying to redeem myself for what I did back on Greengate…"

"You are to remain on the ship while the others go out into this world and that's final!" snarled Diablo "Unless, you want Sycranna to tear your other eye out!"

Nyder gulped and he looked over at Sycranna, the Grand Pilot raising his long, slender claws menacingly as if to say "Remember what I did to you before?" As part of his punishment for disobeying Diablo's orders, Nyder had had his left eye ripped out of its socket by Sycranna and now he had an eye patch to cover the missing eye. Nyder stroked his eye patch and shivered heavily. He did not want to get punished again.

"N-n-no sir." said Nyder "I shall take my post and live with it."

"Good." said Diablo "Besides, you're doing the most important job which is breaking and entering their territory. That's more then enough to help you redeem yourself."

"And don't worry about the entering part, I can help with that." said Marik.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out the last remaining Chaos Cluster fragment he had stolen from Dr. Eggman and used to escape the Devatrons**.

"This is a fragment of a Chaos Emerald and you'll be able to use it to teleport into their city." explained Marik "You'll bring them down easily once you warp inside the city."

Count Nyder was well impressed at that. He looked at the glorious cluster fragment in amazement.

"Marik, you're our winning ticket in this war." said Nyder brightly.

"Thank you Nyder." said Marik "Before you do that though, I'll use this to open up a portal to a random place on Mobius and thus, the Martians can divide up and begin the divide and conquer scheme."

"Very well." said Diablo "So, how are we splitting up then Martians?"

"I'll go with a squadron of soldiers." announced Dranzer.

"Me and Mercury will go someplace together." decided Natasha.

"I'll go someplace and I'm taking Obelisk with me." said Sycranna.

"I'll go with Sycranna as he insists." boomed Obelisk "And we're taking a tank and some soldiers with us.

"Me and Sierra will go together and we'll take a squadron and a tank with us." said Marik.

"Yay! I get to go with my big brother!" cheered Sierra.

"I'll go alone since I don't need anybody." said Myra "I'm quite capable on my own."

"I'll go and take a squadron and TWO tanks with me." announced Diablo "And Zarondight can go on his own and take a saucer full of supplies to set up traps for any Mobian he ends up against. After all, he is an expert trap-setter."

"All this sounds very good indeed." said Natasha "And quite fair too. There'll be enough soldiers left for Nyder and he'll have a tank or two on his side for we're not taking them all."

"This plan is going to work to perfection." crooned Count Nyder "And we'll have Marik to thank for it."

"Thank you, I'll happily take credit for our inevitable victories." crowed Marik conceitedly "Now then, it's time to divide and conquer!"

With that said, the Martians all ran off to prepare their decided attack squads for the plan. Once they split up and started drawing the Royal Fighters out, things were going to get very hectic indeed. Mobius was about to bear witness to the Martians true wrath once the plan commenced…

"Try it now Bunnie." said Tails as he tightened one last bolt on Bunnie Rabbot's roboticized leg.

Bunnie, who was sitting up on a bench in Royal HQ's laboratory, twitched her foot a little and then starting bending her leg back and forth. Once the Martians had retreated, the Mobians had all fallen back into the sanctuary of their home city, NewMobotropolis. Tails had made it his first priority to fix Bunnie's short-circuited limbs. He had given Bunnie's limbs more then just a fix though. He had taken the metal casings off completely and replaced them with waterproof metal so that Ruben wouldn't be able to short-circuit her by accident ever again and she'd also be able to go into water without a problem (although she isn't a good swimmer anyway). Bunnie flexed her new waterproof limbs (don't envision her with different looking robot legs

and left robot arm, they still have the same design it's just that they're waterproof now) and she beamed like a sunrise. She hopped off the bench and started walking around the room. Her new limbs worked to perfection. It was as if she'd never been short-circuited in the first place.

"Oh mah stars! They work beautifully Tails!" squealed Bunnie happily. "Thank ya'll so much for upgradin' them!" she added, grasping Tails into a grateful cuddle.

"Ah, heh, heh, heh. You're welcome Bunnie." said Tails modestly.

"I'm so sorry I accidentally squirted you on the battlefield Bunnie." said a very sad and down-hearted looking Ruben "I should have thought twice before trying to get that Martian standing behind you."

You see, Ruben's not used to making mistakes and will often get sad when he makes one. He doesn't take failing lightly after all, a trait that his mother had tried to get him out of before she was tragically killed off by Zira the Ruthless six years ago.

"Oh Ruben, please don't be so down-hearted about yerself." said Bunnie, patting him on the head affectionately "Everybody makes mistakes, even the best of us. Although your little mistake has given me mah new robot limbs that'll never short-circuit in water again so it was kinda good that you did squirt me. It was a sign that ah needed an upgrade pretty much."

That little statement made Ruben feel a little better. His face turned up into a smile.

"Aw…thanks Bunnie. I feel much better now." said Ruben "Now you have waterproof limbs, it means I can't make the same mistake twice."

"It sure does sugah." said Bunnie with a wink "We make mistakes and we work on them, that's what makes us truly Mobian in nature."

"I agree on that." said Ruben brightly "My mother often told me that the one thing that makes us what we are is that neither of us are perfect and that we all have flaws big and small. We may want to be

perfect but in the end, we're perfect just the way we are."

"Yer ma sure is smart Ruben." said Bunnie "Cause she's so right on that."

"Yeah, if only she were still alive…" murmured Ruben as memories of his clan's demise came back to haunt him again. As far as Ruben was concerned, no matter how long he lived, he'd never truly get over the demise of his clan.

"Ah'm sure yer mom would be very proud of ya Ruben." said Bunnie sympathetically "Now then, shall we see how everybody's doin' in the rest room?"

"Sure." said Ruben brightly "I'd love to see how everybody's doing."

But before they could go anywhere, Tails stopped them dead in their tracks. He had spotted something on the computer monitors and was convinced it wasn't something good. The screen was full of info boxes telling them that the Royal Fighters were receiving incoming messages. Something was going on and Tails could feel his stomach tighten as he dared to think on what the messages were about. Were they from the Martians? Possible since Marik knew where they were and would likely have informed his parents about their whereabouts and thus, they'd be able to send them a message. Or perhaps they were something else entirely. Tails wasn't going to know until he looked at them.

"Hold on a minute you two, we've got incoming messages." said Tails "I dread to think what they are though."

"I hope they aren't Martians, who knows what they'd have to say to us." muttered Ruben.

"Ah don't think they'll be from the Martians, what would those scoundrels wanna send us a message for?" asked Bunnie in wonder.

"Well I'm just about to find out who's sending them." said Tails.

Tails sat down to the computer monitors and looked at the messages. They weren't voice messages or anything, they were

written messages much like a comment left on Facebook or DeviantArt or even a text message on a mobile phone. And the messages came from seven different locations all over Mobius. Tails' heart skipped a beat as he saw where each message was from. One message was form Holoska, a snowy place much like the Earth state of Alaska in the USA, one was from Grand Metropolis, one was from a place near Black Acropolis, the land of obsidian that Sonic, Tails, Amy and the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters barely lived through, one was from RailCanyon, one was from Soleanna, one was from Kingdom Valley and one was from Megapolis. All the messages were urgent cries for help and they were all about the same thing: The places were under attack from strange beings the people had never seen before. The residents of each place had sent the messages in hopes of getting the Royal Fighters involved with this madness. Tails almost fainted at the urgency of the messages and what they were about. Seven different locations all over Mobius were under attack from some strange creature and it was obvious what they were referring to: the Martians! But why? Why would they suddenly split up and attack seven different places on Mobius? It didn't make a lick of sense to Tails but the Royal Fighters couldn't ignore a call for help. Seven calls for help in this case. Tails got up from his seat and charged out of the laboratory faster then anyone could say "Bob's your uncle". Ruben and Bunnie had a feeling that Tails' reaction was to a serious matter and that something bad was going on so they ran out after him to see what had startled the little fox so badly. Tails ran down the corridors and all the way to the rest room where all the others were. Everybody was in this room, including the other Royal Fighter teams. They were all sitting around and talking more than anything though save for Queen Sally Acorn who was doing more staff training (and had given herself bruises galore given how many times she had accidentally smacked herself with the staff. She is learning after all). Tails burst into the room, much to the surprise of everybody in it, and he skidded to a halt just in front of Sally as she twirled the staff around. Sonic leaped up from his chair and wandered over to Tails to see what was wrong.

"Tails, buddy, what the heck's the matter?!" blurted Sonic "You look like someone just set fire to your tails!"

"You're not gonna believe this everybody!" shrieked Tails "The

Martians have split-up and are attacking seven different places all over Mobius!"

That earned a chorus of gasps from all the Royal Fighters in the room. Sally in particular was shocked to hear all this.

"Are…are you quite sure Tails?" said Sally hoarsely.

"Positive!" blurted Tails "The computers in the lab received seven messages coming from seven different locations all over the world! They came from Holoska, Grand Metropolis, Black Acropolis, RailCanyon, Soleanna, KingdomValley and Megapolis! They're all under attack from the Martians! We've gotta stop them and fast!"

The Royal Fighters all mused to one another in wonder.

"This doesn't make a lick of sense at all." said the Royal Fighter tomboy Mandy Mouse "Why would those freaks invade Mobius, give us a big battle, flee because their ship's under siege and then suddenly divide their forces and attack random areas all over the world?"

"It's all part of their conquest I bet." said her husband, Wilson the Dog "After all, that's what conquest is isn't it? Take over the world? That means attack everywhere to ensure you conquer the world?"

"Wilson has a point mates." said Geoffrey St. John "But we ain't gonna let them blighters attack innocents and destroy valuable locations! We've got to stop them all!"

"But we can't stop *seven* different attacks all happening simultaneously!" shrieked Nicole in alarm "Not even Sonic can be in two places at once!"

"Indeed Nicole, which is why we're going to do what they're doing." said Sally "We're going to divide our sources and stop them. We maybe weakened for we won't be all together but we will do what it takes to save those places under siege."

"They do say "united we stand, divided we fall" but we're not gonna fall to the Martians, no siree!" declared Sonic "United or divided, we will stop them!"

"But we can't all go, who's going to defend New Mobotropolis?" noted Miranda Mongoose "I mean, what if the Martians haven't *all* gone to those locations and there's some left behind waiting to ambush us? I have a feeling the Martians have made sure there's some men left behind to attack NewMobotropolis as it's an important city for them to attack."

"I thought of that too Miranda." said Sally "Which is why I've decided to divide the Royal Fighters as follows: Sonic & Tails will go to Holoska, Wilson and Mandy will handle the Martians in Grand Metropolis, Knuckles and Shade will go to Black Acropolis, Bunnie, Geoffrey & Ruben will go to Rail Canyon, Silver & Blaze will deal with the Martians in Soleanna ,Amy, Cream & Cosmo will be sent to Kingdom Valley and Shadow and Rouge will be the ones to go to Megapolis. The rest of us will stay here and defend NewMobotropolis."

"Sounds good Sally-girl but do ya'll think we'll handle the Martians like that with us so divided and spread out?" asked Bunnie "Ah mean, we could be fightin' hundreds of Martians and in each place there's only two or three of us to do the fightin' due to the way you split us up."

"Come on Bunnie, we beat the Devatrons, our strongest enemies yet, the Martians will be nothing compared to them." put in Geoffrey, putting a hand on Bunnie's shoulder "We can handle those blokes."

"Ah'm sure we can sugah but it's just…" began Bunnie.

"Bunnie, there maybe a lot of Martians out there but I'm putting my faith in the heroes that I KNOW will stop a threat like this." said Sally reassuringly "I wouldn't spread you so thin if I didn't have any faith in any of you. When you encounter the Martians in your designated area, just focus on nothing but taking them down and should you need back-up, give us a call and we'll send reinforcements."

"That makes me feel a lot better." said Bunnie with her organic hand over her chest "Thanks sugah."

"Anytime." said Sally happily "Silver, you still got your Super Warp Ring?" she then asked the silver furred hedgehog "We'll need it to

transport the designated Royal Fighters to their respective locations."

"Sure thing your majesty." said Silver, fishing the warp ring out and twirling it around his finger.

"We'll use that to transport everybody to their respective destinations." explained Sally "And when they want to come back, I'll open up the warp ring and welcome our fighters back into Royal HQ. I'll keep the warp ring safe for Silver and Blaze as they go to their destination and I'll be the one to bring them back into Royal HQ when their mission's complete. Sonic and Tails will deploy first so open up the warp ring to Holoska Silver." she ordered.

"Just a secy Silver." said Sonic quickly before Silver could move a muscle "Me and Tails will need to warp up warmly, it's cold over in Holoska."

With that said, Sonic zipped off and in two seconds flat, came back with a pair of coats and a scarf each for himself and Tails (he IS fast after all). Sonic and Tails put on their coats and scarves and they buttoned the coats up to their chins. They'd be toasty warm over in Holoska with those big, thick coats. Sally walked up to the two and she put a hand each on Sonic and Tails' shoulders.

"You two be careful out there." she said, giving Sonic and Tails a big hug "We do not want to lose our best members."

"We'll be careful Queenie." said Sonic casually, hugging Sally back along with Tails "We'll be back before dinner, don't you worry. I know I'm gonna be fine since I've got Tails to back me up in this mission."

"Same to you Sonic." said Tails with a thumbs up to his best friend.

Then suddenly, somebody threw her arms around Tails and grasped him into a surprised hug. It was Cosmo. Cosmo was giving Tails a big farewell hug.

"Please come back safely Tails." begged Cosmo "I've lost my family, my friends, everybody on my planet. I don't want to lose my best friend on Mobius too."

"Oh Cosmo, I'll come back, you know I will." said Tails, stroking the Seedrian's face affectionately "And I promise you with all my heart that I'll make the Martians pay for wiping out your kind and making you the last. I promise."

"I don't want you to get revenge on them Tails, revenge is wrong and it's unhealthy." said Cosmo "I just want you to stop those monsters from bringing the same ruination to your world as they did mine."

"OK then, I promise you that." said Tails, giving Cosmo a peck on the cheek without her realizing it "Those Martians will be outta here before you know it."

Cosmo beamed happily at Tails' words. Sonic smiled at Tails too. He was impressed with how heart-felt the fox could be.

"That was beautiful Tails." said Sonic "Well Sally, we'll be off now. Goodbye for the moment."

"Goodbye for now." said Sally with an expression fit for a farewell scenario "And please, save Holoska from the Martians there."

"You got it." said Sonic "Sayonara guys and gals! We'll be back soon!"

"Goodbye Sonic." said everybody in the room.

With that said, Silver opened up the warp ring to Holoska and Sonic and Tails gracefully charged through the warp ring like a trained tiger leaping through a blazing ring of fire. After they went through the warp ring, it vanished behind them and they landed feet first in a heap of snow. The warmth of Royal HQ was quickly chased away by the bitter cold that swept over them the moment they entered Holoska through the warp ring. The wind was howling loudly and blowing callously and the snow was falling heavily. There was nothing but snow all around for Holoska was the place on Mobius that's always snowing. Sonic and Tails raised the hoods to their coats over their heads to keep the cold and snow off their heads.

"Brrr…I always did hate the cold." muttered Sonic "I do hope we

don't encounter Blizzard the Hedgehog while we're here too. Mind you, she's in White Acropolis and this is Holoska, thousands of miles from White Acropolis so we shouldn't run into her here."

"I think I'd rather run into her then a Martian though." muttered Tails "She was nowhere near as scary or as powerful. So where do you think the Martians might be then?"

"Likely the local village." suggested Sonic "I don't know where it is though so we'll split up and look for it. Should I find it, I'll call you on my wrist-mounted communicator and guide you to it and you do the same should you find it."

"It's a good thing we all had these installed after the Raiju Clan was defeated." said Tails "They're gonna help us a lot should we need to make long ranged communications. You be careful Sonic."

"You be careful out there too Tails." said Sonic "See you later."

With that said, Sonic ran off as fast as his legs would carry him, snow flying into the air in great chunks as he ran off to look for the local Holoska village. Tails twisted his namesakes around one another and took off like a helicopter. He flew off through the snowy plains of Holoska, keeping his hood over his head and trying to make sure that the snow didn't splatter in his face as he flew. After all, going fast in a snowstorm guarantees your vision being blurred by snow falling into your eyes. Tails cupped his hands over his eyes to shelter them from the snow and he looked around for the local village of Holoska.

"Hmm…it would have been convenient of us if we'd brought a map." mused Tails as the snowfall got heavier…

Over at the village of Holoska, Dranzer and his squadron of soldiers blasted the last hut to pieces with their cannons. Dranzer had been the one to go to Holoska (the locations were picked at random so Dranzer could have ended up anywhere) and he had decided to stir things up and catch Royal Fighter attentions by destroying the village of Holoska and scaring off the locals or killing them if

necessary. Dranzer had killed a few just for sport but he'd let most of them go so they could stir up enough worry and send the message to the Royal Fighters. After all, a dead man can't send a message. The entire village, which consisted of wooden huts for various functions such as homes, shops and other facilities, had been reduced to timber and splinters in a matter of minutes with all the attacking Martians. The whole experience had delighted Dranzer greatly and he was grinning maniacally to himself.

"That was a lot of fun." he sneered "Makes trudging through this frigid wasteland worth it. Hopefully that'll bring the attention of some Royal Fighters and I can pick them off one by one."

"I can't wait to hear from the others." said a Martian who was dressed completely in a black body-suit with bits of armour in places and wore a black helmet with a large visor "I bet they'll all have good news to tell us and I wonder whom they'll be killing?"

"I wonder whom I'LL be killing." chortled Dranzer wickedly "I do hope I'm the one to crush Sonic the Hedgehog though, that'll bring me the biggest ounce of honour I could ever hope to grasp in my entire career. I know who I'm looking for since Marik showed us a picture of Sonic and I remember the names of his friends that he's described to me. So I'll easily know who I'm going to kill should any Royal Fighter come my way."

"I'm sure the Royal Fighters will respond." said the Martian in black "I saw a citizen tapping away on a computer and it looked like he was sending a message for he was muttering "Must call the Royal Fighters!" to himself as he tapped away. That and his expression was rather frantic."

"So somebody's managed to send the Royal Fighters the message." sneered Dranzer "Good, that means some scrawny Mobian or maybe a whole squadron of Mobians will come over here and come to their doom."

"How long we'll wait is anyone's guess." sighed the Martian in black "But we'll wait, it's the only way we'll get a Royal Fighter to terminate."

"Dranzer! Dranzer!" screeched another Martian who was a female Martian in a skin tight black bodysuit and wearing pieces of armour on her shoulders, lower arms and chest "There's a twin-tailed creature down at the bottom of the hill! I think it's a Royal Fighter!"

"Twin-tailed creature…?" mused Dranzer.

That sounded familiar. Marik had described such a creature to him. Maybe this was a sign the Royal Fighters had sent out some members and thus, the divide and conquer scheme could begin! Dranzer ran over to the edge of the hilltop that they were standing upon (the village is up a high hill) and he looked over the edge to see what was down at the bottom. To his surprise, he saw Tails down at the bottom, flying around and looking for the village. He looked visibly tired too and he touched down onto the ground to rest. As he touched down, he looked around to see if the village was nearby. Dranzer grinned to himself as he saw Tails.

"I know who that is." he purred to himself "Marik described to us a twin-tailed fox creature named Tails who has the unnatural but gifted ability to fly with his twin-tailed appendages and is the best friend of Sonic the Hedgehog. Marik tells me that if he's around, Sonic's likely not far behind."

"So what do we do sir?" asked the female soldier "Do we kill him first and wait for Sonic to find his corpse and then kill him too?"

"No Tori." said Dranzer "We capture the fox and use him to draw out Sonic. Lance, the net-gun please." he said to the black-suited Martian standing next to him without even looking at him.

Lance obeyed, albeit with a puzzled look on his face behind his helmet. He ran over to the chest of weapons which the squad had brought with them and he pulled out three compartments that set up the net-gun. He assembled the net-gun by clipping the respective parts together and he ran back over to Dranzer with it. The gun was loaded with its only net. Lance handed the gun over to Dranzer and Dranzer primed it. He aimed it down at Tails.

"But sir, that thing's only got one net. You'll have to get a perfect shot if you wanna get it right first time." said Tori, the female soldier

with Dranzer.

"Then I'll MAKE it perfect." hissed Dranzer, his finger curling over the trigger.

He had the net-gun aimed squarely at Tails and the fox was showing no signs of getting ready to move or anything. There was no way he could possibly miss this shot. Dranzer smiled icily (funny he should smile like that for he's in icy cold weather) to himself and he pulled the trigger. The gun blasted a huge, metal wire net out of its barrel and it sailed towards Tails. The net snagged Tails and covered him up like a sheet of cling film being wrapped around yesterday's leftovers. It was like shooting a hand out of a cannon and said hand grabbing whatever it was being shot at. Tails was wrapped up in the net and the terrified fox began squirming madly in the grasp of the net. He was very frightened. He was trapped and Sonic was nowhere to be seen so he couldn't call him for help. Dranzer cackled madly and he jumped down from the hill (which is twenty-four feet high by the way!). He landed down onto the snow down below and strode over to his captive. Tails looked up at Dranzer and his eyes widened at the sight of him. He gasped in horror as Dranzer smirked at him.

"Got you little fox." sneered Dranzer "Now you'll be used as bait to draw Sonic out and make him surrender."

"Sonic will never surrender to you!" cried Tails "Now you let me outta this net right now or you'll be very sorry!"

"Now where would the logic in releasing a prisoner just after I've caught one be?" snorted Dranzer "You're staying in there…until I have no further use for you." he added in a very dark, slithering tone of voice.

Tails gulped nervously. He knew what Dranzer meant by that. Dranzer then picked up the net that Tails was trapped in and he glowered at Tails.

"So Tails. Where is Sonic?" asked Dranzer coldly.

"How d-d-do y-y-you kn-kn-know my n-n-name?" shivered Tails (and

it's not because of the cold).

"Marik described each and every one of Sonic's friends to us." explained Dranzer "He told all us Martians your names and appearances and even your attributes so I know who you are little fox. Now, where's Sonic?"

"P-p-please d-d-don't th-think I'm l-l-lying b-b-but I don't know w-w-where he is." said Tails timidly "W-w-w-we sp-sp-split up t-t-to f-f-find the village of H-H-Holoska."

"Well the village is already destroyed so you're a bit late." crowed Dranzer "And if you don't know where Sonic is then we'll wait for him. Or…"

He narrowed his gaze at Tails.

"Do you have any method of communication at all?" asked Dranzer in a low, rumbling tone of voice "Maybe a wrist-mounted communicator or something?"

"Y-y-yes." said Tails feebly.

"Then contact Sonic and bring him to me." ordered Dranzer.

"No!" snapped Tails, trying to be brave "I'm not gonna let you kill Sonic!"

Dranzer growled at Tails, the fox whimpering in fear as his growls rumbled through his ears ominously like a low, ominous tiger growl.

"Then I shall do it myself." he snarled.

He reached two fingers into the net and pulled Tails' glove down, revealing the communicator he was wearing underneath. Dranzer gripped it with his finger and thumb and he yanked it off Tails' wrist. He switched it on and spoke into it.

"Sonic the Hedgehog, this is the Martian who is attacking this place, do you read me?" asked Dranzer.

Sonic, who was still running around looking for the village of

Holoska, stopped running and he looked at his wrist. He could feel the communicator vibrating as Dranzer attempted to contact him. He switched his communicator on and answered it.

"Tails, what's up bro?" asked Sonic.

"You are mistaken Sonic the Hedgehog." purred Dranzer's deep, commanding voice from the other side of the communicator "I am the Martian attacking this place. My name is Dranzer, Squadron Leader of the Martian fleet, and I am calling you through your friend's communication's device so that I may reveal to you my precise coordinates."

Sonic's blood ran colder then the snowstorm blowing in his face.

"You creep, if you've hurt Tails then so help me I'm gonna…" growled Sonic.

"Curb your anger and listen carefully." snapped Dranzer "I will tell you only once my coordinates. I am at the bottom of a huge hill and at the top of the hill stands the destroyed village of Holoska."

"The village is destroyed?!" blurted Sonic "That's it, you're going down Dranzer! I'll be there, just you wait!"

"I already am." purred Dranzer.

Then he switched the communicator off. Sonic switched his off and ran off in search of Dranzer. He couldn't understand why Dranzer was blatantly telling him where he was. Was he begging for Sonic to stop him or something? Or was he luring Sonic into a trap? Regardless, Sonic would be too fast for the trap to catch him so falling for it wasn't going to do much harm for him. He just hoped that Tails was OK…

A short while later, Dranzer had set up an ambush for Sonic. He and his squadron were standing ready for the hedgehog's arrival while Lance and Tori were hiding. Lance was up at the top of the hill with a bazooka in hand. Tori was hiding behind some snow-covered rocks and was armed with a bazooka too. Once Dranzer gave the

signal, they would leap out of their hiding places and blast Sonic to smithereens with a rocket from their bazookas. Tails was still trapped in the net and he was sitting on the snow-covered ground next to Dranzer. The snow-storm was beginning to die down a little so the snow would be less of an interference. Dranzer waited and waited for his victim to show up. Dranzer was one of the most patient Martians in the army. He had been known to sit around waiting for *hours* just for his victims to arrive before he would blast them with his deadly cannon. Tails was a bit worried by Dranzer's ominous and patient waiting. An enemy this clam usually means that it's going to be more dangerous then an enemy who's usually very violent or something. And judging by how eerily calm and patient Dranzer was, he was likely going to be a VERY dangerous enemy. Dranzer kept his yellow eyes fixed ahead of him as he waited for Sonic to arrive. It was like waiting for a VERY important parcel delivery only there wouldn't be a postman with a package coming to him, it would be Sonic the Hedgehog coming straight to him. And finally, after waiting for what seemed like forever to Dranzer, Sonic arrived onto the scene, sending chunks of snow hurling into the air as he zoomed through it. It had taken Sonic a while to find Dranzer due to the fact Dranzer wasn't every specific on where he was (he could have been at the bottom of any hill since Holoska has lots of them) but he'd found him at last. Sonic screeched to a halt, sending snow flying at Dranzer's feet. Dranzer didn't even flinch, he just stood there ever so calmly with his face as stoic as the darkest of people.

"Sonic the Hedgehog." boomed Dranzer "I will request, only once, that you surrender yourself to the Martians."

"Oh yeah? And who's gonna make me?" snorted Sonic "You've destroyed a village and you've kidnapped my best friend. That kind of behaviour to me is an invitation for a butt-kicking Dranzer!"

"If you do not surrender yourself obstinate one…" said Dranzer coldly "Then I will terminate your friend."

The Martian soldiers standing behind him drew out some guns and they pointed them at the netted up Tails. Tails whimpered in fear as the guns were pointed at him. Sonic gasped but he quickly turned his attention back to Dranzer.

"Nice try Dranzer." sniffed Sonic "But I can see your little plot a mile away. If I stand down, you'll kill us anyway."

"I give you my word that no harm shall come to either of you if you stand down." lied Dranzer "After all, Diablo gave me strict orders to ONLY capture you. He will decide your fate once we get back to the ship."

"Sonic, please don't! It's a trap!" cried Tails.

"Silence!" snapped Dranzer, gritting his teeth at Tails "So Sonic, do you stand down?"

"No." said Sonic "I'm still not entirely convinced here. Now let Tails go before I use your face as my new doormat!"

"You surrender or he dies!" roared Dranzer "Simple as that!"

The Martian soldiers curled their fingers around the triggers to their guns and they prepared to blast Tails' head off. Tails grew ever more frightened and he squirmed furiously in the net. Sonic didn't want his friend to die but he knew he couldn't surrender since the Martians were doing the most predictable plan ever. Then Sonic had an idea. An idea that would guarantee Tails' safety but not him and Tails becoming Martian prisoners. Sonic held his hands up and threw himself down onto his knees.

"OK, I give, I give!" exclaimed Sonic desperately "Please, just please don't hurt Tails!"

"Sonic, don't surrender to them, they'll kill you!" shrieked Tails.

"SILENCE!" thundered Dranzer.

His voice echoed around the snowy scenery and the hilltops began to shudder. If Dranzer didn't keep his voice down, an avalanche would likely start. Dranzer turned his attention back to Sonic.

"Very well Sonic. I'm glad you came to your senses." said Dranzer "As promised, no harm shall come to you or your friend."

"Yeah, yeah." said Sonic casually "So what are you gonna do now?

Stick some cuffs on me and take me back to the ship?"

"Exactly." said Dranzer, an evil smirk spreading out on his face.

That was the signal for Lance and Tori to come out and fire. The two Martians leaped out of their hiding places and fired a rocket each at Sonic! Fortunately, Sonic had heard them coming out of their hiding places so he had already leaped onto his feet and zoomed out the way just as they fired. The two rockets struck each other and caused a terrific explosion that would have easily killed Sonic had they hit him. The explosion caused a lot of smoke and snow to fly everywhere and the Martians shielded their eyes as it drifted over them. Sonic whizzed past Dranzer and snatched up the netted Tails while they weren't looking. Sonic zoomed away from them and he used a nifty little spin-dash to cut Tails' net open and free him from its clutches. The smoke from the explosion died down and Dranzer and his squad realized that Tails was gone. They turned around and saw Sonic and Tails standing before them and ready to fight. Dranzer growled like a furious lion at them.

"You deceiver!" he snarled "I will eviscerate you for this! Martians, kill them both!"

"You'll have to catch me first!" sneered Sonic.

Sonic whizzed towards the Martians and he spin-dashed them all down onto the ground. They soon picked themselves up and began shooting at Sonic with their rifles. Sonic dodged all the shots with ease and he spin-dashed them all into the ground once again. Lance and Tori charged out of their hiding places and they drew out a rifle each. They began shooting madly at Sonic but Sonic dodged all their shots and he spin-dashed Lance in the gut. Tori retaliated with a roundhouse kick to the back that knocked Sonic down into the snow. Tails however got the drop on the female Martian soldier by flying towards her and tail-whipping her in the back of her head. Lance picked himself up and he punched Tails in the face. Then he and Tori both walloped Tails down onto the ground with their fists. Sonic spin-dashed them both in the back and sent them tumbling through the snow. Dranzer could see that his squadron was going to be of no use in this battle so he decided to just do it himself (if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself as they say).

Dranzer whipped out his handheld laser cannon and he blasted at Sonic and Tails as furiously as he could. He was blasting more furiously then even the most deranged of gunmen. Sonic and Tails ran for their lives as they were showered by laser blasts. The blasts struck the snow and sent it flying everywhere and they were close to hitting Sonic and Tails for the blasts were hitting the ground just at their heels. Sonic and Tails dived for cover behind the hill top and Dranzer ran off to catch up to them and blast them to smithereens. As Sonic listened out for Dranzer, he put his hands on Tails' shoulders and looked him directly in the eyes.

"OK, big boy with the big toy's coming this way Tails." said Sonic "I'll handle him. You stay here and don't come out unless I call for help. Got that?"

"Yes Sonic. Please be careful." said Tails.

Sonic just gave Tails the usual thumbs up sign and he ran off to deal with the furious Dranzer. He charged out from behind the hilltop and he spin-dashed Dranzer directly in the gut, sending him flying backwards and causing him to drop his laser cannon. Dranzer landed on his back and skidded across the snow. Dranzer picked himself up and he braced himself as Sonic came in for another attack. Sonic spin-dashed at him but Dranzer blocked the blow by holding out his arms in an X shape. Dranzer pushed Sonic back and then ran off to retrieve his cannon. Sonic beat him to it and he picked the cannon up. He threw it directly at Dranzer and the cannon clonked him on the head. Dranzer growled furiously at Sonic and he picked the cannon back up. But he didn't fire at Sonic. He instead just put it away as he could see it wasn't going to do him any good. Weapons are suitable for some opponents, but not every opponent. Dranzer then drew out his sword and he pointed it directly at Sonic. Sonic sweat-dropped a little for he knew that swords were dangerous but he didn't let it bother him. Dranzer swung his sword at Sonic but Sonic dodged the sword and Dranzer hit the ground. Lance picked himself up and he drew out a sword of his own. He ran over to Sonic but Sonic grabbed him by the wrist, kneed him in the gut and then snatched his sword off of him. He then threw Lance over onto his back and twirled the sword around. Dranzer smirked at Sonic. He was looking forward to seeing how well he could sword-

fight and how easily he could defeat him. Sonic raised the sword above his head and he jumped into the air. Dranzer readied his sword and the two ended up clashing swords with each other. The clangs rung through the snowy scenery as the metal of the swords clashed violently against each other. Sonic and Dranzer clashed swords as hard as they could with Dranzer advancing forward and getting Sonic to back away. But then it was Sonic's turn to make Dranzer back away. Sonic started clashing swords more furiously and he was swinging the sword faster and faster so Dranzer was having trouble keeping up with him. Sonic then jumped up to Dranzer's eye line and he kicked Dranzer in the chest as furiously as he could. Dranzer skidded backwards but he remained standing. He pointed the sword at Sonic and then started twirling it around furiously and frantically for no particular reason other then just to show off. Dranzer then roared an intimidating battle cry and he charged towards Sonic. He and Sonic ended up clashing swords again but Dranzer got the drop on Sonic by manoeuvring his sword just right to force Sonic's down onto the ground and then punch him in the face with his free arm. Sonic staggered backwards and Dranzer tried to cleave him in two with his sword. Sonic blocked the blow with his sword and they two pushed on each other's swords. Dranzer however broke the struggle by ramming the hand-guard into Sonic's face. Sonic staggered backwards, clutching his face and Dranzer attempted to cleave him in two before he could ready himself but Tails quickly rolled up a snowball and threw it in Dranzer's eyes before he could make the killer blow. This gave Sonic time to spin-dash attack Dranzer while he was rubbing snow out of his eyes. Dranzer was brought down onto the ground and Sonic attempted to slash him with his sword. Dranzer blocked the blow and used his leg to throw Sonic over himself and into the snow behind him. Dranzer picked himself up and he sheathed his sword. Sonic wondered what Dranzer was up to but he didn't drop his weapon. He ran at Dranzer but Dranzer uppercut Sonic in the face and made him drop the sword. Sonic hurled into the hilltop beside them and he rolled back down to the bottom. Sonic groaned in pain as he lay there in the snow, covered in chunks of it. Sonic picked himself up, shook off the snow, and charged at Dranzer. He jumped into the air and attempted to kick Dranzer but Dranzer dodged the attack and walloped him in the back of his head. Sonic hurled into the snow face first and he grimaced in pain. Dranzer attempted to

fist-slam Sonic but Sonic rolled out of the way and jumped back onto his feet. Sonic punched Dranzer in the face but Dranzer punched him back and sent him hurling across the battlefield. Sonic lay down front first in the snow. He was a little weakened from that beating he'd received and he was having trouble getting up. Dranzer's punches were like getting whacked by a baseball, they were almost as powerful as a Devatron's punch. Dranzer smirked at Sonic and he drew out his laser cannon. To make Sonic's death more sadistic and grisly, he'd set it to bomb mode, meaning it would fire bombs instead of lasers.

"You have fought admirably and honourably Sonic. I admire such battle skills." boomed Dranzer "But I'm afraid such an honourable duel must come to an end…"

He aimed the cannon directly at Sonic's face and prepared to fire. Sonic however jumped up to his feet and kicked the barrel of the cannon up just as Dranzer pulled the trigger. Dranzer staggered over onto his back due to the weight of the cannon pushing against him as it was forced upwards and the cannon accidentally fired a couple of bombs up into the hilltops! The bombs exploded and the explosions shook the hilltops like rattles. Then…it happened. The hilltops crumbled and an avalanche began! Dranzer looked up in horror as a colossal avalanche of snow began to roar down towards them like a stampede of wildebeest. Nothing could be more terrifying then watching a huge wave of snow soar down towards the ground, sweeping up everything in its path and burying anything alive should anyone get caught up in it. Dranzer put away his cannon and he ran for his life as fast as he could run. Sonic got to his feet and zoomed away at top speed. Tails took to the skies and he flew up into the skies where the avalanche couldn't get him. Dranzer's whole squadron ran for their lives too. Sonic & Tails managed to clear the avalanche zone and the Martians all ran in the opposite direction to the avalanche so it couldn't get them. Dranzer however wasn't so lucky. He was swept away in the avalanche and he vanished under the tonnes of snow that roared down the hilltops and over the snow covered ground. The destroyed village of Holoska at the top of the hill was also covered in the avalanche meaning that an entirely new village had to be built somewhere else once this was over. Sonic and Tails ran and flew respectively as far away from the avalanche

as they could. After they finally stopped, they looked over at the avalanche and watched as it finished falling. There was now a huge pile of snow at the bottom of the hill. The snow had piled up to the point where the hilltops were now the perfect ski-slope for any skiers around. Sonic and Tails were amazed at all this and after the avalanche had stopped, they walked off.

"Well, I guess that's that." said Sonic casually "A big old avalanche starts and buries all the Martians."

"How do you know that Sonic?" asked Tails "They might have escaped before the avalanche could get them."

"Well I know for certain it got Dranzer." said Sonic "I saw him get buried as I ran for my life. He's long gone now. The Martians attacking Holoska have been defeated and our mission's accomplished."

"I guess so." said Tails "I mean, Dranzer's men aren't gonna attack with their leader dead are they?"

"They'll likely fall back." said Sonic "And report the news to their master Diablo. Oh well, the Mobians score one and the Martians score zero in this round. Let's go home and tell everybody the good news."

"We won't have entirely good news to tell them." sighed Tails sadly "Holoska's village was destroyed and now it's been buried by the avalanche. The people of Holoska are homeless now."

"Not entirely." said Sonic reassuringly "There's more then one village in this country. The citizens of this one will have fled to another village. Just a pity we lost the one up in the hills. Hopefully they'll rebuild it when they get the time."

Sonic then switched on his communicator and spoke into it.

"Sally, it's Sonic. Mission accomplished." he said "Warp us back."

"OK Sonic, just hang on a second." came Sally's voice on the other side of the communicator.

So Sonic and Tails waited for Sally to open up the warp ring and let them back into Royal HQ where it would be nice and warm and they could get the chill out of their noses. They'd have to wait though for Sally was dealing with Count Nyder and the remaining Martians left on the ship. That and there were others in the queue to come back to Royal HQ. As Sonic & Tails waited for the warp ring to take them back to Royal HQ, they wandered off through the snowy plains of Holoska. The moment they left though, an arm burst out of the snow. And that arm belonged to Dranzer. He was alive and he was going to be furious once he got out of the snow he was buried deeply in…

Footnotes:

*** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 16 The Final Frontier***

**** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 13: Last Attempt at Victory***

Well people, Divide and Conquer has begun! We've seen Sonic & Tails' battle so let's see how the others are doing! Next time, we're going to see Wilson & Mandy fight Natasha and Mercury in Grand Metropolis so fasten your seatbelts! It's going to be a thrill ride! Plus a surprise somebody will end up joining the battle against the Martians too...

Thanks to everybody for your feedback over the years. You make me so proud to be a writer...

Divide and Conquer Part 2

Story 128: Divide and Conquer Part 2: Madness in the City

"Well Sally, we'll be off now. Goodbye for the moment." said Sonic the Hedgehog as he prepared to go to Holoska to deal with the Martians there.

"Goodbye for now." said Queen Sally Acorn with an expression fit for a farewell scenario "And please, save Holoska from the Martians there."

"You got it." said Sonic "Sayonara guys and gals! We'll be back soon!"

"Goodbye Sonic." said everybody in the room.

With that said, Silver opened up the warp ring to Holoska and Sonic and Tails gracefully charged through the warp ring like a trained tiger leaping through a blazing ring of fire. Sonic and Tails vanished through the warp ring and it closed behind them, sealing them off from Royal HQ and leaving them in Holoska until it was time for them to come back. The Martians had split up and were attacking seven different locations on Mobius simultaneously. Thus, the Royal Fighters had been forced to do the exact same thing, divide their resources and tackle the Martian threats in each place. Sonic and Tails had just gone to Holoska where they would eventually meet up against Dranzer and his squadron of soldiers as we saw in the last episode. Now Sonic and Tails had left, it was time to deploy the next couple of Royal Fighters.

"So, who's going next?" asked Sally.

"We are your majesty." said the Royal Fighter tomboy Mandy Mouse with her husband Wilson the Dog standing beside her "We're off to Grand Metropolis I believe?"

"You are indeed." said Sally.

"Heh, funny. We were sent to Grand Metropolis months ago to help the Royal Fighters there*." noted Wilson with a slight chuckle "And now we're going back there to stop some Martians. Only thing is, we won't be helping any Royal Fighters because Bostock and Mortimer are dead now." he said sadly, thinking back to their deaths at the hands of the sinister Devatrons during the now almost legendary Devatron war.

"Yeah, it is a pity." said Mandy grimly "I bet they'd love to help us beat them. As is, we're going to have to go it alone for this one. Silver dude, open up the warp ring to Grand Metropolis."

"You got it Mandy." said Silver, opening up the warp ring "It's a good thing I memorized the locations of Mobius from my own time and through books I've read over the ages otherwise I wouldn't be able to use this to get you lot anywhere."

The warp ring opened up and on the other side was the city of Grand Metropolis, the now largest city on Mobius since Central City had been razed by the Egg Fleet last year and was under construction much like New Mobotropolis had been until it was completed.

"I always said research was important." said Wilson brightly "Well then, me and Mandy will be going now. Although I'm kinda scared. I mean, we had a tough time taking down Marik and he's just ONE Martian, we'll be facing other Martians and heaven knows what they're like if Marik's as bad as he is!"

"Wilson honey, don't worry." said Mandy affectionately "I don't like to see my cutesy little boy all scared and worried, it makes me feel nervous too."

"It's OK to be scared isn't it?" asked Wilson "I was always told it's better to be scared of something then be brave about everything."

"Can't argue with that baby." said Mandy "But we can't be scared, we have Martians to deal with. We have to be brave Wilson, the world's counting on everybody, us included. Please be brave Wilson, for my sake, for everybody's sake."

Wilson looked at his wife dreamily. No wonder he married her, Mandy was always the one to turn to when he felt afraid. Somehow, that mouse always made him feel braver just by giving him that warm loving smile, her soft little touch and by motivating him gently through soft talk. It's those traits that made him love her so much. Wilson held Mandy's hand.

"OK gorgeous, I'll be brave." said Wilson "But I'm still nervous about the Martians."

"I am too but my duty comes first so I don't let it bother me." said Mandy "Besides, we beat the Devatrons, those guys are a push-over compared to them."

"Let us hope so." said Sally "Well then, I and everybody in the room wish you all good luck with all our hearts and may you come back to us safely you two. We do not want to lose two of our longest serving members."

"We'll be fine your grace." said Mandy reassuringly "When me and Wilson are together, we're tough to beat."

"Bye everybody." said Wilson "And don't worry, we'll stop the Martians in Grand Metropolis!"

"Bye Wilson and Mandy." said everybody in the room.

Wilson and Mandy gave a farewell wave and they ran through the warp ring into Grand Metropolis. Little did they know, they'd have a pair of Martians that was likely to give them a seriously hard time and even likelier to kill them…

Meanwhile in the Northern Border of Megapolis, Dr. Eggman was down in his bunker still and he was oiling a strange mechanical plant that was green in colour and had a metal jaw and metal leaves. This plant was an experiment of his he did back on Earth in which he made mechanical plants. He called this one a Krudzu Plant and he'd constructed one right now to liven the place up a bit. The Krudzu Plant was enjoying it's little oiling right now.

"There, there little Krudzu, a nice little oil to perk you right up." said Dr. Eggman happily "I hope someday to make up into something greater then just a pot of mechanical plants. Well since I've got some spare time on me right now, I can do some experiments with you and see what I can make out of you."

"Master." came the voice of Devion the former Devatron leader-turned-Eggman-lackey who was on the monitors and keeping an eye on things above surface "The proximity alarm is sounding, I believe there's targets on the move. That and Katherine is picking up messages being sent to the Royal Fighters."

Dr. Eggman stopped oiling his Krudzu Plant.

"I beg your pardon Devion?" asked Eggman.

"Katherine, show him what I am trying to convey to him." ordered Devion.

Katherine stepped forward and played some radio transmissions she had been picking up from Mobians everywhere after using her radio interceptor device, which was a small antenna that telescoped up from her head, to listen in on radio communications everywhere on Mobius. Eggman listened intently to the transmissions. One radio message went like this:

"In other…khsshk!…news today, strange red creatures in armour have…. khsshk!...been attacking…sssshhhhhk!… different places… khsshk!...over Mobius. The creatures…sssshhhhhk! hostile intentions. They…zrt!...blowing up homes and…khsshk!...attacking citizens everywhere!"

Dr. Eggman was surprised to hear all this. Red creatures in armour? Eggman didn't know any read creatures in armour save for Marik the Martian and he wore a helmet at the most, although a helmet is somewhat a bit of armour so it counts. Could it be…? Then Katherine switched to another radio station and played a conversation going on live in Soleanna.

"Here in Soleanna, some strange creatures are attacking the village and one of them looks like the Martian thing that was reported to

have killed the former King and Queen of Mobotropolis and attempted to do the same to Sally Acorn who is the current Queen. He's demanded to allow him to make an announcement to everybody so I'm now passing you over to that Martian." the news-reporter's voice dripped with worry.

Then Marik's voice played on the Soleanna radio and Eggman listened to the message as Katherine played it.

"AttentionMobius! I am Marik the Martian, the one who killed the former rulers of Mobotropolis and the attempted murderer of the current Queen Sally Acorn. I'm also the one who's tried to destroy Mobius several times before. I've come back with my friends and family at my side and if you do not cede to the Martians, we will destroy you all! If any Royal Fighters dare to face us then kindly do so, we need the exercise before we conquer your world!"

Then Katherine switched off the message. Dr. Eggman was so speechless with horror that one would think he was going to suddenly drop dead. When he eventually spoke, he made some gargled sounds that made him sound like he was being strangled.

"Marik…has…returned and…brought more…of his kind…TO MOBIUS?!" screamed Dr. Eggman "How dare he?! How dare he?! Mobius is MY planet to conquer and he can't have it! We've tried to hard to stop the Black Arms from conquering the world, we don't need Martians as well!"

"That's not all sir." said Devion "The scanners indicate that the Martians are attacking seven different places on Mobius simultaneously. One location seems to have Sonic and Tails currently handling the situation so we do not need to bother with that one, he'll obviously come out on top."

"Yeah, Sonic will save that place." muttered Eggman "The other places won't be so lucky, especially since the Royal Fighters will have to spread their sources thin across the globe in order to stop those Martians. We're going to give the other places a helping hand…"

Devion and Katherine looked at each other. Why on Mobius would

Eggman want to help his enemies beat the Martians?!

"Forgive me for asking master, but why ever do you wish to assist the Royal Fighters in refuting the Martians? That motion of yours is obfuscating." questioned a very puzzled Devion.

"I wish to help the Royal Fighters so that the Martians will not win and thus, they cannot conquer Mobius and prevent me from conquering this planet and building my ultimate empire!" snapped Dr. Eggman "I want to conquer this world and I will not let any alien freaks deny me that honour!"

"That motion is…logical." said Devion slowly "So how best shall we accommodate the Royal Fighters?"

"By sending them some reinforcements…" purred Dr. Eggman, a slimy smile spreading out beneath his big, bushy moustache.

He had a plan to help the Royal Fighters bring down the Martians. And it involved a little bit of assisting and sending forces of his own out into the attacked countries sans Holoska as that's currently under control. The Royal Fighters were about to receive some unexpected assistance form the unlikeliest of allies…

Meanwhile, Silver's Super Warp Ring opened up near Grand Metropolis and Wilson and Mandy stepped through it, leaving the sanctuary of their cosy headquarters and stepping into the now largest city on Mobius given the fall of Central City last year at the now recently destroyed Egg Fleet's firepower. The warp ring closed behind them as they stepped through, sealing them off from Royal HQ and trapping them here in Grand Metropolis until the problem was dealt with and they called for the warp ring to bring them home. Wilson already had his double-bladed pole deployed and itching to slice some Martians to bits and Mandy had slipped on her brass knuckle attachments. They kept their senses alert for any signs of Martian activity as they walked towards the city. They couldn't see any Martians around so far but they could see signs that they were about. As they neared the city, they noticed that a colossal amount of damage had been done to the city already! Buildings were ablaze

with a mammoth wall of fire that scorched all the insides and razed the edges of them with relative ease. The streets had been desecrated beyond belief with potholes by the dozen, cracked roads, fallen lampposts and leaking fire hydrants. There was tumultuous uproar from the panicked citizens as they fled for their lives. Some were shot down and killed relentlessly while others made it out alive. The city looked like a war zone. Truly, the Martians were one serious threat if they'd managed to cause THIS amount of damage to just ONE big city. Not even Eggman's forces during the first year of the R.F.S. had done that amount of damage and they had pretty much won the battle against the Grand Metropolis Royal Fighters until Wilson and Mandy helped them! The sad thing is, had Bostock and Mortimer not been killed by the Devatrons, they might have been able to fend off the Martians with their Royal Fighter team and prevent all this destruction. As is, the Royal Fighters in Grand Metropolis had been pretty poor without Bostock and Mortimer to lead them which led to illogical tactics and terrible plans. Thus, they had all been slaughtered easily by the Martians. There was no one to help the citizens of Grand Metropolis now except Wilson and Mandy and yet, even they began to feel nervous after surveying the disaster zone that loomed in front of them. Mandy's jaw dropped down so low, she thought it was going to snap off it's hinges. Wilson's eyes almost popped out of their sockets they widened so much. He dropped his weapon in shock.

"Wh-wh-wh-wh-wh…"

Wilson tried to speak but he couldn't. He was too horrified at the sight before them to even keep himself under control.

"I-I-I-I th-th-think I'm th-th-thinking the s-s-same th-th-thing as you b-b-baby!" spluttered a very gobsmacked Mandy "Th-th-th-those m-m-m-monsters have p-p-p-pretty m-m-much d-d-destroyed G-G-G-Grand Metropolis!"

"What are th-th-those M-M-Martians flaming armed with?! Nuclear bombs?!" screamed Wilson, his voice all high and frightened "This is worse then w-w-w-what E-E-E-Eggman did t-t-to the p-p-place a year ago!"

"Those Martians make Eggman look like he's going easy on us!"

shrieked Mandy "It's a good thing we're now on the scene, although I feel uncomfortable that we're all there is to fight those savages! There must be a whole platoon of Martians out there judging by what's happened!"

"I…I don't…I don't wanna do this! Mandy, you're on your own!" cried Wilson "This is too much for me!"

He tried to run away but Mandy grabbed his tail and held him firmly back.

"Let go of my tail!" exclaimed Wilson desperately.

"You are not going anywhere mister!" said Mandy angrily "The Martians destroy a whole city and you wanna just chicken out?! The Devatrons have done worse to us then those Martians ever did Wilson! They power-drained the Chaos Emeralds, took over our home city, blazed Knothole to the ground, killed many Royal Fighters, especially big names like Kate the Eagle, Bostock and Mortimer, crippled Sonic himself for a time and attempted to kill us all! Did we give up then? No! So you're not chickening out of this one Wilson! This is not the man I married! The man I married would never chicken out of a situation like this, even if it is intense and on a colossal scale! Wilson the Dog, we are going to stop those Martians or die trying! Understand?!"

Wilson stopped gibbering like an idiot and he clamed down. Mandy didn't half terrify him when she was angry but her words had a lot of meaning behind them so Wilson couldn't scoff her off as just mindlessly ranting. Wilson knew Mandy was right. They'd survived much worse then a destroyed city, he couldn't chicken out of this one. The world was counting on the Royal Fighters to stop the Martians. If they could take on one Martian then they could take on more Martians. Wilson sighed in shame and he looked up at Mandy.

"You're so right cutie-pie." he said quietly "I'm so sorry I got scared and tried to opt out of this Mandy. Sometimes, I'm just too skittish for my own good."

"It's alright Wilson honey." said Mandy reassuringly "I'm scared too but I'm putting that aside and focusing on what's important. I'm sorry

I shouted at you though, I should know by now you're scared of me when I'm shouting and angry."

"It's OK Mandy." said Wilson softly "You were just pulling me back in line. I'd be so lost if I never met you, you know."

"Aww, you're sweet." said Mandy gleefully "Now then, let's kick some Martian butt shall we?"

"Be my guest Mandy." said Wilson, picking up his weapon "We'll show them what happens when freaks like them tear down our cities!"

With that said, Wilson and Mandy charged off towards Grand Metropolis to deal with the Martian threat. There was one thing that Mandy would have been pleased about had she stayed around longer and observed the scenery around hers and Wilson's former location. And that would be the fact her late sister Marion Mouse's grave was still intact for it wasn't in the city itself. If it had been desecrated then Mandy seriously would have been narked at the Martians. One couldn't help but wonder though what would Marion have been like if she was still alive and was seeing all this happen right now…

In Grand Metropolis itself, two Martians were causing a right ruckus. And those two were the deadly duo of Natasha the Martian, Marik's mother, and Mercury, Mars' Champion Archer and wielder of one of the deadliest weapons ever devised by Martians. They were on their own and didn't have a squadron of Martians with them since they didn't think they'd need any extra-support. Given Mercury's destructive bow, it's not hard to see why they think that. Mercury had been firing arrows at every inch of the city and blowing things up here and there. But it wasn't just Mercury who was causing this devastation. Natasha was flying in a hover-saucer with an enormous tank-like barrel on it that fired laser cannons with destructive capabilities. Mercury was in one too. The hover-saucers looked like a tank-turret turned upside down and they flew quite nicely and had a lot of fire power. Two hover-saucers plus Mercury's exploding arrows means a lot of damage done. Just the two of them alone

could level Mobius if they wanted to with this kind of firepower. The demented dames were having a great time destroying Grand Metropolis and to their disappointment, they had pretty much levelled everything. Buildings were ablaze, walls were crumbling, streets were ravaged, citizens had fled or been killed and houses had been razed. This meant that fun-time was over for them which was a shame as they loved causing destruction. But this did mean that they'd be likely to draw a Royal Fighter or several out and then they could kill them as planned. As Mercury blew up one last building with her bow, she brought her saucer down to the ground but remained sitting in it and hovering about five inches above ground. Natasha flew down and joined her comrade.

"Well Natasha, how about that?" said Mercury gleefully, her eyes full of demented joy "We've managed to level this entire city and we've only been here for an hour at the longest!"

"Well that hi-tech bow of yours is amazing Mercury." said Natasha "Arrows that explode when they hit inorganic matter, it's no wonder Count Drago gave you that as a birthday present. It's so effective! And to think he asked the late Professor Korark to invent it just for you too."

"Yeah…" said Mercury, looking at her bow admirably "I often like to think that when Count Drago died, his spirit went into my bow and every arrow I fire is a cackle of delight from him as he lashes out and destroys his victims. I do miss him so much, I wish he was here conquering Mobius with me right now."

She paused for a moment as a tear came to her eye. Natasha put a hand on Mercury's shoulder affectionately, sharing her pity since even though she found Drago to be very creepy, she quite admired his efficiency and dedication to duty in the Martian army.

"Drago was a marvellous man Mercury and his death won't be in vain." said Natasha "We're getting revenge on the Mobians right now for killing him and crippling Marik like they did. Hopefully, our razing of this city will draw out the Royal Fighters and hopefully, Silver and Blaze will be among the ones that come here to stop us."

"I hope so, I want to skewer that Silver's heart for killing my Drago!"

snarled Mercury "I so desperately tried to kill him when we all fought at once earlier but the damage done to our ship forced me to abandon my battle with him! Well if he comes here again, I won't miss the opportunity to avenge Count Drago! I am going to shoot Silver with so many arrows there won't be any space left on him to so much as poke him!"

"I love the sound of that Mercury dear." said Natasha "For now though, we wait and see if any impudent Mobians actually come here and dare to stand up to us. I shouldn't imagine we'll be waiting for long."

"And imagine that you should!" cried a voice that caught them both by surprise for they weren't expecting a response to that statement.

Natasha and Mercury looked in the direction of the voice and they saw none other then Wilson and Mandy standing before them with their weapons at the ready. The two Martians were surprised at this for they had been expecting a bigger resistance then this but they shrugged it off quickly and they aimed their saucer's gun turrets at the two Mobians.

"Hold it right there Mobians!" snarled Natasha "Don't make us have to blow you two to smithereens!"

"You'll do it anyway you ugly old witch so we don't have to make you." snapped Mandy "Now then, my name is Mandy Mouse and this is my husband Wilson the Dog, we're here on behalf of the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters to bring down the Martian threat here in Grand Metropolis, which you've already desecrated."

"Surrender yourselves and things won't get needlessly unpleasant!" snarled Wilson in an uncharacteristically nasty tone of voice. Wilson often snarled or growled when he was seriously angry and it took a lot to cheese him off. Right now, he was downright furious with Natasha and Mercury.

Natasha and Mercury looked at each other and then they started snickering with laughter. Wilson and Mandy looked at each other and just sighed. They should have expected a reaction like this from a Martian.

"Us? Surrender? In your bleeding dreams!" cackled Natasha "We'll be way too much for you two twits to handle! Before we fight though allow me to introduce ourselves. I am Natasha, Marik's mother and I'm not particularly pleased to hear what you Mobians have done to him. Especially you, Wilson you said your name was, for he told me you've bitten him on the arm…twice."

"Well he asked for it!" retorted Wilson, his teeth gritted and his hands clenched tighter around his weapon "Especially as he tried to kill me and Mandy once**!"

"Uh huh, and your star fighter "Sonic" crippled Marik's hand for life so you're asking for what we're doing now." sneered Natasha.

"As for me, I'm Mercury and I'm Mars' Champion Archer." boasted Mercury "I was hoping to fight Silver and Blaze so I can kill them in revenge for killing my boyfriend Count Drago but you two twerps will do just as nicely."

"Eesh, you guys are touchy." snorted Mandy "Blue-dude cripples Marik, unintentionally might I add, and Silver-dude kills this so-called "Count Drago" guy and that's enough for you to want to slaughter us all? I bet you'd raise a stink if we so much as poked Marik in the eye."

"I feel it fair to point out that Marik started this whole feud in the first place by coming to Mobius just to kill Cosmo." noted Wilson "Had he not invaded our planet in the first place then none of this would be happening."

"Well boy, it did and now we're going to make you suffer in the name of the Martians." said Natasha coldly "Besides, even if you didn't harm Marik or kill Drago, we'd still hate you anyway. We hate peace and you Mobians crave it, fight for it apparently and that is disgusting to us. Now enough stupid gossiping and let's get fighting!"

"I was gonna say the same thing sister!" sneered Mandy, raising her fists and getting ready to punch "I'm gonna make you cry for what you did to this city! Me and Wilson quite liked Grand Metropolis and we're not pleased to see you destroy it Natasha! Brace yourself for this is gonna hurt!"

She then jumped up into the cannon barrel to Natasha's saucer and ran across it. She drew her arm back and thrust it towards Natasha but Natasha whipped out her spiked nunchakus and wrapped them around Mandy's arm. She threw Mandy off the saucer and onto the road face-first by pulling on her arm with her nunchakus. Mandy was quick to get back onto her feet though and she jumped back onto the saucer. She socked Natasha directly in the face and knocked the Grand War Mistress out of her vehicle. The two girls came crashing down onto the road but Natasha threw Mandy off by pushing her off with her legs. Mandy hurled across the road and landed on a crack in it. Mandy picked herself up again and lunged at Natasha, the War Mistress spinning her nunchakus around and preparing to let Mandy have it with them. Natasha swung her nunchakus at Mandy but she missed as Mandy threw herself down onto the road and slid across it and through her legs. Mandy came to a stop behind Natasha and walloped her in the back. The power of her punch combined with the knuckle attachments made Natasha feel like someone just tried to smash her spine in with a hammer. Natasha fell down onto her knees and Mandy began to whale on Natasha as hard as she could. But Natasha managed to get back up and she kicked Mandy in the gut. She then clenched both fists together and slammed them on Mandy's head. Then to finish off, she roundhouse kicked Mandy into her hover-saucer. Mandy hit the saucer and knocked it to the side. The saucer spun around and it bumped into a destroyed building. Mandy grimaced in pain and she forced herself up onto her feet. Natasha spun her nunchakus around and sneered at the mouse.

"You're not bad Mandy." said Natasha sarcastically "I've seen much better of course but you're not bad. I like the knuckle attachments. They're effective weapons."

"Thank you." sniffed Mandy sarcastically "You're not bad either. Marik's tougher but you're a good challenge. I can see where he gets his skills from."

"Indeed rodent." said Natasha in a slimy voice "Marik gets his skills from my side of the family and he gets his strength from my husband Diablo's side of the family. But who needs strength when you have speed to go with it?"

She then quickly ran forward to Mandy and rammed her in the gut. Mandy coughed and spluttered heavily as she felt the wind getting knocked out of her by Natasha's ram. Natasha laughed at the coughing mouse.

"You see? I strike swiftly and vigorously." sneered Natasha "That in turn makes me a force to be reckoned with. Oh and one more thing, you should change your fur colour. Purple is a hideous colour for anybody to wear.

"Don't you DARE insult my fur colour you wretched little pig!" snarled Mandy.

Mandy uppercut Natasha in the face with BOTH arms meaning double the attack, double the impact. Natasha staggered backwards, dropping her nunchakus and clutching her face. Mandy then started whaling on Natasha as hard as she could. She punched her in the gut, the face, the arms, the legs and even the back. She then swept Natasha off her feet with a roundhouse kick to the legs and the Martian was brought down onto her back. Mandy tried to punch Natasha again but Natasha rolled out of the way, leaving Mandy to punch the road and leave tiny cracks in it. Natasha jumped back onto her feet and socked Mandy in the side of her head, a very good area to strike since the side of the head was quite sensitive and being punched in it guaranteed dizziness and a big headache for anyone unfortunate to get punched in it. Mandy yelped in pain and gripped her head as a whoosh of pain swept through it. She felt like she'd just gotten a migraine all of the sudden. Natasha then took the opportunity to upwards kick Mandy in the face and knock her down onto the ground while she was still recovering. Then she picked up her nunchakus and was about to smack Mandy with them but Mandy got up onto her feet and sucker-punched Natasha in the middle of her face with both fists. Natasha staggered well backwards and Mandy then rammed her with her shoulder, backhanded her across the face, punched her in the gut and then in the jaw, causing Natasha to spit blood out. Natasha was thrown onto the ground and Mandy brought both fists slamming down on top of her. Natasha however charged into Mandy's torso and grabbed her. She threw Mandy against the wall of a building and pinned her there by the throat. But Mandy kneed Natasha in the belly to make her let go.

Natasha keeled over and Mandy roundhouse kicked Natasha in the head. Natasha staggered back and her headwear fell off. Natasha quickly put it back on and linked arms with Mandy as Mandy attempted to attack her again.

As for Wilson and Mercury, they had their weapons ready and they circled each other, waiting to attack and make the first move. Mercury had her bow ready and a laser arrow already generated. Wilson slowly twirled his spinning blade around.

"I've gotta say, Wilson, you're not as hideous looking as the other Mobians." sneered Mercury.

"Thank you." said Wilson snidely "As for you, Mercury, you're just as ugly as all the other Martians out there."

"Oooh, I like a boy who can deliver snide remarks!" cackled Mercury "Makes them more pleasurable to stick an arrow into!"

She then fired an arrow at Wilson but the dog spun his weapon around like a flywheel and deflected it (the laser arrows aren't effective against fast spinning targets). The arrow hit an already destroyed building and exploded.

"I will say, your weapon is kinda scary." said Wilson "But effective. The exploding arrows are a nice touch. Just wait till you see my weapon though!"

He then threw the spinning blade at Mercury. Mercury yelped like a frightened cat and she dove for cover as the double-bladed pole soared past her, missing her by centimetres. The weapon boomeranged back to Wilson and he caught it into his hand. Mercury picked herself up and her bow generated another arrow, ready to fire.

"Impressive." said Mercury "Very impressive. Not many people are capable of wielding a weapon with two blades. No matter, I'll still destroy you Wilson! And since Mandy referred to you as her husband, I guess you're a married man. Good, I love to kill married couples, they're my favourite kinds of targets!"

She fired an arrow at Wilson and the semi-skittish canine dove for cover as it whizzed past him. Wilson threw his weapon at her again but Mercury dodged the deadly weapon and she shot at Wilson again. Wilson dodged the arrow but since he moved, that meant his spinning blade boomeranged back to where he had been and ended up embedding itself into the ground since Wilson wasn't there to catch it. Mercury then fired an arrow at the spinning blade weapon, destroying it immediately as it hit the embedded weapon. Wilson grew increasingly nervous. He was weapon-less now his spinning blade was destroyed and Mercury still had her arrow-generating bow at the ready. What was he going to do now since he couldn't fight back? Then Wilson knew what had to be done, he had to disarm Mercury like Mercury had disarmed him. Mercury fired another arrow at Wilson but Wilson jumped out of the way, leaving the arrow to strike the road and blow a hole in it, and he scampered on all fours towards Mercury. Mercury aimed another arrow at Wilson but before she could fire at him, Wilson jumped into the air and pounced on Mercury like a wolf pouncing on a stag. Mercury dropped her bow and was brought down onto the ground by Wilson. Wilson quickly snatched up her bow and pointed it directly at Mercury.

"Don't move or I'll use this on you!" growled Wilson.

"Oh I'm so scared, the mutt's stolen my weapon!" scoffed Mercury in a fake scared tone "Do you even know how to work it?"

Wilson's face fell as he looked at the hi-tech bow in his hand. He didn't know how to work it! The arrows generated into the bow and you could pull them back and fire it like any normal arrow but getting the arrows to generate into place was the big matter at this moment. There was a certain way to work it and Wilson didn't know how to. As Wilson stared at the bow and wondered on how he was going to work it, Mercury charged into Wilson and elbowed him in the gut. Wilson dropped the bow and Mercury kicked upwards, sending him flying away from the bow. Mercury then scooped up the bow and generated another arrow. You see, Mercury obviously knows how to work it and this is how it works. There's a button just above the hand section and you press that in order to generate a new arrow. The button is pressed and then slides in order for it to work. Wilson would never have worked that out by a long shot. Mercury aimed an

arrow at Wilson and she fired at him. Wilson shrieked in fright and he rolled out the way, the arrow missing him by centimetres but going off with a loud bang that flung Wilson into Mercury's hover-saucer. Wilson landed directly in the cockpit seat and the saucer was sent spiralling towards a building. The saucer bumped into the building and rebounded off of it, still spiralling. Wilson picked himself up and the saucer stopped sinning around. Wilson gripped his head and slumped on the side of the cockpit. He felt a little dizzy and a little frazzled from the impact and his ears were ringing from the explosion of the arrow.

"Ooooohhhh…that didn't feel too good…" he moaned groggily "I feel like everything's rumbling around me…"

Mercury put her bow away and she charged towards Wilson. Wilson's ears were still distorted from the explosion noise earlier so he didn't even hear Mercury running towards him. Therefore Mercury was effortlessly able to leap into her hover saucer and kick Wilson straight out of it. Wilson hurtled out of the saucer and rolled roughly across the road. He moaned ever so sickly and he couldn't feel much of his body for he was still feeling groggy from the onslaught earlier. All he could do was lie there and wait for somebody to finish him off. Mercury decided to take the opportunity to finish off Wilson while he was weak. She aimed her bow at Wilson and readied herself to fire another arrow. Mandy, who was still in heated combat with Natasha, saw Mercury preparing to shoot Wilson and the mouse abandoned her fight. She ran over to Mercury and pounced on her before Natasha could try and stop her. Mandy knocked Mercury out of the saucer and onto the road. As they landed, Mercury accidentally fired an arrow as she hit the ground. The arrow whizzed through the air and hit a building. The arrow exploded and the building, which was already in a razed state, started to crumble down to the ground. Rubble, grit and debris began to rain down onto the ground like a meteor shower. Mercury ran for cover before she could get hammered by the crumbling debris that came crashing down to the ground all around. Mandy however ran through the falling grit and rubble and picked up the still feeling lame Wilson. She managed to carry her husband to safety just before a huge chunk of debris could come crashing down onto the ground and crush them. Mandy ran for her life with Wilson in her

arms as the building began to crumble down. Debris began piling up as the finished building tumbled and a chunk of rubble crushed Mercury's abandoned saucer, rendering Mercury with no mode of transportation. She'd have to share a saucer with Natasha now should they need it. The building finally finished falling down and all that was left of it was nothing more then a huge pile of steelwork, frames, rubble and debris. The pile reached at least a storey high. Mandy looked back at the fallen building, sad to see that this is what had become of Grand Metropolis thanks to those demon dames from Mars Mercury and Natasha, and then she looked back at Wilson. Wilson's hearing was coming back to him and he was feeling a little better now the impact of the earlier attack was wearing off. He saw the fallen building and sighed with relief.

"Whew…that was a close shave wasn't it?" he said "I almost got crushed! Thanks for saving my neck out there Mandy."

"I saved more then just your neck honey." said Mandy sweetly "But you're welcome anyway."

Natasha strode over to Wilson and Mandy, spinning her nunchakus around menacingly as she advanced on them.

"You two are impressive I must say." said Natasha "You're surviving some of our best attacks and any dangers around the battlefield. No wonder my son had a tough time with you and the other fuzzy freaks of this world."

"Shows that you made the same mistake Marik did and underestimated us." sneered Mandy "A mistake that'll guarantee your defeat."

"Oh we didn't underestimate you." said Natasha "Marik described you all to us so we had a feeling on what to expect. You two just defied his descriptions. No matter, this battle isn't over yet and we're still going to kill you both."

"Just try it you witch!" snarled Mandy "Me and Wilson have survived much worse then you two measly Martians! We've survived the Devatrons as well as all our friends and they're worse then you Martians are! We'll stomp on you easily!"

"Oh will you?" sneered Natasha "Well we have the one thing the Devatrons didn't have and that was knowledge on the opponent. Marik told us everything about you two as well as the other Mobians. I believe he told me that Wilson's a scardey cat and you don't like to be called a rat?"

Mandy could feel her fists clenching and her eyelids twitching angrily as Natasha began to taunt her. Natasha smiled at Mandy, clearly pleased that Marik's information was helping her to tick off Mandy and allow her to use her weakness against her. After all, losing her wick was one of Mandy's weaknesses and Marik had made sure to tell the Martians that.

"Looks like I'm right." said Natasha "Well then Mandy, you're a rat, a filthy stinking rat and your fur colour is hideous. Why on Mars that mutt of yours married you as beyond my comprehension."

"Oy, you leave Mandy alone!" growled Wilson "Or you'll answer to me!"

"Oooooh, the dog's got a hot spot as he?" laughed Natasha "And I thought Marik told me you were a coward, a worthless, whimpering little coward who's always crying for mummy in the midst of the battle."

Wilson could feel himself getting angry at that remark but he fought hard to keep himself under control for he knew losing his temper was a bad idea. Mandy however, was not so good at that and she was clearly losing her wick right now. She was going red in the face.

"You had better stop insulting us or you'll be in for it you irritating little shank!" snarled Mandy.

"Why should I? I'm quite enjoying myself here…rat-girl." crooned Natasha.

"THAT'S IT!" shouted Mandy "You're going down you little hog!"

"Mandy, don't!" cried Wilson.

Too late, Mandy charged towards Natasha in blind rage but Natasha was ready for her. She spun her nunchakus around and then

uppercut Mandy in the face with both of them. Mandy staggered backwards and Natasha decided to start dishing it out to her before she could recover. Natasha kneed Mandy in the gut, twice to make it really hurt, and then she walloped Mandy in the head with her nunchakus. She hit Mandy so hard that the mouse ended up with a nasty cut on her cranium and it started bleeding. Mandy winced in pain and fought back tears of pain that willed to trickled down her face. The pain in her head was so great that Mandy couldn't take her hands off of it. Mercury laughed at Mandy and then she kicked the stunned mouse down onto her side. Wilson was horrified to see his wife being beaten like this and he ran in to save her. Wilson grabbed Mercury in a chokehold and she hauled the archery champion away from the injured Mandy Mouse. Mercury however wrestled herself free from Wilson and roundhouse punched him in the face. Natasha joined in by whacking Wilson with her nunchakus. Wilson yelped a proper dog yelp of pain as he was hit by the nunchakus and Natasha and Mercury both kicked him away. Mandy staggered back onto her feet and tried to help Wilson but the pain in her head was too great for her to do much. She couldn't stop gripping her head in pain and she felt a little dizzy and light-headed due to the pain in her skull. Natasha had truly whacked her good and hard. Natasha could see Mandy was in distress and she decided to add insult to injury by kicking Mandy and sending her flying into a chunk of rubble from the fallen building. Mandy hit the chunk and she coughed heavily as she felt the wind in her lungs depleting from the sharp hit. Wilson saw this and he clasped his fists together. He bashed Natasha in the back of the head and knocked her headwear off her head. Natasha went pink in the face and she bent down to pick up her headwear. Before she could put it back on though, Wilson thumped her on the cranium and as you already know, Martians have sensitive bony lumps on their craniums that really hurt when you hit them. Wilson didn't know that for he'd never had the chance to do it on Marik of course, he just hit her there hoping to dish out some extra punishment. And that he just did for Natasha howled a blood-curdling howl of pain as pain flared through her skull. The pain was so great she swore even her amygdala was hurting. Wilson was surprised to see that punching a Martian in the cranium seriously hurt them that badly and he smiled to himself. He'd found a good Martian weakness that they could use against them. But before Wilson could punch Natasha in the cranium again,

Mercury jumped in and kicked him aside. Natasha massaged her scalp better and she put her headwear back onto her head. She glared at Wilson coldly and she spun her nunchakus around.

"That hurt you son of a bitch !" snarled Natasha "Now I'm going to return the favour!"

She then proceeded to wallop Wilson in the cranium with her nunchakus. Wilson howled in pain and he cried a few tears of pain as his scalp began burning with pain. Natasha and Mercury then grabbed Wilson and they chucked him over to Mandy, who was still lying against the chunk of rubble. Mandy groaned as Wilson crashed into her and the two Martians advanced on them. Wilson and Mandy backed up against the rubble and they stared in horror at Natasha and Mercury as they advanced on them. Mercury had her bow at the ready and she had already generated an arrow ready to fire. Wilson and Mandy shook madly, their hearts pounding like a pair of drums, in fear.

"We win you two, now you'll die for your insolence." said Natasha wickedly "Mercury, finish them off!"

"With pleasure Grand War Mistress." purred Mercury "You two will be an example of what I'm going to do to Silver and Blaze when I get my hands on them!"

"No, please, don't kill us! Don't kill us!" begged Mandy "Please, we beg of you!"

"I don't wanna die!" whimpered Wilson "Please let us live!"

Mercury ignored them and she stepped a reasonable distance back so that she wouldn't get caught up in the explosion. She then pulled the bow string back, ready to fire the arrow. Wilson and Mandy just closed their eyes and waited for the inevitable blow that would finish them off. There was no chance of them surviving an exploding arrow at point blank range. They were dead meat once that arrow fired. And to think they hadn't even had really a chance to settle down and enjoy life as a married couple. They hadn't even had a honeymoon yet! Truly a shame for a couple that's been married for a while at most. Mercury prepared to release the bowstring and fire the arrow

but before she could, something shot her bow and destroyed it. Mercury yelped and dropped the fried bow onto the ground. It's circuitry was exposed, the metal was blackened and it was no longer of use now for it was not going to work now. Natasha looked around wildly, wondering who or what had just shot Mercury's bow to bits. Wilson and Mandy opened their eyes, amazed to see they were still alive. They looked to the side and saw a sight they didn't think they would see. There standing before the Martians were a squadron of EggPawns all armed with laser cannons and the piece de resistance of the squad, Silver Sonic! Silver Sonic stomped forwards and towered over the two Martians, his red optics glowing malevolently and fixed firmly on the two Martians. Natasha and Mercury stared up in fear at Silver Sonic and almost wet themselves with horror.

"What the blazes is that?!" shrieked Natasha "That's not a Mobian!"

"No, but it resembles one!" cried Mercury "It looks like a giant robot! And it's got lots of other robots with it!"

Silver Sonic curled up into a giant, silver bladed ball and it whooshed towards Natasha and Mercury in a lethal spin-dash that could just as easily tear down a skyscraper with little effort. Natasha and Mercury dived for cover as the giant silver killing machine roared past them. Mercury picked up her bow and desperately tried to fire an arrow at Silver Sonic only she couldn't for the bow was busted. The Egg Pawns all stampeded towards the two Martians, firing madly at them with their laser cannons. Natasha and Mercury scattered like sheep and avoided the blasts. Wilson and Mandy watched in amazement as the Egg Pawns and Silver Sonic started sorting out the Martians with little effort. If only they had shown up earlier and they would have won this fight already! But why were Eggman's forces helping them? Why were they fighting the Martians? Maybe Eggman somehow found out about the Martian invasion and wanted to help stop it too? If that was the case then the Mobians were very fortunate right now. Natasha dodged some gunfire from the Egg-Pawns and growled furiously as the robots persisted in their attacks.

"Whoever owns these robots has earned my hatred already!" cried Natasha "Those things are ruining everything!"

"You're telling me!" shrieked Mercury as Silver Sonic tried to claw at her only to miss by centimetres.

"Well we'll deal with them easily!" growled Natasha, running over to her saucer quickly.

She leaped into her hover-saucer and aimed the cannon barrel at the Egg Pawns. She blasted a few of them away very easily, reducing them to tiny metal pieces, but Silver Sonic came in and spin-dashed the cannon barrel in two, destroying Natasha and Mercury's best weapon to use against the Eggman robots. Silver Sonic then attempted to spin-dash Natasha's saucer to pieces but Natasha dodged Silver Sonic's lethal attack and she sped off. Mercury leaped onto the saucer and Natasha drove off as fast as she could. The Egg-Pawns began firing at the fleeing saucer.

"This isn't over yet Mobians!" growled Natasha "We'll come back and slaughter you all! Just you wait!"

The hover-saucer flew off out of Grand Metropolis and headed on back to the Martian ship. The Egg-Pawns stopped chasing the saucer and they stood down. Silver Sonic stopped attacking too and Wilson and Mandy ran up to the robots.

"Thank you for saving our lives Eggman robots." said Mandy "But, why are you helping us defeat the Martians? And how did you know about us and the Martians being here?"

None of the robots could answer them for they could not speak. Instead, one Egg-Pawn played a pre-recorded message that Dr. Eggman had ordered them to play for any Mobians they encountered while stopping the Martians. The message played out like this:

"Hello there, if any Mobians are listening to this then listen carefully. I, Dr. Eggman, have learnt about the Martians' disgusting presence on Mobius and since I want to conquer the planet for myself, I am going to help Sonic and friends destroy the Martians and save Mobius. I do hope you appreciate my co-operation for I'm not usually this generous or willing to ally with my enemies am I? Please do not attack my robots for they're here to help you, not hinder you.

Understood? Sincerely, Dr. Eggman."

The message ended and Wilson and Mandy looked at each other. They were well gobsmacked by this.

"Well…Dr. Eggman's going to help us?" blurted Wilson "I'm not sure how I should feel about this."

"He helped us fight the Devatrons so I'm cool with him helping us stop the Martians." said Mandy casually "I'd rather have just Eggman to worry about at the moment so I'm OK with anyone wanting to get rid of the Martians. Tell your master that we're very grateful for the assistance and that we're glad he's helping us beat the Martians." she said to the Eggman Robots.

The Egg-Pawns and Silver Sonic nodded understandably and they all left to return to Dr. Eggman and inform him of what had just happened. As the robots left, Mandy switched on her communicator and spoke into it.

"Your majesty, mission's been accomplished, we need a warp ring home." said Mandy.

"OK, just hold on a second, Sonic and Tails are awaiting return at the moment." said Sally on the other side of the communicator.

Mandy nodded and she switched off the communicator. As they waited for the warp ring home, Wilson spoke.

"Well, I'm not pleased that we failed to save the city but I am pleased we stopped the Martians." said Wilson "I can only just imagine what Marik's reaction's going to be when he finds out his mother got chased out of the city by Eggman robots."

"We're lucky we're still alive." said Mandy, feeling the cut on her head that would later become a faint scar "I'm glad Eggman's assisting us and it feels good to be saved by him instead of endangered by him. That doesn't mean I'm going to start liking him though."

"No indeed." said Wilson "Say Mandy, while we're waiting for the warp ring home, why don't we see Marion's grave and see if it's

alright?"

"Oh yes." said Mandy, suddenly thinking of Marion's grave "Let's see it. I do hope those two wretches haven't disturbed it or they'll be in for it."

With that said, Wilson and Mandy ran off to see the gravesite of the late Marion Mouse. They'd be happy to know that her gravesite was fine. But they wouldn't be since the Martians would be back to fight again. This battle was far from over and it was just going to get more hectic as they went along…

Footnotes:

***See *Tales from Mobius Arc 1: The Malicious, Metropolis Masquerade* for the full story!**

**** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 10: Pain in Megapolis***

Well that's Wilson and Mandy's side of the story done and dusted! Tune in next time for a fiery hot encounter as we see Knuckles and Shade's side of the story. Divide and Conquer is about to get more intense as the saga continues next time...

So how's this saga looking so far my friends? Is it good? Is it bad? Is it "Meh"? Do tell, I'm anxious for feedback.

Divide and Conquer Part 3

Story 129: Divide and Conquer Part 3: Obsidian

"OK gorgeous, I'll be brave." said Wilson the Dog "But I'm still nervous about the Martians."

"I am too but my duty comes first so I don't let it bother me." said Mandy Mouse "Besides, we beat the Devatrons, those guys are a push-over compared to them."

"Let us hope so." said Queen Sally Acorn "Well then, I and everybody in the room wish you all good luck with all our hearts and may you come back to us safely you two. We do not want to lose two of our longest serving members."

"We'll be fine your grace." said Mandy reassuringly "When me and Wilson are together, we're tough to beat."

"Bye everybody." said Wilson "And don't worry, we'll stop the Martians in Grand Metropolis!"

"Bye Wilson and Mandy." said everybody in the room.

Wilson and Mandy gave a farewell wave and they ran through the warp ring into Grand Metropolis. The Royal Fighters were beginning to split up so they could deal with the Martians splitting up all around Mobius and causing a ruckus in seven different places around the globe. It was unknown to the Mobians that the Martians had been doing this in order to weaken them and pick them off easily but the Mobians were going to deal with the Martians regardless of what happened. Sonic & Tails had gone off to Holoska to deal with Dranzer and his men and right now, Wilson and Mandy had gone to Grand Metropolis where Natasha and Mercury were waiting for them. As the warp ring closed behind Wilson and Mandy, Sally turned around and pointed her bo-staff at the Royal Fighters still in the room.

"OK my valiant squadron of Freedom Fighters, who wants to go

next?" asked Sally.

There was a brief pause and some murmuring between others before a spiked hand raised up and the owner of the hand stood forward. It was none other then the rough, tough rad red of the team, Knuckles the Echidna, Guardian of Angel Island. His co-guardian and love interest Shade the Echidna stepped forward with him. The two echidnas seemed keen to go next.

"We'll go." said Knuckles "Me and Shade are itching for some action right now. That and my fists are hungry for Martian faces right now!"

He bashed his fists together and smirked a cocky kind of smirk. Shade gave off a half-grin of amusement at her guardian's remarks and then returned to her usual grim expression.

"Please your majesty, allow us to deploy next." said Shade politely "We are anxious to join in the conflict."

"I'm glad to hear that you two." said Sally "But please remember that you are going to Black Acropolis, one of the worst hells on Mobius. You do know what it's like there don't you?"

"I do your highness." said Knuckles "It's got two volcanoes and lots of lava geysers. Few people survive the place. I've heard it all. It's also known as the Apocalypse Zone."

"The place was so deadly that even Imperator Ix dared venture into it." said Shade dryly "You wouldn't think that considering his hubris."

"Well I'm glad you're aware of the dangers in Black Acropolis." said Royal Fighter Miranda Mongoose of the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters "But believe me when I say it's a lot worse then you can dare imagine. Me and my team barely escaped with our lives when we last went there."

"Don't worry Miranda, me and Shade will be careful out there." said Knuckles reassuringly "We'll brave the volcanoes of Black Acropolis and come back with some good news."

"We should hope you do." said Sally "Please Knuckles and Shade, for everybody's sake, be careful out there. And come back to us

safe and sound. We can't afford to lose the Guardians of Angel Island."

"Don't sweat it Sally." said Knuckles in his usual brash attitude "If I survived encounters with Imperator Ix, Eggman's worse creations and the Devatrons then a bunch of silly Martians aren't gonna be much of a problem."

"Do not underestimate them Knuckles." warned Shade "They could be worse than even Ix and the Devatrons. We do not know what awaits us when we get to Black Acropolis so don't be so arrogant."

"OK Shade, I won't." said Knuckles with a half chuckle in his voice "So then, we'll be off to the Apocalypse Zone. Silver, can you warp us there?"

"Sure thing." said Silver the Hedgehog, psychic time traveller of the future "You know, in my time zone, Black Acropolis is very different. Both volcanoes are gone and the whole thing's a wasteland of dried up lava. So much in fact that no new lava's been able to seep through it."

"Well then, I guess the people of the future don't have to worry about Black Acropolis anymore." said Knuckles, hoping to give Silver something to be happy about.

Silver sort of nodded agreeably all though his face was still visibly grim. Silver flicked the Super Warp Ring up into the air and it expanded to twice it's size in a golden flash. On the other side of the warp ring, Black Acropolis awaited them. It was like opening a gateway to hell pretty much. Knuckles and Shade stepped towards the Warp Ring but before they stepped through it, they turned around and waved to the others.

"Goodbye for now. And I promise you all, we'll come back." said Knuckles.

"Be safe out there." said Sally's lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx "And please, stop those Martians before they cause any havoc there."

"We will." said Shade, drawing out her twin blades and deploying

her helmet "We won't rest until every last Martian there becomes part of the scenery."

Knuckles was disturbingly amused by the idea of the Martians being buried under tonnes of lava right about now (maybe he just really hates them).

"I seriously hope we're fighting Marik." said Knuckles "I owe that creep a lot of pain for bringing his folks here to Mobius."

With that said, Knuckles and Shade stepped through the warp ring and they warped from the sanctuary of Royal HQ into the horrors of Black Acropolis. Knuckles and Shade were in for one of the biggest fights of their lives now, and the Martians they were going to be dealing with were two Martians that would give them one heck of a battle in the volcanic land of obsidian…

Black Acropolis, one of the most fearsome places in all of Mobius.

It wasn't hard to see why so many people feared this place. Two volcanoes erupted 24/7 in the place and at times, they erupted simultaneously, upping the fearsome factor of the zone. Making this even worse were the fact random lava geysers often spouted out and sprayed lava everywhere and one could not predict when they would erupt or where they would shoot up from. Sizzling hot lava was always around the place for the volcanoes were always erupting and lava rivers stretched around the zone. Some of the lava sizzled out and set into hard, black rock and some of it seeped into the lava rivers. Sometimes lots of lava got into the rivers and made them even bigger, other times little got into the rivers and changed nothing about them. The lava rivers had been getting bigger and longer every year and eventually, it would completely seep over the sides and spread around the zone, stretching far and wide before sizzling and burning out and becoming hard, black rock. Not that it would matter since the volcanoes would erupt yet again and make new lava rivers. So all-in-all, there was an endless cycle with the lava in Black Acropolis. The Mobians were lucky that the lava wouldn't be getting out of the zone and around Mobius or that would be bad. Things were going to be bad anyway for two Martian leaders

were in the zone and ready to cause havoc. They were Sycranna, the recently promoted pilot of the Martian fleet, and Obelisk, the twin brother of Dranzer whom was currently in White Acropolis fighting Sonic and Tails (and we already know the outcome of that one but in continuity, nobody does at this moment). Sycranna and Obelisk weren't alone though. They had brought a squadron of six Martians, three males and three females, and an enormous Martian tank. The tank had mammoth sized treads that were rectangular in shape and were standing on the short ends of the rectangle with the long ends facing up. There was a spherical shaped cockpit that could rotate so no matter which way the tank was up, the driver could simply rotate the cockpit to face the current direction it was in. Above the cockpit was a spherical gun turret that could slide up and down and face the front and the back of the tank so if it was on its back or upside down, it could rotate the gun barrel into the needed place and still shoot. The Martian tank was truly a surreal piece of science and at the same time, quite marvellous. Tails would be geeking out over the tank if he ever saw it. Upon arriving at Black Acropolis, Sycranna and Obelisk tricked anyone living near the place that they were going to attack the zone and destroy it, threatening to spill lava everywhere and destroy the nearby villages so that they could get the villagers to cry for help and send them a Royal Fighter or two to deal with. The lie had worked and right now, they were waiting for some Mobians to come and face them. It was all part of the "divide and conquer" scheme after all. They had been waiting for roughly fifteen minutes at the moment but they weren't getting impatient since Sycranna and Obelisk weren't that bad when it came to patience. They often thought waiting for an hour is the best time to wait for before losing your patience. While waiting, the two and their squadron had taken the time to observe their surroundings and see what there was. Needless to say, they were quite thrilled since Black Acropolis was their idea of a good place to hang out in (they like lava filled places with volcanoes in them). They thought this place would be a fitting graveyard for any Mobian that dared to face them. Sycranna could tell he was going to enjoy this little conflict. The Martian soldiers with them were a little nervous about Black Acropolis but they didn't show it. They remained tight-lipped and at ease with laser rifles in their hands. The tank had a pilot and the pilot was patiently waiting for his chance to get the tank going and start blasting something (one of the most important traits of being a

tank driver in the Martian army is to have patience and a love for explosions greater then even Michael Bay *heh, heh, heh*). As the Martians patiently waited, Sycranna decided to stir up a conversation to pass the time (they've not said anything for fifteen minutes believe it or not).

"I do have to say, when I began having images of Mobius in my head after Marik described it's inhabitants, I could not for the life of me have ever pictured THIS being a place on the planet." he purred as a lava geyser erupted in the background and sprayed lava everywhere.

"Same here." boomed the terrifying Obelisk in his deep, masculine, booming voice that echoed around the zone "Mind you, New Mobotropolis looked different to what I initially thought so this planet could defy many expectations."

"I'll say it does." said Sycranna "Not only do the Mobians defy our expectations but the sights around us do as well. Who would have thought there'd be a place on Mobius with TWO active volcanoes, stretching lava rivers and lava geysers spouting out at random? If we weren't here to destroy this planet then I'd be quite happy to make a home here, this is my idea of the perfect habitat."

"You'll take that back when a lava geyser ends up scorching your armour and frying your skin." snorted Obelisk "Why would any fool live in a lava-filled wasteland?"

"Because I happen to like lava filled habitats and erupting volcanoes!" snapped Sycranna "That's why I built my home near Olympus Mons* back on our glorious home planet of Mars! An erupting volcano is music to my ears."

Then suddenly, a lava geyser shot up from directly behind Sycranna and scalded his backside (it is covered by his armour but the armour around his bum's so hot from the lava that it's scorching him now). The Martian soldiers ran for cover as the lava geyser finished and drops of lava rained down onto the ground. Surprisingly, Obelisk stayed where he was and didn't so much as flinch at that (it's hard to scare him). None of the drops caught anybody and they just splashed down onto the ground and sizzled away into the dried up

lava earth they were standing upon. As for poor Sycranna, he clutched his bottom in pain and started running around in a comical, crazed manner reminiscent of a comical portrayal of somebody running around while their bottom's on fire (we've all seen it in the cartoons from our childhoods haven't we?). Sycranna looked VERY silly indeed, running around like this while clutching his bottom and trying to cool it off. Obelisk just stood there and remained straight-faced as Sycranna ran circles around him to cool his bum off. Deep inside, he was fuming like mad at Sycranna's insolence. After a minute of running around, the burns cooled down and Sycranna stopped running around. He patted his bum and he sighed with relief.

"Phew…I'm glad that's over with." puffed Sycranna "Goodness me, that was embarrassing." he muttered, going pink in the face over his gaff.

"You're lucky Diablo and the other lead Martians weren't around to see that or Diablo would have demoted you faster then he promoted you." sneered Obelisk, his face trying to twist into a smirk but he found it hard to do so since smiling isn't one of his professions.

"Be quiet Obelisk!" snapped Sycranna "I'd like to see you try and sneer at me when YOUR rear end gets scalded by lava!"

"Don't be so dramatic Sycranna and let it drop." ordered Obelisk "Diablo would not like to see us arguing when we have a job to do."

"Fair enough." hissed Sycranna, simmering down a little but still feeling a little angry right now "Let us put it behind us now. After all, one case of a Martian making a fool of himself is enough for today."

"Indeed." said Obelisk "Now, let's see if any Mobians have arrived to stop us yet."

Obelisk reached onto his belt and took off a device that was attached to it. The device was round and shaped like a lollipop with a black colour-scheme and a green screen on it. The device picked up non-Martian signatures and was often used when hunting for enemies and tracing down enemy spies. Obelisk peered at the device and waited to see if anything happened on the screen. The

screen lit up and displayed some red dots on the screen. Quite a lot of red dots. The red dots symbolized any non-Martian signatures. The device had picked up either a bunch of Mobians or maybe some other kind of non-Martian signature. The device would pick up even robots for they were non-Martian and the device picked up any life-form that was non-Martian, real or robotical. Obelisk was surprised at how many dots were on the screen.

"This is surprising, the device seems to indicate we may have quite a lot of Mobians to deal with." said Obelisk in a surprised voice "There's a lot of non-Martian life-forms being picked up on it."

"The Mobians are resourceful I'll give them that." said Sycranna in a slimy, slithery tone of voice "Well, we'll just put them all down. Martians, let's go and terminate some Mobians! Obelisk, lead the way!"

Obelisk obeyed and he marched off, following the device's directions. Sycranna followed Obelisk and the Martian soldiers followed him. The tank started up and trundled slowly behind the Martians. The Martians all marched off through the rocky plains of Black Acropolis, heading to where the signatures were being picked up. Who knew what they were going to be up against when they arrived at the coordinates the device was leading them to…

Not too far away from the marching Martians, the Super Warp Ring opened up and Knuckles and Shade arrived in Black Acropolis. The warp ring closed behind them, sealing them off from Royal HQ and trapping them in the Apocalypse Zone until they called for a return home. Knuckles and Shade were pretty surprised at how hot it was in Black Acropolis and poor Shade felt the worst of it since she was wearing a full-body suit and an armoured helmet. Knuckles and Shade looked around the zone of hell and they could see they were quite close to a lava river. There were slabs of stone floating down the river but they wouldn't be intact for long. The lava's heat would melt the stone away and then it would crumble and sink down into the lava where the pieces would dissolve in the searing heat. Knuckles and Shade knew Black Acropolis was going to be deadly but they were amazed at just how much lava there truly was.

"Whoa…" said Knuckles "It's often said this place is worse then anyone can dare describe. This place defies all descriptions of the place I've heard!"

"Same here, and it's so hot in this place." moaned Shade, sheathing her helmet so she could get some air and cool off slightly "I hope we don't spend too long here, I'm not sure if I can take it here for long. The heat's already getting to me."

"Stay strong Shade, we'll have to be at our best here." said Knuckles reassuringly "This place is a death zone and there are Martians here that we have to defeat. Although I'm still wondering why the Martians would dare set foot in here. Being in Black Acropolis is often considered a method of suicide!"

"Knowing them freaks, they'd probably love this place." muttered Shade "Cosmo tells me that Martians are peace-haters, anti-pacifists and the like. This hell would be their idea of home I bet."

"I can't argue with you there Shade." said Knuckles grimly "And I can see why the locals who live near here would get so worked up about the idea of Martians attacking this place. I mean look at what could possibly happen if this place got ransacked. That lava could flow out towards the villages and burn them alive. And who knows how much damage could be done if they start bombarding the two volcanoes here!"

He pointed at the two erupting volcanoes that were just in sight from where they were. They weren't doing anything at the moment, just smoking a little. But it was only a matter of time before they began erupting again.

"I have a nasty feeling the Martians maybe crazy enough to do something like that, blow up the volcanoes or something." said Knuckles "We all know what Marik's like so I can just imagine what the other Martians are like."

"They're probably worse than he is." murmured Shade "After all, Marik would have been brought up by those Martians and made into the sadistic little psychopath he is now."

"You have a point there." said Knuckles agreeably "So who do you think we'll be fighting? Marik's mom? Marik's dad? Marik's brother or sister if he has any? Marik's mates?"

"We could be against anybody." muttered Shade, raising her blades and looking around for something preferably Martian-like to slash "I don't care who I'm against as long as it means getting rid of the Martians and their filth. Marik was bad enough, we don't need anymore Martians here."

"Eesh, what have the Martians done to rile you up so badly Shade?" asked Knuckles, puzzlement evident on his face "I mean, you've barely met Marik, you know little of the Martians and all you know came from Cosmo."

"Marik beat me up badly during the doctor's attempt ransacking of NewMobotropolis with his Egg Feet, which as we know has recently been terminated." explained Shade "I owe him a rematch. And the descriptions of the Martians given to me by Cosmo makes me vehemently loathe them with every inch of my body. Especially as they sound as bad as Imperator Ix." she looked down at the ground sadly as memories of Ix and her childhood came back to her "And the fact they…obliterated Cosmo's race just…sickens me. It makes me think of that terrible time he attempted to destroy Angel Island. I hated every moment of that and the Martians are just making me think of those terrible times."

Knuckles could feel Shade's discomfort right now so he decided to simmer his co-guardian down a little. He put an arm around Shade's shoulder and took her hand into his other hand. Shade looked up into Knuckles' eyes with her eyes and wondered what was going on.

"I can see your hatred now." said Knuckles softly "But don't let your hate of the Martians get too extreme. The only thing that matters now is stopping them and saving Mobius. Think you can do that for me Shade?"

Shade smiled at Knuckles.

"Yes guardian." said Shade "I shall not let our mission be clouded by hatred. The only thing that matters is stopping the Martians."

Knuckles nodded agreeably and the two echidnas began leaning towards each other as if they were suddenly about to kiss each other. But before they could start getting romantic with each other, the sound of approaching feet cut them off and they broke up their hug. Knuckles and Shade braced themselves for an inevitable battle and they looked around for anything coming towards them.

"What's that?" asked Knuckles "Martians?"

"I don't think so." said Shade "These footsteps sound…metallic. Robotical even. I think robots are coming towards us."

"And no prizes for guessing who they belong to!" snarled Knuckles.

He had a beady little idea on what robots were coming towards them. And as the clanking noise got louder and louder and the owners of the clanking feet stomped into view, his guesses were right. A horde of Eggman robots, all Egg-Pawns armed with jousts and pistols, were marching through the land of obsidian and heading towards Knuckles and Shade. The two got a very nasty surprise though as the Eggman robots got nearer and nearer. A robot was standing in front of the troops and the robot looked like a robotical version of Knuckles! It's head was shaped like Knuckles, dreadlocks and all only with a black visor lit-up with green optics instead of eyes and instead of actual hands, it had rectangular lower arms with huge spikes on them to resemble Knuckles' trademark fist spikes. Knuckles could not believe his eyes. First Metal Sonic and now Metal Knuckles?! Is there anything Dr. Eggman WON'T make?! Either way, Knuckles was not going to let Metal Knuckles stay functioning. No silly robot dares take on his image and gets away with it! Knuckles stampeded towards Metal Knuckles so suddenly and so swiftly you'd think somebody had just put him on a spring and had him spring out towards Metal Knuckles. Shade wasn't sure if that was a good idea and she hesitated. Knuckles and Metal Knuckles lashed out at each other and began punching at each other.

"A robot me?! Dr. Eggman had the ball-bearings to make A ROBOT ME?!" screamed Knuckles, punching Metal Knuckles in the gut "How dare he! When I get my hands on that fat monster, I'll tear him apart just like I'm going to do to you when I'm through with you

faker!"

He then uppercut Metal Knuckles into the air and sent him hurling over the horde of Egg-Pawns and crashing down behind them. The Egg-Pawns quickly scattered for they knew better then to take on someone as ferocious as Knuckles. Knuckles charged through them all as they stepped out of his way and he and Metal Knuckles began punching at each other once again.

"Shade, you deal with the Egg-Pawns while I smash my Metal-Copy!" cried Knuckles.

"Certainly guardian." said Shade, rushing towards the Egg-Pawns with her blades at the ready.

Knuckles and Metal Knuckles began having a boxing match with each other while Shade darted towards the Egg-Pawns furiously. The Egg-Pawns strangely enough didn't bother to resist Shade. They all ran for their lives as Shade came at them with her blades ready to cleave them in two. Shade slashed one Egg-Pawn to pieces with one fell swipe of her blades but before she could prepare to attack another one, she noticed that the Egg-Pawns were running around like headless chickens as opposed to fighting them like they usually would. It was not in Shade's nature to attack an enemy who didn't want to fight so she didn't attack anymore of them. She began to wonder what was going on. Why weren't they trying to kill her? Why were they running around and not putting up a fight? Shade decided to see what was up. She ran towards another Egg-Pawn and grabbed it by the arm. The Egg-Pawn frantically tried to get out of her grasp but Shade held onto it tight and pulled it towards her. The Egg-Pawn pointed its gun at Shade and threatened to shoot her in hopes of making her let go but Shade kicked the gun out of its hand and glared into its frightened optics.

"OK little robot, what's going on with you? Why aren't you and your troops fighting me?" asked Shade.

"B-b-b-be-c-c-cause w-w-w-we a-a-a-aren't s-s-s-su-p-p-p-posed t-t-t-to f-f-f-fight you!" shrieked the Egg Pawn in a robotically enhanced voice (Eggman's given his Egg-Pawns voices now) "W-w-w-we're h-h-h-h-here t-t-t-to h-h-h-help y-y-y-you f-f-f-fight th-th-th-the M-M-M-

M-Martians! P-p-p-please d-d-d-don't hurt me!" it whimpered, cowering down on it's knees at the mercy of Shade.

Shade couldn't believe her ears. Eggman's robots were here to… HELP…them?! How could this be? Eggman didn't know the Martians had invaded Mobius! Did he…? Shade wasn't entirely convinced by this so she held her blade at the neck of the Egg-Pawn. The Egg-Pawn shrieked like a frightened dog.

"You are lying to me!" snarled Shade "You're here to kill me and Knuckles and if you do not surrender yourself then I shall have to resort to needless violence, something I strongly oppose to!"

"P-p-p-p-please d-d-d-don't k-k-k-kill me!" screamed the Egg-Pawn "I-I-I-I'll p-p-p-prove it that I-I-I-I sp-sp-speak the t-t-t-truth!"

He touched a button on the side of his head and played out a pre-recorded message that Eggman had ordered him to play for the Mobians when the time was right. The message rang out from the Egg-Pawn's voice box and played like this:

"Hello there, if any Mobians are listening to this then listen carefully. I, Dr. Eggman, have learnt about the Martians' disgusting presence on Mobius and since I want to conquer the planet for myself, I am going to help Sonic and friends destroy the Martians and save Mobius. I do hope you appreciate my co-operation for I'm not usually this generous or willing to ally with my enemies am I? Please do not attack my robots for they're here to help you, not hinder you. Understood? Sincerely, Dr. Eggman."

The message ended and Shade relaxed her expression. She lowered her arm and let go of the whimpering Egg-Pawn. The Egg-Pawn crawled nervously away from Shade. Eggman has learnt about he Martian's presence and wants to HELP defeat them? Well, this was something they shouldn't exploit for Dr. Eggman could be very useful to them. After all, his creations were surely going to be able to stand up to the Martians. Silver Sonic in particular was strong enough to wound even the nefarious Devion so who knew what Eggman's robots could do to a Martian? Now Shade knew the truth, she had to calm Knuckles down and stop him from smashing Metal Knuckles since he was likely to be a key factor in Eggman's

squadron here, a key factor that would be effective against the Martians. After all, Metal Sonic was one tough robot so a Metal Knuckles was bound to be just as effective. Shade sheathed her blades and belted over to Knuckles and Metal Knuckles to stop them fighting before they caved each other's heads in. The two were in a heated battle right now. Metal Knuckles didn't want to fight Knuckles since he wasn't supposed to but Knuckles was attacking him so he had no choice but to fight. At the moment, Metal Knuckles was on top. He slashed Knuckles across the chest with his metal claws and then punched him in the gut. Knuckles punched Metal Knuckles back but Metal Knuckles blocked the blow with his arms. Metal Knuckles uppercut Knuckles into the air with his right arm and Knuckles hurled through the air. He crashed landed near a shooting lava geyser and the lava shooting up into the air rained back down onto the ground, splashing all around Knuckles and hissing away into nothing. Knuckles was relieved to see he barely missed it and he leaped back onto his feet. Metal Knuckles clouted Knuckles across the face and then kicked him in the gut. Knuckles retaliated with a gut-kick of his own and then he uppercut Metal Knuckles into the air once again. Metal Knuckles landed with a sharp clunk on the rocky ground that almost shook him apart. Knuckles ran over to Metal Knuckles but before he could do anything, Metal Knuckles leaped up onto his feet and the two linked arms with each other. They pushed on each other and tried to overpower one another but Shade arrived on the scene and pushed the two away from each other. She stood between them with her hands held out and she yelled out.

"Stop! Stop this senseless fighting!"

"Shade?! What the hell are you doing?!" blurted Knuckles "Metal Knuckles and his goons are here to capture us or kill us for Dr. Eggman! Why are you stopping me?!"

"Because the Eggman robots are here to help us fight the Martians!" explained Shade "If you don't believe then allow the Eggman robots to tell you themselves! In fact, can you tell him yourself Metal Knuckles?"

Metal Knuckles lowered his arms, relieved to see that Shade understood their real motives and reason for being here right now.

He then looked at Knuckles with his glowing green optics. Instead of attacking him, Metal Knuckles just played the pre-recorded message Eggman had given to all his robots to play for Sonic or any of his friends so they could understand their reason for being here and prove that they're on their side. The message played out exactly the same as it did when the Egg-Pawn played it for Shade. Knuckles listened to the message and he was amazed at what he had just heard. Eggman found out about the Martians and was hoping to help the Royal Fighters stop them? Well this was an unlikely but surprising turn of events! Knuckles didn't really believe it though but he could see that fighting Eggman's forces was just going to slow him and Shade down as well as get them nowhere in this hell on Mobius. Martians were here and probably planning terrible things and all fighting Eggman's forces was going to do was distract them and prevent them from finding the Martians any quicker. So whether he believed it or not, Knuckles knew that allying with Dr. Eggman was the right thing to do at this moment. After all, the more the merrier as they say although Knuckles would have been quite content taking the Martians out on his own. But if Eggman was here to help then he should allow him to help. Knuckles looked at Metal Knuckles and he sighed.

"So you're here to help us after all." he said "Sorry about the beat down, I jumped to conclusions like I usually do. So Metal Knuckles, me and Shade take you up on your offer. You may help us defeat the Martians here but NO stabbing us in the back once they're defeated! Or I'll break you to pieces!"

Metal Knuckles nodded understandably. After all, he and his forces hadn't been given orders to backstab anyone they allied with so why would they do something like that? Eggman's robots only do what they're told, nothing more and nothing less. Shade smiled dryly at the reluctant Knuckles.

"Well, now that mess is sorted out, let's get finding the Martians." said Shade "We'll have to look hard for they could be anywhere right now."

"They wouldn't happen to be directly above you right now would they?" sneered a deep, slithering voice that came from nowhere.

Knuckles and Shade jumped a foot in the air and they looked around to see who said that. They looked up and saw none other than Sycranna and Obelisk standing atop a ten-foot high lump in the ground and glowering at them. Their squadron of six and the Martian tank was directly behind them and itching to start shooting at them. Knuckles and Shade were surprised at what they were up against and the Egg-Pawns all aimed their pistols at the Martians while Metal Knuckles just raised his metal claws. They all prepared to do battle with the Martians whereas the Martians just sneered at their opponents.

"So this is all we've got to resist us?" cackled Sycranna "Two red freaks with ludicrous looking hair styles and a bunch of robots with hideous designs as well as a robot that resembles the fist-spiked freak? This isn't going to be a challenge at all! This is going to be merely a warm-up exercise for us!"

Obelisk however pounded Sycranna on the head and made Sycranna groan in pain.

"You fool! We have been warned not to under-estimate the indigenous species of this planet!" snarled Obelisk "Marik has told us they're more powerful then their appearances would suggest and one Mobian he described was a powerful warrior named Knuckles whom was described as having spiked fists. Marik told us that Knuckles is one of the strongest Mobians out there so he is one we should not take lightly."

"Well it's nice that Marik remembered to point out that I'm strong and that I shouldn't be taken lightly." sneered Knuckles "And he was right to do so! For I am certainly NOT to be taken lightly!"

With that said, Knuckles belted towards where the Martians were standing but Obelisk reached behind him and pulled out his handheld rotary cannon. He pointed the cannon at Knuckles and began shooting at him furiously. Knuckles jumped in alarm and he turned around and fled for it as laser bullets showered the ground and sent chunks of the earth flying up into the air. Obelisk fired quite a few rounds at Knuckles furiously and he tried as hard as he could to hit the hot-headed echidna guardian. Knuckles did a surprisingly good job at dodging the furious cannon fire from Obelisk. But alas,

he couldn't dodge everything for he wasn't as fast as Sonic. Obelisk managed to tag Knuckles on the arm with his cannon. The laser bullet skilled past Knuckles' arm and left a horrible cut across it. Knuckles cried out in pain and actually ended up blurting out a very dirty curse word that cannot be mentioned for the sake of the younger readers reading this story. The cut on Knuckles' arm was pretty severe and it was bleeding and stinging like mad. Knuckles fell onto his knees and he gripped his arm in pain.

"Argh! Ugh, son of a gun that hurt!" he moaned.

"Nice shot Obelisk." purred Sycranna "Now finish him off while he's down."

Obelisk obliged of course and he pointed his rotary cannon at Knuckles, ready to fire at him and kill him. But that shot would never happen for Shade jumped in front of Knuckles and swept the air with her blades. A pink wave of energy emitted from the blades and swept towards the Martians. This was her trademark attack of Blade Rush as we all know. The Blade Rush struck Obelisk in the face and made him stagger backwards, dropping his rotary cannon and clutching his face in pain. Sycranna growled at Shade and he pointed a long, thin, clawed finger at her.

"Martians, attack!" he bellowed at the top of his voice.

The six Martian soldiers obeyed and they all charged down towards the echidnas and robots. The Egg-Pawns immediately started firing at the Martians but the Martian soldiers dodged their gunfire and started shooting at the Egg-Pawns. Soon the battlefield was filled with flying gunshots all firing in different directions and striking various areas of the battlefield. Most of the shots fired at one another missed and hit nobody but some shots did manage to hit their target. Anyone who got hit though wasn't hurt that badly by the shot for it mostly it their shoulder or skimmed their arm rather then flat out hit them. Obelisk thundered down towards Knuckles with his rotary cannon in hand and he start shooting rapidly at the echidna. The barrel to the cannon spun so fast it looked like a black blur spinning around the cannon and bullets were firing so fast that it was a miracle Knuckles was even managing to dodge any of them! But Knuckles somehow managed to dodge all the firing bullets and he

jumped up into the air. He glided towards Obelisk with the aid of his dreadlocks and he socked the Martian directly in the face. Obelisk dropped the rotary cannon and staggered backwards. Just at that moment, a lava geyser erupted up from beside Knuckles and Obelisk and Knuckles quickly kicked Obelisk's rotary cannon into the geyser. The shooting lava scorched and melted the cannon like an ice cream due to how hot it was, rendering it useless to Obelisk now. The lava geyser finished spouting up and drops of lava rained down onto the ground around Knuckles and Obelisk. Obelisk fumed at Knuckles for destroying his weapon and he clenched his fists.

"You insolent red dog!" growled Obelisk "That weapon is one of my most potent weapons in my armoury! I'll tear out your throat for that!"

"We'll see about that jerk!" growled Knuckles, bashing his fists together "I've taken on Devatrons and they're twice the threat you and your goons ever will be!"

The two potential rivals began to circle each other slowly as they prepared to attack and unleash hell on each other.

"I've had my fair share of powerful opponents too." crowed Obelisk "I fought Yellow Zelkova, one of the strongest warriors in the Seedrian fleet and his strength is matched by very few people out there."

"Sounds like my kind of guy." sneered Knuckles "Pity you Martian freaks killed all the Seedrians so I won't get to meet him! Which reminds me, I happen to be a good friend of Cosmo's and the fact you've destroyed her planet and rendered her the last of her kind makes me sick! For Cosmo and her world, you're going down Martian!"

"We shall see about that." retorted Obelisk "I'll make sure to bring your head to my twin brother Dranzer so I can show him what I've accomplished without him."

The two then pounded towards each other like gladiators and they punched at each other. Knuckles threw a very powerful punch at Obelisk's face and came pretty close to breaking his jaw. Obelisk staggered back and he rubbed his jaw better. Knuckles punched him in the gut but Obelisk's tough armour shielded him from much of the

blow so it didn't hurt him as much as it could have. Obelisk then decided to start throwing punches of his own. A threw a punch that could best any superstar boxer on Earth at Knuckles and he walloped him squarely in the cheek. Knuckles was thrown five whole metres across the battlefield and he lay there on his side, stunned and unable to believe that punch he'd just received. Knuckles was so taken aback by how powerful that punch was that all he could do was lie there on his side, staring ahead of him and fighting the stinging pain in his cheek. Nobody had ever given him such a powerful punch, not even a Devatron. Obelisk was one tough Martian and Knuckles full realized that now. Obelisk cackled a booming, hearty cackle at Knuckles and he drew out his sword (he's like his brother Dranzer, he carries a gun AND a sword) from the sheath on his back. He raised the sword high above his head and he was about to bring it slashing down on Knuckles but Knuckles recovered from that terrific punch and he socked Obelisk in the face with both fists. Obelisk was brought down onto his back and he dropped his sword. Knuckles jumped onto Obelisk and he started to punch Obelisk all over his face as hard as he could. He managed to leave a few dents on his helmet as he punched him. Obelisk grabbed Knuckles though and tossed him off of himself. He picked himself up and braced himself as Knuckles jumped up and punched him again. His arms blocked the blow beautifully and Dranzer kicked upwards, walloping Knuckles and knocked him down onto his back. Knuckles picked himself up only to get roundhouse punched by Obelisk as he got back to his feet and Obelisk let Knuckles have it with a few powerful punches and then a terrific uppercut that could do some serious damage if he threw it just right. Knuckles was sent hurling through the air about twenty feet and he crashed down near a gaping hole in the ground about fifty meters away from Obelisk. That was one powerful uppercut he'd received from the powerful green-armoured Martian. Obelisk picked up his sword, sheathed it and then thundered towards Knuckles, his boots making loud stomping noises as he charged towards him and he had his hands held out. Knuckles picked himself up and looked behind him. There was a huge hole in the ground and at the bottom of the hole was a pool of lava. The hole was about one-hundred meters wide and went down very deep. This was one hole that Knuckles certainly could do without falling down. Obelisk reached Knuckles but before he could punch him down the hole, Knuckles rammed Obelisk in the gut and

grabbed him. He carried Obelisk away from the hole and threw him across the battlefield. Obelisk scraped across the ground rather violently, leaving horrible scratch marks in his armour, and he came to a halt. Obelisk picked himself up and was furious to see his armour all scratched like it was now. Obelisk pounded back to Knuckles and the two ended up having a boxing match with one another. They punched each other as hard as they could all over their bodies and started trying to top one another's punch with every new punch they threw being harder than the old punch. Obelisk however uppercut Knuckles in the face again and brought him down onto his back. Obelisk lunged at Knuckles but Knuckles kicked him away with his legs and picked himself up. Knuckles then jumped up, spun around, and roundhouse kicked Obelisk in the face. Obelisk was almost thrown down onto his back but he managed to remain standing and he and Knuckles punched each other again.

As for Shade, she could see that Knuckles was having a bit of a tough time with Obelisk and she wanted to help her friend so she ran over to help Knuckles. But Sycranna had leaped in front of her and he drew out his rapier. He pointed it directly at Shade's belly and made her jump back in alarm.

"Nah, ah, ah my pretty." purred Sycranna "Your boyfriend has his opponent so I'll give you yours. I think I'll deal with you myself."

"Then so be it." said Shade, brandishing her blades and preparing to attack Sycranna "I won't be so merciful on you. You will be exterminated Martian scum!"

"Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho, ha, ha, ha, ha!" cackled Sycranna "I'd like to see you try girl!"

"The name is Shade and it'll be the last name you'll ever hear!" snarled Shade, deploying her helmet.

She jumped up at Sycranna and violently slashed the Martian across the face with her two blades, leaving horrific cuts on them that would later become scars. Sycranna howled in pain and he clutched his face, grimacing tensely. Shade then Blade-Rushed Sycranna and swept the Grand Pilot off of his feet. Sycranna landed with a heavy thud on his back. Shade pounded towards Sycranna,

roaring a fierce battle roar as she did so. Sycranna suddenly leaped onto his feet and he slashed Shade across the belly with his rapier. Shade squealed a terrible scream and she keeled over onto her knees, grimacing tensely and clutching her gut. There was a long thin cut across it that was superficial at most but still bad. Sycranna laughed at Shade and he added insult to injury by dropkicking the injured echidna into the air and sending her rolling away from him. Shade grimaced tensely and curled up on her side as if she had a killer tummy ache. Sycranna cackled at Shade and he twirled the rapier around. He advanced on Shade, ready to kill the female, suited echidna with one swift stab. He stood over her and prepared to stab her in the heart with his rapier. But Shade quickly blocked the attempted stab with her blades. She jumped up onto her feet and Blade Rushed Sycranna. Sycranna stumbled backwards and Shade jumped up and drop-kicked him in the head. Sycranna growled furiously, rubbing his head, and he threw the rapier at Shade. Shade simply cleaved the rapier in two with one swift slash of her blades. Shade sheathed her blades and ran over to Sycranna. Sycranna however lashed out and kicked Shade in the gut, hitting her cut and making the attack more painful. Shade winced in pain and doubled-over, clutching her belly in pain. Sycranna cackled mockingly at Shade and then he uppercut the poor echidna into the air. Shade hurled through the air in a rainbow arc spanning thirty meters and she came down with a heavy thud. Shade slowly picked herself up just as Sycranna was running towards her. But before he could grab Shade, a lava-geyser suddenly shot up from directly under his feet and sent him hurling up into the air! Sycranna was thrown up into the air goodness knows how high and after the lava geyser died down, he came hurling back down to the ground like a falling star. Shade waited for just the right moment and then suddenly, she jumped up into the air like a jackrabbit and she give Sycranna a tremendous kick just as he was coming back down to earth. Sycranna hurled across the battlefield about thirty feet still in the air and he came down with a crash hard enough to break bones on the ground. His armour protected him from most of the impact but he still felt it very badly. Sycranna rolled across the ground like a football and he came to a stop a good distance away from Shade. In fact Sycranna was so far away from Shade that the echidna could only just see him. Sycranna picked himself up, grunting loudly and grimacing as he did so. His armour was dented and scarred in many

places from that impact and he was having trouble standing. He reached onto his belt and grabbed a communications device. He was very far away from his troops and the tank so he needed the communications device to contact them for they would not be able to hear him at all. He contacted the tank driver.

"Marlon, this is Sycranna, start firing at the two Mobians and the robots!" he thundered into the device "We need the tank's incredible fire power right now!"

The tank driver, name Marlon, got the message and he obeyed instantly. He steered the tank to the left and he aimed the cannon barrel at Shade. The tank then fired a very powerful blast at Shade. Shade stared in horror at the firing tank and quickly jumped out of the way before the blast could hit her. The blast missed Shade by the skin of her teeth and it exploded upon hitting the ground. It was like a bomb going off as it hit the ground. Knuckles heard the cannon blast and he tried to run over to Shade to help her but Obelisk grabbed him by the dreadlocks and held him firmly back. The tank fired at Shade again but Shade dodged the attack again, the blast missing her yet again and exploding upon impact. Shade felt the force of the explosion sweep over her as she lay on the ground, her body tightly pressed down on it. The Egg-Pawns saw the firing tank and they abandoned their Martian soldier opponents. They started firing at the tank with the puny little pistols. But try as they might, their guns had no effect whatsoever on the heavily-armoured tank. The shots were all deflected by the tank's tough armour. The tank then trundled to the right and pointed it's long barrel at the Egg-Pawns. The Egg-Pawns didn't stop shooting though, they carried on in the vain hope of destroying the tank eventually. The tank however fired at the Eggman robots and with the exception of Metal Knuckles, who had flown out of the way before the shot even fired, they were all destroyed in seconds by the powerful blast. Metal Knuckles flew towards the tank and he smashed through the cockpit window, startling Marlon as he did so. He lashed out at Marlon and plunged his claws into his chest, killing him instantly and rendering the tank useless for it had no driver now. Metal Knuckles flew out of the tank and started flying towards the Martian soldiers. The Martian soldiers fired at Metal Knuckles but Metal Knuckles ploughed through them all effortlessly. He punched

each and every one of them and then slashed them across the faces with a swipe of his metal claws. Sycranna ran back towards the fight and he roundhouse punched Metal Knuckles onto the ground. Metal Knuckles picked himself up and started to floor Sycranna at an incredible speed. He pounded Sycranna in the gut, then on the head and then he slashed him across the face. Sycranna screamed in pain and Metal Knuckles added insult to injury by upper cutting him into the air. Sycranna hurled through the air and landed on his stomach very hard. Sycranna picked himself up only to get Blade Rushed across the chest by Shade. Sycranna roared fiercely and dropkicked Shade in the head. Her helmet protected her from much of the kick but she still felt it. Metal Knuckles punched Sycranna but Sycranna kicked him back and then slashed him across the face with his long thin claws, leaving heavy scratches on Metal Knuckles' head. Shade and Metal Knuckles both lunged at Sycranna like a pair of pouncing wolves and they brought him down onto the ground.

Over to Knuckles and Obelisk, their fight was getting more and more hectic by the second. Knuckles roundhouse punched Obelisk in the head and then gave him a right and left hook each to the cheek but Obelisk struck back hard with a punch to the gut and then a backhand across the head. Knuckles staggered near the hole in the ground but he managed to save himself falling in and he rammed Obelisk in the gut with his shoulder. Obelisk doubled over and Knuckles clouted him across the face with the back of his hand. Obelisk was brought down onto his knees and Knuckles fist-slammed the top of his head with his fists. Knuckles decided to make it hurt even more by taking Obelisk's helmet off and punching him on the cranium but before he could even touch Obelisk's helmet, Obelisk clasped his fists together and uppercut him with both hands. Knuckles hurled through the air and came down with a heavy crash onto the ground a few feet away from the hole. The hole suddenly erupted with lava and lava blasted up into the air. The giant hole they were fighting near was indeed a massive lava geyser and it was going off right now. The lava geyser finished shooting lava up into the air and the lava rained back down onto the ground in huge drops of fiery hot lava. None of the drops hit Knuckles or Obelisk, they just splashed down onto the ground and hissed away into nothing. Knuckles struggled back onto his feet and he threw another punch at Obelisk. But that punch was much weaker than

before. Obelisk's pounding of him was starting to weaken him and the heat of Black Acropolis was getting to him so he felt weak. Knuckles threw another desperate punch but after punching Obelisk again, he collapsed onto his knees, gasping for breath and feeling lame right now. Obelisk sneered at Knuckles and he kicked him over onto his back. Knuckles lay on his back, groaning and straining to get back up.

"Grrrr…come on Knuckles…you can do it!" he grunted.

But the heat of the zone combined with Obelisk's beating had left him too weak to get back up. He just lay there, waiting for Obelisk to finish him off. Obelisk smirked at Knuckles and he unsheathed his sword.

"You have fought honourably Knuckles." said Obelisk "And thus, I shall give you and honouree death. And that will be falling by my blade."

He raised the sword high above his head and was ready to kill Knuckles with one swift chop to the neck that would render him headless and dead. Shade however saw what Obelisk was about to do and she quickly Blade-Rushed the sword out of Obelisk's hands before he could kill Knuckles. Obelisk growled furiously and he raised his fists as Shade ran towards him. Obelisk uppercut Shade into the air just as she came to him and Shade landed sharply on her back. But as she landed on the ground, Metal Knuckles hammered Sycranna across the battlefield and sent him flying directly into Obelisk. Sycranna hit Obelisk and the two Martians ended up tumbling backwards down into the giant lava geyser! They both screamed a pair of blood-curdling screams as they plummeted to their seemingly inevitable deaths. But as they plummeted down into the geyser, the geyser erupted again and shot the two Martians up into the air. They rocketed up into the air a very great height and then they were sent plummeting down to the ground like falling meteorites. They hit the ground both together and they passed out from the impact. They lay there on their backs, seemingly dead and finished off for good. Their armour and skin was horribly singed by the lava geyser and their armour was also broken and cracked in many places. They looked dreadful and it was safe to assume that they were dead. Shade panted heavily and she retracted her helmet,

getting some fresh air back to her lungs and she wiped some sweat off of her head.

"Phew…we've done it." she said "They're dead. Finished, it's done. Mission accomplished. Thank you for that Metal Knuckles, you helped us win the battle."

Metal Knuckles nodded and seeing as his mission was accomplished, he flew off back to Dr. Eggman. He flew off into the sky and left Black Acropolis behind. Now Metal Knuckles was gone, Shade wandered over to Knuckles and helped him up onto his feet. Knuckles could feel his strength coming back to him now he was being helped up by his co-guardian.

"Ugh…thanks for the save Shade." said Knuckles "I was nearly a goner."

"You're welcome guardian." said Shade with a smile on her beautiful face "Although Metal Knuckles helped us win that battle. I'm amazed we've survived."

"I'm glad we did." said Knuckles "Although…cough…you may have to tuck me in tonight. I feel awful now."

"So do I, the heat's getting to us I think." said Shade "And we both have wounds that need tending to. Since our mission is complete, we can get some medical treatment and some fresh air back at home."

She touched the side of her headband and switched on a comlink she had hidden under there.

"Royal HQ? This is Shade the Echidna requesting warp ring back home please. We've done our mission." she reported.

"No problem Shade." came the voice of Nicole the Lynx "We're bringing home some others first so bear with us for the moment."

Shade nodded and she switched off her communicator. Shade and Knuckles then sat down onto the ground to rest their weary legs as they waited for Silver's Super Warp Ring to open up and take them back home.

"Since we have to wait while they bring some others home first, I guess our friends are doing well in their locations." guessed Knuckles "That's good to hear."

Shade nodded agreeably.

"Since we're going to be waiting for a while at most Knuckles, there's something I want to give you." said Shade.

Before Knuckles could ask her what she wanted to ask him, Shade grabbed his shoulders and pulled him into a kiss. Knuckles was completely taken aback by this but he didn't mind. He instead just hugged Shade back and the two echidnas started embracing each other lovingly like a proper boyfriend/girlfriend couple would. They had secretly been harbouring romantic feelings for one another and it had taken them until now to finally let it out. Knuckles and Shade could fully confirm their love for each other now and they couldn't be happier. As Knuckles and Shade kissed and cuddled each other lovingly, they failed to noticed that Obelisk started to open up his charred, scorched eyes…

Footnotes:

*** Olympus Mons is the largest volcano in the Solar System and is located on Mars**

Now that was one epic battle wouldn't you agree? And awww, Knuckles and Shade have kissed at last! I do support Knux/ Shade after all and the couple's now official! So what did you guys think to this chapter? And don't go away for Ruben, Bunnie and Geoffrey take the spotlight next time, and they're fighting the head Martian himself in Rail Canyon! Don't miss it or you'll be sorry! LOL ;)

Divide and Conquer Part 4

Story 130: Divide and Conquer Part 4: Warring on the Railroad

Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas vanished through Silver the Hedgehog's Super Warp Ring as they leapt through it and into the hell-hole that is Black Acropolis. The Super Warp Ring closed up after Knuckles and Shade went through it, sealing them off from Royal HQ until they opened it up again. Knuckles and Shade had been the third of many Royal Fighter teams that were departing from Royal HQ and going to a random country on Mobius to stop the Martian threat that was going on there. The Martians had invaded Mobius and had begun their onslaught by dividing their resources across the globe. Of course, the whole thing was a cowardly gambit suggested by Marik the Martian in order to divide the Royal Fighters and make them easier to pick off one by one. So far, Sonic & Tails had departed for Holoska, Wilson and Mandy had departed for Grand Metropolis and Knuckles and Shade had just departed to Black Acropolis. Martians were attacking all those places and right now, the heroes would be dealing with them and hopefully stopping them from causing much harm. Now Knuckles and Shade had left, Queen Sally Acorn turned to the other Royal Fighters in the room and pursed her lips.

"OK then, who wants to go next or will I be choosing who goes next?" asked Sally politely.

"Sally, if it's alright with you, can I pick who goes next?" asked Nicole the Lynx, the Acorn Family's lady-in-waiting and best friend of Sally Acorn "I have a good idea on who should go next."

"OK then Nicole, who should we deploy to the next location that has a Martian attack going on?" asked Sally.

"If it's alright Sally, I think we should send Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John and Ruben the Water Panther next." said Nicole "They could do with getting into the action anytime soon. I believe you said they're going to Rail Canyon?"

"I did indeed." said Sally "Well Bunnie, Geoffrey and Ruben, do you wish to deploy next?"

"We'd be more than happy to." said Geoffrey St. John, saluting Sally Acorn respectfully "I'm itching to give those blighters a good pounding for daring to invade Mobius."

"And I'm eager for a chance to redeem myself for my blunder earlier." said Ruben the Water Panther, still feeling bad about accidentally short-circuiting Bunnie Rabbot's robot limbs with his water powers earlier "I still can't stand the fact that a Martian made me drench Bunnie accidentally earlier."

"Oh Ruben hon, stop holdin' that over yerself." said Bunnie sweetly, patting Ruben affectionately on the head "It's all over and dun with now, you needn't keep beating yerself up just because ya'll accidentally short-circuited mah limbs in the earlier battle."

"I know, I know." sighed Ruben glumly "It's just, I hate making mistakes. It makes me feel awful inside when I mess up on something. I'm not used to making mistakes so when I do make one, I tend to let it get to me pretty badly."

"That's completely understandable mate." said Geoffrey with sympathy in his voice "I wasn't keen on making mistakes when I was a lad. Whenever I messed up, I'd proper whine and moan about it and feel like an idiot. But that's the fact of life, nobody's perfect and we all make mistakes. But the beauty of making mistakes is the ability to work off of them later. Mistakes can often set people up for success in the future. And that's the case with your mistake Ruben lad," he added "You see, now we know that Bunnie's robot limbs are prone to short-circuiting in water, Tails replaced her original robot parts with waterproof limbs so it can't happen again. Your mistake earned Bunnie a much needed upgrade mate."

That made Ruben feel much better now.

"Thanks Geoffrey, I won't let it get to me anymore." said Ruben softly.

"That's the spirit mate!" laughed Geoffrey, playfully slapping Ruben

on the back "Now then, you ready to bash some Martians?"

"Oh yes!" cried Ruben eagerly "Especially after all the dishonourable crimes they've committed! Marik invading our world and trying to kill us all was enough but his kind destroying Cosmo's planet and then coming here to finish us off is crossing the line! I'll see to it that they all get defeated!"

Geoffrey sweat-dropped a little and put his hand over the back of his head, grinning nervously.

"Heh, I think I motivated the kid a bit too much." he chuckled.

"Oh well, it means he's ready to fight Martians like we are." said Bunnie casually.

"OK then, you three may be the next to go and fight the Martians." said Sally "You'll be going to Rail Canyon and please, for heaven's sake, be careful out there! Rail Canyon is a very dangerous place to be given how it's very easy to fall off there. If you fall off the rails or platforms, you will not survive."

"We gathered that from when we fought the Black Arms in Rail Canyon during their invasion." said Geoffrey "We sent them blighters plummeting to their deaths."

"We all understand the dangers at Rail Canyon Sally-girl." said Bunnie "Dun worry about us, we'll be fine. Ah can fly so fallin' off ain't a worry for me and if Geoffrey or Ruben fall, I'll be on hand to catch them."

"Indeed you will." said Sally with a smile "Let us hope that the Martians you're against aren't going to be too much for you three to handle."

"Ah don't care how many Martians we face or how tough they all are!" declared Bunnie, punching the air with her robot arm "We'll beat them all into submission ya'll see if we don't!"

"You got that right luv." said Geoffrey snarkily, loading his arm-mounted crossbow "Them blokes are gonna wish they'd never come here."

Sally just sort of half chuckled to herself. Boy it felt good to have so many eager heroes fighting for the greater good but at times, they really got in over their heads. Still, at least they're optimistic and always ready for action. Sally turned to Silver.

"Open up the warp ring to Rail Canyon Silver, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben are eager to depart." she ordered.

Silver threw up the Super Warp Ring and it opened up a portal to Rail Canyon.

"I've been to Rail Canyon in my time." said Silver more to himself than anybody "Most of the rails are unfortunately destroyed but thankfully, the canyon still exists despite the destruction of Mobius in the future."

"Good luck you three." said Sally "And be careful out there."

"Thank you your majesty and we will." said Geoffrey "OK mates, off to Rail Canyon and away!"

With that said, the skunk in the green combat suit eagerly charged through the Super Warp Ring and over to Rail Canyon where a bunch of Martians would be waiting for him, Ruben and Bunnie. Bunnie and Ruben jumped through the Super Warp Ring too and the warp ring closed up after they left. They had left the sanctuary of Royal HQ and to the high-up world of Rail Canyon. Who knew what dangers awaited the three of them when they started looking for the Martians that were attacking the place…

Rail Canyon, a tourist attraction for many a traveller on Mobius. Rail Canyon was one of those sights on Mobius where your first reaction is merely just "WOW!" when you see it. Canyons stretched for miles around, platforms were built proudly up high into the sky and above the canyons and rails branched all around the canyons, giving people a clear sight on everything around them. The trains of Rail Canyon were a sight for sore eyes too for they were pretty monstrous looking but many people enjoyed riding on them. There has yet to be a single person who's seen Rail Canyon and actually

hates the look of it (I wouldn't be surprised if the Martians didn't like the look of it). The canyon sadly had had some damage to clean up after the whole fiasco with the Black Arms race yesterday. Bullet Station, the main station of Rail Canyon, was still destroyed and the trains were having a bit of trouble finding a station to go to since there were many trains and having so much as one station out of commission would mean at least one station would have about two trains queuing up and dropping off supplies to the places the rails in Rail Canyon lead to. Bullet Station was currently being rebuilt right now but building had ceased for the Martians were attacking and the place had been evacuated for the safety of the workers. For all they knew, the Martians might come to Bullet Station and attack since they'd likely know how to navigate the place. So far, the Martians hadn't touched Bullet Station. The work currently done on the re-building of the station was exactly as the evacuated workers had left it. The Martians weren't anywhere near Bullet Station, they were somewhere else in the canyon. If they had been at Bullet Station then chances are, they would have seen Bunnie, Geoffrey and Ruben arriving at the station through a Super Warp Ring. The warp ring had taken them straight to Bullet Station. After all three of them had jumped through the warp ring, it closed up behind them, stranding them in Rail Canyon for the time being. Rail Canyon wasn't a bad place to be stranded in, provided you hated heights that is. Geoffrey lifted up his goggles to let some fresh air into his eyes and get a clear view of what was around him. The skunk was wowed at the view he was met with. During their first outing in Rail Canyon, they hadn't really had time to appreciate the view or even see much of it so Geoffrey was happy to get a good view of what was around.

"Now that is a sight for very sore eyes." said Geoffrey to himself "Any bloke could enjoy a beautiful view like this."

"Ah'm sorry to say sugah-Geoff but we ain't here to sight-see so dun get too used to the view." said Bunnie grimly "We've got Martians to stomp on."

Geoffrey frowned and he turned away from the beautiful view he was looking at.

"Some days, you just don't wanna be a Royal Fighter." he muttered.

"So, if I remember from our battle with the Black Arms, this is Bullet Station isn't it?" asked Ruben, surveying the under construction Bullet Station they were standing in "This place looks familiar and most of the wreckage is still as it was when we left it."

"It is Bullet Station kid." said Geoffrey "Looks like the place is under refurbishment from when it was destroyed by the rock creatures the Black Arms summoned from the ground with that Doom's Sword thing of theirs. Them blighters really bloomin' messed up the place didn't they?"

"They sure did sugah." said Bunnie "And because of the Martians, the poor lil' workers haven't had time to get started on repairing the place. In fact, there aren't even any here but ah'm seeing a lot of toolboxes lyin' around. Where are all the workers then if there are tools around here?"

"Maybe they heard about the Martians attacking the place and they evacuated for their own good?" suggested Ruben "That's the only logical explanation for all this."

"I sure hope it was like that." muttered Geoffrey "If those Martians kill one Mobian, one single little Mobian, then I will give the blackguards what for!"

He clenched his fists and gritted his teeth angrily, his face turning red at the mere thought of the Martians killing people.

"Geoffrey hon, simmer down please." said Bunnie, putting her hands on the skunk's shoulders "Gettin' riled up and angry ain't gonna do us any favours."

"Sure thing babe." said Geoffrey, putting an arm around his girlfriend's waist "Sorry about that."

The two smiled at each other dreamily for a minute before breaking up the hug and getting back to business.

"It seems the workers evacuated the place, there's no bodies lying around here and there's no signs of a battle around." Geoffrey analyzed "The place would look pretty beaten up if there were

Martians here I bet."

"I agree on that." spat Ruben "Marik loved to desecrate any place he visited and there's no signs of razing anywhere so the Martians can't be around here. They must be elsewhere."

"Well let's go and find the Martians then." said Bunnie eagerly "An ah seriously hope we'll be against Marik. Ah so wanna pound him for destroying Cosmo's planet and wipin' out her dang kind!"

"Same here luv." said Geoffrey "Poor little Cosmo didn't deserve that happening to her."

"I feel Cosmo's pain more then anybody else does." muttered Ruben sadly "The death of her kind and her planet reminds me much of the destruction of my home and the death of my clan. Unlike Cosmo though, my home's since been repaired and the water-panthers aren't down to one. It's almost unfair isn't it? The water-panthers are spared this kind of fate but the Seedrians aren't?"

"Well your kind didn't count on a bunch of Martians invading the home planet and destroying it." said Geoffrey "And fortunately for everybody, we're gonna stop that from happening. Bunnie, could you fly us off into the sky so we can search for the Martians?"

"Sure thing handsome." said Bunnie with a sexy little wink that made Geoffrey grin at her.

Bunnie tucked Geoffrey and Ruben under her arms and she her had robot arm extend all the way around her, Geoffrey and Ruben a couple of times for extra stability. The hand tucked itself between her ribs and Ruben, who was under her left arm to strength the hold. Now Geoffrey and Ruben were wrapped to her by her robot arm, she wouldn't be dropping them anytime soon. Bunnie then activated the rockets in her roboticized feet and took off from the platform. To her amazement, her acceleration into the sky seemed surprisingly faster then she was used to. But she didn't mind, she loved it already. She did a few somersaults in the air with Geoffrey and Ruben laughing and screaming respectively as she did so. Geoffrey was enjoying this but Ruben wasn't so much. This was too fast for him and he didn't like it.

"Yee-HAW!" she squealed excitedly, doing a little twirl around in mid-air "Tails gave mah new limbs some new rocket boosters! Ah'm faster than ever! Whoo-hoo!"

"That's great Bunnie but don't get too excited!" shrieked Ruben as she did another somersault "Me and Geoffrey don't wanna end up bringing up what we ate for breakfast this morning!"

Bunnie stopped showing off and resumed her normal flight pattern.

"Sorry lil' Ruben." chuckled Bunnie "Ah'm just excited that ah can fly faster then normal now."

"We'll go all around the canyon, even to the places the rails link to, and we'll keep going until we find the blighters attacking the place." said Geoffrey "If you get tired Bunnie, feel free to touch down at any time."

"Sho' nuff Geoffrey." said Bunnie understandingly.

So Bunnie rocketed of through the canyons, following the rails and keeping an eye out for anything that resembled a Martian. She'd find them soon enough but they'd be surprised at who they'd be up against…

Further through the canyon, a group of Martians were causing a riot in a city that Rail Canyon led to. This city was known by the name of Rail City for it was the base of operations for Rail Canyon. The people of the city were responsible for the canyon's trains and rails as well as the safety of everything and everybody in the canyons. The city was relatively small for a city, having about forty buildings in it at most but it was still an impressive looking city nonetheless. The tallest building in Rail City was the official headquarters for the city and Rail Canyon itself. The building was dark purple in colour (Rail City has unusually coloured buildings) and it had a very unique design. Everybody who worked there was constantly on their toes and working 24/7 to ensure the utmost care is put into Rail Canyon and the safety of its visitors as well as run the city itself. Rail City was a popular attraction for anyone in Rail Canyon to visit.

Unfortunately, nobody would be visiting the city now for Martians were attacking it. The Martians had arrived at Rail Canyon via Marik's Chaos Control with the only remaining Chaos Cluster fragments and they were storming the city. Being as Marik didn't know about Rail Canyon, let alone ever visited the place, it was just fortuitous that the Martians attacking Rail City just happened to show up here. After all, Marik had teleported the Martian squadrons to *random* places on Mobius with no real locations in mind (just imagine how horribly wrong THAT could have easily gone!) when he did the Chaos Controls. This Martian squadron was a squadron of ten Martians all armed with rifles and bombs and TWO Martian tanks trundled behind them as they razed the streets of Rail City and blasted the buildings. These two tanks were bronze in colour and had shiny gold tread covers for their treads. The Martian leading the squad was the one Martian nobody would want to be up against right now, Grand Warlord Diablo himself! Diablo was the headman of the Martian fleet and Marik's father. Diablo was quite happy to be destroying Rail City right now, even if it was merely just to stir up enough panic to make the citizens call for the Royal Fighters and give them some Royal Fighters to destroy. Diablo joined in with the destruction of the city, clubbing several areas and several people (ouch!) with his deadly mace. He also ordered the tanks on when to fire and what to fire at. The destruction was going well. Buildings were beginning to crumble like sandcastles and half the city was already in ruins. Diablo led the tanks up to the tallest building in Rail City and he gave the order to fire. The two tanks fired some cannonballs at the building and in a matter of minutes, the enormous skyscraper was brought crumbling down to the ground like an unstable Jenga tower. Diablo cackled maniacally as he watched the building crumble. He loved watching tall skyscrapers crumble down to the ground, especially if he was the one responsible for it.

"Oh yes, I love this!" he boomed in his powerful, booming voice that seemed to echo around the city as if he was using a megaphone to project himself "I love watching buildings crumble! It does my adrenaline levels so much good and gives me so much joy! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" (he's not much different from his son is he?)

The building finally crumbled down to the ground and lay their in ruins and rubble. RailCity was now half destroyed with its tallest

building now in complete ruins. The citizens of RailCity had fortunately evacuated the city and sent the call for help before the Martians started bombing the place although some fleeing citizens had unfortunately been killed by some Martians while they were fleeing for their lives. Diablo didn't care though, he'd get to the killing later once the Royal Fighters were killed by his hand. Diablo finished cackling at the falling skyscraper and he turned to face his squadron.

"Well my squad, we have done an admirable amount of damage to this city." he crowed gleefully "Half of it is already down to the ground in ruins and the tallest building in it has been destroyed!"

"If we keep this up sir, we can destroy the entire city." said a female Martian soldier who wore a helmet and red shoulder pads.

"Indeed we can Miko." said Diablo with a big smile on his face "I do hope the damage we've done is enough to attract attention from the Royal Fighters. If not then we'll destroy the rest of the city!"

"I hope we deal with this "Sonic the Hedgehog" guy." said Miko "I'm dying to shoot him after what he did to Marik."

"He will definitely pay." said Diablo reassuringly "But I don't really mind who I'm against as long as they're friends and acquaintances of Sonic."

"Hey sir, I don't mean to ask or anything," said a male soldier armed with a rocket launcher and with a voice similar to that of the late actor Lawrence Tierney "But are you sure you'll know who's a Royal Fighter and such? I mean, we haven't really had time to memorize their appearances or learn their names have we?"

"Marik described each of Sonic's friends to me and the other leaders." explained Diablo "I'll know who I'm up against. Many of them sound pretty fascinating though. I'm particularly interested in one Mobian he described to me as a cyborg rabbit named "Bunnie Rabbot" or something like that. The name is terrible of course but Marik described Bunnie as a powerful woman who knows how to use her robot parts to great effect. I'd like to see just how strong "Bunnie Rabbot" really is. She won't match up to me of course but

still…"

"I think we get the idea Grand Warlord." said the male soldier gruffly "You know what would make our takeover of this mud ball a whole lot easier? If our first Grand Warlord Tyrahko was still around. That guy sure helped us in a lot of our conquests and destruction of peace-loving worlds everywhere."

Diablo's face fell into a solemn expression that looked kind of weird on him given how he was usually angry or happy, his two most prominent emotions.

"Ah yes…Tyrahko." he mumbled "Tyrahko was the greatest Martian of us all. He's the one who rightfully led us to a life of warfare and malice, he was the one that deduced that peace was bad and we couldn't agree more. He was said to have been a fine Grand Warlord back in the day…and that was over one million years ago now. Tyrahko only managed to survive that long thanks to a mystical suit of armour he'd found and put on. The suit made him godlike, giving him god powers and making him ageless so he could live forever. The Martians that followed him branded him a god, the god of Mars because of his power and thus, ever generation of Mars would refer to him as "Tyrahko, The God of Warfare". He'd seen centuries of Martian fleets, ours being his last one unfortunately before he was killed. I remember the last we saw of Tyrahko as if it were only yesterday. We were out in the vast cosmic entity of space, we'd gotten caught up in a battle and Tyrahko was blown up by a powerful planet-shattering bomb the enemy had. He couldn't have survived that, even with his suit of armour. The armour didn't grant him immortality so he couldn't have survived. If only he was still here now then we'd have this planet in pieces already."

He sighed loudly, suggesting that he thought Tyrahko's death was pretty tragic and that it had been hard on him.

"But as is, we can't dishonour Tyrahko by not keeping his memory and spirit alive." said Diablo "We'll do whatever it takes to vanquish peace lovers and peace-loving worlds everywhere. I'm sure Tyrahko is looking down on us all with pride."

"Yeah, I'm sure the scary, million year old, godlike Grand Warlord's

really proud of us all." said Miko "But he won't be proud of our cowardly victory over the Seedrians."

"How I LONG to start that war all over again!" growled Diablo "That's why I'm not going to bother searching for the evacuated Seedrian children, so they can grow up, become fine soldiers and we can battle them all over again and win the war the *right* way!"

"But that'll have to wait. Right now, we've got this planet to raze." said the gruff voice Martian.

"Indeed we have." said Diablo happily "And I swear if it takes me for the rest of my life, I'll destroy this planet and make the Mobians pay for what they did to my poor little Marik…and especially for what they did to my brother, Count Drago."

He wiped away a tear that trickled down his eye. Count Drago's death had been pretty hard on him and it still burnt his mind just thinking about him. But his mind was about to focus on other things for Miko had taken a device off her belt and was looking at it. It was the same device that Obelisk had on him to track down any forms of life that were not Martian, robotical or organic. To Miko's surprise, the device was displaying three dots on the screen, suggesting that three non-Martian life-forms were coming to them.

"Diablo!" cried Miko "There's three non-Martian life forms heading to our location! I think we've got some Mobians coming!"

"Of course we have." said Diablo "They couldn't be anything else! And I bet they're Royal Fighters too. Good, that means Marik's plot is working. Shame we're only fighting three of them, I was expecting a good few hundred at least. Oh well, just means we kill them easier. Three puny Mobians will barely scratch the surface of our wall."

He then turned to his comrades and barked out at them.

"Martians, prepare for their arrival!" he ordered "Tanks and soldiers, hide yourselves and set up an ambush! You three," he pointed at three Martian soldiers "You stay here and we'll act natural to fool the Mobians into thinking there's no trap set up for them and that they

haven't got much to deal with!"

"Yes sir!" said the entire squadron.

And thus, the squad split up to do what they had been told. Three Martians stayed with Diablo as ordered while the other seven ran off to hide and prepare the ambush for the coming Mobians. The two tanks trundled off and took shelter behind some buildings that hadn't been destroyed. Diablo and the three Martians remained where they were and started acting like they were continuing their destructive rampage. The act was pretty convincing, anyone could fall for it, it was that convincing. Anyone seeing this wouldn't suspect a trap at all.

While the Martians were setting up their ambush and preparing to catch whatever it was that was coming to them, Bunnie Rabbot flew through the canyons and spotted the half-wrecked Rail City in the distance. She instantly deduced that the Martians were there and she boosted up her rockets at full power as she headed towards it.

"Boys, ah think we've found where the Martians are!" cried Bunnie.

"What is that city we're heading towards?" shouted Ruben, trying to be heard over the whoosh of wind that swept past Bunnie as she flew quickly through the air.

"That's Rail City, the very place that runs the canyons!" Geoffrey called over to Ruben, trying to be heard of the whoosh of wind too "I've read all about it! Without Rail City, Rail Canyon would be in a right royal mess!"

"It looks like the Martians have attacked the poor lil' city!" shouted Bunnie "It's smokin' and some buildings look like they've been destroyed! Those dang Martians must be here!"

"And I guess that's why we're heading to the city!" called Ruben "I hope we're going to be fighting one of the important Martians! I'm itching to kick their butts for this desecration!"

Judging by the damage done to the place, I have a feeling we'll be facing a lot of Martians!" exclaimed Geoffrey "Oh well, just means

we have more butts to kick!"

Bunnie just sort of chuckled supportively as she flew down towards Rail City. Bunnie raised up her feet and touched down onto the ground, blowing dust off the ground around with her jet boosters. As soon as Bunnie touched down onto the ground, She unwrapped her arm from around Geoffrey and Ruben and put them down. Ruben straightened his ruffled up fur, a result of the flight. Geoffrey straightened his goggles and he observed his surroundings. He was quite disheartened at the mere sight of wrecked buildings, fallen skyscrapers and heaps of rubble lying everywhere.

"Crikey…the blokes really messed up the city didn't they?" said Geoffrey in a sympathetic tone of voice.

"Half of it's already crumbled down to the ground!" shrieked Bunnie "And ah have a nasty lil' feelin' that the rest of the city ain't gonna be standin' for long!"

"Seeing this level of wanton destruction makes me sick!" growled Ruben, clenching his fists and twitching his tail in rage "How could the Martians do all this?! I'm disgusted at how heartless they all are! Destroying places just because they can, what have they got against peace-lovers anyway?!"

"I'll never understand mate." said Geoffrey, sighing "I never understood Marik so I'll never understand the rest of them."

"Well let's get to it boys before more of Rail City gets destroyed." said Bunnie determinedly, striding off without waiting for Ruben and Geoffrey. It was quite clear that she was keen to get into the action as soon as possible.

Geoffrey just smiled admirably at his beautiful girlfriend. No wonder he fancied Bunnie, he loved women with a great sense of passion for their duty and a keenness for action as great as his own. Geoffrey and Ruben followed Bunnie as she strode off into RailCity. The three Mobians all ran into the city and they took cover behind a giant chunk of rubble. They peered over the rubble and saw who they were up against, or so they thought. There was Diablo with three Martian soldiers strutting around as if they owned the place

and smashing anything in fight. Diablo grabbed a fire hydrant and ripped it out of the ground with his bare hands. Water spouted up into the air because of the now missing fire hydrant and Diablo threw the hydrant away. The broken hydrant clanged off the ground and lay there like a piece of litter.

"You three! Destroy that building!" he ordered "And set your rifles to the highest level so the level of damage will be greater!"

"Yes sir." said the three Martian soldiers.

They set their rifles to the highest level of firepower they could reach (yes, their guns have settings. What about it?) and they aimed at a building that was still intact and hadn't been destroyed yet. Ruben looked like he was about to go mad as he watched the Martians prepare to destroy the building. He couldn't stand destruction of any kind as he believed destruction was ultimate dishonour and it was always heartbreaking watching innocent homes getting destroyed so savagely. Wanton destruction was the one thing that angered him more then anything. Bunnie and Geoffrey shared Ruben's horror but at the same time, they were wondering about something.

"Huh, I thought we'd be up against more Martians then that." mused Geoffrey "Four Martians seems a bit small doesn't it? Given the damage done to Rail City, I thought we've be up against a flippin' army or something. Still, four Martians seems to be a big enough threat, I mean look at all the damage they've done to Rail City!"

"Ah know sugah. And ah think ah recognize that Martian there." said Bunnie, pointing at Diablo "That's the dang leader of the Martians, Grand Warlord Diablo I believe his name is."

"It is babe." said Geoffrey, aiming his crossbow at Diablo and preparing to fire a stun dart at him "He even announced himself when the Martians landed earlier. He's also Marik's dad if we heard him correctly."

"Ah believe he did say he was Marik's daddy." said Bunnie "That just gives us more of a reason to take him down. But ah don't think we can do take him down as easily as we might think. He looks tough. We should take him down from the shadows."

"I agree." said Geoffrey "Which is exactly why I've loaded up me little crossbow with a stun dart. If I can get that dart to embed itself into the bloke's armour, it'll stun him and because he's wearing armour, it'll act like a conductor for the electricity in the stun and thus, knock him out in a matter of seconds. It can't possibly fail. Provided…the dart actually sticks into him."

"His armour looks tough sugah." said Bunnie "Ah recommend aimin' for his upper arm. That doesn't have any armour on it."

"Then upper arm it is luv." said Geoffrey, aiming his arm-mounted crossbow at Diablo's upper arm "Prepare to get sedated leader of the Martians..."

But before he could so much as activate his crossbow, Ruben suddenly jumped out of his hiding place and belted towards Diablo like an angry cat! You see, Ruben becomes a very out-of-control person when he loses his cool and right now, seeing so much wanton destruction REALLY made him lose his cool. Ruben maybe intelligent, mature and can keep his emotions in check most of the time but sometimes, even he could lose it and go mental. It took a lot to upset Ruben and when Ruben got upset and angry, he was like a wild cat. His mind was focused on one thing, beat the snot out of Diablo and his goons. Bunnie and Geoffrey panicked as they saw Ruben rushing towards Diablo.

"Oy! Ruben! Come back here at once!" shouted Geoffrey.

"Ya'll can't take Diablo by yerself! Come back!" screamed Bunnie.

But Ruben ignored them and he gave Diablo an enormous jet of water. Diablo turned around and before he knew it, he was drenched by a wave of water but somehow, he managed to remain standing as Ruben squirted him. The Martian soldiers jumped in surprise and they began shooting at Ruben madly with their laser rifles. The rifles were set to the highest firepower so if Ruben got hit by one, he'd be dead in two seconds flat. But Ruben used his martial art skills to dodge the shots with relative ease. Diablo, dripping wet with water, watched as Ruben dodged all the laser shots. He was amazed at the sheer agility and athletic ability of Ruben.

"That little pest is pretty good." said Diablo "And I believe I know who he is. Marik described him to me in great detail and he matches his descriptions. So…"

One Martian soldier aimed his rifle at Ruben but Ruben jumped out of the way before the Martian could get a clear shot at him, causing the Martian to miss and hit the ground instead. Ruben booted the Martian in the head and brought him down onto his back. Then he snatched the Martian's rifle and started beating the Martian up with it. He smacked it in the gut and the chest and then started pounding it on the head with the rifle as if it was a club.

"You desecraters! How dare you destroy an innocent city!" he screamed as he smacked the Martian on the forehead with the rifle "You've made me very mad with all your destruction! Senseless destruction and unwarranted desecration is ultimate dishonour and it sickens me! By the souls of my dead clan, I'll see to it that you never destroy anything ever again!"

He then gave the Martian one last wallop on the head with the rifle and that finished it off for good. Had Ruben been himself, he probably wouldn't have killed the Martian like that since Ruben doesn't like killing and strongly believes that killing is wrong. But when Ruben snaps, he's out of control and ends up being as wild as anything. Geoffrey and Bunnie were gobsmacked at what they had seen. They had NEVER seen Ruben so angry before. Then again, there hadn't been enough destruction to make him snap like this. The other two Martians shot at Ruben with their rifles but Ruben back flipped away from them and then squirted water at them. He knocked them both down onto their backs but he kept up the squirting. He advanced on them and made sure to aim for their mouths. He was attempting to drown them both on dry land. But before Ruben could do such a thing, Diablo walloped the angry water panther with his mace and sent him flying into a chunk of rubble. Ruben lay against the chunk, coughing loudly and wondering which part of him to rub better. He then slowly started to come back to himself after that hit and his temper died down. Diablo lumbered towards Ruben and he seized the water panther with a giant hand. Diablo's hands were so large that he was able to completely wrap his fingers around the puny little water panther he was now

squeezing the life out of. Ruben squirmed in the grasp of Diablo, desperately trying to get free.

"Grrr…ugh…nyrggggh…let me go!" he cried.

"After you've just went on a wild rampage and drenched me, beat one of my soldiers to death, and tried to drown my other two soldiers?" snorted Diablo "Ha, ha, ha! You must think I'm mad!"

"Look Diablo, you've seen me when I lose my cool, although I regret it, don't make me lose it again!" warned Ruben "Or I will whup you so badly you'll never walk again!"

"No chance of that happening Ruben since I'll squeeze the life out of you!" snarled Diablo.

"How…how do you know my name?!" gasped Ruben worriedly.

"Marik described Sonic and his friends to me and told me each of your names." explained Diablo "You are Ruben the Water-Panther and he tells me you're a bit of a nuisance. I do have to wonder what that collar around your neck is for though…"

He then used his other hand to unclip Ruben's aqua-collar from around his neck and take it away from him, rendering him incapable of accessing his water powers.

"Hey! You give that back!" cried Ruben.

"Why? It's not like it's important is it?" sneered Diablo.

"That collar gives me my water powers! Without it, I can't so much as squirt a drop!" snapped Ruben.

"Well in that case I shall relinquish you of that power permanently!" crowed Diablo.

But before he could destroy Ruben's aqua collar (not that he can anyway since the Master Emerald's power has made it indestructible the time Knuckles used it to fix Ruben's collar), Bunnie and Geoffrey jumped out of their hiding place and ran over to Diablo with their weapons ready. Bunnie had her ever useful laser cannon deployed

and she pointed it directly at Diablo's face. Geoffrey had his arm-mounted crossbow primed and ready and he pointed it at Diablo's upper arm. Diablo didn't seem too intimidated at the fact two Mobians were pointing their weapons at him.

"Ya'll drop Ruben now before we blast you to bits Diablo!" cried Bunnie threateningly.

"Trust me, we're deadlier then we look!" warned Geoffrey "Same goes to our weapons!"

"I know, Marik gave me a strict warning not to underestimate you Mobians since you're a lot stronger then one would suggest." muttered Diablo "But still, I will not let Ruben go. He's my prisoner and you two surrender yourselves before I snap him in two with my bare hands!"

"Oh yeah? Who's gonna make us?" sneered Geoffrey, itching to fire a dart at Diablo.

Then suddenly, Diablo's hiding squadron and the two tanks came out of their hiding place and they all pointed their weapons at Bunnie and Geoffrey, even the tanks! Seven Martians and two tanks all had their weapons pointed at Bunnie and Geoffrey. Even the other two Martians with Diablo picked themselves up from the beating Ruben had given them earlier and joined in with the others. Now nine Martians and two tanks had surrounded Bunnie and Geoffrey and were ready to start a fireworks festival with them. Diablo cackled at the two Mobians gloatingly. The look on their faces was priceless to them as they realized they'd walked into a trap. Geoffrey frowned at the Martians threatening to shoot them.

"Huh, no wonder I had a feeling we'd be up against more Martians then just four." he grumbled "Diablo had the rest of his squadron lying in wait for us!"

"And they've…gulp…got tanks!" shrieked Bunnie "Oh mah stars!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! That's right Geoffrey St. John and Bunnie Rabbot, or so Marik says your names are, I set up a trap for you and Ruben and you've fallen for it!" crowed Diablo "Now you HAVE to

stand down or be blasted to bits!"

"You tell your buddies to stand down or we'll blast YOU to bits!" snarled Bunnie fiercely.

"Go ahead, you'll only get shot once you shoot me!" laughed Diablo "You're surrounded by nine fine soldiers and two tanks! You can't possibly hope to survive all that!"

"It's worth a shot." said Bunnie smugly.

"Bunnie! Have you lost your mind?!" shrieked Ruben "We'll all get killed if you don't surrender!"

"Nah, we won't Ruben." said Bunnie, winking at him. The Rabbot actually had a plan and she'd be unleashing it any moment now.

"Well allow me to prove you wrong!" bellowed Diablo "Martians, kill Bunnie and Geoffrey now!"

The Martian soldiers did just that and they fired at the cyborg rabbit and skunk. But Bunnie quickly turned around and deployed her shield generator arm. Then she activated a force field around herself and Geoffrey, defending herself and him from all the shots. The laser shoots all bounced off of the force field harmlessly, shocking the Martians as they did so. Diablo himself was surprised to see this happen.

"A force field generator?! Why didn't Marik tell me Bunnie had a force field generator?!" he growled angrily.

"Looks like your plan's in jeopardy Diablo." sneered Ruben "You are so dead now."

"No I'm not!" snarled Diablo.

He strode up to Bunnie and banged on the force field to get her attention. Bunnie turned around and looked at the Grand Warlord.

"You may be able to defend yourself from my ambush, but can you stop me from killing your water-squirting friend?" growled Diablo, putting his hand on Ruben's head and threatening to snap his neck

in two.

"No, don't do that!" shrieked Bunnie, switching off her force-field "Please, don't kill Ruben!"

"Then do as you're told and I'll let him live!" snapped Diablo "All you have to do is get down onto your knees and surrender, that's all!"

"Well how about you get down on **your** knees?" sneered Bunnie.

She suddenly extended her robot arm and wrapped it around Diablo's legs. She tripped him up by pulling on her arm and Diablo was brought down onto his back. He dropped Ruben and his aqua collar as he landed on his back. Ruben quickly picked up his aqua collar and he clipped it back around his neck. Diablo picked himself up and pulled out his trademark mace weapon.

"That's it! You've just signed your death warrants!" thundered Diablo.

"We'll see about that you blighter!" shouted Geoffrey, firing a dart at Diablo's arm.

But Diablo just raised a hand and caught the dart in his fingers effortlessly. He was very good at that kind of stuff. He crushed the dart and then swung his mace at Geoffrey. The skunk quickly leaped out of the way as Diablo's mace came crashing down onto the ground. Bunnie furiously threw an uppercut at Diablo with her robotic arm. Diablo barely felt that punch though. As powerful as Bunnie was, even her punches had little effect on Diablo. Diablo swatted Bunnie away with his arm. Bunnie hurled through the air and crashed through a steel girder. Geoffrey stared in horror as Bunnie crashed through the girder and he clenched his teeth angrily at Diablo. He loaded his crossbow again and tried to shoot Diablo in the upper arm again but Diablo deflected the shot by leaning his shoulder down and letting his shoulder pad take the shot. The dart pinged off of his shoulder pad like a pebble against a brick wall. Diablo swung his mace at Geoffrey and walloped the skunk with it. Geoffrey was sent hurling across the battlefield and he crashed into a tank tread. Ruben jumped in and threw water all over Diablo. But all that did was make him wet. Diablo punched Ruben and sent him

hurling backwards. Getting punched by Diablo was like getting hit by a car. He was that powerful. Bunnie picked herself up from the earlier onslaught and she grabbed a chunk of the girder she'd crashed into. She flew towards Diablo and walloped the Martian leader with the girder, knocking him sideways and onto his side. Diablo picked himself up and he and Bunnie clashed weapons with each other. They swung at each other and their weapons made very loud clangs as they hit each other. Bunnie swung the girder at Diablo's leg and she hit it, bringing Diablo down on one knee. Then she walloped Diablo on his head with the girder chunk…and the girder chunk broke in two! Diablo's helmet could withstand hammer blows (bad news for Amy Rose) so no wonder that happened. Bunnie gasped and Diablo swung his mace at her. Bunnie ducked and then dropkicked Diablo in the face. Diablo took the blow easily and he slugged Bunnie in the stomach. Bunnie hadn't felt a punch THAT powerful since the time she got decked by Lord Sycorax during the Region of Rebellious Reptile's first ever attack on Castle Acorn*. Diablo then thumped Bunnie on the head and threw the bedraggled rabbit into Geoffrey as he was running towards him with his crossbow loaded. Bunnie and Geoffrey sprawled on the ground on top of one another. Diablo raised his mace up high, ready to kill them both with one swift blow to the head each, but before he could do so, Ruben jumped up behind him and kicked the mace out of his hands. The mace dropped down onto the ground with a heavy thud. Diablo growled and he punched at Ruben but Ruben dodged the punch and punched Diablo back…in the armour. The result was Ruben clutching his sore-first in pain. Diablo uppercut Ruben into the air and the poor water-panther landed with a thud atop a Martian tank. Geoffrey picked himself up and he pile-dived Diablo in the back. Diablo took the blow but Geoffrey climbed up Diablo's back and started thumping him on the top of his helmet. Diablo effortlessly grabbed Geoffrey and threw him off of himself and onto the ground. Bunnie retaliated by upper-cutting Diablo in the face and then roundhouse punching Diablo. Diablo however head-butted Bunnie directly in the forehead (ouch!) and the dazed rabbit ended up falling onto her bum with her hands clasped firmly over her head. She began to cry tears of pain from a blow like that. Diablo kicked Bunnie into the air and sent her rolling across the ground. Ruben gasped in horror and he jumped up to Diablo's height. He then began to rapidly kick Diablo in the chest, making sure he was hitting

the gem in the middle of his armour. Diablo staggered backwards as Ruben kicked him and then Ruben back flipped and kicked Diablo over onto his back. A Martian tank suddenly fired at Ruben. The tank driver wanted to help his leader so he decided to shoot Ruben with a cannon blast. But Ruben re-used a technique he had used during the time he, Sonic, Tails and the Chaotix were on Eggman's oil rig. He grabbed the cannon blast like a proper kung-fu warrior and threw it directly back at the tank. The cannon blast hit the tank and blew it up in a millisecond. Ruben punched the air triumphantly but then suddenly, he was walloped in the back by Diablo. Ruben hurled across the battlefield and he crashed into the tank's remains. Diablo advanced on Ruben but Bunnie Rabbot ran in and decked Diablo in the back of the head. Diablo turned around and elbow-thrusted Bunnie down onto the ground. He then tried to stomp on her but Bunnie picked herself up, deployed her arm-cannon and then blasted Diablo. Diablo was thrown against a destroyed building and he burst through the wall, causing it to crumble into tiny pieces. Diablo picked himself up and he growled furiously.

"Martians, KILL THOSE MOBIANS NOW!" he bellowed with a voice like thunder.

The Martians obeyed instantly and they began shooting at Bunnie, Geoffrey and Ruben. But Bunnie deployed her force-field generator and blocked all the blows with a force-field. She then deployed her arm cannon and blasted the second tank to pieces with a couple of shots. Martian tanks aren't exactly the strongest tanks in the universe so a couple of powerful shots was all Bunnie needed to destroy it and blow it to smithereens. Fortunately for her, all the Martian soldiers had been near the tank so they were blown off their feet with the destruction of the tank and left lying around, wondering which parts of them to rub better. Diablo's entire squadron lay on the ground, too weak to get up from that explosion and the second tank lay on the ground in pieces. Bunnie punched the air delightedly.

"Oh yeah! Ah stopped them all real nicely!" she cheered.

But then suddenly, Diablo lunged at Bunnie and grabbed her by the hair. He hoisted Bunnie off the ground, his hand clenched firmly around the rabbit's beautiful, long flowing blonde hair. Bunnie screamed like a person trapped in a burning building. Geoffrey ran

towards Diablo in hopes of saving Bunnie but Diablo just swung Bunnie at Geoffrey and walloped him with her. Geoffrey and Bunnie both lay on the ground, moaning in pain. Diablo cackled at them and he cracked his knuckles. But before he could do anything, Ruben squirted him with a jet of water and made him stagger backwards. Then Ruben let Diablo have it with some martial arts skills and he sent him backing into a wall. Diablo growled furiously at Ruben and he seized the water-panther. He punched Ruben as hard as he could but he didn't stop there. He began punching Ruben several times and all as hard as he could. Poor Ruben was left with bruises all over his body and his nose trickling with blood. Diablo then slammed Ruben against the wall and prepared to finish him off. But Bunnie and Geoffrey double-teamed Diablo in the back and made him drop Ruben. Bunnie punched Diablo and Geoffrey kicked him but Diablo grabbed their heads and bashed the two Mobians together. He then threw Bunnie and Geoffrey across the battlefield and the two Mobians came down with a crash a few feet away. Diablo grabbed Ruben and threw him over to Bunnie and Geoffrey. He then picked up his mace, which he'd not picked up yet after dropping it, and strode over to the three downed Mobians. They were all beaten and bruised from the battle and were having trouble getting back up. Diablo patted his hand with his mace wickedly.

"You've given me a good battle you three but now I emerge victorious." sneered Diablo "And you will face your sentences."

He then raised his mace up high and prepared to kill Bunnie, Geoffrey and Ruben. It seemed to be the end of the three Mobians for they could not get out of the way of Diablo's mace. They were too weak to move. Diablo swung the mace down…and then suddenly got walloped in the face by a hammer. Diablo hurled to the side and skidded to a halt near the remains of the two Martian tanks. Bunnie was well surprised at this and she looked up to see what had happened. To her surprise, she saw a robotical version of Amy Rose which had no legs and just hovered above the ground. It had arms that could transform into Piko-Piko hammers and it had green optics. This was another robot Eggman had built secretly along with Metal Knuckles and was saving for a another time and it was code-named "Metal Amy" (duh). Metal Amy didn't seem to notice Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben lying there. Instead, she flew off and started

whaling on Diablo with her hammer arms. Diablo took most of the blows and he punched her away.

"What in the name of Deimos is that?!" he growled "Some puny robot with hammer hands? I'll make short work of it!"

But Diablo had more then just Metal Amy to deal with. Metal Amy had brought reinforcements with her. A swarm of Egg-Pawns all armed with various different weapons stampeded towards Diablo, showering him with laser blasts. Diablo stepped back as he was bombarded by laser fire. Metal Amy and the Egg-Pawns advanced on him menacingly and they let him have it with all their weaponry. Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben were speechless. They watched as Metal Amy and her Egg-Pawns fended off Diablo with relative ease. Diablo began smashing Egg-Pawns here and there with his mace but he was still getting overwhelmed by the Egg-Pawns and Metal Amy was making it harder for him by pounding him constantly with her hammer arms.

"Crikey…Eggman's robots are helping us!" cried Geoffrey.

"But why?" asked Bunnie "Eggman doesn't know about the Martian invasion! Does he?"

"I wouldn't be surprised if he did." muttered Ruben "And I know why he's helping us if that's the case. If the Martians destroy Mobius, he can't conquer it himself so he just wants to get rid of the oppression and be able to continue his conquest with no problems at all."

"Well for once, I'm glad he's on our side." said Geoffrey "Let's get outta here, I think Eggman's goons have this one under control."

Geoffrey and Bunnie picked themselves up but Ruben couldn't quite get up with them. He was too weak. So Geoffrey scooped Ruben up and gave him a piggyback ride. The three Mobians fled for it as Eggman's robots began to overpower Diablo. Diablo could barely take the hammer blows and the constant laser fire from the Egg-Pawns. He'd destroyed some of them already but he was beginning to lose his strength thanks to the Eggman robots. So, with great reluctance, he fled the scene as fast as he could. He knew when he was beaten. Surprise attacks were too much for him. Diablo fled the

scene and the Eggman robots watched him as he fled for it. They could see that their mission had been accomplished and they had no further need here in RailCity. The Eggman robots all left RailCity and headed back home to Eggman's underground bunker. They were going home with some good news for their master and they were eager to deliver it to him.

Meanwhile, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben had gotten a good distance away from RailCity and Geoffrey switched on his comlink.

"Hello, your highness? It's Geoffrey." said Geoffrey "Our mission's accomplished…albeit with some outside help from a certain fat doctor. We need a warp ring back home."

"Just a second, I'm kinda occupied right now." came the voice of Queen Sally Acorn.

Geoffrey switched off the comlink and he, Bunnie and Ruben sat down onto the ground.

"Well, Diablo's a tough bloke isn't he?" asked Geoffrey.

"He's just so…strong." said Bunnie "It's like he's the ultimate warrior or somethin' His punches are incredible and he's so resilient. No wonder he's Marik's dad."

"This is all my fault." moaned Ruben, his eyes full of tears as he began moping about his second blunder of the day "This is all my stupid fault. If I didn't lose my cool and blindly attack Diablo then we could have subdued him and saved the day just like that. Instead…I snapped and…got us all beaten up and sorely defeated. I have shamed the Royal Fighter name today and I have dishonoured you all. I'm so, so sorry for my blunder Bunnie and Geoffrey."

Bunnie and Geoffrey looked at Ruben pityingly and they put their arms around him.

"Aw, don't be like that Ruben mate, you couldn't help it." said Geoffrey affectionately "You just lost it and went mad. It's a perfectly natural trait of all Mobians. Everybody loses their temper and goes mad sometimes."

"I know." wailed Ruben "But…I'm supposed to be better then this. I'm not supposed to lose my cool, I'm not supposed to get angry and I'm supposed to be level-headed. But yet, I still did it. I was supposed to make up for my earlier mistake and instead…I've poured more salt on the wound. I'm a disgrace to the team and I should just quit before I mess up again…"

"Don't ya'll dare talk like that Ruben!" snapped Bunnie crossly "You are not a disgrace to the team at all! Yer a great asset to us all. Yer martial arts skills help us in our battles, yer water powers are very helpful to us and you've helped us out on many occasions! Remember when you helped Tails de-roboticize everybody? Or how about when you and sugah-hog got the Raiju Clan to stop Zira? And you even helped Tails and Cosmo save a bunch of slaves under Eggman oppression and also helped us save sugah-hog from Eggman and Metal Sonic! And recently, ya'll helped us in our attempts to stop the Black Arms! You Ruben are far from a disgrace to the team! Just because you've made a couple of mistakes, it doesn't mean yer a disgrace! Nobody's perfect Ruben and that's the sad truth of life. But it doesn't mean we're bad people or what not, it just means we all have our pros and cons. We may want to be perfect but we can't be because that's impossible. But your good traits outweigh your bad traits Ruben. This is the first time you've ever lost your temper and now you know what bad it does, you'll know not to do it again next time."

"Bunnie's absolutely right Ruben." said Geoffrey "And besides, isn't bailing out just for making a mistake more dis-honouree then goofing up accidentally? I'm sure your clan wouldn't want to see you like this. Come on Ruben, please don't be like that."

Ruben looked at Bunnie and Geoffrey and he smiled at them. He truly did have some great friends around him and it made him feel honoured to have such great friends. He wiped away his tears.

"I don't deserve your sympathy." he said "But I'm honoured to have such wonderful, kind friends. I'm so glad you're forgiving me despite my blunders today."

"Think nothing of it mate." said Geoffrey softly "After all, not everything can go right for us, but we don't let that bring us down."

"Yes, we don't." said Ruben "I'm so sorry I let it get to me. I won't mope about it anymore."

"That's OK Ruben." said Bunnie "And who knows, maybe next time ya'll will finally get your chance to redeem yerself. Everybody gets a chance at redemption Ruben."

"I know." said Ruben "I was told that by my mother. And I'll remember that for next time."

"Good on you mate." said Geoffrey brightly "Now all we've gotta do is just wait for the warp ring home."

That would take a while as Sally was otherwise engaged. This mission hadn't gone quite how the Mobians had hoped but at least they'd won in the end since Eggman's robots had chased off Diablo. Diablo would be back though and he'd be furious. And who knew when he would strike again and if anyone would be able to stop him the next time he attacked…

Footnotes:

*** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles***

Well, that's it for this part! Did you like it? Feel free to leave a review and say what you thought! We've only got three more parts of "Divide and Conquer" to go and next time, Team Rose take the spotlight as they venture into Kingdom Valley and fight with the silent but deadly Zarondight! Think you're ready for that? Then join me next time as "Divide and Conquer" continues...

So, how's the story so far? Still as good as ever? Please tell, I'm eager to here your thoughts my fellow readers! :)

Divide and Conquer Part 5

Story 131: Divide and Conquer Part 5: Silent But Deadly

"Good luck you three." said Sally "And be careful out there."

"Thank you your majesty and we will." said Geoffrey "OK mates, off to Rail Canyon and away!"

With that said, the skunk in the green combat suit eagerly charged through the Super Warp Ring and over to Rail Canyon where a bunch of Martians would be waiting for him, Ruben and Bunnie. Bunnie and Ruben jumped through the Super Warp Ring too and the warp ring closed up after they left. They had left the sanctuary of Royal HQ and to the high-up world of Rail Canyon. The three were going to Rail Canyon for the same reason many of the other Royal Fighters had been going to several places around the world, Martians were attacking seven different places around the world simultaneously and the only way to deal with such a threat was to divide the team and send them to those places. Sonic, Tails, Wilson, Mandy, Knuckles, Shade, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben had all been sent out to places like Holoska, Grand Metropolis, Black Acropolis and Rail Canyon respectively to deal with the Martian threats and each of them had a deadly opponent to deal with when they arrived there. With the exception of Sonic and Tails, the Royal Fighters had had some assistance from Dr. Eggman in order to deal with the Martians there and chances are, Eggman was bound to be helping out some more Royal Fighters as the remaining ones prepared to depart for the remaining places that required their help. Only three places were left to go to and Queen Sally Acorn was ready to send the next team of Royal Fighters out to deal with the Martian threats. She looked at the remaining fighters and put her hands on her hips.

"OK everybody, we've just got three more places left to send some Royal Fighters to and then we've divided everybody." said Sally "The next place will be Kingdom Valley. Who wants to go to Kingdom Valley and deal with the Martians there?"

There was a brief pause before none other then Sonic's biggest fan and would-be-love interest Amy Rose stood forward with her trademark weapon, the Piko-Piko hammer, in hand.

"Please, your majesty, let me and my team mates Cream and Cosmo go to Kingdom Valley." pleaded Amy "I'm eager to get in on the action, especially as my Sonic and many of my good friends are now fighting for Mobius."

"Please can we go to Kingdom Valley Miss Acorn?" begged Cream "We want to fight some Martians now."

"Me especially." said Cosmo in an oddly cold voice, a voice that you'd be hard-pressed to hear her speaking in "After what they did to my world and my race, I wish to help prevent Mobius from suffering the same fate. I've lost Greengate, I don't want to lose Mobius too."

Sally was surprised, but pleased to hear such eagerness coming from three young girls like Amy, Cream and Cosmo. True it was natural for kids to be eager to get into the action and be wanting to do big things like thus but still, Sally couldn't help but admire such dedication.

"OK then, you three may go to Kingdom Valley since you asked so nicely." said Sally brightly "But I do hope you'll be careful out there. You three aren't exactly the most experienced fighters in the team, no disrespect intended."

"We get you Sally." said Amy "We may not be very strong but our team move always conquers all! I can't wait to give those Martians the Twirling Hammer Batter move!"

"We still need a better name for that attack." sighed Cream.

Amy fumed at the little rabbit and Cream recoiled quickly. Amy sure scared the daylights out of her when she was angry.

"OK then, you may depart now." said Sally "Silver, open up the warp ring to Kingdom Valley."

Silver the Hedgehog did just that and the Super Warp Ring opened

up a portal to the beautiful but abandoned world of Kingdom Valley. Even in Silver's future, it's still a mystery as to why Kingdom Valley is no longer occupied. It's one of those things the world will never know.

"Right, you girls aware of any potential dangers that you'll come across as you wander into a Martian invaded territory?" asked Sally concernedly.

"Yes, we could get ambushed by Martians and we maybe up against many of them." said Amy "But don't you worry Sally, Team Rose will emerge victorious in this battle against the Martians!"

Team Adabat Leader, Scott Lynx, snickered at that statement.

"Ha, ha, ha "Team Rose"?" he snorted "That is so corny! Did you get that name from a video game or something?"

Amy scowled at the lynx in the blue shorts but she said nothing to him.

"Alright then, Team Rose, you may depart. And please, for heaven's sake, be careful out there." said Sally in a motherly tone of voice.

"We will Sally, don't sweat it." said Amy in a cocky tone of voice "Alright girls, let's go!"

With that said, Amy, Cream and Cosmo all ran through the Super Warp Ring like eager young children diving into a ball pool. The moment they jumped through the ring, it closed up behind them and Silver caught the Super Warp Ring back in his hand. Sally however seemed to be a little disheartened at all this and she put a hand over her heart.

"Those girls are going to die out there, I just know it." fretted Sally "I don't mean to undermine their bravery or deem them unworthy of carrying a mission out on there own but it's just…Amy's a little capricious and in over her head, Cream's dreadfully young and inexperience and Cosmo…oh I regret sending those three out on their own now! I should have sent Amy with Sonic and Tails, Cream with Wilson and Mandy and Cosmo with any of the others. They'd

definitely be OK in their care."

"Your majesty, don't fret." said Silver's best friend Blaze the Cat, putting a hand on the young queen's shoulder "I'm sure Amy, Cream and Cosmo will be OK on their own. Me and Silver have read much about all of the Royal Fighters and what we've learnt about Amy gives me confidence that she'll lead her and the other two to a sound victory. If they need help, they'll call for it and we'll just simply warp over to them with Silver's warp ring."

Sally calmed down a little after hearing Blaze's words and she looked at the future Angel Island guardian.

"Thank you Blaze." said Sally brightly "I'm still worried for them though but what you've said has enlightened me a little."

"You're welcome your grace." said Blaze with a polite curtsey to Sally.

"Please, you don't have to do that because I'm the queen Blaze, you can treat me as a normal person." said Sally in a half-flattered manner "Ahem, OK, only two teams left to go. You and Silver and Shadow and Rouge. Who's going to Megapolis out of you two then?" she suddenly asked to the remaining four Mobians waiting to depart for the last two locations that were under attack from the Martians…

Five minutes earlier…

Kingdom Valley, a truly fascinating relic of Mobius. The Valley was once a highly prosperous, opulent, prodigious kingdom with unequivocal beauty and happiness everywhere among the people that lived there. And yet several years ago, the kingdom was suddenly abandoned and the valley is now full mostly of water with only ruins remaining of the once great kingdom. How this had happened and why the valley had been abandoned truly obfuscated many people. Was the valley flooded and everybody in it drowned? Did they all flee before it was flooded? Did they leave for other reasons and then a random flood came in after they left? And how

did the flood happen? Why did it happen and where did it come from? Nobody knows and it's a mystery that mystifies even the most dedicated of researchers. The answers to those questions is debatable and even to this day, it seems the world will never know.

And right now, people were wondering something different about Kingdom Valley. Something very different indeed. And that thing they were wondering was what a singular, lone Martian was doing in such a place of ruination. They were worried that this strange creature they had not seen before might start desecrating the ruins and destroying a valuable tourist attraction. Not to mention, the ruins are all of Kingdom Valley that are left and they do not want to lose a valuable piece of history so the locals that lived near the kingdom had called for help. While they had been doing that, the Martian had been touring the place himself and taking notes about it. And that was none other then the sinister and creepy Zarondight, the brother of Natasha who was silent due to him being born without vocal chords. Zarondight was the messenger of the Martian fleet but he was also a very capable fighter, evident in how easily he floored the treacherous Rozarr back on Greengate when she had attempted to murder his beloved sister*. Zarondight had trained in combat during the times the Martians had gone out fighting and thus, was an efficient fighter as well as a spy. But he wasn't using those traits right now. He was using another one of his great skills. His strategic abilities. He had decided to rely on laying traps for any Mobians that he might come across in Kingdom Valley. He had arrived an hour ago and had been spending that precious hour setting up traps for any unsuspecting victims he was bound to come across while he was here. He was almost finished too. He was setting up what appeared to be a mine of some kind. He set it down on a bridge way and switched it on. The mine was metallic blue in colour with some white structures around it and in the centre was a red button. If that button was pressed and then released, the mine would go off instantly and give the person standing on it a one way ticket to the moon (albeit in a very bloody way and guaranteed to make the person lose a leg or two). Zarondight smiled to himself from behind his mouth plate. The place was booby-trapped top to bottom. No Mobian would make it through this abandoned place of ruins alive. Zarondight decided that since his work was done, the best thing to do now was wait and see what happens next. Zarondight jumped off

the bridge he was standing on and clung onto a nearby ruin that didn't have any traps set on it. He then climbed up the wall like a spider, using his sharp, thin, long claws to dig into the wall and climb up it. He reached the top of the ruin and sat atop of it like a gargoyle glaring down below atop a rooftop of a spooky mansion. Zarondight kept his beady eyes open and he sat there, waiting for something to happen. He was a very patient Martian (he's a spy, what did you expect?) and he could easily wait here for hours, maybe even days for something to happen. Still, he was hoping it would happen quickly so he could return to the Martian fleet with some Mobian hearts in his hands…

Now…

Amy, Cream and Cosmo flew through the Super Warp Ring and landed on a long stretching bridge way that led to some of the ruins but looked old and crumbly. The Super Warp Ring closed up behind them, sealing them off from Royal HQ and trapping them in Kingdom Valley for the time being. Their only way back was a simple call to Royal HQ and then the Super Warp Ring would open up and let them back in. But now was not the time to be going back home. They had a mission to do and no matter what it took or what dangers they were going to face, they were going to find the Martians (or in their case, just a Martian but they don't know that yet) who were attacking Kingdom Valley. Amy kept her trademark hammer at the ready and kept a cautious eye out for any danger. Strange how Kingdom Valley looked surprisingly OK for a place that's under attack. It didn't look anymore ruined then it already was. Maybe the Martians haven't gotten down to the attacking yet? Or were they lying in wait for them. Experience had taught Amy to remain vigilant, no matter what the scenario is. Even if everything seems OK and completely normal, you should not let your guard down for the enemy could strike at any possible moment. Amy's ears were pricked up and listening for any sign of danger, her nose twitched for any scents out of the ordinary and her eyes took notice of every tiny detail of her surroundings, even cracks in the brick work of the ruins. The girls trekked slowly across the bridge with Amy up front and Cosmo trailing behind. Cosmo looked incredibly nervous

as she trailed behind Cream and Amy. She knew the Martians better than anyone else and the mere thought of being in the middle of a bunch of ruins with possible Martian troops hiding out there worried her sick. She knew many of their tricks and trades and she had a horrible feeling in her stomach that the Martians were hiding and waiting to strike out at any possible moment. She couldn't bear the thought and it was more worrying for her since she was now the last of the Seedrians alive (we know that she isn't but she doesn't and will never know that will she?) thanks to the destruction of Greengate at the hands of the Martians. If she got killed out here then that was it, the Seedrians would be extinct forever. As the girls continued to creep slowly across the bridge, Amy looked around, sniffing the air and listening out like a watchdog.

"Hmm…for a place that's under attack from the Martians, it's eerily quiet." said Amy slowly and quietly, her voice a slight whisper "Heck, the place looks just fine. What's going on here?"

"M-m-maybe w-we got a false alarm and e-everything's fine?" asked Cream nervously.

"Don't be a twerp Cream, why would the locals who live near here call for help and tell us that Kingdom Valley's under attack if it isn't?" snapped Amy quite rudely "We Mobians know better then to cry wolf…most of the time…if Kingdom Valley's got Martians then it's got Martians. They're obviously hiding somewhere, I can feel it in my hair that they're somewhere around and just waiting to pounce on us."

"I bet that'd be just like those horrible, peace-hating jerks!" cried Cream "I mean, Marik liked to pounce on us a lot of the time! I bet the others are no better!"

"I don't even wanna THINK about what the other Martians are like!" blurted Amy, shuddering as if an icy hand had just gripped her by the throat "Marik was horrible enough, especially the time he almost killed me when we were hunting for Chaos Emeralds, I don't wanna think about how horrible the others can possibly be!"

"Well I don't care what the other Martians are like!" said Cream with determination in her voice "We're gonna stop those monsters before

they destroy our world! Isn't that right Cheese?"

"Chao!" piped her ever faithful and helpful pet Chao Cheese. He looked just as determined as Cream was.

"Well it's nice to hear that you and Cheese are as determined as ever." said Amy brightly "With determination like that, we're bound to beat those Martians! Wouldn't you agree Cosmo?"

She looked over her shoulder only to see that Cosmo had stopped and was hugging herself in fear. She looked terrified and was shaking like a leaf (if you'll excuse the VERY obvious pun) a couple of bridge sections away from Amy and Cream. Amy's face fell into one of concern. She looked like a mother who's worried about her child. Amy and Cream ran back over to Cosmo and Amy put a hand around the Seedrian's shoulders.

"Hey…Cosmo. Are you OK?" asked Amy.

"No Amy. I am not OK." said Cosmo miserably, she looked like she was about ready to break down in rainfalls "I'm still effected at the fact that…that…I'm the last of my kind…thanks to those…those… those horrible Martians!"

She finally stopped resisting and just let the tears trickled down her face. She held her head in her hands and wailed ever so loudly. Her sobs tore Amy's heart in two and Cream looked like she was about ready to break down with her. Amy and Cream both hugged Cosmo affectionately to try and make her feel better.

"Aw don't cry Cosmo, we need to focus on stopping the Martians and I'm sure that since they destroyed your planet, you'll be willing to get some payback on them." said Amy softly.

Cosmo lifted her head out of her hands and looked at Amy.

"I know but, I just can't stop being sad about it." sobbed Cosmo "I was so hoping that my dad and his friends would win the war and that I would be able to come back to Greengate and yet…they lost, my planet is gone and I'm the last of my kind! Why did this have to happen to me? Why, why?!"

"I don't know Cosmo but we're gonna teach those Martians a lesson." said Amy supportively "We're gonna make them pay for giving you all this grief. We're gonna kick them out of Mobius and foil their plans…for you, for your kind and for your world Cosmo."

"I appreciate the thought Amy but I don't believe in revenge." said Cosmo, wiping away her tears "I know I hate the Martians with all my heart and I would like nothing better then for them to stop their evil way of life, I do not wish to get revenge on them. That makes me no better then them. And getting revenge on them won't make me feel better, I'm still going to be the last Seedrian whether we beat them or not. So as it is, I just want the Martians to be stopped and Mobius to be safe from their tyranny. I've already lost so much, I don't want to lose all I have left which is you, Cream, all my other friends and this beautiful world you live on. You're all very dear to me and I don't want to lose you all like I've lost everything else."

"Aww, that's very nice of you to say Cosmo." said Cream, feeling touched by the fact Cosmo cared so much about Mobius and its people that she didn't want to lose it "I'm glad you feel that way about us."

"You're welcome Cream." said Cosmo "I'm sorry for getting so emotional about this and slowing you all down but…"

"Cosmo." interrupted Amy, putting a finger to the Seedrian's lips "It's fine. We perfectly understand how you feel right now. It's OK to be upset. You're the last of your kind, you have every right to be sad about it. We feel for you Cosmo and we don't mind if you need a good cry about it. We may have a mission to do but that's not gonna stop us from letting you let out all your sorrows."

Cosmo smiled at Amy appreciatively.

"Thank you so much Amy." said Cosmo, hugging the pink hedgehog happily "I'm so glad to have a friend like you."

"Anytime Cosmo, anytime." said Amy brightly "Now, let's move on and see if we can find any Martians to smash!"

"Yes, let's." said Cosmo "The sooner we send those monsters

packing, the better."

"That's what I like to hear!" cried Amy enthusiastically "Now let's move on and find those Martians. The sooner we find them, the sooner we kick them out of Kingdom Valley and…"

She started walking off as she was talking but before she could finish what she was saying, she suddenly stepped on something. The thing she stepped on felt hard and like it was made of metal. Amy looked down at her foot. Given how she was in a place being attacked by Martians, she wasn't sure if she wanted to lift up her foot or anything in case it was something bad. Something like…

"Um…girls? I think I've stepped on something." said Amy nervously.

"I think you have." said Cosmo gravely "And I think it might have been a mine! Look!"

She pointed ahead of her and the girls noticed that the whole bridge section ahead of them was full of landmines! Zarondight had set up plenty of those in hopes of killing any Mobians that dared wander into Kingdom Valley to look for him. There were mines all over an entire bridge section and it was going to be difficult to step past all of them without setting one off. And much to Amy's horror, she had stepped on one! If she lifted off her foot then it was lights out for her and she'd likely be scattered over a wide area. Zarondight watched from his perch gleefully as he waited for the Mobians to hopefully do something foolish and set off the mine. Cosmo got down onto her hands and knees and looked under Amy's foot. She could see what was unmistakeably a landmine under her foot. This in turn made Cosmo feel horrified all over. She looked up at Amy with an ashen face and fearful eyes.

"U-u-u-un f-f-fortunately Amy y-y-y-you h-h-h-have s-s-stepped on a m-m-m-mine!" gibbered Cosmo worriedly "I-I-I c-c-can s-s-see it u-u-under y-y-your foot!"

" **I HAVE?!** " screamed Amy at the top of her voice box, putting her hands to her head in agony "Oh no, oh no, no, no, no, no, no! I've stepped on a mine! But why haven't I been blown up yet?"

"Those kinds of mines ONLY go off if you lift your foot off of it." said Cosmo gravely, her leafy hair shaking like leaves on a breeze in fear "I should know, I've witnessed many of my kind fall victim to those things. Martians a very fond of mines and they love to use them in their conquests."

Cream looked like she was witnessing the end of the world right before her eyes. Her big chocolate brown eyes were wide open in indescribable fear and tears were raining down her cheeks like crazy.

"Oh no! Miss Rose is going to die!" whimpered Cream "If she lifts her foot off the mine, it'll go off and blow her up! Oh poor Miss Rose!"

"Chao, Chao, Chao!" squeaked Cheese fearfully, sharing Cream's horror.

Amy's heart pounded like a war drum as she desperately tried to think of a way out of this sticky situation. Her head rained with sweat and her mind was whizzing like a Le Mans Race Car.

"What am I gonna do?! What am I gonna do?!" whimpered Amy frantically "If I move, I'm history but I can't stay here forever! I'll die of malnutrition if I do and then when my dead body collapses, the mine will go off anyway! And what if I end up falling asleep?! And I can't have Cream fly me off of it or it'll go off and she won't be fast enough to get us away in time! No matter what we do, that mine's going off and it's taking ME with it!"

Cream threw herself into Amy's arms and squeezed her tightly as if this was the last she'd ever see of Amy Rose. The cries Cream emitted were enough to make even the most stone-hearted of people tear up.

"I don't want you to die Amy! We've gotta save you now!" howled Cream.

"If only my Sonic was here, he'd just zoom me off of this thing in the blink of an eye." wailed Amy, hugging Cream back "But he's not. We've gotta save me on our own. But what can we do?! I can't move

and if I stay here, I'll collapse from exhaustion. How am I gonna get outta this?!"

As Amy and Cream desperately tried to think of a way out of this, Cosmo looked over at Amy's Piko-Piko Hammer which she'd dropped in alarm after freaking out over the fact she's stepped on a mine. She then suddenly had a bright idea. Cosmo stepped around behind Amy and grabbed her Piko-Piko hammer. She tugged on it and dragged it back around Amy and to where she had been standing a moment ago. The hammer was very heavy to her. She couldn't help but wonder how Amy was able to lift the thing. Amy and Cream stopped hugging each other and they looked over at Cosmo in confusion.

"Cosmo, what the cuss are you doing with my hammer?" asked Amy.

"I have an idea that'll save you losing a leg or two." said Cosmo, pushing the hammer towards Amy's foot "I'm going to place your hammer on the mine in place of your foot. Your hammer should be heavy enough to keep the mine pressed in and stop it from going off once we get it on there."

Amy's mind clicked and she realized that Cosmo had her survival in the bag. She beamed like a sunrise.

"Cosmo, you're brilliant!" cried Amy happily "So, what should I do?"

Cosmo edged the hammer slowly to Amy's foot until it was now pressed up against her foot. The hammer was on it's head and facing up right with the handle out to the side. It'd easily keep the mine pressed in if they could get it on there.

"Alright Amy, move your foot on the count of three." said Cosmo cautiously, ready to push the hammer onto the mine.

"OK Cosmo, you're my only hope now." said Amy.

"One…two…" counted Cosmo as she was ready to push and Amy was ready to move her foot off the mine "…three!"

Amy quickly moved her foot and Cosmo just as quickly moved the

hammer onto the mine. The heavy head of the hammer kept the mine pressed in and stopped it from going off. If the hammer stayed where it was then the mine would never go off unless somebody moved it. Amy put a hand over her chest in relief and Cream grasped Amy in a relieved hug.

"Yay! You're safe Amy! We've saved you from being blown up! Oh how wonderful!" squealed Cream.

"Cosmo, you're a life saver." said Amy, hugging Cream back "I owe you big time."

"Please, don't mention it, I'm just saving the life of a friend I can't afford to lose." said Cosmo modestly.

Amy just smiled and grasped Cosmo in a thankful hug. Cosmo beamed graciously and she hugged Amy back. Zarondight watched from his perch and he glared at the girls. He couldn't believe that they've managed to save Amy from setting off a mine! No matter, he could easily put a stop to that. Zarondight remained on his perch and watched as Team Rose prepared to move on further down the bridge.

"OK, now we've got that horror out of the way," said Amy, summoning another hammer to her hands to replace the one keeping the mine from going off "Cream, fly us over the mines and onto that section of the bridge past them all."

"Yes Miss Rose." said Cream politely.

Cream took Amy and Cosmo by the hands and with a flap of her long, floppy ears, she took to the skies and flew her team mates over the horde of mines that were place all over a section of the bridge. Zarondight saw the perfect opportunity to try and catch them off guard. He jumped down from the ruin he was standing upon and landed on top of another ruin. Then he jumped off of that ruin and landed on a broken castle turret that was about ready to crumble. And then he jumped off of that and onto a section of a ruined temple near the bridge. He reached onto his belt and took out a stone he'd stored there. Zarondight was renowned for his contingencies. He liked to collect objects and keep hold of them for incase he'd ever

need them. You never know what kind of use things like stones may be of when you're in situations like this. The stone Zarondight had in his hand was the size of his fist and could just as easily knock somebody out if he threw it at Team Rose. But that wasn't what he was going to do. He aimed the stone at the hammer that was perched atop the mine just as Cream finished flying everybody over the mines. He threw the stone at the hammer and the stone smacked it directly in the head. The hammer was knocked off the mine by the stone and the mine went off with a terrific explosion! The explosion ended up setting off all the other mines and thus, resulted in an explosion that was enough to make the entire bridge crumble! The brickwork of the bridge crumbled to dust in a matter of seconds as the colossal, mammoth explosion blasted it's way across it. Cream had already taken off with Amy and Cosmo in tow as the mines were going off but the force of the explosion sent the girls flying through the air and towards another bridge further away from their current position. Zarondight watched as the girls landed on the other bridge with a sickening crash. Any normal person would have some broken bones after going through this but Mobians are a little tougher then humans are so the girls managed to survive with their bones intact. They still felt like they'd been slammed against a giant wall by a giant hand though. The bridge they had been on was completely destroyed thanks to the terrific explosion that had been caused by all the mines going off. Had they not gotten away in time, they would all have been dead. Zarondight hopped off of the ruin section he was standing on and he dived down into the water down below. He then swam his way over to the over bridge and, using his long, thin claws, climbed out of the water and up the bridge like a spider scuttling up a wall. Zarondight hauled himself onto the bridge and looked at his victims from behind a wall that had once been part of a building near the bridge. He watched disappointedly as the girls slowly but steadily picked themselves up. Amy groaned and she clutched her head in pain.

"Oooooh…my ears are still ringing from that explosion." she murmured groggily. She sounded a little sick as she moaned in pain.

"What happened?" mumbled Cream "Why did the mine go off?"

"I heard something hit something and then suddenly, the mines went

off." said Cosmo, shaking herself off and wiping dust off her skirt "I think something might have knocked the hammer off the mine and in turn, the mine went off."

"That's probably exactly what happened." said Amy, rubbing her ears to get the ringing out of them "I have a feeling the Martians probably know we're here and they're trying everything they can to kill us."

That made Cream and Cheese feel very nervous now. Cream hugged Cheese for comfort.

"Th-th-th-the M-M-M-Martians kn-kn-know w-w-we're here?" she whimpered.

"It's only a guess but I think they do." said Amy "Well that'll just mean we find them and beat the crap outta them faster!" she cried gleefully, swinging her hammer around.

"Amy, please don't be so eager to fight a Martian." said Cosmo sternly "Martians are not to be taken lightly. You've seen it all from just Marik himself but that was just one Martian, you have no idea what the others will be like."

"Oh, of course, I'm sorry Cosmo." said Amy, softening up a bit.

"It's OK Amy." said Cosmo kindly "Now I suggest we keep moving, we have no idea when the Martians will strike again."

"I agree, let's go." said Amy.

The girls walked up further across the bridge they were now standing on after the explosion on the other bridge had blown them onto it. Zarondight watched them walking off. He smiled to himself behind his mouth plate for he had a couple of traps set up here. And he was just about to set them off right now. Zarondight reached onto his belt and he pulled out a long metal stick with a button on it that was clearly meant to set something off. Zarondight pressed the button without a moment's hesitance and then something happened. Another trap set up by Zarondight were a multitude of rotating gun turrets that he'd set up on various walls, bridge ways and nearby cliff

tops all around the area Team Rose were currently in. The guns all aimed at Team Rose and they started firing metal, serrated tipped arrows at them! The arrows whizzed out of the gun turrets and towards the girls. Amy shrieked in horror and she shielded herself with her hammer as a bunch of arrows embedded themselves into the hammer head. Cream and Cheese squealed in fright and they began flying around desperately whereas Cosmo threw herself down onto the ground.

"It's another trap!" shrieked Cosmo "Get down!"

"No, keep moving!" screamed Amy "We'll get past them all if we keep moving!"

So with that said, Amy ran off down the bridge, using her hammer to block the firing arrows that were shooting from all directions and threatening to impale one of them. Cream had flown up into the sky but the turrets just aimed up at Cream and start shooting arrows into the air. Because they were all aiming up at Cream now, Amy and Cosmo had a clear path to run through but poor Cream was getting showered by metal serrated arrows from up above. Cream could see she was no better on the sky then she was on ground so she started flying down towards the running Amy and Cosmo. Amy smacked a section of the bridge to break all the arrows stuck in them so she could defend herself from another flying batch of arrows. One arrow actually managed to scratch Cosmo across the arm and the Seedrian fell over in surprise and shock, clutching her arm in pain. The cut trickled with green blood (Seedrians have green blood, you surprised?). Cream could see Cosmo was hurt and she flew down to pick Cosmo up while dodging the arrows that just wouldn't stop firing at them. Amy and Cream then belted down the bridge as fast as they could run and fly respectively. The arrows kept on firing but the girls kept on dodging them. Eventually, the girls managed to get out of range although one arrow managed to scratch Cream across the leg just as they cleared the way. Cream clutched her leg in pain as she touched down, her white glove getting stained by the bleeding cut. Amy wiped sweat off her forehead.

"Phew…we made it." she huffed "I will say, that was a good trap the Martians set up. Almost got us. Not that I wish to compliment them

or anything."

"Why are the Martians setting up traps to catch us?" asked Cream "I thought they loved to fight, why would they be hiding and relying on traps to catch us?

"I have a sneaky feeling I might know who's here." said Cosmo grimly, clutching her arm as it still continued to sting from the cut "I know a Martian who's primary method of attack is setting up traps and using strategic methods to catch his victims as opposed to just fighting them himself being as he seemingly cannot fight."

"Who might that be then?" asked Amy.

Before Cosmo could answer, Cream toddled off and looked at something. There was a metal ring device about 14 feet wide all around lying on the bridge. It didn't look like it could do much of anything. Heck, it didn't look like it could do anything at all. It looked completely harmless.

"Hey, what's this?" asked Cream, reaching up to pick up the ring.

Cosmo saw what Cream was doing and the Seedrian almost went berserk with horror. She knew what it was and it wasn't good.

"No! Cream! Don't touch that!" she shrieked at the top of her voice.

Too late. Cream touched the ring and then suddenly, the ring began to glow a malevolent dark blue colour as if merely touching it had just switched it on or something. The ring then suddenly floated up off the ground and over Cream's head about five feet above her. Then a cylinder shaped barrier descended down from the ring and over Cream, trapping her like a rat in a cage. Cream looked worried and she clutched Cheese so tightly to her chest it was a miracle Cheese hadn't suffocated yet. Amy looked horrified at this.

"Cosmo, what is that?! Another Martian trap?" asked Amy worriedly.

"It is, and a very deadly one at that." said Cosmo downheartedly "It's a Ring Barrier Emitter, a trap Martians often use when hunting livestock back on Mars. It floats above the victim, traps them in a barrier and…"

Then suddenly, as if the Ring Barrier Emitter knew what Cosmo was going to say next, it started electrocuting Cream from the inside of the barrier. Cream howled at the top of her voice as she was brutally electrocuted from the inside of the barrier. Cream's screams made Amy feel like a knife had been plunged into her heart and then taken out so it could be plunged in again. She had to act fast before Cream was electrocuted to death.

"It's gonna kill her! We have to get her out of there and fast!" screamed Amy frantically.

Cosmo thought fast on a way to save Cream. Luckily, she had seen those things in action before so she knew how to stop it.

"Hit the ring itself as hard as you can, it's the only way to stop it!" ordered Cosmo, pointing at the floating ring device that was emitting the barrier around Cream.

"Got it!" cried Amy, leaping up into the air with her hammer in her hands.

She walloped the ring device with her hammer as hard as she possibly could and sent it spiralling away from Cream, the barrier shutting off as it was knocked away. The Ring Barrier Emitter then landed with a clunk on the bridge and Amy promptly smashed it to pieces with her hammer so it couldn't be used ever again. As for poor Cream, she had collapsed after that terrible shock she'd received but she was still alive and barely conscious. Cosmo knelt down beside her and hugged her tightly.

"Oh Cream, I'm so glad you're OK!" cried Cosmo with relief.

"Thank you…for saving me…Cosmo." coughed Cream hoarsely "I… I'm sorry I…touched that thing…"

"It's alright Cream." said Cosmo "You're safe now, that's all that matters."

"That is until ANOTHER trap goes off and we end up in another life and death situation." grumbled Amy "The Martians sure have been busy haven't they? Going to all this trouble just to set up traps for

us."

"This is sacrilege." said Cosmo in disgust "Those conniving monsters setting up booby-traps in this area of ruination, how could they desecrate this place? Hasn't it been ruined enough?"

"Not like they care that this place is a valuable piece of history." muttered Amy "The Martians would sooner see the world destroyed so wrecking this place is nothing to them. Well when I get my hands on those Martians, they will never wreck another place again!"

As the girls chatted to one another, Zarondight slowly crept out of his hiding place and he climbed down to the underside of the bridge and started creeping across the underside of the bridge like a big, golden armoured spider. He was sick and tired of his traps failing so he decided to do the old "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself route" and finish the girls off himself. He crept along under the bridge until he eventually reached Team Rose. He the crawled out from under the bridge and leaped up onto it just in front of the girls. The silent Martian gave the girls an awful fright and they leaped back in surprise. Amy pointed her hammer at Zarondight and threatened to smash his face into mush.

"Well, well, well. A Martian FINALLY shows up after being a coward and relying on stupid booby traps to do his dirty work for him!" snarled Amy "You've got a lot to answer for pal. I nearly got blown up by a mine, we nearly got arrows in our bodies and Cream nearly got shocked to death! When I'm finished with you, there won't be enough of you to fill a Petri dish!"

Zarondight didn't say anything back to her for he can't. He just kept his gaze fixed on the pink hedgehog in the red dress.

"Amy, don't bother talking to him, he can't answer you back." said Cosmo hastily "He's mute."

"Oh really?" said Amy "That might explain how he crept up on us so quietly. So who is this clown then?"

"That," said Cosmo in a very glum voice "Is Zarondight, the deadliest spy and strategist in the Martian army. He's responsible for killing

more people on the battlefield then even Grand Warlord Diablo. His strategic skills are unrivalled and his spy skills make him one heck of a dangerous Martian. I bet he was the one setting up all the traps for us."

Zarondight nodded as if to confirm Cosmo's statement.

"You set up those traps?! You bad, bad Martian!" yelled Cream "You almost killed us! How could you do such a thing?!"

Zarondight just narrowed his eyes and bared his claws. They glistened like knives in a drawer in the bright sunlight that shone down on Kingdom Valley. The sunlight was soon replaced by dark, grey clouds that started drifting in over the ruins. Cream stepped back at the mere sight of Zarondight's claws. Amy looked at Cream in a rather annoyed tone.

"Cream, don't bother reprimanding him, Martians live for killing people, he's not gonna feel remorse for it." muttered Amy "Well then, Zarondight, I've got a hammer with your name on it!"

"We might have an easy time with him since I do not believe he actually has any fighting prowess." said Cosmo.

"Well that's good to know." said Amy "Let's get him girls! For Cosmo, for her world, for all of Mobius, for peace-lovers everywhere, let's bash this Martian to bits!"

There was a loud clap of thunder and a flash of lightning as Amy screamed that. Then, it started to throw it down with rain as the stormy clouds blocked out the sun and loomed over KingdomValley. Amy was a little annoyed at the fact it was raining and she was getting wet (she hates getting wet) but she ignored it for the moment and decided to just focus on Zarondight. Zarondight and Amy glared at each other as rain poured down from the sky and trickled down their bodies. Amy then lunged at Zarondight, roaring like an Amazon Warrior and she swung her hammer at Zarondight. Zarondight effortlessly blocked the blow with his arm though and he struck Amy in the chest with a powerful punch. He then uppercut Amy with his other arm and sent her staggering backwards. Amy swung the hammer again but she only hit him on the shoulder and his shoulder

pad cushioned the blow for him. Amy swung again and Zarondight blocked the blow with his arm. He then twirled around as Amy tried to hit him again. Amy swung the hammer at Zarondight and very narrowly missed his face. The hammer head just swept over him by millimetres (wow, what a dodge!). Amy then raised her hammer and tried to whack Zarondight again. Zarondight blocked the blow and Amy hit him several more times but Zarondight blocked the blows and then uppercut Amy in the face. Amy staggered backwards, dropping her hammer and she ended up nearly teetering off the edge of the bridge. She wafted her arms around to regain her balance before she could fall off and Zarondight picked up her hammer. Zarondight glared at the hammer, disgusted with it's rather glaring colour scheme of red and yellow (he doesn't do bright colours) and he chucked it Amy, hoping it would crash into her and knock her off the bridge. Amy merely summoned another hammer to her hands and walloped the hammer away, knocking it down into the water below. Amy ran towards Zarondight again but Zarondight ran forward and slugged Amy in the stomach. Amy gasped and wheezed ever so hoarsely by that powerful punch. Zarondight then grabbed Amy by the face and hoisted her up to his height. He tossed Amy further up the bridge and she landed with a heavy thud in front of Cosmo and Cream, who leaped back in alarm. Zarondight picked up Amy's dropped hammer and he threw it over the bridge into the water. Cream and Cosmo helped the poor pink hedgehog stagger back onto her feet.

"Cosmo…I thought you said he has no fighting prowess!" growled Amy "And yet he's kicking my butt here!"

"I'm sorry Amy, I said I **do not believe** he has any fighting prowess, I never said he doesn't have any!" snapped Cosmo "I've never seen Zarondight fight before so I had no idea he **could** fight!"

"Well, you've seen him fight now." muttered Amy, summoning another hammer to her hands "Our battle's not going to be as easy as we thought. But never mind, we'll beat him anyway! Let's go girls!"

Cream was all too happy to jump into the action. She flapped her ears and took to the sky. She flew towards Zarondight like an eagle homing in on its prey. She swung her feet forward and attempted to

kick Zarondight in the face but Zarondight merely stood there and just smacked her away as if she was just a fly being swatted away. Cream spiralled away from the bridge but she regained her balance and flew towards Zarondight again. Zarondight threw himself over backwards and dodged Cream's aerial attack. Cream flew a great U-turn and flew back towards Zarondight. But the silent Martian lashed out and socked Cream in the face and sent her flying backwards. She crashed into Cosmo and knocked the Seedrian down onto the ground. Cream picked herself up and she and Amy both charged towards Zarondight. Amy swung her hammer at him but Zarondight grabbed the hammer and swung Amy down on top of Cream before she could do anything to him. Cheese was furious to see his friends getting hurt like this and he whizzed towards Zarondight like a fighter plane in the World Wars. Zarondight just held up his hand and caught Cheese in it as if he was a baseball. He threw Cheese at Cream and the Chao hit Cream in the eye. Cream yelped and she clutched her sore eye in pain. Zarondight loomed over Cream and Cheese and he raised his sharp claws, ready to kill them both. Cream lay down on the ground clutching Cheese to her chest and whimpering like a lost puppy. Lightening flashed in the sky and thunder boomed around KingdomValley. The lightening flash behind Zarondight made him look very sinister indeed. Zarondight lashed out to kill Cream and Cheese but Amy uppercut him in the face with her hammer. Zarondight staggered backwards and nearly fell onto his back. Amy was right ticked now.

"Don't you DARE threaten Cream's life like that!" snarled Amy, her face redder then the devil himself with rage.

She then ran forward and user her hammer to pole-vault herself into the air and she kick-slammed Zarondight directly in the face. The mouth plate shielded most of the impact but it was still a powerful kick and Zarondight felt it badly. Zarondight stumbled backwards, clutching his face in pain. He then felt his mouth plate and was horrified to find out that Amy had CRACKED it with that kick! Mouth plates weren't notorious for being very resistant but it was still an achievement for Amy to actually crack it like that. Amy smirked at Zarondight and raised her hammer up high.

"You thought that was hard? Then let me show you the hammer!"

she crooned with a rather devious smirk on her face.

She ran towards Zarondight but Zarondight gave Amy a sweep-kick to the legs and tripped her up. He then kicked Amy as hard as he could into the air and sent her rolling across the bridge. Cream gasped in shock and then she held Cheese in her hand and drew her arm back. She threw Cheese at Zarondight like a baseball and Cheese walloped Zarondight in the face. Cheese didn't stop there though, he uncurled from the ball he'd rolled into and then started punching at Zarondight, being sure to aim for his eyes as they were unprotected. But Zarondight grabbed the little Chao and threw him back at Cream. Cosmo decided she need to get involved in this rainy battle so she grabbed a nearby brick that had fallen lose from the side of the bridge and she tossed it at Zarondight as hard as she possibly could, and given she wasn't a very strong person, that is to say it wasn't a strong shot. Zarondight effortlessly dodged the feeble attack though for Cosmo had barely even thrown it that hard. Cosmo gasped and she started to back away from Zarondight. Zarondight however lashed out and clouted her in the chops. That in turn knocked Cosmo down onto the ground and she was now lying there staring into Zarondight's evil eyes. The silent Martian smiled from behind his cracked mouth plate and he aimed the spike on his helmet at Cosmo. Cosmo cried out in horror and she hid her face behind her hands. Zarondight was about to head butt her and given the spike on his helmet, that will **definitely** finish her off. Zarondight thrust his head towards Cosmo but before his head-butt could kill her, Cream and Amy both pile-dived him in the side and knocked him down onto the ground.

"You horrible, nasty Martian! How could you try to kill Cosmo like that?!" scolded Cream in her best impression of a stern mother.

Amy helped the terrified Seedrian back onto her feet.

"Are you OK Cosmo?" she asked.

"I'm fine, thanks." said Cosmo weakly "But…Zarondight's too powerful for us. We can barely land a blow on him."

"I know, and he's just so fast!" exclaimed Amy "It's like he's everywhere at once!"

"We have to stop him though." said Cream "We can't have him ruining this place anymore than he already has! Let's use our team move on him!"

"You've got it Cream, and I have a better name for it at last." said Amy in a determined manner "Girls, prepare to do the Team Rose Spin n' Strike Attack!"

Cream and Cosmo just giggled like a pair of school children.

"That's terrible Amy!" laughed Cream "I think "Twirling Hammer Batter" was better!"

"I think you should stop naming your attacks Amy!" chuckled Cosmo "Your names for them are silly!"

Amy fumed at the girls in annoyance.

"Let's just do the stupid attack shall we?!" she hissed fiercely.

Cream and Cosmo stopped laughing and they obliged to Amy's order. Cream flew up into the air and carried Cosmo who in turn carried Amy. Zarondight picked himself up and watched as Cream spun Cosmo and Amy around in a big circle. Amy held her hammer out and Cream edged towards Zarondight ever so slowly and carefully. But before Amy could even hit Zarondight, Zarondight leaped backwards, causing Cream to edged to close to the bridge and the girls ended up rather comically crashing into it and lying in a heap on the ground. The girls all groaned in pain and they wondered which way was up. If Zarondight had vocal chords (which he doesn't) then he'd be laughing his head off right now. As is, all he could do was laugh inaudibly to himself (think of it as someone miming laughing but not making any noise). Zarondight then strode over to Team Rose and he grabbed Amy by the neck. He hoisted her up to his height and began throttling her as hard as he could. He then strode over to the side of the bridge and held Amy over the edge, preparing to drop her into the water below. Amy struggled in Zarondight's grasp.

"Ack…let me…go…!" she choked.

Poor choice of words as that is exactly what Zarondight did! He let go of Amy and the pink hedgehog began plummeting down into the water below. Cream cried out in horror and she flew down off the bridge and towards Amy as fast as she possibly could fly. Zarondight watched as Cream tried to save Amy. While they were busy, he advanced on Cosmo with his claws bared. Cosmo had backed up to a bridge post and stared into Zarondight's eyes. The Seedrian couldn't move. She was petrified with fear right now. She could see her life flashing before her eyes as Zarondight prepared to kill her and render the Seedrian species extinct forever. Cosmo closed her eyes, her heart pounding madly, and awaited her doom. Zarondight prepared to lash out at Cosmo but suddenly, something yellow flew into him and sent him hurling across the bridge! Cosmo opened her eyes and wandered what had happened. That was when she saw the most surprising thing she had ever seen in her life. It was a robot duplicate of Tails! It was (of course) named Metal Tails and it looked like Tails only the twin tails were a pair of metal tails that could form into a propeller blade, he had a black visor with blue optics and the lower legs and feet were completely white. It had pretty much all of Tails' features, including his fringe. Zarondight picked himself up and stared at Metal Tails as if to say "What is this?!". He had never seen a robot before so he had no idea what he was up against. But Zarondight wasn't about to give up so easily. He lashed out at Metal Tails and socked him in the face. Metal Tails socked him back and then tail-whipped him with his metal tails. As for Cream, she had managed to catch Amy and she flew back up to the bridge with Amy in her arms. The girls were in for a surprised though for they saw Metal Tails shooting Zarondight with his torso laser. Amy was so surprised her eyes nearly popped out of their sockets.

"Oh my gosh! A Metal Tails?!" she squeaked "Where did that come from?"

"I bet it's an Eggman robot." said Cream grimly "But it seems to be helping us. It's fighting Zarondight."

"It's probably hoping to kill us too and is just getting rid of Zarondight so he can have us all to himself." muttered Amy "Oh well, we'll deal with Zarondight first and then we smash Metal Tails."

Cream nodded agreeably. She and Amy ran towards Zarondight just as Zarondight clawed Metal Tails across the face. Amy jumped behind Zarondight and walloped him with her hammer. Zarondight was sent hurling across the bridge and he lay there, clearly pained but being unable to groan in pain as he has no vocal chords. Zarondight picked himself up and stared at Team Rose and Metal Tails standing there.

"Give it up Zarondight! You're outnumbered!" sneered Amy "Either you get outta here alive or you get smashed by us!"

Zarondight hated to admit it, but he WAS outnumbered. He hadn't been training much on fighting large groups. He was more used to singular opponents. Metal Tails was the only one he had to worry about but Amy and Cream were still going to be a handful and give Metal Tails the chance to get the drop on him and finish him off so he decided to do the only logical thing: retreat. Zarondight dived backwards quite gracefully off the bridge and into the water below. He then started swimming away from the bridge and heading off back to the Martians in Megapolis. Team Rose watched as Zarondight swam away as quickly as he could. Amy stuck her tongue out at Zarondight and then turned away.

"Well that's him dealt with." said Amy "Now, time to smash you to itty-bitty pieces Metal Tails!" she snarled, holding up her hammer and preparing to turn Metal Tails into a metal pancake.

"No Amy, he saved our lives, you can't smash him!" cried Cosmo.

"He's only here to get rid of Zarondight so he can have us to himself." retorted Amy "Eggman clearly sent him here to deal with us, why else would he be here?"

Metal Tails provided the answer to Amy's question by playing the pre-recorded message that Eggman had given his robots to give to the Mobians.

"Hello there, if any Mobians are listening to this then listen carefully. I, Dr. Eggman, have learnt about the Martians' disgusting presence on Mobius and since I want to conquer the planet for myself, I am going to help Sonic and friends destroy the Martians and save

Mobius. I do hope you appreciate my co-operation for I'm not usually this generous or willing to ally with my enemies am I? Please do not attack my robots for they're here to help you, not hinder you. Understood? Sincerely, Dr. Eggman."

Amy couldn't believe her ears. Dr. Eggman had found out about the Martians and was **helping** to get rid of them?! She wasn't sure if she should believe that but she also knew she couldn't ignore some much needed assistance. Eggman had just saved them from Metal Tails right now so there was no reason to be ungrateful about it. Amy put her hammer away and softened her expression.

"I understand why you're here now." said Amy "Thanks for helping us beat that Martian. But don't get the idea that we and Eggman are allies, OK?"

Metal Tails nodded understandably. Seeing as his work here was done, he took to the skies with his metal tails forming a propeller blade and spinning around and he flew off away from KingdomValley and back to Eggman's base. Team Rose watched as Metal Tails left the Valley.

"Well that was awful nice of Eggman to help us." said Cream "I'm thankful to him for his generosity, even if he is doing it for his own needs."

"Well, he's on our side for this one, that's good enough for me." said Amy "Now let's get outta here and back home, I can't stand this rain any longer!"

She switched on a comlink she had stored in the cuff of her gloves and she spoke into it.

"Hey Sally, mission accomplished, we'd like to come home please." said Amy "And get some towels ready, we're a bit wet."

"OK Amy, just hold on, some of the others are coming back right now." said Sally on the other side of the comlink.

Amy sighed in annoyance and she switched off the comlink. Team Rose would have to stand around waiting in the rain until the warp

ring came for them. Oh well, at least they'd get home eventually, satisfied with the outcome of their mission and with some news to tell everybody. Their mission had been deadly but Team Rose had made it out alive and Amy couldn't wait to hear what her precious Sonic had to say about all this…

Footnotes:

***We all remember that moment from *Tales from Mobius Arc 16: The Final Frontier* don't we?**

Well that's it for Team Rose's chapter! Just two more parts left and "Divide and Conquer" is over! So how did this part go? Was it good? Was it "meh"? Do tell, I'm eager to hear your feedback! And get ready next time for things are about to get REAL intense in Part 6 of "Divide and Conquer"...

So all my readers, which battle in the Martian saga so far has been the best?

Divide and Conquer Part 6

Story 132: Divide and Conquer Part 6: Fatal Attraction

"Right, you girls aware of any potential dangers that you'll come across as you wander into a Martian invaded territory?" asked Queen Sally Acorn concernedly.

"Yes, we could get ambushed by Martians and we maybe up against many of them." said Amy Rose "But don't you worry Sally, Team Rose will emerge victorious in this battle against the Martians!"

Team Adabat Leader, Scott Lynx, snickered at that statement.

"Ha, ha, ha "Team Rose"?" he snorted "That is so corny! Did you get that name from a video game or something?"

Amy scowled at the lynx in the blue shorts but she said nothing to him.

"Alright then, Team Rose, you may depart. And please, for heaven's sake, be careful out there." said Sally in a motherly tone of voice.

"We will Sally, don't sweat it." said Amy in a cocky tone of voice "Alright girls, let's go!"

With that said, Amy, Cream and Cosmo all ran through the Super Warp Ring like eager young children diving into a ball pool. The moment they jumped through the ring, it closed up behind them and Silver caught the Super Warp Ring back in his hand. Amy, Cream and Cosmo were among many Royal Fighters who had just departed to stop the Martian threat that had come to Mobius. Seven locations all over Mobius were under attack and the Royal Fighters had been dividing their resources to stop the Martians. Sonic, Tails, Wilson, Mandy, Knuckles, Shade, Geoffrey, Bunnie and Ruben had all been sent to the places under attack from the Martians. Now Team Rose had joined them and were off to Kingdom Valley to stop the sinister Zarondight. Sally however seemed to be a little disheartened at all this and she put a hand over her heart.

"Those girls are going to die out there, I just know it." fretted Sally "I don't mean to undermine their bravery or deem them unworthy of carrying a mission out on there own but it's just…Amy's a little capricious and in over her head, Cream's dreadfully young and inexperienced and Cosmo…oh I regret sending those three out on their own now! I should have sent Amy with Sonic and Tails, Cream with Wilson and Mandy and Cosmo with any of the others. They'd definitely be OK in their care."

"Your majesty, don't fret." said Silver's best friend Blaze the Cat, putting a hand on the young queen's shoulder "I'm sure Amy, Cream and Cosmo will be OK on their own. Me and Silver have read much about all of the Royal Fighters and what we've learnt about Amy gives me confidence that she'll lead her and the other two to a sound victory. If they need help, they'll call for it and we'll just simply warp over to them with Silver's warp ring."

Sally calmed down a little after hearing Blaze's words and she looked at the future Angel Island guardian.

"Thank you Blaze." said Sally brightly "I'm still worried for them though but what you've said has enlightened me a little."

"You're welcome your grace." said Blaze with a polite curtsey to Sally.

"Please, you don't have to do that because I'm the queen Blaze, you can treat me as a normal person." said Sally in a half-flattered manner "Ahem, OK, only two teams left to go. You and Silver and Shadow and Rouge. Who's going to Megapolis out of you two then?" she suddenly asked to the remaining four Mobians waiting to depart for the last two locations that were under attack from the Martians. Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat stood forward and they had their hands raised.

"We will go to Megapolis." said Shadow "I believe I've waited long enough and it's time I got into the action now."

"I think Shadow boy's keen to get into the action so he can keep up with Sonic boy." teased Rouge coyly, lightly playing around with one of Shadow's quills "After all, Shadow can't have Sonic hogging all

the glory can he?"

Shadow glared at Rouge. He didn't half hate it when the bat taunted him like this, even if it was for laughs.

"Rouge, since I am now another hero fighting for Mobius' freedom, I no longer have any competitive behaviour towards Sonic." said Shadow coldly "Me and him are no longer enemies or rivals, we are allies so why would I be keen to get into the action just because Sonic is?"

"Eesh, I was just fooling with you Shadow, I didn't mean to get on your nerves." sighed Rouge "You'd think with him finally finding out what his purpose is, he'd simmer down and get a sense of humour."

"Rouge, please, not everybody has a funny bone in them." said Sally sternly "Anyway, Shadow and Rouge, since you asked so politely, you may go to Megapolis and deal with the Martians there. Shadow, you've helped us survive the Black Arms, now you may help us survive the Martians."

"Indeed Sally." said Shadow with a confident smirk on his face "These Martians will be nothing compared to Black Doom and his flunkies. I still relish the time I broke Marik's arm. Maybe I can break another Martian's arm while I'm kicking their butts."

Sally smiled rather uneasily at that, not really knowing how to reply to that rather awkward statement.

"OK then…Silver send these two off to Megapolis." said Sally quickly.

Silver flicked the warp ring up into the air and it opened up a portal to Megapolis, the very place that Eggman was hiding in and the very place the Martian ship had taken refuge after taking damage from the Royal Fighters earlier. Shadow and Rouge eagerly ran through the warp ring and they warped over to Megapolis. Shadow had no idea what was in store for him when he arrived but he hoped that he'd be against Marik at the most. He so wanted to break his arm again for bringing his kind to Mobius, the very planet he'd decided to call home after finding out his origins and realizing what he truly

was. But Shadow wouldn't be facing Marik unfortunately, he'd be facing someone who might be able to overpower even him…

The Northern Border of Megapolis: Eggman's Secret Bunker: A Few Minutes Ago before the departures of Wilson , Mandy, Knuckles, Shade, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Ruben, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Shadow, Rouge, Silver and Blaze…

It hadn't been long since Eggman had found out that the Martians had invaded Mobius and were plotting to destroy it and already he had a squadron of Eggman robots prepared to go out into the world and give the Mobians some much needed assistance in this battle against the Martians. A horde of Egg-Pawns were all ready and on standby as well as a bunch of leader robots to go with them. Eggman had rebuilt Metal Sonic and Silver Sonic and was going to send them to assist the battling Mobians in their battles against the Martians. As well as those two though, he had three new robots to go out and assist the Royal Fighters. These robots were new ideas that Eggman had been dying to try for ages on end and he deemed this time to be the most appropriate time to give them a test drive. These new robots were Metal Knuckles, Metal Tails and Metal Amy. Eggman decided that since Metal Sonic wasn't as good as he used to be (He hasn't been any good since Episode 70 readers, how the mighty truly have fallen eh?), he needed some more "Metal Robots" to join him and he had decided to model them after Tails, Knuckles and Amy since he felt their designs would be the most interesting and fun to build. He already had plans for other robots in the "Metal Series" and was going to get building them once he had any spare time and once he saw how effective Metal Knuckles, Metal Tails and Metal Amy were. Eggman stood in front of his horde of robots like an army general and spoke aloud.

"OK then my marvellous metal minions, your master Dr. Eggman has a VERY important job for you!" he bellowed out to the robots "The Martians had invaded Mobius and are plotting to take away what's mine, Mobius itself! Sonic and his friends are going to stop the Martians but they're dividing up to fight the Martians since they have also divided up and I fear that anyone who isn't Sonic the Hedgehog will struggle out there so to make sure they win, I'm

sending each and everyone of you out into the world to fight the Martians and beat them!"

He pointed at Metal Knuckles.

"Metal Knuckles, you will take a squadron of Egg-Pawns and go to Black Acropolis to fight the Martians there!" barked Eggman.

Metal Knuckles nodded approvingly, pleased with his assignment.

"Metal Tails, you will go alone to KingdomValley since my scanners and the satellite footage of Mobius Katherine's managed to display for me thanks to her expert hacking skills indicate there is only one Martian there." said Eggman, pointing at Metal Tails.

Metal Tails clenched his fists eagerly, ready to get into the action.

"Metal Amy, you will take a squadron of Egg-Pawns and go out into RailCanyon to fight the Martians there." said Eggman, walking past Metal Amy and assigning her mission.

Metal Amy did a little gleeful dance in the manner of Amy when she dances about with joy with excitement (Eggman did make the Metal Series similar to their organic counterparts after all). Eggman strode over to Metal Sonic.

"Metal Sonic, you and a squadron of Egg-Pawns shall go over to Soleanna and deal with the Martians there." ordered Eggman.

Metal Sonic saluted Dr. Eggman loyally, clearly happy to be given an assignment of some kind.

"And finally…Silver Sonic. You shall go to Grand Metropolis." announced Dr. Eggman, pointing at the giant silver killing machine with the bladed quills "You will make mincemeat out of those Martians with your size and power."

Silver Sonic nodded understandingly.

"All of you will deploy…now!" barked Dr. Eggman "And don't you dare come back to me unless the Martians are either sent packing or dead! And please for the love of all things scientific, come back

with all your limbs intact!"

The Metal Series all obeyed their master and they ran off to get to their missions. They all left Dr. Eggman's bunker and they flew off to their respective places all over Mobius. The Egg-Pawns were all equipped with jet-packs so they could fly after the Metal Series robots. In a matter of minutes, the robots had all flown away to deal with the Martians attacking the various regions of Mobius and to make sure the Mobians win their battles. Back down in the bunker, Dr. Eggman turned to his remaining two minions with his hands behind his back. The only robots left with him now were Devion the Devatron Leader, who had been reborn under his control and was the only Devatron still alive now the Startrons had wiped them all out with their chrome-eating virus they'd been developing over the years, and Katherine, Eggman's servant bot who was as silent as a graveyard and a keen fighter.

"Now there's only two jobs left to assign some robots to…" purred Dr. Eggman in a smooth, crooning voice as he stared at Devion and Katherine "And I know just the bots for those two jobs. Devion!" he shouted, pointing at the Devatron-turned-Eggman ally "You will go up to the surface and deal with the Martians outside of this border! The satellite feed Katherine has given me states there's a Martian in the region of Megapolis itself."

"I shall comply to my given task immediately Dr. Eggman." said Devion with a loyal bow to the fat scientist with the big bushy moustache "No Martian shall remain alive when I am through with them."

"Good." said Eggman coldly "Because I do not want any Martians wondering into the Northern Border of Megapolis and finding us! The fact there's Martians so close to us at this very moment worries me dearly!"

"Do not fear on this imperative situation doctor, I shall make sure the Martians do not get anywhere near your grand base." said Devion in a loyal tone of voice (he wouldn't be like this if he was his normal self!)

Devion then stood up straight and marched out of the room to get to

his task. He did not want to stand around for a minute longer, he wanted to get out there and please his master by stopping the Martians from taking over the planet he so wished to conquer. The moment Devion left, Dr. Eggman smiled to himself brightly.

"I'm so glad I took his body and refurbished him as a minion of mine." said Dr. Eggman in a prideful manner "Having a Devatron on my side certainly makes me feel like the most powerful man in all the universe."

Katherine nodded agreeably. Having a Devatron on their side truly was one of the greatest fortunes that Eggman had ever gotten in his on-going battle with the Mobians. Pity he hadn't really had the chance to be put to good use yet but fate had been throwing things in the way so it couldn't be helped really. Devion had performed quite admirably when fending off the Black Arms and he was bound to impress again when he fought the Martian that was in Megapolis. Dr. Eggman turned around and put an arm around Katherine in the manner of a gentleman putting his arm around a lovely lady.

"As for me and you my sweet little Katherine, we're going for a little ride." purred Dr. Eggman "A ride to New Mobotropolis. We're going to team up with the Royal Fighters and give them valuable information. And that information is the whereabouts of the Martian's ship. Thanks to your hacking skills getting us into Mobius' satellites, we've pin-pointed that the Martian ship itself is here in Megapolis about a hundred miles from where Devion will be going. This'll be an offer the Mobians can't refuse and I'll get the pleasure of destroying their very ship!"

He then started cackling like a madman and Katherine played a clip of someone cackling as if she was laughing with him. The two then walked off to board a hover-saucer and fly off to New Mobotropolis where they would meet with Queen Sally Acorn and make a temporary alliance with her and the remaining Royal Fighters in order to ensure that the Martian ship gets destroyed…

Megapolis: Now…

The Super Warp Ring opened up in the middle of the plains of Megapolis and Shadow and Rouge leaped through it. After they had leapt through the warp ring, it closed up behind them, sealing them off from Royal HQ for the time being. After they had leapt through the warp ring, they looked around only to see that there was nobody around at the moment. There was nobody around but Shadow and Rouge at this very moment although given there was a Martian in Megapolis too, it's likely they weren't going to be alone for long. Time would tell when Shadow and Rouge were suddenly going to be fighting any Martians. It could take them a while, they could end up fighting immediately, who knew? But for now, Shadow and Rouge had to find the Martian that was attacking Megapolis. There may not be much to attack in Megapolis for the place was mostly plains and rocky hills but there were civilizations in Megapolis. There was a city somewhere around although it was a pretty small city and it was located in the west of Megapolis, a few miles away from the plains where Shadow and Rouge were right now. Give the Martians long enough, they'd probably discover that there's a city in Megapolis and then they'd go over to the city and destroy it. So that was why Shadow and Rouge were here, to stop the Martians before they get a chance to harm any civilizations in Megapolis. Shadow couldn't help but wonder how many Martians they'd be up against. He kept having the feeling he and Rouge would be up against a lot of Martians. Not that he was worried since the Martians didn't intimidate him in anyway. They could send as many as they liked, he'd just Chaos Blast them all to smithereens easy as that. He was the most powerful "Mobian" on Mobius now he'd accepted his place on the planet so the Martians would be in for one heck of a battle once he got involved. Shadow and Rouge started trekking through the plains and keeping an eye out for any Martians. The moment Shadow sees one, he'd be on that Martian in the blink of an eye.

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"OK Rouge, those Martians could be anywhere so stay alert." said Shadow as he looked around to see what was all around him and where Martians could possibly be hiding.

"Certainly Shadow." said Rouge "And don't worry about me, my senses are ALWAYS alert. My ears are already listening out for any Martians right now."

"That's good to know." said Shadow "And I gather that bats like you have very good hearing given the size of your ears."

"Oh indeed, there's no noise we bats won't hear. We can hear even the smallest of noises." said Rouge, stroking her ears as if she was proud to have them.

"Then there's no chance of a Martian sneaking up on us if your hearing's as good as you say it is." said Shadow with a smirk on his

face "I think being paired up with you is going to be quite fortunate for both of us in this battle."

Rouge was quite flattered to hear Shadow say that. It was even better for her since she secretly had a crush on Shadow. She wasn't sure what it was about Shadow that appealed to her though. Was it his rather dark, brooding attitude? Was it his sinister voice that made him sound rather sexy to her? Was it his general appearance that made her like him? She had no idea. But there was something she admired about Shadow and she would love to let him know that she fancied him but at the same time, she didn't really want to in fear of Shadow reacting quite violently or taking it the wrong way. After all, being as he was a genetic experiment originally conceived by Dr. Gerald Robotnik of the planet Earth (and the grandfather of Dr. Eggman) and then stolen and built to be a violent killing machine by Black Doom, Shadow likely had no concept of love in his heart and even likelier, wouldn't understand the concept in general so it was best to keep her feelings to herself instead of chance a love that likely, can never work. Shadow was not the kind of character who'd be interested in love as he's one of those "duty calls" people, meaning he's more happy to be fighting villains and keeping the world safe more than anything. Now Shadow had accepted his place on Mobius, Rouge hoped that Shadow would simmer down and become more like a Mobian and less like a soldier. For now though, she'd have to put up with his dark personality and strong sense of purpose and see how he develops from here. Even Shadow won't be immune to change after all. As Shadow and Rouge wandered through the plains and kept their senses alert for even the tiniest signs of Martian life, the wind began to slowly blow over them and Shadow could feel the cool breeze blowing through his black fur. He'd become very happy ever since he decided that Mobius was now his home planet after discovering his true intentions were to be somebody's pet and then suddenly changed to be a weapon. It felt good to him to have a place to call home and to have a purpose that best suited him. He'd never really felt that his life with Eggman was right for him and he didn't feel like the purposes intended for him by Gerald and Black Doom respectively were right for him either. Living a life among Mobians and saving the world felt just right to him. It may be the Mobian DNA in his bloodstream and the fact he'd woken up on Mobius that made him feel like he belongs here but whatever

the reason, Shadow didn't mind since he was just happy to live here and defend his home from any villains who seek to take it away from him. And Shadow knew who he had to thank for all of that: Rouge the Bat. Had Rouge not woken him up from his capsule then he never would have discovered what he was truly meant to be and would just be stuck in suspended animation for the rest of his life. It was precisely this that made Shadow like Rouge more then any other Mobian. He didn't have deep feelings for Rouge though, he just saw her as a good friend and the one who woke him up from his slumber. He often liked to wonder what Rouge thought to him and why she seemed pretty fond of him at times though but he didn't bother asking as he didn't think it was worth bothering about. Suddenly, Shadow heard a noise and he stopped dead in his tracks. He looked around, wondering what the noise was and what had made it. Rouge stopped and she listened too for she had heard the noise as well.

"Hey Shadow, what do you think that was?" asked Rouge.

"I don't know." said Shadow "But it's definitely near. You take flight and look around from the skies while I search on the ground. One of us is bound to find something if we do that."

"I agree on that Shadow boy." said Rouge coyly "Bats are renowned for having eyesight as good as their hearing so I'm bound to see something from up in the sky."

She then flapped her wings and took flight. She flew up into the sky and started looking around from all the way up in the sky. Rouge could see all around her and she looked around in every direction to see if she could see something. Shadow activated his hover shoes and skated through the plains of Megapolis at top speed to see what he could find down on the ground, his shoes sending dust off the ground flying up into the air behind him in a big dust cloud as he skated. Shadow skated for quite a while and Rouge was up in the sky for quite a while until eventually, Rouge spotted something. On top of a rocky hill not far from where she and Shadow were, there was something standing on top of it. And that something was a Martian! But not just any Martian, it was Myra, one of the most feared Martians of all time. It certainly wasn't because she was an intimidating looking Martian though, it was because she wielded the

deadly magnetism hammer. The hammer had granted her many victories and was the reason people even remotely feared her. Also the fact she was married to the equally as feared Dranzer, who was in Holoska fighting Sonic and Tails at this very moment, made her a name worth remembering. Myra was standing on top of the rocky hill and overlooking the plains of Megapolis. Strangely enough, she didn't seem to be causing destruction of any kind. She was just standing there as if…she was admiring the view. Strange for someone who's part of a war-loving race of aliens. Rouge didn't quite understand it but she didn't let it distract her. They had to stop Myra before she could do any damage to Megapolis. Rouge called down to Shadow who was just running back to where he'd set off from.

"Hey, Shadow! I've found a Martian!" cried Rouge from up in the sky.

Shadow skidded to a halt and he looked up at Rouge as the bat started flying down towards him.

"You've what?" asked Shadow for he had not heard Rouge properly due to her being high up in the sky and thus, being hard to hear down on the ground.

"I said I've found a Martian." repeated Rouge "It's up on that hill over there and…"

"A Martian? **A** Martian?" said Shadow, clearly looking puzzled "Huh, I thought we'd be up against more Martians than that. Maybe there's some lying in wait. Never mind, we'll take down that "one Martian" and see if there's anymore lurking around."

"I hope there's only one, I'm not in the mood for having a big battle right now." said Rouge dully.

Shadow and Rouge then ran and flew off respectively towards the rocky hill that Myra was standing upon. In a matter of seconds, they were up on the hill and standing before her in battle ready stances and getting ready to beat the living daylights out of her. Myra just glared at the two as if they were interrupting something and she lifted her hammer up onto her shoulder and put her other hand on her hips casually as if she wasn't even interested in them.

"Oh why am I not surprised I've got resistance?" she snorted "Well, just shows that wandering near that city in this place and scaring the crap out of the locals was well-worth it."

"You hold it right there Martian scum!" growled Shadow "We're well aware that you're here to cause trouble and harm innocents! So we've come all the way over here to stop you from razing this place!"

"And you'd better not have a bunch of soldiers hoping to ambush us because we're already expecting one." crooned Rouge slyly "It'd be just like you Martians to be so predictable."

"Well we don't do "predictable" batty-girl." sneered Myra "There's only me here and I'm all that's needed."

"You're the only one here?" scoffed Shadow as if this was a stupid idea "Then this means our mission just got a whole lot easier!" he added, cracking his knuckles and smirking confidently.

"I think not red-eyes." said Myra gloatingly "For I'm not a Martian that can be taken down that easily. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Myra, hammer-expert of the Martian fleet."

"We gathered given the enormous hammer." said Rouge coyly, pointing at Myra's hammer.

Myra lowered the hammer, held it upside down and rested it on top of its head with her hands on top of the handle.

"I am one of the Martian fleet's most feared warriors." boasted Myra "And it's all thanks to this hammer of mine. You'll see what it does in a minute for I'm about to show you what it can do."

"No need since we'll stomp on you BEFORE you get to use it!" snarled Shadow, rushing towards Myra and upper cutting her in the face.

Myra just simply did an amazing gymnastics move and landed on her hands and then flipped over back onto her feet. Myra was quite acrobatic after all and could often recover from being sent flying by a punch because of this. Shadow lunged at Myra again and tried to punch her but Myra lashed out, put her hands on Shadow's head

and thrust herself over him as if she was playing leap frog and she ran over to pick up her hammer. Rouge flew towards Myra and attempted to screw-kick her but Myra walloped Rouge with her hammer and sent her hurling off the hill and onto the ground. Shadow seemed to be horrified at the sight of Rouge getting hurt and he retaliated by spin-dashing Myra clean off the hill and down onto the ground down below with her hammer falling beside her. Shadow slammed Myra down into the ground, causing the Martian to wheeze loudly as she was slammed into the ground by Shadow's spin-dash. It was almost like a giant hand had grabbed her and slammed her against a giant wall. Myra picked herself up, coughing vigorously and she picked up her giant magnetic hammer. Shadow helped the stunned Rouge back onto her feet. Rouge seemed a little shaken by Myra's hammer attack but she was alright. Rouge shook herself off and realized Shadow was helping her up. Maybe Shadow did care for her after all…Shadow could see that Rouge was alright so he turned his attention back to Myra. Myra just dusted herself off from the earlier onslaught and managed to crack a dry smile at him.

"Wow, nice moves dark boy." she purred "I've never seen opponents like you before. I guess our pointless conflict with peace is finally going to get more interesting."

Shadow and Rouge looked at each other in astonishment. Did Myra just call the Martian's prejudice against peace…pointless? There must be a little more to Myra then meets the eye but they couldn't ask questions yet, they had to defeat her first. Still, Shadow was quite interested in seeing what Myra meant by calling the Martian's conflict with peace "pointless". Maybe she was not like the other Martians.

"Thank you Myra." said Shadow, summoning a Chaos Spear into his hand "Now let me show you how "interesting" I can be."

He then threw the Chaos Spear at Myra but Myra held her hammer upside down, put it down on the ground upside down and pole-vaulted herself into the air with it. She hurled over the Chaos Spear and she landed directly in front of Shadow. She whacked Shadow with the hammer but given his genetically engineered and half alien body, he took most of the impact as if it was nothing and he skidded backwards across the battlefield. He then curled up into a ball and

he spin-dashed Myra but Myra held up her hammer to shield herself from the attack. Because of this, all Shadow did was just send Myra skidding backwards a little and make him ricochet off of it. Rouge jumped into the air and she screw-kicked Myra but again, she let the hammer take the blow for her. The hammer was made of a very strong titanium alloy that was near impossible to break so Rouge's attack didn't even scratch the hammer. Myra could see that she needed the hammer's infamous ability so she pointed the hammer at Shadow and Rouge just as they prepared to attack again. Her hammer fired a pair of metallic, magnetized collars at Shadow and Rouge. The collars clipped around their necks each and the two gagged a little for they were a little small for them. Shadow gripped his collar and tried to break it off of his neck. He pulled and he pulled on it but he couldn't seem to get it off. Once that collar was clipped on, it wasn't coming off and given how it was hard to grip it sufficiently and apply the right amount of force needed to break it off, that was not surprising. Not to mention trying to break it off just guaranteed hurting your neck and maybe unintentionally choking yourself to death if you tried to hard to remove it.

"Ack! Hurk! What is this thing?!" grunted Shadow "I can't get it off!"

"Neither can I!" Rouge gagged slightly as she tired to break her collar off "Myra, what did you do to us?!"

"Make you prone to my magnetism hammer." crowed Myra "You see, that's why my hammer is such a fearsome weapon and it makes me such a fearsome warrior, it is a magnetic hammer. It has magnetic abilities and it clips collars onto non-magnetic specimens like organic life forms so they can be magnetized too. And now you two will join the many life forms who have faced my magnetism hammer and fallen to its mighty power!"

She then pointed the hammer at Shadow and Rouge and activated it's magnetic power. Shadow and Rouge could feel themselves being dragged towards Myra's hammer all of the sudden. The magnetic powers of the hammer were attracting the collars around their necks to it. It was as if something had grabbed them by the neck and was pulling them towards itself. Shadow and Rouge tried to stop themselves being pulled but they just couldn't. The hammer's magnetic pull was impossible to break out of. Shadow and Rouge

were pulled directly towards the hammer and they stuck to it just like glue. Due to the fact it was the collars on their necks that were making them magnetized, their faces were pressed tightly against the hammer. They looked a little funny like that. Myra cackled at the two helpless Mobians and she switched her hammer from attract to repel so she ended up sending Shadow and Rouge hurling backwards through the air. To them, it felt like a giant hand had just pushed them away and sent them flying. Shadow and Rouge came down with a crash onto the ground several feet away from Myra. Myra held her hammer upside down and rested herself onto it casually as if this was just another day for her.

"So you see Mobians, my hammer is a forced to be reckoned with." she gloated "As long as those collars are clamped around your puny little necks, you'll be prone to my hammer's magnetic abilities. I can attract you and repel you. And don't think about trying to break the collars off because you're wasting your much needed strength. The collars cannot be broken. They'll come off when I deem the time necessary for them to come off."

"In that case, I'll MAKE you remove them!" growled Shadow, rocketing off towards Myra like a charging bull and getting ready to floor her.

Myra just held up the hammer and since it was still on repel mode, Shadow ended up being pushed away by the hammer. Shadow skidded backwards and he tried to grab Myra but the hammer's magnetic push was too strong for him. As long as it was on repel mode, Shadow couldn't get anywhere near Myra. Myra laughed at Shadow as he feebly tried to grab her. Myra then increased the force of the magnet's repel. Because it was done so suddenly, Shadow was pushed away by the magnetic repel of Myra's hammer. Shadow rolled across the ground on his back after that push. Rouge jumped into the air and attempted to screw-kick Myra but Myra held up the hammer in the direction Rouge was heading towards her and Rouge ended up ricocheting away from her. It was like she'd bounced off an invisible wall around Myra. Rouge landed painfully on the ground and skidded to a halt after that. Myra then aimed the hammer at Rouge and set it to attract mode. The magnetic pull of the hammer pulled Rouge directly towards the hammer and she

stuck to it thanks to the collar on her neck. Rouge tried desperately to break free, squirming and writhing about madly as she tried to get away. But Rouge's attempts were about as vain as a fly trying to break free from flypaper. It was impossible to break free of Myra's hammer once you were stuck to it. It was like trying to get a nail out of a wall using only your fingers, impossible to do and a waste of strength. Shadow could see that Rouge was in trouble so he skated over to the distressed bat and tired to help her. Myra however switched the hammer to repel mode just as Shadow was running towards her and Rouge was sent shooting straight into Shadow like a cannonball. Shadow and Rouge ended up sprawling across the ground on top of each other and they came to a halt with Rouge lying on top of Shadow. If they weren't fighting for their lives right now, Rouge probably would be liking this and not wanting to get up from Shadow (if you know what I mean…hee, hee, hee). Shadow and Rouge both picked themselves up but Myra activated her hammer's power again. Instead of attracting or repelling them though, it seemed to do a bit of both. They weren't attracted straight to the hammer but they were being moved around as if they were attracted to it. Myra was merely using the hammer's magnetic force to lift them up off the ground. Myra smiled as they were lifted up by her hammer's magnetic force.

"Now wait till you see what I'm about to do to you two right now." she sneered.

She then used the power of the hammer to bring Shadow and Rouge towards each other and slam them together as if a pair of hands and grabbed them and slammed them together. That attack left the two feeling a little stunned and pain swept over their bodies like a wave after that slam. Myra wasn't finished with them yet though, she swung the hammer down and the magnetic force clinging onto them pulled them straight down and slammed them into the ground like a giant flyswatter. Myra then swung the hammer up again, lifting Shadow and Rouge off the ground and then she slammed them down onto it again. And again. And again. But before she could do it a fifth time, Shadow summoned a Chaos Spear to his hand and he threw it at Myra. The Chaos Spear struck Myra and sent her flying backwards but she still had hold of her hammer so she ended up dragging Shadow and Rouge with her. Myra landed

on her back and Shadow and Rouge landed on the ground feet first. Shadow and Rouge could see that they were in major peril thanks to Myra's deadly hammer and the magnetic collars around their necks so the best thing for them to do right now was run for it and think of a way to counter-attack it. Shadow and Rouge tried to run and fly away respectively but Myra picked herself up and pointed the hammer at them. She'd set it to attract so the hammer pulled the two back towards her. Myra's hammer had unlimited range when it came to its magnetic powers so Shadow and Rouge could go as far as they liked, they'd never get away from Myra and her magnetism hammer. Shadow and Rouge were pulled back towards Myra and the hammer by a strong magnetic force that tugged on their collars. Shadow and Rouge gripped the ground and they tried as hard as they could to stop themselves from being pulled backwards by Myra's hammer but their attempts were ultimately futile for the hammer's pull was too strong. Shadow and Rouge were pulled back towards the hammer and they soon became attracted to it thanks to the magnetic collars around their necks. Shadow groaned in annoyance for he was getting annoyed to no end at Myra constantly attracting and repelling him and Rouge with her hammer. Myra laughed at the two and then she repelled Shadow and Rouge by switching the magnet from attract to repel. Shadow and Rouge were sent shooting away from her as if they were being shot out of a cannon and they skidded quite roughly across the ground. Their bodies were laden with scrapes after that onslaught. Shadow picked himself up and rubbed his sore chest.

"Ugh…I don't know about you Rouge but that Myra's getting on my damn nerves with that damn hammer of hers!" growled Shadow furiously, his voice as low and growly as a demon.

"I couldn't agree more!" grunted Rouge, tugging on her collar "We can't get away from her, we can't touch her, she's got us on the ropes Shadow!"

"So she thinks!" snorted Shadow "I'm not giving up that easily. I'm going to destroy Myra or my name isn't Shadow the Hedgehog!"

"Your name's Shadow the Hedgehog regardless of what happens." sneered Rouge slyly.

Shadow scowled at her for making that bad joke but he didn't say anything more. He merely turned around and ran towards Myra. Myra just pointed her hammer at Shadow and prepared to repel him for her magnetism hammer was still set on repel but Shadow warped away into thin air as he was nearing Myra. Myra gasped in horror and she looked around wildly for any sign of Shadow.

"No way?!" blustered Myra "The dude can teleport?! Well this doesn't bide well for me!"

Shadow then suddenly reappeared behind Myra and spin-dashed her directly in the back. Myra was sent hurling across the battlefield like someone who's been shoved off a train. Myra landed on her stomach with her hammer just lying in front of her. Shadow saw his chance and he sped towards Myra as quickly as he could. Too late though, Myra grabbed her hammer and quickly activated its power. This in turn caused Shadow to bounce straight backwards like a rubber ball bouncing away after being thrown at a wall. Shadow landed on his back and skidded to a halt. Myra picked herself up and aimed her hammer at Shadow. She brought Shadow to her with the hammer's magnetic pull and then she swung the hammer around at Rouge as the bat flew in close to attack her. She ended up walloping Rouge with Shadow and thanks to Rouge's collar, she ended up sticking to the hammer so Myra had bother Shadow and Rouge stuck to the hammer once again. Myra started spinning around on the spot like a spinning top with her hammer in hands and Shadow and Rouge firmly attached to it. She looked like she was throwing the hammer at the Olympics only her hammer wasn't one she was going to throw around. Myra kept on spinning and spinning until she suddenly switched her hammer to repel and because she was spinning around, Shadow and Rouge were sent hurling through the air like a pair of tossed stones. They shot up into the air and they soared through the sky and came hurling back down towards the ground in one enormous arc. They covered a distance of at least one-hundred yards! Shadow and Rouge came down onto the ground with a terrific crash. The resulting onslaught left the two lying on the ground, unconscious but alive and with only a few bruises and scrapes. Mobians are better at surviving falls than humans are so their bones remained intact amazingly despite such an attack. Myra was amazed at how far she'd thrown Shadow and Rouge and

she used her magnetism hammer to just simply bring them back towards her (like I said, it has no range limit). Shadow and Rouge were dragged one-hundred yards all the way back to Myra and she dropped them down at her feet. She looked down at the two Mobians with a strangely sympathetic look on her face.

"You two freaks gave me a fun battle I will say." she said "It's a shame I have to kill you. I may not want to as I hate killing people but Diablo demands that we Martians come back with a Mobian body in hand as evidence of their demise. Pity really, you guys are too cool to die."

Myra then raised her hammer up high and prepared to bring it crashing down onto Shadow's head. The hammer was large and very solidly built. She'd easily crush Shadow's head with it once she made the final swing. But before she could even do that, she was blasted away by a powerful laser cannon blast that ended up singing her clothes a little. Myra was sent hurling backwards and she crashed back first into a nearby rock. Myra grunted in pain and wondered what had hit her. She opened her eyes and got the shock of her life. Devion was standing before her with his arm-gauntlet blades deployed and his red V-shaped visor was narrowed to a evil slit of pure creepiness. Myra almost lost her mind with horror.

"N-n-n-n-no w-w-way!" she blustered "The-the-the M-M-M-Mobians h-h-have a D-D-D-Devatron on their s-s-side?! And D-D-Devion h-h-himself n-n-no less?!"

"That statement that you so feebly spill out of your mouth is highly incorrect." said Devion in his usual cold manner "I am not on the Mobian's side at all. I am working for the sworn enemy of the Mobians, Dr. Eggman, and he wants to conquer Mobius himself so he's sent reinforcements all over the world to aid the Mobians in making sure you Martians fail in your attempted conquest of Mobius."

"I must be going mental!" shrieked Myra "Devion the Dreaded, leader of the freaking Devatron race, is actually working for somebody?! This can't be! Or are you plotting to take Mobius for yourself Devion?"

"I tried and failed to do so actually." said Devion "And I'm all that's left I believe. No matter, I'm sure Dr. Eggman can rebuild the Devatron race and restore my former glory. Until then, I have to get rid of you Martian vermin and prevent you from denying him his rightful place as ruler of Mobius."

"We'll see about that Deva-dork!" cried Myra, picking up her hammer and aiming it at him.

She activated her hammer's power and attempted to pull Devion towards her and attract him to the hammer. But nothing happened. Devion stood there as if nothing was happening to him! The hammer didn't seem to have any effect on him! Devion cackled at Myra and he raised his arm blades.

"You foolish, simple minded cretin." he crowed "Devatrons are made of a non-magnetic chrome, magnets have NO effect on me! Your hammer's power is useless against me!"

Myra almost had a nervous breakdown at the mere sound of what Devion had just said to her. Devatrons are immune to magnets?! So much for using her hammer to attract or repel him! Oh well, her hammer had other uses so this battle wasn't lost for her yet.

"I may not be able to use my magnetic powers on you…but I can still clobber you with my hammer!" screeched Myra desperately.

She swung the hammer at Devion but Devion jumped out of the way, leaving Myra to smash the ground instead. Myra growled furiously and she used her hammer's power to attract the still unconscious Shadow and Rouge to her. She then used the hammer to repel Shadow and Rouge straight into Devion. Devion just simply caught them in his hands and he put them down onto the ground. He grabbed the collars and broke them in two, freeing Shadow and Rouge from Myra's magnetism hammer. Myra almost went giddy with shock and she decided to desperately try one last thing. She aimed the hammer at Devion and fired a magnetic collar at him but Devion blocked the blow with his arm. The collar pinged off of his arm and landed on the ground. Myra almost lost her sanity with horror at the sight of her precious collar failing to clip around Devion's neck and make him prone to her hammer's power. Myra

wasn't willing to give up though. She rose her hammer up high and ran towards Devion, hoping to smash his head in with the hammer. Devion just lunged forward and slashed her with his arm blades. Myra gasped and she dropped her hammer. She fell down onto her knees and clutched her bleeding ribs in pain. Two long cuts spread out across her ribs and they were bleeding heavily. Myra began gasping for breath as if she was drowning on dry land. That attack had left her feeling very weak and in need of medical attention. It seemed she wouldn't get a chance of receiving any though for Devion advanced on her and prepared to finish her off. Shadow and Rouge woke up suddenly and they got back up to their feet. They looked around and to their surprise, they saw Devion standing behind the injured Myra and preparing to kill her.

"Devion?!" exclaimed Shadow "What?! This can't be! Me and Sonic destroyed him and the other Devatrons! How can he possibly be alive?!"

"I don't know, I was wondering that after I saw him fighting Black Arms while you were fighting Black Doom." murmured Rouge "Hey Devion, how are you still alive despite the fact Sonic and Shadow sent you to the scrap yard?" she called over to him.

Devion stopped what he was doing and he lowered his arm. He sheathed his blades and he answered Rouge's question.

"I am alive thanks to the generous actions of Dr. Eggman." he explained "He took my body and rebuilt me. Now I serve him faithfully and I'm here to help stop the Martians from destroying Mobius since Eggman wishes to conquer it."

"Well that's good to know, you're on our side for this one." said Shadow grimly "I bet you're the one who broke our magnetic collars." he mused as he felt his neck, relieved to see that the collar was now gone and his neck was alright again "Once the Martians are dealt with though, I'll destroy you all over again Devion!"

"We'll see about that." said Devion coldly "Right now, I'm going to kill this Martian and bring it's body back to Dr. Eggman just to see what he thinks to it."

He deployed his blades again and prepared to kill Myra. Myra gasped in horror as she saw Devion preparing to make the killer blow and she closed her eyes, expecting to be killed any moment now. But Shadow for some reason held his hands out and ordered Devion to stop.

"Devion, wait!" cried Shadow quickly "Don't kill her yet, I've got something to ask her!"

Rouge looked dumbfounded. What could Shadow possibly want to ask Myra? And why was he suddenly sticking up for her? What was getting into that black hedgehog? Devion seemed equally as dumbfounded as Rouge was but he sheathed his blades and glowered at Shadow.

"Make it quick or I will kill you as well." he warned.

Shadow ignored Devion and he looked at Myra.

"Myra, why did you call the Martian's hatred of peace "pointless" before the battle started?" asked Shadow curiously "I mean, I thought Martians were a war-loving race."

Myra looked at Shadow with rather sad eyes, a strange expression for a Martian to have.

"I call it that because it IS pointless." said Myra "I mean, what point does our stupid vendetta have anyway? We'll never permanently get rid of peace anyway. I'm one of the few Martians that wanders "There must be more to life then trying to eliminate peace". Not every Martian's a peace hater believe it or not."

Shadow, Rouge and Devion all looked amazed to hear that. Shadow was intrigued to know more about this so he decided to make Myra talk some more.

"Tell us more Myra, we're quite interested to hear more about his." said Shadow.

"OK then. Devion beat me fair and square so you've earned this much." said Myra grimly "Not all Martians hate peace. There are a select few that actually think our way of life is wrong and thus, have

objected to join the Martian fleet and remain in the darkest corners of Mars, living their peaceful lives secretly while the Martian fleet, that's us, goes around desecrating world after world. I was somewhere in the middle, wondering who's side to be on. I decided to join the Martian fleet after my husband Dranzer joined up to see if it would seal who's side I'm officially on. At first I quite enjoyed massacring innocents and destroying cities. But in the end…it wasn't worth it. I never felt that good about myself after we'd won our battles and destroyed those worlds. I began thinking to myself "What is all of this going to accomplish?" and I just couldn't find the answer. I've been dying to quit the army for ages but…Diablo has made it law to quit the army. Once you're in, you're not getting out and I can't try and desert the Martian fleet or Diablo will hunt me down and kill me. So I've been forcing myself to stay with the Martians and continue massacring planets and destroying peace-lovers everywhere for a pointless cause. I pretend to enjoy it in order to keep up appearances but secretly I dream…dream of leaving the Martian fleet for good and going back home to Mars to live with the peace-lovers. This pointless conflict has sealed it for me that I'm on the peace-lover's side. It was fun at first but in the end…it just isn't me. Oh how I wish and wish I could just leave the fleet already! Instead, I'll forever be wrapped in its chains and shackled to the insidious fleet as long as I live."

Shadow and Rouge looked at each other in wonder whereas Devion bent down to Myra and pointed his blades at her.

"You had better not be leading us all under a foul pretence Martian." snarled Devion "If you are then you will have your heart carved out without hesitation."

"Please, I beg of you, please believe me." begged Myra "Every word of what I said is true, honest it is. Please believe me."

Shadow and Rouge looked back over at Myra and Shadow knelt down to Myra's height.

"I'm not fully sure if I believe you." said Shadow "But I know nothing about Martians and I'm not one to jump to conclusions so I'll give you a chance. Prove yourself truthful to us by leaving this place and returning to the Martians empty-handed. And wear this comlink…"

he added, taking off the wrist-mounted communicator device he had around his wrist under his glove and giving it to her "…when you get back to the Martian ship, have the comlink switched on so we can hear what the Martians are up to and whatever plans they have. If you do then you'll prove that you're what you say you are."

"Oh I will, I promise I will!" cried Myra eagerly "Oh thank you for your mercy shadow dude! Thank you! I'll do ANYTHING to betray the Martian fleet and you've given me the opportunity to backstab them! If you hear what they're up to through this comlink I'll be wearing, you'll know their every move before they make it and be able to stop them! When they get sent packing, I'll sneak off the ship and stay down here and maybe borrow a spaceship from this planet and fly off back to Mars. That is, if you Mobians have spacecraft."

"We do indeed." said Shadow "Sonic and Tails used one to find out how to defeat the Devatrons. I'm sure we can spare one for you."

"Oh sir, you're forever in my debt." said Myra happily "Thank you so much for being so generous despite what I've done to you."

"You're welcome." said Shadow casually "And you may call me Shadow by the way."

"OK then, "Shadow"." said Myra "I'll get back to the Martian ship immediately. It's not far from where we are right now."

"It isn't?" said a very surprised Shadow and an equally as surprised Rouge.

Devion looked the most surprised of them all. The Martian ship was so near to them right now it was unbelievable! It seems Eggman was closer to the Martians then he thought!

"It isn't." said Myra "You carry me and run to the ship, I'll direct you to it."

"Very well." said Shadow, scooping Myra up bridal style "I have a feeling I'm going to enjoy this little alliance."

"I have a feeling I'm going to enjoy having a Martian on OUR side." said Rogue snarkily "So where do we go Myra?"

"That way." said Myra "Run straight on until I say otherwise."

With that said, Shadow rocket off on his jet shoes with Myra in his arms and Rouge flying off after the two. A cloud of dust billowed out behind Shadow as he ran off to the Martian ship. Devion just watched the two Mobians run off and he decided to just go back to Eggman's base seeing as he had nothing else to do. He was pretty surprised at everything he had heard from Myra and he had one heck of a story to tell Dr. Eggman.

"So one Martian actually opposes their way of life?" he mused to himself "That is certainly…surprising. I shall have to inform Dr. Eggman of this…"

He had a feeling the good doctor was going to be pleased with this turn of events once he told him everything…

OMG, A Martian that hates the Martian way of life?! Admit it, none of you guys EVER saw that coming! So how was this chapter? Was it good? Was it bad? Was it meh? Feel free to leave a review as you read this chapter. Join me next time though as "Divide and Conquer" comes to a close with Silver and Blaze going off to fight Marik and Sierra and Soleanna...

Divide and Conquer Part 7

Story 133: Divide and Conquer Part 7: The City of Water

"We will go to Megapolis." said Shadow the Hedgehog, the Ultimate Life-form and Mobius' newest resident "I believe I've waited long enough and it's time I got into the action now."

The Martians had invaded Mobius and had divided their resources all over the world in order to thin out the Royal Fighters and pick them off easily. Many Royal Fighters had already gone to deal with those Martians, those Royal Fighters being Sonic the Hedgehog, Tails the Fox, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Knuckles the Echidna, Shade the Echidna, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot, Amy Rose, Cosmo the Seedrian and Cream the Rabbit and right now, Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat were willing to go next and they were going to go over to Megapolis to deal with the Martians there.

"I think Shadow boy's keen to get into the action so he can keep up with Sonic boy." teased Rouge coyly, lightly playing around with one of Shadow's quills "After all, Shadow can't have Sonic hogging all the glory can he?"

Shadow glared at Rouge. He didn't half hate it when the bat taunted him like this, even if it was for laughs.

"Rouge, since I am now another hero fighting for Mobius' freedom, I no longer have any competitive behaviour towards Sonic." said Shadow coldly "Me and him are no longer enemies or rivals, we are allies so why would I be keen to get into the action just because Sonic is?"

"Eesh, I was just fooling with you Shadow, I didn't mean to get on your nerves." sighed Rouge "You'd think with him finally finding out what his purpose is, he'd simmer down and get a sense of humour."

"Rouge, please, not everybody has a funny bone in them." said Queen Sally Acorn sternly "Anyway, Shadow and Rouge, since you asked so politely, you may go to Megapolis and deal with the

Martians there. Shadow, you've helped us survive the Black Arms, now you may help us survive the Martians."

"Indeed Sally." said Shadow with a confident smirk on his face "These Martians will be nothing compared to Black Doom and his flunkies. I still relish the time I broke Marik's arm. Maybe I can break another Martian's arm while I'm kicking their butts."

Sally smiled rather uneasily at that, not really knowing how to reply to that rather awkward statement.

"OK then…Silver send these two off to Megapolis." said Sally quickly.

Silver the Hedgehog, future resident of Mobius, flicked the warp ring up into the air and it opened up a portal to Megapolis, the very place that Eggman was hiding in and the very place the Martian ship had taken refuge after taking damage from the Royal Fighters earlier. Shadow and Rouge eagerly ran through the warp ring and they warped over to Megapolis. The warp ring closed up behind them and Silver caught it in his hand.

"I hope Shadow and Rouge have good luck over in Megapolis." said Sally somewhat downheartedly "I hope EVERY BODY'S having good luck in the places where they are now. Those Martians are bound to be tough opponents. I know our heroes will defeat them but I still can't help but worry for them. Marik alone was a tough Martian according to the Royal Fighter records I often read to see what the service is up to so there's no telling how tough more Martians are going to be."

"I understand your worries Your Highness." said future guardian of Angel Island Blaze the Cat "Me and Silver are equally as worried since we fear that the Martian invasion is what causes the destruction of Mobius and leaves me and Silver in a world of ruination. We may have come back in time to warn you about the invasion and yet our intervention may not make a difference. But if we fail here then me and Silver will go back in time again and find another way of preventing the Martian invasion from happening."

"Blaze has the right idea you know." said Silver, twirling the Super

Warp Ring around his finger casually "If we fail to stop the invasion now, we'll go back in time again and find another way of preventing it. There's a lot of things we could do. Go to the Martian ship and sabotage it before it can go to Mobius, make sure they never find Mobius or heck, we could even go so far back and prevent Marik, the one Martian that started all of this, from ever COMING to Mobius in the first place. There's many possibilities we have here so it doesn't matter if we don't win this invasion, there's other methods me and Blaze can try to prevent this from happening. This is no-win situation for the Martians."

"I see." said Sally "But I'd be careful on how you use your time-travelling abilities. Altering the past in any way could be disastrous you know. If you two go back ever further to prevent the Martian invasion from happening then you'd better be careful how you go about it. You don't want to end up causing more harm than good."

"We know, we know all the risks and dangers of time-travel." said Silver "Me and Blaze have studied time-travel for years. We're likely not to cause any damage as we go to the past and try to fix our future."

"That's good to know." said Sally with a smile "But do keep in mind that even the most skilled or even the most prepared can make mistakes so still take great care when you time-travel."

"We will Queen Sally." said Blaze reassuringly "We've constantly got it on our minds so we will remember. So, I take it it's just me and Silver next to go and stop the dividing Martians?"

"It is." said Sally "You two will be going off to Soleanna to stop the Martians attacking that place. Soleanna is not a good place to be under attack from anything, it's mostly surrounded by water and if too much damage is done, the water could flow into the city and flood it. Or worse…"

"We know what you mean Your Majesty." said Silver "We've studied all the locations of Mobius and we've read all about Soleanna. That's a city you don't want anything to attack. It wouldn't take much effort to bring Soleanna down."

"So we will prevent the Martians from ruining such a fine city." said Blaze "Silver, send us over to Soleanna and let us contribute to the downfall of the Martians."

"Indeed Blaze." said Silver, flicking up the warp ring "For Mobius' past, present and future, we will stop those Martians dead in their tracks!"

The Super Warp Ring expanded to twice its size and opened up a portal from Royal HQ to Soleanna, the City of Water. Silver and Blaze hopped through the warp ring eagerly and were instantly warped from Royal HQ to Soleanna. They didn't know for sure if the Martian invasion was the cause of their future being such a wreck and Mobius being a post-apocalyptic world for them but they were here to find that out and they were going to battle the Martians and save Mobius from their wrath. They prayed and prayed that the Martian invasion was indeed the event they were looking for in order to stop Mobius from coming to an end in the future. If it wasn't then they'd just have to study some more of Mobius' history and try again…

Soleanna: A Few Minutes Ago…

Soleanna was one of the most beautiful places you will ever visit in all of Mobius. The city was very much like the city of Venice, a city in Italy which was a country of the planet Earth, the very planet Dr. Eggman originated from. That is, it was a city surrounded mostly by water. It wasn't a terribly modern city, it was very vintage in appearance but no less beautiful. There were a lot of river-ways for people to go rowing along the water in rowing boats and the city was notorious for its three bell-towers and beautiful scenery. The citizens of Soleanna worshipped a mythical creature known as "Solaris", The Eternal Sun God. Every year on a certain day, they held the "Soleanna Sun Festival", a festival that is meant purely to worship and pay tribute to Solaris. Whether Solaris was real or just a myth was anyone's guess. Nevertheless, the citizens worshipped Solaris and were always happy to celebrate the Day of the Sun God when the Soleanna Sun Festival arrived. Soleanna was also quite happy, peaceful and prosperous and was rich in romance and beauty.

Soleanna was known for having the most amount of weddings held in it a year than any other country on Mobius (that's a lot of love isn't it?). But unfortunately, Soleanna was under attack from a bunch of Martians. These Martians were Marik the Martian and his sister Sierra the Martian. They weren't the only ones though, they had taken a squadron of Martians with them and they had also brought a Martian tank with them. The squadron alone had already started causing considerable damage to the City of Water and the tank was just pouring salt on the wound by blasting various buildings in the city and sending the citizens of Soleanna into a crazed frenzy, running around like a swarm of panicked ants and trying desperately to get away from the attacking Martians. A news reporter was reporting this madness to the media. He had a camera crew already set-up and filming him live right now. The whole world was seeing this for it was being transmitted to the news stations of the world. The news reporter was a bobcat in a blue smart suit and red tie and he looked very frantic and scared as he reported this news to the world. He spoke nervously into a microphone he held in his hand.

"Hello there people of Mobius, this is Derek Bobby reporting to you live from Soleanna." he said, his face raining with sweat as the Martians were getting closer to him and wrecking more of Soleanna "Our home city of Soleanna, as you can see behind me, is under attack from some strange creatures that clearly look otherworldly and not from around here. We're hoping that the esteemed Royal Fighters Service will come to Soleanna and help save us from the tyranny of these creatures…"

His voice trailed off as he looked to the side and noticed the nefarious Marik the Martian storming up to him with his metal hand crackling with electricity menacingly. Marik had a look of certain death on his face and he grabbed Derek by his tie and pulled him down to his height.

"Hello there, I'm Marik the Martian." snarled Marik "I trust the people of Mobius are familiar with me since I'm the one who killed the former King and Queen of Mobotropolis last year?"

"Eep!" squealed Derek in worry "I-I-I-I-I k-k-k-know w-w-wh-who y-y-you a-a-are! I've h-h-h-heard of y-y-y-you! I-I-I-I-I e-e-e-even c-c-covered a n-n-news s-s-story about y-y-you last year a-a-after h-h-

hearing a-a-all a-a-about y-y-you f-f-f-from m-m-m-my friends in the-the-the M-M-Mobotropolis n-n-news crew!"

"Oh good, you know who I am." said Marik sarcastically "Now hand over that microphone so that I may give your news crew something truly brilliant to broadcast!"

Derek looked at his video-camera and spoke into his microphone.

"Here in Soleanna, some strange creatures are attacking the village and one of them looks like the Martian thing that was reported to have killed the former King and Queen of Mobotropolis and attempted to do the same to Sally Acorn who is the current Queen. He's demanded to allow him to make an announcement to everybody so I'm now passing you over to that Martian." he said, his voice dripping with worry.

He then handed the microphone over to Marik to which Marik snatched it off of him and spoke into it, glaring directly into the lens of the video-camera.

"Attention Mobius! I am Marik the Martian, the one who killed the former rulers of Mobotropolis and the attempted murderer of the current Queen Sally Acorn. I'm also the one who's tried to destroy Mobius several times before. I've come back with my friends and family at my side and if you do not cede to the Martians, we will destroy you all! If any Royal Fighters dare to face us then kindly do so, we need the exercise before we conquer your world!" he announced into the microphone whilst standing in front of the television camera.

Every radio station, every television, every news-site would be hearing this announcement of Marik and that was how the Royal Fighters came to know of their presence in Soleanna. Marik tossed the microphone onto the ground after giving his announcement and he suddenly lashed out at the news crew. He destroyed the video-camera in a matter of seconds by stomping on it and ripping it apart with his metal claws. The news crew ran for their lives after Marik did that to their equipment, even Derek. Marik laughed as he watched the news crew run for their lives and he kicked the destroyed camera into the water. The wrecked camera landed into

the water with a splash and sunk quickly down to the bottom.

"Aaaah, nothing like wanton destruction on a nice day like this." purred Marik evilly "And the best thing is, I've got family and friends on my side to join me! I will say, I've NEVER seen this disgusting city before and I'm glad to be destroying it. So much water, this may as well be an underwater city since so much of it surrounds this place! Truly a pathetic excuse for a city!" he scoffed, screwing his face up as he observed his surroundings.

Marik clearly did not seem to like the City of Soleanna at all. He was a bit put off by the fact the city had so much water surrounding it. He didn't like cities that were built this way, they didn't look appealing to him but then again, anything that looks beautiful and peaceful doesn't appeal to Marik. Sierra walked up to Marik and she observed all the damage being done to Soleanna around them.

"Oh Marik, this is so wonderful!" squealed Sierra happily "I'm with you, the best brother in the world, destroying a city and taking part in your brilliant plan to pick off those vile Royal Fighter guys that dared to do harm to you and take your hand!"

Marik looked at his metal hand and wriggled his metal claws. The metal hand glistened in the sun like knives in a drawer.

"I still resent Sonic for crippling my hand and forcing me to take drastic measures to get it working again but I quite like my metal hand." said Marik casually "I actually thank Sonic for giving me this."

"I like it too Marik, it looks cool on you and is a very potent weapon." said Sierra, admiring the hand "You can electrocute people with it and claw people to death. If anything, Sonic made you a better Martian by crippling your hand and make you install that metal hand to make it work again."

"I see your point Sierra." said Marik "But even my metal hand hasn't helped me defeat the Mobians. They are very powerful creatures after all and my underestimation of them was to be my undoing as I ended up suffering pretty bad defeats at the hands of the Mobians. I realize that mistake of mine and I shan't repeat it again. And don't you make the same mistake Sierra!" he yelled, turning around

sharply and pointing straight at Sierra with his metal hand "I don't want my little sister to suffer the misfortunes I've done! Should any Mobians come to stop us, don't underestimate the Mobians! They're as unpredictable as us and some have great power."

"OK Marik, I promise I won't get in over my head." said Sierra "I'll take the Mobians seriously like any serious threat should."

"Good girl." said Marik with a smile on his face, patting his sister on the back "When the Royal Fighters come, we shall do whatever it takes to bring them down."

They were suddenly interrupted by a squadron of Martians marching towards them and they were carrying something. That something was a Mobian jaguar with golden brown fur and black spots. It was a female Mobian and it wore a short white dress with a feather trim around the hem, short sleeves and long white gloves that also had a feather trim. She wore nothing on her feet or her legs and she had short red hair with a feather crown around her head. She was quite slender and beautiful in appearance. The jaguar had her hands cuffed behind her back and the Martians threw her down onto her knees at the feet of Marik and Sierra. Marik glared at the jaguar and wondered what she was being brought to him for.

"What the heck have you brought me this filth for?!" snarled Marik "She's not a Royal Fighter or anything important is she?"

"She is actually." said one of the Martian soldiers "You there, tell him who you are and what you do!" he ordered, kicking the jaguar in the back.

The jaguar growled a proper jaguar growl at the Martian and then faced Marik, still remaining on her knees.

"I am Princess Elise, the Princess of Soleanna and I am not gonna standby and let you monsters tear my city apart!" yelled the jaguar in a very tomboyish manner "Instead of fleeing with the citizens, I opted to stay behind and fight you off! Unfortunately you've managed to capture me and I'm warning you now, if you don't let me go you are going to be toast at the end of the day!"

Marik bared her claws at the impudent little princess. He couldn't stand tomboy women that dared to stand up to him like this. In his experience, a woman with an a attitude was more impertinent then a helpless woman. Princess Elise did not seem the least bit intimidated by Marik at all. Elise was a girl with the heart of a lion and she was rarely scared of anything.

"Oh help, the big freak's baring his big sharp claws at me, ooh I'm so freaking scared!" sniffed Elise sarcastically "You monsters don't scare me freak, when I get outta these manacles, I'm gonna send you all packing with a very sore backside!"

"Please stop calling us "monsters" you stupid little imp of a girl!" roared Marik "We are Martians, got that?! Martians, not monsters, "MARTIANS!"

"What's the difference?" scoffed Elise, smirking bravely at Marik.

Marik was about to tear Elise's heart out of her chest for that but he restrained himself (OMG, he restrained himself?! What bizarre world is this?!) and resisted the urge to hurt Elise. The princess seemed quite amused by that for some reason, amused at the idea that her taunting was making Marik mad and the fact he wasn't reacting amused her even more.

"You know Elise, if you were just some ordinary simpleton wandering this disgusting city, I would slaughter you without hesitation." growled Marik, jamming his face into hers and spitting into her face (ugh!) as he spat every word out of his mouth "But since you're a princess, you're going to be more valuable to me alive than dead!"

"What are you gonna do? Take me hostage?" sighed Elise in a very bored manner "How cliché of you freaks. Besides, what good will I be as a hostage? I'm not that important in all honesty, the Princess of Soleanna isn't the highest rank in the world after all."

"Rank bears no weight in the reasoning behind you being a hostage." said Marik coldly "You see, before you came onto the scene you ignorant little girl, I made a news crew transmit a message of mine to the world. In that message, I demanded the

Royal Fighters Service send it's best men over here to stop me, Sierra and my squadron. When they come onto the scene and see that you're our prisoner, we'll threaten your wretched life and make them stand down. They'll easily back down if a royal authority figure like you is our hostage. And when they stand down…"

Marik then proceeded to claw a chunk of stone out of a wall of a building near to him to give Elise the idea on what would happen to the Royal Fighters who faced him. Elise gulped. She wasn't too bothered about being a Martian hostage but the fact she was being used as a hostage to bring down Royal Fighters scared her. She knew the Royal Fighters Service very well and had made good friends with some of the members. She couldn't bear the idea of them getting killed so it wasn't hard to see why she was looking worried about all this. Marik glowered back at Elise with evil eyes.

"I bet that worries you doesn't it?" he sneered at the worried princess "Soldiers, gag the prisoner so she doesn't give our plan away when the enemy arrives!"

The soldiers obeyed and one of them gagged Elise by tying a cloth around her mouth. The Princess of Soleanna couldn't speak now she was gagged. She mumbled angrily behind her gag as the soldiers hauled her onto her feet and held her close to themselves to prevent her from getting way. Marik smiled widely to himself and he began to have evil thoughts of killing any Royal Fighters that come to Soleanna after forcing them to stand down for the sake of Princess Elise.

"This scheme of mine is going to work perfectly." crooned Marik "I can't wait to hear how everybody else does with the Mobians they deal with in the other parts of the world. I know I'm going home with some good news for my friends and family. I wonder who I'll be up against though…"

He'd soon find out for in a few minutes, his resistance was going to arrive and attempt to stop him and Sierra…

Soleanna: Now…

The Super Warp Ring opened up in the middle of the town centre in Soleanna and Silver & Blaze leaped through it and into the City of Water itself. The warp ring closed up behind them and right now would be in the hands of Sally Acorn as they agreed. Once their mission was complete, they'd just give Sally a call and she'd bring them all back to Royal HQ where they would then brief everybody on their mission in Soleanna. After Silver and Blaze landed on the ground, they stood up straight and they took it upon themselves to observe their surroundings. They were in an area of Soleanna that was still intact for the Martians hadn't attacked every square-inch of Soleanna yet. The town centre hadn't been touched by the Martians as of now so Silver and Blaze could get an idea on what Soleanna truly looks like for in their future, they'd never seen Soleanna. They wandered through the square, eyeing the beautiful architecture, the nearby river ways with bridges over them for people to cross and the lovely stone work on the ground beneath their feet. The city looked absolutely gorgeous to them. True anything would look glamorous to them since they live in a post-apocalyptic world but Soleanna in particular struck a few chords with them, especially Blaze as she was quite fond of beautiful architecture. Just nearby, they could hear one of the three bell-towers all around Soleanna ringing a beautiful, echoing ring. There was a bell-tower in the place they were in right now so they could hear it clear as daylight. The bell's dongs were simply beautiful sounding to Silver and Blaze. They had never heard a bell ring before so this was a treat for them.

"That's such a beautiful sound." mused Blaze "I've never heard a real bell-tower ring before. Now I'm back here in the past, it's as beautiful as I thought it would sound."

"I agree." said Silver "This whole city is wonderful. So beautiful, so… peaceful looking even. Unfortunately, Soleanna doesn't exist in our timeline anymore." he said glumly, his head drooping down in sorrow.

"I know." said Blaze, looking equally as sad about it "Soleanna's now a giant crater of where it once stood. According to history books, Soleanna did survive the initial apocalypse but then a meteor crashed down onto Mobius and wiped out what was left. It burns my mind just thinking about it. How horrible that must have been for any

survivors living in Soleanna's remains. Especially as they were all wiped out by the meteor along with the city."

"Even though we weren't born at the time that happened, I can still imagine what the whole thing must have been like." murmured Silver "Those terrified citizens running for their lives as the meteor comes in towards them and then…nothing more then an explosion and a wave of destruction for them. The meteor itself is still sitting in that crater to this day. I wouldn't mind going back in time to prevent Soleanna from being wiped out but my psychokinesis won't be strong enough to stop a meteor from crashing. Besides, why bother saving Soleanna from a meteor when we can save it, as well as the rest of the world, from being destroyed anyway?" asked Silver "Hopefully stopping the Martian invasion will be the thing we need to do in order to give Mobius a better future."

"I'm with you on that Silver." said Blaze, wandering over to a nearby bench and sitting down on it "So, is the invasion going is written in that book of yours?"

Silver took out the book that he had been studying in order to learn about Mobius' past and he leafed through it until he got to the pages about the Martian invasion. He read them thoroughly for a moment and he looked back at Blaze.

"It is for the most part." said Silver "The whole "Divide and Conquer" thing they're doing is exactly how it went before and when I read the book the first time, it mentioned Count Drago being part of it. Had we not killed him*, he would be attacking Empire City right now according to the book. Of course, since we changed history, the book I have now doesn't state that but before we changed history and unintentionally killed Count Drago, the book stated that so we must have changed one thing at least about the invasion."

"So I guess we're making some kind of impact on the whole Martian invasion then." said Blaze brightly "Less Martians are out attacking the world and the Royal Fighters are less spread out. But who would have been fighting the Martians in Soleanna if we didn't show up?"

Silver looked at the book again.

"Apparently…Sally and Nicole." said Silver, looking at the page he was on "They end up getting defeated though so we may end up changing history again. It's like our very presence in this invasion is leaving a huge impact on it. I almost feel like we're the key to foiling this whole thing."

"Wow…that is amazing when you think about it." said Blaze, her eyes widening a little "So, who should we be up against while we're here then?"

"According to the book…we should be fighting Marik, his sister Sierra, a squadron of Martians and a tank." said Silver, reading a few of the details from the book.

Blaze looked a little surprised to hear that. They're going to be up against Marik the Martian once again? The pyrokinetic cat stood up from the bench, her eyes fixed into a steely gaze.

"We're going to be fighting Marik?" gasped Blaze "My feelings on that matter are rather mixed. On the one hand, I'm glad we'll be getting the chance to kick his butt one again but on the other hand, it sickens me that a freak like him is attacking such a radiant, prosperous city such as this one!"

"I think I feel the same way." said Silver grimly "Well I've gotten the drop on him twice already. I ruined his jet shoes and then I ruined his metal hand so now I'll get the chance to ruin something else of his. I will say, I'm surprised to read right here that Marik has a sister. I thought he was an only child."

"I thought the same too." murmured Blaze "Where was Sierra during the time we ended up unintentionally killing Count Drago?"

"Elsewhere?" suggested Silver, taking a wild guess "Never mind, Marik will still be defeated, sister or not. Now where are we gonna find him I wonder?"

Then suddenly, as if right on cue, a huge explosion boomed from nearby their current location and made the ground tremble beneath their feet. The two ended up grasping each other into a sudden hug in shock as the explosion made them jump nearly out of their fur.

After the explosion settled, Silver and Blaze realized they were suddenly hugging each other and they quickly let go, blushing bright pink both at once. They did secretly harbour feelings for each other but Silver was a little nervous about admitting his love for Blaze and Blaze wasn't sure how to express herself for she wasn't a very emotional person. Silver quickly decided to say something to stop the situation from becoming more awkward.

"Uh, heh, heh…I think we've just been given a very big clue." said Silver "That explosion came from over there." he noted, pointing in the direction of the smoke drifting up from behind the building where the explosion happened "I bet the Martians are over there."

"Let's check it out." said Blaze "If they are there then I'm going to roast every last one of them alive!"

Blaze was not a woman to mess with when she was in a bad mood and Silver knew it. The Martians were in for it now he and Blaze were on the scene. Silver and Blaze quickly ran on ahead and headed to the source of the explosion. They turned a corner and found themselves in another section of the town centre. This area had been razed very badly by the Martian squadron. There were five Martians blasting buildings and scaring citizens away and the Martian tank they had brought was blowing buildings down by the second. This whole section of town was crumbling down to the ground thanks to the attacks of the Martians and Silver and Blaze felt sick just watching it. It started to make them think about the fate of Soleanna in their time now. But now they were here, they were going to make sure Soleanna lives to see another day before Mobius comes to an end and leaves he and Blaze in their current situation.

"There's the tank the book mentioned!" gasped Silver "And it looks very powerful! We have to be careful of that thing!"

"With your psychic powers Silver, that tank will be a breeze." said Blaze "Now let's stop those monsters before they raze this place anymore than they already have!"

"No wait, we need a…" began Silver.

But Blaze already leaped out of her hiding place and blazed towards the Martian soldiers. The five soldiers with the tank gasped in horror at Blaze rushing towards them, her body alit with flames as she ran to them.

"What in the pits of Olympus is that?!" shrieked one Martian soldier.

Blaze ploughed through the Martians in a fiery tornado, sending them all flying across the area they were in and they all crashed down onto the ground face first. Silver sighed, seeing that Blaze wasn't in the mood for playing it safe like any smart person would be right now and he ran in to join his pyrokenetic friend in the battle. The Martians picked themselves up and began shooting at Blaze but before any of their shots could even so much as touch her, Silver caught all the shots with his psychokinesis. He then proceeded to throw the shots into the water were they sizzled out and disappeared harmlessly into the water flowing nearby the battlefield. The Martians gasped in shock at that and something in their minds clicked as they realized who they were up against.

"Wait a minute…I know that freak with the funny hair-do!" shrieked on soldier "He's the one who killed Count Drago! And the fiery kitty with him is his accomplice! They butt into our war with the Seedrians and the silver one killed Count Drago!"

"In that case, they deserve a quick death!" growled another soldier "In the name of our fallen Count Drago, make sure these two cretins don't live this place alive!" he bellowed to his comrades.

The five Martian soldiers all began shooting at Silver and Blaze with their laser rifles but Silver caught all their shots with his psychokinesis and he threw them back at the Martians. The shots landed at the feet of the Martians since Silver didn't want to kill them and the shots made the Martians stagger backwards as they tried to avoid getting shot. The tank aimed at Silver and attempted to blast him away with a cannon blast but Blaze jumped in the way and started blazing the tank with her fire-powers. The tank did not catch fire of course for it wasn't flammable. All it resulted in was the driver of the tank being unable to see what he was aiming at and he began to feel very hot for the tank was being heated up by Blaze's fire. As you all know, metal heats easily so the tank was becoming a cooker

for the poor driver inside. The driver steered the tank away from Blaze and started backing off but Blaze continued to throw fire at it. She was hoping to keep it up until the tank's armour began melting for metal eventually melts when it gets too hot. But the tank was heavily armoured so it would take a while before Blaze even remotely gets close to melting it. A couple of Martian soldiers ran in towards Blaze and they tackled her by ramming her in the side with a head-butt each. Blaze was thrown against the wall of a crumbling building by that attack and the Martians decided to add more to it by ramming her with their sides. Blaze was up against the wall and being slammed repeatedly by a couple of Martian soldiers. The poor cat grimaced and grunted as she was slammed by the Martians. She felt like a nail being hammered into a wall they were ramming her so hard. Silver jumped into help Blaze by grabbing the two soldiers with his psychokinesis. He threw then away from Blaze and they landed onto a bridge nearby. The Martian tank saw its chance to kill two birds with one stone as Silver helped Blaze stand back up. It aimed its long cannon barrel at Silver and Blaze and then fired at them. Silver gasped in shock and he and Blaze quickly ran for their lives. The cannon blast hit the ground and blew Silver and Blaze off their feet as the force of the explosion spread out and hit them like a wave. Silver and Blaze landed a few feet away and they rolled to a stop as they nearly ended up falling into the water. Silver picked himself up and shook himself off. That explosion was terrific and he felt a little shaken from the impact. The tank aimed at them again and fired another cannon blast. Silver was ready for it this time, he thrust his arms forward and stopped the cannon blast with his psychokinesis. He then proceeded to hurl the cannon blast directly back at the tank. The Martian driver inside the tank yelped in horror and he bailed out of his soon-to-be-doomed machine as quickly as possible. The Martian tank was hit by the cannon blast and was destroyed in a matter of seconds. Silver punched the air triumphantly.

"Oh yeah! I destroyed the tank! The Martians have no chance against us now!" cried Silver.

Then suddenly, both Silver and Blaze were stuck from behind by an electrical attack. They screamed in pain as they were electrocuted from behind by somebody. It was Marik the Martian. He had decided

he'd had enough standing by and watching Silver and Blaze make mince meat of his squadron so he decided to jump out and join in the fight. Marik threw Silver and Blaze into a wrecked building, the two crashing straight through the crumbling walls of the building and scattering debris everywhere. The future couple picked themselves up and they jumped out to face Marik once again. Marik had his arms folded and he was grinning like a demon from a horror movie.

"Hello Silver and Blaze." he crooned "I was hoping I'd come across you two again."

"Marik the Martian, you're just as hideous as you were the last time we met." muttered Silver coldly "And we're here to make you wish you'd never come to Mobius in the first place!"

"I gathered as such." snorted Marik "After all, I did demand that some Royal Fighters come and face me. You two may not be Royal Fighters but you will do. Especially as you two heathens killed my Uncle Drago!"

"Big deal, your kind killed the entire Seedrian race!" retorted Silver "You're hardly one to talk about us murdering your stupid uncle when you Martians have wiped out races by the dozen just because they don't agree with your ways of life!"

"Our way of life will do more good for the universe then a peaceful way of life!" snapped Marik "Peace is overrated and is hardly worth fighting for! We're only trying to help the universe see that peace does more harm than good! I mean, wars are often fought just to bring peace back to the world and following a life of peace guarantees that you will be unprepared for any attacks from any evil races and if you're too pacifistic, you'll end up abandoning your comrades and selfishly not contributing to the war at hand! Our Warlord Tyrahko, the God of Warfare and the first ever Warlord of Mars, found that out the hard way when back in his day, which is millions of years ago, the Martians were nearly wiped out because we craved peace too much and were barely able to fight back when an evil race of aliens invaded our home planet and attempted to conquer it! What does that tell you? Peace nearly brought our race to extinction and we're only trying to help other races avoid the same fate by showing them how bad peace is! But no, they don't

listen to us and they ignore us like the ignorant worms they are, so we kill them to set an example to other races out in the universe! Someday soon, they'll get the message and the universe will realize peace is bad and our way of life is the way to go!"

Silver and Blaze were taken aback by what Marik had just said. So that's what this was all about? Their hatred of peace stemmed from the fact they used to crave peace and were nearly wiped out because of it and they only wanted to help other planets avoid the same thing happening to them? While those reasons had some weight behind them, what they were doing was still wrong and still immoral on many levels.

"So you feel that just because a life of peace nearly brought your race to extinction that other races should not be allowed to live how they want to?" said Silver crossly "You aren't doing the universe any favours Marik, you and your bunch of freaks are being dictators! You have no right to decide how those planets live their lives Marik!"

"What you're doing is far from good Marik!" growled Blaze "A life of warfare is far likelier to get your race wiped out than a life of peace!"

"Is it heck?!" snorted Marik "If that's the case then why are we still alive and still around right now you morons? Our way of life has guaranteed our survival, not made us likelier to get killed!"

"You'll meet your match one of these days Marik." said Blaze coldly "And this planet is where you shall meet that match."

"We shall see about that." said Marik with a devil's smile on his face "For I have a valuable hostage in my hands…"

The moment he said that, the rest of his squadron, which was ten Martians, and his sister Sierra all marched onto the scene. They were carrying Princess Elise with them and they threw her down onto the ground beside Marik. Sierra loaded her arm-mounted crossbow and she poked Elise in the back of the head with it, threatening to shoot her. Silver and Blaze were gobsmacked at the sight of Elise. Silver quickly looked through his book and managed to find out who she was.

"I know who that is!" shrieked Silver "It's Princess Elise, daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Soleanna!"

"It is indeed." said Marik "Now you two cretins surrender now and stand down or Elise ends up with her brains scattered all over the ground!"

Sierra threatened to shoot Elise by poking her in the head with the crossbow again and itching to pull the trigger. Elise mumbled worriedly behind her gag, trying to tell the two not to surrender for it was a trap. But Silver and Blaze couldn't understand her of course and they wandered what to do. They couldn't surrender or the Martians would quite simply just kill them. But they couldn't let the life of Princess Elise be pointlessly wasted. Silver then suddenly had an idea. He knew how to deal with this easily. He put his hands behind his head and knelt down onto the ground.

"OK, I surrender." said Silver "Just let the princess go, she's innocent in all of this."

Blaze decided to just go with Silver since she had the feeling Silver had a plan. He maybe a little naïve and reckless at times but he certainly wasn't stupid. Blaze knelt down onto the ground too with her hands behind her head.

"I surrender too, just please leave Elise alone." said Blaze.

"Good little Mobians." crowed Marik "It's nice to know you've got some common sense in you. Now since you've surrendered, you may now face your sentences. You two are guilty of killing my Uncle Drago and therefore you are sentenced…"

"PSYCHE!" crowed Silver, jumping up into his feet and suddenly grabbing everybody in a psychokinetic hold.

The Martians were all suddenly frozen to the spot thanks to Silver's psychokinesis. They could not move at all. Elise watched in wander as the Martians were suddenly frozen by Silver's psychic hold. She'd seen many weird and amazing things in her life but none as weird and as amazing as this. Silver then thrust his arms out and sent the Martians hurling backwards and into a building a few yards away

from where they were now. Now that they were safe, Blaze ran over to Elise and freed her from her cuffs by breaking them. She took Elise's gag off and helped the jaguar stand up on her feet.

"Are you alright your highness?" asked Blaze politely.

"I am now thanks to you two awesome people!" cried Elise delightedly "Thank you so much! So who are you two then? New recruits of the R.F.S.?"

"No, we're from the future." said Silver "I'm Silver the Hedgehog and this is my friend, the beautiful Blaze the Cat."

"Nice to meet you two." said Elise with a polite curtsey "You already know who I am so no introduction needed. I'm so glad you're here to help stop those freaks from desecrating more of my city. Everything's been a nightmare since they came! People running in terror, buildings being blown up, my mom and dad have evacuated along with everybody and I stayed behind to help fend the Martians off and buy the escapees some time to get away but I got overpowered and…"

"Wait, you can fight?" said a very surprised Silver.

"Sure I can!" crowed Elise confidently "I practice judo in my spare time. I'm the judo champion of Soleanna! Mom and dad are very amazed at what I can do. But even I'm no match for all them Martians. As I said, they overpowered me and then decided to take me hostage. I'm glad their attempts to make you stand down failed though, that psychic trick of yours is real handy Silver."

Silver blushed with pleasure.

"Eh, heh, heh…thank you Elise." said Silver "My power is useful indeed isn't it?"

But their discussion was rudely interrupted by all the Martian soldiers coming back towards them. Marik and Sierra looked furious to say the least and they were about ready to unleash hell on the Mobians. Sierra loaded her arm-mounted crossbow and prepared to fire it.

"You tricked us you silver freak!" exclaimed Sierra "Now you will die for that!"

"Martians, GET THEM!" thundered Marik loudly.

The Martians all charged into battle. Silver, Blaze and Elise did the same. They all charged towards each other and soon a big battle erupted between the Mobians and Martians. Elise got well into the battle with her judo skills. She ran towards one Martian and kicked one of them straight in the face as hard as she could. The Martian was pretty amazed at such a powerful kick. Then Elise tripped up the Martian and brought it down onto its back. Another Martian tried to grab her but Elise back-flipped over the Martian, landed behind him and pile-dived it in the back. The Martian was brought down onto his front and Elise kicked it in the back of the head to knock it out. The judo champion smirked at the Martian and the proceeded to fight another one. As for Blaze, she threw fire at a lot of the soldiers and made them back off. Sierra fired a laser arrow at Blaze and it skimmed her across the arm. Blaze cried out in pain and clutched her arm, her face tensing up as the pain began to sting her arm. Sierra cackled at Blaze and she ran towards her. She kicked Blaze in the face, then in the stomach and then proceeded to roundhouse punch Blaze in the face. Sierra then added a kick slam directly on top of Blaze's head (ouch!). Blaze screamed a pained scream as her head flared with pain. Sierra sneered at Blaze and then pointed her arm-mounted crossbow at Blaze's face. Blaze merely threw a wave of fire directly into Sierra's face. Sierra screeched in pain as her face was scalded by the fire. Blaze then leaped back onto her feet and went to town on Sierra. As for Marik, he was fighting Silver. Marik zapped Silver with his metal hand but Silver retaliated by grabbing a soldier with his psychokinesis and throwing him at Marik. The soldier and Marik both sprawled across the ground as the soldier crashed into Marik and knocked him over. Marik threw the soldier off of himself and swiped the air with his arms. Silver was swept off his feet by the resulting energy wave that followed Marik's arm-swipe. Marik cackled at Silver and he ran towards the psychic hedgehog. Silver however jumped onto his feet and gave Marik a psychically enhanced uppercut to the face. Marik staggered backwards and Silver then jumped in and dropkicked Marik. Marik tried to fight back but Silver grabbed him with his psychokinesis and threw him into the

water. Marik jumped out of the water and he hit Silver with another energy wave. Silver was knocked down onto the ground and Marik grabbed him by his quills. He threw Silver over onto his back and slammed him on the ground like a giant fly-swatter and, while still holding his quills, picked him up again and threw him into a bridge. Silver hit the bridge and then ended up falling into the water. Silver came back to the surface and flew out of the water only to be met with an electric shock by Marik. Marik zapped Silver so hard that Silver ended up falling down onto the ground with a heavy thud. Marik laughed at Silver and he grabbed him by the face with his metal hand.

"Ha, beat you Silver!" he crowed "Now let's see what happens when I give you an a electrical shock while I'm holding you by the face…"

But before he could do that, Elise quickly jumped in and kicked Marik away. Marik was thrown down onto the ground by the judo loving jaguar but Elise didn't stop there. She ran towards Marik and started pummelling him as hard as she could. She gave Marik a left and right hook each, then a judo-style kick to the face and the gut respectively and then she grabbed Marik's arm and twisted it to one side. Marik yelped in pain and he tried to wrestle himself free from Elise but Elise's grip was too strong for him. When you know martial arts of any kind, you have a grip like steel. Elise stuck her tongue out at Marik mockingly and then proceeded to throw him over onto his back. Marik grunted in pain and Elise added insult to injury by kicking him away. Silver's jaw dropped at the sight of Elise using her judo on Marik. Elise flipped her hair around and she looked over at Silver.

"Impressed?" she said.

"Very!" gasped Silver "You really are good aren't you Elise?!"

"Well I am a judo champion after all." said Elise smugly "But I only use my skills when I have to. And in this case, I REALLY have to. I hope Marik felt that because I was only going easy on him!" she added with a smirk on her pretty face.

Marik picked himself up, grunting and panting heavily.

"You Elise, have just ended up on my list of Mobians who really need to die right now!" growled Marik "I will eviscerate you for that!"

"Bring it on you freak!" snarled Elise "I've got even more powerful moves to unleash on you!"

But before the fight could continue, a laser blast from nowhere hit Marik and sent him flying backwards across the battlefield. Silver and Elise looked stunned to say the least and they looked around to see who did that. To their surprise, it was none other than Metal Sonic! He and a bunch of Egg-Pawns had been sent to Soleanna to stop the Martians there. Marik gasped in horror at the mere sight of Metal Sonic whereas Silver and Elise didn't know how to react.

"No…Metal Sonic is back?!" shrieked Marik "Don't tell me that fool Dr. Eggman's helping the Mobians to defeat us!"

"Reply to questioning query: You are indeed correct little Martian." droned Metal Sonic "Dr. Eggman has found out about your invasion and has sent me and my comrades out into the world to stop all the Martians attacking Mobius. He will not allow you to destroy Mobius before he can conquer it."

"Well that's convenient." said Silver "Eggman's helping us? True it's for his own gain but still, that's nice of him to help us out."

"It feels weird right now we've got Eggman robots fighting for us instead of against us." said Elise with a chuckle.

Metal Sonic then suddenly lashed forward and grabbed Marik by the neck. He quickly scanned Marik's data so Marik couldn't be able to defeat him and he threw Marik down into the ground. He kicked Marik as hard as he could and sent Marik hurling into Sierra. Marik and Sierra ended up sprawling across the ground and they groaned in pain. Blaze added insult to injury by throwing fire at them. Marik and Sierra both yelled in agony as they were torched by Blaze. They both leaped up onto the feet and dived into the water to cool off. They climbed out of the water the moment they cooled down and they looked over at their squadron. They were toast in this match right now. Silver, Blaze and Elise were fending them all off with ease and Metal Sonic and his goons were providing great help in bringing

the Martians down. This battle was lost to them, they had no chance of winning at all.

"Damn it to Tyrahko!" yelled Marik "We've lost this one, the plan's not going to work after all!"

"What do we do now Marik?" asked Sierra.

"Retreat you stupid girl!" snapped Marik "We can't stay here or we'll be pummelled to death! We have to leave here now!"

"But I hate retreating!" whined Sierra.

"You will do as you are told Sierra!" snarled Marik "We're leaving and that's that! I hope the others are doing better than we are!"

With that said, Marik and Sierra, reluctantly, retreated. They ran for their lives, leaving their squad behind to bear the wrath of the heroes (what cowards). As for the Mobians and Eggman robots, they knocked out the last Martian soldier and Elise dusted her hands off.

"This was too easy." she crowed "These Martian jerks aren't even a real threat, especially as that tank of theirs is gone."

"That was my doing." said Silver proudly "So Metal Sonic," he said, turning to Metal Sonic "What are you and your Egg-Pawns gonna do now?"

"Prioritizing: We shall remove ourselves from this area." droned Metal Sonic "We have no other orders now. We shall return to our base and await further orders."

Silver and Blaze smiled, happy at the fact they wouldn't have to deal with Eggman's robots as well as the Martians they'd just fought. Metal Sonic and the Egg-Pawns all left Soleanna and headed off back to Eggman's hidden bunker in the Northern Border of Megapolis. The moment they left, Elise suddenly grasped Silver and Blaze into a hug. Silver and Blaze hugged her back.

"Thank you so, so, so much for saving my city from those Martians!" squealed Elise happily "I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am for your selflessness today."

"It…it was nothing." said Silver casually "We're here to save lives and stop evil after all."

"I'm very glad to hear that." said Elise "Say, as a way of saying thank you, how about you come to my palace for some lunch? I promise you, a banquet at my palace is not to be missed. Think of it as a way of saying thank you."

"That's very kind of you Elise and we'll take you up on your offer." said Blaze with a little smile on her face "After all, we're in no hurry to get back to New Mobotropolis. We've stopped the Martians so we may as well rest a moment."

"Cool." said Elise happily "First, we'll have to tell everybody the city's safe to come back into now and…get started on repairing the damages." she said, her face falling as she noticed the damages done to Soleanna.

Silver and Blaze wore the same expression on their faces as they noticed the damages done to Soleanna by the Martians. It was going to take a while to get the city fixed but at least the Martians were gone and the city wasn't as wrecked as it could have been. Silver and Blaze could maybe help with the repairs before they had lunch with Elise and her parents, the Duke and Duchess of Soleanna. When the two got back to New Mobotropolis, they had once heck of a story to tell everybody…

Footnotes:

*** We all know what happened to Count Drago. See *Tales from Mobius Arc 15: All's Fair in Warfare***

Well, that's it for Silver and Blaze's chapter and that's the end of "Divide and Conquer"! But this saga isn't over yet, only three more parts to go. What could possibly happen in those parts? Tune in next time as "The Conquest of New Mobotropolis" is about to begin...

But wait! What about Count Nyder and the remaining Royal Fighters? Don't you want to know what happened to them?! Well, you're about to. For* Tales from Mobius *'s next arc is all about Sally and the other Royal Fighters vs. Count Nyder and the remaining Martians. Tune into* Tales from Mobius *and experience the "Divide and Conquer" midquel to find out what's been going on back in new Mobotropolis!

Favourite this chapter for the new and improved version of Princess Elise featured in it. ;)

So now ALL my readers, now "Divide and Conquer" is over, which chapter was the best? Which one was your favourite and which battle was the most epic? Do tell, I'd love to hear what you've got to say about all this! Feel free to say what you thought in the review section! :D

The Wrath of Tyrahko Part 1

Story 134: The Wrath of Tyrahko Part 1

Failure.

Nothing in the world was more humiliating to a Martian than failure. Failure of any kind was bad to a Martian, even if they had lost to powerful opponents. And now, the Martians had experienced failure on a great scale. They had divided their resources all over the world in an attempt to bring out the Royal Fighters, divide them up, and make them easier to pick off. And all that resulted in was failure for each of them, mostly because Dr. Eggman had decided to interfere and help the Mobians. Even the Martians left behind to deal with New Mobotropolis had failed to defeat the Royal Fighters* and quite a lot of them had been left behind. Count Nyder had retreated in the Martian ship and went around picking up all the Martians from the places they had invaded and attacked. All the Martians had been picked up at last and the ship touched down back in Megapolis but in a different location to where they had landed before. The ship had landed miles away from where Dr. Eggman was hiding and since Eggman could no longer had any access to Mobius' satellites thanks to Nicole's meddling, he wouldn't be able to find them again so for all Eggman knew, they could be anywhere right now. After the Martian ship had landed, Grand Warlord Diablo had gathered everybody around outside the ship (except for Sycranna and Obelisk, they're receiving medical attention for the damage they received in Black Acropolis is life-threatening) for a meeting. And needless to say, Diablo was raging his head off right now. Diablo had little tolerance for failure and the fact that everybody, including himself, had failed their given tasks was overwhelming for him.

"How is this POSSIBLE?!" screamed Diablo "All us Martians, the best in the fleet, go out into the world to draw out those pesky Mobians and kill them and yet all you lot have come back with is an excuse?! This failure is unacceptable, especially as Sycranna and Obelisk are just about dying after being burnt alive by lava! You should all be ashamed of yourselves for embarrassing the Martian

fleet you useless bunch of worms!" he thundered, pointing at all the Martians.

"You're one to talk hunky-chops." sniffed Natasha "I mean, you fared no better than any of us. You failed as well so don't you dare put us down when you yourself have ALSO failed to do the given task."

Diablo glared at his wife, his eyes narrowed into a frightening death glare that could make your heart stop.

"You shut up you stupid witch!" snarled Diablo, pointing at Natasha sharply "Or I'll snap you in two!"

"Yeah right, you can't even catch me Diablo so you won't get anywhere near snapping me in two." scoffed Natasha.

"I said SHUT UP!" roared Diablo, his voice like a megaphone down Natasha's ears. The female Martian warrior did not seem to be phased by Diablo shouting at her though. Natasha had grown used to it over the years.

"Dad, mother has every right to speak as much as you do!" snapped Marik "And she's right to call you out for putting us down when you yourself have done no better than us!"

"You shut up as well Marik!" retorted Diablo "Before you lot started gobbing away, I was GOING to bring up my humiliating defeat as well! I was up against three Mobians known as "Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John and Ruben the Water Panther", going by my son's descriptions, and I managed to beat them all. But before I could kill them, a bunch of robots came in, one of them resembling the pink hedgehog with the big hammer that Marik describes to me as "Amy Rose", and they all managed to beat me and force me to retreat! How humiliating a defeat is that?! Being beaten by robots?!"

"Don't get your armour in a twist Diablo, we were beaten by robots too." noted Mercury "Me and Natasha had Wilson & Mandy at our mercy but then a bunch of robots came in and fended us off."

"Same with me and Sierra." muttered Marik "And they were all Eggman robots and a Metal Sonic too, even worse."

"I was beaten by Mobians AND robots." fumed Nyder, scowling angrily.

"Zarondight seems to imply he was beaten by a robot too and he seems to tell us only ONE robot attacked him." said Natasha, reading her silent brother's sign language as he signed to the Martians what happened to him "Is that right dear brother?"

Zarondight nodded to confirm that Natasha was right.

"I did not encounter any robots in my battle." boomed Dranzer "I was beaten thanks to an interfering avalanche caused by my battle with Sonic."

"Sycranna and Obelisk told us that robots helped their opponents in their battle but it was the lava of their location that defeated them." noted Sierra "So not all of us were beaten by robots at least."

"I was beaten by Devion himself." said Myra "Apparently, some guy named "Dr. Eggman" has him under his control now. Don't ask me how that's possible, I'm just as amazed as you lot probably are."

The Martians all gasped in astonishment at that.

"You can NOT be serious!" shrieked Sierra "Devion's working for the Mobians?!"

"No, Myra said he's working for Dr. Eggman." sighed Marik "I told you all who he is as well. He's the Mobian's sworn enemy who loves to make robots and giant ships and he's also a human. A grotesque looking one that is. I cannot believe the fact he's managed to get Devion on his side though. I bet after the Mobians defeated him, Eggman took Devion's body and brought him back alive. How unfortunate for us."

"Well Marik sweetie, if this "Dr. Eggman's" the sworn enemy of the Mobians then why is he helping them?" asked Natasha curiously.

"If I were to guess, I'd say Eggman doesn't want us to destroy the world otherwise he can't conquer it himself so he wants to make sure we lose as much as the Mobians are making sure of that." suggested Marik "Either way, this is not good for us at all. The

Mobians AND Dr. Eggman are allied against us, and Eggman has the freaking Devatron leader on his side, and thus we have twice as much enemies to fight! This invasion's going to be harder than we dared imagine!"

"And here's me hoping we'd have an easier time with this battle." muttered Diablo "The Mobians are proving tougher than the Seedrians ever were! We'll be defeated in no time at the rate they're going!"

"If this pleases you Diablo, I have managed to find the location of the Chaos Emeralds." announced Count Nyder.

"You have?!" blurted Diablo "Where are they then?!" he asked eagerly.

"I found out by using the Visual-Mind Reader Link on a Mobian insect named "Charmy" that the emeralds are located on a floating island called "Angel Island"." explained Count Nyder "The island also seems to house a rather large Chaos Emerald that appears to be known as "The Master Emerald". Unfortunately, the insect was rescued along with two other prisoners I had so they're probably telling their friends back home that I've found out where the Chaos Emeralds are."

Diablo sighed a heavy, annoyed sigh at that revelation.

"So the Mobians will likely be preparing for our arrival on this "Angel Island" and will be ready to fight us off." fumed Diablo "So much for element of surprise! We're going to be fighting a losing battle as we go along it seems. We seriously need a decent plan or we're going to lose to a bunch of furry creatures! And I do not want that kind of humiliation!"

"If only Tyrahko were still alive then he could help us." said Dranzer grimly "We won every battle with him on our side. Ever since his death, our success rate has been declining sharply."

"Yeah, we could do with Tyrahko alive right now." grumbled Diablo "We were invincible with that god-powered Martian leading us. As is, he is not alive right now and thus, we have to fight this battle without

him, much like we have been doing for a year now since his death…"

"Diablo! Something's coming from up in the sky!" cried Natasha, pointing up at the sky frantically, her eyes locked on the thing directly up in the sky that was supposedly coming towards them.

All the Martians looked up at the sky and they could see something coming down towards them. It was too far away for them to make out what it was at the moment but it was coming in fast so the Martians would soon work out what it was as it came down to Mobius. Diablo squinted at the sky, trying to make out what it was.

"Is it a Mobian?" he asked.

"Hmm…too big." said Natasha, squinting at the sky along with Diablo "Must be something else."

The thing in the sky was getting closer and closer as it flew down towards the ground. As the thing continued to fly down and get closer, the Martians could start making out what it was. To their surprise, it was the last thing they had expected to show up. Diablo and Natasha both gaped in amazement at what the thing was.

"By Tyrahko…!" gasped Natasha "It-it-it's him! It-it's really him!"

"But it can't be!" cried Diablo "He-he-he perished during a battle in space! We were there! We all saw what happened to him!"

The thing continued soaring down to the ground and it raised its legs up, ready for a landing. The Martians all stood back quickly in order to clear the landing for the thing that was coming down towards them. The thing landed on the ground quite heavily and made the ground shake beneath their feet from the impact. A cloud of dust rose up from the thing's landing and the Martians all covered their eyes as dust and sand swept over them. Once the dust cloud settled, the Martians uncovered their eyes and saw what had landed in front of them and caused the dust cloud. The Martians all gasped in amazement at what it was. It was a huge monstrous looking creature with an incredible suit of armour that dazzled like a million stars and it was casually walking up towards the Martians as if

nothing had happened, its footsteps like thunder. The suit of armour was black, silver and purple and it had a very majestic, opulent vibe to it that truly made the creature look terrifying. It wore a helmet with five enormous spikes on it, one on the top and four behind it, the helmet itself had a crown like structure that was jade-green with purple gems in it. It wore a face mask with red, ominous glowing eyes that made it look like a demon. It had shoulder pads with three curved up spikes on each shoulder, four wing like structures that draped from its shoulders and back in the manner of a cape, sharp clawed hands with spiked wrists and the armour had a glowing Energy Diamond in the chest. There were a lot of decals all around the armour and an armoured tunic around the waist. The creature was very tall too, seven feet to be exact. It was tall than even Diablo and much more broad and muscular too. This was a terrifying looking monster and the Martians all knew what it was. For it was not just a monster…but a Martian, an actual Martian. And this Martian was the most special Martian of all. As the Martian strolled up to Diablo and the others, they all stared in amazement at it, unable to believe what they were seeing.

"Great Rings of Saturn…it's him!" shrieked Marik "The God of Warfare himself! Tyrahko! Alive and well!"

"Sure looks like it!" gasped Myra, switching on the communicator Shadow had given her as a method of giving the Mobians an edge on the Martians. She had the communicator hidden on her belt and luckily, the Martians hadn't seen it yet so she was in the clear. The Mobians would get a kick out of hearing what was going on with her and the other Martians right now.

Tyrahko finished strolling up to the Martians and he stood ominously before them all. He towered over the Martians, even Diablo, and he peered down at them with his luminous eyes glowing brighter than the stars and redder than the devil himself. One would almost assume that Tyrahko WAS the devil himself given his monstrous appearance and red eyes.

"Martians! Your rightful lord and master has returned!" thundered Tyrahko, his voice powerful and raspy and booming through the plains like an earthquake.

The Martians all instantly threw themselves down at the feet of Tyrahko, bowing graciously to the insidious Martian Warlord.

"Lord Tyrahko, God of Warfare! You're back in the fleet and…and… you're alive!" cried Diablo "Praise the war-torn heavens above! It is a miracle!"

"Hardly a miracle considering my god-like attributes." snorted Tyrahko, folding his arms and glaring at the Martians that knelt before him "So, my war-craving disciples, why might I ask was I abandoned at the site of our last battle with me as your Grand Warlord?!" he snarled, making everybody shudder "You had better have a good explanation for this or I will single-handedly tear you all to pieces!"

Everybody started shaking with fear as Tyrahko's evil eyes began glowing brighter and his hands began to glow green as he prepared to give them an energy-enhanced attack.

"Please Tyrahko! Forgive us!" shrieked Diablo "When the Sprites of Mor-Doon launched that planet-shattering bomb at you, we assumed the worst! We thought you were dead! We couldn't see your body anywhere, we assumed you had been wiped out!"

He then put his hands on his head and curled up fearfully, awaiting Tyrahko's inevitable punishment. He had bore the wrath of the god-powered Martian before and the very idea of being punished by Tyrahko always terrified him. But Tyrahko didn't do anything to him. Instead, he relaxed himself and his hands stopped glowing. His face-mask lifted up into his helmet, revealing an old, wrinkly, aged looking face underneath. The glare in his eyes was still as eerie as ever and his mouth was crammed with razor-sharp teeth. One would think he filed all his teeth in order to make them look that way. The look on his face suggested he was indeed a very old Martian.

"Your response is very reasonable Diablo." crooned Tyrahko, his face still contorted into a scowl "I comprehend why you all left me there in the vast entity of space. But do understand that by "god-powers" it means that I have go-like attributes, INCLUDING immortality. Did it not occur to you that I am immortal with this suit of armour on?"

"Uh…yes actually." said Diablo "We all knew that. But you need to remember that if the armour gets destroyed, you die for the armour contains all your god-like powers AND is the only reason you're still alive now given you've exceeded the usual Martian life-span and that bomb looked like it completely destroyed you, armour and all so can you blame us for thinking you had perished in the battle with the Sprites of Mor-Doon last year?!"

Myra grinned to herself as Diablo and Tyrahko talked. *Thank you for stating Tyrahko's weakness Diablo!* she thought to herself *If anybody's listening on the end of this communicator, they'll now how to defeat Tyrahko!* As for Tyrahko, he glowered at Diablo and he continued to talk.

"No, I cannot." sighed Tyrahko "So I shall explain how I survived such a powerful bomb: I almost very nearly didn't. The bomb blasted me away and even though my armour wasn't destroyed, it was severely weakened by the blast. The armour was damaged after the blast ended and I was rendered unconscious. I was left alone, floating around the vast entity of space with no Martian around to help me. After I awoke, my first instinct was to return to Mars and repair my armour. I returned to Mars only to find that you lot hadn't returned to it. I assumed you were on another world, razing peace-lovers and desecrating peaceful worlds in my absence. So during my time of solitude, I repaired my broken armour and nursed myself back to health. My armour sadly is not as strong as it used to be but all my powers are back at their strongest at least. So after repairing my armour and healing my wounds, I took to the stars, searching for you all. I came across the remains of Greengate, your doing I assume, and I flew on from there to find you. And now I've arrived here, an unknown planet that I have never seen, nor heard of, and find you all here as well. Tell me Diablo, what is this world and why are you all here? Is it another peace-loving world that needs to be tempted to our way of life?"

The Martians all got up onto their feet and Marik stood forward.

"I will provide the necessary exposition on our presence here Tyrahko." he said "I have been on this world already so I knew it better than anybody."

"Marik, you have grown since the last time I saw you." said Tyrahko, a brief smile appearing on his face "You are growing into a very fine young soldier you are. So Marik, where are we, or should I say where am I since the rest of you probably know where you are anyway?"

"This is the planet "Mobius" my lord and we are here for many reasons." explained Marik "Let's start at the beginning: we were at war with the Seedrians and the children were all being evacuated to the Seedrian twin planet. Earthia, the ruler of Greengate's youngest daughter Cosmo was sent flying off course thanks to me giving chase and she ended up here. I landed and attempted to take over the planet through political manipulation and murder. I failed sadly and…lost my hand in the process." he muttered, showing Tyrahko his metal hand.

The god-powered Martian seemed surprised to see that Marik had a metal hand. But since he often kept his emotions in check, he didn't act shocked or blurt out in surprise at it. He just took it in stride as if it wasn't much.

"Hmm…how did you come to requiring a metal hand then?" asked Tyrahko.

"I was sent flying off a cliff and crippled it in the impact." said Marik "I gave it cybernetics in order to get it working again. This robot hand is merely my original hand encased in a metal shell. But we're digressing, after months of attempts to take over the world and destroy it, I eventually fled the planet and came back to my dad and his men. I told them everything and we plotted to destroy Mobius next. After we destroyed Greengate, we moved onto Mobius and here we are now."

"I see." said Tyrahko "Well then, I will be happy to join you in this conflict and unleash wanton destruction on this planet. So where is Count Drago then? Shouldn't he be here with you as well?"

"He should be but he can't be." said Mercury sadly "He's dead. Marik told us a pair of Mobians named Silver and Blaze killed him."

Tyrahko's eyes widened at that but, as I already said, he often kept

his emotions in check and rarely ever let himself get shocked. Deep inside though, he was outright **furious** to hear this had happened.

"So Count Drago is dead?!" growled Tyrahko "And if I am to guess, Silas, Rozarr, Sycranna and Obelisk are also dead too for they are not with you?"

"Yes and no." said Marik "Silas and Rozarr are both dead. Silas was killed by a Seedrian warrior and Rozarr was executed for attempting to kill my mother. Sycranna and Obelisk were badly injured by a jet of lava while fighting Mobians apparently and are in the medical bay receiving medical treatment right now."

"So it is just you lot and me in this battle then?" said Tyrahko, not sounding very pleased at this "Very well, we shall avenge Drago and Silas' deaths and the unfortunate outcome of Sycranna and Obelisk's battles by taking over this world and razing it to the very last atom!"

"We're so happy to hear that Tyrahko." said Diablo happily "You truly haven't changed a bit since we last met you."

"So Tyrahko, allow me to tell you about Mobius and its inhabitants." said Marik "You'll need to know who you'll be up against, not that it matters given even the Mobians will be no trouble for you."

"Tell me everything you know of this world." said Tyrahko, clearly interested in what Marik had to say to him.

Marik smiled happily and he began to provide the necessary exposition for Tyrahko. As for Myra, she grew increasingly worried as her communicator picked up every word that was being spoken. Would Sonic and friends be able to defeat Tyrahko? Or was Tyrahko going to be the Martian to destroy them all? And would her chance at redemption be…diminished…?

Meanwhile, back at Royal HQ, Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat stepped through the Super Warp Ring and transported back from Soleanna into Royal HQ. They were the last of the Mobians

sent abroad to deal with the Martian threats to come home. Over the past few minutes, Queen Sally Acorn had just opened up the Super Warp Ring to one location at a time in order to bring home the Royal Fighters. Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat were already home in Royal HQ given how they ended up joining up with Sally and the others after putting up a fake-fight to leave the Martians known the wiser about Myra. The first to come home through the warp-ring had been Sonic the Hedgehog and his best friend Tails the Fox. They had dealt with Dranzer in Holoska and were thrilled to be back in the warmth of Royal HQ after putting up with the cold of Holoska for so long. Next had been Wilson the Dog and his wife Mandy Mouse. They had had a tough battle with Natasha and Mercury in Grand Metropolis and now they had come back home with quite a story to tell. Next had been Knuckles and Shade. They had had a fiery encounter with Dranzer's twin brother Obelisk and the recently promoted Sycranna. The battle had ended with Sycranna and Obelisk up in flames and Shade confessing her love for Knuckles and now the two echidnas could tell everybody about their battle. Next were Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John and Ruben the Water Panther. They hadn't had a great battle with Diablo in Rail Canyon. It had mostly ended in tears, especially for Ruben as he felt their so-so victory was his fault. But they had survived at least and could tell everybody what happened in Rail Canyon. Next were Team Rose (Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit & Cosmo the Seedrian). They had had one deadly encounter with the silent but deadly Zarondight who's primary method of snagging them was traps laid out strategically all around Kingdom Valley. It had been tough but the girls survived in the end luckily and right now, they were getting a thorough dry-down for it started raining during their fight and they were very wet. And right now, Silver and Blaze had finally returned home. They had just defeated Marik and Sierra, and also had a nice dinner with the Royals of Soleanna so you can imagine they had been over at Soleanna for quite a while. But they were back now and were eagerly waiting to tell everybody how they had done. Now everybody had returned home, Sally graciously welcomed them all expressed everybody's delight at their return.

"Welcome home everybody." said Sally brightly "We're so glad to see that you've all managed to come back, alive and well, after all your encounters with the Martians."

"Thank you your highness." said the Royal Fighters that had just come back home.

"Thanks Sal." said Sonic casually "But really, did you think for a minute we wouldn't return home? I mean, this is us we're talking about, since when do we never crawl out of a conflict alive?"

"Don't get so full of yourself blue dude, some of us very nearly DIDN'T make it out alive." said Mandy grimly "Me and Wilson being two of them."

"Oh." said Sonic, rubbing his quills "Uh, sorry about that, I should have been more thoughtful. I need to remember that just because we've survived many conflicts before, doesn't mean that we will survive **every** conflict we get into."

"That was very well said Sonic." said Sally brightly "You're definitely maturing that's for sure."

"Thanks Sal." said Sonic "So, who's up for a little story-telling then?" he asked, addressing everybody in the room "Me and Tails are just itching to tell you how our battle went."

"Tell us Sonic!" cried Amy eagerly "I'm dying to hear all about your heroic encounter with those dastardly Martians over in Holoska!"

"Thanks Amy." said Sonic, not really meaning it "So, me and Tails arrived in Holoska and we started looking around for Martians."

"Then I ended up getting caught by one and held hostage." added in Tails "The Martian we were up against was named Dranzer and he was one serious Martian. But Sonic managed to defeat him by causing an avalanche that buried Dranzer alive. We assume he's dead because nobody can survive being buried alive by snow."

"Wow." said Nicole "That sounded intense. Thank goodness you didn't get buried alive you two."

"Yeah, thank goodness indeed." said Tails "So, how did all of you do?" he asked everybody else.

"Me and Mandy were against Marik's mother, Natasha and an

archer named Mercury." explained Wilson "The two she-devils had levelled Grand Metropolis by the time we got there and they gave us a serious fight."

"We were almost dead meat until Eggman robots led by Silver Sonic showed up and saved our lives!" exclaimed Mandy "Apparently, he knows about the invasion and sent robots around the world to help us and make sure we defeat the Martians."

"Oh mah stars! The same thing happened to me, Geoff and Ruben sugah!" cried Bunnie in surprise "Eggman robots saved our lives too!"

"Same with me, Cosmo and Cream!" added Amy.

"Same with me and Shadow, but we were saved by just Devion and not Eggman robots." explained Rouge "Devion sure saved mine and Shadow's necks out there, Myra and her magnetism hammer had us on the ropes."

"Me and Shade ended up getting helped by Eggman robots, one of them being a metal version of me, but they didn't save our lives for me and Shade weren't in trouble when they arrived." explained Knuckles "They just ended up joining us in our battle."

"Me and Blaze weren't saved by Eggman robots either, just helped by them." put in Silver "Not that we really needed it, we had the Martians in Soleanna in the bag."

"Whoa…" said a very surprised Mandy "So me and Wilson weren't the only ones to receive a little help from Eggman. Well his message did say he was helping Sonic and friends so I should have expected that."

"Well why didn't I get any help from Egg-Breath?" asked Sonic "Not that I needed any help anyway, me and Tails had it in the bag from the start."

"Maybe Eggman sent some help but it didn't get to us by the time we defeated Dranzer?" suggested Tails "I dunno, doesn't matter anyway. I'm just glad Eggman's on our side again. Even if it's only

for his own gain and to make sure the Martians don't destroy the very planet he wants to conquer." he added bitterly, remembering past alliances with the fat doctor.

"Well Eggman's assisting us and we're not going to put his aid down." said Geoffrey "He helped us fight the Devatrons so we'll let him help us beat the Martians. Then after that, we can focus on him."

"Indeed Geoffrey." said Ruben "So, your majesty, how did you and the others do back here then?" he asked Sally.

"Well me and the others dealt with a Martian named Count Nyder and we had a relatively easy time." said Sally "I got involved in the action too and performed better then I had anticipated."

"And you got yourself a new outfit." said Sonic, winking at her "I love it, you look not only hot, but adventurous in it. Just perfect for a queen who's getting into the battle with us."

"Aw, thank you Sonic." said Sally with a rosy red blush on her cheeks "Anyway, we weren't without problems though. Nyder captured Scott, Kiara and Charmy and using some mind-reading device or whatever they said it was called, he managed to find the location of the Chaos and Master Emeralds."

"No way!" cried Sonic in surprise.

"They did not!" growled Knuckles "They did not just find the location of the emeralds did they?!"

"I'm afraid so." said Sally grimly "Charmy was the one who provided such information apparently given how he's been on Angel Island before and thus, will have the location stored in his mind."

"Well in that case, we'll have to put Angel Island on full alert." deduced Shade "We'll need to set up defences and protect the emeralds from an inevitable Martian invasion. We cannot let the Martians get all eight Chaos Emeralds or the Master Emerald."

"I know." said Sally "That's what I thought too. I strongly feel that the Martian's next move will be to search for Angel Island and find the

emeralds so we will all go over to the island and prepared for their arrival."

"Sounds good to me Sally." said Sonic "I look forward to kicking Martian butts once again. Given how well we've done in this battle so far, we're gonna beat the Martians again and send them out of Mobius for good!"

"Yeah!" cried everybody in the room.

"That's what I like to hear." said Sonic proudly.

He then looked around the room and noticed that Shadow was nowhere to be seen.

"Uh…where's Shadow?" he asked.

"He's gone into another room." explained Rouge "He's listening to a communicator to see if he can hear what's going on with the Martians. You see, one of them actually hates the Martian way of life and is going out of her way to help us beat them. Her name's Myra and she isn't keen on hating peace and sees the Martian's vendetta as pointless so Shadow gave her his communicator and is now listening through another one to see if Myra's switched it on and thus, is allowing him to hear what's going on around her."

Sonic and friends started murmuring amongst each other.

"You mean…Myra, the hammer-wielding menace of the Martian fleet…is a traitor to the Martians?" gasped Cosmo "She hates the Martian way of life? I….I'm speechless!"

"Well I'm happy to hear that one Martian's got more sense than the others." said Cream "I'll be sure to thank Miss Myra for joining our side should we meet her."

"Just a pity not all the Martians have common sense like that "Myra" person." said Ruben grumpily "Oh well, one Martian that is against peace-hating is better than none at least. Maybe not all Martians are bad after all."

"According to Myra, she's not the only one that hates the Martian

way of life." added Rouge "She told me some Martians still like peace and opted not to join the fleet and stayed back on Mars. So there maybe hope for those monsters yet."

"Yeah…there maybe." said Cosmo glumly "Still won't change the fact they destroyed my planet and my kind though…"

Then suddenly, Cosmo's sentence was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Shadow the Hedgehog. He burst into the room, startling everybody, and he looked like he had urgent news to tell everybody.

"Hey everybody! You're not gonna believe this!" cried Shadow, his voice sounding oddly frantic.

"So I guess your little Martian spy's been relying information to ya Shadow?" asked Sonic "What did you find out from her?"

"I put my communicator on," said Shadow, showing the Mobians the device "And I sat listening to it to see if Myra would switch the one I gave her on. Good thing for me, she did and I ended up over-hearing a discussion between the Martians. It doesn't sound very good though for apparently, another one's just come to Mobius and it's a Martian named Tyrahko…"

Silver and Blaze gasped, their eyes widening so much they nearly popped forward and out of their sockets.

"Tyrahko?!" cried Silver, getting out the book he had and quickly leafing through it "I saw that name mentioned several times throughout this book! There's little information about him though as most of the pages with him in it are smudged, illegible thanks to deterioration or missing. I was wondering who the heck he was and if he's important or not."

"I fear that he maybe important, maybe even the key Martian in this invasion." said Shadow, his eyes narrowed to a grey looking expression of concern "From what I overheard, Tyrahko wears a suit of armour that supposedly gives him god-like powers and is the reason the Martians won their conflicts in the past. BUT, I also managed to overhear his weakness. During the discussion I

overheard, Diablo reminded Tyrahko that if his suit of armour's destroyed, he'll die instantly. So we know how to defeat the guy at least."

"Puh, he dies the moment we break his armour?" sniffed Sonic "Lamest. villain. EVER! Why on Mobius is that his weakness?"

"If I were to guess faker, he's probably a very old Martian, maybe even ancient, and that suit of armour's the only thing keeping him alive considering it gives him god-powers, and thus probably gives him immortality too." suggested Shadow "Still, I'm happy he HAS a weakness so we can stop him. A god-powered Martian is going to be the end of us all if we can't stop it."

"So when are the Martians preparing to attack?" asked a very worried Cosmo.

"Right about now." said Shadow darkly "They left just before I came in to tell you everything and are on their way now as we speak."

"Well then, let's prepare to deal with a god-like Martian guys!" cried Sonic "We've beaten regular Martians, we'll beat god-like Martians too!"

"Wait Sonic, you do realize what "god-like" means don't you?" asked Sally hastily "If this "Tyrahko" has god-powers, he can do just about anything to us. I bet he could send us all flying into the air with a wave of his hand. We'll have to be careful about all this."

"Aw come on Sally, we know how to beat him, just smash his armour to pieces." said Sonic cockily "We can do that easily."

"I don't think so Sonic." said Blaze, her face the embodiment of greyness "His armour may be tough to destroy. I wouldn't be too surprised if his armour CAN'T be destroyed, this won't be as easy as we think it'll be."

"It can be destroyed." noted Shadow "From what I heard, Tyrahko very nearly lost his life and he had to repair his armour after being hit by a planet-shattering bomb and it's not as strong as it used to be. But still, it may be tough to even so much as dent. We will have

to put our all into this battle."

"I agree." said Blaze "Especially as mine and Silver's futures are at stake and we must make sure the Martians do not conquer Mobius otherwise us coming back here to warn you all of the pending invasion would have been all for nothing."

So with that all said and done, the Royal Fighters ran outside to deal with the oncoming Martians. The only ones not joining in this fight were Scott, Kiara and Charmy for they were still receiving medical treatment for their injuries under Count Nyder. The Royal Fighters left the sanctuary of Royal HQ, out through the city of New Mobotropolis and out into the surrounding grasslands that stretched out onto the forests of Green Hill Zone in the distance. The Mobians all stopped dead in their tracks and they stood and waited for the Martians were coming. They could see the oncoming ship in the distance and it was coming towards them. The ship hovered over Green Hill Zone and flew on until it completely cleared the forest and it touched down not far in front of the forest. Sonic looked confused. The Martians were keeping their distance for some reason. You would have thought they'd want to come up close and personal wouldn't you? And yet they were parking their ship about thirty feet away from them. Maybe this "Tyrahko" was dangerous and the Martians had to keep their distance while he fought? It could possibly be the reason why they were parking so far away. After the Martian ship touched down and landed, the boarding ramp lowered and something walked down the ramp and out into the open air, glowing red eyes being the only things the Mobians could work out. This of course was Tyrahko, his face-plate down once again, and after leaving the ship, he spread out his four wing capes and he took to the skies. He flew over to the Mobians and he landed just ten feet in front of them, his touch-down like a helicopter landing and making the Mobians stand back. Some of them like Wilson, Tails, Ruben, Amy, Cream and Cosmo grew nervous at the sight of the terrifying Martian but the rest just kept their cool, especially Sonic. Tyrahko's wing capes drooped back down behind his shoulders and back and he glowered at the Mobians with his ominous, blood-red eyes glowing like lit candles in a church.

"Citizens of Mobius, I am Grand Warlord Tyrahko of the Martian

fleet, also know as the God of Warfare." announced Tyrahko in his sinister, raspy voice "I have journeyed from afar to reunite with my Martian brethren after I was left behind, presumed dead by them. I have arrived on this planet only to hear that the Martians have had a nasty experience with you all. Thus, I am here to relieve you all of your lives and make this planet a war-loving world of chaos, like the universe SHOULD be! You are best recommended surrendering now and saving yourselves a callous beat down. What is your response to this testimony?"

"I'll tell you what it is!" yelled Sonic "This!"

Sonic curled up into a blue, spiky ball and he spin-dashed directly at Tyrahko, hitting him squarely in the chest, most notably, the Energy Diamond in his chest. Tyrahko didn't even feel that attack though. He didn't even so much as flinch at that attack. It was as if Sonic hadn't even hit him! Sonic landed back on the ground and gaped at Tyrahko, unable to believe his attack hadn't worked. Tyrahko erupted into crazed, maniacal laughter at that.

"Do you seriously believe that a puny attack like that can harm a god-powered being such as myself?" he crowed "I am invincible with powers like the ones I have now and I shall use such powers to take you all to your graves. Do not say I didn't give you a chance to surrender peacefully like you peace-lovers usually do."

"We've taken on enemies much worse than you Tyrahko!" yelled Sally "We took down the Devatrons and they were much worse than your stupid Martians! We're winning this battle with the Martians and your presence here won't change a thing!"

"We'll see about that you foolish little child…" snarled Tyrahko, his voice like a thunderstorm.

Tyrahko suddenly lunged forward like a pouncing wolf and he drew his arm back, ready to give the Mobians a right good punch. The Mobians all quickly scattered and ran out of the way, leaving Tyrahko to just punch the ground instead. Tyrahko's punches however were no ordinary punches. When he punched the ground, he created shockwaves that spread out and blew his opponents of their feet. This shockwave did just that. The Mobians were sent

hurling off their feet by the attack. But they weren't down for long. Sonic picked himself up and ran up to Tyrahko. The heroic blue hedgehog spin-dashed Tyrahko in the face but the god-powered Martian didn't even feel that blow. When you have god-powers, it is very difficult for someone to hurt you. Tyrahko responded to Sonic's attack by punching him as hard as he could. He sent Sonic hurling backwards and he crashed slap-bang into the wall surrounding New Mobotropolis. Shadow decided to go next and he spin-dashed Tyrahko in the back. But Shadow had more to offer then simply spin-dashing Tyrahko, he unleashed a shower of Chaos Spears on the Grand Warlord and then warped directly in front of them and unleashed a plethora of attacks directly in front of him. Tyrahko took all the blows though and he punched Shadow down onto the ground. Before Shadow could get up, Tyrahko kicked him away, sending Shadow skidding across the grass and getting a face full of dirt. Tails gasped at the downed hedgehogs and he decided to go next, even though he was downright terrified of Tyrahko. Tails flew towards Tyrahko but the Martian decided to show the Mobians just what kind of powers he has. He transformed himself into a mist of smoke, causing Tails to pass directly through him and after Tails did that, Tyrahko whooshed towards him and turned himself solid as he headed towards Tails. He rammed the fox down onto the ground and changed back to his normal self. Tails groaned in pain as he lay at the feet of Tyrahko. Knuckles and Shade were next to attack the insidious warlord and they let Tyrahko have it with their strongest attacks. Knuckles punched Tyrahko as hard as he could, making sure he was aiming for the Energy Diamond in his chest as he had a feeling that was Tyrahko's weak-spot, and Shade Blade-Rushed Tyrahko as hard as she could. Tyrahko took the attacks though and activated a barrier of energy that pushed Knuckles and Shade away from him and sent them flying backwards across the battlefield. Tyrahko cackled at the two echidnas and then he thrust his hands forward. He spouted out jets of fire from his hands and aimed them directly at the echidnas, hoping to roast them alive. But Ruben jumped in front of the echidnas and he thrust his hands forward, sending jets of water directly in the path of Tyrahko's fire. Ruben's water easily beat Tyrahko's fire but of course, Tyrahko had a counter-attack. He simply electrocuted Ruben and since water doesn't conduct electricity, Ruben got a pretty nasty shock from the god-powered engine of destruction that is Tyrahko. Ruben was

shocked to the point of near-unconsciousness and Tyrahko was prepared to let him have it again but Blaze jumped in and threw huge spurts of fire at Tyrahko, making him back away. Tyrahko easily countered Blaze's attacks by throwing water at her and drenching the poor cat. Amy was next in the battle. She jumped up into the air and hammered Tyrahko directly on his helmet with her Piko-Piko Hammer. Tyrahko took the blow and he whacked Amy down onto the ground. Cream decided to provide a distraction for Tyrahko and she flew around him like a buzzing fly. Tyrahko growled at Cream as she flew around his head and he tried to hit her but he missed as Cream flew out of his way. Rouge took advantage of that by screw-kicking Tyrahko in the diamond on his chest. That attack seemed to have effected him for he growled in pain as she hit him. Looks like Knuckles had been right to think that the diamond in his chest was a weak spot. Tyrahko fumed at Cream and Rouge and he struck them both down with lightning. The two girls were brought down onto the ground by that attack. Silver made the next attack by grabbing Tyrahko with a psychokinetic grip. But Tyrahko effortlessly broke out of Silver's psychic grasp and he threw flaming rocks at Silver. Silver grabbed them with his psychokinesis and threw them back at Tyrahko. The rocks hit Tyrahko and the god-powered Martian seemed to be pained by the attacks. Silver began to wonder if his own attacks were his weakness too. Tyrahko growled at Silver and he threw fire at him. Silver couldn't grab fire with his psychokinesis so he was hit by the flames and sent hurling backwards. Bunnie Rabbot was next to attack. She flew in and walloped Tyrahko in the diamond on his chest with her robot arm. She had taken note of Rouge's earlier attack on said diamond and decided to hit him there. Tyrahko however retaliated by clasping his hands together and he fist-slammed Bunnie down onto the ground as hard as he could. As Bunnie hit the ground, Tyrahko also kicked her away. This made Geoffrey mad as he hated to see any harm come to Bunnie and he ran in, shooting darts at Tyrahko like mad. But alas, his efforts were futile for Tyrahko's armour was way too strong for mere stun-darts to penetrate. Tyrahko laughed at Geoffrey's futile attempts and he thrust his hands forward. Geoffrey was suddenly whisked off his feet by a powerful gust of wind that blew out from nowhere after Tyrahko thrust his hands forward. The skunk was sent flying a good distance across the battlefield by that gust of wind. Wilson and Mandy were next to attack and they

bombarded Tyrahko with their respective weapons. Mandy punched him as hard as she could with her brass knuckle attachments and Wilson slashed at him with his spinning-blade but the weapons did no damage to Tyrahko. His armour was simply too strong for them. Tyrahko lashed out and kicked Mandy as hard as he could and then he spun around and kicked Wilson away. The dog and mouse hurled backwards a good distance across the battlefield after those kicks. Tyrahko cackled like a demon at his downed opponents but he wasn't done yet, there were still more to go. Sally, Nicole, Espio, Vector, Team Adabat and Team Nekronopolis were still left and they prepared to get into the battle too despite all what Tyrahko had just done. Over with the Martians, they were cheering like crazy for their warlord.

"Oh yeah! Give to them Tyrahko!" cried Marik.

"Show those Mobians why you're the most feared Martian ever!" cackled Diablo.

Myra wasn't cheering of course; she was standing at the back of the crowd and watching nervously as the Mobians put up their futile resistance against the invincible Martian in the black, red, gold and purple armour. She began to worry about the Mobians. Would they defeat Tyrahko? Or had they met their match with this one? As much as she was willing to help the Mobians fight off Tyrahko, she knew that fighting Tyrahko was suicide so she rightfully stayed put and didn't dare raise a finger to him. Back over to the fight, Sally and Nicole jumped in and decided to give Tyrahko what for. Sally had a new staff as her weapon, the staff now having a blade at the end like a naginata, whereas Nicole still had her usual fighting prowess. Sally twirled the staff around and stabbed at Tyrahko with it…to which the blade ended up breaking in two as it hit him. Sally gasped in horror and Tyrahko grabbed her by the head. He threw Sally at Nicole and the two girls were sent sprawling across the ground. Miranda Mongoose and her team decided to attack next. Miranda blasted at Tyrahko with her plasma cannon and the shots hit him quite heavily for they were powerful blasts. As Tyrahko was being blasted, Thunder & Bolt took the liberty of firing lightning bolts at him. Tyrahko maybe resilient but even he wasn't immune to being bombarded quite heavily. Miranda and the chipmunk brothers' shots

were beginning to overwhelm him slowly but surely. Tyrahko however put an end to it all by summoning water from nowhere and sweeping the three off their feet with a giant wave of water. Kari the Rat ran in behind Tyrahko and walloped him with a huge wrench she often used as a weapon. Tyrahko took the blow and he backhanded Kari across the battlefield. Jessica the Cougar, Taran the Lynx and Felix the Peacock all ran in next and bombarded Tyrahko with attacks. Jessica through energy spears at him and also gave him energy enhanced punched, Taran shot at him with a new gun he got from the R.F.S. armoury and Felix battered him with feather clubs. But Tyrahko took all the blows as if they were nothing and he uppercut Jessica in the face to send her away from him. He then kicked Taran in the gut and elbowed Felix onto the ground. Vector lumbered onto the scene and he clasped his jaws around Tyrahko's arm. His powerful jaws didn't leave any dental impressions on Tyrahko's arm at all but he held on tight. Tyrahko yanked his arm out of Vector's grasp and walloped him with a fiery punch to the face. Espio was next and he gave Tyrahko his best round of ninjitsu moves. Tyrahko wasn't effected though and he punched Espio as hard as he could across the battlefield. Espio was sent flying backwards and he landed a good distance away from Tyrahko. Tyrahko cackled at all the Mobians as they struggled back onto their feet.

"Now you can see why I am the Grand Warlord of the Martians." he crowed "In my time, which to your undoubted amazement is a million years, I have brought citizens to their knees, reduced worlds to ashes and peace into warfare. Your planet will now share the same fate Mobians. You shall grow to marvel our way of life and you will realize that your beloved peace is truly overrated and a life of malice and mayhem is how the universe SHOULD live."

"We're not letting any stupid Martians take away our well-deserved freedom and happiness!" growled Sonic "We've fought long and hard to keep our world happy and free and you will not take all that away from us! Shadow, Chaos Blast him NOW!" he bellowed.

"Hope your stupid armour can withstand this Tyrahko for this is going be deadly!" sneered Shadow, taking off his inhibitor rings and handing them to Sonic.

With that said, Shadow rushed up to Tyrahko and unleashed a colossal Chaos Blast on him. Tyrahko was blown backwards by the powerful blast but he still remained standing and he tried his best to fight through the attack. Shadow was letting it all out on him and even a god-powered being like Tyrahko was having trouble withstanding it. But given his immortality, the blast wasn't going to kill him. Tyrahko shielded himself with his arms and then activated an energy barrier around himself to save himself from any damage he could potentially sustain from the onslaught. He then tried to fight against Shadow's Chaos Blast by expanding the barrier. Tyrahko was beginning to overcome the blast thanks to his superior power and Shadow was beginning to falter since his Chaos Powers were beginning to run out. After a while, the Chaos Blast finally died down and Tyrahko blew Shadow away with his energy barrier. Shadow landed down beside Sonic and Sonic quickly clipped his inhibitor rings back onto his wrists. Tyrahko took note of that for he was one to use weaknesses to his advantage and Sonic helped Shadow stand back up.

"That was a good effort Shadow." said Sonic "But not quite enough. We'll have to bring him down and then try again."

"I agree Sonic." said Shadow "Let's all charge him and bombard him at once! Even he won't be able to take us ALL on at once!"

With that said, all of the Royal Fighters charged towards Tyrahko and attempted to unleash all their might onto him. But Tyrahko was well prepared for that. He raised his arms above his head and a huge ball of magical energy began to form around his hands just above his head. Just as the Mobians all pounced on him, the energy ball fired enormous jolts of magical electricity and the Mobians were all blown back by them. They were all sent scattering across the battlefield and Tyrahko stood triumphantly above them all, cackling like a fiend from hell as he admired his downed opponents.

"You're just delaying the inevitable Mobians!" he laughed "You cannot defeat me! I have powers of the gods! No mortal being can begin to stand up to me and hope to make it out alive! You have all been defeated and now I shall take it upon myself to slaughter you all one by one!"

He strode over to Sonic and grabbed him by the neck. He hoisted Sonic up to his height and glowered at him with his glowing, blood red eyes.

"I'll start with you first Sonic the Hedgehog." growled Tyrahko "You are the main Mobian, the one that we should worry about the most so you can die first."

"Huh? How do you..ack…know my name?!" gagged Sonic.

"Marik told me everything about you, even your names and appearances so I know who you all are." explained Tyrahko "Now, how should I kill you? Burn you alive? Drown you on dry land? Electrocute you to death? Simply crush you with my bare hands? I'm spoilt for choice I am. Ha, ha, ha, ha…"

But suddenly, Tyrahko was attacked from behind by a giant silver bladed ball that spin-dashed him in the back and sent him hurling across the battlefield. He dropped Sonic as he was hit and he was thrown down onto the ground. Tyrahko picked himself up and he gazed in surprise at what had hit him. It was none other than Silver Sonic, one of Dr. Eggman's deadliest creations! The Mobians were all rather surprised to see him here too. What was he doing here? But Silver Sonic was not alone. He had friends with him. Metal Sonic, Metal Tails, Metal Amy, Metal Knuckles, Devion and Katherine were all with the giant silver killing machine and they were all ready to attack. Marik and the other Martians were shocked to see that Eggman's machines were here to give Tyrahko a hard time but they knew that Tyrahko would be able to deal with Eggman robots easily so it was no worry. Up in the sky above the robots floated Dr. Eggman in his Egg-Pod machine. Dr. Eggman had decided to join in with this battle and he had all his heavy artillery with him. Dr. Eggman smiled down at the Mobians and he waved at them as they gazed up at him.

"Hello Sonic and friends! I'm here to deal with a little "pest problem" you're all having right now!" he announced, cackling his usual, loud, demented cackle as his robots prepared to unleash hell on Tyrahko…

Footnotes:

*** You've just seen all that happen in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius* Arc 17**

Oh dear! The Martians have Tyrahko on their side now and it seems he's too tough for the Mobians to defeat! But now Dr. Eggman's here, will things turn in the Mobians favour? Or are the Martians destined to...WIN?! Join in next time as the second part to this saga's finale commences...

So everybody, how's the story shaping up? Still really good?

Tyrahko belongs to my brother so all credit for the character goes to him.

The Wrath of Tyrahko Part 2

Story 135: The Wrath of Tyrahko Part 2

Things had taken a turn for the worse for Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends. True the Martian invasion wasn't proving to be much of an endgame scenario for the heroes given how they were winning the battle against the Martians so far but right now, the God of Warfare himself, Tyrahko had arrived on Mobius after searching for the Martians for a while now and he was about to bring his reign of terror to the world. Tyrahko had just gotten into battle with Sonic and friends and he had beaten all of them with little effort (he's got god powers, what do you expect?!). But before he could finished them all off, Dr. Eggman had arrived on the scene with his robotic minions. He had brought Metal Sonic, Metal Tails, Metal Amy, Metal Knuckles, Silver Sonic, Devion AND Katherine all at once with him and right now, they were preparing to sock it to Tyrahko and bring him down. Tyrahko glared at his new opponents and he narrowed his glowing red-eyes down to evil slits that truly made him look diabolical. The Mobians however were strangely happy to see Dr. Eggman here to help them out.

"Hey Eggman, you've given me a new experience today!" Sonic called up to the fat scientist "Being pleased to see you!" he added and he started laughing at his little joke.

"I hope you enjoyed that experience because it shall not happen again." sneered Dr. Eggman, looking down at Sonic and then looking back over at Tyrahko "Now then, who am I up against this time? A Martian who's not shown up in this battle yet or is this something differently entirely?"

"I am a Martian you flaccid, fatuous little human." snarled Tyrahko, glowering up at Dr. Eggman "I am Grand Warlord Tyrahko, the first ever warlord of the first ever Martian army and I am the weapon of mass destruction that proves to be our opponent's final curtain calls in our battles! I have powers of the gods and I am going to use my powers to bring Mobius to its doom! If you are helping the Mobians

then you will be destroyed as well."

Dr. Eggman's face fell as he heard Tyrahko say all that. He had god-powers? Well this wasn't good, Dr. Eggman had not had any experience with god-powered beings before and if Tyrahko had god-powers, he could quite easily smash all his robots. But nevertheless, Dr. Eggman was not a man to give up so easily. He stood up to the Devatrons themselves and they were beyond any robot he'd ever made before so he was not going to let a god-powered being destroy him and his robots now. He was going to bring Tyrahko down or die trying. He'd helped to stop the Martians already, he was helping to stop this one.

"We'll see just how almighty and powerful you really are Mr. "I-have-god-powers-therefore-I-must-be-unbeatable" !" sneered Dr. Eggman "My Eggman robots will take you down Tyrahko! Heck, I even have the Devatron leader himself under my control so that alone makes me a force to be reckoned with!"

Sonic sighed as Eggman started gloating at Tyrahko like the egomaniac he is.

"Huh, those two may as well start having an ego contest while they're at it." groaned Sonic, wishing Eggman would stop gobbing away like he always does and just get on with killing Tyrahko already.

"Fifty Mobiums says Tyrahko loses it and then goes nuts on Eggman." muttered Tails, sharing Sonic's annoyance and disinterest in this battle of the egos that was going on right now.

As for Tyrahko, he glared at Devion and sneered at him. It was as if the very idea of a Devatron daring to stand up to him didn't phase him whatsoever. He remained as confident as ever about himself and this battle.

"A mere Devatron will not be enough to bring me down." crowed Tyrahko "They maybe invulnerable but invulnerability does not mean unbeatable. I will destroy your little Devatron pet human just as I will all your over infernal robot creations."

"We shall see Tyrahko for these robots are among the best I've built AND they bested your Martian soldiers before you arrived!" gloated Eggman "And now they'll bring you down just like…"

"WILL YOU TWO JUST FIGHT ALREADY?!" bellowed Sonic, finally losing his patience with the two gloating villains.

Dr. Eggman frowned rather comically at Sonic and he pointed directly at Tyrahko, taking Sonic's order to heart since having an ego-battle wasn't going to get anybody anywhere.

"Metals, Devion, Katherine, ATTACK!" screamed Dr. Eggman.

With that said, ALL the robots charged directly at Tyrahko at once and they all pile-dived him down onto the ground. Tyrahko maybe powerful beyond belief but even he can't fend off so many opponents all attacking him at once. Tyrahko was brought down onto the ground by the attacking robots but he managed to get out from underneath them by transforming into mist and seeping out from between the robots. He drifted away from the robots and reappeared in his proper form a good few feet away from them. After transforming back to normal, Tyrahko threw bolts of lightning at the robots. Katherine protected them all by activating her force-field and expanding it to a size great enough to shield all the robots, even Silver Sonic. After that was done, Katherine lowered the force field and Silver Sonic rocketed forward to attack Tyrahko. He curled up into a giant silver bladed ball and he spin-dashed towards Tyrahko. He hit Tyrahko and threw the god-powered Martian off his feet. Tyrahko however landed on his back and immediately flipped himself up and over back onto his feet after that hit. Silver Sonic hurled back towards Tyrahko and attempted to cleave him to pieces by Tyrahko jumped forward and punched at Silver Sonic. His punch was so powerful that he ploughed STRAIGHT THROUGH Silver Sonic like a car driving through a brick wall! The attack completely destroyed Silver Sonic and reduced him to smithereens littering the grasslands all around. Dr. Eggman was a little surprised that Tyrahko had strength like that. One punch reduced the biggest of his robots currently in the battlefield to smithereens? He definitely had to make a robot capable of withstanding punches that strong! Where was Titan Metal Sonic when you needed him? He could easily stand up to Tyrahko given his colossal size and power. But Eggman didn't

have him available right now so he had to make do with what he got. Metal Sonic and his buddies Metal Tails, Metal Amy and Metal Knuckles flew in towards Tyrahko and they all clawed at him as viciously as they could. Their attacks didn't do much damage and Tyrahko smacked them all away with lightning whips he summoned from his hands. He rose his arm up high and he attempted to whip the Metal series robots but they all flew out of his way and they charged at him again. Metal Sonic scanned Tyrahko's data so he'd be able to withstand some of his attacks as he flew towards him. Metal Amy transformed her hands into Piko-Piko hammer hands and she walloped Tyrahko in the face with them. She then walloped him on the chest with both hammers, attempting to break the Energy Diamond in it for she sensed it was a weak spot. Tyrahko however didn't give Metal Amy the change to see if it was a weak-spot for he uppercut Metal Amy in the face and nearly took her head off in the process. He didn't give Metal Amy a chance to recuperate though, he punched her in the gut and completely destroyed her with that one punch. Metal Tails flew in behind Tyrahko and he inched his spinning propeller blades towards Tyrahko. He struck Tyrahko in the back and started churning away at his armour with his ferocious propeller blades spinning away dangerously. Tyrahko didn't feel the attack though for it wasn't enough to hurt him and Metal Tails' tail-mounted propeller blades weren't even enough to cut through his armour. Tyrahko turned sharply around and he swatted Metal Tails onto the ground as hard as he could. He then raised his foot and stomped on Metal Tails, smashing him to pieces instantly. Metal Knuckles jumped in and he began to unleash a juggernaut of punches on Tyrahko and he launched them all good and hard. Tyrahko took most of the punches from Metal Knuckles and he punched him back. Metal Knuckles' tough hide allowed him to withstand that punch though for he was still able to fight again. Metal Knuckles uppercut Tyrahko in the face and then attempted to plunge his clawed hands into Tyrahko's eyes. But Tyrahko summoned fire to his hands and he blazed Metal Knuckles back with a spurt of flames. Metal Knuckles ploughed through the fire but Tyrahko had already shifted position while he was blazing the robot Knuckles clone. Tyrahko fist-slammed Metal Knuckles on the top of his head and knocked him down onto the ground. Then he grabbed Metal Knuckles with both hands and proceeded to rip him in two with his bare hands. Metal Knuckles was now a pile of scrap. Tyrahko threw

his remains on the ground and turned around to face Metal Sonic. Metal Sonic spin-dashed Tyrahko in the face and sent him staggering backwards. Then Devion crept up behind Tyrahko and began blasting him in the back with his gauntlet blasters. Tyrahko took the blasts but they did send him staggering from how powerful they were. Metal Sonic joined in with the blasting and Katherine drill-attacked Tyrahko just to add insult to injury as he was being bombarded.

"I have encountered the Martians before Tyrahko." purred Devion as he blasted him in the chest "I managed to raid their ship's fuel-supply with no problems at all and I killed two Martians named Jupiter and Thor while raiding the fuel. I will add you to my Martian body count."

"In the name of Dr. Eggman, you will be destroyed." droned Metal Sonic as he blasted Tyrahko's head with his torso laser.

Tyrahko couldn't take the bombardment he was receiving a minute longer so to save himself further punishment, he transformed into a cloud of mist yet again and he drifted towards Devion and Metal Sonic. His upper body reappeared and he walloped the two with both hands each as hard as he could. Metal Sonic spiralled through the air but remained airborne and Devion flipped himself over onto his feet and skidded to a halt. Tyrahko bared his claws and prepared to attack again.

"Your mechanical inventions are prodigious human, I commend you on their prowess and strength." crooned Tyrahko "But ultimately, your attempted termination of me is injudicious. For even they do not stand a chance against me."

"You'll change that tone of yours when Devion, Metal Sonic and Katherine separate your head from your body!" yelled Dr. Eggman "Finish him off now!" he bellowed down at Devion, Metal Sonic and Katherine.

"With pleasure master." crooned Devion, deploying his arm blades.

Devion rushed over to Tyrahko and began slashing at him with his arm blades. The blades didn't seem to be doing any damage to

Tyrahko's armour unfortunately and Tyrahko uppercut Devion in the head to make him back off. Then he pounded Devion in the gut and shoulders but Devion retaliated with a swipe to the face, an uppercut and then a double slash to the faceplate. The faceplate was one of Tyrahko's weaker spots on his armour and it showed for Devion actually managed to leave some scratches on it. Tyrahko roared furiously and he pounded the ground with both fists. That caused an earthquake directly under Devion's feet and it made him stagger down onto the ground. Tyrahko then grabbed Devion by the head and tried to yank it directly off his body but given Devion's invulnerability, he couldn't. One cannot just simply yank a Devatron's head off its body after all. Devion just blasted Tyrahko in the face and made him drop him. Then Devion spun around and kicked Tyrahko directly in the face. The Mobians watched on tensely as the fight went on. This was weird for them all but they were actually **rooting** for the leader of the very race that gave them the hardest time of their lives right now. That was only because Devion was with the Mobians then against them right now and a god-powered Martian was easily the bigger threat of the two. Sonic in particular had his fists clenched and he was saying under his breath "Come on Devion, beat him, beat him!" repeatedly as the fight went on. Devion leaped up at Tyrahko and slashed at him, catching him across the face again but Tyrahko threw a ball of dark energy at Devion and blasted him off his feet. Then he summoned fired to his hands and started blazing at Devion with it. But Devatrons were heat-proof (of course) so Devion wasn't effected by the blaze. He picked himself up and slashed his way through the fire. But the fire was only a distraction. As Devion reached Tyrahko, the powerful warlord just slugged him as hard as he could in the gut and then he uppercut him in the face with both hands. Devion was sent hurling through the air by that blow and he was sent flying so high-up he almost landed on top of Dr. Eggman. Eggman moved out of the way, leaving Devion to plummet back down to earth with a heavy crash. Devion picked himself up only for Tyrahko to smack him back down with an energy-whip. Metal Sonic and Katherine decided it was time they got involved already so they joined in with this battle. Tyrahko spun around and swung the whip at the two robots but Katherine shielded herself with her barrier and Metal Sonic flew-up out of the way. Metal Sonic spin-dashed Tyrahko in the forehead, hitting the crown like structure above his eyes on his helmet and denting it. That

attack legitimately hurt Tyrahko for getting hit in the forehead was a big blow to even someone like him. Metal Sonic then did a U-turn and he spin-dashed Tyrahko in the back. Katherine threw a lot of bladed discs at Tyrahko, none of them actually taking any effect on him, and then she drill-attacked him. Tyrahko shrugged off her blows and he threw balls of fire at her. Katherine's barrier protected her but the attacks were pretty powerful so they made her stagger a little as they hit the barrier. Tyrahko ran up to Katherine and punched her barrier. The punch was so powerful it made her shudder like mad inside the barrier. It was like being a fish in a tank with somebody just pounding on it as hard as they can. Tyrahko then punched the barrier again, this punch shaking Katherine so much that the barrier ended up switching off. Now she was unprotected, Tyrahko roundhouse punched Katherine across the battlefield. Katherine hurled a few yards away from Tyrahko after that attack and she lay on the ground face-down, wondering which part of her to rub better. It was amazing that Katherine hadn't fallen apart yet. Metal Sonic fumed at Tyrahko and he spin-dashed him as hard as he could. Tyrahko took the spin-dash as if it was nothing but Metal Sonic blasted him in the chest with his torso laser. More specifically, the Energy Diamond in his chest. Tyrahko bellowed in pain and he clutched his chest. It was as if the Energy Diamond was a part of him, literally a part of him and hitting it seemed to cause him great discomfort. Dr. Eggman observed this and put a thoughtful finger to his lips.

"That diamond in his chest seems to be a weak-spot." he noted "I wonder what would happen if it was removed…?"

He smiled to himself and then gave Metal Sonic and Devion an order.

"Devion, Metal Sonic! Rip that diamond out of his chest!" he roared "It seems to be his weakness so remove it immediately!"

The two obeyed and Metal Sonic got to it immediately for he was already at Tyrahko. Metal Sonic grabbed the diamond and yanked on it. Tyrahko yelled out a roar of pain as if just trying to remove the diamond was physically hurting him. As a matter of facts, it WAS physically hurting him. Tyrahko however grabbed Metal Sonic and threw him away like a baseball.

"Argh! How dare you try to remove this Energy Diamond?!" roared Tyrahko "That diamond has fused with my chest as of putting this armour on so it is now a part of me! Removing it will prove fatal for me!"

"Thanks for giving us the hint Tyrahko." sneered Sonic "So now we know how to defeat you once and for all. Royal Fighters! Let's get him!"

With that said, the Mobians all ran towards Tyrahko, ready to help defeat him for they felt that they had stood by long enough. Devion and Metal Sonic ran towards Tyrahko too. Tyrahko however just tensed his body up and clenched his fists. His body began to glow a malevolent shade of purple and black energy started surrounding him like a snake coiling around its prey. His eyes seemed to glow a brighter red colour as he tensed up. The Mobians, Devion and Metal Sonic all leaped towards Tyrahko, ready to pile-dive him and take the Energy Diamond out of his chest but Tyrahko thrust his arms into the air and let out all of the energy he was building up. Energy seemed to explode from his body and spread out in a wide sphere of chaos like a nuclear explosion. The blast blew everybody away and sent everybody hurling a great distance across the grasslands. Some Mobians landed near New Mobotropolis, some landed near the Great Forest, some landed near Green Hill Zone and some landed further away from the three locations. Dr. Eggman's jaw dropped at what Tyrahko had just done whereas the Martians all cheered happily (except Myra).

"Whoo-hoo! That's the way to do it Tyrahko!" cried Marik "You've beaten them all!"

"No wonder we always win our conflicts when he's around!" laughed Diablo "Tyrahko is truly an unstoppable force of mayhem!"

"This battle is in our favour now." crowed Natasha "And there's nothing anybody can do about it."

As for Tyrahko, after his attack had finished, he lowered his arms and started panting. Using a powerful attack like that really wore him down. Even god-powered beings weren't opposed to exhaustion. But Tyrahko still managed to remain standing and after catching his

breath, he let out a titanic, maniacal laugh that was enough to make anybody's spines shiver. His laugh boomed all around like thunder and echoed ominously as he celebrated his obvious victory. As soon as he stopped laughing, he looked all around and saw all his opponents weakly trudging back towards him, trying their best to stay standing.

"I have won this battle you foolish little creatures." crowed Tyrahko "You may have fought prodigiously and your attempts are valiant and commendable, but ultimately you fall at the hands of Grand Warlord Tyrahko, the God of Warfare! Now you get the honours of sitting back and watching as I make this world quiver before me and remake it into a world of chaos, mayhem and warfare!"

"No…you won't!" grunted Sonic "For we've got a sure-fire ace up our sleeves! An ace that will guarantee your defeat spike-head!"

"They wouldn't happen to be seven mystical emeralds known as "Chaos Emeralds" would they?" sneered Tyrahko.

Sonic gasped in horror. How did Tyrahko know what the Chaos Emeralds were?! And how did he manage to guess that was what he was on about?

"Marik told me everything of this world, Chaos Emeralds included." explained Tyrahko "He tells me that they're full of great power and that they have the ability to control time and space. He described to me a time where he used one on you Mobians. He described to me that with a simple yelling of the words "Chaos Control" he could freeze time around you and also warp out of existence and back again. He also tells me that he learned from you Mobians that should all seven come together, a miracle should happen. And how fortuitous it is that Count Nyder apparently found out their location. Perhaps I should go over to this "Angel Island" and find your Chaos Emeralds and use them against you?"

"You stay away from Angel Island you freak!" roared Knuckles.

"Yeah! You're not getting our Chaos Emeralds!" yelled Sonic "Not a single one! Not even the new White Chaos Emerald we retrieved from the Black Arms!"

Tyrahko looked at Sonic in wonder. New Chaos Emerald? Did that mean there was actually eight Chaos Emeralds and not seven? Even Marik seemed surprised to hear this.

"The Mobians got a new Chaos Emerald?" he asked himself "So now they have eight Chaos Emeralds instead of seven? How?"

"Sonic said he got it from the Black Arms, whoever the heck they are." noted Natasha "I guess those "Black Arms" things probably stole one and they got it back?"

"Possibly." said Marik "Still, eight Chaos Emeralds is going to be a much bigger prize then seven. I bet eight Chaos Emeralds are going to be stronger then seven Chaos Emeralds." he added, rubbing his hands eagerly.

"This planet is full of surprises it seems." crooned Tyrahko "You have an extra emerald? Very well, I shall have to steal **all eight** of your Chaos Emeralds and use them against you."

"You won't be getting a single one you monster!" yelled Tails.

"We'll break that armour of yours open before you get a chance!" snarled Shadow.

With that said, Tyrahko suddenly raised his arms up and did something that nobody expected. He ended up trapping all the Mobians, Devion, Metal Sonic, Katherine and EVEN Dr. Eggman in green energy balls! Tyrahko had imprisoned them all with the simple use of his powers. Sonic tried to move in his energy ball but he quickly found out that he couldn't move all of the sudden. He was fixed in place by the ball of energy he was trapped in.

"Urgh…what gives?!" grunted Sonic, trying to break free of his energy ball but to no avail "I…can't…move!"

"Tyrahko's got us completely immobilized!" cried Sally "He's trapped us in some kind of magical energy sphere!"

"How astute of you to notice you simple-minded woman." sneered Tyrahko "Since you Mobians refuse to stand down, even though you KNOW you're beaten, I've decided to just stop you all dead in your

tracks."

"Why don't you just kill us all?" growled Shadow furiously "Wouldn't that be a more logical idea than simply imprisoning us?"

Tyrahko glared at Shadow as if he'd just asked him a stupid question.

"Yes, killing you all would indeed be a more logical approach to end you all." purred Tyrahko, his voice rumbling like an earthquake as he spoke in a low pitch "But you Mobians have impressed me with your valour and resilience. So I am going to let you all live…as my little pets. And as I transform this world into a war zone, I will corrupt you all and make you all war-loving monsters that will live like a Martian and aid us in destroying peace everywhere."

"You can't do this to us!" shrieked Tails "You sick, twisted demon! You can't jus turn us all into war-loving monsters! We won't let you!"

"And what position are you in to tell me that I am not able to commence with whatever action I wish to perform?" snarled Tyrahko "You're all prisoners of the Martians, you are in no position to stand up to me."

"And you're not the boss of us so you're in no position to tell us how we live our lives, so we're even." retorted Sonic.

Tyrahko pretended he didn't hear Sonic's little quip. He couldn't be bothered to retort at Sonic for he knew that little jokers like him loved to be annoying with their little quips and smart mouths. Instead, Tyrahko just decided to continue crowing to his imprisoned victims.

"Once I reshape this world into a REAL world and make you all my pets, you will learn to embrace our way of life." said Tyrahko coldly "That is what we Martians have dedicated our lives to, waking the universe up and making it realize that peace is bad and a life of warfare is how one should live. Some planets have headed our words and joined us in our chaotic lifestyle, some have foolishly chosen to ignore us and seal their fates and you Mobians are among the ones who refuse to listen to our reasoning. Thus, by force, we will MAKE you like us!"

"Tyrahko, please, don't do this to us." pleaded Sally "We're innocent, freedom-loving beings who just want to live a life of peace and tranquillity. We don't wanna become savage, feral, destruction craving monsters like you Martians are. Please have a heart and just let us live how we want!"

Tyrahko just did the "come here" gesture with his index finger and brought Sally's ball over to him so he could look her squarely in the eyes. Sally began to grow nervous as Tyrahko stared her down. Never in her life had somebody looked so terrifying to her and made her feel so intimidated. Tyrahko was quite simply the most terrifying thing Sally had ever come face to face with.

"Do you know why we Martians are trying to get peace-lovers to see things through our eyes?" said Tyrahko, his voice almost a dangerous whisper "Because we do not want other races in the universe to suffer the same fate we ALMOST suffered ourselves."

"What in the world are you talking about?!" asked a very confused Sally "Is this to do with your deep prejudice against peace?"

"It is indeed dear child." Tyrahko said softly "You know that "All it takes is one bad day and you change forever"? Well I was one of the unfortunate people to suffer through one of those bad days…A million years ago, I was one of the first Martians to ever walk upon Mars…"

"Wait, what?! You're a million years old?!" blurted Sonic, clearly unable to believe he just heard Tyrahko say that "Whoa, never would have expected that! If I were to guess, that god-armour's been keeping you alive all those years hasn't it?"

"I will overlook your unwarranted interruption for now you impertinent little imp." snapped Tyrahko, glaring at Sonic but quickly turning back to Sally "Now as I was saying: A million years ago, I was one of the first Martians to ever walk upon the planet of Mars. The Martians were a peaceful, prosperous race back then, me included. I was one of the more violent Martians but not to the extent I am now. For over 100 years, the Martians lived a peaceful live of prosperity and tranquillity. Until the day we were nearly exterminated by a race of war-lovers. They were known as the Hyadarnns and

they loved to prey upon the weaker races for sick, twisted, mindless entertainment. We were so pacifistic that we were ill-prepared for combat. I became the Martian to rile up an army and thus the first ever Martian army was born with me as the exemplary figure of the army. I designated myself Grand Warlord and battled against the Hyadarnns. But are efforts were ultimately in vain. We had just geared up too late to make a difference. The Hyadarnns spared us for they ultimately decided we were not worth wiping out and that the efforts made by the army made us worth sparing. After they left, I went insane with grief. Mars was desecrated all over and only the members of my army and me were left. Innocent lives all over had been heartlessly and ruthlessly taken away from us with relentless fire and barbaric destruction. Something snapped in me that day and I realized why all this had happened to us. Our pacifistic ways had rendered us weak and defenceless and thus, we were incapable of saving ourselves from this unwarranted destruction that befell our world. So I riled up the last remaining Martians with my strong words of eloquence and decided that we would not be pacifists anymore, we would be war-lovers and be the masters of warfare. So over the years, the Martians began to repopulate for nothing arrived to wipe the remaining ones out, then we began taking vigorous exercises and gruelling trials over the months until finally, we became what we are today, war-lovers and anti-pacifists. Our first act was to exact revenge upon the ones who rendered us an endangered species for a while. We wiped the Hyadarnns out in days thanks to our newfound fighting skills and battle tactics. Shortly after defeating the Hyadarnns, I ended up finding the thing that changed me forever… this suit of armour. Said to have been made by god-like entities that have long since vanished, I put it on myself and it gave me powers of the gods. I became immortal and given power beyond anything I ever imagined. The only catch was because of my deteriorating health at the time of finding it, I am forever encased in it for should I remove it, I lose my powers, time will catch up to me and I will become nothing but dust. It was a worthy price to pay for having such power though for over the million years I've been alive, I've brought the Martians victory in every conflict we had. I got some worlds to turn against peace and crave our life-styles. Some worlds that said no to us were forced to become like us and if that didn't work, we simply destroyed them. And so that is the story of how the Martians became what they are now and why we so rightfully hate

peace. We hate peace because we were almost killed by it and we only wish to spare the rest of the universe a similar fate."

The Mobians had listened to Tyrahko's story and they were all pretty surprised to hear all this (except Silver and Blaze, they already knew the story for Marik had told them it but not all the details).

"So that's why you hate peace…" said Cosmo "You were too peaceful to the point you were almost wiped out."

"Yes…but that does not justify your actions in the slightest." said Sally in a very cold manner "You could still be peace-lovers you know. All you had to do really was make strongholds and defences to protect yourselves from total annihilation in the future. Just because you were nearly wiped out, it doesn't mean you have to be anti-pacifists. Look at us, we're peace-lovers but we have an army to fight off any problem we encounter. All you had to do was do the same Tyrahko. Please understand what I'm saying."

"I do understand what you are saying." said Tyrahko coldly "And I do not heed your pontificating in anyway. Why should I go back to the life that almost got my entire race killed?! And what good would reforming do? The races we've terrorized over the years will just turn on us and attempt to exterminate us all! Not to mention, nobody would be willing to trust us and they would keep waiting for us to stab them in the back. So it is saddening to say that it is much too late for redemption now little girl."

"No, it is not too late!" cried Sally "Please Tyrahko, anyone can redeem themselves, no matter how barbarous they are! Please, listen to me and…"

"This discussion is at an end!" snarled Tyrahko, shoving Sally back in line with all the other imprisoned Mobians.

"When are you gonna learn Sally that sweet-talking baddies just **isn't** going to work?" sighed Sonic pitifully, remembering Sally's failed attempt to redeem Devion just like she'd just failed to redeem Tyrahko right now.

Sally scowled at Sonic but said nothing. Next time she was face to

face with a bad-guy, she was not going to try and redeem them at all. It just seemed like her attempts will forever be in vain. Now that the discussion was over, Tyrahko re-addressed all the Mobians.

"Now then, my first act of dooming you all and subjugating your world to malice and mayhem will be to find your "Chaos Emeralds" and see what power is in them." he announced "If they are powerful gems, I shall use them in my attempts to reformat the universe into a life of warfare, a life that everybody SHOULD be living."

"Might I suggest that we use Sonic to find the Chaos Emeralds?" asked Marik, standing forward "He'll know where this "Angel Island" is and where on said island the emeralds will be located. Allow me to be the one to keep an eye on Sonic as he fetches the emeralds for us."

"Very well Marik, I shall grant you the task of being Sonic's supervisor as he gets the Chaos Emeralds for us." said Tyrahko, bringing Sonic towards him.

"Don't bother because I'm not gonna do it." muttered Sonic "I'd rather rot in this energy-bubble thingy then doom my own planet."

"If you do not give us the Chaos Emeralds Sonic then I will change my mind about letting you live and instead, simply destroy you all." said Tyrahko coldly.

"I'd rather be dead then be a monster like you!" shouted Sonic "I will not take any of you to Angel Island and…"

Then Sonic stopped dead in his tracks and suddenly thought on something. Wait a minute…why not go over to Angel Island and get the Chaos Emeralds? The Chaos Emeralds were just what they needed to win this battle with Tyrahko. If he could just get them and turn super then he could just as easily go to town on Tyrahko and destroy his armour, defeating him for good and rendering the Martians the losers of the war. Sonic thought on this matter and realized that he had just come up with a brilliant idea. An idea that would guarantee the Martian's defeat and Mobius' third victory against alien invaders. Sonic smiled to himself and realized what he had to do. He suddenly changed his expression to an apologetic one

and looked up at Tyrahko with innocent eyes.

"Actually, I will take Marik to Angel Island and show him where the Chaos Emeralds are." said Sonic "I'm sorry I tried to defy you but I've realized that I'm making a mistake and now I'm gonna rectify it. I'll do as you command Tyrahko."

" **WHAAAAATTTT?!** " screamed all the Mobians from inside their energy ball prisons.

They could not believe what Sonic was doing. Had the supersonic hedgehog lost his marbles at last? Even Marik raised an eyebrow of suspicion at this. Why did Sonic suddenly change his attitude? Something was wrong here and he could sense it. But he wasn't going to let himself be foiled by Sonic. He'd keep a close eye on Sonic and make sure he doesn't do anything dodgy. Tyrahko stared at Sonic in a moment of incredulousness but he shrugged it off and turned to Marik.

"Well…it seems Sonic has finally come to his senses." he said "But just to be on the safe side, get the laser cuffs, the wrist and ankle models. He must have some form of restraint so we can be double sure he isn't trying to trick us."

Marik hurried off back to the Martian ship to obey his order.

"If it helps Tyrahko, I know a REALLY quick way of getting to Angel Island." said Sonic, adding more to his little act in order to keep the Martians in the dark about his true motives "My friend Silver has a warp ring and I can use that to warp over to Angel Island. Consider it like "opening a door to another location in thin air" if you will."

"Are you crazy Sonic?!" screamed Silver "I'm not letting you have my warp ring so you can go over and…"

He quickly stopped himself when he caught Sonic's face and saw that the blue hedgehog was winking to him. Silver quickly grasped what Sonic was up to. The hedgehog had a plan and it seemed like a very good plan too. Silver decided to go along with Sonic's idea since he was getting some idea on what Sonic was plotting.

"…uh I mean, OK Sonic, I'll give you my warp ring." said Silver, playing along with Sonic's act "It'll make your trip to Angel Island a lot faster and Tyrahko gets the Chaos Emeralds faster."

"Silver?! You cannot be serious!" shrieked Blaze "Are you trying to make sure our future stays the way it is?! We came here to PREVENT it from being doomed, not reinforce it's doomsday moment…"

Silver then winked at Blaze to give her the idea that he knew what he was doing and that he was going with what Sonic said. This caused Blaze to instantly silence herself and say nothing more than.

"…uh ahem, excuse my outburst. I was wrong to do so."

The other Mobians looked baffled by this obfuscating thing that was going on right now. What was going on all of the sudden? Sonic has a change of heart, then Silver changes his attitude and now Blaze is doing so?! What the heck was up with those three?! Was something coming over them at this moment? As for Tyrahko, he did seem to pick up on what was going on and he released Sonic and Silver from their energy balls so that Silver could give Sonic the warp ring and Sonic could go over to Angel Island with it. Silver walked over to Sonic and handed him the warp ring. He kept his head close to Sonic's and whispered into his ear as Sonic took the warp ring.

"This idea of yours better work or we're doomed!" hissed Silver.

"Trust me Silver, the hedgehog has this completely under control . " whispered Sonic confidently.

"Do not silently converse to each other!" snapped Tyrahko "You're arising suspicions within me as you do that!"

"Sorry." lied Sonic.

Now Silver had given Sonic his warp ring, Tyrahko resealed Silver back in the energy ball and put him back with the others. Sonic stood patiently around, waiting for Marik to come back with the laser cuffs. After a minute of waiting (which to Sonic is too long to be waiting for as he's not much of a waiter), Marik eventually returned

with two metal spheres in his hands. They were the generators for the laser cuffs and all Marik had to do was place them between Sonic's wrists and ankles. Sonic held his hands out and Marik placed one sphere in between his wrists. The sphere generated a pair of blue lasers that wrapped around Sonic's wrists like a pair of handcuffs and they held his hands tightly together. Then Marik placed the other sphere around Sonic's ankles and the sphere generated lasers that wrapped around his ankles. Sonic wouldn't be able to run now. Marik grabbed Sonic by the arm with his metal hand and he jammed his face into Sonic's face, the blue hedgehog now showing any signs of being intimidated.

"Don't get any ideas while we're on Angel Island!" snarled Marik "Or you're dead!"

He then proceeded to give Sonic a nasty jolt of electricity just to further enhance his warning. Sonic yelped in pain but luckily for him, Marik didn't keep it up for long so he didn't get much pain from him. Sonic was tempted to rub his arm better but given the laser cuffs around his wrists, he wouldn't be able to rub his arm better.

"Yeah…ouch…I think I get the hint rocks-for-brains." grunted Sonic "Just keep your claws off me as I lead you to the emeralds!"

"Whatever." sighed Marik "Just get on with it Sonic!"

Sonic frowned at Marik but he didn't bother retorting as all that would end up doing is wasting valuable time, time that should be spent getting rid of the Martians. So Sonic flicked Silver's warp ring up into the air and the warp ring expanded to twice its size. It opened up a portal from the grasslands around New Mobotropolis to Angel Island and Marik eagerly stepped through it. Sonic stepped in after him and the warp ring shrunk down into nothingness after Sonic stepped through, leaving no trace of its existence. Tyrahko was quite surprised at this. He'd never seen anything like a warp ring before. The Mobians certainly have some fascinating gear don't they?

"That warp ring is intriguing…" purred Tyrahko "I may have to steal one and use it for myself."

That gave Blaze some very bad visions right now for Silver's warp ring was a Super Warp Ring, meaning it can open portals to other zones as well. If Tyrahko had something like that, he could probably warp to alternate universes and bring his reign of terror to other parts of the multi-verse. But hopefully, that wouldn't happen since Sonic seemed to have a plan and Silver was contributing to it by letting Sonic have the warp ring. The other Mobians didn't seem to know what to think about all of this. Was Sonic out of his mind or did he have a plan of some kind? Whatever it is though, the Mobians would have to wait for there was no way of seeing what was going on over at Angel Island and they couldn't come to Angel Island and see what was happening for they were trapped in Tyrahko's energy ball prisons so all they could do was wait. It would be an agonizing wait with suspension rising as time went by but that was all the Mobians could do right now, there was nothing else they could do so waiting was all there was to it. They just hoped that Sonic hadn't gone off the deep end like it seems he has at the moment…

Angel Island, a true historical relic and valuable tourist attraction on the face of Mobius. Once part of the earth, it now floats above the ground and is an amazing sight for anybody who sees it. Ever since Knuckles and Shade had left the island to help fend off the Black Arms and fight off the Martians, the island had been floating around peacefully and had remained undisturbed since Knuckles & Shade's departure. But now, the peace was about to be broken for a warp ring opened up and out stepped Sonic and Marik. Sonic had chosen his position carefully so that he wouldn't warp him and Marik near the Master Emerald and let Marik see it. He could do without Marik trying to steal the Master Emerald after all. The place they had warped to was a fair distance away from the Master Emerald so Marik would never see it. After they had stepped through the warp ring, it shrunk back down to size and Marik seized it so Sonic couldn't use it as a quick get away or attempt to sneak off with it. Sonic didn't mind this though for he had a plan and it was going to work to perfection once he executed it. As Marik put the warp ring in his pocket, he looked around and gaped at what he was seeing. When Nyder had mentioned Angel Island to him, he did not picture an island that floated above the ground like it was doing now. This

was beyond what he had seen on Mobius before. He'd seen so much and yet so little at the same time during his time on Mobius. Marik gazed out into the horizon and look down at the ground, which was a few feet down from where they were now.

"Well, I'll be blown…" gasped Marik "Angel Island…floats in the sky?! How can an island like this just float in the air like it is doing now?!"

"That's for me to know and you to find out." said Sonic grimly "Now come on, the Chaos Emeralds are this way."

Marik did not wait to be asked twice. He eagerly followed Sonic as the blue hedgehog headed off into the woods to lead Marik to the tomb where the Chaos Emeralds were kept, all eight of them. Given how Sonic had laser cuffs around his ankles, he couldn't just simply run to the tomb and get the Chaos Emeralds, he had to walk to the tomb with Marik following his every step. It really irked Sonic that Marik had to be following him like this but he was going to play along with it for now since he had a plan and he knew what he was going to do. Sonic trudged slowly through the woods with Marik just behind him, pushing plants and vegetation out of the way. As they headed on through the woods, Marik began to grumble to himself since he hated plants and pushing through them was an annoyance to him. What he wouldn't give to have some Toxic Marsroth on him right now, he'd be able to kill the forest in seconds with some of the deadly substance on him right now. Marik pushed through a tree branch only for it to swing back and whip him across the face as he pushed through it. Sonic couldn't resist the urge to laugh at that so he chuckled at Marik. Marik ignored Sonic and continued following him. After a good few minutes of walking and trudging through plant life, Sonic and Marik eventually arrived at the tomb where the Chaos Emeralds were kept. He remembered it all so well, that huge slab of stone in the ground that hid the Chaos Emeralds deep down underground and masked their energy signatures so they couldn't be tracked by anything. Sonic pointed at the slab of stone.

"They're down in that tomb." said Sonic "All eight of them."

"Thank you, now open it for me." ordered Marik, not willing to trust Sonic to go down and get the emeralds himself "I'll go down and get

them once you've opened the tomb."

"Fair enough." said Sonic, pressing on the slab of stone and opening the tomb up for Marik.

The tomb opened up slowly but steadily and the bright, luminous light of the Chaos Emeralds shone out from deep down. Marik's face brightened at the sight of the Chaos Emeralds and he eagerly jumped down in order to get the emeralds. He had no seen them since the Chaos Emeralds hunt last year so he was quite happy to be seeing the emeralds again. He was still surprised at the fact Sonic and friends now had eight Chaos Emeralds but he didn't care, eight Chaos Emeralds was bound to be better than seven. As Marik collected up the Chaos Emeralds, Sonic saw to freeing himself from the laser cuffs. He found a large stone and he slammed it on top of the laser-cuff sphere between his ankles, destroying it immediately and freeing his legs. The one between his wrists was going to be harder considering he couldn't just simply raise his arms and smash the stone on top of it. Instead, Sonic started banging the laser-cuff sphere on the stone as hard as he could. He gave it a good few pounds before finally breaking it and freeing his wrists. He could now move his arms and legs as perfectly as he could before. He had managed to free himself from the laser cuffs just in time too for Marik had just come out of the tomb with all eight Chaos Emeralds in his arms.

"Aah…I've got all the Chaos Emeralds." crowed Marik "Especially this new, white Chaos Emerald you got from these "Black Arms" things you spoke of, whatever they are. I wonder how much power eight Chaos Emeralds hold?"

"You're not gonna find out because I'm gonna use them!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing Marik in the back and knocking him down onto the ground, causing him to drop all the Chaos Emeralds.

Marik groaned in pain and he clutched his aching back. He had almost forgotten how much a spin-dash from Sonic hurt given how he hadn't fought him for a while. Sonic quickly grabbed the Chaos Emeralds and was ready to turn super with them but Marik picked himself up and electrocuted him with his metal hand.

"I knew you were plotting something Sonic!" growled Marik "Well that trick of yours isn't going to work so you've just wasted both of our times! Before I take the Chaos Emeralds to Tyrahko, I'll get rid of you first!"

He kept up the electrocution in hope of finally finished off Sonic. It would take a while though since Marik's electrocution wasn't strong enough to kill someone very quickly but Marik was willing to keep it up until Sonic was dead. Besides, Sonic couldn't do anything about it, nobody could stop Marik from shocking Sonic and Sonic was being electrocuted, what could he do about it? Nothing, that's what! Then suddenly, Sonic did something that Marik never would have expected. He actually fought Marik's electrical attacks and got back up onto his feet! It was paining Sonic dearly but he was putting all his strength into just fighting Marik's attack. Sonic then curled up into a ball and spin-dashed Marik away, sending the Martian hurling backwards into a tree. Sonic grimaced and he clutched himself, the electricity still crackling through his fur but he was mostly alright for the moment.

"Man, I almost forgot how bad that felt!" grunted Sonic "Well, Marik's down now so I can get the Chaos Emeralds, turn super and deliver Tyrahko's big send off."

But Sonic wasn't safe yet. Marik picked himself up and tried to zap him again but Sonic jumped out of the way just in time. Marik then zoomed in on his jet shoes (he got a new pair after Silver wrecked his old ones remember?) and he karate-chopped Sonic across the face. Sonic punched Marik back and then grabbed Marik by wrapping his arms around Marik's arms. But Marik head-butted Sonic in the face to make him let go of him and Sonic staggered backwards. Marik then spun around and walloped Sonic across the cheek with a powerful punch and kneed him backwards towards the now empty tomb. Marik then attempted to dropkick Sonic but Sonic jumped out of the way and kicked Marik down into the tomb. He quickly pushed the stone slab over the tomb in an attempt to trap Marik inside the tomb but Marik wasn't trapped for long for he simply used Silver's warp ring to warp himself out. The moment he stepped out though, Sonic punched him across the battlefield and sent him head first into a tree. The warp ring ended up shrinking down back

to normal size and lying down on the ground for nobody was there to catch it. Then Sonic spin-dashed Marik five-times over and threw him into another tree. Marik lay against the tree, grimacing but still very much on his feet and able to carry on fighting. Sonic ran towards Marik only for Marik to step out the way and leave Sonic to run accidentally into the tree. Then Marik jumped up and grabbed a low hanging tree branch. He swung himself forward and kicked Sonic in the face. Sonic swiped helplessly at him like somebody trying to swat a fly but Marik raised his legs up out of the way so Sonic couldn't get him and he kicked Sonic directly on top of his head. Sonic ignored the pain long enough to spin-dash Marik directly in the gut and knock him down off the branch. Marik landed down on the ground away from the tree but he saw a log lying nearby. A very big log that could easily crush somebody if it landed on top of them. Marik picked up the log and threw it at Sonic. The log was hurling towards Sonic in a vertical position. Luckily for Sonic, the log had was hollow inside and had holes so Sonic merely spin-dashed directly through the log like a marble running through a tunnel. He went straight through the log and ended up spin-dashing Marik in the gut. Marik fumed angrily at Sonic and he ran towards another tree. Sonic followed Marik and the Martian jumped up and grabbed onto a huge tree branch. He pushed hard onto the branch and caused it to snap at the base but not completely break away. The branch ended up swinging down and smacking Sonic in the face like a golf club. The blue hedgehog staggered backwards and Marik kicked the branch as hard as he could, breaking it off completely and sending it crashing down on top of Sonic. Marik crowed at Sonic as he jumped down from the tree and stood over him.

"You're finished! And your pathetic friends are next!" crowed Marik.

He grabbed Sonic by the neck and prepared to electrocute him but Sonic socked him in the eye, making Marik let go of him and allowing him to push Marik off of him and stand back up. Sonic then spin-dashed Marik as hard as he could into another tree. The attack left Marik winded and finding it hard to stand up. Sonic then turned around and ran to grab the warp ring. He picked it up but Marik zapped him in the back and made him drop it. Sonic just retaliated with a homing attack to the head that knocked his helmet off. Sonic

then kicked Marik in the cranium, causing Marik to scream at the top of his voice for Sonic had hit the sensitive bony lumps on his head. Marik felt like his head was on fire due to how much the pain in his skull was hurting. Now Marik was stunned, Sonic grabbed the warp ring and opened it up behind Marik. He grabbed Marik by the jacket just after the Martian put his helmet back on and threw him directly through the warp ring. The warp ring was opened up to where they had been before they left so Marik would end up back with Tyrahko, the Martians and his friends. The warp ring closed up after Marik vanished through it and Sonic grabbed it so it would stay on his side and not go to Marik. Sonic sighed happily to himself and he twirled the warp ring around his finger.

"Whew, got rid of him at last." he said "Now where was I? Oh yes, Tyrahko's big send off…"

Now Marik was gone, Sonic scooped up the dropped Chaos Emeralds and he held his arms out. The eight Chaos Emeralds all levitated slowly up from his hands and started to spiral around his body. Sonic beamed happily for he always loved it when he super-powered. Sonic tensed himself up as the Chaos Emeralds began to spin around his body slowly but steadily. The speed of the spiralling Chaos Emeralds began to slowly but steadily increase as they spun around Sonic until the Chaos Emeralds became nothing more than a coloured blur all around him. Sonic's fur then changed from blue to gold and his quills pointed up. Super Sonic was here once again and he was ready to give Tyrahko a right royal beat down! Super Sonic felt a little different than usual though. The eighth Chaos Emerald had added some extra-power to him in his transformation so he was a little stronger than before. Super Sonic took to the skies gleefully and he stretched his arms out wide, the power of the Chaos Emeralds pulsing through his veins.

"Oh yeah! It's good to be super again!" cheered Sonic "Now let's give Tyrahko a little supersonic showdown…"

With that said, he rocketed off through the skies and headed back to New Mobotropolis. Boy the Martians would be horrified when he came onto the scene and boy would they be defeated at long last! The Martian's reign of terror was about to end now Super Sonic was here…

Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy! This is it folks, the exicting Martian saga comes to a titanic conclusion for the super showdown with Tyrahko is coming next time and there's more than just Sonic joining in with this battle! :D Tune in next time for the Martian saga's thrilling and EPIC conclusion! :D :D :D

Feel free to leave a review and express your thoughts on this chapter if you please. I'm always happy to have some feedback.

The End of the Martians

Story 136: The End of the Martians

Things were getting tense for the Mobians as time ticked slowly by and they waited for Sonic the Hedgehog to come back with the Chaos Emeralds and Silver the Hedgehog's Super Warp Ring. Sonic had been sent over to Angel Island with Marik the Martian monitoring him under the notion of getting the Chaos Emeralds for Grand Warlord Tyrahko, the God of Warfare. Unbeknownst to all but Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, they had no idea that Sonic actually had a plan. A plan to get the Chaos Emeralds without losing them to the Martians and having them end up in Tyrahko's grasp. They had been hoping that Sonic knew what he was doing but given how they had no idea what Sonic was up to, they couldn't be so sure about all that. Silver and Blaze were the only ones who had any idea though for Sonic had given a hint to Silver and Silver had passed it onto Blaze. And yet even they were sharing the other's anxiousness in this waiting moment. Would Sonic get the Chaos Emeralds and slip past Marik? Or was he bound to fail given the fact he had been fitted with laser cuffs and thus, wouldn't be able to do anything to resist Marik? One thing was for sure, this wait was getting more and more tense and agonizing as it was going on. That was always the sinister thing about waiting, you never know when it'll end and how suddenly it will end, making it an unpredictable force to be reckoned with. Patience maybe a strong virtue but patience doesn't make a wait any less tense. Tyrahko seemed to be quite patient though for he was just standing around with his arms folded, the wind softly blowing over him and spreading his capes out. Tyrahko was renowned for his patience. He often stood still for hours just waiting for his victim to show up, often perched upon something like an owl in a tree when waiting.

"Oh man…the suspense is killing me!" whined Tails the Twin-Tailed Fox "What's taking Sonic and Marik so long to get back?!"

"Knowing Marik, once he finds the sodding tomb, he'll dispose of Sonic and make off with the emeralds himself." muttered Knuckles

the Echidna "It'd be just like that little creep to do something like that."

"I hope he doesn't do that." said Cosmo the Seedrian worriedly "I've lost my kind, I don't want to lose a good friend of mine too."

"You got that right Cosmo." said Amy Rose "I hope my Sonic knows what he's doing. I mean, why would he willingly give Tyrahko the Chaos Emeralds? That's way out of his character, my handsome hero's got a plan and I know he has!"

"Oh really?" said Mandy Mouse, her face the embodiment of grimness "What are you, psychic all of the sudden? I don't think even you can tell what goes on in the blue-dude's head Amy."

"Well Mandy, Amy does have a legitimate point." said Tails "Sonic would never give the Chaos Emeralds to his worst enemies. I bet he's got something in mind."

"Not that it'll do him any good now he's restrained." sighed Blaze "I have a nasty feeling Tyrahko probably had Marik do that as an act of contingency. Make sure Sonic can't back-stab Marik and just take the emeralds himself."

"Well, we'll just have to see what happens." said Silver "I do hope that Sonic comes back alive or I've just lost mine and yours' ticket back home. If I can't get that warp ring back then we won't be able to leave this time, go back to the past again and try again to make sure the Martian invasion never happens or goes in the Martians' favour."

"Indeed." said Blaze sadly.

Tyrahko unfortunately was eavesdropping on the Mobians' conversation and what Silver had just said to Blaze caught his attention.

"Go back to the past again…? Are you saying that you and the feline woman aren't from this time period?" asked Tyrahko.

"Yes, I am. We're from the future and we came back here to make sure this invasion goes belly-up for you." explained Silver.

"Mobius' future is a wreck and we're from 200 years in the future." added Blaze "We're constantly striving to fix the catastrophe that ended the world and has left Mobians dying out and we're theorizing that the Martian invasion is the key factor in Mobius' doom so we've come back in time to help prevent you and the Martians from winning."

"We seem to have changed a good few things about the invasion already." said Silver, looking at the book he had with him "For starters, Count Drago isn't here because I ended up unintentionally killing him*, second me and Blaze ended up fighting Marik and Sierra in Soleanna instead of Sally & Nicole and there's a part where the Martians take over Castle Acorn but that hasn't happened yet. Mind you I think its just because they're all waiting around waiting for Sonic to come back with the Chaos Emeralds. Speaking of Chaos Emeralds, they're not mentioned at all in the book although it is missing a few pages so as well as you Tyrahko, the book might be missing pages detailing the Chaos Emeralds' role in this invasion."

"Interesting." purred Tyrahko "I guess that's how you Mobians managed to give the Martians a hard time. You and your female accomplice obviously came back in time to warn them about us coming and prepare the Mobians for our arrival."

"We did but I don't think we made that much difference." said Blaze dully "The events of the invasion have still mostly gone as foretold in the book. If Silver manages to get his Super Warp Ring back, we'll have to go EVEN FURTHER back in time to make sure that you monsters never win this battle."

"Well in that case, I will see to it that your "Silver" friend never gets his warp ring back." growled Tyrahko "When Marik and Sonic return, I will take the warp ring and keep it for myself. You will never interfere with time again…"

Then suddenly, much to everybody's surprise, a warp ring opened up not far away from Tyrahko and out of the warp ring shot Marik the Martian! After stunning him in the fight on Angel Island, Sonic had taken the warp ring and thrown Marik back through it to get him out of the way while he got the Chaos Emeralds and turned super with them. Marik hurled across the grass and he skidded to a rather

painful halt across his side. The Martians all gasped in amazement at what had just happened and Tyrahko just stared at Marik in astonishment. Even the Mobians were surprised and at the same time, getting hopeful since it seemed that Sonic DID have a plan after all and DID know what he was doing all along. If Marik's been sent back here then Sonic MUST have the Chaos Emeralds! It seemed things were going to turn in the Mobian's favour once again.

"Marik?!" blurted Tyrahko "Why in the volcanic pits of Mount Olympus have you come back here empty-handed?!"

"Grrr…Sonic broke free of his binds and ambushed me!" grunted Marik "I tried as best as I could to fight him off but he beat me and threw me back through the warp ring! I bet he's got it now and he's now going to use the Chaos Emeralds to destroy us! I bet he's going to do the same thing Silver did when he fought Uncle Drago, turn super!"

The Mobians all beamed with delight (and so did Myra from behind the Martian's back for this meant the Martians were going to be defeated after all).

"Oh yeah! I knew my Sonic had a plan!" cheered Amy "Oh Tyrahko, you're dead meat now!"

"Yeah! Nothing can stop the might of Super Sonic!" cried Tails excitedly "The Martians are gonna be dead now he's coming!"

Tyrahko was so furious with Marik that he picked up the tiny three-foot Martian (he's seven feet and Marik's three feet so imagine someone that size picking on someone that small!) and threw him directly into the arms of Diablo.

"You miserable, incompetent, impertinent little imp!" roared Tyrahko "You allowed Sonic to get the Chaos Emeralds?! Now he has them, he'll use whatever power they have to destroy us all!"

"I'm sorry Tyrahko!" retorted Marik "But you shouldn't worry, I mean you have god-powers! You're already super! I bet you'll still be a match for Super Sonic!"

"Maybe so." said Tyrahko, calming down a little "And I do have a little recourse to aid in this situation…"

The Mobians' expressions fell. This didn't sound good. They knew what Tyrahko meant by "recourse". He meant he must have some kind of trick up his sleeve (or in his case, his armour) and that might give him an edge in this forthcoming battle with Super Sonic. Maybe the day wasn't saved after all. Then suddenly, out of the blue, a golden flash of light appeared from nowhere and rocketed down from the sky and towards Tyrahko like a speeding bullet. Tyrahko saw the golden light but he was too late to defend himself. The light charged directly into Tyrahko, squarely in the gut and sent him hurling backwards a very far distance. Tyrahko hurled about 100 yards away from where he originally stood and landed down with a heavy thud. Due to the fact Tyrahko had just been hit, the energy balls trapping the Mobians disappeared like popping bubbles for Tyrahko's concentration to keep them active was broken by the sudden attack and the Mobians were all free at last. They all looked up at the luminous golden light that dazzled everybody and they all beamed with glee for they knew who it was. It was Super Sonic, here at last and he was looking as marvellous as ever. Diablo and Natasha just stared at Super Sonic worriedly.

"No, no, NO! It's Super Silver all over again!" wailed Diablo "And we don't have any Energy Diamonds to do what Drago did so we won't have a chance against him!"

"Don't worry Diablo, we already have our winning card in this game." noted Natasha "Tyrahko will be enough to take that golden, spiny freak down. He is god-powered after all."

That statement made Diablo relax a little but not by a whole lot. Super Silver was still able to eventually finish off Drago despite being super-powered so Super Sonic might be able to finish off Tyrahko despite his prodigious levels of power. As for the Mobians, they were going mad with joy right now at the sight of Super Sonic. They were acting like they'd just seen an angel come down from the heavens to bless them all.

"You did it Sonic, you got the emeralds and turned super again!" cheered Tails "The Martians have no hope of beating us now!"

"You got that right Tails." crowed Super Sonic "But I'm not the only one who's fighting Tyrahko. Hey Shadow, wanna join me in an epic Martian beat down?"

"Do I ever!" laughed Shadow eagerly "I'm gonna join you in this battle too!"

"And so am I." said Silver, standing forward "I am capable of turning super as well. Allow me to help bring down Tyrahko."

"You can turn super too?" blurted Super Sonic "Cool. Alright then, Shadow and Silver can join me for the Martian's final hour on this planet!"

"And you can count me in too." said Blaze, standing forward also.

"Wha…Blaze, you can't turn super can you?" asked Silver doubtfully.

"While I don't have a super form in the general sense of the term, I do have a powerful transformation." explained Blaze "With the Sol Emeralds, I can become a burning entity that is like a pyrokinetic person's equivalent to a super form. I become known as "Burning Blaze" when I turn into that entity."

"Really? Why didn't you use it when I fought Count Drago in his Metal Form?" asked Silver.

"You didn't offer me the Sol Emeralds." retorted Blaze "You didn't give me a chance to use the Sol Emeralds to turn into Burning Blaze. That and I didn't think my burning form would be required since you seemed to have the fight under control. I didn't think I needed to become Burning Blaze and help you beat Metal Drago. In this case though, I am all too happy to provide an extra edge over Tyrahko in this battle."

"OK then." said Silver "But the Sol Emeralds are back home so you'll need to warp back home and get them."

"I got that covered." said Super Sonic, tossing Blaze the Super Warp Ring "While Blaze gets the Sol Emeralds to use her transformation, I'll just get Shadow and Silver ready for transformation."

With that said, Blaze instantly opened up the Super Warp Ring and opened up a portal from the present timeline to the future timeline. Blaze jumped through it and warped back to her timeline. She had warped herself onto Angel Island's Emerald Shrine where all seven Sol Emeralds were sitting neatly in a slab of rock she had made for them. Blaze scooped them all up into her arms and warped herself back into the present timeline with the Super Warp Ring. As she arrived back, she saw Super Sonic handing out the seven Chaos Emeralds to Shadow and Silver. Shadow and Silver took the Chaos Emeralds and they both stood up straight with their hands held out wide, ready to begin the transformation into their super forms. The Chaos Emeralds slowly circled around Shadow & Silver as they levitated at about their shoulder height and began to apply the transformations. Shadow and Silver tensed up as the Chaos Emeralds picked up speed and became a colourful blur circling around the two hedgehogs. Shadow's spines all began to point upwards and his fur became a dazzling lemon-yellow colour. Silver's spines on the back of his head pointed upwards and his fur became a radiant golden colour much like Super Sonic's fur. Super Shadow and Super Silver were here and ready for action. Super Sonic and Super Shadow were both amazed at Super Silver and how he looked in his super form. Super Silver was equally as intrigued with Super Sonic and Super Shadow, given how he'd never seen another super form before. Now that Shadow and Silver had transformed, Blaze was next to turn super. She held the Sol Emeralds out ahead of her and the seven gems all slowly lifted up out of her hands and started slowly circling around her. As the Sol Emeralds did that, they all began to go ablaze like lit-candles and as they circled around Blaze, they became a huge, dazzling, spiralling ring of fire that whirled around Blaze like a fire-eater's act. Blaze tensed herself up tightly and then transformed into Burning Blaze as the Sol Emeralds engulfed her with flames. Burning Blaze had no physical differences to normal Blaze other than pinkish-coloured fur, a red coat, a red tail tip and magenta flame cuffs around her wrists and ankles. She was surrounded by a flame like aurora. The super-hedgehogs all stared at Burning Blaze in amazement, all completely awed by her appearance. Even the others were amazed by Blaze's transformation and they could all agree on one thing, it certainly was unique compared to the super-hedgehogs.

"Whoa…I think Blaze's super-form brings the word "hot" to a whole new level!" cried Super Sonic in astonishment "You look incredible Blaze!"

"Totally in agreement there!" laughed Super Silver, thinking that Blaze somehow just got "hotter" in her super-form (no pun intended).

"Thank you." said Burning Blaze "Now, let us bring the light that will chase away the darkness that threatens to consume our world!"

"I'm up for that!" cried Super Shadow eagerly "Let's crush those Martians!"

Before anybody could do anything though, Tyrahko had picked himself up and he flew back towards the Super Mobians as fast as he could. He ploughed straight through the four supers like an elephant rampaging through the jungle in a frightened stampede and he knocked them all down onto the ground for the moment. The supers picked themselves up almost immediately after they had been knocked down and they flew towards Tyrahko. Tyrahko just flew up out of the way and he ascended a great distance up into the sky with the supers following him. Tyrahko decided that he would take this battle up into the sky so that there would be no interference from anybody around and that he had all the space he needed for a battle with four super-powered Mobians. Super Sonic, Super Shadow, Super Silver and Burning Blaze all lined up together and they glowered at Tyrahko. The Mobians and Martians down on the ground all looked up at the sky, anxious for the battle to begin. Once this battle got going, there was no telling who was going to win and who will emerge victorious in this super-powered showdown.

"Tyrahko, you have shaped your own race into a race of feral, short-sighted, hypocritical monsters who seek to throw the universe into relapse!" yelled Burning Blaze "We are gonna put an end to your reign of terror and render the universe free from your sacrilege and desecration!"

"Your kind has done many bad things to us over the past year and so! Time to put it to an end!" growled Super Sonic.

"And don't expect any lenience from us! We will not hold back!" snarled Super Shadow.

"We will crush you and give Mobius a prosperous future, not just for me and Blaze, but for Sonic and his friends and everybody around!" declared Super Silver "The universe will sigh with relief when we put and end to your tyranny!"

Tyrahko narrowed his eyes down at the Mobians and glowered at them. Their words of motivation fell short on him and he did not care at all what they had said.

"Your hubris comes too early Mobians." sneered Tyrahko "It is unwise to claim something before it happens."

"Look who's talking." snorted Super Sonic "Now put them up or chicken out Tyrahko! This fight is about to begin!

"Indeed it is and it'll end with you all headless before me and the Martian race." said Tyrahko, his voice a soft growl as he spoke.

He reached behind his back and proceeded to, what appeared to the Mobians, pull something out of his back as if he had something stored in it. It started off as a long streak of sparkling, luminous light but when he pulled it all out, the light died down and became a solid entity in Tyrahko's hands. It was a huge, beastly looking sword that was beyond anything the Mobians had ever seen or encountered in their entire lives. The sword had a sharp, diamond like point and twelve serrated spikes that ran down the blade of the sword, some pointing up and some pointing down. Even the hand-guard had curled, serrated spikes that could easily penetrate someone's hand without proper protection around the hands like Tyrahko did. The blade of the sword was red and purple and it had a malevolent aurora that surrounded the blade like a blazing fire. The Super-Mobians gaped at the sword, unable to believe what they were seeing.

"By New Mobotropolis! What is that?!" cried Super Sonic "Looks like the world's beastliest looking sword!"

"That is exactly what it is Sonic." crowed Tyrahko "This is my

weapon of mass destruction, a weapon I forged out of leftover Martian weaponry and Energy Diamonds. I call it the Solar Sabre, a weapon I forged in the emptiness of space and a weapon that has brought doom to any planet I have destroyed in my time! And now the Solar Sabre will claim your pathetic lives! Nobody has faced this prodigious weapon of cosmic brilliance and survived to apprise anybody on its existence so you "super-powered" creatures will stand no chance against it!"

"We'll see about that!" shouted Super Silver "Let's go everybody!"

With that said, Super Sonic, Super Shadow, Super Silver & Burning Blaze all charged towards Tyrahko like the Red Arrows all lined up and rocketing through the sky. Tyrahko just cackled at his opponents and he swiped the Solar Sabre at them. A huge wave of malevolent, dark energy whooshed towards them like a sweeping ocean wave and it hit the four supers, blowing them all backwards across the sky. They all shrugged it off easily though and whooshed back towards Tyrahko.

"Nice toy Tyrahko, but we'll still beat it!" declared Super Sonic "Here we come!"

What followed that little statement was Super Sonic curling up into a golden ball and spin-dashing Tyrahko as hard as he could in the abs. Tyrahko hurled backwards after that powerful blow but he recovered quite quickly and he pointed the Solar Sabre at Super Sonic. He fired a huge ball of fiery energy at Super Sonic but Super Sonic dodged the attack. Part of the Solar Sabre's feature was that it had powers in relation to the Solar Systems of the universe. It had the fiery inferno of the sun, the whooshing waters and winds of Neptune, rock-related attacks in reference to the various moons of the universe and acidic powers in relation to Venus' acidic atmosphere and rains. This is why the Solar Sabre was a weapon to be reckoned with, its powers were on an apocalyptic scale and the Super-Mobians would have to fight hard in order to make sure they did not fall foul to it. Tyrahko fired waves of flames at Super Sonic with his Solar Sabre but Super Sonic flew out of the way and Burning Blaze flew in to tackle Tyrahko's fiery inferno. Burning Blaze let out waves of fire from her hands and she and Tyrahko ended up in one heck of a blazing match. The two put all their effort into

making sure that either one would win, the flames getting bigger and dancing away most brilliantly as the blazing attacks clashed with each other.

"My flames will consume yours, and you as well pyro-form!" growled Tyrahko "You are foolish to dare resist me!"

"And you are foolish to dare underestimate me!" snarled Burning Blaze, cranking her flames up a little more.

Unfortunately, Burning Blaze had reached her limit and wouldn't be able to burn any hotter and fiercer than she already was. Tyrahko had reached his limit too and the two powerful beings were at a stalemate at the moment. Neither fire attacks were going to overcome the other. That is until Super Shadow zoomed in and threw a plethora of Chaos Spears at Tyrahko like a bunch of darts. The Chaos Spears all struck Tyrahko all over is body and given Super Shadow's enhanced powers, these Chaos Spears were worse than before. The Chaos Spears caused Tyrahko to lose his concentration and cry out in pain, leaving Burning Blaze's pyro-attacks to whoosh into his face and blaze him all over. But given his immortality, he survived the impact and his armour didn't take any damage from the attack for it was immune to flames. It didn't stop the attack from hurting Tyrahko though. Tyrahko roared furiously at Super Shadow for interfering and thus, he pointed the Solar Sabre at Super Shadow and sent a shower of meteor rocks hurling towards him. Super Shadow just ploughed through the rocks with ease as they soared towards him. But as Super Shadow ploughed through the rocks and reached Tyrahko, Tyrahko walloped him across the face with his Solar Sabre and made him cry out in pain. Had he not been super-powered, Tyrahko would have cleaved a deep wound into his face but Super Shadow's invulnerability had prevented him from receiving bodily harm of any kind after that attack. Super Shadow growled furiously at Tyrahko and he tried to punch him but Tyrahko swung the Solar Sabre upwards and slashed Super Shadow with it as he neared him. Then Tyrahko kicked Super Shadow down into the ground where he crashed near the Mobians and Martians watching the epic battle from below and made a small crater in the ground. Tyrahko pointed the Solar Sabre down at Super Shadow but before he could do anything, Super Silver used his

psychokinesis to grab Tyrahko and hold him in place. Given his super-enhanced telekinetic abilities, Tyrahko couldn't break free of his psychic grasp as easily as before. Tyrahko fought against Super Silver's psychokinetic hold but just as he was beginning to break free, Super Sonic and Burning Blaze both pile-dived him in the back with a spin-dash and fiery tornado respectively. Tyrahko was sent hurling forwards by the two and Super Silver added to the already powerful attacks by clasping his hands together and giving Tyrahko a psychically enhanced fist-slam to the head that left a dent in his helmet and sent him hurling down almost into the ground. Super Shadow picked himself up and he spin-dashed Tyrahko in the chest, making sure he hit the Energy-Diamond embedded in there so as to add more pain to him. Tyrahko bellowed with pain as he was hit in the chest by Super Shadow and he clutched it tightly as if he had chest pain. The roar was so loud and the battle was so colossal that the citizens of New Mobotropolis all came out of their homes and looked up at the sky to see what was happening. In Royal HQ, Scott the Lynx, Kiara the Cheetah and Charmy Bee struggled out of their medical beds (they're still recovering from Count Nyder's earlier torture**) and staggered over to the window to see what was going on. What they saw was beyond anything they had seen before and they could hardly believe what they were watching. They were so amazed that the three hospitalized Mobians couldn't speak and just decided to stand by the window and watch the action. Back over to the battle, Tyrahko catapulted himself back into the air with Super Shadow perusing him and he swung the Solar Sabre at the heroes, but this time he spun around a full 360 degrees and he did so several times like a spinning top, so waves from every direction emitted from the Solar Sabre and swept over the Super-Mobians. They took most of the attacks but the waves still sent them back a little. Tyrahko stopped spinning around after a few hundred waves had been sent out and he pointed the Solar Sabre at them again.

"You have fared well so there, but can you handle the acid rain that hungers for your bodies Mobians?!" roared Tyrahko, lifting the Solar Sabre up at the sky and emitting a yellowish streak of energy.

As he did so, he created a yellowish cloud of energy that loomed ominously above the Super-Mobians. Then as the cloud finished forming, it began to shower the Mobians with a heavy downpour of

acid rain, a faithful homage to the planet of Venus in the human Solar System. The rain poured down on top of the Super-Mobians. Their invulnerability prevented the acid from dissolving them and burning straight through their skin of course but the drops still burnt severely and made them all cry out in excruciating pain. To make matters worse, the acid rain was also beginning rain down onto the ground below. The Martians had all stood well back from the ferocious attack whereas the Mobians were just beginning to scramble out of the way of the falling drops of acid that rained down from the sky above them. Super Silver gasped in horror and decided to put a stop to Tyrahko's madness. He used his psychokinesis to halt the cloud and stop it from raining anymore acid. Tyrahko gasped in astonishment at what Super Silver had just did and he swung the sword at him, sending an energy wave hurling towards Super Silver. Super Silver just simply brought the acid cloud down in front of the wave and let the wave destroy it, stopping the acid rain for now. Now that horror was over, Super Sonic and Super Shadow both rocketed towards Tyrahko in a super-powered spin-dash each and they both walloped Tyrahko as hard as they could, sending him hurling backwards through the sky. They both turned around and spin-dashed him again but as they tried again a third time, Tyrahko held up the Solar Sabre and blocked the blow. He then pointed the cosmic sword at the two hedgehog and blew them away with a heavy gust of wind, its speed and force on par with the deadliest of hurricanes. Burning Blaze whooshed in and threw a shower of fireballs at Tyrahko but Tyrahko knew how to counter that attack. He just simply waved the Solar Sabre and put out the fireballs with a gush of water. Burning Blaze stared in amazement and horror at this and she jumped out of the way as Tyrahko tried to throw a wave of water over her. Super Shadow zoomed in and threw a bunch of Chaos Spears at Tyrahko, the shots all make him fall back a little. Tyrahko raised the Solar Sabre, poised to make another attack but Super Sonic put a stop to that by unleashing some lightening fast spin-dashes on him, the finishing spin-dash being on top of his head once he'd unleashed it all. Tyrahko just walloped Super Sonic across the face with the Solar Sabre and then he unleashed the powerful blast from the Energy Diamond in his chest, blowing Super Sonic miles through the sky as it hit him. Tyrahko quickly finished the attack though in order to tire himself out less and he aimed his Solar Sabre at Super Shadow, Super Silver and Burning Blaze.

"Let's see how well you handle all the Solar Sabre's attacks at once Mobians!" he growled menacingly as he prepared to make his next move.

He then proceeded to do just that, fire a combination of fire, water, rocks AND acid all at once at the three Super-Mobians! Super Shadow however just performed a Chaos Control and stopped the attack directly in its path. Tyrahko couldn't believe his eyes. The Mobians had the ability to stop time in their super-forms?! How powerful did those Chaos Emeralds make them?! One thing was for sure, Tyrahko had to take them down good and hard. Super Shadow whooshed towards Tyrahko and punched him in the cheek with both fists, then he uppercut Tyrahko in the chin and then kick-slammed him in the Energy Diamond in his chest. That attack left Tyrahko feeling very pained indeed and before he could recover, Super Silver grabbed him with the psychic grasp of his psychokinesis and he threw Tyrahko in the frozen combination attack just as the Chaos Control was beginning to wear off. That left Tyrahko screaming in pain as he was blazed by the flames, hit by the rocks, hit with the water and scalded by the acid in that attack Super Shadow had frozen in time. The impact rendered Tyrahko with bits of his armour scalded and some tiny cracks appearing on it. His armour was beginning to get damaged now, if they kept it up a little longer then they could destroy his armour and kill him. Super Sonic returned to the battle and saw the damage that had been done to Tyrahko while he was catching back up.

"Wow! We're getting through his armour at last!" blurted Super Sonic, observing the cracks on Tyrahko's armour "Keep it up guys, we'll penetrate him eventually!"

"Fools! It took a planet-shattering bomb to so much as render my armour heavily damaged and me half-dead!" snarled Tyrahko "You will take forever to break my armour! In fact, I wager that you will run out of super power before you can break me! I've seen many super-forms in my time and they all have one thing in common, they do not last forever and yours will undoubtedly be the same."

"You got that right Tyrahko, which is why we will make sure we destroy you before we run out of juice!" declared Super Sonic "And if we run out, we will just power ourselves up again so don't count on

us running out being helpful to you!"

He then spin-dashed Tyrahko in the gut and knocked him backwards. Tyrahko however retaliated with a swipe of the Solar Sabre and an energy-wave sweeping over Super Sonic and knocking him down. Burning Blaze whooshed directly into Tyrahko's chest and spun around in a fiery tornado, making Tyrahko grimace in pain as she blazed away at him. Tyrahko however put a stop to her attacks by clasping his fists together and slamming her on the head, knocking her down into the ground like a bird that's been shot dead. Super Silver cried out for Burning Blaze and he rocketed towards Tyrahko. Tyrahko aimed the Solar Sabre at Silver and he fired huge moon rocks at him. Super Silver merely caught all the moon rocks with his psychokinesis but as he reached Tyrahko, Tyrahko threw another one directly at his head and it hit him, making him lose his focus and drop all the rocks he'd just caught down onto the ground below. Tyrahko then fired another shower of moon rocks at Super Silver and they all hit him for he wasn't ready to defend himself in time. Super Sonic and Super Shadow however whizzed around behind Tyrahko and they spin-dashed him directly in the back. Tyrahko cried out in pain as he was hit and he swiped at the two hedgehogs with the Solar Sabre. Super Sonic and Super Shadow dodged the attack though and they spin-dashed him again. Then Super Shadow let loose another shower of Chaos Spears on Tyrahko and the spears made Tyrahko cry out in pain. Super Sonic spin-dashed towards Tyrahko but Tyrahko caught him in an energy ball and he threw him at Super Shadow, sending the two super hedgehogs crashing down into the ground and sprawling across it. Burning Blaze rocketed back up in to the air and she whupped Tyrahko with a fiery tornado that moved far too fast for him to block. Tyrahko however just squirted Burning Blaze with a jet of water from his Solar Sabre. The water drenched Burning Blaze and put her fire out briefly but she soon ignited herself again. Super Silver joined up with Burning Blaze and the two launched a pair of punches each. Burning Blaze's punch was enhanced by her pyrokinetic powers and Silver's was psychically enhanced, making the attacks very powerful and enough to make Tyrahko double over in pain. Tyrahko shrugged off the attack and he spun around with the Solar Sabre held out straight. He sent energy waves sailing out from the sword as he did so and some of the waves hit Super Silver and Burning Blaze. Super

Sonic & Super Shadow however put a stop to that by rocketing up underneath Tyrahko and spin-dashing him (let's hope they didn't spin-dash him in the crotch!). Tyrahko was thrown upside down by the attack and he ended up dropping the Solar Sabre onto the ground. Now he was weapon-less, the Super-Mobians seized the opportunity to attack Tyrahko as viciously as possible while he was defenceless. Super Sonic & Super Shadow both spin-dashed him, Burning Blaze threw fireballs at him and Super Silver psychically punched him all at once and they kept it up for a good whole minute, leaving Tyrahko wailing like a pained tiger as he was bombarded by all these attacks. But Tyrahko soon put a stop to that bombardment by activating an energy barrier around himself and pushing the Super-Mobians all away. Now he finally had a moment, Tyrahko flew back down to the ground and retrieved his Solar-Sabre, only for Super Sonic & Super Shadow to pile-dive him in the back as he grabbed it. Tyrahko spun around and tried to cleave their bodies in two but Super Sonic & Super Shadow dodged the attack and both gave him an uppercut to the face each. Tyrahko growled at the two and he flew back up into the air. What he did next was unbelievable. He pointed the Solar Sabre at the ground and fired a beam of light at it. Then, a HUGE chunk of the ground suddenly levitated up into the air! This whole thing made everybody stand well back as chunks of the ground began to rise up from the ground below. The Super-Mobians all gasped in surprise at this incredible feat.

"No way! How are you doing that?!" cried Super Sonic.

"I didn't mention that the Solar Sabre can also control gravity." explained Tyrahko, his voice like a banshee's "I can make things raise up like I am doing now, or I can increase the gravity and squash my enemies into the dirt! Something that even you will not be able to counter."

With that said, Tyrahko lunged forward with the sword and sent the chunks of ground he'd picked up with the Solar Sabre hurling towards the Super-Mobians. They all ploughed through the chunks with ease but they were only a distraction while Tyrahko prepared for his next move. Super Sonic, Super Shadow, Super Silver and Burning Blaze all crushed their way through the earth and sped towards Tyrahko at top speed. But Tyrahko was ready fro them. He

pointed the Solar Sabre at the four supers and he activated the sword's gravity powers. This time though, it wasn't taking away gravity and making things raise up, it was increasing the gravity around the supers and pushing them down! It was like a giant hand had ascended down from the sky and was pushing down on the Super-Mobians. Slowly but steadily, the Super-Mobians were being pushed down towards the ground by the increasing gravity.

"Grrr…what…is he…doing?!" grunted Super Sonic, trying to fight back.

"He's…making the…gravity around…us…more tense…he's pushing…us down!" spluttered Super Silver, trying to fight back with his psychokinesis but alas, not even a psychokinetic can fight gravity.

"We've…gotta…stop him…before he crushes us!" cried Super Shadow.

"He…can't crush us…as long as…we're super-powered…but if he…keeps us…trapped down on…the ground…long enough…we'll run out…and THEN he'll crush us!" grunted Burning Blaze.

That was the idea Tyrahko had, press them down with increased gravity and keep them there until their power runs dry and then crush them. Tyrahko had brought many worlds to their knees with the sword's gravitational abilities and now Mobius was going to suffer its wrath once this fight was over. Tyrahko kept up the gravitational push until the Super-Mobians were pressed firmly down onto the ground below. He didn't push down any harder for that was the hardest he needed to push. The gravity around the Super-Mobians was so great that they couldn't even move. They were firmly pressed down on the ground, the gravity around them too great for them to so much as wriggle a finger. Super Sonic & Super Shadow tried desperately to use a Chaos Control and warp out of the way of this death attack but the gravitational push on them was so great that they were struggling to speak. They were completely trapped by Tyrahko's immense power. The Mobians all watched on nervously, wondering how the Super-Mobians could get their way out of this one. Tyrahko and the Martians (except Myra) all cackled at what was happening.

"That's it Tyrahko! Crush them with your gravitational push!" cheered Marik "Once their super-forms expire, they'll be nothing but flattened bodies on the face of the earth!"

"Indeed." purred Tyrahko triumphantly "And once I've finished with you, I shall take the Chaos Emeralds from your flattened corpses and then my ruination of this world can begin!"

"NO!" cried Sally helplessly "Tyrahko, please don't kill them!"

Tyrahko ignored the simpering queen and he continued to keep the Super-Mobians pressed firmly down onto the ground. It seemed that the end had come for Sonic, Shadow, Silver & Blaze. They were stuck on the ground thanks to Tyrahko making the gravity around them stronger and because they couldn't move, their super forms would eventually run out and their invulnerability won't save them from being crushed any longer for it would be gone. Their super-forms really were just delaying the inevitable. Knuckles decided to give the Super-Mobians a hand by running up to Tyrahko and getting ready to punch him. The idea was to knock Tyrahko down, make him drop the sword and in turn, stop him from doing what he is doing to the Super-Mobians right now. But unfortunately, Tyrahko was prepared for that. He trapped the Mobians in energy balls to keep them back and stop them from interfering with him. All they could do now was helplessly watched as their only hope was minutes away from being crushed by gravity. But fortunately, that was never going to happen. For Myra had decided she'd had enough of watching innocents get hurt or killed and decided to let her treachery become known to the Martians. She ran out away from the others, got out her magnetism hammer and aimed it at Tyrahko as she ran behind him. The magnetic pull of the hammer grabbed his armour and started to drag Tyrahko away from the Mobians. As Tyrahko was pulled away, the Solar Sabre's gravity powers were aimed away from the Super-Mobians for Tyrahko's arms were flailing madly and he was swinging the Solar Sabre around, giving the Super-Mobians the perfect opportunity to get back up at last. As Tyrahko was pulled towards Myra's hammer, the Super-Mobians all whaled on him as callously as they could until he was firmly attached to Myra's hammer.

"Myra! What are you doing?!" snarled Tyrahko.

"Something I SHOULD have done a long time ago freak!" yelled Myra bravely.

She then set the hammer to repel and sent Tyrahko rocketing towards the other Martians. Tyrahko ended up knocking them all off their feet and sending them sprawling on the ground. This caused the energy balls around the Mobians to disappear once again and they all cheered for Myra.

"Wow Myra, that was gutsy of you, but we appreciate it!" cried Super Sonic happily "You saved our necks out there!"

"Looks like I was right to trust you after all." said Super Shadow with a dry smile.

"You're welcome." said Myra "Now let's finish off Tyrahko shall we?"

Super Sonic nodded and they prepared to fight again. Tyrahko picked himself up and he glowered at Myra, his eyes a hardcore scowl of fury.

"Myra! What has gotten into you?!" he demanded fiercely "Why have you betrayed us?!"

"I'm betraying you all because I care about ourselves!" retorted Myra "Our stupid vendetta is nothing short of nihilism and all we're gonna do is ruin the universe if we keep on destroying peace and happiness! I thought I was gonna enjoy destroying peace-lovers everywhere…but I was wrong! I'm sorry I ever joined this moronic fleet and this idiotic vendetta in the first place and I wish to help contribute to your downfall! Then once you're gone, I will go back to Mars and make the Martians a race worthy of being part of! A race that will no longer loathe peace and instead, embrace it! I will turn the Martians back to the way they apparently used to be before you lost your mind and turned us all into mindless brutes with a mindless agenda!"

The Martians all looked stunned to hear Myra say that. Dranzer was the most hurt of them all though for he was married to Myra. Even the Mobians, although they already knew of Myra's subversive ways, were amazed to hear her say those words. Tyrahko was so

furious with Myra that he went berserk with rage.

"HOW DARE YOU BETRAY US ALL MYRA!" he thundered "I WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOU NEVER LIVE TO SEE ANOTHER MARTIAN WAR YOU TRAITOR!"

Tyrahko then lunged towards Myra with the Solar Sabre raised high above his head but Super Sonic and Super Shadow performed a Chaos Control to freeze him into place. Tyrahko was now completely frozen into place by the Chaos Control, rendering him helpless and prone to any attack the Super-Mobians could possibly do to him. Thus, the Super-Mobians all bombarded Tyrahko with several different attacks and even Myra joined in the frenzy. Super Sonic spin-dashed him, Super Shadow spin-dashed him and Chaos Speared him, Burning Blaze unleashed a fury of fire attacks on him, Super Silver psychically punched and kicked him and Myra hammered him. The Martians all watched in terror as Tyrahko was being pulverized by all the attackers. The Super-Mobians and Myra kept all this up for a minute just as the Chaos Control wore off and Tyrahko was thrown down onto his back by the attacks as he was unfrozen. Super Shadow then decided to deliver the punishing blow that would surely finished off Tyrahko. He unclipped his inhibitor rings, handed them to Super Sonic and he jumped onto Tyrahko as he was standing back up. Everybody cleared the area for they knew what was coming next. Super Shadow turned a blazing, crimson red colour and he unleashed the all mighty Chaos Blast on Tyrahko. Shadow's Chaos Blast was powerful enough but Super Shadow's was devastating. The Chaos Blast completely engulfed Tyrahko and Super Shadow as it was unleashed and everybody shielded their eyes from the dazzling light of the blast. After a minute or so, the Chaos Blast died down and Super Shadow panted for breath. He fell down onto his knees and Super Sonic handed him back his inhibitor rings. Super Shadow clipped them back on and the Super-Mobians all stared at Tyrahko. To their amazement, he was still alive! But not for long. His armour was heavily damaged by the blast now. There were cracks galore and a few holes had appeared in it. But that wasn't all, the cracks on the armour began to increase and chunks of it started falling apart! Tyrahko's armour had truly been damaged to the point of destruction by that Chaos Blast! Tyrahko gasped in horror as his armour began to crumble to pieces, his powers slowly

fading away and his life slipping between his fingers. All the armour around his arms fell off of him and broke to pieces on the ground, his helmet began to fall apart and the armour around his upper-body was crumbling too.

"NNNNNOOOOOOOOOOO!" bellowed Tyrahko as his armour began to crumble "I…I cannot lose to a bunch of animals! I am Tyrahko, the God of Warfare! I cannot have my flawless reign of terror marred by these Mobians! No, No, NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO…"

His voice soon trailed off as all the armour around his upper-body broke away and his body began to start rotting for his immortality had deteriorated along with his armour and time was catching up to him. His skin turned into dust and his flesh became atoms as he started to rot and fade away. Everybody watched the gruesome sight in disgust and some people like Sally, Nicole and Cosmo turned away, unable to watch it anymore. Tyrahko's agonized wails were finally silenced after his skin and flesh had all deteriorated away and his bones were left to lay there, weak and fragile and crumbling to pieces the moment the skeleton fainted down onto the ground. All that remained of Tyrahko now was a broken skeleton and pieces of his marvellous armour. Tyrahko was finally finished after a million years of ruination. His reign of terror was over. The Mobians all instantly began to cheer whereas the Martians all wailed in fury.

"NNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

"Why should we?! You never did!" snarled Super Silver "Now say goodbye to the universe Diablo!"

With that said, all three super hedgehogs performed a Chaos Control which opened up a huge portal that led to the void. The portal spiralled around and began to suck all the Martians but Myra towards itself. Myra was obviously being spared given she had betrayed the Martians and she was well out of the way. But there was one thing she quickly needed to do. Myra ran back into the Martian ship and after a couple of minutes, returned with the charred and unconscious bodies of Sycranna and Obelisk (they still haven't healed from their encounter with Knuckles and Shade). Myra threw them into the path of the portal and they were sucked in instantly. The Martians tried as hard as they could to prevent themselves from being sucked into the Chaos Portal but their efforts were ultimately futile. They were all sucked in one by one. Diablo, Natasha, Mercury, Dranzer, Sierra, Zarondight and Count Nyder were all dragged into the portal. Even the Martian soldiers were dragged into the portal too, every single one of them. Marik was the only Martian left to get sucked in and he was just losing his grip on the ground.

"You'll pay for this!" roared Marik "We'll escape the void somehow! We'll come back Sonic! You have not heard the last of me! We will come back and I promise you that! We will come baaaaaaaaaaccccccccccccckkkkkkkkk…"

His voice trailed off as he finally lost his grip and he was sucked into the portal with all the others. The Chaos Portal sealed itself and vanished into thin air, leaving no trace of its existence. The Martians were now permanently trapped in the void, never to disturb anybody's peace ever again. The Martians were finished at long last. Now the deed had been done, Sonic, Shadow, Silver and Blaze all powered down and returned to their normal selves, complacent with the fact the battle was finally over and the Martians were no more. Now all that was over, the Mobians all exploded into applause and cheer.

"YES! We did it again!" yelled Tails, punching the air triumphantly "We've stopped our THIRD alien invasion!"

"The Martians are gone for good!" cheered Cosmo "Now we peace-

lovers never have to fear their tyranny again!"

"I knew you four could do it!" squealed Amy happily "Now we never have to worry about Marik the Martian or his cronies for the rest of our lives!"

"As begrudging as I am to say…well done all of you." said Dr. Eggman brightly, happy that the Martians couldn't threaten his position as conqueror of Mobius anymore.

"Ah thank you, thank you. You're all too kind." said Sonic casually "I'm glad the Martians are all gone too."

Then suddenly, much to his surprise, somebody grasped him into a hug. But it wasn't Amy for once. It was Sally. The squirrel queen was so over-come with joy that she just had to do that to Sonic. Her eyes were brimming with happy tears.

"Thank you so much for stopping them all." said Sally, giving Sonic a congratulating kiss on the cheek without really realizing it "You, Shadow, Silver and Blaze cannot be commended enough for what you've done today."

"Aw, thanks Sal." said Sonic, actually enjoying being hugged and kissed by a woman other than Amy for once "But we don't deserve all the credit. Myra saved us all from being crushed by Tyrahko so I think she deserves some compensation too."

"I agree." said Sally, breaking up the hug and turning to Myra "Thank you for helping our heroes win. And well done for coming to your senses too Myra. You truly are better than the other Martians."

"Ah don't mention it, the pleasure's all mine." beamed Myra "I was sick of all this mindless violence over something that will never truly be destroyed so I decided I had to do something about it. And you Mobians gave me the inspiration and motivation to do so. I should be thanking you all as well."

"You're welcome." said Sally "So what will you be doing next?"

"I'll be going back to Mars." said Myra "Now the Martian fleet, which had ALL the war-loving Martians you've just gotten rid of, is gone, I

can come home to any of the peace-loving Martians that neglected to join the fleet like I should have done. The peace-loving Martian population is only a quarter of the overall Martian population but it'll do. I will become the ruler of Mars and reformat the Martians into the race we used to be a million years ago, or so historical records say. Once I leave here, you will never see me again. I will be spending the rest of my life fixing the Martian's mess and redeeming our race. Thank goodness our life-spans go up to 200 and I'm only 34 now so I've got plenty of time to fix everything."

"Very well Myra." said Sally "Just remember that we are eternally grateful for your help in defeating the Martians."

"Will do sunshine." said Myra "Well, it's back home to Mars for me. Bye everybody, and thank you for providing the Martians this opportunity for redemption!" he said cheerfully, waving to everybody.

"Bye Myra!" said all the Mobians happily, waving goodbye to her.

Now that farewell was done with, Myra ran off back into the Martian ship and sat down in the pilot's seat. She took the controls and got the ship up and running. The Martian ship took off into the sky and Myra flew it out of Mobius and into space and beyond. She was now off to Mars and once she arrived, her cleanup of the Martian fleet's mess could begin. The moment Myra left, Sonic looked over at Dr. Eggman.

"OK, should we bother about you egg-brains?" he snorted.

"No Sonic. This day has been too long and tiring for all of us." said Dr. Eggman "That and I do not wish to take down the weary. That is beneath me and way too ruthless for me. I'm letting you all rest and recuperate for now but I'll be back and this time, no other villains will be taking my spotlight! I may have lost my edge thanks to somebody hacking my network and making me lose control of your satellites permanently but I'll still be ready to finish you off Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"Sure thing Egg-Head." said Sonic casually "I look forward to when we meet again."

Dr. Eggman just smiled maliciously at Sonic and he took flight in his Egg-Pod. He left the Mobians behind and headed off back for home in Megapolis with Metal Sonic, Devion and Katherine all following him. The moment Dr. Eggman left, Sonic turned to Silver and Blaze.

"One more thing left…" he said "You two. Will you be off home to your timeline now?"

"Yes." said Silver, opening up the Super Warp Ring "Our work here is, hopefully, done. We've stopped the Martians from taking over Mobius so now we're gonna see if our future's changed."

"I'm sure it has." said Sonic "Thank you two for preparing us prematurely for the invasion."

"You're welcome." said Blaze "Goodbye for now Sonic and friends. We will meet again soon."

"Oh yes…some time soon." said Sonic "Goodbye you two. See you again next time."

Silver and Blaze smiled graciously and they both walked through the Super Warp Ring, warping themselves back home to their future. The Super Warp Ring vanished behind them, closing the gap between zones and leaving no trace of their existence. Now that was done with, Sonic turned to the others.

"OK…who's up for a celebration party?" he asked "I think we're all deserving of one after dealing with THREE alien invasions these past weeks!"

The others couldn't agree more and were totally onboard with the idea. So now Mobius was at peace for the moment, the Mobians could party and feast away and celebrate this glorious moment as much as they liked…

But unfortunately, not every Mobian was going to be happy at this moment. For Silver & Blaze had come back home and much to their indescribable horror…the future was EXACTLY the same was it was when they had left it! It was still in a post-apocalyptic state! It was

still wrecked and still lingering for life! Nothing had changed whatsoever! This could only mean one thing: the whole Martian invasion was NOT the cause of Mobius' doom in the future! Silver and Blaze had just wasted their time over nothing! The two Mobians were so shocked that they couldn't believe it.

"I…I don't believe it!" wailed Silver "Everything…is…is…"

"It's exactly the same as it was before!" gasped Blaze "Nothing's changed! The Martians WEREN'T responsible for the end of the world after all! I had a nasty feeling that that would be the case! Oh Silver, we've changed nothing at all! Our attempts have been in vain!"

Silver was so devastated at all of this that he began to get angry. He tensed himself up tightly and he began to glow a brilliant, luminous teal. Blaze knew what happened when Silver did that and was in a bad mood, she had experienced this behaviour from her friend before.

"Blaze…run away! Run far away from here now!" ordered Silver.

"I will." said Blaze "Just don't hurt yourself again like last time!"

With that said, Blaze quickly legged it and rocketed off as far away from Silver as she possibly dared to go. Silver finished tensing himself up tightly and he let out his frustration in a single, anguished cry of despair.

"RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG
GGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
HHHHHHHHHHHHH…"

And what followed this loud wail was an eruption of psychokinetic energy that exploded from within Silver and spread out a large distance like an atomic bomb, completely destroying and blowing away anything in its path and causing havoc all around the disdained hedgehog…

Footnotes:

*** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 15: All's Fair in Warfare***

**** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 17 :Divide and Conquer: The Home Front***

Boy...talk about a buzzkill! The day is saved but the future's still a wreck! Oh well, Silver's always got next time hasn't he? Anyways, here you go guys, the finale to the explosive Martin saga! I hope you all enjoyed the saga and eagerly await your feedback on this. How was this for a finale and did you all enjoy it? Feel free to review and say what you thought...

In the meantime, tune into* Tales from Mobius *for two new stories. One is a stand alone story answering the question you all want to know the answer to: Why does Marik hate Cosmo and how did their rivalry begin? The other is a two-part story which does the unthinkable...give Rouge an origin story! Bet you're all looking forward to that! ;)

One more thing, I PROMISE you guys this is the absolutely last and FINAL alien invasion in all this story. No more alien invasions, only Mobius-bound villains from now on...

The Key of Opulence 1

Story 137: The Key of Opulence Part 1

No sooner had Rouge the Bat and the young super-spy Sora Sumdac had arrived back from the Tropical Jungle*, Sora had directed Rouge to M.S.I.U. (Mobian Spy and Intelligence Unit) headquarters to which she quickly ran inside and gave herself some tools that would be adequate for a search-and-capture mission. She still had her usual utility belt of course but other things she was taking with her were a taser, three sets of earphones and four laser-cuff spheres. The taser would be useful in a case of getting captured herself and she needed to get out of someone's grasp and the laser-cuffs would be perfect for subduing all four members of Team Diamond. The headphones were for her, Rouge and a friend of hers named Joel Nutmeg to wear while on the mission so they could communicate between each other. Speaking of Joel, after making a short stop to her headquarters, Sora had asked Rouge to take her to the S.I.I.D. (Secret Intelligence and Information Department) headquarters so that she could recruit her good friend Joel Nutmeg into this mission too. This mission would require a few agents to carry out after all. Sora, Joel and Rouge were bound to make a good spy-team for this mission they were on. And the mission was simply this: locate Team Diamond and apprehend them and retrieve the recently uncovered Key of Opulence before Team Diamond end up using it too many times and becoming golden entities that turned everything they touched into gold. This was a mission that had more importance then any of them dared to realize. After getting ready and recruiting Joel to join them on the mission, Rouge, Sora and Joel caught a hover-car and Joel drove it since he was the only out of the three who had a driver's license. Joel started up the car and it hovered off out of S.I.I.D. headquarters and on to Team Diamond's location. Sora had slipped a tracking device onto their hover-saucer while Team Diamond were fighting Rouge and now the three spies were heading to where they had fled to. Rouge's first instinct was to guess that they were back in the secret office behind the ally-wall but to her surprise, Team Diamond were not at home. Sora looked at the little computer screen she held in her hand and deduced

where the tracker was saying Team Diamond was. She directed Joel as he drove the hover-car and at long last, they reached Team Diamond's location. It was an old factory located in the middle of nowhere and it was old and run down, suggesting that it hadn't been used in some time. More evidence of this included the doors being chained shut and the windows being boarded up. Sora looked at the screen and it showed her that Team Diamond were definitely in the factory. They had found the insidious treasure-hunters at last.

"They're in that factory." said Sora "We've got them."

"That's great Sora, so what's the plan?" asked Rouge.

"Me and Joel will go in that factory and see what we can find." said Sora "You will stay outside and keep watch and if we need your help, we'll give you a call and you just come straight in and assist us."

"OK. Why do I have to stay out of this though?" asked Rouge "I mean, this is as much about me as it is about the whole world you know. The Key of Opulence is MY find after all."

"I know it is Rouge but you're most at risk out of us three because Team Diamond know you all too well." said Sora sympathetically "And you're easily the best fighter out of us so we could do without you getting into trouble should we need your help."

"Ah alright, I get what you mean." said Rouge dully "Just make sure that I get that key back OK?"

"Indeed we will Miss Rouge." said Joel politely "OK Sora, you ready to go?"

"Ready as I'll ever be old friend." said Sora, putting on her set of earphones that had an attached microphone to them "There's more at stake here than we know."

"Indeed so Sora." said Joel, putting on his earphones.

Rouge put on her earphones and the three spies switched them all on. Now they'd all be able to communicate with each other by speaking through the microphones attached to them and receiving

the messages through the earphones themselves. Sora, Joel and Rouge all stepped out of the car and ran up to the factory as silently as they could. They came up to the door of the factory and they looked around for a way in. The door was chained shut but Sora had an easy way of fixing that. She could simply use her laser-stick to cut through the chains but they'd likely make too much noise and give her away so she didn't want to risk using that method. Instead, she looked for another way inside. Joel spotted a potential way into the factory. There was a window which had fallen boards so the window wasn't boarded up and they could easily get inside through that window. Rouge took them each by the hand and flew Sora & Joel up towards the window. Once up there, she neared the two spies to the window, close enough so that they could reach out and grab the windowsill. They then pulled themselves up to the window and crawled through it into the factory. Sora and Joel looked around as they entered the factory. Rouge merely flew back down to the ground and waited for her signal. There were a lot of chains hanging from the ceiling, there were holes in the ceiling and the walls looked like they were about to cave in. There was a lot of machinery around too, all rusting away and completely incapable of use. Sora held her nose as a foul, malodorous stench drifted up her nostrils. It was very smelly in this old factory and the smell made her feel sick.

"Oh god, it stinks in here!" gagged Sora "No wonder Team Diamond chose this as their hideout! The smell would make everybody hesitant to enter!"

"Indeed Sora. We cannot however let a few bad smells distract us so I'd try my best to ignore it if I were you." suggested Joel, holding his nose as well.

Sora nodded, trying hard not to let the smell bother her. She had a job to do and an odoriferous scent was not going to stop her from doing it. So Sora and Joel crept along the walkway they were on and they looked down at the floor below. To her surprise, she could see just who they were looking for. Well, sort of. For down on the floor of the factory below them, Sora and Joel could see Owen Pounder and Roxy the Raccoon, both members of Team Diamond and they seemed to be studying the Key of Opulence. Owen was sitting at a desk in a rickety old chair that seriously looked uncomfortable and

he had the key in his hand, looking at it and trying to work out how it possibly worked. His brilliant brain was working like mad. You could practically hear the cogs turning in his head as he tried to work out how the key worked since it was rumoured to have some kind of power. Roxy on the other hand was just wandering around like a lost sheep as if she was impatiently waiting for Owen to just do something already.

"Tick-tock Owen! Tick-tock!" whined Roxy "The convoy will be arriving any minute now to pick up our recent steals and ship them off to our boss! Lennox can't afford to have us wasting any time and he said we have to be ready soon so hurry up and find out how that bloody key works! We were given the task of finding out what power it has, if it has any power at all, and how it works you know!"

"We?!" sniffed Owen as if the word sounded foreign to him "Unless "nagging" counts for anything, I haven't seen you lift a finger!"

"Owen, I'm just a dumb little girl remember?" snorted Roxy sarcastically "It's not my job to decipher how these ancient relics are supposed to function since my brain isn't skilled in that kind of stuff. You're the one who works out how things work, you're the brainy one out of us two."

"Well, if I wasn't being sidelined by SOMEONE'S constant moaning, I might be further along right now!" shouted Owen, clearly irritated by Roxy's constant moaning and the fact she wasn't being very helpful right now.

"Grrr…oh just give it here!" grumbled Roxy impatiently, snatching the key off of Owen.

Owen could only stare at Roxy as she dared to snatch the Key of Opulence off of him. Roxy didn't often stand up to him, something must be up with her. Roxy grabbed the centre of the key and tried twisting it to see if anything moved. But nothing did, it was as solid as anything. Roxy then grabbed both ends of the key and started trying to twist them as if she was expecting something to move on the key. But nothing did. It was just a big, golden, solid, jewelled key. Nothing twisted or bent or curved or anything on it, it was just completely solid. After trying and failing to get something to move,

Roxy lost her temper and began banging the key as callously as she could against the desk like a bratty little child who's whinging because his toy's broken and he's trying to make it work again.

"DO. SOME. THING!" bellowed Roxy as she thumped the key as hard as she could against the desk.

One would think the bodacious raccoon was deliberately trying to break the key to pieces or something due to how hard and angrily she was bashing it on the edge of the desk. Owen Pounder could only sigh at that as Roxy resorted to the most childish way of getting something to work, banging it on something.

"Oh gee, why didn't **I** think of that?!" scoffed Owen in annoyance.

That did it. Roxy really lost her wick and she lashed out at Owen with the key, slashing him across the cheek with it as if she was wielding a sword. The Key of Opulence did have sharp edges after all so swiping it at somebody and actually hitting them was bound to hurt. Owen winced in pain and he clutched his throbbing cheek, which now had a long thin cut across it thanks to Roxy slashing him with the key. Owen took his hand off his cheek and noticed that his glove was now stained with blood. Owen gasped at this and he instantly flipped.

"I'm gonna snap your arms in two for that!" he thundered, raising his fists and preparing to deck Roxy ten times over.

Roxy instantly fell over onto her back and covered her face in terror with her arms, the Key of Opulence still in her hands, as Owen advanced on her menacingly, his muscles bulging as he flexed them.

"No, no, no! Please don't hurt me!" whimpered Roxy, cowering on the floor in fear as Owen prepared to beat her up.

Owen looked like he was about ready to ignore Roxy and punch her anyway but before he could hurt the poor raccoon, a sharp voice stopped him dead in his tracks.

"OWEN! Lower your fists this instant!" snarled the voice.

It was none other than Lennox Meers the Meerkat, the leader of Team Diamond and he looked furious to see Owen daring to try and hurt poor Roxy. Alistair Drakken the Bat was beside him and he gave Owen an ominous glare that suggested "Dare hurt Roxy and rile Lennox Owen and you're dead!". Owen knew better than to rile Lennox Meers so he did as he was told. He lowered his fists and put them behind his back apologetically, stepping away from the terrified raccoon he loomed over to add to that. Roxy's breathing began to calm down a little and her whimpers died out after that. Lennox strode over to Roxy and respectfully held out a hand for her to take. Roxy took Lennox's hand and Lennox helped the raccoon up onto her feet.

"Th-th-thank you Lennox." stammered Roxy, still shaking from that threat.

"Anytime Roxy." said Lennox somewhat graciously as if he was glad Roxy didn't get hurt "Now then, what was all that nonsense about Owen?"

"I was just trying to work out how this damn key works and Roxy just snatched it off of me and started banging it against the desk!" retorted Owen "I then commented on how silly that was of her and then she slashed me across the face with it! Look what she's done to me!" he added, pointing to the stinging cut on his cheek.

"Spare me the dramatics Owen, it's merely a scratch." muttered Lennox, not really fussed since he knew Owen was a tough guy and a scratch shouldn't really bother him.

"But Lennox…" protested Owen.

"Enough!" snapped Lennox "Owen, you should control your temper for once in your life and Roxy, don't bang priceless treasures like that key on the desk please! They're valuable to us and we can do without them getting broken!"

"I'm sorry Lennox." said Roxy in an overly-exaggerated apologetic tone of voice that made her sound like a five-year old girl "I promise I won't do it again."

"Don't talk like a child for god's sake!" sighed Lennox in annoyance "Now then, have you worked out how it works yet Owen?" he asked, looking at the rabbit.

"No sir." said Owen "I've studied it thoroughly but I have no idea how to activate the so-called "power" it has. I'm beginning to wonder if all that nonsense about it having power was all just a pretence."

"Maybe it is." murmured Lennox, taking the key off of Roxy and looking at it himself "Not that it really matters since we don't often use a jewel's power should one have any. Still, it would be intriguing to see what power the Key of Opulence could possibly wield if it has any power."

"You know what Lennox, didn't it occur to you that the way it works might be to use it the way an actual key works?" suggested Alistair "Here, let me show you what I mean."

Lennox unsurely gave the key to Alistair. Sora and Joel watched all of this from atop the walk way and they were beginning to worry. Sora's heart began to pound as Alistair took the key from Lennox. Had he managed to work out how the key works? If so then he may have just found out what power it has. The little fox could only watch and wait as Alistair prepared to use the key. Alistair pointed the key directly ahead of himself and then slowly pushed it ahead of him as if he was inserting it into an invisible lock in front of him The key began to glow a radiant red colour as he slowly pushed it forward. He kept on doing it until the key suddenly stopped dead in its tracks and it wouldn't go any further. The key began to glow even brighter as it was "inserted" the furthest it would go. Lennox, Roxy and Owen held their breath as the key seemed to be doing something. Sora and Joel did the same. Alistair titled his head to one side in interest and he crooned to himself as he appeared to have worked out the puzzle. He then twisted the key to one side as if he was unlocking an imaginary door. The key glowed the brightest it could possibly glow after it was turned and Alistair pulled the key backwards. And as he pulled on the key, the very air in front of them seemed to open up like a doorway to another world. It was as if Alistair had just unlocked an imaginary door directly in front of himself. Lennox, Roxy and Owen were gobsmacked as they stared at the open "door" in front of them. What made their jaws drop so low they were about to

break away from their faces was what was in the "doorway". In the doorway was a horde of jewels and they ranged from necklaces to tiaras, to diamonds, to rubies, to sapphires, to emeralds and many, many more! The greedy treasure hunters eagerly leaped at the treasures in the "doorway" and started piling them all out of the door and onto the floor like a bunch of kids pulling all of their toys out of the toy cupboard eagerly. Sora and Joel were amazed at all of this. Even though Sora already knew what the Key of Opulence could do, it was still amazing to see its power function in real life. After they took out all the jewels, they piled them all onto the desk and after all the jewels had been taken out, the key popped out of the lock in the imaginary door and clunked down onto the floor. Alistair picked it up and stared at in amazement.

"Unbelievable…" he mused to himself "The key seems to open up imaginary doors that contain treasures behind them."

"It's incredulous indeed Alistair." said Lennox "How does it do that I wonder?"

"Simple, it's an ancient treasured relic." sniggered Roxy "They always have weird powers."

"Well all I know is I'VE got to try it!" cried Owen happily, snatching the key off of Alistair and activating the key's power.

He opened up an imaginary doorway much like Alistair did earlier directly above the desk and a whole new bunch of treasure was revealed inside the doorway. Team Diamond eagerly rummaged through the treasure and started piling it all out onto the desk. Once they emptied that doorway, Roxy took the key and used it herself. She opened up a doorway in thin air with the key and got a new bunch of treasure from the doorway. Team Diamond emptied that one and then Lennox finally decided he should use it himself. Lennox took the key after they had emptied Roxy's doorway and he opened one up himself. A new bunch of treasure was in that doorway and they took it all out of the doorway as it was opened. The desk was now overflowing with treasures and jewels because of the Key of Opulence's power and some jewels ended up falling off of the desk and clattering across the floor. Once Team Diamond had finished their little craze with the Key of Opulence's power, Lennox

stuffed it into his cloak pocket.

"OK Team Diamond, let's not go overboard with the key's power." said Lennox "While we're getting more treasure then we've ever gotten before, we don't have enough resources right here with us right now to store it all so we will not use the key's power until we get this lot split up between us and shipped off to our boss and other teams in the organization."

"Fair enough." said Roxy "Once we get rid of this lot, we can go nuts with this key. We'll never need to treasure-hunt again now we have a key that just gives us more and more treasures then we can ever hope for!"

"Indeed so Roxy." purred Alistair "Instead of hunting for treasures, we can just use the key's power to give us more and more treasures day after day. H.U.N.T. will soon have enough treasures to last every member of the organization a life time."

That alone made Sora and Joel shudder as if an icy hand had gripped them by the throat. They had studied about the Key of Opulence and knew the deadly side effect of its power. They had to get it back before any member of Team Diamond used it more than three times. Each of them had used it once so each of them could use it another two times without any effect. Once they used it a fourth time though, the side effect kicks in and the end of all life will begin for the first member of Team Diamond to use it more than three times would turn into a golden entity and turn everything into gold. The only problem was, Sora had no idea how they were going to get the Key of Opulence without being spotted. Team Diamond would see them easily since they were around and Lennox had just stuffed the Key of Opulence into his cloak pocket so they couldn't just grab it off of him as easily as that. They had to think of a way to get the key without risking their lives.

"Hey Joel, any ideas on how to get the key from them?" whispered Sora desperately "I have no idea how we're going to get that key off of them without them catching us. Lennox has got it in his cloak, how will we get it out of there secretly?"

"If we had a smoke bomb or two, we could probably distract them

with the smoke bombs and steal the key from Lennox while they're preoccupied." suggested Joel "I do not believe I have any on me though."

"Me neither." muttered Sora "I forgot to get some more after using one to save Rouge earlier. Maybe we could wait until Lennox is all alone and we ambush him while his buddies are gone? I could get the taser I have on me and knock him out simple as that."

"You could indeed." said Joel "Let's see how well that plan works."

But unfortunately, that plan was never going to be tested. For all of the sudden, the section of the walkway they were standing on suddenly gave way and broke directly underneath their feet! The walkway was old and deteriorating after all and the weight of a kid fox and adult squirrel was too much for it to take (it is old and weak after all). Sora and Joel found themselves plummeting down towards the floor with a heavy crash, bits of walkway raining down all over them as they landed on the floor. Team Diamond were so shocked by all of this they nearly fell over in surprise. Sora and Joel picked themselves up from the walkway pieces and they brushed themselves off. Sora was clutching her head in pain and wincing as it ached. Joel was fumbling around looking for his orb-cam eye for it had fallen out in the impact. Lennox instantly whipped his revolvers out and pointed them at the two.

"Spies?! In our territory?!" he shrieked "What the hell are you two heathens doing here and what are you after?!"

"Rouge! We could do with some assistance right now!" Sora shrieked frantically into the microphone in her earphones.

"Rouge?!" blustered Owen "But it can't be, she was poisoned by the smoke-bomb that made us flee for it!"

"It wasn't poisonous you idiot." sneered Sora "Rouge is very much alive and here she comes right now." she added, pointing up to the window that she and Joel had managed to sneak through.

Rouge had gotten Sora's message and had instantly flown through the window and into the factory. She zoomed down towards Lennox

and screw-kicked him away from Sora and Joel.

"Hello boys. Thought you saw the last of me didn't you?" smirked Rouge "Now give me back the Key of Opulence and I won't kick all your butts."

"We have worked too long and too hard to get that key!" growled Lennox "We will not relinquish it to you at all! Team Diamond, get them all!"

The insidious treasure-hunters didn't wait to be asked twice. They all charged into action the moment Lennox gave that order. Rouge, although still a little weak from the beating she'd received earlier, was all too happy to have another rematch with Team Diamond. Rouge jumped into the air and screw-kicked Owen, the first one to get near to her. The rabbit was sent flying backwards across the room and he crashed down heavily on the floor, groaning loudly. Roxy swung her baton at Rouge but the bat effortlessly managed to dodge the attack and she dropkicked Roxy directly in the head. Roxy staggered backwards and she clutched her head in pain. It was hurting so much that she thought she was going to pass out. But Rouge was about to lose whatever luck was on her side right now for Alistair pounced on her from behind and grabbed her by the arms. He flew up into the air with her and then flew all the way back down and threw her directly into the desk of jewels and treasures. You can imagine just how much hurt landing on a desk full of treasures is going to give you. The resulting impact left Rouge feeling sore all over her body and a pile of treasure scattered all over the floor. Rouge was so sore from the impact that she had no idea which part of her to rub better. This gave Owen the perfect opportunity to grab and warp his arms around her in a bear-hug once again. This time, he was going to make sure Rouge gets crushed to death without any interferences. But Sora leaped in to help Rouge by whipping the taser off of her belt and thrusting it into Owen's back. The rabbit screamed in pain and he dropped Rouge immediately. Unfortunately, he managed to fight the pain in his back long enough to turn around and grab Sora by the arm. He snatched the taser off Sora and zapped her in the neck with it but only for long enough to make her feel weak and lame, not to knock her out or anything. After he'd finished zapping Sora, he dropped her

carelessly onto the floor and crushed the taser directly in his hand. Joel was horrified at this and he wanted to do something but he wasn't a very skilled fighter so at the same time, he was kind of reluctant to do anything. Lennox however sneaked up behind Joel and butted him in the back of his head with his revolver, knocking him clean out. Rouge stared in horror at the injured Sora and knocked-out Joel and wondered what to do. She could try and save them but Team Diamond were just too strong for her. She didn't want to abandon them either for Team Diamond would likely kill them. Then suddenly, Rouge knew what she had to do. As she came up with an idea, Lennox pointed his revolvers at her.

"Alright Rouge, it's time you FINALLY say goodbye to your life." he said coldly.

"More like it's time to say goodbye to you idiots!" sneered Rouge, screw-kicking Lennox and then flying away out of the un-boarded window, leaving poor Sora and Joel at the mercy of Team Diamond.

"Rouge! Wait, don't leave us!" cried Sora as Rouge flew out of the factory and fled for her life.

"I'll be back kid, I promise!" Rouge said to her via the microphone on her earphones "I'm going to get help! A LOT of help! Just hang on for me will ya?"

Sora understood what Rouge was telling her and she hoped that she could survive long enough for Rouge and her back-up to arrive. The stakes were too high for Rouge to try and flee with her life and the spies after all so she had to get out before things got too unpleasant for her. Sora had had to abandon people before just to get back up so she knew what it felt like to be in this situation. Now Rouge had gone, Owen picked up Sora and Joel by the scruffs of their necks.

"Hey! Put me down you overgrown ape in rabbit's clothing!" cried Sora, furiously swinging her arms at Owen.

"Don't call me an ape!" snapped Owen "Now, who do you disgusting spies work for and what are you doing here?!"

"Go take a hike, I'm not telling you a goddamn thing!" snapped Sora "Now let me and Joel go or you'll suffer the consequences!"

"No chance of that you little brat." snarled Lennox "Owen, get the chains. I think a torture session's in hand for these two."

Owen obeyed and he carried Sora and Joel over to some low hanging chains that dangled from the ceiling. He raised Sora up to the chains and he wrapped them around her wrists, her arms spread out and her feet dangling a foot above the floor. After wrapping the chains around Sora's wrists, he padlocked the chains to keep them in place. There was no escape for poor Sora now. She was as trapped as anything now. Owen then proceeded to do the same to Joel. He chained Joel up about ten feet away from Sora and he was facing her directly in front of her. Joel was still knocked out though so he had no idea what was going on. All Sora could do now was feebly struggle in her chains as Lennox got out a trolley full of terrible torture weapons. There was a taser, a blowtorch, a knife, a nunchaku and Roxy had added her baton to the collection. Sora gulped in fear at the mere sight of such cruel weapons. She was in for a minute of hell it seemed.

"Right." said Lennox glaring directly at the chained up Sora "Since your friend is knocked out, I'll only focus on you. Who are you child, who do you work for and why are you here?"

Sora remained tight-lipped and she refused to speak. Lennox growled furiously and he walloped her across the face with his revolver, making her spit out a bit of blood.

"Who are you, why are you here and who do you work for?!" thundered Lennox.

Sora still refused to talk and she fought the pain in her cheek. That revolver had left a nasty bruise on it and it looked really painful. Lennox scowled at Sora's resilience and he sheathed his revolvers in his holsters. He picked up the blowtorch and switched it on. The blowtorch hissed loudly as a small blue flame emitted from it.

"Fine, you're asking for this." muttered Lennox.

Sora braced herself as Lennox neared her with the blazing, roaring blowtorch, the flame just inches away from her body as Lennox neared it to her…

New Mobotropolis was finally at a moment of peace, the first real moment of peace it had since the recent alien invasions. So as of this moment, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were making the most of this peace they had now. Most of them were either in their homes and relaxing or wandering around the city and admiring the sights (except Shadow the Hedgehog, he's gone off to see if there's anything interesting going on). Sonic the Hedgehog and his best friend Tails the Fox were doing just that and Tails has his girlfriend Cosmo the Seedrian with him. Tails and Cosmo had been so happy since they had finally revealed their love for each other and they had made sure to tell everybody about it. The Royal Fighters and even Queen Sally herself were all awed and thrilled to hear all of this and Sonic was well pleased that Tails had finally admitted his love for Cosmo. He felt the two were a perfect couple and right now, he was taking Tails and Cosmo for a walk around the local park. Cosmo loved it of course and Tails was grateful to Sonic for taking them around it. Right now, Sonic and Tails were sitting on a bench and enjoying the peace and quiet the park offered them. Cosmo was kneeling by the pond that was nearby and admiring the beauty of it. Sonic smiled contently to himself. It sure felt good to FINALLY have a moment of peace. He had to make the most of it though since Dr. Eggman was liable to return at any time and unleash his new band of craziness into the world.

"This park is beautiful Sonic. Thank you for taking me and Cosmo here." said Tails gratefully, smiling at his best friend.

"Ah, it was nothing Tails." said Sonic happily "Since you and Cosmo have officially become a couple, not a married one of course, I thought I'd bring you to this place. It's perfect for a boyfriend and girlfriend couple I say."

"It certainly is." said Cosmo, beaming so much that you'd think she was turning into the sun all of the sudden "I love it here. I might come here more often."

"Well, it's always available after all so you can come as much as you like." said Sonic "Pity you didn't see this park sooner but then again, we have had a lot on our plates recently so we're still kinda settling into New Mobotropolis and learning everything about it."

"Yeah." said Tails "Oh well, we've finally seen everything in the city now so we can properly make ourselves at home. It really is a beautiful city and I think it's the perfect replacement for the original Mobotropolis."

"It is. It's BETTER than Mobotropolis I say." said Sonic "Mainly because of the shields we have to protect us from harm and it's just such a beautiful city."

"I agree." said Tails "So Sonic, when can we expect you and Amy to reveal your love for each other just like me and Cosmo have done so?" he added teasingly.

Sonic's quills straightened in surprise at that question and his face went red with embarrassment.

"Uh…to be honest Tails, I'm not sure what to say about that." murmured Sonic.

"What do you mean?" asked Tails curiously.

"Well you know that I kinda like Amy and I think she's cute and all." said Sonic "But at the same time, her slightly annoying nature stops me from loving her shall we say so I'm more cool to have Amy as a friend than anything. That and, I don't think I'm ready to settle down and have a girlfriend yet."

"Oh, I see." said Tails "I understand you though. You do have a lot of responsibilities and your duty as hero of Mobius is a heavy enough burden on your shoulders as it is so I don't think you need a love-life tying you down as well."

"Yeah." said Sonic "Maybe when we finally defeat Eggman and my hero days are over, I might consider finding the right girl for me. Right now, I'm just happy to be single and watch other couples enjoy their love for one another."

"I'm sure you'll find the right girl someday, even if it does end up being Amy." said Cosmo supportively "But I think you have the right mindset right now Sonic, just focus on your duties first and worry about that stuff later."

"Thanks Cosmo." said Sonic "As for you, I hope you and Tails be very happy together. I'm glad you're a couple at last."

Tails and Cosmo just beamed happily and Tails stood up from the bench just to kneel down beside Cosmo and give her a little kiss. Cosmo hugged Tails and kissed him back. Sonic couldn't help but give off an "Awwww" expression as he saw the two young couple kissing each other. Tails and Cosmo were so cute together that he just smiled whenever he saw them hugging each other. But this lovely moment wasn't going to last for long for Sonic heard the flapping of wings and he looked around to see who was making that sound. He looked up at the sky and saw a frantic and bruised looking Rouge the Bat flying exhaustedly towards New Mobotropolis. She spotted Sonic from up where she was and she flew down towards him, gasping for breath as she panted exhaustedly from how tired she was. Sonic got up from the bench and wondered what Rouge might be here for. Rouge landed down on the ground and bent over forward with her hands on her thighs and panting ever so heavily. Sonic, Tails and Cosmo all ran up to her and Sonic patted her affectionately on the back to clam her down while she got her breath back.

"Hey Rouge, wasn't expecting you to show up again so soon. What's up?" asked Sonic.

"Oh Sonic, you've gotta help me!" blustered Rouge, grabbing Sonic by the shoulders and looking him directly in the face "I was out treasure-hunting but then I got my recent find stolen by Team Diamond so I teamed up with a kid-spy named Sora Sumdac to get it back but then the plan backfired and now Team Diamond's got Sora! You have to help me rescue that poor kid before they kill her!"

Sonic, Tails and Cosmo were astonished to hear this and they all have Rouge an incredulous look as if they had a hard time factoring all of this in.

"Team Diamond are back?!" gasped Sonic.

"And they've got Sora?!" cried Tails "Oh no! We've gotta save her immediately!"

"So I guess you know Team Diamond then?" asked Rouge.

"We do." said Sonic grimly "Barely though. We met them last year where they worked with Lola Gunn to try and kill me. They ended up killing her instead and they got away and I've been wondering where they've been since then. Seems like they're doing something at last."

"Indeed." said Rouge "They stole the treasure I found and they've got Sora. Will you please help me save her and get my treasure back?"

"Sure thing." said Sonic "We owe Sora big time for all she did to stop the Region of Rebellious Reptiles from wrecking last year's Annual Acorn Awards***so I'll be happy to help save her from Team Diamond."

"Especially since I've been dying to see her again." added Tails, remembering how Sora looked familiar to him somehow but he couldn't quite work out why.

"Believe me when I say Sora's got something incredible to tell you." said Rouge, winking at Tails slyly "Anyway, I can tell you everything about Team Diamond since I'm an ex-member of theirs and I know where they are right now…"

"Wait a minute, YOU are an ex-member of Team Diamond?" asked Sonic in obfuscation.

"Yes." said Rouge glumly, obviously not pleased with that fact "I'll explain everything on the way, we've got to get going now before Team Diamond kill Sora!"

"I'm on it! You coming too Tails?" asked Sonic.

"Sure I am." said Tails "I've got something to ask Sora anyway. Cosmo, it'll be best if you stay here since Team Diamond are too dangerous for you." he said, putting his hands on Cosmo's

shoulders and looking at her with a concerned expression on his face.

"OK Tails, I'll wait here for your return." said Cosmo, hugging her boyfriend in a farewell manner "Please be careful out there and come home to me safely."

"I will Cosmo." said Tails, hugging her back "I'll be back soon, don't worry."

"Wow, the two seem real cosy with each other don't they?" sniggered Rouge.

"They just became boyfriend and girlfriend Rouge so you can see why they're being like that." said Sonic "OK Rouge and Tails, let's do it to it! We've got a treasure for Rouge to retrieve and a super spy friend to rescue!"

With that said, Sonic zoomed off out of New Mobotropolis with Tails flying after him and Rouge flying ahead of him so she could lead the way to Team Diamond's hiding place. As the three left New Mobotropolis, Cosmo put her hands to her chest in concern and worry.

"Please let Sora be alive when they get there…" she said to herself, worried more for Tails than anything since he had been hoping to meet Sora again sometime soon…

The next few minutes had been complete hell for poor Sora. Lennox had used EVERY torture weapon on the trolley on her just to make her talk. She had scorch marks from the blowtorch, slight burn marks from the taser, small cuts from the knife and bruises from the nunchaku and baton. Sora had cuts, burns and bruises all over her body and she was so injured from that horrible torture session that she was barely conscious. All the poor spy could do was dangle from her chains helplessly and stare at the floor in utter pain, barely able to stay awake and keep her eyes open. Despite all of this though, she still refused to talk and tell Lennox anything about herself. The angry meerkat slammed his fists in rage on the trolley

and he kicked it away in anger, sending it rolling across the floor and crashing loudly into a huge, dormant machine that was coated in cobwebs that had been made by moving-in spiders since it had stopped working. The contents on the trolley all fell off of the trolley as it hit the wall. Lennox grabbed Sora by the face.

"I've given you every single torture weapon on the trolley and you still resist me!" he snarled "Talk to me you little brat, goddamn it TALK TO ME!"

Sora just gave him a pathetic look and coughed in his face. Lennox screwed his face-up at Sora and he backhanded her across the face. The smack left a stinging mark on her cheek.

"I am losing my patience with you girl…who do you work for, what are you after and who are you?!" bellowed Lennox "You tell me right now or I'll put a bullet in your head!"

Sora still refused to talk. She just glared at Lennox like the brave little girl she was and glared at him rather ominously, fighting the pain in her cheek from that smack. Sora had been trained vigorously on keeping your mouth shut when being tortured by an enemy (no, the training exercise did not involve torture at all! Why would they do that?!) and she had been told by her foster father NEVER to give in to your enemies, no matter how much they torture you. She had vowed to follow her foster father's teachings to the letter so she was not about to let him down and squeal to Lennox. Lennox growled at Sora, visibly riled by her resilience. Lennox began to wonder if no matter what he did to Sora, she'd never crack. Just his luck to had such a resilient prisoner wasn't it? Lennox threw his arms up in defeat.

"Whatever! If you won't talk then I guess I'll have to kill you." snarled Lennox "If you don't want to die then I suggest you talk little girl."

"I'd…rather…cough, cough, cough…die…then…talk…about…ugh…anything…to you!" rasped Sora, her voice as hoarse as anything as the pains from her torture began to take their toll on her.

"Very well, I'll grant that wish." said Lennox coldly, getting out one of his revolvers and pointing it at Sora's heart.

"Or you can do the sensible thing and leave her alone." said Roxy, grabbing Lennox firmly by the spiked collar around his neck and yanking him back "Dead prisoners can't talk you know. Only an idiot kills people he wants information out of."

"Yes Lennox, don't kill the kid yet." said Owen "We can't learn anything from her if you kill her."

"I have an idea." purred Alistair "How about we kill her accomplice? I mean, he's useless to us isn't he?"

Lennox thought to himself and smiled at Alistair's suggestion. He knew what he was really hinting at here. He'd just suggested a good idea on how to make Sora talk. Lennox looked over at Sora again.

"Listen to me you festering canaille, if you don't answer my questions then your friend won't live to see another sunrise." snarled Lennox "And believe me when I say I mean what I'm saying here."

Sora gasped in horror as Alistair put his claws menacingly around Joel's neck, the squirrel just waking up from being knocked out earlier and looking worried as Alistair threatened to slit his throat with a clawed finger. The fox thought she was going to pass out in shock.

"No…please…don't…ugh…don't kill…Joel! Please…anything…but that!" wailed Sora desperately.

"Then tell me what I want to know and I promise he'll live, along with you." said Lennox furiously.

"I…I…I…can't!" cried Sora "I…promised…my foster…father…I would…never talk…in a situation…like this! Cough, cough, cough…I can't…betray my promise!"

Lennox glared at Sora in fury, the fox feeling a little nervous.

"Fine, your comrade dies." muttered Lennox, twirling the revolver in his hand menacingly.

"No! Please, I beg…of you! Please, don't…kill him…please, please…no!" begged Sora frantically "Please…don't kill him!"

Lennox ignored the pleading fox and he pointed the revolver at Joel's head. Alistair let go of Joel's neck and stood well back as Lennox pointed the gun at his head. The squirrel trembled in fright as his life began to flash before his eyes. and Lennox prepared to let him have it. Sora could feel herself beginning to cry as Lennox prepared to do the deed. Her lips wobbled and her eyes welled up with tears as Lennox clocked the revolver and curled his finger around the trigger. If she wasn't in chains right now, she'd be pinning Lennox to the floor and snatching the revolver from his hand. But she was restrained and helpless and she couldn't do anything about it. Lennox flashed Sora a nasty grin of sadistic glee as he pulled the trigger. The revolver fired the bullet with a terrible bang and Joel was instantly killed by the blast. Sora instantly went mental with horror.

"JOEL!" she screamed in anguish as the squirrel's head flopped down lifelessly and blood began to seep from the wound in his forehead.

One of her best friends in the spy-business was dead and it was all her fault for not talking already. Sora began to feel very bad about all this and she wailed her heart out over all of this. Roxy was the only one who seemed affected by all of this. Sora's cries began to make her feel sorry for the poor super spy. Sora was only a young girl and already she was witnessing something as horrible as this. Not that it mattered since Sora lost her innocence the moment she became a super spy but it still must be horrible for a twelve-year old like her. As Sora sobbed like a weeping willow over Joel's death, Lennox put his revolver away and strode up to her.

"That will happen to you if you don't talk." snarled Lennox "And if you don't talk then maybe I'll take more innocent lives away. And maybe one of them will be another friend of yours."

Sora ignored Lennox and continued weeping away as if she'd just lost someone more precious to her than life itself. Lennox decided that Sora wasn't worth his time anymore so he threw up his arms and strode off.

"Let's leave the little brat to come to grips with herself." said Lennox "When she's finished crying, we'll see if she's more willing to talk right now. Owen, dispose of that dead body, Roxy and Alistair, you

help me get ready for the convoy trucks. They should be here any minute now."

"Yes sir." said all the members of the team.

Owen unchained Joel's dead body and he draped him over his shoulder like an old, dusty carpet waiting to be taken outside and beaten. He carried Joel out of the factory, leaving Sora to still cry over his death. While that was happening, Lennox, Roxy and Alistair left the factory too and went outside to prepare for the convoy trucks that were supposedly coming to pick up their latest raids and the Key of Opulence. The moment everybody had left though, Sonic, Tails and Rouge arrived at the factory and they had sneaked inside through the window. After a while of running, they had finally arrived and were now ready to rescue Sora. As they sneaked inside and crept across the walkway, Sonic and Rouge were conversing silently to one another.

"So let me get this straight, your dad got killed by Team Diamond when you was eight years old, then when you were sixteen you joined them and shortly after, found out they killed your dad and then you betrayed them and went solo and now you're battling them for a jewelled key you promised your dad you'd find?" whispered Sonic.

"Yes." whispered Rouge "Bet you're surprised that my inspiration my jewel-thieving career was a promise I made to my dad."

"I am really." said Sonic "And because of what you've told me, I'm going to make sure you get your key back so you can fulfil that vow you made to your dad."

"Thanks Sonic boy, that's real nice of you." said Rouge graciously "Now, keep your senses alert. Sora could be anywhere in this place…"

"There she is." hissed Tails quietly, pointing down to where Sora was dangling by chains around her wrists.

Sonic and Rouge looked over at Sora and Rouge felt her heart sink as she saw what had happened to her.

"Oh no…I shouldn't have left her behind!" she wailed guiltily "She's been busted up pretty badly and it's all my fault for abandoning her!"

"Rouge, if you didn't flee and get us, Sora wouldn't have anyone to call for help." noted Sonic "You did a good thing escaping and coming to us. Now let's get her out of there and fast."

With that said, Rouge and Tails flew down to the floor with Tails carrying Sonic and they ran over to Sora as quickly as they could. Sonic spin-dashed Sora's chains to pieces and the tortured fox just slumped down onto the floor, exhausted from all the pain she'd received and barely able to stay awake. Tails knelt down beside Sora and lifted her head up. It felt good to see her again, especially as he had something to ask her. Sora weakly opened up her eyes, which were no longer flowing with tears and the fur under them was stained horribly from crying so heavily, and she looked up at Tails.

"Ugh…uh…Tails…?" she whispered weakly.

"Sora Sumdac. It's good to see you again." said Tails "Although I'd have preferred happier circumstances. What happened to you?"

"Team…Diamond…cough…wanted me to…talk…" croaked Sora "I…refused…and bore the…brunt of their…anger…"

"I'm so, so, so sorry I left you to get this undeserved punishment honey." said Rouge guiltily "I had to get help, I really did. I'm so sorry I…"

"It's…OK Rouge…I understand." rasped Sora, clutching her side in pain "I'm glad…help's arrived at last. I'm…especially glad that…Tails is here…too…for I have something…he needs to hear…"

"Me?!" cried Tails "Something I need to hear? What do you mean?"

"Tails…this is going to…sound incredulous…but…I am…your sister." whispered Sora, fighting hard to say those words.

Tails gasped in surprise at this. Sora was his sister? How could this be? He didn't remember having any siblings at all! What was she on about. Sonic however, was less then pleasant about his reaction.

"Whoa…I think Team Diamond let her have it too hard." said Sonic "You can't seriously expect Tails to believe that can you? Tails doesn't have any siblings Sora, you can't possibly be related to him."

"No Sonic, I think she's telling the truth." said Tails "I can vaguely recall someone from when I was just a baby. I think you might be that person Sora. No wonder I kept thinking you look familiar. So if I'm really your brother…then why don't I remember you like I should do?"

"Because…fate tore us apart." said Sora sadly "You see, when you was born, I was the happiest girl in the world. I was always wanting a brother and I finally got one. I was four years old when you were born and I loved you immediately. I adored you and wanted to be the best sister…a brother could ask…for. Unfortunately…fate happened. For…our parents couldn't afford to keep us both. They were…seriously having money troubles and they couldn't keep us both…they just couldn't afford it. They had to give one of us up…or face a life of poverty. I gave myself up…for your sake. You were only two months old when this happened and…poverty was no life for you…so I gave myself up and became an orphan…all for you my lovely, dear brother…"

Tails felt like he wanted to cry hearing all of this. He had a sister all this time and because of financial problems, he lost her before he even knew her? How horrible was fate to him half the time?! But it seemed that fate liked to smile on him at other times since he was now reunited with Sora at last. Even Sonic looked amazed to hear all this but he seemed to be buying it luckily.

"Oh my gosh…I'm so sorry to hear all that Sora." said Tails "You had to be orphaned just so I could live and our parents could afford to look after me? I…I don't know what to say…"

"You're welcome…Tails." said Sora "Believe me when I say…mom and dad were heartbroken when I had to be orphaned for your sake. They made a promise…that once they had enough money…they would get me back. But then my spy-life happened…I was adopted by a super-spy named…Martin Sumdac. He was an amazing…man and a great foster father and…mentor to me. I enjoyed my life…with him and learning…how to be a super-spy so much…that I forgot all

about you. I even…had my name legally changed…from Sora Prower…to Sora Sumdac. I forgot I even had a brother for a while…until the Region of Rebellious Reptiles happened…and then you saw me and lit a spark…in my memory and I…looked at a family photo…I forgot I had…and remembered that you're…my brother. I'm so…sorry that I forgot all about you and never…got to see you again Tails. I'm so, so sorry."

"It's alright Sora." said Tails, on the verge of tears after hearing all of this "You had your duty, you didn't have time for a brother. But now we remember each other we can reunite and bring the family back together again! If only mom and dad were here to see this…" he added sadly.

"I know…what happened to them unfortunately…" said Sora grimly "They…were killed during a raid…in an Eggman base two months…after the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters…formed.

"No!" cried Tails "Mom and dad are…really gone?! Now our family will NEVER be reunited! First I lose you, now we lost mom and dad! I also lost my cousin Ginger but I don't care about him, he was a jerk to me! He got what was coming to him!"

"Yes…I hated Ginger too…" muttered Sora "Glad to hear…he's dead. Anyway…we may never have the family…we always wanted…but me and you can…keep the Prower family alive…at least. Now we're back together again. I'm…so happy to see my little brother again…after being taken from him before…his life really began."

"And I'm glad to know that a super-spy as awesome as you is my sister." said Tails, hugging Sora happily "And now I know you're related to me, I'm never going to lose you again!"

Sora hugged him back and the two siblings had a good, happy cry with each other over what had just been spoken. Sonic and Rouge watched this in awe and Rouge put her hands over her heart, delighted for the two young foxes.

"Aww…that's so cute." said Sonic "Tails got his sister back after all those years of being separated from her. I'm amazed to hear he

even HAS one but it makes sense why he's never mentioned her or said he has any siblings before at least."

"Yeah." said Rouge "I already knew this believe it or not since Sora told me she was Tails' long-lost sister when she saved me from Team Diamond."

"And you didn't tell us since you think it would sound more believable coming out of Sora than you I bet." said Sonic "Thanks for letting Sora tell Tails herself, that was very nice of you."

"Don't mention it." said Rouge "Now, let's get Sora outta here before…"

Then suddenly, the factory doors swung open again and Team Diamond stormed inside to see what was going on, startling Tails and Sora and making them clutch each other in fear…

Footnotes:

*** See Tales from Mobius: Arc 18: Treasure-Hunting Rivals for the whole story and to see how this whole thing got started**

**** See Tales from Mobius: Rival Origins**

***** See Tales from Mobius: Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles**

Well...Tails has discovered he has a sister but it looks like the reunion's about to end as quickly as it happened! Can Sonic, Tails, Sora and Rouge survive Team Diamond? Or are they wlell and truly dead now...? And what of the Key of Opulence? Will its power come to fruition in the ensuing battle?

I apologize for the disturbing nature of Sora's torture. What can I say? Team Diamond are mean, they would do something like this. Please don't get too worked up over it if it's disturbing to you, I'm not trying to freak anybody out after all.

The Key of Opulence 2

Story 138: The Key of Opulence Part 2

What had just been a sweet, loving, tender moment between two reunited siblings had just been destroyed in a matter of seconds.

The sneaky but good-hearted Rouge the Bat had gone off to the Tropical Jungle to find a legendary relic known as "The Key of Opulence", a jewelled key with a power of apocalyptic capabilities, only to then lose it to the nefarious Team Diamond, treasure hunters working for the insidious organization known as H.U.N.T.* Then Rouge ended up teaming up with the amazing super-spy, Sora Sumdac, and her friend Joel Nutmeg to get the key back, only for the spies to get captured and Rouge being forced to retreat and call for help. She'd brought Sonic the Hedgehog and Tails the Fox to the factory Team Diamond were hiding in to save Sora but they were too late to save Joel since he had been coldly executed in an attempt to make Sora talk. So only Sora was there to be rescued now. Sonic had unchained Sora and Sora had revealed to Tails that she was her sister. Surprised at first, Tails was quite thrilled to be reunited with one member of his family at last and the two were happily hugging each other, thrilled to be back together after being separated by a cruel twist of fate all those years ago. But unfortunately, Team Diamond had come back into the factory to collect all the jewels they had gotten from the Key of Opulence's power. Their convey had finally arrived and they had started loading it all the time Sora had been talking to her rescuers. The convey was a fleet of trucks that was going to take all the jewels to a shipyard and ship them off to other regions of the world so other members of H.U.N.T. could get some fair shares and the boss behind it all would get some jewels too since H.U.N.T. had a strict policy on sharing with other teams and members. Made the group more organized and strengthened the teamwork and friendships between them all. The moment Team Diamond had returned to the factory to pick up their jewels from the Key of Opulence, they all stared in horror at the fact Sonic was here and Tails and Sora were hugging each other fearfully. Lennox Meers the Meerkat, leader of Team Diamond,

whipped out his revolvers and pointed them at Sonic and Tails.

"Sonic the Hedgehog?! And his twin-tailed accomplice?!" shrieked Lennox "How did you get here?!"

"A little bat told us and she's standing right next to me." sneered Sonic, pointing at Rouge with his thumb.

"Did you honestly think that I would retreat and let you goons harm an innocent, twelve-year old girl and her friend?" scoffed Rouge "I went to get help and I got the best help I could possibly ask for, Sonic and Tails."

"Well you're too late to save the girl's friend, we killed him to try and make her talk." said Lennox coldly.

"Wha…? Oh no…" said Rouge, shocked to hear that Joel was dead and that they weren't in time to save him too "Oh Sora, I'm so sorry we didn't get here in time to help Joel!"

"It's…OK Rouge. When you're a super…spy you get used…to losing your friends…" grunted Sora "Although…Joel's death will be…hard for me to get over. He was…a really good friend to me."

"So not only did you torture Sora, who's a friend of ours, you killed one of her friends?!" shouted Sonic in disbelief "You're really asking for it Team Diamond! I'm gonna see to it that all four of you rot in prison for this!"

"Just try and get us hedgehog!" snarled Lennox, shooting rapidly at him and Tails with his revolvers.

The Mobians all scattered with Sonic dodging the bullets with ease, Rouge flying into the air and Tails carrying Sora bridal style and flying her out of harm's reach. As Tails flew up, Sora held on tightly to her brother and she gasped as she watched his tails spinning around like propeller blades.

"Oh my gosh! You…you can fly with those tails?!" cried Sora in surprise.

"I sure can sis." said Tails brightly "I can fly faster than most fliers in

the world and they've helped me a lot in my adventures."

"I always…knew you were born…with two tails for a reason brother." said Sora happily "Not only did they make you more special but… they've given you an incredible ability.

"Heh, heh, thanks Sora." said Tails, landing down beside a huge machine and putting Sora down "Now stay behind here while we fight Team Diamond. You're in no condition to help and they'll surely kill you if you try and fight them. I can't bear to lose you just so soon after getting you back."

"Be careful brother, whatever you do." said Sora, hugging Tails as if this was going to be their last hug ever "Please…bring them to justice for what they've done to me…and many others."

"I will Sora, that's a promise." said Tails, hugging her back.

Now that was done with, Tails took to the air again and flew off, leaving Sora to just observe the whole fight from behind the machine. She really wanted to join in with the fight but her injuries from the torture she'd received were too great. She just couldn't join in at all so Sora was stuck on the sidelines. Still, she was quite happy to watch her brother in action and watch him bring down Team Diamond. Lennox was still shooting at Sonic and Rouge but they kept dodging his shots. Sonic eventually put a stop to Lennox's shooting craze by spin-dashing him in the gut and making him drop the revolvers. Rouge stomped on them both, breaking them and rendering them useless to the meerkat now. As for Sonic, he was pinning Lennox down to the floor by putting his foot on his chest. He glared at Lennox and the meerkat glared back at him.

"I remember you gun-happy." he said darkly "You're the ring leader and you gave me a good kicking despite me smashing your guns to bits. Well you won't be leading Team Diamond to anything anymore when I put you behind bars. And Rouge tells me your name is "Lennox Meers". So now I know who I'm up against this time, something that'll help us beat you and your team."

"Grrr…this is why we often memory-wipe or kill deserters and traitors to H.U.N.T.!" growled Lennox "Thanks to Rouge, you and

your whole team will know our names and secrets! No matter, the subtlety maybe gone but we're still as threatening as we always are hedgehog!"

"Yeah, sure, whatever." muttered Sonic "You and your team are going to jail and that's the end of it."

Then suddenly, Sonic was grabbed from behind by an enormous gloved hand and yanked away from Lennox, allowing the meerkat the chance to get back up. The hand that had grabbed Sonic and lifted him off of Lennox belonged to Owen Pounder, the team's strongman with a keen brain and good sense of workings-out. Owen held Sonic at arm's length by his head and Sonic tried to punch at him.

"Hey, put me down you overgrown Easter Bunny!" cried Sonic.

"No chance you big, spiky nuisance!" growled Owen "You will not arrest us and we will tear you apart just like we attempted to do the first time we met you!"

He then proceeded to put his other hand on Sonic's head and he attempted to break his neck in two but Sonic quickly moved his feet and rapidly kicked Owen as he edged his moving feet close to him, causing the muscular rabbit to drop him. Now Sonic was free from Owen's grip, he tripped him up with a sweeping kick to the ankles. Owen landed down back first onto the floor rather sharply, making him wince in pain. Lennox tried to help Owen by punching at Sonic but Sonic leaned out of the way and grabbed his fist. He threw Lennox over onto his back and slammed him on the floor as hard as he could. Owen picked himself up and punched at Sonic but Sonic zipped out of the way, leaving Owen to punch Lennox by accident. Lennox ended up wheezing really loudly as if a football had been kicked into his gut. Owen gasped in horror at his mistake and he helped Lennox sit up and started patting him on the back to make him feel better. Sonic just took the opportunity to spin-dash Owen and send him flying into a dormant machine that was nearby. Owen's crash was so heavy that he ended up denting the machine. Sonic ran up to Owen again but Owen held his hands up and caught Sonic like a basketball being thrown at him. Owen raised Sonic up above his head and slammed him down onto the floor as hard as he

could. He didn't let go of Sonic though, he swung him around into the machine he'd hit earlier and slammed Sonic as hard as he could again. Owen then pinned Sonic against the machine, hoping to keep him there, but Sonic kicked him in the chest and made him let go. Sonic then slugged Owen in the gut and kicked him down onto the floor. Lennox ran in and punched Sonic but Sonic took the blow and he grabbed Lennox by the arm. He bent Lennox's arm over his shoulder and then threw him over in front of himself onto the floor. The meerkat just groaned in pain as he hit the floor.

As for Rouge, she was fighting Roxy the Raccoon, the team's femme fetale, while Tails was fighting Alistair Drakken, the creepy mask-wearing bat who's also an aerial ace. Rouge had her fight with Roxy in the bag since Roxy wasn't the most incredible fighter of Team Diamond. Rouge flew out of the way as Roxy swung her baton at her and she screw-kicked Roxy in the gut, knocking the raccoon down on the floor. Rouge then tried to grab Roxy but Roxy grabbed her hands and kept them away from her. She then proceeded to throw her legs upwards, sending Rouge hurling forwards into the floor face first. Roxy quickly rolled over and she kicked Rouge just as the bat was trying to get back up. Rouge managed to recover from this though and she roundhouse kicked Roxy across the face as the raccoon tried to hit her with her baton again. Roxy was thrown aside by the kick but Rouge didn't stop there. She grabbed Roxy by her ponytail and yanked her onto her knees. She then dragged Roxy around by her hair and slammed her face first into a nearby supporting pole. Roxy groaned as her face flared up with pure, unadulterated pain. Rouge tried to drag her again but Roxy grabbed onto the pole with both hands, preventing Rouge from dragging her around anymore. Roxy then pulled on herself and pulled Rouge towards her. She elbowed the bat in the mouth and made her let go of her ponytail. Rouge's mouth now had a spot of blood on her lips after that elbow thrust. Rouge wiped it away, staining her elbow length glove as she wiped it, and she took to the skies again. She flew towards Roxy but Roxy jumped up and grabbed onto her, pulling the bat down for she was so taken aback by the sudden grab that she didn't have time to react and the girls were brought crashing down onto the floor. Roxy kicked Rouge off of herself and then tried to club Rouge with her baton but Rouge kicked Roxy in the gut and made her double over. Then she ran

towards a pole, grabbed it, swung herself around it sideways and she kicked Roxy in the back, sending her flying forward onto her face. Rouge stopped swinging herself around and she strode casually up to Roxy.

"You're not as good as the boys Roxy." sneered Rouge "I can't think for a minute why Lennox let you on the team."

"Just you wait, I'm not finished yet!" yelled Roxy, picking herself up and walloping Rouge across the head with her baton.

That wallop across the head had left Rouge feeling light-headed and with a big headache which hurt so much, it was hard for her to think straight. She rubbed her head furiously to make the pain go away but she wouldn't have time for that for Roxy picked herself up and uppercut her in the face with the baton, knocking her down onto her back. Roxy tried to hit Rouge again but Rouge rolled out of the way and flew up into the air where Roxy wouldn't be able to hit her. This allowed her a moment to rub her head better and get back into the fight. Rouge screw-kicked Roxy from behind and knocked her down onto the floor. Rouge then snatched the baton out of Roxy's hand and threw it away. She grabbed both her arms and twisted them behind her back, making the raccoon scream loud enough to make the ceiling crumble down on them. Rouge just grinned slyly, clearly enjoying making a member of a team she was once part of suffer. Revenge is sweet as they say.

As for Tails and Alistair, Tails was having one heck of a hard time up in the air with Alistair. Alistair was by far the superior flier of the two so Tails could barely keep up with him. Tails charged towards Alistair like a speeding bullet and he tried to punch Alistair but the bat dodged his attack and dropkicked him in the head, sending Tails hurling down to the floor. Tails managed to save himself by grabbing onto low hanging chain nearby. Alistair charged at Tails but Tails grabbed part of the chain under his feet and he whipped Alistair with it. Being whipped with a chain is much worse than being whipped by an ordinary whip. The whip left Alistair with a dent across the forehead section of his mask and he wailed ominously in pain. The mask was the only thing keeping him alive now and it really hurt him when the mask received any damage. Tails flew off of the chain and he tried to punch Alistair again but Alistair grabbed his fist and

socked him in the mouth. Tails cried out in pain and he gripped his throbbing mouth furiously. Alistair then proceeded to slash Tails across the cheek with his razor-sharp claws. Tails screamed in agony as his cheek began to sting from the three fresh cuts he'd just received across his cheek. Tails really lost his wick after that attack and he tried furiously to punch Alistair but the bat kept dodging his attacks with ease.

"Your efforts are futile little brat." he sneered, karate-chopping Tails in the back of his neck as he dodged another attack of his "I am the superior flier of the two, you will never be able to bring me down. And all losing your temper is going to do is ensure that I win and you die." he added as Tails tried and failed to punch him again.

"Shut up!" shrieked Tails, punching at Alistair again and really losing it "You and your evil gang have brutally harmed my sister and I'm gonna make you pay for it!"

Alistair looked stunned to hear Tails yelling that at him.

"Sister…? The blue-furred fox we tortured is your sister?" he mused "Well in that case, maybe if I hold your life on the line, we can get her to talk! I bet the kid will willingly tell us everything we want to know if her brother's life is threatened!"

That did it. Tails REALLY went berserk with rage and he kicked Alistair in the face as hard as he possibly could. Alistair wailed a ghoulish, growling wail of pain but Tails didn't stop there. He flew directly into Alistair and began whaling on him as hard as he could, his rage so out of control that his punches seemed to get harder every time he threw one at the bat.

"You. Will. Not. Get. My. Sister. To. Talk!" he screamed with every punch he threw at Alistair.

He then proceeded to tail whip Alistair down into the floor where he crashed into a dormant treadmill and left a gaping hole in the belt section. Alistair just groaned in pain and lay there, too weak to move after that epic beat down Tails had just given him. When Tails last his temper, he truly was an unstoppable force that not even Sonic can tame. Tails flew down to the floor, panting heavily for that beat

down had left him out of breath. He observed Alistair and safely deduced that he was out of action for now. Now the bat was dealt with, Tails could maybe help Sonic or Rouge with their fights. As for Sora, she had watched Tails beat the daylights out of Alistair and she was pretty amazed at what she had witnessed.

"Wow…my brother really is a good fighter isn't he?" she whispered to herself "Better than me that's for sure. I'll have to see if he can teach me a bit more on how to fight when this is all over."

That thought was a very lovely thought indeed and hopefully, Sora would live long enough for it to happen. Back over to Sonic, Lennox and Owen, the three were still fighting rather callously with each other and Sonic was on top for the most part. Tails had decided to fly in and help him since Rouge seemed to have her right with Roxy in the bag and wouldn't need help. Tails flew in and kicked Lennox in the head, leaving Sonic to take on Owen. Sonic was delighted to receive some assistance from his best friend and he let Tails deal with Lennox. Sonic leaped up to Owen and he kicked him in the face in the manner of a martial artist. Owen staggered backwards and Sonic then let him have it with a sweeping kick to the legs. Owen was tripped up by the attack and he came down with a rather heavy thud on his back. Sonic then poured salt on the wound by elbow-thrusting Owen in the gut. Owen gasped after that elbow-thrust but he was soon back on his feet. Sonic punched at him but Owen grabbed his fist. He squeezed on it hard, making Sonic cry in pain. Then Owen tossed Sonic across the room and sent him flying into a wall. Sonic hit the wall and lay against it, grimacing in pain. Owen then lowered his head and thundered towards Sonic like a charging bull. Sonic recovered from that smack in the wall but he was too late to dodge Owen's charge. Owen crashed into Sonic and due to how strong he was and how weak the wall was in comparison to most buildings, he ended up breaking his way through the wall as he crashed into Sonic!

"Oh YEAH!" yelled Owen as he burst through the wall, sending chunks of metal flying everywhere and crumbling down onto the floor.

The wall now had a giant hole in it thanks to Owen charging through it. Owen had sent Sonic flying a few feet away after charging into

him and Sonic now lay near a convey truck that was fully loaded and ready to drive off. Owen and Sonic were in the parking lot where the convey was waiting to pick up Team Diamond's latest jewels from their latest hunts. There were four trucks all waiting for the all go signal. The trucks were big, yellow trucks with enormous trailers that had two wheels on each side. The drivers of the trucks looked in their rear-view mirrors and watched as Sonic and Owen started to fight again. They were gobsmacked at what they were seeing.

"Holy mother of pearls! It's Sonic the Hedgehog himself!" shrieked one driver.

"That blasted hedgehog's here to ruin everything!" cried another "Let's get outta here before he steals any jewels that's stored in our trucks!"

"No, we have to wait for Lennox to give the all clear signal. We cannot go yet." said a third driver "Besides, Team Diamond will deal with him no sweat."

So the truck drivers reluctantly decided to stay put and see what happens. Owen threw a punch at Sonic but Sonic dodged and spin-dashed him directly into the trailer of one of the trucks. Owen recovered from the attack and he punched at Sonic again. As the two were fighting, Lennox had decided to run off and see what was going on outside with Tails chasing after him. Rouge and Roxy had decided to do the same thing as well. Alistair had finally recovered from his beat down at the hands of Tails and he flew over to the hole in the wall to see what was going on. Sora was anxious to see what was happening too so she limped over to the hole in the wall, ignoring the pain in her body and forcing herself to walk over to it. They all looked outside and they could see that Sonic and Owen were fighting in the parking lot and fighting near the convey trucks. Sonic spin-dashed Owen into a truck's trailer and the rabbit crashed into some of the cargo inside. Sonic leaped into the trailer and spin-dashed him again. Owen picked up a few crates containing lots of jewels and he tried to smash Sonic with it. Sonic zipped out of the way of course, leaving the crate to smash against the wall of the trailer and break into a million pieces, the contents of the crate scattering everywhere. Sonic picked up a crate and he kicked it directly into Owen's face. The crate smashed to pieces and jewels

fell everywhere as it broke. Owen tried to launch another attack but he stepped on some pearls that had fallen on the floor and he tripped on them. Sonic just laughed at him.

"What's the matter Owen? Too slippery for you?" he sneered "Serves you right for throwing crates at me and spilling jewels everywhere I say!"

Owen just growled at Sonic and tried to punch at him again, the hedgehog dodging his attack and dropkicking Owen in the head. Outside, Lennox ran over to the truck and he nearly went mental with shock over what he was looking at.

"NO! Our precious treasures!" he shrieked "That infernal hedgehog's going to ruin our convey! How can we stop that blasted, rapidly-moving nuisance?!"

He then suddenly came up with a brilliant idea. He reached into his cloak pocket and took out the Key of Opulence.

"If I open up a doorway and throw Sonic into it and then close it… he'll be gone forever!" he deduced "Brilliant! We'll get rid of him once and for all!"

Sora and Rouge were horrified to see that Lennox was going to use the Key of Opulence again.

"No! We mustn't let him use that key again!" cried Sora "If he uses it two more times and then another, the key will turn him into a gold-craving monster that will end all life as we know it!"

"I'm on it honey." said Rouge, flying off towards Lennox as the meerkat activated the key's power.

Lennox thrust the key in front of himself, turned it to one side and then opened up a doorway in front of the trailer. The doorway was full of jewels much like before and Owen could see it from inside the trailer.

"Owen! Grab Sonic and throw him in there!" yelled Lennox "Once he's in I'm going to close the door and seal him in there for good!"

Owen smiled evilly at this. Lennox had a good plan to get rid of Sonic it seemed and he was going to make sure that it works to perfection. Owen lunged at Sonic and grabbed him but before he could even so much as ATTEMPT to throw him through the jewel doorway, Rouge screw-kicked Lennox away and instantly closed it. She snatched the Key of Opulence away after closing the door but Lennox grabbed her by the waist and snatched it back off of her before she could fly away. Lennox then re-opened the door and Owen readied himself to throw Sonic through the door. Sonic however managed to break free of Owen's grip and he dropkicked Owen into the back of the trailer. Lennox jumped into the trailer to try and help Owen through Sonic through the door. This gave Rouge the perfect opportunity to close the door again and get the Key of Opulence back.

"If Lennox uses it one more time, he's gonna become that monster Sora's described." she mused to herself "He's used it three times now, I've gotta make sure he doesn't use it again."

Unfortunately, before Rouge could make off with the key, Alistair and Roxy both ran in and they pounced on her. They brought Rouge down to the ground and Alistair swiped the key from her hands. Rouge tried to get it back but Roxy batted her hand and kept it away from Alistair. Alistair then ran over to the truck to give the key back to Lennox but Tails flew in and dropkicked him, making him drop the key. He had overheard Sora and Rouge's discussion so he knew that Lennox must not be allowed to use the key again. Tails grabbed the key as Alistair dropped it but he was soon hit from behind by a flying Sonic the Hedgehog. Owen had managed to throw him out of the trailer and he had crashed into Tails as he flew out of it. Tails dropped the key and Roxy grabbed it. Rouge kicked the raccoon in the back and Roxy dropped the key but it ended up landing near Lennox. Lennox grabbed the key and quickly used its power again.

"Now Sonic, Rouge and Tails, it's time to seal you all away forever!" he yelled at them.

He was right to say "forever" since when you use the Key of Opulence, you never open the same door twice, you always open up a new one. Thus, if he got Sonic, Tails and Rouge through the door and closed it, they would be stuck in limbo for all eternity. But that

wasn't what was going to happen now. For when Lennox thrust the key in front of him and turned it, a door didn't open. Instead, the key glowed a very bright gold colour and Lennox was engulfed by the light. The light was so bright that everybody had to shield their eyes from it before they got blinded. Sora was horrified to see what was happening. The heroes had failed, Lennox had used the key more than three times and now the end of the world was coming for Lennox would turn it into a golden paradise with only him as the populace of Mobius for everybody would be turned into gold by him. As Lennox was engulfed by the bright, golden, radiant glow, he began to feel himself changing. His body began to feel funny and he gripped himself in anguish as if the transformation was physically hurting him.

"What…?! What's happening to me?!" he wailed as the key's power began to transform him.

Lennox looked at his hands and noticed that they were turning a brilliant golden colour. That wasn't it though. The golden colour began to spread all the way up his arms and up to his shoulders. Then it spread out down his torso and all the way down to his legs and feet. It finished by spreading up to his head and even his hat. It was as if invisible paintbrushes were sweeping over Lennox and painting him gold. Everybody watched in astonishment as Lennox was turned completely gold and now just looked like a golden version of himself. Every inch of his body had been turned gold, even his clothes. His eyes were a much darker gold than the rest of his body and they were as blank as a sheet of paper. They glowed ever so ominously though and Lennox looked truly scary like this. He looked like a golden ghoul that had come out to unleash chaos on the world. The Key of Opulence stopped glowing after Lennox's transformation and it fell down onto the ground with a clunk. Rouge seized it immediately and held it tightly as she stared at Golden Lennox. Everybody unshielded their eyes and they were speechless with amazement at what was looming before them.

"What in the heck happened?!" cried Sonic "Lennox looks like he just fell into a tub of gold paint!"

"It's that key Sonic!" exclaimed Tails, pointing at the Key of Opulence which Rouge now had in her hands "Its transformed

Lennox into a golden entity!"

"But that can't be! How is the Key of Opulence able to do that?!" blurted Owen "I don't recall hearing anything about it being able to do something like this!"

"Well Owen, you big doofus, it **can** do that obviously since that's what it just did!" shouted Roxy "So what's gonna happen now Lennox is that thing?"

"We all die, that's what happens." said Sora gravely "The Key of Opulence's side effect is that anyone who uses it more than once will become a golden entity that craves gold and will turn everything, living or not, into solid gold. Lennox will turn all of Mobius into gold and we'll all be golden statues that will forever observe the golden landscape that he has created."

"So that's why me and Sora came to stop you guys from using it, because we didn't want to risk having one of you idiots causing the end of the world." said Rouge crossly "Now look what happened! Lennox is gonna turn us all into gold and all because you decided to steal what was rightfully mine! Had the key remained in MY hands then we wouldn't be in this situation now!"

This was all too shocking for Roxy, Owen and Alistair to hear. Their own leader was going to turn everything to gold and end all life on Mobius?! They had to stop him and fast! They maybe treasure-hunters with a rapacious greed but ending the world was not what they had signed up for! If Lennox turned them gold, their careers would be over and their lives would be no more! Even Sonic was gobsmacked to hear all this and he decided to get down to it. He couldn't help but think that Lennox might be the one to doom Silver and Blaze's future. But then, they hadn't described the world is being made of solid gold and if Lennox turns everything into gold then how can Silver and Blaze exist? This must mean that Lennox will get stopped somehow and that filled Sonic up with hope. The only trouble was…how can they stop him? Nevertheless, Sonic was determined to try and stop Lennox before he goes on a gold craze.

"If Lennox is gonna turn the world into gold then we have to stop him and fast!" declared Sonic "Sora, how do we stop him? You know

about the key's side-effects, there must be a way to reverse it!"

"Well, I believe it is said that if you use the Key of Opulence and turn it the **other** way, it'll open up a door that will strip the corrupted person of their golden powers and restore them to normal." said Sora "And by other way, I mean turn it to the right instead of the left like one normally does when turning a key."

"Got it." said Sonic "And Rouge already has the key so let's get on with it. We can end this charade before it begins."

But Sonic was wrong on that for Golden Lennox charged at the Mobians and sent them all sprawling across the ground. Everybody was thrown a few metres in different directions of the parking lot and Sonic & Tails were sent crashing into a truck. Golden Lennox swooped down and he snatched the Key of Opulence away from Rouge, who was lying near the hole in the wall of the factory.

"My Key of Opulence!" hissed Golden Lennox, his voice deeply amplified and very intimidating sounding now **"I shall keep this key safely out of your hands and keep you all from taking away my powers! Now, prepare to become gold as I make this world a golden paradise! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"**

He put the key in his cloak pocket and then edged towards Rouge, preparing to touch the bat and turn her into a solid gold statue. But before he could touch Rouge, Sonic spin-dashed him away from the bat and sent him crashing down away from her. Sonic helped Rouge back onto her feet and the two prepared to battle with Golden Lennox.

"Whatever you do Sonic, DON'T let him touch you!" called Sora "If he does, you'll become gold faster then even you can run!"

"Don't let Lennox touch me, get the key back and use it the other way, I believe I can do that." said Sonic cockily "Tails, Rouge and Team Diamond, I'll need all the help I can get out here so are you with me?"

"Certainly." said Tails and Rouge.

"We're in without a moment's hesitance." said Roxy "We don't want Lennox to kill us all. We want him back to normal so we're helping."

"Good." said Sonic "OK guys, let's do it to it!"

With that said, everybody charged towards Golden Lennox and they prepared to bring him down and get the Key of Opulence back off of him. Golden Lennox raised his fists and he flew towards the charging Mobians. Tails and Alistair were the ones to make the first move by kicking Golden Lennox in the head. Golden Lennox hurled down onto the floor and Owen picked him up. He threw Golden Lennox into a truck, noticeable the one he and Sonic had been fighting in earlier. Golden Lennox hit the truck and due to the fact he was more powerful than ever before, his crashing into the truck ended up tipping it over onto its side. The terrified driver jumped out of the truck and ran for his life. The other truck drivers floored it and drove off, leaving the one truck behind to take whatever it was going to get. Three convey trucks were going to deliver whatever jewels they had to the boss and other teams of H.U.N.T but they were only going to be delivering half of what they usually deliver. Golden Lennox picked himself up and he placed his hands on the truck he had crashed into. The moment he did, the truck turned into a solid gold truck that sparkled like the stars in the sky. He then flew underneath the truck and he picked it up as if it weighed nothing! The Mobians all stared in amazement as they watched this ordinarily sized meerkat pick up a huge golden truck as if it was nothing to him. A solid gold truck was likely to weight hundreds of tonnes but Golden Lennox made it seem like it weighed nothing!

"Unbelievable! He can pick up that truck that he's just turned into gold?!" exclaimed Sonic.

"He must have super strength now!" cried Tails "Well, given he's turned into an entity, I bet his powers are limitless!"

Golden Lennox cackled at the top of his voice and he threw the truck at the Mobians. Everybody instantly dove for cover and the truck ended up coming down with a heavy, tumultuous crash that shattered it all into giant, golden pieces that lay on the ground. The road of the parking lot had been cracked by the impact and now giant cracks were spreading out in the parking lot. Golden Lennox

was disappointed to see that his attack had missed and he whooshed down towards Tails for he was nearest too him.

"Gold…must have gold!" he roared as he neared Tails **"You will become gold little one!"**

Tails cried out in horror as Golden Lennox neared him and he braced himself for the impact. But that would never come for Sora used all the strength she had left in her injured body to jump out and push Tails out of the way. The two foxes ended up sprawling on the ground as Golden Lennox swooped past them both. Tails stared at Sora in surprise and the blue-furred fox with the silver utility belt tried to keep herself standing as she picked herself up.

"Sora…thank you." gasped Tails.

"You're…welcome brother…" grunted Sora as her injuries began acting up again "I lost you eight years ago…I'm not gonna lose you again."

That made Tails smile with gratefulness at his long lost sister. But now was not the time to rest, Golden Lennox swooped back around and he headed towards Tails and Sora. They both cried out in fear and they hugged each other worriedly.

"I will turn you BOTH golden!" he cackled maniacally as he headed towards the two foxes **"I must turn everything into gold! Gold is power, gold is beauty and gold is everything and it must become gold!"**

"The only gold we'll have around here is actual gold!" yelled Sonic, running in to save Tails and Sora before Golden Lennox could turn the two siblings into golden statues.

He spin-dashed Golden Lennox and slammed him down into the ground. Tails and Sora both breathed a sigh of relief and Tails helped to escort Sora out of harm's way for she was the most vulnerable out here given her injuries and such. Golden Lennox threw a punch at Sonic in an attempt to touch him and turn him gold but Sonic dodged the attack and he spin-dashed Golden Lennox again. Golden Lennox was sent flying into the wall of the factory and

before he could get up, Sonic grabbed him by the tail and threw him into the remains of the golden truck he'd thrown at the Mobians earlier. Golden Lennox crashed into the golden remains and he ended up breaking them down into even smaller chunks than they already were. Golden Lennox picked himself up, looking visibly unharmed from the onslaught he'd just received right now and he picked up some rather sizeable gold chunks. He threw them at Sonic in an attempt to knock him out and render him vulnerable to his gold-crazy powers. Sonic just spin-dashed through them all and he hit Golden Lennox once again. Golden Lennox picked himself up and he clasped his fists together. He slammed them on the ground and made it shudder underneath everybody's feet. Sonic was thrown down onto his back by the slam and Golden Lennox rushed over to him, eager to touch him and turn him gold. He lashed out at Sonic but Sonic grabbed Golden Lennox's wrists and kept his hands away from him. Golden Lennox pushed hard on Sonic to try and get his hands near him but Sonic fought back to keep Golden Lennox's hands away from him. Unfortunately, Golden Lennox was beginning to overpower Sonic for Golden Lennox had greater strength than Sonic. Sonic could feel his strength beginning to give out as Golden Lennox began to overpower him.

"It is useless to resist!" cackled Golden Lennox **"You are to become gold and you cannot stop me from converting you!"**

But before he could so much as get his fingertips close to Sonic's face, Roxy ran in and walloped him into the air as hard as she could with her baton. Golden Lennox hurled into the air but he stopped himself from crashing down into the ground and he flew back towards Roxy. Roxy prepared to bat him again but Golden Lennox came in too fast and he swept Roxy off her feet by charging into her. Roxy was thrown backwards and she skidded to a halt on her back. The raccoon grimaced in pain at that stop and Golden Lennox prepared to touch her. Sonic spin-dashed towards Golden Lennox but Golden Lennox spun around and kicked Sonic away. Sonic crashed down a few feet away and skidded to a halt. He picked himself up and began wondering something.

"Hey wait a second, Lennox touched me!" he cried "Well, he kicked me but he still touched me! Why am I not gold then? Is it only his

hands that he has to touch people with and turn them into gold?"

Sonic soon received his answer for Lennox grabbed Roxy by the arm and turned the horrified raccoon into a shining golden statue that lay on the ground completely at his mercy. Flesh and bone and even fur and hair had been turned into solid gold in a matter of seconds. Sonic now knew that he had to make sure that Lennox doesn't get his hands on him or he'll end up like poor Roxy. The best way of maintaining this avoidance technique would be to attack Golden Lennox from behind, the very place he can't touch someone. With that in mind, Sonic zoomed towards Golden Lennox and he attempted to spin-dash him in the back. Unfortunately, Golden Lennox heard him coming and he flipped over out of Sonic's way. Sonic skidded to a halt and charged towards Golden Lennox again but Golden Lennox lowered his head and rammed Sonic into the factory wall, breaking another hole through it as he did so. He then backhanded Sonic across the factory and into a nearby machine (that didn't turn Sonic into gold because Golden Lennox has to touch with the PALMS of his hand for his gimmick to work). Sonic picked himself up and ran out of the factory to bring Golden Lennox back outside. The moment Golden Lennox followed Sonic and flew outside though, Rouge and Alistair both pile-dived him into the ground from up above. Rouge used her screw-kick and Alistair just kicked him. Now Golden Lennox was down, the two bats turned him onto his back and Rouge fumbled in his cloak pocket for the Key of Opulence. Unfortunately, Golden Lennox grabbed her by the arm and turned her into solid gold just like he did with Roxy! He pushed the golden Rouge statue away from him and he leaped back onto his feet. Alistair swiped at him with his sharp claws only to miss as Golden Lennox leaped backwards and the golden-powered meerkat grabbed him by the wrists. Alistair was turned solid gold instantly as he was grabbed. This fight was beginning to go out of control now. Three Mobians had been turned into solid gold and Golden Lennox had no intention of stopping there. He flew towards Tails, he was just flying towards him himself. Tails evaded Golden Lennox by flying to the right and Golden Lennox ended up swooping past him. He turned around and flew back towards Tails with his hands wide open, ready to grab him and turn him into hold. Tails just spun-around in a tornado-like manoeuvre and he sent Golden Lennox hurling down into the ground. Golden Lennox picked himself up only

for Tails to fly up to his face and start rapidly kicking him much like how he'd often seen Ruben the Water Panther doing something like that in his battles. He let Golden Lennox have it very hard until finally, he knocked Golden Lennox down onto his back. Tails then landed beside him, reached into his cloak pocket and snatched the Key of Opulence from it. Tails then tried to use the key to turn Golden Lennox back to normal but Golden Lennox backhanded him in the leg, tripping him up and making him drop the key. He tried to touch Tails but Tails quickly moved out of the way and flew off, trying to tempt Golden Lennox to chase him and forget about the key. Lennox bought it luckily for him and he flew after the terrified fox-cub. While Golden Lennox was chasing Tails, Sora staggered as best as she could towards the Key of Opulence. Tails had hidden her behind the corner of the factory and seeing how the Key of Opulence was now in plain sight, she decided to grab it before anything else happens. Unfortunately, Golden Lennox spotted her from up in the sky and he abandoned his chase with Tails. Tails saw this and he flew after Golden Lennox, desperate to save his sister. Sora saw Golden Lennox coming and she quickly dove for cover, leaving Golden Lennox to crash slap-bang into the ground face first. The impact didn't hurt him of course for he's invulnerable in this form and he picked himself up. Tails flew over Golden Lennox's head and he grabbed the Key of Opulence. He flew up into the air and thrust it ahead of him. But before he could turn it, Golden Lennox rammed him from underneath and made him drop the key. Then he kick-slammed Tails down into the ground. The key had landed near Sora and she quickly grabbed it but Golden Lennox swooped down and grabbed her by the arms, turning her into gold instantly. Golden Lennox took they key back and stored it in his cloak pocket. Tails saw what had happened to Sora and he felt like somebody had just plunged a knife into his heart.

"NO! SORA!" cried Tails, unable to believe what had just happened to his long-lost sister.

Eight years he'd spent without her and just when he finally gets her back, it seemed that he'd lost her again. Tails was so shocked at this that he didn't even notice that Golden Lennox was coming towards him. Before Tails knew it though, Golden Lennox grabbed him by the muzzle and turned the heartbroken fox into gold! Sonic

and Owen were the only ones left to fight Golden Lennox now! The hedgehog and rabbit felt a little worried about all this and wondered if they were going to win at all. They had just seen their friends become golden statues and if they didn't come up with a plan and fast, they would be next.

"We're the only ones left Owen." said Sonic "We need a plan and we need one fast!"

"I've just got one." said Owen "I'll grab Lennox by the arms from behind and hold him as best as I can. Then you reach into his cloak pocket and get the Key of Opulence back so you can turn him back to normal."

"Sounds like a good idea Owen, let's try it." said Sonic.

Golden Lennox rushed towards Sonic and Owen, his hands bared and read to grab them both.

"Not enough gold! Must have more! MOOOOORRRRRREEEEEEE!" he thundered gleefully, his mouth wide open and streaming with saliva as if he was a starving wild animal hunting down its prey.

Sonic spin-dashed Golden Lennox in the face and he was sent hurling backwards into Owen, who had positioned himself just so Golden Lennox would fly into him as Sonic spin-dashed him. Owen grabbed Golden Lennox's arms and lifted him up by them. Golden Lennox squirmed madly in his grasp, trying to get free. Sonic quickly reached into Golden Lennox's cloak pocket and he snatched the Key of Opulence away from him. After doing that, he ran as far away from Golden Lennox as he possibly could. Golden Lennox cried out desperately and he kicked Owen in the gut to make him let go of him. He then touched Owen and turned him into gold so Owen couldn't do anything to him. But that was going to be his last golden statue ever for Sonic ran back towards Golden Lennox and thrust the key ahead of him. He pushed it as far as it would go as if he was inserting it into an invisible lock and as Sora had instructed to him, he turned it to the right. As he did that, a door opened up in thin air but this doorway had nothing behind it. It was just a plain, white, portal-like doorway and as it opened up, streams of gold began

trailing out from Golden Lennox and into the portal.

"NNNNNOOOOOOOOO!" wailed Golden Lennox **"My golden paradise isn't complete! I must not lose my powers! I MUST NOT LOSE MY PO WERS….!"**

As he wailed in agony, his bright, luminous golden aurora died away and his solid gold appearance began to fade away, bringing back his true colours and returning Lennox Meers back to normal. That wasn't all the door did though, it took away the gold encasing the ones that Golden Lennox had touched, returning them to normal as well. The moment everybody was returned to normal, Tails and Sora hugged each other and Roxy, Owen and Alistair ran over to Lennox, who had fainted from being converted back to normal, The door had finally finished erasing everything Golden Lennox had done and returning everything to normal and Sonic closed up the door. He then proceeded to spin-dash the Key of Opulence into pieces, something that horrified Rouge as she saw what he did. Sonic threw the remains down on the ground and kicked them away. The Key of Opulence was now no longer a doomsday relic, it was nothing but tiny little pieces.

"There, now nobody can bear the wrath of its side effect ever again." said Sonic, glaring at the fragments of the very key that had nearly doomed them all.

"Sonic you idiot, you weren't supposed to destroy the key!" wailed Rouge "You were supposed to get it back for me!"

"Oh yeah and then what? Give some other crazy loon the opportunity to use its power too much and go golden crazy like Lennox did?" sniffed Sonic "Please understand Rouge that I'm destroying that key for a reason. So nobody will ever end up like Lennox did."

"But…but I promised my dad that I would find it and add it to my treasury." protested Rouge.

"I'm sure your dad would rather have the world be safe then allow anyone the chance to use the key to its worst." said Sonic "I'm really sorry Rouge but it's for the good of everybody. Please understand

that."

"I…I understand Sonic." said Rouge glumly, her ears drooping down in guilt "I'm sorry I started all of this. I never decided to find that stupid key in the first place, none of this would have happened."

"It's OK Rouge, you wouldn't have anticipated such a thing would happen would you?" said Sonic, patting her on the back affectionately "Well that's what happens, we make mistakes and we make sure we don't repeat them."

"Yeah, I know." said Rouge "Now the key's destroyed, I can't repeat my mistake."

"Exactly." said Sonic with a thumbs up to the bat "Now there's only one thing left to do…arrest Team Diamond!"

He and Rouge turned to face Team Diamond. They were kneeling over Lennox's unconscious body and were trying to revive him. Sonic sneaked up behind Team Diamond and then he spin-dashed Roxy, Owen and Alistair in the back all at once, knocking them down onto their stomachs. While they were down, Sora quickly ran over to them and cuffed their arms behind their backs with the laser cuffs she had brought with her to arrest them in the first place. All of Team Diamond were now powerless and defeated at the hands of Sonic the Hedgehog and friends. Sonic stuck his tongue out at them mockingly.

"Nyah, nyah, we win Team Diamond and you're going to prison." sneered Sonic.

That made both Rouge and Sora beam happily. Now they could finally be brought to justice for what they had done to Rouge's dad and the shop Rouge had once lived in during her childhood and they could do time for torturing Sora and killing her friend Joel. This was going to be H.U.N.T.'s darkest hour with their star team behind bars…

Later that day, General Chipper and his men arrived at the factory to

take away the subdued Team Diamond. Lennox, Roxy, Owen and Alistair were all stuffed into police cars and the policemen in them prepared to take them away. General Chipper, who was now in charge of the Mobian Police Department after General Melchett had been killed at the hands of Devion, was chatting with Sonic and Rouge about H.U.N.T. as Team Diamond were bundled into the police cars.

"Yes, I can remember young Rouge here telling us about H.U.N.T. but because she was a thief and a member of the organization for sometime, we didn't believe her and just scoffed her off." said General Chipper, guilty over doing such a thing all those years ago "We're so sorry we didn't believe you Rouge. Well, now we know you are truthful and you and Agent Sora have told us all you know about the organization, we'll see to it that the whole organization gets arrested and taken down."

"That's great General." said Rouge happily "I want H.U.N.T. to go down for all the crimes they've committed. I regret ever being a member of that horrible organization and I hope everybody in it gets arrested."

"Well we'll see what we can do." said General Chipper brightly "Thanks for everything Sonic and friends and we'll see you all next time. Cheerio."

"See ya general." said Sonic with a polite wave "And good luck bringing down H.U.N.T. once and for all!"

General Chipper nodded and he got into his police car, which had Lennox and Roxy cuffed up and sitting in the back seats. General Chipper started up the car and he drove off with the other police cars following them. Rouge waved goodbye to the cars, happy to see Team Diamond being driven away and off to a prison where they would hopefully rot and do hard time for what they had done. As the police cars vanished over the horizon, Sonic turned to Rouge.

"Bet you feel satisfied that the ones who killed your dad are finally arrested." he said.

"I am indeed blue-boy although I do sorta feel sorry for Roxy." said Rouge "I mean, she wasn't a member of the team when they killed my dad so I have no grudge on her and she actually felt sorry for what happened to my dad. She also seemed shocked to hear that they had killed my dad too so I feel that Roxy may not be such a bad girl after all."

"Hmm…" mused Sonic "That is something to think about. Maybe Roxy will redeem herself and leave Team Diamond. I hope she does, joining those losers is a big mistake."

"I'll say it was and it's a mistake I live to regret making." said Rouge grimly "But it doesn't matter now, they're incarcerated at last and now I can treasure hunt in peace, safe with the knowledge that Team Diamond will never be out to get me ever again."

"You said it Rouge." said Sonic "So I guess you'll be going now?"

"I am indeed blue." said Rouge "I'll be off to find another treasure. Hopefully one that can't cause the end of the world." she added with a chuckle "Sayonara you handsome little hedgehog."

"See you next time Rouge." said Sonic with a wink.

With that said, Rouge flew off into the sky and headed off into the distance to begin her next treasure hunt. The moment Rouge flew away, Sonic turned to Tails and Sora.

"Well, this has been eventful hasn't it?" he asked "Team Diamond are finally brought down and you find out you have a sister Tails. Just wait till our friends back home hear all this."

"Oh yes." said Tails happily "And you know what Sora, I'm so glad I've finally got one part of my family back. I may not remember you but I'm willing to make a fresh start and be the little brother you've always wanted before we were separated."

"Thank you so much Tails." said Sora who was feeling much better now "And I'm gonna be the big sister you've never had, that is a promise. And to help with that…I am going to resign from the M.S.I.U. and join the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters just so I can be

with my little brother again. My life as a spy made me forget I even had a brother so now I will give up all that and start over as a spy working for the same organization her brother works in, the Royal Fighters Service."

"Wow! You're gonna join us?" blurted Sonic in amazement "Sora, that is WAY past cool! You sure helped us out when the Region of Rebellious Reptiles** attempted to ruin the Acorn Awards last year so you're gonna make our battles with Eggman all the more easier!"

"Aw, thank you Sonic." said Sora happily.

"I'm so happy to hear you're gonna join us Sora!" cried Tails happily "I can't wait to introduce you to everybody, especially my girlfriend Cosmo…"

"Ha, ha, ha little brother, I already know everybody in the team's names!" laughed Sora "But I didn't know you and Cosmo are a couple now. That's wonderful to hear that is! Tell me all about your romance!"

"Of course Sora, but when we get back home that is." said Tails "I think everybody's gonna start wondering about us now."

"Yeah, let's get going now you two foxes." said Sonic "Let's not have the others worrying where we are."

With that said, Sonic ran off and Tails took flight, holding Sora by the hands and carrying her off after Sonic. Sora squealed with delight, clearly enjoying the ride as Tails flew off with his super-sleuth sister in his hands. As Sonic, Tails and Sora headed off home, they pictured everybody's reactions to Sora becoming a new member of the team and her turning out to be Tails' sister. This day had been a glorious one for the heroes. But it wasn't long until the next villain came in to make the hero's lives miserable and Sora would end up getting her first encounter with that villain…

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 18: Treasure-***

***Hunting Rivals*, the initial set-up to all of this**

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles* for one of Sora's biggest adventures throughout this continuity.**

Well, that's it for this story! So Tails and Sora are reunited at last and Sora's joining the Royal Fighters Service so she'll always be with Tails now. What a delightful ending! :D But that's not going to last long for the next story arc's coming soon and it's going to feature the return of quite a few familiar faces. And even a familiar world too...

Hey Alma Von Arena, how's the whole Martian saga and this two-parter been for you? Are you still enjoying the story?

Hey SecretFlowerChild, are you still enjoying this story too and what did you think to the Martian saga and this two-parter?

Oh and bearvalley3365 since you've made it this far, I'm going to say a few things:

1: Thank you for reading and enjoying my story. I appreciate it. :D

2: In answer to your questions about featuring your OC, I decline your offer. I only want to use OCs I create. I don't take other people's OCs, I only use my own so I will not be featuring your character Noah Thompson in my story. Sorry.

3: As for your questions about Team Diamond. Your answers to both of them are "Read on and find out"...

Dark World Part 1

Story 139: Dark World Part 1

Mobius Nega.

One of infinite alternate universes that exists in the multi-verse. Mobius Nega was an alternate version of Mobius where familiar faces have different appearances and attire and everybody's surname is "Nega". Sonic the Hedgehog himself had visited Mobius Nega (albeit in an untimely tussle with a Metallized Mouse) and he had helped save the world from its oppressor, Eggman Nega. Eggman Nega had been defeated and thrown into the void by Sonic after using the power of the Chaos Emeralds collected from other zones to turn super. Since then, Mobius Nega had returned to its former glory and all the metallized citizens had been returned to normal. But unfortunately, that peace had just been taken away for the world had just been taken over once again. During the time of the Devatron invasion back on the Prime Zone, something had brought over two Prime Zoners and they had worked together to take over Mobius Nega. And those two were none other than Scourge the Hedgehog, Sonic's evil twin brother, and his voluptuous girlfriend Fiona Fox. Scourge and Fiona initially had no idea how they had ended up on Mobius Nega but Scourge had decided that it was a fortunate accident since they had a world close enough to their own to conquer and rule. And since there was no Sonic or Scourge to stand up to him in this world, Scourge's takeover was as easy as pie. He'd taken out resistances as easily as adding two plus two and had made citizens flee in terror with his great power. What made his takeover so easy was the fact that he was Sonic at his full potential so he not only attacked vigorously, viciously and dangerously but he also didn't hold back and in almost no time at all, Mobius Nega had fallen beneath his feet and he had crowned himself King and Fiona Queen of Mobius Nega. The Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters had scattered and were striking from the shadows to try and bring Scourge down but their attempts had really just delayed the inevitable. And right now, their leader Amy Nega had just been captured. She had been spying on Scourge but she ended

up getting spotted and was cut in seconds. After getting caught, Scourge threw her into a dungeon cell and chained her up with her arms held tightly above her head and he raised the chains so Amy Nega was now dangling off the floor by her arms. Amy Nega was then put under a serious torture session to which Fiona, who was now wearing a queen's crown decorated with gleaming sapphires and purple gems, was the one commencing with it and the whole thing was just to get Amy Nega to tell her where the rest of the Freedom Fighters were. Amy Nega had refused to talk and just let herself be tortured by Fiona. The torture method was a simple pair of devices that resembled shavers only much larger and with square shaped structures at the end. Fiona pressed them against Amy Nega's bare belly and she gave her a nasty scorch with them. The devices had heaters in them and at the press of the button, they switched on and gave whatever they were touching a nasty burn. Amy Nega had found the pain excruciatingly awful and hard to bear but despite all this, she had managed to remain silent despite all the nasty burns she was receiving from the heating devices. After letting Amy Nega have it for an hour or so, Fiona finally had enough and she threw the devices on the floor. She slugged Amy Nega in the belly and made the tortured leader wheeze in pain.

"For god's sake Amy Nega, will you just cave in and talk already?!" snarled Fiona "I'm beginning to lose my patience with you and if I lose it, then my baby loses it so talk and stop wasting our time will you?!"

Amy Nega just glared at Fiona, her lips sealed as tight as anything. She was not telling Fiona anything at all. She was clinging onto the false hope of being rescued and if she told Scourge and Fiona where her Freedom Fighters were, then there would be no hope of rescue for her so she wasn't going to talk. Fiona clenched her fists and gritted her teeth in rage. Amy Nega was seriously beginning to tick her off now.

"You are such an obstinate woman aren't you?!" growled Fiona "I bet if my handsome King Scourge comes in and beats the crap outta you, you'll start spilling and I bet you don't want to bear the wrath of King Scourge do you?"

"I'd…rather…him…just…put…me…outta…my…misery already…

then…tell him…where my…friends…are…" croaked Amy Nega, her voice as hoarse as a whisper and as weak and frail as she was feeling right now after such a horrible hour of torture.

"Well maybe King Scourge will be happy to arrange something like that for you, you irksome little brat!" said Fiona crossly "You know, you remind me of the Amy Rose on MY Mobius, you're just as stubborn as she is and just as annoying! I don't see why Scourge doesn't just finish you of already. You're just a pain in the rear you are."

Amy Nega just ignored Fiona, it wasn't worth listening to the vixen ranting anymore. Fiona put her hands on her hips and sighed in annoyance, shaking her head at how annoying Amy Nega was being right now.

"I'm fed up with you now, I refuse to waste anymore of my precious time with you Amy Nega." grumbled Fiona.

With that said, Fiona promptly stormed off out of the dungeon, leaving Amy Nega alone to just dangle off the floor by her arms and do nothing but hope for freedom. As Fiona left the dungeon, Amy Nega let a tear of despair trickle down her face. She was beginning to lose all hope of being free ever again. Scourge was more powerful and dangerous than Eggman Nega and he'd conquered the world far quicker than Eggman Nega ever had managed. Amy Nega began to wish that Sonic Prime would just come over to Mobius Nega again and save the world like he had done before. But that was highly unlikely given that Sonic would have no idea what's going on, on Mobius Nega and thus, would have no reason to come over since he wouldn't know about all this. The chances of Mobius Nega being saved were a hundred to one and Amy Nega would have to accept that before she hurts herself.

Back over to Fiona, she had stormed out of the dungeon and had wandered off to the throne room. The very building that she, Scourge and Amy Nega were in was a huge fortress that had once been the dwelling of the real king and queen of Mobius Nega, Maximilian Acorn Nega and Alicia Acorn Nega, before Scourge and Fiona had overthrown them and become king and queen of Mobius Nega after their takeover. This fortress was Mobius Nega's

equivalent to Castle Acorn only much more futuristic in design and made entirely of steel. The design of the fortress made it look more like a robot's castle then the place of dwelling for a Mobian king and queen. It was full of gun turrets that were stationed in strategic places all around the fortress and they fired very powerful plasma blasts that could incinerate any enemy that dares attack the fortress in seconds. Scourge of course had been using the fortress's guns for his own nefarious purposes and had taken down many resistances with them. Because of this, many Mobians were afraid to even so much as go near the fortress in fear of having Scourge incinerate them just for daring to be in plain sight of him. But Scourge hadn't needed to use the cannons since the last resistance that fought him, which was a week ago, so there was nothing to worry about…yet. Right now in this big, impregnable, invincible fortress that had once housed the original king and queen of Mobius Nega, Scourge was sitting comfortably in the Throne of Acorns and was enjoying the peace and quiet. He was wearing a golden crown with red rubies and glistening emeralds on his head. This crown made him feel very superior and VERY powerful as he wore it and he was often seen stroking it conceitedly by Fiona. He had fought hard for total dominance of Mobius and he'd finally got it with a suitable substitute, Mobius Nega. Mobius Nega was the closest planet in all the multi-verse to matching Mobius Prime absolutely perfectly so Scourge still felt like he'd conquered the REAL Mobius and he was all too happy to be ruling over this lovely substitute. He had been so happy on Mobius Nega that he didn't WANT to go back home, he was quite happy to stay here on Mobius Nega forever and rule the world with an iron fist, just like he'd always wanted. His peace and quiet was interrupted by Fiona knocking politely on the door. He sat up straight and cleared his throat.

"Come in." he said pleasantly for there was only one person in the entire fortress who could be knocking at his door now.

The grand door of the throne room opened up and in walked Fiona, the only Mobian in the world he loved more than himself. Fiona strode across the red carpet that led up to Scourge's throne and she kneeled down with respect at the little steps that led up to the throne. Scourge chuckled a little at Fiona's sign of loyalty to him.

"Aw come on Fi, you're the Queen of Mobius Nega, you don't have to kneel before me." said Scourge kindly "Only my worthless subjects have to do that."

"Oh, sorry." said Fiona, quickly standing back up "I'm more doing this out of respect for you King Scourge."

"That's awful nice of you Fiona." said Scourge brightly "But you don't have to kneel before me, you're too worthy for that. So, how did my beautiful queen do down in the dungeon with that brat Amy Nega?"

"Not too well I'm afraid your majesty." said Fiona crossly "That stubborn little bugger won't say a word to me and I let her have it for a whole frickin' hour! I'm not sure how we'll get her to tell us where her stupid Freedom Fighters are, she just won't say a word."

Scourge's face turned into a very serious frown at the sound of that. He couldn't stand it when people didn't tell him what he wanted to know and the fact Amy Nega was literally being this hard to crack just riled him even further. Scourge thumped the sides of his throne in annoyance.

"What does a guy have to do to get some info outta that wretch?!" he groaned furiously "Is it too much to ask to find out where the ones who dare to try and overthrow me are hiding so that they can suffer proper penance for their treason?!"

"Of course it is baby, Amy Nega's not gonna want to tell us where her friends are so they can keep resisting us and trying to bring us down." said Fiona, climbing up the steps and standing beside Scourge's throne "Although a resilience like hers is most vexing indeed I agree. A normal Mobian would have cracked already."

"Indeed." said Scourge "I do hope that Amy Nega cracks already, I REALLY wanna know where those dweebs who work for her are so I can lock them up and make them suffer for what they've done to try and over-throw me. I really can't settle unless Amy Nega's whole team is in chains alongside her in my dungeon."

"I understand your feelings hon, I'm getting jumpy about them too." said Fiona understandingly, shifting around and sitting on Scourge's

lap, cuddling up beside her evil boyfriend "We've worked too long and too hard to FINALLY have a world to rule and we really can't do with losing our grip on this world."

"We most certainly cannot my beautiful queen." said Scourge, putting his arm around Fiona and stroking her waist "I've had a hard enough time trying to conquer Mobius, **our** Mobius so I can do without losing my grip on a Mobius that more than makes up for failing to conquer the true Mobius."

"Yeah." said Fiona, putting her hand on Scourge's chest "I still feel that the only reason Mobius Nega was no problem for us is that there's no Sonic here and your alternate counterpart apparently is dead too so you've literally got no one who can even remotely match your power."

"That maybe so but still, I'm quite happy ruling this alternate Mobius and I'm glad I had no trouble with it." said Scourge "Although the resistances have been giving me a bit of fun since my takeover I will say. And speaking of my takeover, I still remember how it all began…" he sighed, happily remembering how this had happened in the first place.

"I do too Scourge." said Fiona, thinking back to the critical chain of events that had led to this global takeover "We were over at the village of Spagonia, hiding from the world and waiting to strike again. Until we saw a newspaper and learned that Mobius was being invaded by a race of robots called "Devatrons". You weren't happy at that of course since you want to conquer Mobius so we ran off to stop them."

"And then as we were running, this weird, surreal streak of light comes out of nowhere as if somebody had just tore a piece of the sky out of it and it sucks us directly into it." added Scourge "And then it spat us out here. No idea how or why that happened but I'm glad it did because it gave me the perfect world to rule. No dorky Sonic to stop me and ruin my fun and no resistance strong enough to match me. We conquered this world with your planning and my might and now here we are, basking in the seat of luxury and enjoying every minute of it." he finished with a happy sigh "Oh how fortuitous it was of us to get sucked up into that streak of light in the

first place."

"It was indeed my handsome hedgehog." purred Fiona in a sexy tone of voice "And neither of us could be happier, especially as nobody can stop us."

"Too right hot stuff." said Scourge gleefully "Say, wanna kiss and cuddle?"

"I'm all too happy to make out with you gorgeous." said Fiona seductively "I'm all yours baby."

With that said, the two wrapped their arms around each other and they started to deeply embrace each other with a loving hug and kiss in the Throne of Acorns. Scourge and Fiona kissed happily, knowing that nobody could interrupt this loving moment between two villains and nobody could interrupt their wonderful rule. Never before had Scourge and Fiona been so happy and it seemed that their happiness was eternal since there was nothing that could take that away from them…

Meanwhile on Mobius Prime, Sonic the Hedgehog, his best friend Tails and the super-spy Sora had returned to New Mobotropolis where they had been greeted most graciously by their friends. Sonic and Tails had been recruited by Rouge the Bat to help save Sora, who had been captured and tortured by Team Diamond, a nefarious team of treasure-hunters that were now currently behind bars at the Empire City MPD station, and they had had a near-death experience with a golden powered Lennox Meers who had been turned that way thanks to the Key of Opulence's power turning him into a gold-loving lunatic that turned everything he touches into gold. Luckily, Sonic had managed to save the day by using the key's power in reverse to take away Lennox's powers and turn him back to normal again and the key had been destroyed to prevent any chance of that happening again. After all of that, Sora had decided to resign from her original job as a super-spy for the Mobian Spy and Intelligence Unit (M.S.I.U.) and was going to join the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and be a spy for them so she could remain close to Tails, the brother she'd always wanted but never got thanks to financial

problems forcing the two to be separated from each other at childhood. Now the two were reunited at last, they could start all over again and begin a new life in New Mobotropolis as brother and sister. As Sonic, Tails and Sora arrived back, they noticed all the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, Team Chaotix and Queen Sally Acorn and her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx were outside and waiting for Sonic and Tails to return. Cosmo had told them all that Rouge had asked Sonic and Tails to help her save Sora so they knew what they were doing at least. When Sonic and Tails arrived back, everybody started greeting them happily.

"Hey blue dude! You're back! And so is Tails!" cried the Royal Fighter tomboy Mandy Mouse happily.

"We were beginning to wonder how long it would take for ya'll to come back sugah-hog!" exclaimed the cyborg Bunnie Rabbot excitedly.

"Good to see you blokes back in one piece." said her boyfriend Geoffrey St. John the Skunk.

"How did the mission go?" asked the skittish but brave Wilson the Dog.

"Did you save Sora?" asked Amy Rose, the self proclaimed girlfriend of Sonic the Hedgehog, eagerly "Is she OK?"

"Have Team Diamond been arrested?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian, Tails' girlfriend and only non-Mobian of the team.

"What happened while you were saving Miss Sora?" chipped in the ever-innocent and sweet Cream the Rabbit.

"Did Team Diamond give you a tough time?" asked Ruben the Water Panther, honouree member of the Royal Fighters and former Chun-Nan resident.

"Guys, guys, settle down! The hedgehog can explain everything!" laughed Sonic, waving his hands about hastily "So anyways, Rouge took me and Tails to an old factory where Team Diamond were hiding. We went in and saved Sora but Team Diamond came in and

started giving us a tough battle. During the battle, their leader Lennox used an artefact known as the "Key of Opulence" too many times and ended up becoming a gold-loving monster that tried to turn us all into gold. But I managed to stop him and return him to normal so no worries on being turned into gold. As for Team Diamond, they're all off to prison now where hopefully they'll do time for their crimes and General Chipper's going to try and bring H.U.N.T., the organization that Team Diamond work for, down once and for all."

"Wow! That's amazing that is!" cried Vector the Crocodile, the Chaotix leader "Although I have no idea who Team Diamond are…" he admitted a little afterwards.

"I'm glad to hear your mission was successful Sonic." said Espio the Chameleon, the Chaotix ninja "Although I have to ask how did this "Team Diamond" get the Key of Opulence? Nobody's ever managed to find that thing before."

"What's a "Key of Opulence"?" asked Charmy Bee, the Chaotix numbskull "And what the heck is an "opulence" too?"

"I've heard of that thing before." said Knuckles the Echidna, Guardian of Angel Island and friend of Sonic and the Royal Fighters "It was said to be a golden key that could open doors full of jewels in thin air but it had a devastating side effect. It's been hidden away since ancient times though, how did Team Diamond get it?"

"Well…Rouge got it actually but Team Diamond stole it off of her." said Sonic "But don't worry, after stopping Lennox from turning us into gold I destroyed the key so we can't have a repeat of what happened."

"That is very good to hear Sonic." said Knuckles' girlfriend Shade the Echidna "That key truly is dangerous in the wrong hands. So, how is Sora right now after you rescued her?"

"Why don't you ask her yourself?" chuckled Sonic, standing aside and revealing that Sora was standing behind him and Tails.

She had been standing behind the boys to make her presence here

a surprise for the others when Sonic thought the time was right to reveal her. Sora politely stood forward and waved at everybody.

"Hello people of New Mobotropolis, it is good to see you all again." she said.

"Hey, I remember you!" cried Vector "You were the one who alerted us to the Region of Rebellious Reptiles' attempted ruining of the Annual Acorn Awards last year!*"

"I am indeed, how nice of you to remember Vector." said Sora happily "I remember all of you as if I only saw you all yesterday. Except you two, I don't believe you were there when I helped to save the Annual Acorn Awards." she said, pointing at Knuckles and Shade.

"We were on Angel Island at the time of the awards so no, we weren't there." said Knuckles "But Sonic and Tails did tell us all about what happened that day so we know what you're on about. So little girl, I'm Knuckles the Echidna and this is…"

"Yes, I know who you both are." chuckled Sora "You're both guardians of Angel Island and Shade here used to be your enemy until she opened her eyes and decided to turn good, a very wise decision in my opinion."

Knuckles and Shade stared at Sora in amazement, their mouths hanging open a little.

"How…do you know that?!" gasped Shade in astonishment.

"I'm a spy, I know everything." joked Sora, giggling a little at what she just said "I will say, it is very nice to meet you both in person Knuckles and Shade."

"Thanks, same to you." said Knuckles "So Sora, what brings you here then?"

"Yeah, if you're a spy then should you be going to your next assignment?" asked Shade.

"Not really since I just resigned from the M.S.I.U." explained Sora

"And my reasoning for that being so I can join the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and be a spy for you guys."

Everybody was surprised to hear that and they all looked at each other in amazement. Sally stood forward and knelt down to Sora's height.

"So you willingly resigned from the spy organization you work for, to join us?" she asked "Well that's nice of you but, what made you want to do that?"

"So I can be with my darling brother after being separated from him eight years ago." said Sora, hugging Tails lovingly "I've been away from him for too long and I wanna spend every moment I can with him now."

The fact Sora was hugging Tails gave everybody an idea on who she was talking about. Needless to say, it certainly surprised them on the revelation they'd just gotten.

"Unbelievable, Sora and Tails are siblings?" said a very surprised Amy "Wow! I didn't know Tails had a sister!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I didn't either Amy!" laughed Tails "Although when I saw Sora that time the region tried to wreck the Annual Acorn Awards, something sparked in my head and told me I knew her for some reason. She looked familiar to me and then Sora tells me she's my sister and now it all makes sense. She tells me the reason I probably don't remember her is because I was only two months old when she was given up so I was too young to remember her."

"But now you're back together again and that's so wonderful!" cried Cream happily "It's so nice to see a brother and a sister back together again!"

"It sure is." said Mandy agreeably "So Sora, why were you given up then?"

"Our parents could only afford to look after one child." explained Sora "I willingly gave myself up just so they could afford to look after dear Tails. He was too young to be given up and he needed proper

parental care. An orphanage wouldn't accept him given his two-tailed appearance so I felt I had to go. I was hoping to be adopted back by mom and dad but ultimately, I ended up being adopted by a super-spy who shaped me into the spy I am now. I forgot I even had a brother due to my dedication to duty but seeing him again brought a spark of memory back to me and I remembered him. Now fate has kindly brought us back together and I wish to make up for the eight years I never got to spend with the little brother I never had the chance to have."

"Same with me." said Tails "It's nice to have a member of my family back again."

"That's so sweet!" said Nicole in awe "I think we should take Sora in, she'll be quite welcome among us don't you think Sally?"

"I certainly do Nicole." said Sally brightly "So Sora, we accept your request to join us as a spy. You'll be quite a useful member to us and it's nice that Tails has someone from his family back once again so I will keep that family together. Welcome to the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters."

With that said, Sora and Sally shook hands with each other, pleased with the decision that had been made.

"Oh thank you your majesty, thank you so much!" said Sora, ecstatically happy at her acceptance to join the R.F.S. "I can promise you that I'll be a great asset to the team."

"Well now you're on the team lass, we shall see won't we?" said Geoffrey with a smile on his face.

"Indeed we will Mr. St. John." replied Sora "Now, may I see Cosmo the Seedrian? Tails tells me that him and her are a couple now and I wish to congratulate them."

With that said, Cosmo stood shyly forward so Sora could meet her.

"Hello Miss Sora." said Cosmo "It's nice to see you again. I will say, I'm amazed to hear you and Tails are related. Bet that was wonderful for you when you got to see him again."

"It was indeed Cosmo." beamed Sora "And I've gotta say, I'm thrilled to hear that my little brother's got a girlfriend now. He's grown up so fast hasn't he?" she added with a giggle.

Cosmo giggled with her whereas Tails just blushed bright red and sort of chuckled embarrassedly with them. Sometimes, it was tough to be in love, embarrassment can strike at any time with lovers after all.

"Heh, heh…yeah, you could say that about me Sora." said Tails bashfully "Me and Cosmo have only just announced our love for each other though so we've not really been doing anything together yet aside from sitting in the local park together and enjoying each other's company."

"That's so cute to hear Tails." said Sora "I hope you and Cosmo will be very happy together."

"I know we will be happy together." said Tails, holding Cosmo's hand and giving her a quick kiss to which Cosmo returned, earning an expression of awe from Sora.

"Aww…" said Sora, clearly awed by that little moment between the two. Amazing that she finally reunites with her brother and he has a girlfriend already. She did always think that Tails was adorable when he was first born and betted he'd find a girl who adored him as much as the family did.

"So Sora, since you're now a member of the R.F.S., would you like your first assignment for your career as a Royal Fighter?" asked Sally.

"Uh Sal, she's just joined us, give her a moment to settle in first!" blurted Sonic "Don't you think it's a bit early to give her an assignment? That and she's still recovering from a horrible torture she received from Team Diamond earlier…"

"Sonic please, it's alright." said Sora hastily "I'm still fit enough to go into action and I don't mind receiving an assignment so soon after joining, I'm a super-spy, I'm used to getting assignments at unsuspecting times." she then turned to Sally and said "OK your

highness, what do you wish for me to do then?"

"Just recently, we found out where Dr. Eggman's hidden base is**." explained Nicole "I've put the coordinates into this tracking device and if you hold it ahead of you, it will lead you to the base." she added, holding up a device that looked a little like a remote control for an RC car but had no antenna "We'd like for you to go over to the base and spy on Eggman, find out what he's doing now."

"Oh lovely, I've always wanted to spy on that fat lunatic." said Sora delightedly "Sadly, the M.S.I.U. never really gave me the opportunity as they feel that Eggman isn't worth worrying about what with you lot constantly putting up a good battle against him. Well, now I'm with you, I can show that Eggman is worth spying on and hopefully, I'll help give everybody an edge over the crazy doctor."

"In all honesty, we've already had spies that have helped us before like Espio the Chameleon here so you're not the first to spy on Eggman." noted Sonic, pointing at Espio "But, you've always wanted to spy on Eggman so let's give you the chance. I'll come with you in case you need back-up. I don't think it'll be safe for you to spy on Eggman alone Sora."

"I agree Sonic, I'll need someone to watch my back." said Sora, taking the tracking device from Nicole and switching it on "So shall we get going?"

"Indeed we can Sora." said Sonic, picking the young vixen up bridal style "You direct me since you've got the tracker and I'll deliver you to Eggman's front door faster than you can say "Holy Chaos Emeralds"."

Sora nodded and she peered at the tracker. It was pointing to the north-west of their current position so she pointed in the direction Sonic needed to start running. Sonic understood Sora's directions and he zoomed off out of New Mobotropolis with Sora in his arms. Within seconds, Sonic and Sora vanished into the horizon given how fast Sonic runs and they headed off to Megapolis where Eggman was hiding. As the Royal Fighters watched Sonic go, they all conversed to each other.

"You know, I think Sora's gonna be very welcome among us." said Amy happily "I like her already I do."

"I agree Miss Rose. I wonder what she and Mr. Sonic will find out while they're spying on Eggman?" asked Cream.

"Hopefully nothing too much for us to handle." said Bunnie concernedly "After dealin' with three alien invasions, ah think we could do with an easy time for once."

"I'm just hoping that the blighter's not doing anything at all luv." said Geoffrey, putting an arm around the beautiful cyborg rabbit "After what we've recently been through, I want a moment of peace."

"We ALL do Geoffrey." said Ruben grimly "But when you're fighting for freedom against a dictator who wants to turn us all into robots, a moment of peace can be too hard to ask for."

Geoffrey nodded agreeably with his water-squirting friend. It's too much to ask for a moment of peace when it comes to Dr. Eggman and it was likely he was going to come out again and try to take over Mobius once again…

In almost no time at all, Sonic and Sora arrived at the Northern Border of Megapolis, the very place that Dr. Eggman was hiding in. He had been hiding in the Northern Border of Megapolis ever since he lost his bases all those months ago and had been hiding underground since the day Robotropolis was destroyed by Shadow after the whole world had been de-roboticized. It had only been recently during the Martian invasion that the Royal Fighters had actually managed to find out where Eggman's base was thanks to Nicole tracing Eggman's call to New Mobotropolis back to its source and now they had that info, Sonic and Sora were going to use it for a good cause, spy on Eggman and prepare for his next move. As Sonic screeched to a halt, Sora looked at the tracker and it showed them that the base was about five feet ahead and directly underground. They were there at last, at Eggman's base.

"Well Sonic, it seems we're here." said Sora "We've found Eggman's

base."

"Cool." said Sonic, putting Sora down "Now let's see what ol' egg-head's up to now."

"Indeed." said Sora, handing Sonic the tracker "I will say, that was an awesome ride you gave me, moving at supersonic speed is unbelievable!"

"Thanks and yeah, it is unbelievable." said Sonic admittedly "I'm still wondering how I'm able to run so fast though. My parents always theorized that it had something to do with power rings since apparently, my mom was healed with a power ring before I was born since she fell ill while I was still developing inside her. Maybe the power ring's energy went into me and gave me my super-speed but that's just a theory really."

"Wow." said Sora, intrigued by what Sonic had just told her "So where are your parents now?"

"Living in a peaceful countryside somewhere." said Sonic "We still keep in touch on the off chance I get a day-off and a moment to call them so they're OK don't worry. Anyways, got any ideas on how we can sneak into Eggman's base without drawing attention?" he asked, curious on what surprises the little super-spy was going to pull out for this mission.

"I've got just the thing." said Sora with a grin on her face.

She reached to the back of the shoulder strap on her utility belt and she pulled off a steel orb that had a purple dot on it instead of a red dot on it like the other orbs did. She showed it to Sonic.

"This is an orb I don't often use in my missions and it's a very useful orb too." explained Sora "It can dig through any surface thanks to the super-sharp drill contained inside it I'll use this to dig a hole down into the base so that I can put THIS orb in the base…"

She paused for a moment as she took another orb off her belt. The orb was located on the left side of her waist on her belt and had the word "spy-cam" carved in tiny letters on it so she could identify that

orb quickly and know which one she was looking for. She showed it to Sonic.

"…this orb will record everything it sees and every sound it hears." she explained "The orb comes with an ear-piece…" she added, taking a piece off of the orb and sticking it into her ear "…so I will be able to hear everything the orb hears. It doesn't have two ear pieces so sadly, I can't give you one so you can hear as well. I'll listen in on the conversation and I'll tell you everything I've heard."

"OK then." said Sonic "I've gotta say, you're equipped for anything aren't you?"

"I'm a spy, of course I'm equipped for anything." said Sora cheekily "Now, let's see what we can find out here…"

She switched the purple dotted orb on and placed it directly where the underground bunker was located. The orb opened up in similar fashion to how a Pokeball from the Pokemon series opens up and a drill extended out from the orb. The orb hovered up above the spot it was place at and it aimed its drill straight down. The drill activated and it began to dig its way down into the ground. The orb was programmed to dig until it entered something so it wouldn't dig too far down luckily. The org dug down and down into the ground until it reached the underground bunker and it dog a hole through the ceiling. There was now an orb-sized tunnel that led all the way down into Eggman's base. It was big enough for only your hand to fit down. The drill-orb ascended back out of the hole and the drill extended back inside and the orb closed up. Sora put it back on her belt and she dropped the spy-cam orb down the hole. The spy-cam orb fell down through the hole until it entered the base and it stayed just in the ceiling between the hole that had been made in it. Eggman would not see that hopefully. Now the orb was in position, it switched its speaker on. The ear-piece that Sora had put into her ear vibrated as the speaker switched on and Sora touched it lightly.

"OK then, we're in position." said Sora "Now keep very quiet while I listen to what's being said."

Sonic nodded and gave Sora an understanding thumbs up. Sora knelt down on the ground and listened very carefully to her ear-piece

as the orb picked up a conversation between Dr. Eggman and Devion, former leader of the Devatron race who was now an Eggman servant.

"So Dr. Eggman, what plan do you have now for the Mobian's downfall?" asked Devion inquisitively."

"A plan that is guaranteed to work." purred Dr. Eggman "I've just recently repaired Metals Tails, Amy & Knuckles and Silver Sonic so now Metal Sonic has his buddies back. Now the Metal series is complete once again, I can unleash a vicious attack on New Mobotropolis. You, Katherine and the Metal series will be perfect for taking down that pathetic excuse for a city and bringing out the Mobians for me to roboticize. Sonic and friends will be very worthy assets to my army. I may have roboticized the entire world before but that was foiled by Sonic, Tails, Ruben and Bunnie all those months ago. It would be best to roboticize Mobius' biggest resistance and make sure that none of them can escape roboticization before I try something like that again."

"You motive is logical my liege but how will we get past the city's defences?" asked Devion unsurely "I mean, the city has a barrier and they may raise the shields when we arrive to attack them."

"Indeed so which is why I've made just the thing to deal with it." gloated Dr. Eggman "I have made a bomb device that when thrown at the city will scramble with the city shields and disable the shield generator. The city will be completely prone once I throw that bomb."

"You really are skilled in the realms of brain power master." said Devion "That plan of yours is guaranteed to work. It cannot possibly fail."

"Indeed it won't Devion." purred Eggman "If it does though then I'll have to unleash my new invention on the city and have that take the Royal Fighters down."

"What is this "new invention" then master?" asked Devion.

"You'll see if it needs to be used." said Dr. Eggman darkly "Now let's

get ready to go, we're going to unleash the plan now."

Sora was pretty amazed and horrified at what she had just heard and she pressed a button in the socket the spy-cam orb had been on her belt. The orb came back up through the tunnel and out of the base. It returned to Sora and Sora took the ear-piece out of her ear. She stuck it back on the orb and placed the orb back on her belt.

"Sonic, you will not believe this!" blustered Sora "Eggman's going to attack New Mobotropolis with some bot named Devion, a bot named Katherine and a Metal Sonic, Metal Tails, Metal Amy, Metal Knuckles and a Silver Sonic and he's got a bomb that will lower New Mobotropolis' shields! He's hoping to roboticized you all and then roboticize the entire world again like he did before!"

"Whoa…that is NOT good at all!" cried Sonic "Let's skedaddle and warn everybody now before Eggman's plan comes to fruition."

"I'll say!" said Sora as Sonic picked her up bridal style "By the way, isn't Devion the Devatron Leader? Why is he working for Eggman now?"

"Eggman took his body and modified him to work for him." explained Sonic "So now Devion serves him. We'll stop him though, don't you worry."

Sonic then charged off with Sora clinging on tightly to him as he ran off through the plains of Megapolis. Sora had just found out Eggman's new plan and now he was going to return home and deliver the news to his friends. With this information, they'd stop Eggman in no time and foil his evil plan…

A little while later, Sonic and Sora arrived back at New Mobotropolis and the moment they arrived, they instantly told everybody what Sora had just found out during their time in Megapolis. After Sonic and Sora had told their friends everything, they all gasped in surprise and murmured among each other in concern.

"Dr. Eggman is planning to attack the city and kidnap us so he can

roboticize us all?!" shrieked Nicole in horror.

"And he has a way to bring down our city's shield so he can level the city?" gasped Sally.

"And the ones he's bringing to do it are Devion, Katherine and the Metal Series?!" cried Tails.

"That's sick that is!" growled Knuckles "Eggman can't do such a thing!"

"Well Knuckles, I'm afraid he can and I'm afraid that's what he's going to try doing." said Sonic, his face looking grave "He's getting ready to launch his plan as we speak. I'm willing to bet he'll be here any moment now."

"Well if that sicko thinks he can just destroy our city and turn us into robots then he can forget about it!" screeched Amy, summoning her trademark weapon of destruction, the Piko-Piko hammer, to her hands "I'm gonna smash his precious toys to pieces and then I'll smash him!"

"We'll have to destroy the robots very quickly before Metal Sonic can copy our data and become too powerful to defeat us." noted Sally, remembering the first ever Metal Sonic and how borderline unstoppable he was "And I have a nasty feeling the other metals "Metal Tails", "Metal Knuckles" and "Metal Amy" might have the same ability. And Silver Sonic is a lethal piece of machinery so we need to take him down quickly as well."

"I agree Sal but Devion's really the one we have to worry about." replied Sonic "Remember, he is invulnerable and tough to take down so we really need to bring him down more than anyone."

"In that case, we'll divide the teams up a little." deduced Sally "You, Tails, Knuckles, Amy and Bunnie will fight Devion since you're the heaviest, hardest and most skilled hitters of the team. The rest of us will take out the Metal series and Katherine."

"Sounds like a good idea to me." said Sonic "Are you up for the battle Sally?"

"Of course, I'm getting more active on the battlefield now so of course I'm ready." said Sally "And I've got my weapon ready too…"

She reached into her vest pocket and took out a small capsule. She pressed on the capsule and it extended out into a long blue staff with white bandages wrapped around the edges. The staff had a retractable blade to which Sally deployed, making her staff a naginata and she twirled it around. It had taken her a while but Sally had managed to master the staff at last and could now wield it effectively. Sonic whistled in an impressed manner at the staff that Sally had in her hands.

"Wow…you got a new staff it seems." said Sonic "I've gotta say, it's a good weapon for you Sal, it suits you."

"Thank you Sonic." said Sally, beaming happily "In all honesty, the staff if my favourite weapon of all time and I can't imagine myself using any other weapon so I had to learn how to use this. The blade at the end will help me provide extra-damage as we fight those insidious robots."

"Wow your majesty, I am impressed." said Sora "What happened to you the last time I saw you?"

"The recent alien invasions happened that's what." said Sally, the staff held with the non-bladed end down on the ground and the bladed-end pointing straight up as she spoke "After being pretty much useless against the Black Arms and Devatrons, I decided to become a more active fighter and stop staying cooped up in my own castle while my Royal Fighters risk life and limb fighting for the planet. I felt it was time I cooperated to my own planet's survival so I changed my outfit into something more adventurous, practiced some more of my fighting and how to wield a staff. I'm still mediocre battle skills wise but I'm getting there."

"That's a very good motive Queen Sally and I think you'll be setting a good example to other queens out there, as well as your subjects." said Sora brightly "If their own queen can fight for the world then they have every right to hope I say."

"Thank you Sora." said Sally graciously "I'm really pleased with

myself for making this decision. I wish I'd decided to be more active in the battlefield before."

"Well better late than never Sal." said Sonic cheekily, putting an arm around the queen "It'll be good to have you fighting against Eggman with us."

"Aw Sonic, you're such a flatterer." chuckled Sally, blushing a little at Sonic's compliment "I look forward to fighting alongside you as we foil Eggman's latest plan."

"Speaking of Eggman, I think he's coming now." said Shade, peering into the distance and noticing something heading towards them "Now's the time to strike I think."

With that said, Nicole took the shield's controls off of her hair and activated the city's shields instantly. Now New Mobotropolis was shielded, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters all charged off towards the city gates, which had been repaired after the Martian invasion had finally been resolved the other day. They all charged through the gates and out into the green, grassy meadows that stretched all around the city. They all stood together in a row and they all braced themselves for the battle to come. As they readied themselves for battle, they saw that surely enough, Dr. Eggman was indeed coming towards New Mobotropolis. He was flying in his Egg-Pod and Devion and Katherine were riding in the Egg-Pod with him while the Metal Series flew alongside him and Silver Sonic rocketed after them with the aid of the golden jets on his lower legs. Shade was right, Eggman was coming and it was obvious his plan was going to come in motion now he was here. As Dr. Eggman neared the city, he stared at what was ahead of him and his moustache drooped down in surprise. He couldn't believe his eyes at all.

"What in the name of…? The Mobians are already waiting for me?!" cried Dr. Eggman "How did they know I was coming?!"

"They obviously saw us coming master." retorted Devion "We're not exactly invisible to the naked eye as you can obviously see."

"I know Devion but, it seems like the Mobians knew I was coming." noted Eggman "I do hope Tails isn't spying on me again like he was

last year! Or indeed any other Mobian for that matter!"

"It does not matter if the Mobians managed to work out we were coming master, we will destroy their city and capture them." said Devion reassuringly "We're too powerful for the Mobians and we will overpower them easily."

"Yes…we will indeed Devion." crowed Dr. Eggman arrogantly "My Metal series, henchwoman and you will take them down easily! Just remember to leave them alive so we can roboticize them OK?"

"Comprehended to the letter Eggman." droned Devion, clenching his fists and deploying his arm blades.

Dr. Eggman smiled to himself as the Egg-Pod came to a stop and descended down to the ground, Silver Sonic came to a stop behind him and the Metal series all landed down beside the Egg-Pod. Devion and Katherine leaped out of the pod and bent down in battle ready stances beside Eggman. The Mobians were all ready for battle and they prepared to attack. Dr. Eggman decided to do something first by making one of his usual announcements.

"Mobians, I am here to take you all prisoner and roboticize you all…" he began.

"We know why you're here Egg-Brains so don't bother telling us what we already know!" snapped Sonic "You wanna destroy our city and roboticize us all and you have a bomb to bring down the city shields, blah, blah, blah. Well we're gonna kick you outta here and make sure that doesn't happen!"

Dr. Eggman looked like he was about to faint.

"How…how do you know all this?!" he gasped.

"That is for us to know and you to never find out." said Sonic snarkily "Now get your big fat butt outta here before we all use you for stress relief!"

"I will NOT be leaving here anytime soon Sonic!" growled Eggman "I've been waiting too long to finally come out of hiding and start terrorizing you all again thanks to the recent alien invasions so I am

going to commence with my plans whether you already know what I'm doing or not! Devion, get Sonic!" he roared at him.

With that said, Devion charged towards Sonic and swiped at him with his arm blades. Sonic curled up into a blue spiky ball and he spin-dashed Devion in the gut. The two ended up hurling across the battlefield to one side with Sonic slamming Devion down into the ground. Devion however kicked Sonic off of himself and Sonic skidded across the grass for a few inches. He picked himself up just in time to dodge a slash attack from Devion. Sonic homing-attacked Devion and made him staged but Devion took the blow and punched him onto his back. He tried to grab Sonic but Sonic kicked Devion away and jumped back onto his feet. But then suddenly, before he and Devion could attack each other again, something surreal happened. A huge, multi-coloured streak of light suddenly appeared from nowhere right up in the sky above, as if someone has just ripped a piece of the sky out like a sheet of paper. The streak was about fifty feet long and fifty feet wide and it looked very surreal and paranormal indeed. Sonic and Devion stared up at the streak of light and Devion took a few steps back, wondering what it was. Everybody else stared at the streak of light too, unable to believe what was happening.

"What the hell just happened to the sky?!" cried Mandy.

"It's like someone just tore a hole in it!" shrieked Wilson "Like a tear in the sky!"

"Keep away from it everybody, it could be dangerous!" exclaimed Sally.

Everybody was already a safe distance from the streak of light, or the "tear in the sky" as Wilson called it, but Sonic unfortunately was quite close to it. Sonic couldn't keep his eyes off the streak of light and he kept staring at it, not moving an inch away from it. Then suddenly, he began to feel himself being pulled towards the streak of light. It was as if giant hands reached out from nowhere and grabbed him all over his body. Sonic was slowly but steadily being dragged towards the light.

"Huh…wha…oh no…HELP!" cried Sonic as he was nearly dragged

into the light.

He quickly turned around and gripped onto the grass as tightly as he could, trying desperately not to get pulled into the tear in the sky. But as we all know, grass isn't exactly the best thing to hold onto when trying to keep yourself on the ground. The grass broke away in Sonic's fingers and he was dragged upwards towards the light. But before he could get sucked into it, Bunnie Rabbot ran forward and extended her robot arm. She extended it long enough to catch Sonic by the hand and drag him away from the light. The light's pull was strong though so Bunnie had to pull on very tightly to keep Sonic from flying into it. Unfortunately, Devion ran in and sliced Bunnie's robot arm in two with his gauntlet blades! Bunnie squealed in pain as the lower part of her robot arm lay on the ground and the circuitry in what was left of her robot arm sparked furiously. Because there was no one to help Sonic, the blue hedgehog was sent flying into the tear in the sky.

"SOMEBODY HELP MEEEEEEEEEE….!" wailed Sonic as he was pulled into the streak of light.

The moment Sonic was pulled into the light, it closed up and vanished into thin air, leaving no trace of its existence behind. It was as if it had never happened. The Royal Fighters could do nothing but gape in petrified horror at what had just happened. Even Eggman was lost for words at all this. Where did that tear in the sky come from and why did it happen? What had happened to Sonic now he'd just been pulled into it? Was he…gone for good?! Was this…the end of Sonic the Hedgehog…?

Footnotes

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front* for how Nicole came to gain that information**

HOLY CRAP! What the heck's just happened to Sonic?! A streak of light appears and sucks him up! Is he...gone?! And what's all this got to do with Mobius Nega and Scourge & Fiona? Tune in next time as "Dark World" continues...

Oh and pay attention to those "streaks of light" or "tears in the sky" whichever you prefer. They're a lead-up to a future big-event story that won't be coming until sometime after Episode 150. I just hope the build up will pay off when it comes...

So Alma Von Arena, since you're still reading my story, what did you think to the Martian invasion saga and the two-part "Key of Opulence" story? And how was THIS chapter too? Please answer BOTH questions if you do.

Hey Chaos Kai X, haven't heard from you recently, how's the recent chapters been for you in this story?

Dark World Part 2

Story 140: Dark World Part 2

"SOMEBODY HELP MEEEEEEEEEEE…!" wailed Sonic the Hedgehog as he was pulled up towards a streak of light that had randomly appeared up in the sky above.

Today was getting eventful for the super-speedy hero of Mobius. Not only had he just recently stopped Team Diamond and had gotten them incarcerated at last but he had brought home a new recruit for the Royal Fighters, the super-spy and sister of his best friend Tails the Fox herself, Sora Sumdac (who's now changed her name back to Sora Prower now she's back with Tails). And earlier today, Sonic had taken Sora on her very first mission with the Royal Fighters and that mission was to spy on Dr. Eggman. They had found out that Dr. Eggman had sinister plans up his sleeve and had run home to warn everybody about the fat-man's next attack. Then Dr. Eggman arrived on the scene with the perfect team of robots for a capture-and-destroy mission. Metals Sonic, Tails, Amy and Knuckles, Silver Sonic, Katherine and Devion the Dreaded, former leader of the now extinct Devatron race (The Startrons have officially wiped them all out with their chrome-eating virus as of this chapter). Sonic and Devion had started off the whole fight but their fight was rudely interrupted by a strange phenomenon. A streak of light had appeared in the sky like somebody had torn a piece of the sky out and the light had sucked up Sonic and closed up the moment he vanished, leaving absolutely no trace of its existence behind the moment it had vanished. It was like it had never happened at all. But unfortunately, it had happened and Sonic was gone thanks to it. After the streak of light had closed up, Sonic's friends could do nothing but stand there, frozen in an incredulous stare of horror and try to factor in what the flying monkeys just happened right now. Dr. Eggman was sharing their surprise and he didn't know what to say about all this either. He had never seen something like this before and it began to worry him. Was this going to be a recurring thing and it might suck him up next? He would have to study this "tear in the sky" and see what the deal behind it is before it can strike again. As

for Sonic's friends, they came out of their shock and Amy Rose was the first to say something. She stepped forward two paces and then collapsed onto her knees, her heart feeling like someone had put a bullet through it and her eyes welling up with tears.

"No…Oh no, no, no...Sonic…he-he-he…HE'S GONE!" screamed Amy in anguish "My handsome hero is gone! NOOOOOOOO!"

And with that said, Amy finally let the tears come out and she sobbed her aching heart out. She wailed louder than even the most heartbroken of people can wail and she thumped the grassy ground beneath her in disdain. As for Queen Sally Acorn, she seemed to share Amy's anguish for she found herself crying a few tears too. Just when she starts getting more active on the battlefield, they lose their greatest hero and friend, Sonic the Hedgehog. What a great start to having a battle alongside Sonic THIS was!

"I can't believe it…" said Sally with a few sobs in between her words "Sonic just got sucked up into some streak of light and is…gone. Well and truly gone. This can't be happening…this can NOT be happening!"

"I'm afraid it is happening Sally." said Nicole the Lynx sadly "Sonic's been sucked up into some weird phenomenon and he's gone now. Possibly forever. I can't begin to tell you how unfortunate this is for all of us."

And with that, Nicole found herself shedding tears for the supposed loss of their great comrade. As for Sora, she found herself in a bit of shock and she started getting a little emotional to herself for she had just realized something about herself.

"Unbelievable…my first day as a Royal Fighter and we lose Sonic?!" she gasped "Why does this keep happening to me?! First I get a little brother and then I'm taken away from him just barely two months after he's born, then I become a spy and I lose my foster father and now I become a member of the R.F.S. and we lose Sonic?! Am I…cursed to always lose somebody whenever I gain something?!"

With that said, Sora couldn't help but cry over all of this. It did seem

that she had some kind of curse on her. She gains something, she loses something. She gained a brother and lost a family eight years ago and now she gains a spot on the team and she loses a member already. Who knew what she was going to lose next. Tails began to feel sorry for his older sister so he put his arms around Sora and hugged her comfortingly. Sora hugged him back and wept onto his shoulder while Tails patted her on the back.

"There, there Sora. It's not your fault this happened at all." said Tails softly "You're not cursed in the slightest. It was just a very unlucky coincidence that all of this happened that's all, it was nothing to do with you whatsoever."

"I know but I feel that way because of this!" sobbed Sora "I gain something then I lose something! It's like a cruel case of "easy come, easy go" for me! I wish, I wish this would stop happening to me!"

"Sora, everybody loses something in their lives but it's no good complaining about it and blaming yourself for it." said Tails "It's not your fault or anybody else's fault that Sonic's gone. It was just some weird phenomenon that randomly popped out of nowhere and took him. It was something that nobody could have predicted and nobody could have prevented, nothing to do with anybody at all."

That made Sora feel a little better about herself and she stopped crying on her brother's shoulder.

"All right Tails, I understand." said Sora, sniffling a little "I'm sorry I got so emotional."

"It's fine Sora, we're all feeling emotional right now because Sonic's gone." said Tails gently "It's perfectly OK to be sad about it. But at the same time, being sad about it won't do us any favours or even bring Sonic back for that matter."

"Tails is right, we've gotta do something!" declared Knuckles the Echidna, pounding his fists together "We have to work out what that thing was and how to get Sonic back!"

"But how can we do that guardian?" asked his girlfriend Shade the

Echidna "We have no idea where the hedgehog will have ended up and how we will even get him back for that matter."

"If only my Uncle Finitevus was here, he could build us a warp ring and super charge it so we can travel between zones and then we could go searching for him." grumbled Knuckles "Sonic's probably in another dimension for all we know and a Super Warp Ring is just what we need to go between zones."

"Indeed." murmured Shade "But we don't have any warp rings and Devion destroyed the only one we had left during the Devatron war so we can't super-charge that one and use it."

"Yeah…thanks a lot you chrome-plated creep!" snarled Knuckles, a threatening glare on his face being aimed directly at Devion, who just stood there with his arms folded and an uncaring glower painted on his face.

"If Silver and Blaze were still here, we could ask them for their Super Warp Ring and we could use that to go zone-hopping and see if we can find Sonic." said Tails.

"Yeah. But those two will be back home in their timeline." said Vector the Crocodile sadly "We won't be able to give them a call or anything."

"It seems that we're well and truly stuck here." murmured Espio the Chameleon "We've lost Sonic and we have no way of saving him."

"Bet the stupid Eggman's really pleased at that." muttered Charmy Bee, glowering at Eggman.

"Eh…It's half and half really." admitted Dr. Eggman who had finally managed to come out of his shock and snapped back into reality "On the one hand, my greatest enemy is gone for good but on the other hand, that streak of light might come back and take another one of us so I can't really be content with this, knowing that I might be next if it comes back. I have a nasty feeling that that streak of light isn't a one time only thing."

"Yeah…I kinda agree with you Eggman." said Tails quietly "What if it

comes back? What if it's a recurring thing?"

"Do you think this might be that "end-of-the-world" thing that Silver and Blaze are trying to prevent?" said Wilson the Dog worriedly "If so then they'd better hurry up and prevent it."

"Wilson honey, they can't just "prevent" it, they need to know about it first." noted Mandy Mouse, wife of Wilson and Royal Fighter tomboy "And I sincerely doubt that anybody had the time to write anything about these "tears in the sky" if they really are the things that doom Mobius and they suck everybody up so maybe they'll never find out about it."

That really didn't make Wilson feel good at all. If anything, it worried him even more now.

"I think Mandy maybe right." said Geoffrey St. John the Skunk "This is a problem we'll have to sort out ourselves."

"Yeah." agreed Tails "So Eggman, what are you gonna do now? Commence with your plans now Sonic's gone?"

"No actually, I'm going back to my base and I'm going to study that streak of light, see what I can find out about them." said Dr. Eggman "I'm going to make sure that that thing never shows up again."

"And how exactly do you plan to do that brainiac?" snorted Mandy.

"I dunno but I'll work it out eventually." said Dr. Eggman "That's what scientists are all about, finding out how things tick and all. Everybody, return to base! We have something to investigate!"

With that said, Dr. Eggman's Egg-Pod took off into the air and hovered away with all his robotic minions following him. They all left the Mobians behind and headed off back to Eggman's secret underground bunker (well it's not secret anymore since the Mobians now know where it is) to investigate the whole matter about the streak of light and see what they can find out about it. As soon as Eggman and his minions left, Sally turned to the Royal Fighters.

"I think we should go back to Royal HQ and think of a way to get Sonic back home…if he's still alive that is." she said "And at the

same time, try and study the streak of light and see what we can find out about it."

"Yes your majesty." said all the Royal Fighters.

So without further ado, the Royal Fighters all headed off back into New Mobotropolis and back towards Royal HQ. Even though Sonic was gone, they couldn't help but wonder if he was OK and where he might possibly be now. And one thing they couldn't help but wonder was…will he ever come back in one piece? Will he ever come back…at all…?

Meanwhile on Mobius Nega, King Scourge the Hedgehog was standing on the balcony of the Acorn Fortress, former place of residence of the TRUE king and queen of Mobius Nega before he and Fiona had taken over. His golden crown was perched proudly on his head and he was wearing very wealthy looking robes of state that flowed beautifully and was a deep red colour with white fur on the shoulders and the hem. The shoulder sections had gold, medallion accessories which added to the robe's opulent, majestic appearance. The magnificent cape blew about in the wind that was blowing about all around him, making him look very grand indeed. Today was a new day on Mobius Nega (it's morning on Mobius Nega whereas it's afternoon on Mobius Prime. Mobius Nega's time is different to Mobius Prime). The sun was beginning to rise up but the clouds were dark and murky (probably because of the fact the planet's been taken over) and they obscured much of the sun so there wasn't much light shining over Mobius Nega today, the whole world was blanketed in the shadows of the clouds that loomed over everything in the sky above. Scourge breathed in the fresh air through his nose and he exhaled out through his mouth in a content sigh.

"I love the smell of a brand new day." he said to himself "It always means I've got a new day of terrorizing innocents, punishing traitors and imprisoning people who dare to resist me like those stupid Freedom Fighters. I already have their leader. Today, I'll get her loyal lap-dogs."

He smiled to himself evilly as he thought on FINALLY getting his hands on the Freedom Fighters of Mobius Nega at last. Even though he was enjoying beating them up and foiling their attempts to overthrow him and restore peace to Mobius Nega, he was getting fed up of them constantly trying to defeat him when they should just give-up and bow down to his feet. That and Scourge was so paranoid over his rule right now that he wasn't content with Freedom Fighters running around and trying to overthrow him. He'd worked too hard to conquer Mobius Nega and he wasn't going to let his reign come to an end. He was desperate to keep his reign and remain King of Mobius Nega for as long as he lived. So today, Scourge had big plans he was eager to carry out. Big plans that were going to guarantee that the Freedom Fighters join Amy Nega in his dungeon. As Scourge smiled to himself on the very thought of the Freedom Fighters getting captured, somebody else stepped out onto the balcony and joined his side. It was his gorgeous girlfriend Fiona Fox, traitor to the Royal Fighters and Queen of Mobius Nega as of Scourge's take-over of the planet. Fiona had her crown perched proudly atop her head like Scourge had his crown on and she was also wearing robes of state. Her robes were a lighter red than Scourge's, the fur on the shoulder sections and the hem was whiter than Scourge's but she had less medallion accessories on her robes. The wind started to blow Fiona's robes around, making her look very graceful and elegant as they spread out behind her. Scourge turned to his side and saw that Fiona was standing next to him now. That made him smile even more.

"Good morning my beautiful queen, how are you on this fine looking morning." purred Scourge, sneaking his arm around Fiona's back and edging his fingers around her waist.

"I'm perfectly well thank you King Scourge." said Fiona slyly, doing exactly what Scourge was doing to her right now "I've had a lovely sleep and I'm looking forward to taking on the day today. Now we have Amy Nega, today will go more our way than yesterday and all the days before then."

"Indeed it will Queen Fiona." said Scourge happily, pulling Fiona close to himself "Especially as I have some big plans for today."

"Oooooh, my sexy little boy has big plans does he?" purred Fiona

in a somewhat teasing tone of voice "What plans might that brilliant mind of yours be concocting now Scourge?" she added, patting her boyfriend on the head.

"I'm gonna give out a BIG reward for the capture of the Freedom Fighters." explained Scourge "I'm gonna put a price on their filthy little heads and make sure that people will go out and bring them to me. I bet all the fortress guards and anyone who's actually loyal to me will be itching to bring me the Freedom Fighters just for a big reward."

"Wow, you're gonna put a price on their heads?" asked Fiona with interest "How much hon?"

"250,000 Mobiums." replied Scourge "That'll make ANYBODY want to go out and bring a Freedom Fighter or two or maybe the whole lot to me."

"Indeed it will." said Fiona, approving of Scourge's idea "Since all the riches of Mobius Nega belong to us and the people out there barely have a penny, they'll be killing themselves to get the Freedom Fighters and get the reward."

"And of course, the reward is just a big lie, I'm not paying anybody a single Mobium!" cackled Scourge "Those gullible twerps will fall for it big time! They'll give me the Freedom Fighters and I'll give them nothing!"

"Scourge, you're so twisted that if we twisted you any further, you would suffocate." chuckled Fiona "So when do we start?"

"Now." said Scourge with a devil's smile spread out on his face "Get me the communicator to the guard's quarters. I'll give those sleeping beauties a wake-up call."

Fiona obeyed and she ran back inside to fetch a communicator for Scourge. She returned with it shortly after leaving and she handed it to Scourge. The communicator was shaped like a traditional telephone receiver but it looked more hi-tech and wasn't attached to anything. Scourge just pressed a button on the communicator and spoke into it.

"Hey all you mugs down in the cellars!" he yelled into it "Wake up! Your king has a task for you all to do!"

Of course, that shout woke up all the guards the fortress had down in the cellars where they slept in. Scourge waited a moment while the guards sorted themselves out and then he received a response through the communicator.

"Good morning your highness. What's the job today?" asked one guard.

"I want you lot to go around and paste up some Wanted posters." explained Scourge "I'm putting a price on the Freedom Fighter's heads. 250,000 Mobiums for the capture of the Freedom Fighters. I'm gonna get the fortress publishers to make the posters and then you will take them all out into the city and paste them everywhere. I bet SOMEBODY will want to bring us the Freedom Fighters and collect the reward I'm placing on their heads."

"OK your highness, we'll do that once the posters are made." said the guard.

With that said, Scourge switched off the communicator and he pressed another button on it.

"Now to call up the publishers and get them making those posters." said Scourge "Get them to put all their faces on the posters so the people will know that I want ALL of them, not just one or two."

"Scourge hold on a minute, something's happening." said Fiona, grabbing Scourge's arm and pointing up at the sky.

Scourge put down the communicator and he looked in Fiona's direction. What he saw was enough to make him go mental with horror. For a streak of light had appeared in the sky a few miles out above the city. And it looked exactly like the same streak of light that had brought he and Fiona to Mobius Nega in the first place! Scourge almost went crazy and he quickly darted out of the balcony and back into the fortress.

"Oh no! Not again! That weird streak of light's appeared again! Don't

let it get me!" wailed Scourge as he ran away.

"Hold your horses Scourge, it's too far away from us. You're safe." said Fiona, standing there and just looking out at the tear in the sky as if it wasn't interesting to her.

Scourge caught what Fiona said and he sighed with relief. He came back out to the balcony and he brought out a telescope that was hanging on the wall just beside the doorway to the balcony with him. He extended the telescope to its full length and he peeked through it.

"Alright, let's see what that streak of light's doing over there…" he mused, wondering if it was going to do something good like maybe suck up all the Freedom Fighters and save him and his guards the job of having to capture them themselves.

He aimed the telescope at the steak of light and he watched it very closely, wondering if anything was going to go in it or if anything was going to come out of it. He watched with a mixture of excitement and anxiety bubbling away in his stomach as he waited to see what happened. Unfortunately for him, what happened was probably the one thing he was praying for not to happen. Sonic the Hedgehog came hurling down out of the streak of light as if he had just descended from heaven and he plummeted down into the city below. Scourge's eyes widened in horror and he dropped the telescope in shock. He watched as the tiny blue dot in the distance that is Sonic disappeared behind some buildings in the city. Fiona read Scourge's expression immediately and she detected something was wrong.

"Scourge baby, are you alright?" she asked nervously "What's the matter?"

"You're not gonna believe this baby-cakes…but Sonic the Hedgehog just came falling out of that tear in the sky!" shrieked Scourge, his face an uncharacteristic staple of fear and horror "That freaking tear in the sky just spat out Sonic the Hedgehog! My own dweeby brother's been brought here by the streak of light!"

Fiona's face went pale as Scourge said that to her.

"Oh no…! He…he…he'll ruin everything!" cried Fiona, putting her hands to her head in worry "He'll learn from the locals or maybe even the Freedom Fighters that we're here and we've taken over this world! He'll ruin our reign and throw us in jail either here or back on Mobius Prime if he manages to find a way back!"

"Not on my watch he ain't!" growled Scourge "King Scourge the Hedgehog's reign is far from over my queen! I'll just simply put a price on Sonic's head too! Get somebody to arrest him for me and then once I've got him, I'll lock him up along with Amy Nega and then kill him!"

"Excellent idea Scourge." said Fiona, hugging Scourge in approval "Sonic won't be able to do a thing about us once we get our hands on him!"

Scourge smiled darkly at the very thought of Sonic rotting away in his dungeon to prevent him from taking away his kingdom. If he managed to capture Sonic and lock him away then he would be the happiest hedgehog in the multi-verse. Scourge punched in the button for the fortress's publishers on the communicator and he put it to his ears.

"Hey! News-boys!" he barked sharply into the communicator "Your king has a job for you! I want you to make a bunch of Wanted posters and I want you to make two kinds! One set of posters will have the Freedom Fighter's faces on and the other set will have the face of Sonic the Hedgehog. No, I don't mean YOUR zone's Sonic, I mean there's another version of Sonic the Hedgehog that's come to Mobius Nega to try and take over my kingdom before you ask! He looks like your Sonic except he doesn't wear anything but sneakers and gloves, you can just use an image of Sonic Nega's face if you please. The price on their heads is 250,000 Mobiums. Think you can do that for me?"

"Certainly your highness." said a voice on the other side of the communicator "We'll get making them instantly."

"Good." said Scourge "Print out plenty of copies, I want the WHOLECITY to have a copy of each poster EVERYWHERE! I want those Freedom Fighters and Sonic and I want them NOW!"

"OK, OK! Calm down your highness! We're getting to the task right now!" snapped the voice "We'll have the posters ready and printed before you go on…"

Scourge smiled with appreciation to himself and he hung up, handing the communicator back to Fiona.

"Oh Sonic, you are so mine at the end of this day…" purred Scourge evilly as he picture Sonic's arrestment at his own hands…

A couple of hours had passed after Sonic crash-landed down in the city after being spat out by the tear in the sky that sucked him up like a giant vacuum cleaner. He had crash-landed into a dark, rubbish-bag filled alley-way and was lying on top of some rubbish-bags that cluttered up the back of the alley. Some dustbins that were standing nearby had been knocked over in the impact of the crash and Sonic had been left knocked out for a whole two hours (the crash was pretty bad). Only just now was Sonic finally beginning to come around from that crash-land. He began to moan and groan to himself as he began to wake up and pain swept over his body (Think about it, he crashed on top of black rubbish bags full of rubbish! Of course he's in pain!) for he'd had a very uncomfortable and painful landing. He sat up atop the rubbish-bags he was lying on and he opened his eyes groggily as if he was waking up early in the morning. He stretched ever so tensely and he rubbed himself better as he felt some of his body parts beginning to ache, especially his back.

"Ugggghhhhh…oh man that was painful!" he whinged as he began to rub himself better "Landing on top of garbage bags in the middle of this rundown alley-way?! I'm just begging for a back-ache aren't I?!"

He straightened his back until he felt it crick a little and he eased the pain out of it by gently massaging it with his fingers.

"Ugh…I really can't do with hurting my back anymore given how I had it dislocated by Devion and then I get shot in it shortly after I heal myself with my super form. It maybe healed now thanks to the

Chaos Regeneration I used to heal myself during the Black Arms battle but I should take better care of it, given the abuse its received recently…"

He rubbed his eyes to clear them up a little and he stood up from the rubbish bags. He stumbled forward wobbly for he was still finding his feet and he tripped over a dustbin that was lying nearby. He fell flat onto his face and the dustbin made a most terrible clang sound as it fell over onto its side after Sonic stumbled over it. Sonic grumbled to himself and he got back onto his feet, groaning and shaking his head to wake himself up a bit more.

"Ouch…I've gotta be a little more careful I have!" he winced "Now… where the heck am I?" he found himself asking aloud "Have I been catapulted to another place on Mobius? I hope so, I need to get back to NewMobotropolis and fast before Eggman destroys it."

With that said, Sonic wandered off out of the alley-way to see if he could see where he was. He emerged from the alley-way and found himself walking into an enormous city. The city reminded him very much of Old Mobotropolis (you know, before Eggman razed it to the ground and New Mobotropolis replaced it) only the colouring of the buildings was a little darker and the Mobians looked a little different to what he was used to seeing. Different in the sense they resembled Mobians on his Mobius but had some differences like a scar, a marking, different choice of clothing or even a different fur colour. The sky was also slightly different too, being much grainer looking than usual. Sonic strode through the streets and observed his surroundings, wondering what was what and where everything was. This city really reminded him of Old Mobotropolis as he looked around and took note of everything. Sonic knew that Old Mobotropolis was gone and had a replacement so he knew immediately he wasn't on HIS Mobius, otherwise this city shouldn't be here. He put a finger to his lips and thought to himself about something. Something looked familiar about this city. Had he been here before? As Sonic thought and thought, he soon realized why everything was looking familiar to him in more ways than one. He snapped his fingers in realization.

"He-he-hey! I think I know where I am!" he blurted aloud "I'm on Mobius Nega, only it's much less evil looking now!"

Some citizens looked at him funny, wondering what the heck was up with Sonic but they just shook their heads and walked off, leaving Sonic to stand around by himself and exposit on the last time he'd been to Mobius Nega just to refresh his memory.

"Ah…I remember when I first ended up here." he said to himself "I came here completely by accident. I followed a metallized mouse back to this world and found out it had been conquered by this world's Eggman. I helped to save it, although they lost Scourge Nega, and it seems things have improved since the last time I was here. The city's more friendly and welcoming now in appearance and the sky's not black and purple anymore. Although the locals look a bit down, are they having a bad day or something?" he mused as he took note on how miserable some of the local Mobians were looking as they strutted and trudged glumly through the streets of Mobotropolis.

For a world that had just gotten back on its feet after the defeat of Eggman Nega, the Mobians looked pretty darn miserable. What was going on here? Sonic couldn't help but wonder what was up with them. Had something gone wrong? Was there another villain on the lose? Were they just simply having a bad day? Must be pretty bad if every single Mobian in the street looks down-hearted and melancholy. Being as Sonic was stuck here on Mobius Nega thanks to the tear in the sky, he thought he'd see what was up.

"Those long faces on everybody tell me something's up. Wonder what it is?" he asked himself, wondering over to somebody who was sitting glumly on a bench nearby.

Sonic looked at the guy and noticed that he was dressed in ragged robes and had the stereotypical image of a homeless person. He was also a jaguar and his fur was very messy and untidy looking. He had every right to look miserable it seemed but Sonic wondered if he knew why everybody else had such a long face. He patted the jaguar on the shoulder.

"Hey pal, why's everybody looking so sad?" asked Sonic "Did something bad happen?"

The jaguar looked up at Sonic and his eyes widened in surprise.

"He-he-hey! Y-y-you're the g-g-guy in the posters!" he stammered in a wobbly voice that made him sound somewhat demented (being homeless can give you a major blow to your sanity after all).

"Huh? What? What do you mean?" asked Sonic "What posters? What are you talking about?"

"See for yourself Sonic the Hedgehog Prime!" cried the jaguar with a rather creepy smile on his face that made him look like an evil clown without any face paint on.

Sonic began to feel nervous. What was up with that crazy jaguar? And how the heck did he know his name and that he's "Sonic the Hedgehog Prime" in particular? He soon got his answer for the jaguar reached into his robe pocket and took out a poster that he'd kept in there. He handed it to Sonic and the blue hedgehog unrolled it quickly, anxious to see what was on it. What he saw was enough to stop his heart. For the poster was a wanted poster and it said:

WANTED: SONIC THE HEDGEHOG PRIME

REWARD FOR CAPTURE: 250,000 MOBIUMS

DESCRIPTION: He looks like the late Sonic the Hedgehog Nega only he doesn't wear anything but a pair of red sneakers and white gloves and also has longer quills than our former hero. In the name of the king, he is to be captured on sight and brought to his imperial highness immediately.

Sonic was so shocked at this that he couldn't move. He was….wanted?! And by the king no less?! He had risked tail and hide to save Mobius Nega from Eggman Nega the last time he was here and THIS is how they repay him?! By putting a price on his head?! How ungrateful of them! Sonic began to feel disgusted and betrayed by all of this, he really did. But was there more to this then meets the eye? Was something going on that was causing all of this? Maybe Eggman Nega had somehow escaped from the void and had re-conquered Mobius Nega and now wanted Sonic captured? Not likely since there's no escape from the void and Mobius Nega looked perfectly fine right now, it didn't look like Eggman Nega had taken it over at all. But then again, Sonic didn't

know the void that well. All he knew was it existed, he didn't know much else. Maybe there was a way of escaping it after all. And maybe Eggman Nega had only recently re-conquered Mobius Nega which might explain why everything's alright for the moment. Nevertheless, Sonic had to find out what was going on and why he was wanted for he could do without anyone trying to capture him right now. Sonic dropped the poster and let it blow away in the wind. He looked back at the jaguar.

"I'm a wanted hedgehog?!" he cried "Why?! What have I done wrong to earn a price on my spiny-little head?!"

"I dunno." said the jaguar, his face still twisted into a crazed expression that made him look very crazy indeed "All I know is the king wants the Freedom Fighters and you captured Sonic! Hee, hee, hee, hee…and now you're standing in front of me…ha, ha, ha, ha…I can capture you and take you to him! I'm so dreadfully skint right now that even my mind is in poverty! Ha, ha, ha, ha! Once I deliver you to the king…I'll be rich, rich, RICH! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Sonic decided now would be the chance to run like hell. As the jaguar cackled maniacally, Sonic ran off at top speed, leaving the jaguar behind to cackle like a demented leprechaun. As Sonic zoomed off down the streets, he whizzed by lots of locals and made them all gasp in surprise as a huge breeze whooshed past them and startled them. Sonic decided to run on until he could find a place to hide. He was not safe out in the open like this since he's now a wanted hedgehog. Everybody would recognize him from the posters maybe and start wanting to apprehend him. Sonic didn't want to have to fight off innocent people for he only believed in hurting people who deserve it so he had to hide if he were to remain out of the public's eye. Sonic ran on until he found another alley-way and he dived into that as quickly as he could. Luckily, he was moving so fast that nobody saw where he went so nobody would know he had gone down there. To make double sure that nobody would find him, Sonic jumped into a nearby dumpster that was in the alley. Sonic sat down in the dumpster and closed the lid, sealing himself inside the dark, smelly dumpster. Thankfully it was empty so he had plenty of room in it. He sat down and lay back against the wall of the dumpster.

"Man oh man…I'm wanted? Why?!" wondered Sonic "What have I ever done to get wanted by the King of Mobius Nega? I SAVED the damn planet from their oppressor! Why the hell am I wanted?!"

"Hey, you're not the only wanted fugitive around here pal." came a teenage sounding voice that sounded very familiar to him.

Sonic looked to his left and suddenly realized that he was not alone in the dumpster. Somebody else was in there with him too. And that somebody looked just like his buddy Ruben the Water Panther. He was the same age, fur colour and height as Ruben Prime but he wore an open leather jacket that had a broken zip, some torn pockets and missing buttons. He had no aqua-collar on and he was missing his left eye. It was covered up by a patch. Sonic shifted a little so he was now completely facing the Ruben look-alike and he stared at him.

"Hey there, lemme guess, you're Ruben Nega aren't you?" asked Sonic.

"That is correct." said Ruben Nega "I'm not surprised you worked that out so soon Prime-Zoner. I've heard much about you from my leader, Amy Nega. She tells me you're the Prime Zone Sonic and that you saved the world from Eggman Nega's tyranny."

"I did indeed but for some reason, I'm a wanted hedgehog!" cried Sonic "They've got my face on Wanted posters and a description of what I look like and all! Why would the very planet I saved from oppression want me captured?!"

Ruben Nega listened to Sonic's statement very closely and he made a serious face as he factored in everything Sonic told him.

"I think you're wanted probably because King Scourge doesn't want any supersonic hedgehogs trying to overthrow him and bring peace back to Mobius Nega." estimated Ruben Nega.

Sonic stared at Ruben Nega as if he'd just spoken a foreign language to him. KING Scourge?! He didn't possibly mean…did he?

"King…Scourge?" blustered Sonic "You don't mean YOUR Scourge

do you?"

"Of course not, Scourge Nega's dead remember?" noted Ruben Nega "I was told that Eggman Nega killed Scourge Nega so of course I'm not talking about this world's Scourge. No, King Scourge is actually Scourge the Hedgehog Prime. He made that very clear when he took over our world a few weeks ago."

Sonic couldn't believe his ears. He was so shocked to hear all of this that he felt like he was just going to collapse and just randomly die without warning. Well he DID wonder at one point where Scourge and Fiona were and now it seemed he got his answer. The answer though was not what he had expected in a million years so it was still shocking to him. Ruben Nega just looked at Sonic with a stoic expression on his face. Ruben Nega wasn't like his prime counter part personality wise. He was very straight-faced and deadpan and his emotional side rarely ever came out, causing many people, even his own team mates, to find him to be an absolute misery-guts.

"I know, it's shocking isn't it?" asked Ruben Nega "Your zone's Scourge has taken over the world much like how Eggman Nega took it over and since we have no Sonic Nega or Scourge Nega to stand up to them, we were dead meat out there and he took over the world easily. None of us could match up to him, especially as there's no one else on Mobius Nega like Sonic or Scourge Nega. So right now, he's ruling over us all and there's nothing we can do about it."

Sonic snapped out of his shock and finally started speaking again.

"My zone's Scourge has…conquered Mobius Nega?!" shrieked Sonic "My own brother…has conquered Mobius Nega?! How the flying chilli-dogs did THAT happen?!"

"You will not believe how it happened Sonic Prime." muttered Ruben Nega "A few weeks ago, this random streak of light appeared in the sky and then Scourge and a vixen named Fiona who seems to be his girl, fell out of the sky and crash-landed in the city square. Then once they woke up, Scourge asked one of the locals where he was and once he found out this is one of Mobius Prime's many alternate zones, he decided he wanted to conquer it and make it his own. So with his speed and battle prowess and the cunning and intelligence

of his rather bodacious sidekick…he took over the world. He trumped our armies, made short work out of us Freedom Fighters and forced us to scatter and go into hiding and is now residing in Fortress Acorn, living a life of opulence and making the world suffer under his cruel, iron-fisted rule. Poverty is global because he's taken all the riches of Mobius Nega for himself, punishments are given out if you so much as look at him weird and he's free to do what he wants and nobody can stop him. He's too powerful for us all and we have no one who can match him. He's like Sonic Nega at his full potential. Me and the other Freedom Fighters have been trying to take him down, striking from the shadows like ninjas in the night. But all we're doing is delaying the inevitable and making him mad. Now he's put wanted posters up for all of the Freedom Fighters and you. He must have spotted you when you arrived here and maybe wants you captured so you can't take him down once you discover he's here. Speaking of arrival…were you sent here by a steak of light in the sky too?"

"I was." said Sonic, taking in everything Ruben Nega had told him "A streak of light tore through the sky and then swallowed me up like a crocodile catching its breakfast. And then…it spat me out here. Seems like a weird coincidence doesn't it? Me and Scourge both get taken here by a streak of light?"

"Yeah. Sounds weird indeed." mumbled Ruben Nega, clearly not thinking this was really that weird or even that surprising for that matter.

"Yeah." murmured Sonic "So…Scourge was brought here…by a streak of light…and that happened weeks ago?"

"Sure did." mumbled Ruben Nega.

That made Sonic feel very nervous indeed. The streak of light had happened a few weeks ago already? The one that had taken him to Mobius Nega wasn't the first time it had happened? What on Mobius was the deal behind the streak of light? Sonic began to think very hard on this. Was it a sign of an apocalypse at all? If so then could this be the apocalypse that Silver and Blaze were trying to prevent and save their future? If so then how could they be stopped? But then again, all they seemed to do was suck up anyone near them

and take them somewhere else. Not really doing much harm so far. But would they get worse? And would they get more frequent? Two had already happened with weeks between them. Would those weeks shorten into days and then into hours and then into minutes and then into…seconds?! The streak of light was clearly something catastrophic and Sonic knew it had to be dealt with. But now was not the time for that. Now was the time to save Mobius Nega from his evil brother and bring him and Fiona back to Mobius Prime where they can rot in a prison cell for their crimes.

"Well…I'm gonna bring down Scourge and Fiona and bring them back to MY Mobius!" declared Sonic "I saved this Mobius once and I'll do it again!"

"I'm honoured that you're gonna do that Sonic Prime." said Ruben Nega with a tiny smile on his face "Cause after all, we really do need you to help save Mobius Nega after all."

"You're welcome." said Sonic "Hey, hope you don't mind me asking but…what happened to your eye?" he asked, pointing at Ruben Nega's eye patch "And where's your aqua collar? Shouldn't you have one since you're a water panther?"

Ruben Nega's face fell into an even gloomier expression and he lightly touched his eye patch.

"I lost that during our first battle with Scourge." explained Ruben Nega "He pinned me to the ground and…you don't wanna know how he caused me to lose it. It's too gruesome. As for my aqua-collar… Scourge took it and he destroyed it so I'm incapable of using my water powers now."

"OK then, I'm sorry I asked." said Sonic in a sympathetic tone.

"It's OK, you needed to know." said Ruben Nega gently "Now then, shall I take you to the other Freedom Fighters?" he asked "They'll love to meet you and we can gather together to carry out our next plan."

"Cool." said Sonic "I'd love to meet the Freedom Fighters. Let's get going! I'd especially love to meet Amy Nega again. Man was she hot

and cool both at the same time!"

"I'm afraid Amy Nega has been imprisoned by Scourge." said Ruben Nega sadly, his face falling into a sorrowful expression "She is currently chained up in a dark dungeon, baring the wrath of Scourge."

Sonic was horrified to hear this and he almost leaped out of the dumpster in shock.

"Amy Nega's in Scourge's hands?!" he cried "Oh my gosh…we've gotta save her and fast before Scourge kills her!"

"That's exactly what the Freedom Fighters' next move is going to be, rescuing Amy Nega." said Ruben Nega "Come with me and I'll take you to the Freedom Fighters, then we can all go together and rescue our incarcerated leader."

"OK then." said Sonic "Let's get going, the faster we get going the quicker Amy gets rescued!"

"You really like her don't you?" smirked Ruben Nega, his mouth turning up at the side into a small sneer.

"Of course I do." said Sonic "She's like my zone's Amy if she was cooler and prettier looking. I really liked her when I first came here and I wanna make sure she's safe now I'm here again."

With that said, Sonic and Ruben Nega climbed out of the dumpster as slowly and as quietly as they possibly could for they didn't want to make a noise and attract any unwanted attention. They stepped out of the it and quietly closed the lid behind them, making sure it didn't make any noise as they closed it. Once the dumpster was closed, they crept out of the alley way as quiet as a pair of mice. They came up to the corner and they peeked around it, making sure that the coast was clear before they pressed on. They were both wanted Mobians so they couldn't afford to have anyone spotting them and trying to capture them for Scourge and Fiona. The coast was clear, luckily for them, so the two sneaked out of the alleyway and Ruben Nega ran off with Sonic following him.

"We're in for some luck it seems." said Ruben Nega as they ran off "Hopefully we won't encounter and problems on the way back to base."

"Hopefully not." said Sonic "I really can't afford to have any problems as we try to save Amy Nega and defeat Scourge."

"Neither can I pal." said Ruben Nega "Especially as now me and the team have prices on our heads and you as well."

Sonic nodded as he followed Ruben Nega through the streets of Mobotropolis. Ruben Nega darted down a city block and headed off down the empty road that stretched on ahead of them. But unfortunately, as they reached the end of the road and turned to the right, they ran into a troop of guards that all worked for Scourge. They were out on patrol since they were allowed to try and capture the wanted ones and get the reward for themselves. The guards were all a pack of Mobian African Hunting Dogs all dressed in soldier's uniforms and wielding rifles. The guards all stared in surprise at the sight of Sonic and Ruben Nega and they all pointed their guns at them.

"Well, well boys! We've located a Freedom Fighter AND Sonic the Hedgehog Prime!" cackled the leader of the guards "Boys, set the guns to stun and SHOOT THEM NOW!"

The guards all obeyed and they set their guns to stun and fired at Sonic and Ruben Nega…

So Sonic's ended up on Mobius Nega eh? (Big shocker). Well now he's here, he can hopefully save Mobius Nega and overthrow Scourge from his seat of power! But will he succeed? And will he be able to save Amy Nega? And how will he get back to Mobius Prime? Will his friends be able to help him get home? Find out next time as "Dark World" continues...

Glad you thought "They Key of Opulence" was good and you're still enjoying my story Alma Von Arena. :) So how's this one looking so far?

Dark World Part 3

Story 141: Dark World Part 3

Sonic the Hedgehog was having an eventful day today. He'd just recently defeated Team Diamond and gotten them incarcerated at last, had come home with a new recruit who was also the long-lost sister of his best friend Tails, spied on Dr. Eggman with said new recruit and found out what he was planning, got sucked up into a streak of light that had randomly appeared in the sky, spat back out by the streak of light and ended up on Mobius Nega again and had just found out that his evil brother, Scourge the Hedgehog, and his girlfriend, the treacherous Fiona Fox, had taken over the world and had placed a bounty on the heads of himself and the Freedom Fighters of Mobius Nega, and now he was being shot at by Scourge's guards. Sonic was paired up with the Mobius Nega counterpart of Ruben the Water Panther, obligatorily named Ruben Nega of course, and he had been leading Sonic back to the Freedom Fighter's headquarters but they had run into Scourge's guards and they were shooting at the two with their rifles set to stun mode. One shot from those rifles and they would be knocked out instantly. The guards shot at Sonic and Ruben Nega but the two managed to dodge the shots by running or somersaulting out of the way. Sonic was doing the running and Ruben Nega was doing the somersaulting as you've probably guessed. The guards kept up the shooting, desperate to hit Sonic and Ruben Nega so they could knock them out, take them to Scourge and claim the reward that he was offering for their capture (not). But as we all know, the likelihood of tagging Sonic with a rifle is about as likely as finding a five-pound note just randomly lying on the pavement. That is to say…not likely whatsoever. Sonic and Ruben Nega dodged all the shots and Sonic grabbed Ruben Nega by the arm. He whizzed off, holding Ruben Nega tightly, and he ran directly up a nearby building with him. Ruben Nega didn't show any signs of excitement or enjoyment as Sonic ran off with him. He just kept his face straight as usual as if this was just another day of being carried by a supersonic hedgehog for him (he IS deadpan remember?). Once Sonic had run up the building, he and Ruben Nega ran across the rooftop and took shelter

behind a rooftop generator with the laser fire shooting up at them from down below. Sonic and Ruben Nega were pretty far across the rooftop so the guards could no longer get a clear shot at them and the rooftop generator provided excellent coverage for the two. They had the perfect moment to catch their breath and think of a plan.

"OK…this isn't going how we wanted!" panted Sonic "We've run into some guys with rifles who are trying to stun us! Who are they Ruben?"

"They're the fortress guards." explained Ruben Nega "I bet Scourge sent them out on patrol to try and hunt us down. Or they sent themselves on patrol to try and hunt us down so they can get the reward. Either way, we can't let them catch us."

"We most certainly can't Ruben." said Sonic "So what do you advise on doing?"

"If Scourge hadn't destroyed my aqua collar, I'd just wash them all away with a jet of water." muttered Ruben Nega "I'd suggest we just stay on the rooftops and out of their way."

"Sounds good to me." said Sonic "And since I can run fast and jump high, I'll outrun those guards while up here easily!"

"I agree, they won't catch us while we're up here." said Ruben Nega brightly "So, let's get going. I'll direct you to the Freedom Fighter hideout while you're evading the guards."

"No Ruben, I can't do that." said Sonic sternly "The guards might follow us back to the hideout and find out where your team is. We'll lead the guards in a different direction and THEN I will run off at supersonic speed and you can direct me to the hideout and since I'll be moving so fast, the guards won't see where I'm heading."

"Wow…you're a lot smarter than most Sonics I've met in the multi-verse." said Ruben Nega, his face now a legitimate expression of surprise "Even our Sonic."

"Thanks." said Sonic "And you've met "other Sonics" in the multi-verse? Really? How did you do that?"

Sonic began to get a tingle of excitement in his stomach. If Ruben Nega's managed to meet "other Sonics" in the multi-verse then he must have some kind of device that allows the user to hop from zone to zone and maybe he could use that to get back home to Mobius Prime once he defeated Scourge.

"Mobius Nega has zone-hopping technology that we often used to visit other zones." explained Ruben Nega "Even Mobius Prime. Eggman Nega destroyed all that during his rule though and erased all data on the devices so we've been incapable of rebuilding any so no zone-hopping for us anymore."

That made Sonic's excitement blow out like a flame. Looks like there was no way home for him after all. He might just be stuck on Mobius Nega forever, unless another tear in the sky appears and takes him back home but the likelihood of that was a hundred to one. The one that had brought Scourge here in the first place had happened WEEKS ago so it might be a while until another one comes and takes Sonic home and even then, it may not necessarily take him home, it could spit him out on a whole new world for all he knew and he'd be even more lost. If only there was a Chaos Emerald or two he could use and then maybe he could just Chaos Control back to Mobius Prime after defeating Scourge. But now was not the time to think about going back home yet. He had Mobius Nega to save from Scourge's oppression first and then he could think about that.

That little statement made Sonic's excitement blow out like a flame and his face fell into disappointment. Looks like there was no way home for him after all. He might just be stuck on Mobius Nega forever, unless another tear in the sky appears and takes him back home but the likelihood of that was a hundred to one. The one that had brought Scourge here in the first place had happened WEEKS ago so it might be a while until another one comes and takes Sonic home and even then, it may not necessarily take him home, it could spit him out on a whole new world for all he knew and he'd be even more lost. If only there was a Chaos Emerald or two he could use and then maybe he could just Chaos Control back to Mobius Prime after defeating Scourge. But now was not the time to think about going back home yet. He had Mobius Nega to save from Scourge's oppression first and then he could think about that. But Sonic would

have to think about defeating Scourge later for something else gave him something to think about. And that was the fact that the guards were climbing up a flight of metal stairs that were bolted to the wall of the building he and Ruben Nega were atop and they started shooting at them again. Sonic and Ruben Nega instantly got to their feet and ran for it before any of the stun shots could tag them.

"Whoa!" yelped Sonic as one stun blast whizzed past his bottom just inches away from it "Looks like we're not the only ones who will be rooftop hopping Ruben!"

"Seems that way." said Ruben Nega as he ducked down and dodged a stun shot "Let's commence with your plan Sonic."

Sonic agreed and he picked up Ruben Nega. Unfortunately, before he could run off, a guard aimed his rifle at Sonic's feet and shot at him. The shot hit Sonic's feet and he was brought falling down flat onto his face, Ruben Nega sprawling out in front of him as he fell over. The shot had left Sonic's ankles feeling very sore and the heel of his shoes lightly singed. Sonic gripped his feet in pain and he winced as they began to sting furiously.

"Yeouch! That was a painful shot!" grumbled Sonic "I don't think I'll be able to run with my feet stinging like this! Ow…"

The guards were delighted to hear this. Sonic was completely at their mercy now since his feet were hurting so much, he couldn't run or anything. They all aimed their rifles at Sonic and prepared to shoot him and knock him out with a stun blast. But as they were ready to pull the triggers, Ruben Nega leaped in and unleashed a round of kung-fu moves on all the guards. He jumped on top of one guard's head, and knocked him down onto his face. He then leaped up and kung-fu kicked another guard in the face and knocked him down onto his back. Another guard tried to whack Ruben Nega with his rifle but Ruben Nega evaded the attack and he slugged the guard in the gut. He then elbowed him in the nose, punched him in the eye and then kicked him into another guard. The two dogs were sent sprawling across the rooftop and they groaned in agonizing pain for that had been very painful for them. Another guard tried to shoot Ruben Nega but Ruben Nega bent over backwards to evade the shot. The guard ran up to Ruben Nega as his shot missed but

Ruben Nega spun around and roundhouse kicked him directly off the rooftop! The guard was sent plummeting off the building, screaming as he headed down to the ground below. What silenced his screams was a sickening crunch sound as he hit the pavement. Ruben Nega leaned over to see what had become of the guard. The fall had killed it and Ruben Nega took a moment to close his eyes, put his hands together in a prayer and beg the ancestors for forgiveness since killing was often considered an act of dishonour among Chun-Nan residents, especially water panthers. He maybe dead-pan but he's still capable of feeling after all. There were five guards left standing. They all aimed their guns at Ruben Nega but before they could shoot him and knock him out, Sonic jumped up and spin-dashed them all down. The five guards were thrown near the edge of the rooftop and they all piled up on top of each other in a heap. Sonic stood before them all, his feet still stinging from the earlier shot that had hit him there, and he smirked at them.

"You really should know better than to try and tag someone as fast as me." he crowed "Someone with speed like mine will be much too fast for you to shoot."

Ruben Nega strolled casually over to Sonic with a tiny smile on his face (that's all he's capable of given how stone-faced he is all the time).

"Nice one Sonic." he said casually "Considering you got shot in the feet earlier."

"Yeah, they still sting really badly but I just forced myself to ignore the pain in them long enough to launch that spin-dash." said Sonic, his face scrunched up in a little grimace as he began rubbing his feet better "I often have to ignore whatever pain I'm in when in a situation like this. It's vital if you wanna stay alive after all."

"Can't argue with that." said Ruben Nega "Now, let's get outta here before the guards get back up."

"I'll say, Those dumb dogs aren't very pleasant company." snickered Sonic.

So with that said, Sonic scooped up Ruben Nega bridal style and

positioned himself, ready to run off with him in his arms and jump off onto another building. But as Sonic bent down and prepared to make a dash for it, one of the guards picked himself up and primed his rifle, ready to make another shot. He aimed his rifle at Sonic, making sure his shot was as accurate as possible as he poised himself to make the shot. Sonic dashed off towards the edge of the rooftop in almost a millisecond and he gracefully leaped up into the air…and just as he left the building and sailed over the gap in-between the gap between this building he was jumping off and the one he was heading for, the guard pulled the trigger and fired. The stun-shot whooshed out of the barrel of the rifle and rocketed towards Sonic just as he was positioning himself to land on the other building. Sonic landed feet-first on the building he'd leaped onto, ignoring the flaring pain that seared through his feet as he landed, but the shot caught up to him and blasted him directly in the back! Sonic's whole body seemed to just seize up as if he had been sprayed by liquid nitrogen and just froze up on the spot. Sonic dropped Ruben Nega onto the rooftop and because his seized up body wasn't very well balanced (it's in a pose that's leaning back a little, throwing his balance off), he ended up falling backwards off the building. Ruben Nega's face turned into an expression that he very seldom expressed…horror. His eyes widened and his jaw dropped open in incredulous shock as Sonic toppled backwards off the building.

"SONIC!" screamed Ruben Nega.

As stone-faced and miserable as he was, even he was not opposed to getting shocked or expression emotions at any point. This was a legitimate shock for the poor water panther since the fall could quite easily kill Sonic and thus, end Mobius Nega's only hope for freedom and that terrified Ruben Nega. Ruben Nega watched over the edge of the building as Sonic plummeted down to the ground below. He crash-landed on top of a bunch of dustbins, knocking them all over and making them clang and clash most horribly as their lids fell off and rolled across the ground and Sonic knocked them over. The rubbish contained in the dustbins spilled out onto the ground as they were knocked over and the malodorous scent that drifted from the rubbish began to drift up into the fresh air now there was nothing to contain it. Because Sonic was paralyzed by the guard's stun shot,

he just lay there by the knocked over bins, completely unable to move because of this. Ruben Nega put his hands to his mouth in horror. He began praying and praying that the fall hadn't killed Sonic. His body shook and he put his fingers into his mouth as he worried on Sonic's well-being. As for the guard that had shot Sonic, he was just left staring open-mouthed as if he had just found the Holy Grail at last.

"Oh my goodness, gracious me! I hit him!" crowed the guard "Come on guys, let's deliver the body to King Scourge and get that reward!"

With that said, the guards all climbed down from the building they were on and ran off to the alley way that Sonic had fallen into. Ruben Nega was so overwhelmed with shock that he didn't move. He was frozen to the spot in fear and he didn't do anything. He was almost petrified as he stared at Sonic's paralyzed body and wondered if he was still alive. Falling off a building and landing on top of dustbins did not guarantee any chance of survival after all. The guards all caught up to Sonic and they surrounded him, pointing their rifles at him to make sure he didn't try to do anything incase the paralysis wore off or something. It wouldn't matter anyway since Sonic had been knocked out by the crash so even though he was still paralyzed, he was unconscious so he wouldn't be moving anyway. The guard that had shot Sonic stood forward and he felt Sonic's pulse on is wrist. He felt a faint heartbeat.

"This may surprise you mugs…but he's alive." said the guard "I guess he's as tough-bodied as King Scourge is."

"I'll say, he even LOOKS like King Scourge!" noted one guard in a rather humorous tone "Just paint him green and give him a leather jacket and he'll be the spitting image!"

"Yeah." said the guard "Well, since he's paralyzed, let's take him back to the fortress before it wears off. We cannot afford to lose him now we've got him."

The guards agreed and they all picked up Sonic's body.

"But what about Ruben Nega?" asked one of the guards as they picked up Sonic.

"Aw forget him, let's just get out of here with Sonic before his paralysis wears off. We can't waste this opportunity while we have it." said the lead guard "We'll catch Ruben Nega later."

So the guards proceeded to just walk out of the alley-way whilst carrying Sonic's body away and they headed off back to Fortress Acorn…and back to King Scourge. Ruben Nega finally snapped out of his shock and watched with disdain as Sonic was taken away to be a prisoner for Scourge the Hedgehog.

"Oh no…they've got him!" cried Ruben Nega "And they're taking him to Scourge! I would try and help Sonic but I might get shot and end up being captured too! I'll go back to the FF hideout and get the Freedom Fighters. I'm sorry Sonic but this is not a one man job. I'll come back for you, I promise."

With that said, Ruben Nega jumped down from the rooftop and down onto the pavement below. He darted off down the road and headed to where the Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters were hiding. Once he recruited his friends, he would come to Fortress Acorn, storm the place and rescue Sonic. And maybe they could rescue Amy Nega too as they come to save Sonic…

Back on Mobius Prime, the Royal Fighters had all gathered around in Royal HQ and were in the lab as of this moment. Tails the twin-tailed fox, Sonic's best friend, was sitting at the computers and was using Mobius' satellites to study Mobius and see if he could pick up anything strange at all. How fortuitous it was that Nicole the Lynx, the lady-in-waiting to Queen Sally Acorn, managed to get the satellites back under control for the Royal Fighters after Eggman had hacked into them* otherwise they would be in a bit of a pickle right about now. Ever since the tear in the sky had taken Sonic away, the Royal Fighters had been desperate to find him and thus, they had returned to Royal HQ and Tails was using the satellites (which they have access to) to see if Sonic had re-appeared anywhere else on Mobius thanks to the streak of light, as well as to scan the habitat and see if there's anything else weird and surreal going on at all. The whole tear in the sky had everybody on tenterhooks and also getting very worried for their super-speedy

friend. Even Dr. Eggman was worried about the whole thing and he had gone back to his own lab to study the streak of light himself. You know something's bad if even Eggman's worried about it. While Tails was working away on the lab's computers, the other Mobians were just gathered around and talking to one another.

"I really can't stop wondering what the heck that streak of light in the sky was all about and where it came from." grumbled the AngelIsland guardian and heavy-hitter Knuckles the Echidna "Heck, I'm still wondering WHAT it is for that matter!"

"I'm wondering that too guardian." said Shade the Echidna, co-guardian of AngelIsland and Knuckle's love interest who was standing beside Knuckles and holding his arm for comfort "There must be some kind of rhyme or reason behind that streak of light. Everything has a rhyme and a reason behind it after all."

"I agree on that but sometimes, you can get something that's all rhyme and no reason." said Sally Acorn "For all we know, that streak of light could have just appeared completely at random. It might just be a random phenomenon that happened for no reason."

"I highly doubt that your majesty." said the young and always honourable Ruben the Water Panther "That thing can't just "happen for no reason", it's not a natural thing so something must have caused it. But what caused it is the big question that we're all striving to find the answer to."

"It is indeed Ruben." said Sally grimly "And the other big question is what's happened to Sonic now he's been sucked up into that weird streak of light?"

"I'm just hoping he's not dead!" screeched Amy Rose, Sonic's self-proclaimed girlfriend "I don't know how I'd live with myself if my precious Sonic was dead!"

She began to whimper a little as if she was about to start crying again. She had been one of the most effected of the lot by Sonic's disappearance and was just about losing her mind with grief. Cosmo the Seedrian and Cream the Rabbit both gave Amy a comforting hug to settle her down to which Amy graciously returned.

"Thanks girls." she said with a smile on her face as she wiped away the coming tears.

"No problem Miss Rose." said Cream politely.

"We understand how you feel Amy so we'll be here to comfort you in anyway possible." said Cosmo kindly.

"That's very sweet Cream and Cosmo." said Sally, awestruck by how lovely the two girls could be "It's good to see that despite this stressful moment, you're still there to care for others."

"Thank you Miss Acorn." said Cream.

"Hey everybody, I might sound crazy if I say this but…I think Eggman himself might be behind that "tear in the sky" nonsense." piped in the Royal Fighter tomboy MandyMouse "I mean, it's FAR too convenient for my liking that the tear in the sky just "happened" to show up just shortly after he arrived to take down our city. Coincidence? I think not!"

"I'm sorry to say Miss Mandy that your theory is most illogical." said the newly-recruited Sora Prower, long lost sister to Tails and super-spy "I spied on Eggman with Sonic earlier and he made NO mention whatsoever about a streak of light that can suck things up. Not to mention, he was taken aback by the whole thing himself so how can he possibly have done it?"

"He could have been pretending to fool us all." noted Mandy "But if you said he made no mention about it when you spied on him then maybe he didn't do it after all. You spied on him and told us everything you had heard. Although…he may have talked about it after you left." she added.

"Wrong Mandy, after Eggman had told Devion everything, he said "Now let's get ready to go, we're going to unleash the plan now" and was leaving immediately after he said that." Sora explained "He didn't say anything else. He said nothing about the streak of light, didn't talk about anything else after he left, zilch, zip, nada."

Mandy put a finger to her lips and she thought for a moment about

all this.

"Hmm…I see. Maybe the fat-head isn't responsible after all." she murmured, disappointed her theory was wrong.

"He certainly isn't." said Sora "But it wasn't a bad theory Mandy, you had every right to think that."

"I certainly would have blamed it on Eggman too…" muttered Geoffrey St. John crossly "A lot of the weird things that go on are his doing aren't they?"

"Just Eggman in general is weird." joked Wilson the Dog, husband of Mandy Mouse "His very presence is a weird thing going on. That streak of light's the only thing that's weirder than him. I do hope it isn't going to come back otherwise I will start to worry about it."

"Ah hope it doesn't come back either sugah." said Bunnie Rabbot "We really can't afford to lose anybody else right now."

"I agree Miss Rabbot." said Sora "Although we might have more to worry about then a streak of light. I mean, I heard Eggman talking about a "new invention". He said if his initial plan fails, he'll have to unleash his "new invention" on us."

"N-n-n-new invention?" whimpered Cream worriedly.

"Aha!" cried Mandy, snapping her fingers "New invention! That might be it! Maybe Eggman's so-called "new invention" you heard him mention was something that could make that streak of light! Since you found out his original plan and we've pretty much foiled it because of that, I bet Eggman used his new invention to make that streak of light to suck us up but instead, only got blue dude! I knew he was behind all this after all!"

She thumped the palm of her hand with her fist, clearly content with the idea she had just gotten. Sora was taken aback by Mandy's theory but given how they have no idea on what the real cause is, they had to go with it. They had no other theory on this.

"That's…a plausible theory Mandy." said Sora doubtfully "If it IS true then I will be amazed. Although that still begs the question why

Eggman seemed so shocked at this too…"

"Duh! He was acting along with it to try play us all for saps Sora! Isn't it obvious?" snapped Mandy rudely.

"Mandy dear, don't be rude." said Wilson, putting his hands on his wife's shoulders "Not everybody thinks the same things as you, you know."

"Sorry Wilson." said Mandy.

"You know if Mandy's theory is correct and Eggman IS the one who made that streak of light then I REALLY will kill him for getting rid of my Sonic!" growled Amy furiously "I'll piko him so hard his head will have a permanent bump on it!"

"I'd love to see that love." snickered Geoffrey, imagining the outcome of Amy going berserk on Eggman for making that tear in the sky to get rid of Sonic.

"Hey guys, come over here." said Tails, turning around and facing everybody "I've got some startling news for you all."

Everybody ran over to Tails, their stomachs tingling with excitement at the possibility that Sonic had been found and was still on Mobius after all. They all lined up in front of Tails and they looked at him, eager to hear what he had to say.

"So little guy, what's this news you have for us?" asked Vector the Crocodile, boss of Team Chaotix.

"Have you found Sonic?" asked Espio the Chameleon, ninja of Team Chaotix.

"No." said Tails, shaking his head sadly "I haven't. But this is my startling news…according to Mobius' satellites and data scans… everything on Mobius is completely NORMAL. Everything's OK now, there's nothing else weird going on, nothing odd is being picked up or registered by the satellites. Everything's just…normal. As if the tear in the sky never happened."

Everybody's jaws dropped and they all looked at each other in

astonishment, unable to believe that everything was suddenly normal again after such a weird phenomenon. Surely the planet would be distorted or changed in someway if something this incredulous and obfuscating had happened out of the blue and sucked up Sonic the Hedgehog like it had done. But everything was normal. This certainly was a perplexing mystery wasn't it? The whole business behind the streak of light must be deeper than anybody ever imagined. Mandy however seemed to be getting more ideas with this startling revelation.

"Aha! That PROVES Eggman created that streak of light!" declared Mandy "If everything's normal again it's because that thing was artificially created and not something more surreal like a rift in the timeline or whatever it is in the movies I've seen over the years! Looks like I was right after all!" she added with a satisfied smirk on her face.

"Uh…I'm totally lost. What's up with Mandy?" asked Tails, scratching his head in wonder.

"The mouse girl firmly believes that Eggman created that streak of light himself in an attempt to get rid of us." explained Knuckles "I'm having a hard time believing that myself but it seems likely given the evidence we have. Sora said Eggman mentioned having a "new invention" and the streak of light just conveniently happened to show up shortly after he arrived and now we've just found out everything's normal, it seems that that's the case after all."

"Hmm…Mandy's theory may just well be correct." said Tails "After all, he once built a machine capable of re-shaping the world as he saw fit so I wouldn't be surprised if he built something capable of doing that." he murmured, thinking back to the terrible Egg-Timer machine that Eggman had built and Metal Sonic had taken over and used himself last year.

"Eggman built a machine capable of re-shaping the world?! When did that happen?" asked Nicole.

"Doesn't matter, it's gone for good and I don't think he'll be using it again." said Tails "Anyway, I'm more than inclined to believe Mandy's theory since that Eggman's one heck of a genius. He could

have well built something that can make a streak of light appear."

"But then why didn't he make another one after Sonic was sucked up…?" mused Sally, curling her finger around her lips in thought "He didn't bother about us, you'd think he'd suck us all up into that streak of light and not just Sonic."

"Maybe he's sparing us and getting us all worried and upset for his own sadistic pleasure." suggested Ruben "That'd be just like him I bet…" he added, scowling at the very idea of Eggman doing that.

"Yeah…" murmured Tails agreeably "So we'll have to storm Eggman's base and since we know where it is, that'll be easy as pie. We'll storm the base, find the invention and destroy it. But we'll need to get Sonic back still, we can't do with him being goodness knows where thanks to that streak of light."

"But how can we get Sonic back if we don't know where he is?" asked Wilson despairingly "Heck, we don't even know HOW to get him back so knowing where he is won't help us much anyway."

"If only we had a method of teleportation like a warp ring and then maybe we could look for Sonic and bring him home." said Shade grimly.

"Wait a minute…" said Tails, an idea coming to his head all of the sudden as Shade said that "We have the Chaos Emeralds…they can be used as a method of teleportation…we can just use those to Chaos Control place to place until we find Sonic and bring him home that way!"

Everybody all gasped with delight at that idea. They had a solution for Sonic's dilemma at last! They could just use the Chaos Emeralds to find Sonic and bring him back home! Genius!

"Tails, that's a great idea!" cried Knuckles happily "But we still need to know where Sonic is though."

"We can just keep warping with the Chaos Emeralds until we find him." suggested Tails "And I know just the person to recruit for this task. The very master of Chaos Control himself…"

With that said, Tails pressed a button on the control pad and activated a comlink. He spoke into the microphone that was on the control pad.

"Hello, Shadow the Hedgehog? Do you read me?" asked Tails "This is Tails from the Royal Fighters Service. We've got a little task for you…"

Back on Mobius Nega, Sonic was just beginning to come to after being hit by that stun-blast. The stun-blast was pretty powerful and Sonic had been knocked out for quite a while as a result of this. But Sonic was finally beginning to come around and he was slowly but steadily beginning to wake up. His eyes slowly opened up and he mumbled groggily as he began to come out of his paralysis. His body began to feel achy, a result of being hit by the stun-blast and crash-landing on top of some dustbins after falling off the rooftop. Sonic groaned as he felt his body ache.

"Ugh…I dunno what's happened to me but…man do I feel crummy right now." he whined as he finished waking up and was just blinking the vision back into his eyes.

He tried to rub himself better only to suddenly realize that his arms had been raised over his head and he couldn't move them. Sonic tugged on his arms but he couldn't lower them. Sonic looked at his arms and realized why he couldn't move them. They each had a shackle clamped tightly around his wrists! Sonic gasped in horror and he looked down at his legs, realizing that he also had shackles clamped around his ankles too. Sonic soon realized where he was. He was in a dungeon and he was shackled to the wall. And if he was in a dungeon then he might possibly be a prisoner of his own evil brother! That alone made Sonic panic and he desperately tugged on his shackles as hard as he could. Being the prisoner of Scourge the Hedgehog was never going to be a good thing and Sonic didn't even want to think about the terrible things that Scourge might do to him while he's in his parlour. Sonic pulled and pulled on his shackles but try as he might, he just couldn't break free. They were much too tough for him to break. But Sonic wasn't the giving up type so he kept pulling on them.

"Grrr…I can't believe this!" grunted Sonic as he struggled in his shackles "I, the fastest thing alive, am now shackled in a dark dungeon and possibly at the mercy of Scourge the Hedgehog?! This can NOT be happening to me! And I can't stay here or Scourge will use me for stress relief! Come on shackles! Break!" he grunted as he continued to pull on his shackles, desperate for them to break.

But alas, he just couldn't break them. They were too strong for him to break. Sonic ceased his pitiful struggling and he slumped against the wall in defeat.

"Ugh…this just isn't my day today." he moaned "I get sucked up by a weird steak of light in the sky and I end up here, which is now under the rule of my own brother Scourge and now I'm his prisoner! Can things get any…"

His voice trailed off as he surveyed his surroundings and realized he wasn't alone in this dungeon. For in the middle of the dungeon, dangling off the floor by shackles clamped tightly around her wrists was none other than Amy Nega, the leader of the Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters after Sonic Nega had tragically been killed by Dr. Eggman. Amy Nega seemed to be asleep right now for her eyes were closed and she wasn't doing anything (must be hard to sleep comfortably hanging off the floor by your wrists!). Sonic could see that her cute, slim belly had nasty scorch marks on it. She must have undergone a serious torture session while in here. That would be just like Scourge to torture a helpless victim like this and just the very idea that somebody could dare hurt a woman like Amy Nega made Sonic's spines quiver in rage. Still, he was glad to see her again, although he would have preferred it if he and Amy Nega were meeting again under nicer circumstances. Sonic cleared his throat and called to Amy Nega.

"Yo! Amy Nega! Wake up! It's me, Sonic the Hedgehog!" he called.

That seemed to stir Amy Nega out of her sleep for she began to stir a little and she mumbled under her breath. Her eyes slowly began to open up and she slowly awoke.

"Ugh…am I dead yet…?" she moaned groggily, the pain in her voice as evident as the pain in her body.

Given how much pain she had received from Scourge while being in here, it was not surprising that Amy Nega was beginning to question her life status right now. Amy Nega finally woke up and she turned to her side to see who had just woken her up. To her utmost surprise, it was Sonic the Hedgehog himself. Her eyes widened and her jaw-dropped open.

"Sonic…? Sonic…Prime?" she said slowly "I…Is that you?"

"You'd better believe it Ames, it's me in all my "Prime" glory." said Sonic with his trademark smile on his face.

Just Sonic's presence alone seemed to enlighten Amy Nega's pained state and make her forget the unbearable pain in her arms and wrists.

"Oh my gosh! Sonic Prime! It…ugh…it's so good to…grr…see you!" cried Amy Nega happily, grunting in pain a little for it was still excruciating "But…at the same time it's…not good to see you…see you like that I mean." she added, noting Sonic's imprisoned predicament.

"It's good to see you too Amy, although I'd have preferred us meeting as a free pair of hedgehogs." said Sonic dully "So, what have you had to suffer through? Judging by the marks on your belly, you look like you had it rough Amy."

"I have." muttered Amy Nega, looking at her belly and scowling at the burn marks from the torture she'd received "After I got captured, Scourge demanded I talk and reveal the location of my team mates. I refused of course, I'm not telling that scumbag anything! So Scourge got his girlfriend Fiona to relentlessly torture me. It was horrible of course and I've been praying to no end that somebody can get me out of here. But it seems…that I'm not gonna have such luck, especially as you've managed to get captured. Speaking of you Prime Zoner…how in the heck did you get here?"

"A streak of light that randomly appeared in the sky." explained Sonic grimly "I got sucked up by it and brought here. I learned from Ruben that Scourge was brought here by a streak of light too."

"He was." muttered Amy Nega "And how I cruse that stupid streak of light for bringing him here! He's turned Mobius Nega into a hell almost as bad as Eggman Nega's reign and is much harder to defeat than Eggman Nega since he's pretty much you only more savage! Oh how I wish Sonic and Scourge Nega were still alive, they would have fended him off easily and we wouldn't be subjugated to this hell!"

"Yeah, if only your Sonic and Scourge were still alive." murmured Sonic agreeably "They could have helped you dearly in the fight against Scourge. I bet Scourge would be rotting in a prison cell right about now if Sonic and Scourge Nega were still alive. But they aren't and Scourge is now ruling the world with an iron fist. I still wonder how exactly he managed it with just Fiona helping him. I mean, I don't think even **I** could take over the world myself if I tried!"

Amy Nega nodded and was just about to say something else until the dungeon door swung open and hit the wall with a loud clang that echoed around the dungeon. Sonic and Amy Nega looked over to the door and they saw none other than Scourge the Hedgehog standing there, wearing his crown and robes of state and looking very proud of himself. He strode into the dungeon with Fiona following him and he headed over to Sonic almost instantly, completely ignoring Amy Nega and just leaving her to dangle while he dealt with Sonic. Amy Nega rattled her chains and glared at Scourge.

"Don't you dare harm Sonic you demonic little…" growled Amy Nega.

Fiona just punched Amy Nega in the belly and made her shut up for Fiona had punched here where the scorch marks were and made the punch hurt even more.

"Be quiet while the king and queen are seeing to our latest prisoner!" snapped Fiona "And to make sure you stay quiet…"

Fiona took out a rectangular shaped piece of duct-tape that she had taken to the dungeon with her for she assumed Amy Nega would dare to talk in Scourge's presence and try to get on his nerves from her robe pocket and she placed it squarely on Amy Nega's lips,

sealing her mouth shut and rendering her incapable of speaking right now. Amy Nega mumbled angrily behind her gag but Fiona just ignored her and looked over at Sonic. Scourge lowered his sunglasses and he glared at Sonic. His face was twisted into a devil's smile. He seemed eerily pleased to have his own brother chained up in a dark dungeon and completely at his mercy. Well considering that Sonic was Scourge's worst enemy, it was not surprising that he was so happy over this. Scourge folded his arms and stood squarely in front of Sonic, his eyes narrowed down to pure slits of conceitedness.

"Well, well, well…isn't this a fortuitous turn of events? For me that is." purred Scourge, grabbing Sonic by the muzzle and squeezing it as hard as he can "Sonic the Hedgehog, the hero of Mobius and my annoying goody-goody two-shoes brother is in chains and at MY mercy. Ha, ha, ha, ha…oh how I'm loving this moment right now! I never thought I'd live to see the day my own brother is at my mercy and yet, here you are right now Sonic, completely helpless before your own brother!"

"My heart bleeds for you Scourge." snorted Sonic as much as he could for Scourge was still squeezing his muzzle "So, I heard from a little friend of mine on this planet that you arrived her by a streak of light in the sky right?"

"You got that right moron." said Scourge, letting go of Sonic's muzzle and smacking him across the face "Me and Fiona were hoping to come out of hiding and unleash our new plan to take over the world but then we heard news about a bunch of space guys known as the "Devatrons". We were in Spagonia at the time and after hearing about the Devatrons in the news, I decided to come over to NewMobotropolis and whup their backsides for ya. I don't want someone stealing my thunder when it comes to taking over the world after all. But just as we left Spagonia this streak of light appeared in the sky and me and Fiona were miles too close to it so we ended up going straight through it. And thus…we ended up here. On Mobius Nega, said to be the closest planet in the multi-verse to matching Mobius Prime perfectly. This planet is the perfect substitute for Mobius Prime so instead of trying to get home, I just conquered this joint and now here I am, King Scourge the

Hedgehog, King of Mobius Nega and soon to be your killer!"

Scourge laughed delightedly over all of this whereas Sonic just looked a little worried, so worried in fact that he ignored the stinging pain in his cheek. The streak of light appeared as far back as the Devatron invasion?! That was a good few weeks ago that was so it hadn't been too terribly long since Scourge had vanished and ended up here! Was the one that had sucked up Scourge and Fiona the first streak of light ever to happen or had more happened in the past and nobody had noticed or reported on it? The streak of light was all the more puzzling now Sonic thought about it. There was definitely something big behind that streak of light and Sonic had a feeling it wasn't good. After Scourge had finished laughing, he looked back at Sonic and clenched his teeth at him.

"And yet…the streak of light seemed to come back with a vengeance since it brought YOU here Sonic!" he growled "Well, that failed since you're now in my parlour and helpless to stop me! I'm not going to let you take away my kingdom so I'm gonna finish you off before you get the chance!"

"Well do it then." dared Sonic "Nobody's stopping you."

"I'm just having some fun gloating in your ugly face before I do it." retorted Scourge "I don't want to just kill you and that's it, that's not fun. Rubbing my glory and conquest in your face will certainly pump up the fun factor before I give you your big send off."

"I just bet that's going to bite you in the ass Scourge." sneered Sonic "Villains: they love to stall for time for idiotic reasons and it comes to bite them in the ass later."

Fiona just promptly kicked Sonic in the gut and made him cough and splutter in pain. Amy Nega just cried out for Sonic behind her gag in distress. She wasn't liking watching Sonic getting hurt since she liked him so much. As soon as Sonic got his breath back, Fiona lifted his head up and glared into his eyes.

"Dare insult my hunky boy again and I'll kick you where it REALLY hurts you blue twerp!" snarled Fiona.

"Duly noted." said Sonic "So Scourge, how exactly DID you conquer Mobius Nega? I mean, even you can't possibly conquer a world on your own."

"Well by "conquered the world" I didn't necessarily do it all myself." admitted Scourge "I mean Fiona helped out with her keen mind and intelligence. She gave me some strategic tactics to use in our battles and they helped me gain some ground and then she came up with the idea of political manipulation. We blackmailed some of the governments into ceding to our demands and then we kidnapped the Mobius Nega counterpart to Tails Nega and forced him to hack into some of Mobius Nega's army bases and gain control over some of their missiles and non-piloted spy craft. With all of this weaponry at our disposal, the armies swore fealty to me and then soon the rest of the world sort of "got scared into surrendering" and thus, they relinquished the world to me. My unmatched power combined with Fiona's great ideas and no Sonic or Nega-counterpart-of-me to stand against me resulted in this: world domination. The damn Freedom Fighters have been very foolish in their attempts to try and get the world back from me though. I have an entire fortress under my control so I can just blast any resistance away and the army can't help the to stop me since when we forced Tails Nega into helping us, he uploaded a virus that cannot be counter hacked, not even by him, so we still have control over their missiles and un-manned spy craft. Because I'm threatening to activate the missiles on the world should the army try and intervene…they're too scared to dare get on the wrong side of me. So as you can see…there's no way the world can stand against me now."

Sonic was amazed to hear all this. Fiona must be one smart woman if she helped Scourge do all that just to conquer the world. Scourge and Fiona certainly were more deadly then one might imagine when they got down to it. Sonic could just imagine what the world was thinking as Scourge took over Mobius Nega with those simple tactics and stratagems. He had to make sure that Scourge and Fiona never attempt this should he drag them back home to Mobius Prime otherwise Mobius Prime would be in serious trouble. More trouble than even Dr. Eggman had ever put them under. Sonic looked into Scourge's cold blue eyes and he sneered at him.

"Wow…you really are a coward Scourge." scoffed Sonic "You didn't even conquer Mobius Nega yourself, you just had Fiona help you do it all. And some of your tactics were cowardly too. Manipulating governments into doing as you pleased? Getting a Freedom Fighter to do some dirty work for you? Threatening to launch missiles if the army so much as looks at you weird? And to think I thought you had a backbone after all."

That bit of banter made Scourge's face contort with rage. He did NOT like being told he was a coward or even being remotely labelled as one. He was so angry right now that he took his crown off of his head and scratched Sonic across the face with the sharp edges of the crown. Sonic screamed in pain as he was slashed by the crown and streaming bloody cuts appeared across it. Blood trickled from the scratches and Sonic groaned in pain as they began to sting furiously. Amy Nega just cringed, feeling the pain that Sonic was probably feeling from that slash. Scourge put the crown back onto his head and he jammed his face into Sonic's face.

"I AM NO COWARD!" screamed Scourge "I conquered the world using intelligence and cunning with assistance from Fiona! That is not cowardly at all! You and your friends use your smarts to win your battles so me and Fiona used our smarts to conquer the world! So don't you DARE call me a coward just for following my girlfriend's advice and using my head for once!"

"I will say, I'm amazed you can even use your head for something other than stroking your own ego." snickered Sonic "Guess you're not as thick as you pretend to be."

Scourge just promptly kicked Sonic in the groin to shut him up. Sonic tried very hard to fight the pain in his groin as it flared up and made him wince. Scourge just reached into his robe pocket and he pulled out a dagger that he had kept in there (you surprised? He keeps daggers in his robe pockets!). He took the dagger out of the sheath and he pointed the blade at Sonic's chest. Sonic began to shudder nervously. Here it comes, his final curtain call and at the hands of Scourge the Hedgehog no less. Fiona grinned evilly whereas Amy Nega began to go berserk with horror and she mumbled frantically behind her gag. If she could speak right now, she'd be begging for Scourge no to kill Sonic right now.

"That's it blue, you've just signed your death warrant!" snarled Scourge "Your death is coming now and once I've killed you, I'm gonna put on your gravestone "Here lies one stupid little pile of s*^&"! Bet you don't like the sound of THAT do you?"

He then drew his arm back and prepared to plunge the dagger into Sonic's heart but before he make the killer blow, the ceiling above their heads suddenly caved in and a massive hole formed in it after some of the brickwork and plaster in it crumbled down. Scourge and Fiona both looked over their shoulders and they gaped in amazement at what had happened. The Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters had arrived at last. There was Miranda Nega, Geoffrey Nega, Bunnie Nega and Tails Nega like before and Ruben Nega was also with them. Ruben Nega had gone back to the Freedom Fighter hideout and they had run over to Fortress Acorn to save Sonic and Amy Nega. They had sneaked into the building and Tails Nega had set up a bomb to blow a hole in the floor, which resulted in the dungeon now having a hole in the ceiling. The moment the Freedom Fighters all fell down into the dungeon, Bunnie Nega flew towards Scourge and she punched him away from Sonic. She grabbed Sonic's chains and, using her partially metallized arms, ripped them out of their sockets, freeing Sonic and giving him a chance to get into the battle now. Miranda Nega aimed a wrist-mounted laser at Amy Nega's chains and she blasted them to pieces, causing Amy Nega to drop down onto the floor for she was now free of their grasp. Due to the earlier torture though, Amy Nega couldn't stand, she just slumped on the floor weakly. Geoffrey Nega helped her back onto her feet and walked her out of the way while the other Freedom Fighters gathered around Sonic. Sonic, relieved to be free, greeted them all ecstatically.

"Well guys, I was hoping you would show up eventually." said Sonic "I'm glad you're here, Scourge was about to kill me!"

"You're welcome Sonic Prime." said Tails Nega brightly "After all, we have scores of our own to settle with "his majesty". Me in particular." he added, scowling over what Scourge had forced him to do when he began his take-over.

"And me." murmured Ruben Nega, feeling his eye-patch.

"Well since I'm free and you're all here, we can take Scourge down once and for all." said Sonic brightly "So guys and girls, let's overthrow Scourge and kick him out of your world once and for…"

His speech was rudely cut off by Scourge throwing off his robes and charging directly into him. Scourge seized Sonic and he charged directly through the wall of the dungeon, screaming "Oh YEAH!" at the top of his lungs as he did so. Scourge and Sonic ploughed their way through the wall as if it was nothing and the two found themselves outside of Fortress Acorn and falling down onto one of the gun turrets that made the fortress's defences. They landed on top of the enormous turret, which was the width of a football pitch and with gun barrels as long as a tennis court, with Scourge on top of Sonic and the two hedgehogs ended up brawling with one another. The Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters and Fiona all looked out of the hole in the wall and stared down at the gun turret where Sonic and Scourge were fighting. The scuffle was intense but Sonic managed to push Scourge off of himself and send him hurling into the wall. Scourge landed on the wall feet first and pushed himself off. He landed down on the gun turret and he and Sonic circled each other, their heads lowered, their shoulders raised and their hands open, ready for a grab. The dark clouds in the dull sky blocked out any remaining sky and light there was and then there was a clap of thunder. Rain began to hail down onto the ground below. Sonic ignored the fact he was getting wet from the rain and he prepared to leap onto Scourge.

"OK Scourge, you've sunken further then you can ever sink!" growled Sonic "You've subjugated this innocent alternate Mobius, tortured somebody I got on well with during my first visit here and tried to kill me! You are going DOWN you miserable excuse for a brother!"

"Oh no you blue twerp…YOU are going down!" roared Scourge "I've worked too long and too hard just conquering this planet! You are NOT dragging me back to Mobius Prime and taking away my glorious kingdom! You will be a twisted, mangled corpse when I'm finished with you!"

With that said, Sonic and Scourge zoomed towards each other and they leaped into the air like real gymnasts as lightning flashed in the

sky and made everything look all the more ominous. Sonic and Scourge were having another battle once again and the winner would depend on the eventual turnout as the battle for Mobius Nega began…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front

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OMG ! THIS IS IT! THE FINAL BATTLE FOR MOBIUS NEGA! :D Join me next time for the titanic conclusion to "Dark World"...who will emerge victorious? And will Sonic get back home to Mobius Prime if he survives his battle with Scourge?

Hey speedox12, thank you so much for reading, reviewing and enjoying my story. :) I look forward to your review on it.

What are your favourite chapters?

And where will this review be?

Dark World Part 4

Story 142: Dark World Part 4

"So let me get this straight…Sonic the Hedgehog was sucked up by a streak of light that appeared randomly in the sky and you want me to use a Chaos Control and warp from place to place to see if I can find him?" asked the Ultimate Life form himself, Shadow the Hedgehog.

"That's right." said Tails the twin-tailed fox, best friend of Sonic the Hedgehog.

After using the satellites to search Mobius for any signs of Sonic only to come up empty and conclude that he is not on Mobius anymore, Tails had decided to call Shadow to come over and see if he could help find Sonic at all. Shadow had agreed to come over and he had brought a Chaos Emerald with him since Tails requested he bring one with him (he knows where the Chaos Emeralds are, he's been on Angel Island before, particularly during the Black Arms invasion). Once Shadow had arrived, Tails had briefed him in on everything and what he was being recruited for and yet Shadow was somewhat trying to figure out what Tails was on about since the whole "streak of light" business was new to him. But if Sonic was gone and likely on another world altogether then Shadow would have to track him down and bring him back to Mobius Prime so that the Royal Fighters can have their best comrade back. Shadow was now living among the Mobians and doing good deeds of his own so he couldn't refuse a call for help.

"Hmm…this is an unusual turn of events isn't it?" mused Shadow "Sonic gets sucked up by a weird streak of light in the sky? Do you have any idea on what this "streak of light" is all about?"

"Not really although Mandy's come to the firm belief that Eggman's the one who caused it." explained Tails "Although I have a hard time believing that Eggman might have caused it, it does kinda make sense given how according to Sora he mentioned having a "new

invention" and the streak of light just conveniently happened to show up not long after his arrival. But one thing I can't help but notice is Eggman seemed a little too shocked for someone who made the streak of light and although he could be playing along with it, I still think his reaction was definitely that of someone who has no idea what they've just witnessed."

"I see…" said Shadow "So if I'm to guess, while I search for Sonic, you and the others are going to storm the doctor's base and see if you can find anything that might have caused that streak of light?"

"That's right." said Tails "Because we know where Eggman's base is, we'll have no trouble finding him. I still can't help but be happy that Nicole managed to find Eggman's base during that whole Martian ordeal…" he said happily.

Nicole the Lynx just smiled upon hearing Tails say that. She felt proud of herself for finding Eggman's base too and to think she managed to find it just by tracing one of his video signals back to its source when he contacted them.

"Well then, I sincerely hope you give the doctor a good beating for me while I'm gone." said Shadow with a rather dark smirk on his face. Even though it had been a year since Eggman tricked him into working for him, he still resented the obese scientist greatly and always wished doom on him.

"Oh we will Shadow, you can bet on that!" declared Knuckles, bashing his fists together eagerly "We'll storm the base and bring that slime ball back to a prison cell where he will hopefully rot in!"

"I sincerely hope I return to news like that." said Shadow "So Tails, where do you think I should look first?"

"Well since Sonic's not on Mobius anymore, you could Chaos Control to any planet in the galaxy." suggested Tails "Although I've got the idea that Sonic might be in an alternate dimension. That streak of light heavily reminds me of theories about "rifts in the timeline" and such so I'm thinking he might be in an alternate universe. I'm hoping that he's on a world he referred to as "Mobius Nega". Sometime ago, while we were helping Silver and Blaze get

their Sol Emeralds back, he chased a robotical looking mouse through a warp ring and stated it took him to an alternate version of Mobius called Mobius Nega. If there's any place I hope that streak of light took him to, it'll be there."

"Very well, I shall warp to this "Mobius Nega" and see if the blue hedgehog's there." said Shadow "Thank you for the suggestion Tails."

"You're welcome." said Tails "Good luck Shadow and please come home with Sonic in one piece."

"I shall not fail the given task little fox." said Shadow kindly "And I wish you luck in your mission."

With that said, Shadow held up the green Chaos Emerald he had with him above his head and yelled

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

And with the simple yelling of those words, Shadow vanished in a bright green flash of light. Shadow was off to Mobius Nega to see if he could find Sonic and bring him home to Mobius Prime. The moment Shadow teleported away, Queen Sally Acorn stood forward and addressed everybody.

"OK Royal Fighters, we're going over to Eggman's base to arrest him and see if he is indeed behind the streak of light." she announced "Is everybody keen and ready to go?"

"Yeah!" cried the Royal Fighters eagerly.

"Then let us storm the enemy's territory…" said Sally, whipping out her bladed staff and twirling it around.

This was it, the Royal Fighters were going over to Eggman's underground bunker and they were going to apprehend him at long last…or were they…?

KRA-KOW!

Thunder boomed all around and lightening flashed brilliantly in the dark, grey, cloudy skies above Mobius Nega as rain hammered down onto the ground furiously and soaked everything in sight. Weather like this is weather that people usually tend to stay indoors to get out of since nobody likes to get wet and there's always the danger of getting struck by lightening. But Sonic the Hedgehog and his evil brother Scourge the Hedgehog were making a huge exception for they were outside in the rain and brawling with each other atop a gun-turret that was stationed on the rocky hill that Fortress Acorn stood proudly upon. Scourge had been brought to Mobius Nega by a tear in the sky and with help from his girlfriend Fiona Fox, he had managed to take over the world. Sonic ended up being brought to Mobius Nega by a tear in the sky too and he was determined to save Mobius Nega from a terrible reign at the hands of Scourge. So as of now, the two were having their first major showdown in ages (they hadn't seen each other since the fiasco with the Chaos Clusters and that was LAST YEAR so it's been awhile since they last fought each other). The Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters and Fiona were watching the battle from up in Fortress Acorn through a hole in the wall that Scourge had made when slamming Sonic into it. They all watched tensely as the fight began. Sonic and Scourge charged towards each other in the proper mono y mono fashion and they leaped into the air. They sailed towards each other and threw a punch out both at once. They ended up punching each other in the face and both hedgehogs were sent hurling back down onto the gun-turret. Sonic and Scourge picked themselves up and they lunged at each other again. They grappled arms with each other and they pushed as hard as they could, trying to push either one down onto their knees. Scourge however forced Sonic's arms down and punched him across the face. Sonic retaliated with a punch to the face of his own but then when he tried to throw another punch, Scourge grabbed his fist and socked him in the gut. Sonic uppercut Scourge in the face then twirled around and dropkicked him in the face. Scourge was thrown backwards by the kick and he came down with a heavy thud on his back. Sonic ran towards Scourge in an attempt to grab him but Scourge kicked Sonic away with a hefty kick to the gut. Sonic staggered backwards after that kick and Scourge picked himself up. Scourge homing-attacked Sonic and knocked him down onto his back. Scourge leaped off of Sonic just as he was picking himself up and the

moment Sonic stood back up, Scourge ran around behind him and pile-dived him directly in the back. He kept up the attack until he ended up slamming Sonic into the wall of the mountain the gun-turret was built in. He now had Sonic pinned against the wall and started punching him in the back of the head as hard as he could. Sonic just threw his head backwards and jabbed Scourge with his spines. Scourge cried out in pain and stood back for a minute to rub himself better and Sonic took the moment to sock Scourge in the face and knock him down onto his back. As Scourge lay there, Sonic grabbed him by the ankles and threw him into the wall. Scourge groaned in pain and Sonic threw him across the gun turret. Due to how wide it was, Scourge did end up skidding across it a fair distance but he still managed to stay on for he ended up coming to a halt before he was anywhere near the edges. Sonic spin-dashed towards Scourge before he could get up and he ended up nearly sending Scourge over the edge of the turret. Scourge just managed to save himself and he spin-dashed towards Sonic. Sonic dodged the attack but Scourge merely ricocheted rather violently off the rocky wall near to them (he knocked a few chunks of rock off as he ricocheted away) and spin-dashed back towards Sonic. Sonic curled up into a blue spiky ball and he spin-dashed towards Scourge. The two hedgehogs spin-dashed each other and ricocheted off of each other like bouncy balls being thrown at each other and the two hedgehogs spin-dashed each other again. They kept this up for quite a while until eventually Scourge overcame Sonic and dropkicked him down into the turret. Sonic was back on his feet as quickly as he was knocked down and he and Scourge linked arms just as Scourge tried to grab him again. They pushed on each other's arms and tried to overpower the other.

"I can't tell you how good it is to kick your ass again loser!" taunted Scourge "As much as I've enjoyed my Sonic-free reign of Mobius Nega, I did kinda miss our epic tussles. And now here we are, duking it out like the sibling rivals we are once again!"

"Yeah, this does bring back memories." muttered Sonic "Memories I long to forget."

"Why? Because every time we've had a battle in the past I've kicked your ass?" sneered Scourge "Face it blue, you've never been a

match for me and anytime you did win was only because of your stupid friends helping you out. Oh dear, your friends aren't here right now and the Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters are too high up to give you a hand! You're mincemeat now!"

"We'll see about that you egotistical, arrogant, big-headed douche-bag!" retorted Sonic.

"You're one to talk about being arrogant Mr. "I'm-the-fastest-thing-alive-so-that-means-I'm borderline-invincible-and-I-can-do-anything"!" snorted Scourge, pointing out how hypocritical it is of Sonic to call him arrogant when he himself is just as bad (but not as bad as Scourge of course).

Sonic's spines quivered in rage at that insult. He was fully aware of his faults, his arrogance, precociousness and recklessness at times, and to hear Scourge use his flaws as an insult just got under his skin and made him mad. Sonic spin-dashed towards Scourge angrily and sent him hurling into the wall. Scourge cried out in pain as he was slammed hard against the hard, rocky wall of the hill the turret was stationed in and Sonic added more to this painful attack by keeping up the spin-dash even while Scourge was already pinned against the wall. Scourge however threw his legs upwards and kicked Sonic directly upwards like a football. Sonic hurled straight up into the air and came straight back down again. Scourge threw a punch just as Sonic was heading back down towards him and he punched Sonic, sending flying across the turret and he came to a stop near the gun barrels. Sonic picked himself up and ran back towards Scourge. The evil green-furred hedgehog picked up some rocks that had crumbled down after he ricocheted off the wall earlier and he threw them at Sonic. Sonic dodged the rocks with ease, weaving around them as they came hurling towards him but Scourge was mostly doing that to distract Sonic. As Sonic dodged the last thrown rock, Scourge grabbed another rock, held it tightly in his hands and threw his hands upwards, walloping Sonic in the chin with the rock. Sonic was so overwhelmed with pain after that attack that he began to wonder if his jaw was dislocated or not. As he was thrown onto his back by the attack, he quickly felt his jaw and moved it up and down to make sure that it was still functional. It was luckily for him but it did feel painful. Scourge advanced on Sonic and he rose the rock above his

head, ready to slam it down onto Sonic's head. That would certainly kill him in an instant if Scourge commenced with that. But as Scourge prepared to slam the rock down on Sonic's head, Sonic rolled out of the way, leaving Scourge to slam the rock down on the spot where he had been lying. Sonic kicked the rock away from Scourge's hands and then gave him a left hook to the face. But Sonic made the mistake of turning his back on Scourge as he prepared to launch another attack and Scourge was able to grab Sonic by wrapping his arms around his waist. He picked Sonic up and he ran over to the wall. He threw Sonic directly at the wall but Sonic raised his legs and he hit the wall feet first. He pounced directly off the wall and spin-dashed Scourge directly in the stomach. Scourge doubled over in pain and he clutched his stomach as if he had a killer stomach ache. Sonic took the opportunity to trip Scourge up by roundhouse kicking him in the legs. The moment Scourge was brought down on his back, Sonic kicked him away. Scourge rolled across the turret and he came to a stop near the edge of it. Sonic smirked at Scourge.

"Hey Scourge, you're not doing as well as you usually do." sneered Sonic "Why might that be then? Have you been wallowing in opulence so much that you forgot how to fight me?"

"It's been a while since I've fought you Sonic so I might be a little rusty with you!" snapped Scourge "But I'll turn that around no sweat! I'll cut loose and I won't hold back!"

Scourge picked himself up and tried to run but he ended up slipping and he fell over. The rain was making the turret so wet that it was beginning to get slippy and Scourge's boots weren't suited for slippery terrain. Sonic soon found that he had the same problem. The surface of the turret was getting slippery thanks to the rain soaking everything. So rather than running, Sonic and Scourge carefully walked towards each other and started cutting loose on each other. Sonic threw a punch to the face on Scourge and Scourge threw a punch to the chin back on Sonic. Sonic punched Scourge in the gut and Scourge punched Sonic in the mouth. Sonic staggered backwards a little and Scourge kicked some water into his eyes. Sonic puts his hands over his eyes and winced as they began to sting like mad, giving Scourge the opportunity to kick Sonic in the

gut, spin around and then kick him in the side. Sonic was thrown onto his side and Scourge tried to kick slam Sonic but Sonic grabbed his foot and twisted it sharply to the side, causing Scourge to get turned over onto his front and fall over. Sonic picked himself up and kick-slammed Scourge in the back. He then grabbed him by the leather jacket, threw him up a little and raised his leg. He drew it back and then kicked Scourge directly in the back, sending him hurling across the turret. Scourge skidded to a soaking halt but luckily for him, it was too slippery for Sonic to run so he could pick himself up and recover from the blow just in time to get ready for Sonic's next attack. Sonic tried running to Scourge but the wet surface of the turret was just too slippery for him so he ended up sliding a lot and nearly falling over. Scourge used the terrain to his advantage though. He threw himself forwards onto his side and the wet surface of the turret allowed him to slide most efficiently towards Sonic. He took Sonic's legs directly out from underneath him as he slid into him and Sonic came down with a heavy thud onto his face. Scourge stopped his skid and picked himself up. He broke into a brief sprint and then threw himself forwards. He skidded across the wet surface beneath his feet as if he was on ice and he sailed towards Sonic. Sonic picked himself up only to get tackled by Scourge. The two ended up rolling across the turret and Scourge ended up raising Sonic above his head. He threw Sonic as hard as he could into the wall and Sonic crashed into it, sending a few rocks crumbling down onto the turret. Scourge skated across the wet surface towards Sonic but Sonic got the drop on Scourge by throwing a rock at his feet. The rock struck Scourge's foot and tripped him up. Scourge yelped as he ended up hurling forwards onto his face and skidding to a halt in front of Sonic's feet. Sonic grabbed Scourge by the jacket and he threw Scourge away a few feet across the turret.

Up in Fortress Acorn, the Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters and Fiona were watching the battle tensely and they were wondering on who was going to come out as the victor since the battle seemed equally matched so far. Amy Nega looked at her comrades with concern in her eyes.

"I dunno about you guys but I can't see any of the hedgehogs winning this fight." said Amy Nega "They're so evenly matched this

fight could go on forever."

"Too right luv." said Geoffrey Nega "This match could easily come to a stalemate given how evenly matched Sonic and Scourge seem to be."

"It may seem that way for the minute losers but my baby will come out on top in the end, just you wait and see." snorted Fiona "Scourge always wins when it comes to battling that blue idiot."

"You shut up!" shouted Amy Nega, smacking Fiona across the face and knocking her crown off of her head "I've had just about enough of you glorifying your stupid boyfriend like this!"

Fiona rubbed the stinging slap mark that was left on her face after Amy Nega had smacked her and she glowered at her.

"I can say what I like about Scourge thank you very much." said Fiona coldly "And as for you, fall is coming a little early this year…for YOU!"

With that said Fiona grabbed Amy Nega by the shoulders and threw her out of the hole in the wall! Amy Nega, with a terrible scream, was sent plummeting down from Fortress Acorn and towards the gun turret down below. Tails Nega gasped in terror and he tried to fly down and save her but Fiona grabbed him by the tails and threw him into the back of the dungeon. Shocked at this, Geoffrey Nega threw a punch at Fiona but Fiona dodged the punch and kicked him in the gut. The skunk doubled over in pain and gasped for breath. Miranda Nega tried to grab Fiona but the slippery vixen was too swift for her. She dodged her lunge and grabbed something off of her belt. It was a grappling hook. Miranda Nega liked to bring along gadgets of any kind as an act of contingency. After grabbing the hook, Fiona kicked Miranda up the backside and sent her crashing into a wall. Fiona hooked the grappling hook on the foot of the hole in the wall and she fed the rope down so she could climb down the hill and down to the gun turret. She began to climb down the grappling hook just as Amy Nega was about to become a nasty stain on the surface of the turret. Luckily for the falling alternate counterpart of Amy, Sonic saw Amy Nega falling and he was quick to abandon the battle for the moment and catch her in his arms.

Amy Nega was relieved to have been saved and she instantly hugged Sonic for saving her. But now was not the time for thanks for Scourge ended up spin-dashing Sonic in the back and sending him and Amy Nega sprawling across the turret. Fiona had finally finished climbing down to the turret and she ran, being careful not to slip, over to Scourge's side. The green hedgehog smiled happily at the sight of his girlfriend.

"Hey Fiona, I guess you decided to join in the fun!" cackled Scourge.

"I did indeed handsome." said Fiona slyly "After all, your queen wants a piece of the action to my king."

"And that's what you'll be getting Fi." purred Scourge "Let's kick Sonic's ass into the next millennium or so!"

Fiona nodded and she ran over to Sonic just as he was getting back up. Fiona gave Sonic a karate style-chop across the face and then she spun around and kicked Sonic in the head. Sonic staggered backwards but Fiona didn't give him a chance to recover. She started throwing punches at Sonic and then tripped him up with a kick to the legs. Sonic groaned as he landed heavily on his back and Fiona started throwing more punches at him. Scourge added the final insult to this big injury by spin-dashing Sonic and sending him hurling into the wall again. Sonic groaned in agony as pain swept over his body like an ocean wave. Amy Nega could do nothing but put her hands to her mouth and cry out for Sonic. Sonic picked himself up, very weakly that is, and he grunted with strained effort as Scourge and Fiona advanced on him.

"Hey…Fiona…ugh…you've gotten better a fighting…all of the sudden!" grunted Sonic "What did you…do to get better than usual?"

"Oh Scourge just gave me a lot of training so I'm a more capable fighter then I used to be." crowed Fiona "Now I can help my baby take you down and put an end to your anarchy."

"We'll see about that!" yelled Sonic, spin-dashing Fiona directly in the belly and sending her hurling across the turret.

Scourge was livid to see that Sonic would dare to hurt his girlfriend

like this so he spin-dashed Sonic back. Sonic and Scourge then charged towards each other, ready to bash each other's heads in but then, just as they were about to throw the first punch, a green flash of light appeared between the two, forcing them to stop dead in their tracks, and out of the green flash appeared Shadow the Hedgehog! His Chaos Control had brought him to Mobius Nega at last and by sheer convenience, he showed up where Sonic and Scourge were fighting. Shadow did think about Mobius Nega and where Sonic may be so the Chaos Control pretty much carried out his thoughts literally. Amy Nega was taken aback by the arrival of Shadow. Mobius Nega didn't have a counterpart for Shadow so he was a complete stranger to her. After the Chaos Control had finished, Shadow looked around (ignoring the fact it's raining and he's now getting wet) and he saw Sonic as soon as he turned to his left side.

"Hey Shadow! You just arrived in the nick of time!" cried Sonic delightedly.

"It seems I did." said Shadow with a smirk "Looks like Tails' theory of you being here was right after all. I presume this IS Mobius Nega right?"

"It is." said Sonic "I've gotta say, very clever of Tails to think I might have ended up on Mobius Nega and get you to Chaos Control here to pick me up. Guess he remembered what I told him after I'd visited it the first time. Well at least I've got a ticket home at last but I can't leave yet, I've got my evil brother to defeat."

"Evil brother…" said Shadow in surprise "Is Scourge here too?"

"He is and he's giving you a knuckle sandwich!" shouted Scourge, throwing a punch at Shadow and walloping him across the side of his head.

Shadow dropped the Chaos Emerald and he was thrown down onto his side. Shadow grumbled furiously, unable to believe Scourge had managed to get the drop on him like this, and he picked himself up.

"So I take it you can't leave yet because you need to defeat Scourge blue hedgehog?" asked Shadow.

"I do indeed." said Sonic "The jerk's actually *conquered* Mobius Nega and I have to defeat him otherwise the Nega-Mobians will live a life of oppression for all eternity. I've just got an idea though." he added quickly "Since you have a Chaos Emerald, we can just simply Chaos Control Scourge and Fiona back home and presto, their reign's over."

"A sound plan Sonic." said Shadow agreeably "Pity you were stupid enough to say it out loud so now Scourge knows what we're planning!" he shouted, punching Sonic in the shoulder furiously.

"Uh…oops?" said Sonic, unable to believe he'd done something so stupid.

"Thanks for saying that out loud moron." said Scourge, picking up the Chaos Emerald and getting ready to use it "Now I know how to stop your plan. I'll use this emerald to Chaos Control YOU TWO back to Mobius Prime so you can't bother me again!"

"Big deal, we'll just use the other seven emeralds we have to come back here." snorted Sonic "You'll never get rid of us."

"Other seven…I thought there WERE seven Chaos Emeralds?" mused Scourge in confusion "If there's one right here then shouldn't there be six left?"

"We have eight Chaos Emeralds now. It's kind of a long story." said Sonic "Now, drop that Chaos Emerald and no one gets hurt!"

"Oh there's definitely someone who will get hurt alright! And it's you and Shadow!" yelled Scourge, tapping into the Chaos Emerald's power and getting ready to unleash all hell on Sonic and Shadow.

The Chaos Emerald glowed very brightly and Sonic and Shadow stepped back a little, bracing themselves for the epic beat down that Scourge was about to give them. He was powerful enough as he was already but Scourge plus a Chaos Emerald equals an even stronger Scourge the Hedgehog. Since Sonic pointed out to Scourge that they can just use another Chaos Emerald to Chaos Control back to Mobius Nega, Scourge was going to use the emerald's power to kill Sonic and Shadow to prevent them from

becoming ending his hard-earned kingdom…

Back on Mobius Prime, the notorious Dr. Eggman was sitting at his computer monitors inside his underground bunker and watching them very closely. Ever since the streak of light appeared and took Sonic away, he'd been studying hard to see if he could find out what was going on with it and what it was. He had sent several small machines that were blue in colour with red camera orbs and tiny wings out into the outside world known as Egg-Probe and the probes spread out into the various countries of Mobius, studying everything and analyzing every little detail all over the world. They were scanning everything to see if they could find out anything about the tear in the sky. Eggman was very worried about it after all. It was certainly a weird phenomenon and if it was a recurring thing then he might end up getting sucked up by one too if one came back. And since they were abnormal to no end, they might be catastrophic in nature and may doom the whole world. Eggman did not want that to happen for how can he build his glorious empire if there IS no world? And if the tears in the sky doom the world then he'll be mincemeat so Eggman desperately wanted to know what was the deal behind the streak of light that appeared in the sky earlier. The Egg-Probes had been all over Mobius and had scanned everything in sight only to come up empty. They hadn't managed to detect a single thing that was paranormal in the slightest or out of the ordinary. Everything was completely normal up on the surface. It was as if the streak of light was just something out of the ordinary and the world had decided to just shrug it off and ignore it as if it were nothing. A fine and dandy thing to do and all but it didn't help Eggman find out why it happened in the first place and what it is. Eggman fumed to himself as he read the results from the Egg-Probes on the computer monitors and he put a hand to his head, massaging his temple in annoyance.

"This is preposterous…everything is perfectly normal?!" grumbled Dr. Eggman "How can this be?! The tear in the sky should have left something behind! Everything can't just be normal as if nothing had happened! What is going on here?!"

"This planet is truly a world of obfuscation master." murmured

Devion "Even a Devatron such as myself is incapable of comprehending the illogical situation that is this so-called "tear in the sky" that has just happened earlier. I have used every last ounce of power in my brain circuits to try and logically work out what this paranormal activity that baffles the mind is and I am unable to provide a logical suggestion as to what it could be."

"You know something's puzzling when even someone as clever as you cannot work out what it is." sighed Dr. Eggman "I will say, the fact that everything's normal again might prove that the streak of light was simply a brief rift in the timeline that's caused by something paranormal OR somebody artificially created it and it's just merely a portal. If it's the latter then I sure wish that it was me who did it, that would be acceptable. But I didn't create that streak of light, nor do I think I ever could. If that streak of light was artificially created then who created it and why? It makes me shudder to think that person might use it on me next…" he added, shuddering in fright at the mere thought of someone creating the streak of light again and using it to suck him up.

"I sincerely doubt this planet is technically advanced enough to have the ability to artificially create portals doctor." said Devion "Creating a portal without sorcery of any kind is just beyond the realms of possibility."

"Poppycock Devion! I once created a machine that could reshape the world as I see fit!" snapped Eggman "I'm pretty sure creating portals won't be that difficult a feat to accomplish if I can build a world-remaking-machine!"

"That is…a logical statement master." said Devion, reluctant to admit that Eggman had proven him wrong "If you can make a machine that can reshape worlds then it might be possible to make a machine that can create portals."

"Indeed." said Eggman "I'll find out how that streak of light appeared and if it IS by a machine then I'll destroy that machine before it can be used again! I cannot allow technology like that to be potentially used against me…"

Suddenly, the alarms in the bunker began to go off. They blared

loudly around the bunker and red lights began to flash in time with the wailing alarms. Eggman gasped in surprise and he looked at his computer monitors.

"Egads! My proximity alarm's going off!" cried Dr. Eggman "Who dares to trespass in my territory?!"

Dr. Eggman pressed a button and an outside view of the surface appeared on the screen. To Eggman's sheer terror, the intruders were none other than the Royal Fighters themselves! They were all coming towards his base! All of them! Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Ruben, Sally, Nicole, Shade, Sora, Vector, Espio and Charmy were all coming towards the base and they looked like they were seriously ready for a battle right about now. Dr. Eggman looked like he was about to have a seizure.

"What in the name of…HOW in the right royal name of the President of the United Federation do those Mobians know where I'm hiding?!"

"It does not matter master for I shall get rid of them for you." volunteered Devion, unsheathing his arm blades.

"No Devion, I want my new invention to go for a test drive so we'll use that to get rid of the Royal Fighters instead." said Dr. Eggman "Katherine get it ready for battle will you?"

Katherine, Eggman's sinister servant bot, nodded and walked off to do what she had been asked to do. As for Dr. Eggman, he decided to greet his enemies so he got up out of his seat and wandered off to the stairway that led to the outside world. Eggman climbed up the stairs and pressed a button on the wall that opened up a secret doorway that opened up and allowed him to leave his base and walk up outside. Eggman left his base and stood by the open doorway as the Royal Fighters all ran up towards him. The Royal Fighters were slightly taken aback at the fact that Eggman was just standing there looking casual about the whole thing and not looking prepared in the slightest but they quickly shook it off for they just assumed Eggman had something planned for them like he usually does. They Royal Fighters all stood before Eggman and Sally pointed her bladed staff at Eggman furiously.

"OK Eggman, the jig is up!" declared Sally "We know where your base is and we've got your cornered! Also we've managed to work out that YOU were the one who caused that streak of light that sucked up Sonic and we're here to stop you from using it again!"

Eggman just blatantly laughed at Sally as if she'd just told him the funniest joke in the world.

"What a load of rubbish that is my impudent little queen!" snorted Dr. Eggman "So what if you know where my base is? You'll not bring ME down! And as for the streak of light, you are WRONG on so many levels! I did NOT create the streak of light, nor am I responsible for it!"

"Don't play the idiot with us Eggman, it's obvious it was you!" snapped Mandy "The streak of light just "conveniently" happened to show up shortly after you arrived and somebody found out you had a new invention so your new invention must have created that streak of light! You ARE responsible and we're going to stop you from using it again!"

"I am telling you morons that I had NOTHING whatsoever to do with the streak of light!" retorted Dr. Eggman "If I DID create it then why was I shocked at it when it happened?! If I DID create it, I would be cackling delightedly as it sucked Sonic away but no I didn't, I was shocked by it when it happened!"

"Nice try Eggman, you were obviously acting surprised at it so you could fool us into thinking you had nothing to do with it but guess what? We didn't fall for it!" bellowed Knuckles "Now hand over the device that made the streak of light and I won't have to punch your face off!"

"I cannot do that because I DID NOT CREATE THAT STUPID STREAK OF LIGHT!" roared Eggman "I maybe known for my deceptions but I honestly am not responsible for the tear in the sky! If you were watching me closely, I did not press any buttons on my Egg-Pod or activate any machines when it happened and I've just spent this whole time **trying** to find out what the streak of light is and why it's happening! Although I **wis h** I had caused the streak of light, I really, really had nothing to do with it!"

The Royal Fighters murmured to one another and wondered if they should believe Dr. Eggman or not. Eggman seemed absolutely certain that he was innocent in all of this and if he had been studying the streak of light then he can't possibly have created it. Why would he study something he created himself? Seems that they had jumped the gun a bit on this one. Eggman wasn't finished though, he had something else to say yet.

"Oh and since you mentioned that somebody found out I have a "new invention", I take it you meant this new creation of mine…" purred Dr. Eggman, standing to the side.

There was a thunderous roar coming from down in the base and the roar was followed by heavy clunking that suggested something big was coming up from down the bottom of the stairway. Something VERY big indeed. The Royal Fighters could hear it coming and they began to grow nervous. Eggman seemed to have made something big and monstrous because they could hear roaring and thudding coming from inside the base.

"Wh-wh-wh-what is th-th-that?" gibbered Wilson worriedly.

"It sounds pretty big!" cried Tails "Has Eggman made a brand new robot to smash us all to pieces?"

"It must be a beastly robot since it's also *roaring* down there!" shrieked Nicole "What on Mobius has Eggman made this time?!"

The Royal Fighters soon got their answer for out of the doorway trailed a bunch of thorny vines, snaking out from inside the base and into the open world above. The roaring was getting louder as the thorny vines were beginning to come out and what followed the vines was something beyond what the Royal Fighters had ever seen before. They all gasped in terror as the thing came out of the base, raising its vines and roaring a loud, thunderous roar that made the ground beneath their feet rumble…

Back on Mobius Nega, Sonic and Shadow were sent hurling through the air as a Chaos Emerald powered Scourge spin-dashed into

them. The two hedgehogs were thrown off the gun turret and they crashed down onto another gun turret nearby. Scourge jumped over onto the gun turret so he could continue to whale on them and beat them to death. Fiona and Amy Nega stayed put and they watched the battle from the gun turret they were standing on. The battle had pretty much gone in Scourge's favour now he had the Chaos Emerald in his hands and Sonic and Shadow were baring the wrath of the insidious, green hedgehog. Scourge let loose a series of homing attacks and spin-dashes that were all made harder by the power the Chaos Emerald was giving him. Sonic and Shadow grunted and groaned as they were hit repeatedly by Scourge and eventually, Scourge gave the two a really big spin-dash that slammed them against the wall and made them cry out in pain as they slid down onto the turret. Scourge cackled menacingly at Sonic and Shadow, the green Chaos Emerald glowing brightly in his hands as he advanced on them. He was clearly enjoying the power the Chaos Emerald was giving him and he was intent on using it to the max.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" cackled Scourge delightedly "I really have got to thank you for bringing this Chaos Emerald Shadow so that I can use it to stomp on you and Sonic! Thanks to you, I'll spin-dash you both into oblivion! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Sonic and Shadow picked themselves up and they braced themselves for another attack from Scourge.

"So Shadow…have any ideas on how to get that Chaos Emerald back?" asked Sonic.

"I do have one Sonic and unlike you, I'm not gonna say it out loud and give Scourge ideas on how to foil it." said Shadow grimly.

"OK." said Sonic unsurely "I hope you know what you're doing."

Shadow just stood his ground and got ready to fight while Scourge just stood there, grinning like a gremlin and holding the Chaos Emerald tightly in his hand. Lightning flashed in the sky and thunder boomed around Fortress Acorn as the two hedgehogs prepared to duke it out once more. Shadow bent down in a battle ready stance and Scourge got ready to charge at Shadow. Sonic began to wonder

what was Shadow planning to do. It looked like he was planning to just blindly charge at Scourge in hopes of getting the Chaos Emerald back. That would be an act of suicide, even for someone as powerful as Shadow. Scourge would just as easily cripple Shadow if he tried something like that. But it wasn't Shadow that was doing the charging. Scourge leaped into action, charging towards Shadow and getting ready to pummel him. Shadow just summoned a Chaos Spear to his hand and threw it directly into Scourge's face and then warped out of the way. The Chaos Spear struck Scourge in the face and Scourge ended up being blinded momentarily by the attack. Because he was running though, Scourge ended up crashing directly into the wall. Scourge groaned a very loud, pained groan of agony as he hit the wall. Amazingly, he was still holding onto the Chaos Emerald. Shadow reappeared and he lunged for the emerald in Scourge's hand. He grabbed it and tried to pull it out of Scourge's grasp. Scourge was quick to hold on tight and pull back on it, resulting in a tug-of-war match between the two hedgehogs. Shadow swung around but Scourge still held on tightly and the two hedgehogs pulled and pulled on the emerald, trying desperately to win the tug of war match. Despite their strengths, the two were surprisingly equally matched and neither one was able to wrench the Chaos Emerald out of the other's hand. As they tugged on the emerald, they both clenched their teeth and growled furiously. However, Scourge quickly put an end to the Chaos Emerald tug-of-war by activating a Chaos Control! He disappeared into thin air, taking the Chaos Emerald with him and leaving Shadow bewildered as to the fact that Scourge thought of something he should have thought of himself. Scourge reappeared behind Shadow and pile-dived him in the back, throwing him across the turret and nearly sending him flying off of it. Shadow came to a stop near the edge of the turret and he lay there, groaning in pain. Amy Nega could only gasp in disdain as she watched the fight whereas Fiona just grinned delightedly at her boyfriend's progress in this battle. After sending Shadow flying away, Scourge decided to pummel Sonic next. Scourge ran towards Sonic but Sonic jumped out of the way, waited until Scourge ran beside him, and then rammed him in the side with his shoulder. Scourge was thrown down onto his side but he was quickly back up on his feet. Sonic grabbed the Chaos Emerald in Scourge's hands and unlike Shadow who just played tug-of-war with Scourge, Sonic immediately used a Chaos Control to warp himself

and the emerald away from Scourge. Unfortunately however, that victory was not to last. For the moment Sonic reappeared, Scourge reacted fast. He kicked the emerald out of Sonic's hands, sending it falling down from the gun turret and to the ground down below, which was a long drop from where they were. Sonic gasped in shock and Scourge grabbed him by the wrists.

"There! Now NO ONE gets it!" growled Scourge "We'll fight this fight to the finish without that Chaos Emerald!"

"If you say so Scourge." said Sonic, pulling on his arms and yanking Scourge towards him.

Sonic kneed Scourge in the gut and brought him down onto his knees. Scourge coughed and spluttered as he was kneed in the gut by Sonic. This allowed Sonic to wrench his hands out of Scourge's hands and he fist-slammed Scourge on the head. Scourge groaned and fought the pain in his head as it burned in his skull. Sonic grabbed Scourge by the shoulders and tossed him across the turret as hard as he could. Scourge hurled a few feet away from Sonic but he wasn't down for long. He was back on his feet in no time and he zoomed towards Sonic. Sonic zoomed towards him and they spin-dashed one another. They did this again several times until finally Scourge overpowered Sonic and kicked him down into the turret. Sonic recovered and he delivered a kick to the face on Scourge. Sonic then jumped off of the turret they were in and landed back onto the one they were on before. Scourge quickly followed Sonic and the moment Sonic landed on the upper gun turret, Scourge spin-dashed him in the back and sent him sprawling across the turret, the slide made all the more worse by how wet and slippery the surface was from the rain. Sonic slid along the turret, eventually coming to a stop at the base of the gun barrels. As for Shadow, he picked himself up and noticed Sonic and Scourge were back up on the turret they had been fighting on earlier. He was going to leap up and help Sonic but then he noticed that the green Chaos Emerald was lying down at the base of the hill, glowing faintly. Shadow knew what had to be done. In order to beat Scourge and get Sonic home safely, he had to get the Chaos Emerald back. Shadow jumped down from the gun turret he was on and, using his jet shoes, slowly hovered down to the ground below to retrieve the Chaos Emerald.

Back up to Sonic and Scourge, the two hedgehogs were in heated combat once again and were fighting near the base of the gun barrels. Lightning flashed in the sky as Sonic and Scourge punched each other in the face. Scourge spun around and kicked Sonic in the cheek and nearly knocked him off the turret. Sonic regained his balance, only to receive a punch to the gut from Scourge and then Scourge kicked Sonic directly onto the gun barrel of the turret. Sonic just barely managed to cling onto the gun barrel for it was incredibly slippery from the pouring rain and a gun barrel isn't exactly the best thing to be standing on for they're more round in shape and you can just as easily fall off. Sonic managed to stay standing though and sprung back by spin-dashing across the gun barrel and back towards Scourge. Scourge dodged Sonic's attack but Sonic broke out of it just in time to stop and prepare himself for Scourge's next move. Scourge spin-dashed towards Sonic and Sonic jumped out of the way, booting Scourge as he whizzed beneath him. That broke Scourge out of his spin-dash and sent him skidding across his face. Sonic tried to run towards Scourge but the wet surface of the turret made it hard for him to do so. Instead, Sonic slid across the wet surface like an ice skater and he walloped Scourge in the jaw with a powerful punch. Fiona decided to try and interfere again but just as she ran out to Scourge, Amy Nega grabbed her by the tail and held her back. Fiona pulled on her tail, desperate to get free so she can help Scourge. Amy Nega held on tightly though and squeezed on her tail as hard as possible.

"Now it's time I got some payback for the torture you've given me." said Amy Nega coldly.

With that said, she pulled harder on Fiona's tail and began swinging the vixen around. She spun around in a circle and swung Fiona around as if she was throwing the hammer for the Olympic Games. Fiona cried out as she was swung around by Amy Nega and Amy Nega eventually let go of Fiona's tail. Fiona hurled through the air and she crashed directly into Scourge, knocking the green hedgehog off of his feet and sending him sprawling across the turret. Scourge and Fiona lay in a heap on top of each other to which Scourge just threw Fiona off of himself and got back to his feet. Amy Nega smirked at Fiona triumphantly, clearly satisfied with the payback she had given Fiona. Sonic smiled at Amy Nega as if to say

"Wow Ames, that was awesome!" and then he got back into the battle with Scourge. Sonic and Scourge linked arms with each other and started pushing on one another but that didn't last long for Fiona kicked Sonic in the back of his legs and made him bend down. This gave Scourge the opportunity to throw Sonic into the wall as hard as he could. Sonic grimaced as pain surged through his back and Scourge grabbed Sonic by the throat. Scourge began to throttle his brother as hard as he could, hoping to finish him off. Amy Nega tried to help Sonic but Fiona stopped her by kicking her to the gut and bringing her down onto her knees.

"This is it Sonic! Your death is coming and nobody can help you now!" cackled Scourge "Once I've finished with you, I'm going to get that Chaos Emerald back and then I'll use it to slaughter Shadow and put and end to the only hedgehogs who can possibly stand against me!"

But Scourge's gloating was cut short for he was stricken in the back by a Chaos Spear. Scourge yelped in pain, letting go of Sonic's neck, and he was brought down onto his knees by that Chaos Spear. The Chaos Spear had been launched by Shadow the Hedgehog. He'd retrieved the Chaos Emerald and had caught up to Sonic and Scourge. Now Sonic was free and Scourge was down, Shadow simply used a Chaos Control to freeze Scourge into space. Scourge was completely frozen now and he couldn't move. Fiona gasped in terror at the sight of this. Scourge was defeated at last and his reign of terror was over. Sonic whooped with joy at this.

"Oh yeah! We did it! We've beaten Scourge!" cheered Sonic "Now we can take him back to Mobius Prime and take him to a nice, warm prison cell that he can stay in forever!"

"No he won't!" cried Fiona, running towards Sonic "I'm still active and I…"

Shadow just promptly froze her with a Chaos Control too. Fiona was frozen in a pose that suggested she was about ready to throw a punch at Shadow. Sonic couldn't help but chuckle at this seeing as Fiona looked so funny frozen like that.

"Thanks Shadow." said Sonic "I couldn't have saved Mobius Nega

without your help."

"You're welcome Sonic." said Shadow "Now come, it is time for you to return home. Your friends are worried sick about you."

"I'll bet they are." said Sonic "They'll be thinking I'm dead or trapped somewhere. Let's get going. But first, we need something to tie up Scourge and Fiona with so they won't give us a hard time once the Chaos Control wears off."

"Hey, I can help with that." offered Amy Nega eagerly "I've got plenty of rope back home, just use that Chaos Emerald of yours to warp me and my team back to base and I'll get some rope for you."

"Thank you alternate version of Amy Rose." said Shadow, instantly guessing that's what Amy Nega is being as her appearance evokes that of Amy Rose's so faultlessly.

"Please, call me Amy or Amy Nega Mr. Shadow." said Amy Nega "Now, can I use that Chaos Emerald since I'll know where I'm going?"

"Sure, I trust you'll know how to use it." said Shadow, handing Amy Nega the Chaos Emerald.

"After watching you and Sonic doing it, I think I know how it works." said Amy Nega, admiring the beautiful glowing gem that she now held in her hands. It was so beautiful to her and just to be holding a Chaos Emerald made her feel wonderful.

With that said, Amy Nega looked up at Fortress Acorn and called Tails Nega to bring her up to the Freedom Fighters. Tails Nega did just that and he carried Amy Nega back up into Fortress Acorn. Now Amy Nega was with her team, she held the Chaos Emerald up high and activated a Chaos Control. The Chaos Control engulfed all the Freedom Fighters in a bright green light and they all vanished into thin air. The Chaos Control would be bringing them over to their base right about now and they'd be back shortly with the supplies they'd need to ensure Scourge and Fiona stay put until they're put in jail back on Mobius Prime…

A little while later, the Mobius Nega Freedom Fighters had returned to the gun turret Sonic, Shadow, Scourge and Fiona were on and they had come with the necessary supplies for Scourge and Fiona's detainment. They had brought lots and lots of really thick, strong rope, handcuffs for each of them and a square of duct tape each (they figured that Sonic would want them to remain silent until they were brought to prison). They immediately trussed up Scourge and Fiona the moment their Chaos Controls wore off, the rope tied tightly around their bodies and some extra rope being used to tie up their ankles too, then they handcuffed their hands behind their backs to add further restraint to them and then they had gagged them both with the duct tape squares. Scourge and Fiona were going nowhere now and they couldn't speak for they were gagged. They just mumbled furiously behind their gags but nobody paid any attention to them. Now Scourge and Fiona were subdued, Sonic turned to Amy Nega.

"Well, that's these two dealt with." said Sonic brightly "Their reign of terror has come to an end and now you can restore peace to Mobius Nega once again. I do hope it STAYS peaceful after this, I want a time where I can visit Mobius Nega and it's a nice time for a change."

"We'll do our best to make sure that nobody ever takes over our world again." said Amy Nega, putting her arms around Sonic and grasping him in a hug "I'm so glad that your selflessness paid off again and you willingly helped to save our world once again. Thank you so much for going to all this trouble just to bring Scourge down."

"It's nothing Ames." said Sonic, hugging Amy Nega back "And besides, I couldn't have done it without Shadow, he brought the Chaos Emerald with him and thus, he saved us all so I can't take all the credit for this one."

"Well in that case, I thank you as well Shadow." said Amy Nega brightly "Thank you so much for helping to save our world from Scourge's tyranny."

"Don't mention it Amy." said Shadow "My purpose is to defend Mobius and it doesn't matter which Mobius I'm on, my purpose stands regardless of which version of Mobius I stand on."

"That's very nice of you." said Amy Nega, turning back to Sonic "So Sonic Prime, I guess you'll be going home now? Don't you wanna stay for a little while? Please?"

"Sorry Amy but I'm gonna have to decline." said Sonic, breaking up the hug "I was brought here by accident and I'm gonna have to let my friends know that I'm OK. Maybe I'll visit this place another time perhaps."

"I look forward to that day." said Amy Nega, giving Sonic a quick peck on the cheek "See you later Sonic Prime."

"See you later Amy Nega." said Sonic, rubbing his cheek as if the kiss had some funny feeling on him.

With that farewell said and done, Sonic grabbed Scourge and Fiona by the ropes they were tied up with and Shadow placed his hand on their shoulders. He held up the Chaos Emerald high above his head and performed another Chaos Control. The four Mobians were engulfed in a bright flash of green light and they all vanished into thin air. Amy Nega waved goodbye as they vanished, a small tear trickling down her cheek as they left. How she loved Sonic was what she could think right about now. He reminded her so much of Sonic Nega that she always looked forward to seeing him again. But unfortunately whereas Amy Nega had something pleasant coming her way, the restoration of Mobius Nega's peace and tranquillity, Sonic was coming home to something unpleasant. Most unpleasant indeed and it was going to take him by complete surprise once he arrived home…

Talk about a win-lose situation eh? Sonic and Shadow have defeated Scourge and Fiona but Eggman seems to have the Royal Fighters at his mercy! What is his new invention? And what's going to happen once Sonic arrives home? Is he leaping out of the frying pan into a much bigger fire than the one he's just put out...? Join me next time as Sonic gets an "Unwelcome Home"...

Oh and if anybody believed for a MINUTE that Eggman was

behind the streak of light...as this story's just told you, you thought wrong. Seriously guys, I'm anything BUT predictable you know... :P

So how was this episode then my fellow readers? Do tell, I'd love to hear your thoughts and what you liked about it and if you enjoyed it.

Unwelcome Home Part 1

Story 143: Unwelcome Home Part 1

Today had been right busy for the super-speedy hero of Mobius Sonic the Hedgehog. First he gets recruited by Rouge the Bat to save Sora Prower, recently recruited Royal Fighter and long lost sister of Tails, from Team Diamond, then he and Sora spy on Dr. Eggman and find out what his newest scheme is, then a streak of light appears in the sky and sucks Sonic up, bringing him to Mobius Nega of all places and now Sonic, with the help of the powerful and dark but good-hearted Shadow the Hedgehog, had just defeated Scourge the Hedgehog and his girlfriend Fiona Fox and brought them back home to Mobius Prime to incarcerate them for good. Scourge and Fiona had ended up on Mobius Nega thanks to a tear in the sky too and they had taken it over but now their reign had been put to an end and they were going to spend the rest of their lives in jail back on Mobius Prime for all the crimes they've done both on Mobius Prime and Mobius Nega (mostly for Mobius Prime though). The Chaos Control that Shadow had preformed to bring Sonic, Scourge and Fiona back to Mobius Prime had taken them out of Mobius Nega and the four Mobians reappeared in New Mobotropolis. As soon as they reappeared, Sonic breathed in through his nose and he exhaled out through his mouth.

"Aaaah…it's good to be home I think." said Sonic contently "I feel like I've been away forever I do. I wonder how long I actually have been away?"

"I do not know Sonic." said Shadow "But it does not matter. You're back home and that's all you need to be happy about."

"Indeed and I'm so happy about it I could just run for ten thousand miles and maybe more." said Sonic happily "I bet you two think that it's good to be home too don't you?" he sneered, looking at the bound and gagged Scourge and Fiona with a gloating look in his eye.

Scourge and Fiona just fumed at Sonic, furious at the fact they had been yanked out of their glorious kingdom and taken back to Mobius Prime. It was back to the status quo for them now, trying to take over the world once again. The only thing is, Sonic would be making sure that they never get a chance to do that ever again.

"Yeah, I can see you're not happy Scourge and Fiona." snickered Sonic "Bet you're down right miserable given how I've taken you away from Mobius Nega and put an end to your reign. Well it's like I always say, evil people don't deserve nice things after all." he jeered, poking Scourge in the nose.

Scourge fumed ever so furiously at Sonic but given his helpless situation, he couldn't do anything about it. Sonic wasn't done yet though, he had more things left to say to Scourge and Fiona.

"Oh and I bet you're wondering where the heck you are aren't you?" asked Sonic "Well you two, this is New Mobotropolis, my place of dwelling and a beautiful replacement for Old Mobotropolis. While I miss the old city, this city still feels like home to me and since New Mobotropolis has a prison centre, I can keep a very close eye on you two from the comfort of my own home."

Sonic seemed to be very keen on the idea of keeping close watch on Scourge. Since he was going to be imprisoned in New Mobotropolis, Sonic's home city, it would be a lot easier to monitor him and make sure he stays put. Scourge will never taste freedom again now he's going to be imprisoned in New Mobotropolis. Sonic and Shadow picked up Scourge and Fiona and Sonic ran off ahead with Shadow following him. Sonic led Shadow all the way to the New Mobotropolis Detention Centre, the local prison of New Mobotropolis, and once the two arrived, they knocked on the gates to catch the police officer's attention. The Detention Centre was domed shaped with a large lookout tower protruding from the top of it. It was surrounded by a ring wall much like the city itself. The Detention Centre hadn't seen much usage since New Mobotropolis' grand opening the other month given how very little crime goes in within the walls of the very city itself but now the centre was going to get a little excitement since Sonic and Shadow were delivering Scourge and Fiona to be incarcerated there. The prison gates opened and Sonic and Shadow strode through them. They walked

up to the centre, where two guards were standing, and they throw Scourge and Fiona at the feet of the guards. The guards looked stunned to see Scourge and Fiona here and were even more stunned to see them defeated and tied up. Looks like things were going well for Sonic since he's managed to capture his evil brother at long last. Sonic gave a thumbs up to the guards.

"Afternoon guys, just thought I'd drop off some unwanted items." chuckled Sonic "Give them a nice cell each and keep them as far apart from each other as possible. I think Scourge and Fiona are less likely to be troublesome if they're separated."

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less likely to be troublesome if they're separated."

That idea just made the two livid with rage whereas the guards seemed full onboard with Sonic's suggestion.

"Very well Sonic, we'll do just that." said the guards happily "We're all too happy to have Scourge back in custody after escaping from EmpireCity twice. We'll make sure he never escapes from here though. Same with that traitor Fiona Fox."

"That sounds good to me." said Sonic "And since Scourge is being incarcerated right here in New Mobotropolis, I'll never be far away should he try and escape. His chances of escaping from here are a million-to-one I think."

"Yeah…especially as her majesty's lady-in-waiting can just activate the shields if he tries to get away." said one guard, picking up Scourge by the ropes he was tied up with.

"You two creeps will never escape on our watch." taunted the other guard, picking up Fiona by the ropes she was tied up with.

"Thanks for bringing these two to us pal." said the first guard "We'll make sure they have a VERY unpleasant time in here."

"Eh, I just want them to stay imprisoned." said Sonic "I don't really mind what happens to them in there as long as they stay imprisoned."

The guards nodded understandably and they carried the squirming Scourge and Fiona into the Detention Centre. Sonic just watched as they were taken inside and then he and Shadow walked back out through the gates. The gates closed behind them the minute they left the centre. Now that Scourge and Fiona have been put in a place where they belong, Sonic and Shadow walked through the streets of New Mobotropolis and headed off to Castle Acorn and Royal HQ. As they walked up to the two buildings, Shadow looked at Sonic and decided to ask him something.

"Say Sonic, do you ever feel…bad…that you have to do this to your own brother?" he asked "I mean, it must feel bad that you have to

fight your own brother like this."

"In all honesty Shadow…I kinda do." said Sonic glumly "Every time I fight Scourge I can't help but think to myself "Oh how I wish me and Scourge didn't have to do this". I long for a time where Scourge can finally get it through his thick skull that world domination is a waste of a life and instead of being jealous me, he would be the kind of brother I always wanted but never got. And also…I kinda feel sorry for Scourge." Sonic added with a slight tone of guilt in his voice "The fact that his mind got warped by the darkness in his heart and the power of the Master Emerald just makes me kinda pity him and I would love nothing more than for Scourge to come to his senses and redeem himself. I sure hope that one day in the future I'll be able to get Scourge to turn over a new leaf." he finished with a rather sad look on his face. Sonic maybe a hero who fights for freedom but even he is capable of pitying his enemies, if he feels they deserve any or if there's anything to pity about them at all.

"I understand what you're saying Sonic." said Shadow, putting his hand on Sonic's shoulder "And I hope that Scourge will see the light someday, much like how I've done since the day I found out Eggman had tricked me into thinking I was his creation and my purpose was to destroy the Mobians."

"Thanks Shadow and I agree with you on that." said Sonic brightly "For now though, I've just got my fingers crossed for Scourge's redemption, if it ever happens hopefully. But enough about Scourge, I can't wait to see my friends again. I bet they'll all be really happy to see me back in one piece and back right here on Mobius Prime." he said excitedly.

"I'm afraid that your friends may not be here blue hedgehog." said Shadow grimly "They told me they were planning to storm Eggman's base and in all likelihood, they've probably gone there by now."

Sonic looked surprised to hear this.

"My friends are planning to storm Eggman's base?" blurted Sonic "That's cool I guess, I sure hope they know what they're in for given that Eggman's a character full of surprises. Why are they storming his base then?"

"According to Tails, Mandy believes that Eggman caused the streak of light that brought you to Mobius Nega." explained Shadow "So they've gone to his base to prevent him from doing it again and to maybe arrest him too. How fortuitous they know where he's residing now."

Sonic's jaw dropped in astonishment.

"Mandy believes…what?!" gasped Sonic "I know Mandy's a little presumptuous but how can she think for a minute that Eggman made that streak of light?! Eggman's a genius but he's not supernatural! There's no way he could have done it!"

"I think I agree with you Sonic." said Shadow "Although Tails told me the reasoning behind that theory is that they found out Eggman had a supposed "new invention" and that it was too coincidental that the streak of light appeared just shortly after his arrival."

Sonic took in all of this and he thought for a minute on what Shadow had said.

"Me and Sora spied on Eggman earlier…why didn't she tell me Eggman had a new invention?" wondered Sonic "If that new invention was something that made the streak of light, we could have prepared for that. But anyway, I still don't believe that Eggman caused the streak of light. That "new invention" of his might just be another robot or something."

"Maybe." said Shadow "So why don't you believe that Eggman caused the streak of light then?"

"Well for starters, he's not supernatural." explained Sonic "And Scourge and Fiona were taken by one back during the Devatron invasion. There's no way Eggman could have been responsible for that, he probably didn't even know where Scourge and Fiona were since they've been in hiding until now. So I whole-heartedly believe that Eggman didn't make that streak of light, this is definitely the work of somebody else."

Shadow put a finger to his lips and thought on this for a moment. As much as it pained him to admit, Sonic did have a good point. Maybe

Eggman was innocent after all and didn't create the streak of light. While this was good, it as bad at the same time too, because it meant the mystery was just more perplexing behind it and made Shadow wonder if there was some kind of evil he didn't know about behind all this and just waiting to strike again.

"I see." said Shadow "If Eggman truly is innocent…then what did cause the streak of light?"

"Who knows?" asked Sonic "Maybe somebody opened up a portal by accident and it sucked me in? Somebody with supernatural powers made the tear in the sky? I have no idea. But I will find out sooner or later. So anyways, back on to my friends, I wonder if they've returned from their mission or not? I wonder if they've come back home and are waiting for me now."

"I do not know how long it has been since I left to pick you up Sonic but I think I've been away long enough for them to have done their mission and return home." said Shadow "So we shall see if they are indeed home at all."

While Sonic and Shadow had been talking, they had pretty much reached the hill that Castle Acorn stood proudly upon with Royal HQ beside it. A good talk does make a walk fly by after all. Sonic and Shadow ran up the hill, not racing of course as there was no point, and they headed to Royal HQ. Sonic opened the door and let himself in with Shadow behind him.

"Hey everybody! Sonic the Hedgehog is back and still in one piece!" Sonic called out cheerfully into the corridors of Royal HQ.

He received no reply. Sonic scratched his head in wonder and just shrugged it off, thinking that his friends just simply didn't hear him. He tried again.

"Hello? Anybody? It's me Sonic!" called Sonic "Is anybody home?"

He still received no reply. Sonic began to feel worried. It seemed his friends weren't back from their mission yet. Sonic then realized that he had no idea how long he had been away so for all he knew, his friends had just left or something. He may simply have arrived just a

fraction too earlier to meet them and they had gone off to stop Dr. Eggman. Sonic wandered off down the corridor and he headed into the lab while Shadow headed towards the rest room. Sonic opened the door to the lab and walked inside. He looked around the lab only to see nobody there. The lab was completely empty and all the computer screens were still flashing. Sonic had an idea on how to see how long it had been since his friends had gone. He walked over to the main computer and tapped some keys on it. He was accessing the security cameras around the building to see what footage he could find. He found one recorded video of the Royal Fighters preparing to leave just shortly after Shadow had left to find him. The time recorded on the footage was 4:30. Sonic looked at the clock that hung just above the computer monitors. It said 5:00 now. His friends had been gone for half an hour and he had just returned approximately five minutes ago. Sonic began to get very concerned indeed. Half an hour is a LONG time to be gone away on a mission for. Then again, they've probably been gone for so long because Megapolis is quite a long way away from New Mobotropolis so they've probably spent this long just getting there and are probably carrying out the mission now. All these possibilities and yet Sonic couldn't relax yet, he had to see for himself what was happening with his friends. Shadow arrived into the lab and Sonic looked over at him.

"Your friends are not in the rest room." said Shadow "And it seems they're not in here either."

"They're not." said Sonic grimly "They haven't returned yet after all. According to the camera footage recorded on Royal HQ's security camera, they've been gone for half an hour. I think we should go over to Megapolis and see if they're doing alright. I'm beginning to get concerned for them."

"Very well blue hedgehog, let us go over to Megapolis and see what's going on over there and if your friends need help."

"Yeah, glad you're coming too." said Sonic "It's nice to see you have some concern for them too."

"Well they did help in saving me from the Black Arms and have accepted me among you Mobians so I have some mutual respect for

your comrades." said Shadow "And also, my purpose is to defend Mobius so every life counts in my purpose, except evil life."

"Great." said Sonic "Well then, let's get going and help our friends crack Eggman wide open!"

Shadow smiled at the very idea of cracking Eggman open like…well, an egg (I just had to make that pun you know. I HAD to!). After all, his abhorrence for Eggman was as big as his dedication to his purpose. That is to say…very big. Sonic and Shadow ran out of Royal HQ and they instantly ran off out of New Mobotropolis and towards the nearby Green Hill Zone. They weren't racing since now was not the time for fun and games, they were just running as fast as possible as they usually would and heading off to Megapolis. It was really a good thing that Nicole had helped the Royal Fighters to work out where Eggman's base was* otherwise Sonic and Shadow would be on a wild goose chase right now. Shadow trusted that Sonic knew where he was going so he followed his lead, while running aside him that is. The two cruised through Green Hill Zone and headed off to Megapolis where Dr. Eggman was lurking and they were prepared to give him what for. Eggman was in for it once the two hedgehogs arrived…

…but Sonic and Shadow were going to get more than they bargained for with this battle for Dr. Eggman had already left his base and he was on his way to New Mobotropolis. But he wasn't going there in his Egg-Pod like before, he was going in something MUCH bigger. He'd built a brand new ship for him to fly in and as of this moment, the ship was cruising elegantly through the sky and heading towards New Mobotropolis. This ship was collectively named "Egg Carrier" and it was an enormous vessel with a striking elegance to it. It was red and purpley-black in colour with teal lights and windows everywhere. It had a long, pointed nose, four wings, giant jet turbines in the back and had a rather unique shape to it, making it look pretty amazing to anybody who sees it**. The Egg Carrier had been under-construction since the destruction of the Egg-Fleet at the hands of Black Doom and his cronies and it had finally been completed. Eggman was giving it a test drive by bringing the ship along to destroy New Mobotropolis. But his plans had more

to it then simply destroying New Mobotropolis, he was planning to do much more than that. The Egg Carrier cruised through the blue skies of Mobius as it headed towards New Mobotropolis. Anyone down below simply gasped at the amazing sight of the grand vessel. The ship was being piloted by Egg-Pawns that had been specially built for the job. Eggman himself was in another room on the ship and staring out of the window, pleased to see his new vessel was flying so well. It brought back memories of when he first invaded Mobius, he came to the planet in a giant battleship and terrorized the citizens of Mobotropolis. He brought down the city but that victory had been taken from him by New Mobotropolis being re-built and thus, that is why he wishes to destroy it. He felt that destroying New Mobotropolis would upset his enemies greatly and also grant him his first victory over them back since New Mobotropolis in its entirety took that away from him. Eggman smiled at the very idea of New Mobotropolis going up in flames once the Egg-Carrier attacked. He wasn't alone in this room though. There was a whole row of Diamond Glass capsules in the room and Sonic's friends were in all of them. Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Shade, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Wilson, Mandy, Ruben, Sora, Sally, Nicole, Vector, Espio and Charmy were all trapped inside the capsules and were completely helpless to stop Dr. Eggman from commencing with his plans. Eggman's new invention had taken them all down with ease and now they were prisoners of Dr. Eggman. All of them were standing up with their hands pressed against the glass but Tails was banging on his capsule furiously. His efforts were futile though given how the capsules were made of Diamond Glass and all Tails was doing was giving himself a sore fist. To be honest though, Tails was too furious to even notice how sore his fist was feeling (that's pretty furious if you ask me!).

"Let us out of here!" yelled Tails, banging on the glass as hard as he could "Let us out of here!"

"Tails, you're obnoxious pounding on the glass is not going to warrant your freedom so kindly cease pummelling the glass before you make me lose my patience with you!" snarled Eggman, clearly getting fed up of Tails banging on the glass constantly.

"I'll stop banging on the glass once you let us outta here!" snapped

Tails.

"Tails, for heaven's sake, all you're doing is getting on Eggman's nerves and that's the LAST thing we wanna do so stop doing it!" snapped Sora crossly, sharing Eggman's frustration with Tails' constant pounding against his glass capsule.

"But we can't just sit here and let Eggman destroy NewMobotropolis!" retorted Tails "We need to get outta these capsules and stop Eggman!"

"I know Tails but we can't get outta here and banging on the glass isn't going to help." said Sally grimly "We're stuck here and all we can do is hope Shadow will arrive back with Sonic in time to save us all."

Dr. Eggman turned away from the window he was looking out of and he walked up to Sally in a rather menacing manner.

"You've sent Shadow to try and find Sonic?" he asked "Well that is a clever idea Sally but ultimately a waste of time. Sonic won't be able to stop me, not while I've got my new invention to stop him like it stopped all of you."

"Sonic has stopped every invention you've ever conceived Eggman." said Sally coldly "Your little plant-bot isn't going to be any different to him."

"Well that is definitely wrong my dear. He's never faced a plant-bot before." sneered Eggman "And he's never faced a robot that grows stronger with every machine part it attaches to itself either. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra will stop him without a doubt in my mind! And Shadow too!"

"You'll soon change your tune when your cruddy little Krudzu Hybrid Hydra gets Chaos-Blasted to smithereens by Shadow much like Devion's Deva-Dragon and the Black Arms were." snorted Knuckles.

Eggman ignored the spike-fisted echidna.

"You had better give up all hope Sally. You will never defeat me, even if Sonic manages to come back." he sneered.

"As long as I live, I will never lose hope of anything." said Sally smoothly as if Eggman didn't even scare her one little bit.

"We'll see about that when you're all roboticized and forced to serve me in my glorious Eggman Empire!" cackled Dr. Eggman "And that's what I'm going to do to you all once New Mobotropolis is destroyed! The reason I'm letting you all stay fleshy for the moment is because I wish to see your horrified faces when your precious city crumbles to the ground. It'll be entertaining beyond comprehension it will!" he finished with a sinister smile that made him look possessed in some way.

"Boy is he a sicko." muttered Vector "He needs a better sense of entertainment he does."

"I heard that!" snapped Eggman.

Vector just stuck his tongue out at Eggman cheekily. It was obvious he didn't really care what Eggman said, he was free to insult him as much as he wished. Eggman decided not to bother with Vector and he wandered away from Sally's capsule. He stopped by Sora's capsule and glowered down at the young super-spy. Sora glared back at him, folding her arms in a serious manner.

"One thing I like about this catch is there's some new blood for me to roboticize." he crooned smoothly "I do not believe I've had the displeasure of seeing you before. What's your name?"

"Prower. Sora Prower." said Sora "I am the older sister of Tails and a new recruit in this battle against you. I signed up for the sole purpose of bringing you down you egg-shaped monster."

"Oh really?!" snickered Eggman, clearly humoured by that statement "Well then, I'm going to end your career as soon as it began Sora! Since you're Tails' sister, maybe I should roboticize you first and give him a nasty shock or I can roboticize him first and give you a nasty shock! Either way, it'll be entertaining to no end it will!"

He cackled at the very idea of commencing with this sadistic idea. Sora and Tails just scowled at him, clearly not intimidated by the fat scientist with the amazing IQ. Deep down though, they were

downright terrified about what was going to happen next and the fact Eggman was planning to roboticize them. Regardless, they weren't going to give Eggman the satisfaction of seeing them scared. Eggman stopped cackling and then he stood before the captive Mobians, not really looking at anyone in particular this time.

"But you Royal Fighters aren't going to be the ONLY ones I'm going to roboticize." explained Dr. Eggman "For once I've roboticized you all, I'm going to roboticize the entire world!" he announced loudly.

"As if we couldn't guess." snorted Mandy rudely "You did that before so it's hardly a surprise to us."

"I know I did but this time, I'm going to succeed and nobody will ruin my robotical paradise!" declared Dr. Eggman "And my first victims will NOT be you Royal Fighters believe it or not. My first victims…will be the citizens of New Mobotropolis! Before I knock the city down, I'm going to use this vessel to roboticize everybody in New Mobotropolis! And THEN I'm going to destroy the city!"

That made everybody gasp in horror.

"You're going to roboticize everybody in New Mobotropolis?!" shrieked Tails "No, you can't do that to those poor people! They're so helpless that they won't have a chance against you!"

"I know and that's why I'm going to enjoy it!" laughed Dr. Eggman "I'm going to enjoy watching your horror as I roboticize the citizens of your own city that you are unable to protect and then I'll destroy it once the citizens are all out of the way! When New Mobotropolis is destroyed, I'll build my own city, Robotropolis, on top of it!" he announced, clearly pleased with some of his plans for Mobius.

"Eggman, once we get out of these capsules, you are dead meat!" growled Knuckles, punching against his capsule furiously.

"I'd like to see you try." snorted Dr. Eggman "Well, I'll leave you all to worry about your fates while…"

Then suddenly, an intercom in the room switched on and the familiar cold, chilling voice of Devion started booming out of it, startling Dr.

Eggman.

"Master! There are two rapidly moving life-forms coming towards the ship down below!" barked Devion furiously "I have a feeling that they are Sonic the Hedgehog and Shadow the Hedgehog!"

"Do you have a visual?" asked Eggman nervously.

"Just a minute…" said Devion as he peered through the window to see if he could see what was coming towards the ship.

Luckily for Devion, the moving life-forms he'd spotted had caught up to the Egg-Carrier and had stopped to look up at it. He could see them quite clearly now and he could clearly see that they really were Sonic and Shadow indeed. They were down on the ground, looking up at the Egg-Carrier and trying to figure out how to get onto it. Devion spoke back into the intercom to deliver Eggman the bad news.

"My suggestion has proven to be correct." said Devion "Sonic and Shadow have arrived and are presumably going to try and stop us."

That made the Royal Fighters feel VERY excited indeed. Shadow was back and he had Sonic with him too! That meant their rescue was guaranteed and Dr. Eggman was ascertain to be defeated right about now! And the best part was, Shadow had a Chaos Emerald with him. He had used it to go searching for Sonic so he would simply use the emerald to Chaos Control onto the ship and get everybody out. Dr. Eggman looked horrified to hear this from Devion and his moustache drooped down in fear. Sonic and Shadow were here! Looks like things were turning against him right about now. They'd be coming to stop him right now and they'd foil his plans.

"Ha! You hear that? Sonic and Shadow are back Eggman! You're doomed now!" crowed Tails.

"If you want to spare yourself any humiliation from the two, I suggest you stop what you're doing now." said Sally with a sly smile on her face "You don't want another defeat at Sonic's hands do you?"

"Be quiet all of you!" snapped Dr. Eggman "As I said earlier, Sonic

won't be able to stop me! And neither will Shadow! The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra will mash them into plant food once it deals with them! I'm anything but doomed yet!"

With that said, Dr. Eggman instantly ran out of the room to unleash the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra once Sonic and Shadow arrived onboard the Egg-Carrier. Eggman had a feeling that Sonic and Shadow would somehow get onboard the Egg-Carrier so he decided to prepare for that. As Eggman left the room, the Royal Fighters decided to just sit-back and see what happens given that there's nothing else they can do right about now. They're trapped in Diamond Glass capsules so all they can do is sit-back and wait. Wait and see on what Sonic and Shadow will do once they get onboard the Egg-Carrier. They had a feeling that Sonic and Shadow were going to succeed in this mission and bring the Egg-Carrier down in no time…

Outside, down on the ground, Sonic and Shadow had arrived underneath the flying Egg-Carrier and they were staring up at it in astonishment. They had not anticipated a giant, flying ship at all, they just expected to arrive at Eggman's base and then break in and see if Sonic's friends are OK. The fact that they were looking at a giant ship flying in the sky above them right now just completely took them by surprise and they couldn't keep their eyes off of it. It was such an amazing, yet astonishing sight to them.

"Well…I wasn't expecting this! Eggman's got a new ship!" cried Sonic "And it looks pretty deadly! I didn't think he'd bother building a new ship after the destruction of his Egg-Fleet during the Black Arms invasion!"

"I wasn't expecting a new ship from him either Sonic." murmured Shadow "But when it comes to Eggman, surprises are to be expected. We need to get on that ship. I bet Eggman's onboard!"

"I bet he is too, and the ship's heading for New Mobotropolis!" blurted Sonic "We have to stop it now! Shadow, warp us onto that ship with the Chaos Emerald you brought to bring me back home!"

Shadow obeyed and he took out the green Chaos Emerald that he still had on him right now. He held the emerald out in front of him

and he yelled:

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

With a bright green flash of light, Sonic and Shadow vanished into thin air and they warped all the way up onto the Egg-Carrier. They reappeared onboard the ship in a bright green flash of light and the moment the light died down, Sonic and Shadow looked around to see if there was anyone around and if there was any danger waiting to strike at them. They were in a large corridor with steel walls and a steel ceiling with rows of teal lights in it that stretched down quite a way and the corridor seemed to be empty for there was nobody around in it. The coast seemed to be clear but Sonic and Shadow knew that appearances can be deceptive so they decided to keep their senses alert. When you're in Eggman territory, you never know what you'll come across so vigilance is always paramount when on an Eggman ship or indeed anything Eggman related. Sonic and Shadow sped down the corridor and ran all the way to the end of it. Their super speed allowed them to clear the whole corridor in a matter of minutes. At the end of the corridor was a huge circular door that seemed to lead to something important. A big door often hides a big important room after all. Sonic and Shadow looked around for a way to open the door but there didn't seem to be a switch or a lever of any kind to open it. Not that it mattered since there was one way that Sonic and Shadow could get through the door. They both spin-dashed through it and smashed the door to pieces, sending the fragments sprawling across the floor as they broke through it. The door could have easily have withstood the power of one spin-dashing hedgehog but not two spin-dashing hedgehogs for Sonic and Shadow were very powerful when they were fighting together. Sonic and Shadow uncurled from their spin-dashes and they looked around cautiously to see what kind of room they were in. The room was pretty plain looking and didn't have many features save for wires running through the ceiling and into the next room, a giant screen that hung above the door that lead into the next corridor and some flashing lights. The room didn't seem to serve any kind of purpose. It's like one of those rooms that's just there to take up leftover space or for extra-storage should the actual storage spaces run out. Sonic and Shadow sensed no danger here but they had a feeling that Eggman was waiting to spring some kind

of surprise so they trekked carefully through the room, keeping an eye out for anything that was ready to spring out at them. There didn't seem to be anything and that was making Sonic wonder since this was not Eggman's style at all. He was clearly up to something here.

"OK this is weird, I was expecting maybe a few guards or something." said Sonic cautiously "The whole place seems pretty empty for a giant Eggman ship. Where's all the robot guards? Where's any kind of peril or danger? Where's…anything?! Eggman's not one to make things easy for us! He's up to something, I just know he is!"

"While I am happy that we're having an easy time so far, I too harbour suspicious feelings about all of this too." said Shadow "Eggman's not one to leave his places unguarded. I've seen Robotropolis in its entirety during the times I worked for him and that had guards at pretty much every window. A vessel like this shouldn't be unguarded, this is not an Eggman's character at all."

"And because we're weary of this, Eggman won't catch us off guard at all." gloated Sonic "Eggman's nuts if he thinks he's got us fooled this time."

Then suddenly, as soon as Sonic and Shadow reached the centre of the room, the big screen above the door switched on and on the screen appeared the face of Dr. Eggman. How Sonic wished to punch that hateable face of Eggman's as it appeared on the screen before him and Shadow. The two hedgehogs watched the screen very closely as Dr. Eggman began his speech.

"Greetings Sonic and Shadow!" crooned Dr. Eggman "Welcome aboard my new flying fortress, the Egg-Carrier! I can't tell you how happy I am to have two such esteemed Mobians bear witness to the Egg-Carrier's maiden voyage! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Sonic just shook his head casually as if he was bored by the whole thing.

"Hey Eggman, I guess you're not surprised to see that I'm back from where the streak of light sent me then?" sneered Sonic "I mean, I

bet you were hoping I'd be gone for good so I can't stop you from commencing with any nefarious plot you have."

"I will admit that I am surprised that you've managed to come back Sonic although your friends told me that they had sent Shadow to find you so I can kinda guess how you made it back here." said Dr. Eggman "And anyway, it doesn't matter if you're back Sonic, I will just exterminate you here and now aboard this very vessel!" he declared, pointing out to Sonic, his finger obscuring his presence on the screen for he was pressing his finger against the camera that was projecting his image onto the screen.

"Eggman, I've managed to foil every scheme you ever came up with, you will never stop me." said Sonic "And since you mentioned that my friends told you that they sent Shadow to find me…where are they? Are they here too?"

"They are indeed Sonic and they're in my custody!" cackled Dr. Eggman "They're in Roboticizer Capsules and waiting to be roboticized! But that's going to wait until after I roboticize everybody in NewMobotropolis and then destroy it! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

He leaned back in his chair as he laughed maniacally and almost fell out of it in a fit of laughter. Sonic couldn't believe what Dr. Eggman had just told him. His friends had been…captured? It was fortuitous that they were onboard the vessel so Sonic pretty much knew where to look for them but the fact they were captured just made things even worse and Sonic was more determined then ever to bring down Dr. Eggman. Sonic's eyes narrowed into a sinister scowl at Dr. Eggman his fists trembled in rage.

"You scum! You better not harm any of my friends or I will crack you open like the bad egg you are!" snarled Sonic in a rather fierce tone of voice, a very unusual tone of voice for Sonic to speak in considering he's usually calm and collected.

He had his fist raised threateningly too. Shadow looked at Sonic in amazement. Even he thought that this was strangely fierce behaviour, even for Sonic's standards. Sonic's threats didn't seem to faze Eggman in anyway though since he just cackled mockingly at Sonic.

"Oh Sonic, Sonic, Sonic my feeble-minded pin-cushion! If you want your pathetic friends back then you will have to save them yourself!" sneered Dr. Eggman "And so will Shadow too! But I don't like to make things too easy as you probably know so I've sent my new invention for you to play with…"

Sonic and Shadow braced themselves for they had a feeling that suddenly, something would burst through the door and then unleash hell on the two hedgehogs. Something was beginning to come towards the door from the other side. Sonic and Shadow could hear some stomping and growling coming from the other side of the door as something began to come towards it. Sonic and Shadow stepped back and waited for the thing to make its entrance. It certainly sounded scary given the growling and roaring it was doing.

"Eesh, has Eggman sent us an "Egg-o-saurus Rex" or something?!" blurted Sonic "It sounds like he's got a monster out there!"

"Prepare yourself blue hedgehog, it's about to come through!" cried Shadow.

But instead of bursting through the door as Sonic and Shadow were expecting the thing to, the door just opened up itself and allowed the thing to walk inside. The thing squeezed through the door as it was quite big in size and only just small enough to get through it and the lights shone on it as it stomped into the room, rearing up and roaring at the top of its voice. Sonic and Shadow gaped in amazement at what the thing that Eggman had sent to kill them was. The thing was an enormous behemoth that was vaguely dinosaur like in body shape and had lots and lots of plant like features on it. The thing had a huge body, a long thorny tail that looked like a strand from a thorn bush, five heads, large clumpy feet with leaves for toes and masses of thorny vines in place of arms. The five heads all varied in appearance too. The middle head was the largest of the heads and was the main head of the plant-like creature. It's head was merely a huge set of jaws crammed with razor sharp teeth and a long, slithering tongue that gave it a rather sinister appearance. The other four heads consisted of heads from old robots that Eggman had used during the first days of the Royal Fighters Service. One head was that of a Motobug, the other was that of a Caterkiller model, one was that of a SWAT-bot head (the SWAT-bots had been retired just

a month after the Royal Fighters Service formed, meaning Sonic hasn't fought any for a long time) and the fourth was that of a Combot's head, a robot that Eggman hadn't used since the second month of the Royal Fighters Service's career. The creature had lots of leaves in places and its colours were primarily green since it was plant-like with some brown around the tail and the heads varying in colours too. The thing looked surreal to say the least and also very, very scary. Eggman had used this beast to capture all the Royal Fighters and now it was going to capture Sonic and Shadow for Eggman. Eggman laughed as the plant-creature made its entrance and he started explaining what it is.

"What do you think you bothersome pair of hedgehogs?" sneered Dr. Eggman "Quite the beauty isn't it? This invention of mine started off as a little robot plant that was used for decoration in my base and now I've experimented on it and turned it into a killer robot that can fuse robot parts with itself and grow stronger as a result! I call it…the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra! It's so-called because it was known as a "Krudzu plant bot" and now it's fused with robots, it's a hybrid and it looks like a hydra so that is why I named it as such!"

Sonic just snickered at the daft name of the new invention.

"Krudzu Hybrid Hydra?!" snorted Sonic "What a stupid name! I wonder if your machine's as "cruddy" as it's name is!"

"I assure you, it is not "cruddy" in any meaning of the word." sneered Eggman "This beauty captured all your friends with little to no effort so it is hardly a machine to joke about! Ha, ha, ha, ha! And now to make the Hydra more powerful, I'm going to feed it some new robot parts! Krudzu Hybrid Hydra, here's some tune-ups for you!"

With that said, a compartment opened up in the roof and pieces upon pieces of robot parts rained down into the room and clattered down nosily onto the floor as they fell. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra saw all the robot parts and it seized them immediately. Its vines began to entwine the parts and bring them towards itself. The Hydra began to fuse the parts onto itself, the small parts not really that visible but the bigger parts standing out a bit all over its body. Some of its vines now had attached weapons to it as it was fusing the parts with itself. One vine had a crab-like claw on it, another vine had a drill on it,

another vine had a saw-disc on it and another vine had a mace on it. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra also looked as if it were beginning to grow in size too. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was already enormous but as it devoured the robot parts and added them to its massive body, it seemed to grow a few inches in height. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra finished upgrading itself and it raised its vines menacingly, ready to kill Sonic and Shadow. Sonic and Shadow were pretty amazed at what the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra had just done and they braced themselves for a fight.

"Impressive isn't it?" crowed Dr. Eggman "Good luck in fighting the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra Sonic and Shadow! Oh and to add insult to injury…I've given Devion the honour of fighting alongside the hydra!"

As soon as he said that, Devion dropped down from the hatch and he landed down on the floor in the room Sonic, Shadow and the Hydra were in. Devion drew out his arm blades and he bent down in a battle ready stance, ready to deal with Sonic and Shadow and bring them before Eggman. Eggman just grinned conceitedly and the screen switched off since he didn't need to say anything else. Sonic and Shadow couldn't believe it. Eggman really was making things hard for them wasn't he?! First the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and now Devion?! Was Eggman really trying to ensure their deaths or something? This was overkill if they ever knew it! Devion glowered at Sonic and Shadow with his V-shaped visor and he raised his arms menacingly.

"I have been so craving for a chance to have a rematch with you two." said Devion coldly "After what you've done to me and the Deva-Dragon, I will personally eviscerate you both and make sure you never see the light of day again."

"Just try it Deva-Dork!" taunted Sonic "Our fight got interrupted earlier so let us resume the earlier bout and see who truly is the strongest of us both!"

"We will not be doing anything of the sort." said Shadow "Because I'm just gonna do this…"

He whipped out the Chaos Emerald and prepared to perform another Chaos Control to get him and Sonic out of the room and to

Dr. Eggman quicker. But unfortunately, as soon as he whipped out the Chaos Emerald, Devion aimed the cannons on his arm gauntlets at Shadow and he blasted him in the torso. Shadow was thrown backwards by the blast and he slammed into the wall. He dropped the Chaos Emerald the moment he was shot and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra instantly grabbed the emerald with a long, thorny vine that extended out to reach for it. The moment the Hydra grabbed the emerald, it slotted it into a piece of armour that it had attached to itself when upgrading itself and the emerald glowed brightly as the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra accessed its power. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was a pretty intelligent machine, which is unfortunate for Sonic and Shadow, and it knew how to work a Chaos Emerald. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was even more powerful than before now! Not only did it have a Chaos Emerald in its back now but it might just have its powers too, meaning it could probably use a Chaos Control or something and make this battle REALLY difficult for Sonic & Shadow. Sonic gasped in horror and he spin-dashed towards the Hydra.

"Hey! That Chaos Emerald's ours! Give it back!" yelled Sonic.

The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra just whipped Sonic down into the ground with a long, thorny vine that protruded from its chest. Sonic groaned as he was hit by the heavy vine but he wasn't down for long. Sonic picked himself up and spin-dashed the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra in the middle head. The Hydra roared furiously and it tried to grab Sonic with the crab-claw vine. Sonic dodged the attack and whizzed around near the Hydra's leg. The Hydra lashed out with the crap-claw but Sonic jumped out of the way, leaving it to accidentally pinch itself on the leg. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra roared in pain and stomped its foot furiously, making Sonic fall over. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra then seized Sonic with a vine and threw him across the room. Sonic hurled across the room and he crashed face-first into it. Sonic bounced back though with a spin-dash to the head again and he tried to get the Chaos Emerald back but the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra whipped him away with its tail. Sonic skidded across the room and then he spin-dashed the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra in the side. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra tried to grab it with its vines, only to miss Sonic and just entangle its own vines and Sonic slid under it. He spin-dashed the Hydra directly in the belly and slammed it against the

ceiling. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra fell back down to the floor with a heavy thud after Sonic had spin-dashed it and Sonic spin-dashed towards it again. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra aimed an Egg-Pawn blaster it had fused into one of its vines at Sonic and blasted him with it. Sonic came down with a crash onto the floor but he picked himself up and lunged at Krudzu Hybrid Hydra again.

As for Shadow, he was fighting Devion and he was fighting him hard. Shadow spin-dashed Devion as furiously as he could but given Devion's infamous invulnerability, he took the blows easily and he struck back with a slash of the arm-blades. Shadow winced in pain as he was slashed by the blades and Devion threw a punch at him. He hit Shadow squarely in the middle of his face and knocked him down. Shadow picked himself up and threw a bunch of Chaos Spears at him. Devion took all the shots with ease though but Shadow threw a Chaos Spear and hit him in the visor. Eggman had placed a protective casing for the visor so Shadow failed to blind Devion this time but the shot had left Devion's vision somewhat blurred for the moment so Shadow had the opportunity to strike at him. Shadow punched Devion in the face and then uppercut him in the beak. He then spun around and kicked Devion into the wall. Devion hit the wall with a heavy clunk but he wasn't hurt by the attack. Shadow lashed out at Devion but Devion grabbed him by the hands and threw him against the wall. He pinned Shadow against the wall by pushing on his arms and making sure he can't push back. Shadow tried to push back on Devion but Devion's grip was pretty strong. Shadow couldn't get out of the little grapple he and Devion were having.

"I remember our first encounter Shadow***." purred Devion "I managed to defeat you in that fight and I shall defeat you again. Dr. Eggman will very much approve of your defeat at my invincible hands."

"This battle's just beginning Devion! You won't defeat me this time!" growled Shadow.

Shadow warped out of Devion's grasp and reappeared behind him. Shadow spin-dashed Devion and slammed him against the wall. Devion however elbow-thrusted him away and sent Shadow skidding across the floor. The two lunged at each other again and

started pounding on each other. As the fight raged on, the Egg-Carrier continued cruising through the sky and Sonic and Shadow would have to hurry and finish off this fight. For the Egg-Carrier was now flying over Green Hill Zone and was almost at New Mobotropolis. Once it arrived, disaster was just one step away and the city would be nothing but ruin and all its inhabitants nothing but robots serving Dr. Eggman in his Eggman Empire…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius: Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front

**** The Egg Carrier in this story is the Sonic 06 design of the Egg-Carrier**

***** See *Tales from Mobius: Arc 13: Last Attempt at Victory***

Some welcome home for Sonic this is! His friends are captured and he has to fight through two deadly machines in order to save them and New Mobotropolis! Will he succeed? Or will Dr. Eggman well and truly win this battle...?

So how was this chapter folks? I hope you enjoyed it and I'll see you next time as the "Unwelcome Home" party gets more intense and exciting...

Unwelcome Home Part 2

Story 144: Unwelcome Home Part 2

Just when Sonic thought his day couldn't get any busier, Dr. Eggman gives him a whole new machine to play with.

Sonic the Hedgehog, Hero of Mobius and the fastest thing alive, had been through pretty much already. First he ended up getting sucked up into a streak of light that had randomly appeared in the sky, then he ended up fighting against his own evil brother, Scourge the Hedgehog and his girlfriend Fiona, and successfully defeated them with help from the Ultimate Life form himself, Shadow the Hedgehog, then Shadow had used a Chaos Control to bring Sonic back home and now the two hedgehogs were fighting for their lives against two very deadly Eggman machines onboard Dr. Eggman's brand new battleship, the Egg Carrier, and all in an attempt to save Sonic's captured friends from Eggman. The two very deadly machines that Sonic and Shadow were fighting were Devion the Dreaded, re-programmed Devatron who now serves Dr. Eggman faithfully and without question, and a brand new machine known as the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was a plant-esque robot that could manipulate machinery and add robot parts onto itself in order to make itself stronger and grow in size. It had started off as a little robot plant that was just there for decoration and now Eggman had altered it and given it some robot parts to feed and grow off of and now it was a deadly killing machine, ready to eradicate Sonic and Shadow along with Devion who was equally as eager to kill Sonic and Shadow for destroying the Devatrons and ruining his takeover of Mobius.

As of now, Sonic and Shadow were in heated combat with the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and Devion. They had to get through them in order to save Sonic's friends and defeat Dr. Eggman once and for all. But the two machines were proving to be a tough challenge. Devion's invulnerability combined with his strength and agility was making him a most difficult opponent to overcome and The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra's enormous size and many appendages were making

it hard to get by and it had stolen the green Chaos Emerald that Shadow had brought to bring Sonic back home so Sonic and Shadow had to fight the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra to get the emerald back so they could use it to teleport out of the room they were in and get to saving Sonic's friends. But given the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra's many vines, five heads and many attached weapons from the robot parts it had consumed and attached to itself made it a tricky opponent to sneak by and get the Chaos Emerald back from. Sonic spin-dashed towards the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra but the Hydra just smacked him away with a vine. Sonic was sent skidding across the floor and he came to a stop just near the entrance to the room. He grimaced in pain, clutching his sore arm which was a result of the skid across the floor. Sonic got back onto his feet and jumped out of the way just as the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra attempted to wallop him with a vine that had a mace attached to the end. Sonic cleaved the vine in two with a spin-dash but then came another problem for poor Sonic. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra had regenerative abilities, meaning it could grow a new vine after losing one. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra grew a new vine to replace the one that Sonic had just chopped off and it reattached the fallen off mace to the new vine. That made Sonic grumble in annoyance for it meant he had a tougher opponent then he had anticipated to defeat. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra lunged at Sonic with a crab-claw vine and nearly grabbed Sonic with it but Sonic dodged the attack and he chopped that vine in two with a spine-dash. So the Hydra couldn't use the claw again, once it had fallen off, Sonic stomped on the claw and flattened it into a pancake. That meant the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra grew a new vine but it couldn't put the crab-claw on the new vine since it was flattened and incapable of being used by the deadly plant robot. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra roared furiously at Sonic and it lunged at him with a tangle of vines that threatened to entangle Sonic and suffocate him. Sonic spin-dashed through the vines and he hit the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra in the chest, making it groan in pain and back-off a little. Sonic then back-flipped in front of the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and walloped it in the chin of its middle head with his feet. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra took the blow and it tried to chomp Sonic up in its deadly jaws but it missed as it lunged for Sonic and Sonic punched it in the side of its head.

"Dude! You're trying to eat me! What do you think I am?! Plant

food?!" snickered Sonic, jumping on the Hydra's middle head and stomp-kicking it down onto the floor.

The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra retaliated by butting Sonic off of its middle head with the Motobug head. Sonic was thrown off by the attack and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra raised its middle head, glaring at Sonic with its jaws streaming with oily salvia as it prepared to launch its next attack. Sonic bent down in a battle ready stance and prepared to do battle with the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra once again. He clenched his fists and zoomed towards the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra aimed a vine that had a blaster cannon attached to it at Sonic and it began shooting at the blue hedgehog, hoping to hit him. Sonic dodged all the shots and he leaped up towards the five-headed beast but the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra lunged at Sonic with a vine that had a drill on it and Sonic was brought down to the floor as the drill struck him and left a rather long cut across his left arm. Sonic clutched his arm in pain and he rubbed it tenderly to ease the pain.

"Ouch!" he groaned "That Krudzu Hybrid Hydra's a tough bot and it's loaded with weapons! I bet not even weed killer or some garden sheers will take this nuisance down!"

Sonic finally managed to get his arm to stop stinging and he zoomed towards the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra opened up its mouth and it started firing silver orbs at Sonic. The orbs were Ballhog bombs and they exploded the moment they hit the floor. Sonic jumped back in alarm to avoid being blasted by the bombs as they all shot out of the Hydra's mouth and threatened to blow him up. Sonic ran around behind the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and he spin-dashed it in the bottom. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra growled at Sonic it attempted to tail-whip Sonic but Sonic dodged the attack and he ran across its tail. He spin-dashed the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra in the back of its head and sent its head hurling forward face first into the floor. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra raised its head only for Sonic to kick it back down into the floor and then stomp on it, making the Hydra shriek in pain. The plant-like robot grabbed Sonic with a vine and it proceeded to throw Sonic off of itself. Sonic hurled into the wall and he crashed into it back first. Sonic slid back down onto the floor and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra charged towards Sonic. The Krudzu Hybrid

Hydra stampeded towards Sonic with its five heads all roaring away as it ran towards him. Sonic ran out of the way and left the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra to crash into the wall. The Hydra stumbled about wobbly after it crashed into the wall and Sonic spin-dashed it in the side. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra soon regained itself and it lunged at Sonic with a mace vine. The mace just missed Sonic for the hedgehog stepped out of the way but the Hydra flicked the mace as it whizzed past Sonic just to hit him. Sonic stumbled over after being hit by the mace and the Hydra also added a laser blast onto the hedgehog. Sonic was thrown across the room by the blast and he winced in pain as the shot began to sting ever so furiously. The shot hurt very much and Sonic was having a tough time fighting the pain it had given him.

"Ugh…that Krudzu Hybrid Hydra is getting on my nerves!" cried Sonic "It's pretty darn tough and is getting to be a pain to battle! I sure hope I can defeat this thing!"

He then smacked himself on the head after he'd said that.

"What am I saying? Of course I can defeat it! I'm Sonic the Hedgehog! I can beat anything Dr. Eggman throws at me, even Metal Sonic!" he declared "I can easily beat that silly Krudzu Hybrid Hydra!"

With that thought on his mind, Sonic picked himself up and spin-dashed towards the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra once again. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra tried to grab Sonic with its vines only for Sonic to spin-dash through the vines and whack it in the stomach. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra retaliated by tail-whipping Sonic and sending him hurling into the wall. Sonic bounced back with another spin-dash but the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra grabbed him in its vines and held Sonic firmly by his arms and legs. The Hydra then held Sonic out in front of itself, it's toothy jaws twisted into what appeared to be a sinister grin of some kind, showing that the Hydra was capable of expressing emotions. The Hydra raised up the drill vine and the drill bit at the end started spinning. The vine edged towards Sonic with the drill spinning furiously and whining loudly as it activated. Sonic squirmed furiously in the grasp of the Hydra's vines, trying to get free and to prevent the Hydra from killing him. But try as he might he couldn't get free and the drill vine edged closer and closer towards him.

Luckily however, Sonic wouldn't need to save himself for Shadow the Hedgehog had managed to take a break from his battle and spin-dash the vines holding Sonic, freeing him instantly. The vine cried out in pain as it started growing new ones to replace the ones Shadow had just severed. Sonic picked himself up and wiped his forehead dry.

"Whew! I was about to become plant-chow for the Krudzu!" gasped Sonic "Thanks for the save Shadow!"

"You're welcome Sonic." said Shadow "It seems you're having problems taking down the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra."

"I am." muttered Sonic "It's a tough robot with a lot of robot weapons on it. You don't look like Devion's giving you and glory right now."

"He isn't." said Shadow "He's proving to be tough to fight. Neither of us will be progressing for a while it seems."

"Yeah, if only I could get that Chaos Emerald back." said Sonic grimly "Then we could just Chaos Control out of here and get to saving our friends before Eggman reaches New Mobotropolis, as much as I hate to run from a fight."

"We'll get it back somehow Sonic, we'll just have to keep trying." said Shadow "Let's go and bring down these robots!"

"Oh yeah!" yelled Sonic excitedly.

With that said, Sonic and Shadow leaped back towards their respective opponents and began doing battle once again. I think we've seen enough of Sonic vs. the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra so I think now would be a good time to focus on Shadow vs. Devion. Shadow spin-dashed Devion directly in the torso and made him stagger but Devion was quick to strike back with a slash across the face with his arm-blades. Shadow grimaced in pain as two fresh cuts appeared across his face and they began to sting madly. Shadow ignored the stinging in his face and he threw a Chaos Spear at Devion. Devion smacked the spear away and tried to slash Shadow again but Shadow just warped out the way and reappeared behind Devion. He kicked Devion down into the floor but Devion was quickly back up on

his feet and he slashed Shadow across the side of his head, leaving more cuts across it. Shadow wailed in pain and he clutched his head tensely.

"Ugh…with those blades they may as well call you "Devion the Shredder" rather than "Devion the Dreaded"!" he growled furiously "Those blades of yours are beginning to get on my nerves!"

"Good, if my attacks are vexing you to some degree you vacuous little vermin then that means I am gaining the upper hand on you." sneered Devion "Now prepare to have your head separated from your body!"

He lunged at Shadow and tried to cut his head off but Shadow jumped out of the way. He threw a Chaos Spear at Devion's head and knocked him down onto his side. Devion retaliated by blasting Shadow in the torso with the laser cannons built into his arm gauntlets. Shadow was thrown against the wall by the blast and he cried out as pain swept over his body. That shot was very painful to say the least and even Shadow had to admit it was a powerful blast. Devion ran towards Shadow and lunged at him again only for Shadow to teleport out of his way and start rapidly attacking Devion, flipping around and kicking and punching him as he hit Devion (he's attacking the way he does in Sonic 06 when he goes up to an enemy and you make him attack). Devion took the blows and just punched Shadow down onto the floor. Shadow picked himself up and spin-dashed Devion in the head. Devion didn't really feel the blow but it did make him stagger to one side as he was hit. Shadow then ran behind Devion and spin-dashed him in the back, one of the best places to hit Devion given that Devion didn't have anything in his back to stop sneak attacks and he couldn't see behind him either. Shadow slammed Devion into the wall and then grabbed him by the back of his head. He slammed Devion's face against the wall as hard as he could, hoping to crack his visor. Devion however effortlessly got back to his feet and threw Shadow directly off of himself. Shadow skidded across the floor but he bounded back with a spin-dash to the face and then a couple of Chaos Spears to the shoulders. Devion just blasted Shadow and brought him down onto the floor. Before Shadow could get up and fight some more, Devion kicked Shadow as hard as he could and sent him rolling towards the

Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. The Hydra just picked Shadow up and tossed him away as if he were garbage that was no longer desired by the Hydra. Shadow hurled back towards Devion and Devion back-flipped into the air. Shadow hurled towards him as he flipped and just as Devion's legs began to flip up after his body, Devion caught Shadow's had in-between his feet. He then finished his flip and landed down on the floor, giving Shadow a very painful slam as he did so. Shadow's head was hurting so much now he thought it was going to erupt. Devion then grabbed Shadow by the neck and threw him across the room. Shadow banged into the wall and he winced in pain as his back flared up with pain.

"Grrr…you're asking for it Devion!" snarled Shadow "Prepare for a pounding because you're in for a serious one right now!"

"I sincerely doubt it gamin, you are signing your death warrant if you believe for a minute that you can refute me." said Devion coldly "Come to me and face your karma…"

With that said, Shadow and Devion lunged at each other again, fists raised and ready to punch at each other…

Meanwhile, in the roboticizer chamber, the Royal Fighters were getting a glimpse on the action that was going on in the room Sonic and Shadow were fighting in. Dr. Eggman had decided that just to be cruel, he'd allow the Royal Fighters to bear witness to Sonic and Shadow's seemingly inevitable demise. There was a monitor screen mounted on the wall that was used in order for Eggman robots around the ship to deliver and emergency message to Eggman should he be in the chamber at the time and it was switched on. It gave the Royal Fighters a view of the battle between Sonic, Shadow, Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. The Royal Fighters were now watching the battle between Sonic, Shadow, Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and they weren't happy to see that the two hedgehogs were caught up in heated combat at the moment. They were in danger and so was New Mobotropolis and Sonic and Shadow, their only hope of escape and to save New Mobotropolis, were being distracted by two dangerous robots. Granted they had no choice but to fight the robots since the Hydra had taken the

Chaos Emerald, their only way of getting past the robots without the need to fight them, but it still wasn't good that Sonic and Shadow were caught up in a battle right now. Eggman was heading to New Mobotropolis and if they didn't hurry, Eggman would arrive at the city, roboticize the populace and then destroy the marvellous city. The unfortunate thing is, it looked like that Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra had Sonic and Shadow plenty distracted and it was going to take them a while to finally get past them. The Royal Fighters began dreading that Sonic and Shadow may not actually be able to beat the robots in time to stop Eggman from New Mobotropolis. At the rate this battle was going, Eggman may actually arrive at New Mobotropolis by the time Sonic and Shadow even manage to beat the robots. They had to do something about this and fast.

"Oh no, Devion and Eggman's new invention are giving Sonic and Shadow a tough time!" cried Queen Sally Acorn in despair.

"We all know how tough that "Krudzu Hybrid Hydra" thing is." muttered Tails the Twin-Tailed Fox "It captured us all in no time and now its giving Sonic the fight of his life."

"I still wonder how the heck Eggman managed to make a machine like that!" cried Knuckles the Echidna "Its beyond what we've seen him build before!"

"Mate, you know what Eggman's like, there's nothing he can't build." said Geoffrey St. John the Skunk "The bloke's got a knack for machines that are weird and kooky in nature."

"He sure has Geoffrey and unfortunately, that machine is keeping sugah-hog at bay." said Bunnie Rabbot sadly "Ah sure hope Sonic and Shadow can get past Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra before Eggman reaches New Mobotropolis."

"It doesn't look like they will." said Ruben the Water Panther doubtfully "Devion's unreal when it comes to battle prowess and the fact he's invulnerable and that Hydra thing has lots of weapons attached to it and a lot of vines. They'll be tough to get by."

"If only we weren't trapped in these stupid capsules!" grumbled

Mandy Mouse, thumping the glass in fury "Then we could get out there and help Sonic and Shadow stomp on those robots and save New Mobotropolis!"

"It's just a pity we can't see a way out of these capsules." whined Wilson the Dog "Unfortunately, we're trapped like rats in here and we can't get out of them."

"I may be renowned for getting out of sticky situations but even I'm beat with this one." said Sora Prower grimly "I can't see a way out of these capsules."

Sally put a finger to her lips and thought of if there was a possible way to get out of the capsules. The glass was really tough and there wasn't enough space for the Royal Fighters to throw any decent attacks to try and shatter it. Even if they could, the glass was Diamond Glass and it was a tough glass to shatter. There had to be a better way to escape. Sally looked up at the top of the capsule and analyzed it. The capsules had steel caps at the top, sealing the Mobians inside, and they had some tubes that seemed to connect to the ceiling. Sally studied the steel caps and the squirrel queen suddenly had a brilliant idea.

"Hey guys, I think I've got us a way out of here!" cried Sally delightedly, earning a chorus of excited gasps from all the Royal Fighters.

She took out a small capsule from her vest pocket and she pressed on it. The capsule extended into her bladed staff and Sally thrust the staff, blade end first, in-between the top of the capsule and the bottom of the steel cap. The blade went straight through it and Sally began to push the staff around the top of the capsule. She began to cleave a thin slit between the top of the capsule and the bottom of the steel cap sealing her inside it and she went all the way around it. After doing that, Sally turned the staff around so the flat end was pointing up at the cap above and she butted it as hard as possible. The cap budged slightly and left a gap small enough for Sally to stick the staff through. Sally poked the staff through the gap and she moved the cap off of the capsule with it. The cap was now dangling beside the capsule by the wires in the ceiling it was connected to. Sally's capsule was now completely open and she could climb

straight out of it. Sally put her staff away and she leaped up to the top of the capsule and caught the edge of it with her fingers. She pulled herself up to the top and she climbed out of the capsule. She dropped down onto the floor outside the capsule and she cheered happily. The Royal Fighters were amazed at this and they all applauded Sally with joy.

"Yes! It worked! I've managed to get out!" Sally cried happily "Now for the others."

Sally ran over to a nearby control pad and she instantly pressed a big red button on it. The button opened up the capsules. The capsules rose up thanks to the wires in the ceiling pulling them up and soon all of the Royal Fighters were free and able to join Sally in freedom. The Royal Fighters all ran up to Sally and started congratulating her for her amazing idea.

"Nice one Sally-girl!" cried Bunnie happily.

"That was a brilliant idea Sally!" said Nicole, hugging Sally in thanks "You managed to get us all out because of this brilliant idea!"

"Thank you everybody." said Sally graciously "Now, since we're free, let us help Sonic and Shadow to defeat those robots and save New Mobotropolis!"

"I've got a better idea Miss Sally." piped in Tails "How about you all go and me and Sora find Eggman and stop him so that even if he arrives at New Mobotropolis, he won't be able to commence with his plans because someone's keeping him at bay?"

Sally thought about that for a moment.

"That is a most logical idea Tails." said Sally "Yeah, we'll do that. You and Sora stop Eggman and buy us some time to save the city while the rest of us deal with Devion and the Hydra. Does everybody approve of the plan?"

"Yes." said all the Royal Fighters.

"Then let's go and stop that Eggman!" declared Sally.

With that said, the Royal Fighters all ran out of the room and headed off towards the room where the big battle was going on. Tails and Sora separated from the group and they ran off down corridor in search of Dr. Eggman for they had a feeling he was somewhere important and that the corridor they went down would lead them to him. The rest ran off to join in the fight. Sonic and Shadow's fight was just about to come easier now Sonic's friends were free and able to help them now…

Back over to Sonic and Shadow, their fight with the two machines wasn't going any better. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and Devion were still proving to be too tough to beat and the machines had the two hedgehogs stalemated at the moment. Sonic and Shadow were fighting as hard as they possibly could but their efforts were ultimately in vain since the two were too powerful to defeat. Devion's invulnerability and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra's many limbs and weapons were just too much for the poor hedgehogs and Sonic and Shadow found themselves being slammed against a wall by the two deadly machines once again. Sonic and Shadow groaned in pain as their backs hit the wall and they slid down onto the floor, trying to fight the pain in their backs. Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra advanced menacingly on Sonic and Shadow and Devion pointed his arm blades at them.

"Your efforts to defeat us are futile Sonic and Shadow." sneered Devion "Now you will both perish at my blades."

Devion lashed out at Sonic and Shadow with his arm blades but the two dodged the attack and left Devion with his arm blades stuck in the wall for he ended up plunging the blades into the wall as Sonic and Shadow dodged. Devion growled furiously and he pulled on his arms, trying to get his blades out of the wall and to free himself. Sonic and Shadow ran around the room as the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra began chasing them down while Devion tried to get his blades free. As they ran around, the two hedgehogs began talking to one another.

"Hey Shadow! These bozo bots are just too tough for us to handle! We need a plan!" cried Sonic.

"I know we do Sonic but right now, I don't really have one!" retorted Shadow "I do wish I didn't lose the Chaos Emerald so we could just warp outta here and get to saving your friends and city!"

Sonic then suddenly came up with a brilliant idea. It was such a brilliant idea that Sonic had to wonder why he didn't come up with it earlier. Truly, he ought to use his brain more often.

"Hey Shadow! I've got it!" cried Sonic "Try Chaos Blasting those miscreants to pieces! We'll get the Chaos Emerald back for sure!"

"Chaos Blast them?" mused Shadow "A sound idea Sonic but won't I destroy the Chaos Emerald if I use a Chaos Blast?"

"I wouldn't think you would do so." said Sonic "Chaos Emeralds can't be destroyed like any normal emerald can. Heck, I'm not sure IF a Chaos Emerald can be destroyed."

"I see." said Shadow "Well then, I shall go with your plan."

Shadow screeched to a halt and he removed his inhibitor rings. Sonic screeched to a halt beside Shadow and Shadow handed Sonic his inhibitor rings. Shadow began to glow red with pure Chaos Energy as he began to build up the energy stored inside him. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra ran up towards Shadow but the build-up of energy coming from the Ultimate Life form made the Hydra feel nervous and back off. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was an intelligent machine, par the course of Eggman actually making it intelligent, and it could sense that what Shadow was about to do was not good at all. It shot at Shadow with the SWAT-bot blaster but Shadow took the blows as if nothing was happening. When Shadow was building up Chaos Energy and getting ready to unleash, you couldn't hurt him even with an atomic bomb. Sonic ran up the wall and he grabbed onto some wires running across the ceiling so he would be out of the way of the Chaos Blast. Devion finally managed to wrench his blades out of the wall and he saw that Shadow was building up Chaos Energy and getting ready for a Chaos Blast. Devion remembered this from his first battle with Shadow* and he knew how to counter it. Devion ran towards Shadow and he clenched his fist, ready to give Shadow and uppercut into the air to foil the Chaos Blast like he did the first time. But Devion was too late for Shadow

decided to launch the attack as soon as possible. Shadow thrust his arms out to the sides and thundered at the top of his voice:

"Chaos… **BLLLLAAAAAAAAAAAAASSSSSSSSSSSSSST!** "

A huge blast of crimson red Chaos Energy erupted from within Shadow's body and it blasted the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and Devion backwards across the room. The blast didn't effect Devion due to his invulnerability and the protective cover for his visor but the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra wasn't so lucky. The blasts seemed to tear it apart piece by piece as it tore through the Hydra's body. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra wailed in pain as the Chaos Blast ravaged its body and its parts were destroyed by the blast. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra however managed to save itself. A tiny sprig of the Hydra escaped its doomed body and it slithered away before the Chaos Blast could destroy it, meaning that all that remained of the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was a tiny little sprig with a pair of jaws that slithered across the floor like a snake. Shadow's Chaos Blast eventually died down and Shadow fell to his knees in exhaustion. Sonic ran over to Shadow quickly and he clamped his inhibitor rings back onto his wrists. That immediately boosted Shadow's power back up and the black hedgehog was quickly back onto his feet.

"You did it Shadow!" cried Sonic "You stopped the cruddy little Krudzu Hybrid Hydra! Unfortunately, Devion's still alive but I doubt he'll be hard to take down if we fight him together."

"Indeed." said Shadow "And since the Chaos Emerald is no longer in the Hydra's possession, we can just grab it and go."

Shadow skated over to the green Chaos Emerald, which now lay on its side at the foot of the wall. But Devion jumped in front and he blasted Shadow away with his gauntlet blasters. Shadow was sent skidding across the floor by the blasts and Devion quickly picked up the Chaos Emerald. Devion sneered at Shadow as he held on tightly to the Chaos Emerald.

"You used the Chaos Emeralds to help bring me down during my attempted take-over of Mobius so I shall not allow you to have this Chaos Emerald." he crooned "I shall use its power to defeat you and avenge my fallen soldiers."

"Well I've been looking forward to fighting you again ever since the day Eggman revived you so bring it!" snarled Shadow threateningly.

"Yeah, bring it on Devion!" cried Sonic eagerly.

Devion seemed all too happy to oblige but before he could do anything, the Krudzu sprig slithered up behind Devion and started growing vines out of its tiny, snake-like body. The vines reached up behind Devion and they started to entwine themselves around his body and then sneak into his circuits. Devion gasped in horror as he felt the Krudzu sprig churn its way into his body and start taking it over. That was one of the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra's abilities, it could take over robot bodies be it functioning or non-functioning. Devion cried out as the Krudzu sprig began to get into his body and start taking control of it.

"What…what is happen…ing?!" cried Devion "My body…is being taken…over by…something! The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra! It's…taking over my…body!"

The Krudzu sprig continued to hack its way into Devion's body until finally, Devion was no more and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was now completely in control of Devion's body. Devion looked just the same as before with the only new features being the Krudzu's trademark thorny vines draping from his limbs, face and torso. Sonic and Shadow stared in disbelief at Devion, unable to believe what had just happened and it seemed they were now up against a mix of the two threats. Devion and the Hydra were bad enough on their own but combined together?! They're going to be even harder to defeat now they were together! Devion raised his arms in a rather zombie-like manner, vines curled around them and looking very sinister indeed. He appeared to have lost all speech for he didn't say anything, he just let out a throaty, mechanical sounding growl that made Sonic and Shadow's spines shiver. The two hedgehogs were so amazed at what had happened that they could scarcely breathe, let alone move for the moment.

"I don't believe it! The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra survive somehow and has taken over Devion's body?!" cried Sonic.

"Looks like we're against "Devion Hybrid Hydra" for this battle!"

declared Shadow.

"Devion Hybrid Hydra eh? I like it, let's call it that." said Sonic "Now then Devion Hybrid Hydra, give us that Chaos Emerald back and I won't hurt you too badly."

The Devion Hybrid Hydra ignored the two and blatantly lashed out with a whip of vines, making Sonic and Shadow scatter instantly to avoid being whipped by the thorny vines.

"Guess he's not playing nice!" cried Sonic "We'll just have to get it back ourselves!"

"You don't have to tell me twice!" retorted Shadow, skating around behind the Devion Hybrid Hydra and getting ready to spin-dash him.

The Devion Hybrid Hydra heard Shadow skating around behind him but Shadow attacked before the Devion Hybrid Hydra could get ready to defend himself. Shadow spin-dashed the Devion Hybrid Hydra in the back and slammed him into the wall. Devion Hybrid Hydra retaliated by whipping Shadow away with some thorny vines draped around his arms. Sonic spin-dashed Devion Hybrid Hydra in the torso but the Krudzu-Possessed Devatron fought back by entwining Sonic with his vines. Sonic squirmed in the grasp of Devion Hybrid Hydra but he couldn't get free. The vines were much too tough for him to break free of and the Devion Hybrid Hydra only ended up squeezing harder and harder on Sonic's limbs as he entwined him and prepared to squeeze the very life out of him. More vines began to wrap themselves around Sonic's waist and neck and they began to squeeze very tightly. Sonic gasped and spluttered, trying desperately to catch his breath but to no avail. Shadow tried to help Sonic but the Devion Hybrid Hydra just grabbed him with his vines too and he began to suffocate Shadow and squeeze the life out of him. Shadow tried desperately to get free but try as he might, his efforts were futile and the Devion Hybrid Hydra's grasp just got stronger and stronger. The vine covered Devatron cackled maniacally at Sonic and Shadow as it prepared to finish them off. But it would never get the chance to do that for before it could finish off Sonic and Shadow for good, a familiar double-bladed pole came out of nowhere and sliced the vines to pieces, freeing Sonic & Shadow from the Devion Hybrid Hydra's thorny grasp and made the

monster squeal a robotical squeal of pain. That weapon was the spinning blade weapon and it was none other than Wilson the Dog's trademark weapon. Sonic and Shadow picked themselves up and much to their surprise, they could see all the Royal Fighters bar Tails and Sora standing before them and looking ready for action. As surprised as Sonic was, he was all too happy to see his friends again, especially as it had been a while since he had come back from Mobius Nega.

"Hey guys and gals!" cried Sonic delightedly "What a pleasure it is to see you all again! And to think I came here to save you all and you ended up saving me and Shadow instead!"

"Hello Sonic, it's good to have you back here on Mobius again." said Sally brightly "As for us, I managed to find an escape route for us and now we're here to help you defeat Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. Although, we're up against a fusion of the two it seems now…" she added, pointing at Devion Hybrid Hydra who was just growing a new bunch of vines to use to entwine his enemies and whip them around.

"Yeah, the Krudzu's taken over Devion's body so now it's a "Devion Hybrid Hydra"." said Sonic "It's got the Chaos Emerald and we need to get it back so we can leave it here and see to saving NewMobotropolis from Dr. Eggman."

"I see." said Sally "Royal Fighters, give that thing everything you've got and don't hold back!"

With that said, all the Royal Fighters charged at Devion Hybrid Hydra and they all began to attack it at once. Bunnie and Mandy both socked it as hard as they could, Wilson and Sally slashed at it with their bladed weapons, Nicole threw a few punches and a few kicks, Knuckles and Shade bombarded it with their respective methods of attack, Espio, Vector and Charmy all attacked the Devion Hybrid Hydra as furiously as they could, Geoffrey fired some stun darts at it, Ruben let loose a flurry of ninjutsu moves and even drenched Devion Hybrid Hydra with water, Amy walloped it with her Piko-Piko hammer, Cream threw Cheese at it and Cosmo just picked up any debris from the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra's first body and threw the pieces at it as a distraction. The Devion Hybrid Hydra

maybe two powerful machines all mixed together but not even he could withstand all those attacks going on at once and all hitting him in several places all over his body. The Devion Hybrid Hydra did fight back by whipping at the heroes with his vines and clawing at them with his clawed hands but he was up against too many at once to properly fend them all off and they all attacked too viciously and callously for him to stand against. To add insult to injury, Sonic and Shadow were joining in too and they spin-dashed him furiously all over his body as hard as they could. All these attacks going off simultaneously eventually forced the Devion Hybrid Hydra down onto his knees and Shadow finally managed to seize the Chaos Emerald from it, snatching it directly out of the fusion machine's vines. The Devion Hybrid Hydra's visor widened in shock as Shadow snatched the Chaos Emerald from it and it tried to get it back quickly by reaching out with some vines. But just as it was about to grab Shadow, Wilson and Sally chopped some of the vines to pieces and Vector chewed through some of the other vines. Now that the Chaos Emerald had finally been retrieved, everybody gathered around Shadow and the Ultimate Life form yelled out loud:

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

And with the simple yelling of those words, the Royal Fighters were all engulfed in a bright green flash of light and they all vanished into thin air, leaving the Devion Hybrid Hydra all alone in the room and very furious at the fact its victims had gotten away. The Devion Hybrid Hydra thumped the floor in rage and it roared out a furious, mechanical roar of dismay over its failure to defeat the Royal Fighters and keep hold of the Chaos Emerald. But the Devion Hybrid Hydra wasn't done yet for it had a cunning plan in mind. It ran over to the screen above the door and it extended out some vines. The vines reached into the screen and the Devion Hybrid Hydra started to hack into it. He was using the screen to see if he could find out where the Royal Fighters were going to end up and once it found out, it would catch up to them and finish them all off in the name of Dr. Eggman…

Meanwhile, up on the bridge, Dr. Eggman was looking out through the cockpit window and much to his delight, the Egg Carrier was

finally beginning to arrive over New Mobotropolis. It had been a long flight but the Egg Carrier had finally arrived and was now getting into position. The huge vessel began to slowly cruise over the city, blanketing it in a huge, dark shadow as it blocked out the sunlight and loomed over the city ominously, and the poor citizens of New Mobotropolis began to scream and run in fear. They were fearing that this was going to be a repeat of what happened to the original Mobotropolis and because of this, the panicked citizens were all evacuating New Mobotropolis and running for their lives. Dr. Eggman didn't seem bothered though since he was wanting something like this to happen. If he was to roboticize all the citizens of New Mobotropolis then he'd have to get them out of the city first. And thankfully, the Egg-Carrier's presence was doing just that, scaring everybody out of the city. Now everybody in New Mobotropolis was evacuating, Eggman pressed a button on the control pad. A giant blaster cannon extended down from underneath the enormous vessel and it pointed directly at the evacuating citizens. They all appeared to be gathering together in one big circle so Eggman had a clear shot at all of them. At the press of a button, New Mobotropolis' entire population would be nothing but Robians and New Mobotropolis would be left to be destroyed by Dr. Eggman. Dr. Eggman crooned to himself as he began to picture all the terrified Mobians down below being roboticized in the blink of an eye and the destruction of New Mobotropolis once he'd dealt with the populace.

"This truly is my lucky day today." purred Dr. Eggman "I've managed to capture all of Sonic's friends and I've stalled Sonic and Shadow long enough to get to New Mobotropolis and right now, I'm about to roboticize the populace and destroy the city! Oh what I wouldn't give to see Sonic's face when his precious city is reduced to rubble for a second time! He won't be around to see that I bet since Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra will likely have dealt with the blue twerp already. Well, time to get a new army of Robians for myself…"

"You're not getting a new army of Robians Eggman! Not even one!" screeched a voice that he was not expecting to hear right about now.

Eggman was so startled by the voice that his finger missed the

button he was going to press and he gasped in surprise. Then suddenly, he was knocked down to the floor by something kicking him in the back of the head. It was Tails. He and Sora had finally managed to find Dr. Eggman, and all in good timing too, and now Tails had just kicked Eggman down to stop him from commencing with his evil plan. Eggman picked himself up and he gasped at the sight of Tails and Sora, standing there before him with hardcore scowls on their faces and their fists clenched, ready to beat the stuffing out of Dr. Eggman. Eggman's moustache drooped down in astonishment.

"Wh…at?!" he gasped "But…but…but this is impossible! How can you two be up here when you're supposed to be down in the roboticizer chamber trapped in tubes and ready to be roboticized?!"

"We managed to find a way out of the capsules." said Tails bluntly "And we're here to stop you from taking away our home city Eggman! Stand down and surrender while you still can or me and Sora will make you surrender!"

"Me?! Surrender?! Ho, ho, ho, ho! Not likely Tails!" snorted Dr. Eggman "Why would I surrender when I'm so close to roboticizing the population of New Mobotropolis and reducing the city to rubble?"

"Because we're here to stop you that's why." said Sora "Now make this easy on everybody and stand down before things get unpleasant."

"Do you seriously think petty threats are going to make me surrender?" scoffed Dr. Eggman "I'm in a ship that's choc-a-block full of robots that answer my beck and call! I can just simply call one of them to come in here and deal with you two!"

But Eggman was going to get more than he bargained for at this minute. Just as he was about to call for help, a bright green flash of light appeared from nowhere and startled Eggman, Tails and Sora all at once. The bright green flash died down and in its place appeared Sonic, Shadow and all of the Royal Fighters. Dr. Eggman was so horrified to see this that he almost fainted onto the floor. Tails and Sora beamed happily at the sight of all their friends. Now they were all here, Eggman just HAD to surrender now. There was

no way that he'd be able to win with the entire cavalry here to stop him from commencing with his evil plans.

"Wow guys, you all made it!" cried Tails happily "And with a Chaos Control too! Guess you finally dealt with Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and got the Chaos Emerald back!"

"You…could say that Tails buddy." said Sonic "Hey Eggman, bet you're surprised to see me here, alive and well, aren't you?"

"What…?! N-n-n-n-n…NO! This is impossible! How the heck did you manage to get past Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra?!" cried Dr. Eggman.

"We had a Chaos Emerald." explained Sonic "The machines took it off of us though and give us a hard time trying to get it back which explains what took us so long to get up here."

"Your plan is in jeopardy Eggman." said Sally coldly, pointing her staff at him "We're all up here on the bridge now, ready to stop you and put an end to your schemes. You can either stand down and settle this peacefully or we WILL use force."

"No…I cannot lose now…not while I'm so close!" stammered Dr. Eggman "New Mobotropolis is…directly beneath us…I can still destroy it…you...you won't…st-stop-stop me from…destroying New Mobotropolis!"

Sonic then proceeded to spin-dash Dr. Eggman away from the control pad and send him skidding across the floor on his bottom. Eggman winced in pain as his bottom began to throb from the skid.

"Dude, you've lost, just give it up already." said Sonic, his voice making him sound almost annoyed with Eggman "You can't possibly beat us now we're all here."

But it seemed that fate hadn't quite had enough of throwing obstacles in Sonic's way for before the Royal Fighters could do anything to Eggman, a huge banging noise was heard directly under their feet. That made the Royal Fighters instantly scatter and stand back and even Eggman was beginning to wonder what the noise

was all about. Then suddenly, to the surprise of everybody in the room, Devion Hybrid Hydra burst directly through the floor and ravaged his way up onto the bridge. He had managed to locate Sonic and friends via the screen in the room he was in and had ravaged his way up through the ceiling of every room he came across until he reached the bridge where all the Mobians were gathered. Everybody was taken aback by this and Eggman seemed utterly gobsmacked to see that Devion and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra had become one. He had not expected something like this to happen at all, not that he minded given it meant more trouble for Sonic and friends being as both of his mightiest robots were now combined together to make one seriously powerful robot. Eggman smiled for it seemed his plans weren't ruined after all. The Royal Fighters stared at Devion Hybrid Hydra in disbelief, wondering how on Mobius he had managed to find them.

"The Devion Hybrid Hydra?! Great timing!" muttered Sonic sarcastically "That thing's gonna distract us and give Eggman time to destroy New Mobotropolis and roboticize everybody!"

"No it isn't!" declared Tails "I've got an idea! Hey Devion! Come and get me if you think you're fast enough!"

He stuck his tongue out at the Devion Hybrid Hydra and started mocking it. The Devion Hybrid Hydra glared at Tails furiously and he ran over to the little fox. Tails just took off with the aid of his tails and he flew away as the Devion Hybrid Hydra tried to grab him with his vines. The Devion Hybrid Hydra growled furiously at Tails and he tried to grab him again with his vines. Tails dodged the thorny vines as they tried to grab him and he flew over to a large steel box-shaped object on the wall. This was a power generator and it fed power throughout the entire ship. If that generator got damaged in anyway then chances are, the entire Egg-Carrier would go down like a falling plane. This was Tails' idea, to trick the Devion Hybrid Hydra into destroying the power generator and bring down the Egg-Carrier. He had spotted the generator when looking for a way to defeat the Devion Hybrid Hydra and now he flew in front of it, taunting the Krudzu-possessed Devatron mercilessly and daring it to attack him. Devion Hybrid Hydra lashed out at Tails with some vines and Tails flew out of the way. The vines struck the generator and embedded

themselves into it. The Devion Hybrid Hydra was then hit with a tremendous jolt of electricity and it wailed in pain as electricity surged up its vines like conductors and electricity surged through its body. True Devion maybe immune to an electrical shock but the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra wasn't and now most of Devion's body was Krudzu parts so the electrical shock hurt it very badly. The Devion Hybrid Hydra wailed a robotical wail of pain as it was brutally electrocuted by the generator and after a minute or so, the generator exploded and threw the electrocuted machine across the room where it crashed into the wall with a heavy thud. The Devion Hybrid Hydra lay on the floor, completely motionless and seemingly dead. The generator was nothing more then a smouldering wreck of metal and wire and it was blazing away with flames. Dr. Eggman looked horrified to see this and he put his hands to his head in horror.

"NO! Devion destroyed the power generator! This ship's going to crash and burn now!" he shrieked in terror.

"I know, that's why I tricked it into doing that." sneered Tails "Your precious ship is coming down Eggman and your plan is in turmoil."

"Great stuff Tails." said Sonic "But you've forgotten one little thing… IT'S OVER NEW MOBOTROPOLIS!" he cried at the top of his voice "This thing's gonna crash down on top of New Mobotropolis!"

"No it isn't." said Shadow "For I am going to do this…"

With that said, Shadow held up the green Chaos Emerald and used a Chaos Control to warp the Egg-Carrier away from New Mobotropolis, much to the relief of all the citizens down below. The Egg-Carrier reappeared in Megapolis, the very place that Eggman was hiding in and the ship had taken off from, and since Megapolis was mostly plains and the Egg-Carrier had reappeared above the plains, it could crash down and not harm anyone down below. Now that the Egg-Carrier had been relocated, Shadow used another Chaos Control to warp everybody out of the ship and onto the ground outside so they could watch the Egg-Carrier crash down and burn away. The Egg-Carrier started to tilt and it made some very loud noises as it began to lose all power everywhere and its altitude began to drop. Dr. Eggman put his hands to his head in shock and he attempted to run out of the bridge and find an escape pod. But

unfortunately for him, the ceiling caved in and a large panel landed directly on top of him, knocking him down onto the floor and pinning him there. Dr. Eggman screamed in fright and he tried desperately to get out from under the panel but it was much too heavy for him to lift. He was trapped and he was going down with his ship like a captain often does. The Egg-Carrier titled downwards and it began to plummet down to the ground. The Egg-Carrier crashed down with an almighty explosion of flames and smoke and the ship skidded across the ground for a good few feet until it finally stopped and started blazing away like an evening bonfire. Some Eggman robots in the underground bunker saw the Egg-Carrier's wreckage and they ran over to it with water equipment at the ready. They began to squirt water at the ship and started trying to put out the fires. Sonic and friends watched the Egg-Carrier burning away and they all began to conclude that Eggman probably perished on the ship for he couldn't possibly have escaped from it, nor could he possibly survive that. It amazed them all to think that this is probably the end of Dr. Eggman as they know it and that Mobius was finally going to be at peace.

"Well…that's that I guess." said Sonic "We've brought the ship down and Eggman doesn't appear to have walked out of it alive."

"Nobody can possibly survive something like this." said Tails "Although Eggman likely used an escape pod to get away from the ship before it crashed. I didn't see anything eject from the ship before it crashed though so I assume Eggman didn't survive that."

"I'm hoping he didn't." muttered Mandy "Given all the crap he's given us over the year we've been at war with him, I hope he's finally put out of our misery and is gone for good."

"As harsh as that is Mandy…I hope he's finally gone too." said Wilson "I've so yearned to have peace come back to Mobius and if Eggman's gone…we can finally have it back."

"I didn't want Eggman dead." said Sonic "I wanted him incarcerated so he can pay for all his crimes and maybe learn his lesson from all he's done."

"Sadly Sonic, I don't think Eggman would have ever reformed." said

Sally sadly "There's nothing redeemable about Eggman at all. Like you though, I'd have preferred to have him arrested too."

"Yeah, that would be a better punishment for him since being dead means Eggman can't pay for all he's done." said Sonic "Oh well if Eggman's dead then he's dead and that's all there is to it. Mind you, I don't think we should assume anything yet, Eggman's a man of surprises and we all know it. For all we know, he might have somehow survived the crash."

"Maybe once all the Eggman robots are finished with the wreckage of the Egg-Carrier, we can search it and see if we can find his body." suggested Sally "Until then, let us go home and rest after all we've been through today. And also give Sonic a proper welcome home too."

"Aw, thanks Sal." said Sonic appreciatively "Shadow? Would you care to warp us all home?"

Shadow nodded and he used a Chaos Control to open up a Chaos Portal back to New Mobotropolis. The Royal Fighters all stepped through the portal and they were warped all the way back home to New Mobotropolis where they would rest and recuperate and give Sonic the welcome home he deserved. Once they got home, Sonic would have quite a story to tell everybody, especially since Scourge and Fiona were now incarcerated in New Mobotropolis, and he'd have to tell everybody that the tear in the sky seems to be a recurring thing since Scourge and Fiona had been brought to Mobius Nega via one. Sonic had a feeling that an investigation was going to be in hand for the streak of light and that they'd be spending the next few days and weeks trying to figure out what the deal behind the whole thing is…

Later that day, the wreckage of the Egg-Carrier had finally been cleared away and put out. The Eggman robots had salvaged many things from the wreckage, including the now completely scrapped body of Devion that was damaged beyond repair and beyond saving (most of his circuitry had been wrecked when the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra took over his body), a sprig of the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and

the body of Dr. Eggman himself. Eggman was in a critical condition. His body was scorched, his moustache was singed, his clothes were torn, his body was bruised and laden with cuts and he was barely breathing. Eggman was pretty much at death's door right about now. He had been rushed to medical bay immediately and Katherine, Eggman's loyal servant bot, was nursing Eggman right about now. Eggman was lying on a bed with a breathing apparatus beside him and a mask around his mouth as well as a heartbeat monitor, which beeped very faintly. Katherine had some medical knowledge in her so she, somewhat, knew what he was doing. Sadly for her though, Eggman was beyond saving in the realms of proper medicine. The damage to his body was just too great. Eggman was surely going to die right about now. Katherine was not about to lose Dr. Eggman so she began searching for other methods. And thankfully, she had the perfect method. If Dr. Eggman couldn't be saved then he would just have to become the one thing he loved more than anything in the world…a robot. Rather than roboticizing him though, Katherine thought she'd give Eggman a robot body that would keep him alive and make him a VERY powerful force of nature. And that body she had in mind was the body of a robot that Sonic and Shadow had faced before…E-123 Omega. She had the plans for Omega in her head and she was going to produce a new model for Eggman. It would have the strength, weapons and power of E-123 Omega but it would also work as a life-support machine. Dr. Eggman was going to be reborn…as a powerful machine of great power and weaponry and Sonic would never see him coming…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 13: Last Attempt at Victory

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Well how about that? Sonic and friends have won again and Dr. Eggman's at death's door but it appears Katherine has a way to save him. What's gonna happen next? What's gonna become of Dr. Eggman? Find out next time as Sonic and friends meet a new face who is "More Than Meets The Eye"...

More Than Meets The Eye

Story 145: More Than Meets The Eye…

A couple of days had passed by since Sonic the Hedgehog's return from Mobius Nega and the destruction of the Egg-Carrier. Since then, Dr. Eggman had not been seen for he was currently in the medical bay and awaiting a new life support machine and Mobius was at a moment of peace. But the Royal Fighters of New Mobotropolis weren't making the most of this moment of peace. Instead, they were investigating their latest worry: the tear in the sky that had sucked Sonic up and spat him back out over on Mobius Nega. Sonic had told all his friends what had happened and also the fact that Scourge and Fiona had had the same thing happen to them, thus meaning the streak of light had NOT been a first time thing at all and it needed to be investigated immediately. The Mobians weren't really sure on how to investigate something like this though since everything had returned to normal the moment the tear in the sky had taken Sonic away and it could be weeks before one appears again. Scourge and Fiona had been taken by one weeks ago so it could be weeks before one appears again. Regardless, Sonic had gone out into the world with a special team to try and investigate the streak of light and see if they could find anything. His team consisted of himself, Tails, Cosmo, Knuckles, Shade and the recently recruited super-spy Sora and they had taken some research equipment with them for this job. As of this moment, Shade was setting up a machine with a radar dish attached to it and four legs that it stood upon. The machine was meant to study the habitat and pick up any anomalies, should there be any in the atmosphere right now. This machine was perfect for studying the streak of light. The only thing is…one needed to appear. Given how strange and unpredictable they are, Queen Sally Acorn theorized that the one that had taken Scourge and Fiona might have been the first time and several other tears in the sky had appeared, just gone undocumented and maybe several happen at several different points all over Mobius so for all Sonic and his team knew, they could see one right about now. Thus, the team was setting up and getting ready to see if they could find anything out at all. They had set up

camp in the plains of Megapolis, hundreds of miles from the Northern Border of Megapolis which was where Dr. Eggman was hiding, and Shade was setting up the machine. She'd finished setting up the machine at last and right now, she was monitoring it to see what the machine could find. Sonic and Knuckles were keeping an eye out for any signs of trouble. Tails, Sora and Cosmo however were just having a bit of fun. Sonic had said they could have a bit of fun since they are kids and kids like to have fun but under the condition that once Tails was needed, he would join the research team immediately. As for the fun they were having, Tails had taken Sora by the hands and was giving his big sister a ride in the sky. Sora hung by her arms as Tails flew her around in the sky, holding onto her hands very tightly as he flew her. Sora squealed with delight as Tails flew her around and she could barely stop giggling. She was enjoying the flight very much. Every minute of the flight made Sora more and more glad that she had finally reunited with Tails after being separated from him for eight years. How happy she had felt since she had been reunited with her brother. Tails and Sora's flight went on for a while before Sora decided she wanted to be put down on the ground again. Tails flew down to the ground and he put Sora down, the young super-spy still giggling with delight as she was put back down on the ground. After finally getting her excitement out, Sora caught her breath back and hugged Tails graciously.

"Thank you so much for the flight little brother." she said delightedly "That was wonderful! I had the time of my life up there!"

"Aw Sora, you're more welcome then you realize." said Tails, hugging his sister "Me and you still have a lot of catching up to do so you deserved that flight."

"Thank you." said Sora "When you were born with those two tails, I never in my life would have anticipated that you would be able to fly with them. I always knew that those tails of yours were special and you have just proven my theory correct."

"It's a pity that I used to be taunted for having two tails though." murmured Tails, breaking up the hug with Sora and hugging his tails "But ever since I joined the R.F.S. I am not ashamed of having these tails and I get to put them to excellent use every time."

"I'm glad you're proud of your tails." said Cosmo, putting her arms around Tails "I'm proud of them too, especially since they make you so cuddly and make me feel really lovely and warm when you cuddle me with them."

"Aw…thanks Cosmo." said Tails, blushing bright pink "I'm glad you…like my tails and the cuddles I give you with them."

Tails and Cosmo ended up embracing each other in a nice, lovely, warming hug and Tails wrapped his tails around Cosmo as they cuddled, Cosmo beaming brightly as he did so. Sora just put her hands over her heart and went "aww" at the sight of the two cuddling each other like this.

"Aww…you two are so cute together." said Sora "Who'd have thought that my little brother would find himself a girlfriend, and at such a young age too?"

"I know." said Tails "I don't care though, I love Cosmo and I want to make her as happy as I possibly can."

"And its that amount of kindness to me that made me fall for you Tails." said Cosmo brightly "I'm so glad to be in love with a boy as wonderful as you."

"Thanks precious, I'm glad to be in love with a girl as wonderful as you." said Tails, kissing Cosmo on the forehead "Say Cosmo, I believe your flight is next…" he added, twisting his tails around one another and taking off.

He took Cosmo firmly by the hands and lifted her up off the ground by them. Tails flew up into the air with Cosmo in tow and he gave Cosmo a very lovely flight much as he did Sora. Sora just watched from down below and she smiled happily at the lovely couple up in the sky.

"Aww…they're so wonderful together." said Sora in a heartfelt manner "Makes me wish I had a boyfriend now. Oh well, my time for love will come soon I bet…"

As Tails flew Cosmo in the sky, Shade monitored the machine and

studied the various instruments and scanning of the habitat that the machine was picking up. The radar dish on the machine twitched and moved around as it scanned the environment for any signs of paranormal activity and anything unusual. Unfortunately, so far, everything seemed to be normal. Nothing unusual was being detected and everything appeared to be completely normal. It seemed that no tear in the sky was going to appear anytime soon although Shade wasn't going to conclude something like this so suddenly, she had to be patient and see if one was going to appear soon. Knuckles knelt down behind Shade and put his hands on her shoulders as she focused on the machine.

"Anything yet hon?" asked Knuckles.

"Not yet sweetie." said Shade grimly "Everything appears to be normal so far. No anomaly of any kind has been detected yet although it's a little premature to conclude so far. We've only just started investigating, a tear in the sky could appear at any time now. We'll give it an hour or two and pack up."

"That sounds good to me." said Knuckles "I do hope that the streak of light thingy that took Sonic is the last time it happens and that it's not going to happen again though, we can't let it take anybody else. I'd be all too happy for Scourge and Fiona to have stayed gone though, they wouldn't be able to bother us anymore if they were still gone from the streak of light that took them."

"Yeah but then poor old Mobius Nega would be suffering from their tyranny." noted Sonic "In my opinion, every world deserves to be free, even an alternate world. I'd rather that tear in the sky took Scourge and Fiona to a world with no inhabitants whatsoever and then they'd have nothing to do except amuse themselves."

"Hmm, I see." said Knuckles "At least they'd be happy, they could pretty much rule a world like that but they'd have nobody to terrorize. That's the most they deserve. Oh well, they're locked up in the New Mobotropolis Detention Centre and they're gonna stay locked up there for good."

"I agree, especially since they're on my home turf." said Sonic with a smile on his face "Thus if they escape, I'll be over to stop them

immediately. They'll not get away from me or anyone else for that matter."

"And that is good." said Shade "But enough about Scourge and Fiona, we need to focus on our research job. It's vital we find out what's causing the tear in the sky and why its happening."

"Easier said then done since we NEED one to appear first." sighed Sonic "And who knows when one will finally appear so we can study it?"

"If we have to wait for a year before one appears at last then I'll be all to happy to wait that long." said Shade "I have the patience after all. I managed to wait years before Ix and the Nocturnus Clan made their sinister move on Angel Island again."

"I'll bet you have patience." snickered Sonic "Same with Knuckles since he just spends all day guarding the Master Emerald…"

Then suddenly, a huge laser blast came out of nowhere and it struck the machine, blowing it to smithereens! Shade and Knuckles leaped back in horror as the machine blew up in their faces and Sonic leaped about a foot into the air. The thing that had destroyed the machine was none other than Katherine, Dr. Eggman's servant bot and the one that was currently trying to save his life! She had clasped her hands together and used the blast attack from her palms to destroy the machine. She had a squadron of Eggman robots with her and they looked furious to see Mobians here in Megapolis. Katherine had been monitoring the terrain and she had picked up Sonic, Tails, Cosmo, Knuckles, Shade and Sora's signals while scanning the terrain. She thought that the Mobians were here to try and hurt Dr. Eggman or even make sure that he was dead so she and some Egg-Pawns had arrived on the scene to stop Sonic and friends from harming Dr. Eggman. Tails flew down to the ground and put Cosmo down just as Katherine destroyed the machine and he was surprised to see that they had company. Sonic gritted his teeth and he clenched his fists.

"Hey! We needed that you jerk!" snarled Sonic "If I'm to guess, Katherine, you're here to kill us just because we brought down Dr. Eggman and he seemingly died when the Egg-Carrier crashed! Well

guess what, I'm gonna smash you to pieces!"

Sonic spin-dashed towards Katherine but the female servant bot just activated her barrier and defended herself from the attack. Sonic bounced off the barrier and he skidded to a halt. The Egg-Pawns all ran out from behind Katherine and they began shooting madly at Sonic. Sonic dodged all the attack and he spin-dashed one of them to pieces. Tails, Knuckles and Shade joined in with fighting the Egg-Pawns and they began destroying them one by one. Sonic spin-dashed, Knuckles punched, Tails tail-whipped and kicked and Shade sliced them to pieces. But there were an awful lot of Egg-Pawns around and they were shooting at the Mobians from all directions. As the Egg-Pawns attacked, Katherine spotted Sora and Cosmo standing by and wondering if they should get involved at all. Katherine decided to take them out and see how much she effects the others. Katherine advanced towards Sora and Cosmo menacingly, her sharp metal claws bared and ready to kill. She had her barrier still on and she began firing bladed discs at the two girls. Sora and Cosmo instantly ran for their lives as they were being attacked by Katherine. While Sora was capable of fighting, she didn't think she'd be able to fight a robot that had a barrier on and was firing bladed discs at her. Sora and Cosmo ran for their lives but Katherine gave chase and continued to fire at them. Unfortunately for Sora and Cosmo, they ended up running into a dead end. They had run towards an enormous rock and were now cornered against it with Katherine advancing on them menacingly, ready to fire a bladed disc into them. Sora and Cosmo pressed their backs firmly against the rock and they started trembling with fear. Sora grasped Cosmo into a hug and she shook furiously with fear as Katherine prepared to kill her and Cosmo.

"Tails! Help us!" screamed Sora frantically.

fighting off Egg-Pawns to hear her. Sora and Cosmo stared in terror as Katherine bore over them and she opened up her hands, ready to fire a bladed disc into them and kill the two girls. Sora and Cosmo closed their eyes, the blue-furred fox hugging Cosmo tightly, and they awaited their doom. But their doom was not going to come any moment now for as Katherine prepared to finish them off, a large, golden warp ring appeared directly underneath Katherine and the

silent robot ended up falling straight through it. Sora and Cosmo opened their eyes just in time to see the warp ring close up just as Katherine fell through it and then reappear a few feet away from their position. Katherine ended up falling out of the warp ring and landing on the ground with a heavy crash. Katherine wasn't the only one to fall through a warp ring though, all the Egg-Pawns ended up falling through warp rings too, much to the surprise of Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Shade. The Egg-Pawns all fell through the warp rings and the warp rings reappeared up in the air, causing the Egg-Pawns to all fall out of them and crash down on top of each other in a big pile. The Egg-Pawns all picked themselves up and started wondering what had happened. Katherine picked herself up and looked around, wondering who was responsible for the warp rings and what was going on. She spotted a cloaked figure standing nearby and since he was completely new and out of the blue, she instantly deduced that the figure was responsible for the warp rings. She and the Egg-Pawns charged towards the figure with their weapons at the ready but the figure simply opened up another warp ring and ended up tricking all the robots through the warp ring. The warp ring was set to take them all into another area of Megapolis, miles away from where Sonic and friends currently were. The robots all ran into the warp ring before they could stop themselves and the warp ring closed behind them the moment the last Egg-Pawn went through. Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Shade gasped in amazement at this and they stared at the figure who had summoned the warp ring.

"Whoa…some guy just opened up a warp ring and…got rid of Katherine and her cronies!" cried Sonic in amazement.

"There's only one guy I know who has that many warp rings…" said Knuckles, clearly familiar with all of this.

"Same here." said Shade "You don't possibly think…that it…it…"

Then suddenly, the figure started coming towards Sonic and friends. The figure turned out to be an albino furred echidna with red eye-lids and golden eyes with black sclera. It had black markings on its forehead, the centre being somewhat diamond shaped with a hypnosis spiral in the middle, gauntlets on its arms and legs that carried warp rings and a huge, flowing black cape that met in the middle and covered its entire body when it put its arms down. Its

hands and feet were bandaged and it had metal pieces on its cheeks. The figure looked quite sinister and Sonic didn't really trust it since it looked evil to him, even if it did end up helping to get rid of Katherine and the robots. Knuckles and Shade however were gobsmacked at the mere sight of this figure and they seemed to know who it was, especially Knuckles for he looked like he was about to collapse in shock. The figure stopped before Knuckles and Shade and it smiled at them.

"Greetings nephew." purred the figure in a deep, slithering voice that definitely enhanced its evil appearance further "It has been a while since I last laid my eyes upon you."

"Uncle Finitevus?!" cried Knuckles in amazement "No way it-it-it-it's actually you!"

With that said, Knuckles pounced on the stranger, name Dr. Finitevus, and hugged him tightly. Finitevus hugged him back and patted Knuckles' back. Shade was too shocked to speak whereas Sonic and Tails weren't sure what to think of this revelation. They looked at each other.

"THAT'S Knuckles' Uncle Finitevus?!" blurted Sonic "When Knuckles talked to ME about him, I depicted him being less evil looking! That guy looks like he's auditioning for a Supervillain role!"

"I'm as surprised as you are." said Tails "But we should be grateful that this "Finitevus" guy's here, he did us a favour and got rid of all the Eggman robots for us."

"Indeed he did so I assume he's not as evil as he looks." said Sonic "Hey Shade, you know this guy at all?"

"I do." said Shade, finally regaining the ability to speak after being surprised for so long "That is Dr. Finitevus, the greatest scientist in all of echidna-lore. He was one of the many scientists who worked together to raise AngelIsland into the air to avoid the coming meteor. He, like Imperator Ix, wanted the island back down but when the elders refused, he…took it more lightly then Ix did which is lucky for us. Finitevus even helped to get rid of Ix too for he warped him away after Locke froze him in a Chaos Control."

"I see." said Sonic "Well, I definitely know this guy can be trusted then. Let's meet him Tails."

"Sure thing." said Tails "Hey Sora, Cosmo! Where are you? Come over and meet Dr. Finitevus!" he called out.

Sora and Cosmo ran over to the others, sensing it was safe for them to come out now that the robots were gone and this mysterious stranger was a friend. Dr. Finitevus and Knuckles broke up the hug and Finitevus eyed Sonic, Tails, Shade, Sora and Cosmo as they stood behind Knuckles, waiting to say something to him.

"My, my, my Knuckles, you appear to have made some new friends in my absence." crooned Finitevus smoothly "And among them, I spy none other than Shade the Echidna, the daughter of that traitor Imperator Ix. How she has grown since I last saw her, she's become quite a beautiful young woman hasn't she?"

Shade blushed red with pleasure.

"Yeah, I agree." said Knuckles "Anyway uncle, Shade's on our side now. She ditched Imperator Ix and joined us so she could stand against Ix and let him know exactly what she felt about him. Me and Shade are also officially a couple too." he added, taking Shade's hand.

"And we're all too happy to be one too." said Shade, smiling lovingly at Knuckles.

"Well this certainly is a surprising turn of events isn't it?" chuckled Dr. Finitevus "I leave for ten years and my nephew is now in a relationship with Ix's daughter? What a surprise this is. I'm happy to hear this Knuckles, especially since Shade is on our side now it seems. If only Ix had her common sense…" he added, gritting his teeth as if just thinking about Imperator Ix made him want to snarl.

"Well Knuckles inspired me to betray Ix actually." said Shade "I wouldn't have stood up to him without Ix. I am forever grateful to Knuckles for opening my eyes."

"You're always welcome Shade." said Knuckles brightly "So anyway,

enough about us, allow me to introduce you to these guys." added Knuckles "These are Sonic, Tails, Cosmo and Sora." he said, pointing to each of them as he said their names "They're all Royal Fighters and we're good friends so you can trust them, especially Sonic that little hot-head."

Finitevus looked at the others and he smiled at them, clearly delighted to hear that they were members of the Royal Fighters and one of them was Sonic himself.

"What a fortuitous day this is." he said brightly "I reunite with my nephew and now I meet a few members of the esteemed Royal Fighters Service, especially the world famous Sonic the Hedgehog. It is my dearest pleasure so meet you all."

He held his hand out for Sonic to shake to which Sonic did so rather uncertainly. The others seemed more happy to greet Finitevus though, especially Sora and Cosmo since he saved their lives earlier.

"Thank you for saving mine and Cosmo's life sir." said Sora "We were about to be slaughtered until you got rid of Katherine with that warp ring."

"You are most welcome my child." said Finitevus in a friendly tone of voice "I am not one to let innocent lives be needlessly slaughtered by horrible machines of violent tendencies after all."

"Yeah, Eggman robots like to attack anyone they get their hands on." said Sonic "So Finitevus, it's great to meet you an all but I have one thing to say to you, must you look so evil?"

"Sonic!" snarled Knuckles through gritted teeth.

"I beg your pardon? Does my appearance repulse you in some way?" said Finitevus innocently, wondering what Sonic meant by what he had just asked.

"Not really, it's just well…no offence but you…look kinda creepy." said Sonic "What's with the bandages and the evil eyes and the black markings and the big flowing cape? I really hate guys in

capes, they're usually evil and I should know, I've fought a few villains who have worn capes before."

"I apologize most dearly for my appearance cannot be helped." said Finitevus in an eerily calm manner "I was born like this and my sense of attire just comes from my own personal preferences. A lot of people on Angel Island found it hard to trust me for my appearance made them feel uncomfortable about me. I assure you though, I am not as evil as I look."

"Yes, he isn't!" growled Knuckles "Now Sonic, you say sorry to Uncle Finitevus right now! You should be ashamed of yourself for being so rude to him!"

"OK, OK! I'm sorry!" cried Sonic frantically "I should have been more considerate! Sorry!"

"Your apologies are whole-heartedly accepted young man." said Finitevus, taking all of this pretty well.

"You're lucky Finitevus is a forgiving man Sonic." said Knuckles through gritted teeth "So…" he said, turning to Finitevus "Where have you been uncle? I haven't seen you for ten years."

"I know, I have been gone for quite a while haven't I?" mused Finitevus "After Imperator Ix was banished from Angel Island, I decided to take my scientific research to a whole new level. I decided to study the one thing that a lot of people didn't dare study…the void. I super-charged a warp ring and went into the void. Unfortunately…I ended up being a prisoner of the gate-keeper of the void himself…Ixis Naugus. He captured me and subjected me to his games of torture. I tried to escape but to no avail and it took me a while before I managed to escape. I finally escaped last year and when I realized I had been gone for nine years, I decided to do a lot of research on the world to bring me up to speed and help me get back into the swing of things so that I know what I've missed out on and what is happening in the world. The void…left quite an impact on me and I decided to remain hidden until I got over my shock. I didn't want to return to you in such a frenzied state after all. It took me a while but I have fully recovered from my time in the void and thus, I set out to find you and here I am."

"Whoa…you've been through quite a lot uncle." said Knuckles "I'm glad you're OK though. As for the void, Ix is currently in there now."

"He is?" said Finitevus in surprise "When did that happen dear nephew?"

"Last year, Imperator Ix returned with the Nocturnus Clan to take over Angel Island." explained Knuckles "They corrupted the Master Emerald and made it a Dark Chaos Energy powerhouse that only he could control. I got Shade to see the light and she helped me and the Royal Fighters defeat Imperator Ix and I sealed him in the void with a Chaos Control."

"So the Imperator will NEVER be able to bother anyone on Angel Island ever again." purred Finitevus delightedly "How wonderful. So, would it be OK for me to visit the home place of Sonic the Hedgehog at all?" he suddenly asked "I'd very much like to meet the rest of your team and the Queen of New Mobotropolis herself. It'd be an absolute honour to meet these people."

"Uh…sure, you're welcome to visit." said Sonic "Hand me one of your warp rings and I'll warp us over to New Mobotropolis."

Finitevus took a warp ring off of his arm and he handed it over to Sonic. Sonic flicked the warp ring up into the air and the warp ring extended to several times its size. It opened up a portal back to New Mobotropolis and everybody quickly stepped through it. The warp ring vanished, leaving no trace of its existence as it disappeared.

Back in New Mobotropolis, Queen Sally Acorn was sitting comfortably in her throne and patiently awaiting the return of the research team that she had sent out to find out what they can about the streak of light that had taken Sonic and was now the current mystery of Mobius. Sally was enjoying the relative peace and quiet she was having at the moment and was just sitting back, admiring her beautiful throne room and thinking of happier times from her childhood and before Marik the Martian killed her parents. She had come a long way since then. She was now a queen, prematurely, and was slowly becoming more active on the battlefield. She had

learned some fighting moves mostly to defend herself but as time went on, she decided she needed an actual fighting prowess so she had started training more callously and even gave herself a weapon, a bladed staff. She'd even changed her outfit too and even on a slow day such as today, she was still wearing the new outfit, (which was a blue crop-top with a white stripe down the middle, blue vest, blue shorts, blue boots with white stripes on them and black fingerless gloves) she had changed into before fighting Count Nyder at the time of the Martian invasion*. Sally was quite proud of herself for becoming more active in battle and she looked forward to the next time she'd be fighting evil with the Royal Fighters. She was setting herself up to be a most excellent queen indeed and her image would be an inspiration to many, as well as badge of honour for the Acorn lineage. Her mother and father would be so proud to see their little daughter with so much honour and valour in her now.

"Oh mom…oh dad…how I wish you were still here to see me now…" sighed Sally sadly as she began to think of her parents "I miss you so much and I wish you could see what I've become now. Oh well, at least you're at peace and your killer, Marik, is in hell where he belongs. The void was the perfect place to exile him, especially since that traitor to the Acorn Family, Ixis Naugus, is running the place now…"

Her thoughts were suddenly interrupted by warp ring opening up in the middle of the room and Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Shade, Cosmo and Sora all stepped through it, startling the squirrel queen and nearly making her leap out of her seat. Sally beamed happily to see that her research team was back and she greeted them eagerly by stepping out of her throne and walking up to them.

"Hello everybody! You're back!" cried Sally happily "So how did the research mission go then?"

"Not too well Queenie." said Sonic disappointedly "Some Eggman robots led by Katherine came in from nowhere and they destroyed our machine and attacked us. We didn't find out anything before then either so we've come home with nothing."

"Oh…that's too bad." said Sally "I was hoping we could find out a bit about the streak of light we've recently had. Oh well, there's always

next time. Now you're all home, I suggest you all enjoy yourselves before Dr. Eggman's robots attack again. He maybe gone, or so we hope, but his robots are obviously still functioning and his servant bot's obviously leading them in his absence. Who knows when Katherine will decide to attack and get revenge on us for what happened to Eggman?"

"Indeed." said Sonic.

"By the way your majesty, before we go, there's someone I want you to meet." said Knuckles "Allow me to introduce you to my Uncle Finitevus."

With that said, Knuckles stepped to the side and revealed Dr. Finitevus standing behind him. Finitevus had decided to keep himself hidden and let Knuckles introduce him to Sally for him. As soon as Sally caught sight of Finitevus, she gasped in surprise and took a step back for his rather eerie appearance made her feel very nervous all of the sudden.

"Oh…um…hello?" said Sally wobbly "How…um…nice it is to…uh… meet you sir."

"Greetings my queen." said Finitevus in a slithering voice that made her spine tingle "It is my utmost pleasure to be meeting the Queen of New Mobotropolis herself."

He stepped forward and knelt down before Sally. He took her hand and politely kissed it to which Sally sort of half-chuckled at and half-shuddered at, at the same time given she wasn't sure if she should be flattered or terrified by this stranger in her throne room.

"The…pleasure's all mine Mr. um…Finitevus I believe your name is." said Sally.

"It is indeed." said Finitevus "And please do not be alarmed at my appearance my child, I assure you this dark appearance of mine actually hides a genuine heart of good and honour. You need not fear me, especially since I am a relative of one of your allies…" he added, motioning over to Knuckles.

"Oh, that's alright then." said Sally, settling down a little now she knew that Finitevus wasn't a man to be afraid of "I'm sorry I looked frightened by you, it was very rude of me to be so inconsiderate…"

"Please your majesty, I get that all the time." sighed Finitevus "You do not need to apologize for your reaction to my very presence."

"OK then, thank you." said Sally "So…you're Knuckles' uncle are you? Funny he's never mentioned you before…"

"I have been gone for quite a while." explained Finitevus "I was away studying something and I was gone for a long time. I arrived back last year and spent most of my time researching Mobius to see what I've missed out on in my absence. I've learned much of what has happened since I've been gone, particularly the Royal Fighters Service, the crusade against the scornful Dr. Eggman and even the recent alien invasions. My compensation for making it through them all to all the members of the R.F.S. by the way." he added with a polite bow.

"Oh I see." said Sally "And your compensation is appreciated, thank you. We have been through quite a lot recently. Looking back on it all, it amazes me to no end that we're still alive and walking upon this earth right now."

"It must be most amazing to feel this way my queen." said Finitevus understandably "Looking back on my nine year trip through the void, I'm amazed I managed to survive that."

"You've been through the void?" blurted Sally "Oh my goodness! Thank god you made it out alive, very few people can survive that hell-hole!"

"I know, I found that out the hard way…" muttered Finitevus "After I escaped, I spent most of last year just recovering from the experience, as well as getting up to speed on what I've been missing out on in my absence. And now here I am, reunited with my nephew and meeting a few notorious members of the Royal Fighters Service and the very queen they serve faithfully."

"You're not the only one who's been reunited with a relative after

being gone for so long…" put in Sora, putting her hand on Tails' shoulder.

"So Sally, Uncle Finitevus is AngelIsland's greatest scientist and he helped to get rid of Imperator Ix when he tried to lower AngelIsland years ago." explained Knuckles "I was thinking that…maybe he could help us investigate the tear in the sky that we're all edgy about."

Finitevus seemed rather surprised to hear the words "tear in the sky" and he looked at Knuckles, puzzlement as clear on his face as his trademark black markings.

"Tear…in the sky?" he mused "Whatever do you mean nephew?"

"A couple of days back, a weird streak of light appeared in the sky and it sucked Sonic up and took him to another dimension." explained Tails "We got him back by having Shadow use a Chaos Emerald to warp to said other dimension and find him. Apparently, his evil brother Scourge and his girlfriend Fiona were also taken by a streak of light and that happened during the Devatron invasion, which is WEEKS ago now. We're really worried on what all of this may mean and thus, we're trying to find out what the streak of light, or "tear in the sky" whichever you prefer, is. I've got the theory that it's a random rift in the space-time continuum but there must be a logical theory and possibility behind it, it can't just be random. There has to be a reason for it."

"Hmm…I see." said Finitevus smoothly "Well, given my scientific intellect, I may be able to provide a helping hand in this situation. I will help you to figure out what this "tear in the sky" is all about. I humbly agree with you that there has to be a logical reasoning behind it Tails, everything happens, be it with rhyme or reason or a bit of both. Nothing ever happens with no rhyme or reason behind it after all."

"Yeah." said Tails "That's what we were doing before Eggman's robots interfered, we were studying the landscape to see if a streak of light will appear and see if we can find out what it is. Pity they destroyed our machine…"

"A most unfortunate outcome indeed." said Finitevus sadly "Well, maybe I could help you to build a new one and contribute to your research."

"That'll be swell Finitevus but the queen says we can just make the most of the day for now." said Tails "We'll study again tomorrow and maybe then, you could join us in our research efforts."

"Very well." said Finitevus "So nephew, would you and Sonic care to give me a tour of this most grand city?" he asked, turning to Knuckles "I'd very much like to see NewMobotropolis in all its glory."

"Sure uncle, I'll be happy to show you around." said Knuckles "But since this is Sonic's home city, he'll be a better tour guide so it's good you're inviting him too. Hey Sonic, you up for giving my uncle a tour of the city?" he asked.

"Don't see why not. Finny's on our side and anyone who's on my good side is deserving of a tour of my humble home." said Sonic casually "Come on Finitevus, I'll show you around the whole city if you like."

"That would be most delightful indeed Sonic." said Finitevus graciously.

"You have a nice tour Finitevus." said Sally kindly "It's been nice to meet you and I look forward to seeing you putting your scientific knowledge to good use when we next start studying for tears in the sky."

Finitevus bowed politely to Sally and he walked off with Sonic and Knuckles leading him out of the throne room. Tails, Sora and Cosmo went with them for they decided to join in with the tour of the city. As everybody walked out of the throne room, Sally sat down in her throne and thought to herself about Finitevus and what a good impression he seemed to be setting for himself.

"Well…first Tails get his sister back and now Knuckles gets his uncle back." she said to herself "Nice to see families coming back together lately, give us something nice to think about after all we've been through lately. I wonder if Finitevus will want to join the R.F.S.

at all…?" she wondered, putting a finger to her lips in thought "It certainly would be nice to have another scientist in our ranks. I wonder how good Finitevus is when he gets down to his science…"

Sally had a feeling she was going to see soon enough what Finitevus can do and it'd be sooner than she expected…

"OK Finitevus, you've just seen Castle Acorn so now let's begin this tour by showing you it's next-door neighbour." began Sonic "Just next to Castle Acorn, you will see none other than the Royal Fighters Service headquarters itself, Royal HQ."

He pointed to Royal HQ which stood proudly beside Castle Acorn as it always did. Sonic decided to start off the tour of New Mobotropolis by showing Finitevus around the rest of Castle Acorn and now they had finished with the castle, he felt that Royal HQ was the next best place to show Finitevus around. Finitevus looked at the base and observed its appearance, taking note of everything he looked at. Finitevus often liked to analyze what he was looking at and take note of what he could see and whatnot (he's a scientist, scientists like to analyze everything). He was quite impressed with Royal HQ's appearance.

"A very potent looking base indeed." he said "I do wonder if the insides match what the outside has to offer."

"Oh you'll love the inside of Royal HQ very much uncle." said Knuckles "Especially the lab, that's one of Royal HQ's most important bases after all."

"This base has a lab does it?" purred Finitevus "I look forward to seeing this lab."

"You'll see more than just the lab Finitevus." said Sonic, opening the door and letting everybody in "You'll get to meet the rest of our team too. I'll let you meet them first while we're looking through Royal HQ."

So the Mobians all walked into Royal HQ and Sonic led Finitevus

down the corridor into the rest room. He opened the door and walked into the rest room. There, he saw that all of his other friends were here and all busy chatting to one another. Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Ruben the Water Panther, Espio the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile and Charmy Bee were all here and all having a nice conversation with each other. They stopped chatting the moment Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Cosmo, Shade and Sora walked into the room though and they all smiled happily at the sight of them.

"Hey blue-dude and crew! Good to see you all back!" cried Mandy happily.

"So did my handsome hero find out anything at all?" asked Amy curiously.

"We didn't find out anything about the streak of light." said Sonic sadly "But we did find somebody…"

He stood to the side and allowed Finitevus to step forward and reveal himself. The albino echidna smiled at everybody whereas the Royal Fighters all looked at him funny as if they were staring at a talking cactus that's also wearing a sombrero. Geoffrey in particular seemed to have a rather disapproving look on his face as he saw Finitevus.

"Um…Sonic? Who's the weirdo in the cape?" asked Mandy with her face screwed up in disgust.

"Mandy! Don't be rude!" snapped Knuckles "This is my Uncle Finitevus and he's not happy to be called a weirdo so you'd better apologize to him now!"

"Knuckles please, I am used to insults like that nowadays." muttered Finitevus in annoyance "I grew up with comments like that directed at me."

"Oh sorry, I just can't stand it when people say things like that at you just because of your…distinctive appearance." said Knuckles.

"It is quite alright nephew, I appreciate your consideration for me."

said Finitevus softly.

Mandy stood up from her chair and walked up to Finitevus.

"Oh I'm so, so sorry for my comment sir." said Mandy "I should have been more considerate, really I should."

"Do not fret my child, it's alright." said Finitevus "No offence has been given to me. So, am I right to assume that you are all Royal Fighters and the team mates of Sonic the Hedgehog?"

"We sure are!" declared Amy excitedly "We're all the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters! My name's Amy Rose, soon to be Sonic's girlfriend. It's nice to meet you Mr…um…Fin…it…how do you pronounce that name of yours?"

"Fin-it-TEE-vus." explained Finitevus.

"Thank you." said Amy "It's nice to meet you Mr. Finitevus, especially since you're related to Knuckles. I can trust a relative of any good friend of mine I can." she added with a very bright smile on her lovely little face.

"My name's Cream the Rabbit Mr. Finitevus. How do you do?" Cream introduced in her usual polite attitude.

"My name's Mandy Mouse." said Mandy.

"I'm Wilson the Dog and I'm Mandy's husband." said Wilson, putting his arm around his wife as he said that.

"Howdy sir, ah'm Bunnie Rabbot." introduced Bunnie "Ah don't believe ah need to explain why ah'm called that." she giggled, flexing her robot arm and legs."

"I'm Geoffrey St. John." said Geoffrey, his face still rather grim and distrustful looking to Finitevus given his trust issues and how dodgy Finitevus looked.

"My name's Ruben the Water Panther." said Ruben, bowing politely "It's an honour meeting the uncle of Knuckles the Echidna."

"And we're Team Chaotix." said Vector, pointing to himself, Espio and Charmy "I'm Vector, this is Espio and this is Charmy. If you need us to find anything then give us a call and we'll be right over."

"So, you're Knuckles' uncle are you?" asked Espio "What do you do Finitevus?"

"I'm a scientist and I am among the best scientist on Angel Island." explained Dr. Finitevus "No mind on AngelIsland is as brilliant as mine and there is nothing that I cannot build or repair."

"Cool. Maybe you could fix our toaster since Vector's too incompetent to fix it after it broke the other day." said Charmy, snickering a little at what he said.

Vector shot a death glare at Charmy and he bared his teeth. Could he help it if he wasn't very good at fixing things? He sure wished Charmy would stop bringing up stuff like that, it kinda wounded Vector's pride and it didn't take much to wound Vector's pride what with him having quite a high opinion of himself. Finitevus however didn't seem to have noticed Charmy's remark for he gleamed over it and spoke to everybody.

"It is my utmost pleasure to meet you all." he said "I've heard many good things about you all, especially on what you've been through lately."

"Yeah, we've had quite a tough time lately." said Geoffrey "We've dealt with three different alien invasions, all not long after each other, and we've just recently brought Eggman down and he seemingly died when his ship crashed. We're making the most of the peace while we've got it at this moment."

"Very nice." said Finitevus "Anyways, I have been apprised on a so-called "tear in the sky" that you all are concerned about and I am going to join your research team in finding out what the cause behind them is and why they're happening."

"Oh cool." said Ruben brightly "It'll be nice to have another scientist, especially a good one, helping us out on this research mission. I bet you'll do really well if you're as good as you say you are sir."

"Thank you little boy." said Finitevus kindly.

"We're not going to be doing anymore research today though guys and girls." said Sonic "Katherine and some Eggman robots destroyed the machine we had for the job and it'll take a while before we can get a new one ready. Sally's letting us have the rest of the day off so we're just gonna kick back and relax."

"I see." said Amy "Well that just means me and you can do a lot of catching up Sonic, especially on our love life. I'm still eager to have a date with you since the last two we had got interrupted."

Sonic groaned at the very idea. Why had he ever decided to try and give Amy a chance and see if things will spark between him and her? Why couldn't he just say he'd decided that romance wasn't his thing and right about now, he wasn't ready for love yet? He'd say it some day, but not now since he didn't want to upset Amy in front of a guest.

"So anyways, you ready to see the rest of Royal HQ Finitevus?" asked Sonic tightly, hoping to get away from Amy before things could get uncomfortable "Your tour's only just begun."

Finitevus nodded and he waved goodbye to everybody. Everybody else waved goodbye to him and then Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Shade, Cosmo and Sora took Finitevus out of the room and led him off to Royal HQ's laboratory. The moment he left, the others began to talk to each other about him.

"Well, that Finitevus guy seems awfully nice." said Amy "I wonder if he'll join the Royal Fighters Service at all?"

"I hope he does." said Cream "You know what they say Miss Rose, the more the merrier. It'd be nice to have another person joining our team and expanding our forces."

"I agree love." said Geoffrey grimly "But I don't trust that Finitevus. He looks way too shifty to me."

"Oh Geoffrey, don't you DARE start that nonsense again!" snapped Mandy crossly "I know you have trust issues but you can't just

assume things about Finitevus because he "looks shifty"! I think he looks kinda creepy too but he's shown us that he's not as evil as his appearance suggests. He seems like a really OK dude to me."

"I know Mandy-girl but his appearance just really gives me bad vibes about him." said Geoffrey, shuddering "That cape, the black eyes, the bandaged hands and feet…that just doesn't look normal to me, especially on a good person."

"Maybe Finitevus just has a unique sense of fashion." suggested Wilson "And the black eyes, I don't think he can help that. He was probably born this way."

"Ah agree, same with the black markings on his head." added Bunnie "As for his hands and feet, ah think they're just bandaged because he's hidin' somethin' horrible or they're recovering from a bad injury. Ah don't think they're bandaged like that all the time."

"Maybe." said Geoffrey glumly "But I've got my eye on that blighter. I'm sure he's a good guy, what with him being related to Knuckles and all, but still it's worth making sure there's no foul play with him."

"Fair enough Geoffrey, just don't upset Knuckles if you're going to do that." said Wilson "We don't want to upset that spike-fisted hard-hitter do we?"

Geoffrey shook his head. Upsetting Knuckles was not a wise move at all so he was going to make sure that when keeping an eye on Finitevus, he didn't get on Knuckles' bad side at all. As for Sonic and the others, they had led Finitevus to the lab. Sonic opened the door and let himself in. But as he was doing that, Finitevus did something strange. Instead of going into the lab with them, he snuck off down the corridor and headed off to the door to the base. He went through the door and exited Royal HQ. The moment he left Royal HQ, he snapped his fingers and summoned a warp ring from his arm. The warp ring expanded to several times its size and he stepped through it instantly. The warp ring vanished into thin air, leaving no trace of him or itself behind. Back in the lab, Sonic and the others walked inside and Sonic began talking.

"And here we are Finitevus, the Royal HQ laboratory." said Sonic

cheerfully "You'll love it here, it's very hi-tech and has all that good science-y stuff that you scientists love so much…"

Sonic turned around and he noticed that Finitevus was gone. The hedgehog looked perplexed to see this and he put a hand to his head in wonder.

"Hey…where's Finitevus?" asked Sonic "He's gone."

"That is most puzzling, why did he just vanish like that?" asked Shade "I thought he wanted a tour of the city."

"Maybe he realized he had something important to do and warped off to get it done?" suggested Cosmo "Or maybe he wanted to see AngelIsland again for the first time in years and has gone there?"

"But why would he go without telling us?" asked Knuckles "This isn't in Uncle Finitevus' character at all. I hope he's OK, he did say that the void left a rather bad impact on him after all. I hope the void's not getting to him and making him act weird."

"Well he's got warp rings on him so I'm sure he'll come back to us soon." said Sonic "If he doesn't then I think we should go over and see if he's on Angel Island and see if he's OK."

Knuckles nodded agreeably. He really didn't want Finitevus to be feeling funny just shortly after being reunited with him after ten years. He hoped that his uncle was OK and that he would be back soon…

…but Knuckles was about to get the shock of his life for Dr. Finitevus had warped himself to Angel Island and was about to do something terrible. A warp ring opened up just above the Master Emerald shrine and Finitevus jumped through it. He landed on top of the Master Emerald, feeling the warm energy the emerald contained underneath his feet, and he smiled a devil's smile to himself as he looked at the Master Emerald he now stood upon.

"All too easy…" he purred evilly to himself "Fooling those simple-minded idiots into thinking I am innocent party was just as easy as I

expected it to be. Now thanks to them, I know where they live and where my master has been banished…"

He then took a warp ring off of his arm and placed it atop the Master Emerald, hopping off of the giant green gem as he did so. The Master Emerald's energy started to feed directly into the warp ring, causing it to glow a brilliant green colour as it did so. Finitevus was using the Master Emerald to super-charge his warp ring. He had lost his original Super Warp Ring after escaping the void but since he has plenty of warp rings (sixteen in total, four on each limb), he could easily get a replacement. After a minute or two, the warp ring was finally super charged by the Master Emerald and Finitevus eagerly grabbed it. He cackled maniacally at his now super-charged warp ring and he flicked it up into the air instantly, cackling as he did so.

"Now my master…time for you to come back to Mobius…and to Angel Island!" cried Finitevus in a crazed fashion as the Super Warp Ring opened up and a portal to the void opened up inside the ring.

This is why Finitevus needed to super-charge his warp ring, so he could open up a portal to the void. As for why he needed to open up a portal to the void, that answer was about to come for as soon as the warp ring opened up, something jumped out of it and landed on top of the Master Emerald, cackling maniacally as it did so. The warp ring closed up the moment the figure managed to get out of the void and Finitevus slipped it onto his arm. He smiled gleefully at the figure that now stood upon the Master Emerald, his evil laughter booming around the island as he cackled away. The figure was none other than the imposing and invincible Imperator Ix! Finitevus had opened up a portal to the void purely for the purpose of bringing Imperator Ix back to Angel Island! This is why Finitevus needed to reunite with Knuckles, so he could find out where Imperator Ix was since he had a feeling his nephew would know the whereabouts of the mad echidna and since Knuckles told him Ix was in the void, he knew where he'd need to open up a Super Warp Ring. Ix clenched his fists and Chaos Energy started crackling around him as he cackled gleefully. It was as if the Chaos Energy was feeling as excited as he was and was dancing around him for joy. Imperator Ix threw his arms up delightedly.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Let no joyful voice be heard! Let nobody look up to the sky with hope! And let this day be cursed for those who witness the return of IMPERATOR IX!" thundered Ix, his voice booming around the island like a terrible thunder storm.

"Master. It is good to have you back on the island you so rightfully deserve to rule." said Finitevus, bowing down loyally to the echidna in the armour and cape.

"You miserable wretched failure!" snarled Imperator Ix, glowering at Finitevus with his cold, ice blue eyes.

He then suddenly lashed out and seized the cloaked doctor by the neck and hoisted him up to his height. Finitevus gagged and choked loudly as Ix began to throttle him and he struggled in the Imperator's grasp.

"I ordered you to prepare Angel Island for my return!" bellowed Ix "The island was not prepared at all and I ended up getting defeated by the guardian and his friends and being banished to the void! You were supposed to get rid of the guardian and all the other guardians before me and the Nocturnus Clan made our takeover once I returned! Instead, I had to get rid of them all myself and Knuckles ended up goading my daughter into betrayal and getting me banished to the void! And also, you were supposed to be keeping me updated on Angel Island during the time I was sent away by you, which if you remember was just to save me from arrestment and to help me recover from the Chaos Control I was trapped in, and you didn't keep me updated in the slightest! Give me one good reason why I should keep you alive you worthless excuse for a minion!"

"Ack…I apologize for not…sticking to the plan master!" croaked Finitevus "Gack…hurk…I know what I was supposed to be doing! I just…ack…got fascinated by the void…and wanted to investigate it…and see if we could use it…to our advantage in anyway! Wheeze…my little science mission…just took longer than it…should have! I only just escaped last year and…I've spent most of my…time since the…recovering from the experience…ack!...and trying to find you! Thanks to my manipulation…and me being in Knuckles'…good books…I found out where you were…hurk…and now I've brought you back!"

Ix took in all of Finitevus' words and he dropped the doctor on the ground, making him gasp and splutter for breath as the air in his lungs began to return to him. Ix kept his steely gaze fixed on Finitevus and he folded his arms.

"I see." he said "I assure you though, the void will be of no use to us in this battle. The void cannot be controlled or used in anyway. However…we could banish Knuckles there as we take over Angel Island."

"Indeed we could master." said Finitevus with an evil smile on his face "But may I suggest something better than just taking control back of Angel Island? I think we should expand our empire to more than just Angel Island. We deserve more power than just control over a measly floating island. That and more than just Knuckles needs to pay for this anarchy that was carried out against you."

"I agree apprentice." said Ix grimly "Those disgusting Royal Fighters helped Knuckles to stop me and throw me into the void. They must all pay too! I shall make Angel Island my own and then take over the residence of the Royal Fighters!"

"Then you will delight in knowing that I know where the Royal Fighters are currently living." purred Finitevus darkly "They live in a city called "New Mobotropolis" and I know exactly where it is…"

"Do you?" said Ix delightedly "Well then let us go over to New Mobotropolis and conquer it! Make those Royal Fighters pay for contributing to my exile!"

"Indeed master." said Finitevus happily "And Knuckles & Shade are over at NewMobotropolis too so we can make them suffer too."

"Even better!" cried Ix delightedly "Let us go over immediately and take over the city! We're bringing AngelIsland with us too as a sign of our tyranny and oppression. It'll strike plenty of fear into the heroes for sure…"

"I'm onboard with this idea master." said Finitevus, climbing up the Master Emerald shrine and walking up to the Master Emerald "And I shall perform the Chaos Control since I know exactly where we need

to go."

Finitevus stood upon the Master Emerald and he yelled at the top of his voice "Chaos…CONTROL!" The Master Emerald glowed a brilliant green flash of light as he activated the Chaos Control. The light expanded to all around Angel Island and then suddenly, in the blink of an eye…Angel Island in it's entirety completely vanished into thin air! Angel Island was just…gone in a flash of light! The Chaos Control had taken Angel Island and now it was going all the way over to New Mobotropolis where Finitevus and Imperator Ix could begin a most terrifying takeover…a VERY terrifying takeover indeed. What had been a day of good fortune was now going to become one of the scariest days of Sonic's life…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front

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So how about that then? Dr. Finitevus from Archie Sonic fame is in this story now! And what a debut for him since he's brought Imperator Ix back from the void! Will he and Ix take over New Mobotropolis? Will Sonic and friends be able to stop the two albino echidnas? Or is the end about to come for them...?

Hey speedox12, Prowerpower85, Alma Von Arena and BlackStormNomad, are you all still enjoying the story? If so, what do you think to the recent chapters and how was this one? Was it good?

Thrown into the Void Part 1

Story 146: Thrown Into The Void Part 1: The Takeover

"Hurry up Sonic! Sandy the Ferret's concert is about to begin soon!" cried Amy Rose eagerly, dragging Sonic by the arm and into the bustling crowds that were building up inside the New Mobotropolis Coliseum.

"OK, OK, OK! Calm down Amy! I'm only just beside you! I'm not gonna be late!" sighed Sonic in annoyance as he was dragged through the crowds of people by Amy. If Amy dragged him any harder than his arm might detach from his shoulder.

A good few minutes had passed since the rather sinister but seemingly good Dr. Finitevus had vanished from New Mobotropolis during his tour of the city and now Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends were going to a concert that was being hosted in the New Mobotropolis Coliseum. The concert was hosted by the popular rock star, Sandy the Ferret, and the concert was being made to celebrate Dr. Eggman's demise (or so they thought). Sonic and friends were ecstatic to see the concert and right now, it was about to begin so the Royal Fighters were all taking their places in the crowd and awaiting for this blast of a concert to begin. Hopefully, this one wouldn't be abruptly halted like it was when the Devatrons first came to Mobius and began their attempted takeover of the planet several weeks ago. It didn't seem like this concert was going to be ruined though. Eggman is dead (at least that's what the Mobians have concluded since his ship crashed and his body was never found, nor did they witness any escape pods or anything coming from the ship when it crash), no villains were at large at the moment for most of them (Scourge, Fiona, Team Diamond and others) are incarcerated and ones like Blizzard and Ravage are in hiding and no aliens were invading or even coming to Mobius right now. So at this minute, there was near-to-nothing to ruin this concert. It seemed that things would go without a hitch for once. Sonic was sure hoping that this would be the case since as much as he loved adventure and such, even he didn't mind having a quiet moment for a change. He was

hoping to make the most of the relative peace he and his friends had before anything bad started happening again so he was hoping that this concert would go well and nothing would ruin it. In the crowd, Sonic and Amy managed to make it to the front row, which was reserved specially for the Royal Fighters given their rather renowned status and place in the city. They weren't in a row of seats, they were among the people standing on the grass and looking up at the stage while more people were piled up in the seats further back. The Royal Fighters were allowed to stand up front since they were deserving of what is often considered to be the best view of the concert. As Sonic and Amy took their spaces next to Tails the Fox and Knuckles the Echidna, they looked up at the stage and Amy beamed happily at the sight of it.

"Oooh, I'm so excited!" she squealed "I'm right here at the New Mobotropolis Coliseum with my handsome hero Sonic the Hedgehog and just about to watch a brilliant concert by Sandy the Ferret, one of my all time favourite singers ever! Eeeeeee! I can barely contain myself!"

"I'm glad you're excited Amy." said Sonic, holding Amy's hand to settle her down "I'm looking forward to this too, especially as it's all about us finally being rid of Dr. Eggman. Although one part of me tells me that he's still alive and that our battle isn't over yet…" he murmured, his face falling as he thought about Eggman just suddenly emerging from nowhere and wrecking the entire concert.

"Oh come on Sonic, we all know Eggman's dead!" snapped Amy "We all saw what happened to him! His ship crashed down and we saw no escape pods ejecting from the ship so he can't possibly have escaped from the ship and made it out alive! How can you possibly doubt he's dead Sonic?"

"Well it's just…Eggman often comes back when we think we've defeated him." noted Sonic "And I have a feeling that this'll be another case of him coming back just when we think we've defeated him once and for all. I WANT to believe Eggman's gone forever but I just can't bring myself to think that because I have this doubting feeling that he really is gone for good."

"That's too bad Sonic." said Tails pityingly "Well, please don't worry

about Eggman. Just enjoy this concert and party on with everybody. We earned this celebration after all we've done recently."

"Yeah Sonic, forget about Eggman and just enjoy the concert." said Amy, putting her arms around Sonic and squeezing him affectionately "We're all here to have a good time after all."

"OK, OK, I'll not let my worries get to me." said Sonic, casually pushing Amy away from him "I'll just enjoy this celebration of our victory and us finally being rid of Eggman, even if I don't yet feel that way. Say Knuckles, you still concerned for Finitevus at all since he hasn't come back yet?" he asked, noting that Knuckles still seemed to be somewhat concerned about something.

"I am a little Sonic but Finitevus hasn't been gone for too long so I'm not too worried about him." said Knuckles "Besides, it's kinda good he left since he doesn't really do music, especially concerts. He wouldn't have wanted to stick around for this."

"I see." said Sonic "Still, would be nice to show Finitevus the coliseum along with the rest of the city before the concert started. Oh well, we've got next time when he decides to come back."

"I'm still wondering why he blatantly left us without even telling us he was going." said Shade the Echidna, shaking her head a little "I don't know Finitevus as well as you do Knuckles but I think it seems a bit strange for him to just blatantly leave like that."

"It is Shade but I'm sure Uncle Finitevus will tell us what the deal was when he comes back." said Knuckles, putting an arm around Shade and pulling her close to him "Maybe he wanted to deal with something privately or whatever. I'm sure it's nothing bad."

"I'm sure it isn't too." said Shade, holding Knuckles' hand and nuzzling his cheek with her cheek.

Knuckles smiled at his girlfriend and he returned the nuzzle. As the two echidnas enjoyed the hug they were giving each other, the concert stage began to light up brightly and Sandy the Ferret herself strode proudly up onto the stage. The ferret was now wearing a long, flowing purple dress that sparkled like diamonds on the

illuminated stage she stood proudly upon and the dress was accompanied with a lavender coloured sash. Sandy held her arms out to the sides and beamed happily as the crowd started to explode in tumultuous applause over her. Cameras clicked and flashed as photographs were taken by the dozen of her and people cheered and screamed her name, clearly delighted to see the rock star again. Sandy bowed graciously to the crowd and blew some kisses out to everybody, marvelling in the applause she was receiving. This is why she loved being a rock star, she loved all the attention she received from her adoring fans. Sandy stepped up to the microphone and she spoke into it.

"Hello people of New Mobotropolis! I'm the rockin' rock-star you all know and love, Sandy the Ferret, and I'm here to begin my newest concert!" she shrieked into the microphone "Are you ready to rock everybody?!"

Her response was an uproar of applause that was so loud that even the demons in the pits of hell would have to bang upon the ceiling and start moaning at the crowd to keep it down up there. Sandy continued.

"Well then let's get this party STARTED!" she bellowed loudly "But first, we have a special introduction for this concert. Her royal highness herself, Queen Sally Acorn, is going to deliver a speech that will set the tone of this concert for the next couple of hours so let's give it up for our beloved queen everybody! Go ballistic for Queen Sally Acorn!"

The crowd cheered at the top of their voices, especially the Royal Fighters, as Sally stood shyly out of the crowd headed towards the stage. Her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx cheered happily for her best friend and was eagerly awaiting for Sally to begin her speech. The spot light shone over Sally as she stepped up onto the stage and walked over to the microphone. Sandy respectfully stood aside and curtseyed to Sally out of respect for her. Sally smiled and she stood in front of the microphone. She tapped on it to see if it was working. A boom of reverberation rung around the coliseum as she tapped it, meaning the microphone was on and working. The crowd fell silent as Sally put her hands behind her back and prepared to start speaking, eager to hear what she was going to say. Many

members were staring in amazement at Sally's change in attire, taking note that it seemed strange for her to be dressed in a crop-top, open vest and shorts. Sally cleared her throat and spoke into the microphone.

"I would like to start off by saying that I am honoured to be the queen of such a wonderful city full of wonderful people." said Sally, showing no signs of anxiousness or discomfort as she spoke "And I am especially honoured to be the woman in charge of the Royal Fighters Service. They have risked life and limb for all of us and it is thanks to them that we can enjoy this magnificent concert and finally enjoy our lives without any worries about Dr. Eggman. They have been an inspiration to us all, especially me. I ended up deciding to join in the Royal Fighters' battles since I was so inspired and motivated by their valour and heroism. Thus, I changed my attire and started learning some new fighting skills. While I won't really get to use my new skills to save you all from Dr. Eggman, I will contribute to any new mission the Royal Fighters get over time for there is more to their jobs then just fighting Dr. Eggman. I hope that I will be an inspiration to you all and I hope that the next person to take the throne from me will be as inspirational as I am. As for today, we will sit back, relax and party for Dr. Eggman is finally finished and gone for good. This is a happy time of celebration and joy and I hope you all have a good time. I myself am looking forward to all the fun we're going to have. So that's it for my speech, thank you all for listening and enjoy the concert. Thank you for being such wonderful people to have in my kingdom and special thanks to the Royal Fighters for inspiring me to become a fighter and to fight for my kingdom in bigger ways than ever before." she said, putting a hand over her heart "Have a good concert everybody."

Sally smiled at the crowd and she stood back from the microphone. She stepped down from the stage and took her place back in the crowd. What followed this lovely speech was a loud applause of acclaim from the audience. They screamed so loudly for joy that you'd think their voices were going to give out on them. The Royal Fighters cheered louder than anybody else in the crowd for they loved the speech and were flattered to hear that they had been such an inspiration to their kind-hearted queen. Now Sally's speech was done, the concert could begin and everybody could start having a

good time. Unfortunately though, nothing good was going to happen from this point onwards for just as Sandy stepped towards the microphone and was ready to start singing, a bright green flash of light start shining brightly above New Mobotropolis and everybody stared at it in horror, thinking that something bad was happening. Sandy saw it and she instantly grew worried over the sight of the light.

"Oh no! Have aliens come to interrupt my concert again?!" she cried in despair.

The Royal Fighters all stared up at the flashing light in wonder.

"Oh now what?!" whined Sonic.

"Just when things look like they're going to go well for once, something starts happening!" cried Sally "What's going on up there?!"

"It's not another tear in the sky is it?" asked Tails worriedly.

"Can't be, this looks different to the tear in the sky." said Knuckles "This looks more like…a Chaos Control!"

"But what's Chaos Controlling over the city?" asked Amy in fright "It looks awfully big!"

She soon received her answer for the green light eventually died down and revealed what it was all about. The crowd erupted into gasps of horror as they stared up at the sky and saw none other than Angel Island, looming ominously over the city and blanketing it in a huge shadow as it blocked out the sunlight from up above. The crowd started to murmur in worry, thinking that something terrible was happening right now. Knuckles and Shade was so gobsmacked to see Angel Island here that they almost passed out in shock.

"ANGEL ISLAND?!" they both shrieked in disbelief at once.

"What the cuss is Angel Island doing up there?!" blurted Sonic in confusion "It's supposed to be over Downunda! Why is it all the way over here?!"

"Did somebody Chaos Control the entire island here?" asked Tails "Why would somebody do that? As a matter of facts…who did this and why?"

"I have a feeling we're about to find out Tails…" said Sonic grimly as he stared up at AngelIsland.

And Sonic was right on that for after Angel Island had finished materializing into place, two figures jumped down from the island and one of them summoned a warp ring underneath them. The figures fell through the warp ring and they reappeared through a warp ring that appeared just above the stage. They fell through the warp ring and landed down heavily onto the stage, the impact booming through the microphone and causing it to be amplified. Knuckles and Shade stared in horror at the figures that stood on the stage before everybody. The two figures were Imperator Ix and Dr. Finitevus! The Royal Fighters stared at Ix in terror and they instantly began shrieking in fright at him.

"Imperator Ix?!" cried Sonic "No way! It can't possibly be him!"

"I'm afraid it is…" said Shade hoarsely "And he'll be coming…for me!"

"How can this be?! I banished Ix into the void!" shouted Knuckles "How did he possibly managed to get back?!"

"I bet Finitevus had something to do with that…" said Sonic grimly "Look at him standing beside Ix and looking all delighted and evil! I bet Finitevus brought Ix back here and is really on his side!"

"But…but…but Uncle Finitevus is a good guy!" cried Knuckles "He helped to get rid of Ix all those years ago! Why would he serve him?!"

"Why don't you ask him yourself?" snorted Sonic "He's up on the stage for you after all."

Knuckles stared up at Finitevus and waited to see what he was going to do. He soon found out for Finitevus stood forward and he spoke into the microphone.

"Greetings people of New Mobotropolis." he purred, his evil voice booming around the concert as he spoke into the microphone "My name is Dr. Finitevus and I am here along with my master Imperator Ix to deliver a very serious penance to all of you. My master will explain everything to you now."

He stood aside as Imperator Ix stood forward and he addressed the frightened crowd he stood before on the stage.

"People of New Mobotropolis!" he boomed at the top of his powerful voice "I am Imperator Ix and I am here to deliver you this message! Your local heroes, the Royal Fighters, have committed a very serious crime on my home of AngelIsland! They assisted in overthrowing me from my seat of power and committed anarchy against me and they are to be sentenced to a life of imprisonment! I am here to take over your city and to punish the Royal Fighters for wrongfully exiling me and overthrowing me from my rightful place as ruler of AngelIsland!"

"We'll see about that Imperator Ick-Face!" yelled Sonic, jumping up from the crowd and spin-dashing towards Imperator Ix.

Finitevus however was quick to save his master from a powerful attack by tossing a warp ring in front of him. Sonic ended up spin-dashing through the warp ring and the warp ring took him to directly in front of the crowd. Sonic hurled out of the warp ring and he knocked down the entire front row accidentally. The crowd all stepped back and ran for it as the Royal Fighters were knocked down accidentally by Sonic. Ix clenched his fists angrily and he pointed sharply at Sonic.

"You DARE To assault me?!" he bellowed "I'll have your head for this!"

"No master, you are not fit for combat without your staff." said Finitevus, stopping Ix by holding up his arm and keeping him back "I will deal with the Royal Fighters myself. I have the skills for it after all."

"Very well, I shall let you beat the Royal Fighters up and put them in their places." purred Ix darkly.

Finitevus smiled evilly and he hopped off the stage and stood before the Royal Fighters. He smiled darkly at them as they all picked themselves up. They all glared at him, their faces contorted with loathing and they were ready to beat the stuffing out of the caped doctor with the many warp rings.

"You traitor!" snarled Knuckles "You were working for Imperator Ix all along! I can't believe I never worked that out!"

"I KNEW I shouldn't trust a guy in a cape!" yelled Sonic "I KNEW you looked dodgy the moment I saw you Finitevus and you're gonna pay for your manipulation!"

"You're disgusting!" said Tails crossly "How could you play us all like saps and fool us into thinking you were innocent and that you were good?!"

"Looks like for once, I was right to distrust somebody!" muttered Geoffrey St. John as he loaded his crossbow and prepared to shoot Finitevus was it.

"Why Finitevus? Why?" asked Shade "Why are you working for Imperator Ix?"

"Because Imperator Ix was in the right all along." explained Dr. Finitevus "I believed he was right to lower Angel Island once we rose it up. We rose it up ONLY to avoid that comment that nearly caused zero hour for us all. We agreed to lower it once the comet had passed and what happened? Those senile old fools we called "rulers" decided they liked it BETTER up in the sky where it will be an easy target for many an evil-doer and where it is vulnerable to more than it ever has been before! I'm working for Imperator Ix because I care about the safety of Angel Island and its citizens! Unfortunately, the elders were short-sighted and couldn't see how moronic their ideas were! I didn't rebel against them for Ix was all I needed to express my opinions on the whole matter. I only warped him away from the island so he could recover from his Chaos Control and come back. I ended up getting sidetracked by my visit to the void though so Ix ended up striking prematurely and without me. I roamed most of Mobius trying to find him and now thanks to you all, I found out that Ix had been exiled to the void and thus, I brought

him back. Ix's exile is undeserved and you all should be ashamed for imprisoning a man who's just trying to keep Angel Island safe from destruction that is more liable to come to is now it is up in the sky and sticking out like a sore thumb for anybody around!"

"Imperator Ix murdered the elders! Why should he be allowed what he wants after doing that?!" screamed Knuckles "Besides, the elders decide what happens to AngelIsland! Not Ix! He has no right to pontificate to them and tell them what's right and wrong for us all! The elders were wise and they would not leave AngelIsland up in the sky if they knew it was going to be dangerous!"

"So naive…" said Finitevus angrily "I'm ashamed to call you my nephew Knuckles! You have way too much of my idiot brother Locke in your veins you do. The elders knew NOTHING about what was good for AngelIsland and me and Ix are going to show how wrong they were by putting AngelIsland where it belongs and making it safe for years to come!"

"You cannot defy the laws of the island!" yelled Shade "That is high treason and you will be arrested for such treason against the island!"

"You are one to talk Shade considering you used to work for Ix!" snapped Finitevus "Besides, YOU are the ones who will be arrested! Arrested for preventing Imperator Ix from doing what is right and committing anarchy against him! Your crimes are far greater then any crime that can be committed!"

"Blah, blah, blah! Shut up and stand down Finitevus!" snapped Sonic "You and Ix are not welcome here so get lost or get beaten up by us all!"

"No, me and Ix will stay right here and get the justice we so rightfully deserve." said Finitevus coldly "And you will have to fight me if you wish for me and Ix to leave this city."

"I'll gladly fight you Finitevus." said Knuckles crossly "Any traitor to Angel Island deserves no mercy from me! Even if you are my uncle!"

With that said, Knuckles thundered towards Dr. Finitevus and he raised his fists. He punched at Finitevus and…the albino-furred

echidna just leaned his head to one side and dodged the punch! Knuckles threw several punches at Finitevus but the evil echidna in the black cape dodged them all with ease by bending to one side and causing Knuckles to miss. Knuckles threw an uppercut at Dr. Finitevus but Finitevus bent over backwards to dodge the attack. He then threw himself forwards and he head-butted Knuckles in the face. Knuckles staggered backwards, clutching his nose in pain and Finitevus uppercut him in the chin. Knuckles threw a punch at Finitevus but he back flipped away and dodged the punch. Knuckles chased after Finitevus and tried to catch him but Finitevus cart-wheeled away from Knuckles and then back-flipped onto the stage. Sandy was still on the stage for she was too frightened to move and Finitevus grabbed her. He shoved the horrified ferret into Knuckles, knocking him down before he could climb onto the stage. Sandy picked herself up and belted it fast before she could get hurt. Knuckles climbed up onto the stage only for Finitevus to kick him off of it. The Royal Fighters could sense that Knuckles needed some help so they all ran up towards the stage, ready to help Knuckles. Little did they realize is that Finitevus' fighting prowess is cranked up by a lot of notches when he has an environment full of objects he can use. Wilson the Dog climbed up onto the stage and he deployed his spinning blade weapon. He threw it at Finitevus but the echidna dodged the attack and the blade boomeranged back over to Wilson. Finitevus grabbed the microphone and he thrust it stand-first at Wilson, hitting him in the gut and making him double over in pain. Finitevus then used the microphone to pole vault himself up into the air and he dropkicked Wilson directly off the stage. Mandy Mouse was next to attack and she climbed onto the stage. She had her knuckle attachments on already and she threw some punches at Finitevus. Finitevus just dodged the punches with ease and he whacked Mandy on the head with the microphone stand. Mandy groaned loudly and she clutched her head, easing the pain as it flared up in her head. Finitevus then tripped Mandy up by taking her legs out from underneath her with the microphone stand. Mandy quickly picked herself up and punched at Finitevus. The doctor back-flipped away from her and he leaped up onto a stage light. He kicked the light sharply and caused it to lower down and shine directly in Mandy's eyes. Mandy shielded her eyes from the blinding, dazzling light that was shining on her and Finitevus cackled at her. He kicked the light so hard that it came of its hinges and it landed

directly on top of her! Mandy groaned in pain as the light landed on top of her. She was left feeling very sore indeed from that. Finitevus jumped down from the steel beams above the stage and he kicked the light off of Mandy like a football. It hurled off the stage and it crashed directly into Cosmo the Seedrian, knocking her off her feet and lying beside her on the ground. The light was now twisted and broken and beyond use. Shade somersaulted onto the stage and she slashed at Finitevus with her trademark twin blades. Finitevus dodged the attack and he rolled away from her. He picked up the microphone stand again and he swung it at Shade. Shade blocked the attack and she chopped the microphone stand in half. Finitevus now had one half of the stand with the microphone in one hand and half a stand with the base of the stand in the other hand. He didn't seem phased by this though. He just held the base half out like a shield just as Shade Blade-Rushed him. The microphone stand base took the blow and Finitevus threw it at Shade. Shade sliced it to pieces and she ran up to Finitevus with her blades glowing brightly. She slashed at Finitevus only for him to roll out of the way and then butt her in the back of her head with the microphone. He then started to swing the microphone around like a nunchaku and he walloped Shade as hard as he could with it. Shade was thrown down onto her knees by the attack and Finitevus threw the microphone around her ankles. It wrapped around her ankles and tied her legs together. Finitevus pulled on it and pulled Shade towards himself. He kicked Shade off the stage as hard as he could and the poor echidna was left lying on the ground, grimacing in pain and trying to work out what hit her. Finitevus cackled at the opponents he had just taken down so far.

"You have no idea what you're up against…" he sneered.

Tails decided he was going to attack next. He flew towards Finitevus with his fists clenched and he attempted to punch Finitevus. However, Finitevus just swung the microphone around and he smacked Tails in the head with it. Tails ended up dive-bombing down into the stage thanks to the microphone hitting him and Finitevus immediately threw him off of the stage. He then jumped up onto another stage light and he kicked it off of its hinges. The light came down with a heavy crash, the light bulb shattering to pieces as it hit the floor of the stage. Finitevus then picked up the light and he

threw it at Tails. The light hit Tails and knocked him clean off of the stage. Finitevus somersaulted off of the stage and he landed between Sally and Nicole. The two ladies prepared to deck him but Finitevus split-kicked and knocked them both down onto their back. Amy ran in and tried to whack Finitevus with her hammer. Finitevus just grabbed her wrists and ended up wrestling with Amy for control of the hammer. Amy fought back hard but she couldn't stop Finitevus from shifting her hammer into the way of a punching Knuckles. The hammer ended up blocking Knuckles' punch and giving Finitevus a chance to kick Knuckles in the thigh and bring him down. He thrust Amy's arms and Amy accidentally ended up hitting Knuckles with her hammer. Finitevus then twisted Amy's wrists and wrestled the hammer out of her hands. Tails flew up behind Finitevus and tried to pile-dive him but Finitevus heard him coming and he swung the hammer directly into Tails' face. Tails was brought down onto the ground, clutching his face in excruciating pain after being hit by Amy's Piko-Piko hammer. Amy tried to get free from Finitevus' grasp but the evil echidna had hold of her hands very tightly. Cosmo and Cream ran up to try and help Amy but Finitevus threw Amy up into the air and sent her spiralling towards the two girls. Amy crashed into Cream and Cosmo and she knocked them both off of their feet. Team Chaotix ran up to Finitevus and the three detectives tried to attack him. Vector the Crocodile lashed out at Finitevus and he tried to chomp on him with his jaws. Finitevus dodged the attack as if it was nothing and when Vector lashed out again, Finitevus grabbed his jaws and clamped them shut. Vector tried to open them again but Finitevus' surprising strength kept them shut. Charmy buzzed towards the doctor and attempted to sting him but Finitevus held Vector's jaws in the way, leaving Charmy to accidentally sting Vector on the nose. Vector yelped in pain and a huge sore-spot appeared on his nose from the sting. Finitevus laughed at Vector's misfortune and he dropkicked Charmy down into the ground. Espio threw some kunai at him but Finitevus used a warp ring to shield himself and send the kunai hurling elsewhere. Espio jumped up into the air and he tried to dropkick Finitevus but Finitevus caught his foot and threw him away. Espio landed on the ground and ran towards Finitevus again but the echidna used a warp ring to send him away and drop him on top of Vector. Bunnie and Geoffrey were next to try their luck against the slippery echidna now. Bunnie punched at Finitevus but he ducked to avoid the punch

and he sharply poked Bunnie in the gut. Bunnie fought the pain in her gut and she threw another punch. Finitevus caught her robot arm and forced it behind her back. Bunnie tried to get free but surprisingly, Finitevus was too strong for her to break free of. The doctor was a lot stronger than his appearance suggested. Geoffrey aimed his crossbow at Finitevus but he held Bunnie in front of himself, leaving Geoffrey now aiming it at her. Geoffrey stopped himself quickly before he could accidentally shoot Bunnie. Finitevus then kicked Bunnie directly into Geoffrey and the skunk caught her before she could knock him over. Bunnie punched at Finitevus, extending her robot arm out to hit him without having to get close to him, but Finitevus used a warp ring to send Bunnie's punch elsewhere. And by elsewhere I mean, in the back of Geoffrey's head. The punch threw Geoffrey off of his feet and sent him sprawling on the ground. Bunnie gasped in horror and she ran furiously towards Finitevus. The evil echidna however took a warp ring off of his wrist and threw it at Bunnie like a Frisbee. It pinged off of her face and made her grimace in pain. Finitevus caught the warp ring and he opened it up. He went through it and re-appeared behind Bunnie. He dropkicked her in the back and sent her hurling forwards. Sora ran in and she tried to grab Finitevus but she missed as he ducked, causing her to sail over him, and he grabbed her by the tail. He threw her across the battlefield and sent her hurling into Tails. Finitevus dusted his hands off and he smirked at the Royal Fighters as they all struggled back onto their feet and tried to remain standing.

"You're all pathetic." he sneered "I'm not even breaking a sweat out here. I'm just getting warmed up."

But then suddenly, somebody FINALLY managed to land a blow on Finitevus. It was Sonic the Hedgehog. He'd spin-dashed Finitevus in the back and sent him hurling near the stage. Finitevus groaned in pain and he picked himself up, cursing Sonic for getting the drop on him. Sonic gritted his teeth and glared at Finitevus.

"Nobody beats up my friends like this!" he growled "I'm gonna make chilli-sauce out of you Finitevus!"

"Just try it hedgehog, I'm beyond what you've ever faced before…" purred Finitevus darkly.

Sonic rushed towards Finitevus and he tried to tackle him but Finitevus back-flipped onto the stage. This caused Sonic to crash into the stage and groan in pain as he crashed into it. Sonic climbed onto the stage and he spin-dashed Finitevus in the gut. Finitevus hurled backwards into a large speaker. Fortunate for him though since he had something to use as a weapon now. Sonic prepared to attack Finitevus again but Finitevus jumped behind the speaker and then kicked it towards Sonic. The speaker crashed into Sonic and knocked him down onto his back. Finitevus pushed the speaker down onto its front in an attempt to crush Sonic but Sonic simply held his hands up and saved himself from being squished by the speaker. Sonic pushed the speaker off of himself, the speaker now lying on its side next to him, and he leaped back onto his feet. He punched at Finitevus as furiously as he could only for Finitevus to effortlessly dodge the attacks and he back-flipped, kicking Sonic as his legs went up and over with his body. Sonic staggered backwards and Finitevus ran over to a nearby fire-extinguisher (the stage has one for in case it catches fire of course). He grabbed the fire-extinguisher and he aimed the nozzle at Sonic. He blasted Sonic with a jet of foam, causing Sonic to cough and splutter as he was covered in foam and his vision was impaired by it. Finitevus then held the fire-extinguisher by the nozzle and spun the bottle around by the nozzle! Sonic wiped the foam out of his eyes only for Finitevus to wallop him with the fire extinguisher. Sonic was sent hurling across the stage and he came down with a heavy crash onto his back. The other Royal Fighters ran onto the stage to help Sonic fight off the mad doctor. Finitevus however did something strange. He took the clasps off of his cape and he took his cape off of his shoulders. Knuckles punched at him but Finitevus stepped aside and wrapped his cape around Knuckles' face. Knuckles pulled on the cape as hard as he could but Finitevus was too strong for him. Finitevus pulled on the cape, taking Knuckles with him and he swung him into the Royal Fighters. He sent many of them hurling across the stage as he walloped them with Knuckles. Finitevus then threw the capeupwards and sent Knuckles spiralling towards Shade, who was lying near the speaker that had been used earlier. Knuckles landed on top of Shade and knocked her off her feet. Finitevus then twisted his capearound and he whipped Knuckles with it like some childish person whipping someone with a kitchen towel. Knuckles winced as he was whipped by the cape and

Finitevus put it back on. Sally lunged at Finitevus with her bladed staff but Finitevus caught the staff in his hands and he threw Sally over his shoulder. Sally landed on her face directly in front of Sonic. This provoked Nicole and made her try to attack Finitevus. Finitevus just simply gut-punched Nicole and brought her down onto her knees. Sonic and Sally picked themselves up and they panted heavily.

"Man! Dr. Finitevus is one serious fighter!" cried Sonic "Who taught him how to fight?! He's worse than even Metal Sonic!"

"I dunno." said Sally "He's definitely no push-over that's for sure. Knuckles, is Finitevus usually this powerful?"

"No." said Knuckles "Or at least I don't think so. I've never seen him fight before."

"Indeed nephew." sneered Finitevus "I kept my fighting prowess secret so that when I used it on you and the other guardians, I'd have the element of surprise. My fighting prowess stems from filling myself up with Chaos Energy and a lot of callous training from Imperator Ix, all done in secret of course. I filled myself up with Chaos Energy whenever I got a moment to use the Master Emerald alone. Only until I ended up in the void did I get to put my battle skills to the test. It's precisely my skills that helped me to survive the void in the first place. And now you've just witnessed how formidable an opponent I am…"

"Indeed we have." said Sonic "But we'll still bring you down Dr. Finitevus!"

Sonic's little statement was met with mocking laughter from the maniacal echidna scientist.

"Even after I beat you all into the dirt, you STILL have the gall to think you can beat me?!" snorted Finitevus "You pathetic Royal Fighters are the embodiment of obstinacy! Your stubbornness is so over-bearing that it's a miracle you fools haven't perished yet! How you survive your encounters with Dr. Eggman just obfuscates the mind trying to comprehend this implausibility!"

That statement made the Royal Fighters all glare at Finitevus in rage, every one of them itching to beat the stuffing out of him.

"Finitevus, you don't have to do this!" cried Knuckles desperately, pleading that there was at least some shrewd sense of decency left in his uncle "You don't have to serve Imperator Ix! I mean look at yourself, you've just taken all of us down with little effort! You could help us bring down Imperator Ix before he can doom us all again!"

"And why would I do something as moronic as that nephew?" snapped Finitevus "Ix is by far the most pragmatic and logical of all the echidnas. HE is the one we should be following! His decisions and choices are the ones that should motivate the echidnas for generations to come. His desire to keep the island safe will allow our existence to prolong and continue whereas your precious elders' moronic ideas will get us all blown out of the sky!"

"Ix is no better than the elders!" retorted Knuckles "When he tried to take back AngelIsland last year, he corrupted the Master Emerald, filled himself with Dark Chaos Energy and actually attempted to destroy the world! Is this someone you want to be serving?! You're many things uncle but you're surely not nihilistic are you?!"

"Bah, Dark Chaos Energy can make you act far from lucid." scoffed Finitevus "Ix wouldn't have to resort to tactics like that if you all just listened to him and heeded his warnings about what will happen if Angel Island stays afloat instead of being down on the ground where it belongs. You and the other idiots drove him to that kind of insanity."

"Indeed you're right my apprentice." boomed Ix, stepping down from the stage and striding up to Finitevus and the Royal Fighters proudly, his cape trailing behind him as he walked "I had no desire to take such extremes in lowering the island but because the elders are short-sighted and cannot see that my statements are correct and for the good of our home, they forced me to submit to anarchy and thus, led to my unwarranted exile. If you'd open your eyes instead of blindly following your hubristic father and the idiot elders then me and Finitevus wouldn't be punishing you all right now."

"While you do make good points against the island staying afloat, it's

still treasonous to rebel against the laws of the island!" screamed Knuckles "And besides, you two should respect the laws of Angel Island and if you did then Ix wouldn't have been exiled into the void and I wouldn't have lost my father!"

"A law will only be respected if the reasoning behind it is pragmatic and logical!" thundered Ix "A law that is neither of those things should not be respected at all! And to the void with your father! He was as idiotic as all the others who dared to oppose me!"

That did it. Knuckles lunged up towards Imperator Ix, his face contorting with uncontrollable rage and his fists clenched so hard that his fists were probably as white as his gloves now and his arms drawn so far back that it was a miracle that Knuckles' arms hadn't dislocated from his shoulders yet. He was going to give Ix one heck of a serious beat down just for chastising his feather like that. But unfortunately, his punches never got to connect with Ix's face for Dr. Finitevus opened up a warp ring in front of Ix and sent Knuckles flying through it. The ring opened up directly above the ground and Knuckles ended up falling out of it and crashing face-first into the ground. Knuckles picked himself up only for Ix to throw a Doom Orb sphere at him. Knuckles was sent hurling forwards by the attack and he lay on his back, groaning in pain, a few feet away from everybody. Everybody gasped for poor Knuckles and Ix just cackled at the hot-headed echidna that was a big nuisance to him.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! As before, you're just dust to sweep away Knuckles!" crowed Ix "Dust that me and my apprentice can both sweep away together! You have no chance against me now! I was invincible when I was on my own and with the Nocturnus Clan so what chance do you have against me AND Finitevus both together?"

"In case you've forgotten big-head, you're quite easy to defeat when you don't have your staff." snorted Sonic "You couldn't fight us all on your own without your weapon Ix, you're much weaker without it. Heck, right now Finitevus is the one who curb-stomped us all, not you, so if anything we should be fearing him more than YOU now! Some bad-guy you are Ix if your minion's a bigger threat then you are!"

"SILENCE!" thundered Ix "I am still powerful, even without my

Chaos Staff! I have Angel Island under my control once again! I can just simply use the Master Emerald and power myself up if I have to! And I can also use your Chaos Emeralds too if I have to! I have all this power at my disposal so I will still be unbeatable!"

"Uh-huh, sure." muttered Sonic "And what's to stop us from simply going up to Angel Island and using the emeralds against you?"

"Sonic, are you crazy?! We can't get up to the island!" cried Tails "Ix and Finitevus will be no easy obstacle to climb over and Finitevus has all those warp rings! He can get up on the island in the blink of an eye! Even quicker then you can Sonic!"

"We'll see about that." said Sonic, picking himself up and fighting the pain he was feeling.

Ix however threw a Doom Orb at Sonic and knocked him back down onto the ground before he could do anything. Sonic grimaced in pain as he tried to shake off the attack.

"I wouldn't try anything if I were you." sneered Imperator Ix "Now…it is time for me to deliver your sentence Royal Fighters. You have all been found guilty in assisting Knuckles in his anarchy against me so I shall now punish you all for it."

"Wait! You can't do that!" cried Sally "Me and Nicole had nothing to do with you being exiled to the void! We didn't even remotely get involved with what happened that time so you can't punish me and Nicole!"

"You can't punish me either!" shrieked Sora "I wasn't even a Royal Fighter then! I've only just recently joined!"

"You three assisted in the attempted beating of me during the fight." noted Finitevus "That warrants a punishment. That and Queen Sally is the true leader of the Royal Fighters. The service is in service to the Acorn Family and Sally is currently the only living member and thus, is still running the service. On a technicality, she assisted in Ix's downfall since she runs the Royal Fighters Service."

"Agreed so she is deserving of punishment too." said Ix coldly "The

ones who will get the worst punishments are Sonic the Hedgehog, Knuckles and Shade and Queen Sally Acorn."

"W-w-w-what a-a-a-are y-y-y-you g-g-gonna d-d-d-do t-t-t-to them?" asked Cosmo worriedly, her voice wobblier then a crumbling tower "Oh please, please d-d-d-don't k-k-k-kill them i-i-i-if th-th-th-that's w-w-what you're p-p-p-p-planning to do. P-p-p-please d-d-don't kill them!"

"Don't supplicate me plant-girl." said Ix rudely "Anyway…Shade is guilty of treachery and for turning against me during out take-over of AngelIsland last year and in turn, resulting in my exile! Your sentence is…exile!"

With that said, he grabbed Shade roughly by the scruff of her neck and hoisted her up to his height. The echidna in the Nocturnus bodysuit was downright terrified right now. Her worst nightmare was sentencing her to exile and she had a nasty feeling she knew where she was going to be exiled to. Ix nodded to Finitevus and the scientist opened up a warp ring. Most notably…his Super Warp Ring. Said Super WarpRing was opened up and in it was a portal that led directly into the void itself. Shade squirmed furiously in Ix's grasp and tried desperately to avoid her sentence.

"No! Please! No, don't exile me to the void! Please, please, please!" shrieked Shade "Don't throw me in there! I beg of you father, don't throw me in there! Please!"

"Leave her alone!" grunted Knuckles "Don't you dare throw Shade into the void!"

Ix ignored Knuckles and he promptly did just that, he threw Shade screaming at the top of her horrified lungs through the warp ring and into the void. Shade disappeared into the warp ring and her screams eventually faded out as she was gone. Knuckles was so horrified to see this that he went mental with rage. He punched the ground furiously and he roared a wailing roar of anguish for his girlfriend. Ix soon shut him up though by grabbing him by the face and hoisting him up to his height. His icy blue eyes were colder than ice as he stared at Knuckles with a Medusa stare.

"You'll be joining her for your sentence is exile also Knuckles." said Ix coldly.

He then proceeded to throw Knuckles into the void too! Knuckles cried out in despair as he was thrown through the warp ring and into the void. Everybody gasped in horror as Knuckles disappeared through the warp ring and his screams were drowned out as he fell further and further into the void. Ix turned to Sally next. He grabbed her by the vest and picked her up off the ground. Sally's heart seized up in terror for she had a feeling she was going to be thrown into the void next.

"Oh god no! Please, no!" screamed Sally, her hands clasped together in a pleading manner and her ears flat against her head "Oh please, I beg of you! Don't throw me into the void! Anything but that! Anything!"

"Such a pathetic excuse for a queen." snorted Ix "A true ruler faces his sentence without mindless pleading and begging. Your sentence is also exile and you will be joining the echidnas."

"No! Please! You can't!" whimpered Sally "There's a wizard in there who will kill me if…"

Sally didn't get a chance to finish her sentence for Ix just threw her through the warp ring and into the void. Sally screamed a horrified squeal of anguish as she was thrown into the void. Her screams seemed to tear a hole in everybody's hearts as they watched their beloved queen-turned-fighter disappear into the void. Sonic in particular seemed the most horrified for he quite liked Sally, especially as she was becoming more active in the battlefield now. Ix then turned to Sonic and he grabbed him. Sonic didn't resist him at all, he just allowed himself to be picked up by the mad imperator.

"And your sentence…" began Ix.

"Let me guess, it's exile isn't it?" scoffed Sonic, predicting what Ix was going to say instantly.

"Indeed." said Ix gleefully.

"Good. I WANT to be thrown into the void." said Sonic bravely "That way, I can rescue the three you've exiled there and we'll all come back and kick your sorry butt Imperator Ick!"

"You will never escape the void." crooned Ix gloatingly "Finitevus has your only door to the void and he most certainly will not open it again for you."

With that satisfying thought in his head and his final victory quip blurted at Sonic, Ix threw the hedgehog through the warp ring and into the void. Sonic cried out in surprise as he was thrown into the void. He disappeared in an instant and Finitevus closed up the Super Warp Ring. He slipped it back onto his wrist and he smirked at the Royal Fighters who were still lying there defeated before him and Ix. The Royal Fighters were horrified to see that their greatest hero and friend along with Sally, Knuckles and Shade were gone for good and sealed off into the void. The only emotions that anybody was feeling right now was horror and sorrow. It seemed that after all they have been through, this was how it was going to end for them. Maybe this was the start of what causes Mobius to go to hell in the future. Pity Silver and Blaze wouldn't arrive in time to stop Ix and Finitevus from causing the apocalypse, if indeed they go onto cause such a thing. As for Ix and Finitevus, they smirked at the heroes triumphantly.

"Now the major sentences are dealt with, here's the sentence for the rest of you." purred Ix "You will all be slaves that will serve me faithfully as I take AngelIsland for my own and make it an empire that will spread out all over the world."

"We will NEVER serve you Ix!" cried Tails bravely.

"You will do…" said Ix coldly "Especially since I'm going to make you all serve me faithfully…"

Finitevus seemed eerily delighted at the very thought of Ix smacking the Royal Fighters into place and making them his loyal servants. This was an empire he was looking forward to seeing Ix create now that the main problems were gone and Angel Island was theirs once again…

Sonic the Hedgehog's screams were suddenly silenced as he came to a heavy thud upon something solid and hard. Sonic groaned as pain swept over his body from the impact and he lay there for a few minutes, waiting for the bones in his body to knit again and for his senses to start functioning properly. Sonic picked himself up and he rubbed his head, easing the pain in it and clearing it up enough for him to think clearly again. Sonic looked around and saw that he was in what was probably the strangest, most surreal place he had EVER been in. Everything was a dark blue colour and waving around like swirls and there were crystals all over the place. It was like being in a crystal paradise except this was no paradise. The crystals were all hellish in design and looked very surreal and unsettling. The swirls also had a creepy vibe to them and there were pits of fire all around too, blazing away furiously with dancing blue flames that flicked every so often. The air was also quite different too and Sonic felt that he couldn't breathe as well as he could normally because it was hotter in this place then it was in NewMobotropolis. He was standing on a rocky platform with a stretching bridge way that seemed to lead to other platforms and went on for quite a while. This surreal zone was the void itself, an empty place of death and crystals and is often described as being the closest thing to hell that anyone can ever face on Mobius. Sonic studied his surroundings and he did not like what he was looking at.

"Oh man…this is the void is it?" he said "It's surreal with a big "S" in here! I've seen many weird things in my life but not THIS weird! I hope Sally and the echidnas are OK…"

"Sonic! Over here!" cried the voice of Sally Acorn not too far away from where he was now.

Sonic saw Sally standing on a platform that was on the other side of the bridge way connecting his platform to the others. Sonic zoomed over to Sally and he hugged her comfortingly to ease her fears since she seemed legitimately horrified at the thought of being thrown into the void. Sally was in tears and shaking all over. Sonic stroked her hair and back as he tried to calm the queen squirrel down.

"There, there Sal, it's OK. I'm here now." said Sonic "Everything's going to be OK."

"No it isn't!" shrieked Sally "We're in the void! The freaking void! This place is hell incarnate! We're gonna die in here and…"

"Sally you listen to me!" shouted Sonic "We've survived Eggman, we've survived Scourge, we've survived three different goddamn aliens, one of which was invulnerable robots, and we've survived Perfect Chaos and even Super Scourge! We are going to survive this one you see if we don't! I promise you Sal, we will get out of here alive! I promise!"

"OK Sonic, but how will we get out of here?" asked Sally worriedly "We don't have a warp ring and Finitevus certainly isn't going to let us out! We don't have a Chaos Emerald either!"

"We'd best hope that our friends can get Finitevus' warp ring off of him and get us outta here." said Sonic "Or that there's another way out of the void."

"Sonic, Ix only managed to get out of the void when Finitevus super-charged his warp ring and opened a portal here." noted Sally "There IS no other way out! Chaos Control or a warp ring are the only doors out of this nightmare! Unless our friends can help us, we're trapped in here forever!"

Then suddenly, something crashed down into the platform and Sonic and Sally yelped in horror at it. They hugged each other even tighter and they stared at what had crashed into the platform. To their amazement they recognized it instantly. The thing looked like Marik the Martian! The only thing was he was covered entirely in crystal save for his face and looked completely mindless. His eyes were blank and his mouth hung open unfocusedly. He also groaned in a rather zombie-like manner. Sonic kicked the crystallized Marik away from the platform whereas Sally put her hands to her mouth. Marik just floated away from the platform, completely unaware on what was happening and moaning loudly as he drifted away.

"Oh my god! That…that was Marik!" she gasped "He's…he's…been crystallized! Turned into a mindless crystal servant!"

"Puh, that's the least he was owed." sniffed Sonic "But how did that happen? Who did this to him?"

"I did newcomers to the void!" hissed a sinister raspy voice that made Sonic and Sally jump nearly out of their skins.

They turned around and saw a very strange creature standing before them. The creature was a rather large Mobian with a very surreal and even fantasy like appearance to him. His face was grotesque and troll like in appearance with a mouth crammed with sharp yellow teeth that made him look very ugly and unappealing in appearance. He had large bat ears, a large, ugly horn protruding from the top of his cranium, an enormous beard that touched the ground and dragged across the floor as he walked, a large cape with a bat-like appearance to it and his left arm had a lobster claw in place of an actual hand. His right hand was normal though. He wore gloves on his hand and claw and he also wore boots and a purple bodysuit. He definitely looked very demonic and evil in appearance and his hideous face contorted with sinister glee. A big fat smile spread out across his troll-like face. Sonic literally had no idea what to make of this creature and he stepped back whereas Sally stood her ground and pointed her bladed staff at the creature.

"Y-y-y-you k-k-k-keep a-a-a-way f-f-f-from u-u-u-us y-y-you f-f-f-freak!" stammered Sally "I'm w-w-warning you! Take one s-s-step and I-I-I-I'll skewer you! I mean it!"

"What's up Sal? You know this mutant in the weird pyjamas?" asked Sonic.

"Unfortunately." spat Sally "I'd hoped never to see this freak of nature ever again."

"Whereas I have been craving your return Princess Sally Acorn. Oh yes…gasp…I've been looking forward to it indeed!" cackled the creature delightedly. When he spoke, he often paused for a breath as if he had trouble breathing.

"Who are you and how do you know Sally?" asked Sonic.

"I…gasp…am Ixis Naugus." introduced the creature "I am a sorcerer of the highest calibre…gasp…and I am the Gatekeeper of the Void! Everything is to my will and my bidding…gasp…and I am without limitations here. As for my knowledge of the Acorn Princess…

Hhhha, ha, ha, ha, ha…I know her because I used to be the Acorn Family's Royal Wizard. I served the Acorn Family for many generations until that oaf of a king, King Max, threw me into the void!" he snarled, baring his teeth and dribbling furiously.

"You betrayed him!" snapped Sally "You tried to kill him and take the Acorn throne yourself! You deserved to be banished you freak!"

"I know I did…and I'm glad I was." hissed Naugus smoothly "I'm quite happy in the void. It's a brilliant kingdom for me. It suits my surreal nature perfectly and I'm quite at home here so you'll be happy to know that I do not desire to return to your pathetic city of Mobotropolis. You can have that wretched city, this place is all mine! And whenever anybody gets thrown into the void…I get to have hours of fun with the exiled!"

He cackled maniacally as he thought over all the people who have been exiled to the void over the years. That made Sonic think about Perfect Chaos, Eggman Nega and the Martians. He'd sent them all to the void. Did Naugus simply turn them into crystal as he did Marik and make them his loyal servants? Kind of amazing to think for a minute that he was punishing villains and giving a traitor to the Acorn Family his own personal entertainment. Still, at least Naugus wasn't a villain to worry about since he was happy to be in the void. Sonic had to admit, he was quite at home in this place. As for Naugus, he stopped cackling and he smoothed out his beard.

"As happy as I am here though, I'm all too happy to slaughter you though." snarled Naugus, seizing Sally with his lobster claw and lifting her up off the floor "I still abhor you and your family dearly princess and now an Acorn Family dares to venture into my domain, I will finish you off for revenge against King Max and his ill-treatment of me when I was the Royal Wizard!"

"I'm not a princess anymore, I'm a queen now." said Sally "Mom and dad are both dead now so you can't get revenge on my dad by killing me, he's already dead!"

"So what if he is?" snapped Naugus "I'll still delight in killing you and putting an end to your family name Sally!"

He then squeezed Sally as hard as he could with his claw, Sally wincing as the life in her was getting squeezed out of her by Naugus. Sonic stared in horror as Naugus prepared to finish of Sally and wondered what would the best method of attack be. Naugus is a wizard after all so who knew what he could do if he tried to attack him head on…

OH NO! OH NO! OH NO!

(Kool-Aid Man bursts through the wall)

Kool Aid Man: Oh YEAH!

0_0 That was weird...anyway, Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade have been banished to the void and Sonic and Sally are at the mercy of the sinister Ixis Naugus! Will they escape the void? And what about Ix and Finitevus? Can they be stopped? Or is the end coming for Sonic and friends...?

So how was this chapter readers? Was it good? Did you like it? Read and review and feel free to say what you thought to it! :D

You know somewhere I can see Kratos Pwns grinning evilly over what's become of Marik the Martian now...

Thrown into the Void Part 2

Story 147: Thrown Into The Void Part 2: The Naugus Games

What was supposed to be a day of solace for Sonic the Hedgehog and friends had just turned into a day of hell for them all. First Dr. Finitevus, Knuckles' uncle and recently revealed apprentice of Imperator Ix, super-charged one of his warp rings and he brought Imperator Ix back from the void. Then the two echidnas brought AngelIsland over to New Mobotropolis and attacked the city, then Finitevus beat up all the Royal Fighters, all with little to no effort too, and now Imperator Ix had sent Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade into the void. The other Royal Fighters were going to be subjected to slavery as Imperator Ix took over AngelIsland and sooner or later, the world. In the void, Sonic and Sally had reunited but their reunion had been cut short for they were now face to face with the Gatekeeper of the Void himself, Ixis Naugus. He had been banished to the void for treason against the Acorn Family but he was all too happy to live in the void. He was not pleased to see a member of the Acorn Family in the void though so he had grabbed Sally with his claw and was squeezing her like a bathroom sponge. Sally squirmed in the evil wizard's grasp and she tried to get free but her efforts were ultimately futile. Naugus was much too strong for her and he was slowly but surely squeezing Sally to death. Sonic was left wondering what to do. It would be foolish to attack a wizard head on since wizards can be dangerous and can do goodness knows what. Sonic would have to be careful on this attack. Sonic then had an idea. While Naugus was squeezing Sally, Sonic got down onto his knees and crawled down off the edge of the bridge way, holding onto it with his fingers. He edged his way across the bridge way, keeping quiet and making sure Naugus didn't see him. He edged past Naugus and pulled himself up behind the monstrous looking Mobian. Naugus seemed too invested in what he was doing to notice Sonic behind him. Seeing Sally suffocate seemed to give him some sick kind of enjoyment. Naugus was sadistic after all.

"Naugus…grr…let me…go!" croaked Sally weakly.

"Not a chance you miserable child!" cackled Naugus "Your demise will be greatly enjoyed!"

"Sorry but the queen's got a life to live and she can't lose it yet!" cried Sonic.

Before Naugus could even wonder about who said that, Sonic spin-dashed the wizard in the back and sent him hurling forwards onto his face. He dropped Sally and she lay on the bridge way just inches away from the wizard. Sally got out her bladed staff and she used it to pole-vault over Naugus and she landed in front of Sonic. She put the staff away and she hugged Sonic graciously.

"Thank you for saving my life Sonic." said Sally.

"No problem Sal." said Sonic, enjoying the hug since Sally hugged him properly and not squeezed him to death like Amy does "I have a feeling I might be doing a lot of that while we're in here."

"Not the kind of image I was hoping for when I decided to become a more active fighter." muttered Sally.

"Ah who knows? Maybe you'll end up saving MY life at some point." noted Sonic "Now let's juice before…"

Suddenly, a magical wave swept over the two and their bodies up to their necks were turned into crystal! Naugus had just picked himself up and he was in full rage mode at this moment. He was so furious that his body seemed to be steaming almost as if he was about to burst into flames. Naugus was not only known for his crystalline magic but he was also renowned for being Master of the Elements. He could use elemental powers and sometimes, his powers reacted with his emotions so him being angry equals going up in flames. But Naugus was just at steaming point at the moment, not yet going up in flames. Naugus clenched his teeth and his eyes were curled into a villainous scowl that would give a normal person a headache if they tried to imitate it.

"You DARE to assault me hedgehog?!" snarled Naugus "You DARE to deny me the chance to finish off the Acorn child?! YOU DARE?!"

"I do dare Ixis Noogie-Brain!" snapped Sonic "Nobody tries to harm my friends while I'm around! You let us outta these crystal shells or my shoes will leave an imprint on your hideous face!"

"Watch your words boy!" growled Naugus "Otherwise you will find yourself…gasp…becoming a Crystal Golem much like all the Martians who got sent here did!"

"Naugus please, we just wanna get out of the void and back to Mobius!" pleaded Sally "Please let us go!"

"Why should you be allowed to return to Mobius?" hissed Naugus "You ended up in the void! Only those who are exiled end up thrown in here! Why should you be allowed to leave?"

"Because we weren't exiled, we were thrown in here by an evil echidna named Imperator Ix." explained Sonic "Two echidnas named Knuckles and Shade were thrown in here too, although I'm not sure where they are right now. Anyway, Imperator Ix is trying to take over the world and he threw us in here so we can't interfere…"

"Imperator Ix?!" rasped Naugus as if the name terrified him to some degree "Did you…gasp…say Imperator…Ix?!"

"Yes I did." said Sonic "His wormy assistant Dr. Finitevus broke him out of the void, thus violating his well-deserved exile mind you, and now Ix is trying to subjugate Angel Island and probably soon, the whole world."

Naugus was so furious upon hearing all of this that he (literally) burst into flames! Sally screamed in terror whereas Sonic had no idea what he should think of that. The flames blazed just inches away from them and they could feel the heat of Naugus' anger. Naugus eventually calmed himself down and his flames died away, returning him to his normal self.

"I vehemently LOATHE that unrighteous, vexing, pompous, arrogant echidna!" roared Naugus "He thinks himself…gasp…a more powerful wizard than me and he actually has the gall to resist my crystalline magic! He has tried to take over the void and has left me spending my precious time fighting with him non-stop just to make

sure my glorious utopia doesn't get desecrated and usurped from me! The void is MINE and mine alone…gasp…and he dared to try and take it from me! Not long ago he mysteriously disappeared and I've finally managed to get a moment of peace. I'm NOT happy to hear that he was let out of the void though! Nobody…gasp…is allowed to leave the void unless the people who have exiled them there in the first place pardon their exile! Ix is violating his exile and I will not allow it! especially since I am not finished with him yet!"

Sonic and Sally began to feel a tingle of excitement building up in their stomachs.

"So are you gonna let us out of here so we can kick Ix back into the void for you?" asked Sonic hopefully.

"I am…but first you must "earn" your freedom." explained Naugus "I am not a wizard who just grants freedom like that, it must be earned. You two must compete in a series of challenges I will set up for you now. If you can win three different challenges, I will grant you a portal out of the void."

"Cool!" cried Sonic "Guess you aren't such a bad guy after all."

"Wait a minute!" screeched Sally "If you can open up a portal to leave the void…then why haven't you left already? Heck, why don't you just come out yourself and bring Ix back to the void?"

"As I said, I like it in here." explained Naugus "I don't WANT to leave the void, it's too glorious a paradise for me. If I can't have Mobotropolis…gasp…then I will have the void, simple as that. As for why I'm not leaving the void to bring Ix back, I maybe a conniving wizard…gasp…but even I am bound to the rules of the void. I've been exiled here so therefore, I must remain here until my exile is pardoned. That and I didn't even know Ix had left so why would I need to leave the void and look for him if I didn't know he was gone?"

"Hmm…makes sense I guess." said Sally, taking in Naugus' words "I will say, I'm glad you're more reasonable than most villains I've encountered. At least you actually live with your punishment unlike those who seek to oppose it. Although exiling you here isn't exactly

a punishment since you like it here and thus, it feels more like we rewarded you rather than punished you…"

"Uh Sal, I wouldn't go any further if I were you." said Sonic "Don't want to upset the big, ugly wizard now do we?"

Naugus didn't seem fussed over what Sally had said though. He just simply snapped his fingers and the crystal around their bodies broke, releasing them and allowing them to wander freely. Sonic and Sally dusted themselves off and Naugus spoke again.

"So do you two accept the challenges that will befall you and grant your freedom should you win?" asked Naugus.

"We do." said Sonic "But you better swear on your blood and soul that you WON'T harm Sally or try to kill her again while we're here! If you do, I am gonna give you an Ixis Migraine!"

"Bah! I may hate the Acorn Family but I hate Imperator Ix more!" scoffed Naugus "I'll happily let Sally live if Ix comes back to me… alive so I can kill him myself! Hhhhha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Deal." said Sonic "We'll bring you Imperator Ix back gift-wrapped and with a ribbon on top if we have to. So, what's the first challenge?"

"The first challenge…" purred Naugus, a crooked smile spread out across his slimy, aged lips "…will be a matter of life and death…"

With that said, Naugus waved his arms and started to form something with the aid of magic and the mystic arts. As he was forming the challenge for Sonic and Sally, Sonic whispered into Sally's ear.

"Hey Sal, I don't mean to ask but…what is Naugus exactly?" he whispered "I've never seen anything like him before."

"He used to be three different wizards named Agunus the Rhino, Nusgau the Bat and Suguna the Lobster." explained Sally "They fused themselves together and become Naugus. His title of "Ixis" came from the fact he used to be part of an order known as "The Order of Ixis". He's the only one left though after the Order of Ixis fell

into relapse and eventually…died out. He tried to make a new order by taking over Mobotropolis and turning everybody into wizards with a simple spell. Since his exile though, it seems he doesn't want to do that anymore. I'm quite happy he's content here since it means I don't have to worry about him coming back for me."

"I see." said Sonic "Well I'm glad he doesn't want to leave the void either. I've got enough villains on my plate as it is."

As they were talking, Naugus finished forming his first challenge for Sonic and Sally to complete. The challenge had a lot of square-shaped slabs that led to two crystal pillars standing proudly upon a huge stone slab. To Sonic and Sally's horror, Knuckles and Shade were both bound to the pillars by crystalline restraints wrapped around their bodies. They also seemed to have their lips fused shut by crystals too. They couldn't speak or anything, just cry out muffled mumbles behind their crystalline gags. Sonic and Sally stared at Knuckles and Shade and they had a feeling on what this challenge was going to be about.

"Hop across the slabs and reach the pillars at the end." explained Naugus "If you can get there and save the two echidnas fused to the pillars then you win the challenge. If you fail…gasp…I guess you know what will happen…" he added with a slimy smile on his face.

"Yeah, yeah. We remain trapped here forever and you never get your revenge on Imperator Ix. Whoop-de-do." muttered Sonic "So, is there any catches to this? This challenge seems suspiciously easy."

"I will let you find that out for yourselves…" crooned Naugus darkly.

"I saw that coming." sighed Sally "You always like to hide some sinister surprise in your challenges don't you?"

"Indeed." said Naugus "So hedgehog and Queen of Mobotropolis… in your own time…let the challenge begin!" he cried out, holding his arms out in a rather excited manner.

"Indeed we will." said Sonic "I'll just spin-dash my way up to the pillars…"

"Nah, ah, ah quickster." said Naugus, waggling his finger in the proper "nah, ah, ah" manner "No super powers are allowed in these challenges. They take away the entertainment value they present. You must win without using any kind of power you have."

"Aw!" whined Sonic "So no super speed and no spin-dashes?! This sucks! And yet this isn't the first time this has happened to me…" he added, thinking back to the challenges he had to go through in Chun-Nan last year when trying to meet Conquering Storm.

"We'll abide to your wishes Naugus, especially me since I have no powers." said Sally "So Sonic, let's begin this challenge. Just be careful though since we have no idea if this challenge has a hidden danger or not."

"Ah don't worry Sal, I'll be careful." said Sonic, hopping onto a stone slab "Let's begin this challenge and save the echidnas!"

Sally jumped up and landed on the slab Sonic had just hopped onto. Nothing happened so it seemed that Sonic and Sally had landed on a safe slab. Maybe this challenge had no problems whatsoever and was just a straight path up towards the crystal pillars. Sally still couldn't help but think that not all was what it seemed and that there had to be some kind of catch to this. Sonic however wasn't as cautious. He immediately hopped onto the slab in front of him…and it promptly fell down as he landed on it! Sally immediately lunged out and grabbed Sonic by the hand just before he could fall to his death. Sally lay on the slab with her arm over the edge and her hand tightly gripping Sonic's hand. Sonic held on tightly and Sally mustered up what strength she had in her to hold onto Sonic and pull him back up onto the slab. Sally pulled Sonic back up onto the slab she was on and Sonic gasped with relief. His trademark grin quickly returned to his face though and he smiled at Sally.

"Heh, I told you you'd end up saving my life at some point." he sniggered playfully.

"Sonic the Hedgehog! Be serious please!" snapped Sally "Your reckless behaviour almost guaranteed a never-ending plummet for you! You have to keep your head on in a game like this or you'll ruin our only chance of escape! Understand?!"

"Yes Queenie." said Sonic, slightly taken-aback by Sally yelling at him like that. He'd never see Sally get so mad at him before, nor had he seen Sally get this mad over anything at all.

"And don't call me "Queenie"!" retorted Sally "That's a stupid nickname!"

"Eesh, what's gotten your hair in a tangle Sally?" snorted Sonic, taking note of Sally's rather harsh attitude right now.

"The fact we're competing for our ticket out of here and we only have one shot at this!" yelled Sally "That's why I'm so edgy right now so please, for the love of Mobius, be more careful and start taking this more seriously or I will slap you silly Sonic!"

"OK! OK! Jeez, take a chill pill Sal!" cried Sonic, waving his hands around frantically "I'm sorry OK?"

"Alright." said Sally with a sigh "I'm sorry Sonic, you know what feeling edgy can do to somebody."

"It's fine Sally." said Sonic softly "So…now we know what to look out for. Some slabs fall if you step on them. Any ideas how to bypass that hazard?"

Sally studied the slabs and she noticed how the one that fell was directly in front of them. It was obvious the path to the pillars was not directly in front of them. Sally began to wonder if there was a certain pattern that they had to follow in order to get across. She took out her staff and she poked the slab on the left side of the slab they were on now. The slab fell down the moment she poked it. She tried the slab on the right side of the slab she and Sonic were standing on. That one fell too. She then poked the slab that was on the north-west corner of the slab they were on. That one didn't move when she poked it. It seemed their path might be a matter of hopping onto one slab and then another sort of like this: hop onto one slab on one corner side and then hop onto another slab on the other corner side. Sally hummed to herself and she held the staff beside her.

"Sonic, I think I've worked out how to get around this." deduced Sally "But in case I'm wrong, take it slowly."

"Right behind you Sally." said Sonic, deciding it would be wise to take Sally's advice since taking his advice ended up nearly sending him on an endless plummet through the void.

Sally and Sonic both leapt onto the slab on the north-west corner of the one they had been on. The slab didn't do anything just like how it didn't do anything when Sally prodded it with the staff. Before jumping onto the next slab though, Sally poked it with her staff. Much to her surprise, it ended up falling. It seemed her path wasn't the right one after all. Sally poked the slab on the north-west corner of the one they were on now. That slab didn't move so Sonic and Sally jumped onto that one. Sally poked the slab on the north-west corner of the slab they were on with her staff and that one didn't move either. It seemed the path to the crystal pillars was diagonal instead of the way Sally thought it was. So Sonic and Sally began hopping across slabs in a diagonal pattern towards Knuckles and Shade, the two echidnas looking hopeful for the two as they began to get across to them. Naugus didn't look too pleased though. He thought he'd given the two a decent challenge and yet they were dealing with it as if it was nothing so far. Looks like he'd have to try harder with the second challenge. Sonic and Sally continued their diagonal path until they ended up reaching the end of the slab rows. It seemed they'd have to go diagonal up to the pillars on the slabs on the other side. Sonic and Sally went up diagonally across the slabs in the north-east direction and much to their luck, they led directly up to the stone pillars where Knuckles and Shade were imprisoned. Sonic whooped with joy as he and Sally landed in front of the pillars.

"Whoo-hoo! We did it!" he cried "One challenge completed already!"

"And two of our friends back safe and sound." said Sally, poising her staff and preparing to chip at the crystal binds around Knuckles and Shade.

No need for that though since Naugus just snapped his fingers and the crystal pillars released Knuckles & Shade. The crystal fusing their mouths shut disappeared so they could now speak again and the stone slabs all disappeared and fused into bridge way so Naugus could walk up and congratulate Sonic and Sally.

"Hey, thanks for the save Sonic." said Knuckles "I can't believe that we got caught by that wizard guy down there."

"I can't believe it either." said Sonic "I mean me and Sal didn't have much of a problem with him. Although that might be because I can run fast and we unintentionally ended up suggesting something he liked…"

"Like what?" asked Shade.

"We promised Naugus, the wizard who's walking up to us now, that if he lets us out the void, we'll bring Imperator Ix back into it and let Naugus finish him off since he hates Ix and wants him dead." explained Sally "Naugus is making us take part in some challenges to earn our freedom though so now you two are free, you can help us in our challenges so we can get outta here and stop Imperator Ix once and for all."

"I'm up for that easily!" cried Knuckles "I'll be sure to exile Dr. Finitevus here too since he deserves to be in the void for siding with Ix! I'll remember to confiscate all his warp rings though…"

"I'll assist in anyway possible." said Shade "Especially as I want to get out of this hell hole as quickly as possible."

"Well me and Sally managed to do one challenge so I bet the other two won't be too hard." said Sonic.

Their conversation was interrupted by Naugus striding up to them and he seemed to have a forced smile on his face. Sally felt a little uncomfortable seeing him with that expression. She could tell that secretly he was furious and that he was probably going to do something incredibly unpredictable. You never know what a wizard will do after all, they can be very unpredictable.

"Very well done indeed you two." hissed Naugus "You have passed the first challenge. Now it is time to move onto the other one, and I shall make it a bit harder now we have more players in this game."

"Bring it on Naug-y, we'll take the challenge no matter what it is!" dared Sonic cockily.

Naugus grinned evilly at Sonic and he began to wave his hands around. He was forming the next challenge for the Mobians and he was going to make it a challenging one indeed. Even though he wanted Ix back in the void, he did like to have some entertainment so he was doing these challenges for Sonic and friends to give himself some entertainment. Naugus was a man who didn't give things away unless he got something in return. Through the challenges, he was getting entertainment while the heroes were earning their freedom. He wasn't going to make the challenges impossible though, he was going to make sure that the heroes can pass it so they can earn their freedom and he can let them bring Ix back to the void where he belongs…

Meanwhile, Imperator Ix and Dr. Finitevus had brought the rest of Sonic's friends up onto Angel Island via Finitevus' warp ring and had restrained them all with laser cuffs around their wrists and ankles. As of this moment, everybody was kneeling down before Finitevus while Ix was standing on the Master Emerald shrine and admiring the Master Emerald. He had big plans for Angel Island now that it was under his control once again. He was finally going to put it back down on the ground where it belong and then he was going to expand his reign. He wasn't just going to rule Angel Island, he was going to make his own empire and have it be a global empire too. Ix wasn't content to have a group of Mobians daring to stand up to him so he felt that if he had an expanded reign with many people under his control, people would be less tempted to overthrow him. His plans weren't exactly logical or indeed very good but Imperator Ix is insane so he isn't one to be thinking straight now is he? Ix had used a Chaos Control to bring Angel Island back over Downunda where it belonged and it was now looming above the great crater it had left behind when it was risen up into the sky. Ix placed his hands on the Master Emerald gleefully, the Chaos Energy coursing between his fingers as he felt it crackling away in the palms of his hands.

"Finally, there's no resistance that can get in my way." purred Ix delightedly "Now I can do what should have been done in the first place…return Angel Island back down to where it belongs. I shall make this island safe from harm and prevent anyone from trying to

take our prized relic, the Master Emerald, ever again."

"You're one to talk!" snapped Tails angrily "I bet once Angel Island's back down on the ground, you'll take the Master Emerald for yourself and use all of its power for your own evil deeds Imperator Ix!"

"I would kindly silence your accursed lips little child or I will see to it that you do not live long enough to even see Angel Island return to the ground." said Ix coldly "It is none of your business what I plan to do with the Master Emerald. Besides, I used to be a ruler alongside the elders on Angel Island. The Master Emerald legitimately belongs to me in that regard so I can do what I see fit with it."

"I'd have thought Knuckles technically owns it since he's tasked with guarding it." noted Sora "So technically, it's his emerald."

"Not anymore…" crooned Ix slyly, taking his hands off of the Master Emerald "Now without further ado…"

He held his arms out and he thundered at the top of his voice "Chaos…CONTROL!" and with the simple yelling of those words, Angel Island was warped from up in the sky to down in the crater where it had once been before it rose up into the sky. The island slotted nicely into the crater and it sat there in the ground absolutely perfectly. It was as if it had never been raised at all. Angel Island was an island no more, it was back in the landscape and is now part of the surroundings once again. The captive Royal Fighters were rather surprised that lowering the island was that simple, just Chaos Control it down to the ground. Is that how they raised it up in the sky in the first place? One had to wonder why Ix didn't just do that to begin with when he attacked the island last year. Mind you, Ix is insane so maybe it didn't occur to him at the time to do that. Imperator Ix smiled from behind his helmet and he cackled maniacally over the fact his plans were going his way for once.

"At long last Angel Island, you're back down where you belong." crooned Ix "Now that that is dealt with, I can begin planning my global empire."

"Global empire?" asked Mandy Mouse "What are you up to now you

crazy old echidna?"

"Since you disgusting worms dared to defy me, I think the world needs a bit of discipline." explained Ix "So I'm going to expand my reign to more than just Angel Island. I shall take over the other regions of the world and make everybody my loyal servants. And being as I have the Master Emerald, I will have the power to do so quite easily."

"Wow. He really is crazy isn't he?" sniffed Vector the Crocodile "Where was he when the brains were handed out?"

"Probably in space." chuckled Charmy Bee.

"Silence!" bellowed Imperator Ix "You will all change your tunes for you're all the first of my new servants you are! You'll all serve me faithfully and I'll have you all stationed right here on Angel Island…or shouldn't I call it that anymore since it's not an island anymore?" he added with a sneer evident in his voice.

"We still prefer Angel Island." said Nicole the Lynx grimly "And we will NEVER serve you Ix! We wouldn't bow before Dr. Eggman, the Martians or even the Devatrons and they were all twice the tyrants you are!"

"We'll see about that." scoffed Imperator Ix "Now, before I commence with my plans, I am going to locate the Chaos Emeralds. I remember how that accursed Knuckles dared to use them to exile me into the void. If I have the Chaos Emeralds as well as the Master Emerald…imagine what kind of power I could have in the palm of my hands…"

He cackled at the very idea of what power the Chaos Emeralds could give him if they were used along with the Master Emerald. He would be a god of epic proportions with that much Chaos Energy pulsing through his veins. He could practically feel the Chaos Energy in him now as he pictured using the Master Emerald and the Chaos Emeralds all at once. Dr. Finitevus seemed to like that idea as well. He rubbed his hands delightedly over the very idea.

"That sounds like a great idea master." purred Finitevus "And to add

even greater power, we could even use the Chaos Clusters that were hidden away thanks to the hubris of the echidnas before us."

"Nice try doc but the clusters are all gone now." sneered Ruben the Water Panther "Scourge used them on the Master Emerald and woke up Perfect Chaos. Perfect Chaos took all the clusters for himself and they're all gone now. All one-hundred of them."

He finished his sentence with a gloating smirk on his face. Finitevus looked horrified to hear this.

"You mean to tell me…the Chaos Clusters are gone?!" he gasped "What an inconvenience! Oh well, the Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald will do just fine. Ix, you find the Chaos Emeralds while I keep an eye on our prisoners. After the beat-down I gave them, I doubt they'll try and escape me…" he added with the tone of his voice dropping to a sinister slither that made everybody shudder.

"Indeed Finitevus." said Ix evilly "Well, I shall be off now. I will be back soon worms so don't get too comfortable…"

So Imperator Ix strode off proudly, heading into the nearby woods and searching for the Chaos Emeralds. He'd be surprised to find out that he'd have eight Chaos Emeralds to find instead of seven though (I trust you remember why we have eight Chaos Emeralds instead of seven now. Something to do with a certain alien race that created Shadow owning one and losing it to the Mobians…) As Ix strode into the woods, Finitevus stood before the Royal Fighters with his arms folded and his face was twisted into a rather sinister looking smirk. The Royal Fighters weren't really intimidated by him though. Tails decided to try something desperate and see if he can get Finitevus to turn on Ix much like how Knuckles had managed to get Shade to turn on Ix.

"Finitevus, you've got your wish now, Angel Island's back on the ground so why don't you do the wise thing and help us defeat Imperator Ix?" asked Tails "I mean is this what you want? Ix to take over the world and become an oppressor?"

"While I myself have no intentions on taking over the world, I am not in position to question Ix and his motives." said Finitevus coldly

"Besides, he's only doing it to make sure nobody tries to overthrow him again."

"But Ix isn't in charge of Angel Island!" snapped Amy Rose "Getting rid of him isn't overthrowing him at all!"

"Wrong my child." sneered Finitevus "Ix was one of the rulers alongside the elders and now they're dead and he isn't, he is legitimately the ruler of Angel Island. He was next in line after the elders."

"He got his position through murder and anarchy!" snapped Geoffrey St. John "The blighter doesn't deserve to rule Angel Island!"

"You are in no position to say who deserves what you feeble-minded skunk." scoffed Finitevus "It is not stated how one may achieve the rank of ruler. All it says in the ancient laws of the echidna is that if the main rulers, always referred to as the elders, are dead and only one remains then that echidna is thus appointed as ruler of Angel Island."

"Boy does that law have a lot of holes in it…" sighed Wilson the Dog.

"Never mind all that now." said Tails "Finitevus, why do you think Ix is in the right? I mean, won't Angel Island being down on the ground make the Master Emerald easier to steal? I mean look, it's practically ripe for the picking now!"

"For your information little boy, when Angel Island was down on the ground, the Master Emerald NEVER sat upon that shrine!" snapped Finitevus "That shrine was used as a lookout point and we only put the Master Emerald there to help it raise up into the sky!"

"Oh…right…" said Tails, unable to believe this bit of history about the island that Finitevus had just told him.

"So if the Master Emerald never sat on that shrine until the island rose…then where did you keep it before it was raised?" asked Cosmo the Seedrian.

"It resided in a deep cavern that was so deep down that it's energy

signature was masked and it was impossible to locate unless one already knew where it was." explained Dr. Finitevus "The cavern was sealed with a stone slab that only opened at the sound of an elder or guardian's voice and they had to say a certain chant to make it open. Said chant is in a dead language the ancient echidnas used to speak in. So as you can imagine, only we echidnas knew where the Master Emerald was and Angel Island, back then known simply as "Echidnaopolis" was always at peace and harmony. Then came the day we had to raise the accursed island. We dug out a lot of earth around Echidnaopolis and we brought the Master Emerald out of the cavern and onto the shrine. With a simple Chaos Control, we rose Echidnaopolis up into the sky and avoided the comet that would have left the city in ruins. And now it's up in the sky, we get invaders and thieves trying to steal the Master Emerald for it's practically just sitting there waiting to be stolen and because Echidnaopolis is up in the air, it sticks out like a sore thumb and makes us an easy target! THAT is why I believe Ix is right because he IS right! NOBODY attacked Echidnaopolis or tried to steal the Master Emerald UNTIL the island was raised so that further proves why the elders should have listened to him! For centuries the Master Emerald remained hidden and undisturbed directly under our civilization and only the echidnas who lived here knew where it was! Because the island was raised, people know about the Master Emerald and have tried time and again to steal it and thus, doom our home! And it isn't just Dr. Eggman who's tried to steal the emerald, we had attempted thefts of the emerald long before he came to Mobius! So tell me Royal Fighters, do you truly believe that Angel Island is a safe haven up in the sky now you've heard this history lesson?"

The Royal Fighters all looked at each other in wonder. Neither of them had known this bit of history about Angel Island and hearing more about Angel Island's background just surprised them and made them all think for a moment. Maybe Dr. Finitevus and Imperator Ix were in the right after all? Maybe Angel Island would be safer down on the ground. If Angel Island's grounded then the Master Emerald could be returned to the cavern it resided in at first and nobody would attack the island ever again, especially since they'd be wondering where it had gone since it no longer floats. That bit of revelation made the Royal Fighters wonder if Ix and Finitevus

truly are in the right and that they maybe do care about their home in the grand scheme of things. But there was still a few things wrong with their motives…

"Finitevus, we understand your motives a lot better now thanks to that history lesson." said Tails slowly "But the way you and Ix are going about it is wrong. Ix has killed and committed treason just to do all of this and now you yourself are committing treason by helping an anarchist and a murderer get what he wants. And according to Knuckles and Shade, Angel Island was supposed to stay afloat and by law no less and you can't just defy the laws of the island. That's treasonous you know so really, you two are still committing crimes even if they are for the greater good. The ends do not justify the means as they say."

Finitevus just scowled at Tails but he kept his cool. That was one of the sinister things about Finitevus, he rarely ever lost his cool and that made him a pretty sinister, even dangerous, foe to come across for it made him unpredictable and you never know what he'll do next.

"Me and Ix may indeed be committing crimes little child…but if it means our home being safe and the Master Emerald being well-hidden again then we're all too happy to do so." said Finitevus casually "Sometimes, you have to take extremes to get your point across. That sadly is what the world can be like I'm afraid."

"I believe that definitely." muttered Vector, thinking about the Region of Rebellious Reptiles and his evil father Lord Sycorax and how extreme they were in getting their point across.

"So now the island's back down, are you just gonna put the Master Emerald back in the cavern it used to be in?" asked Cream the Rabbit curiously.

"Indeed." said Finitevus "And Ix will be the only one who has any access to it. No need to use the chant to open the slab that seals the cavern since I can just warp him in there with my warp rings."

"But Ix is gonna use the Master Emerald AND the Chaos Emeralds to do evil, terrible things now he has them!" cried Ruben "Is that

seriously what you're OK with him doing Finitevus? Is that seriously somebody you want to work for?!"

"I've told you already, I am in no position to question my master." said Finitevus, a slight growl in his voice "And if him taking over the world is what he wishes to do then so be it. We deserve more power than control over a measly civilization such as ours anyway. We have the power after all and Ix will use it to it's absolute greatest. I look forward to seeing what happens if the Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald are all used together…"

Then suddenly, something hit him in the side of his head and threw him down onto the ground. The blow to the head was so hard that it knocked him out! The attacker was none other than Espio the Chameleon. He had turned invisible and had sneaked away while Finitevus was talking. Luckily for the chameleon, he had been in the back of the Royal Fighters so Finitevus didn't see him turning invisible and thus, he had been able to sneak off and ambush him. He crept up carefully behind Finitevus and then walloped him in the side of his head with a powerful kick. Now Finitevus was knocked out, Espio turned visible again and he pulled out a kunai. Using the kunai, he broke open his handcuffs and then he broke open his ankle cuffs, freeing his arms and legs and giving him free usage of his arms and legs again. Espio sought to freeing everybody else and the moment everybody was free of their cuffs, they all ran over to the unconscious Finitevus.

"Well done Espio!" cried Vector happily "That was some good sneaking you did!"

"Yeah! Finny-tee-vee-us totally didn't see that coming!" laughed Charmy excitedly.

"Thank you." said Espio, honoured to receive such compliments and very pleased with himself that his plan had worked so well.

"OK, which one of these warp rings on him is his super warp ring?" asked Bunnie Rabbot, looking at the warp rings on Finitevus' arms and legs "Ah can't tell, they all look the same."

"Didn't he put it on his wrist or something?" asked Tails "Although he

probably switched them around for in case we tried to steal it off of him. Let's take them all and see which one opens a portal to the void."

"You do that." said Amy "I'm gonna put the island back up in the sky where it belongs. All I have to do is touch the Master Emerald and say Chaos Control right?"

"Right." said Tails "Remember to think about Angel Island in the sky as you say it though."

So with that said, Amy quickly ran up to the Master Emerald shrine and she placed her hands upon the Master Emerald. She thought about what she needed to think about, then she yelled aloud "Chaos…CONTROL!" and in a bright flash of green light, Angel Island disappeared into thin air and then reappeared in the sky just above the great crater. Angel Island was now an island once again. While that had been going on, the Royal Fighters all took a warp ring each off Finitevus' arms and legs and they began flicking them about to see what would happen and if they'd be able to get into the void at all. They had sixteen warp rings to try out so this could take a while. Nicole flicked a warp ring into the air while thinking about the void. The warp ring expanded to many times its size but no portal appeared in it. It was just an empty ring. Warp rings don't open up portals if they can't get to the place you're thinking of. Nicole didn't have Finitevus' Super Warp Ring. Sora flicked one into the air. Again, no portal opened up. It was just an ordinary warp ring. Amy ran down from the Master Emerald shrine, grabbed a warp ring and she tried it. Another ordinary warp ring. Cream, Cosmo, Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Bunnie, Ruben, Vector, Espio and Charmy all tried some warp rings each but yet again, they just had ordinary warp rings an nothing happened. Tails had gathered up three warp rings so at least one of the ones he had had to be the Super Warp Ring Finitevus had. Tails flicked all three warp rings into the air. Two of them came up empty of course whereas the third opened up a portal to the void. They'd found the Super Warp Ring! Now they could rescue Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade from the void and bring them back to Mobius so they could stop Ix and banish him and Finitevus into the void!

"Guys! I found it!" cried Tails "Let's all go through and save our

friends!"

"Hold on there kiddo, we shouldn't ALL go in there. We need to keep an eye on Dr. Creepy Von Evil here." noted Mandy "Make sure he doesn't try anything if he wakes up."

"OK." said Tails "I'll go in and get them while the rest of you make sure Finitevus…"

Too bad for the Royal Fighters that just at that moment, Finitevus woke up from his attack and leaped over Tails and snatched the Super Warp Ring away! When you're full of Chaos Energy like Finitevus is, you don't stay knocked out for long. Finitevus closed up the warp ring and he slipped it back onto his wrist. The Royal Fighters all grabbed his other warp rings and kept hold of them to make sure that he doesn't get them back. But even one warp ring was all Finitevus needed and it so happened he had the best one so it wasn't that much of a problem for Finitevus. The Royal Fighters would have an edge on him that's for sure though.

"So, you want to play it the hard way do you?" crooned Finitevus "Good…I do enjoy a good exercise after all. If you want to rescue your friends from the void, you will have to get my Super Warp Ring first."

"Bring it on Finitevus!" dared Tails "We'll stop you, especially as we now have all your other warp rings so we will be able to handle you a lot better than before!"

Finitevus just bent down into a battle ready stance and prepared to attack…

Meanwhile back in the void, Ixis Naugus had formed the next challenge for Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade. Using his magic, he had made a straight bridge way that stretched down for quite a distance and there were crystalline shaped structures that sort of acted like flamethrowers. They spouted fire and there were two on each side so you had a crystal flamethrower on both sides of the path and spouting fire at each other. There were quite a few

flamethrowers across the bridge way and it seemed the end of the path had nothing else but given this is a wizard's game, you never know what will happen and what kind of surprise he will have in store for you. There could be more to this challenge then that it appeared to be. The Mobians studied their challenge for a moment and Naugus announced what the challenge was going to be.

"So Mobians, this is your next challenge." explained Naugus "You must get to the end of the path I have set before you while dodging the various obstacles around in the path."

"Sounds easy enough Naugus although there doesn't seem to be more obstacles then the flamethrowers in front of us." said Sonic.

"Oh there's more obstacles in the path then you realize quickster…" hissed Naugus darkly, grinning like a hobgoblin "You'll see for yourself once you begin the challenge."

"Oh that's reassuring." sighed Sonic "Still, we'd best get on with it or we won't be getting out of the void."

"Indeed. And to make it harder…you have to complete the course in five minutes." added Naugus "Your time is starting…NOW!"

Sonic immediately jumped into action upon hearing that. He ran towards the first pair of flamethrowers, running at an ordinary speed of course for he isn't allowed to use his super speed or any power he has, and he jumped over the spouting fire going off between them. Sally, Knuckles & Shade followed him and they jumped over the fire too. It wasn't going to be as easy as that though for the flamethrowers did something different as they went up the path and they also got harder too. The second set of flamethrowers was higher up than the first pair. Much to high for any of them to jump over but high enough for the Mobians to duck under. Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade ducked down and ran under the fire. They ran up the path and came across the third pair of flame throwers. This one was going to be tricky for there were TWO jets of fire going off. One was high up and the other was low down so you couldn't jump over it OR duck under it. Sonic looked around desperately, eager to find a way to get through it without burning himself. Shade however seemed to have an idea already. He got out her blades and she

Blade-Rushed the crystal flamethrowers. Her attack didn't seem to do anything to it though. There were no chips or cracks in the crystal whatsoever. Seemed the crystal was too strong for a Blade-Rush attack. Knuckles tried punching it but even his powerful fists couldn't break through the crystal flamethrowers. Time was ticking by and the Mobians were stuck on the third set of flamethrowers. They needed a plan and fast. Sally had the idea to try and dive between the fire since there was a gap between the flamethrowers. Sally put her arms together, bent down and pointed directly ahead of herself and she jumped through the gap between the roaring flames. She made it clean through with only a few singes on her clothes and a tiny bit of her hair caught fire to which she put out easily by tapping on it. Sonic, Knuckles and Shade copied what Sally did and they soon made it through the flamethrowers too. There was a fourth pair of flamethrowers next to overcome and that pair of flamethrowers moved up and down, meaning that the Mobians would have to time their moves exactly to either jump over it or duck under it. They'd have to be precise too for the flamethrowers moved up and down relatively quickly so if they weren't fast enough, they'd get burnt alive. Sonic stood forward and decided he would go first. He watched very carefully as the flamethrowers moved up and he quickly lay down on the floor and rolled across it just as the flamethrowers were coming back down. Sonic made it past the flamethrowers and he picked himself up. Knuckles went next. He watched as the flamethrowers moved down and he jumped over them. The flames moved up quite quickly though and they just licked his shoes as Knuckles sailed over them, the echidna feeling the sheer heat of the fire on his feet as the flames touched his shoes. A close call as it maybe, Knuckles wasn't hurt and his shoes weren't even effected by the flames. Still, he was lucky to have made it over and barely get touched by the flamethrowers. Shade went next and she decided to go under like Sonic did but she did it a different way to Sonic. Shade ran backwards a little bit until she was up to the third flamethrower obstacle and then she belted it down the bridge as fast as she could. She timed her running just right so that when she reached the flamethrowers, they moved up and she threw herself down onto her side. She slide across the floor and directly under the flamethrowers. Sonic and Knuckles were impressed with that move and Shade was relieved it had worked so brilliantly. Shade picked herself up and dusted herself off. Sally was the only

one left now and she had her staff (with the blade sheathed) at the ready. She waited until the flamethrowers lowered and then she pole-vaulted herself over the flamethrowers. They were just starting to raise up again as she sailed over them. Sally landed just beside Sonic and she put her staff away. She wiped sweat off her forehead in relief as if she didn't think she was going to make it.

"Whew, I'm amazed I made that!" she gasped "Well, that seems to be it for the flamethrowers. I wonder what obstacles are next?"

"Doesn't seem to be anymore Sal." said Sonic, taking note of the bridge way and noticing that it seemed completely empty and there were no obstacles around "I mean look, there's nothing else around."

"Hedgehog, it may seem like there's nothing around but do remember that appearances can be deceptive." noted Shade "For all we know, there might be an invisible trap or something."

"Shade's right, we need to be vigilant." said Sally.

"But we don't have time for that!" snapped Sonic "We're racing against the clock here! We need to move it and fast!"

"Three minutes and counting Mobians!" hissed the voice of Ixis Naugus "I'd hurry up and get on with it if I were you! Hhhha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"See what I mean?!" yelped Sonic, waving his arms about frantically.

Sally just sighed and she took off her vest. She decided to test the bridge and see if there was any traps lying around, particularly invisible ones. Sally threw her vest across the bridge way and waited to see what happens. The vest flew across the bridge and landed about a few sections away from the Mobians. The moment the vest landed on the bridge, a huge bolt of lighting shot out from nowhere and zapped the vest, singeing it and ruining the look of it. Sally gasped in horror. The next obstacle was lightening coming out from nowhere! They'd have to find a way to get past this one and fast! Luckily, the fast-thinking squirrel queen had an idea.

"We'll get zapped if we run across the bridge." said Sally "But there is a way to get around it. Everybody, do what I do." she ordered.

Sally then got down onto her knees and climbed down the side of the bridge, holding onto the edge tightly with her arms so she was now hanging off the edge of the bridge by her arms. Sally then started to trek across the edge of the bridge with her hands. She reached out further up the bridge with one arm and pulled herself across. Sonic, Knuckles and Shade copied her. They hung over the side of the bridge by their arms and they started trekking across the side of the bridge. They moved as fast as they could too to make sure that they still beat the time limit. The Mobians kept this up for a while until Sally decided to see if it was safe to climb back up onto the bridge again. She bit on her glove and she took it off by slipping her hand out of it and she threw the glove onto the bridge. Nothing happened. It seemed like it was safe to come back up. So, using all the strength in her body, Sally pulled herself up onto the bridge. She didn't get zapped as she climbed up. It seemed they had bypassed the obstacle. Sally sighed with relief and she put her glove back on. Sonic, Knuckles and Shade climbed back onto the bridge too and they looked ahead of them. The path ended further up the bridge. It seemed the finishing line was just a good sprint away from them now. Sonic quickly ran off without thinking and he jogged towards the end of the path. Sally groaned in annoyance and she darted off after Sonic. Knuckles and Shade decided to just follow them for there wasn't much they could do just standing where they are now. Unfortunately, just as the Mobians were nearing the end of the path, a huge spiked crystal wall rose up from the bridge and blocked their way! The wall was sixteen feet tall and the spikes all seemed to be in some kind of pattern, almost as if you could use them to climb up the wall. Sonic leaped back to avoid getting skewered by the spikes on the wall.

"Hey! We beat your challenge Naugus! Why are you cheating to make us lose?!" yelled Sonic furiously.

"You have not beat it yet quickster!" cackled Naugus, appearing before them as a misty figure that looked just about fit for a fog "You have to reach the end of the path before time runs out! This is the final obstacle and you only have a minute to climb up it! Hurry up,

the clock is ticking…Hhhha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

The misty Naugus then drifted off to the end of the path, almost as if he was waiting for them to make it so he could congratulate them. Sonic frantically started to climb up the wall for he only had a minute left before the challenge was over. He grabbed onto some spikes with his hands and pulled himself up, putting his feet above any spikes bellow him to keep himself balanced. Knuckles just simply punched his fists into the crystal wall and he climbed up the wall using his knuckles, the way he always climbs whenever he does it. He had Shade clinging onto his back for Shade couldn't climb as well as Knuckles could. Sally was climbing on her own and she followed Sonic as quickly as she could. Because Naugus wanted the Mobians to succeed, he did fashion the wall so that it would be relatively easy to climb but whether the Mobians could climb it in a minute was a matter of how fast they could climb it. Sonic & Knuckles were climbing quite well whereas Sally was going a bit slower than they were. She wasn't as strong as Sonic and Knuckles were so it was harder for her to pull herself up when she needed to. She did rely more on where she was placing her feet though so she didn't have to do too much pulling up at least. In thirty seconds, the Mobians had made it to the top of the wall. Now here came the next big obstacle…climbing down it. It would take too long to do that so Sonic decided he would do the next big thing, jump down from it. He grabbed Sally and held on tightly to her. Then he jumped straight off of the wall and hurled down towards the ground. Sally screamed as Sonic jumped down for she did not like falling at all. Sonic landed on the ground pretty hard and he fought the pain in his feet long enough to put Sally down and run towards the end. Knuckles was a bit more sensible than Sonic and rather than jump straight down, he climbed down halfway with Shade on his back and once he reached halfway, he jumped down onto the bridge and he ran towards the end. They only had ten seconds left and Naugus began counting down as they ran towards the end of the path. The Mobians ran as fast as they possibly could and fought hard to make it to the ending in time as the seconds dropped one by one. Just by the skin of their teeth, the Mobians made it just as Naugus reached three seconds. They all collapsed onto the floor and panted for breath, unable to believe they had just made it.

"Whew…we did it! Challenge two completed!" cried Sonic "Would have been done a lot faster if I could use my super speed!"

"Indeed so Sonic…gasp…but we won the challenge so it doesn't matter." gasped Sally "I'm amazed we did it though."

"So…am I…" panted Shade.

Naugus stood before the tired Mobians and he grinned at them.

"Marvellously done indeed." he said delightedly "You have passed the second challenge, and just barely too. Now it is on to the final challenge and for this one, your powers are not prohibited should any of you have any."

"Sweet! I can spin-dash and run fast again!" cheered Sonic "So what's the final challenge Naugus?"

"Defeat my glorious pet…Crystal Chaos!" announced Naugus in a maniacal manner that made him look crazed and off his rocker.

Before the Mobians could wonder what Naugus meant by that, the bridge way expanded into an enormous platform that was the width and length of a football pitch and a huge crystalline creature appeared from nowhere. It roared loudly at the Mobians as it saw them, its roars making the platform shudder. It had waving tentacles, a huge serpent like head and jaws crammed with sharp, crystalline teeth. It's entire body was covered in crystal and yet despite the crystal body, Sonic couldn't help but think that the creature looked a little familiar. Knuckles recognized it instantly though.

"Oh my gosh! It's Perfect Chaos!" cried Knuckles "And he's all crystal now!"

"So we have to fight that thing and then it's freedom for us?" said Sonic, staring in disbelief at Crystal Chaos "No problem. We beat it before, we'll beat it again. Bring it on Chaos!"

And with that said, Sonic spin-dashed towards Crystal Chaos, making sure he was aiming for the brain on the top of its head…

Well, Sonic and friends have beaten Naugus' challenges and now they have to fight an old enemy for their freedom! Can they succeed and escape the void? Or will they be stuck in there forever? And will the other Royal Fighters beat Dr. Finitevus and save Sonic, Sally, Knuckles & Shade? And what will happen if Imperator Ix returns and gets involved? Why am I asking all these questions?! Tune in next time for "Thrown into the void" comes to an exciting conclusion...

Glad you hear your review's done speedox12. Can't wait to see it when Episode 150's done and you upload it. :)

Thrown into the Void Part 3

Story 148: Thrown Into The Void Part 3: Escaping the Void

A one way ticket out of the surreal nightmare world that is the void was just inches from Sonic the Hedgehog's grasp. After being thrown into the void by Imperator Ix, he and Queen Sally Acorn had made peace with the void's Gatekeeper, the grotesque Mobian wizard Ixis Naugus, and had been forced to participate in a series of challenges set up by the wizard in order for them to leave the void. Knuckles the Echidna and his girlfriend Shade the Echidna were also competing for their freedom. The first challenge had been Sonic & Sally having to save Knuckles & Shade and the second challenge had been a close call on a rather difficult and terrifying obstacle course. Now they were on their third challenge and the only challenge left to win before Naugus would let them out of the void. The third challenge wasn't going to be easy though for the Mobians were up against a crystallized Perfect Chaos. Sonic along with Shadow the Hedgehog and Scourge the Hedgehog had sealed Perfect Chaos into the void during the time of the Chaos Emerald Clusters and now Perfect Chaos was a mindless, crystallized pet for Ixis Naugus to command use to toy with whoever he so wished. Perfect Chaos was hard enough to defeat so Crystal Chaos likely wasn't going to be easy either. Add in the fact that nobody had a Chaos Emerald to turn super with so this was not going to be an easy battle at all. Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade were standing on a huge platform that served as their only grounding in the battle against Crystal Chaos. Crystal Chaos just loomed above them and snarled loudly, waving its crystalline tentacles around and getting ready to attack. Sonic had already launched the first attack at Crystal Chaos and he hit it in the top of its head, making it roar in pain and wave its tentacles around furiously. After that attack, Sonic hurled back down onto the platform. Ixis Naugus levitated above everything, looking down at the Mobians and grinning an evil, toothy grin that could make a shark go wild with excitement.

"This is my glorious little crystalline pet Mobians." hissed Naugus "You must defeat it or you will NEVER leave the void and you will be

mine forever!"

"We'll stop it, don't worry Naugus!" declared Sonic "We've stopped worse then this thing before!"

"Wait Naugus, if we lose and you keep us in the void then we can't bring Imperator Ix back for you to settle your grudge with him!" protested Sally.

"And that is exactly why you must win Queen Acorn!" rasped Naugus "If you lose then both of us suffer! I never get to finish off Ix for all he's done to me and you never get out of the void so you'd better try and see if you can win this challenge or else…"

Sally just sighed in annoyance at the cackling wizard as he laughed away to himself. Sometimes, evil-doers just couldn't make things easy. They just had to be difficult didn't they? Still, this was their only chance of getting out of the void so whether she liked it or not, Sally and her friends would have to take on Crystal Chaos and in turn, win their freedom. Sally got out her staff, unsheathed the blade in it and twirled it around. Sonic, Knuckles and Shade bent down into battle-ready stances and prepared to do battle with Crystal Chaos. Sally looked a little nervous though. She'd never seen anything like Crystal Chaos and considering she never fought Perfect Chaos before he was sealed into the void, she had no idea what she was up against.

"OK…gulp…what are we up against then you three?" asked Sally nervously "You seem very familiar with it."

"That's a Chaos entity known as Perfect Chaos." explained Knuckles "It was a liquid-like life form that was formed from a disaster involving Chaos Emeralds apparently. You don't have to worry about it being water though, it's crystallized now."

"It's only weakness is the brain on top of its head." said Sonic, pointing up at the fin on top of Crystal Chaos's head that contained the only organ in its entire body "If we hit that brain, we seriously hurt it and that'll hopefully bring it down."

"OK then." said Sally "I don't think I'll be of much use in this battle

unfortunately…"

"Don't strain yourself your majesty." said Shade "We'll take down that monster. You standby and see if an opportunity to help presents itself."

"OK." said Sally "Good luck you three."

"Thanks Sal." said Sonic "OK echidnas, let's bring down Crystal Chaos and win our freedom!"

Sonic soon found himself eating those words for Crystal Chaos lunged out and almost hit him with a huge tentacle. Sonic dodged the attack and zipped off as Crystal Chaos attempted to wallop him with another tentacle. The tentacle missed Sonic and walloped the platform, making it shake and shudder almost to the point of falling apart. Sonic jumped onto Crystal Chaos' tentacle just before the beast could retract it and he ran up the tentacle towards Crystal Chaos' head. Crystal Chaos unfortunately saw Sonic coming and it fired shards of crystals at Sonic from the spikes on its back. These normally would be energy bullets but because Chaos was crystallized, its attacks were crystallized too. Sonic dodged all the crystal shards and he spin-dashed towards Crystal Chaos' head. Crystal Chaos rose its head just as Sonic was about to hit its brain so Sonic ended up spin-dashing the wrong area on its head and he ricocheted away and down onto the platform. Sonic muttered grumpily under his breath and he spin-dashed towards Crystal Chaos again. The only thing is, when Sonic's a fair distance away, it gives his enemies more time to react and thus, Crystal Chaos was able to react before Sonic could get within ten feet of his brain. He walloped Sonic away with a huge, crystallized tentacle and Sonic was sent hurling away so far that he crash landed about halfway across the platform. Sally helped him up and Sonic rubbed himself better as Knuckles & Shade ran in to attack Crystal Chaos.

"I forgot one thing about Perfect Chaos...he doesn't like to play nice!" grumbled Sonic.

"Since he's battled you before Sonic, he likely knows that you know his weak-spot and will do anything to stop you from hitting it." explained Sally "Try distracting it and then go in for the kill."

"Sounds like an idea Sal." said Sonic brightly "And I know who'll distract it really well. Hey echidnas! Keep that thing busy for me while I try and hit its brain!" he called over to Knuckles and Shade who were both attacking Crystal Chaos simultaneously. Knuckles had grabbed onto one of its tentacles and had ran up towards its head and Shade was Blade-Rushing it like crazy, hitting several places all over the beast's crystallized body with energy waves.

"What did he say?!" asked Knuckles as he continued running up towards Crystal Chaos. Given how far Sonic was away from him and he was already climbing up Crystal Chaos' tentacle, it was no wonder Knuckles didn't hear Sonic very clearly.

"I think Sonic said "Keep that thing busy for me while I try and hit its brain"!" Shade called up to her boyfriend "I think Sonic wants us to distract this thing while he hits its weak-spot!"

"Got it hon!" said Knuckles, giving his girlfriend the thumbs up and a dashing smirk "Hey crystal-face! Here's mud in your eye!" he added for he had reached Crystal Chaos's head and he jumped into the air, drawing his arm back and aiming for its eye.

Unfortunately for Crystal Chaos, its eyes were not crystalized (obviously. How can he see otherwise?) so Knuckles had a clean shot. He hurled towards Crystal Chaos' eye and he punched it as hard as he possibly could, making the giant serpent-like monster roar in pain as it was hit ever so violently and callously in the eye. Knuckles just feel back down to the platform and Shade was quickly on hand to catch him before he could have a hard landing. Sonic watched Crystal Chaos writhe around and he curled up into a ball. He built up speed and he prepared to launch a spin-dash. He timed his attack just right so that when Crystal Chaos lowered its head while writhing around, Sonic would hit it. He rocketed like a whacked tennis ball towards Crystal Chaos and he spin-dashed directly into the fin on top of Crystal Chaos's head. Just a darn pity for Sonic that it was crystallized like the rest of Crystal Chaos's body was! But the crystal around the fin wasn't as strong as the rest of its body so while Sonic didn't break through it and hit the brain, he did leave a crack in it as he ricocheted off of it. If he hit it a few more times, he might just break through it and be able to hit Crystal Chaos's brain. Sonic landed back on the platform and he stared grimly at Crystal

Chaos. He hated it when his villains didn't go down in one hit. This was why he honestly preferred fighting Eggman robots, they were always easier to take down since he could just knock them out with one hit. As is, he was against a crystallized Perfect Chaos and he'd have to just hit him as hard as he can and keep fighting until he goes down. Shade looked up at Crystal Chaos and she swiped her blades in a Blade Rush attack, aiming for the fin on Crystal Chaos's head. The purple energy wave whooshed from the swipe of Shade's blades and up towards Crystal Chaos's head. The attack struck the fin on Crystal Chaos's head but unfortunately, it didn't break the crystal casing around the fin, it just cracked it a little bit more but not by much. Knuckles ran towards Crystal Chaos and tried to grab onto one of its tentacles so he could run up it and up to its head but Crystal Chaos kept its tentacles up out of Knuckles' reach and it fired clusters of pink energy balls at the echidna. Knuckles dodged the attacks as they showered down over him and he leaped up and actually managed to grab one of the balls. It felt very hot in his hands and began to sting like crazy but he managed to keep hold of it and he threw it at Crystal Chaos's head. The ball hit the fin on Crystal Chaos's head and the colossal beast screamed in pain as its head began to sting like crazy from the attack. What made things worse was the fact that the energy ball had actually managed to shatter the crystal around Crystal Chaos's fin and now its brain was vulnerable! Sonic and the echidnas could hit it now and stop him for good! Sonic beamed happily at what Knuckles' attack had just done.

"Whoo-hoo! Good throw Knuckles!" cheered Sonic "Now let's beat the *brains* outta this guy! Ha, ha, ha...how do I come up with these jokes sometimes?" he snickered.

Sally sort of chuckled sarcastically at Sonic's line. She did somewhat find his sense of humour mildly entertaining most of the time. So now Crystal Chaos's brain was vulnerable, Sonic could just spin-dash it and easily take down the beast as easy as pie. Unfortunately for him, Crystal Chaos was not going to make it easy to hit him now his brain was vulnerable. He fired a huge energy beam out of his mouth at Sonic but the blue hedgehog managed to jump back just in time to dodge the attack. Crystal Chaos did end up taking a huge chunk out of the platform though. There was now a twenty-foot wide crater burning in the middle of the platform. Sonic

gulped and he decided to make sure that Crystal Chaos doesn't do that again otherwise the entire platform would be obliterated and they'd be taken with it, thus eliminating their chance for freedom and quite easily ending their lives. Sonic looked up at Crystal Chaos and much to his horror, he saw that Crystal Chaos was preparing to fire another energy beam out of his mouth! Luckily for him though, Knuckles used his knuckles to climb up Crystal Chaos's tough, crystal shell and he climbed up and up until he reached the monster's eyes. Knuckles punched Crystal Chaos in the eye again as hard as he possibly could and he made Crystal Chaos lose focus. He reared his head up in agony and it fired the energy beam up into the air without really meaning to do it. Sometimes you can do things by accident when you're in pain after all. Now its attack had been interrupted, Knuckles jumped down from Crystal Chaos and landed down onto the platform. Sonic curled up into a ball once again and he spin-dashed towards Crystal Chaos just as it lowered its head. He whizzed towards the exposed fin on Crystal Chaos's head and he ploughed straight through it for Chaos is made up of water. Sonic hit the brain and he made the crystallized monster bellow a thunderous roar of pain, its tentacles waving around furiously and its head aching like mad. The pain in its brain made Crystal Chaos's body structure weaken and it began to sink down below the platform. Sonic hurled out of his head as Crystal Chaos began to sink down and he landed on the platform, skidding across it as he did so and he came to a halt near the crater made in the platform from Crystal Chaos's earlier attack. Sonic mopped his brow and he sighed with relief, believing that Crystal Chaos was defeated at last.

"Whew…that was cathartic!" gasped Sonic "But I think we've done it! Crystal Chaos seems to be down and out at last."

"I sincerely hope it's down." said Knuckles grimly "I wanna get out of this stinkin' place and get to stopping Imperator Ix and my treacherous Uncle Finitevus already!"

"I think we may still be fighting for our lives boys." said Shade downheartedly "Crystal Chaos isn't down yet. Look!" she exclaimed, pointing ahead of her dramatically.

Sonic and Knuckles stared in the direction Shade was pointing in and they saw Crystal Chaos coming back up and towering over the

platform with a very angry look in his eyes and his teeth bared! Sonic leaped back in alarm and the echidnas prepared to do battle once again as Crystal Chaos raised its tentacles and prepared to continue fighting.

"Man, I thought that spin-dash to the brain would have taken it down already!" moaned Sonic "Guess I might have to hit it a few more times!"

"I'd try hitting the brain clean out of its head." suggested Shade "That'll take it down easily."

"It may even kill Chaos if we do that." said Knuckles "Not really bothered though, in this match it's "kill or be killed" as the say."

"OK, I'll try and spin-dash the brain clean out of its head." said Sonic "Apologies if that's a little grisly by the way Sal." he added, looking over at Sally.

"I'll be fine Sonic." said Sally reassuringly "You're doing this to a creature made of water, it won't be that cringing to see."

"OK then." said Sonic with a smile "Knuckles, Shade, let's bash Crystal Chaos's brain right out of his head!"

"You will not be doing that just yet quickster!" cackled Naugus delightedly "For I have decided to add in an extra opponent for you to face to make this final challenge more interesting…Crystal Nega, join in the battle!" he thundered at the top of his raspy voice.

Sonic was horrified to hear this. Naugus was giving them a second opponent to battle?! That wizard liked to make things difficult and throw in a few surprises here and there to shake things up didn't he? The Mobians watched in astonishment as a new crystallized figure suddenly appeared from nowhere in a magical breeze that swept around everybody and stood before them, its crystallized fists clenched and a scowl on its face as it prepared to do battle with its opponents. Sonic stared at the figure and suddenly realized that it looked incredibly familiar. The figure looked heavily like Dr. Eggman only it was entirely crystallized and looked about ready to do battle with them. Sonic had an idea on what they were suddenly up

against whereas Sally, Knuckles and Shade were obfuscated to say the least.

"Dr. Eggman?!" shrieked Sally "B-b-b-but th-this c-can't be! He's dead now! How did HE end up in the void?!"

"Simple, it isn't Dr. Eggman." explained Sonic "Well technically it IS Dr. Eggman but it's not the Dr. Eggman we know and loathe."

"Please explain hedgehog, we're confused here." demanded Shade impatiently.

"OK, remember Mobius Nega?" asked Sonic "Well, that's the Mobius Nega counterpart of Dr. Eggman. He took over Mobius Nega and turned everybody into metal life forms. I helped to bring him down and I sent him here. Guess Naugus got him as well."

"I see." said Sally "So this is an alternate version of Eggman is it? He shouldn't be too difficult since he has no machines to help him out here."

"Yeah." said Sonic "Although I'm pretty sure the challenge was to defeat Crystal Chaos, not to take down Eggman Nega as well!" he growled, glaring at Naugus furiously as the wizard hovered before the Mobians with a sinister grin on his face that would make a goblin proud.

"I've altered the challenge. Pray I do not alter it any further." sneered Naugus "Now fight Mobians unless you want to stay trapped in the void forever! Hhhhha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Sonic, you and the echidnas take on Crystal Chaos!" ordered Sally, whipping out her bo-staff and unsheathing the blade "I'll take on Eggman Nega, he won't be much of a problem for me and he'll just distract you if I don't take him on."

"Good idea Sally." said Sonic "Let's do it to it everybody!"

With that said, Sonic, Knuckles & Shade all ran towards Crystal Chaos and prepared to attack him again while Sally twirled her staff around and prepared to battle Eggman Nega. Naugus watched the whole fight from above, clearly enjoying every minute of what was

going on. He sure was going to miss these Mobians and how entertaining they were when he let them out of the void. In fact… maybe he could keep them in the void anyway and have them provide him entertainment for all eternity…Naugus smiled maliciously as he thought about this idea. It sure would do him good to see Sally's horrified face when he announced that he was changing his mind and was keeping the four Mobians here in the void for the sake of entertainment. How glorious that would be to see indeed…

Meanwhile on Angel Island, the Royal Fighters found themselves having their second bout with Dr. Finitevus. They were fully aware of how powerful Finitevus was since he wiped the floor with them earlier but luckily for them, they had a counter attack. Espio the Chameleon had knocked out Finitevus with a kick to the head and while he was knocked out, the Royal Fighters had stolen his warp rings. Finitevus managed to get his super warp ring back though and that wasn't good for the Royal Fighters for that was the warp ring they needed. If they could get the super warp ring, then they could open up a portal to the void and save Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade from it and bring them back to Mobius. Then they could all team up and stop Imperator Ix once and for all, especially as the Master Emerald's here for Sonic or Knuckles to use and turn super with. Unfortunately, Finitevus is anything but easy to grab hold of and even though the Royal Fighters had his other warp rings to counter-attack, he was still as slippery as a bar of soap. That and Finitevus knew how to use warp-rings in battle much better than the Royal Fighters did too so this battle still wasn't going to be easy for them.

Finitevus started off the battle by lunging towards Tails the Fox. Sora Prower, Tails' sister, quickly handed Tails her warp ring as Finitevus lunged towards him and Tails opened it up to a random location and he sent Finitevus hurling through it. Tails had warped him into the volcanic land of obsidian known as Black Acropolis, miles and miles away from Angel Island. But that wouldn't keep Finitevus away for long. He used his super warp ring to warp back over to Angel Island. The moment he stepped out of the warp ring

though, Vector the Crocodile socked him in the side of his head and sent him hurling across the battlefield. Finitevus dropped his super warp ring and Vector grabbed it quickly. But before he could do anything, Finitevus ran towards Vector and he flipped towards him. He reached the crocodile and, while standing on his right hand, he roundhouse kicked the crocodile in the head. Vector dropped the super warp ring and Finitevus quickly grabbed it. He flicked it into the air and he jumped through it just as Wilson the Dog ran forward and tried to grab him. Finitevus vanished through the warp ring and he reappeared behind Wilson. He jumped out of the super warp ring and he walloped Wilson in the back by lunging feet first into his back. Wilson was brought down onto his face and sent skidding across the grass, a mound of dirt building up around his face as he scrapped across it. Mandy Mouse, Wilson's wife, fumed at Finitevus and she flicked a warp ring into the air. Unfortunately, Finitevus heard her doing so and he quickly jumped through his warp ring. He vanished through it as Mandy threw a punch through the warp ring she had and left Mandy to punch nothing at all. Mandy drew her arm back out of the warp ring and she closed it up quickly so that she wouldn't lose it to Finitevus should he suddenly pop out and attack. Finitevus reappeared behind Mandy but because of Mandy's sensitive ears, she heard the warp ring open up and she ducked immediately before Finitevus could kick her. Finitevus hurled out of his warp ring and Mandy threw the one she had in front of him, sending Finitevus hurling through it. Mandy didn't sent Finitevus to another place unlike Tails, she just opened her warp ring up directly above Bunnie Rabbot. Thus, Finitevus fell out of the warp ring and Bunnie uppercut him in the gut before he could crash on top of her. Finitevus hurled back through Mandy's warp ring and Mandy caught him like a goalkeeper waiting for the coming football for she was standing outside of hers and waiting to grab him. Mandy forced Finitevus' arms behind his back and she held on tightly to him.

"Alright Dr. Creepy Von Evil, give us your super warp ring and I promise I won't break your arms!" snarled Mandy.

"Pry I don't break yours first my dear…" sneered Finitevus smoothly, not phased in the slightest by Mandy's threats.

He wrestled himself out of Mandy's grasp effortlessly and he forced

her arms behind her back. He snatched the warp ring she had from her hands and he kicked Mandy directly into Wilson as he tried to help his wife fight the caped echidna. Finitevus now had two warp rings. He slipped the second one on his left wrist and continued to use his super warp ring. Geoffrey St. John loaded up his crossbow and he shot some stun-darts at Finitevus. Finitevus dodged the attacks and he charged towards Geoffrey as quickly as he could. He clasped his fists together and he uppercut Geoffrey in the face. Geoffrey staggered backwards and Finitevus tripped him up with a kick to the legs. Bunnie had the wise idea to throw a punch as Finitevus was attacking. Her robot arm extended to twice its normal length and she socked Finitevus directly in the face. Finitevus was quite amazed at how powerful that punch was and he found himself lying on the ground somewhat shaken by the powerful punch. Amy Rose ran towards Finitevus, her hammer brandished high above her head and she prepared to attack him before he could get back up. But Finitevus opened up a warp ring above himself as Amy threw the hammer down. The warp ring opened up…directly above Amy's head, leaving the pink hedgehog to wallop herself on the head with her own hammer. Finitevus picked himself up and he saw that Amy had one of his warp rings on her wrist. He pushed the dazed and confused Amy onto her back and he snatched his warp ring back, now giving himself three warp rings to use. He slipped it up to the knee on his left leg. Finitevus soon ended up getting four to use for he saw Nicole standing by and he quickly slugged her in the stomach, making Nicole double-over in pain and drop the warp ring she had. Finitevus grabbed it and slipped it onto his right leg up to the knee. Sora got the drop on him though by opening her warp ring directly underneath Finitevus. Finitevus fell through it and he ended up hurling towards Ruben the Water Panther. Ruben squirted Finitevus away and sent him hurling across the battlefield. Finitevus crashed into the Master Emerald shrine back-first and he groaned in pain as it flooded up his back and made him wince. Charmy Bee tried to sting Finitevus but he opened up a warp ring and sent Charmy whizzing into it. Charmy ended up being warped behind Vector and Charmy accidentally stung Vector in the bottom, making the crocodile yelp in pain. Cosmo the Seedrian ran in and she tried to snatch Finitevus's super warp ring but Finitevus just backhanded her onto the ground. Tails was livid to see Finitevus hurting his girlfriend like this and he lunged towards the albino-furred echidna.

Finitevus saw Tails coming but he was too late to stop Tails from kicking him in the face and knocking him down onto his back. Finitevus picked himself up and he punched at Tails. Tails flew over Finitevus and he grabbed the super warp ring in Finitevus' hand just as he sailed over him. He tried to wrestle it out of Finitevus' grasp but Finitevus held on tightly, resulting in a big tug-of-war between him and Tails. Tails was spinning his tails around as fast as possible to give himself some extra-strength in this tug-of-war. Finitevus was surprised at how much stronger Tails is when using his tails. He was having a hard time snatching his warp ring back. But the tug-of-war match was interrupted by a Doom Orb coming from nowhere and hitting Tails dead on in the body and sending him hurling across the battlefield. It was Imperator Ix! He had come back after searching for the Chaos Emeralds and he saw that Finitevus was in heated battle with the Royal Fighters. He had decided to help Finitevus by blasting Tails away. Unfortunately, Tails letting go of the super warp ring caused Finitevus' arm to shoot up into the air and he ended up accidentally letting go of the super warp ring and flinging it up into the air. The super warp ring hurled near the edge of Angel Island and it pinged off of it and over the edge. Cream the Rabbit saw it falling off of the island and she flew after the super warp ring as fast as she could. Finitevus opened up one of the three ordinary warp rings he got back and he jumped through it. He reappeared just underneath where the super warp ring was falling and he leaped up out of the warp ring. Cream was flying as fast as she could, desperate to get the super warp ring but unfortunately, Finitevus got it first. Finitevus caught it in his hands and he opened it up. He warped back up onto Angel Island just beside Imperator Ix and Cream, upset at her failure to get the Super Warp Ring, flew back onto the island. The Royal Fighters were now up against Imperator Ix and Dr. Finitevus both at once. Imperator Ix stood forward, his fists glowing malevolently as he glowered at the Royal Fighters. He threw some Doom Orbs at the Royal Fighters and he sent them all hurling backwards across the battlefield. This attack caused any Royal Fighters who still has one of Finitevus' warp rings to drop them on the ground and Finitevus was on hand to grab them all and put them back onto his arms and legs respectively. Tails groaned in defeat, unable to believe on how close they were to getting into the void and saving Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade from the horrors it contained. Imperator Ix cackled loudly at the heroes and he pointed

gloatingly at them.

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arms and legs respectively. Tails groaned in defeat, unable to believe on how close they were to getting into the void and saving Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade from the horrors it contained. Imperator Ix cackled loudly at the heroes and he pointed gloatingly at them.

"A most valiant effort to try and take down my apprentice and steal his super warp ring foolish worms." boomed Imperator Ix "But your attempts are ultimately futile. Why do you delay the inevitable so recklessly I must ask?"

"Because we aren't prepared to let guys like you take over the world and make everybody's lives miserable!" snapped Tails hotly.

"Yeah! And we also won't abide to you throwing four of our friends into the void and leaving them there to perish!" squealed Amy "You can beat us up all you like Ix and Finitevus, we won't give up no matter what happens!"

"As vexing as their hubris is, I really have got to admire such valour in these young fighters." purred Finitevus "Valour like that is commendable. You heroes will make fine servants for my master when our empire forms."

"You will never make us serve you Finitevus!" declared Nicole furiously "I'd sooner die then serve you or Imperator Ix!"

"We'd be all too happy to arrange that little lynx…" crooned Imperator Ix coldly, making Nicole suddenly regret saying that.

"Hey, I don't mean to ask but didn't Imperator Ix leave to find the Chaos Emeralds?" asked Cream curiously "He doesn't seem to have them on him right now."

"That's because my search got interrupted before I could really find them." said Ix grimly "I was searching high and low for the emeralds but I then decided to come back for a minute and see how things were going and now I see Finitevus fighting you all off as you try to stop him and steal his warp rings. Before I continue my search for the Chaos Emeralds, I think I may need to discipline you all a little and stave off any ideas of getting Finitevus's super warp ring and

using it to go to the void…" he said, his voice dropping to a rather sinister tone as he summoned some energy to his fists and prepared to launch an attack at the Royal Fighters.

"You won't do anything of the sort Ix!" yelled Tails "For we've got one big shiny emerald that can help us get past you and your apprentice…" he added with a sly smile, flying up off the ground and up towards the Master Emerald, hinting heavily at what his great idea was.

Ix and Finitevus stared in horror at Tails as he prepared to do something with the Master Emerald.

"The Master Emerald…stop him now!" cried Imperator Ix furiously.

But before anyone could do anything, Tails landed on top of the Master Emerald and he yelled aloud "Chaos…CONTROL!" As he yelled those words, the Master Emerald began to glow brightly and time around Imperator Ix and Dr. Finitevus seemed to slow down. Time slowed down so much that it ended up stopping around them. Imperator Ix and Dr. Finitevus were frozen in time thanks to the Chaos Control. Tails cheered happily, pleased to see that his plan had worked and he hopped off the Master Emerald.

"Yes! It worked!" cheered Tails "Ix and Finitevus are stuck in a Chaos Control! Now we can get that super warp ring and get Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade out of the void!"

"Ya'll better be quick sugah for it won't last forever." noted Bunnie.

Tails darted over to Finitevus as quickly as he could and he decided to take a wild guess on which warp ring was the super warp ring. He took one from Finitevus's left wrist and he flicked it up into the air, praying that it was the super warp ring. The warp ring expanded to twice its size and…a portal opened up in the centre of it and the portal led directly into the void! Tails had chosen the right ring! Tails cried out in excitement at the fact he had managed to find the right warp ring.

"Yes! I've got it!" exclaimed Tails "Now I'll just get inside and find our friends. I'll be back soon everybody, see you later." he said, waving

to the others as he prepared to step through the warp ring and into the void.

"Good luck Tails." said Cosmo with her hands over her chest.

"You find our friends and bring them back home little brother." said Sora brightly.

Tails smiled at Cosmo and Sora and he jumped into the warp ring. He was warped from Angel Island and into the void and the super warp ring closed up behind him as he jumped in. It may take a while for Tails to find Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade but he'd do it eventually. He'd have to be quick though for Ix and Finitevus's Chaos Control was wearing off and the Royal Fighters may not be able to hold them off for too long once the inevitable battle ensues…

Back in the void, the battle for freedom was getting as intense as ever. Crystal Chaos was giving Sonic, Knuckles & Shade a hard time whereas Sally wasn't having it too hard with Eggman Nega but the crystallized doctor was pretty resistant so her attacks weren't really that big of a blow to him (you try hurting something coated in crystal!). Sally twirled her staff around and she tripped Eggman Nega up by taking his legs out from underneath him with the staff. Eggman Nega landed heavily on his back and Sally added a bit more by kicking him as hard as she could. The resulting kick left her foot feeling sore but at this point, Sally was pretty used to pain now. Sally rubbed her foot better and she braced herself as Eggman Nega picked himself up. The crystallized mad-man lumbered towards Sally as quickly as he could. That is…not very quickly considering he's already a fat man and all that crystal around him is just making him even heavier. Sally had plenty of time to step out of the way and dropkick Eggman Nega in the back as he lumbered past her. Eggman Nega was no match for Sally's speed and agility. Eggman Nega was thrown onto the floor by the kick but he picked himself up and punched at Sally. Sally dodged the punch and she stabbed Eggman Nega's arm with the blade of her staff. Eggman Nega groaned furiously as the shard blade of Sally's staff penetrated the crystal casing he was trapped in and went through his arm. Sally yanked the staff out of Eggman Nega's arm and she spun around

and kicked Eggman Nega towards the edge of the platform. The crystallized alternate Eggman nearly ended up falling off, he just came to a stop on his shoulder. He lay there on the edge of the platform, clutching his arm in pain. Sally decided to see to it that he does fall off so she ran over to Eggman Nega and she pushed him directly off the platform. Eggman Nega plummeted straight down from the platform and he disappeared into the dark depths of the void, his screams drifting away into silence as he disappeared from sight. Sally took a moment to forgive herself for doing something so brutal and then she turned away from the edge of the platform.

"That almost felt like getting rid of the real Eggman…" she said to herself "I doubt I could ever bring myself to be so cold and merciless though if this were the real Eggman at my mercy. At least Eggman Nega won't be dead since if you fall in this place you just fall and fall until Naugus catches you so I won't have killed Eggman Nega, lucky for me as I could never bring myself to kill anybody, no matter how horrible they are."

Her thoughts snapped back into reality just in time for Sally to see that Crystal Chaos was still providing some problems for Sonic, Knuckles & Shade. The crystallized monster tried to whip the three Mobians with its enormous tentacles but they all dodged the attack and Sonic spin-dashed towards its brain again. Crystal Chaos however lifted its head up so Sonic ended up spin-dashing him in the bridge of his nose rather than the fin on his head. Sonic hurled back down to the ground and he tried another spin-dash. Crystal Chaos however fired some energy bullets from the spikes on its back and they blasted Sonic back down onto the platform, the blue hedgehog crying out in pain as he was stricken by the attacks. Knuckles tried to climb up Crystal Chaos and get to his brain but Crystal Chaos saw him and he scraped Knuckles off of himself with his tentacle. Knuckles was sent hurling back down to the platform and he groaned in pain as he hit it. Shade tried to Blade-Rush Crystal Chaos's brain but he held up his tentacle and blocked the attack. He then tried to whip Shade but Shade managed to dodge the attack and she ran for it as quickly as she could. Crystal Chaos eyed Sonic, who was still lying on the platform and recovering from the earlier attack, and he raised a tentacle up as high as he could. Sally gasped in horror for she could see that Crystal Chaos was

going to crush Sonic with his tentacle. The squirrel queen put her staff away and she instantly bolted forward as fast as she could. Crystal Chaos aimed his tentacle at Sonic and he brought it swinging down towards him. Sally made it just in time and she scooped Sonic up in her arms. She jumped out of the way just as Crystal Chaos slammed the platform with his tentacle. The platform shook violently and Sally ended up falling over, dropping Sonic as she did so. Sonic rolled across the platform and he came to a stop just a few feet away from Sally. Sally picked herself up and she ran over to Sonic's side.

"Sonic? Are you OK?" she asked concernedly, shaking him a little.

"Ugh I feel like I've been shot out of the sky…" groaned Sonic as he sat up and rubbed himself better.

"Oh thank goodness." said Sally, hugging Sonic with relief "Sonic, are you still able to fight at all?"

"I'm a little sore Sally but I can still go for it." said Sonic "I've survived worse before as you know."

"I know." said Sally "Anyway, I've gotten rid of Eggman Nega so you only have Crystal Chaos to worry about now."

"Cool." said Sonic, staggering back onto his feet "As for Crystal Chaos, I'm sure we'll take him down eventually. We just need to hit that brain a few more times."

"If only you had your super form Sonic." said Knuckles grimly "You could just pound Crystal Chaos to a pulp and you'd be too fast for him to stop you."

"Indeed I would." said Sonic dully "As is, we just have to try everything we've got in order to…"

Then suddenly, much to the surprise of everybody, a warp ring opened up and out of it shot Tails! Sonic jumped as Tails whizzed out of the warp ring that opened up. Tails grabbed the super warp ring as he jumped through it and he landed onto the platform next to Sonic & Sally. Naugus looked amazed to see this happen whereas

Sonic, Sally, Knuckles and Shade were all too happy to see Tails here and with a super warp ring no less.

"What sorcery is this?!" he rasped in bewilderment.

"Tails! You managed to get Finny's super warp ring! Ace!" cried Sonic with joy "Now we can get outta here at long last!"

"You bet we can Sonic." said Tails brightly "Come on let's get going and fast!"

But before Tails could do anything, Crystal Chaos slammed the platform and made everybody fall over as it shuddered furiously under the massive slam of Crystal Chaos's enormous, crystalline tentacles. Tails picked himself up and he stared in horror at the sight of Crystal Chaos. He recognized him easily and that's what made him even more scared of Crystal Chaos.

"Perfect Chaos?!" shrieked Tails "Wh-wh-what happened t-t-to him?!"

"Long story bro, can't explain it now." said Sonic "Open up the warp ring and get us outta here!"

Tails did not wait to be asked twice. He flicked the super warp ring up into the air and it expanded to several times its size. Naugus was horrified to see this and he flew towards the super warp ring as fast as he could.

"Oh no you don't! You will not leave here until the challenge is completed!" snarled Naugus, desperate to catch the Mobians before they could escape the void.

But as fast as Naugus was going, he was much too late. Sonic, Tails, Sally, Knuckles & Shade all bolted through the super warp ring the moment it opened up and by the time Naugus got there, the warp ring closed up and vanished into thin air, leaving Naugus to crash face-first into the platform. as he missed. Naugus picked himself up, rubbing his face better, and he clenched his teeth in rage. The Mobians had managed to evade him and they had escaped the void! Naugus was so furious over losing his new figures

of entertainment that all he could do was roar in rage.

"RRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHH

What you're about to get now is the embodiment of good timing for when the super warp ring opened up and Sonic, Sally, Tails, Knuckles & Shade all filed out of it one by one and onto Angel Island, the Chaos Control around Imperator Ix and Dr. Finitevus wore off. The two were now able to move again and once they started moving, they were quick to notice that they now had more company than they did earlier. As for the Royal Fighters, they were overjoyed to see Sonic, Sally, Knuckles & Shade back from the void and looking OK as they stood on the Master Emerald shrine before everybody.

"Whoo-hoo Tails! You did it!" cried Mandy excitedly.

"You've got them all back!" cheered Cosmo "Sonic, Sally, Knuckles & Shade are back from the void and safe and sound again!"

"Now we can deal with those echidna blighters once and for all!" exclaimed Geoffrey St. John happily.

"The guardian and the others I banished to the void have returned?!" thundered Ix in rage "How did this happen?!"

"I froze you both with a Chaos Control and then I stole Finitevus's super warp ring and used it to rescue our friends!" explained Tails, a taunting expression on his face "You two are dead meat now so you may as well give up all plans you have of putting the island back down and making your own empire!" he added, pointing at them as he yelled those words.

"I am hardly dead meat cretin!" snarled Imperator Ix "For I have my magical powers and Dr. Finitevus has his prodigious fighting abilities! You will be thrown back into the void and this time, I'll exile ALL of you so that NOBODY can bring you back from the void!"

"We'll see about that Imperator." said Sonic "Though I think Knuckles has a few things he'd like to say to you."

As Sonic said that, Knuckles climbed onto the Master Emerald and started tapping into its power. Sonic, Sally, Tails & Shade jumped off the shrine as Knuckles tapped into the emerald's power and the Master Emerald began to glow dazzlingly and radiantly as its power activated. Knuckles was activating his chaos form once again. His red fur began to turn a dark green colour as he filled himself with energy from the Master Emerald and his dreadlocks began to spread out and levitate upwards. Ix and Finitevus both stepped back in horror as Knuckles began transforming into his chaos form. They knew they were in trouble now for a chaos form was far more powerful then anything they had ever taken on before and Knuckles' chaos form was the very thing that had exiled Imperator Ix in the first place.

"No! The moron is using his chaos form!" cried Dr. Finitevus.

"He is indeed!" exclaimed Imperator Ix "But I will not be defeated and thrown back into the void again! Finitevus, help me bring down this wretch once and for all!"

"Bring him down yourself master!" snarled Finitevus "Unlike you, I know when I'm defeated!"

With that said, Finitevus snapped his fingers and opened up a warp ring as quickly as he could. He jumped through the warp ring and left Angel Island behind. The warp ring closed up behind him as he left, leaving a furious Imperator Ix stranded on Angel Island and at the mercy of Chaos Knuckles. Speaking of Chaos Knuckles, Knuckles' transformation was complete and he levitated off of the Master Emerald and over to Imperator Ix, a bright green aurora surrounding him and his dreadlocks waving around. Imperator Ix stood back and he began to tremble with fear.

"N-n-n-no! P-p-p-please! G-g-guardian! D-d-d-don't th-th-throw me b-b-back into the v-v-v-void!" whimpered Ix "I-I-I-I'll d-d-do anything! Anything! D-d-don't throw m-m-me b-b-back into the v-v-void Knuckles! Please!"

"You don't deserve to walk on Angel Island Ix, or indeed anywhere else on Mobius." said Chaos Knuckles coldly "You're a disgrace to the echidna race and you violated your exile. Now I'm gonna make

sure you STAY in the void for good!"

With that said, Chaos Knuckles held his arms out and he thundered at the top of his voice "Chaos…CONTROL!" His body began to glow brightly as he yelled it aloud and Imperator Ix suddenly froze up as if time was stopping all around him. Imperator Ix was frozen in time once again and he couldn't move at all. Now that was done, Chaos Knuckles opened up a Chaos Portal with another Chaos Control. The portal opened up nice and big and Chaos Knuckles grabbed Imperator Ix by his arms. He lifted him up as if he weighed nothing and then he threw the crazed echidna into the portal. The portal, of course, led to the void. Imperator Ix was now back in the void where he belonged. But Chaos Knuckles didn't seem to be finished yet. He yelled aloud "Chaos…CONTROL!" again as the portal began to close up. Nothing seemed to happen though so the Royal Fighters were left wondering what Chaos Knuckles had done with that Chaos Control. Now Ix was gone for good, Chaos Knuckles powered down and he returned to his normal self. His fur turned back red and his dreadlocks drooped back down again. The moment he was back to normal, Knuckles turned to the others.

"Tails, try and use the super warp ring to go to the void." he ordered.

Tails was puzzled to receive such an order. Why on Mobius did Knuckles want him to do that? Squaring his shoulders, Tails just did as he was told. He flicked the super warp ring into the air and it expanded to many times its size…but no portal opened up in the middle. It was just empty. Tails was even more puzzled now. What was going on? He has the super warp ring so why can't he open up a portal to the void now?

"Huh? I…I don't understand." said Tails "Why can't I…?"

"It's a good thing Tails, it means it's worked." said Knuckles "You see, one of the perks of being a Chaos Being is that you can do beyond what any normal person can do with a Chaos Emerald. Using that final Chaos Control before the portal closed, I have placed a time-lock on the void. So nobody can ever enter or leave the void ever again. Uncle Finitevus can try all he likes, he will never be able to get into the void again. It's time-locked and no super warp ring will ever be able to get you in it, no matter how powerful it is."

"Wow! Way past cool Knuckles!" cheered Sonic "Ix is stuck in the void forever now!"

"But that means we can't banish anybody else to the void either." noted Sally "Especially Dr. Finitevus."

"It doesn't matter." said Knuckles "Finitevus will be caught some day and brought to justice you see if he isn't. When I get my treacherous uncle, I'll turn into Chaos Knuckles, place a time-locked Chaos Control on him and then lock him away forever. Finitevus will be frozen forever if I ever get to do that to him."

"Sounds cool." said Sonic.

"By the way Knuckles, we learned some history about Angel Island while you were in the void." explained Cosmo "Finitevus claims that the Master Emerald used to be hidden in a cavern before the island was risen and that nobody was ever able to find it in there. Do you think that he's right to have the island down and have everything back the way it was?"

"Uncle Finitevus does have legitimate reasons for being against Angel Island being in the sky." explained Knuckles "But he totally missed the point that even if the island's down and the Master Emerald's back in the cavern, it won't be any safer then it is up here. Everybody knows about the Master Emerald now and do you think lowering the island is gonna make people forget about it? Certainly not! We'd probably get thieves digging the place up trying to find it and since Eggman's servant bot is still functioning, she might bring a whole army of Egg-Pawns and blow up the place just to find the emerald! While raising the island is the reason everybody knows the Master Emerald exists now, the guardians are here to make up for that mistake…by making sure it stays safe and that the island stays afloat. I'm here to make sure that the Master Emerald stays safe and that Angel Island stays safe. It's much safer up here and it shall STAY up here as long as I'm around."

"Very good points there Knuckles and a very good sense of dedication to duty." Sally commended brightly "I bet your father would be very proud to hear all this Knuckles."

"Yeah…my old man would be proud indeed." murmured Knuckles as he thought back to his father's death."

"He would, and there's another echidna who's proud of you Knuckles." said Shade, coming forward and pulling Knuckles into a hug "And she's standing in front of you right now." she added slyly.

Knuckles knew what Shade meant and he chuckled slightly. He wrapped his arms around Shade and the two echidnas kissed each other lovingly. The Royal Fighters just watched on, awed by the two echidnas kissing each other. As they did that, Sally took Sonic's hand into hers and looked over at him dreamily. That scary encounter in the void had left her feeling rather attracted to Sonic and she found herself beginning to fall for him. She'd been harbouring feelings for Sonic since the day he rescued her from Eggman's first attack and this adventure just left her feeling more attracted to Sonic than ever before. She began to wonder if Sonic was feeling the same way towards her. Sonic looked over at Sally and realized she was holding his hand. He didn't mind though, he was beginning to quite like Sally himself.

"Guess Knuckles and Shade smooching together is making you feel all lovey-dovey then?" teased Sonic.

"Don't start true blue." teased Sally "I will say though…thank you for keeping me safe and saving my life while in the void Sonic."

"Don't mention it Sal." said Sonic "And thanks for saving my life too. I appreciate it." he added.

Sally beamed brightly. Seemed Sonic might be sharing her affections after all. They'd just have to wait and see though. For now, they could enjoy this moment of victory and get back to their day of peace they had been hoping to have before this whole mess started.

Unbeknownst to anybody though, Dr. Finitevus had warped back onto the island and he had been listening to the conversation from behind some thick bushes. He put a finger to his lips and mused for a moment about what he had heard.

"So my master's gone forever thanks to a time-lock is he?" purred Finitevus "That means that I am separated from him forever. Oh well, him being gone is his own fault, his hubris was his downfall. As for the reasoning behind keeping the island afloat…maybe my nephew isn't so stupid after all. He can have this accursed island though, it's not worth my time anymore. But the Master Emerald…is. And I have just the plan to snatch it from Knuckles's fingers…yes… they will all pay for my humiliation and for getting rid of Imperator Ix for good. They will all pay…"

And with that said, Finitevus vanished through another warp ring and he headed off to one place he knew he wanted to go…Dr. Eggman's underground bunker…

In the void, Imperator Ix's Chaos Control had worn off and he found himself floating around in the dark, eerie atmosphere of the void. Ix began to feel nervous. He was back in the void again and it was very likely that he was going to be done for. And done for he was for Crystal Chaos spotted him and grabbed him with a huge tentacle. Crystal Chaos squeezed Imperator Ix as hard as he could, the echidna gasping and wheezing for breath as he was squeezed. Ix's troubles were just beginning though for Ixis Naugus appeared in front of him in a gust of wind and he grinned inanely at him.

"Hello Imperator Ix." he hissed evilly "How nice of you to come back to the void! Losing the quickster and his friends is moot now that you're back in my territory. And now I've got you, I will make you suffer for all you've done to me!"

So with that said, Naugus waved his arms around and Ix, screaming in agony, found himself slowly becoming a crystalline figure. His flesh and bones began to become crystal and it started up from his feet and up to his head like a spreading virus. Ix's screams were finally silenced when his head became crystalline. Imperator Ix was now a crystal minion for Ixis Naugus to play with and Naugus was going to have a lot of fun with Ix, especially since he had such a big grudge on him…

And that's the end of Imperator Ix everybody! But Dr. Finitevus is still around and who knows what he's planning next...what's next in store for Sonic the Hedgehog? And will he be ready for it? Join me as we begin the set-up to the titanic milestone epic Chapter 150 next time...

Operation: Double Trouble Part 1

Story 149: Operation: Double Trouble Part 1: Setting the Stages

Dr. Eggman's underground bunker had been working non-stop in the couple of days that had passed since the destruction of the Egg-Carrier and the near-death of Dr. Eggman himself. Eggman was in a critical condition after the Egg Carrier had crashed and nearly taken him with it and the only way to save the good doctor was to give him a new life. A life encased in a cold metal cage complete with functioning joints, coding and circuitry. A life inside a robotical shell. Katherine, Eggman's loyal servant fem-bot, had reconstructed the body of the late E-123 Omega to pose as Dr. Eggman's life-support machine. Omega had once been used by the treacherous butler-bot Alonzo in an attempt to kill Dr. Eggman during the time Shadow the Hedgehog once worked for him and now Omega was going to be used as Dr. Eggman's life-support machine. Truly a cruel case of irony considering Omega once tried to kill Eggman and now was going to be keeping him alive. Omega would be furious over the very idea of keeping Eggman alive. But no need to worry about that for Omega was not entirely the same as before. Katherine had remoulded him to be more appropriate for medical purposes and to be a life-support machine rather than a fully functional robot. For example, Omega had no internal mechanisms inside. The space was entirely hallowed out for Dr. Eggman to fit in. Omega's limbs would move by Eggman's will thanks to special sensors built into the limbs and wires connected to a helmet that was perched on top of Eggman's head. All Eggman would have to do is think and then he'd be able to move around and activate Omega's hidden weapons that were contained in his arms. Dr. Eggman had been placed in Omega and all the time that Sonic the Hedgehog and friends had spent fighting with Imperator Ix and Dr. Finitevus, Katherine had been providing the finishing touches to Dr. Eggman and his life-support machine. Right about now, Katherine had finished her work and she was about ready to bring Eggman back alive. Eggman was fully encased inside Omega's body now and Omega was standing motionless by the wall with lots of wires connected to his back. Katherine was standing by a generator which had a lever. One throw

of the lever and Eggman would function and begin a brand new life as the very thing he loved to make…a robot. She hadn't chosen to roboticize Eggman as she felt Eggman would want some part of him left at least and wouldn't want to be entirely robotic. Katherine curled her long, thin claws over the lever and prepared to pull the lever. Her circuitry hummed nervously for she feared this experiment might not work and Eggman would well and truly be gone. Katherine played a vocal clip of somebody sighing to express her nervousness and then she pulled the lever. Electricity buzzed and crackled through the wires as energy began feeding through them and into Omega's functionless body. Omega began to judder furiously as energy was feeding into him and Katherine stood by, watching intently as the final touch was added to Eggman's life-support machine. This went on for two very tense and very long minutes until finally, the energy stopped feeding into Omega and electricity stopped crackling up the long, snaky wires connected into his back. Everything fell into an ominous silence once that had finished and Omega still stood against the wall, completely functionless and void of any life. Katherine stood forward and held a hand out in the manner of a worried child reaching out to touch something that's just died. Had the experiment failed? Was all her hard work for nothing and Dr. Eggman was gone for good? Katherine could feel herself about ready to malfunction over the very thought of this. Then suddenly, as Katherine's hand began to place itself on Omega's head, his body jerked furiously and his optics shone a fantastic, luminous, eerie red colour that matched his red colour-scheme. He stood up straight and he began to slowly walk away from the wall. Katherine stepped back as Omega walked forward. He then stopped walking and he stretched his arms out to the sides. He then stretched in the manner of somebody waking up in the morning and having a good stretch.

"Oooooh…Dr. Eggman it is good to be back!" came the voice of Dr. Eggman from inside Omega's body as he stretched. His voice was altered a little so when he spoke, he sounded like Eggman and Omega both at once.

Katherine stood there in an excited stance as she heard Dr. Eggman say those words. The experiment had worked! Dr. Eggman was alive and he was back in action once again! The Eggman Empire could continue with it's glorious leader back alive and Sonic and

friends could pay most dearly for nearly ending Eggman's life! Katherine bowed down to Dr. Eggman loyally.

"It is good to have **you back** again DR. EGGMAN." Katherine said through multiple voice-clips she played in order to piece that sentence together.

Dr. Eggman looked at Katherine and he smiled at her from inside Omega's casing.

"Katherine, my loyal little fem-bot. How have you been while I've been out of it?" asked Dr. Eggman kindly.

He reached out a huge, metal hand to touch Katherine only to suddenly realize that he wasn't reaching out with his own hand. He looked at his hand and saw that much to his astonishment, it was the hand of Omega. He looked at his arm and saw that he also had Omega's arm. He looked at his other arm and saw that he had both of Omega's arms. He looked down at his legs and saw that they were not his own legs, they were the legs of Omega. Eggman then realized that he was sitting in something. He looked all around at the interior of Omega that he was fitted in and realized that he was not his old self. He was sitting, fastened inside the body of one of his own machines! Eggman was so startled at this that he almost stumbled over onto his back. The Omega casing he was encased in staggered backwards on its small legs and nearly overbalanced. Eggman regained his balance thanks to Omega's enormous arms weighing him forward as he held them up. He looked at his hands again and the casing's arms began to tremble a little. Almost as if Dr. Eggman was horrified to see what had become of him.

"Katherine…what has happened to me?!" gasped Dr. Eggman "I'm…encased in the body of E-123 Omega?! What has happened to me?!"

Katherine began to feel nervous. Eggman looked horrified to see what had become of him. Would he explode in rage and destroy her? Would he lose his mind and go on a rampage? Katherine's joints trembled and her circuitry hummed anxiously as she pieced together a sentence out of pre-recorded voice-clips to explain Eggman's situation.

"It was the only **way we could save** you Dr. Eggman." she said "You were AT DEATH'S DOOR pretty much . Your spaceship **crashed down** and you nearly died in it . I had **no choice** BUT TO PUT YOU ON LIFE SUPPORT in *order to save your* life Dr. Eggman. Please understand."

She held her hands up and deployed her barrier for incase Eggman reacted violently and tried to kill her for this. Dr. Eggman took in Katherine's words and he realized that she was right. The crash of the Egg Carrier had left him pretty much dead. He remembered the ship crashing down, the impact throwing him off his feet and sending him catapulting into a wall, the crash into the wall leaving him feeling very sore and almost broken, debris crashing down around him and the craft exploding into flames as the fuel was ignited by the crash and the fire dancing all around him as he passed out from his injuries and the heat in the atmosphere. It likely would have been the end for him then so Eggman had to be thankful to Katherine that he was alive at all. As is, he wasn't going to kill Katherine for resurrecting him as a cyborg, a human inside a robot's shell. Eggman admired himself all over again and Katherine waited to see what his reaction was going to be. Eggman lowered his enormous, robotical arms and he looked at Katherine with the optics on Omega's head.

"So in order to save my life, you had to resurrect me as a robot pretty much." crooned Eggman, coming up to Katherine and putting his hands on her shoulders "Very thing that I love to make. And you've put me in the body of E-123 Omega no less! VERY good indeed Katherine!"

He then picked Katherine up and hugged her as a token of gratitude (Thank goodness he's hugging her with the robot shell he's in otherwise this would look wrong in so many ways). Katherine was rather surprised at the fact Eggman was actually OK with this despite his rather horrified reaction once he realized where he was. Nevertheless, she was pleased her master approved of this. She did aim to please after all. Eggman put Katherine down and he looked at the huge arms of the Omega casing he was being kept alive in. He smiled at them from inside the casing.

"Omega was one of my best robots ever! So potent, so powerful and

so full of weaponry too." crowed Dr. Eggman "Now I'm inside the body of Omega, I will be able to take down the hedgehog no sweat! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh yes, Omega himself could fend off Sonic, Shadow, Bunnie and Rouge all at once! Just imagine how strong I will be in this casing! Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!"

With that said, he proceeded to stride over to a wall and he punched it as hard as he could. He broke directly through the wall with that one punch, yelling "Oh YEAH!" as he did so. The wall now had a giant hole in it and chunks of metal from the wall littered the floor as Eggman punched through it. Katherine shook a little at the sight of Eggman punching through the wall. She didn't really think it was that necessary to do that, even if it was a test of strength and also seeing the wall crumble before Eggman's might made her feel relieved that Eggman didn't decide to use her for stress relief. Eggman stepped through the hole in the wall and he cackled over what he had done.

"I've never felt so powerful in all my life!" cackled Eggman "Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho! This is fantastic! I'm in the body of one of my most powerful machines ever! It would have been even better had I been put in the body of Silver Sonic though but Omega more than makes up for that! Especially since I have all these weapons at my disposal!"

With that said, Eggman deployed some of Omega's weaponry. His metallic hands became a pair of laser cannons, some extra-laser cannons came out of his arms and some Gatling guns extended out from compartments in the torso section of the Omega casing. The laser cannons spun as they readied for action and the Gatling guns clocked themselves, ready to spray bullets on whatever they were aimed at. Omega was a robot built with heavy artillery after all and Katherine had re-captured all of that perfectly when re-building Omega as a life-support machine for Dr. Eggman. Eggman had enough weaponry on him now to blow his entire bunker up if he wanted to. But of course, he wasn't that crazy (yet) so he wouldn't be blowing up his own base just to test his firepower. Eggman retracted all of his weapons back into his arms and he had yet another fit of maniacal laughter (yeah, expect a LOT of that from him in this chapter).

"Sonic the Hedgehog will have no idea what's hit him once I strike!"

crowed Dr. Eggman "I will wipe the floor with his smug little face so hard that the floor will leave his face a VERY bloody mess indeed! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Katherine just showed an icon of a smiley face on her visor to express how glad she was to see that Dr. Eggman appreciated her hard work for him. It made her feel good to see that Eggman was happy with his life-support machine and that he didn't mind being resurrected as a robot. Dr. Eggman finally finished idolizing himself (bet you thought he'd never stop) and he turned around to face Katherine again. He put his arms behind his back in the manner of how he used to do it when he was his old self and he strode up to Katherine, again, in the manner of how he used to do it when he was his old self.

"So enough about me and my excellent return to duty, let's talk about some other things." said Dr. Eggman, coming to a stop just before Katherine and looking down at her "Katherine, did you manage to retrieve anything from the Egg-Carrier's wreckage at all?" he asked curiously.

He was quite inquisitive to hear if anything good had been salvaged from the sorry remains of his rather grand vessel of greatness so that he could re-use it and try again to take down Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends. Katherine just turned around and wandered off towards the hole in the wall that Eggman had made. Eggman followed her and the two stepped back through the hole in the wall and into the lab that Eggman had been woken up in. Katherine led Eggman over to a nearby desk and she showed Eggman that she had indeed managed to salvage something from the destruction of the Egg-Carrier. The thing was contained in a glass canister and it was wriggling about inside, trying to get out. It was the sprig of the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra, Dr. Eggman's robotical plant machine that could manipulate machinery and add parts to itself in order to grow, shape-shift and become a very powerful robot. It had given Sonic & Shadow a tough fight on the Egg-Carrier and had even taken over the body of Devion the Devatron Leader in an attempt to stop them. The Hydra had survived but was now a little prickly vine with jaws just wriggling about inside its canister, hungry for machines to devour and parts to add to itself. Eggman

walked up to the desk and he observed the Hydra with the optics of his life-support mech.

"Well…this is fortuitous." purred Dr. Eggman "You've managed to salvage the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra! Brilliant! According to my scanners though, it's a little damaged so I cannot send it out into battle anytime soon. Did you manage to salvage Devion's body at all?" he asked hopefully.

Katherine shook her head in despair. Devion had been rendered irreparable thanks to the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra taking over his body and pretty much replacing most of his circuitry with its own vines as it took over his body. That and the fact Devion got a nasty shock meant that Devion just couldn't be repaired. His body was now nothing more than spare parts for the next Egg-Pawn or whatever Eggman decided to build next time and the Devatrons were now finally extinct (the Startrons wiped all the others out with their chrome-eating virus if you remember). Dr. Eggman was disappointed to hear this. He had done all of this hard work just getting Devion under his control and it had all been for nothing. His most powerful minion was merely scrap metal now. What a loss this was. Devion could have given him a glorious victory what with his intelligent mind, great battle prowess and invulnerable body that made him a dangerous fighter and a tough opponent to take down. Oh well, as the old saying from his home world of Earth went: easy come, easy go. Eggman would just have to put up with the fact Devion was gone for good. After all, Eggman replaced his minions all the time, he could just as easily build a new robot to replace Devion and he still had his Metal series and the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. Devion's loss wasn't entirely devastating after all.

"That is most unfortunate to hear Katherine." said Eggman grimly "Poor Devion has been reduced to the scrap pile. He will be missed. Oh well, nothing lasts forever as they say. I've still got plenty of robots to use against Sonic and friends, especially the Metal series. Metals Sonic, Tails, Knuckles & Amy and the mighty Silver Sonic will still give Sonic and friends a tough battle and the best part is, thanks to you giving me this life-support mech, I will be able to join in with them! Oh happy, happy day this is! Speaking of Sonic and friends, I know just what to do!" he declared excitedly "I'll have you dig into

the city Katherine, then you will take down the shield-generator that is the only thing they have to stop me from entering it and then we will bombard New Mobotropolis and destroy the Royal Fighters with it! I would normally roboticize them but I've decided that it might be better if I just kill them. Keeping them alive has led to my downfall too many times already! And it's also led to this…" he added, looking down at his robotical arms again "So I won't push my luck for the millionth time. The Royal Fighters are to be killed, not roboticized from now on. Do you understand Katherine?"

Katherine nodded understandingly. Roboticizing Sonic and friends didn't do any good for them at all. Mecha Sonic? Sonic got saved and Eggman got defeated humiliatingly. The time Eggman roboticized all of Mobius? Mobius got saved still and Eggman went nuts for a time. Attempting to roboticize Sonic's friends? That just led to the Egg-Carrier crashing and Eggman nearly dying so why keep trying to roboticize Sonic and friends since it keeps leading to disaster? Katherine was all too happy to change her priority from capture the Royal Fighters to kill the Royal Fighters instead. Killing them would definitely put an end to all their problems and leave Mobius without any protectors as Eggman went onto roboticize the entire world and build his glorious Eggman Empire. Eggman grinned at Katherine, pleased to see she understood his plans and change of motive.

"Good girl Katherine." said Eggman, patting her as gently as he could with the mech's huge metal hands (you have to be careful with hands and arms as large as Omegas'!) "Now then, I think we should get started right about now. I'm eager to get into action now that I'm in this great life-support mech and loaded with firepower to unleash on those Mobians! So Katherine get ready to go for…"

He was suddenly interrupted by a warp ring opening up from nowhere and filling the room with a dazzling, golden glow that made it look like an angel had just ascended from heaven and materialized into the room without warning. Eggman was so alarmed that he ended up falling over onto his back with a heavy clunk. Katherine instantly ran over to help Dr. Eggman back onto his feet as something stepped out of the warp ring. The owner of the warp ring was none other than Dr. Finitevus, Knuckles' subversive uncle and

scientist from Angel Island. He had just recently returned from a nine-year absence, most of which had been spent in the void and the rest up till now being spent recovering from it, and he had brought Imperator Ix back from the void in an attempt to return Angel Island to the ground and to punish and enslave the Royal Fighters. The scheme had been foiled by the Royal Fighters, Ix had been returned to the void for good and Finitevus had fled in disgrace. He had many new plans formulating in his head and he had decided to come to Dr. Eggman's underground bunker to prepare for his new schemes. He had spent a long time researching and catching up on things after coming back from the void and thus, he had found out where Dr. Eggman's underground bunker was and was able to warp there with his warp rings. Finitevus stepped out of the warp ring and he put it back onto his arm once he'd emerged from it.

"Aaaah, this is the hiding place of Dr. Eggman himself." purred Dr. Finitevus "Good thing my research led to me coming across Royal Fighter data records so I could find out this information. Now let's see what technology the deceased doctor has on offer…it'll prove useful for me in my plans to get revenge on those accursed Royal Fighters and snatch the Master Emerald from my nephew's precious island…"

He found himself stopping his sentence before he was finished when he suddenly realized that he was not alone in the bunker. His eyes widened at the sight of Katherine and Dr. Eggman standing before him, bewildered at the sight of Dr. Finitevus and wondering who the heck he was. Finitevus, of course, had no idea he was staring at Dr. Eggman right now. He just assumed he was looking at an Eggman robot who had another Eggman robot for a sidekick. Eggman pointed a huge, metallic claw at Finitevus.

"We have an intruder!" he screamed "I shall terminate it immediately! Katherine, leave here at once for you do not want to get caught in the crossfire!"

Katherine obeyed and she ran for her life, leaving Dr. Eggman alone in the laboratory to deal with Dr. Finitevus. Dr. Finitevus just calmly stood before Dr. Eggman and he prepared to let Eggman have a taste of his amazing fighting skills. The two bent down into battle-ready stances and they prepared to unleash hell on each other. The

lab was going to be a serious mess when these two villains were done fighting each other.

"So, I invade the headquarters of the late Dr. Eggman and I find myself against one of his robotical accomplices." sneered Finitevus "How droll. Oh well, if I want to confiscate some of his prodigious technology then I will have to take down this robot first."

"I have no idea who you are freak of nature but you will not be leaving here with anything!" snarled Eggman "Nobody steals from Dr. Ivo Eggman and lives to tell the tale!"

With that said, Eggman deployed some Gatling guns out of his arms and he started shooting at Dr. Finitevus as furiously as he could. Finitevus back-flipped away from the gun shots as laser bullets sprayed out of the spinning barrels in the arms of Eggman's life-support mech and he jumped behind a nearby work desk. He used the desk as shelter and he stomped on a section of floor with his heel. The stomp made the section stick right up into the air so Finitevus could grab the panel with his hands. Finitevus jumped back out from behind the desk, holding the panel in front of his face so that when Eggman shot at him, the panel protected him. It wouldn't be much of a shield for long though for Eggman's attacks immediately started leaving scrapes and dents in it. Finitevus ran up to Dr. Eggman and he threw the panel at his head, diving through a warp ring the minute he threw the panel at Eggman. The panel spun through the air like a Frisbee and it hit the life-support mech squarely in the middle of its head. Eggman stumbled backwards a little but he regained his balance. Finitevus reappeared through a warp ring behind Dr. Eggman and he kicked him directly onto his front. Eggman landed heavily on the floor with a horrible clang and he groaned as the life-support mech shook all around him and made him feel light-headed. Finitevus jumped onto the mech's back and he knelt down on it.

"Now let's remove the robot's head and see what makes it tick." he crooned darkly "Maybe I could study it and use it for my own nefarious purposes…"

He jumped off of the mech's back and he kicked Eggman over onto his back. He then grabbed the head of the mech and he ripped it

clean off the top of it, exposing Dr. Eggman and leaving him vulnerable to an attack, as well as yanking the control helmet off of his head, leaving the mech incapable of moving. Dr. Finitevus stared inside the mech and his eyes widened so much that his pupils became tiny golden dots swimming around in the black sclera of his eyes. He dropped Omega's head on the floor and knelt down beside Dr. Eggman.

"The robot has something inside of it?!" he exclaimed in a rather surprised tone of voice, an expression not often used by it "And I'm willing to bet that you are the infamous Dr. Eggman aren't you?"

"I am! I am Dr. Eggman, the terror of the world and the bane of Sonic's existence!" whimpered Eggman "I've just been saved from dying thanks to this marvellous life-support machine my servant-bot made me and I was hoping to terminate Sonic and friends and take over the world! Please do not finish me off! You wouldn't take down a helpless, crippled old man such as myself would you? You Mobians are more lenient then that right?"

Finitevus just stared at Eggman, unable to believe that he was face-to-face right now with the villain of Mobius himself. He regained himself and spoke in his usual cool and colleted manner.

"Greetings Dr. Eggman, it is a pleasure to meet such an esteemed scientist such as yourself." said Dr. Finitevus politely "Although rumours were spreading around and claiming that you had perished after your vessel crashed down a couple of days ago. Guess the rumours were red herrings."

"Well I WAS about dead when the ship crashed." noted Eggman "But my servant bot Katherine saved me from dying by building me this life-support mech, derived from the design for E-123 Omega and just as potent as him too. So as you can see, in order to stay alive, I had to become the one thing I love to make…a robot."

"Indeed so." said Finitevus smoothly "Well then Eggman, allow me to introduce myself. I am Dr. Finitevus, the best scientist ever to walk across Angel Island and I have scores to settle with your hated enemies the Royal Fighters."

"Really?" said Dr. Eggman brightly "Oh that IS swell to hear! Maybe we could…wait a minute!" he blurted out suddenly "We were fighting a moment ago and now we're being friendly towards each other! Did I miss something here?"

"Not really doctor, I've just decided that since I'm face-to-face with the enemy of Mobius himself, I have the perfect person I can ally with in my ambitions." explained Dr. Finitevus "Besides, we both have every reason to be on the same side. We both hate the Royal Fighters and we both want to take them down. You wish to turn them into robots and I wish to just destroy them."

"How do you know so much about me?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"I've done plenty of research." crooned Dr. Finitevus, a sinister grin spreading out across his evil face "I know much about you and your potent machinery and sensational science skills. I also know much of your rivalry with Sonic the Hedgehog too."

"Figures really since my gaff with Sonic is one of the most well-known things about me." muttered Eggman grimly "So Finitevus, would you kindly put my mech's head back on so I can get back up on my feet? You took off the helmet that helps me make the mech move when you ripped the head off so I can't move with out it."

"I shall fix it immediately." said Dr. Finitevus with a polite bow.

He picked up the head piece of the life-support mech and he put the helmet back onto Dr. Eggman's head. The wires connected to the underside of the head-section were long enough for Finitevus to put the helmet on without needing to put the head on as well. Once the helmet was back on his head, Eggman willed the mech to sit up. One he'd done that, Finitevus wondered over to a work desk nearby and he searched for a welding tool. He managed to find one and he wandered back over to Dr. Eggman. He welded the head section neatly back into place, the process taking a good few minutes or so. Now Eggman's life-support mech was fixed, Eggman stood back up and he looked down at Dr. Finitevus.

"Thank you." said Eggman graciously "So Dr. Finitevus. Tell me a bit about yourself. What's your gaff with Sonic and friends?"

"In response to "tell me a bit about yourself", I will say this:" began Finitevus "I am the uncle of Knuckles the Echidna, no doubt you know who he is, and I am also one of Imperator Ix's loyal servants. I'm one of the echidnas who sided with him when debating over if Angel Island should be lowered or not. As for "what's my gaff with Sonic and friends", they had the nerve to exile my master into the void even though he was trying to keep Angel Island and the Master Emerald safe. I got him back out and sided with him as we attempted to bring Angel Island back down. But then our plans failed and Knuckles exiled Ix again, only this time for good since he's time-locked the void. Angel Island is no longer worth my time though but I do wish to get revenge on those cretins for exiling my master. That and I would very much like to steal the Master Emerald and see what potential I can unlock with it."

"I see." said Dr. Eggman "Well then, any enemy of Sonic's is a friend of mine. But woe betide you if you're hoping to manipulate me into accepting you just so you can overthrow me Finitevus! Because it won't work!"

"Fie Eggman, I do not harbour any interests in over-throwing you." said Finitevus smoothly "I wish to ally with you. That is why I am here after all."

"You came in here hoping to steal some tech from me you lying little scumbag!" retorted Dr. Eggman angrily.

"That WAS my motive but seeing you're alive, I do not need to steal anything from you." said Finitevus calmly "Because allying with you will just grant me access to your amazing technology anyway. That is, if you're willing to share a little with a dear old scientist such as myself."

"If you're going to join my empire Dr. Finitevus then I'll be all too happy to spare some technology for you." said Dr. Eggman "You'd better use it for the purposes of the task given to you though or I won't let you use any." he added sternly.

"Fair enough Eggman, I shall use any given machinery for the tasks you assign me with." said Finitevus "So are you up for an alliance then doctor? Together, we could stop Sonic and friends at long last

and maybe we could run the Eggman Empire together as the world's greatest scientists."

"I'm always happy to have a new member in my empire." said Dr. Eggman brightly "Welcome to the Eggman Empire Dr. Finitevus." he said, holding out a hand for him to shake.

"Uh…I'd prefer to keep my appendages attached thank you." said Finitevus, hastily refusing the handshake as he felt like he might lose an arm in the process.

"OK then." said Dr. Eggman "So Finitevus, what can you do other than use those warp rings of yours to great efficiency?"

"I am one of the most ferocious fighters you'll ever witness in action." explained Dr. Finitevus "I had a lot of training under Imperator Ix's watchful eye and I filled myself up with a lot of Chaos Energy. I am abnormally strong and very swift in battle. I also pride myself in using the environment to my advantage when I fight too. I was able to floor every single one of Sonic's friends and even Sonic himself when I got into a battle with them." he added, grinning a grin so evil looking that even the devil himself would be jealous of it.

"I very much look forward to seeing you fight Finitevus." said Dr. Eggman, liking the sound of what Finitevus had said to him "So it seems I have a scientist and a fighter in my ranks. I think this is an alliance I won't regret making…"

"I assure you it won't be." said Dr. Finitevus reassuringly "So, what plans do you have at this very moment Dr. Eggman?"

"I am hoping to invade New Mobotropolis and kill all the Royal Fighters." explained Dr. Eggman, clenching his metal fists with excitement "And I will be able to carry that task out brilliantly thanks to this life-support mech of mine! Sonic is dead meat when I arrive on his doorstep!"

"Oh that plan marvels on sheer genius, it really does." snorted Finitevus sarcastically, rolling his eyes and folding his arms "How many times have you tried taking Sonic down with a mere robot Eggman? And isn't Sonic quite capable of taking down a robot? I

mean, that's what he does for a living from what I've learnt about him."

Eggman's moustache drooped down in disappointment and the mech's arms sagged down beside him in despair.

"So you think my plan won't work?" said Eggman in disappointment.

"Of course it will not succeed you fool!" snapped Finitevus "From what I can gather from my research, your robots consistently get destroyed by Sonic and friends and because you do the same scheme over and over, you are far too predictable in combat now and Sonic and friends will know what to do about you before you can even launch an attack! Just building a machine to take the hedgehog and his comrades down will not suffice at all Eggman!"

"Fie! I have Metal Sonic and metal versions of Tails, Amy & Knuckles! And Silver Sonic too!" retorted Dr. Eggman "They're on standby and waiting for orders! They'll destroy Sonic and friends easily!"

"If that is the case then why haven't they done so already?" scoffed Finitevus "I have read about your so-called "Metal Sonic" when doing my research. Despite his magnanimous power, he too was unable to kill Sonic and now you keep re-using him so Sonic knows who he's up against all the time now. This is your problem Dr. Eggman, you're too predictable. You keep trying the same scheme over and over and you keep constantly failing. And now look what's happened to you, you're now encased in a cold, metal cage with limbs just to keep alive and why did this happen? Because you never use your scientific knowledge to its best potential and just waste it on a repetitive scheme that has seen a streak of failures and no victories."

"Then what do YOU suggest I do then smarty-pants?!" snarled Eggman crossly, insulted at the very idea that Finitevus dared to call him predictable and suggest his schemes were not the way to go.

"Simple…you do the UN-predictable." purred Finitevus slyly "Try a scheme that does not hinge upon sending robots to destroy the Royal Fighters. Try a scheme that does something different. Try a

scheme that…separates the group and renders them weaker."

"Oooooh…this sounds interesting." said Dr. Eggman excitedly "What marvellous plan are you concocting in that evil little head of yours my caped comrade?" he asked inquisitively.

"A plan that works in two different ways." explained Dr. Finitevus "We should not have just one plan for Sonic and his friends to try and stop…but two. Imagine how shocked Sonic will be when he realizes he has two schemes to stop at once? That is the factor of unpredictability you need Dr. Eggman. That is the kind of scheme you should be concocting if you wish to terminate Sonic and his friends. And that scheme will work like this: The first scheme will involve a giant, nuclear missile that will be targeted directly for New Mobotropolis right here in Megapolis. The second scheme will involve your Metal Sonic and his other comrades you mentioned going to Angel Island to steal the Master Emerald and deliver it to us. And the beauty behind the scheme is if we have them BOTH happening simultaneously, Sonic and friends will have to separate their numbers and thus they'll be weaker and more prone to defeat. Also if there's two schemes to foil at once, the tension will be risen and the chances of them losing are increased. You have many resources so the two schemes will have a lot of back-up to ensure that they both succeed, which they will. What do you think to this plan Dr. Eggman?"

Dr. Eggman had listened to the whole plan and he was intrigued with it. The plan had much potential and he thought that it was going to work to perfection. He was all too happy to carry out such a nefarious plan, especially since it was bound to work. Sonic and friends would have their work cut out for them once they carried this scheme out.

"Finitevus, I would be an idiot to reject this brilliant plan." said Dr. Eggman brightly "I accept without a moment's hesitation! We shall carry out this scheme and we shall call it…Operation: Double Trouble! Me and you will carry this plan out together and we will eliminate Sonic & friends once and for all with Operation: Double Trouble! There's no way they can stop THIS plan!"

"I'm glad you approve of this plan doctor. said Finitevus brightly "And

there's still a bit more to it. I suggest we capture a close comrade of Sonic's and strap him or her to the missile. Maybe more than one if you please. That way, Sonic will be forced to choose to either stop the missile or save his comrades."

"I love that idea Finitevus!" cheered Dr. Eggman happily "So who are you going to get to strap to the missile then?"

"Anyone affiliated with the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters." said Finitevus darkly "And I shall search for that person now…"

With that said, he wandered over to a computer monitor nearby and he sat down at it. He tapped some keys on the keyboard and he began searching for something. He filed through the internet searches as he tapped away on the computers and he began searching for any comrades of the Royal Fighters. Mobius did have an internet much like we humans have an internet and Finitevus was using it to see what information he could gather. He had found out everything he currently knows now thanks to the internet and it was going to help him out this time. Finitevus searched through many pages that came up after typing in his search but he couldn't seem to find anything. Given how most information about the Royal Fighters is classified, not many web-pages were going to have information about them. Most of what Finitevus knew was because of news pages he'd read about the Royal Fighters in action. Finitevus then suddenly came across a webpage that said "Mobius News International". That could easily have the thing he was looking for. Finitevus opened up the article on the screen and he began reading through past news-stories. He then came across a very interesting article that caught his eye. The article was titled "Royal Fighters save Chun-Nan from treacherous ninja-clan". Finitevus read through the entire page, his marvellous brain soaking up the information like a sponge in water, and he came across a particularly interesting bit of the page. It mentioned on how Princess Matilda, the princess of Chun-Nan, had been brought specifically to the Royal Fighters to inform them on what had happened and the article explained how she and Sonic were on good terms and she's considered a good friend of the R.F.S. Finitevus decided to see if he could find any more info on Matilda so he filed back through some more news articles and came across some good ones that told the

time she defeated Shadow and the time Sonic helped to save Chun-Nan from Zira the Ruthless. Finitevus went back to the webpage and he typed Matilda's name into the search bar. He came across a few articles about her and he read some of the news that came from Chun-Nan and told of the times she had stopped Lord Vharr* and had tried to stop Conquering Storm from taking over Chun-Nan**. While doing this, he found out quite a lot of good facts about her. He smiled to himself. He'd found just the person he and Eggman could strap to the missile.

"Dr. Eggman, I have found our Royal Fighter comrade…" he purred darkly.

Eggman clanked over to Dr. Finitevus and he peered over his shoulder to see what Finitevus was looking at. Finitevus had gone back to the news article he originally looked at and found out about Matilda. He saw a picture of Matilda that had been added to the news article so people knew what she looked like when they read the article. Eggman recognized her instantly.

"I think I remember that Mobian." he said "I came to Chun-Nan to pick up Shadow the Hedgehog and Sonic had that yellow mongoose with him. She seemed to be accompanied by a red falcon and a green iguana too. They must be good friends of Sonic's."

"According to this article, they are." said Dr. Finitevus "This child we're looking at right now is named Dalon Matilda and she is the Princess of Chun-Nan. According to other articles I've had a look at, she knows kung-fu and is quite a prodigious fighter. She has a boyfriend named Bladefeather the Falcon and she lives with her father, Dalon Tai. Before you ask, no their names are not "Dalon", in Chun-Nan they introduce themselves surname first. Sonic has met them before so they must indeed be close comrades of his. They'll be perfect to strap to the missile in Operation: Double-Trouble."

"Indeed they will." said Dr. Eggman gleefully "So when are going to kidnap these Matilda, Bladefeather and Tai people?"

"As soon as we've built the missile we're going to launch." explained Finitevus "So let us get started in formulating Operation: Double Trouble for execution…"

Eggman grinned evilly and he and Finitevus immediately set off to start building the missile for the plan. Operation: Double Trouble was going to be a great plan and Sonic and friends would never anticipate it coming. They were as good as dead once the plan was executed…

Three whole weeks had passed since Dr. Eggman and Dr. Finitevus had formulated Operation: Double Trouble and they were now getting ready to carry out the stratagem. The reasoning behind this hinders down to the fact a huge, nuclear missile does take a while to build and had Eggman not had legions upon legions of robots at his disposal, it would have taken EVEN longer to build so Eggman's robot army was doing some good for once and speeding up production work. The missile had finally been completed after three weeks of long hard work, preparation and building. Now Dr. Finitevus was ready to commit the next part of the plan, get the captives to strap to the missile and give Sonic something else to worry about and hopefully, hinder his attempts to stop the missile. Finitevus had already left through a warp ring and was on his way to Chun-Nan to capture the beautiful and powerful Princess Matilda, her pompous but loyal boyfriend Bladefeather and her loving father Emperor Tai for the stratagem. As for Chun-Nan, ever since the Raiju Clan had been defeated, it had been in peace over the past months. No new foes had stricken out of the shadows, no new villains were trying to take over the country and ones still around like the Spiders of Anarchy hadn't attempted their usual bout of anarchism of which they're renowned for and to which their group bears the name. Chun-Nan was completely fine right now with no problems going on at all. This was perfectly fine for Princess Matilda. She wanted Chun-Nan to be at peace. It meant she wouldn't have to keep using violence, the one thing she hated doing yet only did it because she needed to and she loved her country more than she hated violence, and she could settle down with Bladefeather more and develop their relationship at last. Funny I should mention Matilda settling down with Bladefeather more…that's exactly what's happening right now. Bladefeather was paying a visit to the Pagoda of Prosperity and his welcome was met with Matilda throwing his arms around him and embracing him deeply (aww). The

two were now sitting outside in Matilda's back garden and they were having a pretty lovely make-out moment. Bladefeather was lying down on his back in the grass of the garden and Matilda was lying on top of him. They were kissing and cuddling each other deeply and they were also stroking each other's hair. Bladefeather ran his fingers gently through Matilda's beautifully shampooed, glistening black hair which she had let hang loose over her shoulders for a change instead of having it up in a bun. Matilda loved having her hair stroked, it felt very nice to her, especially since Bladefeather was doing it to her. Matilda kissed Bladefeather again and she ran her fingers up and down the three feathers that stood up on top of his head. Bladefeather loved that feeling, especially since he enjoyed the soft, tender touch of his gorgeous girlfriend. It mystified him that a woman as powerful as Matilda still had such a gentle touch but he didn't mind, he always enjoyed it when Matilda's fingers ran up and down his feathers. The two stopped kissing each other for a moment so they could breathe again and they stared lovingly into each other's eyes.

"Oh Bladefeather, I'm having such a lovely moment with you right now I could keep it up all day." giggled Matilda.

"The day is still young my angel, there's still plenty of time left for us to make the most of this joyous moment between us." purred Bladefeather, tickling Matilda lightly behind her ears.

"I know." said Matilda "I'm glad we're having a moment like this now, we deserved it after all the hard-work we've put into keeping Chun-Nan safe."

"Indeed we have my beatific princess." said Bladefeather happily "And we've been going out on romantic outings for quite a good period of time so a moment like this is one we are most deserving of. Our first anniversary of us as a romantic couple is almost upon us too so now is a good time for us to be like this."

"Indeed my handsome little birdie." said Matilda, playfully tapping Bladefeather's beak "The day after my birthday this year will officially mark our first anniversary as a couple. I have a feeling in the future, we'll be celebrating our first anniversary as a married couple." she added with a sly smile on her face, a smile she only really let out in

moments like this.

"I have that same feeling too." purred Bladefeather slyly "But we do not need to let our minds wonder about such thoughts yet, we need to wait for the appropriate time before we can think about such an event. Right now, there's one event we can focus on and anticipate greatly…your birthday. It's only in a couple of days."

"I know and I can't wait for it." said Matilda brightly "I always enjoy it on my birthday, especially since I tend to get some rather extravagant gifts from you Bladefeather. I can't wait to see what you've got for me this year."

"Believe me when I say the gift I shall bestow upon you on your birthday this year will be my most extravagant yet." said Bladefeather happily "I greatly anticipate witnessing your reaction when you receive it."

"That sounds pretty wonderful Bladefeather." said Matilda kindly "I look forward to it. Speaking of you…I do greatly adore how you're becoming far less rude and overbearing ever since you confessed your love for me. You're a much lovelier man nowadays." she said sweetly.

"Your compliments are appreciated my love." said Bladefeather appreciatively "And all the thanks I have is to go to you my radiant sunbeam. You were the positive influence I needed in order to better my personality and I've verily enjoyed my much politer life-style. It's much more pleasant being kind to people, especially the little children of Chun-Nan."

"I'm really happy to hear that Bladefeather." said Matilda, putting her hands on the side of Bladefeather's face "And I really had no idea I was such a positive influence for you. I'm flattered to hear that I am though, means that I'm a princess who does what a princess should do: set a good example for the populace."

"Indeed Matilda." said Bladefeather with a big smile on his beak.

Matilda giggled and the two kissed each other again. But just before they could really get into their loving moment, a warp ring opened up

in the middle of the garden, startling the two Mobians and making them get up onto their feet in alarm. They were still clutching each other as Dr. Finitevus appeared out of the warp ring and stood before them, grinning maliciously and putting his warp ring back onto his wrist. Matilda and Bladefeather instantly had a bad feeling about Finitevus since he looked anything but friendly. Matilda and Bladefeather broke up the hug and they both bent down in battle-ready stances. Emperor Tai heard all the commotion going on outside and he ran out to see if his daughter was OK. Tai was rather surprised to see that his wonderful garden had an intruder in it and he had a feeling that such an abrupt arrival was not for something good. Finitevus stood there as calm as anything with his cape covering his entire body for his had his arms down by his sides and Matilda & Bladefeather prepared to do battle.

"OK mysterious stranger, either you explain yourself right now or I can kick you out of my country." said Matilda coldly "Who are you and why do you trespass in my holy garden?"

"I am Dr. Finitevus my dear and you along with the falcon and the red-furred mongoose are coming with me." purred Finitevus darkly.

Finitevus snapped his fingers and he opened up three warp rings directly underneath Matilda, Bladefeather & Tai's feet. The three Mobians all screamed in terror as they fell directly through the warp rings and vanished into them, their screams drowning out as they fell in the warp rings. The warp rings closed up the moment they fell through them and Finitevus put them back onto his arms. He then opened up another warp ring and he jumped through it. He had warped Matilda, Bladefeather & Tai over to Eggman's underground bunker and now he was warping back over to the bunker himself. The plan was about ready to begin now…

Back over in Dr. Eggman's bunker, warp rings opened up inside some electrical cages (cages with bars made of generating electricity) and Matilda, Tai and Bladefeather ended up falling into one each with a heavy thud. Dr. Eggman watched this gleefully for that meant to him Dr. Finitevus had done his job and that Operation: Double Trouble was ready to begin. Shortly after the three Chun-

Nan Mobians had arrived, Dr. Finitevus re-appeared beside Dr. Eggman out of his own warp ring. His face contorted with smugness.

"As you can see, I've managed to apprehend the poor fools doctor." said Dr. Finitevus smoothly, his evil grin so devilish looking that you'd think he was auditioning for a horror movie.

"Indeed you have. Well done Finitevus." said Dr. Eggman happily "Now we've got our hostages, let us set up the missile and set its course for New Mobotropolis! Operation: Double Trouble can now begin!"

Finitevus smiled evilly as Dr. Eggman said those words. As for the captives, Matilda got up onto her feet and rubbed herself better for crashing down in the cage had left her feeling a little sore and she realized that she was no longer in her back garden. She was in a hi-tech bunker of some kind and she along with Bladefeather and Tai were inside cages with electricity for bars. Matilda poked one streak of electricity that was crackling between the generation points in the cages and she got a very nasty electrical shock that made her yelp in pain and suck on her finger furiously to make it feel better.

"Silly girl, one would think your kung-fu lessons would have taught you that electricity hurts!" taunted Dr. Eggman, snickering mockingly at Matilda.

"Who are you? And what are you?" gasped Matilda, gaping in amazement at Eggman for she had never seen a robot before and she didn't suspect Eggman was inside of it "I've never seen anything like you before! Are you one of those robot things that the villain known as Dr. Eggman supposedly makes?"

"You're right on one thing princess." said Dr. Eggman "But what you're looking at right now is a robot with ME inside of it!"

"A robot with me inside of it…you're Dr. Eggman himself?!" shrieked Matilda, unable to believe her ears.

"Whatever has happened to you?!" exclaimed a very gobsmacked Bladefeather "Your…appearance does not match what it was the last time my eyes were laid upon you!"

"It's a long story I won't waste time explaining." said Dr. Eggman hastily "But I WILL explain something. Like why you're here for example."

"I hope you can explain that you monster!" said Tai crossly "Why on Mobius have you kidnapped and imprisoned us like this?"

"Because you three will be used as hostages as me and my new assistant Dr. Finitevus prepare our latest scheme, Operation: Double Trouble." explained Dr. Eggman "And we got you three in particular because you are close allies of the Royal Fighters and you're far out of Sonic's reach so we could get you three without alerting Sonic too soon."

"How do you know we're allies of the Royal Fighters?!" gasped Matilda hoarsely.

"Research is our greatest weapon my child." purred Finitevus, tapping his brainy head conceitedly.

"You baneful, unrighteous, vile serpents of turpitude!" snarled Bladefeather "You cannot use us as hostages in your repugnant motivations! You release us from these prisons or you will regret the day you ever came to traverse upon mother nature herself!"

"Does the falcon always talk like this?" snorted Dr. Eggman.

"That is beyond my realms of knowledge Eggman." sighed Finitevus "Anyway, you will do nothing about your current situation Bladefeather." continued Finitevus, pointing at him "These cages have electricity crackling away, you'll never escape. And in a matter of minutes, you will be fastened to a nuclear missile that is aimed at Sonic the Hedgehog's home city. You'll not be able to do anything about it when that happens." he added with a very dark smile.

"You're going to fasten us to a missile?!" cried Emperor Tai in horror "And it's aimed for Sonic the Hedgehog's home-city?!"

"You can't do this to us! Let us out of here right now or you'll be very sorry you two sick pair of scientists!" demanded Matilda in an oddly fierce tone of voice.

"You maybe a princess Matilda but that does not mean you can boss us around." sneered Dr. Eggman "You're all staying right here until the missile is ready to launch. And while the missile is readying to launch, I shall be preparing the Metal-series for the attack on Angel Island. Sonic the Hedgehog will NEVER be able to stop two threats at once…NEVER…"

"I could not agree more Eggman." said Finitevus agreeably "You prepare the Metal-series for launch. I shall keep a good eye on the prisoners."

"Very well then." said Dr. Eggman, turning around and clanking off to get the Metal-series ready for action.

Matilda, Bladefeather and Tai watched as Dr. Eggman walked away from them and left them behind to be watched by Dr. Finitevus. Finitevus stood there, eyeing the three captives and grinning darkly at them. He was just picturing Operation: Double Trouble in action now and he could just see Sonic's horrified face when he realized he had two terrible threats to deal with. But Finitevus wouldn't anticipate Sonic getting an early tip-off for there was a little snoop hiding in Eggman's base right now. And that snoop was the one and only… Sora Prower. Three weeks of nothing bad happening and nothing from Katherine and Eggman's robots had made Sonic feel a bit edgy so Sora had volunteered to spy on Eggman and see if she could find out what was going on in Eggman's bunker. She had managed to get inside via the super warp ring they still had from Dr. Finitevus and had sneaked under a work desk where she lay low and had heard every single thing that had been said. Sora frowned at what she had heard and she crawled out from under the desk, making sure Finitevus didn't see her. The desk was in a corner of the room near the door way, Finitevus would not see her sneaking out. Especially as he was looking directly ahead of him. Sora slipped away and ran out through the door. The door closed behind her, earning a look from Finitevus but he just dismissed it as Eggman leaving the room, and Sora got out the super warp ring.

"Just wait until Sonic hears this." she said to herself, flicking the ring into the air and quickly diving through it before anyone could see her.

Operation: Double Trouble was about to begin but it seemed it was going to be foiled most definitely since Sora heard everything and had gotten away ever so cleanly. The only concern though was… would they be able to stop two such potent threats…?

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* See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 6: The Five Festivals of Chun-Nan*

** See *Sonic* the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 14: A Few Steps To A Conquering Storm

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Oh boy! This is it! the lead up to Chapter 150 is over and now the main event itself can begin next time on* Sonic the Hedgehog: Heroes of Mobius! *:D Join me next time for the mega-milestone event, Chapter 150, begins next time! It's gonna be a blast, believe me! :D

Operation: Double Trouble Part 2

Oh wow, oh wow, OH WOW! Unbeliveable! I've managed to reach my 150th chapter?! How do I do this stuff?! All I can say about that is I'm amazing! Well, here's my sixth milestone chapter for you lovely readers to enjoy so...what are you waiting for?! Get reading already! :lol:

Story 150: *Operation: Double Trouble Part 2: The Plan In Action*

Three weeks had passed since the disappearance of Dr. Finitevus and the permanent exile of Imperator Ix and Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends were having a rather relaxing time right now. No villains had come out of hiding and stricken again, no more tears in the sky had appeared since the one that had taken Sonic to Mobius Nega, Dr. Eggman was dead (or so they think) and it didn't seem that Katherine, Eggman's loyal servant bot, was interested in attacking again despite the onslaught she and a bunch of Egg-Pawns had launched the day they first met Dr. Finitevus. The thing is though, the fact that Katherine hadn't attacked again had been getting Sonic pretty concerned about a few things. He was wondering if Katherine was plotting something and the fact she hadn't attacked for three weeks straight is what got him concerned about this. So he had suggested that Sora Prower, the super-spy sister of his best friend Tails, could go over and spy on Katherine to see what was going on over in Eggman's bunker. He was in for a surprise when Sora got back though for she had found out something beyond shocking over in Eggman's bunker. At the moment though, Sonic was sitting by himself on a bench in the park and he was looking up at the beautiful, blue sky above him. The clouds were fluffy and white and there weren't many around. Today was a lovely day and Sonic planned to make the most of it so he was chilling out for the moment. Sonic had rather enjoyed the three weeks of rest and recuperation he and his team were having and he began hoping that it would stay this way. True it may not be as exciting as the life of adventure he'd been having since the day

Eggman came to Mobius but it was still nice for Sonic to be kicking back and enjoying himself. Not to mention, anyone can have an adventure and you don't necessarily need a villain to give you one. Sonic put his hands behind his head and he sighed happily. For once it seemed evil had been defeated and Mobius was FINALLY going to return to it's original peaceful state. The heroes had had a tough time over the years but it had been worth it for this. It seemed all their hard work had paid off once for all. Mobius was finally at peace once more.

"Aaaah…this is more like it." said Sonic, sighing contently and enjoying the gentle cool breeze that blew over him "No worrying about Eggman or any other villains out there, just enjoying life as we live it and having a moment of peace. Three weeks is a pretty good record for us so far, I hope it keeps going. Mind you, we've had longer periods of peace before evil strikes again. Still, shouldn't be much of a problem since Eggman's dead and any other villain out there will be easier to handle. Blizzard's not that much of a threat, the Region of Rebellious Reptiles are jokers, Ravage has his own band of heroes to handle him*,Team Diamond as well as Scourge & Fiona are incarcerated, Devion's dead, Marik and the Martians are stuck in the void forever and are crystal minions for Ixis Naugus and now Imperator Ix is stuck in the void for good since Knuckles time-locked the void and I bet Naugus is handling him. As for Finitevus well…who knows what will happen if he shows up again. He won't be much of a problem though since we know how to counter-attack him. Use a warp ring against him. So pretty much with Eggman gone, we have nothing to worry about."

"I couldn't agree more Hero of Mobius." came a female voice from behind Sonic that made him jump a little.

Sonic turned around and much to his delight, the person who had come across him was none other than the beautiful Queen Sally Acorn. Sonic had been growing more and more fond of Sally ever since she started becoming a fighter so you can imagine he's probably happy to see her here right now. Sally seemed happy to see Sonic too for she had a cute, happy little smile on her pretty face.

"Why your majesty, what an honour it is to have your royal presence

around here." chuckled Sonic in a rather teasing tone of voice.

"Let it never be said that I adore your sense of humour hedgehog." chuckled Sally teasingly "And please, you don't have to treat me like a queen you know, you can just act like I'm another Royal Fighter if you wish."

"But you're technically both aren't you?" noted Sonic "I mean you rule New Mobotropolis and you join us for battles so you're a Royal Fighter in more ways then one."

"Ha, ha, ha, I am aren't I?" chuckled Sally "So may I please sit with you Sonic?"

"Sure, you don't need my permission to sit with me Sal." said Sonic "Anyone who's a friend of mine's free to sit with me if they like."

"Thank you." said Sally, sitting down on the bench beside Sonic without a moment's hesitance.

"So what brings her majesty out here with the hedgehog then?" asked Sonic, playfully nudging Sally with his shoulder.

"I just decided I needed a bit of fresh air that's all." said Sally, taking in Sonic's little tease well since she was used to it now (she's put up with this ever since the R.F.S. formed. Of course she's used to it!) "That and I kinda wanted to see you since I've been cooped up with royal duties most of the last couple of weeks we've had."

"Oh that's nice." said Sonic brightly "Say Sally, you know that you weren't sure about becoming a Royal Fighter because of your important duties as queen? Well I've been meaning to ask...why is that no longer a problem to you now? I mean first you think you can't be a Royal Fighter and now suddenly you think you can? Not that I don't like your decision to become one of us, I think it's great that you do."

"Well Sonic, people change over time as you know." explained Sally "After the Devatrons, I thought about becoming a fighter so that I can help my fellow fighters on the battlefield. Consider it me returning the favour for all you and the others have done over time. I

also realized that I don't need to worry about my royal duties because I have a good substitute for me when I'm out fighting. The Council of Acorn are qualified enough to maintain control over the city. They have experience in laws and policies after all. I also have some loyal staff members who can fill in for me too. I did promise that I won't get into EVERY battle out there though, the substitutes can't handle everything for me, I need to resume my post on occasion. Still, at least I have the freedom to join my loyal soldiers in battle and help keep my city, my kingdom, even the whole world safe from evil."

"I see." said Sonic "And I think that's really cool Sally. I'm so glad that you're the one ruling over New Mobotropolis. You're a great queen you are."

"Thank you so much." said Sally with a slight blush on her face "And I'm so glad I have you in the R.F.S. You're a great hero you are."

With that said, Sally put her hand on top of Sonic's which was placed flat on the seat of the bench beside him. Sonic didn't mind this, he thought Sally had a nice touch and her hand felt quite nice to him.

"Heh, thanks Sally." said Sonic "I'm glad you think that."

"You're welcome Sonic." said Sally sweetly "Say Sonic, are you and Amy still…um…dating at all?" she suddenly asked with the hope that things weren't suddenly going to become awkward between them."

"Nah, we've not dated in a while." said Sonic "I told Amy that I'd rather wait a while before we have one again although I've found myself thinking that maybe I'm not ready for love yet. I mean I have a lot of responsibilities what with me being Hero of Mobius and all and I just hardly have the time to get into a relationship and really develop it between me and Amy. Besides, I don't think Amy's the right girl for me."

"Oh." said Sally "Why is that then?"

"Well she does get a little clingy and all and she does irritate me a

little." said Sonic "I think she's a great friend and all but I don't see her as more than a friend. I see her as just a friend so I don't think I really love Amy that much."

"I understand." said Sally, holding both of Sonic's hands and looking into his eyes "I'm sure Amy will understand too. Be sure to talk to her and let her know that you're not ready for a relationship and you don't think she's the one for you. Don't keep those feelings to yourself, it's important to let Amy know or she'll get the wrong idea about you."

"Good point Sally and don't worry, I'll do just that." said Sonic brightly "I will say though Sal…I'm finding myself quite…uh…liking you. Not you known just "liking" you, I mean…um… REALLY liking you…uh, does that sound right?" he added, blushing a little.

Sally's heart began to flutter excitedly.

"I know what you mean Sonic." said Sally with a smile "You have feelings for me don't you?"

"Uh…a little I admit." said Sonic bashfully "Although I'm not ready for a relationship because of my duties and all, I do admit I kinda fancy you. I've always thought you were…kinda lovely even before you were a queen. Even during the times I gave Amy a chance, I still felt that you were the one I truly admired. But while I admire you…at the same time I feel that I can't let my heart rule my head. I mean, I can't get into a relationship, I've got too much on my plate to bother about love…"

"Sonic, you can never have too much on your plate to worry about love." said Sally kindly "You may have a lot of responsibilities but you must leave room for love. Love can make you strong and keep you going even in the toughest of battles. Believe me, my love for my kingdom inspires me and keeps me going in the thick of the battle. My love for you even kept me going while we were trapped in the void together. And also, if you leave room for love, you can have someone to spend your free time with and have a good time with. Please don't let your hero duties overrule everything Sonic. You can still experience love no matter how much of a hero you are."

Sonic took in Sally's words and understood what she was trying to say to him. Sally had some good points in what she said and Sonic began to feel maybe he should give love another try after all. His heart was telling him to do it that's for sure. Sonic strokes Sally's fingers with his thumbs as he thought deeply about all this and he finally had something to say to Sally again.

"I understand Sal." said Sonic "While I still feel I'm not ready yet… sometime soon I'll give love another shot. And I want to do it…with you. If that's OK that is." he said, putting a finger to Sally's chin gently.

"I'd love that Sonic." said Sally "After all, you really are the Hero of Mobius. My Hero of Mobius that is…"

Sonic chuckled slightly and then he and Sally leaned their heads close to one another. Their eyes closed and they prepared to kiss each other. Sonic could hardly believe he was about to lock lips with the queen of his own city but he didn't mind. He was all too happy to be doing this right now. Their lips were just inches away from each others when suddenly, the sound of swishing tails came from up above them and they stopped what they were doing. Sonic and Sally looked up and saw none other than Sonic's best friend and sidekick, Tails the twin-tailed fox, coming down towards them. His tails were spinning furiously as he flew down towards the bench they were sitting on and his face looked frantic. It seemed an urgent message was coming to them shortly given how frenzied Tails' expression was. Tails landed down directly in front of Sonic & Sally.

"Hey Sonic! Hey Sally! Pant, pant…Sora's back! She wants us all to meet her in Royal HQ so she can tell us what she's found out over in Eggman's bunker!" blustered Tails, panting and gasping madly given how frantic he was "Please come over to Royal HQ!"

"Sure thing sweetheart." said Sally "It sure sounds urgent. Let's see what's going on then."

"Pity this had to happen just as things were getting interesting between us." sighed Sonic in annoyance.

This was one of the reasons why he was less sceptical about love

then most people. It ticked him off dearly when something happened while he was getting ready to enjoy the moment with the girl he was with. Oh well, there was always next time. Sonic and Sally got up from the bench and they ran off to Royal HQ, Sonic rushing ahead of course for he was super-speedy. Tails flew after them as they ran out of the park and headed off to Royal HQ. The three quickly made it into Royal HQ before a minute could pass and they all ran into the lab where everybody else was waiting for them. All the Royal Fighters were here: Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John, Ruben the Water Panther, Nicole the Lynx, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee and Sora was standing before them all, waiting to give out her testimony. Knuckles the Echidna and Shade the Echidna were both on AngelIsland right now, fulfilling their guardian duties. Sonic stood beside Amy with Tails standing by his other side and Sally stood beside Nicole as Sora cleared her throat and prepared to begin her testimony. Everybody listened with baited breath as Sora began.

"You are NOT going to believe what I've just found out!" shrieked Sora, the tone in her voice suggesting it must be horrifying news she had to deliver for them "First of all, we all celebrated too early when we thought Dr. Eggman had died when the Egg Carrier crashed because he hasn't! He's still alive and is now encased inside of a robot known as "Oh-mega" or something like that!"

The reaction to that statement was one of pure shock that swept around the room. Everybody gasped in incredulous horror and they all exchanged disbelieving glances among each other. Sora just shook her head sadly. She knew her friends wouldn't take this news well at all. Even she had been finding it hard to believe and yet she was right there, hearing every word that had been spoken as she spied on Eggman.

"No way! That…that's impossible!" blustered Tails, scarcely able to keep himself clam after this.

"We saw no escape pods ejecting from the Egg-Carrier when it crashed!" exclaimed Cosmo "And nobody can possibly survive a crash like that! The Egg-Carrier exploded into flames when it crashed! How can Eggman possibly have survived that?!"

"I have no idea love." said Geoffrey St. John "But I for one am not happy to hear this. Just when it seems Eggman is gone for good, he comes back! He's like a cockroach mate…he doesn't stay squished."

"Too right sugah." said Bunnie "And Sora says that Eggman's encased inside of Omega? Ah bet he's gonna be even tougher to battle now! Omega was one tough critter and ah should know! Me and sugah-hog took him on and barely survived, even with Shadow & Rouge fighting him too!"

"Well I took that bucket-of-bolts down by sneaking a bomb on him." crowed Mandy "Maybe I can do it again…" she added with a devious smirk on her face "THAT would finish the fat tyrant off for sure I bet."

"It sure would Mandy but we're not that ruthless you know." said Wilson "At the most, we could try and disable Omega and that would leave Eggman vulnerable to us."

"Good idea Wilson." said Ruben "But here's one thing…why is Eggman encased inside of Omega anyway? Is Omega his life-support machine or something now?"

"I guess so." said Sora "What other reason would he have for being inside a robot? Although how he even survived to be put in one mystifies me, his body should have been ravaged by the explosion. Eggman can't possibly be alive."

"Well Sora, he is and that's tough crud for us." snapped Sonic, more shocked than anybody about Eggman still being alive "It's back to square one now and it's gonna be worse than before because Eggman's inside a really powerful robot now. Why do I feel that instead of finishing Eggman off we've just made him more powerful?"

"It doesn't matter if he is, we'll still take him down no matter what." declared Sally "So Sora, did you find anything else out over in that bunker?"

"A lot!" exclaimed Sora "Dr. Finitevus has teamed up with Eggman

and they're both working on a plan called Operation: Double Trouble. It's two schemes going off simultaneously and it's like this: one scheme has a nuclear missile aimed at New Mobotropolis and the other has the Metal series attacking Angel Island and I presume they'll be stealing the Master Emerald as well! What's worse is that they've kidnapped the Emperor of Chun-Nan, Princess Matilda and Bladefeather and are going to restrain them to the missile to try and slow us down in taking the missile down!"

"Oh my gosh!" exclaimed Sally, putting her hands to her face in horror.

"That's mondo bad that is!" cried Sonic "Eggman's going TOO far now! Nobody kidnaps good friends of mine and aims a missile at my city and also attacks rad red's floating home! And how dare Finitevus join Eggman for this! We have to stop Operation: Double Trouble and fast!"

"Wait, this city has shields right?" noted Cream "We can just use the shields to defend New Mobotropolis from the missile."

"I'm afraid the shields won't survive a nuclear missile little Cream." said Nicole sadly "A nuclear strike is just too powerful for the shields to take. Also, the emperor, Matilda and Bladefeather will be strapped to it so even if the shields DID hold off the missile, it'll explode and kill them anyway. We have to stop that missile full stop or New Mobotropolis will be wiped off the map and Chun-Nan loses its royals and one of its fighters."

"I agree with Nicole." said Sally "Operation: Double Trouble has to be stopped and fast. Sora, how much time do we have?"

"Not sure although when I left, Eggman was going to prepare the missile and the Metal series. We have to act now." declared Sora.

"Very well." said Sally

"Very well." said Sally "We need to split up in order to stop this double threat. Knuckles & Shade will be able to handle Angel Island but they'll need an extra hand. We'll send over Team Chaotix to help with Angel Island. The rest of us will stop that missile. When we get

there, I will attempt to shut down the missile while the others keep Eggman and Finitevus distracted. Everyone got that?"

"Yes." said all the Royal Fighters.

"Then let us put an end to Operation: Double Trouble." announced Sally "Team Chaotix, use the super warp ring to go over to Angel Island. We'll hold onto it so we can get it back and use it to go over to Megapolis."

"Sure thing your majesty." said Vector with a polite bow "Boys, lets keep Knuckles' home island safe from Eggman's metal morons!"

Espio nodded obediently and Charmy punched the air with his fist excitedly. He was always happy to be going on a mission after all. Sora, since she had taken the warp ring with her to get into Eggman's bunker in the first place, took out the super warp ring and she flicked it up into the air for Team Chaotix to go through. The warp ring expanded to several times its size and a portal to Angel Island opened up in the middle of it. Vector, Espio and Charmy ran through the warp ring immediately and Sora held onto it so that the warp ring would close in Royal HQ and not on Angel Island. Team Chaotix wouldn't be stuck on Angel Island of course because if they wanted to get home, they'd just use the Master Emerald or even a Chaos Emerald to Chaos Control back home. The warp ring closed up as Team Chaotix ran through it and Sora held it in her hand as it shrunk down to size. Now Team Chaotix had gone over to inform Knuckles and Shade about Operation: Double Trouble and help defend Angel Island, Sally turned to the group and she spoke to them.

"OK everybody, this maybe one of the biggest fights of our lives." said Sally "We need to give Eggman everything we've got and we must stop that missile from launching. If we fail then our city is no more much like the first Mobotropolis and Chun-Nan loses its emperor, its princess and one of its warriors. Failure is NOT an option in this mission. We have to succeed or Mobius will lose many grand things today. So…are you ready everybody?"

"As ready as we'll ever be your majesty." declared Mandy, punching her fists together "Let's get on over there and make some noise!"

"I agree with Mandy, let's kick Eggman's new, shiny, tinplated butt!" yelled Sonic, taking in the fact Eggman's inside of Omega now so he technically does have a shiny, tinplated backside now.

"Then let us get going." ordered Sally "Sora, the warp ring if you please."

Sora nodded and she tossed the warp ring up into the air. The warp ring expanded to twice its size and it opened up a portal to Megapolis, the very place Eggman was hiding in and the very place the missile was going to launch from. All the Royal Fighters charged through the warp ring eagerly…except for Sonic and Sally. Sally had been about to charge but Sonic grabbed her and held her back for a minute because he wanted to ask her something. Sally held onto the warp ring so it wouldn't close before she and Sonic could get through. She turned to face Sonic.

"Sonic, we don't have time for this, we have to get going." said Sally.

"I know Sally it's just…do you think you'll be OK shutting the missile down by yourself?" said Sonic, the concern in his voice very noticeable "I mean, you're still training and learning the tougher fighting skills, you're still not the best fighter out there. And what if you can't shut the missile down?"

"Sonic please, I'm quite adequate at hacking." said Sally reassuringly, putting a hand on Sonic's shoulder "I'll be able to shut that thing down. I was almost able to stop Katherine from forbidding access to our satellites the day she hacked into them** so I'm sure I can do this. Please don't worry about me Sonic. I'll be fine, especially as I have all these brave fighters keeping Eggman busy so he won't notice me."

"If you say so." said Sonic "But if you end up in trouble, I'll be there to save you."

"I'm sure you will." chuckled Sally teasingly "And here's a little something for good luck out there."

Before Sonic could even guess what that little something for luck was, Sally grabbed him by the shoulders and pulled Sonic close to

herself. She then planted a small but affectionate kiss on Sonic's lips. Sonic's quills straightened in surprise but he returned the kiss and even gave Sally a little hug as they kissed. Luckily, they didn't get too carried away and they broke it up before it could go too far. Sonic could only smile at Sally after that kiss.

"Whoa…that was unexpected." gasped Sonic.

"I'll bet it was." giggled Sally "Now, shall we?" she asked, motioning to the still open warp ring.

"Be my guest." said Sonic, bowing down to Sally in the manner of somebody inviting their guest into their humble home.

Sally smiled at Sonic and she stepped through the warp ring. Sonic followed shortly afterwards. As Sonic dashed through the warp ring, it closed up behind him and the lab of Royal HQ was left silent and empty as the warp ring vanished. Operation: Double Trouble was about to commence and the heroes would be there in time to stop it…all of it…

"So if I've got this right…Eggman's still alive, has been resurrected as a robot, my Uncle Finitevus has joined forces with him and they're planning a double-attack, one on New Mobotropolis and one on Angel Island?!" cried Knuckles the Echidna, unable to believe what he had just heard.

"You got it." said Vector "We're just as amazed as you are about all this."

Team Chaotix had arrived on Angel Island and they had just been giving Knuckles the necessary exposition to justify why they're here and what is happening right now. Knuckles and Shade were horrified to hear that Dr. Finitevus had joined Eggman and the two evil scientists were planning a double-attack and Angel Island was one of the targets. But what shocked them the most about all this is the fact Eggman was still alive. Just when they thought that they'd gotten rid of him, he shows up once again and the fact he's now encased in a robot means he'll be a much deadlier foe than ever

before. Knuckles could feel himself getting angry over all of this whereas Shade just put her arms around Knuckles arm and tried to calm him down.

"Knuckles, please curb your anger." said Shade "We need to be ready for when the attack on Angel Island arrives."

"I'm trying the best I can!" muttered Knuckles through gritted teeth.

Shade could tell that Knuckles wasn't going to be easy to clam down right now so she decided to let him vent for a minute and come to grips with himself. She let go of Knuckles and Knuckles turned his back on everybody. Knuckles growled furiously and then he punched the ground as hard as he could to let all his rage out. That one punch didn't seem to have clamed him down much though, he was still fuming.

"I can't believe it! Dr. Eggman's still alive and my subversive uncle is working for him now?!" screamed Knuckles "Why won't Eggman just stay gone already?! And how dare my uncle join forces with him! Eggman's going to be more dangerous than ever with Uncle Finitevus working for him! We all know how well Finitevus can fight and his scientific knowledge combined with Eggman's is going to make them a very deadly team-up! If I ever get my hands on my uncle, I'm gonna KILL him!"

"If we ever catch that dishonourable fiend, we'll be all too happy to let you deliver his penance." said Espio with a rather dry smirk on his face "So you two, the attack on Angel Island is this: According to Sora, Eggman's going to send the Metal series over to attack and presumably steal the Master Emerald. I assume the Metal series means we'll be up against Metal Sonic, Metal Tails, Metal Knuckles and Metal Amy. Maybe even Silver Sonic. I remember how we WERE going to fight those robots until the tear in the sky took Sonic away. Well, we'll get our chance to fight them now."

"I hope so." said Knuckles "I've been itching to tussle with Metal Knuckles again."

"Will they be coming anytime soon?" asked Shade.

"Should be." said Espio "Sora said Eggman was putting the plan in action just before she left."

"Hey, is that them right now?" asked Charmy, pointing into the distance ahead of him "I can see something coming and it looks like a bunch of robots."

Everybody looked in the direction Charmy was pointing in and they could see something coming towards Angel Island in the distance. What they could see was a horde of five robots all flying towards Angel Island at top speed. These robots were, of course, the Metal series. Metal Sonic, Metal Tails, Metal Knuckles, Metal Amy and Silver Sonic were all flying through the air with the aid of their jet packs (Silver Sonic is flying with the jets on his legs for he doesn't have one in his back) and they looked like they were ready for battle. They were coming in fast, meaning that Knuckles, Shade and the Chaotix would have to be ready in a matter of seconds or the Metals would get the drop on them all. Knuckles immediately leaped on top of the Master Emerald and he clenched his fists. The Chaotix and Shade stood around the shrine and they readied themselves for battle.

"Alright Metals! Give us your worst!" dared Knuckles "We'll stop you!"

Metal Sonic launched the first blow by curling up into a shiny, steel ball and he spin-dashed towards the Master Emerald. Knuckles knelt down on the emerald and he tapped into the Chaos Force, green energy crackling around his body as he prepared to use its power for something. Knuckles had the brilliant idea of using the Master Emerald to perform a Chaos Control and freeze the Metals in place. Once the Metals were frozen, he'd simply glide towards them and smash them down into the ground before they can move again. Unfortunately, Knuckles timed his plan a little too late so Metal Sonic ended up spin-dashing him directly off the emerald just before he could perform a Chaos Control. Knuckles was thrown off the emerald by that spin-dash and he slid across the ground on his back, leaving nasty scrapes on his back and a big track of flattened grass and scattered dirt as he slid across it. Metal Sonic stood on top of the Master Emerald and he analyzed it, wondering if he could use its power in anyway and how he'd be able to transport it back

over to Eggman's base. Metal Tails and Metal Amy hovered beside the Master Emerald and they placed their clawed hands on it. They proceeded to try and lift the emerald up off the shrine, using all the power in their jet packs to help them ascend with the emerald. Metal Sonic hopped off the emerald and he joined Metal Tails and Metal Amy. Metal Knuckles could not help for he didn't have real hands, just claws. Silver Sonic hovered by and he placed his claws on the Master Emerald. His enormous size, superior circuitry and powerful systems would make him a lot stronger and thus, he'd be able to lift the emerald up easily. But before he could get the chance, Vector jumped up to the emerald and he fisted Silver Sonic off of it.

"Hey! That's Knuckles' big glowing emerald! No touchie!" yelled Vector as Silver Sonic landed beside the emerald shrine with a heavy clunk.

Silver Sonic picked himself up and he clawed at Vector with a heavy metal hand. Vector ducked as Silver Sonic's clawed hand whooshed over his head, nearly snagging his earphones as it missed him, and he jumped onto Silver Sonic. He clamped his jaws around Silver Sonic's arm and tried to bite it off. Silver Sonic took the bite and he grabbed Vector. He threw him into the emerald shrine as hard as he could. Vector groaned as he hit the shrine and left some heavy cracks into it. Silver Sonic stomped up to Vector and he raised his foot, ready to squash the crocodile flat. Knuckles however saved Vector by jumping in and punching Silver Sonic in the face and knocking him over onto his side. Metal Knuckles was quick to fly in and punch Knuckles away from Silver Sonic though. Knuckles hurled off of Silver Sonic and Metal Knuckles flew after him. Knuckles uppercut Metal Knuckles before he could slash him with his metal claws and Metal Knuckles hurled backwards into the ground. Metal Knuckles jumped back up and he and Knuckles grappled fists with each other.

"Hey Metal Knuckles! Been looking forward to fighting you again!" growled Knuckles, a devious smirk on his face as he grappled with his metal doppelganger "And this time, no truce will save you from being scrapped by me because we aren't forming one this time!"

Metal Knuckles just promptly yanked one of his claws out of Knuckles' grip and he socked Knuckles directly in the face. Knuckles

took the blow despite it being powerful enough to knock him clean off his feet and onto his back and he soon sprung back hard with a punch to the face on Metal Knuckles. The punch was enough to make Metal Knuckles' senses go a bit fuzzy and distorted for a minute before he recovered and tried to attack again. Knuckles beat Metal Knuckles to the punch (no pun intended) though and he uppercut Metal Knuckles into the air. Metal Knuckles hurled up into the air and he fell back down to the ground. Knuckles ran in and walloped Metal Knuckles off of Angel Island with a single punch before he could crash down onto the ground. Metal Knuckles hurled off the edge of the island but he was soon back up onto it thanks to his jetpack. Metal Knuckles flew back up onto the island and he socked Knuckles as hard as he could as he flew back up onto it. As Knuckles and Metal Knuckles fought, Team Chaotix tussled with Metal Sonic, Metal Tails, Metal Amy and Silver Sonic. Shade was fighting Silver Sonic, Vector was against Metal Amy, Espio was against Metal Sonic and Charmy was having an air-to-air showdown with Metal Tails. Operation: Double Trouble had begun and the fight for Angel Island was likely to get hectic. Only time would tell who the victors of this battle would be…

Over in Megapolis, the second stage of Operation: Double Trouble was being set-up. The nuclear missile that was going to be launched at New Mobotropolis had been raised out of the bunker by a bunch of Eggman robots and some walk-ways had been constructed so that robots could walk around the missile and make any further adjustments. The site that the missile was going to launch from looked very much like the launch site for a NASA space rocket. The missile itself looked very similar to a rocket in appearance. It was huge, about the same size as a standard rocket and coated in a silver steel shell. It had the Eggman Empire logo painted on it and it also had yellow fins near the rocket engines. Up near the cone-shaped nose of the missile were Princess Matilda, Bladefeather the Falcon and Emperor Tai. They were secured to the rocket by chains wrapped and wound around their arms, torsos and ankles and they were fastened there quite securely. They tried as desperately as the could to break free of the chains but try as they might (especially poor old Tai), they just couldn't break free. The chains were quite

tough and due to how securely they were fastened, they couldn't really find the strength or momentum to break free (not that Tai ever would be able to break free even if he had momentum since he's weak and frail). On the walkway, Dr. Eggman and Dr. Finitevus stood there looking up proudly at their captives and also admiring the missile. The walkway led to a control pad that was just under Matilda's feet (she's chained facing directly in front of Eggman and Finitevus) and Dr. Eggman was punching in the launch sequence in the control pad. The missile was preparing to fire and Eggman was setting its course, as well as the appropriate launch time. They couldn't launch the missile too fast or it wouldn't have time to warm up and be effective. Also, launching it too fast would probably cause it to overheat and explode right there so this isn't a simple case of just launching the missile at the touch of a button. A nuclear missile needs time to warm up after all. Matilda gulped as Eggman set the launch sequence for the missile. In a matter of moments, she, her father and her boyfriend would be obliterated along with Sonic's home city and maybe even Sonic himself.

"Aaaah, that should do." said Eggman as he pressed one last button on the control pad "The launch sequence is five minutes and the course is set. This missile will be turning NewMobotropolis into a wasteland in five whole minutes! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

He then pressed a button on the control pad that was marked "Begin launch". The countdown for the missile's launch began, red digital numbers flashing on the control pad as it started and the numbers counted down second by second. The missile whirred and rumbled as it was warming up for the launch. The three captives could feel the shell vibrating on their backs as the missile powered up. They were all very frightened now. Would somebody be able to save them in time? Would something go wrong and the missile would end up going dead instead of launching? Both chances seemed unlikely but being that they were from Chun-Nan, Matilda, Tai and Bladefeather didn't give up hope. They considered giving-up to be dishonourable. They began hoping that somebody would stop the missile and save them in time. Dr. Eggman grinned from inside Omega's casing as the missile prepared to launch.

"Oh what a joyous day!" he crowed excitedly "My brilliant plan is in

action and Sonic and friends know NOTHING about it! They can't stop me now, Operation: Double Trouble is going to be a brilliant success it is and all thanks to my genius mind! Oh ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!"

"Ahem, I believe you need to be corrected on certain points in your statement Eggman." said Finitevus coldly, pulling on Eggman's arm and pulling on it so hard he almost yanked him over "First off, it was MY plan and Sonic won't be able to stop US. Do remember that you have me as your sidekick Eggman, don't grab all the glory for yourself." he hissed sinisterly, a fuming scowl narrowed on his face.

Eggman glowered at Finitevus with the red optics of his life-support mech but he didn't smack Finitevus or anything. He just took his arm out of Finitevus's grip and put them on his hips.

"Excuse my misinterpretation of events." he said sarcastically "You do realize though that I'm the head honcho of the Eggman Empire so I can credit myself for anything that goes on under my watch."

"As you wish." said Finitevus, scowling at Eggman and folding his arms "After all, I wouldn't want to steal your glory would I?"

"I should hope not!" snapped Eggman "Now, let us stand back and watch as our glorious missile prepares to launch into the air and fly off to NewMobotropolis. I can just picture the nuclear wasteland it'll be reduced to now!" he cackled evilly.

"I for one hope that the citizens end up mutated by the nuclear substance in the missile and that way, I can have some VERY fascinating creatures to experiment on." crooned Finitevus darkly, thinking on the fact nuclear substances can mutate a being should such a thing end up happening.

"My Finitevus, you are twisted!" laughed Dr. Eggman "Are you naturally this evil or do you practice at it?! Ho, ho, ho, ho!"

"The conversations between these two are so tempting me to vomit violently all over myself at this very moment." sighed Bladefeather crossly. He was disgusted to hear what Finitevus and Eggman were talking about right now.

"I wonder how those two can bear to live with such a horrible sense of enjoyment." said Tai, his face screwed up in disgust "They both have no lives, they really don't."

"I agree daddy." said Matilda grimly "Which is why I so wish I wasn't chained up now. I'd love to give those two a bit of discipline…maybe more than a bit actually."

"I so relish the thought of connecting my foot with the rear ends of those baneful scientists." said Bladefeather "If only we could get free…"

And now is the time for one of the biggest coincidences ever for just as Bladefeather said that, a warp ring opened up a fair distance away from the launch site. Eggman and Finitevus saw the warp ring opening up and they stared hard at it, wondering who was going to come out of it. Much to their utmost shock, out of the open warp ring piled Sonic the Hedgehog and all his friends! Sonic, Tails, Sally, Amy, Cream, Cosmo, Nicole, Wilson, Mandy, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Sora & Ruben all charged out of the warp ring and they began charging towards the missile launch site like a herd of stampeding rhinos. They all looked furious and like they were ready to give Eggman and Finitevus an epic beat down. Both the doctors jaw-dropped in surprise at what they could see. Matilda and Tai saw the warp ring open up and they both beamed at the fact Sonic and friends were here (Bladefeather can't see because he's on the other side of the missile beside Matilda).

"It's the hedgehog and his friends!" blurted Finitevus "But…this is impossible! They shouldn't be knowing about all this! How can they possibly have known about our plan?!"

"So much for unpredictability…" snorted Eggman, frowning at Finitevus "I bet someone in Chun-Nan noticed that the princess, emperor and kung-fu warrior had gone missing and then squealed on us to them. No matter, I've been hoping to have a battle with Sonic in my new robot body! Finitevus, you keep an eye on the control pad while I fight off Sonic and friends!"

Finitevus obeyed and he stood guard by the control pad as Eggman flew off of the walkway and down towards the ground. Sonic saw

Eggman coming and he screeched to a very violent halt just as Eggman landed down heavily on the ground just before him. Sonic leaped back and bent down into a battle ready stance. The others ran up beside Sonic and they came to a stop just behind him, all sharing his eagerness to get into battle. Sonic smirked as he observed the Omega life-support mech that Eggman was now encased inside. Sonic remembered that Sora said he was encased inside Omega and he remembered Omega all too well so he knew that this was Dr. Eggman he was face-to-face with now.

"Hey Eggman! That's a nice new look for you!" taunted Sonic "What happened? You wanted an extra belly-size or something? I mean Omega just makes you look even fatter then before now! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll change that tone of yours Sonic." sneered Dr. Eggman "For I am encased within the body of E-123 Omega! If you remember, even Shadow the Hedgehog couldn't take him down so you should be afraid of me now Sonic! Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho! I will be much deadlier now!"

"Oh yeah sure will be." sneered Sonic "I will say, I'm glad you came back as Omega. I've been itching to have a rematch with Omega and now you've given me that opportunity. You've just made me one happy hedgehog." he added, sticking out his tongue rudely.

"You're not supposed to be delighted! You're supposed to be terrified!" shrieked Dr. Eggman furiously, shaking his huge metal arms furiously.

"Eggman, you weren't scary when you were bald, flabby, ugly and fleshy!" snapped Amy, brandishing her Piko-Piko hammer menacingly "You being encased in a robot isn't going to make you any scarier!"

"We'll see about that…" snarled Dr. Eggman, deploying Omega's weapons and aiming them at the Royal Fighters.

Sonic however spin-dashed Eggman and knocked him over onto his back before he could fire so much as one bullet. Eggman landed with a heavy clunk on his back, his guns randomly shooting up into

the sky as he landed.

"Sally! Go!" yelled Sonic "Now's your chance! Stop that missile!"

"Will do." said Sally, running off past the downed Dr. Eggman with the super warp ring in hand "Please be careful everybody! Eggman's going to be very dangerous with all that artillery in his mech-suit!"

Sonic nodded and he watched as Sally ran off towards the missile launch site as fast as she could. Eggman slowly but steadily picked himself up, not realizing that Sally had gone, and he clenched his fists furiously. He deployed his weapons and he started firing rapidly at the Royal Fighters. The Royal Fighters all scattered around like a terrified colony of ants as Eggman tried to shoot them. Bunnie deployed her shield generator and kept herself and Geoffrey safe from harm with a force field. Once the rabbit and skunk were out of the line of fire, Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and she shot at Dr. Eggman. The blast sent Eggman staggering and he nearly fell over onto his side. Bunnie however ran in and made sure that he did fall over. She uppercut Eggman over onto his side with her robot arm. Eggman tried to get back up but Amy ran in and hammered him into the air. Eggman hurled through the air and crashed down violently on the ground a few feet away. Eggman picked himself up and he launched some missiles at the Royal Fighters. Bunnie blasted them to bits before the missiles could get anywhere near the Mobians but the missiles were merely a distraction. Eggman plunged into the smoke of the exploding missiles and because of his suit's optical sensors, he could sense where his opponents were and he knew where he was heading. He emerged from the explosions and he uppercut Bunnie directly in the face, sending her hurling up into the air but Eggman jumped up after her and grabbed her. He slammed her down onto the ground and then threw her directly into Geoffrey. Geoffrey caught Bunnie and then he fired as many darts as he could at Eggman. The darts pinged off of his tough mech suit and Eggman fired a round of bullets at the skunk. Sonic and Tails however jumped in and they both kicked Eggman at once, knocking him down onto his back. Eggman picked himself up quickly and he punched them both in the face. He picked Tails up and slammed him down on top of Sonic. Sonic cried out as Tails was slammed on top of him. Eggman threw Tails away carelessly like a broken tool

and he picked Sonic up by the head. He held Sonic firmly in one hand and he slugged him in the stomach with the other. He proceeded to do it again but before he could do it a third time, Ruben jumped in and blasted Eggman off of his feet with a jet of water. Eggman hurled across the battlefield and he came to a stop on his back. Eggman picked himself up and he fired a missile at Ruben. Ruben cried in horror and he ran for it as the missile soared towards him. Luckily for him, Sora was on hand to save him. She pounced on Ruben and brought him down to the ground before the missile could get him. The missile whizzed over their heads and exploded as it hit the ground a few feet away from them. Sora and Ruben covered their ears as the missile exploded. Ruben looked over at Sora graciously.

"Ugh…thank you." he said.

"You're welcome water-boy." said Sora with a smile.

Ruben found himself blushing at that remark. Water-boy was a childhood nickname of his and to hear a girl calling him that was just glorious to him. As Ruben blushed, he took note of Sora and found himself thinking she looked quite nice. Beautiful even. Especially her eyes. Amazing he hadn't noticed this before. Now was not the time for admiring Sora though, they had a battle to win. Eggman ran towards Sora and Ruben with his Gatling guns deployed and the barrels spinning, ready to fire. Wilson and Mandy stopped him from getting anywhere near them by attacking him from the side and tripping him up. Eggman fell onto the ground flat on his face as he was tripped up. Eggman picked himself up only to have Cosmo climb onto his back and cover the mech's optics. Eggman couldn't see anything now Cosmo was covering the mech's optics. This gave Cream the perfect opportunity to launch an attack on him. She threw Cheese at Eggman as hard as she could and Cheese ended up hitting Eggman squarely in the knee, bringing him down on one leg as the Chao hit him. Sonic then spin-dashed Eggman, making sure he didn't hit Cosmo as he did so, and knocked him over onto his side. Cosmo hopped off of Eggman but she had an alternative for blinding him. She gathered up a splodge of mud that was from a nearby mud puddle and she threw the mud at Eggman's optics. The mud hit Eggman in the face with a splat and the mech suit's optics

were now covered with mud. Eggman couldn't see a thing at all now. While he tried to get the mud off his optics, Nicole jumped up onto his head and then leaped off again, the force of her legs pushing her into the air sending Eggman stumbling backwards. Bunnie and Geoffrey both pile-dived Eggman in the back and sent him hurling forwards onto his face. Eggman picked himself up only to be spin-dashed by Sonic and knocked over again. Eggman activated the jets in the mech-suit's back to fly up into the air and keep himself out of harm's reach so he could get enough time to wipe the mud off his optics. He of course forgot one thing…Tails and Cream can simply fly after him. But Eggman managed to wipe the mud off his optics just before Tails and Cream could get him and Eggman fisted them both down into the ground. He remained flying and he began unleashing as much of his arsenal as he could from up in the sky. The Royal Fighters ran for it as bullets and missiles all rained down onto the ground from up where Eggman was flying.

Meanwhile, Sally had made it to the launch site and she climbed up the stairs to the walkway as fast as she could. Dr. Finitevus could see Sally coming and he decided to play a sneaky trick on her. He disappeared through a warp ring and made it look like he was abandoning his post to fight the Royal Fighters by reappearing near the battle scene. This trick was to fool Matilda, Tai and Bladefeather into thinking he didn't know somebody was coming up to save them and was going over to help Eggman and thus, they wouldn't warn Sally about him and ruin his ambush. Sally finally made it to the top of the walkway and she bolted over to the control pad, panting heavily. Matilda looked down at Sally and she beamed happily.

"Oh thank the ancestors! Someone's here to stop the missile and get us down!" she cried happily "And...I think it's the Queen of New Mobotropolis herself." she added, recognizing Sally from the last time they met which was when she was hospitalized after being beaten by Conquering Storm a while back.

"It is indeed." said Sally brightly "I am Queen Sally Acorn of the AcornKingdom and I'm gonna stop this missile. Hold on while I try and shut it down."

"I sincerely hope you succeed dear queen." said Bladefeather "I do not harbour any interests in going up like a firework after all!"

Sally nodded and she looked at the control pad. Only three minutes left until launch were left on the countdown. She'd have to think fast and get to it. Sally beginning pressing on some buttons and she tried to see if she could hack into the control pad and get the missile to abort launch. But then Sally realized something. If she aborted the launch and saved the captives, Eggman would still have a missile to use the next time. Shutting it down and nothing more would just be delaying the inevitable. The best thing to do would be abort the launch, save the captives and then make the missile destroy itself. The result would do so damage but given it's in the middle of far stretching plains, it wouldn't harm anything or anybody. Sally knew what she had to do now so she set to hacking into the controls to the missile and stopping the launch.

"OK, if I can just bypass these set of codes, I should have access to the missile." mused Sally "Clever of Eggman to put up encryption codes to stop anyone from accessing the missile once the launch sequence is set. I know I can do this though. Come on Sally girl, you can do this…"she said, a bead of sweat trickling down her forehead as she tried to hack into the controls.

"Sally LOOK OUT!" Matilda suddenly screamed at the top of her voice.

Sally turned around to see what Matilda was so frightened about and she was instantly met with a backhand to the face that sent her hurling over the rail of the walkway. She managed to save herself by clinging onto the walkway luckily. Her attacker stood by the rail and peered down at Sally. It was of course, Dr. Finitevus. He'd warped back onto the stairway a few sections down so Sally wouldn't hear him coming and he had sneaked up onto the walkway as quietly as he could. Now he'd gotten Sally clinging on for dear life onto the rail and he smirked down at her.

"So her Royal Highness herself has come to stop the missile." purred Finitevus darkly, stomping on Sally's right hand and making her let go of the rail "Such a poor choice of planning. Say goodbye…"

He then stomped on Sally's other hand and made her let go of the rail. Sally plummeted straight down from the walkway, screaming

loudly as she fell to her apparent demise. She was very high up from the ground so she wouldn't survive a fall like this. But Sally had a saving grace on her. As Sally fell down to the ground, she fished the warp ring out of her vest pocket and activated it directly below her. Thus, she ended up falling through the warp ring and saving herself from a very nasty fate. The warp ring re-opened just behind Finitevus so Sally ended up hurling out of the warp ring and landing smack in the middle of Finitevus' face. Finitevus was sent hurling across the walkway and he groaned in pain. He picked himself up, rubbing his face better and Sally got out her staff and deployed its blade. She twirled it around and pointed it at Finitevus. Finitevus just cracked his knuckles and prepared to fight. He wasn't even that bothered at the fact he was up against Sally Acorn right now. He knew she was no threat and that she couldn't possibly hope to stop him. Matilda watched on worriedly as they prepared to fight.

"My child, do you seriously believe you can stop me?" snorted Finitevus "All the Royal Fighters together couldn't stop me so what chance do you think YOU have against me?"

"The fact I now have a warp ring of my own." sneered Sally "Finitevus, once I beat you, you will be arrested for your crimes against AngelIsland and the Kingdom of Acorn. Do not expect me to be lenient on you."

"It is you who will be begging for mercy you feeble minded woman…" snarled Finitevus dryly.

Sally immediately sprung into action. She twirled the staff around and tried to hit Finitevus with it. Finitevus leaped over the swinging staff and he drop-kicked Sally in the head. He then grabbed onto the rails, hoisted himself up and kangaroo kicked her directly into the control panel. Luckily, Sally didn't break it as she hit it but she did end up with a sore back after that hit. Finitevus lunged towards Sally but Sally threw her warp ring in front of herself, sending Finitevus hurling through it. He reappeared in front of her, flying out of the warp ring and Sally whacked him away from herself like a baseball player swinging the bat. Finitevus hurled off the walkway but he saved himself with a simple warp ring back onto the walkway. Sally knew what he was planning anyway so she warped away and left Finitevus to pounce on nothing. She reappeared behind him and

kicked him down onto the floor of the walkway. Finitevus didn't seem that hurt though and he picked himself up as if nothing had happened.

"Alright red-head, you want to play?" he sneered "Now we play for real!"

He then lashed out and grabbed Sally's wrists. He forced her to drop the staff and he then jumped around behind Sally, forcing her arms behind her back. Sally tried to get free but Finitevus was just too strong for her. Finitevus kicked Sally and sent her hurling face first into a pole on the walkway. Sally groaned as she hit the pole and her face started aching like mad. Finitevus grabbed Sally by the hair and then slammed Sally's face against the pole. Sally saved herself from another slam by kicking Finitevus in the shin and making him let go. She then spun-around and kicked him backwards. She ran past Finitevus and picked up her staff. She pole-vaulted towards Finitevus but the mad scientist simply held his arms up and pushed himself forward, making her attack ineffective and knocking her down onto the floor. Sally picked herself up and pole-vaulted over Finitevus as he tried to grab her again. Finitevus twirled around and ran after Sally as she ran under an overhead section of the walkway. Sally thrust the staff forward, nearly stabbing Finitevus in the shoulder as she did so. Finitevus leaped up out of her way and grabbed some overhead rails. Sally swung at Finitevus but the doctor kept raising his legs up to dodge and he kicked Sally in the forehead. He then grabbed her head with both his legs and held her firmly in place. Sally gagged and she tried to get free before Finitevus could snap her neck with his feet. Luckily she managed to do so by whacking Finitevus in the back of his knees with her staff. Finitevus let her go but he still held onto the rails. He kicked Sally in the back of the head shortly after letting go of her and Sally fell down onto her face. Finitevus let go of the rails and dropped back down onto the walkway. He grabbed Sally by the vest and he slammed her against a rail. He pinned her there and gave Sally a very nasty look.

"See, you have no chance against me you poor, miserable excuse for a queen." purred Finitevus "I have you beaten and the missile is almost ready for launch. You know…maybe I'll take you prisoner

and see what kind of experiments I can perform on you…" he added with a very twisted, cruel smile on his face.

"I will not be your lab experiment Finitevus!" yelled Sally, head-butting him in the forehead and making Finitevus cry out in pain.

He let go of her and Sally tripped Finitevus up with a swift roundhouse kick to the legs. Finitevus winced as he landed on his back and Sally activated her super warp ring. She picked Finitevus up by his cloak and she threw him into the warp ring. Finitevus vanished through the warp ring and ended up reappearing in the middle of the battle between Dr. Eggman and the Royal Fighters. Sally put the warp ring back into her vest pocket, put her staff away on her belt (it shrinks into a small capsule when she's not using it) and she grunted for her body was paining a bit from the fight. She clutched her arm and wandered over to the control pad.

"Ugh…hopefully Sonic and friends will keep Finitevus busy now I've given him to them." said Sally "Now where was I? Oh yes…"

She made it back over to the control pad and what she saw nearly gave her a heart-attack. The missile only had one minute left until launch! Sally freaked out and instantly resumed what she was doing as fast as she could. She began pressing buttons and furiously trying to break the encryption codes that were keeping her out of the controls. Sally began to sweat madly and her heart was racing as fast as her hands were moving. Would she make it in time? The missile was beginning to yawn a loud, rumbling noise as it was warming up and preparing to take off. Sally could feel the walkway vibrating as the missile was ready to take off. She had to stop it now or it would be too late. Sally typed and typed on the control panel until, at long last, she managed to break the codes and get into the controls and all with thirty seconds left to go. Sally instantly scrolled through the options and she quickly pressed the option that said "Abort launch?". The missile stopped rumbling and it fell into a deep silence as its launch was aborted. Matilda, Bladefeather and Tai all cheered excitedly for they were now saved and the missile was stopped. Sally gasped with relief and she put her hand over her pounding heart.

"Oh thank goodness…I thought I wasn't going to make it!" gasped

Sally "Thank god I did! Whew…"

She wiped sweat off her forehead and took a moment to relax. Once she was relaxed, she got out her staff and saw to freeing the captives. Using the blade of her staff, she cut the chains to pieces and Matilda, Tai and Bladefeather all dropped down onto the walkway. The moment they did, they all gave Sally a gracious hug each and expressed their thanks.

"Oh thank you so much your honour!" squealed Matilda "I thought we were done for!"

"Your valour and honour is to be commended your grace. Many thanks for saving our lives." said Bladefeather, politely kissing Sally's hand as a token of gratitude.

"I cannot thank you enough for your bravery Miss Acorn." said Tai, shaking Sally's hand "I am honoured by your selflessness and valour and I am so grateful to you for saving our lives."

"Aw, thank you everyone." said Sally graciously "You're all quite welcome. I couldn't let Chun-Nan lose its royals and one of its warriors after all. Now I have just one more thing to do."

"Which is?" asked Matilda curiously.

"Set the missile to self-destruct." said Sally, getting back to the controls to see what she could do "Shutting it down and leaving it as it is will just give Eggman another opportunity to use the missile. We have to destroy it completely."

"But won't you take all of us with it?" piped Matilda.

"No, I'll set it on a timer and give us time to get out of here before it goes off." said Sally "I have our escape route already, the warp ring that we got from our first encounter with Dr. Finitevus. I think ten minutes will be more than enough time for us to break for it before the missile destroys itself."

"A very potent plan." praised Bladefeather "I admire a woman of great intelligence I do."

Sally blushed at Bladefeather's remark and she began taping a few buttons on the control pad. She managed to find an option that, rather conveniently, allows the user to set the missile to self-destruct. The feature was there so that if the missile was going to be lost and Eggman didn't want it to fall into enemy hands, he could just destroy it and save it from being used on himself. A sound security feature that was going to be used to Sally's advantage. Sally selected the option and set the timer for ten minutes. She would have to get the Royal Fighters out of Megapolis in ten whole minutes or the missile would take them with it when it self-destructs. This wouldn't be that much of a problem since she had a great escape route. The only real problem was getting them past Eggman and Finitevus. Since she now had Matilda, Bladefeather and Tai free, they could help stop the two villains and buy themselves enough time to warp out of here. Sally flicked the warp ring into the air and she, Matilda, Bladefeather and Tai hopped through it. They warped down to the big battle on the ground and they ran forward to help Sonic and friends stop Eggman and Finitevus. Time was ticking and they were racing against the clock. Would they be able to get past the two villains and get out of Megapolis in time…?

Back on Angel Island, the battle with the Metal series was pretty much even-sided right now. Knuckles was still brawling with Metal Knuckles and given how Metal Knuckles is meant to match Knuckles in everyway, this fight's definitely going to be even-sided. Shade was still against Silver Sonic, Vector was still against Metal Amy, Espio was still against Metal Sonic and Charmy was still fighting with Metal Tails up in the sky. The Metal series were a tough bunch of robots but the echidnas and the Chaotix fought back valiantly and were managing to hold them off pretty well. Metal Sonic and Silver Sonic had been fought so many times already that they weren't really as strong as they used to be. While still powerful, the heroes had become wise to them and since Metal Tails, Metal Amy and Metal Knuckles were pretty much the same only modelled after different characters, the heroes were wise to them too. Still didn't stop the Metal Series from being a tough threat to fight. Metal Knuckles gave Knuckles a powerful uppercut that sent the echidna hurled up into the air and just as Knuckles was hurling back down

into the ground, Metal Knuckles fired a laser from his optics that struck Knuckles before he could hit the ground. Knuckles groaned in pain but he was still able to stand back up. Metal Knuckles ran towards Knuckles and tried to attack him again. Knuckles was quickest to react this time and he socked Metal Knuckles in the face. Metal Knuckles stumbled backwards and Knuckles grabbed him by the arms. He stomped on Metal Knuckles' gut and pulled on his arms, hoping to rip them clean out of their sockets. Metal Knuckles however was able to yank his arms out of Knuckles grasp and he punched Knuckles off of himself. Knuckles and Metal Knuckles linked arms and they pushed on each other, trying to overpower the other and bring them down. As for Shade and Silver Sonic, Shade wasn't having too much trouble with Silver Sonic's superior size. She used her swiftness to stay on top of her battle but Silver Sonic was still a problem for her. Shade Blade-Rushed Silver Sonic but the attack didn't really faze him in anyway. He took it as if it was nothing and clawed at Shade. Shade ducked and she uppercut Silver Sonic with her blades. Silver Sonic was thrown down onto his back but he was soon back up. He spin-dashed at Shade to which the echidna dodged and…Silver Sonic ended up plummeting directly off of Angel Island. Silver Sonic maybe strong but he's not very bright. He's just a mindless killing machine after all. Silver Sonic however uncurled from his spin-dash and he used the jets in his legs to fly back up to Angel Island. However, Shade was ready for him. She swung her blades and activated her Blade-Rush attack. She aimed at Silver Sonic's hip joints and since she sent two waves hurling towards Silver Sonic, the waves hit the hip joints. The hip-joints were much weaker than Silver Sonic's body-armour and the Blade-Rush attack ended up severing Silver Sonic's legs from his body. With no jets to fly now, Silver Sonic just plummeted straight down to the ground with his legs falling ahead of him. Silver Sonic was most definitely finished now. Shade smirked at the falling Silver Sonic and she ran over to help Knuckles take down Metal Knuckles. The two were still pushing on each other's arms and trying to best the other but given their equal strength they just couldn't overpower the other. Shade ran in and Blade-Rushed Metal Knuckles away from Knuckles. Metal Knuckles hurled across the island and came near the edge of it.

"Thanks for that Shade." said Knuckles graciously.

"Anytime handsome." said Shade "Silver Sonic's down for the count so we just have the four we're still fighting left to take down."

"Good." said Knuckles "It'll make things much easier now Silver Sonic's gone. Let's keep up the hard work!"

Shade agreed and she and Knuckles ran out to attack Metal Knuckles again. Over to Team Chaotix, they were managing reasonably well with their opponents. Vector had Metal Amy on the ropes, Espio was even with Metal Sonic and Charmy was just giving Metal Tails a wild game of cat & mouse to which Metal Tails wasn't faring too well at. Metal Amy swung her hammer hands at Vector but Vector grabbed them before they could hit him and he punched Metal Amy away. Metal Amy sprung back and she hammered Vector in the jaws. Vector clasped his fists together and he slammed them down on top of Metal Amy. Metal Amy was slammed down onto the ground and Vector picked her up, hoping to rip her to pieces. Metal Amy however hammered Vector in the gut before he could so much as pull on her. Vector let go of Metal Amy and thus, Metal Amy walloped Vector into the air with her hammer hands. Vector crashed down a good distance away from Metal Amy and Metal Amy flew after him. Vector picked himself up and he caught Metal Amy in his jaws. He tried to chomp her to pieces but Metal Amy was too tough for him to chew through so instead, Vector threw her away as far as he could.

"Huh, I bet it'd be much easier if it was Amy herself fighting Metal Amy!" grumbled Vector "Hey Espio, how are you doing with Metal Sonic?" he asked, looking over at Espio.

"Just fine thanks!" Espio called back as he threw a kunai at Metal Sonic.

Metal Sonic caught the kunai and he threw it away as he flew towards Espio. Espio flipped backwards and he kicked Metal Sonic as his legs swung up and over in his flip. Metal Sonic was whacked by Espio's leg but he wasn't brought down. Metal Sonic fired his torso laser at Espio but Espio dodged the blast and he threw some shuriken at Metal Sonic. The shuriken pinged harmlessly off of Metal Sonic's armour and Metal Sonic clawed Espio across the face. Espio rubbed his face better and he gave Metal Sonic a ninja-style

kick to the head. Metal Sonic landed down on his side but he picked himself up and spin-dashed Espio. The chameleon was thrown across the island but he was soon back on his feet and he ran towards Metal Sonic again.

Up in the sky, Charmy was having some crazy version of a bullfight with Metal Tails. Metal Tails was the bull and Charmy was the matador. Charmy just hovered there and he taunted Metal Tails to which Metal Tails would fly towards him and then attempt to attack him but Charmy would buzz out of the way and then kick Metal Tails in the head. This tactic was doing well for the little ditz of a bee but it wouldn't be successful for long. Metal Tails actually wizened up to Charmy's little game so he decided to do something different. Charmy taunted Metal Tails to come and get him to which Metal Tails did. But he didn't charge straight at Charmy, he instead aimed his torso at him and fired his torso laser. Charmy was hit by the laser and he fell down to the ground head-first. His helmet protected him luckily and Charmy picked himself up, his mind in a bit of a scramble because of that sharp hit to his head. Metal Tails flew down and walloped Charmy across the island. Charmy ended up flying directly into Vector to which the crocodile caught him and settled him down gently on the ground.

"Ugh…Vector these guys aren't fun anymore…" whined Charmy.

"They weren't fun to begin with." muttered Vector "We need to end this now before we get too tired to fight back."

"I'm totally in agreement." said Espio, leaping away from Metal Sonic and preparing for another attack.

"Hey Knuckles & Shade! Got any ideas?!" Vector called over to the two echidnas.

"I have one!" Knuckles called back as he dodged an attack from Metal Knuckles "We could use the Master Emerald to freeze them with a Chaos Control! We just need to get past the robots first!"

"I'll go and do it since I've already taken my opponent down and you'll keep Metal Knuckles away better than me." offered Shade, abandoning the battle and running off towards the Master Emerald.

"Sure thing hon! We'll keep the robots away from you!" Knuckles called as he punched Metal Knuckles in the head.

Team Chaotix resumed their fights while Shade ran towards the Master Emerald. The Metals could see that Shade was heading towards their prize but the Mobians were just too much of a problem for them to get past and stop her. So because of this, Shade was successfully able to get up onto the Master Emerald and she began tapping into the Chaos Energies it contained. Shade knew how to use the Master Emerald luckily. She had used it before with Knuckles and she knew plenty about the Chaos Force. The Master Emerald glowed a dazzling green as Shade tapped into the emerald's power and she held her arms out.

"Chaos…CONTROL!" she yelled as loud as she possibly could.

The Master Emerald was obscured by an amazing, malevolent glow as a Chaos Control activated. Metal Sonic, Metal Tails, Metal Knuckles and Metal Amy were all frozen in time by the Chaos Control and they could not move at all. Knuckles' idea had worked to perfection. Knuckles smirked at the frozen Metal Knuckles and he instantly began pounding the frozen robot echidna into itty-bitty little pieces. He broke his arms off and punched his head clean off of his body. The robots were easier to smash when they couldn't defend themselves after all. Vector grabbed Metal Amy and simply pulled her apart like a baby who likes to break his toys. Espio got out a kunai and started slicing Metal Sonic apart at his joints. The shoulders, neck and hip joints were where he aimed and Metal Sonic ended up as a pile of limbs, a head and a torso lying on the ground. Charmy tried to destroy Metal Tails but much to his disappointment, he couldn't. He just didn't have the strength or weapons for that kind of stuff. He did however leave a few dents in him with his stinger. Vector sighed and just promptly destroyed Metal Tails for Charmy. Charmy pouted crossly for he wanted to destroy Metal Tails himself. Knuckles beamed at the destroyed robots and Shade hopped down from the emerald shrine. Knuckles picked her up and twirled her around happily, earning a cute little giggle from her as he did so.

"Well done Shade! You did it!" cheered Knuckles "We've saved Angel Island from those metal maniacs!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! Thank you Knuckles." said Shade as Knuckles put her down and hugged her "So I guess that's one part of this "Operation: Double Trouble" foiled now?"

"It is indeed." said Espio "I wonder how Sonic and friends are doing with the missile Eggman's planning to launch at New Mobotropolis?"

"Well we can always find out." suggested Charmy "Let's warp over to wherever Eggman is and see how things are going."

"I'm up for that, especially since Finitevus is working with Eggman and will likely be there with him. I'd be all too happy to arrest him once we get there." growled Knuckles "Where's the missile being set up?"

"Megapolis." explained Espio.

"Then let's warp over there and give Eggman and Finitevus a warm welcome." said Knuckles.

With that said, Knuckles climbed up the shrine and he placed his hand on the Master Emerald. He activated a Chaos Portal with the simple yelling of "Chaos…CONTROL!" and the Mobians all ran inside it. The portal closed up behind them as they ran inside and they were warped from Angel Island…

...and over to Megapolis where a big epic fight was going on. Knuckles, Shade and the Chaotix observed their surroundings and they could see Sonic and friends fighting against Eggman and Finitevus. The fight seemed to be going their way, especially since Matilda and Bladefeather were joining in the fight. Emperor Tai was, of course, staying well away from the battle since he would be of no help. He could try and nerve freeze Finitevus but the slippery doctor would be much too fast for him to hit and a nerve freezing attack wouldn't work on Dr. Eggman because he's encased inside a robot so it was best that Emperor Tai kept well out of the way. Sonic and friends were already holding their own well against Eggman and Fintievus but Matilda and Bladefeather joining in just made the fight all the more easier for the Royal Fighters given their kung-fu

prowess. Sally had been trying to tell Sonic that they had to get going now but Eggman's firing weapons was keeping her from getting close to him so she couldn't warn Sonic that the missile was about to self-destruct. She'd just have to wait until they had a moment of peace. Sonic spin-dashed Eggman directly towards Bladefeather and the falcon let Eggman have it with a powerful kick to the back. Eggman was thrown forwards and he crashed down on his front with a heavy clunk. Finitevus was using his great skills and agility to keep out of harm's way pretty much. Bunnie threw a punch at Finitevus but he dodged and grabbed her by the arm. He threw Bunnie over his shoulder and into Cream and Cosmo. Amy tried to hammer Finitevus but Finitevus grabbed her wrists and swung her hammer at Tails, making the fox back off before he could get hit. He kicked Amy onto the ground. But his luck was about to run out for Matilda grabbed him into a choke hold and held him firmly back. Knuckles decided he'd attack Finitevus first so he ran towards Fintievus as Matilda held him in place. Matilda saw Knuckles coming and she held Finitevus in front for she had the idea that Knuckles was wanting to punch him. Knuckles drew his arm back and he slugged Finitevus directly in the gut, making him splutter in pain. Finitevus had never been punched by Knuckles before so this was definitely a first hand experience for him. Needless to say, he didn't enjoy it. Matilda winced as she watched Knuckles punch Finitevus, clearly thinking about how much that would hurt if she received a punch like that. She threw Finitevus across the plains and the evil scientist ended up lying on his side, clutching his gut in pain.

"Thanks for that princess." said Knuckles "You have no idea how much I've been itching to do that to Finitevus."

"You're quite welcome Knuckles." said Matilda with a bow.

As for Sonic, he spotted Knuckles talking to Matilda and he ran over to meet him. Sally followed Sonic and the others continued to do battle with Eggman.

"Knuckles! You're here to help!" said Sonic brightly "Cool! I guess Angel Island's safe now?"

"It is." said Knuckles "We managed to stop all of the Metal Series."

"That's great!" piped Sally "As for us, I've managed to abort the missile's launch and I've set it to self-destruct in ten minutes. It should be going up shortly so we need to leave here now."

"You've set the missile to blow itself up?" exclaimed Sonic "Whoa...Sally you are awesome! But as you said, we'd best break for it! I bet that explosion will spread over a great distance!"

"It will." said Sally "You know how violent a nuclear explosion can get. Good thing I have the perfect getaway."

So with that said, Sally fished out the super warp ring and she tossed it up into the air. A portal to Royal HQ opened up in the centre of the warp ring and the ring expanded to twice Sally's height. The Royal Fighters stopped fighting Eggman and they saw the open warp ring.

"Oh are we leaving now?" asked Tails "I guess we've accomplished our mission."

"If we're leaving then let's get going!" cried Amy "We don't need to be here a second longer!"

So all the Royal Fighters abandoned the battles and they ran off towards the warp ring. One-by-one, the Royal Fighters filed in through the warp ring and warped back home to Royal HQ. Matilda, Bladefeather and Tai followed them since they couldn't just go back to Chun-Nan right now and Royal HQ was the best place to escape to in order to survive a nuclear explosion. Sally stood by until everybody had made it through the warp ring and then she ran through herself. The warp ring vanished into thin air the moment she ran through it. Eggman had watched the Royal Fighters leaving and he muttered to himself.

"They retreated. That must mean they succeeded in stopping my missile!" growled Eggman.

"They have indeed." said Finitevus grimly "I overheard them talking. They've foiled Operation: Double Trouble. Our brilliant plan has gone up in flames."

"Indeed it has." grumbled Eggman "So much for unpredictability and carrying out two schemes instead of one! We still didn't beat Sonic and friends!"

"I bet we would have succeeded had they not somehow found out about our plan." muttered Finitevus "I wonder if somebody spied on us without us knowing about it. We have to speculate later though...the queen has apparently set the missile to self-destruct."

"SHE HAS?!" squealed Dr. Eggman in horror "Well there goes my lovely nuclear missile! Warp us back to my bunker now! Thank goodness it's in the Northern Border so we'll be nice and far away from the explosion!"

Finitevus did not wait to be asked twice. He quickly opened up a warp ring back to Eggman's bunker and he and Eggman dived through it as quickly as possible. The warp ring closed up behind them and vanished out of existence. The missile only had a minute left until it self destructed. Since nobody was around now it could explode and it wouldn't harm anyone. All the damage it would end up doing was creating a huge crater where it once stood. A minute ticked quickly by and then the missile self-destructed. It erupted into a chaotic fireball that reached hundreds of feet high and the tumultuous explosion ripped across three-hundred metres of land, tearing up rocks and sand and throwing them across the plains as if they were nothing. The roaring, deafening thunder of the explosion was deafening and could be heard all over the plains. Green, misty substances flared up from the explosion too like smoke from a fire. That was the nuclear substance inside erupting with the missile. The entire area that exploded would be contaminated by radiation for quite a while thanks to the nuclear substance in the missile. Once the explosion had finished, the smoke cleared away and revealed the destructive aftermath. There was merely a giant crater that was three-hundred metres wide and contaminated with radiation. The crater was a hazard zone and in all likelihood, it would be best to keep as far away from it as possible...

Back in Royal HQ, everybody was squealing and cheering with delight and acting like they were in the middle of an enormous party.

They were very happy with their successes today. Two villainous schemes both foiled in one day, what more could they be happy for? The Mobians all conversed amongst each other and told each other about what went on while they were foiling Operation: Double Trouble. Everybody was pretty amazed to hear from each other on what had happened today and Sally was all too happy to be a part of such a happy moment. After a minute of celebration, Sally stood forward and caught everybody's attention.

"Everybody, if I may have your attention please?" she said "I'd like to say that I'm really pleased with how successful we've been in taking down Eggman and Finitevus' Operation: Double Trouble scheme. I'd like to give everybody a big congratulations for doing so well in our attempts to foil it. And special thanks goes to our little super spy Sora Prower for finding out about this scheme. Had she not spied on Eggman, we would have been unprepared for that scheme."

With that said, everybody cheered excitedly for Sora and Tails even hugged her. Sora just smiled modestly, happy that she had helped prevent all of this and she took in the massive praise.

"That's nice and all Sally but I think someone else deserves a big congratulations." put in Sonic "You Sally. You came up with the plan to stop Operation: Double Trouble and you also stopped the missile. All by yourself no less. You wanted to become a Royal Fighters as well as a queen? Well I say, Queen Sally Acorn, you are officially a Royal Fighter! Well done your majesty!"

Sally was rather surprised to hear Sonic say that but she was glad that Sonic truly thought she was Royal Fighter material at last. The whole room cheered happily for Sally and the squirrel queen found herself overwhelmed with joy. She had wanted to become a queen who was a fighter and it seemed she had succeeded at last. How proud her parents would be to see this. They had often said a great princess who becomes a great queen will become something even greater in life and now, Sally had become the greatest thing she could ever become...a Royal Fighter. Once the cheering quietened down, Sonic spoke again.

"So, we all know that Eggman's going to coin up something else soon right?" asked Sonic "Well, we'll be ready for him. We'll stop

Eggman no matter what he does and it doesn't matter if he's in a robot now. He's still the same mad scientist we all know and loathe. Eggman can do what he likes! We'll be there to stop him and it doesn't matter if Finitevus is there too! We'll stop them both and we will make Mobius free and happy once more!"

The cheering that followed this speech went on for many minutes. Today had been a good day for Sonic and friends and it seemed that the other days afterwards would go well too. Little did Sonic and friends realize is that something bigger and more deadly than Eggman was waiting to strike again. And that something was going on outside as they celebrated. Outside over the giant crater in Megapolis that had been created by the destruction of Eggman's missile...was a streak of light up in the sky. It looked like the one that had taken Sonic away the other day. It was looming in the sky and sucking up all the radiation that contaminated the area. After a minute, it had finished what it was doing and then it vanished into thin air...

Footnotes:

***Sonic met Ravage in a chapter exclusive to DeviantArt called "The Sword of Elemental Po wer". Please see my DeviantArt account if you wish to read the chapter.**

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front***

And that's it for this milestone epic! So what did you all think? Read and review and express your thoughts! I'd love to hear what you thought to it! Join in next time though for we get a very special chapter...a chapter that tells a story that few other Sonic stories have ever told before...as for the road to Episode 175, it's going to be surprising, epic and a joy to read so be sure to tune in for Heroes of Mobius still has many more stories to tell...

Special thanks to EVERYONE who's favourited, followed or reviewed this story and for helping me to get this far. I cannot thank you awesome readers enough. :) You've been a wonderful audience for me. :D

Sonic's Origins

Story 151: Sonic's Origins

"Yo Tails! Rise and shine! We've got a big day ahead of us!" yelled Sonic the Hedgehog as he burst into the house of his best friend Miles "Tails" Prower without even knocking politely on the door first.

It had only been a day since the terror of the almighty Enerjak* and two days since the foiling of Operation Double: Trouble and yet Sonic was still ready for something. Today though he wasn't preparing to save the world from another Eggman scheme or foil another evil plan from another villain around the world. Today, Sonic was getting ready to study the streak of light that had been getting everybody on edge since the day he was taken away by one. The Royal Fighters had been concerned over what the streak of light could possibly be and what it might mean for the rest of the world. It could be the start of something catastrophic, especially since it could just suck somebody up and take them away and what was even more worrying was the fact that it had apparently happened before. Scourge the Hedgehog and Fiona Fox had been taken away by a tear in the sky too, weeks before Sonic got taken by one so the fact that they weren't just a recent problem and had been happening before definitely gave the heroes something to deeply think about. So the heroes had made it their priority to study and investigate the streaks of light and see if they can find out what they are, what's causing them and what they can do to stop them. Today, Sonic and Tails were supposed to be taking the just-been-fixed machine that they had been using to scan for tears in the sky only for Katherine to destroy it and investigate again, see what they can find this time and if any streaks of light would show up this time. Sonic, as usual, was up bright and early but Tails seemed to be sleeping in a little so Sonic decided to run over and kindly remind his friend that they had a job to do today. Sonic let himself into Tails' house (one would think he'd have been taught how to be properly let into a house) and he called around, looking for Tails. The living room was quite cosy looking and looked fit for Tails to live in. There was a comfortable leather sofa which was yellow in colour, a small but hi-tech looking

television sitting in the corner and the floor was covered with a lovely brown, furry carpet that covered every inch of floor in the room. It certainly looked like a nice place for Tails to live in.

"Hey Tails! You home or something?" asked Sonic as he wandered into the living room and looked for his friend "Come on, we've got a job to do!"

Sonic received an answer but not from Tails to his surprise. Sonic's ears caught the sound of a door handle turning upstairs and the door opened up. Sonic wandered over to the stairs and he looked up them to see none other than Tails' adorable, leafy girlfriend Cosmo the Seedrian. It was perfectly understandable for Cosmo to be with Tails right now since they were in love with each other so Sonic didn't find it strange that Cosmo was here at all. He couldn't help but wonder what was going on upstairs though so Sonic climbed up the stairs to meet with Cosmo. Cosmo smiled at Sonic's presence, she was always happy to see someone as selfless and heroic as Sonic after all.

"Good morning Sonic." said Cosmo brightly.

"Top of the morning to you too Cosmo." said Sonic "So how's it going?"

"Oh I'm doing fine Sonic, thank you for asking." said Cosmo cheerfully "Although, same can't be said for Tails I'm afraid."

"Oh really? What's up with him?" asked Sonic "He lost his favourite toolbox again?"

"No." said Cosmo sadly, her cheerful expression dying away into a solemn one "Poor Tails has fallen ill with a terrible fever. I've spent most of the morning just looking after him. He's in a dreadful condition. He's hot to the touch and he just can't stop groaning. It's horrible listening to him suffering like this. I'm ever so sorry to say Sonic but Tails can't join you for the streak of light investigation today."

Sonic felt a little disappointed to hear this. Tails was sick and thus, he'd have to do this investigation without him? Not a chance. Sonic

was useless with machinery and he wouldn't be able to work the machine they were using to study the streaks of light so if Tails wasn't up for this job then Sonic wouldn't do it without him. Still, Sonic could be there for Tails and maybe lighten his day up since Sonic didn't like the idea of Tails being cooped up in bed and feeling miserable because of a bad fever. Sonic put a hand on Cosmo's shoulder.

"Hey Cosmo, I'm sorry to hear about Tails." he said gently "But I'll help you in looking after him if you wish. I'll stay here and keep Tails company if you think that's OK. I'd love to lighten up his day."

"That's very lovely of you Sonic." said Cosmo happily "Tails would like that very much. You go see him while I get him some water to drink."

So Sonic stepped politely to the side and let Cosmo through down the stairs. Cosmo climbed down the stairs and she ran off into the kitchen, which was at the right of the living room, to pour some water for Tails to drink. Sonic watched Cosmo go and then he slowly opened the bedroom door and let himself quietly inside. Sonic shut the door behind him as he entered. Tails' bedroom was quite unusual to say the least. It looked more like an inventory with a bed to sleep in. There was a work desk with piles of blueprint paper for Tails to do some designing ideas on, a wooden rack that was full of toolboxes and a steel cabinet that contained many materials used for building and repairing things. The only thing resembling a bedroom at all was the fact there was a bed in the room with a pair of curtains hanging just above it. Tails was lying in the bed with the duvet pulled up to his muzzle. His eyes were closed and he was groaning ever so miserably. He really did not look very well at all. Sonic was a little sad to see his best friend feeling like this but he knew that it couldn't be helped. If you felt sick, you felt sick and you have to put up with it until you get better. Sonic wandered over to Tails and he knelt down by his bedside. He felt Tails' forehead. The poor fox was burning up. Fevers did that to you after all, make you feel warmer than you should feel. Sonic's face fell into a sympathetic gaze. Tails would definitely be unable to join him for the investigation mission today. Oh well, they could always get to it once he felt better. Sonic lightly shook Tails.

"Hey Tails. It's me, Sonic. I've come to see you buddy." he whispered.

Tails groaned as he was woken up by someone shaking him. He was quite enjoying his little rest so to be woken up by somebody really didn't make him feel good at all. Tails turned over to his right side and he slowly opened up his eyes. To his surprise but also to his delight, he saw Sonic kneeling by his bedside and smiling at him. It was surprising to Tails that he didn't hear Sonic come into the room. Sonic must be getting good at being quiet or Tails was just so ill that he didn't really bother about what was going on around him. Just seeing Sonic there made Tails beam weakly, a sick smile spreading out on his face.

"Ugggghhhhh…hi Sonic…" he mumbled groggily "I'm…sorry but I can't…join you for our little investigation today…ugh I feel terrible…" he whined, clutching his head for it was aching a little.

"I know, Cosmo told me you have a fever." said Sonic, stroking Tails' head comfortingly "I've decided that I'll join her in keeping you company until you get better pal. The investigation of the tears in the sky will have to wait for now."

"Oh…thank you." said Tails appreciatively "That…makes me feel better already…"

He paused for a moment, sat up a bit in his bed and then let fly a horrible, throaty cough that made Sonic jump in alarm. That cough made Tails sound like he had a chest infection as well as a fever it was that horrible sounding. Tails cleared his throat after the cough and then lay back down in the bed, pulling the duvet back up to his chin.

"Cough…uh it's no fun being sick…" he whined "Why did I have to get a fever…on a day as…important as this?"

"I dunno. You never know when you're gonna feel ill Tails." sighed Sonic "When I was younger, I once wanted to take part in a marathon race for Mobius and I had to pull out because I had a terrible cold. It really sucked for me that day, believe me so I understand your displeasure big guy."

"Oh…" croaked Tails "I can just imagine…how you felt when that happened…"

Sonic nodded, still stroking Tails' head to make him feel better. As Sonic comforted Tails, the bedroom door opened up and in walked Cosmo, carrying a bottle of water and a glass in each hand. Cosmo walked up to the bed and she poured some of the water into the glass. Tails sat up in his bed and Cosmo passed him the glass. Tails took it and he lifted the glass up to his dry lips. He titled the glass up and started gulping down the water inside, quite eagerly given how thirsty the fever was making him feel. Tails gulped the entire glass down and he passed it back to Cosmo.

"Want some more?" asked Cosmo sweetly.

"No thanks…angel." said Tails weakly "But you can…leave the water here in case…I need anymore later."

"OK cute stuff." said Cosmo, putting the bottle and glass down beside the bed "I really hope you feel better soon Tails. It's really sad seeing you feeling so down and so ill."

With that said, she gave Tails a little hug for comfort. Tails hugged her back, feeling much better already just having the girl of his dreams hugging him like this. The two stopped hugging and Tails lay back down in his bed.

"Thanks Cosmo, I needed that." said Tails with a small smile.

"Anytime precious." said Cosmo, stroking his hand (which has no glove on. Tails doesn't wear gloves when he's in bed).

"So Tails, if you need anything, me and Cosmo will be there to answer your needs." said Sonic kindly "Do you need me to get anything for you?"

"No thanks Sonic, I'm fine for the moment." said Tails "But…it's very kind of you…to offer."

"No problem." said Sonic.

Sonic then thought for a moment about something. What could he

do to pass the time and cheer Tails up? At the same time, Sonic was trying to give himself something to do since he was likely going to start feeling bored if all he did was just sit there comforting poor Tails. What could he do? Sonic then had an idea. Maybe he could tell a story of some kind. Sonic knew just the story he could tell to pass the time. It'd be a story that Tails and Cosmo would be most interested in hearing too so they could get some enjoyment out of this.

"Hey Tails, would you like to hear a story?" asked Sonic "That'd be something nice to pass the time with I bet."

"A story?" said Tails brightly, sitting up a fraction in his bed "Great…I love stories."

"Me too." said Cosmo eagerly "So what's this story going to be about?"

"Well I don't mean to sound egotistical or anything but…it's a story about me." explained Sonic "And this story is one that I've never told to anyone before for in case they try and use it against me. But you two are two of my closest friends so I can whole-heartedly trust you with this story."

"That's very nice of you Sonic." said Cosmo gratefully "It feels good to be trusted."

"So…what's this story going to tell us?" asked Tails inquisitively, eager to hear this story.

"A secret that I'm only going to tell to you two and any of my other buddies in the R.F.S. if I feel like it." said Sonic "This story…is how I got my super speed…sort of since it's mostly speculation at best."

"Oh cool." said Tails "Let's…hear it."

"OK then, but you mustn't tell this to anyone once you've heard it." said Sonic sternly "Only I can tell this story and I'll tell it to who I think can be trusted the most with this kind of information."

"We won't tell a soul." promised Cosmo "Honest we won't."

"I know you won't, which is why I'm gonna tell you this important story that I like to keep secret." said Sonic "OK, it all starts back during the time my mom was gonna give birth to me. My dad told me this story of course so now I'm passing it on to you two…"

Mobotropolis Medical Centre: 16 years ago…

In the days of the original Mobotropolis, long before Dr. Eggman ever became known to the world, Mobius was quite a different place. All villains of Mobius were Mobians-only, no extra-terrestrial villains at all, life was more peaceful than it is now but there was a lot more criminal activity than there is now, mainly because this was during a time where Sonic the Hedgehog wasn't the big-shot hero of Mobius he is now. To be more precise…he doesn't walk the planet yet at this time for he is still being developed inside the womb of his mother. The very person who would forever be honoured to be giving birth to Sonic the Hedgehog was a female hedgehog named Bernadette Hedgehog, or "Bernie" for short. Bernie was a rather pretty looking hedgehog at about 30 years of age with blonde hair and her quills tied together into a neat looking pony-tail. She wore a lovely purple dress with matching purple slippers and she wore white gloves with gold cuffs around the wrists. Her fur was dark blue, a little similar to Sonic's fur colour and she had light blue eyes. Bernie was lying in a hospital bed and she was in awful agony right now. In two weeks time, she was due to give birth (and had a sizeable baby bump) but she had come down with an agonizing illness. An illness that was causing her body to ache, her temperature to rise and her brea thing to get more furious and raspy. It was absolute torment for the poor girl to be lying there, suffering really badly when she should be looking forward to giving birth in two weeks time. Beside her bed stood her husband, Jules Hedgehog, the man who would become the proud father of Sonic the Hedgehog. Jules was 40 years old and he was a rather tall hedgehog with light blue fur and a quill style very different from the generic hedgehog design. He had three short quills curled up on each side of his head and an extra-three running down the back of his head. He had a tuft of silver hair sticking up on his head. He wore a brown leather jacket with a slight cowboy look to it, white

gloves and red and white walking boots with brownish-gold bits on it. He had been married to Bernie for a couple of years and had been hoping to have kids someday. The other year, Bernie had given birth to their first child, Scourge the Hedgehog (who's at home with a baby-sitter at this moment), and now they were hoping to have another kid. But unfortunately, Bernie had fallen ill as mentioned earlier and her condition was deathly serious. She was finding it harder to breathe and her body was aching more and more. Poor Bernie felt like she was dying and at the rate her condition was worsening…she soon would be dead. Jules held Bernie's hand to try and comfort her but the agonizing pain she was in was too much for her to concentrate on her loving husband. Jules's heart was aching almost as badly as Bernie's body was. Watching his wife suffer like this, and all before she was due to give birth, made him feel like he wanted to drop dead right about now. He even felt like tearing up over Bernie too, his eyes welling up with tears as he dreaded to think what might happen to his beloved wife. The doctors were doing the best they could to stabilize Bernie but their best wasn't enough. She just wasn't improving at all. The doctors ran some diagnostic tests on Bernie again and they the results they received were most grave and severe indeed. They shook their heads and they looked at Jules, who read their expressions and feared the worst.

"She's not getting any better is she?" said Jules, his voice wobbling a little and his lips trembling as he spoke.

"I'm afraid she's not." said the doctor sadly "The illness has spread to most of your wife's body. She has a one-hundred to one chance of survival and many people who reach that stage of the illness do not make it. I'm afraid Miss Bernadette needs a miracle in order to survive and we all know that miracles don't just happen like that." he finished with a snap of the fingers.

"No!" whimpered Jules, ready to break down in tears "No, I can't lose her! Not before we can get our second child! You've got to save her doctors, please, you've got to!" he cried out desperately.

"I'm terribly sorry sir but there's nothing we can do." said the doctor "We've tried all we can but Miss Bernadette just gets worse, not better. If I were you, I'd spend all the time she has left with her and give her some last comfort before she passes, which maybe in a

couple of days or so depending if she gets even worse."

Jules felt like he was going to collapse upon hearing those terrifying words. His legs felt weak and he could feel his heart sinking like a ship. Jules knelt back down beside the bed and he looked at Bernie. She was wheezing ever so hoarsely and her face was scrunched up in agony. She was suffering so much that she appeared to just want to be put out of her misery already. A very depressing thought for somebody to have when they're in this kind of situation. Jules took Bernie's hand, tears streaming down his face as he watched her moan and groan. Bernie turned her head to one side, the look on her face suggesting that she was in so much pain just simply turning her head hurt her, and she shared Jules' depressed expression. She was in rainfalls of tears.

"Oh Jules…sob…I can't believe that it'll end like this…sob…I'm going to die…and the baby inside of me will be going with me…and before it can even have a life!" she wailed, sobbing loudly as thoughts of her dieing began to overwhelm her "Oh what will our little Scourge think?! He's so young…sob…that he won't understand…and it brea ks my heart…to think that he won't understand…sob…any of this!"

Bernie squeezed Jules' hand ever tighter and she wailed so loudly and so uncontrollably that she couldn't speak properly anymore and all the agony she was feeling was turned into wails of sadness and anguish. Jules couldn't help but cry with her, his cries not as loud or uncontrollable as Bernie's. The doctors just shard their grief. They had to deal with this kind of stuff on a daily basis but while it doesn't effect them as badly as the patients, they are still capable of feeling sorry for them and sharing their anguish, especially since they themselves could fall victim to something this heartbreaking some day. After a moment of crying, Jules wiped his eyes dry and he suddenly had a serious look on his face.

"No…I won't lose you like this dear." said Jules "By the power invested in me, I will save your life Bernie, and also our unborn child."

"But honey…there's nothing we can do…" sobbed Bernie "I'm dying…my illness is getting worse…gasp…we can't do anything

about it!"

"Yes we can." said Jules "And I know just what to do. Hang tight for me my angel. I'll be right back."

Jules then gave Bernie a passionate kiss on the forehead and suddenly got up to his feet and walked out of the hospital without saying another word. The doctors just looked at each other, wondering what was going through Jules' head. One doctor deduced that Jules had lost his mind. He'd soon change that tune though for Jules would be back with the one thing that would save his wife's life…

After leaving the hospital, Jules got into his hover car, which was coloured blue and had four powerful engines, and he drove off out of Mobotropolis and headed towards the Great Forest . He had heard of the legendary Lake of Rings and the mystical power rings that the lake produced every 24 hours. Even though Jules didn't know what kind of power the Lake of Rings had, he knew that the rings were renowned for being powerful and he hoped dearly that he could use one to save Bernie. He looked at his watch as he drove through the fields and to the forest. It said 2:50 . In ten minutes time, the ring of the day would come out of the lake. Luckily, the Great Forest wasn't too far away so Jules would get there in time. In less than two minutes, Jules arrived at the Great Forest and he abandoned his car in favour of trekking through the enormous forest on foot for it was too densely grown for a car to drive through, even if it could hover. Jules bolted through the Great Forest as fast as his legs would let him and using his navigational knowledge, he managed to find the Lake of Rings and all with five minutes to spare. Jules dived into the lake and swam out to the centre, ready to grab the ring once it ascended from within its watery habitat. Jules made it out to the centre and waited patiently as five minutes ticked slowly by and the glorious, golden ring that the lake mysteriousl y produced rose up from the water. Jules grabbed it instantly and he swam back over to the bank, making sure he didn't lose the ring. Jules climbed out of the water and he shook himself dry. He looked at the magical ring he now had in his hands and he prayed to himself.

"Please let this thing save her and our second kid." he prayed "Please, please, please…"

With that said, Jules put the ring in his pocket and he ran off back to his car at the end of the forest, avoiding the growth that threatened to trip him up and get in his way. He made it to his car and he quickly drove off back to Mobotropolis. In a matter of minutes, Jules arrived back at Mobotropolis and he ran off back to the Mobotropolis Medical Centre where his dying wife lay. He ran up to her room and he ran over to his wife's bed. Bernie was still in indescribable pain and her breathing was getting more and more hoarse. She sounded like she had a serious lung problem and that just brea thing was hard work for her. The doctors were a little surprised to see Jules back so soon.

"Oh, you're back. Well, I'm sorry to say…"

"I think I can guess what you're going to say doctor." interrupted Jules "Bernie my love, I've got you our last hope." he said to the dying hedgehog, reaching into his jacket pocket and taking out the power ring.

He held it out for Bernie to take. Bernie opened her eyes weakly and she tried to gasp in surprise at the power ring but all she could do was rasp a little and then cough. The doctors however, carried out her intended reaction for her.

"Great Scott! Where on Mobius did you find that?!" exclaimed one doctor.

"In a very special lake." explained Jules "And I'm hoping this will save Bernie."

With that said, he took Bernie's hand and curled her fingers around the ring. As Bernie touched the magical ring, it began to glow a brilliant, radiant gold and Bernie could feel some kind of sensation kicking inside her. It was as if she was being given new life all of the sudden and all thanks to this little golden ring her husband had brought her…

Present Day…

"…and then like magic as dad puts it…mom was just better again." finished Sonic "As if she was never ill to begin with."

"Oh wow!" cried Tails as if the fever he had come down with had suddenly gone away "Your dad's such a hero isn't he? Saving your mom like that! That is awesome!"

He then suddenly groaned as his head started to ache. One thing you shouldn't do when you're poorly is get too excited. It can give you a headache. Tails massaged his scalp and winced in pain.

"Ugh…should take it easy…since I don't feel so good…" he grumbled to himself as he brought the pain down gently with the head-massage he gave himself.

"That is an amazing story Sonic." said Cosmo "It's amazing to think that…you could have died before you were born."

"I know right?!" exclaimed Sonic "If dad didn't get that power ring… then I wouldn't even be sitting in front of you telling you this right now! It's almost disturbing to think that I was nearly a goner before mom could give birth to me!" he added, hugging himself and shuddering a little over those horrible thoughts that crept like a bad dream into his head.

"I'll say." said Cosmo, sharing Sonic's amazement over such a close call "Although how does this story tell us how you got your super-speed?" she added curiously "I thought you said this was the story on how you got your super-speed?"

"Well I was gonna get there." said Sonic impatiently "You see, after I was born, mom and dad named me "Sanjay" and they referred to me as a "Miracle Child" since, when you really think about it, I am a miracle since I was saved by one. Sadly, that title is what forever changed my brother Scourge as we know it…but I digress. When I was two, I began to toddle but the funny thing was…I toddled really quickly. I could toddle as fast as an adult could run. Mom and dad were amazed at this and then when I was three I learnt to run…and I ran faster than a speeding car when I did it. They couldn't understand this and they took me to the doctors to see what they thought. They didn't really know what was causing my unusual

speed but they theorized that the power from the power ring that had been used to save mom had generated into me when I was still inside mom and thus…the power granted me super speed. Mom and dad decided to just go with it since it was the only logical conclusion. And because of my speed, they decided to legally change my name from "Sanjay" to "Sonic" as a reference to how fast I could run. I'm glad too, I mean would you take me all that seriously if my name was "Sanjay" at all?" he finished with a snicker.

"So you can run fast because of a power ring?" said Tails in surprise "Oh wow! Who'd have thought that was the secret behind your speed?"

"I agree, I never would have guessed that in a million years." said Cosmo "Or that your name used to be Sanjay too…" she added, giggling a little.

"Well my name's Sonic now and it has been since I was three so no jokes about my old name." laughed Sonic.

"So…if you got your speed from a power ring…then how did Scourge get his speed?" asked Tails "I mean, Scourge was born before you wasn't he? Your mom didn't have that power ring until before your birth."

"That's right." said Sonic "Scourge NEVER had super speed when he was a kid. He got it when he corrupted himself with the Master Emerald. The Master Emerald granted him super speed as part of his desires. You know that Chaos Energy can turn thoughts into power right? That's what happened with Scourge."

"Oh I see." said Cosmo "Unlike you though, Scourge doesn't deserve that power."

"You bet he doesn't." sniffed Sonic "So, would you like to hear how I became a hero? I was a hero before Eggman ever came to Mobius you know."

"I'd love to hear that story Sonic." said Tails eagerly "We might even learn how you came to master your speed. I mean, surely you must have taken a while to learn how to control running so fast?"

"Oh getting as good as I am now wasn't easy." muttered Sonic "I often crashed into things and tripped over because I couldn't control how fast I was running. Take in mind I was only a kid so how is someone my age supposed to control their speed like that?! Anyway, my dad mentored me most of the time I was learning to control my speed. But there was one day that saw me run in prematurely and get me the beat down of a life time…"

Mobotropolis: An ally-way somewhere in the city, 4 years ago, a year before Scourge's turn to villainy…

12 years had been a mixture of fun and pain for young Sonic the Hedgehog. Fun in the sense that running fast was exciting and awesome for him and painful in the sense that he often became a Mobian crash-dummy because of how uncontrollable his speed was. Thankfully, mentoring from his father Jules had helped him to better control his speed and he could now run really fast without crashing into anything or tripping over himself or even losing control. Even though Jules couldn't run at supersonic speeds, he had helped Sonic by having Sonic run with him and then practice running a little faster but keeping in the advice Jules was giving him. Now Sonic could control his speed and have a happy time running around, free as the wind that blew in his face as he ran. As of this moment though, Sonic was taking a steady stroll home. He'd decided to walk home for a change for he wanted a moment of relaxation and he'd had enough of running for today. But Sonic's little walk home was going to get a little more eventful than he had anticipated for he ended up hearing the cry of an innocent little man coming from further down the street. Sonic followed the sound of the crying voice and it brought him to a rather rundown looking ally way that was full of litter and smelling repugnantly of decaying rubbish coming from the rubbish bins in the alleyway. Sonic poked his head around the corner and he saw something that disgusted him. There was a gang of four Mobians, all very scruffy and ragged looking and they were pummelling a poor, male ferret in a tweed-jacket and bowler hat and carrying a briefcase. The gang consisted of a jackal, an armadillo, a bear and a cougar. The cougar seemed to be the ring leader. He was muscle-bound with brown, spotty fur and he had an eye patch.

He wore an open black vest and had spike attachments on his knuckles. The armadillo was a rather lean looking fellow with a golden stripy shell and he wore ragged shorts and leather gloves that came to his elbows. He looked very mean and sinister. The jackal was skinny as a rake and his eyes had scars lined out underneath them, suggesting a rather bloody encounter was part of his back story. He wore an open vest too and he had a balaclava on his head. The bear was enormous and he wore boxing gear which really kinda hinted at his possible profession in sports, maybe even what sport he actually plays in his spare time. The gang had the ferret pinned to the wall and the armadillo snatched his briefcase. The ferret was whimpering in fear as the cougar and bear kept him pinned. The armadillo opened up the briefcase and found inside a whole pile of money. There in the case were reams and reams of Mobium notes (Mobiums is the Mobian currency) all ranging between 100 & 200. The gang had picked themselves a rich customer it seemed. The armadillo laughed at all the money he'd found in the case.

"Hey guys! We hit the jackpot with this loser!" cackled the armadillo "Look at all this money!"

"I always said morons in bowler hats have great wealth on them!" laughed the cougar "Let's take the whole case with us boys! We are gonna have a good night tonight with all that dough!"

"You guys please, give that back to me!" whimpered the ferret "That money isn't mine! I need to deliver it to my bosses or I'll lose my job! Please, you wouldn't cost an innocent man his job would you?"

"Dude, as far as money's concerned, old Theo here is willing to cost anything!" snarled the cougar "Now keep your trap shut before someone hears you!" he added, clasping his hand over the ferret's mouth.

"Why don't we just kill the poor sod?" asked the armadillo, closing up the briefcase "If we let him live, he'll call the stinkin' cops and get us busted!"

"I agree with Shellshock boss, let's bust this guy before he busts us!" growled the bear.

"OK then Buster, we will." said Theo with a sadistic grin on his hideous face "Say pal, how easy does a ferret's neck snap I wonder? Let's find out…"

"No, no, NO!" screamed the terrified ferret as Theo curled his fingers around his throat.

"Hey! Leave that man alone!" yelled Sonic, running into the ally way and slide-tackling the cougar, causing him to trip up and let go of the ferret.

Theo landed on his back and the ferret ran for it as fast as he could, using his sleek, slender body to avoid capture from Buster and Shellshock as they tried to grab him. Buster and Shellshock cursed their bad luck as the ferret managed to elude them and flee out of the ally way. Theo picked himself up and he glared at Sonic, his yellow teeth glistening like diamonds in a jewel shop.

"How dare you interfere with our business runt!" snarled Theo "I'm gonna rip your heart out for this!"

"Who do you think you are interfering with our affairs?! Some kind of cop?!" snarled Shellshock "Well you don't look much like one!"

"I'm not a cop but I'm not someone who tolerates big bullies like your four shanks!" yelled Sonic "You drop that briefcase or I'll beat you black and blue!"

"You're the one who'll be beaten black to go with your blue shrimp!" roared Buster, punching his fists together.

"I verily agree on this Buster!" said the jackal "Let us send this cretin to the spirit in the sky…"

"You said it Jack!" laughed Theo cruelly, cracking his knuckles.

Sonic had gotten himself into a pretty bad situation here. You see, this was a time where Sonic had no fighting prowess of any kind. He didn't even know how to do the spin-dash yet so Sonic had no chance against this evil gang. The gang all closed in on Sonic and then all lunged out at the terrified hedgehog. Theo grabbed Sonic by his arms and he slammed him against the wall as hard as he could.

He then punched Sonic in the face, the spiked knuckle attachments adding insult to injury as he punched him, but Sonic managed to break free by kicking Theo in the chest. Theo dropped Sonic and Sonic tried to run away but Buster blocked his way. He grabbed Sonic and hoisted him up to his height. He threw Sonic across the ally way and he crashed into a pair of dustbins, knocking them over with a horrific clanging sound as the bins were overturned and the rubbish inside was spilt all over the floor, the malodorous scent contained inside staining the air and filling Sonic's nostrils. Sonic gagged, the scent was so odoriferous that he thought his nostrils were going to fry up like bacon in a pan. Sonic picked himself up just as Shellshock rolled up into a ball and Buster bowled him towards him like a bowling ball. Sonic picked up a dustbin lid to use as a shield but Shellshock's attack was too powerful for him. He hit Sonic and slammed him against the wall, the dustbin lid taking much of the impact. Sonic groaned in pain as pain fla red through his back from the slam into the wall. Jack lunged at Sonic and he slammed him against the wall again. He then punched Sonic as callously as he could, making real sure that the punch hurt. Sonic felt like his face was going to shatter after that punch. But the real blow to him came in the form of Buster drew his arms back and then giving him a good boxing beat-up. Sonic was punched repeatedly by Buster, every punch he threw seeming to get harder as he threw them, and then Buster threw him over to Theo. Theo roundhouse kicked Sonic as he was heading towards him and Sonic crashed face first into a corner. The poor hedgehog's eyes were bruised and swollen from the beat down, his face was bruised and his nose was streaming with blood. Sonic tried to pick himself up but he couldn't. He was too weak from the beat down and he could barely stay awake. Theo cracked his knuckles and he reached out to grab Sonic.

"What a piece of cake this was!" cackled Theo "That kid really needs to learn his place…pity I'm not gonna give him the chance to learn though!"

His crowing was interrupted by the most terrifying sound a criminal can hear. The eerie, wailing sound of a police siren. The patrolling policemen that were keeping an eye on the streets were coming their way and they had to brea k for it and fast. Theo punched the ground in fury.

"%&£^!" he swore "The bloody cops are coming! Boys, let's scraper and fast!"

With that said, the gang ran off out of the ally way and they bolted down the streets, leaving Sonic behind in the corner to pass out from his injuries. The last thing Sonic heard as he drifted off into unconsciousness was the sound of running feet and the sound of approaching police cars that followed a minute after the running feet had stopped…

Present Day…

"Oh my gosh!" cried Tails, surprised at everything he had heard.

"That's awful! Poor you Sonic!" exclaimed Cosmo, putting her hands over her chest in sympathy for Sonic "Those guys sound horrible!"

"They are." muttered Sonic "And because of my idiocy, inexperience and recklessness, I ended up in hospital for a while. You should have seen my parents, they were going MENTAL over me when they heard what had happened. Scourge however just laughed at me, saying that "I was asking for that" when their backs were turned. Mom and dad were so horrified at what had happened to me that I thought they were gonna pass out!" he exclaimed "I was amazed they didn't!"

"I can't believe that you got beaten up like that!" gasped Tails "Not even Eggman's beaten you up that badly before!"

"Had it been Eggman I was up against that day, I'd be pushing up the daisies." said Sonic with a grim expression on his face "I still kick myself for how stupid I was at the time. I mean, I could have gotten myself killed! What was I thinking back then?!"

"Well at least you learned your lesson and you won't make that same mistake again Sonic." said Cosmo, patting Sonic on the back to cheer him up "You've come a long way since then, you really have."

"I'll say, but that's mostly because of my parents." explained Sonic

"After I'd recovered from my beat down, mom and dad started teaching me how to fight and how to use moves like the spin-dash. You see, it's kinda customary for us hedgehogs to know the spin-dash. Dad taught me the spin-dash and mom taught me the homing attack. Over the next year or so, I was able to use those attacks pretty well but I still had to be careful who I fought against. Just because I can do a spin-dash or a homing attack, doesn't mean I'm invincible after all."

"I see." said Tails "So…cough…excuse me…cough, cough…" he paused to clear his throat for a minute and then spoke again "… does this lead up to…your heroic debut?" he asked.

"Oh yes." said Sonic "And here is how it happened…"

Mobius: 3 Years Ago, a month before Scourge's turn to villainy…

Another year had passed and Sonic the Hedgehog had learnt plenty since the day he nearly lost his life to Theo and his gang. Jules had mentored him a bit more on his skills and now Sonic could perform his trademark attacks. He could spin-dash, although not as powerfully as he can now, and he could use the homing attack. He had more control over his speed than ever before and he could use his attacks very well. Sonic still had a bit to go in terms of accuracy though but he was getting there. Sonic was slowly but surely becoming the hot-shot hedgehog he is now. Today was the day where his life would change forever and all his training would end up making him Mobius' biggest hero ever. And it happened in a way that Sonic would nev er have expected…

Sonic was running off to his humble home in Mobotropolis after going for a run around Green Hill Zone to pick some berries so Bernie could make a lovely pie with them. Sonic adored his mother's berry pies and he couldn't wait to have one for desert after dinner tonight. Sonic made sure he had the basket steady as he ran through the meadow that stretched in-between Green Hill Zone and Mobotropolis. Amazingly, despite his amazingly fast pace, he didn't drop a single berry that was in his basket. Sonic arrived back in Mobotropolis and he screeched to a halt outside of his house. He

just missed the path to his front door though for his screech to a halt wasn't quite enough to be exactly a perfect stop. Sonic looked down at his feet and saw that he was on the edge of the path.

"Hmm, I'm getting better at timing my stops." said Sonic to himself "I wonder if that's a good sign at all? Bet my awesome dad can tell me if it is."

So Sonic walked up to the front door and he opened it, letting himself into his house.

"Yo mom! Yo dad! The hedgehog is…"

His happy voice trailed off into a stunned silence the moment he walked inside and got a glimpse of what awaited him inside. The house was in a terrible mess. The lovely red, velvet sofa was overturned, the TV set had been knocked over and destroyed, some picture frames lay shattered on the floor instead of hung-up on the walls as they should be, a couple of windows had been broken, the curtains had been pulled down and the door to the kitchen was left with chunks and splinters missing from it. It looked like a terrible fight had broken out in the living room. Amazingly, there was no blood anywhere, suggesting that the conflict hadn't been all that bloody. Sonic dropped the basket on the floor, spilling the berries and adding more mess to the living room. He felt weak in the knees and he was about ready to burst into tears. He ran into the kitchen to see if his parents were there. To his dismay, he saw only his brother Scourge lying on the floor with the dinner table, which had all four legs broken, lying on top of him. Scourge looked like he'd been in a terrible fight too. He was bruised all over his body and he had cuts all over his body, the cuts staining his fur with blood as they bled away. The kitchen finally had been spared much of the abuse the living room had received. Only the dinner table was damaged in the kitchen. Sonic ran over to Scourge and he lifted the table off of him.

"Scourge! What the heck happened here?!" shrieked Sonic.

"Some…jerks…named Theo, Shellshock, Buster and Jack…broke into…the house…" grunted Scourge "They've…kidnapped…mom… and dad…I tried to stop them…but I wasn't…strong enough!"

Sonic thought he was going to drop dead from shock all of the sudden. Theo, Buster, Shellshock and Jack, the same thugs that had beaten him up last year had kidnapped his parents?! Why?! Why would they do such a thing?! Sonic began to worry, would they kill his parents just to get back at him for interfering with their business last year? Sonic had to save them and fast!

"No!" cried Sonic, horrified to hear this "Mom…dad…where are they?!" he cried desperately.

"I think…one of them said…they were going…to an…old warehouse…in Central Cit y…" grunted Scourge.

With that said, Sonic scooped up Scourge in his arms and he quickly rushed him off to the Mobotropolis Medical Centre so he could heal from his injuries while he saved his parents. The minute Sonic dropped Scourge off, he rocketed out of the city at top speed and he headed off to Central City to find his parents.

"Hang on mom and dad." thought Sonic as he ran off to the designated place "I'll save you both…"

Over in Central City, Theo and his gang had taken Bernie and Jules to an abandoned warehouse and tied them both up to a pair of steel poles that extended up to the ceiling. Their arms had been raised above their heads and tied to the pole with thick, strong rope. Their ankles had been tied to the poles with rope too. The terrified hedgehogs were well and truly stuck now and poor Bernie was practically killing herself with fear at this very moment. She was shaking like crazy, tears streaming down her fact and she was also trying to get free. She writhed around trying to free herself but she just couldn't. The ropes were just too strong for her and much to tightly tied to the pole. She had no hope of getting free. Jules was considerably calmer than his wife but he looked downright furious at the fact this had happened to him. Theo, Shellshock, Buster and Jack stared evilly at their captives, grinning evilly and admiring their helpless state. Bernie stopped struggling and she looked at the thugs, still whimpering in fear.

"Oh please, untie us you four! Please, I hate being tied up like this!" begged Bernie.

"Nah babe, I think we'll leave you like that." purred Theo "Besides, you look cute like that you do." he added with a dirty smirk on his hideous, scarred face.

"How dare you say that to my wife!" snarled Jules "I swear once I get out of these ropes you will be sorry you picked on us!"

"Get real old man, we took you down no sweat so do you really think we're going to be intimidated by your petty threats?" scoffed Theo "So no, I don't think we'll be sorry we picked on you at all."

"Why are you doing this to us?!" wailed Bernie "We haven't done anything to you! Honest!"

"Of course you haven't done anything to us." said Shellshock cruelly "We've nev er met before. We've kidnapped you two because we've heard interesting things about you two."

"What kind of things?" whimpered Bernie.

"That you two are the parents of a supersonic hedgehog boy." explained Theo "Mobotropolis hears things very easily you know. We want your son we do. We want to know how he came to get such speed so we can give ourselves super speed too. We'd be able to commit crimes at the speed of sound and nobody would catch us ever again! So where's your supersonic son you two?"

Bernie's response was a horrified gasp and uncontrollable sobbing. Theo scowled at her.

"Jack, the duct tape please." he said in annoyance.

Jack obeyed and he handed a roll of duct tape over to Theo. Theo ripped a piece of tape from the roll and he plastered it squarely over Bernie's trembling lips, silencing her and preventing her from speaking. Bernie could only emit muffled sobs from behind her gag, the tape inflating in and out as she brea thed. Jules glared at Theo. How dare they do that to his wife! He so ached to bash their heads in he did! If only he wasn't tied up though…

"Hey! Take that tape off Bernie's mouth now!" yelled Jules.

"No chance you old fart." snapped Theo "Her crying's getting on my nerves it is. I always said "women should be seen and not heard" I did. Now then buster, where's your son and what's the secret behind his speed?"

"Get fragged!" snarled Jules "My son will make mincemeat out of you cretins once he finds us!"

"In yer dreams!" laughed Buster "Nobody can beat us! We're too strong for any puny person to defeat!"

"Last chance gramps." said Theo coldly "Where is your son and what is the secret behind his speed?"

Jules did not say a word. Theo scowled at Jules and he turned away from him.

"Fine, if you want talk then maybe your wife will." he said, ripping the tape off of Bernie's mouth and making her lips sting like mad.

Bernie yelped in pain as the tape was ripped off her mouth. Theo jammed his face into Bernie's face, making her feel very uncomfortable.

"Hey blondie, where's your son and what's the secret behind his speed?!" snarled Theo.

"P-p-please, I-I-I c-c-can't t-t-tell you!" sobbed Bernie "I-I-I won't t-t-tell you!"

"Well in that case, let's see what you look like in your underwear." said Theo, reaching out to grab Bernie's dress and pull it down.

"Hey jerks! Leave my parents alone!" yelled a familiar voice that made the gang jump in surprise.

They all turned around and they saw none other than Sonic the Hedgehog standing there with a serious look on his face. He looked furious to see that his parents were tied up and being interrogated by the same gang of thugs that had beaten him almost to death last

year. The gang looked surprised to see him.

"Hey! I remember that loser!" gasped Shellshock "Didn't we beat him half to death last year?"

"We did." said Buster "And the untimely arrival of the cops stopped us from finishing the damn job! Now he's here to save his mommy and daddy from us!"

"Wait a minute, he told us to leave his parents alone…" Jack realized "So if they're his parents…then is he the supersonic hedgehog we're looking for?"

"Seems so." said Theo grimly "We had him right in front of us last year and we never realized that. Well, time for us to make up for that mistake. Boys, get that hedgehog and knock him out so we can find out what the secret behind his speed is!"

Shellshock, Buster and Jack were all too happy to oblige. They all thundered towards Sonic and prepared to grab him.

"No please, don't hurt my son!" wailed Bernie, tugging on her ropes frantically.

"Relax dear, Sonic can show them what we've taught him over the years." said Jules with a wink at Bernie.

Sonic smirked at the gang as they all charged towards him and prepared to beat him into submission. Buster ran forwards and he aimed a punch at Sonic. Sonic curled up into a blue spiky ball and he spin-dashed Buster directly in the gut. The enormous bear gaspe d in surprise as he was walloped in the gut by the spin-dashing hedgehog. Buster was thrown across the room by the attack and he crashed into a wall. The wall, which was already old and crumbling, ended up caving in on top of Buster, knocking him out and pinning him to the floor. The bear was well and truly out of commission for now. Shellshock gaspe d. Sonic didn't do that before! Had he suddenly gotten stronger since their last encounter? Shellshock suddenly found himself being homing-attacked by Sonic and knocked down onto the floor. Shellshock picked himself up and he punched Sonic in the face before the hedgehog could attack him

again. Sonic took the punch and he spin-dashed Shellshock. The armadillo was thrown across the room and he crashed into a rusty old stairway that was practically begging to be knocked down due to how old it was. The stairway ended up falling down as Shellshock crashed into it. Shellshock found himself being pinned down by a tangled pile of rusty old metal stairs. Jack, who was considerably more cowardly than the others, decided not to do anything and instead tried to run away. Sonic grabbed Jack in a quick sprint and he threw the jackal over directly into Theo, knocking the cougar off his feet and onto the floor. Theo picked himself up and he ran over towards Sonic. Sonic homing-attacked Theo and knocked him down onto his back. He then stood on top of Theo and he punched the cougar as hard as he could in the face. He punched him several times, making sure he hit him as hard as he could. Theo took some of the punches but as Sonic punched him harder and harder, the cougar eventually began to give in and Sonic's punches began really hurting him. Sonic then punched Theo so hard that the cougar ended up passing out. Theo's head turned to one side and the cougar lay there on the floor, blood pouring out of his nose and his eyes bruised and swollen. Sonic gasped and panted for he had worn himself out by punching Theo so consistently and callously. Sonic could hardly believe that he had just done that, beaten somebody into unconscious. As much as he was glad to have paid the gang back for beating him up last year, he wasn't all too pleased at what he had done. He felt like he'd gone a little too far. He began to wonder about taking it easy when he got into a fight next time and maybe be a little more lenient. Sonic got up from Theo and he ran over to his parents. He quickly untied them and they both hugged him ever so tightly and gleefully.

"Oh my brave little boy!" squealed Bernie "Thank you so much for saving us!"

"You're a hero Sonic." said Jules brightly "I always knew that you'd perform a miracle some day soon my miracle child."

"Aw thanks mom and dad." said Sonic happily "I'm just glad that you're both safe now!"

The hedgehogs all had a family group hug and they all beamed happily over this happy moment. Sonic was a hero and his parents

were safe. And to think he'd go on to perform even more heroic deeds later on in life…

Present Day…

"…and thus my heroic career was born." finished Sonic "My first ever heroic deed had been simply saving my parents from those jerks who beat me up in that ally way. Who'd have thought it eh?"

"That's amazing Sonic." gasped Tails in amazement, enjoying every moment of the story that Sonic had told him "I bet your parents were really proud of you."

"Oh they were." said Sonic "They treated me like a prince since that day. Although not everything good came out of it. I mean a whole month later I performed my second heroic act…which was stopping Scourge when he went crazy. I kinda wish mom and dad didn't treat me as a "miracle child". I keep feeling like that's what caused Scourge to become the mean hog he is now." he added sadly.

"I understand." said Cosmo "Still, at least you're still a good soul and you don't let jealousy consume you as Scourge did. So…how are your parents now?" she asked.

"They're doing great." said Sonic brightly "They live in a peaceful countryside somewhere in Furville. We keep in touch and sometimes I pop into see them when I'm running through Furville."

"That's lovely to hear." said Cosmo "I wonder if your parents could ever come around and visit us someday?"

"I'll have to see if they want to visit us." said Sonic, taking in the thought "It'd be nice to see what they think to NewMobotropolis. So Tails, how do you feel now?" asked Sonic.

"I feel much better." said Tails "Still a little feverish but your stories have really brightened my day. Thank you for telling us them Sonic."

"Anytime bro." said Sonic happily "I'm glad I decided to tell them at last. Now you all know how I got my super speed and how I became

who I am today. I bet my story will be inspirational to many people who wish to be heroes in the future."

"I certainly think so." said Cosmo brightly.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door downstairs. Sonic got up to his feet.

"Stay right there, I'll get it." said Sonic.

"OK." said Tails.

Sonic left Tails' bedroom and he walked down the stairs to the front door. He opened the door and saw that it was none other than a postman with a letter in his hand. The postman handed the letter to Sonic.

"Letter for you Sonic." said the postman "I was hoping I'd come across you eventually, you didn't answer your door so I assumed you weren't home."

"Oh OK, thanks." said Sonic.

The postman left and Sonic looked at the letter, closing the door behind him. The envelope was purple in colour and it had Chinese writing on it. Sonic opened the envelope and he pulled out the letter inside. To his amazement, this is what it read:

Dear Sonic the Hedgehog,

I was very much hoping if you and the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis would be able to come to my 22nd birthday party tomorrow. It'd be a great honour to see you and your wonderful friends on my birthday!

Yours truly, Princess Matilda

"Oh my gosh! We're invited to Princess Matilda's birthday party?!" blurted Sonic in amazement "Holy macaroni, this is one party I cannot miss! I'd best tell everybody about it!"

And Sonic decided to start by darting up the stairs to Tails and

Cosmo. Hopefully Tails would be better for the party tomorrow for this was a birthday that they just had to attend…

Footnotes:

***See "Heroes of Mobius: The Movie", a chapter exclusive only to DeviantArt. Just simply look up my username on DeviantArt and then search for something called "Heroes of Mobius: The Movie" and read away.**

So that's it for Sonic's origin story! What did you think to it? Was it good? Join me next time for Matilda's birthday party becomes a party you'll never forget...

Birthday Siege Part 1

Story 152: Birthday Siege Part 1: Anarchy and Celebration

"Well, given how Matilda's a princess, I should have expected lots of people to attend her birthday party!" chuckled Sonic the Hedgehog as he saw just how many people were gathered around the Pagoda of Prosperity, ready to celebrate the birthday of Chun-Nan's beloved Princess Matilda.

Chun-Nan had had it rough during the whole agenda with Enerjak the other day*. When Enerjak had awoken from the crypt he had been imprisoned in, he had spread a foul presence around the country and made poor Emperor Tai fall into a state of insanity. He'd also possessed Matilda and made her nearly kill the emperor and also drove her insane too. Chun-Nan had really been through a horrible, dark time during the terror of Enerjak but thankfully, ever since Enerjak's defeat, the country had been recuperating beautifully. The citizen's faith in the emperor had returned, Matilda was cleared of all charges that had been placed on her and the country was now its happy, honourable self once again. Enerjak's dark presence had disappeared and Chun-Nan was celebrating one of the happiest days it could celebrate all year…the birthday of Princess Matilda. Birthdays of the royals were very special days in Chun-Nan and a big celebration was often hosted in their honour. The party consisted of lots of guests, a lot of giving presents as gifts of honour, a hearty banquet and lots and lots of fireworks. It was currently dusk right now (what, did you think a party with fireworks would take place during the day?! Get real!) and the tradition of a birthday party for a Chun-Nan royal was that once the sun had set, the fireworks would go off. It was sunset at the moment and the guests were patiently waiting for Princess Matilda to step out and begin the celebration. Among the many guests here today were Sonic the Hedgehog and all of the Royal Fighters of Mobotropolis. Tails the twin-tailed fox (who was feeling MUCH better from that fever he had yesterday), Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cosmo the Seedrian, Cream the Rabbit, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot, Ruben the Water Panther, Shade

the Echidna, Sora Prower, Queen Sally Acorn, Nicole the Lynx, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee were all there and they were all looking forward to seeing Matilda. Most of them were even wearing very lovely clothes to look nice at this party. Sally in particular was wearing an opulent dress that showed off her royal position. As they waited, the Royal Fighters all began conversing amongst each other.

"This is so exciting!" said Ruben excitedly "I've always wanted to celebrate the birthday of a royal! I've never been allowed to during my days in the Hǎilàng clan because I was too young unfortunately. And now here I am, ready to celebrate the birthday of Princess Matilda! I'm going nuts here I'm so excited!" he squealed, jumping up and down with excitement.

"I can tell you are!" chuckled Sonic, putting his hands on Ruben's shoulders to keep him still "You're practically jumping out of your skin you're so excited!"

"I'm just glad my fever decided to recover so I could come to this party." beamed Tails "I wouldn't want to have missed this party at all, especially since it's the birthday of Princess Matilda."

"Same here." said Amy brightly "Matilda's a great woman, I'm all too happy to wish her well on this party I am. I just hope that pompous old falcon isn't here, I do not like him one little bit and all he's gonna do is make me mad!" grumbled Amy, remembering Bladefeather from her first visit to Chun-Nan last year.

"Amy, Bladefeather's one of Chun-Nan's heroes remember?" noted Ruben "There's no reason to still feel so spiteful over him."

"I don't care, he's far too pompous and vain for me!" sniffed Amy "I hope he's not here or he's gonna ruin this party!"

"Well sorry to burst your bubble Amy but Bladefeather's very loyal to the emperor." noted Ruben "And he loves Matilda, there's no way he'll want to miss this." (before you ask, Matilda told him that after the events of Operation: Double Trouble.)

"I agree." said Sonic "I wonder if his friend Mushu will be here too.

I'd love to meet Mushu again, he was cool."

"I'd love to meet the emperor again." said Cosmo sweetly "He was a lovely man and I enjoyed visiting him that time we went to Chun-Nan last year."

"Well we'll definitely see Emperor Tai again." said Sonic "He's the emperor after all, he won't want to miss his own daughter's birthday after all."

Tails, Cosmo, Amy & Ruben all chuckled at that little joke. Their laughter was suddenly cut off by the arrival of two familiar faces that came up to them. Everybody looked at the two individuals and Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Ruben recognized them. They were Bladefeather and Mushu. The two stood there with very friendly smiles on their faces. The Royal Fighters smiled back whereas Amy just scowled at Bladefeather.

"Oh great, the falcon's here!" whined Amy "This party's ruined already!"

"Amy! Be nice!" snapped Ruben "It's dishonourable to be rude to guests!"

"Don't mind Amy Bladefeather, she still doesn't like you unfortunately." said Sonic, shaking Bladefeather's hand politely.

"Do not fret over such a superfluous matter my good sir." said Bladefeather "I fully comprehend the girl's distaste in me. We do have a variance with each other to which I fully understand. We did not get on well after all the last time we met…Anyways, greetings my honourable heroes of the R.F.S." he added, bowing down to everybody "It is a great honour to see you all here to celebrate the dear princess's most joyous day. I very much hope that you enjoy this magnanimous event tonight."

Mushu just bowed down beside Bladefeather, saying nothing for he was mute. The Royal Fighters were flattered to receive such a greeting whereas Sonic stared at Bladefeather in amazement. Even Amy was gobsmacked at the falcon's unusual politeness. He had changed much since they last met him hadn't he?

"Alright who are you and what have you done with Bladefeather?" snickered Sonic.

"Very humorous of you to pick up on my newfound politeness hedgehog." Bladefeather snickered back "Let us just say that Princess Matilda has been a very good influence on my sense of etiquette. I am now a much more pleasant man and I am all too happy to be like this. It's much nicer being polite to people."

"Well I can already say I like you a lot better than the old Bladefeather." said Amy brightly "Consider us on good terms now sir." she added with a polite curtsey to the falcon.

"Your compliments are appreciated my child." said Bladefeather kindly.

"Hey Bladefeather, have you got a gift for Matilda like usual?" asked Ruben eagerly "I remember hearing that you often liked to give Matilda gifts, especially on her birthday."

"Oh I do indeed my young water panther." said Bladefeather with a wink of the eye.

With that said, Bladefeather decided to show off the extravagant gift he'd gotten for Matilda's birthday this year. He reached up his sleeve and pulled out what appeared to be a small box. He opened the box and showed that inside it contained…a beautiful silver ring with sparkling blue diamonds in it. Everybody stared at the gift, amazed at how beautiful it looked.

"Nice, you got her a ring." said Sonic "Although, don't you think Matilda might have plenty of those already?"

"Sonic!" hissed Ruben, elbowing Sonic furiously for that statement.

"You bring up an excellent point Sonic, which is why this ring I've brought for Matilda is no ordinary ring." explained Bladefeather "This…is an engagement ring."

"Oh I get it!" chipped Amy "You're going to give Matilda a wedding proposal for her birthday right?! That's so adorable! Aww, I'm about ready to faint from the sheer cuteness of this!"

Amy began fawning over the sheer cuteness of the gift. Sonic just looked at her with a look of embarrassment on his face. Amy really needs to settle down a bit one of these days. No wonder he loved Sally instead of her.

"Hey Wilson, why didn't you save our wedding proposal for MY birthday?" Mandy teased, winking at her husband.

"Uh heh, heh, heh, I dunno, I guess I just couldn't wait?" suggested Wilson, giggling a little at Mandy's joke.

"Say Bladefeather, how long have you and Matilda been a couple?" asked Ruben curiously "Heck, WHEN did you even become one?"

"We've been a couple for a year and I've been in love with Matilda ever since she was sixteen." explained Bladefeather "That age was also the age she was when I first met her too. Her bodacious appearance captivated me and I knew that I just had to win her heart. So I started off small by giving her gifts. Then during the Five Festivals of Holy Honour last year**I finally came out and admitted my love for her to which she admitted her love for me back. Since then we've been in a committed and unbreakable relationship. A relationship…that has changed me quite meritoriously. I am now less rude and arrogant and more accepting of children. This lifestyle for me is much more pragmatic than my older self indeed. I am so in love with my beautiful princess that I just feel that it's time we tied the knot. I…I just hope that she'll accept…" he said in a sudden nervous voice.

"Bladefeather, if Matilda really loves you that much then of course she'll accept." said Sally reassuringly "Don't worry about rejection, I'm sure Matilda will be all too happy to accept your proposal."

"Your words of comfort are most reassuring my good woman." said Bladefeather "Thank you. As for the proposal, I harbour feelings of the anxious kind which is why I have Mushu here to back me up should I need a little prompting."

Mushu just smiled at his friend, happy for him that he was going to finally ask for Matilda's hand in marriage.

"Well I think you've given Matilda the best possible gift anyone can receive on their birthday." said Sonic "Matilda's gonna love that I bet. We'll soon be celebrating two things, her birthday and her engagement. Looks like we've gotten more than we've come for eh?"

"You could put it into those kind of terms indeed." chuckled Bladefeather.

"Hey everybody! The emperor's here!" cried Tails excitedly, pointing over at the Pagoda of Prosperity "He's coming out to greet everybody! I think the party's about to start!"

The Royal Fighters, Bladefeather and Mushu all directed their attention over to the Pagoda of Prosperity and surely enough, they could see Emperor Dalon Tai coming out of the pagoda to greet everybody. He looked very well and much happier than he was during the time of Enerjak. It had been hard for him but Master Kai Zen, Matilda, Bladefeather and Mushu had helped Tai to recover from Enerjak's horror and now the emperor was his old self again, happy and full of kindness. It made Sonic happy inside to see the emperor back to his old self again, made all the better that he had recovered in time for his daughter's birthday. Tai's aged old face was curled up into a huge smile that suggested he was very enthusiastic about today. The guests all cheered when they saw Tai and Tai gestured for them all to settle down for a minute. The guests quietened down and waited eagerly for Tai to speak.

"Greetings all you wonderful guests who have attended this joyous event today." said Tai happily "It brings me great honour to see you all here today, ready to wish my wonderful daughter well on her very special day. Matilda has given me twenty-one glorious years since her birth and now she shall move on to give me her twenty-second year of joy on this earth. Without further ado, let us welcome the birthday girl herself. Please welcome my precious daughter and your honourable princess herself…Princess Dalon Matilda."

With that said, Tai stood to the side the pagoda doors opened up. Out of the doors stepped Princess Matilda herself. She was wearing a magnificent teal dress decorated with red roses around the hem that sparkled like a sea of diamonds in the sunset. She had her hair

styled in a ponytail instead of a bun and the dress was so long that Matilda's feet couldn't be seen. If they could, you'd see she had blue slippers on to match the dress. She wasn't wearing her trademark black wristbands. Matilda looked amazing to say the least and Bladefeather was staring open-eyed and open-mouthed at her. Mushu seemed to share his friend's reaction for he was amazed at how Matilda looked too. The crowd greeted Matilda with a tumultuous applause that could be heard from miles around. The Royal Fighters joined in and Sonic even whooped for Matilda. Matilda beamed happily, gracious to receive such an amazing reception from all of her happy guests. It's moments like this that made her happy to be a princess. What made all of this even better for her was that everybody had forgiven her for her "attempted murder" of the emperor during Enerjak's reign of terror. Chun-Nan was a forgiving country after all and Matilda could put all the horrors she endured under Enerjak behind her and focus on the wonderful things, her birthday celebration. Matilda held up her hands and signalled for the crowd to settle down. The crowd fell silent, all eyes on the princess and their faces curled up into big beaming smiles. Matilda smiled back at the crowd and began to speak.

"Hello everyone." she said politely "I'd like to thank you all for attending my birthday celebration today. It brings me great honour to see so many people here, all wishing me well and wishing a good day for me. It's been an honour to walk the very earth of this country for twenty-one years and now I move on to my twenty-second year which I guarantee will be a year of greatness as has been the last twenty-one years of my life. I hope to continue bringing honour and glory to this great country and I hope to continue delighting you and making you all happy for many more years to come. Thank you all for attending this joyous celebration and may you all have a good time. Enjoy the celebration everybody."

The crowd cheered once again as Matilda stepped down and headed towards the crowd. Some crowd members started lighting up Chinese lanterns and letting them float up into the sky. The lanterns were a popular addition to a party in Chun-Nan. Some guests even let some balloons float up into the sky and throw some confetti around. As modest as Matilda was, she really enjoyed hearing the happy cheers of the crowd of guests that had come to

wish her well on this special day. It filled her heart with joy to see that so many people loved her and wanted to wish her well. That was a sign to her that her mentoring and teachings under her father and master had done her good and she was doing her job properly. She never knew that she would be this beloved though, never in a million years. Still, she was quite happy to be much loved among the populace. Made being a princess all the more glorious. As Matilda started to walk through the crowd, Sonic waved to her in hopes of catching her attention.

"Hey Matilda! Over here!" called Sonic "We'd like to meet you!"

Matilda didn't really hear Sonic for the noise of the crowd drowned out his voice but she did see his gloved hand waving around above everybody's heads. Matilda recognized Sonic's hand instantly and she strode over towards him, carefully edging through the happy crowd that held out gifts and began wishing her a happy birthday as she went by. As Matilda got closer to Sonic, she soon realized that he had company with him, very pleasant company indeed. She didn't see Bladefeather and Mushu though for Bladefeather was hiding behind some other guests. He wanted his presence to surprise her so he kept himself hidden until he was ready. Matilda's face brightened and she ran over to get to Sonic and friends. As soon as she made it to them, she bent down a little (she's slightly taller than he is) and threw her arms around the blue hedgehog. Sonic hugged her back for he felt it was good to see Matilda again… for proper that is since their latest meeting was during a villain's scheme.

"Oh Sonic the Hedgehog, I'm so, so, SO happy to see you here today!" squealed Matilda excitedly "It's such an honour to have the hero of the west and his team mates here on my birthday! You honour us all with your presences everybody!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, thanks Matilda." chuckled Sonic "We're glad to be here too."

"This was a party we just COULDN'T refuse your honour." said Tails with a polite bow "We just had to come and you know it."

"Especially me." said Ruben gleefully "I've always wanted to attend

the birthday celebration of a royal."

"Well you're all in for a treat tonight." said Matilda with a big smile on her face "Because these celebrations get VERY colourful, festive and enjoyable. This is a night you'll never forget, believe me."

"I think we already believe you princess." laughed Sally, coming forward to greet Matilda "I mean look at all these guests here and they're setting off lanterns, balloons and confetti! And I bet all of this is just the icing on the cake!"

"Mmm…cake." said Charmy Bee, his mouth-watering over the very thought of some cake being around.

"Stop drooling, there's no cake around yet!" snapped Vector the Crocodile, startling the bee as he yelled that.

Matilda just giggled.

"Oh you lot have a great sense of humour!" she chuckled "No wonder I'm so happy to see you all here."

"Thanks princess." said Sonic "Oh and, happy birthday by the way." he added quickly "We've gotten you a gift."

With that said, Cosmo and Cream stood forward and presented a lovely red box with a yellow ribbon tied around it to Matilda. Sonic decided to let them present the gift for it just "looked cuter" if they did it (aww). Matilda awed at the gift and she took it politely out of their hands.

"Aw thank you." she said graciously "You're too kind you all are."

"You're welcome Miss Matilda." said Cream sweetly "Why don't you open the box and see what's in it?"

"I'm going to right now." chuckled Matilda.

She untied the ribbon from around the box and she opened the lid. In the box was a rather extravagant and radiant looking pendant that looked like it belonged to royalty. It was round in shape, golden in colour and decorated with rubies that sparkled like stars. Matilda

picked up the pendant and she gaped at it.

"Aww…this is beautiful!" she cried happily, immediately putting it around her neck. "I've always wanted one of these! Aw thank you so much Royal Fighters!"

"You're quite welcome." said Sally, speaking on behalf of everyone "By the way, that pendant was one I used to wear but I felt that red and gold wasn't really my style so I decided to give it to you seeing your birthday was coming up. I'm glad you like it."

"I'm glad you let me have this." said Matilda, giving Sally a friendly hug to say thank you to her "Thank you Queen of Mobotropolis."

"You're welcome Princess of Chun-Nan." said Sally, hugging Matilda back.

"Aw, it's nice to see the Royals of Mobotropolis and Chun-Nan getting along like good friends." said Ruben delightedly "Especially as I'm on both sides in a manner of speaking."

"Yeah, we get ya Ruben." said Sonic.

Sally and Matilda stopped hugging and Sally suddenly remembered something.

"Oh Matilda, would it be OK if I can talk privately with your dad at all?" she asked "There's something I'd like to discuss with him."

"Oh sure Sally, go ahead." said Matilda "Daddy's always open for people who want a private word with him. What's it about anyway?"

"Government business." said Sally "I'll go and see the emperor now. Bye for the moment everybody and enjoy this party without me if you please."

"Bye Sal." said the Royal Fighters.

So Sally left the Royal Fighters with Matilda and she walked steadily through the crowd, trying her hardest not to accidentally push anybody out of the way. As soon as Sally disappeared into the crowd, Matilda turned back to the others.

"So how's things been going with you all?" she asked.

"We would tell you Matilda but somebody wants to meet you first." said Sonic with a wink.

Before Matilda could even ask what Sonic meant, Bladefeather sneaked up behind Matilda and playfully covered her eyes with his feathery hands. Matilda gasped in alarm but she quickly relaxed for she recognized the texture of the hands and she knew who liked to play this little prank on her for a bit of fun.

"Hello Matilda." purred Bladefeather in a sly, seductive tone of voice that made her feel warm all over.

"Hee, hee, hee! I know who these hands belong to…" giggled Matilda, lifting Bladefeather's hands off of her eyes.

She then turned around quite quickly and she threw her arms around Bladefeather. She pulled him close and gave him a loving kiss directly on his beak. Bladefeather returned the kiss and even wrapped his arms around Matilda, hugging her tightly and lovingly as they embraced each other. The Royal Fighters all awed at this expect for Amy who didn't really know what to think about this.

"Eh…they're cute I guess although Bladefeather's not the first man I'd pair Matilda up with." she said to herself "Oh well, Bladefeather's better now so it's OK."

"I think they're adorable together I do!" cried Ruben, enjoying what he was seeing right now "Aww…look at them! They really are cute as a couple!"

"I'll admit that they look nice together although I never would have seen Bladefeather and Matilda being in love." said Knuckles "Much has changed since I last saw Chun-Nan indeed."

"Yeah…least it's all good." said Sonic with a smile.

Mushu just shared everybody's reaction and looked at his friend with a happy face. He was happy for Bladefeather that he had found love, especially since Matilda was the one he loved. He couldn't have picked a better woman for Bladefeather. Matilda and

Bladefeather finally stopped kissing and they looked dreamily into each other's eyes.

"Happy birthday my little streak of sunlight." said Bladefeather.

"Thank you my little red falcon." said Matilda happily "You being here has instantly made it ten times happier, twenty even."

"Why how nice of you to say that Matilda, thank you." said Bladefeather graciously, stroking Matilda's raven-black hair "And it's about to get even more happy for I am about to bestow upon you my gift of honour."

"Aw Bladefeather you shouldn't have." giggled Matilda "You've given me many wonderful gifts in the past, I'm not sure if I have room for anymore."

"Heh, heh, heh, you will change that mind of yours when I present the gift to you Matilda." chuckled Bladefeather, taking his arms off from around Matilda and reaching up his sleeve.

Matilda looked puzzled. Bladefeather never hid things up his sleeve before. What kind of gift did he have for her this time? Matilda was more intrigued than ever to see what Bladefeather had gotten for her birthday this year. Bladefeather took out from his sleeve the box with the engagement ring he'd shown Sonic and friends earlier and he opened the box to show Matilda the glorious ring. Matilda stared at the ring, amazed at how beautiful it looked. It was a very beautiful ring and he looked forward to wearing it. She was in for a surprise though for the ring had a bit more to it then just being a ring. Bladefeather took one of Matilda's hands and he held the ring close to her face.

"Upon your celebration of birth I bestow to you…this ring as a gift of honour." said Bladefeather "But this ring is not just a gift of honour… it is an act of engagement. With this ring I wish to seek your hand and heart in marriage. Princess Matilda…will you give me the greatest honour of my life…by becoming my wife?"

Matilda put her free hand to her mouth in surprise. She was so amazed at the fact this was not just a gift, it was a proposal that she

immediately broke down in happy tears.

"Oh my gosh…Bladefeather…this is the greatest gift I've EVER received!" cried Matilda "Yes! I will marry you!"

With that said Matilda threw her arms around Bladefeather and pulled him into a deep kiss, happy tears streaming down her face as the newly engaged couple embraced each other. Mushu grinned from ear to ear at the fact Matilda had accepted his friend's proposal and he wiped away some happy tears that filled up in his eyes. The Royal Fighters all awed at the kissing couple and Ruben expressed his enthusiasm about the proposal.

"YAY!" he cried out happily "I knew Matilda would accept! Now Chun-Nan will have a prince and a princess to rule alongside the emperor!"

"Prince Bladefeather…ugh…I bet the falcon's never gonna stop bragging about this." muttered Amy "Oh well, I'm happy that Matilda accepted his proposal. What an adorable birthday present to give to somebody!"

"I don't think Matilda could have possibly received a gift better than a marriage proposal." said Sonic "Bladefeather's truly made her day today. Major kudos to the guy for having such a big heart."

"I bet they'll invite us to their wedding." said Tails "After all, Matilda invited us to her birthday party so why not invite us to the wedding too?"

"Indeed my young fellow, which is why we whole-heartedly hope that you can attend our wedding day." said Bladefeather as he and Matilda stopped kissing and looked over at the Royal Fighters.

"You bet we'll be there." said Sonic with a thumbs up "So when shall we mark our calendars?"

"Oh next July would be wonderful." suggested Matilda, drying her eyes from the happy tears she'd cried "After all, there's no rush, we need plenty of time to settle before we get married. Also, July often has wonderful weather, it'd be the perfect month to get married.

"Then next July it is." said Sonic "Congrats on the engagement you two and may you be a very happy couple."

"Thank you so much Sonic." said Matilda happily "Now then, who's ready for a little party celebration?"

"I think everybody's gonna have the same answer…" said Sonic with a wink of the eye.

Matilda beamed and prepared to begin the party. This birthday party was a celebration made even bigger thanks to Bladefeather's proposal to Matilda and it was guaranteed to be an enjoyable celebration…

Meanwhile, inside the Pagoda of Prosperity, Emperor Tai and Queen Sally were kneeling at a table and enjoying a nice cup of tea together. Sally had informed Tai that she wanted to see him privately and thus Tai had taken Sally inside for them to have a chat. He'd made some tea for Sally to drink with him and the two were sipping their teas. Sally had never tasted tea from Chun-Nan before and she had to admit, it had an interesting flavour. It wasn't the finest tea for her though but still not bad. Tai put down his cup.

"You know, I never imagined that the Royal Fighters served such a beautiful young queen such as yourself." said Tai kindly "They must be very happy to be under your rule Miss Acorn."

"Aw thank you emperor." said Sally gratefully, putting down her cup "And I think Chun-Nan's lucky to be under the rule of an emperor as kind and loving as you. I've heard a lot of good things about you, especially from Sonic. It's nice to actually see you in person your grace."

"Thank you child, that's very kind of you to say." said Tai with a warm smile on his aged face "Now then my dear, you wanted to converse with me about something?" he added, picking up his cup and preparing to have another sip of tea.

"Oh yes indeed I do." said Sally "And as we begin, you can see why

I wanted to discuss this privately."

"OK then Miss Acorn, do start." said Tai, sipping his tea.

"Thank you." said Sally "So…you know what happened to you, Matilda and Bladefeather recently?" she asked "You three got kidnapped by Dr. Eggman and Dr. Finitevus and chained to a missile in an attempt to slow us down while we tried to foil Operation: Double Trouble."

"Oh I do indeed!" blurted Tai in despair, putting his tea down on the table again "That moment was horrible, awful! I thought we were going to die that day! I cannot tell you how terrified we all were as the missile was preparing to launch with us on it! I'm still very, very grateful that you saved our lives."

"Yes, yes, I know and you're very welcome once again." said Sally quickly "Anyway, Eggman's never really targeted Chun-Nan before has he?"

"He targeted the country only once and that was during his first year on Mobius." said Tai "The kung-fu masters brought him down easily and he hasn't bothered us since. The only other time he appeared, according to Matilda, was when some person named "Shadow the Hedgehog" ventured into Chun-Nan and he'd only come to pick Shadow up, not attack and enslave us. We've not had to deal with him since. Why?"

"Well, since Eggman and Finitevus likely know you're allies of the R.F.S., they might start targeting Chun-Nan more often than they did before." said Sally.

"Oh dear…that is a ghastly thought indeed." said Tai, dreading to think about the possibility of Chun-Nan being targeted by Dr. Eggman more often than before.

"I know, which is why I've decided to make a proposition." explained Sally "I think we should unite our kingdoms. If Chun-Nan and New Mobotropolis come together as one, we could become an even bigger, stronger force for Eggman to reckon with and also it would help the R.F.S. receive any distress calls from Chun-Nan a lot

quicker. It would be easier for us to come to your aid should you need it and if we have a way of contacting each other, your kung-fu masters could also come to our aid should we need it. Do you think this is a good idea?" she asked, hoping for the answer to be yes.

Tai thought about this proposition. A union of kingdoms certainly wouldn't be a bad idea at all. Chun-Nan maybe safe and peaceful now but Tai could never forget the terror of Zira the Ruthless or even the Raiju Clan's takeover of Chun-Nan a while back. It had been thanks to the R.F.S. that Conquering Storm and her ninjas had even been defeated and Sonic and Ruben had been the ones to bring Conquering Storm over to stop Zira during her second attempt at take-over. The R.F.S. had provided ample assistance to the country in the past so Tai could see no reason why he should refuse an offer like this. Not to mention, it'd be an honour to ally his kingdom with a kingdom as strong and beloved as The Kingdom of Acorn that has a great band of heroes much like his very own. Tai smiled at Sally and he held his hand out.

"I see no reason for this offer to be declined." said Tai happily "This alliance will be a boon to both kingdoms indeed. Consider the Kingdom of Chun-Nan and the Kingdom of Acorn officially allied together."

Sally's face brightened like a light bulb and she quickly shook Tai's hand, happy that the emperor had accepted her offer.

"Aw thank you emperor!" cried Sally happily "I'm so glad you've accepted my offer! I promise you, you will not regret this at all!"

"I don't see why I would regret it anyway." chuckled Tai "Allying with the Heroes of Mobius themselves can only lead to great things and great honour."

"It can indeed." said Sally brightly "I'll be sure to set up some resources that your country will need to be in contact with the R.F.S. as soon as possible."

"What kind of resources will those be then my dear?" asked Tai.

"Oh mostly just communication towers and phoning devices."

explained Sally "Nothing too major. I understand that Chun-Nan's a very traditional country and it does not relish technology all that much so we won't be adding too many resources don't worry. Just the resources you'll need to remain in contact with the R.F.S."

"I see." said Tai "Well, would it be permissible for me to oversee the installation of said resources? I wouldn't want a communications tower to be in a place where it would look too conspicuous and unappealing to the populace."

"I understand and you may." said Sally "If an alliance is to work then one side must appeal to the other's and vice-versa."

"Indeed child." said Tai happily "You know, I wonder what Chun-Nan would be like if it had its own Royal Fighter team…" he began to wonder to himself.

As he wondered away, Sally looked out of the window and saw something glisten in the distance. She blinked a little and looked closer. It looked like the last rays of sun shining upon something. Sally wondered if she was seeing things at all.

"Hold on a minute sir, I think I just saw something." said Sally, holding up her hand to stop the emperor from speaking.

"Oh. What is it?" asked Tai curiously.

Sally just stood up from the table and walked over to the window to see if she could see anything. Not much was visible at this moment since the sun was almost fully set and darkness was falling. Sally squinted into the silhouetted distance and tried to see if she could see what she thought she had seen a moment ago. She couldn't see anything though so she began to wonder if it had just been her imagination. Sally was about to turn away from the window until she saw something flare up in the distance. It was as if something had just fired from all the way outside. Was it a firework being set off? Nothing shot up into the air so it wasn't a firework. Then Sally saw something that made her nearly collapse in shock. A trial of smoke was drifting up into the air and something was rocketing towards the pagoda! The roar of the thing was getting louder and louder and the smoke trail got thicker and thicker as it got closer! It was a missile

and it was heading towards the Pagoda of Prosperity! Sally instantly plunged her hands into her dress pockets and yanked out the super warp ring they still managed to keep hold of after defeating Dr. Finitevus back on AngelIsland. She tossed the warp ring up into the air, startling the emperor as it expanded to twice its size and opened up a portal in the centre. Without stopping to tell him anything, Sally grabbed Tai by his robes and she jumped through the warp ring as quickly as she could, taking Tai with her. The warp ring vanished into thin air just seconds before the missile hit its target.

Outside, all the guests had seen the oncoming missile and they all panicked as it headed towards the Pagoda of Prosperity. They were all too late to do anything about it though for the missile reached its target and it ploughed straight through the left side of the Pagoda of Prosperity, exploding into a huge fireball of debris, smoke and flames as it hit the wondrous pagoda. The explosion tore through the pagoda as if it was nothing and the entire building was destroyed in seconds, fire engulfing the woodwork of the walls and floors and scorching the tiled roof that sat atop the pagoda. The Pagoda of Prosperity was reduced to nothing more than a sorry wreck of ashes and rubble that were blazing away in the huge fire that danced around the wreckage, licking away at the rubble and sending smoke up into the sky. The only expression on everybody's face upon seeing this was utter horror. It is impossible to put into words how horrified everybody who was attending Matilda's birthday party was to see this happen. Matilda in particular looked like she was going to have a nervous breakdown. She stared at her blazing home, unable to believe it had been destroyed and all so quickly and suddenly too. Her home never had a chance. What had been a birthday of joy and happiness complete with a marriage engagement had quickly been reduced to a moment of shock. How quickly the mood can shift for some individuals it seemed. Sonic and the Royal Fighters stared at the Pagoda of Prosperity's destroyed remains and they began to feel sorry for Matilda. Nobody should have to have something like this happen to them, especially on their birthday. What made Sonic really worry though was if Sally and Tai were in the pagoda since Sally had been hoping to talk privately with Tai. He soon found out though for the super warp ring opened up just behind the Royal Fighters and Sally & Tai hurled out of it and onto the ground in a heap. They picked themselves up and Sonic was quick to hug Sally

comfortingly.

"Sal! Tai! Thank god you got out of there alive!" cried Sonic "I thought for one spine-tingling moment you went up with the pagoda!"

"We almost did Sonic!" screamed Sally frantically "I'M amazed that we made it out alive! Gasp, gasp…but I'm glad we did. Losing me and the emperor would have made losing the Pagoda of Prosperity even worse…" she said sadly, looking over at the destroyed pagoda.

As for Matilda, she couldn't take it anymore. She fell to her knees and wailed her heart out. She pounded the ground in agony, her sobs as loud and depressing as any heartbroken person could sound.

"NOOOOOOOOOO!" screamed Matilda through her tears "No, no, no, no, NOOOOO! Not my home…oh please not my home!"

She continued to howl at the top of her voice, her tears streaming down her cheeks like rainfall. This was supposed to be the happiest day of her life and instead it had become one of the worst of her life. She had lost plenty in her lifetime, including her mother. She couldn't bear the fact she'd lost her home too. As Matilda wailed and cried, Bladefeather knelt down beside her and hugged her. Matilda threw her arms around Bladefeather and squeezed him tightly, crying into his robes. Bladefeather shed a tear for his fiancée. He thought he'd picked the perfect time to propose to Matilda and yet his perfect proposal had been rendered moot by the destruction of the Pagoda of Prosperity. Instead of celebrating becoming a couple, Matilda would likely spend the night mourning her lost home. Tai listened to his crying daughter and he felt like he wanted to cry with her. As a matter of facts, he couldn't help himself and ended up breaking down with Matilda.

"This is horrible!" wailed Tai "This was supposed to be my daughter's perfect day…and then this happens! Why oh why would anyone launch this unwarranted desecration upon us?"

"I dunno emperor but I have a feeling somebody wants you dead."

suggested Sonic "I mean there must be a reason that missile was aimed at your home. I bet the assailant blew up the pagoda, hoping to take YOU with it."

"I agree with Sonic, this was not just destruction, this was definitely an attempted murder." declared Ruben "But who could be behind this? All of Chun-Nan's villains are locked away except for the Spiders of Anarchy and they can't possibly use a missile launcher. They don't even have proper hands for the job!"

"I'm willing to guess that a certain anarchistic reptile group's behind this but I'm gonna investigate on this before jumping to conclusions." said Vector "Espio, Charmy, once that fire's put out we'll investigate and see what we can find out about this attack."

"Roger." said Espio.

"OK." said Charmy disappointedly "Does this mean we don't get cake?"

"Yes Charmy, it means we don't get cake." said Vector with an annoyed scowl on his face. He'd managed to get Charmy to come under the promise of getting some cake and now Charmy would likely not stop whining about this, much to Vector's despair.

"You know what else, I think we should get Master Kai Zen to come and investigate this too, as well as provide more protection for the royals." suggested Tails "Kai would be all too happy to find out who's behind all this."

"He…sniff…would indeed." sniffed Matilda, wiping her eyes dry "Still…I'm so scared right now…" she said, shaking a little "Somebody launched a missile at my home…presumably hoping to take me and dad with it. What heartless cretin would want to kill me and dad? And on my birthday too no less!" she cried out, squeezing Bladefeather even harder then she already was.

"Even my sharp mind is having trouble comprehending such a thought." mused Bladefeather "I could understand Zira and the Raiju clan since they're evil but they're incarcerated and there's no logical reasoning behind them using a missile launcher. Chun-Nan doesn't

even manufacture them so if they did it, they cannot possibly have a missile launcher."

"I'm amazed nobody other than me thinks this might be Dr. Eggman and Finitevus trying to get revenge on us for foiling Operation: Double Trouble." said Sally grimly "This could easily be their kind of villainy."

"Nah, if Eggman and Finitevus did this, they'd have actually snagged Tilly and the emperor." noted Sonic "Especially since Eggman's a walking arsenal now. I bet he'd carpet bomb the place rather than just destroy the Pagoda of Prosperity with all of Omega's weapons at his disposal. And I think he'd be after all of us and not just the emperor."

"That's…a feasible theory." admitted Sally "So this still leaves the question. Who could have done this?"

"I dunno my child." said Tai sadly "But I have a feeling that the attacker isn't only going to strike once…"

Sally nodded sadly as she looked over at the wrecked remains of the Pagoda of Prosperity. It was hard to believe that what looked like a perfect day of celebration and relaxation had become a night of horror and despair. A terrorist attack had been launched and the Pagoda of Prosperity had been taken in said attack. The scariest thing about all this was that nobody knew or could even possibly guess who the attacker was and when he would attack next. It was going to be a scary time for the Emperor and Princess of Chun-Nan and it would only end with the attacker being found out and arrested for his crimes…

As the moon began to rise up and signal the dusking of night, two shadowy figures began trekking across the Great Wall of Chun-Nan and heading towards a tower that had some flaming torches lit on it. The figures were meeting someone at this tower so the flames were there to signal to them where they needed to go. Lucky for them, nobody was on the Great Wall of Chun-Nan at this time of night so the figures had the entire wall to themselves. Just perfect for them

for their meeting was supposed to be private. And the reason it was meant to be private was that it was a villainous meeting. A very villainous meeting indeed. The two figures ran across the wall and they finally reached the tower that they were heading for. They climbed up the ladder that took them up to the top of the wall and they saw that just the people they were going to be meeting were there. The figures themselves were Vladek the Frill-Necked Lizard and Dak the Spider. Vladek was a member of the Region of Rebellious Reptiles, a group of anarchistic reptiles that specialized in rebellions and the destruction of governments and politics. Dak was a member of the Spiders of Anarchy, a group of anarchistic spiders that were banished from Chun-Nan after revoking against it for not accepting one of them in their parliament. Dak and Vladek bowed down to two people who were standing atop the tower they had climbed up to meet. The two people were the leaders of the respective groups, Lord Sycorax and Gina the Spider Queen! Lord Sycorax was Vector's father and the leader of the Region of Rebellious Reptiles. He had not been seen since the attempted foiling of the Annual Acorn Awards last year, a plan which had been foiled by Sora Prower herself***. Now it seemed he was all too happy to be active again. Gina was the leader of the Spiders of Anarchy. She had not been seen since the Raiju Clan gassed all her children to death**** and now it seemed she and Dak were plotting a new. Sycorax and Gina eyed Vladek and Dak as they bowed down to them.

"Lord Sycorax." said Vladek in a tone of loyalty.

"Gina the Spider Queen." said Dak in a tone of loyalty.

"Report my dear husband." purred Gina delightfully "I eagerly await what you've got to tell us."

"Same to you Vladek." said Sycorax with an evil smile on his face.

"We have done as you've instructed." announced Vladek "We fired a missile at the Pagoda of Prosperity and…destroyed it."

"But we failed to terminate that scornful emperor and that brat of a princess." hissed Dak in annoyance.

"Not to worry my dear husband." said Gina smoothly "There's always a next time you know."

"Indeed my dear ally." purred Lord Sycorax "Besides, we destroyed the pagoda. That's good enough for one night. Get the royals all panicked and worked up and leave them ripe for the killing."

"I understand sir." said Vladek "So when do we launch the next stage of our plan?"

"Tomorrow morning at the crack of dawn." explained Sycorax "After all, it'll be much too early for anybody to be awake. We have the perfect opportunity to kill the royals and wipe out Chun-Nan's government then."

"I see." said Vladek.

"We will not fail you." declared Dak "We shall find out where the emperor and princess are going to stay now they're homeless and then we shall destroy their new home…with both of them in it this time."

"I like the sound of that." said Gina in a slithering voice "You may turn in for the night Dak. We need plenty of sleep if were going to commence with our plans so early in the morning."

Dak obeyed and he crawled down the tower and back onto the wall to go back to the hiding place of the Spiders of Anarchy and get some rest.

"You may fall back too Vladek." said Sycorax "The whole region needs to be wide-eyed and alert in the morning after all."

"Yes Lord Sycorax." said Vladek, saluting his master loyally.

Vladek climbed down the ladder and ran off across the wall to where the Region of Rebellious Reptiles were hiding. Sycorax and Gina were now alone on top of the wall tower together. They both looked at each other and they smiled happily.

"This alliance was certainly one worth formulating Gina." said Sycorax darkly "We're working together beautifully and everything is

going splendidly. You giving us the best info on Chun-Nan plus my region's advanced weaponry will ensure this country losing it's government just like the whole world should do!"

"Indeed Lord Sycorax." purred Gina agreeably "It's amazing how we ended up meeting. You came here hoping to attack Chun-Nan and got tangled up in a web trap. I came to eat you alive and then you explained yourself and convinced me you were worth sparing. And then after that, we decided to team up and now here we are. Life's full of strange occurrences isn't it?"

"It is indeed, but at least this "strange occurrence" has been beneficial to us." said Lord Sycorax gleefully "Thanks to our teamwork, we shall destroy all policy once and for all!" he declared, bashing his fists together.

"Yes…we shall." said Gina, a tone of uncertainty hidden in her voice. After all, Gina didn't want to stop politics altogether, she just wanted spiders to run Chun-Nan.

"So Gina, I think now would be a good time to pack up and get some sleep." said Sycorax "We don't want to be too tired for our attack in the morning do we?"

"Indeed not my friend." said Gina "Let us retire for the night. See you in the morning you rebellious, reptilian rascal." she added with a slimy grin on her slimy lips.

"See you in the morning you anarchistic arachnid." chuckled Sycorax, a big smile on his scaly jaws.

With that said, Sycorax and Gina climbed down the tower and onto the Great Wall of Chun-Nan. They both trekked across it and headed to their respective hiding places. Tomorrow was going to be a big day for them and it was going to be a glorious day for them both…or so they thought…

Footnotes:

***See "Heroes of Mobius: The Movie", a chapter exclusive only**

to DeviantArt. Just simply look up my username on DeviantArt and then search for something called "Heroes of Mobius: The Movie" and read away.

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 6: The Five Festivals of Chun-Nan***

***** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles***

****** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 14: A Few Steps To An Oncoming St orm***

Well way for a party to go off with a bang! The Pagoda of Prosperity is destroyed and the Region of Rebellious Reptiles has teamed up with the Spiders of Anarchy! What will happen next? Tune in next time for we get "Double the Anarchists..."

Birthday Siege Part 2

Story 153: Birthday Siege Part 2: Double the Anarchists

Chun-Nan dawned, bright and sunny. The sun began to peep up from behind the mountains and spread its light out across the landscape of the beautiful country, waking it up from it's dark time slumber and bringing light to Chun-Nan. It had been a long night for everyone in the country. The news of the Pagoda of Prosperity's destruction had spread around like wildfire and now every single person in the country knew all about it, even the incarcerated individuals like Zira the Ruthless (I imagine she's grinning sadistically over all of this). The populace had been worried over the well-being of their beloved emperor and princess. Would they be targeted again today? Would they be killed at all? It was all so worrying just to even think about the possibility of such a thing happening. No sooner had the pagoda been destroyed, Master Kai Zen had been called in to provide some extra protection for the Royals of Chun-Nan. Master Kai Zen was Matilda's mentor in becoming a kung-fu mistress and he was all too happy to be on the case of the destruction of the Pagoda of Prosperity. Kai did not have his trademark mask on this time. He believed wearing a mask to be moot now since Conquering Storm revealed who he really was during the time Chun-Nan had been subjugated by the Raiju Clan. While Chun-Nan slept the night away, Kai had stayed up all night to see if anything else was going to happen (he's a badger so he's nocturnal and can easily stay up all night) at all. To his pleasure, the night had been peaceful and quiet but as morning dawned, Kai had a feeling that he shouldn't go away just yet. Anything could happen, even at a time like this and he knew it. Experience had taught Kai that you have to be alert even at the most unlikely of times. As for Matilda and Tai, Bladefeather had kindly offered the two to take refuge in his home until the Pagoda of Prosperity was repaired. Bladefeather lived in a pagoda of his own. It was nowhere near as wealthy and grand looking as the Pagoda of Prosperity but it was still nice looking and suggested Bladefeather had considerable wealth in him. The R.F.S. had just taken up camping, sleeping outside in Bladefeather's back garden in sleeping bags that they had

kindly been donated. The Royal Fighters were all still sleeping away as dawn began to creep over the country. All the Royal Fighters except for Sonic the Hedgehog and Queen Sally Acorn (who is in her casual outfit now). They had had trouble sleeping all night and the moment the sun rose up, they had just gotten up out of their sleeping bags and walked up to Kai, who was standing outside of Bladefeather's pagoda and watching the sunrise (he likes doing that, he considers it relaxing and pleasant to watch). Kai heard the two coming towards him and he turned around to see them.

"Well, if it isn't the Hero of Mobius and the Queen of New Mobotropolis." said Kai with a tone of surprise in his voice "You're both up very early this morning. What are your reasons for this?"

"We couldn't sleep so we decided to just get up with the sun already." said Sonic, yawning loudly and stretching tightly.

"We've been really worried for the emperor and princess." said Sally affectionately "We're worried on what might happen next and if they'll be targeted again. So as you can imagine, sleep was the last thing on our minds last night."

"I see." said Kai sternly "You two should know how important a good sleep is. Little sleep renders you unfocused and unprepared for the day ahead. A true warrior, kung-fu or not, relinquishes all worry in favour of a good sleep."

"I get you Kai but you forget that we're not that good at keeping our emotions under control." noted Sonic "We're not quite like you kung-fu guys after all."

"We're very sorry Kai, we really did try to sleep but it was just hard for us." said Sally apologetically "But I assure you, we're ready for today and what might happen."

"Good." said Kai "That's the most important thing after all. Being ready for what fate may throw at us."

"I agree." said Sally "So, did you see anything last night Kai?"

"Not a thing my child." said Kai with a shake of the head "The night

was as silent and still as the very sky that looms above us."

"That's good and bad at the same time." said Sonic grimly "Good in the sense nothing happened and bad in the sense it means the attacker's plotting big this time."

"Either that or the attacker just simply went to bed Sonic." snickered Sally, pinching Sonic's cheek and shaking his face playfully "Just consider that for a minute."

Sonic chuckled at Sally and playfully pushed her off of himself.

"Well I bet the attacker's up nice and early like we are and is probably planning to attack anytime soon." said Sonic, the grin on his face quickly vanishing "So for this morning, we'd better stay alert and keep an eye out for any possible assassination attempts."

"And since we're anticipating such an attack, we'll actually be ready for it this time." said Sally, taking out the warp ring and twirling it around her finger "If any missiles come flying our way, I'll just open this up and warp the missile elsewhere."

Kai stared at the warp ring in amazement.

"That ring can warp things away?" he asked in astonishment.

"Sure can. Watch this." said Sally, flicking the warp ring up into the air.

The warp ring expanded up to twice its size and Sally jumped through the portal that opened up in the centre of the ring. Kai watched in amazement as Sally vanished through the ring and then reappeared on top of the pagoda in the blink of an eye. Sally waved down to Sonic and Kai from up on the pagoda's roof and she re-activated the warp ring. She jumped through it and reappeared down on the ground in front of Kai and Sonic. Sally put the warp ring away and Kai just stared open-mouthed at her. He'd seen many amazing things in his life but never anything this amazing. He could hardly speak.

"That…is incredible…" he gasped "However did you come to possess such an amazing artefact?"

"Warp rings have existed for a while now." explained Sally "Although this particular one I have was stolen from Dr. Finitevus himself."

"Finitevus? Hmm…Matilda told me about him." mused Kai "He's working for Dr. Eggman isn't he?"

"He is." said Sonic "And on Knuckles's behalf, I hope to get Finitevus locked up for his crimes. What he did was just sick! Teaming up with Ix to try and bring Angel Island down despite the opinions of their superiors and teaming up with Eggman to kill us all! But he's a villain for another day, right now we've got to think about who the one who destroyed the Pagoda of Prosperity could possibly be."

"That is a question that I hope we find the answer to sooner or later." murmured Kai "The fact somebody dares to try and harm my beloved emperor and my dear student truly is an unsettling one to me."

"Well with us on the case, the attacker will be found out and brought down faster than you can say "Chun-Nan's Got Noodles Galore"." declared Sally "I vow that I will not leave this country until the assassin is eliminated for good."

"Such valour and spirit from a woman so young…you remind me much of Matilda you do." said Kai with an approving grin on his face "New Mobotropolis must be honoured to have a queen like you ruling over them."

"Oh…thank you." said Sally modestly.

"You can sorta think me and my buddies for that, we've kinda inspired her to be a little tougher and such." said Sonic "And I will say, I like that Sally's become more like us recently…"

As Sonic, Sally and Kai chatted away, somebody a good few miles away was preparing something. That somebody was Vladek the Frill-Necked Lizard, member of the Region of Rebellious Reptiles. He was not along though, he had his friend Romeo the Chameleon with him and both reptiles were accompanied by Dak the Spider, husband of Gina the Spider Queen. The three were standing on top

of a giant rock that sat at the foot of a mountain that was standing proudly a few miles away from the village of Chun-Nan, its shadows blanketing the houses as the sun rose up from behind the enormous mountains. They were hoping to finish what they'd started and thus they had set up position in a place where they could see Bladefeather's pagoda and could aim at it just nicely from where they were standing. Romeo and Vladek were priming a rocket launcher, the very weapon that Vladek had used to destroy the Pagoda of Prosperity last night. Romeo loaded a rocket carefully into the barrel of the launcher and Vladek prepared it for activation, clocking it loudly. Dak peered out into the distance. His keen eyesight allowed him to see quite clearly out into the distance and he could see that Chun-Nan was beginning to wake up and Matilda and Tai weren't around. They had spied on the village before going to bed last night and they knew where the royals were staying so they knew that Bladefeather's pagoda was the place to aim. Given how Matilda and Tai were nowhere in sight, it was safe to assume that they were still in the pagoda.

"It appears that the royals are still asleep." announced Dak "I do not see them anywhere."

"How can you possibly see from all the way here?" gasped Romeo.

"Spiders pride themselves on their rather prodigious sight." explained Dak "We can see from miles away. Although from here, I will admit it might be better if I was a little closer and could see a little better."

"Oh well, it's far too early for two fully-grown adults like them to be up." noted Vladek as he made the final preparations on the rocket launcher "They'll still be asleep believe me. I've never ever seen an adult up at a time as early as this."

"If you say so Vladek." said Romeo, closing the crate of missiles that they had with them to load the rocket launcher "I just hope that that stupid hedgehog isn't here. It's bad enough with help from that bratty little fox who squealed on us that Sonic stopped us from ruining the Annual Acorn Awards last year, we don't need him ruining this assassination attempt."

"I highly doubt that the blue hedgehog is here." said Dak "He will be dealing with more seminal matters back at his home. He will not be here."

"I hope you're right Dak otherwise if you're wrong I may have to get the bug spray out." snorted Vladek, standing up and resting the missile launcher on his shoulder.

Dak snarled at Vladek, not pleased to receive a threat like that. The mere mention of the words "bug spray" made Dak think back to the gassing of his and Gina's children. How the loss of their kids still burned in the back of Dak's head like a raging fire! Vladek stood at the edge of the rock and he began to aim the rocket launcher at Bladefeather's pagoda. Vladek settled down on one knee and he peered in the targeting scope on the side of the launcher. He had the rocket launcher aimed squarely at the pagoda and he prepared to pull the trigger. A big breath blew out from Vladek's mouth as he aimed carefully. He made sure that everything was perfect and then, carefully, he curled his claw around the trigger to the rocket launcher.

"Careful buddy, you don't want to miss." said Romeo wearily "It's bad enough we didn't kill them last night, we can't do with another miss."

"Don't worry Romeo, there's no way I will miss them this time." crowed Vladek "They're sleeping like babies and the pagoda is squarely in sight. How can I possibly miss?"

"Don't get in over your head reptile!" snapped Dak "It is compulsory that the assassination goes as planned!"

"Yeah, yeah, sure, sure." sighed Vladek "Get ready, I'm going to fire any second now." he added, looking back through the targeting scope.

Romeo and Dak stood back as Vladek prepared the rocket launcher for fire. Vladek smiled himself as his claw firmly curled around the trigger and prepared to pull it. What an opportunity this was! He had a clear shot at Matilda and Tai. There was no way this assassination could go wrong! Vladek chuckled to himself as he pictured the

destruction of the pagoda in his foul little mind. A political landmark going up in flames was always something he enjoyed, especially when he was the one who caused it to go up in flames. Vladek snapped back into reality and he pulled the trigger. The rocket launcher blasted out the deadly missile that had been loaded into it, fumes trailing out behind it an a loud squeal emitting from the missile as it fired. Romeo and Dak covered their ears to drown out the deafening noise of the launching missile. Vladek cackled like a hyena as he watched the missile rocket towards the pagoda. Anyone walking around in Chun-Nan at this moment immediately panicked as they saw the missile heading towards the village. They instantly thought of last night and how fate seemed to be repeating itself. Unlike last night, nothing was going to get destroyed for Sonic, Sally and Kai saw the missile coming directly towards them, roaring louder than a pride of lions. The three Mobians nearly jumped out of their fur in shock as soon as they saw the missile.

"Missile!" screamed Sonic "Sal, the warp ring NOW!"

Sally was already reaching into her vest pocket as Sonic yelled that. She was in such a hurry though she nearly dropped the warp ring. She just managed to keep hold of it though and she quickly tossed it up into the air just in front of the missile. The missile had only a few meters left to cross as the warp ring opened up. A portal opened up inside the warp ring and the missile whizzed straight through it, vanishing from sight as it did so. The trial of smoke left behind it disappeared into the morning air as the missile vanished and everything fell into a tense silence. Some citizens had witnessed this miracle and they all cheered happily. Sally gasped with relief, pleased to see her plan had worked.

"Oh my gosh, I can't believe how close that was!" gasped Sally "I thought I was gonna miss it!"

"Well you didn't Sally-girl and now you've saved the emperor and princess!" congratulated Sonic, clapping the beautiful squirrel queen on the back.

"So where, pray tell, have you sent the missile my dear?" asked Kai curiously.

"Directly above the sea." explained Sally "Chun-Nan's sea to be precise. That missile won't harm anybody now. It'll just shoot straight down into the water and burn out."

"A most wise tactic my child." said Kai approvingly "You are certainly a most wise woman indeed. I admire intelligence in many a young soul."

"Thank you." said Sally, blushing with pleasure at that compliment.

Despite getting rid of the missile though, it still managed to wake up all the Royal Fighters, Bladefeather, Matilda, Tai & Mushu. The moment the noise of the missile had woken everybody up, they had gotten out of their beds and sleeping bags respectively (they all slept the night in their clothes so no need to change) and they ran out of the pagoda to see what had happened. Everybody was in a flurry over this.

"What was that noise?!" shrieked Matilda, her hair hanging loose down her shoulders and back and flapping about frantically as Matilda fretted "Another missile attack?"

"Where did it hit?" asked Bladefeather "I see no scenes of damage anywhere." he added as he observed his surroundings and saw that everything was intact.

"Is somebody attacking?" asked Tails nervously.

"Everybody, please calm down!" cried Sally hastily, waving her hands around "Somebody attempted to fire a missile at Bladefeather's pagoda, presumably a random terrorist attack or the attacker somehow knew that Matilda and Tai were in it. I got rid of the missile with our handy little warp ring so no harm has been done."

"Oh thank the ancestors!" cried Matilda with relief, brushing some of her hair out of her face "Sally, how can I ever repay you?"

"No need to." said Sally with a smile "I'm just a queen who's saving the lives of other royals. Now…since the attacker is obviously striking now, we'd best take action." she declared.

"And I know just how to do that." said Sonic, taking the warp ring off Sally "I saw where the missile came from. It came from near those mountains over there." he said, pointing at the mountains where Vladek, Romeo and Dak were attacking from "I'll warp myself over there and see who's the wise-guy behind all this."

"Be careful Sonic." said Tails wearily "You don't wanna get killed by this assassin."

"Tails, I've taken down a lot worse than a guy with a rocket launcher, what can happen?" gloated Sonic, flicking the warp ring up into the air.

The warp ring expanded to many times its size and opened up a portal to where Vladek, Romeo and Dak were stationed. Sonic leaped through the warp ring and it vanished behind him as he jumped through it. The three villains were in for a pounding once Sonic got over to them…

Over to Vladek, Romeo and Dak, the three of them had seen the missile vanish through the warp ring (they didn't really see the warp ring, just the missile vanishing) and they were speechless with horror. Their perfect attack had somehow failed?! How could this be! They had the perfect opportunity to destroy the emperor and princess of Chun-Nan! How on Mobius did the attack fail?! Vladek in particular looked like he was going to have a nervous breakdown.

"But…I don't understand!" gibbered Vladek "I had a clean shot at the pagoda! Why the hell did the missile just vanish into thin air?!"

"This country's bewitched!" shrieked Romeo "There's witchcraft going around here I just know it!"

"Preposterous, Chun-Nan may have spiritual beliefs but there is no such thing as magic." said Dak gruffly.

"Then explain why the missile just vanished into thin air you crazy spider!" shrieked Vladek.

"I do not know why the missile vanished but I am not inclined to believe it was an act of sorcery!" snapped Dak "We spiders are firm

believers that magic does not exist!"

Then suddenly, Sonic's warp ring opened up directly behind Dak and Sonic whizzed out of it and pile-dived Dak in the back. Dak cried out in pain as he was suddenly thrown callously off his legs and heavily onto his stomach. Sonic stood on Dak's back, pressing his head down with his foot and he smirked at Romeo and Vladek.

"Alright then, who's ready for a supersonic smash-up?" he announced at the top of his voice.

"THE HEDGEHOG!" cried Romeo "Shoot to kill, shoot to kill!" he screamed, bouncing up and down frantically and pointing at Sonic.

Vladek threw down the rocket launcher for a rocket launcher is hardly a logical choice for really close combat and he whipped out a pair of pistols. To make himself more intimidating, he raised his frill and hissed menacingly. Sonic scoffed at the guns and he jumped out of the way as Vladek tried to shoot him. The shots missed Sonic by a long shot and the hedgehog dropkicked Vladek in the head. The frill-necked lizard was brought down onto his back and he grimaced in pain, rubbing his head vigorously to ease the pain. Romeo threw a punch at Sonic but Sonic ducked and then uppercut Romeo in the chin. Sonic then grabbed Romeo's arms and threw him into Vladek. Dak picked himself up and he tried to web Sonic up but Sonic heard him get up so he leaped out of the way as Dak spun a web. He ended up webbing Romeo and Vladek up in a big webby-cocoon because of this. Romeo and Vladek were completely trapped in the web and try as they might, they couldn't get free. The two reptiles growled furiously, their glares directed squarely at Dak. Dak just hid his face in shame, embarrassed at that little goof-up of his. Dak hated messing up, it embarrassed him greatly, especially when Gina was around. Sonic spin-dashed Dak directly in his abdomen and made him cry out in pain. Dak gave off a shrill screech of fury and he swung one of his legs at Sonic. Sonic dodged but Dak managed to get him with another leg. Sonic was thrown down onto the rock by that smack and Dak raised his arms, hoping to plunge his bladed hands into Sonic's puny body and finish him off. Sonic dodged the attacks though by rolling out of his way and Sonic kicked Dak in the gut. Dak doubled over, coughing and spluttering hoarsely and Sonic jumped back up onto his feet. He spun around

and kicked Dak in the face. The kick threw Dak over onto his back and Sonic finished him off by stomping on his head and knocking him out. Dak lay there on the rock, completely unconscious and out of commission. Sonic dusted his hands off and he strode over to Vladek and Romeo. The two reptiles could only look helplessly back at Sonic, wondering what the hedgehog was going to do to them. Sonic put his fists on his hips in a stern manner and he eyed the discarded rocket launcher that was nearby. Just seeing the rocket launcher lying there told him everything he needed to know and he glared at Romeo and Vladek.

"So you guys are the ones who blew up Matilda's home last night and tried to blow up Bladefeather's a moment ago!" growled Sonic "Well all I can say to you scaly scoundrels is how dare you!"

He grabbed Vladek and Romeo by their necks and jammed his face into theirs.

"Matilda was having the party of a life time last night! She even got engaged with her boyfriend and was supposed to be celebrating such a joyous event and then you heartless cretins went and blew up her pagoda and made it the worst night of her life! How could you?!"

"Because we're doing it for a good cause!" snapped Romeo "Policy should be eradicated and even you know that!"

"Oh sure I do…if I didn't have any common sense!" snapped Sonic "So where's Lord Sycorax and why is Dak the Spider working with you?"

"Dak is working with us because he's group, the Spiders of Anarchy, have joined forces with the Region of Rebellious Reptiles to eradicate all governments and put an end to politics forever." explained Vladek "As for where's Lord Sycorax, you can stuff it in your mouth and swallow it! We're not telling you that!"

"Fine then, I guess you want a nice plummet to certain death then?" said Sonic coldly, pressing his foot against Vladek and threatening to push him off the rock and send him hurling down to a very painful landing.

"You wouldn't!" cried Vladek worriedly.

"Oh wouldn't I?" said Sonic, smiling evilly at Vladek "Do you wanna test that theory? Do you seriously want to chance it with me? I may not kill but there's times I may need to make an exception…"

He then lightly began to push Vladek towards the edge of the rock. Vladek was dangerously close to falling off now. If Sonic pushed him any further then the frill-necked lizard would be going up to heaven with the angels. Vladek began to panic as his balance was beginning to falter at the hands of Sonic. Sonic really was going to kill him! Seems he underestimated the hedgehog greatly. The frill-necked lizard began to sweat and he tried to keep his balance as he felt himself tilt backwards thanks to Sonic. Romeo began to fear for Vladek's safety and he decided to squeal already.

"OK, OK! We'll talk! Leave my friend alone!" wailed Romeo like a pathetic little child.

"Thank you." said Sonic, taking his foot off Vladek and allowing him to balance properly again "So start spillin' the beans then Reptile Rebel!"

"Lord Sycorax and the rest of the region are stationed by the Great Wall of Chun-Nan!" squealed Romeo "So are the Spiders of Anarchy! Honest to the Lizard King they are!"

"See, that wasn't too hard was it?" chuckled Sonic, playfully smacking Romeo on the cheek "Now then, I'd best rile up my friends and meet up with Lord Sycorax and Gina. I look forward to smashing their faces with my shoes I do."

"What about us?" asked Vladek pathetically.

"Oh I've got an idea or two for you three…" said Sonic in an uncharacteristically cold tone of voice as he flicked up the warp ring and re-opened a portal back down to the others…

Later that day at the Great Wall of Chun-Nan, Lord Sycorax was pacing around up and down the wall nervously, his hands behind his

back and his face squarely down at the brick floor of the wall he was pacing upon. Gina was just sitting atop one of the bridge towers and looking very bored indeed. She was staring up at the sky and waiting for something to happen already. They had been waiting for Vladek, Romeo and Dak to return to them after their assassination attempt and they had not come back yet. It seemed that they were taking longer than they needed to do at this job and this was beginning to worry the two anarchists like mad. A job that took longer than needed to finish was always worrying for two evil people like them.

"Where are those three?!" wailed Sycorax, throwing his arms up in the air in fury "They should be back by now!"

"I agree my good friend, those three should have killed the emperor and princess by now." muttered Gina, casually picking her teeth with her blade like hand "I mean they don't even have that big a task to do. Just fire a rocket at the place the emperor and princess are taking refuge in now their home's destroyed and that's it, it's done. Is that too hard a task to do?"

"Shouldn't be for Romeo and Vladek!" cried Sycorax "Those two are some of my finest shooters and they're also quite efficient at their given tasks! They managed to break ME out of prison with little problems encountered*! This task should be a walk in the park for them!"

"And yet it doesn't seem to be." sighed Gina, lying down flat on her stomach and slumping with her head to one side "I have a nasty feeling that something bad has happened and we need to get involved or something."

"I'm feeling the same thing too Gina." said Sycorax with a sigh "I have a feeling we should see what's up and see if anything's gone wrong at all. But if anything went wrong, Vladek or Romeo would have called me already. They have communicators after all."

"That's probably how bad the situation is." suggested Gina "They can't call us for help. So maybe we should traipse over there and see how everything's going."

"Very well Gina, we shall do that." said Sycorax "I do hope that those pesky Royal Fighters aren't causing any interferences of any kind or I will chomp something to tiny pieces!"

Sycorax growled over the very thought of having to deal with the Royal Fighters Service again. He liked it when he had no interferences in his schemes and everything went like clockwork for him. Nothing riled him more than people getting in his way (he's a bit of a spoilsport like that). But before the two leaders could do anything at all, a warp ring opened up a few meters away from the Great Wall. Sycorax and Gina stared at the open warp ring and they wondered what it was for they had never seen a warp ring before. They jumped down from the wall and came closer to the warp ring, wondering if something was going to happen. And to their amazement something did happen. To their dismay, it was something they didn't want to happen. Sonic the Hedgehog stepped out of the warp ring and he stood before Sycorax and Gina with a rather smug expression on his face. Sycorax and Gina both jumped backwards and they glared at Sonic.

"The hedgehog!" cried Sycorax "The Royal Fighters are here! Chun-Nan must have called them for help or something!"

"Ehk! Wrong!" sneered Sonic "We were already here when you guys decided to ruin the princess's very special birthday party last night and we stopped your goons from killing them earlier this morning!"

"Stopped our…so that's why they're taking so long!" shrieked Gina worriedly "Sonic must have beaten them into submission before they could carry out the attempt!"

"Exactly spider-girl." crowed Sonic "And speak of the devil, here they come now…" he added, stepping to the side and allowing some more Mobians to emerge from the still open warp ring.

As Sonic stepped aside, the rest of the Royal Fighters emerged from the warp ring in single file with Sally leading. Matilda, Tai, Kai, Bladefeather and Mushu were with them and they were furious upon seeing Gina the Spider-Queen and they also gave Lord Sycorax a nasty glare for he was working with her. Vector was carrying the still webbed-up Vladek and Romeo under his arms and the other Royal

Fighters were carrying Dak, who had all his legs tied up. The Royal Fighters and Chun-Nan residents lined up together and stood before Sycorax and Gina, the warp ring closing up behind them as they stood there and Sally caught it and put it away. Sycorax and Gina stared in horror at their captive comrades. Their fears were true, they had been taking too long because they had been subdued and the Royal Fighters had taken them captive. They had to admit, they never would have expected the heroes to have done something like that. Matilda stood forward, her face contorting with rage and she pointed fiercely at Sycorax and Gina.

"You two scoundrels are the ones who ruined my birthday part last night and destroyed my home!" she snarled "I'm disgusted you could do something so dishonourable and heartless! I should beat you both senseless for doing something like this to me! But because I'm a patient woman who works pragmatically, I am not going to do something so brutish. I am instead going to make a proposition… you both surrender and face a prison sentence or your comrades will remain in our captivity."

"Who the heck do you think you are talking to ME like that you foolish woman?!" snarled Sycorax "You do realize how dumb you sound, trying to sound all tough and powerful and…"

"Watch it Sycorax, if you get Matilda angry she can kick your butt all the way back to the swamp you were raised in." said Gina smoothly "Matilda's no push-over…she knows kung-fu and is one of Chun-Nan's mightiest warriors."

"Gina's right you know!" yelled Ruben "I've even seen her fight so if you know what's good for you then you'll comply to our offer!"

Sycorax could hardly believe his ears. A kung-fu princess? What an amazing thing to come across! He'd never seen a kung-fu princess before so this should be interesting for him. Sycorax smiled over the very idea of killing Matilda. Killing a kung-fu princess would be infinitely more fascinating than killing an ordinary princess that's for sure. Bladefeather turned to Sonic.

"So who may I ask is the vulgar crocodile with Gina?" he asked.

"That's Lord Sycorax." explained Sonic "He's Vector's dad and he leads an anarchistic group of reptiles. One of his buddies tells me he and Gina have teamed up so we've got two anarchistic groups for the price of one here."

"I see." said Bladefeather "So how did they come together I must question?"

"I can answer that easily." said Lord Sycorax with a big smile on his face "A couple of days ago, I came here hoping to wipe out Chun-Nan's government. I'd been in hiding for a while since the failed attempt at ruining the Annual Acorn Awards and I decided to come out and attack. I ran into a web-trap laid by the Spiders of Anarchy by accident though. Gina came out to eat me alive but I pleaded with her to spare my life, revealing that I'm an anarchist just like she is. She…was impressed to say the least and she decided to let me live. So we formed an alliance and now here we are, the Region of Rebellious Reptiles and the Spiders of Anarchy joining forces to wipe out politics forever!"

"As if you weren't a big enough pain with all your reptilian buddies." muttered Vector "You just HAD to get spiders as well you piece of scum!"

"You should know better than to talk to your father like that!" snarled Sycorax.

"Dude, you're evil. Vector can talk to you how he likes." snorted Sonic "And besides, if you two are hoping to wipe out Chun-Nan's government…then where the heck where you during the tyranny of Enerjak the other day?** I mean Chun-Nan was vulnerable and all during that time. Matilda was even in prison and insane! Where were you during that time?"

Sycorax and Gina looked at each other as if they had an embarrassing secret to tell everybody and then they turned their attention back to the others.

"We were hiding." explained Gina "The earthquakes scared us into hiding and hearing all about this "Enerjak" being made us reluctant to come out. In case we fell victim to his curse like this country did."

"Wow…you lot really are cowards." sneered Sonic "I mean even Cosmo was brave enough to help us fight against Enerjak."

"Shut up!" yelled Lord Sycorax defensively "We're here now, plotting death on Chun-Nan's government, that's all that matters now! And another thing…I'm surprised to see Mushu the Iguana standing among you and glaring evilly at me. Didn't think I'd ever see another region deserter after Vector." he added, glaring at Mushu.

uilty and he looked down at the ground in shame. Vector and Bladefeather stood by him and instantly began questioning him.

"You're a region deserter as well?!" exclaimed Vector.

"You…were one of them?!" blurted Bladefeather "Explain yourself at once Mushu!"

"Uh, he can't. He can't speak remember?" noted Sonic.

Mushu however used one method that he had in order to communicate to Bladefeather and Vector. Using sign language, he managed to tell Bladefeather everything. Bladefeather read his signs and understood what he meant.

"Three…years ago…you…were…approached…by…the region… and…Sycorax…tried…to…goad…you…into…joining… them." read Bladefeather as Mushu signed out and mimicked actions to him with his arms, hands and head "You…nearly…fell…for…his…lies…but… you…discovered his…true…motives…and…abandoned him."

Mushu nodded as he finished his sign language communication.

"Well done you!" cried Vector, clapping Mushu on the back happily "I'm proud of you for doing that! You give reptiles a better image you do!"

Mushu smiled, happy to hear such a compliment. It gave him great honour to think that he gives reptiles a better image by abandoning the region. How he relished the fact he left the region when he had the chance! Sycorax just frowned at Mushu but he said nothing about it. The Royal Fighters refocused their attention back on Sycorax and Gina.

"We're digressing. Do you accept our offer or not?" asked Matilda sternly.

"We decline of course!" snapped Sycorax "I am not relinquishing my freedom just to save my two best comrades! I'll fight you for them if I have to!"

"And I'll fight you for Dak!" yelled Gina.

"Very well, you have chosen your fate." said Matilda coldly "Don't say I didn't give you a better option to choose…"

"Cool!" cried Sonic happily "Royal Fighters, let's kick some reptile and spider butts!"

The Royal Fighters seemed all too happy to be given such a task, especially the Chun-Nan residents after what the Region of Rebellious Reptiles and Spiders of Anarchy had done to them. Lord Sycorax and Gina glared at the Mobians, clearly looking like they were ready to give them all a good beating for foiling their plans, and they called forth their comrades to even the odds.

"Reptiles!" yelled Sycorax.

"Spiders!" yelled Gina.

"Come forth and attack!" they both yelled together.

Just after they yelled that, a horde of reptiles wearing region armour and a swarm of scarlet red spiders all came charging over the Great Wall of Chun-Nan and running over to meet their masters. Sonic eyed all the reptiles and spiders that the Royal Fighters were now up against, his confidence not the least bit shaken by the sheer number of reptiles and spiders they had to fight now. After all, at this point in time, numbers were just numbers to Sonic. Nothing more. He'd taken down huge numbers of cronies before so this was nothing he hadn't experienced before and nothing he certainly couldn't handle. Sonic cracked his knuckles and bent down in a battle ready stance.

"Alright…it's party time." he said smoothly.

Sonic then curled up into a ball and launched the first attack. He

spin-dashed both Gina and Sycorax in the heads and knocked them both down onto their sides quite callously. The two leaders winced in pain as their skulls began aching like mad from the attack. The Royal Fighters all ran forward to attack with the reptiles and spiders running in to attack as well. What resulted was an enormous battle that could give even the historical Battle of Hastings a run for its money in terms of how large it was. Heroes and villains clashed and fought furiously just inches away from the Great Wall of Chun-Nan (Emperor Tai obviously is staying out of this one with the occasional nerve-freeze sneak attack planned in his mind). Amy Rose whipped out her powerful Piko-Piko hammer and she walloped an enormous spider in the face, causing it to spit out some oozy green blood from its mouth as it was hit. The spider screeched a shrilling, ear-piercing screech at Amy and it tried to slash her with its legs. Amy blocked the attacks with the head of her hammer and she hammered the spider in its legs. The spider was brought down onto its belly by the attack and it screeched in pain. Amy hammered it on the head to knock it out and put it out of the battle. She flipped her hair in a preening manner at the knocked-out spider that lay before her and she ran off to fight another spider. Knuckles ran through the battling crowds and he decided to try his luck against a huge muscle-bound chameleon in Reptile Rebel armour. The chameleon punched at Knuckles but Knuckles dodged the punch and he socked the chameleon directly in its face. The chameleon was taken aback by such a powerful punch, especially coming from an echidna, and he rubbed his cheek, wondering if the pain would ever ease due to how much it hurt. Knuckles attacked the chameleon again, upper-cutting it in the chin and then slugging it in the gut. That punch to the gut sent the chameleon hurling backwards like a thrown rock and he crashed back-first into the Great Wall. The impact of the crash, amazingly enough, wasn't enough to do any damage to the enormous, long stretching wall that loomed above the battle. Tails flew around some reptiles, kicking them in the heads and knocking them down as he flew past them and he kept well out of the way of the slashing spiders. Sonic just did what he did best, spin-dashing as many enemies as possible. He spin-dashed through a bunch of spiders and reptiles, sending many of them hurling into the air and crashing down on the ground very heavily. This was just another dose of fun time for Sonic and he was loving it, knocking down spiders and reptiles like skittles as he spin-dashed through them like

a bowling ball. Cream and Cosmo double-teamed against as spider with Cream carrying Cosmo by the arms and swinging her back and forth, allowing Cosmo to kick the spider squarely in the middle of its face. Cream put Cosmo down and on the ground and Cosmo picked up some stones to throw at the spider, making sure to hit the joints on its legs so that the spider's legs would bend in and make it wince and lean down on the ground. The spider cried out as its legs folded up in pain and Cream made it even worse by throwing Cheese squarely at the spider's head. Cheese walloped the spider's head and the spider screeched a terrible screech of agony. Cream and Cosmo gave a high-five for their teamwork (bet that's an adorable image isn't it?). Wilson and Mandy were teaming up against a pair of reptiles. Wilson was sword-fighting with a skinny gecko and Mandy was boxing with a rather tough salamander. Mandy's brass knuckle attachments gave her the upper hand of course for her punches were harder than the salamander's with them on. The salamander began to falter as Mandy threw hard punch after hard punch and eventually, Mandy knocked it out with a punch to the chin. The salamander lay down on the ground staring up at the sky wondering what time of day it was. Mandy sniffed at it and ran off to fight another foe. Wilson and the gecko were sword-fighting quite roughly but Wilson's double-bladed weapon allowed him the victory to this battle for as the gecko clashed blades with him, Wilson used the other blade to scratch him across the arm and make him wince. Wilson kicked the gecko down onto his back and he snatched its sword away. He tossed the sword over his shoulder…and ended up skewering an unlucky spider with it (good grief!).

"The Region of Rebellious Reptiles really hasn't changed has it?" he said to himself "They're still pathetically easy to defeat."

"Couldn't agree more handsome." said Mandy, punching a spider in the fangs as hard as she could "These spiders are no harder too."

"These guys are gonna regret destroying Matilda's pagoda when we're done with them!" declared Sonic, kicking down another reptile as he ran past it.

Wilson and Mandy gave Sonic a thumbs up agreeably. Over to Bunnie and Geoffrey, they were teaming up against a reptile and a spider respectively. Bunnie fought the spider, avoiding it as it fired

torpedoes of web at her from its abdomen in an attempt to subdue her and she walloped the spider in the abdomen with her robotical arm. The spider screamed for the abdomen is a rather sensitive area on a spider and hitting it really does leave it in a great deal of pain. Bunnie walloped it in the head, knocking it over onto its back as she hit it and then she elbow-thrusted it in the gut, making the spider wheeze in pain as all the air in its lungs was about sucked out from that elbow-thrust. Geoffrey was fighting a snake and he showed the snake why a man with limbs will always prevail in battle. He grabbed the snake by its tail and he swung it around as if he was swinging a lasso around. The snake screamed an hilarious scream as it was swung around and Geoffrey let go of it, sending it flying across the battlefield. The snake hurled over the wall and landed with a heavy crash on the other side. Geoffrey couldn't help but slap his knee and laugh at what he did to the snake. Ruben cut loose in this battle, throwing streams of water at various spiders and reptiles and sending them slipping and sliding into the Great Wall of Chun-Nan. Ruben was pretty ticked after all, especially since Chun-Nan was his home so he wanted to make the reptiles and spiders pay ever so dearly for ruining Matilda's birthday last night. As Ruben did that, Sora fought off a spider that tried to attack her with its legs. Sora dodged its attacks and she threw an orb at the spider's eye, blinding it and making it shriek in pain. Sora then jumped up and kicked the spider in the neck, making it gag in pain. Unfortunately, a skink sneaked up behind Sora and grabbed her by the tail. Ruben was quick to save her though by squirting the skink away. Sora glanced over at Ruben and smiled at him, earning a little blush from the water-panther. Sora had saved him during Operation: Double Trouble and now Ruben had returned the favour in this battle. Shade Blade-Rushed a giant tortoise in the gut and brought him down onto his shell. The tortoise tried feebly to get back up but as you know, a tortoise can't get up so easily. Shade leaned down, grabbed the tortoise by its leg and she spun it around on its shell. The tortoise cried out as it was spun around like a Frisbee and Shade kicked the spinning tortoise towards some Reptile Rebels. The result was a comical moment of the tortoise sending reptiles flying all over the place as he hit them. As straight-faced as Shade usually was, she couldn't help but smile at that. Sally and Nicole were double-teaming some reptiles and spiders together with Sally butting and slashing them with her staff and Nicole using her fighting

skills to bring down her opponents. The two girls were performing quite admirably in this battle and the reptiles and spiders could hardly keep up with them. Espio and Charmy fought off some reptiles and insects together with Espio using his ninjutsu and Charmy using his stinger. Espio punched and kicked some reptiles away and Charmy stung some spiders in their abdomen and legs. Vector was, obviously, fighting against Lord Sycorax (did I even need to tell you that?). Vector and Sycorax punched at each other and Sycorax slugged Vector in the gut. Vector lashed out and chomped on Sycorax's arm, destroying his strength-enhancing arm gauntlet with one single bite. Vector chomped on the other one and broke it so Sycorax was now weaker and back to being on par with him. Sycorax growled furiously at Vector and he walloped him in the jaws with his fists. Vector walloped him back in the gut and then uppercut Sycorax in the air. Sycorax came down with a crash on top of the Great Wall. As for Matilda, Bladefeather, Mushu and Kai, they were all joining in the battle and they were taking reptiles and spiders out by the dozen thanks to their kung-fu abilities. They were like snowploughs pushing through snow, sending reptiles and spiders flying as they attacked them. Matilda was fighting Gina and she absolutely unleashed hell on her, not holding back even for a minute and punching her all over her body. Gina cried out furiously as Matilda beat her viciously and she tried to fight back. She slashed at Matilda with her scythe-like hands but Matilda blocked all her attacks and she pile-dived Gina in the gut, making her scream in pain.

"This is for my home and for dishonouring all my guests at my party last night!" yelled Matilda as she did a graceful twirl in mid-air and she roundhouse kicked Gina into the Great Wall.

Gina crashed into the wall just underneath where Lord Sycorax was lying and she groaned in pain.

"Ugh…those heathens are tough!" she grunted "We're losing out here!"

"I can see that." muttered Sycorax "But I'm not inclined to retreat yet. I've got an idea…"

Sycorax leaped down from the Great Wall and he landed beside

Gina. He whispered into Gina's ear and the spider smiled at his idea. She liked the sound of it definitely. Gina and Sycorax picked themselves up and Gina called out to the spiders.

"Spiders! Every single one of you, web up the heroes and make sure you catch them!" yelled Gina.

The spiders all understood the order and every single spider aimed their abdomen at the Mobians and started spouting out webs in every direction. Gina joined in with the web-spinning for she wanted a piece of the action too. The reptiles all fell back to avoid getting accidentally caught by them as web began spinning all around the battlefield. Now one spider spinning webs is bad enough but there's fifty spiders, not including Gina, Dak and the one Amy knocked out, on the battlefield and ALL spinning webs at once! Not even the Royal Fighters could manage all of those webs spinning at once! The heroes suddenly found themselves getting webbed up as so much web began spinning around them and tangling them up. Sonic tried to cleave through the web but due to how much web was being thrown over him, he found himself being anchored down and unable to get back up. Even the kung-fu masters found themselves getting stuck down by the webs. The spiders kept spinning and spinning until eventually, the heroes were all completely stuck down to the ground and unable to move. They all struggled helplessly but try as they might, they couldn't get free. Gina smiled with satisfaction at the trussed up heroes and Lord Sycorax ran over to free Romeo, Vladek and Dak. He freed them all and they all joined in with the gloating session the reptiles and spiders were now having with the heroes.

"A valiant effort heroes but now you're all webbed up and at our mercy." purred Gina "What a way to go isn't it?"

"You scum…let us go and fight with honour!" screamed Matilda "This is a cowardly gambit that will forever shame your name Gina!"

"As if she didn't shame her name already." muttered Sonic.

"Wow, even when they're defeated they still dare to insult us." sniffed Sycorax "How pathetic. Now Gina, I think an execution is in mind don't you?"

"I do indeed Sycorax." purred Gina "And YOU are joining them!"

She then proceeded to web up Lord Sycorax! Sycorax cried out as he was webbed up to his head and he fell down on his side, squirming furiously and trying to get free. Sonic and friends were rather surprised to see this. Gina was turning against Sycorax? Some alliance they formed wasn't it? Sycorax glared at Gina furiously.

"You traitor! Release me at once!" snarled Sycorax.

"I don't think so." sneered Gina "You see, I liked our alliance and all but I don't like how you want to terminate policy altogether. I only want this country to be ruled by spiders, I don't want to terminate policy and governing and have a world without democracy. That kind of world would be catastrophic. So as you can see, I can't let you live Sycorax otherwise you'll just try and terminate me and my spider government."

"Why you slimy little…reptiles, kill her at once!" bellowed Lord Sycorax.

"Dare try it and you'll be webbed up too." threatened Gina before the reptiles could even get out their weapons "I'd run away and never come back if I were you."

The reptiles looked at each other and decided that it'd be best not to do anything about it. They knew better than to try and take out a bunch of spiders that could easily web them up and be done with it. They were all about to run away and leave Sycorax to his fate until something happened. A loud ripping sound was heard as if a giant piece of paper had just been torn in two and then, spreading out in the sky above and looming brightly above everybody was…a steak of light! The exact same streak of light that had taken Sonic away and brought him to Mobius Nega! The only difference was this one was a couple of feet wider than the one that had taken Sonic away, suggesting something ominous and possibly dangerous about the streak of light. Everybody stared up at the streak of light with reactions being surprise for the villains and kung-fu warriors for they'd never seen it before and horror for the heroes.

"Not again!" exclaimed Sonic.

"Don't worry, the webbing will keep us down!" cried Sally "We won't get sucked up by it!"

And Sally couldn't be more right on that for the streak of light began tugging on the spiders and reptiles with an invisible force that was like millions of hands reaching out to grab and pull at something. It tried pulling on the heroes but the masses of webbing that had been spun to keep them down by the whole group of spiders was too strong for it. While the webbing was being tugged at, it was still sticky enough to keep the heroes safe from the streak of light. The spiders and reptiles were not so lucky though. They were all sucked up towards the paranormal activity that is the tear in the sky, screaming bloodcurdling screams as they were sucked up into the aluminous light. Romeo and Vladek ran towards Lord Sycorax and they picked him up quickly before they could be sucked up by the light. They managed to get out of range and they bolted it before anything else could happen. Gina tried to get away but the light was too strong and she soon found herself being sucked up into it, screaming at the top of her lungs as she was snatched up from the earth. Dak was taken in too, crying out in horror as the tear in the sky sucked him up with Gina. In a matter of seconds, all the spiders and reptiles were gone and the streak of light disappeared into nothingness, restoring the sky to normal and leaving to trace of its existence. Everything was normal once again. The heroes were still stuck to the ground in web although some of it had been taken up by the streak of light, allowing them to move a bit more. Matilda was wide-eyed and open-mouthed at what had just happened. She could barely keep her eyes off the sky before she finally snapped back into reality and she looked over at Sonic.

"What in the name of Chun-Nan was that?!" she gasped.

"A mystery." said Sonic grimly "Even we're not entirely sure what it is."

"I will say, for once I'm glad that thing showed up." said Sally "It saved us all from a grisly fate."

"It most certainly did." said Bladefeather "I wonder if it was a miracle

bestowed upon us by the ancient gods that watch over us?"

"Hardly." said Tails with a grave expression on his face "This isn't the first time it's happened. One took Sonic away the other day."

"It did?" gasped Matilda "Then…how is he back here then?"

"Shadow saved him with a Chaos Control." explained Tails "I can guarantee Gina, her cronies and the Region of Rebellious Reptiles are gone for good though. We're certainly not going zone-hopping to save them."

"Good." said Bladefeather "Those insidious canailles don't deserve to traipse upon Mobius's soil due to how wretched and dishonourable they are."

"Yeah, pity Sycorax and two of his men got away." sighed Vector "I'll get them next time though."

"First things first though…" said Sonic "How the heck are we gonna get outta this web?!" he cried out, taking note of the fact they were STILL webbed up.

"Uh…maybe I could help?" suggested Tai helpfully.

He had been on the sidelines the entire time and thus, had been the only one not to get webbed up by the spiders (they were too busy focusing on the heroes to bother with Tai). Tai wandered over and started tearing at the strands of web with his hands, hoping to free everybody from its silky grasp so they could properly celebrate this victory of theirs…

Meanwhile, Romeo and Vladek had taken Sycorax to a rather large cave and they had set to cutting him free from his web. Romeo took out a dagger and cut through Sycorax's web, freeing him and allowing him to stand up and move freely once again. Sycorax flexed his arms and he patted Romeo and Vladek on the head.

"Thank you for that boys." said Sycorax "No wonder I made you both my second-in-commands."

"You're welcome my lord." said Romeo loyally.

"I'm sad to report though that the Region of Rebellious Reptiles is no more." announced Vladek "A weird streak of light appeared in the sky and…the entire region sans us was sucked up into it. They're all gone sir. Our group is no more."

"I know." growled Sycorax fiercely "I witnessed that as I was being carried away. Unbelievable, I've lost my entire region and now only three of us are left! HOW CAN WE ERADICATE POLICY FOREVER IF THERE'S ONLY THREE OF US LEFT TO FIGHT AGAINST IT?!" he bellowed at the top of his voice in rage.

Then suddenly, as if something had heard him, a faint roar came out from the cave they were standing near. Sycorax jumped in surprise when he heard that roar and he peered down the cave.

"What was that?!" he cried out in alarm.

"Shall we investigate sir?" asked Romeo.

"Yes, let's." said Sycorax eagerly "Maybe there's reptiles down there I can get together to make a new region. Let's go."

So with that said the three reptiles all began to trek down into the cave, following the faint sound of roaring that was coming from it. What they were going to find was beyond any reptile they had ever seen before…

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles***

**** See *Heroes of Mobius: The Movie* , a DeviantArt exclusive chapter of this story**

What has Lord Sycorax come across I wonder? Join me next

time for things get fiery hot as we enter a day that Sonic and friends will never forget...and what of the streak of light? The mystery deepens as the story continues...

Feel free to leave a review and say what you thought to this chapter if you please. :)

Day of the Dragons

Story 154: The Day of the Dragons

Chun-Nan had seen many an eventful day in its time and today had been VERY eventful indeed. Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends had found out that the Region of Rebellious Reptiles had teamed up with the Spiders of Anarchy to assassinate Emperor Tai and Princess Matilda and then the heroes had gotten into a big fight with the two groups of anarchy which almost ended with them being a spider's lunch. Fortuitously enough though, a streak of light appeared in the sky and sucked up the entire region sans Lord Sycorax and his two right-hand men Romeo the Chameleon and Vladek the Frill-Necked Lizard and the whole Spiders of Anarchy got sucked up too, including Gina and Dak. Sycorax, Romeo and Vladek were the only Reptile Rebels left and they were pretty desperate. They couldn't wipe out politics and democracy if there was only three of them. They needed a new army and they needed it badly. At this moment though, Sycorax, Vladek and Romeo had heard a faint roar coming from inside a cave they had stopped to rest by and they had gone down into the cave to see what it was. The cave went down pretty deeply and it soon became too dark to see as Lord Sycorax, Romeo and Vladek trekked down and down into the cave. However, Lord Sycorax's helmet visor came with a night-vision feature so he could still see where he was going as they kept going down the cave. Romeo and Vladek weren't wearing helmets though so they still couldn't see where they were going. Sycorax took them by the arms and kept them close so they wouldn't get lost in the cave. He didn't have time to start looking for them if he lost them after all. As they pressed on, they couldn't hear anymore roaring, suggesting that either they had been hearing things or the thing they had heard had simply gone silent. Just as Sycorax began to doubt himself about the fact there was anything down there at all, he heard another roar coming from further down the cave. That confirmed there definitely was something in the cave and Sycorax had not been just hearing things and the fact this roar was louder suggested they were getting closer to the thing. Sycorax, Romeo and Vladek kept walking quietly and carefully through the cave until finally, they

found something that suggested there was something down there after all. There was a cave mouth at the end of the already long, dark tunnel they were trekking down and there was a dim orange light emitting from inside of it. The roars were coming from inside the cave mouth. Sycorax, Romeo and Vladek entered through the cave mouth and they gasped in amazement at what they were face-to-face with. Through the cave mouth was an enormous steel object that appeared to be a prison of some kind, the multitude of chains wrapped around it and padlocked shut further indicating it was indeed a prison. The prison was the size of a living room on the surface but it stretched down a long distance, making it a rather long and tall prison and suggesting there was a big thing kept inside it. It was hexagon shaped too, giving it an unusual look and the room it was in was alit with an ominous orange glow, suggesting a fiery pit was licking away underneath the prison. On top of the prison was a rotating circular object that looked as if it was the very thing that opened it. The loud roaring Sycorax had heard was coming from within the prison itself. Romeo and Vladek were gobsmacked at what they were looking at whereas Sycorax rubbed his hands delightedly and smiled to himself.

"Oooooh…what serendipity this is!" cackled Sycorax delightedly "Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes! This is the greatest day of my marvellous life this is! Hallelujah, we've hit the jackpot!"

He continued to laugh like a demented hyena over this find whereas Romeo and Vladek looked at each other, their faces the embodiment of obfuscation. Had their crazy leader finally lost his marbles once and for all? Why in the name of the lizard king was he so happy about finding a prison? They didn't see much reason for being so delighted over it. They looked back at Sycorax.

"Uh boss…when do you want the asylum keepers to come and collect you?" asked Romeo.

"You seem to have lost it sir." said Vladek "Why on Mobius are you so happy about this thing? It doesn't look like much."

Sycorax stopped celebrating and he shot a death glare at his two minions as if he was about to chomp their heads off for daring to think he was insane (not that he isn't already of course. Heh, heh.).

His face went redder than the room the prison was contained in.

"You…you dare to question my sanity?!" snarled Sycorax, throttling both Romeo and Vladek furiously and shaking their heads like mad "You have the nerve to think that I am insane?! Who do you think you two are?!"

Romeo and Vladek couldn't speak for Sycorax was throttling them too hard for them to breath any words. Sycorax let them go and they dropped down in a heap on the floor just at his feet. Sycorax folded his arms and glared down at his henchmen, his face still contorting with rage.

"This thing we have just found is the one thing I've spent my entire life looking for since the Region of Rebellious Reptiles formed!" Sycorax exposited (to you readers mostly) "That is the Legendary Seal of the Five Dragons we are looking at right now. That thing contains the last five dragons that exist on Mobius! Now can you see why I'm so happy about this?" he added with a scowl at Romeo and Vladek.

Romeo and Vladek rubbed their necks better and they stared at Sycorax in astonishment.

"Dragons?" gibbered Vladek "You mean w-w-we've j-j-just found…d-d-dragons?!"

"Impossible! The dragons went extinct years ago!" shrieked Romeo "You're pulling our legs Sycorax!"

"I'll do more than pull your sodding legs if you keep doubting my sanity you stupid idiots!" snapped Sycorax "Anyways, that's what the world wants us to think! The world wants us to believe that dragons are extinct! The dragons never truly went extinct, there are five dragons who somehow managed to gain the power of immortality during the time of the dragons so they can never die. Those dragons were instead imprisoned in a seal created by the Ancients of Chun-Nan using dead magic or something like that. They've been imprisoned in that cage for millions upon millions of years and have remained dormant since their imprisonment. I've been fascinated with this tale and I've been looking for the seal for years on end. I've

had no luck though and began wondering if it was just a myth but now here I am, looking at the seal itself and looking at an ancient piece of reptile history!"

"Wow…" gasped Vladek "I'm sorry I doubted you master."

"Me too." said Romeo "Although…legend has it that dragons have no allegiance. They're just mindless beasts who raze what they can just because they can. You seriously aren't hoping to free the dragons and get them to work for you are you?"

"That's exactly what I'm doing." announced Sycorax, grinning widely "You see, the dragons have a word of honour. "A dragon doth serveth he who releases thy dragon from thy prison". In other words, you free a dragon, it becomes your loyal servant for life. If I free the dragons, they'll worship me no doubt and I'll have the best reptiles a reptile could ask for!"

"Goodness…you free a dragon from imprisonment and they just swear loyalty to you? Awesome!" cried Vladek happily "Let's free them now!"

"How do we free them from their seal?" asked Romeo curiously.

"Like this…" crooned Sycorax darkly.

Sycorax stepped out onto the seal and he ran over to the rotating circle in the centre of it. Sycorax grabbed the circle and he began to spin it around anti-clockwise. Spinning the circle around seemed to unlock all the padlocks on the chains around the seal and the chains started to unravel from around the seal as the circle was turned around. Sycorax cackled happily as he began to unlock the seal. He could feel the dragons roaring gleefully under his feet from inside the seal as it began to open. Sycorax jumped back off the seal as it opened up and a chorus of roaring erupted out from within the seal. The last five dragons in existence were free and Mobius was going to be doomed once they took flight…

"Thanks for un-webbing us emperor." said Sonic the Hedgehog as

he brushed some thin strands off of his arms and straightened some ruffled up fur on his quills.

"You're welcome." said Emperor Dalon Tai, throwing down the last few strands of web he'd managed to tear off in order to free Sonic from it.

It had taken the emperor a while but he had finally managed to get all the heroes free from the web. Every time he freed somebody, they joined in with freeing the others so the progress had been shorter than it would have been and now all the Royal Fighters and the Chun-Nan kung-fu masters could stand up again. Everybody brushed themselves off and stretched a little, glad to be free from the web at last.

"Oh that feels good." said Mandy Mouse, stretching a little "I hope I never get webbed up again. That was just disgusting!" she added with a gag.

"Couldn't agree more honey." said Wilson the Dog, picking some web off his nose.

"I still can't believe that streak of light thingy decided to just "show up" and suck up all the reptiles and spiders." said Amy Rose, looking up at the sky as if she was expecting another one to show up all of the sudden "It's like it just…decided to show up and give us a hand. Weird isn't it?"

"It was indeed." murmured Knuckles the Echidna "First it gets rid of Sonic and then it gets rid of the Reptile Rebels and spiders? Does this thing flip-flop between good and evil or something?"

"I doubt it even has a sentient mind." said Queen Sally Acorn "It was just purely coincidence it just happened to show up at the right time to save our lives. I highly doubt it was there to save us though, it was just a random, surreal paranormal activity that just coincidentally ended up saving us. I fear though next time, it might not be for a good thing if it appears again."

"That's the thing with that streak of light." sighed Sonic "It's unpredictable. We just don't know when it's gonna show up and

what it's gonna do. I hope we find out a bit more about it and put an end to it soon for it's REALLY getting me concerned now."

"It's getting us ALL concerned." said Sally gravely "I really fear that something terrible is going to happen because of those tears in the sky."

"Something…terrible?" squeaked Matilda nervously "Oh no…I've had enough terrible things in my lifetime, I don't need anymore! I should be kicking back and relaxing with my fiancé, not worrying about something terrible happening!"

"You know what it is like my pet." said Bladefeather, putting his arms around Matilda from behind "There's no rest for the weary, especially if you live an extraordinary life."

"Indeed Bladefeather." agreed Kai Zen, Matilda's mentor "This is why we make the most of the peaceful times when we get them. They're scarce and thus, are very precious to us when they come."

Tai & Matilda both nodded agreeably. They knew all too well that Kai was right about all this.

"So…do you think another one of those "tears in the sky" as you call them will come soon?" asked Matilda, looking over at Sally.

"Maybe so." said Sally grimly "One took Scourge & Fiona away during the Devatron invasion, and that's now months ago. Then one took Sonic away a few weeks ago and now another one's appeared. It's all too likely one may show up again."

"Or if we're lucky, that might be the last time it ever happens and everything returns to normal for good." suggested Tails hopefully "It might be just one of those weird phenomenon's that finally stops after a while of happening. At least, I hope it is."

"I hope it is too." said Sonic "But until another one appears, let's focus on other things. Like helping the royals recover from last night's horror."

"And set up R.F.S. facilities that will allow Chun-Nan and The Kingdom of Acorn to remain in contact." added Sally "Before the

pagoda was destroyed, me and Tai formed an alliance between kingdoms so we could help each other."

"Aw that's awesome!" cheered Sonic happily "That's really cool that is!"

"You formed an alliance with the AcornKingdom daddy?" said Matilda in surprise "That's wonderful! That means we can come to the R.F.S.'s aid should they need it and they can come to our aid anytime now! I'm glad you two agreed on that alliance."

"I am too." said Tai brightly "So when will work on installing communication devices in the country begin?"

"As soon as you wish your honour." said Sally with a polite bow.

"I propose we start now." said Tai with a smile "The sooner we start, the better."

"Nobody's starting anything!" growled a grizzly voice that nobody was expecting to hear again so soon.

Everybody looked over to where the voice had come from and they all gasped in surprise. For there, standing before them was Lord Sycorax with Romeo and Vladek standing behind him. Lord Sycorax had a big fat smile on his hideous face, suggesting he was very happy about something. Vector the Crocodile stood forward and cracked his knuckles. When it comes to Lord Sycorax, Vector must always get first dibs on him (bet you'd feel the same way if your dad was evil).

"Well, well, well…if it isn't my moronic dad." snarled Vector "Guess he hasn't had enough being pounded into the dirt yet!"

"And just when I thought his stain upon this great country had been wiped clean." muttered Espio the Chameleon, drawing out some shuriken and itching to throw them at Sycorax.

"Get outta Chun-Nan you scaly, politic-hating freak!" yelled Charmy furiously "You don't deserve to come here you bad, bad man!"

Matilda was livid to see Sycorax here and she was all too happy to

give him a piece of her mind. She stepped forward, brushing her hair back a little and she pointed menacingly at the anarchistic crocodile.

"Lord Sycorax, you trespass upon holy ground!" growled Matilda furiously "You either stand down and surrender peacefully or things will get needlessly violent once again!"

"I'd do as she says Syco-boy." sneered Sonic "Especially since there's twenty-three of us and ONLY three of you. You've got no chance killer croc."

"Oh I think I have…" purred Sycorax darkly "Especially since I've got a big surprise for you all…"

He then turned around and put his fingers to his jaws. He whistled a VERY high-pitched whistle and just after he'd whistled, a loud roar came from nowhere and made everybody jump in surprise. Sounded like a big monster was around and that had everybody concerned for a minute. Lord Sycorax just folded his arms and smirked confidently at the heroes as out from the distance came an enormous flying shape. It soared over to where the heroes and Sycorax were and it glowered down at them, flapping its wings and remaining airborne. The Mobians stared in horror at the enormous creature that was flying before them and looking down at them with a very evil look in its eyes. The thing was a huge, crimson red dragon with enormous wings and flames emitting from its back, head, tail and just above its limbs. It had four legs with sharp claws on its feet, a huge head with horns that protruded proudly on its forehead, curved structures above its eyes and glowing yellow eyes that just teamed with eeriness. It had a forked tongue too and masses of sharp teeth in its jaws. The flames all over the dragon burned a fiery orange and it bellowed a thunderous roar that shook the ground beneath everybody's feet. The Royal Fighters were amazed and horrified to see this whereas the Chun-Nan people looked like they had just witnessed the end of the world. They were more visibly terrified than anybody at the sight of this monstrous dragon.

"A dragon?! WHERE DID LORD SYCORAX GET A DRAGON?!" screamed Amy in terror, practically losing her mind with horror over the sight of this monster.

"No way! A real live dragon?!" gasped Sonic "Well, given this is Chun-Nan dragons aren't that strange but I thought dragons were just silly make-believe!"

"Oh no Sonic, dragons are all too real…" said Matilda hoarsely, her face as white as a cloud "Dragons used to roam Mobius for many years, reigning supreme in many countries. They caused unspeakable havoc on Mobius for they had a strong feeling of power and would go out of their way to show it off and make the Mobians cower before them. The Ancients of Chun-Nan, a cult of wise mages that knew magical powers, fought against the dragons and slaughtered all but five of them. The five remaining dragons had somehow gained immortal powers so they couldn't be killed. Instead, they were imprisoned in a magical seal that could contain them easily. And now it seems the seal has been opened and the dragons are free!" she shrieked, putting her hands to her head in fear.

"So you're telling us that fiery bloke we're looking at isn't the only dragon we're dealing with love?" said a very horrified looking Geoffrey St. John.

"Yes!" gasped Matilda fearfully.

Then, as if they knew now was the time to conveniently make their appearances, four more dragons flew in onto the scene to join the fire dragon. They all lined up beside the fire dragon and glared at their opponents. One dragon was a water-powered dragon and it had a long snaky body, four wings, fins at the end of its tail, two arms with three clawed hands, a long slender head with fins on the sides and four wavy structures on the top and a long extending fin on its back. Its skin was blue like the very water it used as a weapon and it too had glowing yellow eyes. The second dragon was a lightning based dragon with a sauropod style body (long neck and tail), two wings in place of arms and lightning shaped structures on its back and head. It had four on its back, four on its face and four on the back of its head. The tip of its tail was lightning bolt shaped and its skin was black and gold in colour, all of the gold going to the lightning bolts on its body, its underbelly and its glowing eyes. The third dragon was rock based and it had thicky, lumpy skin that made it look like a cross between an Ankylosaurus and a dragon. It even

had a clubbed tail and a bony lump on its head! It had eight spikes, four on each side of its head, and four horns behind its head. It had huge clumpy legs, tiny two-clawed hands like a Tyrannosaurus and enormous wings that were strong enough to lift its already heavy body. Its skin was as brown as earth and its eyes, again, glowed a bright yellow colour. The fourth dragon was wind based and it had a long snaky body, no wings or limbs at all, a spiked harpoon like tail, waving structures on its body and a mane. It had a beak like jaw and its skin was an ice-cold blue colour. Its eyes glowed yellow just like the others. All five dragons stood there in a line, roaring loudly and making the Mobians all stand back in terror.

"Five dragons?! FIVE DRAGONS?!" screeched Amy "How can we possibly take all of them on?!"

"You can't, that's how little girl." sneered Sycorax "These five dragons are powerful beyond comprehension and they will lay waste to you all! And since I freed them from their seal, they're completely loyal to me so I can make them do whatever I wish."

"He's right unfortunately." said Kai grimly "A dragon's word of honour is it will serve anyone who frees it from imprisonment of any kind."

"Pity WE didn't free those dragons." muttered Sonic "We could use them to help us fight against evil otherwise."

"Well they're mine to command and I have one simple command for them all…" purred Sycorax menacingly "Dragons…kill them all!" he thundered, pointing at the heroes.

Like loyal drones listening to the commander, the dragons instantly obeyed their order. The fire dragon was the first to attack, landing down on the ground and breathing huge bursts of fire out from its mouth. Ruben however was quick to jump in and launch jets of water from his hands at the dragon's fire to protect his friends. His attack stalled the dragon long enough to let everybody get out of the way of the fire-breathing monster. But fire as much water as he possibly could, Ruben was fighting a battle he had no chance of winning. A puny little water panther is nothing compared to a mighty dragon. The fire dragon increased its attack and made its flames stronger, so strong in fact that poor Ruben's water powers weren't

enough to stop it. Ruben kept on trying, straining himself ever so greatly to try and beat the fire dragon but he just couldn't do it. He wasn't strong enough and the fire dragon's power was too much for him. Luckily, Sora Prower ran in and tackled him down to the ground just in time to save him from being incinerated by the dragon. Sora and Ruben could feel the searing heat of the dragon's fire just above them as it flared away over them and at the ground inches away from their sides. Sora helped Ruben back up onto his feet and they both ran for their lives.

"Oh thank you Sora!" gasped Ruben as he was helped away from the fire dragon by the young super spy "I nearly got toasted by that thing!"

"No problem." said Sora with a smile "I can't let a boy as adorable as you get fried can I?"

Ruben blushed bright red at that remark. Sora just called him "adorable". It was obvious that she had some kind of likeness for him. Maybe she was the girl Ruben had been looking for since Cosmo after all. But now was not the time to be feeling happy over a compliment like that, they had huge, monstrous dragons to deal with first. As soon as Ruben and Sora were safe, Sonic zoomed out and spin-dashed the fire dragon in its eye, making it scream a thunderous roar of pain as it was hit. Sonic was used to big bad creatures after all so he at least stood some chance against the dragons. But even Sonic would meet his match here for the water dragon came to the fire dragon's aid and blasted Sonic with a jet of water. Sonic was thrown across the terrain by the attack and he landed in a wet soggy heap at the feet of Sally Acorn. Sally instantly helped Sonic up, the hedgehog soaking to the bone as water dripped from every inch of his body.

"You alright Sonic?" asked Sally worriedly.

"Trust one of those dragons to squirt water!" whined Sonic, shaking himself dry "I hate getting wet!"

"But I thought dragons breathed fire!" exclaimed Tails "How can one of them squirt water?"

"They're elemental dragons." explained Matilda "They have powers of the elements. Fire, Water, Earth, Wind and Lightning. That is what makes them such a deadly bunch of dragons, they can burn, drown, crush, scatter and shock whatever they please and combine all of that together, you get one heck of a killer bunch of attacks!"

"Well that's just prime isn't it?" muttered Sonic "Dragons that have all those kinds of powers? Is there a way to stop them?"

"We must get to their seal and put them back into it." explained Kai "First though, we need to subdue the dragons long enough for us to get to the seal without them getting in our way. I know where the seal is so once the dragons are subdued, I will take you all to it."

"Cool." said Sonic "How do we subdue them then?"

"Just hit them as hard as you can." said Kai "I'm sorry that isn't very helpful but it's all we can do."

"Then what are we waiting for?! Let's bash some dragon brains in!" squealed Amy ecstatically, waving her hammer around like a maniac.

"You heard Amy, let's do it to it people!" cried Sonic, running off towards the water dragon since he wanted to make it pay for soaking him.

The Royal Fighters and kung-fu masters all charged towards the dragons and prepared to give them their best. Bunnie, Knuckles, Shade, Amy and Team Chaotix all decided to take on the rock dragon since that was evidently the toughest one and likely would require their expertise in strength and power to take it down. The rock dragon lowered down and it bellowed at the Mobians, it's mighty roar so powerful it blew them all away. Bunnie Rabbot however managed to pick herself up fast and fly towards the rock dragon. She converted her robotic arm into her blaster cannon and she began blasting away at the dragon's tough, rocky hide. Her blasts didn't seem to have much effect on the dragon but it still flinched and groaned as the shots hit it so Bunnie was at least hurting the dragon to some degree, just the only problem being not an awful lot. A dragon with skin as hard as rock isn't exactly easy to

penetrate after all. The rock dragon fumed at Bunnie and it opened its enormous jaws. Bunnie gasped in fright and she flew off, fearing on what was going to happen now its jaws were open. How right she was to fear what would happen now the rock dragon had opened its mouth for enormous boulders began shooting out from within the very depths of the dragon's throat. Bunnie turned around after flying away a good distance and she began shooting at the boulders to destroy them before they could hurt anyone. While the dragon fired boulders at Bunnie, Knuckles and Shade ran up to the side of the dragon and decided to launch their attacks. Shade Blade-Rushed the rock dragon's side and Knuckles climbed up it, using his spiked fists to climb up the dragon's rocky hide. Shade's attacks didn't really do much and the dragon didn't even feel Knuckles climbing up it. This was good for Knuckles so he could climb up the dragon without it trying to shake him off. Knuckles climbed up and up until he was on the dragon's back and then he climbed up its back and up towards its head. He reached its head and then Knuckles began punching it as hard as he could, fisting the dragon's rough cranium as hard as he could. This made the rock dragon stop firing boulders and start shaking its head around. Bunnie flew up to the dragon and began shooting it in the head as furiously as she could. Two Mobians bombarding your head is enough to make even a dragon cry out in pain. The rock dragon shook its head, trying to get Knuckles to fall off of it and to try and avoid Bunnie's shots. Shade decided to add more injury to the rock dragon so she Blade-Rushed its head, hoping to add more pain to the dragon. The dragon decided that it had taken all that it could and it stomped the ground with its enormous feet, making Shade and Team Chaotix shudder and fall over and Knuckles fall off of its head. Bunnie had to stop shooting just to fly down and catch Knuckles. She just managed to catch him before he could crash down onto the ground and she carried Knuckles up to the dragon's head. She threw Knuckles at the dragon's head and Knuckles crashed directly into the centre of its face. The dragon cried out in pain and it head-butted the ground to try and crush Knuckles. Knuckles managed to get out of the way before the dragon head-butted the ground, leaving a giant crater in the ground where it had head-butted. Of course, the dragon didn't feel much pain for it had a tough head. The rock dragon raised its head up and it prepared to fire more boulders at the Mobians.

As for the lightning dragon, it was attacking Wilson, Mandy, Geoffrey, Sally, Nicole and Bladefeather. The lightning dragon was by far the deadliest of the five dragons for it could not only shock you horribly with lightning powers but it could shock you even if you touch it so physical contact was out of the question. Bladefeather learned that painful lesson the hard way when he flew towards the dragon and tried to claw it in the neck with his talons. The moment he touched the dragon, he got a horrible shock and was brought down onto the ground by the shock. Bladefeather cringed as electricity crackled through his feathers painfully. The others thought it'd be wise not to touch the dragon since all that did was get them hurt. Wilson drew his arm back and he threw his spinning blade weapon at the lightning dragon, hoping it would at least sever a wing or even its head off. The dragon just zapped the weapon with a lightning bolt and disintegrated it instantly. Wilson's response to that horrifying turnout was to put his tail between his legs and flee like a frightened puppy (well he was one once until he grew up). Mandy took off a grenade that she had on her belt and she threw it at the dragon. The dragon just disintegrated it with a lightning bolt as it had done to Wilson's weapon. Mandy cursed her bad luck and she ran for it before the dragon could zap her, as much as it pained her to run and hide since she hated doing that. Geoffrey aimed his crossbow at the dragon and began firing exploding darts at it. Because they were so small and coming in so rapidly, the dragon didn't have much chance to zap them all and ended up missing a lot of them. The darts hit the dragon's body and they all exploded as they hit it. But given the dragon's immortality, the darts didn't hurt it much or even kill it for that matter. They did however make the dragon cry out in pain and fire furious bolts of lighting at the Mobians. They all dodged the zaps and Sally drew out her bladed staff. She held it like a javelin and she threw it at the dragon, aiming for its heart. The dragon was in such a fury that it didn't notice the staff and the staff hit it directly in the chest. But you remember that this is an immortal dragon that they're up against so the attack, as well-aimed and accurate as it was, did not kill it. It did however leave the dragon screeching in pain and growling furiously at its opponents. The dragon flew down towards the ground, low enough for Sally to leap up and grab her staff and then yank it out of the dragon's chest, giving the squirrel her weapon back and leaving the dragon screeching in more pain for removing something from a

wound can hurt very much. Bladefeather flew in and threw showers of daggers at the dragon, neither of them doing any good and the dragon tried to slice him in two with the sharp lightning bolt on the tip of its tail. Bladefeather dodged and just attacked some more.

The wind dragon was up against Tails, Cream, Cosmo, Ruben & Sora. The wind dragon was one deadly opponent for it could just blow everybody away with a single breath. The wind dragon could even start hurricanes if it wanted to. Tails and Cream both flew towards the wind dragon and they drew their arms back, ready to fist the dragon in its eyes but the dragon simply opened up its mouth and blew them away with a big gusty breath of wind. Tails and Cream were strong fliers but even they succumbed to the mighty winds of the wind dragon. The two were blown through the air but they weren't brought down to the ground for their respective flying appendages were keeping them airborne. Ruben tried to give a helping hand by squirting the dragon with water from directly underneath it but the dragon took the attack and it looked down at the ground and blew a gust of wind at Ruben, forcing him down on the ground and pinning him there. However since the wind dragon was distracted with Ruben, Tails and Cream had the perfect opportunity to sneak up behind it and attack. They both kicked it in the sides of its head, making the dragon groan loudly and then the two fliers punched the dragon in the eyes, earning a very loud roar of pain from the dragon. Because the dragon wasn't blowing on Ruben anymore, Ruben was able to get back up and attack again. Ruben aimed his hands at the ground and he fired jets of water out of them, sending himself shooting up into the air and flying up towards the wind dragon. Ruben landed on its head and he began unleashing his ninjitsu on it, hitting it in several places and making the dragon cry out furiously. The dragon however effortlessly shook Ruben off of itself, sending the water panther falling down towards the ground. Tails and Cream were all too quick to fly down and catch him though before he could become a nasty stain on the ground. Sora decided to try and stop the dragon by taking an orb off her belt and aiming it at the dragon. It was her grappling hook orb and she fired the hook at the dragon. She was hoping to skewer the dragon with the hook on her orb. The hook ended up wrapping itself around the wind dragon's neck and Sora pulled on the rope, trying to bring the dragon crashing down. But what chance did a twelve year old

fox cub have of downing an enormous dragon? The dragon just pulled on the rope, yanking the orb out of Sora's hand and it bore down over the little superspy. Sora backed away, terrified of the enormous dragon that she was up against. The dragon opened its mouth and started blowing a gust of wind at Sora, pinning her down to the ground as it did so. Ruben decided to save Sora by leaping in and squirting the dragon's face, making it aim its wind away from Sora and blow somewhere else as its head was hit. Sora smiled gratefully at Ruben and she picked herself up. Cosmo picked up some large stones and she threw them at the wind dragon's head, hitting it in several different places, including its jaws and eyes. Big mistake for the dragon turned around and blew her away with a gust of wind from its jaws. Tails was livid to see the dragon do that to his girlfriend so he flew towards the dragon and he kicked it on the nose. The dragon fumed at Tails and snapped it jaws at him, making the fox back off quickly.

Sonic, Kai, Mushu & Matilda were fighting the fire and water dragons respectively and even they weren't faring too brilliantly in this battle. Sonic and Mushu were against the water dragon and try as much as they could, all that ended up happening was them getting drenched by the aqua-based dragon. The dragon showered Sonic with a wave of water and brought Mushu down with a squirt of water as he tried to jump onto it. Sonic picked himself up and he spin-dashed the dragon in the side of its face. Mushu picked himself up and he jumped onto the dragon's shoulder. He bit it on the neck as hard as he could with his sharp teeth but the dragon took the bite as if it wasn't much of a bite and it squirted Mushu off of its shoulder with a jet of water. Sonic spin-dashed the dragon in the face again but the dragon tail-whipped Sonic away before he could spin-dash him again. The attack brought Sonic down on the ground and the hedgehog winced in pain. Over to the fire dragon, it breathed fire at Matilda and Kai but the two kung-fu warriors dodged the attack and they somersaulted up into the air. They landed on the dragon...and ended up leaping back off of it with very hot feet. The fire dragon was quite literally, hot to the touch, making it the hardest one to fight for physically touching it just resulted in getting burnt. Matilda and Kai rubbed their feet better and they looked up at the fire dragon, wondering how to take it down given that they couldn't touch it without burning themselves. While they were wondering on that,

Sonic ended up getting smacked down to the ground by the water dragon and he landed just beside Matilda and Kai. Sonic picked himself up and he grumbled in annoyance.

"Those dragons are really tough guys!" grunted Sonic "We're all getting whupped out here!"

"They are tough indeed Sonic." said Matilda gravely "I'm not sure if we can defeat them. The fire one in particular can't even be touched, it's so hot to the touch that just trying to attack it results in us burning ourselves!"

"So much for trying to subdue them then." muttered Sonic "How will we stop them now?"

"I don't know." said Matilda helplessly "I've never fought a dragon before, I don't know how to stop one!"

"Maybe WE don't hae to stop them." suggested Kai "Maybe we could get them to stop each other...after all, creatures with elemental powers have a nasty habit of fighting with each other if they're even so much as slightly provoked by another. "

"Wait a minute..." said Matilda, taking in what Kai had just said "You mean...trick them into fighting each other? That's a good idea master! We could get them to fight each other and that'll distract them long enough for us to get to their seal and stop them for good! It's bound to work, especially since dragons like fighting, especially each other!"

"Good thinking there sir." said Sonic with a thumbs up "And I'm just the hedgehog to trick these dragons into fighting each other..."

Sonic whizzed off towards the water dragon and he yelled up to it.

"Hey! Blue boy! Come and get me if you think you're fast enough!" taunted Sonic.

The water dragon just opened its jaws and squirted water at Sonic. Sonic ran out of the way though, leaving the water dragon to just soak a patch of ground where Sonic had once stood. The dragon flew after Sonic and squirted at hm again. However, the fire dragon

was lumbering towards Sonic too and Sonic ran under the fire dragon as the water dragon squirted. This resulted in the water dragon drenching the fire dragon and earning a bloodcurdling roar of agony from it as its fires were quenched by the water dragon's power. The fire dragon simply reignited itself and it roared furiously at the water dragon. It lunged at the water dragon like a mad dog and it bit it furiously on the neck, pinning it down on the ground with its powerful front limbs and it sank its teeth as deeply into the water dragon's neck as it could. The water dragon tail-whipped the fire dragon on the head to make it let go and then it squirted water at the fire dragon, making it cry out in pain and putting its flames out again. The fire dragon reignited itself and it breathed fire at the water dragon, burning it ever so badly for the water dragon was quite sensitive to heat. The water dragon squealed a loud screech of pain as its skin was scorched by the dragon's fire. The screech attracted the attention of the other dragons and they began to wonder what was going on. They saw that the fire and water dragons were fighting each other and they ran over to join in (dragons like to fight after all). Soon all five dragons ended up fighting each other. The rock dragon fired boulders everywhere, the lightning dragon electrocuted everybody and the wind dragon tried its best to blow everybody away while the fire and water dragons fired fire and water at each other and the other dragons. Lord Sycorax's jaw dropped at the sight of this.

"No you idiots! Don't fight each other! Destroy the heroes!" he shrieked at the top of his voice.

But the fighting dragons took no notice of Lord Sycorax, they were too busy fighting each other. The Royal Fighters all saw that the dragons were preoccupied right now and they all gathered around Sonic, Kai, Matilda & Mushu.

"Hey, the dragons are fighting each other!" cried Tails "Did you trick them into doing that Sonic?"

"You bet I did." said Sonic smugly "Now let's get over to that seal thingy that they were imprisoned in and put them back into it!"

"I recommend using my warp ring Master Kai." said Sally, taking the warp ring out of her vest pocket and handing it to Kai "In order to

use it, just visualize the location and flick the warp ring up. It should open a portal to wherever you want to go."

"Very well then child, I shall do that." said Kai, taking the warp ring off of her.

"WAIT JUST A COTTON-PICKING MINUTE HERE!" shouted Sonic at the top of his voice "Why didn't we just do that in the first place?! That could have saved us a lot of trouble!"

"Oh...sorry. I didn't think on that." said Sally with a rather solemn look on her face "It's amazing how when you're occupied, the most obvious of good ideas don't come to you until later. Oh well, doesn't matter, we're doing it now."

"Actually, only **I** am doing it." said Kai "You see, there's no need for us all to go to the seal. Only one of us is needed to go and it shall be me. I know how to work the seal after all."

"Oh OK." said Sonic "So, it'll just be a quick warp ring trip over to the dragon's seal, seal them back in and there we go right?"

"I am afraid it is not that simple Sonic." said Kai, shaking his head sadly "For you see, the seal has a terrible side-effect. In order to open it and seal the dragons back into their prison...someone must sacrifice their own life."

Everybody gasped in surprise to hear this amazing and yet saddening bit of news.

"Somebody...must sacrifice...their own life...just to seal the dragons back up?!" gasped Sonic.

"And...you're gonna be the one to do it right?" asked Tails.

"That is correct little child." said Kai, looking sadly at Tails as if the very thought was depressing to him.

"No!" wailed Matilda, throwing herself into Kai's arms and almost causing him to drop the warp ring "No you can't! Please don't sacrifice yourself master! I haven't learnt everything I need to learn yet! I haven't even mastered inner peace yet! I can't let you go yet!

Please don't leave us master!"

"I'm afraid I must my sweet princess." said Kai, hugging Matilda and looking into her eyes sadly "The world will cease to be if the dragons are allowed to roam free. They must be sealed away for the good of everybody. Besides, I'm old and I've lived my life. It is time I moved on now. And also, I believe you have learned enough Matilda. Now is the time for you to carry on...without my guidance. But remember that with my teachings and what I have taught you...I will never truly be gone. I will still be there for you Matilda."

"I understand master." said Matilda, tears trickling down her face and grabbing Kai's robe quite tightly as she hugged him "Master...sniff...I'm gonna miss you." she sobbed, crying into her master's robes while Kai patted her on the back.

"It has been an honour teaching you my child." said Kai softly "And it honours me to think that my teachings will live on through you and will lead you to great things in the future. I bid you farewell Matilda." he said, breaking up the hug and preparing to leave.

"Goodbye master." said Matilda, wiping some tears away "I will always remember you...and you'll always be in my heart."

"Thank you." said Kai, flicking up the warp ring over his shoulder "Goodbye everybody...and may you all continue to be strong and may you bring honour to us all."

The warp ring expanded to several times its size and opened up a portal leading to the dragon's seal. The Royal Fighters, feeling for Matilda, said a few goodbyes to Kai and even waved farewell to him. Bladefeather and Mushu bowed to the elderly master and Tai, shedding tears of his own, waved goodbye to Kai too. Kai shed a tear of his own as he stepped through the open warp ring. Sally held onto it so she'd be able to get it back after Kai left. He warped over from where they were now to the cave where the seal was located. He stood upon the seal and he began to recite the ancient spell that would seal the dragons back into the prison. Kai held his arms out and began to mutter some strange words under his breath. The circle in the centre of the prison began to spin around as Kai muttered away and huge beams of energy were building up as the

circle spun, illuminating the cave with bright, dazzling glows and electrical energy crackled all around the kung-fu badger. Kai closed his eyes as the energy began to surround him and the lid of the prison opened up. The energy surrounding Kai pulled him into the seal and then the beams that had been building up from the spinning circle all flashed out of the cave and extended out to where the five dragons were. The beams all touched the dragons and stopped them dead in their tracks as if the beams had just suddenly frozen them with a simple touch. The Royal Fighters watched in amazement as the beams engulfed the dragons and then another incredible thing happened. The dragons all dissolved away into the beams like an ice-cube in a glass of cola. It was like the beams transformed the dragons so that they could be taken away by them. Lord Sycorax watched, open-mouthed in horror as the dragons dissolved into the beams and then the beams took them all back to the cave. The beams retracted away back into the cave and then back into the seal. The energy that had surrounded Kai disappeared along with the beams as the dragons were pulled back in and the seal closed back up, trapping the dragons back inside it for good. Kai had been disintegrated during the whole thing, leaving nothing of him behind. Kai was gone forever, his legacy being the only thing that will live on now. But at least the dragons were defeated and sealed away for good now. Back over to the Royal Fighters, they safely assumed that the deed had been done and the dragons had been sealed away now. Matilda ended up breaking down in tears and she put her hands over her weeping eyes. Bladefeather decided to comfort his fiancée by wrapping his arms around Matilda and hugging her tenderly. Matilda just hugged Bladefeather back and cried on his shoulder.

"Oh master!" wailed Matilda "I can't believe that he's gone forever! Oh I'm gonna miss him so much!"

"I understand my flower." said Bladefeather softly "At least Kai gave himself up for a good cause. His sacrifice will not be in vain for he stopped those abhorrent dragons."

"I know..." sobbed Matilda "But...I feel like he's left me too soon. I still feel like there's so much more he could teach me."

"Well precious, maybe now is the time for you to learn new lessons

on your own." said Tai, patting his daughter on the back "After all, there are times where the student must learn without the teacher after all."

Matilda was still crying over Kai's death but she took in what her father said and began to feel that he was right. As hard as it was going to be for her, Matilda would have to carry on without Kai and maybe learn new lessons as she went along. As for Lord Sycorax, he was going metal with rage over what had happened. He had found five powerful dragons and they had all been sealed away just like that. What a blow to what was shaping up to be a new invincible Region of Rebellious Reptiles.

"NOOOOOOOOO! NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" bellowed Sycorax in rage "HOW CAN THIS BE?! I FIND THE FIVE LEGENDARY DRAGONS AND THEY ALL GET SEALED AWAY AGAIN! NOOOOOOOOOOO!"

"Well you'd better believe it dad because your plan's gone belly-up." said Vector coldly, bashing his fists together "And now you are going back to prison where you belong!"

Lord Sycorax stopped ranting just long enough to register the fact that the heroes had suddenly surrounded him and Vector was walking up to him menacingly. Before he even had time to react, Vector drew his arm back and punched him directly in the face as hard as he could. Vector may not be as strong as hard hitters like Knuckles but he did pack quite a punch, so much in fact that Sycorax was knocked clean out. The egotistical maniacal crocodile was now lying on the ground on his back and completely unconscious. Romeo and Vladek decided to do the only remotely logical thing they could do now...surrender. Romeo and Vladek raised their arms up as a sign of surrender. Satisfied with this turn out, Sally stepped forward, her hands on her hips and a very stern scowl on her face.

"In the name of the Kingdom of Acorn and the Kingdom of Chun-Nan you three are under arrest for the heinous crimes of anarchy, destruction of an important landmark, attempted murder and for costing the life of one of Chun-Nan's finest warriors and the mentor of Princess Matilda." she said "No lenience shall be shown towards

you, your sentences are life in prison...all three of you."

"Good one Sal." said Sonic "So we'll just be taking these jokers back home and leave Chun-Nan in peace right?"

"You all can go." said Sally "But I'm gonna stay a little longer. I want to get Chun-Nan's Royal Fighter communication resources set-up and...maybe even comfort Matilda a little." she added, looking sadly at the still weeping princess "I know she's got her dad and fiance with her but still..."

"We understand." said Sonic "It's awful nice of you though. So we'll see you later I guess?"

"Yes Sonic." said Sally "I'll come home once everything's set up here. See you soon."

She flicked the warp ring up into the air for Sonic and friends to go through and take Sycorax, Romeo and Vladek back home to New Mobotropolis. Vector, Knuckles & Shade picked up Sycorax altogether (he is a heavy croc after all) and they carried him through the warp ring. Romeo and Vladek just stepped through it with the others keeping an eye on them to make sure they didn't get away or try anything dodgy. Sonic waved goodbye to Sally before he parted through the warp ring and Sally waved goodbye too. As the Royal Fighters vanished through the warp ring, Sally grabbed it before it could close so she'd get it back and be able to use it to get home once everything was done in Chun-Nan. Sally put the warp ring away and she turned to Tai.

"So your honour, where shall we start?" she asked...

And that's it for this chapter. Poor Matilda...:(She's lost her master...she'll be fine don't worry. So what did you guys think? Leave a review and express your thoughts if you please. Feedback is very much appreciated here.

Tune into the spin-off series* Tales from Mobius *where Sally learns some interesting things about Matilda's past. You may

have heard her story before but you've not heard the WHOLE story yet so don't miss it! :D

As for this one, get ready for the return of Shadow the Hedgehog and a certain albino echidna as we enter "Fintievus' Gambit"...

BIG SPECIAL thank you goes to my most dedicated and loyal reader, Kratos Pwns, for coming up with the idea. All credit goes to him for making this episode possible. Thank you very much for the idea pal. :D

Finitevus's Gambit Part 1

Story 155: Finitevus' Gambit Part 1

Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends had had it tough recently. They had been invited to a birthday party by Princess Matilda that ended up getting ruined by the Region of Rebellious Reptiles and the Spiders of Anarchy and then a streak of light had ended up showing up and taking all of the Reptiles and Spiders sans Lord Sycorax, Romeo the Chameleon and Vladek the Frill-Necked Lizard and then after that, the Royal Fighters had ended up fighting against dragons of all creatures, and not just any dragons but FIVE legendary dragons and the battle ended with Matilda's mentor, Master Kai Zen, sacrificing himself to seal the dragons away. It had been a tough time for Sonic and his friends but right now though the Royal Fighters weren't up to anything, they were having a relaxing time right now. They were all home in New Mobotropolis, save for Queen Sally Acorn who was still in Chun-Nan and over-seeing new developments in the country*, and taking it easy for nothing much was happening right now and they weren't needed for anything. Now I know what you're thinking, this doesn't sound very exciting does it? Well get ready for this is about to get more interesting. While the Royal Fighters were relaxing from their tough time in Chun-Nan, some one else was on the move and on a mission. And that somebody was Shadow the Hedgehog. Shadow had heard about some odd goings-on in an old laboratory and he was going over to investigate the so-called "odd goings-on". He had a feeling that Dr. Eggman was behind all of this since an old laboratory sounded like the kind of thing that Eggman would be interested in. Shadow was hoping that Eggman would be there since he had just recently heard from the Royal Fighters that Eggman was, to his disappointment, still alive and he was hoping to finish him off, this time for good. It really made Shadow furious to hear that Eggman was still alive and he was all too happy to finish him off for good. He skated through the forests, keeping an eye on the coordinates he had been given to the laboratory. He eventually came across the laboratory after a long while of skating through the forests and he skated towards it. He skated up onto the roof of the laboratory and bent down on one

knee. The laboratory was old and run down so nobody would be working in it at this moment. The laboratory was huge and had various dome shapes around it. A large spire protruded proudly from the roof of the laboratory and its dull silver colour scheme was beginning to go brown with rust as the metal work began to deteriorate. It was clear this laboratory hadn't been used for a very long time. Was Dr. Eggman planning to refurbish this laboratory and use it for his own nefarious needs? Whatever Eggman was up to, Shadow would foil it. That is, if Eggman is even here at all. Shadow took a cautious look around and he pressed a button on his wrist-mounted communicator that he had been given by the R.F.S. so they could remain in contact.

"Hello Rouge? This is Shadow the Hedgehog." he said softly into the communicator "I've found the lab to which the "odd-goings on" are supposedly happening. I'm getting ready to infiltrate."

"That's very good honey." came the sexy voice of Rouge the Bat on the other side of the communicator "I really do bet that Eggman's behind all this. I mean an abandoned lab would easily be the kind of thing he's interested in wouldn't you agree?"

"You have no idea how strongly I believe this is Eggman's work." said Shadow grimly "If it is him then I'll make sure that he is put down for good! I'll call you if I need any help at all. I know I may not need it but it never hurts to have some aid."

"I agree Shadow. I'll call you later." said Rouge "Good luck in that laboratory."

"If Eggman's in there then my luck's just going to get better." hissed Shadow with a dry smile on his face.

Shadow switched off his communicator and he looked around for a way inside the lab. He searched all over the dome shaped roof he stood upon until finally he found a way inside. He saw a glass circular window further across the roof. Shadow slid down the domed slope of the roof and he managed to stop himself by the window. He punched the window and broke the glass instantly. Shadow crawled through the window and he jumped down onto a supporting beam that stretched across the ceiling. The room was

completely dark save for one single spotlight shining onto the floor below. Shadow began to wonder what was going on. For a laboratory that had some "odd goings-on" in it, it seemed pretty empty and calm. The dark atmosphere of the room and the single shining light did not suggest much odd things were going on. Still, Shadow was here to investigate so he was going to do just that, investigate this scenario and see what the fuss was about. Shadow warped down to the spotlight and he stepped into it. The light shone over him as he stepped into it and Shadow looked around, wondering if he could make anything out at all. He couldn't see anything at all. It was just too dark for him to see.

"Hello? "Is anybody here?" asked Shadow, squinting into the darkness "Come out and show yourself if anybody's around here!"

That was when much to his surprise, more lights turned on and fully illuminated the room, causing Shadow to jump in alarm. Shadow braced himself for he thought something was going to happen. As soon as all the lights had turned on, Shadow looked ahead of himself and saw somebody that he was not expecting to see at all. Dr. Eggman wasn't here at all, it was the nefarious echidna scientist Dr. Finitevus, uncle of Knuckles the Echidna and just downright creepy and evil. He had some Egg-Pawns by his side and the sinister echidna had a face as dark as a thundercloud. The Egg-Pawns had their weapons primed and ready to shoot Shadow. Shadow stared at Finitevus, wondering who in the name of Mobius he was but he didn't show much signs of surprise. He just narrowed his eyes and smirked at Finitevus.

"A poor excuse for a trap if I ever saw one." he crowed, not seeing much danger whatsoever.

"Actually…" said Finitevus darkly, whipping something out from his cloak pocket and throwing it at the floor.

The thing he threw at the floor split into eight metallic parts and they hovered around Shadow. The eight metal pieces looked like corners of a cube and were made of a brilliant steel with a flashing blue light in the centre of each piece. The corners formed around Shadow as if they were becoming a cube of some kind and then suddenly, the pieces all emitted a blue square of transparent light that protruded

from each piece, forming a cube of blue light all around Shadow as if the pieces were magically conjuring up windows of some kind. It was like making a holographic cube around Shadow but Shadow had a feeling that this whole thing wasn't just a light show, he had a feeling it was something more serious. Finitevus smirked at Shadow and he put his arm back under his cape, the magnificent cape now joining up in the middle and forming the unique star emblem on it now both his arms were down.

"THIS is the trap." he sneered.

Shadow drew his arm back and he punched at the blue square in front of him…and was thrown down onto the floor by the square reacting violently to his punch. When Shadow punched it, it glowed brightly and pushed on him with a great force as if an invisible hand had pushed him away. Shadow picked himself up and wondered what had happened. Finitevus walked up to Shadow and smirked evilly at him, his evil eyes narrowed down to dark slits of pure devilishness.

"This is simple holographic cage." Finitevus explained to the imprisoned Shadow "It can trap anything it's used on for the rather prodigious holographic technology used to make this perfect trap can expand to any size so I could even incase a building if I wanted to. It also has a rather strong defence system, if you try to break out at all it just throws you down on the floor. There is NO escaping this trap Shadow the Hedgehog."

"Oh yeah?! What's to stop me from warping out of here?!" growled Shadow furiously.

"It siphons any special power the trapped person has." crowed Finitevus "Magnanimous isn't it? You're stuck in there Shadow the Hedgehog and you cannot do anything about it."

"Why you…wait a minute, how do you know my name?" asked Shadow curiously "Have we met?"

"No but thanks to excessive research done after ten years in the void and joining forces with Dr. Eggman, I know who YOU are Shadow." gloated Finitevus, tapping his brainy head conceitedly "I

know that you're a scientific experiment intended to be a weapon for a now extinct alien race. I know that Eggman used to have you under his control, I know that you're an ally of Sonic and friends… and I ALSO know you have a lot of Chaos Energy in you and have incredulous power. Power that I might have to seize for myself…" he added with a twisted grin as he pictured taking Shadow's power.

"You won't have my power whoever you are!" growled Shadow "Let me out of this thing so I can kill you!"

"Oh why would I do something so illogical?" snorted Finitevus "I value my life thank you very much and I'm all too happy to keep it. By the way, the name's Dr. Finitevus." he added with a glare.

"Whatever, you'll be sorry you imprisoned me Finitevus!" growled Shadow threateningly "When I get outta here, you will need to be scraped off the floor!"

"Highly unlikely given my aggrandized state of battle prowess." sneered Finitevus "Enough talk, we have a delivery to make. Dr. Eggman is expecting some supplies to be deliver to him via train and he's tasked ME with delivering the goods and defending them from any potential hijackers and infiltrators."

"Why does Eggman need deliveries?" asked Shadow curiously.

"Because he's sending out Egg-Pawns all over Mobius to any abandoned factory he can find and is ordering them to collect any useful supplies from those labs so that he may use them for his own good, as well as expand his underground base." explained Finitevus "This is why we're here. I did also intend to set a trap for the Royal Fighters at the same time and now you've stepped into it so we have more than just supplies to deliver to Eggman. You're coming with us and I will deliver YOU to Dr. Eggman personally…so that I may use his resources to take the power you possess, if he lets me that is..." he added with a sinister slither in his voice as he said this.

"What do you want my power for?!" demanded Shadow.

"So that I may become the most powerful threat on all of Mobius." declared Finitevus "I'll make the heroes pay for imprisoning my

master and for defying his will and I will make Mobius a glorious, chaotic paradise for everyone to enjoy. Provided they wish to enjoy it…" he said in a menacing voice as he thought over the fact some people might dare to disagree with his view on the perfect world.

"I won't let that happen!" declared Shadow "I am Mobius's defender and I will protect it from you! You will not harm anyone and use my power for bad!"

"We'll see about that." purred Finitevus "Now then, Egg-Pawns, get Shadow loaded onto the train. We don't want to keep Eggman waiting do we?"

The Egg-Pawns obeyed and they all walked up to the holo-cage. They picked it up by the four bottom corners of the cube and they carried it off out of the lab with Dr. Finitevus in front. They left the laboratory and walked off to catch Dr. Eggman's train. And before you wonder, no this is not a train that runs on railway tracks. Dr. Eggman doesn't have time for those. Instead, Eggman had built a hover-train to deliver all his goods. It was much more efficient and convenient for the fat scientist who was now encased inside the body of E-123 Omega. Finitevus and the Egg-Pawns walked a good few metres until finally, they came across the hover-train, or "Egg-Train" as Eggman was (obviously) calling it. The Egg-Train was the size of a Japanese bullet train and the train itself had Eggman's face sculpted onto it. It had six carriages, all full of supplies from the various laboratories it had been going to and it had hovering pads in place of wheels. Its colour scheme was red and yellow with some black in there, proper making you feel that this was a piece of Eggman machinery. Finitevus and the Egg-Pawns boarded the train and poor Shadow was placed in the first carriage by some supplies that were tightly packed up in boxes. The Egg-Pawns left the carriage and boarded the train so that they could drive it away and be off to Eggman's base. Finitevus boarded another carriage so that he could do some tidying up in it for the second carriage was a bit messy. This gave Shadow the perfect moment to call for help. He pressed a button on his communicator and spoke into it.

"Rouge? It's Shadow. I've been captured and trapped inside a cube with force field walls." said Shadow quietly "I need some assistance, I can't break out."

"Oh dear…I'll be right there immediately." said Rouge "Where are you?"

"I'm sitting in the carriage of a holo-train near the lab I went to investigate." explained Shadow "I don't think I'll be there for long though, the train's getting ready to leave. I'll leave my communicator on so you can track its signal to my location."

"OK then Shadow, I'll be there as quick as I can." said Rouge "Hold on for me will you?"

"I will." said Shadow "Please hurry."

With that said, Shadow stopped talking but he left his communicator on so Rouge could use hers to track its signal to him. Shadow could do nothing but sit tight and hope that Rouge can find him before they get to Dr. Eggman. Otherwise he was going to end up on the dissection table and his power taken from him by Dr. Finitevus…

Meanwhile at Royal HQ, the young super spy Sora Prower was sitting at the computer monitors in the lab and she appeared to be up to something. On the computer monitor screens, there were satellite images of Mobius and Sora was looking hard at them. She was using satellite imagery to see if she could find any streaks of light going on at all. After the one in Chun-Nan, the Royal Fighters had decided to start researching more thoroughly on them. Most of them were making the most of the day though but Sora, who had her brother Tails the twin-tailed fox, Ruben the Water panther and Sonic the Hedgehog himself behind her, was seeing what she could find out using satellite imagery on the computer monitors. The satellites offered a great view of Mobius so Sora could study every landscape of the planet for anything that looked strange or out of the ordinary. Unfortunately, she couldn't seem to find anything. Everything looked completely normal, there didn't seem to be any streaks of light in the sky at all. Sora massaged her temple in annoyance and she sighed over her progress. She was dying to find out more about the streaks of light that had been appearing randomly for days now and everything was completely normal. What did a Royal Fighter have to do to find something out?!

"Ugh…why do the streaks of light NEVER show up when we want them to?" sighed Sora "Notice how one seems to appear when we least expect it but none show up when we start looking for one?"

"I noticed that too." said Tails with his fingers curled over his pursed lips "It's almost like the streak of light can pick and choose when it wants to come out and it knows not to come out when we're looking for it. Obviously that won't be the case but it'll be weird if it is true."

"I agree little brother." said Sora with a slow nod of the head "It will truly obfuscate me to think that a random streak of light has intelligence to some degree. But of course, it won't have intelligence of any kind because it's just some weird phenomenon, they don't have minds of any kind."

"I just think we're really bad at picking times to investigate these things." muttered Sonic, tapping his foot impatiently "It seems one's not gonna show up today so let's pack up and try again another day."

"In a minute Sonic, I'm going to have one last scan-over." said Sora "Then I'll call it a day."

"Hey when you've done that Sora, maybe you can give me some climbing lessons?" asked Ruben bashfully "I've been wanting to take some climbing lessons for a while now and I think a spy like you would be the…um…best person to teach me how to climb."

"Sure cute stuff, I'll do that." said Sora brightly "We'll go in the training room once I'm finished."

The simple name of "cute stuff" coming from Sora to Ruben was enough to make the water panther blush bright red. He was very happy that Sora had accepted his offer. He was growing quite fond of her and he wanted to spend some time with Sora. He'd just scored a lucky break by asking to be tutored by her. Tails picked up on Ruben's blushing and instantly assumed something.

"Hey Sonic, do you think Ruben's got the hots for Sora?" he whispered "He's blushing after Sora called him "cute stuff" and he seems rather happy to have her as a tutor."

"I've noticed Ruben seems to quite like your sister." said Sonic casually "In battle, the two have been taking turns at watching each other's back and saving the other's life. I think the two might start getting hitched if this goes on. And I'd be happy if that happened, Ruben's a great guy and Sora's an amazing spy, the two would be perfect together."

"I agree." said Tails "Also, it gives Ruben someone to love now Cosmo's with me. Ruben quite liked Cosmo too after all."

"You do realize that we're still in the room you two?" noted Sora sternly "We can hear what you two are saying behind our backs you know."

The conversation between Sonic and Tails had left Ruben blushing even more now. Sonic and Tails chuckled nervously at Sora and Sonic began rubbing the back of his head.

"Heh, sorry about that." said Sonic.

"What we mean to say is we're very happy that you're going to teach Ruben how to climb." said Tails meekly "It'll be very good for him."

"I agree." said Ruben "I can't forget the times I've gotten in trouble because of my poor climbing skills…"

The conversation was interrupted by the sudden appearance of an opening warp ring that made everybody jump in alarm. Was Dr. Finitevus invading Royal HQ? Likely since he had been in Royal HQ and thus, would be able to visualize the place and use his warp rings to get into it. Luckily though, that wasn't the case for the warp ring opening up didn't belong to Dr. Finitevus. It belonged to Queen Sally Acorn. She had finally finished her work in Chun-Nan and had decided to come back home. Sonic, Tails, Sora and Ruben all beamed happily at the return of Sally and Sally beamed at back at them, pleased to be home after working away in Chun-Nan for a bit.

"Hi Sally!" cried Sonic happily, rushing up to her and grasping her in a hug "How did it go over at Chun-Nan?"

"Hi Sonic, good to see you again." said Sally, returning the hug "As

for Chun-Nan, it's going very well thank you. The communication equipment is setting up nicely and Matilda's home is under construction and coming along nicely. Chun-Nan's recovering well from what's happened to it recently. You might be surprised to hear this but Matilda even told me a story about her past while I was there. It was a very interesting story to hear I thought."

"Cool." said Sonic "I'm glad to hear all that. As for here, nothing much is happening. We're mostly sitting back and relaxing right now. Sora's looking up satellite imagery to see if there's any tears in the sky going on at all. Nothing's happening though, the skies are perfectly clear still."

"Oh I see." said Sally "I hope we find out more about those tears in the sky soon enough before they get any worse. I'm worried over what will happen if one shows up again. We might lose somebody if one shows up again."

"We won't lose anybody Sally, I promise you that." said Sonic "We'll find out what the deal behind the streak of light is and we'll find out how to stop it before anyone else gets taken and that's a promise."

"That might not be an easy promise to keep Sonic but I'm glad you're optimistic about all this." said Sally happily.

"Optimism is one of my best friends after all." said Sonic "Optimism often helps me get through a tough situation after all."

"Hey guys! There's something you've gotta see!" cried Sora.

Sonic and Sally were beside the computer and staring at the screen in one second flat. Tails and Ruben were joining Sonic and Sally in watching the computer monitors and looking at what had caught Sora's attention. Sora had been having one last look for any tears in the sky and had instead ended up spotting the Egg-Train hovering through some sandy plains and heading for goodness knows where. What really caught Sora's attention was the fact the train had Eggman's face on it, instantly telling her that it belonged to him. Whatever the train was for, it could not be up to any good. The Royal Fighters would have to deal with this and deal with it quickly. Sonic frowned at the screen as he watched the Egg-Train hovering

quickly through the plains.

"Is that a train?" wondered Sonic "And it has Eggman's ugly mug on it. It MUST be his train or something."

"Exactly." said Sora "If it's Eggman's train then it must be up to something fishy. We have to get over and stop the train. I bet it's going to deliver something important to Eggman and we must not allow him to get his hands on whatever that train's delivering him."

"I agree Sora, we have to stop that train." declared Sally "We'll gather up all the Royal Fighters and get the hover-saucers so we can get to that train."

"Uh, wouldn't warping there be quicker?" asked Sonic "I mean we have a warp ring you know."

"I can't visualize that train for I don't know what it looks like inside so we can't just warp onto the train." noted Sally "The hover-saucers will have to do. Sora, where is the train?" she asked.

"According to where the satellites are looking…it's travelling through the Great Plains and heading towards the Northern Border of Megapolis." said Sora.

"Then we'll get going to the Great Plains then." said Sally "Come on team members, let's get the Royal Fighters together and stop that train."

Sonic was all too happy to oblige. He, Tails, Sora and Ruben all ran out of the lab with Sally leading them and they headed off to get the rest of the team and get going to stop the Egg-Train. Little did any of them know, they were about to get more than they bargained for once they boarded the train…

Meanwhile, Rouge the Bat was flying over the Great Plains herself. she was using her communicator to track Shadow's coordinates and she had ended up arriving at the Great Plains. She was ahead of the Egg-Train so with any luck, Shadow would come straight to her. Rouge had heard from Shadow he was on a train so she had

brought with her something to stop the train. A simple little bomb. She wasn't going to throw it directly at the train though as she could easily hit the wrong carriage and kill Shadow by accident. She was planning to throw it at the ground and make the train stop dead in its tracks so she could get onboard and rescue Shadow. So in order for her plan to work, Rouge had been tracking Shadow's coordinates and flying in a different direction so she would end up ahead of the train. Rouge flew above the ground and she eyed her communicator. Shadow's signal was identified by a flashing bleep on the screen (the communicators have tracking devices on them too so if the person you're talking to needs help but can't state where he/she is, you'll be able to find him/her) and it was moving across the screen from the north-west direction. The train would be coming from the north-east towards her, just perfect for her plan. Rouge smiled a sexy smile to herself.

"Ha, ha…the train's coming my way." she purred "Now I'll teach those goons what happens to those who kidnap Shadow."

Rouge looked into the distance and she could see something moving over the horizon. Trials of dust were flying up into the air as the thing moved through the plains. Rouge speculated that it might be the Egg-Train coming and how right she was to do that for that's exactly what was coming. The Egg-Train was cruising through the plains and heading towards Rouge. Rouge could vaguely make out the iconic Eggman face sculpture on the front of it. She had a feeling that was the train Shadow was on. It couldn't be any other train. Rouge took the bomb into her hand and prepared to throw it.

"Get ready boys, this train's going to make a sudden stop…" said Rouge icily.

Over to the Egg-Train itself, Dr. Finitevus was standing at a nearby computer monitor mounted in the wall of the carriage interior and he was talking to Dr. Eggman. Shadow could only sit in his holographic cube prison and listen as Dr. Finitevus and Eggman conversed with each other. Finitevus seemed oddly enough to have no intentions of revealing to Eggman he had Shadow in his grasp. Finitevus just seemed to be informing him on the train's delivery.

"Greetings Dr. Eggman, you will be very happy to know that the

Egg-Train is on its way back to your base as I'm speaking to you now." announced Dr. Finitevus "The supplies will be deliver to you momentarily."

"Excellent work Finitevus!" cackled Eggman delightedly "Oooooh I can hardly wait to see what my new laboratory will look with these new supplies from those old, unused laboratories spicing things up! It maybe a big case of "What's old is new again" but it'll benefit me most brilliantly for I'll have more resources and I maybe able to make my underground base bigger and better! You know what they say, the more the merrier!" he added with a chortle.

"Yes, indeed." muttered Finitevus in a bored manner of tone "I'm happy I could have been of assistance Eggman and I look forward to seeing how MY lab will look, provided you get one built for me in your base as you promised." he added with a stern growl in his voice.

"Oh fie, I haven't forgotten you at all Finitevus." said Eggman "You'll get what's been promised to you, don't worry about that."

"Good." said Finitevus "Now then, if you want to know how I wish for my laboratory to look, I shall give you the details…"

The conversation was brought to an abrupt halt by the sound of a huge explosion coming from further up ahead and the train breaking to a very acerbic halt that ended up throwing Finitevus onto his side. Finitevus cringed as his body sharply knocked against the floor and pain surged up his arm. The echidna scientist wasn't down for long though, he picked himself up and growled furiously. The train was under attack! How dare somebody attack him in his moment of glory! Eggman looked surprised at what had just happened and so did Shadow although Shadow also had a hopeful feeling in his stomach that it was somebody trying to rescue him.

"What was that?!" cried Eggman worriedly.

"I'll call you back…" said Finitevus in a soft, growling voice. He switched off the computer monitor and he barked into a nearby intercom.

"Egg-Pawns! Investigate that explosion now!" he ordered.

The Egg-Pawns that were guarding the second carriage obeyed and they ran outside to investigate the mysterious explosion that had forced them to stop. As the Egg-Pawns ran out to investigate, Finitevus stuck his head out the window. He could see the Egg-Pawns running over to where the bomb had hit and were instantly looking around for who could have done this. The train had stopped just inches away from where the bomb had hit. The Egg-Pawns stood around the blackened circle left behind by the bomb and they primed their weapons. They looked around for any signs of the bomb-attacker. Then suddenly, something flew out of nowhere and destroyed all the Egg-Pawns! It was Rouge using her powerful screw-kick attack. She moved so fast that the Egg-Pawns just didn't have time to react at all, they were destroyed in seconds by the bat. Finitevus gasped at what he saw and he deduced that help had come for Shadow. He knew how to deal with something like that though. Finitevus walked away from the window and he stomped on a floor panel with his heel. The panel bounced up into his hands and he lay down in the space the panel had been placed over. He put the panel on top of himself, leaving no evidence that it had been moved and making the floor look just like a floor. He was hiding in the floor so he could ambush Rouge for he knew she'd be coming to get Shadow. He had studied plenty on Rouge too and knew that of all people, she liked Shadow the most. As for Rouge, now she'd destroyed all the Egg-Pawns, she ran over to the train and looked through the window to the first carriage of the train. To her delight, Shadow was in the carriage and looking perfectly OK. No harm had come to him thank goodness. Rouge opened the door and let herself in. She beamed at the sight of Shadow.

"Shadow! There you are, I've found you!" she cried "Hang on honey, I'll get you out of that nasty trap you're in."

"Rouge look out!" cried Shadow frantically.

Too late. As Rouge stepped forward to help Shadow, the floor panel ended up being kicked off the floor and sent smacking into Rouge! The panel was so large and heavy that it ended up knocking Rouge down on the floor. Had it been any heavier, the bat would have been crushed instantly. Shadow gasped in horror as Finitevus climbed out

of the floor and cackled at Rouge.

"I'll hand it to you, you're a sneaky and clever woman Rouge the Bat." purred Finitevus "But not entirely aware of ambushes. One would think a treasure hunter like you would be a bit more cautious."

Rouge pushed the panel off of herself and got back to her feet.

"Who are you and how do you know who I am and what I do?" demanded Rouge coldly.

"I am Dr. Finitevus and you are getting off this train!" cackled Finitevus.

He then suddenly jumped up into the air, grabbed onto an overhead railing and kicked Rouge squarely in the gut. Rouge was sent flying out of the carriage and onto the sandy ground outside with a heavy thump. Rouge took a moment to ease the pain in her back while Finitevus closed the door and ordered the train to get moving. The Egg-Pawns obliged to that order and they started up the Egg-Train immediately. The Egg-Train started to hover away but Rouge got back onto her feet just in time to fly towards it and grab onto a rail on the second carriage. Rouge held on tight as the train picked up speed and heavy gusts of wind started to blow in her face. Finitevus looked out of the window and to his annoyance, Rouge was clinging onto the second carriage and trying to edge her way towards the first carriage. Finitevus decided to deal with Rouge once and for all. He ran over to a red box with a sheet of glass over it that was bolted to the wall and he broke the glass. Behind the glass was a long barrelled emergency rifle that fired some powerful shots when in use. Finitevus took the rifle out of the box and he clocked it. He then ran back over to the door. Shadow was horrified to see this.

"No! Don't you dare hurt her!" yelled Shadow furiously.

Finitevus ignored the hedgehog and he opened up the door. The door slid open and Finitevus leaned out through out, holding onto a safety rail so he didn't fall out the train. Rouge was still holding onto the second carriage and she was trying her best to get to the first carriage. Rouge saw the rifle in Finitevus's hands and she gasped in horror.

"Didn't I tell you to get lost?" snarled Finitevus "Let me make my point a little clearer…"

He then pointed the rifle at the horrified Rouge and aimed at her head, ready to blast it clean off. But Rouge wasn't going to lose her head any time soon for Rouge jumped into the air and screw-kicked towards Finitevus. She made very sure that she was aiming at the right angle so she would kick him and land inside the train. Her aiming was perfect and she hit Finitevus squarely in the chest and sent him staggering backwards into the train. Rouge landed on the floor and closed the door behind her so that Finitevus couldn't kick her back out of the train. She lunged at the evil scientist in the black cloak and seized his rifle. She tried to wrestle it out of the mad doctor's grasp but Finitevus held on tightly. In an attempt to intimidate Rouge and make her let go, Finitevus pulled the trigger and started firing randomly around the interior. The sound of the shots made Rouge's very sensitive ears ache and the shots punched holes into the steel walls of the carriage but Rouge held on still. Finitevus wrestled the rifle towards Shadow and fired at the cage. The shots bounced harmlessly off the cube's barriers but the noise the ricochets made was enough to make Shadow cringe and clutch his ears. Rouge yanked on the rifle but Finitevus still wouldn't let go of it. Then Finitevus yanked on the rifle and being as he was much stronger than Rouge he wrestled it out of her grasp…a little too hard though and the rifle ended up flying into the window where it smashed straight through it and fell out of the train. It crashed to the ground and broke into pieces, rendering it completely useless now. Finitevus however didn't need a weapon, we already know he's one of the best fighters Sonic and friends have ever faced. Finitevus lunged at Rouge and clouted her across the face. Rouge retaliated with a kick to the jaw on Finitevus and she then grabbed the doctor into a headlock, bending him forward and wrapping her arm around his neck. Finitevus however pushed Rouge into the wall and slammed her there to make her let go. Then he twirled around and kicked Rouge across the interior where she banged straight into a nearby rail. Rouge winced in pain and Finitevus jumped towards her. Rouge dodged the evil echidna but Finitevus grabbed onto the rail to stop himself from crashing into it. He spun around the rail and walloped Rouge in the head. Rouge was thrown down onto the floor but she managed to pick herself up in time to dodge another attack

from Finitevus. She grabbed his cape and tugged on it. She swung him into the rail and then into the wall. She then threw him into the other wall and pinned him against it. Finitevus seemed more delighted than hurt from all of that eerily enough. Delighted in how Rouge was giving him a good fight that is. This didn't make Rouge feel very comfortable at all.

"Alright girl, you want to get rough? You'll see just how rough **I** can be!" crooned Finitevus.

He kneed Rouge in the gut and made her let him go. Rouge stumbled backwards a bit and Finitevus ran around behind her. He grabbed her arms, forced them behind her back and then kicked her directly into the door. Rouge's head ended up going through the window, shattering it and leaving her with some cuts on her face. Rouge rested against the door and rubbed her face better. Finitevus however added insult to injury by slamming the open button. The door opened up and ended up trapping Rouge's head between the window frame and the door frame! Rouge gagged ever so loudly as her head was practically being crushed by the door. Rouge would have suffocated had she not been able to find the button by feeling around for it and pressing it to open the door. Rouge took her head out the broken window and she kicked a nearby rail on the wall. She broke the rail off the wall and she picked it up. She swung it at Finitevus but she missed as he ducked down low. She lunged at him with the rail but Finitevus grabbed her arm and made Rouge hit herself in the had with the rail. Finitevus then wrestled the rail out of Rouge's hands and walloped her around the face with it. Rouge stumbled backwards and found herself backing up against a pile of crates. These crates contained the stolen supplies that the train was meant to be delivering to Eggman. Rouge picked one, despite how heavy it was, and she kicked it towards Finitevus. Finitevus just drew his leg back and kicked the crate away from himself. The kick ended up breaking the entire bottom section off and sending all the supplies falling out as they were knocked against the lid. The crate now had no top and no bottom. Rouge picked up the crate and she hoisted it above her head. She brought it crashing down on Finitevus…wrong side up that is. Finitevus just jumped through the gap in the crate to avoid any damage. He landed back on the floor and gripped the crate. He swung it upwards and walloped Rouge in

the chin with it. Rouge was thrown down onto the floor by that powerful hit. Shadow could only watch as his friend was pummelled mercilessly by the vicious doctor. Rouge picked herself up and tried to kick Dr. Finitevus but she missed as he dodged again. Finitevus then jumped up to the ceiling and grabbed onto a panel that was mounted up there. He swung it down and sent it smacking into Rouge. The panel swinging down alone was enough to seriously hurt Rouge but what made it more painful was that Finitevus grabbed onto the ceiling and kicked the panel of its hinges and into Rouge. The panel threw Rouge onto the floor and kept her pinned down for it was too heavy for her to move off. Finitevus jumped down from the ceiling and he kicked the panel off Rouge. He grabbed her by the ears and yanked her up onto her feet.

"That'll teach you to interfere with my business you little brat." snarled Finitevus, a cruel smile spread out on his lips "You're finished now and Shadow will be next…"

He then proceeded to throw Rouge into the prison cube Shadow was trapped in. Rouge hit the holographic barriers on the cube and of course, was thrown away by them as she hit them.

Meanwhile, Sonic and the Royal Fighters had arrived in the Great Plains at last. They were speeding through the plains in hover saucers and whipping up clouds of dust as the saucers sped on. Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Sally were in one saucer, Wilson, Mandy, Ruben, Bunnie, Geoffrey, Shade and Nicole were in another and Sora, Vector, Espio and Charmy were taking up the rear in a third saucer. It had taken them a while but they had made it to the plains at last and as of this moment, they were hovering towards the Egg-Train. Sonic had spotted it and all three saucers headed towards it. They all caught up to the Egg-Train and the lined up in single file beside the train. Sally gave Sonic the warp ring.

"OK Sonic, jump onto the train and get a good look at the interior." ordered Sally "Then use the warp ring to get inside. We'll all follow you inside once it's open."

"Got it." said Sonic.

Sonic jumped out of the hover saucer and he landed on top of the roof of the first carriage. He held on tight and he looked through the broken window to have a good look at the interior so he could visualize it and use the warp ring to get inside. As he looked through the window, he got the shock of his life. Dr. Finitevus was on the train and he was battling Rouge and had Shadow trapped in a cube with holographic barriers for walls! Sonic gasped at what he was seeing and quickly rose back up away from the window so Finitevus wouldn't spot him. As he did though, Rouge ended up getting slammed against the door.

"Dr. Finitevus is on this train?!" gasped Sonic "And Shadow and Rouge are here too?! This day just got more interesting…"

"Sonic! What's going on up there?" Sally called over to him from her hover saucer.

"You will NOT believe this Queenie!" Sonic called back to her "Finitevus is on this train and he's got Shadow captive and is beating the crud outta Rouge!"

"Oh no!" gasped Sally in horror "That mad man will kill her! We have to help Rouge and save Shadow now! Warp us on that train now Sonic!"

Sonic obeyed and he jumped off the train and back into the hover saucer. He flicked the warp ring into the air. It landed in front of the hover saucers, to which they all stopped immediately, and opened up a portal to the inside of the carriage. The opening warp ring made Dr. Finitevus and Rouge stop fighting and stare at it in wonder. Rouge had no idea what was coming and what the warp ring was about but Finitevus instantly managed to guess who was going to come through the warp ring. Now the warp ring was open, Sonic curled into a ball and he spin-dashed directly through the warp ring. He ended up spin-dashing Finitevus directly in the gut and sending him hurling across the interior into the back of the carriage. Finitevus picked himself up and growled as he saw Sonic and all the Royal Fighters piling onto the train through the warp ring. Shadow and Rouge both beamed happily at the sight of their friends. Sonic cracked his knuckles and he scowled at Finitevus.

"You know Finny? You've gotta be about the ONLY guy I hate as much as Eggman!" he said crossly "I owe you a supersonic migraine for what you've done to us in the past!"

"Easy Sonic, remember he's very powerful." Sally reminded him "Tails, you get Shadow out of that thing." she said to Tails "Everybody else, attack Finitevus at once! Don't give him much room to fight back!" she ordered.

"Got it!" said all the Royal Fighters.

"Oooooh I'm so gonna enjoy this Uncle!" snarled Knuckles, bashing his fists together.

Tails ran over to get Shadow out of his prison while Knuckles charged up to Dr. Finitevus, bellowing at the top of his voice and preparing to punch him. Finitevus dodged the punch and he spun around behind Knuckles. He grabbed the echidna's dreadlocks and swung him around by them into a pole. Knuckles winced in pain and Finitevus banged him against it again. Shade ran in and pile-dived Finitevus in the back, making him let go of Knuckles. Shade then grabbed the pole, swung herself around and walloped Finitevus with her legs as she spun around the pole. Finitevus staggered backwards after the punch but he wasn't down yet. Wilson charged in and tried to slice him in two with his spinning blade weapon. Finitevus dodged the lunge and grabbed Wilson's wrists. He twisted them sharply and made the dog let go of his weapon. Finitevus snatched it and swung it at Wilson. Wilson ducked and Finitevus then tried to stab him with the weapon. Wilson merely caught the blade between his hands and kept it there. Mandy took the opportunity to help her husband by charging in and punching Finitevus in the head. Given her knuckle attachments were on, the punch was made all the more painful. Finitevus grunted in fury and Mandy punched at him again. Finitevus ducked to avoid the punch and he grabbed Mandy's belt. He unclipped the belt and whipped Mandy across the face with it, the buckle being the end that hit her. Mandy screamed in pain as she was hit by the belt. Wilson picked up his weapon and tried to attack Finitevus but the echidna jumped over him and landed behind him. He then wrapped the belt around Wilson's neck and began throttling him with it. Wilson however managed to save himself by scratching Finitevus above the eye with

his spinning blade. Finitevus winced and gripped his temple. Wilson unwrapped the belt from around his neck and he chucked it back over to Mandy. Mandy clipped her belt back on and the married couple then both kicked Finitevus in the gut. Finitevus was sent hurling into the arms of Vector the Crocodile. Vector squeezed Finitevus in a bone-crushing bear hug. Finitevus grunted and gasped for breath but he couldn't get free. Vector then threw him into a wall. The impact left a nasty dent on the wall. Finitevus picked himself up and he summoned a warp ring. He jumped through it and vanished from sight. He reappeared behind Vector and he pounded him in the back, knocking him down onto the floor. Finitevus then grabbed Vector's arm and swung him into Espio and Charmy as they ran to help their boss. The Chaotix were now lying on the floor, dazed and confused. Sally and Nicole charged in next. Sally tried to whack Finitevus with her staff but Finitevus caught her arm and held it there. Nicole punched at Finitevus but Finitevus caught her arm as well. Finitevus then kneed Sally's hand and caused the staff to hurl up into the ceiling where it stuck thanks to the blade. Finitevus leaped up and grabbed the staff, pulling it down from the ceiling and he butted Nicole in the gut with it. Nicole doubled over in pain and Finitevus ran around behind Sally. He pressed the staff against Sally's neck and pinned her against his body. Sally however remembered some wise words Matilda had taught her. Sally swung her head backwards and butted Finitevus directly on the nose. Finitevus cried out in pain and he let go of Sally. Sally retrieved her staff and she whacked Finitevus across the head with it. She tripped him up with the staff and sent Finitevus falling down onto his back. Finitevus picked himself up and he stomped on a floor panel. The panel was brought up into his hands and he threw it at Sally and Nicole like a Frisbee. Sonic jumped in and spin-dashed the panel away from the girls before it could hit them. Sonic homing-attacked Finitevus and knocked him down onto his back. Finitevus was quickly back on his feet and he grabbed Sonic by the quills. He whirled him around the front and kicked him into Sally and Nicole. The girls just caught him and helped him find his feet. Ruben squirted himself into the air and he landed in front of Finitevus. He punched at him but the mad doctor dodged his attacks, reached around and grabbed Ruben's tail. He slammed Ruben against the wall and unclipped his aqua-collar. Ruben however stomped on his foot and kicked him in the shin to make him release him. Ruben

whirled around and snatched his collar back. He clipped it back on and squirted him into the wall. Finitevus growled furiously and he seized a nearby crate. He kicked it at Ruben and the crate hit the water panther, knocking him down onto the floor. Sora was livid and she tried to help but Finitevus jumped up, grabbed a rail on the ceiling and dodged Sora's attack. He swung his legs and kicked Sora in the head, knocking her down on the floor. But he was quickly brought down on the floor himself for Bunnie shot at him with her arm cannon. Finitevus was knocked down onto the floor by the attack. Amy, Cream and Cosmo all ran towards Finitevus but the echidna sent them away with warp rings. They ended up reappearing above Sonic, Sally & Nicole and the girls knocked them down onto their stomachs. Geoffrey fired some darts at Finitevus but Finitevus picked up a crate to shield himself. However…the darts were exploding darts and they blew up, destroying the crate and throwing Finitevus backwards.

Meanwhile Tails was trying to get Shadow out of the cube but he couldn't find a way to do so. He looked at it but he couldn't see a way of breaking in. The metal pieces that formed the barriers were also shielded to he couldn't destroy them. Then was when Tails had an idea. Who said he had to break anything? He had a way to get Shadow out already!

"Hey Sally! I need your warp ring!" Tails called over to the squirrel.

Sally tossed it over to Tails and ran back to the fight. Tails caught it and he summoned it. The warp ring opened up underneath Shadow and he ended up falling through it and reappearing just above the floor. Shadow was free at last! Rouge beamed at the sight of Shadow now out of his prison.

"Very clever Tails." said Shadow "Now I can help stop Dr. Finitevus."

All in good timing too for Finitevus had now grabbed Bunnie and was aiming her arm gun at everybody, making her shoot unwillingly at her friends. Geoffrey tried to save his girlfriend but Finitevus threw her upwards and sent her spiralling into Geoffrey. Knuckles ran in for another punch but Finitevus blocked his punch and punched Knuckles back. Shade Blade-Rushed Finitevus and struck him in the back, making him kneel down in pain. Knuckles then uppercut

Finitevus directly in the face and knocked him into Shade. Shade kicked Finitevus away and the albino echidna landed beside the previously kicked up floor-panel that he had thrown earlier. Finitevus picked up the panel and he threw it at Knuckles. Knuckles punched it away but Finitevus only did it to distract him. Finitevus picked up a crate and he rammed into Knuckles with it like it was a battering ram. Knuckles was slammed against the wall by the crate. Shade tried to help but Finitevus just threw the crate at her. Then suddenly, he was spin-dashed by a black and red blur. It was Shadow. He spin-dashed Finitevus again and then grabbed him by his cloak. He punched Finitevus in the face and then threw him into the wall. Sonic ran in and the two hedgehogs ended up spin-dashing Finitevus together. Finitevus slammed against the wall very hard and he gasped for breath. He growled at his opponents and he staggered onto his feet. Sonic stood before Finitevus and pointed at him.

"Give up doc. You're outnumbered and you're running out of breath." he said "Stand down and make this easy for yourself."

"Especially now I'm free!" yelled Shadow.

Finitevus eerily enough…smiled at his opponents.

"You have no idea what you're up against…" he purred "Time for my contingencies to commence…"

He then whipped out a remote from his cloak and pressed a button on it. As he pressed said button, he also pulled out a gas mask and put it over his mouth. Nozzles extended out of the ceiling and started to fill the room with sleeping gas. The Royal Fighters all choked and spluttered as the gas began to billow all over the room and seep into their lungs…

Footnotes:

* We've seen all that haven't we in Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 19: Rise of a Warrior Princess

Finitevus's Gambit Part 2

Story 156: Finitevus' Gambit Part 2

Oooooh my goodness…what the heck happened to us…?

These were the thoughts of Queen Sally Acorn, a royal turned fighter, as she slowly but surely began to ascend out of unconsciousness. Today had gotten pretty surprising and eventful for the R.F.S. First Sora Prower, the super sleuth sister of Miles "Tails" Prower, had spotted a train that clearly belong to Dr. Eggman on Mobius's satellite images, then the Royal Fighters had gone over to stop the train only to find out Shadow the Hedgehog was being held captive on it by Dr. Finitevus of all people and Rouge the Bat was trying to save him and then the Royal Fighters had boarded the train to save Shadow and stop Finitevus only for the sneaky doctor to unveil a contingency plan he had hidden in his cape. Said contingency plan involved dosing the whole team with sleeping gas while he himself had a gas mask on so he wouldn't inhale any of it. The past few hours had been nothing but total darkness for the whole team and now Sally Acorn was beginning to wake up. Her thoughts returned to her head, her consciousness began to wake up and her eyes began to open, slowly but steadily. Sally fully came to and the first thing she noticed was that there was a roof above her head. But this was not the roof of a building of any kind, it was much too low. Sally sat up and suddenly noticed that there were bars all around her. Bars?! Bars and a roof?! This meant only one thing… Sally was in a cage! Sally instantly fretted and she gripped the bars of the cage. The cage was very small and very cramped. She couldn't stand up in it, only sit in it. Sally tugged on the bars desperately but try as she might, there was no getting out of this cage.

"Oh no! I'm trapped in a cage!" shrieked Sally "Let me out! Let me out of here right now!"

"Don't bother yelling like that your highness." muttered the voice of Tails "There's no one here but us and we're all in cages too."

Sally looked around and surely enough, she saw ALL the Royal Fighters sitting around trapped in cages just as she was. The cages varied in sizes depending on who was in them with Tails & Sora, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian and Charmy Bee in smaller cages and Vector the Crocodile in a larger cage. The cages were spread out all over the room. Sally was horrified to see this, her whole team was locked in cages just like she was! How could things get any worse?

"Royal Fighters! Oh no, you're all trapped too?" gasped Sally in despair.

"Yep, we are your majesty." said Mandy Mouse grumpily "I hate to say it but we're trapped like rats right now."

"I really don't like this!" whimpered Wilson the Dog, huddling up in his cage and shaking like mad "I hate being trapped! It's not good for my nerves!"

"I can't believe this is happened to us!" fumed Shade the Echidna "Finitevus gassed us all and now he's locked us all in cages and is probably planning to do goodness knows what to us!"

"Given how he's a scientist, I bet he's gonna use us as lab experiments." said Amy Rose worriedly.

"I don't wanna be a science experiment!" whimpered Cream the Rabbit "I don't wanna be trapped in this horrible cage either! I wanna get out!"

"Well we won't be staying trapped for long." declared Sally "Hold on everybody, I'll have us out in…"

She reached into her vest pocket and pulled out…absolutely nothing! Sally's blood ran colder than a polar ice cap. She rummaged around in her pockets and then she even took her vest off and shook it madly. Nothing fell out. Her pockets were empty and she had nothing in her vest. Sally thought she was going to slip back into unconsciousness again. She dropped her vest on the cage floor in horror.

"M-m-m-my warp ring!" she gasped hoarsely "I-I-I-I-It's gone!"

"Finitevus must have swiped it while we were knocked out." sighed Nicole the Lynx, who was in a cage next to Sally's cage "We can't get out with it now, he likely has it back on his arm or something."

"I would try and bust outta here but I can't even stand up in this stupid cage." whined Amy "I haven't got enough room to swing my hammer around, heck I haven't got room for my hammer period! I can't get us outta here."

"I've tried breaking the bars to my cage but given how cramped it is in here, I can't use my full strength." sighed Vector "I can't get us outta here!"

"And don't bother hopin' ah can sugah because Finitevus literally took mah robot arm off!" shrieked Bunnie Rabbot who surely enough, was missing her robotic left arm entirely "There's no getting' out from me ah'm afraid."

"I can't Blade-Rush us outta here because my blades are gone." said Shade grimly "Finitevus must have confiscated them too."

"My weapon's gone too." said Wilson sadly "I'll be of no good."

"Don't look at me, my utility belt's been confiscated." said Sora in despair "I can't use any of my gadgets to get us out I'm sorry to say."

"And I doubt the rest of us will be of any use." sighed Cosmo the Seedrian "The rest of us don't have weapons or useful powers to break out."

"And my staff didn't fall out of my vest when I looked for the warp ring." said Sally "It must have been taken too. I can't use that to get us out. I'm afraid we're stuck in here." she said in defeat "We're trapped and there's no getting out for any of us."

"It's a pity Shadow isn't with us." muttered Rouge the Bat, who was covered in bruises and cuts from her unfortunate encounter with Finitevus earlier "He could just warp out of his cage and then bust us out."

"Wait what? What do you mean?" asked Sally curiously.

"Haven't you noticed sweetheart? Shadow's not here." noted Rouge "And neither are Sonic and Knuckles."

Sally looked around the room and surely enough she noticed that not a single cage in the room housed Sonic, Shadow or Knuckles. Where were they? Why weren't they here? What was going to happen to them? Was Finitevus doing something with them. Sally instantly knew that it wasn't good.

"Well this is odd. We're all here but Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles are missing? Where the heck are they meant to be then?" asked Sally.

"Who knows?" said Tails, shrugging his shoulders "I bet Finitevus is planning something horrible for them! He might even kill them! We have to find them and fast before he harms them!"

"But how?" asked Cosmo glumly "We can't get out of our cages. We can't save them at all."

"If we ever get outta here, I'm gonna build a device that allows us to phase through solid matter." declared Tails "That'll really help us in the future."

"We can't lose hope everybody." said Nicole "We have to find a way out of our cages so we can find Sonic, Shadow & Knuckles and save them from Dr. Finitevus. I'm sure we'll think of something."

"I'm sure we will Nicole." said Sally "Until we come up with an idea though, I can't help but wonder where are we? I doubt we're in Eggman's base, he would have gloated to us already no doubt."

"I'm wondering the same thing luv." said Geoffrey St. John "Has Finitevus taken us somewhere completely different altogether? I can't for the life of me tell where we are."

"We'll find out once we break out." said Sally "Now everybody, think! We need to break out of our cages and fast! There's got to be a way out of here even if we have no weapons!"

Everybody thought for a moment for a way out of their cages. It was going to be tough to find a way out though for the situation seemed pretty darn hopeless right now. With no warp rings and no weapons…how could the Royal Fighters possibly escape…?

Oh man…how long have I been snoozing for…?

Those were the thoughts of Sonic the Hedgehog, swimming around his head like goldfish in a bowl. Sonic was beginning to come to after being unconscious for a while. Sonic could hardly believe that Finitevus had gotten the drop on him and his friends like that. They had the doctor cornered and beaten for sure and then he suddenly gases everybody including him and puts him and his team to sleep. After being out for a while, Sonic was finally beginning to come to. He opened his droopy eyes and he yawned loudly.

"Hoo boy…does it feel good to be waking up…" he slurred sleepily.

Sonic fully opened his eyes and blinked the sleep out of them. He looked up and saw…lights in the ceiling? Sonic stared at the lights, his eyes squinting a little due to how bright the lights were. He wasn't imagining things, there was a circle of glowing white lights looming in the ceiling above him. The Egg-Train didn't have any lights in the ceiling, what was going on here? Sonic could also see that the room was darkly lit, save for the lights in the ceiling above him. He certainly wasn't on the Egg-Train anymore, he was somewhere else entirely. Sonic tried to get up and look around only to find out that he couldn't move! Sonic pulled on his arms and legs. They would not budge. Sonic looked down at his arms and legs saw that he had clamps fastened tightly around his wrists and ankles. He was fastened to a steel bed that was sitting upright. Sonic instantly grew nervous and he struggled furiously. He was fastened to a bed and he had no idea where he was. This was not good at all! But things were about to get more shocking for Sonic looked around while struggling and much to his horror, Shadow the Hedgehog and Knuckles the Echidna were fastened to steel beds too! They were already awake and had been struggling vigorously. Try as they might, they couldn't get free at all. The three Mobians were all trapped and there seemed to be no way of escape. If even Knuckles

couldn't break out of the clamps then what hope was there for Sonic?

"Knuckles! Shadow! What's going on? Where are we?" asked Sonic.

"I don't know." said Knuckles "Neither of us knows. All we do know is we're strapped down and Finitevus is the one who likely did this to us. When I break free though, I'm gonna kill him for this!"

"You and I both Knuckie." said Sonic "Hey Shadow, why don't you just warp out of your clamps? You can do that right?"

"I've tried to but it won't work." grumbled Shadow "These clamps obviously must be stopping me from using my power much like that holographic cube cage did!"

"Well that sucks, how can we get outta this one?" asked Sonic furiously.

"You cannot, that's how." purred a deep sinister voice that came from the shadows.

Sonic, Shadow & Knuckles all stared ahead of them as they heard the voice. Not long after the voice had been heard, something stepped into the light, revealing his presence to the three captive Mobians. It was Dr. Finitevus. he stood there, his cape closed up as his arms were by his side and his evil eyes twinkling diabolically. His mouth was curled into a cruel, sadistic smile that suggested something horrible was about to happen. Sonic clenched his teeth and fists and he pulled on his arms and legs but to no avail.

"Dr. Finitevus! You let us go right now or I'll stomp on you so hard that we can use you as a doormat!" snarled Sonic.

"Yeah Uncle, let us go now or you'll be sorry!" bellowed Knuckles.

"I do not harbour any interest or care in your pathetic threats my ridiculous Royal Fighters." snapped Dr. Finitevus "Besides, your threats fall short given your current condition. Hard for a captive to be threatening after all."

"Let me out of these clamps and I'll show you how threatening I can

be!" growled Shadow.

"I'd rather you stayed put Shadow." said Finitevus coldly.

"Where are we Dr. Creepy-Von-Evil?!" demanded Sonic furiously "And where are my friends? You'd better not have hurt them!"

"Oh don't worry about your friends, they're OK for the moment." explained Finitevus "I just caged them all up until further notice. Don't expect a rescue from them for I confiscated any weapons they have AND the Super Warp Ring that I lost to them during our first encounter." he added with a cold tone of voice that rumbled around the room ominously.

"So my friends are as good as trapped? That's a bummer." muttered Sonic "I'm sure they'll get free somehow and when they do, they'll kick your sorry butt and free me, Knuckles & Shadow! You can bet on that!"

"There is no escaping the cages I have placed them in." crowed Finitevus "They're made of double-coated titanium alloy, even I wouldn't be able to break out of them."

"You would say that." snorted Sonic "Now then, where are we?"

"Where indeed?" purred Finitevus darkly, rubbing his bandaged hands together in the manner of a greedy person "That is the big question isn't it? And I have your answer…"

Finitevus snapped his fingers and then suddenly, as if by magic, the entire room was alit with bright lights from the ceiling shining all around. Sonic, Shadow & Knuckles could now properly see where they were. They were in a room with a pure silver colour to it. Everything was silver, the floor, the ceiling, the machinery, everything. There were rows of lights in the ceiling, dangling chains with sharp, curved hooks and lots of hi-tech machinery all around the room. There was even a table and next to the table was a trolley containing lots and lots of horrible dissection equipment, including a horde of scalpels and drills. There was a large machine with a glass container sitting atop it behind the beds Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles were fastened to and the machine had some pipes with

helmets attached to them waiting to be used. This place was clearly a hi-tech laboratory but it didn't look like anything of Eggman's design at all.

"Whoa…who's lab is this then?" asked Sonic curiously.

"Nobody's." explained Finitevus "This particular laboratory was recently closed down and has been unused for about a week so everything here is still in prime condition and fit to use. Obviously a scientist such as myself would be all too happy to use a lab like this. After the whole ordeal with Enerjak, I warped myself and Dr. Eggman back to his headquarters and while he was busy making repairs to his casing, I sneaked off and went looking for unused labs to use for my own experiments. I am not complacent in the slightest to be sharing labs with Eggman, I'd much prefer to have my own. So in my search, I came across this one and began preparing it for use while also attending to Eggman's needs whenever he called me. Now the lab gets to see its first experiment for I am about to begin it now…"

"What kind of experiment?" asked Shadow curiously.

"An experiment to which you may not survive…" said Finitevus coldly.

"What?! You're insane! You can't do this to us!" cried Knuckles "You can't especially do this to me, your own flesh and blood! Finitevus, you truly are mad!"

"I know. I've been mad ever since I escaped the void…and I love it." said Finitevus in a very creepy tone of voice that made him sound very scary and freaky.

"The void really does leave a bad impact on some people doesn't it?" scoffed Sonic "So Finitevus, what experiment are you planning to perform on us?"

Finitevus said nothing. He instead just walked around behind the beds and he picked up the helmets that lay behind them. He put them on top of Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles's heads and fastened them on good and tight so they couldn't do something like shake

them off or anything. Sonic cringed as the tightness of the helmet squeezed his head.

"This experiment will revolutionize Chaos Energy in all it's quantum and chaotic glory…" purred Finitevus sinisterly "For you see, I have a plan greater than you can ever imagine. I was so fascinated by the power Enerjak contained that I plan to harness that kind of power. And what better place to start then three of the best candidates on Mobius to siphon Chaos Energy from?"

"You're out of your mind! We don't have Chaos Energy save for Shadow!" snapped Sonic.

"Uh actually, we do." noted Knuckles "I'm a Guardian of the Master Emerald, I have unprecedented access to Chaos Energy, I'm chock full of the stuff. And need I remind you of my Chaos Super Form?"

"Oh…" said Sonic "And I use the Chaos Emeralds on a regular basis…I bet I'm full of Chaos Energy too…"

"All of you are full of Chaos Energy, head to toe." said Finitevus "I knew Knuckles would be and after Eggman told me all about you and Shadow Sonic, I KNEW you hedgehogs would be full of Chaos Energy too, especially since a Chaos Emerald was used to create Shadow from what I've learned. Although you Sonic are the most interesting specimen." he added, drumming his fingers on Sonic's bed "For I scanned you all while you were unconscious to see how much Chaos Energy you all contain and you have not only Chaos Energy, but Power Ring energy too. However did you come to get PowerRing energy?"

"As if I'm gonna tell you that!" snapped Sonic, not wanting to bring up his origin story anytime soon.

"Fair enough." said Finitevus dryly "I shan't press on for the answer to that question. Anyway, the machine that the helmets are connected to is a energy siphoning machine. It shall drain you all dry of your Chaos Energy once I activate it. However…it also drains your life force too. You will NOT survive the process, neither of you. That is guaranteed."

Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles gasped in horror.

"You sick little…let us go right now! You're not draining us dry of all life and energy!" screamed Sonic frantically.

"Uncle, please! Don't do this!" cried Knuckles "This isn't the man you once were! You would never perform killer experiments on anybody and you certainly wouldn't risk the life of your own nephew!"

"Oh I would." said Finitevus "I made my allegiance the day I became Imperator Ix's apprentice. The Finitevus you once knew was merely an act I put up to mask my true character. Now the mask has been removed and you see the true Finitevus before you."

"So you lied to me all throughout my childhood?!" shrieked Knuckles "You were NEVER the nice uncle I grew up with?! It was all a pretence?! I'm disgusted that I'm even related to you!" he snarled

"And I'm disgusted I'm related to you." snorted Finitevus, his face contorting with loathing "Enough of this nonsense though, it is time to begin the experiment…"

Finitevus wandered over to the Energy Sapping Machine and he began to prepare it for activation. Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles began desperately trying to break free as the machine was readied for activation. In a matter of moments, all their energy would be drained and they would be nothing but lifeless husks lying dead on the beds they were fastened to…

Meanwhile, Sally and the Royal Fighters had been thinking on hard on how they could escape their cages without any of their weapons or any warp rings whatsoever. Vector had tried chewing through the bars of his cage just to see if he could get through them but all he ended up doing was giving himself severe toothache and now he was sitting on the floor of his cage clenching his sore mouth and fuming furiously to himself. As Finitevus had stated, the cages were strong enough to even contain him, nobody would be getting out on mere strength alone. After watching Vector's failed attempt o chew his way out, Sally began to wonder would having their weapons

make a difference in trying to get out of the cages? But then Finitevus wouldn't need to confiscate them if that was the case. Espio had remembered that he could simply pull his weapons from airspace so he summoned a kunai you his hands and tried all he could to get out with it. The kunai wasn't strong enough to cut through the bars unfortunately and it was much to big to pick the lock of his cage. Espio tried using one of his shurikens to pick the lock of the cage but even that was too big. When he twisted it to the side, it just wouldn't twist very far. Espio couldn't use his exploding shurikens to get out of the cage since he might blow himself up in the process. Everybody else had tried all they could from punching the bars to kicking the bars to just plain struggling but try as they might, they just couldn't break out of the cages. Sally thumped the floor in despair.

"Oh this is hopeless!" she whined "We can't get out of these cages no matter what we try! I'm afraid we're all done for everybody!"

"Sure seems like it." said Nicole in despair, looking like she was about ready to cry.

"Here we go again, the situation seems hopeless and her royal highness is the first to give up." sighed Mandy in annoyance "How typical."

"Don't be so rude to the queen Mandy!" snapped Wilson "Besides, I don't see you doing any better at getting out of the cages!"

"Well unlike Sally, I'm not giving up. I live by this oath: "Never give up, there's always light at the end of the tunnel, no matter how long it seems or how hard it is to get through"." said Mandy "We'll think of something, I know we will. We will get out of here."

"I admire your optimism Mandy but there's NOTHING we can do!" cried Sally "We can't break out, our weapons are gone and my warp ring's gone! How can we break out of these cages if we've got nothing that'll work?!"

"Um, excuse me everybody, I have an idea." said Cream softly.

"See? Even Cream's not giving up and she's what, the youngest of

us all?" sneered Mandy "You need more optimism Sally. OK Creamy-girl, what's that idea of yours?" she asked enthusiastically.

"What if I get Cheese to squeeze through the bars and get out that way?" suggested Cream "Once he gets out, he can look for the keys to our cages. I'm sure he's small enough to get through."

"Well it's the only option we have left." said Sally "Cream, let's try your plan."

"OK Miss Acorn." said Cream sweetly "Cheese, please can you try and squeeze through the bars to my cage?"

Cheese nodded happily and he fluttered towards the bars. He poked his head through the bars and squeezed as hard as he could to get through them. He sucked in as much air as he could to try and make himself slimmer. It was a bit of a tight squeeze but Cheese was only just small enough and slim enough to get through the bars. With a small "Pop!", Cheese squeezed through the bars and chirped joyfully.

"Chao, Chao, Chao, Chao!" cheered Cheese happily.

"The little Chao's out of the cage!" cried Sora happily "Well done little guy!"

"Very good thinking Cream." said Tails approvingly.

"Thank you very much Mr. Tails." said Cream delightedly "Now Cheese, can you please see if there's any keys around? Our cages have keyholes so there must be a key for them."

"Chao." said Cheese agreeably.

He flew around the pretty bare room to see what he could find. Unfortunately, he couldn't find anything around. There were no keys lying around whatsoever and there was nothing that could substitute for a key at all. The room was bare save for all the cages and there was nowhere a key could possibly be stored. Cheese flew back over to Cream and he spoke sadly to her.

"Oh dear…Cheese can't find any keys." said Cream sadly "I'm afraid

we're still stuck."

"No we're not." said Cosmo "Cheese can just try to find Dr. Finitevus and see if he has the keys to our cages."

"But Cheese won't have a chance against the blighter." sighed Geoffrey "Finitevus will beat him down easily. We can't let him go by himself to get the keys from Finitevus."

"Wait a minute! I've just had a brilliant idea!" declared Amy in a shrill voice of excitement.

She stuck her hand out of her cage and she summoned her Piko-Piko hammer to it.

"Cheese, use this to break me out!" ordered Amy.

"Um Miss Rose? I don't think Cheese will be able to lift that heavy hammer…" said Cream unsurely.

But despite this, Cheese had a go. He curled his hands around the hammer and tried as hard as he could to lift the hammer. Using all his might…he managed to pick it up off the floor! This amazed Cream greatly. She had no idea the Chao was so strong. Cheese strained with effort as he lifted the hammer off the ground. He then began to spin the hammer around as fast as he could, spinning himself around as he did so. Cheese spun around the hammer so much that he ended up becoming a twirling blue blur with a red and yellow outline as he spun around. Cheese edged towards Amy's cage and…he hit it and ended up leaving a big dent in the bars. The cage maybe strong but Amy's hammer would always be stronger. Cheese stopped spinning (and felt very dizzy after so much spinning) and he picked up the hammer for another hit. He spun around again and hit the dented bars. He ended up breaking them and freeing Amy at long last. Amy instantly jumped out of her cage and took her hammer from Cheese.

"Whoopee! I'm free!" cheered Amy "Although Cheese is the one to really thank for this. If he couldn't have gotten out then this plan wouldn't have worked."

"Chao." piped Cheese with pride.

"Now let's get the rest of you out…" said Amy, dashing over to Sally's cage and raising her hammer high above her head.

She bashed the cage as hard as she could and she broke Sally out of it. Now she'd broken Sally out of her cage, she proceeded to break everybody else out of their cages. It took Amy a good few minutes and a lot of hammering but she eventually did it. Everybody was free and now they could get out of the room and find their weapons and also find Sonic, Shadow & Knuckles. Sally took charge of course.

"OK then, first we find our weapons and then we go and find Sonic, Shadow & Knuckles." announced Sally "Rouge, is Shadow's communicator still displaying his coordinates?" she asked.

"Sure is." said Rouge, looking at her communicator "It seems to indicate that they're on a floor above us."

"Then we know where to go after we find our weapons." said Sally "Come on Royal Fighters, let's go!"

With that said, the team charged out of the room and began searching for their stolen weapons. The search didn't take them long luckily for they came across a room next door and they looked inside. The room was clearly meant for storage for there wasn't much space in the room and it was full of shelves. On the shelves were the stolen weapons. Sally's staff, Geoffrey's arm-mounted crossbow, Bunnie's robotic left arm, Shade's blades, Wilson's spinning blade, Mandy's knuckle attachments and Sora's utility belt. The Royal Fighters all retrieved their respective weapons from the closet instantly but poor Bunnie was left wondering how to put her arm back on since she had no tools with her and she couldn't just stick it back on as easily as that.

"Oh mah stars…how can ah get mah arm back on?" asked Bunnie "It can't just pop back on and there's no tools to stick it back on."

"I bet Finitevus has a welder of some kind." said Tails "When we get to him, I will see if I can find a tool to reattach Bunnie's arm while the

rest of you keep him busy."

"Good plan Tails." said Cosmo supportively.

"Thanks angel." said Tails gratefully.

"Now then, let's find Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles before something happens to them." said Sally "Rouge, lead the way. You have the coordinates."

Rouge obeyed and she ran off ahead with the others following her. Sally prayed with all her might that the three were OK and that nothing bad was happening to them now…

It was a good thing that Sally and the Royal Fighters had managed to break out at this moment for Dr. Finitevus had gotten his little experiment ready to activate! He'd fully primed the machine and now he was getting ready to throw the switch and activate it. Sonic, Shadow & Knuckles were still trying to break free of their binds but to no avail. They just couldn't get free no matter how hard they tried. And now the experiment was ready to begin. This was the end for Sonic, Shadow & Knuckles. All three of them tensed themselves and prepared for the worst. Finitevus took a moment to admire their frightened faces and then he wandered back over to the machine.

"Prepare yourselves my glorious Chaos Candidates…your end begins now." purred Finitevus "I'll be sure to thank your corpses for the generous donation you're all giving me though."

"Charming I'm sure." snorted Sonic.

Finitevus ignored Sonic's comment and he curled his fingers around the switch. He pulled it down and activated the machine. The machine whirred into life with a horrible, wailing, whirring sound that pierced the captive's ears and then the helmets began to crackle with electricity. The electricity buzzed around the captive's heads and then suddenly, a sharp stinging pain surged through their skulls as the pipes the helmets were linked to the machine by started to drain them of their Chaos Energy. Horrible screams emitted from

Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles's mouths as the helmets zapped their heads and started draining Chaos Energy from their bodies. They writhed around in agonizing pain and the Chaos Energy began to channel through the pipes like an electrical current into the machine. The energy was in liquid form and it began to fill up the glass capsule that sat atop the machine. Not only was Chaos Energy being drained but their very life force was being drained too as Finitevus said it would. Finitevus couldn't help but cackle maniacally at how perfectly his experiment was working. Soon he'd have the two biggest threats against villainy and his nephew dead and he'd be able to make himself ridiculously powerful (like he isn't already!) with Chaos Energy.

"Yes…Yes…YES!" cheered Finitevus "How glorious! When this experiment is over, I shall douse myself in Chaos Energy and I shall become the next Enerjak! Once I become Enerjak…all of Mobius will fall before me! Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

As the experiment continued, Sonic and Knuckles were beginning to look pretty grotesque. Their bodies were beginning to shrivel up as if someone was sucking their blood dry and their skeleton shapes were beginning to become apparent as the flesh shrunk tighter and tighter around them. Shadow was taking a little longer to do this since he had more Chaos Energy in him than the others but it was beginning to happen. In a matter of moments, their bodies would be nothing more than shrivelled up skin clinging tightly around a pile of bones. But as it seemed the end was nigh for the three, the door burst open and in charged all the Royal Fighters. Dr. Finitevus stared in horror at the Royal Fighters.

"Royal Fighters?! How in the heck did you escape your cages?!" shrieked the crazy echidna.

"Never you mind!" yelled Sally "You let Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles go before…"

Her voice trialled off at the sight of the three captive Mobians getting completely drained of all energy, Chaos and Natural. It looked very gruesome and unpleasant, seeing the three getting drained and their bodies shrivelling up by the second. Sally was horrified at this.

"Oh my god! What are you doing to them?!" she screamed.

"Draining them of all energy, including Chaos Energy." explained Finitevus "When the experiment is finished, your friends will be no more and I will become the new identity of Enerjak, the Great Echidna God of the past!"

"You sick twisted monster! You won't resurrect Enerjak after all the terror he's done, especially to my country!" screamed Ruben the Water Panther.

He ran forward and he threw a wave of water at Finitevus. He knocked Finitevus away from the machine and he squirted so hard at Finitevus that he ended up pinning him against the wall. Now Finitevus was pinned against the wall, Tails flew over to the machine and he instantly pulled the switch back up. This caused the machine to stop what it was doing and reverse what it was doing. All the Chaos Energy it had been draining returned back to Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles's bodies. Their bodies stopped shrivelling up and they returned to normal. The machine stopped humming and the pain in their heads stopped. They both panted and gasped for breath, relieved that this horror was over.

"Oh thank god!" cried Sonic "Thanks Tails, this feels much better."

"Anytime." said Tails "Dr. Finitevus has truly gone off the deep end hasn't he? Trying to make himself the new Enerjak? How crazy can you get?"

"I think Finitevus lost all sanity when he went into the void." muttered Knuckles.

Now the experiment was over, Tails flew over to the trolley of tools that was lying nearby to find a tool to reattach Bunnie Rabbot's arm. While he did that, Sally deployed the blade in her staff and she used it to force the clamps around Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles's wrists and ankles to free them. The two hedgehogs and echidna jumped onto their feet and they all had a good stretch.

"Aah, that feels much better." said Sonic "Thanks guys."

"How did you break out of your cages?" asked Shadow.

"Cheese managed to squeeze out of Cream's cage and Amy gave him her hammer to use." explained Sally "Cheese used her hammer to break Amy out and then Amy broke all of us out."

"Wow, saved by a Chao?" laughed Knuckles "I never would have guessed that the littlest of guys could do such a big task. Now let's make Finitevus pay for trying to kill us like this and become the new Enerjak!"

Then suddenly, Ruben was sent hurling across the room and he landed at Sora's feet. The blue-furred vixen was quick to pick up Ruben and help him stand again. Finitevus had managed to break through his water jets and punch him away. He shook himself dry for he was dripping wet now and he squeezed his cape to rinse it. Now he was dry, he reached into his cape and pulled out a silver stick that was the size of a lightsaber hilt. His face contorted with rage.

"You ingrates! You've ruined a revolutionary moment in science and Chaos!" he snarled "Neither of you will leave this room alive!"

Finitevus pressed a button on the stick and out of it emitted a long streak of electrical energy, making it look like a whip made of electricity. Furious, Finitevus swung the whip at all the Mobians and nearly hit them all. The Royal Fighters dodged the whip quickly as it swung over them all. Finitevus drew it back and he swung it again. He hit Tails in the back and Tails received a horrible electrical shock that left him lying on the floor gasping for breath. Luckily, before he got whipped, he had managed to reattach Bunnie's arm after finding a welding tool on the trolley so Bunnie was in fighting condition once again. She deployed her arm cannon and aimed it at Dr. Finitevus. She shot at him but Finitevus whipped the shot, stopping it before it could get near him. Finitevus tried to whip Bunnie but he missed as Bunnie dodged. Sonic ran in and he spin-dashed towards Finitevus but the mad doctor whipped him away with his whip. The attack left Sonic feeling very sore and a little singed. Shadow put a stop to Finitevus's deadly weapon but warping in front of him and pile-diving him into the wall, causing him to drop the electro-whip. Shadow stomped on it and destroyed it instantly. Unfortunately…Finitevus had a spare! (Does he seriously look like the type of guy who

doesn't have a spare weapon?) Finitevus pulled out a spare electro-whip and he whipped Shadow away from himself with it. Shadow was sent sprawling across the floor after that whip. Finitevus raised the whip and he prepared to let Shadow have it really badly but as he was about to whip Shadow, Knuckles charged in and socked him in the gut. Finitevus dropped the whip, which ended up turning itself off after it landed on the floor button-side down. Finitevus socked Knuckles in the face and he kicked him in the gut. Sonic spin-dashed Finitevus in the back and sent him hurling into the restraint bed. Finitevus had an idea though. Shadow came in with a Chaos Spear in hand. He tried to hit Finitevus but Finitevus ducked down under the restraint bed. Shadow stopped by the bed and looked under to see Finitevus there. Finitevus jumped up from under the bed and he pushed on it. The bed swung up and uppercut Shadow in the face, knocking him down onto his back. Finitevus then jumped onto the bed just as Bunnie tried to punch him. He kicked her down underneath the bed, jumped off of it and pushed it down. The bed swung down and clonked Bunnie on the head. Finitevus pushed it up further and further, hoping to crush Bunnie's head with it. Geoffrey was quick to save his girlfriend by seizing Finitevus by the cape and hauling him back. Finitevus just elbowed Geoffrey in the gut to make him let go and then he swung him over onto his back. He unclipped the arm-mounted crossbow from Geoffrey's arm and placed it on his own. He began shooting stun-darts at all the Royal Fighters furiously to make them back off and to hopefully hit one of them with it. Everybody managed to dodge the shots luckily and Shade stopped Finitevus by Blade-Rushing at him. The wave struck Finitevus's arm and knocked the crossbow off of it. Shade Blade-Rushed at Finitevus again but Finitevus used a warp ring to send the attack hurling back towards her. Shadow and Rouge double-teamed Finitevus with a pair of kicks and sent him crashing into the wall. Shadow threw Chaos Spears at him and Rouge screw-kicked him again. Finitevus growled furiously and he summoned a warp ring to his hand. He jumped through it and reappeared in the ceiling. Finitevus jumped down onto the floor and dared Shadow & Rouge to come towards him. The two Mobians did…and ended up falling through a warp ring that opened up in the floor beneath them. They reappeared above Tails, Sora & Cosmo, who were charging behind Finitevus, and they fell directly on top of them.

"When I'm through with all of you, I'll have ALL of your life forces drained!" declared Finitevus "All of you will litter the floor with your shrivelled up, lifeless corpses and I will have more energy than I know what to do with!"

"Not on my watch Dr. Crazy-Von-Evil!" yelled Sonic.

He spin-dashed Finitevus in the gut and sent him hurling into one of the restraint beds. Finitevus picked himself up but Sonic grabbed the trolley of tools and he kicked it into him. Sonic thought he would use Finitevus's reliance on the environment in battle to his advantage by trying it himself. The trolley smacked into Finitevus and made him grimace. Knuckles picked up the trolley and he walloped Finitevus with it, sending the tools spilling onto the floor and Finitevus was sent hurling into the wall. Big mistake for he ended up landing directly beside his electro-whip! Finitevus grabbed it quickly and he activated it. Wilson and Mandy charged towards Finitevus only for the evil scientist to whip them both away. Cream threw Cheese at Finitevus but Finitevus whipped Cheese down into the floor. He picked up a drill and he threw it at Cream. Cosmo leaped up and caught the drill in her hands (she can jump pretty well). She threw the drill back at Finitevus to which he just whipped it to pieces. Shade ran in and tried to cleave Finitevus in two but Finitevus grabbed her wrists and forced her to drop her blades. He put his whip away and picked up her blades. He Blade-Rushed Shade and sent her flying into Cosmo. Sally jumped in by pole-vaulting herself into the air with her staff and kicking Finitevus in the head. Finitevus dropped Shade's blades and Sally kicked them back over to Shade. Sally then ran over to Finitevus and tried to attack him again but Finitevus grabbed her by the wrists and threw her over into a restraint bed. Finitevus quickly strapped Sally to it and he stomped on a drill that was lying on the floor to bring it to his hands. He placed the drill over Sally's heart and prepared to activate it.

"Surrender yourselves and drop your weapons!" snarled Finitevus "Or this will be the last you'll ever see of your precious Queen Sally Acorn!"

"No! Please, don't kill her!" cried Sonic "Please, anything but that!"

"Sonic, don't give up! He'll kill us anyway!" screamed Sally "Please

help me!"

"I'll give you one chance to surrender or Sally will find herself with a drill in her heart!" growled Finitevus "Stand down and drop your weapons or the queen dies! Last chance Royal Fighters!"

To show he was being serious, he turned the drill on and threatened to stick it into Sally's pounding chest. Sally could only sweat nervously and whimper. There was no escaping from this. Finitevus had her completely at his mercy and the Royal Fighters couldn't do anything to help her. But Finitevus seemed to have noticed something.

"Wait a minute…one of you is missing…where's the water panther?" he asked.

"Right here!" came the voice of Ruben.

Finitevus turned to his right and to his horror, he saw Ruben standing near his machine with his hands placed on it, ready to give it a good soaking.

"No! Get away from that! That's highly sophisticated machinery!" cried Finitevus.

"You let Sally go and I won't short-circuit your big toy!" demanded Ruben.

"You get away from that machine or I'll kill Sally!" growled Finitevus.

"That won't stop me from short-circuiting your machine!" snapped Ruben "You killing Sally will just make me do it all the more! It'll be good payback! So will you risk losing your precious machine? Or will you let Sally go like a good man?"

Finitevus growled furiously but he knew that Ruben was being deathly serious. Killing Sally wouldn't stop Ruben from ruining his machine so why kill Sally and lose his machine? Finitevus turned the drill off and he lowered his arm. Ruben smirked at Finitevus and he threw a jet of water at him, sending him flying away from Sally. Now Sally was safe, Sonic picked up her staff and used it to free her from the bed. Sally instantly hugged Sonic for that and then she hugged

Ruben.

"Oh thank god! I thought I was a goner!" cried Sally "Thank you so much for that Ruben!"

"Aw you're welcome honoured queen." said Ruben bashfully.

"That was good planning cute stuff." said Sora approvingly "And you deserve a kiss for that."

With that said, Sora kissed Ruben on the cheek as a way of saying "Well done". That kiss made Ruben's heart leap with joy and his face went redder than a can of Tizer. Tails and Cosmo watched with this awe, thinking about their romance and how Sora and Ruben seemed to be having a similar one to theirs.

"Wow…th-th-thank you." said Ruben graciously, putting his hand over his cheek.

"Anytime." said Sora brightly "Now then, if I were you I'd short-circuit that machine anyway. Don't let Finitevus have a chance to use it again."

"Good idea beautiful." said Ruben.

That comment made Sora blush scarlet with pleasure. She liked to think that she was pretty and liked it when people called her "beautiful" and such. Gave her hopes of becoming a beautiful woman when she grew older. Ruben aimed his hands at Finitevus's machine and he drenched the machine with one big wave of water. The water soaked the machine and began to short-circuit all of its interiors. The machine groaned as if it was in pain and it began to spark furiously. There was no using the machine for any energy draining now. Finitevus shook himself dry from when Ruben squirted him earlier and he gasped in horror at his now ruined machine, soaking wet and sparking violently. It looked like it was about to blow any minute now.

"NO! My machine!" cried Finitevus.

Sonic promptly spin-dashed him in the back and sent him hurling into a restraint bed. Finitevus growled and he picked himself up.

"This is over Finitevus!" yelled Sonic.

"My plans are FAR from over heathen! You have no idea, NO IDEA!" snarled Finitevus, taking out his electro whip and activating it.

He whipped at Sonic only to miss as Sonic dodged his attack. Finitevus recoiled and prepared to launch another attack but he soon realized he had made a big mistake. He was standing quite close to the machine and he hadn't moved. The machine, finally breaking down from the water short-circuiting it, self-destructed in a colossal explosion that blew Finitevus off his feet and sent him hurling into the air. The Royal Fighters all threw themselves down onto the floor to avoid the explosion. Finitevus screamed as he was thrown through the air by the explosion but he ended up grabbing onto a chain and hook to save himself crashing into a wall. Finitevus swung around on the chain until he finally stopped and he stared at his ruined experiment, now nothing more than a flaming wreck and a pile of debris. Finitevus couldn't believe that his beautiful experiment had been destroyed like this. All this planning and preparing the laboratory for nothing. Looks like it's back to the drawing board for Finitevus. The echidna's face contorted with rage and he glowered at the Royal Fighters, who had picked themselves up and were ready to bring him down.

"You will pay for this Royal Fighters! You. will. PAY!" roared Finitevus.

With that said, he summoned a warp ring to his hand and activated it. As reluctant as he was, he was a man of logic, not idiocy and logic dictated to him that retreat was a good option now so he was retreating. Finitevus jumped through the warp ring and he vanished from sight, leaving the Royal Fighters alone in the lab to do nothing except watch him escape. Knuckles fumed furiously.

"He got away again!" he growled "Some day soon, I will get that slimy little scum bucket I call my uncle! Mark me words I will get him!"

"Knuckles sweetie, clam down." said Shade softly, putting her arms around Knuckles's arm "Getting angry won't do any good. We will

get Finitevus one day. For now, we just have to wait until he shows up again."

"I know hon." said Knuckles, putting an arm around his girlfriend "When we get him, I'll show no mercy on him, especially since he nearly killed me, Sonic & Shadow."

"Never mind Dr. Eggman, Dr. Finitevus is the guy I'll be hunting for now!" declared Shadow "Especially since he's working for Eggman!"

"Well Finitevus has gone now so we'll have to try our luck next time." said Sally "For now, let's just get home and have some rest from this hectic battle."

"It's gonna be a long walk home now Finitevus got that warp ring we stole from him back." sighed Tails.

"Maybe, but it'll be worth it to get home." said Sonic "And when we get back, maybe we can see how things have been going while we've been away."

"Before we do that Sonic I have a question for you." said Knuckles "Just how exactly DID you get Power Ring energy inside you anyway? Finitevus noted that you had Power Ring energy to go with your Chaos Energy."

"Well Knuckles that's a story that I trust all my friends enough to tell it." said Sonic "I told it to Tails and Cosmo already so I think it's time you ALL heard it…"

HUNT-Ed Part 1

Story 157: HUNT-ed Part 1: Hunters on the Run

"Ohmigosh, Ohmigosh, OH MY GOSH!" squealed the excited voice of Kiara the Cheetah as she rocketed up towards the only-just arrived Sonic the Hedgehog and Tails the Fox "Sonic the Hedgehog, you have no idea how excited I am to see you again! EEEEEEEEE!"

Kiara threw herself into Sonic and she squeezed him very tightly in ecstatic glee. Sonic took the hug for he'd received much worse from Amy Rose before and he smiled weakly.

"Good to see you too Kiara." he said.

"It's very nice to see you again Kiara." said Tails politely "We haven't seen each other since the Martian invasion."

"I know right?!" shrieked Kiara excitedly "That's why I'm so excited to see you two!"

It had been a couple of weeks since Dr. Finitevus carried out his deadly gambit and escaped the Royal Fighters after they ruined his beautiful plan and things had been going easy for the Royal Fighters. No tears in the sky had appeared again, no Eggman schemes had been carried out and no other villains were attacking or trying to doom the world. Sonic and his friends had made the most out of the two weeks and now Sonic and Tails had been asked to come to Megapolis for something. Sonic and Tails had just arrived and now they'd been ecstatically greeted by the beautiful and sporty Kiara the Cheetah, messenger woman and fellow member of the Megapolis Royal Fighters Team. She had recently been promoted from messenger woman to fighter and was the one to make up for the poor, crippled Thomas Tiger who hadn't been able to fight since the day Devion the Devatron Leader broke his back. Kiara had done well for a rookie and Thomas was beginning to think that the little cheetah was probably above the rookie rank now. But Kiara was young and she still had much to learn so she still had a bit to go yet. The Megapolis Royal Fighters had been having it easy too until now

and they had sent for Sonic and Tails to come and see them. Now they were here, Kiara took them by the hands and led them towards the campwhich was not so far away.

"Come on boys, the camp's this way." said Kiara eagerly as she lead the boys by the hand to the camp "First we're gonna introduce a new recruit we have to you and then we'll let you know why we've called you here."

"That's cool." said Sonic "So why did you ask for me and Tails in particular?"

"Well you're the best in this business and Tails is renowned for his intelligence so we thought "Why not bring the hedgehog and his fox friend?"." explained Kiara "I hope we didn't interrupt anything important back at your home."

"Nah, things have been pretty easy Kiara." said Tails casually "We had a run in with the new enemy Dr. Finitevus two weeks ago but we've not had any trouble since then."

"It's been getting pretty boring in all honesty so I'm glad you've called us here." said Sonic "Maybe some excitement will happen."

"Maybe…" said Kiara, looking unsure for some reason "Anyway, I can't wait to introduce our new recruit, you'll LOVE him!" she squeaked excitedly.

"I'm sure we will." said Sonic "So when did this person first join you guys then?"

"Last week actually." said Kiara "He's still relatively new around here. Can you believe it though? I was running around the plains one day and I just found him, lying in a cave and starving half to death. I took pity on the poor guy and I took him to my camp so he could get better. He's only just recovered and gotten back on his feet bless him."

"Wow, poor guy." said Tails "I'm glad he's OK now though."

"Same here." said Kiara "He's a handsome looking guy, couldn't let a boy that good looking waste away so I had to save him. He's quite

grateful to me for taking him in."

"I'll bet." said Sonic "So, how's your team been Kiara?"

"Not too bad." said Kiara casually "Nothing really exciting's happened lately until now and Thomas, while still crippled, hasn't lost his spirit at all. He's still a great leader even if he can't walk anymore."

"It's a pity his back got broken." said Sonic sympathetically "No fighter should be relieved of their ability to fight and protect their world."

"Hey, there's the camp." said Tails, pointing ahead of himself "We're here now."

Sonic looked ahead and saw the campsite of the Megapolis Royal Fighters. The camp had pretty much become home to the members of the team now since they spent so much time in it. The camp had some luxurious looking tents that had a lot of room for the soldiers, a nice pile of logs ready to make a fire later in the day and there were training facilities for the soldiers to keep in shape. The camp was pretty quiet though with only Thomas Tiger and a new recruit outside and chatting to one another. The new recruit was an unusual Mobian. He was a hybrid between a leopard and a lynx, meaning he had the head and brown fur of a lynx but the tail and spots of a leopard. He had black hair with a mullet at the back, hazel eyes, a white muzzle with black markings under his eyes, white gloves with a red triangle on them that reached to his elbows, grey chest fur with a red gem in the middle, a black vest top and matching black trousers and red knee-high boots with golden claws on the toe sections. He looked just right for the Royal Fighters Service. Thomas and the leo-lynx turned and saw Kiara coming towards them with Sonic & Tails behind her.

"Kiara, I guess Sonic & Tails managed to answer our call then?" he asked.

"They sure did, they're right here." said Kiara "And they're so happy to see us again."

"Top of the morning Field Marshal." said Sonic, shaking Thomas's hand "Nice to see you're doing well despite your…um…condition now."

"Thank you." said Thomas kindly "Nice to see you're doing well too."

"Cheers." said Sonic.

"So you're Sonic the Hedgehog eh?" said the leo-lynx, standing forward to greet him "Cool, I've been itching to meet you after all the legends I heard about you back in Chun-Nan."

"Well now I'm here in all my glory." said Sonic, shaking the leo-lynx's hand "So are you the new recruit Kiara's been telling me about?"

"I am indeed." said the leo-lynx with a smile "My name's Dinciis Weyl but everybody calls me by my nickname Dark Cat." he introduced.

"Dark Cat? Why do they call you that then?" asked Sonic.

"Back in Chun-Nan, I was described as being "darker than night and like a cat on the prowl"." explained Dark "So the nickname kinda stuck with me after that description. I like it though."

"It's nice to meet you Dark." said Tails, shaking Dark's hand "You look like you have potential to be a good Royal Fighter."

"Aw thanks little guy." said Dark appreciatively "I've only been here for a couple of days and just yesterday I recovered from my agonizing hunger and injuries so I've not had time to train or show what I can do yet."

"I'm just glad you're back on your feet handsome." said Kiara, hugging Dark "I can hardly wait to see what skills you have."

"Oh…um…thanks Kiara." said Dark with a blush.

"Heh, I think Kiara likes him…" snickered Tails under his breath.

"Seems like it." Sonic whispered back.

He then looked back at Dark and Kiara.

"So you said you're from Chun-Nan eh?" he said "Good country, I've been there many times. What was it like for you?"

"I…don't wanna talk about it." said Dark sadly "It's too horrible." he looked to one side and hugged himself as if he suddenly felt cold there "Suffice it to say I left there for my own good and ended up nearly starving to death because I couldn't find a place to stay."

"Aw, that's sad." said Tails "OK, we won't ask about your time in Chun-Nan. We know someone else who left Chun-Nan because of a bad event and he's on our team."

"Really?" said Dark "Who's he then and why did he leave?"

"Uh we'll tell you later, right now I'm interested in knowing why me and Tails have been brought here." said Sonic impatiently.

"Oh yes of course." said Thomas, suddenly remembering that he had brought Sonic & Tails here for a reason "So sorry about that, I just wanted you and our newest recruit to get acquainted. Ahem, the reason we have called you two here is because we have a problem that I think you two can help us with."

"Well solving problems is the hedgehog's speciality so what's the problem?" asked Sonic, eager to see what kind of excitement he might encounter since he was wanting some action today after a relatively vapid two weeks.

"Just yesterday my men spotted four strangers lurking around the Golden Caverns." explained Thomas "The Golden Caverns are caves that used to be home to piles of gold and rumour has it that there still is gold to be found in it. I've had guards there ever since the R.F.S. formed since the caves were likely to be desecrated by treasure hunters. Reason being that they're a popular tourist attraction and we wouldn't want to lose it should treasure hunters tear it up in hopes of finding anything in there."

"I see…so why do we need to come in?" asked Sonic.

"Because those particular four strangers we encountered yesterday

are far too powerful for our guards." explained Thomas "They took them out as if they were nothing."

"Then why didn't you send Kiara to stop them?" asked Tails, noticing a little oddity in that statement.

"Because Thomas worries over me and thinks that four measly strangers are too dangerous for me." muttered Kiara "Honestly, I never get ANY freedom in this bloody team! I always have to be watched by somebody, even on the battlefield!"

"Kiara dear, we have already talked about this. Don't start." said Thomas sternly "You know that you're still inexperienced and you're still a rookie so you need supervision until I know you're mature enough to be trusted on your own."

"I'm the best sodding fighter in this team! And In case you've forgotten Field Marshal, **I** was the one who stopped Marik the Martian in the canyon and got him out of the way so we could stop that dormant Eggman weapon* and you STILL think I'm inexperienced?!" shouted Kiara furiously.

"Just being a good fighter does not make you experienced." noted Thomas "You need wisdom and control over your emotions in order to be a balanced and capable fighter."

"Whatever!" sighed Kiara furiously "As far as I'm concerned, I'm always gonna need supervision under your watch! Well guess what? I'm going over to the Golden Caverns and I will go WITHOUT someone breathing down my neck for once!"

"You will do as you are told Kiara and you will not go anywhere." said Thomas coldly.

"Heck yes I am!" shouted Kiara "And maybe when I come back with those strangers in hand, maybe you'll stop treating me as if I'm some stupid kid that needs babysitting all the time and give me the freedom I deserve!"

With that said, Kiara ran off in a huff, leaving Thomas to sit there in his wheelchair, stunned to all heck at what Kiara had just done.

Even Sonic & Tails were surprised at this and they could only watch as Kiara ran off to the Golden Caverns.

"Wow…is she usually like this?" asked Sonic.

"Not all the time but on occasions like this, Kiara gets too big for her boots and deliberately runs off on her own to do something." sighed Thomas "When she stopped Marik the Martian the other year, she promised me she wouldn't do that again."

"And now she's done so." said Tails "Although to be fair, you're being a bit hard on her Thomas. Kiara's proven to be a good fighter and all, I'm sure she can take care of herself."

"I know little boy but…I just worry over her so much." said Thomas grimly "She's so young and so impetuous that I can't help but worry about her. She might get seriously hurt or even killed given how reckless she is."

"Dude, if she beat Marik the Martian once then surely four strangers won't be a problem." noted Sonic "Marik was like no other, he could fend off me and my friends when he really got into it and from what I've heard, Kiara stopped him by herself. True she beat him by tiring him out apparently but still, don't worry so much about Kiara. Give her a chance and maybe she can prove that she can take care of herself."

Thomas took in Sonic's words and he sighed heavily after a long thought.

"I'd love to give her a chance…but with that attitude of hers, I don't think I can trust her on her own." said Thomas "She still has much to learn."

"Well maybe she'll learn something over time." said Sonic "So, do you want me and Tails to follow the angry cheetah then? You do want us to defend the Golden Caverns after all."

"Yes. You may go after her." said Thomas "Please, take Dark Cat with you. He hasn't had a chance to go on a mission since he's just recovered from his starvation and injuries. I'd like for him to have his

first mission today."

"Sure thing sir." said Sonic "Hey Dark, you up for a little mission in the caverns?"

"Am I ever!" said Dark Cat eagerly, punching his fists together "I've been bored out of my mind just lying in bed and waiting to recover so I'm ecstatic about this!"

"Then let's get going." said Sonic "Do you think you can keep up with me?"

"Probably not." said Dark "I can run fast but not at supersonic speeds."

"Then allow me to carry you." said Sonic, taking Dark and Tails by the hands "Hold on tight you two, this is gonna be fast."

"Sonic, I've been with you for a year now, I think I'm used to this." chuckled Tails.

Sonic chuckled back and he zipped off, taking Dark and Tails with him and whipping up a huge cloud of dust as he ran off. Thomas was left alone in the camp to watch Sonic race off with Tails and Dark in hand. As Sonic left, Thomas could only look up at the sky and pray to the heavens.

"Please let them come back in one piece…" he prayed softly to himself…

Meanwhile, over at the GoldenCaverns themselves, four sinister Mobians were at work and these were Mobians that Sonic and Tails would be all too shocked to see again. The four Mobians…were the four Mobians that made up the nefarious treasure hunting Team Diamond! They were a team of treasure hunters working for the mysterious group H.U.N.T., Hidden and Unified Nations in Treasure-hunting. The organization had been terminated after they had been defeated and incarcerated at the hands of Sonic the Hedgehog and friends and after Sora Prower and Rouge the Bat had spilled the beans on them. H.U.N.T. had had all it's teams arrested and thrown

in prison and the organization had been brought down for good. H.U.N.T. was no more. Unfortunately, Team Diamond had managed to break out of prison thanks to a very clever plan orchestrated by Owen Pounder and Alistair Drakken, two of Team Diamond's members, and now Team Diamond seemed keen to keep H.U.N.T.'s infamous image alive. After escaping prison, they had fled to Megapolis for the country was a good place to hide in, especially with the caverns and canyons that were around in Megapolis and they were lurking around the GoldenCaverns. They had heard much rumours about how the caverns were full of gold a long time ago and likely still have gold in them so they were digging for gold in the caverns. They had stolen many explosives, shovels and picks from the Megapolis Royal Fighters and they had been using them to dig in the caverns. As of now, they were resuming their work. Lennox Meers, the leader of Team Diamond, was shovelling away like a mad meerkat digging for grubs. He was keen to find something valuable since all of H.U.N.T.'s treasures had been seized after the organization's termination and they really needed to find some treasures if they had any hope of reforming H.U.N.T. Just beside him, the voluptuous Roxy the Raccoon was picking away at the walls with a pickaxe. Owen and Alistair were shovelling and picking along with Lennox and Roxy. They were hard at work and the pace they were working at was back-breaking. But they didn't show any signs of stopping or slowing down, they were all too keen to see what they could find.

"Found anything yet?" asked Lennox, looking over at Roxy.

"Nothing yet handsome." said Roxy, swinging the pickaxe at the wall again and cracking it a bit "Just a lot of rocks."

"You do know that the caverns still having gold in them is just a rumour?" noted Owen "We might not find anything down here!"

"Yes but we don't know if it's just speculation or truth if we don't try." Alistair pointed out "That's why we're giving this a go, to see what we can find down here."

"I don't see why we don't just simply find all the stolen goods that were confiscated from H.U.N.T. after we all got ratted out." muttered Owen.

"Oh why don't we do that bunny boy? Hmm, let me thing…because we DON'T KNOW WHERE IT IS!" snapped Roxy furiously "Honestly, someone as smart as you should have common sense!"

"Besides, the four of us can't get all that treasure back." added Lennox "We need a proper organization to do that. We need to reform H.U.N.T.

"I hope any treasure we find down here will be enough to convince any potential treasure hunters to join us." said Alistair "After all, it's too much effort to try and break out all our old members so it's best to start anew."

"Agreed." said Lennox "The old members might be able to break out too if they're lucky…"

"Besides, the four of us can't get all that treasure back." added Lennox "We need a proper organization to do that. We need to reform H.U.N.T. and get more members so we can properly form a heist and get that amount of treasure back. The four of us aren't enough."

"I hope any treasure we find down here will be enough to convince any potential treasure hunters to join us." said Alistair "After all, it's too much effort to try and break out all our old members so it's best to start anew."

"Agreed." said Lennox "The old members might be able to break out too if they're lucky…"

"Well given how narrow OUR escape was, I doubt the others will have the same kind of luck." said Roxy, swinging the pickaxe again "We were the best members of H.U.N.T., the best team the organization ever had and we NARROWLY managed to break out of that prison and escape. What hope do the other members have?"

"I'm not bothered about most of the other members anyway, especially those jackanapes on Team Ruby!" snorted Owen "Those guys were so obnoxious and they had no idea how to steal treasures properly! They just liked to blow things up all the time!"

"Team Ruby were amateurs and now they're in prison they'll never get a chance to improve." sighed Lennox "But enough on that, we have to look to the future. The future of Team Diamond…and the future of H.U.N.T. And hopefully it'll start in these caverns. If we don't have any treasure to show as an example of our work, any potential treasure hunters will be hard to win over so there'd better be some in these Golden Caverns."

"There'd better be or we will be breaking our backs for nothing." sighed Roxy, panting a little for swinging the axe constantly was hot, heavy work.

"Lennox, do you mind if I take a break and keep watch for a minute?" asked Alistair, taking one last pick as he said it. "It's a just in case, you know, in case anyone starts sticking their noses in where they're not wanted."

"Go on then." said Lennox "I expect you back here in ten minutes. Then another one of us will tack a break and keep watch for ten minutes and so on. It's fair if we each get a break and a turn to keep watch."

Team Diamond decided not to say another after that for there was nothing more that needed to be said. Alistair put down his pickaxe and he ran off outside to keep an eye out for any signs of trouble. The other three members continued digging and picking away, keen to find anything of value. Lennox and Owen kept shovelling away, sticking the blade of the shovel into the ground and scooping up the earth in the cave they were in and then throwing the dirt over their shoulders to make another dig. Roxy had now rested from her bout of hard work and raised the pickaxe, poised to make another swing. She swung the axe and walloped the spot she'd been picking at constantly for a good few minutes already. Nothing much happened. Roxy raised the axe again and she swung it. She struck the spot and…the wall seemed to crack quite heavily after that hit. Roxy stepped back in case the wall suddenly caved in on her. The crack spread up the wall a fair height and then suddenly it started to break open and chunks of rock began to rain down onto the ground with a chorus of heavy thuds. Team Diamond all stepped back as the crack in the wall split open and the rocks crumbled away from it. When the rocks finally stopped crumbling away, Team Diamond looked at the

crack in the wall and their mouths gapped at what they were looking at. For there behind the crack in the wall…was a huge pile of golden nuggets (no, not the breakfast cereal you dummy, ACTUAL golden nuggets!). They were lying there in the wall, sparkling radiantly and illuminating the dark cave brilliantly with their heavenly sparkles. Lennox, Owen and Roxy were gobsmacked at this.

"Wow…actual golden nuggets!" shrieked Roxy excitedly.

"And hundreds of them!" blurted Owen "We've hit the jackpot!"

"Roxy…I love you." said Lennox, hugging the racoon graciously for the find.

Roxy wasn't flattered at all by this since she knew he was only saying that because she'd found lots of treasure. Love between her and Lennox would never be legitimate as far as she was concerned, especially since Lennox would abuse her often if he was in a bad mood. Nevertheless, Roxy took the compliment and she smiled at her good fortune.

"Thank you boys." said Roxy "Boy those nuggets are a step in the right direction. Treasure hunters everywhere will be killing themselves to get a hold of these! If we promise to share them out, we'll get people *begging* to join H.U.N.T. and help us unearth more treasure to keep for ourselves!"

"You said it hot stuff." said Owen "So how do we get all of them out of here? That crack's too narrow for any of us to get in."

"I won't risk a strategic explosion, we could destroy the nuggets too." said Lennox "We'll just pick at the wall until the crack's big enough for us to get through and get the nuggets out."

"Well then let's get picking!" cried Roxy enthusiastically.

But before anyone could so much as raise a pickaxe, Alistair charged back into the cave and he waved his arms around wildly, his wings flapping in and out as he did so. He looked like he'd just seen a meteor shower outside.

"Team Diamond! There's somebody coming towards the caves and

it's coming in quickly!" cried Alistair.

"Coming in quickly…oh please don't tell me it's Sonic the Hedgehog!" whined Roxy.

"No, it is not Sonic." said Alistair "It is a cheetah. A FEMALE cheetah."

"A cheetah?" said Lennox in surprise "Hmm…I wonder who that cheetah might be then? Some Royal Fighter perhaps?"

"Whoever it is, we need to set up an ambush before that cheetah discovers us!" declared Owen "She's coming towards the caverns so she's probably gonna come down here!"

"I agree, Team Diamond take your positions." ordered Lennox "We'll make sure that cheetah doesn't find out what we're doing down here."

With that said, Team Diamond all took up positions that would be perfect for an ambush. Roxy ducked down behind the piles of tools that Team Diamond had for their digging, Owen stood by the entrance so he could make an instant grab for the intruder once she came in, Lennox stood in a corner and made himself as scarce as possible and Alistair hung upside from the ceiling and like a proper bat and he waited for the intruder to come in so he could drop down on her and nab her. The team were in position to launch the perfect ambush. The intruder wouldn't be prepared for this at all…

Outside, Kiara the Cheetah screeched to a halt just before the cavern entrances and she looked around. There didn't seem to be anybody about. It was just her, out here all alone outside the cavern entrances. Either the "four strangers" weren't here today or they were already inside. Regardless, Kiara would take them out and prove to Thomas that she doesn't need babysitting all the time. Kiara cracked her knuckles.

"OK Kiara-girl, this is your moment." she said "The moment where I stop being treated like a kid and start being treated like a REAL fighter. I'm not too pleased I had to disobey Thomas again but if he won't let me prove myself better and more capable then he gives me

credit for then why shouldn't I disobey him? If he STILL thinks I need watching over…then I'll truly go berserk."

Kiara was about to charge into the cavern when she stopped herself and calmed down.

"No Kiara, you can't run in like that. Gotta be slow, steady and calm." said Kiara, taking a deep breath "You might run into trouble down there. Slow and steady wins the race as they say."

As you can see, Kiara can be quite clever when she calms down. If she was able to control herself a bit better than she could be one amazing Royal Fighter. Kiara walked into the cavern and started heading down deep inside, ready to catch the trespassers. As she headed down though, she began to feel a little worried. She had heard from Thomas that the four strangers had taken down the guards set up here as if they were nothing. Would she be able to take them on herself? Easily. She took down Marik by herself so why would four strangers be enough? They were likely just your generic thugs who are all talk but no battle. Kiara just hoped that they weren't aliens or anything since she was terrified of them and her horrible torture at the hands of Count Nyder during the Martian invasion** had made her even more scared of aliens than before. The likelihood of the strangers being aliens was a million to one now though so Kiara shook off the very thought. Kiara went down further into the cavern until finally, she came to the digging site of Team Diamond. She walked through the entrance into the room and she immediately noticed the wall of golden nuggets. How amazing they looked to her, especially since she didn't think there was any gold still down there. The GoldenCaverns clearly harboured more treasure than anyone had realized.

"Wow…look at them nuggets…" gasped Kiara "So I guess people were right to speculate that the caverns still have gold in them after all…"

Then suddenly, before she would walk over and get a proper look at the gold nuggets, Owen lunged at her and grabbed her. Kiara squealed in alarm but she was quickly silence by Owen slapping a strip of duct tape around her mouth (Team Diamond brought some duct tape with them in case they needed it. They're known for their

contingencies). Kiara squirmed in Owen's rock solid grip but the cheetah had no chance of escaping. Owen was much to strong for a puny cheetah like her. Owen then proceeded to pin the squirming Kiara down on the floor and he got out the roll of duct tape. He unrolled it and proceeded to wrap it around Kiara's body, trussing her up tightly with the strong, sticky tape. Kiara's entire torso was wrapped in tape and her arms were firmly fixed by her sides so she couldn't do anything with them. Owen added extra security by taping her ankles together. She squirmed furiously in her tape binds, desperate to break free. But of course, duct tape is ridiculously sticky and very tough, there was no breaking out of this one. Kiara screamed some muffled screams behind her gag, not that it'd do her any good since nobody would be able to hear her. Owen yanked Kiara onto her knees by her hair, earning a muffled cry from the cheetah and the other three members of Team Diamond emerged from their hiding places to see who they were up against. Kiara was still squirming and she had her eyes closed as she squirmed to she didn't even notice the other members yet. Roxy stared at her and she folded her arms.

"Well, well, who do we have here?" asked Roxy coldly "Some poor kid it seems to me."

"Aye, that it does Roxy." purred Alistair in his deep slithering voice "Yet she looks…familiar somehow."

"I've got that same weird vibe Alistair. Have we met her before?" wondered Owen "I'm sure I've seen this brat before."

Kiara stopped squirming and opened her eyes. She looked at Alistair and Owen she seemed to gasp a muffled gasp, her eyes widening as she gasped, at the sight of them. She clearly looked scared to be seeing them for some reason. Owen and Alistair had a feeling Kiara had met them before, meaning they HAD indeed met her before. Lennox stood before Kiara and he bent down on one knee to look her in the eye. Kiara stared at Lennox and her eyes narrowed down to angry slits of pure unadulterated rage. She looked furious to be seeing Lennox kneeling before her for some reason.

"Mmmmou!" she mumbled crossly behind her gag.

"You…" said Lennox in a cold voice "I remember you, you little brat. Kiara the Cheetah your name is, is it not?"

Kiara nodded "Yes" to let Lennox know he was right. Lennox scowled at her.

"Ooooh yes I remember you Kiara…your parents were members of H.U.N.T. once before but they betrayed us just so they could have a kid, said kid being you." snarled Lennox "We didn't like that so we executed them for their treason and to avoid you spilling on us, I ordered Owen to kill you. Somehow, he failed to carry out that task." he added, glaring a seething glare at the muscular rabbit.

"It's not MY fault cheetahs are so bloody fast sir!" protested Owen.

Kiara just tried to retort back at Lennox only she couldn't because of the tape on her mouth. Lennox wondered what she was trying to say so he ripped the tape off her mouth, leaving her with a very bad sting around her lips. Kiara fought the stinging pain around her lips and she glared at Lennox.

"You murdered my parents in cold blood!" screamed Kiara "You didn't execute them for treason at all! They were NEVER members of your stupid organization!"

"You are such an idiot Kiara." sighed Lennox "Would we have killed your parents if we didn't have a reason to?! We maybe ruthless but we don't kill without reason! And the reason we killed your parents is because they betrayed us!"

"No they did not!" Kiara retorted "How could you think two people as nice as my mom and dad were EVER part of your evil?! Stop lying about my parents like that! You even heard them tell you how wrong you are!"

"That's because they're denying the truth!" snapped Lennox, punching Kiara in the face as hard as he could "They're the lairs, not me! They would have lied to you just to make themselves out as good souls and to hide their shady backgrounds! They ARE traitors to H.U.N.T. and they deserved to be executed! Nobody betrays H.U.N.T. and lives!"

"You'll make up any stupid excuse won't you?!" snarled Kiara furiously "YOU are the liar, not my parents! They weren't treasure hunters! They were ordinary people and I loved them very much! And you selfish monsters took them away from me and now you make up excuses as to why you did it! How low can you demons sink?!"

Lennox decided not to argue anymore. It was obvious Kiara wasn't in a listening mood today. Why bother talk sense into someone as obstinate as her? Lennox glowered at Kiara and he slapped the tape back onto her mouth.

"Fine, don't believe us. Shows how blind to reality you are." snarled Lennox "Owen, take that filthy brat and throw her into the next cave." he ordered "And once she's in there, I want you to kill her."

"With pleasure…" said Owen darkly.

Kiara squirmed like a mad thing upon hearing those words. Owen picked Kiara up by the scruff of her neck and he carried her out of the cavern. As soon as Owen left, Lennox turned to Alistair.

"Alistair, keep watch again and see if anymore intruders plan on sneaking around here." he ordered "I have a feeling Kiara might have back up."

"With pleasure sir." said Alistair gleefully.

Alistair toddled on outside to keep watch again.

"So I guess it's just me and you to unearth those golden nuggets?" asked Roxy.

"Yes dear." said Lennox with a smile "Let's get picking."

So Lennox and Roxy picked up a pickaxe each and started picking away at the wall, breaking away bits of rock to widen the crack so they could get to the glorious golden nuggets. It was going to take awhile but it'd be worth it and once they got all the nuggets out. Oh how glorious it would be to show them off and win over some treasure hunters with them. H.U.N.T. would be reformed in no time at all…

Meanwhile, Sonic had finally arrived at the GoldenCaverns and he screeched to a halt. He let go of Tails and Dark Cat and the three looked out at the caverns. Sonic could see why they were called "The Golden Caverns". The caverns had a slight golden tinge to their colours.

"So these are the GoldenCaverns I guess?" said Sonic.

"I'd assume so." said Dark "I've not toured much of Megapolis so I don't know if they are or not."

"I can say we must have missed Kiara though, she's nowhere in sight." said Tails, looking around only to find no sign of Kiara.

"She must have gone in the cave already." deduced Sonic "Let's look for her."

"I'll be a good pick to search in the caves." volunteered Dark "I can see well in the dark. I have night vision like most felines do."

"Hmm…OK then." said Sonic "You can go look for Kiara Dark. Say, you know that she seems to fancy you…do you feel the same way towards Kiara?"

Dark blushed at that remark.

"Oh uh…heh, heh…I will admit Kiara's cute and all…and I do owe her for saving my life and giving me a chance to start anew with the R.F.S. so…I can easily say I like Kiara." said Dark bashfully.

"I thought so." said Sonic "I wonder if she'll be happy to see you here at all, what with her running off on her own to prove herself and all."

"I shouldn't think Kiara will be too hostile towards me, although I'm expecting a generic "Why are you here! I wanted to do this alone!" lecture from her if she sees me." sighed Dark "And I think you two should expect that too, it's gonna happen no doubt."

"We'll be prepared for that." said Tails "Now let's get in those

caverns and help Kiara deal with the so-called "strangers" around here."

"Hold on a minute, I think someone's coming out of that cave." said Dark, pointing ahead at the main cave entrance.

Sonic and Tails peered at the cave entrance and they could see Owen walking out of the cave with Kiara, held firmly by the scruff of her neck with one hand and squirming furiously in her binds, desperate to get free. Sonic thought he was going to collapse at the sight of Owen. What made him feel even more like he was going to collapse was seeing Alistair come out of the cave to keep watch for intruders. Even Tails was horrified at the sight of them.

"No way!" cried Sonic "That's Owen and Alistair down there!"

"It can't be! They along with Lennox and Roxy were arrested and incarcerated!" shrieked Tails "How can they possibly be right there right now?!"

"They escaped I bet." muttered Sonic "The bad guy always escapes prison, they never stay there. Well, it's time to put them back in their cells!"

"Wait a minute, you know those two?" asked Dark.

"Unfortunately." muttered Tails "Those two are members of a treasure hunting organization called H.U.N.T. which recently got terminated thanks to my sister Sora and our friend Rouge the Bat ratting them out. They along with two others who are presumably in the caves form "Team Diamond" and they've done many horrible crimes. They kidnapped me and Amy and held us hostage once, tortured my sister, killed her comrade and have stolen many priceless treasures in their time. Looks like they got Kiara unfortunately, we have to save her!"

"I'll save Kiara." said Dark "You and Sonic take care of the bat and see if those other two members are in the cave."

"You got it Darky." said Sonic with a thumbs up "Let's do it to it Tails!"

With that said, Dark dashed off towards Owen, who had gone through another cave entrance that led down a different cave with Kiara in hand. While he did that, Sonic and Tails ran towards Alistair, ready to beat the stuffing out of the bat. Alistair saw them coming and he jumped in alarm with his hands to his head.

"Oh my goodness! It's Sonic the Hedgehog!" he shrieked, his voice nearly losing it's deepness due to how frightened he was "I'd best warn Lennox, Roxy and Owen!"

But before he could do anything, Sonic spin-dashed him into the wall next to the cave entrance and slammed him as hard as he could against it. Alistair gasped so loudly for breath that you'd think he would suddenly hack up his lungs or something. Sonic grabbed Alistair by the throat and started throttling him.

"OK Alistair, how did you and your cronies manage to break outta prison?!" demanded Sonic "And what are you traipsing around here for?"

"How we broke out and what we are doing here is none of your business worm!" snarled Alistair "All you should know is that you've made a BIG mistake traipsing around here! You will not leave this area alive!"

"Oh yeah?" snorted Sonic "What can you do like, flap your wings at me?"

Then suddenly, Sonic felt the cold steel of a gun barrel being pointed at his head. It was the barrel of a revolve, most notably, the revolver of Lennox Meers! Lennox had heard Alistair calling for help and he had run up out of the cave to see Alistair in trouble from Sonic. Now Lennox had Sonic on the ropes. Tails tried to help Sonic but Roxy, who had come out of the cave with Lennox, clubbed him on the head with her bat and knocked him out instantly before he could get near him. Tails collapsed on the ground and lay just a few inches away from Lennox. Sonic sighed to himself in annoyance.

"Well…crap." he muttered, letting go of Alistair and raising his hands.

He knew that trying anything with a gun barrel pressed directly at his head was suicide so he had to surrender whether he liked it or not. Lennox smirked at Sonic and he stroked the trigger with his finger, threatening to pull it.

"Good boy Sonic." purred Lennox "Roxy, get the tape!" he ordered.

Roxy obliged and she ran on back down into the cave to get the duct tape. Sonic just remained where he was for Lennox still had his gun pressed at his head.

"So Lennox, what are you gonna do to me and Tails then?" asked Sonic.

"Kill you." growled Lennox "But not in the way you're thinking. I'm not simply going to shoot you right now. That will be too quick and painless, you need something more brutal to pay for what you've done hedgehog. And you shall soon find out once Roxy comes back with the tape."

Right on cue, Roxy remerged from the cave and ran back to Lennox with the roll of duct tape in her hands. Lennox kept his gun pointed at Sonic as Roxy began to unroll the tape and edge towards him with it, grinning wickedly as she prepared to tape him up…

Down in the other cave, Owen had taken Kiara as far down as he dared and he sat her against the wall. Kiara began to whimper like a frightened child at Owen, the tape around her mouth inflating and deflating with every breath she took. She was frightened out of her wits here, even more so that when the Martians invaded. She was about to be killed by the very person who had been ordered to kill her after her parents were murdered. Owen cracked his knuckles nastily and flashed Kiara a killer smile. The cheetah was practically soiling herself right now.

"Right…how should I kill you Kiara?" asked Owen "Should I grab your head and smash your face against the wall until you die? Should I crush your head with my bear hands? Should I rip it off? Should I just simply snap your neck?"

Kiara shook her head furiously. She really didn't want to die at all. Owen just chuckled and clenched his fists.

"I'll just beat you to death…" he crooned "After all, I can do with the exercise…"

"MMMMO! MMMMMO!" squealed Kiara from behind her gag as Owen advanced on her menacingly.

"Leave her alone you overgrown Easter bunny!" yelled a familiar voice that Kiara was all too happy to be hearing right now.

Owen turned around and stared at the one who dared to tell him off like this. It was Dark Cat. He stood before Owen, his face a furious scowl and his teeth clenched.

"Who the hell are you?!" asked Owen.

"I'm Dark Cat and you are abusing my friend!" snarled Dark "Let her go or I'll be forced to use violent methods to make you comply!"

"Do you seriously believe I'm gonna listen to a scrawny little pussycat?" sneered Owen "I'll snap you in two easy as pie!"

"We'll see about that bunny boy." said Dark coldly.

He then surprised Owen by clenching his fists and out of his arms drew two long silver blades that were sharper than the average sword and shinier than gold coins. Kiara beamed happily, she'd longed to see Dark fight and now was her chance. Owen gaped at what he saw.

"H-h-how d-d-did y-y-you d-d-do that?!" he gibbered in fear.

"During my time in Chun-Nan, I got blessed with a little…ancient Chun-Nan chi-magic." said Dark, raising his blades "I can summon these blades outta my arms and make them disappear anytime I like. You don't look like you have a sword of your own to fight back with." he sneered, smirking confidently.

"Bah! I don't need a sword!" snorted Owen "I'll crush you with my bare hands!"

Owen thundered towards Dark like an angry rhinoceros, roaring furiously as he did so. Dark just calmly breathed and then jumped out of the way, leaving Owen to crash into a wall. Owen took the crash though and he threw a punch at Dark. Dark bent over backwards to dodge the punch and he slashed Owen across the face with his blade. Owen screamed in pain and he clutched his face. Dark sheathed his blades for he didn't really need them and he uppercut Owen in the face. Then he jumped up to Owen's height and kicked him in the chest. Owen was thrown down onto the ground and he winced in pain. Owen picked himself up and he punched at Dark again. Dark smacked Owen's fist away and he gut-kicked the rabbit. Owen doubled over in pain and Dark jumped up to the ceiling. He deployed his blades and sliced some rocks down from the ceiling. The rocks rained down onto the floor and some broke into little pieces. Dark sheathed his blades and started kicking all the rocks at Owen. The rocks hit Owen and made him stagger backwards. Then Dark, with a terrifying cat screech, ran towards Owen, jumped in the air and spiralled towards him, images of black claws surrounding him as he spun. This was his best attack, the Shadow Claw attack. He bombarded Owen with the attack and threw him across the room. Owen crashed into the wall and grimaced as pain swept over his body. Now the rabbit was down, Dark ran over to Dark and he lightly peeled the tape off of her mouth.

"Oh thank you so much Dark!" cried Kiara happily "I was about to be killed before you showed up! You saved my life!"

"Don't mention it Kiara." said Dark with a charming smile on his face "So what, are you now gonna start lecturing me on coming here when you wanted to go alone?"

"No! Of course not! I'm glad you came!" shrieked Kiara happily "I was an idiot to go alone! I almost got killed because of my stubbornness! I promise that as long as I live I'll NEVER disobey Thomas and go on my own ever again! Promise!"

Dark smiled upon hearing that.

"Well, you've improved already babe." he said "Guess all you needed was a near-death experience to teach you an important

lesson."

"As horrible as it was, it seems that way." said Kiara "By the way, your fighting is incredible! You're awesome!"

"Aw…thanks." said Dark modestly "I did train a lot in martial arts back in Chun-Nan after all.

"I see." said Kiara "Now, can you get me out of this stupid tape please? It's making me itch and it's tugging nastily on my fur!"

"OK then. Sorry if this gets painful." said Dark, preparing to peel the tape off of Kiara.

"I don't care, just get me out of it!" snapped Kiara.

"Stand down or lose Sonic the Hedgehog and his friend!" snarled a terrible voice that made Dark nearly jump out of his fur.

Dark turned around and to his horror, he saw Lennox, Roxy and Alistair standing before him with a tapped up and gagged Sonic and Tails and Lennox had his revolvers pointed at their heads. The meerkat had a serious look of death on his face.

"Get away from the prisoner and stand down or Sonic and Tails will splatter the ground with their blood!" snarled Lennox "And maybe their brains too!"

He showed that he wasn't kidding by clocking his revolvers and curling his fingers around the triggers. He twitched them slightly, making his threat all the more serious. Dark just stood there, not knowing what to do. If he didn't do something, Sonic and Tails would be dead and then Lennox would probably kill him and Kiara too…

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 10: Pain in Megapolis***

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide***

Well Team Diamond seem to have the upperhand here! Can Dark Cat save Sonic and Tails? Or will he be forced to surrender too? Find out next time as the H.U.N.T. continues...

Special thanks to 1misteraaron, a fellow DeviantArt user, for letting me use his character Dark Cat in this story. Dark Cat belongs to 1misteraaron and was used with his permission. All credit goes to him for the creation of the character and letting me feature him in this story.

HUNT-Ed Part 2

Story 158: HUNT-ed Part 2: Hunting the Hunters

Things were looking a bit "sticky" for Sonic the Hedgehog and friends and that wasn't because of the fact he and his best friend Tails were wrapped up in duct tape. Sonic and Tails had come to Megapolis after receiving a call from the local Royal Fighter team there and their job was to deal with some strangers hanging our around the Golden Caverns, a popular tourist attraction in Megapolis. To Sonic's dismay, the strangers turned out to be the nefarious Team Diamond, mercenaries who worked for the now terminated H.U.N.T. They were plotting to reform H.U.N.T. by finding treasures and winning over many treasure-hunters with them. Right now, Team Diamond have Sonic and Tails tightly trussed up in tape and the leader, Lennox Meers, is holding them at gunpoint. The Megapolis Royal Fighter's newest recruit, Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx, stood there horrified at his captured friend and his brain whirled for a way to save them without risking their lives. What can he do in a situation like this? Dark had a feeling that Lennox would pull the triggers and shoot Sonic and Tails if he so much as looked at him funny so Dark needed a plan and he needed it fast. Beads of sweat trickled down his face and his heart began to pound like a war drum. He didn't know what to do. If he so much as moved or even attempted to run up to Lennox, he might be too late and Lennox would shoot Sonic and Tails. He did NOT want the deaths of Sonic and Tails on his hands so he didn't care risk anything yet he knew he couldn't surrender at the same time. He had to save them as well as his best friend and admirer, Kiara the Cheetah who was kneeling beside him and still taped up. Kiara looked worried and she looked up at Dark.

"Dark! Do something! Save them!" she screamed "We can't let those freaks kill Sonic & Tails!"

"Kiara, please." said Dark "I'm thinking on how to save them."

"Don't bother." snarled Lennox threateningly "If you even so much

as THINK about trying to save these two, I'll shoot them!

"Sir please, let's not be too hasty." begged Dark desperately "We can settle this peacefully, we don't need to be so violent and harsh."

"Speak for yourself pussycat!" snapped Owen Pounder the Rabbit, Team Diamond's muscle "You just beat the crap out of me so you're one to talk about "settling things peacefully"!"

"You forced me to use violence." said Dark "I'm sure your hat wearing friend is more reasonable."

"The name is Lennox you spotty moron and I am anything BUT reasonable." said Lennox coldly "I will give you one last chance to surrender or I'll shoot the prisoners. Last chance, I'm not kidding!"

"No, don't kill them!" shrieked Kiara "Please, anything but that!"

"Yeah Lennox, please don't hurt them!" begged Dark.

"Then do as I ask!" shouted Lennox "My fingers are getting awfully itchy now…"

He twitched the triggers ever so gently on his revolvers, threatening to pull them and let Sonic and Tails have it. The taped up Mobians could only struggle and mumble frightened muffled mumbles behind their gags as death was preparing to give them the swish. Dark began to sweat even more. Sonic and Tails were staring death right in the face right now, what was he going to do?! He decided that it would be best to just surrender and hope Lennox keeps true to his word. Dark bent down onto his knees and he put his hands on his head.

"I surrender, just please for the love of god don't kill Sonic and Tails." said Dark.

"Dark, you can't surrender! Who will save us now?!" shrieked Kiara.

"I'm sorry love but I have no choice." said Dark grimly "Those guys aren't playing around you know, I can't let them take Sonic and Tails' lives. What will their Royal Fighter team think if they get killed?"

"The same can go to you heathen." said Lennox with a wicked smile on his cutesy little meerkat face "Roxy, tape him up."

"With pleasure." said Roxy the Raccoon, the Team Diamond beauty, unrolling the duct tape and advancing on Dark with it.

"WHAT?! I've surrendered!" screeched Dark Cat "You can't do this to me…glomph!"

He was quickly silenced as Roxy ripped off a piece of tape and slapped it onto his mouth. Roxy unrolled some more tape and then began wrapping it around Dark's body, trussing him up tightly as with Sonic, Tails and Kiara. Kiara could only watch as the one she fancied was now sharing her predicament. After Dark had finally been trussed up in tape, Roxy threw him beside Kiara and she put a new strip of tape over Kiara's mouth (bet her mouth's feeling really sore now after having tape put on and taken off so many times already). Lennox dumped Sonic and Tails beside the two felines and he smiled wickedly at his four captives.

"Now the riff-raff has been dealt with, time to execute you all." he said "Alistair, have you got that bomb ready?" he asked the sinister mask-wearing bat.

"Indeed I have Lennox." said Alistair Drakken, the Team Diamond spy, holding up a bomb that he had brought with him. The bomb was used for controlled explosions and demolition should such tactics be required for the job.

Sonic, Tails, Dark and Kiara stared in horror at the bomb. Was Lennox going to blow them up with it? Seemed logical enough, why would Lennox have a bomb if he wasn't going to blow someone up with it? Lennox took the bomb from Alistair and then he took the tape from Roxy. He knelt down on the floor and glowered at his prisoners, tapping buttons on the bomb and setting up a time for it to go off.

"Sonic the Hedgehog, you and your bratty friend Tails, that super spy Sora and the traitorous Rouge the Bat caused us to lose our organization." growled Lennox "Everybody in H.U.N.T. including the boss is in prison now and all because of you! So as you can see, I

cannot let you live…"

Sonic muttered something from behind his gag that sounded like he was trying to say "I figured as such Mr. Obvious". Lennox continued.

"…In order to pay for terminating H.U.N.T., I am going to set off this bomb." he explained, placing the bomb on the floor and then ripping off a strip of duct tape "The bomb will either blow you to pieces or bring the ceiling down on you all. Or maybe do both at once. Either way, your fates will be nasty that's for sure."

As he said that he taped the bomb down onto the floor to prevent the captive Mobians from moving it at all. It was taped down just inches away from Sonic's feet. The meerkat smiled a demon's smile at Sonic.

"When you lot are dead, me and my team will take the golden nuggets we've found in the Golden Caverns next door and we will show them to any potential treasure hunters." he purred, grabbing Sonic by the face "They'll go mad over such a find and we'll offer them a place in H.U.N.T. in exchange for the nuggets. Once we get enough members, the organization will be back in business and we can continue our treasure-hunts as before and YOU won't be around to interfere with them Sonic! As for you Tails, I promise you that your sister will join you in the afterlife too…" he added with a cruel chuckle at the furious twin-tailed fox.

Tails mumbled some angry muffles at Lennox but the meerkat didn't take the slightest bit of notice. Lennox pushed a button on the bomb and got to his knees. The bomb was set to go off in ten minutes, reason being so Team Diamond could get well out of the cave in time to avoid the blast. By the time the bomb went off, they'd be in the main cave with the golden nuggets and they'd be unearthing them without a moment's hesitance. Lennox tipped his hat mockingly at Sonic, Tails, Dark and Kiara.

"Hats off to you four." he sneered "I hope the bomb goes off very violently. Well team, let's get back to unearthing those golden nuggets."

"Yes Lennox." said Roxy, Alistair and Owen.

So with that said, Team Diamond walked up out of the cave and left the prisoners to get blown to smithereens. As Team Diamond left the cave, the bomb ticked down to just nine minutes left until detonation. There was not much time left at all, Sonic, Tails, Dark and Kiara had to break free and get out of the cave before the bomb went off or they would end up with a very nasty death. Now Team Diamond were gone, there was nothing to stop the taped up Mobians from struggling and trying to get free. Sonic writhed and wriggled around like a butterfly trying to get out of its chrysalis but try as he might, he just couldn't get free. The tape was too sticky and much too tough for him to break free of. Duct tape is among some of the stickiest and toughest tapes in the world after all, even someone as strong as Knuckles would have trouble breaking out of it. Tails tried to break free but try as he might, he couldn't get free as well. Unlike Sonic though, he was beginning to panic. Sweat rained down his head as if he was in a tropical environment and he began to breathe very fast, the tape around his mouth inflating in and out as he panted. Kiara tried to break free but she couldn't get free either. She was beginning to panic too and she shook furiously as if she was in a freezing cold freezer. Dark tried to break free but even someone as strong as him couldn't break free either. Tails decided to try something. If they couldn't break free, they could at least try to stop the bomb from going off. Tails shuffled over to the bomb and he looked over at the buttons. To his dismay, the tape fastening the bomb to the floor was over some buttons. That wasn't helpful for the right button Tails needed to stop the bomb could be under the tape. Not to mention Tails' hands were hardly useful given they were taped behind his back. So if they couldn't stop the bomb, they could at least move it out of the cave. Tails kicked at the bomb, trying to shift it but the tape kept it down on the floor. Sonic shook his head at Tails and mumbled something that sounded like "No Tails, you might set it off if you damage it so don't kick it!" Tails had a feeling that Sonic was right on that (yes, he managed to understand Sonic believe it or not) so he didn't try again. He instead shifted around and tried picking at the tape with his hands. But his hands had been taped to tightly together so he could hardly manoeuvre his fingers and get them in the right angle to peel the tape off the bomb. He looked at the bomb to see how much time they had left. Only five minutes. Time was running out! The bomb was about to explode any moment now! Tails began to panic and he tried thinking on what to

do next. Then suddenly Dark had an idea. He remember that he could draw blades out of his arms, if he could do that still, he could just cut himself free and free the others. Dark Cat shifted his arms around and willed for his arm blades to come out. They did and they sliced directly through the tape, freeing his arms and allowing him to move. Dark cut the tape from around his legs and he peeled the tape off from around his mouth. He took a big gasp of breath for he could now open his mouth again. It felt good to get some air back into his lungs now. Dark quickly saw to freeing the others. He freed Kiara first by cutting her tape up and peeling off the tape around her mouth. Kiara's first reaction was to hug Dark and then rush over to Tails. She decided to speed things up by freeing Tails while Dark freed Sonic. Kiara yanked on the tape and gently peeled it off so as not to tear off large clumps of fur from Tails. She managed to get all the tape off and Tails took off his tape gag. Dark cut Sonic free and Sonic took off his gag. He gasped for breath and took a big stretch.

"Gasp…oh man does it feel good to breathe again!" he cried "Thanks a lot Dark, you sure saved us there."

"Welcome." said Dark "I'm just glad I have the ability to draw blades out of my arms otherwise we WOULD be stuck wouldn't we?"

"How can you do that anyway?" asked Tails.

"During my time in Chun-Nan, I got blessed with some Ancient Chun-Nan chi-magic that isn't easy to come across, especially nowadays where chi-magic practically is non-existent now due to how rare it is." explained Dark.

"Cool." said Sonic "Now then, since we're all free…let's get that bomb outta here."

Sonic peeled the tape off of the bomb and he picked it up. Only a minute left until detonation now. He zoomed out of the cave and he ran a good distance outside away from the cave. Sonic skidded to a halt and he looked at the bomb. Fifty seconds left for detonation. Sonic waited until there was only ten seconds left on the bomb and then he threw it into the air as high as he could possibly throw it. The bomb hurled into the air like a thrown baseball and it reached one second til detonation before finally exploding. It didn't even have

time to start falling back down onto the ground before it blew up. The explosion it made wasn't a massive explosion for it was only for controlled demolition but it was still a big explosion that could have easily wiped out Sonic, Tails, Dark and Kiara had Sonic not gotten rid of it. The good thing about the bomb exploding in the air was that it didn't do any damage to the plains or any of the surrounding scenery. Sonic smiled with relief, happy the danger was over now and he whizzed off back into the cave to tell his friends the good news. Sonic was back down the cave in the blink of an eye and he skidded to a halt just in front of his friends, who had been listening out for the bomb and waiting for Sonic to come back.

"Good news pals, the bomb's gone off and it hasn't done even a bit of damage." announced Sonic "We're all clear now."

"Good work Sonic." said Tails brightly.

"Yeah, good work dude." said Dark.

"Although we couldn't have done it if Dark didn't manage to break free and set us all free." said Kiara, wrapping her arms around Dark and nuzzling his shoulder with her cheek "You're the big hero of the day Dark."

"Aw shucks, you're too kind Kiara." said Dark modestly "But Sonic deserves credit for being fast enough to dispose of the bomb safely too."

"I know." said Kiara "Well done to you too Sonic."

"Thanks." said Sonic "Now then, let's focus on stopping Team Diamond and putting them where they belong, behind bars."

"And hopefully they'll STAY there." muttered Tails.

"You're darn right those freaks deserve to be behind bars!" yelled Kiara "And I'm gonna go straight over to them and give them a beating!"

She tried to storm off but Dark grabbed her by the tail and held the cheetah back.

"Kiara, take it easy." said Dark "We need a plan first."

"I have one already, beat the crap out of them!" snapped Kiara "And I'm not waiting a second longer to make them pay for what they've done to me and what they just tried to do to us so let go of my tail!"

"No, I'm not letting you rush in and get in trouble again." said Dark sternly.

"Yeah no offence Kiara but you didn't exactly do well against Team Diamond on your own did ya?" noted Sonic "We need to stick together and we need a plan first."

"We don't have time for one!" shouted Kiara, pulling on her tail and trying to get it free from Dark's hand "We need to stop them now so stop wasting time and let's get going!"

Dark finally decided he'd had enough of Kiara's impetuous behaviour so he snapped.

"KIARA THAT'S ENOUGH!" he bellowed at the top of his voice, grabbing the cheetah by the shoulders and practically screaming in her face "Team Diamond are no push-overs! They managed to capture us all without having to so much as throw a punch at us so if you want to stop them then I suggest you stop being so stubborn and listen to us for once in your life! It's no bloody wonder that Thomas Tiger keeps holding you back! You're so stubborn and hot-headed that you practically can't function without someone watching over you so if you want to prove yourself worthy of being able to handle the situation alone then stop being a hot-head, listen to others and USE YOUR COMMON SENSE FOR ONCE!" he thundered, making Kiara practically jump out of her fur in fright due to how loud he was shouting.

"Whoa Dark, calm down, let's not be too hard on her." said Tails, hoping to cool the situation down before things got out of hand "I think you're scaring her. I get that you're trying to get her to listen to reason but shouting at her isn't gonna help."

Dark was about to snap but he stopped himself. He looked back at Kiara, the cheetah looking very frightened after he'd shouted at her

like this. She was literally trembling as if she'd just seen a ghost. The leo-lynx began to feel a little bad about himself now. He'd lost his cool and terrified poor Kiara. That was not what he wanted to do at all. He relaxed his expression and he breathed a heavy sigh.

"Oh Kiara I uh...I uh...I didn't mean to frighten you." he stammered "I'm sorry I lost my cool and shouted at you."

"It's OK Dark, you're just trying to knock some sense into me." said Kiara softly, her attitude now different thanks to that rant Dark had "I'm sorry for being so stubborn all the time. I'll try and not be so hot-headed in the future."

"That's great." said Sonic "Although I do have to ask, why do you seem so keen on beating up Team Diamond?" he asked "It sounds like you have a deep, personal vendetta against them. Did they do something bad to you?"

Kiara's face fell upon receiving this question. She hugged herself and looked down at her feet, her eyes full of sorrow as some sad memories came back to her.

"They didn't just do something bad to me...they took my parents away from me and emotionally scarred me for life." said Kiara sadly "You see, I was born to quite a wealthy family and me and my parents, names Simba the Cheetah and Nala the Cheetah, lived in a fancy estate in Spagonia. They were wonderful people and they made me the happiest girl in the world by raising me well and tending to my heart's every desire. I loved them so much that I would willingly die for them. But then, one day after my ninth birthday...they came. Team Diamond, who at the time was just Lennox, Owen and Alistair, that raccoon girl wasn't with them back then, broke into my mansion and they tied my parents to chairs. I heard them up in my room and I sneaked down to see what was happening. I peeked through a crack in the door and saw my parents tied to chairs with some electrical wires taped to them. Lennox was shouting at them and asking some weird questions like "Why did you betray H.U.N.T.? What did you tell the cops? Did you tell anybody about us? What are you hiding?". My parents denied everything and claimed innocence while also saying they had the wrong people. Lennox refused to believe them and he just tortured

them. He shocked them, trying to get them to talk. Every deny they made, the shock got worse. But Lennox got carried away and...and...he..." she paused as her beautiful purple eyes began to well up with tears and her lips began to tremble. She swallowed and then continued.

"...he killed them. He tortured them to death!" she wailed "My parents were murdered by those brutes! That's why I'm so keen to beat them up, they killed my parents over something they never did!"

She then broke down into rainfalls of tears. She put her hands over her face and wept into them, wailing loud sobs of anguish. Dark was horrified to hear such a horrible thing had happened to such a determined but sweet girl like Kiara. The leo-lynx just wrapped his arms around Kiara and started stroking her hair for comfort. Kiara gripped Dark's vest top and wept into his shoulder.

"Aw babe...I'm so sorry to hear that." said Dark sadly "That...that's dreadful! Nobody at that age should lose their parents, especially to creeps like them!"

"You're telling me." said Sonic, feeling sorry for Kiara as well "That's just way past uncool that is! Accusing your parents of something they didn't do and then killing them?! Team Diamond are beyond saving they are!"

"That's just so disgusting that is! I thought torturing my sister and killing her comrade was bad enough but this?!" cried Tails "That's just horrible!"

"I know!" howled Kiara "My parents weren't treasure hunters and they certainly never worked for those freaks! They said so themselves and my parents would never lie about something like that! But Lennox just wouldn't believe them and he killed them in cold blood! That monster in meerkat's clothing should rot in prison for taking not just my parents, but my whole life away from me!" she wailed.

"We'll make sure it happens sweetie." said Dark "So what happened after they were killed? Did you tell on Team Diamond?"

"Yeah, not like it did any good." said Kiara "After my parents were killed, I gave myself away by accident and Lennox sent Owen to kill me since I'd witnessed everything. Of course, he failed since I can run fast and I escaped his grasp. I fled to my Uncle Kovu's house and let him know what had happened. He raised me after that dreadful day and looked after me well. We did tell on Team Diamond but because of how clever and sneaky they are, they were never caught. That just made me mad that those heathens were getting away with what they did to my parents. Over time, I became less happy and more like I am now. Most of my stubborn streak comes from me going through those horrors I went through. When I heard about the R.F.S., I thought maybe I could become a fighter and save the world from evil like Team Diamond, prevent anyone else from suffering what I went through and maybe even be the one to put Team Diamond behind bars. That's what drove me to becoming one of you guys, my desire to stop evil from claiming more innocent lives. And now here I am, face-to-face with Team Diamond again and itching to make them pay for what they did to me. The raccoon girl I have no beef with since she had nothing to do with my parent's deaths but she can rot with them just by being part of their team I say."

"Well Kiara, we'll make sure that happens." said Sonic "Me, Tails, Rouge and Sora got them in prison once, now me, Tails, you and Dark can get them back in. What do ya say?"

"I say let's do it!" said Kiara enthusiastically, punching her hand with her fist "But first, we need a plan like you said so true blue, what's the plan?"

"I've got one actually." said Tails with a cute little smile on his cutesy little foxy face.

"Let's here it little guy." said Dark eagerly.

Tails gathered Sonic, Kiara and Dark into a huddle and he began to explain his plan to them in hushed whispers...

Back in the Golden Caverns, Team Diamond were hard at work

mining the golden nuggets they had found in the cave. The team all had pickaxes and they were picking away at the wall, swinging the axes and tearing down chunks of rock with every hit they landed on them. They had heard the bomb go off outside given how an explosion is rarely ever quiet and the team instantly deduced that Sonic, Tails, Kiara and Dark were all dead now. Lennox grinned evilly to himself and reminded himself to check the cave and see if their were any bodies or fallen rocks to fully make sure that the Royal Fighters had kicked the bucket, not that he was doubtful they were dead, just double-checking. Never hurts to double check after all. As the team mined away, Roxy couldn't help but ask something. She had been thinking about Kiara claiming her parents were innocent whereas Lennox claimed them to be traitors. She wasn't sure who to believe and she decided to find out a bit more about this. She stopped picking away and she looked over at Lennox. Lennox looked back at her and frowned at the raccoon.

"Roxy, we have work to do." said Lennox coldly "Please carry on with it."

"I'm sorry Lennox, I just...wanted to ask something." said Roxy nervously "Please promise that you won't lose your temper over this question though."

"I'm pretty sure the question you want to ask is hardly rage-provoking dear." muttered Lennox "So go on, spill it out then. What do you want to ask?"

"Well um...you know that...um...you say Kiara's parents were...uh...traitors to H.U.N.T. whereas...um...Kiara says they...gulp...aren't?" stammered Roxy, gulping between words for she was worried that Lennox would go mad over this.

"Yes...?" said Lennox, not seeming mad in the slightest.

"Well uh...um...ahem...forgive me for doubting someone as handsome and clever as you are but uh...is Kiara right on them being innocent?" squeaked Roxy, bracing herself for an inevitable smack.

Lennox surprisingly refrained from hitting Roxy, unusual given how

he likes to hit Roxy sometimes. Instead, the meerkat kept his often hard-to-keep cool and calmly said:

"No my dear. Kiara is wrong. Simba the Cheetah and Nala the Cheetah, that's their names, were among some of H.U.N.T.'s earliest members." he explained "They were part of Team Emerald, a team we were close friends of. They were amazing treasure-hunters and they got us many riches and relics during their time with us. For some reason though...they just left and didn't even tell us why. Given they now have a kid, I *assume* they left us just so they could raise a child but they didn't have to betray us!" he snarled, clenching his fists "They could have asked for a simple memory-wipe and forget all about us! But they didn't, thus meaning they're traitors!"

"I see." said Roxy, grateful Lennox didn't smack her for this "So I guess you killed them before they could squeal on you or give away any important details about H.U.N.T. right?"

"Actually, we tried torturing them for that information." explained Lennox "I hated having to do that to two close friends of Team Diamond's but traitors have to be punished after all. We tortured Simba and Nala, demanding them to talk. We wanted to know why they left H.U.N.T., did they grass on us and if they gave away any important details at all. They just denied everything and acted like we were idiots and got the wrong people. I...got carried away and killed them though." he added with a guilty look on his face "But that was an accident, we didn't intend to kill them. We just wanted them to talk and tell us why they left H.U.N.T. Kiara obviously doesn't believe us when we say they're traitors to H.U.N.T. because Simba and Nala have manipulated her puny mind into thinking they're all innocent and such. That and we DID kill them so it'll be hard for her to believe us when we say they're traitors who worked for us once."

"Right...just a pity the brat's so blind to reality." sighed Roxy "So her parents were indeed traitors to H.U.N.T.? Thanks for clearing that up for me."

"Anytime Roxy." said Lennox, swinging the pickaxe and tearing down a chunk of rock as he hit it "Now then, get back to work and let's not have any more talk."

Roxy decided to do as she was told and continue working. She swung the pickaxe and chipped off some more rocks as she did so. But before Team Diamond could continue any work, they heard a terrifying roar from outside. It sounded an awful lot like a leopard's roar and it made the four treasure hunters jump out of their skins in shock. Roxy found herself clutching Lennox like a frightened teddy bear without really realizing it. Quite often when you're scared you do something without really noticing it.

"W-w-w-what w-w-was that?!" shrieked Roxy.

"I don't know but I might be able to concentrate better if you let go of me!" snapped Lennox.

Roxy did as she was told and she let go of Lennox, blushing with embarrassment over the fact she'd even done that.

"What was that?" asked Owen, throwing his pickaxe down on the floor "Sounded like something roaring."

"Not more Royal Fighters nosing around on our business!" fumed Lennox, putting down his axe and whipping out his revolvers "Team Diamond, let's take care of them as we did the others!"

With that said, Team Diamond all left their work behind and they rushed up out of the cave to see what the roar was all about. As soon as they reached the surface though, they got a bit of a surprise. For standing right before them and smiling an innocent, cutesy smile was Tails. He had his hands behind his back and he didn't seem worried for some reason. Lennox's jaw dropped down so far that he was amazed it wasn't touching the floor yet. Roxy was babbling like an idiot over this surprise, Owen just looked stunned and Alistair showed no real emotion over this. He just stood there and stared at Tails.

"Oh hello there." said Tails politely, the polite tone of his voice and words just for a laugh "I'm terribly sorry, am I disturbing you?"

"Wh…wha…how did…you…huh…gah…uh…
WWWWWHHHHHHHHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAATTT
shrieked Lennox, his voice sounding very squeaky and hilarious as

he emitted that "what?!" "HOW IN THE NAME OF ALL THINGS WEALTHY DID YOU MANAGE TO SURVIVE THE BOMB?!"

"As if I'm gonna tell you that you crazy meerkat." laughed Tails "All I can say now is that you and your team mates are all morons and should take up a better job than treasure hunting. I can imagine you'll make a good advertising icon for some car insurance website* Lennox."

Lennox fumed. He was so sick of people making that joke about him already. He pointed his revolvers at Tails and prepared to shoot him. Tails just smiled smugly at him. Riling Lennox was all part of his plan after all.

"Well if the bomb didn't kill you then my revolvers will!" he snarled "No wonder I often feel I should just shoot my victims and be done with it when I want someone dead!"

Tails then cupped his hands around his mouth and screamed "NOW GUYS!" at the top of his voice. What followed was a spin-dash to the back on all four members that threw them all down onto the ground. It was Sonic. While Tails had been distracting Team Diamond, Dark Cat had used his blades to keep himself above the cave entrance and he had Sonic and Kiara on his back. Now Tails had given the signal, Sonic had pounced on Team Diamond and knocked them all down. Dark and Kiara jumped down onto the ground and prepared to fight off the insidious treasure hunters. Lennox tried to grab his revolvers but Dark stepped in and chopped them in two with his blades, rendering them useless to anyone now.

"Sorry, no guns allowed." sneered Dark.

"So…you four managed to survive the bomb somehow!" growled Lennox "But how?! I heard it go off! You obviously didn't stop it!"

"Nah, we just broke free and got rid of the bomb." said Sonic "Now you cretins, surrender now or get pounded, simple as that!"

"As if we're gonna surrender heathen!" snarled Alistair "We've got treasures to unearth and you are slowing down our work! We will not allow you to live a second longer if you're not gonna let us work in

peace so put em' up!" he growled, baring his razor sharp claws.

"Fine, don't say I didn't warn ya." said Sonic "So who wants to fight who then?" he asked his friends.

"Alistair's mine!" declared Tails "I've got a particular hatred of him in particular."

"I'm going after Lennox! He's the one who killed my parents after all!" yelled Kiara.

"And I sure would like to kick Owen's ass again." said Dark with a cocky tone of voice.

"So I get the girl then?" snickered Sonic "Fair enough. Royal Fighters, let's jail those treasure-hunters for good!"

"Team Diamond, slaughter them!" yelled Lennox.

The eight Mobians all charged at each other and began to do battle. Sonic ran towards Roxy, Dark ran towards Owen, Kiara ran towards Lennox and Tails and Alistair flew towards each other.

Lennox jumped into the air and tried to dropkick Kiara on the head but Kiara jumped out of his way and waited for Lennox to land on the ground. Lennox landed and Kiara elbowed him very hard in the back. Kiara then tripped Lennox up with a kick to the legs and due to how fast she moved, she was able to kick Lennox and send him flying before he could land on the ground. Lennox hurled across the battlefield and he rolled across the ground a few feet away from Kiara. Kiara rushed over to Lennox and just as the meerkat picked himself up, she roundhouse punched him in the face and then uppercut him in the chin. Lennox rubbed his face better and he gut-kicked Kiara. He then yanked on her hair and to add insult to injury, kicked her again as he yanked on her hair, making the yank even harder and more painful. Kiara screamed in pain and Lennox grabbed her in a chokehold. Kiara gagged and she tried to break free but Lennox had a tough grip on the cheetah.

"Kiara, you can deny your parent's ties with H.U.N.T. all you like but you MUST know this!" he said to her "I did not intend to kill them!

Their deaths were accidental! Honestly they were!"

"I've had enough of your lies you demon!" snarled Kiara "You would have killed my parents even if you made them talk! You fully intended to kill them and I'm gonna make you pay for it asshole!"

She then violently bit Lennox on the hand and made him let go of her. As soon as she break free, she punched Lennox in the face as hard as she could and then punched him directly on the nose. Every punch she threw was full of rage and contentment for the meerkat and she was intending to hurt him as much as she could. Lennox threw a punch at Kiara but the cheetah grabbed his arm and sharply twisted it to the side. Lennox cried out in pain and Kiara punched him in the eye. Lennox put his hand over his eye, which had swollen and turned purple in colour after the punch, and Kiara kicked him in the chest, knocking him down onto his back. Lennox took off his hat and he threw it into Kiara's face as she charged at him. Kiara smacked the hat off her face to which Lennox caught it and put it back on his head. He uppercut Kiara in the face and gave her a left hook to the jaw. He then stood on his hands and swung his laws at Kiara, walloping her in the head and knocking her down onto her side. Kiara picked herself up and kicked Lennox down onto his back, earning a grunt of pain from the meerkat.

Tails and Alistair had taken to the skies for this battle. Tails flew towards Alistair and tried to punch him in the face but Alistair dodged his attack. He flew behind Tails and rammed him in the back face-first. Tails yelped in pain, made all the more worse by the fact Alistair wore a very hard mask, and he swiped his tails at Alistair. Alistair just grabbed his tails and swung him down into the ground. Tails growled furiously and he flew up towards Alistair. Alistair just kick-slammed Tails in the head and sent him spiralling down to the ground. Alistair swooped down after Tails and he caught the fox before he could land on the ground. But this was no rescue, this was to launch another attack. Alistair threw Tails into the wall of the cave as hard as he could. Tails crashed into the wall and he grimaced in pain. Alistair then grabbed Tails by the neck and pinned him against the wall, choking the fox and making him gasp and splutter.

"Ack…let…me…go!" croaked Tails.

"Not a chance little boy." purred Alistair sinisterly "You have become a big nuisance for me and I intend to put you down like a rabid little dog. Not to mention I owe you much for that beat down you gave me back in the factory. When I deal with you…I think I'll slaughter your sister too." he added with a cruel chuckle.

"You…ack…stay away…from my sister!" gagged Tails.

He then kicked Alistair directly in the tender spot, making the bat scream a croaky, haunting scream of pain that made it sound like a demon was in agonizing pain. Tails then tail-whipped Alistair away from himself and sent him skidding across the ground painfully. Alistair picked himself up and flew out of the way just as Tails prepared to deck him. Alistair swooped down and grabbed Tails with his feet. Tails writhed around and tried to make Alistair let go of him. Alistair instead slammed Tails into the ground. Tails however grabbed his ankles and pulled him down before he could fly away. Tails jumped up to his feet and he kicked Alistair in the mask, making the bat groan in pain. Tails then roundhouse kicked Alistair in the face and knocked him down onto his side. The bat growled furiously and he and Tails charged towards each other again.

As for Dark and Owen, they had linked arms with each other and were pushing on each other's arms, trying to overpower the other. Owen was much stronger than Dark so he was beginning to win this little struggle but Dark still fought on, keen to overpower the enormous, muscular rabbit. Owen smiled wickedly at Dark and then suddenly, he lifted him directly off the ground. He threw Dark into the wall of the cave and thundered towards him, ready to punch the leo-lynx's daylights out. But Dark dodged his attack and he punched Owen in the face. He drew out his blades and scratched Owen across the cheeks with them, making the rabbit cry out in pain. Dark then back-flipped and kicked Owen in the face as he did so, sending the rabbit stumbling backwards. Dark then jumped into the air and tried to kick Owen but his attack was badly launched and he ended up in Owen's arms and getting a huge bear hug from the rabbit that just about suffocated him. Dark squirmed in Owen's iron grip and the rabbit ended up slamming him onto the floor and into the wall. After the slam into the wall, Dark flashed a hardcore scowl at the rabbit, baring his glistening white teeth.

"Alright rabbit features! You wanna play? Now we play for REAL!" he yelled, wrapping his arm around Owen's arm and forcing it behind his back.

Owen tried to break free but before he could do so, Dark kicked him into the wall. Owen swung around and clapped Dark around the face with a powerful backhand but the leo-lynx was still standing. Owen tried to punch him again but Dark grabbed him by the ears and yanked on them. Owen grunted and grimaced as his ears were yanked and Dark swung him around into the wall. He drew out a blade and slashed Owen across the back with it, earning a loud bellow of anguish from the former wrestler. Dark then added insult to injury by kicking Owen and sending him falling down into the cave where he and Dark had fought in earlier. Owen tumbled down into the cave like a rolling ball and Dark waited for him to hit the bottom. The moment he heard the thump, he charged down into the cave to finish off Owen.

As for Sonic & Roxy, Roxy whipped out her trademark bat and she swung it at Sonic whilst running up to him. The raccoon missed him by a mile for Sonic jumped into the air before the bat was even halfway towards him. Sonic landed hands-first on Roxy's head and he leap-frogged over her. Roxy straightened down her hair, which had become ruffled after Sonic had put his hands on it and she swung the bat at him again. Sonic dodged the blow and he kicked the bat out of Roxy's hands. Roxy yelped in pain and sucked on her throbbing hands to ease the pain on them. Sonic then kicked Roxy in the gut and made her double-over in pain. Roxy gasped in pain and she clutched her stomach. Sonic then proceeded to grab Roxy in a headlock and give her a very painful noogie-noogie just for larks.

"Ouch! Ow! Eek! Wah! Stop that you wretch!" screamed Roxy "You're messing up my hair!"

"To heck with your hair!" snapped Sonic "You can pay for your crimes along with all the other members of Team Diamond Roxy-girl!"

"To tell you the truth, I'm not sure if I even WANT to be on this stupid team anymore!" yelled Roxy, fighting the pain in her head as Sonic

gave her a noogie.

Sonic stopping rubbing his knuckles on Roxy's scalp and he stared at her in amazement.

"Say what?" asked Sonic "You…don't want to be on Team Diamond anymore?"

"Can we talk about this in the caves?" asked Roxy "Don't want my team-mates to overhear."

"OK." said Sonic, wrapping his arm around Roxy's torso and rushing off with her.

He ran off so quickly that nobody even noticed that he'd left with Roxy, not that anybody would have noticed anyway given Kiara, Tails, Lennox and Alistair are in heated combat and Owen and Dark were down in a cave and fighting. Sonic rushed into the cave entrance that housed the golden nuggets and he looked over his shoulder to see if anybody was watching. No one was around so he decided to make use of the privacy he and Roxy had now.

"So Roxy, what made you say that then?" he asked.

Roxy looked down at the floor sadly as she spoke.

"I say that because…I honestly don't want to be part of Team Diamond anymore." she murmured "Honestly I don't."

She hugged herself as she began to reveal to Sonic who true thoughts on Team Diamond.

"When I joined the team, I was desperate for money in the pot." explained Roxy "Had I not been so poor, I would never have joined them in the first place. When I joined H.U.N.T., I thought that I'd enjoy being a treasure hunter. Instead though…I felt nothing but regret since day one of joining them. They're needlessly violent, ruthless, sadistic and I just can't stand it anymore. To remain part of the team, I've had to develop this faux "bad-girl" attitude and I pretended to enjoy what Team Diamond did just to fit in with them and keep alive. But it just isn't working out. That and I'm sick of getting beaten up by you Royal Fighters all the time and having to

be on the run from the cops. This isn't a life I want to live anymore and I want to get out of it. But I can't just quit, if I want to I have to get my memory wiped and I don't want that to happen. I want to keep my memories and I'm not gonna risk having my memory wiped when I quit H.U.N.T. They may say that they just erase all memories of H.U.N.T. when you leave but I don't fully trust them on that, they might wipe my entire memories clean, not just memories of H.U.N.T. so I'm not risking a memory wipe. How can I improve myself if I end up forgetting who I am? And of course, if I just leave they'll hunt me down and kill me so I don't know what to do about my position. I want to leave Team Diamond, I REALLY do! Honestly I do!" the raccoon wailed at Sonic.

Sonic put a finger to his lips and pondered over Roxy's testimony. He wasn't fully sure if he trusted Roxy or believed what she said but the tone in her voice sounded pretty believable so Sonic decided to go easy on her.

"I see…" said Sonic "Are you telling me the truth? Or are you trying to manipulate me? Not that I don't believe you or anything, I just have trust issues with villains since they always seem to be lying when they say something like this."

"I'm not that person." Roxy insisted, sounding very upset that Sonic didn't seem to believe her "Please, I'm telling you the truth about EVERYTHING! I honestly, honestly, HONESTLY want to leave Team Diamond! Honest! Please believe me! Please!"

Sonic was taken aback at how serious Roxy seemed to be over all this. There was no way this was an act, Roxy was definitely telling the truth here. The tone in her voice was far too real to be a lie or anything, even if she was a former actress. Sonic looked at Roxy and noticed she seemed to be on the verge of tears. Studying her face, he could tell that Roxy was really on the verge of tears, her expression wasn't fake or put on in the slightest. Sonic decided to trust Roxy for he could see the desperation on her face and how upset she seemed about all this. He took Roxy's hand.

"OK Roxy, I believe you." said Sonic "Believe me when I say you are one of the smartest foes I've ever faced. Turning your back on Team Diamond is the smartest thing you can ever do. Since you want to

improve your life and everything, why not join the Royal Fighters Service? We'd be willing to give you a second chance."

"Oh Sonic that's a wonderful offer…" said Roxy "But…I can't accept that. I doubt your friends will be as accepting as I am and I'm no fighter. You know how badly I can fight so I can't join your team. I'm sorry but I can't."

"Oh OK then, I understand." said Sonic "So what will you do when you quit Team Diamond?"

"Be a treasure-hunter still, but this time the peaceful way." answered Roxy "The way Rouge the Bat goes about it. No killing involved or anything, just going to places nobody looks in and unearthing valuables. Once I get enough riches, I'll get myself a new house and begin a fresh new life. I might even be able to return to my dream career…a career as an actress if I get enough treasure."

"That's a nice idea." said Sonic brightly "And by the way Roxy, my supersonic brain has just came up with a way for you to quit Team Diamond and keep them off your back. How about…I trick them into thinking you're dead? I could maybe tell them me and you were fighting in the cave and a rock fell on you and crushed you? That'll stop them hunting you down."

"Oh Sonic that's a wonderful idea!" squealed Roxy happily "Team Diamond won't bother looking for me if they think I'm dead! And you're gonna do that…for me?" she gasped, touched by this generosity.

"What can I say? I'm a firm believer in "second chances" after all." said Sonic casually.

Roxy's response was to hug Sonic gratefully for his kindness. She cried a few years of happiness over this.

"Oh Sonic…that's the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me." she wept happily.

"Don't mention it." said Sonic "I'm just glad you've got common sense unlike my other villains. Now wait here while I break the

"news" out to Lennox." he ordered.

Roxy obeyed and she released Sonic from the hug. Sonic zipped off out of the cave and he rushed back over to the battle, which was still going on. Kiara had Lennox on the ropes right now, pinning him down and yanking on his ears whereas Tails and Alistair were evenly-matched. Dark and Owen had emerged from the cave they had fallen into and both were heavily bruised and battered with Owen looking worse than Dark since Dark was the better fighter of the two (martial arts beats wrestling any day). Sonic was glad to see everybody together and he yelled at the top of his voice.

"STOP THE FIGHT!"

Everybody surprisingly did what they were told and they stopped fighting. Now the fight had stopped, Sonic decided to carry out his idea to help Roxy leave Team Diamond without any worries to tie her down.

"Hey Lennox, I've got some bad news, for you that is." said Sonic "Me and Roxy started fighting in that cave and…well…a rock fell on her and…let's just say she's not gonna be hunting for treasures anymore."

Lennox glared at Sonic in horror, his tail standing up on end and his hat doing back flips in surprise.

"Roxy…my dear Roxy…is…dead?!" he gasped.

" 'Fraid so Lennox." said Sonic "Pity really, I was hoping to arrest all of Team Diamond."

"Well this isn't good!" sighed Owen "We're outnumbered now and with Sonic around, the three of us can't win this no matter how strong we are!"

"I agree." said Lennox "We need to fall back! Team Diamond! We're retreating!" he announced

"Oh you're bloody well not!" yelled Kiara, lunging at Lennox "You're going to prison where you all belong!"

Lennox's response was to whip out some smoke bombs that he had conveniently stored in his cape and he threw them into Kiara's face, blinding her momentarily and causing smoke to drift up into the air to stop the heroes from chasing them down. While the smoke blinded the heroes and had them in a coughing fit, Lennox, Owen and Alistair legged it as fast as they could. As they ran away, Lennox shed a small tear for Roxy. He did secretly love her after all and the fact she was "gone" was enough to make even him feel a bit teary eyed. The moment Team Diamond fled, the smoke cleared and Kiara instantly screamed in rage over their escape.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" she wailed "The freaks got away! Oh will they EVER get their comeuppance?!" she ranted, stamping her feet furiously.

"Hey Kiara! Chill. Breathe. Relax." said Dark, putting his hands on the cheetah's shoulders and calming her down a little "Least we beat them, that's what matters more. We saved the GoldenCaverns from them and got them running scared. We'll get them the next time they show up though, trust me on that."

Kiara breathed a heavy sigh and she looked over at Dark. She managed to crack a small smile over what he'd said.

"You're right." she said "There's always next time as they say. Thanks handsome."

"Anytime cutie." said Dark with a little chuckle.

As for Tails, he looked over at Sonic with a concerned look on his face.

"Roxy's not really dead is she?" asked Tails curiously.

"Nope." said Sonic "She's alive. This may sound unbelievable but… she wants to quit Team Diamond."

"No way!" cried Tails incredulously "You serious?"

"Dead serious." said Sonic "I read her facial features and body language as she talked to me. I couldn't find anything that suggested she was faking in the slightest, she meant everything she

said. So in order to help her quit Team Diamond and keep them from tracking her down, I lied about her being dead. Now she's free from them, she's gonna improve herself and start life anew."

"Well that's good." said Kiara, happy to hear this "Shows she has some decency left in her. I hope she does well with her new life and that she becomes a much better person now."

"Same here." said Sonic "Although if she turns out to be lying, I'll be after her make no mistake on that. But…I don't think that'll be happening anytime soon so no worries."

"That's cool Sonic." said Tails "Although I'm still a bit sore over her tricking me and Amy into a trap set-up by Lola Gunn and Team Diamond themselves though…" he added grimly "Still, least she's redeeming herself."

"Yep." said Sonic brightly "Well then, mission accomplished and all that. The caves are safe and all that so I guess me and Tails will get going now. Hey Dark, Kiara, tell Thomas that we wish him well." he said, turning to the two felines.

"We will." said Dark "We'll be heading on back to campanyway. So I guess I'll see you around then."

"Bye you two, it's been awesome to meet you both again." said Kiara with a big grin on her face.

"Thanks Kiara. Stay cool." said Sonic with a wink "Bye for now you two. Keep on juicin'."

So with that said, Sonic and Tails left Dark and Kiara behind to just head off home to their camp. Sonic whizzed off at top speed and Tails flew after him, spinning his tails around as fast as he could as he flew after him. Unbeknownst to anybody, Roxy was watching the two leave from inside the cave and she smiled as she watched them go.

"Thank you Sonic…for everything." she said to herself "Now that I'm free, I'll make a start to redeeming myself. And what better place to start then in here with all those golden nuggets. To give the people

of Megapolis something to marvel at though, I think I'll just take one. One's enough for me. That and I can't carry them all anyway. New life here I come…" she said as she turned back into the cave and headed back down to the golden nuggets so she could take one with her and leave already.

Back over to Dark and Kiara, they were just standing there watching Sonic and Tails leave. After the two had finally disappeared over the horizon, Dark looked at Kiara.

"So, shall we go back to campthen?" asked Dark.

"Not yet handsome, I wanna say a few things." said Kiara, putting her hands on the leo-lynx's broad, strong chest "First of all…thank you for everything today. Thank you for saving my life, for making me feel better after I revealed my tragic past…and thank you for teaching me some valuable lessons today."

"Aw shucks, you're welcome beautiful." said Dark modestly "After all, you saved my life and gave me a chance at starting anew so I'm returning the favour. I've gotta say as I've been part of this team… I've grown to love you Kiara."

Kiara gasped in pleasant surprise and then she wrapped her arms around Dark's shoulders.

"Oh my gosh…I've grown to love YOU too Dark!" squealed Kiara excitedly "I'm glad you feel the same way!"

She then planted a loving kiss on the leo-lynx's lips and closed her eyes. Dark closed his eyes and wrapped his arms around Kiara's body, pulling her close and embracing the cheetah lovingly. It was truly an adorable, lovely moment between the two and anyone watching would easily be touched by this lovely scene. As the two kissed, they began to stroke each other's hair and lightly feel the other's body. Unfortunately, this moment didn't last for up in the sky appeared…a streak of light! Dark and Kiara stopped kissing and they stared up at the streak of light that had just appeared in the sky above them. Kiara's first reaction was to gasp in horror and stare incredulously at the light.

"Oh my gosh! What is that?!" she squealed in fright.

"Dunno babe…but I don't think that's natural!" cried Dark.

Natural was not a fitting word for the streak of light at all, more like SUPER-natural. As the light loomed in the sky, it began to drag Dark and Kiara towards itself for unfortunately, they were too close to it! Dark and Kiara screamed in terror as they were pulled into the light. Roxy could hear them screaming and she ran outside to see what was happening. She arrived in time to see Dark and Kiara disappear into the streak of light and the light itself vanishing into nothingness after the two had been swallowed up by it. Roxy could do nothing except stand there, wide-eyed and open mouthed at what she had just witnessed. She had to tell somebody about this and she knew just who to contact. Trouble was…they probably wouldn't believe her so Roxy would have to find a way to get a hold of Sonic and let him know about all this…

Footnotes:

***Compare the Meerkat. com reference FOR THE WIN!**

Well that was unexpected...will Sonic and friends find and save Dark Cat and Kiara? Or are they...g-g-g-gone?! For good?! Tune in next time for Sonic investigates this disappearance, Bunnie and Geoffrey have their first date and an old enemy returns to get vengeance once again...

Meanwhile, tune into Tales from Mobius where Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse FINALLY have their honeymoon! :D

So how was this chapter guys? Was it good? Feel free to leave a review and say what you thought. Feedback is much appreciated. No flaming.

Intense Matters

Story 159: Intense Matters

Countdown to Crisis: 6

"Come on Ruben, you can do it." urged the Royal Fighter super spy Sora Prower, sister of Tails and an excellent spy on the battlefield.

"I don't think I can!" whimpered Ruben the Water Panther, former Chun-Nan resident and young martial artist.

"Ruben, you won't learn how to climb if you have an attitude like that so come on, think positive and try harder." said Sora sternly "Come on, I'm there for you, no need to worry."

"OK." said Ruben, beads of sweat raining down his head as he raised his hand and tried to grab onto another knob on the climbing wall.

Ruben had been wanting to learn how to climb since he was pretty bad at climbing and he had specifically requested his secret crush Sora to tutor him since a spy like her would be an expert on climbing. The two were in the work out room of Royal HQ and Ruben was, of course, partaking on the climbing wall. He had managed to get up a few segments, steadily and clumsily that is and now he was becoming a nervous wreck. Climbing scared him, which explained why he was so bad at it and even climbing up something like a climbing wall was enough to scare the living daylights out of the water panther. Sora was there though, urging him on and trying to motivate Ruben so he would be less scared when he climbed up the wall.

"Come on Ruben, one more segment and you can come down now." said Sora "Don't look down, just focus on getting up. That's the important thing about climbing."

"OK Sora, I'll do that." said Ruben, gulping nervously.

He wiped some sweat off his forehead and he kept his eyes fixed on the ceiling above him. He repeated Sora's words of wisdom in his head, don't look down, just look up. Ruben seemed to relax a little after telling himself that a few times and he forced himself up to another knob. The climbing wall was quite tall, about 30 meters, and full of knobs and handgrips for somebody to grab on when partaking the challenge. Ruben had climbed up about 10 meters and he didn't really want to go another inch but Sora wanted him to and being that Ruben had a secret crush on her, he was willing to impress his fair lady so he made himself move on. He gripped another knob and pulled himself up to a knob just further up. Almost there, he had just one more knob and then he could come down. Ruben's fingers just managed to curl over the knob…but his foot ended up slipping and he screamed out in terror as he now dangled by one arm on the knob he'd just gripped.

"Argh! Help! I'm gonna fall!" shrieked Ruben "Help me Sora!"

"Ruben! Don't panic, just relax and get back on the handgrips!" Sora called to him "NEVER panic while climbing, that will not do you any good!"

"Sorry." said Ruben, still keeping his eyes on the ceiling as he tried to get his feet pack on the handgrips underneath him.

He managed to find his footing and he steadied himself, gasping for breath as he began to pant with worry.

"Did it!" he gasped "Can I come down now? Please?"

"Sure Ruben." said Sora kindly "That's enough for one day."

Ruben sighed with relief and he climbed eagerly back down to the floor, eager to be down again. The moment he got down onto the floor, he sat down on it and dribbled some water over himself to calm himself down a bit for he was a bit worked up and needed to relax. Ruben even squirted some water in his mouth to give himself a nice soothing drink to calm his nerves. Sora knelt down beside Ruben, her face not suggesting she was about to give him a good report.

"I'm sorry to say Ruben that you're not off to a good start." she said gravely "You were quite clumsy and unfocused up that wall and you panicked when you nearly fell. At least you climbed a good height though." she added with a smile.

"I'm sorry about that Sora, it's just…I can't stand the thought of falling." said Ruben, feeling disappointed with himself "I have a fear of falling, that's why I've found it hard to learn how to climb. I just… fear the very thought of slipping and falling to my death. I'm so terrified about this that it's hard for me to focus on going up. Last time I tried to climb…I needed mother to help me down, I was petrified with fear so I couldn't get down myself." he said, his ears drooping back and his face falling in despair.

"I understand." said Sora sympathetically, patting Ruben on the back "I found it hard to learn how to climb too. It took me a while before I could climb efficiently. You'll get there eventually Ruben, just a little more practice and we'll get there in the end."

"I hope so." said Ruben "I don't wanna keep disappointing you Sora." he said, holding Sora's hand and looking at her with big puppy-dog eyes.

"Oh Ruben, I'm not disappointed." said Sora gently "I don't get disappointed, I give critiques in my most polite and well-meaning manner. I'm not disappointed with you at all, please don't feel like that."

Ruben was pretty pleased to hear that and he smiled at his secret crush.

"Aw…thank you Sora." said Ruben delightedly "That means a lot to me."

"You're welcome." said Sora "I heard from Mr. St. John that you have self-esteem issues so I'm trying to make sure I don't dampen your spirits in anyway."

"That's awful nice of you." said Ruben, blushing a little over Sora's kindness "You know, it's easy to see how you and Tails are related." he added "You have your brother's kindness and good personality."

Sora grinned from ear to ear just hearing that.

"Aww Ruben, you're so sweet!" she giggled, pinching his cheek and shaking his face a little "That's so nice of you to say! Just for that, you wanna join me for a drink in the rec room?" she asked.

"Do I ever!" cried Ruben happily "Let's go for it!"

Sora giggled at Ruben and the two left the training room to go to the rec room. As they ran off to the rec room, Sonic the Hedgehog passed them by in the corridor and waved them off as they headed to the rec room. Sora and Ruben paused for a moment and waved back to him before resuming their walk. As they walked off together, Sonic could hardly help but smile at the two.

"Aw, they look so cute together." said Sonic "Almost like a second Tails and Cosmo they are. I wonder if they'll become a couple at all?"

It sure was nice to think of the idea of Tails' sister ending up in a romance of her own like how her brother before her has ended up in a romance. And who better for Sora to be with than a boy as honourable, brave and dedicated as Ruben? Sonic would happily support the two all the way just as he supports Tails and Cosmo in their little romance too. For now though, Sonic would focus on a different type of romance…his own. He had been developing feelings for the royal-turned-fighter Queen Sally Acorn after she'd started becoming more like a Royal Fighter and a team player and now he was wanting to chance the idea of a relationship between himself and Sally, especially after the pep-talk they had before Operation: Double Trouble began and the good luck kiss Sally had given him before they left to foil the operation. Sonic had seriously been thinking that Sally might truly be the one for him and he decided if he was going to give love another chance then he may as well make the first move now. Sonic left Royal HQ and began looking around for Sally, hoping the squirrel queen was around for him. He wandered around the beautiful city of New Mobotropolis for a while, enjoying the sights and the peace and quiet until finally, he saw Sally chatting to a little kid who was a Mobian kitten with black fur and white markings around the eyes. The kitten was female and wore a green dress. She seemed rather inquisitive about the royal

life and thus, Sally was telling her all about it.

"So your majesty, you say that being a queen's much more than just wearing a crown and waving at people?" piped the kitten in the sweetest little baby voice you've ever heard. Her voice was so adorable that even the most stone-faced of people would find their frowns turning upside-down over it.

"Oh indeed little girl." said Sally "There's a lot of responsibilities of being a queen and believe me, it can be quite tiring. Especially if you want to be with the Royal Fighters at the same time." she added, thinking over how much weight she truly carries on her shoulders with this double-life of hers.

"How do you handle your wesponsibities then Miss Acorn?" asked the kitten.

"I have some very kind and devoted staff members and the Council of Acorn to handle things whenever I'm away fighting with the Royal Fighters and I take some time off to do some work myself for they can't handle it all without me for too long." explained Sally "It's hard work but we manage in the end."

"Vewy intewesting Queen Sally." said the kitten with a happy smile "I hope you become a vewy good queen for us all."

"Aww, that's so sweet of you." chuckled Sally "Thank you."

The kitten just beamed and Sally patted her on the head. Now the kitten had finished talking with Sally, she decided to toddle off and go back to her parents, who weren't far away and had been keeping an eye on her as she talked to Sally. As soon as the kitten left, Sonic approached Sally and put a hand on her shoulder. Sally turned around and beamed happily at the sight of her handsome blue hero. She was always happy to see Sonic, especially since she was growing feelings for him and was hoping that she and Sonic would start a relationship sooner or later.

"Why hello there Sonic, what brings you here?" asked Sally brightly.

"Oh I was just catching some fresh air and I spotted you while I was

walking." said Sonic, masking his true reasons for coming to her for the moment "I thought I'd pop over and say hi."

"That's nice of you." said Sally with a smile "How are the Royal Fighters doing at this moment?"

"Well Wilson and Mandy have left for their honeymoon already*, everybody's doing their own thing and Sora and Ruben seem to have a relationship building up between them." explained Sonic "Sora's been giving Ruben climbing lessons and the two are now off to the rec room together. It's cute really, seeing Tails' sister finding her true love like Tails found his. Hope things go well between them."

"I do too." said Sally "Love just makes the Royal Fighters stronger I think, Wilson and Mandy, Bunnie and Geoffrey and Tails and Cosmo setting some fine examples for a start."

"Yep." said Sonic "Speaking of Bunnie and Geoffrey, those two are having their first date today. Hope all goes well between them and that they have a nice time."

"I do too." said Sally "So what are you planning on doing today?" she asked, hoping that Sonic would be planning on doing something romantic for him and her, like a date.

"Well Sally, I uh…um…" said Sonic, trying to find the right words to say to the beautiful queen "I uh…was kinda…um…hoping…um…"

"Yes?" asked Sally, excitement bubbling in her stomach.

"I was hoping…that uh…" said Sonic, swallowing nervously and taking Sally's hands into his to try and help himself focus a bit more "I was hoping that…me and you could…could…"

Sally thought she was going to burst at this moment. Sonic was going to ask what she thought he was going ask! It was about time too since the two very nearly had a romantic moment before Operation: Double Trouble started so Sally was really looking forward to this. Unfortunately, romance would have to wait for Sonic heard a voice calling him from nowhere. Sonic looked around and

saw a shadowed figure hiding behind a tree, hissing "psst!" at him and making signals with its hand that suggested it wanted him to come over and see it. Sally heard it too and wondered what was going on.

"Sonic, what was that?" she asked.

"Uh Sal, stay here, I'll check it out." said Sonic.

"As if." sniffed Sally "I've missed out on far too much before I changed my ways, I'm not one to start sitting out of things now. I'm coming too." she said sternly.

"OK." sighed Sonic, knowing that arguing with a queen is just the embodiment of time-wasting. You can't win with royalty and he knew that all too well after many arguments with the royals in the past.

Sonic and Sally ran over to the tree where the figure was hiding and they peered around it to see who was hiding there. To Sonic's utter amazement, it was Roxy the Raccoon! The dark belle of Team Diamond had recently betrayed them and left the team with Sonic providing her an excellent cover to prevent Team Diamond from hunting her down, said cover being a fake story about her being killed in a cave-in. Roxy was free to redeem herself and be a better person and yet she was here right now in New Mobotropolis. Sonic didn't understand since Roxy had refused his offer for her to join the Royal Fighters so he was curious to know Roxy's story.

"Roxy?! What are you doing here?" cried Sonic "I thought you didn't want to become one of us!"

"I don't, I'm not here for that." said Roxy patiently "I'm here to deliver you some horrible, HORRIBLE news!"

"Oh no…have Team Diamond realized they've been tricked and they're after you now?" gasped Sonic worriedly.

"Fortunately, no." said Roxy "It's nothing to do with those creeps. It's something much worse…"

"I'm very sorry to interrupt you Madame but who the heck are you?" asked Sally rather rudely, her arms folded in a manner that

suggested she was highly suspicious about something.

"I could say the same to you sister." snorted Roxy "The name's Roxy and I'm a former member of Team Diamond, I'm sure Sonic here has told you about them?"

"I believe he has." said Sally as she thought about this for a minute "Team Diamond work for H.U.N.T., an organization that has been terminated and they once attempted to kill Sonic. So you've left them now? I'm very pleased to hear that." she said brightly.

"Thank you, I'm glad I left those creeps." said Roxy grimly "So who might you be then?"

"I'm Queen Sally Acorn, ruler of New Mobotropolis and the woman in charge of the Royal Fighters Service." explained Sally "So Roxy, you came here with bad news I believe you said?" she asked, raising an eyebrow of concern.

"I did." said Roxy "OK Sonic and Sally, prepare to be blown away for you will not believe this…Dark Cat and Kiara the Cheetah were taken away by a weird light that appeared in the sky and just vanished after they had been taken by it! Given they're Royal Fighters, I just HAD to let you know Sonic." she said, looking more at Sonic than Sally as she said that.

Sonic and Sally both gasped in unison and gave Roxy an incredulous stare that made them look like she'd just told them a horror story and had told it in frighteningly graphic detail to make it even worse and more scary for them to hear.

"Dark…and Kiara…were taken…be a weird light in the sky?!" gasped Sonic.

"What did this light look like?" asked Sally.

"It was a long streak that flashed a radiant golden glow and just appeared in the sky as if someone tore a piece of it away." said Roxy "Why? You seen one of them before?"

"We've seen quite a few before." said Sally, her expression as grave as a tombstone "Sonic himself got taken by one the other week and

we've been aching to find out more about this streak of light. We wanna know what caused it and how to stop it. We fear…it's something apocalyptic."

"We have to get over to Megapolis and see what we can do." said Sonic "Sally, you and Roxy head off already, I'll get Tails and catch up to you."

"OK Sonic." said Sally "Roxy, you lead."

Roxy nodded and she ran off with Sally running after the raccoon. The moment the girls started to run off, Sonic zipped back into Royal HQ to fetch Tails. Maybe they could finally study the streak of light and learn more about it. And maybe once they learn more about it, they can try and find Dark and Kiara and bring them back to Mobius. One thing was for sure, the streak of light was getting out of hand and had to be stopped now before something catastrophic happened…

While all that was going on, a pair of Mobians were enjoying some peace and quiet together in the local park, sitting on a bench together and holding hands while sipping soda drinks and admiring the beautiful lake that glistened in the gleaming sunlight that shone over the magnificent city around them. The two Mobians were Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey St. John (he's out of uniform for this one since there's no missions to do). The two had announced their love for each other during the Devatron invasion and had been hoping to have their first date sometime soon. The relative calm that had befallen New Mobotropolis after the defeat of Dr. Finitevus had presented them a good opportunity to do just that, have their first date. They were going to start off simple and build up their romance later on. A simple day in the park was all they needed for a first date and right now, they were quite enjoying themselves. Everything was calm and peaceful and they were enjoying each other's company very much. This date was going just nicely and with any luck, it'd stay nice and they'd have no problems at all. After all the hell the Royal Fighters go through in their lives, it was just too much to ask for one nice day with nothing happening so Bunnie and Geoffrey were making the most of this day. As they sat on the bench and

enjoyed the peace and quiet, Bunnie shifted up to Geoffrey so now their shoulders were touching one another. Geoffrey didn't mind this at all, he was all too happy to have a woman as beautiful as Bunnie up close to him.

"It sure is a nice day isn't it sugah?" said Bunnie with a smile.

"Sure is babe, couldn't get any nicer I think." said Geoffrey, looking up at the sky and admiring how pure and blue it was with not a cloud looming over them.

"Ah agree." said Bunnie "What could be better then just the two of us enjoying a nice sunny day in the park? Ah say nothin' indeed."

"Yep." said Geoffrey brightly "I thought that since it's been a while since we announced our love for one another it was about time we had a date."

"Ah thought the same thing too sugah." said Bunnie, putting her hands on Geoffrey's arm "Thinkin' back on ya'll confessin' yer love for me, it still amazes me how it took till the Devatron attack for ya'll to confess yer love for me." she added, her head leaning over onto Geoffrey's shoulder.

"Well at the time, I thought we were goners so I decided to let it out at last to give myself something to be happy about before we got executed." said Geoffrey, putting an arm around Bunnie and pulling her close "Luckily though, we've lived in time to develop our relationship and here we are now, sitting together and enjoying a lovely day."

"Ah'm glad we did survive to see this day." said Bunnie, her organic right arm around Geoffrey and her robotic left arm on his chest "Ah'm lovin' it so far."

"Me too luv." said Geoffrey "And the one thing I'm loving the most is having you beside me." he said, winking at his girlfriend.

"Aww Geoffrey…yer such a sweetie ya'll are!" giggled Bunnie "Maybe that's why ah like to call ya sugah, ya'll are as sweet as sugah."

"You could say that." chuckled Geoffrey modestly "Although I'm certainly not sweet to blighters like Eggman, Finitevus and the like."

"Neither am I but thankfully, they don't seem bothered about us today." said Bunnie cheerfully "Let's not think about the bad-guys hon, let's just think about us having a lovely time here in the park. That's all that matters now."

"You got that right baby." said Geoffrey, stroking Bunnie's back and making her feel very relaxed and content as a loving tingle surged up her spine from Geoffrey's gentle fingers smoothly brushing up and down her back.

"Oooooh, that feels mighty good sugah…" purred Bunnie, clearly enjoying feeling her boyfriend's fingers softly stroking her back "Thanks, this feels lovely."

"Anything for the most awesome and beautiful woman I ever met." Geoffrey purred back in a faux seductive tone of voice that made Bunnie giggle.

Bunnie batted her eyelids and then leaned forward to give Geoffrey a kiss on the lips. Geoffrey could see that Bunnie was wanting to kiss him so he decided that he'd let her. He put his hands on Bunnie's shoulders and the two kissed each other. They'd been aching to do that since they'd announced their love for each other and as they kissed, they both seemed to be thinking the same thing: it had been worth the wait. Unfortunately though this lovely moment wasn't going to last for as they kissed, something peeked out of the bushes and glowered at the kissing couple. Its eyes were full of hatred and it seemed to be stalking Bunnie and Geoffrey as if it had a beef against them in particular. It gritted its teeth and ducked back down in the bushes, almost as if preparing to pounce. It moved ever so quietly so as to not catch any attention. The careful movement of the creature was so good that none of the leaves rustled as it ducked back down into the bushes. Geoffrey and Bunnie did not hear a thing, they just continued kissing each other. The thing smiled and then it leapt out of the bushes like a tiger leaping for a deer. Bunnie and Geoffrey heard it instantly and Bunnie was quick to push Geoffrey out of the way, allowing her to take the pouncing creature for herself. The creature knocked Bunnie clean off the

bench and onto the ground, wrestling with her and trying to bite her head off. The creature snapped its jaws at Bunnie, saliva streaming out of its jaws as it tried to bite her. Bunnie screamed and threw her legs up, throwing the thing off of her and onto the path near where they were. The creature let out a yelp of pain as its body came into sharp contact with the hard, stone, concrete path that people walked on to get around the park. Bunnie gasped and panted as she picked herself up, wondering who was the creature that had pounced on her. Geoffrey picked himself up and looked over Bunnie's shoulder to see who the attacker was. To their horror, it was none other than Bunnie's former friend Ravage Bloodfang! The wolf had returned and was after them both once again! Ravage hadn't been seen since the fiasco with the Sword of Elemental Power** and now here he was, in the flesh once again and gripping his head in pain after landing on the hard walking path head first. Bunnie was so horrified that she staggered backwards and Geoffrey caught her to stop her from collapsing. Bunnie regained herself and she put her hands on her hips.

"Ravage!" she growled furiously "What in the heck are ya'll doin' here ya creepy ol' wolf?!"

"More importantly, how the heck did you find this place?" asked Geoffrey.

Ravage picked himself up and he glowered at Bunnie and Geoffrey. He kept his cool though and managed to crack a slimy smile at them.

"How did I find this place?" he purred "How simple, I just went to the Soleanna library and looked up where this city is. As for why I'm here, I'm here to get rid of two parasites that make my fur crawl, namely you two." he said darkly, pointed two clawed fingers at the rabbit and skunk.

"How did you know we would be here?" asked Bunnie "And why do ya'll wanna kill us? What have we done to ya'll lately? We haven't seen you since last year when me and Geoffrey took a day off in Adabat!***"

"I knew you two would be here since I heard that the Royal Fighters

take refuge in this city and you two are Royal Fighters so it made logical sense you'd be here." explained Ravage "As for why I want to kill you both…well I got bored of picking on Scott and his team all the time so I decided to pick on some one else for a change. Not to mention you two ruined my first attempt to try and raze Adabat so you both deserve a grisly punishment for it." he finished that sentence with a rather sinister growl and a flash of his teeth.

"Ravage, please stop bein' so vengeful!" cried Bunnie "Ah remember what ya'll used to be like when the Peace-Gatherers were around. Ya'll used to be kind, fun, playful, happy and loving. Why can't ya'll be like that anymore? That's the Ravage ah know and love and ah wish he could come back to me." she said rather sadly.

"Well Bunnie, sorry to burst your bubble but that Ravage is dead now." said Ravage, his voice dangerously soft and calm for a villain like him "He died when his country decided to punish him despite his good intentions and now I'm here to make the country pay for ousting me like that. I only wanted to fulfil the very goal of the Peace-Gatherers and how did they thank me? By banishing me and scarring me for life!" he yelled, taking off his mask to show off his hideous scars that were all over his face "So why should I show any love for Adabat if they don't want my good intentions?"

"You broke one of the rules you empty-headed canine!" snapped Geoffrey, priming his arm-mounted crossbow and itching to fire at Ravage "You tried to use the very weapon that Adabat forbid anyone to use! You're not allowed to play the wounded victim here!"

"I was going to use it for a good cause!" thundered Ravage, putting his mask back on "But did those morons listen to me? NO! My generosity and good nature was all for naught back then so I'm only giving what Adabat deserves from me. But this isn't about Adabat now, it's about you two." he said, his eyes fixed on Bunnie and Geoffrey "I've been aching to have a rematch with you two and now I'm here, I'll see to it that you end up in the cooking pot. You see, I'm quite famished right now and you two will make a fine meal for a hungry wolf like me…" he finished with a creepy lick of the chops as he imagined Bunnie and Geoffrey on the dinner table for him.

That just made Bunnie and Geoffrey cringe and Bunnie raised her

fists determinedly.

"Ya'll will be eatin' one thing Ravage…defeat!" yelled Bunnie "Ah'm gonna see to it that ya'll get thrown in the New Mobotropolis Detention Centre!"

"We shall see dear child, we shall see indeed…" purred Ravage, getting down on all fours and preparing to pounce.

It was Bunnie and Geoffrey who made the first move though. They both ran forward and leaped onto Ravage, the wolf snarling at them as he sprang into action and leapt back at them…

Meanwhile, over in Megapolis, Roxy had led Sonic, Sally and Tails over to the spot Dark and Kiara were standing before the streak of light had taken them away. It had been quite a trek but they had got there in the end and now Roxy was pointing up at the sky and explaining everything she had witnessed earlier to the three Royal Fighters.

"So here we are." said Roxy "Dark and Kiara were standing right where I am now and the streak of light appeared…" she paused as she peered up at the sky and tried to mark exactly where it appeared with her finger "…about there." she said, pointing in a slight north-east direction from where she was standing "Just above them."

Tails, who had brought a scanning machine that was the size of a crate and had a radio dish on top of it, set the machine down and looked up at the sky where Roxy was pointing.

"I feel sorry for poor Dark and Kiara." said Tails as he saw to turning the machine on "That must have been horrible for them, just getting snatched away by a streak of light like that, and after a day of victory no less."

"They usually say "all's well that ends well" but it certainly didn't end well for Dark and Kiara." said Sonic, feeling just as sorry for them as Tails was feeling.

"Well we managed to bring you back when you were snatched up by a tear in the sky Sonic so we will save Dark and Kiara." said Sally "But unlike you where we had a keen idea where you might have ended up, we have NO idea where Dark and Kiara might have ended up."

"Yeah, something tells me it might not be Mobius Nega again." said Sonic, although at the same time, he hoped it was since Mobius Nega was a good place to end up in "We could be on a wild goose chase looking for those two."

"I hope they're OK." said Tails as he turned a dial on the machine "I dread to think what might happen to them if they've ended up on some unknown universe or alternate timeline. What if they're somewhere unpleasant?"

"That will not be good at all." said Sonic, shuddering at the thought of Dark and Kiara stranded in a bad timeline or something like that.

Tails nodded agreeably as he flicked a switch and fully got the machine on and ready. The machine whirred into life and the radio dish began pointing up at the sky, in particular aiming at where Roxy pointed since that was where the streak of light was meant to have appeared according to her. As Tails looked at the readings on his machine, Sally looked over to Roxy, curious to know more about the raccoon.

"So Roxy, what made you want to leave Team Diamond then?" she asked.

"Oh I just couldn't stand their overly violent ways anymore and I decided I no longer wished to be a part of that world." said Roxy, scowling bitterly over her time with Team Diamond "And also while I was with Team Diamond I just felt…trapped with them. Now I've left them, I feel free again." Roxy said, her face brightening up a little "I can hardly wait to see what my life's gonna be like now I'm gonna start anew."

"What will you do Roxy?" asked Sally.

"Hopefully restart my fallen acting career and this time, I'll be more

careful with my money so I don't go bust again." Roxy suggested "If only I thought on doing that in the first place…"

"Well Roxy, we all make a bad decision at one point in our lives." said Sally softly "And it's the bad choices that lead us into making the good choices later on. That's how we learn after all, we make mistakes and we learn from them."

"I know." said Roxy with a smile "And now I've undone my mistake of joining H.U.N.T., I'll see to it that my life gets properly fixed. I managed to find some golden nuggets down in the caverns over there," she said while pointing to the Golden Caverns "So I'm gonna take one and get myself some money in the pot. Once that's done, it's a real life for me once again."

"That's a wonderful idea." said Sally approvingly "Although do you think you should take a golden nugget from the Golden Caverns? I mean, they might be there for a reason…"

As Sally and Roxy continued gossiping like a pair of girls who've known each other for life, Tails studied the readings on the screen of his machine to see what it was picking up and if he could make sense out of it. Sonic was sort of leaning over Tails' shoulder to see if he could see what Tails was picking up. The machine was scanning the air above them and the readings that showed up on the screen were a little bit odd. There were strange waves flickering about on the screen like ocean tides and Tails read the screen to try and see if he could understand what was going on. It was odd that the machine was picking anything up to him. Last time they'd done a scan after a streak of light had appeared, the scans picked nothing up and everything was normal as if it had never happened. And yet his machine was picking up something as if the streak of light had only just disappeared or was going to appear. This did not add up at all and Tails was making his brain ache trying to comprehend it.

"Yo Tails, what's going on there?" asked Sonic.

"The machine's picking up vague traces of supernatural material in the air, invisible to the naked eye but there all the same." explained Tails "But that doesn't make sense. When that streak of light took you away, everything was suddenly normal again as if it never

happened. Now we're studying one that's taken Dark and Kiara away, there's traces of it left behind, not that anyone would have known given it's all invisible."

"I see…maybe we got lucky this time?" asked Sonic "Although I'm sure a lot of time's past since that one appeared so shouldn't it had vanished entirely, leaving no trace of its existence?"

"That's what I'm thinking." said Tails "I have a nasty theory on this though…what if…what if…" his face seemed to turn pale as he tried to blab out his theory "What if…the streak of light is getting…gulp… worse?"

"Getting worse? As in, appearing more often and because of this, it never has time to fully disappear?" suggested Sonic.

"Yes." said Tails "If it's appearing more often then that means the problem behind it is getting worse and worse. Maybe…in an apocalyptic sense of the word!" he gasped as a terrible thought crept over his head.

"Apocalyptic…you think this might be the "end of the world" thing that Silver and Blaze are worried about?" said Sonic nervously.

"It might just be." said Tails hoarsely.

That made Sonic fell very anxious indeed. But nothing would make him more anxious then what happened next. Tails' machine suddenly started whirring like crazy and the radio dish was nodding up and down like a nodding dog. The readings on the screen were going crazy too and Tails had a nasty idea on what it might mean, the streak of light was coming again!

"Oh my gosh! Everybody back now!" screamed Tails, gathering up the machine and running like hell.

Sonic, Sally and Roxy didn't wait to be asked twice. They ran off after Tails and just as they left the spot, a huge streak of light appeared once again in the sky, in the exact same spot it had appeared earlier. The surreal thing about it was it was BIGGER than it was the first time but only by a couple of inches. The four Mobians

stared at the streak of light and Tails aimed the machine's radio dish at it, hoping to pick something up from it. A minute passed and the streak of light suddenly closed up like a sealed crack and it vanished completely, leaving no trace of it behind, not even the supernatural material it had left behind previously. Tails read the readings on the machine's screen and wondered what it might be about. Sonic, Sally and Roxy seemed rather surprised that the streak of light had appeared again. This could not be good at all.

"I-I-I-It appeared again!" gasped Roxy "And only an hour has passed since it first appeared!"

"This isn't good at all." said Sonic "The first one that appeared and took Scourge and Fiona away happened weeks ago and it wasn't until weeks later that one appeared again. Now this one appears and then re-appears again an hour later. It's definitely getting worse!"

"It certainly is." said Tails grimly "Although now the machine's not picking anything up anymore. Everything's normal again. But the fact that one has appeared in the same spot twice and with only an hour between them…it must be getting worse and the readings on my machine are nothing like anything I've seen before. I think this is a supernatural occurrence that isn't even of Mobius origin. I fear… that this is a circumstance beyond our control." the delivery of that last sentence dripped with horror as he spoke it.

Sonic, Sally and Roxy all shared the same horrified expression. The tears in the sky were getting worse and the worst part about it was that they had no idea what was causing it and it seemed like a circumstance beyond their control. What could they do to stop it? And would they be able to stop it before something catastrophic happened…?

Back over in New Mobotropolis, Bunnie and Geoffrey were in a heated battle with Ravage and the fight was pretty even-sided, albeit very intense and rough, so far. Ravage seemed to be fighting a little differently than he used to be for some reason, he was fighting more like a wild animal then the calculating warrior he was known for

being in the past. It might be in relation to the fact he's starving and a starving animal will often go berserk and wild so Ravage's fighting was more akin to a ravenous wolf now (given he is a wolf, this is quite fitting). Regardless, Bunnie and Geoffrey gave it their all to make sure Ravage didn't win this battle. They had to, it was kill or be killed in this match and they knew it. Ravage lunged at Bunnie, his jaws opened wide and his eyes teeming with madness. Bunnie drew her robotic arm back and she deliver a terrific punch that threw Ravage backwards and sent him crashing into a nearby tree. Before Ravage could get back up, Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and blasted Ravage in the torso with it. Ravage roared in pain and he found himself struggling to get back up but he managed to do it in the end. Geoffrey was quick to attack by kicking him in the head and then grabbing him by the cloak. Ravage gagged and he tried to yank his cloak out of Geoffrey's grip but the skunk held on tight and pulled him back. He pulled Ravage down onto his back and then slammed him against the tree, earning a yelp of pain from the wolf. Ravage growled furiously at Geoffrey and he yanked his cloak out of the skunk's grip. Geoffrey aimed his crossbow at Ravage and prepared to shoot him but Ravage pounced on him and grabbed him by the arms, holding them back and keeping Geoffrey from aiming at him. Geoffrey pushed on Ravage as hard as he could but the wolf was pretty strong, too strong for him in fact. Geoffrey could feel himself being pushed down onto his knees by Ravage. But this match of strength was abruptly halted by Bunnie, who uppercut Ravage away from Geoffrey and sent him crashing into yet another tree. Ravage growled furiously and he ran towards Bunnie. The cyborg rabbit threw a punch at Ravage but the wolf dodged her punch, weaved his way around behind her and he punched her in the back of her head. Bunnie was thrown onto the ground by the punch and Ravage pinned her down with his clawed hands. Bunnie tried to get up but Ravage managed to hold her down, his jaws ready to snap around her neck and finish her off. He opened his jaws and prepared to bite Bunnie but Geoffrey fired a dart at Ravage and the dart struck him in the side of his face. The dart was just an ordinary dart for Geoffrey didn't have any stun-darts on him at the moment. Geoffrey loaded his crossbow with a flash bomb and he fired it at Ravage. The bomb hit him and blinded him with a bright dazzling light that could make even the biggest light worshipper moan that it's too bright. Ravage roared furiously and he covered his eyes, trying to make them feel

better and regain his vision. Bunnie managed to throw Ravage off of herself now he was distracted and she seized him by the shoulders. She slammed Ravage onto the bench, surprisingly managing not to break it as she did so and then she punched him across the park. Ravage came down with a thud near the lake. Ravage stood up on all fours and he felt his way around, wondering where he was. His claws brushed over the water and he looked in the direction of the sound he'd made. He scooped some water into his hands and he threw it over his eyes to soothe them and make them feel better. Bunnie and Geoffrey charged towards Ravage but unfortunately for them, Ravage's eyes were beginning to recover and he could see properly now. He saw them both coming and threw an uppercut each at them. He walloped them both in the face and sent them crashing down onto their backs. Then Ravage grabbed Bunnie and Geoffrey, hoisted them up to his height and bashed them both together. The rabbit and skunk cried out as their bodies were roughly slammed against each other and Ravage then proceeded to throw them over the lake and onto the bank on the other side. It was a miracle the two didn't land in the water. Geoffrey and Bunnie picked themselves up and they prepared to fight some more.

"You know something Bunnie? I forever question how the bloke is so strong despite not looking as such." said Geoffrey, dusting himself off.

"Oh Ravage was quite a fitness freak when he was younger and ah'm willin' to bet he's still a fitness freak now." said Bunnie "He definitely keeps himself in shape well that's for sure. But luckily for us, his fightin' isn't that all up to snuff thanks to his feral side kickin' in. We should beat him much easier than before."

"Indeed and once he's behind bars, we can continue what was shaping up to be a lovely date." said Geoffrey, loading some darts into his crossbow.

Ravage ran around the lake and darted towards Bunnie and Geoffrey on all fours. His feral side truly was beginning to take him over now, he was acting more and more like a feral wolf by the second. Bunnie shot at Ravage but the wolf leapt over her blast and continued running towards her. Bunnie quickly changed over to her shield generator. She deployed a force-field that prevented Ravage

from jumping onto her. He hit the barrier and was thrown down instantly. Ravage picked himself up and clawed at the barrier, hoping to break through it. But try as he might, he had no chance of breaking down a force field. Bunnie drew her arm backwards and then thrust it forward, causing the barrier to shoot forward and send Ravage flying backwards as it hit him. The force of the barrier made Ravage feel like he'd received a big punch from a giant all of the sudden. Ravage landed on his back and he skidded to a painful halt near the bench. Ravage picked himself up just as Bunnie and Geoffrey charged back towards him. Ravage lunged forward and he sprung into the air like a jack-in-the-box. He soared towards Bunnie and Geoffrey and he dropkicked them both in the head, knocking them down onto the grass. Bunnie picked herself up almost as quickly as she had been knocked down and she roundhouse punched Ravage in the face with her robotic arm. The punch left his skull mask cracked and about ready to break apart. Ravage uppercut Bunnie in the face and then slugged her in the stomach. Bunnie grabbed Ravage by the head and forced him forward, driving her knee into his stomach and brutally winding Ravage as the cold steel of her robotic legs connected sharply with his soft, fleshy body. Ravage doubled over in agony, allowing Bunnie to slam both fists down on his back and knock him down flat onto his stomach. Ravage gasped and grimaced as pain surged over his body and Bunnie looked down at him, her eyes colder than an iceberg.

"Ravage, if ya'll have any decency left in ya then you'll stand down and save yourself further punishment." said Bunnie, her voice soft but stern "Do ya'll want that? Ah don't think you do. Please Ravage, stop bein' so vengeful and evil and be a good guy again. Ah'm sure ya'll will make a very good Royal Fighter and if ya'll join us, you can fulfil the very purpose of our ol' group. What do ya say ol' friend?"

Ravage's response was to claw Bunnie across the face, leaving three bloody cuts across her cheek and one across her eye for as Ravage slashed, his index finger was higher up than his other three claws when he aimed at Bunnie's cheek. Bunnie screamed in anguish as her face stung furiously and the cuts began to stream with blood. Geoffrey was horrified to see his girlfriend hurt like this and he stormed up to Ravage, ready to pound him into the dirt. Ravage glowered at Bunnie, his eyes shrunken down to tiny pupils

of insanity.

"I tried being good…and it rewarded me with just punishment!" snarled Ravage "I refuse to be punished again! I will eat you both alive and then I shall make Adabat suffer for all the strife it gave me!"

Bunnie could hardly believe Ravage had declined her offer and she shed a little tear of pain. That tear of hers contained two different pains, the pain in her cheek and the pain she felt of knowing her old friend was well and truly beyond saving. It broke her heart to think that Ravage couldn't be redeemed. Bunnie wiped some blood off her cheek and she clenched her fists.

"Ah'm sorry ya'll think that Ravage and ah'm also sorry that ya'll wish to be like this…so now ah'm gonna have to stop you before you go any further off the deep end." she said coldly.

Ravage was about to attack but Geoffrey, who had already started storming up towards him after he'd slashed Bunnie, threw a terrific punch at Ravage's jaw and sent his head sharply twisting to the right. The punch threw his head so hard that Ravage felt a muscle pull in his neck. He rubbed it better but Geoffrey gave him another pain to rub better, a knee to the gut. Geoffrey then kicked Ravage backwards and fired a dart at him. The dart struck Ravage in the shoulder but the thick material his capewas made of stopped the dart from doing too much harm to him. Bunnie ran in and uppercut Ravage with her robotic arm. Ravage stumbled backwards and he ran towards Bunnie and Geoffrey, ready to attack again.

Rather coincidentally, while this fight had been going on, Ruben and Sora had decided to come outside and enjoy the lovely day. They were heading off to the park for a little walk before lunch time but they'd soon end up getting more than they came for. As they walked towards the park, Ruben smelled the lovely fresh air.

"Aaaah, it's so lovely today." said Ruben "No wonder you decided to come out and enjoy it Sora."

"Well when it comes to the weather, you should make the most of the nice weather when you get it." said Sora "Makes it less dull

when the bad weather comes around."

"Indeed, although I do rather enjoy it when it rains what with me being a water panther and all." said Ruben "The sun's always nice though."

"Yeah." said Sora brightly.

She then came to a stop for something had just caught her eye. Ruben could see that Sora had stopped and he began to wonder what had stopped the vixen dead in her tracks. It didn't take him long to figure out though for he looked in the direction Sora was looking in and he saw Ravage fighting off Bunnie and Geoffrey. Ruben knew who he was instantly since he had met Ravage during the whole fiasco with the Sword of Elemental Power the other month. He was horrified to see him here though.

"Oh my gosh! It's Ravage Bloodfang!" cried Ruben "What the heck's he doing here?!"

"Ravage What-fang?" asked Sora "You know this guy Ruben?"

"Long story, I'll explain later." said Ruben "Let's help Bunnie and Geoffrey stop him!"

"You've got it!" said Sora "I was hoping to have a nice walk in the park after all."

Ruben was on the scene faster then you could say "Olly, Olly Oxen free". He ran towards the fight scene and he threw a wave of water at Ravage. The wave hit Ravage and it sent him tumbling directly into the lake. Bunnie and Geoffrey were surprised, but delighted at the same time to see Ruben and Sora were here to help them. Ravage climbed out of the water and he growled furiously. He was soaking wet and his clothes were drenched so badly that they clung to his body, making it harder to move in them. Ravage shook himself dry but he couldn't get his clothes dry, meaning they were still drenched. Ravage growled furiously, not pleased to see yet another face he didn't like. Ruben just glowered at Ravage and he prepared to throw another wave of water at him. Bunnie just smirked at Ravage.

"Give up now ugly! Yer outnumbered and ya can't possibly beat us all!" she crowed "Surrender now before things get unpleasant for ya."

Ravage just snorted.

"I will NOT surrender! But I do know when I cannot win." said Ravage "I'll be back Bunnie and next time, you will be dead!"

Ravage then took to his heels and ran off as fast as he could. The Royal Fighters just watched as Ravage belted off at lightning speed. Wolves were known for being fast and Ravage was no exception. They wouldn't catch him now, they just had to let him go. Bunnie watched as Ravage disappeared into the distance and she sighed sadly. Geoffrey put his hands on her shoulders, understanding his girlfriend's dismay.

"I know babe, you wish that the bloke would come to his senses don't you?" he said softly.

"Oh Geoff, ya'll have no idea how much I want Ravage to be mah friend again." said Bunnie, feeling the cuts on her face which were just beginning to heal now "Ah loved him very much when ah was a kid and yet now, ah'm fightin' him as if we're life long enemies. Oh why can't he be good again?" she whined.

"He lost all decency when he decided to get revenge on Adabat for rightfully punishing him." said Geoffrey grimly "I don't think the blighter's got any hope for him now."

"Ah know…and that's why ah feel sorry for him." said Bunnie sadly "Sorry for him in the sense that he's so far gone now. Ah hope he comes to his senses one day, ah don't wanna keep fightin' him and bein' enemies with him."

"Well I'm sure we can get Ravage to see the light someday." said Ruben supportively "After all, one of the Martians turned traitor and helped us beat them and we got Shadow to redeem himself so I'm sure we can help Ravage. If not then…who knows what we'll have to do." he said sadly.

"Um excuse me, can you three tell me a bit more about this "Ravage" guy?" asked Sora "I've not heard of him before, who is he?"

"Well sugah, I'll tell ya'll everything." said Bunnie as she prepared to tell Sora the whole story.

"Wait a minute, I'm receiving a call from somebody." said Geoffrey.

His utility belt had a pouch in it that contained a mobile phone that was vibrating against his torso, suggesting somebody was trying to give him a call. Geoffrey took the phone out of its pouch and he put it to his ear.

"Hello there mate, this is Geoffrey St. John of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighter Team, how may I be of assistance?" asked Geoffrey.

"Oh Mr. St. John, thank god I managed to reach your team!" wailed the voice of Miranda Mongoose, leader of the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters. The mongoose sounded very upset though, she was crying as she spoke, suggesting something very bad had happened.

"Whoa, whoa luv, calm down, what's the matter?" asked Geoffrey.

"Kari has been kidnapped!" screeched Miranda "She's been taken away and we have no idea who's done it!"

Geoffrey nearly dropped the phone in shock upon hearing that. Kari the Rat was the mechanic of the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters and a good friend of Miranda's given how Miranda was the first person to accept her for being a rat. And she had been kidnapped?! Geoffrey had to tell Sonic about this, he just had to. Pity Sonic was away right now but when he arrived home, Geoffrey would let him know what he had just been told…

Footnotes:

We just witnessed their honeymoon in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 20: Honeymoons and Rats

** It all happened in the DeviantArt exclusive chapter *The Sword of Elemental Power*

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 4: Trouble in Ada bat*

Talk about a bunch of hi-jinks! The tears in the sky are getting worse, Ravage ruins Bunnie and Geoffrey's first date and now Kari the Rat's been kidnapped?! Who's done this and why? Find out next time as the search for Kari the Rat begins and the prelude to "Endangered Species" opens up...

Reviews are welcome. :)

Oh and it's the third anniversary of Heroes of Mobius! Three years ago today I started writing this story and I'm still writing it now (I started writing a few chapters before I uploaded it). HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THIS STORY! :D

The Search for Kari the Rat

Story 160: The Search for Kari the Rat

Countdown to Crisis: 5

Endangered Species Prologue

It had all happened so suddenly.

Kari the Rat, member of the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters and junior mechanic had been enjoying a rather nice day with her good friends Miranda Mongoose and the chipmunk brothers Thunder & Bolt and then suddenly, out of nowhere, a group of rats snatched her up and took her away and all before she could even scream for help. She had been gagged, a piece of cloth tied tightly around her mouth to keep her quiet, and her hands had been tied behind her back while her legs had been tied together, all with thick rope that she couldn't possibly break out of. She had a blindfold on too, meaning that she was being taken somewhere secret and the kidnappers didn't want her to know the way or anything. She was draped like a sack of potatoes over the shoulder of a pretty strong, muscular rat and was now being carried into a building. This building was the headquarters of The Exterminators, a group of rats who were enslaving or exterminating mice everywhere depending on their moods. Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse had recently foiled one of the organization's three groups*, leaving two groups left to continue The Exterminator's horrible work. They were both gathered in the headquarters right now and the rat that had kidnapped Kari was taking her to see their leader. Kari tired listening out, trying to see if she could try and work out where she is. Sadly, she couldn't recognize many of the sounds she could hear in this place. She was in a place she had not been in before. Even if she couldn't see, she already knew she wasn't going to be happy here and that she had every right to be scared. She hoped that her team would save her. If not then any other Royal Fighter team would do. Thing is though, why was she being kidnapped and why was she brought here? After a long walk, the rat climbed up a flight of stairs and walked into a

room, carrying Kari through the double doors and entering the room. This room was where the leader of The Exterminators resided. Said leader was a muscular, mask-wearing rat named Brawn. At this moment, he was meditating in the middle of the room and was quite deeply into it. He still heard the rat enter though and he could also hear the rat dumping Kari down on the floor behind him. Kari was forced on her knees and her blindfold was removed. Kari winced as it suddenly become bright again and she regained her vision which had been blurred by the blindfold. Kari gasped a muffled gasp as she saw where she was and who was in front of her. Brawn came out of his meditation, his back still turned, and he lowered his arms. He let out some ominous breaths that were amplified by his mask, making Kari shudder. She was frightened by this rat already and all he was doing was breathing.

"Why are you here?" boomed Brawn, his amplified voice like a booming ghoul from the pits of Hell.

The rat who had brought Kari to Brawn kicked Kari in the back.

"Answer him!" he snarled.

Kari couldn't answer him of course for she was still gagged. Even then, she was too terrified to speak. Brawn looked over his shoulder, ignoring Kari and focusing on the rat with his ugly, grey defective eye.

"I was asking you." he said coldly, glowering at the rat.

The rat shuddered, wondering why Brawn was asking him that question in particular. He swallowed nervously and he spoke.

"Th-th-this is another rat sir." he said "Sh-she's a Royal Fighter and she can join our cause as a fellow rat."

Brawn got slowly up to his feet and he turned around. Kari quivered as Brawn towered over her. He looked absolutely terrifying with his muscular posture and sinister mask that covered his muzzle. But Brawn wasn't even looking at her, he was glowering at the rat who had brought her to him. Kari hoped that Brawn wouldn't notice her full stop and then she could escape.

"And you brought her over here?" Brawn purred in a voice that suggested death was coming.

"Y-y-yes B-B-B-Brawn." stammered the rat "B-b-but y-y-you said th-that any rat w-w-we c-c-come across is to b-b-be b-b-brought t-t-to y-y-you and m-m-m-made to b-b-be another member of Th-Th-The Exterminators!"

"You captured a Roy al Fighter, now you will bring their attention to us." Brawn said, his voice surprisingly calm but still very sinister as he spoke.

"I-I-I'm s-s-sorry s-s-sir, th-th-that w-w-wasn't my intention…"

The pleading rat was silenced as Brawn grabbed him by the scalp and began squeezing his head with a strong enough to crush an rock. Brawn squeezed the rat's head so hard that his skull ended up cracking and the rat was killed instantly. His body collapsed in a sickening heap on the floor and Kari cringed just looking at it. Brawn then finally acknowledged Kari's existence, his eyes glowering at the bound and gagged rat.

"Now you're here child, I suppose I should make you comfortable." he boomed **"After all, you will be one of us now."**

Kari just stared at Brawn, breathing fast behind her gag and her eyes wide open in fright. She wanted to scream in fear at him but the gag made that impossible. She wanted to run but running wouldn't do much good given her feet were tied together and she likely wouldn't get away if she could run away anyway. All she could do was sit there on her knees, frozen in fear at the presence of Brawn. Brawn strode over to Kari and he observed her all over. The terrified rat let out a muffled whimper. Brawn put his hands behind his back and he circled around Kari, observing her top to bottom.

"You don't look like a Royal Fighter child…but you are very beautiful." Brawn purred, his voice making Kari's spine tingle **"You will be quite welcome here."**

He stopped circling Kari and he untied the gag from around her mouth. Kari quickly gasped for breath, relieved to feel the air in her

mouth again, and she looked into Brawn's cold eyes, still terrified before him.

"P-p-p-please…I-I-I-let m-m-me go." she begged "I-I-I-I w-w-want t-t-to go home and b-b-back t-to my friends. They'll b-b-b-be w-w-worried sick about me."

"This will be your new home little girl and you will make some new friends here." Brawn announced **"For this is home to me and my humble army of rats. You are a rat so you will enjoy it much here."**

"B-b-but y-y-your m-m-man here k-k-kidnapped me sir." said Kari weakly "H-h-how is that m-meant to m-m-make me f-feel welcome? And I d-d-don't want t-t-to live here. I-I-I have a n-n-nice home in N-N-Nekronopolis. P-please let m-m-me go."

Brawn was anything but pleased to hear that. He bore over Kari like a towering demon and he bent down and looked the terrified rat in the eye. Kari shivered and nearly fell over onto her back as she bent backwards away from Brawn.

"I will not tolerate a rat who does not accept his or her place among The Exterminators." said Brawn coldly **"We rats are meant to stick together and stave off the enemy we crusade against. You will join us or face death, simple as that."**

"So n-n-now y-y-you're holding me a-a-against my will?!" shrieked Kari "Y-y-you're really t-t-trying to m-m-make m-me feel welcome a-aren't you?"

"I have a goal in mind and I need every last rat on Mobius to help me accomplish it." explained Brawn **"So holding you against your will is perfectly necessary to keep you with us rats and have you contribute to our cause."**

"W-w-what c-c-cause is that th-then?" asked Kari nervously, dreading to hear the answer.

"To enslave or exterminate every last mouse on Mobius." explained Brawn **"The rodent rivalry has gone on for far too long**

so we rats intend to put a stop to it. The mice will serve us our perish, the choice is theirs and given how endangered they are…I don't think they're willing to die any moment soon."

Kari could hardly believe her ears. She was being forced to work for a bunch of rats who's primary goal is to enslave the mice of Mobius or kill them?! This made Kari feel sick and she was not going to be a part of this. Kari suddenly mustered up courage she didn't know she had and did one thing that any normal person wouldn't dare do to Brawn…stand up to him.

"That's sick! I won't be a part of this evil!" yelled Kari "I like the mice and I will not help you vile rats subjugate them like this! You can kill me for all I care, I won't join The Exterminators and contribute to this!"

Brawn took in Kari's lecture and surprisingly enough, he seemed eerily calm about it. He didn't react to Kari's lecture angrily or violently. He didn't even raise a finger. He just stared at her incredulously as if the very thought of a rat liking mice and refusing to join The Exterminators was a big shock to him. Kari suddenly felt nervous. Was Brawn waiting to strike at her? Had she dug herself a grave for standing up to him? A calm villain can often be very dangerous for you never know what their reaction will be. Brawn eventually moved after a minute and he grabbed Kari by the neck. Kari gagged loudly and Brawn hoisted her clean off her feet. Kari tried to gulp but Brawn holding her by the neck made even gulping a bit difficult.

"Then you can join the filthy mice in slavery you poor simpering child." said Brawn coldly **"Now let us see if we have any rags that fit you."**

With that said, Kari was taken away by Brawn and carried off to a room that contained all kinds of rags for the mice to wear. The idea behind making them wear rags was that it would make the mice feel pathetic, dominated and weak compared to the well-dressed rats who wore quite intimidating costumes to make them look superior. Kari knew she wasn't going to like what she was going to be dressed in but what could she do about it? She had very poor fighting skills and without a weapon, she was useless. She had no

choice but to allow Brawn to do what he wished to her. She was being forced into slavery along with many innocent mice and all she could do was hope her friends would save her from this nightmare…

"I leave to investigate Dark and Kiara's disappearances and now I'm here investigating Kari's disappearance?" said Sonic the Hedgehog, supersonic hero of the world "Who's next to disappear around here?"

It didn't take long for Sonic to hear about Kari's disappearance at all. He along with Queen Sally and Miles "Tails" Prower had been to Megapolis to investigate the disappearances of Dark Cat and Kiara, both of whom had been taken by a tear in the sky. The resulting investigation ended up telling them that the tears in the sky were getting worse and worse and that something had to be done about it but the big problem for Sonic was how they could remotely stop something beyond their control and not even of Mobius origin. That burning question that sparked worry through him would have to wait though for when Sonic returned home, he was instantly informed of Kari's disappearance by the first Royal Fighter to receive the call, Geoffrey St. John. He and Bunnie had narrowly escaped death at the hands of the savage Ravage Bloodfang and after the battle, Geoffrey had received a call to say Kari had been kidnapped. Sonic was quick to wonder if this was a kidnapping or yet another tear in the sky that had taken Kari away so he was all too keen to investigate this surprising revelation. He had brought Tails and Sally with him again but it wasn't just them who were coming to Nekronopolis to try and find Kari. They had brought Team Chaotix with them too. Team Chaotix were a trio of detectives which consisted of Espio the Chameleon, the ninja master, Vector the Crocodile, the leader with the big heart and even bigger mouth and Charmy Bee…the idiot and stinger of the team. The Chaotix were pleased to hear that they had a case to solve, they hadn't had one for a while so this was their chance to be the detectives they were, made a change from joining in with the fighting for once. After arriving in Nekronopolis, Sonic was instantly greeted by a very heartbroken and upset Miranda Mongoose. She was practically crying her eyes out and losing her mind with panic over Kari's

abduction, so much so that it took her a while to calm down. Thunder and Bolt were upset over this too, they didn't even crack one joke while Miranda spilled her grief out. Sonic had given Miranda a much needed hug to comfort her and calm her down and now the mongoose was clamed down, she sat down on a chair and regained herself while Vector stood beside her with a notepad and pencil in his hands. He wanted to make some notes so he knew what kind of case this would be. Everybody gathered around and waited for Miranda to tell them what they wanted to know. Sally knelt beside Miranda and held her hand, patting it softly to comfort her for the mongoose looked like she was ready to cry another rainfall.

"OK then Miranda, I need you to tell us everything you know about what's happened." said Sally gently "Try to remain calm so that you can tell us properly, it'll be hard to understand you if you keep snivelling."

"I…I know…it…it's just hard for me to…to…" stammered a still very upset Miranda, her hands trembling in Sally's as she held them.

"Miranda, come on, take it easy." said Sonic softly "We'll solve everything, you don't need to worry. We'll find Kari, I promise you."

Miranda could only smile at Sonic's generosity.

"It's no wonder you're so beloved among the Royal Fighters Sonic." snivelled Miranda, wiping her eyes dry "Your kindness just touches the heart, it really does."

"Anytime Miranda, I'm just doing what I do best." said Sonic with a wink "Now then, what exactly happened around here?"

"Well…we had come home from a mission involving saving a population of mice in Spagonia." explained Miranda "Me, Kari, Thunder and Bolt were told of a group of rats known as "The Exterminators", a group dedicated to subjugation of mice with the second option of killing them. We got the message from Wilson and Mandy themselves**. They had encountered a team working for the group while on their honeymoon apparently."

"Oh dear." said Sally with concern "They were meant to be having a

nice time and they ran into a team working for this so called group "The Exterminators"?"

"Considering Mandy's irrational hatred of rats, I bet that really sucked for her." muttered Sonic.

Vector was jotting all of this down in his notebook, thinking that this information would be of great use to him in this case.

"So what happened next then Miss Mongoose?" asked Vector "How did Kari get kidnapped?"

"I was going to tell you all that." said Miranda, trembling a little "After we had taken down the Spagonia team and gotten them all incarcerated, we returned back here to our camp. Kari went into her tent to build something new and…what happened next happened so suddenly that we hardly had any time to realize what had happened."

"Best we can tell ya is that we had some muffled screams and a struggle going on in the tent." said Thunder.

"We ran over to see if Kari was OK and then…moment we entered the tent she just vanished." said Bolt "Into thin air!"

Sonic sighed with relief, glad to hear that it wasn't a tear in the sky that had caused Kari's disappearance. There was no way a tear in the sky had taken Kari, there was no talk of seeing a strange streak of light in the sky and Kari getting sucked up into it. And yet Sonic couldn't help but wonder what had happened to Kari. She just vanished into thin air? How did that happen? Espio approached Miranda and decided to ask her something.

"You say you heard a struggle and muffled screams, is that what lead to the belief she was kidnapped?" asked Espio.

"Yes." said Miranda "And the very thought just sickens me. Why would want to kidnap a lovely, innocent girl like Kari? Why?! And who would want to do this in the first place?!"

She couldn't help but wail again, taking her hands out of Sally's hands and weeping into them. Vector went over all the notes he had

taken whilst Miranda had been talking and he began to piece together a theory in his scaly head. Vector's brain often worked the best when he was doing detective work. He read the notes several times until his brain went tick and he had a theory to discuss.

"So you guys foil a group of rats…then Kari, who is a rat, goes missing shortly after you come back…" said Vector "I have an idea on who her kidnappers might be."

"Who?" blurted Miranda desperately.

"Isn't it obvious?" said Vector "Another group of them rats you talked about must have done it."

Espio looked over at Vector as if he was surprised to see that the crocodile had worked it out so quickly. Then again, Vector had been wrong (a lot) before in cases so he wasn't holding out any hopes that Vector had solved the case already.

"But, you just foiled a group of rats." Charmy said to Miranda "How could another group of rats kidnap Kari?"

"Wilson and Mandy told us that The Exterminators have three teams." explained Miranda "They foiled one in Adabat and we've just foiled one in Spagonia. The third team must still be on the loose, no Royal Fighter team's reported to anyone about capturing a group of rats yet."

"And I know we haven't captured any groups of rats since no rat has been near New Mobotropolis." said Sonic "The third group must still be on the loose indeed Miranda. But I thought they were subjugating mice, why would they kidnap one of their own?"

"I don't know." said Miranda worriedly "And that's the scary part. Have they mistaken her for a mouse and are enslaving her? It could easily happen since compared to most rats, Kari's quite pleasant looking and doesn't look ratty in the slightest."

"That's possible." said Vector "But…has Kari ever been mistaken for a mouse before?"

"I…don't think so…" said Miranda, more mumbling than speaking

now.

"So I doubt that The Exterminators would confuse her for a mouse." said Vector "They must know she's a rat and they're kidnapping her for some reason."

"Well whatever the reason is, it's not on." said Sonic crossly "We're gonna find this group of rats and "exterminate" them! Then we'll save Kari and bring her back to your team Miranda."

"I hope you can Sonic." snivelled Miranda, feeling more tears welling up in her brown eyes "You must save Kari, you simply must! I love her, I love her like she's my own daughter! I can't bear the thought of her captive and suffering goodness knows what in the hands of those vile rats!"

"Miranda, the hedgehog has given his word to save Kari and he intends to keep it." Sonic insisted "You needn't worry Miranda, we WILL find her or my name isn't Sonic the Hedgehog!"

Miranda's first response was to hug Sonic graciously and smile widely at his kindness. It made her feel good to know that she could rely on someone to find Kari and bring her back home safe and sound

"Thank you so much." said Miranda gratefully "I don't know how I can thank you for this generosity Sonic."

"Don't mention it Miranda." said Sonic "Saving lives and bringing villains to justice is my life's work pretty much, if something's happened, I'm all too happy to be on the case."

"It's selflessness like that as to why I love you so much." purred Sally seductively, leaning near Sonic as she said it.

She couldn't help but giggle as Sonic blushed and half-chuckled in embarrassment at that little purr she did to him. Sonic fought the embarrassment off his face and he quickly regained himself.

"Ahem…OK then, let's get finding Kari!" declared Sonic.

"Hey Chaotix, you have any ideas where to start?" asked Tails "We

can't search for Kari if we have no idea where to start."

"Well when you're a detective Tails, the most logical course of action to take is to investigate the place the person was last seen in, or in Miranda's case "heard" in, to look for clues." said Vector "So Chaotix, let's get investigating!"

"Whee! We're investigating!" cheered Charmy, whipping out a magnifying glass from goodness knows where (seriously, I don't know where he was keeping that thing!) and twirling it around in his hands "Detective Charmy Bee is on the case! Elementary my dear Chaotix!"

His next course of action was to fly around randomly and look through the magnifying glass to see if there was anything lying around.

"I like him already." laughed Thunder, leaning towards Bolt and more talking to him than anybody in particular.

"He could be our new best friend." agreed Bolt.

"Uh Charmy, if you're going to look for clues then look in Kari's tent." said Espio "That's where she last was before getting kidnapped."

"OK. Uh…which tent's Kari's?" asked Charmy as he stopped flying around and started scratching his head.

"It's that one there." said Miranda, pointing at a tent that still had its entrance laid open, revealing what as inside of it.

After Kari was kidnapped, Miranda had kept away from Kari's tent to make sure she didn't get in the way of any evidence lying around. It was very important not to disturb the crime scene when a crime happened, you had to leave it so that the detectives could make a proper investigation and not draw up any wrong conclusions. Charmy flew into the tent instantly and immediately started looking around with his magnifying glass for any clues left behind in the tent.

"Be careful not to break anything in there!" shrieked Miranda "It's delicate machinery and Kari will be very upset if anything's broken!"

"I'll make sure he doesn't break anything." said Espio, running off into the tent to keep Charmy in check.

Espio disappeared into the tent with Charmy and he began to search for clues along with him. Vector remained with the others give the tent was too small for him to fit in and he would take up too much room given his large size. It would be best to leave it to Charmy and Espio for they were small enough and could get around a lot easier. As the two searched for clues, Vector turned to Miranda and decided to ask her something.

"Say Miranda, how did you come to meet Kari and why do you two have such a close friendship?" he asked "I'm just curious that's all."

"Oh it stems from the fact that I was literally the first non-rat person at the time to actually give Kari a chance instead of judging by stereotypes." said Miranda "A month after the Royal Fighters Service had formed, I was making supper for myself and my late friend Kate the Eagle and we heard the sound of somebody crying so me and Kate investigated. To our surprise, it was a young girl sitting on a rock and crying to herself, that girl being Kari. Me and Kate approached her and Kari was quick to tell us to get lost, immediately assuming we were going to pour more grief on her. "Go away!" she said to us "You don't want to be near me! I'm just a nasty, evil, sneaky, conniving rat! You don't want to be near me!" We assured her that we meant her no harm and I asked her what was wrong. Kari told us her problems, she was a victim of stereotype and people were spiteful to her just for being a rat. The poor girl was on the verge of suicide too, saying to us that she was feeling so depressed that she considered killing herself!"

"Oh my gosh…that's horrible!" cried Vector.

"I know, and she's only nineteen too." said Miranda "She was seventeen when we met her, that's way too young an age to take your own life away. So me and Kate talked to Kari and assured her that we didn't believe in stereotyping and that we were willing to give her a chance. Kari was so touched that she hugged us both instantly and said "That was the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me!". So we accepted her in our team and Kari looks up to me as if I'm the mother she always wanted. And I see her as the daughter I've

always wanted…"

She paused to stop herself from crying again. She choked back the tears and took a deep breath to calm down.

"So that's why me and Kari are so close." said Miranda "I literally saved her life. I'm her hero you could say."

Sonic, Sally and Tails had been listening to the story too and they were amazed as to how deep their friendship really was.

"Wow…that was beautiful." said Sonic.

"It's so lovely to hear how deep your friendship really is." said Sally, her hands over her heart in awe "I'm always happy to hear how strong the bonds of my fellow Royal Fighters are. Makes the point of being a unified effort all the more apparent."

"Thank you your majesty." said Miranda "Kari's probably the only Mobian I've been closer to than anybody else, even Kate."

"After hearing that story, it's easy to see why." said Tails "She was at her lowest point and you brought her back to the highest point, what more could somebody want from a friend like you?"

"Aww…that was nice of you to say." said Miranda, touched by Tails' kind words.

Tails just smiled modestly, always happy to speak from his heart. Then suddenly, Charmy rocketed out of the tent as if he'd just seen an ugly monster and was keen to get away from it. He had the magnifying glass still but in his other hand he had what appeared to be a clump of grey fur.

"Hey, hey! Vector! Is THIS a clue?" asked Charmy, showing him the clump of fur as if presenting a trophy to the Chaotix boss.

Vector took the clump of fur and he observed it. It was grey, dirty and very smelly. Vector had to hold his nose as he held it.

"Ugh…what a smelly clump of fur!" he choked "That's definitely rat fur, only they ever smell this bad!"

"Well that's not from Kari, her fur is white and she's probably the cleanest rat you've ever met." said Miranda "She hardly ever smells, if at all to be precise. Must be from one of the kidnappers."

"Wait, is there a way we can do a DNA test on that?" asked Tails "Maybe it could help us track down the specific type of rat we're looking for."

"Hey! Kari has a DNA scanner!" Bolt blurted suddenly "We could use that to scan that fur!"

"I'll go get it." said Thunder "Won't be long, I'll be quite short in fact."

He giggled at his bad joke as he ran off into Kari's tent to fetch the DNA scanner. He wasn't inside the tent for long, approximately a few seconds at most, and he was soon back outside with the DNA scanner. It was a small machine that looked more like a paper guillotine with a screen on it. Instead of a blade for shredding paper of course, it had a scanner that ran across the rail and would scan whatever was placed on the screen. Thunder ran back over to the others but he was running rather clumsily, trying to keep hold of the perceptibly heavy machine he was carrying in his hands and he ended up stumbling over his feet and falling flat onto his face. This caused the machine to fly up out of his hands and had Bolt not been on hand to catch the machine by diving for it as it headed towards the ground, the result would have been a broken machine that littered the ground. Bolt sighed with relief having saved the machine from total destruction and he picked himself up. He scowled at his brother who could only pick himself up and look guilty over nearly breaking Kari's machine.

"Thunder you clumsy fool! We need that!" yelled Bolt.

"Sorry bruv." he said "It's not my fault the darn thing's heavy to carry."

"Well be careful in the future for heaven's sake!" snapped Bolt "Kari's gonna be mad if she finds you breaking her stuff!"

"Please don't argue you two, we don't have time for that." sighed Miranda in annoyance.

Bolt understood Miranda's frustration and he decided it would be wise to do as he was told. He silenced himself and he handed the machine over to Miranda. Miranda had been shown how to work the machine by Kari herself the day she had invented it so Miranda turned it on without hesitating and Vector placed the clump of fur on the scanner, his face suggesting he was happy to have finally put it down due to the bad smell stinging his nostrils. The scanner slid slowly across the rail, a green bar following it across the screen as it scanned its chosen components. The bar slid slowly under the fur, slowly in the sense that it seemed to be analyzing every last inch of the clump down to the smallest bit of grit to the thinnest hair on it. After a minute, the scan had completed and in a small letterbox like screen beeped the results. Miranda looked at the results. It said "Grey Rat Fur, presumably from an unhygienic environment", obviously picking up how dirty and smelly the fur was. Miranda could only frown over the fact they were indeed right about Kari being kidnapped by rats.

"It IS rat fur!" gasped Miranda "Why those sneaky little…Kari was kidnapped by rats, we were right all along!"

"That only adds more questions to the table now." said Tails "Why the heck would rats kidnap Kari? I thought they were kidnapping mice?"

"Maybe they don't like the fact she's a nice rat and want to punish her the way they punish mice?" suggested Sonic "Although unfortunately, this DNA test doesn't tell us that it was a member of The Exterminators that did it. Any rat could have kidnapped Kari and that rat could be anywhere right now. And the fact it's "grey rat fur" doesn't help too much either, there's lots of grey rats out there."

"I agree, we're still at square one." said Sally "All we know is that Kari was kidnapped by a rat, most specifically a grey rat. That narrows our suspects list by a little bit and even then, her kidnappers could be working for somebody. This mystery is going to be a tough one, much like the mystery of the streak of light in the sky…"

"The what?" asked Miranda curiously.

"Never mind." said Sonic quickly, not wanting to distract Miranda

and bring up an unrelated issue to what they were investigating now.

"I notice the machine says this fur belongs to a rat that presumably comes from an unhygienic environment." said Espio, peering over at the machine and reading the results "That must mean the rat lives somewhere dirty and smelly."

"Or the rat just got dirty from poor hygiene skills or from making a long trek here." noted Sally "That bit of information doesn't help one bit."

"Oh we're never gonna find Kari now!" wailed Miranda "We have no idea where she is and where to start looking! What do we do?"

"We'll think of something Miranda, make no mistake on that." said Sonic "Now if I was an evil rat who's totally unlike Kari, where would I have a hideout…"

His thoughts were interrupted by a call coming form a phone that Sally had kept in her vest for incase anybody needed to call her for emergencies or anything at all. Sally assumed it would be the Castle Acorn staff requiring her presence back at Castle Acorn. Sally took the phone out and answered it. To her surprise, it was not the staff of Castle Acorn calling her, making Sally intrigued to hear what this was about. Her phone against her ear, Sally chatted away to the callers and her face seemed to look grave as the conversation went on. Sally gave a nod of the head and she hung up after bidding goodbye to the caller. She put the phone away and she turned to Miranda.

"I'm very sorry Miranda, we have to go now." said Sally "Wilson and Mandy have cut their honeymoon short and are coming back home. Apparently Mandy's developed extreme anxieties after their experience with The Exterminators in Adabat and she couldn't relax and enjoy the holiday. We have to go home and wish them a welcome back, and maybe help Mandy come to grips with herself."

Sonic and Tails were gobsmacked to hear this. Poor Wilson and Mandy! They FINALLY got a chance to have their honeymoon and because of some horrible, mice-abducting group of rats they ended up cutting it short? Could the heroes EVER get a break around

here? Sonic was well prepared to give out his sympathies to the married couple when they got home.

"I understand." said Miranda "I don't blame Mandy for being anxious about The Exterminators. She is a mouse after all and the rats are kidnapping mice."

"If it's OK, me and the boys will stay behind and keep investigating." said Vector "We'll fill ya in on any updates if you come back.

"That's perfectly fine Vector." said Sally brightly "See you later."

Team Chaotix waved goodbye to Sonic, Sally and Tails and the three Royal Fighters set off for home to greet Wilson and Mandy for they were returning after a short honeymoon. Unfortunately, this was not going to go as expected…things were about to go very, VERY bad once Wilson and Mandy returned home…

Meanwhile, Brawn was sitting in his throne and awaiting further updates from the only remaining team working for The Exterminators. He wasn't pleased at all that two of his groups had been beaten and incarcerated and he was determined for this group to accomplish his goals and to avoid capture at all costs. He had a chained up Kari the Rat beside his throne. Kari's hands were shackled together with very heavy, uncomfortable shackles that were so thick it was hard for her to so much as turn her wrists. The shackles were connected to a chain and the chain was nailed to the side of Brawn's throne. Kari was like Brawn's little pet, a poor simpering puppy dog chained beside its master as a sign of dominance and discipline. Kari had been stripped of her clothes too and been forced to wear rags as a symbol of her enslavement. The rags were hardly pleasing though. They consisted of a large piece of cloth that was tied around her breasts, forming a makeshift bikini for her and a ragged skirt that was filthy and had holes in it. She had been allowed to keep her slippers on though but not that it was anything to be happy about. Kari hated the way she was dressed now, so much of her body was uncovered now and she just felt embarrassed and vulnerable to be showing so much skin and fur. It was part of Brawn's twisted idea to ensure the slave's lowly place in

the captivity of The Exterminators. As Brawn sat in his throne and awaited further updates, Kari slumped beside the throne and hugged herself, humiliated and ashamed that this had been allowed to happen to her and she prayed that this was all just a twisted nightmare she would finally wake up from. Even more, she hoped that the Royal Fighters would save her from this hellhole. For the moment, she'd have to put up with being a pathetic little servant rat for Brawn. One could tell that Kari was going to loathe every minute of it. The door opened up and somebody strode into the room to greet Brawn. It was the elephant with the club attached to his trunk that was often seen standing beside Brawn. Kari thought he looked terrifying, a towering powerhouse of muscle and thick skin that was formidable in appearance and had a powerful weapon hanging on the end of his trunk, making him look even scarier. Elephants were often associated with being graceful giants, but this elephant was anything but graceful. Even his walking wasn't graceful. He walked stiffly and heavily as if he was a tank with legs, striding heavily over to Brawn to request who he was going to point his gun barrel at next. The elephant knelt down before Brawn and reported.

"Brawn, I'm here to report that the squad you've sent to comb NewMobotropolis for mice has arrived at the city and the rats are waiting to intercept." the elephant boomed in a croaky, deep voice that indicated he grew up with a rough and tough demeanour that had only gotten worse with his age.

"Very good news Mace." said Brawn **"You may give the order to attack. New Mobotropolis is the last city we've looked at and any mice from that city is more than welcome to join the slaves we currently have."**

Kari's heart stopped with horror. They were attacking NewMobotropolis?! She knew all to well who they'd end up finding in New Mobotropolis and she couldn't bear the thought of that person getting kidnapped. She'd never see them coming.

"No! No please you can't! You can't attack NewMobotropolis!" she shrieked.

Brawn promptly punched Kari in the face and threw her down onto the floor as the punch made contact with her cheek. Kari was left

lying on her side, wondering what on Mobius had just hit her. Mace, the elephant's apparent name, glared at Kari and then he turned his attention back to Brawn.

"Very well sir." said Mace "I'll tell them to move in. New Mobotropolis has very few mice unfortunately, five to be precise but one has just returned to the city and is now at home. The sixth mouse is with an orange dog and it's a purple-furred mouse with yellow eyes, a yellow tail and she dresses in green. We think it's this "Mandy" person Benedict spoke of before you executed him."

Brawn's eyes widened with delight as if he was happy to hear this.

"How fortuitous." he purred **"Mandy lives in New Mo botropolis? She must be captured ind eed, above all the other mice in the city, make sure that the squad captures Mandy. I have some scores to settle with that feisty little imp…"** he growled, his amplified voice dripping with hatred and his fists clenching furiously.

"Very well sir, she will be captured." said Mace "After all, it's thanks to her Benedict's group failed."

Mace then got back to his feet and he left the room to give the waiting squadron the order to kidnap the mice of NewMobotropolis, Mandy included. Kari could hardly contain herself and she got up onto her knees. She grabbed Brawn's arm and squeezed it very tightly. Her puny hands were insignificant against the mass of muscle Brawn's arms contained.

"Brawn please, you're making a mistake!" wailed Kari "You can't invade New Mobotropolis and kidnap Mandy! She's a Royal Fighter like me and I thought you wanted to avoid them! You're sealing your own fate if you do that!"

Brawn just ignored Kari and smacked her back onto the floor, the smack feeling more like a punch to Kari due to how puny she was compared to such an enormous rat.

"It does not matter if the Roy al Fighters get involved now." said Brawn coldly **"They already have gotten involved with us so why should we mask our presence any longer? They still don't know**

where the heart of The Exterminators is so they'll nev er fully terminate us. And they'll nev er save you or Mandy my pathetic little servant girl…"

Kari felt her heart shatter in two as all hope of being rescued seemed to just evaporate into nothing like a puddle being soaked up by the sun. Kari could only sit by the throne and cry into her hands over this. How could she ever escape now if the Royal Fighters were never going to find her or even find Brawn and his group for that matter…?

Back in New Mobotropolis, Wilson the Dog and his wife Mandy Mouse had finally returned home, unaware of the impending danger that was waiting to strike for them. After a good day turned sour by their encounter with Benedict and his goons in Adabat, Mandy had been finding it hard to relax and settle from the events and Wilson decided it was very unfair to prolong the honeymoon if Mandy was unhappy so for her sake, they had decided to postpone it for now and continue with it again another day. Mandy was very upset to cut her honeymoon short but she knew that it was for a good reason and that it's impossible to have a nice honeymoon if you can't relax and settle. So earlier this morning, they had packed their bags and flown home to New Mobotropolis. It had been a long flight but they had made it at last and now they walked into their house, which was a nice two-story house with a triangular ceiling, round windows and a nice purple colour scheme with orange windowsills and an orange door. Nobody would mistake this house for anyone other than Wilson and Mandy's house that's for sure. The two walked inside the house and dumped their suitcases on the sofa. They were both quite tired and they didn't feel like unpacking right now so they slumped on the sofa and decided to have a rest for a bit. Wilson lay back on the sofa while Mandy sat beside him, her hand on his chest and her other hand on his shoulder.

"Home sweet home as they say." said Wilson dully "Although I wasn't anticipating coming home so soon."

"I'm sorry Wilson, I really am." said Mandy "But I just can't get those evil rats off my mind and thus…it's getting hard to settle. I'm really

sorry we had to cancel our honeymoon."

"Mandy dear, please stop fretting." said Wilson, putting his arms around his wife and embracing her warmly "It's not your fault this is happening at all. It's Benedict's fault for spoiling our honeymoon with this bunch of rats and their kidnapping of the mice population in Adabat."

"Yeah, Bene-douche spoiled everything." Mandy growled softly "That sick, lustful, twisted, dirty rat! I swear to god if he was here right now I'd flatten his face into mush!"

"Well he's likely been arrested now since the Adabat group's been terminated and apparently, another group in Spagonia's been terminated." said Wilson "I got a call from Miranda Mongoose and her team earlier before we left, I wanted to save it for when we got home so I could make this welcome home feel sweeter."

"Well that's wonderful to hear." said Mandy, cheering up instantly "Just one more filthy team left and The Exterminators are exterminated. Then with those scornful rats all locked up, we can resume our honeymoon, this time with no worries."

"That's the spirit my girl." said Wilson "Until then though, I will go out of my way to make sure not one rat lays a hand on you Mandy. I'll even sacrifice myself if it means keeping them from you."

"That's lovely Wilson but we both know that I can take on those rats as well." said Mandy, tapping the dog's nose with a gentle finger "After all, I handled Benedict and saved you from those guards didn't I?"

"Uh, yes you did." said Wilson "Even if it was me who sent Benedict down the chute, you handled him well. Very well Mandy, we'll fight those rats together."

"Indeed." said Mandy "And then hopefully we can get the mice and rats to call off this stupid rivalry for good. The world will be much better if both mice and rats can get on."

"I agree." said Wilson, stroking Mandy's fur behind her head

"Rivalries are just pointless, they spoil everything."

"You bet they do." said Mandy grimly "Well enough on that, let's just have a nice nap together and then we'll unpack. It's been a long day and we could do with a rest."

"OK then sweetheart, we'll rest a minute. I could do with a nap in all honesty." said Wilson.

The two had a little kiss before lying back in the sofa, their arms around one another still, and closing their eyes to have a little nap to rest up from their long trip home. But their little nap ended up being shorter than they wanted for a knock on the door was heard and the couple sat up immediately.

"Oh, wonder who that is?" asked Mandy "Might be the mailman."

"I'll get it." said Wilson, hopping onto his feet and heaving his heavy bones over to the door.

He clearly wasn't happy at the fact they had a visitor just when they were hoping to relax a bit. Still, he couldn't ignore it so he opened the door and…the moment he opened the door he was sprayed with a sickly green gas that made him cough and splutter like a man with a bad chesty cough before he collapsed onto the floor, unconscious but alive. Mandy was horrified at this and she ran over to her husband.

"Wilson!" she shrieked, putting her hands on his chest to feel his heartbeat.

"Never mind him, he's alright." snarled the person who had sprayed him "And he's not the one we're after, it's you we want you purple-furred freak."

Mandy looked up and to her horror, she saw that the attacker was a rat dressed in military uniform and baring the symbol of The Exterminators. He was armed with a gun, presumably the weapon that contained the knockout spray. Her worst horror had come true, The Exterminators had found her and they were coming to kidnap her! Well Mandy was **not** going down without a fight. She raised her

fists and dared the rats to attack her.

"Do your worst freaks!" she dared "You won't get me!"

The rat with the knockout spray raised his gun and sprayed green gas at Mandy. Mandy held her breath and she retreated away from the gas, desperate not to inhale any of it. One whiff of the gas and she'd be on the floor like Wilson. The rat with the gun ran into the house to get Mandy while another rat ran over to Wilson's body and dragged him over to the sofa. He lay Wilson on the sofa stomach first and tied his arms behind his back with some rope. He tied his ankles together too and then plastered some sticky tape over his mouth. He didn't want the dog waking up and screaming for help, nor trying to call for it so binding and gagging him would be the best way to ensure he stayed where he was and that he stayed quiet. Over to Mandy, the rat with the gun ran over to her but Mandy threw a well aimed kick to the groin at the rat and her foot connected sharply with his tender spot. The rat groaned in pain and dropped his gun, Mandy grabbing it and spraying him with the gas. The rat was knocked out instantly and Mandy smirked triumphantly at him. Unfortunately, her triumph was short-lived for she turned around to get the other rat…and ended up getting sprayed by knockout gas. The other rat had a gun on him too and sensing his pal needed help, he had whipped out the gun and pointed it at Mandy. Now Mandy was sprayed with green gas and her body was feeling limp.

"No!" she spluttered "I…won't…let you…kidnap…me…"

Resist as much as she might, she had no chance against the gas. Her body fell asleep and she collapsed onto the floor, completely unconscious and helpless before the rats that had come to take her. Two rats waiting outside darted into the house and they grabbed Mandy's unconscious body. They hoisted her up by the arms and legs and they carried her out of the house. The rat that had knocked Mandy out carried out his unconscious comrade who had knocked out Wilson. The rats left the house and the closed the door behind them, the only tell-tale signs of their presence left in the house being Wilson all tied up and gagged on the sofa, completely unconscious and in for a shock when he woke up. The rats had got Mandy and now she was in for a life of hell once she was delivered to Brawn like a parcel in the post…

Footnotes:

We just witnessed their honeymoon in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 20: Honeymoons and Rats

**** At the end of Part 2 of *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 20: Honeymoons and Rats* , Wilson and Mandy decided to put the Royal Fighters Service on high alert and have the other teams track down The Exterminators**

Oh...my...GOD! The Extermiantors have got Mandy! What's gonna happen to her now? Join me next time for "Endangered Species" begins and it's a story you do not want to miss...no seriously, you don't wanna miss this!

Endangered Species Part 1

Story 161: Endangered Species Part 1: Rodents on the Brink

Countdown to Crisis: 4

An eternity seemed to have passed as Mandy Mouse was in this unconscious slumber and yet in reality, the only amount of time that had even passed since Mandy's capture was an hour.

An hour was very precious time indeed, an hour could be used for many things in the day and that one hour had been used by The Exterminators to bring Mandy out of New Mobotropolis and into Central City, the very place that The Exterminators were located in. Obviously, Mandy had been asleep the whole way so she would have no idea of the way there at all. The Exterminators had delivered Mandy to Brawn and Brawn had locked Mandy up in a cell until she woke up. As for Mandy, after a long hour of unconsciousness, she began to wake up from the knockout gas. Knockout gas was quite lethal, especially if much of it was sprayed and Mandy had been give a big spray. The big spray she'd received had been enough to knock her out for a whole hour and at long last, she was beginning to wake up. Mandy groaned as her head beginning swimming with pain and flooding with thoughts that came back to her. As Mandy came out of unconsciousness she began to recall what had happened. She had come home from her honeymoon in Adabat a few days early due to anxieties over The Exterminators. She and Wilson arrived home and were going to rest for a minute when suddenly they were attacked by The Exterminators. Wilson had been knocked out, bound and gagged and dumped on the sofa out of the way while Mandy had tried to fight them off and instead ended up getting knocked out. Now she was waking up and she was beginning to take in her surroundings. As Mandy's eyes swept unfocused around the room she was in, she could see that it was dark, grey and uninviting. She was lying on a bench that was made of steel, very cold steel that is. It was freezing in the room, the walls made of cold steel and a draft seeping in through the door. Mandy shivered, she felt strangely colder than she

should be feeling. She didn't really bother to figure out why though, she was still waking up. She could make out broken chains lying on the floor, the very sight of them making he wonder why they were broken in the first place. Had some person broken free of this cell? If so then it gave Mandy some hope of escape at least. If that person who broke the chains could break out then so could she. Mandy finally blinked the sleep out of her eyes and her field of vision cleared up. She could clearly see the cell she was in and she shivered ever so furiously in the nipping cold she was locked up in. Mandy sat up on the bench and looked out ahead of her. To her surprise, the door was open a crack but that wasn't half as surprising as what was in front of the door and her. Looming above her like a wrestler baring over his defeated opponent was the terrifying figure of Brawn the Rat. He breathed slowly, his mask resonating the breathing and making it sound scary. Brawn was so intimidating that even drawing breath could send shivers up someone's spine. Mandy cried out in surprise and she fell off the bench. She picked herself up and backed herself against the wall, staring directly into Brawn's hideous dead eye and his horrifying red eye. Her heart pounded and she could feel herself breathing very fast. It was difficult to scare Mandy but Brawn seemed to have found something that scared her, being locked in a room with him glaring at her as if waiting to take her to the pits of hell. Mandy's tough demeanour quickly returned though and her face narrowed into a frown.

"OK buster, I have no idea where I am and what the hell I'm doing here so you'd better start spilling!" growled Mandy "Why the hell have you freaks kidnapped me and…brrr…" she paused as the cold of the wall bit at her skin. She rubbed her arms and shivered a little "…why is it so cold in here? And why do I feel like I'm hardly…"

She looked down at her body and got the shock of her life. She was not in her Royal Fighter uniform, she had been stripped off her uniform and much like the imprisoned Kari the Rat, she had been dressed in very unappealing rags that barely complimented her beautiful, feminine figure. She was only wearing a dirty, ragged old brown bra that squeezed on her breasts. It was a bit too small for her but not like Brawn cared about sizes anyway. Around her waist hung a dirty brown skirt that had a lot of wear and tear in it and was

the living definition of ragged. That explained why she felt colder than she should be feeling in this cell, she was barely wearing anything! Mandy put her hands to her face in horror and let out a loud, shrilling scream that echoed around the room and made Brawn's ears hurt. Mandy hardly ever screamed in terror but in this case, she could hardly help it.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH screamed Mandy "WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO MY CLOTHES?! WHAT THE HELL AM I WEARING?!"

Mandy then stopped screaming and she glared at Brawn, her fists clenched and her ears drooped back against her head in rage.

"You dirty little creep! You undressed me while I was unconscious didn't you?!" she snarled "How dare you! How dare you take my clothes off and put me in these…these…horrible rags! I am so gonna kill you for this you godforsaken pervert!"

"Still your nerves Mandy, I was not the one who changed your attire at all." purred Brawn, his voice eerily calm and booming softly in Mandy's ears **"I had my men see to that. I am a rat with decency after all."**

Mandy could only stare at Brawn in disbelief.

"Have we…met?" she murmured "How the hell do you know my name?"

"Don't you remember me Mandy?" said Brawn softly, his voice a faux tone of disappointment as if Mandy's inability to recognize him physically hurt him **"We were in High School together. I was Benedict's loyal lapdog and I was there when you punched him in the face and scolded him for bullying that wimp of a mutt you were friends with."**

Mandy put her hands to her mouth in astonishment as her brain processes the information and went click like a computer mouse clicking on a desktop feature.

"Mildred?!" she gasped.

Brawn seemed to take offence at that name and he backhanded Mandy directly onto the floor in rage. Mandy was taken aback by how powerful his arm seemed to be. That backhand felt more like a punch it was that powerful. Mandy dreaded to think how powerful his punches must be if his backhands feel that strong. Mandy picked herself up and stood back against the wall like she had been doing before Brawn knocked her down on the floor. She rubbed the already apparent bruise her check had, a hideous splodge of purple that ruined her lovely face.

"You are not to refer to me by that scornful name anymore." said Brawn, his voice like impending danger **"Mildred is dead, there is only Brawn now."**

"Brawn? Puh, just when I thought Mildred was a silly name, you go and give yourself an even sillier name." scoffed Mandy "And to think I actually thought you were scary."

Brawn kept his cool surprisingly enough but his eyes were sill fixated on Mandy, the pupils shrunk back in fury as if Mandy was in for a grisly death any minute now.

"I'm saddened to see that your obstinate spunk has not been quelled Mandy." he said grimly as if he was disappointed at the fact Mandy was still tough enough to speak up to him **"But we will see how a few days in this cell and gruelling hours of hard work will make you feel. You will brea k yet my dear."**

"Yeah right, you'll not break this girl!" declared Mandy "So Mildred, why the hell are you here? Are you another member of this filthy organization of filthy rats that has a filthy motivation?"

"I am more than just "another member" you foolish girl." said Brawn coldly **"I AM The Exterminators. I am their leader, and I am here to fulfil the rat's destiny!"** he announced aloud as if he was making a grand speech to a nonexistent audience.

"What destiny?" Mandy spat venomously "Why the hell did you make this disgusting group and why the hell are you enslaving mice all over the world?!"

Brawn just grabbed Mandy by the neck and hoisted her up to his eye line, his hand like a pair of pliers around her neck. Mandy gagged and tried to break free from his grip.

"Let me…ack…go!" she croaked, her breath depleting as Brawn squeezed the air out of her windpipe.

"Allow me to start from the beginning." said Brawn smoothly, his voice booming down Mandy's ears **"Remember back in High School when I was Benedict's loyal lapdog?"**

"Of course…ack…I do!" choked Mandy "You…used Benedict as a shield! You were that cowardly that you…could never do the bullying…ack…yourself!"

Brawn promptly dropped Mandy onto the floor, the mouse coughing furiously and rubbing her neck better. The rat then continued as if Mandy had said nothing.

"Yes…I was a coward." Brawn continued **"Cowardice plagued my life throughout my childhood. I was afraid of everything I came across. When I came to High School, my cowardice made life for me very difficult there. That was why I often clung to Benedict, he gave me something to tackle my fears for me. Then you came in and ruined all that by standing up to him."**

"He was bullying Wilson and he kept hitting on me as if he has some sick, twisted idea I'll be his girlfriend!" shouted Mandy "I had every right to stand up to that sicko of a rat!"

"In my views, you had no right." retorted Brawn smoothly **"Anyway, after you made Benedict a joke, I decided that if I couldn't rely on somebody to help me brave my fears…then I had to BECOME fear itself. So I began vigorously training and exercising myself until I became the rat I am now. My size is gargantuan as you can see, my very appearance strikes fear into the hearts of Mobians all over."**

"Yeah right, you don't scare me!" scoffed Mandy "Dr. Eggman's scarier than you and he's nothing more than a nuisance nowadays!"

Brawn ignored Mandy, probably fortunate for her that he did since she might end up getting punched very hard if he didn't ignore her.

"As well as increasing my muscular structure, I even equipped myself with things that would make me come off as scary." Brawn continued **"Hence why I now where this mask."** he pointed to the mask that he wore over his muzzle **"The mask makes my appearance infinitely more threatening, especially with how it amplifies my voice. Everybody fears me now, I have nothing to fear anymore since I AM fear incarnate."**

"Whatever loser, now tell me what the fridge this stupid group's all about!" snapped Mandy "Why are you enslaving mice and holding onto the other option of killing them?"

Mandy should consider herself lucky that Brawn didn't take offence to being called "loser" otherwise she might have been spitting some teeth out right about now.

"To end the rodent rivalry my dear prisoner." said Brawn **"Do you know how bad our petty rivalry has gotten?"**

"I dread to think." said Mandy, shuddering over the very thought of what the answer could be.

"The rivalry has escalated…to the point where BOTH races are on the brink of extinction." explained Brawn.

"WHAT?!" shrieked Mandy, horrified to hear this revelation "The m-mice and r-r-rats are…on the brink of extinction?! My kind and your kind are an endangered species?!"

"Exactly." continued Brawn **"Adabat boasts the only decent population of mice currently alive now. Everywhere else, mice numbers dwindle. Your city alone only has six mice, you included and some places are lucky to have over ten mice living in them whereas places like Spagonia or Empire City have NO mice left at all. As for the rats, there's only 1,000 of us left all over Mobius, the entire population residing here right now."**

Mandy could only smirk over this.

"So there's more mice left than rats?" she sneered "Ha! I knew mice were better!"

Brawn finally lost his temper and he grabbed Mandy by the face. He slammed her against the wall as hard as he could and then threw her into the corner of the room. Mandy landed with a heavy crash against the walland she groaned in pain. She felt like she'd broken something and yet her bones were still intact, luckily for her. That blow could have been fatal if Brawn wanted it to be. Brawn stormed over to Mandy and bore over her, the mouse sandwiched between him and the corner. Mandy remained sat on the floor and pressed against the wall, fearing what Brawn might do next to her.

"True the mice have more numbers left." purred Brawn **"But that might change thanks to us. A month ago, I riled together the entire rat population and formed The Exterminators, a group dedicated to subjugation of mice everywhere and to prove the rats the dominant species and fulfil our destiny to become the superior race of rodents. Some rats refused to join me so I enslaved any rat who refused to join us along with the captured mice. Our numbers dwindle thanks to the two teams being captured and Benedict having to be executed for his failure though, there's only 900 of us able to continue with our goals but of course, I'll just see to freeing the other two teams from captivity. So as you can see Mandy, my intentions are good. I intend to end the rivalry that drives us both to extinction. I'm helping the rats to survive and make a come back will putting the mice in their lowly place."**

Mandy was disgusted to hear this. The only remotely pleasant thing Brawn had said was that Benedict was dead so she didn't have to worry about meeting him again while she was here.

"You…are…disgusting!" shouted Mandy "Your intentions are despicable! You're not trying to end the rivalry between mice and rats, you're just reinforcing it! If you TRULY wanted to end the stupid rivalry then you would make a speech that would open up their eyes and make them see the errors of their ways and have them form a truce! But no, that would be TOO logical and TOO nice for you

disgusting rats to do! You rats are evil except for Kari and that's all you know how to do, be evil! And the fact you enslaved any rat that refused to join you makes you even worse! Any rat who refused to join you frankly had some sense and you go and enslave them too! It's no wonder you rats are on the brink of extinction, you're gonna end up contributing to it because that bit of idiocy!"

Brawn surprisingly kept his cool. Maybe he had had enough of punching Mandy and worried about accidentally killing her, which of course he doesn't want so he decided to just stop and keep his hands to himself.

"You are truly lost to me you insignificant little mouse." scoffed Brawn **"I'm trying to end this forlorn rivalry and you dare to question my motives. I no longer wish to waste my time with you. You will remain here for an hour and then you shall be taken out for your first bit of work. Rest well since you will endure some very hard work indeed."**

With that said, Brawn turned his back on Mandy and he left the cell, every step he took heavy and furious as if Mandy had just angered him greatly. He slammed the door behind him, making sure it didn't come off of its hinges as he slammed it. Mandy heard the horrible sound of a key turning in the lock as Brawn left. She was now trapped in the cell with no means of escape. Mandy was determined to escape though so she ran over to the door and tugged on it. Of course, it wouldn't open. Mandy then rammed her shoulder against the door and tried desperately to break it down. Sadly, Mandy wasn't strong enough to do that. In a battle with an enemy she was tough as nails. Against a cold steel cell door, she was as weak as wood. Mandy gave up her pitiful attempts to break the door down after a gruelling few minutes that just left her frustrated, angry and tired. Mandy stormed back over to the bench and sat on it, letting out a loud sigh of anger.

"That evil, disgusting, immoral, despicable rat!" she cursed to herself "How could he do this? How, HOW?! Well he'd better watch out! If I get my hands on Mildred I am SO gonna kill the asshole! Mark my words Mildred you are DEAD when I get outta here!"

She then proceeded to stand up and then punch the wall in fury.

Without her knuckle attachments to protect her fist, the punch ended up giving her a very sore fist. Mandy ignored the pain in her hand and she slumped back on the bench. Then suddenly, as if by magic, her tough demeanour vanished and she suddenly began to feel defeated and unhopeful. It was as if this cell had a curse on her and it began to take effect.

"Oh who am I kidding?" she sighed "I'm not getting out of here anytime soon. Nobody knows where I am, heck **I** don't even know where I am! I'm stuck here forever and there's nobody who can save me this time."

She then lay down on her belly and stared at the floor that stretched out underneath the bench she lay upon.

"I'm a prisoner of the rats and there's nothing I can do about it." she said grimly "I'm doomed to be a slave forever. And I'll never see my friends again. The blue dude himself won't be able to save me from this one. And most of all…I'll never see Wilson again."

She could feel the tears willing up inside her eyes as she began to think about her dear husband. How heartbroken he will be to find out she's gone, possibly forever, and he'll never see her again.

"Oh Wilson…what I wouldn't give to feel your strong arms around me again." said Mandy, snivelling a bit "I feel so vulnerable without you to make me feel safe. And now…sniff…I'm…I'm never gonna see you again!"

She couldn't hold them in anymore. Mandy burst into rainfalls of tears and she rested her head on her arms, crying into them and staining the fur on her arms with her tears. Never in her life had Mandy ever felt so defeated, so scared, so alone and so helpless. Brawn had truly broken her, Mandy had finally accepted defeat and she was wailing her heart out. Her sobs resonated around the room but there was nobody to hear them but herself. Crying never solved anybody's problems but of course, Mandy could hardly help it. The very thought of never seeing her husband again was just too much for her. What she wouldn't give for Wilson to show up and save her from this nightmare. But Mandy had to face it, she had no hope whatsoever. She was doomed to a life of slavery forever and Mandy

would have to put up with it whether she liked it or not…

Back in New Mobotropolis, Sonic the Hedgehog, Queen Sally Acorn and Tails the Fox had returned from Nekronopolis and had returned home to New Mobotropolis. They had been investigating Kari's disappearance and had come to the conclusion she had been kidnapped by rats, presumably those working for The Exterminators. Unfortunately, news that Wilson and Mandy were coming home had forced them to leave Nekronopolis and come home so they could welcome the married couple home and try to comfort Mandy. Luckily, Team Chaotix were still available so they had stayed behind in Nekronopolis to help find Kari. It made Sonic feel good that he had so many friends he could depend on when there were problems galore and he couldn't be there for all of them. Team Chaotix were the best Mobians to be left to help find Kari while he was elsewhere. Sonic, Sally and Tails entered New Mobotropolis and headed for Wilson and Mandy's house, instantly recognizing the house when they saw it for its juxtaposition of orange and purple colours. It was pretty hard NOT to tell Wilson and Mandy lived there, the choice of colours pretty much said "Hey, Wilson and Mandy live here! Please notice!"

"While it's nice that Wilson and Mandy are home, it's a pity their honeymoon had to be cut short." said Sonic "They had to wait quite a while for it and they FINALLY got it this week only for some mice-napping rats to ruin that for them."

"I know, it's very sad that this happened." said Sally sadly, feeling for the couple "They deserved that honeymoon and because of The Exterminators, Mandy could hardly enjoy it and then they had to call it off. I hope Mandy's feeling better and she's OK with seeing us now."

"She'll be fine Miss Sally." said Tails "You know what Mandy's like, she's always ready to see her friends. She'll feel better instantly when she sees us."

"I sure hope so." said Sally "I don't like to think about my fellow Royal Fighters being upset and anxious."

"I bet once The Exterminators are no longer a thing, Mandy will be the happiest mouse in the world." said Sonic "I sure hope she and Wilson continue their honeymoon once she's better. They deserve to see it to the end."

"I'm sure they'll be very grateful to hear you say that." said Sally "I do have to wonder where your big heart came from Sonic, you really do have a big heart."

"Maybe it's something that runs in the family, I dunno." said Sonic "Mom and dad often think it's a trait of the family. Speaking of mom and dad, I'm hoping they can come over and see NewMobotropolis some day soon. If they can come over, I'd love for them to meet you and Tails."

"Aw that'll be splendid." said Sally "I'd like to meet them too."

"Same here." said Tails "Especially since technically, they're the ones we have to thank for your heroism and such."

"In a way…yes they are." said Sonic "If they didn't give birth to me and dad didn't save mom with a power ring, I wouldn't be here right now or at the very most, be the person I am now."

Sally and Tails both smiled at Sonic, sharing how grateful he was over his parents for bringing him into existence. It was scary to imagine what the world would have been like if Sonic had never been born. If he was never born than Eggman would have pretty much conquered the world already. True there had been times where the day had been saved without Sonic, mainly the Egg-Timer crisis and the Raiju Clan's take over but mostly it had been Sonic who had saved the day and allowed Mobius to carry on being happy and free. Tails and Sally brushed aside those thoughts as they reached the doorstep and Sonic knocked on the door.

"Oh Wilson and Mandy! It's the blue dude himself and he's got Tails and Sally with him! May we come in?" asked Sonic.

There was no answer. Silence was always ominous in a case like this, ominous in the sense if there's only silence then something can't be right. Sonic was puzzled. Maybe they had fallen asleep and

hadn't woken up yet? Or had something happened and thus, they couldn't answer due to what had happened to them. He rapped on the door again.

"Wilson! Mandy! It's Sonic the Hedgehog, is anybody home?" called Sonic.

Still no answer. Sonic began to feel very nervous.

"Something's up." said Sonic "They're not answering."

"Maybe they haven't arrived back home yet?" suggested Sally.

"I'm afraid you're wrong your majesty." said Tails "Wilson's home but he's tied up and gagged on the sofa! I can't see Mandy anywhere though."

Tails had taken a moment to look through the window to see if they were in at all and all he could see was a bound and gagged Wilson on the sofa, now awake from being knocked out and struggling furiously in his binds while feebly crying for help behind his gag. Sonic and Sally were horrified. Had The Exterminators ambushed Wilson and Mandy and taken Mandy while leaving Wilson bound and gagged so he couldn't follow them? They knew Wilson would hopefully have the answers so they opened the door and let themselves in. Sonic whizzed over to the sofa and he quickly untied Wilson. After he was untied, Wilson quickly peeled the tape off of his mouth and gasped for breath.

"Oh god does that feel better!" he gasped "And thank goodness you three are here! I thought I was gonna be stuck like that for a long time!"

"What happened Wilson?" asked Tails "And where's Mandy?"

"Me and Mandy arrived home at approximately four o'clock this afternoon and we were just settling down until somebody knocked on the door." explained Wilson "I opened the door and then I was sprayed by knockout gas, the person spraying me being a very ugly looking rat in uniform that bore the logo of The Exterminators."

Sonic looked over at the clock that hung above the fireplace. It was

now five past five. Tails decided to check all over the house to see if Mandy was in any of the rooms at all or if she was definitely gone so he left the living room and instantly began looking around any rooms on ground level and upstairs. As he left, Sonic turned back to Wilson.

"You've been out for quite a while." said Sonic "It's five past five now."

"It is?!" cried Wilson "Oh my gosh, I've been out for a whole freaking hour! That's a long time to be knocked out!"

"And a long time for the kidnappers to get away with Mandy." said Sally grimly "She doesn't seem to be anywhere around."

"She isn't." said Tails, coming back down the stairs that led to the bedrooms and running back into the living room "I've checked every room in the house while you were talking, she's definitely not here. The Exterminators…gulp…have got her!"

Wilson looked like he had a spear embedded into his chest. He felt like he wanted to pass out again only he couldn't because he was too shocked to even do that. Wilson was so shocked to hear that Mandy was gone that he didn't even feel the tears welling up in his eyes.

"No…oh no! They've got her! They've got my wife!" shrieked Wilson "Oh my god, they're gonna do terrible things to her! They'll enslave her or kill her, I just know it!"

Wilson could hardly keep himself from crying over the very thought of Mandy in the captivity of The Exterminators. And right about this moment, Mandy was also crying over the thought of never seeing Wilson again, almost like the two sensed each other's pain and both cried for each other. As Wilson cried into his hands, Sally gave him a comforting hug while Sonic sat beside him and patted him on the back.

"Don't cry Wilson, we'll get Mandy back." said Sonic "There's no way I'm letting THIS case go unanswered! Nobody kidnaps one of my friends and gets away with it, especially since she's married to

another one of my friends!"

Wilson took his face out of his hands and looked at Sonic.

"But what can we do?" asked Wilson "We have no idea where Mandy is, she could be anywhere and I have no idea where to start!"

"We'll find her Wilson even if I have to do laps around the planet in order to do so." Sonic swore "I am not letting those rats take Mandy's freedom away. We're getting her back and I won't rest until she's back in your arms buddy! What do you say?"

Those words seemed to have given Wilson new hope for he instantly brightened up and seemed to share Sonic's determination to save Mandy.

"I say let's find my wife and rescue her!" declared Wilson "And while we're at it, we're gonna bring down The Exterminators for good! They have kidnapped their last mouse today!"

"That's the spirit Wilson!" said Sonic happily "So shall we get going?"

"Are you kidding, of course we shall!" said Wilson determinedly "This is my wife we're talking about! She's been captured and she needs rescuing pronto! Let's got for it!"

"As much as I'd like to come, I think it'll be wise for me to stay here and keep an eye on the city." said Sally "I'll keep an eye on things while you're gone Sonic. You know, in case Eggman or anyone tries to attack the city while you're away."

"Fair enough." said Sonic "Me and Wilson will just join up with Team Chaotix and Team Nekronopolis so we can save Mandy and Kari both at the same time."

"Kari's been kidnapped too?!" blurted Wilson.

"I'll explain later Wilson." said Sonic "So Sally, wish us luck out there."

"Good luck you two." said Sally "You'll both need it. Save Mandy,

save Kari, bring them both home and stop The Exterminators for good."

"We will your queenly-ness." said Sonic, giving Sally a farewell embrace "Hope all goes well for you while I'm gone."

"Thank you." said Sally, returning the embrace and then giving Sonic a peck on the cheek for good luck.

Now the farewells were over, Sonic and Wilson instantly ran out of the door and Sonic carried Wilson in his arms as he sped off to Nekronopolis to let Team Chaotix and Team Nekronopolis know that Mandy had been kidnapped and they were going to save her and Kari at the same time. Sally and Tails watched as the two left, hoping they would return home with Mandy safe and sound and with good news to deliver. Little did Sally and Tails realize was that they were in for an adventure of their own for lurking in the shadows was a familiar white hedgehog in icy blue robes, its cold blue eyes fixed on Sally in particular…*

Back in the liar of The Exterminators, poor Mandy was still sobbing her eyes out to herself. She hadn't stopped crying for quite a while, she was that upset and scared right now and just thinking about Wilson made her cry even harder whenever she tried to stop herself. It would be a miracle if Mandy even had any tears left to cry if she carried on going. She had been so upset the past few minutes that she even forgot that it was cold in the cell. All Mandy was focused on now was herself, her thoughts and her tears. She soon had something else to focus on now though for a loud knock at the door snapped her out of her crying marathon and she lifted her head out of her arms. Sniffling loudly, she suddenly turned sour as if her crying never happened and she snapped.

"GO AWAY!" she screamed "I'm not in the mood for seeing you hideous rats right now!"

To Mandy's surprise, it was a familiar voice that replied to her instead of a voice she wasn't familiar with. To an even bigger surprise, it was a familiar voice that she knew from the Royal

Fighters.

"Mandy, it's me, Kari." said the voice of Kari the Rat "You don't need to worry about any ugly rats at all."

"KARI?!" shrieked Mandy "Oh my gosh! They got YOU too?!"

"Yes, they got me too. Horrible isn't it?" Kari's voice replied back "I'm a slave just like you are now and I've been sent to give you some food to give you strength for your work, which will begin soon."

The mention of food suddenly made Mandy feel hungry. At this time, she would be having dinner at home with Wilson right about now and now Mandy wasn't crying anymore, she had time to realize what the rest of her body was feeling and her stomach was practically growling like a tiger now. Mandy rubbed her stomach and hoped she'd been given some decent tuck to gobble.

"Well in that case, you may come in." said Mandy "May as well have some pleasant company before I start slaving away for those rats."

The cell door opened and in walked Kari, carrying a silver plate with a domed lid over it, presumably to keep whatever was on the plate fresh and warm. Kari closed the door behind her and she walked over to Mandy, carrying the plate with both hands and looking sadly at her.

"I can't believe this has happened to you Mandy, you've been captured too." said Kari "You were the last mouse I would be expecting The Exterminators to kidnap."

"I bet I was." sighed Mandy "I took down one of their groups with Wilson and Team Adabat, who'd have thought I'd end up being slave of theirs anyway?"

"Who indeed?" sighed Kari "Although this does give me hope that Sonic and his team will come looking for me and you. Your disappearance will be more than enough to make Sonic and the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters come looking for us, you're quite a popular member of the team."

"Yeah, I'd say kidnapping me will be their downfall." said Mandy with

a twinge of hope tingling in her starving gut "So what's for dinner then?"

Kari held out the plate and she took the lid off to present what was under it to Mandy. To Mandy's displeasure it was the one food she hated more than anything in the world…cheese. There was also a cup of water for her to drink too. It was a curious truth that mice actually do NOT like cheese, it was just something made up for cartoons and fiction. Mandy was not like the mice from the cartoons though, she outright HATED cheese. So much in fact that she wouldn't so much as taste a crumb if she was offered. Mandy's face contorted with disgust and she stuck her tongue out.

"UGH! Get that swill away from me!" she yelled furiously "I hate cheese!"

Kari looked stunned.

"You…hate…cheese?" she gulped.

"You bet I do!" snapped Mandy "Cheese is poison! Eww! It's the most disgusting thing I've ever eaten!"

"Well I'm very sorry Mandy but this is all you're getting." said Kari "Brawn doesn't let the slaves eat anything else. Either eat this or starve and if you want to escape from this place as much as I do, I don't think you want to starve."

"Fine, fine, just give it here!" snapped Mandy, snatching the cheese from the plate.

As much as she REALLY didn't want to do this, she had to. She couldn't escape if she starved to death so like it or not, Mandy had to eat the cheese. Not to mention she was starving anyway so Mandy would happily wolf down what she could anyway just to get the hunger out of her stomach. Mandy closed her eyes and she literally shoved the cheese into her mouth. She chewed it as fast as she could and quickly swallowed it, desperate not to let the taste linger in her mouth for it truly made her want to gag. The moment she swallowed she snatched up the water and slurped it down as if she was thirstier than a camel. Mandy finished the cup and put it

back on the plate, relived to have gotten that over with.

"Gasp…I hope I never have to eat that swill again!" she gagged "What I wouldn't give to be wolfing down a gorgeous plate of waffles and banoffee ice cream now, THAT'S real food!"

"Well until we get out of here Mandy, that's all you'll be eating from now on." said Kari sadly "I'm very sorry."

"Don't be, it's that jerk Brawn who should be sorry." muttered Mandy "He's forcing me to live this life of slavery and bad food. When I get out of here though I'll make him choke on the next piece of cheese he tries to make me eat!"

"I highly doubt that Mandy." said Kari, sitting down on the bench beside the mouse "Brawn is very powerful, his punches feel formidable. I mean look at you!" she gasped, pointing to the bruise Mandy had on her cheek "He did that with just one punch didn't he?!"

Mandy felt the bruise, which was still hurting a little.

"He only backhanded me actually." said Mandy "I dread to think how bad his punches are."

"Believe me, it's very unpleasant." said Kari "He actually punched me for begging him not to send rats to New Mobotropolis."

"All the more reason for us to make him pay." growled Mandy "Why would anyone want to lay a finger on you? You're probably one of the last people who would got out of their way to hurt somebody so why would somebody want to hurt you?"

"Somebody like Brawn I guess." said Kari dully "After all, he wants the slaves to know their place around here."

"Well I know my place already and it's not around here." Mandy declared "Somehow, I'm gonna get outta here and when I do, I'm gonna find out where this place is, get back to NewMobotropolis and then report it to my team back home. Then they'll come here and exterminate The Exterminators once and for all!"

Even though Mandy knew the situation was hopeless she didn't want Kari to think she had given up and that the rats had gotten to her. Plus, she wanted Kari to have some hope as well so if she was determined and hopeful than Kari would be as well. Kari smiled at Mandy, pleased to see her tough demeanour hadn't lessened in the slightest here.

"I'm glad you've still got your optimism." said Kari "Makes me hopeful we'll get out of here and back home."

"Glad to hear that." said Mandy brightly "So Kari...how did you get caught?"

"Some rats were hiding in my tent and they got me the moment I walked in." said Kari, still unsure how they accomplished that "No idea how though, they can't possibly have known where I live and such. Brawn wanted me to join The Exterminators but I refused so he enslaved me and made me wear these disgusting rags." she spat, looking down at her rags "I feel so humiliated and vulnerable in these things. I can't wait to get back into my old clothes."

"Same here." said Mandy, scowling at her rags "As for me, I just got gassed by rats who somehow knew where to find me. They gassed Wilson too but they tied him up and left him on the sofa to stop him from coming after them I think. I hope somebody's freed him right now so he can try and find us. I bet right now, Sonic and the entire team's looking for us, your team included."

"I bet, Miranda's not going to let my kidnapping go unanswered." said Kari "She loves me quite a lot. Loves me…like a daughter even. Just as I love her like she's my mother. She's not gonna sit out of this one, she and the chipmunk brothers are gonna be looking for me now. And I bet your team will be looking for you as if it's the last thing they'll ever do."

"Yeah, a girl couldn't ask for a better team of friends." said Mandy happily "So just out of interest…how many mice have been enslaved and how many reluctant rats have been enslaved?"

"According to Brawn…there are 100 mice here and 50 rats, forty-nine plus me." explained Kari.

"And Brawn said there's 1,000 rats left on Mobius…" Mandy mused as she began to do the maths in her head "So…there's only 900 rats running free now. As for mice, there's 1,000 in Adabat, which we saved already, and there's 100 mice here…so there's 1,100 mice left on Mobius?"

"Afraid so." said Kari "Mice and rat numbers are dwindling now and I have a feeling Brawn will just make them dwindle even further."

"And all because of our stupid, stupid rivalry!" cursed Mandy "Oh how I wish mice and rats weren't enemies! Just how did this stupid "rodent rivalry" begin anyway?!"

"I wish I knew." said Kari "I'm not sure anybody knows anymore. I'm sure there's a way to put this rivalry to rest though."

"I'm already forming a speech in my head." said Mandy "I just hope it tempts the mice and rats to play nice and call off the rivalry much like how me and Wilson managed to stop racism at our school."

"I look forward to hearing it if you ever get the chance to say it." said Kari with a smile "I'm sure you'll get mice and rats to call off the rivalry once they see how bad it's gotten."

"Both races are endangered now, they're gonna have to wake up and realize their rivalry will be the end of them both soon." said Mandy "I don't want the mice to go extinct."

"Same with the rats, I don't want them to go extinct either." said Kari "They can't get a better reputation otherwise."

"As long as this heinous group still functions, the rats won't get a better reputation!" scoffed Mandy "It's guys like Brawn that made me hate rats in the first place but now…I kinda regret it." she said solemnly "Now I know both mice and rats are lingering on the brink now, I feel bad about ever being part of this rivalry. It's torn mice and rats everywhere apart and now both races are declining. I do hope that my speech will convince them to make peace with each other and allow our numbers to climb back up again."

"I hope so too." said Kari "It's not pleasing at all to think of your race

being endangered."

Then suddenly, loud footsteps were heard outside the cell door and in stomped the formidable, gargantuan figure of Mace the Elephant, Brawn's right hand pachyderm. Mandy stared at the elephant in horror, completely taken aback by the huge, brutal appearance of Mace and wondering why an elephant was in rat territory. Did he work for them? Mace stood by the door, a pair of shackles clenched in his hand and the mace at the end of his trunk hanging there, waiting to be swung at somebody. His eyes fixed on the two girls sitting on the bench and staring at him in fear.

"Time's up Mandy, it's time for work." growled Mace, his voice like an earthquake.

"Who's that guy?" asked Mandy, too frightened by the appearance of Mace to so much as move.

"His name's Mace and he's Brawn's right hand man." explained Kari "He's the only thing that looks scarier than Brawn in this place!"

"I said it's time for work you purple-furred freak!" snarled Mace "On your feet now before I squash you!"

"Fat chance buster, I doubt Brawn will let you squish me and let me have the easy way outta this." sniffed Mandy, getting up to her feet and strolling over to Mace in an uppity manner as if she was no longer scared of him "He wants me to suffer so I doubt you have permission to kill me."

"Ooooh, a smart-arse eh?" growled Mace furiously, clamping the shackles on Mandy's wrists roughly just to make her wince in pain "We'll have to see how smart you are once you've done a gruelling seven hours of work in this place!"

"Whatever." scoffed Mandy "Let's just get on with it already."

It mystified Kari as to how Mandy could still remain tough and lippy even in a situation like this. Not even Mace seemed to make Mandy hesitate to talk back to him, she was still brave enough to smack-talk her captors. Kari had to admire that in Mandy and she began

wishing she was as tough as she was. Mace glowered at Mandy, wondering how long she'd last in The Exterminators captivity before she broke like a twig, and then grabbed her by the ear. Holding her pain, Mandy was dragged out of the room by her ear and she tried her best not to let Mace know it hurt her. She was not going to show pain to this horrible elephant or anybody else for that matter. Kari toddled off after them, hoping that Mandy would be able to make it through the horrible, hard work she was in for as she was dragged down the corridors and to the work room. It was quite a long corridor but Mace, Mandy and Kari eventually arrived at the work room. Mace opened the door and shoved Mandy into it, the mouse tempted to punch him in the eye for that. Kari was shoved inside too.

"You're both on the crank." said Mace flatly "Now get on with it, we don't have all day."

He slammed the door behind them and locked it, trapping Mandy and Kari in the work room. Mandy and Kari both observed their surroundings and saw that this was called the work room for a reason. The room was enormous, spanning a great distance all around and there was a lot of machinery pumping, whirring, whizzing and functioning at high speeds. There were a lot of boxes containing coal too. For a modern facility, there seemed to be some old fashioned machinery in there. There was a boiler that ran on coal and fire and there was a crank that needed to be turned to get a machine operational. Mandy watched with dismay as mice, all dressed in rags and ranging in fur colours, size, gender and function skills began to do what looked like very hard work. Some mice were shovelling coal into a boiler to get it working, some mice were sweeping the monstrously long chimneys that belched out smoke into the atmosphere like giant cigarettes, some mice were forced to carry heavy logs tied to their shoulders all around the room a certain number of times (and given the weight of the logs and the size of the room, that could take a while to just do one lap), some mice were cleaning up mess that the rats would deliberately make just to give them something to do, some mice were turning a crank that needed to be turned to get a bizarre looking machine working and some mice were doing a gruelling exercise involving standing in a line and carrying a piece of coal from a large pile across the line to the other end to move the pile to the other end of the line and then back again

when the pile was fully moved to the other end of the line. Many a human historian would recognize some of these as punishments from the era of Queen Victoria, long since forgotten and no longer used as humanity evolved and became more civilized in their lines of work, culture and life. Here on Mobius, these punishments were unfolding in front of Mandy and Kari's eyes and Mandy felt like she wanted to faint. This was a living nightmare and she was determined to save the mice from it.

"This…this is awful!" she cried "This is hell incarnate! And…I'm being subjugated to this! I wish this was a nightmare I could just wake up from already!"

She pinched herself on the arm feebly, hoping that would "wake her up" at last. But she was already awake and this was no nightmare, it was a terrifying reality and Mandy couldn't escape from it so easily.

"I wish that was the case too." said Kari gloomily "And we're unlucky Mandy, we have to turn the crank. That's one of the hardest bits of work."

"Why?" asked Mandy "Turning a crank's dead easy, we can do it."

"It's not like that." said Kari sadly "We have to turn it consistently until the masters say we can stop. And it's a lot harder to turn than it looks."

Mandy had nothing to say about that. Her dismayed face was all that she needed to express her disgust over this slave work.

"In that case I'll make Brawn's death even MORE painful than I already plan to." she said coldly, storming off towards the machine that had the crank.

Kari just followed, sharing Mandy's distaste for this horror she was forced to partake in. Their slave work had begun and it was going to continue for a very long time. Any normal person would be too happy to get out of this but getting out was not all that easy. Mandy took note of the hundreds of rat guards on duty, waiting to kill any mouse who so much as looked at them funny. No rat slaves were around though. They must still be in their cells or doing work in

another room. Mandy already hated this place and she was more determined than ever to escape. Trouble was…would she be able to?

Over in Nekronopolis, Team Chaotix and Team Nekronopolis were rather startled at the sight of Sonic rushing towards them like a heat seeker missile aiming at its target and carrying Wilson in his arms. Not much had progressed since Sonic, Sally and Tails had left. No more clues had been found and there was no trial that led to where Kari had been taken. They were still at square one so far. The sight of Sonic coming towards them was surprising but it made them feel much happier now that he was back. They began to wonder why he was carrying Wilson with him, did Wilson want to join the case now? Sonic screeched to a halt and he put Wilson down before the two teams.

"He-hey Sonic! Wasn't expecting to see you again so soon!" chuckled Vector the Crocodile "Is Mandy better already?"

"Nope, she's worse off than we thought." said Sonic grimly, his face already telling Vector he wasn't in for good news.

"She's been kidnapped!" cried Wilson "The Exterminators ambushed me and her in our home and they got her!"

A chorus of gasps rung around the campsite, the loudest ones coming from Team Chaotix for they knew Mandy quite well. They had once joined her and Wilson for a mission in Robotropolis that saw Eggman's communications tower destroyed, long before the city itself was destroyed for good by Shadow the Hedgehog. To hear Mandy had been kidnapped much like Kari had was just horrifying for them.

"No! They got Miss Mandy too?!" cried Vector.

"That does it, we NEED to find those rats and pound them into the dirt!" growled Espio the Chameleon "They're going too far now!"

"I'm gonna sting every last one of them for that!" declared Charmy

Bee "Nobody kidnaps a good friend of Sonic's! Or indeed a good friend of ours too!"

"Especially since she and Wilson are married." said Espio, taking note of the fact out of respect for Wilson "No husband should be separated from their wife, they should be united forever."

"I agree." said Miranda Mongoose "Sonic, Wilson, we will help find Mandy. And maybe we will find Kari too."

"That's the idea." said Sonic "This is a double search party, we're gonna find Mandy AND Kari and we will save them both! After that, it's bye-bye for The Exterminators! They will never kidnap another mouse or rat ever again!"

Everybody agreed with Sonic, this was the last time The Exterminators were ever going to kidnap anybody. They were going to save Mandy and Kari and put an end to this terror the rats had inflicted on the world. Unfortunately, they had the obstacle of finding out where the rats were in the first place and they also had something else to deal with. Unknown to them, a little camera that had been hidden in Kari's tent as a way of keeping an eye on the Royal Fighter team she belonged to was watching them. Brawn had sent one out to keep an eye on the Royal Fighters since he worried they would come looking for him and ruin everything. The camera had flown all the way to Nekronopolis and hidden in Kari's tent. It was a small disc with a lens and it could attach to anything. As it spied on the Royal Fighters, Brawn heard and saw everything the camera picked up. He was watching from the comfort of his own room and he was not pleased to see that the Royal Fighters were indeed planning to rescue Mandy and Kari. His fists clenched in fury, he switched off the screen and muttered to himself.

"So the team that Kari belonged to is planning on tracking her and Mandy down?" he mused to himself **"Well then, I shall put a stop to that. I'll send Mace out to arrange…a funeral for them. I'll make sure that orange dog " Wilson " gets it the worst since he is Mandy's husband now. A dead husband will make Mandy succumb to me for definite. And the blue hedgehog…I'll make his demise painful too."**

Brawn cackled to himself as he pictured Mace going out into Nekronopolis to kill the Royal Fighters and prevent them from ever finding Mandy and Kari. Their demise would be enough to break their hearts and make them give up hope altogether.

Footnotes:

***That's a story for another time…join Tales from Mobius for *Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm* where we see an old enemy return and secrets about the Acorn family revealed!**

This can't be good...Mandy Mouse, a rat prisoner! Wilson the Dog, a heartbroken husband! Brawn the Rat, a rat with a goal! What will happen next? Join in next time as "Endangered Species" continues and the secret behind the rodent rivalry is finally revealed!

Also be sure to tune into* Tales from Mobius *for a brand new arc which sees Sally Acorn up against a certain ice witch that Amy knows and loathes...

Endangered Species Part 2

Story 162: Endangered Species Part 2: Mice In Slavery

Countdown to Crisis: 3

Slavery is often a subject that no living being ever wants to even so much as think about being subjected to. The very thought of being forced to work against your will while wearing horrible ragged clothing that barely compliment your appearance and working for no pay and possibly little or bad food.

And yet right of this moment, the feisty, rough and tough tomboy of the Royal Fighters Service Mandy Mouse was being subjected to the horrors of slavery. She had been kidnapped by the insidious group known only as The Exterminators, a group of rats who's primary purpose is to enslave mice and, if they have to, kill them as well. Mandy had already run into a group that worked for The Exterminators during her honeymoon with her husband Wilson the Dog in Adabat* and now, as if a personal insult against all her efforts in Adabat, she ended up getting kidnapped by the third and final group in the organization anyway, and this group being led by their leader Brawn the Rat no less! Mandy was familiar with Brawn much like how she had been familiar with Benedict from the Adabat team. Both Brawn and Benedict were rats she knew from high school, one a whimpering coward now turned muscular powerhouse who's very appearance reeked of fear and one a creepy rat who had an unhealthy lust for her that just made Mandy sick. To her delight, she wouldn't see Benedict here for Brawn had mentioned executing him for failing to her earlier. Two familiar rats in The Exterminators made Mandy feel like her high school years were coming back to get her for some sick, twisted, cruel reason other than to just mock her very existence perhaps. And right now, she was doing hard work for the very rat who used to be a coward and rely on Benedict all the time for protection. Said work being a gruelling seven hours on the crank. Kari the Rat was sharing this work with her, turning her own crank on another section of the machine they were working on just ahead of her. The crank was an old punishment that many a historian

would instantly label as originating from the Victorian period of mankind's history. It merely involved turning a crank on a machine for a length of time. Easy at first but back-breaking as you carried on turning the same crank over and over and all in the same direction no less. What made this pure torture for Mandy is that the crank was set it a certain pressure and unluckily for her, it was a high pressure meaning that the crank was pretty hard to turn right now. Mandy was strong but not THAT strong. She had only been turning the crank for five minutes and already her arms felt like they were going to just break without warning. She had to do this for seven hours and the worst part was she wasn't allowed to stop. It sickened Mandy to think how anybody could be so heartless and make any Mobian of any kind do this kind of work. Mandy liked to imagine Dr. Eggman doing this instead of her, he at the very least deserved this. But given he was now encased in the armour of E-123 Omega, chances are it wouldn't be such a gruelling experience for him. Eggman would probably do it all in a jiffy with Omega's huge robotic arms so sadly, even imagining Eggman doing this didn't make Mandy feel any better. Instead, she imagined Benedict doing this. If he was still alive, she would've forced him to do this instead of her. Knowing how puny and weak Benedict is, he wouldn't last a minute on this torture, let alone five. The image alone made Mandy crack a smile to herself but it only ended up reminding her it was her doing this and not Benedict so Mandy decided to just focus on the work and be done with it. Mandy wiped sweat off her head as she gave the crank another hard turn. Every turn felt heavier and heavier to her. It was as if the crank didn't like being turned and was just trying harder and harder to make sure Mandy couldn't turn it. Kari seemed to be faring much worse then Mandy though, she had only been doing this for five minutes and already looked like she was going to collapse from exhaustion. She was much weaker than Mandy. Kari couldn't even throw a good punch so what good was she on an exercise as torturous is this? Mandy and Kari both turned the crank again, already losing count of how many times they'd turned it already and Mandy panted.

"This…puff…is inhumane!" she gasped "No…Urrrggghhh…" she paused as she turned the crank again, this turn feeling the hardest so far "…no Mobian alive should…pant…ever have to do this torture!"

"Just…you wait…nnnnugh!" grunted Kari as her aching arms strained to push the crank around again "They'll…make us do worse tomorrow! This is just…a warm up!"

"A warm up?!" shrieked Mandy as if she'd just heard the silliest thing in the world "You call THIS a warm up?! Turning this bloody thing for seven freaking hours?! THIS IS A WARM UP?!"

"Oy! Shut up!" snarled one of the hideous guards that was on duty. He was keeping an eye on Mandy and Kari and was told to give them a beating if they so much as raised a finger at him.

"You keep out of this buster!" snapped Mandy "Slaves still have a freedom of speech regardless of their "lowly" position here!"

"Mandy just shut up and do the work!" hissed Kari "Do you want to get into trouble?!"

"Don't care what those stupid rats do to me." scoffed Mandy "It'll just give me more excuses to beat the crap outta them."

"Well incase you haven't noticed, you're very vulnerable here and with nobody to save us and nobody knowing where we are, it'll be very unwise to provoke the guards since they might possibly kill you just for talking back to them! If you want to get out alive as much as I do then don't tempt the guards to put you down!" snapped Kari, clearly losing her patience with Mandy.

"Wow, you really can snap at someone after all." said Mandy, taken aback at the fact Kari, one of the most mild-mannered and polite people in the R.F.S. actually snapped at her "I'm impressed. Maybe you're tougher than you let on."

"Eh, I wish I was." said Kari miserably "I wouldn't be in this godforsaken hellhole if I was…"

She forced her exhausted arms to turn the crank once again, ever strain in her muscles feeling like a cry of pain, begging her to stop and give them a rest. Regardless of what her muscles felt, Kari forced them to continue. She felt so tired that she began to wonder if her heart would get tired of beating and just stop abruptly. Mandy

wasn't as tied as Kari but she was getting there. Her arms were killing her and she just wanted to lie down and catch her breath for a minute. If she did then the guards might have an excuse to use her as a punching bag. Mandy just forced herself to continue.

Oh Wilson , I wish you'd just run in here and whisk me away like a knight in shining armour! her thoughts moaned in her brain *You'd sort those rats out in an instant!*

As Mandy and Kari continued to work, another rat guard who carried a long whip with him strode by the two hard-working women and decided to see how their progress was going. He watched them, satisfied to see they were working hard and yet he decided to have a bit of fun with them just as he had many other slaves that worked all over the room doing their slave labour for The Exterminators. The guard stretched out his whip and he eyed Mandy's bum as she worked away on the crank. A tempting target, too tempting to resist for a guard with a whip. The guard drew the whip back and lashed it across Mandy's bum, a horrible cracking sound following the smack on Mandy's bum the whip made. Mandy instantly reared up and clutched her now very sore buttocks.

"OUCH!" she screamed.

Kari stopped what she was doing and turned around, wondering what was wrong. What she saw was Mandy wincing in pain and rubbing her bum better. She looked like it seriously hurt. Whips are very painful after all. The guard just sniggered at her, clearly enjoying himself here. Sadism was a common trait amongst members of The Exterminators. The Martians would have been proud to see this.

"Work harder you freak and I won't have to whip ya!" he snickered mockingly.

"Maybe if you didn't decide to slap my butt for no reason I'd still be working now!" snapped Mandy "How am I supposed to work if you morons are whipping me?!"

"Don't talk to us like that!" snapped the guard "Now get on with your work or I'll whip yer butt again your purple-furred cretin!"

The guard had made a terrible mistake by calling Mandy a purple-furred cretin. As we all know, Mandy had been a victim of racist bullying because of her fur colour back when she was a child. She and Wilson put a stop to it at last and Mandy hadn't had one single negative comment on her fur colour since. To hear her fur-colour being insulted again felt like a stab to her, a knife thrown into her heart by her childhood bullies. Mandy turned around, her fists clenched and her face contorting with rage. She almost looked rabid, the crazed look in her eyes and her clenched teeth being the things that helped to sell the rabid look.

"What…did…you…just…call…me?!" snarled Mandy, her voice a whisper of danger mixed with a hint of threat.

"I said get back to work you purple-furred cretin!" repeated the guard "Don't make me have to whip you again!"

"Don't you DARE insult my fur colour you ugly little rat!" growled Mandy, her fur standing up on end like an angry cat "If you do, you'll live to regret it!"

"Mandy please calm down!" whispered Kari pathetically "Don't give them the satisfaction of seeing you cross!"

Mandy ignored Kari and continued staring at the guard. The guard seemed like he hadn't had enough of bullying Mandy yet so he carried on.

"What are you gonna do toots, bitch-slap me?" sniffed the guard "Please, you women don't threaten me. Women are weak, I thought you were supposed to know that already!" he sneered as if wanting to push more buttons on Mandy for no reason other then just to annoy her.

That did it, Mandy snapped and pounced on the guard like a wild bull. If there's one thing that flips Mandy's lid more than anything else it was expecting her to be weak because she's a girl. That and sexism in general just doesn't fly over her head that easily.

"I'LL SHOW YOU JUST HOW "WEAK" I AM!" she thundered in a voice that was so furious it was amazing she didn't end up losing it

after that.

The guard screamed a shrilling, girly scream as Mandy tackled him to the floor and started to punch him as furiously as she could. Despite the fact her hands were shackled, it didn't stop her throwing a good punch on the guard. Mandy began to beat his face into mush, each punch she threw feeling like being hammered and the punches doing significant damaged to his face. Mandy punched him at least ten times and already his cheeks were swollen up as if somebody puffed up a balloon in his mouth, his nose rained with blood and some of his teeth and come out. Mandy even punched him in the eye, turning his eye into a hideous, swollen purple bulb that stuck out on one side of his nose. Mandy then yanked the guard up onto his feet and slammed him as hard as she could against the machine, making sure that it really hurt. The guard feebly tried to fight back but he had no chance against Mandy's rage. When he threw a punch, Mandy just grabbed his fist, forced it open and sank her teeth into his hand as if hoping to bite it off. The guard wailed in pain as Mandy bit his hand, her teeth sinking so far in that she felt the bone that lay under the flesh. To add insult to injury, Mandy grabbed the guard by his head and slammed it repeatedly against the machine as if trying to break his skull open like a coconut on the beach. Kari just watched, frozen in horror at what she was witnessing. Mandy was bad-tempered and rowdy but never in her life did she think she could go berserk like this. No wonder she was a Royal Fighter! She could even send Eggman to the hospital if she wanted to! Mandy stopped slamming the guard against the machine, his head now a bruised, bleeding, swollen mess that barely resembled a head and she growled at him.

"Take. It. Back!" she spat the words out venomously at the guard.

"Pppp…no." the guard blubbered, his lips barely able to move properly given how badly damaged his face was.

Mandy slammed him against the machine again.

"I SAID TAKE IT BACK!" she roared, practically losing her sanity at the guard now.

"Mandy please, that's enough!" screamed Kari "You're gonna kill him

if you keep doing that! If you kill that guy, they'll kill you in revenge!"

Mandy did not seem to have heard. She slammed the guard against the machine again, the guard just blubbering feebly as if he couldn't speak properly anymore. It was a miracle he wasn't dead yet and yet Mandy seemed awfully keen to go in for the kill. She wrapped the chain of her shackles around the guard's throat and began throttling him with them as if trying to squeeze his head off. Fortunately for the guard, the other guard who had told her to shut up earlier had seen the carnage and he rocketed down the walkway he had been standing upon to try and get Mandy to stop, yelling into a communicator for Mace the Elephant to come and stop the madness before it went out of hand. It was like walking into a cage with a lion and trying feebly to tame the beast despite how wild it was. Mandy was so focused on that guard that she didn't see the other guard coming. If she did, she might have been able to dodge the electric prod that was thrust into her back by the guard. The prod stabbed into Mandy's back and gave her a horrific electrical shock that made her scream in pain and let go of the barely-alive guard she'd just beaten the stuffing out of. The other guard kept it up for a minute and then finally stopped, Mandy collapsing onto the floor in defeat, gasping for breath and fighting to stay awake. Kari just looked at Mandy, shaking her head sadly over Mandy's rage. She wanted to get back up but her limbs refused to move. Deep in her heart, Mandy knew that it would be best to just admit defeat already. Still, it was totally worthy losing the battle if it meant she'd beaten the guard half to death. The other guard helped the beaten guard up, the beaten guard struggling to speak properly and spitting out blood with ever blubber he had. The other guard patted him softly on the back, feeling very sorry for him.

"Just look what you've done you wild, savage monster!" snarled the other guard "You should be ashamed of yourself, beating this poor guard like that! Look at his face! I bet he'll be permanently damaged for life now! What do you have to say for yourself you beast of a mouse?!"

Mandy ignored him. It wasn't worth talking back to somebody with an electro prod. She didn't want another electrical shock. Then suddenly, the door opened and in thundered Mace, looking quite

furious indeed at what he had just heard over the communicator the other guard had spoken into. Mace stomped up to Mandy and glowered down at her, Mandy refusing to look at him as she lay there.

"What is going on in here then?!" boomed Mace, his voice like an earthquake "Something about a mad mouse attack?"

"Sir, this guard was just doing his duty and that wild animal attacked him!" shrieked the guard "Just look what she's done!"

Mace could barely keep his eyes off of the beaten guard. His eyes had swollen up, his cheeks had swollen up, his nose was fractured and dislocated, he had barely any teeth left in his jaws, his face was a little misshapen and his right hand had an ugly bite wound in it that just wouldn't stop bleeding. Mace had seen many horrible things in his life but this took the biscuit. He stared down at Mandy and glared at him, the mouse refusing to look up at him.

"Mandy Mouse, how dare you attack one of our guards like this!" he boomed furiously "What do you have to say for this scornful behaviour!"

"That rat of a guard insulted me!" retorted Mandy "And he whipped me for no reason! I had every right to stand up to him!"

"You're a slave for The Exterminators now you heathen and if you want to survive here, I suggest you know your place and keep your filthy hands to your self!" snapped Mace "For that behaviour, you can go back to your cell and stay there until tomorrow! You also will not be getting any dinner too!"

"Don't care, I hate cheese anyway." snapped Mandy, still keeping her eyes fixed on the floor she was lying on "And my cell's gonna be better then this stupid work anyway."

Mace just grabbed Mandy by the scruff of her neck and hoisted her up off the floor. Mandy ignored the pain and allowed herself to be carried away by the gargantuan-sized elephant with the club at the end of his trunk. Mandy was in big trouble now but it was worth it for her, worth teaching the guard a lesson for daring to be racist and

sexist to her both at once. That and it was a rat working for The Exterminators so that made it even better for her. A bittersweet triumph but a triumph nonetheless. As Mandy was taken away, Kari just watched her be taken away and she just sighed sadly for her friend.

"Oh Mandy…why couldn't you just stop?" she murmured, feeling afraid for her now.

It was obvious what was going to happen next. Mace was going to report everything that had happened and Brawn would likely order Mandy to be executed. Mandy would be…exterminated. The Exterminators had yet to kill any mice yet so Mandy would be the first they killed if they executed her. Kari could only worry for Mandy now and hope Brawn would be lenient. But it seemed fortune would favour the brave mouse for as the guard helped the beaten guard away to a medical room, Kari noticed something lying on the floor. It was a bunch of keys. The guard must have dropped them when Mandy started beating him up. Kari picked up the keys and looked at them. She had seen some guards unlocking the cells with those kind of keys. She had in her hands the keys to the cell doors! Kari would be able to free Mandy from her cell and help her escape! Kari looked around to make sure nobody was watching and she stuffed the keys down her ragged old makeshift bra. With that done, she sneaked out of the work room as quiet as…well, a mouse, before somebody could lock it and trap her inside.

"If me and Mandy are going to escape, it has to be now." Kari deduced to herself "Mandy won't last a minute longer here, they'll kill her for nearly killing that guard. We have to act now or Mandy won't get a chance."

With that said, Kari ran for it down the corridors, hoping to find the cells and get Mandy out before anything could happen to her. She was Mandy's only chance of escape now, especially since she had gotten to know the place already and knew the escape routes. Trouble was…would they succeed?

Meanwhile up in Brawn's quarters, he was still watching his spy

camera spying on the Royal Fighters. He had sent it there to see if anybody was going to start looking for Kari and to his displeasure Sonic the Hedgehog, Wilson the Dog and Teams Chaotix and Nekronopolis were planning to search for Kari and Mandy and rescue them from his clutches. This is why he had been hesitant to get involved with the Royal Fighters Service, he know what they were and what they did and he could hardly afford to have them sticking their noses into his business and ruining his beautiful plans. Brawn had called for Mace to come and meet him but he had been forced to wait for Mace had to be called over to stop Mandy from beating the guard to death so Brawn waited for Mace to deal with that task first. He was quite good at being patient though so he could wait for as long as he needed. After a good few peaceful minutes of watching camera footage, Brawn heard the doors open in the far side of the room and in walked Mace the Elephant, his right hand man and heavy bruiser, perhaps heavier than Brawn himself given he had a mace at the end of his trunk. Mace strode up to Brawn like a tank returning to base from a long hard day of blasting the enemy and he knelt down on one knee. Brawn kept his back turned as if he didn't need to turn around and see Mace for whatever reason.

"Master, I regret to inform you that a terrible occurrence has happened." explained Mace.

"Speak." the single word boomed out of Brawn's masked muzzle as if he'd just talked through a megaphone.

"Mandy Mouse attacked one of your guards my liege." explained Mace "She…beat him half to death. His face is disfigured, bruised and bloody and he has a horrible bite wound in his right hand. The girl's a monster sir, what should we do with her?"

Brawn didn't seem surprised to hear this.

"I expected Mandy to do something like this." he said in a tone that suggested this news barely surprised him **"The girl has been known to be provoked easily and has severe tempe r problems. I should know since she punched the late Benedict the Rat in the face over a very slight provocation."**

"We must do something about her!" cried Mace "I mean what if she

kills a guard next time? And what if the other mice start copying her? They'll start looking up to Mandy and then they'll destroy you and your group for good! Mandy must be dealt with!"

"She will be, do not worry." assured Brawn **"I nev er let incidents like that go unnoticed, I deal with them when they happen."**

"So what do you recommend sir?" asked Mace.

Brawn turned his head and looked over his left shoulder, his piercing red eye glowering at his pachyderm henchman.

"Execution." purred Brawn **"Tell the guards to take Mandy to the execution room. She is to be chained up and placed in a water vat. Then the electric cables will be placed in the water and… you know what happens next."**

"Understood sir, let me just say you made the right decision." said Mace, his face curling into a smile that should be the smile of a satisfied customer but instead, looked strangely forced.

"I am a rat of good mind, I always make the right decision." boomed Brawn **"And because of this, I am recruiting you for a very important job."**

"What's that then sir?" asked Mace.

Brawn stepped to the side and showed Mace the screen that had the Royal Fighters the spy camera was watching from within Kari's tent in the Nekronopolis camp. Mace stared in surprise. He knew too well who Sonic was. After all, was there anyone on Mobius who DIDN'T recognize Sonic?

"Sonic the Hedgehog?!" he gasped "Th-the hero of Mobius h-himself?!"

"Yes, he and some Royal Fighters are planning to rescue Mandy and Kari." explained Brawn **"So to prevent that from happening, I want you to go out and kill them."**

"I shall do that immediately sir." said Mace with a bow.

"And to make sure you succeed, I will be using the camera that I have placed in this very camp to monitor your progress and make sure you do kill them." said Brawn **"The place is Nekronopolis, you cannot miss it."**

"I know how to get to Nekronopolis." said Mace brightly "I'll be over there as quick as I can."

"Excellent. Do not fail me Mace." said Brawn coldly.

"Yes sir." said Mace loyally.

With that said, Mace got up to his feet and he began to leave the room. Brawn kept his attention focused on the screen as he watched the Royal Fighters some more. Mace left the room and once he closed the door behind him, his attitude seemed to change.

"I won't be ordering Mandy's execution." he said grimly "The girl was quite right to beat up one of your filthy henchmen. And as for Sonic, I think I'll deliver him straight to your door…once I can figure out how to get rid of your camera."

Mace put his thick skinned but quite brainy head to work. He wanted to bring Sonic and friends to Brawn personally but with Brawn watching him, he knew he couldn't. He'd have to find the camera and then destroy it so that he could do what he liked without Brawn spying on him. Maybe once he found it, he could arrange an "accident" involving him stepping on it or destroying it accidentally. Maybe even more convincingly enough, he could get one of the Royal Fighters to do it for him. Either way, he had a plan and once the camera was destroyed, he'd drop the act and bring Sonic straight to Brawn and Brawn's evil could be put to rest at last. He had enslaved his last mouse today and would never get the chance to kill any. It seemed that Mandy had more hope than just Kari after all…

Over to poor old Mandy Mouse, she had been thrown back into her cell and locked up in it before Mace left to see Brawn. Mandy had said nothing at all to Brawn and right about now, she was just sitting

hunched up against the wall and crying into her hands. She was feeling a wide variety of emotions right now. Sadness: sad over the fact she was going to put up with this for the rest of her life. Regret: regret over caving into the guard and beating him up so badly since it would give the rats an excuse to kill her. Worry: worry over the fact the rats might take offence to this and have her blatantly executed just for beating up the guard. Mandy was very scared, very upset and very alone right now, it was enough to make anybody breakdown and sob their heart out. As Mandy cried, she began reprimanding herself between snivels.

"Mandy you big, big, big, BIG idiot!" she wailed "Look what you've done now! You lost your temper and beat up a guard, quite brutally in fact! When Brawn hears about this he's gonna…gonna…have me exterminated!"

She began to sob some more, the tears flowing non-stop down her face. She knew she was dead and she knew that she had no hope. Once Mace or even Brawn strode into the cell, she was dead. She'd likely have her neck broken or her head crushed by either one of them. Brawn might even arrange a slow but grisly death for Mandy just to make her suffer more. Mandy was finished and she knew it. The rats would execute her and she'd never be able to reunite with Wilson ever again. It made Mandy sob even louder as she pictured Wilson finding out she was dead and howling like a wolf over her. Wilson would die of a broken heart if he ever found out she was dead. What was worse is this is how Mandy would go. Spending her last precious moments locked in a cell with nothing to do but feel sorry for herself until somebody came into kill her.

"Oh why did I do something so stupid?!" wailed Mandy "Before I had a chance of getting out of here, now I may as well carve my own gravestone! If only I could control this stupid temper of mine! Now… I'm gonna die and it's all my own stupid fault!"

She rested her head back into her hands and cried some more. Her hands were so wet from the crying one would think that she'd been dipping them into a swimming pool for no reason. It was astounding how Mandy had been a wild beast one minute and the next minute she was a crying shame of a mouse. Emotions were a tricky thing to understand but Mandy wasn't really bothered about working out

what emotions meant right now. She was bothered about how she was going to die since the situation was so grim for her right now she pretty much gave up hope of ever making it out alive. She would forever regret it though. Mandy's sobs were silenced by the horrible sound of a key turning in a lock. Mandy instantly grew frightened.

"This is it! My death is coming!" she whimpered.

Mandy swallowed nervously and awaited her doom. It never came for the one who had unlocked the door and opened it was the one person she was hoping to see, Kari the Rat! Kari had found her cell and using the keys she'd picked up earlier, had found the one for Mandy's cell and unlocked it. Mandy's tears evaporated like a puddle being soaked up by the sun and she was on her feet in a millisecond.

"Kari?!" she cried happily "H-how did…?"

"Your beating of the guard did something good Mandy." said Kari "He dropped his keys to the cells and I swiped them while no one was looking." she said with a smug face on, proudly showing the keys to Mandy as if she'd accomplished the mission impossible.

"Oh Kari, how lucky are we?" cried Mandy, hugging the rat gratefully for getting her out of the cell "Now you've freed me, we can get outta here before I get executed!"

"Wait, how do you know you're gonna get executed?" asked Kari "Have you been told that?"

"No, but it's obvious that's what will happen isn't it?" said Mandy "I broke a guard's face, I think it's obvious Brawn's gonna have me executed. We can't wait for blue dude or any of the Royal Fighters to pull a miracle and save us, we have to escape now!"

"I know, that's what I was planning too!" cried Kari "And thankfully, we have a lucky chance at this. The guards are all on duty, watching over the slaves in the work room so we might be able to escape scot-free. We should still remain vigilant though."

"I know, there's always a chance things can go wrong." said Mandy

"Oh and Kari…I just wanna say that…I'm sorry I didn't listen to you." she said gloomily "If I listened to you, we wouldn't be in this mess."

"Oh Mandy, it's quite alright." said Kari, hugging Mandy "I understand uncontrollable tempers, I understand how easily annoyed people can get. And I understand your attitude against insulting of fur colours and genders too, I hate those myself too. It's just wrong."

"Aww…thanks Kari." said Mandy, appreciating her friend's understanding nature "Now then…do those keys open my shackles? I can do without them too."

Kari looked at Mandy's shackles and then looked at the keys she had. She saw a key that looked like it might fit into the lock on Mandy's shackles. She inserted the key into the lock, the key neatly fitting into it and turning just nicely. The shackles opened and Mandy rubbed her wrists better. They had been quite tight on her wrists and they hurt a little bit.

"Thanks." said Mandy "Now then, which way out?"

"I think, that way." said Kari, pointing to her left "Come on, we haven't a moment to lose."

"Wait a minute…" said Mandy quickly "What if there's security cameras around? We might get spotted. I doubt that Brawn would make a place with no security cameras around."

"It doesn't really matter at this point." said Kari with a shrug "You're not gonna last a minute longer so we have to get out now. We won't get another chance. If we get spotted then we'll just have another excuse to escape. The keener we are to escape, the more chance we'll have of succeeding."

Mandy wasn't sure she agreed with Kari but she knew that the rat was right, she had to get out and she had to get out now. If she stayed a minute longer then she might get executed and Mandy could think of a million places she'd rather breathe her last breath in then the headquarters of The Exterminators. Mandy nodded gravely and she urged Kari to lead the way. Kari instantly took off, running

as quick as she could down the corridor. Mandy followed Kari, relying on the young rat to find the way out since Kari knew the place better than Mandy. After all, Kari had been there longer than Mandy and she had had a tour of the place. Kari wasn't entirely sure on the way out mostly but she had a rough guess based on the tour she'd had so Kari would likelier find the way out than Mandy ever could, even if Mandy searched every corridor. Unfortunately, Mandy and Kari only ran down the corridor for a few meters and then suddenly they ended up hearing the sound of footsteps coming from further up the corridor.

"Eek! Guards! Hide!" cried Kari.

In any normal case, Mandy was all too happy to beat up the guards but now they had to get away and stirring up trouble was the last thing they needed to be doing. Not to mention Mandy and Kari would have no chance against armed guards. Kari had seen many of the guards armed with guns and other weapons and Mandy didn't forget the guard who electrocuted her in the back, a repeat of that was not an option. Kari dived to the nearest door to them and she tried to open it. To her dismay it was locked. Not a problem considering she had the keys to all the cells in the corridor. Kari didn't care if this cell was occupied, they needed to hide and fast. Kari quickly unlocked the door and she opened it, allowing herself and Mandy to enter the cell and hide from the guards. The slipped through the door and closed it, keeping down so the guards wouldn't see them through the window. Mandy peeked up and watched as two ugly rats with brown fur and the usual guard uniforms strode past the cell, their senses not picking up a thing wrong as they walked past. They both had machine guns on them. Mandy sighed with relief. She and Kari would have had no chance against the guns. Mandy watched the guards walk away.

"Whew, we evaded them. Let's go Kari." said Mandy.

But to her confusion, Kari was staring ahead of herself in horror, her back pressed firmly against the wall and her eyes full of fright. It was as if she was staring at a phantom that had just come out of the floor and started wailing at her. Mandy looked in Kari's direction and she gasped in surprise herself. The cell they were in was a massive cell, much bigger than her own and in it was a bunch of grubby, dirty,

hideous, snarling, drooling rats! One-hundred of them too! These were the rats that had been forced to work for The Exterminators because they dared to say no to them and they looked starving and wild, all of them. Mandy and Kari had just walked into a death trap pretty much and the two girls could only stare, petrified with fear at what they had stumbled into…

Meanwhile in Nekronopolis, Sonic, Wilson, Team Chaotix and Team Nekronopolis had set off to find Mandy and Kari. Vector had the magnifying glass instead of Charmy this time and he was looking at the ground constantly if they could find some kind of trial that the rats unknowingly left behind that would help them find the kidnapped rodents. Unbeknownst to them, Brawn's camera was following them, scuttling across the ground as silently as possible. It was so tiny that it was no wonder nobody could hear it at all. Brawn was watching their every step and they had no idea. Vector peered through the magnifying glass and paused as he scanned the ground for any possibly clue. A footprint would do nicely, especially if there was a trial of them leading to somewhere. But unfortunately, Vector couldn't see anything that looked helpful lying around at all. There wasn't even a footprint. Vector sighed to himself in annoyance.

"No trails, no clues or anything." he grumbled "How the heck are we gonna find Mandy and Kari if there's no way of finding out where The Exterminators took them?"

"No idea." said Sonic grumpily, clearly sharing Vector's disdain "I'm amazed they managed to get away without leaving any footprints around. They must be very tidy at their jobs."

"More's the pity for us." muttered Wilson "We're never gonna find my wife at this rate!"

"If only Kari had an arm-band tracking beacon like I have." said Miranda Mongoose gloomily "We'd find her easily then. The beacon would take us right to The Exterminators."

"As is, we don't have such luck on our side." sighed Sonic "It'll take a miracle to find those girls now."

"I think it'll take more than a miracle, it'll take a zillion miracles!" wailed Thunder.

"Maybe even more!" added Bolt despairingly.

"Yeah…maybe." sighed Sonic "But I'm not gonna back down. I'll find and rescue Mandy and Kari even if I have to tear the world apart to do so!"

"Hey Sonic, what's that coming over the hill?" asked Wilson, poking Sonic in the shoulder and pointing ahead of him "Is it a monster?"

Sonic looked in Wilson's direction and he saw something charging in the distance, running down a rather steep hill that protruded like an ulcer in the plain earth that stretched around for miles all around. A cloud of dust whipped up as the thing came thundering across the plains and heading towards the Royal Fighters. It was, who else, Mace the Elephant, stampeding across the plains like how an elephant would normally stampede when provoked and frightened into running away. Mace saw the Royal Fighters and he thundered towards them, his feet like earthquakes as he cleared the distance between him and his prey. Sonic instantly sensed that Mace meant danger and he spin-dashed towards the charging pachyderm. Mace saw Sonic coming and he skidded to a halt. He then swung his trunk to one side and walloped Sonic away with the mace at the end of it. One would look and wonder how Mace was able to lift such a heavy mace with merely his trunk given how heavy it was. As much as he didn't want to hurt Sonic, he had to make this look believable or Brawn would accuse him of treachery. Sonic hurled across the plains and he came down with a heavy thud in front of the Royal Fighters. Mace stood before them, his appearance brooding and intimidating to them all.

"EEK! It's an elephant!" shrieked Wilson "And a very mean looking elephant too!"

"That's silly, what's an elephant doing in the middle of nowhere?" asked Charmy, clearly puzzled at the sight of Mace.

"Doesn't matter, it wants to have a fight it seems." said Sonic, picking himself up "OK you walking tank with legs, who are you and

what's the big deal?"

"I am Mace the Elephant and I have been ordered to kill you all by The Exterminators." boomed Mace "My master doesn't want you trying to save his slaves."

"Wait what, how do you know that?!" cried Miranda in terror, horrified at the fact Mace knew what they were doing.

"Never you mind you nosy little brat." snapped Mace "Prepare to be crushed you puny Royal Fighters!"

"If you're with The Exterminators then you can tell us where they are!" yelled Sonic "That is, once we've beaten you to a pulp!"

Sonic curled up into a ball and he spin-dashed Mace directly in the gut but somehow, Mace didn't double over in pain. He barely even flinched! Elephants are tough, it is difficult for even the strongest of animals to hurt them. Mace was probably one of the few Mobians alive that was unaffected by a spin-dash from Sonic. Mace swung his trunk and slammed the ground with his mace, hoping to hit Sonic but missing as Sonic zipped out of his way. Wilson, Team Chaotix and Team Nekronopolis charged towards Mace, keen to get into the battle and beat him down into the dirt. Mace seemed to welcome the challenge, all too happy to beat his enemies to death even though he was only keeping up a pretence for Brawn. Miranda whipped out her electro-prod and she tried to zap Mace with it but Mace just grabbed the weapon and yanked it out of Miranda's hands. He broke it in two and threw it down onto the ground, the weapon now useless to Miranda and nothing more than a broken toy. Thunder and Bolt had better luck, they threw lightning bolts at Mace and they struck the elephant in the back. Mace let out a trumpet of pain from his trunk as lighting seared his back and the two chipmunks jumped up onto his shoulders. They tugged on his ears, trying to bring him down onto the ground. Their diminutive size was of no use against Mace unfortunately.

"Uh…this is not making much of a difference is it?" asked Bolt sheepishly.

Mace just shook the chipmunks off, sending them crashing down

onto the ground in a heap. Vector then jumped on Mace from behind and grabbed the elephant in a headlock, wrestling him down onto his knees. The sad thing is, an elephant will always overpower a crocodile, even ones as strong as Vector. Mace broke out of Vector's grasp and he walloped him across the plains with a roundhouse punch. To Vector's fortune, Mace was holding back. He could punch MUCH harder if he wanted to. Espio jumped in and began to unleash his ninjutsu on Mace. He roundhouse kicked him in the face, elbowed him in the gut, kicked him in the legs and then uppercut him in the chin. The blows did little damage but Mace felt them, stumbling backwards as he was hit and Espio unleashed a ninja-kick on Mace's forehead, knocking him straight down onto the ground. Charmy added insult to injury with a kick to the eye that made Mace scream in pain. He clutched his eye and stood back up, only to get spin-dashed in the back by Sonic. Mace lay on the ground, grimacing in pain and Sonic stood over him.

"OK trunky, why the heck are you working for a bunch of rats?!" demanded Sonic "I mean, aren't elephants scared of mice and rats or something? Besides, you're an elephant, what have YOU got against mice?"

"It's nothing to do with mice or rats!" retorted Mace "It's purely so I can stay out of poverty!"

Before Sonic could wonder what he meant, Mace tried to stand back up. Sonic jumped off of Mace and spin-dashed him down onto his side just as he stood back up. Mace was back on his feet instantly and he swung his mace at Sonic, missing him purposefully as Sonic narrowly dodged him. As he fought, he kept his eyes open for the possible security camera that Brawn was using to make sure he succeeded. Once it was destroyed, he could then come clean and help Sonic and friends bring down The Exterminators…he just hoped he didn't end up killing them in the end…

Back with Mandy and Kari, the two girls were staring at the rather sinister, hungry looking rats that occupied the room they had just run into. Kari was backed against the wall whereas Mandy stood defensively in front of her, her fists raised threateningly.

"Stay away from us rats or you'll feel my fists of fury!" snarled Mandy.

The rats ignored her warning and they just advanced on her and Kari all the more, their movements creepy looking and almost unnatural as if they had forgotten how to walk properly. Slavery hadn't done them well at all, they were nothing more than feral beings now. As the rats advanced on Mandy and Kari, Mandy grew increasingly nervous. Sweat rained down her head and she tried to think of a better threat to give the rats.

"I'm warning you, one more step and you're all toast!" yelled Mandy.

Kari however had a more civil method of stopping them.

"Wait! Please, don't hurt us." she begged "We're lowly slaves just like you all are, we're just trying to escape. If you let us go and don't kill us then we'll help you escape too."

The rats suddenly had a change of attitude as if Kari's words had an automatic effect on them. The rats suddenly turned all nice, their feral behaviour diminishing and their grins looking more friendly than hungry. One rat who wore a monocle, a top hat that had a hole punched through the top of the crown section and bits of the brim torn out of it and a ragged old smart outfit, stood forward and bowed down to Mandy and Kari as if he was presenting himself to the queen. Mandy was astonished. Kari was one amazing girl if she could somehow get all one-hundred rats to change their attitude towards them! Or was it simply because she promised them freedom? Mandy was kind of pleased Kari did that since she wanted the enslaved rats to be free from this oppression too. Plus, her hatred of rats had been declining after the whole revelation behind the mice and rats being endangered so Mandy would have promised them the same thing had she thought of it. The monocle rat straightened himself up and smiled at the girls.

"Oh joyous day! Somebody is promising us freedom at last!" he cried happily, his voice very aristocratic "After days and days of this torture, I was beginning to think we were NEVER going to be free again!"

"You sure look like you've been here for a while sir." said Mandy, sympathizing with him even though she'd only been here for an hour at the most and had only done five minutes work before being taken back to her cell "Look at yourself! You look…dreadful! I'm sorry if that offends you."

"Oh my dear sweet child, don't you fret about me." said the monocle rat "I am not that easy to offend, you're quite alright with me."

"Huh, finally! A decent rat other than Kari!" chuckled Mandy "I'd been hoping to meet another nice rat and now here you are. So what's your name sir?"

"Indeed my dear, I am Raleigh Stilton." introduced the monocle rat "One of many rats whom has been imprisoned just because we don't share Brawn's prejudice against mice. And you are?"

"Mandy, Mandy Mouse." said Mandy, shaking Raleigh's rather filthy, unwashed hand. Slaves were not permitted with cleaning facilities for reasons only a cruel person would understand since it's for cruelty more than anything. Thus, the slaves got very filthy and the smell that they emitted was enough to make somebody sick.

"I'm Kari." said Kari, hoping Raleigh had noticed her as well "Pleased to meet you."

"The pleasure's all mine my child." said Raleigh happily "So, you're slaves of The Exterminators too? Such a pity, how could Brawn imprison to lovely women such as yourselves?"

"How could Brawn imprison a rat as pleasant and polite as yourself?" Mandy asked back "Honestly, with manners like yours, who'd want to treat you like this?!"

"Like I said Mandy my dear, Brawn didn't like the fact that I along with all the other rats in this cell didn't share his prejudice against mice so he imprisoned us." said Raleigh with a sad face on "He's trying to MAKE us hate the poor, poor mice of Mobius by making us work and telling us that "It's the mice's fault this is happening to us". I myself am a rat of profound logic so I will not buy this nonsense from him."

"I'm glad you don't." said Mandy "After all I've been through, I now no longer wish to be a part of this stupid rivalry our races have had over the years. Speaking of which, do any of you rats know how it started?"

"Mandy, I don't think we have time for that…" hissed Kari nervously.

"No, no, no my child, it's quite alright." said Raleigh "The guards rarely check up on us, they're unlikely to come by this cell anytime soon. They don't give us much attention, expecting us to be wild, feral and mindless by now. Of course, we almost did until you promised to rescue us all. Anyways Mandy, I have the answer to your question." he said, turning back to Mandy.

"Really?" gasped Mandy excitedly "Then how did mice and rats come to hate each other then?"

"Given how I've been hoping to stop this rivalry too, I studied vigorously on the subject and found out this." he began to explain "The mice and rats have been enemies since the day Mobius first existed. The rivalry exists purely out of a feeling of superiority, a feeling of being the better race and wanting to prove who the better race is. Two races with much in common and yet such different ways of life and ways that they don't understand. The rivalry has evolved along with the planet, getting worse and worse as time went on. The rivalry has gotten so bad that…both races are in danger of becoming extinct. Do you know how many of us rats and how many mice are left Mandy?"

"I do, Brawn told me himself." muttered Mandy "There's only 1,000 of you rats left, 900 of them keeping up this stupid rivalry and 100 of you forced to serve them For my kind, there's 100 more mice left than rats. While I'm glad there's more mice left, I kinda feel sorry for you rats." she said sympathetically, her hand over her heart as if to say it truly broke her heart to hear both races were endangered "I may have grown up hating rats but I NEVER wanted them to go extinct. I just wished they'd be more like me and the mice that's all. To hear that mice and rats are literally wiping each other out…it's just awful!"

"The feeling is mutual child." said Raleigh, putting a hand on

Mandy's shoulder sadly "I had been hoping to change the ways of rat life before I got enslaved. I did a successful campaign too. As you can see, 99 rats already supported my cause in the first few weeks I started it! But then Brawn came in to try and undermine all that…I sure hope that after all of this, more rats will change their ways and call off this forlorn rivalry. If the mice and rats don't learn to get along…then both races will go extinct."

His head lowered and his eyes fell to the ground as despair swept over him. Mandy shared his expression. She didn't want the mice and rats to go extinct and she was determined to prevent that. She looked at all the other rats, feeling very sorry for them as they shard Raleigh's despair. They looked very sorry for themselves as if they were disgusted that their own kind was continuing this rivalry and enslaving mice and rats all over like this. Hopefully once the rivalry was called off, the rats could build a better name for themselves and gain a better reputation.

"Well once me and Kari escape and get the Royal Fighters to stop The Exterminators for good, I'll help you gain some supporters Raleigh." said Mandy determinedly "I've been forming a speech in my head since I've been here and hopefully, the speech I have planned will sway some opinions."

"I look forward to hearing it my dear." said Raleigh brightly "So, when are we going to escape?"

"Me and Kari are going to escape first Raleigh." said Mandy "You lot just hold on until we return with the Royal Fighters. When the Royal Fighters get here, we'll rescue all the slaves, arrest Brawn and eliminate The Exterminators for good, I promise."

"I can trust a mouse to keep her word." said Raleigh, his face as joyous looking as ever "Mice seldom ever deceive or lie to anyone after all."

"Indeed." said Mandy "Goodbye Raleigh, we'll be back soon."

"Goodbye my child, and good luck." said Raleigh, tipping off his at to Mandy. The 99 rats with him all smiled and waved goodbye as if Mandy was a good friend of theirs and they were wishing her the

best of luck.

Mandy winked at Raleigh, pleased to have had a lengthy conversation with a pleasant rat other than Kari for a change and she and Kari left the cell. They closed the door behind them and Kari reluctantly locked it as they left. They couldn't leave it unlocked or the rats would notice the slave rats' cell door had been unlocked. They had to leave things as they had left them. Mandy and Kari ran off down the corridor, once again looking for a way out of the building.

"Well Raleigh was nice." said Mandy cheerfully "Let's hope more rats start acting like him when this is over."

"I hope so too." said Kari "Then maybe rats can stop having a bad reputation and people other than the Royal Fighters can start trusting me. Not that I'm ungrateful they trust me that is…"

"I understand Kari." said Mandy "Now then, which way…?"

Favour had decided it had had enough of giving Mandy and Kari fortune. As they darted around a corner they ended up crashing into somebody. And that somebody was none other than Brawn the Rat himself! He had heard the sound of running feet outside his quarters and he had decided to investigate to see what was going on. To his amazement, it was Mandy and Kari and they both stared up in horror at Brawn, unable to believe their bad luck.

"How droll, Mandy and Kari come crashing straight into me. " he boomed **"And just when I began to wonder if Mandy had been executed yet. Well then, I guess I shall have to do it myself…"**

He reached out with his enormous hands and they closed around Mandy and Kari's necks as he hoisted them up off their feet and carried them off somewhere. They had been caught red-handed and as punishment for trying to escape, they were going to get one sentence…execution.

Footnotes:

***See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 20: Honeymoons and Rats* for that is where this whole thing began…**

Holy deep fried dodos! Mandy and Kari are in trouble now and Sonic and friends are up against Mace! But why is Mace wanting to rebel against Brawn and help Sonic? Will Mandy and Kari be saved? And will the rodent rivalry finally end? Find out next time as Endangered Species comes to an exciting end...

Remember to tune into* Tales from Mobius *for more of* Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm *and find out if the Royal Fighters back home can capture Blizzard the Ice Witch!

Endangered Species Part 3

Story 163: Endangered Species Part 3: Mice in Rebellion

Countdown to Crisis: 2

"Whoa! Watch where you're swinging that thing you crazy elephant!" yelped Sonic the Hedgehog, ducking down to dodge the swinging mace that was aimed directly at him "You could hurt somebody!"

Mace the Elephant, the one swinging the mace at Sonic, ignored him and he swung his mace again. Sonic the Hedgehog and fellow Royal Fighter Wilson the Dog, Team Chaotix and Team Nekronopolis were engaged in battle with the heavyweight, muscular elephant that had been sent by Brawn the Rat to kill them all. Mace, who's name derives from the fact he carries a mace at the end of his trunk, didn't want to do such a thing and actually wanted the Royal Fighters to help him bring down The Exterminators but because he was being watched by Brawn's hidden camera to make sure he succeeded in killing the Royal Fighters, he had to put up a fight until he found the camera and destroyed it. Once he did that, he could reveal what his true intentions were and get Sonic and friends to terminate The Exterminators and rescue all the enslaved mice and rats, particularly Mandy Mouse and Kari the Rat. For now, he had to fight on but because he didn't want to kill them, he purposefully held back and even made sure that his mace attack was avoidable so he wouldn't break their skulls or anything. In other words, if Mace was fighting for real then some bones would be broken already. Sonic spin-dashed Mace and sent him hurling directly into Vector the Crocodile. Vector jumped up and just as Mace was about to hit him, he slammed both fists down on the elephant's head and brought him crashing down onto the ground. Mace was surprised that Vector was so strong. He always did like it when he was against somebody who could throw a punch like he could. Mace picked himself up only to get zapped in the ankles by Thunder and Bolt. Mace was brought down onto his knees by the attack but he was back on his feet in no time and he swung his mace at Thunder and Bolt, slower than he would normally swing of

course for he wasn't planning to kill them. Thunder and Bolt dodged the mace and they threw lightning bolts at Mace again, the elephant trumpeting in pain as the lightning seared his tough skin. Wilson ran in and he pointed his spinning blade weapon at Mace's throat.

"Alright you thick-skinned cretin, where's my wife?!" growled Wilson "Where is Mandy?!"

"Find out yourself wimp." scoffed Mace, slugging Wilson in the gut and then throwing him across the battlefield as far as he could.

He purposefully aimed at Vector though so that Wilson would have a less painful landing and Vector would most likely catch him anyway, which is exactly what ended up happening. Vector caught Wilson and he put him down so the dog could stand back up and continue fighting.

"I don't think he's gonna tell you where Mandy is." said Vector "We'll just have to beat the info out of him."

"I'll be all too happy to do that." said Wilson with a very obvious tone of anger in his voice, an uncharacteristic tone of voice for him to use most of the time.

Wilson threw the spinning blade at Mace and the double-bladed weapon ended up skimming him across the face as Mace tried to dodge it. His tough skin allowed him to deal with the pain more than the average person would have but it was still enough to make him wince. A good enough distraction for Sonic was able to land a well-aimed stomp kick to the face that brought him down onto his back. Mace tried to stand back up but Sonic jumped onto his head and he put his hands over the elephant's eyes. Mace tried to make Sonic let go of him but Sonic held on tightly, holding on for dear life as Mace tried to shake him off. While he was blinded, Espio and Charmy both leaped in and kicked Mace in the gut together. Espio then went for a sharp prod to the shoulder blade that made Mace cringe in agony and for a moment, he summed stunned. Charmy added insult to injury by stinging him on the trunk. The stinger wasn't as effective as it would have been on an ordinary person but the sting still made Mace bellow in pain. Charmy's stinger was a painful sting after all. Sonic then leaped off of Mace's head, uncovering his eyes and he

stomp-kicked him from behind, throwing him down onto the ground.

"Hey, I should use the stomp-kick more often!" chuckled Sonic "It's quite effective."

Charmy seemed to agree for he was grinning rather excitedly about it. Mace grumbled furiously and he picked himself up.

"No wonder…you guys are the heroes of Mobius." grunted Mace "You're all quite tough."

"Indeed we are you walking vacuum cleaner." sneered Sonic "That's why killing us, or at least trying to is a big mistake. Oh and you might wanna look out, there's a mad mongoose heading your way."

Mace was dumbfounded and before he could even wonder what Sonic meant, Miranda flew in from nowhere and she dropkicked Mace directly in the forehead. The kick sent Mace stumbling backwards and he fell onto his back. As he did though, he felt something go crunch against his skin. Mace had clearly squished something as he landed. He picked himself up and turned around to see what he had landed on. He saw a crushed piece of metal with spindly legs and a broken lens. Mace smiled to himself. It was Brawn's hidden camera! He had destroyed it at last! Now he could come clean! Sonic spin-dashed Mace in the back but the elephant took the blow and he stood back up.

"OK trunky, you up for some more?" crowed Sonic "Come on, I haven't finished with you yet!"

"Well I have." said Mace plainly "Because I'm not here to battle with you, but to recruit you all instead."

Sonic looked like he had just seen the silliest looking thing in his life.

"Say WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAT?!" he cried out in surprise "You were just trying to kill us a moment ago and now you want to recruit us?! WHAT?!"

"He's trying to trick us!" declared Wilson "Well I'm not falling for it!"

"It's no trick Wilson." said Mace "I speak the truth here. You see,

Brawn had smuggled a hidden camera into the camp that belonged to Kari the Rat's team and he was using it to spy on me and make sure I did what I had been told. Now the camera's destroyed, I don't have to keep up the pretence."

As if to further prove himself, he even pointed at the wrecked spy camera that lay smashed on the ground, unusable for anybody now. The Royal Fighters all looked at the destroyed camera and Miranda seemed a little disturbed over the fact Brawn had managed to sneak one into her campwithout her realizing it.

"You mean that The Exterminators were spying on us?!" cried Miranda.

"Guess that's how Mace knew where to find us." murmured Espio.

"Who wants to bet that those rats wanted to make sure we weren't planning on saving Mandy and Kari?" Wilson deduced "And this so-called "Brawn" sent Mace here to prevent us from saving the girls."

"Looks like he's gonna regret it though since Mace-y here wants to help us." said Sonic with a smirk on his face "Speaking of you Mace…why are you working for The Exterminators if you suddenly want to recruit us?"

"Believe me, had I know how evil they were in the first place, I would never have joined them in the first place." muttered Mace, his face a furious scowl all full of wrinkles from his leathery skin "You see, I was born and raised with a family of poverty. My family were so dreadfully poor that it was a miracle we were ever able to eat anything. We resorted to stealing in order to get out daily bread and for a while it worked. But sadly, it wasn't enough to get us out of poverty. We were still poor and life just grew tougher and tougher for us. Given I was a child, I was given the most of any food we ever managed to steal. This in turn has led me to becoming the most fit and able of my family. I was determined to put an end to our poor lives so I tried to find work but jobs are very hard to come by nowadays. Then came the day I met him…Brawn the Rat. He told me he had big ambitions and that he would pay me handsomely if I worked for him. Desperate for money, I accepted without even so much as asking what the job was. I soon lived to regret it when I

found out though. Enslaving mice and torturing them to make the rats feel superior was NOT my idea of work. I instantly wanted to leave but then I thought that I could stay a while and win Brawn's trust then strike him down when he least expected it. And of course, I did get paid well by Brawn so my family now has some decent money to keep them going. It just sickens me that I've earned it through such despicable ways. I was more and more determined to leave The Exterminators as I went on and now I find you Royal Fighters planning to rescue Mandy and Kari and that's when I realized I had the best opportunity ever. I can bring you all to The Exterminators and have you bring them down for good and I can just act like I had nothing to do with it. But then once The Exterminators are defeated…how will I keep my family out of poverty now?"

Sonic took in Mace's story and he thought for a moment about this. Mace was a poor man who had ended up working for a villain, not intending to be doing something evil and was just wanting to get his family out of poverty? Sonic couldn't help but pity poor Mace. Poverty was awful and it could do horrible things to you. Sonic however knew exactly what to do.

"Say Mace, it's really sad to hear about all this and I'm sorry you've had to go through all that." said Sonic sympathetically "But I know just the thing. If you join the Royal Fighters Service, we will pay you all wondrously and your family never need to live as poor folk again. Not to mention, we'd be all too happy to have a guy as big and strong as you on our side."

Mace looked stunned to hear this.

"You…you'll take me in as a Royal Fighter?" he gasped.

"If you want to join us then yes, we will." said Sonic with a smile on his face "You'll be a great Royal Fighter! Not to mention, I'd love to see you squash Eggman with that mace of yours." he said with a wink.

"Funny thing is, I was holding back during my battle with you guys so I wouldn't kill you all!" chuckled Mace "When I fight for real, I'm MUCH worse!"

Sonic just laughed at that little statement, almost imagining what Mace fighting for real would be like.

"I can imagine." said Wilson with a slight chuckle "Now then, PLEASE can you take us to where those evil rats have taken my wife? I just want Mandy safe and back in my arms again."

"Wilson, you needn't have said anything, I was just going to do that." said Mace "But there's more than Mandy and Kari to save over there. There's 100 mice and 100 rats all enslaved there and we must rescue them all as well. We can't just leave them to suffer at Brawn's hands."

"Wait what? There's rat slaves too?!" gasped Sonic "Is Brawn insane in the brain or something?!"

"Enslaving his own kind too? What the hell's up with him?!" gasped Wilson.

"The rats who are enslaved are ones who opposed the rivalry and wanted nothing to do with The Exterminators. Brawn's trying to make them hate the mice by enslaving them and thus, they'll join them willingly." said Mace furiously "I'm disgusted I even work for that monster. What I wouldn't give to kill him already!"

"So mice AND rats are being enslaved by this crazy group of exterminating rats?" said Sonic "Wow…and I thought that all rats save Kari were bad. Maybe there's some hope for the rats after all if 100 of them opposed Brawn's ambitions…"

"Indeed." said Mace "Now then, we must hurry. Before I was sent to kill you all, Brawn told me to order Mandy's execution to which I obviously didn't. He might find out that Mandy's execution hasn't been ordered yet and will have her killed so we need to get a move on!"

"Lead the way Mace!" cried Sonic.

Mace nodded and he ran off as fast as he could, running on all fours for her ran faster that way. Sonic and the others all ran after Mace and followed him as he led them off to Central City and most

importantly…the headquarters of The Exterminators. Wilson just prayed that Mandy would still be alive by the time they got there and that he would be in time to save his beloved wife…

The Royal Fighters would have to get a move on though for the execution was being set-up at this very minute! Mandy Mouse and Kari the Rat had tried to escape from The Exterminators after Kari ended up stealing a guard's keys which had been dropped while Mandy beat up said guard and all their escape ended up doing was telling them how the mice and rats became enemies and why and then they ended up accidentally running to Brawn during their escape. Brawn had seized them both instantly and had taken them both to be executed. The execution was taking place in an isolated room that was full of pipelines, dangling chains with hooks on the end of them, buzzing generators and walkways that led to some of the upper floors of the building. Mandy and Kari had both been fastened in shackles that were then raised up and draped over a hook above their heads. Their arms were raised above their heads by the shackles and they couldn't get the shackles off the hook. They were stuck. That wasn't it though, they were also standing in a cold steel basin that made their feet shiver and the basin was being filled with cold water. A hosepipe was draped over the side of the basin and squirting out cold water into the basin, soaking Mandy and Kari's feet as the basin filled up. Mandy could hardly understand this, how was this a method of execution? All Brawn was doing was getting their feet wet. Then again, Brawn certainly wasn't stupid, he obviously knew what he was doing. Mandy and Kari tugged on their shackles and tried desperately to get free. Alas, their attempts were just in vain. They had no chance of escape. Mandy grunted furiously as she tried to break free.

"Hurgh, dugh…let us go!" yelled Mandy "You can't chain us up like wild animals like this!"

"Uh Mandy, he already has done." said Kari timidly, her struggling ceasing after she decided it was just pointless to keep trying.

"Thanks for pointing out the obvious Mrs. Rhetorical." snapped Mandy, shooting a cold glare at the terrified rat that was chained up

beside her. She turned back to Brawn and yelled at him again. "You let us go right now Brawn or you'll be sorry!"

Brawn, who was watching the basin fill up with water, turned the tap off and the hose pipe stopped trickling water into the basin. The basin was close to overflowing with water. It came up past Mandy and Kari's ankles by a few centimetres. Brawn strolled over to Mandy, his evil eyes focused squarely on her as if he was trying to turn her into stone or something. His hands were behind his back but he could quickly draw them out and punch Mandy if he wished.

"You are the one who will be sorry Mandy, sorry that you and Kari dared to try and escape from me. " he boomed menacingly **"Attempted escaping of my headquarters results in immediate death."**

"Who cares? You would have executed me anyway!" snapped Mandy "I beat one of your guards half to death, I was already due for an execution no doubt. Speaking of which, how is that sexist piece of crap now?"

"In intensive care." replied Brawn, his voice like a megaphone in Mandy's ears **"We do not know if he'll live as a cripple or die from his injuries. Behaviour like that will not be tolerated from you so you will pay for that as well as trying to escape."**

"That jerk deserved that beating! He disrupted me while I was working and he was patronizing towards me! I gave him what he asked for!" screeched Mandy furiously.

"Mandy, for god's sake just shut up already!" hissed Kari "Being all tough and mighty isn't going to get you out of this and all you're doing is making Brawn mad!"

"At ease Kari, Mandy is not making me mad, she is merely amusing me. " purred Brawn, his expression more relaxed than agitated eerily enough **"You never cease to amuse me Mandy. Amuse me on how you're so headstrong even when the situation is hopeless. You really have, what many might say, a lion heart. Such a heart is truly commendable ind eed."**

"More than what can be said about you wuss-bag!" snarled Mandy.

"That name has no way of insulting me Mandy, I am not cowardly anymore in case you've forgotten." said Brawn coldly **"I AM fear itself, people fear me and I strike fear into the heart of anybody I meet. Cowardice has no hold on me anymore."**

"I don't care what garbage you spew at me, you'll always be that coward Mildred I once knew from High School regardless of how you look!" yelled Mandy bravely.

"Mandy, are you TRYING to annoy him?!" shouted Kari crossly.

"We're gonna die anyway Kari so I'm just throwing some last insults at him so I can die a happy mouse!" retorted Mandy.

"You will not be dying a happy mouse at all Mandy for I shall have the final laugh in this forlorn conversation." sneered Brawn, a smirk curling up from behind his mask **"I have had enough of your tough talk Mandy, it is time to finish you and Kari off."**

"So…how will we die?" asked Mandy, gulping nervously as she knew the worst was coming for her now.

"The most painful way possible." purred Brawn, a gloating tone evident in his amplified voice **"Notice how you both stand in a basin of wa ter? Well the water will be your doom. It is harmless as it is now. But we all know what happens when electricity gets into contact with water don't we?"**

Mandy and Kari both felt the air escape their lungs as they gasped in horror.

"You're going to electrocute us?!" shrieked Kari in terror "No, please, you can't! I'd rather have a much less painful death! Please use something less painful!"

"There is no satisfaction in a death that isn't painful." said Brawn with an icy stare in his eyes **"You tried to escape, your deaths must be painful so you pay for it better. Not to mention, Mandy deserves a death like that for beating one of my poor**

guards up really badly."

He then jammed his face into Mandy's, so much in fact that his breathing sounded even louder in Mandy's ears and Mandy could even feel it coming through the mask.

"Any last words?" the three words boomed one by one out of his mask as Brawn spoke them.

Mandy scowled back at Brawn, determined not to let the rat intimidate her.

"Yes actually." she said "You kill me and Kari, you will be making the biggest mistake of your life. The Royal Fighters will discover this and they'll make sure you pay for our deaths. I PROMISE you that."

Kari was quite surprised that Mandy delivered all that without raising her voice and managing to sound really calm, collected and cool about it all. Mandy truly was an amazing woman in more ways then one. Brawn took in Mandy's words and he just remained stoic as if her words had no meaning to him.

"The Royal Fighters will never find us and your deaths will nev er be discovered." he crowed **"You will simply just disappear and everybody will forget about you."**

With that said, Brawn strolled off and he headed towards a working machine. Mandy instantly knew what he was going to do, he was going to tear a wire out of the machine and dunk it in the water that they stood in. The moment the wire went into the water, they would be fried instantly. Mandy and Kari both looked worriedly at each other as the end began closing in on them.

"Mandy…I'm afraid we're finished." said Kari, her lovely innocent face streaming with tears of fear "I can't believe we're going to die here! What…what's Miranda going to think when she…finds out?"

"She'll be devastated." said Mandy sadly, shedding some tears of her own "As for Wilson…I don't think he'll live without me. Poor dog will be devastated to no end when he finds out about us."

"I bet he will." wailed Kari "I never thought I'd be dying like this. At

least I'm with a great friend like you as I die Mandy."

Mandy smiled sadly at Kari, touched to hear that from her.

"Thanks." said Mandy appreciatively "As for you. Kari…you're the best rat I've ever met." she said back to Kari, every bit of that sentence coming from her very heart as she said.

Kari just smiled sweetly at Mandy, touched by her kind words.

"Aww…that's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me." said Kari happily "Thank you Mandy."

"Thought I'd let you have something nice to hear before we die." said Mandy, a weak smile on her face which was streaming with tears along with Kari.

Kari could only beam appreciatively at Mandy, really pleased at the fact she had a friend who was not only a mouse but a mouse who accepted her despite being a rat. Seemed fate was giving her one last thing to appreciate before finally seeing her off. As for Mandy, she really had grown close to Kari during her time in this hell hole. It was almost like Kari was another sister for her. With Marion gone, Kari was the closest thing to a sister Mandy had ever met. It made her happy that of all people she could die along with, Kari was that person. The two rodents lost their smiles for Brawn returned to them, carrying a huge wire that sparked furiously as if it was desperately trying to connect back to some circuitry and continue its electrical course along with the other wires inside. Brawn made a face that could have looked like he was smirking at Mandy but given the mask he wore, it was hard to tell what expression his mouth was making. Mandy and Kari just shivered at the sight of the sparking wire that was going to be the thing to take their lives away.

"Goodbye Mandy and Kari." boomed Brawn, raising his arm and preparing to throw the wire into the water.

Mandy and Kari closed their eyes and waited for the final blow to come to them, their eyes still streaming with tears as they closed them. Brawn aimed for the basin and prepared to throw the wire into it, the electricity crackling inside it furiously. Fate may seemed to

have had enough of favouring Mandy and Kari when they ran into Brawn. But it seemed that fate had seen how scared Mandy and Kari looked and decided to take pity on them. Favour returned to Mandy and Kari's side once again for suddenly, something burst through the door of the room, said something yelling aloud "Oh YEAH!" as it did so. The thing was of course, Sonic the Hedgehog himself, spin-dashing through the door and heading towards Brawn. Before Brawn could even so much as turn an eye, he was hit squarely in the back and sent hurling to the side away from Mandy and Kari. Brawn hurled across the room like a thrown stone and he crashed into a huge cabinet that ended up tipping forward and coming down with a thunderous smash on top of him, supposedly crushing him underneath its massive weight. Mandy and Kari opened their eyes, amazed to see they were still alive. They didn't take long to figure out how they were still alive for Sonic stood before them, grinning triumphantly at what he'd done.

"Hey ladies, not to late to save the two of you am I?" asked Sonic.

"Blue dude! Oh my god, it's really you!" cheered Mandy.

"Pinch me, I must be dreaming!" cried Kari "Sonic's found us at last!"

"Indeed I have and I'm not alone." said Sonic, pointing to the broken door with his thumb "I've brought company."

Right on cue as he finished the word "company", Team Chaotix, Team Nekronopolis and Wilson all ran into the room as quickly as they could. Mace was not with them at the moment, he was freeing the captives at this very moment. Mandy and Kari's faces exploded with joy at the sight of the other Mobians rushing into greet them. Wilson drew out his spinning blade weapon and he threw it at the shackles holding Mandy and Kari's hands aloft. The blade cut through the chains and the girls lowered their arms without hesitating. They leaped out of the basin and Mandy's first instinct was to run towards Wilson while Kari ran towards Miranda, Thunder and Bolt. Kari threw herself into Miranda's arms and the mongoose embraced the rat as if she was a mother reunited with her long lost daughter at last. Kari and Miranda both cried happy tears over this, neither one wanting to let go for the moment. Thunder and Bolt joined in the hug, smiling over the return of their fellow comrade.

"Oh Kari I've been so worried about you!" cried Miranda "Thank god we found you at last!"

"Miranda, Thunder, Bolt! I've missed you all so much!" cried Kari "It's so good to be back with you all again!"

"It certainly is!" cheered Thunder "Our team just wasn't the same without you Kari."

"We're all back together again! Hooray!" Bolt yelled happily.

As for Mandy, she and Wilson ran towards each other with open arms and tears of joy trickling down their faces. Mandy threw her arms around Wilson and Wilson grasped his wife into a tight embrace that neither one wanted to end. Wilson twirled Mandy around a couple of times, earning a giggle of pleasure from the mouse and they both kissed each other on the lips as if it was the first kiss they'd had in years.

"Oh Wilson, oh my god you found us at last!" Mandy exclaimed joyfully "Thank god, I thought I was never going to see you again!"

"Thank god indeed Mandy! I thought I'd lost you forever!" Wilson cried joyfully "Now we're back together, I'm NEVER going to lose you again!"

He and Mandy kissed each other again, this one a very deep, passionate and loving kiss that made them both feel very happy, content and reunited at last. They had truly missed each other and just being back with each other was enough to have them crying happily and kissing each other like there was no tomorrow. Sonic just watched the reunions with awe. He loved bringing friends and loved ones back together, it made his heart swell with pride to watch.

"Aww…that's so sweet." said Sonic "This is what I love about the hero business, getting to see joy like this."

Wilson and Mandy finally broke up their kiss after a minute and Mandy asked the most obvious question she could possibly ask.

"How ever did you find us?" she asked.

"Well we had help from an elephant named Mace." explained Wilson "He led us right to you. I'm so happy he did though, you back in my arms has been the best thing that's happened today."

Mandy looked stunned to hear this.

"Mace?! Mace brought you here?!" she explained "Does that mean…"

Her sentence was rudely interrupted by the heavy sound of metal being lifted up and then slamming down against the floor. Brawn had miraculously survived being crushed by the cabinet and he picked himself up. Wilson clutched Mandy tightly to himself and Team Nekronopolis stood defensively in front of Kari. Brawn stared at the Royal Fighters in horror. It was the first expression of horror he had ever emoted since his turn to valour.

"What?!" he blurted, completely flabbergasted at this **"How did you…? I sent Mace out to kill you all!"**

"Well Mace got the warm and fuzzies and decided to switch sides." sneered Sonic "He led us right to you and is right now releasing all of the slaves while we kick your ugly butt into the next continent!"

"You kidnapped my wife, kidnapped a fellow Royal Fighter and imprisoned mice and rats for your own cruel purposes!" snarled Wilson "I am going to make mincemeat out of you for all this!"

"No Wilson, you stay out of this." said Mandy "I will deal with Brawn."

"No Mandy, you can't take him on by yourself!" cried Wilson "I'm not going to let that monster take you away from me again!"

"Wilson please, I can handle him." said Mandy reassuringly "Besides, he's only Mildred, that coward from High School. He'll be no problem."

Wilson instantly burst out laughing at this.

"Brawn is Mildred?! That wuss from High School?! And I thought he was to be taken seriously for a minute!" he laughed.

Brawn had had enough. He thundered towards Wilson like a charging rhinoceros, his head lowered and aimed at Wilson. Mandy however tipped the basin of water over and spilt water all over the floor. This caused Brawn to slip on the water and fall down onto his back. Brawn winced in pain as he came down with a heavy crash on his back. While he was down, Mandy jumped onto his gut and she grabbed the mask from around his mouth.

"Before we fight, you can take off that stupid, STUPID mask!" growled Mandy "Maybe you won't feel so intimidating without it!"

She then proceeded to rip the mask clean off of Brawn's mouth. She soon ended up wishing she'd kept it on though. Mandy stared at Brawn and she gasped in horror at what she was seeing. She leaped up to her feet and she put her hands over her mouth in astonishment. Brawn's mouth was completely metal and crammed with metallic teeth, all sharp and triangular like the jaws of a shark! The mask had not just been there to look scary, he had something to hide behind it the whole time and now his secret was out! Brawn clenched his metal teeth furiously. Mandy began to think that he suddenly looked less scary with the mask on. The others seemed to agree with her. Brawn looked scarier without his mask all of the sudden.

"Oh…my…GOD! What the hell did you do to your mouth?!" gasped Mandy.

"My desire to look intimidating was quite extreme." explained Brawn, his voice still amplified even without the mask on **"I even altered my appearance using stolen technology from Dr. Eggman to roboticize various parts of my body. It was mostly internal works though. I am 50% cybernetic inside while most of my outer appearance is still organic. I do wish to keep some of my humanity after all. I even had my vocal chords roboticized so I would have this constant booming voice to intimidate and strike fear into my opponents. The only visible signs of my cybernetic work is my mouth and I shall bite your limbs off for removing my mask!"**

"I don't care if you fully roboticized yourself! You're still going down Brawn and I will beat you as badly as I beat that guard!" yelled

Mandy determinedly.

"We shall see about that Mandy…" growled Brawn menacingly.

"We shall indeed Mildred." scoffed Mandy "You kidnapped me and a whole lot of other mice, subjected us to hell and then attempted to kill me and Kari! You will not live to enslave another mouse Mildred!"

Brawn had had enough of Mandy calling him Mildred. He rose his fists and he attempted to bring them crashing down onto Mandy's head but the mouse dodged the attack. Brawn's fists slammed onto the floor quite heavily and left some cracks in it. Small cracks but cracks all the same. Sonic, Wilson, Team Chaotix and Team Nekronopolis just watched as the fight began to unfurl before them. Mandy vs. Brawn, may the best rodent win. Mandy threw a punch at Brawn's face, making sure she avoided his metal mouth but the punch didn't really do much harm to the rat. Brawn backhanded Mandy across the room, the mouse flying into the machine he'd torn a wire out of to dump in the basin of water earlier. Mandy grimaced and winced as her body slammed roughly against the hard machine. She picked herself up and dodged just as Brawn charged at her. Brawn smashed into the machine but due to his cybernetics enhancing his body strength, he took the blow well as if it was nothing and he ended up denting the machine. His internal cybernetics made him stronger and more resilient then he should realistically be. Mandy gulped at the sight of the dented machine. Had she signed her death warrant taking on Brawn by herself? No, Mandy would defeat Brawn or die trying. Mandy picked up the basin that she and Kari had been standing in and she threw it at Brawn like a Frisbee. The basin walloped him in the head and the blow was actually enough to bring Brawn down onto his back. Mandy ran over to the machine that Brawn had taken a wire out of and she ripped out another wire. She pressed it against Brawn's back as he stood up and he got a very nasty electric shock, made even worse by his cybernetics. But Mandy made the mistake of thinking he might pass out now and she took it away. Had she left it a few seconds longer, Brawn might have passed out from the shock. Brawn turned around and backhanded Mandy onto the floor. He then picked Mandy up and slammed her against the machine. The mouse cried out in pain and Brawn threw her down onto the floor. Wilson wanted to scream

and cry for his wife but he knew that Mandy was tough and that she would come out on top sooner or later. Brawn stood over Mandy, the mouse grunting and trying to get back up.

"Had enough yet you little brat?" purred Brawn smugly.

"I'm just getting warmed up loser!" grunted Mandy.

She then drew her legs back and kangaroo kicked him in the groin. Brawn groaned an amplified groan of pain and he bent down, clutching his tender spot. This gave Mandy the opportunity to uppercut him in the face and then punch him in the eye, the dead eye that is. Brawn threw a punch at Mandy but Mandy ducked and she roundhouse kicked him in the arm, throwing his balance off and making him stagger. Mandy then jumped into the air and dropkicked Brawn in the head, making him stagger backwards and then collapse onto a table that sat nearby. The table was old and rickety and it broke under Brawn's immense weight. This proved to be a blessing though for Brawn ended up having something to use as a weapon. He picked the table up, the legs falling off of it, and he threw it at Mandy. Mandy dodged the flying table but she wasn't in time to dodge a club to the right leg from a table leg Brawn had picked up. Mandy screamed in pain as she was smacked in the leg and she clutched in, wincing tensely as if willing the pain to go away. Brawn then grabbed Mandy by the neck and he punched her onto the floor. The punch sent Mandy's head spinning, the mouse wondering which way was up. Her face was bruised and her leg was swelling up with a painful bruise on her thigh. It was painful to stand on and Mandy could barely get back up.

"Mandy! Get up!" cried Kari.

"You can't let Brawn beat you!" yelled Wilson.

Mandy tried with all her might but she just couldn't get back up. She was in too much pain and Brawn was too strong for her. Brawn picked Mandy up and he held the beaten mouse above his head. Mandy squirmed furiously but Brawn held her tight.

"Ah yes! I was wondering what would brea k first!" cried Brawn delightedly **"Your spirit…"**

"No Brawn! Put me down, let go of me!" cried Mandy "Don't you dare, don't you dare!"

She had a horrible idea of what Brawn was going to do. As he stuck his knee out as if preparing to break something over it, Mandy knew that she was right on what Brawn was planning. He was going to break her spine! Slam her helpless body down onto his knee and fracture her spine! Sonic was met with horrible memories of Devion crippling HIS back when he and the Devatrons invaded Mobius. Sonic had managed to heal but poor Mandy wouldn't have a chance. He had to act fast.

"…or your body!" boomed Brawn, ready to slam Mandy down onto his knee.

But before he could do that, Sonic spin-dashed Brawn in the gut and made him drop Mandy. Sonic caught her in his arms before she could land on the floor and Brawn hurled backwards into the wall. Mandy gasped with relief.

"Oh thank you blue dude! I thought I was gonna be permanently disabled for a moment!" she shrieked.

"Good thing I stepped in at the right moment." said Sonic "Now then, I think we should take Brawn down together, you can't stop him yourself."

"I know." said Mandy "So let's…"

But before anything else could happen, something thundered into the room, its footsteps like an earthquake as it stampeded inside. It was Mace! He had freed all the captives and helped them take down, tie up and subdue all the guards and now he was here to stop Brawn. He had a feeling his strength would be needed for this one so he joined in the battle. He ran towards Brawn and walloped him into the machine with his mace. Brawn picked himself up after that blow which ended up sending him flying into the machine and breaking more of it and he glowered at Mace. He remembered that Sonic had told him Mace had switched sides, henceforth how he had managed to find Mandy and Kari. Now he could see for himself Mace had double-crossed him. He would have to deal with him for

this.

"Mace…you dared to betray me. I will punish you for this…" he snarled.

"YOU are the one who deserves to be punished!" roared Mace "Your evil has gone on long enough and I'm ashamed I was ever a part of it!"

He ran towards Brawn and threw a punch at him. Brawn stepped to the side and he backhanded Mace across the face. He then roundhouse punched him twice in the jaw but Mace then grabbed Brawn by his vest and slammed him back first into the machine, picking him up one-handed with ease as if he weighed nothing. Mandy punched the air, cheering for Mace and happy to see him on the good side. Mace then slammed Brawn onto the floor and kicked him across it. Brawn picked himself up, clenching his metal teeth as Mace picked up the broken table Brawn had thrown at Mandy earlier. Mace slammed Brawn with it, the rotting wood splintering to pieces as it slammed against his tough body. Mace had a good chunk left of the table that he used to wallop Brawn's head with. Brawn staggered but he remained standing somehow and then Mace swung his trunk mace at Brawn. Brawn dodged the attack and the swinging mace missing its target caused Mace to overbalance, giving Brawn the perfect opportunity to run into him and grab him in a bear-hug. Mace however forced Brawn's arms off of himself and the two ended up with their hands gripping another and their arms fighting against each other, trying to push the other down onto the floor. Wilson decided to run and get some payback on Brawn for the kidnapping of his wife. He scampered on all fours towards Brawn and did one of the biggest dog stereotypes ever…he bit him on the bum! He sank his powerful teeth into Brawn's bottom and the rat screamed in pain. His bum was a sensitive area and hadn't got any internal cybernetics in it, meaning it was a weak spot for him just like his groin. Mace then ended up pulling Brawn forwards, throwing himself down onto his back and kicking Brawn into the wall face first. Brawn groaned an agonizing, ghoulish groan of pain but more pain was to come for him. Mace picked up Brawn and he tossed him into the air. Brawn screamed as he hurled through the air. Another scream came out of his lungs a split second after though for he

ended up hitting something. Something sharp…something dangling on a chain…something that impaled him through the chest. He had landed on a hook! Mace had actually been aiming for the hook when he threw him and Brawn had landed smack on the hook. It impaled him in the chest and Brawn was left gasping and wincing as he fought for breath. His breath escaped him and his limbs fell limp, suggesting there was no life left in them. Brawn was finally dead. Here he dangled, impaled on a hook and hanging from a chain like a slaughtered pig in a butcher's shop. Kari felt sick and she instantly turned away from the sickening scene before her, Miranda hugging her comfortingly. Mandy cringed and Wilson put his arms around her to comfort her. Sonic just spin-dashed the chain and let Brawn's dead body fall to the floor with a thunk so that it didn't look so sickening anymore. Mace just glared at his body without a single expression on his face.

"It's done. He's finished. Good riddance." he muttered.

"I agree." said Mandy grimly, keeping her eyes off the hideous sight before her. She then looked at Mace and said "Thank you for joining our side."

"Aw you're welcome Mandy." said Mace cheerfully "I couldn't stand working for those rats anymore so I decided to rebel against them."

"And now Brawn's gone, he's going to join the R.F.S." said Sonic with a wink.

"Oh really? Cool!" cheered Mandy "Mace will be an excellent Royal Fighter! Oooh, I can just imagine him against Eggman now!" she added, grinning excitedly.

"Before that though we need to get the slaves out of here." said Espio "I think there's plenty of mice and rats down there begging for freedom."

"Hold on Es." said Mandy, holding up a hand dismissively "I need to make a speech first. A speech that will hopefully end this stupid rivalry between mine and Kari's races…"

With that said, Mandy limped out of the room and found herself on a

platform that overlooked much of the working room. All the mice were standing in rows as if they were an audience waiting to see a performance on the stage. With them were the enslaved rats and they had all the members of The Exterminators bound up and defeated beside them, all 899 of them (Brawn's dead so there's only 899 left). The mice and rats all seemed to cheer at the sight of the Royal Fighters looking over them from the platform that loomed above them. They knew that they were the ones who had saved them and they were ecstatic to see them again. The crowd fell silent when Mandy held up a hand to signal for them to silence. The crowd held its breath and Mandy then spoke. The speech she had been formulating since she got here finally got the chance to be spoken.

"My fellow mice and rats, I am happy to announce that the oppressive leader of this organization is dead at last, his tyranny is no more and all you slaves may go free now." Mandy announced "But that is not the ONLY thing that's dying today. During my time in this hellhole I have come to realize that mice and rats are both endangered now and we're on the brink of extinction, BOTH of us! And who's to blame for this? We all are. We mice dared to be enemies with the rats and the rats dared to be enemies with the mice. Our rivalry has been going on since the dawn of time and it has gone on for TOO long. The rivalry is killing mice and rats everywhere and if we don't put an end to it…I'm afraid we'll all die out. So I, Mandy Mouse, member of the Royal Fighters Service, stand before you all with a solution to our problem. Mice and rats shouldn't be enemies, we should all be friends. We maybe different to each other but difference doesn't mean it's wrong. I've realized how wrong I was to hate rats and some rats out there realize it's wrong to hate mice. If we're to survive for the next generation, we mice and rats have to make peace with each other. We can learn to get along just nicely and the similarities between our races should be enough to convince either race that we can get along. If we make peace between our races, our numbers can escalate again and mice and rats will no longer be endangered. I say we should put an end to the rivalry and start anew…as Rodent Buddies. Please let this Rodent Rivalry end and let a Rodent Alliance rise up in its stead. That way, we will survive and our races won't die out."

The crowd fell silent as they took in the speech. The Exterminators

members looked at each other and they decided on something.

"That speech is well-constructed and shows how bad we all are." said one guard.

"I'm with you on this one mouse-girl, we should be allies, not enemies." said another.

"From this day on, The Exterminators are now disbanded and all rats shall make peace with the mice." said a third guard.

"I second that!" cried a mouse slave.

"The Rodent Rivalry led to this so it's only logical we call it off." said another mouse.

"Mandy my dear, your speech is full of wisdom and heart." said Raleigh Stilton, the leader of the rat slaves "And I say we should go with the speech and end this rivalry!"

It seemed that the crowd had come to an agreement and with that, the crowd all roared back at Mandy "WE WILL MAKE PEACE AND END THE RIVALRY!" Mandy cheered happily, pleased her speech had been so moving and powerful that everybody had decided to call off the rivalry. The Rodent Rivalry was over, mice and rats all over could now live peacefully with each other. Two endangered species could soon climb back up out of the endangered category and their numbers could thrive once again. Mandy had put an end to a rivalry and made peace between two races. This was truly the best moment of her life. Wilson hugged Mandy in congratulations.

"Well done Mandy!" he exclaimed excitedly "You did it!"

"Now mice and rats and be friends and we don't have to hate each other anymore!" cried Kari ecstatically.

"I've gotta say Mandy, that was amazing." said Sonic "You sure you just made that up yourself?"

"I did indeed blue dude." said Mandy with a giggle "I'm amazed that it worked so well. So now this nightmare can end for good and mice and rats can live in peace. Maybe the rats can now build a better

reputation for themselves…"

"I hope so." said Kari "It'll be nice to be accepted by the public again."

"Indeed." said Wilson "Now then…"

He then suddenly scooped Mandy up into his arms, lifting her up off the floor bridal style and holding her close to his body. Mandy wrapped her arms around Wilson's neck and shoulders and giggled.

"Wilson please, I can walk." she said.

"Nah Mandy, you deserve a rest." said Wilson "You've been through quite a lot and your leg's a little banged up. I insist I carry you home my darling wife."

"Aw…so sweet as always." giggled Mandy "OK gorgeous, you can carry me but don't think I'm letting you do this more often!" she added jokingly.

"I know precious, I know." laughed Wilson.

"Still though…I'm so glad to be in your arms again Wilson." said Mandy sweetly "I've missed you so much while I've been in here."

"I've missed you too Mandy." said Wilson "Having you back in my arms is the best thing that's happened today. When we get home, you can get out of those horrible rags and we'll have a lovely evening together, just the two of us."

"That's lovely Wilson." said Mandy with a smile "I can't wait to get home now. Before we go though, your little Mandy wants a little kiss…" she purred slyly, edging her lips towards Wilson's.

Wilson giggled and then he and Mandy locked lips with each other, deeply embracing and having a lovely tender moment between them. It sure did look very romantic with Wilson carrying Mandy in his arms bridal style and the two just kissing each other as if they hadn't kissed in ages. The crowd down below all awed in unison, finding the whole scene very cute and adorable. The Royal Fighters awed at this too, including Mace. Wilson and Mandy had been

separated, but fate saw them back together and now they were together again, Wilson and Mandy were going to make sure that they never separated ever again…

Awwww...so adorable!

Well, that's the end of Endangered Species! Pity really, I was enjoying it. :(Oh well, when one good story ends, another begins. Join me next time for the countdown to crisis concludes with a "Sonic Date". The romantic couple? Sonic and Sally of course! Bet you can't wait for that...

So all my readers, yes, ALL my readers. How was Endangered Species as a whole? Feel free to tell me what you thought and leave a review or two on this chapter! :D

Quills and Acorns

Story 164: Quills and Acorns

Countdown to Crisis: 1

A whole week had passed since the whole affair with The Exterminators and already it felt like an eternity away for MandyMouse.

She had been kidnapped by The Exterminators and forced to suffer the worst day of her life. She had been forced to wear rags, forced to be a slave for Brawn the Rat, the leader of The Exterminators and a childhood enemy of Mandy's and found out that mice and rats were both endangered species and in desperate need of help. Mandy had managed to stave off the rivalry and potentially safe both races but there was still a bit to go. There were members of The Exterminators who had been arrested and weren't willing to call off the rivalry. Prison would keep them from doing anything to any mouse around though and Mandy rather coldly stated they could stay in prison for eternity unless they called off the rivalry. To her pleasure, they had agreed to disband the group after hearing that Brawn was now dead and the ones who hadn't been arrested had joined the truce. As for the mice in Adabat which had been prisoners of The Exterminators until Mandy, her husband Wilson the Dog and Team Adabat rescued them*, they were a bit unsure about the truce. They weren't willing to trust the rats still after what they did to them but they weren't going to be jerks about it. They would see how the rats go and then consider joining the truce. Mandy had hoped that her speech would have been widely accepted but to her disappointment, some mice and rats needed more encouragement. She was just happy the 100 mice and 100 rats that shared captivity with her were all too happy to call off the rivalry. It was a good start and it would hopefully get better over time. As of now, Mandy was having a lovely moment on the sofa with Wilson. Wilson lay on the sofa with Mandy lying on top of him. Mandy was no longer in the rags she had been forced to wear a week ago. She was wearing a green crop-top that exposed her belly (much to Wilson's delight) and

a skimpy pair of shorts that showed off plenty of her curvaceous thighs. A belt was wrapped around her waist and it kept her shorts up. She wore nothing on her feet. Mandy loved to be barefoot on a normal day. Wilson was in casual wear too, wearing a black vest top, some blue jeans and a belt that kept them up. He had no shoes on for he was lying on the sofa and Mandy was quite strict about shoes on the sofa. They both closed their eyes and relaxed, enjoying each other's company. Wilson was stroking Mandy's belly softly with his fingers. He loved Mandy's slim, flat, sexy belly and was always happy to stroke it for her, especially since Mandy enjoyed it. Mandy had her head on Wilson's chest and she was listening to his heartbeat. She loved the sound of his heartbeat, it made her feel relaxed and at peace when she heard it. Because they had been separated, Wilson and Mandy had been making the most of every moment they had together now and they couldn't be happier now.

"Aaaah…this is the life isn't it?" asked Mandy "Just me and you enjoying each other's company and relaxing together. Pure bliss."

"Indeed my beautiful Mandy." purred Wilson "I couldn't think of anything better."

Mandy smiled brightly and she turned over onto her belly, facing Wilson and allowing the dog to now stroke her back. Mandy felt a tingle of joy as Wilson's fingers brushed down her back gently.

"Oooooh…that feels good." she sighed "You give me some lovely back-tickles you do."

"Thanks." said Wilson "Anything for the most beautiful woman I've ever met."

Mandy giggled and she gently stroked Wilson's face. Wilson loved it when Mandy did that, her fingers felt so wonderful gently stroking his face like that. Nobody had nicer hands than Mandy did.

"It's no wonder I missed you like crazy when I was in Brawn's captivity." said Mandy softly "You couldn't make me feel relaxed and content and without you by my side I just felt…vulnerable. Back in your arms, I feel like the happiest girl in the world, safe and content

as any wife should feel with her husband."

"Indeed. You needn't ever worry about Brawn and his group anymore, they're gone now and the rodent rivalry is over." said Wilson "All that matters now is that you're back where you belong and that there's nothing to worry about anymore."

"Indeed my handsome hound dog." purred Mandy, leaning her head towards Wilson's and getting ready to kiss him "And this past week's just been wonderful, being with you and forgetting all about the horrors I was subjected to. I'm still thankful that you and the blue dude himself came to rescue me. I did try myself but still, I can't thank you enough for saving me from that horror."

"Mandy, you're more welcome than you can ever realize." said Wilson "You mean everything to me and I couldn't live my life if you weren't in it. You make my life worth living and I will never let you be taken out of it."

"Awwww…so charming and so flattering. I've always loved that about you." said Mandy, her face the embodiment of awe.

She then planted a loving kiss on her husband's lips. As far as Mandy as concerned, she would never tire of this and neither would Wilson. As they kissed, they began to stroke each other softly, adding more to the pleasure they were getting out of kissing and cuddling each other. Anyone would truly find this scene utterly adorable, even the most stone-faced of people. As they kissed and cuddled, they were unaware that someone was watching them. And that someone was Sonic the Hedgehog. He was passing by and had decided to look in through the window to see if Wilson and Mandy were in at all. He saw that they were in and he could see them making out with each other. Sonic was going to check up on them but seeing them kissing each other, he thought it'd be best to leave them in peace since they seemed so content right now. It'd be rude to disturb such a lovely moment between the couple. Yet Sonic couldn't help but adore the sight before him. He looked away from the window so people wouldn't think he was being nosy and he walked off.

"Aww…they're so cute together." said Sonic brightly "No wonder

they got married. I can't ever picture them not being married now. And yet, seeing them getting so romantic with each other makes me kinda wish I wasn't so reluctant to try at love."

Sonic had tried dating Amy before and the dates hadn't really gone very well…not very well at all so Sonic had been distancing himself from relationships and indeed, love as a whole. Yet, Queen Sally Acorn joining the Royal Fighters as both a royal AND a fighter seemed to change all that. He had found himself growing feelings for her and Sally had even suggested he could give love a chance. Over time he found himself more and more infatuated towards Sally and he thought now would be a good time to give love a chance. He was going to take Sally on a date and see how things went. He hoped that things went well otherwise he would be very reluctant to try love again.

"Now then…I wonder where Sally is?" mused Sonic "I hope she's still in the castle so I can ask her out. I'm sure she will be."

With that said, Sonic headed off towards Castle Acorn. Just as he ran off, Amy Rose passed by and she saw Sonic running off towards Castle Acorn. She had been hoping to ask Sonic if he was free for a date at all but she had been too late. He had run off. Amy wondered what was going on.

"Hmm, Sonic's running to Castle Acorn." she mused "I wonder what he's up to? I'll follow him so I can ask him is he free for a date tonight once he's done in the castle."

So Amy decided to run off after Sonic and see what was going on. She would live to regret it though for Sonic would be free for a date tonight and Amy wasn't the lucky girl he'd be taking out…

"Do you, Mace the Elephant, swear on the blood of your species and the will of the good people of New Mobotropolis that you will serve faithfully as a Royal Fighter and help contribute in anyway to the downfall of any enemy that seeks to take our peace, happiness and freedom away?" asked Queen Sally Acorn as she held a huge sword just above Mace's shoulders.

"I swear." replied Mace, the elephant down on one knee before Sally as she did the process.

"Then rise up Mace the Elephant." said Sally, lightly touching Mace's shoulders with her sword as if she was giving him a knighthood.

After Sonic, Wilson, Team Chaotix and Mace returned home with Mandy and Team Nekronopolis returned to their home with Kari, Sonic had briefed Sally in on the entire adventure they had had, including Mace and his dilemma with his family and life of poverty. Sally had taken pity on Mace and was all too happy to accept him as a Royal Fighter. She too was impressed by how powerful and strong he looked and thought that Mace would make a very good Royal Fighter. It had taken a week to finally get Mace accepted because there were duties Sally had to deal with that took some time off her hands, especially when it came to cleaning up after what Blizzard had done** and Mace had been helping out with the mice and rats getting back home safely. Now both were free so Sally could finally get Mace all signed up for the R.F.S. Mace was all too happy to have been accepted into the group and was looking forward to working for good people which would more than make up for working for Brawn and The Exterminators. Mace got up to his feet, now towering over Sally, and he shook hands with her.

"You have no idea how thrilled I am to be accepted your majesty." said Mace happily "After being part of The Exterminators, the first thing I began wishing for was that I had picked a job with good people in it. Now I'm one of you. This is more than enough to make up for what I did for Brawn and his goons."

"Indeed so Mace." said Sally "I can't thank you enough for helping Sonic save Mandy and Kari. I hate to think of my fellow Royal Fighters captured and held against their will. The Royal Fighters should remain united and should never be separated."

"So true." said Mace "And I was all too happy to bring Mandy and Kari back to the R.F.S. They did not deserve their captivity at all. After all the good they've done along with the other Royal Fighters, they deserve their freedom."

"I couldn't have said that better myself." said Sally brightly "Now

then, as a reward for your heroism, take this bag of gold and split it out evenly with your family." she added, handing Mace an enormous sack of Mobiums that seemed very heavy for her to carry due to how much money was in it "This should get them out of poverty for a while until their lives can be balanced and they can live in civilized society full time."

Mace took the bag of money, which weighed nothing to him, and he looked inside. There were more Mobiums than he could possibly count in the bag. There was enough money in the bag to keep the family financially independent for a month or two! Mace would make sure this bag of money didn't go to waste that was for sure. Mace stared at Sally and then smiled as if this was the nicest thing that's ever happened to him.

"Why your majesty…I don't know what to say." he said.

"You're welcome Mace." said Sally cheerfully "Heroism is to be rewarded, that's my motto."

"A very good one indeed." said Mace "I'll go home and deliver this to my family immediately. If you ever want to find me, I live in a small village in Mazuri. It's a country that's blazing hot, has big plains and deserts and is full of Mobians like me, you can't miss it."

"I'm fully aware where Mazuri is Mace." said Sally "I have an Atlas in the library and I spend a lot of time reading it and memorizing where all the countries are."

"That's good." said Mace "Well, I'll see you later then. I also wish to do some catching up with my family as well as deliver this money so I'll be gone awhile. Maybe a couple of days at best."

"OK then Mace, see you later." said Sally.

Mace slung the money over his shoulder and he walked off out of the throne room. The moment Mace left, Sally sat back down on the throne and thought to herself on a few things. She had recently discovered that her father, the late King Max, wasn't the man she thought he was. Blizzard had looked in his journal and read an entry which detailed how anxious he was about her escape and how he

assumed Blizzard would get her cult to exact revenge on the Kingdom of Acorn for how she had been treated. Thus, he had taken some guards with him and hoped to arrest the entire cult to prevent such a coup de tat. The result ended up with them being killed and now Blizzard knows about this, her desire to conquer the kingdom was more extreme and personal than ever before. It pained Sally to think that her glorious kingdom had single-handedly wrecked the life of a dangerous enemy who wouldn't even BE an enemy to begin with if none of this had ever happened. Blizzard had said it herself that she would have just gone home to Holoska and forget about the Kingdom of Acorn. Then King Max came alone and ruined all that by killing her cult and driving her insane. Sally was running a corrupted kingdom and she was all too determined to fix its twisted image. She had started with burning the journal. A four days ago, she had taken King Max's journal and tossed it onto the fireplace, eliminating any evidence that Blizzard could make against the Kingdom of Acorn and prove her point on King Max's actions. Now people would assume she was pointing fingers for no reason and Sally's popularity wouldn't be in jeopardy. It would take a bit more than that though. Sally would have to rule like a good queen and make sure she never did anything bad like her father did. It was going to be stressful and tough but Sally was determined not to let herself or her kingdom down. She was going to give it its good image back and she wasn't going to let anything tie her down.

"I'll make this kingdom worth ruling again." Sally said to herself "That is a promise. Nobody will know what you did dad and this kingdom will still be beloved and honourable. Our image will never be tarnished again…"

Her thoughts were soon disturbed for she heard a knock at the door. Sally snapped back into reality and she cleared her throat.

"Ahem…come in." she said quickly.

She assumed it was Nicole or a fellow Royal Fighter wishing to see her right now. She got the pleasure of her life when the door opened for Sonic the Hedgehog walked into the room, wearing his usual trademark smile and looking as optimistic and carefree as always. Sally admired that about Sonic. How somebody with burdens heavier than even hers can be so optimistic and cheerful for so long

truly mystified her and yet made him so admirable at the same time. No wonder she had been falling in love with him over time. Sally leaped up to her feet in joy and she ran over to Sonic. Sonic and Sally embraced each other, happy to be seeing each other after being apart for a while due to recent events and picking up the pieces of said events. It was the first time in a week that the two had been able to see each other properly. Unbeknownst to the couple, Amy was outside and watching them through the window, poking around the corner to make sure nobody could see her. Amy's immediate reaction upon seeing the embracing couple was a screwed-up face of bewilderment.

"Wow, Sonic's allowed to just hug the queen like that? Is he really that big a hero he's allowed to embrace royalty?" she said to herself "One would think you couldn't do that. And what's the deal? It's not like they're in love or anything."

Amy shook it off and continued to watch, curious to see what was going to happen in the throne room with Sonic and Sally. The embracing obviously meant they were pleased to see each other and Amy always loved it when people were friendly towards each other. It made her feel good to see good friendships between people. Sonic and Sally stopped hugging each other and Sonic began speaking first.

"Hey Sal, how's it going?" asked Sonic.

"It's going beautifully thank you." said Sally brightly "I've just made Mace a Royal Fighter. He's officially on our team now and I'm really happy about that. He's just gone back home to deliver a sack of money I gave him as a reward for helping to save Mandy and Kari, we won't be seeing him for a few days."

"That's nice." said Sonic "I really do say that the poor guy deserves our sympathies. Poverty really does suck for anyone who has to live a life of it and poor Mace ended up having to do something bad just to get some money for his family. Well, he's doing something good for money now and I bet he's going to love life with us."

"I bet he is too." said Sally "So Sonic, what brings you here then?"

"Well I just wanted to see how my beautiful queen was doing so I thought I'd pop over and say "hi"." said Sonic "And I also wanted to ask you something too."

"Oh really?" said Sally, the tone of surprise in her voice as evident as it could be "What may I ask would you like to ask me then?"

Now came the moment Sonic had been looking forward to yet wondering if he'd be able to bring himself to finally ask the big question that any boy who loves a girl could ask. Sonic swallowed nervously and he held Sally's hands as he tried to bring himself to ask the question. He came close before, he would succeed this time.

"Sally…um…I would be really happy if you would…uh…" Sonic stammered as he tried to make his lips form those words.

"Wait, is this something you wanted to ask me before Roxy came in and informed us of Dark and Kiara's disappearance?" asked Sally slyly, somehow guessing what Sonic might be wanting to ask her.

"Uh…yes actually." said Sonic, sweat-dropping nervously and chuckling shyly.

"In that case, I think I know what you want to ask me." said Sally "You want to know if I want to go on a date with you don't you?"

"Why yes, yes I do." said Sonic, pleased that Sally had managed to guess so now he didn't need to ask the question "That was exactly what I was going to ask. Are you free to go on a date with me tonight?"

"I am indeed my handsome hero." said Sally seductively "I've been looking forward to the day you'd finally ask."

"Well Sally, I can't say much else other than "I'm glad you want to go on a date with me"." said Sonic happily "How does tonight sound?"

"Tonight sounds wonderful." said Sally "Where shall we have this date?"

"I think the park sounds nice." said Sonic "We'll get a takeout meal

from Chuck's Diner, take it to the park to eat and then just enjoy the night."

"That sounds like a wonderful idea." said Sally, embracing Sonic again "I can't wait for our date tonight."

"I look forward to it too Sally." said Sonic, stroking Sally's hair and grinning happily over the fact Sally had accepted his offer. He was now the happiest hedgehog in the world at this moment.

Amy could only stare in horror through the window at Sonic and Sally. She had overheard everything and she was completely destroyed to hear that Sonic was not in fact going to date her, instead he was going to date Sally. Amy had been hoping to date Sonic again after two interrupted outings but all hopes of another date had been shattered in a matter of moments. Sonic loved somebody else and was going on a date with somebody else. Amy was frozen in shock, unable to move for a moment. Deep inside, she could feel her heart breaking in two like a glass falling off the table and onto the floor. She collapsed down onto her knees and she felt tears coming to her eyes. Her whole world felt like a broken mirror, shattered and crumbling to pieces as it came down with a slam onto the floor. It seemed like everything just stopped for a minute until finally, Amy breathed again. She began to breathe slowly and then start mumbling unintelligible babble to herself. Then she regained herself, her eyes streaming with tears, as she commiserated over this development.

"Sonic…wants to go…out with…Sally?!" she squeaked "He…he doesn't love me after all…oh I should have known Sonic wouldn't love me! He made it clear since day one he wasn't interested in me! I really shouldn't have been so annoying and fan-girly towards him! Oh how I want Sonic for my own and now all my hopes and dreams are shattered before my eyes!"

Amy looked back through the window and she fixed her eyes onto Sonic and Sally, the two still embracing each other. Amy seriously felt like breaking through the window and beating Sally to a bloody pulp right now.

"Look at that smug Queen Sally, hugging my Sonic like he's her

own!" she grumbled "Oooooh I could just march in there and… and…"

Amy then suddenly began to realize something. As she watched Sonic and Sally hugging each other and smiling happily, she began to feel something else. Something she had never felt before. Appreciation and acceptance for others. She was finding herself beginning to accept this turnout. It felt weird for her to feel this way but at the same time, Amy knew that accepting the turnout would be better than letting it bother her. Her expression relaxed and her nerves calmed down. Her tone of voice seemed to relax too.

"Oh what am I saying?" she sighed to herself "What am I saying? They look SO wonderful together! How could I possibly break up such a lovely couple? That would be so selfish of me!"

Amy stopped looking out of the window and she slumped against the wall on the grass beneath her feet.

"I couldn't bear the thought of being selfish." Amy said to herself "Being selfish is horrible and Sonic certainly wouldn't love me if I just threw a hissy fit over the fact he's dating Sally and not me. I can't break them up, even if I do wish Sonic was going out with me instead. Besides, if I truly love Sonic as much as I claim I do…I would LET him choose the girl he wants. That's the right thing to do. If Sonic wants Sally then I should be a good friend and let him. If I can't be Sonic's girlfriend then I'll happily be his friend. Also I wish for Sonic to be happy, and Sally's going to make him VERY happy indeed. So bottom line, I won't be a brat over this."

She stood up again and looked through the window. She saw Sonic and Sally waving bye to each other and Sonic walking out of the throne room while Sally walked back over to the throne and sat on it, clearly delighted over the fact Sonic was wishing to date her. Amy just smiled, knowing exactly how Sally felt right now.

"Oh Sally, I know exactly how happy you're feeling now." she sighed "All the more reason why I can't possibly keep her and Sonic from dating. I got the joy of dating Sonic so why shouldn't Sally? And you know what…I think I'll even HELP make this date perfect for them!"

Amy had to resist the urge to go gaga over the idea in fear of getting spotted and having to explain herself.

"Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes! It's the perfect idea!" she squeaked excitedly through clenched teeth, her smile as big as her head nearly "I'll drop a suggestion or two, without them knowing it's me of course, and if they take them, it'll be the best date ever! And I'll be the one to see it in all its romantic glory! Oh yes, I can't wait until tonight!"

The excitement that pulsed through Amy's bloodstream was enough to make her go mental. Amy could just picture the date now and she was very excited on how it would go. Her ideas to make the date even grander would be worth the watch. Tonight was going to be a night to remember and Amy could hardly wait…

As time began to tick away and the night of a lifetime was growing ever closer, Sonic sat in his living room and started reading some comic books of his to pass the time. Sonic found comic books to be the only real books he'd ever sit down and read for a minute. He particularly enjoyed this particular comic he was reading because it was a comic about him and the Royal Fighters, this time called "Freedom Fighters" since the makers of the comic thought it sounded better. The comic itself was merely titled "Sonic the Hedgehog" and had a very catchy tagline "The World's Most Way Past Cool Comic!"***. It certainly was in Sonic's eyes. While not entirely based on his real life and having some slight differences, Sonic felt this comic did him a lot of justice and it always amused him to see how the makers portrayed him. To his pleasure, they always got him right. Sonic was now on the 225th issue of the comic and he had just gotten to the end of it. The comic had ended on a very intense cliff hanger and he could hardly wait to start the next one. He put the comic down and he picked up the next issue he had on him.

"Man these writers now how to keep them coming don't they?" he said to himself "What an ending to that issue! I just hope that the real Eggman never tries something like that…"

He opened up the next issue and was ready to start reading until he heard the sound of a letter coming through his letter box. Sonic put the comic down and he walked over to his front door.

"Oooh, I got a letter. Shouldn't be surprised given the amount of fan mail I receive on a regular basis." said Sonic, picking up the letter "Wonder who it's from?"

Sonic looked at the letter and to his surprise, there was no name on it. It's clear the sender wished to remain anonymous. Sonic shrugged. Sometimes fans went under pseudonyms, pen names or didn't put a name on letters they sent to him so this wasn't suspicious at all. Sonic opened the letter and he read it. To his surprise, the letter came with another piece of paper attached to it. The letter said:

Dear Sonic the Hedgehog,

I am someone you know and I am sending you this letter to tell you this. I am someone who is an expert on how to have the perfect date. If you are having a date with someone then here's something that never fails. This letter comes with a sheet of dancing instructions. A dance is something that all women love and if you give your date a good dance, you are guaranteed to have a good night. Trust me, a dance never fails. Hope this advice makes your date a date to remember!

Signed Roy Same

P.S. There's something on your doorstep that is essen tial to a date.

Sonic could only stare incredulously at the letter. Who was Roy Same? He claimed to be "someone he knew" but Sonic couldn't remember anybody named Roy Same, let alone meeting somebody with that name! Regardless, he seemed to be wanting to give Sonic advice on how to be a good date and given he was going to have a date with Sally tonight, he may as well take this advice. He looked at the dancing instructions on the back of the letter. They gave him many instructions on various tango steps and how to dance well. He wouldn't learn them all so soon but maybe Sally would know how to

dance and give him some more ideas so he wouldn't mess up. Sonic also took note of the "P.S." note at the bottom of the letter. Had Roy Same left something on the doorstep for him to give to Sally or something? Only one way to find out. Sonic opened the door and to his surprise, he saw a huge bouquet of roses sitting on his doorstep. The roses had a wonderful scent that made Sonic's nose dance with joy as the pleasant aroma drifted up into his nostrils and the wrapping they were contained in was very nice, being a nice mixture of pink and red to go with the roses. There was a tag on the roses saying "To a very special person, a person I love so much. That person is you my wonderful…" and there was a blank space where you could presumably write a name in the space. Sonic picked up the bouquet, still taken aback by it coming out of nowhere. Still though, it was awfully nice of Roy Same to just leave the bouquet on the doorstep for him to give to Sally. He could hardly wait to see Sally's face when he presented it to her. He would tell a bit of a lie, say that he brought the roses himself and that the dancing was his idea. Sonic smiled to himself.

"Well this "Roy Same" guy sure is giving me some helpful ideas on how to make a good date." said Sonic "I hope Sally likes this. And I hope we dance OK…" he added, looking at the dance instructions he had in his other hand "I'll just try and follow these as best as I can. I will say though something seems familiar around here. The pink and red wrapping of the bouquet and the fact the flowers are roses…is Roy Same trying to hint at something here?"

He began wondering if Roy Same was thinking of Amy Rose and was thinking on helping him have a date with her. While he wasn't dating Amy, least his efforts wouldn't go to waste for Sally would enjoy them too. Sonic shrugged and he closed his door behind him. Unbeknownst to him, Amy had been watching from around the corner of his house and she giggled to herself, pleased to see her beautiful plan was working.

"Sonic bought the letter and has taken my little ideas for the date! Yes!" cheered Amy "This is SO gonna be awesomely romantic! I will say, it was amazing how I just re-arranged the letters in my name to make up that alias for the letter. Good thing Sonic isn't super bright otherwise he'd have caught on. I hope all goes well now I've

contributed to the date of a lifetime…"

She began to fawn dreamily as she pictured the big event that she was dying to see tonight. The roses and the dancing would certainly liven things up and Amy still had some more little things to make this a date to remember…

Meanwhile in Castle Acorn, Sally had relayed the news to her best friend Nicole the Lynx. Given how going on a date with Sonic was such a big deal, she just HAD to let her best friend know about it more than anyone else. Needless to say, Nicole was ecstatic over this.

"Oh my gosh, you're going on a date with Sonic?!" squealed Nicole happily, grasping Sally in a big bear hug excitedly "Oh Sally I'm so happy to hear that!"

"Thanks Nicole." said Sally weakly as Nicole squeezed her tightly.

Nicole let go of Sally and she started immediately throwing suggestions for the date.

"Oh Sally, this will be the best night of your life I bet!" she piped "We should pick out a nice dress for you, have you wear plenty of make-up for that will make your beauty shine and…"

"Nicole, please, please! It's not a serious date!" laughed Sally uneasily "Me and Sonic are just starting off small for the first date! We're just having dinner at Uncle Chuck's and having a nice evening in the park! No need to dress smartly or fancily or anything."

"Oh OK then." said Nicole "I do have to say that starting off small is a good way to go about a first date. And I do hope that you and Sonic have a good time tonight Sally."

"We will Nicole." said Sally reassuringly "And maybe I'll finally confess to Sonic that I love him."

Nicole grinned from ear to ear upon hearing that.

"Aww…you love Sonic? That's even better!" she cried with glee "This date's going to be one to remember I bet!"

"Yeah it will…but what if Sonic doesn't love me in return?" asked Sally nervously "I can't bear to think that I admit my love for him and then he says to me "Thanks Sally but I don't love you" or something like that…"

"Sally, don't you dare think that!" said Nicole sternly, putting her hands on her friend's shoulders "Sonic was the one who asked for this date in the first place right? So if he was the one to ask, he must surely love you just like you love him. And besides, who wouldn't love somebody as kind, brave, selfless and caring as you?"

Sally could hardly help blushing at that remark. No wonder Nicole was her best friend, she knew how to comfort her when she was having doubts.

"You're right. Thanks Nicole." said Sally gratefully.

"Anything for the best friend in the world." said Nicole, hugging Sally kindly "And you know what Sally? I hope I find the right man for me someday too."

"I'm sure you will Nicole." said Sally supportively "And he maybe somebody who lives close to us in this very city."

"Maybe." said Nicole "We'll just have to see what…"

Her attention was diverted by the sound of someone knocking on the door. Sally hurried over to the door and she opened it. To her surprise, there was nobody there except for a letter lying on the doorstep. Sally picked up the letter and she opened it. She read the letter and was a little surprised at what the letter said. Nicole approached Sally, wondering what the letter was saying.

"Sally? What is it?" she asked.

"I dunno." said Sally "Some guy named "Roy Same" is giving me some dating advice in this letter. Suggesting that a fancy restaurant would be a good place to eat on a good date. That's kinda weird, it's like he somehow knew I was going on a date tonight…"

"Well maybe he's one of those people who likes to give dating advice." suggested Nicole "Maybe it's just a coincidence he gave you a letter like that on a day you're having a date. I suggest following the advice, might make the date even better."

Sally looked at the letter again and began to think Nicole could be right. Even though they were starting small, a fancy restaurant didn't sound like a bad idea at all. After all, this was a date and quality food would make it even better. And she knew just the place to go to.

"You know Nicole, I think I'll go with this letter's idea." said Sally "Me and Sonic will eat at a fancy restaurant tonight instead of Uncle Chuck's. And I know just the place for that…"

Unbeknownst to Sally, Amy was listening outside a nearby window and she was pleased to hear that Sally was taking her letter's advice. Now that Sonic and Sally had gotten her letters and were going to follow the advice on them, all she could do was wait for tonight to come and see what happens…

Tonight finally came and Sonic arrived at Castle Acorn. His stomach was in corkscrews right about now and he was amazed that despite how nervous he felt, he was still able to go through with this. It really seemed strange to Sonic that he was nervous about going on a date yet potentially life-threatening situations were just a walk in the park for him. If he was feeling this nervous already then he didn't want to imagine what he'd be feeling like on the day he ever got married! But Sonic didn't need to think about that yet. He was just having a date with Sally Acorn and that's all there was to it. Sonic hid the bouquet behind his back and he knocked on the grand door that loomed above him. He waited patiently for a minute until the door opened and there stood Queen Sally Acorn. A rather pleasant scent hung around her. Sally had been putting on plenty of perfume just for the sake of smelling nice and Sonic had to admit, she smelt like lavender and petunias. A very beautiful combo indeed. Sally smiled a beautiful smile at Sonic. Seeing Sally smile instantly made Sonic feel more comfortable and less nervous. Amazing what a simple smile from the girl you love can do.

"Hello handsome, are we ready for our date?" purred Sally, her voice making Sonic feel warm and fuzzy all of the sudden.

"Why yes we are my beautiful queen." said Sonic "Before we start though, I have something for you."

He then presented the bouquet to Sally. Sally gasped at the sight of the beautiful, blossomed red roses all bunched together in the pink and red wrapping that Sonic held out for her. Sally took the bouquet and sniffed it eagerly.

"Oh Sonic, this is wonderful! Thank you so much!" he cried "These will look wonderful in the throne room."

"You're welcome Sal." said Sonic with a dashing grin on his cheeky face "And to think I got those just out of the kindness of my heart for you. So, shall we get our evening meal then?"

"Of course." said Sally, putting her arm around Sonic's arm "But there's been…a change of plan. We're not going to Uncle Chuck's diner for dinner. I thought of something a bit more…fancy."

"Oh." said Sonic, surprised to hear this. Did Roy Same visit Sally and give her some ideas for this date? This was going to be interesting. "Where are we eating then?" he asked curiously.

"We are eating at Chez Antoine's." said Sally "Said to be the best place in New Mobotropolis for a romantic dinner. After that, we will go to the park and enjoy the night."

"Oh we will indeed Sally." said Sonic, walking off with Sally by his side "Especially since I've got something to spice this date up. How do you feel about a little dancing?" he said, his grin ever more charming as he smiled at Sally.

"Dancing? Why I love a bit of dancing." said Sally happily "Didn't think you were one to dance though."

"Well one could say something came over me in the day." said Sonic, mostly telling the truth from a certain standpoint given Roy Same's letter "I hope you enjoy it."

"With the Hero of Mobius as my dancing partner, I will relish every minute of our dance." purred Sally happily.

That gave Sonic some hope that the dance would turn out alright. Sonic and Sally walked off down the path and started heading for Chez Antoine's. It would be a first for Sonic since he'd never eaten there before. He was sure it was a good restaurant and that he and Sally would have a lovely meal there. As they walked away, they were under the watchful eye of the excitable and dippy Amy Rose unbeknownst to the two. She was hiding in a bush nearby the castle. Amy had a smile on her face that was so wide you'd think she was trying to impersonate The Joker. The excitement she was feeling right now was so much she was amazed she hadn't burst yet.

"Eee hee hee! This is going so well so far!" she giggled "Sally likes the roses and she's taking Sonic to the fancy restaurant I recommended to her in the letter I gave her! I love it when a plan comes together. Now I'll leave them to have their meal in peace while I wait for them to come to the park where I'll set up some other surprises I have in store for the two…"

With that said, Amy sneaked out of the bush and she ran off to the park, giggling like a little school girl who's done something naughty to the teacher.

An hour had passed since Sonic and Sally had left for dinner and now finally, it was time for them to go to the park. While at the restaurant, they both had a beautiful dinner of steak (served medium) and chips with organic peas on the side smothered in gravy. They had enjoyed their meal but the most enjoyable thing about the meal had been just sitting together talking to one another. They had chatted about many things including how much they longed for a free Mobius and how lovely life could be when there was no evil plans to foil. Sonic even lamented on how for once, he was on a date and things seemed to be going well. Made him wonder if Amy was cursed or something since last two dates he'd tried with her, they hadn't gone well. First time Eggman blew up the restaurant they had gone to and then kidnapped him, second time they had to be interrupted because of a jailbreak that Ginger had

started. Here now, everything was going swimmingly and Sonic couldn't be happier. He just hoped Amy wouldn't know about this, she'd die of jealousy if that was the case. After their dinner had been finished, Sonic and Sally had paid the bill and now they had left Chez Antoine's to go to the park. They were walking arm-in-arm as before and they were really enjoying each other's company. As they walked, Sonic began to feel happy inside. Happy that he had decided to give love a chance after all. He had been a fool to try and avoid it and now here he was, really enjoying himself and having a lovely time with the one girl who he considered more worth hanging out with than Amy. In fact, he felt more comfortable with Sally than Amy since Sally wasn't as clingy, obsessive and overly excitable. Thus, Sonic had been able to enjoy this date without being embarrassed by Amy's behaviour. As Sonic looked at Sally, he began to wonder if she was the right girl for him after all. It certainly was looking that way so far. After a few minutes of walking, Sonic and Sally had arrived at the park. There was a little pond that sparkled in the shining moonlight that hung up above, shedding the only real light around in the dark sky of the night. The moon was crescent shaped and yet still looked wonderful. Sally looked up at the moon and sighed dreamily.

"It's so beautiful tonight." she said "I really think we picked a good night to have this date."

"I certainly agree on that Sally." said Sonic "Although the most beautiful thing of the night is standing right beside me right now." he added slyly.

Sally blushed at that comment, flattered to hear Sonic say that.

"Heh, heh. How does one as reckless and fast-moving as you manage to say something so romantic one has to wonder." she giggled teasingly.

"Guess I'm better at stuff like this when I'm not moving at the speed of sound." chuckled Sonic with a shrug.

"Heh, I have a feeling that there's a new side to you when you're not moving so fast." said Sally jokingly "Is Slow Sonic a lot more down to earth than Fast Sonic?"

Sonic could hardly keep himself from laughing at that.

"I guess he is." he chuckled "So Sally, shall we dance?"

"Yes, let's." said Sally "But none of us brought any music to dance to."

"No need for that, we can just imagine the music." suggested Sonic "Make up our own little tunes as we dance. Our heads will be the radios in this case."

"I think that sounds like a nice idea." said Sally.

Before they could start dancing though, a swarm of fireflies suddenly came out of nowhere and illuminated the park all around the dating couple. The fireflies danced around the night sky, shining light everywhere and making the already beautiful night look even more beautiful. Their lovely lights gave off a bright, loving glow that made Sonic and Sally feel warm and at peace. The fireflies were Amy's idea. She was watching from behind a bush and had brought three jars full of them. She had been busy trying to catch most of them this afternoon and her hard work was paying off. Even Amy was dazzled by the fireflies as they danced around, shining their beautiful lights and setting a warm atmosphere for the dating couple. Sonic and Sally stared in wonder at the fireflies, marvelled by their beauty.

"Wow…look at them. The fireflies are really beautiful tonight." said Sally, pointing at them "Don't they look wonderful Sonic?"

"They sure do Sal." said Sonic "Their glowing lights are amazing. Sets the mood brilliantly I think."

"I wonder if they knew what we were up to and are just helping create the atmosphere for us." joked Sally "Well then, shall we dance?"

"Indeed we shall…wait, look what we've got here." said Sonic suddenly, looking to his right.

There was a bright yellow flower lying on the ground nearby and Sonic picked it up. Amy had put it there in hopes that one of them would see it and maybe present it as a gift. Amy watched excitedly

as Sonic observed the flower and he sniffed it. She could hardly wait to see what he'd do with it. Sonic smiled at the flower's pleasant smell and then he looked over at Sally.

"This is nice." said Sonic "And I know just where to put it."

With that said, he put it in Sally's hair just above her left ear. Sally beamed happily at this and Sonic stepped back to admire her.

"It suits you." said Sonic "You're my blossoming flower Sally."

"Aww, you're too kind Sonic." giggled Sally flatteringly "What made you think of putting the flower in my hair then?"

"I've seen many guys do that to girls so I thought I'd give it a shot." said Sonic casually "Now then, shall we dance?"

"Be my guest true blue." said Sally, positioning Sonic's right hand on her waist and taking his left hand into hers while her right hand rested on his shoulder.

Amy fought to keep herself contained as the dancing was about to begin. This was the moment she had been waiting for. She just hoped Sonic had studied the instructions enough to do the dancing right. Or at the most, get some moves right. Sonic smiled nervously as he and Sally started to do a gentle bit of waltzing. In their heads, they were imagining some romantic tunes of different melodies that helped them get into the rhythm. The two waltzed around for a bit, Sonic finding himself getting into the rhythm a little, but then Sonic accidentally stepped on Sally's foot. Sally resisted the urge to cry "ow!" but her face winced so Sonic instantly knew he'd done something wrong.

"Oh my gosh! I'm sorry, I'm not much of a dancer…" he quickly exclaimed.

"It's OK Sonic, first time's always the hardest." said Sally kindly "Besides, I've had worse pain before."

"OK." said Sonic sheepishly.

The two continued to waltz, the fireflies dancing around them and

illuminating them as they danced. Amy watched as Sonic and Sally slowly waltzed and Sally even did a pirouette. She raised her leg and spun around on her foot, looking like a graceful ballet dancer as she did so. Sonic liked that so he tried it to…resulting in him falling over and Sally catching him before he could land down on his back. Laughing half embarrassedly, Sonic stood back up and he and Sally tried some tango steps. Sonic found himself fumbling a little and nearly stepping on Sally's feet again but he managed to steady himself and keep that from happening. Then Sonic tried something that many dancers did with their partners. He tipped Sally back a little, making sure he didn't drop her, and Sally giggled a little. She had been mostly expecting Sonic to do that. Sonic raised her back up and then he lifted her up slightly. While not really a dance move, Sonic wanted to do this anyway: he twirled around with Sally hoisted up off her feet. Sally laughed with joy as Sonic did that. Amy starred open-mouthed with awe as Sonic did that. As much as she wished that was her he was doing this to, it was really wonderful to watch. Sonic put Sally back down and the two now stood in front of each other, Sonic's arms around Sally's waist and Sally's hands on Sonic's shoulders and their eyes half-closed as they stared lovingly into each other's eyes. Their smiles were so wide that it was a miracle they could still fit on their faces.

"This has been the most wonderful night of my life." said Sally softly "Thank you so much for such a wonderful date Sonic."

"Anything for the most beautiful woman in New Mobotropolis." said Sonic, slipping his fingers under Sally's vest and stroking her back.

Sally sighed contently, enjoying the feeling that tingled up her spine as Sonic stroked her back.

"You're such a charmer when you want to be." purred Sally "So, have you always thought that about me?" she asked curiously.

"Well I've always thought you were beautiful." said Sonic "Even before the day I saved you I thought you were beautiful. And now as I spend more and more time with you, I truly realize how beautiful you really are. And also seeing that awesome personality of yours for myself just makes you more beautiful."

Sally was blushing so much that it was amazing her entire face hadn't gone red yet.

"Th…thank you." she giggled "I'm so glad to hear that. And you know what Sonic?"

"What?" asked Sonic, taking his hands from Sally's back and stroking her lovely, auburn hair. It felt lovely between his fingers as he stroked it.

"Ever since the day Eggman kidnapped me on his first day here and you rescued me from him…I've been amazed by your heroism, selflessness and courage." said Sally, stroking Sonic's quills softly "I knew from the day you saved me that you were a good person, even if you loved arguing with my parents. As time went by, I found myself more and more drawn to you and I began to wish that I could join you. After the Devatrons invaded, I began to consider becoming more active in the battlefield, especially at the moment me and Nicole had to defend you from Devion while you were comatose. Then after the Black Arms, I decided it truly was time for me to change and now here I am, a Royal Fighter who is both Royal AND a fighter. But you know what? If you hadn't been there to inspire me like you have done, I would still be sitting cooped up in my castle right now. I can't thank you enough for inspiring me so much to be more like my fellow Royal Fighters and to be a queen who can do more than just rule a kingdom. You truly have made me a much stronger person than ever before Sonic and I hope you realize how grateful I am for that."

"Sally, I'm just honoured that the ruler of my home city was inspired to become a fighter by me and my friends. The fact I've helped you get to this stage is the most honourable thing I think I've ever done." said Sonic, lightly running his fingers down Sally's face.

Amy was just awed at all the lovely stuff Sonic and Sally were saying to each other. No wonder they seemed so perfect for each other, Sonic had been a big inspiration for Sally and Sally becoming stronger was appealing to Sonic. She was definitely pleased she didn't break them up now. As for Sally, she smiled at what Sonic said and she put both her hands on Sonic's shoulders again.

"I'm glad you think that my honourable hero." said Sally "Oh Sonic…"

She pulled Sonic a little closer and she whispered into his ear the three words Sonic was hoping to hear from her: "I love you."

Sonic nearly fainted with surprise over hearing Sally say that to him. Sonic stared at Sally with a big smile on his face. Amy didn't hear what Sally had said but judging from Sonic's reaction, she guessed Sally might have said "I love you" to him.

"W-wow…th-thanks Sally." said Sonic "You know what? I love you too."

Sally smiled with pleasure and the two leaned their heads forward. Sally wrapped her arms tightly around Sonic's shoulders and neck and Sonic wrapped his arms tightly around Sally's waist, forming a loving embrace that made them both feel at harmony with each other. Then came the moment Amy had been waiting for. Their lips locked, their eyes closed and they deeply kissed each other. As they kissed, a wonderful sensation tingled between them and they felt very lovely indeed. As they kissed, Sally strokes Sonic's quills and Sonic strokes Sally's back. They were kissing quite passionately as if they were really enjoying this and wanted it to last as long as possible. Sonic even tilted Sally back a little while they kissed. Amy watched the whole scene before her with tears in her eyes. She so wished that was her in Sonic's arms instead of Sally but the sheer cuteness of the scene she witnessed made her not care much. Sonic and Sally were just too cute together for her to care about Sonic not kissing her.

"Aww…look at them!" she piped to herself "They're so cute! I'm glad I didn't interfere with them after all. Oh I can hardly wait to tell Cream and Cosmo about this."

She watched as Sonic and Sally kissed for a few more seconds and then finally, they stopped kissing and were back staring lovingly into each other's eyes.

"That was wonderful Sonic." purred Sally.

"I liked that too." said Sonic "Why not have another?"

Sally nodded approvingly and they kissed again. Amy sighed with glee as they kissed again and she leaned her head out of the bush slightly. But as she put her hands down on the bush branches in front of her, they suddenly gave way and she tumbled forwards out of the bush! Amy was now lying on her stomach half in and half out of the bush. The rustling noise the bush made startled Sonic and Sally and they both broke up their embrace to see what it was. They were well surprised to see Amy half out of a nearby bush and looking like a child that's been caught raiding the fridge. Amy looked at them both nervously.

"Uh…hi you two?" she said sheepishly.

"Amy?!" blurted Sonic "What the…what the heck are you doing here?!"

"Have you been spying on us this whole time?!" shrieked Sally "Amy, how could you! Me and Sonic were having our first date together and we were NOT expecting to have you spying on us!"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" shrieked Amy frantically "I'm really, really sorry! It's just…I kinda found out that you and Sonic were going to date and I wanted to help make it perfect for you two. I was only watching to make sure my hard work went as planned."

"You wanted to help make our date perfect?" gasped Sonic.

"So…it was YOU who sent me that letter about the "fancy restaurant"!" Sally deduced "You're Roy Same?"

That answered Sonic's earlier thoughts on whether Sally had gotten a letter from "Roy Same" too. He was surprised to see that Amy had been the one who sent the letters and "Roy Same" was just an alias she went under.

"I am indeed." said Amy guiltily "I kinda made an anagram of my name to keep myself anonymous so you wouldn't suspect me."

"Well as nice of you it was to help make our date really good, I do have to ask why did you do it?" asked Sonic "I mean, you have an

obsession over me. Shouldn't you be trying to club Sally's head in a blind rage?"

"Sonic! I could NEVER harm my friends, even if one of them is smooching you instead of me!" protested Amy "And besides, I've come to this conclusion. If I truly love you…I would allow you to choose who your heart belongs to. So because of that, I refused to break you two up or throw a tantrum over it. Besides, I think you two look cute together so I just HAD to make your date perfect. And watching the events unfold, my contributions really worked. Please don't be mad at me Sonic, I just wanted to be a good friend even if your heart belongs to another."

Sonic and Sally were dumbfounded. Amy was obsessed with Sonic and yet she was willing to accept their love for each other? Was this an alien Amy Rose or had Amy just matured more than they had given her credit for? One thing was for sure, they were impressed and proud of Amy for being so mature and accepting to them. Sonic put a hand on Amy's shoulder.

"Amy, that's just way past cool of you." said Sonic "I'm proud of you for being so grown-up about the whole thing. And thanks for your contributions, the dancing and the fireflies were really cool."

"Aw, you're welcome Sonic." said Amy gratefully.

"And besides Amy, I may love Sally, but I've still got a place in my heart for you too." said Sonic reassuringly "You will always be a good friend to me and I'm glad to have a friend like you, especially since you're so mature now."

Amy felt like melting away into the ground with joy as Sonic said that to her. Sally smiled at Sonic.

"That was very well said Sonic." she said "That big heart of yours is also what makes me love you so much."

"Thanks Sal." said Sonic "So Amy, would it be OK if you leave me and Sally to enjoy the rest of our night now?"

"Oh sure." said Amy "I think I've intruded on your business for long

enough anyway. Have a lovely night." she said cheerily.

"Thank you." said Sonic and Sally together.

Amy waved goodbye and she headed off for home, her heart all a flutter over the fact Sonic still had a place in his heart for her. Maybe being just a friend was all she needed to be in Sonic's life after all. All Amy knew was that she didn't need to obsess over Sonic anymore. Friend-love was all she would need from now on. And yet there was always the chance Sonic and Sally could separate and thus, give Amy another chance with him. For now, she just wanted Sonic to be happy and Sally made him very happy so she would allow their relationship to blossom as it should do. A wonderful relationship had begun and Amy had been a part of it. What more could she possibly ask for? Back over to Sonic and Sally, they both embraced again.

"Now where we were?" purred Sonic.

"I believe we were about to have another kiss." Sally purred back.

Sonic raised his eyebrows up and down in the charming manner that a man usually raises his eyebrows and he and Sally entered another deep, passionate kiss that spelled true love between them. As they kissed and embraced the night away, the only thing that they were thinking now was this simple fact:

Love had been worth trying and experiencing for both of them and it was just going to get more and more wonderful as their love grew and grew over time. This was a love that was greater than anything on Mobius…

Happy Valentine's Day readers! :D

Footnotes:

***See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 20: Honeymoons and Rats* for that is where this whole thing began…**

**** We just saw the end of that in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm***

***** Yes, Sonic is reading an issue of Archie Comics' Sonic the Hedgehog. You surprised?**

Awwwwwwwww...so romantic! :D The gushy levels are over 9000! Awww...what a cute beginning to a wonderful relationship!

Amy fanbrat: Waaah! Sonic should be with Amy, not Sally! How dare you pair Sonic up with Sally! This story sucks balls now! Waaah!

Get lost you stupid fanbrat! So how was this chapter folks? And PLEASE for the love of god don't post any nasty comments if you're a Sally hater, a Sonally hater or the like! I happily support Sonally and I wish for Sonic to be paired up with Sally in this story so get used to it!

So how was this chapter then folks? Was it good? Did you like it? Feel free to express your thoughts in the reviews section. And may you all have a very Happy Valentine's Day...:)

Oh and don't forget to check into* Tales from Mobius *. Silver and Blaze are the stars of the next arc. ;)

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses: The Prelude

Story 165: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses: The Prelude

Time Rifts.

Nobody knew for certain what they were or what their proper name even was. They had been referred to by many different names. Some called them "tears in the sky", some called them "streaks of light". Some even referred to them as "eyes of the universe" and thought that they were being watched by them and given their nature of sucking people up, some even referred to them as "illuminated jaws" and theorized that they swallowed up what they could and once somebody had been sucked up by them, that was the end of them. Completely gone. Never to be seen again. Whatever people thought they were, nobody knew what they ACTUALLY were. Time rifts were rips in the timeline, a tear in the space time continuum, an anomaly that spelt doom for anybody who saw it. Once they opened up, they sucked up what they could and then just disappeared for the moment. One a time rift opened up, you could bet that this wasn't the last you had seen of it. All over the multi-verse, time rifts had been opening up far and wide and causing havoc on whatever worlds they opened up on. They didn't just open up on Mobius Prime, they were opening up everywhere in the multi-verse, even planets that weren't another version of Mobius. Even Earth and all the alternate versions of Earth were getting time rifts! End of the world theories may grow far and wide and get ridiculous and silly but the time rifts were the coming apocalypse, the Day of Reckoning, the Judgement Day that so many people feared all over the multi-verse and the sinister thing was…nobody knew how to stop it. What was causing the time rifts? Why were they happening? Was it possible to stop them? Nobody knew and time was running out for the multi-verse. The time rifts had been going on for a while now. On some worlds, they had been happening for years, some worlds they only just started happening and on worlds like Mobius Prime, they had been happening for months. They were getting worse and sooner or later…the end of all things would finally commence for everybody in every time zone, dimension, world and

universe and nobody would be able to stop this terror from happening…

Mobius Prime was nearing its final curtain call on this very day. A pity really considering that today was waking up to a beautiful sunny morning and the skies were looking as clear and beautiful as ever.

Two individuals were closer to the morning that one might imagine. Closer in the sense that they were sleeping under a tree in the park of New Mobotropolis. These two were the world famous Sonic the Hedgehog and the ruler of New Mobotropolis, Queen Sally Acorn. Sonic and Sally had had their first date last night and to say it was the best night of their lives would have been an understatement. They had enjoyed every minute of the date last night and had been all too happy to admit their love for each other. Love had been an interesting experience for Sonic and he was pleased to have finally found it in Sally. She was definitely more loveable than Amy Rose that much was certain. Their date had been so romantic and wonderful that Sonic and Sally had ended up falling asleep under a tree and had spent the night lying on the grass and in each other's arms. In their sleep though, they felt like they were in their beds at home. Now the sun was rising and the night skies were broken up into light, turning the night into morning. The light began to shine over Sonic, disturbing him from his peaceful slumber. Sonic stretched and yawned as he woke up and he scratched his back. It had become a little itchy from lying against a tree all night. Sonic looked around and he realized that he was not in fact in his own bed at home, he was still in the park he and Sally had had their date in. Sonic chuckled more to himself than anything.

"Wow, we got so romantic that we fell asleep in the park!" he laughed "Ha, ha…funny what love can do to ya isn't it?"

He then looked down at Sally, who was still snoozing peacefully beside him, her arm on his torso and her head resting against his shoulder. Sonic smiled with awe at his girlfriend. How beautiful and cute she looked when she was sleeping. Pity he had to wake her up now since it was that time again. Sonic gently shook Sally.

"Good morning Queenie." he said "It's time to wake up."

Sally mumbled sleepily as Sonic shook her. It seemed she didn't want to wake up right about now but Sonic kept up the shaking. Sally eventually opened her eyes and she gave out a big yawn. She rubbed her eyes, which were full of sleep, and she looked up at Sonic.

"Why good morning handsome." she said "I wasn't expecting to see you so soon."

"Well Sally, I think the fact we fell asleep together under a tree in the park might have something to do with that." snickered Sonic.

Sally had no idea what Sonic was on about but she quickly found out for she took a look at her surroundings and realized that she wasn't in Castle Acorn but in the park she and Sonic had their date at. Sally laughed, almost sounding embarrassed in an amused way at the fact they had fallen asleep here and had spent the whole night under a tree.

"Oh my goodness, we really did overdo it didn't we?" she giggled "Fancy that, we slept here in the park all night! Ha, ha, ha… goodness me this is one amusing turnout."

"Certainly is." chuckled Sonic "Least we were together as we slept. And you know what, I can still remember last night as if it had only just ended five minutes ago."

"Me too. What a wonderful night it was." purred Sally "Made all the better by the fact I spent it with you Sonic the Hedgehog."

And with that, Sally gave Sonic his first kiss of the day to which Sonic gratefully accepted. Sally sure knew how to give a lovely kiss, that was certain. Her lips felt very lovely on his own as they kissed. If Sonic wanted, he could keep this up forever. Their kiss went on for a minute before they broke it up and Sally lifted her head up a little.

"I think we should head back before anyone notices this." she said with an amused smile on her face.

"Yeah, don't want folks getting the wrong idea do we?" chuckled

Sonic.

Deciding not to hang about for any longer, Sonic and Sally got up onto their feet and they walked away from the tree, hand in hand of course. As they left the park, they admired the scenery all around them and drank in the beauty of the morning as they observed what was going on. Mornings in New Mobotropolis somehow managed to look beautiful no matter how many times Sonic woke up to them. Maybe it was simply because New Mobotropolis was such a beautiful city of true magnificence and the morning skies complimented its true beauty so flawlessly as they shone over the city. It was a view Sonic was always happy to wake up to and it was a view that made him proud to live in NewMobotropolis. It was a beautiful city even before it became New Mobotropolis and it was still beautiful now. What more could a hedgehog ask for when it came to a place to call home? As Sonic and Sally walked off to the two most important buildings in New Mobotropolis, Castle Acorn and Royal HQ, Sonic looked over at Sally and decided to ask something. The events of last night continued to dance in his mind and he was keen to ask Sally about it.

"So, what did you enjoy the most of our date last night?" asked Sonic.

"Our first kiss of course." purred Sally seductively "When we kissed, I felt like I was reaching for the stars. I will say it's amazing how well you can kiss Sonic, one would think you were a natural at it."

"I've never kissed all that much so I guess it was just pure luck I delivered a good one." said Sonic modestly "For me, I enjoyed our little meal and Amy's little contributions to the date, as well as how maturely she handled the fact I was seeing another girl. I seriously expected her to start baying for your blood when she found out about us." an unsettled expression fell on his face as he said that.

"I was kinda expecting that too." said Sally "So you can imagine I was about ready to do leaps and corkscrews when I found out Amy was actually contributing to our date and not throwing a tantrum over you with me. I will say if she dared to attack me I would have locked her in a cell in the Detention Centre and thrown away the key!"

"Well Amy's cool with us so we won't need to do that." said Sonic "Although one has to wonder if the real Amy's not here and instead got replaced by a clone or something…"

"Stop it Sonic, you know the real Amy's with us." chuckled Sally, playfully shoving Sonic slightly "She's no clone at all."

"Come on Sal, you know that humour is one of my biggest trademarks." laughed Sonic.

"I do know that and your humour is truly what makes you so loveable." said Sally "Even if you can be overly snarky for your own good sometimes."

"Eh, I tease and mock a lot but obviously, I only ever intend to hurt my enemies." said Sonic "Mostly Eggman." he added with a wink that accompanied his cheeky smile.

Sally chuckled at the joke. They say a woman appreciates a man who can make her laugh and Sally was no exception to the rule.

"Oh Sonic, I'm so gonna enjoy our relationship together." said Sally delightedly "Makes me glad that you decided to have a chance at us together."

"I'm glad I tried it too." said Sonic "Although I fear that this might get in the way of my heroism and all. Will I have to ease up on the hero thing if we're to make this work?"

"Not at all Sonic." said Sally, stopping for a minute and standing before Sonic with her hands on his face "Remember, I'm fighting alongside the Royal Fighters now. I will be able to join you in your heroism. Also I don't EVER want you to stop your heroism. That's what I fell for after all. Your heroism makes you who you are Sonic and I would never forgive myself if I made you stop. I will worry for you don't get me wrong but I will NEVER want you to stop what makes you who you are."

"Wow…when you put it that way…that sounds great." said Sonic brightly, putting his hands on Sally's waist "Thanks Sally."

"Just returning the favour Sonic." said Sally brightly "You've done so

much for me and my loyal heroic Royal Fighters so it's time I did something for you."

The two had another kiss over that, Sonic doing it as a sign of appreciation more than anything. They kept this one brief though and they carried onto Royal HQ and Castle Acorn without wasting another minute. As they arrived at the two buildings though, they could see that all the Royal Fighters were already gathered outside of Royal HQ and they seemed to be up to something. Intrigued, Sonic and Sally ran up to the Royal Fighters and they could see that the twin-tailed child prodigy himself, Tails the Fox, was showing off some new inventions of his. He had been supplying the Royal Fighters with new weapons, giving Sally wristbands that could emit energy blades and Cosmo the Seedrian and Cream the Rabbit throwing discs with deployable blades*. Now he was giving Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse some new weapons. He had been waiting to give them to them but after the hell Mandy had been through with The Exterminators, Tails had decided to let Mandy recover before giving her a new weapon. As you already know, a week had passed since The Exterminators had been defeated and Mandy seemed well rested and recuperated so Tails decided now would be a good time to introduce to Wilson and Mandy his new weapons for them. Sonic and Sally watched with delight as Tails presented a pair of metal knuckle attachments to Mandy. They looked very tough, made of the strongest steel around and that they could pack quite a punch. They fitted around her knuckles perfectly and to Mandy's surprise, they were more comfortable than she fought they would feel. She looked very pleased with them.

"These look super cool Tails!" she cried with joy "Much cooler looking than my ordinary ones that's for sure."

"Glad you like them Mandy." said Tails happily "And here's the exciting part. These knuckle attachments form an invisible force field around your hands that will make your punches stronger than usual. It ONLY activates when you throw a punch so don't worry about it being there if you like want to touch something or shake hands with someone. For the purpose of testing the durable strength of the steel knuckle attachments, I brought this block of titanium for you to punch," he paused for a minute as he lifted up the heavy rectangular

block of titanium that was lying beside him "Feel free to punch away Mandy. I can't wait to see how powerful your punches will be with my new invention adding strength to them."

Mandy seemed keen to test her new toys out so she took up a boxing like position and prepared to throw a punch at the block. Mandy drew her arm back and she punched the block as hard as she possibly dared. There was a terrific clang sound as her fist made violent contact with the block and the power enhanced punch ended up denting the block so furiously it looked like a man doubling over in pain after being punched in the gut. Everybody was amazed at the power Mandy now wielded thanks to these new knuckle attachments and Mandy herself seemed bewildered she could even punch that hard now.

"Oh mah stars!" exclaimed the beautiful but powerful Bunnie Rabbot "She can punch as hard as ah can now! And she doesn't even have cybernetics!"

"That invention of Tails's is pretty amazing luv." said Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie's boyfriend "Mandy can now punch things much harder than herself. Boy I'd love to see her throw a punch like that on Dr. Eggman."

"Oh Geoffrey, believe me, Eggman's the FIRST guy I'm gonna punch with these things on!" laughed Mandy, very pleased with her new weapons "If only I had something like this when I fought Brawn the Rat, I would have floored him otherwise. Oh well, there's always other enemies to use these on." she added with an ecstatic smile on her pretty face.

"I have a feeling you just got tougher all of the sudden my love." said Wilson gleefully "So Tails, what new weapon have you got for me?"

"Well Wilson, seeing how potent you are with that spinning blade weapon, I decided to make you this." said Tails, showing Wilson a silver coloured arm gauntlet that had a pole on a rotating pin, suggesting it was obviously meant to spin around. Some hazard symbols were tattooed on the gauntlet and they had every right to be there for this weapon could be very dangerous. "This is a spinning blade gauntlet. It fits onto your arm like so," he paused as

he clipped the gauntlet around Wilson's right arm "and this is how it's supposed to work. Clench your fist and the pole will spin and then thrust your arm forward. I advise everybody to stand back though for we wouldn't want Wilson to accidentally chop you all to pieces would we?"

Everybody stepped well-back as Wilson followed Tails' instructions. He clenched his fist, the pole on the gauntlet now spinning around at a terrific speed. Wilson then thrust his arm forwards. The pole ejected from the gauntlet as he did that and twin blades deployed from it. It sliced neatly through the air and Sonic and Sally watched as the twin-bladed pole boomeranged back towards Wilson. Wilson held up his arm with the top of the gauntlet facing outwards and the pole reattached itself to the gauntlet, sheathing its blades upon re-entry of course so as not to accidentally cut him. Wilson was amazed at what had just happened and he wolf-whistled at his new weapon.

"With this I can send a spinning blade in one direction while I fight with my normal one." he said "This is ingenious Tails."

"Thank you." said Tails modestly "And the best thing is, it's programmed to attack any enemy within its radius and it doesn't come back to you until it's hit every single one of them. So while that blade is attacking other enemies, you can use your own spinning blade to fight off some others, very useful for if we're hopelessly outnumbered and all."

"Well Tails, me and Mandy greatly appreciate our new weapons." said Wilson brightly.

"We do indeed kiddo. Thanks." said Mandy gratefully.

"You're welcome." said Tails cheerfully "Nice to see all my new weapons work. Speaking of which, I wonder where Sally is? I'd like for you two to see the weapons I made for her."

"I'm right here honey." said Sally, deciding now was a good time to make her presence known at last.

The Royal Fighters all looked over to see Sonic and Sally standing

there and watching them as if they had just decided to stand back and watch the show. They all seemed happy to see the two there at last though and they greeted Sonic and Sally enthusiastically.

"Good morning Sonic and Sally." said Tails "So I guess you liked the new weapons I have Wilson and Mandy?"

"We sure did Tails, they really cool." said Sonic with a thumbs up sign "Wilson and Mandy will do great with them I bet!"

"They will indeed." said Tails with a big grin of pleasure on his face.

"So how are the two lovebirds this morning?" asked Amy Rose sweetly "Did your date go well at all? Did you do anything else after I left?"

"I have a feeling they enjoyed themselves because Sally didn't return home last night." said Nicole the Lynx "Did you and Sonic sleep together at his house or something?"

Sonic and Sally both blushed bright red at those remarks, not expecting the two girls to suddenly start making their love for each other public, especially as they had been hoping to do that themselves. The Royal Fighters all gasped in pleasant surprise at this.

"Sonic and Sally went on a date last night?" gasped Ruben the Water Panther "Aw, how wonderful to hear!"

"I hope Amy doesn't mind this." sniggered Sora Prower.

"Well Mr. Sonic and Miss Sally, that's wonderful to hear!" said a very happy and excited Cream the Rabbit "Did you have a lovely date last night? Did you kiss each other?"

"I bet it was very romantic." said Cosmo the Seedrian dreamily "Just like any moment with me and Tails."

Sonic was so close to dying of embarrassment right now.

"Uh guys, can we not make such a fanfare about this?" said Sonic sheepishly, rubbing the back of his head nervously "You're kinda

embarrassing us. Amy, I was hoping that me and Sally would make our love known ourselves when you're done making a big scene about it." he said with a glare of steel at Amy.

"Sorry Sonic." mumbled Amy guiltily, looking very ashamed of herself for doing this.

"Please Sonic, they would have found out soon enough anyway and I'm glad they're so happy for the two of us together." said Sally defensively "Ease up on poor Amy."

"OK then." said Sonic, quickly thinking of something to change the subject "So Sally, Tails made you some new weapons did he?"

"He did indeed." said Sally "I'll show you them next time we go into battle if you please."

"Sounds cool." said Sonic "I wonder what your new weapons are?"

"Let me just say…you'll be impressed." said Sally, tapping Sonic's nose playfully.

Sonic liked the sound of that. His girlfriend had probably just become more awesome with whatever new weapon Tails had made for her. He suddenly ended up having something else to think about though and it was something he wasn't expecting to suddenly be thinking about right now. The Royal Fighters all heard something coming towards them and they looked to the wall around NewMobotropolis where they could see two flying things coming towards them. Sonic put his hand over his eyes to shield them from the sunlight and see if he could make out what it was that was coming towards them. As the thing came closer he could soon make out who it was. It was none other than the future couple themselves, Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat! Silver was in flight and was carrying Blaze with him (the cat trying to ignore the height of course). Sonic's face lit up like a flashlight with excitement.

"Bless my sneakers! It's Silver and Blaze!" cried Sonic excitedly "I wonder what they're here for? I bet it's good news."

"I wonder if they're here to tell us how wonderful the future is now."

said Sally "They did think the Martian invasion had doomed Mobius and now we prevented it, their future must have changed now."

Sonic nodded agreeably. He did have to wonder why Silver and Blaze were flying through the air though. Didn't Silver usually have a warp ring to use when he wanted to time travel? Silver and Blaze flew over the ring wall and they spotted Castle Acorn standing proudly on the hill that rose it above the city. Silver headed down to the ground and he put Blaze down before the Royal Fighters before joining her on the ground beside her. His body stopped glowing and his psychokinesis switched off for the moment. They were met with a wondrous greeting almost immediately. That alone made the two feel better after all they had just been through a moment ago. Sonic came forward and he knuckle-punched Silver in greeting.

"Silver my futuristic do-gooder! So good to see you again!" exclaimed Sonic delightedly.

"It's great to see you too Sonic." said Silver with pleasure "Me and Blaze are very happy to see you all again."

"How have things been going with you all?" asked Blaze inquisitively "Have things clamed down since the Martians?"

"We've had some rough moments and a new enemy pop up from time to time but we're OK." said Sally, shaking Blaze's hand "Just recently Sonic saved Mandy from a crazy bunch of mice-hating rats and I helped to protect New Mobotropolis from an Ice Witch named Blizzard."

"Funny you should mention that scum in witch's clothing." muttered Blaze bitterly "Me and Silver ran into her after we were brought here by a time rift and she tried to use me for her spell!** We escaped her with our lives though don't worry, she won't be bothering anybody for the moment."

"I like the sound of that." said Amy in a very cold, almost sadistically gleeful tone of voice, suggesting that the very thought of Blizzard suffering badly made her happy "I bet you burnt her to a crisp didn't you Blaze?"

"Oh I let her have more than just a flicker of flames that's for sure." said Blaze with a slight scowl on her face as if the very thought of Blizzard made her cringe "But that's not important right now. We have come to warn you of something terrible that we've just encountered."

"Wait a minute, before you tell us, how's your timeline?" asked Sonic "Is Mobius OK in the future now the Martians have been stopped?"

"Far from it I'm afraid." said Silver, his face grave and sullen as if he'd just found out somebody was dying of a tumour in their brain "The Martians were NOT the cause of Mobius's end at all, nothing changed for me and Blaze at all. The only thing that changed was Count Drago not being in the invasion when they invaded Mobius. That's it. The future is still a wreck and Mobius is still on life support."

Sonic's mouth ran dry at the sound of that.

"Oh no…" he gasped "Stopping the Martians didn't work?! Well at least that tells us we would have won anyway even if you two hadn't stuck your noses in but if it wasn't the Martians then who DID doom Mobius in the future?"

"We're still trying to work that out." sighed Silver sadly "But we've found no more clues since then. We're still at square one. But that's not important now, what's important is that me and Blaze were brought to Mobius by a time rift and we felt it best to warn you of it since a time rift spells doom for anybody."

"What's a time rift?" asked Tails cautiously.

"Rips in the timeline, a strange anomaly that appears from time to time and disrupts the space time continuum." explained Silver "The cause of them is unknown but what time travellers like me DO know is that they're deadly and can spell the end of the world for anybody who sees one. They look like multi-coloured streaks of light and they suck up anything in their path."

The Royal Fighters all let out a chorus of horrified shrieks that let Silver and Blaze know that this truly shocked them and yet their

shrieks were shrieks in the sense of they knew what they were on about, suggesting this wasn't the first time this had happened.

"So that's what the weird streak of light in the sky is all about!" declared Sonic "They're time rift thingies and they spell doom for us all?!"

"They do indeed." said Blaze grimly "You seem awfully familiar with them though, has one already happened here?"

"More than one!" blustered Sally in terror "One appeared during the Devatron invasion and snatched Scourge and Fiona away according to what Sonic told me they had told him! And one appeared and took Sonic to Mobius Nega and then another one appeared in Chun-Nan and took away some evil reptiles and spiders and then another one took the Megapolis Royal Fighters Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx and Kiara the Cheetah away! This has been a regular occurrence now so what does that mean?!"

Silver and Blaze looked very disturbed to hear this and it pained Silver to bring them the horrible truth.

"It means the end of the world is coming." said Silver "And there's nothing we can do to stop it…"

Sonic was so horrified to hear this that he nearly passed out in shock…

Over on Angel Island, Knuckles the Echidna and his gorgeous girlfriend and co-guardian Shade the Echidna were having a relaxing morning to themselves. They were sitting side by side by the emerald shrine and they had their arms around each other and their heads resting against one another's. Shade must be in a casual mood today for instead of her Nocturnus outfit, she was dressed in a pink vest top and a pair of tight fitting skinny jeans that complimented her figure wonderfully and she wore some beige coloured shoes with grey soles on her feet. She still had her trademark hair band on. That seemed to be the one item she could never be without. Shade had grown tired of wearing her Nocturnus

outfit all the time so she had decided to dress in casual clothes for a change. Tails had made her a little device that allowed her to put on her suit whenever it was mission time so Shade would be able to make a quick change should she need to. Shade quite liked her casual wear though and was all too happy to be wearing those clothes as she relaxed with her handsome boyfriend. Knuckles and Shade were both enjoying the peace and quiet as well as each other's company. This is where being a Master Emerald guardian has its perks, you're at peace with the world and it can be quite wonderful to just sit there and enjoy the view. The echidnas hadn't had any trouble since the Royal Fighter's last encounter with Dr. Finitevus and Finitevus hadn't shown up again so it seemed they could kick back for the time being. The Royal Fighters hadn't needed them for anything recently either so that added to their time of relaxation. They knew it couldn't last but they didn't care for the moment. They cared about one thing: enjoying the peace while they can. Three weeks had gone without a hitch for Knuckles and Shade so they'd had plenty of time to make the most of it and they hoped it'd continue for a while longer. Shade nuzzled her head against Knuckles's shoulder and smiled a content smile at her handsome echidna.

"Oh Knuckles, it's so beautiful on a slow day like this. I wish it could always last…" she whispered softly.

"I wish it could too babe." said Knuckles, putting his arm around Shade's waist and pulling her a tad closer to him "As is, nothing lasts forever so we make the most of what we have when we have it. When it comes to being a guardian, this is my favourite part of the job. Peace and quiet are golden to me when guardian the emerald and I always like to think my reward for guardian such a valuable emerald is the beautiful scenery all around us."

"That's a good way to put it handsome for if we didn't protect the Master Emerald, Angel Island would be down on the ground and vulnerable to attack." said Shade "If only my stupid father and your wicked uncle could see that…"

"Ix and Finitevus can think what delusional thing they ever want to." scoffed Knuckles "Shows we know better than them. But Ix is gone and Finitevus isn't interested in AngelIsland anymore so we don't

need to worry about them."

"I agree." said Shade "And speaking of Ix…I still continue to be grateful to you for helping me escape his wrath." she said warmly "If it wasn't for you, I'd still be suffering his ruthless treatment and living a horrible life as his mindless servant. You truly saved me that day."

"Aw think nothing of it Shade." said Knuckles, putting a hand on her shoulder and looking her in the eyes "Anyone being oppressed deserves to be freed from their oppressors I say. And besides, I couldn't let a girl as gorgeous as you continue to be treated badly could I?"

Shade smiled with appreciation to hear Knuckles say that. It was no wonder she fell in love with him over time. He was such a wonderful boy to her that Shade could hardly help but love him.

"I'm grateful for your compliment." said Shade "And you know Knuckles, you are the one thing in the world that's more precious to me than guarding the Master Emerald."

"You took the words out of my mouth hon…I could say the same to you." said Knuckles, rubbing his nose against Shade's playfully.

The little nose rub quickly became a loving kiss though. When you're in love, somehow any moment can turn into a kiss, not that Knuckles or Shade minded. They kept the kiss up for a moment before breaking up and looking back into each other's eyes.

"I bet my dad would be thrilled to see us together like this…if he was still alive that is." said Knuckles.

"Locke would have been very proud Knuckles." Shade assured him as she tenderly ran her fingers down his dreadlocks, something that Knuckles could never get enough from due to how nice it felt "I know he would. Especially considering how well we guard the Master Emerald together."

"Oh yes indeed." said Knuckles, smiling over the very thought of Locke being happy to see his son partnered up with Shade.

Knuckles put his arms around Shade's waist and Shade wrapped

her arms around Knuckles's shoulders. In their eyes, they just couldn't get enough of making love to each other. Their eyes closed and they leaned forward for another kiss but just as their lips were about to lock, a terrible sound echoed through the sky and the echidnas were up on their feet in one second. Knuckles raised his fists and Shade took up a battle ready stance.

"What was that?" asked Knuckles.

"Whatever it was, it picked the wrong day to mess with the guardians!" growled Shade.

They didn't have to spend too much time working out what it was though for the answer him the sooner then they could imagine. Straight above them appeared another time rift! It opened up in the sky like a pair of lips that had remained closed for years and had finally decided to open up but the eerie thing about the time rift was it wasn't like any normal time rift they had encountered before. This time rift was beyond enormous! It was the width of five football pitches and it yawned wide open above AngelIsland. Knuckles and Shade stared incredulously at this enormous streak of light that shone thousands of different colours simultaneously. They had not seen one this big before and they knew it meant something terrible indeed.

"A streak of light!" cried Knuckles in disbelief "And it's bigger than the ones that have appeared before!"

"We have to get away from here now!" shrieked Shade "There's not telling what…"

She was cut off mid-sentence as the time rift began its terrifying vacuum phase. As it loomed above Angel Island, it began to suck up whatever it possibly could. The Master Emerald's power managed to keep Angel Island where it was but unfortunately the same couldn't be said for Knuckles and Shade. They felt themselves being tugged towards the time rift as if somebody had aimed a giant vacuum cleaner at them in hopes of sucking them up like specks of dust. Knuckles and Shade both clung onto the emerald shrine as hard as they could but their efforts were fruitless. They had no chance of avoiding being sucked up by a time rift this big, especially as the pull

was beyond anything they'd felt before, even stronger than when Dr. Eggman made his entire city fly and used it to steal the Master Emerald. Knuckles and Shade were whisked away from the shrine and dragged screaming into the terrifying anomaly that apparently spelt the end of the world for Mobius. As they vanished into the shining streak of light in the sky, the time rift remained open for a minute more, not sucking up anything important, and then it closed up, disappearing entirely from view. But it wasn't long until it would show up again, this time much bigger and much, MUCH worse than before…

Back over at New Mobotropolis, Sonic still seemed to be having a tough time accepting Mobius was doomed. All his hard work saving the world from crazy Dr. Eggman schemes, alien invasions and big monsters like Perfect Chaos and yet the world's coming to an end?! It couldn't be! His hard work couldn't just go to waste like this, it just couldn't!

"No…no! Mobius can't end, it just can't!" exclaimed Sonic "There MUST be a way to stop these time rifts or whatever they are!"

He grabbed Silver by his chest fur and began shaking him as if hoping to make his head fall off.

"You're an expert on these things, you must know how to prevent them from dooming us all!" he shrieked.

"I'm sorry Sonic but I don't know how to stop the time rifts." said Silver sadly "I don't even know WHAT is causing them so how can we stop something if we don't know the cause?"

"Then we'll FIND out the cause!" declared Sonic, letting go of Silver "We must go out searching for the cause of these things before zero hour comes for us!"

"That'll be futile Sonic, we have NO idea where to start and we can't possibly know where to start looking for such a cause." muttered Blaze disapprovingly "This is a problem that we will never be able to sort out. I'm sorry Sonic but it's over, for all of us. There's nothing we

can do."

"To heck with that!" snapped Sonic "I've been working too long and too hard to save the world from evil in all shapes and sizes, I refuse to just sit back and accept this is Mobius's fate, to be ripped apart by these time rifts! I'm gonna find out how to stop it and if I have to do it alone then so be it!"

"Sonic please, you can't do this!" begged Sally "We don't know how to stop these things or even where to find the cause of them, however do you expect to just suddenly stop the time rifts?"

"I'll think of something." said Sonic "You know, I wonder if the Chaos Emeralds could help us…"

"Sadly, I doubt even Chaos Emeralds will be of much use in this situation." said Silver with a shake of his head "Not sure what we'd even be able to do with them that could stop the time rifts. A Chaos Control won't solve anything just like that, they'll still happen. While I don't think the time rifts doomed Mobius and ruined the future, it doesn't really matter now since they're hitting worlds and timelines of all kinds. Mobius is doomed anyway and me and Blaze will never save the future now…"

He stared down at his feet as he began to picture the planet being torn apart and just disappearing from existence altogether. What a way to go that would be. Sonic looked like he had just been given a bomb for his birthday.

"I can't believe this, we've been through a lot of hard times all of us and now a silly streak of light that spells doom for us all has you thinking it's over?!" exclaimed Sonic "What happened to you all?!"

"Sonic, in our previous bouts we got to know the enemy and we eventually learned to counter them." noted Sally "The time rifts are beyond what we can comprehend and we don't know what's causing them. We know nothing about them except the fact they're dangerous, that's it. This is something beyond anything we've ever fought! We can't possibly stop the time rifts!"

Sonic just glared at Sally as if he was ashamed his own girlfriend

had just said that to him. Mandy had once said that the royals were always the first to give up and now Sally was reinforcing that statement by clearly giving up.

"Well then, guess I'm the only one who actually cares about trying to save this damn planet." he muttered coldly, storming off in a huff past Sally and blatantly bumping her aside.

Sally didn't fall over luckily but she was a little hurt that Sonic had done that so blatantly. She watched helplessly as Sonic stalked off in a temper and just left all his friends behind to just wonder what to do. Sally wanted to go after Sonic and stop him.

"Sonic! Please wait!" Sally cried out feebly.

"Let him go." said Nicole, holding Sally back hastily "If Sonic wants to try and stop what we can't stop then let him. Mobius maybe doomed but let's let Sonic keep hold of whatever hope he has OK?"

"OK." said Sally dejectedly "Although I think Sonic has the right idea. We shouldn't just sit around and wait for Mobius to disappear, we should try and stop those time rifts! I'm not going to let my planet die after all we've done to save it from disaster, I say we should try and prevent the coming apocalypse! I know it's futile but then again, we've managed to come out on top of situations that seemed futile before so I don't see why know should be any different. Royal Fighters, are you with me?" she asked hopefully.

The Royal Fighters looked at each other and they all knew what the answer to that question was.

"YES!" they all screamed in unison.

"Excellent! Are you with us too?" Sally asked Silver and Blaze.

"Well…I guess we could try." said Silver "After all, if we just let Mobius end then me and Blaze will never find out what's doomed our future for there won't be a future anymore, not even one that's clinging onto its last ledge of life!"

"I may think this is hopeless…but it's worth a shot." said Blaze "I'm definitely in too."

"Very good." said Sally brightly.

"Very good." said Sally brightly "Now let's catch up to Sonic and let him know we're in too."

With that said, the Royal Fighters all ran off after Sonic, hoping to catch up with him and let him know that they were willing to try and stop the time rifts. But they suddenly found out that Sonic hadn't left the city and that he was standing dead in his tracks, staring directly ahead of himself. He looked stunned as if something had just come out of the ground unexpectedly. The Royal Fighters stopped behind Sonic and they stared in astonishment at what they were met with. Standing directly before Sonic and getting ready to cause mayhem were Drs. Eggman and Finitevus! They had decided to spring an unexpected surprise attack on them and now they were here in Sonic's home territory and ready for a fight. Eggman hadn't been seen since the fiasco with Enerjak*** and Dr. Finitevus hadn't been seen since his failed attempt to drain Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles dry of their energy and yet they both were here right now. It seemed they had been fed up of not doing anything and thus, were now doing something. Finitevus flashed a dark smile that reeked of the devil at the heroes before them.

"Hello Royal Fighters. How lovely of you all to be around as we take this city apart." purred Finitevus menacingly "Don't worry though…I won't break any of your bones if I can help it."

"I on the other hand won't hesitate to do so!" cackled Dr. Eggman, his voice booming from inside the Omega armour that was literally keeping him alive after his near death experience with the crash of the Egg Carrier "I'll tear each of you apart if I have to!"

"Eggman, Finitevus, now is NOT a good time!" cried Sonic "We've got a world to save and we can do without you two getting in our way if that's OK!"

"You're not going anywhere without challenging us!" declared Dr. Eggman, pointing a metallic claw at Sonic "Fight us or die with your city, simple as that!"

"I say we just finish them off whether they want to fight or not."

muttered Dr. Finitevus "The result will be the same anyway."

"Look you two, we don't have time for this!" yelled Sonic desperately "Back off now or you'll regret it!"

"Hey Sonic, who are those two?" asked Silver curiously "I don't believe I've read anything about them."

"The weirdo in the cape is Dr. Finitevus, Knuckles's brain-dead crazy uncle." explained Sonic "And the hulking robot there is a life-support machine for Dr. Eggman. He literally rests inside that machine."

"You mean Dr. Eggman's in that robot?!" exclaimed Blaze "What happened to him?!"

"Long story." said Sonic "Right now, we've gotta stop those time rifts remember?"

"Time rifts? What time rifts?" asked a very puzzled Dr. Finitevus, his eyebrow raised in interest.

"I'll explain." said Silver, stepping forward to address the two doctors "Eggman, you know who me and Blaze are so I needn't introduce us to you. Finitevus on the other hand will need the exposition. I am Silver the Hedgehog and this is Blaze the Cat." he said as he introduced himself and Blaze "We come from the future and we were brought here by a time rift. We've warned Sonic about it and now we're trying to stop it before it dooms the whole world."

Eggman's life support machine jerked back as if it was about to malfunction out of the blue. Finitevus however seemed eerily fascinated by this.

"Wh-wh-what d-do you mean?" asked Eggman nervously "What's a time rift?"

"It's a multi-coloured steak of light that appears in the sky and sucks up what it can." explained Blaze "One brought us here and Sonic tells us that Mobius has been receiving time rifts on a regular basis. We fear the end of the world is coming and we hope to stop the time rifts. If you two villains want to live then I suggest you cease your

evil ambitions and help us put an end to this ticking doomsday clock." she said sternly, pointing sharply at the two evil doctors.

"Count me in!" Dr. Eggman said almost immediately "I'm not letting Mobius die! I can't conquer it otherwise!"

"I suppose we could team up for now." sighed Dr. Finitevus "After all, I will never get the satisfaction of destroying you all if something that's not my doing does it for us."

Blaze smiled at this.

"Good, now we're allies for the moment and if you think of back-stabbing us then so help me I'll barbecue you both!" she snarled threateningly.

"Please my jumpy little fire cat, why would I want to backstab you all when it's a matter of life and death here?" snorted Dr. Eggman "The truce will stay up UNTIL this problem is sorted. Once that's done, we're enemies again."

"Whatever, we know the status quo by now fat-head." sighed Sonic "So can we get going now?!"

"Maybe you two could give us an idea on where to start." suggested Tails "You're both scientists, analyze the whole thing and see if you can work out how we could stop the time rifts."

Eggman and Finitevus both looked at Tails as if he was crazy and then they looked at each other. They racked their brains for the moment and began to think.

"Hmm…how to stop a rift in the timeline…" mused Finitevus "This is an interesting problem to solve…"

"Being as I've seen one in action," mused Dr. Eggman, thinking back to the day Sonic was taken by one "I might have a better idea on this than you Finitevus. Now then, let's see…"

Their little science problem was brought to an abrupt halt by a horrible sound that made the earth shudder and everybody fall over in alarm. Sonic and his friends all stared up at the sky after the

rumbling had ceased and they got the shock of their lives. An enormous time rift suddenly ripped open in the sky above New Mobotropolis but this time rift was unlike anything they had seen before. This time rift was so big that it literally covered the *entire sky* over NewMobotropolis, leaving no patch of blue or a single cloud in the space it occupied! The time rifts had been getting worse and yet even know, it could easily get worse than this! For Sonic and friends, this was the worst one yet! Dr. Finitevus couldn't believe his eyes as he stared at the illuminated streak of multi-coloured lights in the sky, shining ominously above them with the colours dancing around like the Northern Lights on Earth.

"This…cannot be!" he gasped "It's unlike anything…I've ever seen before!"

"It's a time rift!" screamed Sonic in terror "We've gotta juice and fast before we're all sucked into it!"

"Everybody run!" exclaimed Sally frantically "If it's this big then it's bound to suck us up any minute now! Run, run, RUN!"

Running would do no good for anybody now. The time rift had already begun its sinister act of sucking up anything within its radius. The time rift began tugging on everybody with a force that felt like thousands of invisible hands wrapping around their bodies and pulling them towards the yawning mouth of the horrifying light staring down above them. The Royal Fighters threw themselves down onto the ground and clung onto it as hard as they possibly could. They were desperate to avoid being sucked up the light. Last thing they could do with was being whisked off to another world while they tried to stop this impending crisis. Many citizens of New Mobotropolis weren't so lucky though. They were immediately whisked up and those close to their homes clung onto them for dear life only to lose the struggle and be sucked up too. Some citizens had been lucky enough to get into their homes and hide there but soon not even houses would do them any good the next time a time rift appeared. Two of those citizens were Scourge the Hedgehog and Fiona Fox. They had been allowed out of their cells for some fresh air for a minute only to get sucked up into the time rift. This wouldn't be like when they ended up on Mobius Nega though and scourge and Fiona cried out as they were sucked up into the rift. Dr.

Finitevus opened up a warp ring and tried to jump through it but not even somebody as strong as he could get away from the time rift. He ended up clinging onto the warp ring as if his life depended on it and he tried to pull himself into the warp ring. As is though, his strength wasn't enough and he ended up losing the struggle. Finitevus gave in to his strained muscles and he was pulled up into the time rift like a speck of dust being sucked into a vacuum cleaner. His screams were silenced the moment he disappeared into the streak of light. Dr. Eggman kicked his life-support machine's rockets into gear and tried as hard as he could to fly out of range. The rockets roared with effort as they strained to get him away from this powerful force of an anomaly that tried to swallow him up. His suit was strong but unfortunately, not strong enough. Eggman ended up being dragged into the time rift, screaming at the top of his lungs from inside his life-support machine as he disappeared into the time rift. Sonic began wishing now two of his deadliest enemies had been sucked up the time rift would just close up now and not bother with the heroes but much to his displeasure, the time rift still persisted. It was almost like it was deliberately trying to suck them all up. Sonic was determined to win this fight though, he wasn't letting the time rift suck him up again as it did the first time. His hands throbbed as he held on tight to the ground and his face went red with effort. The other Royal Fighters were holding on tightly too but they began to find themselves faltering in this tough struggle to avoid being sucked up. Cream and Cosmo were the first to give up. Their grips on the ground released and they were sucked straight up into the time rift. Following them shortly afterwards were Tails, Sora and Ruben, then Amy, then Geoffrey and Bunnie, then Wilson and Mandy, then Vector, Charmy and Espio and then Nicole. Even Silver and Blaze ended up giving up and getting sucked up into the time rift. Sonic and Sally were the only ones left but they wouldn't be around for much longer. Before the time rift pulled them in, Sonic looked over at Sally. The queen was clearly getting ready to let go now for her strength was failing fast.

"Sally!" Sonic called to her "No matter what happens now, we will stop the time rifts! This will not be the end of Mobius!"

"I hope it won't!" Sally cried, her voice straining along with her body as she held on for one more minute "And if it is the end…at least

we'll have tried to prevent it!"

Sonic nodded and he closed his eyes, accepting that he was going to get sucked up no matter what he did. His strength gave way and he and Sally ended up being dragged into the streak of light that ominously waited for them to join the others in its depths. Sonic and Sally glanced at each other one last time as they disappeared into the pool of light that awaited them. Sonic reached out helplessly as Sally disappeared into the light and then he felt himself going limp all over as the overwhelming cascade of lights whooshed past him in a dizzying display that would give a weak-willed person a seizure. Sonic's eyes rolled into the back of his head and he passed out, spiralling around as the time rift closed up being him, trapping him in a pool of glowing lights that would eject him onto some other world in some other universe. Another universe that was also doomed from this supernatural scare…

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius* Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm**

**** It all happened in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius* Arc 22: Impending Crisis, the very prologue to this saga**

*****See *The Terror of Enerjak***

OH NOES! THIS IS IT PEOPLE, THE CRISIS ON INFINITE MOBIUSES HAS TRULY BEGUN! WHAT THE HECK'S GONNA HAPPEN NOW?!

Will Sonic and friends save the day again or is this...truly...the...END?! 0_0 Find out next time for Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses continues in Part 1 with Hedgehogs on New Worlds...

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 1

Story 166: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 1: Hedgehogs on New Worlds

For a brief moment in time, Sonic the Hedgehog's world had become a spiralling world of flashing colours and a hurling sense of vertigo. A time rift had opened up above Mobius and this time rift had been the biggest one that Sonic had ever seen up to now. The time rift had sucked him and all his friends up into it like one giant mouth sucking up its drink through a straw. Now Sonic and his friends, all unconscious but very much alive thanks to the surreal and overwhelming sensation of the time rift, were spiralling through the multi-coloured anomaly in time and space like fish caught in a whirlpool. The funny thing about this time rift though is that it didn't suck Sonic and friends up and spit them ALL out in the same place. This time rift was like no other time rift they had seen before in not just the sense of how unbelievably enormous it was, but in the sense it had time rifts within itself. It was like Sonic and friends had entered some illuminated corridor that had doorways to other worlds. The time rift seemed to have some kind of mind of its own for it ended up throwing Sonic and each of his friends randomly through a set of mini time rifts that were all around like hives of bees. Some of the Mobians were together as they were thrown into the mini time rifts. Sally Acorn and her best friend Nicole the Lynx were thrown through one together, Tails the Fox and his girlfriend Cosmo the Seedrian were thrown through one together, Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, future dwellers dedicated to preventing the end of the world, were thrown through a mini time rift together, Wilson the Dog, his wife Mandy Mouse and the honourable Ruben the Water Panther were thrown into a mini time rift together, Knuckles the Echidna, Shade the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit and Sora Prower were all thrown into one together and finally, Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John and Team Chaotix (Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee) were thrown through a mini time rift together. Unbeknownst to anybody, even Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat had been sucked up by a time rift and brought to this weird corridor of time rifts too. To their

bad luck, they were thrown through a mini time rift along with Dr. Eggman and Dr. Finitevus. More on them later for this is Sonic's story for now. Sonic was tossed through a mini time rift like a football through a window and unfortunately for him, so were his evil brother Scourge the Hedgehog and the Royal Fighter traitor Fiona Fox. The three Mobians were all sent spinning into the time rift like spiders being washed down a sink and for a moment there was only falling…falling…falling…

Despite coming out of the time rift and landing with a terrible thump onto solid, rock ground, Sonic hadn't registered the thump until a while later. Half an hour to be precise. He had exited the time rift after a while of spinning through it and had landed goodness knows where. He was still unconscious from the horrible sensation that the time rift had given him and he lay there, sleeping peacefully for a while until finally his eyes opened and his body began to kick back into gear. Sonic clutched his head, which began doing leaps and corkscrews in agony from how much it was paining.

"Uh…it feels like my brain's doing a spin-dash in my skull…" he whined, wincing from the agonizing pain his head was feeling. If it ached any longer his head would explode.

Sonic didn't feel like getting up for a minute so he remained lying down on whatever it was he was lying on and waited for his head to start feeling better. As far as he was concerned, he was sure not even aspirin would ease this headache. He massaged his scalp as he relayed the events of thirty minutes ago, although to him the whole thing felt like five minutes ago.

"OK…Silver and Blaze came to us, warned us about the time rifts, tell us that it spells doom on us, then one shows up and sucks us all in." he murmured "And now I bet I'm in the middle of wherever the fridge I am. Given those time rifts, I could be anywhere right now. I hope my friends are alright…especially Sally." he said worriedly, not liking the idea of his girlfriend in serious danger, especially since they'd only just gotten together.

Due to how unpredictable the time rifts were, Sonic had no hope of

finding out where his friends were and he certainly knew it was futile to hope that he and his friends all ended up on the same world. As nice as it would be for him and all his friends to be here together, it was very unlikely and as Sonic knew, there was no telling with time rifts what goes on in them. Whether the group was together or separated, Sonic had no idea. All he knew was a crisis had begun and he was goodness knows where. Speaking of where…where exactly was he? Sonic had eased enough of the pain in his skull to stand up and observe his new surroundings, each of his senses alert and on the look out for any sense of danger around. On a new world and in unfamiliar territory like this, you can never be too careful. Alertness was always paramount in moments like this. Sonic looked all around him and saw that much to his dismay, there wasn't all that much on display for him. He was standing on a slap of rock that was flat on top like a platform and the rock was balanced on a huge stony tower that seemed to be balancing the rock platform like a spinning plate on a stick in a circus act. There was dense fog all around and Sonic looked down only to find the ground wasn't visible due to the fog. That is…if there even WAS any ground at the bottom of this rock tower he was on. Sonic begin to wonder for one fur shivering moment that he was literally nowhere and this rock he was on was the only thing around. But some of the fog seemed to drift aside for a moment and Sonic could make out the shape of another rock in the distance. Like the one he was one, it was balancing on top of a huge pointy rock that protruded from the ground like a giant spike. Sonic jumped off of the rock he was on in one graceful leap and he landed onto the other rock. He looked around again only to see the same dense fog all around and he began to wonder if he had even moved onto a different place. It took a glance over his shoulder and seeing the rock he had been on just a big leap behind him to reassure him he had moved on. Sonic scanned his foggy environment and he managed to make out another rock nearby. Sonic was about to leap but he stopped and thought for a moment. Was this some kind of game or some kind of trap? Or was this just how this strange world looked? Was it just nothing but fog and rocks after all? Only one way to find out and that way was move on. Squaring his shoulders, Sonic leaped onto the other rock. He was met with yet more fog that just seemed to expand endlessly like it was openly mocking him and tormenting him for no reason other than sadistic pleasure. Sonic certainly felt like that was the case.

"What is this place? "The planet of fog and rocks"?" snorted Sonic "I'll be shocked if anybody even lives on this planet! Wish that stupid time rift brought me somewhere a bit more lively…"

"HELP!"

That sudden scream nearly made Sonic jump off of the rock in fright. He looked around and listened to see if he could hear the scream again. He could hear it, a single shrilling cry of "HELP!" coming from not far away. The voice sounded a bit like Amy Rose, giving Sonic hope that his friends were on this world as well as him. It was so audible that Sonic began to wonder if the person crying help was merely meters away and yet he couldn't see anybody around.

"Hello?" Sonic called out "Is there anybody around at all?"

"HELP ME! PLEASE!" the voice screamed back "I'M GONNA FALL!"

The voice was clear enough for Sonic to decipher its location. Sonic turned to the north-west direction and he saw a towering rock platform nearby. This one stood a little taller than the one he was on and he could see a vague shape frantically swinging its legs back and forth as if hoping to gain traction on this rocky surface it was clinging onto the edge of for dear life. The shape looked a little like Amy Rose but Sonic could see some differences in the shape that told him this was not his Amy Rose. Could it be another Amy Rose that he knew too well? Sonic decided to find out, especially since he could clearly see that whoever this Amy was, she was in danger and was going to fall if he didn't do anything about it. Sonic spin-dashed up to the rock and he landed on it. Now he was on it, he peered over to see somebody that looked like Amy Rose gripping onto the edge of the rock, desperate not to fall for it seemed like there was an endless plummet at the bottom. Sonic could see that he was right, it wasn't Amy Rose from his Mobius, but in fact Amy Nega from Mobius Nega. She looked a lot better since the last time he had been on Mobius Nega, suggesting she'd had a nice steady recovery from the torture she'd received under Scourge and Fiona's tyrannical take-over of the planet before fate decided to throw him into Mobius Nega and get him to bring Scourge and Fiona back. But she wouldn't be well for long if Sonic did help her. Amy Nega looked up helplessly and her face brightened at the sight of Sonic standing

there before her looking down at her.

"Sonic Prime! Oh thank god it's you!" she cheered "Please help me, I'm gonna fall if I hang around any longer!"

"Hold on Amy Nega, I'll get ya up!" cried Sonic "Don't move or anything, I'll pull you up!"

Amy Nega did as she was told and she didn't move. Sonic got down onto his knees and he grabbed Amy Nega by the wrists. He made sure his hands were gripping on tightly before doing anything else. Using all the strength he had in his body, he pulled the black-clad hedgehog up onto the rock. Now Amy Nega had been pulled onto the rock and was out of harm's way, Sonic sat down and rubbed his arms while Amy Nega hugged him gratefully.

"Oh thank you Sonic! I thought I was a goner for a moment!" she wailed fearfully.

"You would have been had I not ended up here." said Sonic, taking the hug well since this was a familiar face hugging him "So Amy Nega, how's it been going for you since we last met?"

"Like clockwork." said Amy Nega brightly, letting Sonic go "Mobius Nega has been peaceful and prosperous once again, nothing terrible's happened and everything's going smoothly. We're finally at peace it seems. But then suddenly this giant streak of light appears above Mobotropolis Nega and then sucks up everybody, me included! I don't know if anybody I know has ended up on this strange world or anything or if I'm alone. I've only just been awake believe it or not. I was lying unconscious on this rock for a moment and when I woke up, I rolled onto my side and nearly fell off the rock! I managed to grab onto the side before I could plummet luckily but I couldn't pull myself up, I was too weak to do so. And then you showed up and saved me! Say, how did you end up in this weird world?"

"Same way you did Ames." said Sonic "Giant streak of light in the sky. According to a friend of mine, they're called time rifts and they're apparently apocalyptic. My world's had plenty of them so Mobius Prime's probably on the brink of destruction now!"

Amy Nega put her hands over her mouth in shock.

"That's terrible!" she shrieked "If Mobius Prime dies then the whole multi-verse will collapse onto itself!"

"You serious?" asked Sonic incredulously.

"POSITIVE!" Amy Nega blurted frantically "According to a theory Tails Nega deducted, the multi-verse can't exist without the prime universe! If Mobius Prime is wiped out by these time rift thingies then all the other Mobiuses in the multi-verse will be gone too! The alternate Mobiuses depend squarely on Mobius Prime for existence! If it's wiped out, the other worlds are wiped out too!"

Sonic could hardly believe his ears. If Mobius, HIS Mobius, ended then that would mean the end of all other Mobiuses in the multi-verse? Now Sonic HAD to stop this madness before it got any worse! This was more than just the end of the world now, this was the end of a big multitude of worlds! If Sonic could stop the time rifts and fix everything then he truly would become a hero bigger than he could ever imagine. Not just Hero of Mobius, but Hero of several different Mobiuses. Sonic looked at Amy Nega and he put his hands on her shoulders.

"This is pretty big Amy Nega…and I'm gonna do whatever I can to stop this." said Sonic "I will save the multi-verse. I can't promise that since it's very likely I'll fail…but I WILL try."

"I know you will my heroic little Prime Zoner." said Amy Nega happily "You saved my world twice already, now save all other Mobiuses!"

"I'll do what I can." said Sonic "Although I have no idea where to start! I don't know what's causing the time rifts and where to start looking for such a cause. I'm gonna be on a wild goose chase here!"

"Well I can't help you much I'm afraid." said Amy Nega glumly "I have no idea on this either. I bet Tails Nega would have some kind of idea…"

"I can't believe I'm saying this but I wish Eggman was here to work

this out!" cried Sonic, cringing as if forcing his lips to spew out those words physically hurt him "He's a scientist, I bet he'd work out what's causing these time rifts!"

"Well then we'd better hope he's here." murmured Amy Nega "You mean YOUR Eggman I hope, not Eggman Nega."

"Eggman Nega's in the void and the void's time-locked to stop anyone opening it again, there's no way he'll end up here." noted Sonic "So yeah, I mean my Eggman. Now then, is there anything else around here other than…"

He was rudely cut off by a spin-dash to the back that sent him hurling off the rock and plummeting down onto another rock that was nearby.

He was rudely cut off by a spin-dash to the back that sent him hurling off the rock and plummeting down onto another rock platform that was nearby but lower down from the one he and Amy Nega were on. It was also very wide too, spanning the width of a basketball court. Amy Nega cried out for Sonic as the blue hedgehog came down with a thud onto the rock platform. Sonic picked himself up and began wondering what had hit him. It didn't take him long to find out though for his assailant landed down onto the rock with him and stood before him, his arms folded and a devil's smile on its face. It was none other than Sonic's evil brother himself, Scourge the Hedgehog. Scourge glowered smugly at Sonic and Sonic glowered furiously at him.

"Scourge! So you're here too!" grumbled Sonic "Just my luck. So let me guess, that streak of light got you too?"

"It certainly did blue." said Scourge "One moment me and Fiona were allowed outside for a minute of fresh air and then suddenly a streak of light appears in the sky and we get sucked in! I hope the cops that were guarding us aren't here too or I will be mad…"

"Fiona got sucked up too? Where is she then?" asked Sonic.

"Taking care of Amy's bratty Mobius Nega counterpart." said Scourge smoothly, pointing up to the rock Sonic had been on a

moment ago.

Sonic looked up to where Scourge was pointing and he saw that, just like he'd said, Fiona was taking care of Amy Nega. The vixen kicked the hedgehog in the back of her legs and brought her down onto her knees and then grabbed her into a chokehold. Amy Nega gagged loudly and she tried to break free of the hold but Fiona was too strong for her.

"Let me…go!" croaked Amy Nega.

"No chance sunshine, me and my baby have scores to settle with you." purred Fiona dryly, pressing her arm even harder against Amy Nega's throat, the poor hedgehog gasping for breath as her air supply threatened to run out.

"Amy!" cried Sonic "Scourge, tell Fiona to let her go right now!"

"Why should I? She was a bothersome pest for us when we were on Mobius Nega so therefore, she should suffer." snorted Scourge "Just like YOU should as well you blue twerp!"

"Scourge, please listen for a moment, we don't have time for this!" exclaimed Sonic frantically "Those streaks of light are going to doom the entire multi-verse and if we don't find out what's causing them then we'll all die along with every different version of Mobius out there!"

"Don't play the fool with me Sonic." snarled Scourge "How can a stupid little light in the sky doom us all? We're settling this here and now and if you want to be a wuss and chicken out then be my guest. I'll only chase you down until I catch you!"

"Scourge for once in your worthless life, listen to me!" screamed Sonic "We're wasting time here! We…"

But Scourge wasn't listening. He didn't care about what Sonic had to say anymore. He foolishly believed that the time rifts weren't deadly in the slightest and now he just wanted to destroy Sonic once and for all. He whizzed towards Sonic but Sonic held his hands up and grabbed him. The two linked hands with one another and they

pushed on each other as if they were in a sumo match. The two hedgehogs pushed onto each other and tried their best to take the other down. Sonic decided to distract Scourge by using his usual sense of humour to focus his attention away from the struggle for a moment.

"You might know everything I'm going to do, but that's not going to help you since I know everything YOU'RE going to do! STRANGE isn't it?" he snickered.

"That's the lamest thing you have ever said Sonic!" growled Scourge in annoyance.

"Better than what tosh comes out YOUR mouth loser!" laughed Sonic.

With that said he kicked Scourge in the shin and made the green hedgehog kneel down for a minute. Furious, Scourge punched at Sonic but Sonic smacked the punch away and then jabbed him in the side of his head, a vulnerable point for anybody to be hit in. Now Scourge was down, Sonic spin-dashed back up to the rock Amy Nega and Fiona were on and he spin-dashed Fiona away from the pink hedgehog. Fiona was thrown onto her back but luckily, Sonic didn't spin-dash her hard enough to knock her off of the rock completely. Fiona picked herself up and she ran towards Sonic. She threw a kick at him but Sonic blocked the blow and sent her leg jerking to one side, throwing her off balance and bringing her down onto her side. Since Scourge wasn't listening to him, Sonic decided to try his luck with Fiona.

"Fiona, I know you really hate my guts right now but you must listen to me, this is important." said Sonic "You know that streak of light that took you and Scourge to Mobius Nega and now one's brought us here?"

"Yes?" said Fiona, wondering where this was going.

"Well a friend of mine named Silver the Hedgehog told me what they are." said Sonic "They're called time rifts and according to Silver, they spell doom on us all. Mobius Prime has been getting plenty of them and according to Silver, that means Mobius Prime is coming to

an end. There's already evidence of that, notice how the time rift that took us here was bigger than usual?"

Fiona thought back for a moment. Sonic WAS right on that, the time rift that had sucked her and Scourge up and brought them here was definitely bigger than the first one she and Scourge had seen. Fiona thought on this and began to find herself believing Sonic on this. As reluctant as she was, she decided to trust Sonic for the moment.

"As much as it pains me to say it…but I believe you." said Fiona "Especially if that silver freak was the one who told you it. He is a time traveller so I can believe what he says. And as you pointed out, that time rift or whatever it's called was bigger than the one me and Scourge were taken to Mobius Nega by so that must mean something. And given I don't want our world to end, I'll happily form a truce until this is over."

"Glad you see it my way Fiona." said Sonic "Let's hope we can convince Scourge to play nice too."

As he said Scourge's name, the green hedgehog spin-dashed his way onto the rock platform and he landed just before Sonic, his face contorting with rage and suggesting he was about ready to kill right now.

"You coward! Fight me like you have done before!" roared Scourge "Give me a REAL battle you chicken-hearted pin cushion!"

"Scourge baby, hold on a second!" exclaimed Fiona, grabbing Scourge's arm and holding him back "Sonic's just told me that those streak of lights in the sky are called time rifts and apparently they're going to doom the world!"

"You don't seriously believe that crap for a minute do ya?" snapped Scourge "Don't tell me you're getting infected by stupid Fiona!"

"Scourge, please, I don't think Sonic's kidding for a minute." said Fiona sternly "He sounded deathly serious when he told me this and to top it off, he told me the information he gave me came from Silver. You remember him right?"

"I do, psychic powered time-traveller with a bad hair style who whacked me with a tree during our battle." muttered Scourge "Also hung out with a purple-furred fire cat with a bad fashion sense. So he knows what that light in the sky is and he says it'll doom us all?"

"Yep." said Fiona "Given he's a time traveller, we can definitely believe what he says if it's related to time and all. Also Sonic pointed out that the time rift that brought us here was much bigger than the first one we were taken away by. That definitely can't be a good sign."

"You got that right." said Scourge, thinking about all of this and analyzing what he'd just been told "That time rift was bigger than usual that's for sure…and if it spells doom for us all then…our world will be no more!"

"If you think THAT'S bad, wait till you hear this!" exclaimed Amy Nega "If Mobius Prime ends, then the entire multi-verse will end! We have to stop those time rifts and fast! We maybe enemies and all but will you help us stop those rifts?"

"Totally!" said Scourge agreeably "How can I become ruler of Mobius if there IS no Mobius! And I can't just pick another Mobius because that'll be gone too! I maybe bad, but never in my life would I want the world to end! That's going too far in my books! So Sonic, we're allies for the time being but I'm warning ya, once we stop the time rifts…"

"Yeah, yeah, I know." said Sonic, shaking Scourge's hand "I know you well enough to know what you're gonna say bro. I've gotta say though, it's like Perfect Chaos all over again. World's in jeopardy and you decide to help us."

"Like I said, I can't rule a world if it's destroyed." said Scourge "So then blue, any ideas where to start?"

"I wish I had any." muttered Sonic "But…"

Suddenly, a loud tearing sound was heard. It sounded like a giant sheet of paper being torn in two only much louder and more ominous. Scourge and Fiona clutched each other fearfully,

wondering what it was and Sonic and Amy Nega looked around to see where the noise was coming from. Then, it happened. A streak of light spread down the air in front of them and opened up like a bleeding cut. It was another time rift. This one wasn't too big, suggesting that the time rifts weren't a big problem on this particular world. It was only the size of a giraffe from its hoof to the top of its head. It wasn't as colourful too, being mostly a mixture of red and orange with some yellow mixed in it. Scourge stood forward and surprisingly enough, he couldn't feel anything pulling him towards it. In fact, nobody could feel it pulling them towards it. Was this a weaker time rift and it didn't suck people up, just appeared out of nowhere like this one? Or was this something different? Scourge seemed to have some kind of idea.

"Hey look! Another time rift!" he cried "Maybe if we go through this one, we'll find the cause of these things!"

"Scourge don't!" cried Fiona.

"Don't go in there, it could be dangerous!" yelled Sonic.

But Scourge didn't listen. He leaped off of the rock and straight into the time rift. Sighing loudly, Sonic decided to go after him and make sure he didn't end up in any trouble. Amy Nega and Fiona had no choice but to follow them too. No point staying on a world that's nothing but fog and rock, they may as well see what awaited them on the other side of this time rift. The Mobians all disappeared through the time rift and as they entered it, it closed behind them. The scary thing was, the moment the Mobians had disappeared, a giant pair of icy blue eyes appeared in the sky and booming, thunderous laughter seemed to echo through the fog covered world they had just been on.

"Foolish mortal insects…they will never stop me. " boomed the eyes which flashed as they spoke **"I will rewrite the multi-verse and they cannot stop me now I'm beginning to break through the barriers left by that fool Malacos…they are only going to end themselves at this rate…"**

The laughter that followed this speech was ominous, thundering and like an earthquake all around and then the eyes seemed to

disappear with the laughter fading away shortly afterwards…

The time rift opened up in the sky of another world and out of it poured Sonic, Scourge, Fiona and Amy Nega. The rift had opened up pretty high though so they had quite a bit of a drop. They all plummeted like falling raindrops towards the ground but here's the funny thing about their landing. They landed on the ground…with a big splash. And this wasn't just your usual splash of water either, it was a splash of a yellowy liquid that seemed to expand for miles all around this world. It could have been a lot worse though had it been solid ground and not a yellow liquid substance like they had landed in. Now they had landed, Sonic picked himself up and found himself covered in the yellow liquid they'd landed in. It didn't just run off like water would, suggesting it wasn't water. Sonic eyed it suspiciously.

"Ugh…what is this stuff?" he said in disgust.

Scourge sat up in the liquid and he licked a bit off of his fingers. To his surprise, the taste was very familiar to him. He spat in surprise.

"CUSTARD?!" he blurted "This stuff is custard?!"

"You mean to tell me we're on a world covered in custard?!" gasped Fiona as if this was some kind of crazy dream they had entered "How on Mobius did such a place get formed when the multi-verse did?!"

"I can easily say this is one world that won't be missed when the multi-verse ends." muttered Amy Nega, wiping as much custard off of herself as possible "Who'd want to live in this place?!"

"I dunno, Custard-creatures I guess." said Sonic, shrugging.

"Well I'm not staying on this planet any longer!" muttered Scourge, wiping off some custard and getting to his feet "I hate custard! It's disgusting! I got served enough of that while I've been in prison! I'm outta here!"

He started to stomp off, his feet going splodge through the custard as he did so but no sooner had he taken four big heavy steps, he

ended up suddenly falling through the custard, making a very comical splash that sent custard flying everywhere. It was like falling into a swimming pool only it was custard instead of water. Sonic and Amy Nega instantly shrieked with laughter at this whereas Fiona came close to laughing but forced herself to keep it in since Scourge would kill her if he caught her laughing at him. Fiona then ran over to where Scourge had fallen and dunked her hands in the custard, hoping to find Scourge before he drowned in the stuff.

"Scourge! Scourge! You OK down there?" asked Fiona, fumbling around furiously "Where are you?"

"Bblblb'm blblbown blblblere!" gurgled a bubbling sound from under the custard. Scourge seemed to still be able to hear despite being underneath a bunch of custard.

Fiona resisted the urge to face palm herself for she'd end up getting custard on her face. When you're under liquid of any kind, you do NOT talk! Any idiot would know that! Open your mouth and then suddenly the liquid gets in it and assures you a quick drown! But Scourge wouldn't be drowning in custard after all for shortly after he'd said that he rose to the surface, gasping for breath and gagging as if he'd just been given a poisoned stew.

"Gah! Yuck! Phtooey!" he spat madly "This stuff's so damn vile! I can't believe there's people who eat this stuff and actually LIKE it!"

"Well at least you made it back up without drowning hot stuff." muttered Fiona "You didn't happen to find us a way outta here down there did ya?"

"Nope, but I did find something else." said Scourge.

He dunked his hands back down into the custard and pulled something up from underneath it. Sonic, Amy Nega and Fiona all stared in disbelief at whatever it was Scourge had found. Scourge wiped custard off of the thing he now held in his hands and the Mobians could see that it was out of the ordinary, no mistake about that. It almost looked like something belonging to a wizard. It was a long sceptre that had a clock on top of it. The clock was stylized a little like an old grandfather clock that somebody's grandparent may

have owned in their lives and the hands were spinning around the face of the clock like crazy. Sonic almost had a hard time believing that this thing was real. It looked so much like something out of a children's book. He rubbed his eyes and stared again. There was no mistake. Scourge was actually holding some kind of clock sceptre or whatever it was he had in his hands. Sonic immediately began wondering what it was. It couldn't be of Mobian origin since it looked so out of the ordinary. Was it connected in anyway to the time rifts? The clock on the sceptre was a big indicator of this since clocks are associated with time and are used as a way of telling the time. If it was connected to the time rifts then what should they do with it? Destroy it and hope that it stops the time rifts appearing? Or use it and see if it actually has the power to stop the time rifts? Sonic had no idea. Fiona stood forward and looked at the sceptre.

"What in the world is this baby?" asked Fiona, putting her hands on the sceptre.

"Dunno, but given the clock on it, I'm guessing it's just some big guy's fancy clock or something." said Scourge "Do you think this can stop the time rift thingies at all? I mean, it's got a clock on it and clocks tell time and all…"

"Coincidence, I was wondering the same thing Scourge." said Sonic "Although I'm not sure what to do about it. Should we destroy it or should we see how it works? Either one might stop the time rifts."

"Or how about we do nothing with it in case we make everything worse?" said Amy Nega sternly, her hands on her hips in the manner of a stern mother "We don't know what that is or what it can do so let's not play with something we don't know about shall we?"

"Phooey! If we don't try it out, we won't know what it is and what it does." scoffed Scourge "We should try this thing out. I bet it's got some kind of weird magical power in it. Maybe open a portal out of this stupid custard covered world!"

"So try it out Scourge, see what happens." urged Fiona "I want to get out of this world too. Custard is revolting and I can do without being surrounded by it!" she added, sticking her tongue out in disgust.

"OK then." said Scourge, holding the sceptre up "How do you work this thing? Do you wave it like a wand and say "Abracadabra" or summet?"

"Put that thing down before you do some damage you crazy maniac!" screeched Amy Nega.

Scourge ignored her and he started waving the sceptre around. He circled the air with it and then he thrust it forward in the hope that it would do something. Nothing happened. He shook the sceptre and thrust it forward again. Nothing happened. Scourge held the clock to his face and he shook the sceptre. He tapped on the clock's face. The hands were spinning but that was about the only thing even remotely close to doing something as far as the sceptre was concerned. Scourge fumed.

"Hey, is this thing working or what?" he said crossly, thumping on it as if hopping that would make it do something.

"Or maybe it just doesn't do anything." said Sonic with a shrug "After all, sceptres don't always do something. They can just be decorations or whatnot, they don't have to do something."

Then suddenly, another time rift opened up just above them. The Mobians all jumped back in alarm. The time rift was as big as the other one that had taken them to this custard covered world but it was a mixture of blue and purple inside and not as illuminated. Scourge looked at the clock sceptre suspiciously. The hands on the face were spinning but it didn't seem to be doing anything else.

"Did I do that?" asked Scourge.

"Wouldn't be surprised if you did." said Fiona "You're the one waving that thing around. It couldn't be anything else."

"Or maybe that time rift just coincidentally showed up as he was waving it around." noted Sonic "Either way, let's see where this one takes us. Maybe it'll take us to somebody who knows what that sceptre is and *if* it can do anything."

"I second that!" cried Scourge, eagerly jumping through the time rift

"Goodbye Custard Mobius!"

Scourge's voice died away as he disappeared into the time rift. Sonic, Fiona and Amy Nega didn't hesitate to follow him. They wanted to get out of this world too since they were getting nowhere and custard wasn't their idea of a world. They jumped through the time rift and as they went through it, it disappeared. Yet again as they went through the time rift, a pair of icy blue eyes watched them from up in the sky and they seemed to be happy about what had just happened. The eyes disappeared, presumably following the Mobians to where the time rift was taking them next. It was a matter of who got there first…

The time rift opened up again but this time, on ground level so Sonic, Scourge, Fiona and Amy Nega didn't fall out of the sky for a change. Instead, they just stepped out of the time rift as if they were just walking through an ordinary door. After stepping out of the time rift, they found themselves standing on solid ground, which was good enough for them. They looked around just to see what this world they were now on was like. They were on a huge platform that seemed to float in the middle of nowhere. The platform had a ring of flickering blue flames that spanned all the way around the platform and they blazed away like crazy. There seemed to be no sky or even a horizon for that matter. Everything was just a black and blue mesh of swirling and swimming colours that interchanged from black being prominent to blue being prominent in a manner similar to a fancy set of lights. There was nothing else around. Just this one platform and the mesh of colours that surrounded the scenery. Sonic pulled a face.

"Puh, this is almost as featureless as the world of fog and rocks we were on before the custard world!" he complained "Why do we keep ending up on some pretty vapid looking worlds?"

"Dunno, just our dumb luck I guess." sighed Scourge "I was hoping for something a bit more…chaotic and hellish really."

"Trust you to say that." muttered Amy Nega bitterly, her gaze away from Scourge as if she was worried making eye contact with him

would give her a serious head-trauma.

"Ah, ah, ah, we're allies Amy Nega so no being nasty towards Scourge if you please." said Fiona coldly.

"I wasn't being nasty, I was just fuming at his evil thoughts." snapped Amy Nega "We maybe allies but it doesn't mean I have to like what he likes now."

"Girls, don't argue, now's not the time." said Sonic hastily "Scourge, I don't like this place, it's freaking me out. Use that thing to get us outta here."

"Wait, not yet." said Scourge "There might be somebody who lives here and knows how to work that thing. Let's investigate first."

"Oh yeah right, that's a brilliant idea." scoffed Sonic sarcastically "Let's investigate the whole platform shall we? Oh look, it's a giant platform with flames all around it! How wonderful! Let's see what else there is. Oh wait, there isn't anything else you moron! THIS IS THE ONLY THING HERE!" he screamed in frustration "There's nothing around here but the platform we're on! We won't find anything here!"

"Geez, didn't have to be a sarcastic little prick about it did ya?" sniffed Scourge crossly "Besides, that's my job! Oh well, if you want out of here then let's see where the clock sceptre will take us next."

He raised the sceptre and began to twirl it around but as he did so, a terrible, booming, growly voice that sounded like a demon echoed through the entire area and made everybody jump out of their fur in alarm. Scourge nearly dropped the sceptre and he clutched it tightly to himself as if hoping it would save him from impending danger. Sonic and Fiona swore that they had never seen Scourge look so frightened before.

"Do not meddle with the time sceptre foolish mortals! This will be your ONLY warning!" thundered the voice menacingly.

"Warning?!" screeched Scourge.

"Any attempts to meddle with the sceptre will result in you

mortal fools getting a terrible, gruesome death!" boomed the voice.

What followed that warning was the arrival of the sinister icy blue eyes that had been spying on the Mobians on the last two worlds they had been on. The eyes glowered down at Scourge, fixed entirely on the sceptre as if they had some kind of vendetta against it and were hoping to destroy it for good. Scourge decided not to let the eyes intimidate him as much as the voice did and he pointed the sceptre at them.

"You dare address the awesome Scourge the Hedgehog in threatening tones?!" he snarled furiously "I am so gonna beat the tar outta ya for that you stupid glowing eyes!"

"You are nothing more than an insect waiting to be crushed green one!" sneered the eyes **"You cannot stop a god such as myself! And you will drop that sceptre or I will make you drop it for me!"**

"You seriously think I'm intimidated by a stupid growling voice and flashing eyes?!" scoffed Scourge "Please, I've seen worse in my life. I've even taken on a giant water creature with a brain in a fin on its head! You don't scare me! And if you want me to drop this sceptre then you must be afraid of it or something!"

He waved the sceptre around as if hoping it would scare the eyes away.

"That's it! Cower before the awesome might of Scourge the Hedgehog!" crowed Scourge delightedly.

Sonic just sighed in annoyance and he looked over at Fiona.

"You sure he's the right guy for ya?" he snorted.

"Sometimes that ego of his just makes me sigh." sighed Fiona in agreement "Even I have to admit he's in over his head right now."

"Shut up back there you two!" barked Scourge "Can't you see I'm trying to scare off these stupid glowing eyes that are threatening us?!"

"I do not fear the time sceptre, especially as it is in your inferior hands mortal." crooned the voice darkly, the platform rumbling under the Mobian's feet **"You will drop it so that I may destroy it before Malacos can find it! I went to the trouble of hiding it on that yellow liquidated world so that he would nev er find it and now you've unearthed it, he can find it and use it against me!"**

"Huh? What? Who's Malacos?" asked Sonic inquisitively "And who the heck are YOU Mr. Creepy Von Booming Voice?"

"I am the Eraser, the God of Existence." announced the eyes **"Every existence in the multi-verse, in AL L of creation depends solely on me for existence and I am not pleased with how everything in the multi-verse looks. I will erase it all and reshape it to how I see fit! Only Malacos stands in my way and now I've disposed of his time sceptre, I can commence with my goals without him proving much of a problem for me! He continues to try and stop me but without his sceptre, it is useless for him! He cannot stop me and now I will stop you fools from using the sceptre to try and stop my beautiful time rift portals from erasing everything around!"**

"Time rift portals?!" piped Sonic in alarm "So it's YOU who's behind the time rifts! And you want to reshape the multi-verse?! WHY?!"

"As I said, the multi-verse has a repulsive image." boomed the Eraser **"Such disgusting animals crawling around like insects and giving the multi-verse a repulsive image! Being as I am the God of Existence, I demand that your existences cease but unfortunately, the other Gods of Existence that exist alongside me demanded that I not interfere with the multi-verse! They like it the way it is! I decided to show them I was boss by erasing them from existence! Only one is immune to my power, the God of Time himself, Malacos! He foolishly tries to stop me from recreating the multi-verse but as it is, I am winning the battle with him! He'll fall to me eventually and then I shall recreate the multi-verse into an image that it should have!"**

"And what image is that you creepy little cuss-face?" asked Fiona cautiously.

"No point telling you, you'll all be erased from existence!" cackled the Eraser **"Malacos is protecting you all so far, hence why my time rifts don't erase you, only relocate you to another world. The sceptre also wields protection for you all too. But once I beat him and the sceptre is destroyed, you'll all disappear at the mere snap of my fingers!"**

"I'm not disappearing any time soon!"yelled Sonic bravely "We're gonna give this sceptre to Malacos and then he'll kick your butt with it! And then maybe I'll help him to defeat you too!"

"You dare to challenge the Eraser?!" roared the Eraser furiously **"I shall smite you all for this! I may not be able to make you disappear, but I will snatch that sceptre from your worthless hands!"**

The eyes then suddenly disappeared and what remerged in their place was a tall, dark figure dressed in icy blue robes and wearing a hood that concealed any feature on its face except the malevolent, glowing blue eyes of pure coldness that glowered at the Mobians. Two spikes protruded from the back of its shoulders and its hands looked as if they were made of ice. It didn't seem to have any feet and it levitated above the ground. This was The Eraser's true form and now he was going to battle the Mobians hand to hand. When in battle with the so-called "Malacos" he would be much bigger than this. Sonic, Scourge, Fiona and Amy Nega all stood their ground and they prepared to do battle with this mysterious god that stood before them. His robes flapped around in a wind that the heroes and villains couldn't feel yet seemed to surround him.

"Come on guys! We can take this clown!" Sonic yelled determinedly "We're not letting him erase all of existence! Let's do it to it!"

Scourge was the first to attack. He zoomed forward and he swung the sceptre at The Eraser. He managed to whack him in the head with it, the hands on the clock's face spinning around like crazy as it hit him. The Eraser took the blow and he grabbed the sceptre. Scourge held on tight and he wrestled with the demonic entity that threatened to end all things just so he could do it all over again.

"Hey Eraser! If you want to destroy this thing, how come you merely

hid it on another world?" asked Scourge "Why didn't you just destroy it?!"

"I was hoping to use it for my own once I had beaten Malacos in battle." boomed The Eraser, his eyes narrowing down to cold slits that resembled icicles to some degree **"But now you've found out, by complete accident that is, so now I must destroy it before Malacos can get it back! I may nev er get it away from him again!"**

"Well God of the Dumbos, I've got news for ya!" yelled Scourge "I'm not letting ya erase us all from existence, namely ME! This sceptre's mine and I say Malacos can have it back so he can kick your big godly ass!"

The Eraser just slugged Scourge in the gut and made him let go of the time sceptre. The Eraser cackled delightedly, pleased to have the powerful weapon in his hands again but before he could so much as think about breaking it, Scourge spin-dashed him in the gut and made him drop it. Scourge grabbed the sceptre and then he smacked The Eraser with the sceptre. The Eraser took the blow but he did stagger backwards, wincing for a minute. Sonic spin-dashed him in the back and knocked him down onto his stomach. This gave Scourge the opportunity to whack The Eraser on the head with the sceptre. The Eraser groaned a ghoulish groan of pain and he jumped up onto his feet. He threw a terrific punch at Scourge that sent him hurling into the air. Scourge spiralled through the air but surprisingly enough, he still had hold of the time sceptre. The Eraser flew over to where Scourge was going to land and he caught him in his hands. He tossed Scourge towards the flames on the edges of the platform after snatching the sceptre from him. Scourge landed in front of the flames but luckily, didn't land in them so he avoided a nasty burning. Fiona and Amy Nega both ran up to The Eraser but he smacked them both away with the time sceptre, sending the two girls hurling across the platform. Scourge picked himself up and he spin-dashed The Eraser in the back. The Eraser didn't falter or stagger from the blow and he whacked Scourge onto the ground with the time sceptre. Sonic however had another idea. He ran towards The Eraser and instead of spin-dashing him, he ran around him as fast as he could. He began to run around and around in a

circle at top speed until he became nothing more than a cobalt ring circling The Eraser and going around and around continuously. The Eraser had no idea what was going on but he remained vigilant just to see what would happen. Then it happened. Sonic was doing his Sonic Tornado move and the tornado was beginning to build up all around The Eraser. The Erased was whisked off of his feet and he spun around and around as the tornado carried him into the air. The sceptre was thrown out of his hands and Fiona was on hand to catch it quickly before it could be lost or anything. The Eraser was brought up to the top of the funnel of wind Sonic was creating and he was thrown clean out of it like juice in a blender that's had the lid taken off while it was still blending. The Eraser was thrown quite far, so far in fact that he seemed to disappear in the distance. Sonic knew that he wouldn't be gone for long though, they had to get out of here before he came back for them.

"He's gone now, Fiona use the time sceptre to get us outta here!" cried Sonic frantically.

"I can't! I don't know how!" cried Fiona desperately "I don't even think that sceptre got us outta the previous world!"

"I second that." said Amy Nega "I think The Eraser used a time rift to bring us here on purpose so he could confront us. The sceptre I don't think had anything to do with the time rift that brought us here."

"Well that sucks! And I doubt he's gonna create another time rift to let us leave here!" moaned Sonic in despair "How the heck will we escape from here?!"

"Pray really hard that the time sceptre can get us outta here, we just need to work out how?" suggested Fiona helplessly.

"Yeah, that's not very helpful Fiona." muttered Sonic, taking the sceptre from Fiona "Although there's not much else we can do right now. Let's just try this thing and see if it can work."

Sonic held the time sceptre up right and began wishing it could make a portal or something. But the sceptre didn't do anything except spin its clock hands around as if trying to hypnotize Sonic. Sonic shook the sceptre and began banging it by the tip on the floor.

"For god's sake DO SOMETHING!" cried Sonic helplessly.

Then suddenly, just as he'd feared, The Erased emerged from nowhere and he had his hands opened, ready to snatch Sonic up and rip him apart. Sonic yelped in surprise and he held the time sceptre in front of his face. It was as if he was hoping by some crazy miracle it would actually shield him from the dangerous god that planned to erase everything. The Eraser lunged at Sonic, his claws bared and his eyes burning with rage but Scourge pile-dived him down onto the ground. Sonic added insult to injury by smacking him on the head with the sceptre. The Eraser got up from the floor and he backhanded Scourge into Fiona and Amy Nega.

"FOOLS! I'LL PEEL THE FLESH OFF YOUR BONES FOR DARING TO GET IN MY WAY!" bellowed The Eraser **"And I will start with you, you blue coloured cretin!"** he growled, advancing towards Sonic with a menacing look in his eyes,

"You're one to talk." scoffed Sonic, noticing the irony of his statement for The Eraser was blue himself.

The Eraser clawed furiously at Sonic, the blue hedgehog ducking backwards to avoid his attack. The Eraser clawed at Sonic a second time but Sonic blocked the attack with the time sceptre. He whacked The Eraser across the head with it but The Eraser didn't fall back. The Eraser instead punched Sonic in the face and sent him staggering towards the edge of the platform. The Eraser lunged at Sonic but Sonic stepped to the side and avoided his charge. He kicked The Eraser in his head but The Eraser retaliated sharply with a backhand that send him flying into Scourge. Sonic knocked him down onto the floor but he still had the time sceptre in his hands. Sonic picked himself up and he held the sceptre up as The Eraser ran towards him.

"Hey sceptre, if you can do something, now would be a good time to do it!" cried Sonic desperately.

The words "Now would be a good time" seemed to have some magic effect on the sceptre for the time sceptre actually ended up doing something at last! The time sceptre glowed brightly and the hands began spinning so fast that they became nothing more than a

blur circling the face of the clock on the sceptre. The Eraser stopped dead in his tracks and he backed off as the sceptre began to activate its power.

"NOOOO!" he thundered fearfully **"You've tapped into its power! Malacos will find it for sure!"**

"Well in that case, you'd better run for it before he shows up!" sneered Sonic "Cause you're going to be sorry when he gets hold of you!"

"This isn't over yet mortal!" declared The Eraser **"I'll be back and I'll erase you all once and for all!"**

With that said, The Eraser began to disappear. He dematerialized into thin air and he fled the world that Sonic, Scourge, Fiona and Amy Nega were occupying for the moment. He wasn't fleeing because he thought that Malacos would beat him, he had other plans and he was going to rely on the element of surprise in order to get that sceptre away from Malacos. As for Sonic, he stood there watching the sceptre glowing brilliantly and then to his amazement, a beam of light shot out of the clock's face and it seemed to open up a portal in mid-air. Scourge, Fiona and Amy Nega watched, marvelled by the amazing thing this sceptre was doing. They weren't quite sure what Sonic had done to activate it but it was amazing nonetheless. Sonic stared at the opened portal that the sceptre had formed and he watched with even greater amazement as something stepped through the portal. It was a figure dressed in black robes and wearing a bronze coloured helmet with a great protruding pair of horns. Its eyes were golden and its face was a lighter shade of black compared to its robes. Sonic began to wonder if this was another villain he'd summoned given the rather dark appearance of the figure but the figure merely held his hand out and the time sceptre wrenched itself free from Sonic's hands and drifted over to the figure.

"I thank you dearly for returning this to me." said the figure, bowing down gratefully to Sonic "I feared I had lost it for good when The Eraser stole it from me."

"Well you could say that my bro Scourge kinda fell over it while we

were zone hopping." said Sonic with a slight chuckle "So let me guess…you must be Malacos right?"

"I am indeed my boy." said Malacos with a warm, friendly smile on his face "I am Malacos, the God of Time. I keep time in check, it is my duty to make sure time goes as smoothly as it should and that any anomaly that threatens time itself is erased immediately. I have been in a battle with The Eraser, a battle that has been going on for a centaury now."

"A centaury?!" shrieked Fiona in alarm "It's been going on for THAT long?!"

"How long's a centaury again?" asked Scourge curiously.

"Yes my dear mortals, it has indeed gone on for that long." said Malacos gravely, shaking his head sadly "At first I was able to hold back The Eraser and keep him from erasing everything in sight. You see, I have placed a time lock over the multi-verse to keep you safe from his erasing abilities. Unfortunately, as our fight continues, I grow weaker and my time lock is breaking down. A God of Time is not as strong as a God of Existence and it is power-draining to fight The Eraser while keeping the time lock up. His time rifts are able to seep through the cracks but the time lock manages to keep them from erasing anybody they suck up. You see, that is what they are meant to do, suck you up and erase you for good. The time lock has prevented this from happening and instead you end up on another world but as I grow weaker, the time lock will grow weaker too until eventually, it'll collapse and The Eraser can erase you all at the snap of his fingers and I mean that in a very literal sense of the word. Just a snap," he snapped his fingers as he said this "and you'll be gone."

Sonic shuddered uncomfortably.

"No…we can't let that happen Malacos!" cried Sonic "We have to stop him! Heck, we'll help you stop him if we can! What do you think to that?"

"I am inclined to all the help I can get at this point in time." said Malacos agreeably "You mortals may assist me in taking down The

Eraser and finishing him off for good. But you four will not be enough, we will need more of you."

"And there's definitely more!" cried Sonic excitedly "I have many brave friends who will do whatever they can to save the world! Can you help me find them?"

"Even better my blue friend, I will give you the power necessary to BRING your friends to us." said Malacos, handing him the sceptre "My time sceptre can open up completely harmless time portals that will lead your friends to us. All you have to do is think of their names and appearances and the time sceptre will find them. No matter what zone, no matter what time, it will know exactly who you're looking for."

"Sweet!" Sonic shouted out with glee "Let's get to it then!"

"Don't mess this up blue, we wouldn't want your friends to have a nasty accident would we?" purred Scourge teasingly.

"Lay off Scourge, I know what I'm doing." said Sonic, holding the sceptre up and thinking as hard as he could.

Only his friends were on his mind at this moment and the time sceptre glowed brightly, the hands spinning around as it searched for all of Sonic's friends. Sonic thought of each name and each appearance of his friends, as well as being specific on which zone he wanted (E.g. Sally Acorn Prime, Tails Prime, Knuckles Prime etc.) The sceptre threw beams of light all around as Sonic activated its power. Portals opened up from those beams and Sonic thought harder and harder to make sure that nothing went wrong. He had one shot at this and it had to work or the multi-verse was doomed forever.

My friends…we need you. We need you all. he thought *We have to take on this threat together…*

Was that a good first part or what?! And don't think that this is going to be over any time soon! We need to know where

Sonic's friends are and how things are going with them! And Tails and Cosmo are the first ones to have their story told after Sonic next time. Join me as Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses continues in Part 2 where Tails and Cosmo encounter things that are "The Same As It Never Was"...

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 2

Story 167: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 2: The Same As It Never Was

Author's Note: This episode is a loving tribute to the 2003 TMNT cartoon episode of the same name. All respect goes to Michael Ryan, the writer of the episode "The Same As It Never Was" and no copyright infringement is needed OR intended.

Man I'm so gonna hurl.

Those words were the first words that came to the head of the young child genius and inventor Miles "Tails" Prower as he finally woke up from being unconscious for quite a while. His head was banging so much that Tails wondered if his brain was going to erupt and his stomach was churning ever so horribly. He had to put his hand over his mouth and fight back the urge to throw up, swallowing whatever he felt in the back of his throat and gasping for breath, hoping the fresh air would make his stomach feel better.

Tails had been out for a long time after the time rift had taken him away along with Sonic the Hedgehog and the others. The time rift had opened up and dumped him here, wherever "here" was that is, and roughly forty minutes had passed since then. Now he was finally waking up and needless to say, he felt terrible. He put a hand over his stomach and massaged it tenderly to try and ease off the sick feeling he was getting right now. He massaged his temples as he relayed what had happened just to keep up to date and make sure he hadn't missed anything.

"OK so a moment ago, a giant time rift opens up above the city and sucks us all in like a giant vacuum cleaner and now it's spat me out here…I hope Sonic and the others, especially my beloved Cosmo, are OK." he said worriedly "Oh I hope I'm not here on my own!"

Tails hugged himself fearfully as the nasty thought of him being in the middle of nowhere on his own crept into his mind. But then Tails thought of something. He shouldn't be worried about being on a

world on his own without seeing what it was like first. Maybe he was on a nice friendly world and he would get on just nicely there until he found a way back to Mobius Prime. Maybe he was still on Mobius Prime, who knew? Tails calmed himself down and he sighed a soothing sigh to relax his nerves.

"OK then, before you get into a panic Tails, let's see where we are shall we?" he whispered to himself.

He nodded as if answering his own question and he got up to his feet, relieved that he didn't feel sick anymore. Tails looked around and to his horror, he saw a sight of complete and absolute chaos. His jaw dropped open and his eyes widened to the point of taking up his whole face. He had landed inside of what looked like the throne room of Castle Acorn only it was a complete wreck. The ceiling had caved in, chunks of debris littered the floor and piles upon piles of brick, mortar and wood loomed where the doors were, the doors themselves presumably buried behind the pile of mullock. The floor was laden with cracks and the throne to which the king or queen would have sat in lay in splinters on the floor, any trace of its majestic structure truly gone forever with the remains the only remaining evidence of its existence. Every window in the room was broken, the panes AND the glass itself lying in pieces on the floor, prompting Tails to watch his step. He even checked himself to see if he had landed on any glass and frantically brushed at his fur with his fingers to see if any bits of glass were in his fur. He had no glass in him. Tails turned his attention back to the carnage around him. Through the hole left in the ceiling after it had caved in, he could see a dark, musky grey sky that loomed over the castle like a witch's curse and an illuminated ball of light that was the moon shone eerily through the mist as if trying to be seen through it despite the density. The dull skies made Castle Acorn look vapid and dreary in appearance, hardly any light to illuminate the place and just giving Tails a very uncomfortable feeling as if he had just stumbled into a horror movie. It was a horror all right, but sadly not a movie. It was all real. Tails fell into despair.

"What happened here?" he asked himself "Why is Castle Acorn a wreck?"

He then had a terrible thought. What about the rest of New

Mobotropolis? Was that a wreck too or was Castle Acorn the only building around that was wrecked? Tails had to check it out and fast. He hurried over to a window and he stared out of it. The sight of Castle Acorn in despair was terrible enough for the little fox cub but what he saw outside would mentally scar him for life. His mouth opened so wide that he was amazed his jaw bone hadn't dislocated yet and his eyes streamed with tears of shock and dismay. Outside of Castle Acorn lay a scene of total havoc and destruction. Every house in New Mobotropolis lay on the ground in pieces, nothing left of them that resembled their original structure and fires blazed away in random places all around the city. It looked like a war zone. There were skeletons all around, suggesting that many people had died in this carnage and Tails swore that he even saw a corpse or two that was just rotting away, the flesh rotting and peeling away from the bones that gave the body of the poor victims their shape. Flies danced around the rotting corpses and judging by how much of the flesh had rotted away, Tails guessed the rotting corpses were at least weeks old. How old the already rotted corpses were was beyond him but he guessed that they had been there for weeks, maybe a month or two and that the rotting corpses were people who had just recently died. The gruesome thing about this was that some of the skeletons lay under the pile of debris that the houses had been reduced too and some had sharp bits of wood or sharp bladed weapons in them, suggesting they'd been impaled or stabbed to death in the carnage. As for the wreckage that was New Mobotropolis, Tails could see where his house stood back on Mobius Prime and like the others, it had been wrecked too. He had a sick image of himself under the pile of rubble and chunks that the house had been reduced too. Tails could literally bare it no longer. He turned away from the window and put a hand over his heart to make sure it wasn't going crazy with horror right now. His eyes still streamed with tears. This was the most sickening thing he had seen in his entire life, and he was only eight years old no less. No kid Tails' age should ever have to witness a sight as sickening as this and yet he was here right now, seeing it all and crying over it.

"NO!" he cried out in anguish "No, no, no, no, no! This…this can't be! This…this is horrible! What the heck happened to New Mobotropolis?! Why is everything destroyed or dead?!"

"Ugh…Tails? Is that you?" said a familiar voice from not far away from him.

Tails' head snapped around to the side and he saw probably the most enlightening thing in the entire room. There, sitting in the corner of the room with some chunks of wood lying on top of her was his adorable girlfriend Cosmo the Seedrian. Tails sighed with relief at the fact Cosmo was here. Just Cosmo being here instantly made him feel better. Tails wiped away his tears, ran over to Cosmo and he pushed the wood off of her. Cosmo grabbed onto his shoulders and she pulled herself up onto her feet. She grasped Tails in a tight hug and rested her head against his chest.

"Oh thank goodness you're here with me!" she cried with delight "I was worried that would be alone on this dark world!"

"I worried about that too." said Tails, stroking Cosmo's leafy hair to comfort her "Thank goodness we weren't separated. So how long have you been awake?"

"I only just woke up." replied Cosmo, trailing her fingers up and down Tails' back just for the pleasure of feeling his fur in her fingers "I looked around after waking up and saw nothing but piles of debris and wreckage and a dark grey sky through the hole in the ceiling. Then I heard you crying and spotted you. Why were you crying?"

"It's a nightmare world outside Cosmo!" wailed Tails, the tears coming back to his eyes again "Everything's a mess! The houses are all destroyed, there's dead bodies everywhere and it just looks terrible!"

"Really?" asked Cosmo, spooked by Tails' statement.

"Yes Cosmo." said Tails "Just look for yourself."

He led Cosmo over to the window he'd looked out earlier and showed her what he had seen. He had his hands on Cosmo's shoulders so he could quickly be on hand to comfort her. Cosmo put her hands to her mouth in horror at the grisly scene that waited her outside of Castle Acorn. The sight of death and destruction instantly made Cosmo break down in rainfalls of tears not only because it

was like seeing her home city destroyed, but because it made her think about the Martians destroying Greengate and rendering her the last of her species*. Cosmo turned away from the scene outside and she squeezed Tails tightly, crying into his fur like a weeping willow.

"Oh Tails, it's horrible out there!" she howled "How could that horrible time rift bring us to a world like this?!"

"I don't know Cosmo." said Tails, wrapping his arms around Cosmo and stroking her back and hair to comfort her (he's so sweet isn't he?) while also crying alongside her "Maybe we were unlucky and we were dropped off here. I hope the others are on better worlds than this."

"I just hope they're alright!" wailed Cosmo "I can't bear to think of them in danger! Especially if any of them are here with us!"

"As much as I hate to say it…I hope that nobody else has been sent here." said Tails sadly "Just us suffering the hell of this world is enough, please spare everybody else the horror I say."

"I agree." said Cosmo, wiping her eyes dry and looking her boyfriend in the eyes "Speaking of this world and all, I wonder which version of Mobius this is? Sonic ended up on a "Mobius Nega" before so is this planet called "Mobius something" too?"

"Perhaps." said Tails "Mobius Hell maybe. I wonder what caused this carnage? Who's responsible for wrecking everything? Why is everything so dark and full of death?"

"I don't know and I REALLY don't want to find out." said Cosmo "Please Tails, I want to leave this world! Please get us out of here!"

"Oh Cosmo, I wish I could." said Tails, putting his hands on his girlfriend's face and stroking her cheeks with his thumbs "But I can't. I don't have any tools or machinery right now, I can't build anything to get us out of here. I'm so sorry Cosmo but we're gonna have to find help if we want to leave here."

"I can't believe I'm saying this but I hope another time rift appears

and takes us out of here!" exclaimed Cosmo "Anywhere will be better than here!"

"Well it's too much to hope another time rift will appear and take us out of here." said Tails solemnly "So for now, we'll have to find our own way out of this world. Maybe there's somebody who can help us. It's gonna be tough Cosmo but we'll have to go outside and start searching."

"OK my loveable little fox." said Cosmo "But please, carry me out. I don't want to walk among so much death and destruction."

Tails was all too happy to abide to Cosmo's wishes. He scooped her up bridal style and he flew off into the air outside of Castle Acorn. As Tails flew up into the sky, Cosmo did her best to make sure she didn't look down at the terrible scene that was below them. Tails unfortunately couldn't look away. He had to keep his eyes open and look all around to make sure that he knew where he was going and to see what was around. As the two left New Mobotropolis behind, Tails flew out over the fields surrounding the city, dismayed to see that there was nothing left of the fields. The grass had withered and died out a long time ago, leaving barren wasteland all around that stretched on for miles around. There were more skeletons and rotting corpses all around the wasteland, the sheer number of them making Tails cringe. How many people had died here in New Mobotropolis alone? What had killed them all? Tails didn't really want to know, this scene was too horrible enough as it was, knowing the cause of it all would just make it worse. Tails tried hard not to look down and instead just looked ahead of him. He could at least see where he was going and recognize the way then.

A few minutes of flying later, Tails and Cosmo arrived over what Tails assumed was Empire City. Like New Mobotropolis though, the city was an enormous mess. Buildings had crumbled down, spilling girders, beams, steelwork and glass all over the roads and pavements. The roads were littered with waste, rubble and rubbish and had potholes everywhere, making a simple drive in a car impossible. Tails even saw a crane that had fallen on top of a building, crushing it beneath its weight and the arm of the crane sticking up a slight angle with its cable and hook wedged into another building nearby and making a slope that somebody could

slide down if they had something for that kind of thing. Hover cars, trucks and even construction vehicles lay all around the city, their frameworks and structures all crumpled up like sweet wrappers and some of them spilled oil over the roads, adding more mess to the already messed up roads all around. There were even military vehicles lying around, broken and beyond repairing or ever seeing another battle ever again. Tails sighed sadly as he eyed the smoking, charred remains of what had been a hover tank, its gun barrel bent and buckled and the turret laden with holes. Fire hydrants lay crumbled and broken on their sides, any water that they housed now all gone and leaving a empty hole where they had stood. Some sky scrapers in the city had either been blown in half or knocked down completely. Tails saw half of the once proud Empire State Building lying forlornly on its side as the other half remained standing, a pitiful reminder of what it had been before the destruction had begun. Tails wanted to get out of here and fast. Empire City looked too dreadful for him to hang around. But as he flew over the city he saw something and he stopped. Cosmo opened her eyes, wondering why Tails had stopped for a moment. Tails had spotted what looked like a cream-furred rabbit in a black outfit running through the streets. Tails was curious to see what it was up to and even more so, who this rabbit was. Tails flew down towards the rabbit, making sure to keep a good distance behind it so that the rabbit wouldn't spot him and Cosmo. Cosmo held on tight as Tails flew behind the rabbit, making sure he was well behind and that the rabbit didn't know he was there. With any luck, the echoing sound of her footsteps would drown out any noise he was making and given it seemed to be in a hurry, it wouldn't bother about him.

"Tails, it's not nice to follow people." hissed Cosmo "That poor rabbit might think you're stalking it."

"I know Cosmo but I just want to see who it is and where it's going." whispered Tails "Maybe it can help us."

He watched as the rabbit disappeared around a corner and headed off down another junction. Tails followed it and flew on as the rabbit ran down another pavement and then ducked down into an alley way. Tails followed it with a sharp swerve down the alley way and he watched as the rabbit ran up to a sewer lid that was nearby and it

opened up the lid. It climbed down into the sewers and it put the lid back over the hole. Tails landed onto the ground and he put Cosmo down. They both stood around the sewer lid and wondered what the rabbit could possibly want to be down a sewer for. Given how much of a wreck the world was in at the moment, maybe hiding in the sewers wasn't such a bad idea, even if they were smelly as all heck. Tails was about to lift up the sewer lid and follow the rabbit that had gone down into the sewers but just as he slipped his fingers under the lid, a light shone over him and Cosmo and the two jumped out of their skins in shock. The light was crimson red and it came out of the eye of a robot that had come by the alley way and found them. To Tails and Cosmo's utter disbelief, it was a Devatron soldier! There was no mistake on that! They were face to face with a Devatron, an enemy they thought they had finally defeated long ago! The Devatron looked just like the ones that Tails and Cosmo along with Sonic and all the other Royal Fighters had been up against on their Mobius, a humanoid robot with a pair of horns on the side of tits head, a muzzle-like structures in place of a mouth with sharp fangs protruding from the sides, twin cannons on its backs, spiked shoulders, three clawed hands with two clawed thumbs, a V-shaped visor with a singular holographic eye and reptilian pupil, three clawed feet and it was coated in an invulnerable chrome armour that glistened in the moonlight that shone above. Tails and Cosmo thought for a moment this was imagination and they closed their eyes, hoping to make the Devatron go away. But it didn't, it was still there when they opened their eyes. The Devatron was as real as this hell hole of a world was! Tails instantly assumed that he and Cosmo had found out what had ruined this world. It must have been the Devatrons and unlike Mobius Prime, they had conquered this Mobius. Of all things that had an alternate counterpart though, did it HAVE to be the Devatrons?! The Devatron stomped into the alley way, its glowing visor fixed on Tails and Cosmo and the light that came from it shining over them. Tails and Cosmo backed up against the wall at the end of the alley way and Tails grasped Cosmo into a tight hug as he pressed himself back first against the wall, his terrified eyes fixed on the Devatron.

"Mobian scum!" barked the Devatron viciously "I'll have you both terminated! Devion the Dreaded will not tolerate Mobian filth staining his glorious kingdom!"

"No, please, you can't!" begged Tails desperately "You can't harm us! We're harmless! We're unarmed! Please don't kill us!"

"Please, we beg of you, spare our lives!" sobbed Cosmo "Please!"

"I have been given orders to exterminate every last Mobian I find!" snarled the Devatron "This is Devion's world now and he will not rest until the populace has been exterminated! You insects will not be allowed to thrive anymore!"

It deployed its arm cannon and it aimed directly at Tails and Cosmo, most specifically their heads. Tails hugged Cosmo even tighter and he stared fearfully at the Devatron.

"Don't! Please don't!" whimpered Tails.

But as the Devatron prepared to attack, the sewer lid was suddenly kicked out of its hole and sent crashing into the Devatron. The Devatron backed away as the lid walloped it but it wasn't hurt by the attack. Tails and Cosmo watched as the rabbit they had been following earlier leaped out of the sewer hole, somersaulted into the air and then drop-kicked the Devatron onto its back. Tails and Cosmo now had the chance to see what this rabbit looked like. To their surprise, it looked an awful lot like Cream the Rabbit but this rabbit was much older than Cream was. She looked closer to sixteen, having a very slender, curvy figure that was complimented by a black leather bra with shoulder straps that showed off her slim, flat belly, black fingerless gloves with spikes on them and black leather trousers that were held up by a black belt with a silver buckle. She also wore black boots with steel toecaps. She had very curvaceous legs that somehow spelled grace and deadliness both at once. She had long flowing hair too, very different from the two bumps behind Cream's head. Tails couldn't help but wonder if this was like seeing a future version of Cream the Rabbit. Maybe Mobius Prime's Cream the Rabbit would look like this when she was older. The rabbit whipped something off of her belt and she thrust it into the Devatron's neck. It was a taser and while electricity doesn't hurt a Devatron, this taser was an EMP generator built into the shape of a taser. So when she activated it, the taser activated an EMP shock that brought the Devatron into unconsciousness. The Devatron lay there, limp and unmoving, on the ground. The rabbit put the taser

back onto her belt and she looked over at Tails and Cosmo. Her face looked strangely bitter though.

"You two OK?" she muttered.

"We are now thanks to you ma'am." said Tails appreciatively "Thank you so much for saving our lives miss!"

"Yes, we're very grateful to you for saving us from that Devatron."

"Don't be because you two are coming with me and I don't think my man Miles is gonna like the sight of you." said the rabbit coldly.

She then grabbed Tails and Cosmo by the scruff of their necks and she carried them down into the sewers. Tails and Cosmo were both very worried now. Had they just leaped out of the frying pan into the fire? What was the rabbit going to do to them? They'd soon find out for the rabbit was taking them somewhere and that somewhere was underground in the sewers…

Sooner or later, Tails and Cosmo had been taken to an underground lair that had been formed in an old sewer tunnel by the rabbit. The room was quite small but it had a homey feel to it with a fresh, crisp carpet that was red and gold in colour and covered much of the floor. There was a fridge in the corner that was covered in dirt and grease stains, a couple of sofas and some sleeping bags that lay on the floor. There was a table with an old rusty desk lamp that provided the only light available in the whole room. It was surprisingly bright for such a rusty old lamp so it was all the lamp needed. The table seemed to have some old sheets of paper that were used for planning stages and the like. The room was occupied by two other people. One of those people caught Tails' attention instantly. There was a male fox in a long black leather coat with two tails like him. In fact, this fox looked EXACTLY like an older version of himself! He was much taller than Tails currently was and his face was a nasty, bitter scowl that seemed to indicate the childhood innocence he once had had long since died out, presumably thanks to the Devatrons conquering the world. His right eye was a mess of pink and red with a blue dot that barely resembled a pupil or even an

iris and under his right eye spread a nasty scar that suggested a horrible fight had been part of his life at some point. The fox really didn't like the look of Tails immediately as the rabbit carried him and Cosmo into the room. The other Mobian in the room was like no other. It was a Mobian wolf with white hair and three whiskers on the side of its face. It had a big bushy tail much like a fox's and it wore a long black coat with glowing red lining and symbols on it. It also wore gloves with a symbol on them that glowed along with the red linings on its coat. It wore knee high boots that were chunky and had red lining on them that glowed and crimson soles. The wolf's eyes were green and across its torso was some kind of decoration it wore over its white chest fur. The wolf certainly looked like a stern, serious figure and Tails was immediately intimidated by the icy stare the wolf shot at him. After the rabbit had taken Tails and Cosmo here, she had told them what had happened and now the wolf ordered the rabbit and fox to tie them up and gag them. Tails and Cosmo were placed down onto chairs and their hands were tied around the backrest of the chair while their ankles were tied together too. A strip of duct tape was plastered over their mouths each, preventing them from speaking. Tails and Cosmo struggled in their binds and mumbled muffled whimpers behind their gags. The fox had a device in his hand that looked like some futuristic tennis racket only there was no netting in it, only a transparent screen and the handle had some buttons around it.

"Alright then you two scrubs, let's see what you are." said the fox coldly "I bet you're clones or some kind of Devatron agent sent out to terminate us! I mean how can you," he pointed at Tails "possibly look like me when I was ten years younger?! And how can you," he pointed at Cosmo "Look like my deceased lover Cosmo when she was ten years younger too?"

Tails tried to reply but of course he couldn't because his mouth was taped shut. The fox narrowed his eyes at him and held up the device he had in his hand.

"Well this scanner will let us know everything." said the fox "And believe me, if you two are dodgy in anyway, we will NOT hesitate to kill you both. Alter, permission to go with the scan?" he asked, turning to the wolf who just stood by with his hands behind his back

and his face flat and emotionless.

"Proceed Miles." ordered the wolf who's name was apparently Alter.

The fox, Miles, switched on the scanner and her placed it against Tails' body, running it up and down every square inch of his body as if he was using a metal detector to look for buried treasure and was hoping to find it in him. The scanner whirred as it analyzed Tails' body and after Miles had done with him, he moved over to Cosmo and ran the scanner over her body. Cosmo whimpered and winced as the device was slowly traced over her, scanning very inch of her body for even the slightest anomaly. After that, Miles read the scanner's findings and to his surprise, there was nothing indicating they were fakes, robotic duplicates, androids in disguise or anything of the sort. They were perfectly normal Mobians! Miles scratched his head.

"Well honey? What are the results?" asked the rabbit curiously.

"Incredulously enough my beloved Carrie…the scanners register them as clean." said Miles, his brows furrowed in confusion "They're not fake or anything. They're Mobians like we are."

"But that's impossible!" cried Carrie "They look like younger versions of you and the late Cosmo the Seedrian! They can't possibly be real!"

"Carrie dear, my scanners never lie." said Miles sharply "They are real alright. Question is though…what are they?"

"I have some idea." said Alter, taking interest in the turn out of this whole thing "Let me ask the two something."

He strode over to Tails and Cosmo, his hands still behind his back and his cold gaze fixed on them. Tails and Cosmo looked at him worriedly, wondering if they were in for the chop or something.

"Are you two from another dimension?" asked Alter "If you nod yes and you're telling the truth, then I'll release you two."

Tails and Cosmo both nodded yes for the tape on their mouths made it impossible for them to say yes. Miles used the scanner to

read their nods and surely enough, it came out positive. They were telling the truth. Alter gave off a slight smile that somehow failed to indicate if he was pleased to hear this.

"Well that explains it all." said Alter dryly "They're alternate, and younger, versions of Miles and Cosmo. Which zone do you both come from and why are you here?"

As he asked this, he removed their gags and untied them from the chairs. Remaining sitting but rubbing their wrists and mouths better, Tails and Cosmo explained everything to Alter.

"We're from Mobius Prime." said Tails "We were brought here by a streak of colourful light that appeared up in the sky and we're trying to get back home."

"We're very sorry about this." said Cosmo "Honest we are."

Alter, Miles and Carrie all let out a chorus of amazed gasps at this revelation.

"Prime Zoners?" said Alter, curling his finger over his lips "Now that is something. We've never had Prime Zoners here before. Not that it matters much anyway."

"Please can you tell us where we are Mr. Um…" said Cosmo politely.

"Of course." said Alter "The name's Alter the Wolf, and these are Miles and Carrie." he said, pointing to the two as he addressed their names "You are now currently inhabiting the world of Mobius Beta, the third most prominent version of Mobius after Mobius Prime and Mobius Nega."

"If you're wondering why I look like you in ten years time kid, Mobius Beta is ten years ahead of Mobius Prime." explained Miles "So everybody on Mobius Prime is ten years younger than we are."

"That explains why you and Carrie look like me and Cream only older." mused Tails "So tell me guys, what happened to this world? Are the Devatrons responsible for the death and destruction out there?"

"The answer is yes…AND no." said Carrie grimly "Boss, you tell them everything."

"Don't call me boss Carrie!" sighed Alter in annoyance.

He cleared his throat and looked back at Tails and Cosmo, the two dreading to hear what Alter was going to tell them. The wolf looked almost sad that he'd be explaining this to a couple of kids but he knew that they had to learn since they were here and probably might be for a while.

"Mobius Beta used to be peaceful and wondrous." explained Alter "That was how it used to be three years ago. Then the Devatrons invaded and attempted to conquer the world. Many of us banded together to form a group of Freedom Fighters and we all tried our best to combat this threat. Sadly though, the Devatrons proved tougher than we imagined and many Freedom Fighters lost their lives in the war. Once we learned more about them though, we began to make a comeback and I ended up proving to be a good threat to the Devatrons thanks to my ice powers. You see, I can create ice from the thinnest of air and just freezing the Devatrons seemed like the ticket to winning this war. Alas though, that wasn't the case. The Devatrons upgraded themselves with a suit of armour that allows them to heat up rapidly the moment any ice comes into contact with them. Freezing them is no longer an option. The Freedom Fighters were determined to beat him though and although I prefer best to be alone, I decided to join the Freedom Fighters since alone I had no chance. We put up our best efforts but then the big tragedy came."

"What is it?" asked Cosmo worriedly.

"Out of nowhere, this weird multi-coloured light appeared in the sky and although it didn't seem to do any harm…toxic fumes spilled out of it and began contaminating the entire city above our heads**." Alter continued, his face turning even graver now "Radiation spread everywhere after that light in the sky opened up and needless to say…it got ugly."

"Many of us got poisoned by radiation." said Carrie glumly "Including my good friend Venroxas the Rabbit." she added, her face falling as

she thought back to that terrible day.

"I lost the love of my life, which is your Mobius Beta counterpart Cosmo." said Miles, looking at Cosmo as he said this "She was poisoned by the radiation too."

Cosmo looked like she was going to drop dead upon hearing that. Tails just cringed, hardly daring to imagine what it would have been like if it had been his Cosmo that had been killed by the radiation poisoning.

"So the Devatrons pretty much won because many Freedom Fighters were poisoned by radiation?" asked Tails.

"Correct." said Alter, his voice barely above a mutter "Me, Miles and Carrie were lucky enough to escape with our lives. The rest…well the dead bodies all around will tell you the rest. We're literally the only Freedom Fighters left. The Devatrons were amused by the radiation that mysteriously came out of nowhere and they ended up studying it and making nuclear weapons for themselves. Needless to say they put them to great effect, bombing cities and poisoning everything around. Miles invented some antidotes for me, him and Carrie so that we wouldn't be poisoned but sadly, all we're doing is just delaying the inevitable. There's no winning this battle now. The Devatrons have won. Mobius Beta has few survivors and we're the only heroes left. Even our own version of Sonic the Hedgehog fell victim to the Devatrons. I still cling onto the false sense of hope that we might win somehow since I'm not one to give up. It maybe hopeless but there's always a chance we might win."

"I hope we can win." said Carrie sadly "I don't want to keep living if this is what the world's going to be like."

Tails and Cosmo could only nod agreeably. Who in their right sane mind would want to live in a world like this indeed? Everything's a wreck and the atmosphere is likely poisoned by nuclear radiation. Mobius Beta is pretty much uninhabitable now! And it was all thanks to the Devatrons and a time rift that this had happened. Tails began to wonder something else about this planet now.

"How many Mobians are there left alive?" asked Tails.

"1,000." muttered Alter "Most of the populace was either poisoned or converted into Devatrons. We three are the only Freedom Fighters left, the other 997 Mobians are weak, helpless and powerless and are no good against the Devatrons. If we don't stop the Devatrons now then…we'll go extinct and Mobius Beta will be nothing but a chrome paradise for those demons in metal coating."

"Well have you got a plan for how to defeat them?" asked Cosmo "Surely you've come up with a way to stop the Devatrons! Please tell me you have!"

"We have come up with a plan little Cosmo." said Miles proudly "We were getting ready to put it into action once Carrie had returned from her scouting mission. And then you two came in so now you can provide additional support."

"Oh really? What is it?" asked a very eager Cosmo.

Miles strode over to the table and he picked up what looked like a small hand grenade only it didn't have a pull-stick to activate it, it had a button on top that would likely be used as the trigger for the device. He showed it to Tails and Cosmo.

"At one point during the war, we managed to steal a dead Devatron and we took it back here to see if we could find a way to get through its armour." explained Miles "I ended up making up a toxin that is able to weaken the structure of the Devatron's armour and make them vulnerable. It doesn't destroy the armour completely but it makes it easier to penetrate. It hasn't been tested yet though so now's a good time to see if it works."

"AWESOME!" cheered Tails happily "That reminds me of how we beat the Devatrons on my Mobius! We visited another race that had been developing a virus that ate through their armour and it destroyed them all! Looks like a virus will beat them on this Mobius!"

"Indeed kid. Pity to heck that I took so long to develop it." muttered Miles as if feeling it was his fault that Mobius Beta was still under oppression "I wish I'd finished the toxin earlier, we could have stopped the Devatrons already and so many lives wouldn't have been lost."

"Miles, it isn't your fault." said Tails comfortingly "It took me and my friends a while to defeat the Devatrons, we didn't stop them immediately and we lost a lot of lives too. We even…nearly lost Sonic too." he added, thinking back to when Devion had shot Sonic in the back and put him into a coma.

"Alright kid." said Miles, stroking Tails' head in thanks "You got a good point there. If you're wondering about this world's Sonic…he was poisoned too just like Cosmo. But I assure you that I will avenge his death with this toxin and make sure his death wasn't in vain. And since you're here, you can honour his memory further by joining us in our final battle with the Devatrons." said Miles "What do you say?"

"I say let's save the world and stop those Devatrons!" said Tails, punching the air excitedly "Me and my friends stopped them on my Mobius so I'm gonna help stop them here!"

"If Tails is in then I'm in two." said Cosmo supportively "I'm not allowing the Devatrons to ruin this world and take away your freedom like this."

"I'm happy to hear it." said Alter, his mouth a tiny curl that vaguely resembled a smile "Let's get ourselves armed and ready then. We're gonna need a lot of weaponry…"

An hour later…

The Devatrons were stationed in a huge fortress that they had built directly on top of Central City which they had razed to the ground during their time on Mobius Beta and the fortress was a sign of their oppression and conquest. It was a huge tower of chrome and steel that glistened in the dreary moonlight and the design and architecture gave the fortress a very intimidating appearance. The base was large and cube like with lots of gun-turrets all around just to keep intruders away. The tower itself was about fifty feet high and sat proudly atop the base like a sword in a stone. There was a huge spire that protruded proudly from the roof of the tower and in the centre of the tower there was a V-shaped window that resembled the Devatron visor. The window even glowed as eerily as their visors

did. There were spikes around the base of the spire as if the tower had some kind of crown to support its majestic appeal to the Devatrons. Fleets of Devatron ships flew around the air surrounding the fortress and armies of Devatron soldiers patrolled the grounds. There was no chance of getting in the building without being shot at or spotted by the Devatrons. Inside the magnificent fortress was Devion the Dreaded himself, leader of the Devatron race and an utterly merciless, ruthless conqueror who's only love in the world is his own race and conquest. Devion looked no different from his Prime counterpart aside from wearing a huge black cloak that was red on the inside with a collar at the back of the neck that gave him an eerily vampiric appearance. He had taken this cloak from somebody he had killed during his conquest of the universe. Devion was pleased with his progress on Mobius Beta. The planet had been conquered pretty much in the span of three years. He had conquered other worlds in a much longer amount of time. He had to owe most of his conquest to the fortuitous appearance of the time rift that disposed the nuclear radiation and gave him a new weapon to use. He had bombed and poisoned all of Mobius with some places worse effected than others and Central City in particular had had it VERY bad. So bad in fact that only the Devatrons could inhabit the space around it for it was too polluted, radiated and poisonous for any Mobian to occupy unless they had a gas mask of some kind. It was the perfect place for the Devatrons set up this fortress. The Mobians couldn't possibly beat them now. As Devion sat by in his elegant throne and watched the Devatron ships outside the V-shaped window, he purred contently to himself.

"This planet put up a valiant battle to try and stop me but ultimately, they have fallen to the superior might of the Devatron race." he crooned softly "The Freedom Fighters have diminished to a measly trio and the world barely has a leg to stand on. My army continues to grow and the Mobian population continues to fall. In a matter of time, the whole world shall be mine and the Mobian population shall be nothing but Devatrons."

He tapped the arms of his throne happily. Happiness was an emotion that Devion expressed in ways different to what one would normally consider "Happiness". His idea of happiness was a conquered world and a fresh new army of Devatrons. He may no

express happiness in a way that would be considered "happy" but it didn't mean that Devion couldn't ever be happy. As he watched the flying ships and the marching armies, his circuits tingled with glee and his visor narrowed down to a thin V-shaped slit.

"It never ceases to amaze me just what I have accomplished in my time." he purred to himself "The Devatrons have twenty-four worlds under their control and soon it shall be twenty-five. Mobius Beta will make a fine addition to my collection indeed. The universe dared to wrong the Devatrons and now it is paying oh so gloriously for it. I bet the universe regrets the day it ever messed with Devion the Dreaded…"

His thoughts were interrupted by a strange sound. It sounded like rumbling but to Devion's surprise, it was coming from underneath the floor. Devion's throne turned around and Devion stared at where the noise was coming from. The floor shuddered as if something was making it cringe. Devion dismissed it as a minor earth tremor but as he watched the floor, he could hear the rumbling getting louder and began to wonder if it really was an earth tremor after all. His question was soon answered for a huge drill began to break its way through the floor! Devion nearly jumped out of his throne in alarm. He had seen many surprise attacks from the Freedom Fighters before but never before had he seen anything like this. Directly beneath was a new tactic of breaking and entering for the Freedom Fighters, they had never done this before. Devion watched as the whining cone-shaped drill rose up from the floor and what followed it was a huge metal fuselage with tank treads and an opening canopy door. The whole thing was a hi-tech digging machine and it had broken into the fortress from directly underneath. Nobody would have seen that coming so the Devatrons hadn't expected it. Devion glared at the machine as if disgusted by its presence and what disgusted him even more was what was driving the machine. The door opened up and out from the machine emerged Alter, Miles and Carrie along with Tails and Cosmo. Alter had no weapons on him for his ice powers were all he needed. Miles had equipped himself with two wrist-mounted laser shooters and of course, the toxin that would weaken the Devatrons and render them easier to kill. Carrie had two pistols with huge cartridges that suggested a large amount of firepower was in her hands right now.

Tails had armed himself with some exploding dummy rings and Cosmo of course, had her flower blade weapon as well as some dummy ring bombs. The Mobians looked ready for action that was for sure. After arming themselves, Miles had come up with the plan of using the digging machine to tunnel into the fortress for he knew the Devatrons wouldn't expect it for they hadn't ever tried it before. Now they were here, ready to finish off Devion and bring peace back to the world. Devion's visor narrowed into a furious slit of anger. He obviously wasn't pleased to see the Mobians here. What did he have to do to break them and get them to cease their futile efforts to defeat him already?! Devion stood up from his throne and despite how furious he was, he remained calm and collected.

"So…the Freedom Fighters have come to throw away their worthless lives at long last." he sneered confidently "Good…I was beginning to wonder when you'd finally decide to let me put you all out of your misery."

"We're not here to let you take our lives away!" yelled Alter "We're here to destroy you! And we have just the weapon to do it! Miles, NOW!"

Miles pressed the button on the grenade and he threw it at Devion. Devion unfortunately saw it coming and he grabbed it the moment it came near him. He tossed the grenade away and it landed with a clatter by the window where it exploded into a grey ball of gas that would do no harm to anybody. Miles gasped in horror at this.

"NOOO!" he shrieked.

"Is this seriously the last bout of resistance this pitiful planet has to offer for me?" snorted Devion "A mere gas-bomb? Utterly pathetic. I'm astonished I haven't finished you three off already."

"It was no gas-bomb Devion and did you really think I would only bring ONE of them?" crowed Miles "I've got plenty more and you'll have to guess where they are."

Miles was lying. He only had one spare for he had only had the time to make two of these toxin grenades and the spare one was in the last place Devion would expect him to hide it…in Alter's coat. Alter

had the spare grenade but unlike Miles he wasn't going to waste it so recklessly. Alter was going to wait for the right moment to throw it at him. Miles was just building up this lie to provide a distraction for Devion. Devion would assume he had more toxin grenades and he'd also assume the spares were in the machine, meaning Alter would far less likely be targeted. Devion glowered sinisterly at Alter and he threw off his cape.

"Very well, I shall have to get rid of those bombs before you can use them." said Devion coldly, reaching out behind him and drawing out his sword "If it is as you say, "more than just a gas bomb" than it must not be allowed to be used on us."

"Freedom Fighters, ATTACK!" yelled Alter, throwing the first attack by summoning shards of ice from nowhere and throwing them at Devion like a bunch of darts.

Devion spun his sword around in a neat circle and he shattered the icicles as they hit the sword. Alter was merely distracting him though so Miles and Carrie could get in on the action with Tails and Cosmo providing additional support. Miles fired away with his wrist lasers but the lasers just bounced harmlessly off of Devion's armour as if they were merely ping-pong balls against a brick wall. Carrie let fly a round of laser blasts that also did no damage to Devion but the rapid fire allowed the lasers to provide some level of distraction for Devion given the constant flashing of her guns blinding him a little. Devion however was used to being shot at so this wasn't something beyond his handling. Devion charged through the laser blasts and he swung his sword at Miles and Carrie. Miles and Carrie jumped back to avoid the sword and they blasted at his head. He took the blasts and swung again. Miles and Carrie avoided the attack again and they stepped back to let Tails and Cosmo have their turn at him. They threw dummy rings at Devion as furiously as they could. The dummy rings exploded the moment they hit Devion's body but they did no damage to him whatsoever. Devion put his sword away and he deployed his arm cannons. He fired furiously at Tails and Cosmo, making them run away before they could get hit by the shoots. They had three rings left between them and they decided to keep hold of them for the time being. Maybe wait until Alter had thrown the grenade at him before throwing the dummy rings again. Cosmo

whipped out her flower blade and she threw it at Devion. The bladed disc that Tails had built specially for her soared through the air and it scratched Devion across the visor. Devion winced in pain and he clutched his visor in pain. Cosmo remembered all to tell that the visor was a weak spot for the Devatrons so she of course had aimed at it. The disc returned to Cosmo's hand after it had hit its target. Now Devion was distracted, Miles and Carrie both jumped in and they kicked him across the room. Devion crashed into his throne and the furious Devatron leader picked himself up as the Mobians charged towards him. Devion grabbed the arms of his throne and proceeded to *tear the entire throne out of its socket and lift it above his head!* He tossed the throne at the Freedom Fighters but they were quick to jump out of the way before it could hit them. The throne bounced off the floor for a bit and then rolled over to the digging machine, crashing into it and denting it slightly. Alter aimed his hands up at the ceiling and doing so caused showers of crystals to appear from nowhere and rain down onto Devion. The upgrades to his systems prevented the crystals from freezing him though but they distracted him well enough to let Tails fly behind Devion and kick him in the head. Devion swung around and elbowed Tails in the face, the spike on his elbow actually leaving a nasty gash across his cheek as he did it. Tails plummeted down onto the floor and he clutched his cheek in pain, staining his glove red with blood as he felt the gash. It would take a while to heal that would. Devion drew his sword out and he prepared to execute Tails but Miles jumped in and shot Devion in the face. Devion back away, clutching his face and Miles grabbed his wrists, hoping to make him drop the sword.

"You took away my best friend and my girlfriend!" he snarled "I won't let you take away my alternate counterpart too!"

"Bringing alternate counterparts to this world for help will get you nowhere." sneered Devion "Especially as the other twin-tailed fox looks like an even more pathetic version of you Miles."

He then pecked Miles in the middle of his face, leaving a spot of blood that streamed down the bridge of his nose and Miles winced in pain. If Devion had hit him in the forehead, he could have killed him. Miles clutched his face with one hand while shooting at Devion with the other. Devion just walked towards him as if nothing was

happening and he raised his sword. Aiming at Miles' shoulder, he brought the sword swinging down. Miles was too slow to react and Devion struck him. His sword cleaved through his arm and severed it completely. Miles let out a blood curdling scream of agony as his arm was taken clean off and it landed forlornly on the floor, lifeless and of no use to him anymore. Blood poured out of his shoulder and Miles winced in terrible pain. He was down on his knees and grimacing. Devion added the final blow to him by raising his sword and bringing it straight down onto his head like an axe through wood. Miles' eyes shot open and his mouth hung down as the sword sliced into his cranium. He felt like a block of wood that had been set up for the axe to chop. Devion raised his sword and watched as the lifeless body of Miles collapsed onto the floor, blood streaming out of the neat split in his head. He looked a terrible mess indeed, missing an arm and now having a split in his head. Devion was pleased with his handiwork. Tails had watched the whole thing and he felt sick with horror. That was the grisliest thing he had ever seen in his life and the image would never leave his head.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" he screamed in horror "MILES!"

Watching Miles die had been like watching himself die so this death would effect him more than anybody else in the room. His eyes rained with tears and for a moment he was in shock. He couldn't move. It was a miracle he was even still breathing! Cosmo saw Miles' dead body and felt shocked too. It was almost like seeing Tails dead before her eyes with the only thing reminding her that it wasn't her Tails being the fact he was with her, paralyzed with shock and wailing uncontrollably. Alter and Carrie were horrified at this horrible scene too and Carrie went berserk with rage.

"YOU KILLED HIM! YOU MONSTER, I'M GONNA KILLYOU FOR THIS!" she bellowed.

She began shooting at Devion like a crazed gunwoman and she seemed determined to bring him down but alas, her efforts just weren't good enough. The shots didn't harm Devion and Devion began walking up to her as if the shoots weren't even happening. Because Carrie was so blinded by horror and shock, she wasn't aiming properly and thus, was missing his visor. Carrie backed away

from Devion as Devion advanced on her and she kept shooting at him. Unfortunately for her, her cartridges ran out and her guns clicked uselessly as they ran out of ammo. The rabbit instantly grew worried and Devion swung his sword at him. Determined not to fall at Devion's blade, Carrie rolled out of the way, allowing the sword to sweep above her. Carrie whipped out the EMP taser she had used earlier and tried to use it on Devion but Devion swatted her hand away with his hand, causing her to drop the taser. Carrie ran for it but Devion deployed his arm cannon and he shot her in the back, bringing the bodacious bunny down onto the floor in pain. He ran towards Carrie but Alter, determined not to lose her too, ran in and dropkicked him in the head. Devion was thrown down onto the floor by the kick and Alter placed his hands on Devion. He began to cover the Devatron with a sheet of ice. He knew it wouldn't stop him but it would at least distract him enough to help Carrie to safety. He ran over to Carrie and helped her up to her feet. Devion broke through the ice and as Alter carried Carrie away, he threw his sword at the rabbit. The sword hit Carrie in the back and continued through until it emerged from out her stomach! Carrie gasped out in pain as the last supply of air in her lungs escaped her and she collapsed onto the floor with the sword through her torso. Alter felt sick with anger. He'd lost two of the last Freedom Fighters around in one fell swoop and now it was just him and Cosmo left. Alter pulled the sword out of Carrie's body, the blade bathed in blood, and he ran towards Devion with it.

"That's it Devion, you're gonna die for this!" he bellowed, swinging the sword at Devion.

Devion however held up his arm and blocked the blow. He then slugged Alter in the gut and snatched his sword from him. He raised the sword, ready to kill Alter with it and render the Freedom Fighters extinct but Alter had something to save himself. He made a wall of ice raise up from under Devion's feet and it sent the Devatron flying up into the air. Alter made the wall sink down into the floor and he held his hands out. He activated his signature move, something called Cryo Blitz. This move was simply shards if ice shooting out of his palms like bullets from a gun. The icicles hit Devion but he withstood the attack despite the multitude of icicles slicing past his body. He raised his sword and charged towards Alter. Alter covered

both his hands in ice and he threw them both up into Devion's chin in a terrific uppercut. Devion's head snapped backwards and he fell onto his back. Before he could get up, Alter used another move of his, Crystal Impaler. He punched the ground and shards of ice protruded from the floor around Devion. Had he not been invulnerable, he would have been skewered already. Devion jumped out of the ice shards and he headed down towards Alter. Alter just jumped up and punched him down onto the floor. Devion picked himself up and he sheathed his sword. He lunged at Alter, clawing him across the chest and then upper cutting him in the face. Alter stumbled backwards and he decided now would be a good time to throw the grenade. He fished it out of his pocket but before he could press the button and activate it, Devion grabbed his wrist and made him drop it. He then kicked it away from Alter. Big mistake though for it ended up rolling towards Tails and Cosmo. As Alter and Devion continued fighting, Cosmo spotted the grenade and she picked it up.

"Tails look! Alter dropped the toxin grenade and it's come our way!" she said happily "We can use it on Devion now and end this nightmare!"

Tails didn't seem to hear her. He was still petrified with shock and was still staring at Miles' dead body, Carrie's not far away and in his field of vision so he was staring at that too. Cosmo put her hands on Tails' head and she turned it towards her's so he was looking at her now

"Tails, listen to me! Snap out of it!" she cried "We have to stop Devion, we can't let Miles and Carrie's deaths be in vain! We have the weapon that can end all of this! Please snap out of it!"

Tails still didn't seem to hear her. It was almost as if he couldn't see her either. Cosmo could see that Tails was still petrified and that he wasn't waking up anytime soon. She guessed it was up to her to stop Devion then. Cosmo left Tails to continue grieving while she ran over towards Devion. He and Alter were in hand-to-hand combat and they seemed evenly matched so far. Devion slugged Alter in the gut and then conked him on the head. The wolf, while momentarily dazed, still managed to stay conscious despite that blow and he uppercut Devion in the face. He spun around and then kicked him in the gut, making Devion double-over. Alter then covered his hands

with ice and he punched Devion backwards. Devion deployed his arm cannons and he shot at Alter. Alter dodged the shots and he fired icicle shards back at Devion. Devion merely blasted them to pieces and he ran towards Alter. He kicked him in the side and sent him spiralling across the room into a wall. Alter, his face a hideous scowl of rage, ran towards Devion but the Devatron whipped out his sword and slashed him across the side, bringing Alter down onto the floor in pain. He gritted his teeth and tried to hold in his pain but the pain was too great for him. Devion stood over the wolf and he prepared to finish him off but Cosmo stepped in and threw the grenade at him. Unfortunately, she had forgotten to press the button, meaning the grenade just pinged harmlessly off of his armour without doing any damage whatsoever. Cosmo slapped herself over her gaff and she threw her flower blade at Devion to distract him while she picked the grenade back up. The blade hit Devion but did no harm and Devion advanced towards Cosmo. Cosmo picked up the grenade but before she could throw it, Devion pointed the sword at her heart.

"Put. that. DOWN!" barked Devion.

Cosmo instantly did as she was told, purposefully throwing it over her shoulder so Tails could use it. She sat there on her knees as Devion's sword prodded her chest and the grenade rolled over to Tails. Tails seemed to register it for the first time since his shock and he even rose his head and looked up. He got a shock that was even bigger than the shock he'd just had when he saw that Cosmo was on her knees before Devion and awaiting execution. Devion pushed Cosmo down onto her back with his foot and he aimed the sword at her. He immediately got flashbacks from the Metal Sonic world he had experienced when Metal Sonic had hijacked Eggman's Egg Timer machine and used it to reshape the world. Cosmo had died in that reality and Tails had undone the damage, bringing her back alive. But now Cosmo was at the mercy of Devion and was about to be killed for real!

"You remind me very much of that plant-like alien girl Miles seemed to have a strong attachment to." mused Devion "And she fell to the radiation poisoning. It'll give me great pleasure to kill another version of her. It'll be like killing her all over again."

"Tails, please, HELP!" whimpered Cosmo, turning her head away and closing her eyes tightly as Devion prepared to kill her.

Tails FINALLY snapped out of his shock and was up on his feet in seconds.

"NO!" cried Tails in anguish "Cosmo! I won't lose you too!"

He picked up the grenade and he pressed the button on it. He threw it at Devion and since Devion was about ready to kill Cosmo, he wasn't ready for the attack. The grenade hit him smack in the face and a pillow of grey smoke clouded his body and blinded him for a moment. The smoke drifted away after a moment and Devion cackled with laughter.

"Was that supposed to hurt?" he snorted "It was only a gas-bomb. You haven't harmed me at all. Gas won't effect me."

"It wasn't a gas-bomb." said Tails, smirking triumphantly "It was a toxin grenade. The toxin was made by Miles and it was designed to weaken your armour so that we can destroy you for good!"

"WHAT?!" blustered Devion, his visor wide open in disbelief "You speak the words of a fool little boy!"

"We'll see about that." said Tails, taking off the last three dummy rings and throwing them at Devion.

The rings hit Devion and exploded in unison as they struck him. Cosmo did the same, throwing the last three dummy rings she had on her at Devion. The rings hit Devion and something different happened as all six dummy rings bombarded him. His armour was blown to pieces by the explosions and shards of metal sprinkled the floors as he was blown apart. Devion's entire face and torso were destroyed, leaving only the innards of his body left. Devion was horrified at the fact his armour had been breached and he staggered in alarm.

"M-m-my body! You've ruined it!" he roared furiously "This cannot be!"

"Oh it is Devion." crowed Tails "And now you can die and pay for all

you've done!"

He flew up into the air and he kicked Devion in the head. Because the explosions had done so much damage to his body, Devion's head jerked backwards and…snapped clean off of the neck! Devion's head rolled back off of the body and it landed with a clatter on the floor. Devion's lifeless, headless body collapsed onto the floor, the circuitry spilling out and becoming a messy tangle around the body. The insidious Devatron leader was dead at last. Tails smirked darkly at Devion, pleased to have defeated him again. He was surprised how much easier it had been on this Mobius than on his Mobius, even if they had lost Miles and Carrie in the skirmish. Tails sighed with relief and he turned to Alter, who was straining to get back onto his feet, the gash in his side still hurting.

"It's done. He's dead." said Tails "The grenade worked."

"That's…great." grunted Alter "Pity…Miles…didn't make…anymore. That…was the only…spare we had."

"Well since Devion's dead, we can safely assume that the Devatrons won't function so well without him." said Tails "And I'm sure you can make more of those grenades."

"I'm…not a scientist." spluttered Alter "I…can't make…anymore. But…I'm sure…somebody else…can."

"I'm sure too." said Cosmo "There will be plenty of scientists out there to make the toxin and get rid of the rest of the Devatrons."

"Indeed." said Alter, settling down again for it was getting hard to stay standing due to the pain in his side "And you two…thank you… for helping to defeat him."

"Anytime Alter." said Tails with a smile on his face "I just hope Mobius Beta returns to its former glory. It's horrible here and it sickens me that this is the world you're going to live in."

"With Devion gone…and a weapon to help…us defeat the Devatrons…Mobius Beta will return… to its former glory." said Alter reassuringly "We…will win."

"I hope so." said Cosmo, hugging Alter comfortingly "I really hope things go well for you and Mobius Beta recovers from this horror. And my heart goes out for poor Miles and Carrie too. May they rest in peace."

Alter smiled weakly, appreciating the hug and the little rest in peace speech for Miles and Carrie. Then suddenly, a white portal opened up from nowhere and illuminated the dully lit room with a great white glow. Tails and Cosmo stared at the portal, wondering what it was. Another time rift? It couldn't be, it wasn't in the sky, it was in the room and it was pure white. They looked at it.

"What is it?" asked Cosmo.

"I think…it's some kind of portal." said Tails unsurely "Should…we go in?"

"Maybe it'll take us home!" said Cosmo hopefully "Maybe somebody's trying to return us to Mobius Prime!"

"Only one way to find out." said Tails "Let's go into it and see what happens."

He turned around and looked at Alter.

"Goodbye Alter and may your future improve over this." said Tails.

"God speed Tails." said Alter "And I hope you return to your Mobius safe and sound."

Tails smiled sadly at Alter and he and Cosmo waved goodbye. Holding hands, they walked through the portal and the portal closed up behind them, vanishing into thin air and leaving Alter alone in the room. He wasn't alone for long though. Devatron soldiers had come up to the room to see if Devion was OK and to their horror, they saw Devion lying dead on the floor and Alter the Wolf, down on one knee and clearly looking injured. The Devatrons formed a circle around Alter, boxing him in and they pointed their arm cannons at him. Alter just glowered back at the Devatrons but he knew that it was over for him. He was injured, weak and helpless. He had no way out of this and nobody could help him. Alter closed his eyes and waited for the

shots that would finish him off to come…

Footnotes:

***We all remember *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 16: The Final Frontier* don't we?**

**** In case you're wondering, the toxic fumes came from the radiation left behind after the destruction of Eggman's nuclear missile in Story 150 and as you remember, a time rift sucked it all up at the end. Just a head's up in case it's not very clear or you're not sure about it.**

Well Mobius Beta isn't having a happy ending is it?! Oh well, Tails and Cosmo will never know, they're never going to see it again. Well I hope you enjoyed this wonderfully dark chapter of Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses and prepare for next time for Sally and Nicole are taking the spotlight and they're in a "World of A.I." Don't miss it!

Alter the Wolf belongs to a DeviantArt user named MarekSterling and was used with his permission. All credit for the character goes strictly to him NOT ME.

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 3

Story 168: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 3: World of A.I.

"Attention fugitive, this is the police! You are under arrest! Cease fleeing and come with us nice and easy!" barked the electronic voice of a robotic police officer as he perused his target with relentless force.

"Attention police, this is the fugitive. I ain't goin' with ya and you'll have to catch me if you want me to comply you miserable excuse for a police force!" sneered the fugitive, rocketing down the streets as he was perused by the police with relentless force.

It was not often that the world of Mobius 3000 has a wanted fugitive on the run from the police but in a case like this, this was what many would call a "rare occurrence". Mobius 3000 was one of millions of alternate realities in the multi-verse and this was a world like no other. It was ahead of every single Mobius in the multi-verse, meaning there was no world in the multi-verse who's timeline surpasses Mobius 3000 and it had a lot to display for its very advanced age. Mobius 3000 was the most modern, hi-tech, futuristic world in all of the multi-verse. Every where was a city, even underwater and up in the sky(!) and each city had sleek, hi-tech buildings full of features and ranging in various designs and architecture. The cities all had facilities that were just out of the ordinary. Computers were installed all around and they worked like no computer's ever worked before. They were highly durable, full of features and very intelligent and sophisticated. Nearly everything was made of metal, the only signs of organic life being the Mobians themselves and yet they seemed keen on making machines out of themselves for over the years, some Mobians gave away their humanity, flesh and blood just to be a robot and have the capability to live as long as they possibly could. This was a world that was definitely being taken over by the machines. The technology was so highly advanced and sophisticated that it was hardly surprising. As for what the technology could do, it could make whatever you wished. There were machines that made food out of artificial

materials and whatever else you could use, there were machines that made drinks at the simple push of a button, there were machines that disposed of waste and recycled it into something else and there were even machines that could make whatever toy and furniture you need. It is impossible to know how the machines are capable of doing this, it is that hi-tech and extravagant. Mobius 3000 was commonly known as the most impressive version of Mobius in all the multi-verse by many a time-traveller and it was easy to see why. Crime in this world was a thing of the past too thanks to the well-designed and crafted Robocops that patrolled the streets daily. You couldn't so much as blink without the cops knowing what you're doing. Their hi-tech sensors, extremely accurate aim and meticulous level of thinking and processing as well as well-built armour and weaponry made them the most invincible cops in the history of any world in the multi-verse. No criminal dared to take these cops on and once you see what they look like, you can see why. The Robocops were formidable looking machines with a humanoid appearance, a visor with a red slit for eyes, interchangeable hands that could form any weapon they wished be it a gun, a cannon, a blade or a club and they carried a limitless supply of laser cuffs to restrain whatever enemy they were hunting. They were brutal looking too like the kind of machine that could easily take over the world if it wanted to. The Robocops had a frightening disregard for collateral damage and humility for they would gladly hurt anyone in their way if it meant getting their target. Even if you were just passing by, those machines could suddenly come stampeding down the street and send you flying across the road for no reason. Anyone but the target was regarded as "in the way" in their minds and this had led to many criticisms from the Mobian populace. Sadly, the manufacturer of the Robocops dismissed their claims as "whining" and just told them to keep out of the cop's way. Sentimentality and humanity were dying in this world and soon only machines would be around.

As of this moment, a platoon of Robocops were chasing their most formidable fugitive yet. This was no Mobian, it was actually a robot built in the design of the Mobian. It was a failed experiment though for he still had his humanity inside of him and the person who had made this robot demanded it to be terminated, branding it a "crime against science" due to the fact it was a robot with humanity in it,

something that Mobius 3000 did not tolerate at all. They saw humanity as a weakness and that it must be eliminated immediately. The fugitive robot thought otherwise and was keen to keep his life, hence his fleeing the cops and trying to stay alive. The robot looked like a Mobian hedgehog. One would say he was based on Sonic the Hedgehog in terms of anatomy and design. He was coloured black and gold and he had a gem in his chest that glowed from green to red along with his eyes whenever he was in battle. His body was round with a jet pack in the back and he had large steel quills that were in a different design to the Metal Sonic model, especially in terms of number for he had five quills and not three. He had one hand and the other arm was a cannon that could fire powerful blasts. He had a pointed nose and a mouth that emoted and moved exactly like a Mobian mouth. The robot wasn't given a name, but the humanity inside of him gave him the ability to name himself. After coming across a shard of metal on the ground, he picked himself the name "Shard". Shard was determined to prove to the world that robots shouldn't just be mindless servants and tools of Mobian-kind to do their bidding, they should be people too and he was proof that they can. Sadly, any Mobian that saw Shard instantly tried to get him arrested since there was a price of 100 Million Mobiums on his head and that was if he was brought to them alive and intact! So Shard spent his life on the run while also trying to oppose the manufacturer of the Robocops and all other machines in the world. Right now, he was fleeing for his life once again as Robocops chased him down and showered him with laser blasts. Shard had been clever enough to steal some force field generators and equip them onto himself during his time as a fugitive and he activated the force field to stop the cop's shots from damaging him.

"When are you morons gonna learn that you can't hurt me?!" he snorted, turning around and blasting back at the Robocops.

You know that I said his design was influenced by Sonic? So was his personality. He was quite literally this world's equivalent to Sonic the Hedgehog. Shard's blasts tore through the Robocops as if they were paper models and the hi-tech police robots were brought down onto the ground in bits and pieces. Any Mobians watching glared at Shard and ran towards him, hoping to help the Robocops. Shard just flew out of their way, leaving a comical mass collision between them

all and he sped off down the street as fast as his jets would let him.

"Gee, the Mobians are as mindless as the machines these days!" he sighed "They seriously want to turn me in just to get a crap load of money? Where's their humanity?! Do they not care that humanity is dying because of that stupid General Rakutan*?! Nah of course they don't, I'm the only blasted thing on this stupid world that has a heart and soul these days! Man Mobius 3000 sucks! Well one day, I'll make these idiots see how blind they are and that machines can be people too and the people shouldn't act like mindless machines. One day…"

He snapped out of his thoughts as he was bombarded with more laser shots from another platoon of Robocops that had managed to find him. They all had Gatling gun hands and were determined to bring Shard down. They didn't care if they destroyed him or not, their priority was just to arrest him. Their orders didn't specify they bring him in dead or alive, either one would do for them. Shard deployed his force field and he flew off down an alleyway. The Robocops stampeded after them, crashing through cars and knocking over any of the hi-tech dustbins that would get rid of garbage and produce new material to use. Had Shard of the Robocops stopped for a minute, they would realize that they weren't the only ones in this alleyway but of course, they didn't stop and just carried on as normal. This alleyway was occupied by two Mobians, not of Mobius 3000 origin though. Brought straight from the Prime Zone by a time rift and dumped into this machine savvy world were Queen Sally Acorn and Nicole the Lynx. A time rift had opened up in Mobius Prime and sucked up Sonic and his friends. They had been dumped in various different places around the multi-verse and this was were Sally and Nicole had ended up. They had been lying in this alleyway for over an hour and the pounding metal footsteps of the Robocops rushing down the alleyway after Shard ended up waking them up. Sally opened her eyes and place a hand over her head as she sat up and shook off the effects of the time rift.

"Ugh…that was unpleasant…" she slurred groggily "I wonder where…I am…"

Nicole say up beside Sally and she had a hand over her stomach.

"Oooh I think my breakfast is gonna escape from me…" she croaked as she fought to keep herself from being sick.

Sally turned her head and was delighted to see at least Nicole had ended up with her. Nicole or Sonic were by far the first Mobians Sally would want to be stuck on another world with given how close she was to both of them. Sally helped Nicole onto her feet and Nicole spluttered a sickly cough.

"That was the worst thing I've ever experienced!" she whispered hoarsely "I hope it never happens again!"

"With any luck Nicole, we'll never get sucked into a time rift like that again." muttered Sally as she got her bearings back together at last "I hope the others are OK. Especially Sonic…I don't want to lose him so soon after confessing my love for him." she said worriedly, hugging herself as she feared over Sonic's current state.

"I'm sure Sonic's fine." said Nicole, the sick feeling beginning to fade so she felt a lot fresher now "Don't worry Sally, he'll be OK. As for us…well, I wonder where we are?"

"Well let's find out Nicole." said Sally, ushering Nicole along the alley way eagerly for she wanted to get out of it "Hopefully we can find a way to get back to Mobius Prime and see if we can figure out how to stop the time rifts."

"I hope so too." said Nicole "Although I do have to wonder what was that racket that woke us up? It sounded like a platoon of soldiers only with heavy footsteps. Are we in military grounds or something?"

"Well this doesn't look very military-ish don't you think?" said Sally as she stepped out of the alley way and got a glimpse of the wonders that befell her outside.

Nicole followed Sally out the alley way and her mouth dropped open in astonishment as she saw just exactly where they were. A grand metropolis stood proudly upon the ground they walked upon and it seemed to stretch endlessly for miles around (as I said earlier, every where's a city). They had seen many grand cities in their lives but Sally and Nicole had never seen anything like THIS before. The

buildings looked super, gleaming brilliantly in the sunlight like knives in a drawer and the skyscrapers stretched so high that one would think they were trying to penetrate the earth's atmosphere like a syringe needle through an arm. Their designs were beyond anything they had seen before and there was so much uniqueness and creativity behind their construction that Sally and Nicole knew they'd never forget it. They could see machines performing their daily tasks and robots patrolling every inch of the street, all varying in design, programming and functions. They had to admit they looked a lot more appealing than any machine Eggman had ever made in his life time. They could see many computer screens around the city and many interesting looking vehicles that seemed to have some kind of sentience too them for they could express emotion and personality. The hover cars were prime examples of this feature. When a hover car was happy, its bumper would seemed to turn up into a smile and its headlights would flash brightly and when it was sad, the bumper would turn down into a sad expression and the headlights would glow dully. One thing that anybody who owned one of these cars knew was that you don't want to know what it's like when it's angry. There were domed structures that seemed to house any biological material such as plants and chemicals. You wanted trees? Those buildings were where you could find them these days for forests didn't exist anymore. Also any medicine would be made in those buildings and the primary source of the plants in these bio-domes were to make the medicines. Sally and Nicole were lost for words. Completely awestruck by this amazing world they were in. It was beyond their wildest dreams and they both knew this was a city they'd never forget. Being the computer whizzes they were, this world applied to them in terms of technology and science. Sally and Nicole started strolling down the street and drinking in the fantastic scenery.

"Would…you look…at this?!" gasped Sally.

"It's a hi-tech version of our own world!" squealed Nicole excitedly "Oh my gosh, there's so many computers and hi-tech stuff around here I think I'm gonna geek out!"

"I bet you are." laughed Sally "Computers has always been one of your strong points and interests. I must say, of all worlds we could

have ended up on…I think this was a good place for the time rift to take us."

"I'll say it is!" exclaimed Nicole, fighting to keep herself from bouncing up and down in excitement.

"I wonder what this world is?" mused Sally "I'd call it "Mobius Hi-Tech" or something. And given how highly advanced our technology is…I wonder if our Mobius will end up like this some day."

"It's a possibility." said Nicole "Although I wouldn't want to lose our lovely forests. This world doesn't seem to have anything of nature except for what's in those domed buildings there." she said, pointing at some bio-domes that were nearby."

"Yeah, I wouldn't want the world to be just one giant machine." said Sally "Let's keep the beautiful nature as well."

As they walked and talked, they passed by some stalls, all made of steel and more hi-tech looking than an ordinary market stall that Sally and Nicole were used to. There were Mobians in each stall, all selling different kinds of equipment and machinery. Sally and Nicole looked at the market as they walked by and were pretty amazed at what was on offer. There were pieces for whatever machine you could find, spare parts, computer drives, power tools, weapons and even computers in all their glory. There was one computer stall that was selling a big flat computer with a wide screen and the screen was alight with a lightning bolt symbol on it.

"Stormbreaker! Get your Stormbreaker here!" cried the stall owner who was an otter in a rather bizarre looking outfit that couldn't make up its mind what time period it was from. It seemed like a fight between the Victorian and modern era with a slight hint of the Middle Ages too. Bizarre isn't it?

"The best computer in the history of the world! Only 300,000 Mobiums! We give free demos to help decide if you want to buy this magnificent computer!" he hollered as loud as he could as if trying to get everybody in the street to hear him.

Nicole seemed to like this idea. She stared at the Stormbreaker

computer as if mesmerized by it and she ran over to the stall. Sally decided to let Nicole go nuts since she loved computers and this was something for her to enjoy while they were here. May as well enjoy what's on offer until they can get back to Mobius Prime. The otter beamed proudly at the fact he'd managed to attract a potential customer.

"Why hello my dear, would you like to purchase the Stormbreaker?" he said kindly "Best computer ever made, you'll never see anything like it ever again. Only 300,000 Mobiums."

"I don't have any money on me." said Nicole sadly "But I'd like to try the free demo please. Maybe if I like what this computer does, I'll try and save some money to purchase one in the future."

"Go right ahead love." said the otter, handing Nicole a Stormbreaker computer and keyboard "Enjoy yourself but don't spend too long on there, some other people would like a demo too. Your time limit is ten minutes."

Nicole nodded understandingly and instantly set to work on this amazing computer she'd been given. Resting the computer and keyboard on the stall counter, she hit the enter key and the screen whizzed into life, the lightning bolt logo disappearing into nothing but pixels and an option came up asking Nicole which programme she'd like to try. Nicole saw an icon on the computer that said "Algorithm puzzles and code breaking". Sounded like her kind of programme. The computer didn't have a mouse to use but that was because it didn't need one. The screen was a touch screen so Nicole just had to prod at the icon and it would respond to her. Nicole touched the icon on the screen and the Stormbreaker whizzed furiously as the programme activated. Then something amazing happened. A holographic image of various different codes and algorithms emitted from a little projector built into the screen and Nicole sound herself surrounded by symbols and numbers of all kinds. Sally was astonished by what she was seeing. Nicole had certainly been given an amazing computer to try out. Excitedly, Nicole instantly started working out the codes and trying to break them. Her excellent brain worked at the speed of a race car and she began sorting out puzzles and breaking codes as if they were child's play. The otter stared in amazement as Nicole began to work through the programme.

Nobody had ever performed so fluently on a computer like this before. He'd certainly attracted an amazing customer. Just a pity she couldn't buy one from him.

"This Stormbreaker is amazing!" squealed Nicole ecstatically "Oh I wish I could afford one! Ah well, this demo's totally worth it!"

She pointed at another symbol and moved it across to solve another puzzle while Sally watched, pleased to see Nicole enjoying herself…

Little did the lynx realize was that the Stormbreaker had a feature installed in it that even the stall owner had no idea about. The Stormbreaker was linked to the manufacturer of the computer and indeed every single machine that was made in the world. Therefore, unknowingly, when the Stormbreaker was switched on, it would produce and automatic link to the manufacturer and display a visual through the viewpoint of the Stormbreaker. The manufacturer would then be allowed to see what the computer was looking at, making him the ultimate spy. Every piece of technology on Mobius 3000 worked like this and that was because the manufacturer had sinister plans abound and his technology was merely the tip of the iceberg. The manufacturer in question was not somebody you'd ever expect. The manufacturer, the one who made all of Mobius 3000's amazing technology including the Stormbreaker was a machine himself. Not just a machine though but a machine with a Mobian's mind running it as a sort of artificial intelligence. His name was General Rakutan. He used to be a Mobian crocodile who served in the army before Mobius 3000 became so hi-tech and futuristic. He had opposed the idea of a machine dominated world before but an accident during a raid on a laboratory had ended up trapping his mind in the body of a robot. As he accustomed to this new life, he found himself enjoying being a robot and was determined to make the world nothing but a big machine. Going under the name "The Manufacturer", he had been secretly building all of Mobius 3000's facilities and technology and had distributed it to development companies everywhere, letting them take the credit for his work. Rakutan after all wanted to remain anonymous and thus when donating his inventions, he had told the people who received them through notes and phone calls that they were not to try and find out who he was and that they were the ones

to take the credit for the inventions. All the inventions which had ended up making Mobius 3000 so glamorous and machine heavy were merely so that he could spy on the populace all over and commence with his sinister plans. Said plans being to make everybody on Mobius 3000 a machine or a computer.

The general himself was a very intimidating looking machine. His head had a mouthpiece resembling the muzzle of a gas mask vaguely and he had three spikes on each side of his head, the top spikes being curved and pointing upwards. He had reptilian like eyes that burned a fierce orange and could make people freeze in fear when he gazed at the. His shoulder pads were curved at the tips and he had powerful arms with three clawed fingers and a clawed thumb on each hand. His legs were powerful and packed a lot of strength in them. His feet had three razor sharp talons on each foot and on his hips he carried two very sharp swords that he could wield with deadly effect. Behind his back grew two long tentacles with blades at the end of them. He could retract them or extend them with ease and they were useful for if anybody tried to attack him from behind. They were his favoured weapons in combat. General Rakutan sat in his marvellous metal seat as he watched Nicole breaking codes at the speed of light from the viewpoint of the stall owner's Stormbreaker computer. The general's eyes glistened with glee as he watched Nicole perform so amazingly and admirably.

"Impressive…" he purred, his voice a gravely, hoarse whisper "That woman is beyond anything I've ever seen. Her computer skills are incredible. She's working away on the Stormbreaker's code breaking programme as if it's nothing. One would think this was just child's play for her. She'll be a fine computer she will…"

You see, General Rakutan had this rather weird idea behind his converting the populace. He was rather biased towards the male oriented crowd and wanted them to be superior to women. So he would convert the men into machines and make the women computers to be slaves to the machines and populace. Women in his eyes are just slaves for men, nothing more (what a creep…). Rakutan pressed a button on his chair arm and he waited as a beeping noise signalled for somebody to come and meet him. A moment later, a robot in the shape of a Mobian Mole with sharp

claws for digging and red eyes trotted into the room nervously. He looked to be afraid of the general and you really couldn't blame him considering how scary he was. The robo-mole approached the general worriedly.

"Y-y-you c-called sir?" he whimpered.

"Stop snivelling you moron! I've made it very clear that you are not to act scared in my presence!" barked Rakutan furiously.

The robo-mole changed his personality instantly.

"Sir, yes sir!" he cried out, saluting the general like any army person like him would expect his comrades to do.

"Very good Mordred." said Rakutan coldly "Now then, I want you to find me this woman and bring her to me at once." he ordered, pointing at Nicole on the screen.

Mordred studied the screen closely for a minute and he grinned to himself.

"Oooooh, she's might pretty." he said "I'll enjoy kidnapping her for you general."

"I know you will." said Rakutan "That woman is a computer genius as you can see. She'll be a fine computer A.I. to slave away for my machine armies. Do NOT return to me empty-handed or you will no longer have ANY hands." he snarled.

"Sir, yes sir!" cried Mordred obediently.

With that said, he ran out of the room to do his task, quite eagerly I must add. Rakutan watched Mordred leave the room and he turned back to the large screen that displayed the viewpoint of everything his inventions could see. Every building, every computer, every robot and every vehicle was a viewpoint for him. He quite literally saw everything that went on in the world. Rakutan cackled ominously to himself.

"I'm amazed how beautifully my plans are working…" he crowed to himself "And all because the Mobian populace is slowly but surely

beginning to embrace my vision of a perfect world without them knowing about it. By the time they realize what's going on…it'll be too late."

The room was filled by the dark, eerie sound of the general's laughter…

Back at the computer stall, Nicole was just about ready to try out another programme after having gotten bored of the code cracking game but the stall owner pulled the Stormbreaker away from her and put it back on the shelf.

"Sorry love, time's up." he said "Although I must say you were amazing on that programme! How did you learn how to do that?"

"Well I grew up with a family who loved computers and I just…have a natural talent for computers." said Nicole casually "I grew up around computers pretty much. By the age of five I was able to use one with ease and by age seven, I was able to crack simple codes with ease. By the time I was a teenager, I was able to hack into other computers as if it was nothing and I only continue to improve as I get older. What you've seen right now is the peak of my talents."

"It's true you know." said Sally, stepping forward and putting a hand on Nicole's shoulder "When me and Nicole first me, she astounded me on how much she knew about computers and how they work. I asked her to fix one of mine that had broken and in half an hour, she'd fixed it and even managed to improve the settings. It takes my breath away what she can do."

Nicole beamed with pride, glad to hear this from her best friend.

"I see." said the otter with interest "Well I'll reserve one of these Stormbreakers just for you, Nicole I believe. Once you get enough money for it, it's all yours."

"Oh thank you so much." said Nicole gratefully "But no thanks. I'm quite happy with my own computer at home."

Secretly, Nicole wanted a Stormbreaker but she knew she couldn't

afford one and they weren't going to stay here forever so reserving one for her would do no good, she wouldn't be around to receive it. Best to just politely decline the offer and forget all about it. The otter seemed rather surprised that Nicole had turned down the offer to have a Stormbreaker reserved just for her but before he could say anything, the Mobians around suddenly started diving for cover as if a massive explosion had just gone off and they needed to find whatever shelter they could. Sally and Nicole wondered what was going on but they soon found out for out of the blue, Shard flew down the road with a bunch of Robocops after him. Curious, Sally and Nicole followed them to see what was going on. They ran after the cops as they continued to shoot at Shard in the vain hope of being able to bring him down. Shard still had his force-field up though so to the cops, it was like shooting peas at a brick wall. They just couldn't penetrate his shield and get him at all. Shard turned around and blasted at the cops. His shots tore through the Robocops as if they were made of paper and the dead bodies collapsed onto the ground like dead flies. Shard chuckled, clearly enjoying himself as he blasted the Robocops to smithereens. His shots had been powerful enough to wipe out most of the platoon already. There were only three Robocops left. Shard led them down an alleyway and the Robocops foolishly followed him. They weren't that intelligent when it came to pursuing targets. All they cared about was getting the target, regardless of if the target had some kind of plan to catch them off guard. Strategy was not part of their programming and Shard knew it. So as he sped down the alleyway, he flew up onto the roof of a building and waited as the Robocops ran into the alleyway after him and began looking around for him. Shard just pointed his cannon arm down at the ground and he blasted the Robocops each in the head, finishing them off and wiping out the last of the platoon.

"BOOM! Headshot!" he cheered excitedly "Oh yeah! Shard One-Robocops ZERO! Ah, ha, ha, ha!"

He flew down into the alleyway and he began dancing about excitedly. Sally and Nicole, having caught up to him, peered into the alleyway and watched as Shard did his little victory jig. Sally was instantly drawn to this robot for it reminded her so much of her beloved Sonic. Guess this was the next best thing for her while she

was on this planet.

"Sally, who is that?" asked Nicole "And why does he look so much like Sonic?"

"I'm guessing he's some kind of Metal Sonic only with a different design going off." mused Sally "He seems like he's a good guy though, he doesn't seem like a villain but with Metal Sonic, you can't be too careful so be careful."

Sally and Nicole walked into the alleyway and Sally cleared her throat.

"Ahem…hello there sir." she said.

Shard freaked out instantly and he pointed his arm cannon at the two.

"Won't you stupid cops leave me alone for one freaking minute?!" he shrieked "Geez! And I can do without more Mobians trying to sell me out to General Rakutan too!"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa! Put the cannon away! We're not cops and we won't hurt you!" screeched Sally "Don't shoot us please!"

"We promise we won't hurt you." said Nicole "Promise."

"That's what they all say and then suddenly they try to scrap me and get the reward placed on my head!" snarled Shard "Now back off you two before I shoot you!"

"Listen! We WON'T hurt you!" screamed Sally furiously "We don't even know who you are so why would we have any reason to hurt you?!"

Shard took in what Sally had said and realized that she had a logical point. Why would these two strangers want to hurt him if they had no idea who he was? Shard lowered his cannon arm. The gem in his chest and his eyes turned green as he exited from battle mode.

"Sorry ladies, I'm a bit edgy because of the fact every damn thing in the world's out to get me." said Shard "So who are you two then?"

"My name's Queen Sally Acorn and this is my lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx." said Sally "We're from Mobius Prime and we were brought here by…"

"Mobius Prime?! Prime Zoners?!" blurted Shard suddenly "Oh sweet! I've always wanted to meet a Prime Zoner! Especially since it's because of Mobius Prime that everything in the multi-verse exists! Looks like things are looking up for me after all!"

"O…K…" said Nicole unsurely, not understanding why Shard seemed so excited "So who might you be then sir?"

"Well for starters, it's not "sir"." said Shard snarkily "I'm not a knight or anything. I my beautiful Nicole, am Shard the Metal Sonic! The absolute best and most kickass robot ever invented! And all because I was inspired by the greatest hero of Mobius 3000's history, Sonic the Hedgehog! Oh yeah!" he emphasized this with a heroic pose and a big grin that added to his enthusiasm and ego.

"Oh he's definitely based on Sonic alright." chuckled Sally "He even has his reckless charms…"

"So Shard, where are we and why are those robots after you?" asked Nicole, pointing at the dead Robocops that littered the alleyway.

Shard took Nicole's hand into his only hand.

"Why my dear, you have asked some excellent questions and I have some excellent answers for them." purred Shard seductively, making Nicole blush "You are in the world of Mobius 3000, a world that sadly is becoming nothing but a giant machine thanks to General Rakutan. You see, General Rakutan is a robot who is the manufacturer of EVERY bleeding machine in the world. Everything you see is his invention from the Stormbreaker computers to the hover cars with emotions to even the hi-tech buildings. And that's not all, he kidnaps Mobians and makes them into robots by uploading their minds into the robot's mind. If you're male, he makes you a robot. If you're female, he makes you a computer. Funny enough when this happens, people don't give it a second thought and just see the robots and computers as a new invention and don't

care about the missing people. They're just so tech-happy! I've been trying to stop this mad man for years now but sadly, my attempts are futile. He has the entire world against me, I'm just one guy. I can barely get close to him and I can't run forever. A robot needs a new power supply after all and the gem in my chest needs a power up every now and then. I keep going and it'll just give out on me." he sighed, tapping at the gem as if he felt cursed to have it in him "And the sad thing is, nobody will believe me about Rakutan. They even doubt that he's a real person and the manufacturing companies say that THEY made the inventions when Rakutan actually did. I guess I'm the only person who cares about this world and wants freedom for everybody, not the world to be one giant obedient machine for Rakutan."

Sally and Nicole were flabbergasted at what they were hearing. Nicole now suddenly felt dirty having played on the Stormbreaker earlier. How dare this evil robot fool her into playing one of his toys?! She'd make the general pay for this!

"I can't believe this…" said Nicole "This world is only gloriously hi-tech and advanced because of this "Rakutan" guy and he's doing it just to make the world his own? How could he?!"

"I know cute stuff, how could he?" spat Shard.

"Wait Shard, how do you know about all of what you've told us anyway?" asked Sally.

"Duh! I'm a Rakutan invention too!" snapped Shard "BUT, and this is a big, BIG but, something went wrong with me and I suddenly gained sentience and the ability to think for myself. I'm glad I did, no way will I be content working for Rakutan! He had been hoping to make a robotic Mobian with the abilities and power of one too and using Sonic as an inspiration, I was built. But as I said, something went wrong and I not only look like Sonic, I pretty much AM Sonic both in looks and personality. Just paint me blue and I pretty much am the new Sonic the Hedgehog. Given I'm an invention of Rakutan's, I know everything about him and I don't like what he's up to so I'm trying to stop the asshole. And since you two seem to agree with me on Rakutan…would you like to help me?" he asked hopefully.

Sally and Nicole saw no reason why they shouldn't try. A world that's being taken over was definitely worth their time and since they were stuck here until another time rift appeared, they may as well try and save Mobius 3000 from General Rakutan. It didn't hurt to have a go at all. Sally held out a hand for Shard to shake.

"Shard, I am all too happy to help you." she said "I am sick and tired of these world conquerors trying to take over the world, especially back on my Mobius. I've been trying to stop Dr. Eggman from conquering the world for a year along with my fellow Royal Fighters, I see no reason why I shouldn't try to stop General Rakutan."

"I'm in too." said Nicole "Nobody uses science and machines for their own selfish needs like this!"

"Suh-weet!" cheered Shard, shaking Sally's hand so furiously the squirrel worried that the robot would wrench it free off her wrist "I'm so happy to hear this! Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

"Yes, yes, very good." said Sally shakily as Shard stopping shaking her hand "So Shard, do you know where the general lives?"

"Course." sniffed Shard "I was made by him wasn't I? Rakutan lives in a giant tower with a vague pyramid shape going on in its design. Bit similar to the Transamerica Pyramid from another city in the world. You can't miss it really."

"So if you know where he lives, why haven't you stormed his base and attacked him?" asked Sally.

"Considering that the entire world's after me and I literally can't go ANYWHERE without being noticed, it's a bit pointless to try isn't it?" noted Shard "But with you two helping me, there's a chance I could get in unnoticed if you like play the role of the distraction or something…"

Then suddenly, a pair of metal hands emerged from the earth just behind Nicole's feet and they closed around her ankles! Nicole screamed in terror as she felt the hands around her ankles and she tried to run but the hands held on tight to her.

"AAAAAAAAAIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE! Something's got me! Help!" she squealed.

Sally and Shard ran over to help Nicole but it was much too late to help the poor lynx now. The hands pulled her straight down into the ground and Nicole disappeared down a long tunnel in the earth along with the hands. Sally could only watch as Nicole was taken away and instantly grew worried for her friend. Shard grew worried too considering he had taken an instant liking to Nicole and he instantly knew what had happened.

"Nicole!" wailed Sally "Oh no, Rakutan's got her I bet!"

"He has!" exclaimed Shard "This is exactly what happens when he goes around kidnapping people! A pair of hands come out of the ground and just snatch the person down into the earth to take him to his base so they can be converted! We have to save Nicole before this can happen!"

"I agree! Nicole's not going to become a computer on my watch!" declared Sally "Come on Shard, let's follow this tunnel and see where it ends up!"

Shard looked dumbfounded. He then changed his expression to a more exasperated one and he face palmed himself.

"Man…why didn't I think of that?" he muttered to himself "Could have broken into Rakutan's base already if I thought of doing that…"

Sally just smiled dryly at Shard. He definitely was like Sonic in more ways than one. He even had his tendency to not think that well. Sally crawled down into the tunnel left behind by the kidnapper, surprised to see that she could fit down it well and Shard followed behind her. As the two followed the tunnel through to the end, they prayed that they were in time to save Nicole…

As for poor Nicole, she was more terrified than she ever had been in all her life. The hands, which belonged to Mordred the Robo-Mole as you probably guessed already, had taken her all the way back to the

general's headquarters and Rakutan had quickly taken her to the conversion room before she'd even had time to register her surroundings. The moment she was taken into the room, Rakutan had strapped her to a restraint bed and placed a helmet on her head that was weird up to a handheld computer device that looked a little bit like a hi-tech calculator only the keys had nothing on them and this device was not just a simple maths tool. It would be able to teach people anything they wanted once the person's mind was uploaded into it. As Nicole fought to break free of her restraints, she took heed of her surroundings. She was in a room that was full of restraint beds and prison capsules for any victim that was unfortunate enough to be captured by Rakutan or Mordred. There were lots of tools on display on the various work desks and tables that were around and a lot of machinery filled the room. It was quite fitting for a robot like Rakutan. Nicole looked to her right hand side and she saw Rakutan glowering ominously at him with his orange eyes, glowing darkly like lit candles. The lynx was instantly intimidated by his appearance. He was scarier than even everything Eggman had come up with. Maybe even scarier than the Devatrons. Nicole struggled furiously in her restraints but try as she might, her efforts were futile. There were thick clamps wrapped around her wrists, ankles and waist. They firmly held her to the bed and there was no way out of them. Nicole doubted even Sonic would be able to break out of this.

"LET ME GO!" screeched Nicole frantically "You're not turning me into a computer! No way! Let me go right this second or you'll be sorry!"

"You foolish little woman, I am NEVER sorry for what I do." purred Rakutan sinisterly "I have been keeping this up for over a decade now and still nobody has managed to work out what I am up to. I am slowly but surely taking over the world and nobody realizes this. It's the perfect crime and now I am going to add you to my glorious vision of the perfect world."

"You can't do this!" protested Nicole "You're taking away freedom and sentience and making them all just cogs in your big machine! You're despicable Rakutan and I have every right to say that from what Shard's just told me!"

"Yes, I am fully aware of what that impudent imp Shard has been telling you and your friend "Sally Acorn"." said the general impatiently "I was listening to the entire conversation the whole time."

"Y-you were?!" gasped Nicole "H-how?!"

"I have microphones and recorders installed all over every city in the world that has received my glorious treatment." boasted Rakutan "There is no conversation that I will not hear. I quite literally hear everything and I also see everything too given I have a visual link to every device of mine that has been installed in the world. Nothing happens without me knowing about it."

"You got that right general." said Mordred, acting like he was fawning over the general just to make him happy "You see Nicole, Rakutan is the greatest genius ever. His big plan was to make the world entirely mechanical without people finding out about it. He began making inventions and facilities and distributing them in secret all over the world and making the world think they were being made by actual companies that make technology and stuff. It's thanks to him we have these glorious hi-tech cities out there and he even invented me! How cool is that?!"

"It's disgusting!" spat Nicole furiously "You're tainting the world! Your technology is impressive yes but you can't make the world just one big machine for you to command! You can't just make the world a giant mechanical paradise! Organic life has every right to live on the planet too! You converting them into machines just violates that right and shows how despicable you are! Rakutan, you're EVIL!" she screamed.

"Evil is a matter of perspective you little fool." said Rakutan coldly, pointing a clawed finger at Nicole and threatening to drive it into her eye "In my eyes, I am NOT evil, I am a saviour. You see, the organic life form is weak and flawed whereas a mechanical life form has no weaknesses and can easily be repaired and fixed should things go wrong. Organic life dies eventually, mechanical life just gets rebuilt and repaired. I am making Mobius 3000 a better place by eradicating the weakness that is organic life and repopulating it with the superiority of technology and science. People are already

embracing my vision without really realizing it and any who don't just end up being forced to accept it via conversion anyway. Soon the entire world will be converted and I, General Rakutan, will be the ruler of Mobius 3000! The world will serve my beck and call and nobody will dare oppose me! We will be living in a perfect world and everybody will enjoy it!"

"I won't." said Nicole bitterly "I'll loathe every minute of my time on this planet."

"We'll see about that." said Rakutan, prodding Nicole in the stomach and making her wince in pain "Mordred, begin the conversion!"

"With pleasure general!" said Mordred happily.

As much as Rakutan scared him, he loved converting the Mobians. He considered it very enjoyable for himself as much as it was enjoyable for Rakutan. Mordred skipped over to a control panel delightedly and he pulled the lever that activated the mind transfer process. It was a painful process that extracted the mind from the body, isolating it completely and then storing it into the handheld computer device. The body would be nothing but an empty shell once this was over and what was worse was the process was irreversible. Nicole would be permanently like this unless she was saved in time. Some alterations to the extracted mind would erase all personality, emotions and feelings from the transferred mind so Nicole would literally be just a computer programme, nothing more. She would be able to do nothing but slave away for the person who owned her, just as Rakutan envisioned when he began his big stratagem for the world. The helmet crackled into life as Mordred pulled the lever and Nicole felt her body being jolted with bolts of electricity that coursed through down her head and through her body. Nicole screamed a blood-curdling scream as the process began. Her brain felt like it was on fire as her mind was being extracted painfully from her head and into the computer. The process would be other in a short while but Nicole was fully conscious so every minute was pure agony for her. Rakutan cackled, clearly enjoying this moment as he always did when this happened. Mordred was enjoying this too, skipping about with joy and laughing like a demented clown as Nicole writhed in her restraints and screeched in anguish. But the general and Mordred's

joy was cut short by a door blasting open and in ran Sally and Shard. The tunnel that Mordred had left behind had taken them directly inside the base and given Rakutan didn't have guards (Why would he need them? Nobody opposes him or even knows he exists!) on display, it had been a matter of finding the right room. Sally put her hands to her mouth in horror as she saw what was happening to Nicole.

"Oh no! Nicole!" she wailed.

"Sally…ugh…help meaaaaaarrrrrrgggggghhhh!" howled Nicole, electricity making her body feel like it was burning everywhere.

"General Rakutan! Let her go this minute before I spin-dash you into pieces!" bellowed Shard "Consider this a friendly warning!"

"Shard, I have been working very hard to keep you away from me and to get you scrapped!" snarled Rakutan, his tentacles extending from his back and getting ready to fight "Now you're here, I guess I get the honour of scrapping you myself!"

"No, I get the honour of scrapping YOU general!" yelled Shard "And I've got a little friend to help me with that! Sally, get Nicole outta there while I take on this tin can!"

Sally did not wait to be asked twice. She clipped on her metal wristbands and activated the energy blades that they contained. She ran towards Nicole with her blades ready to slice through whatever dared get in her way. Rakutan ignored Sally and ran off to fight Shard, leaving Mordred to take on Sally. Mordred's metal claws extended to twice their normal length and he activated some kind of electrical force field around his lower arms. He and Sally lunged at each other and they both clashed like expert sword fighters. Blade met metal hand but neither weapon seemed to win this battle. Sally retracted her arm and she lunged at Mordred, hoping to penetrate the mole in the chest. Mordred blocked the blow with ease and he clawed at Sally. Sally jumped backwards and she slashed at Mordred with her blade. Mordred blocked the blow again with his other claw.

"Please let me save my friend!" pleaded Sally "She doesn't deserve

to be a computer programme! You can't let your master do this to her!"

"Says who?" sneered Mordred, holding his arms in an X-shape and blocking a double-strike from Sally's arm blades "I'm Rakutan's servant bot and I happen to like his vision for the world so I'll happily help him achieve that goal! True he scares the crud outta me but it's totally worth it! I have so much fun kidnapping and converting these people and your friend Nicole is welcome to join the victims we've converted in the past!"

"Monster! I won't let you!" Sally blasted, swinging her blades and hoping to catch Mordred in the legs but the mole blocked her blows once again with his arms.

"Too bleeding bad toots." snorted Mordred.

Then he shut the force field off of his left arm and he switched of the force field. He grabbed Sally by the neck and then let her have it with a terrible electrical shock. Sally screamed in pain as she was tasered by the robo-mole and Mordred kept it up, hoping to knock Sally out. But Mordred would soon wish he hadn't done that for Sally fought the pain long enough to bring her arm up and slice Mordred's arm off. The electrical surge died away and Mordred's arm dropped down onto the floor, lifeless and useless to him. Sally dropped down onto the floor, barely conscious after the awful shock she'd received. Mordred however was clutching his arm in excruciating pain and screaming loudly.

"ARRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHH! YOU CUT OFF MY ARM YOU STUPID SON OF A…"

His ranting was quickly silenced by Sally forcing herself onto her knees and ramming her blade through Mordred's chest. The robo-mole's optics stopped flashing and his body went dead. Mordred collapsed onto the floor, dead and defeated but unfortunately, Sally had used the last of her energy just to defeat him. The squirrel fell into unconsciousness, succumbing to the effects of electric shock. With Sally unconsciousness and Shard occupied, poor Nicole was left to fall victim to the mind transfer, completely helpless and at the machine's mercy.

Over to Shard and Rakutan, the general's extended metal tentacles shot out at Shard and they tried to slice him to pieces but Shard dodged the attack and he blasted at him with his arm cannon. The shot just bounced off of Rakutan as if it was nothing. Rakutan was a well built machine after all. Shard wasn't too pleased to see that his best weapon didn't work so he resorted to his second best weapon. He spin-dashed General Rakutan in the gut and sent him hurling across the room. Rakutan spun himself around in mid-air and he landed feet first in the wall. He sprang off the wall with his powerful legs and hurled across the room directly into Shard. He brought Shard crashing down onto the floor but as they skidded across it, Shard dug his legs into Rakutan's gut and flipped him over onto his back. Rakutan picked himself up and his tentacles swung at Shard, hoping to ensnare him so he could rip him apart. Shard dodged the tentacles and he blasted Rakutan in the face with his arm cannon. Rakutan clutched his face in pain and Shard spin-dashed him before Rakutan could recover. Rakutan growled furiously and he reached out with one of his tentacles. He grabbed the dead body of Mordred and he hammered Shard with it before Shard could react. Mordred's tough build violently clashed with Shard's body and sent the robot spiralling across the room. Shard landed on his side and he groaned in pain, Rakutan lifted Mordred's body up and he slammed it on top of Shard. Rakutan raised Mordred's body up above his head, poised to make another slam but Shard jumped to his feet and he blasted Rakutan's tentacle, destroying it and causing him to drop Mordred's body onto the floor. Growling in rage, Rakutan retracted his tentacles and he whipped out his twin swords. He held his arms out and then proceeded to do something that made Shard hesitate. He spun his hands around a complete 360 degrees and his hands began to spin around at a terrifying speed, the swords in his hands nothing more than silver blurs circling around in front of him. He edged towards Shard, hoping to cleave him in two with his twin swords. Shard backed off, his eyes fixed on the spinning blades in terror. Shard flew up into the air out of Rakutan's way and he landed behind him. Rakutan whirled around only to get blasted by Shard in the head. Rakutan's hands stopped spinning and he shook off the pain in his face. Shard ran up to Rakutan and he punched him in the face, driving the knuckles of his metal fist as hard as he could into the cheek structure of Rakutan's face. Rakutan's head twisted violently to the left as he was punched but he retaliated by butting

Shard in the face with the hilt of his sword. He added extra to his attack by slashing Shard across the face with the sword. Shard cried out in pain as a long gash was drawn across his face. It would take some fixing to get that better. Rakutan spun his hands around again and edged the twirling blades towards Shard. Shard threw himself onto the floor and shot him directly in the pelvis section. Rakutan groaned in pain and Shard aimed his cannon at his head but Rakutan swatted his arm away. Shard ended up accidentally shooting towards the machine that was uploading Nicole's mind into the computer the shot skimmed across some wires, fraying them slightly and one wire was fried completely by the shot. They didn't seem to be slowing down the process though. Shard growled crossly and he kneed Rakutan in the gut, adding a shoot from his cannon arm to the gut to further hurt him. Rakutan backed away from the shot and Shard spin-dashed upwards into his chin, throwing his head backwards so violently that Rakutan was whisked off his feet and onto his back. Shard jumped onto Rakutan and he grabbed him by the throat. He aimed his cannon at his head, hoping to blast it clean off his shoulders but Rakutan grabbed Shard and pushed him off of himself. He jumped onto his feet and lashed out with one of his clawed feet. His talons plunged into the sides of Shard's face and he threw Shard into the wall with a swift kick. Shard groaned as his body slammed hard against the wall and he fell down onto the floor. Rakutan began to spin his hands around again and he advanced on Shard, his swords whirling ominously and edging closer towards him. Shard picked himself up and tried to shoot but his power gem core suddenly gave out on him and he couldn't fire anymore.

"Oh not now!" whined Shard as his gem and eyes turned from red to green "Any time but now!"

He just had enough time to leap out of the way as Rakutan's spinning swords nearly snagged him. Rakutan stopped spinning his swords and he extended his remaining tentacle out from behind him. He entwined Shard with the tentacle, wrapping it around his ankle and hoisting him clean off the ground by his leg. Shard stared helplessly at Rakutan as he raised his sword, poised to make a stab. As this happened, Sally came to and she looked to her left to see Shard ready to be executed by the evil general. Straining to get up,

Sally pushed herself onto her feet and she re-activated her energy blades. Rakutan didn't notice her, he was focused entirely on Shard.

"Now Shard, this ends here!" crowed Rakutan "You will be destroyed and I shall commence with my goals. This time, WITHOUT your interference!"

Sally reacted faster than she had ever reacted before. She sprang onto her feet and she pounded towards Rakutan, crying a furious war cry that made even Shard jumped in surprise. Rakutan turned around just as Sally jumped at him and swing her energy blades at him. She landed on the floor just beside Rakutan and at first, the general stood there as if nothing had happened. And then…his head suddenly dropped off of his neck and landed with a clatter on the floor! Sally had just chopped it off in one fell swoop of the blade. Rakutan dropped Shard onto the floor and his headless body just keeled over like a fallen statue. He was dead, defeated at last and unable to terrorize the world anymore. Shard punched the air with joy.

"Oh YEAH! You killed him Sally! You rock! WHOO!" he cheered excitedly.

"I…I can't believe I just did that!" gasped Sally "I reacted faster than I could even process what was happening! I really am amazing aren't I?"

"You sure are!" cried Shard enthusiastically, clapping Sally on the back "You're one fine queen you are! I bet your subjects are might proud of ya!"

"They are indeed…"

Sally was suddenly cut off by a sudden realization that sprang into her mind.

"Oh no…NICOLE!" she blurted.

Shard suddenly realized that they hadn't saved Nicole yet and he and Sally raced over to the restrained lynx. Unfortunately for them though, they were too late. The process had finished. Nicole's body

had been stripped completely of all life and her mind was now trapped inside the handheld computer the head helmet was attached to. Sally cut the restraints to pieces with her energy blades and knelt beside Nicole's body. She shook it furiously, hoping to wake her up as Shard took the helmet off. Nicole didn't respond. There was no life in her to wake up. Her body was empty, devoid of any life at all. Sally instantly burst into tears over this. Her best friend was gone forever and she had been too late to save her. Sally hugged Nicole's body sadly and wailed into her fur. Shard just watched, sharing Sally's grief. He had thought Nicole was very pretty and to lose her so suddenly was a big loss for him. Sally sobbed and wailed as she tried to accept the fact Nicole was gone forever.

"Oh Nicole! I'm so sorry!" howled Sally "I'm sorry I didn't save you! I'm so, so sorry!"

Her wailing did nothing to revive the lifeless body she was hugging, Nicole still didn't move. Sally wasn't grieving for much longer though for the handheld computer suddenly whirred into life and a hologram of Nicole emitted from the device. It looked exactly like her organic form only it was now a hologram. Strangely enough though, Nicole's personality was still with her. She was feeling sad for Sally as she watched her friend grieve over her and despite the fact she no longer had a heart, she could still feel the pain that Sally was going through and felt hurt for her. The general's process hadn't fully worked after all and it had been thanks to Shard's shot frying an important wire that didn't separate her personality from her mind so Nicole was still herself.

"Sally, please don't cry. I'm still here." Nicole said, her voice now ringing with a vocoder monotone in the background of every word she said.

Sally's head shot up from Nicole's body and she looked over her shoulder to see a hologram of Nicole smiling sadly at her. Sally instantly grabbed the handheld device and she stared hard at the hologram as if hoping something would happen. She was still crying though but her sobs were replaced by stunned silence and just tears streaming down her face. Shard stared at Nicole along with Sally, unable to believe what he was seeing.

"N-N-Nicole!" stammered Sally "Y-Y-You're…"

"Yes Sally, I am a computer now." said Nicole, looking down sadly at the handheld device her image was projected over "But I am not gone, don't worry. I still look like Nicole and I still feel and sound like Nicole. My personality is still here too. I'm not gone forever Sally."

"But…but you're trapped in this computer!" wailed Sally "You're nothing but a tool now! Your body is empty of all life and your mind is trapped in here forever! Oh Nicole, you didn't deserve this! I'm so sorry I didn't save you! Please can you forgive me?!"

"Sally, please don't beat yourself up." said Nicole softly "You tried everything you could. It's not your fault you couldn't save me. But don't worry Sally, if you keep hold of this device, I will never be gone. I will always be with you Sally. Trust me, you haven't lost me at all. I'm merely…different now. So please don't grieve over me, I'm still here and I'm still there to tend to your needs."

Sally wiped her tears away and took in what Nicole had said. It would be a great shame to not have Nicole in all her physical glory… but she would never truly lose her if she kept the device. Not to mention Nicole could maybe be of some use like this. Maybe some good could come out of it. Sally smiled sadly back at Nicole.

"You're right." said Sally "This is all that's left of you now and I promise with all my heart that I will NEVER lose it. Nicole, I will take very good care of you and try what I can to make this new life comfortable for you."

"Thank you Sally." said Nicole sweetly "You're such a wonderful friend to me."

"And you are too." said Sally kindly.

Shard smiled with awe, touched by the amount of heart these two friends were displaying between each other. As bittersweet as this turnout was, it was more sweet than bitter at least. Then suddenly, a huge white portal opened up behind Shard and the poor robot leaped about a foot in the air in fright.

"YIKES! What was that?!" gasped Shard.

"Nicole, what is this?" asked Sally, holding the handheld device at the portal so Nicole could see it.

The holographic image of Nicole the Lynx studied the portal for a minute and she thought about it. With the computer she was now trapped in, she seemed to have improved analyzing skills and she managed to work out what it was.

"It's some kind of portal." she said "But it's not a time rift. This one has a much more pleasant presence to it."

"Let's check it out." said Sally "Maybe it'll take us home."

"Hey can I come?" asked Shard "I'd like to see the Prime Zone after all."

"I don't see why not." said Sally with a warm smile "I'd also like you to meet the person you're based on, Sonic the Hedgehog himself. You'll like him I bet."

"Also he and Sally are dating." Nicole snickered teasingly, earning a playful glare from Sally.

"That sounds swell!" said Shard "Let's get going then!"

With that said, Sally and Shard walked through the portal with Sally carrying Nicole in her hand. As they vanished through the portal, the three could only wonder where it would take them. Wherever it took them though, it would not be Mobius Prime. But they would be seeing Sonic the Hedgehog at least…

Footnotes:

***Pronounced rah-KU-tan**

Thought The Same As It Never Was was shocking? THIS is

shocking! Nicole's a computer now! Bet you SatAM fans are happy now... :P

So that's it for this part. I hope you like it and join me next time for Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat are next and they're up against robot pirates and fighting alongside some "radical heroes" in Part 4 of Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses...

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 4

Story 169: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 4: A Radical Encounter

"Yaaargh! Get tharr prisoners loaded onto tharr Metal Marauder ye swabs!" barked the fierce, metallic voice of Captain Metal as his robotical pirate crew began to bundle bound and gagged Mobians into small, tiny cages and carry them on board a metal ship that waited in the ocean for them "Tharr tide will not stay down fer long!"

"Aye, aye sir!" his robotic crew said in unison, acknowledging the captain's orders as any good pirate should do.

The world of Solbius was yet another dimension co-existing amongst millions upon millions of other dimensions in the ever expanding world of the multi-verse. Solbius was named after a mythical creature that exists *only* in this reality named "Solbius", the God of the Sun. A fitting name for the planet since the weather was rarely anything other than sunshine. Rainfall was considered a rare occurrence in this world and the weather would either be hot and sunny or moderately warm. Rarely did the weather ever turn cold on Solbius. Solbius wasn't a dry world though despite the amount of sunshine it had, quite the contrary. It was actually the wettest world in its Solar System. Solbius was 90% water and 10% land, most of the land being just small islands dotted around the vast oceans that managed to hold a reasonable amount of life on it. Some islands had invented floating cities and lived on the water in them. The biggest island on Solbius was Sol Island, the first island to house life on the planet. SolIsland had the most beautiful beaches you would ever lie on in this world and also housed the biggest civilization on land with a big town that had all the usual facilities you need. SolIsland was the size of the Earth country known as Scotland without England and Wales attached to it which explains how it's got so much on it. No other island matched its size. The smallest islands on Solbius were barely bigger than the Earth island of Tenerife. The closest island to matching Sol Island's size was an island that was the size of the Earth country known as Wales and (ironically enough) named "Whale Island" given the island's obsession with

whales. Sadly though, despite how wonderful and popular a place SolIsland is to live, it is a popular target amongst pirates. You see, the vast amount of oceans on Solbius made piracy very popular and many people turned to piracy just because of the many advantages provided on a world like this. With so much water and so little land, you're hard to get. But here's the sinister thing about the pirates on this world. They weren't just pirates…they were robot pirates. The pirates used to be just normal organic Mobians but then somebody had built a roboticizer and turned the pirates into robots. And that somebody was the pirate captain leading the current kidnapping operation.

His name was Captain Metal. He held a unique spot in the world of piracy because he wasn't a pirate turned into a robot pirate, he was a robot pirate from the start. Or more specifically, he was a robot who had been **made** into the appearance of a pirate and the striking thing was, he had a familiar appearance to him at the same time. Captain Metal had a round head with a huge silver eye patch over the left part of his black visor, leaving him with one singular glowing red eye that burned like fire in the pool of black on the right side of his face. His muzzle was designed to make him look like he had a skull mouth which was held there by bolts on his cheeks. He wore a black hat with an admiral-esque appearance to it and was trimmed with gold atop the fins on top of the hat. The hat had large screws sticking out of the sides, presumably to hold it there. His body had the appearance of wearing a coat with a belt wrapped around the waist with the sides black and gold and the chest and torso section coloured white with golden buttons and around his waist hung a long skirt-like section that just further enhanced the coat-like appearance of his torso. His shoulders were flat and golden and tipped with spikes, heavily resembling epaulettes. His left arm was a huge round golden drum with a large hand tipped with razor sharp claws that could shred an opponent instantly if he swiped them at you. His right arm looked like somebody had bolted a pistol to the upper section of his arm in place of the lower section and the pistol had a cutlass blade attached under it as a sort of bayonet. It was a serious looking weapon and packed a lot of firepower. His legs were designed to look like brown pirate boots and around his neck and shoulders draped a ragged blue cape that blew in the wind that trailed it out behind him. The way he was proportioned would

instantly make Sonic think of his old enemy, Metal Sonic, if he was to see him. You see, Captain Metal used to be a Metal Sonic but after running into pirates, they had altered his appearance to give him this pirate like appearance he now currently had. And he seemed to thrive in it.

Captain Metal had his own metallic ship known as "The Metal Marauder" which was waiting to be loaded in the sea. The Metal Marauder looked like a hi-tech galleon with a hull made entirely of metal and sails with patterns on them that made it look very hi-tech. There were a lot of sails on it so it could easily travel very fast when the wind packed up and if the sails failed, it had back-up supplies to still make the ship move. It carried a flag that was a skull with crossed spanners instead of crossed bones (they're robots, they don't have bones). It was loaded with weaponry too, the sides all full of cannons and some surprise weapons were concealed in various places on the ship. It was easily the most modern looking ship that was sailing the seas of Solbius. The moment the Metal Marauder showed up, you were dead meat for it meant Captain Metal and his robot pirates were coming to get you. Captain Metal had roboticized all the pirates that had made him who he was and now they serve him faithfully as if their very lives depend on it (which they do). Captain Metal longed to roboticize the whole of Solbius so he had broken the pirate radiation of hunting for treasure and instead, had been kidnapping as many people as he could possibly get his hands on. Or in his case, his hand since he only has one hand. Once he kidnapped people, he would take them to Pirate Island, an island that had once been desolate and devoid of ANY life at all until they discovered it and populated it. Once they arrived at Pirate Island, Captain Metal would roboticize the hapless victims and make them robot pirates. In his twisted vision, one captain can NEVER have too many crew members. One could say he'd never run out of crew-members given how many people he'd already roboticized. He'd been carrying this out for a whole year since he came into function and he showed no signs of stopping anytime soon. He and his crew were on Sol Beach, the most popular beach on Sol Island, and had instantly started kidnapping all the beach goers around. The poor Mobians had no choice but to comply as robot pirates grabbed them, tied them up and gagged them and then stuffed them into cages much to small for them to stand up in and then get taken

aboard the Metal Marauder. A female white cat in a pink bikini and swimming trunks knelt down before Captain Metal and started begging for mercy, hoping to get through to him and get him to stop his evil for good.

"Oh please sir, leave us alone!" whimpered the cat "We just want to enjoy the lovely weather and have fun! We don't want to be stuffed in cages and taken away! Please leave us alone!"

"If I had a heart, ye'd be breakin' it lassie." snorted Captain Metal, his singular red eye glowering at the cat as if offended by her presence "Now sit tight as we get ye aboard before I cut out yer heart and throw it into tharr ocean!"

The cat did as she was told and allowed a robot pirate to tie her hands tightly behind her back and a gag to be tied around her mouth. Captain Metal seized the cat by the strap of her bikini and shoved her into a cage. The door fell down with a clang, shutting her in and locking the moment it closed. The cat burst into tears as two robot pirates carried her onto the Metal Marauder. Captain Metal watched the whole operation go off without a hitch. He was pleased to see how well things were going. He loved a good kidnapping mission. The whole beach was being combed for Mobians and so far, they'd caged half the people on the beach and the other half were being tied up and prepared for loading. A robot pirate that had one hand and a claw on the other arm, a peg leg and a head that made him look like he had a metal beard and a head scarf limped towards Captain Metal. He had a cane in his hand and he had a sort of smile on his face with a tooth missing. He was red and bronze with some white around the thigh and pelvis section, which were designed to look like shorts. His name was Swash. He had an accomplice with him. He was a huge golden robot with a body shaped like a giant metal barrel and had a metal piece around his torso that resembled a giant belt. He had one hand like Swash did but his other arm had an enormous metal hook that looked deadly serious. If he swung that at somebody, he would do some damage. He wore a metal hat that of course, evoked the pirate design. His name was Buckle. He and Swash were Captain Metal's right hand men and were the first pirates he had roboticized when his tyranny began.

"Arrgh Cap'n, we be havin' a fine time so farrr." said Swash, his voice a heavy gravel voice with a very heavy pirate accent "Them pesky kids haven't shown up yet and nobody be tryin' ta resist us so farrr."

"Yeah, this might be one of our best operations yet." agreed Buckle, his voice a more dopey sounding voice that suggested he was pretty stupid. He wasn't as accented as Swash either.

"Mayhap indeed." purred Captain Metal ominously "We haven't had a raid this fine in tharr longest time. Guess Team Radical be elsewhere for tharr time being. I be hopin' so since I am not in tharr mood for dealin' with the brats at this moment."

"The feelin' be mutual Cap'n." nodded Swash in agreement "I be losin' track of how many times I have given ye scallywags a good zap with me cane!"

"Yeah, can't we just raid and plunder in peace for once?" moaned Buckle "It was all fine and dandy until the little buggers showed up!"

"Team Radical be of no concern now since they be not here rrrright now lads." barked Captain Metal "Get on with tharr capturing and caging of ye landlubbers!"

"Aye, aye sir!" cried both Swash and Buckle.

Disobeying the captain's orders was never an option for these two. They were so fanatically loyal to Captain Metal that no matter what he told them to do, they'd do it immediately. I wouldn't be too surprised if Captain Metal told them to cut their own heads off and they willingly obeyed his order. Swash and Buckle ran off to help carry another cage onto the Metal Marauder but before anything else could happen, a time rift ripped open in the sky, a tearing sound echoing through the island like an earthquake and the pirates all stopped dead in their tracks to look up at the time rift. Captain Metal knew all to well what it was for he had been brought to Solbius by a time rift when he was Metal Sonic. Had it come here to snatch him back to his Mobius? Captain Metal watched closely as the time rift loomed over the beach. But nothing was sucked up into it. Instead, two bodies fell out of the time rift and landed with a thump on the

sand like garbage being disposed of and then the time rift closed, leaving no hint of its existence at all. Captain Metal scratched his head in wonder. He'd not seen that happen before. Oh well, the time rift had just given him two more bodies to add to his Mobians to roboticize list. Captain Metal ran over to the two bodies and examined them. One was a silver hedgehog with an unusual quill style, knee high boots and gloves with a teal symbol on them. The other was a lavender cat in a purple coat and high heeled shoes. They were of course, Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, future dwellers from Mobius Prime's future and victims of the impending crisis that was threatening the multi-verse right now. Both of them were unconscious but alive, unfortunate for them for they were in Captain Metal's hands now. Swash and Buckle ran over to Captain Metal and examined the unconscious Silver and Blaze, wondering who they were and where they came from.

"Shiver me timbers Cap'n!" cried Swash "These landlubbers fell out of tharr sky!"

"Be they "air lubbers" instead?" chuckled Buckle.

"Nay lads, they be brought here by tharr same thing that brought me to this world." explained Captain Metal "Did ye see that light in ye sky and how they feel out of it? That's how I came to inhabit this world. Now it seems these two are here to inhabit it too. Well they be free to do so…as robot pirates. Bind and gag them and put them in a cage each!" he barked furiously "NOW!"

"Aye, aye sir!" cried Swash and Buckle, running off to get a cage each for Silver and Blaze.

Two more robot pirates, both of them with two hands that made them adequate for tying people up, ran over to Silver and Blaze with ropes and cloths in their hands. One robot grabbed Silver and tightly tied his hands behind his back. He then tied the cloth around Silver's mouth, gagging him and making speaking impossible should he wake up. He draped Silver over his shoulder and ran off towards Swash and Buckle as they came off the Metal Marauder with a cage each in their hands. Silver was stuffed into one instantly, remaining unconscious throughout the whole thing. The other robot pirate tied Blaze's hands behind her back and wrapped a cloth around her

mouth. If Blaze woke up, she'd just burn through them easily but once she was in a cage, there'd be no escape for her since the cages were heatproof, a little contingency for incase Captain Metal had come across a fire powered being. The robot pirate draped the tied up Blaze on his shoulder and carried her over to Buckle, who had a cage ready for her but before he could put Blaze in it, something twirled through the air and hit it in the head, making it drop Blaze onto the sand and rub its head in pain. Captain Metal turned to see who had attacked his crew mate. The attack had been a simple throwing of a nunchaku into the robot's head and Captain Metal recognized the attacker instantly. Four Mobians stood on the beach in battle ready stances, ready to lay the smack down on the insidious pirate leader. One was a racoon who had brown fur and black fur around his green eyes. He had black rings around his tail and he wore a green headband, a green open vest, yellow gloves a blue belt and green knee high boots with a white stripe on them. His face contorted with loathing, suggesting he didn't like the robot pirates at all. His name as Radical "Rad" the Raccoon. Beside him stood a smaller female racoon with orange fur, brown and beige fur around her blue eyes, brown rings around her tail and her hair was styled to look like boomerangs. She wore a green shirt that exposed her chest and arms, black shorts, green and orange shoes and yellow gloves. She was Rad's sister and her name was Marine. She was impetuous and capricious and spoke with a heavily exaggerated Australian accent. Standing on Rad's other side was a beautiful female polar bear who clearly looked like she was ready to hit the gym. She was slender-bodied and curvaceous and had fiery red hair with matching red eyes. Her fur was white and she wore a blue sports top that exposed her slim, flat belly, blue jogging trousers, red fingerless gloves and red shoes with rough soles that looked more like they were for walking in the snow in than sand. Her name was Crystal and she was Rad's girlfriend. She looked tough, maybe even as tough as Mandy Mouse. Standing beside Marine was a small green parrot with green feathers and blue tail feathers. He wore spectacles that looked comically large for his face and he had brown eyes. He wore a red bow tie, white gloves and yellow and white shoes. His name was Gadget and he looked like the brainy type of character. Somebody Tails the Fox could get on with just fine. Rad pointed sharply at Captain Metal.

"Captain Metal! You're trespassing on Sol Beach and kidnapping innocents! That's two strikes! Strike three, my nunchakus against your head!" yelled Rad.

"Fire on the poop deck! It be Team Radical!" growled Captain Metal furiously "Ye just had to come in and ruin everything didn't ye lad?! Well ye will be wishin' ye hadn't come here…Swash, Buckle! Join me in keepin' tharr brats busy! The rest of you, get the last of tharr prisoners onboard and get tharr ship ready to leave!"

"You're not getting away that easily Captain Scrap-Metal!" snarled Crystal, cracking her fists "You're going down and those poor people will be released from their cages!"

"Oy bruv, should we attack?" asked Marine "I'm itchin' to give the blighter a good royal thrashing I am!"

"Well itch no more." chuckled Rad "Team Radical, ATTACK!"

Crystal was the first to lunge at Captain Metal. She ran across the sand with the speed and grace of an Olympic Sprinter and she threw a terrific roundhouse punch that sent the captain's head spinning around in a mad craze as if somebody had decided to turn him into a spinning top for a moment. Captain Metal recovered and he uppercut Crystal in the face. Crystal felt like she'd been smacked by a baseball bat but the tough polar bear was used to pain. That was what all the gym training was for. She simply rubbed her face better as if the punch wasn't that big a deal and she aimed a powerful kick at Captain Metal's shoulder, hoping to at least break his arm off. Captain Metal's arm held firm and he swiped his cutlass at Crystal's belly, missing by centimetres as the polar bear jumped back to avoid it. Crystal clenched her fists and slammed them both down onto Captain Metal's head, making him crouch down as he was forced down by the attack. Captain Metal recovered and he backhanded Crystal onto the sand. He tried to stab her but Crystal rolled out of the way and leaped back onto her feet, ready for another round. As for Rad, Marine and Gadget, they didn't have much trouble with Swash and Buckle given they were relatively poor fighters. Buckle swung his hook hand at Rad, hoping to impale him through the head with it but Rad dodged and he whacked Buckle with his nunchakus. Buckle stumbled as if he was about to trip and Marine helped him

with that by getting down on all fours and waiting for Buckle to trip over her. Buckle cried out as the back of his legs brushed against Marine and he tumbled over her back onto the sand. Buckle picked himself up but Rad wrapped his nunchaku around his hook hand and tugged on it, pulling Buckle forward. He swung Buckle around and unwrapped the nunchaku, sending Buckle hurling into the ocean. Swash however snuck up on Rad and jabbed him in the back with his cane. The cane concealed a taser in the base and Rad was brutally electrocuted by the attack. He fell down onto his knees and Swash raised the cane, ready to bonk him on the head with it. Gadget flew up behind Swash and gripped the cane, yanking it out of Swash's hands and bonking him on the head with it as he swung it down onto Swash's head. Swash clawed furiously at Gadget but Gadget kept out of his reach with the cane in his hands. Then he aimed it at Swash's chest and jabbed him in it, electrocuting Swash and knocking him out. Gadget chuckled, pleased with himself for knocking Swash out. Buckle had dragged himself out of the ocean and he ran towards Rad, Marine and Gadget. Rad was quick to react, jumping up and dropkicking him in the face. Buckle however remained standing and he backhanded Rad onto the sand. Marine tried to help but Buckle grabbed her by the head and threw her at Gadget. The two came crashing down onto the sand in a heap. Buckle wasn't victorious for long though. Rad grabbed Swash's cane and electrocuted him with it, knocking him out too. Now Swash and Buckle were dealt with, the three ran over to help Crystal with Captain Metal. Crystal was kicked into Rad just as he got near to the captain and the two fell over onto the sand. Marine and Gadget charged towards Captain Metal but the fierce robot swung his cutlass at them, making them back off hastily. Captain Metal noticed that Swash and Buckle were knocked out and he decided now would be a good time to flee for it. Besides, he'd kept them busy for long enough. His crew had loaded the last of the prisoners onto the ship. He could get out of here and come back for more next time. Captain Metal turned around and bolted off towards the Metal Marauder, not realizing that nobody had remembered to pick Blaze up after she had been dropped earlier. The crew had been in such a hurry they had forgotten about her. Swash and Buckle came to after being knocked out and they ran after Captain Metal, sensing it was now retreat time. The three boarded the Metal Marauder and the ship deployed its sails, the wind blasting through them like invisible

hands pushing through the sails and the ship began to sail away. Team Radical were much too late to catch it and it was very windy, meaning the Metal Marauder was sailing away very quickly. Rad cursed violently as the Metal Marauder escaped their grasp.

"Damn it! Got away again!" he groaned "I'm gonna catch that stupid robot one day and I'm gonna make him pay for what he's done in the past year!"

"Calm down Raddy, getting mad isn't going to help anything." said Crystal softly, putting her hands on Rad's shoulders and lightly massaging him "We'll catch him one day. And we still can catch him you know. We just have to take the Ocean Tornado and sail after him."

"Good idea Crystal." said Rad "We'll get back home and load up my sister's ship and get sailing after that metal moron. Come on team, let's go!"

"Oy bruv! Hold on a minute ya hoppy little kangaroo!" cried Marine "The pirates forgot somebody! Look!"

She had noticed the tied up and gagged Blaze lying on her side on the sand, still unconscious after the time rift's effects. Rad put a hand to his cheek in alarm.

"Oh my gosh! There's a tied up cat lying there!" he cried "Poor thing, Captain Metal must have tried to kidnap her as well as everybody else on the beach. Least we saved one person. Marine, get her untied and take that gag off so she can breathe."

Marine obeyed and she untied Blaze's hands. She took the gag off and turned Blaze over onto her back to make her more comfortable. Rad, Crystal and Gadget stood around Blaze and they observed her. Marine listened to Blaze's chest. She could faintly hear Blaze's breathing and her heart softly beating.

"A heartbeat, she's still alive." she said "Thank bloomin' goodness."

Rad knelt down by Blaze's side and lightly touched her cheek.

"She's beautiful…" he mused "Who'd want to kidnap someone like

her?"

"Captain Metal of course." said Crystal "And judging from the cat's appearance, she seems very wealthy. She must come from a rich family. Bet those pirates would have been interested in her money."

"They're robots my dear Crystal, why ever would they be interested in financial materials such as money?" noted Gadget, his eloquent voice matching his intelligent nature "They only want to make people into robots, not raid anybody."

"They're robot PIRATES." noted Marine "They're still interested in treasure too. Last time we fought Captain Metal, we stopped him from raiding a mansion on Whale Island."

"Well whatever their reason for wanting this woman, they didn't succeed." said Rad "She's safe with us and we should get her out of here before the pirates come back for her."

"Let's take her on the Ocean Tornado with us." suggested Crystal "She can rest and recuperate while we're chasing down Captain Metal and maybe when she wakes up, she can tell us who she is and where she's from."

"I dunno love, I think it's a bit risky to bring somebody a pirate just tried to kidnap with us." said Rad doubtfully.

"Well we cannot just leave the poor woman here alone and isolated." said Gadget "We should bring her with us so we can help her get better and keep an eye on her."

"Come on bruv, let us bring that little Shelia with us! Pleeeeeeeease!" begged Marine "I'll take good care of her if ya want!"

Rad sighed.

"OK then, she's coming with us." said Rad "We'll get back home and load the Ocean Tornado and put the cat in the bedrooms in the cabin where she can rest. If she wakes up, we'll explain what's going on and what's happening."

"Sounds OK to me Raddy." said Crystal "Let's get going before Captain Metal gets back to Pirate Island."

With that aid, Rad and Crystal picked Blaze up by her arms and legs and they gently carried her off the beach and headed into town to where Rad and Marine lived. It was amazing Blaze was still sleeping despite everything that had happened. She'd wake up eventually though and Team Radical were hoping it'd be soon. They were keen to learn more about this stranger and where she had come from…

Later that day, Blaze finally woke up after being out for a long time. As she woke up, she moaned softly and her head started screaming in protest as a thudding pain streamed all around. She felt like her brain was going to explode. Blaze massaged her head, her eyes still closed and she winced tensely.

"Hrrum…ugh…it feels like my head's on fire…" she whispered to herself "Oh Silver…what happened…"

She stopped mumbling and she turned over onto her back. She had been lying on her side. Blaze stopped massaging her head as the pain eased away and she opened her eyes slowly. To her surprise, she could see a ceiling above her head. To her even bigger surprise, Blaze felt a duvet over her body. Her hands traced over the duvet and she realized she could feel a pillow behind her head and a mattress under her. All of them were very comfortable. Blaze sat up in an instant, forgetting that she had been feeling groggy and achy a moment ago and looked all around. She was lying in a bed and she could see she was in some kind of bedroom. The room looked quite cosy. There was a red rug on the floor and the walls were a nice, clam shade of green that added to the room's cosy atmosphere. There was a porthole, instantly telling Blaze she was on a ship and she could hear the sound of the sea outside as the ship cruised through the water. Where on Mobius was she? Who had brought her here and why? Had she been kidnapped? Was she being taken somewhere? Blaze had no idea and she wasn't too sure she wanted to find out. She tried to climb out of bed but her body wouldn't obey her. It was still tired and achy from the time rift throwing her down onto the beach. Blaze lay back and sighed.

"Great, I'm not fit to move." she muttered "So now I'm trapped here for a moment. I swear whoever's taken me on this ship better have a reason for kidnapping me or I'm gonna…"

Her thoughts were interrupted by the sound of a door handle turning and the door opened. Blaze sat up as Rad walked into the room and saw that she was awake. He looked surprised. Blaze stared at Rad. There was no way this boy could possibly be a kidnapper. He looked young and innocent, not the kidnapping kind at all. Maybe she wasn't a prisoner after all. Rad walked over to Blaze as if hoping to tend to her needs.

"Oh my, you're awake." he said "I'm so glad to see that, I was worried that you weren't going to wake up. You slept through the entire loading procedure and we've been sailing for twenty minutes already. Thank goodness you're alive."

"Um…thank you?" said Blaze cautiously "Little boy, who are you and where am I? Also, why have you brought me here?" she asked, her eyes cold and furious.

"Please don't look at me like that miss, I'm a good guy, honest." said Rad quickly "Me and my friends found you tied up and gagged on the beach and we brought you here so the robot pirates couldn't get you. We just wanted to help you get better that's all."

Blaze looked at Rad suspiciously but she relaxed her nerves. Looks like Rad wasn't a kidnapper after all, thank goodness. Blaze lay back a little, her back resting against the pillow and she clasped her hands together.

"I see, well thank you for your hospitality." said Blaze gratefully "It was very kind of you. So where am I?"

"You're on the Ocean Tornado miss." said Rad "It's a ship that belongs to my little sister Marine the Raccoon. She's currently up on deck steering the ship as we're sailing. I just came down here to check on you. Do you need anything at all? Any medicine or drinks or anything?"

"No thank you young man, I'm quite alright." said Blaze truthfully

since her body was beginning to ache less anyway "Even if that time rift did a number on me as it brought me here…speaking of here, please can you tell me what world this is?"

"Sure can." said Rad kindly "This is Solbius, the sunniest world in the Sol-Ar Dimension. It's a place where good weather is always around and bad weather is extremely rare. It's also quite wet too with only islands to live on but it's a good world to live on. Are you new here or something?"

"I am little boy." said Blaze "You see, I'm from Mobius. Mobius PRIME that is. I'm not from this world."

"Just like Captain Metal came from another world too…" mused Rad "So miss, what's your name and how did you get here?"

"My name is Blaze the Cat." introduced Blaze "And I was brought here by a time rift, a multi-coloured light that appears in the sky and sucks up or drops off people. They're apocalyptic though and Mobius Prime is close to ending due to how many time rifts it has had. We're hoping to prevent that from happening."

"That's terrible!" cried Rad "Oh Blaze, I hope you can save your world! And speaking of lights in the sky…something like that happened last year so does that mean Solbius is going to end too?" he asked, his green eyes wide with fear.

"Depends. How many time rifts has this world had?" asked Blaze.

Rad thought for a moment about the question he'd been given.

"Hmm…I don't know for sure…but the only recorded incident as far as I remember was last year when Captain Metal was brought to our world." he murmured "Yeah, I think we've only had one so far but given you was brought here by a time rift, I guess Solbius has only had two so far."

"Good, means Solbius will have much longer to live than Mobius Prime." muttered Blaze "You've been lucky so far. Onto another thing now, who's Captain Metal?" she asked, noting how Rad had been using the name a couple of times during their conversation.

"Captain Metal is our worst enemy and he's the scourge of Solbius." explained Rad gravely "He used to be a robot named "Metal Sonic" and he was brought here by a time rift, the first one we had. What world he came from I don't know. My friend Gadget's father took him in to fix him up and maybe use him in our ongoing crusade against the world of pirates. Metal Sonic came back…minus Gadget's father I'm afraid. He attacked Sol Island and me, Crystal, Marine and Gadget had to fight him off. We were brutally injured that day but we managed to get him to fly off. Big mistake for us since he ended up in the hands of some pirates. They liked the idea of a robot pirate so they scavenged a lot of metal and rebuilt Metal Sonic into a robot pirate which he calls himself "Captain Metal". Captain Metal then built a machine known as a "roboticizer". He says it's based on an invention his master from his world made. Who his master was before he came here is anyone's guess. Anyway, Captain Metal roboticized all the pirates of Solbius and made them his own crew. They all built a ship for themselves called "The Metal Marauder" and now they go around plundering and searching for treasures but their primary goal is kidnapping Mobians and roboticizing them to make more pirates for themselves. Captain Metal's been at it for a year now and already a quarter of the population has fallen victim to his insidious plans. There's only me, Crystal, Gadget and Marine to fight him and…we're just not enough. If we don't stop Captain Metal… then the whole world will be one big pirate crew."

Blaze could only stare incredulously at the young raccoon as he told the story to her.

"That…that's horrible!" she gasped "Oh Rad I'm so sorry to hear this! I'll help you stop this "Captain Metal" if you wish. Since I'm here now, I may as well help you stop him."

"You sure on that?" asked Rad unsurely "I mean, can you fight at all?"

"Rad, when we find Captain Metal, I'm going to show you why they call me "Blaze"." said Blaze with a wink "So, is this why we're on a ship? Are you and your friends sailing after Captain Metal?"

"We are." said Rad "He got away from us back on Sol Island and we're hoping to catch him. I hope we haven't lost him…"

"I hope so too." said Blaze "Given how he tried to kidnap me while I was unconscious. He's gonna pay for that!"

Blaze had remembered how Rad said he'd found her tied up and gagged and he said he'd brought her here so the robot pirates couldn't get her. That must mean Captain Metal and his crew had tried to kidnap her while she was unconscious. So if they tried to kidnap her then…Blaze suddenly realized something.

"Silver!" she cried out "Oh my gosh! Where is he?!"

"Pardon?" asked Rad.

"Silver's my boyfriend." explained Blaze "He's a silver hedgehog with yellow eyes and five quills above his eyes. Have you seen him?"

"No." said Rad, shaking his head "You were alone when we found you. Silver must have landed somewhere else or maybe the pirates got him. I dunno."

"Oh I hope he's alright." said Blaze worriedly "He's so insecure when he's alone…"

Her worries were interrupted by an Aussie accented voice barking over the intercom in the ceiling. It was Marine, calling to Rad from up on deck.

"Oy! Bruv! Get yer butt up on deck immediately! We found the barky that belongs to Captain Metal!" she said.

"Yes! We found him!" cheered Rad "Come on Blaze, let's get up on deck!"

"Gladly." said Blaze, keen to give Captain Metal a piece of her mind for being so evil and for trying to kidnap her earlier.

Rad and Blaze both left the bedroom and Blaze followed the young adventurer as he led her down a corridor and up a flight of stairs that took them to a steel door that opened up and allowed them to walk out onto the deck of the Ocean Tornado. The Ocean Tornado was a big vessel that was truly striking to anybody who saw it sailing on the seas. It had a large turquoise sail that spread over the top decks,

providing excellent shelter should it rain. It had an eagle-shaped decoration that proudly sat on the bow of the boat. It looked marvellous with its large pointed beak, long wings and colour patterns all around to make it look grand. The steering wheel for the ship sat on a platform that stood on a pole at the back of the ship. On either side of the vessel were large paddles that propelled the ship through the water as they spun. The colours were a mixture of light brown, blue, red, yellow and black and were arranged in patterns that made the Ocean Tornado truly striking to the eye. The ship's armament consisted of lots of cannons on the sides that were itching to fire at any enemy ship they came across. Blaze had to admit, this was one impressive looking ship. She looked around the decks and saw Rad run up to a polar bear and a parrot who were looking out to sea. The polar bear had a telescope and was looking through it. Blaze wondered if they were Rad's friends he'd mentioned earlier. As for Marine, she noticed that Blaze was awake and she climbed down from the steering platform to greet her eagerly. Blaze was startled by the sudden appearance of Marine as she started bouncing up and down with excitement.

"Hey Shelia, yer awake!" she cried out excitedly "Say, who are you and where do ya come from? Are ya rich? Are ya royalty? Come on, tell me! Oh, the name's Marine by the way and oi'm the captain of this here dingy we're sailing on right now! I call it the Ocean Tornado! Ripper innit?! I built it meself let me tell you! Well actually, Gadget built it and I oversaw development but the boat was my idea! Do ya like it? Is it awesome? Do you like sailing? You don't get sea sick do ya? If so, should I get you a bucket to spew in? Better not barf on the floor or oi'll 'ave ya! Sya, you met me bruv Rad the Raccoon yet? He's very cool, he's my role model, I look up to him. Ya met Crystal and Gadget yet? They're over there. Crystal's the polar bear and Gadget's the parrot. Me bruv loves Crystal. I hope they get married and have kids in the future. Wonder if I'll get married? As for Gadget, he's very smart and he's cute as far as birds go and…"

Blaze fought hard to keep herself from going mental over the sheer amount of dialogue coming from this overly verbose little girl. Rad should have warned her that Marine was like this. Blaze turned off from Marine's insane babbling and she shot a glance at Rad, who

was beside Crystal and about ready to talk to him.

"Hey Rad! Does your sister have an off button somewhere?! I'd like for her to shut up please!" she called over to him, Marine still warbling mindlessly in the background.

"Ah ignore her, Marine's just an excitable little cutie." said Rad casually "You'll get used to her."

He turned to Crystal who seemed to be watching quite intently through the telescope she had in her hands.

"So babe, what's going on?" asked Rad.

"Something weird handsome." said Crystal, not taking her eye out of the telescope "The Metal Marauder's not moving. It's just…sitting there. It's like Captain Metal WANTS us to come near."

"I strongly advise against a frontal assault." said Gadget "Captain Metal is clearly goading us into a very unsubtle trap that is so obvious even Marine would notice it."

"No Gadget, I don't think that's the case." said Crystal, peering closely through the telescope to see what she could make out "There's a weird teal glow on the ship and…it looks like robot pirates are getting thrown overboard."

"Did you say "teal glow"?" asked Blaze.

"I did." said Crystal, not looking to see who had spoken "Why?"

"That must be my boyfriend Silver." said Blaze, running up the bow and standing behind Crystal "Those robot pirates must have got him. Bring this ship closer to that metal ship in the distance so we can help him!"

Crystal only just realized that she had been hearing an unfamiliar voice and she turned around to see that Blaze was awake and standing behind her.

"Oh, you're awake." she laughed "Ha, ha, nice to see you awake miss."

"Thank you." said Blaze "Your friend Rad the Raccoon has briefed me in on everything and I'm going to help you destroy your enemy Captain Metal for good. Am I right to assume you're Rad's friends."

"That guess is completely accurate madam." said Gadget politely "My name's Gadget and this is Crystal. It's a pleasure to meet you."

"Thank you Gadget." said Blaze "I'm Blaze and when we reach Captain Metal's ship, I'll show you why they call me that."

"Sounds cool." said Crystal "Looks like we have another potential fighter with us. Well Blaze, I look forward to seeing what you can do."

Blaze smiled graciously. Team Radical were all so nice and friendly. Just her luck to end up in their hands. Pity Silver hadn't been so fortuitous. Seeing as the Metal Marauder was in sight, Marine ran back up to the steering platform and steered the Ocean Tornado as it cruised on towards the standing metal ship. It took them five minutes to reach it and another five to line up beside the insidious metal galleon. As they got aside the Metal Marauder, Blaze was happy to see that Silver was indeed on the ship and he was in the middle of a fight with Captain Metal and his crew. Of course, he was winning this fight. Team Radical watched as Silver grabbed some robot pirates with a psychokinetic hold and he tossed them like rag dolls across the deck. Captain Metal himself was hiding behind barrels of ammunition and just taking the occasional shot at Silver. It didn't work for Silver just caught the blast and threw it into a robot pirate. Swash and Buckle both ran towards Silver and Swash aimed his cane at him. Silver stopped him with his psychokinesis and he threw him into Buckle. To say Silver was ticked was an understatement. He was pretty much on a rampage on this ship.

"How dare you tie me up and put me in a cage you metal miscreants!" he screamed "You're all gonna pay for imprisoning me!"

Rad's jaw dropped as Silver froze a robot pirate with a wave of his hand then proceeded to throw it into the water.

"Is this your boyfriend then?" asked Rad "Silver the Hedgehog?"

"It is indeed." said Blaze happily "And it looks like he has this in the bag. I knew he would."

"You sure know how to pick a boy Blaze." said Crystal with admiration "He's really cool! Look at him! He's taking them down with a wave of his hands!"

"I never knew psychic powers were real…" mused Gadget "This is an amazing sight to behold."

"You bet it is!" cried Marine, jumping down from the steering platform and joining the others "That silver dude's right ripper he is! He's taking them down as if they're nothing!"

Blaze was pleased to hear that Team Radical were taking an instant liking to Silver. She was also pleased that Silver seemed to have this fight covered. No need for her to step in. But then Silver's luck ran out. Captain Metal had loaded his gun with trails of rope with heavy metal balls tied to each end and he fired the rope at Silver. The rope twisted around Silver's body, the balls helping with that and Silver found himself tightly trussed up all around his torso. The metal balls dragged him down onto the floor and he strained to get back up. He was about to use his psychokinesis to free himself but Swash jabbed him in the back and electrocuted him, making Silver cease what he was doing and gasp for breath. The shock had weakened him and when he was weak, he couldn't use his powers. He was trapped now. Captain Metal strode up to Silver and he pointed his bayonet at his head.

"Ye are a very troublesome landlubber matey!" growled Captain Metal "And for that, ye will not be granted the great honour of joining me crew! Instead, ye shall be sent to Davy Jones's locker!"

"Sorry, I don't speak "pirate-junk", you'll have to clarify what you mean." snorted Silver.

Captain Metal just sighed and he raised his arm, aiming the bayonet at Silver's neck. He would take his head off in one quick swish of his sword and Silver would be done for. Blaze reacted without even realizing it. She set herself on fire and she spiralled towards Captain Metal, landing a powerful blow squarely into his back and sending

him hurling into the side banister. Captain Metal nearly fell overboard. He picked himself up and his singular glowing red eye shrunk down into a tiny dot of surprise at what he saw. Blaze stood before him, fire emitting from her hands and her face contorted with rage. Silver looked up at Blaze, delighted to see her alive and well. He'd been hoping she was OK since he'd woken up on this ship.

"Don't…EVER…try to kill Silver!" she snarled.

"You! Ye were with tharr silver brat when ye both fell out of tharr light in the sky together and landed on Sol Beach!" declared Captain Metal "I had a nasty feeling I had forgotten something when we left! Well lassie, if ye have come here to challenge me then ye have made tharr biggest mistake of yer life. Mayhap I deliver ye to Davy Jones's locker?"

"You're the one who's going to be delivered to a grave Captain Scum-heap!" roared Blaze "I've been told ALL about your evil plans and I'm here to help Team Radical put a stop to it! You will not leave to kidnap another innocent today you metal monster!"

"Nay lassie, ye are the one who will never see the light of day again." purred Captain Metal coldly.

He raised his arm and he blasted Blaze directly in the torso. Blaze screamed in pain as the shot whisked her off her feet and slammed her against the side banister. Blaze clutched her stomach in pain and forced herself onto her feet, just in time to see Captain Metal charging towards her. Blaze rolled out of the way as the vicious robot swung his sword at her, striking the banister and tearing a great chunk off of it in the process. Blaze set her hands alight and she punched Captain Metal in the face. Captain Metal was surprised to feel so much power behind that punch. Even Crystal's punches didn't hurt that much. Captain Metal slugged Blaze in the gut with his fist and then slammed the pistol handle-shaped elbow of his right arm on the back of her head. Blaze was thrown flat onto the floor and she gripped her head in pain. Captain Metal tried to stab her with his sword but Blaze rolled onto her side and threw fire into his face. Captain Metal backed away from the fire, giving Blaze the chance to stand back up. She set her left foot alight and threw a roundhouse kick that could break jaws at Captain Metal's muzzle,

aiming for the bolt in hopes of breaking it off. The kick dented Captain Metal's cheek and sent his head spinning around. Blaze then jumped up and kicked Captain Metal across the deck. He crashed into the mast at the very front that proudly held up the many sails the ship had. Swash and Buckle decided to help their captain so they crept up behind Blaze. Blaze didn't notice them. She advanced on Captain Metal, her eyes burning and her hands alight. Buckle raised his right arm and aimed for Blaze's head. One hard knock and Blaze would be out cold. But the knock never came for Blaze heard Buckle coming and she spun around on her heel, throwing fire at him and propelling him through the air and crashing down directly on top of Swash. Blaze smirked. Nobody ever got the drop on her so easily. Captain Metal however ended up becoming one of the few that did. He aimed his cannon arm at Blaze's turned back and he fired at her. The shot struck Blaze and threw her across the deck. She landed by Swash and Buckle's sprawled bodies, her back stinging wildly with pain. Silver watched and prayed that Blaze was OK. Blaze staggered back onto her feet and summoned fire to her hands again. The furious fire cat stampeded towards Captain Metal and threw a punch at him. Captain Metal stood to the side and he raised his arm. He swung his sword at Blaze, the cat leaning back to dodge the attack, and the two circled each other for a moment. Blaze threw a punch at Captain Metal, that nearly took his head off. Then she pounced on Captain Metal but the former Metal Sonic model threw himself on his back and swung his legs up into Blaze's body, throwing her over himself and onto her face. The two picked themselves up and charged towards each other, their arms drawn back for a punch. They both threw their punches…and both of them landed a blow on each other. Blaze and Captain Metal staggered backwards and they both rubbed their faces from the punches.

"Very impressive me dear." said Captain Metal "Ye would make a fine pirate lassie for me crew ye would. Mayhap ye be secondary captain alongside me and be me Queen of the Seven Seas. Oh yes…ye'd make a fine second in command indeed."

"I will not be joining your disgusting crew!" retorted Blaze "You will burn and your crew will get their humanity back! You stole it from them, and I'm gonna give it back to them!"

The two leaped into the air and hurled towards one another. They both collided in mid-air and were brought tumbling down onto the ground, wrestling with each other until they both got back onto their feet and continued fighting.

As for Team Radical, they leaped onto the Metal Marauder and Rad and Crystal set to untying Silver. It was a fiddly job thanks to the ropes but they managed it in the end. Silver brushed the ropes off of himself and stood back up.

"Thanks guys." he said "So I guess you're this world's heroes?"

"We are." said Rad proudly "No time to explain now, we have to help Blaze defeat Captain Metal."

"Why, she seems fine on her own Raddy." said Crystal, watching as Blaze punched Captain Metal in the gut and made him double over.

"Maybe so but Metal's crew will jump into help him." noted Rad "You saw how Buckle attempted to bonk her on the head. We'll keep the rabble off her back while she defeats Captain Metal."

"In all honesty, I'd happily help Blaze defeat Metal myself." murmured Silver "Oh well, we'll keep Metal's crew from interfering. You ready guys?"

"Totally!" piped Marine.

Silver smiled and he braced himself as Swash and Buckle got up to their feet and any remaining robot pirates prepared to attack him and Team Radical. Silver froze them all with his psychokinesis and sent them hurling into the wall at the back of the ship. Swash and Buckle picked themselves up only for Team Radical to jump onto them and pound them onto the floor of the ship. Rad swung his nunchakus, Crystal threw punches, Gadget flew around to distract them and Marine helped as best as she could. Silver just made things harder for Swash and Buckle by stopping them from moving so the team could beat them up easier. The other pirates tried to help but Silver would also stop them dead in their tracks so Team Radical were free to let Swash and Buckle have it.

Blaze watched this, pleased to see there would be no interruptions from Metal's crew. She could solely focus on defeating Captain Metal. She leaped towards Captain Metal, her foot pointing at him like a javelin and she delivered a powerful fiery kick to the face. Captain Metal stumbled briefly before regaining himself. He backhanded Blaze across the face and threw her down onto her side. Blaze stood back up, jumped into the air and she dropkicked Metal straight on top of his head. The kick dented the fins of his metal hat. Captain Metal growled furiously and he kneed Blaze in the gut. Blaze gasped as she felt the wind in her get knocked out of her as if somebody had taken a sledgehammer to her stomach. She fell onto her knees and coughed, tightly gripping her stomach as she tried to regain her breath. Captain Metal kicked her and sent her rolling across the floor. Blaze grabbed a nearby barrel of ammunition and used it to pull herself back onto her feet. Then she kicked it at Captain Metal. The barrel hurled through the air as if it weighed nothing but Captain Metal just smacked it away before it could hit him. Blaze seized her chance and she lunged at Captain Metal like a leaping tiger. She grabbed the screws that stuck out of the sides of Captain Metal's hat. She then somersaulted directly over Captain Metal while holding onto the screws. She landed behind him, hoisted Captain Metal off of his feet by the screws and slammed him down onto the floor as hard as she could. This was why having something sticking out of the side of your head was never a good idea. Captain Metal picked himself up, furious as hell at Blaze for daring to grab the screws on his head like that. He aimed his gun arm at Blaze but Blaze cart-wheeled away from Captain Metal and summoned fire to her hands. She threw fire at Captain Metal but Captain Metal fired his cannon at the same time. Their attacks both struck each other but they were evenly matched. Blaze's fire and Captain Metal's laser couldn't overpower one another. Blaze sweated with effort, desperate to win this struggle. Captain Metal growled furiously, willing his laser to win the battle. But in the end, neither one won for the laser and fire attacks built up and up until they both imploded violently and blasted the two fighters off their feet. Blaze hit the floor hard whereas Captain Metal hit the floor hard but took the fall better than Blaze did. He picked himself up whereas Blaze was on her knees and straining to get up. He decided now would be a good time to get Blaze while she was still weak. He advanced on Blaze and aimed his gun arm at her head. Blaze gasped in alarm as she found

herself staring directly at Captain Metal's gun arm. She quickly grabbed it and aimed it up at the sky before he could fire. Then balancing on the ball of her left foot, Blaze threw an upwards kick that struck Captain Metal in the chin. It was a miracle Blaze didn't take his head off. Captain Metal stumbled precariously, nearly falling over. Blaze grabbed his hand and yanked him towards her just so she could punch him in the forehead. Captain Metal fell onto his back and Blaze grabbed him by the throat. She wasn't trying to strangle him, she was trying to yank his head off. Captain Metal however aimed his fist at the side of Blaze's head and he punched her clean off of himself. He stood back up and blasted at Blaze again. Blaze shielded herself with a spiral of fire she summoned and she threw the spiral at Captain Metal. Captain Metal blocked the blow and he raised his gun arm. He swung it at Blaze and slashed her across the face with the bayonet he had under his arm. Blaze screeched in anguish as a large, red slash spread across her face and began to sting like crazy. Blaze put her hand over it and winced tensely. She soon had something else to worry about for Captain Metal pointed the blade of his bayonet at Blaze's chest. Blaze cried out in fright and she pressed her back firmly against the wall. She was trapped and at the mercy of Captain Metal. She began to sweat nervously. Captain Metal narrowed his eye at her.

"Ye have fought very valiantly lassie but I'm afraid the end be comin' for you. Arrgh!" crowed Captain Metal "However, I be prepared to reward your bravery and skills with a chance of escaping death. If ye stand down and allow me to roboticize ye, then ye will have tharr great honour of ruling this crew alongside me. Me and you could be kind and queen of the seas together and nobody will dare stand up to us! What do ye say landlubber?"

"I'd rather DIE than be queen of the seas and ruling alongside YOU, you filthy, scandalous, evil creep!" snarled Blaze.

"That can be arranged!" roared Captain Metal, pressing harder on Blaze's chest "Ye shall be sent to Davy Jones's locker along with all other pirates who have perished in their time on tharr seas! Any last words before I finish ye off?"

Blaze just closed her eyes and turned her head away as if embracing death and allowing herself to welcome it. Shrugging,

Captain Metal drew his arm back and aimed straight at Blaze's heart with his blade. One swift strike and it would be over. But Blaze merely tricked Captain Metal until thinking she was accepting death. As Captain Metal prepared to stab her, Blaze lunged forward and throw tornadoes of fire at the insidious pirate captain, roaring fiercely at the top of her voice. Captain Metal wailed and groaned as flames swirled all around him. Blaze kept it up, hoping to eventually melt Captain Metal. But Captain Metal was made of strong stuff. It would take a while for him to melt and Blaze could sense it. So she thrust her hands forward and sent Captain Metal hurling towards Silver. Silver caught him with his psychokinesis and he threw him down onto the floor as hard as he could. Blaze ran towards Captain Metal and she stomped as hard as she could on his head. The stomp left a heavy dent on Captain Metal's face and his eye stopped glowing and went out. It seemed that he was dead at last. Silver prodded him with his foot. Captain Metal didn't move. Blaze kicked him onto his back. He still didn't move. Blaze smiled happily.

"I think I've finished him off." she said delightedly "Captain Metal is no more."

"YES!" cheered Rad "He's dead at last! Oh happy day! He can't terrorize us anymore!"

"Strewth!" blustered Marine "The blighter's been blighted! Blaze, you're amazing!"

"Oh Blaze, how can we ever repay you?" asked Crystal.

"No need." said Blaze brightly "I was just happy to help. This may not be my world…but all worlds deserve their freedom I say."

"I agree." said Silver, putting his arms around Blaze's waist "And by the way Blaze, it's so good to see you're alright."

"Thanks Silver, it's good to have you back." said Blaze softly, putting her arms around Silver's shoulders "I was so worried for you when I realized you weren't with me."

"I worried about you too." said Silver "Well we're back together and now we can tackle the time rifts together. I hope the others are OK

though…"

"I'm sure Sonic and his friends are fine." said Blaze "They've survived worse before. So then, what now?" she wondered aloud.

"We'll free the captive Mobians and get Metal's crew on the Ocean Tornado." Rad decided "And once that's done, we'll pull away and sink this ship. It can take Captain Metal to his grave."

"That is a great idea." said Blaze brightly "Let's get started."

It took a long time but at long last, Silver, Blaze and Team Radical had rescued all the beach-goers that Captain Metal had kidnapped earlier and helped get them on the Ocean Tornado. Captain Metal's crew were all disabled by Silver and they were taken onto the Ocean Tornado so that they could be taken home and be de-roboticized. Gadget had been working on one for a while and he was eager to test it out. Now the Ocean Tornado was loaded, it pulled away from the Metal Marauder. Marine steered it to the starboard side and widely circled around so that it was a fair distance away from the Metal Marauder. Now it could fire at the ship without the force of its fire damaging the Ocean Tornado as well. Rad, Crystal and Gadget loaded the cannons and they fired them at the Metal Marauder. The cannons struck the ship and blew giant holes in it. The Metal Marauder began to take on water and it titled to one side. It was sinking and in a matter of minutes, it would be completely underwater. Pleased to see it sink, Marine steered the Ocean Tornado around and headed off back to shore. She was bursting with joy over today's turnout. Captain Metal was dead and his piracy was over. How happy everybody would be to hear this when the news was delivered. However, as the Metal Marauder began to submerge, Captain Metal's red eye suddenly lit up again and his body twitched as if coming back alive…

A while later, the Ocean Tornado arrived back at Sol Island and upon reaching land, the beach-goers instantly darted back onto the sand, happy to be back on it so they could continue enjoying

themselves as they had been doing before Captain Metal arrived to ruin everything. Silver, Blaze and Team Radical were the last to disembark from the ship. They all strode onto the sandy beach before them, pleased to see so many happy faces and pleased that the day had been saved again. Rad and Crystal put their arms around each other.

"Oh Raddy, we've done it at last." sighed Crystal "I thought I'd never see the day when Captain Metal finally fell to us."

"I didn't think so to either beautiful." said Rad, stroking Crystal's cheek "Although it was thanks to Silver and Blaze we won that battle."

"Uh, I only kept the crew at bay." said Silver sheepishly "Blaze is the real hero of the day, she stopped Captain Metal not me."

"But keeping the crew away from her gravely contributed to the success of our crusade." noted Gadget "If you didn't help us keep the crew away, Blaze may have been overpowered and defeated and then we would all be awaiting roboticization so you are deserving of praise too my friend."

"Strewth, I think so too." said Marine "Yer both heroes just like we are!"

"I guess you're right." said Silver casually "And it was definitely our pleasure to help out."

"Indeed." said Blaze "And also…I must thank you four for stopping Captain Metal from kidnapping me while I was unconscious and helping to reunite me with Silver."

"Shucks, you're welcome Blaze." said Rad cheerfully "We're Team Radical, we're radical heroes and we give villains a radical beat down! And you certainly gave Metal a radical beat down and finished him off. You have no idea how grateful we are for that."

"The pleasure's all mine." said Blaze with a warm smile "So, have you got a de-roboticizer for the robot pirates at all? You told me they were roboticized Mobians."

"They are indeed." said Gadget "Which is why I've been building a de-roboticizer to rid the pirates of their metal cages. I just pray that it works…"

"Only one way to find out mate." said Marine with a wink "Let's test yer little de-roboticizer do-hickey shall we?"

"Don't see why not." said Gadget "Let's test it."

But before anything else could happen, a sudden white portal opened up out of nowhere, startling everybody and making them leap backwards in alarm.

"STREWTH!" squealed Marine, jumping into Rad's arms like a frightened kitten.

Silver and Blaze stared at the portal, taken aback by its appearance and wondering what it was. Rad and Crystal were nervous whereas Gadget seemed interested in it given his love for science and all.

"Is that…a time rift?" asked Rad nervously.

"I don't think so." said Silver "This one isn't up in the sky. And it's white. Time rifts are multi-coloured."

"Is this…a portal back home?" mused Blaze "If so, we should check it out. I hope it'll take us back home."

"With any luck, it might lead us to the cause of the time rifts." suggested Silver "You ready to go through it Blaze?" he asked, holding her hand.

"With you Silver, I'm always ready." said Blaze.

"Hey, can we come with you?" asked Rad "I'd like to help stop these time-rift things too."

"But Rad, the robot pirates need de-roboticizing." noted Crystal "We can't just leave without de-roboticizing them first."

"Silver disabled them, they aren't going anywhere." said Gadget "We can leave them for a while and test it when we get back."

"OK then." said Crystal "Let's go. I for one am curious on what the hell a "time rift" is."

"We'll explain everything when we get through it Crystal." said Blaze "Come on, let's go."

Silver, Blaze and Team Radical all walked straight through the white portal and the portal vanished the moment they stepped through it. It would certainly take them to the cause of the time rifts and it would surprise them on what the cause was…

Well that was one radical adventure wasn't it?! And I have to say this: BLAZE ROCKS!

Oh and pay attention to Captain Metal's final scene. That means something, he's not dead yet. He'll be back...

So how was this episode? Hope you all enjoyed it. :D

BIG MEGA thank you goes to mastergamer20 of DeviantArt fame for letting me use Rad the Raccoon, Crystal the Polar Bear and Gadget the Parrot in this story. :D

Join me next time for Shadow and Rouge take the spotlight and have an Intergalactic Chase Down...

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 5

Story 170: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 5: Intergalactic Chase Down

Prologue: Twenty minutes ago…

Completely unaware of the oncoming crisis that would effect not just Mobius Prime, but the entire multi verse as a whole, Shadow the Hedgehog was standing on a cliff and overlooking the ever expanding sea of blue that lapped at the foot of the cliff as if hoping to one day scale the cliff and sweep over the land above. Shadow hadn't been doing much since the whole ordeal with Dr. Finitevus back a few weeks ago. He'd been travelling the world like a vagabond and seeing what there was he could do and if any lives needed saving at all. Everything had been pretty peaceful. Dr. Eggman hadn't attacked recently, Dr. Finitevus hadn't shown his face since his defeat last time and no other villain on Mobius was around to cause trouble. Shadow was having it easy which was more than can be said for Sonic the Hedgehog and friends. Shadow closed his eyes and inhaled softly through his nose, enjoying the peace of his surroundings and feeling content and at harmony with the world. The breeze blew gently through his fur and the lapping waves crashed softly against the cliffs. In more furious weather, they'd be much louder. This was a good place to stand and relax if you're in that kind of mood and Shadow certainly had to agree on that. Shadow had no worries, no anxieties at this moment, just complete relaxation and peace and the world of his own thoughts to explore. He opened his eyes again.

"This world is so beautiful." he murmured under his breath "No wonder I chose to defend it. And to think those abhorrent Black Arms wanted me to destroy it…"

He quickly forced the grisly image of Black Doom and his insidious offspring out of his mind. No way would they spoil his peace.

"As much as I enjoy fighting, I will have to say that it feels good to

relax for a change." he mused again "Especially with a scene like this. Even somebody like me can appreciate a good view."

His eyes swept over the beautiful scenery that he was observing. Mobius truly was beautiful. Made Shadow feel very glad that he had ever been sent to it, even if it had been because Black Doom feared losing him to his enemies. Nevertheless, Shadow was still pleased to have landed on Mobius and the more time he spent on there, the more he grew to love it and be proud to call it home. As Shadow drank in the beauty, somebody flew down from the skies and landed behind him, quite softly so that it wouldn't stir him so suddenly. Yet despite the noise of the wind and the soft landing of the person, Shadow still managed to hear the landing and without turning around, he guessed who it was.

"Can't leave me alone for one minute can ya Rouge?" he snickered teasingly.

He was right too. Rouge the Bat had landed behind him and was now approaching him. She had a secret crush on Shadow and really liked him so she would often look for him and see how he was in between looking for treasures. Rouge smiled coyly at Shadow's joke.

"I can hardly help it Shadow." purred Rouge "One might say that in one way, I'm attracted to you. So how's it going dark boy?"

Shadow turned to face Rouge. Even though he wasn't one to have romantic feelings for anybody, he had to admit that Rouge was beautiful and her presence was always welcome as far as he was concerned. He liked Rouge, especially since she had been the one to wake him up from the capsule and also had once tried to turn him away from Eggman. Also when he had been caught by Dr. Finitevus, she had bravely encountered the mad doctor to try and save him. It was a mystery to Shadow why Rouge seemed so fond of him but he appreciated it. Rouge just made him all the more welcome on Mobius. Shadow smiled at Rouge.

"It's going well Rouge." he said "Nothing much has gone on so I'm just here to enjoy the peace and quiet up on this cliff. You have to admit, the view's quite stunning up here."

"It's a lovely view indeed." said Rouge "Even somebody like me could sit down and enjoy it for a moment."

"You're welcome to join me if you want." said Shadow kindly.

"Why Shadow, I don't know what to say." purred Rouge jokingly "Thank you."

Shadow just smirked a little.

"It's nice to see you all better after what Finitevus did to you." he said "Did it take you long to recover?"

"I was sitting around for quite a while but it didn't take too long." said Rouge "I'm glad it didn't too, I hate sitting around doing nothing, especially when I've got jewels to find. Those treasures won't find themselves if I'm not looking for them."

"You seem to enjoy treasure hunting don't you?" said Shadow.

"I grew up in a jewellery shop so that's where my love for jewels and gems come from." said Rouge "And I love looking for new treasures to find. I've come across some pretty amazing things in my life time believe me."

"I can imagine." said Shadow "Although in my opinion, there's one treasure that's greater than anything in the world and you don't have to hunt for it. And that is life."

"Life's one big treasure. My late dad used to say that." said Rouge "And he's too right on that. Nothing in the world's more valuable than life itself."

"Agreed." said Shadow, watching another wave lap up at the shore of the cliff "Pity people like Dr. Eggman like to waste it away with their evil ways. Such a sad waste of life…"

"Tell me about it." agreed Rouge "There's much better ways of living then through evil, fear and hatred. Well, guess we'll just have to accept that some people don't value life as much as we do."

Shadow nodded. It mystified him as to how anybody could enjoy

being evil. Despite being created to be a villain himself he got to see the world through positive eyes and began to feel that evil had no necessity in life. And he would do whatever it took to make sure evil would never plague the world again. But Shadow would soon have a different task in mind. Completely out of the blue, a loud tearing sound boomed across the cliff tops and Shadow and Rouge leapt back in case the cliff suddenly collapsed. They looked up at the sky, the tearing noise getting louder as they looked up. Their eyes widened as a huge time rift yawned open above the cliff tops. It was like some kind of eye opening up and staring down at them ominously. The time rift spanned the entire width of the cliff tops and it swirled with colours. Anyone who got epileptic seizures from bright lights would instantly get one looking at the time rift given how fast the colours swirled and how aluminous they were. Shadow and Rouge stepped back. They hadn't seen a time rift yet but Shadow managed to guess what it was since he had had to travel to Mobius Nega to get Sonic back after a time rift had brought him there.

"It's a streak of light!" cried Shadow "I remember how Tails told me one of those took Sonic to another world and I had to find him with Chaos Control!"

"That thing's bad right?" asked Rouge nervously.

"It'll suck us up into another world if we don't get away from it." said Shadow "Let's move now!"

Rouge was all too happy to obey that order. She flapped her wings and took to the air. Big mistake though. When you're in the air, it is far easier for something to pull you back than when you're on the ground. Rouge felt herself being pulled towards the time rift. She flapped her wings furiously and tried as desperately as she could to get away from the time rift. But her efforts were futile. She was pulled towards the time rift, completely helpless and powerless to get away from it. Shadow jumped up and grabbed Rouge by the ankle. He dug his heels into the ground and pulled as hard as he could, desperate not to lose her to the time rift. But Shadow's efforts were as futile as Rouge's. It was like fighting with a giant vacuum cleaner. Dust will always lose to the vacuum cleaner and that's what it was like for Shadow and Rouge. The two were pulled up into the air by the time rift, screaming in terror as they were sucked up into

the pool of colour that awaited them up above. The time rift swallowed them up and closed the moment they entered. Then it disappeared but it wasn't long until it showed up again. This was Judgement Day for Mobius Prime and once Mobius Prime fell…the entire multi-verse would fall with it…

Present Time…

Shadow and Rouge came to twenty minutes later after being sucked into the time rift. After being sucked up by the time rift, they had been dumped onto a random dimension and they had just been lying there unconscious for twenty minutes. Rouge lay beside Shadow on her back while Shadow lay on his front, his head near the bat's feet. One would think they were a random couple who had just collapsed onto the pavement after frolicking about too much due to ingesting too much alcohol. The only thing defeating that image was the fact there were no bottles lying beside them. Shadow pushed himself onto his knees and he rubbed his head better. Due to being the ultimate life form, the time rift didn't knock him out for as long as it did the other. He recovered much quicker than the average Mobian did. As he rubbed himself better, he shook Rouge lightly helped her to wake up. Rouge sat up, stretching as much as she possibly could and she eased the pain in her head by massaging her temples. She still had her eyes closed for the moment so she didn't see anything around.

"Ugh…feels like I flew into a lamppost." murmured Rouge "But we definitely didn't do that, I remember that for sure."

"Indeed." said Shadow "We got sucked up by a light in the sky. I wonder if Sonic felt like how we felt when he got sucked up into the light?"

"I wonder if Sonic himself has been sucked up by another light or something." said Rouge, opening her eyes and looking at Shadow "Somehow, I doubt we were the only ones who've been sucked up by that thing."

"I can see why." murmured Shadow "When something happens to

us, Sonic seems to get involved too." he thought as memories of Finitevus and the Egg Train came back to him.

"So I wouldn't be too surprised if that was the case here." said Rouge coyly "So Shadow, where do you think we…are?"

She trailed off a bit as she turned her eyes away from Shadow and let them observe her surroundings. Shadow turned his attention to what was around to and despite what he could see right now, he wasn't quite sure he believed his own eyes. He and Rouge were on a platform that seemed to have a chunk of road on it and there was a street light that sat on one corner of the road. It was blinking a florescent blue colour, the kind of blue a police siren would have. There didn't seem to be anything else around for miles, just endless blue sky. It was a pretty featureless world and Shadow and Rouge weren't too pleased to be on such a vapid looking world. They knew one thing though, this was not Mobius Prime at least. They were definitely on a different looking world. Shadow folded his arms and sighed.

"What do they call this place? World of Nothing?" he snorted.

"Couldn't we have ended up somewhere a bit more…adventurous?" muttered Rouge "Why did we have to end up here?"

"Guess the light in the sky just picked a world at random and chose here." murmured Shadow "If I had a Chaos Emerald on me, I'd just warp back home. As is, we're stuck here for the time being so we'd best work out what to do."

"I sure hope there's something that'll come by, I mean we're stuck on a platform and there's nowhere to go." said Rouge "We're in the middle of nowhere! We're gonna starve out here!"

"Did you forget that you can fly?" said Shadow with a sneer on his face.

"Oh yeah, that's a brilliant idea." sniffed Rouge "Where am I gonna fly too? There's nothing here! And what if I tire our before we find any land? We're gonna fall and it likely will be an endless plummet!"

"You're right." thought Shadow "And my teleportation range is limited. I don't know this world so I can't warp anywhere I don't know and I can only warp so far. We're stuck here it seems. I guess we'll just have to hope a light in the sky appears and brings us outta here."

"I hope so." said Rogue, scowling furiously "I'm not willing to die of boredom here after all I've been through in my life…"

However just as things began to look glum for Shadow and Rouge, they could hear the sound of humming coming from their right hand side. They both turned around and squinted at the distance as the humming sound seemed to grow louder and louder. There was something in the distance and it was coming towards the platform. Shadow could make out a faint torpedo shape that had a torpedo shaped engine on each side and they were blazing away as they effortlessly pushed the shape through the endless sky. It was some kind of ship and not a ship that Shadow and Rouge had ever seen before. It was coloured a fiery red and the engines were trimmed with orange underneath. It had mauve coloured windows that stood out brilliantly from the red colours of the ship. The ship pulled up beside the platform, performing a neat, flawless turn as it drew level with the platform and the roaring engines quickly died down into silence. The docking ramp of the ship lowered and it touched the edge of the platform. Out of the ship climbed its pilot. Shadow and Rouge stared at the pilot in wonder as he stepped out of the ship and onto the platform. He was one formidable looking creature. He wore a golden helmet with four spikes on the back, two pointing up and two pointing down. There was red trimmed around the edges of the helmet and above the eyes rested a gold piece that protruded from the brow section of the helmet. He had a gold chest plate that was solid and gleaming and the chest plate was accompanied by shoulder pads with spikes protruding from underneath, heavily resembling epaulettes. He wore a grey shirt with a black patch covering the chest and stomach area. He wore a golden belt that contained small pods that likely weren't just there for decoration. The buckle of the belt was round and gleaming. He wore grey trousers and knee high boots that were also gold in colour and had gold plating on the top of the foot section. From behind his shoulders draped a crimson cape that flowed gracefully behind him. The most

disturbing feature about this creature to Shadow and Rouge was his face. His face looked exactly like a long gone enemy of Mobius's, Marik the Martian. He had the same red skin and the same flaming orange eyes but he couldn't possibly be Marik. He was much taller than Marik and somehow, his face didn't carry the same amount of evil Marik's did. He just looked more like a grumpy cop than anything. This was an alternate version of Marik the Martian and he didn't look too pleased with Shadow and Rouge's presence on the platform. Shadow and Rouge stood their ground, ready for what might happen should this creature strike.

"Alright, let's hear the excuse, what the heck are you two trespassers doing here?" snarled the Martian.

"Trespassers?" asked Shadow curiously.

"This young man is the Inter-Dimensional Lockdown Zone and ONLY occupants of this zone are allowed to roam freely here!" barked the Martian "I am Warden Marvo the Martian, warden of the Inter-Dimensional Lockdown Prison and you two scrubs are under arrest for trespassing in this forbidden zone!"

"Wait, you can't do that! We didn't mean to come here! Honest!" cried Rouge.

"That's what they all say." said Marvo with an irritated sigh "You trespassers always have an excuse. You two are coming with me and you will spend a very long time in prison for your trespassing!"

"Look Marvo, we came here by accident!" shouted Shadow furiously "We were brought here by a streak of colourful light that appeared in the sky! It ripped open above our heads and sucked us up. Next thing we know, we wake up here! Please believe us!"

Marvo seemed to consider this story for a moment. He curled his finger around his upper lip and thought about this. He'd heard this before and to hear it again just sent wheels in his head turning.

"Funny, I've had two other trespassers gave me the same crazy story." he murmured "I just locked them up in prison a moment ago."

"Who are they?" asked Rouge.

"As if I'm telling you that!" snapped Marvo "I bet you two are here to break them out! Well it isn't going to work! I do not buy your story for a minute and if you think you can free the two trespassers who I locked away a moment ago then you have another thing coming!"

"I'm telling you, it's the truth!" yelled Shadow furiously "A light in the sky brought us here and we just want to get out of this zone and back to our Mobius! We're not here for any reason at all!"

"Oh and I suppose when you get back home, you'll bring more people to trespass in this place and take over the Inter-Dimensional Lockdown Zone? I don't think so!" snarled Marvo "You two are going nowhere except a dingy cell in the Lockdown Prison! Now come quietly or I WILL use force on you both!"

"So you're just going to arrest us for accidentally being brought here?" exclaimed Rouge "Puh, some cop you are. Shouldn't you at least let the accused prove their innocence first?

"I'm not soft like all the other cops in the multi-verse are!" growled Marvo "I know a guilty person when I see one and if you're guilty, you're mine!"

"I don't think so!" shouted Shadow, throwing a terrific uppercut to the warden's chin.

Marvo's head snapped backwards violently and he fell against the nearby engine of his parked ship. He rubbed his chin, amazed at how much power Shadow had in him. He clearly wasn't any normal person he'd encountered before. He must be very powerful and in the warden's eyes, great power had to be detained quickly. Shadow jumped over Marvo and onto his ship. Marvo scowled at him. The blighter was going to pinch his ship! How dare he! No way would somebody as feared and respected as him let Shadow get away with it! Shadow was about to board the ship until Marvo ran onto the docking ramp and slugged him in the back, earning a grunt of pain from the black hedgehog. He then elbowed Shadow on the head and knocked him down onto his knees. Rouge ran in, hoping to help Shadow but Marvo grabbed Rouge by the face and threw her into

Shadow. The two sprawled across the floor of the ship and the warden took off a pod from his belt. He threw it into the ship and closed the docking ramp, trapping them inside the ship as the pod hit the flew and exploded like a water balloon. Instead of water though, it threw clouds of sleeping gas all over the ship and Shadow and Rouge coughed as the gas seeped through their mouths and into their lungs. The two tried to fight off the gas but this gas was very powerful, taking effect almost immediately. Shadow and Rouge felt light-headed and then their muscles seemed to just not want to function despite their brains ordering them to move. The gas swept over their bodies and eventually, they succumbed to the effects, collapsing onto the floor and passing out. Marvo opened up the docking ramp to see if the gas had taken effect yet. He was pleased to see Shadow and Rouge knocked out on the floor. He stood by for the moment, letting the gas drift out of the ship and into the atmosphere so it wouldn't take effect on him too. The gas cleared away and the warden boarded his ship. He picked up Shadow and Rouge's bodies and he sat them down on a chair each. A metal bar swung shut over them like a bar on a rollercoaster swinging down over your lap to keep you in. The bar had shackles on them for their hands to which the warden fastened them in. Shadow and Rouge were going nowhere even when they eventually woke up. Smirking, he entered the cockpit of his ship and sat down at the controls.

"OK, this patrol is over and I may return to my beautiful prison." he said to himself "Wasn't expecting some more Prime Zoners to lock up but here I am about to return home with two more. I hope they don't cause too much trouble while they're there…"

He started up his ship and he flew off away from the platform. He was heading off home back to Lockdown Prison and he could hardly wait to get Shadow and Rouge acquainted with all the other inmates. He enjoyed his job and arresting trespassers like these were what he loved the most…

No sooner had the warden arrested Shadow and Rouge, the two had been taken to the Inter-Dimensional Lockdown Zone prison. The prison itself was a huge facility, spanning the length of three tennis courts and matching the height of a five-storey building. It

could easily house a lot of prisoners and that was exactly the point of the Lockdown Prison, to house many people since the multi-verse had many a criminal that liked to trespass in the zone for whatever reason they wanted to. As Shadow and Rouge were escorted to their cell they couldn't help but notice the sheer amount of prisoners that were locked up in the zone. There rows of cells all containing up to five or six inmates and they all ranged in height, size and appearance. They all came from different zones from all over the multi-verse, all of them related to Mobius in somewhere so in turn, the inmates were all Mobian. There must be at least over a thousand inmates all crammed up in this enormous prison. There may even be more than that given how some maybe out on the exercise yard at this moment. Shadow and Rouge were helpless to fight off their escort, who was a Martian in a futuristic police uniform. Their hands were bound behind their backs by lasers cuffs that wrapped tightly around their wrists. Shadow and Rouge knew they couldn't break out of them, laser cuffs were impossible to break. Any attempt at doing so just made the lasers stretch as far as they would allow and that was it. They also had a control collar each around their necks, inhibiting their abilities and making them weaker. The Inter-Dimensional Lockdown Zone had been inspired by the Prime Zone to invent this device and it did considerably good work for the policemen who worked in the zone. Control collars made keeping the inmates under control a lot easier and even subduing them was no problem thanks to the collars. Shadow felt only contempt for Marvo as the guard led him and Rouge to their cell. The collar made him feel weak and powerless for he couldn't spin-dash or use any of his Chaos Powers. He couldn't even warp away like he could. Rouge wasn't losing as much considering she had no special powers but the control collar inhibited her flying abilities and would make her slower and weaker a little. She'd still be able to fight, but not as well as usual. The guard reached the end of the corridor and he opened up a cell door on his left. This was to be Shadow and Rouge's new home from now on. He undid their laser cuffs and he shoved Shadow and Rouge into the cell. The door slid down form the ceiling and closed shut behind them, sealing them inside the dingy cell and trapping them. The door was made of diamond glass, making breaking out impossible, even if Shadow didn't have a control collar on. Chaos Blasting the door open wasn't an option for Shadow would grievously injure, maybe even kill Rouge in the

process so if he got the collar off, he wouldn't try using Chaos Blast to break through the door. As the guard left, Shadow and Rouge both slumped against the wall and sighed loudly.

"Well this is a fine mess we've gotten into isn't it?" moaned Rouge.

"I feel insulted." growled Shadow, tugging on the collar as if hoping to break it off "I beat Black Doom and his hideous Black Arms army, I helped Sonic and Scourge take down Perfect Chaos and I even teamed up with Sonic, Silver and Blaze to defeat Tyrahko and yet I get subdued pathetically easily and locked up in some cell in a prison in a zone I don't even live on! Can it possibly be any more humiliating?!"

"The feeling is mutual Shadow the Hedgehog." purred a deep, sinister voice that made Shadow and Rouge jump into the air as if needles had come out of the ground and jabbed them in the bottom.

Shadow and Rouge had been so busy complaining about their current predicament that they failed to realize that they had cellmates. They both looked ahead of themselves and saw that there were two more people in this cell. And they couldn't possibly have imagined that their cellmates were none other than Dr. Eggman and Dr. Finitevus! The two evil doctors had been captured and locked up too although their first intention upon arriving here was to break out and they had been plotting their escape until Shadow and Rouge got thrown into the cell too. Finitevus had a control collar on him and his arms and legs were absent of any warp rings. They had presumably been taken off of him to stop him escaping. Eggman, being inside of Omega, couldn't have a control collar fitted on him so instead, the cops just disabled his Omega life support suit. The only thing the suit could do now was keep him alive. He couldn't move, he couldn't use his weapons, nothing. Just sit there and do nothing like a bored little kid. Finitevus folded his arms and he smirked at the hedgehog and bat, earning glowers of contempt in return from them.

"Greetings you two." sneered Finitevus "What a pleasure it is to meet you again."

"You!" snarled Shadow "Boy am I glad to see you here! I owe you a

broken neck for what you did last time!"

"And I owe you a beating in return for the one you have me!" growled Rouge.

The bat then noticed Dr. Eggman sitting behind Finitevus but given she had yet to witness Eggman in his current state, she had no idea it was him and immediately assumed it was Omega, back from the dead and ready for revenge after it had been destroyed by Mandy Mouse last year.

"You got Omega back online?" she gasped "How on Mobius did you do that? I bet Eggman isn't going to be pleased that you stole his tech and built it for yourself."

"Finitevus didn't steal Omega." said Dr. Eggman "I AM Omega. What you see before you is what has become of me! After those pesky Royal Fighters crashed my ship, I ended up on the brink of death! Katherine, my lovely little servant bot, rebuilt Omega and adjusted him to work as a life support machine for me so now I am forced to live inside this robot of mass destruction. Not that I care since I'm much stronger than ever before!"

Shadow and Rouge were dumbfounded. Their jaws dropped so far it was a miracle they hadn't come off of their hinges.

"Y-y-you're…on…life support?" gasped Rouge "Whatever did Sonic and friends do to you?"

"He said they crashed his ship." said Shadow "I remember that, I was there when it happened. Tails tricked his Krudzu Hybrid Hydra thingy into cutting the power to the ship and it ended up crashing. I thought that was the end of Eggman that day…but then the Royal Fighters tell me he's still alive. They didn't tell me he had become like this though…" he said, gesturing towards Eggman's life support suit.

"I bet it's surprising to you both." said Eggman "But what's more surprising is that me and Finitevus got caught and thrown in this stinking cell!" he added in fury, willing his arms to raise up and shake but the suit wouldn't obey him due to it being disabled.

"How did you two get captured anyway?" asked Shadow "Finitevus, you're insane in terms of fighting prowess and Eggman, you're inside Omega! That was one of your strongest robots ever! How could you two possibly be subdued by that stupid warden?!"

"I could ask you the same Shadow." snorted Finitevus rudely.

"Me and Finitevus were taken away by the so-called "time rift" that keeps appearing in the sky and snatching people away." explained Eggman "Then we woke up here. Some guy named "Warden Marvo the Martian" found us and he and a squadron of cops were quick to try and arrest us. We put up a magnificent fight…but eventually they subdued us. The warden managed to sneak a control collar on Finitevus and I was disabled with an EMP shock. We were then taken away and brought to this stupid prison. They disabled my suit so I can't break out and Finitevus had all his warp rings swiped from him! Have no fear though, we've been working on an escape plan."

"I should hope you have." said Rouge "I'm not staying in this place and I'm certainly not keeping this collar on." she added, tugging bitterly at the collar as if it was bugging her.

"Before we move onto the plan though, do you know anything about this zone?" asked Shadow.

"I do." said Finitevus "A few hours ago, I sneaked away into one of the computer rooms that this prison has. I maybe weaker thanks to this collar but I'm still as slippery and sneaky as I can be. Anyway, I looked up information about the Inter-Dimensional Lockdown Zone while I was there. Apparently, this is a zone that is home to the Multi-Verse Police Force. Their job is to keep the multi-verse under control and make sure that time travellers and zone travellers are not damaging the fabric of time and existence. If you are guilty of those crimes, they come and arrest you without hesitating. Only the cops themselves are allowed to inhabit this zone. Trespassing, which is what we're accused of, results in an instant arrest. The Lockdown Zone does a pretty good job of arresting people I must say. According to the files I read, there are eight thousand, six hundred and forty three prisoners here, us included. You two have now made that eight thousand, six hundred and forty five."

"Well I'll be blowed…that many?!" gasped Rouge "Boy, you don't wanna mess with these cops in that case! They're good at their jobs aren't they?"

"Very, which is unfortunate for us." muttered Finitevus "We can do without being stuck in here, especially since Mobius Prime is coming to an end."

"What do you mean?" asked Shadow.

"Silver the Hedgehog told us that the lights in the sky are called "time rifts" and that they mean the end of the world." explained Eggman "I won't let Mobius end like this! I can't conquer it otherwise!"

Shadow and Rouge hadn't thought they would hear anything more gob smacking than Eggman being encased in a life support suit but they were wrong.

"Mobius is coming to an end?!" shrieked Shadow "And it's because of those time rifts?!"

"No…no it can't! We can't let that happen!" wailed Rouge "We have to save Mobius! We've gotta get outta here now before the world falls apart!"

"Indeed we have my child." said Finitevus dryly "If Mobius Prime ends…then everything else will. The multi-verse depends on a prime universe to exist. That is the most common theory and one that nobody dares to prove correct or incorrect in case of catastrophe. If the prime universe is gone then the multi-verse has nothing to support it. It's like a broken table. It won't stand on two legs instead of four as we all know."

"So if Mobius Prime ends…this zone will end too and take us with it!" gasped Shadow "All the more reason to break out of here! So what's this plan of yours that you mentioned earlier doctors?"

"Oh we have a plan believe me on that." said Dr. Eggman "During our short time here, Finitevus took to analyzing the prison's surroundings and finding out where everything is. I have to admire

that complex brain of his, he's so meticulous!" the tone in the doctor's voice was a strange one to come out of him. He sounded almost impressed and admired by Finitevus's intelligence. Very strange considering how egotistical he usually is.

"Thank you doctor." said Finitevus, not really all that flattered by Eggman "I found out where tools are kept in this prison and after snooping around the computer rooms and finding out what I needed to know about this zone, I swiped a toolbox and took it back to my cell under my cloak so nobody would notice. And before you two arrived, I had been using said toolbox to try and reactivate Eggman's life support suit. Once he's back online, he can break down the door and provide a great distraction. He may even have the strength to rip off our control collars and bring us back to our former glory."

"Well he'd better be gentle with me!" blustered Rouge, gripping her throat worriedly.

"I won't pull too hard." purred Eggman, his voice dripping with dark humour.

"I must say, security is lousy if you managed to get into a computer room and steal a toolbox without being noticed." sneered Shadow, a dry smile spreading across his lips.

"Yes, security doesn't seem very strong." said Finitevus gleefully "I bet I could have retrieved my warp rings without being noticed too. Speaking of which, I know where they're being kept so when we break out, I'll go and find them."

"So Finitevus, I think now would be a good time to finish fixing Eggman." said Shadow "We have a multi-verse to save now. Time is of essence."

"Don't tell me something I already know…" muttered Finitevus in annoyance.

He strode back round to behind Dr. Eggman, who had a panel in the back of his suit opened up for Dr. Finitevus to do his work. Finitevus had been mostly re-wiring some wires and tightening a few pieces

inside while also trying to get the suit fully functional again. The cops had made a very messy job of disabling Omega, something that even Finitevus was disgusted at. Being a scientist and all, it upset him to see tech like this being abused. At least he was on hand to fix it now. Finitevus picked out a loose wire and he reconnected it into a circular disc-shaped object.

"Now if I connect this wire to the circuit chamber and then reroute the power to the fusion core…" he murmured between tinkers.

Naturally, Shadow and Rouge had no idea what Finitevus was saying. Techno-babble was a foreign language to them but to Eggman, it was a language he was fluent in so he knew what Finitevus was on about easily. He understood every word the albino echidna uttered as he worked away on the amazing machine that housed Dr. Eggman and kept him alive and was pleased that he knew what he was doing. Finitevus was by far the best person to be fixing him right now since Katherine wasn't here. It crossed Eggman's mind briefly as to what Katherine might be thinking now he's gone. He imagined she'd be quite worried about him and probably initiate a global search for him. Katherine was insanely loyal to Eggman after all. Maybe TOO loyal at times…it did sort of creep Eggman out on how loyal Katherine was. Had he unintentionally made a robot that had a crush on him? It was a creepy yet humorous thought he had to admit. His thoughts were interrupted as he felt Finitevus drilling something into his back. He was merely putting screw back where it should be, nothing to worry about. Finitevus picked up a couple more tools and did a few minutes more work on Dr. Eggman until finally, something began to happen. The head section of the suit started to twitch slightly and the optics that allowed Eggman a clear range of vision began to light up. The head then began to turn around a full 360 degrees. Finitevus watched, pleased with his work as Eggman test the suit. The head certainly seemed to be working but what about the rest of the body? He soon got the answer to that question for Eggman then suddenly began to slowly rise up off the floor and onto his feet, whirring noises emitting from the swivelling joints in the suit's ankle, knee and hip joints. Eggman then moved his arms, the enormous limbs rising up above his head as he commanded and then lowering back down. Finitevus had done it! Eggman was back online at last!

Breakout was ascertain at this point in time. The cops would have no idea what hit them. Eggman grinned to himself from inside the suit.

"Finitevus, you amaze me." he said "You've gotten my glorious life-support mech working again! Now to show those scrawny cops what happens when they dare to arrest Dr. Ivo Eggman!"

"Save some for me, I would like to soften my knuckles on their stupid little faces." said Finitevus, his face a twisted grin of the devil himself.

Eggman chortled and then he swivelled his entire upper section around so he was facing Dr. Finitevus. He gripped Finitevus's control collar with a huge metal finger and thumb and he proceeded to squeeze on the collar so hard that it bent and buckled under the strain. It then eventually snapped in two as Eggman's metal claws penetrated it. Finitevus could feel his strength returning as the collar fell off. What a wonderful feeling it was for him. He then gripped Shadow and Rouge's collars and proceeded to break them too, being sure not to hurt them since he needed them intact right about now. The collars broke away and Shadow and Rouge felt a surge of relief as their strength began to return to them. They also felt much better without the horrible collar clamped around their necks. Eggman pointed at Shadow and Rouge.

"You two, behind me now." he ordered "I need all the space I can get if I'm to break down that door."

Shadow and Rouge moved behind him as ordered. It was like hiding behind a giant metal shield, a shield that also had arms, legs and tremendous firepower stored in it. But Eggman wasn't going to use his firepower to break the door down. He thought he'd save it for the cops. Instead, he ran towards the door, his feet making heavy clanking noises as he ran, and he punched at the thick, Diamond Glass as hard as the suit would allow him. His enormous metal hand smashed into the glass and ploughed straight through it as if it were brittle. Splinters of sharp glass littered the floor outside of their cell as the door crumbled like a sandcastle being kicked down by a beachgoer. The moment the glass door was broken, alarms started screaming all over the prison, the noise startling every single

prisoner in the building. It was clear what the alarm's message was: BREAKOUT! BREAKOUT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT! The cops would be on the scene in no time to try and detain the hopeful escapees. As the alarms wailed, red lights began to flash all over the cell corridors, bathing the cells in a luminous crimson glow. Now they were free, Shadow, Rouge, Eggman and Finitevus ran for it. Eggman took off on with his back mounted jet engines and Finitevus jumped onto his back, hitching a ride on the doctor. Shadow skated off on his jet shoes and Rouge flew after him as he followed the doctors.

"You two get out of here, we're going to get Finitevus's warp rings back!" barked Eggman "I'll give you an escape route!"

"Got it!" Shadow called to him.

The prisoners all watched with envy as the four escaping Prime-Zoners left the cell corridors, wishing with all their hearts that it was they who were escaping instead of them. One could make the assumption that they would start plotting their own escape at some point later in life. As Eggman whooshed down the corridor, he aimed one of his arms ahead and fired a missile at the end of the corridor. The missile struck the wall and blew a giant hole in it as if somebody had punched through it with a giant fist. Shadow and Rouge jumped through the hole in the wall while Eggman and Finitevus veered to the left and flew off down another corridor. Shadow and Rouge were now outside the prison, relieved to be in the daylight again despite their brief time in captivity. There were lots of cops out on patrol and the alarms wailing from inside the prison had whipped them up into a frenzy. They were gobsmacked to see Shadow and Rouge standing before them and they all aimed their guns at the two. Marvo the Martian was among the cops and his face contorted with fury.

"You two! How the heck did you manage to escape your cell?!" he snarled.

"As if I'm gonna tell you that." said Shadow with a gloating smile on his face "Now then, you can stand down and let us go or sacrifice your lives needlessly. Pick your option."

"Nobody has ever escaped from Lockdown Prison and lived!" declared Marvo "Any escapees were shot down and killed before they got within a hundred yards from this place! You two won't even get a foot from this place!"

"So I guess you're gonna kill us then just for escaping?" sighed Rouge, not at all amused by this and sounding almost bored by it as if this happened on a regular occasion.

"Any attempt at escaping results in a death penalty." said Marvo coldly "And you two definitely deserve such a penalty! Guards, kill them both!" he bellowed.

The guards obeyed and they opened fire on Shadow and Rouge. Shadow warped out of the way and left the shots to sweep over the empty space he had been standing a moment ago. Rouge had flown out of the way the moment the guards fired. Shadow reappeared behind Marvo and he roundhouse kicked the warden in the back, sending him hurling into the guards like a bowling ball ploughing through the skittles. The guards were knocked down like dominoes as the warden and the guards closest to him all collided into them. Shadow could hardly help but chuckle at this comical scene that unfolded before his eyes. To many people, it would look like something out of a cartoon albeit happening for real instead of being animated. Now the guards were taken out, he skated off and headed towards a hover bike that was parked nearby. The hover bikes were for the guards to use but Shadow didn't care about that. He was going to take one and nobody was going to stop him from doing so. He needed to get away from this prison before the warden could try and recapture him and Rouge. Rouge flew after Shadow as fast as she could. By the time the two had reached the hover bike, Marvo had picked himself up and he snatched a fallen guard's rifle. He aimed it at Shadow and Rouge and opened fire. Laser blasts spat out of the barrel of the rifle and chopped away at the ground behind Shadow's heels. Shadow swiped his arm behind himself and sent Chaos Spears hurling towards Marvo. The spears struck him and one spear even knocked the rifle out of his hands. Marvo growled in fury and he thundered after the two fleeing Mobians. Shadow and Rouge hopped onto the hover bike with Rouge sitting in the driver's seat and Shadow sitting just behind her. The idea for this was

Rouge would drive and Shadow could fend off any possible pursuers that might chase them down. The hover bike that the two had picked was silver in colour with foot rests that had pedals on them that presumably made it go. It also had two large engines, one on each side that suggested great power was stored within them. It made a great vehicle for chasing down anyone the cops were trying to arrest. Rouge started up the hover bike and it hovered up off the ground with a loud hum. Gripping the handle bars tightly, Rouge floored the accelerator pedal and the hover bike rocketed away form its parking spot and soared off into the endless sky of the Lockdown Zone. Roaring furiously, Marvo climbed onto his own hover bike and he rocketed off after Shadow and Rouge. His hover bike was much larger than Shadow and Rouge's and was a fluorescent golden colour that sparkled like actual gold. His bike had the formation of lying down on it as you ride it. As the bike sped off through the sky, his cape billowed out behind him like a waving flag. Marvo's face was a twisted, hideous scowl of hatred. He was not going to let Shadow and Rouge get away so easily. His reputation was glorious, a whole thousand decades worth of keeping prisoners under lock and key with no escape attempts being successful with generation after generation getting the honour of doing such a task. Letting Shadow and Rouge escape would stain his reputation forever and likely make the Lockdown cops not so feared and respectful. He didn't want all the other inmates to suddenly be inspired by Shadow and Rouge to escape and actually get away with it. The prison would be in chaos and his job would be moot.

The warden's hover bike roared loudly as it perused Shadow and Rouge, the engines blazing furiously as they pushed the chassis of the bike through the sky. Rouge kept her eyes fixed ahead of herself and left Shadow to fend off the warden. That was the reason why he was facing backwards after all. Shadow waited for Marvo to close in on him before he threw some Chaos Spears at him. Marvo weaved his bike around and dodged the spears. They just skimmed past the bike, narrowly missing it by inches. Shadow threw some more Chaos Spears but the warden ducked down and dodged them again. Rouge swung the bike around to the side violently as she nearly hit a platform with a lamppost on similar to the one she and Shadow had woken up on earlier. She missed it narrowly and she sped off further through the sky. The warden nearly crashed into the

platform but he rose the bike up and over the platform, letting it pass underneath him as he sailed over it and he continued the chase. Shadow and Rouge had left him behind a little after that manoeuvre but the warden soon caught up with them again. Marvo turned a knob on his bike's control panel and deployed a pair of guns that were concealed in each side of the bike. They began to pepper Rouge's bike with shots but the hover bike resisted the shots. It wouldn't resist them for long though, the bikes were built to resist most gunfire but not gunfire from a gun on another police bike. If Marvo kept shooting and hitting then Rouge and Shadow would have nothing to fly on. Rouge swerved the bike around through the sky to avoid the shots but Marvo kept up his relentless pursuit. He was like a demented fighter pilot trying desperately to shoot down his enemy over No Man's Land during WorldWar I. He shot furiously and refused to give up. Shadow threw Chaos Spears at Marvo but Marvo aimed the guns and blasted the spears away, preventing them from getting near to him. Now the guns were aimed away, Shadow threw another Chaos Spear at Marvo and the spear hit the front of the bike, making it buck slightly and nearly throw Marvo off of it. Marvo regained control and twisted the throttle on the bike's handle. With a burst of flames from the bike, he picked up speed and continued rocketing after Shadow and Rouge. He aimed his bike's guns at Shadow and Rouge again but Shadow threw Chaos Spears at them and destroyed them both. Growling furiously, Marvo kicked the bike into another gear and picked up more speed. Shadow watched as Marvo manoeuvred his bike to the side and pulled up beside Rouge's bike. Rouge shot a nasty glare over at Marvo, the very expression telling him "Get lost you annoying idiot!", an order that Marvo was not going to obey. Marvo turned the handlebars to the side and his bike began to turn slightly. He ended up bumping Rouge's bike, making Rouge jerk to the side suddenly and Shadow nearly fell off. Marvo pulled away and then closed in for another bump. Shadow just drew his arm back and punched Marvo in the head before his bike could make contact. Marvo's head was thrown to the side violently but he managed to keep himself on the bike thanks to a very good grip on the handles. Marvo regained himself and he bumped against Rouge's bike again. Rouge cried out as she nearly fell off the bike. Furious, she jumped off the driver's seat and screw-kicked Marvo's bike, throwing it to the side and nearly causing the warden to fall off. He held on tightly and focused

his muscles on keeping his body upright and on the bike. Rouge flew back onto her bike and pulled away from the warden, turning to the side and leaving him behind. Marvo turned and followed. They were heading towards an asteroid field that could easily be the death of them all. Rouge pulled up and the bike sailed over the asteroids. Marvo followed but the moment his bike was level behind Rouge's, Rouge dipped down and the bike soared down under the asteroids, narrowly missing a huge one that loomed ahead of them. Marvo wasn't tempted to follow them in fear of miscalculating and crashing. He instead stayed above the asteroids and waited for Shadow and Rouge to come back up. He then watched as they turned the bike around under the asteroids and flew off. Marvo stopped his bike and slowly descended below the asteroids. Now he was going slowly, he felt safer plunging down into the asteroid field. The moment he was underneath the asteroids, he floored the pedals and raced off after Shadow and Rouge, the two Mobians getting far ahead and losing him. The bikes soared off under the asteroid field until finally, they came to the end of it and flew off, leaving it behind so it would be of no danger to them anymore. Rouge turned to the left and headed towards some floating platforms that contained a lot of signs and lampposts. Rouge did have to ask herself what the heck these platforms were for. Stops on a long journey perhaps? With bikes as fast as the ones she and the warden were driving, they wouldn't be needed for they cleared a long distance in a matter of seconds. Rouge kept flying the bike close to the signs in hopes of causing the warden to crash into one of them but Marvo knew what she was up to. Thus, he flew up and out of the sign's way. Rouge cursed quietly, not pleased to see her plan had failed. Then suddenly, something came rocketing out of nowhere and Marvo cried out in shock as he narrowly dodged being hit by the thing. It was Dr. Eggman, flying through the sky and carrying Finitevus on his back. Finitevus had retrieved his warp rings and now he and Eggman were aiding Shadow and Rouge in getting away from Marvo. Rouge waved at them.

"Hey doctors! So glad you could catch up to us!" she called to them.

"Anytime Rouge!" Eggman called back "The cops were no trouble for us once we got Finitevus's warp rings back!"

"Now you have them back, use them to warp us back to Mobius Prime!" yelled Shadow furiously "We need to leave this zone and we need to leave now!"

"I daren't use my warp rings while we're moving so fast!" cried Finitevus "We could miscalculate and miss them entirely, I could accidentally lose them or Marvo might follow us through! Also, it's hard to concentrate on visualizing the place we want to be in while we're in a chase like this!"

"Then we lose the warden and find a safe place to stop so you can use your warp rings!" Shadow suggested.

"Good plan!" agreed Eggman.

Eggman then deployed a rocket launcher from Omega's shoulder and he fired a rocket at Marvo. Marvo saw the rocket coming and he threw a pod from his belt at it. He then steered the bike down and flew under as the rocket missed him and hit his pod. The explosion that ensued was terrific but it didn't effect Marvo in anyway. With a crazed look in his eyes, Marvo snarled in rage.

"You're not getting away from me you four Prime-Zoners!" he roared.

The warden would soon end up eating those words for as the two bikes raced past another couple of platforms with signs on them, a white portal opened up just several yards in front of Shadow, Rouge and the two doctors. Rouge only just saw the portal coming as they neared it. Taken by surprise, she didn't have time to slow down or avoid it. She floored the breaks and prayed the bike would stop and avoid it in time but the bike was going too fast. It shot straight into the portal and vanished from view. Dr. Eggman followed it, wondering where the portal might take them. The moment he entered the portal, it closed up behind him, leaving Marvo alone on his hover bike. To Marvo's horror, the portal had concealed a sign and since the portal had closed up, the sign was now visible. Marvo floored the breaks but he couldn't stop in time. He ended up crashing straight into the sign, his bike buckling and breaking in the impact and flattening him against the sign. The bike fell away and plummeted down into an endless plummet through the endless sky

all around. Marvo, still stuck in the sign, remained where he was and he pulled his face free from the sign. Furious at the fact the Prime-Zoners had evaded him and become the first prisoners to ever escape the Lockdown Zone, he bellowed a thunderous roar of rage, his anger echoing for miles around. This was the worst day of his life and he would make these four pay for what they'd done…that is, if he ever came across them again…

Well Shadow, Rouge, Eggman and Finitevus have escaped the cops of the Lockdown Zone! Where will they end up though? Read on and find out.

Next time, Wilson, Mandy and Ruben have a "Special Encounter"...

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 6

Story 171: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 6: A Special Encounter

Ugh I feel like I just fell out of the sky…

Royal Fighter tomboy and no-nonsense tough woman MandyMouse immediately began thinking that as she finally came to and began to slowly sit up. She felt terrible but it would soon wear off and she'd feel alright again.

The time rift had sucked up the whole of the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and thrown them across the multi-verse, various members ending up on various different worlds that ranged in shape, size, appearance and feature. Mandy had been dumped onto this world and had been out for half an hour before finally waking up from the terrible experience. The purple-furred mouse hoped dearly that it would never happen again, the time rift was too horrible to experience a second time. She could easily imagine what Sonic felt like when he had gotten sucked up by the one that had dumped him on Mobius Nega. Had he been dumped there again by the time rift that had just sucked her and the others up now? Mandy had no idea. One thing she did know was that she wasn't on Mobius Prime anymore. As Mandy rubbed her eyes better and had a good stretch, she tuned her senses to focus on what was around her and where she was. Her vision had cleared up luckily so Mandy was able to get a proper look around. Her jaw dropped at what she was looking at. Mandy knew she would be on a different world but never did she imagine she'd be on a world THIS different! She was sitting on an enormous chequered sphere that seemed to be trying to pass off as a planet only it was far too small to be a planet. It was more like an oversized football only with a chequered design on it that made it look like a spherical, purple chess board. There was an endless sky all around that seemed to swim through different colours ranging from bright colours to dull colours and the patterns were almost smoke-like in appearance. There were other spheres floating around that looked smiliar to the one Mandy was sitting upon and strange yellow track-like structures snaked and looped all around this weird

scene before her. Mandy had no idea how to describe it. Was it a surreal dimension of colourful proportions? Was it Wonderland? Was it something indescribable? Mandy didn't know but all she did know was that it was a weird, yet somewhat wonderful looking place. The colours gave it a somewhat nice feel and Mandy had to admit, it was pretty cool looking to some degree.

"Wow…" she breathed out the single word in a single gasp of admiration "This is amazing…what kind of world is this?"

The fact that she received no reply made Mandy feel suddenly alone and isolated. She got up to her feet and started looking around the chequered sphere she stood on.

"Am I alone here or did any of the others land here with me?" she asked herself "Oh I hope my Wilson is here too. I can't bear to think of him alone and afraid on some other universe…"

Her ears drooped back in worry and she gripped her tail as she began to fret over her husband's well-being. If there was anything in the world that scared Mandy at all, it was losing her husband. Wilson was the most precious thing in her life since her sister was dead* and she sure as heck didn't want to lose Wilson too. She prayed with all her heart that he was on this world too. Much to the mouse's over-whelming relief and delight, she spotted Wilson lying on his side just a few paces away from her. Mandy ran over to Wilson and knelt by his side. The dog seemed to be sleeping, a quite natural looking sleep as if he'd merely fallen asleep rather than been knocked out by the time rift and then dumped here like garbage. He snored quietly and a stream of drool trickled from the side of his lip. Mandy smiled weakly. She knew Wilson was a very good sleeper when he wanted to be so this was a sign he was alright. She shook her husband's body slightly.

"Wilson? Honey? Please wake up." she said.

Wilson murmured sleepily as he slowly began to come around.

"Huuuuurm…I love you too my ravishing rodent…" he slurred sleepily.

Mandy blushed with pleasure. She loved it when Wilson called her that. It made her feel wonderful when he called her that. Wilson slowly sat up, his eyes still firmly closed and he stretched as far as he could, making loud grunting noises as he did so. It was as if he was trying to make his bones come out of his body. He then rubbed his eyes and smacked his lips.

"Hey Mandy…can we have pancakes for breakfast this morning?" he mumbled again, wiping the drool from his mouth and opening his eyes.

He was pleased to see that upon opening his eyes, he saw Mandy kneeling next to him and he hugged her happily.

"Oh Mandy thank goodness!" he cried "After we got sucked up by that time rift, I began fearing we'd be separated! Thank goodness we're not!"

"Thank goodness indeed." said Mandy, hugging him back and grinning from ear to ear with relief "I couldn't bear to be on another world without you. I'd feel so lost and alone otherwise."

"Another…world?" blurted Wilson as if Mandy had told him a stupid joke.

He then released his wife and looked around to see where he was. He soon realized that Mandy was being quite literal when she said they were on another world. The time rift had brought him and her to a surreal place that didn't seem to make much sense and looked strange yet wonderful at the same time with its mix of colours and chequered spheres dotted all around like wishful balls wanting to be planets. Wilson gaped and he stared at Mandy, his hands gripping her shoulders tightly.

"Am I still asleep?" he asked.

"I've got that feeling too." murmured Mandy "But I think we're awake. I wonder where this is and what kind of place it is?"

"There's something special about it that's for sure." said Wilson "In the strange kind of way…wonder if anybody else is here too or if it's

just us?"

He soon found the answer to that question for a little Mobian came out of nowhere and plodded sleepily up to them. It was Ruben the Water Panther, the honourable yet low self-esteemed young Royal Fighter who's power came purely from a purple collar he wore around his neck. Ruben had just woken up and he was walking towards Wilson and Mandy. He still seemed half asleep though, his eyes half closed as he wandered across the sphere to them. Wilson and Mandy were pleased to see he was OK and Ruben waved at them as he approached the two.

"Hi guys…what a weird dream it was I just woke up from." he mumbled, yawning loudly as he stretched "I dreamt I was being sucked up into some colourful light in the sky."

"It's no dream kid." said Mandy "It was real. This is all real now. Wake up and have a look around."

Ruben didn't know what Mandy was on about but he did as he was told. He looked around groggily but when he began to drink in the scenery around him, his eyes fully opened and he soon became fully awake and aware of what was going on. He noticed the strange scenery all around him and as he stared in disbelief, he pinched himself to try and wake himself up. To his dismay, he was already awake so this was clearly not some kind of surreal dream he was experiencing. He jumped in alarm and his tail stood up straight behind him in fright.

"Good watery heck!" he gibbered "What the heck is this weird place?! Where the heck are we?!"

"I wish I could answer that Ruben." said Mandy, pulling Ruben towards her and hugging him comfortingly "But I can't. I don't know where we are. All I know is we're on some kind of alternate dimension or something."

"Given how Sonic ended up on another version of Mobius, that is likely." said Wilson "I will say, this Mobius differs greatly from ours doesn't it? There's nothing remotely the same about this world and ours!"

"I do hope Sora's OK, wherever she is." said Ruben, clutching Mandy's vest in worry "I can't bear to think about her in danger…"

"I'm sure she's fine…wherever she is." said Mandy softly "Right now, how do we get out of this place?"

Then suddenly, a terrible voice boomed through the skies above and the chequered sphere the three Mobians stood on began to tremble as if an earthquake was coming from nowhere and striking it. The trio clutched each other in terror as the voice spoke.

"MORTALS! HOW DARE YOU TRESPASS IN FEIST'S ZONE?!" thundered the voice.

The voice was soon accompanied by two ominous glowing yellow eyes that looked demonic in appearance and made Wilson, Mandy and Ruben scream in horror at them. The eyes were soon followed by a head and then later an entire body materialized before their very eyes. The three Mobians were gobsmacked at what stood before them now. An enormous panda-shaped creature stood, looming over the chequered sphere which the Mobians stood upon. It had a white torso and head and black arms and legs. Its only item of clothing was a silver steel belt that was wrapped around its waist. The creature looked Mobian to some degree but clearly wasn't Mobian given his ability to appear out of nowhere and his gargantuan size. He also didn't look as cuddly as panda bears are generally considered to be, he looked just as ferocious as the ones that resided in Chun-Nan. His teeth were clenched and he now held the sphere in his hand as if it were merely a ball for a game of some kind. He glowered at Wilson, Mandy and Ruben, the three backing away from him in fright as his eyes glowed over them, throwing streams of yellow light over their bodies.

"THE SPECIAL ZONE IS FEIST'S DOMAIN AND FEIST WILL NOT AB IDE TO IT BEING INFESTED WITH VILE MORTAL BEINGS!" bellowed the panda **"FEIST WILL SMITE YOU ALL!"**

"No wait, please wait!" begged Ruben, shaking like pennies being rattled around in a moneybox "We're sorry about this! Honest we are!"

"We came here by accident Mr.-Giant-Panda-Dude-Thingy!" shrieked Mandy "Please don't hurt us!"

Wilson was too scared to speak, he was clutching Mandy as if his life depended on her and her alone and his face rained with sweat. He looked as if he might be in need of clean underpants very shortly. Feist, the apparent name of the gigantic panda creature, raised an eyebrow of suspicion but he raised his head away from the Mobians. He put one hand on his hip, his other hand still firmly gripping the sphere he now held.

"YOU MORTALS CAM E HERE BY ACCIDENT?" mused Feist. Even when speaking softly, his voice still boomed around the world and made the floor shudder beneath the Mobian's feet **"CLARIFY HOW THAT CAM E TO HAPPEN THEN."**

Mandy wiped sweat off her forehead and she forced herself to relax so she could tell him everything. Standing shyly forward, Mandy explained everything.

"We're from Mobius Prime and we were brought here by a time rift. You heard of them?" she asked.

Feist put a finger and thumb to his chin and stroked it in thought.

"HMM…YOUR STORY RINGS A BELL. FEIST RECALLS OTHER MORTALS WHO ENDED UP HERE TELLING HIM THAT STORY." he murmured aloud **"THESE TIME RIF TS MUST BE A PROBLEM IF SO MANY MORTALS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT HERE OVER TIME."**

"So we're not the first ones to end up here?" asked Ruben nervously.

"NO, FEIST HAS HAD MORTALS FROM AL L OVER THE MULTI-VERSE END UP IN HIS ZONE." Feist exposited **" NEV ER BEFORE HAS FEIST HAD THE HONOUR OF MEETING PRIME ZONERS THOUGH. YOU THREE ARE INSTANTLY AN AMUSING CASE FOR FEIST."**

"I bet we are talk, dark and insanely creepy." said Mandy "So who

are you and what is this "Special Zone"?" she asked with a gesture to the scenery they were occupying.

"FEIST HAS ALREADY GIVEN HIS NAME." boomed Feist **"FEIST IS A GOD OF GREAT POWER AND FEIST IS IN CHARGE OF THE SPECIAL ZONE. THE SPECIAL ZONE IS A ZONE THAT HAS NO OCCUPANTS OTHER THAN FEIST AND FEIST IS FREE TO SHAPE THE ZONE TO HIS LIKING AS MUCH AS HE WANTS. FEIST LOVES AMUSEMENT AND MORTALS WHO HAVE ENDED UP HERE THANKS TO THESE SO-CALLED "TIME RIFTS" HAVE GIVEN FEIST MUCH AMUSEMENT IND EED."**

"Story of my life." muttered Mandy "So if other people have ended up here…where are they?"

"BACK IN THEIR ZONES." explained Feist **"FEIST HAS THE PO WER TO SEND MORTALS BACK HOME TO THEIR HOME DIMENSIONS."**

"Really?" said Wilson excitedly, forgetting that he was scared of Feist a moment ago "So can you send us back to Mobius Prime? You see, we need to find out what's causing the time rifts and save our world from destruction."

"NOT SO FAST MORTAL!" roared Feist, the sphere trembling as he spoke **"FEIST DOES NOT JUST SIMPLY GRANT A PO RTAL HOME LIKE THAT, YOU HAVE TO PLAY FEIST'S GAMES FOR YOUR TRIP BACK TO YOUR ZONE!"**

"Feist, we don't have time for this!" protested Mandy "Our world is coming to an end thanks to the time rifts and we NEED to get home and fast before we lose everything! Please send us home now!"

"IF YOU WILL NOT TAKE PART IN FEIST'S GAMES THEN YOU CAN STAY HERE FOREVER." said Feist coldly **" NO GA MES, NO PORTAL HOME. SIMPLE AS THAT."**

Mandy sighed in annoyance and she ran her hand down her face exasperatedly. She didn't half hate it when people was as stubborn and obstinate as she could be at times. Especially since the doomsday clock was ticking away the seconds to disaster and they

had to get home now before Mobius Prime fell apart. But if taking Feist's challenges was the only way to get out of the Special Zone and get back home then like it or not, she would have to take them. Sighing, Mandy looked back at Feist.

"OK Feisty boy, we'll accept your stupid games." she grumbled "But you better promise that when we win them, we WILL go home to Mobius Prime or we don't play!"

"FEIST GIVES HIS WORD THAT THE PUNY MORTALS WILL BE TAKEN HOME SAFELY SHOULD YOU WIN HIS GAMES." boomed Feist **"FEIST HAS KEPT THAT PROMISE TO ALL THE OTHER MORTALS WHO HAVE ENDED UP IN THE SPECIAL ZONE AFTER ALL."**

"Good." said Mandy "So what do we have to do then?"

"THE THREE OF YOU WILL TAKE PART IN ONE CHALLENGE EACH." explained Feist **"IF EACH OF YOU WIN YOUR CHALLENGES, ALL THREE OF YOU WILL GO HOME AS FEIST PROMISES. FAIL…AND YOU STAY HERE FOR THE REST OF YOUR MORTAL LIVES. DO YOU ACCEPT?"**

"Sure thing fatty." said Mandy "And since I'm desperate to get back home, I'll go first."

"VERY WELL." said Feist **"PREPARE FOR YOUR CHALLENGE FEMALE RODENT MO RTAL."**

Feist let go of the chequered sphere and he then held his hands up. Mandy, Wilson and Ruben just watched with disbelief as Feist began to form something completely out of thin air. He is a god after all so this was easily in his realm of power. As Feist waved his hands around and then stretched them apart, something began to form between his hands and form a shape. A huge, rocky track-shaped structure began to form out of the planet and expand across the void of space as Feist formed it. At the end of the track was another sphere that had a huge ring at the end of it. This was clearly the goal. The track expanded several yards and stone pillars stood on each section of the track. There was more to this course than met the eye but Feist intended to let Mandy find that out for herself.

Mandy studied the track and had an idea on what the challenge was.

"OK I get it, is this a race to the finish?" she asked.

"IT IS INDEED MOUSE WOMAN." boomed Feist **"YOU MUST ADVANCE THROUGH FEIST'S OBSTACLE COURSE AND LEAP THROUGH THE GOAL RING WITHIN TEN MINUTES. IF YOU SUCCEED THEN YOU WILL BE GRANTED AN INSTANT PORTAL HOME AFTER THE DOG MAN AND THE PANTHER BOY COMPLETE THEIR CHALLENGES."**

"Sounds fair to me." said Mandy, getting down onto her hands and preparing to charge off down the track "I'm ready to get this race started. Let's bring it on!"

Feist clapped his hands with delight.

"HOW DEL IGHTFUL! SUCH EAGERNESS AMUSES FEIST!" he boomed happily.

"Well I am the kind of girl who was born ready for anything." snickered Mandy.

"THEN LET US SEE IF YOU ARE READY FOR THIS." said Feist with a rather dark smile on his enormous, semi-plush and cuddly face **"ON YOUR MARKS…GET SET…"**

Mandy breathed in deeply as she prepared to go. The stone pillars ahead would make the course tricky to get across but Mandy knew what to do about them. It was time to put Tails's new weapons for her to the test. She glanced down at her new knuckle attachments and smiled at them.

"OK girls, time to see what you're made of…" she whispered to herself.

"GO!" the single word thundered out of Feist's mouth like an erupting volcano.

Mandy was on her feet faster than anybody could blink and she charged down the track as fast as her legs would let her. Ten

minutes, nothing but stone pillars in her way to try and slow her down, a ticket back to Mobius Prime was the prize that awaited her at the end of the course. Mandy knew she could do it. She had been through much worse than a measly obstacle course before. She had been abducted by Brawn and his gang of rats the other week and survived so this was nothing for her. Mandy cleared the distance between her and the first pillar in twenty seconds exactly and she drew her arm back. Screaming a loud battle cry of fury, she punched the pillar and the steel knuckle attachments broke through it instantly as if it were merely sand. The pillar crumbled to the ground after a web of cracks formed from the terrific punch she'd launched at it. Mandy knew that Tails had made her some amazing knuckle attachments but she had no idea they were THAT powerful! Feist watched with amusement and he grinned at the power Mandy contained in her new knuckle attachments. This was clearly a mortal like no other and considering she was from the Prime Zone, that wasn't saying much. The Prime Zone was the supreme, ultimate zone of the multi-verse after all so Feist had high expectations for Mandy, Wilson and Ruben. Mandy ran over the broken pillar and she came across the second pillar. Drawing her arm back, she aimed at the centre of the pillar and she punched through it. One single punch mark and a mass of cracks was all the pillar could take before it crumbled to pieces like a house being demolished. Mandy smirked confidently. This was pathetically easy thanks to Tails's new weapons he'd made for her. She could hardly wait to try her knuckle attachments on any of Mobius Prime's villains once she got back there. Mandy ran across the track and to the third pillar. But then came the other surprises that Feist had inserted into the track without Mandy knowing. Hiding them behind the pillars was a good idea from the start since Mandy wouldn't expect it. Mandy punched through the third pillar and then nearly had her head taken off. She ducked down and felt something whiz over her ears. It was a sphere the size of a basketball and armed with axe blades that spun around it lethally. Mandy would have been cut to pieces had she not reacted quick enough. Mandy just sighed at the bladed ball. She had been an idiot to think it was going to be this easy. Mandy ran over the broken pillar and was pursued by the bladed ball. Mandy threw herself onto the floor and waited for the sphere to pass over her. It did so and it crashed into the pillar, its blades getting stuck in the rock and trapping it right then and there. Made punched the sphere

to pieces and then punched through the pillar. As the pillar crumbled, she instinctively threw herself down onto the floor in case anything tried to chop her head off again. She had been right to do so for two large spheres with spikes on them lunged out at the space she had been in a split second before she ducked. Mandy had to wonder if Feist was trying to kill her rather then give her a challenge to do. Maybe surviving was part of the challenge and Feist had decided not to tell her just to shock her. Mandy had a nasty feeling that Feist might not be what he made himself out to be and that any of the previous people who had ended up in the Special Zone hadn't indeed won the challenges and gone home and rather got killed just trying to win. She was not going to fall to Feist's twisted game though, she was going to win and no panda-god was going to stop her. Mandy picked herself up and she grabbed a fallen piece of pillar. She threw it at the spiked balls and the hard stone smashed them both to pieces. Mandy turned around and scampered off to the last pillar. She punched through it and ducked down, expecting something to try and skewer her. Instead though, nothing happened. Mandy stood back up and was suddenly ensnared by tentacles. The last pillar had concealed a tentacle monster that was tall and lanky with red warty skin and clearly had more tentacles then it knew what to do with. Mandy was wrapped from head to toe in tentacles and she struggled furiously. Wilson and Mandy watched with concern as Mandy tried to break free from the monster. The monster held on tight and began to squeeze Mandy as hard as it possibly could. It was trying to constrict her. Mandy grimaced as she felt the air in her lungs being squeezed out of her. In a last desperate attempt to survive, Mandy wrenched her head free from the tentacle wrapped around it and she bit one of the monster's tentacles. The monster yelped and Mandy proceeded to bite another one, chomping down as hard as she could. The monster let Mandy go and clutched its tentacles in pain. Big mistake though. Mandy punched the monster squarely in the face, the heavily enhanced punch throwing the monster clean off the track and sending it on an endless plummet through the Special Zone. Feist boomed with laughter.

"AMAZING WORK FEMALE!" he bellowed **"YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE LEFT TO REACH THE GOA L THOUGH. WILL YOU MAKE IT?!"**

Mandy could hardly believe her ears. How had nine minutes passed so quickly?! Mandy threw herself down onto her hands and feet and she scampered across the track as fast as she could. She looked like a natural mouse running through a maze. On all fours, Mandy was much faster then ever before. It made her wonder why she didn't run on all fours more often. Mandy panted and gasped as she traversed the track and hurried along towards the goal. Her heart hammered and her head poured with sweat. Would she make it in time? She hoped so, she was not willing to have another go at Feist's challenges to try and get home. Once was more than enough. Feist began to count down from ten as Mandy neared the goal ring. Running fast and willing herself to move faster and faster with every second, Mandy closed her eyes and made a frantic leap for the goal ring. With two seconds to spare…she passed through the ring and rolled to a stop on the other side. The ring disappeared and track extended back towards the purple chequered sphere. Gasping for breath, Mandy put a hand over her chest and wiped beads of sweat off her forehead.

"Good god…I thought I was going to lose…" she panted.

"Well dear, you won." said Wilson, hugging Mandy in congratulations "You'll get to go back home to Mobius Prime after me and Ruben win our games."

"Indeed." said Mandy, hugging Wilson back "I've gotta say, I don't think I'll be doing that again…"

"I hope our challenges won't be so lethal." Ruben gulped, his face the embodiment of horror and worry at what he had just seen.

Feist's voice boomed around them once again as if to remind the Mobians that he was still here.

"DELIGHTFUL, SENSATIONAL, WONDERFUL!" he thundered with joy **"YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE CHALLENGE MOUSE GIRL! YOU ARE EASILY THE MOST AMUSING MORTAL FEIST HAS SEEN IN A WHILE!"**

"You know chubby boy, you could have at least WARNED me the course would try and kill me!" shrieked Mandy crossly "I nearly died

because of that!"

"FEIST FINDS IT MORE AMUSING TO SHOCK THE CONTESTANTS." retorted Feist **"NOW DON'T YOU TALK TO FEIST IN THAT TONE OF VOICE OR FEIST WI LL…"**

"I don't give a damn what a big, creepy, overbearing, ill-tempered, bad-humoured, egotistical, badger-panda-giant thing has to say!" shouted Mandy "We don't want to play a game that can get us killed! We want to get home for a very good reason so we can do without you trying to…"

Then suddenly Feist waved his arm and completely out of nowhere, a stone cage formed around Mandy, trapping her inside and startling Wilson and Ruben. The cage was thick, stony and looked very tough. It would easily contain anybody, maybe even Sonic. Mandy tugged on the bars of the cage.

"Oy! Let me outta here!" she demanded.

"DUE TO YOUR OBSTINATE ATTITUDE, FEIST WILL NOW PUNISH YOU." sneered Feist **"AND THAT PUNISHMENT IS YOU WILL BE A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS FOR THE NEXT CHALLENGE. AND DON'T BOTHER PUNCHING YOUR WAY OUT OF THE CAGE, FEIST HAS MADE THE CAGE IND ESTRUCTIBLE JUST TO CONTAIN YOU."**

"Oh big fat whoop-de-do." muttered Mandy furiously "I'm supposed to be saved by somebody like some helpless princess locked in a tower. What a big insult to my honour this is." she moaned.

Feist ignored her and looked over at Wilson.

"YOU THERE, YOU ARE TO GO NEXT." said Feist **"YOUR CHALLENGE WILL BE TO MAKE IT ACROSS A FIELD OF BOUNCING BALLS AND TO THE MOUSE'S CAGE. YOU HAVE TO FIND THE KEY THAT WILL UNLOCK HER CAGE ON THE WAY THOUGH AND IT WILL BE CONCEALED IN ONE OF THE BALLS YOU BOUNCE ON. YOU HAVE TO COMPLETE YOUR CHALLENGE IN TEN MINUTES OR YOU WILL NOT BE GOING BACK TO MOBIUS PRIME. DO YOU ACCEPT?"**

"Course." sniffed Wilson "Nobody locks my wife in a cage and gets away with it!"

"VERY WELL…" said Feist with a dark grin as he began to form the next challenge for Wilson.

Feist held his hands out and out of the blue began to materialize a bunch of yellow spheres that seemed to form a path across the void of space. Mandy's cage was lifted off the chequered sphere and carried over to the end of the path of yellow spheres. The cage hovered in place but Mandy couldn't help but feel nervous at being positioned over pretty much nothing. She daren't imagine what it would be like if the cage fell. She forced herself not to look down and instead stare straight at Wilson. While hoping he would win this challenge, she also hoped that Wilson wouldn't come across anything that could potentially kill him. She did not want her husband to die in this whimsical world they were in. Wilson observed the path of spheres. There were five rows and there were about fifteen balls per row. It looked simple enough, just jump across them all and get to Mandy. Trouble was, Mandy's challenge looked very easy and yet she nearly had her head taken off. Wilson would be more vigilant in this case. Swallowing hard, he looked at Feist, the giant panda standing by with his arms folded and waiting for the fun to begin.

"So I just have to bounce on those balls and get to the cage at the end?" he asked "While also trying to find the key that will unlock it?"

"CORRECT MORTAL CANINE PERSON." boomed Feist with a sinister grin on his face **"AND LIKE YOUR MOUSE FRIEND, YOU HAVE A TIME LIMIT OF TEN MINUTES TOO. CAN YOU FIND THE KEY TO HER CAGE AND MAKE IT ACROSS BEFORE TIME'S UP?"**

"I sure hope I can…" muttered Wilson nervously.

Ruben could only watch and pray that Wilson would win. Otherwise poor Mandy would be going home without him and he did not want to imagine for one minute what that would be like for her. Wilson got down into a starting position and he was ready to spring into action.

"ON YOUR MARKS…GET SET…GO!" thundered Feist.

Wilson's legs activated before his brain had time to tell them to do something. He sprang into the air like a frog and he landed on the first bouncy ball. Feist wasn't kidding when he said they were bouncy. The moment Wilson's feet sank into the ball, he sprang straight off as if the ball was throwing him off for jumping on it. Wilson was taken aback by how springy it was and he found himself flailing about crazily in a comical spin as he hurled through the air and landed on another bouncy ball. This of course led to him being thrown into the air again. Mandy fought hard to keep herself from laughing at Wilson as this happened. She squeezed her lips together tightly and tried to repress herself. She failed. Ruben on the other hand didn't even try to resist. He just started laughing a very hearty laugh as Wilson was thrown from ball to ball like he was doing some crazy trampoline exercise. Even Feist was laughing at the poor dog, his booming laughter echoing and rumbling through the zone like a thunderstorm. Wilson cried out as he landed on another ball and bounced up into the air, fighting to control himself.

"Stop laughing at me you lot!" he yelped as Mandy and Ruben shrieked with laughter at him "It's not funnyyyyyyyyyy!" he was catapulted yet again into the air as he landed on another bouncy ball.

As Wilson spiralled through the air, he had just the idea to control himself. He whipped out his spinning blade weapon and he deployed both blades. He aimed the bottom blade down at the next bouncy ball he was heading for and the blade plunged straight through the ball like a knife through butter. The ball didn't bounce Wilson back up into the air for he was holding his spinning blade and the weapon had impaled itself into the ball. However, it ended up titling backwards and Wilson found himself hanging upside down while holding onto the ball and his weapon. He quickly righted himself and he pulled out his weapon. He sheathed it and put it away.

"OK, I bet I wasted a lot of time doing that." he muttered "Now to concentrate now I'm not bouncing so much. Before I reach Mandy, I need to find the key to her cage. Feist said it was concealed in one of the balls. I know just what to do about that..." he smiled deviously as a plan formed in his head.

He looked over at the new weapon Tails had given him, the spinning blade gauntlet. What was it he had said about it again? Wilson remembered, it would attack any enemy in its radius and wouldn't come back until it had hit them all. Maybe he would use it on the bouncy balls? Wilson reminded himself to keep one row intact so he could bounce his way over to Mandy. He clenched his fist and he thrust his arm forward. The pole whizzed off of the gauntlet it sat upon and its two blades deployed. It boomeranged through the air like a shuriken only much longer and more lethal. The spinning blade cleaved through a row of bouncy balls that ran down Wilson's right side. No key was concealed in any of them. It spiralled back around and cleaved through another row of balls. Still no key. Then it did a U-turn and sliced through a row of bouncy balls that was the second row from Wilson's left side. As it sliced the balls to pieces, Wilson saw the unmistakable shape of a key with a glowing golden aura suddenly appear as the row was destroyed by his spinning blade. He'd found it! Wilson held up his arm and the spinning blade returned to the gauntlet, blades sheathed upon re-entry. Wilson took out his normal spinning blade and he bounced off of the ball he was on and onto the next row. He bounced softly so that when he landed onto the next row, he only bounced up and down a little bit before coming to a stop. Now he was still, Wilson reached out with his spinning blade and he managed to edge the key towards him. He grabbed it and stood up straight, slipping the key onto his belt for safe keeping. How much time did he have to reach Mandy? As if reading his thoughts, Feist informed him.

"TWO MINUTES LEFT MORTAL, HURRY UP UNLESS YOU WANT TO LOSE!" taunted Feist.

"No way am I staying here while my wife goes home." retorted Wilson "We can't live without each other."

Wilson bounced off of the ball he was on and he landed perfectly onto the next ball. He had much better control of himself now as he landed on the next ball and bounced gracefully into the air. He bounced so high that he cleared five balls in a single leap! Only ten more to go and he was there! Wilson landed down on the sixth ball and he bounced up into the air, spiralling around as if doing some kind of dance routine. Mandy watched with awe, wishing she could

join Wilson in this since it looked kind of fun to her. It would be a lot better than being stuck in a cage that's for sure. Wilson landed on the tenth ball and then he sprung up into the air. He cleared the last five balls but he had bounced too hard so he flew straight over the cage! Thinking fast, Wilson swung his spinning blade down and he just caught the edge of the cage with one of the blades. This made him swing down and he shot up one of his hands to grip the edge of the cage. He nearly fell but his will to hold on just managed to keep him holding on. Feist then started to count down from ten. Damn it! Wilson only had ten seconds to unlock Mandy's cage and free her! Acting fast, Wilson pulled himself up onto the cage and he scrambled onto the roof. He leaned over the top and just as Feist got to two, he plunged the key into the key hole and twisted it just as Feist said "one". The door of the cage opened and Mandy climbed out of the cage and onto the roof. Excited, she hugged Wilson eagerly.

"You did it! You won!" she cheered "Now we both go home together!"

"Thank bloomin' goodness I did win!" gasped Wilson, his hand over his heart "I would not want to spend the rest of my life trapped in here without you my lovely Mandy."

That earned a kiss on the cheek from Mandy. Now the challenge was over, Wilson and Mandy were warped back over onto the chequered sphere and Feist loomed over them once again. He didn't look too pleased to see another winner for some reason. That made them feel nervous. But then Feist's face eased up into a smile. A friendly one? Not really.

"CONGRATULATIONS MUTT, YOU HAVE WON YOUR CHALLENGE." boomed Feist **"YOU CERTAINLY GAVE FEIST MUCH ENTERTAINMENT INDEED IN THAT ONE."**

"I aim to please." said Wilson modestly.

"NOW THEN, IT IS TIME FOR THE LITTLE PANTHER BOY TO HAVE HIS CHALLENGE." said Feist, his illuminated yellow eyes fixed on Ruben who only stared back at Feist nervously **"ARE YOU READY CHILD MORTAL?"**

"Um...I think so." said Ruben shakily "I h-hope my challenge won't be d-deadly at all."

"IT IS UP TO FEIST IF YOUR CHALLENGE WILL BE LETHAL OR NOT." snarled Feist **"BUT FEIST WILL BE LENIENT ON YOU SINCE YOU ARE A CHILD. CHILDREN AREN'T SO AMUSING TO WATCH WHEN THEY GET KILLED. HERE IS YOUR CHALLENGE!"**

Ruben braced himself as Feist began to form something else with his great and godly powers. The water panther was worried. Was Feist just toying with him when he said he would be lenient towards him just because he was a child and actually, would make a very deadly challenge? Or would he make the challenge not so lethal and keep to his word? Ruben dreaded to find out. But never in his worst nightmares did he imagine being given a challenge such as this. Next to the chequered sphere, a huge, rocky pillar began to materialize out of thin air, expanding to great heights as Feist formed it. Wilson and Mandy had been placed on top of the pillar before they could even realize what was going on. They clutched each other tightly, wondering what was happening. They were now twenty-five feet above the ground and looking down at Ruben. Despite how tall the pillar was, Feist still loomed over them. The pillar had a lot of knobs sticking out all around the pillar. Ruben gulped and stared at the giant pillar. He had a nasty feeling that he knew what Feist would order him to do. The panda-god glowered at Ruben, his eyes bathing him in a golden glow as he stared at him.

"YOUR CHALLENGE IS TO CLIMB UP THIS PILLAR AND REACH YOUR FRIENDS." boomed Feist **"IF YOU CAN CLIMB TO THE TOP THEN YOU WILL GET TO GO HOME WITH THE HOUND AND RODENT MORTALS. IF YOU FALL...THEN YOU LOSE, SIMPLE AS THAT."**

"But-but-but I c-can't c-climb!" stammered Ruben "I'm a hopeless climber! Please Feist, give me another challenge! I can't do this one! I can't climb!"

"YOUR CHALLENGE HAS BEEN GIVEN AND FEIST WILL NOT CHANGE IT!" bellowed Feist **"FEIST'S WORD IS FINAL! NOW DO THE CHALLENGE OR YOU WILL STAY HERE FOREVER WHILE**

YOUR FRIENDS GET TO GO BACK TO THEIR MOBIUS!"

Ruben looked like he wanted to weep. Fighting back fear, he stuck his nose into the air and marched over to the pillar.

"Fine, I'll do it." he muttered "Besides, I have a sure fire way of getting up there without climbing..."

"AH, AH, AH! NO CHEATING!" snapped Feist **"YOU ARE TO CLIMB THE PILLAR USING ONLY YOUR HANDS AND FEET! NO POWERS, NO TOOLS, NO WEAPONS! ONLY YOUR LIMBS! ANY ATTEMPTS TO CHEAT WILL RENDER THE CHALLENGE LOST AND YOU WILL NOT LEAVE THIS ZONE WITH YOUR FRIENDS!"**

Ruben cursed under his breath in Chinese. He had been planning to just propel himself into the air using his water powers but Feist wouldn't let him. He had to do this the hard way. True Ruben had been given climbing lessons over time by Sora but he'd barely progressed. He was still useless at climbing, he still needed lessons. Right now, Ruben was wishing Sora was here to cheer him on. She was the confidence he needed when he tried climbing. Gulping and sweating, Ruben grabbed onto the rocky knobs that stuck out from all around the pillar. He held his breath and he pulled himself up using all his strength. He raised his left leg and he rested his foot onto the first knob. He pushed himself up and he reached for another knob. His fingers closed around it. Wilson and Mandy watched from where they were and they began to feel afraid for Ruben. Would he make it? They knew he was hopeless at climbing so they feared that this challenge was sure to beat him. They hugged each other and prayed for Ruben's sake. Ruben fixed his eyes onto Wilson and Mandy, knowing they would be praying for him to succeed. Despite only being a couple of knobs up, he was already sweating like a man on a hot summer's day. Ruben pulled himself up to another knob and he grabbed hold of it. His foot felt around for another knob. He brushed over one as he felt for it and he rested his foot on it. He pushed himself up and grabbed hold of another knob. His heart was hammering and he was already panting despite having only just started. Why did Feist curse him with this challenge?! Did Feist somehow know he was useless at climbing and did this challenge just to torture him? Why couldn't he have had

Wilson's challenge?! At least that looked fun! Ruben swallowed hard and he pulled himself onto another knob. His foot slipped and he found himself dangling precariously by his fingers. He forced himself not to panic. When climbing, panicking is the worst and probably stupidest thing you can do. That was what Sora had told him. If you lose a footing, DO NOT panic, just try and find it again. Ruben felt around frantically for the footholds with his scrambling feet. He could feel himself losing strength in his fingers. If he didn't balance himself now, he'd fall! Ruben's foot found a knob and he pressed it hard down onto the knob. Gasping for breath, Ruben wiped his forehead and he looked back up at Wilson and Mandy. He'd barely even made it a foot off the ground! What hope did he have of making it to twenty-five feet?! But Ruben knew what would befall him if he'd failed. He couldn't bear the thought of being stuck in the Special Zone forever. He'd never get to tell Sora he loved her if that was the case. Ruben then put on a serious face. He was going to succeed, he was NOT going to let Feist have the honour of watching him fail. He WAS going to win and show Feist that he couldn't beat him! Ignoring his worries, Ruben pressed on. He reached up and grabbed another knob and he pulled himself further up the pillar. Slowly but steadily, Ruben began to make his way up the pillar. It was as if new strength had come to him at last and he now had the power to make the climb. Wilson and Mandy were astonished. Ruben seemed to be doing much better now. What had suddenly come over him and made him more able than before? Was it simply a case of finding the skill he never knew he had before? They watched on as Ruben cleared a few feet without stopping. The truth was, it was his determination to get home and see Sora again that made him carry on and try as hard as he could to succeed. Not to mention Ruben was sick and tired of being unable to climb. This time, he was going to show that he could do it. And right now, it seemed he could do it. Ruben cleared several more feet and he looked up at Wilson and Mandy. They suddenly seemed much closer now. His heart leapt excitedly. He was going to make it! Ruben kept on climbing, pushing and pulling himself up and up until he was just a few feet away from Wilson and Mandy. But it seemed his luck might run out. He grabbed onto a knob and suddenly, it came free off the pillar and ended up in his hand. Ruben jerked back slightly and he found himself hanging by one arm onto a knob. The knob that had come out fell down to the ground. Ruben looked down

and suddenly realized how high he was. He had climbed twenty feet! The water panther suddenly grew scared again. He closed his eyes and whimpered.

"H-help! P-please! I wanna get down!" he screamed.

"Ruben, hang on! You're almost there!" cheered Mandy "You can do it little dude! Come on, just a bit further!"

"Come on Ruben, don't give up!" Wilson cried supportively "You can do it, I know you can!"

Ruben took in their supporting words and he found the power he had a moment ago once again. He breathed slowly to himself. He could do it, he WOULD do it. Ruben felt around for some footholds with his feet and he placed them onto the footholds. Now he was balanced, he trekked to the side and found another knob to grab onto. He grabbed onto it and he pulled himself up. He pushed and pulled himself up the knobs until finally, he came to the top of the pillar. He gripped the edges of the pillar and he pulled himself on, grunting with effort. Now he was on the top of the pillar with Wilson and Mandy, he gasped with relief and then jumped up and down with joy.

"HALLELUJAH! I DID IT!" he screamed with joy "Oh my sainted ancestors, I did it! I finally managed to climb something and win!"

Wilson and Mandy hugged Ruben delightedly.

"Well done kiddo!" cried Mandy.

"Sora would be so proud of you." said Wilson.

Ruben swelled with pride upon hearing that. That was by far the nicest thing anyone had ever said to him. He could almost imagine what Sora would say when he told her what he'd accomplished. Then suddenly, the pillar began to shrink back down into the chequered sphere and Feist loomed above the Mobians once again. Now the three of them had completed his challenges, he didn't seem so threatening now all of the sudden. Maybe it was because in a way, they had all beaten him.

"FANTASTIC INDEED! YOU THREE HAVE ALL SUCCEEDED IN YOUR CHALLENGES!" boomed Feist **"I KNEW YOU PRIME-ZONERS WOULD BE ENTERTAINING!"**

"Flattered." said Mandy dully "Now do we get our portal back home like you promised?"

Feist suddenly had a very nasty smile on his face. It was the kind of smile that only the devil himself could manage.

"ABSOULTELY NOT." crowed Feist.

Wison, Mandy and Ruben all stared in disbelief at the giant panda as if he'd just shown them something disgusting.

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAT!" they all screamed incredulously.

"But you promised!" yelled Ruben "That's dishonourable of you to break your promise like that!"

"FEIST NEVER PROMISES, FEIST ONLY DECIEVES." snorted Feist **"FEIST NEVER REALLY HAD THE POWER TO SEND PEOPLE BACK TO THEIR OWN ZONES. FEIST ONLY SAID THAT TO MAKE YOU ALL COMPLY ANYBODY WHO ENDED UP HERE REMAINS HERE FOREVER. AND FEIST DOES WITH THEM WHAT HE PLEASES. YOU THREE ARE SO ENTERTAINING THAT YOU WILL ALL BE FEIST'S PERSONAL PLAY THINGS! YOU'LL ENTERTAIN FEIST UNTIL THE DAY YOU ALL DIE!"**

"Over my dead body!" screamed Mandy, snatching Wilson's spinning blade off of him and deploying its blades.

"No Mandy don't!" protested Wilson, trying to hold Mandy back.

When Mandy lost her temper, nothing could restrain her. It was like fighting with a lion only this lion was able to stand on two legs and had hands and more durable features. Mandy wrestled out of Wilson's grip and she threw the blade directly into Feist's eye. Despite being a god, Feist was not immune to pain. The blade skewered him in the eye and Feist bellowed a thunderous scream of

pain. To add insult to injury, Ruben stepped forward and threw water into his other eye. As useless as it was, the two just wanted to show to Feist that they weren't scared of him. Feist rubbed his eyes better and be bellowed in rage.

"Oh great! See, now you made him angry!" shouted Wilson angrily "We're all dead now!"

Mandy and Ruben stepped back. Maybe this hadn't been such a good idea after all. Feist's body disappeared into nothing, leaving behind only his eyes and they both glowered at the three Mobians. The scenery all around began to turn into a storm of black colours as if reflecting his furious mood.

"HOW DARE YOU ASSAULT A GOD IN HIS OWN DOMAIN!" he roared **"FEIST WILL SMITE YOU ALL FOR THIS! YOU WILL REGRET EVER ASSAULTING FEIST LIKE THIS!"**

Wilson, Mandy and Ruben all hugged each other fearfully as they prepared for the worst to come to them. Would Feist kill them all? If so, how would he do it? Horribly and painfully? Would he make them suffer terribly? They would never find out for out of the blue, a white portal appeared suddenly behind the three, catching Feist by surprise and making the eyes back away.

"WHAT IS THIS?!" Feist blurted in surprise.

Wilson, Mandy and Ruben looked behind and they saw the white portal that shone brightly behind them.

"Hey, what the heck is that?" asked Mandy.

"Dunno, but I bet it leads somewhere better than here!" cried Wilson.

"And what if it doesn't?" asked Ruben nervously.

"I'm not gonna stay with tall, dark and plushy." said Mandy "I'm willing to take that risk. Come on guys, let's go through that portal!"

With that said, all three Mobians darted through the portal before Feist could grab them. The portal vanished, leaving Feist all alone in the Special Zone. He had lost his most entertaining victims. Feist

could do nothing more than bellow furiously in anger, the entire zone shaking and shuddering as it felt his rage...

Footnotes:

***We're going back a while in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius* . All the way back to the first arc to be precise…**

Well that was one heck of an adventure wasn't it?! And what is it with Mobius and having evil pandas? Who knows...

That's it for this chapter. Next time, it's time for Knuckles, Shade, Amy, Cream and Sora to take the spotlight as they end up on a World of Brawl...

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 7

Story 172: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 7: World of Brawl

"Knuckles! Knuckles! Are you OK? Please wake up!"

That was the voice of Shade the Echidna pleading to the unconscious body of Knuckles the Echidna. Shade had not long since woken up and was now trying to help Knuckles come around by gently shaking the strong-fisted echidna. Shade prayed that Knuckles wasn't too badly hurt or worse as she tried to revive him.

The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were going through one of their most intense, big and mind-blowing case yet. Time rifts, anomalies that ripped through the space time continuum and sucked up whatever they could find, had been appearing consistently for weeks on Mobius Prime and shortly before, Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat had arrived at New Mobotropolis to let Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends know that they were seconds away from disaster. The time rifts spelt the end of the world apparently, meaning Mobius Prime would be no more unless the Royal Fighters could stop the time rifts in time. A huge time rift had appeared over New Mobotropolis and ended up sucking up all the Royal Fighters and Dr. Eggman and Dr. Finitevus. The result had the team separated and thrown across the multi-verse, landing on random world after random world. Knuckles and Shade had been dumped into a vast stretching desert plain that seemed featureless for miles around and had sand blowing up slightly and drifting across the plains in the wind. So far, it didn't seem like anybody else Shade knew had ended up here. It just seemed to be her and Knuckles so far. Thank goodness they hadn't landed anywhere perilous, or that Finitevus had ended up with them. That would have been terrible. After a few more shakes, Knuckles finally came too and he coughed slightly. Massaging his temples, Knuckles sat up while Shade supported him slightly, pleased to see him awake.

"Oh man what the heck happened…" muttered Knuckles groggily.

"Knuckles, thank goodness you're OK!" cried Shade, hugging him as if he'd risen from the dead and she was overwhelmed with joy to see him.

"Oh Shade, it's good to see we weren't separated." said Knuckles, hugging Shade back "Do you remember what happened at all? My memory's a bit fuzzy."

"We were guarding the Master Emerald and then suddenly a streak of light appeared above Angel Island and sucked us in." explained Shade "We've been out for quite a while and…it looks like we've been dumped in the middle of nowhere."

Knuckles had to look around and see what Shade meant. True to what Shade had just said, they really were in the middle of nowhere. There was nothing around for as far as the eye could see. Just plain old rocky ground with faint traces of sand and dust for miles around. It seemed they had ended up on a pretty featureless world. Knuckles didn't mind too much although he would have preferred something a lot less vapid looking then just sand, dust and nothing more. His brows furrowed and his mouth curled down in distaste.

"Good grief, we really are in the middle of nowhere aren't we?" sniffed Knuckles "Looks like Sandopolis back on Angel Island."

"Are we still on Angel Island?" Shade suddenly wondered, a finger curled over her lips in thought "Have we merely been relocated from the emerald shrine to Sandopolis?"

"Nah, the streak of light wouldn't do that." said Knuckles, waving off the thought "When Sonic was taken by one, it threw him into another dimension. We must be somewhere else."

"An alternate version of Angel Island?" suggested Shade.

"That would be nice." said Knuckles "I'll laugh if I end up meeting another version of myself if that's the case!"

Shade forced a smile onto her face but she didn't really laugh at the joke. She wasn't in the mood for humour right now. She was thinking deeply about the time rift.

"Knuckles, that light in the sky that took us away and brought us here as a lot bigger than the ones that preceded it. Do you…think that's a sign of something terrible?" she asked worriedly.

"Terrible? As in something catastrophic?" mused Knuckles "You think this might be an apocalyptic thing right?"

Shade nodded, her face deathly pale and her eyes full of fright. Shade rarely ever lost her cool but in this case, she couldn't help but feel worried.

"Hmm…it's a possibility." said Knuckles "Maybe those time rifts will do more than just suck up people. It could suck up buildings and then cities and then…the entire world! The fact the time rifts are getting bigger is a big enough indicator on how likely this is to happen!"

Knuckles soon found himself sharing Shard's concerns.

"Shade, I think you might be right!" he cried "We have to get back home and figure out how to stop those lights!"

"But how?" asked Shade hopelessly "What can we do to stop those lights in the sky? It's not like it's something we understand enough to figure out how to stop."

"We'll find a way my love." said Knuckles reassuringly, putting an arm around his girlfriend's waist "Maybe the Master Emerald might have the power to stop those light things, who knows?"

"I don't think even the Master Emerald will stop the streak of light…" said Shade unsurely, clutching Knuckles as if hoping he would perform a miracle of some kind and sort this out in a millisecond.

Knuckles began to wonder if Shade was right. Was this something beyond even the Master Emerald's capabilities? He knew that the Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald had great power but even they had their limits. Would they not be enough to stop the time rifts? Knuckles had no idea but he hoped dearly that they would be able to sort out the problem. Then suddenly, completely out of nowhere, Knuckles and Shade could hear the sound of an

approaching vehicle. It sounded like a hover bike of some kind. At least something was happening now. Whether it was good or bad, Knuckles and Shade would find out. The echidnas picked themselves up and waited for the vehicle to approach them. As it came into view, they saw that it was indeed a hover bike. It was rather bulky looking in appearance and made to look like it belonged to a bad boy with a black colour scheme, flames tattooed all over the sides and front and spikes protruding from around. The rider looked like a stereotypical bad boy too. He was a ferret dressed completely in leather, making him look like a proper bad biker dude. His black leather jacket was open, revealing his uncovered, muscular chest and well-toned stomach. His arms were huge and muscular, suggesting he was very strong and could easily throw a powerful punch. His eyes seemed to burn a fiery red colour. His fur matched his eye colour. Knuckles and Shade stared at the stranger and they wondered if he was a friend or a foe. He certainly didn't look very friendly. The ferret sneered at the echidnas.

"Puh, I've been traversing these deserts for miles in hope of finding any contestants for Brawlbius's latest tournament and I just find two scrawny echidnas out on their own?" he sniffed rudely "Give me a break."

"What did you say?!" snarled Knuckles, bashing his fists together and itching to punch the ferret.

"You're unwise to underestimate us tough guy." said Shade coldly "We are not just "scrawny echidnas", we are guardians and we will give you a pounding if you dare insult us again!"

"Oooooh, tough nuts are ya?" snorted the ferret "I'd love to see you two out in the battlefield. The name's Don Troy by the way. Who are you two scrubs?"

"I'm Knuckles and she's Shade." said Knuckles crossly "What are you doing out here?"

"Looking for new contestants to compete in Brawlbius's latest tournament knuckle-head." explained Don "You see, the tournament needs a few more contestants before we can begin. We're five people short."

"Brawlbius?" snorted Shade, trying not to laugh "What kind of stupid name is that?"

"It's the name of the planet you dumb woman." snapped Don, pointing his finger like a rifle at Shade "This is the world of Brawlbius, a world where the fighting never stops. We love nothing more than fighting and tournaments and having a right royal throw down of epic proportions. We get visitors from all over the multi-verse to try their hand at the Brawlbius Battle Brawl Tournament and we need five more contestants before we start. You two up for it?"

Knuckles and Shade stared incredulously at the ferret. A world where people love nothing more than fighting and tournaments? What kind of world was this?! Knuckles instantly thought about Marik the Martian and how he loved warfare and such. He'd probably enjoy this world if it did nothing but fight. Brawlbius was just right for him. Knuckles would have been tempted to join this tournament but given that Mobius was likely in danger, he couldn't waste time. He and Shade had to get home and fast so whether Don liked it or not, they would not be joining this crazy tournament. They were leaving this world and that was that.

"Sorry Don, but we're not interested." said Knuckles, waving his hand dismissively "Me and Shade have more important matters to attend to."

"Yes, we cannot stay here, our world needs us desperately." said Shade "Good day to you Don."

Don however looked like he was refusing to take no for an answer. He whipped out a gun-shaped weapon from inside his jacket and he aimed it at Knuckles and Shade. The gun was bulky with a square nozzle and a large handle. So large that his hand didn't fully close around it. He pulled the trigger and the gun fired two bolts of electricity at Knuckles and Shade. The bolts hit them and the two seized up as if they were suddenly frozen. Electricity coursed through their bodies and they suddenly collapsed onto the ground, still conscious miraculously enough. But they couldn't move. They couldn't even feel their limbs. The only things they could still feel were their heads and torsos.

"Hey! What gives?! We can't move!" cried Knuckles.

"I can't feel my arms or legs!" blurted Shade.

"I just numbed your bodies for a minute." said Don "You'll recover… eventually. Anyway, I'm not waiting another minute for the next tournament to begin. I love watching them brawls and I refuse to wait any longer! So like it or not, you two are joining the tournament and there's nothing you can do about it."

"Don, we don't have time for this!" shouted Knuckles "Our Mobius is in danger and we need to save it from disaster!"

"I missed the part where that was my problem punk." snapped Don "Now shut up before I numb you to the point of unconsciousness!"

He seized Knuckles and Shade by their dreadlocks and he dumped them onto his hover bike. The two could do nothing but sit in the passenger seats of the bike as Don started it up and then sped off through the plains, taking them to where the tournament would presumably be taking part. The echidnas were not pleased at all with their current situation. They had no time to waste, they didn't want to just take part in some crummy tournament because a fight-happy version of Mobius demands it, they wanted to try and stop the streaks of light in the sky before they doomed Mobius! But what could they do about it? They couldn't escape and even when their paralysis wore off, Don would likely do something else to them to make sure they cooperated. Hopefully when they fought their fights and won or lost them, they'd be allowed to go free and hopefully get back to Mobius Prime. Knuckles knew one thing, he wasn't looking forward to this very much. The thought of Mobius in peril worried him too much to even think about fighting…

"I can't believe we ended up being forced into this!" sighed Amy Rose, her elbow on her knee and her head resting on her hand as she sat on the bench of the changing rooms and sighed loudly.

"I can't believe it either Miss Rose." piped Cream the Rabbit, Amy's friend and little sister figure "We're being forced into taking part in a

horrible fighting tournament! It's horrible! I bet it's going to be nasty and violent!"

"I just pray to god my little brother hasn't been forced into this." sighed Sora Prower, the super spy sister of Sonic's best friend Miles "Tails" Prower "That is, if he's even on this planet like we are."

Knuckles and Shade were NOT the only Prime Zoners that had ended up on Brawlbius it seemed. Amy, Cream and Sora had ended up on Brawlbius too. The time rift had merely dropped them off some distance away from Knuckles and Shade so the two echidnas had missed the girls before they were captured and brought to the Brawlbius Battle Brawl Tournament. Amy had been the first to wake up of the three and after waking up Sora and Cream, they had explored some of the plains to see what they could make of the planet and suddenly, they had been paralyzed and kidnapped by another biker. Now they were here, sitting in the tournament changing rooms and waiting for the tournament to begin. The girls were not looking forward to this tournament at all, especially since they knew that Mobius Prime was on the verge of destruction thanks to information Silver and Blaze had given them. Amy prayed with all her might that Sonic would come out of nowhere and save her, Cream and Sora from this nightmare so they could try and save Mobius Prime. But it seemed that wasn't happening any time soon. Amy even wondered if Sonic was on Brawlbius like she, Cream and Sora were. If he was on another world (which he is as you know) then it was tough luck for her. They'd just have to fine their own way off of Brawlbius and out of this tournament. As for the tournament, it would begin the moment two more contestants had been found and unbeknownst to the girls, they were on their way right now. They'd sure be surprised to see that it would be Knuckles and Shade who'd be joining them in this tournament. Amy sighed again and she drummed her fingers on her thigh.

"What sick world would like nothing but fighting?!" she grumbled for the millionth time "I mean what is the point of fighting, fighting, fighting?! Wouldn't you get bored of it eventually? Why couldn't we have ended up somewhere a bit more romantic? THAT would be nice!"

"My thoughts exactly." said Sora dully "Or somewhere fitting for a

spy like me would be cool too. Anywhere would be better than here I'm certain of. And the worst part is while we're wasting time fighting mindlessly, Mobius Prime's final hour ticks away and threatens to eclipse the world! We shouldn't be doing this, we should be trying to save our world!"

"But we can't, we have to do this or we'll get killed." said Cream fearfully "That mean hyena on the bike warned us that if we refused to comply, he'd kill us all with these discs he's attached to our backs."

She felt behind her and her fingers brushed over a solid metal disc that was fixed to her back. Amy and Sora had one too. After they had been captured, the discs had been equipped onto their backs and no matter how hard they tried, they couldn't get the discs off. Cream's pet Chao Cheese didn't have one on since he was too small. The girls had no idea would the discs would do since apparently, they were meant to kill them but they didn't dare risk it. The discs could be harmless and just be there to make them do as they were told but the girls couldn't be sure on that. It was not wise to take the unknown to chance. If you don't know it's harmless then don't try it. It could well BE harmful. Also the girls wanted to live long enough to save Mobius Prime so they didn't want to risk death from the discs on their backs. Amy and Sora both sighed as they felt the discs, wishing they could remove them.

"Yeah, if only we could take the damn things off and then we could be on our way." muttered Sora "I dread to think what those discs will do to us. Electrocute us to death? Poison us? Impale us? There's a few possibilities on what they could do."

"And I for one do not want to find out." said Amy "Hopefully when we compete in this stupid tournament, we'll be relieved of the discs and then we can get out of here."

"I hope so too." said Cream "I'm really worried about Mobius. Mr. Silver and Miss Blaze said the time rifts mean it's coming to an end. I don't want the world to end! Especially since I'm separated from mother and father! I don't want them to die along with Mobius!"

"Oh Cream, we all want to save Mobius." said Amy, hugging Cream

sympathetically "And I'm sure we will. We just need to get off this dimension that's all."

"And that will be easier said then done." said Sora grimly "They're not going to let us leave here so easily…"

Amy nodded, reluctantly agreeing with Sora on her statement. The discs on their backs were enough proof that the people in charge of the tournament were not going to let them go just like that. They would have to find some way out of this before Mobius ended. But would they succeed? It was definitely a terrible question to ask yourself in a moment like this. Imagine your world coming to an end and you're helpless to try and save it because you're being forced against your will to compete in a tournament. It would be a terrible time to think about succeeding in time indeed. Amy, Cream and Sora soon had something else to think about for the door to the changing room opened up and in walked Don Troy, dragging Knuckles and Shade inside by their arms. Their paralysis had worn off so they could feel their limbs again but Don had attached a disc each to their backs and warned them that if they refused to compete, the discs would kill them and he had gone on to describe what the discs would do to them. Said description included multiple steel legs emerging from within the shell of the disc and impaling them all over their bodies before a huge spike in the centre of the disc would finish them off. Knuckles and Shade assumed he was bluffing but they daren't put that to the test. Better safe then sorry as the old saying goes. Don pushed Knuckles and Shade towards the girls and he grinned nastily at them all.

"Looks like my friend Tony Bark found three more contestants." he purred nastily "Very well, we got the last five contestants we need for the tournament to begin. Hope you're all ready for it…"

Laughing a horrible, nasty laugh, Don left the Mobians alone in the changing room while he took his seat in the audience. Knuckles and Shade glowered at Don as he left.

"Oooooh I'm so gonna kill that ferret when I get my hands on him!" growled Knuckles.

"I hope you save some for me handsome, I want to hack him to

pieces too." said Shade, her voice like ice.

"Knuckles! Shade! Oh my gosh, you're here too?!" cried Amy in alarm.

"Looks like the time rift's taking everybody." said Sora "Even people we didn't expect."

Knuckles and Shade's jaws dropped at the sight of the three girls before them.

"Amy?! Cream?! Sora?!" gasped Knuckles "The streak of light must have got you three too!"

"Thanks for stating the obvious." said Amy snarkily "We're not the only ones though, the time rift sucked all of us up, and I have a feeling that includes Sonic and the rest of the Royal Fighters. I hope they're OK…"

"We do too." said Shade "And by the way, what did Sora mean when she said "time rift" earlier?"

"Oh that's the apparent name of the lights in the sky." explained Sora "Silver and Blaze told us about them. They said…that they mean doom for Mobius. Our world is ending because of the time rifts."

Knuckles and Shade were horrified at this revelation. Their guesses were accurate and their worst fears were coming true! The time rifts were dooming Mobius! Now they HAD to get back to Mobius Prime before the world came to an end! Sadly though, that wouldn't be easy. They all had discs on their backs to threaten their lives should they try to leave or refuse to compete and they couldn't save the world if they were dead so they had to do as they were told for their own good. Knuckles regained himself and he folded his arms.

"So Shade, it seems you were right." said Knuckles sadly "The time rift things do mean something terrible."

"I wish I had been wrong." said Shade miserably "But I was right, the time rift being bigger meant something terrible was going to happen to Mobius. And we're helpless to stop it. The world is doomed…"

"Miss Shade, please don't give up." said Cream, her eyes wide and full of sorrow "We will save Mobius, I know we will! We've saved the world countless times before, we won't fail to save it this time!"

"I wish I could share your optimism little girl." said Shade gravely "But I can't. We're stuck here with no way off and we're wasting time away being forced into fighting in this crackpot tournament. We won't save Mobius in time, I just know it."

"Well we're not losing hope." said Sora "I know with all my heart that we'll succeed in saving Mobius. Let's just hope that the world doesn't end by the time we get out of here. I actually kinda want another time rift to open up and take us out of here. It's the only time a time rift appearing would be convenient I guess."

"Too right." said Knuckles "I also wonder if Finitevus would be able to work out how to stop the time rifts…"

"Funny you should mention the weirdo in the cape." said Amy, raising a finger "He and Eggman teamed up with us to try and stop the time rifts and they got sucked up into the time rift that brought us here. I wonder where they are now?"

"Hopefully on this planet so Finitevus can use his warp rings to warp us home." said Knuckles, frowning slightly since needing Finitevus's help was the last thing he ever wanted to sink down to "That would be great."

"As much as I hate to say it…yes it would." said Amy, nodding agreeably.

Their conversation was brought to an abrupt end for the door swung open and clanged against the wall, startling the Mobians and making them jump about a foot into the air. It was Don and he had his friend, name apparently Tony Bark, with him. Tony was a hyena who was dressed in leather biker gear just like Don was. He was equally as muscular and had terrible jaws crammed full of teeth. They packed a powerful bite and he had bitten many contestants in the past when he had competed in the tournament. His fur was a brilliant golden colour with streaks of brown all over. Knuckles wasn't sure who looked worse, Don or Tony. They both looked equally as punchable

as far as he was concerned. Amy glared at Tony, itching to hammer his head in after what he had done to her, Sora and Cream. For their own sake though, both Knuckles and Amy refrained from attacking the two. Don and Tony smiled nastily at them.

"It's tournament time." crooned Tony, his voice hinting heavily that he had a smoking habit "The pink girl in the hideous red dress is to go first. Hurry up girlie, it's time for your battle!"

"Why does every jerk I meet think my dress is hideous?!" whined Amy furiously.

"Maybe evil people don't like that kind of dress?" said Sora, shrugging.

Amy sniffed and she stalked out of the changing room with Don and Tony. The two evil Mobians led her out onto the arena, which was large and looked very much like an old coliseum from the Roman times. It was even made of stone just like the coliseum in Rome is. It was round and stretched a good few meters all around. There were crowds upon crowds of people all staring at Amy and cheering like crazy. Amy could almost imagine the terrible things that the Romans did in these coliseums. She shook her head, pushing the horrible thoughts aside. She had to concentrate on the match. Even though she didn't want to do this silly tournament, at the same time she wanted to show Don and Tony she meant business and hopefully intimidate them in some way. Amy breathed in and breathed out, relaxing herself and preparing for the fight. This was it, she was going to have her first fight of the tournament. And she doubted it would be pretty. Amy looked ahead of her and noticed that a female echidna was standing before her. But it was not Shade much to her relief. It was somebody she had never seen before. The echidna was slender and curvaceous in appearance with a graceful looking body but her face betrayed whatever beauty her body displayed for it was twisted in a horrible smirk that would make any beautiful woman suddenly look unappealing. Her dreadlocks had criss-crossing white stripes on them but one dreadlock was completely metal. She had hair just at the front of her head. She wore a black leather body suit that certainly seemed to compliment her figure and seemed very fitting for her. She carried a whip with her. Amy sniffed. She didn't look like much of a challenge that's for sure. She'd floor

this woman easily. And yet Amy had to wonder had she been forced against her will to fight in this tournament too? Sentimentality was not compulsory right now though, Amy had to fight and she would win this regardless of her opponent's position. The crowd fell silent as the announcer's booming voice echoed from the speakers all around the arena.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!" squealed the announcer delightedly "I am happy to announce that the 2156 Brawlbius Battle Brawl Tournament can NOW begin! We have twenty contestants from all over the multi-verse here today, ready to duke it out and prove who the ultimate fighter is! OH YEAH!"

The crowd erupted into tumultuous applause.

"We now begin round one of our glorious tournament! From Mobius Prime, we have a rather ghastly looking constant who doesn't look like much. Amy Rose!"

Amy gasped. How did the announcer know her name? Given this was a fighting tournament, it was likely he knew all the contestants names so why let it bother her? The crowd booed Amy, clearly thinking that she was some puny, pathetic girl. They were expecting her to last a very short amount of time on the battlefield. Well Amy would show them a thing or two! She summoned her trademarked Piko-Piko hammer to her hands and she prepared to battle. The announcer continued.

"And from Mobius-Echid. We have a rather promising looking contestant. Lien-Da!" he sounded much more enthusiastic about Amy's opponent than Amy herself.

The crowd cheered for Lien-Da, clearly thinking that she was the one to root for in this battle. Lien-Da stretched out her whip and smiled confidently at Amy.

"Look at that little girl, the crowd's cheering for marvellous me." she boasted "They know who's going to win this fight and it'll be me."

"Allow me to defy your expectations you leather-clad egotist!" snarled Amy, her hammer poised and ready to attack.

"Three…two…one…LET THE BATTLE COMMENCE!" bellowed the announcer.

Lien-Da was the first to attack. She raised her whip and she charged towards Amy, yelling at the top of her voice. Amy just waited for her to come and the moment Lien-Da was within striking distance of her, Amy swung her hammer and walloped the echidna across the face. The hammer sent Lien-Da's head jerking violently to the right and she could have sworn she felt her neck crack under the strain. The crowd was astonished by that hammer blow. Seemed Amy might have more to offer than they thought. Amy smirked at Lien-Da and she raised her hammer, ready for another blow. Lien-Da lashed out with her whip but Amy held her hammer in the way so the whip just wrapped around Amy's hammer instead. Amy yanked on the hammer and pulled the whip out of Lien-Da's hands. Lien-Da gasped in surprise but she didn't let it bother her for long. She ran towards Amy, her hands open and her teeth clenched. Amy just hammered Lien-Da in the chin, sending her head jerking backwards and throwing her onto her back. Lien-Da gripped her head in pain, wishing that she'd stop seeing stars already. Amy hammered her in the gut, taking all the wind out of her and making Lien-Da gasp in pain. Lien-Da forced herself onto her feet but Amy proceeded to hammer on the head and knock her back down again. Lien-Da growled furiously and she clawed at Amy. Amy dodged and she kicked Lien-Da in the groin. Lien-Da shrieked in agony and she clutched her tender spot. Taking advantage of this, Amy walloped her into the air as if she was playing baseball with the echidna. Lien-Da hurled through the air, screaming loudly as she did so and she plummeted down like a cannon ball. She crashed into the wall head first, the blow knocking her out instantly. Amy just smirked at the unconscious Lien-Da.

"Oh and look at that. I win loser." she sneered.

Given Lien-Da was unconscious, the match was instantly over and the announcer's voice boomed out of the speakers once again.

"Aaaaaaaaand it's a knock out! What a surprise this is! Looks like our winner is the Prime Zoner, Amy Rose!" bellowed the announcer "Let's hear it for our winner people! Three cheers for Amy Rose!"

The crowd reluctantly cheered for Amy. Amy just smiled and bowed down to the audience, loving the cheering and glory she was receiving right now. As she preened, Lien-Da was carried out of the arena by the medical staff that worked in this arena.

"Hmm, this wasn't so bad after all." said Amy "Although it still doesn't help the fact Mobius Prime's ticking away to disaster…"

Her fight now over, Amy was escorted back into the changing rooms by Don and Tony. Upon arrival, she was greeted ecstatically by her friends. They had seen the whole match through the changing room windows and were well impressed with how well Amy had done out there.

"Well done Amy! You sure showed that woman down there what for!" cheered Cream.

"You sure showed her how it's done." said Knuckles with a smile "Congratulations."

"Thanks guys." said Amy gloatingly "I can't believe how easily I bet that stupid echidna too. She didn't even TRY to beat me!"

"I'll bet she did, just not very hard." laughed Sora "I wonder if our matches will be anywhere near as easy as yours was?"

"We'll find out shortly." said Shade "I have a feeling the next match is about to begin."

Shade couldn't be more right for Don and Tony re-entered the changing room and Tony pointed at Cream. The rabbit looked horrified at the fact she was picked to go next.

"You, you're next." said Tony "Time for Round 2 little girl."

"I don't want to go next!" whimpered Cream.

"Cream, just do what they say." sighed Amy "It'll make your life a lot easier." She motioned to the disc on her back as if to remind Cream what was coming should they refuse.

Reluctantly, Cream did as she was told. She followed Don and Tony

as they led her out of the changing rooms and onto the arena. Cheese flew after her. It didn't seem like Cheese counted as a separate contestant although given he was often used as a weapon for Cream, he'd likely count as a weapon more than a contestant so he was allowed to come with Cream. Cream walked shyly out onto the arena while Don and Tony took their seats back in the crowd. The crowd seemed almost to sneer at Cream as she took her place in the arena. They clearly didn't think she looked like much. Just some scrawny, pathetic, wimpy little girl waiting to be pummelled by a superior opponent. This made Cream feel like crying. She hated being made fun of, especially since she liked helping and didn't want to feel useless. Cheese folded his stubby little arms and glowered back at the crowd. Cream looked ahead of her and noticed her opponent was in the arena too. He looked very much like Ginger the Fox, Tails's wormy deceased cousin, only he was slightly taller than Ginger was and he was dressed in karate robes. Maybe some alternate version of Ginger perhaps? Cream knew that she had to beat him otherwise Amy would never speak to her again. The Ginger look alike sneered at Cream, thinking he had no competition and that he had this in the bag.

"Time for Round Two ladies and gentlemen! This tournament's just about to get more exciting!" cried the announcer loudly "For our contestants, representing Mobius Prime, we have Cream the Rabbit! And representing Loser-World, we have Ginger the Karate Master!"

The crowd cheered for Ginger and booed Cream, making Cream feel even worse and Ginger feel all the more confident about this match.

"If I were you child, I'd forfeit. You can't win this one." gloated Ginger, striking a conceited pose as if hoping the crowd would admire his looks.

"I don't see how I can take you seriously when you come from a place called "Loser-World"." sneered Cream, trying to sound cool and collected.

Ginger glared at her but said nothing more.

"Three…two…one…LET THE BATTLE COMMENCE!" barked the

announcer.

The crowd shrieked with frenzied delight as Ginger ran towards Cream and leaped into the air. He landed before Cream and began to strike some karate-like poses as if choosing the right moment to strike. Cream just stood there, wondering what the heck he was doing. As he did this, he began making silly noises like what you would hear in a cartoon show. He sounded like somebody doing a bad impression of a martial artist. Cream just sighed, almost embarrassed that this was her opponent, somebody who just did silly poses and made noises. Ginger stood on one foot, raised his hands, made a noise and…Cream just promptly kicked him in the groin as hard as she could. Ginger's face turned a mauve shade of purple and he clutched his groin in pain. He looked hurt that much was certain and collapsed onto the floor of the arena, squealing like a girl. The crowd erupted into shrieks of laughter at Ginger's misfortune.

"Eeeeeek…my groin! My one weakness!" whimpered Ginger.

"No wonder you come from "Loser-World" then." laughed Cream.

Ginger tried to stand back up but he was too weak from the pain in his groin. He lay there on the ground and accepted his defeat. Once the crowd stopped laughing at him, the announcer spoke again.

"Well, well, looks like Ginger the Karate Master is showing us why his world's called "Loser World"!" taunted the announcer as if sadistically wanting to pour more grief onto Ginger "The winner of this match is Cream the Rabbit!"

"Yay I won!" cheered Cream, skipping about like the Easter Bunny on Easter Day.

The crowd weren't sure whether to cheer or boo at Cream. Didn't matter since Cream left the arena before they had chance to deliver their pleasure or displeasure. Don and Tony followed Cream back to the changing room and watched as she was hugged by Amy.

"Goodness me Cream, I never saw THAT coming!" laughed Amy "You just kicked him where it really hurts and that's it! You're

amazing when you want to be you know!"

"Well it was his own silly fault for messing around and not just hitting me already." sneered Cream "Mother always said "Nobody likes a show-off" and that Ginger was definitely a show-off that nobody will like now."

"I bet Tails would love to have seen that." giggled Sora "It would have felt like watching you beat his cousin in a fight."

"Yeah." said Cream delightedly.

"OK, praising time's over, it's your turn to fight now little girl." said Don, pointing at Sora.

"Oh god…wish me luck out there guys." said Sora nervously.

"I'm sure you'll win Sora." said Knuckles "After all, you are Tails's sister and a great super spy. You'll win."

Sora nodded, managing a weak smile on her face as Don and Tony took her firmly by the arms and dragged her out onto the arena. As Sora entered the arena and took her place, Don and Tony retook their seats and waited for the battle to begin. They were hoping for some excitement this time around. The last two matches had been pretty one-sided and in Cream's case, brief. Hopefully this match would last a bit longer and be more eventful. Sora ignored the crowd as it laughed at her, clearly thinking once again that there was a pathetic little kid in the arena. She focused on what appeared to be her opponent. Her opponent was a green feathered bird wearing brown goggles on his head, a red neckerchief and big, knee high boots and brown gloves. What was peculiar about the bird was the shape of his head. His head looked like a big green tear-drop and around his pelvis he wore a white garment that looked very peculiar on him indeed. Sora snickered at him.

"Seriously? I'm against a bird in a nappy?" she laughed "Is this some kind of joke?"

"IT IS NOT A NAPPY, IT IS MY FLIGHT HARNESS!" ranted the bird "Why does everybody think I'm wearing a nappy?!"

"I dunno, maybe because you ARE wearing one?" mocked Sora, keeling over with laughter.

The bird scowled at Sora and resisted the urge to beat her into submission for this. Instead, he waited as the announcer gave their names.

"Now for Round 3 ladies and gentlemen! Representing Mobius Prime again, we have a little vixen known only as Sora Prower! And representing Mobius-Aviary we have Speedy Battlekuku!"

"Pffffft! Speedy Battlekuku?!" Sora shrieked with laughter "Now I'm against a wazzock in a nappy with an equally as stupid name! Oh my gosh, what was I so worried about?!"

The crowd seemed amused at Sora's bantering. In fact, the crowd started laughing at Speedy with her due to how amusing it was. Speedy went hot with rage and embarrassment and he charged towards Sora like a speeding arrow whizzing towards the target. Sora stopped laughing long enough to jump out of the way and leave Speedy to whiz straight past her and crash into the wall. Speedy was sill conscious miraculously enough but he was a little dazed and confused from the impact. Speedy rubbed himself better and he flew towards Sora, hands open and ready to grab her. Sora jumped and grabbed onto Speedy just as he whizzed into her. Sora was now carried up into the air by Speedy. The furious bird tried to wrestle Sora off of himself but Sora held on tightly. She socked Speedy in the beak three times and threw off his concentration, forcing the bird to make a crash landing with Sora on top of him. Speedy skidded to a painful halt across the ground as he crashed. Sora leapt off Speedy and dared him to do his worst. Speedy picked himself up, his eyes burning with hate and he ran towards Sora again. Sora just whipped an orb off of her belt and she aimed it at Speedy. It was the orb that contained a grappling hook. She fired the grappling hook and it wrapped around Speedy's legs, tripping him up and bringing him down with a thud on the floor. Smirking, Sora yanked on the hook and brought Speedy hurling towards her. Before Speedy could crash into her, Sora kicked him across the arena. Speedy cried out as the hook unravelled around him and sent him spiralling through the air and into the wall again. Despite all that, Speedy still didn't seem to be in a giving up mood. He flew towards

Sora and tried to grab her again. Sora ducked to the side and threw an orb at his leg. This was an orb she hadn't used very often due to how precious it could be in a mission. The moment the orb made contact with Speedy's leg, it exploded and threw blobs of sticky purple slime all over his body. This was a rare substance from Mobius Prime called Mega Muck. Sora would often save this orb for a situation that really needed it since it was good for a quick getaway. Now she was using it to defeat Speedy and win her battle. The Mega Muck weighed Speedy down and the moment Speedy made contact with the floor, it stuck fast and glued him down to it. Speedy struggled furiously but the Mega Muck held tightly and refused to let him go.

"Hey, this is cheating!" wailed Speedy.

"The rules don't say you can't use weapons to win." sneered Sora "I should know, I was told the rules before we began."

She then proceeded to finish the match by kicking Speedy in the side of his head, knocking him out instantly. As Speedy passed out, the announcer announced the winner of the match.

"What a knockout! Looks like Mobius Prime is bathing in victory for this year's tournament for the winner is Sora Prower!" yelled the announcer ecstatically.

The crowd cheered for Sora wildly while Sora just took their cheers modestly, not really relishing the glory she was receiving. Sora was not somebody who craved fame and glory after all. Being a spy, she was not really that used to being cheered and praised unless of course it was her friends doing the cheering and praising. Sora left the arena and returned to the changing rooms where she got the kind of cheering she did like to receive, the cheering from her friends. She really felt more comfortable receiving praise from people she knew.

"Sora, you sure impressed us out there!" cheered Amy excitedly.

"You beat that silly looking bird good and hard!" cried Cream "I do have to wonder why he was wearing a nappy though…he looks so silly in it."

"You bet he does, and his name was equally as stupid." laughed Sora "I know it's cruel and sadistic to enjoy the fact you've beat someone in a fight but given how stressed I am over the recent events…that was good stress relief." she sighed.

"That's one way of putting it." said Knuckles "Me and Shade likely will need a lot of stress relief given how edgy we are right now."

"I hope my opponent's fun to punch." muttered Shade "That might make me feel a tiny bit better…"

Shade would soon find out what her opponent was like for Don and Tony both entered the changing room. The sinister thing about them right now was the fact they were grinning like a pair of trolls. They seemed evilly delighted about something. What was it? Shade dreaded to find out. When somebody smiles like that, it's never good news.

"Oy, you two, you're both on the battle field now." ordered Don, pointing at Knuckles and Shade "Get moving the pair of you!"

"We both of us?" asked Knuckles.

"Isn't it obvious stupid?" snorted Tony "You're fighting each other for the next match. This oughta be fun to watch! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Knuckles and Shade were gobsmacked. They stood there, frozen in shock and staring at Don and Tony as if the two evil thugs had just grown a head out of their bottoms all of the sudden. Knuckles and Shade…were fighting each other?! No! This couldn't be! Knuckles instantly assumed that Don and Tony had done this on purpose for their own sadistic pleasure. Well no way would they do this!

"No! I can't fight my own girlfriend!" protested Knuckles.

"I refuse to fight Knuckles!" yelled Shade, pointing sharply at the two "And you can't make me!"

"Fine, then I guess you want the discs on your backs to pepper-pot you both?" threatened Don, making sure they remembered that they had something on their backs to make them comply against their will or else.

Knuckles and Shade both groaned furiously. They both forgot about the discs that clung onto their backs like spiders waiting to bite them. If they refused to comply then they would be skewered several times to the point of being called a kebab and dying was not an option at this point. Knuckles and Shade clenched their fists and they glared at Don and Tony.

"Fine, we'll do it." they both muttered.

"Good." laughed Tony "Come on Don, let's get back in our seats! I am NOT missing this! Ah, ha, ha, ha!"

Don and Tony both charged out of the room and ran back to the crowd seats so they could get seated again. The moment they left, Knuckles and Shade hugged each other as if trying to comfort each other before they had to bash each other's heads in.

"I'm so sorry Shade…" said Knuckles "I don't want to fight you but we have no choice."

"Please forgive me if I hurt you too much." said Shade, stroking Knuckles's dreadlocks and resting her head on her shoulder "Oh god…it's like Imperator Ix all over again!"

"Only this time, he's not part of it and we're doing this for the amusement of a stupid crowd." said Knuckles.

"Wait a minute!" cried Sora in realization "Why don't you two just forfeit? You could bow out of the match and spare yourselves a beating!"

"Sorry, that's not an option." said Knuckles "Don explained to us on the way that you can't bow out of a match. You HAVE to fight. There's no surrendering, only knockouts. It is literally against the rules to surrender."

"Oh…" said Sora, cursing in her head over that fact.

"It's no good, we'll have to do what they say or we're done for." said Shade.

Knuckles nodded. Like it or not, they had to fight or else they would

be killed. Shade drew out a metal tube-shaped device from her jean pocket and she ran her finger across it, activating a switch that the device had. This was a device Tails had built for her that would allow her to change into her battle suit when the situation called for it. The device hovered before Shade and a beam of light swept over Shade, transforming her casual clothes into her battle suit. Amy, Cream and Sora were well impressed as the device did its work. Tails sure knew how to build them didn't he? The device finished its work and Shade put it away. She was fully suited up and ready for battle now. She drew out her twin blades and breathed in deeply. She exhaled again and looked sadly at Knuckles.

"May one of us win I guess." she said.

"This will forever be the worst moment of my life." said Knuckles, sharing her displeasure.

Knuckles and Shade left the changing rooms and they entered the arena. Amy, Cream and Sora left the changing rooms and waited by the arena entrance so they could watch the battle more closely and maybe even help one of the echidnas back into the changing room since Knuckles and Shade would likely leave the other battered and bruised. They couldn't bear to see what would happen as the echidnas took their battle positions. They stared each other down and the announcer's voice boomed around the arena.

"Now things are going to get VERY exciting folks!" he said "For we now have TWO Prime Zoners in the arena fighting for a spot in the quarter finals! Give it up for Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas!"

The crowd cheered for the two looked like promising contestants and a good match was going to come out of this. It would certainly be more entertaining to watch than the previous three matches that much was certain. The announcer counted down from three to one and gave the signal to start the match. The crowd screamed frantically as Knuckles and Shade both charged towards each other like mad rhinos. One thought pulsed through their brains as they ran: They were never going to forget this moment no matter how hard they wished they could. Knuckles threw a punch at Shade but the swift echidna dodged the blow by bending over backwards and letting the punch sweep over her. She swung her blades at

Knuckles, purposefully making sure she missed so she wouldn't cut him. Knuckles grabbed Shade's arm and forced her to drop one of her blades. He picked it up and the two echidnas clashed weapons, sparks flying as the blades made contact with each other. Shade swiped the air with her blade and knocked Knuckles down with a Blade Rush wave. Knuckles picked himself up and tried to Blade Rush Shade in return but the blades only responded to Shade. To Knuckles, it was just another blade, not one that could make energy waves. Knuckles ran towards Shade and swung her blade at her. Shade blocked the attack and she kicked Knuckles in the thigh. Knuckles growled like a mad dog, just to try and hide the fact he and Shade didn't like what they were doing, and he threw a punch at Shade's gut. Shade felt the wind get knocked out of her as Knuckles's spiked fist walloped her in the gut. She doubled over and Knuckles kicked her down onto the floor. Groaning in pain, Shade forced herself onto her feet and she punched Knuckles in the face. Knuckles rubbed his face better and ducked down as Shade swung her blade at him. Knuckles uppercut Shade in the chin, making sure he didn't hit her too hard, and Shade stumbled onto her back. Shade picked herself up and lunged at Knuckles but Knuckles side-stepped out of the way. Shade spun around and slashed across Knuckles's back with her blade. That was when she realized that they had a way out of this mess. She had caught the disc on Knuckles's back and now a long gash had been drawn across it thanks to Shade's blade. Shade snapped her fingers, an idea coming to her head. Of course! They just had to destroy the disc and they were safe! Knuckles had felt Shade's blade across his back and he came to the same conclusion Shade had come to. They could use her blades to destroy the discs on their back! Knuckles stood still as Shade slashed the disc on his back to pieces, the useless device falling to pieces on the floor behind Knuckles's heels. Shade turned around and braced herself as Knuckles proceeded to do the same thing to her. The echidnas were now free of their discs! They no longer had to fight each other anymore! Don and Tony watched this with disapproval.

"Hey! The echidnas destroyed their discs!" growled Tony.

"No matter, we'll just kill the girls and make them wish they hadn't done that." sniffed Don.

But before he could do anything, Shade spotted him in the crowd and proceeded to Blade Rush him and Tony. The two were swept out of their seats and sent hurling back a few rows into the crowd. Many members of the crowd ran for their lives, fearing that the echidnas were going to attack them suddenly. Knuckles ran into the crowd and proceeded to start beating the tar out of Don and Tony. He socked them both in the faces and began slamming them around on the seats, breaking them as their bodies hit them. Don and Tony tried to fight back but Knuckles smacked them both with the broken chair pieces to make them back off and he uppercut them in the chin each. Don and Tony had no idea how strong Knuckles was but now they were wishing they still had no idea.

"That's for forcing me and my friends to take part in this bloodbath! And also making me fight Shade!" roared Knuckles, bashing their heads together and knocking both Don and Tony out.

As they collapsed onto the floor, Knuckles grinned triumphantly at them. Boy he was glad he got to beat up the two for what they did to him and his friends. Now they were out, Shade ran over to Amy, Cream and Sora and she cut their discs to pieces. Amy rubbed her back for the disc had caused it to itch badly and she smiled at Shade.

"Great idea Shade, I'm not sure how we didn't come up with that sooner." she said.

"Some ideas come to you when you least expect them." said Shade with a small smile "I'm just glad I realized that the discs could be destroyed. I never want to fight my handsome guardian again…" she spat venomously.

"I hope that never happens again." said Cream "It was horrible watching you two fight each other against your wills like that! You two love each other and should never have to fight like that!"

"I agree." said Sora "It'd be like if I was forced to fight Tails. It would be horrible to even imagine…"

"So now we're free of those stupid discs, what do we do now?" asked Amy curiously.

"We find a way off this stupid world and back home." said Knuckles, rejoining his friends in the arena "If only there was a way off this world though…"

As if to answer Knuckles's wish, a white portal suddenly materialized from nowhere and made everybody leap backwards in alarm. Rather than backing away or running for their lives, the Mobians stared at the portal. It wasn't like what they had seen before. What was it?

"Is it another time rift?" asked Cream worriedly.

"Don't think so." said Amy "It's plain white. It's not colourful at all. I think it's something else."

"Maybe it's a way home as you requested Knuckles." suggested Sora "Maybe somebody's trying to sort out this time rift problem and is helping us get back to Mobius Prime."

"It's a good guess but it could easily be wrong." said Knuckles "Either way, I'm not staying on Brawlbius any longer. Let's give this thing a shot."

"Brace yourselves, this could be dangerous…" said Shade, cautiously stepping into the portal ahead of everybody else.

She disappeared through the portal as she stepped into it. Knuckles followed her closely, also being cautious of what could happen. Amy, Cream and Sora followed the echidnas through the portal and as they passed through, the portal closed up and left no trace behind of its existence. The Prime Zoners were gone and once Don and Tony found that out, they would be mad indeed…

Well that was a lot of fun wasn't it?

Now we've just got Bunnie, Geoffrey, Vector, Espio and Charmy left and then the two-part finale of Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses begins! What will go on in Part 8? We shall see for it's going to be a "Chaotix Case" next time.

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 8

Story 173: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 8: A Chaotix Case

"Oh god, not ANOTHER murder!" whined Dark Cat the leopard-lynx hybrid, slamming the newspaper down onto the table in frustration "This is seriously beginning to freak me out now! I don't feel safe in this city anymore!"

"I feel even less safe considering all the murdered victims are women!" gasped Kiara the Cheetah, Dark's newly proclaimed girlfriend "I keep feeling like I'm going to be the next victim! I bet because I'm a woman I'm going to be targeted at some point!"

"No you won't babe, because nobody's lying a finger on you." said Dark, giving Kiara's hand a reassuring squeeze "You can fend for yourself and even if the attacker's too strong for you, there's always me to give you a hand."

"Oh of course, silly me." giggled Kiara "How could I possibly forget about those facts?"

Dark half-chuckled in agreement. It had been hard adjusting to this new world after being dumped here by a time rift but now there was a string of murders going around and all the murdered victims were women, which didn't settle well with Kiara in the slightest. If only they could just get out of here and get back to Mobius Prime! Then everything would be fine once again!

Dark and Kiara had been snatched up by a time rift after they had stopped Team Diamond from raiding the Golden Caverns in Megapolis. They had been dropped off onto another dimension and they had been stuck here for a week and two days, overall making seven days. Despite hoping that Sonic the Hedgehog or another Royal Fighter would find them and bring them back home, Dark and Kiara had lost all hope of ever getting back to Mobius Prime. It was hard for them to accept but it seemed they were stuck here forever. Unless of course another time rift appeared to which they could maybe get back home. For now, they just had to fit into the new

Mobius they had ended up on and wait and see what happens. As for the new Mobius they were on, it was yet another alternate version of Mobius. There were after all infinite different versions of Mobius, there was no limit to how many versions of Mobius you could visit in the multi-verse. This Mobius that Dark and Kiara were forced for now to occupy was a very unusual version of Mobius. That is to say it seemed to Dark and Kiara that somebody had set the clock back a couple of centuries. Everything looked like it belongs in the age of Queen Victoria on Earth. The houses, the way the people dressed, the transport, the facilities, everything was straight out of the Victorian ages. Dark and Kiara had been so gobsmacked at how everything looked on this Mobius. It was certainly weird seeing people riding through the streets on horses and carriages instead of cars and people walking around dress immaculately and looking quite posh and opulent. When was the last time anyone had ever seen somebody walk around dressed in a cloak and old smart outfits? Dark certainly didn't recall ever seeing a woman walk around in a long dull dress and a bonnet. And the stink…to say that this world was smelly was an understatement. The smell was putrid beyond belief. Victorian times had a reputation for being smelly after all. This Mobius was called "Victorbius" and was named after the first ruler of the world named, you guessed it, Queen Victoria. Victorbius was a world that was constantly stuck in the Victorian ages and just couldn't seem to evolve. It was the year 2143 on this world and yet it didn't look anywhere near as advanced as Mobius Prime did. In order to fit in with this world, Dark and Kiara had been forced to change their outfits.

Dark was dressed in an all black outfit that consisted of a neatly buttoned up black shirt, a black tie and black trousers with matching black shoes. He wore a black cape that was red on the inside and held together by gold clasps and a chain. Just for the fun of it, he had a cane with a silver top and he had purchased a pocket watch so he could tell what the time was. And to top it all off, he had a top hat on. He looked like a Victorian gentleman and Kiara thought he looked very handsome in the outfit.

Kiara was dressed in a velvet Victorian dress that was sandy brown in colour and had flowers around the hem. She wore a bonnet on her head. She carried a purse with her just to try and look like a

posh woman and she had styled her hair into a neat ponytail at the back so she didn't look so scruffy. Kiara didn't think the outfit suited her much but Dark thought she looked nice in the dress.

Dark and Kiara were revolted to think they had to live in this world until they could get back home. Such a sad, vintage waste of a world was all they could think. It wasn't helped by the fact this world was not just like the Victorian Ages in looks, it was the same in personality too. The poor were sympathetic and forced to be crooks for money, the rich were vain, selfish and snooty and they annoyed Dark and Kiara to no end. There were the prisons and the slums which were so cruel and sadistic that you could feel as sorry for the criminals as the innocent. And now there was a murderer going around killing women, a murderer known only as "Jack the Ripper". He hadn't been caught yet and that was what worried the people of Victorbius. Would this killer be caught and would he pay for his crimes? Given how lame the bogies, Victorian policemen, were at their jobs, it was very unlikely and it wasn't easy to find out who did what due to primitive technology. So the murders kept on going and Dark and Kiara kept on feeling disappointed when Jack the Ripper ended up not being caught. Right now they were sitting at a table outside a dingy pub that had a sever lack of personal hygiene and didn't look very inviting with it's decaying brickwork and slime covered walls. They were only having a cup of tea each but the news had put Dark off of his tea. The leo-lynx sighed in frustration.

"I thought them bloody garrotters were bad enough with how they press their hands against your neck until you passed out and then robbed you but now there is a serial killer out killing women and nobody can stop him!" whined Dark "I do have to ask what daft name is that? Jack the Ripper? Are they trying to make him sound less scary or something?"

"Oh god! Look out for Jack the Ripper!" cried Kiara in faux scared tones "Pfft, I'd laugh if I heard somebody scream that out loud…"

"You wouldn't if Jack the Ripper ended up slitting your throat." said Dark grimly "Not like that's gonna happen since I'll slit HIS throat before he gets anywhere near you."

"You got that right handsome." said Kiara "If that Ripper freak

touches me, you'll give him what for! And maybe I will too given how much of a punch I pack. Say, why don't me and you try to find out who Jack the Ripper is? The police are bloody useless so we may as well do it ourselves."

"Hmm…it's dangerous and we could get killed…" mused Dark "But the police are doing no good so we may as well have a shot at it. I bet with our keen senses of smell we could track down the murderer."

"You bet we could." said Kiara "Although given how smelly this place is, we're bound to be distracted." her nose wrinkled as the whiff of the streets began to creep past her nostrils. Sometimes, Kiara felt like gagging when she smelt the horrible smell of the Victorbius streets.

"No bad smell will put me off." said Dark "So Kiara, I think it's time we went investigating."

"I think so too. If we're going to be stuck in this dingy place for the rest of our lives, we may as well eliminate something disturbing the peace so we can live comfortably here!" declared Kiara.

"Yeah, last thing I need is to feel like this place will be the death of me…" muttered Dark.

He and Kiara left the table and their untouched cups of tea behind and they walked off down the streets arm-in-arm. To be honest, they felt glad to have gotten away from the horrible pub since the atmosphere wasn't very inviting. As Dark and Kiara walked down the street, several people passed them and looked. To them, they just looked like an ordinary Victorian couple and how lovely they seemed to look together too. It was a lot better than the awkward stares that they had received upon arriving here. Their Victorian attire certainly helped them to blend in nicely with this world. Dark and Kiara walked across the pavement, passing by dully lit streetlights that seemed to have some kind of eerie presence to them somehow. Horses and carriages passed by them, the riders never giving them a second thought and just focusing on their own journey ahead. Dark grew to quite enjoy hearing the sound of hooves clip-clopping on the pavement as the horses passed them by. He wasn't sure way

but they had a nice rhythm to them. It was certainly a lot better than half the music they were hearing. As they walked down the streets, they could see some fool banging on a small portable piano and singing horribly. A crowd of people gathered around, hopefully to scorn the horrible singing lad on his bad talents.

"Ladies and gentlemen! I am going to perform to you all that tragic song, "They're Moving Father's Grave To Build A Sewer" if you know it, sing with me!"

Banging on the keys, the boy began to sing.

"They're moving father's grave to build a sewer. They're shifting it regardless of expeeeense.

They're moving his remains, to put in nine-inch drains. To irrigate some posh folk's residence.

And what's the use of having a religion? And thinking when you die your troubles ceeeease?

If some society chap, wants a pipe-line for his tank. And they shift you from your place of rest and peeeace.

But in his life our daddy, he weren't a quitter. And I don't suppose, he'll be a quitter now.

So he'll haunt their toilet seats, in his funeral sheets. And they'll only get to piddle where he'll allow!

There won't be some ruddy consternation. And won't those city chaps all rant and rave .

Which is no more than they deserve, for having the ruddy nerve, to muck about with a British workman's grave! Workman's grrrraaaaaave!"

Somehow, the horrible performance was met with a round of applause from the watching spectators. The thing is, in Victorian times, humans had a fascination with death and often wrote songs about it. The same fact applied sadly to this world too. Dark and Kiara just shook their heads at the song.

"Good grief, did he write that himself?" snorted Dark "That'll explain why it's so bad."

"I know, and who wants to sing about moving somebody's grave to build a sewer?!" scoffed Kiara, twisting her face into a disgusted scowl "These people are so vile! Vile Victorians if you want my opinion!"

"If you think that's bad, wait till you hear William McGonagall's poetry." sighed Dark "That guy needs help if he thinks his poetry's any good."

"I did hear his poetry and I don't think I've ever laughed so loudly at something so bad in all my life!" snickered Kiara, thinking back to when she had the misfortune of hearing this crazy man's poetry "And the fact he's an ant-eater just makes him even harder to take seriously given how silly they look."

"William should stick to ant-eating and stop his bad poetry." said Dark agreeably "It'll do us all a big favour."

"Hey Dark, look over there!" Kiara cried out suddenly "I think there's some people we know!"

Dark looked to where Kiara was pointing. On the other side of the street, there were five Mobians talking to a wombat wearing a smart suit and a monocle. There was a crocodile, a chameleon, a bee, a skunk and a rabbit. Dark and Kiara recognized them easily. They were Vector, Espio, Charmy, Geoffrey and Bunnie Rabbot! They had been brought to Victorbius by the recent time rift that had thrown Sonic and friends all over the multi-verse and how unfortunate they were to end up here. They were all dressed in Victorian attire though for they had to fit into this world too. Vector was wearing a black waistcoat that seemed to strain hard just to fit him and he had a top hat on too. He still neglected to wear trousers it seemed. For shoes, he had managed to find a pair that fit him and they matched the waistcoat. Espio was dressed in a gentlemanly outfit too complete with bow-tie and a bowler hat. Charmy just wore a Victorian schoolboy's outfit since a gentleman's outfit wouldn't look good on him and he was too young to dress like that anyway. He didn't really like the outfit and wished he could just wear his old attire

again. Geoffrey was dressed in an all black outfit much like Dark was. It certainly seemed to blend in well with his fur. The only thing that stuck out from him was a red tie he wore around his neck. Bunnie was dressed in a maid's outfit and she seemed to be making as much effort as possible to hide her robotic parts. After all, it wouldn't settle well with the people of this world. They'd probably be batty enough to consider Bunnie a witch for it. The dress covered her robot legs and she had her robotic arm hidden in a pocket. She just lied saying that she had a horrific hand injury and didn't want people to see it in fear of disgusting them. It certainly worked given how feeble-minded the Victorians were. Dark and Kiara crossed the road to see if they could hear what was going on with the five. Vector was making notes as the wombat spoke.

"Uh huh, so you think this "Jack the Ripper" person is a tall dark guy dressed in a cloak and top hat?" mused Vector.

"I don't think, I know!" snapped the wombat "Goddamn it, I told you I'd seen him didn't I?"

"Did you see his face?" asked Espio.

"No, it was too dark but I definitely saw what he was wearing." said the wombat.

"I've gotta say, who's stupid enough to just wear a cloak and a top hat and nothing more?" snorted Charmy "He's showing off and standing out a bit isn't he?"

"He'll have been wearing more than just that." said the wombat "I just saw him from behind so I didn't fully see what he was wearing, just what I saw."

"Well that's not very helpful…" muttered Vector as he jotted down the wombat's testimony "We can't just go around arresting guys in top hats and cloaks and hope one of them's the Ripper. We could be forever doing that. And also what if he ditches the clothes in favour of a different outfit?"

"I'm helping as best as I can!" whined the wombat.

"I know you are." said Vector "And we'll keep a look out for this Ripper guy and see if we can foil him. Thanks for your time and have a nice day."

The wombat tipped his had and he slowly walked away. The moment he left, Dark and Kiara approached Vector.

"Hey guys." said Dark "Wasn't expecting to see you around."

The five Mobians stared at Dark and Kiara for a minute before registering the fact that they knew who they were.

"Oh mah stars! It's Dark and Kiara!" cried Bunnie in surprise "We'd heard all about ya'll bein' taken away by a time rift and we've been tryin' whatever we can to find ya'll and bring ya back home! Looks like ya'll ended up here with us."

"We've been here for seven days." said Kiara "And in my opinion, that's way too long. I wouldn't have wanted to spend one day here, let alone SEVEN! It's horrible here! Everything's boring, the stink is unbearable and…"

"Kiara, that's enough." said Dark "I think they get the picture."

"We do mate." said Geoffrey glumly "It really is vapid here. What I wouldn't give to get back to Mobius Prime."

"Our sentiments exactly." said Dark with a scowl on his face "So did you five end up here thanks to a weird light in the sky?"

"Oh we did hon." said Bunnie with a sad shake of her head "A really big light in the sky appeared above NewMobotropolis and sucked us all up. Me, Geoffrey and Team Chaotix have ended up here. We're not sure if anybody else has or not. We might be the only ones here. The others could be on other dimensions for all we know."

"I bet they've ended up on better worlds than this one." muttered Kiara.

"Anywhere's better than here." said Espio "Anyway, we have terrible news regarding the light in the sky."

"Oh no, what is it?" asked Kiara, shuddering as she waited for the news to be spoken.

"According to Silver and Blaze, the lights in the sky are called "time rifts" and apparently the amount of time rifts we've been having means that the world is coming to an end." said Espio, his face matching his tone grim tone of voice.

Dark and Kiara felt like they were going to fall over backwards.

"No! No that can't be!" shrieked Kiara, unable to believe what she was hearing "That silver dude showed me what became of Mobius in his future before the Martians attacked! Do you think those "time rifts" are the cause?"

"Unlikely since Silver and Blaze had one appear in their timeline too." explained Geoffrey "I don't think the time rifts are the reason Silver and Blaze's timeline's a mess…but what they do know is that if we don't stop the time rifts then Mobius Prime will be no more, past, present AND future."

"We've gotta get back home and stop those time rifts!" cried Dark "We've just got to!"

"What can we do?" asked a very hopeless Vector "There's no way we can get back to Mobius Prime. This place is all vintage and no technology! We'll not be getting out of here unless another time rift appears."

"So we're gonna be forced to sit and let our world die?" asked Kiara, tears coming to her eyes.

"Ah'm afraid so sugah." said Bunnie, looking equally as dismayed as Kiara.

Kiara burst into tears upon hearing that. She threw herself into Dark's arms and wailed onto his shoulder. Dark hugged Kiara comfortingly, looking as sad as her.

"NO! The world can't end, it just can't!" wailed Kiara "We have to do something about it, we just have to! I'm not staying on this world forever!"

"I know how you feel Kiara." said Dark sadly "I don't want to lose our world either, especially since we only just got to confess our love for each other."

"Aww, that's even sadder now." said Bunnie, feeling sympathy for the two "Reminds me of how Geoffrey confessed his love for me when it looked like the Devatrons were gonna finish us off…at least we lived in time to develop our relationship but now it seems Mobius will be seeing its final hour unless we can save it."

"And right now, that's looking very unlikely." said Geoffrey, putting an arm around Bunnie sadly.

"End of the world sucks, it really does!" whined Charmy, pouting like a spoilt little kid.

"Understatement of the entire multi-verse." sighed Vector, rolling his eyes.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRGG

The horrible scream just seemed to pierce the silence of the night and many heads seemed to turn in the direction of the scream as if wondering what had happened. The scream had certainly startled the Prime Zoners. They all nearly jumped out of their uniforms. Kiara clutched Dark so hard that the poor leo-lynx thought he was going to suffocate. Bunnie and Geoffrey gripped each other tightly and the Chaotix weren't sure what to do other than stand there in silence. The scream had come so suddenly that they were still surprised they'd even heard it. After a minute had passed, somebody finally spoke up.

"What was that?!" blurted Charmy, sounding very frightened.

"I think…the Ripper's struck again!" cried Dark.

"Let's go investigate shall we?" asked Bunnie, almost wishing she hadn't asked that since she had a nasty feeling on what they would come across.

The Mobians ran down the street, following where the scream had come from a moment ago. They turned around a corner and got the

shock of their lives for lying on the road in a pool of blood was the poor, ravaged remains of a female wolf. She had been strikingly beautiful with fiery red fur and a slender frame. She had been well dressed and quite ravishing looking. At least, until she had been murdered right about now. (Hold your noses readers, this is about to get graphic) The woman's abdomen had been slight clean open, explaining the enormous pool of blood pouring out from her dead body. Her throat had been slit in two different places, the cuts fresh and bleeding still. Some of her intestines were lying beside her and her womb had been taken. Her face was the embodiment of horror, mouth open as if the scream hadn't finished before she was killed and her eyes still open in shock. Bunnie and Kiara both felt sick upon seeing this. Women were a lot more squeamish then men could be some times and the fact Bunnie and Kiara were looking at a dead woman just made it worse for them. Thank goodness it hadn't been one of them. Dark was horrified at the corpse whereas Team Chaotix didn't seem that bothered about it. They were detectives after all so they were used to this kind of graphicness. This wasn't the first corpse they'd ever seen on the job either. Still it was quite horrible to see. Especially considering how ravaged the corpse was.

"OK that's just gross." said Vector with a shudder "Look at the mess of that corpse! Was this really necessary?!"

"Vector, you know what murders are like. They're NEVER necessary." said Espio, cringing in disgust.

"I can definitely say that this "Jack the Ripper" has done it." said Charmy, grimacing at the sight of the corpse "I mean this murder matches all the details that witnesses have given us here." he read off of the notes that Vector had made when witnesses had described the victim's remains to them "Her throat's been slit, her stomach's cut open and there seems to be a few organs missing. She's definitely been killed by the Ripper."

"Hey guys, you mind if we just investigate this corpse or would you rather not watch?" asked Vector.

"I think the girls look pretty shell-shocked mate." said Geoffrey "We'll just leave you three to do your work in peace while the girls get their

bearings together.

"Ah'm up for that." gasped Bunnie "That's too horrible to look at…"

Geoffrey and Dark led Bunnie and Kiara back around the corner so they didn't have to see the corpse anymore. As they left, Vector, Espio and Charmy knelt down beside the dead wolf, trying as hard as they could not to be disgusted by it.

"OK, let's see what clues we can gather from this corpse." said Vector "We might find out who Jack the Ripper could be."

"Well for starters, he seems to have medical knowledge." said Espio, taking note of the missing organs and the slit in the wolf's stomach "He seemed to know what he wanted and only somebody with medical knowledge would know exactly where a womb is. As for the cuts on her neck…"

He paused as he fingered around the slits on the wolf's neck.

"The gash is pretty thin but runs deep. Some kind of knife would have been used for that." he deduced.

"What kind of knife?" asked Charmy "That doesn't look like it was done by a butter knife or anything. Kitchen knife maybe?"

"I think the cuts are too thin for that." said Vector "Maybe it was a long bladed knife that a surgeon from this kind of time period would use, further enhancing Espio's theory on the Ripper having medical knowledge."

"I was thinking that too." said Espio "So we're getting ideas on what kind of character this Jack the Ripper is. Trouble is…doesn't really tell us WHO it is. Narrows down the suspect list maybe but not that much."

"Nah, we're still at square one." said Vector "We need to find some way of catching this guy off guard. Now how would we do that…?"

"Beats me." said Charmy "But we'll think of something."

Team Chaotix thought for a moment on what would be a good idea

to catch the Ripper and put an end to his killing spree. It was clear the Ripper knew all of the streets like the back of his hand since he was always careful on where he would make his killings. Newspaper articles and testimonies from the police had told them that helpful bit of advice. Also the Ripper chose alley ways or quiet areas of the street. It would be very likely to catch him in that regard. It was once said that habit makes you predictable and it certainly would be the case for Jack the Ripper since Team Chaotix were immediately estimating where he might strike next. But given how many alleyways and streets there were, he could hide anywhere and although places to look were now narrowed down to just them, it didn't necessarily make it easier to find him. They could be on a wild goose chase for the Ripper and arrive at his possible killing places too late. No, they would have to lure the Ripper into a trap. Catch him off guard and arrest him once and for all. How would they accomplish that? What would lure the Ripper into a trap like a lion to meat? Vector took in the fact that the Ripper seemed only to kill women. They were his only victims. But they couldn't use a woman as bait for the Ripper! That was just horrible! Then Vector remembered, they had Bunnie Rabbot on their side and she was by far the strongest of them all. She'd floor the Ripper before he could even draw his knife out and slit her throat! Vector considered the options. It was risky and the plan could go wrong but it was a plan that was bound to work given how strong Bunnie was. It was worth a shot, it was the only one they had for the time being.

"Hey guys, I've got an idea." said Vector.

"Now's the moment where I feel insanely nervous..." muttered Espio. It was always wise to be concerned when Vector had an idea given how hairbrained they tended to be. Espio could barely forget the time where Vector came up with an idea to find jewellery easier than before. The result had ended up with them needing to buy some new furniture for the owner of the house.

"Puh, thanks for the support Espio." said Vector crossly. He wondered why Espio had to be so pessimistic around him. What had he done to deserve this?

"Come on Vector, let's hear your crazy plan then." said Charmy excitedly.

"I will not question how you knew this idea's crazy." laughed Vector. Somehow, Charmy seemed able to tell if his plans were crazy or not. Maybe it was how often they tended to be crazy. "Anyway, my idea is we lure the Ripper into a trap. And how do we do that? By having somebody act as bait for him."

"Vector, that's inhumane!" shouted Espio furiously, his bowler hat nearly falling off his head in fury "We can't use somebody as bait for a serial killer!"

"I agree Vector! That's not cool at all!" lectured Charmy "And they say I'm the stupid one..." he mumbled to himself.

"Guys hear me out!" protested Vector "Here's the good part of the plan! I'm not gonna use anyone as bait because I already know who's the perfect person to act as bait. And that person is Miss Rabbot herself."

"Out of the question!" barked Geoffrey, emerging from behind the corner and pointing furiously at Vector. He, Dark, Bunnie and Kiara had heard Vector's idea and Bunnie sounded shocked to hear that Vector was planning on using her as bait. Geoffrey of course was not pleased to hear this either.

"Ah agree with mah honey skunk, yer not usin' me as bait for a crazy serial killer!" snapped Bunnie crossly "Ya'll ain't sacrificn' me to him!"

Vector looked hurt to hear this. They seriously thought that he was going to be this evil and let Bunnie get killed by a serial killer?! Some friends they were if they thought he was going to do something so cruel! He'd already considered the fact it was inhumane to do something like this and wouldn't have gone with it if he knew that Bunnie would get killed. Vector frowned at Bunnie.

"Miss Rabbot, this ain't a sacrifice at all! Would I seriously do something like that?!" he growled crossly "Shame on you for thinking that. No, the idea is that since the Ripper seems to target women, you're a likely target for him. But you're strong and all right? So when the Ripper tries to attack, you just sock him with that metal arm of yours and presto, he's down and we've caught him. You're by far the best choice to knock that sucker down a few pegs!"

Bunnie took in Vector's idea and considered it. True she was strong and tough and she'd easily floor the Ripper if he tried to attack her. It was just a matter of whether or not she'd be able to react fast enough to avoid the Ripper since he'd likely be very stealthy on approach. It was very risky and after seeing what had become of the poor wolf she'd seen earlier, Bunnie did not want to a ravaged corpse with her womb and maybe more missing. But if they were going to catch the Ripper, they had to try that idea. Not to mention Bunnie had faced much worse than a measley serial killer. She'd survived Eggman robots and alien invasions, a serial killer was nothing compared to all that. Bunnie took a deep breath and sighed loudly.

"OK sugah, ah'll give it a shot." said Bunnie "Just please promise that this won't go pear-shaped."

"Come on Bunnie, the Ripper's just a guy with a knife. That's nothing compared to what we've been through in our lives so far." said Vector, clapping her on the back.

"I swear if things go wrong and Bunnie gets killed, you'll have more than the Ripper to worry about!" snarled Geoffrey.

"Not a problem." said Vector "Cause if things do go wrong, we'll be there to help Bunnie. We'll watch her and if she fails to notice the Ripper coming, we'll give her a warning. And Geoffrey, I'll let you do it."

"So glad you are since I'd be all too happy to warn me girl about an apporaching serial killer." said Geoffrey "So what should I do? Give her a silent signal?"

"I recommend it." said Espio "If the Ripper's coming and Bunnie doesn't notice, make a motion like this." He clenched his fist and began bending his arm at the elbow back and forth in the manner of somebody stabbing down with a knife or sword. "That'll be a good signal that the Ripper's nearby."

"Perfect." said Geoffrey "So luv, you're ready for this? You're not scared or worried about this plan?" he asked, taking Bunnie's hands into his own and staring worredly into her eyes.

"Ah'm a little nervous but ah'm willin' to take a shot." said Bunnie, her organic hand lightly stroking Geoffrey's cheek "After all, it's better we try to stop Jack the Ripper then to do nothing about it. We can't just let him keep killin' people."

"Too right." said Geoffrey "You know Bunnie, I always did admire how brave you are." he added with a charming smile, the kind that could win the heart of any woman who saw it.

"Bravery was always a common trait in mah family." said Bunnie with a wink "Ah get it from mah mother's side of the family though."

Geoffrey hugged Bunnie for a moment and then he turned to Vector.

"So where do we start?" he asked.

"Given the Ripper seems to prefer lurking in dark empty places, we think an alley-way would be a good place to set Bunnie up." said Vector.

"And this world has plenty of them so it's a start." said Espio "Shall we get set-up then?"

"Sho' thing sugah." said Bunnie "That Ripper has ripped apart his last victim today!"

Now that the Mobians had a plan, they ran off to find a good alley-way to hide in and wait for Jack the Ripper to come. Whether he would come or not remained to be seen. It was certainly going to be quite an agonizing wait for poor Bunnie though. She just hoped that she wouldn't be waiting forever and they could get this whole thing over with. And once the Ripper was defeated, they could work on trying to get back to Mobius Prime and hopefully save it from the time rifts before it came to an end...

A while later, the Mobians had found an alley-way to set up their trap for the Ripper. It was located in a place called Hanbury Street, which was a few minutes walk way from where the red wolf had been murdered minutes ago. The alley-way was dark and very popular among van-draggers, whizzers and screws given how great a hiding

place it provided them when they waited for the time to commit their crimes. There were none of the sort around this time though. The Prime Zoners had the alley-way all to themselves for the time being. Bunnie was standing out in open view of anybody who was passing by. Somebody had to just glance up the alley-way and they'd see her. She was wide open for Jack the Ripper to see. Dark, Kiara, Geoffrey and the Chaotix were all hiding. They had taken shelter behind bin bags, dustbins and broken doors that had come off the nearby houses and were just lying forlornly on their sides, the hinges still attached and rusting. There was no chance of them ever being spotted by anybody. Bunnie just stood there, looking as nervous as she could. It is often said that a predator can sense fear. Maybe that would be the case for Jack the Ripper. Bunnie swallowed nervously. The quietness of the alley-way was beginning to get to her. Quietness is not often something people feared but in a spooky scene like this, the quietness somehow makes it feel even spookier. Nobody's really sure why that is the case, it just is. Bunnie began to whistle to herself just to break the quiet around her for the momet.

"You know...this place is kinda creepy when it's dark and deserted like this." said Bunnie more to herself than anybody "Not helped by the fact it's so different on this world which makes it even scarier to me."

She shivered as if a sudden cold had come over her. As time slowly passed, Geoffrey whispered over to Vector.

"Do you think the Ripper might come down this way?" he hissed with concern "What if he goes somewhere else entirely?"

"I hadn't really thought on that." said Vector sheepishly "But I'm sure this place would be a good place for the Ripper to strike. I just hope he comes out again otherwise Bunnie will be waiting here for nothing."

"I feel sorry for my lovely lass." said Geoffrey "She must be worrying her poor heart out right now, waiting for a sinister serial killer to come and get her."

"She'll be fine." said Vector "Bunnie's a brave woman as she said before, although I must admit I kinda feel bad about making her do

this..." he said softly, looking at Bunnie's nervous face "Poor Bunnie. I had no idea it would be this nerve-racking for her."

"This is why I usually worry when Vector comes up with an idea." Espio said with a glum face.

Vector frowned at Espio but he said nothing. Then suddenly, they could hear the sound of approaching footsteps. Eerybody kept down low and listened out as the footsteps approached the alley-way.

"Somebody's coming!" hissed Kiara "It might be you-know-who!"

"Everybody keep your voices down and stay still." whispered Dark, drawing out his blades from his arms "Let's get ready to ambush the asshole."

Everybody watched and waited as the footsteps got nearer and nearer to the alley-way. Bunnie could hear the footsteps too and she risked a glance to her left as they grew louder. She saw a shadowy figure dressed in a cloak and a top-hat. She couldn't make out anymore features on the figure. It was too dark to see. Bunnie knew that somebody was coming. Was it the Ripper? She had to pretend she hadn't seen him so he would approach her. Bunnie turned her back and pretended she couldn't hear anything. Geoffrey watched, knowing that Bunnie was just pretending since he saw her tak a glance and obviously see somebody coming. He wouldn't need to signal her at all. The figure advanced on Bunnie, clearly eager to get her for some reason. It seemed delighted at this opportunity to get a woman that seemed helpless and alone in the middle of this alley-way. The figure drew out a knife that had a black handle and a long, sharp, shining blade. It hadn't been cleaned recently, it was still stained with blood from the earlier victim. Bunnie could smell the blood on the knife. It matched the smell of the dead wolf's blood from earlier, meaning that they had found the right guy. Jack the Ripper was here. Bunnie stood by, waiting for the right moment to turn out and wallop the murderer. The figure raised the knife and aimed for Bunnie's neck. That was when Bunnie suddenly struck. She spun around and back-handed the figure onto the ground. The figure seemed to groan in pain, clutching its sore face while Bunnie picked up the knife and tossed it into a nearby dustbin, just where it belonged. She looked at Jack the Ripper. She could make out more

features on him now he was closer. He was dressed entirely in black and his face was concealed by a black morph mask that looked custom made. The head looked vaugley canine like. Some kind of dog was the Ripper? Bunnie didn't really care, all she knew was that she caught him and that's all there was to it.

"So ya'll think ya can attack an innocent little lady for no good reason?" growled Bunnie "Well ah got news for you buster! Ya'll ain't killin' anymore gals today! Yer busted partner!"

She reached down to grab the downed killer but Jack the Ripper smacked her hand away and drew out a spare knife he had stored in his coat. He lunged at Bunnie, trying to strike her in the heart with his knife. Bunnie grabbed his arm and held the knife away with her robot arm. The Ripper pushed down, trying to complete his strike. Bunnie strained, her teeth gritted and her face sweating as the knife was kept held just inches from her chest. The Ripper was surprisingly strong, much stronger than Bunnie had anticipated. She began to worry. Was he too strong for her? Geoffrey watched with concern as Bunnie struggled with the Ripper. Bunnie gave the Ripper one desperate shove by pushing her arms upwards and sending him falling backwards onto his back. He picked himself up only for Bunnie to grab him into a chokehold. She forced him to drop the knife and she kicked it away from him. She conked the Ripper on the head and knocked him down onto his knees, the murderer dazed and confused for the moment.

"Nice try gruseome but ya'll ain't addin' me to yer kill list!" snarled Bunnie "Now let's see who ya'll are under that mask!"

She yanked the morph mask of the murderer's head...and gasped in horror. She dropped the mask and she clasped her hands around her mouth. She recognized who Jack the Ripper was!

"R-R-Ravage?!" she shrieked "How in the hoo-hah did ya'll get here?!"

Now unmasked, the Ripper glowered at Bunnie. As Bunnie had said, it was none other than her childhood friend turned enemy, Ravage Bloodfang behind the mask. His trademark skull mask had been swapped for the more subtle morph mask he'd made for himself so

now his scars were visible for everybody to see. His face was a mask of rage as his clenched teeth shone in the light and his eyes were narrowed into a hideous scowl. Upon hearing Bunnie say the name "Ravage", Geoffrey leaped out from his hiding place and ran over to the evil wolf. Team Chaotix, Dark and Kiara joined him and they stared at Ravage incredulously.

"Hello Bunnie. I was hoping to add you to Jack the Ripper's list of kills..." said Ravage coldly.

"Well tough crud grizzly cause we have ya'll outnumbered and ya'll can't possibly beat all of us." said Bunnie crossly "Especially me and Vector both together."

"Hey Bunnie, how's this freak and how do you know him?" asked Dark Cat curiously.

"We're old friends, literally." said Bunnie "But now we're fierce enemies all because Ravage got exiled from Adabat for breaking the rules. And if ah'm to take a wild guess...you must hae been brought here by a time rift too." she deduced.

"I'm not sure what a time rift is." said Ravage thoughtfully "But I can tell you that after my last encounter with you and your smelly boyfriend I was suddenly taken away by a weird colorful light that appeared in the sky completely out of nowhere. And after that, I was brought here and given I was still hungry I took to slaughtering innocent people just to keep myself well fed."

"So you were murdering all those people!" gasped Dark "You monster, how could you?! These people have done nothing to you, you don't even come from this zone!"

"Like I said, I was hungry and I needed to eat something. And over time as I've lived my life of exile, I have grown to really enjoy the taste of Mobian meat..." said Ravage nastily.

Bunnie felt sick hearing this. Ravage had truly gone off the deep end hadn't he? He was now resorting to cannibalism just to live?! And that was the reason he was killing people in this world? Bunnie had to accept it. Her old friend was well and truly gone and there was no

saving him now. Bunnie glared at Ravage, her face the embodiment of contempt and disgust.

"You sick, twisted monster..." she growled "Ah can't believe you're stopping this low. Ya'll are dead to me old friend. Or should ah even acknowledge you as such?"

"I don't really care anymore." said Ravage "After you stopped me from getting my revenge*, you were officially dead to ME. As a matter of fact, allow me to make that statement literal!"

He pounced onto Bunnie and dragged her down onto the ground, hoping to kill the Rabbot with a single snap of his jaws. Bunnie grabbed Ravage's jaws and forced them closed. She swung her legs up and threw Ravage off of herself. The wolf landed on his back with a crunch. Geoffrey charged towards Ravage, his arm-mounted crossbow now on his arm and ready to shoot Ravage. Geoffrey had hidden it in a pocket inside his shirt and now he'd put it on for the battle ahead. Ravage grabbed Geoffrey's arm and forced it upwards, causing him to shoot at the sky and miss him completely. Geoffrey punched Ravage on the nose but the wolf retaliated with a feirce bite on the shoulder that made Geoffrey scream in pain. Ravage was clearly more animalistic than ever before. Ravage clamped down on Geoffrey's shoulder, his teeth penetrating the skunk's flesh deeply and sending flares of pain surging through his arm. Bunnie grabbed Ravage's jaws and forced them open, releasing Geoffrey so the skunk could sock him in the eye. He clutched his shoulder, which had deep teeth marks in it. It would take a while to heel much to Geoffrey's dismay. He wouldn't be able to fight with his left arm for a while. Ravage clawed at Bunnie, catching her across the chest and shredding bits of her Victorian dress as he did so. Bunnie uppercut Ravage in the chin and then socked him in the gut. Ravage growled like a rabid wolf and he spun around on his heel. He drove his foot into Bunnie's gut and sent her hurling across the alleyway into a bunch of dustbins. Ravage picked up a dustbin and prepared to slam it down on Bunnie's head but Dark eblowed him in the back, causing him to keel forward and drop the bin on his own head. Ravage yelped like a dog that's had its tail trapped in the door as the bin landed on top of him. Ravage picked it up and he swung the bin at Dark. Dark just cut the bin to pieces with

his blades, leaving Ravage without a weapon. Ravage punched Dark in the face and then tripped him up with a kick to the legs. Dark groaned but he wasn't down for long. He took off his cloak and he wrapped it around Ravage's face. The wolf flailed around blindly, unable to see with the cloak tied around his head. Dark kicked Ravage in the bum and sent him staggering towards Kiara. Kiara clasped her fists together and she swung them both down onto Ravage's head. The wolf was dazed but he recovered and he ripped the cloak off of his head. He lashed at Kiara, the cheetah ducking backwards to avoid the attack and Kiara swung her head forward. Ravage screamed out loud as Kiara's head violently slammed against the bridge of his snout. The wolf's entire snout began to throb wildly as if it had been smashed by a hammer. To finish off the fight, Vector ran forward and grabbed Ravage around the throat. But Ravage wasn't finished yet. He clawed Vector on the arm and made him let go as he gripped his arm in pain. The wolf kicked Vector in the side and sent him hurling into the wall. Espio ran in and unleashed a few ninjitsu rounds on Ravage. He then wrapped his legs around Rvage's head, spun his body all around his head and brought Ravage down onto the ground, throttling him at the same time. Raage gasped for breath as Espio stood back and whipped out some shuriken. Ravage recovered from the earlier blow but Espio threw the shuriken at him. The stars sliced through his skin and drew blood, making the wolf wince in pain. Ravage ran towards Espio but the ninja chameleon spun around until he was behind Ravage and he dropkicked him in the back of his head, knocking him down onto the ground. Charmy proceeded to sting Ravage on the bottom for extra humiliation. Ravage roared like a wounded coyote as Charmy stung him. He swatted the bee down onto the ground and prepared to eat him alive. But Bunnie ran in and wrapped her robot arm around Ravage's neck. She pressed her metal hand against his windpipe, the wolf gasping for breath that wouldn't enter his lungs and swinging his arms madly. Bunnie remembered how people known as "garrotters" would do this to people so they could rob them. And it seemed now Bunnie would use this tactic to stop Ravage. Ravage fought against Bunnie but his strength was weakening as his air supply depleted and black dots swam round his vision. Bunnie pressed harder and harder on Ravage's throat until the wolf eventually passed out. The moment his body fell limp into her arms, Bunnie let him go and the wolf

collapsed onto the ground in a heap. It seemed she was getting better at fighting him now. This was the shortest fight she'd had with Ravage yet. Wiping sweat off her head, Bunnie sighed with relief.

"Whew...subdued him. We did it." she said "Well fought guys."

"Our pleasure." said Vector "So what do we do with this lunatic now?"

"Bring him back to Mobius Prime so he can be put in a prison cell and pay for his crimes." said Bunnie coldly "That's the most that monster deserves."

"I agree on that." said Geoffrey, clutching his wounded shoulder "Although personally, I wouldn't even go far as to do that. I'd have had the blighter executed."

"Now, now sugah, we're not stooping to his level." said Bunnie firmly "We are decent people and we will do what's right. Please understand that."

"I do luv." said Geoffrey, his hand on Bunnie's cheek "And I'm glad we are decent people. I'd hate to be like Ravage."

"Me too hon." said Bunnie, kissing Geoffrey after saying that and then adding "It feels good to know ah'm not a monster."

"Indeed." said Geoffrey.

"So, now what?" asked Charmy "We don't know how to get back to our Mobius so what do we do now?"

As if to answer his question, a white portal appeared from nowhere, lighting up the alley-way and throwing gleaming white light over the dark shadows that shrouded it. The Mobians leapt back in surprise as the portal opened and they stared at it in wonder.

"Well...I guess we go through that." said Charmy, thinking he'd been given an answer.

"Dark baby, is that another time rift?" asked Kiara, clutching her boyfriend tightly.

"No, this one's plain white and it's at ground level, not in the sky." said Dark, observing the portal "I think this is harmless."

"Ah hope it takes us back to Mobius Prime." said Bunnie "Let's see what happens when we step through it."

The Mobians weren't sure whether to follow Bunnie's suggestion but given the world was ending and they needed to save it, they had to try it and see what happened. All seven Mobians stepped through the portal, Vector dragging Ravage's unconscious body in with them. The portal closed up, returning the darkness to the alley-way as the light faded. That portal was the last of the portals activated by Sonic to reunite his friends. Now it had found the last seven Sonic was looking for, he and his friends would be reunited and they could put an end to the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses once and for all...

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 4: Trouble in Adabat

If anybody dares question some of the Victorian facts in this chapter then please go away. I have done my research on these facts AND I read the Horrible Histories books so if you think I'm making any of these facts up then don't, because I'm not. They are 100% REAL facts. You already know that Jack the Ripper in all his horror glory is true facts though.

Well how was that for some Victorian fun?

Well the search for Sonic's friends is over. Join me in Part 9 as everybody gets back together to stop The Eraser! Don't miss it!

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 9

Story 174: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses Part 9: Getting Back Together

Sonic the Hedgehog watched with awe as the time sceptre opened up white portals all around the room as he tapped into the sceptre's power and followed Malacos's instructions.

A crisis was going on right now, known simply as the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses. For weeks on end, strange multi-coloured lights had been appearing in the sky and sucking up whatever was in their way. On plenty of occasions a Mobian or two had ended up being sucked up by a light in the sky and thrown onto another world in the process. The lights were known simply as time rifts and Sonic the Hedgehog along with Amy Nega, an alternate version of Amy Rose, his evil brother Scourge the Hedgehog and the Royal Fighter traitor Fiona Fox had found out who was causing the time rifts. The villain had identified himself as The Eraser, the God of Existence. He was responsible for existence entirely and he was not pleased with how the multi-verse currently looked so he wanted to erase everything and remake the multi-verse in an image most benefiting him. Malacos, the God of Time, had been preventing that from happening by fighting off The Eraser but much to the multi-verse's dismay, he had been weakening and was now in need of help. Malacos had lent his time sceptre over to Sonic so he could try and find his friends and reunite with them so they could all help him to stop The Eraser from wiping everything clean and starting over. Sonic could almost imagine what The Eraser's evil plan would look like. Imagine knocking a castle down and building a new one in its place only with countless lives at risk and entire universes being reshaped at the selfish expense of a god who's power he abused sickeningly. Sonic would not stand for it so he was all too happy to help Malacos stop this demonic being from succeeding in his evil scheme. He just hoped that he and the combined might of all his friends would be enough to stop The Eraser and save the multi-verse. As the portals opened up and made gateways for his friends to reunite with him, Sonic handed the time sceptre back to Malacos.

"Thanks Malacos." he said "Let's just hope that my friends all get through those portals safely."

"I hope so too." said Scourge "I quite fancy taking a shot at all of them once this crap is over."

"Shut up Scourge." muttered Sonic grimly, glaring at Scourge.

Scourge ignored him and he looked at Malacos.

"So dude, if we stop The Eraser for good, will he, you know, STAY gone?" he asked "I mean, gods don't just die that easily as we all know."

"Gods do not die easily at all my green friend." said Malacos with a nod "But they are not unable to die. If we're to stop The Eraser, we have to kill him. ONLY when he is dead will you all be safe. Killing is by far the last method I would ever resort to but in a dire case like this, it is compulsory to make an exception."

"I'll say." said Scourge agreeably "Nothing wrong with needing to kill if it's absolutely necessary."

"Especially since this lunatic Eraser guy wants to kill us all just so he can make a new multi-verse." said Fiona bitterly, her hands on her hips and her face a bitter scowl of disapproval "Honestly, I've never heard of anything more selfish in all my life! Why should we all die just because some stupid god doesn't like the way everything looks?"

"For once, I agree with you Fiona." said Sonic "I mean even you and Scourge aren't that bad. You only want to take over one world, our world. You don't want to remake EVERYTHING into you image!"

"Indeed." said Fiona "One's enough if you want my opinion. There is such a thing as having "too much of a good thing"."

"I dunno babe, it'd be cool to rule over the entire multi-verse…" purred Scourge, marvelling at the very thought with delight.

"Hey Malacos, can we just let The Eraser erase those two jerks?" hissed Amy Nega "We can do without them, we really can!"

"No. No life should have to be sacrificed to The Eraser." said Malacos firmly "Everybody is an innocent life in all of this and The Eraser will not be allowed to take anybody's life away."

"I agree." said Sonic, scowling at Amy Nega for suggesting something so evil "Besides, I want Scourge to do time for his crimes. He can't do it if he's dead can he?"

"Sorry!" snapped Amy Nega furiously "It was just a suggestion!"

"Oh yeah? Well how about I suggest that we let The Eraser erase YOU and see how you like it pinky!" snarled Scourge.

"Guys, let's not fight please!" muttered Sonic in annoyance "Let's save that for The Eraser if he dares to show up again. Speaking of which…will he come back even though you're here?" Sonic asked, looking at Malacos.

"He will." said Malacos gravely "But The Eraser likes to buy his time. Pick a moment to strike and catch me off guard. I however am keeping myself aware for him so he will not catch me off guard this time."

"OK then." said Sonic "I won't talk to you anymore so you can concentrate. Everybody, leave Malacos alone so he can keep an eye out for The Eraser." he said, addressing everybody at once.

"Fair enough." said Scourge "Don't want to get caught off-guard by him after all."

"And I for one don't want to see him again until the cavalry arrives." said Fiona "Although I'd rather we had something a bit better than your playschool group of snot-faces you call a "team"." she added bitterly.

"Well it's better than nothing!" snapped Sonic "And besides, me and my friends have done the most amazing things just to keep everybody, including you and Scourge safe from harm! What the hell have you ever done aside from turn traitor and run off with Scourge? Have you done anything amazing since then?"

"Shut up!" screamed Fiona, slapping Sonic across the face as hard

as she could "I'd much rather die a happy vixen beside my Scourge then die a miserable waste of life with you and your stupid friends! Heroism is overrated, I've made that very clear by now!"

"That was uncalled for! You take that back!" yelled Amy Nega.

"No, no Amy, leave her be." said Sonic, rubbing his face better "If Fiona wants to be a delusion idiot then let her. At least we're the ones who come off better in the end."

"One more word out of you and I'll break your jaw!" snarled Fiona, her face a twisted maw of rage and fury. She was so cross that she was even shaking around the edges.

"Yeah Sonic, shut your face before me and Fiona flatten you into mush!" roared Scourge.

Sonic was about to retort until some movement in one of the portals caught his eye and he looked at it.

"Hold that thought guys, I think something's coming through one of the portals!" Sonic exclaimed excitedly "I think one of my friends might have found us!"

Scourge and Fiona weren't watching. They really didn't care about this at all, Sonic's friends were very much their enemy as Sonic was so they had no interest in welcoming them back. Amy Nega however was interested in seeing this since she had never met any of Sonic's friends besides Shadow. She wondered how much they differed to their Mobius Nega counterparts. Sonic watched one of the glorious, glowing white portals as two faint shapes were visible from within the portal. Somebody was coming through and Sonic had a faint idea on who these two would be. As they emerged from the portal and entered this empty world that's only feature was the platform with surrounding flames and the coloured background, Sonic could see who the first two to rejoin with him were. Tails the Fox and his girlfriend the adorable Cosmo the Seedrian emerged from the portal that Sonic was looking at. The portal closed behind them as they exited it To their dismay, they weren't on Mobius Prime as they hoped they would be. When the portal had opened up on Mobius Beta, they were hoping to be going home to Mobius Prime,

especially after all the hell they had been through on Mobius Beta. Their faces fell in despair.

"Aww…this isn't Mobius Prime at all." moaned Tails "This is just some featureless limbo type area."

"Well we can easily agree that it's better than Mobius Beta." said Cosmo, clutching Tails's arm and shuddering over their experience in the dystopian alter-world "I do hope that it recovers from what it's been through."

"Maybe one day we could send Alter a message asking how he is." said Tails, hugging Cosmo "Although I don't think I'll ever forget the horrible death of my Mobius Beta counterpart no matter how well Mobius Beta recovers from the Devatron invasion."

Sonic decided to make his presence known.

"Tails! Cosmo! Boy am I glad to see you both!" he cried delightedly.

Tails and Cosmo's heads both turned to Sonic's direction and they gaped in surprise at him. Their faces curled into smiles of pleasure and they both threw themselves at the hedgehog as if trying to rugby tackle him onto the floor. Sonic hugged the two children with joy.

"Sonic! Oh my gosh it's really you!" cheered Tails, almost going crazy with excitement "I was worried we'd never see you again!"

"Where have you been Sonic? Have you been alright?" asked Cosmo.

"Me? Course." said Sonic smugly "And with a little help from a time god, I helped bring you here so you can thank me for you two coming here."

"How did you do that?" asked Tails eagerly, impressed to hear this coming from Sonic.

"I'll explain once all the others come back." said Sonic "So what happened to you two?"

"You don't want to know." said Cosmo grimly, looking like she was

about to cry "It's too horrible."

"Say no more then." said Sonic respectfully "I won't make you talk about it if you don't want. I will say, you both look like you've been through a lot. Must not have been pleasant wherever it was you ended up."

"That's an understatement." mumbled Tails sadly "But never mind, we're back with you so we're much better now."

"That's what I like to hear." said Sonic, playfully giving Tails a noogie-noogie "So then, did anybody else end up on another Mobius with you or is it just you two coming out of that portal?"

"Beats me." said Cosmo "We have no idea if anyone else landed on the same world as us. It might have just been me and Tails."

"I see." said Sonic "Well, there's other portals open so hopefully somebody else will…"

Right on cue as Sonic was about to finish the sentence, two more people emerged from the portal next to the one Tails and Cosmo had come out of. Sonic heard the sound of approaching feet and he turned to face the portal, wondering who else was coming too. To his surprise, two people ran out of the portal but a third seemed to fly out after them and the third person was completely new to Sonic. Out of this portal emerged his recently-become-girlfriend Queen Sally Acorn and in her hands, she held the handheld computer that was now the new and permanent home of her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx. The stranger with them was Shard the Metal Sonic, a resident of Mobius 3000 and a Metal Sonic who was more like Sonic than any robot that had ever been made, even the Metal Sonic of Mobius Prime. Shard had helped Sally stop the villain of Mobius 3000 General Rakutan but he and Sally were both too late to save Nicole from being transformed into a computer. Her mind was trapped inside the handheld device Sally had in her hands while her body was still on Mobius 3000, lifeless and empty like a crate with no loads in it. As Sally, Nicole and Shard emerged from the portal, the portal closing behind them as they exited it, Sally put Nicole in her vest pocket and looked around. This was not Mobius Prime. She had assumed much too early and had been too hopeful. They were

somewhere else entirely. Shard sniffed at their surroundings.

"You call THIS Mobius Prime?" he snorted "Puh, it's pretty damn boring compared to Mobius 3000! Are you THIS is the absolute and definite Mobius Prime? It certainly needs a lot more to liven it up! What a dull-fest!"

"Shard please, this isn't Mobius Prime." said Sally, sounding almost tired "The portal hasn't brought us home at all. This is another zone entirely."

"I should hope it is." said Shard with a coarse expression on his metallic face "I'd be a bit worried if this is what Mobius Prime literally looks like."

"I'm telling you Shard, this IS NOT Mobius Prime!" snapped Sally impatiently "Would I seriously say that if it was?!"

"Hey Sally, chill and breathe for a minute." said Sonic hastily "I can tell you where this is if you want."

Sally's ears pricked up at the sound of her boyfriend's own voice. She had not been expecting to hear it here. Sally spun around on her heel and she stared in disbelief as she saw Sonic standing before her and looking pleased to see her. Given they were in love, it was perfectly normal for them to be pleased to see each other. Sally pounced on Sonic and grasped him in a hug that could crush ribcages if she wasn't careful. Tails and Cosmo watched, awed by the tender scene before them. Shard returned their sentiment. He thought this scene was pretty cute too despite being a robot. Scourge and Fiona just curled their faces in disgust. They really didn't think Sonic and Sally made a cute couple at all. Sonic and Sally kissed for a moment and then finally spoke.

"Oh Sonic, you're here!" gasped Sally "Thank goodness! How have you been and where are we now?"

"I've been fine gorgeous." said Sonic, his finger under Sally's chin and a loving smile on his face "I've just done a bit of zone hopping and met up with a god who's going to help us sort out this façade with the time rifts. I'll explain more when the others come back."

"I see." said Sally, her fingers trailing down Sonic's handsome face "Well I can't tell you enough how thrilled I am to see you're OK."

"Me, Tails and Cosmo are equally as thrilled." said Sonic "So what happened to you then? And did Nicole end up on another Mobius with you? Where is she?"

"We ended up on a hi-tech version of Mobius called "Mobius 3000"." explained Sally, reaching into her vest and fishing out Nicole "And… this is what happened to Nicole while we were there."

She sadly showed the handheld device to Sonic and she opened up the screen. Sonic was puzzled but he soon understood what Sally meant as a hologram of Nicole emitted from the screen and stood before Sonic.

"Hello Sonic. I hope you are well." said Nicole politely.

"Nicole! You're a computer now?!" gasped Sonic "How the heck did that happen?!"

"I was kidnapped by the villain of Mobius 3000 and he wanted to turn me into a computer." explained Nicole "Much to my dismay…he succeeded. I'm now just a computer programme in a little handheld device. My body is nothing but an empty shell waiting to decompose while my consciousness and my soul reside in this meagre computer device. Thankfully I'm still myself and retain my emotions, heart and personality but…it's going to be hard to get used to. Already I want my body back…"

"Oh Nicole…that's terrible!" cried Sonic sympathetically "I'm so sorry to hear this! I wish I'd have been there with you two and I could have saved you before this happened to you Nicole!"

"Please don't be upset Sonic, it was not your fault." said Nicole sweetly "There was nothing you could have done. You were elsewhere. Just be glad that I'm a computer with my personality intact, it'd be worse if I had no emotions or personality at all."

"I'll say." said Sonic.

He glanced over at Shard and the robot hedgehog waved at him

cheekily.

"Yo." he cooed.

"So who's the tin man over there?" asked Sonic "Some kind of Metal Sonic that I haven't smashed before?"

"Oh this is the hero of Mobius 3000." explained Sally "This is Shard. He's very much based on you and he wanted to save Mobius 3000 from the evil that turned Nicole into a computer. He's been dying to meet you."

"You bet I have toots." said Shard, strolling past Sally and walking up to Sonic "So you're the famous Sonic the Hedgehog eh? You're the Prime Zone Sonic right?"

"I am." said Sonic brightly "Well, it's nice to meet a friendly Metal Sonic for once. The ones on my world are evil and devoid of personality and character!"

"Well consider yourself honoured to meet me then true blue." said Shard snarkily, shaking Sonic's hand "And it's an honour to meet the person who's character I was modelled after. In a way, I was inspired by you so you can imagine meeting you face to face is pretty much making my circuits hum with ecstasy!"

Sonic chuckled, happy to hear that Shard was so ecstatic about all of this. Sonic wondered how well Shard would fare up against The Eraser considering that he was a Metal Sonic. He'd certainly boost up their ranks quite considerably in the coming battle. Sonic's attention was diverted from Shard and onto another portal as he spotted some movement coming from inside it. He just had enough time to register some movement before a whopping five Mobians emerged from within the portal. The portal closed as they exited it and the six Mobians that had leaped out of it observed their surroundings. To Sonic's delight, two of them were Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, future dwellers who were determined to change the fate of their timeline. The other four were Mobians he was unfamiliar with. More natives perhaps? They were Rad the Raccoon, his sister Marine the Raccoon, his girlfriend Crystal the Polar Bear and their friend Gadget the Parrot. Together, they all

formed Team Radical and they came from the world of Solbius. Silver and Blaze had ended up on Solbius and had helped the team stop the evil Captain Metal from commencing with his evil plans. They had wanted to come with Silver and Blaze and help stop the time rifts. They didn't seem too impressed with what they were looking at. Rad's face fell into a frown.

"Is this where you two live?" he asked "I thought you came from somewhere more…lively and interesting than this."

"This isn't Mobius Prime." said Silver "We're in another zone entirely. Wonder if this is where the time rifts came from?"

"Or the person who's causing the time rifts maybe resides here." suggested Blaze "Whatever this place is, it's not Mobius Prime."

"Whatever this place is, it's truly magnificent to think that we've transferred from one reality to another." said Gadget, marvelling at what he was seeing "I think I'm going to go nuts with excitement over this! I can hardly believe this is happening!"

"Well you'd better believe it Gadget because it's happening alright." said Crystal "Although couldn't we have ended up somewhere more interesting?"

"Oy! Mateys, we've got some people here!" cried Marine, pointing at Sonic, Sally, Tails, Cosmo and Shard "Maybe they can tell us where this is!"

Silver and Blaze looked where Marine was pointing and their faces lit up like sunbeams at the sight of Sonic and a few others. Noticing Shard, they guessed they weren't the only ones who were bringing natives from other Mobiuses with them.

"Hey Sonic! You're here too!" cried Silver excitedly "Did you open up that portal that me and Blaze came through?"

"I did although I had some help with that." said Sonic, motioning over to the watching and waiting Malacos, all senses alert for even the faintest sign of danger.

"I see and who's that then?" asked Blaze "A new ally of some sort?"

"He's the God of Time and he's trying to stop the time rifts." explained Sonic "I'll explain more when the rest find us. Those portals are doing a good job of bringing you all back it seems."

"I'll say." said Silver "You've already got Tails, Cosmo and Sally back. Wonder if the rest will find us at all?"

"I'm sure they will." said Sonic "So, who are your new friends then?" he added, looking at Team Radical "Natives from another Mobius?"

"We are indeed sir." said Rad "We come from the world of Solbius and Silver and Blaze ended up on our world thanks to a time rift. They helped us stop our greatest enemy, Captain Metal." he added, smiling at the two for helping them defeat the insidious robot pirate.

"Cool." said Sonic "Always nice to hear that my friends are saving worlds without me. So what are your names?"

"I'm Rad, this is Marine, this is Crystal and this is Gadget." said Rad "Together, we make Team Radical. We're "radically awesome" as I like to say."

"You look like a cool team." said Sonic with a wink "I can easily see how you're heroes of your own zone."

Rad smiled modestly. As for Marine, she seemed excited to about all this so she bounced forward and started jabbering away like an ecstatic kid who's pleased with her new toy and is proud to show it off everywhere.

"Oy mate! Yer name's Sonic right? I'm Marine, it's nice to meet ya. Why do they call you Sonic? Are you really fast? Do you run at sonic speeds? What do you do? Are you a hero too? You the hero of Mobius Prime? What moves can ya do? Come on, show us yer moves! Show us something! Why are you blue? Is blue your favourite colour? Who's the squirrel woman? Is she yer girlfriend? You and her gonna marry and have mutant hedge-squirrel babies at all? Who's the twin-tailed fox? Why does he have two tails? Who's the plant girl? Is she HIS girlfriend? Are they gonna marry and have mutant fox-plant babies at all? Eww, that must be a ghastly thought! Who's the green version of you over there? Is he your evil twin or

something? Is the red vixen his girlfriend? They look right mine they do. Want me to knock a few dinghies off of them? Who's the robot dude? Is he a robot version of you? Are you friends with Silver and Blaze? You shoulda seen them when they beat up the robot pirates and crushed Captain Metal! Oh that was ripper! Strewth, Blaze sure showed Metal a thing or two! She fried him up like a kebab! Strewth, you shoulda seen that! Hey, what's Mobius Prime like? Is it full of water like Solbius? Who's the weirdo in the black cape and carrying a clock thingy? Is he a villain? I'll make a didgeridoo outta him! Look atta size of 'im! His height must be over 9000 or summet! Say, do you have anymore friends at all? We have lots ourselves…"

Sonic began to sweat-drop nervously.

"Uh…heh, heh…why won't she shut up?" he chuckled as if the weight of Marine's overly verbose nature was beginning to press down on him.

"Please forgive her." said Rad, half embarrassed at Marine's excitable babbling "She does get carried away a lot. I'm so sorry about this."

"You'd better be because she's getting on my *^&*ing nerves!" whined Scourge, his fingers in his ears "Shut the brat up already!"

"Permission to throw fire at him?" asked Blaze rather coldly, her hands already alit with flames.

"Denied." said Sonic "Just ignore him."

Blaze looked unhappy but she didn't say anything more and she extinguished her flames. Crystal frowned at Scourge.

"Who's the jerk in the leather jacket? And one would think he'd know better then to swear in front of a kid." she muttered, glancing at Marine who looked a little hurt at Scourge yelling at her like that.

"He's just my evil brother." sighed Sonic "But he's on our side for the moment so you can beat him up once the truce is over."

"I'd be happy too." said Crystal, cracking her knuckles.

"I'd like to see her in action." Tails whispered to Cosmo "She looks like she can pack a punch."

"I bet Team Radical as a whole pack quite a punch." Cosmo whispered back.

Tails nodded. Silver and Blaze had certainly brought back with them a promising team. Maybe they could help in stopping the time rifts. Their attention was soon diverted onto other things for something came whizzing out of a portal at a terrific speed. It was Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat on the hover bike they had stolen to get away from the warden on the Inter-dimensional Lockdown Zone. The portal had appeared in front of them while they were getting away so they couldn't stop themselves in time to avoid it and drove straight into it. Following them were Drs. Eggman and Finitevus. They had been close behind Shadow and Rouge and they followed them through the portal. The hover bike circled around the platform as Rouge violently jerked the bike to the side. Malacos looked surprised as the hover-bike whooshed past him. Rouge spun the bike around and she killed the engine. The bike descended slowly down to the platform and Shadow and Rouge hopped off of it. Dr. Eggman had an easier time stopping. He just descended to the platform and touched down, Finitevus hopping off of his back and dusting himself off.

"What a wild ride that was…" he murmured "Wonder where we've ended up?"

"Wherever we've ended up, it's not Mobius Prime." said Eggman, the head of his life support mech rotating all around and taking in their surroundings. "Although some of our Prime-Zone friends are here and there appear to be other zone Mobians here too." he added, looking at Sonic, Sally, Tails, Cosmo, Blaze, Silver, Shard and Team Radical.

Finitevus looked at all the Mobians that were in this zone with him and Eggman.

"Well, well, well." purred Finitevus "Looks like some of you already managed to get back together. Did you end up in a white portal too?"

"Well I didn't, I was the one who made them." said Sonic "When everybody else gets here, I'll tell you all about it."

"Fascinating." said Eggman, his optics eyeing Malacos and taking an immediate interest in him.

As for Shadow and Rouge, they walked up to Sonic and Sonic greeted them happily.

"So what happened to you two then?" asked Sonic "You decided to go bike racing or something?"

"Not quite." said Shadow "We ended up in a zone that's dedicated to keeping law and order throughout the multi-verse. We had to escape from the cops since Mobius Prime is ending and we needed to get back so we can save it. I take it this is not home though."

"It isn't." said Sonic "But we will save Mobius Prime while we're here, you'll see in a moment."

"That's good." said Rouge "And it's also good to see more of the band coming together. Wonder how much more there is left to come."

Before Sonic could answer, three more Mobians emerged from one of the only remaining portals open. Those three were Wilson the Dog, his wife Mandy Mouse and the honourable Ruben the Water Panther. They charged out of the portal as if running away from danger and they panted and gasped for breath, the portal closing as they left it.

"Whew…what a lucky escape." gasped Mandy "I'll tell you something, I'll…gasp…never look at pandas the same way ever again."

"Me too." said Wilson.

"I'll never understand why pandas have a cute and friendly image considering how savage they are!" panted Ruben "Feist is easily the worst of them all though…"

"Hey guys, what's up?" asked Sonic "You look like you just escaped

an apocalypse!"

"Blue dude!" squealed Mandy happily, squeezing Sonic in a spine-crushing hug that was much stronger then what one would think Mandy could do "Oh it's so good to see you're OK! Where did you end up? Right here I guess." she mused as she looked at what was all around her.

"Well I was on two zones before this one really." said Sonic "But I ended up here and with help from Malacos, I've opened up portals to bring you all back to me."

"Very good." said Wilson "And I guess the dude in black is Malacos?" he added, pointing at the time god who was still making sure The Eraser wasn't lurking around.

"He is." said Sonic "He'll be helping us stop the time rifts."

"Oh how fortuitous!" cried Ruben happily "Looks like we've got hope for Mobius after all!"

"More than just Mobius Ruben, all the Mobiuses of the multi-verse since apparently if Mobius Prime goes kaput, the rest of the multi-verse will follow." said Sonic.

"Oh my gosh!" gasped Mandy in horror "That's terrible! I guess this is even bigger than we possibly could imagine!"

"This is our biggest case yet you could say." said Wilson gravely "Never have we ever had to save so many worlds before. Will this make us "heroes of the multi-verse" if we stop the time rifts?"

"I guess." said Sonic casually "Although I think "Heroes of Mobius" has a nicer ring to it. So what happened to you three?"

"We ended up in a place called the Special Zone." explained Ruben "It's ruled by a giant panda named Feist and he wanted us to be his play things. We managed to escape after you apparently opened up that portal luckily. Believe me, you do NOT want to meet Feist Sonic."

"I bet I don't." said Sonic with a scowl "Nobody turns my friends into

play toys for their amusement…"

He was cut off by another bunch of Mobians coming out of a portal. There were only two portals left and out of one of them emerged Knuckles the Echidna, Shade the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit and Sora Prower. The five of them left the portal together and it sealed shut behind them, vanishing into thin air. The five looked all around and their faces fell with dismay.

"Aww! This isn't home!" whined Amy "That portal tricked us!"

"Or were we fools to think the portal would take us back to Mobius Prime?" mused Sora.

"Maybe so." said Cream "But our friends are here it seems. Look!"

The girls looked ahead and surely enough, they saw a bunch of familiar faces as well as some new ones on the platform all around. Amy's first reaction was to pounce on Sonic and grasp him tightly with delight. Sora immediately sprang into Tails's arms and hugged her brother happily. Knuckles and Shade walked up to Sonic while Cream walked up to Cosmo.

"Good to see you're OK." said Knuckles, knuckle-punching Sonic while the hedgehog tried his hardest to pry Amy off of himself "Did you end up here thanks to a white portal too?"

"Nah, I made them." said Sonic "It's a long story, I'll explain once Bunnie, Geoffrey, Team Chaotix, Dark and Kiara find us. So how did it go for you five then?"

"Horrible." spat Shade savagely "We were kidnapped and forced against our will to take part in a fighting tournament. We ended up on a world called "Brawlbius" and that world loves nothing more than a good fight."

"Sounds like Marik's dream world." scoffed Sonic "Well you don't look hurt or anything. I guess it went well for you all."

"It certainly did." said Cream "We won our opponents very easily. All I had to do was kick my opponent in the weak spot and he was down on his side." she added with an oddly prideful look on her face

as if she was proud of herself for doing so."

"I see." said Sonic.

Over to Sora, she and Tails could hardly let go of each other for a minute.

"Oh my little brother, thank goodness you're OK!" exclaimed Sora "I was so worried about you!"

"I was worried too big sister." said Tails "Thank goodness you're safe too."

"My thoughts exactly." said Ruben "Hey Sora, you're gonna be very happy to hear this."

"Hear what cute stuff?" asked Sora, letting go of Tails and embracing Ruben, the water panther blushing as she bugged him.

"Heh, heh…um…I finally managed to climb up something and succeed." explained Ruben "I had to do a challenge where I had to climb a pillar and I did it. I was thinking about your lessons the whole time too."

"Oh Ruben that's amazing!" squealed Sora joyfully "Well done you amazing little water panther! I knew you could do it!"

"Aww…thanks beautiful." said Ruben, blushing so furiously he thought he was going to burst.

Sora just giggled at him. Ruben was cute when he blushed she thought and yet she wasn't sure why she thought that about him. As for Amy, she had spotted Amy Nega and was predictably as could be, asking questions about her.

"Who's SHE?!" blustered Amy "She looks like a black-clad version of me!"

"Oh I'm an alternate you." said Amy Nega "I'm from Mobius Nega. I'm sure Sonic's told you about it before."

"He mentioned meeting another me while he was on Mobius Nega I

believe." said Amy thoughtfully "Well it's nice to meet you other me. I think we'll get on just fine I do." she added with a wink.

"I agree on that "sister"." chuckled Amy Nega, winking back at her.

"Heh, and I thought one Amy was going to be a handful." chuckled Sonic "I doubt we'll ever have two Amy Roses together again after this."

Amy and Amy Nega just giggled at Sonic, humoured by his statement. It would be unlikely to have two Amys together again once the crisis was over although there was always a change Amy could visit Mobius Nega and see Amy Nega again. As for the last white portal that was yawning open and glowing brightly, some Mobians began to emerge from within the portal. They were Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John, Espio the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile, Charmy Bee, Dark Cat the Leo Lynx and Kiara the Cheetah, fresh from the world of Victorbius, a Victorian themed Mobius. Vector was dragging the unconscious body of Ravage Bloodfang with him, his presence earning disgusted glares from Sonic, Tails, Cosmo, Ruben, Wilson and Mandy as they saw him. They had all met him before* and had hoped never to meet him again. The funny thing was as the Mobians all passed through the portal, their Victorian clothes had mystically changed back into their normal attire. Not that they minded of course since they preferred their normal attire anyway. They all had a look around.

"Oh mah stars!" cried Bunnie "This ain't Mobius Prime but all the others are right here before us!"

"Guess we weren't the only ones to get a portal out of the world we landed on." said Geoffrey "Wonder how everybody got on."

"Hey Sonic! So good to see the team back together again!" cried Vector excitedly "So what happened? Why has everybody been brought here?"

"I'll explain shortly." said Sonic "All I can say is it's good to see you all alive and well. So where did you end up and did Ravage do you much harm?"

"He tried to but we got the best of him." said Espio with a frown at Ravage.

"I even stung him on his butt!" laughed Charmy "Hurt him real bad I did! Hee, hee, hee!"

"I see." said Sonic "As for you two, it's so good to see you're alright." said Sonic, hugging Dark and Kiara both at once "I'd been hoping to get you both back after I heard from Roxy that you'd disappeared through a time rift but sadly, things got a little hard and we weren't sure where to look."

"Don't sweat it dude." said Kiara sweetly "I'm just glad we're out of that horrible Victorian-esque world at last! And hopefully soon, we can get back home! I bet Thomas Tiger's killing himself with worry over us!"

"I'm willing to bet he's a victim of a time rift too." said Dark grimly "Though we can't be too sure of that."

As for Ravage, he finally came to and the moment he woke up, Bunnie grabbed his head and held him firmly in place.

"Good to see ya'll are awake scum." snarled Bunnie "Now then, before ya'll try and eat us, just sit tight and listen for sugah-hog's probably got something important to say."

Ravage decided it would be best to do as he was told, especially since there were so many people around and trying to attack would not be a good idea since he'd be floored instantly. Also he was wondering about the time rifts since the day he'd been sucked up by one so he may as well see what they were all about. Now that everybody was back together and the team was complete, Sonic requested them all to form a line together and he stood before them like a conductor for a band. Even Eggman, Finitevus, Scourge and Fiona stood before him and waited to see what was going to happen. Malacos stood beside Sonic as if he was going to give a speech of some kind. Sonic cleared his throat and he spoke to all his friends.

"OK everybody, we're all back together after being separated by the

time rifts." he explained "And now to explain how it happened. First of all, it's good to see everybody's alive and well, yes even the villains. I'm sad to say though that Nicole will not be the same anymore for she has been turned into a computer apparently."

Sally held up Nicole for everybody to see and the hologram that represented her seemed to look down at her see through feet as if to further enhance the fact it was sad news. Everybody gasped in surprise at Nicole's current state expect for Scourge and Fiona who only smirked at Nicole without her realizing, Eggman who just chortled mockingly at her and Finitevus who had a hand to his chin in thought. He was clearly fascinated by this turn of events and maybe he could use those to his advantage. Being Nicole was a computer now, she could be corrupted easily and forced to work for him. He'd have to see what he could do about that once the crisis was over.

"I know, it's horrible isn't it?" said Nicole miserably "But you needn't worry about me, I'm still with you all at least."

"Indeed." said Sonic "Now then, the more important stuff. Me, Amy Nega, Scourge and Fiona ended up on another world and some guy called "The Eraser" brought us here so he could get a time sceptre and use it against Malacos." he motioned to the black guardian standing beside him "But Malacos fended him off for the time being and he let me use his time sceptre to find you all and bring you all here. You see, Malacos is trying to defend the multi-verse from destruction and he kinda needs our help since his fight with The Eraser has weakened him. The Eraser wants to wipe out the multi-verse and rebuild everything into his own image and if we don't stop him…we're all dead. Do you all understand?"

The crowd nodded, horrified to hear that the cause of the time rifts was some god who wanted to erase everything. They couldn't possibly have guessed that was the cause of the time rifts but in the end, it all made sense for only a god could have that kind of power. It sickened all the Mobians to think that one person could be so selfish and horrible as to want to erase everything in existence just so they could start all over and make it their way and not let the multi-verse exist the way it does now.

"Whoa…" said Dr. Eggman, his suit jerking back in alarm "I might be an evil scientist with an IQ of 300 but even I'M not that evil! Wanting to erase the entire multi-verse just because they don't like the way it looks?! That's beyond my standards that's for sure!"

"This is disgusting!" declared Tails angrily "No way are we going to let that "Eraser" guy get rid of us all! We will "erase" HIM instead!"

"My thoughts exactly Tails." said Sonic with a smile on his face.

"Wait Sonic, if The Eraser wants to erase us all…why hasn't he done so already?" asked Sally curiously.

"Oh he's tried but Malacos here is defending us from his power." explained Sonic "As he puts it, he's formed barriers around the multi-verse to prevent us from being erased. But unfortunately, he's been getting weaker as time goes by and now his time rifts are slipping through the cracks in a way. If Malacos gets any weaker… then The Eraser will win."

"We won't allow that to happen!" declared Silver "Especially since me and Blaze still haven't found out what's doomed our future! We will stop this menace once and for all!"

"But Silver, he's a god. How can we stop The Eraser?" asked Blaze concernedly.

"Relax toots, The Eraser isn't such a big shot." crowed Scourge "We had him on the ropes for most of the fight me, Sonic, Fiona and Amy Nega had against him. With all of us together, he'll be creamed in a millisecond."

"That is not the case I'm afraid." said Malacos, a heavy weight to his voice as he spoke solemnly "The Eraser was merely holding back. His power is much greater then what he led you to believe my spiky, green mortal. The Eraser relishes in toying with mortals for his own amusement. He also does not believe that mortals like you are much of a threat so he purposefully uses less of his power to further mock you all."

"Well that's bloody nice of him…" muttered Scourge "Making us look

like fools and tricking us into thinking that he's not that powerful…

"It's not like we needed The Eraser to make you look like a fool." snickered Sonic.

Scourge shot a death glare at Sonic but he said nothing more. He had no time to break Sonic's teeth right now, there was a time and a place for that. Malacos continued.

"At full power, only I can possibly match The Eraser." explained Malacos "And even then, I am getting weaker and The Eraser only grows stronger. Being the God of Existence is a big advantage of his. Every new being that comes into existence on every world of every universe in the multi-verse means that he has a countless supply of existences to feed off of. The same goes with time in my case but existence is stronger than time since time requires existence to even exist. That is why he grows stronger and I grow weaker."

"That's too bad." said Bunnie sympathetically "Ah'm sorry to hear that sir."

"Your sympathy is much appreciated my child." said Malacos, his voice warm and soft as he spoke.

"Hey Malacos, forgive me for asking what might be a stupid question but if we defeat The Eraser…won't that do more harm than good?" asked Tails cautiously as a rather legitimate point suddenly popped into his brainy head "He IS the God of Existence right? So don't we kinda need him to exist? If we get rid of him, we'll all disappear won't we?"

"I will be promoted as the new God of Existence if he is defeated." explained Malacos "The rules of the gods state that "If the God of Existence is defeated by any god under any method of any kind, even assistance from mortals, then the title is to be passed onto the next god in line. I am the next in line after The Eraser so I will become the new God of Existence."

"And you'll let us live right?" asked Cosmo nervously "You won't erase us from existence?"

"Life is everything to me. It makes my life worth living. Of course I'll let you live. I couldn't possibly erase this multi-verse, it's perfect in my eyes." said Malacos. It was hard for somebody as intimidating as Malacos to look friendly but as he smiled kindly at the Mobians, they could swear that he looked like a different kind of person for a brief second.

"Well I'm glad to hear that." said Sonic brightly "I'll be happy to live on Mobius knowing that you'll spare us and allow us to live."

"So Malacos, sir, how DO we defeat The Eraser?" the holographic image of Nicole spoke this time "If you're getting weaker fighting him, what hope do we have against him?"

Malacos was pleased that Nicole had asked him that question for he had a satisfying answer to that.

"The Eraser can be stopped." explained Malacos "But it'll take a lot of power. It is specified that The Eraser cannot match the power of more than one god. The Eraser knows this and thus, he erased all the other gods one by one before they could dare challenge him. My time power renders me immune to his power but I myself am not enough to stop The Eraser. We need more power."

"Wait a minute…would the Chaos Emeralds work?" asked Sonic.

"The Chaos Emeralds…they're mystical gems that give you great power are they not?" asked Malacos.

"They are." said Sonic "We have eight Chaos Emeralds and me, Shadow, Silver, Knuckles and Scourge can use them to turn super. Blaze has her own kind of emeralds known as "Sol Emeralds" and can turn super with them. They make us quite powerful. Me, Shadow and Scourge together took down Perfect Chaos, who was the God of Destruction. And then me, Shadow, Silver and Blaze in our super forms took down Tyrahko, a guy who was bonded in god-like armour so we must have the power to stop The Eraser if with Chaos Emeralds, we've beaten gods before."

"The Eraser is more powerful than those gods…but I'm sure your emeralds will give you the necessary power to stop The Eraser."

explained Malacos "And maybe I can amplify their power slightly. Be warned though, it'll drain some power out of me and render the multi-verse more vulnerable to being erased. If you fight him hard enough, The Eraser will be distracted too much to try and erase anything with any luck."

"It's risky but we have nothing else that we can try." said Sonic "We need to give it a shot. Can you open a portal to Mobius Prime's present and future so we can get our emeralds?"

"I shall try." said Malacos "Let us hope that your Chaos Emeralds and Sol Emeralds will put an end to this nightmare…"

He lifted up his time sceptre and he was about to wave it around until a terrifying voice echoed all around the platform. The Mobians all leaped back in alarm and looked around as the voice boomed in their ears and made the platform beneath their feet shake.

"You are fools to think that you can defeat me!" the deep gravely voice of The Eraser thundered all around as if he was everywhere at once **"Your power will never exceed my own! And don't even try to power yourselves up for I will just erase you all before you get the chance!"**

"Eraser!" barked Malacos, pointing his time sceptre in the air at the north-east direction as if he knew exactly where he was despite the fact The Eraser was nowhere to be seen "Show yourself you coward! Do not hide from me unless you fear losing to me once and for all!"

"Such a short-sighted, flaccid-minded weakling…" taunted The Eraser **"I grow stronger whereas you grow weaker. Why would I need to fear you?"**

"Uh, I activated the time sceptre's power and told Malacos where it was." noted Sonic "And when that happened, you ran away with your tail between your legs. I think you DO fear him."

"My fear of Malacos is non-existent!" crowed The Eraser **"I have never feared Malacos. I've always know that I can defeat him! My cowardice is nothing more than a pretence to lure him into a**

false sense of hope that he might eventually defeat me! Well now is the time my pretence is dropped and I show Malacos what real power is!"

"Whether you fear me or not Eraser, you will never win." proclaimed Malacos "Especially since I now have help from a great range of mortals who are willing to brave the dangers you present to maintain their existence. And as long as I live, you cannot touch them!"

"Then allow me to erase you once and for all!" sneered The Eraser.

Malacos had been wrong on where he was. The Eraser had been directly behind him the whole time. He was just throwing his voice just to trick him so he could creep up behind him and launch an assault. The Eraser materialized behind Malacos and he clawed the time god across the back. Malacos let out an enormous roar of pain as The Eraser's icy hands clawed him across the back. Malacos spun around and walloped The Eraser in the head with his time sceptre. The blow sent the shrouding hood that sat on The Eraser's shoulders jerking violently to the right but the blow didn't seem to effect him all that much. The Eraser merely twisted his head back around as if the blow hadn't even happened. He thrust his hands forward, palms out and fingers curled. The hands slammed into Malacos's gut and made him gasp out as the wind was knocked out of him. Malacos hurled across the platform but he remained standing and he thrust the time sceptre forward. Time around The Eraser seemed to slow down but due to Malacos's weakened state, the curse wouldn't stay on him forever. Malacos ran towards The Eraser and he walloped him on the back of his head with his sceptre, the hands on the clock's faces spinning crazily as the sceptre knocked against The Eraser's shrouded head. The Eraser hurled forwards and landed smack on the pavement. The Eraser picked himself up and he held out his hands.

"Given I am the God of Existence, I can conjure things from thin air as I please!" he crowed **"You know this already Malacos but your mortal friends might be interested in seeing what I am fully capable of!"**

Before The Eraser could do anything, Malacos slowed time down

around him again and he uppercut the evil god in the face with his sceptre. The Eraser hurled clean off the platform and plummeted straight down, not like that would keep him down for long. Malacos smirked to himself.

"We've been doing this for a centaury and he still hasn't learnt never to boast in the middle of a battle." he gloated "Now before he comes back…"

He pointed the time sceptre forward and opened up a white portal just in front of Sonic. He opened up another portal beside the first one.

"The portal on the left will take you to Mobius Prime, exactly where the Chaos Emeralds are kept." explained Malacos "And the portal on the right will take you to Mobius Prime's future, where the Sol Emeralds are kept. Being the god of time, I know where everything is."

"Cool." said Sonic "Keep those portals open Malacos, I'll be right back."

"I'll get my emeralds while Sonic gets his." said Blaze "Hold on for us please, we won't be long."

"I'll try as much as I can." said Malacos, turning around as if expecting The Eraser to suddenly appear again.

Sonic and Blaze both jumped into the white portals, the portals themselves staying open as they passed through them for Malacos was keeping the portals open so they could come straight back. Unfortunately, The Eraser reappeared and he had conjured up some flaming meteors to throw at Malacos. The Eraser threw the meteors at the time god, Malacos much too slow to react as the meteors struck him. He collapsed onto the ground as he was bombarded by the powerful blasts and he dropped the time sceptre. The portals closed up, sealing Sonic and Blaze off in their respective places. The Mobians gasped in horror at this. If Sonic and Blaze couldn't come back through the portals with the emeralds, how would they be able to use them to defeat The Eraser? They could always turn super and Chaos Control to the zone but would a Chaos Control

work? Is this zone accessible by Chaos Control or can it only be entered by time rifts and white portals? They'd have to ask those questions later though for The Erase levitated before the Mobians, his icy hands stretched out ready to conjure up something else and bombard Malacos with it.

"You're only delaying the inevitable." crowed The Eraser **"I will triumph in this match and then once Malacos is defeated, you will all be erased like you all should be! You disgusting parasites stain the multi-verse and I plan to give it a much needed makeover!"**

"Our lives are for us to live and for us to decide if we should live or disappear!" yelled Sally, activating her wrist blades and getting ready to attack "And I say we all deserve to live! Everybody, ATTACK!"

The Mobians all charged towards The Eraser, ready to give the insidious god all their might. They would take him down or die trying. No way were they going to give The Eraser the satisfaction of seeing them standby helplessly. The Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses was going to conclude and they would emerge victorious no matter the cost…

Footnotes:

***They met in a DeviantArt exclusive chapter known as "The Sword of Elemental Power". It's on my DA account for your reading pleasure.**

OMG! This is it people! The final battle for the fate of the multi-verse begins next time! Don't miss the milestone phenomenon that will be Episode 175 next time!

Prepare for Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses comes to an amazing conclusion...

Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses The Finale

Goodness gracious me! I'm on my SEVENTH milestone chapter?! WOW AM I AMAZING! :D I once agian thank you all for be so supportive and wonderful to me for I would never have had the strength to carry this story on if you lot weren't being such wonderful readers. ^^ Thank you so much. Now on with the show...

Story 175 *: Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses: The Finale*

The multi-verse was in a crisis.

A terrifying god known only as The Eraser had decided he had had enough of the way the multi-verse currently looks and wanted nothing more than to try and erase everything and remake the multi-verse in an image he could enjoy. Over time he had been opening up time rifts all over the multi-verse, some universes receiving them more frequently than others such as Mobius Prime, the most important Mobius of all. The Eraser had been prevented from carrying on with his evil goal by the God of Time, Malacos but even he was no match for The Eraser. Over time he had been growing weaker and weaker thanks to The Eraser being stronger due him being a more important god than Malacos. Malacos still had the strength within him to protect the multi-verse from being erased completely but The Eraser's time rifts still managed to get out and suck up whatever they possibly could and over time they had been growing more and more frequent. If Malacos fell then the multi-verse would be no more. Malacos luckily had some allies who were willing to brave the enormous danger just to stop this insidious god from wiping them out of existence. These allies were Sonic the Hedgehog and his brave team of Royal Fighters Queen Sally Acorn, Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Cosmo the Seedrian, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Shade the Echidna, Bunnie Rabbot, Geoffrey St. John, Ruben the Water Panther, Sora Prower, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon, Charmy Bee

and Nicole the Lynx (who can't really fight now since she's just a computer) and with them were Royal Fighters from another team Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx and Kiara the Cheetah. And more still, they had Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat, Mobians from the future, helping them. Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat, part time Royal Fighters, were also helping and so were villains such as Drs. Eggman and Finitevus and Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox and even Ravage Bloodfang. And to top it off, some Mobians from other Mobiuses were helping too. Amy Nega from Mobius Nega, Shard the Metal Sonic from Mobius 3000 and Rad the Raccoon, Crystal the Polar Bear, Gadget the Parrot and Marine the Raccoon from Solbius. It was quite the impressive army and hopefully their combined might would be enough to stop The Eraser. Sonic and Blaze had been transported back to their respective worlds so they could get the Chaos Emeralds and Sol Emeralds to power up and have the strength to stop The Eraser. But The Eraser had stricken Malacos and caused him to close the portals that would allow Sonic and Blaze to come back to this strange realm they were all occupying so it would take them a while to come back with the emeralds. The Eraser foolishly thought that they wouldn't be able to come back without the portals, a mistake that would cost him dearly in this battle. For now though, the Royal Fighters, villains and other dimension Mobians all charged at The Eraser, ready to lay the smack down on him. Sally Acorn deployed her wrist mounted arm blades and took a battle ready stance.

"Our lives are for us to live and for us to decide if we should live or disappear!" she yelled at The Eraser, her eyes full of fury and her blades poised for an attack "And I say we all deserve to live! Everybody, ATTACK!"

With a chorus of battle cries from every Mobian around, the crowd all charged towards The Eraser like an angry mob storming a building. The Eraser cackled a demonic cackle of sadistic glee as he thrust his hands out and blew the crowd off their feet with a gust of wind that seemed to have just come out of nowhere. Given he was the God of Existence, The Eraser would have that kind of power in him so it wasn't unusual. It would of course make it harder for the heroes and villains to defeat The Eraser unfortunately but they were determined not to let the insidious demon win. Their lives literally

depended on defeating him. Sally picked herself up first and she ran towards The Eraser. The Eraser lowered himself down onto the platform and he thrust his hand forward at Sally, his hand clenched into a fist that would likely throw a powerful punch. Sally bent over backwards to avoid the punch and she swung her right blade at his wrist, severing his hand from his arm completely. The hand dropped onto the platform with a clunk, forlorn and lifeless as was taken off The Eraser's body. The Eraser screamed in pain and he clutched his empty wrist in agony. Despite being a god, he wasn't immune to pain. But The Eraser didn't have to worry about losing any body part of any kind for his existential powers just allowed him to conjure up a new part to replace the one he lost. Out of his wrist, a new hand formed and he flexed it to try it out and see if it worked. He cackled dementedly at Sally, the squirrel staring at him incredulously as she watched him grow a new hand.

"Foolish woman! I can never be destroyed so easily!" crowed The Eraser **"I am the God of Existence! I can regenerate at will! Only when my entire body is destroyed will you be able to kill me and if Malacos can't even do that, you have no hope of defeating me!"**

"I cut your hand off didn't I?" sneered Sally "Maybe if we all attack you at once and tear you apart piece by piece, we'll finish you off."

It was a risky gambit and it likely wouldn't work but Sally was determined to defeat The Eraser. She had too much to live for, including her love for Sonic to be erased right now. Sally jumped at The Eraser and she swiped her blades at him. She slashed him across the chest and made The Eraser stagger backwards in pain. She then plunged her blades into his stomach and brought them slashing upwards, tearing great gashes through The Eraser's cloaked body. The Eraser wailed in pain as Sally cleaved through him but it would take more than that to finish him off. The Eraser regenerated his body, healing his injuries and he drew out a sword of his own. He swung it at Sally, the queen blocking the blow with her own arm blades but the force of the impact that followed The Eraser's weapon striking against her own threw her off of her feet. Sally shook her head and she whipped Nicole out of her vest pocket. She opened it up and the holographic avatar that represented

Nicole's former body emitted from the little device, the avatar surrounded by a faint green glow.

"Hey Nicole, will you be able to help us out in anyway?" she asked "Does this computer device have a weapon of some kind you can use?"

"I'm afraid not Sally." said Nicole, her holographic avatar forming a sad face "Rakutan did not design these computers for combat. Remember, he was making the women servants for the men. Why would he give the computers that the women are transformed into weapons that they could use to fight against their masters?"

"Your logic is as profound as ever." said Sally, half-smiling and half frowning at this "Thank goodness you didn't lose that. Alas though, I doubt you'll be of much use to us in this regard."

"I know." sighed Nicole, frowning with Sally "Stupid Rakutan, trapping me in this stupid digital cage and making me useless…" she grumbled, her avatar glowing a faint shade of red around the edges

"You're not useless Nicole, there's just certain cases where you won't be as useful as before." said Sally sadly "When we get back to Mobius Prime, I'll have Tails upgrade you and give you a way to fight."

"That would be nice." said Nicole sweetly "Now then, do you think now would be a good time to get back into the fight?" she asked, a tone of snark evidence in her voice as a cheeky smile spread across her holographic face.

Sally chuckled, half embarrassedly as she realized she and Nicole were going on for quite a bit and now was not a good time for a long discussion. She put Nicole away and she redeployed her arm blades. Sally got to her feet and saw that Shard and Dr. Eggman were cutting lose on The Eraser, shooting at him as furiously as they could. Shard fired powerful shots out of his arm cannon and Dr. Eggman unleashed his entire arsenal, every inch of his life support mech loaded with a weapon of some kind. No wonder Katherine and based the life support mecha on E-123 Omega's design, the amount

of weaponry Omega concealed was extravagant. Rockets launched, bullets sprayed and lasers fired from every available weapons port on the life support mech's chassis. Shard was impressed at the amount of weapons Eggman seemed to have on him.

"Holy Stormbreakers, you're fully loaded aren't you sir?!" he exclaimed, firing again at The Eraser.

"I always did have a nack of building machines with a substantial amount of weaponry." crowed Eggman as he fired more rockets at The Eraser.

"If only I had that many weapons!" laughed Shard.

He and Eggman let The Eraser have a few more rounds before finally stopping to see what the damages had done to him. To their utter horror though, their combined efforts had only slightly damaged The Eraser and even then, he was still repairing himself as he stood back up and laughed at them!

"That tickled!" he gloated, his repairs now finally finished **"Your pitiful weaponry will not be enough to finish me off foolish mortals! I am a god, and I AM INVINCIBLE!"** his haunting, gravely voice echoed like a demon's whisper around the zone.

"And they say I have a big ego…" muttered Eggman.

Shard decided to try another tactic. He spin-dashed The Eraser directly in the gut but The Eraser took the blow as if it was nothing and he puffed his stomach out, throwing Shard backwards like a ball bouncing off the wall. Shard skidded to a halt and he spin-dashed him in the head, this blow hitting him and throwing him backwards. Eggman rushed forward and he grabbed The Eraser by the legs. Using all the strength he had in his mech's body, he lifted The Eraser up and slammed him onto the floor like a kid slamming his teddy bear around excitedly. The Eraser was astonished at the amount of strength Eggman had in him as he slammed him on the floor. Eggman proceeded to do it several times, each slam harder than the previous slam until finally he spun around and tossed the evil god into the air. The Eraser hurled across the platform but before he could hit the ground, Scourge spin-dashed straight up into

him and threw him up into the sky. The Eraser hurled straight up and plummeted straight back down. As he came down, all of Team Radical charged in and all four Mobians pile-dived The Eraser in the back, throwing him off the platform and sending him plummeting down on an endless fall through the zone.

"Good hit team!" praised Rad.

"Thank you Rad." said Crystal, Gadget and Marine in unison.

Silver gave them the thumbs up as if to say "good job team". But the Mobians knew that this battle wasn't over yet, far from it. The Eraser levitated back up onto the platform and he clenched his icy fists furiously. His eyes seemed to glow a darker shade of blue in rage. The Eraser thrust his arms forward and sent shards of ice hurling out of his fingertips. Given the God of Existence grants existence to everything, it wasn't much of a stretch to think that he could imitate super powers such as Blizzard the Ice Witch's ice magic. Silver used his psychokinesis to stop the ice shards. He spun them around and threw them back at The Eraser like a horde of arrows. The icicles pierced The Eraser as they struck him but as we know by now, simply wounding him is not a sure fire way to defeat him. Far from it in fact. It would take more than that to stop him. The Eraser cackled and he slammed his fist onto the platform. The platform cracked under the heavy punch and Silver found himself falling over as it shuddered beneath his feet. Team Radical were quick to help him up but The Eraser slammed his fist on the platform again, making it shudder and causing them to fall onto their backs. The Eraser prepared to punch through the platform again but Shadow and Rouge double-teamed him, spin-dashing and screw-kicking him in the face respectively to stop him from destroying the platform. As The Eraser was knocked down, Malacos weakly stood up and used what strength he had left in him to use the time sceptre on the cracked platform. The Eraser's last attack had done quite a number on him and it seemed to be a chore just to perform this bit of time magic he was doing. Time seemed to go in reverse on the platform for the cracks retracted into the base of the impact as if they were being sucked up and they suddenly vanished. Malacos gasped in exhaustion and he fell to his knees. Tails, who was about to attack The Eraser, ran over to Malacos in concern.

"You OK Malacos?" asked Tails worriedly.

"I am fine child, just worn out that's all." puffed Malacos "I am already weak and it took a lot of my strength just to reverse The Eraser's damage to the platform. I hope I do not have to do it again for if I do…I'll no longer have the strength to keep the time barriers up…and you'll al be vulnerable to The Eraser."

"I understand." said Tails "We'll make sure he doesn't break the platform. If it breaks…there's nowhere we can stand and we'll plummet endlessly.

"Indeed." said Malacos wearily, his eyes showing signs of his exhaustion for their glow wasn't as prominent or as bright now "And I do not have the strength to make a new one."

"You just stay here and rest now." said Tails "We need you to keep us alive pretty much, we'll do what we can to stop that demon."

He left Malacos to recover and he flew towards The Eraser, who was now fighting Shadow and Rouge. Shadow threw Chaos Spears at The Eraser's face, striking him and making the god scream in pain. As he clutched his face, Rouge attacked him from behind with a well-aimed screw-kick to the back. The Eraser was thrown forwards and just as he hurled forwards onto the floor, Shadow spin-dashed up into his gut and sent him hurling up into the air. Tails flew up after him and he stomp-kicked him down onto the floor. The Eraser groaned as his body slammed hard against the floor of the platform. Furious, he summoned what looked like to be swords from thin air, the deadliest thing about the swords being they were on fire. Slash and burn seemed to be his method of attack now. The Eraser threw the swords at Tails, Shadow and Rouge. Shadow just warped out of the way while Tails and Rouge flew around to dodge the attacks. Dr. Finitevus stepped into the line of fire and opened all eight of his warp rings up in a line in front of him. Many of the flaming swords plunged through the portals opened up in the middle of his warp rings and they emerged from the portals opened up directly above The Eraser. The Eraser was slashed and scorched from eight different directions as his own weapons was thrown back at him thanks to Finitevus's warp rings. The Eraser was brought down onto his knees, gasping and panting as he healed his wounds.

Finitevus took the opportunity to attack him while he was recovering. He drop-kicked him on one of his shoulders, aiming for a stab wound that had been caused by the swords. The Eraser roared in anguish as the still healing wound was kicked. Finitevus aimed for another wound that was still healing, driving his fist into it as hard as he could. The Eraser roared even louder as Finitevus's fist entered the wound and the evil echidna proceeded to push his fist as deeply into the wound as he could. The Eraser lunged at Finitevus but he freed his fist from the wound and dodged. The Eraser clawed straight at the floor and Finitevus grabbed his hand. He sharply twisted it to the side and threw The Eraser onto his back.

"Even a god must bow down before my very might…" he crowed.

The Eraser growled like an angry bear and he launched a punch strong enough to shatter skeletons at Finitevus. Finitevus just opened up a warp ring in front of himself and let The Eraser's fist plunge through it. The fist reappeared directly behind The Eraser's head and it ploughed straight into him. The Eraser gripped his head in pain, furious to feel the power of his own fist slamming against his skull. He punched at Finitevus again but Finitevus warped his punch away with a warp ring and he punched himself in the head again. The Eraser clutched his throbbing head and quickly used his healing powers to make the terrible pain go away. Mandy decided to take the opportunity to launch an attack on The Eraser. She ran towards Finitevus on all fours like a mouse scampering through the fields from danger. Finitevus put his hands together and Mandy leaped onto them. Finitevus threw his arms upwards, sending Mandy rocketing straight up into the air and above The Eraser. Mandy drew her arm back and she punched straight down on top of The Eraser, her new knuckle attachments making the punch extraordinarily powerful and painful. The Eraser was thrown down flat onto the floor by the punch. Mandy whistled in astonishment. She knew her new weapons were powerful but powerful enough to floor a god?! She never would have anticipated this!

"Thank you Tails…" she said to herself, smiling approvingly at what she'd just done.

She didn't have time to fawn over herself unfortunately. The Eraser pushed himself back onto his feet, seeming to strain with the effort.

It was as if he was so weak for the moment that even a simple act of getting up off the floor seemed physically challenging to him. Mandy made a note of that since it could be a useful piece of information for the battle. In a battle like this where it is literally a dance with death and the final countdown all at once, you need to make notes of any possible weak spots and fail-safes for they can help you come out on top. It seemed a blow to the head as callous as Mandy's enhanced punches weakened The Eraser significantly. Maybe they should aim for the head when they launch an attack at him.

"Hey everybody! I think I've found a weak spot on The Eraser!" Mandy called to the others "Aim for the head! That seems to weaken him for longer!"

"Makes sense." said Sally, the first one to catch the message "The head's always a weak spot on an opponent. Everybody, aim for the head as Mandy says!"

"Got it!" the heroes and villains all said at once.

Wilson decided to be the first to try his wife's tactic. He drew out his spinning blade weapon and threw it at The Eraser's head and then thrust his arm gauntlet forward, sending the second spinning blade after the first one. Two twin-bladed poles spinning through the air was something that nobody would want to get caught up by. The Eraser only just had enough time to register the blades coming towards him before they sliced through his head like a knife through meat. His head now had two large gashes that spread from the front to the back and he was soon to receive more damage for the spinning blades curled around and skimmed past his shoulders as they returned to Wilson. Furious at the fact he was losing so far, The Eraser flew up into the air out of harm's way. But he had forgotten one important thing, there were Mobians that could fly as well so he wasn't out of harm's way yet. Tails and Rouge flew up into the air after The Eraser and they both pile-dived him directly in the face. Ruben shot himself up into the air with a jet of water and as The Eraser's body bent violently backwards by Tails and Rouge's hits, he dropkicked him back down onto the platform. Before he hit the ground, Shard and Dr. Eggman both flew in and punched The Eraser as hard as they could to make the impact upon returning to the platform even more callous then it likely would be. Tails and

Rouge caught Ruben and lowered him back down to the ground just as The Eraser picked himself up. The god was snarling furiously, sounding more like an animal than a person. Malacos just smirked at him, pleased to see how well the mortals were all doing right now. Seemed he got just the kind of help he needed. He watched on as Team Chaotix showed The Eraser why they were a team to look out for. Vector chomped on The Eraser's arm as hard as he possibly could. The bite of a crocodile is incredible, among one of the strongest bites in the animal kingdom and The Eraser was now seeing that kind of bite for himself. Vector held on tightly despite The Eraser's frantic struggling and Espio and Charmy both teamed up to bombard The Eraser with kicks and punches that even a god like him was able to find painful. The Eraser yanked his arm out of Vector's mouth and he backhanded Vector onto the floor. Espio drew out a kunai and he plunged it into The Eraser's chest, directly on the heart side. But Espio forgot that gods cannot be killed just like that. Their entire body has to be destroyed, a simple stab to the heart wasn't going to be enough. The Eraser grabbed Espio and he swung him to the side, swatting Charmy onto the floor beside Vector as he did so. He healed his injuries only to have more injuries to heal as Ravage jumped onto his back and began clawing and biting at him savagely. Bunnie only watched, remembering that was why people had called him "Ravage".

"Ah best not get used ta this since when this is over, me and Ravage will be enemies again…" sighed Bunnie, quite enjoying the moment since in a way, Ravage was back on her side.

She flew towards The Eraser and sucker-punched him directly in the side of his head, the hooded head snapping cringingly to the left as he was punched. Ravage grinned like a hungry wolf that's about to kill its latest prey.

"Brings back memories doesn't it my dear?" he crooned "Memories of us working together if I say so myself."

"Save it ugly, ah don't have time for yer brand of crazy right now!" snapped Bunnie, punching The Eraser again.

After Ravage had decided to live like a cannibal and eat innocent people just because he thought they tasted nice, Bunnie no longer

had anything nice to say to her former friend. She then deployed her arm cannon and aimed it squarely at The Eraser's face. As Mandy had suggested, aim for the head. That seemed to be his weak spot. She blasted The Eraser, a huge searing laser blast punching into his face like a giant fist that was connected to an equally as giant arm. The Eraser was thrown across the platform like a rag doll and he landed just by one of the flickering flames that edged the platform. For mortal creatures, they sure seemed to pack a punch. He had no idea that mortal creatures could possibly be this powerful. Then again there was a large group of them so that made it harder for him. The Eraser picked himself up and healed himself from Bunnie and Ravage's attacks. But it seemed that healing himself would be pointless now for he just ended up getting injured again! Dark Cat deployed both his arm blades and plunged them straight into his back, the tips protruding from just under his sternum. The Eraser growled in pained fury and he tried to shake Dark off of himself. Dark's blades were embedded pretty deep, merely shaking him wouldn't get him off anytime soon. Dark was still pretty mad over the fact that The Eraser had been responsible for whisking him and Kiara off to Victorbius, an experience he hadn't enjoyed much. Kiara decided to show how grateful she was for being taken to another world by The Eraser. While Dark held him in place, Kiara clawed at him and then drove her knee as hard as she could into his stomach, knocking the wind out of him. Dark drew his blades out of The Eraser's back and he ran around the front to join Kiara. He put his hands around Kiara's waist and he threw her up into the air. Kiara stretched out a leg and she landed a powerful kick directly in the centre of The Eraser's face just between his eyes. The Eraser wasn't effect much by the kick for Kiara wasn't as strong as most of the Mobians around but it was still enough to make him stagger. Dark and Kiara both charged at The Eraser, Dark plunging his blades into his stomach and Kiara pulling him forward so she could head-butt him. Her head butts were pretty hard, much harder than any punch or kick she could throw, something Ravage had learnt back on Victorbius. Dark yanked his blades out of The Eraser's stomach and he and Kiara kicked him onto his back. The moment The Eraser picked himself up, Amy, Cream, Cosmo and Fiona all ran in together and let him have it. Amy walloped him in the face with her hammer, Cosmo and Cream threw their bladed discs and Fiona used whatever fighting skills she knew on him. The Eraser

recovered quite quickly from the blows but he was quickly bombarded from behind as Geoffrey St. John fired a round of darts into the back of his head and shoulders. The darts all exploded at once, the explosion throwing The Eraser onto his stomach. Smoke poured from his head and shoulders but it quickly disappeared as The Eraser repaired the damages. That was the only thing that had stopped the heroes from defeating him already, the fact he could repair whatever damage he received. Even now though he appeared to be getting worn out as if the weight of his opponents was beginning to drag him down. He was fighting against a lot of mortals at once after all. The Eraser got up to his feet and he roared menacingly. The roar made everybody grip their ears in pain as the sound threatened to burst their eardrums and the floor trembled as if intimidated by the roar.

"Bothersome pests!" he screamed furiously **"You may be putting up an excellent battle right now but do you still have the false hope that you can actually defeat me?!"**

"Well consider the fact that we've been spending most of the battle kicking your butt ugly mug!" taunted Kiara "I think we actually can beat you!"

"Seriously, I think Malacos over-exaggerated how much of a threat you were." scoffed Dark "We're not even gods and we're kicking you all around as if you're nothing!"

"That is only because you have strength in numbers!" snapped The Eraser **"I could pick you all off one at a time if you weren't so potent at working together!"**

"So what, your number one weakness is teamwork or something?" joked Shard "Worst. God. EVER!"

"My thoughts exactly." laughed Tails "Tyrahko was harder to beat than he was and he wasn't even a real god!"

The Eraser seemed to have very little tolerance for being taunted and made fun of for he clenched his fists and shook them in rage. He was so mad that you could practically see steam pouring from his ears.

"Mock me all you want you parasites! You're only alive now because Malacos's time barriers are preventing me from erasing you all!" bellowed The Eraser **"In fact, I'll just finish off Malacos so that you all will be vulnerable to my erasing power!"**

"Gee, thanks for telling us what you're gonna do so we can work on preventing you from doing that!" snorted Knuckles, leaping up into the air and punching The Eraser directly in his eye.

"Not that he'll succeed anyway, Malacos has gone." said Shade, throwing a Blade Rush attack at The Eraser.

Surely enough, Malacos had vanished from sight. After The Eraser just stupidly announced at the top of his voice what he was going to do, Malacos decided to remove himself from the battle so that he wouldn't be targeted. If the mortals were going to win, then he had to stay alive and leaving the battle was the best way to ensure that that wasn't going to happen. The Eraser recovered from Knuckles and Shade's attacks and he saw that as Shade had pointed out, Malacos had gone. He growled in rage.

"The coward has fled for it!" he roared **"Well I'll just have to chase him down until I find him and then kill him! He cannot hide from me! I will always know where he is!"**

"I'd like to see you try and get away from us." said Sally coldly "Everybody, don't let him leave this place! Keep him here for our own sake!"

This was a message that everybody got instantly, no repeats necessary. Once was enough. The Eraser was about to open up a time rift and warp out of the zone but Shadow, Scourge and Shard all spin-dashed him at once like a trio of bowling balls rumbling down the lane and into the skittles. It amused Sally to watch three spin-dashes going off at once. It would be even cooler to watch four spin-dashes at once. Just get Sonic to return and they could do just that. The three hedgehogs sent The Eraser hurling down onto his side after that bombardment of spin-dashes. The Eraser glowered at his opponents and he rose up from the floor, ready to attack.

"Fine, I'll kill you all first." he muttered **"Then I'll kill Malacos and erase everything before any more mortals can…"**

"Do you ever shut up?!" yelled Knuckles, socking The Eraser in the face

Even a god like The Eraser found himself surprised at how powerful the spiked fists of Knuckles the Echidna were when he launched them at his enemies like missiles from a tank. The Eraser swung his head forward and he head-butted Knuckles down onto the floor. Shade stood in for Knuckles and she slashed at his hands, taking them both off in one fell swoop. As The Eraser stood by to regenerate his hands, Sally and Dark jumped up and severed his arms with their blades. The Eraser bellowed angrily in pained rage and he levitated up into the air so nobody on the ground could attack him while he regenerated his arms. Tails, Rouge, Silver, Gadget, Cream, Charmy Bunnie, Shard and Eggman all flew up after The Eraser and just as his arms regenerated, they all bombarded him like a swarm of angry bees attacking their predator. The Eraser nearly keeled over under the heavy attacks but he thrust his arms out and blew them away with a gust of wind that came out of nowhere. The fliers didn't fall down to the ground luckily, they managed to stay airborne. They flew towards The Eraser but The Eraser ducked down, causing the fliers to have a comical mass collision that could have easily leapt out of a child's cartoon show. The fliers all fell down to the ground, groaning in pain an wondering which parts of them to rub better first. The Eraser touched down on the platform but before he could do anything, Sora ran in and threw an orb at him. She had one orb full of Mega Muck left and now was a good time to use it. It would be hell trying to get anymore Mega Muck to use unfortunately given how hard to come across it was. The orb exploded in The Eraser's face and showered him in sticky, gloopy Mega Muck. The Eraser tried to move his arms but the Mega Muck held them firmly to his body as it covered him all over. The Mega Muck didn't hold for long though, he broke free of it and he fired shards of ice at Sora. The vixen screamed in terror and she ran for her life as shards of ice missed her by inches. Ruben was on hand to protect Sora by squirting jets of water at The Eraser. The Eraser however copied Ruben's power and squirted water back at him. His jets would easily overpower Ruben's no matter how

powerful Ruben became. Ruben was drenched instantly and sent skidding across the platform. Sora scowled at The Eraser, livid he dared to harm her secret crush like this. She whipped another orb off her belt and she tossed it at The Eraser. This one was a flash bomb and as it hit The Eraser's face, it exploded in a ball of blinding light that left The Eraser without his vision for a while. All he could see so far was blurred colours that had no rhyme or reason or made any sense or shape to him. Taking advantage of this, Wilson and Mandy ran in to pummel The Eraser. Mandy socked him with a powerful punch to the stomach that knocked him off his feet and Wilson threw both his spinning blades at him, the blades tearing through his body like scissors through paper. The Eraser recovered from the blows and he leaped up off the floor as if springs had just popped out of nowhere and catapulted him into the air. He decided to try another tactic given that he could use any power he wanted for he was responsible for creating them and giving them to any super-powered being that existed. He pointed a finger out at the Mobians and fire spouted from his finger tip. Blaze would not like to see him do that if she was here now. The Mobians scattered as the fire raged and blazed threateningly at them. Finitevus just ran towards the fire and summoned all eight of his warp rings again. The warp rings edged forward and the flames flickered through them. Warp rings opened up just above The Eraser's head and he ended up burning himself as his own flames came out of them. The Eraser clutched his scorched body and he quickly willed himself to heal only to get bombarded by Dr. Eggman, unleashing every weapon he had onto The Eraser. He was hoping to tear him apart while he was weak. But The Eraser had done something to remedy that. He had summoned a wall of steel from nowhere and used it to block all of Eggman's attacks. He would punch through it eventually but it was all the time he needed to recover. The Eraser then made the steel wall disappear and he summoned a force field. It reminded Eggman very much of Katherine's own ability to emit those. Should he thank The Eraser for making this ability exist so that Katherine could use it? The Eraser then extended the barrier out from all around, the barrier pushing into the Mobians and edging them towards the edges of the platform. The ones who would fly would be alright if they fell off but the ones that couldn't were toast. If they fell, it was a fall that would never end and there weren't enough fliers to catch everybody. The Eraser cackled like a demented banshee as he

pushed the Mobians towards the edges.

"I told you all you couldn't defeat me!" he crowed **"Now you will all plummet into an endless fall! While you're all falling, I shall kill Malacos and then erase you all!"**

But it seemed that fate was going to favour the heroes and villains once again for straight in front of The Eraser appeared a bright flash of light and a tornado of flames. The force field disappeared as The Eraser's concentration broke and he stared down at the light and fire that had appeared from nowhere just before him.

"What in the…?!" the single sentence came out of his mouth like a giant gasp of startled confusion.

The light and fire soon died down and in their places appeared Sonic the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat! They had finally retrieved their respective emeralds and had used them to teleport back to the zone they were currently in. Sonic had a smug smile of triumph on his face whereas Blaze looked like somebody was going to die today and she would be the one behind that death.

"Hello tall, dark and insanely ugly." sneered Sonic "I hope me and Blaze didn't miss the fun."

"Looks like we're just in time to have a go at him ourselves." muttered Blaze, her hands already alit with fire.

"Sonic! Blaze!" cried Tails excitedly "You made it! What kept you both?"

"The Eraser's time rifts." muttered Sonic "They're appearing over Mobius Prime like crazy and I kept having to hide from them and wait for Malacos to get rid of them. He ended up showing up in person so he could do it better at last and now I've managed to get the Chaos Emeralds and make it back here."

"Same thing happened with me." said Blaze "Malacos is currently trying to keep Mobius Prime safe from anymore time rifts for it's had more than it can take already."

"Well now you're both here, let's use the emeralds and smash that

god to pieces!" cried Scourge, eager to make a grab for the emeralds "I've always wanted to turn super again!"

"All in good time Scourge." said Sonic "We have to get rid of The Eraser long enough so he can't get in the way of our transformations."

"That'll be easy." said Silver "We've been spending most of the past few minutes laying the smack down on him! He's not as strong as he thinks he is."

"Not that strong huh?" snorted Blaze "And here I was expecting a challenge…"

"I am more powerful than all of you!" snarled The Eraser **"It's because of me that you all even exist! Soon though you will all disappear and you will be nothing more than a bad memory to me!"**

"You should listen to yourself speak and realize how lame your threats sound." laughed Sonic.

The Eraser seemed to take an extraordinary amount of offence at the very thought of being called "lame" for he lunged at Sonic and Blaze with both hands. His hands slammed into the platform just a second where Sonic and Blaze had been before they jumped back in surprise. The floor seemed to crack under the force of The Eraser's punches. Sonic and Blaze took a note of the damage done and both came to the same conclusion, do NOT get punched by The Eraser if they knew what was good for them. Sonic curled up into a ball and he spin-dashed at The Eraser. The Eraser held up his hands but Sonic hit his hands and forced his arms to bend so his hands ended up flat against his chest and Sonic kept going, the force of his attack strong enough to push The Eraser backwards. The Eraser thrust his arms forward and sent Sonic skidding across the platform. Sonic spin-dashed again, aiming for his head this time. He was much too fast for The Eraser to react and he struck him straight in the middle of his face. His head yanked backwards as he was struck and he very nearly fell over onto his back. The Eraser was back on his feet as soon as he'd fallen over but just as he stood back up, Blaze was rushing towards him like a whizzing arrow. He

only just registered what was happening before he was met with a fiery fist that slammed between his eyes like a wrecking ball. The Eraser hurled backwards across the platform and he landed directly on top one of the flames around the edges. The Eraser clawed around the flame he'd landed on until he was able to tear it away from the platform. He threw it towards Blaze but the fire cat just snapped her fingers and put the flame out. Before the rubble could hit her, Sonic spin-dashed it to pieces. The Eraser threw his arms up in anger and he bellowed like a lion. He summoned fire to his hands and he charged towards Sonic and Blaze. One thing you must never do when you're fighting Blaze is try to fight fire with fire. Blaze snapped her fingers and the flames around his hands disappeared in a puff of smoke much to the surprise of The Eraser.

"Don't ever attempt to burn me or my friends." said Blaze smoothly "I am a fire cat, I can start AND end fires whenever I wish. Try burning me, I'll just put your fire out. Unfortunately, you won't live to learn that lesson…"

She set her entire body alight and she rocketed towards The Eraser in a spiralling tornado of fire. The Eraser was about to throw water at Blaze and put her fire out but she was much too fast for him to react. She struck him in the chest and sent him flying through the air. Sonic spin-dashed The Eraser just as he hurled over him and The Eraser was sent screaming off the platform as he hurled off the edge.

"OK, he's off the platform, let's power up!" cried Sonic, whipping out the Chaos Emeralds before anyone could register what he was doing "Shadow, Scourge, Silver, Knuckles, over here now!"

Shadow, Scourge, Silver and Knuckles did as they were told. They all ran over to Sonic and they stood in a circle as the Chaos Emeralds prepared to work their magic. Blaze stood by them and took out her Sol Emeralds. Everybody else held their breath and waited for the magic to begin.

"Everyone ready?" asked Sonic.

"Ready as we'll ever be." said Shadow with a dark smile on his face.

"Totally!" cried Scourge "Time to show that dick what REAL power is!"

"The Eraser will be erased and we're gonna be the ones to do it!" declared Silver hotly.

"We'll stomp on him until he wishes he never existed!" yelled Knuckles.

"Let us prove to The Eraser that we deserve our existence." Blaze added, the Sol Emeralds already hot with fire as the transformation was about to begin.

"Couldn't have said it better myself everybody." said Sonic brightly "Let's get ready to do this. We'll show that jerk the real super power that we all have!"

The Chaos Emeralds rose above Sonic, Shadow, Scourge, Silver and Knuckles while the Sol Emeralds rose up above Blaze. The emeralds circled around the Mobians as they began to perform their miracle power. The Mobians closed their eyes and tensed up as the emeralds picked up speed, a great sensation building up through their bodies as they were beginning to turn super. The others watched with fascination, Shard and Team Radical staring at them in total awestruck for they had never seen this before. Finitevus had seen super forms before what with being a resident of Angel Island for some time and yet he was still intrigued at the sight of them and yet as he watched them power up, he began to make mental notes in his brainy head, notes that would likely be used for some evil scheme he'd be concocting in the future. The emeralds finished spinning around as the heroes were bathed in an amazing glow of dazzling light that seemed to swim through eight different colours. Sonic's fur became a strikingly glorious golden colour and his quills stuck up behind his head, Shadow's fur became a dazzling lemon-yellow colour and all of his quills rose up, Silver's fur changed into a brilliant shade of gold and the twin quills behind his head stood up behind him. Scourge's quills pointed upwards and his fur became a malevolent, dark shade of purple while the flames on his sleeves and his sunglasses turned blue and his shoes turned pink. He seemed the most ecstatic of the hedgehogs at being super again. Knuckles's fur turned completely green in colour and his dreadlocks

waved around as if invisible strings were lifting them up and down. Blaze's fur had turned a light pinkish colour and her coat was now a fiery red that seemed fitting for her powers. The transformation was complete and the super powered heroes were ready for action.

"Oh yeah, now let's lay the smack down on The Eraser!" cried Super Sonic joyfully.

"He's so dead now!" crowed Super Scourge "He'll be sorry he messed with us!"

"More than that…he'll wish he never existed." boasted Super Shadow.

"I must say, it's nice that I'm going to use my super form to finish off somebody other than Imperator Ix for once." said Chaos Knuckles "Next time we need super forms to defeat somebody, I want in on the action!"

"I'm sure there'll be another time for that." said Super Silver "Given how much you heroes go through."

"Look out everybody, The Eraser's coming!" yelled Burning Blaze, pointing ahead of her in warning.

Surely enough, The Eraser flew back up onto the platform like a whizzing blue arrow and he spiralled towards the super powered Mobians in a tornado like fashion. The move reminded Sonic, Shadow and also Dr. Eggman of a move that Katherine was capable of doing. The Super Mobians flew out of the way as The Eraser sliced through the air that had seconds ago been occupied by them. The Eraser ground to a halt and he spun around in a flurry, his robes waving around as he turned around sharply. The Eraser's eyes widened at the sight of the Super Mobians all hovering before him like phantoms in a haunted house. To say that the sight of mortals with a super enhanced appearance was starling to him was an understatement in every possible meaning of the word. He was so surprised that his face seemed to betray his usual personality and form a new kind of mask that he'd never worn before. The mask of astonishment.

"How….how did you do that?!" gasped The Eraser in utter amazement **"How did you manage to alter your appearances and get a super powered aura all around you?!"**

"Given you're the reason everything in the multi-verse exists, I think you already know the answer to that question." sneered Super Sonic, his face the embodiment of confidence and triumph.

"Indeed…" The Eraser said slowly as he suddenly realized that he did indeed know the answer to that question **"Your pathetic little Chaos Emeralds! I've seen you use them on many occasions during my battle with Malacos! They seem to wield great power indeed…but they will not save you in this match! I'm still invincible! You still cannot defeat me!"**

"You know, why don't we just call this guy the "God of Mindless Boasting" or something? That's all he's any good at!" jeered Super Scourge mockingly, slapping his knee as he laughed at his joke.

"Maybe he's the kind of god you'd love to pray to then." snickered Chaos Knuckles, noting the hypocrisy of Scourge's statement given how much he liked to boast.

"Eraser, your evil ends here!" declared Super Silver "You dared to try and kill us all for your own selfish needs and we're gonna make you pay for it!"

"If I were you scum heap, I'd surrender." said Burning Blaze "That way we might be tempted to let you live."

"Renounce your evil ways and be content with our existence or perish, this will be your only warning!" snarled Super Shadow.

"Such pathetic threatening from pathetic mortal creatures…" crowed The Eraser, his eyes returning to their natural evil look **"You cannot deny me my existence! My primary task is to ensure existence! I will not allow you all to remove me from existence!"**

"We could say the same to you King of Lame Lines." retorted Super Sonic "Enough talk, let's end this fight here and now!"

" **Not yet…"** purred The Eraser menacingly **"Let us see if you can**

fight your way through an army of look-alikes first…"

With that said, he suddenly shot backwards as if somebody had just thrown a punch at him and sent him flying through the air. The Super Mobians watched, wondering what he was going to do as he expanded the distance between himself and the platform. After he was about ten yards away, The Eraser waved his glowing hands around and he thrust them forward. Clouds of smoke snaked out from around his wrists and coursed through the air towards the platform. The moment the smoke trials reached the platform, they began to form shapes that seemed to resemble The Eraser himself. He was making an army of clones for the Super Mobians to fight. The Eraser knew what their weakness was since he knew every strength and weakness. He had created them after all. He was hoping his clone army would tire the Super Mobians out long enough for their super power to run out and then he could finish them off and steal the Chaos and Sol Emeralds and use their power for himself. If he had their power to add to his own, he would truly be unstoppable. So unstoppable that not even Malacos's power would surpass his own and the multi-verse would be free for him to erase and remake into his own image. Little did The Eraser know was that the Super Mobians were much smarter than he gave them credit for. As the clones advanced on them, Super Sonic prepared to charge.

"He's just trying to stall us until our power runs out!" growled Super Sonic furiously "Those clones are just distractions! We have to take them down all at once!"

"Leave that to me." said Super Shadow, flying towards the army of clones like an eagle swooping towards the helpless rabbit that it was hunting.

Super Shadow removed his inhibitor rings and he soared towards the clones. The clones all prepared to attack him but Super Shadow thrust his limbs out and unleashed all the Chaos Energy that his small but powerful body contained inside of him. Crimson energy seemed to explode from all around Super Shadow like an atom bomb as his Chaos Blast activated. The blast tore through the clones, vaporizing them instantly as if they were nothing. The blast expanded for miles around and it destroyed every last clone that The Eraser had conjured. The Eraser could only stare in disbelief as

his beautiful plan was destroyed directly in front of him along with the clones. Clearly he had been a fool to underestimate the Mobians. If he lived to fight another day, he knew what he would never do again, underestimate mortal creatures. Now the clones were destroyed, the Super Mobians charged towards The Eraser.

"OK Eraser, time for you to disappear forever!" shouted Super Sonic, arm drawn back and ready to pummel The Eraser.

"The only ones who are disappearing are you and your vile friends!" declared The Eraser.

He summoned a wall of steel that stood defensively in front of him but Super Sonic ploughed through it as if it were merely rubble. Super Sonic spin-dashed The Eraser directly in the gut and sent him spiralling through the endless space of the world they were fighting in. The Eraser regained himself and just as Super Sonic hurled towards him again, he held his hands out and clapped them together. The single clap seemed to boom out of his hands like a loud thunderclap and from his hands emerged an arrow of white energy that streaked across the sky and struck Super Sonic. Super Sonic cried out loudly as he was struck and he spiralled backwards in a dizzy spin towards Super Silver. Super Silver used his enhanced psychic powers to catch Super Sonic and helped him to regain his balance and senses. Super Sonic charged towards The Eraser in another spin-dash but The Eraser held his hand out and caught him like a baseball. He drew his arm backwards and he threw Super Sonic straight upwards. Just as he threw Super Sonic up, Super Silver used his psychokinesis to hold The Eraser in place. It was a bit much to hope that he would hold The Eraser though. Even his super form wasn't powerful enough to restrain a god. The Eraser broke free of his power effortlessly and he thrust his arms forward, sending hordes of flaming swords towards Super Silver. This was something that the super hedgehog could stop though. He held his hands out like a mime doing the old wall trick and his body glowed a super enhanced teal colour as he used his psychic powers to stop the flaming swords dead in their paths. Burning Blaze used her connection to the flames to make them even bigger and Super Silver threw the swords at The Eraser. The Eraser screamed in agony as the swords cut through his body and scorched him at the

same time. Getting cut and burnt both at once was not a pleasant experience at all. The Eraser tried to heal the injuries sustained from the terrible weapons but Burning Blaze came whooshing towards him in a burst of flames. She used her Burning Fire Boost attack to plough straight into The Eraser and push him backwards as much as she possibly could. Her flames licked at him, scorching him terribly and earning a roar of pained fury from The Eraser. She then thrust her arms up, sending huge bursts of fire whooshing up into The Eraser's face and then she fire-boosted into his chest again. The Eraser was sent falling down through the empty space all around him, smoke trailing after him as the burns took effect. The Eraser healed his injuries and he sent himself rocketing towards the Super Mobians like a jet. He set himself alight, mimicking what Burning Blaze did, and he spiralled around in a fiery tornado. He struck Super Silver and Burning Blaze both at once and threw jets of water at Burning Blaze in an attempt to put her out. The water did indeed put her out but she didn't stay out for long. She relit herself and whooshed towards The Eraser. The Eraser smirked confidently at her and he doused her in more water, putting her out yet again. Before she could relight herself, The Eraser grabbed her by the face and threw her into Super Silver, knocking him back as she slammed into him. The Eraser cackled gleefully at the two and he was about to attack them again until Super Scourge and Chaos Knuckles ploughed straight into his back with a spin-dash and a super punch respectively. The Eraser bellowed a surprised yelp of surprise as he was hit in the back by the two. Super Scourge then proceeded to punch, kick, elbow, stomp and head butt The Eraser all at once, moving at such a blinding speed that The Eraser couldn't see him as he launched his attacks at him. Chaos Knuckles uppercut The Eraser in the face and then slammed him on top of his head with his fist. It delighted Chaos Knuckles to see just how much stronger his punches were when he used his super form. He really should use it more often. The Eraser keeled forward after the slam on his head and Super Scourge slugged him as hard as he could in the throat, launching his well-aimed punch and driving it as viciously as he could into the Adam's apple in The Eraser's neck. The Eraser coughed and spluttered dreadfully loudly, his breath struggling to return to him as he tried to snatch the air that escaped from his lungs back. Seeking the opportunity, Super Shadow unleashed a shower of Chaos Spears all over The Eraser, the spears striking The

Eraser and spearing him in every inch of his body. It was pure agony for The Eraser as the powerful spears struck him. He almost couldn't believe that he was truly fighting a bunch of mortals, it was as if they had become gods themselves! Their power would be worth snatching from them that much was certain. As the spears ended, Super Shadow spin-dashed The Eraser and unleashed a round of kicks and punches that slammed against The Eraser so hard he may as well have been hit by meteors. Super Scourge and Super Knuckles added more injury to Shadow's insult by charging directly into his head as callously as they could. Then Super Silver held The Eraser in place while Burning Blaze spiralled into him in a flaming twister of searing hot fire and sent him hurling into Super Sonic who finished off the assault with a roundhouse kick that could shatter a building to pieces. The Eraser hurled through the air and he crashed head first into the platform. The platform shuddered and shook as he hit it and the Mobians still occupying the platform had to fight hard to keep their balance. The Eraser shook his head and he kicked in his healing abilities just as the Super Mobians charged towards him again.

Narrowing his eyes, he summoned balls of ice and fire to his hands and he threw them at the Super Mobians. The Super Mobians ploughed straight through them as if they were nothing and they all charged into him at once. The Eraser was slammed against the platform again, forcing the mortals still on the platform to again fight for balance as it shuddered beneath their feet and even began to crack slightly under the impact. Anymore and the portal would crumble to pieces and send the occupants on a downwards plummet that would last until they died. Super Sonic sensed this and he decided to keep the fight as far away from the platform as possible. It was literally the only leg to stand on for his friends and enemies. Super Sonic flew around behind The Eraser followed by Super Shadow and Super Scourge and the three hedgehogs slammed into his back in a powerful spin-dash, throwing The Eraser away form the platform. The others all gathered at the edges of the platform and watched as the fight continued to unfold before them. Super Sonic flew to the top of The Eraser and he stomp-kicked him directly in the centre of his cranium. Super Sonic watched with satisfaction as his seldom used move worked with great effect on The Eraser, throwing him down and sending up spinning like an

astronaut in space. The Eraser soon found himself unable to tell which way was up. Before he could regain his senses, Super Scourge and Super Shadow both stomp-kicked him in the shoulders, a loud snapping sound piercing through the sky as their kicks fractured his shoulder joints. The Eraser fixed his shoulders only to get a tornado of fire from Burning Blaze to the face. He roared in pain and tried to put her out again but Super Silver held him in place before he could throw any water. While he was held, Chaos Knuckles pile-dived him in the head with both fists and sent him on a drunken spin once again. The Eraser regained himself and he decided to use an ability that the Super Mobians could use.

"Chaos…CONTROL!" he thundered, throwing his arms up into the air to accompany his bellow.

Just as he yelled it, the Super Mobians rushed towards him but they were too late to launch an attack on him. Time slowed to a deadly stop around them, holding them in place as if they had been frozen in ice. They tried as hard as they could to keep moving but their bodies wouldn't obey their brain signals. The Eraser crowed at them and he flew towards the frozen Mobians. He spun around with his arms held wide out beside him. He backhanded all the Super Mobians and threw them across the sky a spectacular distance. The Super Mobians regained themselves and Super Sonic stared in disbelief at The Eraser.

"Suffering sneakers!" cried Super Sonic "He knows Chaos Control?!"

"He's the God of Existence Sonic, he created the power that we wield." noted Super Silver "It'll be perfectly normal for him to know what powers and attacks we have."

"Well he's not using Chaos Control on us again!" yelled Super Scourge furiously, the purple super hedgehog clenching his fists and baring his sharp teeth furiously "Cause we're gonna do it to him now!"

"An excellent idea." said Super Shadow "For you that is."

Super Scourge scowled at Super Shadow. Why must Sonic and his

friends take whatever opportunity they have to make fun of him? The Eraser swooped towards the Super Mobians but before he could grab them, all six Super Mobians activated their own Chaos Control to freeze him in place. He stopped just inches in front of them. The pose he had been frozen in made him look like an angry cat pouncing on the unfortunate little mouse that had been foolish enough to scuttle its way. Seizing their chance, Super Sonic, Super Shadow, Super Scourge, Super Knuckles and Burning Blaze all cut loose on him, bombarding him from all over his body with every spin-dash, punch and fire boost they unleashed on him. Super Silver just grabbed him with his psychokinesis just as the Chaos Control wore off and held him in place as the others continued to attack him. He was being assaulted so violently and furiously that he couldn't try and break out of his psychokinesis. Unfortunately, The Eraser managed to use a Chaos Control to teleport out of the Super Mobians' way. He reappeared, his body littered with wounds, burns and bruises that were already beginning to heal. The Super Mobians glared at him angrily.

"Man he's tough!" cried Chaos Knuckles.

"Is he invincible?" asked Burning Blaze nervously.

"Is there anyway to stop this lunatic?!" grumbled Super Sonic "We can't keep this up forever! We'll run out of super power!"

"I heard Sally suggest earlier we attack him at once and tear him apart piece by piece." explained Super Shadow "And I think I know just what to do about that."

"Me too…" purred Super Scourge menacingly, his red eyes gleaming with joy "We'll Chaos Blast the sucker to atoms! All of us together!"

"Why didn't we think of that sooner?" muttered Super Silver, face palming himself in annoyance "Oh well, let's give it a shot!"

"It's the best tactic we have at this point in time." said Super Sonic grimly "Everybody, let's Chaos Blast him!"

But just as they were preparing to unleash the deadly attack that

would ravage The Eraser to bite-sized chunks, The Eraser swooped through the air and ploughed straight through them, knocking them all aside like a meteor smashing into more meteors that were blocking its path.

"You will not be allowed to use your Chaos Blast!" declared The Eraser **"For I will keep you occupied until your super forms expire!"**

He then held his hands out and fired jolts of electricity from his finger tips. All six Super Mobians were stricken by the lightening attacks and being an attack from a god, the Super Mobians were hurt by the lightening as if their super enhanced invulnerability was suddenly gone. They all screamed in pain as electricity surged through their bodies and held them in place. That was the sinister thing about the electrical attacks, they seemed to firmly hold the Super Mobians in place as they attacked them from every inch of their bodies. The Super Mobians fought hard against the electricity but they couldn't move at all. They were stuck fast and the electricity was fast beginning to drain their strength as they screamed in anguish. The Eraser cackled delightedly at the pain he was inflicting on his enemies. If only he'd done this sooner and he could have saved himself a load of bother! Better late than never as the old saying went. The Eraser increased the voltage he was unleashing, making the Super Mobians scream even louder as more powerful bolts of electricity punched through them. But just as it seemed that The Eraser had won, a time sceptre appeared from nowhere and walloped him across the head. It was Malacos! Malacos had decided to return to the zone and see how things were going. He wasn't too pleased at what was happening and had decided to help out. Much of his strength had returned to him after the good rest he'd had luckily so he would be OK to fight The Eraser again, no worries of being killed by him this time. As The Eraser was stricken by the time sceptre, his electrical attacks ceased and the Super Mobians were free. They gasped with relief, glad that the pain had stopped. Their super auras began to slowly heal them as Malacos whacked The Eraser again. The Eraser growled savagely and he clawed at Malacos, the time god blocking the attack with his sceptre. Malacos swung his head forward and butted The Eraser in his neck, his helmet forming most of the power behind the blow. The Eraser's

eyes bulged as if the blow to his neck would make them pop out of his head. The Eraser uppercut Malacos in the face and then roundhouse punched him in the cheek but Malacos uppercut The Eraser back and then used his time sceptre to slow time down around him. The Eraser was now moving completely in slow motion as if he was in some sort of film that was being slowed down. Malacos turned to the Super Mobians who had just finished recovering from The Eraser's earlier onslaught.

"Are you alright my dear mortals?" he asked concernedly.

"We're fine Malacos." said Super Sonic, looking much better now "We now how to stop The Eraser for good."

"Please leave here." said Burning Blaze "We're going to Chaos Blast him, all at once."

"It's gonna get messy and you don't want to get caught up in it." said Super Knuckles.

"That is fortuitous indeed." said Malacos "Very well, unleash all your power on him! End The Eraser's plight forever!"

"You don't have to tell us twice!" laughed Super Scourge.

Malacos warped himself back over onto the platform and watched with a satisfied smile as The Eraser's defeat was about to unfold. His power was still taking hold on The Eraser so The Eraser was going nowhere for the time being. Stuck in slow motion, he would not be able to avoid his coming fate. Super Sonic, Super Shadow, Super Silver, Super Scourge, Chaos Knuckles and Burning Blaze formed a wide circle around the slow moving Eraser and they tensed their bodies up as tightly as they could. Every muscle in their body tensed as they prepared to unleash the ultimate Chaos Blast. The one Super Shadow did earlier was enough to wipe out an entire army of clones so one from six Super Mobians would easily finish off The Eraser. The Super Mobians all thrust their arms out, energy coursing through their bodies as the build-up finished and they unleashed the power they contained within them.

"Chaos...

BLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

The single word was the last thing The Eraser ever heard as masses of Chaos Energy erupted from the six Super Mobians and punched straight into him. The blast was fifty times more powerful than the atomic bomb that had been dropped on Hiroshima during World War II on Earth. As the blast hit The Eraser, he could feel every inch of his body being ripped apart by the savage blast. It was as if he was being devoured only fifty times more painful and more than just his flesh was being stripped apart. He was slowly but surely being decimated by the Chaos Blast and despite his healing powers kicking in, the blast was too powerful for him to recover and the blast wouldn't stop, it continued to furiously ravage his body. In a way, The Eraser was prolonging his own demise and making it even worse for himself. A haunting scream thundered from The Eraser's slowly disappearing head, the last sound he would ever make as he the blast completely vaporized him. Soon he was nothing but dust and the blast continued on until the dust became atoms and then the atoms become nothing. The Eraser had well and truly been erased like a pencil drawing being swiped at by the artist's rubber. The Chaos Blast finally ended and the Super Mobians gasped for breath. The blast had worn them down. So much in fact that their super forms powered down and they returned to normal. Luckily, Malacos used his powers to warp the six back over to platform so they wouldn't fall down through the endless void around them. Sonic, Shadow, Silver, Scourge, Knuckles and Blaze all came down to rest on the platform and they were gently lowered onto their backs as they tried to regain their strength. It didn't take them long to recover, they were soon back on their feet in a few minutes. As soon as they had stood back up, the crowd gathered around them and began expressing their joy over their victory.

"YAHOO! You did it you guys! You did it!" cheered Tails, practically going crazy with excitement.

"As begrudging as I am to say it…well done everyone." said Dr. Eggman "You sure showed that egotistical nutcase what true power is!"

"Strewth! You were awesome out there Silver and Blaze!" cried Marine, summing up what Team Radical pretty much had to say

about this "You gave that blighter a ripper beat down!"

"Great job Scourge!" squealed Fiona, grasping her evil boyfriend in a spine-crushing hug that took Scourge by surprise "I couldn't be more proud of you!"

"Knuckles, you have honoured us all." said Shade, hugging Knuckles lovingly "Everybody on Angel Island will be so proud of you."

"Sonic, I can't thank you enough for saving us all once again!" blustered Sally, leaping into Sonic's arms and hugging him tightly "It never ceases to amaze me how you manage to do it! You're a wonder boy and you're the hero of the entire multi-verse!"

"Not just me Sally, we ALL are." said Sonic, hugging Sally back and smoothing her hair "We all deserve to be compensated for our efforts. We all fought The Eraser and it was our determination to survive and our teamwork that helped us win in the end."

"I couldn't agree more on that." said Silver with a wink "We showed that monster what happens when you mess with us!"

"The power you all displayed was truly magnanimous." purred Finitevus with a sinister grin on his face "I might have to see if I can harness that kind of power for myself someday…"

"Don't push it uncle!" growled Knuckles, threatening to punch the cape wearing echidna in the jaw.

Malacos beamed at the joy of all the mortals that was being displayed all around. He too was happy at The Eraser's demise. He had been fighting him for an entire centaury and now at long last, he was gone, never to threaten the multi-verse again.

"My brave mortals, you have all done the multi-verse proud today." he boomed gleefully "I cannot thank you enough for helping to destroy The Eraser. Because of your valour and dedication, the multi-verse is safe once again. The Crisis on Infinite Worlds is over, you're all heroes and you deserve to be praised for your efforts."

"We're all heroes eh?" chuckled Scourge "You hear that Sonic,

we're ALL heroes, including me, Fiona, Eggman and the weirdo in the cape over there!" he crowed, hoping to ruffle up Sonic's fur a bit.

Crystal just stood forward and punched Scourge onto the floor. She owed him that punch for swearing at Marine earlier and she felt satisfied to finally have landed it on him. Fiona immediately helped Scourge back up, glaring at Crystal. Crystal just walked back over to Rad, the raccoon smiling at her.

"Thanks Crystal." he said with a slight chuckle.

"Any time. I was itching to do that to him anyway." said Crystal with a smile.

Malacos continued, ignoring what had just happened.

"Now The Eraser is defeated, I will assume the mantle of the God of Existence." he said "And as you know, I will not tamper with your existences in anyway. You can live your lives, free of fear, free of The Eraser and never will you have to worry about another time rift again. You can even forget about me and The Eraser and live your lives as if the crisis never happened."

"Oh no Malacos, we couldn't do that." said Sally "You helped save everything, we couldn't have done it without you. It would be disrespectful of us to pretend you never existed. We will always remember what happened and thank you for helping us to keep our lives."

"Very lovely of you my dear." said Malacos warmly "Such heart is truly admirable. Now then, just one more thing…"

He aimed his time sceptre and he opened up four white portals. One led to Mobius Prime, one led to Mobius 3000, one led to Mobius Nega and one led to Solbius. It was time for the Mobians to return home at last. Home never looked so inviting to Sonic or any of his friends before.

"One step through this portals and you will all be returned home." said Malacos "And please return to the correct zones, I don't want to have to organize you all myself."

"Don't worry, we will." said Sonic "I know which zone I'm going to."

"I guess it's back to Solbius for us now." said Rad, hugging Silver and Blaze "Goodbye you two. It's been a blast meeting you."

"The pleasure's all ours Rad." said Blaze sweetly "Good luck on your world and I hope you undo all of Captain Metal's evil."

"We will do." said Gadget "We hope to see you two again someday."

"I'm sure that can be arranged." said Silver brightly "Goodbye and have a great life all of you!"

Rad, Crystal, Marine and Gadget smiled appreciatively and they leaped through the portal that would take them back to Solbius. The portal closed behind them as they went through it. Shard was just about to return to Mobius 3000 but he turned to Malacos.

"Hey, can you keep my portal open for a bit longer?" asked Shard "I have something to return to Sally."

Malacos nodded and Shard disappeared through the portal. A moment later, he returned back through it, Nicole's lifeless body now in his arms and he handed it over to Sally. Sally took Nicole's body, tears already forming in her eyes as she held it again. Shard decided not to leave Nicole's body on his Mobius so he willingly went back just to retrieve it for Sally to take back home.

"Give her a good burial." said Shard "It's the most you can do for your friend. I hope she gets used to being a computer."

"I hope so too." said Sally sadly "Thank you Shard. I'll bury this body in a good place and make Nicole's new life as comfortable as possible for her."

Shard smiled brightly and he waved goodbye to Sally. He ran through the portal that led to Mobius 3000 and he disappeared instantly through it. The portal closed shut behind him. Amy Nega turned to leave but before she did so, she looked over her shoulder at Sonic.

"It's been great having an adventure with you again." she said softly

"And may you and your friends have a wonderful life back on Mobius Prime."

"Cheers Amy Nega." said Sonic "And may you have a wonderful life back on Mobius Nega."

Smiling sweetly, Amy Nega blew a goodbye kiss for Sonic and she walked through the portal that would take her back to Mobius Nega. She disappeared through the portal and the portal closed behind her. Now it was just the Prime Zoners left to return.

"Well guys, let's all go home." said Sonic cheerfully "I can't wait to settle back down in my cosy old house again."

"Don't get too comfortable Sonic." said Eggman deviously "The truce is over now, me and Finitevus will be after you make no mistake on that. But you all deserve a nice long rest after what's happened today so I'm going to be a just man and let you off for now."

"Charmed I'm sure." muttered Sonic "I'll make sure that armour of yours gets an extra special dent from me. But for now, see ya around."

Eggman's suit tilted back and forth in a nodding motion. Before Sonic walked through the portal, Sally took his hand into her own and rest his head on his shoulder.

"If it's alright with you Sonic, I'd like it if me and you had our rest and recuperation…together." she said smoothly "What do you say?"

"Resting with you would be the best way for me to recuperate Sal." said Sonic happily "Once we get back home, we'll go to Castle Acorn and settle down for the rest of the day."

"I think that sounds wonderful handsome." purred Sally, kissing Sonic just behind his ear.

Sonic giggled and then he and Sally walked hand-in-hand through the portal. The rest of the Mobians all followed the two. All that is but four. Before Scourge, Fiona and Ravage could go through the portal, Finitevus summoned his Super Warp Ring and pushed them through it. He then followed them through the warp ring, the warp

ring vanishing as he entered it and leaving Malacos bewildered at what had happened. He didn't do anything about it though and he waved it off. Whatever the mortals were up to were none of his concern. Keep up their existence was the only thing that mattered to him now…

As for Finitevus, he had warped the three evil Mobians over to an empty laboratory that sat somewhere in the middle of Megapolis and was no longer in use. Scourge, Fiona and Ravage stared at him in obfuscation.

"Hey what gives?! Why are you kidnapping us?" asked Fiona coldly.

"Do you want me to break your mouth you creepy little cuss bag?!" snarled Scourge, raising his fist angrily.

"At ease you three, I am not kidnapping you at all." purred Finitevus darkly, waving his hands up defensively "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Dr. Finitevus and I merely have a proposition for you all."

"You do?" said Ravage, surprised to hear Finitevus say this "What kind of proposition?"

"I have done masses of research on Mobius so that I am up-to-date with it after being absent for ten years." explained Finitevus "And I have researched plenty on you three. Scourge, you're pretty much Sonic's equal in every possible way only more due to your more savage nature. Fiona, you're a Royal Fighter turncoat who wishes nothing more than to see the R.F.S. burn. Such subversive behaviour impresses me for I myself am a subversive fiend too. And you Ravage, you were once a man of good nature and now you just want to make Adabat pay for punishing you wrongly. I sympathize with you I really do."

The three stared at Finitevus in amazement.

"Wow…you're good!" gasped Scourge, his jaw dropping and refusing to close back up again.

"Research is my best friend Scourge." purred Finitevus, tapping his brainy head conceitedly.

"So…what is your proposition?" asked Fiona cautiously.

"Dear child, I'm so glad you asked." said Finitevus smoothly, his voice making Fiona's spine tingle "You see, I have great plans right now. Great plans for this pathetic little world we traipse upon. And I need recruits for these plans to work. You three will have the honour of becoming the first of these recruits."

"And why should we be interested?" snapped Scourge, folding his arms and glaring at Finitevus.

"Oh I have every reason you should be interested Scourge." said Finitevus, a finger waggle directed at Scourge as he spoke "For my plans will benefit you greatly. You want to rule Mobius? Well one my plans come to fruition, you shall have the honour of ruling Mobius and your beautiful girlfriend will have the honour of ruling alongside you as your queen. And Ravage, you will get to destroy Adabat at last."

"Do I also get to eat anyone who resists me?" said Ravage, salvia streaming out of his jaws as he pictured himself gorging on as many Mobians as he possibly could.

"Ravage, you may have a banquet to celebrate your victory." said Finitevus "All the meat you could possibly eat. My promise to you in return for your cooperation."

"Count me in!" cried Ravage gleefully "Adabat should pay for what it did to me and the one who should pay the most is that insolent brat Bunnie Rabbot!"

"Trust me Ravage, she can be your first meal once my plans are complete." said Finitevus with a dark smile that could freeze the blood.

Ravage smiled a toothy smile, clearly pleased he was making this decision. He was going to enjoy this alliance, he really was. As for Scourge and Fiona, they looked convinced in Finitevus's offer too.

"Finitevus, you got yourself two recruits." said Scourge, shaking Finitevus's hand gleefully.

"So what are your plans then?" asked Fiona, her hands on her hips and her tail curled around her ankles.

"Patience Fiona, first we must lay low and help Dr. Eggman come to an untimely end." explained Finitevus "His filthy presence will only get in the way of my plans. We must eliminate him first and as long as he believes that I am still working for him, I can infiltrate him from within. And once he is down, the plan can begin. This will require total patience for it could be a while before that happens. Once Eggman is on the verge of collapse, I will visit locations all over Mobius and recruit other big name villains who will be interested in my plans. Together…we will become an armada of dark villains and world conquerors…we shall call ourselves…The Dark Armada…"

Now that's a milestone!

Hope you all enjoyed it but you better buckle up your seats for the ride's about to get wilder as Heroes of Mobius builds up to the end. Only fifty chapters left and this great series will be all over. But there's plenty of adventures left to see though.

Get ready for the road to 200 begins next time with "The Court Of Ice"...

The Court of Ice Part 1

Story 176: The Court of Ice Part 1: A Cold Sentence

A whole peaceful month had passed since the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses had finally come to an end.

Sonic the Hedgehog and friends had been through the biggest adventure of their lives, an adventure that was bigger than anything they'd ever been through and certainly bigger than the entire world for this adventure had been to save the multi-verse. They'd finally found out what had caused the time rifts and in order to save the multi-verse, Sonic and his friends and enemies and even Mobians from other Mobiuses had joined forces to eliminate the cause of the crisis. It had been a tough battle but they had succeeded at last and their attempts had been wonderfully rewarded with a month of peace and tranquillity. It made Sonic feel good to spend his days not worrying about the time rifts anymore. At long last, Mobius could return to normal although the events of the crisis would always remain with him. It was an experience he and his friends would never forget and depending on the person, it was something they'd never forget in a good way or a bad way. Sonic would always see it as the day he accomplished the most amazing thing ever, save the entire multi-verse. Nothing he would do now would ever top this accomplishment. Truly there was nothing more amazing then saving not just one world but infinite amounts of other worlds too.

But as we all know, all good things must come to an end for the month of peace was about to end. Over in the frigid habitat of White Acropolis, Blizzard the Ice Witch was preparing to conduct a spell, the same spell she had tried twice already to conduct.* A spell that would make her an army of Ice Demons, just the thing she'd need to take over New Mobotropolis and refurbish the corrupt and vile Kingdom of Acorn. The kingdom had ruined her life and Blizzard was determined to fix the damage done to her by wiping out the Kingdom of Acorn. Only with the kingdom's disappearance would she ever be able to be at peace. Before the crisis, Blizzard had come close to conducting the spell only to be interrupted at the last

minute. After her unfortunate encounter with Silver and Blaze, she had planned on how to get the last ingredient she needed for the spell, a piece of an elemental Mobian but then the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses had stricken. She had been caught up in a time rift and dumped onto another world. To her misfortune, it was a world of fire with the sole occupants being the fire cat race (Blaze would have loved that world no doubt.)The resulting experience had ended with her getting multiple burns that took weeks to recover. Blizzard had spent most of the month of peace recuperating from the world of fire she had been taken to and now she'd finally recovered, she could get her spell ready. While on the world of fire, she had managed to amputate a fire cat at the wrist and had taken the severed hand back to Mobius Prime once Malacos had begun opening up portals to guide any lost residents back to their proper worlds. To prevent the hand from rotting, Blizzard had frozen it and kept it preserved so that it would still be fresh to use once she'd recovered. Blizzard stretched as much as she could and she sighed contently.

"Aaaah…it's good to be better." she purred to herself "As horrible as that experience was, it shan't haunt me anymore. In a way, I'll have to thank whoever made that weird streak of light for taking me to that world they called "Mobius Pyro". I got just what I needed there, a piece of an elemental Mobian…"

Her voice trailed off as her eyes swept over to the frozen hand that had been waiting patiently to be used as Blizzard recovered from her injuries. Blizzard tapped the ice that imprisoned the hand and it cracked to pieces. Blizzard picked up the hand, which was ice cold due to being preserved in ice for so long, and she cackled delightedly.

"I just got lucky when I managed to amputate that stupid fire cat." she crooned "Thank goodness that portal that took me back home opened up just shortly after I'd cut off the cat's hand. It would have been so much nice if it had been Blaze's hand I'd taken but it's better than nothing at least. Now, since nobody will see me coming, I can finally formulate my Court of Ice and I will sentence all my enemies to immediate death with it. Sally Acorn, you will be sorry your father decided to take away everything that was precious to me…"

Blizzard would never be able to forget the terrible revelation that she had found in King Max's journal when she had been snooping around Castle Acorn looking for Sally last month. She had found out that King Max had been responsible for the death of her cult, a death that she had effected her in terrible ways. King Max had single-handedly transformed Blizzard into a monster when he had committed his heinous crime and Blizzard was determined to eliminate anyone affiliated with him so she could make him pay for it. And that day would be today as Blizzard strolled up to the ice cauldron and unloaded the ingredients she needed for the spell. A pound of crushed ice, a pound of crushed ice, a pile of fresh snow, a drop of mildew, a hair of fox, a leaf of any kind of plant, a hedgehog's quill and finally, a piece of an elemental Mobian. It's a good thing Blizzard stock piled on ingredients otherwise she'd constantly be needing to hunt for them. She dropped the fire cat's hand in last and watched gleefully as it disappeared into the liquid like a stock cube in boiling water. The ice cauldron began to glow a sinister, icy blue aura that somehow managed to make the already freezing cold lair that Blizzard occupied look even colder. Blizzard closed her eyes and held her hands out as the cauldron glowed and the liquid inside began to bubble. She then began the incantation that would formulate the spell and rise up her army of ice creatures. This time though, there would be no interruptions.

Powers of Ice, so strong and cold. I call upon thee, you have been told.

Powers of Ice, so beautiful and fair. I call upon thee, to give thy enemies a scare.

I need an army, an army so great. I need an army to destroy those I hate.

An army of ice creatures, one full of might. An army of ice creatures, one that can truly fight.

Hear my pleas, I call for an army of ice! Hear my pleas, an army that will deliver the final slice.

Army of Ice, I need thee now! Arise from they depths and heed my vow!

She thrust her arms up above her head as the cauldron glowed brighter and brighter and threw a huge beam of light up from within its depths. The light chased away the darkness of the cave, bathing Blizzard in a glorious light that was truly spectacular to watch. Blizzard cackled manically as the spell began to work. The light was soon replaced by a huge arm reaching out of the cauldron. The arm was made of solid ice and have enormous sharp icicles for digits. The wrist section was covered in sharp icicles that protruded forward from either side of its hand. The arm pulled on the side of the cauldron and pulled up the body it was joined to from within the cauldron. Then the entire body emerged from the cauldron, dripping wet from the liquid it had formed from. This was the first of many ice creatures that Blizzard had created with her spell. The creature was truly amazing looking, made entirely of solid ice and laden with sharp icicles protruding from its arms, head and back. It had large jaws with icicles for teeth and three ominous glowing eyes that seemed to spell danger for anybody who looked at it. It stood at a staggering six feet, much taller than the average Mobian and it looked like it had great power behind it. This ice creature was not the only one though, many more ice creatures began to form out of the cauldron and they joined the first one. Twenty ice creatures in total formed from the cauldron but Blizzard didn't mind, twenty was all she would need. This army would be more than enough to take down the Royal Fighters and if it wasn't, she'd just summon more and rebuild the army. As long as the cauldron remained untouched, the Ice Creatures could keep forming from it upon Blizzard's command. Blizzard shrieked with delighted laughter at the sight of her beautiful ice army. If there was such a thing as the most beautiful thing in the world, to Blizzard this was it. Her spell had worked and her plans could commence.

"Oh ho, ho, ho, ho, ho yes! It worked! Now nothing can stop me from getting my much deserved revenge!" cackled Blizzard "Oh Sally Acorn, I hope you have a grave prepared for all of your pathetic Royal Fighters for your funerals will be coming today!"

She stood before the ice army and loudly announced to them in the manner of a high authority figure.

"My beautiful Court of Ice! You have one simple task to complete!"

she barked "My vile enemies, the Royal Fighters, reside in the Kingdom of Acorn which is located in New Mobotropolis! It is a stain upon my honour that is to be wiped clean and you will have the honour of completing that task! Follow me my Court of Ice and I shall lead you to the enemy's location! Once we destroy the Royal Fighters, we will formulate a new kingdom, the Kingdom of Ice! It'll be a kingdom of honour and tranquillity and will be an improvement over the curse that is the Kingdom of Acorn. Onwards my court and let us claim what is rightfully ours!"

The ice creatures made loud, screeching roars of approval as if cheering for their master. Delighted, Blizzard led the Court of Ice out of her cave and began to make the long trek to New Mobotropolis, a city that had caused her too much strife for far too long. But as she began walking, she gripped her head as if in sudden pain and her eyes closed tightly shut. She gritted her teeth and hissed as if something was hammering inside her head. She could hear a whisper of some kind, a ghostly sort of whisper. And the sinister thing was, that whisper seemed to sound familiar to her. Familiar…in a way she never thought it would feel.

Don't do this my love…you're better than this…

"What in the…Iceberg?!" she gasped suddenly, the Court of Ice staring at her as if she was mad "No…it cannot be you! You're dead!"

Ind eed I am honey…but thanks to your new spell, I am back…as a ghost from your past. the whisper hissed in her head *And I am disappointed to see what my beautiful wife has become in my absence. You're nothing but a monster now…this isn't the woman I fell for. Please my darling Blizzard, don't do this. You're not a monster, I know you're not.*

"No…this is a trick! I'm hallucinating!" shrieked Blizzard, gripping her head furiously "I can't be hearing your voice in my head Iceberg, I just can't! I must be going mad! Well I'm not going to be mad any longer!"

She fell to her knees and she started throwing snow onto her head as if trying to ease the pain in her skull that was burning through her

brain. As she did that, the whispers seemed to stop and the pain seemed to ease away. Blizzard shook the snow off her head and she slowly picked herself up, panting furiously. The court just looked confused. Was this seriously their master? A delusional old witch like her? They had served much better Ice Mobians before and it ashamed them to think Blizzard was going to lead them. Blizzard didn't seem to notice the court's reactions as her breathing slowed down.

"Phew…that's better." said Blizzard softly "I must have…imagined that voice. Might have been a side effect from the spell maybe. Hopefully it won't happen again."

She turned around to face the obfuscated Court of Ice, the ice creatures still staring at her as if she was fit for the asylum. She glowered at their gobsmacked faces.

"What are you all looking at?! MARCH ON ALL OF YOU!" she barked furiously.

The Court of Ice regained itself and they along with Blizzard continued to march on through the snow. In a matter of time, they would arrive at New Mobotropolis and the massacre could begin. Blizzard could hardly wait to see what the Kingdom of Ice would look like once she took the city over and remade it into her own image…

"Just a little tinkering here and…we're finished." said Tails the twin-tailed fox, wiping sweat off his head as he tightened one more bolt and put the spanner down "OK, let's see if this works."

The month that had passed after the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses had been a relaxing, tranquil month for the Royal Fighters doing nothing but relaxing and living their daily lives as they would do normally on normal days like this. Being as peace is hard to come by these days, Sonic and friends made the most of this one month the best they possibly could. And Tails had been making the most of the month by doing what he did best, building new devices and tinkering with machinery. As odd as it sounded, this was Tails's idea of rest and relaxation. Given his genius level intellect, Tails was always at

peace as far as machines and technology was concerned. Tails had been working all month on some new facilities that would benefit Nicole the Lynx greatly. During the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses, Nicole had been kidnapped and had her mind transferred into a handheld computer pad, her primary function to be a servant to the next person who purchased her. In an attempt to save her, Sally and Mobius 3000's native hero Shard the Metal Sonic had failed to stop the process but they had managed to save her from losing her personality so in a way, Nicole wasn't truly gone. Her lifeless body had been buried around the back of Castle Acorn just next to Sally's parents graves while her mind lived on in the handheld computer. To give her more freedom, Tails had decided to make something for her. It wasn't fair for Nicole to be trapped inside a computer while she was home in New Mobotropolis, she deserved much more freedom than that. So Tails had installed some holographic projectors all around New Mobotropolis. He had installed them all over the ring wall that surrounded the city, on every wall of Castle Acorn and on every house that housed any of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters. Sonic in particular had insisted his house have a holographic projector fitted on it so Nicole could materialize near it or in it whenever she wished. Tails of course had been all too happy to fit one onto his own house. After the projectors had been set up, Tails had spend the last two weeks of the month building a power generator for the holographic projectors. The generator was large and had hundreds of wires snaking out of it. The generator was located in Royal HQ's laboratory, a good place to put it indeed. He had just discovered that he needed a credible power source for the generator so he had gone out to the Lake of Rings and installed it into the generator. The ring's power was more than enough to power the generator and the power would be feed through on a continuous loop that would bring power to the generator and back to the ring so the ring would never run out. Even more ingenious was that the loop ran at twice the speed of sound so the generator would have time to receive and give power before the ring could lose any. It truly was a magnificent piece of science and in Tails's eyes, a work of scientific art. Just now he had been making some last minute adjustments that would make Nicole's life seem more like her old one. Now he'd finished he was ready to give it a try. Standing up from the generator, he turned to the anxiously waiting Sally Acorn who was standing by with Nicole in her hand, the hologram that represented

her sharing her nervous expression.

"OK Miss Sally it should be ready for activation now." said Tails proudly "Nicole, prepare to leave your handheld and walk freely among us again!"

"Let's hope this works." said Nicole, crossing her fingers.

Tails crossed his fingers in return and he pulled the switch on the generator. The generator buzzed into life, the power ring residing inside it glowing a great, fluorescent golden colour that was so bright even the generator couldn't hide the shine completely. The generator shuddered slightly as it worked but then it stood still and hummed rhythmically as its circuitry worked and flowed as it should do. Tails grinned from ear to ear as he watched his precious machine work. Now came the next part, seeing if the holographic projectors worked as they should do. Nicole uploaded herself into the projectors and just as hoped, a hologram of herself emitted from nowhere and materialized into view just beside Sally. It was the same height and width as Nicole. It almost felt like for a minute that Nicole had truly come back in all her glory. Nicole gasped in delight at this and was amazed to see how well the machine was working.

"Oh my goodness, it works!" cried Nicole "I'm not just confined to the computer anymore! I can be anywhere in the city I want to be!"

"Indeed Nicole." said Tails "And here's the best part."

He talked up to Nicole and he took her hand into his own. Nicole gasped. Her hand didn't phase through Tails's own. In fact, she couldn't even get it out of his grip! She actually felt Tails's fingers curl over her own and his thumb lightly stroke her knuckles! Sally looked dumbfounded and decided to try this herself. She put her hand on Nicole's shoulder. To her utter amazement, her shoulder felt solid and real, even to the point of her fur feeling like actual fur. Tails smiled at their reactions. He loved surprising people, especially his friends. And of course, he liked surprising them in a good way. Sally took her hand from Nicole and gasped, unable to speak for a minute.

"You…you're…you're REAL?!" she blustered "Tails…how did…you

do that?!"

"That's easy." said Tails "I installed a thermo-molecular matrix engine into the generator. The matrix's meritorious engineering allows a holographic projection to form solid shapes and even simulate real things such as fur, fluids and even a heartbeat for realism purposes. Put it simply, Nicole's hologram is the closest thing to organic she's going to get after the unfortunate loss of her old body. Luckily though she will be immune to any form of physical pain for if anybody throws a punch at her for example, the projectors will pick up the attempted assault and Nicole will unconsciously switch from solid to holographic, making any attempts to hurt her quite impossible. And because her hologram's capable of solid structure, she'll still be able to fight if anyone attacks us. I'm sorry to say that your handheld can't handle the same kind of matrix, it's much to compact for one to fit so New Mobotropolis is all the freedom you'll get." he said, looking a bit sad that he couldn't give Nicole anymore freedom than this.

"Tails, it's lovely." said Nicole, hugging Tails gleefully "Thank you so much. I still feel kinda trapped since I'm confined to my handheld once I'm outside of NewMobotropolis…but if there's any place I wouldn't mind being trapped in, it's here. At least I can feel Mobian again."

"At least indeed." said Tails "And you know your handheld form? I bet it'll be useful for research, translation and hacking purposes so even without a solid form for you to have outside of NewMobotropolis, you'll be quite useful on a mission I reckon."

"I'm sure of that indeed." said Nicole "The handheld allows me to think faster than humanly possible and I can process information much faster than before too. As is though…it still kinda makes me feel more like a tool than a Mobian."

Her face fell as she said that. Now was a good time to wonder if her solid form could emit tears like her old body for she certainly felt like crying now.

"I felt so happy and free when I was organic…now I'm a computer I just feel trapped. Your invention makes me feel less so Tails…but all

you've done pretty much is expand my cage to make it roomier." she said sadly "And despite how realistic my hologram now feels, it still doesn't feel the same. What I wouldn't give to have my body back again!"

Nicole put her head into her hands and wept into them. The matrix engine was truly good at its job as far as realistic holograms go for Nicole actually emitted actual tears from her eyes. Tears that felt real to her that is. Sally put her arms around Nicole and she warmly embraced her heartbroken friend. Tails felt kind of crushed to see Nicole so upset. He'd worked so hard to try and make her happier and yet she still mourned her old body and wanted it back desperately. He could hardly help but feel sorry for the lynx. What had she done to deserve all this misery all of the sudden? Life certainly seemed unfair at times didn't it?

"Oh Nicole, please don't cry." said Sally softly "Tails didn't go through all this to see you upset. He was only trying to make you happy again."

"I know, I'm sorry Sally!" wailed Nicole loudly "But I just won't ever get used to this life! I want to be normal, not just a measly programme trapped in a handheld computer! Nothing you do will ever make it better for me!"

She looked at Tails, the fox looking even more hurt as he heard her wail.

"I mean no disrespect at all Tails, I'm glad you've made the city more accessible for me." said Nicole between snivels "I'm really sorry if I'm upsetting you but I can't help it. You have no idea what it feels like to be trapped as I am now."

"Given how often we've all been captured and restrained, I know exactly how you feel." said Tails gently.

"Maybe so but this is nothing compared to being tied down or locked in a cage." sobbed Nicole "This is a permanent cage for me that no key will unlock. Like it or not I'll have to get used to it…but it doesn't mean I'll like it. Please Sally, I need to disappear for a while." the digital tears streamed even harder down her face.

"Sure Nicole, whatever you need right now." said Sally softly, stroking Nicole's back to try and comfort her "Take all the time you need, we won't make you come out if you don't want to."

Nicole nodded sadly and then her body disappeared into a bunch of pixels, leaving no trace of her existence behind. That was one benefit of Nicole being a digital avatar, if she didn't want to be seen she could disappear at will so nobody would have to listen to her wail and she could have her own privacy. She could quite literally wail in private. Sally and Tails watched Nicole disappear, wondering how long she'd be gone for. They looked at each other sadly.

"Oh Tails, what are we going to do?" asked Sally worriedly "I so want my best friend to be happy again. Seeing Nicole sad makes me feel sad. And given how unaccustomed she is to this new life, I doubt she's ever going to be happy again."

"I don't know what we're going to do your majesty." said Tails sadly "I tried all I can but Nicole still feels "trapped" despite this. I don't know what else I can do. That seems to be her main problem, she feels shut in pretty much. She feels like a rat in a cage desperately biting away at the bars for freedom."

"I know." said Sally glumly "What can we do to make her feel less contained and more free?"

"I don't know…I just don't know…" said Tails, hugging Sally in the hope it'll be of some consort and comfort to her.

Sally hugged Tails back. If she ever had kids, she would know what the feeling of hugging one would feel like.

"It's all my fault that Nicole is suffering this torment." Sally whined, tears coming to her own eyes "If only I hadn't gotten knocked out by Mordred back on Mobius 3000, I could have saved her, I could have prevented this! But I didn't. Nicole's in misery…and it's all my fault."

"No it isn't." said Tails "It's not your fault at all. You tried all you could to save Nicole. It was just unfortunate that you didn't succeed. If you hadn't tried at all it would have been your fault but you did try and that's the main thing. I kinda felt the same way when I watched my

alternate counterpart on Mobius Beta get killed in front of my eyes…" he cringed as the gruesome image came to his head again "I feel like it was my fault that he died for I didn't really try to help him. I just stood and watched. You at least tried to save Nicole, I didn't try to save Miles. Now his death haunts my nightmares whenever I have one…"

He could feel himself on the verge of tears. Just as they began brimming, Sally wiped them away with her thumbs like a loving mother comforting her child.

"There, there Tails." said Sally gently "Don't blame yourself for what happened when you and Cosmo ended up on Mobius Beta. I'm sure you did all you could and you didn't mean for your Mobius Beta counterpart to die. Don't act like it was your fault, I'm sure Miles wouldn't want you to think that about his death."

"I'm sure he wouldn't." said Tails, resting his head on Sally's shoulder and holding back the tears that were itching to fall "Thank you Sally."

"Anytime dear." said Sally warmly.

This rather sweet moment was cut short for Sonic burst into the lab and as he ran into it, he accidentally bumped into the counter, grimacing as pain flared up his knee for a minute and as he pumped into the counter, a hi-tech drill wobbled precariously near the edge. It then fell off the counter and broke into a million pieces. Tails instantly flipped in fury out of Sally's arms and he pointed sharply at Sonic.

"Sonic! I needed that!" he whined.

"Sorry Tails, I should have been a bit slower." said Sonic, picking up the broken drill and placing it back onto the counter "So, how's it going? Your new invention finished at all?"

"It is and it works most beautifully." said Tails, his expression changing so fast it was like the drill had never been broken all of the sudden "Although Nicole still kinda feels sad about being a computer programme. I'm trying to work out how to make her feel

more free now…"

"That's too bad." said Sonic "I'm sure you tried all you can buddy. And I'm sure Nicole appreciates your efforts to make her life easier."

"She does." said Tails "That's the best news I can give though."

"Yeah." said Sonic "I'm sure we'll sort something out for Nicole some day."

He then turned to Sally and smiled at her.

"And how's my beautiful queen this morning?" he purred, wrapping his arms around her waist and pulling her close.

"She's perfectly well thank you." Sally purred back, a slight chuckle added to her words "And how's my handsome hedgehog this morning?"

"He's perfectly well thank you." said Sonic, kissing Sally on the forehead "I just thought I'd see how things are going that's all."

"I see. Anything to report?" asked Sally curiously.

"Not so far. Everything's pretty easy-going just like the past month has been." said Sonic brightly "Hopefully we'll get another month of peace. I'm growing to like kicking back and relaxing right now."

"It's only a matter of time until Eggman shows up again." muttered Tails "He's just waiting for the right moment to strike I bet. We should strike first before he gets a chance to."

"Maybe so." said Sonic "Say Sally, do you think a little mission to strike against Eggman would be a good idea?"

"Certainly." said Sally "We'll gather the whole team together and plan a heist on his base. We know where he is thanks to Nicole** so we'll be able to find him and stop him dead in his tracks. He maybe in a life-support mech now but that won't stop us from taking him down."

"My thoughts exactly." said Sonic brightly.

They would soon have something other than Eggman to worry about though for Cosmo the Seedrian suddenly burst into the lab, looking very frightened as if the Day of Reckoning had finally arrived (it pretty much came close a month ago). Tails ran over to his girlfriend and he embraced her, hoping to calm her down a bit.

"Whoa love, settle down, what is it my flower?" he asked.

"You have to come outside now!" shrieked Cosmo, clutching Tails by the shoulders and shaking him furiously "Blizzard is coming towards the city and she's got an army of ice creatures with her! We must stop her before she can harm anybody! NOW!"

Sonic, Tails and Sally looked horrified to hear this. It was as if a zombie had dug up their graves and devoured their remains right then and there. Sonic put his hands on Sally's shoulders in case she needed the comfort.

"No…Blizzard's coming towards us?!" shrieked Sally "Oh god, please, anyone but her!"

"And things were going so well too." muttered Sonic grimly "Well she's not getting in the city!"

"Agreed on that." said Tails "Hey Nicole! Can you hear me? We need the shields raising please!" he called out loud.

Nicole, despite not being visible right now, did hear what Tails had said and she got to it immediately. She had to admit one good thing about her being a computer. She no longer needed the bead in her hair to activate the shields, she could just activate them with just a thought thanks to the access to all the facilities of NewMobotropolis she had been granted when Tails had been giving her the upgrades. The generator hummed as Nicole rose the shields to the city. The Court of Ice would not be able to get into the city while they were up but Sonic doubted Blizzard would let that slow her down. They had to get outside and drive away the threat before Blizzard could try anything crazy or even dangerous. Nicole's holographic form materialized in front of the Mobians.

"The shields are up." Nicole happily informed them "I'll stay visible

so I can keep an eye on the populace and maybe even protect the city if somehow Blizzard manages to get in. Round up the others and drive away Blizzard's forces now!"

"You don't need to ask us twice." said Sally coldly "Blizzard's going to be sorry she ever decided to set foot here again."

"Whoa Sal, since when did you become so hateful towards her?" asked Sonic curiously "I thought she was Amy's enemy, not yours."

"She keeps trying to take over my kingdom, of course she's my enemy!" snapped Sally "And I'm not going to let her freeze my kingdom and make it her own! Come on team, let's take her down!"

Sally stormed out of the lab and headed on out of Royal HQ with Sonic, Tails and Cosmo following her. Sonic had to admit, Sally did have a point on why she seemed so keen on getting rid of Blizzard but he had a feeling that Sally's grudge expanded a bit further than that. Maybe there was more to this than he knew about. He shook off the nagging feeling as he followed the queen out of Royal HQ and towards the city gates. Sally called to the other members of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters as she ran by them. Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Sora Prower, Ruben the Water Panther, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot and Team Chaotix all joined Sonic, Tails, Sally and Cosmo as they walked through the city gates and stood defensively in front of the city wall, waiting for Blizzard to come. Amy in particular seemed very determined to give the Ice Witch a beating after what she'd done to her in the past. Her determination was the only one that exceeded Sally's and that was only by a little bit. As for Sally, she thought back to the day Blizzard had found out a dark secret about her father. In a way, she blamed King Max for the fact they were once again fighting against Blizzard. But what King Max did didn't justify Blizzard's actions at all. It was still evil of her and she wasn't going to let Blizzard win. Especially since she was working so hard on keeping the Acorn name clean and untainted. Blizzard was going to be arrested at last and she would pay for her crimes regardless of how wronged she had been in the past. Sally deployed her arm blades and took up a defensive stance as the Court of Ice marched towards New Mobotropolis. The Royal Fighters could only stare at the marvellous looking army of Ice Creatures that approached the city

like a bunch of soldiers returning to their ranks. They looked sinister and very powerful that much was certain. They wouldn't be a match for them though, the Royal Fighters would defeat them. The Court of Ice stopped marching and Blizzard stood forward like a queen who's been invited to stay at another kingdom. She pointed a sharp finger at the Royal Fighters and her face curled into a sinister grin that made Sally's fur stand up.

"Royal Fighters, I have finally managed to conduct the spell that I've been trying so hard to conduct in the past." she barked "I come to you with my glorious Ice Amy, the Court of Ice! This army is invincible and any attempts to defeat them are futile. They cannot die, they are immortal so all you'll be doing is wasting your efforts. Surrender now and let the court deliver your sentence or you can die needlessly and I really am not in the mood for mindless bloodshed right now! The choice is yours!"

"Big words freak." muttered Amy "But so empty on the threats. Let's bash her head in!" she cried, brandishing her Piko-Piko hammer threateningly.

"Sonic, you and the others take down this "Court of Ice"." ordered Sally "Amy and I will take on Blizzard. Both of us have scores to settle with her."

"Whoa, two girls who have the hots for me are teaming up to fight an evil ice with…am I the only one who's interested in watching that?" chuckled Sonic, finding the whole idea very humorous.

Sally rolled her eyes. Sonic was the man for her that's for sure but at times, his humour could be very inappropriate and very corny. Hopefully he'd be a bit more serious once he spent more time with her. Blizzard just laughed at the fact the Royal Fighters were choosing to fight instead of surrender. A decision they would be regretting very soon.

"Fine then, if you want to sacrifice your lives so needlessly then so be it." she sneered "Don't say I didn't warn you. Court of Ice, ATTACK!" she roared at the top of her voice.

The Court of Ice sprang into action at such an alarming speed,

Sonic was almost impressed. The ice creatures all thundered towards the Royal Fighters with their huge icy hands poised and ready to swat at the heroes. Sonic ducked as a huge icy hand swept through the air that his head had just occupied a moment ago and he rolled away from the ice creature. He spin-dashed it in the shoulder but to his surprise, the creature withstood the blow and shrugged off his spin-dash as if it was nothing. Sonic frowned at the ice creature. It wasn't going to be as simple as just spin-dashing it to pieces unlike all of Eggman's robots. He would have to try something else for the ice creature was clearly tougher than it looked. Sonic leaped up above the ice creature's head and he stomp-kicked it directly on top of its cranium, sending the creature hurling forward onto its face. Despite the power of the stomp-kick, the ice creature didn't seem fazed in the slightest. It still looked about ready to pulverize Sonic. The ice-creature picked itself up and as Sonic spin-dashed towards it, it held its hands up and seized Sonic like a basketball. He rose Sonic up into the air and then slammed him down onto the ground as if he was some disgusting bug that needed to be squashed. Sonic groaned as he was slammed into the ground and the ice creature rose its hand, ready for another strike. Just as it was about to bring its hand down on Sonic, Wilson threw his spinning blade at the creature's arm and the blade sliced it clean off. The creature growled in rage as its severed limb fell to the ground forlornly but it wasn't down for the count by any means. The ice creature simply regenerated its missing arm! A huge icicle extended out from the creature's shoulder and then slowly, steadily, formed an arm as it grew. It was almost like it had never lost it. Wilson could hardly believe his eyes.

"No way! They can regenerate lost limbs?!" he gasped.

"Oh god, it's The Eraser all over again!" muttered Mandy "Oh well, I bet my new knuckle attachments will finish those things off!"

She ran towards the ice creature, roaring like a Viking and she drew her arm back. The ice creature watched as Mandy ran up to it and threw a punch at the creature's abdomen. The punch was powerful enough to throw the creature off its feet thanks to her new knuckle attachments courtesy of Tails but to Mandy's utter amazement, the punch didn't even crack the creature! It had survived the punch as if

it was nothing! The ice creature even emphasized this by picking itself up as if nothing had happened! Mandy looked just as gobsmacked as her husband did.

"No…way!" Mandy spat the words out in a hoarse gasp "It…survived the punch?! But I'm strong enough to punch through flippin' rocks with these new attachments! How can a creature of ice withstand it?!"

"You forget." said Tails, flying beside Mandy "They're magically made by an Ice Witch, of course they'll not shatter so easily. We've got to think of another way to stop them."

"We'd best do it quick." said Mandy grimly "Before those freaks try to storm the city."

Tails nodded agreeably. He knew that the city's shields would withstand the Court of Ice but he knew Blizzard wouldn't let a measly force field stop her. Also, they could easily dig their way underground and get into the city that way, the Court certainly looked capable of digging so despite the city being shielded, it wasn't completely protected from the Court of Ice. They would have to stop them now before they broke into the city. Tails, Wilson and Mandy charged towards the ice creature that had been fighting them. Mandy threw a terrific uppercut to the face on the creature, Wilson severed its arms and Tails stomp-kicked it just as its arms were growing back. The creature fell onto its back but just as its arms finished growing back, it picked itself up and swiped at the Mobians, missing them by centimetres.

Cream, Cosmo and Team Chaotix were teaming up to fight another ice creature. Cream and Cosmo both threw their disc weapons at the ice creature, hitting it in the eyes. The ice creature bellowed in pain as the discs slammed into its eyes. Now it was distract by the pain in its eyes, Vector lumbered clumsily forward and he clasped both fists together. He swung them directly into the creature's abdomen, making the upper-body of the creature lean forward as it was slammed. Vector then grabbed it in a headlock, making sure he didn't jab himself on the creature's head spikes as his arms tightly constricted the creature's neck. The ice creature turned its head slightly, jabbing Vector in the cheek with its head spikes. Vector

yelped in pain but he held on tight. He then let go of the creature and uppercut it in the face. Espio and Charmy both kicked it in the chest but the creature took the blow and sent the chameleon and bee diving for cover as shards of ice spat out of its mouth like razor sharp drops of saliva. Vector ran towards the ice creature but the creature grabbed him by the arms and hoisted him up to its eyeline. It slammed its head into Vector's mouth, making the crocodile cry out from the impact and then the creature threw Vector into the air. Charmy flew up and caught Vector's hand. He lowered him to the ground and scowled at the creature.

"Aww...they're no fun. They're too mean and brutal!" he moaned.

"Blizzard sure knows how to make an army!" grunted Vector, rubbing his sore head "They're pretty tough!"

"Just a pity they're not on our side." grumbled Espio "They could be very useful on for the Royal Fighters."

"Well Espio, they're against us so we'll have to stop them anyway we can." said Cosmo glumly "Although it looks easier said than done I'm afraid..."

Team Chaotix nodded agreeably as the ice creature prepared to attack them again.

Another ice creature was fighting Bunnie, Geoffrey, Ruben and Sora. Sora threw a stun bomb into the creature's eyes to distract it while Bunnie lay the smack down on the creature with her robotic arm. She roundhouse punched it in the face and then deployed her arm cannon and blasted the creature in the torso. The creature was brought down onto the ground and Geoffrey fired a ring of stun-darts around the creature, knowing they wouldn't be sharp enough to actually embed themselves IN to the creature itself. The creature stood up and was suddenly bombarded by a ring of explosions as the darts went off. The explosions seemed to have cracked the creature but all of that was moot for the ice creature simply repaired the damages. Geoffrey and Bunnie were well shocked to see this but before they could express their surprise, the creature swatted them both away with a powerful arm. It then turned to Sora and opened its mouth. Showers of sharp icicles rained out of the

creature's mouth and soared towards Sora. The vixen dodged the attack by rolling out of the way. She whipped an orb off her belt and fired it. It was her grappling hook orb and the hook wrapped itself around the creature, pressing its arms tightly against its sides. Now the creature was subdued, Ruben blasted it off its feet with a jet of water. Big mistake for the creature ended up freezing the water that trickled down its body, adding a bit more to its size and making it a little stronger. It seemed extra ice increased an ice creature's strength. The creature threw icicles at Ruben, the water panther barely dodging the blows as the icicles threatened to rip him apart. Sora yanked him down onto the grass to get him out of the way of the killer ice shower. The ice creature's mouth curled into what almost looked like a smirk as it saw Sora and Ruben diving for cover. It raised its arms and then slammed them onto the ground, the force kicking up soil and grass as it ripped its way across the land and hit Ruben and Sora, sending them both flying into the air as if a catapult had been activated. Bunnie flew up and caught the two children before they could have a nasty impact with the ground.

"Whew! Caught ya! You two OK?" she asked.

"My everything hurts." moaned Ruben.

"Those creatures are tough! And they just heal their injuries like The Eraser does!" exclaimed Sora "How can we stop those things?!"

"Maybe Sally-girl can convince Blizzard to tell us that..." said Bunnie, looking over to Sally and Amy.

The two girls were up against Blizzard, the Ice Witch looking eerily cool and confident as if she knew she was in control of the battle. Sally ran towards Blizzard with her energy blades flashing but the Ice Witch whipped her wand out and blew Sally off her feet with a magical force that felt like being punched very hard. Amy jumped into the air, hammer raised and ready to pile-dive Blizzard into submission but Blizzard smacked her down onto the ground with her wand's power. Amy winced in pain, not sure what had hit her as she hit the ground. Sally picked herself up and she ran towards Blizzard. Blizzard aimed her wand at her but Sally rolled out of the way as the wand's attack blasted towards her. Using her blades, Sally carved up a bit of soil and she threw it at Blizzard. Blizzard blasted the soil

chunk to bits with her wand but that just left her wide open for Sally. Sally sliced her wand to pieces and then aimed a killer strike to the head with her other blade. Blizzard blocked the blow with an icicle that extended out of her hand. She summoned an icicle from her other hand and held Sally's other blade at bay. The queen pushed hard on her blades, willing them to slice through Blizzard's icicles. Unfortunately, that wouldn't be the case for Blizzard's weapons had increased in strength, a positive side effect from the ice creatures spell. Anyone using the spell would have stronger ice weapons as a result so Sally couldn't cut through her icicles, even if her blades could cut through almost anything. Sally grunted as she pushed on Blizzard's arms, her teeth clenched so hard she swore she could feel them cracking.

"Please Blizzard, stop this senseless fight!" pleaded Sally "Getting revenge on what happened to your cult will not make anything better for you! You'll only feel worse!"

The child is right you know darling. Please stop your desires for vengeance and let us rest in peace. Iceberg's voice whispered in Blizzard's head *We want to rest with the knowledge that the Blizzard we knew and loved is still on the side of good...*

"Shut up Iceberg!" snarled Blizzard, out loud by mistake.

"Who's Iceberg?" asked Sally "Your deceased husband? If so then what would HE think if he saw you like this? Do you think HE would be proud of what you've become Blizzard? Do you?!"

"SILENCE!" screamed Blizzard "Iceberg, along with my children and the rest of my cult were heartlessly slaughtered by YOUR father! Their deaths were undeserved and they deserve justice for what your filthy kingdom did to them!"

"This isn't justice, it's revenge!" snapped Sally "The two are NOT the same thing and never will be!"

"Don't you DARE preach to me you little brat!" snarled Blizzard "You are in NO position to preach to me about morality given what your father did! In fact, you're just like him! Stubborn, moronic and blind to the facts along with a poor sense of morality! Killing you will be

like killing him at the same time!"

"I maybe like my father in some ways..." grunted Sally "...but I would never kill over a conclusion like he did. My sense of morality is much better than his. And I can also do what my dad never could, defend my city from villains like you!"

She then swung her leg directly up into Blizzard's gut, the Ice Witch gasping and spitting out drops of saliva as Sally's knee sharply connected with her stomach. Blizzard doubled over, clutching her stomach in pain. Sally sheathed her blades and she spun around on the ball of her foot, driving her other foot into Blizzard's face as hard as she could. What made the blow worse was the heel of Sally's boot being the part of her foot that struck her. Blizzard was thrown onto her side, a nasty bruise splotched on her cheek from the blow, and she clutched her face in pain. Just as she stood up, Amy ran in and hammered Blizzard into the air with her Piko-Piko hammer. Blizzard cried out loudly as she hurled into the air. One of the ice creatures, who was fighting off Team Chaotix, spun around and caught Blizzard in its arms before she could impact on the ground. Blizzard leaped out of its arms and she scowled tensely.

"Enough of this foolishness!" she growled "I will not be sullied at this stage of my plans! Court of Ice, UNLEASH THE FREEZING WINDS!"

The Court of Ice all obeyed Blizzard's orders. All twenty ice creatures opened their mouths and blew out a gust of icy cold winds that drifted all around the battlefield. To the heroes, it looked like ice blue mist was emitting from their throats and coating the arena with fog. But the freezing winds, which was the strongest attack of the Court of Ice, was not just a mere fog. The moment the mist drifted all over the heroes, they froze instantly. Twenty breaths of cold wind was more than enough to freeze everybody. Sally was horrified to see ice forming all around her beloved Royal Fighters. She soon got the shock of her life when she saw that she was freezing up too. Ice formed around her feet and worked her way up her body until she was completely frozen. The pose she had been frozen in made her look like she was calling for help. The mists died away as the Court of Ice completely froze the Royal Fighters. Blizzard cackled with maniacal glee as she saw that she had won the battle, just as she

knew she would.

"YEEEESSS! **YEEEEEEEESSSSSS!** I WON! AH, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!" she shrieked delightedly "The Royal Fighters have been defeated! Bound in ice and helpless to stop me! Now nobody will prevent me from taking over the city!"

Blizzard! I'm ashamed of you! the cold, stern voice of Iceberg was as sharp as an icicle and Blizzard even felt like his words were sharp enough to cut her as the pain in her head appeared again *This isn't you dear! How could you do something so evil?!*

"Don't be ungrateful Icerberg! I did all this for you!" snapped Blizzard, clutching her head "You were killed for no reason, I'm avenging your death my darling husband! You'll thank me later!"

Revenge won't solve anything sweetheart. said Iceberg coldly *And who said we wanted revenge for our untimely deaths? Ice Mobians welcome their deaths regardless of the reason. It's what made us such a civilized, honourable race and you Blizzard, are a disgrace to us all! This was not the woman I married. You're not my wife anymore, you're a monster! A MONSTER!*

Blizzard's eyes streamed with tears and she fell to her knees in agony, clutching her head furiously as if trying to flatten it and ease the pain.

"NO, NOOOOOOO! I AM NOT A MONSTER ICEBERG! **I AM NOT A MONSTER!** " she roared at the top of her husky voice.

The Court of Ice stared at her again, obfuscated by Blizzard's delusional breakdown. What the hell was up with her?! This was NOT the person they would be happy to serve at all. They would happily double-cross Blizzard once the time was right. Blizzard picked herself up and she eased the pain in her head. Her eyes were still streaming with tears. She didn't want to wipe them away.

"I'll show you Iceberg...you'll appreciate what I've done for you...I'll SHOW YOU!" she barked "Court of Ice, let's freeze this pathetic kingdom and form the Kingdom of Ice!"

She and the Court of Ice marched towards New Mobotropolis, Nicole watching them approach from atop the wall in worry. Her friends had been frozen in ice and she'd be unable to stop them given she's now a computer programme. What could she do to save the city...?

Footnotes:

***She's tried already in two *Tales from Mobius* arcs. Arc 21 and Arc 22 to be precise**

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front***

Well this isn't good...the Royal Fighters are frozen and Blizzard's victorious. But for how long? And is the Court of Ice all that loyal to her? Find out next time as the Court of Ice comes to a chilling conclusion...

The Court of Ice Part 2

Story 177: The Court of Ice Part 2: Dismissing the Court

It's amazing how fast peace can be shattered. Almost like watching a glass fall off the table and break into a million tiny slivers of sparkling fragments as it hits the floor.

Sonic the Hedgehog and his Royal Fighter friends had enjoyed a whole month of peace and relaxation after the intense Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses that nearly led to the end of everything and yet it seemed the world hadn't had enough of throwing obstacles in their way for Blizzard the Ice Witch had emerged from hiding to once again, try to take over the Kingdom of Acorn. Her goal was more personal than it was before though given what Blizzard had recently found out about her cult and how Sally's father had been the one who murdered them*. After a few failed attempts, Blizzard had finally conducted a spell that allowed her to form an army of invincible ice creatures that she had collectively named "The Court of Ice" under the impression that it would sentence her enemies to whatever dire punishment she deemed necessary for them. The spell seemed to have some unexplainable side effect for Blizzard for she was now hearing the voice of her deceased husband in her head, something that she was not too happy about for the voice kept berating her and making her look crazy in front of the court. Regardless, Blizzard's take over seemed well in hand for the Court of Ice had just frozen the Royal Fighters and left them to stand around like ice sculptures while they marched towards New Mobotropolis. The city was shielded but it wouldn't do any good. They'd find a way in somehow and there was nobody to stop the court now the Royal Fighters were frozen. Only Nicole the Lynx, Mobian-recently-turned-computer-programme, was left to defend the city and yet she knew she couldn't do anything about it. Her fighting style was not the best and given she was a computer programme, all Blizzard had to do was find out where she was stationed and then destroy it, erasing her instantly. Even if Blizzard didn't find where Nicole was stationed, she'd likely destroy her anyway for she'd likely freeze the city and make it an icy paradise. Her handheld computer wouldn't last in ice

and the holographic projectors wouldn't work if they were frozen. Nicole was literally in a matter of life and death. But Nicole knew she couldn't go down without a fight, she had to try and defend the city. The lynx stood by the gates, bracing herself for the court's entrance.

"OK Nicole…let's see if you can defend this city…" she said to herself "Remember what Tails said, nobody can hurt you. Your solid mass alters if anybody tries to attack you, you won't get killed in this fight…it would be nice if I could just manipulate the city and make it kick them out though." she muttered.

It certainly was a nice thought to think about making a giant foot just come out of nowhere and send the Court of Ice and Blizzard flying back towards White Acropolis. To Nicole's dismay, that was not possible. She'd just have to do what she could. Nicole de-materialized into thin air and given how Tails had set up holo-projectors all over the city, Nicole could reappear anywhere she wanted in the city. For this case, Nicole had chosen to reappear in Royal HQ. Her holographic form materialized into existence within Royal HQ and she immediately ran over to the weapons cupboard. She yanked open the cupboard, now feeling grateful that Tails had given her the upgrades that allowed her hologram to look and feel more real since she was able to interact with the environment as if she was a normal person, and she looked through the masses of weapons that the Royal Fighters Service had. She chose a pair of arm gauntlets that very advanced members of the army would wear in battle. The gauntlets were as long as Nicole's lower arms and they clipped onto her arms nice and comfortably. They were a little chunky but relatively light and they had huge green circles in the centre. They would fire powerful plasma blasts. Hopefully that would be enough to stop the Court of Ice. Nicole de-materialized out of Royal HQ and back to the city gates. To her horror, the Court of Ice had used their icy breath to freeze the ring wall and the force field defending the city from harm and now they were breaking through the ice as if it was nothing. The sheet of ice crumbled to pieces as all twenty members of the Court of Ice stormed into New Mobotropolis. Nicole wasn't worried about their icy breath in the slightest. They couldn't freeze her since her hologram had been programmed to switch from solid to holographic the moment anybody attacked her. She was literally untouchable. But that didn't

make her invincible. Would she be able to stop the court? Nicole raised the gauntlets and aimed them at the court menacingly. Blizzard, who was standing in front of the court, smirked confidently at the lynx.

"P-p-please, d-don't move." said Nicole, stammering a little as she spoke "Y-you are t-t-trespassing on r-r-royal grounds. P-please stand d-down or I w-will use force. Th-these gauntlets w-will p-punch a hole in a-anything."

"Go ahead, see if I care foolish woman." snorted Blizzard "The Court of Ice is immortal. You cannot kill them. Destroy them, they just come back alive with their regenerative powers. Your silly weapons won't stop the court so easily."

"Oh yeah?" said Nicole, trying her best to sound more threatening "How about I use these gauntlets on YOU! Will the Court of Ice be happy to see their master injured, perhaps dead? And what happens if my blasts kill you? Will the Court of Ice simply disappear?"

"As if I'd tell you that." snorted Blizzard "And besides, killing the creator doesn't simply make the creatures disappear. It means they're allowed to act on their own freewill and not be tied down by the master."

Blizzard would soon regret saying that for the Court of Ice suddenly had evil ideas in their heads. As for Nicole, she couldn't believe her rotten luck. The Court of Ice can't die and getting rid of Blizzard wouldn't solve anything? How could she defend the city now? Nevertheless, she wouldn't go down without a fight.

"So you say." said Nicole "But I'm still not surrendering. I'll blast the court to smithereens and send you all home packing if it's the last thing I do!"

"Silly thing to say Nicole, what if it IS the last thing you do?" snorted Blizzard, drawing out her ice wand and pointing it at her "And frankly, it WILL be the last thing you do! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Blizzard was still cackling as she strolled up to Nicole and lunged at her with her wand. Nicole just stood by and let Blizzard stab at her,

interested to see if Tails's upgrades worked as they should do. Blizzard's wand plunged into Nicole's chest like a dagger through flesh…but Nicole felt no pain. She didn't even feel like she'd been impaled. She felt nothing. Blizzard gasped in alarm. It was as if her hand had phased straight through Nicole, something she hadn't seen since she'd stolen the phase shifter from Tails (it's useless now thanks to an EMP launcher Tails used on it so she doesn't still have it). Had Nicole somehow become intangible?! Blizzard drew her arm back and she stabbed again. Nicole smirked at her as the wand harmlessly phased through her.

"That tickles." she crowed.

"Impossible! How did you become intangible?!" shrieked Blizzard "You're not wearing a phase shifter!"

"You know what they say "A magician NEVER reveals his secrets"." sneered Nicole, giving Blizzard a finger waggle in a manner very much like how Sonic the Hedgehog would do it "I'm no magician but I'm not going to reveal my secret on this matter. Suffice it to say, I'm untouchable in a battle."

"So what if you are?!" snarled Blizzard "You can't stop us! This city will be mine and once I freeze it and form it into the Kingdom of Ice, you will be a servant to me and you'll be wishing you hadn't decided to defy me! Court of Ice! At…"

Before she could finish the word "attack", a sharp pain suddenly flared up in her skull and the ice witch fell onto her knees as if somebody had whacked her on the head and knocked her down. Nicole stood back, watching to see what was going to happen. Blizzard gripped her head in agony and she gritted her teeth ever so tensely. Her eyes were screwed tightly shut and her fingers were clutching her head so tightly Nicole thought she'd end up crushing her own head.

"Iceberg…go away!" wailed Blizzard "I'm in the middle of a takeover!"

No Blizzard, I will not go away. hissed the voice of her deceased husband, the voice sounding like it was coming from directly behind

her even though it was in her own head *I refuse to leave you alone unless you stop this evil and come back to the side of good. I don't want to rest knowing that my wife is a murderous monster who wants revenge on those who wronged her.*

"You ungrateful little…you was murdered by a senile old man who was undeserving of his title as "king"! And not just you but our ENTIRE cult!" screamed Blizzard, angry tears as warm as her angry face streaming down her cheeks as she ranted "I'm trying to get justice for what happened to you and this is the thanks you're giving me?! You should appreciate my efforts Iceberg! You deserve justice for your undeserving death!"

Did you ignore what the Acorn child said to you earlier? snorted Iceberg *This is NOT justice. It's REVENGE. You are not getting justice for what happened to us, you're getting revenge for what happened to us. And revenge NEVER solves anything. All you're doing is making your life horrible Blizzard. I mean what's your life been like since you killed that councillor just for picking on you? Horrible, that's what.*

"How do you know about that?!" shrieked Blizzard in astonishment "I never got the chance to tell you about that!"

I'm in your head Blizzard, I know everything you're thinking. said Iceberg coldly *I know exactly what happened now. You may have been bullied Blizzard but did that give you any right at all to murder Aramis? Would you like it if somebody murdered you just for being bullied by you? And what's happened since Aramis's death? Nothing but misery for you Blizzard. If you never killed Aramis then King Max wouldn't have gotten worried about you crying to us and then got the idea to kill us. Yes I agree, King Max's actions were equally as unjustified but given he's dead, you're taking your anger out on people who had NOTHING to do with our demise, especially the new queen, Sally is it? She wasn't even born at the time of our demise so your actions towards her are unjustified. She didn't harm you, far from it. Nobody on her team harmed you so how is killing them and taking over the kingdom going to get you justice for our deaths? It's revenge Blizzard, plain and simple. And now answer me this my darling wife…if you take over the kingdom…then what? Will you be happy? We'll still be dead regardless of what you do. Your*

goals will NOT solve your dilemma, it's making it worse. Please understand this Blizzard. I only want to help you…

"STOP IT! STOP IT, STOP IT, STOP IT!" thundered Blizzard, bellowing at the top of her voice "GET OUT OF MY HEAD ICEBERG! PLEASE, LEAVE ME ALONE!"

Then I guess you don't want to see your children again? said Iceberg smoothly, not showing any signs of losing patience with his wife.

"M…My children?" gasped Blizzard.

Nicole and the Court of Ice could only stare at Blizzard as she began hallucinating and ranting at the top of her voice. Nicole in particular had a face that said all the words she needed to say without her needing to use her mouth to say them. "Has Blizzard gone totally crazy?" Nicole always knew Blizzard was crazy but never had she imagined her being THIS crazy! The Court of Ice seemed to agree with her confusion without needing to say so. Their faces were screwed up in disgust as if to say "This is seriously the person we're working for, what a drag." As for Blizzard, she soon got the shock of her life as straight in front of her, visible only to her were two ghostly images, looming in front of Nicole as if trying to take her place in Blizzard's field of vision. They were ghostly looking images of small Ice Mobians, both of them hedgehogs like Blizzard was. One, a girl, was dressed more or less like Blizzard was only wearing light purple and having two quills that ran down the back of her head. The other, a boy, looked more like a young wizard and had darker blue clothing than Blizzard did. Blizzard thought she would cry for joy at the sight of the ghosts before her.

"Winter! Frost!" gasped Blizzard "My lovely children! I can't believe that I'm seeing you two again for the first time in fourteen years!"

Mummy, daddy says you're a monster. said Winter, her voice sounding somewhat adorable and sinister at the same time *Is this true?*

Yes mummy, is daddy telling the truth? Are you a monster? asked Frost, looking sterner than his sister did and pointing accusingly at

Blizzard.

Blizzard looked stunned to hear accusations coming from her own children. She cried even harder upon hearing this.

"No children…No I'm not a monster!" protested Blizzard "Your mother would never be a monster!"

Then why are you trying to kill completely innocent people over something they didn't do? snapped Winter, sounding like a very stern parent giving her child an epic lecture *They didn't kill us, that nasty man King Max did and he's dead now so you're just being mean and nasty over nothing!*

My sister is right mother, you're not avenging our deaths at all! scolded Frost *You're just making yourself worse! And we don't want our nice, lovely mother to become a monster! Stop being evil and make up for what you did or we will refuse to acknowledge you as our mother!*

"No…NO! No please children, don't hate me!" whimpered Blizzard "I never wanted to stoop so low! Honest I didn't! My intentions were meant to be good! Please, forgive me! FORGIVE ME!"

She wailed loudly, her sobs an agonizing wail of despair as tears poured down her faces and her hands gripped her head tighter and tighter. Nicole, despite being crept out by Blizzard's hallucinations, began to feel a glimmer of hope building insider her digital body. Was Blizzard going to turn around and abdicate her evil intentions? She hoped that was the case, she certainly seemed to be feeling guilty all of the sudden. As Blizzard wept, another ghostly figure appeared before her. It was her husband, Iceberg the Ice Wizard himself. He was a white furred hedgehog with eight long quills styled like dreadlocks and he wore wizard robes that matched Blizzard's own. He knelt before his snivelling wife and he put a ghostly hand on her shoulder.

You see Blizzard? Even your children are heartbroken to see what you've become. he said warmly *Do you want to be hated and scorned by your own family?*

"No…god please…no…I don't want you to hate me!" howled Blizzard, trying to embrace her husband only to remember he was a ghost so she couldn't "Please, I can't live with myself knowing that this is what's going to happen to me! Please Iceberg, help me! Make the misery stop already! Please!"

You don't need my help Blizzard, you just need to relinquish any evil ambitions you have and return to the side of good. said Iceberg softly *Honour our deaths by fulfilling the purpose of our cult, to bring peace to the world. Don't let our deaths be wasted. Please honey… can you do that for us? Our deaths may have been meaningless but you can honour us by carrying out what we strive to do. Come on Blizzard…do it for our children…do it for me….and do it for your cult. It's what they would have wanted.*

Blizzard took in her husband's words and began to think very hard. As much as she wanted to make King Max pay for his crimes, she found herself wondering…would it be worth it? It would not. She did not want to hear her husband criticizing her for the rest of her life and since she didn't know how to fix this side effect that had come out of her spell, she couldn't just stop it and ignore him. Not to mention Iceberg had brought logic and common sense to her, something she had lost a long time ago after going mad. It was quite clear Blizzard needed to hear those ghosts in her head for they had shown her the error of her ways and shown what she had truly become. A monster. She couldn't live knowing that she was a monster. Her goal no longer had any weight to it and Blizzard no longer wished to carry out her grudge. She made up her mind. She was going to redeem herself and abdicate her evil ways for good. She didn't want to dishonour her cult by being this way. Blizzard looked at Iceberg. If there was one thing she had missed in his absence, it had been his warm smile and friendly, charming eyes that had won her over and led to him becoming her husband. Blizzard wiped away her tears and smiled happily at Iceberg.

"…my wonderful husband…you was just the wake-up call I needed." she said gently "What was I thinking? I'm so sorry about all the bad things I did! Please…please forgive me!"

I do forgive you Blizzard. said Iceberg gently *It's up to you to try and earn the Roy al Fighters' forgiveness though. I'm so glad you've*

seen the error of your ways my angel.

Daddy, is mummy nice now? asked Winter.

Judging from what I'm picking up in her head…yes she is. said Frost *Mummy, we knew you could reform. Thank you for listening to daddy.*

"No…thank YOU my angels." said Blizzard brightly "Oh Iceberg, Winter and Frost. I wish I could see you all again. It's clear I need you more than I realized. Without you…I went insane."

Ind eed you did. said Iceberg *And because of the side effect of the Ice Creatures spell, we will always be with you whenever you need us. We're just there inside your head if you want us at all.*

"Wonderful…." said Blizzard happily "Thanks for everything my dear family…and remember, I love you all. Always have, always will."

We love you too Blizzard…always have, always will. said Iceberg *Goodbye for now Blizzard…it's time we were going.*

Blizzard nodded as the ghosts of her family disappeared and she snapped back into reality, just acknowledging that Nicole was still standing before her and had likely seen everything. She felt a bit embarrassed but it didn't matter now. Blizzard got up to her feet and decided to explain everything to Nicole.

"So, you might be wondering what that was all about..." she began.

"No need to explain, I figured it out." said Nicole, raising a hand up to silence Blizzard "You were seeing ghosts of your late family. You seemed to be getting upset and begging for forgiveness and wanting help. Were they lecturing you on your actions?"

"They were." said Blizzard solemnly "And I'm glad they did for they've shown me the error of my ways and pointed out that in the end...my goals aren't worth it and I'm disgracing my cult. This is a stain upon my honour I must wipe clean. So I have decided to reform. I am no longer your enemy and I wish to make up for my appalling crimes. Will you trust me enough to do that?"

"Can we talk about this later Blizzard, because the Court of Ice is preparing to attack you!" shrieked Nicole dramatically.

Blizzard turned around just in time to see an ice creature raise its arm and lunge at her with its powerful, sharp, icy claws. Blizzard leaped back in alarm, phasing through Nicole for she accidentally jumped back into her and she glared at her court.

"Court of Ice! Why are you trying to attack me?!" she snarled "Stand down at once!"

The court ignored Blizzard and they advanced menacingly on her. The Ice Witch stepped back in fright.

"Court of Ice! Stand down NOW!" she barked "Do not commence with this treason! I will destroy you all if you don't stand down!"

The lead ice creature opened its mouth and blasted a jet of icy wind towards Blizzard. But the ice creature should have known better then to try and freeze Blizzard. You can't freeze and Ice Mobian, they control all cyrokinetic abilities. Freeze them, they just unfreeze themselves. The creature's ice breath froze Blizzard in an instant but Blizzard simply managed to break free with merely a thought. It was useful being able to manipulate ice like she could, she would have been in trouble otherwise. Blizzard aimed her wand at the creatures and blew them off their feet with the wand's powers. All twenty ice creatures were sent colliding into each other and they tumbled down like a stack of dominoes. Now they were down, Blizzard ran off towards the city gates.

"Keep the creatures busy! I'm going to free the Royal Fighters and stop the Court of Ice!" Blizzard called to Nicole over her shoulder.

"Given they can't touch me, I'll be keeping them PLENTY busy Blizzard." said Nicole, aiming her arm gauntlets at the Court of Ice picked itself up and advanced towards her.

Blizzard knew that Nicole wouldn't need any help and that there was no need to worry about her. She'd seen for herself that Nicole appeared to be untouchable. She'd likely just keep phasing through the creatures and start blasting them. That would distract them long

enough for her to put an end to her insidious court. Blizzard could already imagine how happy Iceberg and her kids would be to see her willingly going out to solve a problem she'd caused. It was the perfect start to her redemption. Blizzard ran through the city gates, the sound of Nicole's gauntlets firing and plasma blasts punching into ice ringing in her ears, and she dashed over to the frozen Royal Fighters. In an instant, she whipped her wand out and she waved it around. An icy aura trailed through the air, following the wand as Blizzard waved it around.

"Spirits of good, good so pure! Melt the ice, the curse you must cure!"

She pointed her wand at the Royal Fighters and all at once, fifteen beams of light all shot out of the wand and struck the frozen Royal Fighters. The moment the beams struck, the ice cracked and broke away, freeing the Royal Fighters from the prison they formed around them. They all gasped in alarm and started looking around frantically as if they were shocked at suddenly being able to move again.

"Whoa…I never want to get frozen again!" cried Sonic "I can't tell you how unpleasant it is, being unable to move and being so cold and all!"

"The feeling is mutual." said Sally, rubbing her arms to bring some warmth back to them "I wonder who freed us?"

"I did." said Blizzard, looking nervous as she forced herself to speak up.

The Royal Fighters all stared at Blizzard in disbelief. They blinked in unison and stared, not sure how to react to this. Amy however had the perfect reaction. She stormed up to Blizzard and grabbed her by the collar, the Ice Witch showing no signs of resistance as Amy grabbed her.

"Alright you ugly old witch, time to put you in jail where you belong!" snarled Amy "You and your Court of Ice are going down starting with you!"

"Amy please, I've switched sides!" protested Blizzard "I'm on your

side now, I'm giving up my evil schemes and am returning to the side of good!"

"Do you really expect me to fall for such an obvious lie?!" growled Amy "Do you even realize how cliché that lie is?! Practically EVERY villain does it and then suddenly, what a shock! They're still evil! Well I'm not falling for it!"

"No Amy, really! I'm turning over a new leaf! Honest I am!" shrieked Blizzard "I know I've done terrible, terrible things but I'm putting that behind me now! I'm joining you Royal Fighters to stop the Court of Ice!"

"Blizzard, just stop, please. You're making a fool of yourself." said Sally coldly "We aren't falling for your obvious trick. Now stand down and face your punishment before things get unpleasant for you."

"No wait Sally!" cried Tails, holding Sally back by the arm "I think Blizzard's being serious! Look at her expressions and body language! That's way too convincing to be an act! I think she means what she's saying!"

"Tails, for a genius you sure are dumb." muttered Amy "Blizzard's faking it, I KNOW she is! Don't you DARE stick up for her!"

"Amy calm down!" yelled Sonic "I think Tails has a point. Also consider this, why would Blizzard suddenly change from wanting to take over the city to suddenly regretting her actions and wanting to stop the court? Why would she want to fake something like that? That's not in her character. Blizzard's many things but she's not a deceiver."

"True…" mused Sally "Blizzard never relied on deception to get what she wanted in her past attempts…"

"That doesn't prove anything!" yelled Amy angrily "I can't believe you lot are even remotely THINKING that Blizzard's turning good! She's an evil monster who killed my parents and scarred me terribly for a large portion of my childhood! Thanks to her I feared the snow for a while until I got over it! You can't seriously tell me you believe somebody as despicable as her is really willing to help us stop the

Court of Ice, something SHE created need I remind you?!" she ranted furiously, her face seeming to turn red as she raved.

"Amy please, I've had a change of heart!" cried Blizzard desperately "Give me a chance to prove myself, please! I beg you!"

"Just shut up already." snarled Amy, her teeth clenched and her eyes narrowed into a hardcore scowl that could freeze the heart "I have NO respect for you after how you treated me and I'm not falling for your obvious trick! Go do something useful and arrest yourself or something!"

Blizzard scowled at Amy, almost prepared to ignore what her family had told her and go back to being evil but she knew that wouldn't fix the problem, it would make things even worse. She wouldn't be able to stop the court by herself, she needed the Royal Fighters' help and she needed to gain their trust. Blizzard knew what she had to do to sway their minds and get them to help her.

"Fine! If you don't want my help, that's your loss!" snapped Blizzard, folding her arms and sticking her nose up in the air "I **was** going to tell you how to stop the Court of Ice but now because you're being an ungrateful little brat who's assuming things that aren't true, I won't tell you now!"

"No wait Blizzard, please excuse Amy's distrust!" cried Sally desperately "We'll give you a chance to prove you've changed! Please tell us how to stop the Court of Ice!"

"No, you don't want my help so I won't give it you." said Blizzard tersely "I'm just an evil monster who deserves to be locked away aren't I? I've willingly changed my wicked ways and want to help you and you don't want it. I don't see why I should waste my time with people who don't want my help."

Sonic ran up to Blizzard and put a hand on her shoulder. Blizzard began to wonder if her act of refusing to help them was beginning to tempt the Royal Fighters into accepting her after all.

"Amy may not want your help but WE do." said Sonic "Unlike Amy, I actually believe you're willing to change. As Tails pointed out, the

way you acted is way too realistic to be an act or fake and you know what? Your change of heart is reminding me of what happened to another former enemy of mine. A girl named Roxy wanted to change for the better and the way she acted strongly indicated she was being truthful. What you're going through is reminding me of that so I'm convinced. Though I have to ask why have you changed so drastically? First you want to kill us, now you want to help us? You've got some explaining to do." he said sternly.

"I know I have young man and I can explain perfectly." said Blizzard "You see, my spell came with a rather surprising side-effect. After conducting the spell that made the creatures, I began to hear my late husband's voice in my head."

"You were married?" said Sonic in surprise.

"I was, married with children even." said Blizzard sadly "As for my husband, I didn't only hear him but I began to **see** him too. And before you say anything, Nicole saw what was going on with me and worked out that I was seeing and hearing my dead family so she can vouch for what I'm telling you." she said sharply, jabbing Sonic in the chest with a pointy finger.

"So Nicole witnessed what was going on and worked out what was happening to you?" asked Sonic "Now I AM convinced what you're saying is true."

"Thank you." said Blizzard brightly "Now then, my husband showed me the error of my ways and even had my late children show me how wrong I am. It pains me to think I'm dishonouring my cult and disgracing their deaths. So…I no longer wish to commence with my ambitions. I want to redeem myself and I want to make it up to you all for what I've done. And I'm going to start by helping to stop the Court of Ice. I'm sorry to say that they've betrayed me and want to kill me now so I can't just get them to change sides either." she said solemnly "So I have to destroy them."

"That's awesome." said Sonic "Welcome to the good side Blizzard. So how do we stop the Court of Ice then?"

"I have to tamper with the cauldron." explained Blizzard "If I add so

much as a tiny amount of an extra ingredient, the spell will be broken and the creatures will disappear. And I know just what I'm going to do. I'm going to put one of my quills in the cauldron. I created the creatures so it's fitting I use a piece of myself to stop them."

"I'll say." said Sonic "So why do you need us? Can't you just do it yourself?"

"I need somebody to keep the Court of Ice busy and Nicole won't hold them off forever." explained Blizzard "Also, more creatures might come out of the cauldron to try and protect it. I can't fight them alone so I need the extra muscle."

"That can be arranged." said Sonic with a smile "Me, Sally and Amy will back you up while the others protect New Mobotropolis."

"Sounds good to me." said Blizzard "Let's get going before the court wrecks your city!"

Sonic did not wait to be asked twice. He turned away from Blizzard and he walked over to Sally and Amy.

"OK girls, you might hate me for this but I'm convinced Blizzard is telling the truth." said Sonic cautiously, already expecting a violent reaction "But hear me out…she claims that a side effect of her spell is that she now sees and hears the ghosts of her former family, something I didn't know she had before. And apparently they've tempted her to stop being evil and turn over a new leaf. I know it sounds crazy but…"

"Sonic, I believe you." said Sally "When me and Blizzard were fighting, she randomly shouted out to somebody named "Iceberg". Her story is credible and makes sense so as crazy as it is, I believe it too."

"Good." said Sonic "And apparently, Nicole actually saw Blizzard talking to the ghosts so if you still didn't believe her then you could ask Nicole about it, she'd have told us the same thing."

Amy was about to form a rebuttal but she knew that she couldn't find

a way of countering that statement. If Blizzard had talked to a ghost directly in front of Sally and then in front of Nicole then there was no way she could be making this up. And since she was a witch and witch's spells had been known to have side effects sometimes, that also made the story plausible. She didn't have a ghost problem before so why would she suddenly have one now? As reluctant as Amy was to admit it…she couldn't prove Blizzard was lying and her story did have some credibility to it. She sighed and folded her arms.

"Fine, Blizzard's telling the truth. First time that's ever happened." muttered Amy "Now then, has she told us how to stop the Court of Ice?"

"She has." said Sonic "She needs to throw something into the cauldron and tamper with the spell. She needs back-up though so me, you and Sally are coming to do that while the rest stay home and keep the Court of Ice busy."

"Sounds good to me." said Sally "And I very much would like to watch Blizzard do something heroic for a change. Let's go and stop those creatures!"

Happy to hear that Sally and Amy were convinced, Blizzard ran over to the three Mobians and she pulled out a smoke bomb from inside her sleeve.

"Everybody hold hands, I'll poof us back to my cave." said Blizzard, getting ready to throw the bomb down on the ground.

"OK." said Sonic "Everybody, help Nicole to protect the city from the Court of Ice!" he called to the other Royal Fighters "We'll be right back!"

"Good luck out there." said Tails "And…even you too Blizzard." he added, thinking how weird it sounded for him to be wishing Blizzard good luck.

Blizzard nodded and she threw the bomb down onto the ground, a billow of smoke seeping up all around her, Sonic, Sally and Amy as the bomb shattered. The smoke hung around for a few seconds and then vanished, no sign of Blizzard , Sonic, Sally or Amy after it

disappeared. They'd be over in Blizzard's ice cave right now, preparing to put an end to the Court of Ice. The other Royal Fighters instantly headed over to New Mobotropolis to hold back the twenty ice creatures that were attacking the city. Time would tell if Blizzard would succeed in stopping the insidious court. If she couldn't…then the city was doomed to be a frozen paradise for them all…

The ice cave was suddenly alight with purple light as the four Mobians appeared out of thin air. The teleportation had been a success and Blizzard, Sonic, Sally and Amy found themselves in Blizzard's cave once again. Sally and Amy remembered all too well what the place was like since they had been in it in Blizzard's last encounter whereas Sonic was new to the place. He whistled in amazement, impressed with how the cave looked. It was amazing how ice and snow could have some kind of beauty to it despite how deadly it could also be.

"Nice place you got Blizzard…if a little cold." said Sonic, his fur standing up on end as the cold bit into him.

"P-probably sh-should h-have d-dressed up w-warmly b-before we l-left." muttered Amy, wrapping her arms around herself and trying to keep as much of her body warmth in as possible.

"I'm terribly sorry, I forget you poor Mobians aren't used to the cold as I am." said Blizzard half-embarrassedly "Hold on darlings, I can fix that."

She ran off into a room in the corner of the cave and she began looking for something as she entered the room. It was a cloak room, somewhere for Blizzard to hang up her robes when she retired for the night. She had plenty of spare robes in the room for there was always the possibility her robes could be ruined. Sonic, Sally and Amy were quite welcome to have a spare robe each. A moment later, she returned with three robes in her arms. She handed them to Sonic, Sally and Amy and the three put them on eagerly, hoping they were nice and warm. Blizzard beamed at the sight of them as they put on the robes. They looked like they would fit right into an Ice Mobian cult. Just dye their fur white and teach them ice magic

and they would be perfect.

"Good thing I have spare robes isn't it?" she said brightly, a sweet smile on her face. Amy had to admit that a sweet smile did seem to make Blizzard look like a totally different person. She looked a lot nicer that way.

"Indeed so." said Sally, relieved to feel the cold on her arms drifting away as the warmth of the robes took over "So Blizzard, all you have to do is put something into the cauldron and the spell will be broken?"

"Yes." said Blizzard "It's a failsafe the Ice Mobians designed for the ice creatures made by the spell had a nasty habit of betraying their masters. I had hoped mine wouldn't do the same but because of my change of heart, they've betrayed me. Or at least I think it was my heel turn…might have been the ghosts in my head making me look crazy that did it…"

"We get the picture." said Sonic impatiently "So get on with it Blizzard! Ruin the spell already!"

"Please be patient." said Blizzard tightly "I have to make sure it'll be safe first. An ice creature could emerge from the cauldron and strike any moment. They have a nasty way of sensing if the cauldron is in any kind of danger."

"I can imagine." said Sally grimly.

Putting a finger to her lips, Blizzard used her wand to slice off a quill that draped down behind her head. Her wand was sharp enough to cut just like a dagger. Now she'd cut off a quill, the Ice Witch crept silently over to the cauldron, which was still hissing and emitting faint blue smoke. Any new ice creature could come out of the cauldron while the spell was still active. If any members of the Court of Ice were lost permanently or if the army needed an increase in numbers, an ice creature would automatically come out of the cauldron and join them. They would also come out if they sensed anybody attempting to tamper with the cauldron but given Blizzard was an Ice Witch, with any luck the cauldron wouldn't see her as a danger and allow her to commence with her deed, putting an end to

her treacherous court for good. Unfortunately, nothing is ever as simple as that and Blizzard should have realized this. Blizzard was within five feet of the cauldron and then suddenly, a giant icy arm shot out of the cauldron's depths, spraying liquid from the cauldron everywhere. Blizzard leapt back in horror as the ice creature's body followed the emerging arm and it bore over her, baring its icicle like teeth and growling menacingly at Blizzard. This creature was much larger than any of the Court of Ice and it looked very menacing. The ice witch yelped as the ice creature rose its arm and she reacted quickly. She aimed her wand, which was still in her hand, and she blasted the ice creature away with a burst of magical energy. The ice creature hurled backwards across the room and crashed into the wall, making the cave shudder and the icicles in the ceiling shake. They would fall if Blizzard wasn't careful so she thought it would be a good idea if she didn't do that again. The ice creature picked itself up and gasped as Blizzard prepared to throw her severed quill into the cauldron. It rose its arm up and much like what Blizzard could do, it cause an icy hand to emerge from the floor and send her flying away. Blizzard cried out as she hurled through the air but Sonic leaped in and caught her before she could crash onto the floor. In any other case, Sonic would cite this as weird for it would be like saving one of his enemies. Sonic lowered Blizzard down and zoomed off towards the ice creature. The ice creature raised its arm and tried to slam its hand down on Sonic as if he was merely a bug waiting to be squashed but Sonic weaved around its hand as it slammed into the floor. This unfortunately caused Sonic to fall onto his bottom for the ground shook beneath him. The creature prepared to stomp on Sonic but Sonic rolled out of the way and jumped up to the creature's height. He stomp-kicked it on the head, causing it to fall forward and crash face first into the floor. Just as it raised its head, Sally deployed her arm blades and she chopped the creature's head off. But as we already know, the ice creature can just repair itself. It was an effect of the spell. As long as it was active, the creatures couldn't die. Luckily for Sally, the head seemed to take longer to regenerate than any other body part. Using this, Sally ran towards the creature and sliced its legs to pieces. The creature fell onto its stomach, its useless legs falling apart beneath it and its head finished regenerating just seconds after it hit the floor. The creature's legs began to regenerate but Sally had a brilliant idea. She stayed where the creature's legs were growing and proceeded

to slice them off just as they were growing back. All she had to do was keep doing that until Blizzard got to the cauldron to break the spell. But as great an idea it was, it didn't stop the creature. Blizzard ran towards the cauldron but the ice creature summoned a wall of ice in front of her. Blizzard crashed straight into the wall, groaning in pain as her body knocked into it. Sonic tried to do the same but the ice creature summoned an ice hand from the floor and it grabbed Sonic. It then threw him into the wall where he crashed head first into it. The blow knocked him clean out, unfortunate since Sonic might have been fast enough to get Blizzard's quill into the cauldron before the creature could stop him. Then the creature summoned a hand of ice from where Sally was standing, the hand shooting up beneath her and sending Sally flying into the air. The creature regenerated its legs and it stood back up, only to have Sally land on its head and chop it off again with her blades. The creature wasn't down for long though. Sally was about to slice its arm off but she was caught by surprise when the creature suddenly grew another icicle, pushing her off its shoulder and onto the floor. The creature's head finished regenerating and it prepared to breathe its icy breath on Sally. Blizzard leaped in and summoned a hand of ice from beneath one of the creature's feet. It caused the creature to topple over for it was so top heavy it could hardly balance on one foot. With a heavy thud, it fell onto its side. Blizzard ran over to help Sally up.

"Are you alright your majesty?" she asked, sounding straight up concerned for her former enemy's welfare.

"I…I am." said Sally, taking Blizzard's hand "Th…thank you. I wasn't expecting you to be saving me so soon."

"You're not my enemy anymore Sally." said Blizzard "I've made it quite clear, I no longer desire to be vengeful and evil. That's what wrecked my life in the first place."

"I see." said Sally "Well hopefully we'll live long enough for me to congratulate you on coming to your senses."

Blizzard chuckled slightly as she and Sally turned to face the creature. It picked itself up, startled by how it had been toppled over so easily and it shook its head. Sally ran up to the creature and she sliced its legs in two once again. Watching this, Blizzard really had

to admire how potent Sally's weaponry was. Whoever invented those blades was a genius that's for sure. The creature fell away from its severed legs and crashed into the floor. Before it could get back up, Amy ran towards it and she hammered it repeatedly on the head. The creature took the blows and it swatted Amy away. Amy hit the wall and landed down on it with a thump. The hedgehog screamed as the ice creature advanced on her with its newly grown legs and she pressed her back firmly against the wall, too frightened to move or attack. She could only stare in horror as the ice creature prepared to punch her. Blizzard stepped in by standing defensively in front of Amy and she blasted the creature in the leg with her wand. The ice creature stumbled and fell down on one knee as its leg was hit. Amy was stunned, almost finding it impossible to believe that Blizzard had just saved her life like that. She must be dreaming, it couldn't have happened! But luckily for Amy, it was no dream, it really had happened and she was grateful for it. Amy picked up her Piko-Piko hammer and she ran towards the creature. She walloped it in the face with her hammer, sending the creature falling onto its back and just as it landed on the floor, Sally chopped its head off again. She remained standing and waited for the head to regenerate so she could chop it off again. The ice creature wouldn't be able to stop her if it didn't have a head to think of its actions. While Sally was keeping the creature busy, Amy ran over to Sonic. He was still knocked out and Amy tried desperately to wake him up.

"Sonic! Wake up! Wake up!" she squealed "We need you right now!"

While Amy tried to wake up Sonic, Blizzard ran over to the cauldron, seizing her chance to drop in her quill. But the cauldron sensed the danger and given its bodyguard was out of action, a second ice creature emerged from the cauldron's depths. Cursing violently, Blizzard ran for her life as the second ice creature finished coming out of the cauldron and it ran after her. The stomping of the creature's feet was enough to wake Sonic up but at the same time it caused the icicles in the ceiling to shudder as if they were afraid of what was happening and wanted to break free so they didn't have to watch anymore. Blizzard drew her wand out and aimed it at the second ice creature menacingly. Then suddenly…a cluster of icicles broke away. Blizzard looked up in terror as sharp icicles fell down from the ceiling towards her like a mouth full of teeth chomping

down on her. She was petrified with shock. She couldn't move. Sonic was only just coming around, he wouldn't be fast enough to save Blizzard. But one person saved her instead. Amy Rose ran in and she pushed Blizzard out of the icicle's way. The icicles embedded themselves into the ground just seconds where Blizzard had been standing. Some of them scratched Amy on the sides and legs but the pink hedgehog was otherwise unhurt for the most part. This was a moment Amy would not soon forget. She had just saved the life of her worst enemy. She hoped that she wouldn't live to regret it later. Blizzard sat up, awestruck at the fact Amy had saved her.

"Why Amy…thank you…" she whispered.

"Don't mention it…EVER." said Amy coldly, rubbing her cuts better "This doesn't make up for what you did to me so don't get any ideas."

"I know." said Blizzard sadly "And I'm not trying to get you to forgive me anyway. I don't deserve it after what I did."

Amy nodded. At least she and Blizzard wouldn't be enemies anymore though. Sonic got up to his feet, shaking off the blow that had knocked him out earlier and he ran over to the girls.

"Hey what'd I miss other than Amy saving you Blizzard?" he asked.

"Another ice creature's shown up." said Blizzard "And I know how to get past them. Sally keeps beheading the first one before it can regenerate so me and Amy will distract the second one. While that's happening, you will drop my quill into the cauldron. You're fast enough to get it in there before another ice creature can show up."

"Sounds great." said Sonic with a thumbs up.

Amy nodded agreeably. She and Blizzard readied battle positions as the second ice creature bore over them. Sonic took Blizzard's quill off of her and waited for the right moment to run. Blizzard summoned a hand of ice from the floor and had it grab onto the creature's neck and pull its head down low. Amy ran in and hammered it in the face as hard as she could. Her hammer

shuddered after the blow, surprising Amy a little as she felt it tremble in her hands. It seemed the face was a hard spot, not that it mattered. While the ice creature was being dealt with, Sonic seized his chance. He zoomed towards the cauldron at top speed. Leaping up high, he soared over the cauldron and he threw the quill down into its depths. The quill landed into the cauldron, the liquid sizzling as it landed and it dissolved into nothing. As the quill dissolved into the cauldron, the two ice creatures wailed high-pitched squeals as the spell that formed them was broken. The creatures broke apart like ice sculptures melting in the sun. Their limbs fell to pieces, their heads separated from their bodies and smashed to pieces on the floor and their torso broke apart as they fell down with the rest of the body.

Over in New Mobotropolis, the twenty ice creatures that formed the Court of Ice went through the same thing. They all broke to pieces and crumbled down onto the floor like a fallen over snowman. The Royal Fighters were surprised to see this happen but it didn't take them long to work out what had happened. The spell had been broken and the Court of Ice was no more. Delighted, the Royal Fighters cheered ecstatically over the court's defeat. Sonic, Sally and Amy were in for a congratulations when they came home and it was likely to last for a while…

Back in Blizzard's ice cave, the four Mobians stared at the dead bodies of the ice creatures, pleased at the fact they had been stopped at long last. A long silence hung ominously in the air until Sonic finally decided to speak.

"Well Blizzard, I think your court has been dismissed." he chuckled.

"It has indeed Sonic." said Blizzard "Well done young man."

"Thanks, although you deserve most of the praise for today since you helped us to stop the Court of Ice." said Sonic with a thumbs up "And you also turned yourself around and are willing to redeem yourself. I think that deserves some praise too."

"Oh thank you very much Sonic but…I don't deserve your praise." said Blizzard sadly "I've done terrible things to you and your kingdom. I killed Amy's parents, scarred her for life and I've tried to conquer your city. I was even willing to let an innocent kid die out of spite for Sally! I maybe redeeming myself but I still don't deserve your praise."

"Blizzard don't say that, you're a hero!" cried Sally "You helped us stop the Court of Ice! Isn't that enough a redemption for you?"

"It's going to take much more than that to be on your good terms no doubt." said Blizzard glumly "And besides, I still somewhat resent you after what your father did. But…I won't hold a grudge on you anymore. What's past is past and you shouldn't pay for what your father did, you were innocent in all of that. And even if I was to pay him back…what would it achieve? Nothing. The damage has been done and it can't be repaired."

"I understand Blizzard but I still think you deserve a second chance." said Sally "Join the Royal Fighters and help us defeat Dr. Eggman and his evil minions so we can bring peace back to Mobius."

"A lovely offer…but one I cannot accept." said Blizzard, shaking her head sadly "I'm sorry Sally but I don't deserve this. I deserve to live alone for all I did. I will help you if you need it but I can't join you. I'm sorry…but I can't."

"If that's what you think Blizzard then fair enough." said Sally "But you don't need to be so hard on yourself. You're willing to redeem yourself for what you did, that's deserving of Royal Fighter status to me."

Blizzard smiled sadly at Sally.

"Thank you." she said, touched by the queen's kindness "I may reconsider joining you in the future if I feel I'm deserving enough."

"Take all the time you need Blizzard." said Sally "We'll wait. For now, hope things go well for you from now on."

"I hope so too." said Blizzard "And I hope you win your war with Dr.

Eggman."

"We will." said Sonic with a wink "See you around Blizzard."

"Goodbye Sonic, and good luck." said Blizzard softly, smiling brightly at Sonic.

Sonic smiled back and then he and Sally turned to leave. Just as they prepared to go back home, Amy walked up to Blizzard. The Ice Witch wondered what was going to happen next. To her surprise, Amy smiled at her.

"Well done for coming to your senses Blizzard." said Amy "Even though I find the whole "ghosts of your family" thing a bit farfetched. I'm glad we won't have to be enemies anymore."

"It'll take a while before we can fully rekindle I'm sure Amy…but it's a start." said Blizzard, shaking hands with her "I hope things go well for you dear."

"And to you." said Amy "See you around Blizzard…and the next time we meet I won't try and break your head open."

Blizzard forced herself to chuckle as Amy left the cave and followed Sonic and Sally outside. Blizzard watched them leave the cave and head off back to NewMobotropolis. She was now all alone in the cave with only the voices in her head to keep her company. Blizzard closed her eyes and listened as the ghosts of her family began to speak to her again.

Well done…my darling wife. Well done…and thank you for listening to us. Iceberg gently whispered inside Blizzard's head.

"No my love…thank YOU. Thank you…for everything." Blizzard whispered back, smiling widely at her husband's kind, loving words. She had redeemed herself and made her deceased family proud. Things were going to improve for Blizzard from now on and she could hardly wait to see what would happen next…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm

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I bet you didn't see that coming eh? Blizzard's reformed and she's stopped the Court of Ice. What's in store for Blizzard now she's in the side of good? Only the future will tell...

I hope you enjoyed this chapter and I would appreciate it if you could leave a review or two on it. :D

Join me next time for Nicole's going to get a "new body" and it's a story you don't want to miss...

Oh and just for a bit of fun and a fun little tribute to after the credits month in Archie Sonic, here's an end credit scene for you! ;)

Meanwhile, over in the old laboratory in Megapolis, Dr. Finitevus was sitting at a computer and searching for valuable information. This information was vital to him in more ways than one. Vital in the sense that it would help him formulate his forthcoming Dark Armada. He wanted to know all he could about any possible mercenary on Mobius, most importantly, any enemy of Sonic the Hedgehog. He had been searching for quite a while but the computer's rather slow loading progress and worn down features meant Finitevus had to do a lot of waiting. The echidna massaged his temples as a web page he'd come across began to load agonizingly slowly. As much as he would have wanted to use Eggman's more sophisticated and potent computers, he knew he couldn't for he didn't want to attract attention to himself. The Dark Armada HAD to be a secret. It was compulsory that only he and his first three members knew about it. If anybody found out, his plans would be in jeopardy. This laboratory was a good place to formulate his armada for Eggman didn't know about it and likely wouldn't even care to look for him there. As far as Eggman knew, he was just working silently on something that would benefit the Eggman Empire beautifully. Finitevus glanced at the computer screen and sighed furiously.

"Grrr…hurry UP already!" he snarled, thumping the computer with his fist in the vain hope of making it go faster "I don't have all day! Eggman will be wanting me back in his lair anytime soon!"

He was suddenly interrupted by the sound of a warp ring opening up behind him. Out of the warp ring stepped the beautiful but villainous Fiona Fox. Finitevus didn't even turn around although Fiona guessed he knew she was back anyway. Finitevus smiled to himself.

"Dear child, have you gotten what I have ordered you to get?" purred Finitevus in a semi-friendly manner of voice.

"I have indeed." said Fiona, reaching onto her belt and taking some off of it "I've got the plans for Eggman's next project."

She had a memory stick in her hand. Finitevus had given it her and had ordered her to steal some secret information from Dr. Eggman with it. It seemed she'd gotten it. She handed the stick over to Finitevus. The echidna plugged the stick into the computer tower and waited as it loaded up, surprisingly quickly this time. He minimized the web page he was looking at earlier and he opened up the stick's data. He smiled to himself as some blueprints for a ship of some kind showed up on the computer screen.

"Excellent my dear! This is just what I asked for!" he cackled "The blueprints to Eggman's next big plan!"

"Indeed." said Fiona, her hands on her hips in a sultry manner "But…what IS his plan? What's he building this…"Death Egg" for?"

"He thinks he'll be able to stop the Royal Fighters with it." explained Finitevus "And roboticize the entire world as well. Instead, it shall be his own undoing."

"And how exactly do you plan on doing that?" asked Fiona curiously.

"Sabotage my dear, what else could I do to stop it?" crooned Finitevus "Believe me when I say that Eggman's so-called "Death Egg" will end up being his coffin. And out of the ashes of his demise…the Dark Armada shall arise…and it'll be unstoppable."

Nicole's New Body 1

Story 178: Nicole's New Body Part 1

Prologue

*The Egg-Bunker: 30 minutes ago… **

The Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses had come and passed and now a whole month had gone by without a hitch. This had been fortunate for Dr. Eggman, the enemy of Mobius and Sonic's biggest threat, for this month of peace had been more than enough time for him to start plotting. And plotting he had certainly been doing for the past month. Dr. Eggman had been wondering what would be the best way to stop Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends. They had been bothersome for two whole years now. This was his third year of war with the Mobians and he was still pretty much at square one. It was hard to believe before the mass-roboticization of Mobius last year he had been on top of the Mobians for the most part and since the destruction of Robotropolis and the de-roboticization of the world, he'd been stuck hiding in his bunker plotting his next scheme. What an insult to a great genius like him this was. He should be winning this war and yet he was still hiding in his bunker and plotting his next scheme. Even with his life-support mech he was still at square one and the life support mech he now housed was based on one of his strongest creations ever, E-123 Omega. Well Eggman wouldn't be hiding in his measly bunker anymore. He would be making his next move and he had the ultimate scheme in mind. Eggman stood by and watched as his Egg-Pawns began working on keeping the bunker functional and preparing his next scheme. All this was going on while Sonic and friends were dealing with Blizzard and her Court of Ice, meaning Eggman could have a moment of peace for a change. He smiled to himself from inside his mech. It was a brilliant plan he had come up with, even more brilliant than Egg-Timer, a machine that had ended up being used for Metal Sonic's nefarious scheme rather than his own. This plan was to end all plans and it would guarantee a sure fire victory for him and his Egg Army. It made him tingled with excitement just thinking about it.

"Oooooh my new plan is brilliant! Brilliant I say! Bwah, ha, ha, ha!" chortled Eggman "It's flawless and it's guaranteed to work! Ah, ha, ha, ha! Once it's unleashed, nobody will be able to stop it! Not even Sonic! I wonder what my echidna sidekick thinks of this plan?"

Eggman turned the upper body of his mech around and he bellowed at the top of his voice.

"DR. FINITEVUS!"

Almost immediately, Dr. Finitevus entered the room and stood to attention before Dr. Eggman. The evil albino echidna had plans of his own but Eggman had called him so he had to put his plans to the side for the moment while he answered his master's summons. The master that would soon be overthrown by him personally.

"You bellowed Dr. Eggman?" he answered innocently.

"I have come up with a brilliant new plan, a plan that is so flawless and amazing that it's guaranteed to succeed!" declared Dr. Eggman, pointing up with a metal claw in a manner of making a superior announcement.

"This ought to be interesting…" muttered Finitevus sarcastically "So let's hear this "flawless and brilliant plan" of yours."

"Now Finitevus, let's not have the cheek shall we?" said Eggman sternly "You'll regret the sarcasm once I explain this to you."

"I'm sure I will." said Finitevus, rolling his eyes.

Dr. Eggman frowned at the albino furred echidna. What did he have to do to impress the mad scientist? Finitevus allied himself with Eggman so surely would it be too much to ask for him to appreciate what he did?! Eggman shook it off and he spoke to Finitevus.

"OK then, here's my brilliant new plan." explained Dr. Eggman "Remember how you told me once that I was getting too predictable?"

"Yes, don't tell me something I already know." said Finitevus with a bored scowl on his face.

Eggman ignored him and he carried on, his mech making gestures he likely would have done if he was still his old self before he needed to be on life support.

"Well I've decided to carry out a plan that no Mobian on Mobius will see coming, not even the Royal Fighters." crowed Eggman.

"So you said when we formulated "Operation Double Trouble" and yet they still managed to stop you." snorted Finitevus.

"That was YOUR idea, not mine!" growled Eggman "Anyway, I'll be sending out robotic forces all over the world to start building fuelling stations for a new giant ship that I am making. The fuelling stations will not be necessary though, my ship won't actually need them." he crooned sinisterly.

"Ah, distractions. Decoys to slow them down while you commence with your actual plan." said Finitevus brightly "You're smarter than I give you credit for Eggman."

"I do have an IQ of 300 after all." sneered Eggman "Anyway, my new ship is called "The Death Egg". It is a ship that will be unlike any other ship I've ever built. It'll be colossal, have amazing weaponry and carry this ultimate feature...it'll carry a roboticization beam that'll transform EVERY last Mobian on the planet into robots! The Eggman Empire will be born and I will rule over all of Mobius! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

His grating laughter echoed around the room as he chortled with delight. Finitevus's evil mind began working away on a plan to get rid of Eggman, the first stage of his own master plan.

"Correct me if I'm wrong Eggman but didn't you already try roboticizing the entire world?" asked Finitevus "I believe you said you did before."

"I did, but this time I'll roboticize EVERYBODY and not miss a single Mobian." declared Eggman "The Royal Fighters won't see me coming at all so when the beam fires, they'll blink and then suddenly, they'll be robots before they know what's happened! And to make sure they can't reach me, I'll go up into outer space and fire

the beam! They'll not be able to stop me from succeeding in THIS plan! Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"I wouldn't gloat if I were you Eggman, you never know." said Finitevus sinisterly "You failed every other scheme you tried out and now look at you, still hiding away in your little bunker and making big plans. I'd just try out the new scheme and see what happens instead of being so certain it'll work."

"Never hurts to be confident." said Eggman smugly "And don't worry about being roboticized when the beam is fired at the planet Finitevus, you'll be on the Death Egg with me. You won't be roboticized."

"I should hope not too..." growled Finitevus fiercely.

"I mean it!" protested Eggman "You'll be safe as safe can be up on the Death Egg! Now Finitevus, be helpful and get some of my robots ready. I don't have enough Eggman robots to send out to build the counterfeit fuelling stations yet. I've only got enough to start building the Death Egg."

"I shall get to it immediately." lied Finitevus, bowing before Eggman.

Eggman smiled and he turned to face his servant bot Katherine. She was standing by and awaiting orders from Eggman and to her delight, Eggman was about to give her some. Finitevus didn't stick around. He simply left the room and sneaked out of the bunker through a warp ring. The warp ring took him back to the rundown laboratory in the middle of Megapolis that he had set himself up in to carry out his secret plans. Upon arrival, he saw Scourge the Hedgehog and Fiona Fox making out in the corner of the room. Scourge had his jacket off and Fiona was pinning him against the wall, arms wrapped tightly around him and her lips locked with his. Finitevus had recruited the two after taking them to the lab after the multi-verse crisis had ended. They, along with Ravage Bloodfang, were the first members of an upcoming armada he was planning. The armada would help him commence with his master plan but for now, he was still building up the army. He needed more than just himself, Scourge, Fiona and Ravage after all and he was waiting for the perfect opportunity to bring Eggman down. Now he had it, it was

time to commence with his plans to get rid of Eggman. Finitevus scowled as Scourge and Fiona stopped kissing and they looked at Finitevus nervously. Scourge sweat-dropped and he put his jacket back on.

"Heh, heh...uh, me and Fiona got bored so..."

"I get the picture, you two very much love each other." said Finitevus grimly "Well I hope you don't mind me interrupting your private moment for I have a job for Fiona to do."

"M-Me?" asked Fiona, surprised to hear this and almost lost for words "Uh, wh-what do you want me for?"

"Eggman's planning to build a ship, and I want you to steal the plans for it." said Finitevus "You're stealthy enough to get in and out unnoticed. Do NOT come back empty-handed, is that understood?"

"Yes Finitevus." said Fiona, trying not to sound timid "I won't fail you."

Finitevus nodded and he opened up a portal to Eggman's Egg-Bunker with one of his warp rings. Fiona sneaked through the warp ring and it vanished from sight as she passed through. As Fiona left, Scourge looked at Finitevus curiously.

"What's this all about then doc?" he asked.

"The downfall of Dr. Eggman." Finitevus simply replied with a sinister smile that managed to make even Scourge feel nervous...

New Mobotropolis: Now...

Over in New Mobotropolis, things were going well. The Court of Ice had just been vanquished thanks to the unexpected assistance of Blizzard the Ice Witch after a ghost problem ended up turning her around and just now, the remains of the ice creatures had been tided away and the damage done to the city, which wasn't much to fuss about, was being dealt with immediately. New Mobotropolis was quickly returning back to its peaceful state as if nothing had

happened earlier. The moment Sonic, Sally and Amy had returned home from Blizzard's ice cave, the three had let the other Royal Fighters know what had happened and most of all, how Blizzard had been a great help to them and had even saved Sally and Amy's lives at one point. The Royal Fighters were surprised to hear that Blizzard had well and truly turned good but they understood why she had done so after Nicole the Lynx had told them what she had witnessed and even showed recorded evidence to further prove her point that Blizzard was telling the truth about her ghost problem and subsequent heel-turn. The Royal Fighters were happy about this of course, it meant they had one enemy less to worry about. It would have been better if she had decided to join the Royal Fighters Service but they could understand why Blizzard had declined. She didn't feel deserving of such a position and she needed to have some time to feel deserving. She had only just turned around, she needed to do more good deeds before she was full redeemed. So for now, the Royal Fighters were returning to their daily routines and going about the day as normal. Yet there was one Royal Fighter who didn't seem too happy right about now. And that was Nicole. During the multi-verse crisis, Nicole had been kidnapped and had her mind transferred into that of a handheld computer. She had been turned from a Mobian to an A.I. and she was struggling to come to grips with her new life. She didn't feel the same anymore and due to being stuck in a computer, she felt constantly trapped and that she had no real freedom anymore. Tails had upgraded some of New Mobotropolis' facilities by adding holographic projectors everywhere so Nicole's avatar could show up whenever she wished and not just be limited to the computer and had even added a special engine that allowed her holographic avatar to form solid shapes and stimulate realism to try and help her feel more free and like her old self. But still Nicole felt contained and that she wasn't a real Mobian still. Right now she was sitting in the local park by herself, drowning in sorrow as she tried to commiserate over her new state. She wanted to be Mobian again, very badly. But she just had to accept the fact that she couldn't be Mobian again. What happened to her had happened and she couldn't change it. Her old body was dead and buried in Castle Acorn's garden, a special tombstone placed in it to mark where she'd been buried, so she wouldn't be able to just go back into her old body. It was likely to have fully rotted now given a whole month had passed since the

crisis had ended. Like it or not, Nicole had to get used to her new life and even after a month had passed, she still wanted her old body back. It was like she was never going to get used to being an A.I. Nicole sighed, although given she was merely a hologram her sigh didn't really feel like it was done with real air in her lungs, and she looked up at the sky solemnly.

"Why can't I get used to my new life?" she whined "Why do I still crave to be organic again? I know why…because I didn't feel trapped and restricted before, that's why. Oh I wish I could be normal again. I just feel like a computer programme who's only purpose is to be a tool for my owner, even if I still have my personality and freewill. I don't want to feel like that…oh why did I have to lose my body?"

There was nobody around to answer her question. Nicole just put her head into her hands and cried again. She'd been doing plenty of that recently. Ever since she'd lost her body she'd mostly been crying about it and even after a whole month it wasn't going any better for her. As Nicole cried, she didn't notice that somebody was watching her. And that somebody was her best friend, Sally Acorn. Sally had been distraught when she'd failed to save Nicole and just to see how unhappy her friend was just made her feel worse. In a way, she felt responsible for Nicole's current predicament since she'd failed to save her. It wasn't her fault of course but she still felt that way about Nicole becoming an A.I. Sally sighed sadly and she shook her head.

"Oh Nicole…what are we going to do to make you happy again?" she asked miserably "It really pains me to see you like this."

"I'm on the same boat as you Miss Sally." came a young sounding voice that made her jump slightly.

Sally turned around and saw that she wasn't alone. Tails the Fox was standing behind her and sharing her expression. He had tried to make Nicole's life easier but the lynx was still upset so he felt sad for her as well.

"Oh Tails, it's only you." said Sally "What are you doing here?"

"I wondered how Nicole was doing and I could see that you were watching her sadly so it told me that she's still upset." said Tails glumly "I wonder if she'll ever be happy again. A month's gone by and she still craves for her old body."

"I know." said Sally sadly, looking back at Nicole who was still weeping like a willow to herself. Anybody passing by would likely just go on about their daily routine and ignore her as if she wasn't worth their valuable time. Sally and Tails on the other hand would happily go over to Nicole and comfort her but on the other hand, Nicole might want some alone time so they thought it best to leave her for a minute.

"You know if I could go back in time, I'd be all too happy to rewind to the point Nicole got kidnapped and prevent it from happening." said Sally grimly "The moment Mordred got her, that was the end for her and I still feel like I could have saved her. I know it wasn't my fault she got turned into a computer but I still feel like I could have saved her! I wish I did, it pains me to see my dearest friend so distraught all the time now."

"I know Sally but moping about it isn't going to help." said Tails "Something I learnt when I never found my parents after Eggman got them and when I saw my Mobius Beta counterpart get killed in front of me. You may wish you could have done something about it but the simple fact remains that you can't and there's no point feeling sorry for yourself. Just accept what's happened and move on. The status quo is not something that stays forever I'm afraid."

"Tails, at times I wonder if you're really as young as you say you are." chuckled Sally "You sound more like an adult than a kid at times."

"I grew up fighting a war with you guys, I had to grow up quickly." said Tails grimly "And also Miles's death has effected me a little. Maybe more than a little…"

Ever since his horrible encounter on Mobius Beta, Tails hadn't quite been the same himself. He had lost some of his cutesy charm and was a bit quieter than usual. Miles's death had been a horrible sight for him and had left an impact that would last him for quite a while.

One could say Tails's innocence had died along with Miles and not even Cosmo would be able to bring it back to him despite how much he still loved her. Not wanting to think about Miles anymore, Tails decided to bring up something else, something that he never thought of asking before but had decided to ask now.

"So Sally, this might be a weird question but…when did you and Nicole first meet? How did you become such great friends?" he asked.

Sally looked surprised to hear Tails ask her that. Her jaw dropped and her eyes opened wide. She composed herself and answered.

"Oh my…nobody's ever asked that before." she gasped "I never thought you'd be the first to ask Tails."

"I bet you were expecting Sonic to be the first to ask." chuckled Tails.

Sally half-laughed in agreement and then she answered the question.

"Well Tails, it all began on a rainy day in Old Mobotropolis." explained Sally "I was only ten years old at the time and Nicole was only nine. I was playing in the grand hall to myself until I heard a knock on the door. I opened it and there, standing soaking wet in the rain was a young lynx in a purple raincoat. She looked very sad and alone. Taking pity, I let her in and dried her off. Nicole introduced herself to me and explained why she was in New Mobotropolis. She was living with a family of computer manufacturers in Central City and was due to inherit the company when she came of age. But a terrible accident at the company had resulted in the death of her parents and Nicole had no living relatives to take care of her. So she decided to come to Mobotropolis for help. She claims to have hired somebody to take her here and given her family's opulence, I wouldn't be surprised if she did. After Nicole told me her story, I took pity on her and offered her a place in the castle. My dad didn't approve, not wanting to be a king who lets in homeless vagabonds but mother wouldn't hear of him, she accepted in a heartbeat. She thought some company would be good for me. I was quite pleased and when I started showing Nicole around, she noticed I had a

broken computer. In half an hour, she fixed it for me and even improved the settings. I was breath taken. She was only nine and she could fix computers on a whim! After that…we sort of hit it off and became best friends. At times I felt Nicole was more than a friend. She felt…like a sister to me. The sister I never got. That's how close me and Nicole truly are." she finished with a weak smile on her beautiful face.

"Aww…that's a lovely story." said Tails with a heartfelt smile on his face "You and Nicole really are good friends aren't you?"

"The best." said Sally brightly "But sadly, I don't think even I can cheer Nicole up. I don't think she'll ever be happy again after what's become of her. She was a great computer whiz…I never would have thought she'd end up BECOMING one."

"I'll bet." murmured Tails sympathetically "It'd be like if I turned into a spanner or something…if only Nicole had a new body that would allow her more freedom and…"

Tails stopped and stared straight ahead of himself as if he'd just seen a ghost. He had just been stricken by an idea. It was amazing how just saying something out loud can give you an idea. Tails was lucky his brain was as prodigious as it was otherwise he wouldn't have caught onto the idea.

"A new body! That's it!" screeched Tails excitedly, snapping his fingers "Oh man am I so thick! Why didn't I think of that before?"

"What's your idea Tails?" asked Sally incredulously, her eyebrows furrowed in an unsure expression.

"We make Nicole a new body!" Tails explained enthusiastically "True it won't be exactly like her old body but it'll be better than nothing. I bet I could make a good Automaton and make it look like Nicole's old body so that she feels more like her old self. The Automatons were meant to be insanely realistic for a robot after all."

Memories of the Automaton Mandy came back into his head as he said that. Mandy had been kidnapped unknowingly by Dr. Eggman and replaced with an Automaton during an attack on Castle Acorn

led by Metal Sonic last year. It had fooled everybody, even Wilson and had cost Sonic and friends a Chaos Emerald. Thankfully, the real Mandy had been retrieved and the Auto-Mandy presumably destroyed forever since they never saw it again. An Automaton would be perfect for Nicole's new body.

"It's a nice idea Tails but do you know HOW to build an Automaton?" asked Sally.

"Well…no I'm afraid." said Tails sheepishly "But I know just the person who can help me with that…"

He looked over to Nicole with a sneaky grin on his face. Sally read his expression and realized what he was up to.

"Ah…I see your plan now." said Sally smoothly "Nicole can hack into Eggman's systems and get the Automaton plans. Brilliant idea Tails!"

"Indeed it is." said Tails with pride "I sure hope Nicole likes her new body when it gets built."

"I'm sure she will." said Sally "Please Tails, be careful over there. I don't know what I'd do if something happened to you."

"I'll be fine Sally, I promise." said Tails reassuringly "I'm just going to sneak into the Egg-Bunker, get what I need and be out again before Eggman knows what's happened."

With that said, Tails ran off to get Nicole's handheld computer so he could use her to get exactly what he needed. Sally watched him go, smiling proudly at Tails. The boy really did have a big heart and it was really touching to see he was willing to brave certain dangers just to give Nicole a new body. It made Sally proud to have such a lovely boy on the Royal Fighters Service. She could hardly wait to see what Nicole would think to all of this…

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40 minutes later…

Over in Megapolis, Dr. Finitevus was sitting in the old laboratory he

had picked for a hiding place and was on a computer, closely studying the plans for the Death Egg that Fiona had stolen from directly underneath Eggman's nose. Finitevus wasn't at all surprised that Fiona had succeeded in her task. After all, he knew she could be a good sneak and Scourge had assure him that she was good at tasks like this. Fiona just stood with Scourge as Finitevus studied the Death Egg plans. He'd told Fiona he planned to sabotage the ship and bring Eggman down with it so obviously, he was trying to find a weak spot on the Death Egg. Fiona and Scourge could only watch, wondering how long it would take Finitevus to work out the ship's weak points. It slightly disturbed them to think that Dr. Eggman was going to use the ship to roboticized everybody on Mobius but given they had the plans for the ship, they needn't worry about it. Finitevus was a step ahead of Eggman now he had what he needed. After a minute or so, Finitevus found what he was looking for.

"Gotcha…" he mused to himself "Scourge, Fiona, I've found a weak spot on the Death Egg."

"Let's hear it then Dr. Creepy Von Evil." demanded Scourge.

"Stop calling him that, that's a stupid name!" shouted Fiona, elbowing Scourge in the ribs. The green hedgehog glowered at Fiona, the look on his face like a dagger through the heart.

"Yes Scourge, please don't call me that." muttered Finitevus "As I was saying, I know where the sabotage of the Death Egg should begin. It has a power core chamber located right in the centre of the vessel."

He pointed at the diagram of the Death Egg's power core chamber that was on the screen of the computer he had been using for his research and planning. The power core chamber was enormous with huge metal structures protruding from the floor and ceilings of the great vessel, the two structures almost meeting together like a pair of hands reaching out to touch one another. There were prongs on the end of two metal cylinders, one on the floor structure and the other above in the ceiling structure. Make them a few inches longer and they'll be able to touch each other. They were clearly meant to hold something. But what? Some kind of battery that would power

the ship. Scourge and Fiona peered over Finitevus's shoulders to get a good look at the screen.

"So that's where its power source will be." said Scourge "So what do we do? Smash it until it's useless?"

"That would be a method most befitting you of course but I have a more subtle idea." purred Finitevus "You see, the plans clearly state that some kind of power source will be used for the Death Egg to make the ship more powerful. Eggman will be trying his hand at maybe obtaining a Chaos Emerald or even the Master Emerald to power up his ship. The best way of sabotage? Simply steal the power source. Once that happens, the ship will crash down and burn, taking Dr. Eggman with it."

"I dunno…that seems too easy." said Fiona unsurely "You sure he won't have some kind of back-up in case the Chaos Emerald fails?"

"Of course he will, Eggman's not stupid after all." purred Finitevus "Which is exactly why I've been combing the plans for any possible back up power supply."

"You found any?" asked Scourge.

"Not yet but my attention was mostly focused on the main power supply. I shall now study more of the plans to see what back ups it might have…" mused Finitevus as he moved the cursor over to the corner of the screen and zoomed out of the diagram, showing a full picture of the Death Egg's overall outer appearance. It looked like a giant steel egg with eyes, a nose and a moustache on it, just fitting for Dr. Eggman indeed. It somehow looked silly and threatening at the same time and Finitevus had a way of stopping it. He could already see the Death Egg's demise now once he commenced with his sabotage. Eggman was as good as dead and he, Dr. Finitevus, would rise up in his stead with his Dark Armada behind him. And once the armada rose, he would destroy the Royal Fighters and be without oppression as he carried out his grand plan. For now, he would just have to wait until Eggman went ahead with his plan before he could get rid of him. Finitevus soon had other things to focus on for the door opened up and in ran Ravage Bloodfang. Like Scourge and Fiona, Finitevus had recruited him for his coming

armada. He had been on patrol outside the laboratory and it was clear he had some news to give, otherwise he wouldn't be here now. Finitevus turned to look at Ravage.

"Yes Ravage, what is it?" he asked.

"I've just sight a Royal Fighter." explained Ravage "It's Tails. He appears to be heading towards the Northern Border of Megapolis. He might be up to something."

"Sonic's little brat is going to the Northern Border of Megapolis…on his own?" blurted Scourge "You serious man?!"

"Positive, it's just him, no one else." said Ravage flatly "Why I don't know, it doesn't make any sense."

"Indeed it doesn't…" mused Finitevus, putting a finger and a thumb to his bottom lip in thought "What is the child up to? It must be something crazy if he's going there alone. I'll see what he's up to."

"I do hope he's not spying on Eggman." said Fiona grimly "I don't want Sonic and his playschool buddies to get rid of Eggman first."

"Same here, plus if he starts spying on Eggman, he might also work out what I'm up to." deducted Finitevus "Sometimes you can come for one thing and stay for another. I'll see what Tails is up to and then let Eggman have him."

"Aw, I was hoping you'd let me have him!" moaned Scourge.

Finitevus ignored him and he disappeared through a warp ring he summoned to warp back over to the Egg-Bunker. Scourge, Fiona and Ravage were left alone to do nothing but sit around and wait for Finitevus to return. They hoped he wouldn't be too long, it got boring waiting for him when he went away.

Meanwhile, Tails had arrived in the Northern Border of Megapolis. After taking Nicole's handheld computer from the holographic projectors generator, he had briefed Nicole over what he was planning to do and had left for the Egg-Bunker. Luckily for him,

Nicole remembered where the Egg-Bunker was for she had been in the bunker herself and had found it through a rather clever method during the Martian invasion**. It had taken a long flight but Tails had finally arrived at the place. He was now standing directly above the Egg-Bunker. It amused Tails to think Eggman had been hiding in the small bunker since the last time Robotropolis had been destroyed. How long ago it had been since that happened and yet Tails remembered the last time he saw Robotropolis as if it were yesterday. Shadow the Hedgehog had torn it apart to try and find Eggman after the mass-roboticization of Mobius had been foiled and Eggman had been in the bunker since. Somehow hiding underground seemed very fitting for Eggman. One day the Royal Fighters would get him out of hiding and throw him in prison for his many crimes. Tails looked at the handheld computer as Nicole's avatar emitted out of the screen.

"We're here." said Nicole "Right above the Egg-Bunker itself."

"That's great Nicole." said Tails brightly "So how do we get in?"

"We wait for somebody to open the door." said Nicole sheepishly "I'm afraid there's no other way in there. Unless of course you brought a cutting tool of some kind."

"I'm afraid I didn't for it would have looked too conspicuous." muttered Tails "Don't you have something on you that could get us in?"

"I'm sorry to say this but…no." said Nicole sadly "Rakutan put me inside a computer that has no weaponry. After all, I was meant to be a slave for whoever purchased me. Why would he give me weapons?"

"Good point." murmured Tails. Whoever Rakutan was, he had earned Tails's disapproval. "This would be so much easier if I still had my phase shifter…" he added bitterly.

He had built a device that allowed him to become intangible but Blizzard had stolen it from him and he had been forced to destroy it to stop her using it***. He hadn't rebuilt it since it was too valuable a device to lose to enemies although there were times like this where

he strongly considered changing his mind and rebuild the phase shifter. For now, he'd just have to wait and hope that somebody would open the door soon. Or maybe they could attract attention and make Eggman come up.

"Say Nicole, what do you think to catching Eggman's attention?" asked Tails.

"We could give him a reason to come to the surface and while he's looking for us, we could sneak through the open door." suggested Nicole "It's risky but it might work. Cover your ears Tails, I'm about to make a loud noise."

Tails put Nicole down on the ground and he stuck his fingers in his ears, waiting for the supposed noise she was going to make. Nicole's avatar disappeared and then the handheld computer suddenly blared an extremely loud siren. It was a fire alarm, one of the features that the handheld computer had. The idea was the handheld computers would have some security features such as a fire alarm in case of emergencies, providing safety for the person who purchased them back on Mobius 3000. Nicole was now putting it to good use and her control over the device allowed her to make the alarm much louder than it was supposed to be. Even with his fingers in his ears, the sound still sounded pretty loud to Tails. The fox even cringed a little as the alarm beat at his eardrums. Nicole could wake up a whole country with an alarm sound that loud. If that noise didn't catch Eggman's attention nothing will. Nicole stopped the alarm and Tails picked her up, rubbing his ears.

"You could have warned me just how loud that would have been!" he laughed.

"I may have overdone it a bit." Nicole giggled embarrassedly, her avatar's face emitting a sweat-drop.

Tails and Nicole both gasped in surprise for the ground shuddered slightly beneath Tails's feet and one section of ground seemed to open up like a trap door set in the floor. That was obviously the way into the Egg-Bunker. Tails and Nicole ran around behind the open door and listened as the sound of heavy clanking thundered from down in the bunker. They watched and waited as Dr. Eggman

emerged out of the door and looked around. Tails dived down the door just as the life support mech's upper-body rotated a full 360 degrees. The optics swept over the spot that had a few second ago been occupied by Tails.

"Alright, who's making that racket and who's up here?!" barked Eggman "Come on, show yourself! Who is it?!"

Much to Eggman's bewilderment, there was nobody there. The only person up on the surface was him right now. It was as deserted as it always was and always has been. Eggman scratched the head of his mech with a metal claw in confusion.

"That's weird, I was sure I had some kind of alarm going off up here." he mumbled to himself "Must have been some kind of glitch in my systems, I'll see if my devices are working OK."

With that said, he turned around and headed back down into the Egg-Bunker. By the time the door had closed behind him, Tails and Nicole were already in Eggman's lab. They had quite stealthily managed to sneak past all the Eggman robots, even Katherine, and were now standing before one of his great computers. A USB slot extended out from the handheld computer and Tails plugged Nicole into the main computer.

"Alright Nicole, let's see how fast you can download." whispered Tails.

"Given how hi-tech Mobius 3000 was, I imagine I'll be the fastest downloader ever." Nicole whispered back confidently "Just need to find the Automaton file first and we can go…"

Tails gave the thumbs up sign and he hid behind a nearby tool desk while Nicole did her work. Her screen flashed brilliantly as she began searching for the right file she needed to download. It didn't take her long to find what she was looking for. She was an A.I. occupying a handheld computer device that was far more advanced than anything on Mobius Prime, this was mere child's play for her. In a matter of seconds she'd already found what she was looking for and began downloading the Automaton file. In another matter of seconds, she had downloaded it. Tails just watched with

amazement. Mobius 3000 must be a hi-tech world if just a handheld computer could work that fast! He might have to visit it one day. It certainly sounded better than Mobius Beta. Nicole gave Tails a thumbs up to say she was done. Tails carefully emerged from his hiding place and he unplugged Nicole. He jumped in alarm for he heard Eggman coming back. One benefit of him being encased inside Omega was that he was incredibly noisy. He could tip-toe for all Tails knew and he'd still be loud enough to wake up a sleeping child. Tails dived back into his hiding place and waited with baited breath as Eggman re-entered the room. Katherine saluted him but Eggman didn't seem to have noticed. He strolled past her and addressed the Egg-Pawns working around the lab.

"There was a random loud alarm outside the bunker and I want to know if any of our systems have a glitch that caused it." announced Eggman "Perform a quick diagnostics test immediately!"

Katherine and the Egg-Pawns obeyed and they got to work on finding out if their systems were working as they should be. Tails decided now was the perfect time to leave. He closed the screen on Nicole, switching her off for the moment, and he cautiously peeked out from round the corner of the desk. Everybody was at work on something or another and with their backs turned. They'd never see Tails leaving. Heart pounding, Tails got up to his feet and tip-toed away from the desk. He crept as silently as he could up to the door. He pressed a button that opened the door. The door opened up silently, much to Tails's relief, and…he walked straight into Dr. Finitevus! The echidna had seen Tails creeping into the lab for he had arrived back for Tails even got here and was waiting for the right moment to seize him. Tails was so shocked he nearly dropped Nicole in horror.

"ARGH!" yelped Tails, catching the attention of every Egg-Pawn in the lab.

"Going somewhere little boy?" purred Finitevus, his face an ugly, nasty smirk that spelled confidence and triumph in every muscle.

Without warning, Tails lashed at Finitevus with a savage punch to the face. Finitevus had already moved his head out of the way before Tails so much as threw the punch. Finitevus slugged Tails in

the stomach and made the fox keel over onto his knees in pain. Tails coughed loudly. He'd forgotten how hard Finitevus could punch. Finitevus then grabbed Tails by the scruff of his neck and he hoisted him up off the floor. He dropped Nicole as he was lifted up. Finitevus saw Nicole and he picked her up, thinking it was just some ordinary handheld computer. Finitevus carried Tails into the lab and he threw the wincing fox at Eggman's feet.

"It appears we have a spy in the works." crowed Finitevus.

"Ah Tails! Snooping as usual I see?" sneered Eggman, his mech leaning forward to look Tails in the eye "Well you've been caught you poor, simpering little boy! Ha, ha, ha, ha! So what are you doing here and why?"

"None of your business fat-head!" snapped Tails "Now if you don't mind, I was just leaving until Finitevus got in the way."

"You're not going anywhere Tails." said Finitevus coldly "You have some questions to answer. What are you doing here and why do you have this meagre handheld device?" he asked, holding up Nicole.

"Were you stealing valuable information?" snarled Eggman viciously "If so then I might have to arrange your funeral…"

"No please, don't hurt Tails! I beg of you!"

To Finitevus's surprise, the voice that had suddenly shrieked from nowhere seemed to be coming from the device. Finitevus opened up the screen and Nicole's avatar emitted from within.

"What in the name of…?!" blurted Finitevus.

"Please, don't hurt Tails!" wailed Nicole desperately.

"Is that…Nicole?!" cried Eggman "What's she doing in that computer?!"

"If you remember Eggman, Sonic mentioned that during the multi-verse crisis, Nicole was transferred into a computer device." explained Finitevus "And how fortuitous of us, we now hold her in

our hands."

"Put Nicole down now or you'll be sorry!" screamed Tails.

Eggman just grabbed Tails and hoisted him up, the fox squirming in his grasp as the metal claws wrapped tightly around his body.

"Ugh…grrr…let me go!" cried Tails.

Eggman ignored him and he glared at Nicole. The holographic avatar looked worried as she stared helplessly at Tails.

"Now Nicole, we're going to ask some simple questions. And if you refuse to answer them, I'll break Tails's neck." growled Eggman threateningly "Why are you two here and what were you doing?"

He put his hand on Tails's head and got ready to make the killer blow that would silence the fox and finish him off. Tails instantly grew scared. It looked like he was going to meet his Mobius Beta counterpart if Nicole didn't do as she was told already. Nicole grew scared for Tails. She'd never forgive herself if she let Tails die so pointlessly so like it or not, she had to answer.

"Tails wanted to build a new body for me so he came here to download schematics for the Automaton model and use that as my new body!" shrieked Nicole frantically "That's why we're here! Cross my heart and hope to die! Just please don't kill Tails!"

"That's all I needed to hear…" purred Eggman sinisterly "Finitevus, bind and gag the brat and lock him in a cage!" he bellowed, throwing Tails at Finitevus "I'm going to give Nicole a new body."

"I beg your pardon doctor?" said Finitevus, wrapping his arm around Tails's neck and holding him firmly as the fox tried to get away.

"I'm going to give Nicole a new body." said Eggman, taking Nicole from Finitevus "And she'll be a slave for me when I put her in the new body. I really must thank Tails for such a brilliant idea. I can infiltrate the Royal Fighters from within with Nicole on my side and when the time is right…I'll have her finish them off!"

"You can't do this!" yelled Nicole furiously "I won't be your slave! I…"

Eggman just closed the screen and shut Nicole off for the moment. Tails wanted to cry out for Nicole. As if her situation couldn't get any worse! Now she's going to be an Eggman slave?! Sally would go mental if she knew what was happening now! Tails really wanted to kick himself for even going through with the idea in the first place. It was a foolish idea and it was costing him dearly. Finitevus dragged Tails away, the fox squirming madly in his grasp and trying to get away. As for Eggman, he took Nicole into another room in his laboratory. He was going to prepare an Automaton body for her and given he had some models pre-made already, it wouldn't take long. Just add the skin and fur textures and do some tinkering on the Automaton that would ensure Nicole's unwavering loyalty to him and it'd be done. Tails had given Eggman a great chance to eliminate Sonic and friends. He could dispose of them now and carry out his Death Egg plot without a hitch, wasn't life grand sometimes…?

Back in New Mobotropolis, Sally was sitting alone in the park just watching the Mobini(non-sentient Mobians) fish swimming around in the lake, happy as could be and without a care in the world. Tails and Nicole had been gone for quite a while and the squirrel was beginning to get worried about them. She knew that it took a while to get from here to Eggman's base but still, some nagging feeling in the back of her skull was making her wonder if everything was going alright with them. She was considering going over to the Egg-Bunker herself to see if Tails and Nicole were alright or if they needed any help. Her stomach tightened in anxiety.

"Oh I can't stop worrying about those two!" she moaned "Are they OK? Are they in trouble? Oh I don't know and I can't settle down because of it! I think I should go over to the Egg-Bunker and see if they're fine. I'll take Sonic with me in case I need back-up, it'll be foolish of me to go alone."

It was funny how Sally should mention Sonic's name for Sonic jogged by and skidded to a stop. He smiled happily at the fact he'd just run into his girlfriend and he wandered over to here.

"Hey Sal, how's it going?" he asked "It's been pretty nice since we stopped the Court of Ice. Amazing how quickly things can settle

down isn't it?"

"I'm afraid we're not quite settled yet." said Sally solemnly, getting up off the bench and turning to face her boyfriend "Tails wanted to build Nicole a new body and he's gone over to the Egg-Bunker to get the schematics for an Automaton so he can make one for Nicole."

Sonic looked like Sally had just slapped him in the face.

"And…you let him go alone?!" he shrieked, leaping a foot in the air like a scared rabbit "Sally, that's crazy! Why didn't you let me know about this?! Tails won't make it in and out of there alone! Eggman will likely have caught him already!"

"I'm sorry Sonic, I myself wondered if letting Tails go alone was a good idea shortly after he and Nicole had left but I decided to have faith in Tails and wait and see if he succeeds." proclaimed Sally, putting her hands on Sonic's shoulders as if trying to keeping him down on the ground before he could blast off in orbit suddenly "Tails maybe young but he's not incompetent, he's very capable you know, even on his own. Please don't be mad at me."

"I'm not mad Sally." said Sonic calmly, putting his hands around Sally's wrists "But at the same time I do wish you'd informed me about Tails's idea so I could have gone with him. That way, we'd be certain he'd be OK."

"I'm sure he will be OK Sonic but I will admit, I've been worrying about Tails a moment ago and I was going to take you with me to the Egg-Bunker to see if he needs help." said Sally.

"Well I guess it was even more fortunate I happened to pass by." muttered Sonic "If Tails is in trouble Sally, I'm holding you responsible." he added, his voice uncharacteristically cold as he said it.

"No need, I'm already holding myself responsible for any misfortune that might have befallen Tails." said Sally grimly as Sonic scooped her up into his arms bridal style and prepared to run.

"I just hope Tails is OK and it turns out I'm getting jumpy over nothing." said Sonic hopefully.

Sally held on tightly to her boyfriend as Sonic rushed off out of New Mobotropolis and headed for Megapolis. It wouldn't take long for Sonic to get there thanks to his super speed. He'd be there in no time and if Tails needed any help, he'd be on time to give it to him. Sally prayed with all her heart that Tails and Nicole were OK. If not, it would be all her fault for not thinking properly about the whole thing and just letting Tails go alone…

Back in the Egg-Bunker, Tails had been tied up with a bunch of zip-ties that Eggman had on him. His hands were bound tightly behind his back and his ankles were bound together. The zip-ties held firmly and Tails couldn't break out of them no matter how hard he tried. A strip of duct tape had been plastered across his mouth to keep him quiet. After all of that had been done, he had been thrown into a tiny cage and locked firmly inside. The cage was too small for Tails to stand up in or lie down in, he could only sit down in it and try in vain to get free of his binds. As he struggled and made muffled grunts of effort behind his gag, Dr. Eggman lay down an Automaton model on the inventions table that he would often use to hold all the pieces before he started putting things together. Finitevus stood idly by with Nicole, still switched off, in his hand. The Automaton model looked like a robotic frame, a frame that would soon be covered in fur and other features to look fully like a Mobian. At its current state, it was more like a skeleton than a body but it would soon come to look like a body when Eggman had finished with it. As the Automaton was laid on the table, Eggman fastened it down on the surface with thick clamps that closed around the wrists and ankles. It seemed strange to just restrain an empty robotic shell that had no life in it but Eggman had his reasons. Tails watched with despair as Finitevus plugged Nicole into the Automaton's chest. As he did so, the Automaton jolted as if it had been struck be lightening. The Automaton rested back down on the table and then suddenly, the optics began to light up with a glowing green light. The head twitched as if taking note of its surroundings and it tried to move its limbs. The clamps held firm and the Automaton couldn't move.

"Grrr…let me go right now!" cried Nicole, her voice ringing out of the Automaton's vocal processor "You're not making me one of your robot cronies Eggman!"

"I really should have removed the voice box before I plugged her in." sighed Eggman "Nicole, download yourself into the body so that we won't need to keep the computer plugged in all the time."

"No!" spat Nicole furiously "I won't! I won't cede to your demands and I will NOT be your slave!"

"Fine then I guess you don't want Tails to live after all." said Eggman coldly "Finitevus, what should we put on his gravestone?" he purred, the albino echidna smiling gleefully at Eggman's little statement.

Nicole quickly changed her mind and she began the download. Finitevus glanced at the computer's screen to see if Nicole was doing as she was told. She was, the screen was flashing saying "Download commencing, transferring of home base approaching completion in two minutes". Nicole would be out of the computer and into the Automaton, a permanent new home for her. While easily better than the computer, it wouldn't be a nice new home for her when Eggman was finished.

"MMMMOOO!" Tails could only scream the muffled word as the tape on his mouth firmly held his lips together.

Nicole heard Tails's plea and despite being digital, the plea seemed to sting her hard like a dagger in the back. She knew that what she was doing wasn't good but she wasn't going to let Tails die just because she was refusing to obey Eggman's orders. She was not worth Tails dying for. In a matter of moments, the download had completed and Finitevus yanked the now empty computer device from the Automaton's chest. It was useless now there was nobody occupying it.

"You won't be needing THIS anymore my dear…" he said sinisterly, crushing the handheld computer in his hand and dropping the crumpled up mesh of metal he had reduced it to on the floor.

Tails felt like he had been stabbed in the chest as he saw this.

Nicole wouldn't be able to return to her handheld computer, she was stuck in the Automaton forever. The Automaton was her new home from now on. At least she'd have a body to control but it wouldn't be the kind of body she wanted. Now Nicole was in the Automaton and out of the computer, Eggman opened up the tip of his index claw and out of the tip extended a USB slot that he plugged into Nicole's chest.

"Now just upload some of my rather brash personality and my strongest internal coding that she will not be able to bypass and we're complete…" he mused to himself.

Nicole was helpless to fight Dr. Eggman. She was fastened to the table firmly and she had no way of defending herself. She could only lay back and allow Eggman to upload some of his own data into her. It would easily exceed her own free will and make her a loyal Eggman servant. She wouldn't be strong enough to fight Eggman's coding. In a matter of moments she would be transformed from a Royal Fighter to an Eggman robot. The Automaton shuddered as Eggman began his work and Tails watched with tears in his eyes as he watched Nicole being subjected to this horror. It was all his fault this was happening. If he hadn't gone alone and been so sure of himself, this wouldn't have happened. Now thanks to him, Nicole was going to betray her friends, even Sally, and be forced to work for Eggman. The fox let out some muffled cries of despair as the Automaton shuddered more furiously. Eggman kept it up for a minute until finally he was finished and he took his claw out of Nicole's chest. The Automaton fell silent and still for a minute before its optics changed from green to red and it spoke, the voice more evil sounding than before. The work had been done, Nicole was gone and in her place was a new servant for Dr. Eggman.

"I am Nicole, I am part of the Eggman Empire. I must destroy all enemies of the Eggman Empire." droned Nicole.

"Excellent! Excellent!" cheered Eggman delightedly "It worked, it worked! Nicole's all mine now! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Please can you release me?" requested Nicole, the Automaton head turning to face him "I must commence with my duties Dr. Eggman."

Eggman obeyed instantly and he undid the clamps around Nicole's wrists and ankles. The Automaton skeleton sat up on the table and looked at Dr. Eggman as if registering what he looked like. Finitevus was intrigued. He hadn't been expecting Eggman's tampering to work and yet it had. If luck presented itself to him, he would try and take control of Nicole himself.

"What do you want me to do Dr. Eggman?" asked Nicole. It was clear she wanted something to do right now. Eggman wouldn't be too surprised if he ordered Nicole to self-destruct and she did it. The loyalty thing really seemed to be working.

"I'm so glad you asked my dear…" purred Eggman wickedly "I've got the perfect task for you. Kill Tails!" he bellowed.

"MMMHAT!?" Tails shrieked a muffled shrieked in horror.

"As you wish sir." droned Nicole, her voice empty of any emotion at all.

She hopped off the table and she strode up towards Tails. The fox backed up against the bars of his cage, his heart thumping wildly and the tape inflating in and out frantically as he breathed furiously. He was trapped and at the mercy of Nicole. If he survived this one, it would be a miracle. The miracle would have to hurry up though for Nicole ripped open the cage as if it was merely breadsticks and she reached in to grab the terrified fox cub…

Footnotes:

***The opening scene takes place before the end credits scene in the previous episode**

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front***

***** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm***

HOLY SHIT! Nicole's been turned evil and Tails is about to meet the spirit in the sky! Will Sonic and Sally get to him in time or is Tails truly dead? And is Nicole...gone?!

Find out next time in Part 2 of "Nicole's New Body"!

Nicole's New Body 2

Story 179: Nicole's New Body Part 2

Miles "Tails" Prower was staring death directly in the face in the most literal way possible.

After the Court of Ice had attacked New Mobotropolis only to then be foiled by a reformed Blizzard the Ice Witch, Tails had decided to make Nicole a new body for her to occupy since she was missing being normal and wanted to be more than a computer programme. She had been turned into a computer programme by an evil genius on another version of Mobius during the now almost legendary multi-verse crisis that had impacted many alternate Mobiuses. She missed her old body and Tails had decided to make her a new one, using an Automaton as the new body since that was easily the next best thing Nicole could have. Unfortunately, things had gone horribly, HORRIBLY wrong. Finitevus had spotted Tails heading to the Egg-Bunker and had caught him red-handed before he could leave for home. Dr. Eggman, intrigued with Tails's idea, had decided to execute the idea himself only making Nicole work for him of course. Tails had been tied up, gagged and locked in a cage and forced to watch helplessly as Nicole was forced out of her handheld computer and into the Automaton body Eggman had gotten for her. After Nicole had placed herself in the Automaton, Eggman had uploaded his own unique coding and some of his personality into Nicole. The result had been glorious for him. Nicole was now completely loyal to him and completely on his side. Eggman had given Nicole her first horrible deed of the day to do and that was to mercilessly slaughter poor Tails. Eggman was so wicked and evil that he didn't care if he killed an innocent kid. Anyone can die as far as he was concerned. Nicole strode up to Tails's cage, the fox pressing himself firmly against the back of the cage in terror. He was crying tears of fear and his head rained with cold sweat. He almost wanted to faint he was that scared. Nicole grabbed the door of the cage and tore it clean of its hinges, the metal making a screeching cry of agony as it was taken away from its post. Nicole tossed the door across the room and she grabbed Tails by the fur on his chest.

Tails wondered if Nicole could feel his heart thumping against his ribcage as if hoping to escape while it still could. Nicole hoisted Tails out of the cage and she bared her metal claws, her other hand poised and aimed directly at his heart. Tails squirmed in protest, desperate to try and get away from Nicole. He picked her furiously but Nicole felt no pain. She was in the body of an Automaton, a robot that was meant to be realistic to the point of feeling pain, but Eggman had rather inconveniently disabled its pain receptors. The body was immune to pain of any sort now. Tails just stared helplessly at Nicole as she prepared to kill him.

"Mmmo! Mmmo! Mmmmease! Mmmmo! Mmmmn't mmmo mmmit Mmmicmmmole!" Tails pleaded pathetically, trying as best as he could to speak despite his mouth being taped shut.

Nicole ignored the terrified fox and was about ready to finish him off. Tails closed his eyes tightly, unable to witness his ultimate demise. The sweat was pouring so rapidly down his face now he may as well have had a rain cloud over his head. But as he waited for Nicole to finish him off, Nicole just stood there, silent and unmoving as if somebody had hit the pause button. Despite Eggman's coding, there was still a bit of Nicole left inside the Automaton and right now, Nicole was screaming at the body to ignore Eggman's orders and obey her own. But sadly, she was like the voice in the back of your head that tries to be heard and fails miserably. All she could do was combat Eggman's coding and try to win control over the Automaton. It seemed to be working for she'd gotten the Automaton to stop what it was doing. But how long could she hold it? Not very long it seemed for the Automaton's arm was twitching furiously as if itching to complete its journey into Tails's chest. Nicole did her best to hold the arm back. The twitching seemed to cease, meaning Nicole was beginning to overpower the coding. Eggman watched the Automaton with disgust.

"What are you doing Nicole?! KILL HIM!" he bellowed, shaking his arms furiously.

Don't listen to him body, listen to me! Nicole screamed in the Automaton's head.

The Automaton seemed conflicted between who's orders it should

obey, Eggman's or Nicole's. Tails only stared at the Automaton, praying that Nicole could somehow take control of the Automaton and defeat Eggman's coding. Unfortunately, Eggman decided to make doubly sure that Nicole would obey him. He grabbed Nicole and carried her back over to the table, the Automaton dropping Tails as it was grabbed. He fastened her to the table again and he frowned at Nicole. If Nicole could see through his life support mech, she'd see a hideous scowl glowering at her.

"Nicole! Why aren't you doing as you're told?!" snarled Eggman "You're supposed to be loyal to me!"

"Please doctor, I was going to kill the boy but something keeps stopping me from doing so." droned Nicole "Give me anothe chance, I'll do it."

"Before you do that, I think some extra coding is in store for you." said Eggman.

He deployed his USB slot from the open claw tip he held over Nicole's chest and he plunged the slot into it again. He began to upload some more coding of his into Nicole's Automaton body. He was taking no chances, he couldn't let Nicole take control of the Automaton or he would be losing a potentially great weapon. A Royal Fighter forced to work for him was an opportunity he couldn't afford to lose. As Eggman began uploading more codes, Tails tried to sneak away only for Finitevus to stop him and hold him in place. The echidna seemed to be smirking at the fact things weren't going as Eggman planned.

"Oh dear Eggman, it seems your scheme isn't going as planned." he crowed "Nicole appears to be fighting for control of the body. Are you sure your coding will be enough for you to ensure control over her?"

"Do not criticize me Finitevus!" growled Eggman "I assure you my coding is plenty strong enough to make Nicole swear fealty to me! I obviously needed to upload some more! Nicole's stronger than I imagined. Well she did manage to counter-hack Katherine and lock me out of Mobius's satellites so that might explain something...*"

"If she can counter hack your loyal servant bot AND lock you out of Mobius's satellites then I doubt you'll be able to keep Nicole under control." said Finitevus warningly "I'd just dismantle Nicole while she's in the body and erase her forever. We have the perfect opportunity."

"I am NOT going to lose the chance to use one of Sonic's friends against him!" growled Eggman "Nicole will not be dismantled! If she IS too hard to control then I'll go with your suggestion. Fair enough?"

Finitevus sighed. Eggman was so stupid at times, hardly a man with an IQ of 300 was he? More like 3 as far as Finitevus was concerned. All the more reason to overthrow him. Finitevus looked forward dearly to the day the Dark Armada would rise above the Eggman Empire. Even if he waited for a hundred years it would be worth it. Then suddenly, Katherine entered the room and she walked up to Eggman. Eggman didn't even look at her. It was almost like he didn't even know she was there.

"What is it Katherine?" he asked, sounding almost tired as he asked.

"I checked the **security camera** for signs of any disturbances *and I regret to inform* THAT SONIC THE HEDGEHOG AND QUEEN SALLY ACORN **are coming towards** *the Egg Bunker.*

Eggman sighed loudly, taking the USB slot out of Nicole so he could throw his arms up in the air in exasperation. He seemed to make a habit out of doing that when things didn't go well.

"Oh for the love of all things scientific! Why must Sonic show up at the most inconvenient times?!" he moaned angrily "It's funny he never shows up when I'm not doing anything, I mean I went a whole month without him bothering me and I spent most of the month just coming up with my latest plan!"

"Stop moaning and deal with the hedgehog already!" snapped Finitevus "Do you want him to save Tails and Nicole?"

"Don't get snippy with me Finitevus, I was going to do that." said Eggman sternly "Nicole, come with me! Finitevus, take Tails with you! We're going to give Sonic and Sally a warm welcome..."

Nicole obeyed and she got up from the table after Finitevus freed her from it. As Eggman and Nicole left the room, Finitevus grabbed Tails by the scruff of his neck and he carried the tied up fox after him. Tails could only allow himself to be carried up to the surface, helpless to stop Eggman and Finitevus as they headed for the door. He knew what Eggman was planning. He'd use Tails as a hostage and likely make Sonic and Sally surrender to Eggman. And then to add salt to the wound, make Nicole kill them both as well as Tails. What more could go wrong?!

Up on the surface of the Egg-Bunker, Sonic and Sally had finally arrived and Sonic skidded to a halt. He put Sally down on the ground and he looked around cautiously. Being near Eggman's territory was almost like stepping into a minefield. You could walk anywhere and one wrong step will cause something to explode. In this case, one wrong step could set off whatever traps Eggman might have. Sonic put a finger to his lips as he observed his surroundings.

"Cost is clear, looks like we've been undetected." whispered Sonic "Although you never know when you're near an Eggman base."

"I know." said Sally, clipping he wristbands on as she spoke "I'll cut us a way into the bunker and once we're in, you cut loose and I'll see where Tails and Nicole are."

"If they need help, you're well equipped to get them free." said Sonic with a wink.

Sally nodded approvingly and she clenched her fists, deploying the energy blades that her wristbands stored. If Tails needed saving then it was a case of using an invention Tails had made to save Tails himself. Almost ironic in a way. Sally plunged her blades into the ground and was about to start cutting until a section of the ground opened up and Eggman suddenly emerged from within and strode up to them in a casual, almost prideful manner as if he was having a good day and was feeling confident about everything that was going on. Sally took her blades out of the ground and she braced herself for a fight. Sonic stood beside her, bracing himself for

a fight with her.

"Why hello there Sonic and Sally." said Eggman brightly "How nice of you to pop by. After a month of not seeing you two I was beginning to worry about you both."

"Can't say the same about you egg for brains." muttered Sonic, tapping his foot impatiently "Now where are Tails and Nicole?"

Eggman didn't reply. Instead, Dr. Finitevus emerged from inside the Egg-Bunker with Tails in his arms and Nicole walked behind him, keeping a close eye on the fox. Tails squirmed furiously, trying to get free but Finitevus held on tightly and he dumped him down onto his knees before Sonic and Sally. Tails looked at Sonic and Sally with his eyes full of fright. Sonic and Sally stared in horror at Tails. Their fears had come true, he'd been caught and was now bound and gagged before them.

"Mmmmnic! Mmmmlly!" Tails cried as best as he could.

"Tails! Let him go right now Eggman!" ordered Sonic angrily, his face contorting with rage that looked like it was about to explode any moment now.

"How about you two surrender and the boy keeps his life?" sneered Eggman "And as for Nicole well, she's on MY side now."

"What do you mean?" asked Sally venomously.

"I put Nicole's mind into this Automaton body you see before you and thanks to some alterations, I have managed to re-program her to work for me." crowed Eggman "Genius isn't it?"

Sally looked like her intestines had just started to fall out without any reason why.

"You monster! How could you?!" she screamed wildly "You let Nicole go or so help me you'll be chopped to pieces before you can even realize what's happening!"

"Can you chop me to pieces before Nicole can kill Tails?" said Eggman threateningly.

"No but Sonic can spin-dash you faster than you can move." purred Sally smoothly.

Surely enough, Sonic did just that. He spin-dashed Dr. Eggman and threw him across the plains as he slammed into him like a football through a window. Eggman's mech hurled heavily through the air and came down with a heavy crash that threw him back up again and brought him down with another crash. Eggman picked himself up, mumbling unintelligibly to himself as his massive frame lifted itself up onto its own two feet.

"That's it! Nicole, kill Tails!" bellowed Eggman.

"Nicole, don't listen to him!" ordered Sally desperately "Don't kill Tails! Fight his programming! You're stronger than he is, I know you are!"

Nicole didn't seem to have heard Sally for she rose an arm and aimed her claws at Tails, the latter held firmly by Finitevus. Tails struggled to get free but Finitevus held him firmly into place. Finitevus had a tough grip. Tails wondered if even an elephant could break free from his grasp. Nicole aimed her claws at Tails and she prepared to run him through. Deep inside, Nicole was screaming at the Automaton to ignore its orders and listen to her but the extra coding Eggman had added was too strong for her to be heard. It was like trying to hear a conversation behind sound-proof glass for her. Tails watched nervously as the Automaton got into its killing position. Tails then suddenly had an idea. Thinking fast, he swung his head backwards into Finitevus's muzzle as hard as he could. Finitevus bellowed a thunderous roar of pain as Tails's head sharply connected with his face. He let go of Tails, allowing the fox to throw himself forward and out of harm's way. Nicole lunged at Tails but Tails had moved out of the way so Nicole ended up slashing Finitevus across the chest. His golden clasps that held his cape around his shoulders took the blow for him, heavy scratches now spread across them, and Finitevus growled like a rabid dog.

"You imbecile! You wasn't supposed to hit me!" he ranted, uppercutting Nicole into the air in retaliation.

Sonic seized the opportunity to spin-dash Finitevus while he was

venting. As Sonic sent Finitevus flying, Tails rolled his away across the ground and towards Sally. Sally ran over to Tails and she cut him free with her energy blades. Tails got up onto his feet and he peeled the tape off of his mouth, relieved to be able to breathe again.

"Oh my gosh Sally, thank goodness you and Sonic made it here!" blustered Tails "I'm so sorry I got caught Sally and I'm equally as sorry as to what's happened to Nicole! Please don't be mad at me!"

"Tails, I'm not mad at you. I'm mad it myself for letting you go alone." said Sally, hugging him as if she was a mother who's been reunited with her lost child "I should have sent Sonic to go with you, or heck I should have come with you. It's all my fault this has happened!"

"No Sally, it's my fault." Tails insisted "I shouldn't have tried to get the Automaton plans, I should have just made Nicole a new body from scratch and all of this could have been avoided. I'm truly sorry that Nicole's been corrupted."

"It's alright Tails." said Sally softly "We'll get Nicole back. We won't lose her to Eggman like this."

"Yeah, let's save Nicole!" Tails yelled with enthusiasm.

He soon ended up yelping in surprise as Nicole lunged at them with her sharp metal claws. Tails and Sally dodged the attack just seconds before Nicole's hand came near them and Sally swung her energy blades at Nicole. To her surprise, the Automaton body had defences of its own against her blades. Eggman had installed them in the newer Automaton models so that they were more up to date with the current Royal Fighters. Nicole's lower arms glowed a fluorescent purple and faint outlines could be seen around the glow. As Sally's arm blades struck them, they bounced back off and made Sally stagger. Eggman had seen her use her energy blades to perfection during the multi verse crisis and thus, had upgraded his Automaton models to have forcefield generators in the arms to stop Sally from chopping them to pieces. It was possible he had even done so to more of his Eggman robots and not just the Automatons. Sally sighed in annoyance. It was Mordred the Robo-Mole all over again only this one was worse because it was her own friend fighting

her. Sally swung at Nicole again but Nicole blocked the attack with her arm, causing Sally's blade to bounce backwards as it struck the forcefield. Sally could feel her arm shaking in protest after the blow. Keep this up and her own arm bone could end up jutting out of her shoulder. Nicole ran towards Sally and she backhanded her across the face. With the added forcefield, the backhand felt more like being whacked by a cricket bat. Sally was thrown across the battlefield as if somebody had shot her out of a cannon and she came down with a heavy crash on the ground. Her face was bruised horrifically from the attack. She looked like somebody had just thrown a splodge of purple paint on her cheek. Nicole ran towards Sally again but Tails flew in behind her and dropkicked her in the back of her head. This caused Nicole to fall forward onto the ground with a clunk. Sally picked herself up, ignoring the pain in her face, and she held her blades together in an X shape. She plunged them into the ground on either side of Nicole's neck, pinning her down and trapping the Automaton. Nicole didn't dare try to move in fear of severing her own head.

"Nicole, please, I know you can hear me in there!" cried Sally desperately "Fight Eggman's control! You can do it! I KNOW you can! You're stronger than he is! Remember how you managed to counter-hack him once? You can do it again! Fight his control, come back to us! Fight it Nicole, FIGHT IT!"

Nicole just glowered at Sally, hoping to find a way out of her current situation. Deep inside though, Nicole was trying to fight Eggman's coding and win control of herself again. Eggman may have added extra coding but that wasn't going to stop her. She was going to win and she wasn't going to let Eggman do this to her. She'd sooner be dead than serve Eggman. Unfortunately, Nicole was too weak to make herself heard inside the Automaton's head. She couldn't break through Eggman's control, the Automaton was still dominated by his coding. She needed another way of winning control. That would have to wait though for Finitevus sneaked up behind Sally and he grabbed her by the shoulders. He yanked the queen away from Nicole and pressed his knuckles against her throat. Sally gagged and spluttered, fighting for air that wouldn't come to her lungs. This tactic was very popular with garrotters back in the Victorian era of humanity and now Finitevus was using it on Sally. He'd make her

pass out and then kill her while she was unconscious.

"Try all you want my dear, Nicole can't hear you." taunted Finitevus "As for you, I have scores to settle with you after the way you humiliated me during Operation: Double Trouble so I'll kill you myself!"

"Not...ack...in this life time!" croaked Sally.

Remembering advice from Princess Matilda**, Sally held her blade against Finitevus's thigh. She had been taught that when somebody grabs hold of you, don't give into them, just find a way out of it. Finitevus winced in pain as Sally's blade pressed against his thigh. The blade felt hot and it burnt him badly. Yet Finitevus fought the pain and held on. Sally decided to increase the pain by making it a cut. That was enough to make Finitevus let go of her. He started to rub his sore thigh better and he let go of Sally. Sally spun around and lightly nicked him across the side of his head. Any closer and she would have taken his dreadlocks off. Finitevus growled furiously and he lashed out at Sally, aiming a powerful jab at her throat. Sally leaned backwards and tried to make another cut on Finitevus but the echidna drew his arm back before she could hit him. Finitevus swept Sally's feet out from under her and the squirrel came down heavily onto her back. While she was down, Finitevus grabbed Sally's left hand and he forced her fingers to curl into her palm, making a fist. Sally tried to stop him but Finitevus pinned her other arm down with his foot. He pressed on as hard as he could, the pressure on her palm enough to deactivate her energy blade. Finitevus then unclipped the wristband from Sally's wrist and he clipped it around his own wrist. He activated the blade and he held it at Sally's throat.

"How ironic it is that I will be finishing you off with your own weapon?" he purred darkly.

Sally gulped. She couldn't see anyway out of this one. She was dead meat in every possible meaning of the words. But it seemed her time would come another day for Tails flew in and tried to land a blow on Finitevus. The echidna heard his propelling tails scything through the air like helicopter rotors as he flew towards him so he was quick to react. Finitevus leaped off of Sally and he slashed at Tails with Sally's energy blade. He caught Tails across the face,

leaving a long gash that streamed with blade and Tails screeched like a wounded fox. Finitevus then grabbed Tails by the foot and threw him into Sally just as she was standing back up. The two sprawled on the ground as they were knocked over and Finitevus cackled at them. He was about to make the killing blow until Sally leaped back onto her feet and blocked his attack with her other blade.

"You and Eggman won't be killing us today!" she growled determinedly "We'll rescue Nicole and we'll escape here with our lives!"

"I'd like to see you try you royal brat..." crooned Finitevus menacingly.

Sally pushed Finitevus backwards and slashed at him furiously like the Grim Reaper swishing his scythe at his latest victim but Finitevus already had his arm up to block the blow before Sally even threw the attack. The two blades clashed, a bright flash of blue light sparking between them as the blades hit. Finitevus pushed Sally away and he slashed Sally across the thigh with the blade he'd stolen from her. Sally winced as a sharp, stinging pain streamed through her thigh and down to her toes. Now Sally and Finitevus both had a cut across their thigh from the energy blades. Finitevus grinned evilly and he lunged at Sally with his foot. Sally had been expecting a punch so she didn't block the attack, allowing Finitevus's foot to hit its target, which was the cut on her thigh. Sally yelped as the already stinging cut began to sting even more and Finitevus was certain he saw Sally's leg buckle slightly underneath her. Sally screamed angrily and she tried to kick Finitevus in the cut on his thigh. Finitevus saw it coming so he blocked the attack with his blade. He swung his arm sharply to the side, throwing Sally's blade outwards so it gave him the perfect opportunity to launch a blow on her body. He kicked her in the thigh, aiming at the cut once again. Sally tried to hold in the pain but she couldn't resist the urge to put her hand over it and rub it better. This allowed Finitevus the opportunity to grab Sally's arm and unclip her remaining wristband. Sally now had no blades left to fight with. Finitevus took the wristband and he stuffed it into a pocket in his cloak. He took off the first wristband he'd nicked from Sally and put it in his cloak pocket too. Finitevus

seemed to be interested in giving Sally a right royal beating. Sally just raised her fists. She'd beat Finitevus without her blades or so she hoped. But Finitevus wouldn't be the one to lay the smackdown on Sally. Instead, he glanced over to his left.

"Nicole, she's all yours now." he purred wickedly, smiling like a troll.

Now Sally realized that Finitevus had tricked her. He had only taken a shot at her to weaken her and deprive her of her weapons so Nicole could finish her off easier! And he'd done a good job too for she now had both weapons confiscated and her thigh had a horrible cut that had been made worse because of Finitevus kicking it! Nicole would take her down much easier now considering Nicole had her arm-mounted forcefields and she had nothing. Nicole ran up towards Sally and savagely clubbed the squirrel around the head with her arm, which still had the forcefield around it. Sally was thrown onto the floor like a wine bottle falling off a table and she grunted as she hit the ground hard. Nicole didn't relent though, she socked Sally in the back and made her cry out in agony. Sally tried to fight back with a kick to the leg but Nicole took the blow as if it didn't even happen and she punched Sally in the back again. She turned Sally onto her back and slugged her in the stomach. Sally spluttered hoarsely in pain but she soon had more pain to deal with for Nicole punched Sally in the face. To the poor queen it felt like being socked by a bowling ball. Sally turned her head to one side and spat out blood in a single throaty cough. Finitevus just stood idly by, enjoying every minute of the beating. Tails picked himself up from the earlier onslaught and he cried out in despair as Nicole slugged Sally yet again.

"Nicole! Stop this! Please stop it!" he screamed "That's your best friend you're beating up!"

Nicole didn't hear him. Instead, she punched Sally in the face again and knocked Sally down on the ground again. Sally forced herself onto her feet and she threw a punch at Nicole. Big mistake for she ended up giving herself a sore fist. Nicole picked Sally in her injured thigh, copying Finitevus's tactic and Sally staggered down on one knee. Nicole punched Sally in the mouth, blood trickling around her lips as she was thrown backwards and Sally collapsed onto the ground again. She coughed and splutered, sending drops of blood

mixed with saliva shooting out of her mouth. Sally looked dreadful. Her face already had a bruise on it from earlier but now it had more bruises, her belly was bruised and her arms were bruised. The cut on her thigh had now swollen and gone a nasty mix of purple and red and any strength Sally had was only enough to keep her conscious. Sally tried to get back up but her injured body wouldn't obey her. Nicole stood over Sally, ready to finish her off. Sally's eyes trickled with tears as she watched Nicole bring her arm back and aim a killing punch at her face.

"No Nicole...please...don't...kill me." Sally said weakily, her voice straining with effort "Please...you're my...friend...you would...never hurt me...please..."

Nicole tried as hard as she could to stop the Automaton from completing its objective but she was still too weak to fight against Eggman's coding. Instead, the Automaton obeyed its orders and was about to kill the weeping Sally Acorn. Sally pleaded with her eyes for Nicole to stop but she could see it was futile. Nicole was working for Eggman now and she was going to kill her, no ifs or buts about it. But as Nicole prepared to kill Sally, Sonic spin-dashed Nicole in the back and tossed her across the battlefield like mere garbage. The Automaton hurled through the air and crashed head-first on the ground. The impact smashed some of its head and left it looking crumpled, crooked and dented. Another attack like that and it would have come off. Sonic knelt down beside his girlfriend's side. It pained him to see Sally hurt like this, especially since Nicole had done it.

"You alright Sally?" he asked worriedly.

"I feel...terrible..." croaked Sally "Nicole...and Finitevus...beat me up good...and hard."

"I can see that." said Sonic sadly "I tried to help you but Eggman kept getting in the way. Thanks to his stupid life-support mech, he's tough to beat. I'm so sorry I couldn't help Sally."

"It's...OK Sonic." grunted Sally reassuringly "We...have to...get Nicole...back home...so we can...save her...from Eggman's control."

"Well my spin-dash nearly took her head off so I'd best not do it again." said Sonic with concern "I'll grab her and then me, you and Tails will beat it before..."

He was rudely interrupted by a warp ring opening up underneath him and sending him falling away from Sally and back over to where Eggman was. Finitevus had done that of course. The echidna closed up the warp ring after Sonic had been successfully transported back to where Eggman was and he strode up to the weak and helpless Sally. Sally tried to get up but she was still too weak to move. She could only lie there and watch as Finitevus stood over her.

"You will not save Nicole." purred Finitevus darkly "She is Eggman's to control and you will be removed so you can never save her."

But before Finitevus could do anything to Sally, Tails flew up behind him and grabbed him by the cape. The echidna cried out in surprise as Tails tugged on his cape and literally lifted him off the ground by it! Finitevus gagged and croaked as the cape pressed hard against his Adam's apple. Tails strained with the effort as he fought to remain airborne and hold Finitevus both at once.

"I'll keep him busy Sally, you get to Nicole!" cried Tails.

Sally wasn't sure what good getting to Nicole would do but then again, she had gotten her head damaged by Sonic after she'd crashed on the ground so maybe with any luck, Nicole had reverted back to her original self. Sally remembered Sonic telling her how Tails had helped Vanilla get back her freewill while she was a robot, a sharp blow to the head had been enough to turn her back good. Maybe that was the case with Nicole. As Tails carried Finitevus away, Sally slowly pushed herself onto her stomach and crawled towards Nicole. It would take her a while due to her injuries but Sally was not about to let her injuries stop her now. She strained and grunted as she forced her muscles to articulate and make her body move. While she was doing that, Tails carried Finitevus over to Dr. Eggman, who was in battle with Sonic. Sonic spin-dashed at Eggman but Eggman blocked his attack by holding his hand up and letting his hand take the blow for him. It was so fortunate Eggman had such thickly built limbs and that Katherine had picked that to be his life-support mech otherwise Sonic would be flooring him right

now. Sonic growled furiously. He hated it when Eggman's creations didn't break when he hit them, it made Eggman more infuriating to fight. Sonic leaped up into the air and just as he sailed above Eggman, he stomp-kicked the head section of his mech. Eggman staggered but he managed to keep himself standing and he shot a missile at Sonic. Sonic dodged the missile and he spin-dashed Eggman in the side. The top-heaviness of his mech caused him to loose his footing and fall onto his side. Seizing his chance, Tails dropped the flailing Finitevus directly on top of Dr. Eggman. Finitevus tried to get a warp ring out to save himself from the fall but he crashed into Eggman before he had the chance to flick it in the air, dropping the warp ring in the process. Sonic seized it and he activated it. Eggman threw Finitevus off of himself, yelling "Get off!" as he did so and he saw Sonic disappear through Finitevus's warp ring. He reappeared behind Eggman and he spin-dashed him in the back, throwing him across the battlefield and sending him crashing down onto his front with a heavy thud. Sonic chuckled but his chuckle was quickly replaced an "Argh!" as Finitevus booted him in the back of his head and knocked him down onto his hands and knees. Finitevus grabbed his warp ring and he put it back onto his arm before Sonic could get it back. Sonic picked himself up and he lashed out with his foot at Finitevus, the kick aimed squarely at his face. Finitevus grabbed Sonic's foot and sharply twisted it to the side, twisting Sonic around onto his front. Sonic's upper body fell down onto the ground, his chin taking the brunt of the impact. Tails flew in to help Sonic but Finitevus spun around on his heel and swung Sonic into Tails. The hedgehog's body slammed against the fox's and brought him crashing down onto the ground. Finitevus was about to swing Sonic again but Sonic yanked his foot out of Finitevus's grip and smacked his hand with it. Finitevus ignored the pain in his hand and he punched at Sonic. Sonic managed to manoeuvre himself out of the way so Finitevus ended up punching solid ground. Sonic kicked Finitevus in the face and then homing-attacked him in the chest. The echidna hurled backwards and came down with a heavy thud on his back. Sonic was about to attack Finitevus again but Eggman sent him scurrying for cover by firing a missile at him. Sonic only just managed to dodge the missile as it roared like a wild animal towards him. It exploded just inches from his feet, kicking up dirt and gravel as it tore a chunk out of the ground he had just seconds ago been standing on. Sonic turned

around and he ran towards Eggman. Eggman deployed his Gatling guns and he was about to shoot Sonic but Tails put his hands over Eggman's optics, blinding him for long enough to let Sonic attack him. Sonic jumped towards Eggman and he stomp-kicked him, propelling himself away from Eggman and leaving the force of his kick to throw Eggman backwards. Sonic heard a satisfying thud as Eggman landed on his back. Finitevus however sneaked up behind Sonic and he threw his warp ring into the back of Sonic's head like a frisbee. The warp ring pinged off of Sonic's head and made him cry in pain. This distracted him long enough to let Eggman get back up and blast him off his feet with a laser blast. Sonic was tossed backwards as if a giant hand had smacked him but before he could land on the ground, Finitevus used a warp ring to send Sonic flying into Tails from up above. Sonic landed smack bang on top of Tails as if he was a fly swatter squashing a fly against the wall. Tails cried out in pain as he slammed against the ground with Sonic on top of himself. The impact had left Tails feeling winded and he coughed furiously as he tried to get the air back into his lungs. Eggman and Finitevus surrounded the two and they prepared to pummel them both into the ground but Sonic lashed out and pinched Finitevus's cut on his thigh. Finitevus's eyes shot open as pain surged up his thigh like an electrical shock and he bent down to rub his thigh better. Sonic jumped up and uppercut Finitevus in the chin before he could recover. Tails leaped up into the air and he tail-whipped Eggman in the face. Eggman wasn't effected by the blow but Sonic's attack did. He tripped Eggman up with a kick to the legs and brought him crashing down again. Eggman picked himself up only for Sonic to spin-dash him in the back, throwing him towards Finitevus. Finitevus just opened up a warp ring and sent Dr. Eggman hurling through it. Sonic only just had time to realize where it was going to reappear before the warp ring opened up behind him and threw Eggman out straight into him and Tails. It almost felt like being bowled over by a bowling ball as Sonic and Tails were whisked off their feet by the giant mech that housed Dr. Eggman. Eggman picked himself up and chortled at what had happened.

"That was a good tactic Finitevus. Thank you." he crooned.

"Think nothing of it doctor..." said Finitevus sinisterly as Sonic and Tails staggered back onto their feet.

"You know, I liked you two better when you WEREN'T working together!" grumbled Sonic "I'd sooner fight one or the other rather than both of you!"

Eggman and Finitevus sneered triumphantly at Sonic and Tails and they lunged forward for another attack. Sonic and Tails lunged back.

Meanwhile, Sally had made it over to Nicole, the latter still lying on the ground with her smashed up head looking very much lifeless and dead. Sally strained as she lifted her head up and she coughed before she managed to speak.

"Nicole...? Can...you hear me?" she grunted.

The Automaton didn't move for a minute but soon after, it suddenly twitched as if responding to Sally's question. The head's optics were faintly glowing but curiously enough, they were glowing green instead of red. The Automaton sat up, the head still attached thankfully but looking very much like a crumpled tin can sitting on top of a robot's shoulders. Nicole looked over at Sally, the optics fixed on her despite the damages to the head.

"S-S-Sally?" came Nicole's voice, sounding more or less normal again "I-Is that you?"

Sally beamed, well tried to beam but her face strained with the effort so she could only manage a slight smile. Her theory had been correct. The damage done to Nicole's head had been enough to weaken Eggman's programming and allow her to gain control! She was back on the heroes's side again!

"Yes Nicole...it's me...cough, cough, cough!" Sally croaked weakly "I'm...here for you..."

"Oh my god! What have I done to you?!" wailed Nicole, scurrying over to Sally and placing her metal hands on her friend's battered body "Oh Sally, I'm so sorry this happened! I tried my best to fight Eggman's control but I couldn't! I was too weak! Please, please, PLEASE forgive me Sally! I didn't want to beat you up, I really didn't!"

"Nicole...it doesn't matter...you're back with us...now." said Sally with a feeble smile "You...don't have...to serve...Eggman...anymore."

"I know, but still I apologize for what I did." said Nicole sadly "When we get home, I want to get out of this body and back into my computer! I don't want to have a new body anymore, it'll be a painful reminder of what I've done to you and what I almost did to Tails."

"Nicole...it's fine. Stop...beating yourself about it." said Sally softly "It...was not...your fault. It's...Eggman's fault...and now...you can make him...pay for it."

"With my head just about destroyed, I don't think that's a good idea." said Nicole worriedly "If it falls off, my body will be useless for I won't be able to control it without its head."

"Good...idea. It'll be best...to get you back home." said Sally.

Nicole nodded and she helped Sally up onto her feet. Pulling Sally's arm around her shoulder and putting a hand around Sally's waist, Nicole helped Sally to limp towards the battle with Sonic, Tails and the two doctors. Sonic saw the girls coming and he sped off away from Eggman and Finitevus with Tails flying after him.

"Sally! Is Nicole on our side again?" asked Sonic hopefully as he approached the girls.

"Yes." croaked Sally "The damage to...her head...was enough for...Nicole to regain...control."

"Yes!" cried Tails happily "Now let's get outta here before anything else happens!"

Dr. Eggman looked like his life support mech was about to have a mechanical breakdown upon hearing this. Nicole had been able to break through his coding and regain control of herself?! He would not let this humiliation go unnoticed! Nobody dared to break free of his control and get away with it! Eggman aimed his arm at the Royal Fighters and deployed a missile, ready for launch.

"You filthy rats won't leave here alive!" he bellowed "Especially Nicole!"

Without another word...he fired a missile at the Royal Fighters. The missile spat out of its nozzle like a poisoned dart and it rocketed through the air, quickly closing the distance between it and the heroes. Nicole handed Sally over to Sonic and she ran towards the missile. Sally cried out in horror as Nicole did what was essentially a suicidal run in.

"NICOLE NO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!" she screeched, her eyes already streaming with tears.

Nicole ignored Sally and she held her arms up in an X-shape. The two forcefields around her arms were already deployed but Nicole did something incredible. She managed to extend the forcefields so that they now completely shielded her. Luckily for her, Eggman hadn't put a limit on how big the forcefields could be. When she had been evil for Eggman, she had fought hard to keep the Automaton from making its forcefields any bigger to help the heroes in their battle earlier. Now she was allowing the forcefields to grow as big as they needed to be. But would they be enough to block a missile? It was too late to wonder now for the missile smashed against her forcefields and exploded into a terrific fist of fire and smoke. It was like a giant punch had slammed against her, said punch being a fist made of an explosion. Nicole was thrown backwards from the force of the explosion, her forcefields switching off as she was tossed away and leaving her body vulnerable to the aftershock. The Automaton's body was not built to withstand the aftershock of a missile explosion so the body ended up shattering to pieces as it hit the ground just before Sonic, Sally and Tails. The head, which had been horrifically damaged earlier already, was ironically enough the most intact part of the Automaton now. It sat forlornly at Sally's feet, optics blank and lifeless. It was nothing more than a crumpled piece of metal that resembled a head. The body was worst, scattered across the ground in a thousand pieces and useless to anyone. Sally threw herself onto her knees and she picked up the Automaton head, going hysterical with shock.

"NOOOOO! NICOLE!" she howled as tears streamed down her face like a pair of waterfalls.

"My gosh...she just...sacrificed herself to save us!" blurted Sonic, feeling sorry for his girlfriend "That was very gutsy of her.

Nicole...truly was one brave woman." he said solemnly.

"Indeed...pity she's dead now." said Tails, shedding tears of his own for poor Sally.

As for Eggman and Finitevus, they were gob smacked at the fact Nicole had managed to block a missile blow and only lose herself in the process. They looked at each other as if wondering what to do. They then turned back towards the Mobians only to see that Sonic had picked up the howling Sally, who was clutching the Automaton's head to her chest as if her life depended on it, and Tails had taken flight with a simple twirl of his twin tails.

"You'll pay for this Eggman!" snarled Sonic "If Nicole's truly gone then mark my words, you will PAY!"

He raised his fist as if to further emphasize his point before running off and leaving the two villains in the dust. Tails flew after him, desperate to get far away from Eggman and Finitevus as quickly as possible. Eggman and Finitevus weren't sure whether they should stop them or not. After a while, Eggman made up his decision.

"Well, at least I got one of them." he said casually "I bet that'll crush Sally's spirit oh most horribly and I bet Sonic will be plenty furious with this. We can use this to our advantage...if Sonic's emotionally troubled then he will falter in battle and..."

"Don't he so confident Eggman." interrupted Finitevus "A vengeful, angry person can be very dangerous you know. You might be sealing your own grave with this recent out turn. And what if Nicole's not even dead?"

"You heard Sally howling her heart out, Nicole's definitely had it." crowed Eggman.

"I'm not so sure about that. The head might still contain her and might still be functional enough for her to be alive." warned Finitevus.

"So what if it is?" sneered Eggman "Nicole won't be of any use to the Royal Fighters stuck inside a crumpled up Automaton head!

Don't worry so much Finitevus and enjoy our victory today!" he said in his usual brash attitude.

"Boy are you so illogical..." muttered Finitevus.

"What was that?!" snarled Eggman furiously.

Finitevus ignored Eggman and he summoned a warp ring to his hand. He tossed it over his shoulder and he disappeared through it, leaving Dr. Eggman alone in the plains to just get mad over the fact Finitevus had just blatantly left him behind like this.

"Oy! Come back here at once Finitevus!" roared Eggman, jumping up and down like an angry flea.

The warp ring had already closed before he said that so Finitevus didn't even hear him. He had gone back to his hideout and was going to leave Eggman to make a fool of himself until he was next needed in his presence...

Back in New Mobotropolis, Sonic and Tails had taken Sally and Nicole straight into Royal HQ and Tails had set the crumpled head down onto the desk as if ready to study it. Sonic had his arms comfortingly around Sally, the squirrel still sobbing as she feared the worst about her friend. She assumed Nicole was gone for good but Tails remained more optimistic. He was sure that Nicole could be saved so he had taken the head from her and was now observing it. It didn't look too good but considering the head's damage and Nicole was still functional with it in its current condition, it didn't necessarily mean Nicole was dead.

"Well?" asked Sonic with concern.

"I think Nicole might still be alive." said Tails "Most of my thoughts are admittedly gut instinct but I am dead sure Nicole can be saved. Maybe some remains of her data are still in the head and we just need to move her into something more functional. The head might be too damaged for her to properly work."

"But what can we use?" asked Sally between sobs "Her handheld

computer's been lost hasn't it?"

"It has, Finitevus destroyed it." said Tails grimly "But we have an even bigger and better computer for her to take refuge in..."

He smiled brightly a she glanced over at the elephant in the room...Royal HQ's main computer monitor. Sonic and Sally looked over at the giant computer monitor and they saw what Tails was on to.

"Good idea Tails." said Sonic with a wink.

"But...Nicole will just feel trapped again." muttered Sally "Especially since this computer isn't portable."

"It'll have to do until we make a new handheld computer for her." said Tails "Besides, she'll still be able to use the holo projectors to appear around New Mobotropolis. She'll have the freedom I gave her before this happened, no worries."

"OK then. Let's hope this works." said Sonic, crossing his fingers "I don't want Sally to be sad and I don't want to lose Nicole since losing Nicole will make her very sad."

"I hope it works too." said Tails, crossing his fingers too.

He took out a wire that had USB links at each end and he connected the wire to the Automaton's head. He took the head over to the computer and he plugged the other end of the wire into it. Now Tails, still holding the head in his hands, bit his lip nervously as he waited for something to happen. Sally watched too, clutching her heart as if it was about to explode into a million pieces. Several minutes passed and it seemed like nothing was happening. The screen wasn't doing anything and the head wasn't showing any signs of life. Tails began to fear the worst. Maybe he had been too hopeful and Nicole truly was gone. Sally was about ready to wail again. Then suddenly, the screen flashed into life and the words "Body transfer commencing" flashed on the screen like a neon-lit sign. Tails almost dropped the head in excitement. If there was a body transfer happening then...

"YES! YES! She's alive! Look! She's transferring from the head into the computer!" screamed Tails delightedly.

"Oh thank goodness!" cried Sally, hugging Sonic tightly "Nicole's alive! What a lucky break for us!"

"You can say that again Sally." said Sonic, hugging her back.

The Mobians watched as the body transfer finished and the screen suddenly lit up with Nicole's beautiful smiling face looking at her friends delightedly.

"Hello my friends." she said "It is good to be back home and it's good to still be alive."

"Nicole! We thought we'd lost you!" shrieked Sally hysterically "When you ran in to stop the missile, I thought you was going to die!"

"I nearly did." said Nicole sadly "The head was only just enough to keep me alive. The brain section was the only part of the head that was still functional and I resided in there until further notice. I tried to tell you all I was alive but the optics wouldn't light up and my voice was silent. I'm so sorry for the scare everybody, I was only trying to protect you all..."

"Nicole, don't be sorry for saving our lives." said Sonic "You have just proven yourself one of our greatest heroes. Your body maybe gone but you've proven you don't need a body to be amazing. All you needed was a strong will and a good heart. Nicole, you are way past cool." he finished with a wink.

Sonic could swear that he saw Nicole's digital face blushing after he said that to him. The blush quickly faded and Nicole grinned from ear to ear.

"Thank you Sonic." she said "And you know what? I think I'm going to get used to being a computer after all. After all, I don't need my body just to be me. I have everything I need to be even if I am just digital codes and programme memory. I have my free will, my soul and most importantly...my friends. I can't thank you enough for

coming to save me and trying to make my life easier despite my big change."

"Nicole, you are welcome and don't you forget it." said Sally, placing her hands against the screen and smiling at Nicole "And I'm so glad that you accept your new life now."

"Thanks Sally." said Nicole happily "It's amazing it took me a near-death experience and corruption at Eggman's hands to learn this lesson but never mind. Now then..."

With a flourish, Nicole's face disappeared from the computer screen and then suddenly, Nicole's holographic avatar appeared out of thin air and stood proudly before Sonic, Tails and Sally with a beautiful smile on her pixelated face.

"How about a group hug?" she asked "Thanks to Tails's genius, I'm still able to do that at least."

Sonic, Tails and Sally all gathered around Nicole and hugged her in unison. Nicole returned the hug, beaming with pride at her friends. Nicole didn't need her body anymore, nor did she need a body of any sort at all. Nicole had everything she could need and she would never lose sight of it. What she truly needed...was her friends and she wouldn't swap them for anything in the world. Not even a new body...

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front***

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 19: Rise of a Warrior Princess***

Aww...I love a happy ending. ^^

Well that's it for this story arc. Come back soon for we get a

stand-alone chapter and it's all about Sora Prower. And she's a "Number 1: Target"...wonder what Ruben will think to that? Don't miss it...

Sora Prower: Number 1 Target

Story 180: Sora Prower: Number 1 Target

"OK Eggman, what are you up to now?" mused Sora Prower as she watched the Egg-Pawns marching back and forth, carrying iron work and steel girders back and forth as they paced around the plains of Megapolis's Northern Border.

Dr. Eggman, the enemy of Mobius, had a grand plan and it involved building fake fuelling stations for his next big vessel, the Death Egg, so he could slow down the Royal Fighters and finish his Death Egg in peace and once the vessel launched into the sky, it was curtains for everyone on Mobius. Sora of course, didn't know this but she was here to find out what Eggman was planning now. After the recent fiasco with Nicole yesterday, Sally Acorn was anxious about Eggman and wondered if he was planning to try and corrupt her again so of course, her first choice for such a mission was the super-sleuth vixen Sora Prower. Tails, her brother, had been sceptical about sending Sora since he worried she'd get caught like he did but Sora had insisted to him that she was OK and that she would be fine. So Sora had left for Megapolis, piloting a hover saucer to help get her there as quickly as possible and now she had arrived at the site of the Egg-Bunker, she took shelter behind a rock and watched as a rather interesting yet puzzling scene unfolded before her. the Egg-Pawns were busy at work on something. They were cutting down chunks of metal and measuring the size of it, lifting the bars up and forming a structure of some kind and busy welding and hammering away. They were making something that was for sure. But what? What were they making? Sora had to find out. After all, that's why she was here. Sora took her camera-orb off her belt and she pointed it at the working Egg-Pawns. She took pictures of the Egg-Pawns and their work. The pictures would give the Royal Fighters some idea on what Eggman was up to and whatever his plan was, they would stop it before Eggman could use this building for anything. Didn't matter what it was for as long as he couldn't use it. It was better if they didn't know what it was for and Eggman couldn't use it then not knowing what it was for and

Eggman using it. Yet Sora still wanted to know what Eggman was building so she stuck around for a time, waiting for something to happen.

"OK, there's some kind of construction work going off. Tells me there's building work going on but not what it's for." she mused "What is Eggman's plan?"

It seemed she'd get the answer for a loud noise began to pierce through the terrain like a loud scream breaking the silence. Sora's head snapped around as she looked at where the noise had come from. Her eyes fixed on the ground that seemed to be opening up from a few meters away from the building site. Sora knew what was happening. Eggman was coming out of his little hiding hole and he was going to inspect the progress of whatever it was his robots were building. Sora stood by and watched silently as Dr. Eggman's life support mech nosily walked out from the Egg-Bunker and entered the upper surface of the world above. Dr. Finitevus was walking behind him and looking like he wished he was somewhere else. That's probably because he does wish he was somewhere else. He had plans of his own and had been formulating his own secret army while also planning to sabotage Eggman from within. He had been interrupted once again for he had to see what Eggman was doing and keep up his act. After all, it was compulsory that Eggman suspected nothing of his planned betrayal. He had to remain completely in the dark and so far, it looked like it was working. Eggman didn't suspect a thing about Finitevus and continued to foolishly believe the albino echidna was still loyal to him. This foolishness would end up bringing Eggman down one day and Finitevus longed to see it happen. Sora read Finitevus's face and she instantly realized he didn't look too happy.

"Hmm…that face Finitevus has suggests he's not all that loyal." she murmured "What's his game I wonder?"

Maybe she could find out something about Finitevus as well as Eggman. After she'd finished with Eggman, she could spy on Finitevus too and see what he might be up to. For now, she focused on Eggman and watched as he loudly announced to his workers. It was clear that he knew nothing about keeping his voice down.

"Hurry up Egg-Pawns! The Death Egg's refuelling station must be completed in time!" he barked, shaking his arms so much that Sora swore they'd detach themselves from his shoulders "How will my Death Egg fly if there's nothing to refuel it with?! I sure hope the other groups I've sent around Mobius are progressing faster than you lot are!"

Sora's heart skipped a couple of beats before resuming its natural rhythm. Death Egg? Refuelling station? Other groups around Mobius? Eggman must be planning something big. Was this Death Egg a new ship? If refuelling stations were being built then it had to be a vehicle of some kind and Eggman LOVED to build giant ships that could fly through the sky and spell doom on anyone who saw them. Sora had found out Eggman's evil plan and she had to inform the Royal Fighters about it. But she needed to know where on Mobius the other groups of Egg-Pawns had been sent. Where on Mobius had Eggman decided to send some Egg-Pawns to build refuelling stations? She already knew where one was, and that was right here in front of her but where were the others being built? She had to find out although it was risky to try and find out information like that. She'd be plain lucky if Eggman even decided to conveniently mention the locations out loud for her but that was hoping too much. Sora remained hiding behind the rock and continued to watch and listen. As Eggman barked at the Egg-Pawns, Finitevus seemed to be looking around is if hoping to escape from Eggman as quickly as possible and he was trying to determine the best route. Not that he'd need to considering his warp rings. Sora observed his body-language. She was getting suspicions about Finitevus by the second. What was up with him? For someone who willingly allied with Eggman he didn't seem awfully happy. This was something Sora would have to find out one day. It could be important just like finding out what Eggman was planning was important. Finitevus glanced back at Eggman, a nasty scowl on his face that suggested he was disgusted he had to so much as look at Eggman.

"Do you really thinking barking like a wild dog is going to make your junk pile robots work any faster?" he growled, clearly sounding irritated "They work as fast as they're possibly capable of working. Shouting isn't going to make them move faster!"

"It will since they know what happens if they progress too slowly!" snapped Eggman "I destroy them all and make replacements and I doubt the Egg-Pawns will like that at all!"

"It's a miracle they haven't turned on you yet Eggman." crooned Finitevus, a dry smirk spreading across his slimy lips and catching Sora's attention "The way you treat them, one would think they'd be plotting your downfall or something."

"No robot will ever betray me as long as I have total control over them and I reside in this awesome mech!" barked Eggman furiously "Metal Sonic and Alonzo may have turned on me but that was because I was an idiot and gave them freewill! Now none of my robots have freewill, they will not be able to turn on me!"

"A very good idea if I say so myself." purred Finitevus "It's what I would have done too…"

He suddenly paused and blinked as a glistening shine from the sun reflected off of something and hit his eye. Finitevus kept his eye closed for a minute and then looked in the direction that the shine had come from. He could see a speck of sunlight reflecting off of a shiny surface behind a rock. He couldn't see what it was but he knew that it meant somebody was here. Sora watched Finitevus and she began to feel nervous. Had he spotted him? If so then how? She'd been so careful! There was no way he could have spotted her! Then Sora remembered. She was still holding her camera orb. She'd forgotten to put it away and now the sun was glistening off of its polished, metal surface. It might have caught Finitevus's attention for the echidna seemed to be glancing in her direction. Sora put her camera orb back on her belt and pressed her back firmly against the rock.

Please don't look for me! she hissed in her head *Dismiss it as your imagination! Go on as normal! Please don't look for me!*

Eggman noticed Finitevus was looking at something and he leaned over by his head.

"Finitevus? What is it?" he asked.

"I think I saw something over there." mused Finitevus quietly "Stay there, I'll check it out."

With that said, he opened up a warp ring and warped himself over from where he was standing over to Sora's hiding place. Sora let out a frightened scream as she saw Finitevus coming out of the warp ring and standing before her with a menacing look in his eyes. She thought her heart was going to stop beating in fear. She pressed herself against the rock as hard as she could. Any harder and she might somehow shift it. Finitevus rubbed his hands evilly.

"Well, well, well…it appears we have a spy in the works." he crooned darkly "Oh dear, oh dear. Whatever shall I do about this?"

"P-please, don't hurt me!" whimpered Sora, hoping her frightened girl act would deter Finitevus somehow "I-I m-mean you n-no harm! I-I'm n-not doing anything w-wrong!"

"Don't lie to me you little brat." snarled Finitevus, grabbing Sora by the neck and hoisting her off the ground as if she weighed as much as a sack of feathers "You're spying on me and Eggman! How much do you know?" he demanded.

"Go to hell!" snarled Sora, gritting her teeth furiously.

"I might do just that but you're going there before I am." said Finitevus coldly, tightening his grip on Sora's neck.

Sora fought desperately for breath as her air supply began to deplete. Finitevus was going to choke her to death and if she didn't escape now, he'd surely finish her off. But Sora had been in situations like this before and had gotten out of them so she knew exactly what to do. Sora reached onto her utility belt and whipped out her spray can. She aimed the can at Finitevus's eyes. Unfortunately, Finitevus knew what she was doing and he closed his eyes as Sora sprayed. But Sora had a backup plan, something she was often very good at coming up with. While Finitevus had his eyes closed, she kicked him in the gut and made the echidna gasp in astonishment as the air in his lungs was suddenly kicked out of him. His grip loosened on Sora's neck, enough for the vixen to wiggle free and sock him in the jaw. Finitevus rubbed his jaw better and he

opened his eyes…only for Sora to spray them with her spray can. Finitevus screamed a pained scream as the irritable substance bit at his eyes like stinging hornets and he clutched them as if they were going to melt out of their sockets. Sora turned and ran as fast as she could. Unfortunately, Eggman spotted her and he deployed his Gatling gun from the mech's wrist section.

"A Royal Fighter! And it's that blue fox that recently joined them!" he blurted.

The barrel spun around in his wrist and spat out a shower of bullets that whizzed towards Sora, cleaving through the air that hung in the distance between them. Sora yelped and threw herself onto the ground as the bullets shot over her head. She picked herself up and ran on again. Eggman took to the air, activating the rockets in the mech's back and shooting into the air like a rocket. Sora was prepared for that much to Eggman's dismay. She took an orb off her belt and threw it at Eggman. After the multi-verse crisis had ended, she had managed to get some more Mega Muck and had now thrown an orb full of the stuff at him. The orb exploded and covered Eggman with a wave of purple sticky goo that weighed him down and brought him crashing onto the ground. The Mega Muck then clung to the ground like a board of wood that had been nailed down and held Eggman firmly in place. Eggman tried as hard as he could to break out of the Mega Muck but it was much too sticky for him. It held firm and Eggman couldn't move. Whooping with joy, Sora leaped into her parked hover saucer and she started it up immediately.

"Whew, I thought I was a goner for a moment!" she gasped as the saucer kicked into gear and she floored the acceleration pedal.

The saucer jerked violently as it hurled forward and then sped off through the plains, whipping up a cloud of dust that seemed to follow it as it sped along the terrain. Finitevus watched Sora escape with despair and he growled angrily. He summoned a warp ring and he disappeared through it, leaving Dr. Eggman stuck in the Mega Muck. Eggman kept on squirming until finally, he'd had enough of trying and he bellowed as loud as he could.

"OY! EGG-PAWNS! DON'T STAND THERE AND LOOK STUPID!

GET ME OUT OF THIS BLASTED GOO!"

The Egg-Pawns obeyed instantly and they ran over to Dr. Eggman to see what they could do about the Mega Muck. Eggman growled furiously. Sora had escaped and she likely knew way too much. He would have to take her down and he had a feeling Finitevus had already gone to do just that given he'd gone without him. He was likely already in New Mobotropolis and waiting to ambush her now…

Back in New Mobotropolis, Sora had arrived back at the city and had charged straight into Royal HQ without a moment's hesitance. The vixen frantically darted past the small houses and up towards the hill where Royal HQ proudly stood beside the equally as proud looking Castle Acorn. She ran into the lab, where Sonic the Hedgehog, Sally Acorn, Tails the Fox and Ruben the Water Panther were waiting for her and she paused for a moment to catch her breath. The four Mobians in the lab read Sora's body language and assumed she had just made it out by the skin of her teeth, something they were very used to in this line of duty and business.

"Sora, you look flushed. What happened?" asked Sally.

"Did Eggman nearly get you or something?" asked Ruben worriedly, putting his hands on Sora's shoulders.

"Very nearly…pant…pant…" gasped Sora, her hand over her chest as she tried to regain her breath "I got…spotted and Finitevus and Eggman…tried to kill me."

"Oh my gosh!" cried Tails in alarm "I knew you shouldn't have gone alone big sister! You could have gotten killed out there!"

"Little brother, don't worry about it." said Sora casually "I'm a spy, I'm used to nearly getting killed you know."

"I know Sora but you need to be more careful." said Tails, embracing his sister tenderly "I don't want to lose you Sora. You're the only family I have left and after not knowing you for eight years, I can't afford to lose you."

"Aww…that's so sweet Tails." said Sora, hugging him back "You're such a wonderful brother to me. And I think you're right anyway, I do need to be more careful. My luck will run out one of these days. Nobody stays lucky forever."

"Indeed." said Tails "So Sora, did you find anything out while you was in Megapolis?"

"I sure did Tails." said Sora, letting go of Tails and walking up towards Royal HQ's biggest computer monitor "Nicole, please could you upload some photos I took on my camera orb so I can show my friends what I've found out?"

The screen came into life and Nicole's lovely face appeared on the screen, smiling sweetly at her friends. It had taken her a while but she was becoming accustomed to life as a computer programme at last.

"Of course Sora." said Nicole.

With that said, a little drive opened up under the computer and Sora put her camera orb into the drive. The drive retracted back into its base and Nicole disappeared from the screen as Sora's latest photos appeared in her place. The Royal Fighters looked at the photos and thought about what they were looking at.

"Looks like old Egg-head's building something again." said Sonic casually "What is it? Is he rebuilding Robotropolis? If so, it's taken him long enough. It's been destroyed for goodness knows how long now!"

"It's not a city they're building, it's a refuelling station." explained Sora "Eggman is building refuelling stations for a new ship he's planning to launch. He calls it the "Death Egg" and given the supposed, estimated size of the station, it's going to be a big ship."

Sonic's first reaction was to slap his knee and burst out laughing as if Sora had told him an extremely funny joke. He clutched his sides as he laughed out loud.

"The Death Egg?! Ha, ha, ha, ha, haaaaa! That's the corniest name

I've EVER heard for a ship! Ha, ha, ha, ha! Is Eggman seriously running out of cool names for his toys now?! Ha, ha, ha, ha, haaaaa!"

Sonic was laughing so hard that he nearly fell over onto his side in hysterical laughter. He managed to contain himself at last but to his dismay, he seemed to be the only one who found that funny. Nobody else was laughing with him. Sally was fixed on the photos as if trying to find some kind of hidden message in them.

"Refuelling stations for a big ship…this is serious." murmured Sally "Especially if the ship's going to be a big one. We've dealt with big ships before but we can't let Eggman launch his Death Egg. We have to destroy those stations. Sora, how many are there or is this the only one?"

"Eggman said he'd sent more groups of Egg-Pawns out into the world to build refuelling stations." explained Sora "Makes sense since he'll have a lot of places for an emergency stop in that case. I'm sorry to say that I didn't find out where the other stations are being built or how many there are."

"That does make things difficult." sighed Sally "We could be on a wild goose chase looking for the other stations. It'd be better if we found out where the other stations are being set up. At least we know where one of them's being set-up. We'll set out to destroy the Megapolis refuelling station and then find out where the other stations are being set up. We cannot let Eggman use those stations. Without refuelling stations, he can't fuel up his so-called "Death Egg" should he run out."

"I'm sure he's got a way of refuelling in his bunker but it won't do him any good if he's just flying along and he runs out of fuel." said Ruben "If he's too far away from the Egg-Bunker and all his stations are down, he's mincemeat."

"Exactly." said Sally with a rather lovely yet determined looking smile on her face "Me, Sonic and Tails will bring down that first station. Since the construction's not been going on for long, we'll have an easier time taking it down."

"You bet Sally!" cried Sonic happily "Come on then Sally and Tails, let's bust down a refuelling station!" he added with a cracking of his knuckles.

"Wait, are me and Ruben not coming with you?" asked Sora.

"I think since Eggman and Finitevus apparently spotted you, it would be best to keep out of their way." said Sally softly "You'll be safe here and neither of them will get you with Nicole defending the city. Plus I think Ruben would very much like to contribute to your protection." she added, winking at Ruben.

Ruben seemed happy to hear this, probably because it meant he could spend time with Sora and maybe at long last, reveal his crush he had on her. Sora however appeared to take offence to this idea.

"With all due respect your majesty, I'm not going to sit here and hide like a coward." she said sternly "Who cares if Eggman and Finitevus know I spied on them? With you, Sonic and Tails on the battlefield, they won't get anywhere near me."

"Sora, you are staying here and that is final." said Sally coldly "Do not make me have to punish you for disobeying orders. Is that clear?"

"Yes Sally." muttered Sora bitterly, folding her arms and scowling at Sally "Although do take in mind Finitevus has those warp rings of his and he HAS been in New Mobotropolis before." she noted "He can just warp in here and try to kill me anyway. I'm not safe here after all."

Sally looked taken aback to hear this. How did she not thing of that herself? Sora had a brilliant point and Sally couldn't possibly argue with her logic. Although Sally had a back up plan for that.

"Well noted Sora." said Sally smoothly "Which is why I suggest Ruben take you to the GreatForest and hide there until we come back. If Finitevus comes to the city, he'll find you gone and he can't possibly warp to your location if he doesn't know where you are. He'll be trying to find a needle in a haystack. Or in this case, a vixen cub in a big round world."

Sora looked defeated and she was about to object but she knew that she was fighting a losing battle. Sally did have a point and as she said to Tails, her luck would run out eventually so it would be best to make sure that Eggman or Finitevus wouldn't be able to kill her if they were thinking of trying such a thing. Hiding was a good option now and the GreatForest would be a good place to hide. Sora swallowed as if literally swallowing her pride and she sighed.

"Very well your majesty." she murmured "I'll do just that. At least you're letting Ruben keep me company, he's the first person I'd want to go into hiding with other than Tails." she added with a sweet smile.

Ruben grinned a Cheshire Cat grin as he heard Sora say that. It was quite clear she did have a thing for him so maybe he'd be lucky when he revealed to Sora that he loved her. Happy that business was settled, Sally turned to go.

"That's good to hear." she said "Come on Sonic and Tails, it's time to wreck Eggman's upcoming refuelling station."

Sonic and Tails followed Sally as she left the room. Ruben and Sora waited until they left Royal HQ before looking at each other and Ruben extending his arm out for Sora.

"So, shall we go to the Great Forest?" He asked "Maybe me and you could play in the Lake of Rings together."

"Sure why not cute stuff?" said Sora, wrapping her arm around Ruben's as if she was a fair lady being escorted by an equally as fair gentleman "I love swimming. It'll be twice as fun with you water boy."

Ruben beamed like a happy bouncing lamb and he and Sora walked out of Royal HQ to go to the Great Forest. Unfortunately, their hiding place wouldn't be so secret for the moment they left the building, Dr. Finitevus emerged from a nearby closet. He had been listening to the entire conversation from outside the lab and had hidden in a closet when the Royal Fighters prepared to go. Now Sora and Ruben were off, he summoned a warp ring and warped himself back into the Megapolis laboratory he had taken refuge in to secretly formulate his Dark Armada. Upon arrival, he saw Scourge the

Hedgehog, Fiona Fox and Ravage Bloodfang all standing around looking bored and like they wished something would happen already. The three looked at the arriving Finitevus and seemed strangely happy to see him. Maybe because something was finally going to happen and chase the boredom away.

"Yo doc, is something finally going to happen?" asked Scourge "I'm dying of boredom here!"

"Well don't arrange your funeral just yet for something interesting is going to happen." said Finitevus darkly.

"That's the best news I've heard all day." said Fiona with sigh "So what's happening tall, dark and creepy-as-all-heck?"

"I'd prefer just plain old "Dr. Finitevus" thank you." muttered Finitevus "Anyway, the Royal Fighter known as Sora Prower has been caught red-handed spying on me and Dr. Eggman and she unfortunately managed to elude us and flee back to New Mobotropolis."

"I find that hard to believe." said Fiona casually.

"She is a spy don't forget so she's bound to have some surprises in store." said Finitevus "Anyway, Sonic, Sally and Tails are on their way to destroy Eggman's fake refuelling station in the Northern Border of Megapolis. To keep Sora safe in the event that me and Eggman come after her, she's sent Sora to hide in the Great Forest. She and that water panther Ruben are going to the Lake of Rings in particular. I want you and Scourge to go into the Great Forest and kill her."

"Dude, you didn't even need to ask." purred Scourge "The opportunity to kill Sonic or any of his lame-ass friends is always something I'm happy to do."

"Why do you want us to kill Sora?" asked Fiona "I mean, she doesn't know about the Dark Armada or your plans, she's focused on Eggman isn't she?"

"She is but what if she starts getting a little too nosy and ends up

taking interest in me?" noted Finitevus "She could spy on me and find out what I'm up to and then the Dark Armada will be jeopardized before we can even begin our plans! Sora must not be allowed to live for our own good! Do you understand?"

"Totally." said Fiona.

"Good." said Finitevus "As for the kill, you will take this rifle…"

He paused as he walked over to a nearby cabinet that just sat forlornly in the corner of the room and opened it. Inside the cabinet was a long barrelled rifle that clearly looked like the kind of rifle an assassin would use. It as sleek, silver in colour and had an elemental of danger to it. Finitevus handed Fiona the rifle and the vixen clocked it. She smiled as if pleased to be holding the rifle in her hands.

"Oooh, this'll get the job done nicely." purred Fiona happily.

"Indeed it will my dear." said Finitevus "But in case it doesn't, I won't you to take these as well…"

He reached into his cloak pocket and handed Fiona two blue wristbands. Fiona took the wrist bands and she gasped in surprise.

"My gosh, they're Sally's wrist blades!" she cried out in alarm "How did you get these from her?"

"I am a deadly opponent in battle don't forget." crowed Finitevus "Remember, to activate them you have to clench your fists very tightly and to deactivate them, clench them again. I know this thanks to watching Sally use them. I'm sure you'll put them to great use." he added with a dark tone that seemed to accompany his words flawlessly.

"I will indeed." said Fiona "And if I don't get the kid then Scourge will. I'm sure he can break a few bones of hers."

"I'll break every bone in her body if I have to." laughed Scourge evilly "Come on Fiona, let's go kill that spy!"

Finitevus opened up a warp ring that led to the Great Forest and he

stepped aside as Scourge and Fiona ran through the warp ring. The two would find a good hiding spot near the Lake of Rings and then make the kill. Finitevus smiled a demon's smile as Scourge and Fiona vanished through the warp ring. Sora had spied on Eggman for the last time…

Meanwhile in the Great Forest, Ruben and Sora had arrived at the Lake of the Rings. Before going in for a swim, Sora took off her utility belt and lay it down on the bank of the lake since it wasn't a wise idea to take a belt full of gadgets into a lake. She removed her hair bobble too, allowing her lovely lavender hair to fall down behind her shoulders like it naturally would do. Ruben stared hard at Sora's hair. He'd never seen it down before, only in a ponytail and he had to admit, Sora looked very cute with her hair down. Maybe she'd keep it like that more often. Now her belt and hair bobble was removed, Sora and Ruben both dived into the water, Ruben first and then Sora following afterwards. They both made some terrific splashes as they entered the lovely cool water. They both came up to surface and laughed like happy little children playing in their back garden paddling pool. Sora threw water into the air and giggled merrily.

"Ah I feel like a kid again!" she squealed excitedly "I haven't been swimming for a while, I used to do a lot of it when I was younger! Although most of it was training for my eventual career as a super spy, I didn't often get to swim for fun."

"Well you can swim for all the fun in the world right now darling." said Ruben, lying on his back and doing some back strokes across the water, his arms carrying him along as he moved them in circular motions and accompanied his paddling legs.

"I bet it's going to be very fun with a water panther swimming with me." laughed Sora, swimming after Ruben in a breast stroke motion.

"Believe me Sora, you're in for a lot of fun now I'm in the water with you." chuckled Ruben.

It felt strange to Ruben how he didn't seem so shy about talking or

even interacting with Sora. Maybe his confidence was building up at long last and he'd finally get the courage to say those three words he was dying to say to Sora. First, he'd play a bit and then give it a shot. Ruben lifted himself upwards so he was back floating upright in the water while Sora continued to swim towards him. Just as Sora reached him, Ruben playfully swiped at the water and sent a wave of water whooshing over Sora's face. Sora shielded herself with her arms as the water hit her.

"Oy! That wasn't fair!" she playfully whined at Ruben.

"There are no rules in a water fight except have fun." laughed Ruben, placing his hands together and pushing them through the water palms first.

The flat palms of his hands caused the water to build up into a wave that swept over Sora, drenching her hair and causing it to stick to her head. Sora brushed her hair out of her eyes and she laughed at Ruben.

"OK wise guy, let's see how YOU like it!" she chortled.

She placed her hands together and pushed them through the water, sending a wave of water whooshing into Ruben's face. Ruben could tell Sora had been swimming before for that was a pretty good wave she did. Laughing heartily, Ruben was about to send another wave over Sora only to see that the vixen had disappeared. Ruben looked around wildly, wondering where Sora had gone. Then he felt a pair of hands close around his ankles. Ruben yelped in fright and began to splash around frantically only to then realize who had done it. Sora came up to the surface, her face the embodiment of joy as she laughed at Ruben's reaction. Ruben was happy to hear Sora laughing so much, she had a very cute laugh in his opinion. Ruben smiled mischievously at Sora and then he lunged forward and grabbed her by the shoulders. Sora only just had time to yelp in surprise before she and Ruben both submerged under the water. They remained under for a while before Ruben let Sora go and swam back up to the surface. Sora however got a mouthful of water before she emerged from under the water. Ruben noticed that Sora's cheeks suddenly seemed puffier than before and before he could say anything, Sora squirted him in the face with the water she

had in her mouth. Ruben shook his head and then started throwing water at Sora. Sora threw water back at him and the two ended up throwing water at each other back and forth as furiously as possible. Ruben however decided to show why a water panther will always win the fight. He pointed his fingers at Sora and let her have it with a jet of water from each digit. Sora was drenched without mercy and the vixen tried hard to fight her way through the water jets. Ruben stopped squirting her and let Sora have a minute to catch her breath as she coughed and spluttered. Sora looked at Ruben with a childish smile on her face.

"That's totally unfair you know! I don't have water powers!" she giggled "You pretty much win by default!"

"I probably do." chuckled Ruben "I think that's enough water fighting now."

"Yeah, we'll call it a draw." Sora decided, swimming up to Ruben.

"That sounds fair." said Ruben brightly as Sora came up to him.

They were in a shallow part of the lake so the two could stand up in the water and face each other. The water came up to their chests, leaving only their heads and shoulders above the water. The two just stood in front of each other, looking into each others eyes and smiling at each other. Ruben started to blush but he fought to keep himself from going crazy with embarrassment. It had never occurred to him that Sora had such beautiful eyes before. As he stared into her green eyes, he found himself almost mesmerized by their beauty. Like a pair of gleaming emeralds he thought. Sora's grin broadened.

"Hee, hee, are you blushing cute stuff?" she taunted cheerily.

"N-no." said Ruben feebly "I was merely admiring your beautiful eyes Sora. You have very beautiful eyes I think."

"Aw Ruben, you're gonna make ME blush in a minute!" giggled Sora, playfully pushing Ruben away from her and half hiding her face, flattered by his comment.

"No Sora, I mean it. Your eyes are wonderful." said Ruben softly "And I also think your hair looks very nice too. Especially down like it is now."

He reached out and lightly touched Sora's lovely lavender hair with his fingers. Sora let him do so for she only let her friends touch her hair and Ruben was definitely her friend so he was allowed to touch her hair. Sora blushed although she tried to keep it from showing.

"Aw…th-thank you." said Sora "I'm glad you like my hair. It used to be brown believe it or not but I didn't think it suited me so I dyed it lavender. It looks much better than it did when it was brown I think."

"Your hair would look lovely no matter what colour it is." said Ruben, amazed he even said that out loud.

"You're too kind Ruben. Really." said Sora, her blush more apparent now "What did I ever do to earn your kindness?"

"Nothing, I just think you're a very lovely, smart, strong, talented and lovely girl Sora and in Chun-Nan, it was customary for us water panthers to treat girls we liked very well." said Ruben, putting his hands around Sora's shoulders and lightly pulling her closer to himself "I really like you Sora for you have a lot of traits I adore in women and I want to show you just how much I like you. That's why I'm so nice to you."

"Oh…I see. That's very sweet Ruben." said Sora, putting her hands on his shoulders and looking into his dark blue eyes lovingly "We're so lucky to have you on our team. It wouldn't be the same without you."

"Thanks." said Ruben, flattered by the comment "And you know what Sora? You're such a wonderful person and a great friend…"

"Yes?" asked Sora as Ruben suddenly paused for a moment.

"Um…how do I put this…uh…Sora, I uh…um…" Ruben tried to make his lips form the words he so desperately wanted to say to his crush.

Sora had a feeling that Ruben was trying to tell her what he'd tried to

tell her before during the time she was on death's door with Blizzard's Cold Death curse*. He'd told her he really liked her but why would he go and tell her that again? Maybe he more than liked her. Sora could feel her heart skipping with excitement for she knew what Ruben was trying to say to her.

"Ruben…do you love me?" she asked.

Ruben blushed so hard he thought he was going to explode. Ruben now suddenly seemed to lose the ability to speak. He was so shy that the words just wouldn't come to his mouth. Sora could tell that his answer was likely yes though. She was good at reading body-language and facial expressions thanks to her training that shaped her into a spy over the years. Ruben however surprised Sora for he didn't say he loved her with words, but with his body instead. The water panther leaned forward, holding Sora tenderly and he planted a kiss on her lips. Sora's eyes widened in surprise but she closed them and wrapped her arms around Ruben, returning the kiss. They may only be eleven** and twelve respectively but it seemed they had found love. And they had found it in each other. Somehow the fact they were kissing in the water seemed to make the scene look more romantic and beautiful. They kissed for a minute before separating their lips and looking back into each other's eyes. Ruben was no longer blushing and his face suggested he was now every confident.

"Yes…Sora, I love you so much." he said gently "I think you're the most wonderful girl I've ever met and I've grown to love you as time goes by."

"Awww…you're so sweet and adorable." said Sora, stroking Ruben's face softly "And you know what…I love you too you adorable little water panther. I've never met a boy as cute as you since my little brother. Speaking of Tails, wonder what he would think if he saw this?"

"He'd be happy that his big sister has found love like he has." said Ruben with a wink.

Sora smiled and the two were about to kiss again until Ruben suddenly noticed something was wrong. There was a red dot on

Sora's head. Why was it there? She hadn't cut herself and couldn't be bleeding or anything. The dot hadn't been there when he and Sora had kissed so why was it there now? Then Ruben suddenly had a nasty thought. The red dot was a targeting dot and it must belong to a gun! Somebody was pointing a gun at Sora's head!

"SORA GET DOWN!" he screamed, ducking Sora underwater just as an ear splitting bang tore through the forest quiet and a laser shot whizzed over his head just millimetres from his ears.

He aimed his hands at where the shot had come from and he fired a jet of water at a nearby bush. The person with the gun spilled out from behind the bush as it was hit by the water. To Ruben's horror, it was Fiona Fox and she wasn't alone for she had Scourge with her! Scourge and Fiona picked themselves up from the ground, sopping wet and grumbling furiously. Sora emerged from the surface of the water in time to see Scourge and Fiona shouting at each other.

"I told you to shoot the moment the dot was on her head you lazy lump!" yelled Scourge angrily.

"I had to make sure the aim was precise before I pulled the trigger you stupid head!" snapped Fiona.

"Scourge and Fiona?!" shrieked Sora "How the hell did they know we were here?!"

"Doesn't matter, they're going home with a broken jaw each!" snarled Ruben "What are you two dishonourable creeps doing here and why are you trying to kill Sora?!" he demanded angrily, climbing out of the lake and pointing sharply at the two.

"You pretty much just answered the first question yourself and as for why we're trying to kill Sora, it's none of your business snot-face." snapped Fiona, pointing the rifle at Ruben "Now get lost before I blow your head off!"

Ruben just squirted the gun out of Fiona's hands and sent the rifle spinning through the air into a bush. Cursing violently, Fiona dived into the bush to retrieve the rifle while Scourge spin-dashed Ruben and knocked him into the water. Sora cried out for her boyfriend and

she swam over to help Ruben up to the surface. Ruben emerged from under the water and he swam back over to the bank while Sora swam over to where her utility belt was. Unfortunately, Scourge grabbed it and held it tauntingly in front of Sora, mocking her mercilessly as Sora tried to get her belt back.

"Sorry kid but you won't be needing this." sneered Scourge.

In a single spin-dash, he broke the belt and its contents to pieces. Sora stared in horror at her broken utility belt as it was reduced to pieces. The belt had been a gift from her foster father and was all he had left of her. Now it was broken, Sora felt like she'd lost the only thing that kept her foster father alive. Scourge threw the broken belt into the lake and he grabbed Sora by the wrists. He hoisted her out of the water and threw her onto the grass, Sora grunting as she hit the ground. Ruben climbed out of the water only for Scourge to roundhouse kick him back into it.

"Ha, ha, ha! I could keep this up all day!" he laughed as Ruben landed back into the water.

Scowling angrily, Sora pounced on Scourge and she punched him in the mouth. Scourge staggered backwards, surprised at how hard Sora could punch. He had clearly underestimated his opponent. But of course, Sora was just another puny, pathetic Mobian to him. He could curbstomp Sonic on a good day so Sora had no chance. Scourge slugged Sora in the gut and brought her down onto her knees. Sora clutched her gut and coughed loudly. Seizing her chance, Fiona emerged from the bush with the rifle back in her hands and she aimed it at Sora. Before she could shoot Sora dead, Ruben knocked her off her feet with a jet of water and he leaped out of the lake. Fiona picked herself up on for Ruben to kick her in the gut and then wrap his tail around her ankle. His tail yanked on her leg and tripped Fiona up, bringing the vixen down hard on her back. Scourge ran in to deck Ruben but Ruben span around and blasted him off his feet with water. Fiona picked herself up and she deployed the energy blades Finitevus had stolen from Sally and given to her. Ruben gasped in horror and ducked over backwards as Fiona swung the blades at him. Ruben attempted to squirt water at Fiona again but Scourge grabbed Ruben by the collar and yanked him back, choking Ruben as the collar dug into his Adam's apple. Fiona

walked up to Ruben and she slashed him on both legs. Ruben screamed in pain as horrible gashes spread across his thighs. The water panther was brought down onto his knees, clutching his thighs in pain. Fiona sneered at him and she slashed him across the back. Sora could feel her heart tearing in two as she saw Fiona slashing at Ruben. She charged towards Scourge and she dropkicked him in the back of his head. Scourge hurled forward and very nearly got impaled on Fiona's arm blades. Fiona quickly sheathed them and caught Scourge before he could land on the ground. Scourge twisted around and he uppercut Sora in the chin, sending the vixen hurling into the air and crashing down beside a tree. Ruben tried to stand up but the injuries Fiona had inflicted on him were too great. Scourge decided to curbstomp Ruben just to hurt Sora mentally for a bit of extra fun. He and Fiona had witnessed them confessing their love for each other so he knew beating up Ruben would upset Sora greatly. Scourge stomped on Ruben's back, aiming for the slash wound, and then he punched, kicked, stomped and even bit him several times over, showing no mercy and not relenting in the slightest. He even picked Ruben up and spin-dashed him onto the other side of the lake. Ruben groaned in pain as he hit the bank. He tried to get up but his wounds and bruises were too great for him. He couldn't get up. He was very close to passing out due to how weak he was. Sora looked at Ruben in despair. She soon had something else to worry about for Scourge and Fiona advanced on her. Sora backed away from them, staring worriedly at the two. Ruben watched as they advanced on Sora. He reached up feebly and grunted as he spoke.

"N…No…I…leave her alone!" he croaked.

Scourge and Fiona ignored Ruben and continued advancing on her. Sora backed away until her back suddenly hit something. Sora had backed against a tree. She was completely trapped now. Sora pressed herself firmly against the tree, her legs trembling and her heart pounding as Scourge and Fiona blocked her escape.

"Ha, ha, ha! No escape now kid." crowed Scourge "You're dead now! And I thought this was going to be difficult. How silly of me."

"P-please! D-don't k-kill me!" whimpered Sora "I h-haven't d-done anything t-to you two! Y-you h-have n-no right t-to kill me!"

"Who says we need a right to kill anyway?" snorted Fiona "Besides, we don't want filthy young spies spying on us and getting in our way so you little girl have to be put down. Nothing personal, it's just business."

"Please! I beg of you! Spare my life!" screeched Sora "Please don't do it!"

"Begging won't get you anywhere you little brat." snarled Scourge "Fiona, shoot the kid and be done with her already!"

Fiona nodded and she aimed the rifle at Sora's head. Eyes streaming with tears, Sora stared at the rifle as if she was staring at the Grim Reaper himself. Once Fiona pulled the trigger, a laser blast would travel down the bullet and spit out into Sora's head. The blow would finish her off before she could blink.

"RUBEN, HELP!" screamed Sora.

Fiona was just about to pull the trigger until something diverted her attention. Ruben couldn't possibly have picked a better time to take Sora down to the Lake of Rings. It was three o'clock now and that was when the miracle that occurred every twenty-four hours happened. A beautiful, golden power ring emerged from the Lake of Rings, shining brighter than the sun itself and dazzling Scourge and Fiona. Ruben watched the ring glowing and he reached out as if trying to grab it. He would never get it, he was too far away from the ring and too weak to get it. However, he could try and get it over to Sora. Since Scourge and Fiona were looking at the power ring, Sora ran around them and she ran into Ruben's viewpoint. Ruben seized his chance. He squirted a jet of water at the power ring and sent it hurling towards Sora. Sora caught the ring and she threw it back over to Ruben like a Frisbee. Fiona tried to shoot the ring to pieces but her shooting skills weren't good enough to get a clear aim at the ring so she missed. The ring landed in front of Ruben and the water panther weakly grabbed it. Ruben knew about the power rings from Sonic. Those who desperately needed its power could use the power for whatever need they had for it and the power rings packed a lot of power. Ruben needed all the power he could get at this point given how tough Scourge and Fiona were. Ruben closed his eyes and willed for the power ring to power him up. He could already feel

the ring crackling with energy in his hands and a great surging sensation seemed to tingle in his veins. A golden aura surrounded Ruben as he tapped into the ring's power. Sora just stared open-mouthed at Ruben, unable to believe what she was seeing. Scourge however spin-dashed towards Ruben and tried to stop him from using the ring. To Scourge's amazement, Ruben stood up and punched him away, sending him hurling into the water! The ring had managed to get Ruben back on his feet and had even enhanced his strength, meaning his punch was much stronger then it would have been had he not used the ring. Scourge hurled into the bank of the lakehead first and then fell into the water. Fiona helped him climb out of the lake and she pointed the rifle at him. She shot at him but the ring's power prevented the shots from doing any damage. Ruben leaped into the air, doing an amazing somersault as he crossed from one side of the lake to the other and he landed before Scourge and Fiona. Scourge punched at Ruben but the water panther caught his hand and twisted it to the side. He kicked Scourge into a bush and then he elbowed Fiona in the gut. Fiona doubled over, allowing Ruben to snatch the rifle from her. He broke the rifle over his knee and tossed the broken halves aside. He grabbed Scourge and Fiona by the neck each and he glowered at them, his face somehow scarier looking than usual.

"Leave. Sora. Alone!" he snarled, his voice as vicious as a lion's growl "Get out of here now before I break your necks!"

Scourge was stubborn and never liked to back down but he knew when he was beaten. Fiona on the other hand looked like she was ready to surrender without a second thought. Fiona took out the warp ring Finitevus had given her and she flicked it into the air. The warp ring expanded in size and opened up a portal from the GreatForest to Finitevus's laboratory. The two villains fled through the warp ring as fast as they possibly could. The moment they left, Ruben powered down and threw the power-drained power ring back into the lake. Sora ran over to Ruben and she embraced him tightly with delight.

"Oh thank you so much Ruben!" she cried with tears in her eyes "I thought I was dead until that power ring appeared! Thank you for saving my life Ruben! Thank you so much!"

"Anytime…Sora." said Ruben, suddenly feeling weak again for the power ring hadn't healed his injuries and now its power was gone, he was back to his injured state "I…only just…confessed my love for…you. I couldn't…let them kill you…so soon…after that."

"I know and for that, I owe you my life." said Sora happily "Oh Ruben, you're the best boy a girl could ask for!"

"Thank you…precious." said Ruben weakly "And you…are a girl worth…dying for."

He couldn't stay awake any longer, he succumbed to his injuries. Ruben's legs buckled underneath him and he closed his eyes. Sora was the only thing keeping him from collapsing onto the ground. Sora lay Ruben down gently and she knelt beside him, hoping that he was alright. Sora clutched Ruben tightly and she wept over his unconscious body.

"Oh Ruben! Please be OK!" she cried "I don't want to lose you! I've lost too many things in my life, I can't afford to lose you!"

Ruben didn't answer. He remained unconscious in his girlfriend's arms. Determined not to lose Ruben to his injuries, Sora picked him up in her arms and she carried him off back to New Mobotropolis. She'd get Ruben into a hospital and hopefully they'd be able to save him. If not then she would surely die of a broken heart and join Ruben in the afterlife…

Later on, Sora had managed to return Ruben to New Mobotropolis and had been quick to get him into hospital. Sonic, Tails and Sally hadn't come back from their mission in Megapolis yet so Sora kept it in mind to let them know what had happened when they came back. At the moment, Sora was sitting in the waiting room with her hands clenched together as if she was trying to crush them and her stomach aching with worry. The other people in the waiting room sympathized with her. It was a daunting place to sit in a hospital. You sit there, waiting in anxiety as you await the news of your loved one and find out if they will survive or not. Sora was definitely going through that phase right now. She was waiting to see if Ruben was

going to survive his injuries or not. He had been beaten pretty badly and his slash wounds were very serious. The power ring might have drained him a bit too much after he powered down and he might lose the will to live. Sora could feel her hands sweating as if she was in a very hot room yet the sweat felt ice cold as if they had been dipped in cold water. It was agonizing, waiting for the news she so longed to hear now. Almost half an hour had passed before a doctor walked into the waiting room and looked down at Sora. Sora looked up at him. Doctors were often quite emotionless people. They had to be, it made it easier for them to do their work. Sora couldn't read any emotions on his face right now so she had no idea what the news was going to be.

"Is…is he…?" asked Sora nervously.

"Ruben is quite badly bruised and he has superficial wounding to his thighs and back…but he's quite stable." said the doctor, his voice carrying more emotion than his face.

"Oh thank god!" cried Sora in relief, the pain in her stomach fading away quickly as if it had never happened "Please can I see him?"

"You may." said the doctor kindly "He's just resting right now but he's fit enough to see somebody."

Sora did not wait to be asked twice. She got up to her feet and walked down the corridor. The other patients seemed pleased that things were looking good for Sora, now they just hoped they could share her reaction when hearing news about their loved ones. Sora ran down the corridor and found Ruben's room. He was in room 8643. She knew this because she had followed the doctors to the room herself so she'd know where to find him. Sora entered the room and saw Ruben resting peacefully in a hospital bed, the duvet tucked up to his chin and his eyes closed. He wasn't asleep though, he heard Sora coming into the room. He was merely resting his eyes. Ruben opened his eyes and he looked to his right. Sora sat down by his bed and lightly touched his face. It had multiple bruises and his left eye had a dark blue circle around it but he seemed to have enough energy in his face to smile. Under the duvet, Sora would see Ruben had bandages on his back and thighs. Ruben reached a hand out from under the duvet and he placed it over

Sora's hand, happy to feel it again for Sora had very lovely hands that felt very lovely in his own hand. Sora smiled at Ruben, happy tears filling her eyes.

"Hey Sora…how are you?" asked Ruben softly, suggesting he didn't feel like speaking very loudly right now.

"I'm over the moon after hearing the doctor's news." said Sora, the happy tears trickling down her face as she stroked Ruben's hand "You have no idea how worried I was for you Ruben. I feared you was going to die!"

"I thought…I was about dead too." said Ruben "But thankfully…I'm alive and in a couple of weeks, I'll be back on my feet and back in the battle."

"I hope you recover well my adorable water panther." said Sora kindly, wiping away her tears "I'm going to miss you while you're in here and unable to join me on a mission or two."

"I'm going to miss you too." said Ruben softly "But don't worry, Tails will keep you company and I'm sure Sonic and the others will make sure you're well looked after and not so lonely without me."

"I know." said Sora, leaning forward a little closer to Ruben "And Ruben…I can't thank you enough for what you did for me today. That was very brave, selfless and kind of you to risk your life for me. You're just like my lovely brother and that's what makes me love you so much."

"Aw thank you dear." said Ruben "And Sora, you are more beautiful than even Chun-Nan's most magnificent waterfalls. I can't describe how much I love you Sora."

Touched by his words, Sora leaned forward again and kissed Ruben on the lips. Ruben put his arm around Sora's head and stroked her hair while returning the kiss. It was going to be a long wait for Ruben's recovery but their love would see them through until the end and it would be worth waiting for. Sora and Ruben were in love and their love would make them stronger than ever and no villain would ever be able to break them apart…

Footnotes:

***You know, I can't seem to stop bringing up *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm* can I?**

****As of Story 176, Ruben is now eleven years old**

Aww...aren't Ruben and Sora so adorable together? Aww...

Well that's it for this chapter. It's not the end of Sora's story yet for in* Tales from Mobius*, we are going to learn something we don't know about yet. How did she become a spy and what led to her becoming one? Tune into* Tales from Mobius *for a whole new arc which shows Sora "Becoming A Spy"... don't miss it!

As for the main series, we're going to learn about a "Dark Secret in Soleanna"...

The Dark Secret of Soleanna

Story 181: The Dark Secret Of Soleanna

Mobius Prime, 200 years into the future…

The world maybe a wreck and in a state of never-ending decay but it was not impossible to find a way of exercising yourself. Blaze the Cat was roaming through the wrecked city of Nekronopolis and going through a keep-fit phase. Blaze was a firm believer in keeping fit and that it was very important to keep yourself fit no matter what. The fitter you are, the more able you are in battle or anything else for that matter. Blaze sprinted at a steady but fast pace through the forlorn streets that told a sad story on how Nekronopolis used to be before the catastrophe had happened. The multi-verse crisis had been an extremely close call and since then, Silver the Hedgehog had been more determined than ever to find out the cause behind Mobius's destruction. He was taking some time off to study more about Mobius's history and Blaze was exercising since she wasn't much of a study person. She was more of a "listen to somebody tell you what they've learnt" person, it was much easier for her to just listen to somebody then try and study herself. Plus it saved time too. As Blaze sprinted, she wondered if Silver would have anything interesting to tell her when she returned. Blaze turned a corner and sprinted down an avenue that was pretty much beyond recognition and not what an avenue commonly looks like given how wrecked and full of pot holes it was. Blaze avoided each and every one with ease and she ran towards a pile of wrecked cars that were piled on top of each other. Blaze really had no idea how this had happened. One of life's mysteries she guessed. Blaze leaped gracefully into the air, sailing perfectly over the car pile in a single, spectacular twirl through the air. She landed on her feet (like cats supposedly always do) on the other side of the pile and she sprinted off. She came across a large oil tanker that had been abandoned and forgotten for years and was dry of any oil so Blaze wouldn't have to worry about setting it alight by accident and causing an explosion. Blaze ran as fast as she could towards the tanker but instead of leaping over it, she threw herself down onto the ground and slid under the tanker as

if she was skating across ice. Blaze leaped back onto her feet after passing under the tanker and she ran off. She jumped up into the air, did an amazing somersault accompanied by an added twirl of grace and she landed perfectly on top of a hover car that probably hadn't hovered in over two-hundred years. Blaze smiled with satisfaction. She was still very good at her stuff. Her continuous exercising was paying off beautifully. Blaze decided that was enough exercise for one day so she sprinted off back to the hotel that she and Silver had to reluctantly call home. I say reluctantly because a wrecked establishment with little conveniences wasn't their idea of home but until they changed the past and fixed the future, it had to do for now. Blaze entered the hotel and she walked up into Silver's room which was only on the second floor of the hotel. She opened the door a crack and peeked through it. She could see that as usual Silver has his nose buried in another book he'd managed to find. It was another copy of "Mobius History" and this one was more intact then the one that had led them to falsely believe the Martians had been the cause of all Mobius's destruction. While more intact and having further dates to read about, the book was still missing some potentially vital pages but Silver had studied the book quite carefully and had jotted down some potential events the book documented on a piece of paper. Blaze walked up to Silver and she put her arms around his neck and shoulders. Silver smiled, loving the warm embrace Blaze was giving him.

"Hey beautiful, did you have a nice exercise?" asked Silver.

"Wonderful thank you." said Blaze smoothly "As horrible as the world looks right now, it does make an entertaining exercise course. Want an obstacle race, you've got obstacles everywhere."

"Indeed although in my case I just move the obstacles out of the way." laughed Silver "With any chance of beating me, they'd have to make psychic powers against the rules."

"Can't argue with that." said Blaze "So Silver, have you found anymore clues to Mobius's destruction?"

"I've found some facts that stand out to me but whether they're the missing links or not is questionable." said Silver.

Blaze sat down on a chair beside Silver and waited as Silver picked up the list and prepared to read it to her. He picked up his paper and glanced at it.

"First of all, there's an event known as "The Day of Solaris"." explained Silver "According to information form the book, a creature known as Solaris was unleashed upon the world and it attempted to end it. There's a page missing and it doesn't say if Solaris was stopped or not." he said sadly.

"What's Solaris?" asked Blaze.

"The eternal sun god that the people of Soleanna worship but that's as much as I know." murmured Silver "The book's vague about Solaris for some reason."

"I see." said Blaze grimly "I bet it would be vital to learn much about this "Solaris" creature so we could stop it."

"The book does state how Solaris was made." replied Silver "It was made with a fusion of a creature named "Mephiles" and a creature named "Iblis". I bet if we destroyed both those creatures, Solaris would never exist and he wouldn't doom the world...that is if he WAS responsible."

"Indeed." said Blaze "And is that it or do you have other notes at all?"

"Just one more." said Silver, looking at the paper "Something about a big Eggman ship called...the Death Egg."

"If something has the word "death" in it, it's never a good thing." said Blaze with a shudder "What's that all about then?"

"Well all the page tells me is that "Eggman launched a giant egg-shaped ship into the sky known as the Death Egg and it fired a giant beam at the planet" and that's about it." mused Silver "There's quite a lot of bits missing from the actual page for most of the page is torn. It's not giving me much information."

"So it doesn't tell us much does it?" murmured Blaze "Two different times that sound like they might be the link we're looking for yet

there's no concrete evidence that they are the events that ended the world. They could be and yet they couldn't be at the same time."

"Well both events are similarly timed so there might be a connection somehow." said Silver "The Day of Solaris takes place in July the 5th 2143 and the Death Egg rises only a week after, July the 12th 2143. Maybe the Day of Solaris dooms the world and the Death Egg just makes it worse?"

"I highly doubt that." Blaze thought aloud "Then again, we don't know how much damage Solaris or the Death Egg can do. Solaris tried to end the world according to your research so it must be powerful...but the Death Egg is able to rise and fire a beam at the world, meaning at least Eggman survives the Day of Solaris. But does Eggman live to launch the Death Egg because Solaris was defeated and the world was saved? Or does he straight up survive the day and live to launch the Death Egg?"

"We'll just have to find that out." said Silver "We should go back in time to the Day of Solaris and see what happens and if the world does end, we'll go back and prevent it from dooming the world. If not, then we stick around to stop the Death Egg from launching."

"Kill two birds with one stone pretty much, sounds good to me." said Blaze, her face not really showing much enthusiasm "Silver, take us back to that time."

"I will." said Silver, whipping out his Super Warp Ring "You bring the Sol Emeralds since if we have to fight Solaris and he's too powerful for us to defeat, we might need them to go super."

Blaze nodded understandably and Silver opened up a portal to Angel Island with his warp ring. Blaze went through the portal and over to the island to get her Sol Emeralds. Once she got them, she made them vanish into the flames within her soul so she didn't have to carry them with her all over the place and would just need to summon them with merely a thought. Now Blaze had the emeralds, she returned to Silver and Silver reopened his Super Warp Ring to Soleanna in the year 2143 and on July the 5th 2143. Holding hands, Silver and Blaze walked through the warp ring and they were instantly transported into the past once again. Hopefully they will

have gotten it right this time. If they managed to foil these two events, hopefully the world would be saved and the future would be different...if not then it was back to square one for the two...

"Princess Elise of Soleanna. It is an honour to meet you." said Queen Sally Acorn, bowing politely before the jaguar that stood before her, all grace and beauty like any normal princess usually stands.

"The honour is all mine my queen." said Princess Elise curtseying politely in return before Sally "Especially since you're here with all your amazing Royal Fighters."

"I'm glad you think that your honour." said Sally gratefully "The Royal Fighters are always happy to hear such compliments."

"That's great because I have nothing but good things to say to you guys after all the amazing things you've done to save the world on countless occassions." said a very happy Elise "You truly are inspirations for me and my people. Soleanna appreciates your heroism."

The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters glowed with delight but nobody seemed to glow brighter than Sonic the Hedgehog himself. No sooner had Tails and Sora Prower found out that Eggman was setting up a Death Egg refuelling station in Soleanna**, the Royal Fighters had been keen to get to the City of Water right away. Sonic had been quite happy to come to Soleanna. He thought it was one of the most beautiful cities on Mobius and he always wanted a chance to go to it again. And now he was here, admiring its beauty again while preparing to kick Eggman butt. He was also quite pleased to meet Princess Elise in the flesh at last. He'd heard about her from Silver and Blaze when they'd gone to Soleanna during the Martian invasion and had been greatly amused at the fact Elise not only was a good fighter, but managed to floor Marik the Martian himself. He wondered if Elise would be as great a fighter as Silver and Blaze had described. Now Elise had greeted the Royal Fighters, Sally informed her on what the occasion was.

"So you maybe wondering why we've come." said Sally.

"I am honestly." said Elise "Though I'm still happy you're all here, don't get me wrong. So what's the occasion?"

"Tails and his sister Sora discovered that Dr. Eggman was building a refuelling station for an upcoming ship of his called "The Death Egg"." explained Sonic "We think destroying the stations will be a great hindrance to the ship so we've come here to destroy the station."

"I see." said Elise "You know what, I was beginning to wonder what that giant steel tower was all about. I was out walking through the city and then suddenly I spotted a steel tower of some kind standing in the middle of Soleanna Forest. It was so bloomin' tall that I could see the top of it and I wasn't even IN the forest! I was just on the outskirts! I had assumed that it might be construction work for a tower of some kind but it never crossed my mind that it could be an Eggman building. I think that might be the refuelling station you're looking for."

"What did it look like?" asked Tails.

"I dunno, I didn't investigate. I'm sorry." said Elise sadly "I only saw the top of the tower but from what I could make it, it's all frames and girders so far, it must not be complete yet."

"We'll investigate this "tower" you've spotted and be back before you know it." said Sonic "If it is an Eggman refuelling station, we'll save your country from unwillingly being one of its refuelling ports."

"That'll be awesome!" piped Elise "I can't bear the idea of Eggman using my country as a port for any hideous ship he might have to refuel! Ugh, disgusting!" Her face screwed up as if it was trying to suck itself up into Elise's head.

"You bet it is." murmured Sally "So Elise, you say the tower's in Soleanna forest?"

"Correct." said Elise "As I said, it's so tall it stretches above the trees. You can't miss it. Do you need a guide to show you the way?"

"No need." said Sally "I have Nicole as my navigator. She was recently uploaded with the coordinates of every place on Mobius. She's the world's greatest Sat-nav pretty much."

Sally reached down onto her boot and took off a handheld computer she had attached there. It was Nicole. Tails had built her a new handheld computer after Finitevus had destroyed the original and Nicole used that as her home when outside of New Mobotropolis. Sally opened up the computer and Nicole's avatar emitted out of the computer. Elise was gobsmacked.

"Good lord! How did that happen?!" she gasped "Your "Nicole" has turned into a computer!"

"It's a long story and I don't want to talk about it." said Sally sadly "It's very sad."

"Oh I'm sorry, don't tell me then." said Elise "Forgive me for being so thoughtless."

"Don't sweat it, it's OK." said Sally hastily "Nicole, can you lead us to the Soleanna Forest?"

"Certainly Sally." said Nicole brightly "Just follow my directions and you'll be there before you can say "Binary codes"." her digital face winked at Sally.

"Thank you." said Sally brightly "Elise, are you coming with us?"

"Oh no, I'm very sorry but I've got my duties here." said Elise with a shake of her head "It's my turn to guard the Sceptre of Darkness today and I have to be at my post shortly. I can't come with you."

"OK then, we'll let you know how things went when we get back." said Sonic with a thumbs up "By the way, what's the Sceptre of Darkness?"

"Something for me to know and you guys to never find out." said Elise grimly "It's for the good of everybody."

"Oh...I see." said Sonic slowly, taken aback by the response "Well then, I won't ask about it again. See you later Elise."

"See you and thanks for coming once again." said Elise with a big smile on her face.

The Royal Fighters walked off and headed towards the Soleanna Forest with Sally in the lead and following the directions that Nicole was giving to her. Elise watched them leave and then she walked off, heading back to her palace where she would be taking over as guard of the Sceptre of Darkness for the time being. Her face fell as she headed towards her palace.

"Oh I wish we weren't the ones that have to guard that stupid thing..." she moaned under her breath "I wish we could just chuck the damn thing into the sea and let it stay submerged forever."

Elise did not really like guarding the Sceptre of Darkness, less still did she like the fact that her family was the one to guard it. Why should her family be the ones guarding the sceptre? Just because it contained a dark being that was one half of the eternal sun god Solaris, a god that Soleanna worshipped, does it mean that her family had to be in charge of it? Somebody else should guard it, somebody who actually enjoys guarding things that can spell doom on the world. But Elise's family was the family that was guarding the sceptre so like it or not, they had to guard it and Elise had to do her part as well. Didn't mean she had to enjoy it though...

Meanwhile in Megapolis, Dr. Finitevus was once again, sitting at his computer and doing more research. He was already conducting a list of people he wanted to recruit for the Dark Armada and outlining the details of his plans but he was still working on something. He was searching for whatever could be useful for the Dark Armada in its scheme to take over the world. Scourge, Fiona and Ravage, who were already recruited, were out on patrol and were to report back anything of relevance to Finitevus. The echidna had been furious at Scourge and Fiona for failing to kill Sora so Scourge and Fiona were determined not to upset Finitevus this time. They'd do their job and make sure that they succeeded at it this time. Ravage would see to it that they succeed which is why he was going with them. Finitevus still felt that Sora should be gotten rid of as soon as possible but at the same time, he knew better than to keep gunning for Sora as that

would attract some unwanted attention and he could even unintentionally get Sora interested in him so he wouldn't consistently try and get rid of Sora. After all, he had bigger fish to fry. He'd already plotted Eggman's downfall and now he was finalizing the Dark Armada and his plans. The list of recruits had grown quite long and Finitevus was quite satisfied with it. The armada would be glorious when it formulated, he just knew it. Now he was looking up for anything related to Soleanna. Ravage had told him about the Sword of Elemental Power and how it would be impossible to retrieve since Sonic had thrown it into a volcano*** and Finitevus had been interested in seeing if Soleanna had anything else powerful, or any ONE powerful that could be of use to the armada. Finitevus searched and searched until he came across a news article saying "Soleanna remembers the Disaster of Project: Solaris on its tenth anniversary". Finitevus was one of those sick, twisted minds that loved the very idea of a disaster and that article interested him easily. He clicked on it and read the article to himself. It said:

Ten years ago on this very day, our brave team of scientists carried out Project: Solaris. Originally thought to be an energy research programme, the project was actually about trying to control time itself and the very thing used in the experiment was the Flame of Hope. The experiment was ambitious and the research team had hoped dearly that it would be a success. If we could control time then we could do wondrous things with that power, like erasing Mobian-kind's mistakes in the past and making the world a better place. But the project ended in disaster and the Flame of Hope, also known as the eternal sun god Solaris, was split in two in the resulting accident. The halves were known as Mephiles and Iblis and they were likely to cause great damage had they been allowed to roam freely or even worse...form Solaris. The Duke and Duchess of Soleanna were quick to seal the creatures away. Mephiles was contained in the Sceptre of Darkness and Iblis was sealed inside a Fire Stone. The Royals of Soleanna currently guard Mephiles whereas Iblis's location is yet to be known for they have kept it a heavy secret and refuse to let anybody know the location of Iblis. It's probably for the best. We morn for those who lost their lives in the accident and we hope that Mephiles and Iblis will

NEVER come together.

Finitevus grinned maliciously at the news article.

"How incredibly interesting..." he purred "Two creatures that could form a god named Solaris? Now that is power the Dark Armada MUST have! If my plans are to succeed then these two will make valuable weapons of mass destruction for the armada. The Royal Fighters won't know what hit them..."

He typed up something on the computer before he got up from his chair and summoned a warp ring to his hand.

"Scourge, Fiona and Ravage may wonder where I am so the message on the computer will let them know what's happening." he said to himself "In the meantime, I will seize that Sceptre of Darkness, free Mephiles and help him to find Iblis. I'm sure we'll locate him somehow. With Mephiles and Iblis, I may even be able to get rid of Sonic and his friends and even Dr. Eggman already..."

He cackled maniacally to himself as he flicked the warp ring into the air and jumped through it, warping over from his secret lab to Soleanna. Soleanna was in for its darkest hour any moment now...

Back over to the Royal Fighters, Sally continued to follow Nicole's directions as arrows appeared on her screen and pointed in the direction they had to go. Thanks to Nicole's navigational skills, they were almost at the Soleanna Forest. Sally could faintly make out a forest in the distance as they were nearing the edge of the city so they were definitely going in the right direction.

"Just head forward from this point on and hey presto, we're there." said Nicole brightly.

"Thank you very much Nicole." said Sally gratefully.

"As sad as it is that Nicole's not a Mobian anymore, that computer of her's sure has its advantages." said Bunnie Rabbot gleefully "Thanks to Nicole, we never need a map and we'll never get lost."

"It's a good think we installed a navigational programme into her to make this possible." said Tails brightly "Nicole's essentially the world's greatest map on a computer. Only thing we have to worry about is losing Nicole herself but like that's gonna happen."

"Too right." said Geoffrey St. John agreeably "Especially since Sally's taking good care of the lass. So, once we storm this tower that might be what we're looking for, what do we do next?"

"Find out where the other refuelling stations are being built." replied Sonic "I wonder what other locations Eggman's picked for his precious stations."

"He better not pick Grand Metropolis or I'm gonna murder him!" growled Mandy Mouse furiously "That would be a sure fire way to desecrate my sister's resting place..."

"I'm sure he won't pick Grand Metropolis Mandy." said Wilson reassuringly "Though it would be horrible if he did."

"It'd be equally as horrible if he picked Chun-Nan!" cried Ruben in alarm "I hope he's not building a filthy station in Chun-Nan!"

"We'll find that out soon enough Ruben." said Sora grimly "If Chun-Nan is a place he's picked to put a refuelling station then he will have no mercy from me. Nobody desecrates my boyfriend's home country." she added with a rather uncharacteristic scowl on her face.

"I just hope the fat man doesn't try and build a station in New Mobotropolis." muttered Sonic "I will flip my lid if he does. But I doubt Eggman's that stupid so I don't think he'll put one there."

"Eggman would have to be suicidal if he thought about building a station in New Mobotropolis." said Amy Rose "I mean, we'd be right there to stop him without a single problem. We'd wreck his robots before he can start building. Eggman's certainly not going to be so bone-headed and do that."

"You got that right Amy." said Cream the Rabbit agreeably "So our city won't have a nasty station built on it."

"Regardless of where Eggman's building these refuelling stations,

we can guarantee he won't go easy on us." murmured Sally "We destroyed the one directly above his Egg Bunker so he likely will be heavily guarding all the rest of his stations."

"Doesn't matter sugah, we'll destroy them all and make sure that durn Death Egg hasn't got a place to land when it needs new fuel!" cried a very determined Bunnie Rabbot "And once we've destroyed the stations, we'll destroy the Death Egg itself!"

"You got that right Bunnie." said Geoffrey agreeably.

"One thing I keep wondering is what this "Death Egg" will do." said a rather nervous looking Cosmo, her face matching the tone of her voice "Will it be a big weapon of death and fire some kind of beam that'll kill us all? I remember how daddy would describe weapons of mass destruction that often had the word "death" in their names would live up to their names quite literally. Even the Martians had destructive weapons with the word "death" in their names."

Her body shuddered as if a cold hand had run itself down her back.

"The Death Egg will likely be very powerful and potentially deadly but I don't think Eggman wants to just kill everything and everybody with it, he does want to roboticize us all after all." noted Tails "Maybe the Death Egg will play a part in that..."

Cosmo nodded weakly. She did not want to think about what the Death Egg would possibly do. She wanted it to be stopped before it could take flight much like everybody else did. Cosmo had lost her original home planet Greengate, she didn't want to lose Mobius too. Tails could see Cosmo looked a bit nervous so he held her hand comfortingly.

"Don't worry Cosmo, we'll stop Eggman for good." he reassured, his sentence matched up with a warm reassuring smile that made Cosmo feel much better.

"I'm sure we will Tails." said Cosmo sweetly "Hey Sally, are we at the forest yet?" she asked.

Sally looked up from Nicole and she could see that the forest scene

that expanded across the horizon a few moments ago had suddenly come forward to greet them. It was amazing how their conversation had passed so much time. They were there already and they hadn't really realized it. Sally looked at the forest and surely enough, like Elise had said, there was a giant metal tower standing in the centre of the mass sea of trees. Only the tip of the tower, which was nothing but frames and girders, was visible as if trying to cry out for help before the trees surrounding it swallowed it up like quicksand.

"We are." said Sally as her gaze set upon the wall of trees that stood proudly above the Mobians with their thick branches and green leaves looking as elegant and peaceful as ever "And as Elise said, there's the tip of the tower protruding from the centre of the forest. We're at our destination."

"So what's our plan of attack your majesty?" asked Ruben eagerly.

"We sneak through the growth that the forest will likely have plenty of and once we're close enough to the tower, we observe and see if it is indeed a Death Egg refuelling station." replied Sally "If it is what we think it is, we ambush and attack the Eggman robots. If it isn't, then we just go back and see where the refuelling station really is."

"I just hope the information me and Tails got wasn't fake information just to slow us down." Sora shuddered as a terrible thought crept over her like a haunting shadow.

"Nah, that's not Eggman's style." said Sonic "dismissively "He wouldn't have done that."

Sora hoped Sonic was right, swallowing a nervous lump in her throat as if hoping to swallow her anxieties too. Ruben patted Sora on the shoulder to ease her nerves to which Sora greatly appreciated. Sally closed up Nicole and put her on her boot. Leading the team, she entered the forest. The team walked after her as slowly and quietly as possible. Somebody as fast moving as Sonic didn't really enjoy such tactics but he put up with it for the time being. He knew better than to rush in just like that since reckless behaviour like that had landed him in serious trouble before. The trek wasn't long much to Sonic's delight for a few minutes later, they'd reached the area that the tower was being built in. The Royal Fighters ducked down

behind a thick bush and peered cautiously over the top. It was just as they'd suspected. The area was alive with construction activity and the builders were Egg-Pawns all rushing too-and-fro and carrying a variety of tools, steel beams, girders, nuts, bolts and rivets that would make up the tower's frame and then later have metal plating added to build up the bulk and outer casing of the tower. Surprisingly enough, Dr. Eggman was nowhere to be seen. It was just Egg-Pawns and nothing else. Not even Dr. Finitevus was there and he seemed to be the likeliest person to be on guard given his amazing prowess. Sally narrowed her brows into a frown of suspicion. Sonic didn't seem suspicious at all though.

"It's just as we suspected! It's the refuelling station we're here to destroy!" hissed Sonic "Come on let's bash those builders!"

"Wait Sonic, this looks way too easy..." whispered Sally, holding her boyfriend back hastily with an outstretched arm "Why the hell is Eggman not here? Surely after the destruction of his first station he'd be a bit more protective of his facilities, upcoming or already made. And why is Finitevus absent? Surely he'd be guarding one of these stations too? I smell a trap."

"Either that or they're guarding another station." suggested Sonic "Maybe one that needs protecting more than this one? I mean he can't possibly know we were going to gun for that particular station."

"Perhaps or maybe coincidentally he chose to guard this one and we happened to find out it's here." mused Sally "Either way I don't like this. It must be a trap. He wouldn't leave a station so valuable under protected like this."

"I think I agree Sally." said Tails quietly "I'll never forget how heavily guarded Robotropolis could get when he used to have that city running."

"Well what are we gonna do?" asked Bunnie helplessly "If we think it's a trap and don't do anything about it, how will we destroy the darn tower?"

"Simple, we spring the trap prematurely." said Sally matter-of-factly "Bunnie, shot at an Egg-Pawn and see what happens."

Bunnie was dumbfounded but she knew better than to question the Queen of New Mobotropolis, especially since she was so good at plans and strategy. Shrugging, Bunnie deployed her arm-cannon and she pointed it at a nearby Egg-Pawn that seemed to be having trouble telling the difference between a hammer and a spanner. It made Bunnie giggle as to how comical the dumb robot looked as its head twitched helplessly from the hammer and the spanner in its hands. Bunnie shot at the Egg-Pawn with her arm cannon. The single blast punched a hole through the Egg-Pawn and fried its internal circuits. The Egg-Pawn twitched furiously and then collapsed onto the ground, dead as a dingbat. The other Egg-Pawns leaped about a foot into the air in shock and they searched desperately for who had done that. Nothing else seemed to happen. This struck Sally as very peculiar indeed. No trap. Eggman was definitely getting bad at what he does or maybe Bunnie's shot wasn't enough to spring the trap.

"Look Sally, no trap." sneered Sonic "You were just being paranoid."

Sally had a grim face but she couldn't seem to file a rebuttal for Sonic. Sighing, she just simply said:

"Royal Fighters, let the ambush begin."

The sentence had an automatic effect on the team. It was as if it was merely a code to activate them and get them moving. The Royal Fighters sprang out from behind the bush like jack in the boxes and they charged towards the Egg-Pawns. But their ambush was quickly halted by the sudden hail of bullets that kicked up the soil before them and threatened to slice through their bodies. The Royal Fighters stepped back as a giant bush with an arm that had a Gatling gun at the end suddenly emerged from within the depths of the forest and plodded up to them on its peculiar metal legs. The bush then tore itself apart from within, a giant metal hand cleaving through the leaves and yanking them away. It was none other than Dr. Eggman himself! He had been hiding in a bush the whole time and was planning an ambush of his own. He had expected the Royal Fighters to come by and had been lying in wait for them. He had also set this trap for incase anybody from Soleanna came poking around and dared to squeal on him. Eggman's laughter resonated from the voice box of his life-support mech as he pointed

his weapon at the Royal Fighters. Sonic frowned at Eggman.

"OK Sally you were right, there WAS a trap after all." muttered Sonic.

"I will say I didn't expect him to be so patient." Sally muttered back "I wondered if he'd show up after Bunnie shot that Egg-Pawn."

"Oh really Sally, for somebody so brainy you sure can be thick-headed." sneered Dr. Eggman "Would I really do something so stupid and give myself away so prematurely? Nah, I knew that patience was the key in a well-executed ambush so when Bunnie fired that shot, I knew better than to spoil my ambush so I waited back for a minute. Now I have you all at my mercy and waiting to be annihilated! I have no idea how you know that I had a refueling station being built in Soleanna but it doesn't matter, you're here now and I'm going to destroy every single one of you once and for all!"

"No chance of that fatty." sneered Sonic "You've been fighting us for a couple of years now and we're still alive to kick your backside in so you'll not get rid of us so easily."

"Well I have this glorious life-support mech that is loaded with more weaponry than I know what to do with so I will get rid of you all that easily!" gloated Eggman "Prepare for total annihilation!"

"I could say the same to you." growled Mandy, slipping on her knuckle attachments and running towards Eggman.

Eggman aimed his Gatling gun at Mandy but Bunnie Rabbot fired a laser shot at Eggman's arm and made his arm point away from Mandy so he ended up shooting at any innocent trees that just happened to be standing around like spectators watching a fight. Mandy smirked at Bunnie's distraction. She carried on running and she roundhouse punched Eggman in the torso. The extra-power of her knuckle-attachments chucked Eggman across the battlefield and slammed him against a mighty tree that despite the impact of Eggman's heavy mech slamming against it, still managed to remain standing. Eggman was amazed at Mandy's onslaught. How powerful where the mouse's new knuckle attachments?! He didn't remember Mandy being that powerful with her knuckle attachments before. She

must have been given new ones that enhance her punches somehow. How amazing! Eggman pushed himself onto his feet and he deployed all the weaponry he had in his mech. Before he could fire a single shot though, Sonic zoomed in and spin-dashed Eggman off of his feet, knocking him down onto his back.

"Me, Bunnie and Mandy will handle Egg-head, the rest of you destroy that station!" yelled Sonic.

The rest of the team gave the thumbs up as they ran over towards the refuelling station. Eggman tried to stop them but Bunnie flew in front of his line of fire with her shield generator deployed so when Eggman fired his Gatling guns, he hit Bunnie's shield and the shots bounced off of it like ping pong balls across a table. Eggman was about to launch a missile at Bunnie but Mandy punched him in the side and caused him to topple over. Sonic stomp-kicked on Eggman's mid-section and he hopped off as Bunnie landed a powerful punch that left a dent on the section he'd just stomp-kicked on. The other Royal Fighters came up against the Egg-Pawns. The Egg-Pawns abandoned their precious work in order to fight off the Royal Fighters. But they'd soon end up wishing they'd carried on working. Sally deployed her ever deadly wrist blades and she neatly cleaved through an Egg-Pawn as if it were made of butter. The Egg-Pawn's top half collapsed onto the ground while its legs tumbled over backwards. Geoffrey fired his usual round of explosive darts at the Egg-Pawns and destroyed them instantly, Ruben and Sora double-teamed against an Egg-Pawn and brought it down onto the ground, Tails and Cosmo took down an Egg-Pawn with a single tail-whip and a throw of the Flower Blade, Amy hammered the robots away as if they were golf balls and Wilson sliced the Egg-Pawns to pieces with his two spinning blades. Given the puny opposition, it was certain that the Royal Fighters would win this battle. But they'd soon end up in a battle bigger than they anticipated…

"Well the newspaper here says that it's "July the 5th, 2143 so we've definitely arrived at the right date." Silver's voice was quiet and distant as he read the date on the paper aloud "So why are the Royal Fighters nowhere around? The book I read said they were involved in the Day of Solaris."

"Maybe they weren't in Soleanna when it happened?" suggested Blaze, looking around the familiar scenery of Soleanna and taking note of the architecture of the buildings and the surrounding scenery "Or maybe they're somewhere around and we just missed them somehow."

"I should hope that's not the case, we have to warn them about what we've just learnt and fast." said Silver desperately "The sooner they're prepared for this, the better."

"Provided that our efforts in preparing them for these events are actually worthwhile and not another dead end." noted Blaze sternly.

Silver nodded. He and Blaze had arrived in Soleanna half an hour ago and had been spending most of their time trying to find Sonic the Hedgehog and friends. As bad luck would have it, they just missed the Royal Fighters. They had left for the SoleannaForest and had disappeared just as they arrived at their location. Now they'd been searching for them and Silver had just found a newspaper lying on a nearby bench that confirmed to him he had gone back to the right time and date. He had simply just missed the Royal Fighters. The search for them had rewarded them with a walk around Soleanna and a chance to drink in the scenery and enjoy the pleasure of walking through an actual alive city and not ruins, something they always enjoyed when coming to the past so it hadn't been all bad. Silver became more determined to save the future than ever when he admired how beautiful the past was. Blaze shared his determination. With her hands on her hips, Blaze thought about something.

"So how will we stop this "Day of Solaris" from happening?" she asked "I mean, we know how Solaris is formed but did that book explain how Solaris was formed?"

"Sadly no, that information was missing." muttered Silver grumpily "So we've gotta figure it out on our own. Where would Mephiles and Iblis be kept I wonder?"

"Beats me." said Blaze with a shrug "If we knew where we could find them, we could just destroy them and prevent Solaris from existing. That is…if they can even be destroyed. Solaris is a god right? And if

Mephiles and Iblis make Solaris…are they gods too?"

"Possibly." murmured Silver unevenly "And if they're gods, will they be the immortal kind?"

"They might but they might also be the kind of god you can kill just like The Eraser was." thought Blaze "We'll see for ourselves should we come face-to-face with the two."

"I just wonder what power they'll have." mused Silver to nobody in particular.

"Hey Silver, who's the guy in the cape over there?" asked Blaze, pointing ahead of herself seemingly for no reason.

Of course, she was pointing for a reason and Silver had no trouble working out what the reason was. Blaze had spotted an albino echidna wearing a black cape marching up towards the Soleanna Palace a good few metres away from where they were standing. It was Dr. Finitevus. He'd arrived in Soleanna and was now going to get the Sceptre of Darkness, the prison that contained the deadly Mephiles. Silver recognized him from the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses but he wasn't entirely sure on who it was. He hadn't studied about him either so Finitevus was new to him.

"I think I saw him during the multi-verse crisis. Wasn't his name "Finitevus" or something?" he asked.

"I think I heard somebody refer to him as such." said Blaze slowly and unsurely "And I think he was with Dr. Eggman. I don't think he's a good guy."

"Well we can't jump to conclusions about him." said Silver matter-of-factly "We could be attacking an entirely innocent echidna. Let's investigate and see what he's up to."

"Woe betide him if it's anything with malicious intent…" Blaze said coldly.

She and Silver waited until Finitevus walked into the Soleanna Palace. Once he entered, they ran towards the palace. It took a few strides before they reached the palace and by the time they'd gotten

to the front door, Finitevus was already storming down to the lower levels of the Soleanna Palace. Finitevus had immediately assumed that the Sceptre of Darkness would likely be on the lower floors of the palace since anything that was usually hidden from the world was stored in a downstairs or underground room. Since he'd gone down, Silver and Blaze had entered the palace only to see he was seemingly gone. They were just left staring at a rather grand looking hallway that had Soleanna's traditional architecture and beauty carved in every inch of its marble and stonework. This was not the time for admiring though, they had to find Finitevus. Silver and Blaze both ran upstairs to look for him. Their assumption had been he'd gone up to the upper rooms for whatever reason, an assumption that would slow them down greatly in this race against time. As they ran upstairs, Dr. Finitevus had reached the underground level of the palace. There was a rather damp and cold tunnel with little lighting that stretched a few metres and led to a stone wall with a door and a few flaming torches on the wall near the door. There was a jaguar in a white dress and white gloves with red hair and blue eyes standing by the door. Finitevus dismissed it as a mere woman who was not worth the hassle. Just somebody in the way. He walked through the tunnel and up towards the door. Elise, who was looking maddeningly bored just standing in front of the door to guard the precious thing it had on the other side, stared at Finitevus as he emerged from the tunnel and stood before Elise with a rather dark smile on his face. Elise was quick to assume he meant no good, especially given his dark appearance. She took up a battle-ready stance and she glowered at Finitevus.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?!" she demanded furiously.

"I am Dr. Finitevus and I am here to release Mephiles from his prison." purred Finitevus "My dear, I greatly advise that you stand down and let me carry out my ambition, I do not want to attract any unwanted attention."

"You already have done Finitevus and that's me." growled Elise coldly "I've been assigned here to protect Mephiles from being released and if you're here to release him, I'm afraid I'm gonna have to lay the smack down on you."

"Don't waste my time you foolish woman, save yourself a beating and surrender." Finitevus's voice was heavy with annoyance.

"I'm Princess Elise and I will NOT abandon my post for any reason!" snarled Elise.

Finitevus held his hand up and he dared Elise to come up to him. Elise foolishly did as Finitevus wanted her to and she ran towards Finitevus. Finitevus leaped up to the roof of the tunnel, gripped the stonework around the mouth of the tunnel above him and he raised his legs. He lashed out in a kangaroo style and both his feet slammed directly in Elise's chest. Elise staggered backwards, amazed at the power behind Finitevus's kicks. The kick had felt like being hammered only not as hard and having the texture of bandaged up feet. Finitevus dropped down from the tunnel and he chopped Elise across the face with a mighty swipe of his hand. Elise took the blow and she brought her elbow-slamming down on Finitevus's shoulder, causing the echidna's upper body to lean to one side and then Elise gripped him in a chokehold, her arm tightly constricting his neck and pressing against his windpipe. Finitevus pinched Elise on the neck and made the jaguar yelp in pain. Finitevus broke out of her grasp in a single twirl and he socked Elise in the mouth. Blood streamed down Elise's chin as Finitevus's fist violently struck her jaw. Wiping the blood away, Elise lashed out with a furious swipe of her fingers as if trying to claw Finitevus without actually having any claws. Finitevus dodged the attack and he ran around beside Elise. He took Elise's legs out from underneath her with a swift roundhouse kick and Elise slammed down onto the floor, the impact taking the wind out of her. Finitevus grabbed a flame torch and just as Elise stood up, he pointed it at her. Gasping in horror, Elise backed away from Finitevus as he advanced on her with the torch. Her back ended up against the wall near the tunnel and she pressed herself firmly against it. Her head rained with sweat as Finitevus held the flaming torch in front of her face. She could feel the heat licking at her, just waiting to consume her whole. Elise gulped while Finitevus grinned wickedly.

"Such a pathetic fight." he sneered "Now stand down and I won't burn you alive."

"Oh please, don't do this!" whimpered Elise "I'm begging you, please

don't release Mephiles! He'll doom us all if you release him! Please!"

"He has great power and I only wish to claim the power for myself." purred Finitevus darkly "I have great plans and Mephiles will be very useful for them indeed."

"I'm begging you, please listen to me!" screeched Elise, trying as much as she could to keep herself from the flames as the flickered wildly at her "If you release Mephiles and he releases Iblis, you'll bring the end of everything! Once they become Solaris, that's it! We're all doomed! Please don't do this!"

"I am not interested in your begging princess." growled Finitevus "Besides, my plan revolves around destruction anyway, this "Solaris" will be quite welcome. This world is corrupted and like a wild fire that needs to be cleansed. I'll be all too happy to unleash the starting ember. But I'll not allow Solaris to destroy the entire world, oh no. I'll tame its power and make it destroy as much as I deem necessary."

I won't let you do this!" shouted Elise bravely, trying not to let the fire intimidate her a minute longer.

"Oh you won't? And how do you plan on stopping me?" snorted Finitevus, edging the torch ever closer to Elise's face.

Elise didn't answer, she just dropped down onto the floor, completely out of harm's way now. Elise punched Finitevus in the gut while she was still sat down on the floor and while Finitevus doubled over, she jumped up and uppercut the echidna into the door she had been standing guard in front of. Finitevus bumped into the door and yet surprisingly, was still holding the torch in his hand. Elise grabbed his wrists and tried to make him drop the torch but Finitevus fought back and pushed on Elise's arms. The two were getting into a sumo match right about now, both opponents pushing onto each other's arms as much as they possibly could. Elise grunted as she tried to overpower Finitevus whereas Finitevus wasn't to the point of making a noise of effort. Just gritting his teeth and glowering at Elise. The girl was surprisingly strong. She was clearly more of an opponent than Finitevus had anticipated. But Finitevus knew what to do about Elise. He twisted his hand and aimed the torch at Elise's arm. The fire singed Elise's arm and made

the jaguar scream in anguish as the flame burnt her arm. Elise let go of Finitevus and gripped her arm tensely, still screaming horribly over the horrible burn she's received. Finitevus dropkicked her into the tunnel and he saw to opening the door. Elise pressed her arm against the cold, damp wall of the tunnel to ease the burning pain in her arm, leaving Finitevus to just punch the door of its hinges. Finitevus ran in through the door and found himself inside a dingy room that wouldn't have looked out of place in a castle's dungeon. It was dark, damp and murky and there was a stony plinth where the Sceptre of Darkness stood eerily above. The sceptre was stony and had a purple gem in the centre of its head. Finitevus ran up to the sceptre and he grabbed it eagerly. Elise ran into the room and gasped in terror as Finitevus raised the sceptre, ready to break it.

"NO! DON'T PLEASE!" screamed Elise.

Finitevus ignored Elise and just as the princess ran to stop him, he threw the sceptre into the wall at the end of the room. Elise tackled Finitevus and pinned him down to the plinth but it was much too late. The sceptre had been hurled into the wall by Finitevus and it was not designed to withstand being smashed into the wall like that. Upon hitting the wall, it had smashed into a million pieces. With the sceptre broken, its prisoner was now free to roam once again. A black puddle oozed out of the broken sceptre. Elise could only watch in horror as the puddle began to form a shape. Finitevus watched, clearly fascinated by what was happening next. Unbeknownst to both of them, Silver and Blaze had come to the underground level of the palace and had run to the room only to see a black puddle forming a solid shape. They had no idea what was going on so they could only watch. The black puddle formed a Mobian hedgehog shape and solidified itself like water being frozen into ice. The thing now looked a little bit like Shadow the Hedgehog only it had a crystalline appearance, no nose or mouth, red eyes with green pupils and a devious scowl that could make the devil wet himself in fear. The tips of its quills, the edges around its eyes, its hands, its feet and even its ears had a crystalline texture around them, making it look more like some living jewel than a Mobian. Silver and Blaze were dumbfounded. They couldn't believe what they were looking at. Finitevus looked delighted at what he was looking at whereas Elise looked like she was going to have a heart-attack. The thing stared

down at the floor for a moment before raising its head back and thundering with laughter.

"Muah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Oooooh how horrible fate can be!" crowed the crystalline hedgehog, its voice booming and sounding very much like Knuckles the Echidna, only more evil "I have been sealed away for ten miserable years by the foolish people of Soleanna and now I am free to wreck havoc wherever I go! I am Mephiles the Dark…and I am FREE, FREE AT LAST! AH, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!

His laughter boomed around the room like a haunting echo of the ghouls…

Footnotes:

The accusation came to Silver in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 15: All's Fair In Warfare

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 23: Becoming A Spy***

***** See the DeviantArt exclusive chapter "The Sword of Elemental Power"**

HOLY CRAP! MEPHILES IS HERE?! WHAT THE HELL'S GONNA HAPPEN NEXT?!

Tune into the next chapter "Dark Tidings" to find out what happens next...believe me, it ain't pretty...

Dark Tidings

Story 182: Dark Tidings

"Blaze…I think we've found Mephiles." said Silver the Hedgehog, his voice hoarse as if he couldn't speak properly. He was that horrified right now.

"We have indeed." Blaze the Cat gasped in terror as she stared at the crystalline hedgehog that identified itself as Mephiles "We're too late! The Day of Solaris is likely to begin…"

Soleanna was in for a dark time. The maniacal Dr. Finitevus had just managed to break into the forbidden cell that the Sceptre of Darkness was being held in and now Finitevus had broken the sceptre before Princess Elise, the princess of Soleanna and the one who had been entrusted with guarding the sceptre for today, could stop him. The sceptre lay in pieces and because it was broken, the valuable prisoner it contained was free once again. Mephiles the Dark, a demigod that was half of the eternal sun god Solaris, stood over the broken sceptre in a zombie-like manner. His cold, demonic stare seemed to have a Medusa-like effect on Elise. She was frozen in terror, unable to move or even speak. She could only stare directly at Mephiles as if he was her worst nightmare. As far as anyone could tell, Mephiles WAS her worst nightmare. Finitevus pushed Elise off of himself, sending the princess tumbling onto her bottom and he rose from the plinth. Mephiles walked, his arms limp and his head facing the floor. He rose his head and glowered at Elise.

"Muah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! You poor, simple fools thought you could contain me after I and my other half Iblis were separated as a result of your failed Solaris Project." crowed Mephiles, pointing straight at the petrified princess "But now I am free at long last. Ten years have I been held in that sceptre, unable to do anything but watch as you and your family guarded me and made sure I never escaped. And now I'm free, I am going to find Iblis and join with him at long last so that we can become Solaris!"

Elise still couldn't speak. She was too shocked and horrified to do so. Silver and Blaze were about to step in and help Elise but they held back for the moment for Finitevus decided to make himself known. He stood before Mephiles and bowed graciously before him. Mephiles seemed to scowl at Finitevus as if he was staring at a disgusting bug that he wanted to just flick away or step on.

"Greeting Mephiles, I am Dr. Finitevus and I am the one who freed you from your prison." Finitevus purred.

"In that case I am very grateful for your aid." crooned Mephiles, the tone in his voice suggesting he didn't really mean it "I thank you for freeing me…Dr. Finitevus."

"You're most welcome dark creature of great power." said Finitevus wickedly "Now you maybe wondering why I have freed you from your prison. You see, I have plans, great plans and I could do with somebody as powerful as you on my side. I've heard that you wield great power Mephiles and if you join me, we can bring order to this tainted world and make it a dark paradise for villains everywhere. Do you accept my offer?"

Silver and Blaze did not like what they were hearing. Finitevus wanted Mephiles to join him? And what was his so-called "great plan"? Was that linked in anyway to the end of the world? Silver was now beginning to wonder if he'd found the key to changing the past. But he got the surprise of his life when Mephiles answered Finitevus's question.

"No." he growled.

"What?!" cried Finitevus in disbelief, his face contorting with shock. An unusual expression for Finitevus to wear on his face indeed.

"I do not seek world dominion, nor do I wish to bring order to the world." boomed Mephiles menacingly "I crave only one thing… destruction. When I become Solaris, I am going to lay waste to this pathetic world and not only am I going to do that, I will lay waste to everything else. As a super-dimensional being, the whole multi-verse will fall before me!"

That made Silver and Blaze very nervous. Mephiles wanted to destroy the multi-verse?! It was the multi-verse crisis all over again! Only this time no time rifts were involved and they actually knew how they could stop the crisis this time. They had to destroy Mephiles now before he could find Iblis and become Solaris! Silver and Blaze prepared to jump in and fight Mephiles but Finitevus seemed eager to launch the first attack. He bent down in a battle ready stance and fixed his steely gaze on Mephiles.

"You cannot destroy the multi-verse!" shouted Finitevus desperately "Would you really be so demonic as to wipe out all existence?!"

"Life means nothing to me, only destruction." purred Mephiles darkly, giving Finitevus a Basilisk stare "I am going to find Iblis, then I'm going to merge with him and we shall form Solaris! Once Solaris is born, we will lay waste to everything in existence! And then there will only be one life form that is truly deserving of living…Solaris."

"Well I have great plans for this world and I'm not about to let you put a stop to them before I can unleash them!" snarled Finitevus "It appears I've made a mistake, a mistake I'll soon rectify right now!"

He lunged at Mephiles and punched him in the face as hard as he could. The crystalline hedgehog-shaped creature was hurled swiftly off his feet by the punch and he slammed against the wall at the force of a car crashing into another car head on. Mephiles didn't appear to be hurt by the impact. He in fact was completely unharmed! He still felt the punch though and he had to admit, for a mortal, Finitevus had some power behind him. Mephiles cricked his neck and he glowered at Finitevus.

"All right then…" he purred menacingly.

He then summoned a dark, crackling ball of energy to his hands. He threw the energy ball at Finitevus but the echidna was already out of the way just seconds before it could hit him. He rolled over the plinth as the ball swept through the air just millimetres from his leg. Silver and Blaze threw themselves onto the floor before the ball could hit them. It pounded against the floor just outside the cell, kicking up brickwork and throwing stone and shrapnel into the tunnel outside the cell. Mephiles was impressed by Finitevus's agility. He hadn't

expected a mortal of any kind to be so agile. Laughing, Mephiles decided to do something else. He was a being of darkness, meaning he could flawlessly shadow-meld with any shadows around in the room. And as bad luck would have it, the cell was shrouded in shadows. It was mostly dark with very little light. Mephiles sunk down into the shadow like a melting snowman and he disappeared from view. Finitevus was both amazed and horrified at this. How could he fight something he couldn't touch? Elise jumped up onto her feet and looked around nervously. Where would Mephiles emerge from? Silver and Blaze stayed outside the cell, waiting for Mephiles to return into view. This was not good at all. If he could shadow-meld then it was very likely he'd be difficult to defeat.

"Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" the haunting cackle of Mephiles boomed around the room completely out of the blue, startling the Mobians "I am a dark entity, shadows are my strengths and your weaknesses! I am strong in the shadows and the shadows will consume you all so that you may never see the light again!"

He then suddenly emerged from a shadow directly behind Finitevus. Finitevus heard him coming and he roundhouse kicked Mephiles in the face. Mephiles took the kick as if nothing had happened and he uppercut Finitevus in the chin. The echidna stumbled backwards, surprised at the power Mephiles had in that punch. Mephiles then summoned a dark ball of energy and he thrust his arms forward, sending the ball slamming into Finitevus's body and sending him hurling backwards across the room. Finitevus slammed into the wall and fell onto the floor. He spluttered for the impact had knocked the wind out of him. He tried to get back up but Mephiles summoned two shadowy figures that greatly resembled him from nowhere and the two figures grabbed hold of Finitevus. Finitevus fought against their grasp but the figures held on tightly. They were quite strong, even more so than Finitevus himself. Cackling maniacally, Mephiles advanced on Finitevus and he slugged the echidna in the gut. Finitevus spluttered as Mephiles's fist slammed into his stomach. Mephiles then proceeded to drive his fist into Finitevus's head. Slamming down hard on the echidna's cranium with his tightly clenched fist, Mephiles managed to knock Finitevus out cold. The echidna collapsed onto the floor, unconscious and defeated. Mephiles stood over Finitevus and he held his hand above him.

"Such a foolish waste of energy…" he gloated "You meagre creatures can't hope to match a dark entity such as myself. Now Finitevus, you will die for daring to defy me!"

"Oh no you don't!" yelled Elise, charging towards Mephiles and elbow-thrusting him in the back, slamming him face first into the wall as a result of her attack.

Mephiles was momentarily stunned but sinisterly enough, just seconds later he got back onto his feet and turned to face Elise. He wasn't even rubbing his face better. His hands still remained limp by his sides in his weird-zombie-like-manner that he seemed very fond of standing in. Elise knew that Mephiles wasn't easy to hurt so this didn't surprise her. She was still worried over whether she'd be able to bring down Mephiles. Judo skills would not be enough to take down a demigod no matter how hard she tried to beat Mephiles. Silver and Blaze seemed to share Elise's doubts for they were beginning to think Elise was signing her death warrant even so much as thinking about taking on Mephiles. If he could knock Finitevus out then what hope did she have against him? Mephiles clenched his fists and his reptilian eyes fixed on the nervous but determined princess that had dared to assault him so vigorously.

"So…the mighty princess dares to attack me?" he purred "What an act of folly…you will not have chance against me. I know everything I need to know about you Elise. I've been in your family's care for ten years! I know your strengths and weaknesses and your fear of me is your greatest weakness. Trying to fight me will only bring your death sooner than you'd have liked it to come…"

"I don't care! I will do whatever I can to beat you down Mephiles! You will not leave this room alive!" screamed Elise viciously.

"If you want to achieve that your highness, you'll need some help." said Silver, running into the room to join the battle.

The time for idling by and watching was over, he and Blaze needed to get involved in this fight if Elise had a even a ghost of a chance in stopping Mephiles. Silver stood beside Elise's left side and Blaze took Elise's right side. The jaguar was momentarily stunned at the surprise arrival of Silver and Blaze but nonetheless grateful. She

had remembered how they'd helped stop Marik and his Martian squadron from wrecking Soleanna during the infamous Martian invasion. Elise's face lit up like a light bulb.

"Silver! Blaze! You two are here to help me! Awesome!" she cried out ecstatically.

"We have indeed." said Blaze tersely "Me and Silver studied about Mobius's past and learnt about an event supposedly called "The Day of Solaris". We're here to make sure it never happens."

That made Elise feel a bit worried. The Day of Solaris? Did that mean that Mephiles finds Iblis somehow and fuses with him to make Solaris? She didn't have to worry now Silver and Blaze were here to prevent that from happening, she could put her worries at ease and focus on stopping Mephiles. With Silver and Blaze on hand, her job just got easier. Mephiles didn't seem to agree with her though for he merely laughed out loud as if Silver and Blaze were a comedy duo and they'd just done something seriously funny.

"So it appears that time travellers have come to make sure I never fuse with Solaris?" he sneered "That means that I end up succeeding in my cause. How delightful! But if there's time travellers here to stop me from becoming Solaris then I'll have to erase you both just like I intend to erase the princess and her pitiful family for imprisoning me in that accursed sceptre!" he pointed a sharp, crystalline digit at Silver and Blaze. The digit was so sharp that Silver felt like Mephiles could cut people just by pointing at them.

"You're not becoming Solaris Mephiles!" barked Silver hotly "You're going to be destroyed and with you gone, Iblis won't have anybody to become Solaris with!"

"I'm afraid it's not that simple." said Elise gravely, her face suggesting what she was going to say next was not good at all "They're demigods, they cannot be destroyed. Why do you think we merely imprisoned Mephiles and Iblis if we could destroy them?"

"No! How can we stop Mephiles if we can't destroy him?!" cried a very horrified Blaze the Cat.

"We stomp on him until he turns into his base form and then try to imprison him again." explained Elise "Once he's imprisoned again, I'm going to just toss him into the sea. Nobody will find him in there."

"I'd like to see you try and imprison me again Elise." snorted Mephiles, his eyes making an expression that matched the tone of his voice "You and your family will be the first to die. Consider that an act of mercy for you will be spared the terror that Solaris will inflict upon all of existence when he rises…"

Mephiles held his hands out and out of the blue, purple spheres of crackling energy loomed above his hands. Mephiles threw the balls but Silver caught them with his psychic energy powers. He drew his arm back and launched it forward like a catapult, sending the energy balls hurling back towards Mephiles. The balls struck Mephiles and hurled him callously into the wall. Mephiles had never been stricken by his own attacks before and he could hardly say it was a satisfying experience. More like the most painful experience he'd ever encountered. Mephiles stood awkwardly, his legs bent inwards as if he was about to collapse. He remained standing and he gasped furiously. It was amazing he could gasp despite not having a mouth, or at least a visible mouth. Mephiles raised his head and glowered at Silver. His stare was freakier than anything Silver had seen before.

"A psychokinetic? I am impressed…I didn't want this battle to be too easy after all." he crowed.

He melted down into the shadows and disappeared from view once again. Silver and Blaze were instantly on the alert, looking for any sign of Mephiles. It would be hard to locate somebody who had melted down into the shadows but they wouldn't let that stop them. Mephiles emerged from behind Silver and the demigod back-handed him across the cell, sending him hurling over the plinth and crashing down by the foot of the plinth. He groaned, amazed at how hard Mephiles could hit. Furious, Blaze set her hands alight and she punched Mephiles with a blazing fist that would deliver a double dose of pain. Pain from the punch and pain from the fire. It made no difference to Mephiles for he withstood the blows that Blaze launched at him. Blaze threw her punches hard and callously, striking him in the face, gut and the sides of his head. She uppercut Mephiles and then tripped him up with a roundhouse kick to the

legs. Mephiles picked himself up and he grabbed Blaze's arm as she lunged at him again. He twisted her arm behind her back sharply and wrapped his other hand around her neck. Blaze squirmed furiously, trying to break free but Mephiles seemed to have an iron grasp. He pressed hard against Blaze's windpipe, the cat losing air and fast as she tried to keep conscious.

"And a pyrokinetic too, even better!" cackled Mephiles "You'd be perfect for helping me find Iblis young one, you'd be able to sense his flames and lead me right to him!"

"I'm not helping you find Iblis! I'm helping you get sealed away again!" snarled Blaze, setting her entire body alight and letting Mephiles have it full on with her fire powers.

Mephiles let out a haunting bellow as Blaze's fire seared away at his body. He was forced to let go of Blaze in order to save himself anymore pain. Just because he was difficult to hurt, it didn't mean he was entirely tolerable of pain, especially great pain like this. Blaze turned around and roundhouse kicked Mephiles across the face, sending him hurling into the wall. As Mephiles hit the wall, some bricks came loose and crumbled away onto the floor. The cell was very old and run down, if the fight got too violent then the entire room could cave in onto their heads. Mephiles picked himself up and he narrowed his eyes into an expression mixed with fury, rage and annoyance. He raised his arms in to the air and suddenly, out of the shadows in the room, rose shadowy figures that resembled him greatly with small differences to their anatomy and appearance. The shadow figures grew in numbers and they completely surrounded Elise, Blaze and Silver. The three Mobians looked nervous as the army of shadow men advanced on them.

"Drown in darkness!" bellowed Mephiles, disappearing from view and leaving the Mobians at the mercy of his shadow army.

The moment he disappeared, the shadow men pounced on Silver, Blaze and Elise. Silver used his psychokinesis to hold some of the men away but he couldn't focus on all of them at once for it was too strenuous for his head and there were too many shadow men at once, meaning he couldn't stop them all. He threw the shadow men he managed to grab away but the others grabbed hold of him from

all corners and they forced him down onto the floor. After forcing him down, they all piled on top of him, hoping to hold him down. Blaze threw fire at as many creatures as she could but the shadow men kept coming back after she blazed them away and they jumped on top of her. Grabbing hold of whatever part of her body they could, they dragged Blaze down onto the floor and held her firmly down. Blaze struggled, trying desperately to break free from the shadow men but their numbers made them much stronger in their holding of her. Elise had been taken down in mere seconds and was forced down onto the floor by the shadow men. She struggled as much as she possibly could but she couldn't get free. Silver, Blaze and Elise were all firmly pressed down onto the floor by the shadow men, pretty much being consumed by the shadows that shrouded the cell only these shadows were alive and had limbs and solid forms. Mephiles emerged from the shadows and stood before his captives. The shadow men holding Elise formed a new shape as Mephiles silently commanded them to do so. They formed a long black pole with side arms that resembled the Christian Cross that stood before Mephiles. Elise's arms were fastened to the cross's side arms and her legs were fastened to the base of the cross. Elise was completely restrained and trapped before the dark demigod. Mephiles seemed quite happy to have Elise as his prisoner. The jaguar stared, terrified, into the crystalline hedgehog's eyes as Mephiles stared at her with a stare that could make the weak-willed die of exposure. Mephiles reached out with his hand and he grabbed Elise by the face.

"Before you die princess, you can contribute to my victory by ending your life with the telling of Iblis's location." he said smoothly, his voice making Elise's skin crawl "Where is Iblis?!"

"Go to hell!" screamed Elise.

"I'm a dark entity, hell would be a comforting place for me to go to." snorted Mephiles mockingly "Now where is Iblis?! Tell me now or your friends will be scarified needlessly!"

"Doesn't matter, you'll kill us all anyway if Iblis is released." snapped Elise "I'm not telling you where he is!"

"You will tell me or I'll tear this planet apart trying to find him myself!"

snarled Mephiles.

"Go ahead, it'll just make it possible for you to be defeated and imprisoned again." retorted Elise.

"If you won't tell me where Iblis is then I'll MAKE you tell me!" roared Mephiles "I might have to take over your body and…"

His sentence was rudely interrupted by a bright glow of teal light and fiery orange. Silver and Blaze had summoned the power they needed to break out of the shadow army's holds. Silver blasted them away with a burst of psychic energy and Blaze threw them away with a burst of flames that spread around like an ever-expanding ring that was designed to keep people away from you. Silver and Blaze got onto their feet and Silver used his psychokinesis to hold Mephiles in place. The demigod tried to break free but Silver's hold was powerful. While Silver held Mephiles, Blaze threw fire at the shadow cross holding Elise and the cross disappeared into the shadows, releasing Elise. The jaguar lashed forward and elbow-thrusted Mephiles in the gut. She elbowed him on top of his head and then backhanded him onto the floor. Mephiles was about to stand up but Silver grabbed him with his psychokinesis and threw him towards Blaze. Blaze, her hand alit with flames, drew her arm back and launched it straight into Mephiles just as he hurled towards her. Blaze's fist hit Mephiles squarely in the centre of his face, a perfect shot if you ever saw it. Mephiles's head snapped backwards, his body lurching forwards due to the impact of the punch and Mephiles hurled backwards into the wall. More bricks fell out onto the floor and some very perceptible cracks started to spread up the wall. The sudden cracking of the wall had given Blaze some kind of idea. They could maybe make the cell cave in on top of Mephiles. It wouldn't kill him but it would hold him long enough for them to find a way to imprison Mephiles. Mephiles staggered onto his feet and he was about to launch another attack on the Mobians but suddenly, a warp ring appeared underneath his feet and he disappeared through it. The warp ring opened up in the ceiling and Mephiles fell out of it with a crunch on the floor. Dr. Finitevus had come to at last and despite the noticeable bump on his cranium, he appeared to be fine. He was evidently very peeved though and seemed eager to finish off Mephiles. Silver, Blaze and Elise were pleased at this, meant that

Finitevus could help them subdue the demigod. Finitevus ran towards Mephiles and just as Mephiles got up to his feet, the echidna chopped him across the cheek and then grabbed his arms. He forced his arms behind his back and he kicked Mephiles onto the floor. Mephiles punched at the stone plinth and he cracked it. The cracks were so big that he was able to grab a chunk of the plinth and wrench it free from its housing. Mephiles threw the slab of rock at Finitevus but Finitevus used a warp ring to send the rock hurling back towards him. The rock landed slap-bang on top of Mephiles's head but the impact didn't even phase him. He swiped his arms and sent a ball of purple energy slamming vigorously into Finitevus's torso. The ball hit Finitevus and slammed him against the wall, knocking the wind out of him. Elise ran towards Mephiles but he levitated up out of the way, leaving Elise to rush past underneath him. Mephiles positioned himself upside down and he flew straight down on top of Elise with his elbow aimed at the top of her head. The attack brought Elise down onto her stomach and Mephiles grabbed Elise's arms. Yanking them sharply back, he dug his foot into the small of Elise's back and yanked viciously on her arms as if hoping to wrench them free from her sockets. Elise squealed and tried to yank her arms free from Mephiles's tough grasp but the demigod held on tightly and kept pulling. Blaze jumped towards Mephiles and struck him in the back with a fiery tornado that threw him off of Elise and sent him hurling towards the recovered Finitevus. Finitevus jumped up high and dropkicked Mephiles onto the floor. Mephiles groaned furiously, clearly getting agitated at the resistance that he was met with. He had no idea that mortal creatures could be so powerful. Mephiles picked himself up only to get grabbed in a psychic grasp by Silver the Hedgehog. Silver rose Mephiles off the ground and then threw him into the ceiling. Mephiles hit the ceiling and just as he did so, a chunk of the ceiling fell free from its place and it weighed down on Mephiles like a hand coming down to squash an ant. The chunk of ceiling crashed down on the floor, flattening Mephiles like a pancake. But when you're a dark entity with shadow powers, it'll take more than a chunk of rock flattening you to stop you. Mephiles turned into his base form and the black puddle that he had reduced himself to trickled out from under the slab. After the puddle had done that, it reformed itself into Mephiles. It was like watching a snowman melting but in reverse. Blaze realized that her idea likely wouldn't slow Mephiles down that

much. They needed a better idea. Mephiles forced himself to stand, straining hard as he stood up. He looked to be in pain at long last but it was too much to hope that they'd defeated him. Mephiles raised his head, his face contorting with loathing.

"You fools are persistent I'll hand it to you…but ultimately your attempts are futile." he crooned darkly "I'll find Iblis myself and you can't stop me from locating him…"

With that said, he proceeded to sink down into another shadow and then disappear from view. That did not settle well with the Mobians at all, they were quick to panic.

"He's gone!" cried Elise "And he's going to try and find Iblis! He doesn't know where he is but he'll likely try whatever he can to find him! We have to stop Mephiles now!"

"Let's search everywhere!" cried Silver "There's plenty of shadows in Soleanna, he could pop up anywhere!"

I agree on that statement." said Finitevus grimly "We should split up and search the city high and low to see where Mephiles emerges. I sincerely doubt he has an unlimited range in that shadow meld of his. He'll only be able to travel through shadows as far as the next room or building. He won't end up out of Soleanna that quickly."

"I'll stay here and search the palace." said Blaze "The rest of you can search wherever you wish."

"If you see Mephiles Blaze, do what you can to stop him." said Silver urgently "The fate of Mobius depends on it."

"I know Silver." said Blaze, tenderly touching Silver's arm "I'll be careful, don't worry about me. You be careful yourself."

"I will Blaze." said Silver, tenderly touching Blaze's arm in return "Good luck in finding him."

"And to you." said Blaze, pecking Silver on the cheek for luck.

"Oooh I hope Mephiles doesn't play too hard to find!" whined Elise, hopping from one foot to another as if she needed to go, very badly

"Mom and dad will kill me if they find out he's escaped!"

"We'll find him, don't worry." said Silver "Finitevus, warp us outside the palace so we can get outta here faster."

Finitevus obeyed and he summoned a warp ring to his hand. He flicked it open and the warp ring opened a portal that led from the cell to the upper surface. Finitevus, Silver and Elise walked through the warp ring and left Blaze behind in the cell to search the palace for Mephiles. Once the warp ring vanished, Blaze prepared to leave the cell. But before she could leave, a tiny doubt began to nag in the back of her mind and it made Blaze hesitate, something she wasn't renowned for doing. Was Mephiles really gone? Was he still hiding in this room? He was going to look for Iblis so why would he still be in the cell? Maybe Mephiles had done this just to try and single out the four of them and make them easier to pick off. But he was trying to find Iblis so why would he need to single anybody out. Then Blaze realized something. He said that due to being a pyrokinetic, Blaze would be useful in finding Iblis. Had he pretended to leave just to try and single her out and make it easier to catch her? Not that it'd be a problem since Blaze would floor Mephiles and refuse to help him. Mephiles couldn't make her so what was there to worry about? Then suddenly, Blaze felt something close around her legs. She looked down and saw a black tentacle snaking its way up her legs and towards her waist! Blaze gasped in horror and the tentacle continued to close around Blaze until it wrapped itself around her body and then around her mouth, silencing her and preventing her from calling for help. Blaze struggled in the grasp of the tentacle but to no effect. She couldn't break free at all. She set herself on fire but the tentacle held her firmly, ignoring the flames as if Blaze wasn't even on fire! Blaze quickly grew very frightened. She'd fallen for Mephiles's trick and now Mephiles had her at his mercy. But she wouldn't submit to him, no way. She'd still refuse to help him. Then another tentacle grew out from the same shadow that the tentacle holding Blaze was growing out of and the tip of the tentacle formed Mephiles's upper body and arms. The head glowered at Blaze with its ominous, reptilian green and red eyes. Blaze frowned at Mephiles.

"How simple-minded you mortals can be…you managed to fall for

such an obvious trap and now I've caught you…Blaze I believe your name is." he purred.

Blaze just continued glaring at Mephiles, not showing any signs of giving up to him. Mephiles leaned forward and he lightly touched Blaze's cheek.

"As I've said Blaze, you are a pyrokinetic. You will make finding Iblis all that much easier for me. You will help me find Iblis or I shall be forced to take more…painful methods of which will make you comply."

"Mmm'll mmmver mmmelp mmmou!" growled Blaze, trying as best as she could to speak despite her mouth being held shut by the tentacle. At most, she could just mumble.

"I figured as such." growled Mephiles "Which is why I'll make you help me. If you won't help me under your own agenda then I very much think I'll have to force you…and by that I'll have to take control of your body…"

Blaze's eyes widened in shock. She squirmed and writhed furiously in the grip of the black tentacle but it just wouldn't let her go and she couldn't break free. She was at the mercy of Mephiles and he was free to do what he liked. Mephiles cackled at his prisoner as he transformed back into the tentacle tip and then he sank down into the shadow that he rose from. Blaze wondered what was going to happen next. Then the tentacle holding her unwrapped from around her mouth. Confused, Blaze watched the tentacle tip hover in front of her face. Then the tentacle tip seeped between Blaze's lips and forced itself down into Blaze's mouth. Gagging horribly, Blaze could do nothing about it as the tentacle descended down Blaze's throat and into her body. It was like swallowing a black snake only way more unpleasant. The tentacle disappeared down Blaze's throat, unravelling around her as it did so and Blaze coughed horribly as the tentacle finished entering her body. She gripped her chest in pain as if her heart was going to explode and she fell onto her knees, gasping hoarsely as if on the verge of vomiting. She gasped for air and choked, gripping her neck and fighting for breath. Then the tormented cat lay sprawled on the floor and she passed out. She didn't remain passed out for long though. She stood up two minutes

later and opened her eyes. Her beautiful golden eyes were replaced by the crystalline red and green eyes that Mephiles had and black veins began to appear all over Blaze's body. Her mouth curled into a sinister sneer that looked very out of place on somebody as serious and reserved as Blaze. Blaze admired herself all over and she laughed, only her laugh was not her own laugh, it was the laugh of Mephiles. He had done it. Mephiles had taken over Blaze's body and poor Blaze couldn't do anything about it. Mephiles stopped laughing and he gloated aloud to himself.

"All too easy…" he sneered "The cat was far too weak to resist my body control technique. Now with her pyrokinetic powers, I will locate Iblis and become Solaris at long last! And when Solaris rises…nobody will stop me! Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

With that said, Mephiles sank down into a shadow and disappeared from the cell. With Blaze's body, he could already sense Iblis's flames, but only very faintly. He had to search far and wide for Iblis but he'd find the demigod eventually and then all hell would break lose for everybody…

"And yet another missile misses me!" taunted Sonic the Hedgehog as he ducked down and avoided an oncoming missile from Dr. Eggman "Seriously doc, are you missing me on purpose or doing a really bad job at hitting me?! I'm confused as to what you're doing right now!"

Dr. Eggman let out a loud, grating growl of frustration as Sonic taunted him. How Sonic irritated him when he did that!

Things had been going much better for the Royal Fighters than for Elise, Silver, Blaze and Finitevus. Sonic and two Royal Fighters Mandy Mouse and Bunnie Rabbot were doing a fine job on keeping Dr. Eggman occupied while the other team members Sally Acorn, Tails the Fox Amy Rose, Cosmo the Seedrian, Cream the Rabbit, Geoffrey St. John, Wilson the Dog, Ruben the Water Panther and Sora Prower were taking out the Egg-Pawns that were guarding the Soleanna Refuelling Station that was being built for Dr. Eggman's upcoming Death Egg ship. Dr. Eggman kept trying to stop the Royal

Fighters from getting close to the tower but Sonic, Bunnie and Mandy were too much for him. Eggman threw a mighty punch that would have easily shattered bones at Mandy but Mandy ducked down onto the floor and she uppercut Eggman in the upper section of his life support mech. The uppercut was much stronger than it normally would have been thanks to the new knuckle attachments Tails had made for her last month. They never ceased to amaze Mandy at how much better these knuckle attachments were compared to her old brass ones. They really did make her punches all the more stronger and made her much more liable to fight somebody like Eggman. Dr. Eggman swiped at Mandy with his metal claws but the mouse managed to dodge his attack. This was a serious Achilles heel for Eggman, his life-support mech was based upon the design of E-123 Omega and he was rather heavy, cumbersome and slow so his speed paled in comparison to Mandy's. But Eggman was able to land a laser shot on Mandy that threw her across the battlefield and sent her flying into a bush. Bunnie flew in and she threw a punch at Eggman. Eggman threw a punch at the same time and the two connected metal fists very violently with each other. Eggman won the match due to his much larger and more powerful robotic limb and Bunnie was thrown onto the ground. She picked herself up and punched Eggman in the gut. Eggman fell down onto his bottom and just as he picked himself up, Sonic spin-dashed him in the bottom. Eggman fell onto his hands and knees and he deployed some guns that pointed behind him to shoot at Sonic. Sonic dodged every shot as if they were moving in slow motion and he stomp-kicked Eggman in the back. Eggman lay flat on the ground after that attack and he thumped his fists against the ground in rage.

"How is it I'm encased in the body of E-123 Omega, my most weapon-heavy and one of my most powerful robots in the history of the world and I'm still getting floored by you pests?!" wailed Dr. Eggman.

"Isn't it obvious Eggman? Because you suck, that's why!" retorted Mandy cheekily, laughing as she punched Eggman in the mech's head section.

"Ah reckon he's fallen to the point he's not really a threat, more like

an annoyance nowadays!" taunted Bunnie, kicking Eggman as furiously as she could.

They knew that Eggman was easily riled and that annoying your enemy was always a good idea. It makes them angry and when they get angry, they lose focus and become easier to attack for they'll be too busy to try and block your blows and just try to attack you. Eggman growled savagely and he picked himself up. His huge metal arms shook with rage.

"I'll show you just how "annoying" I can be!" roared Dr. Eggman.

He lunged at Bunnie and Mandy with his metal claws but the two girls jumped out of the way, leaving him to claw at the dirt they had just momentarily been standing on. Bunnie drew her arm backwards and threw a punch at Eggman's shoulder but the evil scientist caught her arm with his hand and hoisted her off the ground. He then spun Bunnie around and walloped Mandy with her. It was like Bunnie had become a Mobian nunchaku for Eggman. Mandy crashed into a nearby tree as she was hit by Bunnie and Eggman threw Bunnie into the tree just on top of Mandy. Sonic zoomed towards Dr. Eggman but Eggman deployed one of his laser cannons and he shot at the ground just in front of Sonic's feet. The force of the blast caused Sonic to lose his balance and topple over onto his face. Now Sonic was down, Eggman grabbed the hedgehog and he lifted him up off the ground. He slammed Sonic onto the floor like a rugby ball at touchdown. Sonic groaned as he felt pretty much every inch of his body flare up with pain and Eggman lifted him up again. He slammed him on the ground again and then closed his other hand around Sonic's head.

"Let's see how useful you are once I've separated your head from your body!" he cackled menacingly as he pulled on Sonic's head.

But he never got the chance to render his greatest enemy headless for Bunnie deployed her arm cannon and shot Eggman in the back, causing him to drop Sonic and sending him hurling across the battlefield. He landed with a heavy crash onto his back. Sonic picked himself up, massaging his aching head better as pain flowed through his skull. Thank goodness for that save otherwise things would have been very messy indeed.

"You OK sugah-hog?" asked Bunnie.

"Never better." said Sonic casually "I'd best make sure that never happens again. That was painful!"

Bunnie nodded, only daring to imagine the pain Sonic must have felt as Eggman quite literally attempted to rip his head off a moment ago. Dr. Eggman picked himself up and he turned to face his foes. He pointed his Gatling guns at the trio but Bunnie deployed her force field generator and used her force field to block Eggman's attack. The bullets bounced off of her force field as if they were merely tennis balls bouncing off the wall. While Eggman was shooting at Bunnie, Sonic took the perfect opportunity to run around from behind and spin-dash Eggman in the side. Eggman was knocked over but just as he picked himself up, Mandy uppercut Eggman in the torso and sent him flying into the air. Eggman spiralled crazily through the air and he crashed into a tree, his great bulk knocking it clean over as he crashed into it. Eggman was back on his feet in no time and he picked up the fallen tree. He swung it at Sonic but Sonic jumped over the tree as it swept underneath his feet and he spin-dashed Eggman once again. Eggman raised the fallen tree up but Bunnie shot it to splinters before he could slam it down on Sonic. Growling angrily, Eggman thundered towards Bunnie and roundhouse punched the Rabbot as hard as he could. The punch felt like being hit by a wrecking ball. Bunnie was left lying on the ground wondering which part of her to rub better first. Mandy ran in to punch Eggman again but Eggman grabbed her and hoisted her off the ground. He pointed a laser cannon at Mandy's face but Sonic stomp-kicked his arm down, forcing him to shoot the ground and due to how close the laser had hit from where Eggman was standing, the force of the shot sent Eggman's arm hurling to the side and throwing him off balance. This caused him to drop Mandy and Mandy punched him in the torso, throwing him onto his back once again. Bunnie picked herself up and picked up Dr. Eggman with her robotic arm. It was amazing how strong her robotic arm was. Eggman forever rued the day he had ever given Bunnie those robotic parts when he tried to roboticize her once. Bunnie aimed at the refuelling station and she threw Dr. Eggman at it. Eggman crashed into one of the supporting beams for the tower, his mech denting it heavily and buckling it slightly a she crashed into it. The tower began to creak ominously

and lean to one side a little. Eggman pushed himself back onto his feet and he stampeded back towards the Mobians. Bunnie however stuck her leg out and caused Eggman to trip over it. What resulted was an hilarious scene of Eggman tripping over Bunnie's leg and rolling across the grass and into a tree with a wallop. Sonic was laughing so hard he swore that his guts were about to erupt.

"Oh man that is priceless! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" he chortled "Eggman would make great entertainment in a comedy show I bet! Hee, hee, hee, hee!"

"He'd certainly be very popular among us." agreed Mandy "We'd be laughing at him because it's our worst enemy doing something silly."

"Yeah." Sonic breathed as he slowed down his laughing "Hey Sally, how are you doing over there?" he called over to his girlfriend.

"We're doing quite well sweetie." Sally called back as she sliced another Egg-Pawn to pieces "The Egg-Pawns are falling like dead flies. We've got this covered."

"That's great." said Sonic "So I think we can destroy that refuelling station now."

"I'm inclined to agree there." said Sally approvingly "Geoffrey, fire a dart into each supporting leg of the tower." she ordered "Once you've done that, we'll run into the forest for cover and let the darts blow the tower down."

"No problem your highness." said Geoffrey brightly.

Sally had been true to her word. The Egg-Pawns had all been destroyed by her and the others so there was nobody to stop them from destroying the tower. Now there was no more resistance, Geoffrey fired an explosive dart into all four of the tower's supporting legs. He was amazed that the darts had actually managed to embed themselves into the steelwork. It seemed the tower wasn't as strong as he thought it would be. Now the darts were set up, the Royal Fighters retreated into the forest. Geoffrey was the last to guy, pushing the detonation button on his arm-mounted crossbow as he legged it. The darts exploded, tearing the supporting legs apart as

they ripped their way through the strong steel. Eggman picked himself up only to see that his precious tower was beginning to fall. He didn't mind since of course, it was fake as part of his plan to slow the Royal Fighters down and keep their attention away from the Death Egg but he still legged it since he didn't want the tower to crash down on top of him. As he ran, he had to give himself a lot of credit, he'd certainly done a good job on convincing the Royal Fighters that the towers were worth their time and effort. They didn't suspect a thing about his plans at all. The doomed refuelling station creaked a horrible, ear-piercing creak as the legs gave way and the tower fell down. It came down with a thundering crash as tonnes of steel slammed down onto the ground. The top half of the tower flattened many of the trees due to how tall it was and the fact some trees were near to it and not out of the tower's range. Some environmentalists would not be pleased with this at all. The Royal Fighters heard the terrific crash as the refuelling station came down and they whooped with joy.

"Oh yeah! We destroyed it!" whooped Tails joyfully.

"I'm amazed how easy these things are to destroy." laughed Sonic "It's like Eggman's not even trying to make them Royal Fighter-proof! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do take in mind Sonic that we're destroying the stations while they're being constructed." noted Sally "We wouldn't have this much luck if the stations were complete. We're just lucky to be destroying them while they're so vulnerable."

"True." said Sonic agreeably "I hope we find the other stations before they get completed. I do have to wonder how many more there are to destroy."

"We'll have to find that out sooner or later." said Sally "Me and Nicole could probably try and hack into Eggman's database and find out that vital piece of information."

"So we'd best schedule a visit to the Egg-Bunker at some point." said Sonic "That'll be no problem at all. So, let's get back to Soleanna Town and give Elise the good news."

Before anyone could do anything though, Dr. Eggman emerged from within the depths of the forest and he pointed his deployed missile launchers at the Royal Fighters. The Royal Fighters all stepped back hastily as Eggman prepared to bombard them with missiles.

"You pests have destroyed my refuelling station! Now you'll pay for this with your lives!" he roared furiously.

"Geez Eggman, do you ever quit?" muttered Sonic "Just admit you're defeated for once and quit bothering us."

"Why do you see me as just "bothering you" these days Sonic?!" ranted Eggman "Have you forgotten that I'm the one who roboticized much of the populace upon my arrival here and destroyed the original Mobotropolis?! And have you forgotten about all the times I nearly beat you all and even once roboticized ALL of Mobius?!"

"Yes and you lost all of those times and nowadays, you're just easily defeated and you've come no closer to winning then you have before so you're not really a threat anymore Eggman, just a nuisance." snickered Sonic "And once you're locked away forever, you'll not be a nuisance to anybody anymore."

"Face it Eggman, you've become tiresome, predictable. You've hit rock bottom." said Sally with a cold smirk on her face that made her seem eerily villainous looking.

"I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S HIT ROCK BOTTOM!" bellowed Eggman angrily.

Sonic was pleased to see Eggman getting so mad. It's why he was so easily defeated these days, his anger was what ultimately prevented him from ever coming on top in this war. If Eggman couldn't control that temper of his, he had no chance of ever winning against the Royal Fighters. Eggman didn't seem to care though. He was going to wipe out Sonic and friends if it was the last thing he did. And even if he didn't, he still had his Death Egg coming soon and the Death Egg would roboticize all of Mobius once it took to the sky so no matter what happened now, Eggman would win in the end. At the same time, he thought it would be good if he at least managed to kill the Royal Fighters before the Death Egg launched

just to be safe. Eggman aimed his weapons at the Royal Fighters but just as he was about to fire, a wall of flames suddenly rushed across between Eggman and the Royal Fighters, making them all back off hastily to avoid being burnt by the fire.

"Whoa! I didn't know "Kill it with fire" was suddenly your next method of attack Eggman!" yelped Sonic as his nose was nearly singed off.

"That…wasn't me." blurted Eggman in surprise.

Sonic turned to his left and he saw who really started that flame wall. The flame wall ended and the person who had caused it strode forward towards the Royal Fighters. It was Blaze the Cat, their good old friend from the future. But something seemed oddly different about her. Her eyes were red and green and she had black veins visible all over her body. Plus her face seemed a little dark and possibly even evil looking. "Blaze" strode towards the Royal Fighters, a cold stare on her face as she glanced at them. Sonic instantly recognized the odd things about Blaze as she came up to them.

"Hey…uh…Blaze." he said wearily "Good to…see you. Um, you OK? You look a bit odd."

"I'm afraid Blaze isn't here right now." Blaze purred in a deep, dark voice that sounded very freaky coming out of her "She's had a bad case of "having her body taken over by an evil spirit"! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Sonic leaped back in fright and almost collided with Sally as he did so. His quills stood up on end and his eyes were wide with shock. Blaze with a male voice?! And just when he thought he couldn't see anything freakier than half the stuff he'd seen in his life.

"Wh-what's going on?" asked Tails "Why is Blaze talking in that scary voice?"

"I can definitely say goodbye to my sleep tonight." murmured Eggman.

"Who are you and why are you doing this to Blaze?!" demanded

Sonic furiously.

"I am Mephiles the Dark and I need this woman to find somebody important." purred Mephiles, gesturing towards the body of Blaze to which he currently piloted "With her pyrokinetic abilities, I will find Iblis and once I find Iblis, I will lay waste to everything in existence."

"Yeah about that, somebody else already tried that and we kinda stopped him." said Sonic smugly "So now we're going to do the same to you Mephiles! Let Blaze go and I promise I won't hurt you!"

"Blaze is mine until Iblis is found." growled Mephiles "If you want her back then leave me to find Iblis or I'll burn you all alive!"

"Just try it freak!" growled Sonic, zooming up to Mephiles and slugging him in the gut as hard as he possibly could.

He felt kind of guilty at having to punch Blaze but with Mephiles in her body, he had no choice but to attack her. He had to get Mephiles out of Blaze before he could use her any longer. Mephiles took the blow to the gut and he smiled wickedly at Sonic.

"That tickled." he crowed "But this will do more than tickle you…"

He swiped his arm and sent a wave of fire sweeping through the air towards Sonic…

Well this didn't go very well did it? Mephiles is in control of Blaze and is now using her to find Iblis! Will he succeed? Or will he be stopped in time?

Tune in next time as we bear witness to "The Flames of Iblis..."

Oh and I do hope the scene with Blaze getting possessed didn't freak you out too much...ha, ha, ha...Happy Nightmares Everybody!

The Flames of Disaster

Story 183: The Flames of Iblis

Five minutes ago…

Soleanna was in for a dark time. First the demonic being Mephiles the Dark had been released from his prison by Dr. Finitevus and now he was hoping to find Iblis, the other half of the eternal sun god known as Solaris. Mephiles craved destruction and he wished to destroy everything in existence just because he wanted to. No real reason why, it was just his nature. Silver the Hedgehog and his girlfriend Blaze the Cat had travelled back in time to try and prevent Mephiles from becoming Solaris for they wondered if Solaris had anything to do with Mobius's destruction in the future. At the moment, Mephiles had escaped and now he was running around Soleanna Town, trying to find the demonic creature so that he and the city's princess, Elise, could seal Mephiles away for good. Even Dr. Finitevus, the one who had released Mephiles in the first place, was helping to find him. After all, he had hoped that Mephiles would join the Dark Armada and his cause and when Mephiles had refused, Finitevus quickly changed from hoping to recruit him to wanting to seal him away. The three had split up to search Soleanna Town for Mephiles for they had the idea he might be somewhere in the town after he'd shadow-melded out of his cell. Silver had searched all around the upper part of town but he hadn't found Mephiles unfortunately. He was heading back to the town square to meet up with Elise and Finitevus. Using his psychokinesis to levitate, he reached the town square in record time. He was the only one in the square though, Finitevus and Elise hadn't returned yet. As Silver waited for them to return, he failed to noticed that Blaze the Cat appeared to be heading towards the Soleanna Forest. Only on a technical note, it wasn't Blaze. Mephiles had captured the feisty and powerful cat and had taken over her body. Blaze was a prisoner to Mephiles's mind and she couldn't do anything about her current predicament. She was forced against her will to serve Mephiles and find Iblis. Her connection to fire was the reason Mephiles wanted to use her. She'd be able to sense Iblis's flames and find him easily.

And now he was heading into Soleanna Forest, presumably thinking that Iblis was in the forest or something. The moment Mephiles disappeared into the forest, Dr. Finitevus and Elise arrived at Silver's location, looking out of breath and like they'd been on a wild goose chase. Silver assumed they hadn't found Mephiles either.

"No luck?" he asked, already knowing the answer.

"No luck." panted Elise "I couldn't find Mephiles anywhere."

"I have been equally as unsuccessful in tracking down our demonic enemy." muttered Finitevus "And believe me, I searched everywhere INCLUDING inside every building."

"I couldn't find him either." said Silver disappointedly "It appears he's alluded us."

"Oh where could he be?!" whined Elise impatiently "It tears me apart to think about what he could be doing now he's rooming freely and looking for Iblis! He'll probably slaughter as many innocent people as possible just to find that fiery demon! We've gotta stop him and we've gotta stop him NOW!"

"I know, I know. Calm down Elise." said Silver, putting his hands on the jaguar's shoulders and holding her still "I promise, we'll find Mephiles. We won't let him find Iblis. If we have to turn the world upside down in the process, we'll find Mephiles and put a stop to him for good."

"It's easy enough to promise something like that Silver but it's a promise I don't think you can keep so easily." muttered Finitevus.

"You can be quiet before I decide you're not helping us." snarled Silver "You started all of this and you're going to answer for this when all this is over." he added with a finger aimed at him like a pistol waiting to spit the bullet into his head.

"Not likely." sighed Finitevus, his face showing no emotion over than annoyance at Silver's statement.

Silver ignored Finitevus. He didn't have time to beat some sense into him right now. He looked at Elise. He was beginning to form an

idea in his head and he needed some vital information from her in order for it to work.

"So Elise, where exactly IS Iblis?" he asked "Maybe if you tell us, we can get to Iblis first and…"

"I can't tell you where Iblis is." said Elise dully "I'm forbidden to ever reveal his location to anybody. And besides, if we just go to Iblis won't we make Mephiles's job easier? I mean what if he coincidentally sees us standing where Iblis is located and gets suspicious?" she noted.

"Elise please, I've just come up with a brilliant idea on how to sort this mess." explained Silver "You see, I have a super warp ring. Take me to Iblis's location and using the super warp ring, I'll warp Iblis OFF of Mobius. I'll warp into another dimension and dump Iblis there. Mephiles will never find him then!"

"Wrong." said Elise grimly "Mephiles is a time traveller. Did you forget the fact that Solaris is a super-dimensional being? Mephiles can appear wherever he likes in the multi-verse. He has NO limit! Your plan is doomed to failure Silver."

Silver was speechless with shock. His beautiful plan crumbled to pieces before him. Silver stomped the ground furiously with his foot.

"Damn!" he cursed "Well then, I guess it's best if Iblis's location remains secret. But if it's so secret, why are you so worried about Mephiles finding him?"

"Because I know he'll tear the world apart just trying to find him." sighed Elise, massaging her temples vigorously "And he'll find him eventually if we don't stop him. That's why I'm so worried Silver."

"I see." said Silver understandingly "Well then, we'd best find Mephiles and stop him before it's too late."

"And how are we going to do that?" asked Finitevus "We do not have a way of imprisoning him. There's nothing to contain him now the Sceptre of Darkness is destroyed, thanks to me as we already know…" he added venomously.

"Is there a way of imprisoning him Elise?" asked Silver "Is there a replacement for the Sceptre of Darkness?"

"I'm afraid not. We only had the one built." replied Elise sadly "And that took years to make. Before it was used to imprison Mephiles, it had been built to imprison dark creatures and Mephiles had been the sceptre's first and only prisoner until now."

Silver was beginning to get seriously frustrated. He'd gone back in time to prevent The Day of Solaris was happening and yet he'd failed and it seemed it was destined to happen regardless of what he came up with. Fate was seriously against Silver now it seemed. But then Silver realized something. It was as if his head had suddenly gone click and a light bulb had switched on in his mind.

"Wait a minute!" he cried out loud "I have a super warp ring! I can just warp back in time to stop Finitevus from ever releasing Mephiles in the first place!" he leaped up into the air with joy, pleased to have found a solution at last.

"A very clever idea indeed." complimented Finitevus with a dark smile on his face "Very ingenious I must say."

Silver smiled and he got out his super warp ring. He flicked it into the air…but it didn't open a portal. It expanded in size but opened no portal of any kid. It was just a giant ring with an empty space. Silver face-palmed himself in anguish.

"Oh please don't tell me I didn't recharge the damn thing!" he whined "Gah, I forget these warp rings are limited on how many times they can be used and need constant recharging to stop them from running out! Stupid, stupid, stupid!"

He added more to his little rant by smacking himself in the head and stomping angrily in annoyance.

"I have a super warp ring as well but unfortunately, the fight with Mephiles has left it a little damaged." muttered Finitevus, looking at the warp rings on his arm "I am unable to carry out your marvellous plan."

The two rings nearest to either of his hands were cracked a little, meaning that he couldn't use them. Warp rings don't work very well when they're damaged, even slightly. One little crack would throw their coordination of whack and that was not what Finitevus wanted right now. One of the cracked warp rings was his super warp ring. The fight with Mephiles had damaged them and he only had four more warp rings, two on each arm, and the four on each leg to use. When this was over, Finitevus would fix the broken warp rings.

"That's unfortunate." murmured Silver "But we can still do the plan. Blaze has the Sol Emeralds on her. We can use them to warp back in time. I'll just have to go and get her."

"Before you run off Silver, I faintly glimpsed Blaze heading into the forest as I was heading back to the Town Square." explained Finitevus "I had assumed she was just looking for Mephiles in there and didn't bother her as I headed back here."

"I see." said Silver "Well then, off to the Soleanna Forest I guess."

"Let's hope Blaze has subdued Mephiles by the time we arrive." added Elise worriedly, running off frantically towards the Soleanna Forest.

Silver and Finitevus ran after her as fast as they could. They had a plan on how to stop Mephiles and Blaze held the key to the plan's success. Only Blaze wasn't herself right now…

Meanwhile, Mephiles had trekked quite fair into the Soleanna Forest in his search for Mephiles. The fire in Blaze's soul only grew hotter and stronger as he trekked into the forest. Iblis must be somewhere around and Mephiles was going to find him. Blaze's pyrokinetic abilities had led Mephiles this far, deep into the Soleanna Forest, and now only one thing stood in his way. Sonic the Hedgehog and his Royal Fighter comrades. Of course they weren't in his way on purpose but Mephiles didn't really want them to interfere with his mission so he was going to get rid of them all. Sonic had struck the first blow by slugging him and now he was retaliating.

He swiped the arm that belonged to Blaze at Sonic and struck him with a wave of fire. The flame wave knocked Sonic off of his feet but Sally Acorn was on hand to catch him before he could crash into the ground. Sonic rubbed himself better and he winced as the burns stung him slightly.

"Alright Mephiles, you wanna play? I'll show you playtime!" yelled Sonic.

"Royal Fighters, bring that thing down but do NOT try and cause too much harm to Blaze!" ordered Sally "We must get this "Mephiles" thing out of her body!"

The Royal Fighters understood even if they had no idea how in the heck they were possibly going to get a dark being out of Blaze's body. It wasn't going to be that simple. One does not simply beat somebody and force the being controlling their body out of the body after all. Bunnie Rabbot charged into Mephiles and she grasped him in a bear-hug that would make even a bear jealous due to how tight it was. Bunnie held on tightly to Mephiles but the evil being used Blaze's fire powers to set himself alight. The fire surrounding Blaze scalded Bunnie and made the Rabbit jump back in agony. Mephiles spun around and walloped Bunnie in the side of her face with Blaze's foot, the hell of her shoe being the part of her foot that struck Bunnie. Bunnie winced and placed a hand over her cheek as it began to sting from the impact. Mephiles cackled at Bunnie.

"It is very unwise to get too close to a fire-powered entity such as the woman I'm in control of..." he sneered.

He ignited Blaze's hands and he advanced on Bunnie. But the Rabbot got up onto her feet and uppercut Mephiles, using her organic hand so she'd hurt Blaze's body less. Blaze's head snapped backwards from the impact but given Mephiles was in control of her, she had Mephiles's high level of resilience. He took the blow and he punched Bunnie in the gut. Bunnie had always wondered how hard Blaze would actually be able to punch and now she knew the answer, very hard. Whether Blaze could naturally punch that hard or if it was just Mephiles enhancing her strength was questionable but Bunnie wasn't all that interested in knowing the answer to that question. The Rabbot knelt down on one knee, clutching her aching

stomach and coughing hoarsely. Mephiles drew his arm back and was about to give Bunnie a fiery punch to the head but just as Blaze's fist lit up with flames, Tails flew in and tail-whipped him in the head.

"I'm very sorry Blaze but we need to get that thing out of your body!" he cried as his attack brought Mephiles down onto his side.

Mephiles picked himself up and Blaze's face curled into a hideous scowl that really seemed out of place on the fiery feline. Tails definitely had to admit that Blaze looked pretty scary with that scowl. If it hadn't been so obvious she had been possessed then that scowl would have been the big indicator that she had been. Mephiles placed Blaze's hands together and fired a tornado of flames towards Tails. Screaming in terror, Tails flew out of the way and fled for it as Mephiles tried to fry him like a burger in a fast-food restaurant. Mephiles came terrifyingly close to scorching Tails alive but Cosmo the Seedrian whipped out her Flower Blade weapon and she threw it at Mephiles, already regretting having to do so because she would be hurting Blaze. The bladed disc slashed him across the arm and made Mephiles bellow in pain. As himself, he didn't often feel pain that easily but being inside a mortal body full of nerves and the like, it made it much easier for him to feel pain than before. Not that it mattered to him. Mephiles spun around on the heel of Blaze's foot and he threw fire at Cosmo. Cosmo leaped out of the way and Tails flew in behind Mephiles, drop-kicking him in the back of his head. Mephiles was thrown town onto his hands and knees by the attack and just as he stood back up, Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse both jumped in and kicked him back down onto the ground. They both pinned Mephiles down by pressing their legs down on his arms but Mephiles didn't let that stop him. He set himself alight, forcing Wilson and Mandy to back off before they could be burnt alive. Ruben the Water Panther quickly got rid of the fire by squirting water all over Mephiles. Mephiles fumed angrily as the fire to which Blaze was renowned for was put out from around him. He picked himself up and growled fiercely. It was such a fierce growl that even Sonic stepped back, a little freaked out that the growl was coming out of a woman's mouth.

"You're quite hardy I'll hand it to you…but can you handle the

powers of the darkness?" growled Mephiles sinisterly.

He held his hands into the air and summoned a bunch of dark, crackling, purple balls of energy to his hands. He felt much more comfortable using his own powers rather than somebody else's, even if he did enjoy using Blaze's fire powers. The Royal Fighters instantly managed to guess that this was Mephiles's doing for they knew Blaze couldn't normally do that and that made them wonder what Mephiles could do when he wasn't using somebody else to do the fighting. Mephiles threw the energy balls at the Royal Fighters but the great agility that the team all displayed between them paid off for they managed to dodge all the balls before they could hit them. Sonic ducked down low as an energy ball sailed over his head. He felt it whiz past as it narrowly missed him. He did not want to know what it felt like to be hit by one of these.

"Whoa! Since when could Blaze do that?!" he gasped.

"She can't. It's part of Mephiles's natural abilities if I'm to guess." said Sally "I dread to think what else he can do."

She clenched her fists and deployed her energy blades. Eggman was a little surprised at this given she'd had them stolen from her by Finitevus the other week but he quickly ruled it out as "She just got new ones". Sally rushed up towards Mephiles and swiped her blades at him. She was more trying to intimidate Mephiles than hurt him since she did not want to render Blaze with a missing limb or two. Hopefully the deadly blades would scare Mephiles into leaving the body before he could get dissected. However Mephiles was not so easily scared and that was what would make Sally's plan utterly useless against him. Mephiles dodged Sally's attacks and he threw fire at the squirrel queen. Sally ducked down low to avoid the oncoming fire but just as she rose back up, Mephiles sped forwards and slugged her in the stomach. He then elbowed Sally on the back just behind her shoulders, bringing her down onto the ground instantly. Mephiles attempted to stomp on Sally but she rolled out of the way just before he could do so. She slashed Mephiles on the leg, making the demon scream out horribly as a fresh cut spread across Blaze's leg and stung furiously. Now he was distracted, Sally criss-crossed her blades and held them at Mephiles's throat. Mephiles didn't seem phased at all by this.

"Get out of Blaze's body Mephiles or I'll kill you!" snarled Sally.

"You foolish woman, you'll kill Blaze as well if you do that." snorted Mephiles.

"Indeed I will but I don't think you're willing to die anytime soon are you?" asked Sally smoothly "If you want to live then let Blaze go. You live and we get her back. That way, we both win."

"Indeed so squirrel girl…but I am a being of darkness. I don't believe in both sides winning, only the dark side is allowed to triumph!" crowed Mephiles.

He aimed his hand at Sally's belly and blasted her off her feet with a jet of flames that spewed from the palm of Blaze's hand. Sally crashed into a tree and clutched her belly in agonizing pain. She looked like she had a stomach ache but the pain in her belly was much worse than a mere stomach ache. Sonic ran over to Sally's side and helped her up.

"You OK Sally?" he asked worriedly.

"Ugh…not really." groaned Sally, trying to ease the scalding pain in her belly "I thought I had him there…"

Sonic glared at Mephiles furiously and he closed his hand around his fist.

"That's it! Nobody, and I mean NOBODY possesses my friend and uses her to burn my girlfriend!" growled Sonic "Mephiles, I'm gonna beat you so badly that you'll *want* to leave Blaze's body!"

"I intend to hold onto the fire cat until I find Iblis!" snarled Mephiles "And you pitiful creatures cannot hope to stop me! I am all powerful and once Solaris is formed once again, I'll have the power to destroy you all!"

With that said, he held his arms out to the sides and torrents of fire whooshed out from Blaze's hands. But they didn't hit anybody. He hadn't been aiming at the Royal Fighters. He had instead been aiming at the surrounding forest. Mephiles knew very well what happens when flames and plants come into contact and he was

doing this in an attempt to slow the Royal Fighters down enough so he could continue his search for Iblis. Blaze's flames spewed out all over the trees and the nearby bushes and they were all instantly set alight by the whooshing flames. Mephiles lowered his arms and set the grass on fire too. Given how much growth there was in the forest, the fire spread horrifyingly quickly and soon the surrounding area to which the Royal Fighters and Mephiles were standing was engulfed by a raging inferno that would soon consume the entire forest. Mephiles cackled maniacally but the crackling and whooshing of flames made his evil laugh inaudible to even his own ears. He then sunk down into a shadow that stretched out ahead of him as the fire burned behind him and disappeared, leaving the Royal Fighters at the mercy of the fiery inferno he'd created. An arsonist would be proud of his work, that's for sure. The Royal Fighters gathered together in a tight circle as the fire spread all around and threatened to consume them. The heat was intense and no matter where the Royal Fighters stood, they could feel the fire blazing away all around. Even Dr. Eggman seemed a little nervous of this scene of fiery carnage that Mephiles had single-handedly created thanks to the power that Blaze wielded in her soul.

"I hope Katherine made my life support mech heat-proof!" he whimpered.

"I hope she didn't so you can burn alive in this fire!" snapped Amy Rose rather bitterly.

"Ruben, put this fire out!" cried Sonic as a burning branch broke away from a blazing tree and nearly fell down on top of him, missing him by inches.

"I hope I can do this…" said Ruben nervously "I'm not used to putting out very big fires."

"You can do it Ruben, I know you can! Give it a try!" yelled Sora Prower supportively.

Ruben beamed, pleased to hear his girlfriend supporting him like this. Closing his eyes and focusing deeply, Ruben held his hands out and he unleashed a torrent of water from his hands. The water swept over the fire that was creeping ominously towards them

across the grass and the fire was quickly extinguished by Ruben's water. He had a lot of work to do for the fire continued to burn from all around, incinerating bushes and destroying trees. A branch broke away from an incinerated tree and nearly fell down on top of Tails and Cosmo. Ruben aimed his hand and squirted the branch away from them, the water hitting the branch like a missile and sending it hurling away into the flames. Ruben aimed up at the trees and sprayed jets of water from his palms and his fingertips. The more water the better and because there was water coming out of his fingertips, he could flex his fingers and move the shooting water around so he wasn't just aiming at one spot. It took him a few minutes but he managed to put out most of the nearby trees and now he just had to put out a wall of flames that blazed away behind the Royal Fighters. He was getting tired and the fire was threatening to expand and blaze away at the already incinerated trees but Ruben was determined to beat the fire. Straining from the effort, he fired streams of water at the fire and pressed on until the last remaining wall of fire hissed and went out with a cloud of vapour. Ruben fell onto his knees, gasping for breath as he felt his strength drain out of him. He'd never used so much water before so this had been a tiring experience for him. Sora knelt down beside him and hugged Ruben, delighted that he succeeded.

"You did it cute stuff." she said sweetly.

"I know…pant…pant…but it took…a lot out of me…pant…pant…" Ruben gasped out in hoarse pants "I've…never thrown…so much water…before…"

"Take a break Ruben, you earned it." said Sonic kindly, patting him on the back "You gave it your all to stop that fire. As a Royal Fighter, you've done us all proud buddy."

Ruben beamed with delight. Receiving compliments from his friends was one of the most honourable things he could ever receive on the team. He couldn't be more proud to be a Royal Fighter. Now that the fire had been put out, Cream the Rabbit decided to break the silence that hung around for a minute or two.

"So now we saved ourselves from becoming a barbecue, what are we going to do about poor Miss Blaze?" she asked "That nasty

"Mephiles" thingy got away from us. How will we find him?"

"Hopefully he decided to leave a trail of flames just for the sake of burning something." muttered Amy "It'd make finding him all the more easy."

"I doubt Mephiles would do that." said Cosmo matter-of-factly "He only fought us because he wanted us out of his way while he found something. He's looking for something called "Iblis". What's an "Iblis"? And who's Mephiles for that matter?"

"I don't know but I think Elise can tell us that." said Sally grimly "I once read that Soleanna had a terrible accident ten years ago and the accident formed Mephiles and Iblis. What they are I don't know for the book had been published a long while back and thus, has outdated information. It didn't say exactly what Mephiles and Iblis were."

"It doesn't matter, Mephiles plans to find Iblis and form something called "Solaris" and he wants to lay waste to everything." noted Sonic, recalling what Mephiles had said cryptically earlier. "We can't let him find Iblis and become Solaris. We've gotta track down Mephiles, get him out of Blaze's body and then…uh, what do we do after that?" he asked, shrugging his shoulders.

"I'd suggest contain him but I'm not sure if that would work." mused Eggman "I saw him just sink down into a shadow and disappear. Put him in a cell of some kind, he'll just shadow-meld out of it once the cell has a shadow in it."

"I see." said Sally disappointedly "Maybe Elise would know how to contain him."

"Funny you should mention Elise Sal, she's coming to us right now." Sonic's arm was stretched out and his finger pointing directly ahead of himself as something perceptibly enough caught his attention.

The Royal Fighters looked in Sonic's direction and they noticed that, surely enough, Elise was indeed coming towards them, pushing through the bushes as she desperately ran towards the team. Not surprisingly, Silver the Hedgehog was with her. They had expected

Silver to not be far behind since he and Blaze were always together. What did surprise them was that Dr. Finitevus was with them. Sonic couldn't guess for a minute what Finitevus was doing here and why he was with Elise and Silver. Elise and Silver ran up to the Royal Fighters whereas Finitevus hung back for a minute.

"Sonic! Royal Fighters! Thank goodness we found you!" gasped Silver "We've been looking all over for Blaze and we haven't managed to find her yet! Have you seen her?"

"We did." said Sonic, motioning towards the sorry scene of incinerated and blackened trees, grass and bushes that lightly steamed away as the heat of the fire began to die down "Unfortunately, she's been possessed by some guy named "Mephiles". Elise, can you tell us who he is?"

Elise was about to speak but Silver interrupted her.

"Blaze has been WHAT?!" he screamed, his face the living definition of horror.

"Possessed." said Sonic "I'm sorry Silver but that's what's happened. She had red and green eyes and black veins all over her body. She also threw dark energy balls at us. That definitely isn't the Blaze I know."

Silver looked like he was about to die of exposure.

"NO!" he screamed "That…that…that monster's possessed my Blaze?! I won't let him get away with this! I'm gonna catch up to him and make him leave my girl's body or I'll drag him out of it kicking and screaming!"

"We need to find where he's gone first." said Sally, taking Nicole off her boot and opening the little computer up "And I've got the person who can help with that."

"Before we go anywhere, why is Finitevus here?" demanded Dr. Eggman, pointing accusingly at the echidna "I explicitly remember telling him to stay put when I left for Soleanna! You were supposed to protect the Egg-Bunker while I was away Finitevus!"

Finitevus scowled at Eggman, refusing to respond to his comment. Silver scowled at Finitevus and then turned to Eggman.

"He came to Soleanna wanting to release Mephiles in the first place. And he succeeded too." he grumbled "So you can blame Finitevus for Mephiles roaming freely now."

The Royal Fighters gave Finitevus a horde of horrified gasps and glares of disgust at him. Even Eggman seemed furious with Finitevus right now. Finitevus however just scowled back at them all, not phased in the slightest by the angry Royal Fighters and the equally as angry Dr. Eggman.

"So all this is YOUR fault?!" cried Sonic "Finitevus, that's a new low even for you!"

"Don't start you idiotic simpleton! I did not intend for this to happen!" snarled Finitevus, poking Sonic sharply in the chest "I had hoped to harness the power of Mephiles and use him as a way of defeating you all and bringing the Eggman Empire to victory but Mephiles rejected my offer for he plans to destroy everything, not take over the world and turned on me! Had I known he was so obstinate and destruction-hungry, I wouldn't have released him in the first place!"

"It's still your fault." retorted Sonic, rubbing his chest better "Didn't your mommy ever tell you not to play around with strange people?" he added cheekily.

Finitevus scowled but said nothing more. He had no time to waste arguing with such an impudent sod like Sonic the Hedgehog. He'd rather save his breath for something more important.

"Finitevus, I will save your punishment for later." growled Eggman crossly "For now, we've got more important things at hand. Like finding Mephiles and stopping him before he destroys everything!" he declared in the manner of a World War II general about ready to go to war.

"You got that right!" piped Elise with her hands to her face "Me and my family have been entrusted in making sure Mephiles and Iblis never come together and if Mephiles succeeds in finding Iblis…I will

have disgraced my family and all my people! I can't let this happen!" she wailed.

"If it does happen Elise, just remember who's actually the one to blame for that." muttered Sally, glaring an ice cold glare at Finitevus in the vain hope of making him feel guilty. It didn't work. Finitevus just pretended Sally wasn't looking at him. Sally just ignored Finitevus and looked at Nicole "Nicole, can you track down where Mephiles has gone?"

"Certainly Sally." said Nicole with a happy emoticon appearing on her screen "Mephiles has a very peculiar energy signature that makes him very easy to track. He sticks out like a sore thumb to some extent. He's heading north, deep into the forest and judging from the layout of the forest…he appears to be heading towards a nearby cave." she added, showing Sally a map of where Mephiles was.

Elise's face couldn't possibly look anymore shocked than it did now.

"No!" squealed Elise in horror "That's where Iblis is being kept! He's going to find him! We're gonna be too late!" she panicked frantically.

"No we won't." said Sonic "Finitevus, use your warp rings to warp us over to Iblis's hiding place." he ordered.

"I have never been in Soleanna before and therefore, will not be able to visualize where we need to go." sighed Finitevus disappointedly "I am unable to aid you in this situation Sonic the Hedgehog."

"Well that sucks." muttered Sonic "Very well, Silver can get us there quickly enough. Silver, use your psychic powers to carry us all and fly us to where Mephiles is."

"OK then, I warn you though that it's going to do a number on me." said Silver cautiously.

"We haven't got far to go." said Sally, looking at the map on Nicole's screen "We should get there in a short amount of time. I'll tell you where to go while you fly us over to the cave."

"Sure thing Sally." said Silver "Get ready everybody, this is going to be quite sensational."

The Royal Fighters readied themselves as Silver held his hands out and activated his psychic powers. A teal outline surrounded Silver and as he focused on the Royal Fighters, they began to get a teal outline around their bodies too. Silver levitated off the ground, taking all the Royal Fighters along with him. Elise could hardly keep the excitement off her face as she saw herself rising off the ground. She'd wondered what it would be like to fly and thanks to Silver, he'd get to see for herself what it would be like. Silver was quite pleased to hear the jaguar laughing. Made a change from her constantly fretting. Sally looked at Nicole and worked out that Mephiles was in the north direction according to the displayed map. She directed to Silver and Silver flew off, heading north. As he flew, the other Royal Fighters followed him. Flying altogether through the sky thanks to Silver's psychokinesis, the Mobians looked like a meteor shower hurling through the sky although they were considerably more furry and animalistic in appearance and not at all rocky. As Silver carried everybody through the sky, Elise prayed hard that they would make it in time to stop Mephiles…

Meanwhile, Mephiles had trekked through the forest and come across a huge cave that seemed unusually out of place in the middle of a forest. The amount of tress and bushes in the Soleanna Forest just made the appearance of something that wasn't a tree of a bush or anything plant like unusual when you came across it. Mephiles walked up to the mouth of the cave. It was like a lump of rock just randomly stick up out of the earth with a large mouth yawning wide open, waiting to swallow you up whole should you be foolish enough to walk inside it. There were a couple of trees standing atop the cave but nothing more. Mephiles stood still for a minute and closed his eyes. He listened to the crackling of fire coming from deep within Blaze's very soul, something she would always feel as long as she had the fire gem in her head. The fire was roaring quite fiercely. Iblis had to be in the cave, he was quite literally on fire just standing where he was. Mephiles opened his eyes and he smiled wickedly to himself.

"Iblis…I can feel your flames…you're in there, I just know it!" he cackled delightedly "Now I can join with you at long last…"

He then closed his eyes again and opened his mouth. Blaze's body began to tremble all of the sudden. Shaking furiously, Blaze's body tensed up and the dark veins snaking around her body began to disappear. A dark trail of black goo started to pour out of Blaze's mouth and spill onto the ground. She looked like she was vomiting and it didn't look very pleasant at all. The black goo formed a black puddle and the black puddle solidified and formed into Mephiles's usual Mobian-hedgehog-esque form. Mephiles admired himself all over, pleased to be himself again. Now he was no longer in Blaze's body, Blaze collapsed onto the ground and passed out. Her breathing was raspy and her face was ashen. Blood dribbled out of her mouth, possibly a side effect from the possession. She'd be OK in a short while though, Mephiles hadn't done any lasting harm to Blaze. Fortunately for her as one would easily say. Mephiles scoffed at the pathetic body that he had taken over and he strode into the cave.

"Blaze served her purpose well…" purred Mephiles "Pity I'll have to wipe her out along with the rest of existence. All good things must come to an end as they say."

Before going down into the cave, he turned around and fired a bunch of energy balls into the ceiling of the cave. He had suspected that the Royal Fighters likely would have survived the fire and would be looking for him. He also took in the possible fact Silver and Elise might come looking for him so to keep them at bay, he was going to block the cave entrance. The energy balls hit the ceiling and the roof of the cave just slightly behind the cave entrance caved in. Huge rocks piled down from the ceiling and onto the ground, piling up until they reached the top of the cave. The entrance was completely blocked. Nobody would be getting in or out of the cave now. Mephiles wanted it that way so that he could unlock Iblis without any interruptions. Now the cave was blocked, Mephiles sank down into the darkness of the cave and quickly traverse through it. When you can travel through shadows and darkness, you never need to walk when you're in a place as dark as a cave. Mephiles reached the heart of the cave in mere seconds and just as he sensed at the

mouth of the cave…he found Iblis at long last. Iblis was contained within a giant red ruby that was five times the size of even the biggest Mobian in the world and bathed the room with an ominous, ruby red glow that seemed to emphasize how fiery hot its prisoner was. The ruby was known as a "Fire Ruby" and was a gift from the Fire Cat race. They had given it to Soleanna after hearing about Iblis and the danger he presented. Iblis had been successfully contained in the ruby for ten years but the ruby would be Iblis's prison no more. Mephiles places his hands on the ruby and cackled delightedly.

"I've found you Iblis…yes! Now we can become Solaris at long last! Iblis, prepare to be freed!" he bellowed at the top of his voice.

He held his hand out and fired a huge spear of energy from the palm of his hand. This was a deadly attack known as the "Dark Chaos Lance" and was a deadly impaling weapon. Mephiles often saved that for when he seriously needed it and he certainly needed it in this case. The spear pierced the tough skin of the ruby and cracks began to spread up the ruby like somebody drawing pencil lines on a paper bit by bit. Now the starting damage was done, Mephiles drew his arm back and he punched through the ruby. His punch made a huge hole in the ruby and that hole was more than enough for Iblis to free himself. A trickle of what looked like lava began to seep through the hole in the ruby and spill onto the floor. Mephiles just watched as the lava puddle began to spread until it filled the entire floor of the cave. He was cackling constantly throughout the entire process. This was like the happiest day of his life for him. As Iblis finished seeping out of the ruby, the lava that was Iblis began to form a shape. The shape formed a huge body with four arms, a head and no legs. It was truly a monstrous looking creature with its skin being entirely made of lava and its back and head had rocky builds all around. The head looked asymmetrical with one spike on one side of its face and chin. The rocks on its back made it look like it had a vague shell-like structure on its back. This was one of three different forms Iblis could form and it was its preferred form, the form it was most happy using. Iblis roared a magnificent, thunderous roar, the first roar in ten years it had ever done. Mephiles stared gleefully at his companion.

"Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Finally, the seal is broken! At long

last, I'll be able to join with you…IBLLIIIIIIIS!" his voice echoed around the cave as he bellowed Iblis's name.

Iblis roared with Mephiles and then he stared down at his dark companion. But nothing seemed to happen after that. Mephiles and Iblis were just standing staring at each other with nothing happening. No fusion process was going on or anything. Mephiles was willing himself and Iblis to fuse together and form Solaris but Iblis didn't seem like he was going to do so. Mephiles looked confused.

"But…but I've found you Iblis. Why won't you join with me?" he asked curiously "I freed you! We can become Solaris! Why won't you fuse with me?"

Iblis gave off a growl. Iblis couldn't speak like Mephiles could so he just growled and roared in order to communicate. Mephiles could understand his lava-based other half very well.

"Me and you aren't powerful enough to make the transformation?!" he blurted as if very confused by this aspect indeed "How can we become Solaris then if we're not powerful enough?!"

Iblis growled again, the room shaking as the growl resonated from all around.

"We need a Chaos Emerald?" Mephiles spoke aloud "Yes…I've heard of Chaos Emeralds. They're powerful gems with time stopping and warping abilities. I didn't think we'd need one though. Where are we going to find a Chaos Emerald?"

He thought for a moment and then thought of something.

"Maybe the princess knows where to find a Chaos Emerald." mused Mephiles "She knows much about us after all. I'll find her and force her to give me a Chaos Emerald. Then me and you will make the transformation at last. Come Iblis."

Iblis obeyed and his shape dissolved into the puddle of lava that formed the base it protruded from. Mephiles melted down into the shadows and he headed up towards the surface outside the cave. Iblis, sensing Mephiles due to his connection to the dark being,

slithered up through the cave after Mephiles. It was like watching a lava flow in reverse, the lava flowing up instead of down. The two couldn't form Solaris yet but it wouldn't be long before they'd be able to…

Outside the cave, Silver had reached the destination and he lowered himself down onto the ground. He released everybody from his psychokinetic hold and he clutched his head dizzyingly. He felt like it was about to erupt like a volcano. Not a pretty image at all.

"Man what a headache…I'm not used to carrying so many people at once!" he slurred.

"Well Silver, you did very well." said Elise, helping to support him for he looked like he was about to fall over "You got us all there and you didn't drop anybody."

"That's lucky I suppose." said Silver.

His attention was quickly diverted when he saw Blaze the Cat lying on the ground unconscious just near the cave entrance.

"BLAZE!" screamed Silver.

He dashed over to his girlfriend and he threw himself onto his knees beside her still body. The Royal Fighters joined him and stared at Blaze. The black veins were gone and a puddle of blood was just underneath the side of her face with a trail of blood from her mouth to the puddle on the ground. She was still breathing, indicating she was alive luckily. Silver raised Blaze up onto his lap and Ruben held his finger into her mouth, letting a light trickle of water pour out of his finger to freshen her up. The water revived Blaze and the cat woke up with a violent coughing fit. After she'd stopped coughing, she wiped her mouth and opened her eyes. To her delight, the first thing she saw was her beloved Silver. Blaze threw her arms around Silver and grasped him tightly. Her eyes were streaming with tears as she hugged Silver.

"Oh Silver! I'm so sorry about what I've done!" she wailed "I got

captured by Mephiles and he took over my body and forced me to fight against Sonic and friends and then forced me to help him find Iblis! I'm so sorry! I'm so, so sorry!"

"Sssh, it's alright Blaze." said Silver, patting her on the back affectionately "You didn't do all that on purpose. Mephiles made you do that. It's alright now, you're free from him and now you can help us stop him."

"Oh I'll be very happy to do that." muttered Blaze bitterly "Nobody possesses me and uses me in their scheme to doom the world! I'm going to make Mephiles pay for what he's done to me!"

"Now he's found Iblis, I doubt we'll be able to do that." said Elise with a sad look on her face, taking note of the blocked cave entrance which easily suggested that Mephiles was in the cave looking for Iblis "We're all doomed now."

"No we're not." said Silver "Blaze, you have your Sol Emeralds remember? Use them to take us back in time to before Finitevus released Mephiles! Then we can prevent this from happening at all!"

"Silver, you're a genius." Blaze could only utter in amazement "Who knew that we had a solution that simple the whole time? Would have been better if we realized it earlier so I never would have gotten possessed…"

"Nobody's perfect." said Silver casually "Come on now Blaze, let's do the plan."

"And we'd best do it fast." said Elise nervously "If the two become Solaris now then no time period will be safe. Being a multi-dimensional being, he'll be able to stop you from trying to prevent Mephiles from being released. He'll be able to appear ANYWHERE he likes."

"In that case, time for us to time travel again." murmured Blaze, fishing out her favourite of the Sol Emeralds, the red emerald.

She was about to perform a Sol Control and warp herself and Silver back a couple of hours to before Mephiles was released but before

she could say the words, Sonic interrupted her.

"Hey! Is that supposed to happen?" he asked, pointing at the blocked up cave entrance.

"I thought this was meant to be a cave, not a volcano!" blurted Eggman.

Blaze looked over her shoulder and gasped at what she saw. Seeping out through the gaps in the rock pile blocking the cave was a trail of lava. The lava trails formed together to make a much larger puddle of lava as it exited the cave. The puddle crept towards the Royal Fighters as if trying to lap up to their feet…and maybe burn them off at the same time. Elise looked horrified and she knew what his meant.

"NO!" she screamed "Iblis is free! Mephiles is going to destroy us all!"

"Not if I can help it." growled Blaze, holding her Sol Emerald up into the air "Sol CON…"

Before she could finish her sentence, a tentacle of lava lashed out and smacked Blaze, causing her to drop the Sol Emerald and hurl backwards into the air. Blaze came down onto the ground with a terrible thud that knocked the wind out of her. The Sol Emerald lay at the edge of the expanding lava puddle. Silver used his psychokinesis to grab the emerald and hold it back as the lava puddle tried and failed to grip it. The lava puddle then stopped expanding and started to form the familiar shape of Iblis. Elise looked horrified to be witnessing Iblis in person for the first time in ten years. She had only been nine when Iblis was first released and even now, Iblis still looked as terrifying as ever. She put her hands over her mouth to stop herself from screaming as the four-armed, lava-based creature towered over her, roaring loudly and making the ground tremble as if it was afraid of him as much as the Mobians themselves.

"HOLY CHAOS EMERALDS!" exclaimed Sonic "THAT'S Iblis?! Bit hot under the collar isn't he?!"

"That's Iblis!" gasped Elise, hardly able to speak properly due to how horrified she was at the sight of the fiery creature she had hoped would stay imprisoned forever "And now he's free, Solaris can form at last! We're all doomed!"

"I'm afraid that isn't the case Elise." said Mephiles, rising up just in front of Iblis's base "We have discovered that we are not powerful enough to form Solaris. We need a Chaos Emerald in order to begin the transformation and you are going to tell us where we can find them!"

"I don't know what a "Chaos Emerald" is! And even if I did, I wouldn't tell ya!" retorted Elise.

"Mephiles and Iblis need a Chaos Emerald?" asked Silver "Well I guess we're not doomed yet. I'll just use Blaze's Sol Emerald to back in time and…"

"Back in time?" Mephiles echoed as Silver said those words "You're not planning to go back in time and prevent my release from the Sceptre of Darkness are you?"

"How'd you guess?" snorted Silver.

"I wouldn't try that plan if I were you silver creature." growled Mephiles "I can travel through time as well. I'll just follow you and make sure you don't tamper with the past. Your plan is doomed to failure."

"Let's see if you can stop me before I can stop your release!" challenged Silver "Sol…"

He had to stomp himself and leap back in alarm as Iblis breathed a jet of fire at him. As Silver leaped back, he accidentally dropped the Sol Emerald onto the ground. Blaze was about to grab it but Mephiles fired dark energy balls at her and sent her hurling backwards away from the emerald. Mephiles grabbed the emerald and he cackled delightedly.

"This is quite a close equivalent to the Chaos Emeralds, if with a fiery touch to them." he mused with interest "This emerald will do

just nicely for us Iblis."

Sonic spin-dashed towards Mephiles but the evil dark being levitated out of his way and flew up into the sky just above Iblis, rendering him out of reach for anybody so the emerald was his to keep. He held the Sol Emerald up high above his head, the emerald glowing very brightly as his thoughts were being transformed into power. Blaze stared at him with loathing and hatred, desperate to make him pay for what he'd done to her but now missing the opportunity. She also was horrified at the fact Mephiles was using her own emerald for his own nefarious needs. The Royal Fighters ran forward to stop Mephiles but Iblis surrounded them with a ring of fire that kept them in check. Blaze tried to put the fire out with a snap of her fingers but Iblis was just like her, he could control the flames and he was much more powerful than Blaze was so Blaze couldn't do anything about it. His will was infinite as far as fire was concerned. Now the heroes were rounded up, Mephiles was ready to begin the transformation.

"Now little emerald…it's time for the final curtain call!" he declared.

The Sol Emerald hovered out of his hand and with its power combined with Mephiles, it miraculously managed to summon the other six Sol Emeralds without Blaze needing to do so and the other six emeralds joined the red emerald Mephiles had. The seven Sol Emeralds began to spiral around Mephiles and Iblis, the two creatures becoming ghostly entities as their forms began to combine. Solaris was coming and nobody could do anything to stop it…

Well...this isn't good...Solaris is coming! The end of everything is coming! And it's not even a milestone chapter yet...LOL.

How will the heroes stop Solaris now he's coming? Find out next time in the finale, "Solaris Rising"...

Solaris Rising

Story 184: Solaris Rising

The transformation to Solaris was well under-way and it was coming close to completion.

What had started as a routine assault on Dr. Eggman's property had quickly spiralled into yet another end-of-the-world scenario that would have to be prevented once again. Sonic the Hedgehog and friends had come to Soleanna to destroy a Death Egg refuelling station and despite succeeding, they ended up getting more than they bargained for. Dr. Finitevus had unleashed a dark entity named Mephiles the Dark. He had hoped to harness Mephiles's meritorious power for his own nefarious schemes but Mephiles had refused to join him and so Finitevus had to fix the mistake he'd made. A mistake that was going to cost the lives of everybody. Whilst free, Mephiles had taken over the body of Blaze the Cat and used her pyrokinetic abilities to track down Iblis, the other half of Solaris that he needed in order to become the eternal sun god. Now he'd found Solaris, he'd managed to swipe Blaze's Sol Emeralds from her and was using them to fuse him and Iblis together to make Solaris. The transformation had merely been a blinding dazzle of light and a fusion of two bodies but it had been quick and terrifying to watch. Nobody was possibly more terrified now than Soleanna's very own Princess Elise. She watched the whole process with tears in her eyes, too shocked to move and too shocked to faint. Frozen to the spot in fear as if time had stopped around her and only her. Sonic and his love Queen Sally Acorn, clutched each other tightly as Solaris began to form. The transformation completed, the haunting cackle of Mephiles drowning out as the light faded and revealed a giant creature beyond anything ever seen on Mobius before. This was Solaris. Solaris was enormous, his height surpassing even the tallest building in the world. He was a very unusually shaped creature with no legs and two enormous arms. The lower section was just a sharp point as if he had a spike growing from underneath his upper body. He appeared to have a chunk of armour on the chest section that had a head sitting atop the armour and the lower

arms were thickly armoured with pointy elbows and three claws protruding from out the armour. The head was vaguely bird like and had antler-like structures on either side. The eyes glowed an ominous yellow that seemed to evoke all the power Solaris wielded. On his back floated a circular plate with six triangular points, resembling a traditional sun symbol and the points would spin clockwise on occasion. He was transparent white all over. Solaris made no noise but it was already intimidating enough as it was without needing to emit any vocal sounds. Everybody stared in fear and amazement at the sight of this illuminated behemoth that threatened to destroy everything. Nobody could do anything but stare for they were all petrified with fear. The worst was yet to come though for Solaris held out his arms and bathed the entire area with an ominous, fluorescent purple light that expanded for miles around, swallowing up whatever was in its path. The Royal Fighters had to shield their eyes from the light but even with their eyes closed, it still felt too bright. The light seemed to expand all over the world and as the light expanded, darkness befell everything. The Royal Fighters opened their eyes only to see that they were standing on a platform of grass, presumably all that was left of Soleanna Forest after the light had touched it. Everything else was either vague platforms that barely had anything going for them or just a vast void of darkness stretching for miles around. Solaris was represented by a big sphere of light that loomed over everybody as if watching them and waiting for the right moment to strike at them. Elise was hysterical, unable to control her sobbing and practically going mental with terror.

"It's happened…it's happened! Solaris is here! He's been formed and he's going to kill us all!" she howled "We're all dead! And there's nothing we can do to stop him!"

She put her hands over her eyes and wept into them, feeling that she would never be able to stop no matter how much she wanted to.

"And we all know who's fault THAT is!" snarled Sonic, glaring at Finitevus angrily "Well freaking done Finitevus! You released Mephiles, he's found Iblis and now they've become Solaris! You've doomed us all! Is this what you wanted?! Huh?! HUH?!"

"Curb your insolence you wretched hedgehog!" retorted Finitevus angrily "I did NOT intend for this to happen at all and I'm all too

happy to try and prevent Solaris from carrying out his nefarious schemes!"

"Still doesn't change the fact that all of this is YOUR fault Finitevus!" snapped Sonic "And we're going to clean up the mess you've made! Elise, how can we stop Solaris?"

"We can't." snivelled Elise "Solaris cannot be stopped! At least, it's assumed he can't given what kind of creature he is…"

"Assume is good, means there's a possibility we can stop Solaris." thought Sonic "I need to get to Angel Island and get the Chaos Emeralds. I have a feeling I need to go super for this one."

"I'd happily help you in the battle Sonic but since Mephiles stole my Sol Emeralds to become Solaris, I can't become Burning Blaze." said Blaze disappointedly "I need to get them back!"

"I'll help you." offered Silver "We'll get the Sol Emeralds back for you and then me and you can turn super to help Sonic stop Solaris."

"That'll be very nice Silver." said Blaze appreciatively "Though how we'll possibly get the emeralds back from Solaris is beyond me." she added, taking in the fact they likely had a very powerful foe to deal with right now.

"Do you think Solaris still has them?" asked Silver.

"Let's see…" mused Blaze quietly.

She closed her eyes and allowed the fire within her soul to reach out and feel for the Sol Emeralds. Her ability to sense flames made it possible for her to track the Sol Emeralds since they themselves were infused with the flames that the fire cat race was known for. The fire within the Sol Emeralds is what had made the Sol Emeralds what they are now. To Blaze's surprise, as she searched for the Sol Emeralds, she felt their flames but not from Solaris. Instead, the Sol Emeralds were gathered around a particular spot. It was like Solaris had just disposed of them as if he felt they were useless to him and he didn't need them anymore, a mistake that would definitely be very costly for Solaris. Blaze opened her eyes.

"I can sense the emerald's flames." she said "Solaris doesn't have them anymore. He's thrown them into some random corner of this distorted world."

"Well that's a bit thick of him isn't it?" snorted Sonic with a mocking grin on his face just as he took in that surprising yet humorous fact "Just getting rid of seven precious gems like that. He's just making your job a lot easier Blaze."

"Where are the Sol Emeralds?" asked Silver.

"Carry me and I'll direct you to them." ordered Blaze.

"OK then Blaze, just don't panic about the heights." warned Silver, taking note of Blaze's phobia.

"At this point, I don't care about the heights anymore." muttered Blaze.

Silver smiled, pleased to hear that, and he put his hands around Blaze's waist. Using psychokinesis, he lifted himself up off the platform of grass they all occupied at the moment. He held on tightly to Blaze as he and the cat ascended into the air. Blaze pointed ahead of herself and Silver flew off at a speed that would rival even the fastest of fighter jets. Now Silver and Blaze were gone, Sonic turned to Finitevus.

"OK Dr. Creepy-As-All-Heck, give me a warp ring and I'll head over to Angel Island so I can get the Chaos Emeralds." ordered Sonic.

"In this particular case, I'm all too happy to relinquish one of my rings." Finitevus said with a voice who's tone was flatter than even a pancake.

He lifted his leg up and took off the warp ring around his ankle. This, unlike the first two warp rings on each arm, wasn't damaged so it'd be perfect for using. Sonic took the warp ring and he was about to activate it until he felt a familiar pair of hands pull him close to the body they belonged to. It was Sally. Her face was full of anxiety and Sonic could sense that she was worried about Solaris. He put a hand on her cheek tenderly.

"Please Sonic, be careful out there." she said "And do whatever you can to stop that monster."

"I'll do anything I can Sal." said Sonic softly "I'll stop Solaris you see if I don't."

"I know." said Sally, embracing Sonic warmly "Good luck out there, you'll need plenty of it."

"Thanks Sally. Hold on for me will you?" Sonic asked kindly.

Sally nodded and the two shared a farewell kiss before Sonic broke up the hug and flicked the warp ring into the air. The ring expanded to twice its normal size and opened up a portal that led from where they were now to Angel Island. Sonic could only wonder what Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas had to say about all this. They wouldn't be very happy that's for sure. Sonic bid his friends farewell and he disappeared through the warp ring. The warp ring closed shut and Finitevus grabbed it and put it back onto his leg. Sonic wouldn't need it since he was going to turn super and would just warp back here anyway. A long silence hung over the platform until Elise wandered over to Sally and put a hand on the squirrel's shoulder.

"Do you…think that Sonic, Silver and Blaze can…stop Solaris?" she whispered hoarsely. She'd been crying so much that she'd worn her voice out a little.

"I don't think Elise…I KNOW they can." said Sally confidently "They stopped the God of Existence along with Shadow, Knuckles and Scourge so this will be a cakewalk for them."

"How powerful was this "God of Existence" thing?" asked Elise.

"He was the one responsible for our existences. That alone should tell you how powerful he was." explained Sally "And yet we managed to stop that creature and get another god to take over the mantle of "God of Existence". You know thinking about it, do you think Malacos would try and stop Solaris?" Sally wondered aloud more to herself than anybody.

Elise didn't answer for she had no idea who Malacos was and would be unable to give an answer to such a question.

"Given Malacos is the new God of Existence after The Eraser was defeated, he might come out and help us." suggested Tails "I bet Solaris will make it difficult for him though. Being super-dimensional and all, Malacos won't be able to just "get rid of him" that easily."

"You're right." said Sally agreeably "So we'll have to do whatever we can in order to stop this creature."

She stared fearfully up at the ball of light that was Solaris, looming above the dark, distorted world that Mobius had been reduced to by his very own hand. The end was ticking away slowly but steadily and it was precisely this as to why Sally was becoming slightly nervous about Solaris. Solaris was toying with them, buying his time for his own amusement as he prepared to reduce everything in the multi-verse to nothing. Solaris could strike any time and the long wait would just be an attempt to throw the Mobians off-guard. A singe prayer came from every one on the platform in this dire moment of terror:

Please Sonic, Silver and Blaze…save us all and defeat Solaris…

The warp ring opened up just above Angel Island and Sonic stepped out through the warp ring, all senses alert and taking great caution. The world was distorted, twisted and wrong so anything could happen even in a simple moment like this and Sonic was taking no chances. He'd been in many life-and-death situations and even though he'd survived them all, he still knew that you had to be vigilant. Especially since the end-of-the-world was threatening to eclipse him and everybody else on Mobius right now. Sonic cautiously looked around as he exited the warp ring and it disappeared behind him. Angel Island didn't look all that different amazingly enough. It still looked the same as it did before albeit now just floating around a vast black void that seemed to go on forever. Knuckles and Shade were nowhere in sight. Presumably they were taking shelter somewhere on the island or guarding the Master Emerald from whatever was causing the world to be this way. It was

likely the latter since even in a crisis like this, the echidnas wouldn't leave the Master Emerald unguarded under any circumstances. Sonic hadn't warped over to the Master Emerald shrine so he couldn't see for himself if they were guarding the Master Emerald at all. He had instead warped into the forest that housed the tomb where all eight Chaos Emeralds resided. The forest was silent and there didn't appear to be any signs of danger around at all. Sonic looked and listened to make sure the coast was clear. He saw nothing and heard nothing that immediately said to him "watch out!".

"Looks like luck is on my side." said Sonic casually "Nothing going on here that isn't out of the ordinary. Maybe Solaris hasn't noticed what I'm up to. Lucky for me I guess…"

Smiling confidently and contently to himself, Sonic wandered through the tall grass that he was standing in and he searched for the emerald tomb. He had obligated to warp too close to the tomb or in the tomb itself incase Eggman or Finitevus attempted to follow him and had instead warped reasonably close to the tomb. He only took half a minute to find it. Sonic pressed on the stone that shielded the Chaos Emerald's energy from being detected and sealed them in the tomb and the stone slid down and away, revealing all eight Chaos Emeralds sitting in the slab at the bottom, all glowing beautifully with their eight different colours of red, yellow, green, purple, cyan, grey, blue and white. Sonic could still recall the time when he only had seven Chaos Emeralds, it was still amazing to even have an extra one. Of course, he had to thank the Black Arms for that for they had been the ones to have the eighth Chaos Emerald. Sonic reached out to grab the Chaos Emeralds but just as his fingers reached to close around one, a terrible sound boomed in his ears and Sonic jerked around so fast that if you had blinked, you wouldn't have seen him turn around. To his horror, a giant purpley-blue sphere appeared directly in front of him, the sphere having a reptilian pupil in the middle which made it look like a giant staring eyeball glaring directly at Sonic. The hedgehog had not expected something like this at all. This sphere was the Eye of Solaris. Solaris was determined to put down any attempts to stop him and thus he'd sent the eye to stop Sonic. Sonic at first though the eye would be of no harm but he soon regretted thinking such a thing for he could feel something pulling on him as if invisible hands had reached out and

grabbed him. It was the same feeling he got from the time rifts in the prelude to the multi-verse crisis only this wasn't a time rift, it was a giant eye-like sphere doing it. Sonic turned around and tried to grab the Chaos Emeralds but the Eye of Solaris was too strong for him to resist. He pulled as hard as he could and tried desperately to break free from the pull but he had no chance. It was like trying to pull a jumbo jet, impossible to do and a feat you cannot accomplish. Sonic strained as he forced his body to pull and move forward. His body obeyed him but the strength it had wasn't enough. Sonic could feel himself giving up as the Eye of Solaris pulled him forward. His body was beginning tugged backwards slowly but steadily, inch by inch, towards the eye. Sonic would soon be in the eye and he did not want to think for a minute what the eye would do to him should he get pulled into it. Complete disintegration was one possible outcome and Sonic would not be able to save Mobius if he was disintegrated. Sonic fought on to break free from the eye's pull but he knew it was hopeless. He knew he was doomed and that he'd failed everybody all because he wasn't more alert and just was too quick to assume that things were going well for him. But it seemed luck was still on Sonic's side for a red blur jumped in and pushed Sonic out of the way of the Eye of Solaris. It was Knuckles! He'd heard the sound the eye made when it appeared and he along with Shade and rushed into investigate. They had been surprised to see Sonic here and even more surprised to see he was in danger so they'd rushed in to help the hapless hedgehog. Knuckles had managed to get Sonic out of the way and Shade had rushed into the emerald tomb to grab a Chaos Emerald. She grabbed the white one and used a Chaos Control to freeze time around the Eye of Solaris. That way it wouldn't be able to try and suck up anybody else until it wore off. Shade gathered up the other seven emeralds and she ran over to Sonic and Knuckles. The three Mobians shifted away from the Eye of Solaris and Sonic expressed his gratitude.

"Knuckles! Shade! Boy you two are life savers!" cried Sonic happily "I thought I was dead meat for a minute!"

"You very nearly were." murmured Knuckles "So Sonic, what's going on? Why is everything…dark and distorted?"

"Well your brilliant uncle Finitevus decided to release a creature

named Mephiles who in turn found a creature named Iblis and the two formed together to make Solaris, a super dimensional creature who eats dimensions for lunch or something along those lines." explained Sonic "So basically, it's another "end-of-the-world" thing and I need the Chaos Emeralds to stop it from happening."

"You mean all of this is Finitevus's fault?!" screamed Knuckles in astonishment "Ooooh when I get my hands on him I'm gonna make him wish he'd never been born!"

"Allow me the privilege of joining you on that matter." said Shade, looking equally as mad as Knuckles did.

"Certainly hon." said Knuckles with a smile "So you think the Chaos Emeralds will stop this "Solaris" thingy?" he asked.

"I'm hoping so." said Sonic "There's nothing else we can try, the Chaos Emeralds are the best options we have at this point. If they don't work…then we're all doomed."

"Let us hope it won't come to that." said Shade grimly, handing Sonic the Chaos Emeralds.

"I'll say. I've been working for way too long and hard on keeping Mobius safe for us all. No way is Solaris undermining what I and my friends have done for Mobius now!" declared Sonic.

Knuckles and Shade couldn't agree more with that statement. Sonic held out the eight Chaos Emeralds and allowed them to drift up out of his arms and into the air around his head. The Chaos Emeralds circled around his body as the always sensational and amazing transformation to Super Sonic prepared to begin. Sonic could never get enough of that feeling, it was the most amazing feeling in the world. Sonic closed his eyes and held his arms out to the side as the Chaos Emeralds picked up speed, the emeralds becoming a ring of colours that circled around him like a tornado waiting to whisk him away in the monstrous winds. The Chaos Emeralds soon vanished and Sonic's cobalt blue fur began to change into the familiar bright, luminous, brilliant shade of gold of Super Sonic and his quills stood up on end. Super Sonic was here once again and he was ready to put an end to Solaris's nefarious goal. Knuckles and Shade just

stared at Super Sonic, awestruck by his appearance. The sight of a super form never ceased to amaze them no matter how many times they watched it happen. Super Sonic grinned confidently.

"Man I love it when I do this!" he laughed "Now then, it's time to send Solaris packing!"

He took Knuckles and Shade by the hands for he thought the echidnas would want to watch and see if he could stop Solaris despite them not knowing who Solaris was. Super Sonic warped away from Angel Island with a single Chaos Control, disappearing just as the Chaos Control around the Eye of Solaris wore off and the eye started moving around, trying to locate its prey. It saw nothing and disappeared into thin air, no longer needing to be around since Sonic was gone…

Meanwhile, Silver had flown over vast voids of darkness and the odd floating platform or two as Blaze directed him to where the Sol Emeralds had been stored. It still baffled Silver as to how Solaris just disposed of the Sol Emeralds as if they were garbage like this. Was Solaris really that thick in the head or was Solaris baiting them into a trap? In times like this, Silver knew that you had to risk everything. It was a matter of life and death and they had to risk certain death in order to save the lives of everybody in the world, or the multi-verse for that matter. Blaze pointed ahead of herself. Just ahead was another platform but Silver recognized the appearance. It looked like a chunk of Soleanna's town square had been take out of the city and was just floating around for no real reason. The Sol Emeralds were lying scattered on the platform as if they had merely been dropped there carelessly.

"They're on that platform." said Blaze "Take us in Silver."

Silver nodded and he flew towards the platform whilst holding on tightly to Blaze. Despite her fear of heights, Blaze had to admit that the feeling she felt in her stomach while riding on Silver was thrilling. Silver literally made the heights bearable due to how exciting it was to ride in his arms while he flew. Silver headed towards the platform and he swung his legs forward. He landed feet first on the platform

and Blaze scampered over to the Sol Emeralds. She gathered all seven of them up and clutched them tightly to her body as if afraid they'd try and scamper away.

"Now I've got my emeralds back, we can put an end to Solaris's terror." declared Blaze "Not to mention I still have a score to settle with Mephiles, one of Solaris's halves…"

She still felt sore over the fact Mephiles had taken control of her and used her to find Iblis and therefore, be able to start all of this carnage and was looking forward to making Solaris pay for what Mephiles did.

"And of course we need to make sure that this isn't the event that ends Mobius too." reminded Silver "When you're ready Blaze, let's…"

He was cut off by a terrible sound that made Silver and Blaze clutch their eyes in anguish as their eardrums screamed in protest against the noise. Then an Eye of Solaris opened up, staring ominously at the two Mobians that had managed to find the Sol Emeralds despite the mess that Mobius was in at the moment. Silver and Blaze stared at the eye, wondering what it was. Then suddenly, the eye's powers began to activate and Silver and Blaze could feel themselves being pulled towards it.

"H-hey! That eye's pulling us towards it!" cried Silver.

"Solaris baited us!" cried Blaze, fighting against the pull of the eye "He tricked us into coming here so he could finish us off! Why didn't I see that at first?! It was so obvious it was a trap!" she complained.

"Well this trap ain't…catching us!" grunted Silver.

Activating his psychokinesis, he managed to tear up a chunk of the ground beneath his feet and he used his psychokinesis to lift himself off the ground. The Eye of Solaris tugged back but Silver's psychokinesis was strong enough to hold for the moment. He wouldn't hold on forever though and he could feel his grip weakening as he forced his psychokinesis to pull and keep himself away from the Eye of Solaris. With the eye focusing more on Silver,

Blaze was able to break free from its pull. She summoned flames to her hands and she threw them at the eye. The flames didn't seem to do much harm to the Eye of Solaris unfortunately but they did break its concentration long enough for Silver to break free from its pull. He used his psychokinesis to lift Blaze up onto the chunk of ground he was standing on and Blaze held her hands out.

"We need to make the transformation now!" Blaze blurted frantically "We won't have a chance if more of those eye things show up!"

"I agree." said Silver "And I do NOT wanna find out what happens if the eye pulls us in!"

Silver and Blaze held hands and closed their eyes as the Sol Emeralds prepared to do their magic. The Sol Emeralds were alight with flames as they slowly circled around Silver and Blaze. Their speed increased until the Sol Emeralds became a blazing ring of fire that surrounded the two Mobians. The Eye of Solaris seemed to watch, helpless to stop the transformation as it unfolded before it. A huge wave of fire burst out from around Silver and Blaze as the transformation completed. The fire was so bright that the Eye of Solaris's pupil shrank back as if mesmerized by the fire and then the fire struck the eye. Due to the super power coming from the Sol Emeralds, the fire was enough to destroy the Eye of Solaris and make it disappear. Super Silver and Burning Blaze were unleashed once more. Super Silver's brilliant golden fur glower brilliantly and Burning Blaze's pink and red colour scheme was as fiery and hot as the feline herself.

"Oh yeah, Solaris is doomed now!" laughed Super Silver.

"Time to show Solaris what happens to those who try to end the world…" growled Burning Blaze, her face the embodiment of fury.

With a quick Sol Control, Super Silver and Burning Blaze eclipsed themselves within a tornado of fire and then disappeared into thin air, leaving nothing but the platform they had been standing on behind…

Nothing much had been going on since Sonic, Silver and Blaze had left. The Royal Fighters had just been standing on the grassy platform waiting for the Mobians to return whilst watching Solaris. It had been an agonizing wait but the wait was soon to be over for a couple of bright flashes appeared and Super Sonic, Super Silver and Burning Blaze appeared directly in front of them. This made the Royal Fighters cheer ecstatically for they knew that their only hope was here at last. Elise in particular seemed to be amazed at the sight of the Super Mobians before her.

"Actual super forms…I don't believe it!" she cried in amazement "I never thought I'd ever see a real super form!"

"Well Elise, you have now." said Super Sonic smugly "Now Solaris will be going down and wishing he'd never existed!"

"We'll have to see on that." said Elise gravely "We have to hope your powers are enough to stop that thing."

"Come on Elise, I've stopped many crazy things in the past." gloated Super Sonic "Invulnerable robots, a Martian clad in god-like armour and even an ACTUAL god. Solaris will be a cakewalk!"

"Well if you're so confident then stop preening about yourself and destroy Solaris!" bellowed a furious Dr. Eggman, shaking his arms wildly in annoyance.

"You didn't even have to say anything." snorted Super Sonic "Come on Silver and Blaze, let's send Solaris to his doom!"

"With pleasure." said Burning Blaze, cracking her knuckles.

The three super forms left the platform and flew up to the ball of light that was Solaris, looking down on them as if waiting to strike at any available opportunity. The Royal Fighters watched with baited breath as the fight was about to begin. Knuckles and Shade were the most nervous at the moment for they hadn't seen Solaris yet but they would do very shortly. Super Sonic, Super Silver and Burning Blaze levitated before the ball of light and Super Sonic pointed challengingly at it.

"Solaris! Come out and fight!" he growled.

"It's time to meet your doom Solaris!" declared Super Silver.

"You'll pay for using me as part of your rebirth!" snarled Burning Blaze.

Solaris seemed to take those comments as personal threats and challenges so he emerged from the ball of light he was hiding in. The giant beast with the sun-like symbol on his back and enormous arms loomed ominously before the Super Mobians with a look of death in its eyes and a thirst for destruction. Knuckles and Shade could only gape at the sight of such a creature. They could see why Solaris was something to be worried about now, he literally LOOKED like something to worry about. Solaris's surreal, terrifying appearance didn't faze Super Sonic in the slightest. After all, he had dealt with many creatures like this before. Solaris was just another doomsday monster to deal with.

"The present day…the here and now that you've stolen…time to take it back!" Super Sonic yelled with such authority and confidence in his voice.

Solaris seemed to have something to say about that for several Eyes of Solaris opened up in front of him and they fired giant, rocky, purple orbs towards the Super Mobians. Super Silver was on hand to catch them all with his psychokinesis. The orbs were surrounded by a teal glow and they halted just inches in front of the Super Mobians. Super Silver drew his arms back and he threw the spheres at Solaris. Solaris held up his left arm to shield himself from the attack. The spheres crashed and smashed against his arm but the chunk of armour around it seemed to hold. Burning Blaze was next to attack. She activated her Burning Fire Boost move and rocket towards Solaris. Solaris held up his arm left arm again to block the attack. Blaze ploughed straight into his arm and her attack seemed to do more damage than what Super Silver had done. Only superficial damage though for there were cracks spreading up the armour and nothing more. Solaris swatted Burning Blaze away from himself and fired a beam of light towards her. The beam of light seemed to come from his chest area. Burning Blaze dodged the attack and threw a hail fire of fireballs at Solaris. Once again, Solaris

shielded himself with his arm and the fireballs all bombarded his arm in rapid succession. While Solaris was distracted, Super Sonic rocketed through the sky like a supersonic aircraft and he held his feet up. He stomp-kicked Solaris's arm, his attack seeming to cause more damage to the chunk of armour that shielded it. It looked like it was ready to break into pieces. Super Sonic and Burning Blaze decided to combine their efforts and break off the armour. Super Sonic boosted and Burning Blaze shot towards Solaris's arm. They both struck it together and broke the amour into pieces. Their attack didn't seem to hurt Solaris all that much though. Solaris merely lowered his arm as if nothing had happened. The Super Mobians had some idea on how to beat him. Maybe break through the armour and it'll expose him a little and make him more vulnerable to their attacks. Super Silver seemed uncertain though. For an super dimensional being, Solaris seemed a little easy to defeat so far. Was Solaris goading them into breaking his armour in the false hope that it'll weaken him? There was no way of being 100% certain at the moment, they'd have to keep trying and see what happens. Solaris fired more purple orbs at the Super Mobians but Super Silver caught them all with his psychokinesis. Solaris however had a back up plan. He fired a beam of light at Super Silver and struck him. He had been focusing only on the orbs so he couldn't possibly stop the beam of light too. Super Silver cried out as he was stricken by the light and he was thrown backwards. The watching Royal Fighters cringed, feeling the pain that Super Silver had received from that shot. Burning Blaze growled with rage and she set her hands alight. She boosted towards Solaris and spiralled around in a killer fire tornado that would surely do damage to even the hardiest of life forms. Solaris watched the deadly fire cat spiralling towards him and he held up his right arm to block the attack. Burning Blaze struck his arm and she struck it so hard that the armour on his right arm cracked under the power of her attack. She continued spinning despite already hitting his arm and because of this, she was doing more and more damage by the second. Chunks of armour were flying off as Burning Blaze's attack churned away at Solaris's arm. Solaris however swung his arm to the side and sent Burning Blaze hurling away. He just had enough time to raise his arm and block Super Sonic's attack but the damage had been done. Burning Blaze's terrific onslaught had damaged the armour enough for Super Sonic to break it with a mere super spin-dash. Solaris's right arm

was now bare just like his left. Solaris didn't seem fazed by the attack at all. He just glowered at the Super Mobians as if they were annoying bugs waiting to be squashed. As far as Solaris was concerned, that's exactly what they were. Solaris held his arms out and fired a beam of light at Super Sonic. The light struck him and sent him spiralling through the vast void of darkness, wondering which way was up and which way was down. Super Silver and Burning Blaze flew up on either side of Solaris and they both pile-dived Solaris in either sides of his chest. Their attacks cracked it but Solaris otherwise seemed unhurt. Burning Blaze summoned a huge fireball to her hands and she threw it at Solaris, hitting him in the chest again. He withstood most of the impact and he fired another beam at Burning Blaze. Burning Blaze dodged and Burning Fire Boosted into Solaris's upper body again. This time, she did more damage.

"Silver, it seems if we attack him while he's launching that beam attack, we can damage him more!" called Burning Blaze.

"So he makes himself vulnerable when he attacks? That's fortuitous for us." Super Silver smirked delightedly at this news.

Super Sonic had heard what Burning Blaze had said and was equally as delighted to hear this. Super Sonic rushed towards Solaris and stomp-kicked him in the chest, hoping to provoke Solaris to fire a beam at him. His plan worked for Solaris did just that to make him back off. Now distracted, Super Silver and Burning Blaze double-teamed Solaris and did more damage to his chest. Super Sonic added more to the attack by spin-dashing Solaris in the head. Creepily enough, his head seemed to crack under the strain it had been subjected to as well. Being a super dimensional being, Super Sonic doubted destroying the head would finish off Solaris anyway so he didn't get excited. Solaris swatted the Super Mobians away from himself and fired another beam attack. Super Sonic used a Chaos Control to warp out of the way and he reappeared in front of Solaris as he was still firing. He spin-dashed the armour and shattered it into pieces. Solaris now had no armour anywhere on him and his head was gone. With the armour gone, one could see that there was a giant red sphere in the centre of Solaris's body but the Super Mobians didn't take much notice of it. Solaris didn't seem

all that weakened and destroying the head hadn't fazed him at all. He was still active and ready to kill. The infuriating Super Mobians had broken his defences and he was going to make them pay for it. Solaris advanced on the Super Mobians and swatted them away with both arms. Being hit like Solaris was like being hit by a tank, two very big tanks that is. The Super Mobians were stricken and shaken by the blow but had they been normal at this moment, it would have been much worse for them. Solaris summoned more purple orbs from nowhere and he fired them towards the Super Mobians in hopes of adding more pain that he'd already caused to the Super Mobians. Super Silver caught them and he threw them back at Solaris. The orbs struck Solaris and Super Sonic and Burning Blaze wrapped it all up with a spin-dash and a fire boost each on Solaris's chest. The attacks seemed to bring Solaris down for the giant demigod began to fall down out of the sky and plummet an endless plummet down through the void it had created. Super Sonic was about to celebrate until something incredible happened. Solaris rose back up and seemed to have transformed himself in someway. Gone was the sun like symbol on its back and in its place protruded a huge structure that had enormous wings protruding from either side. The wings looked like bony structures with four blade like features protruding from them. The wings gave Solaris a rather graceful and deadly look both at the same time. The Super Mobians and the Royal Fighters were speechless with amazement. They hadn't seen that coming, not even Elise.

"Solaris…just changed himself!" gasped Super Sonic.

"We threw everything we've got at him and he's still not down!" exclaimed Burning Blaze.

"Is he invincible?!" cried Super Silver "Is it possible to stop him?!"

"I should hope so…" said Super Sonic grimly.

Over on the platform, Sally opened up Nicole and held her up so she could see Solaris. Nicole's avatar emitted from the handheld computer she occupied and she stared incredulously at Solaris.

"Nicole, can you detect anything that resembles a weakness on Solaris?" asked Sally.

"Analyzing…" Nicole murmured as she observed Solaris and took in whatever she could read about him. The process took mere seconds before she came to a conclusion. "There seems to be a concentrated dose of energy in the centre of Solaris's body. It is in the form of a red sphere occupying the centre of his body. It's his core and it must be his weak spot."

"I hope it is!" blurted Elise "We're all doomed otherwise!"

"Sonic, Silver, Blaze! Aim for the sphere in Solaris's body!" Sally called out to the Super Mobians "We think that's his weak spot!"

"Got it." said Super Sonic with a thumbs up "You heard the lady guys, aim for the core! It must be the only way to stop Solaris!"

"It better be or we will be finished…" muttered Burning Blaze.

Unfortunately for them, Solaris seemed to know what they were attempting to do. He knew full well his core was vulnerable so he was going to do whatever he could to make sure they never got near him. With his wings flapping, Solaris held his arms out and fired a plethora of beams at the Super Mobians. The beams seemed to strike from as many directions as possible and the Super Mobians found it near impossible to dodge them all. They were stricken by at least one of the beams and they cried out in agonizing pain. Even their super forms weren't enough to spare them the pain of Solaris's attacks. But being invulnerable, the Super Mobians were quick to recover and they all charged towards Solaris. Solaris fired more beams of light and struck them again. The Super Mobians were thrown backwards by the attacks. So far in fact they crashed into the platform that the Royal Fighters occupied and they all fell over as it shuddered under the impact. They managed to pick themselves up and they watched as the Super Mobians shook off the effects of Solaris's attack and they charged back towards him. Solaris fired showers of purple meteors towards the Super Mobians but Super Silver was on hand to catch them all with his psychokinesis. Using his psychokinesis, he forced all the meteors together into one big rocky ball that just looked like a giant meteor like what would usually fall out of space and crash into a planet. Super Silver threw the giant rock ball at Solaris and it struck him. Solaris had his arms up so the rock ball didn't do much harm to him. It did distract Solaris long

enough for Super Sonic to take a shot at hitting his core. Solaris kept his arms raised until Super Sonic came within striking distance and he threw them out to the side. His arms struck Super Sonic and sent him spinning out of control through the air. Super Sonic was left with a dizzying sense of vertigo as he tried to work out which way was up. Burning Blaze hit Solaris in his upper body with a Burning Fire Boost but the attack didn't effect Solaris. He reached up and grabbed Burning Blaze. Super Silver tried to save her but Solaris lashed out and grabbed him as well. Super Silver used his psychokinesis to try and open Solaris's arm but it didn't work. He was too strong for him. Solaris held the two in front of himself and blasted Super Silver and Burning Blaze with a beam of light from his core. The attack felt much worse to them for they had been held directly in front of Solaris's core as he fired the attack. Solaris let go while he was still firing and the beam threw Burning Blaze and Super Silver into a random platform that seemed to belong to nothing in particular. As they hit the platform, they completely destroyed it. Unfortunately for Solaris, that gave Super Silver a weapon. He used his psychokinesis to grab the platform debris and he threw it at Solaris's core. Solaris held his arms up to block the platform debris from hitting him. That distracted Solaris long enough for Super Sonic to fly around from behind and charge into his core like an arrow through the heart. He struck the core and Solaris emitted a shrieking wailing sound that sounded more like it was coming from a ghost than a super-dimensional creature. That was definitely his weak spot. He hadn't shrieked in pain during any of the other onslaughts prior to this attack so the core was definitely his weak spot. Nicole's analysis had been correct on Solaris's weak point. Satisfied, Super Sonic boosted towards Solaris's core again but Solaris held both arms in front of himself to shield his vulnerable core. Super Sonic ricocheted off of Solaris's arms as he hit them. If Solaris had a face that could emote human expressions, he'd likely have been smirking at Super Sonic as he failed to hit his core. Super Sonic frowned and he charged towards Solaris again. Not a very good idea for Solaris struck him down with another beam of light. But Super Sonic's recklessness had been useful for a change for Burning Blaze had the perfect opportunity to throw fire into Solaris's exposed core. The core was more vulnerable when Solaris was attacking. Solaris winced as Burning Blaze struck his core. He turned to Burning Blaze and blasted her with a shower of meteors

that sent Burning Blaze spiralling away. Super Silver rushed into avenge his girlfriend by flying directly towards Solaris's core. Solaris fired a beam at him but Super Silver flew out of the way and flew into his exposed core. Solaris groaned once again as his core as hit. He wouldn't be able to withstand this onslaught forever. He had to finish the pesky Mobians off once and for all before they destroyed his core. With his core gone, he'd be nothing. Solaris fired off nine beams coming from multiple directions at once. The super Mobians had a hard time dodging all the beams and at least one of them managed to snag them. Super Sonic charged towards Solaris's core while he was firing the beams but the beams criss-crossed so he couldn't get to the core without hitting the beams. Super Sonic panted, feeling his strength depleting after that latest attack. They couldn't keep getting hit by those beams otherwise they would end up running out of strength and their super forms would run out. Without their super forms, Solaris would win hands down. Super Sonic decided to be more elusive from now on. Solaris tried to hit Super Sonic again but he used a Chaos Control to warp out of the way of the beams. He reappeared underneath Solaris's attacks and he spin-dashed into his core once again. Solaris made an ominous noise that made him sound almost furious and infuriated with the Mobians. He sent a shower of orbs hurling towards the Super Mobians but Super Silver was on hand to stop them all again. Solaris didn't stop though, he continued firing the orbs until they became too much for Super Silver to focus on all of them at once and they struck him, causing him to let go of the others. The other orbs hit Burning Blaze and Super Sonic and Solaris added another beam of light to this already incredible onslaught of his. The three Super Mobians began to pant. Their power was running out and they could feel it. If they continued to get bombarded like this, they'd be finished. They had to end the battle now.

"Whew…Solaris sure isn't going easy on us…" puffed Super Sonic.

"He isn't indeed. I can feel…my power fading." grunted Super Silver.

"We need to hurry and finish him!" declared Burning Blaze "Let's try charging into him all at once!"

Super Sonic approved of the idea as did Super Silver so they tried it. All three of them boosted towards Solaris's core. Solaris attempted

to stop their attack but the Super Mobians flew out of the way of his attacks and continued their pursuit. They all struck him in unison and made Solaris thunder in pain as he was stricken by all three Mobians. It wouldn't take long to finish him off. His core was getting weaker and weaker. A few more attack and he'd probably be did. Solaris decided to launch another attack and this time he combined his energy beams and his meteor attacks together. He fired energy beams and meteors all at once at the Super Mobians. No direction they flew in would allow them a way of evading the attacks. Even a Chaos Control wouldn't save them for they'd just reappear in the line of fire. The Super Mobians were bombarded relentlessly by the terrible attacks and as they were hit, they could feel their powers fading more and more by the minute. They all gasped and panted for breath the moment the attack ended. Their immortality was beginning to wear. They were feeling more pain then they should be feeling. One more attack like that and their super powers would deplete and burn out on them. It was a matter of life and death and death was threatening to eclipse them at any moment now. Solaris was about to launch another attack until Super Sonic had a great idea. Maybe he could use a Chaos Control on Solaris and freeze him into place! Super Sonic thrust his arms forward and activated his Chaos Control. It worked for time slowed to a stop around Solaris and the giant, dimensional creature could do nothing more but stand there, frozen completely in time. It wouldn't last long though and given they were weakening, Solaris would likely finish them off once he broke free so they had to be quick about it.

"Solaris is frozen! Let's hit his core and finish him off now!" yelled Super Sonic.

"Allow me the honours Sonic." said Burning Blaze coldly "After all, I have a score to settle with that monster."

"Be my guest Blaze." said Super Sonic, all too happy to allow Blaze the pleasure of eliminating Solaris.

Burning Blaze flew towards Solaris and given how Solaris couldn't move, she was free to unleash hell on him. Burning Blaze summoned fire to her hands and she let it all out in a huge explosion of flames that erupted from all around and fried Solaris's core. The Chaos Control was beginning to wear off but Burning Blaze had

enough time to keep the attack going for long enough to finish Solaris off. With a bloodcurdling roar, Burning Blaze fire-boosted all around Solaris's core and unleashed a final burst of flames that wiped out the rest of Solaris's core. The Chaos Control had worn off at last but it was much too late for Solaris to do anything now. His core had been vaporized by the furious Burning Blaze and now Solaris was defeated. His lifeless body tumbled down and plummeted on an endless plummet into the empty void that he'd created. Burning Blaze just watched with a look of contempt on her face as Solaris's body disappeared forever.

"That was for controlling me and using me to awaken you." she snarled at the dead body.

"Whoo hoo! That was epic Blaze!" cheered Silver "You sure showed Solaris what for!"

"Thanks Silver." said Burning Blaze appreciatively "Although I wouldn't have done it without you and Sonic helping me. We all stopped Solaris together."

"And this is why I love teamwork." Super Sonic beamed happily.

Now Solaris was defeated at last, the world that Solaris had created disappeared and Mobius returned to its former glorious self. The dark void disappeared, bright blue sky returned and platforms became whole landscapes once again. Mobius was back to normal and Solaris had been defeated. Once again, the world had been saved from total destruction. Satisfied with the results and their victory over Solaris, Super Sonic, Super Silver and Burning Blaze powered down and returned to their normal forms. They lowered down onto the ground and were instantly greeted by a very ecstatic and grateful Princess Elise. She hugged each of them excitedly to which the three Mobians were all too happy to receive.

"OHMIGOSH! I can't believe you three amazing Mobians managed to stop Solaris! How can I ever thank you three for your hard work?!" she squealed delightedly.

"Don't sweat it princess" said Sonic casually "It's what we do. We stop doomsday monsters like this all the time."

"Well me and Blaze don't do it all the time since in our timeline, there are no doomsday monsters anymore but yeah, we're quite good at saving the world it seems." said Silver modestly.

"Silver, is the future any different?" asked Blaze suddenly "I'm sure after you turned super, your Super Warp Ring was recharged in the transformation."

"Let's try it…" said Silver, fishing out his Super Warp Ring.

He flicked it into the air and as expected, it opened a portal that led into the future of Mobius. His transformation to Super Silver had recharged the Super Warp Ring so now he could use it again. Silver peeked his head through the warp ring and to his dismay, nothing had changed. The future was still an apocalyptic wreck of a world, the same world he and Blaze had lived in all their lives. Solaris clearly had nothing to do with the end of Mobius at all. He would have been stopped regardless of their interventions it seemed. Silver took his head out of the warp ring and stomped the ground in fury.

"It's still a wreck!" he whined "Nothing's changed! Solaris wasn't responsible after all! Gyah! How many damn times are me and Blaze gonna try and save the future before it gets saved?!"

"I don't know…" muttered Blaze sadly, hugging Silver sympathetically "Well we have on theory debunked already. Onto the next one."

"Yeah." said Silver, not mentioning the other theory they had for it was about the Death Egg and they didn't want to catch Dr. Eggman's attention at all.

"What's the other theory you had behind Mobius's future being a wreck?" asked Sonic curiously.

"We'll explain later." said Silver tersely "For now, we just enjoy the fact that Solaris is gone for good and he'll never menace the world again."

"Indeed." said Dr. Eggman agreeably "And I have one more thing to

do before I leave here. Dr. Finitevus, your punishment for your actions today is…"

He turned around and much to his utter obfuscation, Dr. Finitevus had vanished. The echidna had used a warp ring to warp away from Eggman the moment Solaris had been defeated. He was not at all interested in Eggman's punishment and decided now was the perfect time to ditch him. Eggman fumed angrily and he stomped a metal foot on the ground.

"Humph! The coward fled for it! He should have been a man and faced his punishment instead of running away!" growled Eggman.

"You're not the only one who wanted to lay the smack down on Finitevus for what he did." sighed Knuckles, disappointed he couldn't make Finitevus pay for the fact he'd caused Solaris to rise and nearly end the world.

"Well that Karma Houdini isn't worth it right now." muttered Sonic "We have more urgent things to deal with now. Such as finding out where more of Eggman's refuelling stations are." he added, glowering at Dr. Eggman.

"Well I'm not telling you where they are!" sneered Eggman mockingly "You'll have to find out yourself!"

With that said, he took to the skies with a blast of his rockets and he whooshed off into the distance. He was far too fast and too high for anybody to catch now so the Mobians couldn't do anything except watch Eggman leave SoleannaForest behind and head off back to base. Now Eggman was gone, Silver and Blaze stood forward and spoke.

"OK now Eggman's gone, here's the other theory we're testing out for the end of Mobius." Silver announced.

"A ship called the Death Egg launches and it fires a giant beam at the planet." explained Blaze "We think that it probably causes the wreck that is our future."

"So the Death Egg launches?" gasped Sonic, horrified to hear that

their attempts were presumably in vain at this point "And it fires a beam at Mobius? Why would Egg-Brains do that? He wants to conquer the world, not destroy it!"

"Maybe he had a change of heart." said Silver with a shrug "Either way, we cannot let Eggman launch that ship. It might very well be the missing link me and Blaze are looking for."

"I hope it is." said Sonic with a shudder "I don't want Eggman to be the cause of Mobius's destruction. It would mean everything we've done for the world was all in vain and Eggman ultimately wins in the end."

"Indeed." said Sally gravely "We're going to have to destroy the rest of those stations and find out where the Death Egg's located. While the Egg Bunker might be obvious, I don't think Eggman would build the Death Egg in a place we're bound to look in. He's too smart for that."

"I agree Sally." said Sonic, taking her hands into his own for comfort "So we need to find out where the Death Egg is and stop it from launching. If it launches, then we stop it before it can fire a beam at the planet. Either way, we'll stop that thing for good."

"I hope so Sonic…" said Sally, hugging Sonic tightly as if tomorrow wasn't going to come.

Sonic patted Sally's back and nodded. The Death Egg seemed to be the missing link and Sonic would do whatever he could to make sure it didn't end the world. He loved Mobius and would do anything to protect it. He wasn't going to let a measly Eggman ship end it for him now…

Meanwhile, Finitevus had returned to his secret lab in Megapolis and was instantly greeted by a very concerned Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox and Ravage Bloodfang. They had seen the message he'd left for them earlier, saying he'd left for Soleanna and they had been eager to hear how things had been going for him in Soleanna.

"Yo doc! How'd it go?" asked Scourge "You've been gone for hours and then suddenly the world turned dark and surreal for some reason!"

"It went disastrous!" growled Finitevus "I unleashed Mephiles and the first thing he did was backstab me and fuse with another creature to become Solaris! Solaris caused the world to go dark for a minute and had it not been for Sonic, Silver and Blaze, we wouldn't be alive right now for Solaris intended to destroy everything."

"Huh, for once I'm glad my dweeby, goody-goody, two-shoes brother exists." muttered Scourge "He saved us all pretty much now."

"So I guess you won't be using this Mephiles guy for your grand plan?" asked Fiona curiously.

"Indeed not my child but I do have a rather interesting idea for the plan." mused Finitevus "If I could recreate the power of Solaris then we would be one invincible army and nobody would stand in our way." he grinned wickedly at the idea.

"And what kind of power does this "Solaris" have?" asked Ravage inquisitively.

"He's a super dimensional being Ravage." explained Finitevus "His power was greater than anything ever seen on Mobius. If I could add that to my plan than we could all become super dimensional beings and rule Mobius with an iron fist. Nobody would stop us with that kind of power…"

"Cute. Is it possible?" asked Fiona unsurely.

"I'm willing to do whatever I can to try and see if it is indeed possible." purred Finitevus "And given the plan involves a Chaos demigod and hordes of Chaos Emeralds to be artificially made…it might be possible."

"I hope so cause I'd LOVE to have the kind of power that Solaris guy had!" cried Scourge delightedly.

"Indeed so Scourge." Finitevus nodded agreeably "Also I have some

other news to tell. Eggman was going to punish me for my blunder so I decided to cut my losses and ditch him already."

"You mean you've relinquished your ties with the portly man?" asked Ravage in surprise "I'm glad to hear it. Nobody should work with such a hideous creature such as him…"

"I loathed every minute I spent with the idiot that much is certain." Finitevus grumbled "Well no more do I have to suffer under his farce and play the loyal stooge to him. I'm free to formulate my plans and I'll actually have more time to develop them now. We will need to start building the Dark Armada's flagship soon though. Eggman will launch his Death Egg soon and *The Nefarious* will be the only safe haven we'll have from the blast."

"We'll get the materials we need for the ship immediately." said Fiona "Although it'll take us a while to build *The Nefarious* I'm afraid. We can't build ships extremely quickly and there's only four of us. We won't build the ship in time for the Death Egg's launch."

"Who says we're going to build *The Nefarious* from scratch?" purred Finitevus "No, we're going to swipe one of Eggman's ships behind his back and remould it to our liking. He has an Egg-Carrier stationary for incase he ever needs it in the Egg-Bunker and my Super Warp Ring will expand enough for us to steal the Egg-Carrier for Super Warp Rings have no limit to how far they can open. The lab we currently occupy has an underground hangar bay for it used to build ships and aircraft and launch them on occasion, the Egg-Carrier will reside there until its transformation to *The Nefarious* is complete."

"Wow…you're smart." gasped Fiona.

"Thank you dear." said Finitevus happily "One more thing. We'll need to formulate the armada itself before the Death Egg launches. I've completed my list of villains I want to recruit so I feel that we can start gathering up our lucky armada members once *The Nefarious* is ready to launch."

"That's very good Finitevus." said Ravage "And if I may add something, I've discovered that there's a Cyber-Husky residing in

Megapolis."

"Cyber-Husky?" mused Finitevus "Explain Ravage."

"Being a canine myself, I of course will be familiar with the Cyber Huskies." explained Ravage "I heard many stories about them when I was a little boy and I heard that they were very tech-crazy and nefarious creatures. They believed that technology was the way of life everybody should have they tried to force everybody else to become cyborgs. Alas…they were met with near extinction in their attempts. They sadly began to die out and only one remains it seems. I looked them up while you was away since I thought they would be a good addition to the armada and I discovered there's only one left apparently. He lives in Megapolis and his name is Raphael."

"I see…" said Finitevus with interest "Find this Raphael and recruit him at once. You know what they say, the more the merrier." he added darkly.

"It shall be done." said Ravage delightedly "We could promise to restore his species and he'll be willing to join us instantly."

Ravage bowed to Finitevus and then he left the room to find Raphael the Cyber-Husky. As for Finitevus, he sat down on the computer and opened up a file so he could add his recent updates to it for the whole idea of having power like Solaris was going to be part of it. This single, solitary file was Finitevus's grand plan and was marked with the words "Operation: Enerjak Reborn"…

Solaris's mark has been left and time is ticking as the Death Egg and Finitevus's plans are nearing fruition. What will happen next? Will the Death Egg launch? What is Finitevus's plan? Will Sonic and friends find out before it's too late? Join in next time for Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze find themselves in a familiar world with some old "radical friends" of Silver and Blaze's...

Before that, tune into Tales from Mobius where Dark and Kiara

find themselves at the mercy of this so-called "Cyber-Husky" that Ravage was talking about...

Other World Encounter Part 1

Story 185: Other World Encounter Part 1: Solbius

"Your sonic wave emitter should be repaired by now Raphael. Give it a test drive." said Dr. Finitevus as he put down his screwdriver and stood up from the worktable he was currently sitting at.

Next to him on another seat was the person he'd been using the screwdriver and indeed any other tool on the table on. A broad, muscular, cybernetic husky named Raphael. Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox and Ravage Bloodfang were in the corner of the laboratory and watching with interest. Raphael had been through a rough day yesterday. He'd managed to capture the Megapolis Royal Fighters Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx and Kiara the Cheetah but before he could turn them into cyborgs, Kiara had managed to get herself free and then had freed Dark as well. The resulting battle had ended with Raphael losing his hands and his sonic wave emitter being damaged and his entire camp had been destroyed. But Ravage Bloodfang had come across him and had taken him to Dr. Finitevus to have his hands and sonic wave emitter fixed as well as to join the Dark Armada itself*. Raphael liked the idea of the Dark Armada making his dream of making everybody a cyborg come true, something Ravage had promised him when recruiting him, so he was all too happy to join the Armada. Finitevus had been trilled to see that Ravage had been successful in recruiting Raphael. He believed that the bigger his armada, the better it would be. You could not have too many members after all. Finitevus had spent most of the morning fixing Raphael's missing and broken parts. Raphael had had to wait for Finitevus had been quite busy yesterday and now he was getting fixed at last. It hadn't taken Finitevus long at all, only the whole morning. This was mere child's play for the scientist. He'd had to fix far worse damages than missing hands and a broken sonic wave emitter. After screwing the cover of the sonic wave emitter back onto Raphael's forehead apparatus, Raphael was ready to test his fixed weapon to see if Finitevus had done a good job. Raphael aimed at a dummy that was standing nearby and he fired sonic waves at it. The dummy was

mostly there for target practice or to do some training on since the Dark Armada needed to be in good shape for its eventual takeover. The dummy was blasted by the sonic waves coming from Raphael's forehead apparatus. The amount of force the dummy was hit by the sonic waves was impressive to watch for Finitevus. The dummy slammed against the wall and landed with a thud on the floor. Scourge, Fiona and Ravage were impressed. That weapon sure seemed useful and they were already picturing Raphael using it on their sworn enemies. It would be a tough weapon for Sonic and friends to beat that's for sure. Raphael was pleased to see that his sonic wave emitter was working again. And it was just as strong as before too. Finitevus had done a good job on fixing him up from the damages Kiara had done to him. Now he could get his revenge on her and her boyfriend Dark Cat. Raphael turned to Finitevus with an approving smile on his gruff face. Finitevus returned the smile with an evil smile of his own. It seemed evil smiles were contagious in this armada. One of them smiles, they all smile.

"This is great Finitevus! You fixed it up brilliantly!" cried Raphael delightedly "My sonic wave emitter and my new hands work perfectly!"

"I'm so glad you approve of my repair work Raphael." purred Finitevus smoothly, his voice almost kind sounding but still not quite there yet.

"You're more welcome then you give yourself credit for doc." beamed Raphael "Now if you'll excuse me, I have two disgusting kitties to slaughter!"

"Patience Raphael, you shall get your revenge on the leo-lynx and his cheetah girl sooner or later." Finitevus held up his hands hastily "There are many monumental things we still have to get on with in this armada before we can strike."

"Like what?" asked Raphael impatiently "What's this armada about anyway?"

"It's about satisfying the villains of the world whilst striking back on the heroes that dare to defend it from our schemes." explained Finitevus "This world is wild and corrupt like an experiment gone

wrong and all we want to do is improve it. Scourge and Fiona wish to bring their idea of law and order to Mobius and Ravage himself wishes for the world to be a peaceful place. I myself just wish to make myself all powerful so that I have the power to perfect this tainted world. And then there's you Raphael. You want to make the Mobian race stronger and more perfect by making us all cyborgs. We all have good intentions in mind between us and our efforts are met with resistance and idiocy. The Dark Armada seeks to right all those wrongs but we're not ready to show our hand yet. We need to lay low and keep anything about us to ourselves until the armada is formulated."

"I see." said Raphael with a nod "And when will the armada be formulated? I want my revenge on Dark and Kiara NOW!"

"Dude, don't yell at the master planner or I'll break your jaws!" snarled Scourge "You'll get your revenge when Finitevus is ready! I'm as impatient as you are but I've come to grips with this long waiting now so I suggest you do the same."

"I agree with my handsome hunk Raph, please be patient." said Fiona grimly "We'll be ready when Finitevus deems the time to be right. We can't rush this or the Dark Armada will lose the element of surprise."

"Fine." muttered Raphael tersely "I guess I can wait. Waiting is good, it gets us ready for action when the time is right."

"Indeed." said Finitevus with a nod of his head "We won't be long either, the Dark Armada will make its move once *The Nefarious* is completed. It'll take a week or maybe longer to get the new additions fitted into the Egg Carrier that I managed to steal from Dr. Eggman behind his back and there's also the purpose of remoulding the ship's appearance to our liking. Once *The Nefarious* is ready, we'll take flight and then recruit the other villains I wish to have in our armada."

"And who are they then?" asked Raphael with interest.

"A fine selection of villains who will fit our armada's goals and interests indeed." crooned Finitevus delightedly "I've researched on

many notorious criminals from around Mobius and have made a list on who to recruit. The chosen members will be…"

He paused as he fished out the list of villains he wanted to recruit for the Dark Armada. The list was merely a small scrap of paper that Finitevus had scribbled the names on so he could remind himself on who he was going to recruit without needing to keep looking at his file on the computer. Finitevus read the list aloud.

"1: Team Diamond, members Lennox Meers the Meerkat, Alistair Drakken the Bat and Owen Pounder the Rabbit. Roxy the Raccoon was a member but has gone rogue. They are a team of treasure hunters and are very brutal in their pursuits of treasures and priceless artefacts. Lennox is a good shot, Owen is very strong and powerful, Alistair is an aerial ace and Roxy was a good infiltrator who's charm and beauty may prove useful in making the men hesitate. The boys may want to join the armada whereas the girl will have to be forced into joining us. Whereabouts unknown.

2: Lord Sycorax. He is an anarchistic crocodile who's sole purpose is to make the world free of policy, democracy and governments. We'll need to convince him that the Dark Armada wishes to make a kind of government that he can enjoy. Was a leader of a group of reptiles but ended up losing them to a time rift and only has two sidekicks on his side, Romeo the Chameleon and Vladek the Frill-Necked Lizard. All currently incarcerated.

3: Zira the Ruthless. Was presumably treated badly as a child in Chun-Nan and now wants to conquer the country. Is very brutal in her approach to power. Will snap necks and knows a vicious style of kung-fu. Her kung-fu abilities will be a boon to the heroes and a blessing to the armada. She'll very likely join us if it means conquering Chun-Nan. Currently incarcerated.

4: Conquering Storm and the Raiju Clan. This clan is a clan of strict discipline, order and ruthlessness. Once conquered Chun-Nan and oppressed its emperor and even managed to defeat its princess in battle. Will likely join the armada for reasons of revenge and dominance over Chun-Nan. Their large numbers and great skill will benefit the armada greatly, as well as increase numbers. May not get along well with Zira unfortunately given their past rivalry with

each other. I'll fix that problem of course. Conquering Storm and all her clan members are currently incarcerated.

5: Cutthroat Jim. A vicious pirate with a bloodthirsty nature and a keen eye for treasure. May not be all that useful but it never hurts to have an extra member. His sword skills and vicious fighting style will be of use to us in the battlefield. His pirate crew could also add to our numbers. Currently marooned on an island and has been so for a year. May have to proceed with caution for he could be insane or worse."

"That sounds like an interesting bunch of baddies." mused Raphael in amazement "And you sure did research deeply on them all didn't you? You know them all as if you've just met them all!"

"That's Dr. Brainy-Beyond-Belief for you Raph, he's insanely good at what he does." chuckled Fiona with a chuckle that sounded more dry and forced than one of good humour.

"So once we've got your ship ready to fly, we'll track down these villains, recruit em, and then put our plans into action?" asked Raphael "Is that it?"

"Correct Raphael, that's exactly what the plan is." said Finitevus darkly "But first, we need to get rid of Dr. Eggman, the single cursed being that taints Mobius more than anything else. Fiona managed to steal the plans to his upcoming vessel, the Death Egg, and we plan to sneak onboard the ship and sabotage its power supply. It'll bring Eggman down to the ground and kill him at long last. With him gone, we focus on Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends and destroy them one at a time. Then we shall get what we want."

"Sounds good to me." said Raphael gleefully "So are we doing anything now?"

"Yes." said Finitevus "Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends are taking out refuelling stations that Dr. Eggman is building for the Death Egg. They are fake of course and he doesn't need them. But they'll undeniably get closer to Dr. Eggman and then find the Death Egg and destroy it, eliminating our chance to kill him once and for all. The heroes will just prolong the war instead of ending it."

"So what are we gonna do about that?" asked Scourge "Cut our losses and strike now?"

"Absolutely not." spat Finitevus crossly "That illogical action could compromise our plans gravely. No, we slow down Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends. If we can delay them for at least a week then the Death Egg will near or reach completion and then take flight. At the same time, *The Nefarious* will be ready to launch and we can take down Dr. Eggman. And because of Raphael's prodigious technology, I know how we'll slow down Sonic and his friends."

"My technology? What do you man doc?" asked Raphael curiously.

"You can create portals." explained Finitevus "You said so yourself earlier. You can create a portal and send Sonic and anyone with him to another place. Can you create portals to other worlds?"

"Oh I can indeed." Raphael grinned with pride as he announced this "I travelled around the multi-verse the other year, testing the capabilities of my portal creating ability. I know every single world in the multi-verse. I know a good place to send this "Sonic the Hedgehog" person. It's a world called "Solbius". It's mostly water there and has little land. That'll keep him busy and I doubt that Solbius has a way off the world so he might be stuck there permanently."

"In that case Raphael, next time Sonic decides to snoop on Dr. Eggman, you can send him to this "Solbius" world and we'll leave him there until he lives his lifespan…" purred Finitevus darkly, his face a menacing smirk that could give even the world's ugliest, scariest spider nightmares.

It appeared that Finitevus had a plan and Sonic would never know what hit him when he unleashed it…

Meanwhile in the Egg-Bunker, a Super WarpRing opened up, throwing a bright golden gleam around the empty room that it had appeared in. Out of the warp ring appeared first a foot that was

covered by a white sock and an accompanying red and white sneaker with a golden buckle on one side. As the foot stepped out of the warp ring, the body that the foot belong to emerged from out the warp ring along with the foot. Sonic the Hedgehog emerged completely from within the warp ring and he looked around the Egg-Bunker. His senses were all alert and he had his eyes open and focused on the scenery around him. He was taking part in a raiding mission that had been contrived by Queen Sally Acorn, New Mobotropolis's ruler and Sonic's girlfriend. They had plotted to sneak in the Egg-Bunker and find out the locations of the rest of the Death Egg refuelling stations, as well as find where the Death Egg itself was although they sincerely doubted that would be the case since Eggman likely wouldn't have information like that stored somewhere. The Death Egg was his next big scheme and he'd be likely trying everything in his power to make sure that it went off without a hitch. thus it was unlikely he'd have the Death Egg's location stored anywhere for them to find. It was still worth a try though. Finding the Death Egg was a paramount task at this moment in time, especially since Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat were theorizing that the launch of the Death Egg had something to do with Mobius's doom, something they had been trying endlessly to prevent since the day Sonic had first met them. Speaking of Silver and Blaze, they were with Sonic too. As Sonic checked his surroundings and realized that the coast was clear, he stuck his arm through the still open warp ring and curled his fingers into his palm. That was the signal: the coast is clear. You can come through now. Silver and Blaze traversed through the warp ring and into the Egg-Bunker. The warp ring had opened up from inside Royal HQ so it was merely a hop from hero headquarters to villain headquarters. A very dangerous hop indeed. Sonic, Silver and Blaze had one more person coming through and then the mission could begin. And that was the brain that had come up with the heist in the first place, Sally Acorn herself. She came through the warp ring with Nicole, a Mobian-turned-computer-programme, in her hand. Nicole had been vital for the mission for out of the four, only she had ever been in the Egg-Bunker. Twice in fact, once during the Martian invasion** and the second when Tails tried to get a new body for her. Thus, Nicole knew where the warp ring should open up and had shown Sally a visual of the room they were in so she could visualize it in her head and be able to warp into the bunker. As for the room the Mobians

were in, it was the room that Eggman had taken Nicole into when he'd attempted to turn her evil. Nicole remembered it all too well, the low ceiling and the metal bed that the automaton body she'd been placed in had been restrained to as Eggman did his work. Thank goodness it wouldn't happen again. The warp ring closed up behind Sally as she exited from it and Silver grabbed it. Given it was his warp ring, he held onto it for the time being, twirling it casually around his finger.

"OK we're in." whispered Silver "Now what?"

"As you remember, we have the other team members on standby waiting to cause a distraction that will get Eggman out of the bunker." Sally whispered back "I'll just let Sora know that we're in and we can begin the hacking."

"Eggman really will feel stupid when he realizes that his computer's been hacked in while he's been up top fighting." snickered Sonic "And it won't matter if he leaves anybody on guard while he's away since we'll just smash them all to pieces."

"You make it sound like Eggman's never built a good machine yet." murmured Blaze grimly "One has to wonder how he came to antagonize Mobius for so long."

"Indeed." said Sonic with a shrug "He only built a couple of good machines in all the while he's been on Mobius and that's it. Even then, they stop being good once he uses them over and over. I mean Metal Sonic's not threatening anymore."

It was true. Metal Sonic had once been Eggman's greatest creation and probably the only robot Eggman had ever made that had managed to take over the world and even then, Tails had erased what Metal Sonic had done to Mobius with Eggman's Egg-Timer. Nowadays, Metal Sonic seemed to just be thrown out for the heroes to destroy on occasion. The latest time Metal Sonic had been used was during Operation: Double Trouble and he had been destroyed by Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas and Team Chaotix. Eggman had yet to build a good robot again these days. It was no wonder he was losing this war and was seen more as a nuisance than a threat pretty much by all the Royal Fighters.

"And yet Silver and Blaze seem convinced that his Death Egg is what causes the end of the world." mused Sally "I still don't believe it though. Eggman wants to conquer the world, not destroy it."

"Maybe something goes wrong with the Death Egg and it devastates Mobius by accident?" suggested Silver "Or maybe Eggman has a sudden change of heart and ends up wanting to destroy the world instead. We don't know, me and Blaze are just going from what we've learnt from history books and any information we can find."

"And hopefully you've found what you were looking for." said Sonic brightly "It still makes my skin shudder to think Mobius ends at some point and 200 years later, life's beginning to wipe out."

"The feeling is mutual Sonic." said Sally gravely, her face matching the tone of her voice.

Sally loved her life on Mobius and the life that she and her Royal Fighters lived and swore to protect. Just thinking about the world ending felt like a severe undermining of their efforts and she hoped dearly that they could prevent it from happening. For now, she pushed her thoughts aside and focused on the mission at hand. She had staged this heist perfectly. She, Sonic, Silver and Blaze were the pawns that were to make the first move in this game and up above the Egg-Bunker, the rest of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were on standby like the other pieces of the chessboard waiting to be moved along the board, waiting to distract Eggman and give Sally the chance to get what they came for. Tails was equipped with an earpiece and Sally would use Nicole to call him once she and her team were inside. She pressed a button on Nicole's keypad and waited as Nicole's screen lit up with the words "connecting to earpiece device". Nicole connected and Tails answered the call.

"Hello, this is Tails. You ready Sally?" his voice emitted from Nicole's speaker and thankfully, had been set to quiet so his voice came out more like a whisper in somebody's ear as he spoke.

"We're inside Tails, begin the distraction." ordered Sally.

"Roger that." said Tails happily.

Up on the surface above the Egg-Bunker, Tails switched off his earpiece and he turned to the other Royal Fighters. They were all here, Amy Rose, Cosmo the Seedrian, Cream the Rabbit, Knuckles the Echidna, Shade the Echidna, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot, Ruben the Water Panther, Sora Prower, Espio the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile and Charmy Bee. They had been waiting patiently for Tails to tell them that it was OK to set off the distraction and get Eggman out of the bunker so Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze could do their part. The distraction was a simple bomb that they were going to detonate. The explosion would catch Eggman's attention and bring him out of the bunker and up to the surface. The bomb would be powerful but not too powerful. They didn't want to bring the roof down on Sonic's team's heads or that would jeopardize everything and make the mission all for naught. Tails switched on the bomb, which was a huge rugby ball-shaped device with a single button that was meant to activate it. Tails lay the bomb down on its side and he signalled for everybody to stand well back. The bomb would send a lot of debris flying and they didn't want to get hit by any of it. The Royal Fighters all ran a good distance away from the bomb and waited for it to explode. Ten seconds passed and the bomb exploded in a terrific ball of fire and smoke. Despite its size, the bomb was powerful enough to make the earth tremble beneath the Royal Fighter's feet and the noise was ear-splittingly loud, surprising for a bomb so small. Tails thought for one horrid, fur shivering moment that the bomb was too powerful and he'd end up causing the roof of the Egg-Bunker to cave in. But the bomb didn't do as much damage as he thought it would do. It only caused a small crater no bigger than a standard living room in a standard house. The Egg-Bunker would hold, luckily for them. The terrific explosion had definitely done the job it was supposed to do though, catch Dr. Eggman's attention. He was in the main computer room and upon hearing the explosion, he'd instantly reacted.

"What the Sam Hill was that?!" blurted Eggman frantically "Katherine, Egg-Pawns, with me up to the surface now! You two, stand guard while I'm out!" Eggman pointed to a couple of Egg-Pawns armed with lances and shields as he gave the order.

The two Egg-Pawns nodded eagerly, happy to be given guard-duties for the time being. They soon would end up wishing that they

hadn't been given that task. Dr. Eggman, his servant bot Katherine, and a fleet of Egg-Pawns all rushed out of the room to find out what had caused that tremble above their heads. Eggman already assumed it was Royal Fighter work but he still needed to know how they did it so he could stop them doing it again. The roof could have easily crumbled down on top of him and ruin his Egg-Bunker, the only base he had left now. The computer room was now empty save for the two Egg-Pawns that had been placed on guard. Eggman would be outside fighting the Royal Fighters along with his servant bot and Egg-Pawns. The plan had worked and now it was time for Phase 2 of the plan. The Egg-Pawns stood to attention as if they were the Queen's bodyguards outside of Buckingham Palace standing guard and ensuring her Majesty's safety. Sonic could only snicker at their attempts of looking imposing. Egg-Pawns were probably the worst guards anybody could have. Silver just reached out a hand and he grabbed the Egg-Pawns with his psychokinesis. The Egg-Pawns froze as a teal glow surrounded them. They felt like something had just grabbed them but they couldn't see any hands anywhere, suggesting they were being grabbed by invisible hands or by the air itself. Silver clenched his fist, his psychic powers pressing onto the Egg-Pawns and squashing them flat like a soda can being crushed in the hand of its purchaser. The two crushed Egg-Pawns fell down onto the floor as Silver released them. They were of no use to anyone anymore. Now the cost was clear, Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze ran into the room. Sally's first intention was to run over to the main computer and plug Nicole into it.

"OK Nicole, do your stuff." said Sally under her breath.

"Easily done Sally." crowed Nicole "Eggman's yet to build something I can't hack in to."

"How fortuitous." Blaze said quietly.

The room fell silent as Nicole began to hack into Dr. Eggman's main computer and search for the files she absolutely needed to find. Nicole had been right to boast about how Eggman was yet to build something she couldn't hack into for she managed to break the codes of the main computer and access its data files in mere seconds. It helped how she was an A.I. that had been put into a heavily advanced handheld computer courtesy of General Rakutan

on Mobius 3000. Finitevus may have destroyed her original handheld but the new handheld computer she resided in was functional enough and Nicole was still as advanced as before. Nicole managed to find what she was looking for and she downloaded the information into her handheld computer base. The process had taken one whole precious minute. Now Nicole had finished, Sally unplugged her from the main computer.

"That was quick." she said with a smile "So did you find out where the remaining stations are?"

"I have." said Nicole delightedly "There is one in Adabat, one near the city of Megapolis, one in the Golden Hive Colony, one in the Lost Jungle and one in Chun-Nan. We will have to divide our forces in order to bring them all down at once. And we'll have to start soon, these towers are presumably nearing completion."

"That is something indeed." murmured Sally dryly, a little uneasy about how many refuelling stations were left to destroy and the fact they were nearing completion "And what about the Death Egg? Did you find the location of the Death Egg as well?"

"I'm afraid not Sally." said Nicole sadly, a sad face emoticon appearing on the screen as she spoke "Dr. Eggman seems to want to keep the Death Egg so secret that its whereabouts aren't stored on the main computers. It's like he knew we'd try and find out where the Death Egg is."

"Very clever of him if that's the case and very unusual of him to be so clever." mused Sally "Eggman's sure stepping up his A-Game isn't he?"

"Well give him credit, he is desperate to beat us and take over Mobius is he not?" noted Sonic "So he'll do whatever he can to make sure he wins. Even so, we'll still beat him."

"We've been on top of him for months now, he's as good as beaten anyway." crowed Sally "And yet Silver and Blaze seem to think he causes the end of the world and is the reason their future is a wreck..."

"They've given us a head start by warning us about this so that won't happen...hopefully." said Sonic, looking unsure of what he'd just said.

"With any luck, the last few refuelling stations might give us a clue on the whereabouts of the Death Egg." suggested Sally "And once we find it, we destroy it. It can't end Mobius if it's destroyed after all."

"If we find the Death Egg, I'd like to be the one to destroy it." growled Blaze fiercely, clenching her fists with rage "The very thought of that thing being responsible for me and Silver living in a dystopian world makes my skin crawl!"

"Calm down Blaze, we'll get our chance soon enough." said Silver "Now then, we got what we came for, let's get outta here."

"Tails, this is Sally, mission accomplished." said Sally, switching Nicole's communicator on and speaking into Nicole's speaker so she could talk to Tails "Meet us back a Royal HQ immediately."

"Got it Sally." replied Tails.

Sally could hear bullets spraying and missiles firing in the background. It seemed Eggman was in a bad mood right now. Not that he could help it given how much of a nuisance she and her Royal Fighters were for him. He'd be furious to see that they'd successfully managed to infiltrate the Egg-Bunker and steal valuable information that they would use to bring down the Death Egg and foil his plans once again. Whatever his plans with the Death Egg were, Sally didn't care. She just wanted it destroyed and never to see the light of day. The Mobians turned away from the main computer and Silver prepared to activate his Super Warp Ring. But just was he flicked it up, a tunnel of sonic waves suddenly blasted him, Sonic, Sally and Blaze and slammed them against the main computer, breaking it and crushing many of its buttons and controls. Silver had dropped his Super Warp Ring the moment he'd been hit. The four collapsed onto the floor, not knowing what had hit them. They picked themselves up off the floor only to see that a portal had opened up in front of them. They stared at the portal in wonderment. It was definitely something they hadn't seen before and they wondered where it had come from. Before they could find out, something

rushed around behind them and pushed them into the portal with another blast of sonic waves. Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze disappeared into the portal as they were pushed into it. The portal closed up behind them and the attacker grinned delightedly, pleased that the plan had worked so well.

"Ha! The four twerps didn't know what hit em!" crowed Raphael as he scooped up Silver's Super Warp Ring "And they won't be getting back anytime soon now they've lost their warp ring."

He laughed to himself and he walked into the room where the Royal Fighters had arrived in earlier. He wasn't the only one in the room though, Dr. Finitevus was there too. He had warped Raphael into the room with a warp ring of his own since he knew the Egg-Bunker inside and out. Once he'd warped Raphael into the Egg-Bunker, Raphael carried out the plan as perfectly as possible. Pleased to see Raphael had succeeded, Finitevus flicked his warp ring into the air and opened up a portal back to the lab he and the Dark Armada resided in.

"Masterfully executed if I do say so myself Raphael." purred Finitevus delightedly "You sent Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze all at once into Solbius. And you managed to make Silver lose his warp ring, even better. They'll never get back now."

"Indeed not." replied Raphael with a tone of triumph in his voice "So you say this Sonic guy's a big threat? Didn't seem so tough to me."

"That's because you caught him by surprise." growled Finitevus, jabbing Raphael in the chest sharply with a bandaged finger that was so heavy on Raphael that Finitevus may as well have pulled a knife on him "Do not underestimate Sonic. Had you fought him properly, you would be amazed at how powerful he can be and a battle with him would be a battle you'd like to forget."

"Good thing we got rid of him eh?" said Raphael, rubbing the back of his head uneasily "He'll not stop the armada now he's gone forever."

"Indeed so Raphael." said Finitevus agreeably "Come now, *The Nefarious* needs preparing for launch."

Raphael nodded and he followed Finitevus through the warp ring. The warp ring vanished as Finitevus and Raphael stepped through it, leaving the Egg-Bunker exactly as it was. Minus the destroyed main computer to which Dr. Eggman would not be pleased about at all...

Meanwhile, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had returned home from Megapolis and had entered Royal HQ. They all gathered together into the lab to see what Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze had in store for them all. They had played their part of the plan beautifully. Eggman had been a tough opponent for all of them given his rather heavily armoured and well-armed life-support mech suit but they had all made it out in one piece and now they were excitedly waiting to see if Sally's team had found exactly what they'd broken into the Egg-Bunker for. But upon arriving back at Royal HQ and entering the lab, it was clear that something was deathly wrong. Sally had told the others to meet her back at Royal HQ. She was not here. Nor was Sonic, Silver or Blaze. Just to be double-sure, Tails ran out of the lab and did a thorough search through of the entire headquarters. They could have warped into any particular room of Royal HQ although it did strike Tails as odd since they wouldn't have any reason not to warp into the lab as that was Royal HQ's most important room. A few minutes later, Tails returned to the lab with a face that said everything that needed to be said without any words needing to be spoken whatsoever. The others could tell what he was going to say before he even opened his mouth.

"They're not in any of the other rooms are they?" asked Cosmo, her voice worried and quivering.

"I'm afraid not Cosmo." gasped Tails, his face ashen with fear "Sonic's team hasn't come back yet it seems. They're not in Royal HQ at all."

"But why wouldn't they be back yet?" asked Knuckles curiously "I mean, you told us that Sally told you to meet her team back here. Why would they not be back yet? Given Silver has a warp ring, Sally and the boys should have got home before us!"

"I agree with the red dude, this isn't right." said Mandy with a tight edge to her voice "They should be back here but they're not. And when Sally said "Back at Royal HQ", she means "Back at HQ". Something must have happened to them."

"Tails, try contacting them." suggested Cosmo "See if they answer at all."

Tails did so. He activated his ear piece and he spoke loud and clear so Sally would hear him.

"Sally? Sally? This is Tails. Where are you? Over." he asked.

There was no reply.

"Sally please respond. Where are you?" Tails asked again.

There was still no reply. The silence that responded to Tails's question made the fox's blood run colder than a polar ice cap. He almost felt like he wanted to collapse in shock. Cosmo put an arm around her lover's arm and looked into his fear-filled eyes worriedly.

"They're not responding are they?" she asked nervously.

"I'm afraid not Cosmo." whispered Tails hoarsely "I've received no response of any kind. Only silence."

Cosmo put her free hand to her mouth in horror.

"No…you don't…think…" she gasped, unable to speak properly.

"Did Eggman get them?" asked Bunnie worriedly "Or did somethin' else happen to them?"

"I dunno but we're gonna have to find them." declared Tails "We go back to the Egg-Bunker and see if Eggman's captured them. If he hasn't then we'll have to assume that something worse might have happened to them. I hope they're alive, I can't bear to think of my best friend being dead…"

It was particularly horrible for Tails to think about after his traumatizing experience on Mobius Beta during the now already

legendary multi-verse crisis last month. He had watched his Mobius Beta counterpart die in front of his eyes and the experience had left him quite paranoid about anything death related, especially when it concerned any of his friends. The very thought of Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze dead was enough to make Tails shiver like a boy trapped in a freezer. He'd been so traumatized by the experience that the sound of his own breathing at night had become a comfort to him.

"I'm sure they're still alive Tails, no need to worry about them being dead." said Wilson softly "I agree with your idea, we should go back to the Egg-Bunker and see if we can find out what happened to the four."

"Let's get started and to make things easier for us, I say we should bring a Chaos Emerald with us so we can use a Chaos Control to freeze time on the Egg-Bunker." suggested Tails "With time frozen, Eggman won't slow us down."

"You better make sure you don't lose it Tails or you'll be the one to retrieve it." warned Knuckles firmly.

"I won't lose it Knuckles." Tails reassured him hastily "I promise you that. Now then, let's get a Chaos Emerald and start searching the Egg-Bunker for Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze."

Without another word, the Royal Fighters left Royal HQ to do just that. It was going to be a tense moment for them all, finding out if their friends were dead or alive at this point in time. Tails sincerely hoped with all his heart that it was the former…

Meanwhile, a portal opened up in a bright blue, sunny sky that looked down gleefully upon a glorious, golden beach complete with dry, fine sand and a lapping blue ocean that threw waves at the shore every so often. Out of the portal spilled Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze. To them it felt like being inside a can of baked beans and then poured into the hot pan. The surface they landed on was considerably softer and much better than a hot pan though. The four Mobians crashed down onto the sand with a hard thump that sprayed grains of sand everywhere. Sonic and Silver had landed on

their backs whereas Sally and Blaze had unfortunately landed on their stomachs, their faces getting covered in sand and the grains blinding them momentarily. Sally even got some in her mouth and she coughed and spluttered violently to get the sand out. She brushed sand out of her fur and vigorously wiped her tongue on the palm of her hand to get the sand off of it. Blaze had had her mouth closed so she didn't get any in her mouth, only all over her face. She couldn't open her eyes for a minute though for she'd gotten a bit of a sand in them and she rubbed at them furiously. Sonic and Silver sat up and crawled over to their respective girlfriends to help them. Sonic brushed sand off of Sally's face and hair and Silver helped Blaze to get sand out of her face. When the four had finally managed to get all of the sand out of their fur, Sally turned to Sonic.

"What the heck was that?" she croaked, her voice a little strained and sore due to the sand getting in her mouth.

"I dunno." said Sonic with a helpless shrug of his shoulders "Some sonic wave thingy hit us and knocked us through a portal. I have no idea what caused the portal though, I mean time rifts are a thing of the past now."

"Unless of course somebody else is able to make time rifts." said Silver tersely "But I don't think that was a time rift. I'm not sure what the portal was but I'm sure it wasn't a time rift."

"I hope it wasn't." muttered Sonic, helping Sally up to her feet "They were more trouble than they were worth."

"You can say that again handsome." murmured Sally "So…where are we?" her voice trailed as she took sight of the bright sunny sky and the sparkling blue ocean that lapped at the shore of the sand they had landed on.

"Some kind of beach I suppose." said Sonic, looking around and drinking in the glorious, sunny scene that lay out before him.

"I think I know this beach…" mused Blaze as she observed the sand beneath her feet and sniffed at the air that hung around them "It feels like I've been here before…maybe during the near end of the multi-verse."

"I think I know this beach too." mused Silver "The buildings in the distance strike me as familiar and I haven't felt this much heat since we left Solbius." he added as he took note of the nearby town that stood outside of the beach and the fact that the weather was swelteringly hot all of the sudden.

"Nor I." agreed Blaze, nodding slowly as it dawned on her that she knew where they were "Sonic, Sally…we have landed on the alternate world known as Solbius."

"You sure? Positive about that?" asked Sonic.

"Definitely." said Blaze plainly "Believe me, this is Solbius. We're on Sol Beach, the very beach that we got off of the Ocean Tornado at after me and Silver helped the world's local heroes defeat Captain Metal."

"I believe you." said Sally "I must say…this place is beautiful. And it looks so peaceful too. Reminds me of the times before Eggman if I say so myself."

Sally had already fallen in love with the beautiful scenery around her. She'd probably want to live here if she didn't have a reason to return to Mobius Prime.

"It is beautiful indeed." said Sonic with an approving smile on his face as he gently lifted his foot and allowed the sand around his sneakers to trail down the sides like water in a waterfall "Maybe on a slow day, we could come here for a day off or two. For now though, we need to get back home. The others will be worried sick about us." his tone shifted almost as fast as he could run.

"Oh yes!" cried Sally in alarm "The Royal Fighters were to meet us back at Royal HQ! We need to get back there now or they'll think we've disappeared or something!"

"One thing I have to wonder is why somebody sent us to Solbius in particular?" asked Silver curiously "I mean, was somebody trying to get rid of us or something?"

"If they did Silver then they would have killed us, not sent us to

another dimension." said Blaze with a disagreeable shake of her head "The portal must have been some other weird phenomenon and we ended up in it. But then again, who caused the sonic waves?"

"We'll find out when we get home." declared Sonic "If only we had a way home though."

"I know, I lost my warp ring when I got hit." said Silver sadly "I can't warp us back I'm afraid."

"But I can." announced Blaze with a triumphant grin on her face "My Sol Emeralds will do the trick. I still have them on me after all."

"Oh of course! When you take the Sol Emeralds with you, you can summon them whenever you feel the need to!" cried Silver, snapping his fingers in realization "Man Blaze, it's so fortunate you brought the emeralds!"

"Indeed it is Silver." Blaze beamed as she summoned one of them to her hand "I assure you Sonic and Sally, this won't hurt at all. It's just like a Chaos Control only with fire instead of light. The fire is harmless, I promise you."

"Well then let's get going back home shall we?" asked Sonic impatiently "We've got information to share with our buddies right now!"

Blaze was about to perform a Sol Control but then suddenly, her voice was drowned out by an ear-splitting bang that seemed to rip through the quiet of the beach. Blaze turned around to see what the noise was and suddenly found a net being draped over her. The net threw Blaze down onto the sand and just before Blaze could try and break out of the net, a terrible electrical shock surged through the net and zapped Blaze into unconsciousness. The lavender furred cat passed out on the sand, unable to escape from the net that had captured her. Sonic, Silver and Sally were horrified at what had happened but before they could do anything to help Blaze, a smoke bomb had been tossed out onto the beach and upon exploding, the bomb emitted thick black smoke that obscured all vision, making it impossible for anybody to see. That is, if you were organic. Two

shapes ran through the smoke and they both spotted the netted and unconscious Blaze lying on the sand thanks to their highly advanced sensor optics that allowed them to see through the thick smoke. The two shapes were the metallic buccaneers of the robotic pirate crew known as Swash and Buckle. They worked for the evil Captain Metal and now they had carried out a plan that saw Blaze the Cat getting subdued for them to take away. The picked up the netted up cat and carried her to the sea where a submarine was waiting for them. They had arrived in the submarine and had fired a net at Blaze via the submarine's onboard net-gun. The smoke bomb had been fired from one of its cannons. The submarine itself was partially submerged with only the top of it visible like a whale lying on the shore. It was quite large and had a black and navy blue colour scheme with a golden eagle statuette at the front. Swash and Buckle carried Blaze onto the submarine and they took her down inside the cabin.

"Shiver me timbers Buckle, I neverrr thought we'd be capturing Blaze tharr Cat!" cried Swash in astonishment "I thought we were supposed to be capturing Team Radical! We've been lyin' in wait fer those landlubbers to come near tharr shores so we could net em' up and take em' to tharr captain!"

"Well the captain will want Blaze more than those scallywags that's fer sure." said Buckle as they hung the netted up Blaze on a hook in the ceiling of the submarine "After all, she was the one who nearly killed him, not them."

"Indeed so Buckle me lad!" yelled Swash, slapping his friend on the back "This be a fine capture indeed! Tharr captain will be so happy when he sees we've got Blaze for him!"

"Oh yes Swash matey." Buckle said excitedly "I bet we will be paid handsomely for her capture!"

He could already picture the amount of golden parts that Captain Metal would be paying him and Swash with when they arrived back to the Metal Marauder with their prisoner. Blaze would likely be worth more gold than they'd ever received in their lives.

"Bet the lassie will regret ever tryin' ta murder our captain." laughed

Swash as he sat down at the submarine's controls and prepared to set off.

"And if she thinks about escapin' then she's got another thing coming." crowed Buckle "That net be heatproof, she'll not get out of that at all."

"Indeed not." agreed Swash.

He thrust the submarine's controls into action and the submarine started up. With an ominous whirr, it reversed away from the beach and sunk down into the ocean that lapped out at the shores like a mouth trying to swallow up the whole island. By the time the submarine had descended into the water and turned around to go back to base, the smoke from the smoke bomb had cleared and Sonic, Sally and Silver could now see properly again. Sonic coughed as the last of the smoke escaped his lungs and he opened his eyes, relieved he could now see properly again.

"Man! Talk about an ambush!" spluttered Sonic "That's twice somebody's gotten the drop on us today!"

"It seems our vigilance is a little rusty." grumbled Sally "We need to remain more alert from now on, this is getting irksome by the second."

"You know what's worse than that you two?" asked Silver, his face full of shock "Blaze has gone! Somebody's taken her while we were blinded by that smoke!"

Sonic and Sally leapt into action before Silver even said the last word of his sentence. They ran up to where Blaze had been netted and quickly noticed that she was indeed gone. Sonic kicked at the sand furiously, cursing himself furiously over Blaze's capture.

"Damn!" he swore "First we end up on an entirely new world and now Blaze gets captured! What more can go wrong today?!"

"Sonic dear, clam down." Sally said hastily, grabbing Sonic and holding him tight so he couldn't kick about anymore.

"Don't tell me to be calm Sally!" spat Sonic wildly "Blaze had our

only way off of this world and now she's been captured! How will we get back home now?!"

"We need to find Blaze and rescue her!" cried Silver frantically "Who knows what's gonna happen to her now she's been captured! We need to get her back before any harm comes to her!"

"But how Silver?" asked Sally "There's no way we'll be able to find Blaze! We don't even know where she is or where she's being taken!"

"Well can't Nicole track her?" asked Sonic "I mean, Nicole is good at that stuff isn't she?"

"Oh yes of course…Nicole can track her." Sally realized.

She took Nicole off of her boot, pausing to shake sand off of the computer for a moment, and then she opened up Nicole. Nicole's avatar emerged from the handheld device and she instantly realized that she was being called at a bad time now.

"Hello Sally, is there something wrong?" she asked politely.

"Blaze has been captured and we need to find her so we can get back to Mobius Prime." explained Sally "Can you track her?"

"Hold on…"

Nicole fell silent as she began to scan the world that they were occupying for any signs of Blaze the Cat. Solbius was new to her so it took a while for her to take in their surroundings and what was what in this world but she managed it eventually and she managed to locate a moving object cruising through the ocean at top speed. It was Swash and Buckle's submarine. The submarine seemed to have a faint heat signature emitting from it. That was Blaze, no questions asked. Nicole's avatar opened its digital eyes and looked up at Sally.

"Blaze is inside a submarine that is cruising through the water at about 100 knots." explained Nicole "It's heading in the north direction."

"Well that sucks, how are we gonna get to that submarine then?" groaned Silver "We haven't got a means of sea travel around here!"

"Did somebody request for sea travel?" came a familiar voice that Silver knew all too well.

Sonic, Sally and Silver turned their heads and saw that they were no longer alone on the beach. Standing before them, looking a little dumbfounded were the local heroes of Solbius, Team Radical. Rad and Marine the Raccoons, Crystal the Polar Bear and Gadget the Parrot had been passing by quite casually until they'd heard Silver complaining and they'd decided to go over and see what was the problem. Silver smiled at the sight of Team Radical whereas Sonic and Sally looked at them with interest.

"Team Radical!" cried Silver excitedly.

"Hey Silver." said Rad with a wink "Good to see you again psychic dude. So what's going on around here then…?"

Footnotes:

*** That all just happened recently in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Terror of the Cyber-Husky***

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 17: Divide and Conquer: The Home Front***

Why must things always go wrong for Sonic and friends? So how will Sonic, Sally and Silver save Blaze? Will Team Radical help them out with that? And what will happen to Blaze when she's delivered to Captain Metal? Will Tails find out where Sonic and the others are? Find out next time in Part 2 where a real "Pirate Plunder Panic" begins...

Other World Encounter Part 2

Story 186: Other World Encounter Part 2: Pirate Plunder Panic

Today had gone from bad to worse for Sonic the Hedgehog, his girlfriend Queen Sally Acorn, Silver the Hedgehog, time traveller hell-bent on changing the past to save the future and Blaze the Cat, Silver's girlfriend and former fire cat princess.

First they had successfully managed to infiltrate the Egg-Bunker and download some very valuable information that they needed in order to cripple Dr. Eggman's upcoming battle ship, the Death Egg. But then after that, somebody had ended up sending them through a portal that took them from Mobius Prime to Solbius, one of infinite alternate worlds in the multi-verse that was related to Mobius. Blaze had been about to warp herself, Sonic, Sally and Silver back to Mobius Prime with the aid of her Sol Emeralds but she ended up getting caught and knocked out by an electrical net and then taken away in a pirate submarine. Now Sonic, Sally and Silver were well and truly stranded and they had no way of catching up to the submarine. Just when all hope seemed lost though, things started to look up for the heroes for Team Radical, Solbius's native heroes and indigenous residents had arrived on the scene. Silver remembered them all too well. It was like he'd only seen them yesterday and yet it had been a whole month since the day that he and Blaze had ended up on Solbius. Silver greeted the four Solbians (Solbius Mobians) with ecstatic glee.

"Team Radical!" he cried excitedly, his face matching the tone of his voice.

"Hey Silver, good to see you again psychic dude." said Rad the Raccoon cheerfully, winking at him "So what's going on around here then?"

"Yeah, we didn't think you'd show up again Silver." said Crystal the Polar Bear, giving Silver a friendly hug in greeting "What brings you here then? And especially bringing Sonic and Sally with you too.

This is a special occasion."

"Hey Team Radical, it's cool to see you four again." said Sonic happily "How's it been going since The Eraser was defeated and destroyed at last?"

"It's been great." said Rad brightly "Solbius has been pretty peaceful since the time rifts stopped and we've been enjoying the peace and quiet."

"It's been too boring for my tastes but still nice." said Crystal "Especially since we don't have to worry about any damn lights appearing in the sky now…"

"You have no idea how much I agree with you on that." said Sally, smiling "The time rifts were just scary from day one and now they're gone, no Mobius in the multi-verse needs to worry about them anymore."

"I certainly acquiesce with that statement fair lady." said Gadget the Parrot in his usual eloquent manner "So my Prime Zone friends, what brings you upon Solbius territory then?"

"Believe me, we're not here for a holiday." muttered Sonic bitterly as if the fact they weren't here for a holiday was disappointing for him "We were sent here by some portal that appeared from nowhere. But it wasn't a time rift so don't worry about it."

"Crikey! Portals comin' outta nowhere?! Right weird things happen in this bloomin' world dunnit?" blurted a rather surprised Marine the Raccoon.

"We're still obfuscated as to where it came from and why it happened." sighed Sally "Anyway, we were sent here by a portal and before we could go back home, somebody kidnapped Blaze the Cat. She's here too and has been taken away in a submarine apparently."

"Oh no!" cried Rad, putting his hands to his face in horror "Blaze has been captured?! We've gotta help you save her! You said she's in a submarine right?"

"Yes." explained Sally "We don't know what the submarine looked like I'm afraid. Just that Blaze is in a submarine."

Rad thought about this for a minute.

"A lot of villains we've faced used submarines be they pirates or not." mused Rad "I can only think of one person who'd want to capture Blaze though but it can't be him since he's dead."

"Indeed, and we de-roboticized all of Captain Metal's crew save for Swash and Buckle so maybe they have done that just to avenge their fallen captain." suggested Gadget.

"Why didn't you de-roboticize those two then?" asked Silver with a rather angry look on his face as if blaming Gadget for the fact they'd kidnapped Blaze, if indeed that was correct.

"They got away before we could do so. I am sorry to say this Silver." said Gadget with a rather guilty look on his face.

"It's OK." said Silver "At least we know who to look for now. Can you lend us the Ocean Tornado so we can sail off after those two and rescue Blaze?"

"Sure." said Rad brightly, eager to lend a hand if it meant saving a friend of his "We're coming with you though. We want to help save Blaze too. It's the least we could do to return the favour after you and her helped us to defeat Captain Metal."

"That's very kind of you Rad." said Silver with pleasure "I'm all too happy to let you help us."

"I just hope we won't be sailing for long." moaned Sonic "I really hate water after all…"

"We'll be on a ship Sonic and you can stay inside the ship so you don't have to see the water, you'll be fine." assured Sally gently "I hope we can catch up to that submarine because we REALLY need to get back to Mobius Prime and fast."

"I bet your friends will be worried about you." said Crystal sadly.

She remembered that Sonic and Sally had friends back home for she and the rest of Team Radical had been present during the final battle with The Eraser. She could already imagine them being worried about Sonic and Sally right now.

"They will be Crystal." said Sally worriedly "So it's vital we rescue Blaze. She has our only ticket home and if we don't rescue her, we'll be stuck here forever."

"Not that that's a bad thing right?" asked Marine "I mean Solbius is a lovely world to be stranded on wouldn't you agree?"

Grinning, Sally just nodded at Marine as if to say "Yes I do agree Marine". Marine was right, Solbius was a nice world to be stranded on. There were much worse places they could have ended up on than here.

"We'll see to it that she gets saved so she can return you all home." said Rad kindly "Come on! The Ocean Tornado's this way! Let's go and save Blaze the Cat!"

He and his team mates ran off eagerly to get to the Ocean Tornado. Sonic, Sally and Silver followed them without a moment's hesitation. As they ran off to the Ocean Tornado, Silver could only wonder what was happening to Blaze right now. It pained him to think that she could be in great danger right now, especially in the hands of robotic pirates that likely wanted to make her suffer for killing their precious captain…

Meanwhile…

The submarine had been cruising through the sea for quite a long time but it had finally arrived at its destination. It had been heading towards an island that had metallic looking trees dotted around the landscape and a huge cylindrical building with a crane arm on the top that stretched high above the trees as if hoping to be noticed. This was where Swash and Buckle were taking their prisoner. The submarine's periscope extended above the water and Swash peered through it to see if they had arrived at their destination yet.

The building and the island it stood upon was in view much to Swash's delight. He was too impatient to deliver Blaze to Captain Metal already and been tingling with excitement that could rival even the most excitable of children. Just as the submarine pulled up into port, Blaze woke up at long last. It had amazed Swash and Buckle that the pyrokinetic cat had been out for the entire trip. The shock the net had given her had indeed been quite painful and powerful and the trip had been quiet so Blaze had no chance of being woken up prematurely. But she was coming around at last, her head throbbing to the point she wondered if some tiny person had crawled inside her head and was doing a moonwalk on her brain. Her voice was a low sickly groan of displeasure.

"Oooooh where am I…?" she slurred.

"Oh goodie, the lassie's awake!" cried Swash "Now we can show herrr to Cap'n Metal awake!"

"That'll be more fun than giving him to her unconscious. We wouldn't see her reaction otherwise." said Buckle in a crude evil voice.

"Huh?!"

Blaze's eyes shot open and she suddenly realized what was going on. She was trapped in a net that was hanging on a hook in the ceiling and she was in some kind of sea vehicle with Swash and Buckle at the controls. Blaze squirmed in the net and tried as hard as she could to break out of it. She tugged on it and tried to break the net apart but the strands held firm and her efforts were ultimately futile.

"Let me outta here right now!" she barked "If you don't let me go this second I'm gonna fry you both to a crisp!"

"Just try it lassie, we've been given upgrades." boasted Swash "We're made of heatproof metal now. Ye won't harm us at all."

"That won't stop me from beating the crap outta you two!" snarled Blaze "Let me out of this net and I promise you'll keep your bodies intact!"

"Sorry lassie but we follow the Captain's orders." said Buckle, striding up to Blaze and hooking the net with his own hook hand to take it off the hook in the ceiling "And speaking of the Captain, he wants to see you very badly."

"What, is he planning on haunting me?" sniffed Blaze "I don't believe in ghosts and robots can't even become ghosts so that won't work."

Swash and Buckle just laughed at Blaze's remark as if she'd told a very bad joke. Blaze didn't really like the fact they were laughing at her. If somebody laughs at you like that, it means something bad usually and that you've assumed something wrong. Buckle carried Blaze out of the submarine with Swash leading him and the two strode onto the shore of the island.

"Ye'll find out fer yerself what he's planning on doing lassie." crowed Swash "And believe me, ye will be surprised. Not pleasantly that is."

"As if I'd be pleasantly surprised by anything you scum have to offer." growled Blaze.

Swash ignored her and he headed on towards the cylindrical building. Blaze couldn't help but think that it looked like a giant silo with a crane arm attached to it. She doubted that she would be finding it full of leavings from a pig though. Swash and Buckle came up to a huge iron door that was barred, giving the building a prison like feeling. How appropriate considering Blaze was here as a prisoner anyway. The door rose up to let the two robotic pirates inside and Blaze found herself being carried into a large metallic room that had little features on offer. The walls were in a pattern of squares and Xs that stretched up to the top of the building. There appeared to be a row of seats just a few meters up from ground level that reached all around the building. Blaze suggested that Captain Metal's crew would have all sat there at some point before being de-roboticized by Team Radical. There was a large tortoise shell-like pattern on the floor and a line down the middle of it. Could the floor open up or something? If so what was it containing? Blaze didn't really care. What she cared about was getting out of this net and back to her friends so she could whisk them all back to Mobius Prime. But then something in the room caught her attention. She stared in indescribable shock at what lay ahead of her. There was a

throne at the back of the room which had stairs that led to it, huge gears on the side that served whatever purpose they served and there were skulls sculpted on either side at the top of the throne. The throne had an occupant and the occupant was the last person Blaze ever expected to see again. It was none other than the nefarious Metal Sonic turned robot pirate Captain Metal! He stood up from his throne and narrowed his singular red optic at the captive in the net that Buckle had on the end of his hook like a fishing trip gone well. Blaze couldn't speak for a minute and when she finally did, it was nothing more than a snarl of fury.

"No…it can't be! I killed you!" snarled Blaze "How can you possibly be alive?! I finished you off and we sunk your ship! You should be lying dead at the bottom of the ocean you monster!"

Captain Metal ignored Blaze and he stepped down from his throne. He walked up to Swash and Buckle and glanced at them as if acknowledging them for the first time. They were used to it though, he often ignored them until he saw who they had captured.

"Shiver me timbers lads, I sent ye to capturrre Team Radical and ye come back with me with Blaze tharr Cat in yer hands! What serendipity this be! This be much better than capturing those pesky landlubbers!" he cried in delight.

"Why thank ye Captain." said Swash with a smug, proud smile on his face "And it was no problem either."

"Yeah, we caught tharr lass completely off-guard and we've brought her here directly to you!" added Buckle "So what's our reward?"

"I promised ye limbs of gold for tharr capture of Team Radical but Blaze be much more special so ye deserve an entire BODY made of gold me fine ship mates!" declared Captain Metal "Escort yer selves over to ye engineer bot and have yer bodies upgraded into golden metal bodies! Ye both deserve it for yer efforts!"

"Gee, thanks Captain!" squealed Swash and Buckle with excitement.

Buckle dumped Blaze on the floor and he and Swash ran off to get

their bodies upgraded. They could hardly wait to see what they looked like as golden robots. Now alone with Blaze, Captain Metal knelt down before her and glared ominously into her eyes with his singular red optic. Blaze scowled at him. Captain Metal didn't seem bothered.

"So, ye decided to come to Solbius once again Blaze...what made ye come crawling back then?" sneered Captain Metal "Did ye want to make doubly sure I was dead?"

"I'm not here under my own admission, believe me. I was sent here by a weird portal and somebody with sonic waves." muttered Blaze bitterly "And I was just about to leave until your stupid goons kidnapped me."

"How fortuitous is was they caught ye then otherwise I wouldn't get a chance to get me revenge on you me dear." hissed Captain Metal demoniacally, raising his gun arm so the cutlass blade that formed the bayonet at the end glistened in the light "Ever since me near death at your hands, the only thing I ever wanted was to make you suffer for what ye did to me. Now you're here, I can fulfil that dream of mine..."

He held his blade just inches from Blaze's face, the tip pointing directly at her forehead. Blaze ignored him and folded her arms.

"So what now? You going to kill me?" sniffed Blaze "Go ahead, I deserve it for what I did to you no doubt."

Captain Metal withdrew his arm, taking the blade away from Blaze's face.

"Ye don't fear death do ye?" purred Captain Metal, clearly impressed at what Blaze had just said "I admire that in a woman, or indeed any person fer that matter. Any good person welcomes death in me books."

"I come from a future where everything is dead and the populace is dwindling, death doesn't scare me." growled Blaze "So I'm not at all scared at the fact you're going to kill me. Don't think you'll get that satisfaction of seeing me scared before you because you'll not. Kill

me now, you'll only feel empty about it since I didn't give you any satisfaction in return for my death."

"Killing ye now is satisfaction enough lassie, whether yer afraid or not." snorted Captain Metal, positioning the blade on his gun arm at Blaze's throat through the net "But I do not plan to kill ye anyway. No, that be too merciful for a scurvy landlubber like you. Ye deserve a fate worse than death Blaze. I'm going to break ye and then I'm going to make ye watch as I take over Solbius and then take over other worlds with me new weapon of mass destruction. Then when ye beg me for mercy…and beg for me to stop what I'm doing…then ye will die. Seeing ye broken and defeated as ye die will be tharr best satisfaction a pirate could have."

"You'll never break me you scum!" growled Blaze "I beat you once, I'll bet you again! Now let me out of this net so I can break you to pieces!"

"Of course lassie, it be time for our rematch. And what a fine sea tale to tell tharr other pirates it shall be!" laughed Captain Metal delightedly.

With that said, Captain Metal cut Blaze's net open and the cat leapt up onto her feet, throwing the strands of net off herself. She failed to realize that she still had her Sol Emerald out though. She had been about to use it before getting captured and as she stood up, it clattered onto the floor, startling Blaze and catching Captain Metal's attention. The sparkling red gem practically winked at him as it shone in the light of the room.

"Fire on tharr poop deck!" blurted Captain Metal "It appears ye have treasure of yer own lassie! That be impressive indeed. I may have to steal that emerald from yer battered and beaten body!"

"This gem is mine and you'll never have it!" yelled Blaze "In fact, I can just use this gem to disappear and flee your clutches once and for all! You've lost before the fight's even started Captain Metal!"

Blaze should have known better than to be so cocky in the presence of a villain as dangerous as Captain Metal. Captain Metal aimed his gun arm at Blaze and fired, blasting Blaze directly in the stomach

and sending her flying across the room. She crashed into the wall and slid down to the floor, groaning in pain. Captain Metal scooped up the Sol Emerald and he admired it delightedly. It looked so beautiful to him given his pirate-nature and love for gems and he thought it would make a very nice addition to his treasure trove indeed. Yet the emerald had a familiar feel to it. Something like… Chaos Energy only hotter.

"Avast ye…this gem feels like a Chaos Emerald!" exclaimed Captain Metal "Ye have yer own version of a Chaos Emerald lassie! That be a fine treasure indeed! This will be welcome in me treasure trove indeed!"

"Give that back!" screamed Blaze.

"I'll make you a deal lassie." said Captain Metal smoothly "Ye fight me and the prize will be yer emerald. If ye win, ye get it back. If ye lose then I keep it. And given it be like a Chaos Emerald, I'm willing to bet that there be six more gems like it."

"How right you are." muttered Blaze "But you won't get ANY of them because I'll beat you and win my freedom!"

"If so sure ye are lassie then how about we alter the deal?" suggested Captain Metal "The prize will be ALL of yer emeralds, not just one. Winner takes all seven, loser gets nothing."

"There's not point making that wager since I'll win but deal." said Blaze coldly "Prepare to die again Captain Metal!"

"Ye are the one who should be preparin' to die lassie…" growled Captain Metal sinisterly, raising his sword and tossing the Sol Emerald over onto his throne.

Blaze narrowed her eyes and glared squarely at Captain Metal. Never in all her life had she found herself hating somebody as much as Captain Metal. He was now literally the most hated thing Blaze had ever encountered and she was going to enjoy killing him all over again. This time, she'd make sure he actually WAS dead. Blaze summoned fire to her hands and she aimed at Captain Metal. Captain Metal oddly enough seemed to be daring Blaze to attack

him as if he wasn't scared of her. Well he was a pirate and he had fought Blaze before and nearly won so he had no reason to be afraid of her. Blaze thrust her arms forward and sent a tornado of fire spiralling through the air towards Captain Metal. The flames hit him and the robot pirate was engulfed by the fire. Blaze kept it up for a minute before stopping her fire to see how she'd done. She was only met with sheer horror. Captain Metal just stood there as if nothing had happened and he was laughing at Blaze!

"Harr, harr, harrgh! Blaze, I thought tharr battle was beginning! Did you want me to throw tharr first blow or something?" he crowed. He was not only looking like nothing had happened, he was *acting like it too!*

"But...but...that's impossible! My flames effected you before!" shrieked Blaze "How are you..."

"When me body was salvaged from tharr waters by me good first mates Swash and Buckle, I had myself rebuilt with **heatproof metal** . Every inch of me body is heatproof, yer fire powers will not harm me again!" boasted Captain Metal.

"You're a pirate, of course you'd be a coward and cheat!" snarled Blaze "You're a dirty, cheating, slimy, yellow-bellied coward Captain Metal and I'm gonna make you sorry you were manufactured!"

"And I will make you sorry ye were born Blaze..." Captain Metal snarled back.

Screaming viciously, Blaze summoned fire to her hands and ran towards Captain Metal. Her fire powers wouldn't work on Captain Metal but it would still enhance her fighting prowess and make her a strong contender for Captain Metal. She drew her arm back and punched Captain Metal directly in the torso. The heatproof metal that Captain Metal's body had been constructed of did nothing to prevent the punch from sending him flying backwards into his throne. Captain Metal had almost forgotten how powerful Blaze was. But he was a robot, he had many advantages over Blaze and he would exploit them to ensure himself a victory in this battle. Blaze ran towards Captain Metal's throne and was ready to attack him again but Captain Metal grabbed the Sol Emerald he'd stolen from

Blaze and he threw it into her face. The Sol Emerald walloped Blaze between the eyes and the cat screeched as the sharp bump on her head from the emerald made her head throb. Captain Metal retrieved the emerald and he threw it back onto his throne. Then just to keep the Sol Emerald out of Blaze's reach, he pressed a button on the side wall that caused the throne to rise up. The gears on either side of the throne climbed up the tracks they were connected too as they rotated, pulling the throne up to the upper platform. Blaze wouldn't be able to get the Sol Emerald back now. Furious, Blaze set fire to herself and rocketed towards Captain Metal in a fiery spin with her feet straight ahead of her. Captain Metal merely held his arm up and let Blaze hit him. He had something else to boast about to her.

"I should mention something else lassie...I cannot feel pain anymore." gloated Captain Metal as Blaze leapt back, ready to attack him again "I had me pain receptors removed when I was being repaired. Therefore, I cannot feel pain. Pain is a weakness that shall not hinder me anymore!"

"You'll be glad you can't feel pain anymore for what I have planned for you is going to be VERY painful indeed!" roared Blaze.

She threw an uppercut to the chin at Captain Metal but the insidious Metal Sonic pirate ducked backwards, leaving Blaze to uppercut the air he had occupied just seconds ago. Captain Metal swung his head forward and walloped Blaze in the bridge of her nose. It was very unpleasant for Blaze to be hit with such force by something so hard. Getting head butted by Captain Metal was like getting hit by a toolbox. Blaze was amazed she hadn't blacked out from the attack. Captain Metal then lunged at Blaze with a savage blow to the gut that knocked the wind out of her. Blaze spluttered and then found herself being elbowed on the back by Captain Metal's gun arm. Being his right arm was shaped like a gun, the elbow attack was like hitting somebody in the back with the gun's handle. Blaze winced but fought against the pain as Captain Metal prepared to slash her with the blade under his right arm. Blaze rolled out of the way as Captain Metal swung down at her, leaving his blade to cleave into the floor and get stuck. Blaze set her feet alight and she kicked Captain Metal callously, trying to break his body away from his arm.

But no such luck for Captain Metal backhanded Blaze onto her side. He wrenched his right arm free and he blasted Blaze with a powerful laser blast that shot out of his right arm and hit her squarely in the back. Blaze gritted her teeth and forced herself to stand back up...only to get knocked down again by a powerful kick to the head from Captain Metal. Blaze's head was spinning after that kick and by the time she worked out which way was up, Captain Metal punched her in the gut and sent her slamming into a wall. Blaze spluttered and waited for Captain Metal to come to her. The captain stampeded towards her like a wild boar but Blaze moved out of his way, leaving Captain Metal to crash into the wall. Captain Metal staggered backwards for a minute, wondering what had happened. Blaze lashed out and grabbed his ragged, light blue cape. She yanked on it, pulling him backwards and she swung Captain Metal around into the wall. Captain Metal may not feel pain anymore but Blaze was sure she could break him if she applied enough force on him in her attacks. She swung Captain Metal into the wall again and then gave him a fiery punch to the head. The attack seemed to leave Captain Metal bedraggled so Blaze did it again. Captain Metal fell down onto his knees. Seizing her chance, Blaze kicked him against the wall and then grabbed his cape again. She swung him around and threw him across the room and into the other wall. Captain Metal slumped against it but he wasn't down for long. He picked himself up and waited for Blaze to come at him. Blaze launched herself at Captain Metal in another fiery spinning-attack. Captain Metal held his arms up and allowed Blaze to hit him. Blaze sent him skidding backwards as she hit him but she didn't do much harm to him. Blaze leapt back and then threw a punch at Captain Metal. Captain Metal caught the punch with his hand and he twisted Blaze's arm sharply to the side. Blaze screamed and tried to get her arm free but Captain Metal's grasp was much too strong for her. Captain Metal then slashed her across the face with his blade and just to further weaken her, he slashed her across the arm he was holding. Blaze now had two horrible cuts, one on her face and one on her arm and both of them hurt very badly. Captain Metal released Blaze's arm and he socked her in the mouth. Blaze backed away in pain, clutching her mouth. She took her hand away and saw that there was blood on her glove. She spat some blood out and wiped her mouth clean. Growling, she tried to attack Captain Metal again. She punched Captain Metal, with the arm that had the cut on.

Stinging pain shot up her arm because of this and she winced for a minute, giving Captain Metal the opportunity to kick her in the knee and bring her down onto her side. Blaze howled like a cat that's had its tail trapped in the door and she clutched her throbbing knee instinctively. While she was down, Captain Metal stomped on Blaze like he was trying to crush a soda can that was lying on the floor. Blaze cried out in pain and Captain Metal only proceeded to do it again. Then he kicked Blaze into the air and sent her hurling into the centre of the room. Blaze strained as she stood back up and she tried to attack Captain Metal again. But she was too hurt from his earlier blows to fight properly. Her punch came in slow and ill-timed so she ended up missing. Captain Metal slugged her and then backhanded her, causing her to spit blood out again. Then Captain Metal sucker-punched her in the middle of her face, kicked her in the thigh and then roundhouse kicked her into the floor. He wasn't done yet though. He stomped on her again and kicked her twice in the back. He yanked Blaze back up onto her feet just so he could slash her across her other cheek and then elbow-thrust her in the eye. Her left eye was a swollen, purple splodge that didn't compliment her face very well at all. Blaze fought to stay conscious but she didn't have any energy left to fight. Captain Metal shot her in the stomach and sent her slamming against the wall where she fell onto the floor and coughed loudly. She moaned as pain flared up her body. She had never been beaten so badly before in her life. This was the worst fight she'd ever had. Captain Metal however seemed to think this was the best fight he'd ever had. He strode up to Blaze, triumphant and full of smugness as the cat failed to get back up.

"Harr, harrgh! An amazing grudge match that was! Ye fought valiantly Blaze but ultimately, ye have been bested by me!" crowed Captain Metal "Thus, I get all of yer emeralds as par our deal!"

"You...will...not...have...them..." croaked Blaze "I...refuse...to honour...the deal..."

"If ye won't honour the deal then I'll be forced to kill you lassie." snarled Captain Metal, aiming his gun arm directly at her head "And I think ye'd rather live to fight me another day wouldn't ye?"

Blaze would sooner die than let Captain Metal have the Sol Emeralds but in the end, what good would dying do? Blaze needed

to get back to Sonic, Sally and Silver so she could warp them all home with her emeralds. She could warp away now but Captain Metal would still have the red Sol Emerald and she wasn't going to let him have even one Sol Emerald. He could still do harm with even one Sol Emerald. Plus, even if she refused to give them over, Captain Metal would likely take them from her corpse so either way, he would win. Blaze would much rather live and get the emeralds back then die and lose them permanently. With great reluctance plaguing her soul, Blaze opened her hands and summoned the other six emeralds in a wisp of flames. Delighted, Captain Metal took off his cape and gathered the emeralds up into the cape. He tied the cape shut and he slung the emeralds over his shoulder. He looked like Santa Claus with the cape full of emeralds slung over his shoulder like how Santa would carry his sack of toys. Blaze just lifted her head and tried her best to scowl at Captain Metal but she could only manage a tiny scowl due to how much her face hurt right now.

"Thank you lassie." sneered Captain Metal "Don't worry, I'll put all yer gems to good use. You'll see what use I have for them when I unveil me new weapon."

"New...weapon?" croaked Blaze.

"Yes lassie, after Team Radical de-roboticized me pirate crew, I decided to make a weapon that would roboticize every last citizen on Solbius." explained Captain Metal "It is a weapon based upon a design of ship that me creator once made only I added a few extra features to it to make it more...pirate like as ye would say."

"A weapon…to roboticize…every…last citizen?" grunted Blaze weakly.

"Indeed lassie, me chariot of chaos will roboticize every last citizen on Solbius." crowed Captain Metal "And ye will be tharr first Mobian to bear witness to its intriguing design and structurrre before it launches!"

"How…rewarding." muttered Blaze in a voice mixed with sarcasm and venom.

Captain Metal just laughed and he hooked the cape full of Sol Emeralds onto his blade. Now his hand was free, he grabbed Blaze by the scruff of her neck. He carried the battered and beaten cat out of his base and he took her around the back to show her his new weapon. Blaze couldn't do anything about it since she was too weak from her injuries. She just allowed herself to be carried away by Captain Metal. She may as well see what his new weapon was given there was nothing else she could do. As Blaze was carried around the back of the base, she could that there was another silo-shaped building nearby. It was sitting on an island of rocks surrounded by sea water as if about to drift away from the rest of the island. Blaze had a feeling that the weapon was inside that building. Captain Metal barked over to the crew members that were standing guard around the building. These were robot pirates but they were actual robots instead of roboticized people. The few that Blaze could see were the only crew Captain Metal momentarily had for the time being.

"Mateys! Unveil tharr ship!" ordered Captain Metal "I wish to see me completed weapon with me own optics now!"

"Aye, aye captain!" said the robot pirates with a salute of loyalty.

The pirates pressed a few buttons that were dotted around the base of the building and they all ran for cover as the building began to hiss loudly. Steam poured out from the inside of the building and then it began to split into four parts. The four sections of the building lowered down like a peeled banana and Blaze watched as they splashed down onto the water, spraying it everywhere and even sending some of it landing at Captain Metal's feet. Captain Metal just watched, delighted that he could see his completed weapon for himself. It had taken a long time since his crew's numbers were so low but it was complete and now for the first time ever, he'd see its completed form in all its glory. Blaze stared in disbelief at that the building had opened up to reveal. In its place stood an enormous egg-shaped vessel that dwarfed everything around it, even Captain Metal's base. The pirate like-features on the ship that Captain Metal had mentioned were a huge skull-face with an eye patch on the front of the ship with a ventilation system in place of its mouth, four steel structures that were presumably meant to act like a crossbones for

the skull face, a barrage of cannons that were all around the base of ship underneath the skull face and the whole thing was steel with rings of magenta on the top and a gold coloured bottom section. Even with one of her eyes bruised and swollen, Blaze still managed to stare at the ship, wide-eyed and open mouthed. Captain Metal was clearly delighted at her expression concerning the appearance of the ship.

"Behold, THE EGG O' WAR!" bellowed Captain Metal, motioning towards the enormous vessel that stood before them on the platform of rocks that supported it. The tone of voice he expressed was unmistakeable. He was clearly delighted to be showing off his new toy to Blaze.

"That…looks like…the Death…Egg…" gasped Blaze.

The book Silver had read stating that the Death Egg fired a beam at Mobius showed a picture of the Death Egg and Blaze could easily see how this "Egg O' War" greatly resembled the Death Egg. It was like Captain Metal just stole the Death Egg and remade it into a flying egg-shaped skull and crossbones. Things just took a turn for the worse now. If that thing managed to take flight, Solbius would no longer be home to Solbian life, only Robians from now on.

"Ye are impressive…" mused Captain Metal "Ye know of tharr Death Egg? Well me creatorrr once created a ship called tharr Death Egg. I just took the Death Egg design and remade it into me own Ship of Terror. The Egg O' War is much more threatening than tharr Death Egg for its very appearance spells death to anyone that witnesses it!"

"More like…it causes…people to…laugh at…how stupid…it looks…" grunted Blaze.

Captain Metal just threw her onto the rocks beneath his feet, adding more pain to the already beaten fire cat. He turned around and pointed at a robot pirate that had a spherical body, giving it the appearance of a pirate with a beer-gut.

"Lock her up in the brig of the Egg O' War!" he snapped "Then after ye've done that, prepare tharr ship fer launch! I want to see it in

action as soon as possible!"

"Aye, aye captain!" said the fat robot pirate.

He grabbed Blaze and casually slung her over his shoulder as if she was a bag full of treasure waiting to be emptied. Blaze just allowed herself to be taken away. What could she do when she was too weak to even so much as punch anybody? She was battered and beaten, she may as well save herself anymore beating. As the pirate leapt into the water and carried Blaze over to the Egg O' War, Captain Metal strode back towards his base. He looked at the cape full of Sol Emeralds he still had hooked on the end of his blade like a net full of fish.

"And ye know with these Sol Emeralds…I could maybe invade other worlds and plunder them of their riches." he thought to himself "And also roboticize them too. A captain can never have too many crew members after all. Yes…tharr emeralds will make me an invincible force to be reckoned with. Harr, harr, harr, harrgh…"

He was still laughing as he re-entered his base to get the red Sol Emerald he still had lying on his throne. Captain Metal was going to win and Blaze was helpless to stop him. Once the Egg O' War took flight, that was it. The end of all organic life was about to begin…

"…me and Rad may have had a rough introduction and looking back on the day, I kinda wish I'd handled it better but we've set aside that fight and now we're very much in love." said Crystal as she finished telling the story of her first meeting with Rad "I couldn't have been a luckier girl to have met a boy as cute as my Raddy." her smile was so bright and wonderful that Crystal almost seemed to glow with it.

"That's very lovely Crystal." said Sally, who had been listening to Crystal's story with great interest "I think you and Rad make a lovely couple."

"Thanks." replied Crystal, beaming "And I think you and Sonic look destined for each other too."

"And to think when the Royal Fighters first formed, we weren't that interested in each other." laughed Sally "I guess it took me becoming a fighter to finally catch Sonic's attention!"

The girls laughed at that joke.

It had been a long trip on the Ocean Tornado but the Mobians had managed to pass much of the time on the sea talking to each other. It had been nice for Sonic and Sally to learn more about Team Radical and their adventures on Solbius. Sonic in particular admired Rad's love of adventure and the two were engaging in conversation about the kind of adventures they had had in their time.

"…so you can see that I've definitely had my fair share of close encounters and nail-biting adventures." finished Sonic "The Eraser and this whole multi-verse crisis thing was just one of many adventures I've had in my life."

"And to think all of that was in the span of three years just about!" gasped Rad "You have been busy Sonic. Even me and my team haven't been active for that long!"

"When did you four become a team like?" asked Sonic.

"Literally the day Captain Metal was born, which was a few months ago although we had been friends a couple of years before we became Team Radical so we were more just a group of friends than a hero team at that time." explained Rad.

"I see now." said Sonic "Quick question, who's Captain Metal?"

"A robot named "Metal Sonic" made into the image of a pirate." explained Rad "But Blaze destroyed him when she and Silver came to our world via the time rifts, you won't have to worry about him."

"Too right bruv!" agreed Marine "Blaze proper made a barbecue outta that blighter didn't she?! It was proper awesome to watch it was! And a good thing too since that darn pirate was nothing but trouble with a big fat "T"."

"Metal Sonic as a pirate…huh, sounds like something the guys who make the comics about me would come up with." chuckled Sonic

"Oh well, if Captain Metal's dead then we don't have to worry about him. I do wonder who kidnapped Blaze and why though."

"I theory that Swash and Buckle did it to avenge Captain Metal's death." explained Gadget "They were incredibly loyal to him after all. They'd easily do something like that for him even if he is dead."

"Puh, loyalty can make you do some crazy things can't it?" snickered Sonic "Now then, are we nearly at any land at all? I can't stand being out in this water any longer!" he whinged.

"Hold on mate, I'll take a gander and see." said Marine, picking up a telescope and extending it out to its full length.

She ran to the bow of the ship and placed one of her feet on the proud eagle statuette that protruded from atop the Ocean Tornado's bow. Marine peered through the telescope and looked out to see if there was any land in sight. She could see Captain Metal's island in the distance. Marine recognized it all to well with its metallic trees and huge silo-shaped building. She and her team mates had been on the island before. Many times in fact.

"Oy bruv! Pirate Island's just up ahead!" squealed Marine excitedly.

"I wonder if that's where Blaze is." murmured Rad thoughtfully "Sally, can Nicole tell us if she's there?"

Sally didn't answer for a minute as she took Nicole off her boot and held her towards the bow of the Ocean Tornado. Nicole immediately went into action as Sally waited for the answer to Rad's question.

"Nicole, is Blaze on the island?" asked Sally.

"I am unable to clarify that but the submarine I detected with her heat signature in it earlier is in port at the island." Nicole analyzed "Blaze must be on the island somewhere if the submarine that was taking her away is there."

"So it was Swash and Buckle who kidnapped her." growled Crystal "Nobody else could possibly be living on Pirate Island but them. Well this polar bear's gonna show those two scoundrels what happens to those who kidnap my friends!"

She punched her hand with her fist as if to show how ready she was for a battle. Sally could tell from her body language that she was very ready for a battle now.

"Once we arrive at the island, we'll attack and get Blaze back." declared Silver "I sure hope Swash and Buckle are ready for a beating because I'm so gonna give it to them for kidnapping my girl!"

"I'm not sure if Blaze would appreciate being labelled as "your girl" Silver." snickered Sonic, playfully nudging the psychic hedgehog with his elbow.

"Uh, maybe not." said Silver embarrassedly "I should have said "my girlfriend" rather shouldn't I?"

Silver didn't receive an answer for the Mobians and Solbians were purely focused on Pirate Island, coming up towards them as the ship sailed on. Rad narrowed his eyes as he focused on the upcoming island. He'd been on Pirate Island more times than he could possibly count. Sometimes as a prisoner and sometimes in an invasion plan or a rescue mission. And now here he and his team were again, coming to Pirate Island to rescue another captured citizen. Since Rad knew the island just as well as he knew Sol Island, he was already coming up with a plan.

"OK, if Swash and Buckle are still alive then they're bound to be on guard somewhere." deduced Rad "There likely won't be anymore robot pirates since we de-roboticized all of Captain Metal's crew but it's possible Swash and Buckle built some new robot pirates to replace them. Me and my team will keep Swash and Buckle busy. Silver, you Sonic and Sally break into that building to see if Blaze is in there." he pointed at the silo-shaped building on the edge of the island "That's where Captain Metal liked to hang out, it'd be fitting for Swash and Buckle to keep her prisoner in there."

"I'll do just that." said Silver "And I know just how I'm gonna get in there too. When you have psychokinesis, there's nothing you can't break into."

"You wouldn't really need to break into the building since it has no roof." said Gadget matter-of-factly "Just take your friends and fly in

over the building, you'll get inside easily since there's no roof."

"Well that seems surprisingly simple." thought Sally wearily "Who in their right mind doesn't have a roof on a building? It's like the architect who build it is BEGGING for somebody to drop in from up above."

"Maybe when Captain Metal built it, he wanted it to look easy on purpose." suggested Crystal, shrugging "He's laid many traps for us in that building before though so the whole "looking easy on purpose" thing worked. But Captain Metal's dead so there won't be any traps in the building."

"In that case let's get onto that island and get Blaze back!" cried Sonic.

The Ocean Tornado was almost in port to Pirate Island. In another ten minutes, it would be close enough to the island for the heroes to just leap off the boat and onto the shore. But Silver wasn't willing to wait ten more minutes, he wanted to save Blaze now. Using his psychokinesis, Silver carried everybody off of the Ocean Tornado and he flew them over to Pirate Island. Marine was practically going crazy with excitement as this happened. She'd always loved the idea of flying and now her dream was coming true. Rad liked how Silver was doing this since Swash and Buckle wouldn't expect him and his team to just come flying into them from up above. A perfect ambush if ever there was one. The moment Silver passed over Pirate Island, he lowered Team Radical down onto the ground where Swash and Buckle, who were now completely golden in appearance as per the reward Captain Metal had given them for Blaze's capture, were waiting for them. They were well surprised to see what was happening and for a moment, they couldn't speak. Before they could speak though, Rad lashed out and whacked them both across the face with his nunchakus. His nunchakus had added blades on the end of them so Rad could do more damage to the two. Swash and Buckle staggered backwards from the blow but they were still standing. Buckle raised his hook hand and tried to impale Rad with it but Rad jumped out of the way, leaving Buckle to get it stuck in the ground. As Buckle tried to wrench it free, Crystal ran towards Buckle and she socked him right in the section of his face where his mouth would be if he had one. Buckle's hook came free

from the ground after that punch and he was thrown onto his back. He was still amazed at how a puny polar bear girl could be so strong. Swash raised his cane and aimed its electrical tip at Crystal. Crystal lashed out and grabbed the cane before it could touch her. She shoved it backwards, making Swash hit himself in the face with the cane's handle. Then Crystal yanked the cane out of Swash's hand and jabbed the tip into his throat, shocking him into submission instantly. It's always worse when a robot gets shocked than when an organic gets shocked. Swash collapsed, unconscious onto the ground. Buckle furiously tried to bonk Crystal on the head but the polar bear heard him coming so she dodged his assault and roundhouse kicked him in the side. There were other robot pirates on the island just as Rad had suspected and they could see Swash and Buckle needed help so they ran over towards Team Radical to help their first mates. Gadget and Marine ran towards the oncoming pirate crowd and Gadget dive-bombed into them, knocking many of them over as he flew past them. Marine leapt onto a robot pirate and started thumping it on the head furiously. The pirate tried to skewer her with its cutlass but Marine jumped off, leaving it to accidentally skewer itself in the head.

"What a wally that bot was!" chortled Marine "He should know better than ta skewer himself in the head!"

Team Radical appeared to have the situation under control so Silver flew off towards the silo building with Sonic and Sally in his psychic grasp. As he touched down on top of the building just beside the crane arm though, he spotted the Egg O' War standing motionlessly as it waited to take to the skies and unleash hell on the pitiful planet that it had been built on. Silver stared in disbelief at the Egg O' War. Sonic and Sally could hardly keep their eyes off the giant vessel too for it looked very unusual. Beyond anything they'd ever seen before.

"What is that?" asked Sonic "Looks like a cross between a Jolly Roger symbol and an egg!"

"It looks like the Death Egg design I saw in that book I read…" gasped Silver "Is there an Eggman on this world too?"

"Perhaps." murmured Sally "And that thing likely can do what the Death Egg will be able to do if it greatly resembles the Death Egg.

Do you think we should take it down after we've rescued Blaze?"

"Totally." said Sonic "Solbius isn't falling victim to that thing on my watch. It's bad enough how it seems Mobius will end because of the Death Egg, I'm not letting Solbius have the same fate."

"Then once we've found Blaze, we'll destroy that ship." declared Sally "I hope we find her before it takes flight…"

Silver nodded and he used his psychokinesis to pick himself, Sonic and Sally up and float down onto the floor at the bottom of the building. As they touched down, they took in their surroundings. There was a tortoise shell like pattern on the floor, a throne with gears attached to a track of gears that stretched up to the top of the building and an upper row of seats just a storey up from where they were. Blaze appeared to be nowhere in sight. Maybe she wasn't in the building after all. Silver looked a little disappointed.

"Huh, she's not here." he muttered "She must be on that ship then. Where else could she be?"

"Then it's over to that Pirate Death Egg ship then." said Sonic "If Blaze is there than she can help us destroy that thing."

But before anything could happen, the tortoise shell pattern on the floor suddenly began to separate and split in half, retracting away into the corners of the room. The Mobians all jumped in alarm as the floor opened up to a reveal a circular pool of water splashing about underneath and huge, metallic, blue tentacles began to snake their way up from the water. They loomed above the Mobians, sensing that there was prey in the room and that it had something to snatch up and drag underwater. The three stepped back in terror.

"Holy heck, there's something living under there!" yelped Sonic "And it's got big metal tentacles!"

"Some kind of robo-squid or something?" suggested Silver "In any case, we're getting outta here!"

He was about to fly away but the tentacles lashed out and grabbed hold of Sonic, Sally and Silver. They had moved so fast that Silver

didn't see them do so. The Mobians cried out in extreme terror as the tentacles held them aloft and pulled them down into the water. Whilst under the water, they could see that the tentacles did indeed belong to a giant robotic squid. The squid was completely metal and it had glowing orange eyes and glowing orange decals all around its tentacles and eyes. It looked completely monstrous and the size seemed to suggest that it was meant to be a robotic equivalent of the legendary sea monster known as The Kraken. The Kraken glared at its prey delightedly. It was dinner time for The Kraken and Sonic, Sally and Silver are on the menu…

Meanwhile, Captain Metal was on the Egg O' War and was preparing it for launch. He was in the power core chamber, a huge spacious room that had a bridge way connecting to a huge metal base with a metal structure protruding from the top of the base. Another spherical structure loomed about it from the ceiling with a metallic structure protruding from the bottom as if trying to touch the one on the bottom base. He put the Sol Emeralds in-between the two structures and watched as they levitated slightly in a big ball of light that emitted as the two structures did their work. The Sol Emeralds were connecting to the Egg O' War's power core and with their prodigious power working away, the Egg O' War would have power like no other vessel in the world. It would be able to warp from world to world so Captain Metal could take over more worlds than one. The Egg O' War was quite simply the most invincible vessel in the multi-verse and once it launched, nobody would be able to stop it. Captain Metal cackled to himself gleefully.

"Yeesss…now that me Egg O' War be powered up with tharr emeralds that Blaze so kindly donated to me, I shall take flight and make the entire world me pirate crew." purred Captain Metal "And since I'll be able to teleport to other worlds with tharr emerald's powers, I'll be able to make another world me pirate crew! And another, and another! Until finally, the entire multi-verse will be me pirate crew! We'll plunder everything and nobody will stop me! Harr, harr, harr, harr, harrgh!"

His cackling echoed around the room as if the room was laughing with him. With the Sol Emeralds in place, Captain Metal now saw to

getting the Egg O' War to launch. A holographic launch sequence emitted in the space before him and he started dialling in the codes. The Egg O' War rumbled as its engines started up. The rumbling could be felt all over the ship, even in the prison chamber where Blaze was currently being held. The beaten fire cat had been tossed into an empty, featureless cell with four walls, a ceiling a door and nothing more. Vapidity at its best although Blaze supposed that given this was a prison cell, it was supposed to feel this way. Blaze could feel the floor rumbling beneath her as the engines of the Egg O' War roared into life and prepared to push the vessel into the sky. Blaze's mind was racing and she forced herself up onto her feet. One thought was on her mind.

No…the ship's preparing to launch…I need to get out of here. And I need to get out of here NOW!

She strained as she forced herself to walk around the room, desperate to find a way out as the ship prepared to ascend…

Now this is what I call a deep sea skirmish! Sonic, Sally and Silver are Kraken food, Blaze is locked up and the Egg O' War is ready to launch! Will our heroes win this battle and make it out alive...?

Other World Encounter Part 3

Story 187: Other World Encounter Part 3: The Egg O' War

The beginning of the end was coming for all organic life on Solbius. And the beginning of the end for all organic life on Solbius was in the form of a giant egg-shaped ship with a skull and crossbones theme to it.

Pirate Island trembled, maybe in fear, as the gigantic vessel that was the Egg O' War began to slowly but steadily rise up from the rocky platform it stood upon. The Egg O' War was a ship built by the nefarious robotic pirate Captain Metal, a Metal Sonic model rebuilt with a pirate theme to its design. Captain Metal had built the Egg O' War for the sole purpose of roboticizing every last Solbian on Solbius and because the Egg O' War was being powered with the Sol Emeralds, it would have the ability to travel to other worlds. Captain Metal would then use the Egg O' War on those worlds too and make the entire multi-verse one big pirate crew for himself. The Egg O' War's engines boosted and flames spouted it from beneath the base of the ship. Water sprayed in every direction as the fumes of the engines slammed down on it. The terrific noise caught the attention of Solbius's native heroes Team Radical. They were fighting the robot pirates that patrolled PirateIsland but the Egg O' War taking off had distracted them. Not that they had to worry about anything since they were pretty much victorious anyway for Swash and Buckle were down on the ground barely moving and all the other robot pirates had been beaten. Rad the Raccoon, the team leader, ran over to the edge of the island and gaped as the Egg O' War slowly ascended into the sky. The takeoff was slow but that just made it look all the more ominous. Crystal the Polar Bear, Gadget the Parrot and Marine the Raccoon all stood behind Rad and watched as the ship took off, mesmerized and intimidated both at once by the size and appearance of the Egg O' War.

"What in the blazes is that?!" shrieked Crystal.

"It's a bloomin' flying Jolly Roger!" squealed Marine "But who the

heck's flyin' it?! All the robot pirates are down here!"

"Maybe there's more robot pirates on board." murmured Rad with a serious expression to match his tone of voice "I can say this though, I don't like the look of that ship. If it's pirate made, it's going to be bad. We need to get the others and bring that thing down."

"I agree on that Rad. I for one am heavily uninterested in finding out the nefarious purpose of that aviation vessel before us." said Gadget with a rather worried look on his face.

Team Radical abandoned the defeated robot pirates and turned their back on the Egg O' War to run off towards Captain Metal's base. Sonic the Hedgehog, Silver the Hedgehog and Sally Acorn had gone into the building to see if Blaze the Cat, who had been kidnapped by the robot pirates, was in there. Team Radical would find out for themselves if Blaze was in there and Sonic, Silver and Sally had found her. They ran up to the barred door of the base and Crystal proceeded to grab hold of the door and wrench it free of its sockets. Rad watched admirably. He always did admire how strong Crystal was. Crystal threw the door away and ran into the base. She got the shock of her life as she saw the Kraken looming before her in a pool of water in the middle of the room. The Kraken had hold of Sonic, Silver and Sally and despite holding them underwater for a while, it had let them up for air just so it could have the amusement of pulling them under again. It was delighted to see that it had more prey to play with. It raised a tentacle and lunged at Crystal. Crystal threw herself down on the floor just as the tentacle was about to hit her. She could feel the air rush over her as the tentacle missed and stabbed through the space she had been in a second before. Rad could see that his girlfriend was in trouble so he charged in to help her. Gadget and Marine ran along behind him, seeing if they could help in anyway. The Kraken swiped at them with a huge tentacle but Team Radical leapt up over the tentacle, feeling it sweep underneath their feet as it passed under them. They landed down on the floor and stared at the Kraken, wondering what to do about.

"OK…how the heck do we stop a giant robotic squid?!" blurted Rad.

"Silver has psychic powers, he'll stop it easily!" declared Crystal.

Unfortunately, that wasn't going to be the case for the Kraken was squeezing Sonic, Sally and Silver very tightly. Much to tightly for Silver to even so much as think about using his psychic powers. He needed to be able to think in order to use his powers but when you're being squeezed by a giant metal tentacle, that just isn't possible. Silver could only croak weakly as he felt his air supply diminishing. Sonic and Sally struggled but they couldn't get free at all.

"Grrr…help us…!" grunted Sonic in desperation as the Kraken squeezed him as if trying to squeeze is very life out of him like toothpaste out of its tube.

"Oy you big metal monster, you put my friends down or I'll give ya a ripper beating!" yelled Marine angrily "I warn ya, yer messin' with the great Captain Marine of the Ocean Tornado! I'm so gonna beat ya to death if ya don't let them go this minute!"

"Marine, get away from that thing!" screamed Rad.

Too late. The Kraken grabbed Marine and coiled its tentacle tightly around the raccoon's puny body. Marine tried to scream but the amount of pressure applied on her body from the tentacle's squeezing made even a scream impossible to emit. She couldn't even so much as gasp, more like croak in agony as she was squeezed. The Kraken was going to have more than it thought it was going to eat at this rate. Raising its tentacles, it prepared to grab Rad, Crystal and Gadget. Gadget however flew up off the floor and zoomed towards the Kraken's eye. The Kraken swung a tentacle at Gadget but the parrot flew out of its way, causing the Kraken to hit itself in the eye. The Kraken yelped and emitted a loud, thunderous, mechanical screech that suggested it was in pain although with robots, Gadget could never be fully sure how a robot emotes compared to a Mobian. Due to the Kraken hitting itself in the eye and hurting itself, Sonic, Sally, Silver and Marine found its grip loosening a little around them. This was perfect for Silver could now breathe properly and concentrate on his psychokinesis. He closed his eyes and allowed his body to glow teal. He then used his powers to grab hold of the Kraken's tentacles and force them open. The Kraken just watched, completely bewildered by the fact its tentacles were opening without it wanting them too. It was like they suddenly

had a mind of their own. Silver forced open the Kraken's tentacles and then used his psychic powers to catch Sonic, Sally and Marine before they could fall. It was giving him a bit of a headache using so much of his psychokinesis and focusing so much on so many things at once but Silver was determined to come through. With himself and his friends now free, he carried himself and his friends back down onto the floor. They maybe free but the Kraken wasn't down yet. The giant robotical cephalopod roared in anger and it swung a tentacle down towards the Mobians. Silver caught it with his psychokinesis and threw it backwards, causing the Kraken to whip itself in the face. While it was distracted, Sally clipped on her wristbands and clenched her fists, activating her energy blades. Crystal however ran outside to fetch something. The polar bear had an idea but she needed something in order for it to work. Sally stood her ground as the Kraken reached out for her, ready to snag her once again. Sally waited patiently as the tentacle came towards her and she bent down low just as it shot over her head. Sally ran to the tentacle's middle section and she swung her blade at it. The tentacle was severed cleanly in half. The Kraken's reaction as a mixture of rage and anguish and it started pounding the floor and the walls in fury. In its fury, one of its tentacles slammed down beside Sally and Sally proceeded to chop that one in half too. The two tentacles that had been severed by Sally's blades were the ones that protruded from directly under its face. Its face was now less protected with those tentacles missing, a fact that Sonic took to his advantage. He spin-dashed the Kraken directly in the face and knocked it backwards, sending cascades of water streaming out of its pool and all over the floor. This hadn't been a very smart move for the water made the floor slippery and the Mobians had to be careful not to slip. The Kraken lunged at Rad but the raccoon jumped out of the way. Upon landing however, he slipped on the wet floor and landed with a horrible thud on the floor. He grimaced as his back sharply hit the floor and he found himself winded and finding it hard to stand back up. Marine helped Rad stand back up just as the Kraken was about to grab him. Sally chopped its tentacle in half once again and the Kraken reeled back in pain. Then suddenly, Crystal arrived back on the scene. She had Swash's can in his hand, the electrical tip still buzzing furiously. She had planned to throw it into the Kraken's pool and electrocute it but she could see that the floor was wet and she would electrocute everybody else as well so an evacuation was in

order.

"Everybody outta here now!" screeched Crystal "I'm gonna finish that thing off!"

"You got it Crystal!" cried Rad.

He could see Crystal's plan from a mile away so he didn't hesitate for a minute. The Mobians all ran for it with the Kraken swatting down at their heels with its remaining tentacles. It even pulled itself onto the edge of the pool as if trying to follow them but no such luck. Its large size and missing tentacles made the job very cumbersome. It would take ages for the Kraken to catch up with its escaping prey. It would never catch up to them though. Crystal gave the Kraken a dirty look of disgust and abhorrence and she tossed the electric cane onto the wet floor just in front of the Kraken, turning and running the moment the cane left her hand. The cane landed on the floor and a current of electricity travelled across the water and to the Kraken. Water and electricity are elements that should never be combined. They don't mix and thus, anyone in the water is instantly electrocuted. The Kraken was in for terrible pain for it was sitting in a pool of water, the floor around said pool was wet and the Kraken itself was wet. The electrical current from Swash's cane turned the Kraken's pool into a pool of agony. The Kraken screeched as it was brutally electrocuted. One could almost feel sorry for the creature as it was subjected to such terrible pain and torture. The tentacles writhed around as if trying to swat the electricity away but that just wasn't possible. The Kraken could only feebly try to fight the electrical current as it coursed through its circuitry. The torture carried on until the Kraken short-circuited and then erupted into a terrible explosion that tore it apart piece by piece from the inside. The explosion hammered against the walls of the base and even buckled them. It held firm but there were noticeable splits around the top of the building as if the explosion had tried to split it in two and the walls were buckled and dented. Captain Metal would not be pleased to see what had become of his base. The Mobians all watched the base buckle under the pressure of the explosion and Crystal punched the air triumphantly.

"Oh yeah baby! Team Radical ONE, ugly robot squid thing ZERO!" she squealed delightedly "I knew Swash's cane would come in

handy!"

"That was a brilliant idea Crystal." complimented Rad, hugging his girlfriend in congratulations "Well done. I bet Swash won't be too happy that his cane killed that robot squid thing."

"I bet not indeed Raddy." beamed Crystal, hugging him back.

"Well now we have eluded the clutches of that cephalopod-shaped behemoth, we now have to stop that rather gargantuan aviation vessel before it can do something terrible." noted Gadget, pointing up at the Egg O' War, which was now half-way up into the sky and still climbing.

"Strewth! We'll never catch that bloomin' thing now!" squealed Marine "It's too high up! How can we stop it from flying?!"

"Easy." said Silver "We've got me remember? I'll fly us all up there."

"And with my blades, we can cut our way in." declared Sally "Once we're aboard, we destroy that ship."

"And if Blaze is on there, we'll rescue her at the same time." added Sonic "She wasn't in that building so she must be on that ship. Or at the most, it's likely she's on that ship."

Sally nodded agreeably. It didn't seem like Blaze could be anywhere else on the island. There was only one building and that was Captain Metal's base, which they had just been in and she wasn't there. The Egg O' War was definitely the only place Blaze could possibly be on now. Silver used his psychokinesis to grab hold of everybody and he flew up towards the ascending Egg O' War. It wasn't so high that the atmosphere was too thin yet so the Mobians would survive. Silver was also a very fast flier. He was already halfway through the distance between the ground and the Egg O' War. They'd be onboard in no time…

Meanwhile, Blaze the Cat had observed the whole of the tiny, bare cell that she had been locked up in and to her utter annoyance, she had not found a single way out of the cell. She hadn't even thought

of using her fire powers, instantly assuming that the Egg O' War's cells were likely made of heatproof metal too. She was trapped. Blaze slumped against the wall and she fumed furiously to herself. Why did she have to get captured by Swash and Buckle? Why didn't she just use the Sol Emeralds to escape Captain Metal before they got into that battle? Blaze didn't know the answer to those questions but she did feel very foolish for not using the Sol Emeralds to escape when she had the chance. She should have used them the moment she had woken up. But as with any person in the world, small details like that can be easily overlooked no matter how bright you are. Blaze was reasonably intelligent but even she had moments where she could overlook something so obvious. It's only natural that small things or even big things can occasionally slip your mind. Blaze made sure that if she ever get out of this cell, she would never forget to use the Sol Emeralds when she had them on her ever again. Now of course, she had to escape so she would live to learn that lesson. If she stayed here, the Egg O' War would do its nefarious purpose and then Captain Metal would kill her. With Blaze dead, Sonic, Silver and Sally would be stranded here forever although it wouldn't matter since they'd all be robot pirates serving Captain Metal once the Egg O' War unleashed its power. Blaze thought hard to herself. How could she possibly escape from this cell? There were no escape routes, no lose panels that she could use to breakout and the cell was very likely heatproof so her fire powers were out of the question. Plus she still felt weakened from Captain Metal's earlier beating, she wouldn't be at her best strength to break out anyway. She needed a plan and she needed it fast. Then Blaze suddenly realized that she had a way out. If there was a guard outside the cell door, maybe she could trick it into letting her out. It was certainly worth a try. Blaze gritted her teeth as she forced herself onto her feet. Her injuries hadn't healed at all, she was still in great pain. But her injuries weren't going to bring her down, not while there was a world at stake. Blaze rapped on the door, hoping to receive an answer.

"What do you want?!" snapped a fierce, pirate like voice from the other side of the door.

Outside Blaze's cell was a spherical looking robot pirate with green body paint and a metal beard. It had cutlasses sheathed on its back

and a peg leg. Blaze could hardly believe her luck. There WAS a guard outside her cell! Why did Captain Metal feel the need to put a guard outside the cell if her cell was as inescapable as it seemed? Maybe she'd overestimated the cell and it obviously wasn't as inescapable as she thought. Or maybe the guard was just there to mock her or beat her up if Captain Metal was feeling bored, Blaze didn't care. She got what she needed and now she needed to put her plan into action.

"So you're…here to guard…me I suppose?" sneered Blaze "I guess…Captain Metal didn't think this…cell was very hardy if…he thinks a puny guard…such as yourself should…be on duty to keep me locked up. If this cell was inescapable…he wouldn't need you now would he?"

"What are you getting at lassie?" snorted the pirate.

"If I need guarding…then this cell must be…useless at keeping me imprisoned." jeered Blaze "Heck, this may surprise you…but I think there's a loose panel in the ceiling."

"That be preposterous, this cell is inescapable!" declared the pirate.

"Wanna bet?" scoffed Blaze "Come…in here…and stop me before I escape through…the ceiling! There's a panel loose. It's loosening… just one more shove and…"

The guard was about to malfunction. He was sure Blaze was bluffing but at the same time he couldn't be sure. He couldn't see what was going on in the cell so Blaze could be telling the truth for all he knew. He had to check and see if the ceiling did have a loose panel. The door was just a big solid rectangle of metal with no windows so there was no way of seeing into the cell. The guard placed his hand against the handprint scanner that opened the door for him. He ran into the cell only to see that the ceiling was indeed intact but Blaze was nowhere to be seen. Before he could work out where she was, the door suddenly slammed shut behind him, trapping him inside the cell. The guard knew exactly what had happened. Blaze had been hiding next to the door and had slipped out the moment he entered the cell. The cell door was programmed to close once anybody left. It was meant to be for the guard to be that one person that left but

Blaze had left the cell so the door closed. The guard banged on it furiously.

"Oy! Open this door!" he bellowed "Get back here prisoner!"

Blaze ignored the guard and she ran down the corridor. Or at least, tried to run as best as she possibly could considering her injuries. Her legs weren't as injured as the rest of her body so they were more functional and she was in less pain when she used them. Blaze darted down the corridor only to then suddenly stop to catch her breath. Her injuries were taking hold so her stamina was considerably weakened. Plus she had no idea where she was going. This was the Egg O' War, something she'd never been on before. She couldn't possibly find the Sol Emeralds without knowing where to go. Blaze closed her eyes and concentrated. She would just have to sense the Sol Emerald's presence. She let the flames in her soul flicker as they reached out for the flames of the Sol Emeralds.

"Come on…where are you my…emeralds?" murmured Blaze as she tried to find the emeralds.

Then suddenly, she felt a sharp pain in her chest and she winced tensely. Something was reacting with the Sol Emeralds. It was the Egg O' War's power core chamber using their power for its own. Because of this, Blaze was able to pinpoint their exact location now.

"Guh…they're in the heart of the ship itself!" growled Blaze, rubbing her chest better "Good. Then I can take…them back and make…this abomination crash down and hopefully take Captain Metal with it!"

Now she knew where to go, Blaze set off down the corridor again, using her connection to the Sol Emeralds to guide her. It was much easier for her now she knew exactly where they were. Once she got to the power core chamber, Blaze would make Captain Metal sorry he was ever created. Blaze found herself coming to the end of a corridor but there was a nearby doorway that seemed to lead up somewhere. Being how Blaze had been locked in a cell, it was obvious she was in the bottom of the Egg O' War. Nobody puts a cell on an upper floor, always the bottom floor. The doorway could only lead upwards. Blaze ran to the doorway and saw that it indeed led upwards. She ran up the steps and found herself in another

corridor. She ran to the end of that one and found another flight of stairs that led upwards. She could feel the fire getting hotter inside her as the Sol Emeralds got closer and closer to their location. So hot in fact Blaze could practically feel them in their hands already. She must be very close to their location already. As Blaze made it to the top of the second flight of stairs she'd come across, she ran down another corridor, following where she'd pinpointed the Sol Emeralds. She could see a sign at the end saying "This way to the power core chamber" printed on the wall at the end of the corridor. Blaze almost wanted to laugh at that sign. It seemed pretty ridiculous to put up a sign saying where such an important room was. Anybody looking for the power core chamber would know where to look now. Blaze knew that's where the Sol Emeralds would be. After all, the power core chamber was the ship's equivalent to a heart after all, only without the beating. Blaze followed the scene and came across a door that was locked shut and had a hand print scanner that was clearly meant for Captain Metal to use. It matched the shape of his hand. Blaze wouldn't be able to open the door with that so she did the only thing she could do in order to break in. She summoned fire to her hands and punched the scanner with all her might. The scanner was broken and the door opened, revealing another flight of stairs, but only a short flight this time. Blaze had to stop and rest for a moment though for she was feeling tired and couldn't go on any longer. Her injuries really weren't helping but her desire to find the Sol Emeralds had somehow eased the pain a little. She still had her limits though. Blaze rested for five minutes before forcing herself up the stairs. She found herself inside the power core chamber and she saw that the seven Sol Emeralds were indeed in the chamber itself. Captain Metal was standing before a giant machine and the Sol Emeralds were hovering between the two prongs with energy feeding from them into the machinery. Captain Metal was using the Sol Emeralds to power up the Egg O' War. That made Blaze grit her teeth in unfathomable fury. How dare this scumbag pirate use her emeralds to power up his evil machine?! Well Blaze would put a stop to that! Captain Metal maybe heatproof and impervious to pain but he wasn't unbeatable. Blaze had beaten him in their first outing and she'd do it again. The beating she'd taken earlier would make that difficult but once she got her emeralds back, she would reduce Captain Metal into ashes. Blaze walked into the power core chamber, watching Captain Metal closely. He was

too busy watching the Sol Emeralds and the altitude of the Egg O' War to notice that he had an intruder. Blaze was pleased. She could launch a sneak attack on Captain Metal. If she'd stolen a cutlass from her guard, she could have just sneaked up behind Captain Metal and run him through. But she didn't have a cutlass and being Captain Metal was heatproof now, a sword likely wouldn't be enough to penetrate him. She had to get Captain Metal away from the Sol Emeralds and then power up with them. She was too weak to fight Captain Metal as she was now. Blaze crept as quietly as she could towards Captain Metal but upon standing on the bridge way that led to the power core machine, Captain Metal suddenly wheeled around and spotted her. He hadn't heard her and turned around, he'd simply turned around and just happened to turn around as Blaze was coming. His singular optic stared at her as if she'd come down with bubonic plague and he was afraid of getting infected.

"Shiver me timbers!" he blurted in surprise "Blaze tharr Cat! How tharr heck did ye break outta yer prison cell?!"

"Your guard had a change of heart and decided to let me go." sniffed Blaze "Now I've found you Captain Miscreant, you're going to pay for kidnapping me, stealing my emeralds and using them to power up your abomination you call a vessel!"

Captain Metal just laughed mockingly at Blaze as if the cat was out of her mind.

"Ye seriously believe that ye can stop me?" purred Captain Metal "Ye be a brain dead landlubber if ye seriously believe that ye can stop me! Look at ye, ye can barely stand up! The beating I gave ye earlier is still taking a bad effect on ya lassie! Ye will not be able to fight with me!"

"I maybe weakened…but I'm not down yet." growled Blaze "As long as I'm alive, there's always a chance that I'll stop you!"

"Nay lassie, there be no chance of stopping me now." boasted Captain Metal "See this? I'm at tharr right altitude to fire me roboticizer wave."

He pointed to his left at the holographic screen that displayed the

Egg O' War's altitude over his shoulder. It was nearly in space it had gone so high. But Captain Metal had said he was at the right altitude to fire the wave. It was obvious he thought this was high enough. The holographic screen then suddenly changed shape and a different option appeared on it. It now said "Pirate Roboticizer Wave Ready for Activation. Commence with activation?" and it had the options of Yes and No available. Blaze stared in horror as Captain Metal's metal claw hovered over the yes option.

"No…don't do it!" begged Blaze "Don't roboticize all of…Solbius! Please!"

"Give me a good reason why I shouldn't Blaze." snarled Captain Metal "Before I ever ended up on Solbius thanks to that blasted light in tharr sky, me purpose under me original creator was to destroy his enemies and roboticize the entire world. I may not be on me old world anymore but I want to fulfil me original purpose. After all, everything has a purpose in tharr world. Without purpose…we be nothing."

"You can have a better purpose…than wanton destruction and… dictatorship!" screamed Blaze "Your goals are evil and…even nonsensical in a way! I mean…what happens when you roboticize the entire…multi-verse and make…everybody a robot pirate? What will the point…of your life be after that? You'll have no purpose… anymore!"

"That lassie be where you're wrong." sniffed Captain Metal "Me purpose will be to keep all tharr multi-verse under control. I'll have the biggest purpose in all of existence! If I'm in charge of infinite planets full of robot pirates, they'll all be relying on their creatorrr to keep them in check. Me purpose will be more important than anybody else's! Mayhap it be more important than all of existence itself."

"But is this really…the kind of purpose you want?!" cried Blaze "To rule planets upon planets full of the same verminous robotic pirates…that you love? Won't the universe…be boring if it's all just robot pirates and nothing more? I mean, you'll have nothing to plunder or fight for!"

"Fie Blaze, I knew fer certain that me robot pirates may turn on me at any available opportunity so life will not be boring! It be interesting to see how long I'll be able to hold me control over them before any of them revolt. And if they revolt…they'll be fighting a losing battle. I'll just use me Egg O' War to destroy them all."

"So if your own minions double-cross them…you'll wipe them out?!" screeched Blaze "You're sick and you're mine!"

"Can ye stop me before I press tharr button?" sneered Captain Metal.

Blaze didn't answer that question. Instead she just threw fire into Captain Metal's face. Captain Metal was unharmed of course but with Blaze's fire in his face, he couldn't see anything but flames. He pushed his way through the fire towards Blaze. Seizing her chance, Blaze lashed out and hooked her foot around Captain Metal's ankle. She tripped him up and brought him down onto his back. Then she kicked him off the bridge way and down onto the floor below. Blaze was disappointed that there wasn't a bottomless drop under the bridge but it didn't matter, Captain Metal was distracted and out of her way. She ran over towards the holographic screen and pressed the no option. Unfortunately…it didn't work. The screen went red in colour and said electronically "Access Denied". Blaze couldn't tell the computer not to go with the roboticization. Thus she would have to do the obvious best thing. Destroy the Egg O' War. The Sol Emeralds loomed before her, waiting to be used. Blaze was about to grab the Sol Emeralds until something blasted her in the back and brought her down onto her knees. Captain Metal had shot her and now he was climbing back up to the bridge way. He hopped back onto the bridge and he stabbed at the holographic screen's yes option. The screen disappeared and a flare of energy flowed through the Egg O' War. Blaze screamed in agony as the Sol Emeralds reacted to the Egg O' War's energy feed and the roboticizer wave was activated. Captain Metal cackled delightedly. His plan was complete, the roboticizer wave had activated. Under the Egg O' War, a huge white wave expanded all around Solbius, transforming everything that it touched into a robotical pirate. Citizens all over Solbius screamed as the wave hit them and transformed them. They didn't even have a chance as the wave brushed over them. Swash,

Buckle and the robot pirates on Pirate Island were instantly destroyed by the wave though since roboticizers destroy anything that's already a robot. Not that it mattered to Captain Metal. They had literally been cannon fodder up until this point. Blaze managed to turn herself around, ignoring the pain in her back as she lay against the power core machine. She stared in horror as a screen lit up, showing Captain Metal what was going on down below. She nearly fainted as she saw everybody on Solbius being transformed into robot pirates.

"NOOOOO!" screamed Blaze in despair, her eyes full of angry and horrified tears.

"Oh yes lassie! I have succeeded!" crowed Captain Metal "Solbius will be me first pirate crew and ye were helpless to stop me! Even Team Rrrradical haven't shown up to stop me! Harr, harr, harrgh!"

"You monster! Why are you so evil?! WHY?!" wailed Blaze angrily.

"I was built that way." sniffed Captain Metal "Why do ye think I be like this? Now one last problem to deal with."

He pressed his blade over Blaze's heart, pinning the fire cat against the machine and himself. Blaze gulped. Captain Metal had cornered her in their first battle and nearly killed her. Now he had her cornered again and was going to kill her.

"Harr, harr…déjà vu it be lassie." gloated Captain Metal "Now I was going to be an honourable pirate and let ye live until ye begged for mercy. But now I be forced to kill you now. Such a shame too. Ye were a good opponent Blaze but all good things must come to an end I'm afraid."

"You're making a mistake!" snarled Blaze "I have friends back on Mobius Prime who will avenge my death! As a matter of fact, Silver…ended up here again as well as me and he'll…be looking for me right now! Kill me now and he'll kill you! It's…a lose-lose situation for both of us!"

"And you believe that Silver will reach tharr Egg O' War before tharr roboticizer wave hits him?" sneered Captain Metal "He's probably

being roboticized as we speak! He'll be a robot pirate forced to serve me and address me as "Captain"! So this is actually a win-win situation fer me."

"Silver can fly. He'll have flown out of the way before the wave can get him." retorted Blaze "He's probably flying towards your disgusting chip right now."

"Then I'll just kill him the moment he arrives if that be the case!" declared Captain Metal "Now say yer prayers Blaze tharr Cat!"

He drew his arm backwards and was about to impale Blaze directly through the chest with his blade but before he could finish off Blaze…he stopped. His arm wouldn't move. Captain Metal tried to continue his blade on its journey into Blaze's heart but it refused to budge. Then Blaze noticed that Captain Metal had a teal glow around him. That could only mean one thing…Silver was here at last! Captain Metal found himself being picked up off the floor and then thrown to one side where he crashed into the wall and dented it. He fell down heavily onto the floor. With Captain Metal out of the way, Blaze could see that Silver was indeed here and he had Sally, Sonic and Team Radical with him. Blaze couldn't be more happy to see them then right now. Straining, Blaze forced herself up and Silver threw himself into her arms.

"Blaze! Thank goodness we got here!" cried Silver "I was so worried about you! I thought you'd be in terrible trouble or something!"

"I was…until you showed up." said Blaze happily "However did you…find me?"

"Well a giant flying egg with a skull and crossbones on it isn't exactly hard to miss." scoffed Sonic "And being we couldn't find you on the ground, we guessed you'd be up here. As for how we got to you, Sally cut us inside and Gadget hacked into the ship's computers to find the power core chamber since we're here to destroy the ship."

"It was simply a coincidence you just happened to be there Blaze." said Gadget matter-of-factly.

"And Captain Metal too." muttered Rad "I can't believe he's still

alive." he growled with a seething contempt dominating his tone of voice "I thought we'd seen the last of that monster during the multi-verse crisis…"

"So did I." muttered Blaze "Now…listen to me. The Egg O' War… has activated a roboticizer wave. It's roboticizing everybody down on the ground! We…need to stop it!"

The Mobians gasped in horror and they looked at each other incredulously.

"NO!" cried Rad "Our home…it's…being roboticized?!"

"Thank goodness we got onboard before it fired then." said Crystal, her face full of shock "Gadget, hack into this thing and reverse the wave's effects!"

"I shall strive to accomplish that task Crystal!" cried Gadget quickly.

He dashed over to the holographic screen that was still showing the effects of the roboticizer wave that was spreading over Solbius. Gadget began to tap away on the screen, seeing whatever he could do to reverse its effects.

"As for you Blaze, you need healing." said Silver, using his psychokinesis to grab the Sol Emeralds and carry them away from the power core "Here you go, I believe these are yours."

Blaze graciously took the Sol Emeralds into her hands, pleased to feel them in her possession once again.

"Uh Silver, don't you think the Sol Emeralds were making this thing fly?" asked Sally unsurely "We're going to fall out of the sky if you take them out.

"Captain…Metal didn't know about my…emeralds at first." explained Blaze "He…wouldn't have built…the Egg O' War with them in mind to power…it up. The ship…doesn't necessarily need them. He likely…used them so the…Egg O' War could use their power…to onto other worlds…since he planned to roboticize…all of the multi-verse."

"Ah, makes sense to me." said Sally "So the ship will remain airborne. Once Gadget reverses what the Egg O' War's done, we'll get off the ship and Blaze can use her emeralds to destroy it."

Using the Sol Emeralds, Blaze performed a Sol Regeneration on herself, the Sol Emerald's equivalent to a Chaos Regeneration. As Blaze held up the emeralds, she was engulfed in a bright flash of light and fire. Captain Metal picked himself up and he stared in fury at Blaze as her injuries slowly but steadily began to heal themselves. He could practically see her cuts closing shut and her bruises melting away into Blaze's natural colours as the regeneration began. He wanted to stop Blaze but he knew he'd be too late. It didn't matter though, Captain Metal would merely beat Blaze up all over again. As Blaze's Sol Regeneration completed, Captain Metal took aim at her. He was going to shoot her through the head. Unfortunately for him, Blaze spotted him and she rocketed towards him in a torpedo of flames. She struck Captain Metal and slammed him against the wall. So hard that Captain Metal not only dented the wall, but he bent the back of his hat in the impact. Blaze clutched him by the throat and she summoned fire to her free hand.

"It's over Captain Metal!" she snarled "You have lost! The Sol Emeralds are back in my possession, your plan is being undone and your ship will be destroyed! Surrender now and you might live long enough to be scrap metal for somebody to use as spare parts!"

"Nay lassie! I am not defeated yet! I'll peel the flesh off yer bones fer ruining me plans! Not just you, but all of her landlubber friends!" roared Captain Metal. The anger in his voice was like that of a wild tiger.

He swung his head forward but Blaze was already launching her punch at him before his head could connect with hers. Captain Metal's attempted head butt had just ended up delivering himself into Blaze's fist. Blaze's fire-enhanced fist slammed callously into the middle of Captain Metal's face, slamming his head backwards against the wall and crushing the back of his hat flat against the back of his head. Blaze then grabbed Captain Metal by the neck section of his cloak and he threw him across the room. Captain Metal crashed into the base of the Egg O' War's power core machine and he slid down to the floor at the bottom. Blaze jumped

down after him and started whaling on him as hard as she could. The Sol Regeneration had given Blaze new strength and agility so she was fighting much better than she had done before. She punched Captain Metal in the face and then uppercut him in the chin, nearly taking his head off. Captain Metal took every blow she threw without feeling anything since he couldn't feel pain anymore but he was getting frustrated at how fast Blaze was throwing her punches. He couldn't keep up with her. Blaze roundhouse kicked Captain Metal in the side of his head and threw him down onto the floor. Captain Metal picked himself up and he blasted at Blaze but Blaze blocked the attack with a wall of flames. She summoned fire to her hands and swiped at Captain Metal, hitting him with a wave of flames that swept over him. Captain Metal just walked straight through them and ran up towards Blaze. Captain Metal slugged Blaze in the gut and elbowed her on the head, throwing her down onto the floor. He tried to cut her head off while she was down, raising his gun arm and aiming the blade underneath at her neck. Blaze rolled out of the way, leaving Captain Metal to get it stuck in the floor. As he tried to free it, Blaze kicked Captain Metal furiously in the chest. She then kicked Captain Metal so hard that as he snapped backwards, his entire right arm wrenched itself free from his shoulder, leaving only the ball joint it had been attached to behind. The arm was still stuck in the floor but Captain Metal wasn't going to leave it there. He grabbed his broke gun arm by the handle shaped elbow and wrenched it free from the floor. He couldn't shoot anymore now the arm was broken but he could still use it as a sword. He swung the arm at Blaze, nearly catching her with the blade but Blaze ducked, allowing the sword to sweep over her head. Captain Metal kicked Blaze in the thigh and knocked her down onto one knee. He tried to cut Blaze in two with the blade on his gun arm but Blaze leapt up and slugged him in the gut, making him double-over. Blaze had the perfect opportunity to kick Captain Metal directly in the cranium as his head was lowered, Captain Metal was sent hurling backwards into the wall. In the impact, he dropped his broken gun arm. Blaze grabbed it, surprised at how heavy it was as she lifted it up, and she plunged the blade into Captain Metal's chest. Captain Metal felt the blade penetrating him but no pain registered in his body. He was however aware that he had been impaled and was severely damaged. His limbs twitched and he growled furiously, his voice going static slightly and his optic

brightening and going dull back and forth.

"C-c-curse y-you…B-B-Blaze tharr…Cat!" he croaked.

His head fell back, his remaining arm fell limp by his side and his optic switched off. Captain Metal appeared to be finished off once again. Blaze stomped on his head.

"And this time…STAY DEAD!" she snarled, her mouth a snarling maw of gritted teeth and her eyes a hideous scowl of fury that looked out of place on such a beautiful face like hers.

Now Captain Metal was dealt with, she looked up on the bridge way and saw that the others were still working on reversing the Egg O' War's roboticization wave. She leapt up onto the bridge and watched to see what was happening. Gadget was typing furiously on the holographic screen and clearly trying to sort out what to do about the roboticizer wave. Unfortunately for him, while he was able to interact with the computer, he couldn't get it to accept his requests or do what he wanted it to. It kept denying him access to the Egg O' War's main controls. Gadget was sweating now. He gripped his head and began panicking.

"It's hopeless! Absolutely hopeless!" he cried out "The primary interfacing system is immune to my commands! It won't respond to what I'm trying to do with it!"

"How can we reverse the roboticizer wave?" asked Rad frantically "If you can't use the computer, what can we do to reverse it?"

"I know." said Blaze "Silver, bring Captain Metal's body up here. Only he can use that computer."

Silver obeyed and he used his psychokinesis to pick up Captain Metal's dead body. He carried the insidious robot pirate up towards them and he put him down beside Gadget. Blaze held him upright and Gadget lifted up Captain Metal's left arm. He pointed one of his claws at the screen and began using the claw to do what he had been trying to do with his own fingers on the holographic screen. The computer responded to Captain Metal's claw and Gadget was successfully able to do what he needed to do. In a moment, the

roboticizer wave was reversed and ready to fire. Gadget used Captain Metal's claw to press the "Yes" option when the options screen came up. The Mobians now stood back and watched as the wave fired down on Solbius below. The de-roboticizer wave swept over the planet and in a matter of moments, the robotic pirates that the wave had created suddenly began to lose their metal bodies and regain their organic bodies. Captain Metal's pirate crew had been eliminated as quickly as it had been born. The Solbians all cheered as they were turned back to normal and the wave continued all around Solbius until every last Solbian had been restored to normal. Up on the Egg O' War, Team Radical whooped with joy.

"YES! We did it!" cried Rad ecstatically "We saved all of Solbius again!"

"And to think Captain Metal nearly won!" cried Crystal excitedly "But we beat him, and this time for good!"

"Just to make double-sure he's dead…" said Silver.

He reached out with his psychokinesis and grabbed Captain Metal with his powers. He closed his eyes, focused hard on Metal's body and then clenched his fist. The dead body as crushed instantly and reduced to nothing more than a sorry crumple of metal with a ragged cape attached to it. Silver threw the remains away from the bridge.

"Now Captain Metal's dead and Solbius is saved, there's only one thing left to do." said Sally "Destroy the Egg O' War. We can't have Solbius being reminded of its darkest hour after all."

"Allow me." said Blaze "I'll Sol Control Team Radical down to the ground and return you, Sonic and Silver home Sally. With you all safe and sound, I'll use the emeralds to power myself up enough to destroy this Egg O' War."

"Sounds good to me Blaze." said Sonic "I'd love to stay and watch myself but…then I'd be cooked alive. Ha, ha…we'll see you back on Mobius Prime when you're finished."

"Indeed you will." said Blaze.

She turned to Team Radical with a smile on her face.

"It's a pity I didn't get much time to meet you again." she said "But it is nice to see you four again. I'm afraid I can't stay though, I have to go now."

"We understand." said Rad, shaking Blaze's hand "Thanks for destroying Captain Metal all over again and for helping to save our world."

"My pleasure." said Blaze, beaming "I hope you all have a good life now he's gone for good."

"Strewth, we will indeed Blaze." said Marine with a smile "Bye Blaze! Hope to see ya again someday!"

"I hope so too." said Blaze happily.

"One more thing, warp us onto the Ocean Tornado please." said Crystal "We don't wanna leave that moored to Pirate Island forever."

"Certainly." said Blaze.

Without further ado, Blaze used her Sol Emeralds to emit a Sol Control. With the emeralds, she opened up two fiery portals for the Mobians and Solbians. One led to the Ocean Tornado and one led back to New Mobotropolis. The Solbians took the left portal, which was the one that led to the Ocean Tornado. The Mobians took the portal on the right. Silver gave Blaze a loving smile over his shoulder before he went into the portal. Blaze smiled back and watched as the portal disappeared into nothing. Now that everybody was safe and out of harm's way, Blaze turned around to the face the Egg O' War's power core machine. She stepped up on top of the bottom prong and summoned the Sol Emeralds into her hands.

"Now time to fry this abomination." she growled softly to herself.

Closing her eyes, she allowed the Sol Emeralds to circle her body and engulf her in a bright flash of light and spiralling fire. Blaze was turning into Burning Blaze once again but only for the purpose of destroying the Egg O' War. In a matter of seconds, her transformation was complete and Burning Blaze was here once

again. She summoned much fire to her body and then fire boosted through the ceiling. Burning Blaze tore through the metal of the Egg O' War as if it were merely paper. She ploughed her way through the Egg O' War's chassis, destroying every inch of metal and circuitry that stood in her way. She blasted fire out in all directions and exploded through the top of the Egg O' War like a missile ploughing through its target. Burning Blaze then came around for another attack, ploughing through the Egg O' War's hull and rocketing through its inner body once again. She emerged through the skull face, breaking a huge hole through the skull face as she did so. The damage on the Egg O' War was incredible. There were holes in the top and sides of the vessel and smoke billowing out from the holes but it was still airborne. Not for long though. Burning Blaze then turned around, not quite finished with her work yet. She summoned a huge fireball to her hands and she blasted the Egg O' War with a rocket of fire that could rival even the biggest bonfire display you can imagine. The Egg O' War's hull couldn't take anymore damage. The fire blast churned through the metal and fried its innards to molten slag. The entire centre of the Egg O' War was completely destroyed, the interior being completely unrecognizable to anybody. The damage done to the Egg O' War was enough to finally bring it down. The Egg O' War had flown straight up so it fell straight down, right on top of the rocks it had been based on before take off. As it crashed down onto the rocks, it overbalanced and ended up crashing down onto Pirate Island, flattening half of the island and throwing water over the rest. Pirate Island was no more. Only Captain Metal's base remained visible above the ocean but that wasn't much to go on when the rest of the island was submerged. Satisfied with her handiwork, Burning Blaze used a Sol Control to disappear from Solbius and return to Mobius Prime. She had done it. Captain Metal was dead, Solbius was safe. She had no reason to stay on Solbius anymore. Now she had warped home to Mobius Prime where she could resume her original mission, to prevent the Death Egg from seeing the light of day…

Had Burning Blaze not been so focused on destroying the Egg O' War, she may have noticed that there was something cruising through the ocean. It was Captain Metal! Captain Metal had

activated yet another contingency plan of his. Prior to his resurrection after the multi-verse crisis had concluded, he had built spare bodies for himself in the event he should get destroyed once again. His bodies had been programmed to send his consciousness to the next model up once his original body was dead and destroyed. His original body had only died in front of Blaze's eyes because his consciousness had been transported to the next body, which was the same as his old body only with a slightly darker colour scheme. Silver had merely crushed an empty shell. Sadly for Captain Metal, the body he had now was the only one he had left. The rest of his new bodies had been destroyed along with the Egg O' War. Captain Metal would have to make sure he didn't die in this body or he would be permanently dead. Now Captain Metal was cruising through the seas in an escape pod that took him towards Sol Island. His escape pod had launched shortly after the de-roboticizer wave had activated so he was way ahead of Team Radical. In fact, he had even arrived back at the island now. His escape pod was very fast after all and literally just as Burning Blaze teleported back to Mobius Prime, he had pulled up to the shore. He had not pulled up on the beach though, he had pulled up in an unpopulated area of the island. Captain Metal left the escape pod and he went wild with rage, screaming in rage at the top of his voice as if hoping the heavens above could hear him.

"I can't believe tharr bloody fire cat foiled me plans AGAIN!" he raved, kicking the sand beneath his metal feet furiously "Damn her! Damn that Blaze! Damn her to Davy Jones's locker! When I get me hands on that impudent woman, I'm going to rip her to pieces! I'll send her to the bottom of tharr ocean and leave her to rot fer all eternity! She has not heard, nor seen tharr last of tharr great Captain Metal!"

He stopped ranting and then came to a realization.

"But tharr lass has likely gone back to her own world now." he muttered "I be stuck here on Solbius, she be back on Mobius Prime now. How will I get me revenge on her if I be stuck here? I need a way of transporting myself onto Mobius Prime…"

Then suddenly, it seemed as if luck would have it for he looked up and saw a little twin-tailed fox asking a brown dog in a leather coat

something. It was Tails. Back on Mobius Prime, he had managed to find out that Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze had been sent to another world and he had grabbed a Chaos Emerald to start warping to other worlds in hopes of finding them. He had ended up on Solbius after a few searches on other worlds and was now asking the dog if he'd seen them anywhere. He'd looked on all the Sol Islands and was now on the main island itself in hopes of finding them. Captain Metal eyed the green Chaos Emerald in Tails's hand eagerly and he crept up towards Tails in hopes of snatching the emerald. Tails didn't notice Captain Metal as he crept up towards him.

"So sir, have you seen the people I described to you?" asked Tails hopefully.

"No kiddo, I haven't seen anybody like that." said the dog sadly "I wouldn't really think Solbius was a place where Prime Zoners would visit anyway."

"I'm sorry to have wasted your time then sir." said Tails "Have a nice day."

"Cheers mate, you too." said the dog, walking away and whistling nonchalantly.

Tails was a little disappointed now. He'd been searching everywhere and he couldn't find Sonic, Sally, Silver or Blaze. It seemed he was on a wild goose chase at this point in time.

"Well, I guess this isn't going to work." murmured Tails "I should build something that'll make my job easier really. Maybe a scanner that can pick up Prime Zoner signatures. I'll see what I can do when I get back."

He raised the Chaos Emerald and activated a Chaos Control. Unfortunately for him, Captain Metal had grabbed hold of his hand, catching Tails by surprise, and he yelled "Chaos…CONTROL!" upon grabbing Tails. The Chaos Emerald ended up taking both of them back to Mobius Prime, the two disappearing in a bright green flash that disappeared after a few seconds. Captain Metal was coming to Mobius Prime…and he was out for revenge. Blaze was not safe now Captain Metal had followed her home…

Oh dear...Captain Metal's coming to Mobius Prime! What will happen to him now? And what will Blaze think to this? Join me next time as we begin a new countdown, starting with "Adabat in Peril"...

Plan of Attack

Story 188: Plans of Attack

Countdown to Death Egg: 7

"Ah…it's good to be home again." said Sonic the Hedgehog happily as he, Sally Acorn and Silver the Hedgehog returned to New Mobotropolis in a flash of fire and light.

Things had been pretty eventful lately for Mobius's biggest hero, New Mobotrolis's ruler and the two future dwelling Mobians that had a big goal in mind, to save Mobius from future destruction. First they had infiltrated the Egg-Bunker in order to steal sensitive information from Dr. Eggman, then a portal had opened up and somebody had shoved them through it, then they had ended up on the alternate world of Solbius and all sorts of hi-jinks had ensued while they had been there. Captain Metal had turned out to be alive and had kidnapped Blaze the Cat so he could get revenge on her, then he'd used his Egg O' War to roboticize all of Solbius but luckily, his plans had been reversed and Solbius had been saved. Now Sonic, Sally and Silver had been returned back to Mobius Prime while she destroyed the Egg O' War. As they waited, the three stirred up a conversation.

"I do hope we weren't gone for too long." said Sally, looking concerned "Our friends will be worried about us."

"Well now we're back, let's go and see them shall we?" asked Sonic "Let's put their worries at ease and show that we're A-OK."

"Hold on Sonic, let's wait for Blaze to return first." said Silver "So she can show the others that she's OK too."

"OK then." said Sonic kindly "While we wait, there's one thing we need to find out. What caused that portal that sent us to Solbius in the first place?"

"I really wonder if we'll ever find out." murmured Sally "If it happens

again, we'll be ready for it. If any portals open up, move away from it so we can't get knocked into it."

"I can do that." said Silver smiling. His smile died away though as he realized something else. "Although I did lose my super warp ring back in the Egg Bunker. I bet Eggman's got it now…"

"I hope he hasn't…or he'll be able to spread his rule to other Mobiuses as well as our own." Sally shuddered "We may have to try and get that back at some point."

"Indeed. For now, we've gotta destroy those refuelling stations and find out where the Death Egg is." declared Sonic "You still got that information Nicole downloaded am I right?"

"Course." said Sally smugly "Computers don't lose sensitive information like that. And it was lucky Nicole's waterproof otherwise when that squid dragged us underwater, she would have short-circuited…"

She took Nicole off her boot and opened her up just to be double sure she was fine. Nicole's screen lit up and her smiling face appeared on it.

"Hello Sally." said Nicole happily "It appears we've returned to Mobius Prime." she analyzed as she took in their surroundings and noticed the familiar territory they were in.

"Indeed so." replied Sally, grinning "Blaze warped us back here with her emeralds. Now we're back, you can deliver what you found out to our comrades. Then we can see to bringing down Eggman once and for all."

"I strive to see that happen Sally." beamed Nicole.

Sally smiled back as if to say "Don't we all Nicole?". A brief second passed before another flash of fire and light appeared from nowhere. Sonic, Sally and Silver weren't surprised at this. They had expected that to happen after all. The light and fire disappeared and in its place stood Blaze the Cat. She had used her Sol Emeralds to become Burning Blaze and had just destroyed the Egg O' War, quite

brutally in fact, and had now returned to Mobius Prime. She now stood before the others, powered down and clearly content with what she had done a moment ago. Silver ran over to Blaze and hugged her, pleased to have her back along with him on Mobius Prime. Blaze returned the hug graciously. Sonic and Sally were awed by this. Silver and Blaze's love reminded them a bit of their love for each other. It helped considering the two had much in common with Sonic and Sally too.

"You know Blaze, every moment we were away on Solbius was a moment I never want to experience again." said Silver "I really did worry about you when you got caught."

"I was worried too Silver." said Blaze, lightly stroking Silver's face tenderly "Worried that I wouldn't live to reunite with you. But we survived Captain Metal and his tyranny and I've sent his abhorrent ship down to the bottom of the ocean. The Egg O' War will never fly again."

"That's great news Blaze." Silver's face seemed to beam like a sunrise as he said that "And Captain Metal's remains will have gone down with the Egg O' War. He belongs under the ocean after all he's done."

"You know what they say Silver, "A good captain goes down with his ship"." noted Blaze "Not that Metal was a good captain anyway...but I digress. Shall we go to Royal HQ and let everybody know we're fine now?"

"Course." said Sonic happily "We were just waiting for you to return first. That and you and Silver looked really cute together so me and Sally thought we'd let you two have a moment first." he winked cheekily at the two future Mobians.

Silver and Blaze blushed red. Silver chuckled nervously whereas Blaze remained straight-faced despite her reddening cheeks. They maybe in love but they'd prefer that Sonic didn't make a joke about it. Just to save the moment from becoming more awkward, Sonic decided to set off for Royal HQ. Sally, Silver and Blaze followed him. Sonic could already picture the reactions from his friends when he, Sally, Silver and Blaze walked into the building. Provided that the

Royal Fighters were in Royal HQ or not. Didn't matter for they could just search around New Mobotropolis for them and let them know that they were back. But there was on person they wouldn't find...yet. As they walked into Royal HQ, a bright green flash suddenly appeared just down the hill from where Castle Acorn was. It was Tails the Fox and the stowaway metal marauder himself, Captain Metal. Tails had managed to break into the Egg-Bunker and find out what had happened to the four returning Mobians so he'd taken a Chaos Emerald and Chaos Controlled onto whatever Mobius he knew in the multi-verse in hopes of finding them. He'd decided to return home after coming up empty handed but unfortunately for him, Captain Metal had grabbed onto his hand as he used the Chaos Control. The hand he'd grabbed was the hand holding the Chaos Emerald so it took him to Mobius Prime along with Tails. Now the Chaos Control had completed, Captain Metal kicked Tails away from himself, taking the Chaos Emerald out of his hand as he did so. Tails landed with a thud onto his back and he groaned as Captain Metal stared at the glorious, green emerald in his hand. It sparkled brighter than any treasure he'd ever seen and it felt magnificent to hold. He cackled delightedly with joy.

"Harr, harr, harrgh...I'd always dreamed of holding a Chaos Emerald in me hand." purred Captain Metal "And now I be holding one. Life sure is grrrand sometimes..."

"Give that back to me!" cried Tails "That's not your emerald! Who are you and why did you follow me back here?!"

"I be Captain Metal, the Scourge of Solbius, and I be here to exact revenge on Blaze tharr Cat!" growled Captain Metal "And you lad have kindly delivered me to tharr Prime Zone. I must thank ye very much. Now where be Blaze so that I may cut out her heart and show it to her as she dies?"

"I don't know if Blaze has returned home yet or not." explained Tails truthfully "I was on Solbius looking for her, Sonic, Sally and Silver. Even if I knew where she was I wouldn't tell you! Now give me that Chaos Emerald back!"

"Nay chance of that laddie!" snarled Captain Metal "I be needing this gem to make myself strongerrr so I can finally be rid of that fire-

throwing feline!"

Tails glared crossly at Captain Metal and he flew towards him, yelling loudly at the top of his voice. He drew his arm back and prepared to punch Captain Metal in the face. However, Captain Metal had already won this match for he had a Chaos Emerald in his hands. He used the Chaos Emerald to slow Tails down and render him vulnerable to an attack. Captain Metal ran around beside Tails and conked him on the head with his fist. The blow knocked Tails clean out instantly. Getting hit on the head by a metal fist does guarantee a clean knockout. To Tails it had been like the world had just turned black. When he woke up, he'd realize what had really happened. Captain Metal sneered at Tails's unconscious body and he swished his cape as he turned away from him.

"A pathetic little lad. Not even worth slaying." he muttered "I'll just leave him there while I search for Blaze tharr Cat."

But just before he could even do that, a warp ring suddenly appeared underneath him and swallowed him up in a golden portal that filled the space inside the ring. His screams were silenced by the warp ring closing up, vanishing in a bright golden sparkle. The warp ring had belonged to Dr. Finitevus. He had started snooping around New Mobotropolis to see if Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze were still gone. To his disappointment, they had returned but fortuitously enough, a metal robot that clearly seemed to be evil and have a grudge on Blaze had gotten a Chaos Emerald. How fortunate indeed for a Chaos Emerald was just what Finitevus needed for his master plan. Summoning a warp ring to his hand, he flicked it up behind him and disappeared through it. He was going to give Captain Metal a warm welcome and a possible spot for the Dark Armada. After all, he wasn't limiting himself to how many members he needed for it...

The atmosphere in Royal HQ was nothing short of tense and impatient. A week had passed since Tails had left Mobius Prime to go looking for Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze and he hadn't returned yet. A whole week of nothing but waiting and worrying was becoming a little too much for the poor Royal Fighters. They were

practically killing themselves ten times over with worry, dying to know if Tails was going to return with their lost friends. The Royal Fighters were all sitting together in the rest room but all they were doing was sitting around waiting for something to happen rather than occupying themselves with the room's conveniences. They weren't in the right frame of mind for fun after all. Tails's girlfriend, the lovely Cosmo the Seedrian, was gripping her hands and feeling the sweat in her palms. She was beginning to worry about Tails. She did love him dearly after all and couldn't bear to think of him in danger.

"Ooooh...it's been a week since Tails left." moaned Cosmo "Where could he be?"

"Do remember Cosmo, we saw the four getting pushed into a portal by a tunnel of sonic waves." noted Amy Rose "Just because we saw them going through a portal, it doesn't mean we know where they ended up. They could be anywhere for all we know. Tails could take forever just to find them."

"I hope he finds our friends soon, I'm really concerned about them." replied Cosmo anxiously "What could be happening to Sonic, Sally, Silver or Blaze as we speak? If they've ended up on Mobius Beta, they won't be very happy indeed..."

Cosmo still shuddered to remember Mobius Beta, an alternate version of Mobius that had been reduced to a hell on Earth by the Devatrons of that dimension. True they had defeated Devion and Alter the Wolf would see that the rest of the Devatrons join Devion in the afterlife but still, it was horrible to imagine the four treading through a dystopian world and worrying about what had happened. The gloomy atmosphere would certainly effect them dearly as it had done to her and Tails.

"I hope they ended up somewhere nice." said Amy "That way, they won't be in too much trouble when Tails finds them at last. If they've ended up on Brawlbius, I will be mad..."

"Same here." muttered Knuckles the Echidna "It was bad enough what me, you, Shade, Cream and Sora endured whilst on that world. They don't deserve to suffer Brawlbius's horrible nature either."

Amy nodded agreeably. She remembered all too well what had happened when she, Knuckles, Shade, Cream and Sora had ended up on Brawlbius. They had been forced against their will to take part in a fighting contest for the sick entertainment of the people who lived on Brawlbius. The thought of Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze being forced to do that was just cringing for Amy and she wanted to imagine them somewhere else to make it better for her.

"If there's one place I hope they didn't end up, it's the Special Zone." grumbled Mandy Mouse bitterly "Feist is the last person I want the blue dude and the others to cross paths with."

"Tell me about it dear." said Wilson agreeably, shaking his head "It was bad enough what me, you and Ruben went through whilst in his parlour."

"You bet." agreed Mandy "If they did end up in the Special Zone then they'd best hope Feist is feeling generous after what we did to upset him..."

Her face drooped as she remembered how angry Feist had been when she's skewered him in the eye with Wilson's own blade weapon. She couldn't imagine Feist being too pleased at the idea of dealing with more Prime Zoners.

"Well it's not good hoping Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze didn't end up in a particular place since that portal they were pushed into could have taken them anywhere." noted Ruben the Water Panther gravely "We'll just have to wait and see where Tails finds them."

The Royal Fighters nodded agreeably. Their thoughts were interrupted by the sound of a door opening. They all turned around and got a surprise they never expected they would get. The door opened and four people strode into the room. The four people that entered the room were the last people they had expected so suddenly. Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze all stood before them, looking pleased to see them all again.

"Hi everybody!" cooed Sonic cheerily "Did you all miss us while we were gone?"

"SONIC!" squealed Amy "Ohmigosh you're back! And so's Sally, Silver and Blaze! Oh hallelujah, this is great! We were all so worried about you!"

"We were concerned about you all too." said Sally softly "We worried over what you would think to our disappearance. But we're back now so no worries."

"This might worry you a bit though." said Sora Prower, sister of Tails and child super spy "You've been gone for a week. I bet that Death Egg's even closer to launching now."

"A week?!" shrieked Blaze in disbelief "But...but...how?!"

"We haven't been gone that long!" cried Silver "If I counted my time right on Solbius, we were only gone for a few hours!"

"If I'm to guess, time flows differently on Solbius." mused Sally "Maybe a day on Solbius is a week on Mobius Prime. We feel like we've been gone for a few hours on Solbius but on Mobius Prime, we've been gone for a week. This is not good indeed..."

"I'll say!" whined Sonic "We've lost precious time in finding that Death Egg and destroying its stations! The Death Egg might be done by now!"

"I hope it isn't..." said Silver grimly "Otherwise mine and Blaze's mission to stop it launching may well be jeopardized."

"It depends if the Death Egg's actually completed or not." Sally stated matter-of-factly "And I guess we'll find out when we go out and destroy the last of the refuelling stations. If they're near completed or at least complete, they might be an indicator of how close to completion the Death Egg is."

"Good point." said Sonic "So we'd best get finding those stations and get to bringing them down! Maybe one of them will give us a clue as to where the Death Egg is."

"I hope that'll be the case too." said Sally, opening up Nicole's screen "Nicole, show our friends where the refuelling stations are please."

"Hold on." said Sonic quickly, putting his hand on Sally's shoulder hesitantly "There's somebody missing. Where's Tails?"

While Sally had been talking, Sonic had taken a look around the room to see if everybody was here. He noticed Tails was indeed missing. That immediately concerned the hedgehog for Tails was the one friend he would put his life in the line of fire for ahead of anybody else. Sally noticed that Tails was missing too. She fumed at herself for not noticing before.

"Tails has gone searching through the multi-verse, trying to find you Sonic." explained Cosmo "He likely hasn't returned yet."

"Boy will Tails be disappointed when he sees we've already gotten back here, making his attempts all for naught." murmured Silver sadly "Poor kid."

"I'm afraid we won't have time to wait for him though." said Sally "We'll have to leave without him. We'll just leave him a message and let him know where we've gone. We'll give him the option of whether he wants to join one of the teams or just sit back here and wait for us. Now then, Nicole, show the Royal Fighters the information we downloaded from the Egg-Bunker please."

Nicole obeyed and her avatar materialized into view before the Royal Fighters like a ghost that's come to haunt people. Nicole beamed, pleased to be able to stand before her friends like an ordinary person again since she didn't enjoy being cooped up in her little computer for too long. Now Nicole was standing before everybody, she began her testimony.

"OK everybody, whilst in the Egg-Bunker, I managed to download the information we required." explained Nicole "The last remaining refuelling stations are in certain locations all over the world."

She reshaped her avatar into the shape of Mobius itself with a mere rearrangement of pixels. Nicole had to admit that it was rather fun being able to change her shape in anyway like she did now. As the holographic image of Mobius was made, Nicole displayed the coordinates for the other Death Egg refuelling stations that she had found out about when hacking into the Egg-Bunker's computers. It

amused the Royal Fighters a little how Nicole displayed the locations of the stations with an image of her face. It was quite a funny sight for a holographic image.

"The stations are located in Adabat, Megapolis, the Golden Hive Colony, the Lost Jungle and Chun-Nan." explained Nicole "And if we're to destroy them all at once, we need to split up into teams. Divide our resources and attack simultaneously. It'll take forever for us to destroy all the stations one at a time. The Death Egg nears completion the longer we wait so this'll be much quicker."

"And we all know that quick is what I do best." beamed Sonic "I'll go to Chun-Nan. Anyone wanna come with me?"

"We'll come." offered Silver and Blaze together.

"We've always wanted to see Chun-Nan in its prime before…well, you know." said Silver "Chun-Nan sounds like a wonderful place and me and Blaze would love to come with you to destroy the station it has there."

"Likewise." said Sonic enthusiastically "Plus, we can get a helping hand from Chun-Nan's native heroes. They'll be very useful to us."

"Indeed, and you're going to have a native of Chun-Nan helping you three." put in Ruben "I'm coming too. When my country's involved, I get involved too. It'll be an honour to save it from Eggman's scorn once again."

Sonic was very pleased to hear this. Ruben's honourable personality was truly admirable indeed. No wonder he was a Royal Fighter.

"Very good." said Sally happily "I'll take Bunnie and Nicole to the Lost Jungle. I've always fancied a jungle expedition. Although I lost one of my cousins in the Lost Jungle once when my parents took her on an expedition there seven years ago…"

It seemed out of place for Sally to suddenly mention something like that. Sonic could understand why Sally volunteered to go to the Lost Jungle now. Maybe pay her respects to her supposed lost cousin whilst on the mission at the same time. It was very nice of Sally to

do this and Sonic loved it. A good heart was what he admired in a person, especially one as beautiful and lovely as Sally.

"I'm sure your lost cousin will appreciate that." said Sonic comfortingly, hugging Sally "Good luck in the Lost Jungle. Same goes to you too Bunnie." he added, looking over at the Southern Belle with a charming smile that could make anybody enthusiastic.

"Aw thanks sugah-hog." chirped Bunnie brightly "Ah appreciate it. Good luck to you, Silver and Blaze over in Chun-Nan."

Sonic gave Bunnie a thumbs up in return.

"If it's no problem, I'd like to go to Adabat." offered Wilson "I've kinda wanted to go back there after mine and Mandy's short-lived honeymoon there*. You coming too honey?" he turned to his wife and waited for an answer.

"Of course." said Mandy brightly "You go, I go. No questions asked. Anyone else wanna come with me and Wilson?" she asked, addressing the other Royal Fighters with a glance over at each of them.

"I'll come love." said Geoffrey St. John eagerly "It'll be nice to be in Adabat again."

"We'll be happy to have you Mr. St. John." Mandy replied with a satisfied smile on her face "Don't worry Bunnie, we'll make sure your handsome skunk-boy returns in on piece." she winked teasingly at the Rabbot.

"Haw, haw, OK Mandy." chortled Bunnie amusedly "And Geoffrey will take good care of ya'll too ah bet."

Geoffrey nodded at Bunnie.

"We'll take the Golden Hive Colony." offered Vector the Crocodile, leader of Team Chaotix "Our junior member Charmy Bee here came from that place. He got kicked out of the colony a while back but once the colony sees what he's capable of, they'll be pleased to see him again."

Charmy didn't look very comfortable. He looked nervous as if the Golden Hive Colony was a bad memory to him. He didn't look like he wanted to go back there at all. But he didn't say anything, unusual considering he was often known to be quite chatty and talkative. He was deep in thought about how his meeting with his former colony would turn out.

"We'll come too." offered Knuckles, motioning to himself and Shade, who was standing beside him "We'll offer any extra muscle just in case."

"Very nice of you echidnas to offer." said Espio the Chameleon, the Chaotix Ninja, with a bow "We accept your offer."

"That colony's gonna be rid of its refuelling station now we're the ones going after it!" cried Vector delightedly "I can hardly wait to see how this'll turn out!"

Knuckles and Shade just smiled. They were just looking forward to smashing Eggman robots themselves more than anything but it would be fun to work with the Chaotix since they were a great trio of fighters and a lot of fun to hang around with.

"So that just leaves me, Cosmo, Amy and Cream to go to Megapolis." said Sora "If Tails was here, I'd take him too but alas, we'll have to go without him I'm afraid. Hope my little brother doesn't mind."

"Maybe when he returns and finds out we're gone, he'll probably join your team Sora." suggested Sonic "In the meantime, let's do it to it everybody! We've got some stations to destroy!"

The Royal Fighters acted immediately. The teams all split up and set off to their respective places. In order to get to the locations quicker, the Royal Fighters boarded some vehicles. Mandy chose her customized hover-car for her, Wilson and Geoffrey to go in to Adabat. Mandy started the car up and kicked it into the highest gear. With a whirr of its hover pad and a roar of its engines, the car levitated off the ground and zoomed off. Wilson and Geoffrey didn't mind the speed. They were used to going fast by now thanks to Sonic's famous super speed. Mandy whooped excitedly, pleased to

be using her car for the first time in a while and especially at this speed. The car zoomed out of the city gates and headed off for Adabat. Knuckles and Sally's teams boarded a hover-saucer each and they set off for their respective locations. They waved each other goodbye as they passed through New Mobotropolis's gates and headed off to the Golden Hive Colony and the Lost Jungle. Sonic's team didn't even need a vehicle. Blaze used her Sol Emeralds to warp the team over to Chun-Nan. They all disappeared in a bright flash of spiralling flames and light as the Sol Control whisked them away. That left Sora's team to board another hover saucer that was on standby. As the team got into it and started it up, they began to hover on through the city. However, something caught Sora's eye and she ground the saucer to a halt. She turned to her left and saw something moving. Moving…and groaning too. It was Tails! Sora put her hands to her mouth in alarm and Cosmo leapt out of the saucer to greet her boyfriend. Tails had been woken up by the hover-saucers and Mandy's car moving along out of New Mobotropolis and he picked himself up, stretching and massaging his temples. He was nearly knocked over as Cosmo pounced on him and hugged him tightly.

"Oh Tails! Thank goodness you're back!" cried Cosmo "We worried that you'd be missing out on our next mission!"

"Cosmo!" exclaimed Tails happily, hugging her back "So glad to be back my love! I'm sorry to announce that I couldn't find Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze. I've…"

"No worries little brother, they're back now." explained Sora "Blaze used her Sol Emeralds to get them back."

"Oh…right." murmured Tails "That's slightly disappointing…I kinda went after them for nothing. Oh well, they're back now, that's good enough for me. So what's going on now?"

"We've divided our resources to destroy the last remaining Death Egg refuelling stations." explained Cosmo "Nicole was able to decipher their locations so we're going to destroy them all. Hopefully, they'll lead us to the Death Egg itself."

"That's great!" cried Tails excitedly "So were you girls just about to

go to destroy a station?"

"We were." piped Cream "Do you wanna come with us Mr. Tails?"

"I'm sorry but I can't." said Tails sadly "You see, somebody stole the Chaos Emerald I used to travel around the multi-verse in search of Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze. I need to get it back or Knuckles will kill me for losing it!"

"Somebody stole the emerald from you?" gasped Sora "Who?"

"Some…robot pirate thing." said Tails shrugging "He called himself "Captain Metal" or something and he's out for revenge against Blaze. He looked like Metal Sonic dressed as a pirate. No really."

"Huh, and just when I thought Mobius couldn't have anything weirder than what we've seen in the past." scoffed Amy "Well what are we gonna do?"

"You girls go do your mission, I'll find the Chaos Emerald." declared Tails "I lost it, ergo I get it back."

"You're not going alone Tails." Cosmo said firmly "I'm coming with you precious."

"Cosmo please, I can manage." Tails insisted, not wanting to upset Cosmo but still being firm on how he wanted to go alone.

"No Tails. Please. Let me help." begged Cosmo, stroking Tails's whiskers soothingly "I want to be by your side if you ever need help."

"Well…OK then sweetheart." said Tails happily, kissing Cosmo on the forehead "You can come. Sora, good luck on your mission. Hope you destroy that station."

"I have Amy Rose with me. I think I'll manage." laughed Sora "Hope you find that Chaos Emerald Tails and Cosmo."

"We will." Tails insisted "And we'll make Captain Metal sorry he stole it from me."

Sora nodded and she started up the hover saucer. The hover saucer

rose up off the ground and Sora thrust the controls forward, setting the saucer off towards the city gates. Tails and Cosmo watched, hand-in-hand, as the saucer left New Mobotropolis and set off towards Megapolis. As the saucer left, Cosmo looked at Tails with concern in her eyes.

"So how will we find the Chaos Emerald?" she asked worriedly.

"I'll have to use Mobius's satellites to see if they can pinpoint a Chaos signature anywhere." suggested Tails "Nowhere on Mobius other than the tomb on Angel Island can mask a Chaos signature. Outside of Angel Island, the Chaos Emerald's a sitting target. We'll find it in no time."

Cosmo felt a twinge of excitement in her stomach as she and Tails ran off to Royal HQ to find the Chaos Emerald. There was quite a lot of events going off now on Mobius. How they would all end remained to be seen…

Meanwhile, over in Megapolis, Captain Metal had fallen out of the warp ring that had snatched him up in New Mobotropolis and he dropped down onto the floor with a heavy clang that made all his joints shudder in protest. Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox, Ravage Bloodfang and Raphael the Cyber-Husky were in the room and they were startled at the sight of Captain Metal. As he lay on the floor, wondering which way was up, they all stared at him and began wondering what he was. Scourge and Fiona looked at each other and then back at Captain Metal.

"What the hell is that?!" blurted Fiona "And how'd it get here?!"

"If you want my opinion babe, it looks like Metal Sonic cosplaying as a pirate." sniffed Scourge "He looks pretty damn silly to me. As for how it got here, I guess Dr. Warp Rings brought it here."

"Why I wonder?" mused Ravage "Does he think this thing will make a liable addition to our armada?"

"Perhaps." said Raphael, shrugging "But why would Finitevus bring

an Eggman robot? I mean, aren't Eggman's robots generally useless?"

"Not Metal Sonic dude." noted Scourge "He was able to best me AND Sonic both at once. I bet this guy, despite his silly pirate additions, is equally as powerful."

"If so then Finitevus sure is making a smart move and giving us a Metal Sonic…whatever that is." Fiona deduced.

"I'll tell you what was smart about Finitevus bringing that thing here, the fact it's got a Chaos Emerald!" Scourge cried out in astonishment.

He pointed at the floor and Fiona could see that surely enough, there was a Chaos Emerald lying near Captain Metal's hand. Scourge had to smile at the fact it was a green Chaos Emerald. Matched his fur colour. Scourge rubbed his hands greedily.

"Oh boy this is awesome! We've got a Chaos Emerald already and Finny's plan hasn't even started yet!" laughed Scourge "He'll be mighty pleased about this!"

"Given the prodigious power the emeralds seem to bestow upon the user, it is fortuitous indeed that we have a Chaos Emerald in our hands." agreed Ravage. He had see what the emeralds can do for himself. He had witnessed Scourge turning super along with Sonic, Silver and Knuckles when they fought to destroy The Eraser. He was pleased to have a Chaos Emerald in the armada's possession too.

"Well let's take it and hold onto it until Finitevus returns." said Fiona "I'm sure this tin-can pirate won't mind if we hold onto it."

She knelt down and grabbed the Chaos Emerald…and then got grabbed on the wrist by Captain Metal. Fiona screamed as Captain Metal made her drop the Chaos Emerald and he stood up to his full height, still clutching Fiona's arm. The robot pirate scowled viciously at Fiona and he aimed his cutlass blade at her arm.

"Tryin' ta steal me treasure are ye lassie?!" snarled Captain Metal

"Well I'll see to it that ye end up missing an arm fer that!"

"Let go of me you tin-plated moron!" screamed Fiona furiously, trying to get her arm free "I wasn't stealing it, I was "borrowing" it! Totally different!"

"Yeah, let Fiona go or I'll stomp on you!" growled Scourge "Nobody messes with my girl and gets away with it!"

"Yaaargh, ye can talk tharr talk green hedgehog, but can ye walk tharr walk?" asked Captain Metal coldly "Nobody threatens Captain Metal and lives to tell tharr tale! Mayhap we have a battle to settle this?"

"You're on asshole!" yelled Scourge "I'm gonna beat the metal outta ya!"

"ENOUGH!" bellowed a fierce voice that was so intimidating that the room echoed as if repeating the word in a nervous whisper all over.

Scourge remained where he was and Captain Metal released Fiona's arm. He spun around on his heel and saw that there was another person in the room. And that was Dr. Finitevus. He'd been standing by to see how Captain Metal would react to being in the parlour of some villains like the ones he had currently gathered together and also how he would react to having the Chaos Emerald taken from him. He'd been pleased with the reactions but now he had to step in to stop a fight brewing. He wanted to form an army, not form an army and have the members kill each other. Finitevus stepped out of the shadows and he stood before Captain Metal, his cloak shrouding his entire body as he kept his arms down by his sides.

"Greetings Captain Metal. It is a pleasure to meet a cutthroat villain such as yourself." purred Finitevus delightedly.

"Who in tharr name of Davy Jones are you?!" blurted Captain Metal, staring incredulously at the albino echidna.

"Indeed, know your enemy as they say." purred Finitevus "I am Dr. Finitevus, a Chaos Scientist and master planner. I am currently

formulating an army of villains to take over the world of Mobius and make it a more worthwhile place to occupy. What you see now are just some of the villains that I'm recruiting to my army."

"Yaaargh, that be a fine sea tale indeed doctorrr." said Captain Metal "But why did ye bring me down to yer hideout? Do ye wish to recruit me into tharr army?"

"I do indeed." said Finitevus delightedly "I've been thinking about having a Metal Sonic in the Dark Armada and you Captain Metal, are the lucky one to fill in that role. Not to mention, you interest me already given you seek revenge on the one called…Blaze the Cat I believe."

"Yaaargh! Ye bet I do!" snarled Captain Metal "That meddling brat has interfered in me affairs much to often! First she ended up on Solbius and ended up nearly killing me and sending me down to tharr bottom of the ocean and now she ends up on Solbius again and not only foils me plans of making tharr whole world a world of robot piracy, but she destroys me Egg O' War too! I so wanna kill that lass! Only with her death will I be satisfied at last!"

"Um...about Blaze ending up on Solbius…that's kinda my fault." said Raphael, looking guilty as he heard this "I sent her, Sonic, Sally and Silver there to try and keep them from meddling in our affairs. Sorry to have caused you such grief metal guy."

"Don't be sorry Raphael for you have just ended up giving us a worthy candidate for our armada." crooned Finitevus wickedly "If you hadn't sent those fools to Solbius, we wouldn't have ended up with Captain Metal in our hands now would we?"

"Suppose not." said Raphael, shrugging "By the way, are they still trapped on Solbius?"

"I'm afraid not." said Finitevus grimly "I had completely forgotten that Blaze had her Sol Emeralds with her and she used them to warp back here. I wonder what took her so long though, it's been a week since you sent them away…"

"A week?" mused Captain Metal "Funny, a full day hasn't passed on

Solbius yet. Anyway, ye can thank me for delaying tharr lass fer so long. I had stolen her emeralds and used them to power up me Egg O' War. But tharr fire cat has managed to get her emeralds back unfortunately…"

"And yet you managed to get a Chaos Emerald." noted Scourge "How did you get it pal?"

"A twin-tailed fox appeared on Solbius, looking fer Sonic and his friends." explained Captain Metal "He had that Chaos Emerald on him. I followed him back home as he used his Chaos Control and I stole tharr emerald from him. So if ye want it, ye will have to challenge me fer it! It be my treasure and ye can't have it!"

"You're welcome TO have it Captain Metal." purred Finitevus smoothly "It's yours. You earned it. You deserve to keep it. But I will be needing to borrow it for a while though."

"Why is that then matey?" asked Captain Metal suspiciously.

"You see, there are other villains in the world that I am hoping to recruit." explained Finitevus "And I think a Chaos Emerald will help me very much in that regard. You don't mind if I borrow the Chaos Emerald for a while do you?"

"Do ya swear on tharr oil of all robot pirates that ye will return it to me afterwards?" growled Captain Metal.

"I'm recruiting you for the Dark Armada, why would I betray my own allies?" scoffed Finitevus.

Captain Metal found himself trusting Finitevus so he handed the Chaos Emerald over to him. He was still sure he'd take the emerald and ditch him but at the same time, he had to admire Finitevus's dark personality and ambitions for the world. Maybe he could trust him after all. Finitevus took the Chaos Emerald and he stored it in a pocket in his cloak.

"Thank you." said Dr. Finitevus "Now then Captain Metal, is there a wish that the armada can grant for you? Maybe, you have a nefarious goal in mind that you want to see completed?"

"Well, I be wanting to make everything in tharr multi-verse a robot pirate." explained Captain Metal "Make myself tharr largest pirate crew one could ask for. Will ye be willing to help me accomplish that?"

"Yes…and no." said Finitevus "You see, Mobius Prime is ours for the taking and some of my comrades won't approve of your vision of the world. BUT I will allow you to roboticize at least half the population of Mobius Prime and then let you roboticize the rest of the multi-verse. We only have interest in Mobius Prime."

"That be a fair deal indeed matey." said Captain Metal gleefully "Half of Mobius Prime be just fine with me. It be better than nothing at all. Not to mention if I am to be in yer army, I should respect tharr wishes of me shipmates right?"

"Indeed." said Finitevus with a slasher smile on his face "And another promise I make to you is that you will get your revenge on Blaze. Mark my words you will have her head as a trophy to keep for your very own."

"Shiver me timbers! That be just what I be wanting!" cackled Captain Metal excitedly "Consider me part of tharr Dark Armada!"

"Good." said Finitevus, shaking Captain Metal's hand "If you like, I'll even try to locate Blaze for you so that you may kill her."

"That be very nice of you matey!" said Captain Metal happily.

Finitevus nodded and he sat down on the old computer that he had been using to formulate his big plan, "Operation: Enerjak Reborn". He booted the computer up and began taping on it. Unbeknownst to the Royal Fighters, in the week of Sonic's absence, he had sneaked a miniature drone up into space and had attached it onto one of Mobius's satellites. The drone allowed him to take control of the satellite and he was now using it to find Blaze the Cat for Captain Metal. It took him a long time to finally locate Blaze for Mobius was a big planet and Blaze could be anywhere on the planet. But he'd found her at last. He saw her trekking through the bamboo forests of Chun-Nan with Sonic, Silver and Ruben following her closely behind. Finitevus had a feeling he knew why they were in Chun-

Nan. He knew where all the Death Egg refuelling stations were being built and Chun-Nan was one of the places that had been chosen. They were obviously there to destroy the tower. Finitevus turned around and faced Captain Metal.

"Blaze is in a country called Chun-Nan." he explained "She has Sonic, Silver and a Royal Fighter named Ruben the Water Panther with her. Unless you're water proof, I'd avoid fighting with Ruben since he has water powers."

"I be waterproof so that water panther won't harm me." gloated Captain Metal "Did ye honestly think that a steel scallywag such as myself wouldn't be waterproof considering I be sailing across tharr water on a regular basis?"

"Point taken." said Finitevus bluntly "Now stand still. I'll use a warp ring to take you over to Chun-Nan. You may keep hold of the warp ring so that once you kill Blaze, you can use it to return home. When using the warp ring, you have to visualize the place you want to go to and then flick it into the air. It'll open up a portal for you and you'll be able to go wherever you visualize."

"So to use tharr warp ring to come back here, I just got to think of this place?" asked Captain Metal "Very well then matey. I can do that. I promise ye that I will return with Blaze's head on tharr end of me blade!"

"Very good." purred Finitevus "Blaze will be one less hero to worry about when the Dark Armada rises. Good luck Captain."

He flicked a warp ring up into the air and opened up a portal to Chun-Nan. Captain Metal stepped through the warp ring and transported from the lab in Megapolis to Chun-Nan. Blaze would certainly be in for a nasty surprise when she realized that Captain Metal was back to try and kill her again. The warp ring vanished as he passed through it. It would now be Captain Metal's to use whenever he so desired and Finitevus wondered if Metal would use it against Blaze in anyway in the forthcoming battle between him and her. After Captain Metal vanished, Finitevus turned around to face his comrades.

"So…now what?" asked Scourge "We just sit around and wait for Captain Metal to come back?"

"You sit around and wait for Captain Metal to come back." ordered Finitevus "I on the other hand will be going out to find Team Diamond. The Chaos Emerald will be the perfect bait to lure them into the armada. They'll join instantly when they see what treasure we have for them."

"So you're going to get Team Diamond then?" asked Fiona "And then you'll recruit all the other villains you want as well?"

"After *The Nefarious* is complete, I shall formulate the rest of the armada." explained Finitevus "And fortuitously enough, the ship's nearly complete so we won't be waiting long. With a Chaos Emerald, I'll easily be able to break out the incarcerated villains and find Cutthroat Jim. A simple Chaos Control will make breaking and entering the prisons holding Sycorax, Conquering Storm and Zira easy as pie. For Cutthroat Jim, I can just warp onto CocoIsland and find him. I just hope the fact he is a pirate doesn't cause any tension between him and Captain Metal…" he muttered to himself more than anybody.

"I think we should expect that to happen at some point." sighed Fiona "Or we can just reprogram Captain Metal to play nice with Cutthroat Jim if they become enemies. Easy as that."

"Indeed child." agreed Finitevus "Now then, see to it that *The Nefarious* gets finished while I'm away. Once I return, give me a status report on the ship. If it's ready, we take flight. If not, then I'll see if I can help speed up the finishing touches."

"Sounds good doc." said Scourge "I can't wait till we FINALLY make our move and stop hiding from everybody. I'm so freaking bored of this!"

"Your patience will have to hold out for as long as I deem necessary." said Finitevus coldly "If you get impatient Scourge then that's your problem to deal with."

Scourge rolled his eyes but said nothing more.

"So what happens when *The Nefarious* takes flight and we recruit everybody else?" asked Raphael.

"We then wait for the Death Egg to rise…so that I may take it down myself." purred Finitevus "Although the fact we have a Chaos Emerald…gives me more ideas. Maybe I can use this Chaos Emerald to locate the other seven the heroes have. And I could also steal the Master Emerald too. That and the eight Chaos Emeralds are vital to our plan. We need their unique properties in order to be able to artificially create hundreds of other Chaos Emeralds necessary for the plan."

"Finitevus, it's no wonder I'm glad to be recruited by you." said Scourge happily "I'd love to go super once again and kick everybody's ass!"

"The emeralds are for me to use." said Finitevus sternly "I will decide whether you use them to go super or not. But don't worry, I'll easily grant you that opportunity. And without Chaos Emeralds, Sonic and friends will not be able to turn super themselves and fight back. True Blaze has her Sol Emeralds but Captain Metal's gone to get rid of her. No worries about her becoming Burning Blaze and trying to fight back."

"You bet!" Scourge crooned wickedly, his face twisted into a smile that only a troll could ever think looked nice at all.

"Now then, I bid you farewell." said Finitevus "I'll be back as soon as possible."

The other villains waved goodbye as Finitevus used a Chaos Control to teleport out of his lab and outside in the world to look for Team Diamond. He already knew a good place to start looking… Megapolis. They had been nosing around Megapolis, looking in the GoldenCaverns for treasure and he wondered if they would be there again. If not, he would just have to look for them. A team of treasure hunters wouldn't be all that hard to find. As for the turncoat Roxy the Raccoon, he had the perfect way of forcing her back into the team and he knew that Lennox Meers, the team leader, would approve of his methods…

Meanwhile, Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey had finally arrived at Adabat. It had been a long drive, even at the great speed Mandy was driving at, but they made it at last. Wilson and Mandy were instantly met with pleasant memories of fun on the beach and a grand day out that they had had when they came here to spend their honeymoon. It was a shame that their holiday had been forcibly cut short after a bunch of mice-hating rats had spoilt the mood for Mandy but they still had pleasant memories of their short time in Adabat. Geoffrey however was reminded very much of when he and Bunnie had been here for a day off and instead, fought for their lives against Ravage Bloodfang.** Geoffrey prayed that they wouldn't see Ravage here while they were on their mission. They didn't have time to fight with him after all. Mandy parked her car and the Royal Fighters got out of it, instantly feeling the intense heat of Adabat's sun beating down on them. The sun was starting to set for Adabat was a few hours ahead of Mobotropolis and while it was late afternoon for them, it was beginning to dusk here in Adabat. Mandy could hardly keep her eyes off the beautiful mixture of orange and yellow the sky was turning as the sun started to dip down behind the horizon. Adabat still looked fabulous to her, even in a sunset.

"Man I could get used to a place like this." she sighed contently "So beautiful…I'd like to have a holiday here again someday."

"I'll be sure to arrange that for us sweetie." said Wilson kindly "For now, we've got a mission to do."

"I hope that when we finally bring Eggman down, we'll get time to enjoy the views that Mobius has on offer as opposed to just fighting for our lives all the bloomin' time." muttered Geoffrey "I don't half miss the good old days before this war started."

"We do as well." said Mandy sadly "But that's what we're fighting for. Our freedom and our peace. With Eggman gone, we'll have those back at long last and I look forward SO much to that day."

"Me too." added Wilson "So any thoughts on where this tower might be?"

"Well I can see a rather conspicuous looking building standing in the

middle of the local village." Geoffrey observed, pointing ahead of him "You don't think that building could possibly be a refuelling station at all?"

Wilson and Mandy looked in Geoffrey's direction and they could see that there was indeed a rather tall building standing proudly in the centre of the village. It looked hideous and woefully out of place in a village of rather rustic looking houses and houses on stilts that stood above the waters surrounding the island. Hi-tech facilities and low-tech facilities don't mix together well at all. Wilson and Mandy were so surprised at how much the building stood out to them that they were amazed they didn't immediately notice it upon arrival. Mandy frowned at herself for being so unobservant.

"Oh yeah, that's definitely our target." muttered Mandy "Eggman's as subtle as a motorway accident in the middle of the night. That tower's pretty much screaming at us "Hi! I'm your target! Please destroy me!" does that fat idiot put ANY effort into his schemes anymore?!"

"I dunno but I'm glad he's being so careless now. It makes our job easier for us." chuckled Wilson.

"I dunno you two but I think Eggman's making this a little TOO easy for my tastes..." murmured Geoffrey "Maybe this is a trap. We'll have to be careful."

"Geoffrey, Tails gave me knuckle attachments that can punch through anything. No trap will be too great for me." boasted Mandy "Eggman and try all he likes. I'll just punch my way out of any trap he springs at us!"

"I can see why you married this girl." snickered Geoffrey, nudging Wilson in the shoulder playfully.

Wilson winked back at him, agreeing with Geoffrey on what he said.

"Well then, let's go and bring down that station." said Wilson "You know, I wonder if Team Adabat's around? They could give us a hand or two."

"With any luck, they're already at it and we're here to finish the job." suggested Mandy.

With that said, she set off towards the village with Wilson and Geoffrey following her closely. Mandy was right. Team Adabat were already at the station. But they weren't bringing it down. As the trio would soon discover, this mission would end up turning into a rescue as well for Team Adabat had been captured by Eggman's forces guarding the station. And now they were being held hostage for any possible attack that would be launched on the station...

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 20: Honeymoons and Rats***

****See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 4: Trouble in Ada bat***

Well, the Royal Fighters have made their moves and now the pieces are coming together. Will they all succeed in their missions? Or will they all end in disaster?

Find out as Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey have to save Adabat from peril...

Meanwhile, tune into Tales from Mobius and see what happens as Roxy the Raccoon ends up on the run while Tails and Cosmo search for the stolen Chaos Emerald and Sora's team makes its move in destroying a refuelling station...

P.S., this WAS going to be the first part of "Adabat in Peril" but the way this turned out made me change my mind. I'm spending more time moving the pieces of the story into place so it didn't feel right calling this "Adabat in Peril Part 1" so I changed the name. The next chapter WILL be called "Adabat in Peril". Promise.

Adabat in Peril

Story 189: Adabat in Peril

Countdown to Death Egg: 6

The Adabat Death Egg refuelling station stood out like a sore thumb that also had accompanying blusters and scabs from previous cuts it had gained over time. The Death Egg refuelling station that was now occupying the centre of Adabat's village was truly out of place in such a rustic looking village that occupied the space around the station. The station was a tall red and black tower with bits of gold in places, the usual colours of Dr. Eggman. It was often said that people make things in their own image as an extension of their own ego and Dr. Eggman was no exception to this at all. The refuelling station was a huge tower that had an astonishing resemblance to the Eiffel Tower, a landmark in Paris, France that Eggman remembered all to well from his time on Earth before his exile. He thought the Eiffel Tower's complex design of criss-crossed steel girders and its great height would make a fine design for a Death Egg refuelling station. Behind the tower was a huge landing pad for the Death Egg itself and there were pipes snaking from the station to the pad that would connect to the Death Egg when it landed there to refuel. Not that it needed them since the Death Egg didn't actually need the refuelling stations. They were fake after all. The station had gun turrets on both sides and they were ready to shoot at whatever dared to come near it and attempt to destroy it. There were many Egg-Pawn guards on patrol to keep the tower defended and there was a rather large box-shaped vehicle with tank treads on standby. Presumably, something was inside it. It was perhaps a storage vehicle of some kind that was meant to carry supplies and escort the guards to and from the station. Whatever it was, it served some kind of purpose to the station. The guards marched around the station, occasionally glancing up at something before resuming their patrol. They had a reason to glance up occasionally though for they had something hanging from underneath the tower's base, which was supported by four enormous legs that stored a lot of fuel and oil in them akin to those of an oil rig. There were prisoners of the Egg-

Pawns that guarded the station. The four prisoners were Team Adabat: Scott the Lynx, Jessica the Cougar, Taran the Lynx and Felix the Peacock. The four had actually tried to take down the refuelling station but they had been captured due to the overwhelming forces they were dealt with and a secret weapon that the guards had. Now they were chained up and dangling under the base of the tower by chains wrapped around their wrists. Team Adabat all winced in agony as the chains squeezed around their wrists and held their arms aloft. They all felt like their arms were going to suddenly break away from their bodies given the strain put on them. They had tried to break free but when you're strung up by your wrists and left dangling, escape isn't exactly easy and Scott and Jessica's powers weren't enough to break the chains. They could only dangle helplessly as the guards patrolled the area and made sure they didn't get away. Team Adabat were being kept prisoner and there was presumably a good reason for this. Eggman had suspected that the Royal Fighters would try and attack the refuelling station so he wanted Team Adabat to be held hostage to make Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends back off. Plus, he wanted Team Adabat to be roboticized when the Death Egg launched so he didn't want them killed yet. That was one bit of good news for Team Adabat, they were being kept alive. That meant they had a chance to break free. They just needed a good plan for it. Fighting the pain in his arms, Scott looked over at Jessica. The cougar looked to be in agony as she was held aloft by her arms. She clearly wasn't used to being in this position.

"Ungh…duh…my arms are so killing me!" moaned Jessica "Why did they have to chain us up like this?!"

"Eggman's a sadist, what other reason does he need?" muttered Scott "I can't tell you how much this hurts too. And how vulnerable I feel in this position too."

"Yeah, the guards can do what they like to us and with our arms held aloft like this, we're powerless to stop them." sighed Jessica, looking up at her arms "So any ideas how we're going to get out of this mess?"

"I'm afraid I have been unable to conjure up a plan good enough to get us out of this." said Felix sadly.

"I haven't been successful either." muttered Taran, looking down at the ground below them "I dunno how to get out of this either."

"It would be so nice if one of us had a cutting weapon or something." grumbled Scott "We could slice the chains to pieces and get free."

"But we don't have one so we'll have to deal with it." sighed Jessica "Our energy powers are no good either. We can't fire energy spears when we can't use our arms and the chains are heatproof."

"Eggman certainly put his mind into our capture didn't he?" murmured Felix "We're literally in an inescapable situation here."

"I hope one of the other Royal Fighter groups comes along to give us a hand." said Taran grimly "We could sure use one."

"I sure would love it if Sonic showed up out of nowhere and decided to save us." said Scott hopefully "But that's just wishful thinking. He might be too occupied with something else to bother about us…"

"Maybe so but it never hurts to hope." said Jessica "It's better than admitting defeat, something that Eggman won't get the pleasure of seeing me do."

"Same here." said Scott "I'd sooner let Ravage eat me alive than admit defeat to Eggman."

"We're of the same opinion as you Scott." added Felix "Eggman may have us chained, but he will not bring down our hopes for a rescue. I just verily hope that it comes soon."

"Right now would be even better." moaned Taran "If I hang about like this any longer, my arms will go numb for life!"

Moan as much as he liked, Taran knew that there was nothing he could do about his position. Just hang about and hope for a miracle. Team Adabat fell silent as they watched the Egg-Pawns patrolling around the station like some Indian tripe dancing around a campfire. The Egg-Pawns glanced up for the billionth time just to make sure their prisoners were still imprisoned and weren't trying to escape. Team Adabat just ignored them. They didn't think the guards were much to bother about. They just wanted to escape or at the most,

get rescued so that was all they thought about.

And it seemed help would come sooner than either member could have anticipated. Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse and Geoffrey St. John had come to Adabat to destroy the Adabat Refuelling Station. They had chosen to come to Adabat in particular for the three each had fond memories of the country and wanted to set foot in it again. Given how conspicuous the station looked, Geoffrey had literally spotted it immediately and the trio was now making its way over to the station. They came across a wooden house and opened the door, surprised to find that the house was empty. They ran into the house and ran over to a window that gave them a perfect view of the refuelling station outside. The trio knelt down by the window and they stared at the station, amazed at the height and size of their target. They knew it was tall due to how easily spotted it was but as with any building, it always looked taller when you was actually close to it. Wilson and Mandy took note of the Egg-Pawns patrolling the area and wondered on what to do.

"That's one big station…and there's a lot of guards about." said Wilson, a clear tone of worry in his voice "Any ideas on how we carry this destruction mission out?"

"Simple, we smash the guards and I'll punch the legs to bits." declared Mandy "My knuckle attachments will make easy work of that. And Geoffrey can add some additional destruction with his exploding darts."

"Indeed love." said Geoffrey brightly "Me arm-mounted crossbow would be all too happy to destroy that station. Look how hideous it is! It clashes horribly with the village of Adabat! It has no place here!"

"Not to mention so of Adabat's lush environment would have been flattened to make that thing." muttered Mandy "That station deserves to be destroyed."

"Uh you two, we might have a problem." hissed Wilson "It appears the guards have hostages."

Mandy and Geoffrey looked in Wilson's location and they could see

that Wilson had noticed something they hadn't. They saw Team Adabat chained up and dangling under the station while Egg-Pawns patrolled around the area beneath them. Mandy gasped and Geoffrey stared incredulously. The two were shocked to see that Team Adabat had gotten there before them and had somehow gotten captured by the Egg-Pawns. Team Adabat's imprisonment only complicated things for the trio. They had come here to destroy a Death Egg refuelling station, now they were here to destroy the station and rescue some captured Royal Fighters. They would have to save Team Adabat before they could destroy the station.

"No! Team Adabat have been caught?!" cried Mandy.

"That's impossible! Scott and Jessica have incredible powers and are great fighters! How the bloody hell did they get captured by mere Egg-Pawns?!" cried Geoffrey in astonishment.

"I guess Team Adabat were unlucky." said Wilson, shrugging "We need to rescue them. We'll only get them killed if we destroy the station without saving them."

"I agree on that my handsome hound." said Mandy grimly, her face a cold glare as she stared venomously at the Egg-Pawns "Change of plan, we kick the guard's asses, save Team Adabat and then we destroy the station."

"I can save them easily enough." said Wilson with a smile on his face "I'll just throw my spinning blade at their chains and cut them to pieces."

"If the chains are too strong for your blade, I'll just shoot some darts at the top of their chains and blow them out of their sockets." put in Geoffrey "Either way, they're definitely as good as rescued now we're here."

"And when they get free, maybe they could help us destroy the station." suggested Mandy "Many hands make light work as they say."

"Indeed." said Wilson "So it appears we have a plan on our hands. Let's put it into action shall we?"

"Hold on you two, what do you think that thing is?" asked Geoffrey, pointing at something from the corner of the window.

Wilson and Mandy looked in Geoffrey's direction and they saw that he had noticed something. He'd spotted the black box-shaped vehicle with tank treads that was standing nearby the station. The married couple looked at the vehicle with wonderment.

"What is that?" mused Mandy "Is it hiding something in there?"

"Maybe so." murmured Geoffrey "We should keep an eye on that. It could just be a storage vehicle but when it comes to Dr. Eggman, you just can't be too certain. It's always wise to be cautious around him."

"Indeed." agreed Mandy "We'll see what that thing is when we get to the station. Come on boys, let's save Team Adabat and destroy that station!"

Without waiting to be asked twice, Wilson and Geoffrey leapt up onto their feet just as Mandy did so and the trio ran out of the empty house to ambush the refuelling station. They ran towards the station, their footsteps catching the attention of the Egg-Pawns and springing them into action faster than anyone could blink. The Egg-Pawns readied the laser rifles that they were armed with and they began shooting at Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey. The trio dived for cover as they were shot at and Wilson retaliated by throwing the two spinning blades he had at the Egg-Pawns. The Egg-Pawns stood no chance. They were sliced to pieces the moment the blades hit them. It was like an axe through wood to them. Team Adabat watched excitedly as the Egg-Pawns were quickly taken out by Wilson's spinning blades. The two blades returned to Wilson's hands after they had finished their jobs. There were some Egg-Pawns that were lucky to have avoided getting chopped to pieces but that was hardly anything to be happy about for Mandy just charged at the Egg-Pawns and punched them to smithereens with her specialized knuckle attachments. It was just like punching through a crumbling brick wall for Mandy. The mouse laughed mockingly at the destroyed Egg-Pawns and she looked around to see if they had taken down all the guards. The guards had been taken down but there was another danger that they had to avoid. The station's gun

turrets picked up the fact that there was an intruder in the area and they lowered down at Wilson and Mandy. Geoffrey stepped in with his arm-mounted crossbow to fire exploding darts at the guns before they could fire. The darts embedded themselves into the turrets and Geoffrey set them off to blow with a push of a button on his crossbow. The darts exploded, taking the gun turrets with them as the explosion tore them apart. The gun turrets collapsed onto the ground in pieces, unable to serve their purpose anymore. Pleased with himself, Geoffrey turned to Wilson and Mandy.

"Well that wasn't too hard." he said happily "Looks like we're in for an easy time right now."

"Lucky for us I guess." said Mandy brightly.

"Hey guys, you sure showed up at the right time!" cried Scott happily.

"We were beginning to wonder if anybody was going to save us!" exclaimed Jessica excitedly "Thank goodness you're here!"

Taran and Felix showed all their excitement in just their facial expressions. They literally didn't need to say anything, their faces said all that needed saying. Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey looked up at Team Adabat, pleased to see how happy the team was to see them here now.

"Thank goodness indeed." agreed Geoffrey "You four look like you need some help."

"Yeah, we spotted this tower thing being built the other day and just an hour ago, we tried to destroy it." explained Scott "But then the guards unleashed some kind of secret weapon they had and… needless to say it got us captured." he grumbled, looking up at his chained hands.

"Secret weapon?" asked Mandy quizzically "What secret weapon?"

"Some kind of huge silver robot with blades on its back." answered Jessica "It's hiding in that black box-shaped vehicle over there."

She raised a leg to point at the vehicle since she couldn't user her

arms. The trio looked over at the vehicle and understood what Jessica was talking about. They had wondered just moments ago what it was. Now they knew.

"So there IS something hiding in there!" cried Mandy, snapping her fingers "Well hopefully, since the Egg-Pawns are all dead now, they can't call for it. It'll be stuck in there without somebody to call for it."

"Just to be sure, I think we should destroy it." said Geoffrey "Can't be too careful you know. Wilson, you get Team Adabat free while I blow up that storage vehicle."

"Will do Geoffrey." said Wilson "And a good thing too, Team Adabat look to be in great discomfort. Poor kids…"

Team Adabat didn't even need to reply to his comment. Nothing needed to be said about their situation now. Wilson aimed his left arm, which had the gauntlet that launched a spinning blade on, at Team Adabat's chains. Before he could launch the blade at the chains and free the team though, the vehicle suddenly split open down the middle. Geoffrey had only stepped two paces towards the vehicle and suddenly it had activated. Geoffrey wondered for a brief moment if he'd accidentally activated the vehicle but he soon realized that there was nothing in sight and he hadn't stepped on anything so he couldn't have made the vehicle open as he stepped towards it. Maybe the vehicle just had a sensor array and it had senses Geoffrey as he came near the vehicle. Whatever the activation was, it had happened and now the vehicle was opening up. Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey watched as the vehicle opened and the thing it was concealing began to rise up from within. The vehicle had been hiding a Silver Sonic robot. Wilson and Mandy had fought with one before and had barely escaped with their lives. Now they were facing yet another Silver Sonic but this one was a little different to the other models that had preceded it. It was slightly larger than the previous Silver Sonics, about a foot taller in height and it had black arm gauntlets that had some kind of feature on them. This Silver Sonic also differed greatly from the others thanks to one fundamental feature that would make it a deadly opponent for any Royal Fighter…it had an intelligent mind. After Silver Sonic had been tricked into destroying Eggman's flagship during the Egg Fleet's attack on New Mobotropolis on its opening ceremony,

Eggman had decided that in order to prevent Silver Sonic from accidentally destroying the refuelling station, he should install some intelligence into the robot. It wasn't as smart as Alonzo, Katherine or the first Metal Sonic but it was smarter than its previous models at least. Collateral damage would be something it would avoid now it had a sense of environmental awareness. This model was simply known as Silver Sonic Mk II. Silver Sonic Mk II glowered down at its victims with fiery orange optics and it prepared to jump into battle. Wilson clutched Mandy in fear whereas Mandy looked a little nervous but not quite as much as Wilson. Geoffrey stood back, trying not to look intimidated but he failed miserably.

"Th-th-that's the s-s-secret w-weapon the g-guards u-used on us!" stammered Taran.

"Take great caution in the battle my friends!" hollered Felix "It is a most onerous opponent! It is fast, intelligent and its arm gauntlets have an array of weaponry that will most certainly kill you if you are not careful!"

"I gathered as such!" whimpered Wilson "We've fought a Silver Sonic before but this one looks kinda new…I bet it's much better than the previous model."

"Guys, I think our job just got harder…" said Mandy with a gulp "Prepare to unleash all you've got on that thing!"

Geoffrey and Wilson nodded as Silver Sonic Mk II advanced on the trio menacingly, emitting a mechanical screechy roar from its vocal processor. Its arm gauntlets crackled with purple electricity. It was building up an attack and the heroes would see soon what it was. Silver Sonic Mk II held its arms out and it aimed the electrical bolts at the heroes. The bolts fired like a lightening storm towards Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey…

Roxy the Raccoon struggled violently in her restraints and tried as desperately as she could to cry for help. The most she could manage though was a loud, muffled shriek and her struggling was ultimately futile. Roxy had been on the run from Team Diamond after

they had found out they had been tricked and that she was actually still alive and had turned traitor. She'd turn into Tails the Fox and Cosmo the Seedrian and asked for protection, as well as the chance to join the Royal Fighters Service since she would be safer with them rather than on her own. While the protection had been good and Roxy had actually managed to shoot Lennox Meers in the knee and cripple him, Dr. Finitevus had come onto the scene and had kidnapped her along with Lennox, Owen and Alistair with the aid of his warp rings*. While Lennox, Owen and Alistair were just sitting in the corner of the room, wondering what was going on, Roxy had been laid down on an operating table and fastened to it via belts around her wrists and ankles. The belts were tough and they held firm. Roxy struggled as much as she could to break free but the thick leather of the belts refused to give way. She was trapped. And just to stop her from screaming for help every five minutes like any captive would, Finitevus had taped her mouth shut with a silver strip of duct tape. Now all Roxy could do was struggle violently and emit muffled screams as she tried to break free. She refused to give up despite the fact she couldn't break free and struggled as much as she possibly could. Finitevus watched her, bewildered at the fact Roxy wasn't willing to give up her pitiful struggling. He put a hand on the raccoon's throat and stopped her from squirming. He glowered ominously into the raccoon's terrified eyes. Roxy had never seen anybody who looked so scary in all her life. Finitevus was beyond anything she'd seen before, especially with the black and gold eyes that just screamed "Unnatural" to her.

"Struggle all you want you ignorant girl, you're just tiring yourself out." sneered Finitevus "Those belts could hold the Team Diamond muscle member Owen Pounder so what chance do you have of breaking free?"

Roxy tried to say something but the tape across her mouth prevented that from happening. She just mumbled a few muffled words that sounded like she was trying to say "Let me go at once you black eyed freak!". Finitevus didn't understand what she'd tried to say but he didn't respond to it. He carried on as if Roxy hadn't said anything.

"I know all about you Roxy my dear." purred Finitevus sinisterly "In

fact, I know ALL about you and your team mates. I even know about your abhorrent heel-turn. Seriously, you wanted to give up a cruel and dark lifestyle like what Team Diamond led? Utterly disgraceful. You disappoint me my child…"

Roxy shivered as Finitevus put a hand as cold as ice on her face and ran it down her side. The echidna continued.

"You have potential to be a great villainess. You already displayed that by crippling your own team leader." he said, pointing at Lennox who was still clutching his injured knee in agony "And yet you wasted all that just to be a disgusting do-gooder? You shame the villain name Roxy and for that you must be punished."

Roxy angrily protested but again, the tape prevented her from spitting the words out. Finitevus promptly back-handed her across the face to make her shut-up. Roxy moaned a pained, muffled moan as she was hit.

"And by punished, I mean you will have to be forced back into villainy." explained Finitevus "But before I do that, I have to talk to your team mates."

He turned away from Roxy and wandered over to the curious Team Diamond. They only sat where they were and watched him in wonderment as he approached them in a manner far too casual for somebody who had just kidnapped them. He was acting more like an old friend of theirs than a kidnapper, something that Lennox was a little crept out by. Finitevus certainly seemed like a sinister figure and he had no idea what to expect with him. Finitevus stood before Lennox, Owen and Alistair and he smiled a friendly smile at them. Strange considering the three had never met Finitevus before. They kept their guard up and waited to see what would happen next.

"Greetings Team Diamond." said Finitevus smoothly, his voice displaying no hostility towards the three boys at all "I am Dr. Finitevus and it is my utmost pleasure to meet such renowned villains such as yourselves. It's quite an honour to meet you, it really is."

He finished his sentence with a bow as if he was addressing royalty

and not just three mangy treasure-hunters. Lennox, Owen and Alistair were obfuscated. They had no idea what was up with Finitevus. He went and kidnapped them and now he's acting like he's a big fan of them?! They'd seen many weird things in their lives…but nothing as strange as this! Cautiously, Lennox looked at Finitevus.

"Alright you albino-furred freak, what's the big idea?" snarled Lennox "You kidnapped us and now you're treating us as if we're your guests! Explain yourself!"

"Watch your tone Lennox, that'll give Roxy over there a bad example of how to behave in front of me." Finitevus said in a voice harder than steel and colder than ice "I did not kidnap you three at all, I merely invited you over to meet me and it's an invitation you cannot refuse."

"Oh yeah?" scoffed Owen, folding his arms "How about I just crush your skull and leave this place?"

"You wouldn't want to do that Owen." said Finitevus darkly "Unless of course you fancy the idea of being curb-stomped into the floor…"

Owen seemed to take that as an offence but Lennox and Alistair held him down before he could try to attack Finitevus.

"How do you know our names?" asked Alistair.

"Research is a very good friend of mine." purred Finitevus, tapping his brainy head to emphasize his point "I've researched all I can about you four. I know your names, I know your occupations and I know of your…encounters with Sonic the Hedgehog. It's also no secret that you once used the Key of Opulence to a disastrous result and nearly turned the whole of Mobius into gold. And of course, I know all about your raccoon friend's betrayal and just for you, I'm going to put her back in her place."

"You're going to force Roxy back into the team?" asked Lennox "Why? Why do this for us?"

"We don't even know you!" blurted Owen "And you're not giving us a

reason why we should buy all this!"

"Then allow me to explain myself." said Finitevus impatiently "I am formulating an army of villains which all have one goal in mind…to eliminate Sonic the Hedgehog, his pathetic Royal Fighters and to take over the whole of Mobius and make it a world worth living in. It's pathetic as it is now but the Dark Armada will see to improving it. And I am inviting you all to join me in my cause. We could use treasure-hunters such as yourselves in our cause."

"Give us a reason why we should join you!" growled Owen.

"If you join the Dark Armada, you will find treasures beyond anything you've ever known before…"

Finitevus reached into his cloak and he unveiled the green Chaos Emerald that Captain Metal had stolen from Tails earlier. The team gasped in wonder at the glowing green emerald. They had never seen a treasure like this before. This was definitely a sight to behold and the treasure-hunters in them practically screamed for possession of the emerald.

"W-w-wow…" stammered Lennox "That's the most beautiful gem I've ever seen…what is it?"

"It is a Chaos Emerald Lennox." explained Finitevus "There are eight of these gems and one of them just conveniently happened to fall into my hands. If you join my cause, I'll find the other seven for you and you will be allowed to keep them. There's even a Master Emerald on AngelIsland and it is twice the size of an ordinary Chaos Emerald. Join the Dark Armada and you will be handsomely rewarded with the Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald."

"Good deal…" mused Alistair "And I say we should take it."

"I agree." said Lennox "H.U.N.T. specializes in treasure and treasure is what we hunt for. But how do we know you'll honour your agreement?"

Finitevus just promptly handed Lennox the green Chaos Emerald. The meerkat was surprised at the fact Finitevus had just given it to

him free-handedly like that. That had never happened to him before. Finitevus smiled darkly.

"That one is for you to keep as a little token of my sincerity." crooned Finitevus "And I promise you the other seven and the Master Emerald too. But only if you join my cause. If you join the armada, you will have as much treasure as you can handle and you'll even get revenge on Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends too. This is an offer you cannot pass up."

"It seems so." said Lennox, grateful for the gift Finitevus had bestowed for him "And we accept. Team Diamond will join your armada."

"Thank you very much indeed." said Finitevus, shaking Lennox's hand "But be warned, I will not tolerate betrayals of any kind. Double-cross me, you will live to regret it." his voice was like that of a poisoned dart.

"Dude, why would we WANT to double-cross you after your generous offer?" asked Owen indignantly "This is the nicest thing anyone's ever offered us! We'll be grateful to you for this!"

"See to it that you are." warned Finitevus "After all, Roxy betrayed you so you know what it feels like to be betrayed."

"Indeed." muttered Lennox "So, you said you're going to force Roxy back onto the team? How?"

"You really do not want to know…" Finitevus's face was twisted into a devil's smirk. To be honest, even the devil himself would have whimpered at that smile.

"Try us. We're tough guys!" bragged Owen "We'll handle it!"

"Don't say I didn't warn you…" cackled Finitevus, swishing his cape as he turned around and walked back over to Roxy.

The raccoon had listened to the whole conversation and was horrified at the fact Team Diamond had agreed to join Finitevus and his sinister army. What was worse was that Finitevus was going to force her back into the team and she did not want to know how he

was going to accomplish that. Finitevus approached Roxy and reached into his cloak. He pulled out a long sedation needle and he jabbed it into Roxy's arm. The raccoon squirmed and writhed around frantically but the needle had been inserted into her skin and the sedation drug kicked in almost immediately. Roxy's eyes rolled into the back of her head and she fell into a sedated slumber. Just perfect for what Finitevus had in mind. Finitevus checked to see if Roxy was fully sedated before proceeding onto Phase 2. He took out a scalpel and a specialist drill that a brain surgeon would likely use. He also had a silver disc shaped object that was no thicker than a penny and had a red light on it.

"Let's see Roxy betray us now once she realizes that a simple voice command from either of us can blow her head off…" purred Finitevus.

He raised the scalpel and prepared to cut, aiming directly at the top of Roxy's scalp. Lennox, Owen and Alistair just watched, completely silent and scarcely daring to breathe as Finitevus stuck the scalpel into the skin of Roxy's scalp and slowly began to cut open Roxy's head…

Mandy threw herself down onto the ground as a purple jolt of electricity surged directly over her head, missing her by millimetres. Silver Sonic Mk II aimed his other arm at Mandy and fired another jolt of electricity to which Mandy narrowly dodged again although she did actually feel the jolt pass by her as she moved out of the way. Silver Sonic Mk II currently had the Royal Fighters on the ropes. Its electrical attacks were deadly and powerful and Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey were not at all interested in seeing what would happen if the attack actually hit them. Team Adabat had given them some warning in advance that the electrical attacks would knock them out instantly if they were hit, explaining how they had managed to get captured in the first place. Thus, the trio was determined not to get hit by Silver Sonic Mk II. Mandy ran towards Silver Sonic Mk II and she threw a punch at him. But Silver Sonic Mk II raised its leg and caused Mandy to accidentally throw herself over onto her face. Silver Sonic Mk II was then about to bring its foot down on Mandy and crush her but Wilson threw his spinning blade at the monstrous

robot and hit it just above the foot. This caused Silver Sonic Mk II's leg to go backwards and land down away from Mandy. Mandy picked herself up and punched Silver Sonic Mk II in the shin. The heavily armoured robot withstood the punch but Mandy had left some damage on it. Her metal knuckle attachments had left a huge dent in the robot's shin. Silver Sonic Mk II glowered down at its dented shin, showing no signs of pain despite the damage. It looked more annoyed than hurt. It glared at Mandy and raised its foot, hoping to squash her this time. Mandy ran out of the way just as Silver Sonic Mk II's foot came crashing down on the ground. Geoffrey fired an explosive dart at Silver Sonic Mk II but much to his horror, the dart ricocheted off of Silver Sonic Mk II's tough armour! Eggman had taken in Geoffrey's exploding darts when designing this new Silver Sonic model and had made it so the armour would be took thick for the darts to stab into the robot and then blow up. Geoffrey cursed to himself, angered to see that his weapon was useless in this fight. He ran for cover as Silver Sonic Mk II clawed at him. He narrowly caught Geoffrey by the fur on his tail. Geoffrey rolled across the floor and under Silver Sonic Mk II's storage vehicle. Silver Sonic Mk II saw where he was hiding and he picked up the heavy, tank-treaded vehicle as if it weighed nothing to the giant robot. Geoffrey was gobsmacked at how strong Silver Sonic Mk II was and he had to run for it as Silver Sonic Mk II brought the vehicle crashing down onto the ground, smashing it to pieces as it happened. Mandy ran up behind Silver Sonic and punched it in the back of its leg, leaving a terrible dent in it and making Silver Sonic Mk II flinch as if that punch did hurt him that time. That was because Mandy had punched it on the same leg she'd punched earlier. So now its left leg was dented on both sides. It was still functional but it was dented heavily on both sides so Silver Sonic Mk II ended up with a slight limp. Growling a mechanical growl of fury, Silver Sonic Mk II swatted down at Mandy as if trying top swat a fly. Mandy threw herself to the side and out of Silver Sonic Mk II's way, leaving him to slam down onto empty ground. Mandy ran over to the Death Egg refuelling station, hoping that Silver Sonic Mk II would follow her and cause damage to the station just trying to get her. Unfortunately for her, this model had environmental awareness as mentioned earlier so despite following Mandy, it immediately stopped once it got up to the refuelling station. It got down on its knees so as not to hurt Team Adabat for they dangled just inches above it, and it reached out for

Mandy. Mandy punched down on its hand, making it screech in pain and raise up, the blades on the back of its head stabbing into the underbelly of the tower's base above. Team Adabat felt their chains shudder as Silver Sonic Mk II hit the underbelly of the tower's base. Silver Sonic Mk II got out from underneath the tower and it started analyzing the environment, hoping to find another way of getting to Mandy without causing any collateral damage. While it was distracted, Wilson threw his spinning blade at Team Adabat's chains. The blade cut through the chains and the four Mobians dropped down onto the ground, relived to be free at last. Scott, Jessica, Taran and Felix rubbed their aching arms better but they remained under the tower for they seemed to realize that Silver Sonic Mk II was hesitant to get them if it meant damaging the refuelling station. Wilson and Geoffrey ran under the tower to join them.

"Thanks for getting us down Wilson." said Scott, still rubbing his arms better.

"Anytime Scott." said Wilson brightly.

"Man does it feel good to be free at last!" grunted Jessica as she stretched to ease the strain on her body "My arms were killing me up there!"

"Believe me, I've felt like that before." murmured Mandy, remembering how she herself had been restrained in such a painful manner in the past "So then, what do we do now?"

"It appears the behemoth is highly hesitant to attack us while we are under the refuelling station." observed Felix "I guess it does not want to inflict any damage to the station as well."

"So much for tricking that thing into doing the dirty work for us." sighed Mandy "But this does give us an advantage. If we remain under here, it won't come after us in fear of causing damage to the station."

"And me and Jessica have projectile weaponry." said Scott, summoning energy to his hands "We can just shoot at that thing whilst remaining under here for safety. This is a win-win for us."

But Scott was wrong. Silver Sonic Mk II had realized that it didn't need to come under the tower to attack the Royal Fighters. Instead, he could just fire his electrical attacks. Silver Sonic Mk II aimed his arm gauntlets under the tower and fired jolts of electricity at the Royal Fighters. The Royal Fighters cried out in surprise and they ran for cover as the shocks nearly hit them.

"So much for that plan!" cried Jessica frantically.

"Now what do we do?!" yelled Taran in fright "Run for our lives and hope it gets tired?!"

"No, we try and bring it down once and for all." declared Mandy "And since there's more of us this time, Silver Sonic will have a harder time snagging us all."

"I hope you're right my love!" squeaked Wilson fearfully as he was nearly hit by another jolt of electricity.

Since the station didn't offer the kind of protection they had been hoping for, the Royal Fighters had to come out from underneath and into the open where they'd be more exposed but likewise, they didn't have much choice. Plus they'd have more freedom to move around out from underneath the station. Silver Sonic Mk II saw Scott coming out from under the station and he decided to attack him first. He fired a jolt of electricity at Scott but the lynx threw an energy spear and hit the attack, stopping it dead in its tracks. Silver Sonic Mk II wasn't too pleased at this and thus it decided to unleash its deadliest attack. It curled up into a huge, bladed ball and it spin-dashed towards Scott. Screaming in terror, Scott dived out of the way as Silver Sonic Mk II hurtled past him. Silver Sonic Mk II broke out of the spin-dash and screeched to a halt after realizing it had missed. This was another new feature of this upgraded model. Silver Sonic Mk II had a sensor that operated while it was in spin-dash mode. The sensor would detect if it had missed its target and if it missed, it would automatically stop the spin-dash so it wouldn't accidentally hit something else. It would also stop the spin-dash if it was about to hit any Eggman buildings. A perfect failsafe device if one ever existed. Silver Sonic Mk II spin-dashed again towards Scott but the lynx jumped out of the way and just as Silver Sonic Mk II uncurled from its spin-dash, Scott summoned energy to his hands and walloped it

in the side of its abdomen. Silver Sonic Mk II tumbled over from that punch and lay on its side, groaning a mechanical groan of pain. Before it could get up, Jessica ran up to its head and punched it in the visor with an energy enhanced punch, cracking it heavily and blinding the robot. Jessica did it again, breaking the visor completely. Now Silver Sonic Mk II couldn't see whatsoever. This would end up leading to its downfall. Silver Sonic Mk II got back up onto its feet but because it couldn't see, it didn't notice that Mandy was coming towards it. She punched it in the left leg, denting it so hard that the leg just buckled inwards completely and made Silver Sonic kneel down in pain. The left leg was completely useless to it now. Silver Sonic Mk II forced itself up on its one leg and began firing jolts of electricity in random directions. It couldn't see so it had no idea where it was aiming anymore. But that didn't mean it wasn't still dangerous. A blinded opponent can be very dangerous. They may not know where they're aiming but attacking and firing rapidly like that, Silver Sonic Mk II was bound to hit somebody eventually. Plus their rather frantic firing makes it rather difficult to get close to them without getting hit. The Royal Fighters were forced to take cover as Silver Sonic Mk II continued to blindly fire at them. Felix however realized something that the others hadn't. Silver Sonic Mk II was aiming all around him but he wasn't aiming above himself. Felix could fly over Silver Sonic Mk II and distract him. Taking flight, Felix flew over Silver Sonic Mk II's head and he grabbed two of his tail feathers. They stiffened into clubs and Felix walloped Silver Sonic Mk II on his head. Silver Sonic Mk II felt the blow and he stopped firing electrical jolts to claw at Felix. The peacock just swung his clubs and knocked Silver Sonic Mk II's hand away. Angry, Silver Sonic Mk II started firing rapidly into the sky, trying to hit Felix. Mandy seized her chance. She darted towards Silver Sonic Mk II and punched him in his other leg, three times on the shin. That caused his other leg to buckle inwards and make the huge silver robot collapse onto the ground. The ground shuddered beneath Mandy's feet as Silver Sonic Mk II landed just in front of her.

"Not so tough without your legs now are you?" sneered Mandy, sticking her tongue out mockingly at Silver Sonic Mk II. The gesture was pointless since he couldn't see but Mandy just thought it made her mockery even worse for Silver Sonic Mk II since she was making fun of him and he couldn't see her doing it.

Silver Sonic Mk II heard what Mandy had said and it decided it wasn't going to let her make fun of it like this. It curled into a spin-dash and hurtled towards Mandy but Mandy had jumped out of the way the moment he had curled into a spin-dash. Silver Sonic Mk II hurled past Mandy and he uncurled from its spin-dash. Its visor maybe be broken but the sensor fail-safe was still functional at least. Silver Sonic Mk II landed on the flat part of its buckled in legs and it spin-dashed towards Mandy again. But Scott and Jessica summoned energy to their hands and combined their powers to fire a powerful energy blast from their hands. The blast hurled towards the spin-dashed Silver Sonic Mk II and walloped it side on, sending Silver Sonic Mk II hurling into one of the supporting legs of the refuelling station. Silver Sonic Mk II's body slammed into the tough steel work of the leg and buckled some of the supporting rods that made up the leg's shape. But the strongest parts of the leg were still intact luckily so the station remained standing. Silver Sonic Mk II didn't realize that it had caused damaged to the refuelling station, something it was meant to avoid doing. All it knew was that it had crashed into something but because it was blinded, it didn't know what it had crashed into. It didn't have time to think of anything else though for Geoffrey fired two exploding darts into the empty space in its face that had once been its visor. The darts embedded themselves into the circuitry within the head of Silver Sonic Mk II and Geoffrey set them off without a moment's hesitance. The darts exploded, taking Silver Sonic Mk II's head apart from within and blowing it into fragments. Silver Sonic Mk II's headless body sagged to one side, smoke pouring out of its neck section. It had finally been defeated. Silver Sonic Mk II was destroyed at last. The Royal Fighters whooped with joy over their victory.

"YES! We destroyed it!" cheered Mandy "I thought we'd met our match for a moment but we proved that not even the strongest of Eggman robots can stop us!"

"It's all thanks to our great team work." said Scott brightly "We did brilliantly together didn't we?"

"I agree on that mate." said Geoffrey with a nod "We wouldn't have won if we hadn't worked together so well."

"That's why Eggman will never win." crowed Jessica "Our teamwork

will always take down whatever he throws at us!"

"Royal Fighters rule!" whooped Taran.

"Now that the assailant has been eliminated, we can see to bringing down this abysmal station." deduced Felix "That abhorrent building has no place in our wonderful village. Utter desecration if I ever saw it."

"That's what we'd come here for, to destroy that station." said Wilson "Let's get to it before anything else happens."

"We'll have to be careful about it mate." said Geoffrey "We don't want the blooming tower to fall over and crush any houses. This needs to be controlled demolition."

"You're the best man for that." said Mandy "We'll stand back while you set up the darts to blow up the building. I assume you know about controlled demolition?"

"Believe me love, I'm the one to rely on for stuff like this." said Geoffrey, trying to sound modest but failing to keep a bit of pride out of his voice "Felix, you'll have to fly me to the higher levels of the station. I'll need to set up a dart on each section of the building for it to be controlled."

"I shall carry out that task without hindrance or question sir." said Felix politely.

Now they had a plan, Felix flew up and put his talons around Geoffrey's shoulders, hoisting him up from the ground and taking him into the air. Wilson, Mandy, Scott, Jessica and Taran all ran away from the station so they wouldn't be caught up in the crumbling building. Geoffrey fired four darts into each of the station's supporting legs and motioned for Felix to take him up higher. Felix flew up to the next section of the building, which was the base above the legs. Geoffrey set up some darts around the base and had Felix carry him up to where the destroyed gun-turrets were. Geoffrey fired a few darts into the space between the gun turrets on both sides of the tower and Felix took him up to the section nearest to the top of the building. Geoffrey set up some darts around that section and he

gave Felix the thumbs up to tell him that they were done and they could go back down to the ground. Felix carried Geoffrey down to where the others had taken shelter. Wilson, Mandy, Scott, Jessica and Taran had taken shelter behind a couple of houses that were a safe distance away from the station. Felix put Geoffrey down and Geoffrey pressed the activation button on his crossbow. The darts exploded, starting with the ones around the base then moving on upwards until the darts at the top exploded, a five-second delay between each section as they went off. The noise was deafening and the explosions were terrific and chaotic. The station was blown apart as the darts tore through the structure and due to the placement of the darts, the tower crumbled straight down in on itself instead of tumbling over and crashing down onto something. It was like watching a sandcastle crumble down. The tower collapsed into a huge pile of metal and debris. The landing pad lay buried under the tower's rubble, useless now the station was destroyed and laying on top of it in pieces. No harm had been done to the surrounding environment. The controlled destruction had been a success. Geoffrey felt very pleased with himself.

"And that's how you destroy a station without harming anything else." he said proudly.

"Very well executed Geoff." said Mandy happily "I bet our pals back home will be very happy to hear how well things have gone with us. This mission was pretty much a cakewalk sans Silver Sonic really."

"They'll be very happy to hear how well we've done Mandy." said Wilson, hugging Mandy "I wonder if the other teams are doing well in their missions."

"We'll find out soon enough when we get home." noted Mandy.

"Hey you guys, enlighten us please. What is this all about anyway?" asked Scott curiously "You know, the station and splitting into teams and all."

"Oh I'm sorry, we should have told you what was going on." said Mandy quickly "Ahem, Eggman's built refuelling stations for an upcoming ship of his called "The Death Egg". We've split into groups to destroy the stations so that the Death Egg won't have anywhere

to make an emergency stop or refuel Although Silver and Blaze told us that they think the Death Egg will cause the supposed end of the world that they're trying to prevent so we're now trying to prevent the Death Egg from launching in the first place. Hopefully the stations will give us some kind of clue as to where it is."

"Wow...that's pretty amazing." gasped Jessica "Can we join in this mission?"

"Sure, why not?" said Mandy brightly "The more the merrier and all that. You're welcome to join us in our mission to stop the Death Egg."

"Thank you." said Scott happily "I promise you this, if I see that Dr. Eggman I'll make sure he knows who it is that knocks him down flat!"

"You and me both Scottie." said Mandy grimly "Come on, we'll take you back to Royal HQ. There's room in the car for you all, unless of course Felix wants to fly."

Mandy led the Royal Fighters back to her hover-car. A mission had been accomplished and the Death Egg had one less station to use. But they hadn't gotten closer to finding the Death Egg itself. Mandy began to worry if they'd be too late and the Death Egg would launch. And if it did launch, would it end Mobius like Silver and Blaze thought it would? Mandy hoped they'd never find out...

"Wake up Roxy my dear..." purred the sinister voice of Dr. Finitevus.

Roxy had been out for a whole hour, more than enough time for Finitevus to do what he needed to do to her. Finitevus had completed his work and now he was enticing the raccoon into waking up. She was still strapped down to the table but Finitevus had removed her tape gag so she could speak now. Roxy began to wake up, moaning sleepily and looking very groggy. There was a scar on her cranium that had been stitched shut after Fintievus had finished with her but her hair covered it up. Team Diamond, who had watched the entire operation go off with rather disgusted

expressions on their faces, waited to see what Finitevus had done to her. To them, it had just been like watching a brain surgeon work on a patient but they had a feeling Finitevus wasn't trying to fix Roxy's brain since it was just fine. There was something more sinister behind this operation and they were anxious to see what it was. Roxy's eyes opened but her vision was blurred. They closed again but she was beginning to speak again.

"Oh god...I feel like I've fallen out of bed..." she slurred drunkenly "And why does my head hurt...?"

As she'd woken up, she suddenly realized that her head was throbbing. Possibly an after effect of being sedated but Roxy was sure that she could feel something funny in her brain. She so wanted to rub her head better but she was still belted down to the table so she couldn't. Roxy's eyes opened up and she realized that Finitevus was staring at her. Growling angrily, Roxy tugged on her belts and tried to attack him.

"You...you...how dare you sedate me you sick echidna!" she growled "Let me outta these belts so I can give you a headache!"

"And risk being blown up? I don't think so my dear." sneered Dr. Finitevus "After all, you'll be useless to me without a head."

"What the hell are you talking about?!" snapped Roxy.

"You know why I sedated you Roxy?" purred Finitevus "So I could perform my magic on you without accidentally damaging you in anyway."

"You're not making any sense!" snapped Roxy "Get to the bloody point!"

"I was." growled Finitevus, grabbing Roxy's neck and throttling her "You see, while you was unconscious, I cut your head open and placed a small, tiny bomb atop your brain."

"WHAT?!" squealed Roxy "No...that's impossible! You're lying to me!"

"Will you still think that after you see the X-ray?" crooned Finitevus.

He then proceeded to show Roxy her image on an X-ray screen that was positioned beside the table. Roxy looked at the screen and straight away, she noticed that her brain had something added to it. It was a small, flat circular disc about the size of a 2 pence penny and it had a red light to show it was active. Roxy's blood froze and her heart nearly stopped.

"No...no..." she gasped hoarsely.

"Yes my child, you now have a bomb inside your head." purred Finitevus sadistically "If you dare to betray Team Diamond OR me for that matter...we'll set off the bomb and it'll be bye-bye Roxy. Isn't science wonderful?"

"YOU MONSTER!" screamed Roxy "How could you?!"

"I wanted ALL of Team Diamond in my armada, therefore I had to force you to join me." explained Finitevus "Now you will do as I or Lennox tells you...or you'll be killed. All I or any member of Team Diamond has to do is say the words "bomb" and "self-destruct" both together and your head will be blown apart. I can't imagine it'll be a very pretty sight."

"You bastard!" shrieked Roxy "Sonic and the Royal Fighters will kill you for this!"

"Oh no they won't." purred Finitevus "You see, they will think you've come back to Team Diamond willingly. You will not breathe a word about what's happened to you on any occasion. If you do, the bomb goes off without any moment's hesitance. If you meet any Royal Fighters, you will tell them that you lied about your heel-turn and you've come back to Team Diamond and joined me. Do you understand?"

"Y-y-yes Finitevus..." whimpered Roxy "I swear though, you will pay for this!"

"I'm sure I will but you will not be the one who will be making me pay." sneered Finitevus "Now then, you need to rest for a moment so I suggest you be isolated for an hour or so. I'll take you to an isolation chamber and once you think you're ready to accept your

place and you feel well rested, I will let you out. Me and Team Diamond on the other hand have some emeralds to find."

Roxy didn't say anything, she knew that it'd be pointless now. She did not want Finitevus to blow her head up after all. Finitevus released Roxy from the belts and he helped her up off the table and onto her feet. As he led Roxy out of the room, Team Diamond smiled mockingly at her. They were well pleased with what Finitevus had done to Roxy. He'd kept his word definitely. He'd promised to force Roxy back into the team...and he'd succeeded in a way they never would have expected.

"Hey Roxy, welcome back to the team!" yelled Owen in a teasing voice that dripped with sadism and mockery.

"Dare betray us and it's off with your head! Ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed Alistair wickedly.

"And this time Roxy, you will STAY on our team." said Lennox coldly "Don't make me be the one that'll blow your head off."

Roxy ignored them. She was not giving them the satisfaction of a reaction to their words. She'd rather keep herself to herself this time around. Finitevus led Roxy out of the room and he took her to a cell that had four walls and a door, nothing else. This was an isolation chamber although it was more like a cell than anything. Finitevus just preferred the term "Isolation chamber" because it sounded more scientific than "cell". Finitevus shoved Roxy into the cell and he locked it shut behind her. Roxy just listened at the door as Finitevus walked away. The moment Finitevus left, Roxy slumped against the cell wall and tucked her knees up to her chest. Defeated, submitted and without anyway out of her situation, Roxy fell into a despair worse than anything she'd ever felt before. With her ears drooping down and her eyes welling with tears, Roxy lowered her head into her knees and cried. Feeling for all the world that she would never...ever... be able to stop...

Footnotes:

*** That all just happened in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Racoon on the Run***

Aww...poor Roxy! :'((cries)

Well at least Wilson, Mandy and Geoffrey succeeded in their mission! :D Let's see if Knuckles, Shade and the Chaotix have anymore luck in the next chapter. Tune in as we fight "For The Colony" next time...

For The Colony Part 1

Story 190: For the Colony Part 1

Countdown to Death Egg: 5

The Royal Fighters were on a trip all around the world. Just recently they had found out that the Death Egg's remaining refuelling stations were located in random locations all over Mobius and in order to destroy them all simultaneously, the Royal Fighters had to split up. Knuckles the Echidna, his girlfriend Shade the Echidna and Team Chaotix were one of those teams. Vector the Crocodile, the Chaotix boss, had chosen personally to go to the Golden Hive Colony in Nekronopolis, one of the locations that a Death Egg refuelling station had been built in. He'd chosen primarily because the Golden Hive Colony was the birthplace of the junior Chaotix member Charmy Bee. He had been kicked out of the hive just for being an irresponsible worker though and this had led to Vector finding Charmy and taking him in when nobody else would. Vector hoped that destroying the refuelling station would put Charmy in the colony's good books even though Charmy would most certainly not come back to the colony again. His place was with the Chaotix and that's all there was to it. The Golden Hive Colony was a long drive away from New Mobotropolis but the Mobians were almost there. In a few minutes, they would be arriving to the colony. The hover-saucer sped across a field of grass that seemed to go on forever, blowing the grass wildly as it sped over it. Shade, who was already in combat gear at this moment, turned to Vector The crocodile was sitting on her left side while Knuckles sat on her right side.

"So Vector, what is the Golden Hive Colony?" asked Shade curiously "I've never really heard of it before."

"All I can tell ya pretty much is what Charmy tells me about it." said Vector modestly "That is to say, he doesn't tell me much about it."

"Can you blame him?" asked Espio the Chameleon, the Chaotix Ninja and the one who was driving the hover-saucer. He kept his

eye on the road but still turned around to talk to Vector "Would you want to talk about a place that kicked you out at all?"

"In case you forget Espio, I LEFT the place I was raised in!" snapped Vector "So actually, I can't really blame Charmy! I was in the same position as him before I had to reveal my past to you all!* But I guess Charmy is more hesitant to talk about his past than I was because he still tells us very little about the colony other than the fact it has a pretty mean king and he was kicked out for being irresponsible and clumsy."

"Seems a bit unfair really." muttered Knuckles "He's just a kid after all, it's hardly his fault he acted that way."

"Bees do have a rather complex way of life Knuckles." said Shade matter-of-factly "No matter your age, every bee has to do his or her part for the colony. Its how they function and we're not inclined to tell them otherwise."

"Fair enough but I still think that was needlessly harsh on Charmy's part." said Knuckles, a sympathetic expression on his face as he glanced over at Charmy, who was sitting beside Espio and keeping very quiet "If I was in charge of the Golden Hive Colony, I would have just tried to teach Charmy how to be responsible instead of dropping him off as a dead weight."

Charmy had been quiet throughout the entire trip but after what Knuckles had said, he felt the need to say something. He turned around and pointed at Knuckles.

"For your information spiky, the royals in charge of the Golden Hive Colony DID try to teach me how to be responsible!" he snapped "And I did try my hardest but I just couldn't do what they wanted me to do and thus they gave up on me and kicked me out! And I'm not EVER allowed to come back to the colony! I really wish you didn't pick the Golden Hive Colony Vector! Why did you have to pick the Golden Hive Colony?! Couldn't we have gone to Adabat instead?"

"I picked the colony because I was hoping to repair your image and give you a better reputation amongst the colony." explained Vector "I'm nice like that you know. Plus, I'm sure your mama and papa

would be really pleased to see you too."

"Oh yeah, I really missed those guys when I got the boot…" murmured Charmy sadly "It'll be awesome to see them again but… I'm not allowed in the colony. I'm forbidden so I can't come in."

"We'll see if the king changes his tune when he finds out that you're a member of the Royal Fighters Service and is here along with me, Espio, Knuckles and Shade to destroy a Death Egg refuelling station that's been built on their property." said Vector with a confident smile on his grizzly but kind face "I bet he'll be all too happy to let you in Charmy."

"I sincerely doubt that…" muttered Charmy "The king was a right jerk he was. He made the colony worked until their wings ached. I hope he's softened down in my absence…"

"He'll be in a good mood when he sees who's coming to meet the colony." said Knuckles although in his mind, he was just as doubtful as Charmy himself "I bet even the colony's heard of the Royal Fighters and all the good they've done for the world."

"Let us hope that's the case or things will get very difficult indeed…" said Shade grimly.

"I'm tellin' ya, the king's gonna hate you all the moment he looks at you." said Charmy, his voice deathly serious. Unusual for the bee's rather crazy, excitable character. It was like this trip was slowly transforming him into a different person altogether.

Vector and Espio were very perplexed at Charmy's sudden change in character. It was obvious that being kicked out of the Golden Hive Colony had effected in Charmy worse than they could ever imagine. The colony clearly did leave a bad memory in his head, a memory that he'd rather expel from his mind if possible. Hopefully this mission would change all that. A couple more minutes passed before the Golden Give Colony suddenly came into view up ahead. They had arrived at last. Espio, Vector, Knuckles and Shade stared incredulously at what lay ahead of them. The Golden Hive Colony was a metropolis of beehive shaped buildings that varied in shape and size. Some beehives looked more traditional, others looked

more like skyscrapers mixed with beehives. They all varied in different shades of orange, yellow and gold too, very traditional colours for bees of all kinds. Charmy remembered this architecture all too well. It had been a couple of years since he'd last set foot in the colony and yet he felt like he'd only see it yesterday. Kicked out at the age of five and now he was returning to the colony, a couple years older. Not that it made any difference since one could still plainly tell it was him should anyone lay eyes upon Charmy. The bee gulped as the hover-saucer pulled up to a stop and the Mobians all leapt out of the saucer. Vector whistled, clearly impressed at what he was looking at.

"Now that's a nice looking place." he said to himself "If I was a bee, I'd be heartbroken if I was kicked outta this place."

"Just wait till you see the inside of it." whinged Charmy "Nothing but work, work, work from all the bees in the colony. It's not as fun as it looks or sounds."

"Maybe to you." said Espio "Some people enjoy working you know. It's obvious you weren't the right kind of bee for this colony."

"Well this is the Golden Hive Colony is seems." mused Knuckles "But I don't see anything that looks like it's of Eggman's design. Maybe it's deeper in the city."

"It must be less conspicuous than that station in Soleanna if we can't immediately spot it." said Shade "I bet the colony's bigger than it appears."

"Oh it is." said Charmy "It's gianormous! Humongous! Big enough to get lost in forever! Don't let those few buildings fool ya! The colony's a lot bigger than it seems!"

"In that case, we'll stick together." said Espio "We'll avoid getting lost in that case and on a mission as imperative as this, we can't afford to get lost in there."

"So Charmy, how do we enter this place?" asked Vector curiously "Do we just knock on the door or something?"

"You just walk right in and if a bee in a royal uniform comes up to ya, tell him who you are and what you're doing here." explained Charmy "They welcome visitors since bees have a habit of being nice and welcoming but they will hesitate if you're a bad-guy or something like that."

"Sounds easy enough." said Vector "Let's go in then. Keep an eye out for any Eggman robots. They'll likely pounce on us if they recognize us."

The team nodded and they approached the impressive looking bee city before them. The colony seemed to expand in size as the Mobians approached it. Shade was beginning to believe Charmy on what he said about the colony being bigger than it seemed from afar. More buildings were visible now the Mobians entered the colony, most of them being the size of an average house but still keeping the beehive like structure that made the Golden Hive Colony what it was. There were a horde of bees buzzing all around the city, rushing to and fro with baskets of honey and flowers that give the colony a very sweet smell that give the colony a very pleasant atmosphere. Some of the bees were walking around rather than flying and they seemed to be greeting each other like ordinary people on the street. Some of the bees clearly had wives for Vector saw a couple of bees embracing each other and another couple kissing as the husband went off to work. There were even child bees walking or flying around with their parents, all of them looking about Charmy's age and size. Charmy had to admit, the children made him feel more welcome since he didn't look out of place compared to them. Some of the buildings that occupied the streets were civilian houses or shopping markets that sold a lot of flowers and honey. There was a huge, bright orange beehive with yellow hexagons dotted around that seemed to be where all the honey was made. A lot of bees were flying in and out of that building. They were empty handed when they flew into the building but when they flew out of the building, they had hands full of baskets containing honey jars. It was truly a lovely looking city and for Knuckles, Shade, Vector and Espio, it was like stepping into a new world. They were breath taken at what they were looking at. They were so marvelled at what they saw that they didn't realize some of the bees were staring at them, wondering what the heck they were staring at. They didn't see many

Mobians that weren't bees after all but given they were bees, they didn't be rude or nasty about it. Bees were among the nicest Mobians on Mobius, hardly ever having bees that were cruel or even evil for that matter. They knew better than to make a big scene about strangers which was all for the best in a matter of speaking for the Mobians might have felt a bit uncomfortable.

"Take a gander…at this!" gasped Vector.

"You sure came from a grand colony Charmy." said Espio "This is truly meritorious. The bees must be honoured to live here."

"I must say, it's awesome to see this place again." said Charmy admittedly "But I still don't feel comfortable here. I keep feeling like somebody's gonna point at me and call the guards on me…"

"Charmy, keep your voice down!" hissed Shade "Don't draw attention to yourself if you don't want the guards on you!"

"Sorry." whispered Charmy, dropping his voice down so only Shade could hear him.

"So, where's the king's residence then?" asked Knuckles "I'm not seeing anything that says "Here is where you'll find the King of the Golden Hive Colony"."

"You don't just walk over to the king's palace silly-brain!" snapped Charmy, bonking Knuckles on the head "You have to ask permission first! And a guard will take you over to the palace should he accept your request to see the king and queen! And I bet once they see me, they won't be so generous…"

Charmy soon realized that he'd found out for himself how generous the king and queen of the Golden Hive Colony would be feeling for a huge bee that sported combat armour suddenly soared down towards the Royal Fighters and landed down before them. His armour looked ridiculous, the colours being a garish mixture of orange and yellow that clashed violently together. It did look well armoured though with a thick bodysuit, thick shoulder pads and heavy boots that were fit for a bee of its size. The bee also wore a helmet that had a hexagonal pattern around it. The bee looked firm

but he showed no signs of hostility. He relaxed his composure and adopted a more friendly posture. The Royal Fighters waited to see what the bee was going to say whereas Charmy hid behind Vector in fear.

"Good day visitors, welcome to the Golden Hive Colony." he said in his most polite voice he could possibly manage "My name's Hugo Beeving and I'm one of the king's royal guards. Who are you and what is your business here?"

"We're Royal Fighters." explained Knuckles "I assume you've heard of us?"

"We bees are big admirers of your work Royal Fighter sir." said Hugo with a brash smile on his chunky face "We are very grateful to the hard work you honourable heroes have put into saving the world from any evil that threatens our peace and tranquillity. The king and queen have dreamed about meeting at least one Royal Fighter so this is quite a pleasant surprise."

"That's good." said Knuckles, smiling back "I'm Knuckles, this is my girl Shade and these two are Vector and Espio." he introduced "And we also have another one with us. Please don't get mad when you see who it is though."

"OK um, why would I be mad?" asked Hugo unsurely.

"Because it's Charmy Bee." said Knuckles, pulling Charmy out from behind Vector and showing him to Hugo "But he's a Royal Fighter now, surely he'll be welcome too?"

Hugo stared at Charmy as if he'd just witnessed somebody dying from a deadly plague. He didn't think he'd ever see Charmy again and yet he was staring straight at him. Charmy just waved nervously at Hugo and tried to look sweet.

"Uh…long time n-no s-see hey H-Hugo?" gibbered Charmy nervously.

"Huh, who'd have thought the irresponsible klutz of the colony would end up becoming a Royal Fighter?" mused Hugo "Well that already

redeems Charmy in my books. Let's hope their royal highnesses are anymore welcoming than I…ahem, so what have you decided to visit the Golden Hive Colony for then?"

"We wish to meet the king and queen." explained Vector "We're here to sort something out for the colony and we want to let them know that we're here to help them."

"I wonder if it's something to do about that hideous building that Dr. Eggman monster built here the other day…" Hugo thought out loud to himself more than anybody. He then said to the Royal Fighters themselves "Very good. I shall escort you to the Golden Hive Palace immediately."

With that said, Hugo buzzed off and the Royal Fighters followed him as he escorted them to the Golden Hive Palace. The bees in the street watched as Hugo escorted what were clearly strangers to them towards the Golden Hive Palace. They guessed they were important people if they were being escorted by a Royal Guard to the palace itself. They would definitely have to learn more about these people later on. Knuckles, Shade, Vector and Espio were pleased that things were going rather well so far for them whereas Charmy could feel his heartbeat increasing as he reluctantly followed Hugo to the palace. He was not looking forward to meeting the king and queen again and he had a feeling they would not be very lenient on him at all. This was going to be a very tense moment between now and when the meeting began…

The Golden Hive Palace was truly a building of pure majesty and opulence. It was a very grandiose structure that made it very clear that it was a palace the moment the occasional onlooker glanced in its direction. It looked like a beehive just like all the other buildings in the Golden Hive Colony but this building had features that helped it look like a palace too. It had stained glass windows all around the midsection of the building that were a mixture of many colours just like how a church's stained glass windows would be. There was a huge, green, hexagon shaped gem protruding from the middle of the palace from the front side. The building was red mixed with orange and with trims of yellow in places. There were large doors that had a

golden sculpture around the edges to make the doors look more impressive than they already did and there was a flag waving atop the palace. The flag had an image of a bee wearing a crown. If people couldn't tell this was where the king and queen lived then the flag would most certainly confirm it to them that the royals lived here. The GoldenHivePalace was easily the most conspicuous building in the colony but also the most important and admired building amongst the citizens. Anyone who visited the Golden Hive Colony was instantly entranced in how impressive the palace looked. Inside, the palace looked equally as impressive. The throne room was the living depiction of the most generic of throne rooms with a ludicrously high ceiling that had marble sculptures of bees carrying honey protruding from just a few inches under the ceiling as if the sculptures were trying to fly up through the ceiling and escape. It appears the people who sculpted them didn't want it to look that way so they had sculpted them lower down. The ceiling itself was a huge hexagon shaped window that let in the sunlight and made the room sparkle like diamonds. Most of the room was made of marble and had a very old fashioned architecture to it. There were pillars supporting the ceiling all around with gold trimming around the bases and there was a huge painting of a colony of bees buzzing through the skies and carrying as much honey as possible to the honey factories that the Golden Hive Colony was famous for. The throne was enormous, big enough to sit two people on it and there were two red cushions for the royals to sit upon. Like most of the throne room, the throne was made of marble. But nobody was sitting on it at this moment.

The king and queen were staring up at the hexagon window as if they'd never seen it before and were wondering what it was. The king stopped staring at the window and started to pace around the room worriedly. The king was a rather scrawny looking bee who wore a ridiculously long red capethat trailed behind him as he paced around. He had a goatee that just made him look even more ridiculous and he wore a large crown that looked about a size too small for him. One had the impression that he'd once been large and for some reason at some point in his life, he'd begun shrinking down and was now too small for his clothes. The queen was equally as scrawny as the king was. She had an attractive face and a slender build to match. Her outfit consisted of a purple dress with white

trimming around the hem and she wore a crown that had been specially built to match her small head. She did have a bigger crown once but it kept falling off and she didn't think it was a good image for a queen bee to have. The king had kept his crown for he considered it dishonourable to not wear the actual crown and instead wear a smaller make just so it would fit his head. Thus on many occasions, the king's crown slipped down over his eyes and he would have to raise it back up. The king's crowed fell down over his eyes as he paced and he paused to lift it back up.

"Oh what to do…what to do?!" he whined for the millionth time, nearly tripping over his long train of a cape as he turned around and paced back towards his wife "It's been an hour since Nekronopolis's Royal Fighters went out to deal with that ugly station Dr. Eggman built on our property! Why haven't they reported yet?"

"At ease Stinger, give them time." said the queen softly "Maybe they're planning on how to destroy the station and it's taking them a while to figure out how to do it?"

"One would think they'd have given us a message by now Bessie!" shrieked Stinger, his crown leaping about a foot off of his head as if trying to escape from him as he shrieked "We've received nothing since they went out to destroy the station! They promised to keep us informed and yet we've not been informed! What's keeping them?!"

"Maybe they haven't had time yet dear?" asked Bessie with a shrug.

"Oh, you and your bloomin' "maybes"! You're not all that helpful are you Bessie?!" sighed Stinger loudly.

"Well what else can I say Stinger my love? I'm only suggesting what I'm thinking at this point in time." replied Bessie, surprisingly keeping her voice level despite Stinger yelling at him.

Bessie was used to Stinger being a bit overbearing and impolite and she knew better than to raise her voice back at him. All it did was make the situation worse. Best to keep calm when Stinger's in a bit of a jumpy mood. Stinger sighed and he hugged Bessie warmly.

"Oh sorry Bessie my dear, I didn't mean to raise my voice again."

said Stinger "You know how edgy I can be when the Golden Hive Colony has a problem that needs dealing with."

"Your love for this kingdom is what makes you so beloved Stinger and we admire how much you care for us all." said Bessie softly, touching Stinger's cheek tenderly "It's perfectly understandable why you get jumpy when something out of the blue happens to the colony. I just hope that station isn't some kind of robot production factory and it's going to overrun the colony with robots."

"That's the least we deserve!" squealed Stinger "Oh I hope the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters destroy that thing eventually…"

His voice died in his throat as a knock on the door stopped him dead in his tracks. Jumping in alarm, Stinger leapt onto his throne as if somebody had just kicked him onto it and he sat neatly upon the throne as if he wasn't anxious anymore. Bessie sat down neatly beside him and clasped her hands together. Stinger was about to speak but his crown fell over his eyes once again. Sighing, he decided to speak anyway.

"Come in!" he hollered, raising the crown back up so he could see properly.

The grand-looking marble door opened up and in walked Hugo Beeving with the Royal Fighters. He walked up to the throne and he bowed down before Stinger and Bessie honourably. The Royal Fighters stood behind him, waiting for Hugo to allow them to come forward. Charmy hid behind Vector again, praying that Stinger and Bessie hadn't seen him. They didn't say anything so it seemed they hadn't spotted him.

"Your majesties, it gives me great pleasure to announce that we have some Royal Fighters visiting us today." he said "If you'd like to come forward guys." he said with a glance over to the Royal Fighters.

Knuckles and Shade came forward first and they both bowed down to Stinger and Bessie. Stinger appreciated this ounce of politeness from the two echidnas and he had a feeling he was going to like them already.

"Well, more Royal Fighters? How drool!" he said happily "I didn't think I'd get the pleasure of seeing more Royal Fighters come here to meet me today!"

"More?" questioned Shade "You mean, there's more Royal Fighters already here?"

"A team of fighters who call themselves "Team Nekronopolis" came here about an hour ago and offered to destroy an Eggman building that he had built in our great kingdom without our permission." explained Bessie "They haven't updated us for an hour though so we're wondering if they've succeeded yet or not."

"Well, this place IS in Nekronopolis so of course Miranda's team would already be on the case." said Vector with a shrug.

"Never hurts to throw our hand in and see how we could help in anyway." said Espio "We're part of the New Mobotropolis group. I'm Espio the Chameleon and this is Vector the Crocodile. The two echidnas are Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas, Guardians of Angel Island."

"Guardians eh? Fascinating…" said Stinger with great interest "Well then, it's nice to meet you all. I'm King Stinger and this is my lovely wife, Queen Bessie." he introduced.

"We're honoured to meet you all." said Bessie kindly.

"We have one more although he seems a bit shy at the moment." said Vector with a wide smile on his face that looked a little put on given how uneasy he was beginning to feel "Charmy, you can come out now."

Charmy refused to budge so Vector had to shove him out from behind him. Charmy found himself staring directly at Stinger and Bessie and he could feel himself sweating with fear. Stinger and Bessie stared at him incredulously as if a ghost had just come back from the past to haunt them for reasons they didn't understand. Stinger looked like he couldn't mover for a second whereas Bessie was trying her best to think of the politest way to handle this. Charmy positioned his feet inwards and he put his hands behind his

back. His heart was beating as fast as his wings could flap when he buzzed through the air. He smiled nervously at the king and queen.

"Uh…hi your majesty?" squeaked Charmy "It's uh…nice to meet you again?"

"What is HE doing here?!" shouted Stinger frantically, bouncing up and down in an almost comical manner on his seat. Maybe the cushion was very springy and that's why he was bouncing. "I thought I banished this charlatan two years ago! Escort him out of here at once!"

Charmy was not surprised whatsoever. He knew this would happen to him. He was already waiting for Hugo's hands to grab him and take him out of the palace but Vector butt in before anything could happen.

"No wait your Excellency please!" cried Vector frantically "We can vouch for Charmy here! He's a Royal Fighter now! We assure you, he won't disappoint you again!"

"A Royal Fighter?!" blurted Stinger with a mocking laugh "Oh the very idea! Ha, ha! This klutz of a bee couldn't even carry a honey basket without making a disaster of the operation! You seriously expect me to believe this disaster waiting to happen is a Royal Fighter? You're pulling my leg you are! Why don't you pull my arm instead? It's got fairy lights on it."

He stretched out an arm and wriggled his fingers as if actually inviting for one of the Royal Fighters to pull on his arm. Vector was very nearly tempted to grab his arm and yank it clean out of its socket. He restrained himself just in time before the temptation could get to him.

"We're not joking, we're being deathly serious your honour." said Espio "Charmy is a member of our team. Me, him and Vector form Team Chaotix and Charmy has been of great help to us in our missions. He's quite the fighter when he needs to be. We ask you nicely that you give him a chance to prove himself to you. He won't disappoint you."

"Well I was always a believer in second chances so I'm willing to give the little boy a chance." said Bessie "I will admit, we were a little callous to him back then…"

"I'm not convinced but I'm not going to be the first bee in this colony to reject a perfectly reasonable offer." cut in Stinger "I shall not dishonour my ancestors by being so needlessly callous. "Never reject a reasonable offer" that's the colony's motto. Charmy may stay and aid you in your mission BUT if he makes a fool of himself again…he leaves this place and this time, he STAYS away from it for good. Do you understand?" he asked firmly.

"Perfectly." said Knuckles "Now then, where's this Eggman station and what does it look like?"

"It's just near the Hexagon Village." explained Stinger "Hugo will lead you there. It's a huge building that looks like a launch pad for some kind of rocket only there's no rocket around."

"Thank you." said Shade politely "That station is a refuelling station for Eggman's upcoming vessel known as "The Death Egg". We gravely fear that it's going to cause the end of the world thanks to information give to us by some…very talented people. We're hoping that destroying the stations will hinder the vessel and in someway, maybe lead us to its location."

"Well I bloomin' well hope you DO destroy that hideous building then!" piped Stinger "No way is my colony going to be a refuelling station for a ship that belongs to Eggman! Ugh, what a ghastly thought! Good luck my Royal Fighters and…even you Charmy." he said "May you be successful in your mission."

"Thank you very much King Stinger." said Knuckles "We'll report back once the station's destroyed. And maybe we'll see what's going on with Team Nekronopolis too."

"That'll be nice." said Bessie "I'm kinda worried about those four myself…"

The Royal Fighters bowed respectfully to the royals and then they turned to leave the throne room with Hugo leading them out. Stinger

and Bessie watched the Royal Fighters leave, hoping dearly that this wouldn't be the last they'd ever see of them and that they would return with good news to deliver to them…

Over onto Angel Island, the home of Knuckles and Shade, a warp ring appeared just above the Master Emerald shrine and a leg with warp rings all around the calf section and a bandaged up foot stepped out of the warp ring. The rest of the body followed the leg out of the warp ring. It was Dr. Finitevus. After performing surgery on Roxy the Raccoon and planting a bomb in her head, Finitevus had decided to pay a visit to Angel Island so he could fulfil another end of his bargain with Team Diamond. He had promised to reward their joining with the Dark Armada with the other seven Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald so he was here to do just that. Dr. Finitevus observed his surroundings to make sure that the coast was clear. He could see nothing in sight for the moment so he hopped down off the shrine and onto the ground below. He glanced over his shoulder and spoke to the still open warp ring.

"Team Diamond, you are free to proceed." he said.

Out of the warp ring emerged Lennox Meers, Owen Pounder and Alistair Drakken. Lennox's knee, which had been damaged after Roxy had shot him in it earlier**, had been fixed by Finitevus just moments before they left. He had given him a steel-kneecap that substituted for his shattered kneecap perfectly. Lennox was still in pain but at least he could walk properly again. Alistair's visor had also been fixed so his eyes were no longer a weakness, fortunately enough for the mask-wearing bat. They hopped onto the Master Emerald as the warp ring vanished behind them. They glanced down at the Master Emerald in surprise, amazed at how big it was. All three of them could stand on it without a problem. Owen and Alistair looked like they were about to start fawning over the emerald whereas Lennox wasn't sure how to react to the sheer size of it.

"Wow…I guess this is the Master Emerald is it not?" he murmured "It's huge! It's the biggest emerald I've ever seen in my life and that's saying a lot since I have seen quite a lot of big treasures in my life!"

"I think this thing is all we need to reform H.U.N.T.!" cried Owen excitedly "Treasure-hunters the world over will be killing themselves to get their hands on this!"

"You certainly know how to impress Finitevus…we're even more glad we made this alliance with you." purred Alistair delightedly "You have given us the best treasures one could ask for."

"You're very welcome my treasure-hunting terrors." said Finitevus with an evil smile on his face "Now then, keep an eye on the Master Emerald while I go and find the other seven Chaos Emeralds."

"Why don't we just steal the Master Emerald now?" asked Lennox.

"Because it is keeping this island afloat." explained Finitevus "Remove it and the island will fall. It is not to be removed UNTIL I've found the Chaos Emeralds."

"Dear god, we wouldn't want the island to fall while we're on it would we?" blurted Lennox "I guess that's why they call it the "Master Emerald" if it's the reason this island's floating.

"We shall make sure it doesn't move out of its place at all." said Owen "We'll guard it with our lives if we have to. No way are we losing by far the biggest treasure we'll ever own."

"Very good." said Finitevus "Do not let me return only to find the Master Emerald's been stolen." he warned sternly.

"It shan't come to that." promised Alistair.

Finitevus gave Alistair a look that suggested "It better not for your sake" and he spun around on his heel, his cape billowing out behind him in the breeze as he walked off into the jungle. He had the green Chaos Emerald with him and he was going to use that to sense where the Chaos Emeralds were. When it came to looking for a Chaos Emerald, the best way of finding one is to use another Chaos Emerald. They glowed brighter when they were near another Chaos Emerald. Finitevus followed the Chaos Emerald's directions as it led him into the jungle. It was telling him to go forward and so far, that was all it was telling him. Finitevus would follow the directions until

the Chaos Emerald told him otherwise. It helped to have a strong connection to the Chaos Force so that it was easier to follow a Chaos Emerald's directions and Finitevus had a very strong connection to the Chaos Force. He had Chaos Energy in his veins and that was what gave him his abnormal fighting prowess. The Chaos Emeralds were as good as found with Finitevus looking for them. As he left, Team Diamond stood around the Master Emerald and wondered how long it would take for Finitevus to return.

"Do you think he'll be long?" asked Owen.

"He says that Chaos Emerald of ours can be used to track the others." said Lennox "It's safe to assume he won't be too long. I hope so too. I just want to make off with the Master Emerald already."

"I can see why." said Alistair, putting his hands on the Master Emerald and feeling the Chaos Energy pulsing through the emerald "It's a grand treasure and its size and feel just seem to emote power of a grand kind. Just owning this emerald is enough to make us feel like very powerful treasure hunters!"

"Indeed so." said Owen "I hope Finitevus doesn't try to keep it for himself."

"It doesn't matter if he does." said Lennox "Think of him as like our new H.U.N.T. boss if you will. We had to share our profits with him so if Finitevus wants shares from us, we give him some. Though I myself hope he lets us keep the Master Emerald. I would really like to own that emerald."

He glanced over his shoulder to admire the Master Emerald. So glorious and sparkling it was to him. Never in his life would he ever see a gem as glorious as this again. He so dearly hoped that Dr. Finitevus would let him keep the Master Emerald once they swiped it and took it back to the laboratory with them. Lennox stopped looking at the Master Emerald and he turned his attention to making sure that the coast was still clear and that nobody was going to try and steal the Master Emerald from them. So far, everything seemed clear. Nothing around whatsoever. It seemed like things would be going their way, fortuitously enough for them. Lennox leaned back

against the Master Emerald, being careful not to knock it over by accident. It maybe a big emerald but it was quite stable. Leaning against it wasn't going to knock it over which was fortunate enough for Lennox.

"So once we get revenge on Sonic and friends, what do you think we'll do next?" asked Owen "Do you think Finitevus will help us revive H.U.N.T?"

"In my eyes, he already has." said Lennox "Getting us the Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald like this. Once we put down the Royal Fighters, I'll drop a suggestion to Finitevus and see if he approves of a new H.U.N.T. for us."

"And if he refuses?" asked Alistair with a tone of concern in his voice.

"Then we do it without him." said Lennox "After all, we're only using him for our own personal needs. We just wanted Roxy back and now she's back with us, we just need him to help us get rid of the Royal Figthers and then we can revive H.U.N.T. without any hindrances."

"Oh yeah!" cackled Owen "With the Royal Fighters gone, H.U.N.T. will be able to reform and no pesky heroes will get in our way!"

Exactly." said Lennox with a smile drier than the Sahara Desert "And Finitevus has given us the kind of treasure that will more than likely get any potential treasure hunters to join us in our cause. The Master Emerald will get anyone begging for it..."

He suddenly cut himself off mid-setence as he heard a sound coming from a distance away. He leaped a top of the Master Emerald and stood up high on tip-toe like a natural meerkat on the lookout for danger. He could see something coming towards the island. Something that he hadn't seen before. There was a huge looking robot rocketing towards Angel Island. Lennox immediately guessed it was one of Eggman's creations since he was renowned for his obsession with robots. He'd never seen an Eggman robot before but he had heard enough about Eggman to know that Eggman made robots and any robot you saw was likely one he

made. Owen and Alistair climbed onto the Master Emerald to see what Lennox had spotted.

"What is it boss?" asked Owen.

"Danger?" asked Alistair, trying to see what Lennox had seen.

"There's a robot coming towards the island." explained Lennox "I think Dr. Eggman's sent one to steal the Master Emerald."

"Well in that case, we'll destroy it!" declared Owen, punching his fists together "We were told to defend the Master Emerald until Finitevus got back so let's defend it!"

"Despite my repaired knee, it would be best I don't use my limbs in this battle." murmured Lennox, looking down at his repaired knee, which was noticeably bulkier than his other knee and had a stitched up scar where the operation had taken place "I don't want to damage my knee again. I'll just rely on the laser pistols Finitevus supplied me with."

He whipped out a pair of hi-tech pistols from the holsters on his belt and he primed them for activation. Twirling them around, he pointed them at the approaching robot and waited until it was in range before he could fire at it. The robot was just a few yards away from the island before Lennox started shooting at it. The shots hurled through the air and punched into the robot. It didn't bring the robot down but it did throw off its flight path a little. The robot dived down and flew towards Angel Island lower down. Lennox aimed down and began shooting at the robot but he couldn't quite hit it. The robot flew straight up towards the island and loomed before Team Diamond. The robot was none other than Dr. Eggman, cackling maniacally and aiming the weapons of his life-support mech at Team Diamond. Lennox didn't flinch, he just kept his guns pointed at Eggman.

"Alright Eggman robot, you can back off now or suffer the consequences!" growled Lennox "The Master Emerald is ours for the taking and we will not allow you to steal it from us!"

"Oh fie, I'm not an Eggman robot you moronic car insurance mascot,

I AM Dr. Eggman himself!" cackled Eggman from inside the mech "Although I'm not exactly in the flesh given...unfortunate circumstances to which I was nearly killed in."

"So now you're just a guy in a robot suit?" asked Owen "Bet that sucks for you Egg-head."

"Oh no, I actually LOVE it in here!" crowed Eggman delightedly "I'm stronger, faster and much more heavily armed than before and I can actually join in the fight myself! Ho, ho, ho! Now I don't know who you three morons are but you can either surrender the Master Emerald now or you'll be blown to smithereens! The choice is yours! I wish to have the Master Emerald for needs you cannot possibly understand and I sincerely doubt you three want it for a more important cause so back off and let me take it!"

"We were given strict orders to prevent the Master Emerald from falling out of our hands." said Lennox coldly "Our boss wants the emerald and he does not want to share it with heathens like you!"

"Boss? Who might he be then?" asked Eggman.

"Find out yourself!" snapped Alistair "We're not revealing his name!"

"Team Diamond! ATTACK!" bellowed Lennox.

Owen and Alistair leapt into the air like tigers pouncing on a deer as Dr. Eggman retracted his weapons and prepared to claw at them. The fight was on and it was going to be a very serious battle indeed, especially when the prize was such a big emerald with such amazing power and value that was keeping an entire island afloat...

"Well Charmy, the king didn't seem as bad as you were making him out to be." said Vector as Hugo led the Royal Fighters towards the Death Egg refuelling station "I mean he's willing to give you a second chance! You sure you didn't exaggerate on his behaviour just to make him look bad?"

The Royal Fighters were still following Hugo Beeving through the streets of the colony as he led them towards the Death Egg

refuelling station. In order to pass the time, Vector had decided to strike up a conversation. Charmy was walking ahead of Vector with a rather grim expression on his face.

"Oh believe me Vector, he wasn't like that when I was in the colony." muttered Charmy "I think he just put on an act just because you're all Royal Fighters. If it was me alone, he wouldn't have been so nice to me."

"Well just be grateful he hasn't kicked you out again." said Knuckles "So Hugo, how did Eggman manage to build his station in the Golden Hive Colony? Surely you would have tried to stop him."

"Oh we did, but we were helpless against Eggman." explained Hugo sadly "You see, we're not really warriors. We just make honey and live like bees. We tried to stop Eggman's forces from building the station but they just shrugged us off as if we were nothing."

"Then why didn't you call for help?" asked Shade "We would have been on the case in no time."

"We don't have the kind of technology for that." said Hugo, looking rather embarrassed to admit this "We physically couldn't call for help so we just had to wait and see if anybody would come and sort the problem out for us. And now here you all are. It's like our prayers were answered."

"After this is done, the R.F.S. would be happy to install any communications equipment for the colony so that you'll be able to call us for help next time you need it." Shade offered "You may well need it since there will be a time you'll REALLY need us and we won't know about it."

"That sounds like a good idea, I just hope King Stinger approves." murmured Hugo doubtfully "Although he really loves his colony and will do anything to ensure its well being. He'll agree to that no doubt."

"Looks like you bees are good at making smart choices." said Espio approvingly "I admire that. Not all people are so willing to make a change, even if it is for the greater good..."

"Yeah, some people just worship the status quo for some reason." sighed Hugo "Status quo's boring. There's nothing wrong with a bit of change is there?"

"Depends on what the change is." said Vector, shrugging "For starters, I was all too happy to change my lifestyle from political hating reptile to a detective who only has the people's needs on his mind. I wouldn't swap my current life for anything else."

"Sounds nice." said Hugo brightly "Anyway, here we are Royal Fighters. This is your target."

He stopped marching and he pointed ahead of him. The Royal Fighters looked ahead and saw that they were standing on the outskirts of Hexagon Village. It was called Hexagon Village for a very literal reason. The houses all had a hexagon pattern on them and a couple of houses were even SHAPED like hexagons. In the middle of the village was the Death Egg Refuelling Station. It was just as King Stinger had described. It looked more like the launching platform that a rocket at Cape Canaveral would use. NASA would certainly like to use the station to launch off their own rockets into space. It had the usual Eggman colour scheme and a huge fuel tank standing beside the launch pad. The Royal Fighters had no problems guessing that this was a refuelling station and the huge Eggman logo on the fuel tank pretty screamed at them "I am an Eggman station. Please attack me!". Knuckles bashed his fists together.

"There's our target. Don't worry Hugo, we'll take that station down!" Knuckles declared "Come on Royal Fighters, let's take it down!"

The Royal Fighters all ran forward towards the refuelling station, eager to destroy it and eliminate another stain that Eggman had left on Mobius. But as they ran towards the station, Hugo stood where he was and looked around to see if he was alone. There was nobody else around. He reached into his pocket and he whipped out a communications device he had stored in his pocket. If anyone was around, they would notice that the device was red in colour and had the Eggman Empire logo on it! He put the communicator to his ear and spoke into it.

"Krudzu, spring the trap." he commanded and then put the device back into his pocket.

He smiled to himself as he pictured the Royal Fighters getting caught in the trap he'd just led them into. It was so easy playing the friendly guard. The act fooled everybody who was unforunate enough to meet him. Not even members of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had managed to work out that he was playing them on. And that would cost them their lives...

The Royal Fighters arrived at the station and upon arrival, they instantly noticed something that wasn't very clear from a distance. They were not the only Royal Fighters here. Team Nekronopolis was here too only to their surprise, the team was a little tied up at the moment. Miranda Mongoose, Kari the Rat and the chipmunk brothers Thunder and Bolt were all tied up in green, thorny vines that snaked around the bottom of the fuel tank. There were vines wrapped around their mouths, gagging them, and there were vines wrapped around their ankles. Their hands were tied behind their backs and vines were wrapped around their bodies, firmly holding them to the fuel tank. They had tried as hard as they possibly could to break free but they had been very unsuccessful. They were pleased to see that help was on the way and Miranda began screaming, trying as hard as she could to be understood from behind her gag.

"Mmmyal Mmmightmmmrs! Mmmmlp mmmmus!" she cried as best as she could.

"It's Team Nekronopolis!" cried Knuckles "They're still here! So that's why they haven't reported back to the king already! They're bound up in vines!"

"Why didn't Hugo tell us about this?" asked Shade "Surely he led Miranda and her team here too? He must have known that this happened!"

"We'll have to ask him about that later, let's get the team outta those vines." said Knuckles, stepping forward to help the captured team.

"Wait a minute! Green thorny vines binding them up...why does this

sound familiar?" asked Vector "I feel like...that happened to us once. Did it?"

"I believe so..." mused Espio "Eggman had a kind of robotical plant that could manipulate machinery and had thorny vines as weapons. What was it called again?"

"Wasn't it the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra or something like that?" suggested Charmy "It was something silly sounding, that much I remember."

"Yeah...it was!" cried Knuckles "That thing captured us once before Shadow brought Sonic home from Mobius Nega And if Miranda's team are bound in vines..."

The ground suddenly erupted into a show of rubble and gravel that showered all over the place and the Royal Fighters leapt up about a foot in the air in horror. Team Nekronopolis emitted muffled gasps of horror behind their gags as a huge, green creature began to rise up from the ground, growling fiercely like a wild dog. The creature had five heads, a long thorny tail, two legs and a multiple amount of vines in place of arms. The main head was a huge set of jaws with a maw of sharp teeth and the other four heads were heads of old robot models that Eggman no longer had use for. The Royal Fighters stepped back in horror as the creature bore over them.

"It's the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra!" cried Knuckles "But I thought that thing was destroyed when the Egg-Carrier crashed!"

"You're such an idiot Knuckles." sighed Charmy "He obviously rebuilt it you dummy! Duh! How do you explain all of Eggman's other robots coming back from the dead?"

"Well this is one robot I'd be happy to send back to its grave!" growled Vector "That crummy Krudzu's not catching us! Everybody, let's attack it and bring it down!"

"Shade, cut Miranda and her team loose while we fight this monster!" ordered Knuckles.

Shade drew out her blades and ran off to carry out her order but the

Krudzu Hybrid Hydra reached out with its vines and grabbed her by her ankles. It tripped her up and held her upside down in the air like a fish caught on a hook.

"Heeeeeey! Put me down!" yelled Shade as the Krudzu began to swing her around "Put me down right nooooooooow!"

The Krudzu ignored Shade and reached out for the other Royal Fighters with its deadly vines. The vines ensnared the Mobians and they lifted them up off the ground. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra had caught the Royal Fighters and now it was free to do what it pleased with them, just like it had done to the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters...

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales From Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles***

****** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Raccoon on the Run***

Well this is one heck of a crummy situation isn't it?! The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra has the Royal Fighters and two villains are fighting over the Master Emerald! How will this epic tale end? Find out next time in Part 2...

In the meantime, get ready to do your best Tarzan yells for we're going to the jungle with Sally Acorn in* Tales from Mobius *. You'd be bananas to miss it!

For the Colony Part 2

Story 191: For the Colony Part 2

Countdown to Death Egg: 4

The Golden Hive Colony, a wondrous civilization that was home to the thousands of bees that flew around its streets and buildings, doing whatever they pleased and making as much honey as possible was receiving some aid from the notorious Royal Fighters Service. Knuckles the Echidna, his girlfriend Shade the Echidna and Team Chaotix (Espio the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile and the colony exile Charmy Bee) had come to the colony to get rid of a Death Egg refuelling station that had been built there. The bees didn't like the station at all, they thought it sullied the appearance of the colony most horribly and they feared that Eggman robots could storm the colony any moment now. Worse still, it was used as a port for the upcoming ship known as the Death Egg. The bees would be in a right panic if that ship ever came to their colony. So Knuckles and his team were here to destroy the refuelling station. The task seemed easy enough given how they'd had plenty of experience destroying Eggman's property in the past.

There was just one problem…the station had a guard and it was by far the worst kind of guard that they could possibly be up against. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was a menacing plant like machine that could manipulate machinery and make itself bigger and stronger and it also had snaking vines and five heads that it could use to attack with. The Hydra had currently ensnared Team Nekronopolis and had them tied to the station's fuel tank and now it had caught all of Knuckles's team! The Hydra shook the five Mobians around gleefully as if they were toys for it to play with. It had had fun ensnaring Miranda Mongoose and her team and it was certainly going to enjoy playing with Knuckles and his team. It had captured them, along with many other Royal Fighters, before so it felt quite pleased to do it again. The five Mobians cried out as they were swung around aimlessly by the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. Knuckles winced as he was suddenly slammed down onto the ground by the

Hydra. If the Hydra carried on doing this, Knuckles wouldn't be able to hold on. He'd be smashed to pieces. The Hydra lifted him up and then slammed him and Shade together. Shade yelped in pain as she was slammed against Knuckles. The Hydra then held Shade above its main head and it opened its jaws wide, showing off a hideous maw of sharp teeth that were itching to bite down on the Mobians. The Hydra lowered Shade down towards its mouth, ready to swallow her whole. But Shade wasn't going down that easily. Even though she'd dropped her blades after the Hydra had tripped her up, she still wasn't going to let it beat her. As the Hydra lowered Shade into its jaws, Shade punched it in the roof of its mouth. The Hydra flinched and threw Shade away from its mouth. Not a wise thing to do at all for Shade landed down directly beside her dropped blades. She picked them up and Blade-Rushed the Hydra. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra roared fiercely as it was pummelled by a pink energy wave and it was forced to drop all the Mobians in order to block another energy wave that came towards it. Now Knuckles, Espio, Vector and Charmy were free, they charged towards the Hydra and did what they could to it. Knuckles leaped into the air and socked the Hydra in the throat. That made the Hydra's jaws snap open and it made a strange, gurgling noise as if it was being strangled. Being punched in the throat by Knuckles was probably worse than being strangled given how hard he could punch. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra began to make a loud hacking noise as it tried to shake off the punch in the throat it had received. This gave Vector the perfect opportunity to run towards the Hydra and grab it by its vines. He yanked on the vines and pulled the Hydra down onto its stomach. Espio and Charmy jumped onto the Hydra's back and started pummelling it as hard as they could. They Hydra stood back up but Espio held on tightly to the Hydra's back as it stood up. He drew out a kunai and he stabbed the Hydra in the back with it. The Hydra screeched in pain but the screech was silenced by Charmy kick-slamming the Hydra on top of its head. The Hydra reached behind with its tail and it wrapped around Espio's ankle. He lifted the chameleon off of its back and threw him straight into Vector. Charmy gritted his teeth and shook his fists.

"Hey! Nobody hurts my pals like this!" he cried.

He whizzed towards the Hydra but he found himself getting whipped

in the face by a bunch of vines. Charmy hurtled down into the ground and groaned as pain swept over his small body. The Hydra was about to grab him again but Knuckles punched the ground and tore up a chunk of rock. He hoisted the rock above his head and threw it directly at the Hydra. The rock hit the Hydra's main head and made it back away. But it would take more than a rock to stop the Hydra. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra screeched furiously and it lunged forward with all five heads. Knuckles just punched them one at a time as they came at him.

"They may say that two heads are better than one but are five heads better than one?" sneered Knuckles as he socked the Hydra's fifth head.

The Hydra growled and he whipped Knuckles with a long sharp vine that made Knuckles wince as the thorns cut him. It didn't bother him too much though, he'd been hurt much worse than this before. Knuckles picked himself up and he charged back into battle.

Meanwhile, Shade had run over to the station's fuel tank and she cut Team Nekronopolis free with a single slash of her blades. The vines fell away and the team pulled the vines from around their mouths off. Miranda brushed herself off, getting out any bits of vine that had gotten into her fur.

"Thank you for your help Shade." said Miranda.

"Any time Miranda." replied Shade "You four were here to destroy this refuelling station weren't you?"

"We were." replied Kari the Rat "We'd heard that there was trouble in the Golden Hive Colony so we, being local to them and all, sprang into action and answered their call."

"We would have bloomin' well destroyed the station if the walking garden patch over there didn't capture us." muttered Thunder the Chipmunk "But we got captured and now here we are being freed by you."

"I wonder why Hugo didn't warn me and Knuckles about the Hydra?" mused Shade "It's almost like he purposefully left that fact out. Did

he bring you to the station?"

"Oh yes, Hugo Beeving led us here." said Bolt the Chipmunk with a nod "He led all four of us here and watched as we were captured. The big sod didn't bother helping us though, he just left us behind while the Hydra captured us! We were stuck here for a whole flippin' hour!"

"And Hugo didn't think to call anybody for help…" murmured Shade "And he didn't warn us about the Hydra, nor did he mention that you were captured. Just that you hadn't reported back yet…"

Shade suddenly realized something. Her brain managed to slot all the pieces together to form the terrible truth about Hugo.

"Hugo's a traitor!" she gasped "He's on Eggman's side! He didn't warn us on purpose! He set my team up for capture!"

"I bet King Stinger won't be too happy to hear about that." sighed Miranda with a shake of her head "We'll have to bring him to the king and let him decide his fate."

"I hope he punishes him most appropriately…" growled Shade, deploying her helmet "We'll deal with him later. We have to stop the Hydra and destroy this station!"

"Right behind you!" Kari cried enthusiastically.

Shade and Team Nekronopolis charged towards the Hydra as Knuckles and Team Chaotix attacked it again. As the fight raged on, Hugo Beeving stood and watched, pleased with himself for leading Knuckles's team into this trap. And since he was watching the fight rage on, he could help the Hydra in any means necessary. He had a pistol waiting to be used and he wouldn't hesitate to use it if he had to. He smiled wickedly as the Hydra lashed out with its vines again. He was going to enjoy this fight and it would go completely in the Hydra's favour…

"Ho, ho, ho, ho! Do you seriously believe you three puny Mobians can stop ME?!" cackled Dr. Eggman maniacally as he fisted Alistair

Drakken the Bat out of the sky and down onto the ground.

"We together can give Sonic the Hedgehog a tough time!" barked Lennox Meers the Meerkat, his laser pistols aimed at Eggman and firing wildly at him "We'll take you down no sweat!"

Dr. Eggman weaved around the laser blasts effortlessly with his rocket jets. The blasts missed him completely and Eggman returned fire, forcing Lennox to run away before he could get shot.

Team Diamond had been brought to Angel Island by Dr. Finitevus and they were here to steal the Master Emerald and the eight Chaos Emeralds. Finitevus was currently in the jungle looking for the Chaos Emeralds while Team Diamond had been assigned with keeping the Master Emerald safe from anybody who would probably try to steal the Master Emerald such as Dr. Eggman himself. Eggman was here now and Team Diamond were trying their best to keep him from stealing the Master Emerald. Both sides wanted it for their own personal use so this was a battle that would take no prisoners. Eggman certainly didn't seem very lenient at the moment. He was throwing as many lasers and rockets as he possibly could at Team Diamond. So many that it was a miracle they hadn't been hit yet! Lennox took shelter behind the Master Emerald shrine, a smart move since Eggman wouldn't dare risk destroying the Master Emerald just to hit Lennox. Eggman held back and he retracted his weapons as Lennox ran around behind the shrine and took cover. Lennox took advantage of Eggman's hesitation and he zapped him directly in the shoulder with his laser pistol. He felt much more deadly with a laser pistol than his traditional revovlers. Lasers were much stronger than bullets. Dr. Eggman reeled back as he was hit but he felt no pain since he was merely a pilot inside his life support mech. In order to feel pain, somebody would have to attack him when he was exposed. Eggman growled at Lennox and he flew around behind the Master Emerald shrine to catch him. But Lennox had moved around to the other side of the shrine so Eggman still had to hold his fire to avoid damaging the emerald. Lennox leaned out from the side and zapped him in the other shoulder. Lennox wondered if he would take the mech's arms off if he kept shooting it in the shoulders. He wouldn't get a chance to try that though for Eggman flew around and started spraying bullets at him. Lennox ran

around the shrine but Eggman kept flying around after him, shooting at the ground and kicking up soil and grass behind Lennox's heels. Lennox aimed over his shoulder and fired at Eggman again but he missed as Eggman leaned to one side. Lennox then had an idea. He fired at Eggman's other side and Eggman leaned to the side to dodge the attack. That was when he realized he'd done something stupid. He leaned to the side, the side closest to the emerald shrine. Thus he ended up colliding with it and losing control. He spiralled down into the ground and groaned. He felt the head section of the mech and was relieved that he'd only gotten a slight dent on it. The damage could have been much worse. Now he was down on the ground, Lennox began shooting at his shoulders, hoping to break the arms off. But Eggman stood back up, taking the shots, and he shot Lennox in the torso with his own lasers. Lennox was thrown backwards and he nearly ended up falling off the island. He grabbed onto the grass and held on for dear life as half his body leaned over the side of the island. He prayed hard that he wouldn't fall and he scrambled furiously with his legs to get back on the island. Eggman deployed his Gatling gun and aimed directly at Lennox's head. One shot to the head from that gun and he would be finished. But Eggman never got the chance for Owen Pounder the Rabbit charged into the battle and he grabbed Eggman's arm. He aimed it directly up at the sky and left Eggman spraying bullets up into it, no targets in sight so the bullets caused no harm. Owen maneuvered himself around to the front and he uppercut Eggman in the head section of his mech. The mech hurled off of its feet, landed on its back and bounced up and over onto its front. Eggman skidded to a halt and he pushed himself up onto his feet. Owen stampeded towards Eggman like a wild bison and he linked hands with the powerful mech. Eggman pushed on Owen and Owen pushed back on Eggman. They both grunted as they tried to overpower one another. While this was happening, Lennox pulled himself back onto the island and he recollected his laser pistols. He watched as Owen and Eggman pushed on each other.

"Grrr...you...will not...win this battle!" grunted Owen, sweat pouring down his head as his muscles fought hard against Eggman's strength "We are treasure...hunters! And we will...walk home with this treasure! Nobody...stands in our...way!"

"Oh really bunny boy?" sneered Eggman "Then what am I doing right now? Standing in your way? I certainly think so! And you need to learn that nobody interferes with Dr. Eggman and his master plans!"

The arms of his mech suddenly raised and Owen found himself hoisted up into the air with complete ease. When it came to Owen, he weighed nothing to Eggman's life support mech. Eggman could lift all three members of Team Diamond together and still be able to add extra weight to the load. Owen could hardly believe how strong Eggman was but he reckoned that because Eggman was inside a robot mech suit, he shouldn't be all that surprised at his strength. Eggman began to spin the entire top section of his mech around while still holding on to Owen's hands. Owen cried out as he was swung around in a perfect 360 degree circle. It felt like being on a demented merry-go-round, a ride that no kid at a fairground would ever want to ride on. Eggman chortled as he spun Owen around. He was enjoying himself. He firmly believed that it never hurt to have fun with your enemies. It's what made his battles fun to him. Unfortunately for Lennox, he could shoot Eggman as he spun Owen around. He risked accidentally shooting him instead of Eggman. He kept swinging Owen around until he finally let him go and he tossed him straight into the emerald shrine. A very big mistake for the Master Emerald wobbled slightly and threatened to topple over under the impact of the crash. Alistair flew onto the shrine and supported the emerald before it could topple over. Pleased the emerald was saved, Eggman now took aim at Alistair. He sprayed a barrage of bullets at Alistair, hoping to tear the bat to pieces with his attack. Alistair flew out of the way and waved around the firing bullets. He swooped towards Eggman and dropkicked him directly in the face. Eggman nearly lost his balance but he used the rockets in his back to stabilize himself. Alistair however clung onto Eggman with his claws and started scratching at the head section of the mech. One fault of having his life support mask was that he couldn't use his teeth to go with his claws but he reckoned his teeth wouldn't be that useful anyway. Eggman growled for it was getting hard to see with Alistair clawing at him. He tried to whack Alistair off of himself but Alistair moved out of the way, causing Eggman to thump himself directly in the face and knock himself over. Eggman muttered unintelligible gibberish under his breath as he got back

onto his feet. Just as he stood up though, Owen backhanded him and sent him hurling onto his side. Owen then ran over to Eggman and picked him up. He was tempted to throw him off the island but being the smart brute he was, he logically concluded that it wouldn't do any good. Eggman would just fly back up onto the island. Instead, he threw Eggman through the air and Eggman landed on the ground with a terrible clunk that made Eggman wonder if he'd broken anything. He lay down on his front and Lennoxhad the idea to take out his jets. He shot Eggman in the back and damaged the rockets in his back. Eggman growled crossly as the screen in front of him displayed the damages done to the mech. His jets were destroyed, he wouldn't be able to fly anymore. He best be careful now. If he fell off the island, that would be the end of him. Eggman forced himself back onto his feet and he prepared to do battle as Lennox, Owen and Alistair stood before him.

"You're certainly hardy fighters, I'll give you that." he crooned smoothly "If I didn't know any better, I'd say you were part of the Royal Fighters Service!"

"Oh we're not with those swine." muttered Lennox "We curse Sonic and the Royal Fighter name! We're going to use the Master Emerald to get rid of him and his friends once and for all!"

"Then why are we fighting over the Master Emerald?" cackled Eggman "We should be working together! We could take down Sonic if we joined forces! Let's stop this senseless fighting and make an alliance Team Diamond! Together, we could crush the Royal Fighters!"

"Yeah right, and then you'll double-cross us and turn us into robots!" growled Alistair malevolently "We've heard many terrible things about you Eggman and your affinity for betrayal does not settle well with us. Not to mention, there was that time where the entire world as roboticized, us included. Your doing obviously! We're not letting that happen again!"

"Besides, we only share treasures with our boss!" added Owen "We don't work for you so we won't share the Master Emerald with you! And don't try employing us because we refuse to work for you!"

"Then you'll be obliterated!" bellowed Dr. Eggman "You just made the biggest mistake of your lives you miserable Mobians!"

He deployed his rocket launchers and began launching rockets at Team Diamond. Lennox aimed at the oncoming rockets and he shot at them, destroying the rockets before they could hit their target. Team Diamond threw themselves down onto the ground to avoid the flying debris from the rockets. Unfortunately, the huge cloud of flames and smoke from the rockets had given Dr. Eggman the perfect opportunity to steal the Master Emerald. He turned around and he ran towards the emerald shrine, his feet making heavy clunking noises as he did so. The smoke cleared and Team Diamond could see that Dr. Eggman was running up to the Master Emerald shrine. Alistair took to the skies and flew towards Eggman faster than a whizzing arrow. He landed on Eggman's head and bounded off of him, his feet pushing Eggman backwards and causing him to topple over as he sprang away. Eggman fell back down to the bottom of the shrine just as Owen ran up to him. He picked up Eggman and he threw him towards the edge of the island. Eggman landed...just near the edge but he didn't go over it. He managed to steady himself and he picked himself up. Owen thundered towards Eggman like a bull charging at the matador. Eggman fired a laser at the ground just as Owen's feet pounded down on it. Owen was flung up into the air by the force of the shot. Alistair caught him with his feet and lowered him down safely to the ground. Eggman ran towards Owen and Alistair and he socked them both in the face with both fists. Owen and Alistair lay down on their backs, clutching their faces in pain and wondering what had just hit them. Lennox began shooting at Eggman's legs, figuring they would be a weak spot given how they were smaller than the rest of his body and because his jets were destroyed, he wouldn't be able to stand should the legs get destroyed. Eggman shielded his legs with his hands and he shot Lennox with his shoulder mounted laser cannons. Lennox yelped in pain as the lasers hit him and he collapsed onto the ground. Eggman ran over to Lennox and he picked the meerkat up. Alistair tried to attack Eggman from behind but Eggman swung around and swatted him down to the ground with Lennox. Then he threw Lennox onto the ground. Unfortunately for Lennox, he ended up banging his still recovering knee as he landed. Roxy had shot him in it earlier* and Finitevus had fixed it but

it was still recovering from the surgery. The pain that flared up Lennox's knee was agonizing. The meerkat screamed as loud as his vocal chords would let him and he clutched his knee as if the pain was killing him. Eggman chortled at Lennox's misfortune.

"It appears you have a bum knee...how lucky for me." he cackled "You won't be so useful in this battle now..."

Owen and Alistair decided to protect Lennox from Dr. Eggman by running up towards him. Owen roundhouse punched Eggman in the head and then grabbed him around the midsection. He hoisted Eggman off his feet but Eggman slammed his leg against his stomach, making the rabbit drop him back down. Eggman grabbed Owen by the head and he threw him into the air. Alistair kicked Eggman in the optics but Eggman swatted him down onto the ground with a powerful smack of his metal hand. Now Team Diamond were down, Eggman ran off towards the Master Emerald shrine. Lennox grabbed his pistols and he shot at Eggman, desperately trying to tag him but he knew he couldn't do it with his knee hurting so badly. His aim was crooked and way off so he couldn't hit Eggman square on. He missed every shot and Eggman cackled as he ran up the stairs to the shrine. He grabbed the Master Emerald and he hoisted it effortlessly above his head. It seemed like he could lift anything if he wanted to. The Master Emerald didn't seem to weigh anything in his hands. Lennox, Owen and Alistair cried out in despair as Eggman triumphantly held the Master Emerald above his head.

"Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! I win, I win!" he cried excitedly "Now I'll have the ultimate power source for my Death Egg! It was powerful enough on its own but with THIS, I'll be even MORE powerful! I can hardly wait to unleash Operation: Eggman Empire! It's going to be a blast indeed!"

He then proceeded to use a Chaos Control to warp himself and the Master Emerald away from Angel Island. Lennox, Owen and Alistair could only stare in horror at their failed task. Eggman had won. He'd gotten the Master Emerald and was now making his way back home to the Egg-Bunker with it. Lennox cursed violently at Eggman.

"DAMN HIM!" he bellowed "He beat us! We lost the bloody emerald!

Finitevus will NOT be happy about this at all!"

"Indeed I'm not Team Diamond." snarled a chilling, dark, malevolent voice that made Lennox's blood run cold.

He, Owen and Alistair turned around and saw a very angry looking Dr. Finitevus standing before them. His cloak had been taken off and was slung over his shoulder like a sack full of toys. All eight Chaos Emeralds were in that cloak. He'd found them all and had come back to see if Team Diamond had accomplished their task yet. He was very disappointed to see that the Master Emerald had been lost. Lennox looked very nervous, an emotion he rarely ever used and an emotion that felt weird to him when he did use it.

"Um...h-hello D-Dr. Finitevus..." he stammered worriedly "W-we're..."

"Do. NOT. Say. Anything." growled Finitevus "I know what's happened. You've lost the Master Emerald! How the hell did you lose the Master Emerald?!"

"Dr. Eggman just shouted the words "Chaos Control" and he vanished with the Master Emerald!" exclaimed Owen "We tried our best to defeat him! We fought hard but he was too strong for us! We're very sorry Finitevus..."

"Sorry? SORRY?! Sorry isn't good enough you incompetent cretins!" roared Finitevus, walloping Owen with the cloak full of Chaos Emeralds "I ordered you to make sure nobody tried to take the Master Emerald and you failed to do something so simple! You should have called ME for help! I would have defeated Eggman in a matter of seconds!"

"We didn't get the chance to do so!" protested Alistair "We were caught up in the battle and we simply didn't think to call for you!"

"Enough of your pathetic excuses!" snapped Finitevus "You disgrace the Dark Armada with your incompetence and you will be punished most horribly for this failure!"

"Oh yeah?" challenged Owen "You and what army?"

"Owen, don't provoke him!" exclaimed Lennox.

Too late. Finitevus was very much provoked right now. He summoned a warp ring from nowhere and he caused Owen to fall through it. Lennox and Alistair assumed that Finitevus wanted them to go through it too so they followed Owen through the warp ring. Finitevus jumped through after them, the warp ring vanishing behind him as he passed through it. As soon as Finitevus left...Angel Island began to tilt to the side and sink down to the ground. The Master Emerald was gone and the Chaos Emeralds weren't on the island anymore. There was nothing to keep the island afloat anymore. It started tilting and then...it fell. Fell straight out of the sky like a falling aeroplane. The entire island came crashing down onto the ground below, shattering to pieces like broken glass as it crashed down. The island was reduced to rubble, there was nothing left of it after the crash. Not even the Master Emerald shrine. The once beautiful floating island was now a sorry pile of rocks and rubble, no longer resembling an island anymore. Luckily, there was nothing on the ground so the island had been spared the misfortune of crushing something or someone underneath it. One thing was for sure, Knuckles would to berserk once he found out what had happened to Angel Island...

Over at the Golden Hive Colony though, AngelIsland was the last thing on Knuckles's mind. He leapfrogged over a thorny vine that tried to wallop him off his feet. The vine swept under his feet as Knuckles dodged the attack. The battle with the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra didn't seem any closer to ending at this moment. It was far from over more like. Even with Team Nekronopolis helping Knuckles at his team, the battle was still going on. It really didn't help that the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was such a powerful opponent either. The Hydra had decided to resort to other weapons that its body contained. Being how it could manipulate machinery, it had more weapons on it than just vines. The Hydra extended out a vine that had a drill on the end of it and it lunged at Knuckles with the drill spinning dangerously and squealing ominously. Knuckles leaped out of the way as the drill attempted to skewer him. The drill ended up stabbing down into the ground just where Knuckles had been standing seconds before. Knuckles grabbed the vine, the drill still spinning, and he pointed the drill at the Hydra. But the Hydra swung

his vine up and flicked Knuckles up into the air. Knuckles cried out as he found himself suddenly flung upwards like a baseball and he hurtled straight back down. The Hydra was holding its drill vine under where Knuckles was going to land. Knuckles yelled in horror. He was going to land on the drill and get skewered! Luckily for him, Shade saved his life by chopping the vine in two. Knuckles ended up having a much safer landing for Shade held her arms out and caught him just after cutting the vine in two.

"Whew! What a save!" he gasped "Thanks Shade!"

"You're welcome." said Shade "How will we stop that thing? It seems very endurable and it can regenerate its vines once they get severed. It seems like a no-win situation for us."

"We'll defeat it somehow, I just know it!" declared Knuckles "It must have a weak spot, everything does!"

"We just don't know what it is I'm afraid." said Shade grimly "We'll have to keep fighting. We'll find its weak spot eventually."

"I wonder if a good shock will do the trick." suggested Thunder "It's worth a shot."

"More like "Worth a *shock* "!" giggled Bolt.

Thunder chuckled at his brother's bad joke and the two held hands. They tensed up tightly and they fired a huge jolt of electricity at the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra. The shock seemed to work for the Hydra started screeching a blood curdling screech of pain as it was brutally electrocuted. Thunder and Bolt were pleased that their attack was working so they kept it up. Electricity coursed through the Hydra's body and the circuitry inside the machine couldn't seem to hold for very long for a few explosions went off inside the Hydra's body and the Hydra began to wail. It was short-circuiting from the attack. Thunder and Bolt stopped their electrical attack and watched with satisfaction as the Hydra began to sway, struggling to remain standing.

"It's weakened!" cheered Bolt "What a "shocker" that is!"

"Let's attack it while it's weak!" cried Thunder.

Miranda whipped out her electro-prod and she stabbed it into the side of the Hydra and gave it another electrical shock to keep it distracted while the other Royal Fighters came in for the kill. Knuckles and Shade both attacked the Hydra together with Knuckles punching and Shade slicing and Team Chaotix joined in their onslaught. Vector chomped on the Hydra's main neck and bit down as hard as he could, hoping to rip the Hydra's head off. Espio threw as much shurikens as he could at the Hydra and severed many of its vines. Charmy just did what he could, which wasn't really much but he reckoned it was better than nothing. Kari offered some additional support by smashing the four robot heads the Hydra had with her spanner. She may not like having to destroy things but in Eggman's case, she was all too happy to make an exception. The Royal Fighters combined strengths were too much for the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra and soon it found itself reduced to nothing more than a pile of vines and robot parts. The Royal Fighters cheered delightedly at their victory whereas Hugo, who had been watching the whole fight just stared grimly at the scene before them. He shook his head and smirked at the Royal Fighters as he whipped out a remote and pressed a button on it.

"Oh you haven't won this one yet Royal Fighters…" he said to himself.

The Royal Fighters soon found out for themselves why the fight wasn't over yet. The remote that Hugo had whipped out was a control remote for a feature for the Death Egg refuelling station. Given how the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra was guarding the station, a little contingency plan had been inserted in the station to ensure that the Hydra would win against any Royal Fighter it came up against. A huge hover bed crammed full of robot parts came out of an open compartment that opened up after Hugo had pressed the button on the remote. The hover bed sped over to the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra's remains and the Hydra reached up for the bed eagerly. It still had some life in it thanks to its regenerative abilities and it buried itself into the bed of robot parts like a child diving into a swimming pool. The Hydra began to absorb all of the robot parts on the bed and rebuild itself into a new image. The Royal Fighters watched

helplessly as the Hydra regenerated into a huge bipedal shape that loomed above the Royal Fighters like a giant from a child's nightmare. It was now a mesh of vines and machinery with the head coming from the leftovers of Metal Knuckles and its hands being huge crab claws with spiked wrists. There was an array of guns al lover its body and goodness knows what else on that new body of the Hydra's. The Krudzu Hybrid Hydra roared menacingly and it raised its crab claws, ready to strike. The Royal Fighters gaped at the sight of this new Hydra and they stepped back.

"I think the previous Hydra looked less scary!" whimpered Thunder.

"How bloomin' unfortunate that those robot parts were on offer for it!" squeaked Bolt.

"I forgot, that thing can manipulate machinery." muttered Knuckles, remembering the time that the Hydra took over the body of Devion the Devatron Leader and used him against the Royal Fighters before causing the crash of the Egg-Carrier that resulted in Eggman being put on life support "Well next time we destroy it, we'll make sure it doesn't get its vines on anymore machinery. Let's take it down!"

"I hope we can take it down again…" said Miranda nervously.

The Hydra lashed out with his crab claws and nearly grabbed Vector and Espio but the two reptiles jumped out of the way just in time. Vector grabbed hold of one of the crab claws but the Hydra ended up throwing him up into the air and then catching him before he could drop down to the ground. It squeezed Vector as hard as it possibly could with its claw, the crocodile grunting as he felt the life being squeezed out of him. Charmy saved Vector by flying into the Hydra's face and kicking it in the optics. Hugo watched this with displeasure and he whipped out his pistol. He decided to give the Hydra a helping hand and he began shooting at Charmy, forcing the bee to fly away. Espio noticed that the shot was coming from the sidelines and not from the Hydra himself but he couldn't quite see who was doing it. He ran for cover as the shots were now targeted at him.

"Look out! Somebody's shooting at us!" he cried.

"The Hydra must have back up!" yelled Vector, leaping out of the way as a laser blast nearly hit him "Charmy, go distract the sniper while we take down the Hydra will ya?"

"Sure thing Vector!" cried Charmy happily.

He flew away from the battle and he buzzed towards the shooter. He weaved around the firing shots as they threatened to hit him and he rocketed down with his feet held in front. He kick-slammed Hugo directly in the face and knocked him down onto his back. Hugo dropped his pistol as he was hit and he found himself lying on his back staring directly up at Charmy. Charmy whooped happily and looked down to see who he'd hit. To his shock, he was standing directly on top of Hugo.

"Hugo?!" he blurted "Why the heck were you shooting at us?!"

"Why do you think I'm shooting at you Charmy?" snapped Hugo "I'm trying to help the Hydra defeat you all!"

"What?! Why are you doing that?!" exclaimed Charmy "We're trying to help the Golden Hive Colony by getting rid of that station! Why are you trying to help the Hydra beat us?!"

"Because I'm working with Eggman." explained Hugo "You see, it was MY idea for Eggman to build a station here in the first place. I made a deal with him and he built his station here. And why? Remember how I said earlier "status quo is boring"? I meant it. The Golden Hive Colony is nothing but a boring waste of life with bees buzzing around in their pointless lives doing the same damn thing over and over! It's time for a change and I think Eggman's the welcome change we need! We can have a different life now! Not everything has to stay the same! The Golden Hive Colony can be for much greater things than just making honey, honey and more honey! I happily welcome Eggman's idea for a new world for it'll give us something new to do for once! And I will not have a little brat like you trying to ruin it for me!"

"Wow, I always knew you were a jerk but this takes the honeypot!" said Charmy in disgust "You're working for Eggman just because you want the colony to change? Just wait till I tell King Stinger about

what you've done! He'll be VERY angry about this!"

Hugo was not somebody who was interested in doing time for treason so he socked Charmy directly in the mouth and knocked him off. Charmy clutched his mouth in pain and winced, swearing that Hugo had knocked a tooth out even though he could still feel them all in his mouth. Hugo picked up his pistol but before he could shoot Charmy, the bee sprang up into the air and booted him in the face. Hugo swore violently at Charmy and threw a punch at him. Charmy dodged and he stuck his tongue out at Hugo. Hugo growled furiously at Charmy and he pointed the pistol at Charmy's face. Just as he pulled the trigger, Charmy leaned over backwards, causing the shot to miss and accidentally hit the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra in the face. The Krudzu snarled and eyed Hugo angrily. It did not appreciate the fact that Hugo, who was supposed to be on its side, had shot him and obviously concluded that he had shot him on purpose. So the Hydra abandoned the battle and he lumbered after Hugo. Hugo tried to fly away but the Hydra lashed out with his vines and ensnared Hugo. He dropped his pistol as he was grabbed and Charmy grabbed it, thinking it could come in useful. Hugo screamed in terror as the Hydra began swinging him around and squeezing him as hard as possible. Charmy saw his chance and he flew past the Hydra. The Hydra spotted him and it lumbered after Charmy, still holding Hugo. Charmy led the Hydra directly towards the Royal Fighters and just as it ran by, Miranda prodded it in the foot with her electric prod. The prod stung the Hydra's foot and made it wince in pain. It lost its balance and fell over onto its side. Now it was down, Charmy decided to deliver the news to his friends.

"Hey everybody! Hugo's double-crossed us!" cried Charmy "He's working for Eggman and is trying to help the Hydra kill us!"

"I know, I figured it out already." said Shade grimly "I was going to tell the others after the battle was over. Wonder why Hugo's working for Eggman."

"He thinks the colony's "boring" and it needs a makeover so he wants Eggman to take over the colony." said Charmy with a look of disgust on his face "Yeah, he's kinda crazy." he added whislt circling the air beside his head with his finger to emphasize his point.

"So Hugo set us all up to be captured like Team Nekronopolis were, that's why he didn't warn us about the Hydra." muttered Knuckles "Well after this is done, we'll see to it that the king hears about this. But how will we stop the Hydra?"

"If it helps, I have an idea." said Kari quietly "See that fuel tank over there?" she pointed at the huge fuel tank that provided all the fuel that the Death Egg would need "If we can get the Hydra near that tank and then cause the tank to explode, it should destroy the Hydra. And the station too."

"Brilliant idea!" said Miranda enthusiastically "We'll all trick the Hydra into getting near to the tank and then destroy the tank. But we risk going up with the tank too..." she murmured.

"I'll cut the tank open and leave an opening." suggested Shade "Then one of us gets the Hydra near the tank and Thunder and Bolt will electrocute it. That'll weaken it too much for it to get away. And then while Thunder and Bolt get out of the way, Charmy will shoot the fuel tank with that pistol he got from Hugo and set the whole thing to explode."

"Yay! I get to cause an explosion! AWESOME!" squealed Charmy excitedly.

"It's a good plan and it's worth a try." said Knuckles "Let's give it a shot. It's now or never."

The Royal Fighters agreed with Knuckles. They may as well give this plan a shot if they have any chance of winning and getting out of this battle alive. Before the Hydra could stand back up, Vector ran over to the still ensnared Hugo and he yanked him out of the Hydra's grasp. Hugo attempted to resist but Vector held him tightly so he couldn't get away.

"And you, you filthy traitor are going straight to the Golden Hive Palace." growled Vector "And I'll be happy to escort you there myself."

Vector carried Hugo away from the battle, leaving the other Royal Fighters to carry out Kari's plan. The Hydra picked itself up and it

raised its claws menacingly. Knuckles and Espio just dared it to come to them and the Hydra happily obliged. It lunged out at Knuckles and Espio with its claws but the two jumped up out of the way, leaving the claws to embed themselves into the ground. They landed atop the Hyda's claws and they ran up the Hydra's arms up to its head. They both punched it in the face and Espio stabbed it in the optices with his kunai. The Hydra writhed around in pain, trying to fling Knuckles and Espio off of its head. While it was distracted, Shade ran up to the station's fuel tank and she carved a hole into the tank with her blades. Black liquid began to seep out of the hole Shade had made and spill onto the floor. Shade ran away from the expanding puddle and waited for Knuckles and Espio to lead the Hydra towards the fuel tank. Knuckles and Espio leaped off of the Hydra's head and ran over to the fuel tank. The Hydra followed, oblivious to the danger that waited for it. The moment the Hydra was near the fuel tank, Knuckles and Espio darted away and left Thunder and Bolt to electrocute the Hydra. They threw lightning bolts at the Hydra, the bolts zapping the Hydra and making it squeal loudly in pain. Thunder and Bolt kept it up until the Hydra was down onto his knees and now Charmy made his move. He waited until everybody was out of the way of the Hydra and far away from the refuelling station. He then took aim with Hugo's pistol and fired at the hole in the fuel tank. To his amazement, he hit exactly where he was aiming at. The moment the shot came into contact with the fuel, the fuel ignited and then erupted into a terrific explosion that could make any bomb expert proud. Charmy flew away before the explosion could catch up to him though it did come close. He could feel the heat of the explosion behind him as he left it behind. The explosion tore apart the Krudzu Hybrid Hydra, vaporizing every last vine on the Hydra's body. The Hydra didn't even have time to scream as the explosion swallowed it up. The station itself was reduced to smithereens too, the explosion tearing apart every last piece of the station. The Royal Fighters looked back and saw that what had once been a Death Egg refuelling station was now a smouldering wreck of fire, debris and smoke. They all whooped with joy. Mission accomplished. They'd have some good news to deliver to the rest of the Royal Fighters that's for sure. Charmy in particular seemed quite happy over the fact their mission was a success and he'd been the one to start the explosion that had completed the mission.

"Whoo hoo! We did it! Eggman's lost a refuelling station! We rock!" cried Charmy excitedly.

"It was certainly a tough battle but we succeeded." said Knuckles, wiping his forehead "Well done everybody."

"Yes, we all did brilliantly didn't we?" said Miranda modestly "Now then, what was that station meant to be used for?"

"It was a refuelling station for an upcoming ship Eggman's building." explained Knuckles "I'll explain everything else later, we've gotta get back to the Golden Hive Palace and let King Stinger know that the station's destroyed. I bet he's already dealing with Hugo since Vector took him away earlier."

"Indeed." said Espio "And I bet he'll be happy to hear that Charmy was the one who exposed him too. I wonder if that'll redeem Charmy in his eyes?"

"I hope so." said Charmy worriedly "I don't wanna be kicked out again. Let's go to the palace and see what the king says."

With that said, the Royal Fighters left the wreck that was the refuelling station behind and headed off back to the Golden Hive Palace. The king was in for one heck of a story to hear once they got back to the palace...

Later, the Royal Fighters joined Vector back at the Golden Hive Palace and had arrived at the throne room. They had told the king and queen bees everything that had happened and that Hugo was a traitor and had set the Royal Fighters up for a trap that had nearly cost them their lives. Charmy also told them exactly what Hugo had said to him about why he'd turned traitor and that it was his idea in the first place for Eggman to build a station in the colony. Needless to say, the two bees were not pleased at all to see that one of their guards had turned traitor and had been responsible for the station being built here.

"THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS!" shouted King Stinger angrily, bouncing

up and down on his throne with his crown leaping on and off of his head "My most trusted guard is a traitor?! How dare you! Hugo, you shall be punished for this treason! I'll see to it that you are locked away in a cell and the key thrown away forever! What do you have to say for yourself?!"

"I have no regrets for my actions." said Hugo coldly, the bee's hands cuffed tightly behind his back and Vector holding him very tightly to prevent him from making a quick getaway "This colony is a festering ball of vapidity and a change in appearance and nature is what it needs. We're outdated now, it's time for a change."

"I'm appalled you can say those horrible words!" said Queen Bessie, scowling at Hugo with a look of utter contempt and disgust on her beautiful face "You shame the Golden Hive Colony Hugo! You are hereby stripped of your title and sentence to life in the dungeons. You will never taste freedom ever again."

Hugo said nothing as a pair of bee guards grabbed him by the arms and hauled him away. Stinger and Bessie watched with loathing as Hugo was taken out of the throne room as if this was the last they'd ever see of him. Good riddance to bad rubbish as some would say. The moment Hugo was taken away, Stinger addressed the Royal Fighters.

"I'm so terribly sorry for this outrage my friends, had I known Hugo was conspiring against the colony I never would have trusted him to take care of you." said Stinger, lifting his crown up from over his eyes once again "That whole mess with the Hydra thing was all my fault. I could have caused your deaths I could!"

"It's alright your majesty." said Knuckles politely "You didn't know Hugo was a traitor, this wasn't your fault at all."

"To make sure this disgusting turn of events never happens again, we'll keep a track record of every guard and make sure that any treachery is stopped dead in its tracks." declared Bessie "We will not allow anybody else to betray our colony like this. Treachery is one of the worst things that a colony can fall victim too."

"We understand." said Knuckles, thinking about how he himself had

been betrayed by Dr. Finitevus "But it doesn't matter now. We destroyed the station and the colony no longer has to worry about it. No Death Egg will be landing here anytime soon."

"Thank goodness." sighed Stinger "Now then there's something I need to do. Charmy, please come here."

Charmy looked a little nervous. Was the king going to say something nice to him or not? He stepped forward and he bowed down to the king. He may not be in the colony anymore but he still respected King Stinger. He was relieved to see that Stinger was smiling at him. That meant there was good news to give.

"Charmy, you have exposed Hugo for the traitor he is and uncovered his evil plans, as well as helped most marvellously in destroying the station." said Stinger with a smile on his face "I think that's the most amazing thing a bee's ever done. You really are a Royal Fighter after all and you have my utmost apologies for doubting you."

"Aw shucks, I don't blame you." said Charmy modestly "I kinda doubted myself too until we did the actual mission. Thank you for being nice to me sir."

"Well you did something that deserves my kindness." said Stinger brightly "Charmy, I am allowing you to rejoin the Golden Hive Colony. But if you want to stay with the Royal Fighters, that's fine with me."

Charmy looked stunned to hear this. Stinger was going to let him back in the colony? Charmy was thrilled to hear this but deep in his heart, he knew where he truly belonged.

"Thanks for the offer King Stinger sir but I'm staying with the Royal Fighters." said Charmy "The colony's great and all but I think I was born to be a fighter, not a worker. Hope you don't mind."

"We're just glad you've found your place Charmy." said Bessie softly "You maybe staying with the Royal Fighters but as a reward for your heroism, you're free to visit the colony whenever you wish. Your exile is lifted and you're no longer forbidden to set foot in the colony

again."

"Aw sweet! Thank you your majesties!" cried Charmy, shakign Stinger's hand so furiously he nearly wrenched it free from his wrist.

"Y-y-yes, y-y-you're welcome." stammered Stinger as Charmy stopped shaking his hand and he tried to regain himself "W-well Royal Fighters, I guess you'll b-be leaving now?"

"We have to find the location of the Death Egg and bring it down before it can launch." said Shade "We can't stay here any longer, we need to get going."

"The colony wishes you luck in your mission Royal Fighters and we're forever grateful for your selflessness today." said Bessie "Hope to see you again soon."

"See you around guys." said Knuckles with a wave "We'll stop Dr. Eggman once and for all, we promise."

Stinger and Bessie waved goodbye as the Royal Fighters turned and left the throne room. As they left the Golden Hive Palace behind, Vector smiled at Charmy.

"Well Charmy, you redeemed yourself in the colony's eyes." said Vector brightly "How's that for a good day?"

"It feels wonderful that my own colony doesn't hate me anymore." said Charmy with a happy smile on his face "Thank you for bringing me back here Vector, the chance to make the colony like me again was the nicest thing you've ever done for me."

He hugged Vector gratefully. Vector just chuckled modestly and patted Charmy on the back.

"Anytime little guy." said Vector "And just know that you're always a good bee in my books. I'm proud to have you in the Chaotix Detective Agency."

Charmy beamed. This day was going to be a day to remember for the bee that was for sure. And despite the fact he was from the Golden Hive Colony and was allowed to come back to them, he

knew that he was already on his way home as the Royal Fighters boarded the hover saucer and headed off back to New Mobotropolis. The Royal Fighters were his colony and he wouldn't swap this colony for anything else in the world...

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Raccoon on the Run

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Yay! Charmy's liked by the Golden Hive Colony again! Boo! Dr. Eggman's got the Master Emerald! What will happen next?

Tune in next time as Sonic, Silver and Blaze deal with some "Trouble in Chun-Nan"...

Trouble in Chun-Nan Part 1

Story 192: Trouble for Chun-Nan Part 1

Countdown to Death Egg: 3

"Silver, Blaze…welcome to Chun-Nan."

Sonic the Hedgehog stepped aside and enthusiastically allowed Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat to see the scene that befell them. The Royal Fighters were currently on a worldwide mission and had spread their forces the world over in order to ensure that the mission would be completed successfully. The Lost Jungle, Megapolis, Adabat and The Golden Hive Colony all had Royal Fighters in them to take care of something that needed to be dealt with immediately. Refuelling stations for the upcoming Eggman vessel, the Death Egg, had been built in various different parts of Mobius and thanks to Nicole, the Royal Fighters knew where to find them. They had split up and had travelled all over the world to deal with the refuelling stations. Sonic, Silver Blaze and the former Chun-Nan resident Ruben the Water Panther had chosen to come to Chun-Nan to destroy the refuelling station that had been built there. It had mostly been Ruben's suggestion since he was devoted to his country of origin and would do anything to ensure it was safe. The trip had been a breeze for Blaze merely used her Sol Emeralds to warp everybody over to Chun-Nan. Being how she was from Mobius's future, she knew where Chun-Nan was and thus, had no difficulty warping there. They had appeared just outside the local village in a spiral of flames and after settling down for a minute, Sonic showed Silver and Blaze exactly what they had arrived in. Silver and Blaze stared ahead and were instantly marvelled at what lay ahead of them. They walked towards the village so they could get a closer look at everything around them. Sonic and Ruben followed close behind. Upon entering the village, Silver and Blaze could hardly tear their eyes away from the vast amounts of market stalls, pagodas and huts that made the village of Chun-Nan. Everything looked simply amazing to them and they were keen to explore as much of the country as possible. They knew they couldn't

though since they had an important job to do but they could still admire some of the scenery around them. Some of the local citizens glanced at Silver and Blaze in wonder as if marvelled at their appearances as much as they were marvelled at Chun-Nan itself before carrying on their merry way.

"It's…so beautiful…" whispered Blaze in amazement.

"How did a world with so much beauty like this end up becoming such a ruin?" asked Silver, thinking back to his and Blaze's timeline and how they live in a post apocalyptic world that's clinging onto life quite desperately.

"Well that is what you're trying to find out is it not?" noted Sonic "And we think we may have found the cause since it seems very likely that the Death Egg is what ends the world."

"I just hope me and Blaze are right at long last." muttered Silver "Otherwise I WILL lose my mind if we get it wrong yet again."

"Hey Silver, Blaze, what's Chun-Nan like in the future?" asked Ruben worriedly "Is it a wreck too?"

"Surprisingly enough Ruben, Chun-Nan is the most intact of any place on Mobius in the future." explained Blaze "It was spared much of the destruction that claimed the other countries. It's wrecked to some degree but compared to everywhere else, it's easily the most habitable place on Mobius in the future. Me and Silver kinda feel glad for the country although even Chun-Nan won't keep everybody alive forever."

"Well that's good to know, Chun-Nan is the most habitable place in Mobius's future." said Ruben "But I'd much rather that the world doesn't end in the first place. I'm as eager as you two are to prevent the end of the world."

"Glad to hear it little panther." said Blaze with a small smile on her face "Now then, any ideas where to find the station?"

"It doesn't look like it's in the village." said Silver, taking a look around "Nothing really stands out from this village and a refuelling

station would be WAY too conspicuous to hide here. Everything's so vintage looking! It would stick out like a sore thumb if it was here."

"I bet Emperor Tai and Princess Matilda know where it is." suggested Sonic "They rule the country so they'd be the first to notice any changes to it. Let's go see them."

"I wonder if the Pagoda of Prosperity's been rebuilt yet." wondered Ruben aloud "It's been a while since we last met Matilda, I bet it's been rebuilt by now."

"I'm sure it is Ruben." said Sonic cheerfully "Come on Silver and Blaze. I bet you two will get on nicely with Matilda. She's quite a remarkable woman and she knows how to kick butt."

"Like Princess Elise does?" mused Silver "That does sound great. And Blaze will have something to relate to with Matilda. She's a princess too."

"Unlike me though, Matilda's still got her kingdom so her title is still meaningful. I on the other hand don't deserve my title since there's nothing to be a princess of for me." murmured Blaze.

"What happened to your kingdom?" asked Ruben.

"Please, I don't wanna talk about it. It brings back sad memories for me." said Blaze, a tear coming to her eye as memories of her deceased kingdom came back to her. She wiped the tear away.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you." said Ruben worriedly "Please forgive me."

"It's quite alright." said Blaze gently "There was no harm in asking me. Anyway, where is the Pagoda of Prosperity? Or at least, where would it be?"

"We'll show you the way." said Sonic "If it's still not rebuilt yet then we'll take you to Bladefeather's pagoda. The Emperor and Matilda will likely be there."

"What's gotten you wondering about if the Pagoda of Prosperity's been rebuilt yet?" asked Silver "Was it destroyed or something?"

"Last month, the Region of Rebellious Reptiles blew up the pagoda, hoping to take Matilda and the Emperor with it." said Sonic "What made it worse was that that happened on Matilda's birthday and just after Bladefeather proposed marriage to her! How sick can some people get?!"

"That's dreadful!" gasped Silver "Nobody should have that happen to them on such a special day and especially after a marriage proposal!"

"I agree." said Ruben bitterly "Don't worry though, I'm sure the pagoda's been rebuilt now."

Ruben eagerly toddled off ahead of the Mobians and headed through the village. Sonic couldn't blame Ruben's enthusiasm since this was his country of origin and he was a very close friend of the royals despite no longer living in Chun-Nan. He, Silver and Blaze followed Ruben through the village and found themselves coming to the familiar sight of the Pagoda of Prosperity. Just as they'd hoped, the pagoda had indeed been rebuilt. A month and a couple of week's worth of rebuilding had resulted in the Pagoda of Prosperity being rebuilt and it looked as grand and majestic as ever. The pagoda was a gleaming mixture of white and gold with dragon pictures snaking around some of the supporting beams and stretching out across the tiled roof of the pagoda. Ruben darted up the hill as if the pagoda had a magnet like effect on him. Sonic just chuckled, humoured at Ruben's excitement upon seeing the rebuilt pagoda. He, Silver and Blaze followed Ruben up the hill and caught up to Ruben just as he approached the door and knocked on it excitedly. The door opened and the familiar aged but kind face of Emperor Dalon Tai peeked through the open door. His face brightened at the sight of Ruben.

"Why hello there Ruben. It's an honour to see you." said Tai "And you've brought Sonic and some new friends with you too." he added, taking note of Sonic, Silver and Blaze who were standing politely behind Ruben.

"I have indeed." said Ruben "I'm really happy to see your pagoda's been rebuilt by the way."

"Thank you." said Tai "It feels good to be home I say. So what have you all come to Chun-Nan for?"

"We'll explain in a minute." said Ruben "Where's Matilda? She'll want to hear about this too."

"She's in the garden training her friend Li Moon." answered Tai "Just go around to the back and you'll meet her there."

Ruben bowed as if to say "thank you" without saying the words themselves and he ran around to the back of the pagoda with Sonic, Silver and Blaze following him. Surely enough, just as Tai had said, Matilda was in the back garden and she was training her friend Li Moon the Fox in how to fight. Recently, Li Moon had decided she wanted to learn kung-fu too and knew full well who the best person to teach her was. Ruben held up a hand as if to say that the Royal Fighters should keep quiet until Matilda was finished. It was considered dishonourable to interrupt a training session and Ruben was not about to be the first person to do so. Silver and Blaze watched as Matilda stood before Li Moon in a battle-ready stance, the young vixen mimicking her pose and waiting for Matilda to make a move. Matilda breathed slowly, getting ready to make a move. Li Moon tried her best to keep her pose still and to not make any sudden moves. She wasn't meant to move until Matilda attacked. This step of the training was meant to teach defensive moves. Ruben could tell this since he himself had partaken in training like this as well during the days of his clan, days that he cherished dearly since the day of their demise. The water panther was quite eager to see how Li Moon would perform for he didn't know she was being trained in kung-fu and was instantly interested in watching this session. Matilda and Li Moon remained still for a moment before Matilda made a move so sudden that Ruben jumped in alarm. She lashed out and slugged Li Moon in the gut, bringing the vixen down onto her knees with her hands tightly clutching her stomach in pain. She coughed loudly as if trying to say something but not managing much more than a loud cough. Matilda shook her head sadly and she helped Li Moon up onto her feet, the vixen still clutching her gut in pain.

"This won't do at all Li Moon." said Matilda "Your reflexes are weak. You'll need to work on them a bit."

"You say that as if I was...cough, cough...meant to expect what you did." croaked Li Moon "You kept still for so long that I wasn't prepared for your surprise attack."

"Ah, that's one of the many subtle tricks of the kung-fu expert that Master Kai taught me when he was alive." said Matilda "Lure your opponent into a false sense of security and trick them. Lash out when they least expect it and you'll be able to bring your opponent down before they've realized what's happened."

"Like this?" asked Li Moon in a rather innocent, sweet sounding voice.

Then she attempted to drive her elbow into Matilda's gut but the princess had expected that move. Whenever she told anybody that tactic, the first thing they did was attempt to attack her because she hadn't expected it. Well now she expected it and Li Moon found herself with her elbow firmly grabbed by Matilda's arm.

"Nice try Li Moon but I've fallen for that trick once already and it wasn't funny the first time." crowed Matilda.

She took Li Moon's legs out from underneath her with a swift kick to the ankles. Li Moon cried out a pained cry as her back sharply hit the ground and before she could even think about getting back up, Matilda pinned her down with her foot place firmly over Li Moon's chest. The princess smiled pityingly at Li Moon as if mocking her. Li Moon wasn't offended, she knew Matilda was just messing with her for a bit of fun. It's what friends did after all.

"You have to be unpredictable." said Matilda sternly "Trying the oldest trick in the book will NOT get you anywhere. Unpredictability will save your life one of these days. Believe me, I've had plenty of those moments."

"Alright then Matilda, I'll remember that." said Li Moon.

Matilda smiled and she let Li Moon go. Li Moon stood back up and shook hands with Matilda.

"It's been a great session today. Thank you." said Li Moon brightly "I

think you're a great teacher so far."

"Oh believe me, I've been tutored BY a great teacher myself so it's something you kinda inherit from your master." said Matilda modestly "I wouldn't be such a great teacher if Master Kai wasn't a great teacher himself."

Li Moon shook her head, agreeing with Matilda's statement. Before anything else could be said, Ruben decided to let Matilda know he was here. He ran out to meet her. Matilda wheeled around upon hearing the sound of Ruben's pounding feet on the grass of her garden and Li Moon leaned to one side to see past Matilda. Both girls were thrilled to see the little water panther again.

"Hi Matilda! Hi Li Moon!" Ruben cried excitedly.

"Why Ruben, it's so good to see you!" exclaimed Matilda happily, hugging the water panther "I really wasn't expecting you to come around anytime soon. You've certainly surprised me."

"Guess Ruben know how to "Be unpredictable"." giggled Li Moon jokingly "Good to see you Ruben. What brings you here then?"

"I think I'll let Sonic explain everything." said Ruben.

Sonic seemed to respond to what Ruben had said for he emerged from around the side of the pagoda and walked up towards Matilda with Silver and Blaze following him. He waved at Matilda and then shook hands with her.

"Hi princess, good to see you again and especially with your pagoda fully rebuilt." said Sonic brightly "It must be great to be in your old home again."

"Oh I can't tell you how happy I am the pagoda's been rebuilt." beamed Matilda "Daddy and I have been over the moon about it. Bladefeather's happy too since the pagoda will be his new home after we get married."

"I bet he'll like that." said Sonic with a wink "And if it interests you Tilly, I have two new friends I'd like you to meet. Their names are Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat and they're helping us Royal

Fighters with something at the moment." he added, stepping aside so Matilda could see Silver and Blaze properly.

"Why hello there you two." said Matilda politely as she set her gaze upon Silver and Blaze "I don't believe we've ever met. My name's Dalon Matilda. Welcome to Chun-Nan Silver and Blaze."

"Thank you princess." said Silver, bowing down respectfully "It's quite nice to visit this lovely country. You must be very proud to rule over it."

"Proud doesn't begin to describe my love for my country." said Matilda with a happy smile on her face that seemed to stretch wider than what would be considered normal "So are you two new recruits for the R.F.S. then?"

"No, we're from the future." explained Blaze in a straight-to-the-point manner of speaking "Please do not dismiss us as crazy, we assure you that it's true. We've come back in time to help Sonic the Hedgehog prevent something terrible that will happen and end up dooming Mobius for years to come."

Matilda looked shocked to hear this. It was common knowledge how Matilda would get extremely anxious if she heard that something bad was going to happen to Chun-Nan but this was going to make her more anxious than ever before. Something dooms Mobius? That was worse than anything Matilda had ever heard in her life. The world ending was worse than anything that could happen to Chun-Nan. Li Moon caught the signs of Matilda's anxiety immediately and she put a hand on Matilda's arm to try and relax her. Blaze looked down at her feet in shame.

"I'm sorry…I didn't think that would disturb you so much." she said apologetically.

"Just remember that not everybody takes news like this as lightly as Sonic and friends." said Silver, shaking his head sadly "And Matilda seems to be one of those people."

"Something…happens…and…dooms…Mobius?!" shrieked Matilda. Her face was so pale that she looked like she had just risen from the

dead "You mean...the world...ends?!" her body began to shake uncontrollably.

"According to Silver and Blaze, something happens and Mobius ends up being a wreck for over 200 years." explained Sonic "They've been desperately trying to find out what the cause of Mobius's end is and have gone back in time to try and help us prevent it. Some of their theories...have been inaccurate I'm sorry to say but they think they've got it this time. It's also related as to why we're here."

"Is it?" asked Li Moon "Please tell us everything."

"Me and Blaze think the thing that ends the world is caused by Dr. Eggman." Silver exposited "We read in a history book that a ship he builds called "The Death Egg" fires a beam at Mobius and probably destroys most of it. We're here to find the Death Egg and also get rid of any refuelling stations it has so that it'll have nowhere to run or hide from us. There's a station in Chun-Nan apparently and we're wondering if you know anything about it."

"Refuelling station...hmm...I know what you're talking about." murmured Matilda, her anxiety seemingly under control now "We saw a huge metal building standing in the middle of the Bamboo Forests and it has a logo baring Eggman's hideous face on it. Bladefeather went over to investigate it a couple of hours ago but he hasn't returned yet. I was thinking about going after him after Li Moon's training session."

"So Bladefeather's over at the refuelling station already?" asked Sonic "Cool. Is Mushu with him?"

"No. Bladefeather insisted he went alone." said Matilda gravely "Which explains why I, his fiancée, didn't go with him. He's been gone for too long now though so like it or not, I'm coming after him and Mushu's coming with me."

"Well we're here to destroy the refuelling station Matilda so we'd like to come with you too." said Ruben, tugging lightly on Matilda's dress "That station will be as good as destroyed with us helping you."

"It certainly will." said Matilda agreeably "I've seen enough of Sonic to know how well he can fight and I've heard many rumours on his destructive capabilities. And your water powers will be useful against a metal building Ruben. As for you two…what powers do you have?" she asked, addressing Silver and Blaze.

"I have psychokinesis and Blaze his pyrokinesis." explained Silver "Basically, I'm psychic and Blaze has fire powers. Believe me when I say they'll be very useful against our enemies."

"I look forward to seeing your powers in action." said Matilda gleefully "So, let's get Mushu and get going to the station."

"Hey, can I come too?" asked Li Moon eagerly "Get a chance to test out what I've learned so far?"

"I would have said no in any other circumstance Li Moon but because I have very reliable friends who I'm sure will take good care of you, I'm going to allow you to come." said Matilda kindly "It's not that I don't think you'll be very good on your own, it's just I don't think you're ready to handle things by yourself. Sonic and friends will keep an eye on you in case I'm unable to aid you in battle my friend."

"Oh, OK." said Li Moon, looking slightly disappointed but trying her best to remain polite about it "I hope that what I've learned so far will be enough."

"It'll depend on the opponent mostly but we'll see." said Matilda "Everybody, follow me. Once we pick up Mushu, we'll get going to the station. I know where it is."

"We'll follow your lead than Tilly, let's do it to it!" cried Sonic excitedly.

Glad to see that everybody was ripped and rearing to go, Matilda ran off around the pagoda and headed into the village to find Mushu with the Royal Fighters and Li Moon following her. One thought began to run through Matilda's mind as they were preparing for their mission. Hopefully what happened today would be enough to prevent the supposed apocalypse that was coming in the future…

Over in the Bamboo Forests, there were a horde of Egg-Pawns patrolling the area with shields and lances in their hands. They marched around in unison, keeping a close eye out for any signs of intruders who dared to wonder into their territory. And this was territory worth defending for this territory was home to the last and biggest of the Death Egg refuelling stations that had been built all over the world. This was meant to be the main Death Egg refuelling station. All the others were just pit-stops, this station was meant to be a pit-stop and more. The Chun-Nan Death Egg refuelling station dwarfed all the other stations, even the one in Adabat in height. It was a huge tower that stretched to be about twice the height of Eiffel Tower. What made it even larger was that the tower itself was standing proudly atop a huge rectangular base that housed the station's controls. A huge landing pad stood behind the station. The Death Egg would touch down on that pad and refuel and because of the tall tower, worker bots could perform maintenance checks and repairs on the upper parts of the Death Egg. The Royal Fighters could only imagine the size of the Death Egg once it reached completion and took to the skies at last and this station would clinch it for them how big the Death Egg really was. The station had the usual defensive measures such as gun turrets on the sides of the towers and around the base. They would shoot if somebody so much as stepped a toe into the station's territory. If the gun turrets didn't kill any intruders than the Egg-Pawns on guard most certainly will. They looked like they were ready to stab anybody with their lances if they so much as looked at them. This was the most important refuelling station of all the ones Eggman had built so the tight security was hardly unjustified. There was one guard that the Royal Fighters would fear more than the Egg-Pawns though. And that was Eggman's loyal servant bot Katherine. She had been troublesome for the Royal Fighters since the day she had been constructed and the main reason as to why Dr. Eggman keeps cheating death. She'd saved his life when it looked like the crash of the Egg-Carrier had finally finished him off and continued to remain loyal to Dr. Eggman. She was honoured to have been given the task of guarding the Chun-Nan Death Egg refuelling station and would guard the station with her very life. As of now, she was making a report to Dr. Eggman. She had some very exciting news to give him. She tapped some buttons on the computer monitor and waited for Dr. Eggman to respond to her call. The screen was blank for a few

seconds before it finally lit up with the head section of Dr. Eggman's life support mech filling the space of the screen. Eggman greeted Katherine with a hearty chuckle as if the very sight of Katherine was enough to put him in a good mood.

"Ah, good afternoon Katherine!" chortled Eggman happily "And how's my lovely assistant today?"

"I am **very good** THANK YOU VERY MUCH **Dr. Eggman.** " Katherine pieced some clips of pre-recorded voices together to form the sentence "I come *bearing very good news* for you."

"If my lovely Katherine has good news for me, then it's going to be good news worth hearing about!" cackled Eggman excitedly "Go on then, let's hear it!"

Katherine displayed an image of an evil smile on her cactus-shaped visor as she delivered her news.

"I have MANAGED TO CAPTURE a kung-fu warrior. **I believe he** *HAS TIES WITH THE* Royal Fighters. " explained Katherine.

"Who is it?" asked Dr. Eggman.

"His name is **Bladefeather** ." replied Katherine.

"I remember him…we kidnapped him along with that princess and the emperor of Chun-Nan didn't we?" mused Dr. Eggman. Pleasant memories of the planning stage for Operation: Double Trouble came back to him "Yes…we strapped him along with Matilda and the emperor to a missile that we were planning on launching at New Mobotropolis! I should have expected resistance from Chun-Nan's local heroes given I've built a station in their territory. I'd like to see Bladefeather if you please Katherine."

Katherine nodded and she switched off the computer monitor. She left the room and headed upstairs to one of the upper floors of the station. The base had three floors and after the third floor, it was the tower from all the way up. The second floor housed a prison cell that was used to house any prisoners that the Eggman Empire could possibly have use for. Katherine pressed a button that opened up

the prison door and she walked inside. The room was a huge room that had a very long drop. The only grounding in the room was a walkway bridge that led to a huge glass prison cell that stood on the edge of the bridge with a few supporting rods keeping it in place. Near the entrance to the prison room was a control panel that would open or close the cell. The cell itself was a capsule that had a metal top and metal bottom but a sheet of glass all around. It was Diamond Glass, the toughest glass on Mobius and the cell had one solitary prisoner. That prisoner was Bladefeather the Falcon, Matilda's betrothed and one of Chun-Nan's most loyal and fearsome warriors. His Thousand Daggers technique made him a force to be reckoned with but it seemed that not even his skills could save him from this one. He'd been captured while snooping around the station and was being held captive in the cell. He stood in the cell, scowling at Katherine as she approached him.

"What do you want you foul, repugnant female?" snarled Bladefeather.

"The maser **wants to** *see you.* " Katherine said with a montage of voice clips.

"Just my luck I guess, I now have to put up with the mad doctor's pontificating do I?" sighed Bladefeather "Well apprise your conniving, vexing master that I harbour no interest in meeting with him."

Katherine ignored him and she displayed Eggman's face on her visor. His face was bathed in a red glow due to being inside a red life support mech and somehow the red face looked more frightening than his normally coloured face.

"Hello Bladefeather, I think you've been a naughty boy since Katherine's put you in a cell." crowed Eggman "What have you done wrong then?"

"Dr. Eggman, I am not interested in exchanging discussions with a baneful fiend like you." snapped Bladefeather "Kindly leave me in peace and I won't have to put a dagger through your filthy robot's head."

"Oh, ho, ho, ho! Just try it feather brain and you'll regret it!" sneered Dr. Eggman "You're behind a thick sheet of Diamond Glass! You can't hurt Katherine!"

"My daggers can cut through Diamond Glass." gloated Bladefeather "Were it not for the inconvenient fact that if I so much as scratch the glass, the cell will collapse and take me with it onto a giant fan down below, I could cut my way out of this cell without a problem. Pity you've made such a simple escape attempt infinitely more onerous with that feature."

Dr. Eggman knew full well what the falcon was talking about. He'd installed that feature himself when the station was nearing completion. The idea was to make sure that escape was impossible and given how trying to escape a cell like this was pretty much a method of suicide, it seemed he'd succeeded. Bladefeather hadn't attempted to break out of the cell for he valued his life too much to just waste it to a giant fan at the bottom. As for the fan itself, it was a huge fan with six sharp blades and it was spinning menacingly down below and filling the room with an ominous whirr. To Bladefeather it was like being kept in a cage and dangled above a dangerous animal, said animal being a giant fan and probably more dangerous than any animal he could possibly name. Eggman cackled again at Bladefeather.

"Exactly! So I'm free to gloat to you as much as I want my prisoner!" gloated Eggman.

"Fine, then I shall just take it upon myself to ignore your mindless bragging." snorted Bladefeather, turning his back on Katherine and giving her the cold shoulder.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you." warned Eggman, a soft but menacing tone dominating his voice as he spoke "I might ask Katherine to carve your name on the glass. I don't think she'll even manage to write the first letter before it falls though!"

"Of all the...fine." sighed Bladefeather, turning back around to face Katherine "What do you want then?"

"Just to make fun of how helpless you are." sneered Eggman "And

to let you know what this station's purpose is. I'm sure you're interested to know right?"

"The purpose of this station is not a question I am pursuing to find the answer to." grumbled Bladefeather "But knowing you, you'll tell me anyway you obnoxious, gluttonous waste of existence."

"I'll ignore that disgusting insult for it's not worth my anger at this time." said Dr. Eggman coldly "This station serves as a refuelling port for my upcoming vessel of destruction, the Death Egg."

"That has got to be the most childish name I've ever heard of for a ship." scoffed Bladefeather "It's no wonder we kung-fu warriors see you as nothing more than a joke."

"You'll change that attitude of yours once I tell you that the Death Egg will roboticize the entire world!" snapped Eggman "Once it takes off and enters space, I shall fire a world roboticizer and turn the entire world into a robot utopia just for me and me only to rule!"

"How predictable." sniffed Bladefeather "You already tried that pernicious scheme of yours last year and we were all restored by a fortuitous turn of events. It'll be stopped again."

"That's what YOU think!" gloated Eggman "Nobody knows where my Death Egg and by the time they find out, it'll be too late! The Royal Fighters will never see it coming and I shall be victorious!"

"You underestimate my allies." said Bladefeather coldly "How many times has the magnanimous Sonic the Hedgehog put an end to your insane plans of world domination? More times than numbers can possibly calculate. You will be stopped again Dr. Eggman."

"We'll see about that..." purred Eggman confidently "I'll leave Katherine on guard here and if anybody tries to rescue you...I'll see to it that she sends you to your grave."

His laughter was silence as Katherine switched off and turned her back on Bladefeather, standing guard before his cell and making sure that nobody dared to come near the cell. Bladefeather just slumped down against the wall, his back turned on Katherine. He

thought desperately for a way out of the cell. To his annoyance, he couldn't see anyway out of the cell. He would just have to wait and hope his fiancée would come and rescue him. But how would Matilda save him if Katherine was here to damage the glass before she could get near to him? It seemed like a hopeless situation for the falcon now but he refused to give up hope. Hope was a valuable ally and it can save your life no matter what situation you're in...

Meanwhile, the Royal Fighters had found Mushu the Iguana at last and were now on their way to the refuelling station. Mushu was Bladefeather's silent companion and the two had been best friends since the day they first trained to be kung-fu warriors. After hearing that Bladefeather wasn't back from his mission yet, Mushu had been all too happy to come along and aid the Royal Fighters and Matilda in their mission. He had been pleasantly surprised to see that Li Moon was coming too and was curious to see how well she'd do on her first mission. The Mobians came to the Bamboo Forests and Matilda led the way, pushing through thickly grown bamboo trees and trying to move as fast as she can. The others followed as much as they possibly could despite the thickness of the bamboo trees. Blaze had been severely tempted to just burn down the trees and make their path a whole lot clearer but she knew better than to just burn down trees in somebody else's country. Matilda wouldn't approve of this at all so she kept her fire to herself. Silver began wishing he'd just flown everybody over but he didn't complain. It took a good few minutes before the trek through the jungle finally came to a close and Matilda held up a hand that signalled everybody to stop. She'd clearly spotted something and she was observing the scenery before her before making a move. The Mobians hesitated.

"Sssh, there it is." she whispered, pointing ahead of herself "And it's heavily guarded. Keep quiet."

She signalled everybody to come to her. The Mobians crept up behind Matilda as quietly as possible and they knelt down beside her. It was lucky that Matilda had chosen a thick bush to hide behind otherwise at least one Egg-Pawn would have noticed them already. Sonic couldn't resist peeking over the bush and getting a look at the refuelling station that he, Silver and Blaze had come to destroy. His

jaw dropped at the sheer size of the station. It was bigger than the first two stations that had been destroyed. He dreaded to think how big the other stations that his friends had split up to destroy were. He began to wonder if the Death Egg's actual size was as big as this station. Silver and Blaze risked a glance too and found themselves gaping at what stood before them.

"Holy heck...that's one big station!" gasped Silver, trying his best to keep his voice down and still sound surprised at the same time.

"That's ridiculously big!" piped Ruben quietly "Bigger than anything I've ever seen!"

"The Death Egg must be enormous if that's how big its refuelling station is!" whispered Blaze "We'll certainly be a while destroying that!"

"With me on the case? Not likely. We'll be done by dinner." crowed Sonic "So, has anyone got a plan at all? Mine is "Smash everything in sight and see where Bladefeather is" but I'm up for any other suggestions."

"I have one." said Matilda "Everybody will distract the guards while I go in to find Bladefeather. He's nowhere to be seen around here so he must be inside."

"What about those gun turrets?" asked Li Moon, pointing at the gun turrets "Won't they shoot us if we get near the station?"

"I'll take them out." said Silver "My psychokinesis will bring those turrets down easily. In fact, everybody wait here and I'll deal with the turrets now."

"OK." said Matilda, a little unsurely "You be careful out there."

"I'm always careful your majesty." boasted Silver.

He emerged from his hiding place and he ran forward towards the station. The moment he stepped within five metres of the station, the gun turrets were all aimed at him and they began to fire. Silver held up his hands and caught the shots with his psychic grasp. The shots slowed down to a stop just inches in front of him and Silver lifted up

his hand to turn the shots around. He aimed them at the turrets and he swiped his arms aside. The shots rocketed towards the gun turrets and destroyed them instantly. With no turrets left, the station could only rely on the Egg-Pawns for protection and at the moment, they were too shocked to take action against Silver. Matilda, Li Moon and Mushu were gobsmacked. They had never seen power like this before so to see something so magical looking was enough to make them stare in amazement.

"W-w-wow...th-that's incredible!" whispered Matilda.

"What kind of power is that? Ancient Chi-Magic or something?" asked Li Moon inquisitively "That's not possible!"

"When you're a Mobian Li Moon, nothing's impossible." said Sonic with a wink "Now let's bring down that station!"

If there was anything that Sonic thoroughly enjoyed, it was smashing Dr. Eggman's robots and foiling whatever hair-brained scheme he was concocting. He'd been doing it for two years going on three now and he still never tired of it, though he did look forward greatly to the day Dr. Eggman's tyranny was finally over. And hopefully with the inevitable destruction of the Death Egg, this year would be Eggman's last. Sonic leapt into action immediately and hurtled towards some of the Egg-Pawns in a killer spin-dash that would reduce them to smithereens. That was exactly why the Egg-Pawns had been equipped with shields in the first place. An Egg-Pawn raised his shield and despite the shield sparing it the horror of being eviscerated by a spin-dash, Sonic knocked it clean off its feet and onto its back. The shield did little more than delay the inevitable for the Egg-Pawn. Sonic snatched the shield off the Egg-Pawn and he threw it like a Frisbee at the other Egg-Pawns. The shield pinged off of one Egg-Pawn's head and hit another, knocking them down as if they were nothing. The Egg-Pawn that Sonic had knocked over swung its lance at Sonic but Sonic grabbed the lance, snatched it off the Egg-Pawn and stabbed it through the chest. The Egg-Pawn twitched helplessly as its own lance penetrated its body and killed it instantly. Two Egg-Pawns ran up towards Sonic with their lances aimed directly at him but Blaze rocketed out towards them and struck them down in a fiery spin that reduced them to smithereens. Sonic gave Blaze the thumbs up, impressed with her attack. Ruben

drenched the Egg-Pawns with a jet of water and made them short-circuit. Ruben watched gleefully as the Egg-Pawns blew up in unison due to his water mixing terribly with the Egg-Pawns. Matilda, Mushu and Li Moon decided to help out by emerging from behind the bush and cutting lose on the Egg-Pawns. This was an interesting experience for them for they were not used to dealing with robots. They usually fought organic enemies but their kung-fu would aid them well in the fight. Mushu chomped on an Egg-Pawn's arm and made it drop its lance. Mushu picked up the lance and decided to use it against the Egg-Pawns. He clashed lances with one Egg-Pawn before stabbing it in the head with the sharp tip of the lance and killing it instantly. Matilda saw that Mushu had a good idea since fists and feet weren't the best weapons against something made of metal. She kicked an Egg-Pawn's arm and knocked its shield off. She grabbed the shield and walloped the Egg-Pawn with it. A shield was one of Matilda's favourite weapons to fight with. She swung the shield directly down on top of the Egg-Pawn's head and crushed it to pieces. The shield was designed to withstand a sonic spin-dash so it was hardly surprising that swinging it down on an Egg-Pawn's head was enough to flatten it. Matilda then threw the shield at an Egg-Pawn and knocked it clean off its feet. She was quick to pick it back up after it landed on the ground and she ran towards the refuelling station. Silver used his psychokinesis to force the door open for Matilda, allowing her a clean entry into the building. Matilda waved to Silver as she entered the station and Silver waved back. He looked down and saw Li Moon putting up a rather mediocre performance against an Egg-Pawn. She wasn't doing terribly but it was clear that she needed more practice. She kept kicking the Egg-Pawn but she couldn't quite get it to lose any weapons. It swung its lance at her but Li Moon's reflexes were faster than the earlier training session implied for she leaped over the lance. The Egg-Pawn tried to whack her with its shield but Li Moon grabbed it and kicked the Egg-Pawn in the gut to make it let go of the shield. Unfortunately, it was slightly too heavy for her to lift and she struggled to swing it at the Egg-Pawn. She managed a limp smack at the most and all that did was knock the lance out of the Egg-Pawn's hand. The Egg-Pawn threw a punch at Li Moon but the vixen blocked the attack with the shield, straining to keep it lifted as the punch smacked against it. Li Moon was so startled by the punch that she fell over from the force of the hit. Silver could see Li Moon

needed help so he flew down and grabbed the Egg-Pawn with his psychokinesis. Li Moon wasn't too pleased at this.

"Hey thanks for the help but I was doing pretty well thank you." said Li Moon, trying not to sound rude.

"Sorry but you weren't, you needed help Li Moon." said Silver sadly "You did much better than one might have thought though. When Matilda trains you more, you'll be amazing."

That made Li Moon feel much better. Silver clenched his fists and upon doing so, he caused the Egg-Pawn to crumble up into a tangled mess of metal and limbs. He then tossed the Egg-Pawn over his shoulder. Li Moon kept hold of the shield and she picked up the Egg-Pawn's lance so she had an offensive weapon to match the defensive weaponry. Sonic spin-dashed one last Egg-Pawn to pieces before dusting his hands off and admiring the scene of carnage all around him. The Egg-Pawns were all defeated and useless to Eggman's cause. No surprises there since they did not present much of a threat. Sonic wondered why Eggman even bothered making these Egg-Pawns since they were so useless.

"Well what a surprise, we beat all the pawns." laughed Sonic "I do wish Eggman would make something challenging for once. Well he did, several times before but now he's just using these pathetic pawns over and over. Maybe he just can't be bothered to make an effort anymore. Just makes our job so much easier."

"I'll say." said Silver "If those pawns were actually useful, we'd be in one heck of a pickle and given how we wanna stop the Death Egg, we can't afford to be in one now."

"Well our plan has worked." noted Blaze "Matilda got inside the station safely and will hopefully come out with Bladefeather safe and sound and we've rendered the station defenceless. Once Matilda and Bladefeather come out of the station, we'll destroy it while it's weak."

"I bet you'd be the one to destroy the station given your fire powers Blaze." said Li Moon supportively "You'd fry that building to a crisp and bring it down."

"Woe betide Eggman if it's heat proof…" muttered Blaze "Either way, Silver could help destroy it too. He could take it apart piece by piece with his psychic powers."

"That could take a while given how extreme usage of my psychic powers gives me a migraine." said Silver uneasily "It would have to be a joint effort. I destroy some parts, you destroy some parts and even Sonic can destroy some parts. Ruben's water powers will do us some good too. He could short circuit some circuitry in the building and cause an explosion. The four of us together will reduce that thing to scrap."

"You bet, and Chun-Nan won't have the dishonour of having that hideous thing staining its beauty!" declared Ruben happily.

"And I bet Eggman will be yanking on his moustache in rage when he finds out we've destroyed one of his precious refuelling stations!" crowed Sonic "I wonder how the others are doing with their stations?"

"I'm sure they're doing as well as we are." said Blaze "We'll find out when we get back to NewMobotropolis…"

"Blaze, LOOK OUT!" screamed Silver, jumping forward and pushing Blaze down onto the ground for seemingly no reason.

The reason for that action came shortly afterwards as a deadly laser blast shot over Silver's back and missed him and Blaze by inches. Sonic jumped back and watched as the laser hit a dead Egg-Pawn and threw its remains up into the air. Mushu and Li Moon were on the alert and waiting to attack. Mushu had the lance he'd stolen from the Egg-Pawns ready and Li Moon had her shield and lance poised and ready for an attack. Sonic clenched his fists and stood his ground.

"Hey! Come out and show yourself sniper!" he yelled angrily "I'd like to show you what happens to those who attack my friends like this!"

The mystery attacker seemed willing to oblige to Sonic's order for the bushes parted and the attacked stood forward to reveal himself. Blaze picked herself up to see who the attacker was…and gasped.

The attacker was a robot who looked like somebody had tossed Metal Sonic and a robot pirate into a blender. Blaze knew who it was instantly. Ruben, Li Moon and Mushu stared in disbelief at what they were looking at.

"CAPTAIN METAL?!" she screamed in shock.

"Yaaargh lassie, it be me once again!" crowed Captain Metal "And to think ye thought ye'd seen tharr last of me!"

"So that's Captain Metal?" asked Ruben "Puh, he looks sillier than I imagined he would…" he added, not impressed at all with Captain Metal's appearance.

"But…but…but how?!" shrieked Blaze "I…I…I killed you! I impaled you with your own sword! I destroyed the Egg O' War! You should be dead and at the bottom of the ocean back on Solbius!"

"Yeah! And speaking of Solbius, how the heck did you get here?!" blurted Sonic "Or are you an Eggman robot and it's just coincidental that you look like Captain Metal?"

"Be ready me hearties, for I have a sea tale to share with ye all." said Captain Metal in his usual over-bearing pirate accent "When Blaze impaled me with me own sword, I downloaded me memory into another body that I had on standby. After me near-death experience with Blaze I decided to have another contingency plan on me. I built a bunch of spare bodies that would remain on standby until I uploaded me memory into them. What ye see before ye is one of me spare bodies. Sadly, tharr rest of me spares be at tharr bottom of ye ocean with me doomed Egg O' War. But while I'm here, I'll build myself some spare bodies. As fer how I got to Mobius Prime, a twin-tailed fox came to Solbius with a Chaos Emerald in hand. He be looking for you the poor lad and just as he was about to go home, I grabbed onto him so he Chaos Controlled back home with me in tow. I took tharr Chaos Emerald off of him too."

Sonic could only gasp in horror at Captain Metal's story.

"You…stole a Chaos Emerald from Tails?!" gasped Sonic "You better not have hurt my buddy or so help me I'll stomp on you until

we can't recognize you anymore!"

"I only knocked the lad out, I'm sure he'll be fine once he wakes up." sneered Captain Metal "As fer the Chaos Emerald, it be out of yer reach for I don't have it on me now. I left it in a secret place I've decided to call me own while I come here to kill Blaze and put an end to her interfering ways once and fer all!"

"How did you know I would be here?" asked Blaze.

"Mind yer own business ye nosey parker!" snapped Captain Metal "Just know that this country shall be yer grave Blaze!"

"Dare harm Blaze and you'll suffer MY wrath!" snarled Silver.

"Oh I know how to deal with you me psychic powered landlubber…" purred Captain Metal.

Using the warp ring that Finitevus had given him, Captain Metal opened up a portal beneath Silver's feet. The hedgehog screamed as he fell through the warp ring and disappeared from view. Blaze watched in shock as her boyfriend was swallowed up whole by the warp ring and she was helpless to do anything about it as the warp ring vanished into thin air. Sonic was more shocked at the fact Captain Metal had a warp ring than anything.

"Whoa, since when did you have a warp ring?!" gasped Sonic.

"What can I say laddie? I be full of surprises indeed." gloated Captain Metal.

Blaze looked at Captain Metal and growled menacingly at him.

"You monster! Where did you send him?!" she growled furiously.

"I tossed him back onto Solbius." sneered Captain Metal "I know how dangerous psychic powered beings can be and I bet he could crush me with a simple wave of his hand so to make this fight fairer, I was forced to get rid of him. If ye can beat me…I'll bring him back for ye."

"Deal." muttered Blaze "And I'm gonna send YOU back to Solbius…

IN PIECES!"

She set her hands alight and she rocketed towards Captain Metal, screaming fiercely as she prepared to destroy him. Captain Metal cackled at Blaze and he lunged forward, ready to slice her to ribbons. Sonic, Ruben, Li Moon and Mushu stood by, waiting for the right moment to strike and help Blaze defeat Captain Metal. It seemed their mission suddenly got more intense now Captain Metal was here…

Meanwhile inside the station, Princess Matilda had run up to the second floor of the station and had come across a door with a button beside it. She'd searched the entire first floor of the station and had come up empty so now she was trying the second floor to see if Bladefeather was here instead. She was quite surprised at the fact the door had a simple button beside it. She may not be very familiar with technology due to Chun-Nan's vintage and traditional style of life but she had expected something a bit more advanced than a simple button to open the door. It looked almost too easy. Matilda swallowed nervously and she pressed the button to open the door. The door opened up and Matilda saw that she was looking inside a large room with a glass capsule standing at the edge of a metal bridge that stretched out far from the door. Matilda gasped in surprise as she saw that the capsule contained Bladefeather. There was a female robot standing beside the capsule but Matilda didn't notice it, she was too focused on Bladefeather. Bladefeather pressed his hands against the glass and stared ahead as he saw Matilda standing at the beginning of the bridge.

"Matilda!" he cried.

"Bladefeather!" gasped Matilda "Oh thank goodness I've found you! Don't worry, I'll get you outta there in a hurry!"

"No Matilda, you mustn't!" protested Bladefeather "If the glass on my cell gets damaged in anyway, the cell will fall down onto a giant fan and take me with it!"

Right on cue, Katherine raised her hand and she placed the tips of

her claws against the glass, threatening to scratch it or crack it. Matilda's heart raced as she saw Katherine threatening to damage the glass.

"NO! Oh god please no, don't do that!" shrieked Matilda "Please, I don't want to lose my fiancé!"

"Then you **must surrender to me now** otherwise Bladefeather is going to take a **BIG PLUNGE!** " Katherine droned out in a montage of voice clips.

"I-I can't do that!" protested Matilda "I can't dishonour my country by surrendering! Please, I can't!"

Katherine pressed on harder with her claws. Bladefeather shuddered in horror, expecting cracks to appear in the glass any moment now. Diamond Glass was hard but he had a feeling Katherine's claws were enough to penetrate the glass since she was threatening to damage it. Matilda fell to her knees and began to feel tears coming to her eyes.

"NO, NO DON'T DO IT!" she screamed "I'll surrender, I'll surrender! Just please don't kill Bladefeather!"

Katherine took her hand away from the glass and glared at Matilda with her black visor. If she had a face, she'd likely be grinning triumphantly at Matilda now. Katherine strode towards Matilda, the princess looking very sad and defeated before her. She looked up and saw Katherine coming towards her and offered no resistance as Katherine grabbed her by the arms and hauled her onto her feet.

"I'm sorry Bladefeather…" Matilda sobbed pathetically.

"It's alright my love, you couldn't let me die could you?" said Bladefeather sadly "I doubt your heart would ever recover from the pain my loss would bring to it."

Matilda nodded as Katherine pulled her towards the cell and pressed a button that opened up the glass so she could put Matilda into the cell. However, just as the glass retracted to allow Katherine to put Matilda inside, the mongoose grabbed Katherine's arms and

wrestled her around to the front. She kicked Katherine into the cell and past Bladefeather. Katherine was down on her hands and knees as Bladefeather ran past her and the moment he was out of the cell, Matilda closed it, sealing Katherine inside. Katherine walked up to the glass and glared at Matilda as the mongoose smiled triumphantly at her.

"Ha. Looks like I win." gloated Matilda "I guess Eggman didn't teach you to be unpredictable too."

"Ah, unpredictability, such a meritorious tactic to use in battle." said Bladefeather happily "My love, you continue to amaze me."

"Well I am soon to be your wife so I seek to amaze you my handsome falcon." said Matilda kindly "Now quick, let's get outta here. Sonic is here and he's going to destroy the station once we're out."

"In a moment. I'd like to send Katherine here to her doom." said Bladefeather, drawing out a dagger and holding it before the glass, ready to scratch it and bring Katherine down onto the fan below.

But Katherine had a contingency plan that she was activating now. She had a manual override code installed in her body and she could use it to make the cell's controls do what she wanted without needing to press anything. She commanded the cell to open for her and the moment the cell opened up, she leaped out and pounced on Bladefeather…

A refuelling station, waiting to be destroyed! Captain Metal, hungry for revenge! Bladefeather and Matilda, at Katherine's mercy! All this and more next time in the exciting second part of "Trouble in Chun-Nan"...

Trouble in Chun-Nan Part 2

Story 193: Trouble for Chun-Nan Part 2

Countdown to Death Egg: 2

"Come on, come on, come on! Work faster you pathetic excuses for worker bots!" yelled Dr. Eggman furiously "The Death Egg's nearly complete! I can't wait any longer for it to launch! Hurry up and finish the work!"

It was no surprise that the villainous Dr. Eggman was getting edgy right now. His glorious vessel, the Death Egg, was nearing completion and he was too impatient to wait for it to be completed. He wanted it done and he wanted it done NOW. The Death Egg had been a month's worth of hard work and only just now was it nearing completion. The Death Egg itself was located under the Egg-Bunker and in order to make room for the enormous vessel, Eggman had tunnelled a big hole under the Egg-Bunker to make room for the ship and the crew that were working on it. Even then, the ship was still too big to fit under the Egg-Bunker so Eggman had decided to have the very top of the Death Egg built around the Egg-Bunker. When the ship took off, the Egg-Bunker would be taken with it and would be part of the Death Egg itself. Eggman rather liked that idea since it meant less work had to be done on the interior of the ship. Eggman was sitting in the Egg-Bunker and watching the progress of the Death Egg's construction from a computer monitor. While he was pleased to see the work was going on as planned, he still wanted it to speed up a little for he was practically itching with excitement to see his glorious ship in the sky at last. His latest and greatest plan was ready to begin but he still had to wait until the ship was fully operational. He turned away from his computer monitor and began pacing around the room. It never ceased to amaze him just how loud his footsteps were in this life-support mech suit he was permanently housed in. He just reasoned that the heavyweight meant he was a powerful opponent and that E-123 Omega had been a brilliant design when he'd come up with it. He never would have anticipated that the design would end up being what's keeping him alive now.

Not that he minded. His machines hadn't been very successful in terminating Sonic so he much liked the idea of terminating Sonic himself with this very life-support mech. Eggman stopped pacing around and stood before a door that he then opened. The door opened up and revealed that the Master Emerald that he'd stolen from Angel Island was contained behind it. The glorious green emerald was still glowing marvellously and Eggman could hardly keep himself from marvelling at the sight of the beautiful gem. A giant green powerhouse that had the power to keep an island afloat. And it was all his to use for his own nefarious plans. The Death Egg would be even more powerful with the Master Emerald being used to aggrandize the vessel. It was powerful enough on its own but with the Master Emerald, it would be even more powerful. And with the Master Emerald, he'd be able to teleport to other worlds and maybe enslave them too. Most particularly, Earth, the very planet he came from. Earth would bear the wrath of the Death Egg once he'd finished with Mobius. He'd make Earth a robot utopia for himself to rule over as well as Mobius. The very image was enough to make Eggman the happiest man in the world.

"All this Chaos Energy at my disposal…and it'll make me the most powerful man the universe has ever known." purred Eggman delightedly "First Mobius shall be roboticized…then I'll use the emerald to take me to Earth and I shall roboticize Earth too. Those ingrates will be sorry they messed with me! I, Dr. Ivo Eggman shall reign supreme over two different worlds and NOBODY will stand up to me! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

His gloating was interrupted by a sudden beeping noise on his computer monitor. The screen was flashing with the words "Warning: Death Egg Stations Compromised". Eggman ran clumsily over to the computer and he stared at the screen. He pressed a button and saw something that made him gasp in surprise. The screen was displaying the Death Egg refuelling stations and the images were obscured by a huge circle with the word "Offline" in the middle. Eggman couldn't believe his eyes. With the exception of the Chun-Nan refuelling station, all the Death Egg refuelling stations had been destroyed! But how was this possible? The Royal Fighters couldn't possibly have known where they all were! How had they managed to find out?! Eggman had a nasty feeling that the Chun-

Nan station wouldn't be online for very long either, even with Katherine defending it. He grumbled to himself.

"Curses, those Royal Fighters have destroyed my stations already and there's only one left!" he growled "I expected them to be taking MUCH longer than that! And I bet that Queen Sally's used her precious Nicole to find out where the Death Egg is too! They'll be on to me in no time! The Death Egg's launch MUST happen at once! But I can't take off if the ship's not complete yet…I'll just have to hope that the Royal Fighters take a while to come running to me. It's just fortunate that I don't need those refuelling stations. The Death Egg doesn't even NEED fuel! And with the Master Emerald onboard, it'll go on forever…those Royal Fighters have no idea what they're up against!"

He cackled to himself and he switched the monitor back to the work on the Death Egg outside of the Egg-Bunker. For too long he'd been hiding in this miserable bunker, soon he'd be housed inside a giant vessel that would be the flagship of his empire and the very appearance of the Death Egg would have everybody paralyzed with fear before him…

"Yikes! Watch it, you could hurt somebody with that!" yelped Sonic the Hedgehog as he cart wheeled out of the way of Captain Metal's deadly blade.

"Did ye not think fer a minute that I be intendin' to do just that?" sneered Captain Metal, swinging his blade at Sonic again and missing him by inches.

A mission in Chun-Nan to destroy the Chun-Nan Death Egg refuelling station had turned into a fight to the death. The robotic rapscallion Captain Metal had come to Chun-Nan via a warp ring given to him by Dr. Finitevus and he was here with one goal in mind, to kill Blaze the Cat and put an end to her fire throwing ways at last. He'd been on the verge of death for a second time but had saved himself thanks to a very clever back-up plan and thanks to Tails the Fox, he'd managed to come to Mobius Prime by grabbing Tails as he used a Chaos Control to warp back to Mobius. Now Captain

Metal was out of Solbius and on Mobius Prime and he'd found his target. He didn't care who he was up against or who got in his way as long as he had Blaze's head on the edge of his sword. He'd gotten rid of Silver the Hedgehog by using a warp ring to send him to Solbius so they couldn't just rely on him to use his psychokinesis to crush Captain Metal and put a swift end to the battle. In order to get Silver back, Blaze would have to destroy Captain Metal and take the warp ring from him. Captain Metal swung his blade at Sonic but Sonic managed to avoid the attack by leaping out of the way. He spin-dashed Captain Metal in the gut and sent him hurling into a pile of dead Egg-Pawns. Sonic stood before Captain Metal and smiled mockingly at him.

"Just a head's up Captain Metal, I've stomped on Metal Sonics before and despite the fact they can match up to me, I still come out on top." gloated Sonic "And considering you're built with parts that make you the robot pirate that you are now, I bet you're not as resilient as a standard Metal Sonic."

"Yarrgh, I be just as resilient as I was as Metal Sonic!" snapped Captain Metal "When I had me new bodies built, I built them in tharr same way that I had been built when I was Metal Sonic! I may not look like Metal Sonic anymore but I have the endurance and hardiness that made ye Metal Sonic model a force to be reckoned with! Not to mention I be much stronger since I be fireproof and waterproof too so he will not smash me to pieces anytime soon!"

"Puh, I think I preferred the usual Metal Sonic over you." sighed Sonic "Your pirate accent's REALLY annoying and you talk way too darn much!"

"Then maybe I should cut yer ears off so ye don't have to listen to me anymore?" snorted Captain Metal.

Ironically enough, pirates had been known to cut people's ears off so this just showed how pirate-like Captain Metal really was. Captain Metal leaped back onto his feet and he slugged Sonic in the gut with his one hand. Sonic fell to his knees, coughing and spluttering and Captain Metal proceeded to try and do exactly what he'd suggested, cut Sonic's ears off. He would force them down Blaze's throat just to add insult to injury. But just as he pinched Sonic's left ear and

prepared to cut it off, Blaze knocked him down with spinning, fiery kick that threw Captain Metal across the battlefield and sent him crashing into yet another pile of dead Egg-Pawns. Captain Metal however considered that a blessing for he grabbed one of the nearby shields that the Egg-Pawns had been equipped with and he threw it at Blaze. Blaze kicked it away but the shield had just been to throw her off while Captain Metal lunged at her. Blaze only just had enough time to hold her arms up defensively as Captain Metal slashed at her. She ended up with a nasty cut across her arms and she winced in pain. Blaze punched Captain Metal in the face and then grabbed him by the cloak. She spun around and tossed him into the refuelling station. Just as Captain Metal was getting up, Blaze pinned him to the wall with her foot. The heel of her shoe stabbed at Captain Metal's neck as she pressed her foot on him.

"Why do you persist in this mindless gambit?!" snarled Blaze "All your desire for revenge is going to do is get you killed, this time for good!"

"Nay lassie, me desire fer revenge is what keeps me alive!" gloated Captain Metal, grabbing Blaze's leg and tripping her up "Do ye think that I'd still be alive now if I didn't desire revenge on ye? Would I have built me self some spare bodies if I didn't desire to see ye dead? Would I even have come to Mobius Prime if I didn't want revenge on ye? I don't think so. Face it Blaze, until you're dead ye will NEVER be rid of me!"

"Allow me to contradict that statement!"

Blaze yanked her foot out of Captain Metal's hand and slammed it into the middle of Captain Metal's torso. The metal mutineer buckled over but felt no pain for just like his original body, he had no pain receptors so he couldn't feel any pain. The kick was still enough to make Captain Metal buckle over regardless if he felt any pain or not. Blaze leapt back onto her feet and she slammed a fire enhanced fist into the middle of Captain Metal's face. Captain Metal uppercut Blaze in the face and threw her off her feet. She was saved from a nasty thump on the ground by Mushu the Iguana. He caught Blaze and helped her get steady as Captain Metal aimed his gun arm at her. Li Moon, friend of Princess Matilda and novice-in-training, ran towards Captain Metal and grabbed hold of his arm. She yanked it

aside, causing the shot to aim directly at the ground instead. Captain Metal wrenched his arm free, the blade cutting Li Moon viciously as he did so and he aimed his blade at Li Moon's neck. The vixen stared at the blade in fear and she reacted much faster than she thought she ever would. She leapt aside and left Captain Metal to strike at the ground. She picked up the lance and shield that she'd taken from an Egg-Pawn's remains and she ran towards Captain Metal. She swung the shield at him as hard as she could but she wasn't very strong and the shield was a little too heavy for her. She managed a limp smack that made Captain Metal lean aside more than anything. Captain Metal laughed at Li Moon and he shot at her. Li Moon blocked the attack with the shield but Captain Metal stood forward and smacked it out of her hand. Before he could harm her, Ruben the Water Panther blasted Captain Metal with a jet of water from the palm of his hands. It wouldn't kill Captain Metal since he was waterproof but it did throw him away from Li Moon and send him crashing into some bamboo trees. Captain Metal picked himself up, water dripping down his body and he glowered at Ruben with his singular optic.

"Did ye seriously think waterrr could stop me?" he gloated "I be a robot pirate! I sail on tharr seas just like what pirates do! Where would tharr logic be in me goin' on tharr seas and not be waterproof?"

"I knew you'd be waterproof, you already said to Sonic that you were." retorted Ruben "But that doesn't mean my water won't be a nuisance to you. And let me tell you something Captain Metal, you made a big mistake coming to Chun-Nan. This country is precious to me and Chun-Nan does not accept scum like you. I'm gonna personally kick you outta Chun-Nan myself!"

"So this be yer country is it little water panther?" said Captain Metal, feigning sympathy "Well then, how fitting it shall be yer grave!"

He aimed his gun arm at Ruben and he blasted him off of his feet with a powerful laser blast. Ruben screamed as he was hit and he hurtled into Li Moon, knocking the vixen off her feet. With the two down, Captain Metal charged towards Li Moon and Ruben with murder in his optic but Sonic and Blaze both hit him at once, knocking him down onto his side and sending him skidding across

the ground. Captain Metal growled as he stood back up and he waited for Sonic to come at him. The hedgehog was curled up into a spin-dash and he was hurling towards Captain Metal. He picked up a shield that was lying near a dead Egg-Pawn and he held it up in front of himself. Sonic hit the shield and ricocheted off of it. He hit the shield at such an angle that he ricocheted straight into the ground and found himself with his face buried in a mound of dirt. Sonic was about to pick himself up but Captain Metal smacked him in the head with the shield. Sonic was still conscious but one more hit like that and his head could be damaged very badly indeed. He was rubbing his head and wondering which way was up. Captain Metal had his blade jabbed into his back and he drew his arm back, ready to finish him off. He heard Blaze coming towards him so he quickly spun around and held up the shield to block Blaze's attack. Blaze winced as her fire-enhanced fist slammed hard against solid metal but she ignored the pain in her knuckles. Captain Metal tried to whack her with the shield but Blaze caught his wrist and held the shield firmly above her head. Captain Metal attempted to stab her but Blaze caught his gun arm and held it back. The metal pirate pushed on Blaze's arms and tried as much as he could to force Blaze down onto the ground. Blaze fought back, using up every muscle in her arms to keep Captain Metal from pushing her down. Her muscles strained with the effort but Blaze was not going to listen to their protests. She willed herself to win this struggle.

"Make this easy on yourself! Surrender now! You're outnumbered!" grunted Blaze "You can't possibly win!"

"Perhaps...so I may have to cheat in order to win." gloated Captain Metal "Something that we pirates just love to do..."

Blaze had a feeling that she knew what Captain Metal was going to do. She leapt back just as Captain Metal prepared to head butt her so Captain Metal ended up throwing himself onto the ground. But that hadn't been what Captain Metal's plan was. The head butt was just meant to disorientate Blaze until he put his plan into action. It seemed her would have to do it regardless of Blaze's status. Captain Metal waited for Blaze to come at him and then just as Blaze prepared to punch him, he summoned the warp ring that he'd used to get to Chun-Nan and left Blaze to hurtle through it. The warp

ring reopened behind him and Blaze came hurling out of it like water through a drain pipe. She landed down with a thud on the ground and before she could pick herself up, Captain Metal opened up the warp ring under Sonic's feet and brought him falling down through it. It closed up afterwards and Captain Metal proceeded to do the same to Ruben, Mushu and Li Moon. Like Silver, he'd sent them all to Solbius so that they couldn't get in his way. The battle was now between Blaze and Captain Metal once again. Blaze picked herself up and growled furiously.

"You...bring them back!" she ordered.

"Make me lassie!" sneered Captain Metal "Ye have to beat me first if ye want this warp ring to bring yer friends back remember?"

"If you won't bring them back than I will..." said Blaze with a smirk on her face.

Before Captain Metal could work out what Blaze was talking about, she whipped out one of her Sol Emeralds and proceeded to warp away in a whoosh of flames. She had used the Sol Emeralds to warp everybody to Chun-Nan and now she was using it to bring the Royal Fighters back to Mobius. The robot pirate cursed violently as Blaze disappeared into thin air.

"CURSES!" he yelled angrily "I should have suspected that tharr lass had her bloody emeralds on her! Now she be bringing her pesky friends back to Mobius Prime! No matter, this warp ring will give me an edge over tharr Mobians easily."

He looked at the warp ring he held delicately between his finger and thumb delightedly. It didn't matter if all the Mobians were brought back to the battle, he'd use his warp ring to get rid of them again and this time, he'd steal the Sol Emeralds from Blaze so she couldn't get them back. If he couldn't do that then he'd just use the warp ring to make things harder for the Royal Fighters. He would have to thank Dr. Finitevus for letting him use the warp ring otherwise this battle would be so much harder for him. Captain Metal waited for a little while until a whoosh of flames suddenly appeared from nowhere. The flames parted, unveiling the Royal Fighters in their place. They were all back together, Sonic, Ruben, Mushu, Li Moon and even

Silver who looked keen to tear Captain Metal apart. Blaze smiled triumphantly at Captain Metal as if mocking him over the fact his plan had gone pear-shaped.

"Look at that...I've got everybody back." she sneered "You thought you could get rid of everybody that easily?"

"It appears I made a drastic error in making tharr battle plan." said Captain Metal smoothly "But with tharr warp ring, I be untouchable!"

"You'll change that tune of yours when I snatch it outta your hand!" crowed Silver with a cocky grin on his face.

He activated his psychokinesis and focused solely on the warp ring in Captain Metal's hand. But focusing solely on the warp ring meant that Captain Metal could attack him and he wouldn't be able to defend himself. Captain Metal felt the warp ring pull in his claws as if trying to escape from his grip. Captain Metal held on tight and to make Silver let go, he shot him directly in the chest. Silver cried out in pain as he was hit and his psychic powers released the warp ring. Then Captain Metal used the warp ring to send Silver up into the sky. He reopened the warp ring from the height of the Death Egg refuelling station and Silver plummeted straight down from the station's massive height. Blaze ran forward to catch Silver but Captain Metal used the warp ring to send her up in the sky directly beside him. Now Silver and Blaze were plummeting from a massive height and the fall would surely finish them off. But Silver recovered in time to save himself and Blaze from a nasty crash onto the ground below. He surrounded himself and Blaze in a psychic bubble and let the bubble cushion the impact of their fall. As they landed, the psychic bubble punched a little crater beneath them into the ground they landed upon. Captain Metal was none too pleased that they had survived the fall but he decided to hold back on the warp ring for a bit. He didn't want to become too predictable. He took aim at Silver and Blaze and he fired at them. Silver used his psychokinesis to stop the blast but the blast was merely meant to distract him. Captain Metal warped away through the warp ring and left Silver to throw the blast back at empty air. He reappeared beside Silver and Blaze and he kicked them both onto their sides. However, upon exiting he found himself getting slammed against the wall by Mushu and Li Moon. Mushu picked up Captain Metal, causing him to

drop the warp ring and he tossed him into the air towards Ruben. Ruben squirted water at him and sent him flying up into the tower of the refuelling station. Now the warp ring was out of Captain Metal's grasp, Sonic zipped over and grabbed it.

"Now I think it's time we sent Captain Metal back home to Solbius!" he declared.

But as he flicked open the warp ring, Captain Metal shot him and sent him flying backwards. The warp ring clattered down onto the ground being that it had failed to activate properly due to Captain Metal's intervention. Captain Metal leaped down onto the ground and he scooped up the warp ring quickly.

"Ye think ye can get rid of me that easily?" he snorted "Not a chance. I am not going back to Solbius. Not till I've got Blaze dead and I've conquered this world too."

"Mobius Prime has done nothing to you Captain Metal! Why would you want to take it over as well as Solbius?!" demanded Blaze furiously.

"Let's just say that I fancy adding Mobius Prime to me robot pirate army too." purred Captain Metal "Remember, I did plan on roboticizing tharr entire multi-verse too. That was what me Egg O' War was for lassie."

"I know...and I got rid of that abomination. Pity I didn't get rid of you as well!" growled Blaze "Well after this battle, you'll be dead and you'll stay that way since you don't have any spare bodies to activate this time!"

"If yer so eager to finish me off then come at me..." dared Captain Metal.

Blaze was all too happy to do just that. She summoned fire to her hands and charged towards Captain Metal, murder in her eyes and her teeth bared like a tiger pouncing on a deer...

Bladefeather the Falcon cried out as Katherine pounced on him and

knocked him down onto the bridge with grievous intentions in mind for the falcon. Bladefeather swung his legs up and threw Katherine over himself and further across the bridge to which she landed with a heavy clang. The fem-bot made a little whirr of annoyance as she stood back up. Sonic and friends weren't the only ones having a fight to the death. Princess Matilda had broken into the refuelling station to save Bladefeather and although Katherine had managed to get her to surrender, it turned out to be a trick and Matilda had managed to get Katherine inside the cell and Bladefeather out of it. But Katherine managed to open the cell with merely a thought and now she was trying to kill the two soon-to-be-wed kung-fu warriors. As Katherine stood up, Matilda leapt over Bladefeather for the bridge was too narrow for her to simply run around past him and she socked Katherine directly in the lower section of her face, where the mouth would likely be if she had one. Katherine reeled backwards and struggled to keep herself standing. Matilda then kicked Katherine in the shins and knocked the fem-bot down onto her stomach. Katherine was just getting up when Matilda kicked Katherine into the air and sent her crashing into the wall just above the open door. As Katherine landed onto the bridge, Matilda rubbed her foot slightly.

"Mmm…I can honestly say that kicking metal isn't the same as kicking flesh and bone." she muttered "I hope I never have to fight a robot again."

"To save myself pained appendages, I'll just rely on my weaponry." decided Bladefeather "And you yourself have brought a shield into the room so you could fight Katherine with that instead Matilda.

Matilda had forgotten about the shield. She'd grabbed it from an Egg-Pawn earlier and had taken it in with her when she searched for Bladefeather. She had put it down when pretending to surrender to Katherine and it was still lying upside down with the handle facing up on the bridge. Matilda picked it up and held it defensively in front of herself.

"Oh yes, this'll be better than using my fists and feet." said Matilda "Katherine will be in for the fight of her life now."

"Indeed so." said Bladefeather deviously "So, you tell me Sonic and

friends are here too?"

"Yes. Sonic is here with Ruben, Mushu and Li Moon plus two new faces." explained Matilda "They're waiting for me to come out of the station so that they may destroy it."

"That's good to know." said Bladefeather brightly "In that case, let's forget about the heathen machine and let Sonic know that he is OK to destroy this hideous facility of Eggman's."

"Yes, let's." said Matilda grimly "Especially since it's a refuelling station for an upcoming ship that Eggman's building. He's calling in the "Death Egg" apparently."

"That information was already bestowed upon me." said Bladefeather "By Katherine herself. No way is our country going to contribute to Eggman's evil in anyway…"

Matilda nodded agreeably. What made it even worse was that as Blaze had explained to her earlier, the Death Egg presumably caused the end of the world and the fact this station was meant to refuel such a vessel made Matilda sick with anger. Nobody used her country as a refuelling port for a doomsday machine! She would see to it that Eggman got a personal beating from her, even if she wasn't very keen on senseless violence. Bladefeather and Matilda were just about to leave the room until Katherine stood back up and blocked the way. Matilda kept the shield raised in case Katherine attacked.

"Katherine. I will request ONLY once, that you stand down and save yourself a needless beating." said Matilda coldly "Make this easy on yourself."

Katherine refused to move. She stood in front of the door, silent as a statue and as sinister looking as a gargoyle. Bladefeather drew a dagger out of thin air and twirled it around in his hand.

"If you won't accept Matilda's armistice then I shall make you move." growled Bladefeather.

He threw the dagger straight at Katherine's head. It was a perfectly aimed shot. The dagger sailed towards Katherine, its sharp point

aimed straight in the middle of her visor. Katherine would be too slow to react. The dagger would impale her through the visor and kill her instantly. But Katherine didn't need to react, she had the perfect shield. Her barrier activated and surrounded her in a red transparent bubble that protected her from anything around her. The dagger hit the barrier and bounced away harmlessly off the surface of the barrier. Bladefeather's beak dropped open in shock.

"I...i...impossible...the...the charlatan...has a magical shield of some kind!" blurted Bladefeather.

"We can't touch her now!" wailed Matilda "We'll have to push her out of the way or we won't be getting out of here!"

She ran towards Katherine with her shield in hand, hoping to ram Katherine backwards by banging against the barrier hard enough. But Katherine's barrier had expanded about ten inches in front of her. Matilda banging against it wouldn't do anything. Matilda charged into the barrier with the shield raised and just found herself being thrown backwards onto the floor by the barrier. Matilda picked herself up and held up the shield as Katherine held up her hands and began shooting bladed discs at Matilda. The discs deflected off the shield, their blades breaking as they hit the tough steel. The Egg-Pawn shield had been built to withstand a spin-dash so Katherine had no chance of breaking through that shield. Katherine didn't seem to care though, she kept firing the discs with every intention of dissecting Matilda piece by piece. She did notice that the shield didn't protect all of Matilda's body and tried aiming at her feet but Matilda's reflexes were much too fast for Katherine. She moved the shield up and down at an alarming speed, blocking all of her attacks and sending every bladed disc flying away. Bladefeather provided more defence by drawing out a dagger and twirling it around in front of Matilda, deflecting any disc that came her way. Katherine fumed angrily to herself. It seemed she would have to change tactis for this one. Katherine shrunk down her barrier so it was just a red outline all around her body and she ran towards Matilda and Bladefeather. She leaped into the air and spun in a drill-like fashion towards the two. Bladefeather threw himself down onto the bridge whereas Matilda held up the shield and timed her attack. Katherine was within two inches of her before Matilda reacted. She

angled the shield slightly and swung it upwards. She struck Katherine and threw her off target, sending her hurling over onto her back and crashing down in front of the cell. Now Katherine was out of the way, Matilda and Bladefeather ran for their lives. Katherine however pressed a button on the control panel next to the cell and closed the door, trapping Matilda and Bladefeather in the room with her. Matilda and Bladefeather turned around and glowered at Katherine.

"It appears the abhorrent little vermin does not acquiesce to our wanting to leave this room." murmured Bladefeather crossly.

"We'll make her wish she'd just let us go already." declared Matilda, her voice harder than steel as she glared at Katherine.

After hearing that Eggman had a potential doomsday machine, Matilda had become a bit more hardcore in this battle with Katherine. The main reason being that this was a fight to the death in more ways than one. If they failed to stop the Death Egg then Mobius would be doomed and Matilda couldn't bear the thought of the world being destroyed. She loved her life and the lives of all her faithful subjects too much to just let them be wasted like this. Despite her hatred of violence and preference to use more peaceful methods to resolve a conflict, Matilda no longer cared about using violence to beat Katherine. She would be all too happy to smash her to pieces at this point in time. Matilda charged towards Katherine, her shield raised and ready to smash Katherine to pieces. Katherine extended her barrier and Matilda ground to a halt before she could bump into the barrier. Matidla stood her ground and thought quickly. How could she get Katherine into the cell with her barrier up like this? She pressed the shield against the barrier and pushed on it, hoping she would push Katherine back as well. The barrier didn't even budge. Matilda pushed with all her might but she couldn't get Katherine to budge at all. Katherine just watched Matilda's pitiful attempts to push her and she decided to launch an attack on her. She held her hands together and began to build up a powerful laser blast. She would blast Matilda away and hopefully take her out. Bladefeather noticed this and he quickly flew over to Matilda. He grabbed her by the arms with his talons and lifted her out of the way, leaving Katherine to blast at empty space that had been occupied

just seconds ago. Katherine looked up and saw Bladefeather carrying Matilda to the end of the bridge. She held her hands out and began blasting at them with smaller laser blasts. Matilda held up the shield to block the blasts as Bladefeather put her down and took cover behind her. Seeing that this wouldn't work, Katherine shrunk down her barrier again, preparing to try another drill attack. And that was when Matilda struck. She threw the shield at Katherine's head and struck her, knocking her down onto her back and into the cell. Before she could react, Matilda picked up the shield again and slammed it against Katherine, throwing her backwards into the back of the cell. Then she closed the cell by pushing a button on the control panel that closed the glass together and Bladefeather threw a dagger at the glass. Diamond Glass maybe tough but Bladefeather's daggers were sharp enough to penetrate it. The dagger embedded itself into the glass and formed a web of cracks around the hilt and the base of the blade. Katherine didn't even have time to so much as raise a finger. The damaged glass deactivated the supporting rods and the cell plummeted straight down onto the giant fan waiting for Katherine down below. Not a sound came out of Katherine as she plummeted to her death. Not even a pre-recorded sound. The cell crashed down ontop of the fan and the fan tore the cell to shreds, ripping apart the metal bottom and shattering the glass as if it was the fragile kind of glass that would break if you so much as stepped on it. Katherine was torn apart limb from limb by the fan and reduced to tiny fragments along with the cell. Her head displayed a face on the visor that looked like the face of agony as she was chopped to pieces by the spinning blades of the fan. Bladefeather had watched every second of Katherine's destruction and relished everything he'd just witnessed.

"Goodbye you filthy little servant bot." he purred to himself.

"Whew...I thought we weren't going to win this battle." puffed Matilda, wiping sweat off of her head "I really should know better than to doubt myself in these situations."

"I firmly believe that nothing's impossible if you set your mind to the task at hand." said Bladefeather "Now then my love, shall we?" he beckoned towards the door at the beginning of the bridge.

"Be my guest my dashing falcon." said Matilda sweetly.

Bladefeather nodded and he pressed a button on the control panel. That had not gone down with the cell for it was a separate piece to the cell. It would only be able to open and close the door now though. The cell's destruction had severely limited its purposes in this room. The door opened up upon the press of the button and Bladefeather and Matilda ran out of the room. They couldn't wait to see Sonic and his friends tear apart the refuelling station and remove its disgusting presence from their wonderful country...

Outside the station, Captain Metal found himself being spin-dashed by Sonic and sent hurling towards Blaze. Blaze leapt up into the air and dropkicked her down into the ground as hard as she could swing her leg down. Captain Metal hit the ground but he wasn't down for long as Silver grabbed him with his psychokinesis and threw him across the battlefield and into the refuelling station. The fight with Captain Metal was slowly but surely swinging in the Mobian's favour. Captain Metal was putting up a great fight but he was beginning to get overwhelmed by the sheer numbers that the Mobians had. He was outnumbered six-one and despite having a warp ring, he was still getting overwhelmed. It also didn't help that Silver was here and kept using his psychokinesis to stop Captain Metal whenever he tried to attack somebody. The Metal Sonic turned robot pirate picked himself up, growling furiously as the Mobians stood around him, ready to attack him all at once. He managed to save himself a beating from all six Mobians at once by activating the warp ring and disappearing down through it. But the Mobians were getting wise to his tactics now and Blaze was already waiting for him to show up again. Captain Metal reappeared behind Blaze but Blaze swung around and punched him, sending him back through the warp ring and shooting up into the air. As Captain Metal hurtled down to the ground, he fired his gun as frantically as possible, forcing his enemies to scatter to avoid getting hit. He managed to hit Silver and bring him down onto his stomach. Silver winced in pain as his back began to sting from the shot. Captain Metal seized his chance. He ran over to Silver and slammed his fist on top of his head, knocking him out and taking him out of the fight. The knockout was for more than just that though. He yanked Silver onto his feet by his quills and held his sword to Silver's throat.

"Everybody, stand down and surrender to me or Silver will never wake up again!" he barked.

"Let go of Silver right now Captain Metal or you'll be sorry!" snarled Blaze.

"Can ye launch a successful attack on me before I cut Silver's throat?" snorted Captain Metal "Or will ye just end up causing great harm to Silver yerself? Maybe even accidentally help him on his way to Davy Jones's locker?"

Blaze could feel beads of sweat trickling down her head as she tried to work out how to stop Captain Metal from killing Silver. She could just throw fire at him but fire didn't hurt Captain Metal anymore. He was heatproof now. Not to mention she'd just burn Silver if she threw fire at Captain Metal. She wondered if Ruben would be able to take him down with a jet of water. He probably could but the water could accidentally cause Captain Metal to injure Silver, maybe fatally injure him if the water hit Captain Metal wrong. And Sonic would likely cause Captain Metal to fatally injure Silver too. And even if they could launch an attack on Captain Metal, he had a warp ring. He'd just warp away from the Mobians and maybe kill Silver just because they'd refused to obey his orders. Blaze had no choice but to cede to Captain Metal's demands. She raised her hands and stepped forward slowly.

"Fine, I surrender." she said "But don't think I'm happy about it."

"Very good lassie." purred Captain Metal "How about yer friends?"

"They surrender too." said Blaze grimly.

"And we're just as happy about it as Blaze is." muttered Sonic.

"Even better." sneered Captain Metal "Now then Blaze, I want ye to come to me and give me tharr Sol Emeralds. Once you give me tharr emeralds, I want ye to kneel down and make no attempt to attack me as I disembowel you piece by piece."

"Whatever you say Captain Metal..." muttered Blaze despairingly.

Blaze could not believe it. She had beaten Captain Metal, TWICE

and yet now she was surrendering to him and letting him kill her just like that. Captain Metal had won. She had lost. She could imagine how devastated Silver would be when he heard of her death. Silver loved her and his poor heart wouldn't take the news very well at all. But then suddenly, Li Moon reacted at a speed so quick that it was unnatural even to somebody at her level of kung-fu. Captain Metal had been so focused on Blaze that he had forgotten about the others so he didn't even see Li Moon act until it was too late. She threw her lance like a javelin directly at Captain Metal's optic. The lance hurled through the air and impaled itself directly into Captain Metal's optic. The furious robot growled in rage and yanked the lance out of his optic. He threw Silver on the ground and began ranting like a whiny little kid.

"GAAAARRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHH! CURSE YE LANDLUBBERS!" he roared "NOW I CAN'T SEE!"

As he ranted and raved blindly and angrily, Sonic turned to Li Moon and stared at her.

"Li...Li Moon...that...that was well thrown!" gasped Sonic "How did you do that?"

"I'm a champion javelin thrower." explained Li Moon "There's not a target in the world I can't hit with a javelin, or in this case a lance."

"That's very well done Li Moon." said Blaze gratefully "You saved my life and Silver's life too. Thank you."

"No problem." said Li Moon sweetly "And I think I successfully carried out one of Matilda's tips she gave me, be unpredictable."

"You certainly WERE unpredictable!" gasped Ruben "Even I didn't see that coming!"

"I don't think any of us did." laughed Sonic "Matilda will be VERY proud Li Moon."

Li Moon smiled with pleasure. She couldn't wait to tell Matilda how well she'd done in this match. As for Captain Metal, he stopped raving and he held up the warp ring. He couldn't see anybody so he

pointed at whom he thought was Blaze but actually, was just the scenery around him.

"This isn't over Blaze! This sea tale of ours will continue and next time, it'll conclude with YOUR death!" he swore.

Captain Metal flicked the warp ring over his shoulder and followed the sound it made so he would be able to find it again and walk through it. Blaze ran towards the warp ring, hoping to catch Captain Metal. She failed. The warp ring began closing as soon as Captain Metal stepped through it. But while Blaze was too late to catch Captain Metal, she wasn't too late to catch the warp ring. She grabbed the warp ring and skidded to a halt before she could fall over. Pleased she'd gotten the warp ring, Blaze tucked it away under her coat.

"Captain Metal won't be using that anymore…" she muttered to herself "Not to mention Silver lost his super warp ring when we were sent to Solbius so this is a good substitute."

"Yeah and now you have a super warp ring, you can send Captain Metal back to Solbius next time we see him." said Ruben brightly "Though I'd much rather send him into a zone with no life on it whatsoever if such a thing exists…"

"Well Captain Metal's run away with his tail between his legs so we don't need to worry about him now." said Sonic "Now he's gone, we can focus on destroying that station."

"Wait, Matilda hasn't returned yet." noted Ruben "Wait a minute, she might come back anytime…"

Right on cue, the door to the refuelling station opened up and Matilda and Bladefeather emerged from within the building. Ruben sighed with relief, pleased to see they were OK and he ran over to greet them. Mushu was pleased to see Bladefeather was OK and he ran over to greet him. Ruben and Matilda hugged while Mushu and Bladefeather shook hands.

"You're back, thank goodness!" cried Ruben happily "How did it go in there?"

"We had to deal with a robot named "Katherine" but we managed to defeat it." said Matilda brightly "I had to get Bladefeather out of a cell he was trapped in though so I guess Bladefeather was a bit in over his head when he thought he could handle this alone." she glanced at him cheekily and smirked at him.

Mushu folded his arms and smirked back at Bladefeather as if to say "I told you so". Like Matilda, he'd wanted Bladefeather to go with back up too instead of going it alone. Bladefeather fumed at Mushu, his face a mix of annoyance and maybe even embarrassment at the fact he'd been wrong again. Bladefeather could already imagine what Mushu would be saying if he could still talk now. Bladefeather sighed.

"OK, I admit that I made a grave error and got myself into a very onerous situation that required the assistance of my fiancée and my friend. I deeply apologize for not taking you with me when I went to spy on this station. Will that satisfy your needs to humiliate me?!" he snapped.

"Now, now Bladefeather, let's not be rude please." said Matilda sternly "We all make mistakes remember?"

"My deepest apologies." said Bladefeather guiltily "Please excuse my unnecessary ranting."

"It's OK dear, I understand that you don't like to be made fun of." said Matilda softly, embracing her fiancé and resting her head against his chest.

"Thank you my flower." said Bladefeather, hugging Matilda back "Well, are we going to destroy that hideous building then?"

"Leave it to me, Silver, Blaze and Ruben." said Sonic with a wink "We'll destroy it together."

Matilda and Bladefeather nodded approvingly and the two along with Mushu and Li Moon stepped back as Sonic and Ruben walked up towards the building. Blaze remained where she was and she shook Silver lightly to wake him up from Captain Metal's knockout. Silver woke up and he rubbed his head to ease the pain that had flared up

in it.

"Huh…what?" murmured Silver.

"Captain Metal's run away so we can destroy the station now." said Blaze softly "Are you up for destroying the station Silver?"

"My head hurts a little bit but I'll be OK." said Silver "Let's bring that thing down!"

Happy to hear this, Blaze and Silver walked up towards the station to join Sonic and Ruben. The destruction process was very swift. Sonic unleashed a heavy round of spin-dashes that punched holes into the metal and damaged the interior of the station most callously, leaving the station completely useless since it wouldn't work properly with most of its interior destroyed. Sonic had done most of his work on the first two floors and had done a lot of damage. Blaze did even more damage by setting herself alight and smashing through the wall of the station and razing through the interior in a fiery tornado that nothing would be able to stop. Blaze destroyed much of the upper floors as well as more of the first two floors and she even proceeded to set fire to some of the exposed circuitry that her attacks had caused to be exposed. Ruben squirted water onto some of the machinery and ended up causing electrical fires to go with Blaze's fire. The combining fires spread rapidly through the station and began to engulf it in flames and smoke. Ruben and Blaze had luckily bailed out of the station before they could be caught up in the fire. Now all that was left was for Silver to focus on the top half of the tower and use his psychokinesis to crush the middle part of the tower and cause it to bend and buckle over. Silver used his psychic powers to make sure the tower fell away from the Mobians down below. The tower came down with a crash onto the landing pad, smashing it to pieces and the tower ended up breaking up into sections along with the landing pad as it was destroyed. The fire inside the other half of the station ended up igniting some fuel inside the station and some explosions began to tear through the station. The Mobians all ran for cover as one final explosion tore apart the station and blew debris all across the area. A huge fireball raged in place of the destroyed building and smoke billowed out as if climbing up into the sky in a desperate attempt to escape from the raging inferno beneath it. The Royal Fighters whooped with joy over

their combined efforts destroying the station.

"Whoo Hoo! We did it!" cried Sonic "Bye, bye ugly Eggman-made refuelling station!"

"Our combined efforts sure did make short work of that thing." said Blaze, satisfied with the team's handiwork "I bet the others have had as easy a time as we have."

"Others…that reminds me. Where's the rest of your team?" asked Matilda "Why did just you, Ruben, Silver and Blaze come Sonic?"

"My friends have split up all over the world to deal with other refuelling stations around the world." explained Sonic "Chun-Nan wasn't the only one who had the dishonour of having one built in it."

"Others? I guess it makes sense that Eggman would have more than one station." deduced Bladefeather "Why have one stop when you can have several?"

"Indeed." agreed Sonic "So now my team's done, we can go home and see if the others have done their missions yet."

"I'd like to come too." said Matilda "I want to be there when the Death Egg is stopped. That way I'll sleep happily with the knowledge that the world won't end."

"Pardon?" asked Bladefeather curiously "What did you mean Matilda?"

"We'll explain everything when we get home Bladefeather." said Sonic quickly "Anyway, you're free to come with us Matilda. And you can bring Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon too. They deserve to see Eggman's latest scheme go up in flames too."

"Thank you Sonic." said Matilda gratefully "As for Li Moon…how did she do?"

"Let me just say that she's pretty good at throwing sharp things at bad guys." said Sonic, winking at Li Moon "You're training a promising student Tilly."

Matilda beamed. It seemed Li Moon would be a fine student indeed. She felt bad about ever doubting her in the first place. As for Li Moon, she was pleased to see that Matilda was pleased with her. She felt very honoured indeed and couldn't wait to complete her training. She wondered if she'd be as good as Matilda when Matilda had finished training her. The Royal Fighters gathered around Blaze and Sonic instructed the Chun-Nan fighters to gather around her too. Blaze took out her Sol Emeralds and used a Sol Control to warp everybody out of Chun-Nan and back over to New Mobotropolis. Their mission had been a success…but it wouldn't change a thing about the fore coming events.

The Death Egg was nearing completion. It was nearly ready to launch. In half an hour it would be up in the sky and ready to reek havoc all over the world. Even as Sonic and friends were on their way home…it was already…too…late…

A mission succeeded! Captain Metal, sent scurrying home! But does that mean we'll get a happy ending? Doesn't seem like it.

The Countdown to the Death Egg nears its final number as we prepare for the launch of the Death Egg next time...be there to read it!

Countdown to Roboticization Part 1

Story 194: Countdown to Roboticization Part 1: The Launch

Countdown to Death Egg: 1

The Royal Fighters had been busy lately. VERY busy. So busy that one couldn't just put it into words and do it justice.

After hearing about Dr. Eggman's planned new ship "The Death Egg", the Royal Fighters had vowed to make sure that the Death Egg never saw the light of day and after hearing from Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat that the Death Egg seems to end Mobius, they were more determined than ever to stop the ship dead in its tracks and make sure it never took off. After infiltrating the Egg-Bunker, Queen Sally Acorn had managed to find out the locations of the Death Egg's refuelling stations which had been completed after she, Sonic the Hedgehog, Silver and Blaze had been sent to Solbius and ended up missing a week of Mobius Prime's time in the process. The Royal Fighters had split up all over the world to destroy the refuelling stations. As of this moment, Sally and the Royal Fighter she'd taken with her, Bunnie Rabbot, had been the first to return home from their mission. They'd come home with more than they'd bargained for. Mace the Elephant had come home with them after hearing what their mission was about and he vowed to help prevent the end of the world. His family life was just starting to look up after years of poverty and he wasn't going to let it end now. More still, they had come home with Sally's long lost cousin, Abby the Squirrel*. Abby had been lost in the Lost Jungle for over four years due to an unfortunate turn of events but now she was happily reunited with Sally and had come home to New Mobotropolis…not in the best condition for she'd sustained a few injuries from the battle with Mecha Sally in the Lost Jungle. Upon arrival, she'd been taken to Royal HQ and Sally and Bunnie had seen to giving her medical treatment immediately. Her torso was now completely bandaged and the wound had been given antiseptic to prevent it becoming infected and to ease the pain. Now that had been done, Abby had requested to be given a change of clothes since her current attire of

a tiger fur skirt and nothing more was hardly an appropriate way to dress in society like New Mobotropolis. Sally had given Abby one of her best dresses to wear. The dress had no sleeves and was dark purple on the torso section with a lighter purple skirt section and it fit Abby perfectly. Abby had been given a matching pair of purple slippers to go with the dress. Abby had even combed her hair and untied it from around her head so it now hung loose over her shoulders and looked very neat and tidy. Gone was the jungle girl that Abby had been for four years. The Abby that Sally remembered very fondly was back again. Abby even had to admit she looked a lot better like this and was already accustomed to her new outfit and appearance. Now Abby was bandaged up and neatly dressed and tidied up, Sally and Bunnie had seen to explaining what she had missed out on for four years and why Mobotropolis was now "New Mobotropolis" and why it looked so different. They were sitting in the rec room of Royal HQ, the best place to hang out when you want to chill and relax for a bit and Abby found the room to be most comforting to be in. Once she was comfortable, Sally and Bunnie started explaining everything. Abby had been utterly amazed at what she'd heard. She had missed out on more than she could have possibly realized from Eggman's debut to Mobius to the war that had been going on for two years, going on three now, to the countless amount of evil schemes they've foiled and the three alien invasions they'd fought against and nearly died in the process. Even the multiverse crisis had been mentioned in the story to which Abby had admitted she'd seen streaks of light in the sky over the Lost Jungle on occasion but never lost anybody due to their uncertainty of the light and unwillingness to go near it. Sally even told Abby on how she had come to ascend from princess to queen and how she was now a queen who fought for her city as well as ruled over it and most importantly, how Mobotropolis became New Mobotropolis. It had been a lot to take in for Abby but she'd followed Sally and Bunnie without a single interruption. After the story had been finished, Abby spoke her thoughts on the whole thing.

"Whoa...four years pass by and everything changes...gasped Abby "Mobotropolis is now "New Mobotropolis", there's an army known as the Royal Fighters Service and it's fighting against a man named Dr. Eggman, whom I already know about, you're now a queen after an alien killed Alicia and Max and you now have the ability to fight,

you're dating a boy named Sonic the Hedgehog who is also the biggest hero of Mobius and now currently, you're all fighting against Dr. Eggman and hoping to stop him from launching a ship called the Death Egg?"

"Yes cousin, that's correct." said Sally "And if all of what I've told you sounds a bit far-fetched, Nicole can vouch for everything."

"It's true." a feminine voice said as a cloud of pixels came from nowhere and formed the image of Nicole the Lynx, former Mobian and best friend of Sally Acorn, in front of Abby and Sally "I can show you news reports and images to back-up everything that's been said so please, don't dismiss everything as nonsense. We assure you it isn't." she said bluntly.

"Why would I disbelieve my own cousin?" snorted Abby "Sally never lied to me whenever we were together so I believe everything she's said. I'm sorry that you're just a computer programme now Nicole...it must be sad to no longer be Mobian again eh?"

Abby had met Nicole during the times she'd met Sally so she knew Nicole very well and was sad to see that she wasn't flesh and blood anymore, just a computer programme and a digital but realistic looking avatar that could stimulate emotions and realistic features to feel more Mobian.

"It was sad for a time but I've come to accept the changes to the status quo." said Nicole brightly "What's happened as happened and we can't change it. But it's not a bad thing, I've been quite useful to my friends since my turn to computer programme. Just a pity Eggman tried to turn me against my friends at one point..." her face fell as a terrible memory began to haunt her mind and she had to pause for a minute to compose herself.

"Don't worry Nicole, we're making sure it won't ever happen again." said Sally quickly, hoping to stop Nicole before she got emotional "You've done way more good things for us as you are, don't let what Eggman tried to d to you get to you."

"I won't, thank you Sally." said Nicole with a smile "Now then Abby, would you like to be a part of the Royal Fighters Service?" she

asked, addressing Abby directly much to the squirrel's surprise.

"Oh no, I don't think I could be a Royal Fighter." said Abby sadly "I mean, I CAN fight but I was trained by Kay and his gorillas to fight jungle animals, not Eggman robots. And I'm certainly not used to being shot at either. I'd be dead on the battlefield..."

"We could train ya'll Abby, shape ya'll up into a nice, capable fighter." offered Bunnie "You maybe outta the jungle now but we can get ya'll used to fightin' outside of it too sugah."

"That's very nice of you but I still don't think I'd be very good at being a Royal Fighter." said Abby, shaking her head "You saw how badly I got hurt by Mecha Sally, I was nearly killed back there! I'd just be a boon to you all and I'd slow you down. I'm much safer here in New Mobotropolis I think. If anybody tries to take over Castle Acorn or anything then I will at least put up a fight and protect the city."

"If that's yer choice than we'll accept it hon." said Bunnie kindly "Besides, ah think ya'll could fill in nicely for Sally-girl when she's away."

"Yes, that would be a good idea." said Sally happily "You could be my substitute ruler and take care of the city while I'm fighting against Eggman! You were good at politics when you were a teen Abby and you ruled over a gorilla tribe very well, I'm sure you'll take good care of New Mobotropolis too."

"I've got some catching up to do since I've been away for so long but I think this is a task I'll be well-suited for." said Abby softly "I'll give it a shot. Guess I'm not done being "queen" yet."

Sally and Abby chuckled and hugged each other.

"OK, so, when do we go and find the Death Egg?" asked Mace "Didn't Nicole here find out where it was?"

"She did but we have to wait until the other Royal Fighters return sugah." said Bunnie "We can't go without em ya know, we'll need the whole team in on this. This isn't a task for just four of us."

"Let's hope they come back soon, some bad feeling in my gut's

telling me we're running out of time and I'm not sure why." muttered Mace "I feel like the Death Egg's going to launch any moment now."

"I have that feeling too..." Sally's face was graver than a lonely ghoul wondering the haunted streets alone at night.

"If only I could have found any files on the Death Egg whilst we were in the Egg-Bunker." murmured Nicole sadly "We could have found out how close the Death Egg is to being completed and if we have the time to stop it."

"I bet if we weren't stuck on Solbius for a week, our time that is, we would likelier have had a chance to stop the Death Egg." moaned Sally "But we lost five precious days to find the Death Egg and destroy it. If we hadn't been stuck on Solbius for a week then we would have found the Death Egg already."

"Ah'll say. Ah mean all ya had to do was plug Nicole into that station in the jungle and she found out where the durn thing was." said Bunnie, her face darker than a thundercloud "We know where it is but given how long it took us to find that information...we might be too late."

"If this had happened a week ago, we'd definitely be in time to stop the Death Egg." murmured Sally "We'll just have to hope the Death Egg's still not finished yet but given that Eggman's been putting a month and a few weeks worth of effort into building that ship...it must be close to finished now. It's only an estimation but it could well be correct."

Mace, Nicole, Bunnie and Abby all nodded agreeably.

"I kinda feel like I've slowed you down even more." muttered Abby "If I didn't try doing that horrible thing I did to you, you would have found the station quicker. Heck, I should have taken you straight to it in the first place! That would have sped things up a little!"

"Yes it would but it wouldn't make the other Royal Fighters get home faster." said Sally, shaking her head "You've done nothing to hinder anything Abby, please don't blame yourself. You helped us more than anything. You and your gorillas led us right to that station. We

would have taken much longer on our own."

"Aw thanks cousin." said Abby, hugging Sally gratefully "Let it never be said that I've missed your kind heart during my four years in the jungle. Then again, I had amnesia so I wouldn't have remembered anyway."

Sally knew what Abby meant and she hugged her cousin back. She'd missed hugs with her cousin too so hugging Abby was a great comfort to her in this worrying time. The calm before the storm one could say. It wasn't going to remain calm for very long though. Sally heard the sound of approaching footsteps from outside of Royal HQ and the sound was soon replaced by the sound of a door opening and footsteps entering Royal HQ. The door to the rec room opened and in walked Sonic the Hedgehog, accompanied by Silver the Hedgehog, Blaze the Cat, Ruben the Water Panther, Princess Matilda, Bladefeather the Falcon, Mushu the Iguana and Li Moon the Fox. Sonic, Ruben, Silver and Blaze had gone to Chun-Nan to destroy a Death Egg refuelling station and had only just recently completed the mission. They'd returned a few seconds ago thanks to Blaze using her Sol Emeralds to warp everybody home. Sally wondered why Matilda and the others were with the four Mobotropolis Royal Fighters but she pushed that aside for a minute to greet her comrades home.

"Sonic, Ruben, Silver, Blaze! You're all back!" cried Sally, hugging each of them with Sonic being saved for last and also hugged for the longest.

"And so are you my lovely queen." said Sonic, winking at Sally "How did it go with you and Bunnie then?"

"It went well." said Sally happily "How about you?"

"We ran into Captain Metal again but we fought him off and destroyed the refuelling station." explained Sonic "And before you ask, Captain Metal got to Mobius Prime by following Tails home when he used a Chaos Control and he managed to steal the Chaos Emerald Tails had used to look for us when we got thrown onto Solbius."

Sally and Bunnie were horrified to hear this, even though Bunnie didn't really know Captain Metal and was more horrified about the fact Tails had lost a Chaos Emerald to him.

"No…Captain Metal's got the Chaos Emerald from Tails?!" shrieked Sally "That's terrible! Did you get it back?!"

"No, he didn't bring it with him I'm sorry to say." said Blaze, shaking her head sadly "But we DID get a super warp ring from him. How he got it is beyond me though."

She showed the warp ring that she had managed to retrieve from Captain Metal to Sally. Sally took the warp ring and looked at it in wonder.

"You say this is a super warp ring…maybe Captain Metal found the one Silver had and lost when we got thrown onto Solbius?" she suggested.

"I wouldn't be surprised if he somehow got into the Egg-Bunker and found it." said Sonic, shrugging "Never mind, we WILL get that emerald back Sally, I promise you. Plus, Captain Metal deserves a beating for stealing that emerald from my best friend too! I hope Tails is OK…wherever he is."

"If he's not with any of the other Royal Fighter groups, we'll look for him." offered Sally "He might have been found by one of the other groups and taken with them."

"Hopefully." said Sonic, clearly looking worried about Tails as he thought about him at this moment.

"For now though, care to explain why Matilda, Bladefeather, Mushu and…whoever that vixen girl is are here too?" asked Sally.

"Same reason you brought Mace home I'd wager." replied Sonic, glancing at Mace "They want to help destroy the Death Egg too. Matilda in particular's keen to stop the Death Egg since she doesn't want the world to end as much as we do."

"It'd be my utmost honour to aid you all in the destruction of the Death Egg." said Matilda politely, bowing before Sally "We'd love to

join you in your mission Sally."

"I'm very happy to hear that Matilda." said Sally happily "Extra support never hurts. Now then, I've got some good news to deliver but I'm going to save it until the rest of the Royal Fighters return."

"Sounds good to me." said Silver with a smile "So who's the cute squirrel with you? A friend of yours?" he asked, looking over at the quiet and polite Abby who was keeping to herself at this moment.

"I'm her cousin sir." said Abby "My name's Abby and I've been lost in the jungle for four years thanks to amnesia I received from getting hit on the head. I managed to get my memory back after Sally found me in her mission to destroy the station that had been built in the jungle and now she's been getting me up to date with everything I've missed out on. You must be Sonic." she added, looking over at Sonic "Sally described you as being blue, spiky and astonishingly handsome and you match that description perfectly. I can see why Sally's dating you Sonic." she winked cheekily at the hedgehog, making Sonic blush red.

"S-Sally r-really describes me that way?" he chuckled nervously "Heh, heh…I knew I was good looking but…wow. Ha, ha…ahem…" he coughed "It's nice to meet you Abby, especially since you're back with your cousin now. Are you joining the Royal Fighters?"

"No but I'm going to have an important job still." said Abby "I'm going to act as a stand-in for Sally when she's unable to run the city. I'm her "substitute queen" really now."

"Sounds good, very honourable of you to take such a big responsibility miss." said Ruben kindly "I'm sure you'll be a very good substitute for Sally."

"Thanks little guy." said Abby sweetly "Sally tells me your name's Ruben. It's nice to meet you."

Her excitement was well-deserved for the footsteps entered Royal HQ and soon the entire rec room was flooded with a barrage of Royal Fighters all filing in single file and waving hello to Sally and Sonic's teams. Abby gasped in amazement at the sight of the Royal

Fighters and how many there were. They matched Sally's descriptions of them to a tee but she could see that these Royal Fighters also had some extra people that Sally hadn't described to her among them. This was definitely going to be quite enjoyable. All the rest of the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were here, Tails the Fox, Amy Rose, Cosmo the Seedrian, Cream the Rabbit, Knuckles the Echidna, Shade the Echidna, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Sora Prower, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee but more Royal Fighters had come home with them. Teams Adabat and Nekronopolis had come to NewMobotropolis too. Sonic was hardly surprised considering his team had come home with some extra Mobians so it made sense that the other teams had come home with some extra Royal Fighters too. It really was a case of "everybody was getting involved in this fight" and that feeling made Sonic feel like he was ready to take on anything, including the Death Egg. The Royal Fighters gathered around inside the rec room and Sally waited for them to start speaking, eager to hear what they had to tell her. She noticed that Amy seemed to be hurt though. On her mission in Megapolis, she'd been shot in the shoulder by Lennox Meers** and she needed serious medical attention. The bullet was still in her shoulder even.

"Amy, you're hurt!" cried Sally "Nicole, get the first aid kit, that wound looks pretty serious!

"It is serious." muttered Amy as Nicole materialized out of the room to get the first aid kit "I got shot in the shoulder! By Lennox Meers no less!"

"We ran into Team Diamond in our mission." explained Sora "They gave us a tough time but we still managed to destroy the station."

"That's good." said Sally as Nicole re-entered the room with the medical kit in her hands. Due to Nicole's avatar being solid and realistic, she was able to pick up objects as if she was solid flesh and bone. Another genius feature of Tails's upgrades that made everything so much easier for her.

As Sally opened up the medical kit and prepared to work on Amy's wound, Tails ran over to Sonic and embraced his friend. Sonic hugged him back, pleased to see he was OK.

"Sonic, it's good to see you again!" cried Tails "I'm sorry I missed you before you left, I…"

"I know Tails, Captain Metal got the drop on you and stole your Chaos Emerald." said Sonic "I'm just glad you're OK Tails, I worried that Captain Metal had hurt you really badly or something. Thank goodness you're OK."

"Thank goodness indeed." agreed Cosmo "Me, Sora, Amy and Cream prepared to go to Megapolis and destroy the Death Egg station that had been built there and we found him lying unconscious on the ground so we woke him up, briefed him in on what's happening and we took him on our mission with us. We succeeded in destroying the station but…I'm afraid we failed to get the Chaos Emerald back."

"I'm not surprised, when my team ran into Captain Metal, he told us he didn't bring it with him so you were pretty much on a wild goose chase guys." said Sonic sadly.

"No, it's even worse than that." said Tails, his face grave and full of horror "You see…Finitevus has the Chaos Emerald now."

"WHAT?!" shrieked Knuckles, his dread locks flailing around wildly in alarm "Finitevus has the Chaos Emerald?! How can that be?!"

"I guess he found Captain Metal and stole the emerald from him." murmured Tails "I'm sorry Knuckles, I really am but we couldn't get it back from him. He stopped me with a Chaos Control and got away with one of his warp rings."

"So if Finitevus got a Chaos Emerald…that might explain how Captain Metal got this warp ring." murmured Blaze, glancing at the super warp ring in her hand "He maybe got it from Finitevus after losing the emerald to him."

"And if Finitevus has a Chaos Emerald then…oh no…oh no! Angel Island!" shrieked Shade "Knuckles, we've gotta get over there now! Finitevus might be stealing the Chaos Emeralds!"

"Blaze, warp ring now!" cried Knuckles desperately.

Blaze tossed the warp ring over to Knuckles to which the echidna quickly activated and opened up a portal to Angel Island. He looked through the portal…and held on tightly as he nearly fell out of it. He looked down and saw the most horrifying sight he would ever see in his life. Angel Island had fallen to the ground and smashed to pieces. There was nothing left but a pile of rocks that had once been an island. Even the Master Emerald shrine was destroyed, a sorry wreckage of rocks and rubble that lay spread out over Angel Island's remains. Knuckles nearly lost his grip on the open warp ring and fell out of it as his body began to go numb with shock. Shade pulled him back and the warp ring closed, falling to the floor with a clatter. Shade could feel Knuckles's pulse racing as she put a hand on his chest. His face was ashen and his mouth was dropped open as if he was possessed.

"Knuckles…what's wrong?" asked Shade.

"AngelIsland…it's destroyed!" croaked Knuckles "He did it…the bastard did it! He used the Chaos Emerald to find the other seven Chaos Emeralds and has taken the Master Emerald too! My home… our home Shade…it's no more!"

"NO!" wailed Shade "No it can't be! Angel Island's destroyed?!"

"But…that's impossible! It's still intact in the future, just floating in the ocean rather than floating in the sky!" protested Silver "I should know, Blaze keeps her Sol Emeralds there!"

Blaze quickly picked up the warp ring and flicked it into the air, opening up a portal to the future, most particularly where Angel Island was. Blaze looked through the open warp ring and saw that the future had changed. Angel Island was gone, no longer floating in the ocean where it should be. History had been changed but not in the way Silver and Blaze had anticipated. Blaze took her head out of the warp ring and stared at Silver.

"Angel Island's gone in the future too! History's been changed!" she gasped.

"But how? We didn't do anything to change history did we?" asked Silver "If Finitevus didn't cause Angel Island to be destroyed in the

previous timeline, why has it happened now?"

"It's all my fault!" wailed Tails "If I didn't come looking for you, Blaze, Sonic and Sally with that Chaos Emerald, I wouldn't have brought Captain Metal back to Mobius Prime and cause this to happen! It's all my fault this has happened!"

"No Tails…I think it might be a bit more than that." thought Sally as she started bandaging up Amy's wounded shoulder after getting the bullet out for her "You see, Silver and Blaze wouldn't have been thrown onto Solbius along with me and Sonic originally right? I bet in the original timeline, it was just me and Sonic that ended up on Solbius and because me and Sonic didn't have a way home…we would have been roboticized when Captain Metal used the Egg O' War. Tails here would have come to Solbius, seen that it's been roboticized and fled immediately. Because Blaze was there to foil his plans, it gave him reason to flee and seek revenge on her, thus leading him to Tails and coming home with him to Mobius Prime."

"So technically…it's YOUR fault Blaze!" declared Amy "Obviously, it's not your fault intentionally, you did something good but sadly, something bad came out of it too."

"I'm dreadfully sorry that this happened Knuckles." said Blaze sadly "I did not mean for this to happen."

"Blaze, don't be sorry about saving another version of Mobius." said Knuckles softly "And besides, you didn't know that was going to happen did you? It was just bad luck that this Captain Metal guy happened to come across Tails as he was looking for you on Solbius. As my dad would have said "It just ended up being a series of unfortunate events"."

"Very unfortunate events indeed." murmured Silver "Although…if me and Blaze weren't there to get Sonic and Sally out of Solbius in the original timeline then maybe that's why the Death Egg ended up succeeding. Sonic wasn't very to destroy it originally so me and Blaze bringing Sonic back to Mobius Prime might end up leading to the Death Egg's downfall!"

"So despite losing Angel Island, we might well have saved Mobius

as a whole." said Blaze with a dry smile "Much better than losing the entire world."

"Indeed. Which brings me to some good news I have for you all." said Sally, the squirrel now finished with Amy and getting up to speak "I got into a refuelling station and found out where the Death Egg was with help from my good friend Nicole. It's underneath the Egg Bunker apparently so we know where to find it now."

Sonic almost wanted to laugh out loud in amazement at this.

"You mean to tell me the Death Egg was in the most OBVIOUS place in the world and we missed it?!" he gasped.

"It's so obvious, it's overlooked." said Tails, shrugging and chuckling half embarrassedly.

"Instead of wasting time with those damn refuelling stations, we should have just gone straight to the Egg-Bunker in the first place and destroyed the Death Egg!" moaned Knuckles "We could have saved ourselves a lot of bother and we'd have this crisis averted already!"

"Like Tails said, it was so obvious that we didn't think Eggman would build it there." said Sonic casually "And it seems Silver and Blaze did some more good. If me and Sally were still on Solbius, Sally couldn't have found out where the Death Egg was could she?"

"Indeed not." said Nicole agreeably "Silver and Blaze have changed a lot more than they realize just by being sent to Solbius with you and Sally it seems."

"So it seems we might succeed in our mission after all Blaze." said Silver excitedly "We might well have helped to prevent the Death Egg's rising after what we've done!"

"That more than makes up for losing Angel Island." said Blaze grimly "Well, we know where the Death Egg is so let's go to the Egg-Bunker and destroy it before it can take flight."

"I'm not entirely sure if I should come guys." said Amy disappointedly "My shoulder wound might hinder my fighting a little

bit."

"If you feel like you shouldn't come Amy then you can stay here with my cousin Abby." said Sally kindly "Abby, take care of Amy while we're gone if you please."

"Anything for you cousin." said Abby brightly "So you're Amy Rose I guess? Sally described you to me and how you're a bit of a mean streak in the battlefield."

"When I haven't got a shoulder wound that is." laughed Amy "See you later everybody. Good luck out there and make sure you save some of Eggman's ugly backside for me when you bring that ship down!"

"We'll bring him straight to you so you can hammer him if you like." chuckled Sonic "See ya Amy. We'll be back before you can say "chilli-dogs"."

No more words needed to be spoken after that. The Royal Fighters all filed out of Royal HQ in single file and ran outside to go off to the Egg-Bunker. Blaze handed Sonic the warp ring and Sonic flicked it ahead of the crowd of Mobians he was now leading. The warp ring opened up a portal that led to Megapolis and they crowd filed through it in single file, disappearing one by one through the warp ring. The Death Egg was the main priority for Sonic and the Royal Fighters at this point in time. Once the Death Egg had been dealt with, they would see to finding Dr. Finitevus and getting the Chaos Emeralds back from them. It disappointed Sonic to think that even after taking down the Death Egg, they still wouldn't be entirely victorious but taking down the Death Egg would be a victory worth celebrating, that much was certain…

Meanwhile in the Egg-Bunker, Dr. Eggman was waiting patiently for the Death Egg to finally be completed so that he could launch his enormous vessel into the sky and roboticize all of Mobius at last. It had been a while in the making but the Death Egg was nearing completion. In a couple of minutes time, the Death Egg would be completed and it would be ready to launch. The only thing that really

needed doing right now was to put the stolen Master Emerald into place and then prepare the launch sequence. It made Dr. Eggman tingle with excitement to think that he would finally be victorious and his goal of ruling an entirely robotic empire would be achieved at last. He'd been fighting for two whole years against the Mobians and now this war would come to an end. He would win, the Mobians would lose and history would forever remember this day as the day Dr. Eggman triumphed. And his home planet, Earth, would join Mobius too. Thanks to the Master Emerald, he would just Chaos Control the Death Egg to Earth and then roboticize Earth. Two robotic worlds to rule. It certainly had a glorious image indeed and Eggman could hardly wait to see it come true. He cackled to himself.

"I can't believe it…the glorious day is coming at last…the day Dr. Eggman wins!" he crowed "I've waited too long and dreamt endlessly about this day…and it's finally coming! The Death Egg will rise and nobody will be able to stop me! My glorious vessel is unstoppable, I've made very sure of that and if those pesky Royal Fighters think Chaos Emeralds will save them this time…oh, ho, ho…they're dead wrong!"

Eggman had put a lot of thought into the building of the Death Egg and had taken some features from previous projects that he thought would make the Death Egg an even greater vessel then it already was. One of those features had been taken from the time he'd made Robotropolis fly, the Chaos Magnet. If the heroes dared to use the Chaos Emeralds and turn super at all, he would just use the Chaos Magnet to swipe the emeralds from them and add them to the Master Emerald down in the power core chamber. Eggman had even tested it on the Master Emerald to see if it worked and to his delight, it did. It helped how he had data files on Chaos Energy so making the Chaos Magnet a second time would be possible. It had been a success when Robotropolis had taken flight and it was going to be very helpful when the Death Egg took to the skies. Eggman really was confident that the Death Egg was well and truly unstoppable and given the thought process and the careful construction of the Death Egg, it seemed he was right. Eggman clasped the metal hands of his mech suit together and he smiled to himself.

"Pity Katherine's been destroyed along with the Chun-Nan station so she can't join me for my final victory but who cares?" he sighed "I have two much better henchbots to have at my side. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally will make a fine duo indeed. I'm surprised my first model ended up getting destroyed but she performed admirably from what I can gather. The second Mecha Sally model will be an improvement and not even Sonic will match up to her..."

He was smiling so much to himself that it was a miracle his face wasn't hurting yet, or that his face could even contain his smile in the first place. You could almost see the corners of his smile protruding from his cheeks.

"And to think that all it took was for me to be exiled from Earth to come this far." mused Eggman "Yes...I remember my time on that wretched planet that I had the dishonour of calling "home". I knew I was gifted since the day I was born. Arithmetics were child's play for me, algorithms were no problem and I could understand science equations as if it were as easy as counting. The simple fact was that I was exceptionally gifted. I was...a genius. Pity those ungrateful science teachers at school didn't appreciate the fact that I knew better than they did and spent most of my time correcting them whenever they were wrong!"

Eggman stomped the floor with the mech suit's left foot in rage. His origin story truly did leave him fuming whenever he thought about it. Things like this were things he'd rather forget about.

"They just dismissed me as a "show-off" and a "stuck-up little boy" and kicked me out of any science lesson the school had! Well I showed them when I moved onto college and got my science degree that showed how much of a genius I really was! Boy it was fun rubbing it in their faces that I got a higher degree in science then any of those squares! Ho, ho, ho! And then came the day I invented roboticization...the most amazing feat anybody has ever accomplished! The idea was sound, to heal injuries and any kind of disease by making the patient a robot. We'd never need to worry about dying from illness or injuries ever again! My science buddies liked it so much that they suggested that I go to G.U.N. and work for them! I presented my idea to G.U.N. and they thought that it would be a great asset to their military department! But when I started

trying it in innocent people, they declared me insane and fired me! I tried to exact my revenge and instead, I ended up being exiled in a miserable, humiliating defeat! And now here I am, on another world and trying to achieve the task that I sought to achieve on Earth...make a robot utopia just for me to rule over! I'll prove to Earth that a roboticized world is a MUCH better place, I'll prove it! Crime and warfare would be a thing of the past, we'd never need useless doctors and pointless hospitals since medical problems wouldn't ever be a problem again and we'd be in a world of peace and tranquility with me, the glorious Dr. Ivo "Eggman" Robotnik would be the perfect ruler!"

He threw his arms into the air and roared with laughter as if he was doing some kind of hammy performance in a bad stage show before an uninterested audience. Only...there was no audience, he was just making a scene for himself. Eggman stopped laughing and tapped his claws together.

"Mobius is just merely a test for how my robot utopia will look! And once Mobius is mine, Earth will fall victim to the Death Egg too and for once, my genius will be appreciated!" declared Eggman "For too long I have been wronged, unappreciated and sneered at! Now people will respect me and worship me! If not then too bad, they'll have to do it anyway!"

His pontificating was brought to an ubrupt halt by a beeping sound on the main computer screen. An Egg-Pawn's face appeared on the screen and waited for Eggman to respond. Eggman pointed at the screen as if it was doing something wrong and he was calling it out.

"What is it?! Can't you see I'm busy idolizing myself?!" snapped Eggman.

"The-Death-Egg-is-rea-dy-for-launch. A-wait-ing-your-com-mand." droned the Egg-Pawn.

Eggman tried to skip for joy but the mech suit was much too top heavy for him to do so without toppling over so instead, he threw the metal arms up and whooped from inside the mech.

"YES! It's ready at last!" chortled Eggman "Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy!

It's ready, it's finally ready! Countdown to Extinction for the Mobians and Countdown to Genesis will for the Robians will now begin! Launch the Death Egg!"

"Yes-sir." said the Egg-Pawn.

The screen switched off and Eggman waited by, trembling with excitement as the Death Egg prepared for launch. Outside, he could hear a loud alarm wailing throughout the underground cave that had been dug to house the Death Egg during construction.

"Attention all Egg-Pawns, Death Egg is ready to launch. Repeat. Death Egg is ready to launch. Board the ship immediately and prepare for take-off."

The working Egg-Pawns were quick to respond. They put away all their tools and carried them into the Death Egg as they boarded the ship. Dr. Eggman left the Egg-Bunker, which was now the top floor of the Death Egg, and he flew down to the centre floor which housed the control room for the Death Egg. He sat down in a large metal seat and watched as the Death Egg's crew began to prepare the ship for launch. Buttons were pressed and levers were pulled during the whole process and the room was alive with blinking lights and whirring sounds as if some creature was finally waking up after being asleep for several years. The Egg-Pawns primed the ship and began the launch sequence.

"Ocular shutters...opening..." droned a computerized voice as two huge circular shapes on the Death Egg opened up in a manner of eyes opening. The shapes themselves clearly resembled eyes.

"Nasal sensory array deploying..." the voice droned again as a metal slab opened down from the middle of the Death Egg's face and formed what looked like a nose.

"Ventral engines beginning preliminary burn..." the voice droned one last time "Prepare for take-off in ten...nine...eight...seven..."

The Death Egg rumbled as its engines began burning away, roaring gleefully as they prepared to push the great vessel they were attached to into the sky above. To Eggman, this rumble was one of

the best feelings he would ever experience. He laughed with joy as the Death Egg slowly began to ascend. Sonic and friends were too late...the Death Egg was launching and nothing could stop it...

Up above, a warp ring opened up in mid-air and out of it poured all the Royal Fighters from Team Mobotropolis to Team Nekronopolis and even Team Adabat. If Dr. Eggman thought he dealt with enough Royal Fighters already then he would certainly go ballistic over the large amount of Royal Fighters here to fight him now. The Royal Fighters all spread out and Blaze grabbed the warp ring before it could close up behind her. The Northern Border of Megapolis needed no introduction to the Royal Fighters. Ever since the time Sonic and Knuckles had first met each other, this had been Eggman's primary base of refuge. Once had a robotic city stood in this very place and now it was currently housing Eggman in an underground bunker that was now part of Eggman's new ship, his new place of refuge. Sonic looked around and was rather surprised to see that there was nobody around. Considering the Death Egg was located underneath the Egg-Bunker, Sonic at least expected some security around but there was none. Almost as if Eggman thought they would never guess the Death Egg was here. They hadn't been able to guess at first though so Sonic could hardly blame Eggman for his lapse in security.

"Huh, coast is clear. That's unexpected." mused Sonic "Guess Eggman's not expecting company."

"Lucky for us." said Tails "We'll be able to stop that Death Egg easily since he has no idea we're coming after him!"

"I dunno Tails, Eggman's not that stupid." murmured Sally uneasily "I'm sure he would have at least made sure that we couldn't get to the Death Egg in case we did manage to find out where it is, in which case we have now. It's like he doesn't care about security anymore..."

"Doesn't matter, Eggman's inviting us to destroy his new toy so let's be polite and accept his invitation." said Sonic impatiently "Has anybody got any ideas how to destroy the Death Egg?"

"Given I have the Sol Emeralds on me, I could just as easily turn super and destroy that thing myself." suggested Blaze "Easy as that."

"Bet Eggman won't expect that to happen now will he?" laughed Sonic "You know, we didn't even need everybody here. Just let Blaze do it all and we're good to go!"

"A little anti-climactic some might think but not that it's a bad thing." said Tails casually "Although something tells me it won't be as easy as that..."

"I know the feeling buddy." said Sonic, nodding his head "Sometimes something looks easy and it ends up being much harder than you think. And in Eggman's case, he's definitely proved that statement correct multiple times before. Oh well, we have something that will destroy that Death Egg easily and Eggman won't be able to do anything about it."

"Yeah, yeah, we get it, now can we get into the Egg-Bunker and destroy the darn thing already?!" yelled Knuckles "We're wasting time here!"

"Hold on Knuckles, I can feel something beneath my feet." said Cosmo worriedly "It feels like...rumbling."

The Royal Fighters waited for a moment and fell silent as they listened for a sound of any kind. They could feel the rumbling too. And as they waited, it began to get much worse. The rumbling increased to the point where the Royal Fighters felt like they were going to fall over like skittles in a bowling game. Sonic had a feeling that standing around wasn't a good idea at this moment. He turned to the Royal Fighters, his face full of panic.

"RUN FOR IT!" yelled Sonic frantically.

He knew what the rumbling meant. They were too late. The Death Egg was launching and they were standing right above it! The Royal Fighters ran for their lives as the ground shook even more violently and large cracks began to spread out across the ground beneath their feet. They ran until they couldn't feel the rumbling under their

feet as much as before and watched with utter dismay as the ground opened up in an enormous crack and a huge metal shape began to ascend from underneath. Rocks showered down the sides of the shape and into the cracks and the cracks only expanded as the shape continued to plough its way up through the ground. It was like watching a tank plough through a brick wall only the shape was going up and was going to be airborne momentarily. Sonic could only stare incredulously as the enormous shape of the Death Egg began to rise from the ground and loom over them all. He could only imagine what the Death Egg looked like and now he finally knew. He never would have imagined anything like this. The Death Egg was an enormous egg-shaped machine with eyes, nose and a moustache on it. The best way to describe it was that it looked like a giant flying egg with Eggman's face on it. Yet the somewhat silly image managed to look very intimidating because of its enormous size. A ship this big likely contained great power. Power...enough to end the world Sonic thought immediately. He could see why Silver and Blaze thought this behemoth of a ship was responsible for Mobius's doom and 200 years of decay and dwindling life, it could easily destroy a planet depending on what weaponry it had. Silver and Blaze were more horrified at the sight of the Death Egg than anybody. They'd tried to prevent it from coming and yet it was here, looming above them and glaring at them with its huge, ominous orange "eyes. Not for long though. Blaze summoned the Sol Emeralds and prepared to become Burning Blaze...only to regret trying this action. The Chaos Magnet that Eggman had installed into the Death Egg acted the moment the Sol Emeralds appeared. The magnet was a small circular disc with a very powerful force that could attract anything with Chaos Energy in them no matter how far away they were and it was located under the Death Egg's moustache. Eggman had specially programmed it to activate the moment anything Chaos related was detected. The Death Egg could be in space and the magnet still would have activated. Blaze watched with horror as the Sol Emeralds were whisked away from her and taken up to the Death Egg. The magnet retreated back into the Death Egg now it had the Sol Emeralds. The Mobian's best plan was utterly crushed. Blaze could not turn super without her emeralds and they didn't know where the Chaos or Master Emeralds were given Finitevus had the former and Eggman had the latter (unbeknownst to them). Blaze could only watch in defeat as the

Death Egg continued to rise.

"No..." she gasped. It was all she could do at this moment.

"We...we failed...the Death Egg's rising...and we can't stop it!" cried Silver in anguish.

He and Blaze embraced as if it was the last thing they were ever going to do. Sally and Tails were both clutching onto Sonic as if their life depended solely on him and him only. Sonic put his arms around them both, hoping to find some comfort in this horrible time.

"Sonic..." whispered Tails hoarsely.

"It's launching...the Death Egg's launching!" blustered Sally.

"We were too late...and now the Death Egg's going to unleash hell on us all!" exclaimed Sonic, clutching Sally and Tails even tighter.

The Death Egg began to ascend, climbing slowly up into the sky and leaving the ground down below. It would ascend into space and once up there...the end of the Mobians would commence. The age of Robians was about to begin...

Footnotes:

***See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 26: Welcome to the Jungle Sally Acorn* to find out how she got here!**

**** It happened in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Raccoon on the Run***

NOOOOOOOOOO! THE DEATH EGG'S RISING! OH NOES! HOW WILL SONIC AND FRIENDS STOP IT NOW?! D: :0

Tune in next time for the second part of one of the most colossal Sonic stories you'll ever read!

Before that, join Tales from Mobius for its FINAL chapter when Dr. Finitevus begins "The Formulation of the Dark Armada"...

Countdown to Roboticization Part 2

Story 195: Countdown to Roboticization Part 2: The Death Egg

Countdown to Death Egg: 0 Death Egg Launched

For days on end, the Royal Fighters had been dreading the launch of the Death Egg. Now that nightmare was coming true. Despite all their best efforts in trying to find the Death Egg and hinder it, it had launched and it was ascending up high into the sky with no way of stopping it.

After the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses had been brought to a cataclysmic but epic end by Sonic and friends, Dr. Eggman had been working hard on building himself a new ship to which he christened the Death Egg. He'd managed to keep it hidden from the Royal Fighters for a long time and had built a bunch of refuelling stations that the Death Egg actually didn't need in order to slow the Royal Fighters down and buy himself some more time to finish the ship. It had worked better than he ever could have realized. The heroes had been slowed down most beautifully by his stations although really, Raphael the Cyber Husky sending Sonic, Sally, Silver and Blaze to Solbius had been the true thing that had slowed them down for they had been gone for a week whilst on Solbius. had that not happened then the Death Egg wouldn't be flying right now. But that critical event had paved the way for the Death Egg's launch. The heroes had been too slow to find it and stop it, now it was launching and preparing to cause chaos for everybody. The heroes had no Chaos Emeralds to use on the Death Egg for Dr. Finitevus had stolen them all and the Master Emerald was onboard the Death Egg itself. Blaze the Cat had attempted to use her Sol Emeralds to turn super and destroy the Death Egg but she had just ended up losing them to the Death Egg's Chaos Magnet. Now the heroes had nothing to stop the enormous ship. The Royal Fighters stared and watched as the ship began to rise up from the ground, its ascent slow but steady for the time being. It was heading up into space where it would unleash its world roboticizer and turn Mobius into a robot utopia for Dr. Eggman himself to rule over and enjoy for years

to come. After watching it for a minute, Sonic the Hedgehog turned to face Queen Sally Acorn, who was holding onto his arm in fear. Tails the Fox was holding his other arm and looking equally as frightened.

"So…what do we do now?" asked Sonic desperately. It wasn't often that Sonic ever got worried about something but right now, he really was terrified more than he ever had been in his life.

"We're going to have to fly up after that Death Egg and shoot it down!" blustered Sally, "But how? We can't get up there and we won't be able to take it down ourselves!"

"We'll need flying vehicles!" declared Tails, "I've still got the Tornado ready for use back at home! Funny I haven't used it since the day I rebuilt it though*. Now I get to use it at long last."

"Not all of us will fit in the Tornado Tails." noted Sonic, "We need more than that if we're all gonna get up there."

"We could get the R.F.S. Jet too but even then, we won't all fit into that jet." said Sally despairingly.

"If it helps your majesty, my team has a flying vehicle of our own." said the leader of Team Nekronopolis, Miranda Mongoose, "For a while now, me, Kari and the boys have been building ourselves a ship so that should anyone far away be in danger, we can fly to their aid and not be a second too late. We also built it to tackle large Eggman robots should he ever unleash any. We called it the Sky Patrol and Kari's been quite eager to fly it at last. Well now we get to show it off, see if our hard work has paid off."

"That's great Miranda!" exclaimed Sally, "You will take Team Adabat and Team Chun-Nan on the Sky Patrol with you while me and my team go in the Tornado and the R.F.S. Jet. Blaze, warp ring please."

Blaze tossed Sally the super warp ring that she had managed to swipe from Captain Metal during her time in Chun-Nan earlier. It seemed like a good idea at the time and right now was just proving how good an idea it had been. Sally flicked the warp ring into the air and opened up a portal back home to New Mobotropolis.

"All New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, Silver and Blaze, with me now!" Sally cried frantically, "After we've gone through Miranda, you will use the warp ring to warp yourself and the remaining Royal Fighters to the Sky Patrol."

"Got it." said Miranda, "I've always wanted to use one of those warp rings."

"And now you'll get the chance." said Sonic with a wink "Come on ladies and gentleman, boys and girls, let's bring death to that Death Egg!" he declared ecstatically, leaping into the air like somebody who's won a noble prize.

"Only you could ever be in such an intense situation and still say something that cheesy Sonic." laughed Tails, playfully nudging Sonic with his elbow.

Sonic just grinned casually. He maybe scared over what the Death Egg can do but he believed in remaining optimistic in the heat of a battle since remaining good-willed and hopeful in situations like this can often be very helpful. A wise man once said that fear can hold you prisoner but hope can set you free. In Sonic's case, fear would hold him back but hope would help him win. Sally flicked the warp ring into the air and opened up a portal back to New Mobotropolis. The New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters all ran through the warp ring with Silver and Blaze following them. The moment they disappeared through the warp ring, Miranda grabbed it just as it closed up and she activated it, opening up a portal to the R.F.S. base back in Nekronopolis. Team Nekronopolis, Team Adabat and Team Chun-Nan all ran through the warp ring and found themselves transported over to the R.F.S. base. Soon the Royal Fighters would all be flying up after the Death Egg, keen to bring it down before it could cause any harm. But would they succeed? That was a question that had even Sonic nervous at this pressing hour…

A few minutes later…

Up on the Death Egg itself, it was pretty smooth sailing for Dr. Eggman. The egomaniacal mad-scientist now caged inside a life

support machine modelled after the E-123 Omega design was sitting back and relaxing as the Death Egg continued its ascent up into the sky. The Death Egg had already climbed fairly high up into the sky, about the height of the world's tallest mountain, and it was still heading on up. Eggman was intending to go into space so the Death Egg would carry on flying until the skies turned black and the clouds became swarms of stars. It was kind of funny to Eggman that he hadn't really been up in space for three years. He'd cruised through eons of space and past many planets and stars searching for a place to build the Eggman Empire after being exiled from Earth and yet after landing on Mobius, he hadn't been up in space since then. Memories of the cruise to Mobius came back to Eggman's head as the Death Egg continued ascending. He had travelled through space in his battleship, the prototype Egg Carrier, when searching for Mobius. Now he was heading up into space with by fair his greatest ship ever, the Death Egg. Bigger than the Egg-Carrier, stronger and more heavily armed to, the Death Egg put the Egg Carrier to shame. And it had the greatest weapon of all…a worldwide roboticizer. He'd used it once when Robotropolis still existed and had succeeded in roboticizing all but five Mobians. This in turn led to his defeat, his brief snap into insanity and Robotropolis being destroyed for good. He wouldn't miss a single Mobian this time around though. He was going to be up in space when he fired the blast and the blast would bathe Mobius in its dazzling light as everything was converted into a robot. Best of all, Sonic the Hedgehog wouldn't be able to stop him now. The Death Egg would be impossible for him to break in and even if he had a ship of any kind, the Death Egg would just shoot it down. Even if Sonic managed to get onboard, he still had some surprises for the hedgehog that he knew would keep him at bay long enough for him to fire the roboticizer beam. This really was going to be Dr. Eggman's perfect day.

"Death-Egg-as-cend-ing. Est-i-mat-ed a-rri-val-time-fif-teen-min-utes-and-coun-ting." droned an Egg-Pawn on duty monotonously, "En-gines-are-at-opt-i-mal-burn, the-world-wide-ro-bot-i-ci-zer-is-char-ging-and-all-sys-tems-are-green."

"Excellent, excellent! Everything's running like clockwork." purred Dr. Eggman delightedly, "And best of all, the hedgehog doesn't seem to have anticipated my Death Egg's launch, even if he and his friends

have destroyed all of my fake stations…"

He still couldn't resist the urge to preen and gloat over his clever plan to build fake stations in order to slow the Royal Fighters down and waste their time while his Death Egg neared completion. The plan seemed to have worked to perfection for the Royal Fighters still hadn't arrived to stop him yet. Not that they could even if they were here. Eggman eye the main computer monitor as it displayed the Death Egg's ascent. He had reached an altitude of 10,000 feet already and it was still climbing. Eggman wished he could have gone faster but he remembered an old saying from an old fable that he once heard on Earth. "Slow and steady wins the race". This wasn't a race, but slow and steady would help Eggman win this battle. Eggman leaned forward inquisitively in his seat.

"Egg-Pawn, any sign of Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends?" he asked.

"Neg-a-tive. No-sign-of-hedge-hog-currently-de-tec-ted." droned the Egg-Pawn.

"I guess I slowed them down more than I realized." chortled Eggman, "Ha, ha…I bet they're still trying to figure out where this ship is right about now! They'll find out alright…too late that is! Ho, ho, ho!"

"Hold-on-Doc-tor-Egg-man. Scan-ners-in-di-cate-that-there-are-three-ap-proach-ing-veh-icles-com-ing-to-wards-us." the Egg-Pawn quipped suddenly, straightening up and staring at the screen it was positioned in front of. Three dots had appeared on the Death Egg's radar and they were closing in on the Death Egg.

"Might be some aeroplanes taking people on holiday but let's see what they are." said Eggman casually, clearly not bothered about what the vehicles could be. He had an invincible ship with a worldwide roboticizer, he had nothing to fear pretty much.

The Egg-Pawn tapped away on the control panel's buttons to display a visual scene of what was going on outside on the computer monitor. Dr. Eggman stared at the screen as an image of outside the Death Egg filled the entire screen. He gaped at what he

was seeing. He saw three flying vehicles coming towards the Death Egg. One was the Tornado, a blue and yellow bi-plane that Tails had built himself with Sonic the Hedgehog and Sally Acorn riding on the wings. Flying beside the Tornado was the R.F.S. jet, a silver jet with four engines and hovering abilities. The third ship was new to Eggman. This was the aforementioned Sky Patrol that Team Nekronopolis had built themselves. It was a round ship with white wings jutting out from the sides. The hull was a brilliant golden colour and the top of the ship was domed with a large golden star printed on the top. It was armed with gun turrets that were positioned all around the ship's hull, giving it the capability of firing in every direction possible. Team New Mobotropolis had been very impressed with the appearance of the Sky Patrol and looked forward immensely to seeing the ship in action. Team Nekronopolis themselves were very excited to see their new ship in action too. Dr. Eggman took in what he'd seen, his brow furrowed in thought.

"So it appears the Royal Fighters were prepared for me after all." he sighed, "Well, I guess launching into the sky without any problem was too much to ask for."

He stood up from his seat and barked as loudly as he could.

"Launch the distraction drones!" bellowed Eggman wildly, "Fire the Death Egg's weapons! Shoot those vehicles down! We cannot have the launch being interrupted at this delicate stage! Leave no Royal Fighter alive!"

"Sir-yes-sir." droned the Egg Pawn.

The Egg-Pawn pressed a button on the control panel. Outside on the Death Egg, the green bands that circled around the top and the bottom of the Death Egg began to glow with a light that would have been very bright but the day outside was already bright so the bands hardly looked like they were glowing. Then huge spears of lasers began to shoot out of the bands on the Death Egg and head straight towards the oncoming vehicles. The Royal Fighters were already anticipating an attack from the Death Egg so the moment the lasers fired, they were already manoeuvring their vehicles to dodge the attack. The lasers were just one of two distractions that the Death Egg had in store for the Royal Fighters. The deadly green laser

shots surged towards the Tornado but Tails performed a slick, evasive barrel roll to dodge the shot. Sonic and Sally held on for dear life as the plane spun around in a neat circle to avoid the laser shots. It amazed even Tails how fast his plane could really move but even more amazing was the fact Sonic and Sally had been able to hold onto the wings during that roll. Tails zoomed closed towards the Death Egg, the Tornado's propeller spinning at top speed and scything through the air as it edged closer to the egg-shaped ship. The Death Egg just seemed to increase in size as Tails drove closer and closer. It was big enough already but getting closer to it by the second, it just seemed to get bigger. But Tails wasn't somebody who got intimidated by mere size, he'd seen enough big things in his life to get used to them. The Death Egg's lasers fired towards the Tornado again but Tails weaved the plane up and around the lasers as if he was on a battlefield dodging bullets every yard he ran. He fired back at the Death Egg with a hail fire of blasters that barely did anything against the hull of the Death Egg. They just bounced off as if they were merely stones against a brick wall. The R.F.S. Jet edged closer towards the Death Egg and launched an attack of its own. Wilson the Dog was in the pilot's seat of the jet and he fired the jet's lasers at the Death Egg. The Sky Patrol, flying close behind, fired its own lasers alongside the R.F.S. jet. The sky was now filled with a hailstorm of lasers from four different ships all shooting at each other, three against one, Mobians vs. Human, no holds barred. The heavy laser fire was useful to the Royal Fighters though. As the Sky Patrol and the R.F.S. Jet hammered feebly against the Death Egg's impenetrable hull, the Tornado began flying around the side of the ship. Tails kept a keen eye out for anything resembling a weak spot on the ship. Every ship, even ones as big as this, had their weak spots.

"Come on...there must be a vulnerable area on that thing..." murmured Tails.

"That Death Egg's strong but I bet on the inside, it's not so tough." crowed Sonic, "Once we get inside, we destroy its power core and bring it down!"

"I hope it's as straight forward as that..." said Sally, trying her best to be heard over the wind as it snatched away her words.

"You know Dr. Eggman, nothing's EVER straight forward with him." Sonic murmured more to himself than anybody, the wind drowning out his words to the point where even he only just managed to hear himself speak.

Sonic knew all too well that Eggman was a master planner and that he always had some kind of surprise in store for him and his friends. This time would be no different, especially with a ship as large as the Death Egg. Sonic dreaded to think what Eggman had in store for him and his friends in the Death Egg, especially since it seemed that the Death Egg was the very thing that ended the world according to Silver and Blaze. Sonic couldn't bear to think about it, all the more reason he had to succeed in stopping the Death Egg. Tails suddenly cried out in alarm, pointing ahead of himself at something up ahead.

"Sonic, Sally, heads up! There's something coming towards us!" he blurted.

Sonic and Sally stared ahead and saw that something was indeed coming towards them. There was a trio of Egg-Pawns with jetpacks attached to their backs flying towards the Tornado with one intention in their computerized minds: to kill Sonic and friends. These were the distraction drones that Dr. Eggman had sent out to slow down Sonic and friends. The Egg-Pawns were armed with huge laser cannons that looked like they could do a lot of damage. Tails registered the size of the cannons and knew instantly that he didn't want to get hit by them. The Egg-Pawns, flying backwards as the Tornado flew forwards, fired at the plane. Sonic and Sally held on tightly as Tails banked sharply to the right to avoid the blasts. Tails was right on not wanting to be hit by the blasts, they were large and looked extremely powerful. They could have punched the Tornado's wings clean off if they had hit it. The Egg-Pawns analyzed the situation and realized that if Tails banked to the left, he would likely collide with the Death Egg and get himself killed. If they could force him to do that then it would be mission accomplished. The Egg-Pawns fired at Tails again, this time from the right side so surely he'd be forced to bank to the left in order to dodge. But Tails thrust the levers forward and the Tornado rose upwards instead, the shots missing the undercarriage by millimetres as they seared past underneath the plane. The Egg-Pawns tried a different tactic to get

Tails to crash into the Death Egg. One Egg-Pawn flew up a little higher than the Tornado was currently flying. The second Egg-Pawn remained below the first and the third Egg-Pawn took the right side. They would be firing from the top, the bottom and the right sides of the Tornado. Tails would surely have to bank to the right in order to dodge their attacks. The top and bottom Egg-Pawns started shooting rapidly, a hail fire of laser blasts searing over the Tornado and preventing it from going up top or down below in order to dodge. The Egg-Pawn on the right aimed at the Tornado and prepared to shoot at it. But despite how analytical the Egg-Pawns were, they had failed to notice one fundamental fact of the scene before them. Sonic the Hedgehog was riding on the wing of the Tornado. Sonic leaped off of the Tornado's wing and spin-dashed into the two Egg-Pawns firing above and below the Tornado. The Egg-Pawn on the right turned to see what was happening, a very big mistake for it ended up getting walloped and smashed to pieces by the Tornado's wing as it zoomed straight into the Egg-Pawn. Sonic landed back on the Tornado's wing as it passed under him, the Egg-Pawn's remains falling down to the ever shrinking ground down below.

"Whew, that was tight!" puffed Sonic, wiping his forehead, "Eggman's not pulling his punches is he?"

"He's got a big ship called the Death Egg, of course he's not pulling his punches!" Sally called over to Sonic, "He'll be doing whatever it takes to make sure his flight doesn't go uninterrupted! We have to bring the Death Egg down now before it fires that beam Silver and Blaze told us about!"

"Yeah…and wipe out Mobius as we know it." murmured Sonic, thinking back to what Silver and Blaze had told the Royal Fighters after the Solaris incident had been ceased the other day, "No way is Eggman destroying our world! We've been fighting for years to prevent him from conquering it, no way is he undermining our efforts like this!"

He looked over to Tails and could evidently see that the yellow-furred fox was as nervous looking as he was.

"You see a weak spot on that thing?" asked Sonic, motioning towards the Death Egg.

"Negative, I don't see anything that looks like a weak spot." said Tails, shaking his head disappointedly, "I'm not sure how we'll get inside."

"We have to get in somehow!" yelled Sonic desperately, "Try firing a missile at the hull and see if that'll punch a hole in it or something!"

"We may as well give it a go." said Tails "There's no other way inside otherwise."

Sonic and Sally nodded uneasily. Tails nodded back, willing to try this plan as much as they were. He was equally as desperate to save Mobius from destruction as Sonic and Sally were. He'd seen a dystopian Mobius himself, Mobius Beta, one of infinite different versions of Mobius in the multi-verse. Mobius Beta was a wreck and barely had any life on it. Tails did not want this to happen to Mobius, HIS Mobius. He couldn't bear the idea of his world being a wreck. The Death Egg would be stopped no matter the cost. Tails closed his hands around the joysticks and he thumbed a button on the top of the left joystick. A huge homing missile fired out from underneath the Tornado, emitting an ear-splitting scream as it roared towards it target. Tails swerved away from the Death Egg so he wouldn't get hit by flying debris when the missile hit. The missile slammed against the wall of the ship directly around the back. Despite the power of the missile, it didn't seem to do an awful lot of damage, only a big dent at the most. Tails tried launching another missile. Sadly, that was the only one he had left. The Tornado didn't have much room for more missiles than two for it wasn't really a military plane. It could only fit two and they were meant to be used on special occasions. Tails launched the second missile, aiming directly at where the first missile had hit. The missile struck home and this time, it managed to punch a hole into the Death Egg. Not a very big hole though, only enough for Sonic or anybody smaller than him. Tails edged the plane towards the hole in the wall.

"We've managed to breach the hull!" cried Tails, "Sonic, Sally, you two get inside and fast! We'll do what we can out here!"

"Will do Tails!" Sonic called over to his best friend, "You ready for this Sal?"

"Definitely." said Sally determinedly, "Let's go my handsome hedgehog."

Sonic winked at his girlfriend before he leapt off the Tornado's wing and spin-dashed directly towards the hole in the wall, passing straight through it effortlessly. Sally jumped off after him and she deployed her energy blades. As she headed towards the Death Egg, she swung the blades forward and allowed them to plunge straight into the hull. Sally hit the wall just above the hole and let herself slide down towards the hole where Sonic was waiting for her, hands outstretched so he could catch her. Sally slid down until she was dangling above Sonic and the hedgehog put his hands around her hips. He carried Sally inside through the hole and set her down on the floor. Sally dusted herself off and watched as Tails banked the Tornado away from the Death Egg and flew off.

"I hope our friends will survive out there." said Sally worriedly.

"They'll be fine, don't sweat it Sally." said Sonic casually, "Now then, we're inside the Death Egg and by golly, it's as hideous as all the other places Eggman hangs out in." he muttered in disgust, taking in their surroundings.

Sally observed their surroundings too, only just taking in the fact she was now inside the Death Egg. They were in a metal corridor that had light blue rectangular lights running across each individual section of the wall. The floor seemed to curl further down the corridor, matching the relatively round shape of the Death Egg itself. The vapid colours did nothing to help make the corridor look anymore interesting. Sally screwed her face up. Was Eggman always this plain and boring when it came to interiors of his design? She'd never really been in any of his bases before the Egg-Bunker so she wouldn't know. Sonic however was reminded heavily of Robotropolis and most other bases Eggman had built before. The Death Egg was no more inviting than the other bases, cold, metallic and just screaming with death. Sonic would be all too happy to smash this ship to pieces.

"Any ideas where to find the power core chamber?" asked Sonic impatiently.

"I'll see if Nicole can find that out for us." said Sally, taking Nicole off of her boot and opening her up, "I must say though, Eggman's going awfully high up. Wonder why that is."

Sonic glanced outside along with Sally to see that the Death Egg was pretty high up now. So high that the ground looked like a nasty stain on a vast blue surface down below. Sonic could see the surrounding oceans and some of the other islands. Was Eggman heading into space or something? If so then it wouldn't be that surprising. Eggman would need to be in space if he was to destroy Mobius and not get caught up in the blast himself. The height didn't bother Sonic much, he'd been high up before and he'd been in space before. The only thing to worry about was what Eggman was going so high up for. Sonic looked away from the hole and back over to Sally.

"He is going up high. Bet the Death Egg's going into space." muttered Sonic.

"I'm willing to bet that too." mused Sally, "Why else would he be going up so high? Nicole, where's the Death Egg's power core chamber?"

"I'm afraid I cannot pinpoint its location." said Nicole sadly, her digitized voice still having some kind of emotion to her words as she spoke, "With no proper schematics of the Death Egg, I cannot simply pinpoint where it is. I would need to hack into the Death Egg's mainframe and download its schematics so I can find it."

"Something we don't have time to do…" said Sally grimly, "OK new plan, we find Dr. Eggman and we take him out. Once he's down, we hack into the Death Egg and maybe get Nicole to shut it down so it'll fall down to the ground."

"Not a good idea Sal, it'll take us with it." noted Sonic, "And we don't have the warp ring to get us outta here and the others won't be able to warp in here with it, they can't visualize the Death Egg since they don't know what it looks like inside."

"Then we ask Eggman nicely to help us off the Death Egg before it crashes." said Sally cheekily, sticking her tongue out at Sonic

playfully, "Now if Eggman's on the ship, he'll likely…"

Her words died down in her throat as she heard the sound of a door opening. Further down the corridor, a metal door had opened up to reveal an elevator that would take them goodness knows where. Sonic saw the elevator and he ran over towards it. He was surprised to find it empty, as if the lift had just come up here specifically for them. The hedgehog shook his head. He didn't like this at all. It had to be a trap, he couldn't risk getting inside the elevator. For all he knew, the moment he stepped in, it would plummet down and take him and Sally to their deaths. He observed the elevator carefully. To him, it felt like checking a room to see if there was a bomb inside. As far as Eggman was concerned, there may as well have been a bomb inside this elevator.

"OK, so an elevator door just randomly opens up and invites us inside? That doesn't sound suspicious in the slightest." snorted Sonic, "Does Eggman SERIOUSLY think we're gonna fall for that?" he could hardly resist the urge to keep the smirk off of his face.

"Maybe he does but that elevator can take us where we need to be taken." noted Sally, "It's worth trying to use it for our own needs. First things first, Nicole, is the elevator safe?" she asked, glancing down at Nicole.

The handheld computer displayed a digital image of Nicole's face that had an expression that was the living picture of concentration. Sally held Nicole in front of the elevator and Nicole started running a quick scan to see if there was anything to worry about in this elevator. Several tense seconds passed by before the scan completed and Nicole's face opened its eye. The mouth moved as she spoke to Sally.

Surprisingly enough Sally, the elevator is clean." she reported, the tone of surprise evident in her voice, "There is no booby trap or explosive device or anything that suggests it's out of the ordinary."

Sally and Sonic stared at each other as if they'd just heard that the sky was hailing meatballs and raining tomato sauce.

"So Dr. Eggman invites us into an obvious trap that turns out not to

be an obvious trap?" blurted Sonic in surprise, "Guess it wasn't an obvious trap then…"

"The elevator could well take us to an obvious trap." murmured Sally, "But if we're to find Dr. Eggman, we need to use it. I'll see if Nicole can override its controls and bring us straight to him."

With that plan in mind, Sonic and Sally stepped into the elevator. The moment they were inside though, the door slammed shut and the elevator began to go straight down. Sonic and Sally held on tight as the elevator began to take them down, surprisingly fast for an elevator. Sally looked around for a place to plug Nicole in so she could try and override the elevator and use it to go up instead of down. Eggman would likely be on the upper floors of the Death Egg and the elevator going down just took them away from him. But to Sally's dismay, there was nowhere in the elevator that said "Plug Nicole right here". Eggman clearly had that in mind when he was building the Death Egg, making sure that Nicole couldn't hack into it and do her magic. That alone made Sally frown with annoyance.

"OK…looks like our plan won't work." said Sally disappointedly, "There's nowhere to plug Nicole in this elevator."

"So it's down for us I suppose." muttered Sonic. "Let's just hope it's taking us straight to Dr. Eggman…although that might be too much to ask for."

Sally nodded, agreeing that it would indeed be too much to ask for the elevator to just bring them straight to Eggman. It was taking them somewhere and it was likely to be somewhere full of killer robots or a death trap of some kind…

Meanwhile outside, the Death Egg was nearing the planet's atmosphere and was just about ready to plough through it. The ascent was nearly complete. A few more minutes and the Death Egg would be flying above Mobius like a satellite monitoring the Earth. Tails followed the Death Egg as best as he could but he could see that the Death Egg was getting a little too high for the Tornado to carry on like this. It wasn't designed to go into space so Tails would

have to bail out of the mission or abandon the Tornado and get into another ship. The R.F.S. Jet and the Sky Patrol were two available options and both of them were designed to go into space. The R.F.S. Jet had been designed to go into space for incase the Royal Fighters ever needed to go that high. The Sky Patrol had been designed with the exact same contingency plan in mind. That and Kari the Rat, the ship's designer, had always fancied the idea of going into space one day, something Miranda could hardly say no to. The Tornado was strictly planet-bound so Tails would have to abandon his plane if he was to get into space along with the Death Egg. It was a good thing that Tails had designed a special feature for the Tornado should he need to abandon the plane for any reason. He pressed on the little screen on the control panel in front of him and activated a little command.

"Tornado, commence autopilot feature and return to base." he commanded.

The Tornado obeyed that command like a dog that's been told to sit and beg. The Tornado banked around sharply and flew off away from the battle. Tails flew out of the Tornado's cockpit and he flew over to the R.F.S. Jet. Wilson saw him coming and he pressed a button on the control panel that opened the side door. It wasn't really safe to open it at such a high altitude but Tails had no other way inside the jet so he opened the door for him. Tails flew inside the jet and landed down in before the other Royal Fighters, who were securely fastened in their seats as the jet climbed after the Death Egg. Tails sat himself in an empty seat next to Cosmo the Seedrian and he fastened himself in.

"Stage One is complete, Sonic and Sally are safely aboard the Death Egg." Tails reported.

"That's good to hear Tails." said Cosmo brightly, "Just a pity we can't get in the Death Egg with them ourselves."

"I know Cosmo but I'm sure Sonic and Sally will be alright." said Tails, clinging onto any last bit of hope he possibly could. Hope was the one thing he could do about this situation right now.

"I hope so otherwise Mobius will be doomed." said Silver sadly,

"We're nearing that time now...the time the Death Egg fires its beam on Mobius."

"I bet that's why it's going so high." thought Blaze aloud, "It needs to be in outer space in order to fire the beam and not destroy itself with the planet."

"But why would Eggman want to destroy the world after trying to conquer it for so long?" asked Knuckles the Echidna, "It just doesn't make any sense! It's a weird change of tone if you ask me!"

"Maybe Eggman's going the old "If I can't have it, no one can" route." muttered Tails bitterly, "It would be just like him to be so selfish."

"You got that right kiddo." said Mandy Mouse with an exasperated sigh, "I just wish we could shoot him down already! We and Miranda's Sky Patrol ship hit it with everything we've got and it still won't go down!"

"It took me two homing missiles just to punch even a **small** hole into that thing!" cried Tails, "The lasers have no chance and I don't think the jet's missiles will bring it down in time!"

"It's pointless trying to fire missiles any Tails, the Death Egg's blinkin' lasers will just stop them before they get anywhere near." said Geoffrey St. John with a sigh, "We'll just have to hope Sonic and her majesty can sabotage the ship from within and bring it down."

"If we fail then we lose Mobius...just like how I lost my planet to the Martians..." Cosmo mumbled to herself, terrible memories flooding through her brain and making her cringe in despair.

Tails put a comforting arm around his girlfriend, sharing her thoughts. It would be terrible for Cosmo to lose Mobius for she'd already lost Greengate, her home planet, she couldn't do with losing another home planet. Tails thought about Sonic and Sally onboard the Death Egg. He could imagine them doing whatever it takes to stop the ship before it can fire its beam. They must be trying whatever they can at this point...and he hoped they would succeed

in what they were trying to do...

Back on the Death Egg, which was now beginning to rise up through the planet's atmosphere, the elevator that Sonic and Sally had taken reached its destination and the door opened with a little "ding" noise as if to try and assure the occupants inside that it was just an ordinary elevator. Sonic and Sally had no idea that the Death Egg was breaching the planet's atmosphere due to how surprisingly smooth the process was. It was almost like nothing was happening at all. But the hedgehog and squirrel knew that the Death Egg would be close to exiting Mobius and reaching outer space soon enough and they even wondered if it was happening right now. They stepped out of the elevator and into the room that it had taken them too. They had expected an army of killer robots or some kind of death trap. Instead, they were finding themselves looking at a huge metal interior that had a lot of pumping machinery at work and a glass tube expanding down from the ceiling and into the centre of the floor. The room was round and there was a circular grate around the tube. There was a lift that lifted up to a metal platform on one side of the room and the metal platform had two doors, one above and one below. The doors would lead to two different floors of the Death Egg. Sonic and Sally's attention was fixed squarely on the glass tube in front of them. The tube had a metal egg-shaped object encased inside and the egg was connected to a pole that could retract and extend. There was a zig-zag seam all around the egg, presumably meaning it could open and close for whatever reason. Sonic scratched his head in thought.

"Wonder what that thing does?" Sonic asked.

"I'm willing to bet it's some kind of machine. But what it does, I really don't wanna know." said Sally, shuddering, "I don't think Eggman's here, nor do I think this is the power core chamber. That elevator's just taken us to some random room that'll serve no purpose to us."

"We can't go back in the elevator, it'll just take us somewhere we don't wanna be in again." said Sonic grimly "What do we do now?"

"You do nothing while I have my ultimate victory!" boomed a terrible

voice that made Sonic's skin crawl and his quills stand up on end.

Sonic and Sally's heads snapped upwards as the voice of Dr. Eggman boomed from the ceiling above them. There were intercom systems built into the ceiling and they were proudly emitting Eggman's voice as clear as if he was standing right next to them. He was still stationed up in the control room but he was using the communications systems to talk to Sonic and Sally. He knew they had managed to board the Death Egg before they even ended up in the elevator. He was the one who'd even used the elevator to bring Sonic and Sally to this room. Now they were here, he could do what he wanted with them and prevent them from getting in his way as Operation: World Roboticizer was about to begin.

"Eggman!" growled Sonic furiously, teeth clench and fists shaking in rage "I was wondering when we'd hear your annoying, grating voice again! Where are you? I've got something big and shiny for you and it's called a kick in the rear!"

"Where I am is none of you buisness hedgehog!" snorted Dr. Eggman, "You will just have to find me won't you? Ho, ho ho! And you never will find me for my Death Egg will do whatever it can to keep you away from me!"

"Try all you can Egg-Brains, we'll find you and we'll bring this ugly vessel down!" declared Sonic, pointing up at the ceiling as if hoping Eggman would see him.

"I'd like to see you try Sonic." purred Eggman confidently. If there was one thing he loved, it was teasing Sonic with his overbearing ego. He knew that his arrogance would get on Sonic's nerves and make him mad. All the more fun for him.

"Eggman, you've been trying to conquer our world for two years, going on three now! What do you want to destroy it?" asked Sally.

"I beg your pardon?" blustered Eggman, "You think that I, Dr. Eggman, am using this Death Egg...to destroy the world?!"

With that said, Dr. Eggman let fly a colossal laugh that suggested to Sally he thought she was bluffing or that she'd said something

incredibly stupid. Sonic just frowned even harder as Eggman's laughter boomed in his ears, almost like a mockery to him and Sally.

"You stupid woman, you honestly think I spent all my precious time and two precious years trying to make this world the perfect robot-utopia for me to rule only to suddenly turn around and destroy it?!" sneered Eggman, "You're out of your mind! How can I build my Eggman Empire if there IS no world to build it on?! If I wanted it destroyed, I would have helped The Eraser wipe it out when that multi-verse crisis happened! No, I don't want to destroy the world at all! This vessel is for a completely different purpose. Heck, I didn't even give it the POWER to destroy the world! Goodness me, why would I do something so mindless and idiotic?!"

Sonic's face fell so much that he thought it would drop off onto the floor.

"So...the Death Egg ISN'T the missing link Silver and Blaze are looking for after all..." he muttered, "Boy are they gonna be disappointed."

"The Death Egg isn't meant to destroy the world...so what IS it meant to do?" asked Sally curiously.

"You mind your own business you foolish female, you'll see what it's about to do momentarily." crowed Dr. Eggman, "The Death Egg is passing through Mobius's atmosphere as we speak. In a couple of minutes, it'll be in position and I'll unleash the Death Egg's ultimate weapon on the world...and assure a victory for myself at long last."

"Wait a minute..." mused Sally as her brain started whirring with all the information it had taken in. "You have an ultimate weapon...but the Death Egg isn't meant to destroy the world...then what is it..."

Her eyes opened wide. Her mouth dropped open and her face went pale. Sonic shared her reaction. He realized what Eggman had been talking about too.

"No...oh god...no..." Sally whispered hoarsely.

"He...he's talking about...a world roboticizer isn't he?" stammered

Sonic worriedly.

"And you win the grand prize!" annouced Dr. Eggman "You have guessed correctly! The Death Egg is going to roboticize all of Mobius!"

"But you already tried that Egghead and look what happened! You still lost!" protested Sonic, "Why are you trying it again?"

"Because you would never expect me to try a scheme like that again and I'm much better prepared for you this time." sneered Eggman, "Up in space, I won't miss a single Mobian and now you two are here, I can just get rid of you before you can reverse what I've done! I missed five of you last time. This time, only two of you will be spared roboticization and you two won't survive long enough to prevent Operation: World Roboticizer from happening!"

"You can't do this!" screamed Sally, "You can't enslave us all like this! Have you no decency anymore?!"

"I never had any to begin with." crooned Dr. Eggman coldly, "I am going to prove to those morons back on my world that a world of robots is better than a world of pathetic meatbags like us humans or even you Mobians! They'll be sorry they kicked me out of my world and branded me a lunatic! And you two pests will not stop me now!"

With that said, the two doors with the metal platform separating them above and below respectively opened up and in flew two different robots that were going to keep Sonic and Sally on their toes while the Death Egg prepared to launch its World Roboticizer. Sonic and Sally frowned angrily at what they were up against. Dr. Eggman had sent in Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally to fight them. Sonic hoped he would never again fight Metal Sonic and Sally had hoped Mecha Sally wouldn't be coming back after it had given her a tough time and injured Abby the Squirrel, her beloved cousin horribly**. And yet here they both were, standing before them with a look of death in their optics. Metal Sonic had his claws bared and Mecha Sally had her blades deployed. They would take no prisoners. They would kill Sonic and Sally and they wouldn't be lenient on them. Sonic dropped into a battle-ready stance while Sally deployed her blades and prepared to attack. Sonic already hated Mecha Sally for it was a

shameless knock off of his beloved Sally and the fact she was with Metal Sonic felt like Eggman was trying to mock their status as a couple. Utterly disgusting he thought. Sally pretty much had the same thoughts as they prepared to fight their metal duplicates.

"Oh great, Metal Sonic! Just what I needed!" groaned Sonic furiously, "And he seriously made a metal you Sally? It's like Eggman's mocking us with these two together!"

"I can definitely say that Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally won't live to replace us." growled Sally, "We'll switch opponents. We might have a chance at defeating them. Metal Sonic's meant to best you, Mecha Sally's meant to best me so swapping will likely result in them being destroyed."

"I sure hope this works Sal." said Sonic, "The final countdown's ticking away and I'd much rather stop it before it reaches the final second!"

"You'll never defeat them in time you pair of brats!" sneered Dr. Eggman, "Metal Sonic, Mecha Sally, ATTACK!"

The two robots leapt into action immediately. Metal Sonic activated his jet pack and he boosted towards Sonic, clearly intending to take him down himself. But Sonic zoomed out of the way and left Sally to attack Metal Sonic. Sonic spin-dashed towards Mecha Sally, the metal squirrel robot swinging its blades madly at him as he closed in on her. Mecha Sally however stepped side and elbowed Sonic as he spin-dashed past, throwing him onto the floor and sending him skidding across it like an ice skater that's fallen over onto the ice. Sally swung her blades at Metal Sonic but it was very clear that Metal Sonic had been built with her blades in mind for his arms coated themselves in an electrical shield that blocked Sally's attack. The barriers sparked and flashed as Sally's energy blades clashed against them. Sally was instantly reminded of Mordred the Robo-Mole from Mobius 3000 and how he was able to block her attacks with barriers around his arms. Now Metal Sonic was doing it, not very good for her at all. Sally didn't let this deter her at all though. She swiped at Metal Sonic, her blade clashing against his arm but the attack did little more than make Sally's arm tingle from the impact. Metal Sonic retaliated with a punch to the gut that felt more

painful than it would have done had his arm not been shielded. Sally wasn't sure if she'd be able to breathe again after that punch. Metal Sonic then proceeded to uppercut Sally into the air and send her flying across the room in a perfect rainbow arch. Sally crashed down by the elevator door. Sally forced herself back onto her feet, her belly still aching from the earlier attack. She didn't have time to react before Metal Sonic spin-dashed into her, slamming her against the elevator door. Metal Sonic then grabbed Sally by the neck and hoisted her up off of her feet. Sally scrambled furiously, trying to break free of Metal Sonic's grip. Then she realized that Metal Sonic's arms were shielded...but the rest of his body wasn't. She lifted her arm and swung her blade down at Metal Sonic's head. Metal Sonic, holding onto Sally's neck with one hand, blocked the attack with his other hand. But he wouldn't be able to block both of Sally's blades while strangling her, giving Sally the opportunity to lunge forward with her other blade and stab him in the torso section. Metal Sonic threw Sally across the room and winced in pain. Sally was back on her feet in seconds and she lunged at Metal Sonic again, her blades scything through the air towards Metal Sonic's head. Metal Sonic spun around on the balls of his feet and he blocked her attack.

Over to Sonic and Mecha Sally, Sonic narrowly dodged as Mecha Sally aimed for his arm, intending to cut it off. He managed to save himself a severed limb just in time. Mecha Sally sheathed her blades and instead, opted for a sharp vicious jab to the gut. Sonic leap-frogged over her to dodge her attack and he kicked her in the back of her head. Mecha Sally was thrown forward onto the floor by the kick and just as she picked herself up, Sonic spin-dashed her back down onto the floor. Mecha Sally rolled out of the way as Sonic spin-dashed towards her again, leaving him to slam down into the floor. Sonic unrolled from the spin-dash and found himself being walloped in the cheek by a savage backhand from Mecha Sally. To Sonic, it felt like being slammed by a sack of rocks. The hedgehog shook off the impact of the attack and he charged towards Mecha Sally. Mecha Sally kneed Sonic in the gut, making him gasp as the wind was slammed out of him, and Sonic doubled over as pain flooded through his stomach. Not even the worst stomach cramp felt as bad as this. Mecha Sally deployed her blades and aimed for Sonic's head, hoping to cut it off. Sonic yelped in fright and he rolled

backwards as Mecha Sally cleaved at the floor beneath him. Sonic leaped up onto his feet and he homing-attacked Mecha Sally in the head, nearly tearing it clean off in the process. Mecha Sally staggered backwards but she regained her balance and she deployed the gun in her "hair". The gun aimed at Sonic and fired at him, nearly singing his arm off as he leaped aside. Sonic didn't think that Mecha Sally would be such a tough opponent. That deadly underestimation was going to cost him dearly unless he thought of something and quick. Mecha Sally shot at him again, aiming directly at his head. Sonic threw himself down on the ground as the shot surged straight over him. Sonic jumped into the air as high as he could and he stomp-kicked Mecha Sally down into the floor However, Metal Sonic noticed that his partner was in need of help and frotuitously enough for him, he and Sally were positioned in a way that he had his back turned on Sonic. He fired the laser from his back and hit Sonic, throwing him clean off of Mecha Sally and into the wall. Mecha Sally returned the favour by zapping Sally in the legs and tripping her up. Metal Sonic grabbed Sally by the vest and he threw her into the air. He spin-dashed up after her and bashed against her, throwing her down onto the floor. Sonic tried to help Sally but Mecha Sally zapped him in the gut and brought him down onto his knees. Sonic sprang back up and he spin-dashed against both Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally, knocking them both down onto the floor. Sonic knelt down beside Sally and he tried to help her up.

"You OK Sal?" he asked worriedly.

"Ungh, I'm fine Sonic." grunted Sally, her voice betraying any indication in her words that she was OK, "We can't keep fighting against these two. They're slowing us down...while Eggman prepares the world roboticizer."

"We can't do anything about it." said Sonic sadly, "They're too tough for us and we can't just run away, they'll chase us down and attack us. We have to get rid of them here and now."

"If only it was that simple..." sighed Sally.

Sonic and Sally charged towards Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally, ready to resume the battle that would ultimately decide the outcome of Oepration: World Roboticizer. But no matter what happened now,

if Sonic and Sally won or lost the battle, nothing could stop Operation: World Roboticizer. The Death Egg had now exited Mobius and entered space. Hovering just a few hundred metres above Mobius from the north position, it was in position to fire the World Roboticizer beam. The Death Egg's engines died down and it loomed ominously above Mobius like an egg-shaped meteor waiting to crash into it. Perfect. Everything was in position. Dr. Eggman had been watching the battle via the main computer screen but he had been interrupted by a beeping sound and the words "Death Egg In Position" flashing over and over on the screen. Dr. Eggman didn't need to watch the battle anymore. It was time. His ultimate victory was here at last. Dr. Eggman glanced away from the screen and held his metal hand over the activate button. This button would fire the World Roboticizer. Eggman allowed himself a few seconds to relish the victory and how he'd done such a marvellous job at keeping his enemies at bay. Everything had worked better than he ever could have hoped or even anticipated they would. Just perfect for this glorious moment of triumph. Eggman raised his hand, extended the mech suit's clawed finger and stabbed down on the activate button...

Footnotes:

***See the DeviantArt exclusive chapter "The Sword of Elemental Po wer"**

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 26: Welcome to the Jungle Sally Acorn***

Oh no...it looks like...this is the end...Eggman...is going to win! He's activating his World Roboticizer! Will...will our heroes...stop it...before it's too late?! 0_0

Tune in next time for the beginning of the end...

Eggman Empire Part 1

Story 196: Victory for Eggman Part 1

Sonic the Hedgehog cried out as he was slammed against the glass tube by Metal Sonic, the tough, thick glass withstanding the impact of the slam despite the sheer force that Metal Sonic had applied into the slam. Sonic could only wonder what it would be like if Metal Sonic had slammed him against something harder.

The Royal Fighters were facing one of their most intense and gripping battles they had ever faced. Dr. Eggman's greatest battleship ever, the Death Egg, had finally launched and had taken off into space to fire its greatest weapon, the World Roboticizer, on Mobius and roboticize the entire planet so his Eggman Empire would rise and he would be the one ruling over it all. It had been a steady launch and the Royal Fighters had done whatever they could have done in order to stop the Death Egg but their attempts had ultimately been futile. At the most, Tails the Fox had managed to blow a hole into the Death Egg, a small hole that is and Sonic and his girlfriend Queen Sally Acorn had been the ones to get inside through the hole. They were intending to sabotage the Death Egg from within before it completed its launch but they were currently being distracted by Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally, two of Eggman's strongest creations ever.

The two robot-copies had the two Mobians matched blow for blow and even swapping opponents didn't make the battle any easier. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally still proved to be troublesome for the two Mobians. And of course, it had all been part of Dr. Eggman's plan to keep them all at bay while the Death Egg's launch completed. As the fight went on, the Death Egg was now in position. Looming above Mobius like a moon at night time, the Death Egg was in the right position to fire its terrible weapon. Dr. Eggman, gleefully and eagerly anticipating this moment, raised his hand and he stabbed down on the activation button with the mech suit's metal claw. The World Roboticizer had activated and the Royal Fighters were powerless to stop it. Sonic and Sally were occupied and the

rest the Royal Fighters were still trying to get to the Death Egg. The R.F.S. Jet and the Sky Patrol were exiting Mobius's atmosphere and coming towards the Death Egg but they were too late to stop it. The World Roboticizer was firing and they were just underneath the Death Egg. They would be caught in the blast if they didn't move out of the way. The underside of the ship was glowing a dazzling white colour as the ebam powered up. In the Death Egg itself, Sonic and Sally could see that the glass tube was glowing brightly and the machinery inside was beginning to move up and down, the egg-shaped structure opening and closing back and forth.

"Hey, that tube's doing something!" exclaimed Sonic, his hands closed around Metal Sonic as he tried to push him away.

"That must be the World Roboticizer!" cried Sally, "Eggman's activating it! We've gotta stop it and fast!"

She ran towards the tube, hoping to slice it open and hack at the machinery inside but Mecha Sally pile-dived her in the back and knocked her down onto the floor. It irked Sally to no end that Mecha Sally and Metal Sonic were being so problematic. What made it worse was her blades had no effect on them for Mecha Sally had blades of her own and Metal Sonic was designed specifically to be able to counter her blades with barriers around his arms. Mecha Sally plunged her blade into the floor, her actual target being Sally's arm but the queen had already moved it out of the way before she could stab her. Sally could almost imagine how the Eggman robots she had dissected felt when she sliced them to pieces with her blades. She was not going to share their fate though. Sally raised her leg and booted Mecha Sally in the back with her heel, the robot clone falling forward onto her face after the impact. Sally quickly picked herself up and lunged at the glowing tube but the squirrel never got the chance to stick her blades through the glass for Metal Sonic shot her away with his torso laser. Sonic kicked Metal Sonic in the back and knocked him down onto the floor and seized the opportunity to spin-dash at the tube. But the hedgehog bounced off of it, not leaving so much as a scratch on the tube. Sonic landed back on the floor, skidding to a halt and growling furiously in annoyance.

"Damn, it's Diamond Glass! I can't shatter it!" cursed Sonic.

"And with Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally getting in the way, I can't get near it!" Sally grunted irritably, "We can't stop it Sonic!"

"We'll see about that!" retorted Sonic.

But Sally was right. They couldn't stop the World Roboticizer. It had activated and now it fired down towards Mobius down below, the black starry void of space turning a dazzling white as a huge blast surged towards the planet. The R.F.S. Jet saw the wave coming and it flew quickly to the right. The Sky Patrol wasn't so lucky. The blast hit the Sky Patrol and immediately roboticized the occupants. Teams Nekronopolis, Adabat and Chun-Nan were transformed from flesh and blood to metal and oil in seconds. Neither Mobian felt pain for very long for the process was much too fast for them to register any as the roboticizer wave transformed them. The blast continued on down towards Mobius, striking the planet and then spreading all over in a huge white wave that seemed to bathe the planet in a white glow that made Mobius look like it was completely snowed over. The idea of a planet full of snow was much more pleasent than what was actually happening right now. All innocent, unknowing Mobians were stricken as the roboticizer wave swept over them, their skin becoming metal, their eyes becoming visors with glowing optics in them, their organs becoming circuitry and their blood becoming oil as the transformation took hold. The wave swept over the entire planet and the entire process took little more than two minutes. No Mobian on Mobius was spared the horror. Only the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were still organic but they wouldn't be for long. Dr. Eggman would see to it that they wouldn't himself. Mobius was now a robot utopia again with Robians as the occupants and Dr. Eggman as the ruler. The tube stopped glowing and the machinary came to a stand still. Sonic and Sally stared at it in dismay, knowing immediately what that meant.

"It's stopped...that means..." Sonic murmured, his voice tense and his body tingling with shock.

"We were too late..." Sally added, her voice low and solemn as the feeling of failure came crashing down on her like a falling weight, "Eggman's done it. He's fired the World Roboticizer...we failed..."

"You certainly did you hapless fools!" crowed Dr. Eggman, "Mobius

has now been fully roboticized! I have my Robian utopia once again and you two are the only ones who had the misfortune of missing the roboticization process! I can fix that easily though, ho, ho, ho, ho!"

"In case you haven't realized fatty, we're in here so your World Roboticizer won't touch me and Sally." snorted Sonic, "You won't turn us into robots!"

"You may have roboticized everything Eggman but we'll reverse what you've done!" declared Sally, "This battle isn't over by a long shot, we will still beat you!"

"Your hubris never ceases to amaze me..." purred Eggman darkly, "We'll see how much you have left when you end up joining my Robian army..."

With that said, a door in one side of the room opened up and something hovered through the door and into the room. The design of the robot instantly struck Sonic as familiar and in a very terrifying way. He hadn't seen this machine for a long time and to see it again was still as shocking as it was since the day he'd first seen it. Eggman had rebuilt the portable roboticizer robot, which he "creatively" nicknamed Port. Port was a dome shaped robot that had the ability to hover and it had multiple cannons around the body of the machine. The colours of the machine were red, black and gold, matching Eggman's trademark colours flawlessly. It had the words "Mk III" printed on both sides of the robot, meaning this was the third model of Port that had been made. Port had been used to roboticize people on the move and it hadn't been used since the last time it had been destroyed which was a long, long time ago now. Now Eggman had rebuilt it and Sonic and Sally found themselves staring in horror at the roboticizer robot that loomed before them, its many cannons itching to blast them.

"Oh man, as if things couldn't get any damn worse! He's rebuilt the portable roboticizer!" exclaimed Sonic.

"If that thing shoots us, we'll be joining the Mobians down on Mobius in Eggman's Empire!" shrieked Sally.

"No chance of that, I'm gonna smash it to pieces!" declared Sonic.

He spin-dashed towards Port Mk III but he was knocked down by Metal Sonic before he could get anywhere near the robot. Sonic grunted as once again, he was slammed down on the floor. He was getting slammed down by Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally so much that he was amazed he hadn't become a new tile for the floor yet. Port Mk III rotated around and pointed one of its cannons at Sonic, the inside of the cannon glowing sinisterly as it prepared to shoot Sonic and turn him into a Robian. Sonic was instantly reminded of the terrible time that he had once been roboticized and turned into Mecha Sonic. During that time, he'd had no control over his actions and had attacked and almost killed some of his friends. He even came close to slaughtering the Acorn Family, something that he would forever be haunted by for had that happened, he wouldn't have found love in Sally otherwise. He was not going to let that happen again. Sonic rolled out of the way, leaving Port Mk III to just shoot at the spot he had been lying on just seconds ago. Sonic spin-dashed Port Mk III but to his surprise, all he did was send the robot flying across the room and crashing into the wall. Port Mk III had been built to withstand his attacks. Hopefully Sally's blades would work on the robot. As Port Mk III spun around dizzily from the impact of Sonic's attack, Sally ran towards the robot with her blades ready to slice it to pieces. Because Port was disoriented, it didn't register the fact Sally was coming towards it. Sally plunged her blades towards Port...and found her arms bouncing off of a transparent surface. Port Mk III had been built with a barrier in mind. Eggman had decided to make it so that it would be impossible to destroy the machine. It could withstand Sonic's attacks and it could block Sally's energy blades. The two had no chance of destroying it. Port Mk III regained focus and its sensory arrays picked up its assailant standing before it. Port fired a roboticizer beam at Sally, the squirrel narrowly dodging it by throwing herself backwards to allow the blast to surge through the air above her. The blast hit the World Roboticizer tube but nothing happened for the glass wasn't organic or something that could be roboticized. Sally took to her heels and darted for the elevator.

"Sonic, we have to retreat!" cried Sally, "We've lost this battle!"

"No way, I'm not leaving here until we've undone Eggman's evil!" retorted Sonic, making another attempt to destroy Port only to be pile-dived by both Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally.

"Sonic please, there's nothing more we can do!" yelled Sally desperately, "We've lost! We need to get outta here before we end up becoming robots ourselves!"

Sonic was about to argue some more but something in his mind made him hesitate. As desperate as he was to save Mobius and reverse the effects of the World Roboticizer, he knew that he couldn't do anything about it now. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally were in the way and Port Mk III just complicated things further. Stay any longer and Sonic and Sally risked becoming robots and joining Eggman's insidious empire. Gritting his teeth, Sonic picked himself up and ran over to the elevator. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally chased after them just as the elevator door opened up and Sonic and Sally ran inside. Dr. Eggman had the feeling that Sonic and Sally would use the elevator to try and get out of the room and out of the Death Egg so he let Sonic and Sally inside so he could make the elevator plunge down to the bottom and take the two to their deaths. But Eggman should have known better than to think Sonic and Sally would be so stupid. Sally already knew what Eggman was planning so upon entering the elevator, she cut a hole in the ceiling and jumped through it with Sonic jumping up afterwards, leaving Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally to collide in the back of the elevator. Sonic picked up Sally bridal style and he revved up his fast-moving, sneakered feet as fast as he could. Just as the elevator prepared to plunge down, Sonic ran up the wall and headed towards the top of the shaft, leaving the elevator to plunge down to the bottom of the shaft with Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally still inside. However, the two robots had noticed the hole in the elevator ceiling and they flew through it before the elevator could take them to their deaths. They were miles behind Sonic and Sally though and would take a while to catch up to them. Further up the elevator shaft, Sonic kept on running and made sure his feet never paused even for a moment as he ran up the wall. Sally held on tight, both enjoying the thrill of the ride and being scared of the angle Sonic was running at. A ninety degree angle was pretty scary to be travelling at and to Sally, it felt like being on some kind of demented rollercoaster. Luckily, they

didn't have to travel for very long. Sonic eyed a metal door at the top of the shaft. It was closed but Sonic would see to that without a problem. He threw Sally ahead of him, the squirrel using her blades to cling onto the wall before she could fall back down the shaft and Sonic spin-dashed through the door. Sally climbed up the wall with her blades and crawled through the broken door after Sonic. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally flew straight past them, going much too fast to slow down and stop or even notice where Sonic and Sally had gone. Sonic picked himself up and observed his surroundings. They were back in the corridor that they had been in before they'd gone down the elevator. He knew this because he saw a metal square that looked like it had been newly added to the wall. It had been welded over the hole that Tails had caused earlier. The square was meant to keep the air in as the Death Egg entered space and it had been applied there while Sonic and Sally had been heading down the elevator. Sonic was kind of glad it was there, otherwise they would have been sucked out into space but on the other hand, it meant he and Sally were trapped on the Death Egg. As for Sally, she gasped for breath, her heart pounding furiously as she lay on the floor in shock. Sonic helped her back up, concerned for the squirrel given how hectic she looked.

"You OK Sal?" asked Sonic worriedly.

"That was the scariest yet most exciting thing I've ever experienced!" shrieked Sally, "Wouldn't want to do it again though..."

"I'll take that as a "yes"." said Sonic, pleased that Sally was OK, "Well, we lost the metal copies. Now we can get off of this ship."

"I just hope our team and the Sky Patrol managed to avoid the World Roboticizer's beam..." said Sally, her voice the definition of worried.

Sonic shared her concern. He had the nasty image of the rest of the Royal Fighters all roboticized and waiting to kill them at any moment. He couldn't bear the scary image, it was too horrible to think about. He prayed that his friends were alright. His prayers were soon answered for he could see a dent forming in the metal square that blocked their only way out of the ship. The metal buckled as it tried to hold against whatever was punching it from outside. Then

the square gave up the fight as it was torn out of its place by another terrific punch that through the chunk into the wall. The square was now a crumpled metal heap that barely resembled a square anymore. The puncher had been the Royal Fighter tomboy and heavy hitter Mandy Mouse. The R.F.S. Jet had caught up to the Death Egg after avoiding the Roboticizer Beam and had docked aside Sonic and Sally's entry point with a metal tunnel that connected the jet to the Death Egg. Mandy had been the one sent to punch through the blocked up hole. Sonic and Sally's faces lit up with joy. If Mandy was here, all flesh and bone, than that meant the best thing possible. Mandy saw Sonic and Sally and she called over to them.

"Blue dude, your majesty, come on! We're getting you out of here!" she yelled.

"We were already planning on leaving anyway!" Sonic called back, dashing over to her.

"Thank goodness you weren't roboticized!" gasped Sally happily.

"Roboticized...is that what that weird white beam was supposed to do?" asked Mandy with concern in her voice, "We were nearly hit but my darling husband managed to manoeuvre the jet out of the way. We thought we were going to be vaporized by it."

"Well luckily, that's not what the beam was meant to do. Unluckily, it was meant to roboticize us." said Sonic, the tone of his voice heavier than a sack of cement as he and Sally followed Mandy through the docking tunnel and into the jet, "The Death Egg wasn't meant to destroy the world, it was meant to roboticize it."

"Well thank god it wasn't meant to destroy the world." said Mandy with relief "But...that beam was supposed to roboticize the world? Oh no...that means..."

Mandy's face went pale as she realized what Eggman had really done to Mobius. He hadn't destroyed it, he'd roboticized it instead. Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat had gotten it wrong. They'd been so worried about Eggman destroying the world that they had been blind to his true intentions, which were to roboticize the world

and not destroy it. Mandy wasn't sure what to say about this. She knew that Mobius had been roboticized before but she had never expected Dr. Eggman to do it again. Sonic and Sally read her expression and understood what Mandy was feeling. They hadn't expected Eggman to do it again either. It was just as shocking to them as it was to Mandy. They dreaded having to deliver the news to the rest of the team. Sonic, Sally and Mandy boarded the R.F.S. Jet and the jet pulled away from the Death Egg, flying as far away as possible from the huge egg-shaped ship. Sonic could hardly blame his friends for being so keen to get away. He didn't want to be anywhere near the ship that roboticized his entire world either. Even more so, he wished he could just wake up and find out all of this had been a bad dream. To his disappointment, it wasn't a dream, bad or good. It was reality and a very terrifying one at that. As the jet cruised slowly through space, Wilson the Dog put the jet on autopilot and got up from the pilot's seat to join everybody in the back of the jet. The atmosphere was tense, made even more so by the news that Sonic and Sally would deliver to the rest of the team. Once Sonic and Sally had gotten inside and the jet had flown away from the Death Egg, the team expressed their joy at the fact they were safe. Tails ran over to Sonic and embraced him.

"Oh thank goodness you made it out alive!" cried Tails, "We wondered what was going on in there when that beam fired."

"We were very worried about you two." said Cosmo the Seedrian softly, embracing Sally for comfort, "Especially since you didn't succeed in stopping the Death Egg before it fired its beam. We feared…that you'd both been killed."

"We came pretty close to that Cosmo." said Sally, patting Cosmo tenderly on the back, "But we survived…and we have terrible news to deliver to you all."

"It's about that beam the Death Egg fired isn't it?" asked Knuckles the Echidna.

"You were too late to stop it. Mobius is a wreck now." said Silver sadly, "Me and Blaze have failed to save our future…again."

"No Silver, Mobius isn't destroyed." corrected Sonic, "Eggman told

us that the Death Egg WAS NOT meant to do that. It was built to roboticize the entire planet. And that's what happened. He's roboticized the entire planet!"

The reaction to this horrible news was exactly what Sonic and Sally had expected. The horror in everybody's faces was something to remember and the chorus of gasping matched their horrified reactions faultlessly. It would be impossible to separate the two. Silver and Blaze had a mixture of relief and horror in their faces. Relief over the fact the Death Egg WASN'T the cause of the end of the world but horror over what it really did.

"NO!" shrieked Tails, clutching Sonic as if his life depended on him, "No, no, no! It can't be! Please tell me this isn't true Sonic!"

"Ask Eggman yourself Tails, he'll tell you the same thing." said Sonic, shaking his head sadly at Tails's desperate pleas for this to be a lie, "He told us in his own words that the Death Egg had a World Roboticizer and that it was built to roboticize the entire planet. And what's exactly what he's done."

"And that means me and Blaze were wrong AGAIN!" moaned Silver, stomping the floor in rage, "How many damn times are we gonna have to go back in time to try and find out what caused the end of the world already?!"

"Well at least we can eliminate the theory that Eggman did it." said Blaze, her appearance stoic but deep inside, she was upset, angry and horrified over the news, "Even though we should have known from the start that it wasn't Eggman. As Sonic once said, he wants to conquer the world, not destroy it."

"Indeed." said Mandy with a slow nod of her head. She was disturbed most horribly at the fact Mobius had been roboticized once again. It wasn't easy to disturb Mandy so the fact she was disturbed now meant the situation really was intense, "And yet we still thought Eggman would seriously do it." she muttered bitterly as if the very fact irritated her.

"He still kinda did the unthinkable though." said Wilson, putting an arm around his wife's shoulder and holding her close, hoping to

ease her emotions for he didn't like seeing Mandy upset and frightened. "We never would have expected him to roboticize the planet again. He already tried that last year and he's not one to try the same scheme twice."

"Nah, Eggman likes to mix it up. Keep us on our toes." agreed Espio the Chameleon, "So the fact he did the last thing we would have expected him to do…it shows he truly is a genius."

"You got that right Espio." said Vector the Crocodile, "Man…all of Mobius has been roboticized again. And to think we very nearly got roboticized ourselves…"

"It was thanks to Wilson that we managed to avoid that!" exclaimed Charmy, "Thank you Wilson, you're a great doggy you are!"

"Heh, thanks." said Wilson casually, "Although I fear the other Royal Fighter teams weren't so fortunate…"

"Yeah, we're not sure if the Sky Patrol got outta the way when the beam fired." said Bunnie Rabbot worriedly.

"Let's try to contact them." suggested Sally, "If they respond, we'll see what's become of them."

Wilson and Mandy left the seating area arm in arm and went into the cockpit to try and contact the Sky Patrol. As they left, the Royal Fighters continued talking, sharing their dismay and horror over the outcome of the battle.

"I can't believe that Eggman's roboticized our home again!" wailed Cream, her eyes streaming with tears "I bet my poor parents are both evil robots working for Eggman now! And even Miss Rose!" she exclaimed suddenly.

Amy had been forced to drop out of the mission thanks to a wounded shoulder courtesy of Lennox Meers the Meerkat*. The fact she was still down on Mobius and not up here with the Royal Fighters made Cream realize that Amy would have been roboticized too. That very image just made Cream cry even harder. The thought of her parents and her best friend being robots working for Eggman

was enough to scar the poor girl for life.

"Everybody down below will be a robot Cream." said Tails's sister, Sora Prower, solemnly. "We're possibly the only ones who are still organic."

"I just hope that the other teams were spared too." said Ruben the Water Panther, hugging Sora to ease his tense nerves, "I can't bear the thought of Matilda, Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon as robots…nor can I bear the idea of everybody in Chun-Nan being robots too."

"If there's one thing to be concerned about, it's the fact Shadow and Rouge were still down on Mobius so they'll have been roboticized too." said Sonic, his face ashen as the terrible image of Mecha Shadow and Mecha Rouge came into his head, "I bet Eggman will send those two after us at some point! And even though I don't know what happened to Scourge after the multi-verse crisis, I bet he's been roboticized too! I'm gonna have my work cut out for me at this rate!"

"Thinking about your brother Sonic, I bet Uncle Finitevus has been roboticized too." sighed Knuckles, "Not even that scoundrel deserves a fate like that. He deserved a lot worse."

"Indeed." said his girlfriend Shade the Echidna, "One has to wonder how we'll save Mobius this time? We can't go back down on the planet. The Robians will ambush us the moment we touch down."

"I'll tell ya what we do." said Sonic matter-of-factly, "We get back on the Death Egg and we reverse the World Roboticizer's effects! That's what we do!"

"You sure about that Sonic?" asked Tails doubtfully, "I mean, you two had to retreat for some reason so it's pretty obvious it's not that easy."

"We were unprepared that time." protested Sonic, "Plus, it was just me and Sally that time. If we all go together, we'll stand more of a chance!"

"Indeed we might Sonic." said Sally agreeably, "Once we get inside the Death Egg everybody, you are to be extremely careful." she addressed the team with a tone that was matter-of-fact, stern and deathly serious, a tone she was very comfortable with using, "There's a Metal Sonic and a metal version of me inside there, PLUS Eggman has rebuilt the portable roboticizer. If that thing zaps you, you're an instant robot so look out."

"The blighter just had to rebuild Port didn't he?!" moaned Geoffrey St. John furiously, "That makes things all the more harder for us now! Made even worse at the fact Metal Sonic's here again and there's a robot version of you to go with him!"

"I know, Eggman's been very thorough with his planning." said Sally grimly, "He continues to throw stuff we'd never expect him to throw at us again…"

"Yeah, and to think we actually believed he was losing his touch too." sighed Sonic, "We shouldn't be been so cocky and arrogant. We might have avoided all of this otherwise…"

"Well hopefully we'll rectify that mistake." said Sally, putting a hand on Sonic's shoulder affectionately, something that Sonic would never get tired of due to how lovely her hand felt on him.

"I'm sure we will." said Sonic, smiling, "I mean, Silver and Blaze have mentioned that Mobius is a wreck in the future with MOBIANS clinging onto life. So Eggman's dirty work must be undone at some point."

"Sonic's right, Mobius isn't a Robian utopia in the future and Eggman's not around anymore so the Death Egg's roboticizer wave must be undone or something." added Silver, "So that at least means we win at some point. Win so we can then move onto the thing that really ends the world I guess…"

"And at this point I can't possibly guess what it is." sighed Blaze, "I'm actually wondering if there's any point to this anymore since me and Silver keep being wrong…"

Silver stared at Blaze in disbelief. Never in his life would he have

expected to hear Blaze actually considering if his and her goal had any point to it anymore. He began wondering if this wasn't really Blaze and instead it was a fake Blaze talking to him. Silver put his hands on Blaze's shoulders and stared hard into her eyes, startling the cat. Silver looked more serious now than he ever had done before.

"Blaze, I can't believe you just said that!" snapped Silver, his voice so heavy that Blaze could feel the words weighing down on her, "Me and you have strived for a years to see our future improved from the apocalyptic wreck that is now and you think there's no point to it anymore just because we're having a tough time finding the cause of it? My father once said that "Nothing in life is easy but challenges in life are worth overcoming". This is a challenge worth overcoming Blaze! You've seen for yourself how beautiful Mobius is in this time! Do you think it's not worth preventing the end of the world to maintain the beauty of the planet? There IS a point to this Blaze...and it's to make Mobius's future brighter and better so that the Mobian race will survive for many more centuries to come. And now, we can help by saving Mobius from being a Robian utopia for Eggman."

Blaze now felt extremely guilty for saying something so heartless earlier. Her face fell into a mask of guilt and she looked down at her feet in shame.

"You're right Silver..." murmured Blaze, wrapping her arms around Silver and resting her head against his chest, "What was I thinking? I'm so sorry I said that...mother taught me better than this."

"It's alright Blaze." said Silver kindly, embracing her back and stroking her back, "Sometimes we say something wrong when things are looking bad. Just remember Blaze, things look bad now...but they will get better eventually."

Blaze nodded and she and Silver kissed tenderly for comfort. The other Royal Fighters were touched by this lovely scene before them and they could hardly resist the urge to say "aww" in unison.

"That was lovely Silver." said Sally, "Very well said and well-handled. It's good to know that in the future, Mobius still has good-

hearted people like you."

"Thanks Sally." said Silver appreciatively, "Now then, let's stop Dr. Eggman shall we?"

"Now that's MY kind of talk!" chuckled Sonic, "So who's up for a little breaking and entering the Death Egg?"

Sonic could see from the look on everybody's faces that they were all about to say "yes" to that. But no chances to respond to his question could be given for Wilson and Mandy burst into the room, looking like a hurricane was coming straight towards them. The atmosphere changed from hopeful to concern as Sonic registered Wilson and Mandy's expressions. He could tell that they didn't have good news to give.

"Everybody, you're not gonna like the sound of this!" shrieked Mandy frantically, "We contacted the Sky Patrol and Miranda responded...but she spoke in monotone and her voice was robotical!"

"We think the Sky Patrol was hit by the roboticizer wave!" blustered Wilson, "Everybody on board's been roboticized and the Sky Patrol's coming to get us!"

The chorus of shocked gasps that exploded around the room was exactly what Wilson and Mandy had expected to happen. The Royal Fighters stared at each other as if hoping their staring would magically solve the problem. That was just wishful thinking though. Ruben looked pretty shocked more than anybody because it meant that Princess Matilda and her team were robots now and he was very close to the princess and her friends. Wilson and Mandy felt for Team Adabat in particular considering the good times they'd had together on the battlefield and Sonic took a moment to mourn for Miranda and her team for he was good friends with them before saying something.

"Well…I guess we're on our own…" murmured Sonic, "And you have no idea how much it pains me to say that."

"It pains us to hear you say that Sonic." said Tails, the shock in his

face having a hard time subsiding due to how horrible the news was, "Our own friends will be after us now and will do what it takes to keep us away from the Death Egg!"

"Or worse my sweet little fox…try and drive us TOWARDS Eggman so he can roboticize us too." Cosmo said shakily, putting her arm around Tails for comfort but still shaking a little uncontrollably.

"We've gotta lose the Sky Patrol, otherwise Eggman will see us coming!" declared Sonic, "If they follow us while we go to the Death Egg, Eggman will pick us up straight away! We'll try and lose them before we go for the Death Egg!"

"But then once we reverse what Eggman's done, they might not get hit by the wave if we just lose them." noted Sally, "I suggest we bring them onto Mobius, do some damage to them so they end up stuck on Mobius and then we go back to the Death Egg and commence with our plan."

"That could work." said Sonic happily, "Though I'm a little worried that we might accidentally kill them if we do that…"

"Miranda had the Super Warp Ring in order to warp her team, Team Adabat and Team Chun-Nan onto the Sky Patrol. We could break into the ship and just use that to warp them out of the Sky Patrol and onto the ground so they can't fly after us." suggested Sora, "Plus, we end up with the warp ring and Sonic and Sally can warp us onto the Death Egg with it. That plan's bound to work."

"Let's try it!" said Tails excitedly, "It's a good plan!"

"Very good indeed." said Sally agreeably, "Wilson, take us to Mobius. Once we're back on Mobius, me and Sonic will break into the Sky Patrol and use the warp ring to relocate our friends so they can't chase after us."

Wilson didn't wait to be asked twice. He left the seating area quickly and he sat down in the pilots seat, adrenaline rushing through his veins as he prepared to try out Sora's plan. He started up the jet's dormant engines and the R.F.S. Jet cruised forwards from its stationary position. Wilson turned the jet around and he headed

back towards Mobius. Just as he and Mandy had reported, the Sky Patrol was coming towards them and now the R.F.S. Jet was flying directly past the jet, heading towards Mobius which loomed behind them like a giant blue and green ball in the endless black, starry sky all around. Mecha Miranda registered this through her optics and began to wonder why the jet was heading back towards Mobius. Mecha Miranda turned the Sky Patrol around and flew off after the R.F.S. Jet. Mecha Kari stood beside Mecha Miranda and glared at their fleeing prey. They would not let the R.F.S. Jet go so easily. Dr. Eggman had realized that the R.F.S. Jet had been spared being hit by the roboticizer wave and he wanted them to chase down the ship, capture the occupants and bring them straight to the Death Egg. Eggman wanted them all alive so the roboticized Royal Fighters aboard the Sky Patrol would not be so lethal in its pursuit of the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters.

"R.F.S.-jet-sight-ed. We-must-bring-it-down-and-cap-ture-the-occ-u-pants." droned Mecha Miranda.

"Do-not-let-them-es-cape." droned Mecha Matilda, the Robian who had decided to elect herself as leader of this group due to arguably being the most powerful Robian on the ship given how she was a powerful kung-fu mistress and even as a Robian, she still possessed that power. "Chase-them-down. But-bring-them-in-alive."

"We-o-bey." replied Mecha Miranda.

The Sky Patrol's engines flared brilliantly as the ship picked up speed and began to chase after the R.F.S. Jet. The Sky Patrol was steadily but surely enough closing the distance between itself and the R.F.S. Jet. The Sky Patrol was fast but the R.F.S. Jet was faster and Wilson showed this by picking up speed and making the R.F.S Jet go faster. The R.F.S Jet's engines burned and flared frantically as they pushed the ship through space as much as possible. Mecha Matilda's optics flared angrily as she watched the R.F.S. Jet pull away from them, heading closer towards Mobius and going faster than their ship ever could go. This was a chase that they couldn't win and Mecha Matilda didn't like that at all. But she wasn't going to give up so easily, especially in the name of her master, Dr. Eggman. Mecha Matilda pointed at Mecha Miranda and Mecha Kari.

"Fire-the-ship's-weap-ons." droned Mecha Matilda, "Aim-for-the-engines. Ren-der-them-help-less-so-we-can-cap-ture-them."

Mecha Miranda and Mecha Kari gave a thumbs up to Mecha Matilda and they saw to it that they carried that order out to the letter. That was what happened when you got roboticized, you were loyal to pretty much anybody in charge be it Eggman or a higher ranking Robian. And Robians also obey orders without question, meaning that they operate at a speed that few people in the world could ever hope to achieve. Eggman truly had the perfect army to use against the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters. The Sky Patrol's gun turrets aimed at the R.F.S. Jet, which was speeding towards Mobius's surface, almost entering the atmosphere as it cruised the last few miles towards the planet. But it would be forced to abandon its route for the Sky Patrol began shooting at it. The R.F.S. Jet pulled up away from Mobius and started flying over the planet to try and avoid the shots of the Sky Patrol. If the jet got hit, it wouldn't be able to pass through the atmosphere without sustaining even more damage. When a rocket or a shuttle passes through the atmosphere, it heats up to an astonishing level. If the rocket was damaged in anyway, bet it a hole or a missing part, it would break up in the atmosphere from the heat. Such a fate had befallen a shuttle known as the *Columbia* . The R.F.S. Jet would definitely break up in the atmosphere if it suffered any damage so like it or not, the Mobians had to keep away from Mobius and stay in space until the Sky Patrol stopped shooting at them, which was very unlikely, or they evaded the ship long enough to enter the atmosphere. The Sky Patrol's lasers hammered through the sky, chasing after the R.F.S. Jet and either missing it or hitting a strong spot that would take more than a measly laser to take down. The jet's hull was designed to withstand many attacks, including laser fire. But the engines were vulnerable and Wilson knew this very well. He'd been given a tutorial on all the facts he needed on the jet before learning how to fly it. The Royal Fighters in the back were thankful they had fastened themselves back into their seats otherwise with the jet flying around and weaving through the laser blasts in a desperate bid to avoid them, they would be bouncing around like peas being shaken inside a pan. Even then, the Royal Fighters could hardly resist the urge to cling onto their seats as the jet did a barrel roll out of the Sky Patrol's way. Wilson's heart was

hammering as he steered the jet as crazily as he could. He hadn't really done much of this, even in practice runs so this was nerve-racking for him. So much so he could feel his nerves rapping against each other. He thumbed a button on the control panel and fired some rear-mounted lasers out of the back of the jet. The lasers blasted into the Sky Patrol's lasers, stopping them from getting anywhere near the jet. But Mecha Matilda registered this little feature and she ordered Mecha Miranda to change her target. The Sky Patrol's gun turrets aimed at the R.F.S. Jet's lasers and fired at them. The lasers slammed into each other, exploding marvellously as one laser hit another in the distance between the pursuing and the pursued. It was a fantastic hail fire of lasers that the two ships were displaying between them but only one would win the battle. And sadly, it was the Sky Patrol. The Sky Patrol had more guns and thus, it had more places to aim at. This allowed it to shoot under the R.F.S. Jet's lasers and hit the bases that were firing the lasers. The R.F.S Jet now had no rear mounted weaponry to defend itself with. Wilson was thinking about steering the jet around and shooting at the Sky Patrol from the front but before he could try that manoeuvre, the Sky Patrol shot at its engines and destroyed them instantly. Without engines, the jet was a sitting duck. The Royal Fighters felt it coming to an abrupt halt and feared the worst. They couldn't go anywhere, the engines were destroyed. They were trapped. In the Sky Patrol, the Robians laughed robotical laughs of triumph as they closed in on their prey. They had caught the Royal Fighters. They could take them home to Dr. Eggman and have them roboticized! The Sky Patrol positioned itself above the R.F.S. Jet and the Robians deployed some cables with harpoons on the end of them to impale the ship and anchor it to the Sky Patrol. The Royal Fighters watched as the tips of the harpoons pierced effortlessly through the jet's tough fuselage. They couldn't do anything about it now. In space, there's no air and you will suffocate so they couldn't just break the jet free of the harpoons. And the jet couldn't move without engines anyway so there would be no point. They'd be sitting ducks nevertheless. The Royal Fighters made no attempt to resist as the Sky Patrol dragged it away to the Death Egg. Sonic kicked against the floor furiously.

"Damn! More crud keeps coming our way!" he moaned, "We're being towed back to the Death Egg!"

"Our engines have been shot and we can't get outside to break free, we're stuck like a rat in a cage!" whined Tails.

"And we're all going to be roboticized once we're onboard the Death Egg!" cried Cosmo fearfully.

"We'll just have to make sure that we don't get roboticized once we arrive." said Sally, a heavy tone of defeat dominating her voice, "Be prepared for the worst Royal Fighters, it's coming to us right now…"

The Royal Fighters nodded agreeably. They maybe caught but they're not necessarily defeated yet. They could still make it out alive and avoid being roboticized. It was going to be risky but the Royal Fighters knew that if they lost now, Mobius would never be saved and it would be a Robian planet for all eternity. A future that Silver and Blaze thought was actually worse than their current one…

Every Mobian on Mobius had been roboticized. Only the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had been spared the horror thanks to evasive actions taken at a critical moment. But another group of Mobians had actually managed to avoid being roboticized too. This group of Mobians resided in a ship called *The Nefarious* . This group of Mobians also had dark desires, black hearts and evil ambitions in mind for the planet the evil ship cruised over. These Mobians were known together as…

The Dark Armada

The Dark Armada was an insidious group of villains founded by the maniacal Dr. Finitevus, a madman who's only desire was to see Mobius purged with fire for he grew to see the planet as out of control and in need of a rehash. Plus he relished the thought on becoming the most powerful Mobian ever and was formulating an ambitious project known only as "Operation: Enerjak Reborn". He'd kept the project's name secret but he let his team now that the plan was to make them the most powerful Mobians ever to have existed. Finitevus had just recently finished formulating the team**and had taken *The Nefarious* to deal with the Death Egg. The whole time it had been cruising invisibly behind the R.F.S. Jet and Sky Patrol

when they had been chasing the Death Egg up into space. The cloaking technology of *The Nefarious* meant that it was impossible for anybody to tell it had been flying after them, let alone been behind them in the first place. Finitevus could see that the Death Egg was too far ahead and to avoid being roboticized, he had used the Chaos Emeralds he'd stolen from the now destroyed Angel Island to Chaos Control up into space and out of the way of the blast. Unfortunately, *The Nefarious* 's cloaking tech had run out of power and Finitevus had been forced to warp the ship away from the Death Egg to avoid being detected. He had the plans for the Death Egg and he knew that the Death Egg would pick up the ship and if he got caught, the Death Egg would roboticize him and his armada, something he couldn't afford to have happen to him right now. So on the other side of Mobius, *The Nefarious* stayed stationary while its cloaking technology recharged. Finitevus waited patiently whereas the other members were keen to get going already. Scourge the Hedgehog paced back and forth impatiently.

"Yo doc, when's this joint gonna be fully charged?!" whined Scourge, "I want to take down Dr. Eggman already!"

"It'll be fully charged when it's fully charged." snapped Finitevus, "It takes time depending on how much power we've used up and we've used up quite a considerable amount just following the Royal Fighters. It'll take a long time."

"Well this bites!" growled Scourge in annoyance, "Oh well, at least we didn't get roboticized by the Death Egg. Speaking of which, I bet Mobius is a robot planet now. I hope my dweeby brother got roboticized."

"Well do not hope such a thing for Mobius will not be roboticized for long." said Finitevus crossly, "We need to de-roboticize Mobius don't we? How can we accomplish our goals if that fool Eggman is ruling the planet?!"

He stood up on tip-toe so he ended up baring over Scourge and glaring at him with his golden eyes. Scourge stepped back hesitantly.

"Uh, good point." said Scourge with a nervous smile, "So what's the

plan?"

"I already have the bombs ready to blow up the Death Egg's power core chamber and bring the ship down." explained Finitevus, "But there's no logic behind destroying the only thing that can de-roboticize the entire world right now. Once *The Nefarious* 's cloaking device is fully charged, we sneak up on the Death Egg whilst invisible and we get onboard the ship. Once onboard, I will locate the World Roboticizer and set it in reverse. I shall also find the Master Emerald and steal it back from Eggman since I was the one to have it first. Then I will fire it and de-roboticize all of Mobius. Once that's done, THEN we destroy the Death Egg."

"Do you think we could let Sonic get onboard the ship so he can fight with Eggman to the death?" Scourge suggested, "We could take him along with Eggman when we blow up the Death Egg!"

"That…is a brilliant idea Scourge." purred Finitevus, smiling approvingly at his idea, "We will do just that. Wait until Sonic and his Royal Fighters board the Death Egg so they can fight Eggman and then we set the Death Egg to blow. We'll take them and Dr. Eggman to their graves. And when they're gone…our plans will have no obstacles to get in their way…"

Scourge laughed menacingly at that idea. The Dark Armada was certainly on top of all of this. Dr. Eggman was doomed and the Royal Fighters would be taken with him. The Dark Armada would then rise up and commence with its evil plans. Mobius was doomed no matter what happened. Eggman was already dooming the world to an eternity of slavery. The tides would soon change and Finitevus would end up dooming the world to a dark, dystopian future with him as the ruler of it all…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Raccoon on the Run

***** See Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius: Formulation of***

the Dark Armada

Things just keep getting worse and worse don't they?! Now what's going to happen?!

Tune in next time as this thrilling saga continues with Part 2...

Eggman Empire Part 2

Story 197: Eggman Empire Part 2: The Darkest Hour

The Royal Fighters had been through many dark times, times that they could consider their darkest hour. And somehow even when they have a moment they consider to be their darkest hour, they go through something else that manages to be an even darker hour than the previous darkest hour. And right now, they were well and truly in their darkest hour yet…

And it had all started after the multi-verse crisis had ended. The insidious, obese, maniacal, loony but frightening and menacing Dr. Eggman had come up with his most diabolical scheme yet. He had been spending weeks on end building his ultimate weapon, which he collectively named the "Death Egg". The name wasn't the most intimidating in the world but the ship itself was something to fear. The ship was enormous in size and bore the facial features of Dr. Eggman such as his rather sizeable nose and his ridiculously big moustache. But the eyes on the Death Egg was what made the ship look frightening. They were like huge, orange, staring eyes that stared into your very soul and haunted your nightmares. Because of the eyes, the ship always had the appearance that it was staring at you as if watching your every move and preparing to strike. But what made the Death Egg so fearsome was its ultimate weapon, the World Roboticizer. Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends had tried their best to stop the Death Egg from firing the weapon, to which they had thought was actually going to destroy the world at first, but their efforts had ultimately ended in disaster. Given how Eggman did the last thing they had ever expected, roboticizing the entire planet again, they weren't prepared for a worldwide roboticization beam and had been focused on stopping the Death Egg from destroying the world. Sonic the Hedgehog himself and his girlfriend Sally Acorn had managed to get on the ship but before they could even destroy the World Roboticizer, Eggman had distracted them with Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally respectively. The fight was nothing more than a distraction to keep them at bay while Eggman fired the weapon. The World Roboticizer had fired on Mobius and roboticized

every single citizen on the planet. Only the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had evaded the beam and saved themselves being roboticized by the blast. Dr. Finitevus and his Dark Armada had evaded the blast too but nobody knew about them so as far as the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were concerned, everybody but them was now a mindless robot working for Dr. Eggman. It had happened before and now it had happened again, but this time with Dr. Eggman piloting a big ship which housed the World Roboticizer. Nobody could stop him now, not even Sonic and his team…

And that statement couldn't be more true then how the events of today were panning out. Despite Sonic and Sally escaping the Death Egg and avoiding being roboticized by Port Mk III, a portable roboticizer robot that Dr. Eggman had built as a back-up plan, things hadn't gone well upon getting back to the R.F.S. Jet. The jet had been pursued by the Sky Patrol, a ship built by Team Nekronopolis. The team itself was onboard the ship with Team Chun-Nan and Team Adabat and much to Sonic and his team's misfortune, the Sky Patrol had not been so lucky in evading the blast. All the occupants aboard the ship had been roboticized and they had turned on the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters in an instant. After a tense chase just above Mobius's atmosphere, the Sky Patrol had successfully managed to destroy the jet's engines and render it incapable of travelling any farther. Completely stuck and unable to do anything about their situation, the Royal Fighters had no choice but to let their roboticized friends take them away to the Death Egg where surely enough, Dr. Eggman would be ready to roboticize them all. Once that happened, all the Royal Fighters in the R.F.S. (Royal Fighters Service) would be no more, doomed to a life of robotic slavery for the maniacal mad doctor. Sonic knew too well what that felt like since he himself had once been roboticized. The time of Mecha Sonic was a time that even to this day still haunted him and he could just see himself becoming Mecha Sonic once again. It would be the worst day of his life, especially since nobody would be able to undo what Eggman had done to Mobius once he'd been roboticized. All of his friends were very nervous about the roboticization too. They had experienced roboticization and oppression at Eggman's hand. Bunnie Rabbot was the exception and so far the only Mobian on Mobius that hadn't been roboticized already although she was partially roboticized so Bunnie could still imagine what it would be

like to be fully roboticized. It was an image she did not like at all and an image she didn't want to see come true. But as the Sky Patrol towed the dormant, battered R.F.S. Jet to the Death Egg, the Royal Fighters couldn't do anything about it. Being in space, they couldn't just get out of the jet and ambush the Sky Patrol for they would suffocate. It was hopeless. They would have to wait until they were on the Death Egg itself before they could do anything. They would have to act fast too. Sonic could already see Eggman bringing Port Mk III with him to greet the approaching Sky Patrol and he'd have them all roboticized the moment they stepped out of the jet. The Royal Fighters had been silent for quite a while for they didn't really know what to talk about. There was nothing much to say as the Sky Patrol began nearing the Death Egg. The chase had taken it considerably far from the Death Egg so it was taking a while for the ship to return to it. Thus the heroes had sat through a very long silence indeed. So long that they were startled the moment any noise was heard or made. After a while, the Sky Patrol was finally nearing the Death Egg. Just five more minutes and they would be on the ship itself. Mecha Miranda, a roboticized Miranda Mongoose, switched on the communications systems so she could give Dr. Eggman a message. She waited for a moment as static crackling hissed through the system. The crackling cleared up and Eggman's hammy, obnoxious, grating voice boomed over the speakers.

"Yes? Who is this?" he asked.

"Dr.-Egg-Man. This-is-Mecha-Miranda." droned Mecha Miranda in her robotical, emotionless voice that contained just traces of Miranda's original voice, "We-have-cap-tured-Sonic-the-Hedge-hog-and-his-team-of-Royal-Fight-ers. We-are-return-ing-to-you-with-them-in-tow."

If Mecha Miranda could see what was going on, on the other side of the speaker then she would have bore witness to a very comical scene for Dr. Eggman literally stepped back from the speaker to do a rather strange, comedic dance of joy to himself. Being how he was inside the body of E-123 Omega, a robot with rather large arms and small legs, the dance looked even sillier and at times, even dangerous for Eggman came rather close to falling over a couple of times. He cackled and whooped like a kid who's just played the

prank of the century as he danced for joy. His roboticized minions had actually managed to capture Sonic and his team! What joy for him to hear about this! He was even more pleased at the fact his roboticizer wave had actually hit the Sky Patrol. Thus the fact the Royal Fighters onboard the Sky Patrol were the ones to be bringing the captive Sonic and friends to him so he could roboticize them. That made him dance even more with joy. So much so that Mecha Miranda was almost tempted to ask Dr. Eggman if he was OK but Eggman quickly regained himself and he returned to the speaker.

"That's excellent news my dear!" cried Eggman, "Bring them to the nose of the Death Egg, I shall welcome you aboard with Sonic and friends immediately."

"We-o-bey." droned Mecha Miranda.

It never ceased to please Dr. Eggman how well his roboticization technology worked. When he roboticized somebody, that robot was fiercely loyal to him and it never failed to work whatsoever. He got loyal robots every time they were roboticized. So pleasing and still so amazing at the same time for Dr. Eggman. Science truly was a wonder to behold and it made Eggman feel grand to be part of the scientist world. Dr. Eggman left the control room of the Death Egg and ran straight towards the nose section of the Death Egg, which as you already know is LITERALLY a nose that protruded from between the "eyes" of the Death Egg and sat above the "moustache" that just showed clearly where the Death Egg's "face" got its design from. Outside, the Sky Patrol turned slightly to the left and started cruising towards the Death Egg head on. In the R.F.S. Jet, Sonic finally broke the long silence that the Royal Fighters had been sitting in. A gut instinct was telling him they were nearly there. Now was the time to start planning.

"I think we're nearly there guys." said Sonic gravely, "We're nearing the Death Egg. I'm not sure why I feel that way, I just…do. Gut instinct if you will."

"I have that exact same feeling." murmured Sally, her face devoid of any emotion other than despair, "Our end is near…or so Eggman thinks."

"You bet your majesty." said Tails, nodding his head slowly, "We are not going to go down without a fight. If Eggman thinks we're defeated and helpless before him, he can think again!"

"I assume that you, Sonic or Sally has a plan?" sniffed Knuckles the Echidna doubtfully.

"Well to be honest, I'm just remaining hopeful in this dark situation." said Sonic admittedly.

"I however have a plan." said Tails eagerly, "The moment we step out of the R.F.S. Jet, Sonic can leap out and spin-dash the portable roboticizer to pieces so Eggman can't roboticize us…"

"Sorry, already tried that." said Sonic sadly, "Port's immune to my attacks and it even has a barrier to block Sally's energy blades. We can't just destroy that thing."

"Oh." said Tails disappointedly, "Well then, change of plan. Silver could use his psychokinesis to grab Port and throw it away from us so it can't roboticize us."

"I could do that easily." claimed Silver the Hedgehog enthusiastically, "And I could also be of good help against Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally too. Keep them off your back while the rest of you try to find the World Roboticizer and set it in reverse so we can de-roboticize all of Mobius."

"But then that leaves the others on the Sky Patrol." noted Blaze the Cat grimly, "If they're inside the Death Egg with us, they won't get de-roboticized."

"I could always try hacking into Port and see if I can set him in reverse and use him on the other R.F. teams." suggested Tails, "Though we'll have to do something about the supposed barrier it has, I won't be able to touch it otherwise."

"I could probably crush its circuitry." suggested Silver, "Once I have him in my psychic hold, I could focus the energy on its insides and crumple them like paper. Port's barrier will easily switch off then. But then you will have to fix it in order to set it in reverse…" he realized,

his quills drooping against his head in despair.

"I won't mind having to do that, it just means the other teams will have to wait a little longer before they're returned to normal." noted Tails.

"So it seems we have a plan." said Ruben the Water Panther solemnly, not daring to cling onto too much hope before leaping into action, "I hope with all the heart and soul of my deceased clan that it works…"

"I do too Ruben." said his girlfriend Sora Prower, putting her hands around Ruben's arm and tenderly stroking it to comfort him, "There's nothing else we can do but hope this plan works. If it fails…then that's it. The end of all Mobians forever…"

The Royal Fighters couldn't agree more with that statement. Everybody on the R.F.S. Jet were the only Mobians left. If they were roboticized now then there would be no hope for Mobius at all. They may as well just rename it "Robius" if they ended up failing and falling victim to Eggman's evil technology. And yet Sonic still remembered something that Silver had said earlier. The Mobians were still around in the future and Mobius has a dystopian future, nothing to do with Eggman at all so that made Sonic feel very hopeful. Eggman's plan must be undone at some point if it's not roboticized in the future and there are Mobians still around. If the world was still roboticized in the future then Silver and Blaze technically shouldn't exist for Robians wouldn't be able to reproduce like Mobians could. And yet Silver and Blaze were born at some point in Mobius's future so that told Sonic one thing: Eggman doesn't stay victorious for long. And right now, they could see to it that Eggman's scheme is undone at their hands. They wouldn't have to wait for much longer though. The Sky Patrol had reached the Death Egg and it was now stationary directly underneath the Death Egg's "nose". The ship waited until a hole opened up in the Death Egg's nose, now giving it the image of having a nostril, and the Sky Patrol ascended up into the Death Egg's nose. It was like watching it sniff something straight up into its nose, only it didn't look gross. Once the Sky Patrol was up in the Death Egg's nose, the hole closed up and the Sky Patrol settled down onto the floor, first putting down the R.F.S. Jet and detaching itself from it and then landing down beside

the jet. As the Sky Patrol touched down, the occupants inside all exited the Sky Patrol and stood before Dr. Eggman, who was already waiting for them with Metal Sonic, Mecha Sally and Port Mk III by his side. Mecha Matilda stood before Eggman and bowed down in respect with Mecha Miranda, Mecha Kari, Mecha Thunder, Mecha Bolt, Mecha Scott, Mecha Jessica, Mecha Taran, Mecha Felix, Mecha Bladefeather, Mecha Mushu and Mecha Li Moon bowing down behind her. Dr. Eggman smiled widely though being inside a mech suit, his Robian minions couldn't see him smiling.

"We-bring-you-Sonic-the-Hedge-hog-and-his-team." droned Mecha Matilda.

"Thank you my darling Matilda." purred Eggman, "You may all stand aside now."

The Robians all stood to the side as instructed as Dr. Eggman proudly strode towards the R.F.S. Jet with the mech suit's enormous arms behind his back. He had Pork Mk III hovering ahead of him and Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally following him like they were his loyal bodyguards and were constantly on their toes for any sign of danger that could befall Eggman. Eggman stopped outside the jet and he cleared his throat, purposefully loudly for presumably no reason other than to annoy Sonic and friends.

"Sonic the Hedgehog! You and your friends come out of that jet and face roboticization or I will drag all of you out, one at a time and kicking and screaming if I have to!" he bellowed "I will not warn you again! Do you understand?"

"We do understand Egg-head and I say this…" Sonic's voice yelled from inside the jet.

He then proceeded to yell an ugly curse word at Eggman with the word "off" added at the end that surprised the scientist and made Sally frown at him since he'd just sworn in the presence of young children as well as adults. But Sonic didn't really care. He'd always wanted to swear at Eggman, especially in a time like this so to have that satisfaction made him feel proud and like he hadn't lost his valorous streak. Dr. Eggman was so furious at that fact Sonic had sworn at him that he started hopping up and down like a flea on a

hot cooker.

"Let's see if that foul mouth of yours will survive the roboticization process!" screamed Eggman angrily "Metal Sonic, get on that jet and drag Sonic out before me! He can be roboticized first!"

Metal Sonic obeyed and he strode towards the R.F.S. Jet. Eggman was tingling with excitement as he waited for Metal Sonic to come out with Sonic in his metal claws. He'd roboticized Sonic before and he couldn't wait to do it again, this time without Sonic still having his freewill thanks to a power ring like last time he had been roboticized. Mecha Sonic would make a fine second-in-command for him and his Robian army. It would also be cool to have Metal Sonic AND Mecha Sonic both together. He could imagine them getting along just nicely, or so he hoped they would. He could also see them being bitter rivals but he'd make sure that didn't happen. Then suddenly, Metal Sonic came launching out of the R.F.S. Jet, surrounded by a teal aura and he skidded across the floor. Eggman didn't know what happened but he soon found out as Silver the Hedgehog stepped out of the jet and grabbed him with a psychokinetic hold. His face was the mask of triumph.

"Bet you didn't see THAT coming did ya?!" chortled Silver.

"You…the psychic one! Release me at once!" ordered Dr. Eggman, trying to move as much as he could.

The psychic energy around him held firm. Eggman was so immobile that he himself from inside the life-support mech couldn't even move! Silver laughed mockingly at Eggman and he tossed him into the air, sending him hurling into a wall at the end of the room. Eggman picked himself and he barked furiously.

"Port, roboticize them all NOW!" he thundered.

The hovering, dome-shaped robot sprang into action. It aimed one of its many turrets at Silver and fired a roboticizer beam. Silver used his psychokinesis to catch the blast and he threw the blast up into the cieling. He had a feeling that redirecting it at Port wouldn't be a good idea. Roboticizing something that's already a robot causes it to explode. They wanted Port mostly intact so they could use him for

their own needs so destroying him was out of the question. Silver used his psychic powers to grab hold of Port and he began focusing on his insides so he could disable Port and render it helpless so Tails could do what he could and make the machine a de-roboticizing machine. While Silver was focusing on disabling Port, the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters darted out of the jet, ready to make their move and find the World Roboticizer so they could use it to de-roboticize Mobius. Port tried to fire at them but Silver's hold on it was unbreakable. It couldn't shoot them as long as Silver had hold of it. Silver was about to disable Port but before he could do so, he was taken directly off of his feet by a terrific punch that could have shattered his cheek had his psychic aura not cushioned most of the punch for him. Mecha Sally had done that and she waited until Silver came down on the floor before attacking him again. Silver picked himself up just in time to get another punch from Mecha Sally, this one right in the face. Silver thought his head was going to come off after that punch. Mecha Sally then dropkicked Silver in the head, knocking him clean out with that blow. Livid, Blaze turned around and charged towards Mecha Sally in a fiery tornado. She socked Mecha Sally in the face with a fire enhanced punch. Mecha Sally seemed more effected by the punch than the fire though. Mecha Sally punched Blaze back, slamming her fist squarely into the cat's stomach and bringing her down onto her knees. Blaze coughed loudly and just as she stood back up, Port Mk III turned in her direction and blasted her with a roboticization beam! Blaze screamed in agony as her flesh and blood was converted painfully into metal and oil and her bones became pistons and supporting rods that formed the exoskeleton of her Robian body. Sonic and the other Royal Fighters stopped running towards the exit and turned to see Silver knocked out and Blaze being roboticized. Sonic cried out in despair as Mecha Blaze stood up on her metallic feet and glared at the Royal Fighters with cold, golden optics that dripped with evil.

"NO!" cried Sonic, "The plan's going wrong! Silver's out cold and Blaze is now a robot!"

"We've gotta wake Silver up now so he can disable Port!" exclaimed Tails, "We'll do that first and then get on with our mission!"

"Be careful everybody!" yelled Sally, "Do NOT let Port hit you! Take

evasive action!"

The Royal Fighters were all too happy to be as evasive as possible. Mecha Blaze, a metallic prison for the original Blaze the Cat, set her hands alight with fire and she charged towards the Royal Fighters. Sonic spin-dashed her, being as gentle as possible for he didn't want to hurt her too much. He knocked Mecha Blaze down but Mecha Blaze picked herself up again and the roboticized fire cat slammed a sharp, metal heel into Sonic's arm. Getting kicked by a high-heeled shoe was painful enough but being kicked by a METAL high-heeled shoe was even worse. Sonic felt like he'd been slashed and slammed both at the same time given how sharp the heel of Mecha Blaze's foot was. Knuckles and his girlfriend Shade the Echidna pounced on Mecha Blaze and pinned her down to the floor by her arms, regretful of having to do so to their former friend. Tails ran over to Silver while Mecha Blaze was occupied. The other Royal Fighters ran after him but they ended up getting into a battle with the other Robians for they stood in their way, obviously intending to defend Port from them. Only Tails managed to get past the Robians while the others fought them to keep them away from Tails so he could get to Silver. He had to wake him up so Silver could disable Port Mk III but unfortunately, he didn't get the chance for Mecha Matilda, who had managed to fight off Geoffrey St. John and Bunnie Rabbot, rushed in and rammed him aside with her shoulder. Tails fell onto the floor, directly in Port's path. Port fired a roboticizer beam at Tails but before the beam could hit him, Sora ran in and stood in the way. She was helping Tails up and had thought she would have enough time to save him and herself both at the same time. She was terribly wrong. Sora was hit by the roboticizer beam and Tails watched with a mixture of horror, grief and anger as his own sister was roboticized in front of his very eyes. It would go down as one of the most horrifying things he had ever seen in his life. Tails could feel his heart aching as Sora was transformed into a metal minion for Dr. Eggman. Tails burst into tears of anguish as Mecha Sora rose and bared her sharp claws and glared at Tails with emotionless green optics. It was like a nightmare come true for Tails. Tails backed against the wall as Mecha Sora came close to him, a killer look in her optics.

"No Sora, please, don't!" whimpered Tails, "I-I'm y-your brother!

Tails! You'd never hurt me! Fight Eggman's control! I know you can do...AHK!"

He was rudely cut off as Mecha Sora grabbed him by the throat and picked him up off the floor. She then turned around and held Tails in front of Port. The domed- multi-cannoned machine was just itching to roboticize him next. But Tails was saved at the last minute by Vector lumbering towards the machine and ramming Port aside like a charging rhinoceros. Port may have a barrier but it didn't stop people from knocking it aside. Port spiralled rather crazily across the room and crashed into the wall. The crash caused it to accidentally fire another beam and it was heading towards Mecha Matilda. Ruben scampered towards Mecha Matilda and pushed her out of the way so she wouldn't blow up when the blast hit her. The blast hit him instead, converting him into a Robian within seconds. Ruben had been roboticized before only when it happened to him, he had a power ring to restore his freewill. This time, there was no power ring so Ruben would be stuck as an Eggman minion for now. Mecha Ruben turned around and squirted a jet of water at Vector for knocking Port aside earlier. Vector was swept off of his feet by the water and sent skidding across the floor like a stone being carried through a ranging river. Back over to Mecha Sora, she seemed pleased that Ruben had been roboticized and decided to share Tails with him. It seemed Sora and Ruben's love still existed in their Robian forms only they were both on Eggman's side now. Mecha Sora threw Tails at Mecha Ruben to which Mecha Ruben squirted water at him. Tails was hit by the icy cold water, which seemed colder than usual for some reason, and sent slamming into the wall. Wilson the Dog and Mandy Mouse tackled Mecha Ruben and Mecha Sora, bringing them down onto the floor. Mandy had obligated against using her knuckle attachments in this battle for she would just end up destroying the Robians if she punched them, leaving her at a severe disadvantage. Wilson still had his weapons on him but he was going to be careful on how he used them since he could easily damage them accidentally if he wasn't careful. Mecha Ruben and Mecha Sora fought against Wilson and Mandy but the dog and mouse fought back hard, keeping them down on the floor as best as they could. As they were doing this, Tails seized the perfect chance to wake up Silver. All the other Robians were fighting the Royal Fighters, there was nobody to try and stop him. Tails ran

over to Silver, knelt down by his side and started shaking him, hoping to wake him up. Unfortunately for Tails, Port had regained itself and it was hovering menacingly towards Tails with its cannons ready to roboticize him. Tails yelped in fright and he picked the unconscious Silver up off the floor, flying into the air with him in his hands as quickly as he could. Port fired at him and missed him by millimetres. The whole commotion seemed to wake Silver up though for he started stirring and moaning sleepily. Tails beamed happily, glad to see that Silver was coming around at last. But then Metal Sonic spin-dash up into the air and hit both Tails and Silver, bringing them both down onto the floor. Port hovered towards the two, hoping to roboticize them both. Bunnie flew in and punched Port away from Tails and Silver but she ended up getting dropkicked in the back by Mecha Bladefeather. Silver picked himself up and shook his head groggily, trying to make out what was going on. He was still amazed that Mecha Sally had managed to get the drop on him like this and knock him out so swiftly. He began to wonder if he was in a nightmare though for the first thing he noticed was that Blaze was now a robot and she was fighting an intense battle with Sonic. Silver watched with horror as his roboticized girlfriend threw a kick at Sonic, aiming directly his chest in the hopes that her sharp heel would do a lot of damage to his heart. Sonic dodged the kick and he kicked upwards, throwing Blaze's leg upwards and knocking her off balance. If Mecha Blaze was still organic, she might have felt a sharp surge of pain from the thud down onto the floor. Silver couldn't believe that Blaze was really a robot though. He rubbed his eyes, hoping this would turn out to be a nightmare. It didn't work. Blaze was still a robot. He wasn't dreaming.

"No...Blaze has been roboticized!" wailed Silver, "I'm gonna get her outta that robot prison though!"

"Indeed you can Silver." said Tails, "Disable Port while you still can!"

Silver was all too happy to oblige. He got up onto his feet and prepared to use his psychokinesis. Unfortunately, the blow to the head Mecha Sally had given him was beginning to throb and Silver winced as he tried using his psychokinesis. It was never a good idea to use psychic powers when you have a headache. To Silver, it felt like somebody had reached into his head, grabbed his brain and

started squeezing it like a sponge in a bath. Silver couldn't try and disable Port, his head was aching too much. He cringed in agonizing pain as his head started throbbing in a way that words couldn't describe. Tails sensed that something was wrong and he put his hands on Silver's shoulders.

"What's wrong?" he asked worriedly.

"My head's killing...hurts too much to use my powers!" moaned Silver, "I can't disable Port for the moment!"

"Well rest your head for a minute, I'll try and keep him at bay before he can roboticize anyone else." said Tails.

Silver nodded and watched as Tails flew into the air, keeping well out of Port's way and flying nowhere in particular to keep the robot distracted. But Tails needed to remember that Port could aim in any direction at once. It didn't have a blind spot or a place that it couldn't aim at. It could try shooting at Tails with one cannon and still have some left to shoot at any others. And that's exactly what Port ended up doing. It started shooting wildly at all the Royal Fighters in the room, hoping to snag them all one at a time. Much to the bad luck of the Royal Fighters, that's exactly what ended up happening. Geoffrey, Wilson, Mandy, Knuckles, Shade, Cream, Cosmo, Espio, Vector, Charmy and Mace all ended up getting hit by the roboticizer beams and turned into Robians faster than anybody could say "Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived" three times. Port's aim had been really good, not once missing its targets and actually avoiding hitting any of the Robians, Metal Sonic or Mecha Sally as it had been shooting. Sonic, Sally, Tails, Bunnie and Silver were the only ones who hadn't been hit yet although Sonic had a terrible feeling that they weren't going to be organic for long. In order to prevent Port from attempting to roboticize anybody else, Sonic zoomed up towards Port and spin-dashed him, sending the machine hurling through the room and crashing into the R.F.S. Jet. Now Port was momentarily stunned, Silver used his psychokinesis to try and disable him but once again, he got tackled by a robot, this one being Mecha Knuckles. Silver cried out in alarm as Mecha Knuckles lunged at him with his metal, spiked fists and attempted to severely injure him. Silver saved himself with a psychokinetic grasp that stopped Mecha Knuckles dead in his tracks. As he did that,

Sonic, Sally, Tails and Bunnie gathered around together.

"The plan's gone seriously wrong! There's only five of us left!" shrieked Sonic, "We have to disable Port and set him in reverse NOW!"

"Silver keeps trying but the poor guy keeps getting distracted!" yelped Tails, "What are we gonna do now?"

"Ya'll just asked the million dollar question sugah!" blurted Bunnie "What ARE we gonna do Sally-girl?" she asked, looking directly at Sally as if the whole thing depended on her now, a feeling Sally wasn't always that keen about having.

"We stay on our toes and keep ourselves from being roboticized!" declared Sally, "We'll try and keep the rabble off Silver's back so he can disable Port in peace! Once he's disabled, we take him on the Sky Patrol and break out of this Death Egg so we can set him in reverse without a problem. We then come back and de-roboticize our friends and then go for the World Roboticizer and set that in reverse so we can de-roboticize Mobius."

"And after that, we destroy this damn Death Egg!" growled Sonic, "This ship deserves to be destroyed and hopefully with Eggman still on it!"

"Now, now Sonic, we're not stooping to his level." said Sally firmly, "We will arrest Eggman and make him pay, not kill him and let him have the easy way out."

Sonic rolled his eyes, clearly wishing he could go with the former option. Sonic was so angry with Eggman roboticizing his world for the second time ever in this war and also for now roboticizing his friends that Sonic was actually wanting to send Eggman to his grave. He thought Eggman deserved to die, especially after the fact he said earlier that he had no decency and thought a robotical world was better than an organic world. That evil mindset and kind of dictatorship deserved nothing more than death but Sonic was not going to dishonour the Royal Fighters Service by killing Eggman in cold blood. He was better than this and he would prove it by taking Eggman to justice, not Death's door. Sonic shook off the rather dark

thoughts that had been entering his head and he charged back into battle with Sally, Tails and Bunnie right behind him. Mecha Wilson and Mecha Mandy charged towards Sonic and Sally with Wilson aiming for Sonic and Sally being targeted by Mandy. Sonic and Sally dodged their attacks and kicked the Robian dog and mouse down onto the floor. They picked themselves up shortly after and Mecha Wilson launched his spinning blade at Sonic. Sonic threw himself flat on the floor back first, the blade missing him by centimetres as it hurled over him. He leaped back up and he stomp-kicked Mecha Wilson in the chest. He regretted this very much for he felt like he was attacking his friend and despite him launching an attack on Mecha Wilson, it still hurt him as much as it hurt Mecha Wilson. That is...it hurt him emotionally. Sonic was looking forward all the more to de-roboticizing all of Mobius now. Mecha Mandy slugged Sally in the gut and elbowed her onto the floor, the blow feeling as heavy as somebody swinging a baseball bat at you and Sally cried out as Mecha Mandy prepared to attack her again. Not wanting to use her blades so as not to damage Mandy herself in anyway, Sally booted Mecha Mandy in the torso and knocked her off her feet. Sally rubbed her leg better as she felt a tingle of pain flood through her veins. The Robians had strong armour that's for sure. Stronger than most Eggman robots maybe. Tails was in the worst possible situation ever. He was being attacked not only by Mecha Sora, but by Mecha Cosmo too! The two most special girls in his life were now roboticized and trying to attack him. Tails literally decided that this was the worst moment of his life. Only thing that could make it worse was if Ginger was roboticized and trying to attack him. Mecha Cosmo lunged at Tails with her sharp metallic skirt spinning around like a deadly saw blade. Tails threw himself down onto the floor in order to dodge her deadly attack. Mecha Cosmo landed on her feet and she spun around on her heel, catching Tails with a vicious kick to the head just as he got back to his feet. Tails was sent hurling off his feet and flying into Mecha Sora. Mecha Sora swung her leg up and walloped Tails in the face, throwing him straight up into the air. As Tails fell back down towards the ground, screaming at the top of his voice as he fell, Mecha Cosmo and Mecha Sora positioned themselves underneath where Tails was going to land so they could grab him and let Port roboticize him. Bunnie saw this and she flew over to Tails as quickly as possible, catching him before he could land into Mecha Cosmo and Mecha Sora's hands. Bunnie landed

down on the floor and put Tails down before flying off into battle again. Port tried to shoot at her but Bunnie shot back and stopped its blast before it could hit anyone. Eggman yelled furiously at Port for this.

"No you dumb robot, don't shoot Bunnie!" he yelled, "You'll blow up her limbs! Wait until you've roboticized everybody else and then de-roboticize her so you can roboticize her without damaging her!"

"No point telling the ugly robot that because that ain't happening gruesome!" declared Bunnie, flying directly in front of Eggman and upper cutting him directly into the air as callously as she could with her robotic arm.

Dr. Eggman screamed like a child being freaked out on a rollercoaster ride as he sailed through the air and landed slap-bang into the wall. He slid down onto the ground, moaning dizzily and trying to recognize left from right as he picked himself up. Over to Sonic and Sally, they were once again in battle with Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally. Not the best idea but they couldn't really help that since Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally picked them themselves and the two robots were the only robots that Sonic and Sally could fight without feeling bad about hurting them or worrying about killing the Mobian inside the Robian. Sonic and Sally had nothing but the intention to kill in mind for Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally as they fought against them, especially as together, the two were a mockery to them and their status as a couple and that was not acceptable in their eyes. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally had the same intentions in mind for their organic counterparts too. Metal Sonic clawed at Sonic, nearly catching the hedgehog across the chest. Sonic jumped back to avoid the attack, amazed at how narrowly he'd actually managed to dodge the attack. Sonic socked Metal Sonic in the cheek, gritting his teeth callously so that he could hold in the pain that surged through his fist after he punched Metal Sonic. Sonic then drew his leg back and kicked Metal Sonic in the chest, throwing him across the room and directly into Port. Port fired a roboticizer beam as an act of warning after being hit and much to Sonic's bad luck…the blast hit him! Sally screamed in terror as Sonic was swiftly converted into a Robian, his screams dying down into silence as Mecha Sonic stood before Sally with his red optics burning brilliantly and

malevolently and his claws bared and ready to tear her apart. Tails, Bunnie and Silver watched with horror as this happened and Sally collapsed backwards onto the floor, unable to stand up anymore given how shocking this was. Sonic was now a Robian once again. Mecha Sonic had returned and he had a cold look in his optics.

"NOOOOOOO!" wailed Sally, clutching her chest as if her heart was going to burst its way out suddenly, "Sonic! No…NOOOOOO! Please, not you!"

"Sonic!" screamed Tails in terror.

"Sugah-hog!" howled Bunnie, "He's Mecha Sonic again!"

"That's it Port, you're not roboticizing anybody else today!" declared Silver angrily.

He used his psychokinesis to hold Port in place and he clenched his fists, crumpling Port's insides like paper and ruining the machine completely. Unfortunately for Silver, the moment he let go of Port, the machine suddenly fired one last desperate shot at Silver and roboticized him too! Port literally only had enough life left in it to fire that one last shot. Now power-drained, Port switched off and stopped hovering, coming down onto the floor with a thud. Silver, now Mecha Silver, picked himself up and he grabbed Sally, Tails and Bunnie with a psychic hold before they could attempt to escape or do anything else. Sally, Tails and Bunnie were completely immobilized, unable to do anything else now. They were the last Mobians in existence and they were helpless before the Robian army Dr. Eggman had on the Death Egg now. They stared despairingly as Mecha Sonic stood before them with the rest of the Robians behind him. Dr. Eggman ran over to Sally, Tails and Bunnie and he began laughing uncontrollable fits of maniacal laughter over his victory. Port maybe disabled but what could Sally, Tails and Bunnie do about their situation now? They couldn't de-roboticize anybody and they were all captured by Mecha Silver, they couldn't do anything to help their friends. Eggman stopped laughing long enough to gloat at his captured and defeated enemies.

"What a brilliant turnout!" cried Eggman excitedly, "What a BRILLIANT turnout! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha! Everybody but you three

has been roboticized now and you three can't do anything about it! I win, I win! AH, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!"

The laughter that Eggman bellowed out was enough to make the entire room echo as if laughing along with him over his triumph. This day was easily the best day of Eggman's life, mostly since he now had a roboticized Sonic on his side once again and he wouldn't be able to help the last three Mobians in anyway. Eggman stopped laughing and continued to pontificate to his captives.

"How does it feel Sally Acorn, to be one of the last Mobians in existence?" sneered Eggman, "You, Bunnie and Tails cling onto your organic lives while the rest of Mobius's population now falls under my command and my vision of a perfect world! Once Port's fixed though you will be roboticized and then the Robian race will be complete and Mobius will be mine at last!"

"You will never win Eggman." said Sally coldly, "We'll reverse what you've done, make no mistake on that. You will not remain victorious for long."

"Yeah! You roboticized the entire world and only a handful of us avoided being roboticized that time!" yelled Tails, "And guess what? We beat you! We'll bet you again!"

"As long as we're not Robians, there's still a chance Mobius will be saved doc…and once it is, you will be defeated and arrested for yer crimes once and for all!" declared Bunnie, "Mark our words Eggman, ya'll haven't won yet!"

"Your hubris fails to do anything except bore me." sneered Eggman, "So don't try and fill yourself with false hope, you're only embarrassing yourselves. Now then, I can't roboticize you three since Port's broken and I can't use the World Roboticizer INSIDE the Death Egg, it wasn't built for that. So I'm afraid I need to lock you up somewhere while I get Port fixed. And I know just the place…Mecha Silver, keep hold of the three until the Death Egg touches back down on Mobius!" he ordered, pointing at Mecha Silver.

"I-o-bey." droned Mecha Silver.

"Don't any of you three attempt to break free of Mecha Silver's psychic hold or Mecha Sonic will rip you three apart." threatened Dr. Eggman, "And I'd much rather roboticize you with your limbs intact if you don't mind."

"You could just stick a new bunch of limbs on us once we're roboticized." snorted Tails.

Dr. Eggman ignored him and he left the room to go to the main control room on the upper floors of the ship. The room itself was located just behind the Death Egg's eyes so Dr. Eggman didn't have long to go at all. He was in the main control room in a matter of seconds and he instantly leaped into his seat, laughing excitedly as he set the Death Egg into motion. He had the perfect place to lock up his captives until Port was fixed and he could hardly wait to get everybody introduced there back down on Mobius. The Death Egg's engines roared into life and the enormous vessel began heading towards the planet. This did not go unnoticed however. *The Nefarious* had fully charged up its cloaking device in all the time the battle had been going on and it was spying on the Death Egg, completely invisible to the naked eye and watching the Death Egg like an eagle watching a rabbit. The Death Egg hadn't detected it at all. It just flew on down towards Mobius without any concerns or other thoughts. Dr. Finitevus watched through the window of the ship and he narrowed his eyes. The Bride of the Conquering Storm stood beside him, her pose rigid and to attention like a loyal soldier to her commander. The coolie-hat wearing lynx had recently been broken out of prison by Scourge the Hedgehog and Fiona the Fox* and she was now a member of the Dark Armada and working for Dr. Finitevus. She turned to face her leader, her expression as stoic as ever. This was a trademark for Conquering Storm and any other emotion she emoted were considered unusual for many people were used to seeing her emotionless and blunt.

"The Death Egg appears to be moving Finitevus." said Conquering Storm, "What should we do?"

"Follow it." said Finitevus bluntly, "I want to know what the Death Egg's moving down onto Mobius for. And maybe…have the opportunity to begin the sabotage."

"A wise move indeed my dark commander." said Conquering Storm bluntly, "Shall I inform the others Finitevus?"

"Yes my dear, please inform the other members that we're mobilizing." said Finitevus politely, "It could well be time to put the plan into action…"

He smiled wickedly as he pictured himself setting up the bombs inside the Death Egg and then setting the World Roboticizer in reverse so that Mobius would be de-roboticized and ripe for the picking once he disposed of Dr. Eggman. Dr. Finitevus ordered *The Nefarious* to follow the Death Egg with a simple voice command that registered at the speed of a super fast computer. *The Nefarious* began to activate its engines and fly slowly but silently after the Death Egg. The Death Egg would nave no idea that it was being followed, no idea whatsoever. It would touch down on Mobius and *The Nefarious* would not be noticed. Its stealth technology was that sophisticated and brilliant. Finitevus was very pleased at how well the cloaking device worked. He could fly directly over New Mobotropolis and not be noticed for all he knew. The two ships re-entered Mobius's atmosphere and the occupants of both ships held on as they began to shudder under the pressure of the atmosphere burning all around them. In a matter of moments, the Death Egg and *The Nefarious* were back on Mobius and the Death Egg headed down towards Megapolis, most noticeably a part of Megapolis that was very far away from the Egg-Bunker's original location before the Death Egg had launched. Eggman was heading towards the eastern part of Megapolis for the place he was taking the captive Sally, Tails and Bunnie was located in this part of the country. *The Nefarious* cruised silently after the Death Egg. Megapolis was a dark shadow of a country now for it was roofed by a ceiling of dark, grey clouds that looked like they were ready to throw it down any moment now. Finitevus didn't mind since the rain wouldn't effect *The Nefarious* 's stealth technology in anyway. It would still appear invisible and even if anybody could see actual raindrops pitter-pattering over the invisible shape of the evil ship, it wouldn't be very easy to notice since there were raindrops by the millions. *The Nefarious* would still be invisible. The Death Egg cruised over Megapolis for a couple of minutes before finally touching down onto a landing pad that had been built especially for the insidious, world-roboticizing ship. *The*

Nefarious stayed airborne but Finitevus watched the Death Egg from the window of his ship as Eggman exited with all the Robians onboard following him. He noticed that they had Sally, Tails and Bunnie with them and they were not roboticized yet. Finitevus shook his head, a mocking smirk on his face as he eyed Mecha Sonic holding Sally tightly by her arms and leading her along with the other Robians. Sonic was a Robian, this could work to Finitevus's favour easily. Once he'd de-roboticized the world, Sonic would have more reason to go into the Death Egg and pursue Dr. Eggman giving Finitevus the perfect opportunity to kill Sonic as well as Dr. Eggman. Finitevus could easily just walk up to Mecha Sonic and destroy him now if he wanted but that would attract attention and Finitevus was being very vigilant in his plans this time. He hadn't been so in his previous plans and they had cost him dearly. He would not make that mistake again. He continued watching out the window, taking note that the clouds had been very good on their threat of rain. Fat raindrops dripped onto the windows and trickled down the glass. Finitevus could imagine everybody down below getting soaking wet as the rain began to hammer down onto the ground and drench everything in sight. Down below and getting soaked by the rain, Dr. Eggman led his Robians and prisoners to a huge steel building that seemed out of place in the middle of nowhere. Eggman had easily just built it himself and the building was not a natural part of the scenery. Sally picked up on that rather bitterly and she screwed her face up at the building. The building was enormous, spanning the size of two tennis courts and exceeding the height of a five-storey building with ease. It had every little features aside from Dr. Eggman's hideous logo on the top of the building and a door that seemed to be the only way in or out of the building. Sally had a nasty feeling that she knew what this building was. It was a prison and it was easily meant for her, Tails and Bunnie to stay in while Eggman fixed Port. Eggman threw his arms up and announced rather obnoxiously:

"Welcome to the newly rebuilt Sentinel Blockade!"

He looked very pleased with himself over the fact he'd just announced that the heroes were being welcomed to a prison. The Sentinel Blockade was a prison that Eggman had built long ago in Nekronopolis to house people he wanted to roboticize**. Shadow

the Hedgehog had destroyed it but Dr. Eggman had rebuilt it before the Death Egg had been launched. The Sentinel Blockade would be useless of course since Eggman intended to roboticize everybody but the prison had been built as a back-up plan incase Eggman missed any Mobians and had to contain them for the time being. Plus if any Robians suddenly went rogue, he could throw them into the prison for punishment. Neither Sally, Tails or Bunnie had been in the Sentinel Blockade when it had first been built but they didn't like the sound of the prison at all from what Miranda and her team had described about it. Now they would see for themselves what the prison was like. Dr. Eggman stood to the side but he announced something else about his prison.

"The Sentinel Blockade will be your home until Port is fixed and you three can be roboticized." crowed Dr. Eggman, "Do NOT try to escape the prison. I assure you it is inescapable and even if you succeed, you won't get far. Metal Sonic, Mecha Sonic, Mecha Sally, Mecha Shadow and Mecha Silver are the guards and you will NEVER get past either of those! Enjoy your stay Mobians, it'll be the last thing you do before you get roboticized!"

He began laughing as Mecha Sonic, Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally took the three Mobians inside the Sentinel Blockade. As soon as they were inside, the trio began wishing that they were still out in the rain. It would be much better than being in this place. The Sentinel Blockade was featureless on the inside save for a lot of prison cells as far as the eye could see. None of the doors had any windows and all the locks were keypads, meaning that a code was required in order to open them. There were many floors, all with more prison cells on them. Eggman could house over 200 Mobians here Tails calculated in his head. It would only have three occupants tonight. Sally was taken by Mecha Sonic down the corridor of the first floor of the prison while Mecha Sally and Metal Sonic flew Bunnie and Tails onto the second and third floors respectively. Sally could hardly blame the robots for wanting to keep her and her friend separated. They would be less deadly when they were separated. As soon as Sally was taken to a cell, Mecha Sonic held his hands out.

"Hand-over-your-en-er-gy-blades-and-Ni-cole." he demanded.

Had it been METAL Sonic ordering her, Sally would have just turned

around and chopped him to pieces. But this was Mecha Sonic, her boyfriend Sonic as a robot. She couldn't chop him up for it would mean killing her boyfriend. Sally couldn't live with herself if she killed Sonic so she did as she was told. She gave Mecha Sonic her wristbands and Nicole, the little computer that housed Nicole's consciousness after what General Rakutan had done to her on Mobius 3000. Now Sally was deprived of anything useful, Mecha Sonic opened up a cell and shoved Sally inside. Her cell was marked with the number 8643. Sally remained on her knees as Mecha Sonic slammed the door shut behind her, the door locking the moment it was closed. Sally lifted her head and she saw that the cell was just as she'd expected, completely featureless save for four walls and a floor and with no way of escape. There wasn't even a bench for her to sit on. Sally sat herself against the wall and did the only thing she could in this cell. Overwhelmed with grief, horror, heartbreak and despair, the poor queen cried a heart-wrenching sob that seemed to be full of all the emotion she had inside of her. All but three Mobians were now Robians and she was locked in a prison with no way of escape. Mobius was in its darkest hour and would never lighten up again. Sally could hardly help but cry in this situation. And she felt like she'd never be able to stop…no matter how hard she cried…

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius: Formulation of the Dark Armada***

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius: Arc 8: The Sentinel Blockade***

Man things just keep getting worse and worse...:(

How the fridge will Sally, Tails and Bunnie get out of this one?! I think...I think...this is...gulp...THE END!

Or maybe the Dark Armada can help them out? Tune in next

time as our heroes attempt the impossible...to escape The Sentinel Blockade.

Eggman Empire Part 3

Story 198: Eggman Empire Part 3: Escape from Sentinel

The rain continued to hammer down onto the ground below as the dark clouds loomed over Mobius, casting the world in a dark, grey shadow that seemed to set an appropriate mood for the current events that had been going on lately. The mood was made even more appropriate with the occasional flash of lightening and deafening bang of a thunderclap.

Mobius, once a world that was peaceful and beautiful, now a world run by Dr. Eggman with the entire population sans three Royal Fighters and the entire Dark Armada and the last three Royal Fighters currently un-roboticized were locked up in a secure prison called The Sentinel Blockade, described by Eggman himself as being inescapable. Being inside the cells, Sally Acorn, Tails the Fox and Bunnie Rabbot could actually agree that it did seem inescapable. The cells had no features save for a door that could only be opened by code on the outside and four walls, nothing else. They would definitely be kept captive for quite a while inside the prison. It seemed pretty helpless for the trio now…

The Dark Armada on the other hand were still roaming freely and were overlooking things from up inside their insidious flagship *The Nefarious* . The Dark Armada was an army of villains ranging from many of Sonic's old enemies or enemies of Sonic's friends and led by Dr. Finitevus himself, the evil, treacherous uncle of Knuckles the Echidna and one of Sonic's most deadliest enemies. Able to fight Sonic's entire team at once without breaking a sweat and having sheer intelligence, manipulation skills and the strategy planning of a chess player, Finitevus truly cemented himself as the only threat on Mobius that could potentially take over from Dr. Eggman and be equally as, if not more, successful than he was. Dr. Finitevus already had big plans in mind for Mobius such as his precious "Operation: Enerjak Reborn" stratagem but he couldn't put it into action yet. Not while Mobius was roboticized and being ruled by Dr. Eggman. His plan wasn't to rule a roboticized world and with

everybody in the world working for Dr. Eggman, his plan would go belly-up easily. He was sure to get spotted by at least one Robian and there would be nowhere on Mobius to hide for they'd all come looking for him. So Finitevus planned to get rid of Dr. Eggman. He had to wait for the right moment though and the right moment presented itself. The Death Egg had come back down to Mobius so Eggman could put Sally, Tails and Bunnie in the Sentinel Blockade and keep them contained whilst he fixed Port Mk III, his portable roboticizer robot. Silver the Hedgehog had managed to disable Port thanks to his psychokinesis but sadly, had ended up being roboticized himself after he'd done so. Eggman couldn't use his World Roboticizer to roboticize Sally, Bunnie and Tails otherwise he'd blow up all his Robians so he needed Port so he could roboticize the three. He didn't want to just use the Death Egg to de-roboticize everybody and then roboticize them again as that would take up too much energy and the World Roboticizer needed charging up after use, which would give Sonic and friends the chance to attack him and then it would be back to square one. Unfortunately for Eggman, no matter what he did he would end up losing since Finitevus was using Eggman's current time fixing Port to his advantage. Advantage was something Finitevus loved to exploit. Finitevus turned away from the window and he wandered through the corridors of *The Nefarious* . He walked down into the meeting room to greet his glorious armada members. The meeting room was a room that like most of the ship, was bathed in a malevolent purple glow that suited the evil atmosphere of the ship perfectly. There was a huge round table that had enough seats for all the main members and a white light hung over the table, the light seeming to make the table glow for the table was also white. Finitevus sat down at the main seat and clasped his hands together. He eyed all of his members, Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox, Captain Metal, Cutthroat Jim, Lord Sycorax, Ravage Bloodfang, Raphael the Cyber Husky, all four members of Team Diamond, Zira the Ruthless and Conquering Storm all sitting patiently around the table and waiting for him to speak.

"Well my glorious armada, it appears Dr. Eggman has landed back down on Mobius." purred Finitevus, "This is the perfect time for us to sneak aboard the Death Egg and set up the bombs that will claim Dr. Eggman's useless, pathetic life."

"Very good to hear my good man." said Ravage politely, his smooth gentlemanly voice as rich and sophisticated as ever as he spoke.

"But of course, it's not quite the right time to blow the egg-headed geezer to kingdom come." said Raphael, "We need to de-roboticize all of Mobius first. If we just kill Eggman now, all his minions will kill us in revenge."

"Indeed Raphael, which is why I will also see to it that the Death Egg de-roboticizes Mobius BEFORE we blow it up." noted Finitevus, "Our good friend Fiona Fox got me the Death Egg's schematics a few weeks ago and studying them closely, it annoys me to no end that the Death Egg cannot simply just fire the roboticizer, it has to be a certain height before it can fire. So we may well have to wait until Eggman takes flight again before we fire the World Roboticizer in reverse."

"Won't it be awfully risky to go in there and fly the ship yourself?" asked Fiona worriedly, "I mean, Eggman's bound to notice and he'll likely fly after you and stop you dead in your tracks."

"Eggman will not be able to best me in a battle but our entire plan hinges on the element of surprise." said Finitevus, nodding in Fiona's direction, "So no, I will not simply just go into the Death Egg and fly it myself. Rather once I've set up the bombs and set the World Roboticizer in reverse, I'll return to *The Nefarious* and expose us to Eggman…"

"Are you out of your %$£*ing mind?!" shrieked Scourge furiously, "I thought you said the element of surprise was what our plan hinged on! You're NOT exposing us to Eggman!"

"When you're quite finished interrupting me you flaccid minded fool, I was GOING to say that we go up into the sky a long distance away from the Death Egg and then de-cloak the ship. The Death Egg will then follow us into space and once it's there, we will wait for Eggman to fire the roboticizer wave at us. We'll use a Chaos Control to get out of the way and Eggman will de-roboticize the entire planet for us. He'll blame the entire thing on a glitch in the systems, caused by me that is." explained Finitevus, "Then we cloak ourselves again so Eggman won't find us and once Sonic gets onboard the Death

Egg to fight Eggman to the death, we will blow up the Death Egg and kill Sonic and Eggman both together. As a back-up, if I'm not out of the Death Egg in twenty minutes then you may take off without me. Anything can happen and I do not want to delay *The Nefarious's* take off for any reason at all."

"Great idea Finny me hearty!" exclaimed Cutthroat Jim enthusiastically.

"My name is Finitevus, NOT Finny thank you very much." said Finitevus coldly, glaring at Cutthroat Jim angrily.

Cutthroat Jim shifted in his seat nervously. Captain Metal, who was sitting beside him, rolled his optic and then turned to Finitevus.

"Does it really matter if we kill Eggman AND Sonic together matey?" he asked, "Mayhap it doesn't matter that much if we kill one now and the other later?"

"I agree with you Captain Metal." said Conquering Storm bluntly, "Doctor, we shouldn't hinge the plan so much on just trying to take down Eggman and Sonic both at the same time." she said, turning to Finitevus.

"You make very good points you two and yes, it does not entirely matter if Sonic does not perish along with Dr. Eggman." said Finitevus with a nod, "But it would be more pleasant if we actually killed him too wouldn't it? The plan is mostly to get rid of Dr. Eggman with the possibility of getting rid of Sonic too."

"Seems like a logical course of action honourable leader." mused Zira, nodding slowly although her face didn't really suggest she thought much to the idea, "I hope we get rid of Sonic as well as Eggman. He owes me much for my humiliation since it was he who brought Conquering Storm to me and foiled my first attempt at taking over Chun-Nan…"

Conquering Storm resisted the urge to sneer at Zira although she hid her face behind her hands so she could smirk at Zira without her realizing it. Zira did not seem to notice much to the lynx's delight.

"I sure hope we get rid of Sonic too. The meddling brat's been messing in my affairs for long enough!" moaned Lord Sycorax, "I, the great Lord Sycorax, would have been successful already if it wasn't for Sonic being such a…"

"We get it, we get it you conceited nut job now shut your pie hole!" bellowed Scourge angrily "Nobody wants to hear you idolize yourself and rant at the same time!"

"Try saying that to me when we're in a fighting arena!" growled Lord Sycorax, batting his fists together threateningly.

"Oh please, Scourge could take you any day Sycorax." snorted Fiona, "You don't have a chance against him."

"LORD! IT'S **LORD** SYCORAX!" thundered Sycorax in rage, "And I could take Scourge on any day you slut in vixen's clothing!"

"You three, stop this inane bickering!" snarled Conquering Storm, "The doctor did not gather us all together to argue like bratty little children!"

"Yes indeed my dear." said Finitevus coldly, "If you bicker any longer than I shall see to it that you're thrown into a cell between now and Eggman's defeat!"

"Why don't you just do it now and save us all a load of bother?" sighed the reluctant Dark Armada member Roxy the Raccoon.

She was only in the armada because Finitevus had stitched a bomb inside her head to force her to comply. Had she not had this happen to her, she would happily be somewhere else now. Fiona glared at Roxy for suggesting that Finitevus lock her, Scourge and Sycorax up now, mostly her and Scourge though.

"Watch your tone with me Roxy!" growled Fiona threateningly, "Or I'll ask Finitevus to put you back into the cell in the laboratory!"

"Easy Fiona, Roxy will mind her manners in the future." said Lennox Meers the Meerkat, glaring angrily at Roxy for her unwarranted and really cheeky remark.

Roxy just ignored Lennox, not regretting what she'd said in the slightest. Finitevus glared at the armada as if daring anybody to make another comment. When nobody said anything for a minute, he relaxed his face and sat back in his seat, pleased that the tone had calmed down now.

"Now that we're settled, is everybody in favour of the plan or do you all have a suggestion of your own?" he asked inquisitively, "Put your hands up if you're in favour of the plan to kill Dr. Eggman."

The armada members rose their hands immediately, all twelve members. There was no reason to doubt the plan at all since it was so brilliant. It was bound to work so they were all in favour of it. Finitevus smiled at the twelve raised hands all around the table.

"Very well, we have ourselves a stratagem." purred Finitevus darkly, "I'll give Dr. Eggman five minutes and then I shall put the plan into action…"

He cackled to himself as he pictured the Death Egg exploding into fragments and killing Dr. Eggman as it was destroyed by the bombs he would plant in there. It pleased Finitevus to think that he would be the one to end Dr. Eggman's life and not Sonic the Hedgehog. Sonic had had many chances to do it already and he had not taken advantage of the situation at all. As a wise man once said, if you want something done right, do it yourself. Finitevus was taking that to the extreme once his plan was ready to begin…

Queen Sally Acorn had gotten used to her new surroundings very quickly. It had been an hour since the Death Egg had landed back on Mobius and she, Bunnie and Tails had been locked up in the Sentinel Blockade so she had nothing to do but observe her surroundings and get used to the fact she was locked in a cell with no way out. Had she still had her energy blades on her than this would be easy but Mecha Sonic, a roboticized Sonic the Hedgehog, had confiscated them so Sally had no way out. Upon being locked in the cell, the heartbroken and defeated queen could do nothing but cry to herself as if hoping her tears would magically solve everything. But life was not full of miracles like that as much as Sally

hated to admit it. Crying never solver anybody's problems but Sally couldn't really help herself in this depressing situation. She had to let it all out otherwise she could go mad and she would much rather keep her sanity than lose it right about now. Sanity was the only thing that would be of any use to Sally now, going insane would solve nothing and just mean that Dr. Eggman had won already. Sally would much sooner have her heart torn out of her chest and then stomped on as she died than show Eggman that he'd broken her in anyway.

As long as she was still alive and still organic, that gave her some ray of hope. There was a small chance that she could still save the day and de-roboticize all of Mobius. All she had to do was escape, get Tails and Bunnie out too and get onboard the Death Egg so they could set the World Roboticizer in reverse and save everybody. The only trouble was…how could they escape? The cell had nothing that offered an escape route of any kind and Sally was not strong enough to break down the door. Bunnie could probably break down the door but surely Eggman would have a contingency plan in mind to counter that? And Eggman said the Sentinel Blockade was inescapable, he probably means it in the worst possible way. He could be bluffing but Sally wasn't sure if she wanted to risk finding out if it really was inescapable or not. She would have to see if she would have the opportunity to explore the prison some more and find a way of escaping. She began wondering if waiting until Port was fixed might be a good idea since they could maybe avoid being roboticized and make a break for it before Port could snag them. Much too risky but Sally couldn't think of anything better to try out at this moment in time. She was willing to try out whatever she could now, no matter the risk factor. In this dark time, anything was worth trying, even if it meant putting yourself at Death's feet and begging him to take you to the afterlife. Sally hoped it wouldn't actually come to that.

Sally was suddenly snapped out of her thoughts by the sound of a keypad's buttons being pressed outside her door. Was somebody letting her out of the cell? It turned out that somebody was indeed letting her out of the cell. The cell door opened up and Mecha Sonic walked into the cell. Sally wasn't too pleased to see him for she'd much rather be seeing Sonic the Hedgehog standing before her, not

a roboticized Sonic the Hedgehog. Her heart ached as she thought about how horrible it must be for poor Sonic to be trapped in this metal cage that would be a permanent prison for the hedgehog until he was de-roboticized. What made it worse was that this had happened before and now it was happening again. It must be even worse for poor Sonic in that case. Mecha Sonic stood before Sally, glaring at her sinisterly before closing the door behind him. Sally didn't even look at him.

"What do you want?" she muttered.

"Doc-tor-Egg-Man-would-like-to-see-you." droned Mecha Sonic in his heavy monotone voice. The voice just made Sally cringe for it was merely a robotical version of Sonic's normal voice, a voice she never wanted to hear again.

As the two talked, there was a slight echo resonating around the blockade. The high ceiling and narrow cell rows made the echo all the more easier to happen and the echo increased once a voice was raised

"Well tell the fat bastard that I'm not interested." said Sally coldly "I'd rather rot in this cell than see him right about now."

It would normally be considered suicide to insult a minion's master in a case like this but Sally didn't care. She'd rather show Eggman that she still had some spunk left in her than admit defeat to him. Mecha Sonic ignored Sally and he grabbed her by the arms, hauling her directly onto her feet at an unnecessarily rough force that nearly tore Sally's arms out of their sockets. Sally's shoulders screamed at the strain the yank had put on them. The squirrel was amazed that her arms were still attached to her shoulders. Sally gritted her teeth furiously and she kicked Mecha Sonic in the shin, hoping that the real Sonic wouldn't feel that too much.

"Oy, I said I'm not interested!" yelled Sally "Don't you dare yank my arms like that! I'm not coming to see him and you can't make me!"

"You-should-have-com-plied-you-ig-no-rant-wo-man." said Mecha Sonic coldly.

With that said, he picked Sally up off the floor by her neck, the squirrel squirming madly and choking for air as Mecha Sonic strangled her. Being strangled is bad enough but being strangled whilst being held off the floor made it even worse. It was like being squeezed by a pair of plies only much tougher given this was a whole metal hand clamped firmly around the squirrel's throat now. Sally tried desperately to get free but Mecha Sonic's grip was absolute. He wouldn't let go no matter what and Sally couldn't do anything about it.

"Ack…gack…let me…go…!" croaked Sally feebly, kicking Mecha Sonic as hard as she could in the stomach. The Robian didn't even flinch. It was like Sally wasn't even doing anything to her.

"You-will-come-with-me-quiet-ly-or-else-the-blood-of-Bun-nie-and-Tails-will-be-on-your-hands." threatened Mecha Sonic, tightening his grip on Sally's neck.

Sally knew full well what Mecha Sonic was talking about and that made her tremble with fear. Mecha Sonic was going to kill Bunnie and Tails if she didn't do as she was told. She couldn't sacrifice their lives like this, that would go against everything she believed in. Plus, they were her friends and she couldn't bear to lose them. Also Sonic would be devastated if he got de-roboticized and saw that he had killed Tails while he was under Dr. Eggman's control. He'd never be the same again and Sally couldn't bear to see that come to reality. She had no choice but to comply. Sally loosened her grip on Mecha Sonic's wrists.

"Fine…take me to Dr. Eggman…" she croaked.

Sally could already imagine what Eggman would do the moment she showed herself. He would likely gloat, something he did so often that he may as well have practiced it to himself in-between take-over attempts and would go out of his way to humiliate her in anyway possible. It would be a complete waste of her time and Eggman's and Sally couldn't understand why Eggman felt the need to idolize himself. It was annoying and obnoxious and a complete waste of time and effort. But Sally couldn't refuse his invitation to see him for Mecha Sonic had just threatened to kill Bunnie and Tails and Sally would sooner have Mecha Sonic kill her than sacrifice her friends'

lives in a stupid act of defiance. Pleased that the squirrel had succumbed, the enslaved Robian-hedgehog put Sally back down onto the floor and released her neck. Sally let fly a violent coughing fit as she fought to get the air back into her lungs. Never again did she want Mecha Sonic to throttle her again. The moment Sally stopped coughing, she looked at Mecha Sonic.

"So what does…cough…Eggman want with me?" she asked.

"You-will-find-out-soon-en-ough." droned Mecha Sonic.

With that said, he took Sally out of her cell and led her up the corridor to see Dr. Eggman. On the second floor of the prison, Tails could hear the footsteps of Sally and Mecha Sonic echoing ominously through the high-ceiling, multi-storey blockade that housed him and Bunnie along with her from outside his cell-door. He was in cell number 5295 and was positioned about three cells on the left side of where Sally's cell was on the floor below him. He could easily distinguish the footsteps and given how much noise echoed in the blockade, he'd even been able to hear Sally and Mecha Sonic's voices although the thick cell door did muffle their voices a bit so he'd only been able to hear their voices rather than what was actually being said. But Tails didn't care about what was being said, he could work out from the fact there were metal footsteps and booted footsteps echoing through the blockade that Mecha Sonic was taking Sally somewhere and wherever it was, he didn't like to think where it could be. It was somewhere horrible no doubt, maybe even straight to Eggman so he could use Port Mk II to roboticize her! He doubted Eggman would have fixed Port in an hour but then again, he didn't know how much Silver had damaged the machine. For all he knew, Silver probably just knocked a few wires loose. Tails knew that Sally was being taken into danger and all it took really was for Mecha Sonic to just show up and take her away. He began frantically scrambling around his cell, hoping to find a way out.

"Oh no, Sally's in danger, I just know it!" he fretted, his heart racing like crazy and his breathing going rapid very quickly, "And it's Sonic who's going to be the one doing it! I can't let Eggman make Sonic hurt Sally! He'll never forgive himself for this! I've gotta get outta here and help her fast!"

He searched every inch of his featureless cell, hoping to find something, anything that could be use to get him out of the cell. Unfortunately, he couldn't find anything at all. The walls had nothing that could come loose or anything. The ceiling had no ventilation systems that he could use to crawl out of. The floor was completely smooth with nothing that could come loose either. Tails began to panic. He was hyperventilating and he couldn't control himself. He tried to force himself to calm down but he was having no such luck.

"No…no…no…there's no way out! I can't help Sally!" whimpered Tails, "Oh no…she's definitely in trouble now! Eggman's going to make Sonic hurt her or even worse, roboticize her and me and Bunnie can't do anything about it!"

He curled his legs up against his torso and wrapped his arms around them, pressing his knees against his chest and resting his head against them. Tails never usually panicked in a situation like this but he really did feel like he couldn't help himself at this time. It was mostly the fear on what was going to happen to Sally and if it would happen to him and Bunnie too. He was downright terrified and Tails couldn't control himself. He was shaking like pennies being rattled in a money box he was so frightened.

As for Bunnie, she was on the third floor and was positioned five cells on the right side of Sally's cell on the bottom floor and seven cells away from Tails who was just on the floor below her. She had heard the same things Tails had heard only because of the echo and the fact she was higher up than Tails, it had sounded louder to her. Plus, her hearing was better than Tails's was. She had actually managed to make out some words that were being said and she didn't like what she'd heard. Mecha Sonic had come for Sally and he was taking her to meet Dr. Eggman. Bunnie knew instantly that meant something terrible and that Sally needed help and she needed it fast. Bunnie got up onto her feet and pressed her hands against the door. She'd already searched her cell multiple times and found no way out of the cell so she was going to try and break the door down.

"Hold on Sally-girl, ya'll ain't gonna be harmed by Dr. Eggman on mah watch!" she declared.

Bunnie pushed on the door with both hands, using all the strength she had in her arms to push on the door. She was hoping her strength would be enough to force the door open. Bunnie gritted her teeth tensely and grunted with effort as her organic right arm and her metal left arm both worked in unison to apply heavy pressure on the door. But despite the Rabbot's strength, she couldn't make the door budge. Bunnie reasoned with herself that maybe she would eventually break the door down if she kept on pushing and didn't relent. Bunnie continued what she was doing, hoping to eventually push the door of its hinges and free herself. She daren't imagine what Sally must be going through right now as she was trying to break out…

As for Sally, she had been taken to another room in the Sentinel Blockade. This room was not another blockade of cells but rather a huge, darkly lit room with a single white light in the ceiling. There were metal spheres that lay on the floor and they looked like they could open and close. They were meant to do that for a reason and Sally would soon find out what that reason was. There were laser generators protruding from the ceiling like telescopes extending out to get a close look at what was below them. Sally thought of this place being more like a dungeon than a prison cell compared to the cell blockade and immediately she was wanting to go back to her cell. She didn't like it here at all, something about the room gave her bad nerves. Why had Mecha Sonic taken her here? And where was Dr. Eggman? Mecha Sonic said Dr. Eggman wanted to see her so… where was he? Sally couldn't see him anyway and that obfuscated her to no end.

"Where's Dr. Eggman? I thought he wanted to see me?" asked Sally curiously.

"He-will-be-here-short-ly." droned Mecha Sonic, "In-the-mean-time, I-need-to-pre-pare-you-for-his-meet-ing-with-him."

"What, does he expect me to put on a fancy dress as if I'm out to dinner with him or something?" snorted Sally.

The answer was more shocking than she possibly could have

anticipated. Mecha Sonic didn't even answer her with words, more with actions. He reached out to Sally and he proceeded to rip her vest clean off. Sally was a little surprised but she assumed Mecha Sonic was maybe going to dress her up in something of Eggman's choice. The actual intention of Mecha Sonic was quite the opposite. After taking her vest off, Mecha Sonic proceeded to take Sally's blue and white sports bra off and just carelessly dump it on the floor as if it was litter. Sally felt a little embarrassed but not as embarrassed as one would normally feel since she wore very little when she was younger and when she was an early teen. But Mecha Sonic didn't stop. He then proceeded to grab Sally's shorts and undo her belt. He took the belt off and then proceeded to pull the shorts down her slender, smooth legs. Once he reached the feet, he made Sally raise them up one at a time as he took the shorts off. Then finally, he took Sally's boots off and lay them down on their sides beside her discarded clothes. Sally blushed bright red. Mecha Sonic had stripped her naked. Mobians tended to have a dress code consisting of little clothing, lots of clothing or even no clothing so this was not inappropriate or unusual for a Mobian to be nude. But Sally had been used to being clothed the way she was for so long that to be suddenly undressed felt a bit uncomfortable for her, even if she used to wear very little. What was worse was that Mecha Sonic didn't even offer any new clothes for her to wear, he just led her over to the metal spheres on the floor. Mecha Sonic didn't even seem to show any remorse for his actions. Sally began to wonder what the real Sonic would think to the fact he'd just stripped her naked against his own will. He wouldn't be pleased at all if he had his freewill on him. Mecha Sonic stood Sally under the laser generators and he clamped a sphere each around her hands. They felt a little heavy and Sally fought to keep them from pulling her down onto the floor. Mecha Sonic the walked over to the left wall and pressed a red button that activated the laser generators. The generators emitted blue, lightening shaped lasers that attached to the spheres around Sally's hands and pulled them up, raising Sally's arms up and out to the side. Sally's arms were now in a "two o'clock" position but it didn't stop there. The lasers lifted Sally up off her feet, causing a massive strain to floor through her arms and make Sally wince in terrible pain. Her arms were closer to a "one o'clock" position now. Sally grimaced, fighting off the strain that her arms were going through in order to carry her weight. She was restrained, obviously

for some purpose and she was also nude. Eggman was obviously intending to humiliate her. Sally glared at Mecha Sonic, her cheeks red with a mixture of embarrassment and anger.

"OK Sonic, what's the big idea?" asked Sally crossly "Why has Eggman ordered you to do this to me?"

She grunted as she struggled in her binds. Mecha Sonic just watched her. If he had emotions, he'd probably be enjoying watching Sally struggle helplessly in her binds for reasons one might not really understand.

"Dr.-Egg-Man-will-ex-plain-every-thing-to-you." answered Mecha Sonic flatly.

Sally was still very confused. Dr. Eggman wasn't here so how could he explain everything to her? Then she found out what Mecha Sonic was on about. Dr. Eggman wasn't here *in person* but he was here in a different way. Mecha Sonic stood to the side as a television screen began to descend from up in the cieling and lower down just in front of Sally, switching on and bathing her body in a white glow that dazzled her for a moment. As her eyes adjusted to the glow, the face of Dr. Eggman appeared on the screen before her. His face looked almost like somebody had painted it red but Sally had to remember that he was housed inside a life-support mech that was mostly red in colour so that's why his face looked red. Somehow the red glow made Eggman look even uglier although as far as Sally was concerned, no colour in the world could make Eggman look any less ugly. She screwed her face up as Eggman began chortling at her.

"Hello Sally, are you comfortable at all?" sneered Dr. Eggman.

"Do I LOOK comfortable?!" snapped Sally, looking up at the lasers that were holding her firmly off the floor, "Nobody could possibly be comfortable in this position!"

"In other words "No I'm not"." sniffed Eggman mockingly, "Anyway, I bet you're wondering why I've asked Mecha Sonic to bring you here now aren't you?"

"You might say I wondered." sighed Sally, rolling her eyes.

"Well now you don't have to wonder anymore." purred Eggman sinisterly, a dark look in his spectacled eyes as he prepared to speak again, "If you're wondering, it has nothing to do with Port. He's still being fixed at the moment. And besides, I want to roboticize you so why would I ask Mecha Sonic to remove your attire?" he added, taking note of Sally's nude body, "No, this is for something else entirely. I know very well that you and Sonic have an…attraction to each other."

The tone of his voice as he delivered those words made Sally shudder uncomfortably. She didn't like where this was going at all and it made her want to get free of her binds and run away as fast as possible. But that couldn't happen so Sally had to keep listening and see if the conversation would get as bad as she was dreading it would.

"So I thought why not take advantage of that attraction you two have…by having the man of your dreams break you in two?" said Dr. Eggman darkly, "Yes Sally, as you've probably guessed, I'm going to make Mecha Sonic torture you. It'll be entertaining for me to watch Sonic the Hedgehog torture his own girlfriend and it'll make your last day as a Mobian all the more horrible! You'll be BEGGING for me to roboticize you so I can put you out of your misery once Mecha Sonic's finished with you! Bwah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Sally froze in utter horror. She couldn't breathe, she couldn't even feel her own heart pounding in fear. She felt numb all over. So numb in fact that she didn't even feel the tears coming to her eyes. She couldn't believe how sick and demented Dr. Eggman was being right now. He was going to have Mecha Sonic TORTURE her for his own amusement?! Sally began to struggle furiously in her binds, trying desperately to break free so she could save herself the worst torture session of her life.

"You can't do this Eggman, please, I beg of you! Don't do it!" cried Sally frantically between struggles, "You'll regret this, I promise you that you will! Don't do it, don't do it!"

"Mecha Sonic, torture her!" ordered Eggman, "But **don't** kill her! I

want her alive so she can be roboticized!"

"Why are you so damn evil Eggman?!" Sally screamed at the top of her voice.

"I do not have to explain myself to an impudent rodent like you." said Dr. Eggman coldly.

He remained silent but still had his trademark toothy grin on his face as Mecha Sonic strode forward with his hands crackling menacingly with brilliant but deadly blue electricity. Sally cringed in fright. Mecha Sonic was going to be very brutal in his torture, she just knew it. And the worst part was, it was Sonic himself doing this to her and he had no control over this robot body that he was trapped in. If Sonic ever got de-roboticized, he would never forgive himself for this horror. He would be torturing his own girlfriend and he was helpless to stop himself. Sally's eyes streamed with tears of fright as Mecha Sonic raised his hands and prepared to plant themselves on her body. The squirrel squirmed like a dog in a cage.

"No Sonic, please, no!" she whimpered, "Don't hurt me, please! You would never hurt me Sonic! You're not Eggman's mindless lackey! You're Sonic the Hedgehog, my hero and my boyfriend! You're the hero of Mobius! Please don't do this! You're not Eggman's minion! Fight his control! FIGHT IT!"

Her pleas were ultimately futile for Mecha Sonic didn't show a shred of emotion towards Sally. Sonic was not here. It was Mecha Sonic and he was programmed to blindly follow orders no matter what the order was. Sally gave up her pitiful struggling as Mecha Sonic approached her and places his hands on her sides, electricity crackling between his claws as they were placed on them. The squirrel screeched a blood-curdling howl of agony as Mecha Sonic let her have it with a terrible electrical shock that surged up her body, attacking every inch of her skin and fur and causing horrific pain that the squirrel would never be able to forget no matter how hard she tried. Sally was being brutally electrocuted but this torture hurt her in more ways than one. It was physical torture and also emotional torture. Sally was physically tortured by the electrical surge Mecha Sonic was giving her but the emotional torture came from the anguish Sally was feeling from being tortured so brutally,

emotionlessly and ruthlessly by the hero of Mobius himself. Eggman couldn't possibly have made it any worse than it was now. Sally screamed and howled in pain but Mecha Sonic didn't relent, he kept his hands on her sides and continued to electrocute her. Dr. Eggman watched the entire session with a mixture of sadistic pleasure and evil joy. Sally would be broken after this and then he'd have the pleasure of roboticizing her with no resistance. Truly this was the perfect way to end Sally's Mobian life in his eyes. She would be happy to be a robot so that she could forget all about her traumatizing experience as a prisoner of the Sentinel Blockade. And Eggman would be all too happy to grant her wish…

Back in the cell blockade, Bunnie was still trying to break her cell door down. She'd been pushing on the door as hard as she could for a good few minutes now and all she'd ended up doing is making her right arm and back ache from the pressure she'd been applying on the door. Bunnie came to the conclusion that pushing the door down wouldn't work so she decided to give up and try something else. First though she sat down against the wall of her cell and waited for her breath to come back to her. Pushing on something you can't move out of the way was hot, heavy work after all and Bunnie couldn't keep trying to break out while she was worn out. Luckily, Bunnie's tremendous stamina meant that she wasn't down on her bum resting for long. Bunnie considered it most fortuitous that she had good stamina for every minute that passed meant more time for Mecha Sonic to take Sally to Eggman and presumably do something terrible to her. Bunnie only rested for a couple of minutes and she was suddenly back on her feet in no time. Bunnie knew her strength wasn't enough for the door, so she instead decided to use something else.

"Alright little cell door…let's see ya'll fight against mah cannon…" said Bunnie, a devious, confident smile spreading out across her face.

Bunnie stood at the back of the cell so her cannon blast would have more time to build up to its full power. Pressing her back firmly against the wall, she pointed the cannon at the cell door and charged up a shot. She then closed her eyes and fired a terrific

cannon blast at the door. The blast punched into the door and tore it straight out of its sockets. The door was thrown straight across the room and crashing into another cell on the opposite side. Tails heard the commotion outside and he leaped up into the air in alarm. What was going on out there? Was somebody banging against the doors for no reason? He soon found out for Bunnie flew out of her cell, relieved to be free at last and she hovered down to Tails's cell and punched the keypad beside the door to pieces. With the keypad broken, there was nothing that could lock the door anymore. Bunnie slid her fingers in the gap between the door and wall and she pulled it open with all her might. She grunted loudly as she pulled the door open. Tails leaped up into the air with joy as he saw the beautiful Southern Belle pulling open his cell door. He hadn't expected this at all but he was by no means disappointed that this was how he was going to get out of his cell. He'd been panicking because he couldn't find a way out but now Bunnie had freed him, he didn't need to panic anymore.

"Yay! We're free!" squealed Tails delightedly, "Oh Bunnie, well done! How did you manage to escape your cell?"

"Let's just say Eggman needs to build a door that can withstand mah laser cannon." gloated Bunnie, "Now then Tails, we need to get goin'! Ah heard Mecha Sonic and Sally-girl talkin' together outside mah cell! Ah think Mecha Sonic's takin' Sally-girl to be tortured or somethin'!"

"I began dreading that thought too!" exclaimed Tails, "We need to find her and now! Come on, let's go!"

"Ah'm way ahead of ya sugah!" yelled Bunnie.

She flew down onto the floor and ran to the blockade entrance with Tails flying after her. Unfortunately just as it seemed things were looking up for the two…they didn't get very far. Bunnie and Tails screeched to a halt as a group of Robians suddenly leaped out of nowhere and blocked the entrance, standing before Bunnie and Tails menacingly. There were all the roboticized Royal Fighters from Team New Mobotropolis to Team Chun-Nan to Team Adabat and Team Nekronopolis and they even had Team Megapolis joining them too. Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx and Kiara the Cheetah were

amongst the roboticized victims too and they stood before Bunnie and Tails as Mecha Dark and Mecha Kiara. There was also Mecha Shadow and Mecha Rouge to boost up their numbers. Mecha Shadow looked the scariest of all the roboticized Mobians in the room right now and that might mostly be because of his prodigious power and the fact Shadow looked scary anyway so a Robian Shadow was bound to look equally as frightening. All the Mecha-Royal Fighters stood before Bunnie and Tails, their claws bared and their optics staring darkly at them. Bunnie and Tails stood back nervously as Mecha Matilda pointed at them.

"Did-you-real-ly-think-your-es-cape-would-be-that-easy?" she droned in a voice that somehow managed to make an emotional tone sounding almost like a sneer despite how emotionless the Robians were.

"It's all our friends!" shrieked Tails, "They must have been lying in wait for us!"

"Ah had a nasty feelin' our escape was too easy sugah…" muttered Bunnie, "Eggman ain't kiddin' when he says this place is inescapable. Ah think it might just be!"

"This-place-is-in-es-cape-able." droned Mecha Shadow confidently, "And-we-are-here-to-prove-that."

"The-mo-ment-you-broke-your-door-down-we-were-alert-ed-by-an-a-larm-sys-tem-that-our-mas-ter-in-stalled-to-en-sure-that-we-would-get-there-in-time-to-pre-vent-you-from-es-cap-ing." added Mecha Blaze, "Get-back-in-your-cells-and-make-this-easy-on-your-selves." she ordered menacingly.

"No chance of that!" growled Bunnie, "Ah'm not gettin' back in mah cell, no dang way! Ah'm gettin' outta here and ah'm gonna save Sally-girl from Mecha Sonic and then ah'm gonna help save Mobius from Eggman's tyranny!"

"Eggman's reign of terror is over! Stand aside and we won't have to hurt you!" yelled Tails bravely.

The Robians instead charged towards Bunnie and Tails, their

intentions nothing more than to beat them to a pulp and force them back into their cells. Bunnie and Tails reacted instantly and they charged towards the Robians. This was a battle that they had to win. Otherwise things would be getting much, MUCH worse for them and they couldn't afford that. Tails and Bunnie were frightened but they knew that they had to do this for their own good. Yelling loudly, the Rabbot and fox threw their first attacks at the Robian army…

Meanwhile on the Death Egg, a warp ring opened up in the Egg-Bunker section of the Death Egg. When the Death Egg had been built, the top of the ship had been built around the Egg-Bunker so when the ship took off, the Egg-Bunker was taken with it. That ended up being costly on Eggman's part though for Dr. Finitevus had managed to get onboard the Death Egg thanks to this. He'd been in the Egg-Bunker with Dr. Eggman on many occasions and thus, he could visualize the Egg-Bunker and warp onto the Death Egg with his golden warp rings. Finitevus had known the Egg-Bunker would be in the Death Egg thanks to the plans Fiona had stolen for him long ago. The plans clearly showed the Egg-Bunker being part of the Death Egg so he knew how he would get onto the Death Egg without having to try and visualize it without knowing what it's like on the inside. It was amazing how such a tiny detail would end up being so costly for Dr. Eggman right now. Had the Egg-Bunker not been on the Death Egg then Finitevus wouldn't be onboard right now.

Finitevus looked around cautiously to make sure he wasn't seen or anything. There was nobody around. Dr. Finitevus was all alone in this room. Finitevus screwed his face up, not at all pleased to be back in the Egg-Bunker for he considered it to be a hideous environment and a terrible environment for science. He considered *The Nefarious* a much better place to be based in. But Finitevus didn't keep his disgust up for long for he knew he wouldn't see it for much longer. He'd destroy this room along with the rest of the Death Egg when he set the ship to blow. Finitevus could already see the explosion tearing its way through the Death Egg and ripping it apart from the inside out. Finitevus looked into his cloak pocket to have another glance at the bombs he had taken with him to blow up the

Death Egg. He had four bombs the size of a rugby ball, all steel-cased and extremely powerful. One bomb could blow up half the Death Egg alone so four would be more than enough to destroy it. But Finitevus wasn't going to destroy it yet. He had other things to do. Since the coast was clear, Finitevus ran over to a nearby elevator and he opened it up. The doors slid open and Finitevus walked inside. The elevator closed and it took him down deeper into the Death Egg. Finitevus had remembered how he needed to retrieve the Master Emerald from Dr. Eggman. He had come to Angel Island hoping to steal it with Team Diamond helping him but instead, Team Diamond had failed and Dr. Eggman had gotten away with the Master Emerald. Finitevus had managed to get the Chaos Emeralds at least, meaning that with no Chaos Emeralds of any kind to keep the island afloat, Angel Island had fallen to the ground and broken to pieces. Finitevus didn't want the Master Emerald remaining in Eggman's care since Eggman didn't really need it (or at least in his eyes he didn't). He needed it more than Eggman did and he was going to take care of that now. The elevator finished descending down into the Death Egg and Finitevus exited the elevator the moment the doors opened up. The evil albino echidna grinned happily at what he had stepped into. He was in the Death Egg's power core chamber. The power core chamber was huge and it was holding the Master Emerald in the centre of the room with two metallic structures holding it in place. Noticeably, the Master Emerald's energy wasn't really feeding into the Death Egg or anything, it was just standing there and looking grand. The power core chamber was unguarded. Finitevus was baffled at this but he squared his shoulders casually and strolled up to the Master Emerald.

"All too easy…" he mused to himself, "And now the Master Emerald ends up in my care…ha, ha, ha…with your help Master Emerald, Operation: Enerjak Reborn will not fail…"

Finitevus rubbed his hands together greedily and then summoned a warp ring to his hand. He flicked it over his shoulder and the caped scientist grabbed the Master Emerald as a huge portal opened up in the middle of the warp ring. Finitevus strained as he picked up the Master Emerald and pushed it through the warp ring. He had warped it from the Death Egg and into the cargo hold of *The*

Nefarious . He then proceeded to close up the warp ring behind him, preventing any chance of the Master Emerald returning to the Death Egg. Finitevus now had all the Chaos Emeralds on Mobius. All eight currently existing Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald. His plan was on the verge of beginning now and he hadn't even started it yet. Grinning excitedly, Finitevus then reached into his cape and took out the bombs. The bombs had strong magnets on them so they could attach to the metal surface of the Death Egg's interior. Finitevus attached all four bombs to where the Master Emerald had been moments before. Satisfied, he switched them on so that once he got back on *The Nefarious* , he could press the detonator button he had back on the ship and set them off. The bombs weren't timed or anything, giving Finitevus all the time in the world to activate them. Now the bombs were set and ready to explode, Finitevus had one more thing to do. He warped himself back up into the Egg-Bunker to save himself an unnecessary elevator ride since he didn't need one again. The insidious scientist stepped out of his warp ring and put it back onto his arm, fuming as he found himself in the Egg-Bunker once again. But he had every reason to be here right now, it was for the next part of this plan. Finitevus ran over to the main computer of the Egg-Bunker and he began taping on the keys.

"Now then to set the World Roboticizer in reverse…" he mused to himself, "This should be a snap. Ha, ha, ha…Eggman won't know what's hit him…"

The cloaked villain glanced at the screen as he began to access the Death Egg's hard drives and began searching for the World Roboticizer's programming. All he had to do was change the programming to de-roboticize and then he could lure the Death Egg into space and have it fire down onto Mobius. But then Finitevus had a terrible thought. What if Dr. Eggman used a smaller wave so he would only roboticize *The Nefarious* and his armada if he hit it? He needed the big colossal wave that Eggman had used to roboticize Mobius in order to de-roboticize the entire world. Maybe he could make sure that Eggman used the right size of wave. Finitevus could see to it that when Eggman fired the roboticizer wave, it would be the size he needed it to be in order to de-roboticize the entire planet. Finitevus began working away as fast as he could on the computer, his fingers dancing around the keyboard as if his hands were doing

some kind of tap dance from one key to another. His scientific and very prodigious brain was working at maximum speed and deciphering the right actions that Finitevus needed to take in order to get the setting she needed. It surprised the nefarious doctor that he could understand human science so well. It was so very similar to his own scientific skills. Maybe human science and Mobians science were very similar if not the same. Finitevus sure found himself being interested in studying human science if he ever got the chance. But not right now since he was focusing on getting rid of this one human now and he doubted that Mobius would receive another human visitor after Eggman. Shaking his head, Finitevus focused back onto his work. He'd nearly done with his settings. He'd set the roboticizer in reverse and he was now setting the wave at the right size. It was at the worldwide size of wave at the moment but Finitevus was setting the wave so that it couldn't change size no matter what. He was deleting certain files that made the action possible. After doing that, the wave would be stuck at the one size it was on and never be able to alter again. Finitevus really was pleased to see that everything was going so well for him so far. Dr. Eggman was as good as dead now. Finitevus finished what he was doing and he grinned like a fiend to himself.

"That's that done. Now Eggman's precious Death Egg will undo everything he built it to do and then go up in flames…" purred Finitevus darkly.

He turned away from the computer…and found himself staring directly into the eyes of Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally! They were on patrol in the Death Egg to make sure there were no security breaches and they had come up into the Egg-Bunker to see if everything was alright. To their surprise, Dr. Finitevus was here in the Egg-Bunker and presumably snooping around in a place where he didn't belong. Metal Sonic had his claws bared and Mecha Sally deployed her arm blades. The two were ready to dissect Dr. Finitevus piece by piece just for trespassing here. Finitevus showed no signs of being frightened by the two robots. His face remained straight as the two prepared to attack him.

"Oh dear, I'm sorry. Did I miss my roboticization appointment?" said Finitevus innocently, putting on the most obviously fake sweet voice

ever put on by anybody, "I guess I should allow myself to be taken to Dr. Eggman to be roboticized…"

He then proceeded to lunge at the two robots with a blinding speed and fury beyond anything remotely possibly for any Mobian. Finitevus had no desire to be taken alive by the two robots and he would happily fight them to the death if he had to. Like Bunnie and Tails, Finitevus was now fighting for his life and it was going to be a tough fight indeed…

The escape from the Sentinel Blockade isn't going awfully well...will the heroes win? Or are they just delaying the inevitable?

Tune into the next chapter as we set up the final stage for Chapter 200 next time with Eggman Empire Part 4...

As for you R4L1K, I don't know how the private messaging thing works so I'm answering your question here. Who'd win between Sonic and Mecha Sonic? Nobody, because it can't happen. Mecha Sonic is a roboticized Sonic so how can Sonic fight Mecha Sonic since in a way, he IS Mecha Sonic?

Eggman Empire Part 4

Story 199: Eggman Empire Part 4: End of the Empire

It is a common occurrence in life for somebody to "have the time of their life". Many people would say "I've had the time of my life" after experiencing something so magical, so amazing and so unforgettable that it truly does feel like the time of their life in their eyes.

Dr. Ivo "Eggman" Robotnik, enemy of Mobius and human exile was one of those people. He was definitely having what many would consider to be the "time of his life". And given the current events that had been unfolding as time went by, it wasn't hard to see why he was having the time of his life. He'd managed to build himself the ultimate weapon, the Death Egg after a long hard month of planning and construction work and thanks to building fake refuelling stations to slow the Royal Fighters down, he'd launched it without them trying to stop him from doing so. Once the Death Egg had launched, he'd taken it up into space and proceeded to do the unthinkable… roboticize all of Mobius. Since he'd done it once before, Sonic the Hedgehog and friends didn't suspect that he would do it again. A costly oversight on their part indeed. Eggman had initially missed the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters but he'd quickly remedied that by roboticizing them one by one with his portable roboticizer robot Port Mk III. He sadly failed to roboticize all of them though, Silver the Hedgehog had broken Port before he could roboticize Sally Acorn, Tails the Fox and Bunnie Rabbot so there were only three Mobians left. But Eggman didn't need to worry about that at all. He'd put Sally, Bunnie and Tails into the Sentinel Blockade, a prison that was solely built for the purpose of holding any Mobians in case he failed to roboticize them and needed to contain them for the time being. The prison was said to be inescapable and Eggman was very confident in that belief which is why he showed no concerns for Sally, Bunnie or Tails escaping from the prison.

And as of this moment, he was having fun with one of his prisoners and that was Queen Sally Acorn herself. Because he had Mecha

Sonic on his side once again, he wanted to take advantage of that little turnabout by having Mecha Sonic strip Sally completely nude and then torture her. Sally was hanging off the floor by metal spheres clamped around her wrists and held aloft by laser generators in the ceiling. Now Mecha Sonic had his hands on Sally's sides and he was electrocuting her as violently as he possibly could. Eggman had been marvelling in the time he'd spent watching Sally get electrocuted and hearing her scream in agony. This was his idea of fun and he was enjoying every minute of it. He could watch this all day if he wanted to but he knew it had to end soon. He wanted to roboticize Sally so he didn't want Mecha Sonic to kill her, just torture her very badly. Still, this bit of horror was very enjoyable for him. Eggman had been savouring every moment of his worldwide victory and he hoped that it would never end. He'd finally conquered Mobius, he'd won the war that he'd been fighting for two years going on three now and most of all, nobody in the world had a chance against him. Soon after the last three Mobians were made part of his Robian army, he would then take the Death Egg to his home planet, Earth, and then roboticize that world too. Mobius and Earth would be the perfect robot paradises for him to rule over. He'd made it his life's ambition to prove that robots were superior to people and Mobius and Earth would be his two examples. And no matter what happened now, nobody would be able to undo his hard work. The Death Egg truly was his greatest weapon ever and it had given him the ultimate victory…

Eggman laughed delightedly as Mecha Sonic gave Sally another painful round of electrocution. Eggman himself was inside the Death Egg and watching the whole thing via a big computer monitor in the main control room. It was like being at a cinema for Eggman only there was one big seat for him to sit him and only he was watching. All the worker robots were just keeping the ship running and ready for when it took off again. As for the torture session, Mecha Sonic had placed one hand on Sally's belly and another on her back this time, giving Sally an excruciating amount of pain on both front and back. Sally howled even louder in pain as Mecha Sonic let her have it, not once relenting or showing any signs of mercy. The squirrel writhed around as her body was attacked by the electricity and every surge that went up and down her body made the pain worse and worse. If Sonic was himself now, he'd likely be crying at what

Eggman had forced him to do. Mecha Sonic kept up the horrible torture for a couple of minutes before stopping and giving Sally a moment to catch her breath. The squirrel's head flopped down, her eyes streaming with tears of pain and anguish and her mouth dropped open as he gasped and panted for breath. Every pause between shocks was relief for her but she knew that it would continue again shortly so she couldn't enjoy the relief of not being shocked for long. However, this could be the end of the torture for Mecha Sonic suddenly stared at Sally's pained body and started analyzing her. He ran a quick scan over Sally's body and came to a quick conclusion, a conclusion that Eggman was already expecting.

"Read-ings-in-di-cate-that-the-wo-man-is-in-crit-i-cal-con-dit-ion." reported Mecha Sonic, "Heart-beat-sig-na-ture-is-very-weak. Not-rec-om-men-ded-to-con-tin-ue-tor-tur-ing-sess-ion-un-less-you-want-the-squirrel-wo-man-dead-Doc-tor-Egg-man."

"Yes…please…no…more…" croaked Sally weakly, "Please… don't…shock…me….again…"

She followed her sentence with a violent, throaty cough that made it sound like she was trying to hack her own lungs up. Dr. Eggman could see that Sally was clinging onto whatever life she had left and he didn't want to kill Sally so he agreed with Mecha Sonic that it was best not to give her another round. As the saying goes "All good things must come to an end". It was fun while it lasted as far as Eggman was concerned. Shrugging the chunky metal shoulders of his mech suit, Eggman sighed and gave his verdict.

"I agree Mecha Sonic, I think Sally's had enough now." he said casually, "Just leave her hanging around if you will." he added with a childish snicker.

Making puns can sometimes make people groan but using a pun to make fun of somebody's current position made it even worse. Sally mustered up whatever strength she had left in her body to glare at Eggman for his bad joke. Even then, it took great effort to make the muscles in her face perform such a function. Eggman ignored her.

"Look at you now Sally, so broken and so defeated…and all it took was your own boyfriend being turned into a robot and made to

torture you under my own orders." crooned Eggman, "How does it feel?"

Sally refused to answer the question. She wanted to show Eggman that she still wasn't quite broken yet even though she felt that way. She just glared at Eggman as if trying to say everything she could to him in one facial expression. That face she had now clearly said "Get stuffed" to him. Eggman was a little disappointed that the tortured queen wasn't answering him but he didn't let it bother him.

"I bet it feels awful, you don't need to answer." he said casually, "Now then, you'll stay as you are until Port Mk III is fixed. Then you will be the first out of the three of you to be roboticized. You know since there's a while left until Port Mk III is fixed, maybe I could let Mecha Sonic torture Tails and Bunnie too…"

That little suggestion made Sally gasp in horror. As if making Sonic torture her was bad enough, he was suggesting the possibility of letting him torture Tails and Bunnie too?! Sally knew Eggman was sick and twisted but she had no idea the rotund scientist was THAT demented!

"N-no…please…don't…hurt them…!" pleaded Sally, "You've… done….enough...please…leave…them…alone!"

"They're my prisoners along with you Sally so I decide what I do with them." growled Eggman menacingly, "And I say…"

His voice was rudely cut off by a loud blaring alarm that made him leap about a foot out of his seat in surprise. Sally began to wonder what was happening. Had the twin-tailed fox cub and the cyborg rabbit broken out of their cells? The squirrel queen would soon find out for Eggman pressed a button on the side of his chair and barked furiously.

"What was that alarm about?!" he demanded.

"We have an intruder in the top floor of the Death Egg." reported an Egg-Pawn who was on duty at one of the computer monitors, "Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally are engaging the intruder now."

"I'll be up there to deal with it immediately!" barked Dr. Eggman, "So sorry Sally, it appears my ship has an intruder. I'll be back soon, don't worry."

Sally just frowned. The alarm wasn't about Tails and Bunnie escaping after all. But then she began to wonder. How could there be an intruder onboard the ship if all of Mobius except her, Tails and Bunnie was roboticized? Maybe Tails and Bunnie HAD escaped their cells and were on the Death Egg right now? But the Egg-Pawn had said intruder, NOT intruders so there could only be one intruder in there. Who was it? And who could it be? Maybe somebody else had avoided being roboticized after all? That gave Sally some hope. MaybeMobius would be saved after all. Sally watched as the screen in front of her went static and then switched off. It ascended back up into the ceiling, leaving Sally alone with her roboticized boyfriend and unable to do anything about her current situation. Mecha Sonic stood beside Sally and he placed his metal claws over the heart side of her chest.

"Do-not-try-any-thing-fool-ish-or-I-shall-tear-out-your-heart. Do-you-com-pre-hend?" he droned menacingly.

"Sonic…I can't…do…anything…about…my current…situation…" grunted Sally "I'm…too…weak…to…do…anything…"

She coughed again. The torture had been so horrible and so life-draining that just talking was a challenge for her now. Mecha Sonic believed Sally for his scans registered that Sally was indeed very weak. He had no reason to worry about her. But just for the fun of it, he placed his claws on Sally's belly and slashed it, leaving four bloody cuts across her belly. Sally cried out in pain and tried to hold it in as the cuts began to sting. It looked like somebody had painted four blood-red stripes across her stomach only it was a lot more painful and unpleasant than that. Sally allowed her head to droop down and stare at the floor. There was no reason to keep it up any longer. She closed her eyes and began praying that the Death Egg's mysterious intruder would save her and all of Mobius. The intruder on the Death Egg was literally Mobius's only hope now…

…but if Sally knew who the intruder really was, she'd really doubt if this Mobian being her only hope was a good thing or not. The intruder was in fact Dr. Finitevus, Knuckles's treacherous uncle and a scheming chessmaster of a villain who's scientific knowledge and insane battle prowess made him one of Sonic's deadliest enemies to date. Dr. Finitevus had been plotting to kill Dr. Eggman for a long time now and after gathering together his own army of mercenaries known as "The Dark Armada", the albino echidna had snuck aboard the Death Egg to take care of Dr. Eggman at long last. He'd planted bombs into the Death Egg and had set Dr. Eggman's World Roboticizer in reverse so that when Eggman fired it again, it would de-roboticize all of Mobius and return it to normal, just right for Finitevus's perfect vision for Mobius. He couldn't execute his grand plan Operation: Enerjak Reborn if Eggman was in charge so he had to go. But unfortunately for the caped villain, Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally had picked the rather inconvenient moment to show up and make his escape all the more difficult. They were two of Eggman's strongest enemies and even though Finitevus could easily best Sonic and Sally in a fight, he knew that these two robots would give him a hard time. Another worrying factor was stamina. Finitevus had good stamina but Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally would be able to last longer than him easily. Robots don't get tired so Finitevus knew he couldn't let this go on for too long. If it did, Finitevus would likely tire out and Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally would take him down. So Finitevus was focused solely on one thing…make it out alive in this battle.

Finitevus struck the first blow, catching Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally completely off guard with a surprising agility that they assumed only a machine could ever manage successfully. He grabbed both robots by their neck sockets and he tossed him across the room with a strength that couldn't be natural for a Mobian. That's because Finitevus wasn't all natural. He'd aggrandized himself with Chaos Energy and strict training over the years, hench why he could take on the Royal Fighters without breaking much of a sweat. They had been getting wise to his tactics though and Finitevus had ended up getting hit more often but Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally had never met Finitevus before so they had no idea what they were up against. Finitevus had fought against both Sonic and Sally so he was already familiar with his opponents. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally both

crashed into the wall after being thrown into it by Finitevus. They were back on their feet no sooner had they fallen down to the floor and the two robot copies braced themselves for another attack. Finitevus lunged at Metal Sonic once again at an alarming speed. Despite not being in a battle for a long time, Finitevus had been training vigorously in his spare time so he was still the deadly fighter he always was. The albino scientist grabbed Metal Sonic in a chokehold and the robot Sonic clone had to fight hard against Finitevus to keep his head from being torn out of its socket. Mecha Sally lunged at Finitevus with her energy blades but Finitevus spun around and held Metal Sonic in place, leaving him in the line of the robot squirrel's attack. Metal Sonic however activated the defence barriers in his arms and blocked Mecha Sally's attack, saving his female accomplice from chopping him up by accident. Furious that his plan didn't work, the warp-ring wielding echidna kicked Metal Sonic directly into Mecha Sally, the metal robot knocking Mecha Sally off her feet and slamming her down against the floor. Metal Sonic stood back up and he spun around to face Finitevus. He spin-dashed Finitevus and slammed him against the wall. The golden-eyed menace coughed loudly as he was slammed but he didn't take very long to recover. Aside from rubbing his stomach better and fighting off the pain, he was back on his feet in no time and he put his hands on Metal Sonic's shoulders. Pushing himself up into the air with his feet, he flipped over Metal Sonic's head whilst still holding his shoulders and as he landed behind Metal Sonic, he picked him up and through him across the room, his muscles working effortlessly against the weight of his opponent as he performed that motion. Metal Sonic hurled into the main computer and he crashed into the screen, the metal marauder making a mechanical noise of pain as he hit the screen. A web of cracks spread across the screen, a sign of just how hard Metal Sonic was. The cracks became so bad that the screen shattered to pieces. Finitevus could imagine Eggman wouldn't be using that anymore. Mecha Sally crept up behind Finitevus and she lunged at him with her energy blades. Finitevus spun around and dodged the attack. He was totally confident in this battle, not the least bit worried or scared. He could match Sonic's entire team so this was nothing to him. After dodging the attack, he manoeuvred himself behind Mecha Sally and he grabbed her by the arms. He yanked on her arms, pulling her towards himself and Finitevus slammed his foot into

Mecha Sally's back. The Chaos Energy in his body cushioned much of the pain he should have been feeling from kicking so vigorously against solid metal. The kick threw Mecha Sally forward but her arms didn't tear out of their sockets. Finitevus would succeed if he kept at it though.

"Let's see how useful you are with no arms…" purred Finitevus sinisterly.

He kicked against Mecha Sally again, the robot Sally clone's optics screwing up in pain as her arms were yanked backwards and her body was kicked forwards. But Finitevus didn't get the chance to render Mecha Sally with no arms for Metal Sonic rushed in and spin-dashed Finitevus in the side, throwing him across the room and into a control panel. Finitevus took a moment out of the battle to ease the pain in his body that had flared up from the impact and he pulled himself back onto his feet. Metal Sonic ran towards Finitevus but the echidna moved out of the way, leaving Metal Sonic to crash into the control panel. Finitevus stood behind Metal Sonic and pressed his hand against Metal Sonic's head. He slammed it against the control panel as hard as he possibly could, bending Metal Sonic's nose in the impact so now Metal Sonic looked like his nose had been flattened against his face with a sledgehammer. Metal Sonic pushed Finitevus away and he spun around on his heel hoping to claw him across the face. Finitevus dodged and he used a warp ring to send Metal Sonic flying directly into Mecha Sally. The two robots were sent sprawling across the floor. Finitevus was about to use a warp ring to get away until suddenly, the door opened up and in burst Dr. Eggman, all his weapons primed and ready to fire. He was not at all pleased to see he had an intruder onboard his Death Egg and he was even less pleased to see that it was Dr. Finitevus who was the intruder. He hadn't seen Dr. Finitevus since the Day of Solaris and he hoped that he would do again since he still owed Finitevus that punishment for unleashing Mephiles on the world and nearly dooming it as a result. Finitevus glowered at Dr. Eggman. He'd hoped dearly that Eggman wouldn't show up and make things harder for him. Just his bad luck he supposed.

"Dr. Finitevus?!" blurted Dr. Eggman, "What in the name of Robotropolis?! How did YOU manage to avoid being roboticized?!"

"You mind your own business." snapped Finitevus, "A good villain doesn't reveal his secrets. And if you don't mind, I was just leaving."

"You're not going anywhere!" growled Dr. Eggman, keeping his weapons handy for in case Finitevus did anything that looked like an attempt to escape, "You're trespassing in my ship and you must be punished for it! I'm going to beat you black and blue and then I'm going to roboticize you! That'll more than make-up for you dodging your punishment I was going to give you for unleashing Mephiles on the world!"

"You'll have to catch me first." sneered Finitevus.

Finitevus was just about to summon a warp ring until Dr. Eggman suddenly launched a missile at him and the albino echidna was forced to run for it before the missile punched into the ground. He was amazed he actually managed to dodge the missile as he stared incredulously at the charred spot on the ground where the missile had once been. Finitevus then realized he now had a new problem. Dr. Eggman was loaded with weaponry. Not that that was a problem since he could dodge them all with ease. But the problem was if he tried to open up a warp ring. Eggman could fire at him and since he was going to warp back onto *The Nefarious* , he could potentially do terrible damage to the ship and maybe hurt or kill one of his Dark Armada members. Finitevus just couldn't use a warp ring with Eggman shooting at him like this. He had to distract him and he had to do it fast. Finitevus ran towards Eggman and he prepared to attack as the mad scientist began shooting at him with blazing Gatling guns that spat out bullets by the hundreds at him…

Finitevus wasn't the only one who was fighting for his life against a bunch of killer robots.

The Sentinel Blockade's two other inmates Tails the Fox and Bunnie Rabbot had broken out of their cells thanks to Bunnie's powerful weaponry but it turned out that their escape had been anticipated. An alarm system had been installed in the prison so that once the cell doors were broken down, the Robians would be alerted immediately and they could all come over to the prison and stop

anybody from escaping. It had been very clever of Dr. Eggman to install that little contingency plan and it was certainly working so far. Bunnie and Tails had no choice but to fight off their roboticized fiends if they had any chance whatsoever of getting out of the Sentinel Blockade alive. It was going to be a tough one for Tails and Bunnie for they were being forced to fight their own friends. And it wasn't just the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters who were fighting against Tails and Bunnie. There were all the other Royal Fighter teams as well as Mecha Shadow and Mecha Rouge to deal with too. This was a battle that Tails and Bunnie were very sure that they couldn't possibly win and yet they knew better than to give up since there was much at stake such as their lives and Mobius's only hope for being restored to normal. Give up now and they lose everything and Tails and Bunnie couldn't possibly let that happen…

So despite knowing they couldn't possibly win this battle, Tails and Bunnie were in combat with the Robian army that blocked their only path to freedom. Tails made doubly sure that he wasn't against Mecha Cosmo or Mecha Sora. They were the last Robians he wanted to fight since he couldn't bear to fight the two most special girls in his life again. But in all honesty, none of the other Robians Tails could fight instead were really that much better than fighting Mecha Cosmo and Mecha Sora. After all, Cosmo and Sora weren't exactly the strongest Mobians around. If anything, Tails was just picking himself far worse opponents. And one of those opponents was Mecha Amy. Amy had been absent in the attempt to stop the Death Egg thanks to a wounded shoulder and thus was the first New Mobotropolis Royal Fighter to be roboticized. She had been brought here to join the rest of her roboticized friends in the battle to keep Tails and Bunnie imprisoned. Tails screamed in terror as Mecha Amy's metallic Piko-Piko hammer swung through the air and threatened to smash him to pieces. The frightened fox narrowly managed to dodge her attack by weaving to the side. Mecha Amy ended up swinging her hammer down into the floor, leaving a huge dent in it. Tails couldn't bear to imagine what it would be like if that had been his head instead of the floor. He was thankful that it hadn't been that instead. Tails swiped his tails at Mecha Amy, walloping the Robian hedgehog in the head and knocking her onto her side. At least Amy wasn't that strong when she didn't have her hammer on her. But then a much stronger opponent came in to attack Tails. The

fox screamed as Mecha Rouge charged up from the ground and flew straight into him, knocking him down onto the floor vigorously. Tails began to wonder if he'd hit the floor harder than he thought he did as his body began to flare with pain. Fighting the pain in his body and gritting his teeth, Tails forced himself back onto his feet and he jumped out of the way as Mecha Rouge flew down towards him in a screw-kick attack. Her attack left another massive dent in the floor that looked like somebody had just tried to punch that particular piece of the floor in on itself. Once again, Tails was relieved that it was the floor instead of him that got the attack.

"Man, I'd be one sorry mess on the floor if those attacks got me!" shrieked Tails, "I'd better be extra careful or I will be toast!"

He then turned his head to one side and watched as Bunnie got into a wrestling match with Mecha Knuckles. The Rabbot's head was raining with sweat and her teeth were clenched so hard that Tails was amazed they were still intact. They must surely be coming close to cracking by now! Bunnie was finding Mecha Knuckles surprisingly difficult to deal with. She knew Knuckles was strong but she didn't think he was THAT strong. But this was a roboticized Knuckles so he was likely going to be stronger than the original Knuckles. Bunnie pushed back on Mecha Knuckles as hard as she could, grunting heavily with effort. She was making her throat hoarse as she growled but she still pressed on.

"Grrr…ya'll…always…wanted to…have a strength…test…with me sugah…!" she grunted with the huge amount of effort she was putting into her push, "Well…now…let's see…who's REALLY…the strongest…out of us!"

Then suddenly, Bunnie swung her arms up and threw Mecha Knuckles's arms up into the air. This gave her the perfect opportunity to slug him in the gut with her metal arm while Mecha Knuckles's arms were out of the way. Mecha Knuckles doubled over in pain, his optics a tiny dot of surprise swimming in the black of his visor as he was punched. He was amazed how much strength Bunnie had despite being only partially a robot. Bunnie then drew her metal arm backwards and she swung it straight up into Mecha Knuckles's chin, throwing his head backwards and nearly taking it clean off his body. That made Bunnie worry for a moment since she

didn't want to do that. That would kill Knuckles for good if she took his head off. But to her relief, Mecha Knuckles's head held. She didn't give him a chance to retaliate though. Bunnie drew her arm back and punched Mecha Knuckles in the gut as hard as she could. The punch was like throwing a rock at somebody's belly only much harder. Mecha Knuckles was thrown across the room by the punch and he ended up crashing into a door, causing it to buckle over and underneath him and tear straight off its hinges. Both Mecha Knuckles and the door fell backwards into the cell. Unfortunately for Bunnie, that ended up giving the Robians a hand. Mecha Matilda ran into the cell and picked up the broken down door from Mecha Knuckles's laid down body and she ran towards Bunnie with it. Bunnie frantically deployed her arm cannon but she was too late to shoot the door out of Mecha Matilda's hands. Mecha Matilda threw it at Bunnie and the Rabbot had to jump out of the way at a speed she didn't think she was capable of until now. She was a little too slow though. The door slammed against her legs just as her body sailed out of the door's way. This threw Bunnie grossly off balance and sent her skidding across the floor like a skater that's fallen onto the ice. Tails put his hands to his face in shock and he flew down beside Bunnie to see if she was alright. Bunnie was mostly unhurt. Even her legs didn't really hurt all that much thanks to them being robotic although Bunnie still felt the impact of the door from when it had hit her.

"You OK Bunnie? Can you stand up?" asked Tails worriedly.

"Ah'm fine, ah can stand sugah." said Bunnie kindly, "That might dang hurt that did! Could' a been worse ah suppose…" she murmured as she imagined what it would have been like if she'd been hit be the door while her legs were organic.

"You would likely have had your legs broken." said Tails, cringing in disgust over the horrible thought, "It's a good thing you're OK Bunnie. I won't be able to manage against all the Robians without you."

"Ah know little guy, ya'll wouldn't have a ghost of a chance against these critters." agreed Bunnie, hoping that she didn't offend Tails by saying that, "It would be like trying to wrangle a whole herd of cows with one lasso. Impossible to do and very dangerous…"

Tails knew exactly what Bunnie meant. Although in this situation, Tails thought he'd rather take the cows. The Robians all surrounded Tails and Bunnie and they began to close in on them, rounding the two together like sheep in a pen. Tails and Bunnie got up onto their feet and prepared to fight again. They knew it was suicide but they were going to do whatever it took to get away from the group. Mecha Shadow stood forward, his dark and evil looking optics glowering ominously at the two Mobians and his metal claws bared and ready to slaughter them.

"Stand-down-now." he droned in his dark, robotical voice, "Or-suff-er-the-con-se-quen-ces."

"We've worked too hard to escape sugah and we're not having ya'll undermine our efforts like this!" barked Bunnie furiously.

"We're going to save you all from being robots whether you like it or not!" screeched Tails determinedly.

He and Bunnie both flew up into the air and out of the ring of Robians that rounded them up. The Robians watched as their prey escaped their grasp and flew over them, heading towards the blockade exit. They very nearly made it but Mecha Shadow ended up teleporting directly in front of the entrance and he threw a bunch of Chaos Spears at Bunnie and Tails to make them stay back. The two Mobians flew away, dodging the Chaos Spears frantically as they came flying towards them. Bunnie deployed her force field generator and she turned around and activated it. The pink barrier that her arm emitted around her deflected all of Mecha Shadow's Chaos Spears. Delighted, Bunnie started flying towards the entrance again. Just through the door and she and Tails would be free at last. But just as Bunnie flew towards the entrance, Mecha Shadow spin-dashed straight up into her. The barrier protected Bunnie from the attack but Mecha Shadow's attack was so vigorous that the force of the attack caused Bunnie to shoot straight up into the ceiling. The barrier cushioned the impact for her but it caused a huge dent to form in the ceiling. The dent was so deep that you could fill it up with ten inches of dirt and make it into a flower bed. Bunnie switched off her force field generator and she bounded off the ceiling, flying down towards Mecha Shadow. Mecha Shadow prepared to attack but because he was looking directly up at Bunnie, he failed to notice that

Tails was coming towards him. The fox flew straight into his mid-section and he slammed both feet into it. Mecha Shadow buckled over from the impact and he was whisked off his feet. Tails punched the air triumphantly, pleased and also amazed that he'd even succeeded in taking down Mecha Shadow in the first place. But his triumph was short-lived for the last two Robians he wanted to fight piled on him and pinned him down. Mecha Cosmo and Mecha Sora held Tails's arms out and they held them down with one leg each. Their other legs pinned him down by his back. Tails squirmed frantically in their grasp as Bunnie flew towards the entrance.

"Urgh! Let me go Cosmo and Sora!" cried Tails desperately, trying to get free but to no avail, "Let go of me! Bunnie help!"

Bunnie stopped dead in her tracks and she flew back towards Tails to help him out. She landed in front of the fox and she grabbed Mecha Cosmo by the arm. She hoisted Mecha Cosmo off of Tails and casually tossed her aside. Mecha Sora attempted to attack Bunnie but Bunnie delivered a callous roundhouse kick to the gut that threw her into a cell door. The cell door actually held unlike when Mecha Knuckles had crashed into one earlier although Mecha Sora did leave a noticeable dent in it. Tails got back to his feet but then he and Bunnie saw that they had something else to deal with now. Mecha Ruben had come up towards them and he had his hands aimed at them, ready to drench them with water. Bunnie was very frightened. Her robotic limbs weren't waterproof. If Ruben squirted her, her robot parts would malfunction and she'd likely be killed when they exploded. Mecha Ruben was the one Robian she couldn't get into a battle with. She deployed her force field generator quickly as Mecha Ruben squirted water at her. The water hit the barrier but did no harm to the Rabbot. But Bunnie knew she couldn't keep this up forever. Prolonged use of her robot parts tired her out and if she kept her force field generator up for too long, she would weaken and shut it off, leaving herself vulnerable to Mecha Ruben's water. But she wouldn't have to worry about that for Tails flew towards Mecha Ruben and booted him in the head, knocking him over and saving Bunnie an inevitable drenching. Bunnie once again made it for the entrance But then suddenly she was taken off her feet by something. Mecha Scott had fired an energy spear at her and it had knocked her down onto her stomach. Bunnie picked

herself up and deployed her arm cannon. Mecha Scott and Mecha Jessica shot at Bunnie but Bunnie blasted their shots with her own cannon blasts. But as she fired, Bunnie could feel herself panting and sweating. She was wearing out. She needed a moment to rest. Bunnie fired a shot at the floor just before Scott and Jessica's feet and sent them flying through the air and then she dropped down on one knee, gasping for breath.

"Gasp…Tails, ah'm beginning to wear down!" panted Bunnie, "Please…cover for me…while ah catch mah breath!"

"I'll protect you as best as I can Bunnie!" yelled Tails.

The fox knew that on his own he would be hopeless but he couldn't make Bunnie go on and on otherwise she would pass out from over-use. Gulping in fear but putting on a brave face, Tails flew towards the Robian army and prepared to fight again. He hoped dearly that he would make it out alive as he tried to keep Bunnie safe until she recovered…

Meanwhile, up in the Death Egg, Dr. Finitevus was still fighting for his life against Dr. Eggman, Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally. The battle with Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally had been no problem so far but Eggman and his multiple weaponry just complicated things further. Finitevus wasn't used to fighting against multiple opponents WHILE being shot at in the midst of the battle at the same time. In a fist fight he was just fine but he couldn't really throw punches at Metal Sonic or Mecha Sally while Eggman was shooting at him too. One example came just a couple of minutes ago when Finitevus cart wheeled across the room and threw a punch at Metal Sonic but Dr. Eggman had aimed his Gatling guns at Finitevus and started shooting at him, forcing the echidna to back away and take over before he was hit. Eggman very nearly got him but Finitevus had managed to dodge all the bullets. The scientist knew that he couldn't chance another moment of dodging rapid fire bullets though, his luck would run out eventually and he was not at all interested in being killed right about now. He'd been working too hard and too long on his plans and recruiting the Dark Armada. Dr. Eggman was not about to undermine all of that for him now.

Eggman took aim at Finitevus, the crippled scientist preparing to take his head off with a missile but Finitevus summoned one of his warp rings to his hands and he used it to warp himself behind Dr. Eggman. He reappeared behind Dr. Eggman and he dropkicked the maniacal, rotund villain in the back. The life support mech that housed Eggman crashed down heavily onto the floor. Finitevus bounded off of Eggman and kicked his way through Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally as they tried to aid their master. Eggman picked himself up and he deployed his Gatling guns, pointing them directly at the caped echidna. Finitevus dived behind a computer monitor as a shower of bullets came hammering his way and he began thinking fast. He couldn't warp away from the battle in fear of Eggman shooting at the warp ring and damaging *The Nefarious* in the process. But he could use his warp rings in an entirely different way. Maybe he didn't have to leave the Death Egg yet…but he could make Eggman leave the Death Egg. Finitevus took a warp ring off of his wrist and he twirled it between his fingers. He waited for Eggman to come stomping his way. Eggman's heavy metal feet came clanking towards Finitevus's hiding place. Finitevus sprang into action so fast that you'd think his legs were actually springs themselves. He leaped out of his hiding place and he flicked the warp ring straight towards Dr. Eggman. The robot-craving human was so surprised at that motion that he didn't even have time to stop himself. He tumbled straight through the warp ring and found himself warped straight out of the Death Egg and outside in the thundering rain. He went from dry to wet in mere seconds and it was made even worse for Eggman when the only way back into the Death Egg quickly was sealed up behind him. Eggman fumed, water dripping down every inch of his life-support mech as the rain hammered down all over him. He ran back towards the Death Egg and began shouting for the docking ramp to be lowered so he could get back inside.

As for Finitevus, now Eggman was out of the way at last he could make a clean getaway. Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally lunged towards Finitevus like a pair of ravenous wolves leaping on an antelope but Finitevus summoned a warp ring underneath his feet, waving a mocking farewell to the two robots as they came towards him. Finitevus disappeared through the warp ring and left the two Eggman robots to just crash into the wall as they missed him. The

two robots frowned at each other, not at all pleased that they'd failed to catch Dr. Finitevus. Dr. Eggman would not be very pleased with them at all…

Over onto *The Nefarious* , the Dark Armada was preparing to get the ship uncloaked and ready to launch for it had been twenty minutes since Finitevus had been on the Death Egg to begin his sabotage mission and he had explicitly told them that they could take off without him if they had to. But they wouldn't have to take off without Dr. Finitevus after all for the armada leader reappeared before them all in the meeting room much to their surprise. All the members of the armada were still together so Finitevus had the honour of greeting them all at once.

"Yo Finny, you're back!" cried Scourge the Hedgehog in surprise and delight, "We were just getting ready to take off without you!"

"Good timing I must say." said Fiona Fox, Royal Fighter traitor and Scourge's shameless girlfriend, "So how did the mission go? You ran into trouble I presume?"

"I ran into…some inevitable difficulties." said Finitevus casually, straightening his cape as if the fact it looked a little untidy was an insult to his pride, "But I've managed to escape in time. I guess I've been twenty minutes since you were just preparing to take off without me?"

"Oh yes, bang on twenty minutes doc." said Raphael the Cyber-Husky with a nod.

"Then I guess it's time to put the next phase of the plan into action." said Finitevus darkly, "Nefarious de-cloak and then fly up into space!" he ordered.

The Nefarious responded immediately. The sophisticated machinery which made up the ship's cockpit registered Finitevus's order and acted upon it, turning off its cloaking device and activating its engines for the big push up into space. *The Nefarious* was now visible for anybody around to see but they wouldn't be seeing it for long as the ship began to ascend upwards and head towards the grey, rainy sky up above. Water streamed down the fuselage of *The*

Nefarious as it began to climb upwards, ploughing through the clouds as it headed towards the surface of Mobius. As planned, the Death Egg started to take off and climb after it. The Death Egg's scanners had picked up *The Nefarious* the moment it de-cloaked and Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally started manually controlling the ship from the Egg Bunker's main computer monitor. Eggman had installed that as a back-up featured in case the control room in the centre of the Death Egg was compromised. It could be controlled from the top floor as well as the centre floor. Eggman was just arriving in the centre room as the Death Egg was chasing *The Nefarious.* He sat down in his seat and watched on the main computer screen as *The Nefarious* rose up and began quickly jetting up into the sky. The scans registered that there were Mobian life forms aboard, thirty-six in total, sixteen members of the Dark Armada plus Conquering Storm's twenty ninjas. Eggman was livid. He'd missed thirty-nine Mobians, the thirty-six Mobians on *The Nefarious* plus the three Mobians he had locked up in the Sentinel Blockade! This was a major embarrassment on his account for he'd done EVEN WORSE than he had the first time he roboticized Mobius! That time he'd only missed five, this time he missed thirty-six! Eggman's life support mech shuddered in rage as if reacting with him. Eggman would rectify that embarrassment easily. He'd catch *The Nefarious* and roboticize all its occupants! *The Nefarious* was quite fast, way faster than the Death Egg was. Dr. Eggman knew it wouldn't be able to catch up to the evil looking ship at all. But Eggman had the perfect way to get ahead of it.

"Death Egg, activate Chaos Control!" he barked furiously.

This was his chance to use the Master Emerald's power and see just how well it did at transporting the Death Egg from place to place. Eggman cackled as he sat back and waited for the Chaos Control to activate. He waited…and waited…and waited. Eggman just assumed that it was taking a while to power up so he waited some more. But as he continued to wait, he began to wonder if anything was even happening. Eggman sat up straight and pressed a button on the arm of his chair. The screen showed him an image of the power core chamber and to his horror, he saw that the Master Emerald wasn't there! It was gone, completely! Vanished off the face of Mobius! Dr. Eggman began to go wild with rage, banging the

arms of his chair in rage and shaking furiously. He couldn't believe it, he'd finally achieved his ultimate victory and yet a conga of humiliation seemed to be coming his way. First he finds out Finitevus isn't a Robian and gets outfoxed by him, then he finds out that he's missed another thirty-five Mobians in his attempt to roboticize the entire planet and now he finds out that the Master Emerald is gone! Eggman dared to think what would happen next as the conga went along. Would it take another step of humiliation for him? Eggman threw his arms up and roared furiously.

"THE MASTER EMERALD'S GONE! GONE, GONE, **GOOOOOOOONE!** " he roared "I bet that scoundrel Dr. Finitevus took it while he was onboard my ship! Well I'm so going to kill him when I get my hands on him! I'm going to roboticize him and then I'm going to tear him to pieces! And then…"

"Sir, I think you should look closely at this." droned an Egg-Pawn on duty.

Eggman was surprised. One of his lowly Egg-Pawns had spotted something he hadn't? That was surprising considering the Egg-Pawns weren't really built with a keen sense of detail like he had. Eggman leaned forward in his seat and he noticed on the computer screen the thing that the Egg-Pawn had noticed. There were four rugby-sized objects all attached around the power core base, the machine that had been holding the Master Emerald before Dr. Finitevus had stolen it. Eggman was very suspicious about the objects and he had a feeling he knew what they were. And the realization over what they were made his blood run cold.

"Those things must be bombs!" he cried out in alarm, "Egg-Pawns, get down to the power core chamber and dispose of those metal objects in there! I'm not going to let Finitevus blow up my Death Egg!"

Two Egg-Pawns got to work immediately. They ran over to the nearby elevator and they took it straight down to the power core chamber to dispose of the bombs. Given how high the Death Egg was already climbing, they could easily toss the bombs overboard and let them drop down onto the ground. As the Egg-Pawns were coming down to the power core chamber, Eggman switched the

screen back to what was going on outside. The Death Egg and *The Nefarious* had cleared through the stormy, rainy clouds that shrouded Mobius in a dark, gloomy shadow of despair and they were now cruising through a clear blue sky with a bright sunshine gleaming from the side. They were very high up now if that was the case. Just a few more minutes and they would be up in space. Eggman was rather surprised at the fact *The Nefarious* was so obviously faster than the Death Egg and yet the Death Egg seemed to be catching up to it. Was it letting him catch up or was the ship running out of fuel? Either way, Eggman hoped that the Death Egg would be fast enough to catch up to *The Nefarious* so he could roboticize all its occupants and add them to his Robian army. The Death Egg thrust its engines up to maximum power and the speed of the ship dramatically increased to the point that it was beginning to overtake *The Nefarious* . Finitevus had been intending to go up into space so that he could let Eggman fire the World Roboticizer at the ship and then he could blow up the Death Egg in space so that if Eggman somehow survived the blast, he'd die out in space too. But unfortunately, the cloaking device had drained a lot of power from *The Nefarious* and slowed it down considerably. It could only manage a cruising speed now and Finitevus was getting increasingly mad and anxious at this. He knew that the Death Egg had to be at a certain height before it could fire the roboticizer wave. Were they high enough for Eggman to fire the wave? Then again, Finitevus assumed that Eggman wouldn't care how high he was as long as he fired the wave. The Death Egg climbed up above *The Nefarious* and the huge egg-shaped vessel positioned itself directly above the ship, ready to fire the roboticizer wave. Finitevus smiled wickedly. Eggman was going to do it regardless of height, perfect for him. And he could set the bombs off after the wave fired and give Eggman a nasty fall to deal with as well as his ship being destroyed. The Death Egg fired the roboticizer wave at *The Nefarious* , a huge beam of white light sailing out from underneath the ship and heading towards the malevolent Dark Armada flagship. But Finitevus was ready for it, he had already planned for how he would avoid it.

"Nefarious, Chaos Control." he ordered quietly.

The eight Chaos Emeralds were linked to *The Nefarious* 's main computer so that Finitevus could activate their power with a simple

voice command. The eight Chaos Emeralds worked in unison as they bathed the evil ship in a glorious glow that took them away from their current position. Even though Finitevus had set the roboticizer wave in reverse, he didn't fancy the idea of *The Nefarious* being hit by the wave. It could destroy his most important systems and the main computer of *The Nefarious* since it was technically a robot of some kind. Plus Captain Metal would be destroyed if the wave hit so he had to move out of the way for the armada's own good. *The Nefarious* reappeared above the Death Egg in a bright flash of light. The scanners of the Death Egg displayed this to Eggman so he found out that he was going to in fact, miss his target completely.

"Huh?! W-w-wait! Abort launch!" squealed Dr. Eggman desperately.

Too late. The World Roboticizer fired its de-roboticizing wave down onto Mobius and as the beam hit, it spread out in a giant white wave that swept over the world like a giant ocean wave, covering over every inch of Mobius. Eggman was not at all pleased at this for he didn't even want to fire the wave at that size. But Finitevus's meddling had obviously seen to that. Finitevus had tampered with the World Roboticizer so that when it fired, it would ONLY fire at the world wide size it had fired at earlier. Eggman watched as his World Roboticizer wave swept all over Mobius in a matter of seconds. He began to feel himself panicking. The wave would wipe out every one of his Robian army and he only survivors would be the Mobians on *The Nefarious* and also the trio of captives in the Sentinel Blockade. Some army if he were to roboticize them! But then Eggman noticed something strange. As the wave swept over Mobius, the Death Egg was no longer displaying the Robians on the screen. The screen had been littered with red dots that indicated where Robians were. They were all disappearing and being replaced with green dots. Red meant the subject had been roboticized. Green meant the subject WASN'T roboticized. Eggman knew what that meant and it made him go berserk with rage. He leapt out of his seat and began peppering the ceiling with an angry array of bullets from his Gatling guns. He stamped his feet so hard that he wondered if he was going to break through the floor. The rage he had was so uncontrollable that you wouldn't be able to sedate him with tranquilizer dart. Eggman stopped shooting at the ceiling and he punched his seat so hard that he began to break it to pieces and litter the floor with the

remains of the seat. He then let out a horrible bellow that sounded like a realize of all the anger in his body. Never in Eggman's life had he been so angry. He was in such a rage that anybody in his position would likely make themselves pass out. But not Eggman, he was too angry to even pass out.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" bellowed Dr. Eggman in an uncontrollable roar of thunderous fury, **"NO, NO, NO, NO, NOOOOOOOO! THE WORLD ROBOTICIZIER'S BEEN TAMPERE D WITH! DR. FINITEVUS RUINED EVERYTHING! HOW DARE HE! HOW DARE HE! EVERYTHING'S RUINED! MOBIUS IS BEING DE-ROBOTICIZED! SONIC AND FRIENDS WILL BE BACK FOR ME! IT'S BACK TO SQUARE ONE AGAIN! MY GLORIOUS EMPIRE IS NO MORE! IT'S…IT'S…RRR**

RRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARR

Eggman was so furious that something happened to him. Something snapped inside of him and he ended up having a different view on the world. With his limbs shaking in rage, Eggman fell silent for a moment while he caught his breath back. He then ended up speaking again but this time, his voice was much darker and more threatening than ever before.

"Well…I guess that does it…" he murmured in a strange manner of speech that sounded like something from a horror movie, "I've been fighting for two years…to take over Mobius. And I just can't win…so if I can't have Mobius…THEN NOBODY CAN!"

He pointed sharply at his terrified Egg-Pawns. They thought Eggman was going to destroy them in anger but Eggman didn't even so much as point a gun at them. Only his metal claw was pointing at them.

"Prepare the Egg Annihilator Beam!" he ordered, "Set it to fire as soon as possible! We are going to destroy Mobius once and for all! This planet doesn't deserve to live if it won't accept my generous offer of a better way of life!"

The Egg-Pawns saluted and they began preparing the Egg Annihilator Beam for activation. Dr. Eggman didn't just have a

roboticizer wave that made the Death Egg so formidable. He had a weapon that could destroy the entire world. The Egg Annihilator Beam was a beam that could fire down onto a planet. Once it struck the ground, it would plough its way down into the ground and reach the planet's core. Once he reached the planet's core…it would be the end of the world forever…

Down on the ground below, all of Mobius had been de-roboticized at long last. All the Robians were now back to being flesh and blood Mobians with not a hint of metal on them anywhere. The Robian nightmare was at an end, Mobius was back to its former glory. Eggman's rule was at an end.

In the Sentinel Blockade, the wave had swept through the building and hit the roboticized Royal Fighters. Tails and Bunnie had flown out of the way of the wave, presuming that it was going to roboticize them the moment it hit them but they were surprised to see that it had actually de-roboticized them. The New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were overjoyed to be back to normal and of course, were quick to apologize to Tails and Bunnie for attacking them while they were Robians. The other Royal Fighters teams were back to normal and were very quick to comment on how unpleasant it had been to be a Robian. They sadly remembered everything they did as Robians and they felt ashamed at what they had been doing whilst under Eggman's control. But Tails and Bunnie forgave them for they knew that they couldn't have done anything about it. The celebration had to be cut short though for Tails and Bunnie remembered about Sally and what Mecha Sonic had been doing to her. So they left the cell blockade to find Sally and see if she was alright.

As for Sally, she had passed out from her injuries at the time the roboticizer wave had hit and was just hanging by her bonds with her head dropped down, her body a little slumped and her arms fully stretched. Mecha Sonic had been standing beside her patiently, waiting for further orders but then the roboticizer wave had hit him. Much to his surprise, it had de-roboticized him instead and now Mecha Sonic was back to normal once again. Sonic admired himself all over to see that he was no longer a robot but he didn't have time to celebrate for terrible memories came back to his head and he

found himself turning to his right to see a tortured and unconscious Sally Acorn naked and chained beside him. Sonic's face was the definition of horror. He couldn't speak for a moment and at first, he felt like he was going to pass out.

"SALLY!" he shrieked in terror, "Oh…my…gosh! What did that sick bastard make me do to you?!"

He sadly remembered it all, every little bit of what he'd done to Sally as Mecha Sally. He remembered throttling her as he was trying to make her come with him, he remembered how embarrassed and frightened Sally was as he took off her clothes, and he especially remembered Sally's pained howls as he placed his hands on her body and electrocuted her brutally. He remembered all that but the thing he remembered the most was how helpless he had been at the time. How he couldn't do anything to stop himself from torturing his beloved Sally. Eggman had made him torture his own girlfriend. Sonic now knew what was the worst thing Eggman had ever done to him. Nothing Eggman did now would ever top this. With his eyes welling up and his heart aching, Sonic ran over to the wall and he pressed a button that shut off the laser generators and dropped Sally down onto the floor. The squirrel was still unconscious as she lay down on the floor with her hands bound in the metal spheres. Sonic ran back over to Sally and he pressed a button that opened up the spheres. Sally's hands were now free and Sonic held one of them as he rolled his girlfriend onto her back. Sally's hands were cold and Sonic knew why. The hedgehog could feel the tears rolling down his cheeks like rain on a window. He felt terrible. Worse than he'd ever felt before. He knew that he couldn't have done anything about it at the time but it still didn't change the fact that he'd been made to torture his own girlfriend by Dr. Eggman and he'd been helpless to stop that from happening. Sonic squeezed Sally's hand tightly, hoping that it would revive her.

"Sally! Oh man…Sally I'm so sorry that I did all that to you! I'm so sorry that I tortured you and I couldn't stop myself!" wailed Sonic, the tears coming down his cheeks even faster now, "I'm sorry that I got roboticized and Eggman made me do this to you! I'm so sorry…I'm so sorry!"

He wrapped his arms around the squirrel's unconscious body and

began to weep uncontrollably. Sonic was not usually the crying type but he couldn't help himself. This was the worst thing that had ever happened to him and he would never be able to forget about it. He was still crying as Tails and the rest of the Royal Fighters ran into the room to see if he and Sally were in there. To Tails's relief, he saw that they were in the room but he was distraught to see that Sally was in a terrible state. She had burn marks all over her body, she had no clothes on she had slash marks on her belly. Tails picked up Sally's discarded clothes and he ran over to Sonic, the hedgehog still sobbing loudly over what he'd done to Sally. Tails felt like crying with Sonic. He could imagine what had happened and how horrible Sonic must be feeling right now.

"Sonic! What happened? Did Eggman make you…do that to our queen?" asked Tails, his voice a hoarse whisper of shock.

"Yes! Eggman made me torture Sally!" yelled Sonic, his voice a mixture of sadness and anger, "He made me do this to her…and I couldn't stop myself! Oh Tails…I'll never forgive myself for this!"

"Sonic, Sonic! Please don't beat yourself up!" cried Tails, putting his hands comfortingly on Sonic's back, "It wasn't your fault! Don't be like that! Eggman roboticized you! He made you do this! It's his fault! Don't you dare blame yourself Sonic! Otherwise you're giving Eggman the satisfaction of seeing you broken and distraught Sonic!"

That seemed to have an effect on Sonic for his sobbing became more controlled and his face suddenly became a dark thundercloud of an expression. Something had clearly snapped in him, something that should never have snapped in his life. Sonic was now a completely different person as a result of this snapping.

"No…Eggman's not getting that satisfaction…" said Sonic, wiping his eyes dry and gently lying Sally back down on the floor, "Eggman is going to PAY. And I do mean PAY! Get Sally's clothes back on and then get her to a hospital Tails! I'm going after Dr. Eggman! And I'm going to put him down… for good!"

Tails did as he was told and Sonic got up onto his feet, heading out of the door and leaving Tails to dress Sally back up and then get her back to New Mobotropolis and to a hospital along with the rest of the

Royal Fighters. Sonic walked past the rest of the Royal Fighters, taking no notice of any of them as he walked by. It was like he didn't even know they were there. They all watched him leave, wondering what he was doing as he walked out of the Sentinel Blockade. Sonic then realized that he would need something and so he came back over to the Royal Fighters, acknowledging them for the first time. He didn't say much. He just looked at Miranda Mongoose and he held out his hand.

"Warp ring please." he said in a voice of steel.

Miranda still had the warp ring on her after she'd used it to warp herself and the other teams onto the Sky Patrol in the mission to stop the Death Egg from rising. Miranda handed it over to Sonic and the hedgehog stormed off with the warp ring in his hand without saying another word. The Royal Fighters looked worried, something was clearly different about Sonic. He seemed a lot more serious and emotional now. He wasn't even making any wise cracks! Something had happened and they soon found out what it was as Tails called for them to help him with the comatose Sally. They all ran into the room to help him get Sally dressed up again and get her back to New Mobotropolis so she could heal.

As for Sonic, he was full of rage and anger. He'd never been this angry in his life. He was well and truly enraged and he had snapped harder than a twig as a result of what Eggman had done to him. This was a side of Sonic that nobody in the world would ever want to meet again. As Sonic stormed outside in a huff, he found himself walking outside into a shower of rain. The stormy weather hadn't subsided at all, it was still raining. Sonic ignored the trickling water that streamed down his body and soaked his fur. The rain was nonexistent as far as he was concerned. Sonic spun the warp ring around his finger, his face darker than the thunderclouds in the sky above him. He knew the Death Egg was up in the sky since it wasn't here currently and he had the perfect way onboard the Death Egg. He stopped twirling the warp ring and he clenched his fists so hard that his fingers were close to penetrating the flesh of his hands. Before he did anything, the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters ran outside to join him. Sonic turned around and saw that Tails was running towards him and Knuckles and Shade were carrying Sally

between them. She had her clothes back on but she was still unconscious. Sonic was glad to see her fully clothed again. He opened up the warp ring for Tails and the others so they could warp back over to New Mobotropolis.

"All of you, go back to New Mobotropolis." ordered Sonic, "I'm going to take care of Dr. Eggman. Do NOT try to stop me, I'm going alone and if you try to stop me then you're just wasting your time. You can't change my mind."

"But Sonic, you can't stop Eggman alone!" protested Tails, "Please, let us help Sonic!"

"Sally needs you all right now." said Sonic tersely, "You're all going home with her and I'm going after Eggman alone. And that is final. Do as you're told, please. For Sally."

"OK Sonic…I hope you're not making a big mistake." said Tails worriedly.

The worried fox cub embraced his big brother figure tenderly and Sonic patted him on the back. Then Sonic walked over to Knuckles and Shade and leant over Sally's body. He put his mouth near to her ear and whispered.

"I love you Sal…that's why I have to make Eggman pay for this. Please hold on for me…my love."

He then kissed Sally tenderly on the cheek before letting Knuckles and Shade carry her through the warp ring to New Mobotropolis. The rest of the team followed through the warp ring and so did all the other Royal Fighter teams. Tails was the last to go. He took one last look over at Sonic as the hedgehog stared at him emotionlessly. The fox cub was very frightened for Sonic now. He was sure Sonic was making a big mistake. Sonic couldn't fight Eggman alone. And yet…Sonic seemed so sure and so confident that he could. And he even seemed so…distant and determined. Tails hoped dearly that Sonic would be alright after this was over. The fox turned away and then walked through the warp ring. Sonic grabbed it and he held it above his head, ready to open it up again.

"Eggman has done it…he's crossed the line…he doesn't deserve to live. He deserves to die…and I'm the one who's going to kill him!" growled Sonic, "Eggman's tyranny is over!"

Flicking the warp ring into the air, he opened up a portal that lead from the ground to the Death Egg. Sonic put one foot inside, allowing the golden gleam of the warp ring to shine over him for a minute before saying one last cryptic sentence as he prepared to step into what could be the most fierce and epic battle of his life.

"This will be…our last stand…"

This is it ladies and gentleman...the final battle is here...Sonic the Hedgehog vs. Dr. Eggman...for the fate of the world...and for everybody on it...

Join me next time for my 200th chapter...for the FINAL battle between Sonic and Eggman...their war is about to end...and only one will be victorious...

Eggman's Last Stand

Story 200: *Eggman's Last Stand*

KRA-KOW!

The thunder boomed through the dull, grey skies that shrouded New Mobotropolis in a sinister shadow of gloom and despair. Rain hammered down in fat, wet drops that drenched whatever they fell down upon. The rain had soaked New Mobotropolis completely on the outside, leaving only the inside of the city dry. Lightening sliced through the grey skies, flashing as it crackled on the heels of the thunderclap and briefly lightening up the dark void of grey that loomed over the grandiose city that was home to Mobius's most special team of heroes ever. Once the lightening had disappeared, everything became dark once again.

The stormy weather outside wasn't a bother to anybody living in New Mobotropolis though for they were all inside their nice warm houses, making the most of the comfort and warmth they had now they were out of the rain. They had to make the most of it too for Mobius wasn't going to last for much longer. The villainous Dr. Eggman had come to Mobius a couple of years ago with nothing but enslavement on his mind for the animal-populated world he had come across. He had been exiled from his own world after trying to roboticize it all and make everybody a mindless machine that's only purpose was to serve him. He'd actually managed to succeed in roboticizing the whole of Mobius for a second time. He'd achieved this thanks to a giant ship that he called the Death Egg. The Death Egg was equipped with a World Roboticizer, a roboticizer machine capable of roboticizing an entire planet with one blast. And yet despite having the Death Egg and using it to roboticize the entire planet, he still ended up being ridiculously humiliated for Dr. Finitevus, an evil scientist and the uncle of Knuckles the Echidna, had set Eggman's own weapon in reverse and had tricked Eggman into de-roboticizing the entire planet. Mobius was now back to normal and the Mobians were beginning to get accustomed to being back to normal and hoping dearly to forget what had happened to

them moments ago. Dr. Eggman had well and truly snapped at this and he had suddenly decided that he was going to destroy Mobius since he wasn't content with the Mobians having it while he couldn't. After Mobius was destroyed, he'd simply take the Death Egg and fly off somewhere else with the ship. Maybe go back to Earth and use it to roboticize Earth or try another planet before he went back to Earth. And at this moment, he was preparing the Death Egg to destroy Mobius, setting up a weapon known as the Egg Annihilator. When the weapon fired...Mobius would be space debris.

Such terrifying thoughts were not on the minds of the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters as they re-entered New Mobotropolis via warp ring and fought there way through the pouring rain and the howling winds. Nor was that information even known to them. The Death Egg wasn't even on their minds as they found the New Mobotropolis Hospital Centre and quickly filed in through the door, clearly desperate to get in out of the rain. The team consisted of Sonic the Hedgehog, Queen Sally Acorn, Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Shade the Echidna, Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, Bunnie Rabbot, Wilson the Dog, Mandy Mouse, Ruben the Water Panther. Sora Prower, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon, Charmy Bee and Mace the Elephant. The other Royal Fighter teams, Team Chun-Nan, Team Nekronopolis, Team Megapolis and Team Adabat were just behind them and so were the future Mobians Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat. Even Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat were there too and they followed the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters as they filed into the hospital, hoping to find a room spare. Sally was in a terrible state right now. While Sonic had been roboticized, Eggman had made him torture Sally near to death just for his own amusement. Sally had burns all over her body from the electrocution inflicted on her by Mecha Sonic and she had four bloody cuts across her belly. She had been stripped naked by Mecha Sonic before he tortured her, making the whole thing even worse for Sonic to take in after he had been de-roboticized thanks to Dr. Finitevus's meddling. Sonic had snapped even harder than Eggman had upon realizing what he'd done to his beloved girlfriend. Gone was his snarky, light-hearted and jokey personality. In its place was something considerably more serious and dark. Sonic wanted Eggman dead and he wanted to personally

kill Eggman himself. So he had sent everybody to New Mobotropolis so Sally could be taken to hospital and he could go after Dr. Eggman himself. So the team was one short of being complete at this moment. While they were taking Sally into hospital, Sonic would be warping onto the Death Egg and having his final showdown with Dr. Eggman. It would be a battle to end all battles. A battle that would end the war once and for all. The conflict that Sonic and Eggman had been having for two whole years, going on three now, would be over. And only one would emerge victorious.

Who would emerge victorious was the one question that was bugging Tails's mind. The fox cub was very frightened and worried about his best friend and he could hardly keep himself from wondering what was going to happen as he and Eggman had a fight to the death. He forced himself to focus on their current task. Thankfully, they had managed to find a spare room to put Sally in for the time being. The hospital staff lead the Royal Fighters to room number 8643 and Knuckles and Shade were quick to lay the comatose Sally down on a bed so that she could rest and recover from her injuries. The miracle woman Mariah the Medicine Cat arrived in Sally's room moments after she'd been settled down and Mariah had seen to giving the queen one of her amazing medicines. It always amazed the Royal Fighters how Mariah seemed to have a medicine for any kind of illness, injury or any kind of medical problem. Maybe Mariah was some kind of witch. Justified given how her house was somewhat like a witch's hat. Mariah put some of the medicine into a syringe and she injected it into Sally's arm. As she did this, a holographic figure materialized out of thin air and stood beside Sally, looking very worried for her best friend. This was Nicole, formerly a Mobian and currently a computer programme that had all of Nicole's personality and memories and the holographic avatar even resembled what she had once been. Nicole approached Sally and put a hand on Sally's arm, her hand solid and real thanks to a hi-tech generator Tails had installed in the city to make her more realistic and more like a Mobian than a computer. The avatar's eyes even welled up with real tears and felt emotional pain like a real person does when seeing their friend comatose and lying on a bed waiting to recover or get mailed to Death's door depending on their situation.

"Oh Sally...my dear friend!" sobbed Nicole, "Wh...what happened to you?!"

"Eggman made Sonic torture her while he was a robot." said Tails grimly, "He took advantage of his status as Mecha Sonic and made him do this to Sally for his own amusement."

"Why that monster!" shrieked Nicole, "How could he?! He made Sonic torture Sally?! I never thought Eggman could be so evil!"

"Neither did we Nicole." said Amy, shaking her head sadly in agreement, "Eggman's done some pretty twisted things but this is the most evil and twisted thing he's ever done."

"Believe me, had we known this had happened, we would have warned Sally about it so that if could have been prevented." said Silver solemnly.

"At least Sally will survive." said Blaze gently, patting Silver affectionately on the back, "And we won't be spending our lives as robots working for Eggman anymore. We were right to think that this got undone considering in our future, Mobius isn't roboticized."

"Too right luv." said Geoffrey, "As for our beloved queen, it's so horrible to think that poor Sonic was forced to do this to her while he was a robot..." his face fell as he looked over at the unconscious Sally as she lay peacefully on her bed with Nicole sobbing uncontrollably over her as if the worst was coming for Sally.

"And it seems to have had a bad effect on the blue dude for he's going after Eggman alone." said Mandy, her voice nothing more than a theme tune for the word "concerned", "I think he wants to make the fat bastard pay for it."

"But will he be able to stop Eggman alone?" asked Wilson, giving his wife's hand a worried squeeze as if hoping it would somehow make him feel braver, "I mean he's in the body of Omega, a robot who managed to match Sonic, Shadow, Bunnie and Rouge all at once! He can't fight that alone!"

"He should have let me fight Eggman with him!" growled Shadow

furiously, punching the wall in fury, "He'd have a bigger chance with me helping him! I'd just Chaos Blast him to pieces and leave nothing left of him!"

"I'd be equally as happy to help too Shadow but I think there's a reason Sonic wants to do this alone." said Rouge, putting her hands on Shadow's shoulders, "You see, he wants to be the one that puts all this to rest since the battle's always been between him and Eggman. After all, the war started with Eggman trying to enslave us and Sonic getting in the way, it's always been between Sonic and Eggman. Eggman started it, Sonic wants to end it."

"But why does he have to do it alone?" asked Cosmo worriedly, "We'd be much likelier to stop Eggman if we did it together."

"I think Sonic wants to do it alone...because he feels like it's deathly personal on his behalf." murmured Tails, embracing his girlfriend warmly to try and comfort her jumpy nerves, "You see, Eggman's roboticized all of Mobius twice before and Sonic's been dedicating his life to saving Mobius. And now Eggman makes him torture his own girlfriend. He hasn't made any of us do that, only him so in his eyes...it must be personal between him and Eggman now. That's why he must do it alone."

"But is Sonic going to beat Eggman as usual?" asked Ruben in a voice that carried all the concern he had in his body, "Or...is he going...to...to..." his voice quavered as if he couldn't quite make himself say the last two words though everybody in the room knew exactly what he was trying to say.

"You're worried if Sonic's going to kill Eggman Ruben." said Sora, stroking his back softly with her gentle, tender fingertips, "I had the same feeling too. I heard Tails and Sonic talking in the room and Sonic said something about putting Eggman down for good. He clearly intends to kill the evil man."

"Given what he made poor Sonic do, I really don't blame the poor boy." said Princess Matilda sadly, cringing in disgust over what had happened, "How could somebody be so evil as to make somebody torture their own partner?! It'd be like if Eggman made me torture Bladefeather, I'd never be able to forgive myself for that!"

"Nor I if he made me torture you my sweet flower." said Bladefeather softly, embracing his soon-to-be-wife warmly to try and dampen her fears, "And I know it's not honourable to wish death upon others Matilda...but I hope Sonic does kill Eggman. That insidious, baneful demon doesn't deserve to live."

"I think everybody agrees with you Bladefeather...but killing Eggman won't make Sonic any better than he is." said Tails with a shudder, "I hope Sonic realizes this. I don't want him to...go off the deep end and become something I can't recognize anymore."

"Ah don't think Sally-girl wants that either little guy." said a very sympathetic and caring Bunnie Rabbot as she stroked Tails's head tenderly to make him feel better, "Ah guess we'll just have to wait and see what happens now. We'll hear everything from sugah-hog when he comes back."

"IF he comes back..." noted Tails tensely.

That suddenly made all the Royal Fighters feel nervous. Would Sonic come back in one piece? Would he come back at all? Or was he going to perish in his final battle with Dr. Eggman? The Royal Fighters began to feel very worried for their supersonic friend as the terrible thought crept into their minds. Sonic might not make it back from this battle. It was very likely that he wasn't going to make it. Everybody began to pray that Sonic would come back and that he would be OK when he returned. It was going to be the most intense wait of anybody's lives. And it was a wait that the Royal Fighters wanted to be over as soon as possible. Nicole knelt by Sally's bed and began stroking her hair, hoping that Sally could still feel that despite being unconscious.

"Oh Sally...I hope Sonic comes back alive..." Nicole whispered softly to her friend, "Your heart will never recover if he doesn't...and I don't think you can bear to live without your beloved Sonic..."

If Sally was awake, she'd be nodding agreeably to Nicole's statement. If Sonic died then Sally would surely die with him, of a very broken heart. The torture didn't kill her but Sonic's death surely would finish the job and two important losses like that would be too big a loss for New Mobotropolis. Sonic had to come back or the city

would never be the same again...

Meanwhile on the Death Egg, Dr. Eggman was standing by in the control room of the ship and waiting patiently for the Egg Annihilator to fire and destroy all of Mobius. He would be sitting down and watching the whole process but earlier he had destroyed his own seat in a blind fit of uncontrollable rage so he was forced to stand. Not that it mattered to Eggman since he was too grumpy to care. The fact that Mobius had been roboticized for a SECOND time and then been de-roboticized before a day had even passed for a second time had made him snap very violently. No longer did he desire to roboticize all of Mobius and make it a heaven for robots everywhere with him as the leader. He only wanted to destroy Mobius. He considered it a punishment the planet deserved for constantly refusing his generous offer for a better world and to embrace his beautiful technology. If Mobius wouldn't accept him then why let it live? He'd been over forwards and backwards for two years trying to conquer Mobius and show the universe that a world of robots was the way to live. And this was the thanks he got: constantly being made a fool of, constantly having his plans ruined because the selfish Mobians didn't appreciate his lovely technology and how much it could improve life and also being battered and beaten to the point he was now on life support in a mech suit modelled after E-123 Omega, one of his best robots ever. Well Eggman was going to return the favour, by destroying Mobius and showing them what happens to those who deny him. This pointless war that had been going on for way too long was coming to an end and Eggman was going to be the one who ended it. He felt like he'd wasted so much precious time over the past two years that destroying Mobius was going to be reliving to him in too many ways to count. And yet Eggman wouldn't forget his time on Mobius. He'd learned many valuable lessons during his time on the baneful planet and also got the chance to see how many of his inventions worked and which ideas were the best. He'd certainly improved with his technology on Mobius. He'd even once built a robot that could manipulate time and reshape the world how he saw fit! And now thanks to the lessons he'd learnt on Mobius, he would return to Earth as a wiser scientist and he'd know how to take care of the

idiotic humans who dared to exile him in the first place. And yet in a way...being exiled had led to this war and had even led to Eggman learning from his mistakes in the first place. So maybe the exile had actually done him some good. In a way, Eggman could easily make the humans feel sorry they had even exiled him in the first place. His exile would inadvertently lead him to their doom. Eggman smiled wickedly to himself as he pictured the Death Egg flying over Earth and activating the World Roboticizer down on the planet. Earth would be his Eggman Empire and he knew for certain the humans would have no chance of reversing what he'd done considering that humans didn't have super powers like Mobians did. The image of his Earth-bound Eggman Empire was glorious and Eggman felt like bursting with excitement just thinking about it. As he waited for the Egg Annihilator beam to fire, an Egg-Pawn came up beside him. Eggman did not seem to notice it was there.

"Sir." droned the Egg-Pawn, "The Death Egg is nearing Mobius's atmosphere. Soon we will be out of the planet and thus, clear to fire the Egg Annihilator beam on the planet. Plus, we have successfully disposed of the bombs that you spotted in the power core chamber."

"Very good, very good." said Dr. Eggman gleefully, "Nobody's blowing up my ship today! Nice try Finitevus but you're not getting away with murder! You can keep the Master Emerald for all I care since you won't live to enjoy its power and you won't be able to destroy my Death Egg! So I win! Ha, ha, ha!"

He could just imagine how cross Dr. Finitevus would be once he found out that the Death Egg was bomb-free. It disgusted Eggman that Finitevus thought for a minute that he could kill him so easily. Eggman cheated death on a regular basis. He was much too afraid to die. He was so afraid of dying that he always had a way of escaping death at the last possible second anything went wrong. The fact he was in a life support machine made him even more desperate to avoid death now. Eggman focused back on the Egg Annihilator's progress. The beam was very nearly ready to fire and the Death Egg was nearly out of Mobius and into orbit. Once in orbit, he'd be safely out of the way and Mobius would be dead. Eggman could already hear the Mobian's final screams as the Egg Annihilator tore Mobius apart, vaporising all life forms on the planet

into atoms and reducing the planet itself to nothing more than rubble and debris floating around aimlessly in the void of space for all eternity. It was the most beautiful image that Eggman could ever picture in his foul and evil mind. He eyed the computer screen just as it was saying the Egg Annihilator had five more minutes to go and then it was ready to fire. Five minutes still felt like a long wait for Dr. Eggman, he wanted to fire it now. But he knew that the beam would only fire when it was ready to fire and he also knew he couldn't fire while the Death Egg was still on Mobius otherwise he would take himself with the planet. Aching with excitement and tingling with joy, Eggman forced himself to be patient as the seconds ticked by ominously on the screen.

"I could have saved myself SO MUCH bother if I'd just destroyed Mobius in the first damn place!" griped Eggman, "Oh well, better late than never as they say. At least I've learned some valuable lessons in my two wasted years of trying to conquer the planet. Lessons that will earn me an easy conquest of my home planet. Those fools will finally get to appreciate my technology for what it is, the next evolutionary step in mankind's circle of life! The Eggman Empire will be born and I will rule over it all! And since I'm destroying Mobius, Sonic won't be a pest for me anymore! Earth will be mine and NOBODY WILL BE ABLE TO STOP ME!"

"Don't count your chickens before they hatch Eggman, or in this case, don't claim victory when you haven't won yet."

Eggman couldn't believe what he was hearing. He was hearing a voice, but not just any voice, a *teenage* voice, an annoying voice, an *annoying teenage* voice. The worst voice that he had ever heard in his life and the one voice he wasn't expecting to hear anytime soon. He turned around and got the shock of his life. Standing in the doorway to the main control room, arms down to the sides, fists clenched and teeth gritted along with eyes narrowed down into the most hardcore scowl ever known to Mobian-kind...was Sonic the Hedgehog! Thanks to a warp ring, Sonic had managed to get onboard the Death Egg for he memorized the interior of the roboticizer chamber, which was one of the rooms on the Death Egg. Upon getting onboard, all he had to do was find his way up to Dr. Eggman and that hadn't taken him long at all thanks to his super

speed. Now he was here, standing in the doorway to the one room Eggman was in. Sonic was full of rage and his face was as dark as the rainy, stormy atmosphere outside the Death Egg. He strode up to Eggman in a manner that crept the scientist out and that was saying a heck of a lot considering Eggman wasn't easily disturbed by anything. Eggman however remained cool and utterly confident. He stood his ground and he bared his claws, waiting to tear Sonic to pieces. The Egg-Pawns in the room prepared to shoot at Sonic but in the blink of an eye, Sonic took them all out with a spin-dash that could have easily punched a hole through a tower and bring it down into a pile of rubble with little prompting. Sonic returned to his original spot and strode up towards Eggman again. Eggman began to realize what it was that Sonic seemed so angry about. He was incredibly distant and very serious looking. There was only one reason why he would be feeling this way. Eggman began to chortle at his lifelong nemesis.

"Ho, ho, ho Sonic!" crowed Eggman, "What a surprise this is! What's the matter? Still mad at me for making you torture your own girlfriend? You should be thankful Sonic! I could have ordered you to kill her instead but because I'm generous, I didn't do so! How about I take back my generosity and instead roboticize you again so I can make you kill that wretched queen of yours?"

"You will never roboticize me again you fat, tubby little demon spawn!" snarled Sonic, "I'm gonna tear this stupid ship apart! And then after that...I'm going to kill you! You've gone way too far now Egg Brains! You've roboticized my world for a second time and you made me strip and torture Sally! And you even threatened to make me torture Tails and Bunnie too! You're sick and you're mine! This will be our final battle you monster! And I will emerge victorious whilst standing over your twisted, mangled, bloody corpse!"

Eggman was so shocked at what he heard that he almost fainted. Sonic the Hedgehog, the one guy who loved justice more than anything else, was actually threatening to KILL him?! Eggman began to wonder if he'd pushed Sonic's buttons a little too hard now. He actually had Sonic wanting to kill him! Then again, the fat scientist thought for a moment, he could probably use this to his advantage. Sonic would be very angry at this moment now. He

could easily use Sonic's emotions against him and emerge victorious. Sonic would be the one reduced to a twisted, mangled, bloody corpse and not him. Eggman stood his ground and took up a battle ready stance.

"Oh Sonic, YOU think you can kill ME do you?!" Eggman snorted as if the whole thing was just a sick little joke on Sonic's part, "You seriously think you can kill me huh? Well that's not going to happen! I'm in a mech suit that will easily shield me from your attacks! Omega was able to fend off you, Shadow, Bunnie AND Rouge all together!"

"And yet he was still destroyed." sniffed Sonic coldly.

"That impudent, purple rat Mandy blew him up that's why!" protested Eggman, "Well she's not here to sneak a bomb on me this time is she? No, it's just me and you now!"

"Yes it is ugly mug." muttered Sonic, his face more stoic than even the biggest of sourpusses, "Just you and me. Nobody getting in the way, nobody holding me back, nobody to worry about getting hurt. Just me vs. you and only one of us is going to emerge victorious. And it'll be me!"

He cupped his hand around his fist.

"For my world, for my people, for my friends and especially for Sally, you are gonna die today Eggman! I won't rest until you're dead and believe me, you'll be wishing you'd never messed with me Eggman!" snarled Sonic, looking as wild and savage as a wolf that hasn't eaten for days and is just about ready to make its first kill in a while.

"Oh Sonic, you are such a child." sneered Eggman, "You're throwing a little temper tantrum because I made you strip and torture your stupid girlfriend! Get over it! I could have made you do worse to her!"

Eggman was pretty much begging for Sonic to kill him now and Sonic was all too happy to accept his invitation. To Sonic, Eggman was pretty much saying "Please kill me now, you know you want to and I want you to do it!" so he was going to oblige. Sonic spin-

dashed directly into Eggman, aiming directly for the head of his mech-suit. Eggman cried out as the attack threw him off his feet and sent him bouncing across the floor and into the wall with a crash. Eggman picked himself up, clearly a little fazed from the attack but otherwise unhurt. He clenched the metal fists of his mech suit as Sonic prepared to attack again.

"Alright Sonic, you're asking for it!" roared Eggman, "You dare threaten my life and strike me in my own ship! Now you'll pay for it! I'm going to kill YOU Sonic and I'll make sure it's a beautifully gruesome death too!"

"Puh, and here I thought you was going to beat me into chilli-sauce and then roboticize me afterwards." scoffed Sonic "Why don't you just do that then fat head?"

Eggman tensed up for a minute before bellowing a long-winded rant out at Sonic.

"I remember one time I roboticized you!" he shouted, "And what happened after that?! You were saved and ended up being a problem for me still! I've come up with brilliant devices and robots to finish you off, and you just destroyed them all! I even managed to roboticize the planet again and roboticize you again too, and yet you STILL managed to come back from that! Well now you face me and me alone and I will not allow you to walk out of this room alive! No more mistakes, in this battle, there will be ONE survivor and it'll be ME Sonic the Hedgehog!"

"No, it'll be me you fat bastard!" declared Sonic, "For Mobius, you are DEAD!"

"For the Eggman Empire, YOU are dead!" thundered Eggman.

With a blood-curdling roar each that sounded as over-the-top as a hero and a villain's battle cry from a cheesy cartoon would sound, Sonic and Eggman ran towards each other and threw their first attacks...

Meanwhile, *The Nefarious* was following the Death Egg up into space. Dr. Finitevus had attempted to set off the bombs just moments after Mobius had been de-roboticized but much to the echidna's dismay, the bombs didn't go off as they should have done. It hadn't taken him long to work out that Eggman had discovered the bombs and had gotten rid of them. So it seemed that his plan was going south for the moment. But the Death Egg appeared to be going up into space and that had Finitevus's interest piqued. What was it doing now? Was it going to try and roboticize Mobius again? Impossible, Finitevus had made it impossible to set the World Roboticizer back to normal. But then Finitevus had noticed that the underside of the Death Egg was glowing ominously and he knew what that meant. When Fiona Fox had stolen the Death Egg's plans for him the other week or so, he'd studied the plans from top to bottom, meaning that he knew what there was to know about his foe's evil ship of mass destruction. He knew about the Egg Annihilator beam and was sure that Eggman was about to fire it. Finitevus was not going to let him fire that beam for he too knew that the Egg Annihilator was going to destroy Mobius once it fired. If Mobius was destroyed, the Dark Armada would have been all for nothing. No Enerjak: Reborn being put into action, no Dark Armada taking over the world, nothing. He couldn't let Eggman undermine all of that so he was chasing after the Death Egg in *The Nefarious* . Once he was in space, he'd sneak onboard the Death Egg and sabotage the weapon. It irked Finitevus to no end that he needed to do the dirty work himself now but he supposed it was his own fault for drawing attention to himself. Had he simply placed the bombs in the power core chamber and fled for it once he'd sabotaged the World Roboticizer, he wouldn't have fought Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally and thus, give Eggman a reason to come to him and then find out about the bombs. Finitevus had tried so hard to be careful and stealthy but he supposed that no matter how careful you are, your plan can still hit a bump in the road. That's why Finitevus ALWAYS had a back-up plan. As he waited for the right moment to warp himself onto the Death Egg, he was approached from behind by one of his Dark Armada members. It was Ravage Bloodfang, a childhood friend of Bunnie Rabbot's who had good intentions for the world but sadly turned to a life of evil after being banished from Adabat for breaking a very important rule. He was now part of Finitevus's Dark Armada. The skull masked-wolf stood beside Finitevus, wondering

what was going on inside the echidna's head at this moment. He considered Finitevus to be a Mobian that was both fascinating and scary at the same time. Fascinating in how smart he was and yet also scary in how smart he was at the same time.

"Finitevus? It's such a shame that the bombs didn't work." said Ravage softly, "I don't suppose you have a contingency plan at all?"

"I do Ravage." said Finitevus, his voice smooth and surprisingly void of any emotion that could hint at anger or disappointment, "Once we're in orbit, I'm going to warp onto the Death Egg again and I'm going to sabotage the Egg Annihilator."

"I believe that's some kind of weapon is it not?" asked Ravage curiously.

"It's the Death Egg's strongest and most powerful weapon in its arsenal." Finitevus spoke matter-of-factly as he explained to Ravage, "It can destroy an entire planet and given how...insane Dr. Eggman is, I wouldn't be too surprise if that is what he's planning on doing now."

"Why would he change his mind and destroy Mobius?" questioned Ravage, "He's been trying to conquer it for two whole years! Why would he change his motives so suddenly?"

"Simple...because he's had his master plan ruined." purred Finitevus, "I had a feeling that after sabotaging his ship and tricking him into undoing his own plan that he would snap and go crazy. And given how he's planning to fire the Egg Annihilator. That alone proves that I was indeed correct. He's grown tired of fighting a battle that he cannot win so he's going the cowardly route in order to win."

"Well we're going to put a stop to that!" declared Ravage fiercely, "How can the Dark Armada get what it wants if Eggman destroys Mobius?!"

"Exactly my skull-masked mercenary." agreed Finitevus, nodding his head slowly and yet somehow managing to look creepy while doing it, "So that's why I MUST do what has to be done."

"Be careful of Metal Sonic and Mecha Sally though, they gave you a tough time last time you were on the Death Egg." warned Ravage, a twinge of concern evident in his voice.

"They won't expect me to come on again." crowed Finitevus, "Eggman will be thinking about destroying us all, he'll think I'm here on *The Nefarious* waiting to be vaporized."

"In that case, good luck on there." said Ravage, still sounding very concerned despite Finitevus's unnatural confidence.

"I do not believe in luck." said Finitevus sinisterly, summoning a warp ring to his hand with a snap of his fingers.

The Death Egg was now in space according to *The Nefarious's* central computer. Finitevus could make his move and do what he had to do in order to finish off Eggman at last.

"Very well. You know what Finitevus...isn't it ironic that this armada's meant to be a group of villains and its purpose is to fulfil the dreams of all the villains and yet...what we're going to do now...will pretty much...make us heroes?" noted Ravage, his voice matching the surprised expression on his face.

"Hardly considering we're doing this for our own needs." sneered Finitevus.

He flicked the warp ring into the air and quickly darted through it. The warp ring closed up behind him as if being sucked away through an invisible sinkhole in the air and Ravage was left alone on *The Nefarious* to do nothing more than to report to the Dark Armada what was going on now. Finitevus would succeed in bringing down Eggman but Ravage couldn't help but having the very human factor of doubt nagging at his mind. Would Finitevus succeed? Even if he did would he be fast enough? Or was Mobius's destruction inevitable? It seemed unusual for a villain to worry about the end of the world considering villains would often try to end it themselves. But Ravage merely wanted justice over Adabat's unnecessarily cruel treatment towards him, not the world to explode and he hoped dearly that Finitevus would be the drop of water that put out the bomb's fuse. Otherwise the Dark Armada would be gone before it

could put its plans into action...

A punch that could break bones sent Sonic whizzing through the air at the speed of baseball that's been struck by the player's bat. Sonic slammed against the wall and yet despite the force of the attack, it didn't shatter any bones. Sonic withstood most of the impact to be precise. This was because of the power ring energy that had been inherited to him at birth thanks to a very desperate father that wanted to save his mother before she could die and take him to her grave as well. He was also full of Chaos Energy from the amount of times he'd used the Chaos Emeralds in battle so it was going to take a lot of pounding to actually make much of an impression on Sonic. Sonic fell down onto the floor after the slam into the wall but he forced himself back onto his feet with a heavy strain in his arms. Dr. Eggman ran towards Sonic with his claws bared and a murderous look in the optics of his mech-suit. Amazing how despite being encased inside a robot, Eggman still managed to make all his rage and hate apparent. Sonic leaped out of the way and left Eggman to crash into the wall. Sonic didn't even so much as smile at Eggman's misfortune. He was so over the edge now that he didn't even find Eggman's pain funny anymore. Eggman twirled around on the heel of the mech-suit's foot and he glowered at Sonic.

"You know what Sonic? I'm actually beginning to miss your annoying one-liners and corny jokes!" gloated Eggman, "What's the matter? Not feeling funny at all?"

"There's no reason to feel funny." said Sonic coldly, "This isn't a game Eggman, this is the fight of our lives! We'll see if you can crack a joke after I tear out your heart and stomp on it as you die!"

"My, my Sonic! You're talking like a villain now!" sneered Eggman mockingly, "Sally will be ashamed of you once she hears about you talking to me like this! Oh wait, she'll be dead once the Egg Annihilator fires!"

"Don't you dare bring up Sally!" snarled Sonic, "This is between us, leave her out of this! And she won't be dead because your stupid beam isn't going to fire you fat barrel of *&^%!"

"Wow, you're even cussing more than usual! You really have gone over the edge haven't you?" crowed Eggman pitifully.

Sonic roared furiously and he spin-dashed Eggman in the head as hard as he could, hoping to tear it clean off so he could attack Eggman from inside. This spin-dash didn't quite take Eggman's head off unfortunately but Sonic hadn't really expected it to. Omega was a tough robot and had been able to fend off even Shadow so Sonic knew he'd need a lot of good hits on Eggman if he had any hope of doing some damage to him. The attack did however make Eggman overbalance and fall onto his back. Eggman tried to pull himself back up onto his feet but Sonic stomp-kicked him back down onto the floor. Then with a surprising amount of force and power, Sonic proceeded to kick Eggman with one foot and actually send him flying over onto his front as if he weighed nothing and was merely a football being kicked by the star player of the team! Eggman came down with a crash so heavy that he actually felt himself being thrown around inside the machine under the impact. Eggman picked himself up and began to chortle although his voice sounded a little pained, meaning Sonic had done some kind of damage to him at least. Sonic stood his ground and prepared to fight again.

"Well done Sonic, I'm very impressed indeed!" laughed Eggman, "You're getting some very good hits on me indeed!"

"You act like this is a rare occurrence." sniffed Sonic, "I ALWAYS get a good hit on you! Why do you think I always smash your stupid robots to pieces?"

"Not every robot of mine has been smashed to pieces Sonic!" noted Eggman, "You never could beat Metal Sonic and I distinctly remember big robots such as my Egg Beater and the Egg-Dragon actually being able to beat you!"

"And guess what? I'm STILL alive and I'm still standing before you!" scoffed Sonic, "Even your best robots haven't finished me off Eggman! And why? Because I have friends who will back me up at any available opportunity! Friends who care about each other and the world they live on! What do you have you disgusting sack of fat? NOTHING! Just a bunch of useless robots who you can't possibly

call "friends" because they're inventions meant to do nothing but make people miserable for YOUR amusement!"

"Pah, I don't need friends anyway!" proclaimed Eggman in a manner that suggested he was utterly confident in that belief, "My robot army is all I need!"

"And what happens when your robot army's gone after I've destroyed it all?" retorted Sonic, "Who will you have to back you up then? Nobody! Especially since when I'm through with you, you'll never build another disgusting robot again!"

He launched himself at Eggman like a missile being fired at an enemy aircraft and he swung both of his feet up in an upwards kick attack. Both of Sonic's feet slammed against the head section of Eggman's mech suit and threw him off his feet and into the control panel of the Death Egg. The panel bent and buckled under the force of the crash and the weight of the mech-suit. Eggman deployed his Gatling guns and thrust his arms forward, the weight of his arms and the deployed weapons pulling him back onto his feet. Eggman roared as his Gatling guns began to spit a shower of bullets at Sonic. The barrels spun at an incredible speed and the flashes of the firing bullets began to blink almost as fast as the barrels were spinning. The bullets pepper-potted the floor as Eggman tried to hit Sonic but the hedgehog once again used his trademark super speed to do what he did best. He dodged all of the bullets and even ran up the wall as Eggman tried to shoot at him. He bounded off the wall, sailing straight over Eggman and landing directly behind him. He turned to his side and zoomed into Eggman, slamming him in the back and whisking him off as his feet. He crashed Eggman into the wall, feeling the impact shuddering through his side as Eggman and the wall met each other. Eggman however twisted around and walloped Sonic with his arm, sending the hedgehog hurling across the room and into a wall. Sonic didn't even have time to fall down onto the floor. Eggman flew over to Sonic with a burst of his rockets and he caught the hedgehog in his hands. As far as Sonic was concerned, he'd have taken the floor. The maniacal scientist cackled as he raised his arm and then slammed Sonic down into the floor. The hedgehog cried out in anguish as he was slammed. It fly like being a fly on the wall that's just inches away from being hit by the

swatter. Eggman picked Sonic up again and the evil robot lover took up a pose that looked like he was about to pitch a baseball. He then swung his arm as hard as he possibly could and threw Sonic across the room at a speed and force that would make any baseball pitcher proud. Eggman threw Sonic so hard that the crippled scientist had to check the mech-suit's arm to make sure he hadn't dislocated anything. He was so busy checking himself that he didn't see Sonic crash face first into the wall. Eggman stopped checking his arm and turned around just in time to see Sonic fall down to the floor, groaning in pain and grimacing tensely. The obese dictator of a scientist knew that he would have to try that again. It seemed to have an effect on his primary nemesis and to his delight, he a very big effect on him. Sonic pushed himself onto his feet but he clearly seemed to be having trouble just doing so. The pained hedgehog forced an eye open as Eggman deployed his Gatling guns again and prepared to shoot at him.

"Any last words Sonic?" sneered Eggman.

"Yes, do you ever stop talking and just shoot for once?" retorted Sonic.

He ducked down just as Eggman unleashed an arsenal of bullets towards him, the killer shots just punching holes into the wall inches above his body. Sonic rolled across the floor and out of harm's way so now he had the opportunity to pick himself up and attack Eggman again. The determined Mobian revved up his feet as fast and as furiously as the most powerful of motorbikes and he launched himself towards Eggman. Eggman knew Sonic was fast but the mustachioed villain still couldn't keep the surprise off of his face as Sonic moved at a speed that was just plain unnatural for a hedgehog, even of this kind. Sonic rammed into Eggman at the speed and force of three charging rhinoceroses and Eggman yelled out in surprise as he was taken off his feet and slammed back first into the wall again. Sonic seemed to be hitting much harder than usual ever since he'd snapped. Were the negative emotions really improving Sonic's battle prowess all that much? Eggman began to grow worried now. Sonic could easily kill him now if he wanted to. If he kept hitting him at the kind of force he was hitting him at now, his life support mech would be destroyed...and he would be dead. He

needed to keep the mech intact in order to stay alive. With beads of sweat running down his head, the determined human deployed another set of weapons his heavy mech suit contained. The arms and the back of the mech deployed a bunch of rocket launchers and Eggman aimed them all at Sonic as he bounced back and prepared to attack him again. Eggman fired the rockets at Sonic desperately, hoping to hit him with at least one rocket. The rockets screamed as they launched out of their sockets and roared towards Sonic. Sonic jumped into the air and tapped down on one of them with his foot. That caused the rocket to careen to the left and then collide with another rocket. That in turn set off a huge chain reaction that caused a terrific explosion that tore through the control room and threw Sonic and Eggman into the wall. Eggman crashed straight through the wall given how hard the impact was and how weak the wall had gotten since the battle had started. Sonic fell through the hole with him for he was on top of Eggman as he crashed through the wall. A fist of flame and smoke punched through the wall after them as if trying to grab Sonic and Eggman and pull them back into the blazing inferno that was quickly engulfing the entire room. It missed and the two rivals found themselves plunging down a very long drop that ended with Eggman crashing down onto the floor with Sonic on top of him, feeling very little of the impact for Eggman had cushioned most of it for him. The evil man threw Sonic off of himself and picked himself up, feeling the mech suit all over for any signs of damage with the arms of the mech. He felt a couple of dents in the back and front but nothing too serious. He was OK...for now. Sonic however was burnt in a few places and clearly in pain. He seemed to be having great trouble just standing up now. Although he looked determined and like he was ready to carry on, his legs were bent as if they couldn't support his weight anymore. He wasn't meant to be in a stance but at the most, it was all he could manage. Eggman and Sonic took their positions and prepared to carry on the battle. They had fallen out of the control room and were on a lower floor of the Death Egg. Luckily, they were in a large steel room that had plenty of room for them to fight. This arena would suffice just nicely. Sonic raised his fists, his face still stoic and serious despite what had happened.

"It's over Eggman. Your control room's destroyed." he muttered, "You can't fire your Egg Annihilator beam."

"Fie, I had a contingency for that!" gloated Eggman, "The Egg Annihilator can be activated by control, OR by my voice! All I need now is an Egg-Pawn to announce to me on the intercom system that the weapon's ready to fire and I'll give the simple voice command that will spell doom on you all!"

"Let's see if you can say anything before I break your mouth!" growled Sonic, "You're not destroying my world and considering that Silver and Blaze are from Mobius's future, it means that your plan doesn't work! Mobius won't get destroyed and Silver and Blaze are proof of that!"

"But I recall Silver looking through a warp ring and moaning over how the world's a wreck." noted Eggman, "So even if I don't wreck Mobius today, who's to say that I won't do it later on? The Egg Annihilator may not destroy Mobius but who cares? Mobius is a wreck in your future it seems and I bet I'm the one responsible! So I will win no matter the outcome!"

"IN YOUR DREAMS YOU MONSTER!" bellowed Sonic.

He proceeded to roll up into a ball and spin-dash Dr. Eggman as callously as he possibly could. Eggman felt like that he'd been hit by a rampaging elephant and for a moment, he began to wonder if a rampaging elephant would actually match up to Sonic's attack or not. As Sonic watched Eggman crash down onto the floor he began to wonder about something in his mind. The Egg Annihilator must have been the beam that Silver and Blaze had been worried about for they had read a history book that explained that the Death Egg fired a beam at Mobius. Sonic knew that the Egg Annihilator wouldn't destroy Mobius since it was intact enough for their to still be Mobians in the future. But Mobius was a post apocalyptic wreck in the future with few Mobians still living. Would Eggman somehow cause that to happen? Maybe the Egg Annihilator wasn't strong enough to destroy the planet but at the very most cause unimaginable amounts of damage? Sonic knew that even if the beam didn't destroy Mobius, he couldn't let it fire down on the planet. Sonic waited for Eggman to stand back up before snarling like a wild dog and zooming towards Eggman. He had one intention on his mind now. Kill Eggman and do it as quickly as possible before disaster struck...

Somewhere on the Death Egg, a large golden glow filled the entire room as a warp ring opened up from thin air. Out of the warp ring stepped Dr. Finitevus. The albino echidna looked both ways before fully emerging from the warp ring. The coast was clear so he had nothing to worry about. He had warped himself into the elevator that he had taken earlier to go down to the Death Egg's power core chamber and steal the Master Emerald from him. He figured that the quickest way to get to where he needed to go was just to warp himself onto the elevator already. Now on the elevator, he simply thumbed a button and ordered the elevator to take him down the furthest it could take him. Upon studying the Death Egg's schematics that he'd been given by Fiona, he knew what was at the very bottom floor of the Death Egg. The Egg Annihilator itself. It took a couple of precious minutes for the elevator to take Finitevus down to the bottom floor and upon arrival, Finitevus darted out of the elevator before the doors had fully opened. The Dark Chaos Energy powered Mobian took a glimpse at what he'd just stepped into.

He was in the Egg Annihilator's power chamber. It was a huge room that filled the entire bottom floor of the Death Egg. There was a huge amount of machinery that was working in unison to activate the weapon. Finitevus had to shield his eyes from an exceptionally bright object that threw light all around the room. This was the beam powering up, a huge concentrated ball of energy contained only in a huge glass tube that was just waiting to be fired. Staring at that for more than even a few seconds would instantly blind a person. Finitevus's glasses darkened the glow for him a little but he still had to shield his eyes from the light before he could be blinded. The tube had an opening bottom and once that was open, the beam could fire upon Eggman's command. It amazed Finitevus to think that he was staring at the one weapon onboard the Death Egg that could actually bring the whole world to an end. It made him think of the kind of energy he would have when Operation: Enerjak Reborn was completed. But now was not the time to think about that, the scientist knew that he was working against the clock and that the weapon could fire at any point now.

Shielding his eyes from the glow of the beam's energy but still

keeping them open so he could see where he was going, Finitevus edged his way around the room until he found something that he desperately needed. A computer screen. This screen was used primarily for altering the Egg Annihilator. If Eggman needed to stop the beam from firing then the computer would instantly stop the beam once Eggman gave the order. It could also be used to change the amount of power it would fire. If Eggman wanted a smaller blast than the computer would take away some of the beam's power so the Egg Annihilator would be less powerful. It wasn't operated by anybody, it worked by itself but it was able to be manually operated should the computer require manual operation. Finitevus rubbed his hands together gleefully. This was just too easy for him now. He ducked down behind the wall of metal the computer was attached too so the glow of the beam's energy wouldn't bother him anymore and he crept towards the computer. He activated it and he stared at the screen. The screen was responding to his fingertips, very fortuitous for him. Smiling wickedly, the evil scientist began typing away on the computer. In a few minutes, maybe more or maybe less, he would reset the Egg Annihilator and cause it to destroy not Mobius, but the Death Egg itself. Finitevus stared at the screen as his dancing fingers flew over the keys and began altering the beam. This was mere child's play for him, nothing he couldn't handle. How simple human technology was to hack! Finitevus could imagine hacking into technology from Eggman's world as if it was nothing should he ever visit Eggman's world. It proved one thing that was for sure, Mobian technology was superior in everyway. No wonder Eggman couldn't beat the Mobians, they were just too advanced for him. Finitevus felt very grand indeed to think that his race as truly superior and because of this, Eggman was going to die today...

Eggman let out a cry of amazement and horror as he was tossed into the air like a basketball being thrown at the hoop. He had just been callously kicked into the air by a furious and savage Sonic the Hedgehog and despite Sonic being smaller and lighter than Eggman was, the kick had somehow managed to send him flying. Sonic clearly was stronger than what his size implied, something that Eggman had found out a long time ago given how he always seemed to be able to destroy his ingenious inventions. Eggman

crashed down onto the floor with a force that actually left a small dent in it! The dent in the floor was big enough for Eggman to fill with just the fist of his mech-suit. Eggman stood back up, not looking very fazed by the attack and still looking as persistent as ever. Sonic zoomed up towards Eggman at top speed but the scientist held up his arms to block Sonic's attack. Sonic slammed against Eggman's arms in a spin-dash that was still powerful enough to knock him over. But the attack did no damage to the mech suit's arms. Before Eggman could stand back up, the blue-furred hedgehog zoomed up to him and once again, kicked him into the air. Eggman however manoeuvred himself as he was spiralling through the air and he did it in such a way that he landed back down on his own feet. Eggman deployed one of his rocket launchers and instead of launching several missiles for he didn't want a repeat of what happened earlier in his control room, he launched just one this time. The missile whooshed towards his nemesis but despite the speed of the missile, Sonic's speed was greater. Sonic ran out of the missile's way and left it to just punch through the wall. He would have been killed had the missile hit him square on. But Sonic had been just the tiniest of a fraction too slow. The missile had missed him but the force of the explosion just managed to catch him and trip him up. Sonic felt it on his feet and he cried out in shock as he was whisked onto his back and sent skidding across the floor for a couple of metres. The wall had a hole where the missile had just hit it but the hole didn't seem to lead to anywhere important so there was little reason to go through it. Dr. Eggman clapped his metal hands together in a faux display of applause as the hedgehog forced himself back onto his feet.

"You never cease to amaze me Sonic! You're so fast that you can dodge just about anything I throw at you, even if it's at a speed on par with yours!" cackled Eggman delightedly.

"Well I AM the fastest thing alive." sniffed Sonic.

"You maybe so but even that won't save you in this battle." declared Eggman, "You will not survive Sonic and neither will your pathetic friends! Why do you fight Sonic? You know that you're going to fail to save Mobius! Your "Silver and Blaze" have pretty much said so themselves! Mobius is a wreck in the future! Is this what you're

destined to Sonic? To fight for a world that's going to die anyway despite your best efforts to save it?"

Sonic's face was already furious looking but somehow, as Eggman observed his nemesis, he managed to look even more furious as he was taunting the hedgehog mercilessly.

"I'll tell you why I fight Eggman, because I have something you NEVER could have!" retorted Sonic, "I have many things to fight for! And I fight for those many things...because I love them! I love my friends, I love my world and most of all...I love my life and I'm not going to let you take ANY of that away! Mobius may well end in the future but I have two very caring and loyal friends from the future who will find out why Mobius ends in the future and warn me and my friends so that we can prevent it from happening! I always win Eggman and I'm going to win today and in the battle to keep Mobius from ending, I'll win that one too!"

Sonic then proceeded to run around Dr. Eggman at a blinding speed. The hedgehog was nothing more than a blue blur that seemed to circle around the life-support bound villain. Eggman began to wonder what Sonic was doing but he quickly found out. Sonic was attempting to use his Sonic Tornado move, a move he only used on special occasions given how dizzying it was. Sonic ran around and around in the circle faster and faster with every passing second until he was at top speed. From up above, it would just look like Eggman was standing in the middle of a blue ring painted on the floor. Eggman tried to fly out of the building up tornado but something was keeping him from flying anywhere. The spiralling wind that Sonic was building up as he carried on running and running was too strong for Eggman to escape from. The fat, bald human screamed a terrified scream as he was suddenly whisked off his feet and spun around in the centre of the Sonic Tornado. The tornado got bigger and bigger as Sonic continued to run and Eggman was spun around more and more until he reached the top of the funnel of wind he was swept up in. Upon reaching the top, Eggman was hurled out of the tornado like disposed junk and he screamed as he spiralled out of control through the air and crashed head first into the wall. The impact crushed the entire head section of his mech-suit. It was now flattened like a pancake and completely

useless to Eggman. The damaged suit came free from the wall and fall down onto the ground with a crash that shook Eggman from inside and made the mech-suit shudder. Sonic began to pant, pleased that his attack had worked but tired from the Sonic Tornado. It was a very tiring move after all but it had been totally worth it to do this much to Eggman. The head section was smashed and flattened against the top of Eggman's mech suit, he wouldn't be able to see with it since the optics would be crushed too. Eggman somehow managed to force himself onto his feet but he clearly seemed to hae trouble doing so. He swayed alarmingly as he got onto his own two feet and he fought to keep himself balanced. He then looked around wildly, clearly panicked over the fact he couldn't see anymore.

"GAH! CURSE YOU SONIC! I CANNOT SEE!" he roared furiously, "YOU'VE CRUSHED THE MECH'S HEAD!"

"Good, so now you can't see me as I beat the crap outta ya!" snarled Sonic, his face twisted into a fierce expression that would make any predator of the animal kingdom proud.

Sonic zoomed towards Eggman in a charge that could rival a Triceratops and he spin-dashed Eggman as hard as he could in the mid-section. The attack caught the blinded Eggman completely off-guard and as he was sent hurling into the floor, his reaction was more a mixture of surprise and fear than one of pain. Eggman picked himself up only to get another spin-dash that knocked him down onto the floor. Sonic then proceeded to stomp-kick Eggman in the back while he was down, his attack very nearly denting the back of the mech-suit. Eggman desperately activated the jets in his back in order to escape from Sonic. He zoomed across the floor...and crashed straight into the wall again for he couldn't see where he was going at all. Eggman however had enough time to feel around for the mech's head section and then rip it clean off so he could now see properly. To see even better, he tore a piece of the mech's chest section off so now he could see straight ahead and up above. The trouble with that was he was now exposed. Sonic could aim directly at his head and maybe kill him. A spin-dash to the head would easily finish him off, he was already crippled and on life-support, he couldn't possibly take a blow to the head. Eggman knew he had to stay on his toes and rely heavily on defence if he was to

stay alive. Sonic gave Eggman the first smile he'd ever managed during the entire battle but this was a smile of sheer triumph and deviousness. He knew that Eggman had pretty much invited him to kill him now. All he had to do was hit Eggman directly in the head and that would be the end of it. He spin-dashed, aiming directly at Eggman's head just as predicted. Eggman shielded his face with the mech's arms and blocked Sonic's attack. Sonic ricocheted off of the mech's arms and the cobalt coloured hero found himself careening into the floor. Sonic grimaced as he tried to fight off the stinging pain in his side but he sound found himself having to deal with more pain. The desperate scientist grabbed Sonic by the legs and picked him clean up off the floor. Eggman hoisted Sonic above his head and then slammed him down into the floor as hard as he could. Sonic let out a terrible yell of pain as he was slammed. This was among some of the worst pain he'd ever felt and he had a feeling Eggman wasn't going to relent. Eggman smacked Sonic into the floor again and again, slamming him harder and harder every time he swung him and then he proceeded to throw him into the wall. Sonic hit the wall at a force that should have fractured at least something in his body but surprisingly enough, didn't do so. Sonic felt like his bones were all broken though as he fell down onto to the floor in pain. Eggman thundered towards Sonic like a lumbering troll waiting to hammer its prey into the ground and just as Sonic picked himself up, Eggman grabbed Sonic and hammered him against the wall. Then he held Sonic directly in front of himself, sneering at his battered nemesis triumphantly. Sonic had a few bruises on his body and he appeared to be having trouble keeping his eyes open. The bruised hedgehog struggled in Eggman's grasp, trying desperately to get free. Try as he might though, he couldn't do it. Eggman tightened his metallic grip around Sonic, squeezing him even harder and making him cry out as the air was squeezed out of him like water being squeezed out of a sponge. Eggman's hideous face grinned at him. Sonic could hardly say he missed seeing Eggman's horrible face ever since he'd been put in the mech suit and seeing it now for the first time in forever, he wished he still couldn't see it.

"How about that Sonic? I win!" crowed Eggman, "Now I have you in my hands, I can crush you like a bug and put an end to this stupid rivalry at last! Two whole years we've been fighting this forlorn war of ours! And now it ends with you crushed in my metal hands!"

"It...isn't...over...until the hedgehog...stops running!" yelled Sonic.

He then proceeded to start moving his legs back and forth simultaneously and he edged them close to Eggman's mid-section. His fast moving feet walloped Eggman just below where his face was and he cried out in alarm. Eggman dropped Sonic as he was hit, giving Sonic the perfect opportunity to kick the mech-suit in the groin section and send him tumbling over. Eggman picked himself up and deployed every weapon his mech suit contained save for the chest mounted weaponry as the chest section was gone. He fired a montage of bullets, missiles and lasers at Sonic, hoping to kill him in the most ridiculously brutal and over-the-top way as possible. But Sonic had expected him to try that so he proceeded to dodge all of the attacks, not once getting hit by a single bullet, missile or laser. Eggman grew increasingly desperate as Sonic kept dodging his attacks. The vulnerable scientist knew that Sonic was going to get him so he tried as hard as he could to kill him now. But he just couldn't hit his nemesis, he was much too fast. Sonic was actually going a little bit slower than usual thanks to the pain Eggman had given him but he still pressed on, forcing every muscle in his body to work as hard as they could. He finally ran around behind Eggman and spin-dashed him in the back, throwing him down onto the floor. He was still firing as he fell onto the floor and he sent himself shooting up into the air at the height of London's CanaryWharfTower. Eggman yelled a crazed, frantic, terrified yell as he fell down heavily towards the floor, Sonic just down below waiting for him to land so he could pummel him some more. The moment Eggman was in reach, Sonic jumped straight up into the air and walloped Eggman directly in the torso, throwing him up into the air again. The Mobian hedgehog waited for Eggman to come falling down again before jumping up into the air and stomp-kicking him in the side. That threw Eggman into a wall and Eggman hit the wall so hard that not only did he dent the wall but he crushed the jet boosters on the mech's back, rendering him incapable of flight for the remainder of the battle. Eggman crashed down onto the floor, the impact feeling much harder than it would have been given he was exposed and he let out a loud, groaning moan of defeat. He couldn't possibly continue this battle now. He was exposed, dented, beaten and incapable of flying anymore. The mad scientist was dead meat now and his blue-furred arch-enemy was going to see to

it that the meaning of the term "dead-meat" became literal in every possible way. Sonic advanced menacingly towards Dr. Eggman in a manner that would make a demon nervous. His face was devoid of even the faintest hint of emotion. Eggman couldn't possibly tell what Sonic was feeling like at this moment but he had a nasty feeling that he could guess. Sonic kicked Eggman upright and left him leaning pathetically against the wall like a hobo on the side of the street. The evil man's face was nothing short of fear and horror as Sonic placed his foot against the pelvis section of the mech suit and glowered directly into his eyes. His teeth were gritted and his fists were clenched together so hard that you'd be lucky if you could pry them open with a crowbar.

"I win Eggman, as usual." said Sonic coldly, "Now then, it's time to deliver what I promised. Your death..."

"No Sonic, please, I beg of you! Don't do it!" whimpered Eggman, feebly hoping that he could coax Sonic out of his killer intent despite knowing that he would fail miserably, "You're a hero! You cannot kill me! Think of what that'll do to your reputation!"

"Nobody will know that I killed you Eggman because when I come back to Mobius, I'll say that you died when the Death Egg exploded." snapped Sonic, "Your death will be nothing more than an accident as far as anybody's concerned."

"And what if they find out the truth?" purred Eggman wickedly, "They'll all scorn your name, disgusted to think that you of all people has stooped down to MY level! You're supposed to be better than me and yet you're going to kill me like a bloodthirsty villain? You're not the big Hero of Mobius everybody thinks you are Sonic! You're just as bad as I am! And just imagine what your precious Sally's going to think when she learns about what you did..."

"NOBODY is going to find out I killed you Eggman!" bellowed Sonic, "Nobody CAN find out! Once you're dead, I'm going to destroy this goddamn ship and leave your body to roast along with it and when everybody sees its remains burning up in the atmosphere, they'll see that the Death Egg's destroyed and you were taken with it! And they'll believe me because as you know, I'm not the lying type! I'll just say you tried to fight me off but I got past you and destroyed

your ship and got away whereas you did not! They'll never know that you died at my hands and not because you couldn't escape from the Death Egg before it blew up."

"You say you're not the lying type and yet you're going to tell a lie like that just to keep your image, thus making you the world's biggest hypocrite and liar?" snorted Eggman, "I was wrong about you Sonic, you really ARE a villain aren't you?"

"DON'T YOU DARE LABEL ME AS A VILLAIN!" snarled Sonic, "I'm nothing like you and I never will be! Killing you is for a good cause and nothing's gonna stop me from finishing you off!"

He then proceeded to lash out with his hands and grab Eggman by the neck. The terrified dictator gagged in fear as Sonic strangled him, hoping to kill him at last. Eggman couldn't do anything about the enraged hedgehog now. He was too weak to try and stop Sonic from killing him and he was already rapidly losing air. Being on life-support, he was weaker than he normally would have been so something like a strangle was enough to have him panicked and pretty much on the verge of death. But Sonic wasn't going to strangle Eggman to death, he was going to snap his neck like a twig and finish him off as swiftly as that. Sonic's hands gripped even tighter on the soft, fleshy neck of his nemesis and he prepared to make the killer blow. But something began nagging in the back of his mind. Sonic's hands started screaming at him, begging for his brain to give them the order to finish the job. But at the same time, Sonic began to second-guess his motives. Could he kill Eggman? If so then would it be worth it? So many good things would come out of Eggman's death, it had to be done! But what would Sonic achieve from killing Eggman? Many good things but at the same time...he would have crossed a line that nobody wanted to cross. For the entire war he had strived to prove that he was better than Dr. Eggman. He was not a cold-blooded killer, he was a fighter for justice and killing Eggman so mercilessly like that was NOT justice, it was revenge. His entire motivation was based on revenge and Sonic began to feel ashamed of himself for doing so. He was not evil, he wasn't a killer and today was not the day he'd go back on his word. Sonic also thought of Sally, the woman he loved with all his heart. Sally wouldn't want him to do this. She would want Eggman to

be brought to justice. Sonic loved Sally very much and considered it abominable for him to betray her like this. She formed the Royal Fighters Service for a good cause and to bring peace back to Mobius. She did not form the Royal Fighters for this at all. Sonic's hands loosened from around Eggman's neck and his expression relaxed. He let out a heavy sigh before glaring at Eggman again, the scientist worrying over what Sonic was going to do next. The hedgehog just grabbed the side of his face and jammed his own into it.

"You're right...I am no killer." said Sonic dryly, "That's why I'm not going to kill you after all. But you are going to pay for your crimes. I have a warp ring on me and I'm going to take you straight to a prison cell. Then you'll rot in that cell and be gone forever. And we will all dance on your grave you sorry excuse for an actual being."

"Oh Sonic...you really should have killed me when you had the chance." crowed Eggman.

Before Sonic could ask Eggman what he was on about, an announcement boomed over the intercom system all over the Death Egg. It said:

"Egg-Annihilator ready to fire, awaiting further orders."

Reacting quickly, Eggman thundered at the top of his voice "Egg Annihilator FIIIIIIRRRRRE!" Sonic now began to feel like an idiot. How could he have dared to hesitate even for a minute?! He could have killed Eggman when he had the chance and yet he blew it and now because of his blunder, Eggman was going to destroy his planet! Why did he be so stupid?! Why didn't he finish off Eggman already?! Sonic was going to rectify that mistake though. He lunged for Eggman's throat again but Eggman swatted him away with his arm, throwing him directly into the wall. Eggman got back to his feet and he laughed like a maniac.

"You had the chance, YOU HAD THE CHANCE! And yet you was stupid enough to spare me Sonic!" gloated Eggman, his every expression and quote a mockery of Sonic's inability to finish the job "You could have killed me, you really could have! But you didn't! And now Mobius is going to be destroyed! And it's all your fault Sonic!

You'd doomed your own planet! How does that feel Mr. Big Hero of Mobius?!"

Sonic growled like a wild tiger as he got back up off the floor.

"I don't know why I did something so stupid Eggman, but I'm going to make up for it!" yelled Sonic, "I'll destroy your Death Egg before the beam can fire and THEN I'm going to leave you to die with it!"

"Just try it hedgehog, you're much too late!" sneered Eggman.

Sonic knew that deep inside, he really was too late. The beam was firing as they spoke and Mobius was going to be reduced to fragments. But he wasn't going to let Eggman stand victorious before him. Sonic spin-dashed straight into Eggman and slammed him straight through the wall, sending him plummeting down a huge drop that led to another floor lower down in the ship.

And that was when it happened.

The entire bottom section of the Death Egg suddenly exploded into a colossal cloud of flames and smoke that surged up the ship like it was a giant chimney. The Egg Annihilator had indeed fired, but directly inside the Death Egg itself. The beam had never left the ship, it was still in the power chamber when it fired. The resulting energy colliding against itself ended in disaster and now a giant explosion was tearing the Death Egg apart. The huge fireball soared up the Death Egg and Eggman rather unfortunately seemed to be falling down towards it. Eggman screamed his final scream as the flames rushed up to snatch him down into its deadly grasp. Eggman was mincemeat, more than that he was toast, completely roasted alive in a huge fiery inferno that incinerated him in seconds, mech-suit and all. He never stood a chance, his final screams dying away as the fire claimed his life forever. He didn't even know what had happened as he was toasted by the flames. Eggman was gone, dead at last and a thing of the past for the Mobian race. Sonic gasped in shock as he watched his lifelong enemy burn to death in a pool of fire that was rushing up to meet him. Now Sonic was pleased Eggman was dead...but he knew that he wasn't safe yet. Far from it. The explosion was ripping apart the Death Egg, punching holes through walls, burning through floors and tearing pieces apart from

the inside out. The entire bottom section and the first few floors of the Death Egg were gone, now the rest of the ship was being claimed along with it. Sonic could feel the floor getting hotter and hotter as the explosion climbed up after him. It had claimed many victims already, Egg-Pawns on every floor, Metal Sonic, Mecha Sally and now Dr. Eggman himself. But it was hungry for me and it wanted to take Sonic's life along with all the others it had taken to their graves. Sonic screamed in terror as the floor began to break apart, jets of flames breaking through the tiles and sending them hurling into the air. He could feel the section of floor he was standing on getting ready to take-off with him on it. The explosion then blasted its way through the floor, sending Sonic hurling into the air higher than he could have expected to be thrown. But Sonic knew that there was only one way left for him to go and that was down. He could already see himself falling back down into the blazing inferno that was chasing him up through the Death Egg, desperate to catch him and burn him alive. He would be incinerated in seconds along with Eggman and unlike Eggman, he didn't deserve to die like this, he had to save himself and fast.

Sonic felt a twinge of despair as he suddenly stopped soaring upwards and found himself plummeting back down towards the ground. The flames were waiting for him. Sonic screamed in terror as his death was coming to meet him. He could imagine the horror on his friend's faces once they found out he was dead. They would never be able to live without him, especially Tails or Sally. The hedgehog could just see how destroyed his little brother figure and girlfriend would be when they found out he was dead. And it seemed that was just what was going to happen now. But then the doomed hedgehog remembered what he'd said to Eggman earlier. He had a warp ring! He'd used it to get onto the ship in the first place! But could he use it in time to get off of the Death Egg? It was the only chance Sonic had of survival and he had to take it. Sonic fished out the warp ring and flicked it ahead of himself, praying the explosion wouldn't reach the warp ring and take away his only chance of survival. The ring opened up just metres above the onslaught of flames and smoke down below. Sonic put his arms to the sides to increase the speed of his descent as he headed straight for the warp ring. His position was perfect, he plunged straight through the middle of the ring. He disappeared through the portal and the ring

closed up behind him as if as desperate to escape as he was. The flames rushed up the corridor, passing through where the warp ring had just been. They had failed to catch Sonic but they still had the rest of the ship to destroy. And that was exactly what happened. The explosion continued to tear the Death Egg apart until finally, the ship exploded into fragments, scattering itself across the void of space just above Mobius's atmosphere. The Death Egg was no more, never to roboticize another Mobian or attempt to destroy Mobius ever again. Only chunks of metal remained of the deadly vessel, nothing more. Some of the debris began falling towards Mobius. They would burn up in the atmosphere and never be seen again. The rest would just float around in space forever. All of this had been observed by *The Nefarious* , the only other ship in space along with the Death Egg. And on *The Nefarious* stood a very triumphant Dr. Finitevus. He of course had been the one who caused Eggman's ultimate demise. He'd sabotaged the Egg Annihilator and had been off the Death Egg minutes before Eggman ordered it to fire. All he did after that was stand and watch and the entire scene before him had been glorious. His plan had worked, Eggman was dead and the Dark Armada was victorious. Finitevus smiled wickedly as he said a couple of words that meant a whole lot and summed up everything that had happened to himself.

"Mission...accomplished..."

The warp ring opened up in the middle of New Mobotropolis where the rain continued to pour and the thunder continued to boom with the occasional flash of lightening to accompany it. Out of the warp ring plunged Sonic the Hedgehog. He crashed face-first into a puddle of water as he fell out of the warp ring. Sonic began to cough and splutter as he found himself in a puddle of cold, freshly fallen rain water. He sat up straight and realized that he was back in New Mobotropolis and was getting soaked by the rain. Given his disdain for water, he wasn't at all pleased to be coming back to his home city while it was hammering it down with rain. But Sonic didn't care, all he cared about was that he was back home at last. He managed to crack a smile as he looked all around the city and saw that it was intact and just how he'd left it. He was home and he couldn't

possibly be happier about that fact then he ever had been before. He'd been in a tough battle with Dr. Eggman and was still feeling bruised and battered, as well as shaken from his near death experience so home was where he wanted to be more than anything else. He stood up from the puddle and he ran over to the New Mobotropolis Hospital. There was one person he wanted to see right now and he knew where he'd find her. He entered the hospital, paused for a moment so he could shake himself dry and then he ran over to the counter where an antelope in a nurse's outfit was sitting.

"Hi there, which room is Queen Sally Acorn in right now?" asked Sonic quickly.

"Room number 8643 sir." said the antelope.

"Thank you." said Sonic, quickly running off to find the room.

He didn't bother taking any of the elevators since they would just be slow and take forever. He took the stairs and after running up a few flights, he found the room he was looking for. A sign pointed down a corridor and it said "Rooms 8640-8650". Sonic ran down the corridor until he found Room 8643 and he walked inside. Not surprisingly, he found himself looking into a room that was full of all the Royal Fighters in the R.F.S. They had stayed by Sally's side the entire time, hoping to keep her comfortable and waiting anxiously for Sonic to return. The moment Sonic opened up the door, the Royal Fighters looked in his direction and erupted into ecstatic cheering. Sonic's presence alone had been enough to make them feel so much happier. Tails in particular threw himself into Sonic's arms and hugged him as tightly as he possibly could.

"SONIC!" squealed Tails excitedly, "You're back! We were all so worried about you! We feared you weren't going to come back!"

"What happened between you and Eggman?" asked Amy, "You look pretty banged up! Did he hurt you too much?"

"Is the Death Egg destroyed? Where's Eggman? What's happened to him?" asked Knuckles.

"Guys, guys, please! I'll explain everything!" chuckled Sonic,

suddenly feeling a lot more like his old self now that he was back with his friends, "First things first, how are you all?"

"Much better now you're back." said Matilda softly, "How are you?"

"A little bruised but I'll live." said Sonic casually, "Now then, prepare for the news of a lifetime everybody, you're not going to believe what I'm going to tell you."

"It's good news I hope." said Vector.

"It is." replied Sonic, "Dr. Eggman...is dead. He's actually, totally, for real...dead. I saw it with my own eyes. I spin-dashed him down a long drop and then for some reason...the Death Egg exploded. The entire bottom section erupted into flames and Eggman fell into the flames. I watched him burn alive as he fell into the flames. He won't have survived that one, especially since his mech-suit was damaged and he was exposed. Not to mention the Death Egg was exploding so even if he survived that he's definitely dead now. Eggman is no more my friends. We've won, the war is over. Mobius is free at long, LONG last!"

The Royal Fighters could only stare in silence at Sonic as if he'd just told them a story that was impossible to believe. The seconds ticked slowly by before the Royal Fighters erupted into a tumultuous cheer of happiness. There was much cheering, yelling delightedly and hugging going on for several moments before the atmosphere calmed down enough for anybody to speak.

"Eggman's dead at last! YAHOOOOOO!" squealed Amy, punching the air excitedly, "Finally, the fat guy's gone for good! All of my YES!"

"It's amazing! Eggman's dead and Mobius is free from his tyranny at long last!" cried Cosmo, hugging Tails with glee.

"I know, it's incredible Cosmo!" agreed Tails, hugging the delighted Seedrian back "Finally, Mobius is free from that maniac! We never have to worry about him again!"

"Ah never thought ah'd see the day when Eggman finally died and

we emerged victorious! And yet it's happened!" shrieked Bunnie delightedly, "Ah sure hope ah ain't dreamin'!"

"It's no dream luv, it's all too real." said Geoffrey happily, embracing his cyborg girlfriend with joy, "The blighter's gone for good."

"Pity Sonic didn't save some for the rest of us." muttered Shadow grumpily, "But I suppose I can let it slide since Eggman's dead for real at last."

"Indeed he is Shadow." purred Rouge, wrapping her arms around Shadow's arm and making the hedgehog stare at her in surprise, "Now we can all live without having to worry about the fat man anymore."

Shadow nodded agreeably and smiled at the beautiful bat. He'd wanted Eggman dead since the day he found out he'd lied to him about being Eggman's creation and now he'd gotten his wish. With Eggman dead alongside Black Doom, Shadow could fully enjoy his life on Mobius and also enjoy his time with his friend Rouge.

"Though one has to wonder why the Death Egg suddenly exploded." mused Silver, "Did the Death Egg malfunction or something?"

"Eggman tried to fire some kind of weapon known as the Egg Annihilator at Mobius." explained Sonic, "He was trying to destroy the world but...I guess the weapon malfunctioned and blew up the Death Egg. I'm not sure why that would happen but I'm glad it did. Otherwise we'd all be dead."

"Eggman attempted to destroy Mobius?" gasped Blaze, "And the weapon he was using...maybe THAT was the beam me and Silver were worried about when we read about the Death Egg firing one at Mobius!"

"But the Death Egg blew up so that won't have been responsible for the destruction of our future." murmured Silver "So while it's great to know Eggman didn't do it...we're now left wondering who or what did."

"Let's also consider the fact Finitevus now has the Chaos Emeralds

too." noted Knuckles, remembering Angel Island's unfortunate destruction and how Tails losing the green Chaos Emerald to Finitevus had led to it, "So Mobius isn't quite safe yet. Who knows what that maniac's doing with the emeralds now!"

"We'll deal with Finitevus another time." said Sonic, "Right now, we should just celebrate Eggman's demise and after that workout, I'm pooped. We all deserve a rest after what's happened lately."

"I agree." said Tails, "We'll rest up for now and then see to finding Finitevus and getting the emeralds back."

"Me and Blaze will return to our timeline for now." said Silver, "See if we can find out what REALLY causes the end of the world this time. We will be back to warn you about it, that much we can promise."

"Before we go Silver...did you retrieve the Sol Emeralds?" asked Blaze curiously. She remembered that Eggman had used a Chaos Magnet to snatch away the Sol Emeralds from her, preventing her from using them to destroy the Death Egg in the first place.

"I'm afraid not Blaze." said Sonic grimly, "Like I said, the Death Egg blew up. They're likely completely destroyed now. But that shouldn't be a problem, I mean the Chaos Emeralds still exist now so the Sol Emeralds shouldn't be gone since they're the future Chaos Emeralds right?"

"Depends if history's been changed in a way that alters that or not." said Silver, "We'll have a look and see."

Sonic handed Silver the warp ring he'd used to get onboard the Death Egg and Silver opened it up. The warp ring opened up a portal that led back to Mobius 200 years in the future. As predicted, Mobius was still a wreck since Eggman wasn't the one responsible for Mobius's destruction. Silver remembered that Angel Island no longer existed thanks to history getting changed so he didn't bother warping over to it. He did however look in the apartment that he and Blaze lived in now and to his surprise, he saw all seven Sol Emeralds safely displayed in Blaze's room. Since Angel Island was gone, it as very likely that in the new timeline, Blaze simply displayed the emeralds in her room for safe-keeping. That indicated

to Silver that the Chaos Emeralds must get retrieved from Finitevus at some point for the Sol Emeralds still exist in the future. Silver took his head out of the warp ring and smiled at Blaze.

"The Sol Emeralds are in your room now Blaze." he explained, "The Chaos Emeralds still become the Sol Emeralds in the future and given there's no Angel Island to keep the emeralds on, you obviously kept them in your room in this new timeline."

"Thank goodness." said Blaze with a sigh, "I don't want to disappoint my mother by losing the emeralds like that. I promised her I'd take good care of them no matter what."

"And you can still keep that promise." said Silver with a wink, "Well Sonic, we'll be going now. We'll see you again when we've actually worked out what dooms Mobius in the future."

"I know you will guys, see you around and thanks for helping as best as you could." said Sonic happily, waving goodbye to his future friends.

Silver and Blaze waved goodbye and then walked through the warp ring hand-in-hand, transporting themselves from Mobius in the past back to Mobius in the future. It made Sonic sad to think that while the happiest day of their lives was going on, Silver and Blaze still had a wreck of a world to live in. Why must the day always end happily for him and his friends but not Silver and Blaze? Did fate just really hate them or something? Sonic hoped that they'd find out what doomed Mobius eventually so they could get their well-deserved happy ending too. The moment Silver and Blaze left, Sonic turned to all the Royal Fighters.

"Well then, I guess there's nothing to do now other than prepare ourselves a celebration to celebrate Eggman's demise. And this time, it'll be a REAL celebration." said Sonic casually.

"I'm certainly up for it blue dude!" cried Mandy happily, "Hell yeah, we can party all night and have as much fun as possible!"

"Before we do so though can you give me a private moment or two?" asked Sonic, "You know, with Sally? OK?"

"Sure pal." said Tails, "We'll go to Royal HQ and wait for you Sonic. I bet Sally will be happy to hear the good news."

"I know she will." said Sonic happily.

With that said, the Mobians left the room to give Sonic a moment with Sally. They all understood more than he realized how much this moment would mean for him. As the Royal Fighters all left the room and Nicole teleported back to Royal HQ to meet them there, Sonic knelt down beside Sally's bed. Surprisingly enough and at the same time scarily enough, Sally had slept through the whole thing. Her coma must have been deeper than Sonic possibly could have predicted. He knew that Sally wasn't dead though for there was a heart monitor recording her pulse next to her bed and it was picking up a heartbeat. It had actually grown a little stronger over the time she'd been in the room so that meant Sally was recovering to some degree. Maybe all the noise in the room had actually started waking her up and she needed just a little more prompting. Sonic looked at his pained, tortured girlfriend with an overwhelming sadness. He'd done this to her and it was all Eggman's fault for roboticizing him and forcing him to do this to her. Sonic put a tender hand on Sally and he shook her lightly.

"Sally? It's me, Sonic. I'm not a robot anymore." whispered Sonic, "Please wake up Sally, I've got some good news for you."

Sally didn't respond. She still lay on the bed, still and unconscious like she had for the past few minutes. Sonic shook her again, hoping that Sally would finally wake up. He shook Sally for a couple of minutes before suddenly, Sally began to stir in her bed. She was mumbling sleepily as she was coming to. Sonic's heart leapt, Sally was going to wake up at last! That alone made him feel so much happier. Sally stopped stirring and she began to open her eyes. How Sonic had missed those beautiful blue eyes while she'd been out. He felt very happy to see them open again. Sally's eyes fully opened and her vision began to clear up.

"Oooooh...where am I?" mumbled Sally, "Wait a minute...my clothes are back on..." she slurred as she realized that she could feel her clothes on her body, "I'm not naked anymore..."

She turned to one side and realized that she wasn't alone in the room. She was lying on a bed and somebody was kneeling beside her. It was Sonic the Hedgehog. The squirrel's eyes widened in surprise as she saw Sonic kneeling beside her. He wasn't a robot anymore! Was she dead and this was heaven? Or...

"Hi Sally." said Sonic softly, "It's so good to see you awake again."

"S-S-Sonic?" stammered Sally, "Wha...what? Am...Am I dead?" she asked worriedly, "Is this heaven?"

"No Sal, you're alive." said Sonic, taking her hand into his own and stroking it with his thumbs tenderly, "You're not dead although you were pretty close to it. I'm not a robot anymore and neither is anybody else. Mobius has been de-roboticized and Eggman is dead."

"I really must be in heaven then." said Sally with a slight smirk on her face, "Are you sure I'm not dead Sonic?"

"Sally, I PROMISE you, you're not dead!" exclaimed Sonic, feeling a little pained to hear Sally thinking that about herself, "You're not dead, honest! You're alive, I'll prove it to you if I have to!"

Sally stared at Sonic and she realized something about his body language and facial features. He was being deathly serious with her. He clearly wasn't joking and if Sally was indeed dead, this was way too realistic and convincing for it to just be a figment of her imagination. Sonic was telling the truth, she was alive after all. Sally sat up in her bed and put her other hand around Sonic's as he continued stroking her right hand. She felt bad for making that joke now.

"Oh Sonic, I'm sorry I said that." said Sally softly, "Please forgive me. I really was feeling like that I was dead and..."

"Sal, I understand." said Sonic gently, taking both Sally's hands into his own this time, "Like I said, you were very close to death after I tortured you as Mecha Sonic."

"Oh Sonic...you remember that?" gasped Sally, putting her hand

over her heart in shock, "Oh my gosh...that must feel so horrible Sonic!"

"It did Sal, I remembered everything I did as Mecha Sonic from strangling you to taking your clothes off and finally...torturing you." said Sonic sadly, tears welling up in his eyes again, "I'm so sorry I did all that to you Sally, I really am! I tried to stop myself but I was helpless! I couldn't do anything to stop Eggman from making me hurt you like that! I'm so sorry I couldn't stop myself! Please forgive me Sally!"

"Sonic, I do forgive you." said Sally softly, tracing her fingers gently around Sonic's face, "It was not your fault and it never was. Don't EVER think it was. I tried to help you fight Eggman's control but even that didn't work. There was nothing we could have done I'm afraid."

"I know...and that's what really scares me the most." said Sonic, fighting back the tears "Oh Sally...I could have killed you if I didn't stop and scan you! I never would have forgiven myself if that had happened!"

Sally could see that her boyfriend as very troubled from the horrific experience he'd gone through in being forced against his will to torture her near to death so she decided to give him a hug. She wrapped her arms warmly around Sonic and patted his back softly as the hedgehog cried into her shoulder.

"I understand what you're feeling Sonic and I'm very sorry that you had to go through that." she said warmly, "But it's over now Sonic, you're not a robot anymore and I'm still alive. You don't ever have to worry about that again."

Sonic wiped away his tears and he lifted his head so he could look into his beautiful girlfriend's loving eyes. He smiled at the queen and put his hands on her shoulders.

"Indeed Sally." he said agreeably, "It's over now and it'll never happen again. Especially since Eggman's dead at last."

"He...he's dead?" asked Sally in surprise, "Are...are you quite sure

Sonic?"

"Cross my heart, hope to die." said Sonic reassuringly, "I even watched it happen. The Death Egg blew itself up for some reason and as me and Eggman thought, he fell into a blazing inferno and was incinerated instantly. The Death Egg was completely destroyed afterwards too. Eggman's definitely gone for good now."

Sally was so shocked to hear this that she began to wonder if she was going to pass out again. She was too shocked and relieved to do that luckily. Sally's eyes streamed with tears of joy and she hugged Sonic as tightly as she could.

"Oh yes...he's dead! Eggman's actually gone for good!" she exclaimed, "At last, we can be free and happy like we have been for years! At long, long last...we won! The war is over and we're finally free again!"

"I know Sally and I'm so happy that we lived so we could see that dream come true." said Sonic, stroking Sally's back tenderly as they embraced, "So...what now? Will the R.F.S. have to disband now since Eggman's gone?"

"Nonsense my handsome hero, we may still need the R.F.S. for any other threats that could happen." noted Sally, "Remember, Finitevus is still on the loose and we have other villains currently incarcerated that could break out at any point. The R.F.S. will be far from obsolete. But at the same time, we will be living a much more peaceful time now Eggman's gone forever."

"You bet." said Sonic gleefully, "And because of this, we can now have a happy relationship with nothing to ruin it. With Eggman gone, our love and grow with no hindrances Sally."

"Indeed it can Sonic." said Sally happily, "After all, I really do love you Sonic."

"And I really love you too Sally." said Sonic happily.

The two leaned forward towards each other until their lips met and they kissed as lovingly and as passionately as they possibly could.

As they kissed, Sally pulled Sonic onto the bed with her so they could have extra comfort. Sonic was now lying on top of Sally and kissing her as affectionately as he always wanted to. They formed an embrace that they never wanted to break out of and their lips locked. This kiss was the most loving and affectionate kiss the pair had ever shared and they would never forget about it. The war was over, Eggman was gone and Mobius was free. Sonic and Sally could hardly wait to see how their beautiful relationship would blossom now they were at peace again. It was going to become something beautiful and it would be the most beautiful thing of their lives...

Up in space, *The Nefarious* loomed over Mobius as if glaring down at the planet below and waiting excitedly to dive down into the planet and unleash all hell on it. Hovering through the debris field that was the remains of the Death Egg, *The Nefarious* cruised peacefully as it headed down towards Mobius. It didn't need to be in space anymore so the ship was getting ready to go back down. Among the debris field it flew through were tiny chunks of Eggman's mech-suit, completely singed and nearly unrecognizable. Eggman's trademark goggles were among the rubble too, singed nearly to the point of falling apart. That was all the proof anybody needed that Eggman was dead. The fat villain of scientific intellect was nothing more than a terrible memory. The humans on Earth would be left wondering whatever happened to him and never once be any the wiser of Eggman's death. Such a thing was a delight to Dr. Finitevus as *The Nefarious* left the Death Egg's remains behind and headed on to Mobius. As the ship approached Mobius, Finitevus smiled to himself.

"I've done it...I've killed the moron at last." purred Finitevus, "Now Mobius is free from his filth. It better not celebrate though. Eggman maybe gone but now it's MY turn. I have my army, I have the Chaos Emeralds and most of all...I have my plans. And nobody, not even Sonic the Hedgehog will be able to stop me..."

He finished his sentence with a devious cackle that echoed throughout the entire ship...

Dark Armada Part 1: Never Lasting Peace

Story 201: Never Lasting Peace

The Dark Armada Chapter 1 of 25

A year had passed since the death of Dr. Eggman. A whole single year. A whole, single peaceful, wondrous year. To the citizens of Mobius, it felt like a lifetime ago rather than a year. And as every day and every month passed by, the Mobians still felt like they couldn't believe that Eggman was actually dead. It had been so sudden and unexpected that the fact Eggman was dead still continued to surprise everybody on Mobius.

It had all happened when Sonic the Hedgehog had gone up to the Death Egg to fight Eggman for the last time. Dr. Eggman had built the Death Egg to roboticize all of Mobius, an ambition that he had longed to achieve since he believed that a world of robots was all for a good cause and that it would be a major improvement over the organic life. He had actually managed to succeed in doing so but thanks to the meddling of Dr. Finitevus, his reign had been short-lived and Mobius had been de-roboticized yet again. Sonic and Eggman ended up fighting for the last time after that had happened and the overall fight had been finished by Dr. Finitevus blowing up the Death Egg. The ship was still in pieces, floating around aimlessly in the void of space just above Mobius's atmosphere. The fragments would likely be there forever. Once Sonic had escaped from the Death Egg, cheating death at the very last second in the process, he'd returned to Mobius and let everybody know about Eggman's death. Finitevus had been quite happy to just let Sonic take the credit for Eggman's downfall even though the hedgehog had made it known to his friends that the Death Egg had just blown up and taken Eggman with it. Once Eggman's death had become public knowledge, all of Mobius had celebrated this delightful turn of events, happy that Eggman's tyranny was over for good and they could return to their peaceful, happy lives without any fear of being turned into a robot ever again. Nobody was happier about this turnout than Sonic and his beloved girlfriend Queen Sally Acorn.

They'd been over the moon about Eggman's death and even as a year passed, they were still joyful and happy about it. Now they were nearing July the 12th 2144, the first anniversary of Eggman's passing. Something special was going to happen on this day and it was more than just celebrating Eggman's passing.

But as the heroes were preparing for this special day, a sinister group of villains were preparing for something much more malevolent than a special day to celebrate. This was the Dark Armada, Finitevus's insidious group of villains that he had gathered together in order to orchestrate his master plans. He had promised the villains glory and their desires to be fulfilled upon formulating the armada but he'd kept most of the plan's details secret. Nobody but him knew that the plan was called "Operation: Enerjak Reborn" and they didn't know that the plan was all about bringing back Enerjak in all his evil glory. What they did know was that the plan involved a lot of Chaos Emeralds and the Royal Fighters would be powerless to stop them since they had no idea of what the armada was planning. They didn't even know that the armada existed. Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas had been on the lookout for Finitevus though since AngelIsland had crashed down onto the ground and the Master and Chaos Emeralds were all gone but they hadn't been successful. Finitevus was still in hiding and he still had the eight Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald in his grasp. Finitevus had been so successful in his hiding thanks to his marvellous ship *The Nefarious* . Its cloaking technology made it impossible to find him so it was no wonder that a year later, he still hadn't been found. Finitevus had waited a year since he wanted to unleash his plan when the heroes least expected it. Being absent for a year would make the heroes unprepared for his attack and Finitevus reasoned that by now, they would have forgotten about him mostly and that nobody would be on the lookout for him. Now he felt was the time to unleash his plan, especially since today was the first anniversary of Eggman's death. What an appropriate time to carry out Operation: Enerjak Reborn! The first move was about to begin. Finitevus could feel excitement coursing through his bloodstream as the armada gathered together into the meeting room to hear the glorious news he was going to deliver them. It had taken an insane amount of patience and a lot of careful thinking and planning but Finitevus was now officially ready to carry out his master plan. He smiled wickedly

as the armada sat down around the meeting room table and faced him. The group consisted of Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox, Lord Sycorax, Zira the Ruthless, Bride of the Conquering Storm, Captain Metal, Cutthroat Jim, Raphael the Cyber-Husky, Ravage Bloodfang and Team Diamond. Only three members of Team Diamond were here though, Lennox Meers, Owen Pounder and Alistair Drakken. Roxy the Raccoon was nowhere to be seen but Finitevus didn't seem bothered about that. Lord Sycorax had Romeo and Vladek on his side and Conquering Storm had her entire clan but they weren't in the room with the leaders since they were lower ranking members of the armada and this was a meeting between the leaders only. Finitevus clasped his hands together and he spoke in his usual sinister, smooth, chilling voice.

"Good morning my glorious armada." purred Finitevus darkly, "You will be glad you're all here right now for I have some very good news for you all."

"Please tell me we're carrying out the plan Finny because all this waiting's been boring me to death!" whined Scourge.

He was clearly running out of patience what with being out of action for so long and he was more keen than anybody for the plan to begin. Finitevus shot Scourge a death glare before continuing.

"Before Scourge rudely interrupted, I was going to announce that the wait is over my friends." Finitevus announced, "Oh yes, we've waited long enough now. Operation: Villains Rising will now begin at last."

Finitevus had given his big plan a false name since he didn't want anybody to have any ideas on what his plan was about. He wanted them to remain thinking it was about making their wishes come true and not about Enerjak in any shape or form. To the armada, it was "Operation: Villains Rising". In reality, it was "Operation: Enerjak Reborn". The entire armada cried out for joy upon Finitevus announcing that the plan was ready to begin. They were very excited now. The waiting had been agonizing but they'd forced themselves to put up with it until the plan was ready to begin. The relief that the waiting would now finally cease was enough to make the entire armada explode into pieces of happiness.

"HELL YEAH! Finally, the party's about to get started baby!" cried Scourge in an exaggerated display of ecstasy and joy.

"So tell me doc, what's the first step of the plan?" asked Fiona coyly, "You've kept us in the dark about the plan other than it involves lots of Chaos Emeralds and it's going to fulfil our desires."

"Well you're now being led into the light my child." said Finitevus sinisterly, his smile managing to make even Fiona feel nervous despite the fact she was on his side, "For the first step involves hurting Sonic in the worst possible way. I'm going over to New Mobotropolis and I'm going to capture his little friend Tails."

Fiona raised an eyebrow with interest. Scourge however looked like he'd just been told something stupid.

"Say what? Why are you kidnapping Tails?!" demanded Scourge wildly, "What the hell's that lame ass kid gotta do with all this?"

"Tails is many things Scourge but "lame" is not one of them." said Finitevus firmly, "He is a child prodigy with a rather skilled level of intelligence and a close bond to Sonic the Hedgehog. Capture him, Sonic will be hurt in many ways that will benefit us and cripple his team."

"Oooh, I like the sound of that Dr. Brainiac!" cackled Scourge, "So we kidnap Tails just to hurt Sonic right?"

"We do a bit more than that Scourge." said Finitevus sinisterly, "We turn Tails onto our side. We make him one of us. THAT will hurt Sonic deeply, VERY deeply indeed."

"How will we turn the child evil?" asked Sycorax curiously, the father of the Chaotix leader Vector the crocodile raising his eyebrows and putting a finger to his jaws in thought. He was very much interested in hearing how Finitevus planned to turn such a noble, heroic and spirited child like Tails into a villain.

"That's a surprise." explained Finitevus, "And you'll all very much enjoy it when I spring the surprise. That is all. I shall be back shortly. You may return to your rooms and rest until I get back."

"Yes Finitevus." said the armada.

Finitevus got up from his seat and he left the room, leaving the rest of the armada to file out of the meeting room themselves in a quiet, steady huddle that caused no pushing, shoving or arguing, something Finitevus approved very much of. Now the speech was over, the Dark Armada members were given the luxury of returning to their rooms. *The Nefarious* had been built with dorm rooms for the members to sleep and rest in after a long hard day of doing villainous things and commencing with Operation: Enerjak Reborn. Every member had their own room, including every single member of the Raiju Clan. An entire row of rooms had been built especially for each of them. All of the Dark Armada members entered their rooms, waving to each other as they retreated into their space of living and peace. Lennox went into his room after waving goodbye to Owen and Alistair, whom had rooms of their own on either side of his room. The dorm rooms were small rooms but not too small. They were as big as a standard sized living room with a bed, a toilet cubicle, a sink and a desk. The ceilings were flat with a singular bright light to lighten everything up. Every room was like this in terms of design. Lennox closed his door and smiled as he turned around to look ahead of himself. He had something special in his room, something that none of the other members had. A prisoner. And the prisoner was a member of the Dark Armada who had not been present at the meeting. Lennox had taken it upon himself to kidnap the treacherous Roxy the Raccoon and imprison her into his own room to which Finitevus approved of as that would keep her in place and stop her from trying to escape or betray the armada. True Roxy had a bomb stitched in her brain to prevent such an occasion but Finitevus didn't want any of his members dying anytime soon so he went with Lennox's idea as it would tempt him not to blow Roxy's head off for punishment if she tried to betray the armada. Finitevus had said that Lennox needed to let Roxy out if he felt she would be needed to though but for most of the armada's time, Roxy was all his and it made Lennox lick his slimy lips with delight. He loved Roxy despite the fact she had betrayed him once and he was glad to have her prisoner in his room. Lennox walked up to Roxy, the raccoon shaking with terror at the sight of him. Lennox had done worse than keep her prisoner in his own room, he'd stripped her to her underwear and tied her up. She was wearing nothing more than a

black bikini that barely covered her breasts and a pair of black pants that looked too short for her. Roxy almost felt naked because of this. Her arms were raised above her head, exposing her armpits and stretching her body a little. Her hands had been fastened to an overhead rail with a red zip-tie tightly bound around her wrists. Her ankles were bound together with a zip-tie too so she couldn't kick Lennox and was forced to stand firmly on her own two feet in order to keep the zip-tie from biting further into her wrists. Her mouth was taped firmly shut with a huge, silver square of duct-tape. Roxy was very embarrassed, frightened and humiliated. Not only was she standing before Lennox tied up and in her underwear but she was completely helpless to do anything about her situation. She'd struggled many times but she'd never been able to get free. Roxy's heart was thumping as Lennox stood before her and started to trace his fingers down the raccoon's slim, flat belly. Roxy felt very uncomfortable as Lennox began stroking her. No woman wants a man to do that to them if they don't want them to but Roxy was unable to stop Lennox. The meerkat looked shameless as he placed both hands on Roxy's exposed belly and stared into her frightened eyes. The fact he could do this to her and not show any remorse for doing so just sickened Roxy and made her desperate to get away from this sick, perverted meerkat. Being as she couldn't though, Roxy just allowed Lennox to groom her like he was now.

"Hello Roxy, I just thought I'd give you some news." purred Lennox, putting his hands on Roxy's hips and putting his face much too close into Roxy's face, "Our plan's getting ready to commence now. Very soon, we will be commencing with Finitevus's big plan and I thought you'd be interested in hearing this because Tails is involved in it."

Roxy stared at Lennox in horror. She was so horrified that she didn't even realize he was now tracing his gloved fingers up and down her thighs. Tails was involved in the plan somehow. That could NOT be good. Roxy dared to think what Lennox meant by Tails being involved in the plan but she knew that Lennox would surely tell her anyway.

"I know, it's shocking isn't it?" sneered Lennox, moving his hands up Roxy's thighs and onto her ribs, "Tails tried to save you from us I remember. And now he's involved in our plan. How? You shall see

soon for Finitevus is preparing to make his first move now."

Roxy began to feel afraid for the twin-tailed fox now. Lennox could see it in the captive raccoon's eyes that she was frightened not just of him fondling her like he was now but frightened for Tails. It made the meerkat smile with delight over this. Lennox then decided to shock Roxy by moving his hands across from her ribs and onto her breasts. The raccoon let out a muffled shriek of horror behind her gag as Lennox's hands cupped around her breasts. The meerkat again looked shameless as he was doing this. How anybody could do this to a woman and look shameless made Roxy feel sick to her stomach.

"While we wait for Finitevus to make the first move...how's about we have a bit of love Roxy?" purred Lennox sinisterly.

He then proceeded to remove Roxy's gag and stick the tape on the wall beside her with the ends sticking up so he could easily peel it off again and put it back on her mouth. He had peeled the tape off gently, something that Roxy hadn't been expecting since she was waiting for him to just rip it off. After the tape had been removed, Lennox placed his hands on Roxy's arms, pressed his body up against hers and forced the raccoon into a kiss. Sandwiched between Lennox and the wall and with her hands and feet bound together, Roxy was completely helpless. She moaned and squealed defiantly as Lennox's lips forcefully locked with hers. Lennox was enjoying himself very much but Roxy just wanted to get her hands free so she could beat him to death already. As Lennox kissed Roxy, he ran his hands up and down her sides and her back, feeling as much of her as possible. The more he did this, the more desperately Roxy wanted to smack him already. This was a moment she would never forget but would long to do so...

The first anniversary of the death of Dr. Eggman and yet there was something else to celebrate on this notorious day. And this celebration had nothing to do with death of any kind. Dusk was approaching and as the skies were turning dark, the celebration was about to begin.

It had been a long time since Bladefeather the Falcon had proposed to the beautiful and powerful Princess Matilda on her last birthday and now the glorious day was finally here. The kung-fu, dagger-wielding falcon and the strong-willed, honourable mongoose were finally getting married. Chun-Nan was ecstatic about the wedding and one could easily expect the entire village to be baring witness to this grand event. A wedding in Chun-Nan was not something to be missed and no one in Chun-Nan would dare miss such an event, especially since it was the princess getting married to somebody. It had been a while since there had been a marriage between royals in Chun-Nan and that had been when Emperor Tai had married Empress Tiana. Now for the first time in years, a royal was getting married.

This event was such an exciting event that people outside of Chun-Nan were coming to see the wedding too. These were people who had ties with Chun-Nan and especially with Matilda and the emperor. These were the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, a team of brave heroes all ranging in abilities, age, size and species. This very team had been the team to influence many other Royal Fighter teams the world over and was still the one team that everybody looked up to and admired. The team consisted of Sonic the Hedgehog, Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Geoffrey St. John, Bunnie Rabbot, Wilson the Dog, Mandy the Mouse, Shade the Echidna, Ruben the Water Panther, Sora Prower, Mace the Elephant, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee. The group had been formulated by Queen Sally Acorn, former princess of the Kingdom of Acorn who had been forced to take the role prematurely thanks to Marik the Martian killing her parents. Her lady-in-waiting Nicole the Lynx remained by her side and despite no longer being a Mobian thanks to General Rakutan of Mobius 3000, Nicole forever remained loyal to Sally and had gotten used to being a computer programme who's physical form was merely a hologram that was able to solidify at will. Together, this team had protected many people from harm, saved lives from danger and even saved not only their world, but the entire multi-verse too. They were heroes in more ways than one and their heroism had made it possible to see another year on Mobius unfold before them. As of now, they were preparing to celebrate the marriage of two very close comrades to

the team. Sally and Tai had made an alliance between kingdoms so that it would be possible to remain in contact with each other and provide either party the help they need should New Mobotropolis or Chun-Nan require immediate aid. So it made perfect sense for Sally to want to see the marriage of Bladefeather and Matilda. She was currently getting ready for the event with Nicole and her cousin Abby the Squirrel helping her. Abby had once been a jungle girl who ruled over a tribe of gorillas. Now she'd returned home to New Mobotropolis to be with her cousin again after regaining her lost memories and she had been enjoying her life back with Sally and even with the Royal Fighters for getting to know them had been very pleasant and exciting for her. Abby was already dressed for the wedding, wearing a very lovely golden dress that sparkled in the light. The dress came down to her knees and she wore gold coloured high heels to accompany the dress. Her blonde hair was plaited and hung over her shoulder and down her left breast. If her gorilla friends in the Lost Jungle could see her now, they would be thrilled to see how beautiful their former queen looked. As for Nicole, she didn't need to change since her holographic form couldn't exist outside of New Mobotropolis. Sally was just going to bring the handheld computer she was housed in and let Nicole see the wedding for herself through the eyes of the computer. Sally herself was wearing a beautiful purple dress with a singular shoulder strap that came down to the floor. She wore purple slippers to match the dress but given how far her dress came down, people wouldn't really notice until she started walking. She wore a lovely golden necklace around her neck, the kind that her mother used to wear when she was alive. It made Sally proud to be wearing her mother's necklace and she took a moment to pray for her deceased mother, wishing she could see her now but at the same time, hoping she's having a nice time in heaven along with her father. Her hair had been styled in a way that looked a bit neater and tidier looking than the usual tomboy look she had when on the battlefield. Abby and Nicole smiled brightly at their queen.

"You look gorgeous cousin!" squealed Abby excitedly, "I bet Sonic's gonna be surprised when he sees you!"

"Ha, ha, thanks Abby." said Sally with a modest smile, "I can hardly wait to see what Sonic thinks to my appearance too."

"He'll like it very much my friend." said Nicole matter-of-factly as if she knew for certain that Sonic would indeed like Sally's appearance, "And I bet Sonic himself will look very handsome once he's all dressed up for this wedding."

"Is it funny how I can never imagine Sonic in a tux?" Sally chuckled.

Nicole and Abby chuckled along with Sally. It was indeed quite difficult to imagine somebody as impetuous as Sonic dressing up so smartly, even for an occasion like this. The idea was humorous and yet Sally very much longed to see how Sonic would look in smart clothing. He'd look very handsome indeed.

"Not really all that funny Sally." giggled Nicole, her grin almost as wide as her face, "I couldn't either. But you'll have to imagine Sonic in a tux for he may well be wearing one when you two tie the knot at last."

"Not so fast Nicole, me and Sonic are still dating at this moment." said Sally sternly, her face not really matching her tone which suggested she was likely joking for the most part, "We're not thinking about getting married yet."

"Sure you're not cousin." sneered Abby teasingly, nudging Sally playfully with her elbow.

Sally couldn't help but laugh along with Abby's teasing. She playfully nudged Abby back with her elbow.

"I'm serious Abby!" she laughed, "Although if me and Sonic ever do get married, I'm not sure when that'll happen. Or if Sonic will even want to marry me for that matter…"

Her face fell as a sudden thought crept over her mind. Sally remembered how Sonic often didn't think he'd be cut out for life as a king. If she and Sonic were to marry, Sonic would be a king, ruling alongside her and living a life of royalty in Castle Acorn. Would Sonic want that? Would he cope with that? Sally wasn't sure but she knew one thing about Sonic, she wanted him to be happy and she'd do whatever it took to make him happy. Especially if they were to be wed at some point. Nicole and Abby both put a hand on Sally's

shoulders.

"I'm sure Sonic will want to marry you Sally." said Nicole softly, "After all, you ARE the girl he fell for aren't you? I think you two would make a great couple. And I'm even sure that Sonic will be OK with being a king if it means making you happy Sally."

It was as if Nicole had read her thoughts. Sally looked at her friend and smiled at her.

"I'm not sure what the future holds for us Nicole, but I'm sure that me and Sonic will be very happy together regardless of whether we get married or not." she said brightly.

"That's a good mindset." said Nicole, grinning approvingly at Sally's statement, "So, shall we see how everybody else is doing?"

Sally nodded agreeably. She and Abby left the room to head out into the city and meet the other Royal Fighters while Nicole simply materialized out of the room to appear somewhere else in New Mobotropolis. Sally was excited to see how the other Royal Fighters were going to look for the wedding. She could already imagine how smart the men would look and how beautiful the women would look. It would certainly make the bride and groom glad to have invited them to their wedding. But things weren't going to go as well as anybody hoped they would…

The other Royal Fighters were all busily preparing themselves for the wedding in their individual houses all around New Mobotropolis. Some Royal Fighters were getting ready by themselves but some such as Tails, Cosmo, Ruben and Sora were helping each other get ready. To give Knuckles and Shade a new place to live after the destruction of AngelIsland, a house had been built for them both to live in for they didn't have anywhere else to live. The echidnas accepted this generous gift from the Royal Fighters and had spent the past year getting used to living in an actual house for the first time in their lives, and also getting used to living in a city that wasn't on a floating island. They missed AngelIsland terribly but they had accepted the fact the island was gone and they couldn't do anything

about it. Although Knuckles had found it hard to relax with the knowledge that his evil uncle Dr. Finitevus was still on the loose and he had the Chaos Emeralds and even the Master Emerald in his possession. Of all the Royal Fighters, Knuckles had been the most determined to find Finitevus and over the past year, he'd turned the world upside down hoping to find the caped scientist and take back the emeralds. To his annoyance, he hadn't been able to find him at all. He was beginning to have the dreadful feeling of whether Finitevus was even ON Mobius Prime anymore due to his inability to find the mad doctor. Had Finitevus escaped into another dimension forever so that he could continue his evil life somewhere else? It was driving Knuckles insane just thinking about how he couldn't find Finitevus or the Chaos Emeralds. His strong attachment to the Chaos Force hadn't been of much help to him either, not once giving him any helpful hints on where Finitevus could be. So after a year of searching, Knuckles and Shade had decided to just give up the search and accept the fact that Finitevus was nowhere in sight and the Chaos Emeralds were lost though Knuckles was still holding onto the possibility of finding his evil uncle again someday.

For now, Finitevus and the Chaos Emeralds were not on anybody's mind except Knuckles. They were thinking about the wedding of Matilda and Bladefeather and how special it was going to be to watch. The Royal Fighters were very pleased and honoured to have been invited to the wedding and they all knew it was something that they just couldn't miss under any circumstances. Over in Tails's house, the young fox was currently getting his outfit on. He was wearing the same clothes he had worn for Wilson and Mandy's wedding last year, a black tuxedo with a rose in the breast pocket and a red bow tie. Flashbacks of Wilson and Mandy's wedding poured into the fox's head as he buttoned up the tuxedo. It seemed like a long time since that day had happened. He was only eight at the time, the wedding taking place before his ninth birthday. Come this year, he was now ten years old and dressing up for another wedding. Tails didn't look much different despite being ten years old now but he was certain he was getting a little taller and that his voice was dropping down a pitch. Not that it mattered to him, he was still very much pleased with his appearance. More pleasing still was the outfit he was putting on now. It made him look very handsome, even for somebody his age and he felt proud to be wearing the tuxedo.

He needed his girlfriend Cosmo to help him put on the tie though Cosmo was just as clueless as Tails was about putting on a tie and the hapless Seedrian ended up nearly choking Tails a couple of times. This had worried Cosmo but much to her relief, Tails was OK and the bow tie wasn't too tight around him now, it was just right after a good few minutes of trying to get it right. Cosmo herself was showing signs of growing up too. She was a couple of inches taller than she was last year and her leafy hair was beginning to grow longer. Her rosebud ears hadn't bloomed yet but Cosmo had plenty more years yet before that would happen. At this moment, she was in her smart clothes, which were the same as the ones she'd worn for Wilson and Mandy's wedding. Said outfit was a white dress that was made of the finest satin in New Mobotropolis and had pink ribbons and bows around torso and skirt sections of the dress. Tails was still amazed at how beautiful Cosmo looked, especially in a dress like this. Like a radiant sunflower was what he thought to her beauty. Tails smiled dreamily at Cosmo, feeling very lucky to have her as his girlfriend. He also began thinking about the future. Would he and Cosmo get married? Maybe so but not at this time. They were too young for that yet but he was sure that Cosmo would willingly accept his proposal once he deemed himself old enough to pop the question. For now, he and Cosmo could both enjoy seeing two good friends of theirs getting married. Cosmo was still going nuts with excitement.

"Isn't this thrilling Tails? We're going to see Matilda and Bladefeather get married!" squealed Cosmo, "It'll be as exciting as when Wilson and Mandy got married!"

"It sure will be Cosmo." said Tails happily, embracing his girlfriend tenderly with his loving arms, "And I bet Bladefeather's really excited about today. He really loves Matilda and now he's going to become her husband…and a prince too."

"Yes, he'll be Prince Bladefeather, ruling over Chun-Nan alongside Princess Matilda and Emperor Tai." said Cosmo with a nod, "I bet the emperor's going to be very happy to have Bladefeather as the Prince of Chun-Nan."

"Yeah and to think he used to be rude and pompous a long time ago…" mused Tails, remembering how Bladefeather used to act

until his love for Matilda changed his attitude for the better, "…but he's much better now and he can thank Matilda for that. As for this very day…well, it's still amazing to think that just a year ago today, we finally beat Eggman."

"I know, I thought I'd never see the end of him." said Cosmo, lightly putting her hand over the rose on Tails's tuxedo and fingering the fake petals around the plastic stem, "And yet he died, this time for real. It's horrible to celebrate somebody's death…but I'm still very happy that Mobius never has to worry about Eggman again."

"Indeed my sweet little flower." agreed Tails, stroking a lock of Cosmo's leafy hair tenderly with his index finger and thumb, "But today, we're not celebrating Eggman's death. We're celebrating something much better and much more worth celebrating, the wedding of two very good friends of the R.F.S."

"Indeed and I'm much happier about the idea of celebrating a marriage then a death." beamed Cosmo, wrapping her arms around Tails's shoulders and neck and pulling him close to her face, "And I'm equally as happy that we're all alive in time to celebrate this marriage."

"Me too." Tails said with a very wide but pleasing smile on his cutesy little face.

He and Cosmo then pulled each other into a kiss, a kiss that contained all their love and made them feel happier than they could possibly hope to feel. No matter how many times they did this, Tails and Cosmo still enjoyed the kisses they shared with each other. After the kiss was over, they retracted their heads slightly but still kept their loving gazes fixed on each other.

"You really do look very handsome Tails." said Cosmo sweetly.

"And you look very beautiful Cosmo." Tails replied, "Especially with your hair growing a little longer. It looks very cute at the length it is now."

"I can grow it even longer if you like." said Cosmo with a wink, "When you're a Seedrian, your hair grows as long as you wish it to.

I'm thinking of letting mine grown down to my…um…behind if you know what I mean."

"That sounds nice." said Tails, "Your hair will look VERY lovely at that length."

Cosmo giggled with pleasure.

"Thanks Tails." she said brightly, "Please excuse me for a minute, I need to put on some perfume. I want to smell very nice when we go to Chun-Nan."

"You do that, I'll just get my hair combed." replied Tails, "I'll wait right down here for you."

Cosmo toddled off to the stairs to go up to her room where all her perfume was kept. Tails watched as Cosmo climbed up the stairs and ran off towards her room. He couldn't blame her for hurrying, it was clear that she was hoping to be in time for the wedding. Tails checked the clock that hung on the wall by the stairs. The time was 6:00. The wedding would begin at 8:30, a late time for children like him and Cosmo to be staying up but Tails didn't mind. Some things were worth losing sleep over. Tails walked over to the mirror and grabbed a comb. He caught sight of his reflection as he faced the mirror. A smartly dressed fox with sky blue eyes, twin-tails and a very happy smile on his face stared at him as if complimenting its solid counterpart on its appearance. Tails couldn't believe how smart he looked and yet he was about to make himself look even smarter. He started to comb down his trademark three strands of hair that protruded proudly above his head. They had grown a little longer but not too long and Tails found it easy to make them look neat. He wasn't sure which side to comb his hair over. He combed all three strands together and held them over to the right. He thought it looked OK over the right side of his face but he thought he'd be fair and try the left side. But just as he combed his hair over the left side of his face, the mirror started showing him something different from his own reflection. Tails diverted his attention from his hair to the corner of his reflection where he could see a golden portal opening up behind him. The portal was contained in a large ring and something stepped out of the ring. Something white and shrouded in a black cape. Something with a very evil expression on its face that

smiled wickedly at him like a ghost in the mirror. Tails dropped his comb in complete shock. He was frozen with fear, unable to move for a minute. It was like seeing the Bloody Mary curse only Tails hadn't said "Bloody Mary" in front of the mirror so he knew it wasn't that. His heart pounding, Tails forced himself to look over his shoulder, moving very slowly and shaking vigorously with fear. To his horror, the thing in the mirror wasn't just a thing in the mirror, it was a real person and it was directly behind him! And the person was none other than Dr. Finitevus! Tails was about to let out a scream of terror but Finitevus lashed out at a blinding speed, clasping his hand around the frightened fox's mouth and causing whatever Tails was building up in his throat to die into silence. Tails tried to get his mouth free so he could scream for help but Finitevus was too strong for him. His grip was like iron on the helpless fox. Tails was more frightened now than he ever had been in his life. Finitevus was in his own house and was presumably going to kidnap him. Finitevus gave Tails probably the creepiest smile the fox had ever seen in his life. A smile that would haunt his nightmares for weeks to come.

"Hello Tails." purred Finitevus, "I do hope I'm not interrupting anything important…" he added cruelly, taking note of Tails's smart attire.

"Mmmet mmmo mmmf mmme!" whimpered Tails feebly behind Finitevus's hand.

"I'd rather you not try and speak little boy, I do not want any attention being brought towards me." purred Finitevus sinisterly, "Now, you're coming with me. I have big plans for you…"

He then proceed to turn around and shove Tails through the warp ring as hard as he could. Tails cried out as he disappeared into the warp ring, his screams silencing as the warp ring closed shut behind him. Tails would be over on *The Nefarious* now, waiting for Finitevus to come and prepare him for whatever it was the evil echidna had planned for him. Laughing sadistically with pleasure, the cruel, nihilistic scientist took out a small, metallic orb and he set it down on a nearby coffee table. The orb was also part of his big plan and he smiled with pleasure just thinking about what an important part that tiny device would play. He then summoned another warp ring to his

hand and he warped himself over onto *The Nefarious* , leaving nothing but the orb behind on the table. Just as he left, Cosmo ran back down the stairs and into the living room to see what was going on. She'd heard the sound of Finitevus's warp rings opening up and Finitevus's deep, sinister voice so she came to see what was happening. She was horrified to see that Tails was gone and Finitevus was nowhere around. The Seedrian went pale with shock. Hearing Finitevus's voice and coming down to see him and Tails gone meant one thing and she did not like it at all. Her boyfriend had been kidnapped and Finitevus was the kidnapper. Cosmo was about to call Sonic for help until she spotted the orb on the table. She curiously wandered over to examine it.

"What on Mobius is this?" she asked, picking up the orb and examining it curiously…

Outside, completely unaware of what had happened to Tails or even anything going on inside his house, Sonic the Hedgehog and the Royal Fighters were gathered around and waiting to set off to Chun-Nan to see Bladefeather and Matilda's marriage come to fruition. Sonic had spent most of the day enjoying himself and celebrating the death of Dr. Eggman. Eggman's death was more special to him than anybody on Mobius given Eggman was Sonic's lifelong enemy and he was now finally dead, never to terrorize Mobius ever again or threaten the lives of his friends and especially…never to roboticize anybody and make them his slaves for the rest of their lives. Sonic still cringed over the horrible memories that plagued his mind, memories of when he'd been roboticized and forced to strip and torture Sally. He'd gone further off the deep end than he'd ever gone before. After Eggman had made him torture Sally, he went so mad with grief and rage that he wanted Eggman dead. He certainly got his wish but Sonic hadn't been the one who killed Eggman. The Death Egg had exploded and killed Eggman and even to this day, Sonic was still wondering why the Death Egg had exploded. He had nothing to do with it so who was really responsible for Eggman's death? He kind of felt glad it wasn't him since thinking back on the day, he really didn't think he'd be able to cope with the guilt of going against his moral code and making himself a hypocrite. He was glad

somebody else had done the dirt work for him and whoever it was that destroyed the Death Egg, Sonic would happily thank him for doing Mobius a big favour.

For now, he was thinking about the wedding of two very good friends of his taking place in Chun-Nan, no thoughts of Eggman hanging over his mind as he and his friends prepared to go. Sonic was dressed in the same clothes he'd worn when Wilson and Mandy had gotten married. So did everybody else for that matter. They somehow even managed to find a tuxedo large enough for Mace to wear! The only differences were the fact Wilson and Mandy weren't dressed as the bride and groom since they weren't the ones getting married. Wilson wore a tuxedo that didn't have tails this time, black trousers and smart black shoes. His cufflinks were silver this time and he wore a red tie. His breast pocket was empty. Mandy was wearing a ravishing dress with a colour that looked somewhere between dark blue and dark purple with a flowing skirt section and shoulder straps atop the torso section. Her arms and chest were bare and just like at her wedding, Mandy had no shoes on. She preferred to wear dresses without shoes, an odd preference to many but to her, it suited her just fine and she wouldn't have it any other way. Ruben, who had missed Wilson and Mandy's wedding and had never gotten the chance to get any smart clothes, had put on a traditional Chinese robe that was designed to be worn at special events. It was made of silk, red in colour and decorated with lively golden patterns that made him look very fancy and smart. Sora, who was now going to witness her first wedding as a Royal Fighter, was wearing a black mini-dress that stopped above her knees. The dress was tight fitting and had shoulder straps, leaving her chest, arms and shoulders bare. Sora was beginning to shows signs of aging just like her brother was. Now thirteen years old, her body was beginning to show some curves and her height had increased by a few inches. Her hair was a little longer too and she currently had it styled in a longer ponytail with her fringe slipped neatly back. Ruben, who like Tails, Sora and Cosmo had also grown a little and was beginning to show signs of maturity in terms of his body, thought Sora looked adorable in the black dress and that as she was getting older, she was looking more beautiful. He was twelve years old now, just a year away from being a teenager like Sora. Sora thought Ruben was going to be a very handsome man when he

became an adult at last as she admired him. She also very much liked his robe, finding it very striking and a perfect match for someone of his character. Sonic was pleased to see his friends looking so smart for this very special occasion. Bladefeather and Matilda would be pleased to see them all that much was certain.

"It's not everyday we all get to dress up nicely like this is it?" asked Sonic cheerfully.

"Certainly not, that's what makes it all the more special for us when it does happen." said Wilson agreeably, "And to think just last year we were all getting dressed up nicely to see me and Mandy get married!" he chuckled.

"Indeed and now me and you are going to watch two other people get married along with the blue-dude and everybody else." said Mandy with a nod, "I bet Bladefeather and Matilda will look amazing when we see them."

"I can't wait to see them!" squeaked Ruben, jumping up and down in excitement, "I bet Matilda will look very beautiful in a wedding dress!"

"She sure will." said Amy, nodding in agreement at Ruben, "I bet Bladefeather will be wearing something that will make Matilda proud to be his bride. I just hope that Bladefeather doesn't get too in over his head when he becomes a prince…"

"Now, now Amy, you know as well as I do that Bladefeather isn't an arrogant jerk anymore." said Sonic sternly, "Though one has to wonder if he'll enjoy his position as prince more than he should be doing. If so, I'm sure Tilly will keep him under control." he added with a reassuring wink.

"Well falling for Matilda did change Bladefeather's personality so I don't think anyone needs to worry about Bladefeather abusing his power." laughed Knuckles, "I bet the two will be very happy together. And to think when we first met him, he was fighting against us…"

"But that was because that mean Zira the Ruthless woman forced him to." noted Cream, "Thankfully, he's back on the side of good and

now he and Matilda are going to be married. I'm so happy for them I am!"

"We all are sugah." said Bunnie Rabbot, smiling brightly at the little rabbit's excitement, "Though ah don't mean to dampen the mood or anything but…it's a darn pity we haven't found Finitevus and gotten the Chaos Emeralds back from him yet."

"I know, I keep feeling like he's gonna show up from nowhere and attack when we least expect it!" grumbled Knuckles, "I sure as hell wish we'd been able to find him but the bastard's playing hard to find! For all we know, he might be on another version of Mobius and causing chaos and we can't stop him because we have no way of getting to another version of Mobius without a warp ring or a Chaos Emerald!"

"Knux! Chill, breathe!" cried Sonic, holding the furious echidna back before he could fly into a rage, "We'll find him eventually! I'm sure we will!"

"For now, we should be focusing on something much more pleasant then that evil echidna." said Shade softly, "We can focus on Finitevus later Knuckles. Please calm down and forget about him for now."

"I wish I could hon…but given he's my uncle and he's an evil scientist and he has the Chaos Emeralds and also is the cause of Angel Island's destruction, it's hard to forget about him." muttered Knuckles bitterly.

"We all understand Knuckles." said Sonic reassuringly, "But we will find him and get the emeralds back eventually. I just hope he's…"

He was cut off by the sound of somebody screaming for help. The scream sounded all too familiar to Sonic and as he turned into the direction of the scream, he knew who he was going to see straight away. A very worried Cosmo the Seedrian threw herself straight into his arms, wailing uncontrollably and clutching Sonic as tightly as she could. Sonic could instantly tell that something was wrong and he put his hands on Cosmo's shoulders.

"Hey, hey Cosmo! Settle down! What's wrong?" he asked in a voice full of concern.

"It's Tails! Dr. Finitevus has kidnapped him!" sobbed Cosmo, "I was upstairs and I heard a warp ring open up and then I heard his voice and when I ran down to see what was happening…he was gone and so was Tails! Finitevus has got him and he's going to do something horrible to him, I just know it!"

Sonic's blood ran colder than a winter storm in White Acropolis. The Royal Fighters all gasped in horror and Sora began to cry over hearing this news. Tears poured down her face and she put her hands to her mouth as if trying to contain herself.

"NO!" wailed Sora, "Not…not my little brother! We've gotta save him, we've just gotta! That monster's going to do terrible things to Tails!" she sobbed, clutching Ruben very tightly as if Tails's life counted on him in some way. Ruben hugged his distressed girlfriend back, feeling very afraid for the poor vixen since her little brother was in dire peril.

"I'll say I mean remember what he tried to do to me, Knuckles and Shadow?" exclaimed Sonic, "You guys let Sally know what's happened, I'll go and find Tails! I'm afraid Bladefeather and Matilda will have to get married without me being there to watch it." he added grimly, feeling a little bad that he would be missing yet another wedding.

"We'll let her know why that is mate." said Geoffrey, "Just please find Tails and save him from that maniac!"

"I'm gonna come too Sonic." offered Knuckles, "I owe Finitevus many knuckle sandwiches for what he's done!"

"But how will we find Finitevus?" asked Sonic helplessly, "He could have taken Tails anywhere!"

"Believe it or not, Finitevus left me this little ball that tells us where he is." explained Cosmo, showing Sonic the sphere the doctor had left on the table back in Tails's house, "According to the coordinates on the device…they're in Megapolis. They were displayed in a

hologram that emitted from the top after I picked it up."

Sonic and Knuckles both looked dumbfounded to hear this.

"Well that's stupid, why did Finitevus literally tell you where he is?!" exclaimed Sonic in surprise and confusion, "I thought Finitevus was smarter than that!"

"It's obviously a trap." muttered Knuckles, "Well we ain't falling for it! We're gonna sneak up to Megapolis, find Finitevus and ambush him! We know all his tricks so we'll bring him down before he knows what's happened!"

"I hope so Knuckie." said Sonic, "Over to Megapolis we go!"

Sonic and Knuckles both quickly changed out of their smart clothes and then proceeded to run towards the city gates. The Royal Fighters watched the two leave for Megapolis with one emotion on their minds: fear. Fear that Tails could be in serious danger now Finitevus had the fox in his grasp and fear over whether Sonic and Knuckles would get him back or not. And whether they'd get him back in one piece. It was amazing as to how quickly the mood had changed from happy and excited to worry and concern, a pity for everybody in the R.F.S. for they'd been looking forward to this day for a long time. Now it was here it was going terribly wrong and would likely get worse from there…

Tails swore that if his heart started pounding any faster it would leap out of his chest and start sprinting around the room like an Olympic athlete.

Never in his life had he been so frightened. He'd been through many situations of life and death and had seen many things that would scar a kid for life and yet he'd survived them all, even witnessing an alternate counterpart of his get violently slaughtered by Devion the Devatron leader right in front of his eyes. Yet this was what terrified him more than anything he'd ever seen or been through in his life. The fox had been fastened down to a bed with thick metal clamps around his wrists and ankles. Even his trademark twin tails were

clamped down to the bed as if the kidnapper worried he'd use them to escape somehow. He'd been stripped off his tuxedo and bowtie, leaving him in just his trademark gloves and shoes again. The reason for this was beyond Tails's realm of comprehension but he was sure that Finitevus had a reason for it. The bed was horizontal so Tails was lying on his back and looking up at the ceiling. There was a glass tube suspended from the ceiling and looming above him as if waiting to close down on him and trap him even more. He was in a room onboard the insidious vessel *The Nefarious* but he didn't know that he was onboard a vessel. All he knew was that he was in a room and he had been restrained. His head was soaked with sweat and his heart was pounding so much that his chest was aching. Why had Finitevus brought him here? What was going to happen to him? Was Finitevus going to dissect him piece by piece and use him in some kind of sadistic experiment? The fox felt more and more scared just thinking about it. The frightened cub pulled on his limbs, trying desperately to break free of his restraints. Dr. Finitevus stood by menacingly, watching him with sick, sadistic pleasure as the fox tried to get free from this nightmare.

"I take it you're making yourself comfortable Tails?" sneered Finitevus softly.

"Let me go!" screamed Tails in terror, "Please, just please let me go! I don't know what you want me for but I won't let you do anything terrible to me!"

"Why so frightened little boy?" snorted Finitevus with a dark smirk curling up on his face, "You don't even know what I'm going to do to you yet."

"That's the scary part!" shrieked Tails, "You're gonna do something terrible to me, I just know it! I won't let you do anything to me you fiend in echidna's clothing!"

"And how do you intend to do that then you simple-minded child?" crowed Finitevus, "These restraints are 100% titanium, you'll never get loose. Even Knuckles wouldn't get out of those, you're not going anywhere."

"What do you want me for?!" cried Tails, "Why have you kidnapped

me? And why did you take my smart clothes off?"

"Because you'd look rather ridiculous if I roboticized you whilst you were wearing a tuxedo…" purred Finitevus, answering Tails's last question and ignoring the others.

Tails thought for a moment that his heart had stopped beating.

"R-r-r-roboticize m-m-me?!" squeaked Tails nervously, "Oh no…oh please no! Please, not that! Anything but that! Please don't roboticize me!" he whimpered, struggling frantically in his restraints.

"I'm afraid that your pleas do not sway my decisions in the slightest." said Finitevus sinisterly, "You see, I have grand plans in mind and YOU are a part of my scheme. But you need to be roboticized so that you'll play your part without trying to betray me behind my back."

"What's your "grand plan" then?" asked Tails, almost afraid that he'd even done so.

"You'll find out for you'll be a part of it…" purred Finitevus.

He then walked over to a control panel that was sitting nearby Tails's bed and he pressed a red button on the panel. The glass tube above Tails descended down from the ceiling and closed around him, sealing him inside and making any hope of escape impossible. If he somehow managed to get out of the clamps then he'd have a glass tube to keep him contained and he'd never break out of the tube since it was Diamond Glass. Finitevus had literally thought of every possibly contingency he could think of. Now Tails was sealed inside, Finitevus pressed another button on the control panel. The ceiling of the tube, which was metal and had a round circle in the middle began to glow a bright, luminous blue colour. Tails struggled frantically in his restraints, desperate to escape but going nowhere very fast. Finitevus smiled wickedly at his prisoner.

"Isn't it clever of me to have studied the plans for Eggman's roboticizer so that I could recreate it myself?" he gloated, "I may not approve of Dr. Eggman's plans to take over the world but he has an ingenious way of making sure that somebody stays loyal to you

when you want them to do so. I'm only going to roboticize you though Tails so don't think I'm going to copy Eggman's scheme. My plans are far greater than a mere roboticizer."

"You can't do this! Sonic will stop you Finitevus and you'll be sorry that you kidnapped me!" screamed Tails, hoping that his last words as an organic being would have some kind of effect on the albino villain.

"No…Sonic will be sorry that he ever met me." sneered Finitevus, "I've left a device for your precious girl Cosmo to come across. The device contains our coordinates. Sonic will be coming to save you any moment now and when Sonic comes to me…he'll be dead!"

"Don't bet on it freak!" yelled Tails defiantly.

"We shall see about that…" sneered Finitevus darkly, "Oh and just one more thing…I killed Dr. Eggman." he said to Tails, hoping to shock him one last time before he was roboticized "How ironic hmm? I killed Eggman and brought you a year of peace. Now I'm taking it away from you all and putting my plans into action! AH, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!"

Tails was too busy staring at the roboticizer to care about what Finitevus had told him. He was petrified with fear. He was going to be a Robian and he'd be forced to work for Finitevus. Tails couldn't let this happen, no matter what Finitevus's plan was about and how he was going to achieve it. He tried as hard as he could to get free but try as he might, he couldn't do it. He was securely fastened, he had no chance of escape. The roboticizer was now getting ready to fire upon him. The blue light was glowing brightly, so brightly that it looked too big to be contained in the centre of the metal ceiling of the tube any longer. It was going to expand down and strike Tails and then it was going to transform him. Unable to escape, Tails could do nothing more than scream for help, his eyes streaming with tears of fright and despair as he screamed.

"NO! NOOOO! PLEASE, DON'T! SONIC, HELP ME!"

Sonic was much too far away from Tails to help him now. He was currently running towards Megapolis in hopes of finding Tails in time

to save him from Finitevus. But not even Sonic's speed would get him there in time, it was much too late. Tails let out his final scream as the roboticizer beam struck him. His scream was louder and more pained than any scream he'd emitted before. Finitevus showed no remorse for the fox as the wave struck him and began to convert him from a Mobian into a Robian. Tails's skin and fur was transformed into metal, his eyes became optics, his mouth became a metallic muzzle with no mouth at all, his organs became circuitry and even his gloves and shoes became metal. His tails even transformed into metallic, bladed tails that were razor sharp and would be effective weapons in combat. The transformation lasted for a couple of minutes. After two minutes, the beam died down and Tails lay still on the bed. He was no longer Miles "Tails" Prower. He was now Mecha Tails, loyal robotic servant to Dr. Finitevus and another pawn in Finitevus's sinister game. Finitevus admired his new mechanical servant with delight. Mecha Tails would indeed make a fine addition to his armada. Mecha Tails's cold, emotionless optics light up with an icy blue light that looked as cold as actual ice and he turned his head to one side. He saw Finitevus and spoke to him, his voice a mixture of Tails's voice and a robotical voice.

"Mecha Tails online and ready for duty master." he droned in a monotone voice that wasn't as pronounced as most Robians.

Finitevus laughed delightedly and he released Mecha Tails from his restraints so the robot fox could stand up. The clamps were opened and Mecha Tails hopped off the bed, bowing down before his insidious master graciously.

"Rise Mecha Tails, my glorious robotic servant!" Finitevus cried with delight…

. . .

I...I...I've got nothing...just...just tune into the next chapter!

Dark Armada Part 2: Dangerous Territory

Story 202: Dangerous Territory

The Dark Armada Chapter 2 of 25

Sonic the Hedgehog thought that his troubles were finally over. Last year on this very day, the July the 12th 2144, Dr. Eggman had finally been killed in what was possibly the most intense fight of Sonic's life and Mobius had been rewarded with a year's worth of peace and tranquillity for the death of the one man that had put it through oppression for two years straight with other villains causing trouble along the way. Eggman had been killed by his Death Egg, a powerful egg-shaped ship that could roboticize the entire world or destroy it. The Death Egg had exploded when trying to destroy the planet and Sonic still had no idea what had caused the Death Egg to explode. He didn't care though for it meant he never had to see Dr. Eggman ever again and he and his friends could have a peaceful life from now on. Today he was supposed to be attending the wedding of Princess Matilda and Bladefeather the Falcon, an event he'd been looking forward to for a long time. Bladefeather had proposed marriage to Matilda on her birthday and they had decided to get married next July. Next July was here and they were now getting married on this very day, coincidentally enough the same day Dr. Eggman had died. The wedding was more worth celebrating than the death of Dr. Eggman though so Sonic and his friends were eager to celebrate it.

And yet…the peace and tranquillity had been ruined. Tails the Fox, Sonic's best friend, had been kidnapped by Dr. Finitevus. Such a thought was causing Sonic to lose his mind with worry and as he sped off to Megapolis to confront Finitevus along with his friend Knuckles the Echidna, he had one thought on his mind, to save Tails and beat Finitevus to a pulp. He'd worked too hard and for too long in bringing peace back to Mobius and he refused to let Finitevus ruin it for him now. He was very scared for his best friend as he ran to Megapolis. What was Finitevus going to do to the poor cub? Sonic couldn't bear to think about it. He was going to save Tails and he'd

break every bone in Finitevus's body for kidnapping him and spoiling what was supposed to be a lovely day for him and his friends to enjoy in Chun-Nan. Also Finitevus had the Chaos Emeralds and Sonic would see to it that they were retrieved from the mad doctor. Eight previous gems like the Chaos Emeralds were too valuable to leave in Finitevus's possession. It still puzzled Sonic as to why Finitevus was being so unsubtle. He kidnaps Tails and then tells Cosmo where he is. That seemed unusual for the albino scientist and Sonic didn't like it. This was very suspicious and he had a nasty feeling Finitevus had set up a trap for him and Knuckles. But if springing the trap meant saving Tails then Sonic would happily let a cage fall on him. Provided that said cage didn't also contain something that was meant to kill him while he was trapped in it.

It had been a long run but at long last, Sonic and Knuckles arrived in Megapolis, the very place that Finitevus had apparently informed Cosmo that he was hiding in. Many memories came back to Sonic as he ran through Megapolis. Dr. Eggman used to keep his base here in Megapolis, most notably the Northern Border. First there had been a simple base, than came Robotropolis and then came the Egg-Bunker, which then in turn became the Death Egg. It baffled Sonic as to how his enemies seemed to like hiding out in Megapolis. Eggman had done it when he was alive and now Finitevus was doing it. Was Finitevus seriously trying to become the next Dr. Eggman, only a lot more sinister given his reliance on his smarts and battle prowess than robots that couldn't even do one simple thing and kill Sonic? Sonic hoped this wouldn't be the case. One Eggman was bad enough, he didn't need another. As Sonic and Knuckles ran through Megapolis, they looked around and noticed that they couldn't really see anything around. There was nobody running through the plains but them. Even the local Royal Fighters Dark Cat, Kiara the Cheetah and Thomas Tiger were nowhere to be seen. They were likely in the city of Megapolis celebrating the anniversary of Eggman's death than camping out in the plains like they usually did. Why would they need to campout when there was nothing to worry about in their case? That was what Sonic thought when he noted their lack of presences around the plains. Sonic stopped running after a while and he paused to take in his surroundings. The clouds were grey over the plains and it looked as if it were going to rain at any moment. A clap of thunder boomed

through the sky as if warning Sonic and Knuckles about the bad weather that was coming to them. Knuckles frowned for there was nobody around and he and Sonic were alone together in the plains with nothing but themselves around.

"This is odd, Uncle Finitevus specifically told Cosmo that he was here!" blurted Knuckles wildly, "Where in the name of Locke is he?!"

"I'm beginning to think that he was lying to Cosmo the whole time and just planned to get me out of the way so he can kidnap my friends just like he kidnapped Tails!" growled Sonic, a slight edge to his voice that seemed to match his mood, "Well once we get back to New Mobotropolis, mark my words I'm gonna kick his ass until my foot feels numb!"

"I bet Finitevus's ass will be even number." snickered Knuckles.

"Maybe so." said Sonic casually, "So since Finitevus isn't here, let's go home. I don't like the look of those clouds up there."

Sonic wasn't one who liked to get wet, especially when it rained, so he was keen to get home before it rained.

"Be my guest." said Knuckles, shrugging, "Though I still can't work out why Finitevus kidnapped Tails specifically? Why didn't he kidnap you? Wouldn't you make a more…valuable hostage given your heroic status and all?"

"Don't ever imply I'm more valuable than my friends!" growled Sonic, "While technically I AM the most valuable person to hold hostage, Tails is as valuable as I am, not just to me but to everybody! Especially Cosmo! Tails is plenty valuable enough a hostage for Finitevus! But what does he want him for? And what is he doing to my best buddy?"

"If he harms one hair on his head, I'll show no mercy!" shouted Knuckles, "He better hope we don't find him for real because when we do, he'll never see the light of day again!"

"He'll join Eggman in the afterlife if he dares harm Tails!" yelled Sonic agreeably.

It surprised Knuckles that Sonic literally just announced that Finitevus could join Eggman in the afterlife like that. Knuckles began to wonder if Sonic was taking Tails's kidnapping more seriously than he possibly could have imagined. It didn't bother him too much though since he thought Finitevus was deserving of death. After all, he had nearly killed him, Sonic and Shadow all at once just to get some Chaos Energy from them and had nearly doomed the entire world by unleashing Mephiles the Dark upon it. That was pretty deserving of death in Knuckles's eyes. So Sonic and Knuckles were just about to leave until suddenly, a very strange thing happened. They stayed where they were, frozen to the spot in surprise as the sand and dust just a few meters ahead of them suddenly began to kick up and blow aside as if some giant invisible fan was blowing down onto the ground and sending the dust sweeping away. Small pebbles were being blown away too. The hedgehog and echidna were speechless. What on Mobius were they watching? Why was the dust on the ground sweeping away to the side like it was doing now? Sonic was ready to dismiss at as mere wind kicking up the dust and run away but he stayed to see something that he could not have anticipated. The hedgehog and echidna's eyes both widened together in absolute shock as something landed down on the ground, the noise of the thing landing being the one thing that told them there was even anything there at all, and then de-materialized. Straight ahead of them, an enormous ship materialized into view. The ship was huge and looked vaguely familiar. Sonic was instantly reminded of the Egg-Carrier, a powerful ship of Dr. Eggman's that he'd used before. But this ship looked like a more evil version of the Egg Carrier with a dominantly black colour scheme with traces of red and huge spikes protruding from the sides and top of the fuselage. The bow even had evil looking "eyes" on either side, the "eyes" being red lights with a shape to them that made them look like eyes. Sonic and Knuckles couldn't believe what they were looking at. The sight of the ship was truly one to behold and the very design even made Knuckles and Sonic feel a little intimidated.

"Holy galoshes!" blurted Sonic in amazement.

"It's a demonic looking Egg Carrier!" cried Knuckles, "But who's piloting that ship? It can't be Eggman! He's dead!"

"I think I can take a wild guess…" mused Sonic as a beady little thought began to creep into his head.

He had a feeling that he was going to see the very echidna he and Knuckles had come here to see and rescue Tails from. The docking ramp of the ship before them extended out from the side of the ship and lowered down onto the ground. A docking door opened up at the base of the ramp and something began to walk down the ramp in a rather slow, sinister manner. Sonic and Knuckles's surprise quickly turned into anger greater than they had ever felt in their lives. Strolling casually down the boarding ramp, radiating confidence of the highest calibre with every step taken down the ramp and smiling a smile more wicked than even the most evil of Satan's offspring was Dr. Finitevus. The wind blew around his cape and started blowing it around behind him, giving him the appearance of having huge black wings waving behind him as he walked. Knuckles was ready to launch himself at Finitevus but the doctor had clearly been anticipating that move for he held up a warp ring as if to say "Move one finger and you get the warp ring!" without needing to say the words himself. Knuckles hesitated for his own good for he knew too well how powerful his uncle was and his warp rings were one of the things that made him very dangerous. Finitevus continued his walk down the ramp, pleased to see that Knuckles was hesitating. It disgusted Sonic to see how confident and laid back Finitevus looked. How could somebody possibly have such an attitude after kidnapping an innocent little boy? Sonic vowed to wipe that horrid smirk off of the mad echidna's face. Finitevus finally stepped off of the ramp and onto the solid rocky ground beneath his feet, his arms folded in front of him as his cape blew around behind his shoulders and neck.

"Hello there Sonic the Hedgehog." purred Finitevus sinisterly, his chilling voice somehow making Sonic feel colder than he already was feeling, "So nice to see you again my simple-minded, fast-moving hero of the world. And you've brought my pathetic excuse for a nephew Knuckles the Echidna with you! Even better! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

The insult made Knuckles itch to punch Finitevus in the mouth but he forced himself to keep his cool and not let Finitevus irritate him.

That would be the wrong thing to do for it would give Finitevus the advantage and even do what the echidna expected him to do. Sonic managed to keep his cool though but he looked deathly serious.

"Alright Finitevus you albino-freak, where's Tails!" snarled Sonic, "You better not have harmed him or so help me…"

"Silence yourself before you bore me to death with your generic quotes of heroism and idiocy, I don't have time for that right now." sighed Finitevus, waving his hand dismissively, "So, what do you think to my ship?" he asked, gesturing to the ship that loomed behind him menacingly, "I call it *The Nefarious* . It's amazing isn't it?"

"It's hideous just like you are." growled Sonic, "Now where's Tails?!"

"You shall see him when I deem necessary hedgehog." said Finitevus coldly, "Now then, I assume you've been wondering where I've been this whole time yes?"

"We have." said Knuckles grimly, "Where have you been this whole time and why have you been hiding?"

"Simple: to make my return less predictable." replied Finitevus, "And I've been hiding in my ship. It's camouflage abilities make it impossible to detect and since it's mostly invisible, you had no chance of finding me. Even when the power ran out I just hid the ship in the clouds so you'd never spot it. Now I've deemed my time of patience to be over so now I'm here to make your lives miserable once again. And it'll be very easy to do since I have the eight Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald."

"That brings me onto something, you're gonna pay for destroying my home Finitevus!" roared Knuckles, "Thanks to you, Angel Island is now a pile of rubble on the ground! Do you have any remorse for what you've done?! That island used to be YOUR home too remember?!"

"I have a saying: I. Don't. Care." growled Finitevus, "Angel Island is dead to me so it deserved to be destroyed. The island was an illogical hiding place for such powerful gems so it was begging to be

destroyed. You should be thanking me Knuckles for I've given the emeralds a MUCH better hiding place."

"More like I'll be THRASHING you!" bellowed Knuckles, his anger very much reaching its boiling point. Sonic could swear that he was looking even redder than before he was that angry!

"So ungrateful." sighed Finitevus, rolling his eyes and sighing nonchalantly "I give the emeralds a better hiding place and this is the thanks I get? There's no pleasing some people."

"That isn't your intention at all Finitevus!" snapped Sonic, "You just want to use them all for your own nefarious deeds! Now one last time, Where. Is. Tails?!" he yelled, spitting out the words viciously as if trying to make them sound as angry as he was right now.

"You'll wish you hadn't asked." sneered Finitevus.

With that said, the echidna pulled out a remote device from within his abnormally large cape and he pressed a button on it. At first nothing seemed to happen but then Sonic began to hear the sound of clanking feet. Did Finitevus have a robot in *The Nefarious* or something? Sonic soon found that out for at the entrance to the ship just at the start of the boarding ramp appeared a small robot that looked like a twin-tailed fox with cold blue optics. The robot walked down the boarding ramp with heavy metal feet that sounded much heavier than the body they belonged to. The ramp clanged loudly with every footstep the robot took across it. Its walking was very slow but sinister, like a killer android advancing slowly towards its target. Sonic thought he was going to faint at the sight of the robot. It looked too familiar for his liking. The yellow colour scheme, the blue optics, the red and white feet, the twin-tails, the white muzzle with sharp metallic whiskers and the small black nose that the robot displayed proudly for him to see were very much like Tails himself. Even the body size and proportions were the same. That could mean only one thing and as the robot stood beside Finitevus like a loyal second-hand-man would do to his master, Sonic knew what that thing was. Knuckles was equally as speechless but he thought he'd let Sonic unleash his horror first.

"TAILS!" screamed Sonic in more anguish than he had screamed

since the time he'd been forced to torture Sally while he was a robot, "You…you bastard! You roboticized him! How could you?!"

"Why to keep him on my side Sonic." purred Finitevus smoothly, patting Mecha Tails on the head, "You see, I have grand plans in mind and Tails here is going to be a part of it. His scientific and technical mind will suit my most demanding and particular needs perfectly. And because he's been roboticized and programmed to be loyal only to me, he will be the PERFECT minion for me! How does it feel Sonic to have your best friend turned traitor and working for me now? Does it make you…angry? Horrified? Disgusted? Does it make you bay for my blood? Does it make you want to…kill me?" his sentence was tail-ended by a demonic grin that seemed to sum up his character as a whole.

"Oh it makes me feel many things Finitevus and they all hinge on anger, shock and disgust!" snarled Sonic, "How dare you roboticize my best friend! How dare you!"

"You've gone too far now Finitevus, kidnapping my buddy's best buddy and turning him evil!" growled Knuckles viciously, punching his fists together so hard that it seemed like he was trying to break his own knuckles in rage for reasons no more than mere stress relief, "You're going to pay for this! I am gonna break every bone in your body for this Finitevus! You're a disgrace to echidna kind and I'm gonna see to it that you'll never conduct another evil scheme again!"

"Why do you heroes never just attack already?" sighed Finitevus, "Would it honestly kill you morons to just attack me already instead of wasting your breath spewing out empty words that fail to do yourselves any favours?"

"Well since you so kindly asked, we'll fight!" growled Sonic, "And don't think I'm gonna fight my own friend because it's you I'm after!"

"Well tough luck Sonic because Mecha Tails is dying to battle you." sneered Finitevus menacingly, "And so are my other friends."

He stepped casually to the side as the sound of footsteps from inside *The Nefarious* began to boom out through the open door.

Sonic and Knuckles grew nervous. Finitevus had friends?! How was that possible?! Given how evil and insane Finitevus was, how did he manage to convince anybody to work for him?! This obfuscating revelation was baffling to Sonic and Knuckles and they dreaded to think who Finitevus's supposed "friends" were. They found out shortly after the noise had begun and the shock they felt upon seeing Finitevus's friends was impossible for even themselves to describe. Out through the entrance and down the docking ramp of *The Nefarious* strode Finitevus's comrades, the very people he'd gathered together to formulate his evil army, the Dark Armada. There was Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox, Captain Metal, Ravage Bloodfang, Bride of the Conquering Storm and her Raiju Clan ninjas, Lord Sycorax and his henchmen Vladek the Frill-Necked Lizard and Romeo the Chameleon, all four members of Team Diamond (Lennox Meers, Owen Pounder, Alistair Drakken and the reluctant Roxy the Raccoon whom had been untied and freed for this occasion), Cutthroat Jim, Zira the Ruthless and Raphael the Cyber Husky. Sonic recognized them all except for Raphael as he'd not met him before whereas Knuckles seemed unfamiliar with not just Raphael, but Captain Metal too. Sonic was shocked to see so many villains he knew but he was more shocked at the fact Roxy the Raccoon was among the villains too. She had turned on Team Diamond and wanted to redeem herself. Had she been forced into working for Finitevus against her will like poor Tails? If so then why wasn't she a robot? Sonic assumed Finitevus didn't have a roboticizer on him at the time Roxy had joined his army and thus, had been unable to roboticize her. At least she had more of a chance of turning on Finitevus than Tails did. As the Dark Armada gathered behind Finitevus, the echidna gave off a triumphant laugh that radiated with confidence and certainty, certainty of victory that is.

"I've been quite busy while you and your idiotic friends have been trying and failing to defeat Dr. Eggman." crowed Finitevus, "I've gathered up all of Mobius's most notorious villains and formulated my own army that has one purpose in mind, to rule all of Mobius and destroy all who stand in our way! I call it the Dark Armada! My armada will be the slayer of heroes, destroyer of cities and the rulers of Mobius and you and your friends have no chance against us! Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"That's right doc, Sonic and his wimpy friends can't beat us!" sneered the always arrogant and conceited Scourge, "All of us together will be too strong for you to defeat!" he declared, pointing at Sonic as if his finger was a pistol with a bullet waiting to be shot into Sonic's head, "Alone we villains were strong, united we're INVINCIBLE!"

"You both made a grave mistake coming here." sneered Fiona, her voice seductive but her tone arrogant and wicked, "You've signed your death warrants coming to challenge the Dark Armada and now you'll suffer the consequences."

"Ye think that ye landlubbers were finally free and happy now Eggman's been killed?" snorted Captain Metal mockingly, "Nay lads, yer not free at all and ye never will be! Not while this ship crew be around ta make yer lives miserable fer years ta come!"

"You will not stop us." gloated Ravage, "You couldn't even defeat that lunatic Dr. Eggman. No, you needed our very own Dr. Finitevus to do that for you. He's the one who killed Dr. Eggman and did you all a favour. But now he's going to take back that favour and do what Eggman never could, destroy you all and conquer this miserable excuse for a world!"

Sonic was angry and insulted at the Dark Armada's comments but he staved off his anger for long enough to take in and be surprised at the fact Finitevus had been the one responsible for Eggman's death. He'd always wondered what had caused the Death Egg to explode and now he knew. Finitevus had done it. But Sonic wasn't going to congratulate Finitevus. He'd only done it for his own nefarious needs and so he and his armada would have no competition for the ruler of Mobius. Though with mercenaries like Scourge, Fiona, Conquering Storm, Zira and Lord Sycorax on the team, Sonic predicted that the armada members would turn on each other like a pack of wolves and fight over the spoils once the world was conquered. Sonic clenched his fists and scowled at the armada.

"So Finitevus has recruited you all has he?" he growled fiercely, "That explains why he's been absent for so long. Well I'm gonna kick all of your butts and tear apart this stupid armada! And I'll also save Tails and Roxy from your control Finitevus!" he added angrily.

"Oh I'm not under control or anything." lied Roxy, her face cold and emotionless as she spoke, "I willingly joined this armada. You see, I was lying about my heel-turn all along. I never really turned good. I just said that to get rid of you so me and my boys could get all of the golden nuggets without you and your friends interfering. Finitevus offered us a great reward for our cooperation in his schemes too, the Chaos Emeralds. Such a fine treasure is worth joining the armada for. Sorry hedgehog but you've been played for a sap the whole time."

"Indeed he has my dear." purred Lennox, putting a hand around the raccoon's waist and grinning wickedly at Sonic.

Roxy felt nothing but disgust at having to tell that lie to Sonic. The words were not her own and it felt like she'd been speaking with somebody else's mouth instead of her own. She hoped that when the time was right for the truth to come out, Sonic would believe her. She looked at him with disguised despair as Sonic glared at her.

"I knew I shouldn't have trusted you!" snarled Sonic, "But no, I allowed myself to be fooled by your obvious act! In that case Roxy, I'm gonna kick your ass as well as the others!"

"Oh you won't get near my Roxy." said Lennox coldly.

"We're gonna tear you and the red idiot apart!" declared Zira, cracking her knuckles and baring her teeth, "We all have scores to settle with you and your Royal Fighters and once you're all dead, we'll be victorious and Mobius will be ours!"

"Not on my watch!" shouted Sonic defiantly, "Knuckles, let's take them down, get Tails back and also get the Chaos Emeralds back!"

"You got it buddy!" yelled Knuckles "For the sake of Mobius, we will destroy this armada!"

"Dark Armada, ATTACK!" roared Finitevus just a loud, tumultuous roar of thunder boomed through the sky and hordes of rain drops whooshed down from the clouds and splashed loudly on the ground.

The hammering rain and the booming thunder seemed to further set

the tone of the fore-coming battle, gloomy, intense and callous. It was going to turn out that way as Sonic and Knuckles charged into battle with loud, vicious battle cries that would make any army soldier proud. The Dark Armada reacted too, all the members rushing in to engage in battle with their two foolish opponents. Sonic knew that it was a mistake to fight so many villains at once, especially since most of them were organic and fighting organic people weren't the same as fighting against robots. Mainly because organic people don't smash like robots do. But he had to rescue Tails, retrieve the Chaos Emeralds and stop the armada before they could commence with any evil scheme they likely had in mind for Mobius. It pained Sonic to think that just when it looked like Mobius was at peace at last, he was now being thrown into another war, this one likely to be worse than the Eggman war.

The hedgehog's first target was Finitevus himself, already a grave mistake to make in this battle for Finitevus was predicting that Sonic would target him first. The albino echidna summoned a warp ring to his hand and he tossed it in front of the spin-dashing blue hedgehog. Sonic dived straight into the warp ring and reappeared just above Scourge. Scourge spin-dashed into Sonic and walloped him back through the warp ring, throwing him backwards and shooting out of the warp ring like a cannonball out of a cannon. Fiona ran just behind Sonic as he came out of the warp ring and she pounded him into the ground with a callous roundhouse kick that made Sonic feel like his spine had been kicked out of place as he was hit. Sonic picked himself up just as Scourge and Fiona came running towards him, their evil eyes gleaming with delight as they prepared to tear him apart limb from limb. Thinking fast and reacting even faster, Sonic leaped out of their way, leaving his evil brother and the Royal Fighter traitor to collide into each other like cars in a head-on collision. Scourge bellowed furiously as his head began to ache. Fiona seemed to have come off worse though for she was on her bottom and clutching her forehead and nose, the latter trickling with blood from the impact. Scourge stomped towards Sonic and threw a roundhouse punch at Sonic, focusing all his raw power and strength into his right arm to make the punch really powerful. Sonic reacted at a speed so fast that even he was surprised he'd managed it, dodging the punch and giving himself the opportunity to attack. He charged into Scourge's torso, wrapping his arms around him and he

tackled him to the ground. As they rolled down onto the ground, Sonic drove his fist into Scourge's mouth, hoping to make his punch hurt as much as possible. The punch made Scourge yell but that was about as much as he'd achieved. They continued rolling until Scourge managed to pick himself up and get onto his feet. Sonic picked himself up too and uppercut Scourge in the face. His evil relative cried out as his head was snapped backwards by the power of the punch but he wasn't hurt for long. Scourge's stamina was as great as Sonic's, maybe even greater. Scourge leaped onto Sonic and he pinned him down, intending to break him in as many places as possible. The hedgehogs sprawled on the ground but Sonic swung his legs up, driving them into Scourge's abdomen and he threw him off. The green villain swore violently as he crashed chin first onto the ground. Sonic stood back up only to be caught off guard as something hard and metal slammed into the small of his back. It was Mecha Tails swinging his metal tails at Sonic. The roboticized fox was not meant to be doing much fighting as Finitevus risked losing him so he'd come out in a surprise attack on Sonic. That was as much as he was allowed. Sonic stumbled forward, just managing to keep his balance before he could fall over. He turned around and felt his heart weep as he saw Mecha Tails was now attacking him.

"Tails! Fight it big guy!" yelled Sonic desperately, "You can't let Finitevus control you! You're not Finitevus's mindless servant! You're Miles "Tails" Prower and you're a Royal Fighter! But you're also my best friend! Please, don't make me fight you!"

"My allegiance is only to Finitevus." droned Mecha Tails, "I am his servant, I am programmed to destroy you and aid my master in his plans."

"Sorry Tails but I can't let that happen!" Sonic said in a tone of voice that sounded almost like heartbreak.

He spin-dashed towards Mecha Tails, deliberately keeping his momentum low so he wouldn't strike Mecha Tails too hard. But the roboticized fox was anticipating the move. He'd positioned his metal tails in front of himself so he could block the attack. Sonic hit his tails and ricocheted off of them, hurling straight towards Captain Metal. The Metal Sonic/robot pirate cackled maniacally as he aimed his

gun arm at Sonic and blasted him down onto the ground. He wished he was fighting against Blaze the Cat at this very moment but he supposed Sonic would suffice. Sonic crashed down into the ground, getting a face full of wet sand and gravel from the rain soaked surface beneath him. He picked himself up and reacted quickly as Scourge, Fiona, Mecha Tails and Captain Metal all charged at him. Sonic spun around on the ball of his right foot and he drew his left leg back as Scourge lunged at him. Sonic sprang his foot forward and kicked Scourge, sending him stumbling away. Mecha Tails pounced towards Sonic like a wild cat and he clawed at him, the hedgehog turning to the side Just as Mecha Tails's clawed hand sliced through the air towards him. His hand lightly scratched Sonic across his shoulder and the side of his face, thin cuts spreading across them and stinging in protest against the rain slamming onto his body and the water soaking the cuts. Sonic had dealt with worse pain before so this was hardly going to slow him down. Then Captain Metal seized Sonic by the arm and yanked him up close. Sonic elbowed him in the face, quickly regretting doing so for he just ended up numbing his arm and Captain Metal, being unable to feel pain, was unaffected by the blow. Captain Metal struck Sonic in the rib with his blade and tore a gash through his skin with the sharp edge. Sonic screamed in anguish as a red, bloody gash opened up on his side and stung extremely furiously as the rain water streamed down his body and over his gash. Sonic wrestled himself free from Captain Metal's grasp and slammed the heel of his foot into Captain Metal's single optic. Captain Metal was unhurt but he was momentarily blinded for the kick had splattered wet dirt over his optic, rendering him unable to see properly. Sonic liked it when the environment played into his favour, something Finitevus was renowned for in his fights. Fiona ran towards Sonic and lashed out with a powerful kick. Her foot slammed vigorously into the side of Sonic's face and the blue hero of Mobius found himself dazed as head started swimming from the impact. Sonic retaliated with a punch to Fiona's exposed belly, the vixen gasping in surprise and doubling over as the wind was knocked out of her.

But just as Sonic kicked Fiona down onto the ground, Scourge ran up behind him and grabbed him by the shoulders. He yanked Sonic off of his feet with seemingly little effort and he hurled him over onto his back. Sonic hit the ground hard, crying out in pain and just as he

began to pick himself up, Scourge spun on his heel and swung his foot into the super speedy hedgehog's face. Sonic felt like his face was going to shatter as Scourge's foot slammed into it and his head snapped backwards, throwing him off balance and bringing him down onto his side. Refusing to give up, Sonic forced himself onto his feet. He felt like he was wearing down though, his muscles screaming protest as he forced them to function. Fiona elbowed him in the back, then Mecha Tails slashed him across the belly with the sharp tips of his metal tails and Scourge slammed his fist atop his cranium. That dazed Sonic long enough for Captain Metal to blast him in the torso with his laser cannon. The yellow laser smashed itself against Sonic's torso and threw him backwards as if he'd been punched really hard. Sonic came down on the ground with a heavy crash and he rolled to a stop just inches away from his adversaries. The impact had been so callous that he'd chipped one of his own teeth and he spat out the chipped off half. He was feeling hurt all over his body, even his mouth. Sonic winced and groaned as he tried to get back up, Scourge cackling maniacally as he advanced towards him.

"See loser? We told you we're too tough for ya!" he gloated, "And you're not even fighting the entire armada! Just four of us are enough to bring you down! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll…see about that…Scourge!" growled Sonic, new strength coming back to him as the hedgehog threw his usual taunts at him.

The blue-furred Mobian was back on his feet and charging towards Scourge, Fiona, Captain Metal and Mecha Tails before they could even blink. Scourge lashed forward and he and Sonic soon found themselves tumbling over each other once again.

Meanwhile, Knuckles seemed to be dealing with most of the Dark Armada's heavyweight. He was currently up against Zira the Ruthless and he was beginning to wish he'd had a weaker opponent. Zira was a master of kung-fu, the only one in Chun-Nan who had a chance of matching the mighty Princess Matilda. Knuckles had fought her during her attempts at taking over Chun-Nan and she'd been a proper beast to fight. She was a little weaker due to being out of action for so long as a result of having her limbs infused with concrete and immobilizing her for as long as she had

been in jail but still she was too tough for Knuckles. The echidna slugged the leopard in the gut and bashed his fists against her head in an attempt to daze her. Zira tried to shake off the pain in her head for long enough to focus properly but then Knuckles put his hands on Zira's shoulders and sprung off the ground with his feet. His weight pressing down on Zira's shoulders caused the kung-fu feline to topple backwards like a falling skyscraper. Zira however pushed Knuckles off of herself and she leaped back onto her feet. Knuckles bounded back up onto his feet and cried out as Zira lashed out with an acerbic punch to the chest, the heel of her hand and all four of her fingers curled inwards as she threw the punch. Knuckles staggered backwards and found himself being callously pounded in the back by Conquering Storm's foot. Her iron-toed boot made the lynx's kicks very powerful and very hard. Knuckles felt more like he'd been hit by a bat then kicked by a ninja lynx. Knuckles was thrown forward by Conquering Storm's kick and he found himself receiving another punch to the chest from Zira. This threw him down to the ground and just as he picked himself up, Zira and Conquering Storm both kicked him into the air together. How weird it was for the two to be working together considering the fierce rivalry they'd built up between them after two encounters and the fact Conquering Storm had once succeeded where Zira had failed. They wouldn't make a habit out of teaming up in these battles though, that much was certain between them both.

Knuckles crashed down hard onto the ground, the impact sending surges of pain through his shoulders and back but he forced himself up onto his feet. Lord Sycorax came lumbering towards Knuckles now and he seemed just as keen to get rid of the red-furred Mobian as he was Vector the Crocodile, his own son. Knuckles leaped out of Sycorax's way and he grabbed the crocodile's arm. He forced it behind his back and then wheeled him around so he was facing Zira and Conquering Storm. He kicked Sycorax towards the two ninja ladies and laughed as the crocodile bowled the two over. His laughter was off by Ravage Bloodfang suddenly running up behind him and chomping down onto his shoulder with his terrible jaws. Knuckles screamed in agony as he felt the sharp teeth of the wolf penetrate through his skin and dig into his flesh. His entire left arm felt numb from the pain in his shoulder and as Ravage let go, blood oozed out of the teeth marks the vicious, cannibalistic wolf had left in

it. Ravage licked his lips, clearly seeming to like the taste of Knuckles's blood on his tongue. He now wanted to eat him alive. Ravage was about to bite Knuckles again but Knuckles clamped his mouth shut, fighting the pain his shoulder, and he swung Ravage onto his back. He picked up the wolf and threw him at Lord Sycorax just as the egotistical reptile picked himself. Knuckles laughed at that but he then winced as rain splashed down onto his wound, causing a terrible stinging pain to flare through his shoulder. He was so busy rubbing his wound better that he didn't realize that Finitevus was charging towards him. He soon found out that he was going to be against his uncle as Finitevus chopped him across the face with the side of his hand. Knuckles was thrown aside but he didn't fall over, he managed to keep his balance though he began to wonder how he'd been able to do so. Finitevus then gripped the edges of his cape and swung them at Knuckles as if he was wielding twin swords. To Knuckles's surprise, the tips of Finitevus's cape actually **slashed** him across the face! Two horrible cuts spread out across his cheeks and blood trickled down them. Knuckles bellowed in anguish but his cries were silenced by Finitevus balancing backwards on his left foot and launching his right foot straight into the echidna's gut. Knuckles was thrown backwards and he landed with a splash in a muddy puddle that had formed from the heavy rain that just seemed to get heavier by the second. Knuckles was lying on the ground, wet, dirty and bloody and his body was screaming in pain. Finitevus added a terrible insult to a very horrible injury as he walked up to Knuckles and pressed the heel of his foot down on Knuckles's shoulder wound. This made Knuckles shout a bloodcurdling shout of indescribable agony.

"Impressive isn't it?" sneered Finitevus as the rain trickled down the bridge of his nose and off his glasses, "I inserted two sharp blades beneath the fabric of each side of my cape so now my cape can be even more of a weapon that it already was. It's like I have swords hidden in my cape. And look at yourself, you're a soggy, bloody, muddy mess and the armada hasn't even used all of its members. You're pathetic Knuckles and you're a disgrace to our bloodline. Locke must be so ashamed of you right now."

"No…you're a disgrace…to our bloodline! And dad…is ashamed of YOU!" thundered Knuckles.

He punched Finitevus in the leg and made his evil uncle get off of him. Knuckles picked himself up and socked Finitevus in the mouth, causing the evil armada leader to spit out blood as he staggered backwards. Finitevus spun around on the heel of his foot, his cape swishing out behind him and smacking Knuckles in the face. Due to the cape getting heavier as a result of being drenched by the rain, the cape wrapped around Knuckles's head and pulled him onto the ground. Finitevus took off his cape so that Knuckles's added weight wouldn't yank on the cape and choke him. He swung his cape around and sent Knuckles hurling through the air. Owen Pounder was just ahead of Knuckles, waiting for him to be in range. As Knuckles entered within a metre of Owen, the rabbit lashed out and grabbed him with his hands. Then he tossed Knuckles into the air like a baseball and held back as the echidna hurled down towards the ground. Owen punched Knuckles, his punch radiating power and strength that even Knuckles was astounded by and the purple-eyed emerald guardian was hurled through the air and into the ground like a football coming down to earth after being kicked. Knuckles lay down on the grounding, groaning loudly as his body surged with pain and he found he had no strength left in him to get back up.

Sonic himself was faring no better. Scourge, Fiona, Captain Metal and Mecha Tails were beginning to overwhelm the poor hedgehog but what made it even worse was the fact that Raphael had stormed onto the scene. His personal grudges were with Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx and Kiara the Cheetah but he was all too happy to pound Sonic into the dirt after what he'd heard about him. Plus, he'd once sent Sonic to the alternate dimension of Solbius and Sonic had somehow gotten back to Mobius Prime so he was going to make Sonic pay for coming back. Raphael blasted Sonic off of his feet with his sonic waves and Sonic found himself in more pain than he'd ever felt in his life for he was already pretty battered and beaten and had a gash in his side but now he was being pummelled by sonic waves that hurt in more ways than one. Sonic came down onto the ground with a sickening crunch on his side. He'd landed awkwardly on his arm and had just ended up breaking it. Sonic howled in agonizing pain as he clutched his broken arm. What made it even worse was that Cutthroat Jim ended up running onto the scene and he slashed Sonic's broken arm with his cutlass.

"That be fer marooning me on Cocoa Island and causing me to eat me own crew just ta stay alive ya devilish dog!" snarled Cutthroat Jim.

Sonic at this moment was wishing he was still stuck on Cocoa Island. Sonic picked himself up and spin-dashed Cutthroat Jim in the gut, throwing him down onto his back. But that was just a last, pathetic attempt at getting the last punch and Sonic knew he couldn't win now. His side was throbbing, his body was aching, his arm was beyond any use in this battle and his strength was gone. He couldn't make himself go on any longer. He was too battered, too beaten and much too weak to continue fighting. So weak that he didn't even resist when Scourge spin-dashed towards him and sent him flying into a muddy puddle. Sonic sent water sloshing everywhere as he crashed into the puddle. He tried to pick himself up but he couldn't. He was just too weak to do anything. He lay forlornly in the puddle, defeated and depressed for he knew he'd let his best friend down. He'd been unable to save Tails and now he was likely going to be killed by the Dark Armada before he could cause them anymore trouble. The beaten hedgehog could also that Knuckles was just as defeated as well, lying beside him and straining to get back up. Sonic watched feebly as Finitevus strode up towards him with the tips of his cape in his hands and ready for a slash attack. Sonic never thought he'd feel more hate and anger towards anybody other than Dr. Eggman. Now he'd found his most hated Mobian of all time and he'd found it in the form of Dr. Finitevus. If he somehow managed to crawl out of this alive, he would make sure Finitevus suffered even more than Eggman did when he was roasted alive by the explosion that destroyed his Death Egg. Finitevus stood before Sonic, his toes just under the puddle of water that Sonic was lying in. Finitevus held the blade hidden in within the tip of his cape at Sonic's throat.

"A valiant effort my ridiculous, feeble-minded simpleton but I'm afraid we were right, you ARE no match for the Dark Armada." sneered Finitevus with a tone of triumph in his voice and a triumphant expression on his face, "You were fools to fall for my obvious trap. I suppose Cosmo informed you of the coordinates I left for her to give to you? Well you can thank her for sending you and Knuckles to your graves!"

"You…won't win…Finitevus!" growled Sonic, hoping he still sounded as defiant and confident as either despite the pain in his body and the apparent strain in his voice, "Not…by a long shot! There are others…who will fight you! And you…and your armada…will be disbanded!"

"I sincerely doubt that will happen." purred Finitevus confidently, "I have gathered the best villains Mobius has to offer and I myself am a powerful adversary. What chance do you have of stopping me and my armada? And once we commence with our plans, Mobius will be ours and you and your pathetic team will be buried underground and pushing up the flowers."

He then raised the blade up high, his blade positioned in a way that would ensure he would slash Sonic's throat once he swung it. Sonic knew he was too weak to continue fighting but as he stared death right in the face, he knew he couldn't let Finitevus kill him here and now. Reacting fast, Sonic kicked Finitevus in the shin and took the echidna's leg out from underneath him. Finitevus yelped in surprise as he suddenly toppled over and landed with a splash in the puddle just in front of Sonic. Sonic, straining and fighting the pain his body, then quickly grabbed Finitevus's wrist and yanked a warp ring off of it. He flicked it into the air and opened up a portal back to NewMobotropolis. Knuckles pushed himself back onto his feet and he summoned all the strength he needed to walk over to the warp ring. Sonic helped him through and he followed his guardian friend through the warp ring. Finitevus reached out to grab Sonic but he was a fraction too slow. The warp ring closed up but Finitevus did manage to grab it before it could disappear, meaning that Sonic and Knuckles didn't end up having the warp ring. Finitevus had given one to Captain Metal to which he'd lost to Silver and Blaze, he was not going to lose another one. Finitevus surprisingly enough didn't seem to mad at the fact he'd just failed to kill Sonic and Knuckles. He kept his cool and even managed to smile about the whole thing. The rest of the armada didn't seem to share his enthusiasm.

"&%^! The runt got away!" moaned Scourge, "And we had him right there at our mercy! WE FREAKING HAD HIM!"

"And to think we could have finally killed Sonic the Hedgehog!" whined Fiona, "Finitevus, you should have just killed him already

instead of boasting at him!"

"This is a stain on our honour that we must wipe clean." muttered a very stoic looking Conquering Storm, "We will kill the hedgehog next time we face him though, won't we Finitevus?"

"We shall indeed Conquering Storm." purred Finitevus smoothly, "We stand triumphant today and as the days go by, our triumphs will get greater and greater and we will have more and more victories until our plan is complete and Mobius is ours! Do not fear about Sonic's escaping my armada, this is merely the beginning of his downfall! AH, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HAAAAAAA!"

His laughter echoed all around the rain soaked plains as lightening flashed through the sky and thunder clapped as if in approval of Finitevus's maniacal laughter. The Dark Armada had made its first move and it had won its first battle. This was the beginning of many victories they were going to have in the future and the Royal Fighters would have no chance of stopping the insidious armada…

Back in New Mobotropolis, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were all gathered together in the centre of the city, anxiously awaiting the return of Sonic and Knuckles. After Queen Sally Acorn had been informed on Tails's kidnapping, the squirrel had decided to postpone their plans to see Matilda and Bladefeather's wedding. Sally had been quick to inform them on why they weren't coming and Matilda understood her. Sally could just imagine the mongoose and falcon being wed right now, wondering if things were OK right here at home and if Sonic and Knuckles would return home with Tails safe and sound. The news must have killed the mood a little between them but Sally assured herself that their marriage would still go well without them and they'd be very happy on this day. Just a pity they couldn't be happy themselves. The mood was tense and Sally could feel the tension surging through everybody around, including herself. Sora Prower and Cosmo the Seedrian looked the most worried of everybody since Tails was special to them in more ways than one. The two girls could hardly keep their anxiety under control as they waited for some hopefully good news to come to them. Sally sympathized with them dearly. Sora was Tails's sister and Cosmo

was Tails's girlfriend. To have that kind of person abducted and leaving the girls with no idea on what was happening to him, she imagined it most be horrible for them to think about. Even worse in their case since Cosmo was still a child and Sora was now a teenager. The whole experience must be traumatizing for them and Sally hoped early that Tails would be saved and brought back home so their anxieties could be over.

"They've been gone for quite a while…do you think Sonic and Knuckles are OK?" asked Sora nervously.

"I should hope so." said Sally sadly, sharing the vixen's anxieties, "It's bad enough how we've had to miss what would have been a nice wedding to see and all because Finitevus decided to kidnap Tails. I sure hope Sonic brings him back here so I can give him a piece of my mind!" she growled furiously, not something she often did, even in cases like this.

"We all want to give him a piece of our minds sugah." said Bunnie Rabbot with a grim nod of her head, "Nobody kidnaps poor lil' Tails and gets away with it! And nobody tries to ruin the peace for us either! We've finally gotten what we've wanted now Eggman's dead and Finitevus is ruining it!"

"He's ruined a lot of things just by kidnapping Tails." murmured Cosmo, her eyes full of tears and her hands trembling, "And I hope he comes back safely. I can't possibly be at peace knowing that the one I love is in the hands of that…that…"

She failed to finish her sentence as she broke down into rainfalls of tears. Amy Rose and Cream the Rabbit gathered around Cosmo and hugged her to try and comfort the Seedrian. But she was so distraught it was like they weren't even there to her.

"There, there Cosmo. It'll be OK." Amy reassured her heartbroken friend, "Sonic will save Tails, he always saves people and he always makes it out victorious and alive! Just you wait and see!"

Amy would soon find out whether she was right or not. Much to the Royal Fighter's surprise, a warp ring opened up out of nowhere and out of the warp ring spilled a very battered and beaten Sonic the

Hedgehog and an equally as battered and beaten Knuckles the Echidna. They both looked terrible, not only soaked from the rain and muddy from the puddles and dirt on the ground, but also they had wounds and cuts and bruises all over them. Sally was quick to notice the gash in Sonic's side and the bite wound on Knuckles's shoulder. The Royal Fighters all freaked out as Sonic and Knuckles collapsed onto the ground, the warp ring closing up behind them. Sally ran over to Sonic and Shade the Echidna immediately ran over to Knuckles. The rest of the team gathered around the pummelled Mobians worriedly, wondering what had happened. Cosmo and Sora noticed with dismay that they didn't have Tails with them, meaning they had failed to rescue him. That just made them even more worried now.

"Sonic! Knuckles!" yelled Sally in dismay as she cradled Sonic's head in her lap, "What the heck happened to you two?!"

"Who did this to you both?" asked Shade, her tone unusually hysterical for somebody as collected as herself, "Look at your shoulder Knuckles! Finitevus couldn't have done that!" she shrieked, taking note of the ugly wound in Knuckles's shoulder.

"My scans register that they've had a terrible beating." mused the former Mobian Nicole the A.I. Lynx, "Finitevus is a good fighter but some of their injuries don't look like they were his doing."

"They…weren't…" grunted Sonic, "Finitevus…is back…and he has…an army…of villains…at his side now!"

"No…no this can't be true Sonic!" shrieked Sally, her face the embodiment of horror, "Finitevus has an army of villains?! Who's in this army?"

"Many villains…we've fought…before Sal." spluttered Sonic as he forced the words out of his mouth, "We'll…give you the list later. I have…some more…bad news…though."

"Tails…has been…roboticized." Knuckles said with a strain in his voice, "Finitevus…did it…to force him…to be part…of his army. We're…sorry we…couldn't save him!"

The already nervous tone had exploded into a whole new tone of horror, shock and disbelief. The news was too much for Cosmo. The Seedrian began to feel numb all over with horror, her heart seized up, her head began to feel like it was spinning and then…she fainted. Her eyes closed and she collapsed onto the ground. Amy and Cream screamed with horror and they were quick to pick up Cosmo and carry her away so she could get some comfort. Sora was too shocked to do the same thing though. The vixen just broke down harder than she'd ever broken down before. Sora threw her arms around her boyfriend Ruben the Water Panther and wailed into his shoulder. She'd never been so heartbroken in her life. She'd vowed never to lose her little brother again and yet that was exactly what had happened. Tails was now Finitevus's loyal servant and Sora could feel nothing but despair over what had happened. Ruben embraced his distraught girlfriend back, feeling the pain Sora was going through. This was the worst thing that could ever happen to her. The rest of the Royal Fighters were all shocked and horrified to hear this. Finitevus had an army of villains and Tails had been forced into being part of the army, as a Robian no less. Mobius had finally broken free from Eggman's tyranny but it seemed a new darkest hour was coming. And it was here in the form of Dr. Finitevus and his new army. A new battle was beginning and it would be more intense than the war with Dr. Eggman ever was. This was going to be their most intense crusade in the history of the R.F.S. and maybe even all of Mobius…

Holy...fucking...shit! The Dark Armada has risen and made its move! Sonic and Knuckles are battered and beaten, Tails is still a robot and the armada's plans are about to commence! How will Sonic and friends stop this new enemy?! The heck I should know, just tune into the next episode to find out!

Dark Armada Part 3: Operation: Sabotage

Story 203: Operation: Sabotage

The Dark Armada Chapter 3 of 25

Mobius, Nekronopolis Library, 200 years in the future...

"Hey, hey Blaze! Come here! I think I've found something!" cried Silver the Hedgehog, his voice quivering with excitement along with his body.

"What is it Silver?" asked Blaze the Cat curiously. She had been sitting at a table reading a library book. The book was about the history of a country called Mercia, a country that had a medieval theme going on and a country that had a lot of history but not a lot of admirers. Mercia was no longer around in the future so Blaze had been intrigued to learn more about its history.

"Look my love, do you notice anything unusual about this bookcase?" asked Silver excitedly, pointing at the rather tatty looking bookcase that was nearly empty of all books and was in a state of decay. Any books it did have on the crumbling shelves were barely intact or in good condition.

Blaze walked towards the bookcase and looked at what Silver was pointing at. The cat's eagle eyes caught what he was pointing at almost immediately. She could see a gap behind the bookcase, a funny thing to see behind a bookcase for behind the case itself should be a wall, not a gap. The cat began to wonder about this gap behind the tattered bookcase. They'd missed it all the time they'd been coming to this library and yet now they'd finally noticed it.

"There's a gap behind that case!" blurted Blaze in surprise, "How did we miss that?"

"Beats me." said Silver with a shrug, "Oh well, let's see what it is. There must be a new room behind there! Maybe it's full of new books we can study!"

"Please don't get excited Silver." said Blaze with concern, putting her hands on her boyfriends arm, "I don't want you to die of disappointment if it turns out to be nothing."

"Don't worry Blaze, I'm being cautiously optimistic." said Silver reassuringly, stroking his beloved cat's hands softly, "Oh well, here goes."

Silver and Blaze held their breaths as Silver began to use his psychokinesis to push aside the bookcase. Silver was a psychokinetic hedgehog with five quills protruding between his eyes and over his forehead and two large quills protruding from behind his head. His girlfriend Blaze was a pyrokinetic cat who was formerly a princess but no longer took the title thanks to a tragedy that resulted in the extinction of her kingdom and her being the last fire cat alive. They were both Mobians from Mobius's future, and it was a terrible future to be in for them. Two-hundred years ago in their time, something had caused the end of the world. Cities were ruined, water and food was scarce, forests were bare and the sky was forever dull and grim with burning orange colours mixed with grey clouds. Silver and Blaze desired nothing more than to see Mobius's future improved and they had gone back in time to disprove any theories that they had gotten from their research of Mobius's past. They had been horribly unsuccessful in their attempts and the whole thing was beginning to frustrate the two. But they knew that Mobius wasn't going to fix itself so Silver and Blaze didn't give up. They were going to fix Mobius no matter what it took and seeing how beautiful Mobius was in the past, it would be totally worth it for them. The silver hedgehog and the lavender cat had been doing most of their research in Mobius's library, which was easily the best place to do their research in. But given the run down and ravaged appearance of the library and the tattered state of the books, that wasn't saying much. It was like saying a headless chicken was better than one that had just died. But Silver and Blaze had managed to disprove any theories they had read about so they had narrowed their choices down considerably. Mobius must end at least some time after the year 2143 but sadly, they couldn't find any books that documented Mobius's history after the year 2143. And now the psychokinetic hedgehog had just found out there was a gap behind a bookshelf. Using his powerful psychokinesis, the bookcase

was effortlessly pushed aside by Silver and he and his pyrokinetic love interest were met with a surprising sight. A whole new room was hiding behind the bookcase and it was mostly intact! It was mostly dusty and some books had fallen onto the floor but otherwise, the room was in excellent condition. The apocalypse must have been unlucky enough to miss this particular room, luckily for the future Mobians. Silver fought to keep his excitement under control as he saw what was behind the case.

"YES! Another room!" yelled Silver excitedly, "And the books look intact too! We'll have a good chance of finding what we desire to find out!"

"Yes Silver but it's very likely there are no history books in this room so don't get too hopeful." said Blaze cautiously, "Don't build yourself up to disappointment please."

"OK Blaze, I won't." said Silver softly, "But still, this is a surprising find for us. Who'd have thought this forgotten room was there the whole time?"

"Who indeed?" agreed Blaze as she walked into the room, her high heels making a soft clunking noise as she walked across the wooden floor that two-hundred years ago would have been nicely polished and shiny.

Silver followed Blaze eagerly into the room and was marvelled at the sight of it. How could this one room be mostly intact in comparison to the rest of the library? It seemed like a miracle and Silver had to pinch himself several times to make sure he was still awake and this wasn't a dream. All that happened was that he sent a bit of pain surging up his arm, nothing more. He was still awake. That was good news already for the determined hedgehog. Maybe this whole new room would actually have the answers he needed at long last! Taking in Blaze's advice though, he forced himself to keep calm and not get too hopeful. This room could just have books that had no relevance to what he wanted. Silver and Blaze observed the bookshelves that were all around the room. They had the usual labels that told the visitors to the library what kind of books were on offer. Silver scanned the bookcases closely to see if there were any history books on the shelves. He didn't look for long though for

Blaze seemed to have spotted the history section almost immediately. She was looking at another shelf on the other side of the room and her sharp eyesight had spotted what they were looking for straight away.

"Silver, here's the history section." Blaze called over to him, "And there's quite a lot in this section."

Silver ran over to Blaze and gaped at the miraculous sight that lay before him and his fiery partner. There was a shelf on the bookcase and it was labelled with a gold plate with the words "history books" carved on it. The shelf was completely full too, about twenty books in total on the shelf. All the books were in great condition and there wasn't a single gap between them, meaning no history books had fallen off the shelf during the apocalypse. That gave Silver even more excitement building up inside him. The books wouldn't be tattered or missing any pages! He could find just what he was looking for! Silver began to wonder if he was dreaming again so he pinched himself once again to double check. Again, he was still standing here and standing at this miracle sight before him. He wasn't dreaming. Silver just felt even more happy knowing that he wasn't dreaming.

"This is just what we've been looking for!" cried Silver, "A whole shelf of history books! This is just what we need!"

"Provided those books actually have the information we're looking for." said Blaze, her face stoic for she didn't want to get too excited yet.

"Oh come on Blaze, show some enthusiasm!" chuckled Silver, playfully nudging his feline companion with his elbow, "We're closer to finding the answers we need in order to prevent the end of the world than ever before!"

"You don't know that for sure Silver." said Blaze softly, "Those books may not far enough to the year the apocalypse began. I have every right to be sceptical, please understand that."

"I understand hon, I really do." said Silver, patting Blaze gently on the back, "Well, let's see if these books have the information we

require."

He peered at the bookshelf and he scanned the titles on the spines of the enormous row of books carefully. He was surprised at how fast he ended up finding something promising. The tenth book in the row was a rather thin book with its title written in tiny letters on the spin. It said "Mobius 2144: The Final Year". Silver yanked it off the shelf immediately.

"Look at this!" he cried out joyfully, "This book is titled "Mobius 2144: The FINAL Year"! That means the world ends in 2144! We now know WHEN this disaster happens! This is just what we 've been looking for! Hallelujah Blaze we've finally found what we've been looking for!"

"Oh Silver, it's a miracle find!" gasped Blaze, her eyes brimming with happy tears, "The title of that book alone already helps us! We now know WHEN the world ends! 2144! That's the year we need to go back to in order to prevent this from happening!"

She and Silver embraced with delight over this information. They were finally getting somewhere at long last. It truly was a miracle indeed.

"Yes, but WHAT causes the apocalypse?" asked Silver, "Let's see if the book can tell us that."

Blaze, now feeling more optimistic, kept her fingers crossed as Silver blew dust off of the book and opened it up. He was already met with a wall of text on the inside of the cover page. Silver read it eagerly. The text had been hand-written by the original author of the book, who's name was "Yassen Romanoff". The name told Silver that the author was likely Russian in nature. The text said:

The apocalypse has happened and I'm one of the few Mobians to have survived the disaster. A thousand of us still live, maybe a few more than that but I wouldn't be too surprised if there's not a lot more. I am writing this book so that we Mobians will always remember what had caused this disaster. Maybe somebody in the future can work out how to prevent this from happening thanks to the information in this book. There will be

no way of publishing this book so this singular copy is all that there is to tell of Mobius's final hours. Hopefully the Nekronopolis library will receive visitors that will come across this book and learn what caused the end of our great world.

Yassen Romanoff, one of the few apocalypse survivors.

Silver could feel nothing but despair and sorrow for the man who had written those words. He must have perished sometime after writing the book because it had been left in this very library to collect dust for all eternity. 200 years pass by and yet Silver was now the first person in 200 years to be even so much as looking at the book in his hands. He imagined that nobody knew about this book for it clearly hadn't been read since the day it had been written and nobody knew what had ended the world. The apocalypse survivors had obviously died out before they could share their information or at the least didn't even know what had ended the world in the first place, leaving a generation of Mobians completely in the dark about this catastrophic event for twenty whole decades. And now the answers were finally going to be revealed. With baited breath, Silver turned the page and began to read...

Mobius, New Mobotropolis City, present time...

It had been a day since it had happened.

The New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had enjoyed a year of peace and tranquillity after the death of Dr. Eggman last year. But just as they thought their worries were far behind for good at long last, a new dark hour had dawned over them all. Miles "Tails" Prower, the Royal Fighter inventor and technician had been kidnapped by Dr. Finitevus, the evil uncle of Knuckles the Echidna. But that wasn't all that had happened. Tails had not only been kidnapped by Dr. Finitevus, but he had been roboticized by the mad doctor and made into his loyal servant, the cold and emotionless Mecha Tails. He had also been recruited into Finitevus's deadly army, the Dark Armada. The Dark Armada was an evil army consisting of many of Sonic's deadliest enemies and led by the mad, nihilistic doctor himself. Sonic the Hedgehog and Knuckles the Echidna had fought this

armada…and ended up coming home extremely battered, bruised, wounded and weak.

They were now lying in a bed each in the New Mobotropolis Hospital with Mariah the Medicine Cat tending to their wounds. She gave them some of her miracle medicines that would accelerate their recovery rate and ease the pain in their bodies. They weren't the only ones in the hospital though, Cosmo the Seedrian was in hospital with them too. She had fainted upon hearing the terrible news and was now recovering along with the hedgehog and echidna. She had come to and had been given some medicine to help her get better once she had been woken up. The rest of the Royal Fighters were in the room with the three patients, all of them exchanging sad and pained glances of sorrow and despair. Tails being kidnapped and made into Finitevus's loyal servant was the kick to the head but the fact Sonic and Knuckles had failed to rescue him and only had bad news to deliver was the kick that knocked the head out. Mariah looked sad as she observed her patients. She was used to seeing pained faces and she could see that her trio of patients were in a lot of pain indeed.

"It must have been a terrible fight my darlings." she said pityingly, lightly stroking Sonic's forehead to comfort him, "Look at that ghastly gash in your side! Who did that? Some maniac with a sword?"

"You…ungh…could say that!" grunted Sonic, pain evident in not just his body, but his voice too. Captain Metal had been the cause of the gash in his side and he'd done it with his own sword so Mariah's guess was spot on.

"And what in the world happened to your shoulder young man?" asked Mariah, looking shocked to see such a wound. It had been bandaged up but the size of the bandages still left the tell-tale signs of the size of the wound, "You look like you were bitten by a monster!"

"If you'd class a wolf who wears a skull mask and a cape "a monster" then yeah, you're pretty much bang on." Knuckles said with a winch, gritting his teeth as pain flared up his shoulder.

"You sure looked like you were up against some powerful, vicious

people." said Mariah with a shudder, "I dread to think who in the world you were fighting against."

"Well dread no more for you're about to know who we were against." said Sonic, fighting off the pain in his side long enough to speak clearly, "Surely you've heard of Dr. Finitevus right?"

"I have. I was there when he ruined Sandy's concert and brought a floating island above our city!" exclaimed Mariah, "Did he do this to you both?"

"Not all of it." said Sonic truthfully, "He's gathered together some of our worst enemies ever from my evil brother Scourge to Chun-Nan's two evil ladies Zira and Conquering Storm to the Royal Fighter traitor Fiona and much more. And the worst part is he's kidnapped Tails, roboticized him and made him a member of his evil army!"

"And it makes my heart ache with worry to think what Finitevus is using my sweet, handsome fox for!" wailed Cosmo, her eyes raining with tears once again, "Oh why did Finitevus have to kidnap him?! Why couldn't he just leave us all alone and let us live in peace?!"

Mariah gave Cosmo a sympathetic gaze as the heartbroken Seedrian began to cry once again. Amy and Cream were once again on hand to sit by Cosmo's bed and comfort her as she sobbed into her hands. One had to wonder how Cosmo still had any tears left in her eyes to cry. Amy put her arms around the wailing Seedrian whereas Cream patted her softly on the back, shedding tears for her distraught friend.

"Oh poor Cosmo. She's never going to be happy until we save Tails!" wailed Cream, "It's making me sad to see how upset she is!"

"It saddens me too." said Amy grimly, stroking Cosmo's hair softly to ease her nerves, "And it angers me too! How dare Finitevus kidnap Tails! He's Sonic's best friend and Cosmo's boyfriend! He's hurt my idol and he's hurt my second best friend! I swear if I see that white-furred bastard again I'm going to break every bone in his body! For Sonic and for Cosmo!"

"I doubt you'll even get within five feet of him before he takes you

out Amy." said Sonic with a sad but serious expression on his face, "He can take us all out and now he's got an army of Mobius's most notorious villains, he's even more untouchable."

"I agree and considering the list of villains he's recruited for his army, we're really in for a tough battle." said the Royal Fighter leader and queen Sally Acorn, "What an army of villains he has! Scourge, Fiona, Zira, Conquering Storm and her entire clan, Captain Metal, Ravage, all of Team Diamond, Lord Sycorax and his two henchmen all together! Cutthroat Jim, I don't really know much about but I assume he's not much of a threat. As for Raphael, Dark and Kiara told me about him a few months ago. Said he'd given them a hard time and tried to make them cyborgs* so I bet he's a liable threat."

"He is your majesty." put in Knuckles, "He took Sonic down with a tunnel of sonic waves from his forehead! It looked like a powerful attack too!"

"It was!" exclaimed Sonic, "Finitevus sure knew how to make an army, he really did! And he's also got my buddy Tails on his side, as Mecha Tails. It burns me to think of the fact he's done this, he's turned my best friend into a robot and is forcing him to do evil things for him! It's as bad as the time Eggman roboticized me and made me torture you Sally!" he blustered, thinking back to a time he longed to forget and a time he was sure Sally longed to forget too.

"Don't remind me." said Sally grimly, her mind fighting hard to keep the terrible memories away, "Finitevus has shown his hand and he has some kind of goal in mind. Why else would he gather together so many villains? We have to stop him and his armada and get Tails back before he can commence with his plans!"

"But how can we do that sugah?" asked Bunnie Rabbot worriedly, "Ah mean, look what they did to Sonic and Knuckles!" she exclaimed, gesturing wildly at the injured hedgehog and echidna lying on the beds before them.

"That was our first mistake." noted Sally, "We should have all gone together instead of just letting Sonic and Knuckles go alone. Next time we fight the Dark Armada, we will fight them all together. Only with our forces combined will we be able to bring the armada down."

"I agree Sally." said the A.I. Mobian Lynx Nicole, "Now then, I believe Sonic and Knuckles told us the Dark Armada has a ship called "The Nefarious"? If we find that ship, we find the armada."

"But the blokes told us it has cloaking technology." noted Geoffrey St. John, "The bloomin' thing will likely be invisible. We'll NEVER find it!"

"Wrong Geoffrey." said Nicole matter-of-factly, "I am linked to Mobius's satellites and the satellites have heat-vision technology. I just set the satellites to heat-sensor mode and we'll find the ship easily. It'll detect the ship's heat signature and show us exactly where it is. No cloaking technology in the world can hide a heat signature."

"Have I ever told you your lady-in-waiting's a genius cousin?" chuckled Abby the Squirrel, playfully nudging Sally with her shoulder.

"Yes Abby, you have." laughed Sally, "Well then Nicole, you go to Royal HQ and search for The Nefarious. We'll wait for you to return."

Nicole nodded and she materialized out of the room. This was something she was beginning to enjoy now, the ability to warp herself from room to room within any point of the city. It was quite fun for her and also meant she could never be late for anything, or take a long time to go to and fro. In a matter of seconds, she would be over in Royal HQ and Nicole would be searching for *The Nefarious* . The moment she left, Cosmo clasped her hands together, clearly concerned about something. Amy patted her back gently.

"You OK Cosmo?" she asked?

"I'm just holding back the bit of excitement that's building up in me now." she said quietly, "Excitement as in we'll find Finitevus's ship and get Tails back."

"Once we find that ship, we'll take the stealth approach before we all charge in together." explained Sally, "A direct attack would be suicide, especially as we have nothing that can combat an upgraded

Egg-Carrier at the moment. The best option would be to sabotage the ship and bring it down. Ground the Dark Armada and take away the advantage they have over us."

"Great idea Sally-girl!" cheered Bunnie excitedly, "Say, can me and mah handsome skunk be the saboteurs? Ah'd love to have the opportunity to ground The Nefarious for ya'll!"

"I would too." said Geoffrey with a rather devious smirk on his face, "Please your majesty, allow me and my beautiful Bunnie take part in this mission. I can set up a bunch of darts around strategic areas of the ship and set them to blow! And Bunnie's strength and weapons will blow that blighter apart!"

Sally wasn't entirely sure about sending two Royal Fighters into The Nefarious like that, especially as it was a risky gambit to take but she couldn't see why she shouldn't send two very capable Royal Fighters like Bunnie and Geoffrey on a sabotage mission. They would likely make it out of the ship alive and be back in time to report to them so that they could launch the full frontal attack. She sighed but she smiled at Bunnie and Geoffrey.

"Well since you two plucky fighters so kindly volunteered, I think I'll accept your offer." said Sally brightly, "You two will be the saboteurs who will take down The Nefarious for us. Come back to us once the ship is down or at least come back to us if you're too overwhelmed and need to retreat. Overall though…come back to us ALIVE."

"We will yer highness, we will." said Bunnie with a wink, "We'll get goin' once Nicole gives us the low down on the durn ship's location."

The moment she finished that sentence, Nicole suddenly re-materialized into the room. It had only been about five minutes and she was already back.

The moment she finished that sentence, Nicole suddenly re-materialized into the room. It had only been about five minutes and she was already back. Everybody gathered around, eagerly awaiting for Nicole to give them the news.

"I've found the ship!" gasped Nicole, "It's flying over Nekronopolis!

It's flying away from the city though so no worries about Miranda and her team getting caught up in any destruction. We have to catch it now we know where it is!"

"Bunnie, Geoffrey, there's your cue." said Sally with a wink, "Fly over to Nekronopolis and bring that ship crashing down!"

"Will do sugah." declared Bunnie, "And me and Geoffrey will get ourselves some heat-vision goggles so we can see the ship as he enter Nekronopolis. Come on sugah, let's go and sabotage The Nefarious!"

"Right behind ya luv!" cried Geoffrey excitedly.

He and Bunnie proceeded to run out of the room as fast as they could to get the goggles they'd need for the mission. Upon acquiring the goggles, they would be up in the air together and flying off to Nekronopolis. With Bunnie's powerful jets, they would be over in Nekronopolis in a matter of minutes. As soon as they'd left, Cosmo climbed out of her bed and called over to Mariah.

"Please excuse me miss, but I need to use the bathroom." she said politely.

"Run along my darling." said Mariah sweetly, "You know where the bathrooms are. Come straight back once you're finished."

Cosmo nodded and then she left the room to go down to the toilets. As soon as she left, Sally knelt down beside Sonic's bed and tenderly took his hand into her own. Her soft, gentle and loving her hands felt around his own was all the hedgehog could think at this moment. He smiled at his beautiful girlfriend, her presence alone making him feel much better already.

"We'll get Tails back Sonic, I promise you we will." Sally said softly, "I know how much he means to you and we will not rest until he's back safe at home with us."

"I know Sal." said Sonic, "Believe me, if it was you in Tails's position, I would turn the world upside down if it meant saving you from Finitevus's control."

"Then let us turn the world upside down to bring Tails back." said the squirrel, kissing Sonic on the cheek while still stroking his hands.

Sonic gave Sally a grim smile. Finitevus would regret ever kidnapping Tails and formulating his insidious armada. But one question burned in Sonic's mind. Why did Finitevus formulate this army? What was he planning? And why did he need an army to commence with his plans…?

Meanwhile, *The Nefarious* was hovering over the Golden Hive Colony, having traversed all the way across Nekronopolis in order to reach the bee populated city. The Golden Hive Colony was a haven for bees all over Mobius and also the birthplace of Team Chaotix's Charmy Bee. It was ruled by King Stinger and Queen Bess and was a happy place for bees to live in and make honey like bees did. But the city was not in for a happy time. The city was being invaded by the Dark Armada. *The Nefarious* de-cloaked, revealing itself to the citizens in all its terrifying, malevolent, evil glory and the Dark Armada descended down from the ship and into the city below. Not all the armada was there though, only Finitevus and Ravage Bloodfang remained behind to run the ship. Mecha Tails had been put in charge of the invasion force and as the armada touched down into the city, he pointed ahead of himself to the city all around him. The bees panicked and began buzzing around in a frenzy that was unmatched by anything in the world.

"Storm the city, steal all their honey, kill anyone who tries to interfere." he ordered, "The master needs material to create Chaos Emeralds out of.

The Dark Armada obeyed his commands and they all ran rampant through the city, causing chaos and stealing whatever honey they could get their hands on. The panicked, frightened bees didn't dare get in their way and they began to fly away as fast as their wings would let them, allowing the evil group to commence with their nefarious mission. Finitevus was putting Stage One of Operation: Enerjak Reborn (Villains Rising to the Armada for they don't know his true intentions) into action. He was going to steal and mine whatever materials he could find in order to create hordes of Chaos

Emeralds. It was a curious truth in the world of science that Chaos Emeralds could be made out of just about anything as long as it's mixed with Chaos Energy and Finitevus, being a Chaos scientist, knew this very well. The Dark Armada would steal every last drop of honey and they would give it all to Finitevus to use for his evil experiment.

Up on the ship, Dr. Finitevus stood in the bridge, surrounded by computer monitors and he seemed to be listening intently to somebody, completely ignoring the carnage down on the ground that the ship's screens were showing him. Ravage was actually keeping an eye on the mission and was enjoying what he was seeing. They would hopefully storm Adabat and steal whatever they could for Finitevus to turn into Chaos Emeralds. He didn't understand the need for thousands of Chaos Emeralds but he supposed Finitevus had his reasons. Maybe he was increasing the number of Chaos Emeralds from nine (eight including the Master Emerald) to a thousand to make the Armada more powerful. Powerful enough to conquer the world and have no resistance. Ravage looked up from the screens and saw that Finitevus had his index and middle fingers pressed against his ear and he was nodding as if he was listening to a conversation. The wolf was confused and he waited until Finitevus took his fingers away from his ear before he asked.

"I beg your pardon Finitevus but what were you doing?" asked Ravage.

"Listening to a call. I've received a tip-off from my agent." explained Finitevus, "Apparently Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey St. John are coming to sabotage *The Nefarious* and make us easier targets for the Royal Fighters."

"How did they know about that?!" asked Ravage wildly.

"Nicole used Mobius's satellites to locate my ship via heat signature." explained Finitevus, "Not that it matters since I'll always know the Royal Fighter's moves before they make them."

"So tell me, who is this agent of yours?" asked Ravage curiously.

"That would be telling." said Finitevus, tapping his nose with his index finger, "Needless to say, it is somebody trustworthy and reliable and somebody who'd make a fine Dark Armada member. Now then, I trust you have scores to settle with the skunk and rabbit?"

"I do indeed." said Ravage grimly, "Geoffrey and Bunnie ruined my plans to destroy Adabat** and Bunnie destroyed a powerful weapon that I could have used to destroy the country! They even ruined my killing streak on Victorbius, a Victorian themed Mobius too! I so want to eat them alive! Bunnie first since I hate her more!"

"Then prepare the dinner table my friend because dinner will be served." purred Finitevus sinisterly, "I have the perfect thing to deal with Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey will be taken out very easily."

"I can hardly wait!" cried Ravage gleefully, licking his lips wickedly over the thought of eating his former friend and her boyfriend.

Finitevus cackled at Ravage's delight and he led the wolf out of the room so they could prepare for Bunnie and Geoffrey's arrival…

It had been a long but peaceful flight over to Nekronopolis for Bunnie and Geoffrey but the two were finally arriving at the very location *The Nefarious* had been located in. Bunnie soared through the sky like a graceful bird with the rockets in her feet. She carried Geoffrey in her arms, holding on tightly to the skunk as they headed to Nekronopolis. The rabbit and skunk were wearing heat vision goggles so that they could locate *The Nefarious* should it turn invisible. Their goggles were silver rimmed with green lenses and they already had them on. Bunnie and Geoffrey flew through the sky and kept their eyes peeled for any sign of *The Nefarious* . They were quite surprised when they eventually came across it but not because they were surprised to have finally found it. They were surprised to see WHERE they had found it. That is to say it was looming above the Golden Hive Colony but it seemed to be packing up for they could see Dark Armada members waiting for the ship to take them back onboard. They watched as a large, silver and blue cylinder tunnel descended down from below the ship and closed over some

of the Dark Armada members. Once the cylinder closed down around them, a force field emitted underneath their feet, forming a floor that would keep them in and the cylinder retracted back into the ship. Bunnie and Geoffrey were shocked and also puzzled. What was the Dark Armada attacking the Golden Hive Colony for? What could they possibly want to be here for? The colony surely didn't have anything of use for such an insidious army? Whatever the reason, it couldn't be good. Bunnie and Geoffrey lifted up their goggles and was straight away that they wouldn't need them. *The Nefarious* wasn't cloaked, it was visible for them. They kept hold of the goggles as a just in case though, leaving them perched above their eyes. Bunnie touched down behind a building and she lowered Geoffrey to the ground. They watched as some Raiju Clan ninjas lined up for *The Nefarious* to take them aboard. There wasn't enough room for all the clan to be taken on at once so they had to split into groups of ten. Twenty ninjas populated the clan so there were two groups, ten in each, waiting to be taken aboard.

"So the ugly ol' ship decided to attack this place huh?" mused Bunnie, "Ah can't for the life of me think why they would want a bee colony."

"Maybe Finitevus wants them to join his army?" asked Geoffrey.

"No sugah, ah doubt he'll be THAT desperate for more members." said Bunnie with a shake of her head, "And besides, the bees won't be of much use to him. All they do is fly around and make honey all day. What use would they be to him?"

"Good point babe." said Geoffrey, "So what do we do to get onboard that vessel?"

"We wait until that tunnel comes down again." deduced Bunnie, "And once we're on, it's time for Operation: Sabotage to commence. And maybe while we're at it, we can save Tails too."

"I like your thinking luv." said Geoffrey with a smile, "We move on your mark."

"Alright then. Ready to move in three…two…"

Bunnie paused for a tense moment as the first group of Raiju Ninjas were taken aboard *The Nefarious* . Once they had been taken aboard, the cylinder began to descend down to pick up the other Raiju Ninjas.

"One!" cried Bunnie.

Picking Geoffrey up bridal style once again, Bunnie activated the jets in her feet and rocketed towards the Raiju Ninjas. Flying faster than anybody could blink, she flew straight above them, startling all the ninjas. She ascended up through the cylinder, catching the attention of the Raiju Ninjas and leaving them behind to just gesture wildly at the surprising sight above them. Bunnie and Geoffrey ignored the ninjas as the cyborg rabbit flew up into *The Nefarious* . Once they were inside, Bunnie put Geoffrey down onto the floor and they ran down a darkly lit corridor before they could be seen. They darted around a corner and pressed themselves against the wall. This corridor led to a dead end on one side, which was the side they were hiding in, but the other side led to another stretch of corridor.

"OK, we don't really know the layout of this ship but I'm sure a lot of carefully placed exploding darts will take it down." whispered Geoffrey, "I'll go down there and set up as many darts as possible. You go down there and see what damage you can cause."

"Will do hon, ya'll be careful without me OK?" said Bunnie sternly.

"I will, and you too my darling Rabbot." said Geoffrey sweetly.

The two shared a quick embrace and a kiss before they separated and went down their own corridors to begin the sabotage. Bunnie watched as Geoffrey disappeared down the corridor and as she ran down the corridor to find a good spot on the ship to cause damage to, she couldn't help but let a nagging feeling in the back of her mind reach out to her. The mission seemed…too easy at the moment. Surely the Dark Armada would have spotted her and Geoffrey even if their entry was a little unexpected and swift? She was sure the last bunch of Raiju Ninjas that were waiting to get aboard the ship were running around *The Nefarious* and telling everybody that they had intruders onboard. Nevertheless, Bunnie supposed she shouldn't really complain about an easy mission. After the shock they had all

received from Sonic and Knuckles's return home with nothing but bad news to deliver, an easy-going mission was just what they all needed, especially if they had any hopes of winning against the Dark Armada. Bunnie came to a corner and she poked her head around the side to see if there was anybody around. What she saw around the corner was the most shocking thing she could ever see. There, standing proudly and smiling wickedly at her just a few feet down the corridor was Ravage Bloodfang, her childhood friend and member of the Peace Gatherers group in Adabat before the group had disbanded. Bunnie's blood boiled and her teeth clenched at the sight of the wolf. Nobody in the world made her more angry then Ravage Bloodfang, especially given how much he'd hurt her not just physically, but emotionally too. Bunnie had fond memories of Ravage from her childhood and seeing him being as evil as he is now just broke her heart every time she thought about it. It was even worse considering that Ravage had become rather cannibalistic over the years, once even trying to eat her and Geoffrey before the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses happened. What really clinched it for her was what he did when he ended up on Victorbius during said crisis. He had slaughtered innocent people just to give himself something to eat. She had declared that Ravage was dead to her and now she wanted to make that statement quite literal in every sense of the word. Bunnie stood before Ravage, clearly ready to have a fight with her former friend. The wolf seemed eerily calm and confident though, clearly not intimidated in the slightest at the presence of the powerful cyborg rabbit standing before him. They had fought on several occasions and Ravage had given Bunnie a tough time but Bunnie always came out on top so it made the rabbit feel nervous that Ravage wasn't that bothered about the fact she was standing before him and ready to beat the tar out of him.

"Hello my dear child." purred Ravage, "Small world isn't it old friend?"

"Too small Ravage…" snarled Bunnie, "Ah can't tell ya'll how much it BURNS me to see ya'll standin' here before me! Your very presence makes me sick to mah stomach and ah'm gonna see to it that ya'll spend the rest of yer days rottin' away in a prison cell for all yer crimes!"

"Yes Bunnie, it's nice to see you too." purred Ravage, "Now I suppose you're wondering how I knew you'd be here?"

"Ah guess somebody spotted us and let ya'll know about it." said Bunnie coldly.

"In a way." replied Ravage, "And let me tell you something my darling, it was foolish of you and your foul-smelling boyfriend to come here and sabotage our ship. You've pretty much just come to the undertaker to have your graves sorted out for you!"

Bunnie's heart missed a beat.

"What?! How did you know me and Geoffrey are here to sabotage the ship?!" she shrieked in horror.

"A little bird told Finitevus." purred Ravage smugly, "And who this bird is you'll never find out because you'll be going to your grave!"

"Don't prepare mah tombstone yet, because this gal ain't going down anytime soon you ugly old cannibal!" growled Bunnie.

Ravage seemed to take offence to being referred to as a cannibal for he sprung into action at a speed that would make the average wolf proud. Ravage roared loudly as he ran towards Bunnie, the Southern Belle adopting a battle-ready stance and preparing to make her move. Ravage lunged at her with his powerful claws but Bunnie stepped to the side, leaving Ravage to claw at air that had previously been occupied. Bunnie socked him three times in the face with her cybernetic arm before the wolf could regain himself and attack again. But as Bunnie prepared to launch a fourth attack, Ravage grabbed her by the neck and slammed her against the wall as hard as she could. The Rabbot cried out in pain, feeling the wind being smacked out of her. Ravage then proceeded to toss Bunnie across the corridor as if she was nothing more than garbage waiting to be disposed of. Bunnie crashed down on to the floor and she landed on her stomach, skidding to a painful halt that left her stunned for the moment. Bunnie picked herself up and she glared as Ravage advanced on her menacingly.

"I will tear you apart!" roared Ravage, his face the mask of anger.

He ran towards Bunnie and let her have it in the face with a powerful roundhouse punch that nearly threw her off her feet. He then uppercut Bunnie in the face, the attack actually lifting her off her feet and throwing her backwards on again. Bunnie picked herself up and was quick to link hands with Ravage as he lashed out at her again. Frightened inside but determined everywhere else, Bunnie pushed back on Ravage's arms with a growl of effort. A fight with Ravage always had her worried for one wrong move and she was done for. But she wasn't going to let Ravage take her down today, not while she had a mission to do. She pulled on Ravage's hands, pulling him straight into herself as catching the wolf by surprise. Ravage and Bunnie both tumbled down onto the floor but that was precisely what Bunnie wanted to do for she had the opportunity to swing her legs up and kick Ravage across the corridor as hard as she could. Ravage crashed down onto the ground with a sickening crack that broke the teeth on his skull mask and left a crack down on side. Ravage was back on his feet in no time but he was brought back down just as quickly for Bunnie shot him directly in the back with her arm cannon. Her opponent down, the furious cowgirl ran towards Ravage and grabbed him with her robot arm. She slammed him into the wall as hard as she could, hoping that she'd broken something inside of Ravage despite it not being in her character to have such thoughts. Then she threw Ravage into the other wall and pinned him against it with her foot after he'd slid down to the floor.

"OK gruesome, tell me where the ship's weakest spots are and ah might be tempted to let you live!" she demanded fiercely, "Ya'll have ten seconds to answer me and then ah blow yer head off! Got it?"

What happened next was something that nobody could have foreseen. A huge laser blast shot out from nowhere and struck Bunnie full on, making the rabbit scream in agony as the blast hit her and her muscles all tensed up and convulsed in protest against the beam. Dr. Finitevus had warped onto the scene and he had an unconscious Geoffrey St. John by his side. Geoffrey had been incredibly unlucky and had run straight into Finitevus before he could set up any darts and Finitevus had been quick to knock him out. Now he had found Bunnie and had shot her with a large rifle he had in his hands. But this was not the normal laser rifle that one would use. This was a de-roboticizer made in the design of a rifle!

And now Finitevus had shot her with it! The echidna could hardly wait to see Bunnie's face when she realized what he'd done. Bunnie fell onto her knees as the pain of the beam sapped away her strength and she gasped for breath. The pain subsided and Bunnie winced as she straightened up. She looked up at Dr. Finitevus and glared at him. The rabbit was quick to get up onto her feet and prepare to fight Finitevus but she noticed that something was wrong. She could feel the floor beneath her feet, cold and metallic. Her feet felt…soft and furry. Her left arm did as well. Bunnie looked down at herself and screamed. Her left arm was no longer metal! It was flesh, blood and fur once again! And so were her legs! Her metal legs were now her original smooth, slender, furry legs that she had once had before being partially roboticized! Bunnie burst into tears of shock and horror. On the one hand it was good to be normal again but at the same time, Bunnie didn't WANT to be normal again. She had grown accustomed to being a cyborg and yet she was now fully organic once again, after three years of being a cyborg.

"No…no! You…you did it! You de-roboticized me!" shrieked Bunnie, "Ah'm no longer a cyborg!"

"Yes I did." purred Finitevus wickedly, "I built this rifle-shaped de-roboticizer for precisely that purpose. You're a very powerful fighter and it's because of your cybernetics, given to you by Dr. Eggman himself even though he intended to fully roboticize you and not just part of your body. How does it feel now Bunnie? To be weak…and organic?"

"How dare ya'll take away mah cybernetics!" yelled Bunnie angrily, "Ah actually loved bein' a cyborg! Ah got to do many amazing things with them and ah was a great asset to the team because of mah cybernetics! And you gone and took them away from me! How could you?!"

"Quite simple my child, so you'll be weaker and the team will lose one of its heavy hitters." gloated Finitevus, "But I de-roboticized you for another reason…so Ravage could have more meat for his dinner. Ravage, eat her!" he ordered.

"With pleasure doctor." purred Ravage wickedly.

Bunnie gulped and her heart began to double its beating rate as Ravage advanced towards her. The rabbit pressed herself against the wall in terror, staring at Ravage in horror as the wolf's mouth watered and he licked his lips. Bunnie knew it was pointless to fight. Ravage was a tough opponent for her even when she had her cybernetics, what chance did she have against him like this? Bunnie shook furiously as the wolf bore over her.

"N-no! P-please! D-don't!" she whimpered, "D-don't eat me!"

"Oh I can't do that Bunnie, you've done terrible things to me in the past and I cannot let you live to preen about them." sneered Ravage evilly, "That and I've been DYING to find out what you taste like! You're perfect for my main course Bunnie Rabbot…or is it just Bunnie Rab-BIT now since you're not a cyborg anymore?"

It was just like the wolf to hammer one final nail into the coffin for poor Bunnie. Ravage opened his jaws and prepared to snap them around Bunnie's neck. One swift snap of the jaws would kill her instantly. But Bunnie was much to desperate to live to allow Ravage such an easy kill. Bunnie dived to one side, leaving Ravage to simply lunge forward and crash head-first into the wall. The wolf gripped his muzzle in pain and he let out a yell of anger. She ran past Dr. Finitevus and over to Geoffrey. Acting fast, she took off his arm-mounted crossbow and loaded it with a stun dart. Geoffrey had shown here which pockets held which darts before so she knew where to find them. She clipped the crossbow onto her arm and pointed it at Finitevus. But Finitevus was anticipating Bunnie's move though so he summoned a warp ring and held it in front of him in order to stop Bunnie from firing the dart at him. But Bunnie did the unthinkable. She aimed at his foot just under the warp ring. The dart embedded itself directly into Finitevus's foot and shocked him into unconsciousness. The moment Finitevus passed out and collapsed onto the floor, Bunnie snatched one of his warp rings from his wrist and she summoned it quickly. She had opened up a portal to directly outside *The Nefarious* . It was not safe inside the ship anymore so the sabotage had to commence outside the evil vessel now. Ravage picked himself up and watched as Bunnie carried the unconscious Geoffrey through the warp ring. He lunged for her but he was much too late. The warp ring closed shut just as he leapt for her, leaving

him to do nothing more than growl angrily and thump the floor in rage.

Outside *The Nefarious* , the warp ring opened up and Bunnie emerged from within with Geoffrey in her arms. She put Geoffrey down onto the ground and stared up at the ship she had just moments ago been onboard. *The Nefarious* truly looked like a monstrous creature looming above The Golden Hive Colony like that. It was preparing to go though for Finitevus had commanded the ship to leave the moment everybody was onboard. Everybody was now onboard *The Nefarious* so the computer that controlled the ship was commencing with Finitevus's order. The enormous, demonic looking vessel began to turn to the left and fly slowly away from The Golden Hive Colony, passing straight above Bunnie and Geoffrey. Bunnie wasn't going to let it go that easily so quickly loading Geoffrey's crossbow with all the explosive darts he had in his backpack, she opened up a portal that opened up beside *The Nefarious* with her warp ring. She leaned through the warp ring and watched as *The Nefarious* cruised casually by her. She aimed the crossbow at the side of the ship and fired one dart at a time, getting about an five inches worth of space between each dart. There were twenty darts in the crossbow and in a matter of moments, Bunnie had fired all twenty of them down the left side of *The Nefarious* . She then pressed a button on the crossbow that would set all the darts to self-destruct and quickly retreated through the warp ring before the blast could snatch her up. She knelt down beside her unconscious boyfriend as all twenty darts suddenly exploded, ripping up chunks of the fuselage and blowing balls of flame and smoke out the side of *The Nefarious* . Bunnie smiled triumphantly as the ship's left side was vaporized in the blast and the vessel suddenly began to tilt down towards the ground, unable to fly anymore with the damage done to it. Amazingly, nobody aboard the ship had been killed or even caught up in the blast. Only *The Nefarious* had received any damage right now. *The Nefarious* crashed down onto the ground, withstanding the impact despite the damage to its left side. The ship wouldn't be flying again for a while now and Bunnie laughed at the very thought of Finitevus in rage over what had happened to his precious ship. Her mission accomplished, she now opened up the warp ring and warped herself and Geoffrey back over to New Mobotropolis. Pity they hadn't been able to get Tails back as well but

with just her and Geoffrey on the mission, now was not a good time. Still, they'd crippled the armada at the very least. And as Bunnie left Nekronopolis and returned to New Mobotropolis, Finitevus woke up and was quick to find out about the damages done to his ship. Seeing what Bunnie had done to *The Nefarious* made him go berserk with rage…

Back in the New Mobotropolis Hospital, the Royal Fighters were greeted with a surprising sight. One was the fact that a warp ring had opened up in the hospital but Dr. Finitevus had not stepped out of it. Instead, Bunnie and Geoffrey had emerged through the warp ring and that was when they got their second surprised. Bunnie was no longer a cyborg and Geoffrey was unconscious. Surprisingly enough, the blast that had damaged *The Nefarious* hadn't even stirred him. Bunnie lay Geoffrey down on a nearby bed and stood before her friends, waiting for the inevitable questions they were going to ask her about the mission and how she'd lost her robot parts. Sonic, who seemed much better now despite the still healing gash in his side, stood up from his bed and gaped at Bunnie.

"Bunnie! It's good to see you and Geoffrey are back but what happened to you?!" blustered Sonic frantically, "You're fully organic again! Where are your robot parts?! And is Geoffrey OK?"

"He's just unconscious sugah, ah guess Finitevus hit him pretty hard." murmured Bunnie solemnly, "As for mah robot parts… Finitevus had built a rifle that had a de-roboticizer beam in it and he used it on me to relieve me of mah robot parts."

"Oh man…that sucks." said Sonic glumly, "Poor Bunnie Rabbot's no longer a Rabbot. This'll be a hindrance to the R.F.S. Your strength and weapons were amazing and now they're all gone! Just like Finitevus took Tails from us…"

"This is truly our darkest hour." said Sally sadly, shaking her head, "Tails is a robot working for Finitevus and Bunnie's lost her cybernetics. Please tell me there's good news as well Bunnie." she pleaded.

"That's exactly what else I've brought home with me." said Bunnie, her face brightening, "Ah used Geoffrey's crossbow to shoot exploding darts into the side of The Nefarious and ah blew it up! The entire left side of The Nefarious is nothing more than flames and smoke now and the ship's crashed down! We can storm the ship and take the armada members by surprise! And since ah've been on the ship, ah can warp ya'll there with the doc's lil' ol warp ring!" she added with a wink, showing off the warp ring she'd managed to swipe from Finitevus after knocking him out.

"Well considering you lost your cybernetics, that's pretty impressive Bunnie." said Sally brightly, "So the day's looking up for us after all."

"You bet!" cried Sonic excitedly, "And you know what this means? We have a chance at getting Tails back! Yes! And since Finitevus has a de-roboticizing rifle, we can use it on Tails and break him free of his Robian prison!"

"Looks like Uncle Finitevus is doing us a favour for once." said Knuckles with a smirk on his face, "Oh boy is this going to bite him in the ass!"

"It sure will Knuckie." said Sonic happily, "Hang on Tails, we'll be getting you back!"

"Not quite yet though." said Sally, "You still need to heal Sonic, same goes to you too Knuckles. We'll see how you are tomorrow and then we will invade The Nefarious. We'll need you two at your best if it means taking the Dark Armada by storm and getting Tails back."

"I suppose you're right Sal." said Sonic, looking quite grim about the idea for he just wanted Tails back already, "It'll be worth waiting for though, foiling Finitevus and his armada and saving Tails before they can do any more evil deeds, or even commence with whatever big plan Finitevus has in mind."

"And to think me and Geoffrey will have provided much help in that matter." thought Bunnie aloud, "Say, where's Cosmo?" she asked curiously.

She noticed that Cosmo didn't seem to be anywhere in the room like she should be.

"She went to the bathroom but she seems to be taking her sweet time." noted Sonic, "I bet she just wanted to let it all out in privacy the poor girl. Maybe that's why she went, just to have a good cry and to regain herself."

"Well Cosmo will be happy to hear that we have a way of saving Tails now." said Bunnie brightly, "We should tell her the moment she comes back…"

Then suddenly before anybody could do anything, the door opened up and in walked Cosmo, looking pretty refreshed and even happier all of the sudden after her trip to the bathroom. She wasn't alone though, there were two Mobians behind her and she walked into the room ahead of them.

"Hello everyone." said Cosmo softly, "It appears we have visitors."

She stepped aside to reveal that the two Mobians with here were none other than Mobius's future heroes Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat! The Royal Fighters all looked very surprised to see the two but nonetheless pleased as well. Silver and Blaze smiled back at the Royal Fighters, delighted to see their friends again.

"Hello there everybody." said Silver cheerfully, "Long time no see eh?"

"Silver!" cried Sonic excitedly, "Am I glad to see you and Blaze again! What brings you two here to the past once again though?"

"We've found out what causes the end of the world, and we're here to stop it from happening." announced Blaze, "And this time, we KNOW we're right…"

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius 24: Terror of the Cyber-Husky

** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius 4: Trouble in Ada bat*

***Well that escalated quickly. :) So the Dark Armada's grounded, Silver and Blaze know what destroys Mobius and dooms their future and the Royal Fighters have a plan of attack! But will it work though? And how will Bunnie cope with the loss of her cybernetic limbs? Find out next time in "*Operation: Nefarious"...

Dark Armada Part 4: Operation: Nefarious

Story 204: Operation: Nefarious

The Dark Armada Chapter 4 of 25

There was a scene of absolute chaos in Nekronopolis right now.

Moments ago, the Dark Armada had invaded the Golden Hive Colony and raided the colony dry of all its honey, intending to use it in their insidious plan, Operation: Villains Rising. The name was not the true name of the plan though but the armada's leader Dr. Finitevus had deliberately given the plan a fake name to keep Enerjak's return a secret for he knew it wouldn't settle well with most of the armada given what Enerjak did when he first rose last year*. The plan involved gathering whatever materials they could find in the world and use them to make artificial Chaos Emeralds. The invasion had gone well enough until *The Nefarious* had ended up receiving two very unwelcome visitors. *The Nefarious* was the Dark Armada's flying base of operations and the reason they were hard to locate. It was formerly an Egg Carrier that once belonged to the long since dead Dr. Eggman. Finitevus had stolen the Egg Carrier and made some major adjustments that made *The Nefarious* the sinister ship that it was now, loaded with great firepower, great speed and cloaking technology that made it impossible to detect unless with heat-vision technology though Finitevus was going to see to that sooner or later. The ship was not currently flying now for Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey St. John had sneaked onto the ship and Bunnie had used Geoffrey's exploding darts to blow a massive chunk out of the left side of *The Nefarious* . The damage would take a good few days to repair and the ship would be back in the air in no time. The Dark Armada was already rushing around onto the scene and trying to fix whatever damage had been done to their glorious vessel. *The Nefarious* had a huge hole that spanned a quarter of the ship's length in the left side and a few smaller holes dotted around the rest of the ship's side. The holes would be fixed very shortly for Finitevus had spare metal on hand for such an occasion. Raphael the Cyber Husky, Captain Metal, Lord Sycorax and his henchmen

Vladek and Romeo were in charge of repairs. Raphael knew well about metal what with being a cyborg and wanting to make everybody in the world a cyborg and Captain Metal and the reptiles had built ships before so they knew exactly how to fix *The Nefarious* . Once the sides were fixed and replaced with new metal, they would see to fixing some of the ship's inner circuitry that had been fried in the explosion. The ship would be back in the air by tomorrow or the day after given how fast and efficiently they were working. Most of the other Dark Armada members were giving a hand with the tools and handing out the pieces needed to fix the ship.

Finitevus strangely enough was not helping with the repairs. He was in the ship's bridge once again and he had his fingers pressed against his ear just like before. His agent was delivering another report to him and he was listening intently. He wanted to know badly what Sonic the Hedgehog and his infuriating group of pesky Royal Fighters were up to now so he made sure he didn't miss a single word the agent said. He nodded his head slowly as he heard the agent's report.

"Mmm, hmm…I see…what else?" he murmured as he continued to listen.

The bridge's door suddenly opened up slowly behind him and in walked Scourge the Hedgehog, the green furred bad boy looking pretty grim in the face as he walked into the bridge to report to Finitevus. The way he entered the room was in the manner of a nervous person stepping through the door to certain doom. As far as he was concerned, Finitevus in general was certain doom so walking into a room occupied by him may as well be certain doom. The door closed behind him and Scourge cleared his throat with a nervous cough.

"Um, doc? Yo boss, I'm sorry to announce that our ship won't be flying again until the day after tomorrow." explained Scourge, "But the outside damages…"

"Not now!" snarled Finitevus.

Scourge recoiled sharply, his heart leaping in fright as Finitevus yelled at him. Finitevus was one scary individual and he really did

not like the idea of making him angry. Scourge did the one thing he wasn't renowned for, which was doing the sensible thing and keeping quiet as Finitevus listened on to the agent's report.

"Please repeat that." he said, "Yes, uh huh…I understand now. Is that all? Yes? Very well. Report to me once the Royal Fighters begin planning again. Thank you, goodbye."

Finitevus took his fingers away from his ear and he turned to face Scourge, his expression much softer this time much to Scourge's relief.

"Scourge my faithful soldier, what is it you wish to say to me?" asked Finitevus politely.

"The ship will be operational again the day after tomorrow." explained Scourge, "The outside repairs are going well though so the ship won't have a big gaping hole for much longer. Who were you talking to by the way?"

"My agent." explained Finitevus, "I have an agent within the very heart of New Mobotropolis and the agent is supplying me with very valuable information that'll keep us one step ahead of the Royal Fighters Service."

"COOL!" cried Scourge joyfully, "Who is it?!"

"That's my business." said Finitevus sternly, "Why do you think it is MY agent? Plus I'd rather you and the rest of the armada not accidentally blurt its name out and give the game away so I'm keeping its name confidential for the time being."

"And I guess you referring to the agent as "it" is to keep his or her gender secret too?" asked Scourge.

"Exactly." crowed Finitevus, "Now then, my agent tells me that the Royal Fighters plan to invade *The Nefarious* while it's down, take us all by storm and then take my de-roboticizer rifle and use it to de-roboticize Mecha Tails."

"Well the brats won't succeed in that!" declared Scourge "We know that they're coming and we can get rid of them easily! Use a Chaos

Emerald or two to Chaos Control them off the ship and back to their puny little home!"

"Yes and then they'll just use my stolen warp ring to come back." said Finitevus in a very matter-of-factly manner, "So first I'll have to freeze them with a Chaos Control, get my warp ring back and THEN get rid of them. As for the de-roboticizer rifle, I'll have it destroyed immediately and I'll send Mecha Tails to do an errand for me so that Sonic and his pathetic friends will not get anywhere near him. As for our ship, I'll Chaos Control that away so they cannot find it anymore and Nicole can forget about using Mobius's satellites for I've programmed my drone to scramble with each of the satellites and shut down their heat sensors so they cannot pick up The Nefarious while it's hidden. And to make sure it's hidden, I'll have it hidden back in the hangar bay it was made in, they'll never find it, especially when I retrieve my warp ring."

"Good idea Finny." said Scourge wickedly, rubbing his hands together in delight at that idea.

"It is Finitevus, nothing less." said Finitevus sternly.

"Whatever you say doc boy." said Scourge, shrugging casually.

Finitevus ignored Scourge and he turned to face one of the monitors in the bridge. But he didn't keep his back turned for long though. He turned back around and he smiled wickedly at Scourge. Scourge began to feel nervous. When Finitevus had that smile on, it meant he had some kind of crazy scheme in mind but at the same time, Scourge supposed it was a good thing. Finitevus's excellent brain had been very useful to them thus far so maybe it was going to be useful again.

"Actually…forget what I said about the Chaos Emeralds earlier…I have a BETTER idea…" purred Finitevus smoothly, his smile so demonic looking that the devil himself would be jealous of him…

Meanwhile at the New Mobotropolis Hospital, Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends had received one of the most pleasant surprises they

could possibly receive, especially at a time like this. Not only had Bunnie Rabbot and Geoffrey St. John, the former still unconscious, returned with mostly good news to bring them but Cosmo the Seedrian had returned from her bathroom break with Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat right behind her. Silver and Blaze were Mobians from the future and very good friends of Sonic and the Royal Fighters, especially since their primary goal was to find out what caused Mobius to be in a state of ruin for 200 years in their time. They had tried many theories and had helped Sonic and friends debunk them one by one but finally, Silver and Blaze had found the missing link to what they were looking for. They had found a book which was titled "Mobius 2144: The FINAL Year" and now they had returned to the past to share this information with Sonic and friends. They had roamed all over New Mobotropolis in search of the team and they came across Cosmo in the hall of the NMH. Upon seeing them, Cosmo greeted them excitedly and had been quick to invited them into the room to see the others. The silver hedgehog and purple cat had been greeted quite ecstatically and upon being asked why they had come to the past, Blaze had announced they'd figured out what dooms Mobius and leaves its future in ruins. As Blaze said that, the Royal Fighters fell dead silent. Sonic sat up in his hospital bed, still recovering from the injuries sustained in the battle with the Dark Armada in Megapolis but mostly much better now, and he stared at Silver and Blaze in amazement.

"You've…you've finally figured it out?" asked Sonic curiously.

"You know what dooms Mobius?" asked Queen Sally Acorn, her voice tense, "How did you figure it out at long last?"

"We didn't figure it out your majesty, we were given the answers. Literally." said Blaze, looking as stoic as usual, "It's all here in this book that Silver's got."

She pointed at the psychokinetic hedgehog who in turn held up the book for the Royal Fighters to see. They all gasped in horror at the title of the book. Mobius 2144: The FINAL Year. It was 2144 right now so that instantly made everybody feel nervous. One the one hand, it was good to know when the world ended but at the same time, it wasn't good that the year the world ended was right now this very year. The atmosphere became very tense as Silver opened up

the book.

"According to this book, which we found literally just moments ago, the world ends thanks to a powerful being." explained Silver, picking up bits and pieces from the important pages of the book, "A being… named Enerjak. He's described as "coming out of the blue" and that he had so much power that no Royal Fighter in the world stood a chance against him. And as the book explains, Enerjak first slaughters all of you guys and then goes on a murderous rampage that sees Mobius wrecked and in ruins with only 1,000 lucky survivors living to tell the tale. So there you have it guys, the one who destroys our world is this "Enerjak" guy. Name sound familiar at all?"

The Mobians knew full well who Enerjak was. He had risen up from his tomb last year and had caused a lot of havoc and chaos throughout all of Mobius. It had been a tough battle when the time had come to fight Enerjak and lives were nearly lost on that faithful day. Many terrible memories came back to several Royal Fighters in the room and Sonic and Sally could both feel the fear building up inside both of them at this revelation. Enerjak dooms Mobius? But how could that be? He had been destroyed! But Sonic remembered Enerjak's cryptic final words to him before he, as Super Sonic, destroyed him.

I'll nev er be a memory…

Maybe those words were truer than he ever could have given them credit for. Maybe Enerjak was going to come back and destroy the world! While the Royal Fighters were mostly too shocked to speak, the Royal Fighter tomboy MandyMouse actually managed to say something.

"Oh silver dude…we know Enerjak VERY well." she said bitterly as if the very thought of Enerjak made her feel sick to her stomach, "Oh yes. We fought against that creepy phantom last year. He went around possessing people and turning people into deranged cultists who worshipped him like a demented god of some kind. He drove our good friend Princess Matilda crazy and nearly made her kill the emperor! He even possessed me and had me attack my husband! And then he went onto to possess other people and force us to fight

against Knuckles just to destroy him! We succeeded but since he's the one who's dooming Mobius, I guess he comes back."

"How does he come back?!" shrieked Wilson frantically, "How?! HOW?!"

"You do realize that the book was written by an apocalypse survivor?" noted Silver, "They aren't going to know how Enerjak came back. Although the description of Enerjak in the book…" he paused as he turned a page and jabbed down at it with his index finger, "…describes him as being albino with black markings on his face and wearing black and golden armour and a huge flowing black cape."

Knuckles was the first to put the two pieces of the puzzle together.

"FINITEVUS!" he blurted at the top of his voice, "That's it! Finitevus must become Enerjak at some point! After all, he did once try to drain me, Sonic and Shadow dry of all Chaos Energy to give himself the power of Enerjak! He must become Enerjak himself!"

"Is that even possible Knuckles?" asked his girlfriend Shade curiously.

"Not sure but I'm willing to bet that Finitevus's grand plan is to become Enerjak and that's what he's got the Dark Armada to help him do!" declared Knuckles.

"I don't see how Finitevus will become Enerjak but it never hurts to try and stop him from commencing with his big plans just in case." said Sonic, "We have to make sure that Enerjak NEVER rises or else that's it…the end of all Mobius forever…"

"It would be convenient if the damn book told us HOW Enerjak came back so we could work on stopping that from happening." muttered Amy Rose grimly, "All we have at the moment is an estimate based on how Enerjak's described as looking. For all we know, he just coincidentally looks like Finitevus but isn't Finitevus."

"Very profound point Amy." said Sally, nodding in agreement, "But still, we can try and stop Finitevus and his Dark Armada. They have

some kind of plan and Silver and Blaze tell us that this is the year the world ends. The two must be linked in someway. We foil the Dark Armada's plan, we stop Enerjak…I hope."

"I hope so too your highness." said Silver, his face like a mourner at a funeral as the terrible image of Enerjak wiping out the Royal Fighters and destroying the world began to burn in his skull.

"Now it's time for us to ask questions." Blaze announced as if this was important, "Where's Tails, why is Bunnie fully organic and what's a "Dark Armada"?" she asked quizzically.

Bunnie immediately fell into despair upon Blaze taking note of her lack of cybernetics. As much as it felt good to be normal again, Bunnie had embraced her life as a cyborg and even began to consider her life as a cyborg "normal". So to be fully organic again didn't really feel normal to her anymore. Sally had an expression that matched Bunnie's as she told Silver and Blaze everything.

"The Dark Armada is Finitevus's army of villains." explained Sally, "The team has Finitevus himself, Scourge, Fiona, Captain Metal, Raphael, Lord Sycorax and his two henchmen, Zira, Conquering Storm and her whole clan, Cutthroat Jim, Ravage and all of Team Diamond. They're currently our newest threat after the death of Dr. Eggman and they gave Sonic and Knuckles one heck of a beat down. Tails…has been roboticized and made a member of the Dark Armada. Finitevus has turned him against us. And Bunnie lost her cybernetics thanks to Finitevus using a de-roboticizer on her. To say we've gone through hell lately is a bit of an understatement."

Silver and Blaze instantly felt sorry for their past-dwelling friends. Tails was a robot working for Finitevus and Finitevus had an army of villains that were already showing themselves to be a serious threat. Silver could already imagine how Sora Prower and Cosmo the Seedrian were feeling about Tails's situation now. And Bunnie losing her cybernetics must be a bit of a blow to the poor rabbit. She pretty much lost her strength and weaponry. How would she fight now? Blaze gave Sally a sympathetic gaze.

"That sounds terrible, especially about what's happened to Tails and Bunnie." she said solemnly.

"If you think it can't get any worse, Finitevus still has the Chaos Emeralds too." muttered Sonic, "And I bet he's just waiting to use them at any moment now."

"Good thing I decided to bring my Sol Emeralds." said Blaze with a small smile, "I could use them to fight off anybody who uses the emeralds to turn super. Most likely Scourge of course." she mused as she thought back to the big battle that ended The Eraser's life and saved the multi verse last year.

"So that already evens the odds." said Sonic with a smile, "With Burning Blaze, we'll take down the Dark Armada no sweat! Oh yeah, Finitevus is so dead now!" he cheered triumphantly.

He was beginning to feel a twinge of hope building up inside him. The Dark Armada wasn't going to last very long with Burning Blaze on their side now. She could just fry everybody instantly and then burn *The Nefarious* to a crisp. The end of the Dark Armada was coming for them.

"I wouldn't get too hopeful Sonic." said Sally wearily, "After all, we know how powerful Super Scourge can be and Finitevus has all eight Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald. That's easily more powerful than Blaze's Sol Emeralds. Finitevus could still have the advantage over us."

"We'll see about that." said Sonic, "So what are we waiting for guys? Let's go and storm The Nefarious!"

"Not yet Sonic, you and Knuckles still need to recover." noted Sora, "I doubt your injuries from earlier have healed that quickly."

"I can help with that." offered Blaze.

She approached Sonic and Knuckles's beds and she took out a Sol Emerald each. Fittingly enough, she picked blue for Sonic and red for Knuckles. She held the emeralds over Sonic and Knuckles and used a Sol Regeneration to heal them both. The emeralds glowed a bright, brilliant flash as they healed Sonic and Knuckles. After a matter of seconds, the regeneration was done and Sonic and Knuckles both leaped onto their feet, feeling so much better now. It

was like their injuries had never happened.

"Ah, nothing a good ol' regeneration power from some powerful emeralds can't fix!" cried Sonic happily, "I'm ready for action now!"

"Uncle Finitevus is so dead once I get onboard that ship of his!" declared Knuckles.

Mariah the Medicine Cat, who had been nursing the two Royal Fighters, simply gaped in surprise at what Blaze had just done. She'd healed the two faster than she'd ever healed anybody in her life! Her medicines were obsolete with such a miracle cure like that around! Mariah simply had to wonder how the emeralds had been able to do that.

"Such…such a miracle cure!" she gasped, "We should just use those emeralds to heal the sick and injured from now on!"

"Well once we get the Chaos Emeralds back, we can try that idea." suggested Sonic, "Bunnie, you've been on The Nefarious so would you kindly open up that warp ring you got from Finitevus and take us all over there?"

"Sure thing sugah-hog." said Bunnie with a nod "Although ah ain't comin' with ya'll. Ah don't think ah'll be of much use without mah cybernetics and also ah'd like to stay here and keep Geoffrey company. Maybe even wake him up from his earlier knockout." she added, her face changing from happy to sad rather quickly.

"Well if you don't wanna come, we won't make you." said Sonic understandingly, "Anybody else wanna stay?"

"I would." said Cosmo solemnly, "Forgive me but I do not wish to bare witness to my poor, roboticized Tails. I wouldn't be able to stand it."

"Fair enough Cosmo." said Amy sympathetically, "But don't you worry, we'll bring Tails back home and he'll be back to normal, just for you my little sister!" she finished with a cheerful grin on her pretty face.

"That would be wonderful." said Cosmo, beaming with joy over the

very thought of Tails returning home safely to New Mobotropolis, unharmed and de-roboticized.

"We'll be back soon Cosmo and Bunnie, see you then." said Sonic, "And wish us luck!"

"Good luck everyone." said Bunnie as she flicked the warp ring up into the air and opened up a portal to *The Nefarious* for her team.

The Royal Fighters all filed in through the warp ring and found themselves warping from the New Mobotropolis Hospital to *The Nefarious* , the very base of The Dark Armada. The warp ring closed up as they all filed through it, leaving Bunnie and Cosmo alone in the hospital together to do nothing more than comfort the still unconscious Geoffrey. As they waited tensely for their friends to return, one single thought echoed in Cosmo's mind.

Oh Tails…you're going to be saved today…you'll never serve Finitevus ever again…

"Doctor, I have arrived at the Holoska Ice Factory just as you ordered. No complications." droned the voice of Mecha Tails over the ship's still functional communications systems.

"Very good my servant, now commence with your duties." replied Finitevus, "We need as much snow and ice as possible to make our Synthetic Chaos Energy from. If the ice has anything frozen inside of it, feel free to use that too. Anything will do for the formula."

"I understand doctor." Mecha Tails answered, "I will report back once my mission is complete."

"Very good, over and out." Finitevus finished and switched off the communicator on the control panel he stood at.

The evil, albino scientist smiled wickedly to himself. Oh how cross Sonic would be when he came on-board his ship to save his precious best friend only to find out he's not here! The very thought just made him feel like laughing out loud but naturally, he composed himself and he resisted the temptation. While he was here observing

the repairs of *The Nefarious* , Mecha Tails was over in Holoska, mining snow and ice for him to make Chaos Energy out of. Operation: Enerjak Reborn was going well. They had every last drop of honey from the Golden Hive Colony to make Chaos Emeralds out of and now Mecha Tails was getting him some snow and ice to use for the creation of his counterfeit Chaos Emeralds. Eight weren't enough for his master plan, not even the Master Emerald was enough. He needed thousands of Chaos Emeralds just like how there used to be that much before that fool he had the nerve to call a brother, Locke, decided to fuse them all together to make Chaos Clusters and then also hide them just to hide his own shame after the damages the clusters caused. Well Locke would be furious if he could see his evil brother now, making Synthetic Chaos Energy and then shaping said energy into new Chaos Emeralds for him to use. Thousands of Chaos Emeralds would easily be enough to transform himself into the Chaos Powered Demi-god known as Enerjak. Finitevus had been fascinated with the demigod's power and hoped to harness it himself. He also hoped to have the same power as Solaris so he could potentially lay waste to the entire multi-verse at the same time. He supposed Malacos would be able to stop him though but still, Solaris's power plus Enerjak's power would make Finitevus impossible to defeat. He could already see himself killing all the Royal Fighters right now. But that vision wouldn't come true for a while yet, Finitevus needed to start making the Synthetic Chaos Energy formula. He would do so once he was safely hidden back in *The Nefarious's* hangar. Now Mecha Tails had given his report, Finitevus made a quick call to Scourge.

"Are you in position Scourge?" asked Finitevus.

"I am doc! Can I turn super yet?" Scourge's voice answered him over the intercom.

"Yes you may." replied Finitevus, "The moment you turn super, use a Chaos Control to warp down into the main corridor. Then you will freeze the Royal Fighters and get my warp ring back. Once my warp ring is back, you may warp The Nefarious back to its hangar bay so it can finish being repaired in peace."

"And what of the Royal Fighters?" asked Scourge.

"Kill them all." said Finitevus in a voice dripping with venom.

He switched off the communicator and then proceeded to warp himself down to the main corridor of the ship. It was a no-brainer for the doctor as to why the Royal Fighters would warp into the main corridor. Bunnie and Geoffrey had seen the corridor so Bunnie would easily use his warp ring to open up a portal to this specific corridor. The moment Finitevus arrived, another warp ring opened up and just as predicted, the Royal Fighters all filed out of the warp ring and stood before him, ready to make him pay for what he had done to the team. Finitevus was quick to notice that Geoffrey, Bunnie and Cosmo weren't here. Bunnie and Geoffrey he knew why and he had a feeling he knew why Cosmo hadn't come on this mission. He was also quick to notice that Silver and Blaze were here too. Perhaps they were here in some vain attempt to help the Royal Fighters stop him from carrying out Operation: Enerjak Reborn. Plus, Blaze had powerful gems of her own, her Sol Emeralds. He remembered how she became Burning Blaze with them during the multi-verse crisis and the Battle with Solaris. Finitevus would see to it that those emeralds ended up in his hands. Maybe Captain Metal could see to that sometime soon. Sonic pointed sharply at Finitevus, his face contorting with loathing.

"Doctor! You are so gonna pay for what you've done!" yelled Sonic, "Now then..."

"Do not bore me by telling me something I already know you stupid boy, I know exactly why you're here." snarled Finitevus, "You want to destroy my ship while it's vulnerable, take us all prisoner and save Tails. Well too bad, I've destroyed the de-roboticizer rifle so Tails cannot be de-roboticized and he is not here right now."

The Royal Fighters were all shocked. A wave of horror swept over them all and Sonic suddenly lost whatever bravado he had in him. Finitevus KNEW what they were here for?! And he knew what they were here for to the point he'd already planned ahead of them?! How?! Sonic knew Finitevus was smart but he didn't know he was THAT smart!

"How...how did you know what we were planning to do?!" shrieked Sally, deploying her arm blades and getting ready to cut Finitevus to

pieces.

"Lucky guess." snorted Finitevus, not wanting to give away the fact he had a hidden agent working for him secretly, "Now you can do one simple thing. Hand over my warp ring and get off of my ship or you'll all be slaughtered."

"I have a better proposal." said Knuckles, standing forward and bashing his fists together, "You and your filthy army surrender or we'll tear this ship apaaaaaaaarrrrrrr..."

Knuckles's voice suddenly began to slow down as he was speaking. It slowed down further and further until finally he fell silent. His body became absolutely stiff as if time had come to a pause all around him. The other Royal Fighters were frozen too, unable to so much as twitch an eyeball. They were trapped in a Chaos Control that had been activated by Scourge. Only he wasn't Scourge anymore. Using the power of the Master Emerald, he had become Super Scourge once again! The purple furred, super-powered hedgehog materialized into view beside Finitevus and laughed at his handiwork. He was enjoying himself and looked forward to having more fun with the Royal Fighters once he took care of some other things. Super Scourge flew over the Royal Fighters with his black and red eyes observing them closely for any sign of a warp ring. He spotted it in the hand of Abby the Squirrel. She had been the last one through the warp ring and thus had been the one to hold onto it. Super Scourge flew over to the frozen Abby and he snatched the warp ring out of her hand.

"Yoink!" he said, tossing it over to Finitevus, "Now time for my vanishing act..."

He then proceeded to use a Chaos Control on the Royal Fighters and relocate them all outside of *The Nefarious* . With the Royal Fighters now on the ground beside the ship, Super Scourge then used a Chaos Control to make *The Nefarious* vanish into thin air. In a bright, purple flash, the whole ship vanished, teleporting from Nekronopolis and back over to Finitevus's former hidden lab in Megapolis, right in the underground hangar bay that the ship had been built in originally. Now that was done, Super Scourge gleefully returned to Nekronopolis to finish off the Royal Fighters. His Chaos

Control had worn off though and as he reappeared, he noticed that the Royal Fighters were looking around wildly for *The Nefarious* , completely dumbfounded at the fact it was gone. The super-powered villain watched delightedly, greatly amused by his enemies's confused expressions.

"Hey! Where's *The Nefarious* gone?!" cried Sonic frantically, "It's vanished into thin air!"

"It can't be the ship's cloaking device, we should still see the ship's insides even if it's invisible!" yelped Sally in alarm.

"The ship's gone because I Chaos Controlled it away!" sneered Super Scourge, his voice catching everybody's attention and bringing all their gazes towards him, "And I stole your warp ring and gave it back to Finitevus so you'll never find it! And if you think Nicole will find our ship, forget about it! It's hidden in a place that no dumb satellite will ever find so there! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Super Scourge's boasting ended up planting more seeds of worry into Sonic's mind. Finitevus knew so well of what they were planning that he had Scourge super-power himself just in time to perform a Chaos Control to stop them, get the warp ring back and then warp *The Nefarious* away. If that wasn't freaky enough, Super Scourge knew about Nicole using Mobius's satellites to find *The N efarious* and thus, had warped the ship into a place that could not be found on satellite! How did Finitevus and Scourge know all this?! It was like the echidna somehow knew their every move before they made it! True Finitevus had said "Lucky guess" when questioned on how he knew what they were planning but surely he couldn't have accurately guessed ALL of this! Sonic really began to feel more worried as many troubled thoughts began to swim around his already troubled mind. Did Finitevus have some kind of spy working for him? Or was he really that intelligent? He cast the thoughts aside for the moment for more worrying things were happening before him.

"Scourge, I have no idea how Finitevus seems to be many steps ahead of us…but we're still gonna bring him down!" declared Sonic, "And don't think for a minute that we're all dead because you're super! We have a secret weapon ourselves!"

That was Blaze's cue to turn into Burning Blaze. The pyrokinetic cat summoned the seven Sol Emeralds to her hands and she closed as her eyes as they prepared to transform her into Burning Blaze. Super Scourge growled at this and he zoomed towards Blaze, hoping to stop her from transforming but Silver quickly used his psychokinesis to throw him off his attack and send him careening into the ground. The psychic hold wouldn't have held Scourge for long but Silver still had the strength to hold a super form for a few seconds, especially when catching said super form by surprise. This allowed Blaze to continue with her transformation as planned. Her lavender fur transformed into a light pink colour and her clothes became a blazing red. The transformation was complete and Burning Blaze was here to fight once again. The fiery feline clenched her fists and summoned fire to her hands as Super Scourge was ready to fight her. He smirked at his opponent confidently.

"I remember you, you helped me and the others destroy The Eraser." crooned Super Scourge, "Well you can help me send you to your grave kitty-cat!"

"I'd like to see you try you monster…" snarled Burning Blaze.

With loud battle cries that signified the intense nature of the fore coming battle, the two super forms charged into each other at a speed greater than that of a charging rhinoceros. The rest of the Royal Fighters watched tensely, hoping that Burning Blaze would come out on top of this battle so she could maybe force Scourge into spilling the beans on *The Nefarious's* whereabouts…

It felt like a long time for Geoffrey St. John as he woke up from his knockout. During his attempted sabotage of *The Nefarious* , Finitevus had come out from behind and knocked him out with a blow to the head. Finitevus had used the de-roboticizer rifle to knock him out, hence why he had been out for quite a while. As the skunk opened his eyes, his head began to ache and he moaned groggily. He rubbed his eyes to get the vision back into them and he sat up slowly, massaging his scalp. To his delight, he saw Bunnie Rabbot sitting beside him looking very happy to see him awake. Cosmo was

with Bunnie and looking relieved that Geoffrey was awake at last. Geoffrey beamed as Bunnie embraced him. What a wonderful thing to wake up to was all he could think to himself.

"Howdy sugah! Ah'm glad to see ya'll awake again!" piped Bunnie delightedly.

"You sure took a nasty blow Mr. St. John, you were out for quite a while." said Cosmo solemnly.

"I, I was?" murmured Geoffrey, "What happened while I was unconscious like?"

"Well Geoff, ah ended up getting' de-roboticized thanks to Finitevus having a rifle that fires de-roboticizer beams but ah managed to steal a warp ring from him and use it to escape with you in tow." explained Bunnie, "Ah used all of yer explodin' darts to blow up the left side of The Nefarious and the durn ship actually crashed down onto the ground! Surprisingly enough, ya'll slept through that Geoffrey!" she exclaimed.

"That is surprising." laughed Geoffrey, still massaging his scalp, "A big bloomin' explosion that brings a ship crashing down and I sleep through it! I guess I was hit harder than I thought."

"Do you know who knocked you out?" asked Cosmo curiously.

"Likely somebody with a powerful punch." murmured Geoffrey, "Don't matter anyway. What else did I miss?"

"Silver and Blaze have come ta our timeline once again sugah and they actually have found out what causes the world to go ta hell!" replied Bunnie, "Enerjak is responsible for it and we all think that Finitevus might have something ta do with Enerjak returnin' so everybody's gone over ta The Nefarious to arrest all the members of the armada and prevent Finitevus from being the cause of Enerjak's resurrection!"

"Crikey…crikey me indeed!" blurted Geoffrey, "Enerjak is the one who's responsible for Silver and Blaze's future being in ruins?! Well it's a good thing our mates are dealing with the blighters right now

isn't it? So why didn't you go sweetheart?"

"Because without mah limbs, ah think ah'm gonna be of no use anymore…" murmured Bunnie, looking down at the floor sadly.

Geoffrey felt sad hearing his girlfriend think that about herself. He looked at his now de-roboticized lover, seeing how she looked without her cybernetics. He had to admit that Bunnie looked really beautiful like this. She was beautiful as a cyborg but now she was fully normal again, she looked even more so. But Geoffrey hadn't thought Bunnie was beautiful because of her body, he had admired her for more reasons than that. He had after all fallen for Bunnie despite her appearance and to hear her thinking she was going to be useless because she didn't have her robot parts anymore made him feel sad. Geoffrey took Bunnie's hands into his own, finding it strange to be feeling two organic hands and not one organic hand and one metal hand in his own. The rabbit looked into the skunk's handsome blue eyes as Geoffrey gazed at her sympathetically.

"My love, don't you dare think you're gonna be of no use to us anymore." said Geoffrey softly, "You're not useless. Never have been, never will be."

"But Geoffrey, that was only because of mah robot limbs!" protested Bunnie, "Before ah became a cyborg, ah was NEVER that powerful before! Never! Ah only became strong because of mah robot parts! Ever since mah arm and legs were roboticized, ah was stronger than ah'd ever been before and even more! Ah was able to take part in fights, fly, shoot cannon blasts and make force fields to defend mah self and others! But look at me now! Ah'm just a pathetic little rabbit who's lost what made her special and a part of this team!"

Her eyes began to brim with tears as she said this to Geoffrey. The skunk lifted his hands up to Bunnie's beautiful face and he wiped away the tears that began to trickle down her cheeks.

"No Bunnie, it wasn't the robot parts that made you special and a part of this team." said Geoffrey, "It was you, it was ALWAYS you. You were the one who used those robot parts to fight against our enemies. It was you who made you strong, not those metal limbs. If you were truly weak then you would not have used those limbs to

the effect that you did. But you did, and why? Because you're a strong woman Bunnie and I admire that. Plus anybody else who was in your position likely would be horrified at the thought of being a cyborg, of being "a freak" if you will. But not you, you never let the change in your appearance effect you. You embraced your cybernetics and made them into something special. That required a lot of courage and strength my dear and believe me, you sure had the courage and strength to accept your differences and show that what happened to you was nothing to be ashamed of. In my opinion Bunnie, you're the strongest Mobian I've ever met. Don't ever lose sight of that."

Bunnie was so touched that she was sure she could feel Geoffrey's heart reaching out to touch her own. The rabbit smiled lovingly at Geoffrey and she put her hands on his shoulders.

"Oh mah stars…ya'll…really think that?" she asked, her eyes brimming with new tears, happy ones this time.

"Bunnie, I'm not the lying type. What I said is as true as I can be and I've never been more honest in all my life." Geoffrey said with a warm smile, "You really are the strongest, bravest woman I've ever met and it's all because of how strong and brave you truly are."

The rabbit and skunk pulled each other close and they kissed as passionately and lovingly as possible. Cosmo watched the scene before her with awe, very touched at how much the two loved each other and how heart-warming Geoffrey's words were. It was a shame the others weren't here to see this for themselves, they would have loved it too. Bunnie and Geoffrey broke up the kiss but they still gazed into each other's eyes, smiling lovingly at one another.

"Geoffrey, you're the loveliest Mobian ah've ever met." said Bunnie sweetly.

"Cheers luv, and same goes to you." said Geoffrey with a wink, "Now then, I have an idea that may compensate for the loss of your cybernetics. Let's see what the Royal Fighter Armoury in Royal HQ has on offer for you…"

Bunnie knew what Geoffrey was proposing. She may not have her limbs anymore but that didn't mean she couldn't have a weapon to use on the battlefield. Royal HQ was choc full of weapons that she could use as substitutes and when she combined them with her fighting prowess, she would continue to be a powerful ally to the Royal Fighters. Bunnie felt excited as Geoffrey stood up from the bed and led her out of the room to take her to Royal HQ to get some new weapons for her to wield. If Finitevus thought he'd crippled the team by de-roboticizing Bunnie…he thought wrong and Bunnie was going to show him just exactly how wrong he was…

Back over in Nekronopolis, Super Scourge shielded his face with his arms held out into an X shape as Burning Blaze threw balls of searing hot flames at him. The flames whooshed over Super Scourge, breaking apart as they crashed against his arms. Super Scourge charged towards Burning Blaze, his every thought focusing on one thing: to make Burning Blaze suffer as much as he possibly could. Burning Blaze watched as Super Scourge whizzed towards her at a speed that even though he was super powered, still come off as surprising to her. The super powered pyro-cat waited until Super Scourge was nearly in attacking range before unleashing her next move. She thrust her arms forward and let Super Scourge have it in the face with a wave of flames. Super Scourge cried out as he was hit but his cry was more one of surprise than of pain. The flaming attack was enough to distract Scourge long enough for Burning Blaze to plough straight into him with a Burning Fire Boost attack. She struck Super Scourge and sent him hurling through the sky and crashing down into the ground below. Super Scourge didn't stay down for long. He got back to his feet and he rocketed into the sky towards Burning Blaze. Burning Blaze threw balls of fire at him but Super Scourge spin-dashed through them all and carried on going until he eventually hit Burning Blaze, his spin-dash at the same level of force as a speeding car crashing into another car. Burning Blaze withstood most of the impact thanks to the invulnerability that was customary of all super forms to have but that didn't stop Super Scourge's attack from knocking her down onto the ground. The super powered feline winced as she crashed down below, the impact leaving a little crater in the ground, but she soon

leaped back onto her feet and boosted towards Super Scourge. Super Scourge charged towards Burning Blaze and the two collided with one another, the crash sending them both spiralling through the air. Both opponents managed to regain their balance and stop themselves from crashing down.

Burning Blaze glowered at Scourge with her fiery golden eyes. He was a tough opponent and she had to finish this fight soon before her power ran out. But since Scourge had turned super before she did, he was likelier to run out before she did so maybe she could try and keep the fight going until Super Scourge ran out of power. Once he did, she would then force the hedgehog into revealing the location of the Dark Armada. After all, if Finitevus was the link in the chain of events that led to Enerjak rising and destroying Mobius, the armada had to be arrested as quickly as possible. This was her's and Silver's only chance now of saving their future. Burning Blaze summoned some more fireballs to her hands but this time, she let them charge up so she could fire bigger fireballs at Scourge. Super Scourge rocketed through the air towards Burning Blaze, the purple-coloured super hedgehog cackling maniacally as he drew his arms back and prepared to punch his fiery opponent in the face. There was something about punching people in the face he always enjoyed. But Super Scourge wouldn't get to do this for Burning Blaze unleashed her fire balls and let Super Scourge have it full on with two super-powered fire attacks. The blazing balls struck Super Scourge and threw him backwards through the sky, the stricken hedgehog yelling loudly as he was thrown backwards. Burning Blaze then took the opportunity to use her Burning Fire Boost to rush towards Super Scourge and then slug him in the stomach. Had Scourge not been super, the blow could have easily killed him. Super Scourge gasped as the air in his lungs was punched out of him and while he was distracted, Burning Blaze raised her leg and slammed it down callously on her opponent's head. Super Scourge cried out as he was hammered down into the ground by the attack. As he hit the ground, Burning Blaze charged down towards him and pile-dived him directly in the back. The Royal Fighters knew that Scourge was their enemy but even they had to cringe as they imagined how much that must have hurt. Silver however was ecstatic that his girlfriend was winning.

"Whoo hoo! Go Blaze!" he cheered.

"I will say Silver, you're lucky to have a woman like Blaze on your side." said Sonic with a wink, "She sure doesn't mess around does she?"

"Nope, when has a task in mind, she finishes it." replied Silver, his grin wide and as excitable as he was feeling.

Over to the battle that was unfolding before them, Burning Blaze stood up and glowered at her downed opponent. Super Scourge forced himself back onto his feet, the red-coated cat noticing how he seemed to be straining most terribly as he got up. That was good, it meant her attacks were having some effect on him. She would win this fight and then Super Scourge would cough up the information the Royal Fighters needed so they could take the armada by storm and prevent Enerjak from coming back to doom Mobius. The future would be saved and she and Silver would finally have the world they dreamed of as their home. Super Scourge stood before Burning Blaze, fists raised and eyes narrowed into a hideous scowl that could make even somebody with a strong stomach feel sick.

"I gotta admit toots, you're strong." muttered Super Scourge, "Very strong in fact. Good, I thought this fight was going to be boring!"

"So sorry to disappoint." snorted Burning Blaze.

"Well you maybe strong but you won't beat me!" declared Super Scourge, "I'll stomp on ya until your brains leak outta your ears and then I'm gonna kill all of those pesky Royal Fighters! Just to make it hurt…I'll kill your stupid silver-furred friend first!"

"You will not touch Silver and you will not defeat me!" growled Burning Blaze, "Me and Silver are here to prevent your filthy army from resurrecting Enerjak and dooming our world and by the power invested in me, I will prevent you and your armada from causing the end of our world!"

"You should listen to yourself and realize how much crap you're talking." snorted Super Scourge, "We AREN'T resurrecting some guy named "Enerjak" at all! We're teaming up to take over the world!

We want to rule Mobius, NOT destroy it so don't give me bullcrap like that!"

Before Burning Blaze could protest, Super Scourge slugged her in the stomach and brought her doubling over but not quite down onto her knees. Burning Blaze coughed but she soon had a cry of pain to add to that cough as Super Scourge uppercut her directly in the face and sent her hurling backwards into the air. Burning Blaze came down with a crash just a few yards away from Super Scourge but she was back on her feet in mere seconds. She rushed towards Super Scourge, leaving a trial of fire behind her as she did so, and she drew her arm back. Her hand was alit with flames and she was prepared to give Super Scourge the hardest punch she could possibly throw. Super Scourge anticipated this move so he Chaos Controlled out of Burning Blaze's way and reappeared behind her. Burning Blaze realized this too late as Super Scourge spin-dashed her in the back and slammed her down into the ground as hard as she could. He then picked up Burning Blaze and threw her as hard as he could, focusing all his strength and power into that one throw. Burning Blaze screamed as she was tossed like a baseball but she managed to cushion the impact of the crash down by holding her hands and feet out. The cat could only think about the old saying "Cats always land on their feet" as she crashed down on her hands and feet. In this case she'd certainly done what a cat always does. Super Scourge laughed at Burning Blaze and he charged towards her, hoping to lay more smack down on her. But as he was launching towards Burning Blaze, Silver suddenly leapt in and stopped him with his psychokinesis. Super Scourge was brought to a complete halt by the silver-coloured Mobian but Silver knew he wouldn't hold him for long. Super Scourge broke free of his psychokinesis but Silver didn't worry about that. He was only the distraction. Burning Blaze now had a wide-open shot at Super Scourge because of Silver's interference. Burning Blaze used another Burning Fire Boost attack to plough straight into Super Scourge and send him hurling away from Silver and into the ground. While Super Scourge was down, Burning Blaze unleashed a hail of fire balls in rapid succession at her purple-coloured opponent. The super hedgehog yelled and growled as he was bombarded mercilessly by the furious, fiery feline he was up against. The attacks were beginning to hurt more than they should be doing. That

was a bad sign for Super Scourge. He was weakening from the battle and his super powers would run out sooner or later. He had to finish off this fight and fast or at the very least, escape with his life so he could come back and fight another day. Super Scourge picked himself up and he clenched his fists, growling viciously at Burning Blaze who was standing before him.

"Alright bitch, you wanna play?! Now we play for real!" snarled Super Scourge.

He then proceeded to use a Chaos Control to freeze Burning Blaze into place before she could do anything else to him. Now she was frozen, Super Scourge unleashed all hell on his frozen opponent. He spin-dashed her as many times as he possibly could before the Chaos Control could wear off. Burning Blaze was helpless to fight against him while the Chaos Control had her frozen in time and at his mercy. The Royal Fighters could only watch helplessly as Super Scourge pummelled Burning Blaze as much as he possibly could while she was frozen. The Chaos Control eventually wore off and Super Scourge walloped Burning Blaze with one last spin-dash, the blow now actually sending her flying since she wasn't frozen anymore. Burning Blaze crashed down at the feet of Sonic and Silver and the two had to leap backwards out of her way before she could knock them other. Burning Blaze came to a halt just before the other Royal Fighters and she grimaced as pain began to flare up through her body. Being invulnerable didn't stop her from feeling pain after all. Super Scourge laughed like a hyena as he rocketed towards his opponent but he soon ended up getting something he never would have expected. The heavyweight Royal Fighter Mace the Elephant stampeded towards him and stood in front of Burning Blaze. He swung his trunk, which was tipped with a rock-solid made, side to side and waited until Super Scourge was in range. The look of confusion and shock on Super Scourge's face was something Sonic would forever treasure as Mace swung his trademark mace into the hedgehog's jaw. Super Scourge gave out a terrific yell of disdain as Mace walloped him and sent him crashing down into the ground face first. Sonic could barely keep himself from laughing out loud. Super Scourge, one of Mobius's most powerful opponents… got floored by a non-super powered elephant! This was something he'd never let Scourge hear the end of. Super Scourge picked

himself up, groaning loudly but he cried out in alarm as Mace suddenly picked him up and started slamming him into the ground as hard as he could. He made sure that he left Super Scourge no opening to fight back as he hammered him. Then he threw Super Scourge into Burning Blaze, the latter socking him with a fire-enhanced punch and sending him crashing down onto his side. Burning Blaze smiled at Mace appreciatively.

"You're pretty powerful." she said, "Well done out there."

"I'm kinda amazed that I even managed to land a hit on him!" chuckled Mace, "I guess I was just lucky! Ha, ha! Still, thanks anyway."

"I'm very sure the Royal Fighters feel lucky to have such a powerhouse on their team." replied Burning Blaze.

"Oh we do indeed Blaze, we do indeed." agreed Mandy, winking at Mace and smiling widely.

She still held much gratitude for the elephant since he had been the one responsible for saving her life and Kari's during the time she'd been kidnapped by her childhood enemy Mildred "Brawn" the Rat. Mace just smiled with pleasure at the mouse, pleased to be of some help in this battle. He quickly turned his attention back to Super Scourge, the super-powered hedgehog straining with effort as he forced himself back up. Burning Blaze rushed towards Super Scourge and she elbowed him in the back. Super Scourge cried out as his opponent's elbow violently slammed into the base of his spine. If he wasn't super powered, that could have broken his back easily. Then Burning Blaze grabbed Super Scourge into a chokehold and held him tightly against herself. Super Scourge gagged and fought back feebly. His strength was fading and his powers were running out. He had to escape now while he still could.

"Alright then Scourge, you have one question that'll save your life to answer…where have you taken the Dark Armada?" asked Burning Blaze coldly.

"You can go £$%^ yourself wretch because I'm outta here!" snarled Super Scourge, "Have fun going on a wild goose chase looking for

my buddies and your precious Tails!"

He then proceeded to use a Chaos Control to warp away, leaving behind a very furious Burning Blaze as he vanished into thin air. The moment Super Scourge vanished, Sonic stomped the ground in rage and yelled up at the heavens as if hoping that they could somehow solve his problems for him.

"NOOOOO!" bellowed Sonic, "Damn that Scourge! He got away again! Now we don't know where to find Finitevus and his army!"

"I'm so, so sorry Sonic." said a very solemn looking Burning Blaze as she changed back to normal and started walking up to Sonic, "I did the best I could to subdue him but I couldn't stop him. I'm very sorry…"

"Blaze, you were great out there. Don't put yourself down." said Silver softly, putting a gentle hand on the cat's shoulder, "There was nothing we could have done to keep Scourge from Chaos Controlling away."

"I know…but we could have managed it somehow." murmured Blaze, "Now we're left wondering where Finitevus is and the Dark Armada still has the chance to bring Enerjak into existence again."

"But Miss Blaze, Scourge says that the Dark Armada's plans have nothing to do with Enerjak, I don't think they're responsible for his return." said Cream the Rabbit.

"Are you seriously telling us that you BELIEVE Scourge's obvious lies?!" snapped Amy furiously, "He lied Cream! He's Scourge the Hedgehog, he's always lying!"

"Amy, please don't talk to Cream like that." said Sally hastily, "But I do have to agree with you. Scourge is obviously lying about this. But…he didn't refer to Enerjak as if he has previous knowledge of him. Note how he said "some guy named Enerjak" and not just "Enerjak". That might be an indicator to something…"

"Whether the Dark Armada IS responsible for Enerjak or not, we still have to make sure that it doesn't happen!" shouted Sonic, "Even if

they aren't responsible, they still have my best buddy as their mindless slave and I won't rest until he's back home, safe and sound where he belongs!"

"There's not much more we can do here now." said Shade the Echidna, looking rather disappointed at having to say that, "We may as well go home and plan our next attack."

"And we'll make sure that Finitevus doesn't know what we're planning next time." added Sonic, "Come on guys, let's go home."

Blaze saw to that, using her Sol Emeralds to provide a Sol Control that warped the Royal Fighters back to Royal HQ. Today had ended on a pretty sad note for them, and to think for all of them that they were actually on top of the battle for a moment. But somehow Finitevus remained a step ahead of them all and managed to swing the battle back into his favour. The light in the tunnel to this dark time had now become dark once again…

"You…WHAT?!" thundered a very furious Dr. Finitevus. His face was the embodiment of rage and his fists were clenched so tightly that he thought his fingers would leave permanent marks on his palms.

Scourge had returned to *The Nefarious* , de-powered and back to normal and he was now baring the wrath of Dr. Finitevus as he delivered his report.

"Yes doc, you heard, I failed to kill the Royal Fighters." said a very worried Scourge the Hedgehog, "But, but it wasn't my fault! Blaze had her Sol Emeralds and she used them to turn super and…"

"I do not harbour any interest in hearing whatever pathetic excuse you have for your failure Scourge!" snarled Finitevus, "This is pathetic! You couldn't even take down a super-powered Blaze even though your records state that you were able to fight Super Sonic to a stand still and actually beat him before your power ran out! You shame the Dark Armada Scourge and you must pay for your failure!"

"Hey doc, can I help it if 1: Blaze is a tough little bitch and 2: She had help!" retorted Scourge, "So don't you dare tell ME I shame the armada's name when I failed for reasons beyond my control! And IIRC, you didn't stick around to give me a hand did ya? You just stayed put on The Nefarious after I warped it away! So you can't put ME down when you didn't offer any assistance for me!"

"You were super powered you impudent fool, you shouldn't NEED help!" bellowed Finitevus, "I guess I was mistaken then if you seriously need assistance despite being invincible! You an embarrassment to this armada and you will pay the price for your failure!"

He then proceeded to lash out at Scourge at a speed that even a supersonic hedgehog like himself would have to think "Dude, that guy's fast!" and he tripped him up with a swift kick to the legs. Scourge yelled as he was whisked off his feet and he landed down onto his back with a heavy thump. As he was brought down, Finitevus then proceeded to knock Scourge out with a savage punch to the head. Once Scourge was knocked out, Finitevus switched on *The Nefarious's* intercom system and spoke into it.

"Captain Metal, please come to the torture room." he announced, "I want you to do something for me."

"Shiver me timbers captain! What do ye wish for me ta do like?" asked Captain Metal curiously.

"Punish Scourge for his failure." explained Finitevus, "And make it...gruesome. I think an arm and an eye will do."

"I'll be there me heartie..." purred Captain Metal darkly.

"That's good." said Finitevus, "And after Scourge's punishment is done, I'd like for you to build me something that'll deal with a pesky pyrokinetic cat that you despise if you please."

"Just give me yer ideas and I'll make it fer you!" replied Captain Metal, "See yer in the torture room Finitevus me heartie!"

The intercom switched off and Finitevus picked up Scourge's

unconscious body. As he opened up a warp ring to take the green hedgehog to the torture room, he began to wonder how Mecha Tails was doing now. He imagined that the roboticized fox was hard at work and would be returning with lots and lots of snow and ice for him to use to make his Synthetic Chaos Energy...

Footnotes:

*** See *The Terror of Enerjak***

Well that turnup for the books didn't last long did it? The heroes are now back to square one and Finitevus is still able to carry out Operation: Enerjak Reborn! But will they manage to make another turn around and swing the war into their favour? Tune in next time as we commence with " **Operation Frostbite"...**

Dark Armada Part 5: Operation: Frostbite

Story 205: Operation: Frostbite

The Dark Armada Chapter 5 of 25

"Oh mah stars, these weapons will be great for me ta use on the battlefield Geoffrey!" exclaimed the recently de-roboticized Bunnie Rabbot (now going by the name "Bunnie Rabboh since "Rabbot" has lost all meaning due to her de-roboticization), "Ah can't wait ta use these against the Dark Armada!"

"I can't wait to see you use them too." said Geoffrey St. John happily, "Those weapons not only suit you, but they'll make you a strong fighter indeed."

Royal HQ wasn't receiving much activity for the moment. At the most, the Royal Fighter A.I. Nicole the Lynx was keeping an eye on the base and also on the whereabouts of *The Nefarious* and while she was doing that, Geoffrey had taken Bunnie to the armoury to pick out some weapons for Bunnie to use instead of her cybernetics since she didn't feel like she would be of much use without them. Geoffrey had managed to regain Bunnie's confidence first of all before taking the rabbit down to Royal HQ to pick some weapons. As a tribute to her lost cybernetics, Geoffrey had picked for Bunnie a handheld cannon and a steel glove that would make a great battering weapon for Bunnie to punch people with. The handheld cannon was a silver cannon with a green circle in the centre. It was held with by a handle behind the cannon itself and the trigger was also on the handle. The back of the cannon covered Bunnie's hand. The steel glove looked like a solid lump of steel that Bunnie just simply had clipped around her entire hand. Inside the glove, her hand was closed into a fist. The steel glove was a battering weapon and Bunnie was instantly reminded of her cybernetic arm that had allowed her to deliver some powerful punches to her enemies whenever she was in battle. The weapons were definitely more than enough to compensate for her lost robotic limbs and Bunnie could hardly wait to test them on the Dark Armada. Bunnie walked up to

Cosmo the Seedrian, the plant-like girl sitting casually beside a desk as Bunnie was admiring her new weapons. She had opted to stay behind for she didn't want to face her beloved Tails as a Robian and had just sat by and watched as Bunnie and Geoffrey had a look at what weapons would be most fitting for her. Bunnie showed her new weapons to Cosmo.

"Well sugah, what do ya'll think?" she asked, "Nice ain't they?"

"I would never be the type of person to label a weapon as "nice" but I do say that they suit you Bunnie." said Cosmo with a small smile, "I'm glad you've managed to find a way to make up for the loss of your trademark cybernetics."

"Thanks lil' Cosmo." said Bunnie brightly, "Ah do admit, it feels kinda weird havin' both mah arms organic instead of the other arm being metal and it feels even weirder havin' normal legs again!" she exclaimed in a humorous manner, "But as Geoffrey said, mah cybernetics didn't make me who I am, it was mah bravery and strength that did so ah don't mind bein' "normal" again."

"In my eyes Bunnie, you were normal even when you were a cyborg." said Geoffrey kindly, "So then, do you think our mates will be back soon?"

"Ah'm sure they will be sugah." replied Bunnie optimistically, "And ah bet they'll have good news to give us all when they return."

"And maybe they'll have my Tails back to normal!" piped Cosmo, letting a tingle of excitement build up in her as she pictured the Royal Fighters returning home with Tails de-roboticized and back to normal once again, "I can hardly wait to see Tails as a Mobian again! I've felt nothing but despair ever since he got roboticized and his return will make my day most wonderfully."

"It'll do the same for all of us love." said Geoffrey with a warm smile, "And given how Finitevus won't see them coming, the Dark Armada are as good as beaten."

Geoffrey soon ended up eating those words. Royal HQ's lab was suddenly alit with a bright light surrounded by flames as all the Royal

Fighters materialized into the room. That caught Bunnie, Geoffrey and Cosmo well by surprise for they had expected them to return to Royal HQ via warp ring but instead, had returned via Sol Control. The three started to feel excited at the return of their friends and were eager to greet them. But as the Sol Control finished and the light vanished, their excitement was taken away from them as quickly as it had been given to them. Cosmo immediately noticed that Tails was not among the Royal Fighters and Geoffrey quickly read all their faces and noticed they all seemed pretty down-hearted and disappointed about something. They had not succeeded in their mission. That was what their faces told the combat-trained skunk as he looked at them. Bunnie put her weapons aside and she walked over to the Royal Fighters.

"Mah friends...what's the matter?" asked Bunnie sadly, "Did...did you fail the mission?"

"I'm afraid we bleeding did Bunnie..." muttered Sonic, the tone of anger in his voice sounding very frightening despite his voice not being raised, "We bleeding well failed! Finitevus somehow knew what we were planning and he was about fifty steps ahead of us! He had Scourge turn super, steal our warp ring and then warp The Nefarious away so we couldn't destroy the ship and arrest the entire armada! And to top it all, Finitevus had sent Tails away and destroyed the de-roboticizer rifle to prevent us from saving him!"

"What was a good plan ended up becoming nothing more than a big waste of time for all of us." moaned Queen Sally Acorn disappointedly, "I don't understand how Finitevus knew what we were planning though. True he said that he had a "lucky guess" but he can't possibly have had THAT lucky a guess!"

"Ah don't think it was a guess of any kind Sally-girl." said Bunnie sadly, shaking her head as she spoke, "Oh no indeed. You see, when me and Geoffrey were on The Nefarious, Ravage somehow knew ah was on that ship to sabotage it. When I asked him about it, he said to me "A little bird told Finitevus". So ah think...ah think Finitevus has a spy working for him."

The Royal Fighters considered that thought for the moment. It seemed very likely that Finitevus had somebody working for him.

After all, how else could he be so ahead of them? Ravage had told Bunnie that Finitevus had had a tip-off about their sabotage plans so it seemed likely Finitevus had a similar tip-off when he and the others came to storm their ship, arrest them all and save Tails. But then they had to consider the stolen warp ring. The stolen warp ring would have played some part in Finitevus knowing what they were planning. He had obviously anticipated the Royal Fighters to use the warp ring to get onboard *The Nefarious* and try to save Tails. After all, he knew that Bunnie had stolen it and that because Bunnie had been on the ship, she'd know how to use it to get onboard. And the fact he had a de-roboticizer rifle would have given Finitevus the sensible idea to dispose of it incase they tried to use it on Tails. So maybe Finitevus had had a lucky guess after all. But then the Royal Fighters thought about Super Scourge telling them about Nicole finding *The Nefarious* via satellite. How did Scourge know about that? That one quote and Bunnie revealing that Ravage had told her Finitevus had been informed of her's and Geoffrey's sabotage plans changed everything. Sally looked at Bunnie with a very grave face.

"Bunnie...I think you're absolutely right." murmured Sally, "Finitevus must have a spy working for him. And the spy must be somebody who lives here in New Mobotropolis."

"I agree with you your majesty." said the young but brilliant super spy Sora Prower who was also the sister of Tails, "I know spies well enough what with being one myself and the enemy would often recruit a spy close to the person they want to take down. Finitevus must have done the same. I mean how else did Scourge know about Nicole and her use of satellites to find their ship? Scourge can't have just had a "lucky guess" like Finitevus claimed he did when we asked how HE knew about our plan, Scourge must have been informed of that."

"Well once I find the bastard who's spying on us, I'm gonna break his or her face for that!" snarled Mandy Mouse fiercely, punching her fists together callously, "Nobody gives away information to the enemy and lives to tell the tale!"

"But who could possibly want to spy on us and work for Finitevus?!" squeaked Wilson the Dog worriedly, "I mean, everybody in New Mobotropolis loves us! Why would any of them betray us?!"

"Maybe we aren't as beloved as we think." mused Ruben the Water Panther, "I know how that feels. I mean look at Chun-Nan, Emperor Tai and Princess Matilda are beloved beyond belief and THEY still have enemies. Maybe somebody who lives in this city hates us and wants Finitevus to beat us."

"Well I know for certain that it's nobody in this room." muttered Amy Rose, "I mean we all want to destroy the Dark Armada so none of us have a reason to spy on the team and help the enemy!"

"I never suspected anyone on the team for a minute." put in Sally firmly, "I know neither of you would ever betray the R.F.S. So the spy must be somebody whom we don't know."

"Maybe me and my boys could look into that." offered Vector the Crocodile cheerfully, "We are detectives after all. Maybe we could sniff out clues that lead to the spy's identity."

"And when we find out who it is, we're gonna kick that spy's butt!" declared Charmy Bee excitedly.

"Guys, if there's a spy working for Finitevus then maybe it's not a good idea to suggest that plan OUT LOUD?" suggested Espio the Chameleon, "The spy's probably picked up that information now!"

"No worries Espio, there's nobody outside the rooms or indeed anywhere near Royal HQ." reported Nicole as she did a quick scan on the computer for any intruders, "We're safe this time."

"Oh that's a relief." said Vector with a relieved smile on his scaly face, "So your Queenly-ness, may we conduct an investigation on the identity of this spy?" he asked hopefully.

"Permission granted." said Sally brightly, "Report back as soon as you can."

"What will the rest of you do?" asked Espio curiously.

"Plan our next move." answered Sally, "Since there's nobody to eavesdrop on us, we can safely plan our next move without Finitevus being informed beforehand."

The Chaotix nodded understandingly and they filed out of the room to conduct their investigation. As they left, Sally turned to the team and spoke to them.

"So the Dark Armada's hidden in a place that our satellites won't find." said Sally, sounding very disappointed as she said this, "So I guess the Dark Armada will be a considerably harder to find now. What do you think the best thing to do would be?"

"I don't suppose "tear the planet apart until we find them" is a good idea?" asked Knuckles the Echidna, more joking then being serious in asking that question.

"No need to do that since Enerjak will do that for you." muttered Silver the Hedgehog bitterly. Being as his heart was set on saving Mobius before the apocalypse could doom it and render the future a dystopian wreck with dwindling life, a statement about "Tearing the planet apart" did not really settle well with him at all. Even if Knuckles was joking.

"No Knuckles, we won't do that." Sally said grimly, "We need to find the armada but how we'll do so I'm unsure about. A good idea would be to try and blackmail one of their members into telling us where they are but we should consider the fact that..."

"Sally, please excuse my interruption but...I've found something!" gasped Nicole completely out of the blue as if she was trying to remind everybody she was still in the room, "It's Mecha Tails! He's in Holoska digging up snow!"

That piece of news caught everybody by surprise. Sonic and Sally were on hand to rush over to the computer and look over Nicole's shoulders to see what she'd found. Nicole had been using Mobius's satellites to try and find *The Nefarious* . Despite it being hidden in a place that couldn't be found using a satellite, Nicole assumed the ship's heat signature would still show up. Little did she realize was that Finitevus had used his drone bug to disable the heat sensors so even if *The Nefarious* was functional and invisible again, she wouldn't find it. But Nicole had found pretty much the next best thing with Mobius's satellites. She was looking at the snowy landscape of Holoska through the powerful lenses of the satellite and she could

see Mecha Tails just outside a factory digging up snow and carrying it back inside. Sonic's quills began to quiver excitedly. They'd found Mecha Tails! Now they could bring him back to New Mobotropolis and hopefully de-roboticize him! They would probably need to build a de-roboticizer or at the very most, force Finitevus do reverse what he'd done. One thing puzzled Sonic thought. What was Mecha Tails digging up snow for? Surely snow wouldn't be of any use to him? Whatever the reason was, Sonic didn't care. He wanted to save Tails and de-roboticize him, that was all that mattered. Even more so than preventing Enerjak from coming into existence. Sonic and Sally looked at each other.

"Well, it's not the armada but it'll do." said Sonic casually, "Let's go over to Holoska and save Tails!"

"I'm with you on that Sonic." said Sally, "Me and you will go over to the Holaska Ice Factory and grab Mecha Tails. Once we have him, we'll bring him back home and restrain him until we can de-roboticize him."

"I'm coming too." offered Sora eagerly, "I want to see if I can tempt Tails to snap out of his programming and maybe get his freewill back. I'm sure the sight of me will do that."

"I dunno Sora, it's a risky gambit and I don't want Tails to hurt you." said Sally softly, "He'll never forgive himself if he does."

"It's worth a shot." said Sora bravely, "And I think Cosmo should come too. She'll have a better chance at this than me. Maybe the both of us together will help Tails fight his programming."

"Oh Sora please, I don't want to come." protested Cosmo, "Please don't make me. I can't bear to see Tails as a robot!" she whimpered, looking very distressed at the thought of seeing Tails as a robot.

"But Cosmo, won't it be wonderful if you end up causing Mecha Tails to gain his freewill back?" asked Sora, "And like I say, both of us together will likely help Tails to fight the programming and come back to us. Please Cosmo, do it for Tails. He'd want you to just like he'd want ME to do so too."

Cosmo took in that thought for a moment before making her decision.

"Alright...I'll come." she said, still looking pretty sad despite making that choice, "I just hope this idea works."

"I hope so too Cosmo." said Sora agreeably, sharing the Seedrian's glum look, "Does anybody else wanna come?"

"Ah will!" volunteered Bunnie eagerly, "Maybe with mah new weapons, ah could tempt Tails to stand down for a minute and let us rescue him." she said, picking them up and showing them to her friends.

"Very well Bunnie but please for the love of Mobius, don't actually use them on him!" exclaimed Sally, "We don't want to damage Mecha Tails in anyway, we'll damage the real Tails inside too!"

"Ah wasn't even thinkin' about doin' that Sally-girl." Bunnie noted matter-of-factly, "Oh mah stars, ah'd never forgive mah self if ah did that to poor Tails!"

"I'm sure you wouldn't." said Sally, "So now that's settled, we'll have to dress up nice and warmly if we're going to Holoska. It is a very cold country after all. We won't use Blaze's Sol Emeralds to get to Holoska for Finitevus will likely predict that and have Mecha Tails expecting us to do so. Plus, we can't risk losing the Sol Emeralds to the Dark Armada."

"I agree on that your majesty." said Blaze the Cat, "With the Chaos Emeralds in the armada's possession, we need to keep my emeralds out of their reach at all times. Though I will resort to using them if I HAVE to if you know what I mean."

"Yeah like if we get Super Scourge again." noted Sonic, "Then we'll need them. For now, we'll have use the element of surprise by coming to Holoska in a way Finitevus will be expecting the least. We'll go by hover-saucer."

"That'll be a good idea. Finitevus won't expect something so basic." agreed Sally, "Well Sonic, Bunnie, Cosmo and Sora, let's go and

save Tails!"

With that said, the five Mobians all ran out of the room to get themselves some warm clothes to wear in Holoska. Once they were changed, they would board a hover-saucer and be off to the snow-covered country to save Tails from Finitevus's evil grasp. The best part was, nobody had eavesdropped on them so Finitevus wouldn't see them coming this time...or so they thought...

Back on *The Nefarious* , Dr. Finitevus was once again standing in the bridge with his fingers against his ear. His ship's repairs were coming along nicely and he knew that he wouldn't be found so he could relax and keep an eye on repairs in the bridge of *The Nefarious* . But he'd received a call so he was answering it now. His agent had stricken again and was now giving him some new information to take advantage of. He listened closely as he was told about the Royal Fighters's next plan. He smiled wickedly to himself as he listened to the agent's report.

"Very well done my agent, thanks very much for this information. Over and out." he said, switching off his communicator.

After he'd heard everything from his agent, he fingered a button on the control panel, activating the ship's intercom systems. He then spoke into the intercom.

"Would Scourge the Hedgehog and Fiona Fox come up to the bridge please?" he asked in his usual faux polite tone of voice, "I have a job for the two."

"Sure, warp us there Finitevus." replied Fiona.

Finitevus switched off the intercom and he opened up a warp ring to let Scourge and Fiona onto the bridge. He had allowed Fiona to come into the torture room to see Scourge after his rather harsh and brutal punishment he'd received for failing his earlier task so he knew she'd be there too. A whole hour had passed since the torture and he was sure that Scourge would be back on his feet and ready for another fight. Scourge and Fiona entered through the warp ring

and stood to attention before Dr. Finitevus. Scourge had his hand over his left eye. Only...the hand over his left eye was no longer his own hand. Captain Metal had decapitated him at the shoulder and had been quick to fix him with a metal arm as a replacement for his missing arm. The metal hand that was visible while the rest of his arm was obscured by his jacket sleeve was a dirty golden colour and had five sharp claws at the end of it. Despite this, Fiona didn't seem repulsed by her boyfriend's new metal appendage. Finitevus smirked evilly at Scourge, the hedgehog glaring back at him angrily.

"So, did the poor little hedgehog learn his lesson?" sneered Finitevus, his tone of voice easily that of mockery.

"Yes he did..." growled Scourge, taking his hand away from his eye and revealing that he not only had a metal arm, but an optic in place of his left eye too.

Captain Metal had simply gouged it out and replaced it with the optic. The optic was black with a red pupil that was exactly the same as Captain Metal's own singular optic. That seemed to make Fiona cringe and Scourge could imagine how freaked out his beautiful girlfriend would be at the fact he was now a cyborg. And all because he failed a mission for reasons beyond his control! It hardly seemed fair to the poor green hedgehog but he knew better than to oppose Finitevus or even complain about his condition. Finitevus smiled wickedly.

"Now then, since I'm a generous man, I am giving you the opportunity to redeem yourself." explained Finitevus, "Sonic the Hedgehog and four of his female friends Sally, Bunnie, Sora and Cosmo are coming to Holoska. Once again, a tip-off from my agent."

"Your agent sure is good at snooping around isn't it?" asked Fiona, smirking at the news she'd been told, "I bet Sonic and his brats will NEVER find out who it is."

"They certainly will not my child." purred Finitevus, "So I'm going to ask you two to go over to Holoska and prevent the heathens from getting near Mecha Tails while he completes his mission."

"Why not just pull him out so they can't get him?" asked Fiona

curiously, "Wouldn't that be more logical?"

"Oh it would indeed." admitted Finitevus, "But at the same time, I need Mecha Tails to complete his mission. That and he could probably fight off the five Royal Fighters in case any of them get past you. It never hurts to have extra support."

"You have a point." said Fiona casually, "And if Mecha Tails needs an escape route, I guess he'll call you for a warp ring and you'll bring him home."

"I will." said Finitevus, "So then, you are to protect Mecha Tails and his mined snow and ice at ALL COSTS! Failure to do so will result in you getting a cybernetic makeover," he pointed at Fiona, "And the both of you locked together in a cell to think about what a failure you've been."

"Will you kick our asses if we don't kill the Royal Fighters who are coming to Holoska?" asked Scourge worriedly.

"No for that is not your main priority. Killing them will be a nice bonus though but do not worry if you don't get any dead bodies on your hands. Just worry about keeping Mecha Tails safe as he completes his job." commanded Finitevus firmly, "Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes Finitevus." said both Scourge and Fiona in unison.

"Then it is time for you both to dress up warmly and get going to Holoska…" purred Finitevus, handing Fiona a warp ring to use to warp over to Holoska once she and Scourge had something warm to wear.

Fiona nodded and she and Scourge left the bridge to get some warm clothes. They used the warp ring to warp down to the laundry room. Finitevus had warm clothes for any of the Mobian members of the Dark Armada for incase they ever went to a cold place like Holoska or White Acropolis and they were stored in here along with spare clothes for any other armada members to wear in case the ones they had currently were filthy or wrecked beyond use. Scourge grabbed a thick padded coat and he put it on while Fiona put on a

thick padded coat and wrapped a scarf around her neck. She then tapped Scourge on the shoulder.

"Hey Scourge, I can't believe that freak Finitevus did that to you!" she hissed, "He has Captain Metal tear off your arm and tear out your eye and has made you into a cyborg! And for what? Failing to beat somebody who's at your level of strength and power?! It's hardly your fault that you failed isn't it?!"

"I agree Fiona." muttered Scourge, "And I'm gonna make that bastard pay for doing this to me! I'm a freak now because of what he's done! I bet you can't look at me the same way anymore Fiona!"

"Scourge, your cybernetics do not change a thing between us." purred Fiona seductively, "You're still my handsome hedgehog and I still love you. No robot arm and optic will change that for me."

"You really think so?" asked Scourge, touched to hear the Royal Fighter traitor saying this to him.

"Absolutely." Fiona whispered seductively into his ear.

Scourge's response was to embrace Fiona warmly and give her a loving kiss for her kind words. If Fiona still loved him despite his appearance then he was proud to be a cyborg. The two broke up the kiss and Scourge smiled in awe at Fiona.

"Fi, you have truly made my day." he said softly.

"Anything for you my lovely little Scourge." purred Fiona, "And hey, when Operation: Villains Rising is complete, we can overthrow Finitevus and take over the armada! That'll teach him for wrongfully punishing you like this!"

"Too right my voluptuous vixen." agreed Scourge, "Now then sweet-cakes, I believe we have a mission to do."

Fiona nodded and she flicked the warp ring up into the air, opening up a portal between *The Nefarious* 's laundry room and just outside the Holoska Ice Factory. Having seen images of the factory itself, they were able to visualize just outside the factory very easily. Now the warp ring was open, the evil couple quickly leapt through it and

found themselves abandoning the warmth of *The Nefarious* in favour of the bitter cold of Holoska. Getting to fight Sonic, Sally, Bunnie, Sally and Cosmo and maybe even kill them all would make this totally worth it for them. Scourge in particular thought this as he thought about his cybernetics. Sonic and the Royal Fighters were the ones to blame for his failure and he was going to make them pay for causing this to happen to him…

Another hour passed slowly by before Sonic and his team arrived at the frigid country of Holoska. Sonic remembered all too well the last time he had ever been in this country. It had been during the Martian invasion last year and he and Tails had taken down the Martian known as Dranzer. Now this time, he was here to save his best friend from Finitevus's control. Sonic kept it on his mind to try and have a pleasant visit to Holoska that didn't involve having to fight some evil villain once this was over. He was sitting at the back of the hover-saucer while Sally did the driving. Sora was on her left side and Cosmo was on her right side, both looking very anxious as the saucer hovered over the snowy ground that just seemed to stretch endlessly for miles around. The clouds were dull and grey and it looked like they were going to unleash a snowstorm any moment now. Sonic hoped this wouldn't happen for the snow would be a bit of a hindrance in the battle to come, unless they fought inside the factory itself. The hover saucer carried on for a good few miles before eventually, Sally stopped the saucer but she left the heating system on to prevent the saucer from freezing over. She climbed out of the saucer. Her feet sunk straight into the deep blanket of snow. Sally was wearing a thick padded coat, gloves with fingers and thick trousers to keep her legs warm. She still had her trademark blue boots with white stripes around the calf section. Her coat also had a hood on it which Sally had up at the moment. Sonic had a thick brown coat buttoned up to his chin and he wore a green and red scarf around his neck, tucking it deep under his coat collar so that he wouldn't get it caught on anything in the fight. Sora and Cosmo both wore winter dresses, thick gloves and black leggings to keep themselves warm in the chilling cold of Holoska. Bunnie wore a winter dress too along with thick winter boots to keep her legs and feet warm, something she had done for a very long time. It felt

strange for her, having to wear something on her feet given how because her feet were once roboticized, she didn't need footwear. But Bunnie didn't mind, she quickly got used to it. She had her new weapons at the ready and held on tightly to them as the five Mobians began to walk up to the Holoska Ice Factory.

The factory itself looked as cold as the atmosphere around them. The factory was an icy blue colour and had blankets of snow and sheets of ice covering it. Most of the factory's actual shape was changed by the piles of snow and ice all over the building. It was a huge building too, giving it a somewhat intimidating presence, especially given how it was the only kind of structure around. There were many digging vehicles around the factory such as excavators with huge caterpillar treads and scoop buckets, caterpillar treaded machines with moving arms and attached drills for cutting through ice and treaded machines that were used to carry people long distances around the snowy terrain. None of the vehicles were occupied, suggesting that the factory wasn't expecting any work for today. Or maybe something more sinister. Sally shivered to think on what the empty vehicles implied but she shook it off. She turned and spoke to her team, clouds of mist blowing out of her mouth with every word she said.

"OK here we are." she announced, "We have to approach with extreme caution. Mecha Tails likely won't hesitate to attack us the moment he sees us. Plus, we don't know if he's booby-trapped the place or not."

"I seems unlikely for Mecha Tails to do that." thought Sonic, "Tails isn't the kind of guy to booby trap a place. Then again, this is a roboticized Tails..."

"Pretty much, we have to remain vigilant and Tails won't get the drop on us." said Sora impatiently, "Now can we just get on with the mission already?"

"Whoa, never known you to be so keen to get in the action." chuckled Sonic.

"This is my brother, the brother that I spent eight years of my life without until we reunited last year, of course I'm keen to get into the

action!" snapped Sora, "Tails isn't gonna save himself for us is he?"

"Sora dear, please calm down. Shouting isn't gonna help us get to Mecha Tails unnoticed is it?" noted Sally hastily.

"It certainly isn't sugar-queen." purred a female, sultry voice that made Sally's blood run cold.

The five Mobians stared in disbelief as Scourge and Fiona suddenly appeared from nowhere and started walking towards them. Scourge had a look of total confidence yet total anger on his face whereas Fiona looked laid-back about the fact they were soon going to be fighting five Royal Fighters in the middle of an icy wasteland. Sonic quickly took note of Scourge's new optic and metallic looking hand. Finitevus must not have taken his failure lightly, that much was certain to him. It didn't cross Sonic's mind for a minute as to why Scourge and Fiona were here. It was obvious as to why they were here. Finitevus had obviously sent them both over to Holoska to help Mecha Tails with his task and it was merely coincidence that they were here. They must have been inside the factory when Nicole spotted Mecha Tails, thus making their presence unknown to them until now. Sonic clenched his fists and gritted his teeth as Scourge smiled confidently at him. Sally clipped on her wristbands, deployed her energy blades and prepared to fight. She soon received a big shock when Fiona proceeded to do the same thing. She remembered her fight with Finitevus last year which saw her lose her wrist-blades to him. He must have given them to Fiona so now Sally had an equal to fight. Bunnie, Sora and Cosmo prepared to do battle, bending down in battle-ready stances as they prepared to fight.

"Well, well, bet ya didn't think you'd see me again so soon eh losers?" sneered Scourge, "And I see you don't have a Burning Blaze to help ya this time! Good! Means I can stomp on ya all without her interfering!"

"Hey Scourge, I love your new look. Is "cyborg" a new fashion trend or something?" chuckled Sonic, "I bet Finitevus was REALLY mad with you if you know have robot parts! Maybe he'll cut you to pieces so badly that you'll need a robot body to live!"

"Don't you dare mock my Scourge!" snarled Fiona, "You're the ones who caused this to happen to him and you're going to pay for it! With your severed heads..." she hissed, holding up her arm blades.

"Bunnie, take Cosmo and Sora into the factory, me and Sonic will take care of Scourge and the Royal Fighter traitor." ordered Sally.

"Sure thing Sally-girl!" piped Bunnie happily.

She ran off with Sora and Cosmo following her closely as Sonic and Sally charged towards Scourge and Fiona. Scourge and Fiona knew they were in a bit of a pickle the moment the battle started. They couldn't stop Bunnie, Sora and Cosmo from reaching Mecha Tails AND fight Sonic and Sally at the same time. They didn't let it bother them too much though. Mecha Tails would surely have a way of defending himself, he was a capable fight when he was Tails and he did pretty well on the battlefield when the Dark Armada first fought Sonic and Knuckles. He would be fine, the hedgehog and vixen reassured themselves that. Yelling angrily, Scourge and Fiona charged towards Sonic and Sally. Scourge predictably gunned for Sonic and Sally ran for Fiona. Sonic and Scourge both spin-dashed straight into each other at a force that could shatter brick walls while Sally and Fiona clashed blades with each other. A bright flash of blue light sparked between the two women as their energy blades clashed. Sally really hated it when she was against her own weapons. Mecha Sally had been the first to do this and now Fiona was doing it. It was beginning to make her energy blades seem pointless since everybody was coming up with ways to block them. Sally and Fiona retracted their arms and aimed another strike at each other. Fiona aimed at Sally's head whereas Sally was just simply aiming for a block. The queen held up her energy blades in a cross shape and blocked Fiona's rather well-aimed strike. A shudder flowed through Sally's arms as Fiona's blades clashed against hers. She know imagined how her victims felt before she slashed them or chopped them to pieces. Fiona pushed on Sally's arms, trying to force the squirrel down onto the ground. Her teeth were gritted as her arms pushed as hard as she ordered them to. Sally pushed back, straining with effort and desperately trying to keep Fiona's blades away from her head.

"Wonder how Sonic will feel when I separate your head from your

body?!" cackled Fiona maniacally.

"Finitevus took his best friend away...I'm not gonna let you take me away from him!" grunted Sally, "And you of all people should have sympathy towards Sonic and what he's going through, considering you used to be his friend!" she spat out the words as if emphasising a big point to the treacherous vixen.

"Don't try to gain sympathy from me cretin!" snarled Fiona, "You Royal Fighters made my life worse so I had every right to betray you all! You're all dead to me and you gain no sympathy from me! And I have no regrets about betraying you all too!"

"Then I have no regrets about doing this!"

Fiona shrieked in pain as Sally suddenly lashed out with her foot and kicked her sharply in between her legs. When the arms were occupied, using the legs was always a good tactic to catch the opponent off-guard. Fiona doubled over in excruciating pain and she willed for the pain in her groin to go away. This gave Sally the perfect opportunity to trip Fiona up with a kick to the legs and then pin her down with her foot. She held her blades at Fiona's throat to prevent the vixen from getting back up. Fiona lay flat on her back against the snow on the ground, staring up helplessly at Sally but not looking worried in the slightest, more like angered. Angered because she had been beaten so easily when she expected to win this fight. Sally smirked confidently at Fiona, completely sure that she had won this fight. But then Sonic came flying out of nowhere and Sally's triumph was quickly snatched away as Sonic crashed into her and knocked her clean off her feet. The two landed in a heap on the snow and Scourge ran over to Fiona to help her up. Sonic and Scourge both helped their girlfriends back onto their feet, both girls brushing snow off of each other and rushing back into the fight. Sonic left Sally to take care of Fiona as he ran back towards Scourge. Scourge then showed off a new ability that his cybernetics contained. He aimed his robotical hand at Sonic and fired a compressed ball of air at Sonic straight out of the centre of his palm. Sonic was whisked clean off of his feet by the blast smacking straight into his stomach. He felt like he'd been punched by a gorilla. Sonic landed with a thump on the snow and Scourge laughed at Sonic mockingly.

"Dare mock my new cybernetics now moron?" he sneered, "Finitevus gave me WEAPONIZED cybernetics much like how your stupid friend Bunnie had weaponized cybernetics before she was de-roboticized! Captain Metal was quick to teach me how to use them after he fitted them on me so now I'm not just a powerhouse, I'm an even bigger powerhouse with some kickass weapons to boot!"

"We'll see about that cyber-jerk!" growled Sonic viciously, his voice like an angry lion.

He whizzed towards Scourge as fast as he possibly could but Scourge closed his right eye and fired a red laser beam out of his optic. The beam struck Sonic and brought him down onto his feet. Sonic quickly wiped some snow on himself to ease the pain but that just gave Scourge the opportunity to spin-dash Sonic in the face and throw him into a pile of snow. Scourge laughed and he fired another ball of compressed air at him. The blast hit the snow pile and sent snow flying everywhere. But Sonic seemed unharmed from the attack. The snow had taken the force of the attack for him. Sonic scooped up snow into his hands and he threw it into Scourge's face. The snow covered Scourge's eyes and blinded him, the hedgehog panicking as he wiped the snow out of his face. Sonic whizzed towards Scourge and clasped both fists together. He swung them upwards and walloped Scourge in the chin. Scourge let out a terrific yell as the uppercut launched him into the air and sent him crashing into an excavator. He landed directly in the bucket but despite the enormous clang that echoed from the impact, he seemed mostly unhurt. Scourge spin-dashed out of the excavator's bucket and he ricocheted off of Sonic as his blue nemesis spin-dashed towards him too. Sonic landed on the ground and took a moment out of the battle to hope that Bunnie, Sora and Cosmo were having better luck than he was right now before launching into another attack...

In the Ice Factory itself, Mecha Tails had a warp ring opened up for him to hand over his supplies that he'd gathered on his mission here. He had ten containers all full of freshly dug up snow and freshly mined ice. The containers were at a sub-zero temperature and they kept the snow and ice frozen and chilled so it wouldn't

melt. He had a separate container full of gold and silver that he'd mined out of the ice. The whole process had been tiring and long but he'd done it and now he had more items to send home to Finitevus. The gold and silver would do very nicely indeed for the planned Synthetic Chaos Energy formula. Once Finitevus was ready to make the formula, Mecha Tails himself was going to help him make it. Finitevus reasoned that two scientists would be better than one in making something like Synthetic Chaos Energy. Mecha Tails had quite enjoyed his solitude in the Holoska Ice Factory but he was pleased that his mission was nearly over now. He couldn't wait to see what task Finitevus would give him next. As he passed Finitevus the container containing the gold and silver he'd managed to break out of the ice, he failed to notice that Bunnie, Cosmo and Sora had arrived into the room and Bunnie had her handheld cannon pointed at the warp ring. She waited until the container fully passed through the warp ring before she pulled the trigger. The enormous green coloured blast that launched out of the cannon she held tightly in her hand was immense. The blast threw Bunnie off her feet and into the wall and the blast whizzed through the air, slamming into the warp ring and vaporizing it instantly. Mecha Tails looked shocked to see his one-way ticket home destroyed like this and his head snapped around to his left to see who had done this. He was livid to see that Cosmo, Sora and Bunnie were here in the Holoska Ice Factory to come and ruin everything for him. Well, they were too late to stop him from delivering his diggings to Finitevus, he'd just given them all to him. He would have to fight off the three intruders until Finitevus opened up an extra warp ring for him. Bunnie picked herself up, amazed at the power of her new cannon and she pointed it threateningly at Mecha Tails. Mecha Tails glared at Bunnie coldly, his piercing, emotionless glare sending shivers up Cosmo and Sora's spines. This was it, their beloved Tails as a heartless, emotionless Robian slave. Cosmo just wanted to cry at the sight of Mecha Tails but she knew it wouldn't do any good. Sora on the other hand looked like she wanted to unleash all hell if it meant saving her brother from this hell he was in.

"I needed that." Mecha Tails said in a voice of steel.

"Alright Tails, ya'll can come with us or get vaporized!" growled Bunnie, her statement a total bluff for she had been given strict

orders not to harm Tails with her weapons, "Only warning, take it or leave it!"

"You are all fools." droned Mecha Tails, "You will not take me prisoner."

"We aren't trying to take you prisoner, we're trying to rescue you!" yelled Sora, "Now please stand down! I don't want to have to manhandle you too much!"

"Please Tails, it's for your own good. We're saving you from a horrible life with Dr. Finitevus." pleaded Cosmo.

"I do not need saving." snapped Mecha Tails coldly, his voice even chillier than the snow-covered terrain outside the factory, "And my life with Finitevus is not horrible. You will not be saving me, you are kidnapping me and I will not allow that."

"Finitevus is the kidnapper Tails, we're trying to save you from him!" yelled Bunnie, "Please make this easy on yerself! Stand down and let us take you back home!"

"The Nefarious is my home, your home will be my prison." droned Mecha Tails, "And you will not imprison me."

With that said, he spun around his sharp metal tails and launched himself at Bunnie. The former-Rabbot was startled as to how quickly Mecha-Tails could move. He grabbed Bunnie by the neck and let her have it with an incredible jolt of electricity that made Bunnie scream and convulse in pain. He kept it up for a few seconds before releasing Bunnie from his grasp. The rabbit collapsed onto the floor, completely unconscious after such a terrible shock. Now the main threat was dealt with, Mecha Tails confiscated her weapons and clipped the cannon around his hand. Sora and Cosmo screamed in terror as he pointed it at the two girls and fired. His timing was a little slow though. He pulled the trigger just as they were leaping out of the way so he missed them by inches. The blast seemed to have been closer to Sora than Cosmo as he fired though. The blast punched through a wall and shattered the window that was built into it. Sora shivered with fright at the damage done to the wall by the cannon blast. She did not want to imagine what it'd be like if she

actually got hit by the blast. Cosmo whipped out her Flower-Blade weapon, the sight of the weapon in her hands giving her fond memories of her precious Tails before he got roboticized, and she threw it at Mecha Tails. The bladed-disc pinged harmlessly off of Mecha Tails's tough, metal armour and returned to Cosmo's hand. Mecha Tails glared at Cosmo and he ran towards her. To the Seedrian's surprise, he didn't use the cannon on her. He instead used the metal fist weapon. He slugged Cosmo in the gut but for some reason, he didn't do it as hard as possible. Cosmo felt like she'd just been hit by Tails punching at his hardest as a Mobian rather than a Robian wearing a metal fist on his hand. It was like Mecha Tails was deliberately trying not to kill the heartbroken Seedrian. Maybe he still had some freewill in him and was holding back for Cosmo's sake? The thought didn't register into Cosmo's mind as she hurled backwards across the room and skidded across the floor straight through the hole in the wall. She nearly fell over the edge but she quickly grabbed on, dangling precariously by her hands as she held on for dear life. The ice factory was high up in a snow-covered mountain and they were in the very top floor of the building. If Cosmo fell, it would be an unpleasant tumble indeed. Heart racing and head raining with sweat that came chilled and cold thanks to the cold air outside, Cosmo tried to pull herself back up into the factory. Mecha Tails marched towards her and he glowered down at her. Cosmo seized her chance to try and reach out to the Tails she knew and loved very much.

"Tails! Please! Help me!" she cried helplessly, "I'm going to fall! Please help me!"

"Why should I help the enemy?" demanded Mecha Tails bitterly.

"I'm not the enemy! I'm your girlfriend Tails!" shrieked Cosmo desperately, "Please, you must remember me! I'm your girlfriend Tails! I'm the love of your life and you'd do anything to protect me! You MUST remember!"

"Love. I have no understanding of the word. It is not registered in my vocabulary banks." replied Mecha Tails, "You are not my girlfriend and I would never protect you."

"Yes you would Tails! You protected me from many dangers ever

since I landed on Mobius!" exclaimed Cosmo feebly, "You've been kinder to me than anybody on this planet and because of that, I grew to love you! You must still love me Tails! You're holding back against me! Remember our love Tails! REMEMBER!" she screamed, hoping to break through Mecha Tails's stoic demeanour and reach out to the Tails she loved.

"I do not remember something that is not real." replied Mecha Tails, "We were never in love, I never loved you and you have no reason to love me. You are the enemy and I am your enemy. Your words are the words of a crazed girl who speaks of a false connection between us."

Cosmo's eyes streamed with tears. Mecha Tails was just impossible to reason with! No matter what she said, he just insisted that he never loved her and that she was his enemy! Finitevus had truly ruined Tails beyond belief when he roboticized him, that much was certain. The Seedrian could feel her heart breaking in two as she factored in how lost Tails really was. And yet Mecha Tails wasn't sending her falling to her death, that was something Cosmo noticed. Why was he allowing her to cling onto life like this? Why wasn't he trying to kill her? She didn't need to wonder for long though for Sora suddenly pounced on Mecha Tails and pulled back on him, trying to wrench him away from Cosmo so the Seedrian could get back up. Mecha Tails simply shrugged off Sora as if she was nothing and he socked the teenage vixen as hard as he possibly could with Bunnie's metal fist weapon. Sora swore that he'd broken something in her face with that punch but her face still seemed intact despite the punch. The vixen crashed against the wall and groaned in terrible pain as Mecha Tails advanced towards her. Sora pressed herself against the wall in terror as her roboticized brother raised the hand cannon and pointed it at her.

"No Tails, no! Please, don't shoot!" begged Sora, "You wouldn't kill me! I'm Sora, your sister! You'd never harm me!"

"We are of no relation delusional vixen." muttered Mecha Tails, "You are my enemy, I would kill you."

"Tails listen to me, this isn't you!" whimpered Sora feebly, "You're not an emotionless robot working for Finitevus! You're my brother

and you're Sonic's best friend! And most of all, your Cosmo's lover! I know you're still in there little brother, I know you are! Fight his control and come back to us! Please!"

"I am not under control so I cannot fight anything." replied Mecha Tails coldly, "I am not related to you, I am not Sonic's friend and Cosmo is not my…"lover". You are deranged and you need to be put down."

Sora acted fast before Mecha Tails could shoot her. She whipped out a smoke bomb that she had on her utility belt, which was hidden by the coat, and he threw it at Mecha Tails's face. The roboticized fox didn't seem surprised or bothered at the fact he'd just received a smoke-bomb to the face. But he was distracted long enough for Sora to escape. She ran away from him as the smoke obscured his vision and she ran over to Cosmo. The Seedrian was still clinging on for dear life, her strength failing her so she couldn't pull herself back up. Sora closed her hands around Cosmo's and she pulled her up. Cosmo was still crying as Sora pulled her back into the room.

"It's no use Sora...Tails refuses to believe what we say!" she howled.

"We'll get to him somehow, I know we will!" declared Sora, "We just need to try harder!"

Then suddenly, Mecha Tails grabbed Sora by the neck and hoisted her clean off her feet! He'd disposed of Bunnie's weapons so he could do this. He picked Sora up, his iron grip tightening around the vixen's neck as he stared at her. Sora kicked at him furiously, trying to get Mecha Tails to put her down. But the young spy was unable to get Mecha Tails to let her go. He just tightened his grip, the vixen now fighting for consciousness as black spots began swimming in her eyes.

"Ack…please…let me…go!" croaked Sora weakly.

"Put her down!" pleaded Cosmo, "That's your sister you're throttling! You'd never harm her like this Tails! Please put her down!"

Mecha Tails ignored Cosmo. He was beginning to tire of her persistent claims that "he'd never harm her" and such. He'd have to

make sure Cosmo never spoke again after Sora was dead. But then Mecha Tails realized that he'd made a grave mistake. He'd discarded Bunnie's weapons so he could strangle Sora. This proved to be his own undoing for Bunnie had finally regained consciousness and she pointed the cannon at his head.

"Put. Her. Down!" she snarled, "Don't make me ask again!"

Mecha Tails as he was told and he tossed Sora down onto the floor. He raised his hands, clearly defeated and unable to find a way out of his predicament. Bunnie smiled triumphantly. She'd gotten Mecha Tails to surrender! Now they could take him home and see to de-roboticizing him! The day was won at last, the Dark Armada had lost and the Royal Fighters had won! But Bunnie of all people should have known better than to celebrate too early. A warp ring suddenly opened up behind her and Finitevus came soaring out of it like an athlete on the high jump. He landed behind Bunnie Rabboh and he thumped her callously on the head with both fists. With her head spinning, Bunnie couldn't do anything as Finitevus tossed her aside and grabbed Mecha Tails. He sensed that something was wrong after his warp ring had been destroyed before he could get through and thus, had taken liberty of coming to aid his roboticized slave. Finitevus quickly shoved Mecha Tails through the warp ring, transporting him straight back to *The Nefarious* and out of harm's way. He sneered at the three girls wickedly.

"Sorry to disappoint girls, but Mecha Tails is staying with me." he purred sinisterly, "Have fun trying to find him again."

He then proceeded to retreat through the warp ring, leaving behind a very disappointed and crushed Sora and Cosmo. Sora kicked at the wall furiously and broke down into floods of tears.

"DAMN IT! DAMN IT ALL!" she screamed, tears streaming rapidly down her face and anger coursing through her veins, "WE LOST! MY BROTHER'S STILL IN FINITEVUS'S POSSESSION! WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO TO GET HIM BACK?!"

Cosmo could only hug Sora sympathetically as the vixen spilled out all her grief and anger over the failure of this mission. She even wept with the distraught spy too, both girls showering their shoulders

with their own tears as they hugged. Bunnie felt like she wanted to shed a tear for the heartbroken girls. They were so close to saving Tails and yet they still failed! What did it take to save Tails already?! Bunnie walked over to the girls and gently touched them on each shoulder.

"Come on girls, there's no reason to stay here." she mumbled, "Let's pick up sugah-hog and Sally-girl…and get goin' home."

Cosmo and Sora nodded agreeably. Why stay when they'd failed the mission? Their eyes still pouring with tears, Bunnie led Sora and Cosmo out of the factory and back outside into the bitter cold air and howling wind that seemed eerily appropriate for the fact they were going through a tough and dark time. They ran over to the fight scene before them, watching as Sonic and Scourge wrestled with each other and Sally and Fiona tried to cut one another to pieces. Bunnie made it easier for Sonic and Sally by blasting Scourge clean off of his feet and blasting Fiona away from Sally. With the two villains out of the way, Bunnie ran over to Sonic and Sally. The two noticed the disappointment on Bunnie's face and Sora and Cosmo's tear-filled eyes.

"You didn't save him…did you?" asked Sonic, trying not to let the wind snatch away his words.

"No, Finitevus took him before we could make off with him." murmured Bunnie solemnly, "Ah'm so sorry sugah-hog…truly ah am."

"I'm sure you all did your best." said Sally sadly but kindly, "But if Tails is back on The Nefarious then we have no reason to stay here. We may as well just go home."

"If only Scourge and Fiona weren't here!" moaned Sonic, "I could have rushed into that stupid factory and grabbed him straight away! I swear I'm going crazy just thinking about how horrible it must be for poor Tails to be going through this! I just want him back, his absence is affecting me real bad!"

"I can relate." whimpered Cosmo miserably.

"We'll get him back eventually." declared Sally, "But not now I'm afraid…we'll have to let him go for now. It pains me to say this, but what can we do now he's back on The Nefarious?"

The others nodded agreeably and they quickly ran over to their still parked hover-saucer. They climbed into the saucer just as Scourge and Fiona picked themselves up and brushed the snow out of their faces. Sally started up the saucer and she drove off, leaving the two villains behind to just watch despairingly as their prey got away again. As they drove away, Sally looked over to a very sad and troubled looking Sonic. It wounded her heart to see her boyfriend looking so miserable. All the more reason to make Finitevus pay for taking his best friend away from him like this. Sally put a hand on Sonic's hand and stroked it gently.

"I know how much this is hurting you Sonic." she said softly, "Tails was your brother figure, his absence is leaving a hole in your heart that cannot be filled. I'm so sorry that you're going through this."

"Don't be Sal." said Sonic, taking her hand into his own, "Finitevus took my little brother from me, and he's gonna pay for it! With his life if necessary!"

"Right now I'm leaving the option of executing him for his crimes open." murmured Sally, "As for now Sonic, I think we'll need some extra support. We'll need the other Royal Fighter teams. With all the teams together, we'll stand a chance of beating the Dark Armada."

"I hope so my girl…I hope so…" said Sonic solemnly, kissing Sally on the lips for comfort.

The silence that followed was one of the most haunting silences that Sonic had ever experienced as the hover-saucer took them back home to New Mobotropolis. If extra-support didn't do them any good…then there was no hope for Mobius. The Dark Armada would win and the Royal Fighters would all be dead…and then nobody would stop Enerjak from rising. It was no wonder that the world comes to an end on this very year…

You lot better get used to this downer endings, we're going to get more of these as we go along. So the Dark Armada wins yet again. Will the Royal Fighters turn this around somehow?

Join in next time as Team Adabat bear witness to the wrath of the Dark Armada...

Dark Armada Part 6: Operation: Adabat

Story 206: Operation: Adabat

The Dark Armada Chapter 6 of 25

It was the dawning of a new day, a day that likely wasn't going to go as well as yesterday did for the Royal Fighters. The Dark Armada had been on a winning streak and it was all because of Finitevus's agent feeding them information that kept the armada one step ahead of the game. First Bunnie Rabbot ended up de-roboticized, then *The Nefarious* was quickly warped away from the heroes so they couldn't storm it and cause more damage to the ship after Bunnie had brought it down and just yesterday evening, the heroes had failed miserably to subdue Mecha Tails and take him back to New Mobotropolis to be de-roboticized. And the armada would see many more victories as time went by for the heroes still had no idea who Finitevus's mysterious agent is (even the armada itself doesn't know who it is) and Finitevus would keep getting information from that agent.

The Royal Fighters were searching for the agent at his very moment. Their very own detectives Team Chaotix were investigating deeply into this case but so far, they hadn't come to any clues or finds yet. The agent was still a mystery at this moment. And it was because of the agent as to why Queen Sally Acorn was feeling a little anxious about making a call to the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters in the Royal HQ laboratory. She was sitting at the main computer and speaking into the microphone as she waited for them to respond to her call. Sonic the Hedgehog was just beside her, watching intently. Yesterday after the horrible failure to rescue Tails from Dr. Finitevus, Sally had decided to make a call to the other Royal Fighter groups to double their numbers and maybe stand a stronger chance of saving Tails and defeating the armada. Sally was starting off with Team Nekronopolis. They had the one thing they would need to match the Dark Armada in terms of cavalry and resources, a ship. The Sky Patrol to be precise. The Sky Patrol had seen action during the Royal Fighters' last bout with Dr. Eggman before his

horrific demise. It had been destroyed along with the Death Egg after the Death Egg exploded but the team had since rebuilt it. Their ship wasn't as potent as *The Nefarious* by a long shot but by all means, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters would need a ship if they stood a ghost of a chance of finding or even keeping up with *The Nefarious* .

"Miranda Mongoose, this is Sally Acorn. Please respond." Sally said into the microphone.

"I just hope she's at home to answer that call." murmured Sonic.

Given the dark times that the Royal Fighters were going through right now, Sonic was finding it hard to stay completely enthusiastic and was resorting to "hoping" a lot of the time. His hopes were soon answered for Sally received a response from Miranda on the other side of the microphone.

"Why good morning your majesty." came the kind, soft voice of Miranda Mongoose, "How may me and my team be of a service to you?"

"Good morning Miranda." Sally replied, "Listen, are you familiar with the Dark Armada at all?"

"Dark Armada…hmm…I haven't heard any names like that." mused Miranda, "But I do recall hearing that the Golden Hive Colony was recently attacked by what they described as "a big black ship with an evil appearance" and that their colony was raided by several different villains, one of them a robot that greatly resembles the Royal Fighter Tails. Do these ring any bells?"

"Plenty of them." muttered Sally, "The Dark Armada is an army of villains formulated by the evil scoundrel known as Dr. Finitevus. We brought their ship crashing down in Nekronopolis so I bet they were the ones attacking the Golden Hive Colony. We'll list to you the members later, right now we have a request for you and it's compulsory that you comply. The armada is very strong and Finitevus keeps being a step ahead of us because he has a spy feeding him information behind our backs. We need all the Royal Fighters we can get so please, PLEASE can you join us in our battle

with the armada?"

"Of course we can!" replied Miranda in a tone that suggested it was rather silly to ask such a question, "We owe that armada much for attacking the poor Golden Hive Colony. Those poor innocent bees are still frightened as all heck!"

"Thank you so much Miranda!" cried Sally happily, "So where are you now?"

"On the Sky Patrol." explained Miranda, "Ever since the colony was attacked, we've been searching for this ship they described. We're currently heading towards New Mobotropolis to see if it's hiding there."

"Well you won't find The Nefarious here but you can stop by and pick me and Sonic up." explained Sally, "Then once you've picked us up, take us to Adabat, Megapolis and Chun-Nan, all in that order if you please. We need the other teams as well."

"Very well then, we'll come straight to you." said Miranda kindly, "We'll see you when we arrive."

Miranda than hung up, leaving Sally to get up from her seat and stand in front of Sonic.

"Good thing Miranda's already on her way here." said Sally brightly, "She'll be here sooner than we expect."

"It's cool and fortuitous." said Sonic, "I just hope the extra support will help us save my best buddy and stop the armada."

Sally nodded agreeably and she pulled Sonic close towards her. Gently wrapping her arms around his body and running her fingers through his quills, she looked lovingly into the hedgehog's eyes. It pained her to see Sonic like this and she wanted dearly to make him happy again.

"I'm so sorry that you're going through this Sonic." she said softly, "Nobody should EVER have to go through what you're going through. But I promise you this, I'll do whatever it takes to stop this armada…and get you your best friend back. I want you happy Sonic

and getting Tails back will make you happy again. It pains me to see you like this."

"Thanks for the concern my girl." said Sonic appreciatively, smiling and embracing his girlfriend, "I can't tell you how much it sucks to feel so helpless and like you could've saved your best friend and yet didn't. It also sucks to feel so sad and frightened…it's why I'm not usually very emotional. Because when I get emotional…I get scared."

"Emotions are a very scary thing true blue, but emotions are what make us Mobian." explained Sally, "It might be scary feeling emotions that you don't usually experience Sonic…but please don't get scared. I assure you, it's nothing to worry about. It's perfectly normal for you and anybody else to feel like this in a situation as dire as what we're going through."

"You're right Sal." said Sonic agreeably, stroking Sally's soft, red hair, "We're only Mobian as they say."

"We are indeed…we are indeed." replied Sally.

The two then kissed each other on the lips, feeling content, warm, happy and like all their problems were suddenly gone. But the moment their lips separated, they knew that their problems weren't gone. They broke up their embrace and the hedgehog and squirrel left the laboratory to meet Team Nekronopolis once the Sky Patrol arrived. But they didn't realize something was wrong as they closed the laboratory door behind them. There was a communicator device lying on the table in the corner of the room. The communicator wasn't out of place where it was though, there was always one or more on the table in case the Royal Fighters needed to put one on. What was out of the norm was that the communicator was switched on. It had been on the whole time Sonic and Sally had been talking and making the call to the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters. The only reason it hadn't been noticed was that the communicator was facing the wall. But sound reverberates around the laboratory quite easily so the communicator still picked up what they were saying. And on the other side of the communicator, outside of New Mobotropolis's gates and listening to the conversation…was Finitevus's secret agent! The agent had gotten the information it needed to give to its

master. Now the agent switched off the communicator and prepared to make the call to Finitevus…

Ravage Bloodfang, Raphael the Cyber Husky, Zira the Ruthless, Bride of the Conquering Storm and Team Diamond were rather puzzled as they made their way to *The Nefarious* 's meeting room. Puzzled as in they couldn't for the life of them work out why their leader Dr. Finitevus was calling them up to the meeting room in particular. On the other hand, it was quite an honour that they had been chosen in particular. If Finitevus picked anybody for a specific task then it should be considered an honour in their eyes for it meant Finitevus was putting faith into his disciples. They had to wonder why Finitevus picked them in particular as they answered his call. They'd find out what it was Finitevus wanted them for very shortly. The villains paused briefly outside the meeting room as the door opened up and allowed them inside. Finitevus was already in the room, sitting in his chair at the round table that stood proudly in the centre of the room with many other chairs all around the table for armada members to sit at. The villains took their seats and were quick to notice that Finitevus had left cups of tea for them to drink as the meeting progressed. Finitevus took a sip out of his own mug as his requested members made themselves comfortable. He set down the mug of tea on the table and he clasped his hands together.

"Good morning my fellow armada members." he purred.

"Zǎo ān honourable leader." replied Zira the Ruthless, looking down at her mug and noticing delightedly that she had been given green tea, a native beverage to her country, "It is an honour to be summoned by you personally doctor."

"Do apprise us on why you have summoned us in particular." requested Conquering Storm. She tail-ended her sentence with a sip of her green tea.

"Yes, what jobs do you have for all of us?" asked Raphael curiously.

"So glad you asked for I have the answer to satisfy your curious minds." said Finitevus smoothly. He waited until everybody put down

their teas before he continued, "My agent has been at it again. Just moments ago, I was informed of the Royal Fighters' next move. They are hoping to recruit their other Royal Fighter teams to increase their numbers and to hopefully take us down once and for all."

"And those teams will be Teams Nekronopolis, Adabat, Chun-Nan and Megapolis right?" asked Lennox Meers the Meerkat curiously.

"Affirmative." answered Finitevus, "While they wouldn't pose much of a threat on their own, joined up with Sonic's team they'll be a bigger threat to us all. And let's not get started on Team Chun-Nan and how they have kung-fu warriors fighting against evil like us. If Team Chun-Nan join the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, our plans could easily hit a heavy bump in the road."

"So…let me guess doc…are we going to be assigned to the task of killin them before they can be recruited?" asked Raphael.

"Yes." answered Finitevus, smiling wickedly.

"Allow me the honour of terminating the princess and her team!" cried Zira desperately, "I'm perfectly adequate for the task!"

"You're a fool Zira, you couldn't even beat the princess and last time you attacked Chun-Nan, you were beaten by that weak old fool of an emperor! I on the hand have actually managed to BEAT Matilda herself and take over Chun-Nan!" crowed Conquering Storm, "I should go! The job is for me!"

Zira stood up form her chair and glowered down at Conquering Storm.

"You will not rob me of my rightful task!" she snarled, "I am the one to terminate Team Chun-Nan!"

"You'll fail miserably Zira and disgrace this armada!" snapped Conquering Storm, standing up and staring at Zira directly in the eyes, "I should kill them all!"

"You two, enough of this inane bickering!" bellowed Finitevus angrily, "Just for that, you can BOTH go and you will work together

and share the kills between you or so help me, you'll both end up like Scourge! DO YOU COMPREHEND?!"

Zira and Conquering Storm both sat down in their seats and they lowered their heads in shame. The last thing they wanted as to become cyborgs like Scourge before them had done. They considered the thought a stain on their honour so like it or not, working together was better than becoming a hideous cyborg like Scourge and Raphael, even if the former made himself one and was proud of it.

"Yes master, we're sorry master." they both said together.

"Good." growled Finitevus, "Now then, Raphael, I believe you have grudges to settle with Dark Cat and Kiara am I right?"

"Darn right doc, I tried to make them cyborgs but they ended up destroying my camp and damaging me terribly* as you already know since you're the one who fixed me!" growled Raphael, "I want to make those kitty-cats pay for their crimes!"

"Then you shall have the honour of terminating the Megapolis Royal Fighters." explained Finitevus.

"Wait a minute…did you say Dark Cat?" asked Conquering Storm quickly.

"Yes I did, why do you ask?" questioned Finitevus.

"Dark Cat is a former Raiju Clan member." explained Conquering Storm, "He betrayed me a long time ago and I've sworn on my clan's honour that I would get him back or kill him myself! Since I am going with Zira to Chun-Nan, maybe Raphael could take my clan with him to fight the Megapolis Royal Fighters? He can have this "Kiara" woman but IF Dark cannot be turned back to us, he can have him too."

"Mmm, sounds pretty fair toots." said Raphael casually, "I'll take your clan if you want. I'll let them see if they can get Dark on their team before we kill him."

"Deal." said Conquering Storm, "I'll place my best man Dàfeng Rai

in charge of the clan while I'm in Chun-Nan. He'll give my clan orders but he'll let you act under your own orders. That way, disputes will be avoided."

"Exemplary thinking there Conquering Storm and a fine use of logic too." Finitevus praised delightedly, "No wonder you were the one to take over Chun-Nan last year. Now then, Ravage Bloodfang has many scores to settle with Team Adabat so he will be the one to hunt them down…and maybe have them for dinner too." he said darkly, looking at Ravage.

"Oooh Scott and Jessica will make a fine meal indeed…" muttered Ravage, "I may have failed to kill Bunnie but I won't fail this task. I promise that I'll have all four of Team Adabat DEAD!"

"I know you will." purred Finitevus with a devilish grin on his face, "And as for you Team Diamond, you will go to Chun-Nan and provide back-up should they need it." he ordered, looking at Team Diamond now, "Once Team Chun-Nan are dead, you may raid the Pagoda of Prosperity for whatever treasures the place owns. I'll allow you to keep HALF of what you find, the other half is to be used for my Synthetic Chaos Energy formula."

"Very well then." said Lennox, "We'll do just that and we'll have NO betrayal attempts will we Roxy?" he growled, looking over at the raccoon forcibly sitting beside him.

Roxy the Raccoon looked dreadful. She had bruises under he eyes, she had ugly hickeys on her throat and the way she presented herself made her look tired, beaten and miserable. She even had an unbearable pain between her legs that she longed would go away already. Lennox had been dominating her and he'd been very rough about it. Roxy glared at Lennox but she nodded her head bitterly. Her scowl said everything that needed to be said about her, "I do not want to do this task, but I have no choice so I'll do it anyway". Lennox sneered at his love interest.

"Good girl." he said, "You know, if you continue to be good then maybe that bomb doesn't need to be in your head anymore."

"Roxy can behave as well as she likes, the bomb stays where it is."

said Finitevus coldly, "Remove it, she has a chance at betrayal."

"OK then." said Lennox, "So, what of Team Nekronopolis?"

"I'm afraid that after we raided the Golden Hive Colony, the team was quick to mobilize and they received the Royal Fighters' call for help." explained Finitevus, "My agent tells me they're on their ship, the Sky Patrol, and already on their way to New Mobotropolis. I have not been on the Sky Patrol so warping onto the patrol is impossible without me being able to visualize it. Plus, our ship is still being repaired. We'll have to let them go unfortunately. The rest…make sure they never leave their countries."

"Yes Finitevus." said the villains in unison.

"Now you all have your tasks, you may all go to accomplish them. Good luck my armada." said Finitevus.

The evil Mobians all nodded as Finitevus opened up a warp ring for each team to take. Everybody but Conquering Storm went through their warp rings. Ravage was warped to Adabat, Raphael was warped to Megapolis and Zira and Team Diamond were warped to Chun-Nan. Conquering Storm used her warp ring to warp down to the Raiju Clan and get them warped over to Megapolis for their mission with Raphael. The moment she left, Finitevus got up from his seat.

"Now to see how my Synthetic Chaos Energy formula is coming along…" he purred, "I hope Mecha Tails is doing as well as he should be doing at making it."

He warped out of the room and over to *The Nefarious* 's laboratory to see how Mecha Tails was doing…

Over in Adabat, the local Royal Fighter team was currently exploring a canyon that despite being as old as Adabat itself, they had never seen before. This was their first time exploring this new sight for them and they were enjoying what they were walking through.

Team Adabat was a foursome team with Scott the Lynx as their

leader. His team mates were his girlfriend Jessica the Cougar, Jessica's good friend Felix the Peacock and his brother Taran the Lynx. Scott and Jessica had been close friends since childhood and their friendship had blossomed into love as they got older. Despite Scott's temper problems and his recklessness, Jessica always remained loyal to him and Scott had slowly but surely begun to mature. After nearly being driven to murder due to the destruction of his village two years ago**, his personality had changed quite drastically and his recklessness and bad temper had mostly disappeared, much to Jessica's delight. Life had been quite peaceful for the team since their enemy Ravage Bloodfang hadn't been active lately. Had they known why that was though, they'd likelier have been more concerned about the wolf and would be trying to find him right about now. Such thoughts were not present as the team roamed through the canyon. They had come across it while on a walk earlier today and given they had never seen it before, Scott was all too happy to explore it. He loved to explore and he was enjoying himself on this hike.

With Felix and Taran further behind, Scott hoped onto a bunch of rocks and had a good look around at the view he was met with at the top. The pile of rocks reached up very high and Scott was met with a pretty impressive view from all around. Jessica climbed up after him, doing so with ease since felines like her were often good at climbing. She stood beside her boyfriend and shared the view that he was drinking in. They could see their local village, which had been rebuilt long since after Ravage had destroyed it, and could just make out tiny specks walking up and down the beach in the distance. They were people and Scott and Jessica imagined how much fun they were having on the beach, playing in the beautiful yellow sunshine that shone over the perfect, golden sands and the sparkling, crystal clear sea that lapped up at the shore. The two could even see Mount Adabat in the distance, silent and inactive at this current moment. It wasn't due to erupt again for a while now so the two didn't give the volcano any second thoughts. As they admired the view, the two felines held hands together.

"Oh Scott…our country truly is beautiful." sighed Jessica, "I know I say that a lot but…wow our country is beautiful."

"Indeed so and discovering this new canyon just adds to the beauty our country presents." said Scott brightly, "This view all around us is simply amazing! Don't you just feel lucky to live here?"

"I do Scotty, I really do." said Jessica warmly, "But I feel even luckier to live in this country with a wonderful boy like you."

"Oh Jessica, you're really too kind you are. Too kind for me even." chuckled Scott.

The two playfully nuzzled each other's faces and giggles, their nuzzle quickly becoming an embrace. They cuddled each other and rubbed noses, now ignoring the view around them in favour of each other's company.

"I could never be too kind for you Scotty-baby." purred Jessica, "You mean everything to me and I want to show how much I mean that."

"You do that very well babe." said a very flattered Scott, beaming delightedly at his girlfriend's love for him, "And I can easily tell you this. Meeting you as a kid was the best moment of my life. You have no idea how much I mean that."

"Oooh I have some idea handsome." chuckled Jessica teasingly, "You love me more than our own country right?"

"I love you more than life itself." replied Scott, "And the fact we've been at peace for over a year has just made life wonderful, because I'm with you, my brother and our friend and we don't ever have to worry about anything ever again."

"That's not entirely true honey, I'm kinda worried about Ravage to be honest." said Jessica, her expression becoming a little more anxious suddenly, "We haven't seen him since that whole incident with the lights in the sky. Heck, we haven't seen him since he used that Elemental Sword to try and destroy the country***! Where has he been since then? I keep feeling like he's going to attack any moment now…and we'll NEVER see it coming!"

"Sssh, please don't worry Jessica, everything's OK." said Scott kindly, fingering a lock of her beautiful, ginger hair and running his

hand gently down her back, "We'll be prepared if Ravage attacks. Or maybe we won't need to because he's incarcerated. I bet that's the case."

"You'd think Sonic would have told us Ravage was in jail or something." said Jessica, her concern not faltering in the slightest, "No, I'm still convinced he's gonna attack and that he'll try and kill us all…"

"Come on baby, please don't spoil our lovely day out." said Scott softly, "We're supposed to be having fun today, not worrying about Ravage."

"I'm sorry but it's hard to keep him off my mind." said Jessica sadly, "Please take that into consideration."

"I will." said Scott kindly, "We'll keep an eye out for that wolf but we're also going to enjoy exploring this canyon too. If we see Ravage, we'll have him."

"Thank you Scott, that makes me feel much better." said Jessica sweetly.

"Anything for the girl of my dreams." purred Scott seductively.

The two then proceeded to kiss each other. As they kissed and cuddled atop the rock pile, Taran and Felix looked up at them and smiled in awe. Taran put a hand over his heart.

"Aww…my little brother's so adorable with Jessica, he really is." he sighed.

"It makes my heart feel warm to see my darling friend with Scott." said Felix happily, "I couldn't possibly think of Jessica with anybody else. Scott is the perfect person for her to be romantically involved with."

"Glad to hear you say that Felix, makes me glad to have Scott as my brother." said Taran brightly, "Yes sir, I wouldn't have anybody else as my brother indeed."

"I'm sure Scott greatly appreciates your brotherly love for him."

replied Felix, "It's a pity that I myself have no family to love and nurture. I was an only child and my family, which were just my mother and father, were sadly killed during a lightening storm. I had no other relatives so I was on my own for much of my life. The day I met Scott and Jessica was the best day of my life since that event since with them…I'm no longer alone. You can imagine when they left their old village due to the bullying they received for their powers, I was quite saddened at their departure. It was a good thing that six years later, we reunited in the R.F.S. and now I hope to remain a part of this family forever.

"Family eh? In a way, we kinda are family aren't we?" said Taran happily, "Anyway, I'm glad we don't make you feel so lonely anymore Felix. You'll never be alone as long as you're with us."

"Indeed so my good friend." Felix beamed delightedly.

Then suddenly, a small rock fell off down a nearby ledge and rolled down into the canyon. Taran's head snapped into the direction of the falling rock and as he leapt up, he swore that he saw something move atop the ledge. The lynx got to his feet and he scanned the ledge as if hoping to see something.

"What is it?" asked Felix curiously.

"I have a sneaky feeling we're not alone…" mused Taran, "Stay there while I take a look around."

"Is it wise to venture solitarily without knowing what you're up against Taran?" asked Felix concernedly.

"Maybe not but I'll call you if I need you." said Taran, "I can count on you guys to give me a hand when I need it."

Taran then proceeded to run off in the direction he had seen something move. He climbed up the ledge and walked off in search for what he'd spotted, that is if he had indeed spotted something. The lynx was sure that he had seen something but at the same time, he wondered if he had really seen something or if it had just been his imagination. He was prepared to accept that thought if he couldn't find anything. As Taran searched for his mysterious

watcher, Scott and Jessica climbed down the rock pile and stood beside Felix.

"What's my big bro doing?" asked Scott curiously.

"He claims to have sighted something so he is trekking forward to confirm his suspicions of having sighted something." explained Felix.

"Well given how things have been pretty peaceful since Eggman's death, I'm sure he didn't see anything we should worry about." said Scott casually, "But it would have been wise if we all went together, you never know what you'll run into."

"I'm sure Taran will call us if he needs us." said Jessica, "But I do hope that he doesn't run into any trouble. I bet you'd be terrified to hear if Taran was in danger Scott."

"I would indeed." murmured Scott, "In fact, I don't care if Taran wants to go alone, I can't risk him getting into trouble. Let's go after him and make sure…"

His sentence was cut off by a blood-curdling scream that echoed all around the canyon. Scott's fur stood up on end as the scream's echoes died down into sinister whispers of warning. He knew that scream. It was Taran's! The lynx felt his heartbeat increasing rapidly as he pictured something terrible happening to his beloved brother. Jessica and Felix looked shaken to hear that scream and they dreaded to think what it was all about. A whole tense minute passed before one of them said anything.

"D-d-did y-you h-hear that?" whimpered Felix.

"Taran's run into trouble!" shrieked Scott, "Come on team, let's help him!"

The three Adabat Mobians ran towards the ledge that Taran had climbed up in search of the thing he'd supposedly spotted. Upon reaching the top, they ran over to a huge rock that protruded from the ground a few metres away from where they were. They were out of the canyon's long, narrow tunnels and up on the plains above.

There wasn't much around except for the rock they were running towards and Scott felt his blood run cold as he saw a trickle of blood seeping from behind it. Taran's or somebody else's? Scott came to a stop just metres in front of the rock and he commanded his team to stop. Now they had stopped, Scott tip-toed towards the rock, hoping he didn't attract any attention. Jessica and Felix followed him closely but kept as quiet as they possibly could. Now they were up to the rock, Scott nervously climbed up it, climbing as quietly as possible. His heart was racing. He dreaded to think what he was about to see on the other side of the rock. The sight of blood already had his head spinning with worry and the fact he was about to see what was on the other side of the rock made him feel more nervous. He reached the top of the rock…and let out a horrified shriek of terror. There on the other side of the rock was his arch-enemy Ravage Bloodfang. Jessica had worried about him moments ago and now he was here once again! But what had actually caused Scott to scream was NOT the sight of his arch-enemy. Ravage was leaning over something and he had his jaws around something. It was the throat of Taran the Lynx! Ravage had grabbed Taran and the two ended up having a brief struggle before Ravage finally killed him with a snap of his jaws. He had been about to mutilate the body even more before Scott's scream caught the wolf's attention and spared the dead Taran that horror. His head snapped upwards and he smiled wickedly at his nemesis. He licked his bloodstained lips delightedly. Scott still appeared to be frozen with fear, not realizing that Ravage was now looking up at him.

"Hello Scott…you're just in time for dinner." he purred, "And you're the lucky boy who's going to be my main course!"

He then proceeded to leap up at Scott and snap his jaws at him. The wolf nearly got him but Scott reacted just a fraction too quick so Ravage's jaws snapped at empty air. Scott considered himself lucky to have actually dodged that attack in time. He had been so shocked at what he'd just witnessed that he thought he'd never move again. And yet here he was, leaping out of the way and running for his life as Ravage came leaping after him. The wolf didn't get a chance to complete his leap though for as he sailed into the air, Jessica jumped up and slugged the wolf in the gut with an energy enhanced punch. Ravage's tongue stuck out and his eyes widened so much

he thought they were going to stick out with his tongue in the fashion of an old cartoon. He came down with a heavy crash onto his side and he curled up tensely, clutching his stomach furiously in pain. Jessica was surprised she'd managed to punch him that hard. Considering the team usually had a tough time fighting Ravage, she had to wonder how she managed to punch him that hard. She dismissed it as a lucky shot and turned her attention to Scott, who stopped running for his life and ran back towards Ravage. His eyes were streaming with tears and his face was a mixture of anger, horror and despair. The cougar took in the expression on his face and instantly assumed the worst.

"Scott? Is…is he…?" she stammered, finding it hard to keep herself composed.

"Dead…Ravage killed him! He killed my brother!" screamed Scott angrily, "That bastard of a wolf killed my brother! Behind that rock over there you'll find Taran dead on the ground with bite marks in his neck!"

The lynx then let out a rainfall of tears into his hands, letting out all the grief and horror he was experiencing. Jessica and Felix were both overwhelmed with horror to hear this sickening news. The knew Ravage was on the loose but they hadn't excepted him to make his return like that. What a wicked way to show up again! Jessica pulled Scott into a sympathetic hug and shed some tears for her distressed boyfriend.

"Oh Scott…oh Scott…" she sobbed, "That's terrible!"

"Our good friend Taran…is dead?!" wept Felix, wiping away the tears that trickled down his cheeks, "No…we've lost a valuable comrade…"

"We've lost more than that!" bellowed Scott, "We've lost my brother, the only family I had left! And that monster Ravage took him away from me! From us! I knew I should have killed him the moment I had him last year! I shouldn't have let you stop me Jessica! Because of you, my brother is dead!" he shouted directly into Jessica's face as if emphasizing the point he was making.

Jessica was horrified to hear Scott say that to her. He was blaming HER for the death of Taran?! The cougar was livid to hear this and she was not going to let Scott blame Taran's death on her. she broke up the hug and pointed angrily at Scott.

"Oh it's MY fault is it?!" growled Jessica, "Yeah right, I deliberately told you not to kill Ravage so he could live to kill Taran! Yeah, his death is TOTALLY my fault!" her voice dripped with sarcasm.

"Yes Jessica, it IS your fault!" retorted Scott, "You stopped me from killing Ravage and now this has happened!"

"You say that as if I KNEW that was going to happen you moron!" snapped Jessica, "How was I going to know this was going happen?! And besides, you're the one who wasn't bothered about Ravage! Had you shown some concern for our enemy then maybe we would have found him already and we could have prevented this from happening!"

"So you're saying it's MY fault Taran's dead?!" shouted Scott, "How dare you! Don't you dare blame Taran's death on me you dumb girl!"

"Well don't you dare blame it on ME either you foul-tempered little hot-head!" snarled Jessica.

"Can we save this argument for later my friends? We have a wolf to deal with!" shrieked Felix furiously.

Scott and Jessica stopped arguing long enough to see that Ravage was back on his feet and leaping towards them. The lynx and cougar screamed in terror as Ravage tackled them both down towards the ground and prepared to bite them on the necks. But before Ravage could kill his two most hated enemies, Felix whipped out two of his tail feathers, stiffened them into clubs, and walloped Ravage with them as vigorously as he could. The wolf was whisked up into the air by the attack and he landed down heavily with a crash onto his back. The wolf was back up onto his feet in no time, shrugging off the pain of the impact and he flashed his terrible teeth at what remained of Team Adabat.

"Alright then…I killed one of you already so it's fitting I kill the rest of

you!" growled Ravage, "Besides, I was ordered to do so by my master so prepare to be dinner, all three of you!"

Scott was surprised at the mere mention of the word "master" coming from Ravage. Since when did Ravage work for anybody? This made Scott feel very uncomfortable. If Ravage was working for somebody than it meant he had somebody to run crying to once they kicked his butt. Was his master as ferocious as he was? Scott hoped never to find out. The lynx summoned energy to his hands and he thundered towards Ravage, screaming at the top of his voice and drawing both fists back for a punch to the face. Ravage stampeded towards Scott, his cape billowing out behind him as he ran towards him. His jaws were streaming with saliva and his eyes were burning. He was desperate for Scott's flesh and blood and wanted badly to eat him. Once he'd eaten him, he'd eat Jessica and Felix and then finish off with Taran's corpse. He'd save his next mealtime for next time he and Bunnie met. Ravage leaped into the air towards Scott, a very big mistake that he soon realized he made for Scott didn't leap up after him. He skidded to a halt, waited for Ravage to be in range and then socked him in the face with both energy powered fists. Ravage wasn't really sure what had hit him as he came crashing down onto his back from the power of Scott's punch. Before the wolf could even get back up onto his feet, Scott pinned him down and began whaling on him as hard as he could, punching him in the jaws and cheeks as viciously as he could, the energy around his hands glowing a brilliant green as he punched him.

"THIS. IS. FOR. TARAN!" Scott roared angrily, his eyes still streaming with angry tears as he began to unleash all hell on his enemy.

The caped canine was surprised at how hard Scott was punching him and how viciously he was whaling on him. Truly he'd struck a nerve in the lynx with the killing of Taran. Not that it mattered. Ravage eventually managed to summon the strength he needed to grab Scott's hands and stop his relentless hammering on him. The wolf shoved the lynx off of himself and Ravage picked himself up. Ravage then began to whale on Scott in return, striking him in as many places as possible. Scott cried out in pain as Ravage punched

him in the face, then in the shoulders, then in the stomach and then in the chest, each punch as accurate and as callous as he could possibly throw them. Ravage threw his punches so hard and so fast that Scott didn't have the strength, nor the speed to block his punches. Ravage let out a terrifying cackle of delight as he drew his leg back and kicked Scott in the chest as hard as he possibly could, hitting him directly in the sternum. The teenage lynx let out a winded gasp as he was thrown backwards by the kick and he landed down heavily onto his back.

As he tried to get his breath back, Jessica took over for him. Ravage ran towards her, claws bared and teeth dripping with saliva as he prepared to make a meal out of her. Jessica could see that running towards Ravage would likely be a foolish move to make so the cougar decided to try a more pragmatic tactic to get the drop on Ravage. She threw herself onto her side and skidded straight through between Ravage's legs, leaving the wolf to run straight over her. Jessica leapt up onto her feet and fired an energy spear into Ravage's back. The spear struck Ravage and made the evil cannibal bellow in pain. The pain distracted him long enough for Jessica to run up towards Ravage and slug him as hard as she could in the back. If she punched him any harder, she could have broken his back. Ravage himself felt like his back was broken even though it was still intact. Ravage fell onto his knees, clutching his back in anguish and he clenched his teeth as if the motion would make the pain go away. Jessica took advantage of this by bashing Ravage callously on his head with both fists clenched together. The wolf let out a terrible yelp as he was stricken but he wasn't spared a moment to let the pain settle as Jessica grabbed his cape and hauled him onto his feet. She turned Ravage around and let him have it directly in the mouth with a terrific, energy-enhanced punch that actually cracked the nose section of his skull mask, broke off the teeth on his mask and broke some of his actual front teeth. The cougar seemed just as rage-filled as Scott was but that was probably more because she was still angry at Scott for blaming Taran's death on her and she was now taking it out on Ravage. The wolf fell down onto his back, clutching his aching mouth hard as he tried to ease the pain. Jessica ran towards him and prepared to let him have another punch but Ravage rolled out of the way, leaving Jessica to punch at empty ground and kicked up rocks and gravel.

Ravage socked Jessica in the face with his right fist, hitting her directly in the cheek. The punch sent Jessica's head spinning, so much so that she didn't even see Ravage coming as he tripped her up with a kick to her legs. Jessica came down with a heavy thud and before she could get up, Ravage put his hands on her shoulders and pinned her down. Licking his lips, Ravage prepared to finish off the bikini clad cougar with a swift snap of his powerful jaws. Another snap of the jaws on another neck, something Ravage would savour. But just as Ravage prepared to bite Jessica, the ginger-haired feline swung her head forwards and slammed it against his lower jaws just on the flat of his teeth and his lower lip. The pain that flowed through Ravage's mouth was agonizing. The grey-furred Mobian let out a terrible screech of pain as blood began trickling out of his gums. Jessica was now able to push Ravage off of herself and get back to her feet. Her forehead was trickling with blood but only a little. She rubbed it tenderly to ease the stinging pain that was flaring in it. She'd scratched her forehead a bit on Ravage's teeth in the head butt but her head did far more damage to Ravage's jaw than it did to her. While Ravage writhed in agony, Scott ran over to his girlfriend, concern all over his face.

"Jessica, you alright?" he asked, looking at the cougar's forehead as she took her hand away for a moment.

"It's just a scratch, I'm fine." murmured Jessica, "Come on, let's take Ravage down while we still can."

Scott was all too happy to concur with his girlfriend's suggestion. They both held hands and began to build up a lot of energy between them. This wasn't something they did very often but when they did it, they became a very formidable force to be reckoned with. They closed their eyes, held their hands tightly and thought of all the energy bestowed upon them by the legendary Sceptre of Fates coursing through their bloodstream. They thought of their energies coalescing together to form a bigger attack to defeat Ravage. The evil wolf picked himself up, his jaw still hurting, and he tried to stop the two before they were ready. But Felix flew in and pecked him rapidly on the head like a woodpecker through wood. Ravage clawed at Felix but he missed the peacock as he flew backwards to dodge his attack. Felix had a score of his own to settle with Ravage.

He'd once forced the peacock to do his evil bidding and carry out his evil plan to destroy Team Adabat's village. Felix had been powerless to stop him back then and the peacock longed to make Ravage pay for it. Felix clubbed Ravage on the head as hard as he could, the clubs giving Ravage a headache but not really knocking him out. Ravage's skull mask did provide some protection for his head and his own skull was quite thick. Knocking him out was not an easy task. Ravage reached out and grabbed Felix's clubs before he could club him again. He snatched the clubs out of Felix's hands and he grabbed the peacock by his neck. Felix kicked at him, desperate to break free of Ravage's grasp before the skull-masked canine could hurt him. But Ravage took the blows and prepared to snap Felix's neck. One quick snap and it would be over for the peacock and he'd join Taran in the afterlife. But Felix managed to break free by pecking Ravage in the nose, the resulting peck causing Ravage to let go of him and clutch his nose in pain. Felix flew up out of Ravage's reach so the wolf wouldn't be able to grab him. Ravage leapt up, trying to grab Felix but failing to do so. He couldn't leap high enough to catch the peacock. Then it happened. Scott and Jessica, the two glowing brightly and surrounded by a green aura, had finished building up their ultimate attack and they unleashed it on Ravage. The two threw their arms forward and sent a wave of energy sweeping towards Ravage. The wave was enormous and as it hit Ravage, it took him off his feet and sent him hurling a great distance across the terrain. It was like being hit by a plane speeding down the runway. Ravage let out a terrific cry as he was hit and he spiralled through the air several times before eventually crashing down onto the ground about five yards away from his enemies. The attack had left Ravage feeling weak, beaten and unable to carry on any longer. Gasping for breath, he forced himself onto his hands and knees as Scott, Jessica and Felix all ran towards him. Ravage wanted to complete his mission but at the same time, he knew that he couldn't carry on fighting. Much too weak, he decided to accept defeat and retreat back to *The Nefarious* . On the bright side, at least he'd killed ONE member of Team Adabat. Taking out the warp ring donated to him by Finitevus so he could return, Ravage opened up a portal back to *The Nefarious* and he was quick to climb through it. He strained as he did so but he managed it. The warp ring closed just as Scott threw an energy spear at him. The spear ended up cutting through the air the warp ring had previously occupied and it

carried on until it hit a rock in the distance. With Ravage evading their grasp once again, Scott punched the ground angrily and roared up to the heavens.

"NNNNNNNNOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" he raved, "HE GOT AWAY AGAIN! GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

He punched the ground several more times before stopping and putting his hands over his eyes. He began to weep again, sobbing uncontrollably into his hands. Jessica knelt down beside Scott, feeling pity for her beloved lynx and wishing that she could bring Taran back alive so Scott wouldn't be crying anymore. But she knew that wasn't going to happen. The best she could do was try and make Scott feel better. She put a hand on his back softly.

"Oh Scott…I'm so sorry that this happened…" she said sadly, "You're right, Taran's death IS my fault…I shouldn't have stopped you. I should have let you kill him when you had him…it's wrong to kill but it would have prevented this. I'm so, so sorry…"

"No Jessica…" murmured Scott, wiping away his tears, "YOU were right. I should have conducted a search for Ravage, I should have searched for him and apprehended him. We could have locked him up and prevented my brother's needless death! But my laid back attitude and adoration for the peaceful times blinded me…I didn't do what should have been done…now I'll never see my brother again! His death is all MY fault and I'll never, EVER forgive myself!"

He looked at Jessica with pain and anguish in his tear-soaked eyes.

"Oh Jessica…what kind of Royal Fighter am I?!" wailed Scott, "I'm supposed to lead this team…and all I did was cause the death of my brother! I don't deserve to be in this team! The R.F.S. deserves better than me…"

"No Scott, please don't say that!" cried Jessica, "Without you on the team, my heart would break, it really would! You're not a terrible Royal Fighter at all! Neither of us could have prepared for Ravage's return so this was something we couldn't have predicted. Plus, do you think Taran would want you feeling this way about yourself?"

"No…no he wouldn't." Scott said with wobbly lips and weeping eyes.

"There you go then." said Jessica warmly, "So honour Taran's death by doing what we signed up for, to defeat evil and bring peace to Mobius. Taran would want that."

Scott took a moment to think about this before giving his reply.

"Yes…he would." he said, wiping his eyes dry again, "I'm sorry I put myself down Jessica…I really am. And I'm also sorry about saying his death was your fault. It never was and I'm ashamed I ever said that."

"Scott, you're forgiven my love." said Jessica softly, "People go through many emotional things when they lose someone close to them. Your behaviour wasn't uncalled for or anything, it's alright that you were bad-tempered and angry at everybody. I don't put you down at all for your behaviour."

"Thanks babe, you're the best." said Scott, hugging Jessica appreciatively.

Jessica hugged him back, glad to see that her boyfriend was beginning to feel better now. But their tender moment was interrupted by the sound of an approaching ship. The two felines looked up and saw that none other than the Sky Patrol was coming towards them. The ship loomed above the canyon before touching down onto the ground below. The docking ramp opened up and down it zoomed Sonic the Hedgehog. He zipped over to Team Adabat excitedly, pleased to see the three of them again after such a long time. Scott, Jessica and Felix greeted the blue hedgehog enthusiastically.

"SONIC!" they cried.

"Hey kids, how's it going?" asked Sonic brightly.

"Not too well…" muttered Scott bitterly.

"We bring you dark news famed hero of the world." said Felix sadly, "Ravage Bloodfang has savagely slaughtered our dear comrade Taran the Lynx. There is only the three of us left now."

"And Ravage got away before we could arrest him for this crime." sighed Jessica, "So it's a pretty sad time for us I'm afraid…"

Sonic's heart sank. Ravage had killed Taran the Lynx, thus Team Adabat only had three members now and the death had happened before they even got to them. Finitevus's agent must have stricken again! The agent must have told the mad doctor that he was hoping to pick up the other R.F.S. teams and recruit them in their battle with the Dark Armada! But then Sonic thought something else. Maybe the agent had nothing to do with it this time, maybe it had been a coincidence that Finitevus sent out Ravage to attack Team Adabat as he was coming to pick them up.

"Oh man…that's horrible!" cried Sonic, "So sorry we weren't quick enough to reach you before that happened guys."

"It's OK Sonic, you didn't have a chance of getting here in time." said Scott sadly, "Although one thing puzzles me. Ravage mentioned having a "master" when he thought us. What did he mean by that? Did his master send him here to kill us?"

"He probably did." murmured Sonic, "Ravage is working with Dr. Finitevus and is part of an army of villains Finitevus is in charge of called "The Dark Armada". We're in combat with the armada right now and we can tell you all the members. The armada's giving us a tough time so that's why we need you and the other teams to help us defeat the armada."

"Well after Ravage just killed my brother, count me in!" Scott offered without hesitating, "I'll make that fiend in wolf's clothing pay for killing Taran!"

"We all will." said Jessica, "Consider us part of your fight now Sonic."

"Very good." said Sonic brightly, "Quick, onto the Sky Patrol. We're picking up Team Megapolis next."

Team Adabat didn't wait to be asked twice. They followed Sonic back to the Sky Patrol and the moment they were onboard, Miranda set the ship to take off. As the Sky Patrol climbed up into the sky,

Sonic began to worry over what would happen next. Ravage had been sent to kill Adabat, obviously by Finitevus. Did Finitevus do this to make sure they couldn't recruit the others? If so then how did Finitevus get the idea to do that? He was focused on the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters, not the other teams. Did his agent give him the idea? If so then the agent had clearly stricken again and Sonic would have to hope the Sky Patrol would reach the other teams in time…before anybody else in the armada could attack them…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 24: Terror of the Cyber Husky

****See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 9: New Recruits***

***** Check out the DeviantArt exclusive chapter *The Sword of Elemental Power***

******See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 9: New Recruits***

The race is on now! Will Sonic and friends reach the other Royal Fighters in time? Find out next time in* Operation: Nekronopolis *...

Dark Armada Part 7: Operation Megapolis

Story 207: Operation: Megapolis

The Dark Armada Chapter 7 of 25

"Honestly Rouge, did you have to drag me along for this?" sighed Shadow the Hedgehog, the tone of annoyance in his voice as evident as the annoyed scowl on his face.

"Oh hush up and get loading these nuggets into the cart." snapped Rouge the Bat, handing Shadow a huge golden nugget, "These little babies will do fine in my treasure collection, they really will."

"I do wish I could understand your weird obsession for shiny things, jewels and treasures." muttered Shadow, rolling his eyes, "I do not see the value in such worthless objects."

"Maybe you would if you would actually realize they're more worth than you think." snorted Rouge.

Shadow sighed loudly but he said nothing more as he carried the golden nugget over to the hover cart that stood patiently to the side, waiting to be loaded. Ever since Eggman's death, Shadow had been trying to find a new purpose in life since his purpose had been to protect Mobius from danger, a purpose he discovered after defeating his "creator" Black Doom in a battle and embracing his life on Mobius. With Eggman dead, Shadow supposed he didn't really have much to protect Mobius from although he had heard from the Royal Fighters in the previous months gone by that Finitevus was still at large and the Chaos Emeralds were in his possession. This didn't make Shadow feel very comfortable at all. He knew how dangerous Finitevus was. He had not only managed to capture him but he'd also come close to draining him dry of all energy, normal energy and Chaos Energy. Shadow wanted to find Finitevus and get back the Chaos Emeralds but sadly, his attempts had been futile. Even Rouge hadn't been able to find Finitevus and yet the bat was very good at finding jewels and treasures, something Shadow didn't see much point in finding. While he still had it on his mind to find

Finitevus and get back the emeralds, Shadow decided to allow himself to do what Rouge wanted to do for a change. He did very much like Rouge and was OK with doing what she wanted every now and then. It didn't mean he enjoyed it though. Shadow and Rouge were in Megapolis, most specifically the Golden Caverns. The Golden Caverns hadn't seen much activity since Team Diamond had attempted to raid it and now Rouge was here in the caverns, mining up golden nuggets to keep for herself and maybe use to buy more valuable treasures should she come across any. The bat was rather surprised to see that there was another hover cart already in the cavern. It had been used by Roxy before she ended up fleeing for her life when Team Diamond discovered she was still alive*. It had been left there for an entire year and it was already full of nuggets so Rouge took out the hover-cart and put it aside while she went into the caverns to fill the cart she had brought herself with more golden nuggets. How fortuitous for the jewel-thief indeed. Shadow loaded the cart with golden nuggets as Rouge went down into the caverns again to get some more.

"This is a waste of time..." he moaned to himself, "We should be finding that monster Finitevus and getting back the Chaos Emeralds, not roaming around a cave and digging up golden nuggets! Still, as long as Rouge is happy..."

He paused as he let that line sink into his head. He was never one to care much about his emotions or even question them but he did have to think about his thoughts on Rouge the Bat. He knew Rouge more than any other Mobian on Mobius mainly due to spending the most amount of time with her and also because she had been the first ever Mobian he met. Rouge had woken him from his capsule when Black Doom had sent him to Mobius. Rouge in a way was probably his best friend, that is if he even considered her a friend. There were things Shadow didn't always like about Rouge but at the same time as far as Mobians went, she was the one he felt the most comfortable with and also the one he could get on with the best. Yes...Rouge was a friend. Rouge was somebody he could happily consider a friend. But maybe she was more than a friend. Shadow pondered over those thoughts as he loaded the nuggets into the cart. Rouge came out with some more in her arms and she piled them into the cart after Shadow had put away his load.

"Man there's a lot of these babies in the cavern. I guess that's why they're called the "Golden Caverns"." snickered Rouge.

"Yes, maybe." murmured Shadow, "One has to wonder who was here before us since they seem to be already unearthed and a hover-cart full of these nuggets was already there."

"I bet Team Diamond was here." muttered Rouge bitterly, "They love to hunt treasures too."

"Team Diamond...who are they again?" asked Shadow curiously.

"A team of scoundrels working for the disbanded organization H.U.N.T." explained Rouge, "I used to be on their team...until I found out they killed my dad." she added, her face dropping into a scowl.

"I bet you were disgusted to hear that." muttered Shadow, feeling sorry for his friend, "Why did they kill your dad?"

"He owned a jewel shop and they robbed it." replied Rouge, "They killed dad so he couldn't stop them no doubt. They got arrested after the incident with the Key of Opulence but much to dismay, they broke out and I haven't heard anything suggesting they've been arrested again. It makes me mad to think that those jokers are still on the loose..."

"Well Rouge if it pleases you, I will happily help you find them and bring them to justice." offered Shadow kindly, something he wasn't renowned for doing very often, "No criminal should be allowed to walk free, especially after killing your dad and robbing your shop."

"You bet." said Rouge, "So I guess you can see why I'm such a jewel lover. I grew up in a jewel shop and was surrounded by jewels all my life. Plus the jewels I collect...make me think of my times with my dad and how wonderful they were."

"I see." said Shadow, "Nice to see that what you hunt for has a value to you in more ways than one. I'm sure your father would be quite happy to see that you still carry his love for jewels and treasures."

Rouge beamed. She was sure her late father, Roger the Bat, would appreciate her life as it was now. He may not approve of the stealing

though but the treasure hunting and the collecting would make him happy.

"Thanks." said Rouge appreciatively, "It means a lot, especially coming from you." she added teasingly.

Shadow just smirked back as if understanding the joke in the way Rouge delivered that line.

"I can have my softer moments." Shadow said with a slight chuckle added to his words.

Rogue was about to reply until suddenly, something started beeping. Shadow looked at his wrist and noticed that the communicator he'd been given to stay in touch with the Royal Fighters was beeping. It had been a year since they'd ever needed to contact him so he imagined something urgent was going on. He answered it quickly.

"Hello? This is Shadow the Hedgehog." he answered.

"Hey Shadow, good to hear your deep, scary voice again!" chuckled Sonic, "How are ya this fine day?"

"Helping Rouge with some treasure hunting." murmured Shadow, his voice suggesting he wasn't enjoying the activity.

"Well can you spare a moment?" asked Sonic, "We kinda need you and Rouge at the moment. You see, Dr. Finitevus is back and he has an army of villains at his side. We need all the Royal Fighters we can get in order to have a chance of matching him so we'd appreciate it if you can join us in our battle."

Shadow's face turned into a frown upon hearing Finitevus's name and he didn't like what he'd been hearing. Finitevus was back and he had an army of villains at his side? This couldn't be good at all, especially if the Royal Fighters needed all the teams they had in order to combat them. Given how Shadow had been looking for Finitevus for a while now, he was all too happy to hop in and help Sonic and friends defeat the evil albino echidna. He just wondered who was part of this so-called "army of villains" Finitevus had on his side. He'd find out soon enough since he was going to join the Royal

Fighters in their battle against the Dark Armada.

"Sonic, consider us part of the battle." said Shadow, "I'm all too happy to join in this fight against the Dark Armada. My purpose is to defend my home planet, so I will do just that."

"Good to hear Shadow!" cried Sonic excitedly on the other side of the communicator, "We're on our way to Megapolis right now, where are you and Rouge currently?"

"Megapolis." replied Shadow, "By the Golden Caverns to be precise."

"Well that's fortuitous." replied Sonic, "Hey, since you two are in Megapolis now, think you could pass my message onto Dark Cat and Kiara?"

"They're Royal Fighters too I believe." mused Shadow, "Where might me and Rouge find them?"

"Either in the City of Megapolis itself or they might be out camping." explained Sonic, "I'm sure you'll find them. And you'll have to be fast. Because Finitevus sent one of his goons after Team Adabat as we came to pick them up…and we fear the other teams might be targeted."

Shadow didn't like the sound of that. Finitevus had targeted Team Adabat as Sonic came to pick them up? Seems that the mad doctor doesn't want anymore Royal Fighters joining Sonic's side. Shadow would see to it that Dark and Kiara were found and the message given to them before they could be targeted.

"Understood. Estimated arrival time?" asked Shadow.

"According to the Sky Patrol's thingy on the control panel…about half an hour." explained Sonic, "Try and keep Dark and Kiara safe for that long. That is, if they need to be kept safe."

"Got it, over and out." Shadow replied, switching off his communicator.

Rouge had heard the entire conversation in disbelief and she would

only stare at Shadow in a face that had an emotion she didn't often express…horror. If Sonic and friends were calling for help in a fight against Dr. Finitevus and an army of villains then the situation couldn't possibly be good at all. She even dreaded to think who were the villains that Finitevus had recruited. If Team Diamond were among them then Rouge would make them wish they weren't. She looked at Shadow in concern.

"Well Shadow…it looks like we're gonna be in another battle to save the world." mused Rouge, "And to think that with Eggman's death I expected things to be pretty peaceful from now on."

"Guess that was too much to ask for although with Finitevus still on the loose, we should have expected him to make a come back." muttered Shadow, "Come on Rouge, we've gotta find Dark and Kiara and warn them of the Dark Armada…before the armada gets them."

"Looks like I'll have to leave these behind." sighed Rouge, pointing at the carts full of nuggets, "Oh well, the world's more important than treasures. Let's go Shadow."

With that said, the femme fetale took to the skies with a swoop of her wings and Shadow raced off on his hover shoes, skating quickly across the terrain as they left the Golden Caverns behind and headed off to find Dark and Kiara. Shadow hoped that the armada hadn't already gotten to them, otherwise Sonic would have two Royal Fighters less to recruit…

Meanwhile on *The Nefarious* , Mecha Tails was working quietly in the ship's laboratory, a room that Finitevus had made absolutely certain that the ship had otherwise he wouldn't have anywhere to make his Synthetic Chaos Energy formula.

The ship itself was nearly fully repaired from the damages done to it by Bunnie Rabbot (now Bunnie Rabboh due to recent events). In a few hours time, *The Nefarious* would be back in the sky and Finitevus wouldn't have to keep it hidden in the hangar anymore. And due to his drone sabotaging the satellites and disabling the heat

vision sensors, the ship would remain invisible once the cloaking device was activated. Never again would the Royal Fighters find it unless Finitevus wanted them to.

Mecha Tails's mind wasn't about *The Nefarious* taking flight again. He was looking at a screen and playing around with schematics and figures. Before the Synthetic Chaos Energy could be made, Finitevus demanded that a suitable formula be created before they could even think about making it a reality. Without a suitable formula, the Synthetic Chaos Energy could produce catastrophic results. They so far had honey, snow, ice and bits of gold and silver found in the ice to use to make the energy with. After all, Chaos Energy could be made with just about anything as long as it had a dose of Chaos Energy mixed in with it. Once Chaos Energy is added, the materials would meld together into the Chaos Energy and become a synthetic dose of raw power that only a scientist like Finitevus could possibly duplicate thanks to his expert knowledge on Chaos Energy. Tails had studied a fair bit on Chaos Energy himself and thanks to Finitevus's roboticization and feeding him some information he had on Chaos Energy, Mecha Tails was now just as much an expert as Finitevus was. Mecha Tails changed around a few figures on the screen before he took his hands away and put a clawed finger to his metallic muzzle in thought.

"Hmm…this won't work…" he murmured to himself.

He was taken out of his thoughts as the door opened up and in walked Dr. Finitevus, looking quite pleased with himself as he strode into the lab with his cape billowing out behind him.

"And how's my little scientist this fine morning?" he asked in an unusually cheerful tone.

"Master, we have a problem." said Mecha Tails bluntly, ignoring his master's question.

Dr. Finitevus raised an eyebrow of concern at Mecha Tails's rather blunt but serious reply.

"A problem?" he asked curiously, "Define this "problem" Mecha Tails."

"The Synthetic Chaos Energy is a promising idea that will indeed make the Dark Armada extremely powerful, and even give you the power of Enerjak master." explained Mecha Tails, "The problem is, reviewing your schematics and analysing your figures and algorithms…the formula you currently have is flawed."

Finitevus almost looked offended to hear Mecha Tails daring to say that his precious formula was flawed. He had been painstakingly designing it himself and was sure that Mecha Tails's review of the formula would come out positive and they could begin making it and yet his mechanical sidekick dared to tell him of all people it was flawed?! Finitevus frowned at Mecha Tails but he just folded his arms and said:

"Explain."

Mecha Tails didn't seem to be uncomfortable with the fact he was telling his master why his precious formula was flawed. He explained in his monotone voice without once pausing:

"A healthy dose of Dark Chaos Energy from you mixed into the materials we currently possess is indeed a fundamental part of the formula…but the problem is that there needs to be more than just Dark Chaos Energy. You see, the Synthetic Chaos Energy formula needs a balance of positive Chaos Energy as well as Dark Chaos Energy. Too much dark and some monstrous results could ensue and I do not think you wish to take such a risk. The positive Chaos Energy will give you the control you need over the monstrous side of the formula but we currently do not possess any positive Chaos Energy."

"What about the Chaos Emeralds and Master Emerald?" asked Finitevus curiously.

"They're corrupted after a year in your care." explained Mecha Tails, "Their energy is a compulsory need for the formula but the negative energies from your corruption of the emeralds will fill the formula with too much Dark Chaos Energy for even you to control."

"I see. Will the materials we currently have weigh out the positives and negatives of Chaos Energy to make the formula stable but still

powerful?" asked Finitevus hopefully.

"Negative master, it's not enough." explained Mecha Tails, "Snow and ice would become negative Chaos Energy due to the kind of weather that creates it. The honey is the ONLY thing that would become positive Chaos Energy that we currently have, the gold and silver may possibly do so too."

"So we need more materials to balance the positive energy of Chaos to make the formula more stable…" mused Finitevus, "Yes… it's fortuitous that I sent Team Diamond to raid the Pagoda of Prosperity in Chun-Nan then. Princess Matilda's riches will definitely be a step in the right direction."

"Affirmative, but we'd still need much more positive items to make more positive Chaos Energy." droned Mecha Tails, looking at the schematics once again, "Much, MUCH more…"

Dr. Finitevus nodded grimly, disappointed at the fact his formula was flawed but pleased that Mecha Tails had the solution to the problem. Hopefully this analysis would help Finitevus create the perfect formula for his Synthetic Chaos Energy. Then he could make his duplicate Chaos Emeralds, fill them with the energy and then use them to become Enerjak. Once he was Enerjak, the world would be his and nobody would stop him…

Meanwhile, Dark Cat the Leo Lynx was once again giving his beloved girlfriend Kiara the Cheetah a training session in Megapolis. They were out in the sight that the Megapolis Royal Fighters often used as a camping site whenever they had to camp out for their missions. They considered it a good training arena and with permission from Thomas Tiger, they had been allowed to come out to the site and train. It was just the two of them out in the plains right now, no soldiers, no Thomas Tiger or even any tents for that matter. Dark liked it this way, it meant he and Kiara had plenty of room for their match and they wouldn't get distracted by any surroundings as they fought. Since Eggman had died, Dark and Kiara had had plenty of time to develop their relationship further and also train up for any possible enemies that could attack Megapolis. Eggman maybe dead

but it didn't mean that there wouldn't be any new enemies to fight. The two felines were just relieved that they had even managed to go an entire year without any new threats. So making the most of their peace and tranquillity, they were training with swords once again. Dark had his trademark arm blades deployed and Kiara had her broadsword ready. She had come to enjoy wielding a sword in battle and the training matches with Dark made her enjoy wielding a sword even more. Dark stood before Kiara with his blades held defensively in front of himself. Kiara held her sword ready and bent down in a battle-ready stance.

"Beware Dark Cat…you're about to face your worst enemy…me, Kiara the Cheetah!" Kiara hissed in a humorous manner at her boyfriend.

"It appears so Kiara…do you think you can beat me?" sneered Dark teasingly, "We shall find out Kiara…ready?"

"Whenever you are hon." purred Kiara.

Dark smiled, pleased to hear this. He then threw his arms to the side and he ran towards Kiara as fast as he could. Kiara saw this coming so she stepped out of his way and stuck her leg out, causing Dark to trip over and fall onto his face. She chuckled as Dark groaned in pain and got up onto his knees, rubbing his nose.

"Didn't you once tell me that charging towards the enemy like that was a foolish move?" laughed Kiara, sticking her tongue out teasingly at Dark.

"I expected you to do the same thing!" protested Dark.

"Well you also told me to "be unpredictable" so I did just that, I did what you DIDN'T expect me to do." sneered Kiara, "I do hope you won't be humiliated at the fact you got beaten by a girl."

"I don't believe in that kind of stuff babe." said Dark as he got back up onto his feet, "I've been beaten by girls before so you're not the first to kick my butt. And besides, this match is just beginning."

He deployed his arm blades yet again and he ran towards Kiara, this

time on the alert for her moving out of the way. But Kiara didn't do this, knowing full well that using an unpredictable tactic more than once stopped it being unpredictable. She instead charged into action and clashed swords with Dark. Dark had been unprepared for this so he had to react quickly to block the attack. That scared Kiara a little. The cheetah knew that she could have hurt Dark had he not been fast enough so she kept it in mind to be more careful. This was a training match, not a fight to the death. Kiara raised her sword and swung at Dark, much slower this time so Dark could react quick enough to block her. Dark blocked her attack with his right blade, a loud clanging noise ringing in his ears as the metal blades clashed. Dark scraped his blade across Kiara's sending sparks flying and pushing Kiara a little off balance. The cheetah thought hard to keep her balance but Dark lashed out with his foot and kicked her in the gut. The blonde-haired cheetah doubled over, coughing loudly and fighting to get some air back into her lungs. She always had to wonder where Dark got his fighting skills from, he was awfully powerful and skilled. He wasn't an average Mobian definitely, martial-artist perhaps? She had asked Dark many times on where he got his skills from but the leo-lynx wouldn't say, clearly disappointed with where he got them from. His originating from Chun-Nan gave her some idea though, he had to be a martial artist. Kiara snapped out of her thoughts as Dark ran towards her and swung his blades at her. Kiara reacted just in time, holding her sword ahead of her diagonally to block his attacks.

"Whew, your reflexes are sharp." said Dark approvingly, "I thought you wouldn't block that in time."

"Guess I'm faster than you think." said Kiara with a smirk, "I AM a cheetah remember?"

"Point taken." laughed Dark, pushing on Kiara's sword and trying to force her down onto her knees.

But all his training with Kiara in the past had made the purple-eyed cheetah quite strong. Stronger than she had been before. Kiara held her own as Dark tried to push her down, the leo-lynx straining furiously with effort but getting nowhere. Kiara then used another unpredictable tactic. While Dark was focused so much on his arms, he wasn't paying any attention to his legs. Kiara took advantage of

this and she kicked Dark in the shin. Dark's right leg went out underneath him and he fell down onto one knee. He stood back up but Kiara then wrapped her tail around his other ankle and yanked on it, tripping him up and bringing him down onto his back. Kiara then pinned him down with her foot placed firmly on his chest and she pointed the sword at his face. Dark stared at the blade, gulping and thinking desperately for a way to get out of this situation. Kiara held the blade even closer, the tip lightly touching the fur between Dark's eyes.

"I think I win this one cute stuff." sneered Kiara "I doubt you'll get out of this one."

"That's what you think baby." retorted Dark.

He then proceeded to wrap his tail around Kiara's ankle and pull her leg forwards, causing the cheetah to fall over backwards with a heavy thump onto her back. Kiara let out a terrible cry of pain and she clutched the back of her head as it began to throb immensely. Dark got up onto his feet and gasped at what had happened. He'd caused Kiara to bang her head on the ground extremely hard and the leo-lynx worried if he'd caused Kiara to bang it too hard. She was still conscious luckily enough but Kiara did seem to be wincing tensely and rubbing her head very vigorously. Kiara sat up and Dark knelt down beside the cheetah, quick to inspect her head for any damage. She had a slight cut in the back of her head but her beautiful, brilliant blonde hair obscured it so it wasn't that easily seen. Kiara however shot a nasty glare at Dark.

"THAT HURT JACKASS!" she shouted angrily, "What are you trying to do?! Crack my bleeding head open?!"

"Oh god Kiara, I'm sorry, I really am!" cried Dark frantically, "I'm really sorry! I didn't mean for that to happen!"

"Ffffs…ugh…it's alright Dark. I'm sorry I yelled." said Kiara as she rubbed her head better, her expression becoming much softer as she realized that her shouting was a little uncalled for, "Accidents happen, I know that. I shouldn't have got angry about it."

"It's OK Kiara, a lot of people get made when they get hurt. I used to

do that a lot when…"

Dark suddenly paused as something began to creep into his head, something unpleasant. He quickly shook the thought out of his head and continued.

"…never mind. Are you alright?" he asked.

"I'm getting there, the pain's already going." murmured Kiara as she got back up onto her feet, "I will say though Dark, you really don't seem keen on talking about your past do you?"

"There's a reason for that babe." said Dark grimly, standing up with Kiara, "And it's because it's something I want to forget. All I want to think about is my wonderful life with you and the R.F.S., nothing more. I do hope my refusal to talk about my past doesn't irk you."

"Well it does get a little annoying and I do kinda wish you'd tell me about your life in Chun-Nan before you came to us but hey, I won't make you talk about it if you don't want to." said Kiara kindly, putting a hand on Dark's shoulder tenderly, "I'll never make you talk about something you don't want to."

"That's nice of you." said Dark happily, "No wonder I love you so much Kiara."

"Thanks handsome." said Kiara sweetly, "Now shall we continue the training match?"

"Not before I settle some scores with you brats!" snarled a rough, gruff voice that made Dark and Kiara's faces go pale with shock.

The two felines turned around and saw possibly one of the most shocking sites they could ever see in their lives. There standing before them looking proud and mighty as ever was their enemy Raphael the Cyber-Husky. They remembered him all too well. He had kidnapped them and tried to make them into cyborgs against their will**. He'd come very close too but Kiara had managed to save herself and Dark just in time. Their fight with Raphael after escaping had resulted in the yellow-furred cyborg losing his hands and his camp and had caused him to flee through a portal before anymore

damage could be done. Dark and Kiara had wondered where Raphael had been since last year but now they didn't have to wonder anymore for he was standing right there before them. He wasn't alone though, he had a group of ninja lynxes behind him and all wielding weapons of various shapes and sizes. This was the Raiju Clan, a clan of lynxes who seek nothing more than conquest and dominance. Their leader, the Bride of the Conquering Storm, had led them to victory last year, conquering Chun-Nan and imprisoning the emperor and Princess Matilda's late mentor Master Kai Zen. She wasn't leading the clan this time for she was in Chun-Nan with Zira the Ruthless and Team Diamond. Instead, her second in command and right-hand man Dàfeng Rai. He stood beside Raphael, sneering at Dark like he was some playground bully waiting to pick on his first victim. Dark stared in horror at the Raiju Clan, completely ignoring Raphael.

"You!" he cried out in shock.

"Hello traitor." said Rai, smirking wickedly and folding his arms, "Small world isn't it?"

"Too small Dàfeng Rai…" snarled Dark angrily, "So where's your boss then? Is she too chicken to face me herself?!"

"I'll thank you for NOT insulting our honoured matron scumbag." snarled Rai, "Conquering Storm is otherwise engaged so she's left me in charge of the clan. And I'm honoured I've been given such a privilege too. I get to have the honour of smacking around the Raiju Clan traitor and I'm gonna make sure that I enjoy EVERY minute of it!"

"Whoa hold on there! Dark, what the hell is that weirdo in the black pyjamas talking about?" demanded Kiara wildly, "Why is he calling you "traitor" and what the bloody hell is a "Raiju Clan"?!"

Dark looked at Kiara as if just realizing that she was still there. He'd been so focused on Rai himself that he had forgotten Kiara was with him. He turned to face Kiara and he sighed loudly, clearly disappointed at what was going to come.

"Well babe, looks like I can't hide my past anymore…" he murmured,

"It's time you learnt about my life in Chun-Nan, something I had hoped would never happen."

Kiara folded her arms and gave Dark a stern look. The leo-lynx looked very uncomfortable about having to tell her this story, something Kiara noted from the way his face and body-language presented themselves as he began.

"The Raiju Clan is a clan of ninjas that have one goal in mind…to conquer Chun-Nan all because of their crackpot mistress, the Bride of the Conquering Storm's, delusional ravings about how it's our "destiny" and such. I…I was part of the clan."

Kiara gasped in shock and she put her hands to her mouth. Dark looked at her with a look of despair, disappointed and saddened that he had to tell her this.

"Yes I know, you'll never look at me the same way again." muttered Dark, "I don't blame you, anybody who was part of the Raiju Clan should be ashamed they were ever part of it. Anyway, I didn't believe in Conquering Storm's way of life and wanted no part in her takeover of the country* so one night before she could execute her plan to conquer Chun-Nan, I tried to assassinate her. I sneaked into her room while she was sleeping and attempted to kill her. I couldn't let her carry out her plans to conquer the country so I had to kill her to save the country. But Rai stopped me and in order to save myself, I was forced to abandon Chun-Nan and flee for my life. I could have warned Chun-Nan about Conquering Storm's attempted takeover but as I ran for it, my mind was only focused on getting as far away from the Raiju Clan as possible…so it slipped my mind and I feel nothing but regret that I did nothing to prevent the Raiju Clan from taking over the country. I know it was saved and all but still, I could have stopped it from happening in the first place…but I didn't. That's why I was so ashamed to talk about my past…because I have much to be ashamed of. Please Kiara…I hope you won't hate me now."

The leo-lynx looked sadly away from Kiara, his eyes closed and his lips wobbling. He was on the verge of tears and Kiara could sense this whole revelation had been very tough for him and he was proper ashamed of himself for having to remind himself about it. Even worse was that he had to tell it to her, the girl that he loved very

much. Kiara could imagine what kind of thoughts were going through the leo-lynx's head and they were all bad. Kiara put her hands on Dark's shoulders and looked at him with sympathetic eyes. The leo-lynx didn't look back at her, tears trickling down his cheeks.

"Dark...I fully understand why you've been so keen on keeping your past a secret." said Kiara softly, "If I had a past like yours, I wouldn't want anyone to know about it either. I don't hate you now I know your past Dark. I'm a little disappointed that you just ran away and let Chun-Nan got conquered though but still, I don't hate you. You rejected the Raiju Clan and you did at least TRY to save Chun-Nan. If you didn't try at all, that would have been terrible and I really WOULD hate you. But I think you were very brave to not only betray such an evil clan but try to assassinate their leader for the good of the country. I doubt I would have been as brave so I really admire you for that handsome."

Dark stared at Kiara as if she'd just said the most random thing in the entire world.

"You...you mean that?" he gasped, wiping his eyes dry, "You still love me despite all that?"

"Dark, all that stuff is in the past. It doesn't matter anymore." said Kiara kindly, "What matters is what you're doing NOW and you're trying to improve your life from how bad it was before. That in my opinion deserves all my love for you."

Dark smiled lovingly at his beautiful girlfriend. He found himself loving Kiara more than ever, thrilled that she wasn't going to let his past cloud her judgement of him. Truly he was lucky to have met such a wonderful girl like Kiara. But unfortunately before things could get more sweet, Raphael rudely interrupted.

"Oh boo, hoo! I'm shedding tears! Enough sappy talk, I've got a score to settle with these two brats and I want to settle it NOW!" he yelled angrily.

"Be my guest Raphael but we get Dark Cat." Rai insisted, "You can have that scrawny cheetah girl for all we care, she's of no interest to us."

"I hope you give Dark a terrible death. Or tempt him back into your clan." muttered Raphael, cracking his metal knuckles.

"Kiara, you ready for this?" asked Dark, worry sweeping over him as he prepared for the fight of his life.

"Whenever you are sweetie." said Kiara, raising her broadsword and getting ready to battle, "Let's kick some Raiju and cyborg butt!"

Dark was all too happy to concur to that statement. He so wanted to make Raphael pay for kidnapping him and he wanted to make the Raiju Clan pay for all their evil, especially Rai for preventing him from killing Conquering Storm before their takeover of Chun-Nan could begin. He drew out his arm blades and he ran towards Rai, yelling angrily with every step he ran. Rai drew out a katana blade and he ran towards Dark, snarling viciously with eyes full of rage. Kiara and Raphael did the same thing as Dark and Rai, yelling angrily and running towards each other with blades raised and eyes full of fury.

Kiara swung her broadsword at Raphael, striking him on both his hand blades and sending a shudder rushing up Raphael's arms. Raphael ignored them and he slashed at Kiara. The cheetah managed to block the attack, holding the sword sideways to successfully block both blades. While Raphael's blades were pushing against her own sword, Kiara kicked Raphael hard in the gut to make him double over. Raphael did do so but not as much as Kiara wanted. She still had the opportunity to bang him on the head with handle of her sword and leave a dent atop the sonic wave emitter that ran over his cranium and ended at his forehead. Raphael growled furiously and he blasted Kiara off her feet with his sonic wave emitter. Kiara crashed down on the ground and rolled to a stop but she was back up on her feet in no time. Raphael lumbered towards Kiara but the cheetah ran past him, leaving Raphael to lumber onwards and screech to a halt as Kiara evaded him. She ran over to her dropped sword and picked it back up. Raphael ran towards Kiara again and fired his sonic wave emitter at her. Kiara leaped out of the way and rushed towards Raphael with her sword in hand. She slashed Raphael across the arm and made him scream in pain. Angered, Raphael punched at Kiara and hit her squarely in the face. Kiara screeched in pain and rubbed at it

furiously with her left hand. Raphael sniggered and he bashed his fists together.

"You're still a cute little cheetah you are, even if you're with the Royal Fighters." said Raphael darkly, "How about I take you and make you my loyal cyborg pet? You'd make a fine slave for me little Kiara."

"Good luck subduing me then!" yelled Kiara determinedly.

She and Raphael swung their weapons at each other again and clashed blades. The battle would only get more vicious from there as they continued fighting...

Meanwhile, Dark swung both his blades down at Rai, the lynx blocking the blow effortlessly with his katana. The lynx grinned smugly at Dark and he pushed him away, using very little of his strength to actually do so. To him it was like Dark was not much of an obstacle. Dark stumbled backwards but he remained standing and he lashed out at Rai again. Once again, he blocked the blow effortlessly, this time with just one hand holding the katana. Dark pushed hard on Rai's katana with both his blades but the lynx didn't falter. It was like nothing was even pushing on him! Rai bent his arm in a little to bring Dark closer to himself and then he kicked Dark as hard as he could in the gut. Dark cried out as he fell down onto his back. The kick felt like he'd been smacked by a rock. Dark picked himself up, fighting the pain in his stomach and readying himself for another attack. Rai lashed out at him, the katana scything through the air and clashing hard against Dark's raised arm blades. Dark tried to push back on Rai but the lynx was too strong for him. Rai then swung the katana upwards, pushing Dark's arms up and causing him to lean backwards. This left Rai the opportunity to then rush around behind him and elbow him in the back. Dark was thrown down onto the ground, crying out loudly as he hit it. Rai just twirled the katana around in his hands mockingly, clearly enjoying himself as he was laying the smack down on Dark.

"You're pathetic traitor. You were never a match for me." he crowed, "I always beat you every time we fought. I even stopped you from assassinating our honoured mistress! What chance do you remotely have of beating me you pathetic little kid?"

"When are you going to learn that talk during battle is a stupid thing to do?!" snapped Dark.

He leaped up onto his feet and he launched his foot at Rai's chest. The lynx merely grabbed Dark by the ankle before his foot could make impact and he swung it upwards. Dark lost his balance as his leg swung upwards and he found himself back down on the ground with Rai standing up at him. Dark growled in frustration. Why was it he could NEVER beat Rai no matter how many times they fought?! He was sure with the amount of training he'd received and how callously he'd trained since becoming a Royal Fighter that he would at least be on par with his rival! But no, Rai was still on top of the game and beating him as if he was nothing. Dark wondered if he would even have a chance at beating Rai at this stage. He rolled out of the way quickly as Rai plunged his katana towards him. This caused Rai to get it stuck in the ground but the lynx didn't waste time trying to wrench it free. He instead left it stuck in the ground and ran towards the Raiju Ninjas. One ninja tossed him a kunai blade that was attached to a chain and he caught it with both hands. He spun around only to get a terrific roundhouse kick to the face from Dark that sent him spinning. He shook off the kick and started to spin the kunai end of the chain around. He swung it at Dark but the leo-lynx sliced it to pieces with a single slash of his blades. But Rai still had the rest of the chain to use so he waited as Dark ran towards him. H swung the chain and walloped Dark around the face with it. Head spinning a throbbing pain in his skull, Dark tried to stay focused as Rai swung the chain at him again in an uppercut strike. Dark's head snapped backwards as the chain hit him under his chin and he fell down onto his back. Rai laughed at him wickedly and he walked towards Dark. He wrapped the chain around the leo-lynx's throat and began to strangle him. Dark fought desperately for air as the chain constricted around his neck.

"You're finished runt...but I won't kill you just yet." he growled, "You have two choices. You can come back to the Raiju Clan and betray your stupid girlfriend...or you can die. Choice is yours."

"Ack...gack...I would rather...die...than come crawling...hurk...back to you!" Dark spluttered with a strained voice as Rai strangled him with the chain.

"Be my guest!" laughed Rai, clearly delighted that Dark chose the latter option.

He pulled on the chain harder, causing Dark to let out strangled gasps as his air supply was being depleted. His face was beginning to turn blue as he was strangled. He could get free and he couldn't beat Rai. He was going to die and he had no chance of saving himself. And Kiara would be dead too without him to help her fight Raphael. Either that or converted into a cyborg by Raphael. But Dark's death was not going to be coming today. A yellow beam suddenly shot out of nowhere and struck Rai in the back, throwing him off his feet and sending him hurling over Dark onto his face. Dark unwrapped the chain from his neck and quickly began breathing in air, the colour returning to his face as his circulation returned. Gasping, he stood back up and turned to see who had attacked Rai. He got a very pleasant surprise for standing behind him with his arm stretched out was Shadow the Hedgehog! Rouge stood behind him and Shadow lowered his arm.

"Looks like I'm just in time." he said in his usual dull, vapid tone of voice.

"Shadow! Rouge! Thank goodness...I thought I was gonna be strangled to death!" cried Dark, rubbing his neck vigorously.

"How fortunate we showed up then." said Rouge, "Mind if we give you two a hand in kicking some evil butt?"

"Not at all, you're welcome to help us!" said a very excited Dark, "Let's show Raphael and the Raiju Clan what happens when they mess with Royal Fighters!"

Shadow ran towards the Raiju Clan, the ninja lynxes all ready to attack and raising their weapons. Shadow remembered them all too well. He had to fill in for Sonic after Devion took him out and helped to defeat the Raiju Clan and save Chun-Nan. He was looking forward to fighting them again so he spin-dashed straight towards the ninjas. In a single spin-dash, he ploughed through all the ninjas and sent them hurling through the air, causing them to scream in terror as they were whisked off their feet. Shadow had dealt with much more powerful opponents in the past so the ninjas felt like a

warm-up exercise to him. He skidded to a halt and smiled at what he'd done. The Raiju Ninjas all lay sprawled on the ground wondering which way was up. Rai growled furiously at Shadow and he stampeded towards him. Shadow just swiped his arm and threw Chaos Spears at Rai. The spears struck Rai at the force of a powerful punch and the lynx was hurled off of his feet. He felt like he'd been hit by a powerful cannon blast. Rai got back to his feet only for Shadow to spin-dash into him and then stomp-kick him back down onto the ground. He picked Rai up with both hands and he tossed him into Raphael, the Cyber Husky still in battle with Kiara. Rai hit Raphael and knocked the husky down onto his side. A few ninjas picked themselves up from Shadow's earlier attack and they ran towards Kiara. But they never got near her as Rouge swooped down from the sky and screw-kicked her way through them all. The ninjas were sent flying backwards as Rouge ploughed through them and the bat took a moment to watch them crash down onto the ground in a rather comical fashion. This was almost as fun as hunting for treasures. Kiara gave Rouge the thumbs up, very much impressed with the bat's handiwork. Rouge just winked back at her and flew down towards Rai as he got smacked down onto the ground once again by Shadow. Shadow picked Rai up and tossed him into the air. Rouge flew towards Rai as he was thrown up and she screw-kicked him down into the ground. Rai didn't even know what had hit him as he lay on the ground groaning in pain. Shadow walked up to Rai and he grabbed him by the collar, growling furiously at him.

"Dare harm another Royal Fighter again...and I'll bury a katana in your heart!" he snarled, "So why are you trying to kill these two then? Are you part of Finitevus's Dark Armada and are doing this under his orders?"

"As if we're telling you that." muttered Rai, "But know this, we ain't leaving until you four are all dead!"

"Then I'll just beat you up some more." growled Shadow.

Just as he was about to do so, Raphael blasted him off his feet with a tunnel of sonic waves. Shadow grunted as he landed flat onto his side painfully.

"Come on Rai, we're outta here!" declared Raphael, "I know when I'm beaten and it'll be sensible for you lot to retreat too!"

Rai had to admit that Raphael was right. Dead right in fact. Shadow could curbstomp all of his ninjas with little effort and Rouge seemed to be a powerful fighter too. He had to retreat for his own good although Conquering Storm would not at all be pleased to hear that he'd failed his mission. Raphael opened up a portal that would take him and the others back to *The Nefarious* and he quickly ran through it. The Raiju Ninjas filed through the portal after Raphael but just as Rai was about to follow them in, Shadow suddenly sped towards him and tackled him down onto the ground. The portal closed up as soon as the last Raiju Ninja ran through. Rai tried to get back to his feet but Shadow was too strong for him. Shadow clenched his fist and thumped him hard on his head, knocking him clean out. With Rai unconscious, Dark and Kiara ran up to him and Dark smirked at his rival.

"How does it feel being beaten by somebody who doesn't have ninja skills?" he sneered, "Good work Shadow."

"Thanks Dark Cat." said Shadow casually, "Once Sonic and the others arrive in the Sky Patrol to pick you up, we'll take this filth with us."

"Maybe he'll tell us what we need to know about the Dark Armada." suggested Rouge, "That is, whatever Sonic can't tell us."

"Sonic's coming to pick us up?" asked Kiara curiously, "Must be important then. What's it about? And what's a "Dark Armada"?"

"Sonic informed us that the Dark Armada is an army of villains led by Dr. Finitevus." explained Shadow, "They need all the other Royal Fighters they can get to combat the armada so they're coming to pick you up. We've been recruited too and we were sent to make you the armada hadn't already gotten to you."

"I see." said Kiara, "Well I don't really think it's that shocking Raphael's part of the armada, if that's the case. He must be in it to get rid of me and Dark."

"Same goes to the Raiju Clan." muttered Dark, "Well when Sonic arrives, I'll tell him myself how eager I am to join in this battle against the armada. We've beaten Eggman and got our peace back, we're not losing it to that armada!"

"Agreed." said Shadow grimly, "And fortuitously enough, we now have a prisoner who might be of some us to us all."

Dark nodded as he glanced over at the unconscious Rai. Hopefully he'd be able to give them all the information they'd need in order to stay ahead of the armada. Sonic was sure to be happy at the fact they now had a prisoner that they could use against the armada. They'd see Sonic's reaction soon enough for the Sky Patrol finally arrived at Megapolis and was just now flying towards the four Mobians on the ground below. Shadow stared at it as it approached them.

"I think that's the Sky Patrol." he said, "Let's get aboard it once it lands."

Shadow, Rouge, Dark and Kiara waited as the Sky Patrol landed down on the ground in front of them and Sonic ran out of the ship to meet everybody.

"Thank goodness, you're all together and all alive!" cried Sonic happily, "We made it! So everybody, let's get aboard the Sky Patrol! We have much to talk about..."

Meanwhile at the Golden Caverns, Dr. Finitevus appeared through a warp ring. He was on the search for more items to add to the Synthetic Chaos Energy formula and hopefully balance out the positive Chaos Energy with the negatives to make the formula more stable for his plan. He was rather surprised to see two hover carts full of golden nuggets outside the caverns. He had come to the caverns to dig up the nuggets and take them for himself but he now had two carts full already for him to use. He smiled wickedly to himself as he grabbed the carts and pulled them through his warp ring.

"These will do just nicely..." he purred to himself, "Look at all them golden nuggets...these'll come in handy for my formula."

He cackled to himself as he disappeared through his warp ring, leaving nothing behind as he disappeared through it...

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Racoon on the Run

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 24: Terror of the Cyber Husky***

***** See Conquering Storm's takeover in all its glory in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 14: A Few Steps To A Conquering Storm***

YAY! A HAPPY ENDING! It's nice to have a lighter chapter in a dark story isn't it?

Tune in next time to see if* Operation Chun-Nan *will also have a happy ending...

Dark Armada Part 8: Operation Chun-Nan

Story 208: Operation: Chun-Nan

The Dark Armada Chapter 8 of 25

"…so if I've got this straight, the Dark Armada consists of Finitevus, Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox, Lord Sycorax, Zira the Ruthless, Bride of the Conquering Storm and her clan, Captain Metal, Cutthroat Jim, Raphael the Cyber-Husky, Ravage Bloodfang and Team Diamond yes?" asked Shadow the Hedgehog.

"You got it buddy." replied Sonic the Hedgehog.

"I'm not surprised that Team Diamond are in the armada." muttered Rouge the Bat bitterly as if just mentioning the words "Team Diamond" were some kind of bad curse that shouldn't be spoken of, "I bet Finitevus promised them riches beyond their wildest dreams to get them to join him."

"Probably." said Sonic, nodding agreeably.

"If there's anyone who I'M not surprised to hear is part of the armada, it's easily Scourge and his pet bitch Fiona." murmured Shadow, scowling over the very thought of the two, "It would be strange if Scourge DIDN'T join the armada. I bet Finitevus promised something along the lines of "world domination" to appeal to that green monster."

"Oh you know Scourge Shadow, he'll serve ANYBODY as long as it serves his best interests." sighed Sonic, "Next time you see Scourge though you may notice a few differences since he now has a robot arm and a robot eye."

"Let me guess, he pissed Finitevus off and he did that to him as punishment." sneered Rouge.

"Duh." retorted Sonic cheekily, "Why else would he have them?"

"Indeed." mused Shadow, "As for the armada, I'm familiar with most of them. I don't know Cutthroat Jim, Zira the Ruthless, Lord Sycorax or Captain Metal and Raphael, me and Rouge just met him as we helped Dark and Kiara beat the Raiju ninjas so we don't know much about him. You'll have to inform us on those particular members so me and Rouge know who we're up against."

"Well all you need to know is Jim's a pirate and probably the least threatening member of the armada, Zira's as deadly as Conquering Storm thanks to being a kung-fu warrior, Lord Sycorax is an egotistical nut job and Captain Metal is literally Metal Sonic cosplaying as a pirate." explained Sonic, "That's pretty much them in a nutshell. I'm sure Dark and Kiara will tell you all you need to know about Raphael."

"Too right we will." said Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx, looking slightly angered at the thought the cyborg husky, "He's a cyborg who wants to make everybody else cyborgs and has pretty potent weaponry. Watch out for him, he's powerful."

"I'll say, he took Shadow down with one big blast of sonic waves from his forehead!" exclaimed Rouge, "We'll definitely be weary of him on the battlefield!"

"A very good idea indeed Rouge." said Kiara the Cheetah, her face grim looking.

Shadow, Rouge, Dark and Kiara were just some of the Royal Fighters that Sonic and his girlfriend Queen Sally Acorn had come to pick up with the aid of the Nekronopolis Royal Fighters and their prodigious ship, the Sky Patrol. Sonic and his team of Royal Fighters had been going through hell and back as of late thanks to Finitevus formulating an army of Mobius's worst and deadliest villains and carrying out their insidious scheme Operation: Enerjak Reborn (though the plan is known to the armada itself as "Operation: Villains Rising"). Tails the twin-tailed fox had been kidnapped and roboticized by Finitevus, thus forcing the poor cub into the armada and Finitevus was using him to help create his Synthetic Chaos Energy formula. The Royal Fighters had dealt with some hardships such as Bunnie being de-roboticized and at least two failed attempts to save Tails from Finitevus's control. Even

worse was the fact Finitevus had an agent spying on them constantly and the agent was helping Finitevus stay ahead of the game, which caused the armada to gain several victories against the Royal Fighters. Sonic and Sally decided that they needed the other teams if they had a chance of matching the Dark Armada but unfortunately, Finitevus's agent had heard their plan to recruit the others and now the armada was out trying to kill the other teams before Sonic and Sally could reach them. Ravage Bloodfang had managed to kill Taran the Lynx of Team Adabat but the other three members had made it out alive. Shadow and Rouge had saved Dark and Kiara from Raphael and the Raiju Clan, and even took Conquering Storm's right hand man Dàfeng Rai prisoner before he could escape, and now they were all aboard the Sky Patrol, heading quickly to Chun-Nan so they could pick up Princess Matilda and her friends. Hopefully before the armada could get them. As Sonic was chatting with Shadow, Rouge, Dark and Kiara, Sally was leaning over Kari the Rat's shoulder. The white-furred rat had been responsible for most of the Sky Patrol and was even the one piloting it. Kari was looking at a screen as she steered the ship through the sky.

"How long until we arrive at Chun-Nan?" asked Sally tensely.

"About half an hour." Kari replied, looking at the screen above the steering mechanism, "The ship's at full speed so we won't arrive any faster. Good thing we're at top speed otherwise we would be taking forever."

"That's good, thank you Kari." said Sally, "I do hope we reach Chun-Nan before Finitevus sends anybody to kill Matilda and her friends."

"I wouldn't worry too much your majesty, I mean doesn't Matilda know kung-fu?" asked Kari curiously, "And her friends too? I'm sure she'll handle herself if that horrible armada comes gunning for them."

"I know but, Matilda's a very good friend of mine and I can't help but worry." said Sally anxiously, "That and she and Bladefeather recently got married so I don't want their marriage to be cut short."

"That's understandable." said Kari, "I remember how worried I was

when me and Mandy were kidnapped by those rats and we were about to be executed. I imagine how worried Miranda was about me. She must have feared for my life like you're fearing for Matilda's life now."

"Indeed." agreed Sally, "So I really hope that we make it to Chun-Nan…and Matilda, Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon are all alive when we get there. I'll even be happy if the emperor makes it out alive although given he's not really a Royal Fighter, the armada might leave him alone. Or they'll send Zira to kill him so she can take Chun-Nan for herself should the armada win…"

The very thought made Sally go pale with shock. She quickly shook it off though for worrying wasn't going to do her any favours. It was pointless to worry about something you couldn't control, it was better to wait and see what happens. Sally walked away and left Kari to continue driving the ship in peace, heading over to Sonic. Sonic smiled upon Sally approaching him and he took her by the hand.

"Hey Sal, I was just thinking about having a conversation with you." he said brightly.

"That's nice Sonic." said Sally happily, "Shall we go somewhere more private to talk?"

"If you want my girl." said Sonic smoothly, his trademark cheeky smile spreading out across his face, a smile that Sally would never tire of seeing no matter how many times he did it.

Sally just gave Sonic a sly smile, not really appreciating him labelling her as "his girl" but taking his remark as more of a jokey remark for it was in Sonic's character to make remarks like that. As Sonic and Sally walked out of the room hand-in-hand, Rouge eyed them mischievously and could hardly resist the urge to snicker as Sonic and Sally left.

"Huh, didn't think Sonic and Sally would be getting cosy together in the middle of something as big as this." she joked, speaking more to herself than anybody.

Her remark remained unheard, even to Sonic and Sally's ears as

they left the cockpit of the Sky Patrol and walked into a viewing area. This was a small room with nothing but a door, three walls and a window to look out of. The two stood in front of the window, amazed at the view that lay spread out below like a giant carpet on the ground. They could see vast forests and stretching fields of grass as the Sky Patrol made its way to Chun-Nan. They were higher than some of the clouds in the vast blue roof of sky above and watched as the white wispy clouds drifted quickly by the graceful vessel. Flying was truly a grand experience and Sonic and Sally felt privileged to be up in a ship like this and enjoying the thrill of flying. It was views like this that made one feel lucky to be able to fly, with or without vehicles. Sally sighed contently at the views outside.

"Oh Sonic, what a view…" she said softly.

"I bet Tails enjoys views like this when he flies up in the sky." murmured Sonic, "And hopefully we'll save him and get him de-roboticized so he may enjoy such an experience once again. I miss him so much Sal…I really do."

His cheery expression fell into a grim frown as he thought about his little brother figure being forced against his will to serve Finitevus as a robotical slave, powerless to do anything about it just like how he had been forced to do the same things under Eggman's insidious control as Mecha Sonic. Just thinking about his past experiences made Sonic wish even more that Tails had been spared such a horror. Sally looked at Sonic glumly and lightly touched his arm.

"I know how you feel Sonic…and I miss our little Royal Fighter too." said Sally softly, "He was a wonderful little boy with a bright mind and a loveable personality. Without him…the team doesn't feel the same anymore. I hope we can get him back just as much as you do."

"Glad to hear it Sal." said Sonic appreciatively, his face lifting up a little, "I bet Tails would be thrilled to hear how determined we are to get him back. Once he's back, me and him will have one big day together. We'll spend it playing games, having fun and larks, making each other laugh and even having a big meal between us just like a loving pair of brothers. I'll make him so happy to be back that he'll

forget ALL about this nightmare."

"A lovely, lovely thought Sonic. Very lovely indeed." said Sally happily, "And I hope to see that day happen. For now…we have to stop the armada and even prevent Enerjak from rising…and dooming Mobius."

"Oh man, I'm so focused on the armada and getting Tails back that I kinda forgot about that…" gasped Sonic suddenly, "Silver and Blaze found out that Enerjak is the missing link in Mobius's destruction and we think Finitevus might be the cause of it! How could I let that slip my mind?"

"Anything can slip our minds, no matter how important." said Sally, "Although given Scourge's lack of knowledge over Enerjak and indicating he doesn't know what Blaze was talking about…I wonder if the armada's responsible or is it all Finitevus's big idea and the armada are unwitting pawns in his sadistic game?"

"Doesn't matter, we have to stop the whole armada, Finitevus mostly." sniffed Sonic, "With him down, Enerjak won't come back and destroy the world."

"And Silver and Blaze will have good futures like they deserve to have." said Sally, her face brightening at the lovely thought.

Sonic nodded agreeably. Silver and Blaze were trying as hard as they could to save Mobius and give it a better future. They deserved to have a good future after all they were going through. Sally then suddenly asked something else.

"So Sonic, this may seem a little…random, ahem…but have you ever considered marriage it all?"

Sonic gasped at the question he had just received. His quills straightened and his face went red. He had not expected such a question at all. He looked at Sally as if she'd just grown an extra head on top of her own head.

"Why do you ask?" Sonic said in a single gasp.

"Well I just wondered that once this whole thing is over…maybe me

and you could settle down together…as husband and wife?" asked Sally timidly, "I'll admit, it is pretty dull in Castle Acorn with just me and Nicole around and I'd love to have you living with me as my husband Sonic. I really love you and you're the one I want to tie the knot with at last."

She then proceeded to pull Sonic into a warm embrace that made the hedgehog feel content but also hot under the collar. He staved off his embarrassment enough to deliver his reply to Sally's response.

"Well it hasn't been on my mind lately…but if I feel like marriage is something I wanna have a shot at, I'll let you know." he said, trying his best to be composed, "For now, let's hope we live long enough to still have that option available."

"Indeed." said Sally, her tone of voice as loving as the expression on her face.

The two then shared a loving kiss between each other, their attention focused squarely on each other and the view outside the window now completely ignored. As they kissed, Sonic could feel his mind reeling away as he thought about Sally's questioning about marriage.

Marriage hmm? Maybe when this whole thing is over, I'll surprise Sally with an engagement ring. he thought inside his head *Not to mention, marriage sounds pretty nice. A new adventure for me pretty much. And Sally's the perfect girl for me. Yeah…I'll definitely make her wish come true once the armada's beaten for good.*

He could already imagine the beautiful queen's face when he presented a engagement ring to her…

Meanwhile in the holy country of Chun-Nan itself, the happy citizens were enjoying yet another day of peace and tranquillity, something that they had been doing plenty of since the ultimate demise of Dr. Eggman. Chun-Nan hadn't really seen much of Eggman's tyranny but his death was still a great relief to the people of Chun-Nan for

they would never live with the fear of Eggman attacking the country ever again. Even Chun-Nan's own villains had been surprisingly quiet since Eggman's death though Zira the Ruthless and the Bride of the Conquering Storm's apparent escape from prison* still had some people worrying about their safety. A year had passed and they hadn't been apprehended which meant they were either really good at hiding, no longer in Chun-Nan or dead. Most of them hoped it was the third option. But for now, any thoughts of Zira and Conquering Storm were mostly absent in this peaceful time.

Even Chun-Nan's very own Princess Matilda didn't have the two on her mind. She was sitting in her back garden and meditating with her husband, now known as Prince Bladefeather the Falcon. The two had very recently gotten married but due to recent events, Sonic and friends had been unable to attend, much to Matilda's disappointment. The reason for them being unable to attend had made Matilda feel very uncomfortable. Tails had been kidnapped by Dr. Finitevus. She remembered him all too well. He had kidnapped her once and had also kidnapped Bladefeather and her father Emperor Tai. He had been working with Dr. Eggman at the time and had fastened her, Bladefeather and Tai to a nuclear missile that was aimed at New Mobotropolis. Sally had rescued the trio before the missile could take their lives and since then, Matilda had hoped never to hear of Finitevus again until he was either locked up or dead. And yet he had come out of his hidey hole and had kidnapped Tails. She hadn't heard any updates recently so she had assumed the Royal Fighters were trying all they could to deal with the situation. As long as she didn't need to get involved, she assumed it wasn't too much to worry about. If Finitevus kept his business away from Chun-Nan, Matilda would be happy but she hoped will all her heart that Tails would be rescued and Finitevus would be arrested.

To try and remain calm, she had decided to meditate. What made this session even more wonderful for her was the fact Bladefeather was meditating with her. Nothing could put Matilda in a greater frame of mind than meditating in her own back garden with her loving husband beside her, drinking in the peace and quiet and harnessing the flow of the universe. Matilda had her legs crossed and her hands resting on her knees, breathing in softly through her nose and breathing out through her mouth. Her eyes were closed

and her body was still save for the gentle rise and fall of her chest as she exhaled and inhaled. Bladefeather had his legs crossed but his arms were out to the side, thumb and index finger curled inwards and the other three stretched out. His eyes were closed and he breathed in and out, his body so still that even his feathers didn't move. As they meditated, the two both pictured the loveliest thought they could possibly think of, their lives as a married couple and being united together through mind and heart. Their marriage had been a beautiful, wonderful day even if Sonic and friends had been unable to attend and thinking about it was enough to put them in a great frame of mind. They kept this up for a few minutes before Matilda exhaled one last time and slowly opened her eyes, a warm content feeling spreading through her body. Bladefeather opened his eyes as if sensing Matilda had done so herself and he smiled warmly to himself.

"Meditation…so wondrous isn't it my love?" he sighed contently.

"Meditation can chase away even the deepest of worries." replied Matilda agreeably, "I feel much better now. Especially thinking about how wonderful it is to be married to you."

"I very much thank you for the compliment my beautiful bride." said Bladefeather, edging closer to Matilda and resting his head against her shoulder, "Being wed to you is a thought that'll always put me in a good mood."

"Glad to hear it precious." said Matilda sweetly, "And given Eggman is dead and the world is at peace again, we can enjoy our lives together as much as we like. I do hope dearly that Sonic and his friends will save Tails and apprehend that vile Finitevus person…" she murmured, trying hard not to let the relaxation of her meditation fade away into anxiety again.

"It still repulses me that he nearly wasted our lives just as a part of the obese villain's game." muttered Bladefeather, "But Eggman is now spending an eternity in the darkest corner of the afterlife so Finitevus will never do anything for him again. And yet the villain seems to be operating solo this time. Obviously to avenge Eggman's death."

"Maybe so." mused Matilda, "But I don't really see Finitevus being on as grand a scale as Eggman. Eggman had control over certain regions for a time. Finitevus has just kidnapped one little boy, that's hardly going to put him above Eggman. Though it worries me to think what he's doing to such a poor innocent child like Tails…I hope he's not being tortured mercilessly or worse…"

"My love, please do not fret." said Bladefeather softly, hugging his wife tenderly to ease the coming anxiety that was building up inside, "Sonic will rescue his abducted accomplice. The mendicant Finitevus will then receive his comeuppance and we will be forever complacent over the fact that everything is going to be just fine. Plus, if Sonic requires our assistance in rescuing Tails, we will be on hand to provide it for him and then Finitevus will wish he'd never been born."

"I sure hope so honey…I sure hope so." murmured Matilda, hugging Bladefeather back.

"Likewise." replied Bladefeather, "I say Matilda, do you think another meditation session is in hand? You're getting anxious again."

"No, I'm actually in the mood for some exercise." said Matilda, "Maybe a good training session will put my mind at ease. My late master always said that a bit of exercise is always a good way to put your mind at ease."

"In that case, maybe you could show me your strongest move Matilda." suggested Bladefeather, "I remember you mentioning to me that you have a move that you consider to be the strongest move you know."

"Ah yes…the Six Dragon Strike." thought Matilda, "I remember spending a long time trying to learn that move. I eventually learnt it sometime after Conquering Storm's take over was foiled but I'm yet to be in a position where I need to use the move. I can tell you though if I ever fight Zira OR Conquering Storm again, I will definitely use it on them."

"I wish I could say anything complimentary about that idea but I'm afraid I am unfamiliar with the Six Dragon Strike." said a rather

puzzled Bladefeather, "What is that move?"

"Only the hardest and most powerful move ever devised in the history of kung-fu." replied Matilda, "Only a select few have ever learnt it, and I was lucky enough to have the master who could teach me the move. But I have a very important rule to abide by. I can ONLY use it in a fight and ONLY if I need to for the move has been known to be powerful enough…to kill." she paused as Bladefeather's eyes widened in surprise at that bit of information.

"Luckily I haven't had to use the move yet but it never hurts to show how it works." she added quickly.

"I sincerely hope you won't use it on me!" blurted Bladefeather fearfully.

Matilda gave Bladefeather a look that suggested the very statement offended her in someway.

"Oh heavens no, I would NEVER use it on you!" she cried, "I'd never forgive myself if I ended up killing you with it! No, I'll get a training dummy and show you how it works on that. Maybe if you like what you see, I could teach you how to do it." she finished with a sweet smile.

"Then let us see this amazing but hard-to-learn move of yours then." purred Bladefeather delightedly.

Matilda nodded approvingly and she got up onto her feet. But before she could do anything at all, she received the surprise of her life. Mushu the Iguana and Li Moon suddenly burst into her garden and came running towards her and Bladefeather as if they'd just found out that apocalypse had begun. Their faces contorted with fright and they frantically gestured and swung their arms around as if to accompany the horror on their faces. Mushu was Bladefeather's silent but powerful friend, robbed of his ability to speak long ago thanks to Zira damaging his vocal chords. Li Moon was Matilda's best friend and a kung-fu warrior in training, Matilda herself being her mentor. She was also a good javelin thrower, a skill she displayed last year in a fight with Captain Metal. Matilda read Li Moon and Mushu's horrified faces and she quickly saw to calming

them down. She put her hands on Li Moon's shoulders and held her still, bending down slightly to look her in the eyes. Bladefeather grabbed Mushu and held him still.

"Easy, easy! Whatever is the matter my friends?" asked Matilda, "Li Moon, you tell us. What's wrong?"

"Zira and Conquering Storm are back!" shrieked Li Moon frantically, "And they're coming this way! We ran here to warn you of their return! We've gotta fight them off now!"

Matilda felt like she wanted to collapse. Chun-Nan's two worst villains ever were back?! And coming straight towards the Pagoda of Prosperity?! This didn't make sense to her. Zira and Conquering Storm were enemies, why would they both be here and coming to the pagoda together? Shouldn't they be arguing over who gets to take over the country? Or even FIGHTING about it like they did in Zira's second take over attempt two years ago?! Matilda began to feel very nervous. If two of her worst enemies were teaming up and coming towards her home, it couldn't be good. Matilda swallowed nervously and put on a brave face.

"Very well…if those two are coming here…then they face against me." she said coldly, "And it'll be a mistake they'll regret making."

"Matilda, you cannot fight them BOTH by yourself!" cried Bladefeather worriedly, "Remember how you needed Conquering Storm to beat Zira when you first thought her**?! And when you thought Conquering Storm herself, she defeated you***! You can't fight them both alone!"

"Who said I'm going alone?" retorted Matilda, "I'm sure my handsome prince would like to fight alongside me, same goes to my best friend and my prince's best friend."

It didn't take long for Bladefeather to realize that she was talking about him, Mushu and Li Moon. Because of this, the falcon suddenly began to feel nervous.

"Uh…do you think we will be adequate enough for such a battle?" asked Bladefeather worriedly, "The four of us against those two?"

"They've been imprisoned for a while, they'll be a bit rusty." Matilda assumed, "That and I have been training quite vigorously in their absences so I'm pretty sure that we'll be enough. Li Moon, you'll have to take GREAT care in the battlefield though, you're easily the weakest of us and they'll pick you off the quickest."

"I'll serve as a distraction mostly your majesty." suggested Li Moon, "Zira and Conquering Storm won't bother about me that much. I'm sure I'll be fine…I hope."

"If they dare harm you, I will show them no mercy." Matilda swore, "Now come my husband and my friends. Let us defend our country from those two monsters…together."

"Together. We will drive those baneful witches away from our home and put them back in prison where they belong!" declared Bladefeather.

Just before anybody could do anything, the back door of the Pagoda of Prosperity opened up and Emperor Dalon Tai poked his head out nervously. He'd been inside the whole time and had been hearing a lot of shouting going on outside so he wondered what the matter was.

"Dearest, what's going on?" asked Tai worriedly.

"Daddy, whatever you do, DO NOT leave the pagoda." ordered Matilda, "Zira and Conquering Storm are coming and you'll be an easy target. I don't want you getting hurt so for the love of our ancestors, PLEASE stay inside. We'll handle the two women."

"I shan't set a foot outside Matilda. Please be careful." said Tai nervously, closing the door shut quickly.

Matilda nodded, agreeing completely with Tai's request. One wrong move and she would be dead, same went to her friends. Now that the emperor was safe, Matilda sneaked around the Pagoda of Prosperity and looked out down the hill to see if Zira and Conquering Storm were on their way up towards the pagoda yet. She spotted them straight away, the furious, hate-filled leopard and the coolie-hat, wearing, destiny worshipping lynx walking together towards the

hill. Matilda's heart sank at the sight of them. She'd hoped never to see them roaming freely again and yet here they were, coming to make her life miserable once again. But the princess was not one to give up, even when grievously injured. She had beaten many insidious foes and powerful enemies in her life from a group of Huns to a treacherous governor and had even fought Zira and lived to tell about it. She'd even managed to floor Shadow with little effort before, she could beat the two martial arts mistresses. And with her friends beside her, she at least had a chance. Matilda looked at Bladefeather, who was standing still behind her.

"Give me a dagger." she hissed.

Bladefeather eagerly handed it over. He could tell what his wife was planning. The dagger would be a distraction and give them chance to make the first move. Bladefeather watched with baited breath as the princess took aim, the dagger held firmly between index finger and thumb. She aimed the dagger directly at Conquering Storm's head, wanting to take her out more than Zira. Zira she knew she had a chance against but Conquering Storm was the one who had actually managed to beat her in a fight so she had to receive the dagger. Matilda held her breath and threw the dagger. The sharp, pointed dagger whizzed through the air like an arrow and soared towards Conquering Storm's head just as the lynx climbed up the hill. Conquering Storm reacted at an impossible speed, leaning to one side before the dagger could insert itself rather bloodily into her head. Matilda knew the dagger wouldn't hit her, it was just for a distraction. Just as Conquering Storm repositioned herself, Matilda charged down the hill and pounced towards the lynx. Conquering Storm back flipped away from Matilda, leaving her to land down on empty ground. The lynx stood up straight and sneered at Matilda as the mongoose prepared to do battle. Zira bent down in a battle-ready stance beside Conquering Storm, itching for a shot at the princess herself. But Matilda clearly wanted to fight Conquering Storm for she ignored Zira and focused squarely on her. Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon were the ones gunning for Zira. The three stood before the powerful leopard and prepared to commence fighting. Zira gave the trio a smug smile.

"Well, well...I didn't think you'd have the gall to stand up to me again

Bladefeather and Mushu." she crowed, "Especially after forcing you two to work for me. Maybe if you swear fealty to me again and this time, STAY loyal to me, I'll let you both live!"

"There will be no chance of that happening you insidious little canaille." snarled Bladefeather, "And you will refer to me as "Prince Bladefeather" from now on."

"Oh so I guess you're married to Matilda now are you?" snorted Zira, "Well "your majesty", maybe you could request for your father-in-law to just relinquish the throne to me and Conquering Storm?"

"Not a chance!" growled Matilda, "You two are going back in prison where you belong! Before that happens, why are you two working together? You should be enemies! You hate each other!"

Zira and Conquering Storm scowled furiously as if Matilda had somehow managed to pinch a nerve in them just by reminding them that they were sworn enemies to each other and reluctant partners while they served the Dark Armada.

"That is none of your business wretch!" retorted Conquering Storm, "Now then, we're here to kill you all and take Chun-Nan for ourselves! And as we're working together, we are BOUND to succeed!"

"Not if I have anything to say about it you filthy pair of monsters!" snapped Matilda, "Bladefeather, you, Mushu and Li Moon deal with Zira. I'm taking Conquering Storm. She owes me a rematch for our first fight."

"So keen to have your life snatched away from you aren't you, you foolish little woman?" snorted Conquering Storm, "Allow me to grant that wish..."

The iron-toed lynx screamed at the top of her voice as she charged towards her purple-dressed opponent. Matilda was already ready for her and she dropped into a defensive stance as Conquering Storm launched a powerful kick that could crack stones at her. Conquering Storm's foot slammed callously against Matilda's held up arms. The mongoose gritted her teeth and held in the pain that came after the

kick. She lowered her arms and launched a kick of her own at Conquering Storm. The lynx blocked it by raising her own leg and letting her shin take the blow. Matilda then stood firmly on both feet and threw a terrific punch at Conquering Storm. The lynx blocked it effortlessly and that was very shocking to the princess for that was her hardest punch. Conquering Storm must have been training vigorously after escaping from prison so she would still be in a good enough shape to fight her, that was the only logical explanation Matilda could think of. But she wasn't going to let that bother her. Conquering Storm balanced backwards on her right foot and drew her left leg back until her knee was against her chest. Then she launched her foot at Matilda's chest. Matilda however grabbed Conquering Storm's large foot before it could hit its target and she sharply twisted her ankle to the side. Conquering Storm let out a terrible shriek of pain that made Matilda's ears wince in protest. Matilda smirked confidently at her opponent, thinking that Conquering Storm's twisted ankle would sully the lynx's chances of beating her. But Matilda should know better than to assume that a twisted ankle would seriously slow Conquering Storm down. Still holding onto her ankle, Matilda threw Conquering Storm's leg upwards, causing her to fall flat onto her back. Conquering Storm picked herself up, noticeably standing on one leg now and keeping her twisted left ankle off the ground. She scowled furiously at Matilda.

"You seriously think I'll succumb to you thanks to a twisted ankle?" she snarled, "I once thought against a lion with kung-fu abilities as powerful as yours with a broken arm…and I won!"

"Fighting one-handed is easier than fighting with one leg." noted Matilda.

"Maybe so, but I have the balance needed to be just as capable on one foot as I am on both!" snapped Conquering Storm, "You won't have the edge on me!"

She then sprang into the air with her one foot and hurled towards Matilda. Matilda just leaped backwards and left Conquering Storm to punch at the ground. Surprisingly, Conquering Storm didn't even cringe at the fact her fist had just slammed into solid ground. Conquering Storm was a tough woman. She could punch a steel

block and her fist wouldn't hurt. Conquering Storm stood up again, still on one foot, and she readied herself as Matilda charged towards her. Conquering Storm jumped into the air and somersaulted over Matilda. She then swung the heel of her right foot into Matilda's head, knocking her down onto the ground. The lynx landed perfectly on her good foot and turned around as Matilda got back to her feet. Conquering Storm reached out to grab Matilda but the mongoose spun around on the balls of her feet and socked Conquering Storm in the jaw. The ninja bride screamed in pain as her jaw flared with pain and then Matilda tripped her up with a kick to her right leg. Conquering Storm landed down with a terrible, painful thud. So painful in fact that she was still wincing tensely as Matilda grabbed her right foot and sharply twisted it to the side. The noise Conquering Storm made after that was dreadful. Matilda had to fight hard to keep the scream from making her cringe in protest. Conquering Storm yanked her foot out of Matilda's grip and tried to stand up. But with both ankles twisted, she couldn't possibly stand. She yelped in pain as her twisted ankles screamed in agony and she collapsed onto her knees. Satisfied with this, Matilda walked up to Conquering Storm and chopped her in the neck, knocking her clean out. The Raiju Clan bride lay still on the ground, unconscious but breathing slowly.

"That was for manipulating me, imprisoning my friends and taking over my country." she growled, her voice as cold as an icy mountain, "Now to deal with Zira…"

She left the unconscious lynx to lie on the ground and charged over to Zira the Ruthless. The leopard was so far gaining the upper hand against Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon. Bladefeather threw daggers at Zira but the kung-fu mistress was much to fast for him. She dodged every shot with ease and lunged at Bladefeather at an impossible speed. She caught the falcon in the chin with a powerful uppercut that caused his head to snap backwards so hard that Bladefeather briefly worried if he'd just gotten whiplash. Zira then drew her right leg backwards and kicked Bladefeather in the gut, throwing the falcon off his feet and sending him crash down away from the hill. Mushu clawed at Zira but the vicious leopard wheeled around and dodged the attack. She grabbed Mushu's tail and swung him around into Li Moon, whisking the kung-fu novice off her feet.

Mushu and Li Moon lay sprawled on the grass, wondering what had just hit them. Li Moon picked herself up and in a move that could be considered brave but also suicidal, she ran towards Zira and prepared to punch her. Zira effortlessly blocked the blow and grabbed Li Moon by the neck. She hoisted Li Moon off the ground but the vixen kicked her in the gut to make Zira release her. Zira doubled over and dropped Li Moon, allowing the trainee fighter to wheel around on her foot and drive her other foot into Zira's face. The kick threw her down onto her side but Zira was back up in seconds. Li Moon jumped into the air, hoping to dropkick Zira but Zira jumped up and kicked the young fox down. Li Moon landed sharply on the ground, wincing in pain. She was mostly used to pain what with being trained by Matilda herself but Matilda was mostly going easy on her. Zira was doing anything but so this hurt more than anything Matilda had ever done to her. Zira grabbed Li Moon by the neck again but she kept her pinned down instead of lifting her up. Her face twisted into a cruel sneer.

"You have much to learn weakling…pity you'll NEVER live to learn anymore lessons!" she declared.

Then suddenly, something sprang up into the air and Zira found herself caught completely by surprise as Matilda punched her in the face, throwing her away from Li Moon and sending her crashing into the bottom of the hill. Zira got back up onto her feet just as Matilda ran towards her and began throwing punches at her as savagely as possible, not Matilda's usual style but a style she was all too happy to use on the brutal leopard.

"Nobody! Hurts! Li Moon!" screamed Matilda with every punch she threw.

She then finished off with a kick to the head that sent Zira somersaulting backwards and landed flat on her stomach. Zira forced herself back onto her feet and growled viciously, scampering towards Matilda on all fours and leaping towards her.

While this was going on, the Pagoda of Prosperity was finding itself with some unwelcome visitors. Team Diamond had come with Zira and Conquering Storm under Finitevus's suggestion that they could provide some help should the two need it. Lennox Meers the

Meerkat, the team leader, was standing outside and keeping watch while his team mates stole whatever treasures the pagoda contained. Emperor Tai, not wanting to get involved, had evacuated the building and was staying in the back garden out of harm's way. Own Pounder, Alistair Drakken and the reluctant Roxy the Racoon were in the pagoda, robbing whatever treasures they could find in the building. They had been ordered by Finitevus to wait until Team Chun-Nan were dead but they thought that while Team Chun-Nan were so busy with Zira and Conquering Storm, they could rob the pagoda without any trouble. They had been doing this even before Conquering Storm got knocked out. Lennox was disappointed to see that the Bride of the Raiju Clan had been taken out so he assumed now would be a good time to provide his back-up. He took out his twin revolvers and he aimed them at Matilda. It was hard for him to keep a good aim on the princess though, she was moving much too fast and she was fighting against Zira. He risked shooting Zira by accident so he waited for the right moment to shoot. But he would soon end up failing to do his simple task for Bladefeather spotted him and he threw a dagger at the meerkat, his speed so fast that Lennox only had enough time to gasp before the dagger plunged into his right shoulder, numbing his arm and causing him to drop one of his revolvers. Lennox bellowed in pain and he yanked the dagger out of his shoulder, blood pouring out of the fresh wound and staining his prized cape red. Bladefeather ran up the hill towards Lennox and grabbed him before he could use his good arm to shoot at him. Yanking the revolver out of Lennox's hands, he tossed the meerkat down the hill and directly into Zira. The falcon then swooped down to the bottom of the hill and landed on Zira, digging his talons into the ruthless killer's arms.

"I always did abhor men with guns…" he muttered, glaring at Lennox as he pinned Zira down.

Zira tried as hard as she could to get Bladefeather to let go of her but if there was one thing that Bladefeather was insanely good at, it was pinning his enemies down and holding them with his talons. He could even pin Matilda down with his talons if he had to. Bladefeather then flapped his mighty wings and he took to the skies, carrying Zira with him. Zira thrashed around wildly, trying to get free but nothing and nobody, not even Master Kai, could possibly get

Bladefeather to let her go. Bladefeather smirked at Zira, pleased to see that she couldn't get free. He then proceeded to drop her, releasing her from his unbreakable grasp. Zira screamed as she plummeted straight down to the ground, Mushu and Li Moon waiting to receive her. Before she could land, both kung-fu warriors kicked her and sent her hurling away from the hill and crashing into some nearby trees. Lennox got back to his feet and cursed himself for failing to his task correctly. But he could make up for it still. He had a spare gun in his blood-stained cloak and he whipped it out with his good arm. He pointed it at Matilda but before he could pull the trigger, Bladefeather poked him in the back of his neck with a dagger.

"Pull the trigger and you find out what it feels like to have a dagger inserted into your brain." he threatened, "Drop the gun you filthy, baneful gun-slinger."

Lennox knew better than to do something so foolish so he did as he was told. He threw the gun onto the ground and raised his hands. Suspecting he may have more, Bladefeather grabbed his cloak and yanked it from around his neck. He tossed it onto the ground and saw that he had indeed been right. Lennox had plenty of spares in his cloak so it was wise that he had decided to remove it.

"No more guns for you then." he sneered, "Now then, who are you and what are you doing here?"

"I'm with Zira and Conquering Storm." explained Lennox, "I have three friends with me and they're robbing the Pagoda of Prosperity."

"Well when your friends show up, I'll "kindly" request that they return everything they've stolen." muttered Bladefeather coldly.

Bladefeather would later wonder how a huge orange rabbit had somehow managed to sneak up on him and knock him aside, saving Lennox from being a hostage any longer. Owen smirked wickedly at the falcon that he had just sneaked up on and backhanded onto his side. Lennox quickly made a dash for his cloak but his attempts to retrieve it were met with Li Moon picking up the cloak, holding it by both ends like a bundle full of stuff and then swinging it into the meerkat's face. The multitude of guns that Lennox had in the cloak

made it an effective battering weapon. The meerkat's head was spinning and he didn't know which way was up anymore. He was just lucky that neither of the guns were loaded. Owen lunged at Li Moon but the vixen just ended up walloping him with the cloak full of guns. Owen crashed down on top of Lennox, clutching his aching head in pain. Alistair and Roxy saw this and they also noticed how well Matilda and her team were faring against Zira and Conquering Storm. Conquering Storm was knocked out and Zira was barely managing to hold her own anymore. They decided that getting involved was a very bad idea so Roxy just promptly opened up the warp ring that Finitevus had given Team Diamond to use when robbing the Pagoda of Prosperity. They had stolen many valuable items in the pagoda and had used the warp ring to send it over to *The Nefarious* to save them the trouble of carrying it all home. Now Roxy was going to use it to flee before she could get her backside handed to her.

"Come on Alistair, we're outta here." she muttered, "Zira can handle herself, all we're doing is getting in the way. We're not of much use here. Get the meat-head and the creepy pervert for me."

Alistair did just that, flying over to Lennox and carrying him over to the warp ring. Roxy went through first and waited for the other two to arrive. Lennox didn't want to surrender but Alistair refused to let him go. He just promptly threw him through the warp ring. Alistair than flew back for Owen and carried him through the warp ring, the warp ring closing up behind the two. Bladefeather just sniffed, not at all bothered at their escaping. They were of no concern to him or anybody else. True Lennox had said he and his team were robbing the Pagoda of Prosperity but the stolen items could easily be replaced, nothing to worry about. The main concern now was Zira the Ruthless. She was waiting to attack again and was livid to see that Team Diamond had abandoned her so she was even angrier than before. She charged like a pouncing lion towards Bladefeather and roared at the top of her voice, eyes burning and fangs bared. Bladefeather only just had enough time to catch sight of Zira before she kicked him down onto the ground, springing off of him as she did so and then landing on top of Mushu. Matilda ran towards Zira but the leopard picked up the silent iguana and threw him straight at the princess. Mushu and Matilda both sprawled on the ground,

Mushu sitting up and apologizing to Matilda in sign language. Matilda nodded and got back to her feet. Zira pounced on Matilda but the mongoose managed to push the leopard away and bring her down onto her back. Zira struck back with a savage punch that had all but two fingers curled into her palms. The index and middle fingers were curled into the shape of snake fangs as she punched. The attack left two small cuts on Matilda's chest and the mongoose stumbled backwards in pain. Zira lashed out with another clawed punch but Matilda stepped to the side and let the leopard lunge past her. Then she grabbed Zira's long ponytail and yanked on it. Zira winced as her ponytail was pulled, ruing herself for letting her hair grow that long so it could be easily grabbed. Matilda pulled Zira towards herself and drove her knee hard into the small of her back. Zira recovered quickly and back-handed Matilda across the face, sending the mongoose's head spinning wildly. Matilda cringed, feeling like her brain was doing a rain dance inside her skull. Zira then kicked Matilda in the gut, the mongoose letting out a loud moan of pain as she slammed down onto her back, lying against the foot of the hill. Zira then grabbed Matidla by the neck and strangled her. Matilda fought to stay conscious, fighting for air and clawing at Zira's arm in a desperate attempt to break free. Zira ignored the pain Matilda was inflicting in her arms and continued to throttle the terrified princess.

"I've been longing to snap your neck Matilda!" roared Zira "And now the time has come!"

But just as Zira prepared to make the killer blow, Matilda lashed out and rammed her finger into Zira's eye. Zira screamed a blood-curdling, shrilling, agonizing wail as the tip of Matilda's finger rammed into her eyeball. She let go of Matilda and roared loudly, willing for the pain to go away in her eye. A tear trickled out of it as it watered in pain. Matilda rubbed her neck better and she ran up the hill up until she reached the Pagoda of Prosperity. Matilda needed some distance between her and her temporarily blinded opponent in order to unleash her strongest move...the Six Dragon Strike. She thought it was time to show Zira what she knew. Matilda charged down the hill like a thundering rhino, aiming directly at Zira. Zira had managed to rub her eye better but she didn't nearly have enough time to react. Matilda jumped up into the air in one big graceful leap,

screeching at the top of her voice as she drew her arm back and took aim. She landed on the ground and launched the first blow of the Six Dragon Strike. She punched Zira, swinging her fist down onto the top of her head and causing her to double over. She then uppercut Zira in the chin and caused her to stumble backwards as her head jerked back, the second strike in the attack. The third strike saw Matilda spin around on her heel and elbow Zira in the gut, throwing her back a few inches and causing her to double over again. The leopard had no time to defend herself as Matilda launched the fourth strike, a right hook to the cheek that threw her head violently to the side. Then Matilda accompanied the punch with a left hook that sent Zira's head careening to the right. The evil kung-fu warrior swore that her head would come off if Matilda kept this up. Then Matilda concluded the powerful attack with the sixth and most powerful blow. Screaming loudly, Matilda punched Zira squarely in the chest, aiming directly for her sternum. Zira was winded by the attack and she found herself yelling despairingly as she was sent hurling backwards through the air and crashing down beside Conquering Storm's unconscious body. The impact was so hard and so close that Conquering Storm actually woke up from her knock out! Conquering Storm opened her eyes and stared in horror at what she first saw. Zira was lying beside her, clutching her chest in pain and struggling even to so much as breathe properly. She had a violent coughing fit as she rubbed her chest vigorously to get rid of the pain. Conquering Storm knelt beside her rival and stared in disbelief.

"What happened?!" she demanded furiously.

"Matilda...knows...the legendary...Six Dragon Strike!" spluttered Zira, "Too...weak to...fight!"

Conquering Storm's blood ran cold. She knew that move all too well. She couldn't learn the move because she had studied ninjitsu and the Six Dragon Strike was a kung-fu move. She had hoped never to fight anybody who knew such a powerful move, knowing she would be powerless against it. And yet Matilda knew the move and had pretty much crippled Zira with it! Her twisted ankles made sure that Conquering Storm wouldn't be able to continue the fight but even if she could, she didn't dare allow Matilda to use the move on her. For

the first time in the lynx's life...she was now terrified of Matilda and wanted to get away from her as fast as possible. Fishing out the warp ring Finitevus had given her, she opened it quickly.

"It's a stain upon my honour to say this...but we need to retreat!" shrieked Conquering Storm, "I'm in no condition to fight and neither are you! We have to leave!"

Zira, for once in her life, was happy to accept the option of retreating. Conquering Storm crawled through the warp ring on all fours for the pain in her ankles prevented her from walking. Zira just forced herself onto all fours and crawled through after her. The warp ring closed up behind the women as they retreated through it and Matilda just watched them flee, panting heavily and falling to her knees in exhaustion. Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon gathered around her and congratulated her ecstatically.

"That was incredible!" exclaimed Li Moon, "What move was that you just did?!"

"That my child, was the Six Dragon Strike." replied Bladefeather, "Matilda apprised me about the fact she knew the move and was about to show it me before we were interrupted. Now seeing it with my own eyes...it is incredible indeed. Master Kai would be so proud to have seen you use that legendary move my wife." he said gently, putting a hand on Matilda's shoulder.

"Thanks..." panted Matilda, "Whew did that drain a lot outta me...thank goodness we sent the two packing."

"Indeed my beautiful bride." purred Bladefeather delightedly, "I must say, their skills aren't as good as they used to be. Their time in prison must have slowed them down plenty for us."

"Either that or we've been training so much that we've surpassed their strength." suggested Matilda, "Either way, thank the ancestors we won."

Just seconds later, Emperor Tai came running down the hill as quickly as his arthritic body would allow him to. The moment he was at the bottom, he quickly embraced Matilda tightly.

"Oh thank the ancestors! You beat them back my daughter! Well done Matilda!" he cheered happily, "And thank goodness you made it through alive!"

"Thank goodness indeed daddy." beamed Matilda, "And thanks for keeping safe while we fought."

"You're welcome dearest, although I do have some bad news." said Tai sadly, "Four Mobians broke into our home while you were fighting and they robbed the entire place clean of all our fanciest and most opulent items. One was a meerkat, the other was a rabbit, the third was a bat and the fourth was a raccoon. The meerkat had guns so I didn't dare interfere with them. I'm sorry but I couldn't stop them from raiding the pagoda."

"It's fine daddy, we can replace them all." said Matilda reassuringly, "Besides, it doesn't matter if our home's been robbed as long as we haven't been robbed of our lives. I'd be more upset if they killed you as well as robbed our home father."

"Indeed sweetheart, I'll replace the stolen items as soon as possible." said Tai, "But now, I'm just happy to have kept my life. I wonder who those robbers were?"

"I have a feeling Sonic can tell us that emperor." murmured Li Moon, "For some reason, I can imagine Sonic being familiar with those robbers. Dunno why, I just do."

"Well if we ever meet Sonic again, we can ask him." suggested Matilda brightly.

"That might be sooner than we have anticipated Matilda." said Bladefeather, looking up at the sky for some reason, "The Sky Patrol is coming our way."

Everybody stared up at the sky incredulously and saw that indeed, the Sky Patrol was coming towards them. Hovering high in the sky and slowly approaching, the Sky Patrol loomed above the terrain below and began to descend. It landed down on the ground gently, blowing the grass wildly and causing Matilda's dress, Tai and Bladefeather's robes and Li Moon's hair to blow around. The

moment the ship had fully landed, Sonic exited the ship and ran excitedly towards Team Chun-Nan.

"Matilda! Emperor Tai! Bladefeather! Mushu! Li Moon! Good to see you all!" cried Sonic happily, "And all in one piece too! Even better!"

"Honoured hero of Mobius, it is our greatest honour to see you again." said Princess Matilda graciously, bowing down respectfully to Sonic, "What brings you to our honoured country then?"

"Hop aboard the Sky Patrol and I'll tell you EVERYTHING Tilly." Sonic ordered...

Footnotes:

See the final *Tales from Mobius* arc: *Formulation of the Dark Armada

**** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 12: The Water Panther Pl under***

***** See *Tales from Mobius Arc 14: A Few Steps To A Conquering Storm***

Well Team Chun-Nan has made it out alive and is joining Sonic and friends! :D

So what will happen now the Royal Fighters are all gathered together? Tune in next time...

Dark Armada Part 9: Unhappy Meeting

Story 209: Unhappy Meeting

The Dark Armada Chapter 9 of 25

"How is this possible?!" roared Dr. Finitevus in rage, throwing his arms up into the air as he strode past the line of failures that stood to attention beside him, "I send you all to do ONE simple task and eliminate some pesky Royal Fighters! And yet only Ravage has returned with at least ONE dead body on his hands! You all shame the Dark Armada, all of you! Even you Ravage for only killing ONE Royal Fighter!"

Ravage Bloodfang, Zira the Ruthless, Bride of the Conquering Storm, Raphael the Cyber Husky and all four members of Team Diamond all looked down at the floor with nothing but misery on their faces. They were all very ashamed of themselves for failing to accomplish such a simple task.

The Dark Armada had been on a winning streak lately, a streak that had quickly ended as of today. After showing its hand to the Royal Fighters, the armada had single-handedly managed to score some victories against the Royal Fighters by kidnapping and roboticizing Tails, de-roboticizing Bunnie Rabbot and giving the Royal Fighters one heavy-hitter less to throw at them, gotten some materials to make Synthetic Chaos Energy with and had done a good job on keeping Mecha Tails out of the Royal Fighters's reach. Plus, they had a secret agent who was spying on the Royal Fighters and feeding information to Finitevus before he made his next move against the Royal Fighters. And yet despite this, the armada wasn't completely victorious yet and although his agent had informed him about Sonic wanting to recruit the other Royal Fighter teams, Finitevus had been met with bad news from his armada disciples. All but Ravage had returned with nothing but bad news to give. They had failed to kill any of the Royal Fighters they had come across. Ravage had managed to kill at least one Royal Fighter, said Royal Fighter being Taran the Lynx, the brother of Scott the Lynx, but

Taran's death was hardly anything to be proud of. He was one of the lower ranking Royal Fighters and even one of the least threatening so Finitevus hardly praised Ravage for his efforts. He shot a glare at all the armada members standing before him, a wave of anxiety sweeping over them all as fear gripped them by the throats.

"What's even more insulting is that not only did you all fail to accomplish your tasks, but Raphael somehow managed to lose Conquering Storm's right hand man, Dàfeng Rai, to the Royal Fighters!" Finitevus bellowed angrily, "The Royal Fighters have one of our members as a prisoner! Which means that any information about us is now in the hands of the Royal Fighters!"

"Well it's not MY fault the moron got caught!" snapped Raphael, "He should have followed me through the portal but instead he got himself caught! I bet Shadow did it, it couldn't have been anybody else!"

"I do not tolerate excuses you pathetic, tin-plated canine!" snarled Finitevus, "You should have made sure Rai made it through before allowing this to happen to him!"

"Yeah, I LET him get captured! That's exactly what happened Dr. Dumbass!" retorted Raphael in a voice mixed with anger and sarcasm, "I deliberately let Rai get captured!"

Finitevus had had enough. Raphael had just crossed the line by insulting him and that was one line Finitevus would show the armada why you shouldn't cross it. Finitevus lashed out at Raphael and slugged him hard in the gut, causing the husky to double over in pain and gasp loudly. Finitevus then wrapped his arms around Raphael's neck and grabbed him into a chokehold. The hold was so tough that Raphael was amazed Finitevus was able to wrap his arms around him that tightly. Raphael tried to break free but Finitevus had a hold that couldn't be wrenched apart, even with a crowbar. Not even Knuckles the Echidna could pry Finitevus's arms apart and free Raphael from his hold. The husky found himself running out of air and fast. His consciousness was slipping and he was finding it hard to breathe.

"Apologize for your behaviour and I will release you Raphael!"

Finitevus snarled fiercely.

"OK...OK...ack...gack...I'm sorry! Please...let me go!" whimpered Raphael in a pathetic, squeaky, strangled voice.

Finitevus let Raphael go, the husky gasping and panting rapidly as he breathed the air back into his lungs. The rest of the members had watched the entire thing with great discomfort and shock, feeling very sorry for Raphael and glaring at Finitevus for doing that to him. Finitevus did not seem to care about their angry glares. He carried on as if they weren't even frowning at him.

"Let this be a lesson to you all. Insult me, you lose your oxygen supply." announced Finitevus, "Now then, despite your failure to kill all the other Royal Fighter teams...there is SOME light in the tunnel at least. Team Diamond have given us a whole batch of opulent items to use in the Synthetic Chaos Energy formula. And hopefully those items will be enough to perfect the formula for Mecha Tails tells me that my current one is flawed."

"Fan-whopping-tastic." muttered Raphael bitterly.

"We're honoured to hear that some good has come out of our embarrassing failures Finitevus, but what are we going to do about Rai?" asked Conquering Storm worriedly, "We must get him back! The Royal Fighters will try and force him to talk, I know they will! Please my master, allow me to stage a rescue mission for Rai."

"Absolutely not." said Finitevus with a dark and serious scowl on his evil face, "The Royal Fighters will expect that. Plus, it does not matter if they get Rai to talk. My agent is still on the lookout, my agent will keep us ahead of the Royal Fighters even if Rai gives away any information."

"Master, that's a foolish idea!" cried Conquering Storm, "Rai knows where The Nefarious is! What if the Royal Fighters make him reveal that information?!"

"Chaos Emeralds and warp rings, we'll just send them away." snorted Finitevus, "Trust me, Rai in their hands won't be that much of a problem after all. Plus...maybe we could kidnap one of the

Royal Fighters and force them to give-up Rai in exchange for said Royal Fighter. Of course, we won't give that Royal Fighter back to them once they relinquish Rai to us."

"Oooh, now you're talking sense oh glorious leader!" cried Ravage excitedly, "I do hope it's Bunnie you kidnap, I still crave for her flesh and bones!"

"Has anybody ever told you you're a creepy little bugger?" scoffed Lennox Meers, his nose wrinkling as if something didn't smell right about Ravage to him.

"You're one to talk." snorted Ravage, "We all know what you're doing to Miss Roxy behind the scenes Mr. Meers. I mean I'm pretty sure those bruises and hickeys of hers weren't self-inflicted."

Roxy went bright red with embarrassment. It was bad enough that Lennox was abusing her and taking advantage of her body due to the fact she had a bomb in her brain that Lennox could set off if she dared say no to him but now Ravage was announcing at the top of his voice about what Lennox was doing! It was like her very life aboard *The Nemesis* was created just to spite her! And what exactly had she done to deserve all this? Try and redeem herself for all the bad things she did with Team Diamond. Roxy supposed that fate really had it against her for some reason. The raccoon forced herself to remain quiet as Lennox retorted to Ravage.

"What I do to my beloved Roxy is none of your business!" he growled, "And at least I'm not constantly fantasizing about eating people like you, you crazy cannibal!"

"Oh, I suppose YOU want to be eaten then?" asked Ravage coldly, "Because you're coming very close to having that wish granted!"

"How many times do I have to tell you ingrates NO INANE BICKERING!" bellowed Finitevus angrily, "If any of you so much as name-call each other, you'll all end up like Scourge the Hedgehog, only ten-times worse. **DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?!"**

The villains all recoiled in horror, dreading to imagine what Finitevus meant by "ending up like Scourge, only ten-times worse". It was bad

enough that Scourge had been forcibly turned into a cyborg as punishment for failure, they didn't want the same happening to them. Raphael was already a cyborg but he had the feeling Finitevus would do something dreadful to him if this arguing carried in. The armada members all lowered their heads and replied in unison.

"Yes Dr. Finitevus. You make yourself very clear."

"Good." grumbled Finitevus, "Now then, until my agent calls me and gives me some more information, we just stay aboard the ship and wait. Repairs are almost complete so we'll be flying again shortly. You're all dismissed, return to your rooms and standby until I need you again."

The villains were all too happy to do just that. Any reason to get away from Finitevus at this moment was good enough for them. Roxy on the other hand would much rather stay where she was than return to Lennox's dorm room and be abused some more. She had a nasty feeling that Lennox was going to beat her up and blame the failure to kill Team Chun-Nan on her even though it was far from her fault this had happened. Her face fell as she followed Lennox back to his room, Owen and Alistair following the two closely behind. Zira, Conquering Storm, Ravage and Raphael left to return to their dorm rooms too. They all needed a good rest after such a workout, especially Zira. The leopard clutched her chest in pain as she walked away. Princess Matilda had used the most powerful kung-fu move in history, the Six Dragon Strike, on her in their battle and the attack had left her with a severe chest pain that she was sure wouldn't go away for a while. She wondered about seeking medical treatment to alleviate the pain. As the villains left the room, Finitevus opened up a warp ring.

"Now to see if Matilda's stolen property and those two cars full of golden nuggets I found in Megapolis have made my beautiful formula more stable and ready for tasting…" mused Finitevus.

He walked through the warp ring and warped himself into the laboratory to meet Mecha Tails. He hoped dearly that the Synthetic Chaos Energy formula would be more stable this time…

Over in New Mobotropolis, the mood was considerably much more pleasant and cheerful than it was on *The Nefarious* . The Sky Patrol, a ship made and piloted by Team Nekronopolis, had touched down in New Mobotropolis after picking up the other Royal Fighter teams that were part of the R.F.S. They were Team Megapolis, Team Adabat and Team Chun-Nan. Sonic the Hedgehog and Queen Sally Acorn had come up with the idea in hopes of being able to match the Dark Armada and gain an edge on them since more of them would definitely make it easier to combat the insidious armada. On their trip around the world to recruit the other teams, they had even managed to find Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat. Given how they had scores to settle with Finitevus, they were all too happy to join the battle. Sadly, the trip hadn't gone without any problems. Team Adabat had lost Taran the Lynx to Ravage Bloodfang before they had even arrived at Adabat. The other teams had made it through with all their members intact but the disturbing fact was that the Dark Armada had sent some of its members out with the obvious intention of killing those teams with no reason other than to stop Sonic and his friends from getting more Royal Fighters to join the battle. It made Sally go crazy with worry on how the armada got the idea to do this. They couldn't have known about her plan beforehand! But then Sally had to remember that there was a hidden agent spying on the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and he or she hadn't been caught yet. But Sally was still perplexed for nobody was in Royal HQ but her and Sonic at the time and Nicole the A.I. lynx hadn't reported to her about anybody listening by the door or something so how the agent got the information to give to Finitevus was worrying to her. It seemed the agent was able to find out their every move before they made it.

But thoughts of the agent weren't on her mind right now. She and Sonic arrived back in Royal HQ with all the other Royal Fighter teams with them and the rest of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were greeting them ecstatically. It was a very pleasant atmosphere and Sonic and Sally beamed delightedly, watching the lovely scene before them.

"Well, well, if it isn't Shadow and Rouge!" cried Knuckles the Echidna, "Didn't expect to see you two again in a while!"

"Likewise." replied Shadow, "And I can just say that me and Rouge are really glad to be part of this battle against the Dark Armada. Your uncle did terrible things to us so we wanna make him pay for it."

"Not to mention kidnapping a child and roboticizing him does NOT settle well with me." said Rouge with a scowl, "Finitevus will pay for doing that to poor Tails."

"You bet he will Rouge." said Shade the Echidna agreeably, "And me and Knuckles owe him much for destroying AngelIsland and taking all the emeralds."

"Now you've got me on the case, finding the emeralds shouldn't be too hard." said Shadow confidently, "Then we can use them against Finitevus and take him down!"

Knuckles and Shade both liked the sound of that. They pictured Finitevus getting the demise he deserved at the hands of any super powered Mobians using the Chaos Emeralds against him, namely Sonic, Shadow, Silver and maybe Knuckles himself.

Meanwhile, Team Chun-Nan was being greeted by Ruben the Water Panther, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit and Cosmo the Seedrian. Matilda was here along with her husband Bladefeather the Falcon, her friends Mushu the Iguana and Li Moon the Vixen and her father Emperor Dalon Tai. He was here because Sally thought Zira and Conquering Storm would target him with Matilda and friends gone so she thought he'd be safer if he came along. Ruben was already in Matilda's arms and hugging her tightly as if they hadn't seen each other in years. Matilda hugged Ruben back graciously.

"Oh honoured princess, I'm so happy to see you again!" cried Ruben excitedly.

"Thank you Ruben. I'm happy to see you too." Matilda said with a smile, "It's an honour to see all of you again." she added, addressing everybody in the room as she said that.

"I'll bet it is." said Amy sweetly, "Sorry we couldn't attend your wedding Matilda but all the same, congratulations on getting married

anyway."

"Thank you so much Amy." said Matilda brightly, "And my condolences for losing Tails Cosmo." she said sadly, looking at Cosmo sympathetically, "He'll be saved, I'm sure he will."

"With all of us united, he definitely will." said Cosmo hopefully, "I long dearly to have my beloved Tails back."

"I very much see why you desire to have your loved one returned safely to you dear child." said Bladefeather, sharing his wife's sympathy for Cosmo, "If Matilda had been kidnapped and roboticized, I'd want nothing more than to have her back in my arms. I hope we can save him too."

"I'm very glad to hear it Bladefeather." said Cosmo appreciatively, "Thank you."

"Anytime." said Bladefeather kindly.

Amy just smiled approvingly at Bladefeather. Some time ago, he used to be rude and pompous and would treat children as if they were idiots and like they were just a bad curse to the world. Nowadays, he was much more polite and pleasant and was even talking nicely to a child! Matilda really had changed him for the better, he really had and Amy couldn't have been prouder of Bladefeather for changing his attitude so much so that he was a much more pleasant Mobian now.

With Team Nekronopolis, Miranda Mongoose was socializing with as many of the Royal Fighters as she could. Thunder and Bolt the Chipmunks did the same whereas Kari the Rat immediately ran over to Mandy Mouse and embraced her. Surprised, Mandy returned the embrace and smiled at her friend. She and Kari were quite close, in a sisterly way no less so she sort of expected Kari to greet her first.

"Hey Mandy, it's great to see you!" squealed Kari, "How's everything been with you since Eggman died?"

"Just wonderful Kari." replied Mandy brightly, "Me and Wilson are still enjoying our lives together, the Rodent Rivalry is officially at an

end with no more mice and rats hating on each other and our dwindling numbers are on the road to recovery. It's been a lovely year, it really has and Eggman's death has made Mobius great once again."

"I'll say, it's been wonderful since Eggman was finally put down for good!" cried Kari, "And the Sky Patrol's working as potently as ever. We used it to gather everybody together."

"I can see you have Kari. And now we have the Sky Patrol, we have a ship of our own to use against the armada." said Mandy with a grin.

"Does the Dark Armada have a ship too?" asked Miranda, suddenly adding herself into the conversation.

"Oh yes Miranda, Finitevus calls it "The Nefarious". Lame name I know. It's pretty much a more evil looking Egg-Carrier and it has cloaking technology." explained Mandy, "Bunnie bought it crashing down but the ship was teleported away and hidden somewhere so I have a nasty feeling we'll be seeing it in flight again. Finitevus will likely have repaired it by now."

"I see. Well I hope the Sky Patrol's firepower will be enough to bring it down again should it take flight." murmured Miranda, "As for Bunnie, such a shame she lost her cybernetics. Sonic told us all about what's happened to you all lately, including Tails being enslaved and Bunnie losing her cybernetics."

"Yeah, the poor kid being enslaved by Finitevus has been a big blow on us all, especially the blue dude himself." said Mandy sadly. "We hope to get him back eventually. As for Bunnie's cybernetics, eh, it's not a total loss. Bunnie has new weapons to compensate for them. She's still able to kick ass so she's fine."

Miranda smiled, pleased to hear this. Unknown to her, Bunnie Rabboh was standing nearby and she'd heard the conversation between Miranda and Mandy. She smiled, pleased to think that despite being fully organic, she was still able to fight. She hoped to use her new weapons again next time a battle happened. And she'd make sure that Finitevus was the one her new cannon was pointed

at.

Team Adabat and Team Megapolis were greeting the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters individually. Scott the Lynx, Team Adabat's leader, made sure that they all knew about what had happened to his unfortunate brother Taran after Ravage came to Adabat to kill him and his team. The reaction was nothing short of sympathy from everybody. Sora in particular seemed to sympathize the most with Scott.

"So me and you have both lost our brothers really." mused Sora, "My brother's a robotical slave working for Finitevus and yours is dead...I'm so sorry for Taran's loss Scott."

"It's alright." said Scott, his face grave and his eyes looking like he was going to cry again, "At least your brother isn't dead so we can save Tails and get you reunited with him. I however...will never see Taran again."

"Our team won't be the same without him." said Jessica the Cougar glumly, "And I doubt Scotty will ever recuperate from his death. They were close, they really were and Taran was the only family Scott had left. Now...he's got no family left."

"I'm just the same Jessica." said Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx, sharing the others' sympathy for Scott, "I have no family either. I lost my parents a long time ago and I was an only child. And the Raiju Clan is certainly not something I'd ever label as my family given how much I hated being a part of it. You have all my sympathy little guy." he said, looking at Scott sadly.

"Mine too." said Kiara the Cheetah glumly, "I have no family too thanks to Team Diamond taking my parents from me...and it makes my blood boil to think that those bastards are part of the Dark Armada!" she growled suddenly.

"It seems many different enemies of ours are in this armada." mused Felix the Peacock, "How unfortunate for us."

"Indeed. So in a way, the armada is every Royal Fighter in the service's enemy." murmured Wilson the Dog, "Each and every team

in this room. No wonder Sonic and Sally gathered everybody up, everybody deserves to have a hand in this conflict."

"You're sure right on that." murmured Kiara, "I mean going through the Royal Fighter records and thinking about the list of names in the armada Sonic gave us on the Sky Patrol, at least one member of the Dark Armada's an enemy of at least one Royal Fighter in this room. One has to wonder how Finitevus gathered together such an army."

"That's somethin' ah wonder too." murmured Bunnie grimly, "Some of those members ah can understand but Scourge, Fiona, Zira and Conquering Storm? How did he get THOSE into his team?!"

"Maybe they're doing what pretty much any Eggman sidekick has done and are using him for their own needs." suggested Geoffrey, "I mean look at Alonzo. And heck, Finitevus himself backstabbed Eggman and killed him apparently! Who wants to bet some of the armada's members are just waiting to overthrow Finitevus and seize control?"

"Well if that's the case, they're all making a grave mistake…" muttered Sora, "Finitevus bested our entire team once! He could probably floor his own armada blindfolded!"

"Maybe he could." added Nicole, suddenly materializing into view to join in with the discussion that was going on around the headquarters.

Sora nodded agreeably. Then suddenly, all attention of the Royal Fighters was diverted from each other and onto Sonic and Sally as the two called for silence in the room. The Royal Fighters fell silent and they all kept their eyes and ears focused on Sonic and Sally as they prepared to speak. Sally started off.

"Royal Fighters of all teams." she announced, "We maybe rid of our worst enemy, Dr. Eggman. But we have an even worse enemy to deal with now. They call themselves the Dark Armada and they're made up of villains who are not only big threats, but also enemies to many of us in more ways than one. At least one member of the armada is somebody in this room's enemy. They currently have our comrade Tails roboticized and forced to work for them as their slave

and they have a mysterious agent spying on my team and feeding Finitevus sensitive information. That is why Teams Adabat, Chun-Nan and Megapolis were attacked. The agent must have informed Finitevus on what me and Sonic were planning so he could make sure you never made it to us."

There was murmurs of worry and disgust among the crowd, something Sally had expected to hear.

"Well when I found out who this agent is, I'm gonna kill him or her!" snarled Scott, his face contorting with rage, "Thanks to that agent, Ravage killed my brother!"

"His death will be avenged Scott, I promise you." said Sonic, "Now then, here's something really important you all need to learn. Silver and Blaze, come forward if you please."

Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat did just that. They had travelled from the future to warn Sonic and friends about the coming apocalypse that dooms Mobius and leaves it in ruins for 200 years with dwindling life and bad places to live. They had found a book that detailed the end of the world for them and they were hoping to prevent it from happening. Silver and Blaze emerged from the crowd and stood forward. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters didn't need to listen, they already knew what they were going to say. The other teams focused on Silver and Blaze, wondering what they were going to say. Silver pulled out the book, the title already catching some attention and earning a few gasps of horror. "Mobius 2144: The FINAL Year". It was 2144 now so the title alone made the Royal Fighters feel nervous.

"In my future, I found this book in a library." explained Silver, "It details how Mobius comes to an end and how me and Blaze came to live in such a dystopian world."

He opened the book and read out some key facts that he'd picked up.

"According to the book, Mobius ends on the 21st of July, 2144." explained Silver, "And the one who ends the world…is Enerjak."

Matilda was the first to react, her expression contorting with horror. She ran over to Silver and grabbed him by the shoulders. Her face was white and her eyes were tiny dots of fear swimming in the whites of her eyes. She was shaking all over with fear and Silver could feel it in her hands on his shoulders.

"It's not true! Tell me it's not true!" Matilda whispered hoarsely.

"It's true." said Blaze, shaking her head sadly, "The book was written by a survivor, he had seen the world end with his own eyes and he clearly stated that the one who did it was a spirit named Enerjak. Given your horrified reaction, I guess you know him."

"Know him?! KNOW HIM?! That…that…that monster took over my mind and made me a raving lunatic!" shrieked Matilda, "He nearly made me murder my father, he made me turn Chun-Nan into a country of cultists who worshipped him, he got me locked up for a crime I didn't commit under my own agenda and…and…"

The princess then broke down crying, putting her hands over her eyes and weeping into them uncontrollably.

"I'd hoped never to hear about that freak again!" she wailed, "Now I hear that he's going to destroy the world!"

Bladefeather and Tai stepped out of the crowd and hugged Matilda comfortingly, the mongoose putting an arm around each of them but still crying uncontrollably.

"My dear children, how does Enerjak come to rise again?" asked Tai worriedly, knowing full well the extent of Enerjak's terror and what he could do for he himself had been a victim of Enerjak's evil just like Matilda.

"The book doesn't say that…but the way the author describes Enerjak seems to coalesce with Finitevus's appearance." explained Silver, "So we THINK the Dark Armada has something to do with Enerjak. We think Finitevus is responsible."

"And because we have an armada member as a prisoner, we can find out what Finitevus's wicked game is." noted Sally, "Me and

Sonic are going to interrogate him now. We'll let you know what the prisoner tells us."

"It better be the truth or I will break Rai's face…" muttered Dark under his breath.

"Oh it will be, because Nicole's handheld form has a lie detector." explained Sally, holding up Nicole's handheld computer form for everybody to see, "ANY attempt to lie will be spotted immediately."

"So Rai has no choice but to tell the truth." sneered Nicole, smirking at the idea that she would be getting the truth out of Rai, "Let's go and have a little chat with him shall we?"

"Indeed. All of you can take a rest for the moment." said Sally, "We'll be back with updates soon."

So Sonic and Sally walked out of Royal HQ with Nicole's handheld form in hand. As they left, Geoffrey St. John gathered around the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters and took them all into the rest room, leaving the others to stand around and talk to each other to pass the time. The moment everybody was in the rest room, Geoffrey closed the door and put his hands behind his back. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters looked at Geoffrey, wondering what he had gathered them all around for.

"Alright then mates, it's time for an interrogation of my own." he announced.

"Oh here it comes, Geoffrey's gonna start pointing fingers again." sighed Mandy, "I bet you're thinking that one of us is Finitevus's hidden agent aren't you?"

"Correct." said Geoffrey bluntly, "BUT I do have a reason. I mean, this agent seems awfully close to us doesn't it? The agent seems to know our every move before we make it. That can only mean one thing…that one of you lot is the agent. I mean, it seems awfully convenient that Sonic and Sally made their plan to recruit the other Royal Fighters in Royal HQ and the agent just happened to hear about it. Only Royal Fighters are allowed in Royal HQ so the agent has to be one of you guys."

"Well don't look at me!" snarled Mandy, "You dare accuse me of being the agent and I'll break your arms!"

"I wasn't going to…" squeaked Geoffrey nervously, "Last time I accused you of being a traitor, you turned out to be an Automaton double and the real you was elsewhere. Plus, being a victim of betrayal yourself**, I doubt you'd want to do something so hypocritical."

"I did always hate hypocrisy." sighed Mandy, rolling her eyes, "So yippee, you don't think it's me, very good. So who do you think it is then?"

"I don't have a particular suspect so I'm just going to tick you all off one by one." explained Geoffrey, "Starting with Knuckles and Shade."

The two echidnas glared at Geoffrey in disgust. The skunk already expected them to react with distaste to his accusation so he quickly held up a hand to keep them quiet.

"Before you lose your heads mates, hear me out." said Geoffrey quickly, "Now then, Angel Island was destroyed and the Chaos and Master Emeralds are in Doc Fin's possession right? Maybe he promised you two the emeralds in exchange for your loyalty to him and thus, you two or at least one of you could be working for Finitevus."

"You do realize how stupid that is right?" growled Knuckles, "Why would I serve my own uncle after what he did to me, did to my home and also the fact he once served Imperator Ix?! And need I remind you Geoffrey St. Dumbass that the armada beat me half to death! Would Finitevus do that to me if I was his agent?!"

"Probably did it to keep up appearances." suggested Geoffrey.

"Yeah and then what would he do if Knuckles DID die of his injuries?" noted Shade, "He'd have wasted a good agent. It can't be Knuckles. And it certainly isn't me either."

"How do we know you're not lying to us?" asked Geoffrey sternly,

"Give me proof that it couldn't have been you and I'll let you off the hook."

"Well take in the fact that before we left to storm The Nefarious, I went with the whole group." Shade said matter-of-factly, "I couldn't possibly have had any time to tell Finitevus that we were coming to storm the ship, take the armada and use Fintievus's rifle to de-roboticize Tails."

"How about the other times then?" asked Geoffrey, "You know, when me and Bunnie went to sabotage the ship? When Sonic, Sally, Sora and Cosmo went over to Holoska? And just now when Sonic and Sally went to get the other teams? How do we know you didn't spy on them and get that information?"

"I've been a victim of abuse from Imperator Ix during my whole childhood, why would I want to return to a life of evil when all it bought me was abuse and misery?!" snapped Shade, "I'm sorry but that defies all logic! It'd be like if Cosmo joined the Martians despite the fact they destroyed her home world, it wouldn't make any sense!"

Geoffrey was about to form a rebuttal to the statement but he kept his mouth close, knowing that he was beaten.

"Point taken, sorry I accused you luv." he said softly.

"Geoffrey, ah think ya'll should stop before ya'll start offendin' people." said Bunnie softly.

"No babe, the agent NEEDS to be uncovered!" protested Geoffrey, "I have to go through with this. Now I know Knuckles and Shade are innocent, time for my next big suspect. Team Chaotix's very own Espio the Chameleon." he glanced over at the ninja chameleon who was standing against the wall looking grim and uninterested in the conversation.

"Gee, I wonder why you think it's me." snorted Espio sarcastically, "It's because I can turn invisible right?"

"Too right mate." said Geoffrey, "Maybe you've been spying on us

while invisible the whole time."

"Well I can refute that claim." put in the Chaotix boss Vector the Crocodile, "Espio was with me and Charmy the whole time we were investigating and trying to find the agent the previous day! He hasn't left my sight!"

"Yeah so don't you dare accuse Espio you smelly skunk!" growled Charmy, "He'd never betray any of us!"

"Indeed, also it'd be disgrace to my honour." put in Espio, "There's no honour in evil deeds. You're wrong to accuse me Geoffrey."

"Well soooooooorry." snorted Geoffrey, "Now onto my next big suspect...Miss Sora Prower." he said, glancing over at the teenage vixen standing before him. Sora was livid with rage to think that Geoffrey would even think of accusing her.

"Geoffrey! Don't you DARE accuse me!" snarled Sora angrily, "You should know full well I would NEVER betray any of you! Why the hell would I work for Finitevus?!"

"He has Tails in his possession. Maybe he's using him as a means to blackmail you." suggested Geoffrey, "And you ARE a spy so you'd make a great pawn for Finitevus."

"Yeah right, wouldn't I be too obvious?" snorted Sora, "Fintievus uses me, a spy working for the Royal Fighters as his spy, wouldn't that be a big give away? Finitevus isn't stupid you know, I'd be the LAST person he'd want to use as an agent because I'd be the first person you'd think of! Using me would be a big case of "Hey! I'm the agent! It's dead obvious!"! And also, I haven't been blackmailed at all! I can even prove it if you wish!"

"You don't need to Sora because unlike Geoffrey St. Accuser over here, we know you're innocent." said Mandy firmly, "Sora is not the agent and even YOU know that Geoffrey! So leave her alone!"

"Alright then, I will. Excuse my ignorance." sighed Geoffrey, "Now onto the next big suspect...Cosmo the Seedrian." He looked over at the worried Seedrian suspiciously.

Cosmo gasped with horror and she put her hands to her mouth.

"Geoffrey...how...how could you?!" she shrieked, "How could you possibly accuse me?!"

"Same reason I accused Sora, Finitevus might be using Tails as a form of blackmail to get you working for him little Cosmo." murmured Geoffrey, "Plus you seemed awfully reluctant to join the mission to Holoska. Maybe it's because you wanted more of an excuse to tell Finitevus everything he needed to learn?"

Cosmo burst into tears. Her sobs gained sympathy from all the Royal Fighters in the room, mostly from Amy and Cream. Geoffrey seemed rather surprised at the fact Cosmo was crying now.

"HOW COULD YOU?!" she screamed at the top of her voice, "I would never work for Finitevus! NEVER! And why would I want to stop you all from rescuing Tails?! I want him saved! Why would I work for Finitevus if it meant keep you from saving Tails?! And the reason I didn't want to come to Holoska with Sonic, Sally and Sora is because I didn't want to face him as a robot! I just...couldn't bear it! And I didn't want Tails to have the horror of attacking me! You're a horrible man for even THINKING of accusing me and you should be ashamed of yourself!"

Cosmo then proceeded to run out of the room in tears, slamming the door shut behind her. The moment she left, Amy and Cream glared at Geoffrey angrily. Amy walked up to the guilty skunk and slapped him across the face.

"Shame on you! Shame on you, shame on you, SHAME ON YOU!" shouted Amy, "How dare you accuse Cosmo! How DARE you!"

"You made Cosmo cry! How could you, you nasty man?!" Cream yelled angrily, "Cosmo's heartbroken over what's happened to poor Tails and you go and think she's trying to keep us from rescuing him?! You're disgusting!"

"But...but...I...I...I have a v-valid p-point didn't I?" stammered Geoffrey.

"No you did not!" snapped Amy, "You forgot one fundamental fact in this case, Cosmo FAINTED when she heard that Tails was roboticized! If she was Finitevus's agent, she'd already know about that so why would she faint?! And you can't just fake fainting either, she was flat-out diagnosed as being unconscious when we took her to hospital! You can't fake that so again, why would Cosmo faint over something she would likely already know?!"

"Maybe the sphere she..." protested Geoffrey.

"The sphere displayed the armada's coordinates, nothing more." noted Sora, "I should know, I studied it. And that was just to trick Cosmo into leading Sonic and Knuckles into a trap. No way could Finitevus have used that for any other purpose. The agent isn't either of us and you're sick for even thinking that."

"Come on guys, we're outta here." said Mandy impatiently, "I don't wanna spend anymore time with Geoffrey St. Asshole anymore. We'll find out who the agent is and this time, we won't be pointing fingers randomly at obviously innocent people."

The Royal Fighters then proceeded to walk out of the room, leaving the gobsmacked but guilt-ridden Geoffrey to do nothing but stand there and think about what had happened. Bunnie looked over at him coldly as she left the room, hurt to think her boyfriend could do this to his own friends.

"Ya'll should've stopped sugah...ya'll should've stopped..." she said, her voice even colder than her face.

She then closed the door behind her, leaving Geoffrey alone in the room to feel nothing but regret for what he'd done. He sat down on the sofa and rested his head on his hands.

"What have I done...?" he asked himself, "I dared to accuse my own mates of being the agent?! I'm a disgrace to the team...I hope they'll forgive me for my behaviour..."

He then put his hands over his eyes and cried, hoping for all the world that he could make up for what he'd done...

Over on the Sky Patrol, Sonic and Sally walked into the containment cell on the bottom floor of the ship. The Sky Patrol was parked outside of New Mobotropolis, waiting to take flight once again. The containment cell had been built there par Miranda Mongoose's request for she knew some day soon, they'd have prisoners to take onboard and keep contained. Sonic and Sally opened up the door and walked into the cell. The cell was tiny, only just being big enough to fit Sonic and Sally in standing side by side. It had a single light, nothing more. Dàfeng Rai was in the cell, his hands bound behind him with laser cuffs and his legs were also bound with laser cuffs. He glared at Sonic and Sally furiously but he didn't try and get up or barge his way past them. He would never escape so he decided to sit down and wait for Sonic and Sally to do what they wanted to him. Sally knelt down before Rai and took Nicole from out of her vest. Her face was straight.

"Hello Rai." she said smoothly, "You and I are going to have a little chat. Think you're up for one?"

"Go to hell bitch! I ain't telling you anything! I'll disgrace my honoured matron!" bellowed Rai.

"Then perhaps you want me and Sally to use less civil methods of interrogation then?" asked Sonic coldly, "Believe me, we WILL resort to such methods if we have to."

"Go ahead, I'm not afraid of torture!" snarled Rai.

"Then I suppose you won't miss having both arms?" asked Sally sternly, "I have energy blades and if you do not comply, I might be tempted to show you how fast I can cut your limbs off. You won't be of much use to Conquering Storm without limbs will you?"

It disgusted Sally dearly to resort to evil threats like this but a Royal Fighters had to do what he/she had to do in order to get the information he/she required. and Sally was VERY desperate for information now so she had to make an exception and use such violent threats to make Rai talk. It worked too for Rai changed his attitude.

"Fine then wretch, what do you want?!" demanded Rai.

"What is Finitevus planning?" asked Sally, holding out Nicole in front of the lynx's face.

"I do not know." lied Rai.

Nicole suddenly made a loud beeping noise that made Rai's ears hurt. Sonic and Sally weren't effected by the noise though, they were wearing earplugs to make the noise less unbearable.

"Oh I'm sorry, you appear to have lied to us." sneered Sally, "My little friend here has a lie detector and believe me, she is NEVER wrong. I'll ask you again, what is Finitevus planning?"

"I just said I don't know OK?!" snapped Rai.

Once again, Nicole made a piercing sound that made Rai cringe in pain.

"OK, OK, I'm lying! I know what he's planning!" yelled Rai, "He's making Synthetic Chaos Energy and he plans to make thousands of Chaos Emeralds with it!"

Nicole didn't make a noise. If she didn't make a noise, it meant that Rai was telling the truth.

"And what is he doing that for?" demanded Sonic.

"To conquer Mobius for everybody in the armada." explained Rai, "He's promised each of us what we desire, the world for Scourge and Fiona, Chun-Nan for Conquering Storm and all the Raiju Clan and more. And with our plan "Operation: Villains Rising", we'll get what we want!"

Nicole remained silent again.

"So Finitevus's plan has nothing to do with anybody named "Enerjak" then?" asked Sally.

"Who's Enerjak?" asked Rai.

Nicole remained silent, surprising Sonic and Sally greatly. They'd expected it to be a lie but Rai was telling the truth in asking who

Enerjak was. Sally looked at Rai.

"Enerjak turned your entire country into a country of cultists." explained Sally, "He drove the princess insane. Does that not ring any bells?"

"You do know that I WAS in prison for most of last year?" snorted Rai, "Prisoners don't hear anything. I have no idea what you're talking about."

Nicole still remained silent. Sonic and Sally weren't sure what to think to that. Surely Rai would have heard about Enerjak, even if he was in prison at the time! But Nicole was indicating that Rai was telling the truth and Nicole was never wrong so they trusted her. Rai was indeed telling the truth.

"OK then, now for the million dollar question." said Sonic quickly, "Where's The Nefarious?"

"In Megapolis." explained Rai, "It's in a hangar bay in a lab in the city."

Nicole didn't make a noise, once again another truth from the prisoner.

"In that case, that's all we needed to know." said Sally, "Thank you ever so much for your time Rai. When the Dark Armada is defeated, I'll be sure to give Conquering Storm your regards."

Rai leaped onto his feet in rage but Sally was ready for him. She already had her wristbands clipper around her wrists and she quickly activated her energy blade. Rai hesitated as Sally held it to his throat.

"Ah, ah, ah." she said tauntingly, "It's rude to threaten the queen you know. Sit. Down."

"Or you'll answer to me!" growled Sonic, "Nobody threatens the queen like that!"

Rai sat back down on the floor, his face contorting with rage. Smirking confidently, Sally sheathed her blades and walked out of

the cell. Sonic shot a death glare at Rai before leaving the cell and closing the door behind him. As the door closed, Rai sighed loudly in annoyance. He had to break out of this puny cell and he had to warn the armada on what he'd been forced into revealing. But then he remembered that Finitevus had an agent on the loose. Maybe the agent would find out what Sonic and Sally had been told and report it Finitevus. And maybe even break him out. The Royal Fighters hadn't won yet, not by a long shot...

As for Sonic and Sally, they walked through the corridors of the Sky Patrol and headed for the exit. As they were walking, Sonic looked over at his girlfriend.

"Well Sal, I didn't know you could be so ruthless." he snickered.

"I had to be, it was the only way Rai would talk." said Sally grimly, "I absolutely HATED doing that though. It made me feel as bad as Eggman. I'm better than he is, I'm no villain."

"I know hot-stuff, you're nothing like that." said Sonic reassuringly, "But you have to be ruthless sometimes, especially for a cause like this. So, got a plan now from the info Rai's given us?"

"Yes." said Sally brightly, "We'll send Blaze over to Megapolis. She'll use her Sol Emeralds to destroy The Nefarious and then get Tails back. Then she can destroy his "Synthetic Chaos Energy" thing as well. I know Rai doesn't know who Enerjak is and both he and Scourge seem to think Finitevus's plan isn't about Enerjak but I still think it is. The Synthetic Chaos Energy sounds like the kind of thing that could resurrect Enerjak. He is a Chaos Demi-God remember?"

"Yeah and Rai says Finitevus is using the energy to make Chaos Emeralds." murmured Sonic, "He has to be using the synthetic emeralds to resurrect Enerjak...or become Enerjak himself. After all, the book that Silver has describes Enerjak's appearance in a way that matches Finitevus."

"Yes...so Rai and Scourge don't know what the plan's really about...unless Enerjak is about fulfilling the desires of the armada's members." suggested Sally, "But Enerjak ends up dooming the world...so Finitevus's plan must be about destroying the world, not

what the armada thinks."

"Well good luck with convincing them that's the case." sighed Sonic, "Oh well, we can stop the armada now. Your plan's fool proof. It can't possibly fail."

"Thanks Sonic." said Sally appreciatively, "Now to bring the news to the Royal Fighters and put the plan into action. I hope it works."

"Me too Sal, me too." said Sonic, nodding agreeably.

The two left the Sky Patrol and headed off back to New Mobotropolis. But unbeknownst to them, they had been spied on once again! Finitevus's agent had been on the Sky Patrol and had been outside the cell, listening to the entire conversation! The agent had left the moment Sally had said "In that case, that's all we need to know" and was now hiding behind the ship itself, contacting Finitevus and whispering into a communication device it was wearing. Once again, Finitevus would be prepared for the Royal Fighters's next move...

"How is the Synthetic Chaos Energy coming along Mecha Tails?" asked Dr. Finitevus curiously.

The very thought of his precious formula being flawed still burned in the back of his mind and he hoped dearly that the formula was right this time. Earlier this very day, he had consulted Mecha Tails about the Synthetic Chaos Energy formula and was disappointed to hear it was flawed. Mecha Tails's analysis had come up with the idea that the formula was too negative in nature and could be uncontrollable so Finitevus had tried finding more items that would likely become positive Chaos Energy. He had the Pagoda of Prosperity's robbed items courtesy of Team Diamond and as punishment for failing to get rid of Team Chun-Nan, Finitevus hadn't kept his promise of them keeping half of the riches and had kept them all himself. He also had two hover-carts full of golden nuggets that he had nicked fresh from the GoldenCaverns, one from Roxy herself that had been left there for a whole year after she had been kidnapped by him ***and one from Rouge who had been mining the precious nuggets earlier with

Shadow and had abandoned them to find Dark and Kiara. He'd given them to Mecha Tails and Mecha Tails had quickly converted them into Chaos Energy along with all the other items that they had stolen to use for the formula.

Mecha Tails was sitting at a table and staring at a giant canister of green liquid. This was the Synthetic Chaos Energy. It looked like green goo but this one canister full of green goo contained the power to evenly match the Chaos Emeralds themselves. A couple of canisters of the liquid would easily match the Master Emerald's power. The canister was connected to a screen and the screen was running a diagnostic scan on the contents inside. The scan completed in a matter of seconds and Mecha Tails observed the results. He looked grave as the results flashed on the screen.

"I'm very sorry master…but it's still flawed." he said disappointedly.

"What do you mean it's still flawed?!" growled Finitevus, "I gave you all those items to make the formula more positive to balance out the negative! How is it still flawed?!"

"You are so obtuse master." scoffed Mecha Tails cheekily, "Now the formula is TOO positive. You had too many positive items given to me."

"Why does that make it flawed then?" asked Finitevus.

"Because if you use a very positive Synthetic Chaos Energy formula, you will not be as powerful as before." explained Mecha Tails, "Plus…Enerjak is negative Chaos Energy. If you want to become Enerjak, you can't be too positive. It violently clashes with the negative Chaos Energy that makes Enerjak who he is. Have too much positive Chaos Energy, you won't become Enerjak. He wouldn't accept you as his host. It is compulsory that we have more Dark Chaos Energy."

"But I've given as much I possibly dared to!" protested Finitevus, "If I give away anymore, I'll start losing my battle prowess! I'll be weaker!"

"Then that's a problem you'll have to fix yourself." said Mecha Tails

grimly, "Either get some items that are more of a negative nature or try and create some more Dark Chaos Energy."

"Or better yet, we remove some of the positive Chaos Energy." suggested Finitevus, "We have too much in, we should just get rid of it."

"Negative, you'll remove some of the Dark Chaos Energy too now it's all been mixed together." said Mecha Tails, shaking his metal head sadly.

"Then I guess we need to hunt for more items…" mused Finitevus, "Good thing that The Nefarious is nearly ready for flying again. Just five minutes left and we can take off."

"I suggest Black Acropolis is a good place to look for an item that will produce Dark Chaos Energy." said Mecha Tails helpfully, "The lava will not be very positive when mixed with Chaos Energy…"

Mecha Tails was suddenly interrupted by Finitevus jumping in his seat in alarm and putting his fingers to his ear.

"What is it?!" he snarled, his tone then changing quickly when he realized who it was, "Oh it's you my wonderful agent! Yes…yes… hmm…interesting…aha…they're planning what? Hmm…that is most disturbing…yes…yes…thank you. Goodbye."

He took his fingers away from his ear and smiled wickedly at Mecha Tails. He had been called by his mysterious agent and he had been delighted to hear what he had been told.

"I think we're about to get some more Chaos Energy for our formula…this one with a fiery twist." he purred sinisterly to his roboticized slave…

Footnotes:

***She is of course, talking about "The Terror of Enerjak"**

**** Mandy was betrayed by General Bostock in *Sonic the***

Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 1: The Malicious Metropolis Masquerade

***** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Raccoon on the Run***

Gee, it's like the Royal Fighters can't win against Finitevus no matter what! Once again, he's a step ahead of them! But does that mean he'll win again?

Tune in next time for* Operation: Blaze *and believe me, the fur REALLY flies next time...

Dark Armada Part 10: Operation: Blaze

Story 210: Operation: Blaze

The Dark Armada Chapter 10 of 25

"Well then Geoffrey St. John, I suppose you have something to say to us?" asked Mandy Mouse in a voice so cold that even Blizzard the Ice Witch would have shivered.

Geoffrey just trudged slowly out of the rest room with his hands behind his back and a sad, gloomy look on his handsome face. He looked terribly guilt-ridden and he had every right to feel this way.

The Royal Fighters were currently in a war against the Dark Armada, a group of villains formulated by Dr. Finitevus himself and in order to match the armada's strength, Sonic the Hedgehog and Sally Acorn had recently gone out around Mobius to recruit the other Royal Fighter teams so they had more Royal Fighters to join in with the war. Sadly, the whole mission hadn't gone without problems and one Royal Fighter had been lost before Sonic could reach him. The armada was consistently a step ahead of Sonic and his friends thanks to a mysterious agent spying on them and working for Finitevus. Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, a Royal Fighter with occasional trust issues and over-baring suspicions the moment anything out of the norm happened, had accused some of Sonic's friends of being the agent from Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas to Espio the Chameleon to Sora Prower and even Cosmo the Seedrian. After sending Cosmo out of the room in tears, the team had scorned Geoffrey for his behaviour and the skunk felt nothing but regret for accusing his friends like this, and even making poor Cosmo cry. So after having a moment to himself to think about his actions, Geoffrey had decided to come out of the room and apologize to everybody. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters all stared at him icily as Geoffrey looked back at them guiltily.

"Hi mates…" he murmured, "Listen…I'm dreadfully sorry about my behaviour. I really, REALLY am. I feel bad that I accused my own

mates of working for Finitevus and I really am sorry that I did so. Especially for making Cosmo cry. I'm just so desperate to find out who this agent is that I'm getting a bit…over edgy I guess. Please mates…can you forgive me?"

He looked down at his feet in shame as if expecting them to say no and start chastising him some more. The Royal Fighters looked like they were going to do this, all of them with rather cold and stern expressions. But then Bunnie Rabboh, Geoffrey's beautiful girlfriend and former cyborg, stood forward and put her hands on Geoffrey's shoulders, looking lovingly into his eyes.

"Ah forgive ya sugah." she said sweetly, "Ah understand why ya'll did what ya did. And besides, we're only Mobian after all. We ain't perfect, we all make mistakes."

"Indeed so." said Ruben the Water Panther, standing forward, "And while I'm still mad you dared to accuse my girlfriend, I'm willing to forgive you too. Apologies like that is very honourable and I very much approve of you having the honour to apologize to us all like that."

"Aw cheers babe, cheers Ruben." said Geoffrey, hugging Bunnie delightedly and looking at Ruben, "How about the rest of you?"

"I think we'll let it be water under the bridge." said Wilson the Dog brightly, "If we're to defeat the Dark Armada, we need to be united, we won't achieve that by being angry at each other."

"Indeed so." agreed Mandy, "Though I wonder if Cosmo will forgive you so easily Geoffrey, you did hurt her very badly."

Then suddenly, right on cue, Cosmo suddenly walked back into Royal HQ and walked into the corridor where the others were standing. In order to keep herself to herself, she had left Royal HQ to let out all her grief and to save anybody else the pain of having to watch her cry. She seemed to have stopped now although she looked a little gloomy, her face the embodiment of misery and her eyes red from crying so much. Cream the Rabbit was quick to pick up on that. She ran over to Cosmo and hugged her gently.

"Are you feeling better Cosmo?" asked Cream worriedly.

"I'm fine Cream, a good cry was all I needed…" murmured Cosmo, "I'm still so disgusted that Geoffrey accused me…"

"Well Geoffrey's come and apologized to us Cosmo so I think he's about ready to apologize to you too Cosmo." said Amy Rose softly, "Isn't that right Geoffrey?"

Cosmo looked up at Geoffrey, the skunk looking back down on her. Geoffrey knelt down to Cosmo's height and he put a hand on the Seedrian's shoulders. Cosmo could see that Geoffrey looked very sorry for what he did from the sad expression on his face.

"Cosmo…I really am sorry I accused you." said Geoffrey apologetically, "I should have known better. It's bad enough that you're still hurting over Tails being Finitevus's robo-minion, I shouldn't have poured more grief on you. I was wrong to do this and I really am sorry I did that. Are we friends again?"

Cosmo took in Geoffrey's apology for the minute before making her decision. She then smiled sweetly and hugged Geoffrey tenderly.

"Yes we are. Thank you for apologizing Mr. St. John." said Cosmo happily.

Geoffrey glowed. He was happy that his friends had forgiven him despite pointing accusing fingers at them earlier. He truly felt honoured to have such good friends to be around in this service. Geoffrey hugged Cosmo back, earning a chorus of awe from the Royal Fighters. To them, it really was a sweet, heart warming scene.

"Thank you Cosmo." said Geoffrey kindly, "Thank you everybody for forgiving me. I couldn't ask for a better group of friends."

"Indeed." said Knuckles, "Now that we've all made up, we just wait for Sonic and Sally to return from their interrogation with Rai."

"I really do consider it fortunate that we even got a member of the armada in our clutches." said Shade, "It would have been more satisfying if it had been Finitevus himself but experience has taught me that Finitevus is NEVER easy to catch."

"It'll be a bloomin' miracle if we even lay a finger on him." muttered Mandy crossly, "Him and his stupid warp rings…"

"What I wouldn't give to pry them all from his scrawny little limbs." grumbled Vector the Crocodile, "That'll make him easier to catch."

"Not really given how fast and powerful he is." mused Espio the Chameleon, "The only way we'd ever catch him is if we caught him by surprise."

"Hey everybody, Sonic and Sally have returned." announced Mace the Elephant suddenly.

The entire team turned around and saw that indeed, Sonic the Hedgehog and Queen Sally Acorn had returned to Royal HQ. They had been on the Sky Patrol interrogating a captured Dàfeng Rai and had now just come back. They looked quite pleased with themselves. The Royal Fighters picked up on this immediately, they must be in for some good news, something that they really needed to hear given all the hard times they were dealing with currently.

"Hey cousin, how'd it go?" asked Abby the Squirrel curiously.

"Surprisingly well Abby." replied Sally brightly, "All I had to do was threaten to amputate Rai's limbs and he cracked like an egg. That and Nicole's brilliant lie detector feature really helped us find out some very useful information from him."

"The Nefarious is in Megapolis City, hiding in a hangar bay that's part of some lab he says." explained Sonic, "And also Finitevus's big plan is about making Synthetic Chaos Emeralds. He plans to do this by making Synthetic Chaos Energy."

The Royal Fighters murmured in unison amongst each other.

"Synthetic...Chaos Energy?" asked Knuckles, "You mean my treacherous uncle is pretty much making custom Chaos Emeralds? What on Mobius is he doing that for?"

"According to Rai, their big scheme's codenamed "Operation: Villains Rising" and it's about fulfilling the desires of each armada member." replied Sonic, "Though knowing Finitevus, I doubt that

he'll keep that promise to his own team. He did kill Eggman remember?"

"So...nothing to do with Enerjak then?" asked Silver the Hedgehog, a future dweller and on a mission to save Mobius from a bad future.

"Rai claims not to know about Enerjak and that the plan's about the armada rather than Enerjak." explained Sally, "But I remember how Finitevus tried to drain Sonic, Knuckles and Shadow dry of Chaos Energy so he could become Enerjak. Now he's making Synthetic Chaos Energy...I dunno, I have a feeling that Finitevus is manipulating the armada and they have no idea what they're really doing."

"Why would they care?" snapped Amy, "They're evil, Enerjak's evil so Enerjak would be the kind of thing they'd want to conquer the world with. Maybe Enerjak's all about fulfilling the desires of the armada?"

"But he destroys the world..." noted Blaze the Cat, another future dweller and Silver's girlfriend, "Surely the armada doesn't want to destroy the world?"

"No they don't." answered Nicole, her holographic avatar materializing out of thin air and standing beside Sally, "Scourge and Fiona want to rule the world, Zira and Conquering Storm want to rule Chun-Nan, Lord Sycorax wants to erase all politics, Ravage just wants to destroy Adabat and eat all of us, Team Diamond just want to be rich, Captain Metal just wants you dead Blaze, Cutthroat Jim...I'm not sure what he wants. Maybe revenge for being marooned. Raphael, from what Dark and Kiara tell us, wants to make everybody a cyborg. So Enerjak destroying the world goes against what their motivations are."

"Maybe Finitevus becomes Enerjak and goes crazy and destroys the world?" suggested Sora Prower, the super spy sister of the still enslaved Tails, "Maybe Enerjak destroying the world is nothing more than a freak accident on the Dark Armada's part. Or maybe that's what Finitevus wants to do full stop."

"Whatever he's planning, we're going to stop it and I have a fool-

proof plan." announced Sally, "Blaze will go over to Megapolis and once The Nefarious either takes off or is found before it can do so, Blaze will use her Sol Emeralds to destroy the ship, get Tails back and even destroy the Synthetic Chaos Energy. The armada will be crippled and we will be victorious at last."

"Well I'm honoured that you're giving me this responsibility your majesty." said Blaze, bowing politely to Sally, "Thank you. Though I do risk losing my emeralds to the armada. I'll make sure that I don't lose them in this mission."

"I very much doubt that you will Blaze." said Sally reassuringly, smiling brightly at the fire cat, "If you just turn super right before you attack The Nefarious, the armada won't have a chance of getting your emeralds."

Blaze had to admit that Sally was right. The armada would have no chance of getting the Sol Emeralds from her if she was to turn into Burning Blaze before even jumping into battle. Sally was right to say that the plan was fool-proof, it couldn't possibly fail. Blaze smiled confidently at Sally.

"I think I agree with you." she said brightly, "The armada won't get my emeralds once I'm Burning Blaze. Even if Scourge uses the Chaos Emeralds to turn super, I'll still destroy the ship. Maybe I could even trick him into helping me with that."

"Sounds like a good idea Blaze." said Sonic approvingly, "Hey and maybe you could retrieve the emeralds as well as Tails when you tear that vessel apart." he suggested with a wink.

"I shall see to it that the Chaos Emeralds are retrieved too." declared Blaze, "Wish me luck over in Megapolis...not that I really need it."

"As far as I'm concerned Blaze, you've pretty much got this mission in the bag." said Silver supportively, hugging the beautiful fire cat, "You can't possibly fail. I'll see you when you get back."

"See you later Silver." said Blaze, kissing him on the cheek affectionately "I'll be back soon everybody. With the armada's ship in ruins and some very valuable items and a very valuable comrade

returned to you all."

The Royal Fighters all waved goodbye to Blaze as she used her Sol Emeralds to warp out of Royal HQ in a tornado of flames. The dazzling display caused many of them to shield their eyes from the brightness of the flames and stay well back so the flames wouldn't burn. After the teleportation had ended, the Royal Fighters unshielded their eyes and stood still for a moment, allowing a tense silence to fall upon Royal HQ. Now they would wait, wait for Blaze to return to Royal HQ with good news to give. Sonic could already feel himself tingling with excitement. Tails would be saved and the armada would be crippled. No ship for them to fly around in and hide in anymore. And Finitevus's beautiful plan would fail spectacularly since Blaze was going to destroy the Synthetic Chaos Energy, thus Enerjak would never come to be. Mobius would be saved and the future would be glorious, just right for Silver and Blaze. Sonic began to feel uncomfortable with the silence so he turned to face the others.

"So, what happened while me and Sally were on the Sky Patrol?" he asked curiously...

Meanwhile, *The Nefarious* was ready to launch. It had been damaged and had been stuck on the ground since yesterday but thanks to some rather prodigious repair work, the ship was fully repaired and waiting to take flight. Bunnie Rabboh had been the one to damage the ship with the aid of Geoffrey's arm-mounted crossbow and some exploding darts. But the damage had been repaired. The left side of the ship was no longer a massive hole, the circuitry was fixed and functional and the ship was capable of flying again. Such thoughts were swimming around Dr. Finitevus's mind like goldfish in a bowl as he walked down the corridor and headed towards Captain Metal's dorm room. Yesterday he had requested for Captain Metal to make something that could deal with Blaze the Cat after she had managed to give Super Scourge a tough time thanks to her Sol Emeralds. Finitevus wasn't going to allow Blaze to be able to turn super like this, she had the potential to end the armada here and now because of it. So he'd asked Captain Metal to make something that would deal with her. He entered the pirate Metal

Sonic's dorm room and greeted him enthusiastically. Captain Metal stood to attention and greeted Finitevus.

"Matey!" he cried happily.

"So Captain Metal, did we make something that can deal with a certain pyrokinetic feline and make the armada happy?" asked Finitevus in a faux, sweet tone of voice that seemed very awkward coming from somebody as cruel and sadistic as himself.

"Aye captain, I sure did make something that can deal with Blaze Tharr Cat!" announced Captain Metal excitedly, "Behold, me greatest invention!"

He turned around and picked something up from his working desk. Being a robot, he didn't need a bed to sleep on so instead of a bed, he had a steel desk that he used to create new weapons or whatever he could make on it. After cutting Scourge's arm off and tearing his eye out for failing yesterday, he'd gotten to work on making something that would guaranteed a victory over Blaze the Cat. This was a great privilege for Captain Metal since Blaze had humiliated him twice already and he wanted nothing more than to make Blaze pay for her crimes against him. He showed Finitevus his new invention, holding it with his one hand and supporting the end of it with his gun arm underneath. It was a huge cannon shaped weapon with a handle at the back and a handle on the top. It looked very big and heavy and Finitevus stared at it in wonder.

"Um...what's a laser cannon going to do to deal with Blaze?" he asked, "She'll be invincible as Burning Blaze, that won't stop her."

"That be where yer wrong me heartie." said Captain Metal matter-of-factly, "Fetch me a Chaos Emerald and I'll demonstrate it for ye."

Finitevus shrugged, wondering why he shouldn't do something like this so he opened up a warp ring and reached through it. The warp ring was opened up to there the Chaos Emeralds and Master Emerald were being held. This room was so secret that only the armada knew where it was and it was hidden in such a way that nobody would find it for the door of the room looked like the wall outside and there were no buttons to open it. Only through a warp

ring or by voice command from Finitevus himself would allow anyone access inside the room. Finitevus grabbed a Chaos Emerald and took his hand back out of the warp ring. He had picked the blue Chaos Emerald, fitting for Captain Metal to test his weapon on for the main enemy, Sonic, was blue too. Finitevus held the Chaos Emerald out and Captain Metal aimed the cannon at it. He pulled the trigger with his metal claws and a brilliant blast fired out of the cannon's barrel. It struck the Chaos Emerald and then something amazing begin to happen. Blue swirls were beginning to feed out of the Chaos Emerald and into the cannon itself as if the cannon was draining it dry of the energy contained inside it. Finitevus gasped in surprise and let go of the Chaos Emerald. It was like watching somebody get all the blood in his body drained out of them. The cannon kept up until the Chaos Emerald eventually went a dull grey colour and fell to the ground with a clatter. No energy left in it whatsoever, it was all inside the cannon. Finitevus picked up the power-drained Chaos Emerald and jaw-dropped.

"A...Amazing...w...what is that weapon?!" he gasped.

"It be an invention of me universe's Dr. Eggman." explained Captain Metal, "He calls it tharr "Chaos Drainer". A Chaos Drainer is a most amazing weapon, effortlessly able to power drain any Chaos Emerald in tharr multiverse dry in seconds! All its energy be stored inside tharr drainer itself! Isn't it amazing me heartie?!"

"Yes...quite..." stammered Finitevus. The first time in his life, he had been shocked at something other than his experiences inside the void a while back. He'd never seen anything so amazing.

"And tharr best part is tharr Chaos Drainer can put the Chaos Energy back in case ye want to use tharr emeralds for yerself." announced Captain Metal, "Watch..."

He then aimed the Chaos Drainer at the power drained Chaos Emerald, Finitevus still holding onto it as he did so. He turned a dial on one side of the weapon and he pulled the trigger. The Chaos Drainer fired a beam at the Chaos Emerald but instead of something coming out of it, something came IN to it. Blue swirls of energy began to feed back into the Chaos Emerald. As this happened, the Chaos Emerald began to glow again, getting brighter and brighter

until finally, all the energy was back in the emerald and its glow was back to normal. Finitevus could only stare incredulously at the great weapon Captain Metal held in his hands and then back at the Chaos Emerald.

"Very impressive...how fortuitous indeed that I have a Metal Sonic on my team..." he mused to himself, "So I suppose you plan to use this on Blaze?"

"Y'aaargh! That be EXACTLY what I be plannin' ta do!" bellowed Captain Metal excitedly, "Ye wanted me ta make something that would deal with her and her emeralds and that be just what I be doing! I made this Chaos Drainer ta drain her emeralds dry of their powers! It'll work on ANYTHING Chaos powered, even tharr Sol Emeralds! And then once I power drain her emeralds, I will let ye use it fer yer Synthetic Chaos Energy. I bet it'll be very useful."

"Thanks very much Captain Metal." purred Finitevus, putting the Chaos Emerald back in the hidden room via warp ring, "Now then, my agent tells me Blaze will be on her way to destroy The Nefarious and will use her Sol Emeralds to do the task."

"I know, ye announced it five minutes ago." noted Captain Metal, "I have Cutthroat Jim on the lookout, waiting to give me tharr warning that she be here ta destroy our ship."

Just as he finished that sentence, he ended up receiving a call on a communications device he had lying on his work desk. He turned his head and looked at the communicator.

"Shiver me timbers Captain Metal! Blaze is here!" Cutthroat Jim cried frantically on the other side of the communicator.

"Then it be time to spring into action..." declared Captain Metal delightedly, "Keep her busy Jim me lad, I'll be right with ye."

"Aye, aye sir!" replied the pirate hyena gleefully.

The communicator switched off and Captain Metal looked at Dr. Finitevus.

"Time ta give ye some more Chaos Energy for yer formula matey..."

he purred delightedly as Finitevus passed him a warp ring...

Up above, Blaze the Cat arrived in the City of Megapolis in a whoosh of flames. As her teleportation was completed, Blaze put the Sol Emeralds away and had a look around. She'd never seen MegapolisCity before. In her time, MegapolisCity was nothing but ruins and rubble with no buildings intact at all, not even slightly. In any other case, Blaze would be taking the sweet time to observe this city that no longer existed in her timeline thanks to Enerjak's apocalypse. But now, she had to make sure that this city would exist in the future and that meant stopping the Dark Armada and destroying the Synthetic Chaos Energy. Once she did that, Enerjak would never rise and Mobius would never end. It made Blaze feel privileged that as of this moment, she would be saving Tails from being a roboticized minion for Finitevus any longer and she'd also be saving Mobius by stopping the Dark Armada from commencing with its plan. But Blaze began to feel a worrying tingle in her gut. What if the armada WASN'T responsible for Enerjak? Would she and Silver be going around in circles once again? Blaze shook her head, she couldn't be pessimistic. She had to think about the mission and all the good it would bring. The Chaos Emeralds would be out the armada's reach, Tails would be reunited with his friends and the armada wouldn't have a ship to fly with anymore. This mission would stop Enerjak from rising, it would save the world. Blaze felt the worrying feeling fade away as she forced herself to think positively. Now she was focused, she walked towards MegapolisCity. It was a grand looking city with very modern looking buildings and perfectly made roads with no bumps or potholes or even cracks in them. The city was having a slow day, very little cars actually driving around on the roads at this moment. Blaze took it all in sadly, thinking that soon, this very year, it would all be gone unless she succeeded in her mission.

"Such a wonderful past Mobius has…and hopefully the future can be just as wonderful." she mused under her breath.

She stopped walking towards the city as she suddenly saw something in the corner of her eye. What was it? Blaze turned her head to one side and saw something nearby. There was a hyena

dressed in a purple long coat and a French cocked hat. He was waving a cutlass in the air like a lunatic, the silver, curved blade shining in the sunlight that shone from up in the sky. Who on Mobius was that crazy hyena? Blaze had a feeling she wasn't going to like him very much and she was very tempted to just ignore him and walk along some more but Blaze had a feeling that the hyena was trying to call her. Maybe he wanted something. Maybe he could help her find the lab *The Nefarious* was hiding in. Rai hadn't been very specific to Sonic and Sally when he told them it was hiding in a hangar bay to some lab so maybe this stranger could give her a few pointers. Blaze ran over to the cutlass wielding canine and stopped just before him. Now closer to him, Blaze could see that the hyena had a pretty mean look on him, the look that suggested anybody who met him was in deep trouble. She began regretting coming towards him but now she was here, she supposed she could see what he wanted.

"Hello sir, what are you waving your cutlass around for?" she asked, "Did you want me or something?"

"Aye lassie I did!" cried Cutthroat Jim gleefully, "I wanted ye over here so that I could cut off yer head and give it ta Captain Metal!"

Blaze reacted immediately. She summoned fire to her hands and adopted a battle-ready stance, itching for a fight with the stranger before her.

"Captain Metal?!" she snarled, "You're working for him! You've set me up for a trap! Well let me tell you pirate filth…you've just signed your death warrant!"

"Have I really me beautiful little mermaid?" sneered Jim confidently, "Then I suppose this be a fight to tharr death then?!"

"If you're working for that scum Captain Metal then yes!" growled Blaze.

"Captain Metal be no scum lassie! He be a great pirate captain he be!" declared Cutthroat Jim in a tone that made him sound like he was stating his opinion as a fact, "He actually rescued me after Sonic and his friends marooned me on Cocoa Island*! I owe him

much fer rescuing me, I really do! And I'll cut off yer head fer insulting him ya fiery wretch!"

"Pray I don't fry your head to a crisp first…" replied Blaze coldly.

"That will not be happenin' today sweetheart!" the hyena pirate declared, "Ye know, it be a shame Captain Metal ordered me ta kill ya…yer a beautiful little lass ye are. Ye'd do fine as me first mate… and I mean that in more ways than one." he added with a mischievous chuckle and a sly smile spreading out on his furry lips.

"Maybe I should arrange a date for us…in the afterlife." snorted Blaze.

The whole thing was nothing more than a method of distraction. Cutthroat Jim wasn't meant to fight Blaze, he was meant to keep her busy while Captain Metal showed up onto the scene. Right on cue, before any fighting could start, Captain Metal appeared behind Blaze via a warp ring given to him by Dr. Finitevus. He had the Chaos Drainer with him, the back handle held tightly in his left hand and the barrel of the cannon balanced atop his gun arm. He aimed it directly at Blaze but the fire cat spun around on her heels and saw him. She gasped in horror at the sight of the huge cannon in his hands and was about to react but Captain Metal quickly shot her with it. Blaze gasped but to her surprise, the shot wasn't hurting her. It struck her directly in the chest but she couldn't feel anything happening. But she saw something happening instead. Trails of energy and fire were coming out from her body and snaking their way into the Chaos Drainer. Blaze wasn't sure what was happening but she knew that it couldn't be good. Captain Metal never built good things so the weapon he had had to be bad. Blaze tried to run away from Captain Metal but her body wouldn't obey her mind. The shot had fixed her firmly to the spot. She was unable to move and unable to do anything about Captain Metal. She could only stand and stare as the Chaos Drainer did its work. The cannon eventually finished draining the energy it was draining and Blaze was now free to move again. She gasped for breath for her body had become so still, her breathing had become a bit stiff. Once she got the air back into her lungs, Blaze summoned fire to her hands and growled menacingly.

"OK Captain Metal, what did you just do to me?!" snarled Blaze,

"Nothing much it seems…I don't feel any different."

"That be where yer wrong me dear." said Captain Metal smoothly, "Try using yer Sol Emeralds on me. I dare ye."

Blaze didn't stop to think, she immediately whipped out the Sol Emeralds and prepared to become Burning Blaze. Only there was something dreadfully wrong. Blaze held the Sol Emeralds in front of her but much to her horror, they didn't float above her. They didn't even glow. They remained in her hands, power-drained and useless to her. They were nothing more than gemstones, no value of any kind and nothing to power up with. Blaze let out a horrified gasp and she dropped the Sol Emeralds in shock.

"You monster! You drained them all! You drained all my Sol Emeralds!" she roared, her hands flaming wildly with rage as if corresponding to the anger in her eyes.

"Yes I did lassie." crowed Captain Metal, "Now ye won't be destroyin' tharr Nefarious and rescuing Tails and destroyin' Finitevus's Synthetic Chaos Energy. No indeed."

"What?! How did you know about that?!" shrieked Blaze, "Wait… Finitevus's agent…it's stricken again! But how?!"

"Do not ask me lassie, even I do not know who Finitevus's agent is." snorted Captain Metal, "Even if I did I wouldn't tell ye. All ye need to know is ye'll never get tharr drop on us."

"Maybe not…but I'll still use my Sol Emeralds to destroy you…" growled Blaze, "I'll snatch that weapon from you, break it open and use the power you've drained to become Burning Blaze. And then you will BURN!"

She was about to fight Captain Metal but Cutthroat Jim was quick to react. He had sneaked up behind Blaze while she was talking to Captain Metal and he walloped her in the head with the hilt of his cutlass before she could make a move. Blaze cried out in pain and collapsed onto the ground, not unconscious but very much with her head swimming and her senses very disorientated. Blaze gripped her head in pain, wondering what had hit her. Now she was down,

Captain Metal threw down the Chaos Drainer, grabbed her by the neck and hoisted her up off her feet. He closed his grip around her neck tightly, denying her lungs any access to air. Blaze gagged loudly and tried to make Captain Metal let her go but the evil robot pirate had a very strong grip. It was pointless to kick him since he couldn't feel pain anymore and fire wouldn't make him let go either. She was stuck, doomed to suffocate to death at the hands of Captain Metal. While she was being strangled, Captain Metal took the opportunity to stomp on the power-drained Sol Emeralds, smashing them to pieces instantly. Blaze let out a throttled cry of despair as Captain Metal smashed the Sol Emeralds. If she destroy the Chaos Drainer, she wouldn't be able to put the power back into the Sol Emeralds. The power would have nowhere to go now. With his enemy's precious emeralds destroyed, Captain Metal looked at Cutthroat Jim delightedly.

"Well done matey!" he praised, "Ye will make a fine ship mate ye will!"

"Thank you captain." said Cutthroat Jim with pleasure, "So what will we do with tharr lass now?"

"I be very tempted to kill her here and now…" suggested Captain Metal, strangling Blaze a little harder and making the cat cry out a strangled cry of pain, "…but at tharr same time, death be too merciful fer her. Maybe she could be a test subject fer Finitevus's Synthetic Chaos Energy."

"Ack…don't…you…gack…dare!" croaked Blaze desperately, holding Captain Metal's wrist tightly as he continued to throttle her.

"But my dear Blaze, we need to test tharr formula or else we won't be knowing if it'll work will we?" replied Captain Metal in a faux tone of shock at his fiery nemesis's quote, "Ye have tharr honour of bein' our test subject! Once we know it works, we'll be ready ta use it to bring tharr armada ta victory!"

"A pity really, I would love to keep her as me pet slave I would." muttered Cutthroat Jim.

"Well too bad, tharr lass is mine and I decide what we do ta her."

declared Captain Metal, "And I say she be used as a test subject for tharr formula! Use me warp ring ta get us into tharr Nefarious's laboratory. I'm afraid me hand be full at tharr moment." he ordered, "And don't forget me Chaos Drainer too."

The hyena did as he was told. Captain Metal had the warp ring draped over one of the bolts on his hat having put it there before using the Chaos Drainer on Blaze. Jim took the warp ring and opened it up. The warp ring led to *The Nefarious's* laboratory, right where the Synthetic Chaos Energy was kept. Captain Metal carried Blaze through the warp ring, still strangling her as he did so. His pirate assistant picked up the Chaos Drainer, surprised at how heavy it was in his hands, and he followed his saviour through the warp ring. All that was left behind were the shattered remains of the power-drained Sol Emeralds…

Onboard *The Nefarious* , everybody was preparing for take off. *The Nefarious* 's repairs were completely done now so up on the bridge, Finitevus gave the order for take-off and commanded everybody to brace themselves for the ascendance into the sky. *The Nefarious's* computer pilot registered Finitevus's take-off order and set the ship into motion. The malevolent vessel began to whirr into life as the engines ignited and the systems started up. *The Nefarious* prepared to raise up off the floor of the hangar bay and back up into the outside world that it had become familiar with over the one year Finitevus had been hiding aboard it before making his move. The hangar bay doors opened up and *The Nefarious* began to rise slowly up off the floor, making a terrific noise as it did so. It was like a dragon that had been asleep in its cave for hundreds of years, getting up, roaring and flying again for the first time in years. The "eyes" of *The Nefarious* glowed eerily and the engines roared with life. With the doors fully open, *The Nefarious* ascended up out of the hangar bay and climbed up into the sky.

The take-off was felt all over the ship, even in *The Nefarious's* laboratory, a low rumbling feeling in the floors that was felt in the feet of anybody standing on it. The ship would soon have a smoother flight as it carried on into the sky. In the laboratory, Captain Metal and Cutthroat Jim just carelessly dumped Blaze onto

the floor against the wall. The fire cat began coughing violently, relieved that Captain Metal had let go of her neck at last. She fought to get the air back into her lungs as Cutthroat Jim pointed his cutlass at her chest. Blaze looked up and stared at Jim as the pirate prepared to run her through with the sharp, curved blade he now pointed at her. She could felt the cold steel just above her left breast, aimed straight at her heart. She didn't dare move in fear of being impaled by the sword. She remained sat at the wall, staring helplessly up at Cutthroat Jim.

"Stand up, back against the wall and hands by yer sides!" growled Jim viciously, "Otherwise I will run ye through and I'd much rather not harm such a lovely looking lady like yerself!"

Blaze complied, getting slowly up to her feet but keeping her back firmly pressed against the wall and her hands firmly kept by her side. She narrowed her eyes at Cutthroat Jim angrily as if trying to scare him into backing down. But the pirate kept the tip of his cutlass blade pressed firmly against Blaze's chest. His arm remained outstretched and Blaze could feel the pressure he was applying on the blade. It wasn't enough to impale, but it was enough to prod and it was slightly hurting her a she was doing it. This was just enough to keep the cat from trying anything to get away. One wrong move and her heart ended up skewered like a kebab. Blaze forced herself to keep still as Cutthroat Jim kept his steely gaze fitted on her.

"And don't let me catch ye so much as lighting any fires either!" growled Cutthroat Jim, "One wrong move and yer dead!"

Blaze complied, not daring to so much as set one of her fingertips alight. She kept very still, scarcely daring to move.

"So…why use me as a test subject?" asked Blaze curiously, "Why not just kill me?"

"Believe me lassie, we're still holding onto that option and if this test goes horribly wrong, we will be forced ta put ye down." Captain Metal warned her threateningly, "Now be quiet!"

Blaze kept her mouth firmly closed as Captain Metal raised the Chaos Drainer and pointed it at a canister full of green liquid. He

was standing at the work desk, where the Synthetic Chaos Energy was being kept. Blaze could just see over Cutthroat Jim's shoulder the canister of green liquid that she had come to destroy. There it was, Synthetic Chaos Energy, the very thing that would very likely bring Enerjak into existence. Sally spoke of how Finitevus had attempted to drain Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles dry of Chaos Energy to become Enerjak. There could be no other reason for Finitevus to be making Synthetic Chaos Energy, it had to be for Enerjak. And Blaze had to destroy it so Enerjak wouldn't exist and the world wouldn't end this year. But she was caught between the wall and Cutthroat Jim's sword. She had to wait for an opening to present itself before she could make any moves. She watched with loathing as Captain Metal opened the canister and poured the Sol Emerald's energy into it, mixing up the fiery hot energy in with the Chaos Energy inside the canister. The canister filled up some more, reaching the very top as the Chaos Drainer emptied its components inside. Captain Metal then put the Chaos Drainer down on the desk and he closed the canister. He picked it up and swirled it around to mix up the Sol Emerald's energy with the Synthetic Chaos Energy. The liquid began to turn into a reddish green colour, presumably from the fire of the Sol Emeralds.

Blaze dreaded to think what would happen if Captain Metal used it on her. She had to escape and destroy it fast! But Cutthroat Jim wouldn't keep his eyes off her and he was watching her as if expecting her to so much as sneeze on him, any excuse to skewer her. She couldn't get away. Captain Metal then picked up a syringe that was lying on the desk and he filled it up with some of the Chaos Energy. The menacing machine then walked slowly towards Blaze, syringe in hand and ready to pump her full of Synthetic Chaos Energy. He was eagerly anticipating what the effects would be. Blaze would either become a Chaos powered slave for the armada or the formula would just give her a violent death. Either way, he was looking forward to this. Blaze began to sweat nervously as Captain Metal came close to her.

"Now let's see how Finitevus's formula works on ye…" he said sinisterly, ready to inject Blaze with the syringe.

"No, please wait!" begged Blaze, "Before you use it on me, please

answer me this big question."

"Go on then." growled Captain Metal angrily.

"Do you two know anything about Enerjak at all?" asked Blaze curiously.

The two pirates stared at each other incredulously.

"What in tharr world is an Enerjak?!" demanded Captain Metal in confusion.

"A Chaos Demi-God who causes the destruction of Mobius this very year." explained Blaze, "Me and Silver read a book detailing Mobius's final year. The world comes to an end this year and Enerjak is the cause of it! And that Synthetic Chaos Energy is likely the cause of Enerjak coming to destroy Mobius, you must let me destroy it so Mobius will survive!"

Captain Metal stared at Blaze as if her head had just turned into a pumpkin complete with carved eyes and a mouth.

"Lassie…I think ye've swallowed too much sea water." the robot pirate snorted, "This here Synthetic Chaos Energy be to help us take over tharr world! It has nothing to do with some sea dog named Enerjak! Finitevus didn't mention Enerjak at all when he told us tharr plan of his!"

"Finitevus is manipulating you all!" protested Blaze, mostly going on speculation rather than fact, "He's really trying to resurrect Enerjak and destroy the world! In the book Silver and I read, Enerjak was described as being an albino echidna with black markings and a cape! Finitevus fits that description! You mustn't let him commence with his plan or you'll destroy all of Mobius! Please, listen to me!"

The two pirates standing before Blaze just shook their heads in faux sympathy as if pitying the poor fire cat.

"Lassie, ye really are mental." snorted Captain Metal.

"And ta think I thought ye were beautiful…" sighed Cutthroat Jim, "I don't like crazy girls."

"I'm not crazy!" snapped Blaze fiercely, "I can even show you the evidence I have if you don't believe me!"

"Nice try wretch but we ain't fallin' fer such an obvious trick." growled Captain Metal, "Now be quiet while I inject this into yer bloodstream!"

Captain Metal ignored Blaze and he raised his syringe, ready to inject Blaze with the Synthetic Chaos Energy. The fire cat began to sweat even more furiously with fear. She couldn't let Captain Metal inject even a drop of the energy into her! If he did, terrible things could happen to her. It might even kill her and Blaze valued her life too much to let Captain Metal take it away from her like this. Just as the pirate/Metal Sonic hybrid machine aimed the sharp needle at Blaze's neck, the lavender furred feline decided to take a very risky gambit. She set her entire body aflame, forcing Captain Metal to stand back in alarm. The flames wouldn't do any harm to Captain Metal as he was heatproof and couldn't feel pain due to upgrades made to his body after Blaze destroyed him the first time, his reaction had been entirely out of surprise more than anything. He hadn't expected Blaze to do this since he was sure Cutthroat Jim had her in a position she didn't dare risk her life in. As for his hyena sidekick, Cutthroat Jim stepped back from Blaze as if suddenly terrified of her. He was very close to her, so close that he actually felt the heat of her flames on him and it felt very hot to him, too hot for comfort so he forced himself to stand back in case Blaze burnt him. But Jim had made a very costly mistake for himself and Captain Metal. Now the sword was away from Blaze's chest, the cat reacted at an incredible speed. She grabbed the pirate canine's hands and twisted them sharply, numbing them and causing them to let go of his cutlass. Blaze picked up the cutlass and slashed Jim across the face with it, leaving a long cut that would later become a scar across it. Jim roared in pain and Blaze whirled around fast so she could block Captain Metal's swinging gun arm. His gun arm had a blade attached to the end of it and Captain Metal had hoped to take Blaze's head off with it but Blaze had blocked the blow. While she held his blade away from her neck, Blaze aimed her hand at Captain Metal and fired a jet of flames into her metallic nemesis's face. The flames did no harm to Captain Metal but he was blinded by them. He couldn't see a thing with a wave of fire in his face. This gave Blaze

the perfect opportunity to make her killer move. She raised the cutlass and swung it at Captain Metal's neck. In one perfect swish of the curve-bladed sword…she took Captain Metal's head clean off his shoulders! Captain Metal's headless body collapsed onto its knees and slammed down on the floor as his head clattered across the floor forlornly. Blaze threw the cutlass down on the floor and grabbed Captain Metal's discarded head.

"I said it once and I'll say it again…STAY DEAD!" snarled Blaze, tightening her grip on the head she held in her hands, "And this maybe stretching things…but I bet your head could come in handy. You'll likely have all kinds of information stored inside that the Royal Fighters can use. Now one more thing before I make a break for it…"

Tucking Captain Metal's head under her arm, Blaze ran over to the work desk and she yanked up the Synthetic Chaos Energy canister. She raised it high above her head and threw it down onto the ground with a terrific smash. The canister broke into pieces and spilt its green coloured contents all over the floor. Cutthroat Jim gasped in horror as Finitevus's precious formula was spilled on the floor, staining the silver metal of the floor green and to add insult to injury, Blaze set the entire goo alight by throwing flames at it. The Chaos Energy ignited and blazed away like a puddle of jet fuel on fire. Blaze smirked triumphantly to herself and proceeded to run out of the lab with Captain Metal's head in her hands. The fire she had caused began to evaporate the Chaos Energy, burning away brilliantly on the puddle that was all over the floor. The Synthetic Chaos Energy was no more, never to be used to bring Enerjak to life. Horrified, Cutthroat Jim leaped up onto his feet and he switched on his communicator.

"Dr. Finitevus! Fire on the poop deck!" he shrieked wildly, "Blaze has destroyed yer formula thingy and is making off with Captain Metal's head! Sound tharr alarm, SOUND THARR ALARM!"

Dr. Finitevus, who was on the other side of the communicator, reacted immediately. He ordered *The Nefarious* to sound its alarm and glared at the monitors in the bridge to see where Blaze was heading. A wailing alarm blared throughout the entire ship, the noise so loud and so deafening that anybody down on the ground below

would faintly hear it even from the height it was flying at. The Dark Armada members all caught the alarm and gasped as Finitevus announced over the intercom:

"We have Blaze the Cat running loose aboard this ship! Repeat, Blaze the Cat running loose aboard this ship! She is heading to the roof of The Nefarious! Capture her and slay her on sight! Repeat, SLAY HER ON SIGHT!"

The armada reacted as soon as Finitevus gave them the order, dashing out of their dorm rooms and stampeding through the corridors like a frantic herd of wildebeest trying to outrun the lion that was hunting it. Only Roxy the Raccoon was left behind, tied up to a pole and gagged in Lennox's room while he and his team mates ran after the others. Dr. Finitevus himself used a warp ring to warp onto the roof of his glorious vessel, already waiting to receive Blaze upon stepping out of the warp ring. His face contorted with rage as he waited for Blaze to arrive. The fiery feline had destroyed his precious formula! He was going to give her a very painful, sadistic death for this and Blaze would end up wishing she was never born when he was finished with her! Moments later, Blaze finally arrived on the roof of *The Nefarious* . Despite being unfamiliar with the ship, she had managed to get to this point mostly from following corridors and coming across staircases that took her up to the roof. Blaze was hit in the face by a sweep of cold air as she found herself back outside in the open air but very high up and running across the top of a huge vessel. Blaze clutched Captain Metal's head tightly to her body as she ran, her high-heeled shoes making loud clatter noises with every step she took. She gasped in horror upon seeing Finitevus ahead of her, waiting to slaughter her violently for what she did. She turned to the left and ran for it. Finitevus summoned a warp ring in front of her but Blaze jumped over it and ran on until she reached the side of *The Nefarious* . She skidded to a halt and let out a yelp of terror when she saw that she was extremely high up. *The Nefarious* was in the sky and flying hundreds of feet above the ground, casting a small shadow down below across the ground. Blaze felt her heart rate increasing uncomfortably. She was afraid of heights and a height like this made her feel a crippling sense of vertigo. She wanted to get down and she wanted to get down fast. She looked over her shoulder and gasped with horror as Finitevus stormed up

towards her, his brilliant capeflapping out behind his shoulders in the wind like giant black wings. The rest of the armada joined Finitevus up on the roof and began walking up towards Blaze menacingly. The cat's ears drooped against her head and she hugged Captain Metal's head as if hoping that it would miraculously save her life. She was very frightened now, whimpering with fear as she saw how hopeless her situation was. She was faced with two options:

1: She could take a straight plummet to certain death.

Or 2: She could try foolishly to fight off the entire armada and get herself killed in the process.

Blaze didn't want to take either option, she forced herself to think of another way out. Then she saw Finitevus's warp rings and had a brilliant idea. She calmed herself down as Finitevus stood before her and prepared to attack.

"Blaze the Cat, you are under arrest for crimes against the armada!" snarled Finitevus, "You've destroy the Synthetic Chaos Energy and beheaded poor Captain Metal! I have one sentence for you… DEATH!"

"You'll never take me alive!" declared Blaze.

She then did the most surprising thing that anybody could have done in her position…she threw herself off *The Nefarious* and sent herself plummeting straight down to the ground! Dr. Finitevus stood frozen in shock to the spot as Blaze threw herself over the edge. The cat must have been desperate to escape him if she was willing to commit suicide in order to elude him! But Finitevus wasn't going to let Blaze get off the hook that easily. He knew Blaze wasn't stupid, she threw herself off *The Nefarious* for a reason. She obviously had a way of surviving the fall and she'd use it to escape him. Finitevus ran to the edge of *The Nefarious* and he peered over the edge, watching as Blaze plummeted down to the ground with her body positioned flat against the air whooshing up in her face and making her eyes water. She had her arms wrapped tightly around Captain Metal's head, willing herself not to let go as she fell. Finitevus smiled wickedly, thinking that he had Blaze right in his grasp. He opened up a warp ring directly below Blaze, waiting for

her to fall into it and land straight beside him, which was where the warp ring's exit was now positioned. But Blaze had thrown herself off *The Nefarious* , fully expecting Finitevus to try that tactic. She forced her eyes open as the wind continued battering against her and looked down below. Her face spread out into a smile as she saw that Finitevus had played into her hands beautifully. There was a warp ring below her, waiting to swallow her up and bring her back onto *The Nefarious.* Blaze drew her legs up against her chest and kicked out, causing her to somersault to the left a little. She was now going to land on the left side of the warp ring and not go straight into it. She then reached out a hand and grabbed the warp ring as she whooshed straight into it. Finitevus gasped incredulously as the warp ring's exit closed up and vanished from beside him. He looked down as Blaze then proceeded to flick the warp ring out ahead of her and summon a portal down to the ground below, the portal opening up vertically so she shot out of it like somebody charging out of their front door. This shortened her fall and giving her a smoother landing although she skidded and rolled to a painful stop after shooting out of the warp ring. But she was alive and mostly unhurt. She still had Captain Metal's head too and a warp ring to boot. Blaze picked herself up, tucking Captain Metal's head under her arm and she ran over to pick up the warp ring. It had fallen onto the ground after she'd exited it. Blaze scooped it up and opened up a portal to Royal HQ. She looked up at *The Nefarious* and smirked smugly to herself.

"Thank you so much Finitevus…" she crowed, "Now I have something that'll be of use to us and a warp ring of yours. What I wouldn't give to see your face…"

She then proceeded to retreat through the warp ring, warping herself over from Megapolis to New Mobotropolis in a single bound. As she disappeared through it, Finitevus appeared with seconds to spare through a warp ring of his own and lunged out of it, hoping to nab Blaze before she could escape. What ended up happening was him just grabbing the warp ring before Blaze could end up taking it on the other side of the portal and then falling flat onto his face. Finitevus picked himself up and roared a loud roar of rage up to the heavens above. Blaze had escaped, and with her life no less! This was truly a humiliating day for the Dark Armada and Finitevus would

see to it that it humiliated them no further. He warped himself back onto *The Nefarious* and delivered the bad news to his disciples, throwing his arms about wildly as he did so.

"THAT WRETCHED CAT HAS ESCAPED!" roared Finitevus, "AND WITH CAPTAIN METAL'S HEAD NO LESS! OUR SYNTHETIC CHAOS ENERGY FORMULA HAS BEEN DESTROYED AND NOW SHE'S GOT A HEAD FULL OF USEFUL INFORMATION FOR THE ROYAL FIGHTERS!"

"So what are we gonna do about it?" asked the recently-turned-cyborg Scourge the Hedgehog curiously.

"We see to making more Synthetic Chaos Energy!" snarled Finitevus, pointing directly at Scourge with a bandaged finger, "I'll set our courses over to Black Acropolis and we'll start getting as much lava as possible so we can convert it into Chaos Energy!"

"But what about Captain Metal's head?" asked Fiona Fox, "Heck, what about Captain Metal himself? He's useless without a head now."

"He has spare heads, I'll just put one on him immediately." announced Finitevus, "As for Captain Metal's head…let the Royal Fighters keep it. My agent will only tell me what they're planning, any information they get will just end up being used against them."

"Oh of course, your marvellous agent!" cried Ravage Bloodfang excitedly, "This day isn't lost after all!"

"Oh no…far from it my friend…" purred Finitevus evilly, "We'll set courses for Black Acropolis and once we arrive…our Synthetic Chaos Energy will be remade. Operation: Villains Rising will still commence…and it'll still succeed…"

The armada all cackled along with him, picturing in their heads perfectly how horrified the heroes would be when their plan continued on and they emerged victorious in their war with them. Blaze hadn't stopped them yet, far from it and that was going to cost the heroes dearly in more ways than one…

What a close call for Blaze that was! Well she escaped but has her victory really swung the war in Sonic's favour? Or is the armada still a step ahead of the Royal Fighters?

Find out next time in* Operation: Black Acropolis *and for one of the most shocking twists you'll ever see in this saga...

Dark Armada Part 11: Operation: Black A

Story 211: Operation: Black Acropolis

The Dark Armada Chapter 11 of 25

"Oh…Blaze has been gone for a while…she should be back by now!" whined Silver the Hedgehog frantically, pacing back and forth aimlessly as if he was trying to run a grove into the floor, "It shouldn't take her this long to turn super, destroy a ship and get back Tails and the Chaos Emeralds! Gah, I should've gone with her!"

"Silver. Chill, breathe, she'll be fine." Sonic the Hedgehog insisted, "You know Blaze, she's very capable on her own. She'll be back soon."

"Plus you're going to have to remember that Finitevus has the Chaos Emeralds." noted Sally Acorn, "If Blaze is in super form then Scourge might well be in super form to fight her off. I'm sure Blaze is fine."

"I'm sure she is too but…you know…I love her so much and…I worry about her." said Silver anxiously, "She was my first friend and pretty much my only friend. And she's more than my friend, she's my girlfriend. I couldn't live without her by my side so you have to understand why I'm so edgy."

"Oh we understand more than you realize." said Sally softly, looking at her beloved Sonic who was standing beside her and nodded in his direction.

Sonic nodded back, agreeing completely with his royal love interest. The Royal Fighters were in another one of those tense waiting games that they so hated to be a part of in their line of duty. The kind where they'd send somebody on a mission and then anxiously wait for them to return. Sally had come up with an idea on how to stop the Dark Armada after she and Sonic had interrogated the captive Raiju Clan ninja Dàfeng Rai. Rai had been captured by Shadow the Hedgehog after a failed attempt to kill the Megapolis

Royal Fighters and thanks to Sally's uncharacteristically ruthless side, she'd managed to get Rai to talk. Rai had given them some useful information in the interrogation regarding Finitevus's big plan Operation: Villains Rising (actually Operation: Enerjak Reborn) and the whereabouts of his ship *The Nefarious* . So Sally had sent Blaze over to destroy the ship and get back the roboticized Tails and the Chaos Emeralds. Blaze had her Sol Emeralds and was able to turn into Burning Blaze with them, a powerful super form that had seen much action. The tense waiting game that Sonic, Silver and Sally were taking part in now was just simply waiting for Blaze to return. The rest of the Royal Fighters were elsewhere and waiting for some good news to be given to them.

They wouldn't have to wait any longer though for a warp ring suddenly opened up from nowhere, filling Royal HQ's laboratory up with a golden gleam and making the three Mobians jump in surprise. Then out through the warp ring shot Blaze the Cat herself, not in her super form and clutching something underneath her arm. Sonic, Sally and Silver stared incredulously at Blaze as if she'd just come home from a hurricane storm. What surprised them even more was what she had come home with. There was no Mecha Tails and no Chaos Emeralds. Not a single one. She had the head of the robot rapscallion Captain Metal, the sworn arch-enemy of Blaze and one of the strangest hybrids ever, Metal Sonic and a robot pirate. Why had she come home with Captain Metal's head? What good would that be to them? And why had she returned home via warp ring instead of a Sol Control? The warp ring clearly appeared to have been retrieved though for it closed up after Blaze leapt out of it but it didn't come down onto the floor of Royal HQ, meaning that Blaze wouldn't have it now. Blaze panted for a moment before turning around and putting Captain Metal's head on the work desk nearby. She had just narrowly escaped certain death by jumping off *The Nefarious* and taking a risky gambit by waiting for Finitevus to do what she expected him to do. But she was alive and Silver was quick to hug her excitedly. Blaze yelped as Silver began crushing her in a bear-hug.

"Yay, you made it back Blaze! And I was just beginning to worry about you too!" he squealed.

"I'm glad to be back too Silver, now could you not squeeze me so hard?" croaked Blaze weakly, "I can't breathe!"

"Oops, my bad. Ha, ha…got carried away there." Silver giggled, letting go of his lavender furred girlfriend.

"So Blaze, how'd it go?" asked Sonic, "Did you complete the mission?"

"It went terribly Sonic." muttered Blaze sadly, "Once again, Finitevus knew what we were planning and he prepared for my arrival. He had Captain Metal use a weapon on me that drained the Sol Emeralds dry of their energy. Because of this, I didn't destroy the ship OR save Tails and the Chaos Emeralds. But I did manage to destroy the Synthetic Chaos Energy at least…and I got Captain Metal's head too."

She motioned over to the robot head that she had brought home to Royal HQ. On *The Nefarious* , she had stolen Cutthroat Jim's cutlass and used it to cut off Captain Metal's head. Thinking it would be useful, she had decided to bring it back home to see what information they could find in it. The three Mobians looked at Captain Metal's head curiously.

"That's nice and all Blaze but why did you bring back Captain Metal's head?" asked Sonic, "What good will that do us?"

"I would explain Sonic…but I'm worried Finitevus's agent will hear about it." said Blaze cautiously, "The agent seems able to hear whatever plan we come up with before we make it. We have to be super secret about our plans this time."

"Hold on a minute. Nicole, is there anybody listening outside?" asked Sally quickly.

Outside of the lab, Nicole's holographic avatar materialized into existence in a swirl of pixels. Nicole had once been a Mobian but during the legendary multi-verse crisis that nearly saw the end of everything, she had been turned into a computer programme by an insane, tech-savvy world conqueror. She'd taken a while to get used to being like this but nowadays, being a programme was of no

bother to her. Nicole looked around and saw that there was nobody outside the lab. Pleased, she dissolved into a cloud of pixels and phased through the door back into the lab. The pixels rearranged into her image, something that Silver and Blaze were very impressed at for they hadn't seen something like this before.

"There's nobody outside, we're safe Sally." reported Nicole.

"Good, but still we should keep our voices down." said Sally, "In case the agent attempts to listen in anyway."

So Sonic, Silver, Blaze and Sally gathered around in a huddle and they whispered quietly to each other with Blaze starting first.

"I brought home Captain Metal's head because I thought he'd have some useful information for us to use." whispered Blaze, "It's just gut instinct really but still, it's worth a shot."

"Captain Metal's part of the armada and he's been on The Nefarious…he might give us ideas on the ship inside and out." suggested Sonic, "How's about we get good old Nicole to hack into his brain and get any information out of it for us?"

"That's a splendid idea Sonic." said Sally happily, "I'll do just that."

They broke up the circle and Sally whispered into Nicole's ear what they were planning to do. Nicole gave Sally the thumbs up, approving of the idea very much and she disappeared into thin air. Her avatar wouldn't be needed at this point. As Nicole disappeared, Sally took the handheld device that Nicole was housed in off of her boot and she observed Captain Metal's head, wondering where to plug her computerized friend in. There didn't seem to be anywhere to plug anything on the head but Sally knew how to deal with that. Nicole's handheld device had a built-in saw blade that she had once used to escape from a wooden cage in the Lost Jungle*. She used the saw blade to cut open the back of Captain Metal's head, carving a neat circle into the metal and taking out the chunk she'd cut. She saw that inside Captain Metal's head was a lot of circuitry and a big metallic box that clearly appeared to be his brain. There was a circular hole in the "brain", clearly meant for something to plug into. Nicole's handheld device came with a lead and at the end of the

lead was a plug that could change shape and size and fit in ANY slot. The plug shrunk down in size as Sally held it close to the slot and Sally plugged Nicole inside. Now linked with Captain Metal's brain, Nicole began searching around inside and looked for whatever information would be useful to the Royal Fighters. Captain Metal's brain was like visiting a new world for Nicole. Inside, her avatar came into existence and found itself surrounded by a lot of codes. The robot pirate may have had his head separated from his body but his mind still had a lot of information for her to rummage through. Nicole began downloading everything that was inside Captain Metal's head, working at an alarming speed that easily bested the world's fastest supercomputer. In mere seconds, Captain Metal's head was empty of all data and Nicole had it all stored inside her own handheld device. She returned back to the handheld and Sally unplugged it. Her screen said "Download Complete" on it and Sally couldn't wait to see what Nicole had found.

"I've downloaded all the data in his head." explained Nicole.

"Then show us what kind of info was in that head of his…" asked Sally excitedly, speaking quietly still.

Nicole proceeded to do just that. Her screen began showing off various different files that she had downloaded from Captain Metal's head from members of the Dark Armada to the kinds of inventions he had built before and what he had built now. She even went past a blueprint of the Chaos Drainer, something that Blaze noticed with loathing as it flickered up on the screen and disappeared in seconds. Nicole leafed through many files until she finally found something that would actually be of use to them. She displayed a blueprint on her screen and as Sally read it, her heart skipped a beat. This was a blueprint for *The Nefarious* itself! Since Captain Metal was responsible for repairing the ship whenever it was damaged, he had to be programmed with *The Nefarious's* blueprints in his computerized brain so he would know exactly how to repair a certain part and where everything went. And now the Royal Fighters had the blueprints for the ship itself! Sally's face lit up and she pulled Sonic over to have a look. Keeping up the secrecy act, she whispered into his ear.

"It's the plans for The Nefarious!" whispered Sally excitedly, "We can

use this to our advantage!"

"Too right Sal!" cried Sonic, keeping his voice low so nobody attempting to listen in on the conversation would hear them, "We can find all its weak spots and even find out where the Chaos Emeralds are!"

"Blaze, I've told you that I love you before haven't I?" Silver said with a cheeky smile on his face, nudging the fiery feline playfully.

"Yes Silver, you have." Blaze replied, playfully nudging him back with her elbow, "I had a feeling Captain Metal's head would be useful."

"And now we have the plans for The Nefarious, we know where to hit it and where to get the Chaos Emeralds." added Sally brightly, "Looks like today isn't a total loss after all. Nicole, see if you can find where The Nefarious is currently and we'll stage a sabotage mission. We'll take the Sky Patrol, fly to the ship and sneak onboard so we can bring it down for good."

Nicole's avatar appeared in the room once again, straight in front of the computer monitors. She began taping away on the computers, once again accessing Mobius's satellites and hoping to use them to find *The Nefarious* once again like she had done before. Only that wasn't going to happen. Finitevus had a miniature drone that was up in space and hacking into Mobius's satellites. He had sent it up their a year ago and had first used it to use Mobius's satellites to track Blaze down for Captain Metal. Now after hearing from his hidden agent that the satellite's heat sensors were being used to track down *The Nefarious* while it was invisible, he had used it to sabotage the satellites and disable the heat-sensors. Nobody would ever find out that he'd done this for nobody knew he had the drone up there in the first place. Nicole flickered through several different satellite views before she came across a rather peculiar sight. While *The Nefarious* was nowhere in sight on one satellite view, she did see the next best thing. The Dark Armada was in Black Acropolis, every single member! Including Mecha Tails! Nicole zoomed in the satellite's lens on Black Acropolis down on Mobius and she saw that the armada was all here and seemingly gathering up lava using sophisticated tools in order to do so without any damages or injury. This

obfuscated the digital lynx. What on Mobius was the armada doing in Black Acropolis she thought to herself. Were they trying to fix their destroy Synthetic Chaos Energy formula? Blaze had said she'd destroyed it so that had to be the reason they were here now, collecting lava to make into Chaos Energy. They had after all stormed the Golden Hive Colony and stolen all their honey and Mecha Tails had been seen mining up snow yesterday in Holoska. Either way, Nicole knew they had the ample opportunity to attack the armada, and all unnoticed by them too. They would never see them coming. Nicole turned to face her friends.

"My friends, the entire Dark Armada is over in Black Acropolis believe it or not." announced Nicole, "They're mining up lava from the volcanoes."

"Well that's suicidal if I ever saw it!" blurted Sonic, "Does Finitevus even know HOW dangerous that hellhole is?!"

"Maybe so but he doesn't care since it means getting him some precious contents to make Synthetic Chaos Energy out of." said Sally bitterly, "Is Tails there too?"

"Yes he is." said Nicole happily, "We have a chance to rescue him and we must take it now."

"What about The Nefarious?" asked Silver curiously.

"It's nowhere in sight." said Nicole in confusion, "The armada's in Black Acropolis but the ship isn't. It might be invisible but the heat sensors aren't picking anything up."

"It doesn't matter, the ship won't be of much use if the armada's all taken in and arrested." said Sally matter-of-factly, "We'll get aboard the Sky Patrol and get flying off to Black Acropolis. I hope we get there before the armada finishes what they're doing."

"Then what are we waiting for? Let's go!" cried Sonic excitedly, "Gather all the Royal Fighters together and get going before it's too late! Come on!"

With that said, the four Mobians ran out of the lab to find the other

Royal Fighters. Sonic could feel himself tingling all over with excitement. The armada was in Black Acropolis, every single member! They could beat the armada into submission and get Tails back! The Chaos Emeralds would have to wait though but Sonic didn't care. The Chaos Emeralds wouldn't be of any use to an imprisoned armada and Tails was more important to him than the emeralds anyway. His best friend was going to be saved and the armada would be defeated at last. And best of all, no hidden agents would know what was going on for most of their planning had been done secretly. They'd get the drop on Finitevus for once…

Black Acropolis. If hell truly existed, chances are it would look like Black Acropolis.

The land itself was nothing more than black, rocky ground that had once been lava many years ago, dried out and solidified after spreading over everything. Two volcanoes were the only thing that could pass off as features in Black Acropolis aside from the many lava geysers that spewed out the searing hot lava as high as they could. There were lakes of lava flowing through the land and one lava lake even led to a lava-fall. Setting foot in Black Acropolis was considered in act of suicide due to how dangerous the habitat was. If the lava geysers didn't kill a Mobian then one of the two constantly erupting volcanoes would do the trick. And yet Sonic and at least some of his friends had been in Black Acropolis and made it out alive.

Now the entire Dark Armada was roaming around Black Acropolis and gathering up as much lava as they possibly could. The Synthetic Chaos Energy formula had been destroyed by Blaze and very little of it had actually managed to be salvaged from the remains. The remains they had wasn't even enough for one dose so Dr. Finitevus wanted as much lava as possible. This was achieved by something that Captain Metal had invented par Finitevus's request should they ever need to come to a place like this and gather up lava. Captain Metal, who now had a new head attached to his body to make up for the one that Blaze had chopped off earlier, had invented a hovering container with a heat-resistant hose attached to one end of it. The container was heat-resistant too and

could hold as much as one tonne's worth of lava. The armada all had a container each and they simply put the hose into the lava lake that they were standing by and sucked up the lava with the hose. Red hot lava was sucked up the strong, heat-resistant nozzle of the hose and brought inside the strong container it was attached to. There was a huge cannon on a bed of wheels standing nearby too, waiting to be used as the armada worked. Captain Metal had insisted on bringing it for he planned to give Blaze a horrible death with it. The cannon stood by as the armada filled up their containers with lava. Due to how much the containers could carry, the armada was taking a while in gathering up as much lava as they possibly could. As far as Finitevus was concerned, the more lava they had, the more Synthetic Chaos Energy they could make. Having just one dose had been a terrible mistake on his part so he was going to rectify that by having more canisters full, hence why the need to gather up so much lava. Finitevus himself had a container and he was sucking up as much lava as possible, his face shielded with a protective visor to keep the heat out of his face and to also protect him from any lava that could spit at him. The rest of the armada had protective visors on too save for Captain Metal since he was a robot made of heat-proof metal and thus, the heat of the lava wouldn't bother him. Not even a little bit. He was standing beside Finitevus and he appeared to be growling angrily as he was sucking up lava to make Synthetic Chaos Energy out of. Finitevus looked over at the robotic rapscallion curiously.

"Why Captain Metal, you do not seem very happy right now. What is it that's agitating you so much?" asked Finitevus in a tone of voice that almost managed to sound kind and yet still managing to sound somewhat sinister at the same time.

"I'd have thought that me recent defeat at tharr hands of Blaze tharr Cat would be a big enough indicator…" muttered Captain Metal, "How humiliating that was! I got defeated in mere seconds by her and she made off with me head! I knew instead of tryin' ta use yer Synthetic Chaos Energy on her, I should have just killed her straight away! But I didn't and now this pirate captain have shamed his own crew. I'm amazed ye didn't leave me dead fer this big mistake I made."

"Well Captain Metal, if the Dark Armada has ANY chance of winning, I need everybody alive and that includes you my mechanical mutineer." purred Finitevus, "Besides, you've been of a great service to the Dark Armada, I couldn't possibly leave you dead."

"Well that be very nice of ye captain." said Captain Metal appreciatively, "Thank ye fer sparin' me a life in Davy Jones's locker."

"Believe me Captain Metal, you're lucky that I'm even CAPABLE of rare moments of generosity such as this so don't waste it." warned Finitevus threateningly, "If you mess up like this again then I might humiliate you in aways you cannot imagine. Maybe give you a female body with your head attached to it…"

"NAY! Not that! Anything but that!" shrieked Captain Metal, "I won't fail, I won't fail! The captain gives his word not to fail ye Finitevus!"

Finitevus could hardly resist the urge to laugh at Captain Metal's rather humorous reaction to his suggestion of a suitable punishment for him. It was strange seeing the usually fierce and threatening Captain Metal acting so scared over such a silly thought. In Finitevus's eyes, he thought it was strange even seeing Captain Metal scared in the first place. He would keep that in mind next time the robotical buccaneer failed him.

"I'm sure you won't fail Captain Metal." the albino scientist purred optimistically, "After all, you're not prone to making the same mistake twice are you?"

"Nay matey, after I was destroyed tharr first time by that impudent fire cat, I rebuilt meself out of heat-proof metal and removed me pain receptors. I be invulnerable to Blaze's attacks and I cannot feel pain so I can go on fer far longer than Blaze can!" boasted Captain Metal.

"And yet she ended up beating you on Solbius a second time and has defeated you yet again." murmured Finitevus, "All the more reason why next time you face Blaze, you should kill her straight away."

"That me heartie, I certainly will do!" declared Captain Metal.

Finitevus smiled wickedly, pleased to hear Captain Metal's determination not to lost to Blaze again. He was interrupted by Scourge the Hedgehog and Fiona Fox walking up to him.

"Yo doc, are containers are full!" reported Scourge.

"Excellent. I'll get them aboard *The Nefarious* immediately." said Finitevus, opening up a warp ring for Scourge to put the containers through.

The Nefarious itself was up in the sky, hundreds of miles above Black Acropolis but the reason Nicole hadn't seen it on Mobius's satellites was that it was invisible. The ship had enough power in it to stay invisible for a whole two hours, maybe even longer and Finitevus knew full well that he wasn't going to be here for two hours so he didn't have to worry about *The Nefarious* 's cloaking device running out of power. Thanks to Mobius's satellites having disabled heat sensors because of Finitevus's drone meddling with it, the satellites would never find *The Nefarious* when it was invisible. So to anybody looking through the satellites, they'd see only the armada, no vessel as well. With a warp ring opened up, Scourge and Fiona walked through it and put their containers side by side in *The Nefarious* 's laboratory, which was where the warp ring had been opened up. As soon as they put their containers beside the work desk, Scourge whispered something into Fiona's ear.

"I've got an idea on how to get rid of Finitevus." he whispered, "I could sneak up behind him and shoot him into the lava with my cyber-hand."

"It's risky Scourge but it's worth a shot." Fiona whispered back, "And once he's gone, we will rule the armada and we'll carry out Operation: Villains Rising. That'll teach Finitevus for cutting your arm off and tearing your eye out for failing."

"You bet he will…although I can kind thank Finitevus for this since I'm going to use my cyber-hand against him." purred Scourge evilly, "In a way, this is coming back to bite Finitevus in the ass!"

"It certainly is." laughed Fiona.

Scourge smiled wickedly at his girlfriend as he walked back through the warp ring to join the other Dark Armada members back in Black Acropolis. As he and Fiona emerged from the warp ring, they both noticed something odd. The armada had stopped working and they were all staring up at the sky in surprise as if they'd seen something very strange happening up above. Scourge was tempted to take advantage of this and shoot Finitevus into the lava but he didn't do this for Finitevus was standing ahead of many armada members. There'd be too many witnesses. Plus he was curious as to what was going on too. He and Fiona looked up at the sky and saw that they were no longer going to be alone in Black Acropolis. There was a ship coming towards them and it wasn't a friendly ship either. It was the Sky Patrol, the flagship of the Royal Fighters Service! The Royal Fighters had come to interfere with the Dark Armada's plans once again! Finitevus would see to it that they failed though. He turned around and barked at the armada.

"Containers on *The Nefarious* ! NOW!"

He opened up a warp ring and the armada saw to getting all their lava-filled containers through the warp ring as quickly as they could. Last thing they needed was the Royal Fighters foiling what they'd done so far, the lava containers had to be kept far out of their reach and an invisible ship would do just that. Once all the containers were onboard, the Dark Armada gathered together and waited for the Sky Patrol to land. Finitevus stood ahead of them all, cracking his knuckles.

"My armada…the Royal Fighters do NOT leave this place alive! Slay them all! They cannot be allowed to live!" he ordered fiercely.

The armada nodded understandingly and prepared to fight. They were all too happy to follow Finitevus's order down to the letter since most of the armada had personal scores of their own to settle with at least one Royal Fighter. And at this moment, Finitevus fully expected at least all of the Royal Fighters to be here, not just Team New Mobotropolis but all the other teams too. If they were all here then Finitevus could single-handedly have all of them killed. No Royal Fighters meant an easy victory for the Dark Armada and

Enerjak would rise just as Finitevus wanted. The armada watched with evil stares and even more evil glares as the Sky Patrol touched down on the ground, blowing lots of dust around as the landing gear placed itself flat on the rocky ground beneath the ship. The armada held back as the docking ramp of the Sky Patrol lowered down to the ground and the Royal Fighters all exited the ship, striding down the ramp as they landed. Everybody was indeed aboard the ship, all the New Mobotropolis Fighters and all the other teams from Team Nekronopolis to Team Chun-Nan to Team Adabat and finally Team Megapolis. Finitevus just smiled wickedly to himself. Sonic the Hedgehog was making a costly mistake, bringing so many of his friends to such a hell-hole and risk losing everybody in the line of battle at once. He would see to it that everybody in the service would end up joining Dr. Eggman in the afterlife. He imagined the afterlife would be very unpleasant for Sonic and friends to be in if it meant sharing it with Eggman. The Royal Fighters all stood before the Dark Armada and Sonic pointed sharply at Finitevus. His face contorted with rage and yet there was a bit of confidence neatly coalesced with the rage as if he was sure that he was going to have another victory today after Blaze's amazing escape earlier.

"Dr. Finitevus, you have committed many terrible crimes against us lately and you're now going to pay for it!" growled Sonic, "And for once, your agent hasn't given you a tip-off so you won't be ahead of us this time!"

"Oh fie Sonic, I didn't even need my agent to give me a tip-off anyway." snorted Finitevus, "I expected you all to arrive after Blaze made off with Captain Metal's head. And I don't even need to say why you're here, it's obvious to all of us."

"Indeed." said Sally, standing beside Sonic and deploying her arm blades, "Blaze has destroyed your Synthetic Chaos Energy, now we will make sure you don't remake it. You have one option: surrender now and make this easy for all of us."

"You are all fools…" growled Finitevus, "I didn't go through all the trouble of organizing this armada just to surrender to you all like this! If you want us to surrender…then fight us until we beg for a forfeit."

"We'll happily comply to that." said Sonic, "Especially since I'm going

to get my best friend back!"

"Negative: I am not your best friend and I am not coming with you." droned Mecha Tails, baring his metal claws, "I will kill you if you dare try to kidnap me."

"I wouldn't worry Mecha Tails, Sonic and friends won't touch you." purred Finitevus wickedly, "Especially since we're in Black Acropolis, the lava might finish them off for us."

"Wrong, Blaze can control fires and all. She'll save us from harm." scoffed Sonic, sticking his tongue out at Finitevus cheekily.

"In that case, we'll just do it ourselves." muttered Finitevus, "Armada...ATTACK!" he bellowed at the top of his evil voice.

"Royal Fighters, ATTACK!" bellowed Sonic and Sally, both rushing into battle side-by-side towards the armada.

The Royal Fighters and the Dark Armada both charged towards each other like stampeding tribes at war with each other, ready to throw the first spears and launch the first arrows. Sonic immediately gunned for Mecha Tails, spin-dashing towards him only for Mecha Tails to spin around in mid-air and smack him down onto the ground with his sharp, metallic tails. Sonic winced as he hit the hard, rocky ground of hardened lava face first but he had another "ouch!" to add to his pain as Mecha Tails flew down and stomp-kicked him directly on his back. Sonic tried to get back up but Mecha Tails kept him pinned down. As a Robian, he was much heavier than he would have been as Tails so standing on Sonic was enough to keep him pinned down onto the ground. Mecha Tails then turned around so his feet were pointing towards Sonic's bottom and legs and he aimed one of his tails at Sonic's neck. The sharp bladed tail would easily slit Sonic's throat and kill him instantly, something that Sonic was very worried about as the sharp point touched against his neck, ready to slice it open. But Sonic was saved by Shadow the Hedgehog spin-dashing Mecha Tails in the back and knocking him off. Sonic got back onto his feet and gave Shadow the thumbs up.

"Thanks." he said graciously.

"No problem. I'm very sorry that you have to fight your best friend Sonic." said Shadow, his tone oddly sympathetic for his usual character.

"It's OK Shadow, I'll happily fight Mecha Tails if it means saving him." said Sonic, "Given you're very strong, I think fighting Finitevus would be a good idea for you."

"I'll happily do just that…" growled Shadow angrily as bitter memories of what Finitevus had done to him in the past began to come back to him. Now was his chance to face Finitevus again.

He skated off, leaving Sonic behind to fight Mecha Tails some more. Mecha Tails picked himself up and flew towards Sonic, his metal-tails spinning around behind him like a propeller. Sonic zoomed into Mecha Tails and grappled hands with him.

"Tails, if you can hear me in there, I'm going to save you and get you free of this metal cage you're trapped in!" declared Sonic.

"I'm already free, I do not need saving and you'll be the one who's depriving me of my freedom." said Mecha Tails coldly.

Sonic just let go of Mecha Tails's hands and kicked him in the gut, his heart aching with emotional pain as he launched that attack on his best friend. He hoped he wouldn't damage him too much as he fought with Mecha Tails for he need him in good condition if it meant getting Tails back.

As for Shadow, he skated towards Dr. Finitevus, his face suggesting he was about ready to kill. Finitevus already had some opponents though, Knuckles and Shade the Echidnas. Knuckles threw a punch at his treacherous uncle, concentrating all his rage and hate into that one punch. Finitevus caught Knuckles punch in his hand, not even putting any effort into the block at all. It was like Knuckles wasn't even trying to hit him in his eyes. Finitevus held tightly onto Knuckles's fist and swung him around, walloping Shadow as he skated towards him. Shadow and Knuckles both cried out as their bodies collided with each other. Shadow had another cry of pain as he was whisked off his feet and onto his back by the attack. Finitevus then kicked Knuckles into the air, hoping that he would

crash into Shade. Shade instead moved out of the way and Blade-Rushed at Finitevus. The purple energy waves whizzed through the air towards Finitevus but the echidna jumped into the air just above the waves, allowing them to sweep cleanly under his feet as they missed. Shade ran towards Finitevus and slashed at him but the albino scientist gripped the edges of his cape and blocked her attack with them. He had sown some blades into the edges of his cape so his cape could be used as some kind of offensive weapon. As he kept Shade's blades away from himself, he kicked her in the gut to make her double-over in pain and then he elbowed her on the head. Shade moaned groggily, wondering what had hit her. Finitevus was about to kill Shade but Shadow threw a Chaos Spear into the echidna's back. The armada leader was whisked off his feet by the Chaos Spear and he crashed down just behind Shade. Shade stood back up first and just as Finitevus stood back up, Shade walloped him in the face with a roundhouse kick to the cheek. The kick caused Finitevus to spit out blood and wince in pain but he merely retaliated with a roundhouse kick to Shade's ribs. The female fighter screamed as she felt Finitevus's foot sharply connect with her ribs and she stumbled to the side. Finitevus was about to attack Shade again but Knuckles pounced on him and tackled him down to the ground. Finitevus merely swung his legs up and threw Knuckles off of himself. Knuckles landed with a callous thud on his back but he picked himself up and charged back towards Finitevus. Finitevus stepped to the side as Knuckles punched at him and the albino villain grabbed Knuckles by his neck. Knuckles yelped and croaked as Finitevus began throttling him. He then held Knuckles close to a hole in the ground, presumably where a lava geyser.

"Let's see if your face is still recognizable after a jet of lava…" he crooned wickedly.

Shade and Shadow both charged towards Finitevus, hoping to save Knuckles before he was burnt alive by the lava geyser. Finitevus heard them coming and he let go of Knuckles so he could lunge his hand out, grab Shade's wrist and swing her blade into Shadow as he prepared to attack. Her blade caught Shadow on the forearm and made the hedgehog cry out in pain. But Shadow chopped down on Finitevus's arm, numbing his hand and making him let go of Shade's wrist. Shade put both her blades away so she could sock Finitevus

in the face and Shadow then overwhelmed the echidna some more by throwing a terrific uppercut into his chin, snapping his head backwards and whisking him off his feet. Finitevus got back up onto his feet and he braced himself as Shadow came gunning for him again. Finitevus took a warp ring off of his wrist and he threw it into Shadow's face. The warp ring smacked Shadow between the eyes and made him hesitate so he could rub his forehead better. Finitevus put the warp ring back onto his wrist and tripped Shadow up with a kick to the legs. Shade sliced at him again with her blades but Finitevus dodged the attack and grabbed Shade's wrist. He snatched one of her blades from her and slashed her across the arm with it. Shade screamed in a mixture of anger and pain and she Blade-Rushed Finitevus in the face. The echidna stumbled backwards, dropping Shade's blade, and he fell backwards into Knuckles, who was lying in wait for him. The red furred emerald guardian grabbed his uncle by the cloak. He picked Finitevus up and threw him into the air. Finitevus crashed down onto his side but he was soon back onto his feet, only to then get knocked down again by a spin-dash from Shadow.

The other Royal Fighters were taking turns in fighting various members of the Dark Armada. Amy Rose, Cosmo the Seedrian, Cream the Rabbit and Princess Matilda were all teaming up against Zira the Ruthless. The savage leopard had only just recently recovered from when Princess Matilda had used her most powerful move on her earlier though her chest was still hurting a little. She really wanted revenge on Matilda now. The furious leopard clawed at Matilda with her sharp claws but Matilda stepped back to dodge the attack. She kicked upwards, walloping Zira in the face as hard as she could. Zira's head snapped backwards and the leopard found herself nearly falling down onto her back. Amy ran in and walloped Zira into the air with her Piko-Piko hammer. The leopard let out a rather comical sounding cry as she was sent spiralling into the air by Amy's attack. The moment she landed, Matilda charged towards Zira and left Amy, Cream and Cosmo behind to fight somebody else. As Zira and Matilda began to fight some more, launching as many attacks as possible at each other, Amy chose her next opponent. She, Cream and Cosmo ran over to Cutthroat Jim, rightfully thinking he would be easy prey for them to deal with. Cutthroat Jim swung his cutlass at Amy, hoping to take her head off but Amy ducked,

leaving him to swish at thin air. Amy hammered Cutthroat Jim in the face with her hammer, knocking him backwards and giving Cream and Cosmo the opportunity to attack. The pirate picked himself up only to receive two throwing discs to the face from Cream and Cosmo. The discs hit him in the eyes, blinding him momentarily and Cosmo took advantage of this by throwing herself directly into his shins. Cutthroat Jim was tripped up by the attack and just before he could stand up, Cream snatched his cutlass from him and tossed it to Amy. Amy hammered it away, sending it flying into a nearby lava lake. Cutthroat Jim roared angrily at the loss of his weapon but he was quickly silenced by Amy thumping him on the head with her hammer.

"Oh shaddup!" she sneered as Cutthroat Jim lay on the ground, dazed and confused from the hit, "Seriously, they let a loser like you in the armada? Pathetic!"

"I'll say." agreed Cream.

"Oh well, at least he won't be a pain for anybody else now." crowed Amy, "Let's bash some more armada losers!"

Cream and Cosmo were right behind Amy as she ran off to find another opponent.

Bladefeather the Falcon, Mushu the Iguana and Li Moon were fighting against Bride of the Conquering Storm and her Raiju Ninjas. Some of them were helping Conquering Storm while others were fighting other Royal Fighters. Ruben the Water Panther and his girlfriend Sora Prower were fighting some of the ninjas in the clan. Ruben threw water at most of the ninjas, taking them clean off their feet and sending them sprawling across the terrain crazily. Sora jumped into the air and drop-kicked a Raiju Ninja in the face, knocking it down onto its back and just before he could get back up, Sora threw an orb from her utility belt into the ninja's face. She then took it down with another kick, this time to the face. The kick knocked it clean out, making Sora smile happily at what she'd done. It served the armada right for kidnapping her brother and roboticizing him. As for Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon, Conquering Storm was proving to be a tough opponent for them. Bladefeather threw daggers furiously at Conquering Storm but the

ninja lynx dodged them all and retaliated with a flat-handed punch to the chest on Bladefeather. It was a pity her ankles weren't still hurting from when Matilda twisted them earlier, that would be very helpful to them now. Bladefeather landed flat on his back but he received no more blows as Mushu lunged toward and began unleashing a torrent of rapid fire fisticuffs on Conquering Storm. Conquering Storm blocked the blows with her arms but while she was distracted, Li Moon sneaked up behind Conquering Storm and kneed her in the small of her back. This distracted the lynx long enough for Mushu to sock Conquering Storm in the jaw. Conquering Storm spat out drops of blood and she lashed out at Mushu with a chop to the face. But the blow never came for Bladefeather threw a dagger at her hand. The dagger slashed Conquering Storm across the hand and made the lynx scream in agony. While she was distracted some more, Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon all charged into her at once and brought her down onto her back.

With the rest of the Raiju Clan, they were in battle with most of the other Royal Fighter teams. Miranda Mongoose, Kari the Rat, Thunder and Bolt, Scott the Lynx, Jessica the Cougar, Felix the Peacock, Dark Cat and Kiara the Cheetah all fended off the ninjas with their respective attacks and skills. Miranda zapped some with her electric prod weapon, Kari battered some with a spanner that she liked to wield in a fight, Thunder and Bolt electrocuted many ninjas, Scott and Jessica threw energy spears at a lot of them, Felix battered some of them with his feather clubs and Dark and Kiara teamed up to slash and attack some other ninjas. One ninja nearly got the drop on Kari but the rat was saved by the timely intervention of Mandy Mouse. The rat smiled appreciatively at her friend and Mandy fave her the thumbs up back. She ran back to join her husband Wilson the Dog, who was currently fighting against Ravage Bloodfang. Ravage clawed at Wilson with his sharp claws but Wilson dodged the attack and swiped his spinning blade weapon. He missed Ravage and the wolf socked him in the face. Mandy retaliated by punching him in the face. Her punch was enhanced by the steel knuckle attachments that she wore on her fists. The punch was so hard that Ravage was sent flying across the terrain and sent crashing down a hundred feet away. Wilson and Mandy high-fived each other in triumph and ran off to fight somebody else.

Sally and her cousin Abby the Squirrel were fighting against Fiona Fox together. Fiona had her energy blades deployed, said blades being stolen from Sally herself originally by Finitevus, and she swung them at Sally. Sally blocked the attack with her own blades and pushed against Fiona, causing her to stagger backwards into Abby. Abby, who was a skilled fighter thanks to four years of living in the jungle with a tribe of gorillas, let Fiona have it with a powerful kick to the back. The vixen screeched in pain and she spun around on the balls of her feet, hoping to cut Abby's head off with her blades. Abby ducked and pinched Fiona in the belly while she was at her midriff's height. Fiona winced as her exposed belly was pinched by the squirrel and before she could recover, Sally kicked Fiona in the back and sent her toppling forwards. Fiona picked herself up and jumped into the air. She split-kicked Sally and Abby both in the head as she sailed past them and upon landing, she swung her blades at Sally. Sally blocked the attack but was pinned down by Fiona. Not for long for Abby stood back up and grabbed the vixen's tail. The former jungle queen pulled Fiona way from her cousin, the queen squirrel getting up onto her feet so she could clash blades with Fiona again. Scourge saw that Fiona needed help so he zoomed towards her, hoping to lend a hand. Instead, he found himself crashing into the hard, tough body of Mace the Elephant. Trying to knock Mace down was like trying to break through a brick wall. Scourge spin-dashed at Mace again but the elephant withstood the attack and he walloped Scourge with the mace at the end of his trunk. Scourge crashed down into the ground, not knowing for a moment what had hit him.

Raphael the Cyber-Husky, Lord Sycorax and his two minions Vladek and Romeo and Team Diamond were up against a variety of opponents. Team Chaotix (Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee) went for Sycorax and his minions, Team Diamond faced against Rouge the Bat and Bunnie Rabboh and Geoffrey St. John took on Raphael while watching Rouge's back. Lord Sycorax threw a punch at his loathsome son but Vector dodged the attack and elbowed him in the gut. Sycorax doubled over and Vector proceeded to chomp on his egotistical father's arm, something he was quite known for doing. Vector was angry at the fact his evil father was part of the armada and he was going to make sure he regretted making that choice. Vector uppercut Sycorax into

the air with both fists as Espio and Charmy both kicked Vladek and Romeo. Vector lumbered after the former region leader while Vladek and Romeo both punched at Espio and Charmy. Espio dodged Vladek's attack and Charmy merely stung Romeo's arm. Espio punched Vladek in the face and Charmy stomped on Romeo's feet to make the chameleon wince in pain. Then the two kicked Romeo and Vladek onto their backs as hard as they could. Rouge screw-kicked her way through all four members of Team Diamond, hoping that the kick hurt all four of them at once. She had a very personal score to settle with the team for they had once killed her father and raided her jewel shop when she was just a child. Lennox, Roxy, Owen and Alistair all collided with the ground as they were knocked off their feet. Owen recovered first and tried to punch at Rouge but the bat kicked him in the fist, making Owen wince and retract his hand. Rouge then kicked Owen towards Bunnie Rabboh. Bunnie swung her metallic glove upwards and punched Owen in the back, throwing him into the air. She was pleased to see how well her new weapons were working, very worthy replacements for her cybernetics indeed. Rouge gave Bunnie the thumbs up and flew towards Lennox. Lennox shot at Rouge only for him to miss and get screw-kicked in the torso. Roxy watched this with deep satisfaction, pleased to see Rouge beating up Lennox for her. It was a pity that she was still on the enemy's side otherwise she would be joining in with Rouge. Alistair flew towards Bunnie, hoping to take her out but Bunnie blasted him down with her hand held laser cannon. Alistair crashed down onto the ground, groaning in pain. Raphael blasted at Bunnie with his sonic wave emitter but Bunnie pasted back, both attacks cancelling each other out as they hit each other. Geoffrey jumped into the air and dropkicked Raphael in the head, knocking him down onto his side as he hit him.

Silver and Blaze were both fighting against Captain Metal. Captain Metal blasted furiously at the two with his gun arm but Silver caught the blasts with his psychokinesis and threw them at other Dark Armada members. Captain Metal tried to stab Silver with his sword but Silver stopped him with a psychokinetic grab and he threw him towards Blaze. Blaze drew her arm back and kicked Captain Metal in the back, throwing him back towards Silver. Silver grabbed Captain Metal with his psychokinesis and slammed him down onto the ground as hard as he could.

"It's no use!" he crowed, "You can't stop me and Blaze together Captain Miscreant!"

"You may as well surrender now." said Blaze coldly, "Lest I be forced to cut your head off again."

Captain Metal refused to give up and he jumped up onto his feet. Silver tried to stop him with his psychokinesis but Captain Metal was a fraction too quick. He punched Silver in the face and knocked him down onto his back. Blaze retaliated with a fiery punch to the side of Captain Metal's face that nearly took his head off. Captain Metal slashed at Blaze, catching her across the face with his sword. Blaze let out a yelp of pain as she was slashed and Captain Metal took the opportunity to run for it. Blaze helped Silver back up onto his feet before running off after Captain Metal. The metal pirate ran over to the nearby cannon that he had brought with him to shoot Blaze with and he aimed it at Blaze. He fired at Blaze, hoping to kill her with it. The cannon blast was huge and as it sailed towards Blaze, the fire cat knew that it would kill her instantly. Silver caught it with his psychokinesis and he was about to toss it back to Captain Metal but he and Blaze were blast off their feet by Raphael's sonic wave emitter. Captain Metal was about to shoot Blaze while she was down with his cannon blast but he had a better idea. He aimed the cannon at Sonic, the blue hedgehog still fighting hard against Mecha Tails. If he took Sonic out, the shock of him being killed would distract the Royal Fighters so much that the Dark Armada could take them all out in one fell swoop. He aimed at Sonic and pulled the trigger. The cannon blast punched out of the cannon and roared towards Sonic, a huge fist of searing hot energy that had enough force to kill upon impact. Sonic was completely unaware of what was happening as he fought Mecha Tails but Mecha Tails saw the cannon blast and flew away, leaving Sonic to be killed. But Amy had also spotted the cannon blast and was horrified to see it heading towards Sonic, running as fast as she could, she charged towards Sonic.

"NOOO

just as it was in range. The hammer and cannon blast collided and the blast exploded into a fist of power and energy that shattered her Piko-Piko hammer instantly and blew her off her feet. The force of the attack knocked Sonic over too and he picked himself up just in time to watch Amy crash down with a sickening, bone-crunching thud on the ground. She bounced upwards from the impact and then came down a second time, much softer than the first thud, and she rolled to a stop. The remains of her Piko-Piko hammer fell down around her, the handle lying near her head and the hammer head lying in pieces all around her. Sonic zoomed over to Amy and observed her with tingling nerves running through him. Amy looked terrible. Her body was badly burnt and scorched in some places from the impact of the blast and her nose was streaming with blood. Her mouth had a trickle of blood coming from her lip and she had a nasty bruise from when she'd crashed down on the ground. She lay deathly still, not moving even an eyelid. Her eyes were closed and her breathing was shallow. Sonic felt her pulse desperately. His heart sank when he found out that her pulse was deathly weak. Amy was alive, but for how long? Sonic could feel himself getting ready to break down again. He threw his arms up into the air and let out a bloodcurdling wail of anguish. Amy Rose, his biggest fan and hopeful girlfriend and one of the best Royal Fighters on the team, was badly injured and clinging onto life. They had to get her out of here and fast. Sonic let some tears escape from his eyes as he picked up Amy's unconscious body. She was pretty much dead but Sonic was determined to save her. There was still hope for the hedgehog. Carrying her bridal-style, he whizzed off towards the Sky Patrol.

"Everybody! We have a casualty!" shrieked Sonic, "Amy's been badly injured and is dying! We need to get home NOW!"

The news hit the Royal Fighters like a punch to the stomach. They all stopped fighting and willingly abandoned their opponents, running after Sonic towards the Sky Patrol as fast as they could. The armada was about to run after them but Finitevus held up a hand, telling them to stop.

"Cease fighting! Let them go!" he barked.

"Are you out of your $%^ing mind Finitevus?!" bellowed Scourge

angrily, "Why the bloody hell are you letting the morons go?!"

"Simple, I intend to relish their pain and torment." purred Finitevus, "Captain Metal has just taken out one of their Royal Fighters and forced them to retreat. That is a victory worth savouring and since Amy is pretty much dead…oh their misery will be so delicious."

"You bet it will." agreed Fiona, watching as the Royal Fighters filed into the Sky Patrol and prepared for rake off.

"Pity I didn't hit Sonic but I supposed Amy will be acceptable enough." said Captain Metal gleefully, "I can't wait ta see their miserable faces when Amy ends up in Davy Jones's locker!"

"Depends if they bury her at sea." snickered Raphael.

"Nevertheless, we have won today." said Finitevus triumphantly, watching the Sky Patrol's engines starting up as the ship prepared to take flight, "The Royal Fighters have lost one of their own and our mission is a success. The Synthetic Chaos Energy will make a come back and the Royal Fighters won't be prepared for us…they'll be too busy grieving for poor Amy Rose to care."

He laughed maniacally as the Sky Patrol ascended slowly up in the sky. The Dark Armada was triumphant and Finitevus could see many more victories coming their way now. One Royal Fighter had been taken out…soon the rest of them would be taken out too…

Up on the Sky Patrol, Amy Rose had been rushed immediately to the medical bay. The ship had one in case of any medical problems onboard and Amy was laid down on a bed quickly. The Royal Fighters all gathered around Amy as Miranda and Kari fitted her with a heart-monitor and observed her condition. The tone in the room was nothing but silence, grief and horror. Amy lay deathly still on the bed, her head resting peacefully on the pillow and her arms flat against her sides. She was breathing, barely, and he body looked dreadful. Cream and Cosmo both broke down into floods of tears, Cream crying the hardest of all at poor Amy. She wailed into her hands, drenching her gloves with tears and Cosmo hugged Cream

comfortingly as if hoping she could somehow make the rabbit feel better. Everybody else shared Cosmo and Cream's anguish. Amy was a good friend of many Royal Fighters and a good fighter. It would be a tragedy to lose her like this.

"Oh Amyyyyyyyy!" sobbed Cream, "Please, please, please not Amy! Please don't let Amy die! I don't want Amy to die!"

"This is terrible! One of my best friends…what happened to her?!" howled Cosmo.

"Captain Metal shot at her with a cannon." said Blaze grimly, "He had been aiming for Sonic…but Amy took the blow for him. She used her hammer to smash the blow but it appears to have still grievously wounded her."

"She's gotta be alright!" howled Cream despairingly, "Please let her be alright! I don't want her to die!"

"We're hopping that Amy dying won't be the case sweetheart…" said Sally, trying hard not to cry herself but losing the battle, "We've lost one Royal Fighter already, PLEASE don't let it be two!"

"Taran was killed by the armada…now it seems Amy's going to join him." said Scott sadly, "I hope that's not gonna happen…we can't afford anymore loses."

"Miranda, what's the diagnosis?" asked Sonic desperately, his eyes still streaming with tears.

Miranda ran an X-ray scan on Amy and Kari checked the heart-monitor she had fitted Amy up with. The heartbeat was very weak, each slow, ominous heartbeat with a tense pause in-between. The X-ray scan was done quickly and Miranda looked at the results. The screen showed her Amy's skeleton and Miranda saw that it wasn't good at all. She shook her head gravely and looked at everybody with a sad face.

"The poor dear's got multiple fraction bones including fractured rips and a rather acerbic blow to the head." she said, "She's very critical that's for sure."

"Will she survive?!" cried Matilda in horror.

"It's hard to say…" said Miranda glumly, "She's somewhat stable for the moment. She needs medical care and now or she'll die."

"We'll give her all she needs when we get back to New Mobotropolis!" blurted Sonic, "We've gotta save her! We've just gotta!"

"Me and Kari will do what we can to keep her stable enough until we get home." said Miranda, "I'm sure Mariah's magic medicines will save her when we get back."

"I hope so…" said Sonic tensely.

He knelt down by Amy's side and put a hand gently over her badly burnt hand. If Amy was awake now, she'd likely be going gaga over the fact Sonic was holding her hand now. As is, she just lay still on the bed, weakly breathing. Sonic let more tears fall down his cheeks as he saw how critical Amy's condition was. She would survive though, he knew she would.

"Thanks for saving my life Amy…now we're going to save yours." declared Sonic, "Mark my words Amy…you aren't gonna die. We'll save you…I promise we will."

Receiving no reply from the comatose she-hog, Sonic just lowered his head and cried some more, feeling for all the world that he might never stop…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 26: Welcome to the Jungle Sally Acorn

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... ... I've...got nothing...j ust... just wait until the next chapter...:(

Dark Armada Part 12: Remember the Fallen

Story 212: Remember the Fallen

The Dark Armada Chapter 12 of 25

It was the dawning of a new day and the day dawned dark and grey with stormy clouds looming over everything down below, threatening to throw it down with torrents of rainfall at any moment. A very appropriate atmosphere for the dark times that were happening recently.

The Royal Fighters Service was in a war, a war that was much bigger and much worse than their two year war with Dr. Eggman. They were against the insidious Dark Armada, an army of villains and mercenaries gathered together by Dr. Finitevus. The armada had proven itself worse than Dr. Eggman by a country mile by single-handedly managing to enslave Tails the Fox, de-roboticizing Bunnie Rabbot and killing off Taran the Lynx. They had also managed to start gathering together materials to make their Synthetic Chaos Energy out of and despite the heroes's best efforts to try and stop the armada and rescue Tails, Finitevus kept outsmarting them by consistently being one step ahead. He had a mysterious agent spying on the Royal Fighters and the Royal Fighters were still completely in the dark about who it was. Thus no matter what plan the Royal Fighters came up with, Finitevus knew what they would do. Even just yesterday he knew what they were planning and he didn't need his agent to spill the beans on him. The Dark Armada was currently relishing in a recent victory over the Royal Fighters that they had scored. In Black Acropolis, they had gathered an astonishing amount of lava to make Synthetic Chaos Energy with and not only had they managed to keep their finds without the Royal Fighters doing any damage to their plans, but they had grievously wounded the hammer-swinging heroine Amy Rose. The armada seemed certain that she was dead, especially since Amy had take a cannon blast extremely close up by hitting it with her hammer. This had been done to stop the blast from hitting Sonic the

Hedgehog, the actual target of the cannon. The cannon had been fired by Captain Metal, a part Metal Sonic, part robot pirate machine who had a vengeful thirst for Blaze the Cat's hide.

The Nefarious , the Dark Armada's wicked flagship, cruised peacefully through the dull grey clouds in the sky, blending in perfectly with them due to its predominantly black colour scheme. It did not need to be invisible for nobody would see it hidden among the clouds like this. Not even a satellite would see it. Aboard *The Nefarious* was the whole Dark Armada. They were gathered together in the meeting room and much to the armada's annoyance, Captain Metal was once again crowing about his crippling of Amy Rose. He seemed to take great pride in the fact that he of all people had actually taken out one of the big name Royal Fighters. The armada groaned as the robot rapscallion began boasting about yesterday's victory as if he was merely telling his shipmates an old sea tale.

"So there we all were…working away in Black Acropolis and getting as much lava was we possibly could fer Finitevus's Synthetic Chaos Energy formula." crooned Captain Metal, "Than shiver me timbers! Tharr Royal Fighters show up and those scurrrrvy landlubbers attempted to sabotage our mission! So that's when I got me cannon and took aim at Sonic tharr Hedgehog! I almost got the beastie! But then Amy Rose took tharr blast fer him…and she be so crippled that tharr Royal Fighters were forced ta retreat! And all because of me excellent cannon shot! Be that tharr best sea tale ye've ever heard me hearties?"

"Yeah, it was the first dozen times we heard it." sighed Fiona Fox in annoyance, "Seriously Captain Boast-a-lot, do you ever talk about anything else?"

"Yeah! We get it! You took out Amy Rose!" moaned Scourge the Hedgehog, equally as annoyed as his girlfriend, "Big $^£%ing deal! It's not like you took out Sonic himself or anything! And why take such pride in snuffing Amy? It's not like she's that big a deal!"

"Yaaargh, but she is laddie." purred Captain Metal, "She be one of tharr heaviest hitters of tharr Royal Fighters. And she also be one of tharr big names of tharr service. Killing her was certainly a great way

ta redeem myself for me humiliation at tharr hands of Blaze tharr Cat! Harr, harr, I shall relish this victory fer many days to come!"

"Careful Captain, you may dislocate a shoulder patting yourself on the back." snorted Zira the Ruthless matter-of-factly.

"Watch yer tone lassie!" snarled Captain Metal, pointing sharply at Zira with his gun and sword arm.

"No Captain Metal, our kung-fu mistress has a very profound point." said Dr. Finitevus, clearly sounding irritated with Captain Metal's endless boasting, "Never take too much pride in your achievements, that can lead to your downfall. And besides, we don't even know if Amy's dead or not."

"But captain! She got hit by me cannon blast! She couldn't had survived that!" protested Captain Metal.

"Never underestimate the Royal Fighters my robotic rapscallion." said Finitevus warningly, "They have survived MUCH worse than a mere cannon blast. I very much doubt that Amy will survive but I also have a nagging feeling in my skull that she may not be dead."

"Well if you hadn't decided to let the Royal Fighters go then we could have made completely sure of that!" snapped Lord Sycorax angrily, "This is why the great me should be in charge! I won't make moronic mistakes like our impudent leader Finitevus! This armada needs a true leader such as the amazing me, Lord Sycorax!"

"I suppose you want to commit treason against me and get dissected like Scourge did, only this time I won't stitch any new parts on you?" growled Finitevus menacingly, "Anymore talk like that and you're dead meat!"

"Yeah Lord Sycorax, keep your big fat mouth shut!" added Scourge, "Finitevus is just fine as our leader thank you!"

The reptilian rebel looked like he was about to argue some more but he didn't think that would be a good idea so he kept himself quiet. He folded his arms and grumbled furiously under his breath.

"Thank you very much." sneered Finitevus, "Now then, to make

doubly sure that Amy Rose is dead, I am going to send over two very reliable members of this armada."

"Me and Fiona?" asked Scourge hopefully.

"Absolutely not, I was referring to Zira the Ruthless and Mecha Tails." said Finitevus coldly.

"Why master, this is quite an honour." said Zira gratefully, "Thank you. But why me and our Robian slave?"

"You're strong enough to match at least half of the service unaided." noted Finitevus, "And Mecha Tails…well I just very much relish the thought of having Amy killed by Sonic's best friend…if she's not already dead."

"Seriously doc, you're a creepy little cuss you are." said Roxy the Raccoon, risking everything just to say that to Finitevus.

"Roxy, do you want your head to go "kaboom"?!" snarled Lennox Meers the Meerkat threateningly, making Roxy lean back a little in fear.

"No Lennox, Roxy is quite alright." said Finitevus, holding up a hand dismissively, "She is right, I am creepy. And I admit it with PRIDE. Now then, I'll just get Mecha Tails and then he and Zira can go over to New Mobotropolis. If Amy isn't dead…she will be." he purred sinisterly.

"And Captain Egotism over there won't be the one to do it!" jeered Scourge mockingly, pointing at Captain Metal and making a rude face to accompany his gesture.

Scourge came very close to having his head blasted off. Captain Metal leapt up in his seat and aimed his gun arm at him only for Finitevus to suddenly leap up in his seat and throw a warp ring in Captain Metal's way. This caused Captain Metal to shoot a powerful laser blast through the warp ring and because Finitevus had opened the exit behind Captain Metal, he ended up shooting himself in the back. The blast did no harm to Captain Metal for he couldn't feel pain, but it did do some damage to his back. Damage he would have

no idea about because he couldn't feel pain. All he knew was that he'd just shot himself in the back for despite not feeling any pain, he still felt the shot slam into his back. He collapsed onto the table, confused as to why he couldn't stand anymore. His inability to feel pain had ironically become a big Achilles heel for him.

"Grr...too weak to stand back up..." he muttered, "Me shot must have done a lot of damage ta me."

"Not that you'd know since you have no pain receptors." muttered Finitevus, "I really would recommend re-installing them for not feeling pain is going to be your biggest weakness. I'll have you repaired soon enough. In the meantime, I trust there will be no more attempts on Scourge's life just for pointing out something accurate and truthful?"

"Yes captain..." growled Captain Metal, clearly embarrassed and humiliated at the fact Finitevus had caused him to take himself out with his own weapon.

"Good. You're all dismissed except for Zira." ordered Finitevus, "Me and her are just going to fetch Mecha Tails for the mission."

The armada did as they were told and they all filed out of the room save for Zira. She stayed with Finitevus and they both waited for everybody to leave. Once they had gone, Finitevus summoned a warp ring to his hand and flicked it over his shoulder. He and Zira walked through it, the warp ring taking them to the laboratory. Mecha Tails was there, as usual, working on the Synthetic Chaos Energy formula. He had started mixing up lava with Chaos Energy both positive and negative but his work was interrupted by Finitevus arriving into the laboratory and striding up to him.

"Mecha Tails, I have a job for you..." he announced delightedly...

The New Mobotropolis Hospital was in a scene of despair and remorse. And it wasn't because it had actually started raining over in New Mobotropolis either. After being brutally injured by the cannon blast she had taken for Sonic the Hedgehog, Amy Rose had been

quickly rushed to the New Mobotropolis Hospital upon arriving home at New Mobotropolis yesterday. The hedgehog was in a critical condition but Miranda the Mongoose and Kari the Rat had kept her stable for long enough so she would survive in time to receive proper medical care. Amy was now in a hospital room, Room number 8643, and lying on a hospital bed. She was dressed in a hospital gown and nothing else. Even her headband and gloves had been removed. She lay peacefully on the bed with her head resting gently against the pillow and a thick, warm duvet over her body. Her head was facing up at the ceiling, eyes tightly closed and her chest rising and falling slowly with every breath she took. She had a heart monitor fitted to her, the monitor beeping slowly as it registered her weak but still beating heart. Amy was a dreadful sight to behold, badly burnt, bruised and with multiple broken bones but any bleeding on her had stopped thankfully. Mariah the Medicine Cat stood beside Amy, stroking her head softly and injecting something into her arm with a syringe. The syringe had one of her magic medicines inside of it, a mauve coloured liquid that had a slight sparkle to it and it would heal Amy. But it would take time to heal. Even her magic medicines wouldn't repair Amy in such a short time. The hedgehog could be bedbound for quite a while, at least a couple of weeks at the most Mariah calculated. The cat looked at Amy with nothing but grief. She had lived in Knothole with Amy for most of the little girl's life so she knew Amy very well. To see her like this truly made her heart ache. She looked forward to seeing Amy fully recover from this terrible condition she was in. Amy deserved to live for all the good she had done with Sonic and friends over the years.

The elderly cat soon received a surprise as the door to Amy's room opened and a few Mobians walked inside. Sonic the Hedgehog was one of them and he was accompanied by Queen Sally Acorn, Cosmo the Seedrian and Cream the Rabbit. Cream had her parents with her, Vanilla the Rabbit and Porthos the Rabbit. Sonic and Sally were hand-in-hand together as they walked up to the bed. Cream and Cosmo both had gifts for the comatose Amy. Cream had a bouquet of flowers, a bunch of balloons and a "Get Well Soon" card and Cosmo had a bunch of brightly wrapped gifts that Amy would open once she came to. The two girls were hysterical, already crying floods of tears before they even handed out the gifts. Sonic seemed to be past the uncontrollable crying phase, his face a mask of

grimness and misery but not a single tear shedding from his eyes. Sonic and Sally walked over to Mariah, hoping to hear some good news.

"So Mariah...will...Amy be alright?" asked Sonic worriedly.

"Oh the poor dear...she's been very badly hurt and she's received a lot of damage. But miraculously...she'll survive." reported Mariah, "I've given her a dose of my healing potion. It's a medicine of mine that repairs the body from any damage done to it but it'll take time. At least a couple of weeks. I'm sorry but rushing something like that could seriously harm the dear child. And I think she's had enough harm done to her already."

"It's perfectly fine Mariah." said Sally reassuringly, "We just want our beloved comrade to heal and heal well. If we have to wait an entire year for her to recover, we'll do just that."

"Thankfully it won't be that long." said Sonic grimly, "Man how scary it was to think that one of my best friends was gonna die...I can't thank the heavens enough for sparing Amy."

"I think there's two little children who agree with that statement Sonic." said Mariah softly, looking sadly at Cosmo and Cream as they placed their gifts at the foot of Amy's bed.

Cosmo lay down the presents stacked atop each other at one bed post and Cream placed the bouquet of flowers by the other bed post. Cream tied the balloons to the bed post beside Amy's head and she hung the Get Well Soon card onto two of the balloons. The card didn't weigh the balloons down. After that had been done, Cream and Cosmo both stood together beside Amy's bed, trying to control their sobbing long enough to even speak to the comatose girl on the bed before them.

"Amy...I don't know if you can hear me...but I just wanna tell you this." snivelled Cream, wiping her eyes away futilely, "You've been a wonderful friend to me over the years. I remember when we first met. My mother had been kidnapped and you were the first to offer to help me. Since then you've taken good care of me, even treated me like I was your sister. Even when I got my mother back, you've

been a very good friend to me. Thank you for all the good times Amy and I hope you wake up soon so we can have...some more...good..."

Cream couldn't finish off her sentence. The chocolate-eye-coloured bunny lowered her head into Amy's duvet and began to wail again. Cream was such a sweet, innocent, cute little girl that the sight of her crying could bring tears to even the most stone-hearted of people. Somehow, Sonic doubted that even Finitevus would shed a tear for Cream at this point. Cosmo, still crying herself, patted Cream softly on the back to comfort her. Cream didn't seem to notice, continuing to sob into Amy's duvet uncontrollably. Vanilla and Porthos felt nothing but sorrow for their beloved daughter and they wanted so badly to cheer her up somehow. But it seemed that as long as Amy was comatose, Cream wouldn't be feeling better anytime soon.

"Oh my poor daughter...Amy was so kind to her and it just breaks my heart to see Cream so upset." said Vanilla sadly, "I hope Amy will recover soon, that'll make Cream so much happier."

"Mariah, how long do you think Amy will be in a coma for?" asked Porthos.

"She'll be awake at some point tomorrow, that is a fact." said Mariah, emphasizing on the last four words as if making a point on how much of a fact it was, "My healing potion may take a week or two to heal a damaged body but it gets people out of comas much faster. Amy will be awake tomorrow and I'm sure as heck that your sweet little Cream will be VERY happy when she wakes up."

Cream looked up from the duvet she had stained with her tears as if the mere mention of her name was enough to bring her out of her crying fit.

"What was that?" she asked.

"Amy will wake up tomorrow." announced Mariah, "Make sure you're there for her when she's awake. The sight of you will really brighten her up when she awakens."

"I'll be right there for her first thing tomorrow!" declared Cream, wiping her eyes dry, "I hope Miss Rose likes the gifts we've given her."

"I'm sure she'll love them Cream." said Cosmo brightly, wiping her eyes dry too, "And I'm sure she'll have a lovely recovery."

"With Mariah's medicine doing its magic work on her...she will." said Sonic happily, "And then she'll make Captain Metal pay for nearly killing her. I can definitely say that he's earned himself a new enemy. I.e, me!"

"Not only is Blaze baying for his oil, you will be doing so now." noted Sally, "Oooh Captain Metal will be sorry he was ever manufactured, he really will."

"I intend to make him feel that way." growled Sonic, "Amy may have been a nuisance for me in the past...but she's still one of my best friends and also one of my inspirations for giving love a try out. That and I still very much appreciate how maturely she handled the fact that I'm in love with you Sally and how she helped to make our first date one to remember. Amy's done many good things, for me and everybody else. She deserves to be avenged." he declared. He was quite amazed as to how much heart he really had for his friends but the feeling of having a big heart for his friends made him feel wonderful inside.

"I agree." said Sally, hugging her beloved hedgehog, "And we'll all make the armada pay for what they've done to her as well as Tails, Bunnie and Taran."

"One enslaved, one weakened a little and one killed...now we have a Royal Fighter bed bound but recovering. The armada has much to pay for." said Sonic coldly, "So, shall we go back to Royal HQ and plan our next attack? I'm REALLY eager to give the armada a thrashing after what they've done to Amy!"

"Gladly." said Sally smoothly, "If you want Cream and Cosmo, you can stay with Amy if you please."

"We'll do that." said Cosmo, "I'm not to keen on getting into another

battle at this moment."

"Me too. Miss Rose needs our company." said Cream.

Sonic and Sally nodded, understanding Cream and Cosmo's decision to stay with Amy in the hospital room. They very much loved Amy as a good friend of theirs and wanted to spend as much time with her as possible, even if she couldn't see or hear them right now. But she would awaken tomorrow and get to see her beloved friends once again. Sonic and Sally left the room, leaving the rabbit and Seedrian behind as they headed out of the hospital to Royal HQ. Vanilla and Porthos seemed to want to stay with Amy, Cream and Cosmo for they didn't leave the room either. As they headed to Royal HQ, Sonic began to imagine how he would make the armada pay for roboticizing his best friend and crippling one of his best friends. They had crossed the line and Sonic was going to show them no mercy, just like how in his final battle with Eggman he showed him little to no mercy. And Sonic knew very well that it wasn't going to be a pretty sight once he began cutting loose on the armada...

Meanwhile, a warp ring opened up and out of it stepped Zira the Ruthless and Mecha Tails. The warp ring had opened up in the centre of the city and as they stepped out, Zira began looking around New Mobotropolis. She had never been in the city before so this was unfamiliar territory for her. She scowled a hideous scowl of disgust as she observed her surroundings.

"Ugh, this hideous city is where the Royal Fighters live?!" she growled, screwing her face up, "What a repulsive metropolis! Chun-Nan is a much more attractive country!"

"Hence why you want to conquer it." noted Mecha Tails.

"Yes." replied Zira, "Now then, since you were once an occupant of this city, where is Royal HQ?" she asked.

"It is over there next to Castle Acorn." answered Mecha Tails, pointing in the direction of the Royal Fighters Service headquarters

up on a nearby hill next to an opulent looking castle, "You keep the Royal Fighters busy, I will terminate the enemy codenamed Amy Rose."

"Have fun..." purred Zira, a wicked smile spreading out on her face as she ran towards Royal HQ.

"I do not understand the concept of "fun"." droned Mecha Tails, more to himself than Zira as he flew off towards the New Mobotropolis Hospital, fully expecting to find Amy in there for there was no other place she could possibly be in.

Zira looked over her shoulder as Mecha Tails headed off to Royal HQ to keep the Royal Fighters distracted, as well as add some dead bodies to the armada's kill count. Finitevus had given Zira and Mecha Tails a pretty good plan. Mecha Tails would go to the hospital and kill the bed bound Amy Rose while she dealt with the Royal Fighters. She knew full well she wouldn't beat all of them but Finitevus told her to at least kill one Royal Fighter. Or at the most, cripple some more of them so they could be in Amy's position too. Zira hoped very much that she would at least kill Princess Matilda, the princess of Chun-Nan and one of the world's strongest fighters. She still owed Matilda a beating for using the Six Dragon Strike on her. Her chest still ached a little from when Matilda had pounded her into submission with it yesterday. Well when she was through with Matilda, the mongoose would have more than a chest ache. As Zira ran to Royal HQ, she spotted Sonic and Sally entering the building. That was a good sign. She had the chance to get rid of Sonic himself too. How honourable that would be for her! Zira had scores to settle with Sonic too for he'd aided in her defeat in her second take over attempt by bringing Conquering Storm over to face her. Sonic would run his last mile today. Zira stormed into Royal HQ, immediately catching the attention of Sonic and Sally. They both turned around and gasped in horror at what lay before them.

"Zira!" cried Sonic, "Huh, should have expected Finitevus to send some of his precious armada members to finish what Captain Metal started!"

"What are you doing here Zira?!" growled Sally, deploying her arm blades and getting ready to fight, "Are you here to kill us?!"

"You just answered your own question you foolish woman." snorted Zira, "But I'm mostly here to see if Captain Metal succeeded in killing Amy Rose. Since you said "finish what Captain Metal started", I assume the heathen is still alive?"

"You bet." said Sonic coldly, "And your ugly army's gonna pay for nearly killing her!"

"I sincerely doubt that Sonic…" said Zira sinisterly, "Especially since Amy is going to receive a very unwelcome visitor. I'm not alone you see…Mecha Tails is here too and since Amy's still alive…let's just say that Mecha Tails might not show much remorse in killing her."

Sonic's heart stopped. Finitevus had sent Mecha Tails to kill Amy?! If he succeeded in that task, Tails would never forgive himself once he was back on the side of good! Sonic had to stop his best friend from killing Amy or Tails would be scarred for life, never to be the same person again.

"No, not gonna happen!" growled Sonic, "Outta my way Zira!"

He then charged into the leopard and spin-dashed her straight in the gut, throwing her through the door and out of Royal HQ. The moment Zira was outside and thrown down onto the ground, Sonic zoomed off towards the New Mobotropolis Hospital as fast as he possibly could. He felt confident enough with leaving Royal HQ in his friends care. There were many Royal Fighters who would easily deal with Zira without him. That left him to deal with Mecha Tails before he could harm Amy. As Sonic ran towards the hospital, Zira picked herself up and tried to run after him. What stopped this from happening was Sally running up behind her and grabbing her by the tail. Zira spun around at a blinding speed, walloping Sally across the face with a backhand that left her with the mother of all headaches. Sally knew that Zira was a kung-fu mistress. That meant very hard attacks. But because she knew this, it was why she thought it wise not to challenge Zira alone. Zira quickly found out that she had multiple opponents and not just Sally to deal with. The squirrel queen had chosen Princess Matilda, Bladefeather the Falcon, Mushu the Iguana, Li Moon the Vixen, Knuckles the Echidna and Shade the Echidna to join her in her battle with Zira. They seemed very fitting choices for the fight, especially all of Team Chun-Nan.

Zira narrowed her eyes at Matilda, all her hate and rage focusing squarely on her and nobody else.

"So...the princess is here for another fight." she purred, "Good. I owe you a broken neck for using that Six Dragon Strike on me!"

"You won't be breaking anybody's neck on my watch Zira." declared Matilda, "You shame our country. You come to New Mobotropolis to strike us when we're unprepared, and even have an assistant to strike a wounded warrior! You have no honour!"

"I suppose the impudent rodent in the blue vest told you that..." muttered Zira in annoyance, "And who needs a sense of honour like yours anyway? The only honour around here is victory! No matter how it is achieved!"

"Well allow us to show what we think to your sick idea of honour..." said Sally coldly, "Royal Fighters, ATTACK!"

Princess Matilda had already leapt into action before Sally even finished her sentence. The kung-fu mongoose leaped towards Zira like a tiger pouncing on the unfortunate deer that it was hunting. Zira pounced into the air towards her and the two kung-fu mistresses ended up colliding quite comically into each other. As they both crashed down on the ground, Bladefeather and Mushu made their moves. Zira got back up onto her feet but the two seized her by the arms and held her firmly in place while Matilda aimed a powerful punch to the stomach on her. She hit Zira squarely in the centre and made the leopard double over in pain, coughing loudly as the wind was knocked out of her. Zira broke free of Bladefeather and Mushu's grip and clawed at them both, leaving horrible cuts across both their faces. Matilda tried to punch Zira again but the leopard caught her by the arm and threw her over her shoulder. The mongoose winced as she hit the ground hard. Li Moon feebly tried to fight Zira, launching a kick that wasn't even close to the kind of power Matilda had at Zira. The evil martial artist blocked the kick before it came within five inches of her with her hand. She twisted Li Moon's foot and spun her over onto her front. Matilda gasped in horror for her friend and she ran towards Zira, hoping to save Li Moon. What she did instead was get walloped by Li Moon herself as Zira swung her around into the princess like a baton. Knuckles and Shade were

next to attack, both of them charging into Zira's back and knocking her clean off her feet. Zira got back up only for Knuckles to release a torrent of punches on her and even take her off her feet with a terrific uppercut. He watched with satisfaction as Zira hurled through the air and crashed down just metres away. Matilda gasped in amazement at what had happened.

"Wow…impressive." she mused, "Not many people who don't know kung-fu have been able to do that successfully on somebody as powerful as Zira."

"Well I have fought many powerful opponents before." crowed Knuckles, "Especially Zira. So one could say I've had lots of practice fighting against really powerful opponents."

"Indeed but I doubt that will have stopped Zira." murmured Shade, "She does seem quite resilient an opponent."

"Resilient doesn't even begin to describe Zira in a fight..." muttered Knuckles, remembering all too well how fights with her had gone during her first encounter with him, Sonic and some others the two years ago.

Zira picked herself up, seeming to be mostly unharmed, and she cricked her neck as she turned her head side to side. It was almost as if Knuckles's onslaughts hadn't even deterred her in the slightest despite how hard he'd hit her. Zira crouched down on all fours and ran towards Knuckles. The emerald guardian stood his ground and prepared to launch another attack. But he never got the chance for Zira pounced on him at a speed even Sonic wouldn't have been fast enough to dodge and tackled him to the ground. Her hands closed around the echidna's throat, hoping to add another broken neck to her collection of dead bodies. Knuckles slammed Zira in the side of her head, disorientating her enough to make her loosen her grip on him. Shade yanked on Zira's ponytail and pulled her back, allowing Knuckles to get back onto his feet. But Zira kicked Shade in the thigh to make her let go, the female echidna crying out as she was kicked. The leopard then grabbed one of Knuckles's arms and proceeded to sharply yank it to one side, breaking it and rendering it useless to him. Knuckles let out a horrible, agonizing scream as he felt the bones in his right arm crack and fracture under Zira's attack.

Zira then threw Knuckles down onto the ground, leaving the crippled echidna to clutch his arm and writhe in pain on the ground. Horrified, Matilda decided to try and end this before anybody else got hurt. She and Sally both ran towards Zira and the two royal women sailed through the air as they jumped up off the ground. Zira only just had enough time to catch sight of the two as she was given a double kick to the face, one from each woman. It was bad enough she had an impudent princess to deal with, now she was dealing with a queen as well. Two royals for the price of one as far as she was concerned. Zira retaliated with a sharp jab to the belly on Sally and a punch to the shoulder on Matilda. Sally doubled over and Matilda winced in pain, checking to see if her shoulder was still OK. Thankfully, it wasn't broken so the Chun-Nan princess could continue fighting. She wrapped her arm around Zira's throat and held her in a tight, unbreakable chokehold. While she was restrained, Sally decided to give herself and the others something to aim at so she deployed one of her energy blades and slashed Zira across both thighs with it. If Zira continued fighting, they would have a great weak spot to aim at. She remembered how Finitevus had cut her thigh and kept kicking her in it to gain an advantage on her so she decided to try the tactic for herself. Zira growled angrily, more furious than hurt at the squirrel for slashing her thighs. She head-butted Matilda in the jaw to make her release her so she could attack Sally. The first thing that Sally did was kick Zira in the slash on her left thigh. Zira gritted her teeth, trying as hard as she could to hold in the stinging pain shooting up her leg and into pelvis. This was enough for Matilda to sneak up behind Zira and roundhouse kick her in the head. The attack threw Zira off her feet and sent her crashing down at Bladefeather's feet. As she picked herself up, Bladefeather drew out his daggers and prepared to add some more cuts to her body. The leopard dodged the falcon's attack only to then be slugged in the back by Mushu.

Grrr...I hope Mecha Tails is having an easier job than I am! Zira moaned inside her head as she whirled around to slug Mushu in the stomach...

Meanwhile, Mecha Tails was roaming down a corridor inside the

hospital. It had taken him a lot of searching around in such a big building but he was getting eerily close to Amy's room. He was in the corridor that contained rooms 8640-8680 and he passed by three of the rooms already in his search for Amy. He came across Room number 8643 and peered curiously through the window of the door. What he saw was Cream and Cosmo seemingly chatting to somebody on the bed. And that somebody was his target, Amy Rose. She was still comatose and unmoving but Mecha Tails took note of the heartbeat monitor beeping slowly but steadily away in the corner, clearly attached to Amy and monitoring her progress. She was alive! Captain Metal had failed to kill her after all! Finitevus was right to be sceptical! Mecha Tails noted three other bodies in the room, Vanilla and Porthos the Rabbit and Mariah the Medicine Cat but he didn't care about them. He was only after Amy. He supposed he could kill Cream as well since two dead Royal Fighters for the price of one was a good thing to achieve. Something in his robotical mind told him to spare Cosmo though. He wasn't sure why but he knew better than to question his thoughts. If he wasn't to kill Cosmo then he wasn't to kill her. His target was Amy and he'd get some pleasure out of adding Cream to the kill list. Mecha Tails grabbed the door handle and he opened the door, walking inside the room and earning a chorus of gasps from the occupants inside. Cosmo looked like she was about to have a heart-attack whereas Cream looked like she was going to faint any moment now, very pleasing reactions from the girls to his very presence as far as Mecha Tails was concerned.

"TAILS!" shrieked Cosmo.

"What are you doing here Mr. Tails?" asked Cream worriedly.

"My codename is MECHA Tails, not just Tails." droned Mecha Tails coldly, "I am here to finish what Captain Metal started. If you want to live then leave this room. NOW."

Cream and Cosmo somehow managed to look even more shocked than they already did, a feat that one would think was impossible to achieve. This was the worst thing that Finitevus could order their roboticized friend to do, to go and murder one of his own friends in cold blood! They had to stop Mecha Tails before he did this. Mariah seemed to be the first to go ahead with this for she stood

defensively in front of Amy.

"Tails you poor boy, I will not allow you to murder one of your friends like this!" she declared, "You'll have to get through me first if you want to harm Amy!"

"I am not murdering one of my own friends. Amy is not my friend. She is an enemy of the Dark Armada." droned Mecha Tails, "As for your second inquiry..."

Mecha Tails the proceeded to lash out at Mariah and plunge his claws straight into her gut! The medicine cat let out a terrible shriek as her stomach was impaled by Mecha Tails's sharp, metal claws. There was a chorus of horrified gasps from everybody else in the room as they bore witness to what had happened. Mecha Tails showed no emotion for what he'd just done to Mariah. He yanked his claws out of Mariah's stomach and left the cat to collapse onto the floor, a red puddle expanding underneath her as her gut streamed with blood from the five puncture wounds inflicted on it. Mariah tried to cry out for help but the poor, dying feline was helpless to do anything. She couldn't even make a sound, only stare helplessly and clutch her wounded gut in anguish. There were tears in her eyes, tears of horror as she knew the inevitable was coming. Mecha Tails just strode past her, leaving Mariah to bleed to death on the floor. The cat's eyes closed as he walked by and her arm fell limp beside her. Cream and Cosmo couldn't move. They were too shocked at what had happened to do anything. Mecha Tails had just killed Mariah the Medicine Cat! Now they would never be able to cure themselves with Mariah's magic medicines ever again! What sickened them was how swiftly and ruthlessly Mecha Tails did this and how he showed no remorse for his actions. Finitevus had well and truly corrupted the poor fox beyond belief. Mecha Tails stood beside Amy's bed and he aimed his blood-stained claws at the unconscious hedgehog. One simple plunge into her chest and it would be over.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOO!" howled Cream.

Despite being petrified by the death of Mariah, Cream had come back into reality just in time to stop Mecha Tails from killing Amy. The rabbit pounced on Mecha Tails and tackled him to the ground.

Her pet Chao Cheese and her parents Vanilla and Porthos seemed equally as keen to help Cream subdue Mecha Tails. Vanilla and Porthos knelt down on his arms and Cheese sat on his visor, obscuring his vision while Cream sat on top of him. Her eyes were full of tears again.

"Mr. Tails, please stop this!" sobbed Cream, "You're our friend! You're not a mindless machine working for Finitevus! Stop doing bad things and come back to us!"

"I tire of your impudence..." growled Mecha Tails, "Why do you Royal Fighters keep insisting I'm one of your comrades? I am part of the Dark Armada. Please stop trying to manipulate me."

"But we're not!" shouted Cosmo, running over to Mecha Tails, "We're telling you the truth! You're one of us! Finitevus has corrupted you and he's using you as his mindless slave! Please Tails, stop working for Finitevus and come back to us so we can save you!"

"I'm not corrupted. You Royal Fighters are." said Mecha Tails coldly, "And corruption must be purged with fire...like my master Finitevus says!"

He then proceeded to throw everybody off of himself in a feat that nobody was sure of how he achieved it. He was clearly stronger than he looked. Cream, Vanilla and Porthos all crashed into the wall together and Cosmo found herself backing away from Mecha Tails. Mecha Tails advanced on her and he grabbed Cosmo by the neck with one hand. Cosmo gripped his wrist, trying desperately to get free.

"T-T-Tails! P-p-please let me go!" she whimpered feebly, "D-d-don't k-k-kill me! Please!"

"I have no orders to terminate you Cosmo." droned Mecha Tails, "But I wasn't given orders not to hurt you. I will hurt you as punishment for aiding my enemies. If Finitevus ever orders me to kill you...then I'll do it."

He raised one of his sharp, metal tails and prepared to give Cosmo

a horrible slash across the side, making the Seedrian shake furiously and begin squirming desperately in his grasp.

"NO! PLEASE NO!" screamed Cosmo as Mecha Tails drew the tail back and aimed for a brutal slash attack on her side.

But just as Mecha Tails prepared to slash Cosmo, he was whisked swiftly off his feet and thrown into a wall by something very powerful and very hard. Cosmo was able to identify what had happened by the familiar blue blur she caught sight of as Mecha Tails hurled over her and across the room. She turned and saw Sonic the Hedgehog standing there, fists clenched and his face contorting with loathing. Loathing for what his best friend was doing against his will thanks to the Robian cage he was imprisoned in. Mecha Tails picked himself up and glowered at Sonic, claws bared and tails ready to slice him to ribbons.

"Hey Mecha Tails, so glad you could come." said Sonic grimly, "I've been trying so desperately to get you de-roboticized that it warms my heart to see you've delivered yourself straight to us so we can get you saved."

"Negative: I was just leaving." replied Mecha Tails bluntly.

Mecha Tails then turned on his heels and threw himself at the nearby window, smashing it into shards of glass and escaping the hospital room before anybody could stop him. Sonic whizzed up to the window and leapt for Mecha Tails like a graceful gymnast hurling himself onto the next swinging trapeze. He just made it, grabbing onto his ankles and holding on tight as the roboticized fox began spinning his propeller-like tails around. Mecha Tails looked down and saw that he had an unwanted passenger so the evil Robian slave flew down towards the ground. He flew deliberately low so that Sonic would drag across the ground and get a mouthful of grass and dirt. Sonic fought hard against the pummelling he received from the grass and dirt that flew into his face as Mecha Tails dragged him roughly across the terrain. He wasn't going to let Mecha Tails go that easily. Mecha Tails could drag him through hell and back and he wouldn't let go. But he wouldn't hold on for much longer. Mecha Tails flew towards the battle that was going on with Zira the Ruthless up ahead and he ascended slightly. Then he swung his legs forward

as hard as he could, whisking Sonic up into the air. Sonic was forced to let go as his wrists screamed in protest against his body being thrown upwards and his arms causing his wrists to painfully bend and numb his hands. Mecha Tails watched gleefully as he sent Sonic flying into the air and crashing down onto the ground on top of Sally. Zira jumped in amazement, watching with glee as two of her enemies lay sprawled on the ground before her. Mecha Tails then flew down towards Zira and he grabbed her, taking the leopard up off her feet and flying away.

"The mission has been compromised. We have to return to base before we are overwhelmed." droned Mecha Tails disappointedly.

"Oooooh our master will NOT be pleased…" growled Zira.

She then flicked open the warp ring that Finitevus had donated to her and Mecha Tails for the mission and as it opened, Mecha Tails quickly flew through it with Zira in tow. Sonic watched the two villains flee for it through the warp ring and he punched the air angrily. This was the third time that he'd been face to face with Mecha Tails and lost him! What did a hedgehog have to do to save his best friend?! Sonic really hoped that he wouldn't have to go on any longer and that he'd save Tails soon. The fox's lack of being by his side was beginning to get to the supersonic hero.

"Oh for piss sake!" yelled Sonic angrily, "What do I have to do to save Tails from Finitevus?! Nuke the entire planet?!"

"I hope that won't be the case or Tails will be an even more trouble than he is…" murmured Sally, getting up onto her feet and dusting herself off, "Well…the two villains fled for it. I assume this means Mecha Tails failed to kill Amy."

"Yes he did Miss Acorn." Cream the Rabbit answered instead of Sonic. "Me and Cosmo kept him busy long enough for Mr. Sonic to stop him from killing Amy. She's alive!"

Cream and Cosmo had come charging out of the hospital with Cream flapping her long flappy ears and taking to the sky with Cosmo holding on tightly to her hands. They had come flying after Sonic after he took a ride on Mecha Tails. Cream touched down on

the ground and she and Cosmo both hugged Sonic graciously. Sonic hugged them back, pleased that the children were OK.

"Good to hear that my buddy didn't kill Amy." said Sonic happily.

"Yes…but he killed Mariah." said Cosmo sadly, "I'm afraid Tails still has a dead body to regret being responsible for."

"No!" gasped Sally in horror, "No! Not…not Mariah! Her medicines were compulsory needs for us! Without her…we'll never use them again!"

"And that's a shame because I sure hoped Mariah had a medicine to cure my broken arm!" moaned Knuckles, standing up and cradling his broken arm close to his chest. Sonic saw the broken arm and his face fell into despair.

"Oh great…Knuckles has a broken arm!" cried Sonic, "No more fighting for him then until it's healed. How many more Royal Fighters are gonna get killed or sidelined?! HOW MANY?!"

The hedgehog could feel himself getting very stressed and agitated. He looked like he was going to start throwing a fit of rage any moment now. Sally sensed that Sonic was in desperate need of a cool down so she hugged Sonic before he could get anymore anxious.

"Sonic, honey, calm down. Please. Getting stressed isn't going to help." she said softly, "Plus we need you in good health or we're all doomed."

"You're…you're right Sal…thank you." he gasped, "I'm just…I'm scared. Scared that the armada's gonna beat us. I know that I don't usually get scared but…even I have something to be afraid of. And given how many heavy blows the armada's dealing us, it's hard not to be worried about the outcome of this war."

"I understand Sonic." said Sally sweetly, "I'm scared too. The armada means business and they're scoring a lot more victories against us than Eggman ever did. And this crusade hasn't even been a week yet! We've been through more hell in the last four days

than we have against Eggman over two years! This is definitely our biggest battle ever."

"Too right…and I hope we can win." said Sonic, clutching Sally in an embrace he didn't want to let go of, "So…what now?"

"We hold a funeral for Mariah, get Knuckles a bed and rest for the rest of the day. We need a good recuperation…and then tomorrow, we storm The Nefarious." Sally decided, "We have to end this before it gets any worse. Thanks to Captain Metal's head, we know where to find the Chaos Emeralds are on the ship so we'll just get them and then end this nightmare."

"Sounds good to me Sal." said Sonic happily, kissing the queen on the lips delightedly.

It seemed that there was light at the end of this dark tunnel that he and his friends were going through. And Sonic looked forward immensely to coming out of the tunnel and into the light once again…

"This is unacceptable!" roared Finitevus angrily, thumping the meeting table in rage.

Zira and Mecha Tails had returned to *The Nefarious* and had reluctantly given Finitevus the bad news. Needless to say, he didn't like what he'd heard and the two become frightened as they were about to suffer his wrath. They were in the meeting room with Finitevus and sitting in two chairs at the end of the table away from Finitevus, a wise decision they thought for being a good few feet away from an angry Finitevus would be very good for their health.

"We're very sorry Finitevus but Mecha Tails was overwhelmed and…" mumbled Zira.

"I am not interested in pathetic excuses!" snapped Finitevus, "I gave you a simple task and you failed it! How can you two be so utterly incompetent?!" he thumped the meeting table so hard that Zira was amazed it hadn't cracked yet. It would start cracking if he thumped it

any harder.

"Master, if it pleases you, there is some good news to deliver." explained Mecha Tails, "I killed their miracle nurse, Mariah the Medicine Cat. And Zira broke Knuckles's arm she tells me. Knuckles will be sidelined for a while and without Mariah, he'll make a slow recovery. As will anybody else we cripple."

Finitevus relaxed his tense, angry nerves and he sat back down in his seat.

"That is good news indeed." he purred, "We've still crippled the team. My nephew won't be bothering me for a while and they haven't got their precious medicine cat to simply whip up a miracle cure to heal any grievous wounds they receive. Yes…today isn't a total loss after all."

"But we still didn't kill Amy or any Royal Fighters." protested Zira.

"I know…and we'll make up for that failure." declared Finitevus, "First I'm going to start mixing up some lava and Chaos Energy to remake my new Synthetic Chaos Energy. Then we'll get some more items to mix in with the formula. Then tomorrow…we take them ALL out in one fell swoop. We'll go to New Mobotropolis, deploy the ship's greatest weapon, the Oblivion Cannon, and destroy the city with everybody inside."

"Logical idea master. They'll never see it coming." droned Mecha Tails approvingly.

"Indeed…the Royal Fighters have fought their last royal fight today." purred Finitevus happily.

He could just see his enemies's terrified faces when the Oblivion Cannon fired down on New Mobotropolis tomorrow…

I'm scared...really scared! Is Finitevus going to destroy the Royal Fighters?! We'll find out in the next chapter!

Join in next time for the most shocking moment of the entire

saga...Finitevus's mysterious agent is FINALLY revealed and you'll NEVER believe who it is...

Dark Armada Part 13: The Agent Revealed

Story 213: The Traitor Revealed

The Dark Armada Chapter 13 of 25

The next day dawned, bright and peaceful. But just because it was starting off peacefully, it didn't mean that Mobius was in for a good day. It hadn't been very pleasant for the Royal Fighters for quite a few days lately. Four days had been nothing but complete hell for the Royal Fighters Service. The first day saw the Dark Armada making its first sinister move on the world of Mobius by kidnapping and roboticizing the Royal Fighter child prodigy and tech-wiz Tails the Fox. The second day had seen Bunnie Rabbot getting de-roboticized and two failed attempts to stop the armada and retrieve Tails from the armada so he could be saved. The third day saw the Adabat Royal Fighters lose a member of their team and Amy Rose get horrifically crippled, nearly to death. And just yesterday, day four, the Royal Fighters lost their greatest nurse Mariah the Medicine Cat and Knuckles the Echidna was now bed bound along with Amy thanks to Zira the Ruthless breaking his arm. Day five was going to either be a good day or a bad day for the Royal Fighters. Given the Dark Armada's next sinister move, it could even be their final day.

But despite the hell the Royal Fighters were going through the past four days, the rest of Mobius was doing quite well. Once such place was White Acropolis, completely undisturbed by anything and anybody. The Dark Armada hadn't even so much as thought of coming to White Acropolis for they had no reason to come to the snowy, frigid country. Because of this, one particular Mobian was having a very peaceful life out in White Acropolis. And that Mobian was Blizzard the Ice Witch. Formerly an enemy of the Royal Fighters herself, she had abdicated her villainous ways in favour of a more peaceful, loving lifestyle and had made amends for her actions against the Royal Fighters by helping them stop a spell that she had conducted to get rid of them. This had been achieved by a side-effect of the spell. Blizzard had been hearing voices of her deceased family in her head and even saw their ghostly images before her.

The thought of her family hating her had broken the ice-witch's stony heart and made her realize what a monster she had been since their deaths at the hands of King Max. So Blizzard had willingly decided to turn over a new leaf for she had learnt the most fundamental lesson in her life: Revenge never solved anything. Ever since her heel-turn, she had been on good terms with the Royal Fighters and in the period between Eggman's death and the armada's first strike, she had visited them on many occasions. She had even managed to make friends with Sally and Amy, two of the Royal Fighters who had a grudge against her the most due to wanting to take over the former's kingdom and scarring the latter badly after kidnapping her as a child. The fact she was no longer a monster and now a good-hearted soul made Blizzard feel grand inside. It truly was wonderful being a good witch and she now used her spells for fun and larks in White Acropolis. This had earned her a very good reputation among the citizens, a reputation she was proud to have.

As of now, Blizzard as in her ice cave and lying peacefully in her bed, sleeping soundly with the dark blue duvet pulled right up close to her muzzle. She had been dreaming a wonderful dream last night and she still played it over and over in her brain. The dream had involved making a wonderful snowman for some playful little children who loved the snow and loved to have fun in it. She could do just that today. As the morning dawned, the sunlight began to creep into the cave and make it a little lighter. Blizzard began to stir a little before succumbing to the light and waking up from her lovely slumber. She yawned loudly and stretched as far as she could. She sat up in her bed and opened her eyes. Just as always, the ghost of her late husband Iceberg the Ice Wizard was sitting on the bed waiting for her to wake up. It was something like this that made Blizzard very happy to wake up in a morning. If anybody knew about this, they'd consider her mad. But if being mad meant Blizzard was happy, she would let the men in white coats take her away without resistance.

"Good morning my beautiful wife." said Iceberg sweetly.

"Oh good morning my handsome husband." said Blizzard softly, smiling at the sight of the paranormal figure before her, "Ghost or not, it's always a pleasure to see you when I wake up."

"Thanks very much sweetie." said Iceberg happily, *"And what a fine morning it appears to be outside. Do you plan on doing anything today my love?"*

"As always darling." purred Blizzard sweetly, "You know I always have plans for my days. Why do you still ask?"

"Because your plans may have to be altered drastically…"

The ghostly image before the ice-witch's eyes suddenly turned grave and serious. Blizzard put her hands to her chest, sensing that something was wrong.

"Oh no…whatever is the matter my love?" asked Blizzard worriedly.

"You know how we're ghosts? We can go anywhere we like." noted Iceberg, *"Well while you was sleeping last night, me and the children went to see how your former enemies now friends the Royal Fighters were doing."*

"And?" asked Blizzard, wondering if it was wise to have asked.

"They're having a hard time I'm afraid." said Iceberg, shaking his head sadly, *"They're up against an army of villains and they're having a very hard time in beating them. Me and the children listened to Sonic and Sally having a very heart-wrenching conversation about how badly things are going for them now."*

Had Blizzard been her old self, this would have been good news for her. But instead, Blizzard shook her head and lowered her hands, keeping them tightly clasped together.

"Oh the poor darlings…" she whispered.

"You won't like this either…" murmured Iceberg, *"Poor Amy Rose nearly wound up dead. We saw her in the hospital and she looks to be in a TERRIBLE state. She looks like a bomb hit her and she just made it out alive."*

"Oh no…the poor child!" gasped Blizzard, "Oh that's dreadful! I know it might sound weird for me to say this but honestly, that's dreadful!"

"I'm sure your former enemy would appreciate that sweetheart." said Iceberg gently, *"She is alive though but she doesn't look like she'll be awake any time soon."*

Blizzard nodded. She'd see to it that she gave Amy a little something to show how sorry she was to hear about her condition. She and Amy had just become friends since her heel-turn so it pained her to hear that her friend was badly hurt. She imagined that this army of villains that the Royal Fighters were up against meant business, and a lot of it. Blizzard put her hands on her duvet-covered thighs and massaged them slowly.

"So why do you tell me this Iceberg?" asked Blizzard.

"I thought being a friend of the Royal Fighters now, you'd want to help them face this army." explained Iceberg, *"Plus, you're enjoying doing good things nowadays so why not do something good and help the Royal Fighters?"*

"Oh Aramis please, I couldn't." said Blizzard sadly, "Please understand, I'm not a Royal Fighter and I won't be of much help…"

"Oh yes you will my love." the ghostly Ice Wizard said as he came closer to his wife and looked her straight in the eyes, *"You're an Ice Witch. You'll be very helpful ind eed. You'll have the spells needed to fight this army. Please…for me and the children, help those poor, poor Roy al Fighters. They need it now."*

Blizzard stared into her husband's eyes and the snow-coloured hedgehog began to think to herself. The army of villains must indeed be dangerous if even somebody as powerful as Amy Rose was currently hospitalized. But she couldn't just sit out of this and let the Royal Fighters fight the army. They were struggling and they needed help. Wouldn't it be selfish and horrible of her to just sit back and enjoy herself while her newfound friends just got crippled or even killed in this battle? Yes it would. Blizzard also regretted being of little help in the war with Eggman and this could be her chance to make up for that. Blizzard thought and thought on the matter before coming to her conclusion. She smiled lovingly at Iceberg.

"My darling…I'll do it. I'll help the Royal Fighters." said Blizzard

brightly, "I didn't help them beat Eggman when I should so I'm going to help them this time."

"This is why I married you Blizzard. You always know when to do the right thing." said Iceberg kindly.

"Well…not always." murmured Blizzard, thinking back miserably to the evil things she had done in the past.

"You're making up for that though." noted Iceberg, *"I'll leave you to prepare for the battle Blizzard. If you want I'll send the children up to meet you before you go."*

"Please do." said Blizzard, "I'd love to say good morning to Frost and Winter before I go."

With that said, Iceberg materialized out of existence. Blizzard never minded with this. She knew that Iceberg would always return to her so there was never any need to worry when he disappeared. The moment Iceberg disappeared, Blizzard climbed out of bed and had a good stretch before summoning her ice wand to her hand out of thin air. She was dressed in a long flowing night dress with shoulder straps that looked as cold and chilly as the snow outside, very suitable for somebody like Blizzard. Blizzard flicked her wand and showered herself in magical particles of ice that changed her attire from a night dress to her usual flowing, ice-blue coloured robes. Now dressed for action, Blizzard wandered over to her magical ice cauldron and muttered an incantation while waving her hands above it. She had no teleportation orbs left so she needed to make some more for herself. This was the spell that made it. After muttering the spell, three new purple orbs came rising out of the cauldron and Blizzard put two of them into her robe pocket. She kept the first one in her hand. She waited for a moment before doing anything else. Then to her delight, the ghostly images of her beloved children came into her view and they ran towards her with open arms and smiling faces.

"Good morning mummy!" they squealed delightedly.

"My dear children! Good morning to you both!" cried Blizzard happily, "Now then dears, care to give mummy some ideas on what

would make a nice gift for poor little Amy when she feels better…?"

"Hey Knuckles, how do you feel this morning?" asked Sonic the Hedgehog kindly as he approached his rad red friend.

"My arm still kills but I'll live." muttered Knuckles, "Really wish I didn't get my arm broken by that stupid leopard yesterday…

Knuckles was lying in a hospital bed with his right arm bandaged up in a cast. He was in Room number 8644, directly next door to where the comatose Amy Rose was. Yesterday had been a very bittersweet victory for the Royal Fighters although they probably wouldn't consider it much of a victory in the first place, bittersweet or not. Zira the Ruthless and Mecha Tails had been sent to New Mobotropolis to make sure that Amy had died from the injuries inflicted upon her by Captain Metal's powerful cannon. Amy had been saved luckily but then came the bittersweet part. Amy had been saved but there was still a dead body on the Royal Fighter's hands. Mariah the Medicine Cat had been killed by Mecha Tails, rendering any chance of using her miracle medicines to cure anymore illnesses completely impossible now and Knuckles had been crippled by Zira, a big blow dealt to the Royal Fighters by each of them. Mariah's funeral had been hosted the previous evening and many tears were shed for the unfortunate cat since she had saved many lives in her time and now she'd never save another life again. She was buried next to Kate the Eagle, a deceased Royal Fighter who had been killed in the Devatron war, in the New Mobotropolis graveyard and she had been given a gravestone that read, "Mariah the Medicine Cat: A life saver and a miracle nurse who's medicines have helped heal many sick and dying people in her life. Rest In Peace.". Now the day was dawning, the Royal Fighters could prepare their next move. Blaze the Cat had come home to New Mobotropolis with Captain Metal's head two days ago and Queen Sally Acorn had user her Mobian-turned-computer friend Nicole the Lynx to download any information that the head contained. This included the plans to *The Nefarious* , the Dark Armada's insidious flagship. Sally planned to invade *The Nefarious* and get the Chaos Emeralds back so they could then use them to defeat the armada for good. The plans for the ship showed where they were being kept so

all they had to do was follow Nicole and find the Chaos Emeralds on the ship. Once they were found, Finitevus was doomed and the armada would regret ever being formed. They could even use the Chaos Emeralds to heal Amy and Knuckles with a Chaos Regeneration too. Before they got to the plan though, Sonic had decided to see how Knuckles was doing first. The echidna seemed to be fine aside from a broken arm. He wasn't in too much discomfort and he still had some of his snark in him. That was good in Sonic's eyes, meant that Knuckles was still himself.

"It's good that you're OK Knuckie." said Sonic brightly, "And yeah, it does suck that Zira broke your arm. But no worries, if all goes according to plan, we might just be able to heal it sooner than you think."

"Yeah, a Chaos Regeneration is what me and Amy really need right now." agreed Knuckles, "And since Mariah's dead, the Chaos Emeralds may have to be everybody's new miracle cure from now on."

"We can probably allow that to happen." said Sonic, smiling at the very thought, "Now then, care to hear what you'll sadly be missing out on?" he asked.

"Enlighten me. I'd love to know what you're all getting up to without me." said Knuckles with a dry smirk on his face.

"Sally had Nicole download some info from Captain Metal's head as you already know." explained Sonic, "And some of that info was The Nefarious's plans. Thanks to the plans, we know where the Chaos Emeralds are stored on the ship so we're going to storm The Nefarious and get those emeralds back! And also Tails too."

"Well I sure hope that works." muttered Knuckles, "And woe betide Finitevus's agent if he or she is spying on us now and gives the game away to Finitevus again!"

"Oh I don't think Finny's agent will be eavesdropping on us this time." said Sonic casually, "Besides, I checked before I walked into the room, there's nobody waiting to spy on us."

Sonic couldn't be more wrong. There was somebody spying on him and that somebody was directly outside of Knuckles's room right now! Finitevus's anonymous agent had followed Sonic all the way to Knuckles's room and had eavesdropped on the entire conversation. Now the agent had the information it had come for, it sneaked away from Knuckles's room and hid in the toilets to give its message to Finitevus. Taking out a communicator device, which was spherical in shape, the agent locked itself inside a toilet stall and began speaking into the device, whispering quietly to make sure it couldn't be overheard. Yet another plan would blow up in Sonic's face thanks to this agent…

Dr. Finitevus was standing in *The Nefarious* 's bridge, keeping an eye on the computer monitors all around him as the ship cruised silently and stealthily through the sky. *The Nefarious* was currently cloaked, meaning that the ship had no chance of being seen any time soon. It was on its merry way to New Mobotropolis, ready to destroy the city and waste all the Royal Fighters. The Oblivion Cannon, *The Nefarious* 's most powerful weapon was primed and ready to fire. Finitevus had tested it on an asteroid in space in the period between Eggman's death and the armada's first move and the cannon had completely vaporized the asteroid. The asteroid itself had been the size of a small house so if the cannon vaporized that, leaving nothing but atoms left, then New Mobotropolis was as good as destroyed. Finitevus could hardly contain his excitement. He was so looking forward to putting an end to his enemies at last. No more would the Royal Fighters get in his way, no more would they try to stop his plans and never again would they destroy his precious formula. Just yesterday he had gathered up clumps of grass, a bunch of rocks and had even made a trip to the Lake of Rings to get a power ring to use for his formula. Mecha Tails was currently in the lab re-making the formula for him now. Finitevus hoped that the combination they were using now would create a stable formula for him to use in his grand plan Operation: Enerjak Reborn. Finitevus could just see himself becoming Enerjak right now. How glorious that feeling would be! He suddenly snapped out of his thoughts as a beeping noise in his ear made him jump. Finitevus sighed in annoyance. He would have to have a quieter

earpiece in the future. He pressed the earpiece with two of his fingers and he answered it.

"Hello? Ah my glorious agent! How are you doing this morning?" asked Finitevus politely, "Yes…yes…mmm hmm…interesting… hmm…maybe letting them keep Captain Metal's original head wasn't a good idea after all…but that's what you're here for my agent, to render any victory of theirs moot. Thank you for the information. Goodbye."

He then switched off the earpiece and grinned to himself wickedly.

"So the Royal Fighters plan to raid my ship?" purred Finitevus, "Well I'll put a stop to that. I'll just put the Chaos Emeralds somewhere else for the time being. As for the Royal Fighters…I think it's time I had a hostage to make them comply. And I know exactly who I'm going to use…"

He cackled to himself wickedly as he pictured the Royal Fighters' faces. No Chaos Emeralds for them and they'd just be met with a hostage that would force them to surrender. Today was going to be a marvellous day indeed for the armada…

Back in the New Mobotropolis Hospital, Sonic decided to leave Knuckles alone so he could rest for the day. Before returning to his friends so they could begin the plan, Sonic decided to check on Amy and see how she was doing now. Mariah had said yesterday that Amy should wake up some time soon thanks to her healing potion that she had given her before she met her untimely demise at Mecha Tails's cold, metallic hand. He wondered if she'd be waking up now. As Sonic walked into Amy's room, he got the surprise of his life. But to his delight, it was a pleasant surprise for a change. Somebody else was already in the room and that somebody was former enemy Blizzard the Ice Witch! It was funny for Sonic to think that a couple of years ago, Blizzard would be trying to kill Amy if she came across her in this condition. And yet here she was, standing beside Amy's bed and lying down a gift next to the presents that Cosmo and Cream had bought for her yesterday. She had conjured up a transparent, diamond vase with a diamond rose in it for Amy to

keep forever when she came out of her coma. A permanent rose seemed like a nice gift to give for Amy, especially as her surname was "Rose" too. Blizzard had know which room Amy was in thanks to Frost and Winter telling her so she just simply used a smoke bomb to poof herself into the room. She turned around and saw that Sonic had come into the room to see Amy. She gasped in surprise.

"Oh Sonic, what a pleasant surprise." she said meekly, "I uh… should have let you know I was here shouldn't I? Ha, ha…do excuse my unannounced visit."

"No Blizzard, it's perfectly OK." said Sonic kindly, "Remember, you're on our side now. You can see us any time you like. Though what gave you the idea to come here and see Amy? How did you know to come here and see Amy even?"

"The ghosts of my family informed me of what you'd been going through lately so I thought I'd come in and join you in your battle against this supposed "army of villains" you're up against." explained Blizzard, "They even told me what had happened to poor Amy so I thought I'd give her my respects. After all, we are no longer enemies."

"I'm sure Amy appreciates that." said Sonic with a smile, "And you're here to help us fight the Dark Armada too? Can I just say that's really swell?"

"Thank you very much." said Blizzard appreciatively, "And you said "Dark Armada". Is that the army's name that you're fighting?"

"It is indeed Blizzard." murmured Sonic, scowling as if the name of the armada had a very bad effect on him, "The Dark Armada is its name, evil is its game. And you can see that from what they did to poor Amy."

The two hedgehogs glanced over at the peacefully resting pink hedgehog on the bed before them. Sonic noted happily that the heartbeat monitor appeared to beeping faster than yesterday. Amy was definitely improving thanks to Mariah's last medicine given out before her death. Blizzard took note of Amy's appearance with a grim face and she looked back at Sonic.

"Indeed. The poor dear looks like she got a terrible beating." she said sadly.

"I know. She got hit by a cannon blast." explained Sonic, "She took the shot for me and saved my life. When she wakes up, I'm going to show her just how grateful I am. I've saved her life many times before so it must have been nice for her to save my life too."

"I bet." said Blizzard agreeably, "So what else has this Dark Armada done that's got you Royal Fighters on the ropes?"

"Well they have a secret spy who keeps spying on us and finding out what we're planning so they're constantly a step ahead of us." said Sonic bitterly, "I still long to find out who that spy is so I can make him or her sorry he or she worked for Finitevus! But the worst thing they've done...is roboticize my best friend Tails and turn him against us."

"Tails...the twin-tailed fox cub that's always by your side is he not?" asked Blizzard.

"Correct." said Sonic, his face falling and his tone becoming more miserable, "I miss Tails so much. He was like a brother to me and Finitevus took him away from me...I want him back! I can't stress how much I want him back!"

"I'm so sorry to hear this Sonic." said Blizzard sympathetically, "Having lost my family and my cult, I know how it feels to lose somebody, be it death or not. You have my deepest sympathies dear."

"Thanks Blizzie, I appreciate it very much." said Sonic, his face brightening a little, "It's so nice to see what a big heart you have now."

"Well a little ghost problem was the wake up call I needed to get such a big heart." noted Blizzard with a slight chuckle, "So then, would it be permissible if I assist you Royal Fighters in this battle with the armada?"

"Of course!" cried Sonic happily, "We need all the help we can get

right now! Plus, you're an Ice Witch, you'll be very helpful in this battle! Just one wave of a wand and you can send the armada flying! Maybe even freeze them if you could."

"Oh I can't freeze anymore after my belt and ice-gem were destroyed before my turn to good*." noted Blizzard, "But I have some spells and magic tricks that the armada won't be expecting. Thank you for allowing me to aid you in your crusade." she added gratefully.

"Any time." said Sonic, "Now come with me, we're about to commence with a great plan Sally's come up with."

"Looks like I joined you just in time then..." said Blizzard happily.

With that said, Sonic and Blizzard both walked out of the room to join up with the Royal Fighters. As they left the room, Amy seemed to give a slight, brief stir in her sleep. She was getting ready to wake up at last. But if the Dark Armada succeeded with its plan to destroy New Mobotropolis, she could well never wake up again...

Meanwhile, all the Royal Fighters in the R.F.S. were gathered around in a big circle outside of Royal HQ. Given how it was such a lovely day today, Sally wanted to sit outside with her team so she had gathered everybody outside for a meeting. Plus it seemed very unlikely that Finitevus's mysterious agent would successfully eavesdrop on them without being spotted whilst out in the open like this. Any attempt at eavesdropping would result in at least one Royal Fighter catching them red-handed. Plus Nicole's holographic avatar was keeping an eye out for anybody daring to spy on them as they talked. It seemed that doing everything outside was a logical idea after all for nobody came close to the Royal Fighters in an attempt to spy on them. This was good, for once they'd catch the Dark Armada by surprise. Everybody was here in this circle from all of Team Mobotropolis to Team Adabat to Team Chun-Nan to Team Nekronopolis and Team Megapolis. everybody listened intently as Sally explained the plan to them.

"OK everybody, here's the plan that I've come up with for our next

move against the armada." explained Sally, "Given how thanks to Blaze giving us the head of Captain Metal, Nicole was able to download some very useful information for us to use against the armada."

"What kind of information cousin?" asked Abby the Squirrel inquisitively.

"Here on Nicole's handheld computer," Sally paused as she took the hand held computer out of her vest pocket and showed it to everybody, "I have the plans to the Dark Armada's ship, The Nefarious. All thanks to Captain Metal's head having some very useful information."

"I still feel very proud to be responsible for the obtaining of this information." said Blaze the Cat happily.

"After studying the plans, I found out that the stolen Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald are kept in a secure room on the top floor of the ship." explained Sally, "We storm the ship, find the room and break into it. Then once we're in...all hell can break loose." she added with a rather devious smirk that seemed out of place on the squirrel's face.

"Yes, me and Sonic can turn super and destroy the ship!" cried Shadow the Hedgehog, "The armada won't have a chance against us once me and Sonic are super!"

"And me and Knuckles will reclaim what we were assigned to protect..." murmured Shade the Echidna, "This is a very good plan indeed."

"Just one small problem your majesty." said Mandy the Mouse quickly, "How do we get ON the ship? We don't have warp rings or anything."

"What about the Sky Patrol?" asked Wilson the Dog, "We could use that to get aboard The Nefarious."

"But the ship can turn invisible, we may never find it." mused Ruben the Water Panther, "They might make their next move before we

find it."

"I'm telling you now, if we ever get on The Nefarious, I'm planting a tracking device." declared Sora Prower, "That way, we'll ALWAYS find it no matter if it's invisible or not."

"Yeah and then what happens when Finitevus finds it?" snorted Vector the Crocodile rudely, "We'll end up losing the ship again!"

"It so would help if we had a warp ring to use." muttered Silver the Hedgehog, "Heck, I should have brought a Super Warp Ring so that Blaze could use it to get us aboard. Instead, Blaze used her Sol Emeralds. I didn't think we'd need the warp ring at the time..."

"Hey everybody, our honourable hero of Mobius is coming." Matilda called out, looking to her left, "And he appears to have a new recruit with him."

New recruit? That made everybody's ears prick up in surprise and they all looked in Matilda's direction to see that indeed, Sonic was coming towards them and he had somebody else with him. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters all beamed delightedly whereas Silver and Blaze leaped onto their feet in alarm for they recognized who it was immediately. It was Blizzard the Ice Witch. As Sonic approached everybody, Blizzard caught sight of Silver and Blaze and put a hand to her mouth in surprise. She remembered them, she had met them last year. Silver and Blaze had ended up on Mobius Prime thanks to a time rift in the sky that sucked them up and dumped them onto Mobius Prime. They had ended up in White Acropolis and Blizzard had tried to use Blaze as part of a spell she'd tried to conduct**. She'd used Blaze's fire necklace, a birthday present from Silver in the spell and Blaze had not been happy at all. She really didn't seem happy to see Blizzard now for the lavender furred feline set her hands alight.

"You!" snarled Blaze, "What are you doing here Blizzard?!"

"Are you working for the armada too you wicked witch?!" cried Silver angrily.

"Oh no Silver and Blaze, quite the contrary." said Blizzard hastily,

"I'm here to fight AGAINST the armada. No you probably don't believe me but I do have people who can vouch for me."

Sally was one of the first to do just that. She leaped onto her feet and stood defensively in front of Blizzard, something that would have seemed odd to her had Blizzard been her old self.

"At ease Silver and Blaze, Blizzard's our friend now." said Sally supportively, "She turned over a new leaf thanks to a side effect from one of her spells. Nicole witnessed all that and she can show you the evidence if you need convincing."

Blaze put out the fire in her hands and put them behind her back. Silver shared Blaze's apologetic look.

"We're very sorry for our outburst." said Blaze, "Please forgive us. We hadn't been informed of your heel-turn."

"Oh no dears, it's quite alright." said Blizzard sweetly, "I suppose I should have let Sonic inform you before showing me off to everybody."

"It's OK." said Silver, "We're just happy that we're not enemies anymore. Well done for coming to your senses and joining the good guys Blizzard. Makes me wish everybody else had your kind of sense."

"Thank you very much." said Blizzard politely, "So, Sonic tells me that you have a plan for your next move against the Dark Armada your majesty?" she asked, looking over at her former enemy.

"Why yes indeed Blizzard." replied Sally brightly, her pretty face curling up into a beautiful smile that made the nearby Sonic smile back at her, "We're going to get onboard The Nefarious, the Dark Armada's ship, find the stolen Chaos Emeralds and use them to tear the ship apart and subdue the armada. We'll also rescue Tails too."

"But we're not sure how we're going to get aboard the vessel." said the holographic Nicole, shaking her head sadly.

"Well I do have one of my smoke-bomb teleporters." suggested Blizzard, taking one out of her robe pocket and showing it to Sally,

"But I cannot take you aboard the ship. I haven't been on it and I need to know where I'm going if I'm to use it."

"Well luckily for you Blizzard, we have somebody who has been on the ship and has seen more of it than any of us…" said Sally happily.

She looked over at Blaze and winked at her. Blaze smiled back at her. She knew what Sally meant. Blaze had run through the entire ship just to get to the top of it in order to escape from it after being taken prisoner aboard it by Captain Metal and Cutthroat Jim. Blaze had mostly run through the corridors just to find her way out so she didn't have a super clear image of the ship's interior…but she did have a clear image of the top of *The Nefarious* . She could take the smoke-bomb and poof everybody aboard the ship. Blaze walked over to Blizzard and held out her gloved hand.

"Allow me to transport us aboard the ship." offered Blaze, "I know exactly where I'm going to take everybody."

"Very well then my child." said Blizzard, handing the purple smoke bomb to Blaze, "Just yell "Alakazam" and throw it on the ground."

"But won't that just transport me and nobody else?" asked Blaze curiously, "I can't go alone."

"If everybody holds onto each other while you hold onto them, you'll poof everybody aboard." explained Blizzard, "I recommend having everybody form a circle and hold hands."

Cosmo the Seedrian then suddenly stood up and toddled over to Sally. Sally looked at Cosmo, sensing that the Seedrian didn't seem awfully happy about something.

"Please your highness, I do not wish to come on the mission." said Cosmo glumly, "I cannot bear to face my roboticized boyfriend again, especially after he nearly hurt me. Plus, I think Amy and Knuckles could do with some company."

"Well…OK Cosmo. I'll allow you to stay home." said Sally gently, "Everybody else…let's go and make haste!"

The rest of the Royal Fighters were all too happy to go along with this. They were all as keen to defeat the Dark Armada as Sonic and Sally were. Everybody got up onto their feet and they all held hands while Blaze prepared to transport everybody over to *The Nefarious* . Cosmo stood away from the circle, not wanting to come with them on the mission. Blaze held the smoke bomb high above her head and yelled "ALAKAZAM!", then she threw it down onto the ground and shattered it to pieces. The smoke drifted all around the Royal Fighters as the shell broke open and within one simple cloud of mist, everybody disappeared into thin air, transporting from where they had been all the way over to *The Nefarious* . Nicole dematerialized out of existence, thinking she wouldn't be needed anymore for Sally would just be using her handheld form up on the ship now. The moment they all disappeared and Nicole left, Cosmo then proceeded to do what she didn't say she was going to do. She pulled out a spherical device, the exact same device that she had found on the table during the night Tails was kidnapped by Finitevus and she spoke into it. Her face contorted with worry and repulsion as she spoke into the device.

"Agent White Seed reporting." she said quietly, "Everybody's going to appear on your ship very shortly. They're using a smoke bomb given to them by Blizzard the Ice Witch."

"Excellent to hear my agent!" cried Finitevus on the other side of the device, "Now onto the next part of the plan…you turn from agent to hostage…"

Over onto *The Nefarious* , the ship was silently cruising through the sky and well on its way to New Mobotropolis, no longer cloaked as Finitevus saw no point to staying invisible now. It had travelled a long way across Mobius last night so it had a long way to travel to get to New Mobotropolis. It was nearly there, just another hour and it would arrive at New Mobotropolis. One precious hour was all the Royal Fighters had in order to save New Mobotropolis from total destruction. Not that they had any idea that that was going to happen. A cloud of purple smoke appeared directly atop *The Nefarious* and after the smoke drifted away, the crowd of Royal Fighters stood in its place. The transportation had been successful.

As the smoke cleared, everybody got a good look at where they were currently standing. They could feel the wind whooshing past them all and blowing about any long flowing clothing or hair on any of the Royal Fighters. They could see a great view all around atop the malevolent vessel that they were now standing on. An impressive, amazing feeling indeed but a feeling that the Royal Fighters couldn't enjoy. They had a mission to do and they couldn't afford to hang about enjoying the view.

"OK, we're on top of the ship. Does anybody see a way in?" asked Sonic curiously.

"I got up here through a hatch somewhere…" mused Blaze, "I think it was over there."

She ran across the top of The Nefarious and almost immediately, she came across what she was looking for. There in the floor was a rectangular door with a handle on it. The door was labelled "Emergency Exit". In an emergency, this door would be a quick way out of the ship and certainly had been for Blaze when she'd fled for her life two days ago. There was no handle on the outside of the door for the door was meant to be opened up from the inside. But the Royal Fighters still had a way inside. Silver stood forward and used his psychokinesis to open up the door. With the emergency exit opened up, the Royal Fighters all filed inside the ship through the open door. They found themselves inside a huge, straight, long stretching corridor that reached the entire length of *The Nefarious* . The corridor was gloomily lit with an eerie purple light all the way through and the black interior made the Royal Fighters feel a little uncomfortable. They could tell this was the ship of a villain army no questions asked about it. Surprisingly enough, there was a lack of presence of any Dark Armada member in this corridor. Only the Royal Fighters were in this corridor. It seemed very strange to Sonic as he noticed this odd turnout. Surely the Dark Armada would be guarding every inch of the ship in case they ever sneaked onboard? This didn't settle well with Sonic, he began to suspect that all was not what it seemed. Nobody else seemed to share his suspicion, probably due to how confident they were in the fact Sally's plan was going to work so brilliantly. Sally opened up Nicole's handheld computer and studied the plans for *The Nefarious* that the A.I. lynx

displayed on her screen.

"OK, we're on the right floor." explained Sally, "The Chaos Emeralds are in a room that's down a corridor on our right. We have to go down this corridor until we come across the second corridor on our right."

"Got it." said all the Royal Fighters.

"I dunno Sal...this seems TOO easy." murmured Sonic worriedly, "I mean, wouldn't the armada be guarding this floor if the Chaos Emeralds are all here?"

"The armada doesn't know we're coming." said Sally dismissively, "Finitevus's agent won't have eavesdropped on us, especially since I made the plan out in the open, something that would guarantee the agent blowing its cover, for once we're a step ahead of the armada."

"Yeah but still, you'd think somebody as clever and as well-prepared as Finitevus would at least have somebody up here as a contingency or something?" asked Sonic.

"Maybe there is somebody on this floor. We're just not in the same corridor as them." suggested Sally, "Either way, our victory is just moments away. Let's go."

She ran off down the corridor eagerly with Nicole in hand. Sonic almost laughed to himself. Usually it was him being reckless and Sally being sensible and now Sally was being reckless and he was being sensible. She really was the perfect woman for him after all. Grinning, Sonic ran off after Sally with the rest of the Royal Fighters following them closely as they down the corridor. They were all as confident in the plan as Sally was. They were going to succeed. The Chaos Emeralds would be theirs and the armada would be defeated. Sonic could just picture his best friend being returned to him, de-roboticized and back to normal at last. Maybe when they got the emeralds, they could persuade Finitevus to make a new de-roboticizer rifle for them to use on Mecha Tails. Either way, Tails's nightmare wasn't going to last any longer. The Royal Fighters ran down the stretch of corridor for a few minutes before running into something. Being at the other end of the corridor upon arrival, they

didn't see that they weren't alone in the corridor at first. It was always harder to see something clearly from a distance. Now closer, they found out that the corridor was also occupied by Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox and the entire Raiju Clan. They were all standing near the second corridor on the right, clearly intending to stop the Royal Fighters from getting near the Chaos Emerald. Scourge smirked confidently at the Royal Fighters.

"Going somewhere morons?" he sneered, "You wouldn't happen to be looking for the Chaos Emeralds now would you?"

Sonic clenched his fist and swung it downwards angrily. Yet again the agent had somehow stricken and the Royal Fighters' plan had been given away! But how?! Sonic didn't care anymore. Element of surprise or not, they were getting those Chaos Emeralds whether the armada was a step ahead of them or not. They were so close, they couldn't give up now.

"Lucky guess..." snarled Sonic, "Now get out of our way before we beat you all into unconsciousness!"

"No chance loser, you'll have to get through all of us first!" yelled Scourge, aiming his metal hand at Sonic and preparing to shoot at him.

"I can honour your wish green Sonic..." sneered Blizzard, stepping forward and whipping out her ice wand.

"Who in the hell are you?!" blurted Fiona in surprise, "New recruit or something?!"

"All you need to know is that I'm here to give the Royal Fighters a helping hand." snapped Blizzard, pointing the wand at Scourge, Fiona and ninja lynxes standing before her.

She then closed her eyes and began to mutter a spell. The Royal Fighters could just make out what she was saying. The chant went like this:

"Powers of snow, powers of ice, I call for a wind, I call so nice. Blizzard winds, heed my command. Blow my enemies away, with a

swish of my hand!"

Then Blizzard swiped the air with her wand and sent everybody blowing backwards across the corridor. It was like a hurricane had suddenly swept out of Blizzard's wand and smacked the armada members. Blizzard beamed at the chorus of cries from the hedgehog, vixen and lynxes as they were whisked off their feet and down the corridor. Everybody gasped in amazement, even Team Mobotropolis for they hadn't seen Blizzard do this before. It was certainly a powerful attack and a great spell the ice witch had learnt. Blizzard turned around and smiled sweetly at her friends.

"Impressed?" she asked.

"Very much so..." gasped Sonic, "I'm "blown" away at that!"

Blizzard could hardly keep herself from chuckling at the bad pun that Sonic had given her. Now that the defence had been taken down, the Royal Fighters darted down the corridor that they had to take in order to find the Chaos Emeralds. But what they found instead was a sight beyond what they had expected. Standing in the corridor, glaring angrily at them all was Conquering Storm's right hand man Dafeng Rai! The Royal Fighters had captured him a couple of days ago and Sally had managed to coax him into giving out some very useful information. But he wasn't the only shocking thing they were seeing. Dr. Finitevus was with him and he had Cosmo wrapped tightly in a chokehold and Finitevus was holding a katana to her throat! Finitevus had warped over to New Mobotropolis and grabbed Cosmo to use as a hostage. He'd also found Rai in the Sky Patrol and had rescued him, hence why he was here now. Rai had given Finitevus the katana he was now holding at Cosmo's throat. The Seedrian looked terrified and tried her best not to cry as Finitevus held her at blade point. The Royal Fighters were about ready to charge into Finitevus and save Cosmo but the echidna looked ready to sever Cosmo's head any moment now.

"Hand over Nicole." snarled Finitevus, edging the katana blade closer to Cosmo's throat and leaving a little cut across it, "Throw her to me. I will not ask you again."

"Let Cosmo go Finitevus!" growled Sonic.

"Only if you hand over Nicole now." Finitevus retorted.

"Fine, I'll MAKE you let go of her!" declared Silver, standing forward and getting ready to use his psychokinesis.

But unfortunately, Finitevus had already prepared for that. As Silver prepared to use his psychokinesis, a gun turret suddenly descended out of the ceiling and pointed at the Royal Fighters. Before any of them could find out what it was, the turret fired a jolt of electricity at all of them that surrounded them in a doom of electrical bolts and quickly knocked them all out in one single zap. The Royal Fighters all collapsed onto the floor in a heap and Finitevus marched over to Cosmo, throwing her aside and handing the katana back over to Rai. With Sally unconscious, he was able to steal Nicole's handheld form from her without a single problem. He grabbed the handheld computer device from Sally's hand and crushed it within his own hand.

"There, now Nicole's handheld form cannot give those fools a map of my ship anymore." he crowed, "And as for the lynx herself...she'll perish when New Mobotropolis is destroyed. Now to restrain our prisoners..."

He opened up a warp ring and stepped forward to grab the first Royal Fighter...

The Royal Fighters came to after a long while of being passed out. The shock had definitely given them a big knockout. But all of them started to wake up, groaning as the effects of being knocked out began to take hold. Sonic opened his eyes and wondered where he was. He could see that he was in a very wide and a very large room with laser cuff generators all around. He and all his friends were bound to the wall by laser shackles around their wrists and ankles. All that is but two. Blizzard was nowhere to be seen and Cosmo was in the room but she wasn't bound to the wall. Instead she was standing beside Dr. Finitevus with a very sorrowful expression on her face as if she was about to cry. Finitevus stood before the captive Royal Fighters, a big, devious smirk plastered across his muzzle. Sonic's eyes fully opened and he tried to lunge at Finitevus

but the laser cuffs held him firmly back. All he and his friends could do now was just stand there and glower at Finitevus. The echidna seemed unfazed at their gazes, something that he often did as if no matter what expression the Royal Fighters gave him, he would never care about it.

"Have a nice nap my friends?" sneered Finitevus mockingly, his face a cruel sneer of triumph as he admired his captive guests.

"Finitevus! Let us outta these laser binds or so help me you're gonna be battered and bruised at the end of the day!" shouted Sonic, struggling in his unbreakable binds.

"That doesn't seem very possible given what's become of you all now." purred Finitevus, "And once again, you have nothing but empty threats to give me. You heroes never have anything interesting to say don't you?"

"If you let me go, I'll show you how many "interesting" things I have to say to you." said a very angry and furious Shade with a voice colder than a polar ice cap.

"You can say them all to me now if you like, not that I'm interested in hearing them." crooned Finitevus.

"Whatever." sighed Shade in annoyance, "So what do you plan on doing to us now?"

"Hold on." said Mandy, "I've noticed something odd. Where's Blizzard and why is Cosmo not locked up in these laser cuffs with us?" she asked, taking note of Cosmo's presence by Finitevus's side and a lack of presence for Blizzard.

"Blizzard is in solitary confinement for I have plans for her." explained Finitevus, "An ice witch like her will make a fine experiment. As for Cosmo...well she has a confession to make. Isn't that right...Agent White Seed?" he said sinisterly, looking over at the miserable Seedrian standing beside him.

"Agent White Seed? What's he on about?" asked Sally, staring directly at Cosmo as if expecting her to turn into a hideous monster

completely out of nowhere.

Cosmo stepped forward with her hands clasped together and held to her chest. Her eyes streamed with tears as she prepared to reveal her terrible secret to the Royal Fighters.

"My friends...my poor, poor friends...it makes my heart ache to say this...but I am Finitevus's agent." announced Cosmo, her eyes streaming harder with tears.

The revelation hit everybody in the room like a punch to the gut. Sonic was so horrified to hear this that he thought for a moment his heart had exploded. Nobody looked more shocked to hear this than Geoffrey St. John though. He'd accused Cosmo of being the agent a couple of days ago and he had been right all along! He had been right and yet he'd allowed himself to scorn himself for accusing her! Sonic and Sally both thought back to the chain of events that they had been going though lately. It all made sense now. On day two, Cosmo had only wanted to go to the toilets so she could tell Finitevus that Bunnie and Geoffrey were planning to sabotage the ship! And after Bunnie had returned home, Cosmo had been outside telling Finitevus what she had been hearing before Silver and Blaze arrived at the hospital and saw her outside the room! Sally also remembered their failed attempt to save Tails in Holoska. Cosmo must have snitched on them while she was getting dressed into warm clothes. Then there was day three. Cosmo must have somehow spied on her and Sonic in Royal HQ. Then there was Blaze's mission that had been foiled on the same day. Geoffrey remembered how Cosmo ran out of Royal HQ in tears. She must have used that as a way of sneaking after Sonic and Sally without being suspicious. And now today's plan had gone belly-up. Cosmo had opted to stay behind not because she wanted to keep Amy and Knuckles company, but so she could tell Finitevus what they were planning on doing. It all made so much sense! Sonic stared at Cosmo in horror, the Seedrian looking extremely guilty.

"It's not true!" cried Sonic in denial, "Cosmo...please tell me it's not true!"

"I'm sorry Sonic...but it's true." said Cosmo glumly, "I'm very sorry my friends."

"Sorry? SORRY?!" bellowed Geoffrey, "Thanks to you, we've been going through hell and back and you have the nerve to say you're sorry?! You sicken me you filthy, disgusting little traitor!"

"Shame on you Cosmo! How could you betray us like this?!" screamed Cream, her eyes streaming with angry, hot tears, "Miss Rose is going to be so cross with you Cosmo!"

"We've been trying to save Tails, which if I recall, is the one that you love Cosmo and you've been preventing us from doing that!" shouted Ruben, "You dishonour us all Cosmo! And to think I liked you when we first met..." he added bitterly.

"My brother's gonna be so disappointed with you Cosmo." said Sora angrily, "He loves you, he trusted you with his life and this is how you repay all that?! Be betraying us all and stopping us from rescuing him?! Shame on you indeed!"

"I can't believe you betrayed us Cosmo!" growled Sonic, "We gave you a home, we've treated you like you're one of our own and we're the only family you have after the destruction of your world...and this is how you repay us?! I'm appalled, I really am!"

"I HAD NO CHOICE!" screamed Cosmo angrily, feeling very hurt by the incredibly mean-spirited and hurtful words being hurled at her by her friends, "I HAD NO CHOICE!"

"What do you mean you had no choice?!" snarled Mandy.

"I MEAN I HAD NO CHOICE!" bellowed Cosmo, "Don't you understand?! I would NEVER betray you all if I had the choice to do so but I really had no choice in this matter! Sonic, remember that device I showed you on the evening Tails was kidnapped?"

"Yes?" asked Sonic, surprised to hear Cosmo bringing that up now. She hadn't shown it again since that day.

"Well that sphere contained more than coordinates that led you and Knuckles to the armada...it contained a message from Finitevus himself." explained Cosmo, "He said that he'd kidnapped and roboticized my sweet little Tails and that I had to do whatever he told

me to do. If I didn't...he was going to order Mecha Tails to self-destruct! If he did that then we'd NEVER save Tails! So again, I HAD NO BLOODY CHOICE! I had to do it for Tails's sake! You would have done the same if you were in my shoes! I'm so sorry everybody! I'm so sorry!"

With that heart-wrenching revelation, Cosmo threw herself onto her knees and howled a loud, depressing, uncontrollable sob, putting her head into her hands and soaking them with her tears. Sonic and the Royal Fighters all looked at each other in shock. Cosmo betrayed them all because she was blackmailed into doing so? That made so much sense. That was just like Finitevus to do something so wicked. Blackmailing an innocent child into betraying her friends just to save her boyfriend. Sonic then thought to when Cosmo had fainted after he gave his friends the bad news after their first fight with the armada. Cosmo hadn't fainted because of the news...she'd fainted because she had hoped Sonic and Knuckles would save Tails and thus, give her an excuse to ignore Finitevus's blackmail and keep her from having to betray her friends! It all fitted together now and yet it had taken them this long to put the pieces into the puzzle! The Royal Fighters now felt sorry for Cosmo and shamed themselves for being so callous to her.

"Gosh...I...I'm so sorry about that Cosmo." said Sonic sadly.

"And I seriously shamed her, thinking she willingly betrayed us? Shame on me..." muttered Geoffrey scornfully.

"Shame on all of us." said Ruben glumly, "We should have known better..."

"I'm very sorry I was mean to you Cosmo!" wailed Cream, "I didn't know you'd been blackmailed...Amy would be very sad to hear about this."

"I can't believe that Finitevus could do something so vile!" growled Sally. She looked up at Finitevus and glared at him, "This is low, even for YOU Finitevus! You have no soul!"

"That is why I have NO fear." sneered Finitevus, "And that is also why I always win. You Royal Fighters think you're so noble and

majestic, fighting for a noble cause and bringing good back to the world. But you fail to grasp one fundamental feature of life. There will always be evil. You're all fighting for a forlorn cause, an impossibility that can never be achieved. There will always be evil, you'll never achieve your perfect world. So why continue fighting for a cause that'll never be achieved? I know why...because you pathetic heroes all realize that. You're just in denial. You have a hubristic mindset that keeps you going in this crusade to bring peace to the world. A mindset that is now leading to your downfall. And it's clear that Mobius's heroes aren't what they're shaped up to be either. I mean, we all know who REALLY killed Eggman don't we? I did! And that is because I am not blinded by a pathetic mindset that exists purely to show how magnanimous you all are. I fight for a cause that has no restraints such as morality. Morality is why you Royal Fighters fail. Never do you actually finish off your enemies when you have the chance. You always let them live and that in turn allows them to put all your hard work to waste. If you had a sense of ruthlessness and didn't let your moronic morality tie you down, my armada wouldn't exist would it? But it does, and why? Because you never had the gall to put your enemies down when you had the chance. Everything that's happened recently is all your fault. My armada is all your fault. And it's all because of your mindset. Well I'm here to tell you that a life of morality and a cause like yours is pointless. There will never be a world rid of evil, a world with only good that reigns supreme. Will the world be free without me and my armada? No...chances are you'll find another enemy to tackle and it'll be back to the status quo. Face it Royal Fighters, you're all a forlorn cause. You're all at ROCK BOTTOM."

The reaction to his speech was very pleasing for him. The Royal Fighters looked shocked, hurt and repulsed that Finitevus thought all of that about them. Just to pour salt on the wound, Finitevus decided to give them something else to be horrified at.

"Now if you'll excuse me...I have a city to destroy." he announced, "I'm going to destroy New Mobotropolis and take everybody with it. And don't think Nicole will save the city with her precious shields. My Oblivion Cannon will be too strong for the shields. Once your city's destroyed...I'll have you all killed afterwards. Cosmo here is staying with me. Since she's had to reveal herself, she cannot be my agent

anymore. Instead, she'll be kept as Mecha Tails's pet punching bag and perhaps as a test for my Synth-Energy...provided the test on Blizzard doesn't go horribly wrong."

He cackled evilly as he opened a warp ring and dragged the snivelling Cosmo through it with him. Cosmo took one last look at her friends as if seeing them for the last time before the warp ring closed, leaving the Royal Fighters all alone in the prison cell to do nothing but wait for their doom. Sally broke the tense silence by looking at Sonic and speaking. Her eyes streamed with tears and the squirrel was truly broken and defeated. It all showed on her face as she spoke.

"Oh Sonic...this is the end. Our city's gonna be destroyed...with everybody in it...and we're going to be killed." sobbed Sally.

"I'm not the giving up type...but even I know when I'm beaten." sighed Sonic, "Finitevus was right...we are at rock bottom. Three years of our lives fighting for peace...and what has that done for us? Got us ready for execution. Let's face it, we asked for this. And now we're getting what we asked for..."

The Royal Fighters weren't fully sure if they agreed with Sonic. But they knew one thing...the end was coming for them and they wouldn't be able to save themselves now...

Meanwhile, Finitevus reappeared outside of a small, lonely cell that was located on the middle floor of *The Nefarious* . This was an isolation chamber, a cell that Finitevus used to keep hold of any people he wanted to experiment on. Finitevus opened the door and he shoved Cosmo into the cell. Cosmo landed with a thump onto her face and she cowered against the wall on her side as Finitevus smiled evilly at her.

"Enjoy your stay Cosmo. You're going to spend the rest of your life here." he said sinisterly, "And your life may not go on for much longer. You know Cosmo...you made a very fine agent for me." he added deviously as if wanting to add another twist to the handle of the knife to Cosmo, "I'm sure Tails would have been horrified to

know that you prevented your friends from saving him. And you wasted your time anyway. I'm going to order Tails to self-destruct once Operation: Enerjak is complete for he won't be of no use to me anymore. Like said...you Royal Fighters always fight for a forlorn cause. Goodbye Agent White Seed."

He then shut the door, leaving Cosmo alone in a pool of shadows that shrouded the entire room she was locked up in. Cosmo waited until Finitevus's footsteps couldn't be heard walking away anymore before she let a fresh stream of tears trickle down her face. Despaired, sorrowful and heartbroken, Cosmo could only weep and feel sorry for herself.

"What have I done? What...have I...done?" she whimpered.

Cosmo then curled up into a ball and cried, feeling that she'd never run out of tears no matter how hard she cried. She had doomed all of Mobius. Enerjak would rise, her friends wouldn't be there to stop him and it was all her fault. Cosmo supposed she deserved this and when the time came for her to die, she had a feeling that nobody would miss her. Not even Tails...

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm

****See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 22: Impending Crisis***

HOLY SHIT! COSMO WAS FINTIEVUS'S AGENT THE WHOLE TIME?! I bet you're all speechless! I know I am!

And one could say this chapter was "Unlucky for some" eh? Dark Armada Part 13, unlucky 13? Eh? Get it? ;)

Oh well, I sure hope all ends well next time! The heroes are really doomed aren't they?

Dark Armada Part 14: Total Destruction

Story 214: Total Destruction

The Dark Armada Chapter 14 of 25

"Wake up my icy prisoner." purred Dr. Finitevus sinisterly before proceeding to slap the unconscious Blizzard the Ice Witch across the face.

Blizzard groaned in pain as the callous smack woke her up. She opened her icy blue eyes and waited for her senses to come to. She suddenly realized that something was terribly wrong as she woke up. She also remembered something too. She and the Royal Fighters had sneaked aboard *The Nefarious* to carry out a plan that Sally had come up with which involved getting the Chaos Emeralds back and using them to destroy the armada. But unfortunately, they had been ratted out by a very unwitting Cosmo the Seedrian. The plant-like girl had been blackmailed into spying on her friends and feeding information to Dr. Finitevus, the leader of the Dark Armada. Because of this, the plan had been a failure. Blizzard remembered how she and the others had been about to save Cosmo from Dr. Finitevus after he used her as hostage bait but then suddenly, they had all been knocked out. The Royal Fighters were all locked up in a cell together but the ice-witch herself had been taken into *The Nefarious's* laboratory for experimentation. Now Blizzard was awake, she could see what had happened to her after being knocked out. She knew for certain that she was leaning backwards a little, obviously against a bed. She felt her sleeves drooping down beneath her elbows and there was something a little bit warm around her wrists and ankles. She saw that they were laser cuffs and that she was fastened to a restraint bed. She could see that she was in some kind of laboratory although she wasn't very familiar with a laboratory having spent most of her life living in icy wastelands like Holoska and White Acropolis. Blizzard squirmed in the grasp of the lasers but they wouldn't let her go. They kept her firmly fixed to the bed. Blizzard gave up her struggling and she glowered at Finitevus.

"You! Set me free before I embed in icicle through your heart!" snarled Blizzard.

"I'd love to see you try." said Finitevus smugly, "Given you're restrained, I imagine that'll be a difficult feat to accomplish."

"What have you restrained me for?! Why am I here in this… whatever this is?!" demanded Blizzard angrily, "And where are the Royal Fighters?!"

"How ironic for you to care about those you tried to destroy once my dear." crooned Finitevus, putting a hand on Blizzard's face and stroking her cheek with his thumb.

Blizzard just savagely bit Finitevus on his hand and made the echidna scream in pain. Finitevus sharply retracted his hand and clutched it tenderly. Blizzard had bitten him quite hard and there was blood staining his bandaged hand. Finitevus just reacted to this with an angry roar and he back-handed Blizzard across the face, bruising her cheek and making her wince. Finitevus rubbed his bleeding hand better as Blizzard looked back into his evil, golden eyes.

"How do you know about what I once tried to do?!" growled Blizzard.

"Research is a scientist's best friend." sneered Finitevus, tapping his brainy head conceitedly, "I read all about you on the World Wide Web Blizzard. You were formerly a councillor for the Council of Acorn in Mobotropolis. But then Aramis Rose caused you to become a murderer and things changed very badly for you after that. You even became a lifelong enemy with Amy Rose, whom as you probably know, is in pretty bad shape right now. A pity that you wasted your villainous life by becoming one of those disgusting Royal Fighters. Well, look where that's gotten you my dear. Bound to my experimentation bed and waiting to become an experiment for me."

"I opened my eyes and saw that what I did was wrong!" bellowed Blizzard, "I have no regrets about my turn to good! My evil life just saw my cult getting pointlessly wasted by a paranoid King Max and me going mad with grief! I have no regrets about changing my ways at all!"

"That disgusts me, it really does." sighed Finitevus, "Well I'm going to fix that. You see, there's another young woman in my army who turned good too, wasting a promising career in villainy for forlorn traits like "morality" and "decency". And I forced her back to the dark side through…scientific measures. I'm going to do the same to you Blizzard."

"Don't you dare!" snarled Blizzard, tugging on her restraints feebly.

"Oh…I'm afraid I DO dare." purred Finitevus deviously.

He then strode over to the work desk nearby, his capeflowing behind him as he walked. Blizzard could only watch as Finitevus walked over to the desk and picked up a syringe. Her heart began to pound worriedly, was Finitevus going to inject her with something horrible? Or was he going to sedate her with some kind of serum and then do terrible things to her while she was unconscious? Blizzard didn't want to find out, she wanted to get away as quick as she could. In her head she began pleading for help.

Iceberg! My darling husband! Help me! her brain whimpered.

But she knew it was pointless to hope like this. A ghost wouldn't stop Dr. Finitevus at all so why pray for Iceberg to save her? Blizzard just lay back and waited as Finitevus opened up a canister containing a weird, green, gooey liquid and he stuck the syringe inside the canister, sucking up some of the liquid through the syringe's long sharp needle. Finitevus then closed the canister and he strode back over to Blizzard with the syringe raised menacingly in his hand. Blizzard stared at it, worried on what the liquid inside would do to her if he injected it into her.

"What…is that?!" she asked hoarsely.

"That is the key to my ultimate victory." explained Finitevus in a very matter-of-fact tone of voice, "This is Synthetic Chaos Energy. To put it simple, combining this substance with the eight Chaos Emeralds plus the Master Emerald will give me all the power I need in order to become the most powerful creature in the world…Enerjak."

Blizzard shivered. If a villain wanted to become the most powerful

creature in the world, it was never a good thing. Finitevus continued.

"And I'm going to test it on you Blizzard." he announced malevolently, "If the formula works, you'll be made very welcome in my glorious armada. If not…then I suppose I'll have a dead body to dispose of like yesterday's leftovers. Either way, you're going to be put to good use and you'll make a fine test subject."

"GO TO HELL!" bellowed Blizzard angrily.

"Been there, it's not all it's cracked up to be." snorted Finitevus, thinking back to his ten years of torture in the void before making his marvellous comeback last year, "Now let's see what this will do when I inject it into your bloodstream…"

He pointed the syringe at Blizzard's neck and he prepared to insert the needle into it. Blizzard squirmed furiously, trying desperately to get free as Finitevus prepared to inject her.

"No, no! Don't you dare, don't you dare!" cried Blizzard frantically.

Finitevus ignored her and he pricked Blizzard's neck with the syringe. Inserting it into a vein, he then pushed down the plunger, inserting the Synthetic Chaos Energy into Blizzard's bloodstream through the syringe's needle. Blizzard cringed as she was injected. She cringed even more as Finitevus sharply yanked the needle out of her neck, leaving a thin trickle of blood to run down the side of her throat. At first, Blizzard lay still, breathing a little heavier as she was still a little worked up from the injection. Then Blizzard suddenly let out a shriek of agony as a sharp pain bit into her skull. Her eyes closed tightly and she writhed around on the bed in a frenzy. The only thing keeping her in place were the laser cuffs binding her to the bed but even they extended a little as she writhed crazily. Finitevus watched with great interest. Was the formula killing her brutally? She seemed to be in an awful lot of pain right now. But then Blizzard's eyes opened and Finitevus noticed something different about them straight away. They had turned a brilliant, sickly Chaos Emerald green. Finitevus beamed happily. That was a good sign, it meant the Chaos Energy was already beginning to take effect. Blizzard then began growling furiously, no longer appearing to be in any pain but looking very ticked at the fact Finitevus had

pumped her full of Chaos Energy. Then Blizzard did something surprising. Inside her body, the Synthetic Chaos Energy was flowing all over her body, all the way up to her brain. As the energy reached her brain, she suddenly began to get knowledge of the Chaos Emeralds and how to use their power, something that she really needed now. Using the energy that Finitevus had injected into her, Blizzard suddenly bellowed out loud:

"Chaos…CONTROL!"

Finitevus just stared at her, surprised that the Ice Witch suddenly yelled those two words. He didn't expect anything to happen though but then something more surprising happened. Blizzard actually *vanished* out of her restraints after initiating a Chaos Control! Blizzard disappeared in a bright green flash and then reappeared behind Finitevus. Finitevus turned around…only to get a savage backhand to the jaw that nearly dislocated his entire jawbone from Blizzard. That gave Finitevus a mixed reaction. On the one hand, the formula was making Blizzard as strong as it should be making her but on the other hand, Blizzard was attacking him instead of being as evil as he was. This meant one thing, something hadn't gone right with the Synthetic Chaos Energy. Blizzard was supposed to be evil now but she wasn't! What had gone wrong. Finitevus didn't think about that as he tried to block himself from a punch to the face launched at him by Blizzard. Blizzard threw the punch at a speed too fast for even Finitevus to counter and she caught him directly between the eyes. Finitevus was whisked off his feet and sent flying across the room. He crashed into the wall and groaned in pain as he hit the floor upon falling down from the wall hard. Blizzard advanced towards Finitevus, cracking her knuckles and clenching her teeth. Her eyes still glowed a sinister green colour, making her look more evil than she ever did before.

"Thanks ever so much Finitevus…you've just given me a way out of my restraints so I can beat the skeleton out of you for experimenting on me!" she barked savagely, "And now I'm going to use these powers to rescue the Royal Fighters and tear this ship apart!"

"Looks like this experiment is one that needs undoing…" growled Finitevus, getting up onto his feet and gripping the blades hidden in the edges of his cape.

Furious that his formula had gone horribly wrong, Finitevus would show Blizzard no mercy in this fight. He would have her put down and she wouldn't stop him. But Finitevus would regret being so cocky and confident in himself. His arrogance had blindsided him on one simple but potent fact. The Synthetic Chaos Energy was stronger than even he was. Blizzard had a syringe-sized amount inside her veins and pumping through her bloodstream. She was pretty much invincible now. Finitevus ran towards Blizzard in a snarling rage but the Chaos-powered IceWitch used a Chaos Control to disappear and reappear behind him. Upon appearing behind him, Blizzard kicked Finitevus in the back of his head, knocking him down onto his stomach. Finitevus hit the floor hard, nearly cracking some of his teeth in the process. Finitevus picked himself up and he swung the blades at Blizzard. Blizzard dodged at a speed that she never would have been capable of if she was still normal. She then slugged Finitevus in the gut, spun around on the heel of her foot and swung her other foot into Finitevus's temple. The Ice Witch watched delightedly as Finitevus fell sideways onto the floor from her kick. She'd never been so powerful before and she was actually beginning to enjoy herself. She was now the most powerful IceWitch that had ever lived and she intended to make the most of her newly given powers. Finitevus picked himself up again and he decided to try tactics. He summoned a warp ring and hoped to send Blizzard falling through it. But Blizzard just used a Chaos Control to warp away, making the echidna growl in annoyance. Blizzard reappeared in front of Finitevus and she swung both her fists upwards into the echidna's chin, snapping his head backwards and throwing him down onto the floor. Blizzard cackled maniacally at Finitevus and she grabbed him by the cloak. She picked him up, seemingly with ease, and tossed him into the air. Then Blizzard summoned shards of icicles to her hands and waited for Finitevus to crash onto the floor. But her icicles weren't icicles anymore. They were now Chaos Spears, the icicles equally as enhanced by the Chaos Energy as Blizzard herself. Blizzard fired the Chaos Spears at Finitevus, each strike feeling like being punched by a rocky fist to Finitevus as he was hit. As the final Chaos Spear hit him, Blizzard thundered towards Finitevus and slammed him against the wall as hard as possible. Then she threw Finitevus over at the work desk. The scientist let out a terrible roar of pain as he crashed down on the desk, smashing the canister containing his Synthetic Chaos

Energy and spilling the contents all over the floor. A green puddle seeped all over, staining the floor and Finitevus himself as it seeped underneath him. The echidna looked terrible, his snow white fur stained green with Chaos Energy goo and bruises splotched all over his body. Finitevus groaned in pain and in order to save himself anymore grief, he decided to forfeit the battle and escape through a warp ring. But before he could do that, Blizzard Chaos Controlled in front of him and grabbed him. She yanked him away from the warp ring and jammed her face into his own.

"Where are the Royal Fighters?!" she snarled angrily.

"Find out yourself…cretin." growled Finitevus defiantly.

"Tell me where they are now or I'll kill you!" roared Blizzard, "Ten seconds and you're dead!"

"Fine then…they're on the bottom floor of the ship…I'll warp you there if you want…" grumbled Finitevus.

He then summoned a warp ring and opened it up, giving Blizzard a quick portal to the inside of *The Nefarious* 's prison cell. Blizzard ran through eagerly but Finitevus held onto the warp ring so he'd have it back when she went through. After she disappeared, Finitevus opened up a warp ring and warped himself over to the hidden room with the Chaos Emeralds inside. He'd just use a Chaos Regeneration to heal himself and then he'd deal with Blizzard. Also, *The Nefarious* was arriving at New Mobotropolis. Finitevus could use that to his advantage. With any luck, the threat of destruction for New Mobotropolis would force Blizzard and the soon-to-be-free Royal Fighters to leave him alone and save everybody before he fired the Oblivion Cannon. He would still win, this wasn't going to go south for him now…

Meanwhile on the bottom floor of *The Nefarious* , the Royal Fighters were just doing nothing but standing around, bound firmly to the wall, and feeling very sorry for themselves. The atmosphere in the cell was very appropriate, dull, gloomy and grim-faced for everybody in the room. After being captured and imprisoned by Dr. Finitevus,

the Royal Fighters had pretty much just given up all hope. *The Nefarious* was on its way to destroy New Mobotropolis and once that deed was done, Finitevus was going to kill the Royal Fighters and put them all out of their misery. It truly did seem helpless, especially since the Royal Fighters had no way of escape. Laser-binds were impossible to break and there was nothing to switch them off. The laser binds also siphoned any special powers that the Royal Fighters had. The Chaos-powered Shadow the Hedgehog couldn't simply warp out of his binds and free everybody like he'd normally be able to. He was stuck just waiting for his doom like everybody else. What really had set the mood for the Royal Fighters was Finitevus's harsh, degrading speech that he had given them earlier. He had berated all the Royal Fighters and claimed they were "fighting for a forlorn cause". The Royal Fighters hated to admit it, but Finitevus had brought up some good points. They had fought for years against Eggman, hoping to restore peace to Mobius and yet all that had happened was that Finitevus had risen in his stead and was now going to send Mobius to hell with Operation: Enerjak Reborn. Their cause maybe was forlorn after all. They'd fought hard to bring peace to Mobius, and yet this is what their efforts were met with, a coming death and the world in chaos. Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat began to wonder if they should have even bothered coming to the past to try and fix the future since that seemed a forlorn cause too. They hadn't changed a thing. The Royal Fighters were still going to die and Enerjak was still going to rise. Mobius was doomed and it seemed that was the way things were going to be. It was a miserable thought but the Royal Fighters could barely help it. Finitevus had truly opened their eyes and caused them to see how forlorn their cause really was.

"Hey Sal, do you think we're nearly back home yet?" sighed a very glum and defeated Sonic the Hedgehog, resting his head against his arm and sighing loudly.

"I have a nasty feeling we are." muttered Queen Sally Acorn miserably, looking over at her beloved Sonic as if making the most of him before the inevitable happened, "I bet we'll be arriving home in a matter of minutes…and then Finitevus is going to destroy it all."

"Knuckles and Amy are down there…they'll never be prepared for

the city's destruction." said a very depressed looking Shade the Echidna, "Knuckles will die and I won't be by his side…" she added, letting a tear fall down her cheek, "…I want to be by his side when I die. Knuckles means everything to me."

"And I wanna be with my best friend Miss Rose right now." sobbed Cream the Rabbit, "But we're stuck here and Finitevus is going to destroy our city! Miss Rose will die…and so will Mr. Knuckles!"

"And we're all helpless to stop him." murmured Sora Prower sadly, "We're gonna lose our city and then Finitevus will kill us all. I wonder what he's gonna do to my brother when he completes this plan of his?"

"Likely do the old "You have outworn your usefulness" thing and get rid of him." mumbled Geoffrey St. John the Skunk, "Thus making Cosmo's entire reason for being his agent completely moot."

"The scary thing is, I have a feeling you're right." said Ruben the Water Panther grimly, "After all, he's clearly using Tails for his plan. When it's complete, what will he need him for?"

"Nothin' that's what." said Bunnie Rabboh sadly, "Ah just dread ta think what Finitevus will do ta lil' ol Cosmo. The poor girl…she doesn't deserve anymore grief. Especially after what she's been through."

"I agree." mused the Chun-Nan ruler Princess Matilda, "What happened to that sweet little girl was just unforgivable. How could that monster blackmail her into betraying us? And for what? Nothing…Cosmo's going to be deeply scarred that's for sure."

"Indeed my love…" murmured Matilda's husband Bladefeather the Falcon agreeably.

"I'd hoped that when me and Blaze came back to the past…we'd change the future and stop Enerjak from coming." mumbled Silver, "But we haven't. Everything's still happening the way it's going to. We'll all be dead…and Enerjak will rise."

"But Silver, that book of yours stated that the Royal Fighters got

killed BY Enerjak himself." noted Blaze, "Enerjak hasn't risen yet so that must indicate we'll get free somehow."

The atmosphere seemed to brighten up suddenly as everybody took in that fact. Blaze had brought up an excellent point. A point that was bringing new hope to the Royal Fighters now. Maybe their "forlorn cause" wasn't so forlorn after all.

"You're right!" gasped Silver, "Enerjak slaughters the Royal Fighters…that's what the book said! But he's not here yet! This can't be the day the Royal Fighters die!"

"So that must mean we'll get outta here somehow!" cried Sonic excitedly, "But…how?"

"I don't suppose that book of yours about Mobius's final year tells us that huh?" asked the grizzly boss of Team Chaotix, Vector the Crocodile.

"Well no since the author isn't a Royal Fighter." said Silver sheepishly, "But we'll get out somehow. We have to otherwise the book wouldn't say that Enerjak is the one that kills the Royal Fighters."

"Or maybe you and Blaze have ended up changing things somehow and the change in history is that we die today instead of later." suggested the tomboyish Mandy Mouse, "I mean, you've changed one thing definitely. Would we have gotten Captain Metal's head in the original timeline?"

"Maybe not." mused Blaze, "But I doubt that things would have gone that differently if we didn't come. I'm sure that we'll still get outta here."

"I agree, especially since Blizzard's not with us." noted Wilson the Dog, "She might escape from Finitevus and rescue us all right now."

Then right on cue, a warp ring opened up and out of it stepped Blizzard the Ice Witch herself! The Royal Fighters all gasped in amazement at the fact that not only had Wilson been right, but Blizzard had come through a warp ring. What caught Sonic and

Shadow's attentions though was the fact that Blizzard had glowing green eyes. That concerned them a little. What had Finitevus done to her?

"Well...didn't think you'd be right." chuckled Rouge the Bat as she glanced over at Wilson.

Wilson just chuckled modestly. He didn't think he'd be right either.

"What's up with her eyes?" asked Shadow, staring at Blizzard glowing green eyes as hard as he could, "I'm sensing…Chaos Energy in her. What did Finitevus do? Pump her full of Chaos Energy?"

"Synthetic Chaos Energy!" gasped Sonic, "Rai told me and Sally that Finitevus was making a synthetic dose of Chaos Energy for their plan Operation: Villains Rising! Finitevus must have tested it on her!"

"That is absolutely right Royal Fighters…and he's made me so powerful…so strong…I was able to defeat him and convince him to deliver me here." announced Blizzard, "Now with my new powers, I set you ALL free!"

She then swiped her arm and sent showers of Chaos Spears all hurling across the room and into the laser cuff generators binding the Royal Fighters to the wall. The spears destroyed the generators and freed the Royal Fighters. They all stepped forward away from the wall and ran over to Blizzard.

"Thanks Blizzie! But…why did Finitevus give you the Chaos Energy?" asked Sonic curiously.

"He tested it on me and it seems to have gone wrong in his eyes for despite being Chaos Powered, I still retain my original personality and my heroic intentions." explained Blizzard, "Fortuitous to no end is what I think."

"Very much so." agreed Sally, "Finitevus has just given us the edge we needed to bite back. Now we're free, we can stop the armada from destroying New Mobotropolis!"

"You bet!" cried Mandy excitedly, punching the air with her fist "Let's

show Dr. Fini-dork-us how "forlorn" our cause really is!"

"Indeed." agreed Wilson, "Finitevus forgot one fundamental thing in life…there may always be evil but there'll always be good too. We may not have a perfect world, but at least we have something worth fighting for."

"Yeah!" exclaimed Sonic, "Don't know what was up with us earlier! Finitevus was wrong, we're not at rock bottom. As long as we keep fighting, we'll NEVER be that far down!"

"We have something that makes us much stronger than Finitevus ever could be…honour." said Matilda matter-of-factly, "Now we can bring honour to the world and stop the armada."

"But I don't have Nicole's handheld form anymore." said Sally disappointedly, turning out all the pockets in her vests only to find no Nicole inside, "We have no map to lead us around The Nefarious."

"But Nicole will still have the plans back home right?" asked Bunnie curiously.

"Oh yes, Nicole has the plans on the main computer in Royal HQ." said Sally brightly, "All we have to do is get home and ask her to give us those plans again. And since I'm a woman of contingency, I have a spare handheld computer."

"Well what are we waiting for?! Let's go!" cried Sonic.

"I'll get everybody home." announced Blizzard, "Thanks to my new powers, I can use a Chaos Control."

She prepared to use one but just as she was going to, a voice boomed all over *The Nefarious* 's intercom system.

"Attention Dark Armada! The Nefarious has arrived! We're above New Mobotropolis! Preparing to launch the Oblivion Cannon in ten minutes!"

That made everybody's blood run cold. Ten minutes?! They didn't have much time to save New Mobotropolis! They had to hurry! Blizzard wasted no time at all. She quickly used a Chaos Control

and opened up a Chaos Portal back to New Mobotropolis. Without hesitating, everybody charged through the portal and quickly warped back home to New Mobotropolis. The clock was ticking as every precious second passed by. Ten minutes was all the Royal Fighters had in order to save their city. Would they succeed? That was the scariest question they could ever ask themselves in this situation…

New Mobotropolis, a grand successor to the original City of Mobotropolis that had been destroyed three years ago. Dr. Eggman had been the one to destroy it and he had destroyed on the first day the Royal Fighters Service had even been formed. New Mobotropolis had stood proud in its place, constantly surviving many attacks thanks to Nicole's sophisticated shield technology that could protect that city from almost any attack. The city had been home to many Mobians and life in New Mobotropolis had been grand for the citizens living in it. And yet all of that was going to come to an end very soon. The terrified citizens all gathered around nervously and stared up at the sky like a crowd of citizens watching an invading alien spaceship in a cheesy movie. *The Nefarious* loomed over the city, flying just low enough to block out the sun and shroud the city in its sinister shadow. The design made everybody think of Eggman given *The Nefarious's* origins as an Egg Carrier and they had a fur-shivering moment that Eggman had returned. Over in the New Mobotropolis hospital, Knuckles the Echidna heard the commotion outside and he climbed out of bed to take a look out the window. His broken arm ached as he walked and Knuckles tried his best to avoid it. He still resented Zira for breaking his arm and he wanted to make her pay for it very much. He reached the window and he gaped in horror at what awaited him outside. He could see *The Nefarious* looming above the city outside as if waiting to hear the citizens scream in fear at it. Knuckles was quick to notice something about the ship and he felt his heart rate increase as he watched. The under belly of *The Nefarious* opened up and descending from inside the underbelly, the ship's most powerful weapon began to deploy. This was the Oblivion Cannon. It was a terrifying looking weapon, the size almost reaching the entire length of *The Nefarious* self. The cannon was bulky and coloured black and gold. It was connected to the ship by a rotating pin at the back and the front of the cannon was

pointed straight down at New Mobotropolis by a pneumatic piston. The cannon slowly pointed down at the city and prepared to fire at it. Nine minutes to go and the Oblivion Cannon would fire. Knuckles didn't like the sight of the enormous weapon. New Mobotropolis would be vaporized instantly, even if Nicole put the shields up! He could see from the size and bulk of the cannon that it would easily break through the shields if Nicole put them up. He had to evacuate the city and fast before he was obliterated. He also had to get the comatose Amy Rose out of bed and out of the hospital so she would live to wake up from her coma. The late Mariah had estimated just yesterday that Amy would wake up today but she hadn't done so yet. Knuckles walked slowly out of his room to get Amy so that he and Amy could evacuate the city and give Amy the chance to wake up from her coma.

As Knuckles was preparing to evacuate, a green portal appeared just outside of Royal HQ. The headquarters had served as the Royal Fighter's base of operations for the entirety of the service's existence and was one place that the Royal Fighters could probably consider another home in the city. If the Royal Fighters couldn't save the city in time then Royal HQ would never be a base of operations for anyone ever again. Out of the green portal charged all the Royal Fighters and upon exiting the portal, Sally darted into Royal HQ as fast as she could so she could get a spare handheld computer for Nicole to use and have her upload the plans to *The Nefarious* onto the computer. As the Royal Fighters waited for her to return, they all stared up at the sky in horror at *The Nefarious* looming above. They saw the Oblivion Cannon pointing down at them from underneath the insidious vessel. Sonic could feel his quills shivering in fear just by looking at the cannon. Finitevus could use that to even level Empire City if he wanted! The hedgehog hoped dearly that they could stop the cannon before it fired. It was a gruesome image to think about, the cannon firing down on New Mobotropolis and completely obliterating it in mere seconds, wiping out all life and leaving nothing but a scene of ruination behind. It would be Old Mobotropolis all over again only everything would be gone, even Castle Acorn, the only building to have survived the original Mobotropolis's destruction. Sonic wouldn't allow Finitevus to destroy his precious city, not while they had been working so hard to keep it intact and safe from harm ever since it had been built. Moments

alter, with just seven minutes left before the cannon was going to fire, Sally emerged from inside Royal HQ. She looked flustered as if she'd just run a marathon and yet all she'd done was run inside Royal HQ, download the plans to *The Nefarious* onto a handheld computer and run back out again. Nicole's holographic avatar appeared beside her.

"The plans for the ship have been downloaded! Now quickly, onto the ship before that cannon fires!" shrieked Nicole.

"Not all of us will go this time, we'll just send a small squad aboard the ship." explained Sally, "Shadow and Geoffrey will be adequate for destroying that cannon. Shadow can easily Chaos Blast it to pieces. Should anything get in the way for him, Geoffrey can substitute with his exploding darts. I'll also send Sonic as back-up. And finally, Blizzard will get the three onboard with her new Chaos Powers. The rest of us will evacuate everybody out of the city…just in case…in case we don't stop it in time."

"Sounds like a plan to me." said Sonic brightly, "Finitevus is so gonna pay for all he's done! We'll mar his best weapon and send him running away! Maybe while I'm onboard, I can try and save Tails and Cosmo at last."

"Good idea." said Sally brightly, "Blizzard, if you please."

"Certainly darling." said Blizzard sweetly, holding her hands out and preparing to use another Chaos Control.

"Chaos…" she began.

Then suddenly, a sharp pain flared through Blizzard's head and the Ice Witch screamed a blood-curdling scream of agonizing pain. The Synthetic Chaos Energy had made its way into her brain and was beginning to take a terrifying effect on her. The Ice Witch felt like somebody was squeezing her brain like a sponge inside her skull. Blizzard gripped her head tensely and she wailed in anguish as the energy attacked her brain.

"ARRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
she bellowed loudly, "MY HEAD'S ON FIRE! MAKE IT STOP! MAKE

IT STOOOOOP!"

Then as she finished shouting…she fainted. The Ice Witch's legs collapsed underneath her and she landed with a heavy thud on the ground. The Royal Fighters all gasped in shock and Sally was quickly to get down beside Blizzard and feel her pulse.

"Holy chilli-dogs! She just collapsed!" cried Sonic.

"What the hell did she do that for?" asked Mandy, "Is that Synthetic Chaos Energy thingy having a nasty side effect on her?"

"Her pulse is OK and her breathing's steady." announced Sally after giving Blizzard a through examine, "But we need to get her out of here quickly. This will be no place to leave her lying around."

"Well this stinks. How can we get on The Nefarious now?" moaned Sonic grumpily.

"Hold on, maybe she has another smoke bomb." suggested Blaze.

She got down onto her knees and slipped her hand into Blizzard's pocket. She normally wouldn't do something like this as it was considered a violation of property and it was something pick-pockets did but this was an emergency. Blaze felt her heart leap with excitement as her finger brushed over something spherical. She grabbed it and took it out of Blizzard's pocket. Blizzard did indeed have another smoke bomb. She'd taken three with her before coming to NewMobotropolis earlier and had already used two of them. Now Blaze had the third one in her hand.

"Yes!" cried Sonic, "We can use that to poof aboard the ship! And since we still have a map of the place, we'll find where the Oblivion Cannon is!"

"Then get to it my handsome hero." ordered Sally, handing Nicole's handheld computer over to Sonic, "We only have six minutes left before the cannon fires."

"Say no more Queenie." said Sonic with a cheeky smile on his face as he took the computer from Sally's hand, "Me, Shadow and Geoffrey will be back before you can say "Chaos Emeralds". That

Oblivion Cannon is going to be…well, obliterated."

"It certainly will." muttered Shadow.

He took the smoke bomb from Blaze's hand and did what Blizzard had done before. He held Sonic's arm and Geoffrey held Sonic's other arm. Then Shadow yelled "ALAKAZAM!" and threw the smoke bomb down on the ground. The trio were surrounded by a cloud of purple smoke as the bomb shattered to pieces on the ground. Then the trio vanished and the smoke drifted away. The moment that was done, Sally turned to the Royal Fighters.

"Now for the evacuation process." she said, "Get everybody out of the city and do it QUICKLY. If Sonic, Shadow and Geoffrey fail to destroy the cannon then at least we won't give Finitevus the satisfaction of killing everybody."

"Looks like most of the city's evacuated already." noted Shade, catching sight of the vast crowd of fleeing citizens charging through the gates.

"Then that makes our job easier for us." said Sally brightly, "Silver, I think you'll be the best man to get the hospital evacuated."

"Indeed, I can just carry all the patients with my psychokinesis." declared Silver.

The Royal Fighters then spread out throughout the city to help with the evacuating citizens. Silver flew straight over to the hospital and saw to evacuating any of the poor patients inside. He saw Knuckles emerging from the hospital with a still comatose Amy Rose sitting in a wheelchair and being wheeled out by Knuckles. To speed them up, Silver used his psychokinesis to pick them up and carry them out over the city wall. It was going to be a long process but Silver wasn't going to let one single patient be left at *The Nefarious's* mercy. He looked up at the ship as he carried Knuckles and Amy out of the city. The cannon would fire shortly. Would Sonic, Shadow and Geoffrey stop it in time…?

Aboard *The Nefarious* , Sonic, Shadow and Geoffrey appeared inside the prison cell on the bottom floor of the ship. The reason Shadow had chosen to warp there in particular was purely logical thinking on his part. The Oblivion Cannon was underneath the ship so it would make more sense to be on the bottom floor if wanting to destroy it. The moment they appeared in the cell, they ran to the cell door and Shadow effortlessly broke through it, reducing it to chunks of metal in seconds with a few punches and kicks. Upon leaving the cell, the three charged down the corridor with Sonic leading for he had Nicole in his hand. He glanced at the displayed plans on the computer's screen and saw that they were on the right floor. The Oblivion Cannon was indeed on the bottom floor of *The Nefarious* . With where they were now, they'd reach the cannon shortly and they would approach the cannon from behind. That would be a good place to destroy it. They could stand near the cannon and Shadow could Chaos Blast it to pieces. With only five minutes left until the cannon launched, the trio arrived at the cannon at last. The floor stopped just short of underneath the cannon's base. The trio got a good stare at the cannon. It somehow looked even bigger up close and yet they were only staring at the rear end of the cannon. They could see that it was pointing down at New Mobotropolis, mostly at an angle. In five minutes, the enormous weapon would fire the killing shot and wipe out the entire city. At least Finitevus wouldn't have a terrifying body count to add to this wanton destruction he was about to cause.

"OK, here it is." said Sonic, looking down at Nicole as if to make double sure, "Shadow, if you'd care to do the honours."

"With pleasure. You two may wanna step back, this'll be huge…" mused Shadow.

Sonic and Geoffrey took a big step backwards. Now that the two were out of harm's way, Shadow unclipped the inhibitor rings from his wrists and dropped them down onto the floor. Sonic zipped over to Shadow to grab the rings so that he could give them back to the Black Arms created Mobian after he'd done. Sonic then quickly zipped back away from Shadow as he prepared to activate his Chaos Blast. He was beginning to glow crimson red all over and he could feel immense levels of power building up furiously inside of

him. It would build up to a point and then Shadow would release it. But then suddenly, a warp ring appeared directly underneath Shadow and the black and red hedgehog found himself falling straight through it and out of *The Nefarious* completely. Sonic and Geoffrey gasped in horror as Shadow disappeared through the warp ring. It was just what Sally had feared and exactly why she'd sent more than just Shadow to go to stop the Oblivion Cannon.

The warp ring had taken Shadow out of *The Nefarious* and had casually dumped him inside New Mobotropolis itself. Shadow had been about to release his Chaos Blast but he opened his eyes to see that he wasn't on the ship anymore. Furious, Shadow warped himself out of New Mobotropolis and into the nearby field so he wouldn't destroy anything. He forced himself to let out the Chaos Blast for he couldn't keep it in any longer. The huge, crimson explosion of power made all the evacuated New Mobotropolis citizens and the Royal Fighters leap in surprise as he unleashed it. The Royal Fighters had just about finished evacuating everybody, Silver just having a few more hospital patients to save, and they were all gathered together in a crowd to watch what was happening. Thankfully, Shadow had not hurt anybody for nobody was standing too closely to him and he was the right distance away from everybody. As soon as the Chaos Blast had ended, Shadow fell to his knees and gasped. Without his inhibitor rings to clip back on, he felt very power-drained and in need of a rest. But he knew he couldn't rest yet. New Mobotropolis was still in grave danger. Rouge flew over to Shadow and she helped him back onto his feet.

"What happened?" asked Rouge.

"Finitevus no doubt…" muttered Shadow, "Probably warped me down here to stop me Chaos-Blasting the cannon to pieces. Fly me back up to The Nefarious now!"

Rouge wasted no time at all. She grabbed Shadow and she carried him up towards *The Nefarious* , leaving the Royal Fighters to just stand and watch tensely as the last few minutes ticked away until the cannon's fire…

Back on *The Nefarious* , Dr. Finitevus, now fully healed because of a Chaos Regeneration, stood before Sonic and Geoffrey with a

devious smirk on his evil face. Sonic and Geoffrey bent down into battle ready stances, ready to kick the tar out of their sworn enemy. They'd never felt this angry at the sight of him before. Finitevus had certainly stricken some chords with them, especially because of his degrading speech to the two and the rest of their friends earlier.

"OK Finitevus, how did you know we'd be here?! You don't have Cosmo to spy on us anymore!" growled Sonic.

"Oh Sonic, how stupid do you think I am?" snorted Finitevus, "Isn't it obvious? You escape my prison cell thanks to Blizzard and my ship is about to destroy your city. Logically, you'll come here to stop the cannon. Plus I gathered that Nicole would have the plans for my ship in Royal HQ since a computer like her is more potent than one realizes. You heroes are so embarrassingly predictable that it's just sad. And I must ask why you even bother trying to stop me? Didn't I just tell you that your cause is forlorn?"

"Yes you did Finitevus…and we disagree with you." said Sonic coldly, "I'll tell you what a forlorn cause is: a cause with nothing to fight for. Me and my friends have plenty of things to fight for! We have each other, our world and our lives and we fight for them because it's a cause worth fighting for! And you have opened my eyes, there will always be evil no matter how hard we fight in the world. It's kinda sad to think about but here's one thing you forgot. With every villain, there's a hero to stop it! You say WE fight for a forlorn cause Finitevus but guess what? So do you! You'll never be in a world rid of good! Even if your stupid plan works, there'll be somebody to stop you! I mean look at Silver and Blaze! They've found out about the coming of Enerjak and thanks to them, we've found out that YOU are the one who's bringing him around to destroy Mobius! Because of them, we have a chance at saving our world from the dystopian future that it becomes! 200 years after Enerjak's rising and there's still heroes trying to bring peace to the world! How "forlorn" is our cause NOW Dr. Fini-dork-us?!"

He concluded his speech with a snide smirk that radiated confidence and smugness, just another staple of Sonic's very characteristic personality. Dr. Finitevus stared at Sonic in utter horror. Sonic knew that his plan involved Enerjak?! And Silver and Blaze had been the ones who found out about Enerjak rising and thus, had come here

precisely to tell Sonic and friends about Enerjak so they could stop him from accomplishing his goals?! The echidna felt like going mad with rage. He'd lost all subtlety now and the purpose of his plan was no longer a secret. But what made Finitevus really livid was how his speech hadn't deterred Sonic's spirit in the slightest. All his hard work to stay on top and Sonic STILL believed he could win?! What did he have to do to crush Sonic's spirit?! Kill Sally Acorn? It was worth a try but Finitevus didn't think about that now. He gripped the blades inserted in his cape and he lunged at Sonic, snarling angrily with rage. He swiped the blades at Sonic only for the hedgehog to dodge his attack by leaping over him. He landed behind Finitevus and kicked him in the back, knocking the echidna down onto his stomach. Finitevus pushed himself back onto his feet and just as Sonic homing-attacked towards him, he spun around on his heels and slashed Sonic savagely across the face with his blades. Sonic cried out in pain and he gripped the bloody cut on his cheek, wincing tensely under the terrible stinging. Finitevus then kicked Sonic in the gut and sent him tumbling over the edge of the floor that had separated in order to make way for the Oblivion Cannon. Sonic gripped the edge desperately, clinging on for dear life as Finitevus advanced towards him. He raised his foot, ready to stomp on Sonic's fingers and send him falling to his death. But then Geoffrey sneaked up behind Finitevus and prepared to shoot a stun dart at him. Finitevus unfortunately heard him and he wheeled around just as Geoffrey fired. He caught the dart between his fingers, its sharp point just inches from his throat. He'd been knocked out by a stun dart already, he wasn't going to let it happen again. He tossed the dart over his shoulder and ran towards Finitevus at an inhuman speed. He slugged Geoffrey in the gut and then elbowed him on the head, bringing the skunk down onto his stomach. Geoffrey coughed loudly and Finitevus raised one of the blades sown into his cape, ready to finish off Geoffrey. But then Sonic pulled himself back up into the ship and he spin-dashed the echidna in the back, throwing him off of the skunk and sending him hurling across the room. Seizing his chance, Geoffrey ran over to the Oblivion Cannon and he took aim at it with his arm-mounted crossbow. There was only a minute left until it fired. Every second that passed now was of essence. Geoffrey fired as many darts into the base of the cannon as possible and he even fired some down onto the cannon's barrel. Lucky for him that the cannon was at an angle otherwise this would

have been impossible. These exploding darts had points that could penetrate the hardest of metals with ease so there was no problem firing the darts into the cannon. He'd set up the darts and now he needed to get a good distance away from the cannon so that the resulting explosion wouldn't blow him up as well as the cannon. He ran over to Sonic and watched despairingly as Finitevus kicked him up into the ceiling as hard as he could. Sonic hit the ceiling and just as he was coming down, Finitevus leaped up and kicked him into Geoffrey. Sonic and Geoffrey both sprawled on the ground but they picked themselves up and Geoffrey turned to Sonic.

"I've just about loaded the blighter with darts, it's time we got away from this thing!" he announced."

"I bet the explosion's gonna be big, big enough to destroy that cannon!" cried Sonic, "Let's run for it!"

"You two won't be going anywhere…" snarled Finitevus, "The cannon maybe loaded with the skunk's exploding darts…but he won't get to trigger them."

He then proceeded to summon a warp ring in front of himself and open the exit in front of Geoffrey. He raised the blade in the left edge of his cape and plunged it through the warp ring. Geoffrey cried out a sudden gasp as he felt something slam into and penetrate his gut. Finitevus had stabbed him! The sharp, vicious blade was half-way through Geoffrey's stomach. Blood oozed out from around the edges of the blade and spilled onto the floor. Geoffrey tried to say something but he could barely speak. The life in him was draining fast and he could feel it. Sonic could only stare in utter horror at what had happened. Geoffrey St. John, the Royal Fighter whom he'd known longer than anybody else, one of the first members of the Royal Fighters Service ever was now on death's door. Finitevus smirked wickedly and he yanked the blade out of Geoffrey's gut, the warp ring closing up after he took it out. The left edge of his cape was now soaked in blood. Geoffrey placed a hand over his bleeding stomach and he collapsed onto his knees. As he did this, Shadow and Rouge arrived aboard *The Nefarious* just in time to see Geoffrey keel over. The skunk was alive, but barely. He wouldn't survive much longer. Shadow and Rouge were shocked to see this. They hadn't been fast enough. Geoffrey was dying and the cannon was

still ready to fire. Furious, Rouge put Shadow down on the ground and she screw-kicked Finitevus as hard as she could, taking him off his feet and throwing him back across the room. Sonic gave Shadow his inhibitor rings back and he clipped them on quickly, restoring his much needed energy for the battle ahead. Then he charged towards Finitevus whereas Sonic ran over to Geoffrey's side. He could see it in the skunk's eyes that he didn't have long left. It would be too late to save him.

"Geoffrey…" gasped Sonic, "You…you're gonna make it are you?"

"Ugh…no mate…I…don't think…I'll…make it." spluttered Geoffrey, "But…on my dying…breath…I shall…trigger…the darts…and...blow up…this cannon."

"But you'll blow yourself up too!" cried Sonic.

"Doesn't…matter. I'm…dying…anyway…at least…let me…go out… with a…bang." said Geoffrey weakly, winking at Sonic.

"You're on death's door and you're still cracking jokes." chuckled Sonic, "I bet I'd do the same thing. The team won't be the same without you Geoff. You'll be missed, very much. Especially by Bunnie."

"I know…but…at least…I won't…die in vain." grunted Geoffrey, coughing loudly and clutching his wounded stomach in agony, "Goodbye…Sonic my…mate."

"Goodbye Geoff." said Sonic sadly, "And don't worry, we'll honour your sacrifice today."

"Thanks…and…one more…thing…" whispered Geoffrey, "Tell Bunnie…that I'll always…love her. Even…in death…I'll always…love her."

"Will do." Sonic swore, "The hedgehog gives his word. See you in the afterlife Geoff."

Geoffrey just smiled weakly, knowing this would be the last time he would ever smile. Now that Geoffrey had decided what was going to happen, Sonic decided to get out of harm's way. He zoomed over to

Shadow and Rouge and he quickly grabbed them, whisking them away from the scene before them. Finitevus wondered what was happening and he watched with horror as Geoffrey summoned the last of his strength to raise his crossbow arm, raise his other arm and then press the trigger button.

"Take that…ya blighter." he sneered, pleased that his final words were a four words of snark aimed directly at the one who had fatally wounded him.

The darts all exploded in unison, just ten seconds to spare before the Oblivion Cannon fired. Now the darts were exploding, the cannon would never fire. The explosion was massive, enough to tear the entire cannon apart and rip off pieces of *The Nefarious* 's underbelly. Finitevus could sense that his plan had just gone completely belly-up so he warped himself out of the room before the explosion could swallow him up and vaporize him. The explosion had taken Geoffrey immediately and they now hungered for Finitevus. Flames and smoke rushed towards him just as he escaped. The explosion tore its way through most of the bottom floor of *The Nefarious* and showers upon showers of debris rained down onto the city below. The shields had been raised by Nicole so no piece of debris hit the city itself. Aboard the ship, the explosion was chasing after Sonic, Shadow and Rouge, tearing up the corridors and blazing away after them. Shadow was quick to save everybody though by warping everybody off the ship. He didn't get very far though but upon reappearing, he warped away again. He kept on doing this short-ranged teleportation trick until finally, he reached the ground with Sonic and Rouge by his side. They looked up at *The Nefarious* with satisfaction, pleased to see its best weapon completely obliterated and some heavy damage being done to the underside of the ship. Geoffrey's last act of heroism had left its grievous mark on the Dark Armada. It would take them ages to repair the ship. It didn't look like it even had any energy left to fly anymore due to how damaged it was. But Finitevus was quick to use a Chaos Control to warp the ship back over to Megapolis so, once again, it could be repaired. And to think *The Nefarious* had only just been repaired a couple of days ago, now it needed repairing again. With the ship gone and New Mobotropolis still safe and intact, the Royal Fighters all began to cheer excitedly. The noise was so great

that Amy actually woke up in her wheelchair. She opened her eyes slowly and mumbled sleepily.

"Huh…wh…what's happening…?" she mumbled groggily.

Cream was quick to notice that Amy was now awake and she hugged her friend ecstatically.

"MISS ROSE! YOU'RE AWAKE!" she squealed at the top of her voice "YAY! I'm so glad you're awake!"

"Uh…h-hello Cream…" Amy said weakly, "What's…what's going on? Is something…happening?"

"It's a long story Amy, we'll explain later." said Sonic as he approached his pink-furred friend, "Just know that we've crippled the Dark Armada's ship and sent them packing before they could destroy New Mobotropolis."

"Oh that's wonderful…pity that I…missed all that." sighed Amy, "Oh well. How long…have I been out?" she asked curiously.

"Since yesterday and the evening before." explained Sally, "After Captain Metal shot you, you were nearly killed so we rushed you home as quickly as possible. Mariah the Medicine Cat gave you a healing potion to accelerate your healing. It'll still at least be another week before you're fit to fight again."

"Well…that sucks." moaned Amy, "I wanna…smash Captain Metal…for nearly…killing me."

"We all do." said Blaze coldly, "And trust me, you will get your chance. So Sonic, where's Geoffrey?" she asked, looking up at Sonic this time, "And did you rescue Cosmo and Tails?"

Sonic looked grave as he gave the answers.

"Geoffrey…didn't make it. He was fatally wounded and he had no choice but to blow up the cannon before he died." explained Sonic, "And Tails and Cosmo are still in Finitevus's captivity. It's yet another bittersweet victory for us I'm afraid."

Bunnie Rabboh was the first to react. She broke down hysterically, tears steaming down her face and her body trembling crazily with shock. The Royal Fighters all shared her horror, gasping in unison at what they'd heard.

"NOOOOOOOOO!" howled Bunnie, "No…not mah Geoffrey! Please not him! He can't be gone! HE CAN'T BE!"

Sonic walked over to Bunnie and embraced the heartbroken rabbit warmly to give her some comfort. Bunnie clutched Sonic tightly as if hoping he'd somehow bring Geoffrey back alive and wailed into his shoulder. Sonic patted Bunnie on the back softly, sharing how sorrow. He'd known Geoffrey since Day One of the R.F.S. so to him, he'd lost a friend he'd known for longer than anybody else. It was a deep loss for him as well as Bunnie.

"I'm sorry Bunnie…" said Sonic sadly, "I'm very sorry…"

"No…it's not yer fault sugah-hog…" sobbed Bunnie, "Ya'll…did what ya'll could…at least…Geoffrey stopped The Nefarious…from destroying our city."

"Yes indeed. His death was not in vain." said Sonic, hoping that would lift Bunnie up a little, "And Geoffrey told me to tell you this Bunnie…he'll always love you, even in death."

"And ah'll always love him too…" snivelled Bunnie, "Let's hold a funeral for him and wish him well in heaven."

"That's just what a brave man like Geoffrey deserves." agreed Sally, "Everybody, back into the city. So we can pay respects for our fallen comrade."

With that said, everybody walked back into New Mobotropolis. As they walked back towards the city, Sonic looked over at Sally sadly.

"I'm glad we stopped The Nefarious but I don't feel like I've really won today." he moaned, "We lost Geoffrey, Cosmo's still a prisoner of Finitevus, Tails is still a robot and the Chaos Emeralds are still with Finitevus. It's a pretty shallow victory if you ask me."

"At least it was a victory at all and not total defeat." noted Sally, "And

trust me Sonic, we'll stop the armada at last. As long as we live, we'll never, EVER give up. We'll get Tails and Cosmo back. And we'll stop the armada."

Sonic took Sally's hand into his own and held it gently, stroking it with his thumb softly.

"I know we will Sal…I just wonder how much more we'll sacrifice just to beat them." said Sonic grimly.

Sally nodded. This was definitely a war of heavy loss and great tragedy for the Royal Fighters indeed, much worse than their war with Eggman had ever been. They had won today…but would their next victory be as bittersweet? Time would tell as the war continued…and Operation: Enerjak Reborn came closer to being executed…

R.I.P Geoffrey St. John. He will be missed... :(

So will the Royal Fighters defeat the armada at last? Join in next time as our heroes deal with the "Aftershock" of today's events...and an armada member makes a surprising heel turn! (It's not Scourge or Fiona, that's not surprising)

Dark Armada Part 15: Aftershock

Story 215: Aftershock

The Dark Armada Chapter 15 of 25

The next day had arrived, dull and grey but not quite to the point of raining yet. Grey clouds loomed in the sky but all they did was overlook everything down below, not so much as letting a drop of rain fall to the ground. They were not heavy enough with water for it to start raining yet.

The dull grey atmosphere seemed very appropriate for the tone that had pretty much been set for all of the Royal Fighters in the Royal Fighters Service. Just yesterday they had received the shock of their lives when Cosmo the Seedrian turned out to be Finitevus's secret agent and the Seedrian was currently in Finitevus's captivity, waiting to become a sick test subject for any science experiment that Finitevus had planned. Before that though, she was currently used for stress relief by Finitevus or Mecha Tails himself. Even though the Royal Fighters had escaped certain death and managed to foil Finitevus's plan to destroy New Mobotropolis, their victory hadn't been without any cost. Geoffrey St. John, the Royal Fighter who had been on Sonic's side longer than anybody else and one of the first ever members along with Sonic and Fiona Fox had died, sacrificing his own dying life to stop the Oblivion Cannon from destroying New Mobotropolis. Plus Tails was still a robot and Cosmo was still Finitevus's prisoner. It had been a victory yesterday, but a very pyrrhic one indeed. So much so that even though it was now a new day, the Royal Fighters still felt glum about it. Bunnie Rabboh, formerly Bunnie Rabbot, hadn't slept a wink last night due to Geoffrey's death plaguing her mind like a bad disease. All she had done last night was cry her heart out until she felt like she'd run out of tears to cry. She'd loved Geoffrey very much. Not only had he been the one to save her from being fully roboticized by Eggman on the Royal Fighter's first mission and thus, give her a chance to join the service, but he'd been very supportive, protective and kind to her. He'd even been the one to show her she was strong even

without her cybernetics. Geoffrey had been the man of her dreams and she'd loved every minute spent with him. Now he was gone, leaving her behind to do nothing but grieve over him. To start off the morning, Bunnie had gone to the local florist to buy a beautiful bouquet of flowers for her fallen boyfriend. The bouquet was huge and had lots of red, yellow and pink flowers. Upon buying the bouquet, she went over to the New Mobotropolis graveyard and walked over to Geoffrey's gravestone. His body had been vaporized aboard *The Nefarious* when the Oblivion Cannon blew up so there was no body to bury, just a gravestone to place and commemorate him. His gravestone was next to Mariah the Medicine Cat's and it read:

Geoffrey St. John

2124-2144

He was a brave soldier and he gave the Royal Fighters a great name.

He gave his life to save many other lives and his sacrifice will forever be remembered as a selfless, honourable deed that has saved our city, and our lives.

Rest In Peace

Bunnie felt the tears welling up in her eyes as she knelt down by his grave and lay down the bouquet. Geoffrey's funeral had been a very sad time for her and the rest of the Royal Fighters yesterday. She was glad that she was alone with him now though. Bunnie wiped her eyes dry, desperately not wanting to cry in front of her boyfriend's grave. Sniffling, she began to speak.

"Hope ya'll like the flowers sugah." she said sadly, "I bought em' just for you mah love."

In her mind, she imagined how Geoffrey would reply to this. She imagined he'd be very happy and flattered to receiver such a gift, especially from her. Bunnie continued to speak.

"Ah know, yer very welcome." she said with a sad smile, "And ah'll

be sure to give ya'll a fresh bouquet every once in a while. It's the most ya'll deserve for bein' so wonderful ta me."

She put her hands over her heart and choked back tears so she could continue speaking.

"Thank ya'll Geoffrey, for bein' such a kind soul ta me. A-and thank you for givin' me s-self-esteem when ah n-n-needed it most. Ah'm r-really gonna miss ya Geoffrey…but w-when mah time comes, I'll be with ya'll again." she said with trembling lips, "And then w-we c-can b-be together for a-all e-eternity. B-bet ya'll like th-the sound of th-that."

She imagined that Geoffrey would probably be saying "I very much like the sound of that luv" to her. Bunnie let some of the tears fall down her face as despair began to creep over her but she kept herself from crying uncontrollably. She wiped them away from her already tear-soaked cheeks and knelt closer to Geoffrey.

"But mah time ain't here yet." she said softly, "Ya'll wouldn't want me ta join ya just yet. Ya'll would want me ta live mah life ta the fullest. And that's what ah'm gonna do, for you sugah. And while ah'm still livin' ah'm gonna make Finitevus pay for what he did. He caused ya'll to die and he's gonna pay for it! Mark mah words Geoffrey…He. Will. PAY!"

A pleasing thought came into Bunnie's mind as she imagined herself beating the tar out of Finitevus and making him suffer for causing Geoffrey's death. She had heard from Sonic that Geoffrey's sacrifice had been forced upon him by Finitevus himself. Finitevus had fatally stabbed Geoffrey in the gut and the dying skunk had chosen to let his dying breath mean something by allowing himself to be sacrificed for the greater good. Had Finitevus not done that, Geoffrey would still be here now. Finitevus had crossed the line with Bunnie. He'd kidnapped Tails, the best friend of one of her best friends Sonic the Hedgehog, then he'd de-roboticized her and made her weaker and now he'd caused the death of her boyfriend. She would make Finitevus beg for mercy if it was the last thing she did. Thinking about Finitevus made Bunnie clench her fists in rage and she had the sudden urge to punch something. But she knew that doing it in a graveyard was very disrespectful so she composed

herself. She instead relaxed and looked back at Geoffrey's gravestone.

"Goodbye Geoffrey…and ah promise ya'll, ah'll never forget you… and ah'll always have a place for you in mah heart. Ah promise."

With nothing more to say, the distraught rabbit got up to her feet and walked away from the grave. Only when she walked away from the grave did she allow herself to finally break down again. She put her head into her hands and let out another sob, just another of many that she'd done already. She hoped that this one would be the last one and she'd finally get over Geoffrey's death enough to focus on the bigger picture at hand…the Dark Armada itself…

The atmosphere in the New Mobotropolis Hospital was just as dull and grey as it was outside. Everybody in the R.F.S. was gathered around in Amy Rose's room and they were all just sitting around and talking, the conversation not being entirely pleasing. One of the few good things that had happened yesterday was that Amy had come out of her coma after being nearly obliterated by Captain Metal. She still looked very much a worse for wear but she was getting better thanks to Mariah the Medicine Cat's healing potion that she'd been given before Mariah was swiftly murdered by Mecha Tails. Cream the Rabbit had been ecstatic upon Amy being awake again and the little rabbit had barely left her side since then. After spending most of yesterday paying respect for Geoffrey, everybody had now decided to give Amy the information she required. Amy had been informed on everything that had happened while she'd been out from Mariah's death, the attempt on her life while she'd been out and even Cosmo's unwilling role as Finitevus's agent just to keep Tails alive. The news about Cosmo had been so shocking that poor Amy thought she was going to slip back into her coma. She lay in her hospital bed, her hands over her mouth in shock and her body trembling. Cream looked at her sadly. She knew that Amy wouldn't be happy to hear what had been going on in her absence at all.

"Oh my...I never would have guessed that COSMO was the agent all along!" shrieked Amy, "But...she had no choice. It must have been horrible for her! Finitevus threatening to tell Tails to kill himself

unless she does what he tells her to do! How could anybody be so evil?!"

"It mystifies me as to why anybody would even WANT to be so cruel and heartless." grumbled Queen Sally Acorn angrily, "I swear that people like Finitevus make me want to go insane!"

"That's why we exist Sal, to stop evil people from taking over the world and all that crazy stuff." sighed Sonic the Hedgehog, "We formulated this service to stop Eggman and now we're trying to stop guys like Finitevus and his armada. And to think after Eggman's death I wondered if we'd disband..."

"Mobius would be as good as dead if we did something that stupid." muttered the holographic Nicole the Lynx, shaking her head sadly, "Thank goodness we stayed together."

"And yet it feels like the team's falling apart..." said Amy grimly, "I'm not fit for battle yet, Knuckles has a broken arm, Tails is working for Finitevus as a Robian, Cosmo's captured and now Geoffrey's dead." she sighed sadly, "True me and Knuckles will be fine in a few days time but Geoffrey's still dead and Tails and Cosmo are still prisoners of Finitevus."

"And your team's not the only one falling apart." sighed Team Adabat's leader Scott the Lynx, "My team lost Taran."

"I sure as hell hope we don't lose anybody else in this service." muttered Mandy Mouse bitterly as if the losses they'd experienced lately were just nothing but a bad taste in her mouth, "If we lose anybody else, we'll never defeat the armada! And I feel sorry for you and Bunnie Scott." she added sympathetically, "You lost your brother, Bunnie's lost her boyfriend. I can relate...I still grieve over my sister's death even though it's been a few years since then..."

Mandy could feel herself tearing up inside. The mouse had a tough personality but even she was capable of breaking down crying on occasion. All this talk of loss had brought back bad memories for her. Her sister Marion the Mouse had been killed on a mission in Grand Metropolis and there wasn't a day that went by where she still missed her*. Sensing Mandy's pain, Kari the Rat of the Nekronopolis

Royal Fighters team came up to her and hugged her comfortingly. Kari was a close friend of Mandy's and she didn't like seeing her sad like this.

"Oh there, there Mandy..." she said softly, "Please don't cry. It's sad enough as it is in here. And we don't want to see you upset like this."

"Sorry Kari..." Mandy said solemnly, "It's just...every time I think of Marion...it's hard for me not to..."

"We understand very much." said Kari sweetly, "Miranda still misses Kate the Eagle. And this talk about loss is beginning to make us remember her death too."

"I bet it is..." sighed Mandy, wiping her eyes dry, "Being a Royal Fighter is great and all...but...but sometimes it's tough dealing with the losses you have to endure and the sacrifices that have to be made."

"You said it Mandy." murmured Amy, "As for me, I consider Cosmo being Finitevus's prisoner to be a loss. It doesn't feel the same without her around with me and Cream. And I really worry what that fiend is gonna do to Cosmo...experiment on her no doubt!" she cried out, her face contorting with horror and her chest rising and falling rapidly

"He straight up told us he was going to keep the poor girl as a punching bag for Mecha Tails and also to experiment on her." said Princess Matilda with disgust, "That sickens me! How could anybody do that to such a sweet little child?!"

"I may not have much love for children but even I will agree that that is just abominable..." muttered Bladefeather, "No child should be subjected to cruelty like this."

"And that's why we're gonna save her." announced Sonic, "It's a pity that The Nefarious was warped away by a Chaos Control so now we have no idea where it is now."

"Rai told us that Finitevus had put the ship in Megapolis when it needed repairing the first time." noted Sally, "But I doubt Finitevus

will put it there since we know it's where he put it last time."

"Yeah, Finitevus got Rai back behind our backs and I bet he's told Finitevus EVERYTHING you forced him to tell you." growled a very bitter Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx, "We're back to square one. We'll be forced to wait until that ugly-ass ship comes out of its hidey-hole again before we can attack the armada..."

"Not necessarily." said Knuckles the Echidna, "Blizzard was given Synthetic Chaos Energy by Finitevus right? She can Chaos Control us on the ship."

"But Finitevus will expect that and he'll plan for it." sighed Nicole, "You know what he's like. He's like a master chess player. He always knows how to counter his opponent's moves with every piece he moves on the board.

"Not to mention if he isn't ready, Blizzard's still recovering." noted Ruben the Water Panther, "She passed out and she's just resting in bed next door now. As weird as it is for me to say this...I hope she's alright."

"It's weird for any of us to say that but at least there's no shame in it." said Ruben's girlfriend Sora Prower, hugging her boyfriend gently and stroking his arm, "She's on our side now and is making up for her previous crimes. I wonder if her villainous life is what tempted Finitevus to test the Synthetic Chaos Energy on her." she added thoughtfully, a very deep in thought look falling on her face. It was a face she made a lot what with being a spy and all.

"Maybe it is." murmured Sonic, "Well, at least it didn't work how he hoped and Blizzard's still good. But I wonder if the energy's doing some harm to her..."

"I would recommend removing it to see what it does to her but then we lose the only way of getting on The Nefarious we have." noted Sally, "And I wouldn't recommend putting it in somebody else, it could do terrible things to either of us."

"Indeed. Last thing we need is a headache and a sudden pass-out like Blizzard." said Shadow the Hedgehog in his usual quiet voice,

"Although I wonder if it would effect me and Sonic any differently since we're actual Chaos-powered beings?"

"It could be worse..." said Rogue the Bat worriedly, "It might react very violently with the Chaos Energy in your bodies. I wouldn't try it."

"Then we won't risk it." Shadow decided, taking in his friend's worries, "We'll just have to wait for Blizzard to come to and then we could probably use a Chaos Control to get aboard The Nefarious. Finitevus may expect it but we don't have any other ways of getting on that thing."

"Yeah so literally, it's our only option." said Sonic grimly, "And I assure you, next time I get aboard that ship...the Dark Armada will cry for mercy but I won't give them any, not even a little."

"I used to think that showing our enemies mercy made us better people...and in a way it did." mused Sally, "But Fintievus gave us a profound point. Our lack of ability to put down monsters like him is why we'll never achieve our goals. I'm not the murdering type...but if the Finitevus is killed in battle, I shan't lose any sleep over it."

"I may not approve of this...but my master once taught me that sometimes, the peaceful solution isn't always the best one." said Matilda solemnly, "Sometimes you have to kill if it means bringing peace and happiness to those you love."

"I assure you, Captain Metal's so dead when I get my hands on him!" snarled Amy, "How dare he try to kill Sonic! And how dare he cripple me like this! Once I'm healed, he's so dead!"

"You better save some for me..." muttered Blaze the Cat, "I have scores to settle with him too."

"If there's anybody who needs to die around here, it's Finitevus himself." noted Silver the Hedgehog, "He's definitely the one responsible for the end of the world this year. Synthetic Chaos Energy, world is destroyed by Enerjak, Finitevus has attempted to become Enerjak already, Enerjak's appearance matches Finitevus...it's obvious that Finitevus is the missing link in the chain of events that leaves Mobius in ruin for 200 years!"

"So I don't suppose anybody will stop me if I attempt to put Finitevus down like the monster he is?" asked Sonic, his voice deathly serious and even sinister sounding, an unusual tone of voice for the hedgehog to use.

The question came to a shock to everybody. Sonic had never suggested attempting to kill somebody before. Or at least, not in front of them. It was true, the Royal Fighters thought, that Sonic was no stranger to killing. He had killed the Devatrons when they'd invaded Mobius and he had sent the Martians to the void where they had all been crystallized by Ixis Naugus. Plus he'd destroyed many Eggman robots, had helped to kill the Eraser and even Solaris. But to actually ask to kill somebody like Finitevus...that was something they never would have expected. Sonic felt no different though. He'd once attempted to kill Eggman only to give into his good nature and spare him. Finitevus had done the dirty work for him. But Sonic wasn't prepared to let Enerjak come back alive. He'd defeated him once** and he didn't fancy fighting him again. Finitevus had to die so Enerjak couldn't be brought back alive. After a moment of silence, Sally stared at Sonic and spoke.

"If it'll stop Enerjak from coming...then no, we won't stop you." she whispered, "If you want to put Finitevus down...then be my guest. I'm not one to approve of killing but this will be a case where I make an exception."

"Good." said Sonic coldly, "Because that's what's happening next time I see the bastard. Finitevus is going to die and the world will be saved from his monstrosity."

The Royal Fighters all nodded agreeably. Finitevus was too dangerous to be left alive. He had to die and it would be for the good of all of Mobius...

Unbeknownst to the Royal Fighters, Blizzard the Ice Witch was having a dream in the room next door to Amy's. She had fallen unconscious after something had happened to her inside her body and she was now resting peacefully in the bed, her chest rising and falling softly as she slowly breathed. Her vital signals were all clear,

meaning that the Synthetic Chaos Energy wasn't killing her, nor was it damaging her. But it was slowly but steadily beginning to change her. Inside her head, her brain was beginning to show signs of turning green. Green veins pulsated around her brain and her head began throbbing like crazy. This was causing her to cringe in her sleep. The Synthetic Chaos Energy flowed through her body, some of it channelling through her brain and causing changes into it. Blizzard was beginning to dream as a result of this. She was beginning to have dark thoughts in her mind. Thoughts very reminiscent of what she used to be like. She was feeling thoughts of vengeance and conquest. She found herself wanting to murder Sally and Amy again and was considering taking over Castle Acorn. But she had something that was combating the Chaos Energy in her brain. The ghosts of her family, Iceberg, Frost and Winter.

Do not let this evil brew corrupt you my love...fight it! begged Iceberg.

Come on mummy! You can do it! Don't let it corrupt you! pleaded Frost and Winter.

Mummy's trying dears...but this energy...it's poisoning my brain! Make it stop! wailed Blizzard in her thoughts.

Don't panic sweetheart, we're there for you. Just think of us. said Iceberg warmly, *Think of us. Think of how wonderful your life is now. Please...do it for us.*

I...won't...be...corrupted! declared Blizzard, *I'm not returning to my evil life again!*

Yes mummy! That's it! You can do it! cheered her children ecstatically.

Blizzard smiled and she focused her thoughts on her good life and nothing more. This seemed to work for the Chaos Energy began to attack her brain less and her head began to ache less. The sleeping Ice Witch settled back down and continued snoozing peacefully away as if nothing had happened. But the Chaos Energy wouldn't give up that easily...it was still inside of her...and it would come back strong whether Blizzard wanted it to or not...

Meanwhile on *The Nefarious* , repair work was going at a rapid pace. Dr. Finitevus was all too keen to get the ship up and flying again so he ordered the armada to work as fast as possible on getting *The Nefarious* back in the sky in no time at all. It was bad enough that the ship had been crippled and in need of repair already, it angered Finitevus that the same thing had happened again. Once *The Nefarious* was back in the sky, Finitevus would see to it that the ship would never get damaged ever again. Captain Metal, Rapahel the Cyber Husky, Lord Sycorax, Valdek the Frill-Necked Lizard and Romeo the Chameleon were working as fast and as hard as possible to get the ship fixed as fast as they could. They worked at a breakneck pace, not once slowing down or stopping to rest. The damage to *The Nefarious* was catastrophic. Nearly all of the ship's underbelly had been completely destroyed and most of the bottom floor had been destroyed. It would take them a long time to fix the ship. But they would see to it that it was repaired sooner or later.

As they worked, the Raiju Clan had all gathered together in their dorm room and the Bride of the Conquering Storm shook hands with her right hand man Dàfeng Rai. Rai had been taken prisoner by the Royal Fighters a few days ago but Finitevus had rescued him before taking Cosmo hostage and forcing the Royal Fighters to surrender yesterday. The armada had been a little too busy yesterday so Conquering Storm hadn't really had the time to welcome him back to the clan. Now they had the time, they were doing just that.

"It is an honour to have you back Rai." said Conquering Storm stoically.

"Thank you honoured matron." said Rai brightly, "It's good to be back. It was boring staying stuck in that prison cell with nothing to do but hope I get rescued."

"We apologize for not coming to rescue you earlier." said Conquering Storm grimly, "Finitevus decided to take his time."

"It's OK." Rai reassured his beloved clan leader, "Saving me later is better than never at all."

"Indeed so Rai." said Conquering Storm, folding her arms and looking at him with a face that didn't show much interest in anything, "So Rai, tell me...what did the Royal Fighters do to you?"

"They forced me to give them sensitive information." muttered Rai, "They made me crack. Sally Acorn actually threatened to sever my limbs to make me talk!"

"They did what?!" shrieked Conquering Storm. Her face was full of livid anger and her voice was like steel, "Those savages! How dare they threaten to disembowel you!"

"They'll pay that's for sure." said Rai grimly, "But here's one thing that has me confused."

Conquering Storm raised an eyebrow of suspicion.

"Go on then..." she mused, her tone suddenly cautious as she spoke.

"I told the Royal Fighters about our plan but...Sally asked me if the plan had anything to do with somebody called...Enerjak." explained Rai.

Conquering Storm suddenly went pale with horror. She stood as straight as a ruler and her body became stiff and unmoving. Rai thought for a moment she was going to faint. But amazingly enough, Conquering Storm did nothing of the sort. She regained herself and spoke.

"Did...did you say...Enerjak?" she whispered hoarsely.

"Yes I did." said Rai in confusion, "Why? What's the matter my honourable leader?"

"I've heard of him...he's a monster of wizardry and black magic!" Conquering Storm answered in a voice that didn't quite sound like her own, "He corrupted Matilda and got her thrown into a cell next door to mine! I could hear her raving like a maniac about somebody named "Enerjak" for days! She sounded crazy but...then those Royal Fighters came to see her...and then all hell broke loose...Enerjak possessed Sally and then he jumped over into

Sonic's body and had him fight against his friends and Kai Zen! Matilda sounded delusional when she raved about "Enerjak" but that pretty much confirmed she wasn't! I also recall hearing the guards talking as they threw her into that cell...they were worried about how Chun-Nan was suddenly worshipping this "Enerjak" monster. Black magic is a sin to the world and Enerjak is one thing I do NOT want to have roaming Mobius!"

"But our plan has nothing to do with Enerjak." noted Rai, "Why worry about him?"

"Don't you understand you idiot?!" snapped Conquering Storm, slapping Rai in the face as hard as she could, "Those heroes ask if our plan has something to do with Enerjak! What does that tell you?!"

Rai was about to answer but he kept his mouth closed. He actually didn't know what to say, much to his surprise. He shrugged stupidly in defeat.

"It means that they know something WE don't!" snapped Conquering Storm, "You tell them about our plan and they ask if it's related to Enerjak...they must have been suspicious about the Synthetic Chaos Energy! I believe Enerjak was a Chaos God or something...and I also remember Finitevus telling us about all the Royal Fighters. He told us about two Mobians from the future named Silver and Blaze. They must know what Finitevus's plan is really about and they've told our enemies so they know what we don't know...that the plan's actually about Enerjak!"

The Raiju Clan all gasped in horror to hear this. Rai however didn't seem fussed.

"So? Who cares if it's about Enerjak? Finitevus will have him help us conquer the world!" protested Rai.

"There's no honour in conquering the world with black magic!" snarled Conquering Storm, "ONLY through strength and might do you earn anything in life! Magic like Enerjak's is dishonourable and goes against our philosophy! Not to mention Enerjak corrupted our country before! I'll NEVER forgive him for that! Finitevus cannot be

allowed to commence with Operation: Villains Rising! We must overthrow him and take over ourselves so that we will conquer the world the honourable way!"

"Are you out of your %^&*ing mind?!" shrieked Rai frantically, "We can't betray Finitevus! He'll kill us all!"

"Let him try..." growled Conquering Storm, picking up a katana with a red hilt and a decorated handle from the weapons display cabinet in the corner of their room, "Raiju Clan, we are taking over this armada!" she declared, raising the katana high above her head.

"YEAH!" squealed all the Raiju Ninjas excitedly.

The Raiju Clan were like herds of sheep. They always followed whatever Conquering Storm said no matter what it was. But Rai was beginning to have doubts about this coup de tat of Conquering Storm's. Would rebelling and mutinying against Finitevus really be that wise an idea? And what if they were all jumping to conclusions? What if Finitevus's plan wasn't about Enerjak at all? They'd be slaughtering him for nothing! But Rai knew better than to question Conquering Storm's intelligence and decisions. She had after all led the clan to taking over Chun-Nan through a brilliantly contrived and executed stratagem that fooled even Princess Matilda of all people***. She wasn't one to stupidly assume something or make a foolish decision. He would follow her for this one regardless of his own self-doubts. Not to mention, as he remembered, Conquering Storm sort of planned on getting rid of Finitevus anyway. Now had just forced her to do it earlier than planned. Conquering Storm and her clan marched out of the dorm room and they headed off to find Finitevus. Once they found him, he would be dead meat…

Cosmo the Seedrian had lost track of how long she'd been locked up in this dark, featureless room that served as her prison from now on until her death. This was the isolation chamber, a room that Finitevus had built to keep anybody he wanted to experiment on isolated and cut off from anybody until he was ready to use them. Cosmo was being kept as a punching bag for Mecha Tails and also as a possible experiment for Synthetic Chaos Energy for Finitevus

since her role as his agent had expired. The former use had already been done. After the Dark Armada's crippling failure yesterday, Finitevus had ordered Mecha Tails to just beat up Cosmo for no reason other than to give him some catharsis to alleviate his rage and anger over the failure of his mission. It hadn't really worked much to Finitevus's dismay since he was still angry but he had enjoyed watching Mecha Tails beat up somebody as pathetic and miserable as Cosmo. Cosmo still winced in pain from the beating. Mecha Tails had given her a black eye, a bruised left arm, bruised thighs, slashes across her torso and right arm that had been inflicted on her by his tails and a bleeding lip which had since scabbed over and was now beginning to heal. Cosmo spent all of last night in agony, too hurt to sleep both physically and mentally. She had brought this upon herself. She should never have become Finitevus's agent and betrayed her friends, she never should have let Finitevus's blackmail get to her and should have let Sonic know about it so that Finitevus would be stopped. She should have known better than to allow herself to play into his hands. She should have known that he'd blow up Tails anyway once he'd finished with him. But she hadn't known and she'd done it. She'd allowed Finitevus to manipulate her into betraying everybody and now she was paying for her crimes. She'd only been in this room for a day now and yet Cosmo had already decided there was no hope for her anymore. She felt that she got what she deserved. She'd been stupid enough to let Finitevus turn her against her friends and even though they were still alive according to Finitevus, she didn't think they'd be bothered about her anymore. She doubted they were even worried about her. Cosmo had a nasty image in her head that the Royal Fighters would be scorning her name, even Amy to whom she would never see wake up from her coma. Even if they'd felt sorry for her after hearing she'd been manipulated, Cosmo didn't think they really did. She didn't deserve their sorrow and sympathy. She didn't even deserve their forgiveness. She knew that Geoffrey St. John, the one who had actually guessed that she was the agent before anybody else did, would never forgive her had he still been alive. That made her feel even worse as she thought about Geoffrey. It was her fault he'd died. It was also her fault Taran and Mariah had died too. How could the Royal Fighters forgive her for that? Cosmo curled her aching legs up to her chest and she hugged them as if they were her only friends now.

"Oh why did I do it…?" Cosmo whimpered for the millionth time, "Why did I be so stupid? I've betrayed everybody…and for what? Tails blowing up once Finitevus is done with him! Why did I do it?!"

She began to cry for the millionth time, surprised that she even had the energy left in her to cry anymore. Her tears trickled down her face and onto her knees, staining the white satin of her skirt.

"Because of me, Geoffrey is now dead and my friends are no closer to saving Tails than before…they all must hate me now…" she sobbed, "I bet Tails really hates me…that is if his real self is still in that Robian body of his. I deserve all this. I bet when I die…nobody will miss me."

She began to cry even harder, the horrible image of her dead and buried and nobody even so much as shedding a tear for her after she'd died making her brain shudder in disgust as she thought it. Never in her life had Cosmo been so distraught, so pessimistic and above all, so destroyed. Even the Martians destroying her world and rendering her the last of her kind didn't make her feel this bad. When death came for Cosmo, she would welcome it. Anything to put herself out of her misery. She even considered just strangling herself but at the same time, she was too scared to think about suicide. So Cosmo just sat in the cell, wallowing in sorrow and drowning in tears. A rotten end to her life indeed. Then suddenly, Cosmo heard footsteps approaching the room. Her heart leaped into her throat and she cowered away into the corner of the room. The door opened, spilling light inside and slicing open the darkness, and in walked Dr. Finitevus. Cosmo hid her face in horror and she pressed herself as far into the wall as possible.

"No! Please! Go away!" whimpered Cosmo feebly, "Please Finitevus, I don't want anymore! Don't make Tails torture me again! Please! Please! Just put me out of misery!"

"You're pathetic Agent White Seed…" growled Finitevus, "Already you fear a torture session and I haven't even announced why I'm here yet. And don't you give me "just put me out of my misery", I won't give you that satisfaction if that's what you want. I'm not a believer in the "easy way out"."

"Then…what do you want to do with me?" asked Cosmo worriedly, still keeping her eyes covered in fear.

"It's time you became an experiment my dear." purred Finitevus wickedly, "I have a fresh batch of Synthetic Chaos Energy waiting to be tested. And you're the lucky girl who's going to have it tested on her."

Cosmo went pale with shock. Despite pretty much losing interest in living, she didn't really want to be a test for Synthetic Chaos Energy. If the test went well then she'd be working for Finitevus again, this time for good. She'd rather die than work for Finitevus again.

"NO! NO! Not that, anything but that please!" begged Cosmo frantically, "Don't experiment on me! Please!"

I told you why you're being kept alive Cosmo. One of the reasons was so you can be an experiment for me so like it or not, that's what's happening to you." said Finitevus coldly, "Now shut up whimpering and get up!"

Cosmo tried to do that but the pain in her body was too much for her. Mecha Tails had beaten her so badly that just the simple act of standing up was a challenge for her and it was a challenge she couldn't overcome. She forced herself onto her legs and then collapsed onto the floor again.

"I said GET UP!" snarled Finitevus.

He kicked Cosmo in the gut as hard as he could to try and "encourage" her into standing back up. Cosmo coughed and spluttered loudly but she forced herself onto her feet. She then further forced herself to stay standing. Now she was up on her feet, Finitevus grabbed her hand.

"You wanted to be put out of your misery Cosmo…well if the experiment goes wrong then consider me granting your wish." said Finitevus cruelly.

Cosmo nodded grimly. Maybe she would get what she wanted after all. Finitevus was about to warp himself and her over to the lab until

he heard marching footsteps approaching. Finitevus threw Cosmo back against the wall and he walked out of the cell to see what was happening. The door closed shut behind the albino scientist, sealing Cosmo back in once again. The Seedrian crawled over to the door and pressed her ear against it, seeing if she could hear what was going on. She could hear Finitevus walking a few steps before stopping to address the oncoming feet. The marching stopped and Finitevus spoke. Outside, he was face-to-face with the entire Raiju Clan. Conquering Storm had a katana in her hands, something that made Finitevus raise an eyebrow suspiciously.

"Why my dear Raiju Clan, whatever is all the commotion about?" asked Finitevus smoothly, "I haven't given any orders to go into battle."

"We don't need any orders." said Conquering Storm coldly, "We've managed to figure out what your plan is really about Finitevus. You want to resurrect Enerjak…and we will NOT allow that to happen!"

That made Cosmo gasp in surprise from inside her cell. Conquering Storm knew that Finitevus's plan was about Enerjak? How did she work that out? Cosmo then remembered. Sonic and Sally had asked Rai about Enerjak! She'd spied on them and had heard everything when working for Finitevus! Rai must have told Conquering Storm about what Sonic and Sally had said! But Cosmo still didn't understand how Conquering Storm had been able to put two plus two together like that. Finitevus on the other hand seemed unfazed and just as cold and collected as ever.

"Why Conquering Storm, you're deathly mistaken." purred Finitevus, "My plan is for all of you, it has nothing to do with Enerjak at all."

"Then explain why the heroes questioned Rai about our plan having anything to do with him!" snapped Conquering Storm, "They know what we don't know and that is what the plan is REALLY about! And we're going to stop you from resurrecting Enerjak! You are being replaced by me as leader of the Dark Armada! And we will commence with Operation: Villains Rising the way it SHOULD be commenced…through strength and honour, not evil magic and wizardry!"

Finitevus growled furiously. How did Sonic and his friends know his plot was about Enerjak?! He supposed that Silver and Blaze were responsible for that what with being from the future and all. And now because of them, Conquering Storm was betraying him and plotting to overthrow him! Finitevus would see to it that Silver and Blaze got brutally murdered at some point after this. He narrowed his eyes at Conquering Storm and he cracked his knuckles.

"Alright then…" he purred angrily.

Conquering Storm roared furiously, her roar like a wild animal waiting to pounce on its unfortunate prey and rip it apart. She raised her katana and she thundered towards Finitevus like an angry lion. She swung the katana downwards towards Finitevus but the echidna quickly caught the blade between his hands before it could strike him. He yanked on the katana and he kicked Conquering Storm in the gut, causing her to double over and let go of the katana. Finitevus took it into his own hands and he swung it at Conquering Storm. The ninja bride weaved out of the way before she could be sliced to pieces. The rest of the Raiju Clan charged towards Finitevus, hoping to help their honoured matron but the caped experimenter summoned a warp ring and caused all of the ninjas to run straight through it for they were too late to realize what had happened. The entire Raiju Clan disappeared through the warp ring, even Rai and Finitevus closed it up behind them. Conquering Storm watched with horror as her clan vanished through the warp ring.

"Where have you sent them?!" she snarled angrily, throwing a punch at Finitevus but missing by a mile as the echidna leaped over her.

Finitevus threw a kick straight down atop of Conquering Storm's head and knocked her down onto the floor. Then Finitevus landed behind Conquering Storm and prepared to slice her in two with the katana. Conquering Storm turned onto her back and caught it in between her hands just as Finitevus had done so to her earlier.

"Your clan is getting a nasty bit of roasting I'm afraid…" purred Finitevus, "You see, I warped them straight into Mount Adabat itself. And you may not know this but Mount Adabat is a volcano so I think your precious clan will end up buried in tonnes of lava by the time

this fight is over."

The look on Conquering Storm's face was a look that Finitevus would forever treasure. Her face was a juxtaposition of anger, horror, sadness and rage all at once. For a moment she couldn't move and thus, this gave Finitevus the perfect opportunity to yank the katana out of her hands, slightly scratching them in the process, and he raised it above his head, ready to finish her off. But Conquering Storm had been brought back to reality by the katana scratching her hands and just as Finitevus was about to kill her, Conquering Storm leapt into action. She grabbed Finitevus by the torso and she knocked him down onto the floor. She then picked herself up and began punching him as hard as she could, aiming directly at his face with every punch she threw.

"YOU'LL DIE FOR THIS!" she screamed at the top of her voice.

She punched Finitevus directly between the eyes, the blow actually causing the echidna's head to start swimming. The punch had disorientated Finitevus a little but the scientist wasn't down yet. Conquering Storm launched another punch at him but then Finitevus summoned a warp ring to his hand and held it in front of his face. Conquering Storm's fist shot through the warp ring and then reappeared…directly beside her head. This caused Conquering Storm to punch herself and knock herself off of Finitevus. Finitevus leaped up onto his feet and he chopped Conquering Storm across the cheek. Conquering Storm retaliated with a flat-handed punch to the cheek on Finitevus and sent his head snapping sharply to the right. Finitevus recovered quickly and ducked as Conquering Storm launched a powerful kick to his forehead. He grabbed Conquering Storm's leg and shoved it upwards, causing her leg to smack into her and make her overbalance. She landed down with a thud on the floor and before she could get back up, Finitevus grabbed her by the ankles and he swung her around in a neat circle. He spun the lynx around, the lynx crying out loudly as she was spun. Then Finitevus let go of Conquering Storm and sent her flying across the corridor. Conquering Storm yelled helplessly as she was sent on a short flight down the corridor and came down in a crash land further down. Inside her cell, Cosmo could hear the fight going on and as weird as it was, she was actually hoping Conquering Storm would win. It

would mean that Finitevus couldn't commence with his evil plan and Conquering Storm would hardly be any worse than Finitevus since she was nowhere near as smart as he was. But to her dismay, Finitevus seemed to be winning from what she could hear. Finitevus cackled deviously and he used a warp ring to warp the treacherous Raiju Clan leader back over to him. He had Conquering Storm appear above him so he could kick her as hard as he could. Conquering Storm landed directly beside her katana and the furious lynx quickly grabbed it. She thundered towards Finitevus and swung the katana at him as hard as she could. Finitevus jumped backwards to avoid the attack and he gripped the blades in his cape. He swung them at Conquering Storm, the lynx blocking the echidna's attack with her katana held at an angle and her ears winced as a loud clanging noise pounded her ear drums. She swung the katana up, sending Finitevus's weapons hurling upwards and she spun around in an attempt to cleave him in two. The katana nearly reached its target but Finitevus blocked the attack with his forearm. The katana hit the warp rings, scratching them slightly but they withstood the attack and protected his arm. Finitevus inspected the damage and he looked at Conquering Storm coldly.

"You scratched my warp rings…how rude." he said dangerously.

He then retaliated with a savage slash to the shoulders on his ninja opponent. Conquering Storm winced in pain but otherwise, withstood the attack. The coolie-hat wearing lynx swung her katana at Finitevus and caught him across the shoulder just as he was attempting to dodge. Finitevus ignored the pain and he scratched Conquering Storm's arm with his blade. The attack didn't seem to effect Conquering Storm all that much but then Finitevus grabbed the ninja's arm and bit into the cut he'd inflicted on it. Conquering Storm let out a shrilling cry of pain but Finitevus quickly silenced her by kicking her in the back of her leg and bringing her down on one knee. Conquering Storm elbowed her opponent's gut and then slashed him across the face with her katana. The cut she'd left was big and bloody and the albino echidna let out a terrible cry of agonizing pain. Conquering Storm smirked wickedly and she then proceeded to kick Finitevus in the face as hard as she could, her iron-toed boot slamming into the centre of the echidna's face and throwing him off his feet. But Finitevus didn't crash down onto his

back. He instead flipped himself over, landed on his hands and sprang himself back onto his feet. He felt his face throbbing wildly and he rubbed it better. Conquering Storm was a good fighter and she'd inflicted a critical cut onto him that she could aim at and disorientate him. He had to get this over with before Conquering Storm turned the fight into her favour. Snarling viciously, his female opponent came stampeding towards him, her iron-toed boots making loud clumping noises with every footstep she took. Finitevus waited for Conquering Storm to come at him, keeping an eye on her raised katana. The lynx swung the weapon down towards him but then the echidna stepped out of the way and elbowed Conquering Storm down onto her stomach, the bony point of his elbow digging sharply into her back as he struck her. Conquering Storm landed heavily on the floor and she tried to pick herself back up. The elbow strike had been quite painful and her back was throbbing furiously. So furiously that the lynx could only think about the pain in her back. She was so focused on her back that she didn't even realize that Finitevus was still there. Finitevus then suddenly raised his hand and he slammed it down on Conquering Storm's neck. The blow knocked her clean out and left her lying on the floor completely still and unconscious. Finitevus dusted his hands off and smirked at the traitor lying before him.

"A valiant effort my dear…but sadly not enough." he sneered, "I'll make an example of those who double-cross me out of you."

He picked up Conquering Storm's unconscious body and he draped her casually over his shoulder like she was just a bundle of clothes being carried away. Finitevus then pressed against his ear with two of his fingers.

"Mecha Tails, there's been a change of plan. Conquering Storm is our experiment now." he purred, "I'll just drop her off to you and you can get her restrained. I'll tell you when you can pump her full of Synthetic Chaos Energy."

"Understood master." answered Mecha Tails stoically.

Finitevus smirked to himself as he opened up a warp ring and stepped through it, taking himself and Conquering Storm over to the laboratory to set her up for the experiment. As Finitevus left, Cosmo

slumped against the wall and sighed loudly in despair. The one chance to get rid of Finitevus and Conquering Storm had completely botched the job. The Raiju Clan was melting to death inside a volcano that she herself had gone down in just to get a Chaos Emerald during the big Chaos Emerald hunt a couple of years ago and Conquering Storm had been knocked out. Cosmo had hoped dearly that Conquering Storm would beat Finitevus so that Operation: Enerjak Reborn would never see completion and the Royal Fighters would be against an opponent who wouldn't match up to Finitevus in anyway. Finitevus was literally the one that was scoring all the victories against the heroes and Conquering Storm could have defeated him. But she hadn't and now she was going to be experimented on. Cosmo supposed it was good it wasn't her but if it went wrong on Conquering Storm then she'd be experimented on next…

Footnotes:

*** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 1: The Malicious Metropolis Masquerade***

****** See *The Terror of Enerjak***

****** See Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 14: A Few Steps To A Conquering Storm***

The heroes are clearly ready to give it to Finitevus next time they meet and Conquering Storm has just intiated a failed coup de tat against Finitevus! What will happen next?

Well the heroes will take a rest for the next chapter for the villains take the spotlight next time and they'll be witnessing an "*Experiment of Horror" *...

Dark Armada Part 16: Experiment o Horror

Story 216: Experiment of Horror

The Dark Armada Chapter 16 of 25

"So Mecha Tails, how's my glorious Synthetic Chaos Energy formula coming along now?" asked Dr. Finitevus in his usual polite, eloquent nature.

"It's still stable and ready for testing." replied Mecha Tails as he read the schematics on the screen that was reading the formula they had made, "We now have the perfect balance between positive and negative Chaos Energy. It took us nearly a week but we've got it at last."

Finitevus let out a small smile after hearing that. After the catastrophic failure of the first test that ended up with Blizzard getting ridiculously powerful and the heroes escaping from his grasp, Finitevus had made sure that the next dose of Chaos Energy would be just right. Mecha Tails had spent most of yesterday and this morning getting it right with some help from Finitevus and now it was ready for testing. They had been about to test it on the unwilling Dark Armada spy Cosmo the Seedrian but circumstances had caused Finitevus to spare Cosmo for the moment and instead try it on somebody else instead. Before that, he was making doubly sure that it was still right and still ready for testing.

"Indeed." mused Finitevus grimly, "I really thought the dose I tried on Blizzard was just right…but that power ring I used made it too positive after all…" he muttered, thinking back to how he'd gotten a power ring to use in the formula the day before. They had left it out for this new formula to see if it would give them the desired result.

"And now without it, it will not be too positive." droned Mecha Tails, "And the negative Chaos Energy, while still dominant, won't be unstable. We have the perfect formula to test out."

"And to think we were going to use it on Cosmo a moment ago…"

purred Finitevus as he turned around to face something behind him.

His slimy lips widened into a toothy, sinister grin that could get a tiger to run away like a scared kitten. Behind him, fastened to a restraint bed by her wrists and ankles was none other than the Bride of the Conquering Storm. She was the leader of the Raiju Clan and had joined the Dark Armada after Finitevus had sent Scourge the Hedgehog to break her out of prison*. Her right hand man Dàfeng Rai had been a prisoner of the Royal Fighters and because Sonic the Hedgehog and Sally Acorn had asked him about Enerjak, Conquering Storm had worked out that Finitevus's plan was really about Enerjak, something she didn't approve of. She had attempted to kill Finitevus and take over the armada but her attempt coup d'etat had ended disastrously. Finitevus had sent the entire Raiju Clan to their deaths inside of Mount Adabat and had knocked Conquering Storm out. Now the rebellious lynx was restrained to a cold steel bed, her arms and legs stretched out in an "X" position and laser binds wrapped tightly around her wrists and ankles. Her shirt had been removed, revealing a purple, strapless bra around her breasts. She'd even been deprived of her trademark coolie-hat. Her mouth had been taped shut, supposedly to stop her from telling anybody about Enerjak and how Finitevus's plan was about him, not that she'd get to tell anybody anyway. Conquering Storm writhed around on the bed, trying desperately to get free. But she couldn't, no matter how hard she tried. It gave Finitevus great pleasure to watch his treacherous captive trying forlornly to escape. Conquering Storm glared daggers at Finitevus and tried to speak. The tape around her mouth kept her from doing so though but she did mumble so angry, muffled mumbles that Finitevus was sure he could make out. He wasn't all that bothered though.

"Yes Conquering Storm I can see you're uncomfortable…and I do not care." purred Finitevus wickedly.

He then whipped out a remote control from inside his cloak and pointed it at Conquering Storm. He pressed a button on the control and the laser binds suddenly gave the captive lynx a terrible electrical shock that made her scream muffled screams of anguish. Electricity coursed through her body and her muscles convulsed in agony. Conquering Storm's back arched as she was electrocuted,

stretching her torso taut as she arched in pain. Had she not been gagged, her screams would have been loud, shrilling, ear-piercing and horrible. Finitevus left her to be electrocuted for a whole minute before switching off the current and allowing Conquering Storm a breather moment. The lynx lay back down flat against the bed, her head resting against her shoulder and the tape on her mouth inflating in and out as she breathed heavily from the torture. Her nose did most of the breathing as she caught her breath back. She could still feel little sparks of electricity crackling between her fur despite the torture being over. Finitevus put the remote back into his cloak pocket and he advanced towards Conquering Storm. He leaned forward and jammed his face into his prisoner's face. Conquering Storm gave Finitevus an evil glare that could pierce the soul. Her eyes were narrowed down to slits that were so narrow, they could have fit through a closed blind.

"Do anymore of that annoying writhing and mumbling again, I'll give you another shock." said Finitevus coldly, "Are we in anyway unclear my dear?"

Conquering Storm shook her head, still glaring daggers at Finitevus. This was a torture she did not want to go through again though it didn't stop her concentrating all her hate for Finitevus into her evil glare. Finitevus smirked at his captive and he put a hand on the lynx's face.

"Good." he said darkly, "You really shouldn't have betrayed me Conquering Storm. I promised you Chun-Nan and with me, you would have gotten what you wanted. And now look at you, restrained to an experiment bed and waiting to be tested on." he sneered, "You really shouldn't have betrayed me."

Conquering Storm really wanted to say something but she knew that speaking was futile since her lips were sealed. Finitevus smiled shamelessly and he continued.

"And you needn't have worried about Enerjak either." crooned Finitevus, "Enerjak will do us all a favour. This pathetic world is a garden gone wild. It is corrupt, out of control and above all, primitive. Enerjak has the power to erase everything and allow us all to start over again. And with my Chaos Energy, I will harness that power

and become Enerjak himself. Now Sonic told me that Silver and Blaze come from a dystopian future yesterday, a future that is a dystopia for 200 years in fact. That and their concern over Enerjak means that I succeed in getting what I want."

Conquering Storm let out a muffled gasp of horror from behind her gag. Silver and Blaze's future was a wreck?! Enerjak succeeds in destroying Mobius?! Now Conquering Storm began to feel more shame and anger for failing to kill Finitevus. Rai had pretty much given her the chance to save the entire planet from destruction by telling her about Sonic and Sally mentioning Enerjak! If she'd succeeded in killing Finitevus then the mad man would never get to obliterate everything as Enerjak! If only she hadn't lost the battle! Conquering Storm now felt more despair than ever before. What a stain upon her honour this was! She had the chance to stop Finitevus and actually save the world from Enerjak's terror...and she'd blown it completely. Why did she have to fail?! She began to regret ever joining the Dark Armada. The armada's entire purpose was to bring the end of the world and she'd played a part of it! She couldn't believe it at all. Finitevus smiled at the look on Conquering Storm's face.

"Yes, you actually could have done more than take over the armada had you won...you could have saved the entire world." purred Finitevus, "And yet you failed. You must feel very dishonoured now Conquering Storm..."

The ninja-lynx just swung her head forward and walloped Finitevus in the forehead. She knew she was going to be tortured for that but it was well worth seeing the crazy echidna in pain. Finitevus let out a pained cry and he clutched his forehead tensely, willing the pain to go away as he took a step away from Conquering Storm. He whipped the remote out of his cloak and pointed it at her.

"And here I thought you didn't want another shock therapy session..." he growled, pressing the button with his thumb.

Conquering Storm let out muffled screams of agony as electricity surged through her body and made her arch and convulse painfully again. Finitevus let her have it for a whole minute again before switching the electricity off and giving her a moment to breath.

Conquering Storm lay down flat against the bed again and let out muffled coughs and splutters as the pain died down. Steam drifted up from her body and some bits of her fur were singed and blackened. Finitevus put the remote away again and he reached forward to punch Conquering Storm's naked belly. Conquering Storm winced as the skin on her belly was sharply pinched between forefinger and thumb by Finitevus.

"Strike me again and I shock you to death, do you understand?!" snarled Finitevus.

The electrocuted lynx nodded slowly, barely able to open her eyes. Finitevus let go of her belly and then smacked her in it, making the lynx wince in pain again.

"Good." growled Finitevus, "Now then..." he turned to Mecha Tails, whom had just been standing there and watching with no emotion whatsoever, "...I'm going to check on The Nefarious's repairs. You are to remain here and keep an eye on the prisoner until I come back. Once I return, we will commence with the experiment."

"Understood. I obey." droned Mecha Tails.

Finitevus smiled and patted his Robian pet on the shoulder, one of the few acts of affection and kindness he ever showed to anybody. He was certainly going to miss having Mecha Tails when Operation: Enerjak Reborn was complete. But he supposed when Mobius was remade after he wiped everything out, he'd just get himself a new minion. Mobius's new life would all answer to him when it started anew. Finitevus grinned at the very image of himself as Enerjak ruling over a new Mobius as he used a warp ring to warp himself out of the room to check on repairs. As he left though, for the first time in her life...Conquering Storm began to cry. Tears streamed out of her eyes but her sobs were mostly muffled by the gag. She had never cried before but given how bad things looked now, she couldn't help but cry over her failure to stop Finitevus and the fact Mobius was coming to an end soon...

"Say Fiona, do you think now might be a good time to double-cross

Finitevus?" asked Scourge the Hedgehog, the evil brother of Sonic the Hedgehog, impatiently, "I mean, the moron doesn't suspect a thing about us! We can take him down before he realizes what's happened!"

"Scourge, keep your voice down!" hissed Fiona Fox, Royal Fighter traitor and Scourge's girlfriend, "Do you want anybody to hear us?!"

"Sooooooorry babe." sighed Scourge in annoyance, speaking quieter now, "So do you think now might be a good time to get rid of Finitevus?"

"It might be." murmured Fiona, "We'll have to see what's going on now."

Conquering Storm wasn't the first Dark Armada member to think about betraying Finitevus. The conniving Scourge and Fiona had had thoughts of betraying Finitevus first, most notably after Scourge had had his arm and eye replaced with robotic ones just for failing to kill any of the Royal Fighters. The two had been patiently buying their time, waiting for the right moment to turn on Finitevus and overthrow him. They had heard about Conquering Storm's heel-turn earlier for Finitevus had announced on the intercom system that Conquering Storm had betrayed him and was being punished for it. This had inspired Scourge and Fiona to try their hand, only they were going to be more subtle about it than the ninja clan leader was. They weren't thinking of just going straight up to Finitevus and announcing their betrayal like Conquering Storm had done, they were thinking of how to catch him off guard and take him out in the most pragmatic and logical way possible. They were currently in their dorm room discussing on how to go about their plans.

"I bet the doc's in the lab waiting to test that Synthetic Chaos Energy thingy of his on that dumb bitch Conquering Storm." said Scourge, "He'll likely be there if nothing else."

"Maybe so." said Fiona with a shrug, "Now this talk about the lab's given me some idea on how to take the bastard out…" she murmured.

"Oooh, I love it when you've got yer thinking cap on babe!" cried

Scourge excitedly, "You're so awesome at coming up with ideas!"

"Oh thanks hunky chops, you're too kind." giggled Fiona slyly, "Anyway. What if we take that Chaos Energy and use it on ourselves? We could be stronger than Finitevus and we'd kill him in an instant. He'll have no chance against us if we're Chaos Powered. I remember how he told us he'd tested the formula on some gal named Blizzard and she utterly curb-stomped him! That was so funny to hear about!"

"Pity the doc didn't really see the joke." muttered Scourge, "Anyway, I like this idea Fi. It's foolproof and it's definitely gonna work."

"Yeah and given how the test worked well on Blizzard minus her still being a wimpy good girl, I bet Finitevus will have fixed that and the formula will be just perfect." said Fiona with a devious smile on her pretty face, "There's no risks, we'll be OK when we pump ourselves full of the stuff."

"We sure will." said Scourge sinisterly, "And when we take over this armada, the world will scream our names and bow beneath our feet! We'll be the most powerful Mobians ever!"

"Too right." said Fiona wickedly, "And I can't wait to make those losers I once called "friends" cry like babies…"

It was not unknown amongst the Dark Armada that Fiona had once been a Royal Fighter and after a mere eight months, she had already quitted the team after being nothing but a failure on all counts. Scourge had run into her in the GreatForest once when Fiona had foolishly tried to apprehend him just to redeem herself. Instead, she'd ended up choosing Scourge and now the two had a happy, villainous relationship together. Fiona was much happier with Scourge than the Royal Fighters and Scourge had trained Fiona so well that the vixen was fifty times the fighter she had been as a Royal Fighter. She'd even been able to go toe-to-toe with somebody as tough as Mandy Mouse on occasion and she could also match Sally blow for blow with the wrist blades that she'd gotten from Finitevus after he'd stolen Sally's first pair last year. Scourge smiled a toothy, shark like smile at Fiona.

"I'd love to make them cry too, especially my goody-goody two-shoes brother…" said Scourge sinisterly, "So shall we see if Doctor Creepy Von Evil's in his lab?"

"Yes. If he's there then we'll have to wait until he's gone before we steal the formula." said Fiona sternly, "We'll never get it if he's there. The first thing we cannot do is let Finitevus get a clue on our motives, we have to be as unpredictable as possible."

"Yeah I mean look at Connie, she got herself caught and on the experiment table!" cried Scourge, "I wonder if she's still waiting to be Finitevus's little lab rat at the moment…"

They would find out shortly. Scourge and Fiona stood up from their beds and they left their dorm room. Now they were outside the room, the two made their merry way over to the Dark Armada's lab. Without a warp ring to make the journey short, they would have to stride through much of *The Nefarious* 's corridors to get to the lab. But since Scourge was super fast like Sonic was, the simple walk through the corridors would be over in a flash. Scourge picked up Fiona bridal style and he whizzed off down the corridors to get to the lab. A few minutes later, he arrived and screeched to a halt outside of the laboratory. Scourge had roamed around *The Nefarious* so much that he knew his way around the ship blindfolded. Upon arriving at the lab, he put Fiona down and he opened the door. He and Fiona walked inside and inspected their surroundings. The lab had to be the scariest room on *The Nefarious* with its rather wicked looking machinery, gloomy atmosphere and the table of contents that had all sorts of things on it. They couldn't see Dr. Finitevus in the room anywhere in the lab. He was out checking on the ship's repairs at the moment. Scourge and Fiona smiled gleefully at Finitevus's lack of presence in the lab. Their job would be a whole lot easier now. They could swipe the Synthetic Chaos Energy and use it on themselves and then they would overthrow Finitevus. Scourge noticed how Mecha Tails was here, keeping an eye on the bound and gagged Conquering Storm before him. Scourge could barely keep himself from smirking. Conquering Storm had attempted to overthrow Finitevus and as a result, had ended up like this. Well he wouldn't end up like her at all. He and Fiona strode up to Mecha Tails, the Robian looking up as if just noticing that they had walked

into the room. He wasn't bothered at their presence at all, anybody was welcome to meet him as long as they were on Finitevus's good side as far as Mecha Tails cared.

"Say Mecha Tails, looks like you got Connie all nicely tied down haven't ya?!" laughed Scourge, "I bet she can't so much was raise a leg now!"

"Yes, she is indeed quite secure." droned Mecha Tails, "You did not need to point out the obvious."

"Huh, so you do have some snark in ya after all." snorted Scourge, "And here's me thinking you were Mr. Emotionless or something."

"Say, who's idea was it to take her shirt off?" snickered Fiona, taking note of the fact Conquering Storm was almost naked from the waist up, the bra being the only thing she was even wearing on her upper body.

"The master seemed to take great delight in removing her upper attire for reasons I cannon comprehend." droned Mecha Tails, still looking as stoic as ever, "I do not see the point in removing parts of clothing at all. It is pointless."

"Ah well, the bitch deserved it." sneered Scourge, walking over to Conquering Storm and rudely poking her in the belly, "Hey Connie, see what happens to those who double-cross the great Dr. Finitevus?!" he cackled mockingly, poking her even harder the second time.

Conquering Storm was so tempted to floor Scourge at this moment but the laser binds restraining her to the bed kept her firmly fastened down, preventing her from doing anything to him. Scourge just laughed at Conquering Storm and he smacked her across the face.

"Serves you right you stupid lynx! You should have known better than to turn on Doc Finny like that!" he sneered tauntingly, "Now you're paying the price for it!"

"Speaking of paying the price, why hasn't Conquering Storm been tested on yet?" asked Fiona curiously, "Didn't Finitevus say he was

going to test the Synthetic Chaos Energy on her?"

"Affirmative. But Finitevus needs to oversee the repairs of his ship." Mecha Tails exposited for Fiona, "I am left in charge until he returns. I have to keep an eye on Conquering Storm until he comes back. When he returns, she will be tested on."

"I see." said Fiona smoothly, "So Mecha Tails…how's the Synth-En? Is it ready for testing?" she asked, glancing over at the canister of green liquid on the work desk beside her.

"Yes. We have mitigated the problem with the last batch and made an improved formula for this one." explained Mecha Tails, "The past formula was too positive. This one is just right. It'll be perfect for testing on her."

"Great!" cried Scourge, "So…what's it meant to do?"

"You're as obtuse as my master is when he's in a bad mood…" sighed Mecha Tails, rolling his optics as if Scourge has asked him a stupid question, "It is meant to make the candidate super-powered and fiercely loyal to Finitevus. If the test gives us those desired results then we can begin making the Synthetic Chaos Emeralds that will house this energy. And then the plan can reach its conclusion."

Conquering Storm tried to tell Scourge and Fiona something but the tape across her mouth prevented that from happening. She wanted to warn them about Enerjak very badly but she couldn't. Fiona just turned around and punched the lynx in the stomach as hard as she could. The lynx winced in pain and glared at the leather-clad vixen.

"Shut up and mind your own business traitor!" snapped Fiona angrily.

"Good one Fi." said Scourge happily, "So Mecha Tails. You uh… don't mind if me and Fiona test the Chaos Energy do you? I mean, sure Conquering Storm deserves to be a test subject but wouldn't me and Fiona be better test subjects? I mean, Connie doesn't deserve to be super-powered and all but given how loyal we've been to the armada, we deserve to be test subjects. We deserve to be

super powered."

"You have the Chaos Emeralds, you do not need this." said Mecha Tails coldly, "Besides, the test could possibly go wrong and kill you. I do not want to clean up your corpses afterwards."

Scourge frowned at Mecha Tails.

"But you said this juice was ready for testing!" he protested wildly.

"Yes, but that does not mitigate the fact that it could still be lethal." explained Mecha Tails, "We do not know what it'll do when placed inside somebody. That is why we're testing it."

"Well I wanna test it on myself!" barked Scourge, grabbing a syringe and plunging it into the canister, "Come on Mecha Tails, I'm the perfect test subject! I'm choc-full of Chaos Energy! It won't hurt me!"

"Yeah! It didn't kill Blizzard and she's no Chaos adept so why would it harm Scourge?" noted Fiona as Scourge filled the syringe with the Synth-En Chaos liquid.

"It could have a disastrous effect on a Chaos adept since this is meant to be greater Chaos Energy than beyond your wildest imagination." protested Mecha Tails, "It might overload him and make him explode."

"Yeah right, you're just making up crap now!" sighed Scourge, raising the syringe and preparing to put it into his arm, "Let's see how this stuff works!"

Before he could stick the needle into his arm and insert the powerful substance into his bloodstream, Mecha Tails grabbed him and tried to wrestle the syringe away from him. Scourge growled furiously and he wrestled with Mecha Tails, trying to get his arms free so he could inject himself. He was surprised at how strong the Robian fox was. Even Knuckles would find it hard to win any arm-wrestling contests against him! Mecha Tails pulled on Scourge's arms and squeezed on his wrists, trying desperately to make him let go of the syringe. Scourge held on tight, his thumb over the plunger and his fingers holding the syringe as tightly as possible. He tugged on his arms

dragging Mecha Tails to the side as he tried to get free.

"Let go of me you dumb bot!" snarled Scourge, "That's an order!"

"Objection: only Finitevus can order me." retorted Mecha Tails, "Now release the syringe and please cease your unintelligible intentions."

Scourge refused to let go and he yanked on his arms again, pulling Mecha Tails towards him. Mecha Tails dragged Scourge to the side, the hedgehog fighting back but ultimately losing. He cried out as he was knocked against the nearby restraint bed and he stumbled over against Conquering Storm. His hand holding the syringe came down on Conquering Storm's chest and the needle inserted itself into her neck. Scourge accidentally pressed down on the plunger, inserting the green coloured viscous substance into the treacherous ninja's bloodstream. Scourge didn't realize what had happened until he picked himself up and saw that he'd injected Conquering Storm. He quickly yanked the syringe out but too late, he had emptied the entire syringe and the Chaos Energy inside was working its way around Conquering Storm's body. The ninja convulsed in agony, crying out muffled cries of pain as the energy began to swarm around her body. Mecha Tails switched off the laser cuffs, releasing Conquering Storm from the bed and allowing the ninja to throw herself onto the floor. He'd done this for if the test went according to plan, there was no reason for her to be restrained. Conquering Storm, now free, ripped the tape off of her mouth and screamed a bloodcurdling scream of pained agony. Green veins began to appear all over her body as if her whole bloodstream was changing colour. Scourge, Fiona and Mecha Tails watched in surprise, wondering what was going to happen. Then suddenly, Conquering Storm stared at the villains. her eyes completely green and her teeth suddenly bared and looking much sharper than they had been before. Then her body began to increase in size, her muscular build becoming much bigger, broader and stockier in mass. Her feet grew too big for her iron-toed boots, the clawed toes breaking their way through them and tearing them to pieces. Her fingers grew claws and then something grisly began to happen. Some of her bones began to tear their way through her flesh, Her spin grew big and spiky, piercing through the skin and sending oozes of blood trailing down her back. Some of the bones on her arms became visible,

more blood spouting out from the wounds and a massive vein grew just above Conquering Storm's left eye. She hunched over, her hideously spiky spine protruding even further in the process and a blood vessel protruded just under Conquering Storm's over eye. Her teeth grew abnormally large, looking a little too big to fit in her mouth but nonetheless sharp and terrifying. The green veins pulsated with energy, little glows trailing through her body as if she had a bunch of fireflies trapped inside of her. The monstrously deformed Conquering Storm bellowed a thunderous roar that made everything in the room shudder in fear. Scourge, Fiona and Mecha Tails all took a step backwards from the behemoth before them. Conquering Storm advanced on them, trailing blood as she walked from the massive puddle that had formed underneath her feet.

"Uh…w-w-was t-t-that m-meant t-t-to happen?!" shrieked Scourge, his voice sounding comically high-pitched and feminine.

"Negative. The monstrous deformity was not supposed to occur. The formula must have been flawed…" mused Mecha Tails, "Maybe it was too negative after all. How did I overlook that fact?"

"Well let's hope she's still friendly!" squeaked Fiona.

She got the answer to that question, indeed the hard way. Conquering Storm swatted everybody across the room with an oversized, muscular arm that knocked the wind out of Scourge and Fiona. The trio crashed into the wall and just as they got back up, Conquering Storm thundered towards Scourge and seized him with her giant hands. She then opened her mouth and to Scourge's disgust and horror, a mouthed tongue came out from inside her jaws. The tongue looked at Scourge and opened its fanged mouth, letting out a shrilling screech of glee.

"THAT THING HAS A TONGUE WITH A MOUTH AT THE END?!" squealed Scourge in terror. He was so frightened right now that he began to wonder if he'd ended up wetting himself.

The tongue lashed out at him, aiming straight for his neck but just before it could bite Scourge, Mecha Tails flew in and dropkicked the monstrous Conquering Storm in the side of her head. Conquering Storm let out a thunderous roar of pain and she threw Scourge

directly into Mecha Tails. The hedgehog and Robian sprawled on the floor as they crashed down and Conquering Storm stood towering over them, mouth open and streaming with salvia.

"Need…Chaos Energy…" the monster growled in a voice that was as inhuman as it could possibly sound.

Scourge felt even more afraid now. Conquering Storm wanted Chaos Energy! He was full of it what with being corrupted by the Master Emerald a few years ago so he had to get out of her as quick as he could before Conquering Storm could drain him dry. The tongue snaked out of Conquering Storm's huge jaws and it snapped at Scourge like a striking cobra. The fanged mouth missed him by inches as he jumped to his feet.

"YIKES!" he squeaked, "Don't eat me! Eat him! He'll taste better!" he shrieked, pointing at Mecha Tails and then running off as quickly as he could.

He zoomed past the Chaos-craving lynx and out of the lab with Fiona running after him as fast as she could. Conquering Storm watched them running away and she lumbered after them only for Mecha Tails to fly up behind her and kick her in the spine. The beast howled painfully and tried to reach behind her to rub it better. A side effect of the transformation involved a lot of sensitive areas, such as the over-sized, spiky spine that had ripped its way through her skin. Mecha Tails took advantage of this by flying over Conquering Storm and whooshing out of the lab like a speeding plane. He shut the door behind him, knowing that it wouldn't keep Conquering Storm contained for long but it would at least slow her down. He flew after the frantically fleeing Scourge and Fiona and surprisingly enough, managed to catch up to them. As Tails, he could keep up with Sonic thanks to his fast spinning tails so as a Robian, he'd easily catch up with Scourge. The three darted around a corner and they all threw themselves against the wall to catch their breath sans Mecha Tails for he didn't need to breathe. Fiona put a hand on her rapidly thumping chest as she caught her breath.

"We need to…sound the alarm!" she cried, panting heavily."

"Out of the question!" barked Scourge, "Doc Finny will hold us

responsible!"

"But…WE ARE!" protested Fiona wildly, "Well actually, YOU'RE responsible but still!"

"Do you really think I'm gonna own up to this mess?!" cried Scourge, "No way! Mecha Tails, how can we stop that thing?!" he demanded wildly.

"Simple. Remove the Chaos Energy." answered Mecha Tails matter-of-factly, "Though that requires getting back into the lab…"

"And you didn't remove it while you were in there because…?" asked Fiona, raising an eyebrow of suspicion at the Robian Fox.

"It did not occur to me at the time. Just like the formula being too negative didn't occur to me at the time." droned Mecha Tails, "I apologize for this mistake."

"Well if it were up to me, I'd scrap ya for such a stupid blunder…" sighed Scourge, "Well, let's get back into the lab and remove the Chaos Energy!"

"Or we could just kill her and make it look like the test went horribly wrong and that it killed her." said Fiona slyly, "After all, I still have my energy blades." she added with a wink.

"Unacceptable. Deception will not be tolerated." said Mecha Tails firmly, "I will not allow you to cover up your wrong-doings to fool my master into thinking it was a freak accident so you can clear your own guilty consciences."

"Who do you think you are Mecha Tails?! A squealer?!" snapped Scourge, jamming his face into Mecha Tails's, "Don't you dare tell on us you squealer or I'll smash you to pieces!"

"That's right brat-face, if you dare stop me and Scourge then you might end up needing several spare parts." said Fiona threateningly.

"You are threatening me. Unacceptable. The doctor will have your heads for this." warned Mecha Tails.

"Then I guess we'll have to have YOUR head before that happens…" snarled Scourge.

Mecha Tails did not like how Scourge was threatening him so he prepared to defend himself from the inevitable attack Scourge would launch upon him. Then suddenly, a loud tearing sound was heard further up the corridor. It sounded like metal being ripped apart like paper and what followed the ominous sound was a loud clang against a wall. Conquering Storm had broken out of the lab and was now stalking down the corridors. Luckily for the trio, she went the opposite way, away from where they had gone. Scourge, Fiona and Mecha Tails watched as Conquering Storm lumbered away from the lab and down another corridor. Now the coast was clear, they all ran over to the lab as fast as they could go. Scourge could see the ruined doors lying against the wall further up the corridor. It was like they were made of paper rather than metal to the colossal beast the ninja had become. Scourge hoped that Conquering Storm wouldn't tear him apart should they next meet. But just as they reached the lab, somebody stepped out of the lab and stood in front of them all with his arms folded and a sinister glare on his face. It was Dr. Finitevus! He'd arrived back just shortly after Conquering Storm had broken out of the lab and had already seen what a complete mess the lab had been reduced too. There were broken glasses and canisters everywhere, the restraint bed had been slashed and the doors had been completely broken. He'd also noticed the huge puddle of blood on the floor and the bloody footprints that had been left behind by something monstrous. To his relief, the Synthetic Chaos Energy canister was intact but it had been completely emptied. Conquering Storm had guzzled the lot to satisfy her craving for Chaos Energy before breaking out of the lab. Curious to see what had happened, he'd stepped out just in time to see Scourge, Fiona and Mecha Tails rushing towards him. They all screeched to a halt before they could crash into Finitevus. The echidna glared at them suspiciously.

"What's the hurry my disciples?" he asked coldly.

"N-nothing Doctor Creepy-Von-Evil!" exclaimed Scourge innocently, "Nothing at all!"

"Yeah! We um…heard a noise and um, ran over to check what was

going on." lied Fiona, putting on her sweetest expression possible.

"Then I suppose you know why the lab is a complete mess and my Synth-En is completely gone?" asked Finitevus dryly.

"No, we do not know." fibbed Scourge. Unfortunately for him, Finitevus wasn't convinced so he turned to Mecha Tails.

"Mecha Tails, are they telling the truth?" he demanded.

"Negative. Scourge took a dose of Chaos Energy and used it on Conquering Storm." explained Mecha Tails, "But the formula was flawed, something that I somehow didn't see. She has become a Chaos craving monster and is now roaming loose around The Nefarious."

"Oh thanks a lot tattle-tale!" snarled Scourge.

"Scourge, I'll deal with you later." said Finitevus coldly, "Right now, we need to detain Conquering Storm before she tears the entire ship apart!"

"That shouldn't be too hard considering the very bloody clues she's left us…" purred Fiona.

She pointed at the bloody footprints left behind by the monstrous Conquering Storm that led down the corridor and around a corner. Finitevus observed the footprints and quickly calculated where she was going.

"She's heading towards the dorm rooms." he murmured, "I can get us ahead of her. Judging by the footprint pattern, she's moving quite slowly."

"So what are we gonna do then doc boy?" asked Scourge curiously.

"Kill her." said Finitevus darkly, "A failed experiment is a failed experiment and it cannot be allowed to live. That and she is a traitor anyway so she won't be missed."

"Well not by me for starters!" blurted Scourge.

With that said, Finitevus opened up a warp ring and he ran through it with Scourge, Fiona and Mecha Tails following him through closely behind. The warp ring closed up behind them the moment they went through, leaving nothing but a wrecked laboratory behind...

Further up the corridors, Conquering Storm lumbered like a gorilla on all fours as she searched for Chaos Energy. One terrifying side effect of her mutation at the hands of the single dose of Synth-En that she'd been given earlier was that she had a never ending hunger for Chaos Energy. She had consumed the entire canister of Synthetic Chaos Energy in the lab and was still craving for more. Her saliva filled jaws dribbled with hunger as she sniffed the air. She couldn't sense any Chaos Energy where she was now but she could pick up a faint scent on the upper floors. The Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald themselves. They had a rich supply of Chaos Energy just for her to consume and drain dry and their energy signature was very powerful, especially the Master Emerald's. She was only on the middle floor and she could sense the Chaos Energy as if it was directly beside her. She was walking towards the dorm rooms because she was looking for a way to the Chaos Emeralds. She looked around desperately for a way up to the upper floors. A staircase or even an elevator would do nicely. Unlike Blizzard who had gained the knowledge of the Chaos Energy and thus, could use a Chaos Control, Conquering Storm's mind was too monstrous and out there to know how to use a Chaos Control. She was literally a Chaos-powered behemoth who had no idea how to use her powers due to being too stupid. All she knew was that she needed Chaos Energy and a lot of it.

"Sense...Chaos Energy...must...have...Chaos Energy!" growled Conquering Storm in her abnormally, inhuman, monstrous voice.

She stood up on two legs and began to jog heavily down the corridor. But before she could even get past the dorm rooms, a warp ring opened up and out of it jumped Dr. Finitevus, Scourge, Fiona and Mecha Tails. The four stood defensively in front of her and formed a wall to keep her from getting past. Dr. Finitevus's eyes widened at the sight of the beastly ninja lynx before him, unable to believe what he was seeing. Mecha Tails hadn't been kidding on

when he'd told him she'd turned into a monster! Conquering Storm glared at him with hungry eyes and she licked her lips as if imaging how good Finitevus must taste. She could sense the Chaos Energy in his bloodstream, rich and full of darkness. How appetizing!

"My, my...whatever did my formula do to her?" he mused, "All the more reason to put her down."

"Chaos...Energy! You are...full of it...MUST. HAVE. CHAOS ENERGY!" bellowed Conquering Storm savagely.

She opened her mouth and her mouthed tongue shot out towards Finitevus. The echidna quickly activated a warp ring and caused the tongue to re-direct directly behind Conquering Storm herself. The tongue bit onto the monster lynx's exposed spin and she roared furiously in pain. She retracted her tongue and snapped at Finitevus with her enormous jaws. The echidna leaped back to avoid the terrible teeth that craved for him and he threw a warp ring like a Frisbee into Conquering Storm's face. The warp ring hit her sharply but the beast didn't seem effect much by it. She instead just lunged at Finitevus with a beefy, muscular arm and seized him like a rag doll. She slammed Finitevus into the wall as hard as she could, knocking the wind out of the powerful Chaos scientist. Then she opened her mouth and her hideous tongue came out again, ready to bite him and suck him dry of all Chaos Energy. Finitevus squirmed in the grasp of the creature that had hold of him but he couldn't get free. Conquering Storm was much stronger than he was now. The tongue opened its fanged jaws and aimed for Finitevus's neck but just as it was about to bite him, Scourge spin-dashed into Conquering Storm's head and knocked her aside. The mutated lynx released Finitevus and glared at Scourge.

"Hey! You want Chaos Energy? Here's a fresh supply!" yelled Scourge, "Come and get me ugly!"

"Chaos Energy...MUST HAVE IT! SO HUNGRY!" wailed Conquering Storm menacingly.

She lunged at Scourge with her powerful clawed hands but the hedgehog spin-dashed her in the face and made her back off. Dr. Finitevus then sneaked up behind Conquering Storm and kicked her

sharply in the ankles, tripping the lynx up and bringing her down onto her back. The impact left her feeling very much in agony since her back was a sensitive area. She picked herself up and seized both Scourge and Finitevus with her enormous hands. She slammed them together and threw them into the wall. Her tongue extended outwards and aimed for Scourge. The terrified hedgehog moved out of the way and left her tongue to slam down into the floor. Finitevus lunged for Conquering Storm and grabbed the beast's fanged tongue. He observed it for a moment.

"Fascinating...I bet she saps up Chaos Energy with that." he murmured.

He then pulled on the tongue and yanked Conquering Storm over onto her stomach. The beast picked herself up and flicked her tongue, taking Finitevus up off his feet and throwing him into the air. As he crashed down, Conquering Storm came stampeding towards him but Fiona ran in and slashed her arms with her energy blades before she could get him. Unfortunately, Fiona's aim had been a little off so she didn't cut Conquering Storm's hands off, she only slashed them. Conquering Storm bellowed in pain as her arms began to bleed from the cuts inflicted on them by Fiona. She then swatted Fiona and smacked her against the wall. Fiona cried out as her body hit the wall hard but her expression turned from pain to fear as Conquering Storm advanced towards her. The terrified vixen pressed herself against the wall as if hoping she'd somehow be able to phase straight through it. Her heart pounded and her head rained with sweat as she stared danger literally right in the face. Conquering Storm's tongue extended out from her mouth and it lashed towards Fiona. Fiona moved out of the way but the tongue scratched her across the arm with its fangs and tore a bloody gash across it. Fiona screamed loudly and clutched her arm tensely. Conquering Storm then grabbed Fiona and slammed her against the wall. The vixen slumped down onto the floor as Conquering Storm let her go. She winced in pain but her pain was not just from being slammed in the wall. Her arm was throbbing like crazy and she could feel something moving around inside her arm. She ignored it and pushed herself back onto her feet. The monstrous beast that had once been a ninja roared at Fiona and prepared to attack her again. But then Mecha Tails flew in behind Conquering Storm and

the Robian fox viciously kicked the monster in the spine. Conquering Storm roared in pain as her spiked spine was brutally walloped by Mecha Tails's foot. She whirled around and smacked Mecha Tails down onto the floor with her arm. Mecha Tails hit the floor so hard that he left a dent inside of it. But as Conquering Storm's back was turned, Fiona saw the opportunity to plunge her blades into the beast's back. The corridor shuddered as Conquering Storm let out a thunderous bellow of agony. While Fiona had her blades in Conquering Storm's back, Scourge and Finitevus both unleashed a flurry of attacks on her while she was helpless to fight back. Fiona then swung the blades upwards, creating enormous gashes in Conquering Storm's back and sending streams of blood pouring down her spine and onto the floor. The lynx wailed helplessly, falling weak from the loss of blood and also Synthetic Chaos Energy for the energy was mixed in with her blood. Finitevus could see swirls of green building up in the puddle of blood that spread around Conquering Storm's feet. Conquering Storm fell onto her knees, completely in agony and helpless to do anything except shriek agonized wails and bleed to death. Fiona then decided to put Conquering Storm out of her misery by stabbing her again, this time in the heart. The pitiful beast could only gasp as she was impaled, this time fatally. Fiona yanked her blades out of the lynx's chest and the poor Dark Armada traitor collapsed onto the floor, lying in a puddle of her own blood and very much dead. The sight disgusted the leather-clad vixen and she had to look away in disgust. Scourge hugged Fiona and patted her back comfortingly.

"There, there...she's dead now. Well done Fi." he said softly.

"Yes, very well done indeed." muttered Finitevus, "Now you two can clean up the mess while Mecha Tails gives me a full status report."

Scourge and Fiona could only moan despairingly as they stared at the hideous, mutilated corpse that lay before them, soaked in blood and Synth-En. They were not looking forward to cleaning up the mess at all but they got to work, cringing as they stood near the body and prepared to dispose of it...

Later that day, night was beginning to fall and the Dark Armada was

preparing to kick back for the night. The repairs had been going well for the whole day but there was still more to do next morning. Scourge and Fiona, having finally cleaned up the mess that they'd caused and disposed of Conquering Storm's body, were in the meeting room with Finitevus and they were not at all happy at what the evil doctor had to say to them. They had their hands behind their backs and their heads lowered in shame as Finitevus lectured them. Mecha Tails stood beside Finitevus and just watched. If he could show any emotion, he'd likely be smiling smugly at the two.

"Reckless! You two were utterly, utterly reckless!" bellowed Finitevus, "This behaviour is unacceptable! You ignored Mecha Tails's warning and proceeded to test the Synthetic Chaos Energy without my permission, and even worse, you wanted to test it on YOURSELVES! Your carless behaviour has resulted my Synthetic Chaos Energy being completely consumed and the near deaths of all of us! And what's more repulsive is you wanted to cover up your actions and threatened to harm Mecha Tails if he dared to apprise me on what you've done! What do you have to say about this appalling behaviour of yours Scourge and Fiona?!"

"If it's any consolation "sir"...we're deeply sorry." mumbled Fiona, rubbing her bandaged up arm.

"I should hope you are..." growled Finitevus, "You follow my orders and if Mecha Tails is in charge while I'm gone, you take orders from him too. And you will NOT threaten him in the future. You two will spend the night in the prison cell. That should give you two goons plenty of time to think about what you've done!"

"But doc..." protested Scourge.

"SILENCE!" snarled Finitevus, "You will be locked up for tonight and that is final! That'll teach you two to ignore orders and test MY science experiments!"

Scourge and Fiona tensed up angrily but they fought back the urge to attack Finitevus as they knew it was a foolish idea. Instead, they waited for Finitevus to warp them over onto the bottom floor. Finitevus opened up a warp ring but he stood forward and held his hand out at Fiona.

"Wristbands please. So you don't get tempted to cute your way out." he ordered.

Fiona obeyed and she handed Finitevus the blue wristbands, albeit with great reluctance. After doing that, she and Scourge stepped through the warp ring and transported themselves from the meeting room down to the prison cell on the bottom floor. Finitevus closed the warp ring up behind him and he put the warp ring back onto his wrist.

"So Mecha Tails, what do you think caused the formula to be too negative?" he asked, turning to face his faithful companion.

"I am unsure of this matter." mused Mecha Tails, "I swore that it was just right so I'm not sure what went wrong with it."

"I wonder if it just depends on the person using it..." murmured Finitevus, "A too positive formula resulted in Blizzard being powerful and a formula we thought was just right had a bad effect on Conquering Storm. Hmm...maybe the negative Chaos Energy in the formula didn't mix well with her for that is the dominant factor. That and having no Chaos Energy in her body probably resulted in the Dark Chaos Energy being too dominant in her body and thus, was much for her to handle."

"A logical statement." agreed Mecha Tails, "Maybe it wouldn't have the same effect on somebody WITH Chaos Energy like you, Sonic, Shadow, Knuckles or maybe even Shade. Their Chaos Energy would control the Dark Chaos Energy much easier than somebody without Chaos Energy."

"So the formula WAS perfect...we just tested it on the wrong person." muttered Finitevus grimly, "How unfortunate...well next time, I am going to kidnap Sonic, Shadow, Knuckles or Shade and test my new formula on them."

"A good idea indeed." droned Mecha Tails, "Though that makes Cosmo surplus to requirements since testing the formula on her will likely result in what happened to Conquering Storm."

"Not necessarily." noted Finitevus, "Maybe we could test it on her

anyway, and if it results in what happened to the late C. Storm...then Sonic and friends will have a Chaos monster to deal with."

He grinned wickedly over such an idea...

Down on the bottom floor, Scourge and Fiona slumped against the wall, grumbling to themselves. Their plan had been a complete failure. No Chaos Energy to use against Finitevus and now they were locked up in the ship's prison cell for the night like naughty children who had been sent to their rooms by their parents. Scourge looked at Fiona grimly.

"Well that plan didn't work out..." he sighed.

"Complete belly-up, it really was." agreed Fiona, "I'm very sorry that the plan didn't work baby..."

"No Fi, don't be. We were fools to even think it was a good idea." said Scourge sadly, "We shouldn't have thought playing with Finitevus's toys would do us any good. I mean look at what happened to Connie! That could have happened to us!"

"So I pretty much came up with a bad plan." moaned Fiona, "Well don't worry handsome, next plan I come up with will be better."

"It will indeed Fi...it will indeed." said Scourge supportively, "Now how's about we have some...love to pass the time huh?" he added seductively.

"Oh yes Scourge, yes indeed." said Fiona slyly.

She then suddenly grabbed Scourge firmly by the shoulders. Scourge was surprised at this but what disturbed him more as how hard Fiona was grabbing him. It was like she was trying to crush his shoulders. Fiona wasn't normally this strong, something wasn't right."

"Uh Fi...do you really need to grab me like that?" asked Scourge uncomfortably, "You're...grabbing me a bit hard. Babe? Huh?"

Fiona just smiled sweetly at Scourge, completely ignoring his questions. And then the green-furred hedgehog saw the last thing he would ever see in his life. Fiona's eyes were turning green, Chaos green like Conquering Storm's had. They began to glow brightly and Scourge noticed that the bandage around her arm had a faint glow coming from when she'd been scratched earlier. The cut and her eyes were glowing simultaneously. And then suddenly Fiona opened her mouth, which suddenly seemed to have very large, curved incisors, and screeched loudly like an excited vampire ready to sample his supper. Scourge let out a scream that filled the room but Fiona quickly silenced him by tackling him to the floor. There was nobody to hear Scourge's screams and nobody around to save him. He was trapped in a room with a demonic Fiona Fox pinning him down and baring her fangs. The hedgehog had screamed his final screams this very night...

Footnotes:

*** See the final *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius* story *Formulation of the Dark Armada***

Whoa...I mean...WHOA! Who the hell saw that coming?!

So what's going to become of Fiona? Find out next time in* "Operation: Fiona" *...

Dark Armada Part 17: Operation: Fiona

Story 217: Operation: Fiona

The Dark Armada Chapter 17 of 25

Morning dawned, dull and grey. If the sun was indeed up in the sky at all, it couldn't be seen by the vast sea of grey clouds that obscured the blue sky and the bright sun behind them. It seemed an appropriate atmosphere for Megapolis since it was being used as the hiding place for the Dark Armada. The Dark Armada was a sinister group of villains from all over Mobius that all had grudges to settle with the Royal Fighters Service. The group had been formulated by the nefarious Dr. Finitevus, the uncle of Knuckles the Echidna and Mobius's biggest, deadliest, most evil villain ever. Ever since the group had been formed, the Dark Armada had seen to collecting whatever items they could get their hands on and use it to make Synthetic Chaos Energy. The Chaos Energy was a compulsory item in Finitevus's insidious plan, Operation: Enerjak Rising. Finitevus wanted to become Enerjak and he needed a lot of Chaos Energy. Using the Chaos and Master Emeralds as well as any items they had, he began making synthetic doses of Chaos Energy which he would then duplicate and make new Chaos Emeralds out of. Then he would use all the emeralds to become Enerjak and destroy the entire world so it could be redone and start anew, in his own wicked way of course. The armada had scored some victories against the heroes but they had also been dealing with some major setbacks lately. Geoffrey St. John had given his life to cripple *The Nefarious* once again and render it in need of repairs. *The Nefarious* was the Dark Armada's ship and base of operations. Despite being grounded, it served its secondary function perfectly. It was the perfect base for the armada as they waited to get back into the sky again.

But the Dark Armada had recently gone through something pretty disastrous. The Bride of the Conquering Storm had decided to betray Finitevus after her right hand man had informed her that Sonic the Hedgehog and Sally Acorn had asked him about their plan

being involved with Enerjak. Conquering Storm had not liked the idea of Enerjak rising, especially after what he had done to her country while she'd been imprisoned* so she'd attempted to overthrow Dr. Finitevus and take control of the Dark Armada. Her attempted coup d'état had ended in disaster for her. Finitevus had callously disposed of her entire clan by using a warp ring to send them plummeting to their deaths inside of Mount Adabat and Conquering Storm herself had gotten captured and restrained to an experiment bed to be used as a test subject for his precious Synthetic Chaos Energy formula. Scourge the Hedgehog and his girlfriend Fiona Fox had heard of Conquering Storm's attempted rebellion and given how they'd been plotting to do the same thing, they decided to try their hand at overthrowing Dr. Finitevus. They'd planned to steal his Chaos Synth-En and use it on themselves so they could become more powerful than Finitevus and easily vanquish him. But Mecha Tails, a roboticized Tails the Fox, wouldn't let them and a resulting fight over the Chaos Energy had ended up causing Scourge to inject Conquering Storm and give her a dose of the Chaos Synth-En. Being a non-Chaos Adept and the formula being more negative and dark, Conquering Storm had reacted to the formula extremely violently. She'd mutated hideously and become a grotesque abomination that craved Chaos Energy and was ludicrously powerful. Only Fiona stabbing the creature in the back and then stabbing it in the heart had been enough to finish the mutated lynx off and after her body had been disposed of and the mess cleaned up, Scourge and Fiona had been thrown into *The Nefarious* 's prison cell for the night as punishment for their careless behaviour. Their resulting screw-up had left Finitevus needing to make a new batch of Chaos Synth-En. Finitevus was going to look for new items to use today since all he had left was some of the lava they'd mined from Black Acropolis and all that would do is make Dark Chaos Energy, something that the Synthetic Chaos Energy couldn't consist primarily of otherwise it would be too out of control and too monstrous. Finitevus did get one good thing out of yesterday though, he knew that he couldn't test his precious formula on non-Chaos powered beings. For the test to be accurate and to ensure him he could become Enerjak with a large amount of the energy, he needed to test it on an actual Chaos Adept. He was already planning on whom he was going to test it on as he warped himself over to the prison cell and prepared to let Scourge and Fiona

out for the day. They'd be very useful in capturing Sonic, Knuckles, Shadow or Shade to test the artificially made Chaos Energy on for the first three were Chaos Adepts and Shade was full of the stuff after being a co-guardian with Knuckles and living with Imperator Ix, another Chaos Adept her whole childhood. Any one of them would do beautifully for the test but first, he needed to get some new items to make his new batch of Chaos Synth-En. To give Scourge and Fiona a chance to redeem themselves, he supposed it'd be fair to recruit them for his collecting mission today. Finitevus opened up the cell door and he walked inside.

"Good morning Scourge and Fiona. Did you learn your lesson from yesterday?" he asked politely.

What he received was not the kind of response he expected. He received a snarling growl that sounded more animalistic than Mobian. That couldn't be good at all. Finitevus stared straight ahead of him and got the shock of his life. It was very unusual for somebody as sinister and devious as Finitevus to be shocked by something but this was something even he had to admit was pretty shocking. Standing on all four in a corner of the cell was Fiona Fox. But something wasn't right about her. She had oversized fangs, sharp teeth and glowing Chaos-green eyes! She also appeared to have claws growing out of her finger tips and the bandage she had around her arm to cover up the scratch Conquering Storm had given her yesterday was glowing simultaneously with her eyes. She had a wild and feral look on her face that could please even the wildest of jungle men. Finitevus could hardly believe what he was looking at. But what shocked him even more was what else was in the room with Fiona. There lying on the floor, a gaping hole in his neck and a dry puddle of blood underneath his body...was the corpse of Scourge the Hedgehog. He lay on the floor, unmoving and with lifeless eyes staring helplessly up at the ceiling as if hoping that he would ascend to heaven through it. Fiona had sank her teeth into Scourge's neck and drained him dry of all Chaos Energy he had in his body last night but the vixen still had cravings for more. And now, right in front of her, was a fresh supply in the form of Dr. Finitevus. The albino scientist was full from head to toe of Dark Chaos Energy, he'd be a meal for the possessed vixen.

"Chaos Energy...so hungry for more...you've got lots of it...you'll be delicious." Fiona hissed in a voice that sounded like it was made up of a thousand whispers all at once.

Dr. Finitevus leaped backwards like a scared rabbit as Fiona prepared to charge at him. Fiona sprang into action and ran towards him but the echidna quickly ran outside the cell and closed the door. Fiona just ended up crashing into the door as it closed and she began feebly clawing at it in a vain attempt to break it down. Her attempts were futile but the vixen's usually brand of intelligence had been diminished. She was completely mindless and only had one thing on her mind...Chaos Energy and the need to feed herself with it. Finitevus listened to Fiona clawing at the door, his heart pounding. Never in his life had he been so scared before, not even during his ten years of hell in the void. There was a Chaos craving monster locked up in a cell and it was after HIM.

"Let me out! Let me out right now!" bellowed Fiona, **"I'm so hungry! Need Chaos Energy! Please let me out!"**

Finitevus ignored her and instead pressed against his ear.

"Mecha Tails, we have an emergency! Get down here NOW!" barked Finitevus frantically.

"I obey." replied Mecha Tails's usual cold, emotionless voice.

Finitevus nodded and took his fingers away from his ear. He couldn't understand it. How did Fiona get possessed and demonized by the Chaos Synth-En?! She hadn't taken any doses! She shouldn't have a drop of the brew inside her at all! Then Finitevus remembered one big elephant in the room that he thought should have been obvious to him from the start. The cut on Fiona's arm. During the fight yesterday, Fiona had been scratched on the arm by the demonic, mutated Conquering Storm, most notably the fanged tongue that the mutation had given her. The tongue's fangs must have been full of Chaos Energy and once the fang had scratched Fiona, it must have let a drop or two of the Synthetic Chaos Energy seep into her bloodstream! Finitevus remembered seeing the bandage on Fiona's arm glowing when he stared at her earlier. It had been glowing in time with her eyes, the cut must be infected with the artificially made

Chaos Energy and now Fiona had been corrupted by it! What a disaster this was! Because of Conquering Storm, Scourge was now dead and Fiona was a Chaos-craving maniac! Scourge and Fiona were two of his best minions and he'd just lost them both in one day all because of a test that went wrong! Finitevus just shrugged. Being a scientist, you had to be prepared to make sacrifices. He had hoped that he wouldn't lose anymore of his armada after disposing of the Raiju Clan and losing Conquering Storm because Sonic just had to know his plan was about Enerjak. He only had Mecha Tails, Team Diamond, Captain Metal, Raphael the Cyber-Husky, Ravage Bloodfang, Lord Sycorax and his two henchmen Vladek and Romeo, Zira the Ruthless and Cutthroat Jim left now. Still a decent army but nowhere near as good as it had been before. His armada was falling apart and he was determined to make sure that he didn't lost anymore. Fiona was his last member to be lost until the armada outwore their usefulness and he became Enerjak.

A few minutes later, Mecha Tails arrived at the cell and he stood before Finitevus.

"What is the situation master?" asked Mecha Tails in a vapid tone of voice.

"Fiona has been corrupted." explained Finitevus, suddenly much calmer and back to his normal, collected composure, "She is now a Chaos craving monster, not as bad as Conquering Storm but still very much lost to us."

"I see. How did this happen?" asked Mecha Tails.

"I believe the scratch Conquering Storm inflicted on her arm had something to do with that my disciple." muttered Finitevus, "The scratch was glowing beneath her bandage along with her eyes. I shall show you it now."

He then opened up a warp ring but he opened it above Fiona so that she wouldn't be able to go through the warp ring and escape from her cell. The warp ring looked down at Fiona and Mecha Tails peered through it to observe her. He noticed the glowing bandage on Fiona's arm and how crazed and wild she was acting. She was clawing viciously at the door, leaving faint scratches but doing no

other damage to it. The prison cell door was strong enough to withstand a punch from even Mandy the Mouse's steel knuckle-attachments, Fiona had no chance of escaping. Mecha Tails seemed oddly fascinated at what he was looking at as he watched Fiona. He then took his head out of the warp ring and turned to Finitevus.

"An infection caused by Conquering Storm scratching her arm is the only logical explanation to this change in Fiona's behaviour." droned Mecha Tails, "And to think we dismissed it as a mere scratch when we bandaged it up."

"We had no idea on what kind of things the mutated Conquering Storm could do." mused Finitevus grimly, "Now we know...that fanged tongue of hers can infect with merely a scratch. It is fortuitous that we've kept the child contained before she could start spreading an infection around like a zombie apocalypse."

"Indeed master." droned Mecha Tails, "But one thing that obfuscates me is why Fiona has had a less severe mutation than Conquering Storm?"

"Simple, she didn't have a big enough dose." noted Finitevus, "At the most, the poor girl's mind is corrupted and wilder than somebody locked up in an asylum but she has a mild mutation. Her teeth have increased in size, all of them are now sharp and she has claws. Conquering Storm had a syringe-full of Chaos Energy given to her, that was more than enough to turn her into a monster. Fiona...is less of a monster appearance wise, but every bit the monster Conquering Storm was in mind."

"I recommend removing the infection immediately so Fiona will be back to normal." suggested Mecha Tails.

"No, the death of Scourge would traumatize the unfortunate woman." murmured Finitevus, "And given her history from what I've read and heard...she's had enough trauma as it is. Last thing she needs is another trauma to tip the scales of despair. Remove the Chaos Energy and she'll be so devastated that she will be of no use to us."

"But we cannot just leave her infected like this. We need to deal with it." protested Mecha Tails.

"And we shall..." mused Finitevus wickedly, "I'll just send her over to New Mobotropolis. In her mad craze, she could hinder the Royal Fighters for us and given how Sonic can seem to win against any opponent, he'll defeat Fiona and do the dirty work for us."

"She's feral and out of control...Sonic will be forced to put her down like the mad dog she is..." murmured Mecha Tails, "And we will not have to worry about the Synthetic Chaos Energy falling into their hands. They will not dare use it given what it's done to Fiona."

"Indeed not." said Finitevus dryly, "We could get rid of at least a few of Sonic's friends and Sonic will get rid of Fiona for us. And there's no chance she'll kill Sonic or even Shadow in her rampage either so I'll still have a Chaos Adept to test my formula on."

"Agreed." replied Mecha Tails, "So while Fiona's distracting our enemies, we can get the necessary components in order to remake the Synthetic Chaos Energy. And we know how to make the perfect formula now so the next batch will perfect."

"And once it's ready...I'll kidnap Sonic, Shadow, Knuckles or Shade and test it on them." purred Finitevus, "I bet all four of them will survive Fiona at the very least."

"Yes. And also consider the queen Sally Acorn, she has energy blades. She'll cut Fiona to pieces before she harms any of them." noted Mecha Tails.

"The plan is sound and there's no guarantee it'll fail." said Finitevus gleefully, "The heroes will get rid of the garbage for us and we'll have no interruptions. Time to put the plan in action..."

Now he knew how he was going to deal with Fiona, he opened the cell door and opened up a warp ring. The moment the door opened, Fiona pounced straight towards him but the warp ring Finitevus held in front of her stopped her from laying a finger on him. She instead disappeared through the warp ring and found herself warping out of *The Nefarious* and into New Mobotropolis. The moment Fiona was

gone, Finitevus smiled to himself and put the warp ring on his wrist.

"Now the deadweight is off our shoulders, we can do our daily collecting." he purred, "I'm sure the Lost Jungle has many things we can use in our formula."

He opened up a warp ring and he stepped through it with Mecha Tails following him closely behind. The duo warped themselves over to the Lost Jungle and once they'd arrived, the warp ring closed behind them, leaving the bottom floor *The Nefarious* in total silence for the time being. Repair work would continue shortly and put an end to the silence though. And it wouldn't be long until *The Nefarious* was ready for flying again...

Meanwhile in New Mobotropolis, the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were once again gathered together in Amy Rose's hospital room. Amy wasn't in bed this time though, she was down on the floor doing some stretches. She lay on her side and lifted her leg up and down in a slow, gentle rhythm while Mandy the Mouse watched her. Amy had been recovering from her near death at the hands of Captain Metal. Four days had passed since that terrible day. The Royal Fighters had been in a big battle with the Dark Armada and Captain Metal had attempted to dispatch Sonic with a cannon blast. Amy had taken the blow for him and had nearly died as a result. Mariah the Medicine Cat had given Amy a healing potion before she was tragically killed by Mecha Tails shortly afterwards. The potion was healing Amy nicely. Most of her burns were gone and her head looked much better. But she still ached very badly and in order to get Amy back into shape, Mandy had suggested she do some small exercises. They could help the healing potion heal her sooner. Amy winced as she lifted her right leg for what felt like the millionth time but was actually the tenth time, but she forced herself to keep going. After the eleventh lift, Amy stopped lifting her leg and she panted exhaustedly.

"Come on Amy, one more and then it's onto the next leg." said Mandy softly.

"Damn you for torturing me like this..." sniffed Amy, lifting her leg a

twelfth time "Why can't I just lay in bed and let Mariah's potion do its work?"

"You can do that but exercise is good for you." said Mandy sternly, "A healing potion doesn't give you an excuse not to keep fit. Not to mention your muscles will atrophy if you don't use them."

"What are you, a nurse?" snorted Amy.

"I am mildly knowledgeable about medicine and the Mobian body." retorted Mandy, sticking her tongue out at Amy, "Now stop moaning and get exercising." she ordered.

"Says the one who told me off for overly-exercising Sonic after the Devatrons crippled him..." muttered Amy.

"Oh don't start, I'm only making you two 12 leg lifts and that's it!" snapped Mandy, "Hardly an over-exercise. Plus you'll get a break after that so there."

"Let's just hope this is worth it..." sighed Amy as she turned onto her side and began lifting up her left leg, "Once I'm all better again, I'm gonna smash Captain Metal to bits for doing this to me! I'm gonna flatten him like a pancake and smash his remains until there's nothing left!"

"Glad to here somebody other than me really wants Captain Metal dead..." murmured Blaze the Cat grimly, "And I assure you, I'll make him burn for nearly killing you Amy."

"Good to hear. And I'll stomp on his ashes perhaps." said Amy stoically as she lifted up her left leg again.

Sonic the Hedgehog, who was standing at a nearby window, looked over at Amy and he shook his head sadly. Amy had certainly changed after her near-death experience at the hands of Captain Metal. She was a lot more serious and her usual chipper attitude had all but vanished. He hadn't seen Amy smile since she'd woken up from her coma and received a hug from Cream the Rabbit. Cosmo the Seedrian being in Finitevus's captivity might also have effected the pink-furred hedgehog badly too. He could imagine how

afraid Amy was feeling for Cosmo right now and it made him think about how afraid he was feeling for his best friend Tails. Ever since he'd been roboticized by Finitevus at the start of the war with the Dark Armada, Sonic had been afraid for the twin-tailed fox and wanted nothing more than to have him back safe and sound and de-roboticized. Tails would be traumatized by the whole affair though. He'd been aiding Finitevus in his evil plans and he'd murdered Mariah the Medicine Cat. Tails would never be the same kind again once they got him back. Finitevus had single-handedly destroyed his innocence and that made Sonic burn with rage. He wanted Finitevus dead and he would stop at nothing to make sure that Finitevus was dead and the armada was defeated. It amazed Sonic as to how Dr. Eggman had barely effect him personally and mentally with his war on Mobius and desire to conquer it and yet this battle with the Dark Armada had been a physical and mental trauma for him. He supposed it was because Finitevus knew how to strike at him mentally too. He'd done well what with roboticizing his best friend, having some of his worst enemies work for him, blackmailing Cosmo into working for him and causing the death of a good friend of his, Geoffrey St. John. Sonic was surprised that he hadn't just cracked already and gone ballistic. He knew that it wouldn't do him any good though so he composed himself and tried his best to keep his emotions in check. Although Sonic was willing to bet that the straw that would break the camel's back for him would be if Finitevus did any harm to his beloved Sally. Dr. Eggman had roboticized Sonic and made him torture Sally for his own amusement, an event that still traumatized Sonic to this day and he was deathly certain of not letting any harm come to Sally ever again. If Finitevus dared try to harm Sally, Sonic would dig his grave for him and throw him into the coffin personally. He sighed glumly as he stared up at the grey sky above.

"We're gonna stop that armada...and we're gonna get Tails and Cosmo back...and Finitevus will die. That monster doesn't deserve to be spared. He's gonna die and I'm the one who's gonna kill him."

Sonic wasn't entirely pleased that he would be willingly going out of his way to murder Finitevus but he didn't really care anymore. Finitevus did deserve death. He is twice the monster Eggman ever was and had done more damage to him than Eggman could ever

dream of doing. Plus Finitevus ended up causing the end of the world as Silver and Blaze had found out for him so it was for the sake of the entire world and not just himself that Finitevus had to die. He had spared Eggman when he had the chance to kill him and had Finitevus not intervened, Eggman would have destroyed Mobius. So Sonic decided that he wasn't going to pull his punches. Finitevus would die next time they met and he wouldn't hold back. Sally approached him from behind, noticing how grim Sonic looked and she patted his back softly.

"Are you alright?" she asked concernedly.

"Just fine Sal." said Sonic nonchalantly, "Just...taking in what's happened lately and thinking of how my next fight with Finitevus is gonna go. I promise you now, it'll be brutal."

"I'm sure it will after what that monster has done lately." said Sally grimly, "He's done things that have effect many of us in more ways than one and we're still having trouble defeating him. It's no wonder that I'm making an exception to our "No Kill" policy. Finitevus's death will benefit all of us greatly."

"I'll say considering that he's the cause of Mobius's doom this year." muttered Sonic, "We have all the evidence at hand, we know that albino bastard is responsible. Synthetic Chaos Energy, Enerjak dooms the world, looks like Finitevus...it's definitely him who's responsible and to save our world, we need to put him down before he destroys it."

"I agree." said Sally, nodding her head slowly as she slid her hands around Sonic's torso and pulled him closer to her, "And hopefully when this is over, you can be happy again. It's very sad seeing you like this." she said solemnly.

"Sorry about the moping Sal." said Sonic sadly, "But even a guy like me can't help but feel down after what's been going on lately. It's been tough for all of us, some more than others. You can't blame me for being a little down-hearted right?"

"No Sonic, not all." said Sally gently, running her hands softly up and down his torso.

"Thanks. And you know Sally, when this is over, you know how I plan to give Tails the best day of his life to help him get over this nightmare?" Sonic asked, "Well I thought...maybe I could do the same to you. When I'm done with Tails, I'll have a day with just the two of us together and we'll act like carefree lovebirds with not a worry in the world."

The very thought seemed to perk him up a little. He actually smiled slightly at his royal girlfriend. Sally smiled back at him.

"I think that's a wonderful idea and I'd love that." said Sally sweetly.

"I aim to please." said Sonic casually, "And I hope that day happens. I'll make sure that it does happen if I have to."

Sally had to admire Sonic's dedication to wanting to save Mobius. Dedication to such a noble cause was what made Sonic so admirable to her. She rested her head against Sonic's shoulder warmly, making the hedgehog feel very content and much happier. What Sally didn't know was that Sonic's idea of making Sally's day wonderful after the Dark Armada was finished involved something a little more than what he'd said. He remembered how earlier this week, Sally had questioned him on if he had any thoughts about marriage. He considered giving her an engagement ring as a gift, a perfect gift to give to his beloved queen after going through so many days of hell. He imagined Sally would be very ecstatic to see him proposing to her but for now, he could just hope he'd get the chance to pop the question to Sally. But then his mind wondered off onto something else. He glanced out of the window and saw a surprising sight. A warp ring had opened up in the centre of the city and out of it came Fiona Fox, alone this time. But she wasn't acting like Fiona at all. She was down on all fours like a wild animal and Sonic could see that she had glowing green eyes, even from where he was. Sally could sense something was wrong and she looked out of the window to see what had caught Sonic's attention.

"Is that...Fiona?!" she gasped in surprise as she spotted the leather-clad R.F.S. traitor outside in the middle of the city, "What's she doing here?"

"And why is she alone?" asked Sonic curiously, "Surely her beloved

Scourgey would be with her. This doesn't add up in the slightest."

"Well we can go over to her and have a few words with her." said Sally sternly, "You coming Sonic?"

"I sure am." said Sonic brightly, "I have scores to settle with that traitor too. Still sore over the fact she left us for that idiot I'm ashamed to call my brother."

"That's good." said Sally. She turned to the Royal Fighters and said, "Me and Sonic are just gonna take care of something. Stay here and make sure Amy's comfortable. And also maybe see if Blizzard wakes up at all." she added, thinking about the formerly evil Ice Witch who had been given Synthetic Chaos Energy by Finitevus and had passed out for reasons the heroes weren't sure about, We'll call you if we need you."

"OK your majesty." said the Royal Fighters in unison.

Sonic and Sally both left the room to take care of Fiona, leaving the Royal Fighters to take care of Amy and wait for back up. Amy herself was back in her bed and resting from her exercises. As she lay back, she wondered what it was that Sonic and Sally were taking care of. Nevertheless, if it only required those two then it couldn't be too serious she supposed. The Royal Fighters wondered what it was too but they stayed put, waiting to see if they were needed...

In the centre of the city, nervous citizens kept their distance as the Chaos-craving Fiona was prowling around on all fours, looking for her first victim. She glowered at the frightened citizens with her horrible, glowing green eyes and bared her vicious, oversized, sharp teeth at them. She let out a growl that sent many citizens running for their lives. Some even barricaded themselves inside their own homes just to get away from this monster that had magically appeared before them. Fiona sniffed the air, hoping to detect any sign of Chaos Energy anywhere. She was ravenous and was desperate to sink her teeth into a Chaos-powered being right now. She swore she'd go crazy with hunger if she had to wait any long for her supper. Her mouth streamed with saliva as she stared at the

terrified citizens. To her disappointment, none of them had Chaos Energy of any sort in them. She turned her nose up at the citizens and slunk off like a prowling tiger.

"Need…Chaos Energy! So…hungry…need…energy! Need to stave…off…hunger!" she growled viciously.

The citizens were glad to hear she wasn't craving for blood but they began to wonder what the crazed vixen was babbling about. They had little knowledge about the Chaos Emeralds and some hadn't even heard of a Chaos Emerald so any they had to wonder what Fiona was talking about. They watched nervously as Fiona headed towards Castle Acorn. She was sniffing the air again, wondering where she could find any Chaos Energy. But then a rich sent caught her nostrils and turned her away from Castle Acorn. She could smell something delicious. Something…chaotic. She licked her lips delightedly. She could smell Chaos Energy! Fiona scampered off to her right, ignoring Castle Acorn and following the scent of Chaos Energy. The smell took her straight into the paths of Sonic the Hedgehog and Queen Sally Acorn. Fiona didn't recognize them for her intelligence had pretty much been replaced by hunger for Chaos Energy as a result of the infection she'd received from Conquering Storm. But what she did know was that Sonic had been the one she'd smelt out and just staring at him, she could tell that he was swimming in the stuff just like her first meal had done. She dribbled hungrily where as Sonic and Sally just stared at Fiona in wonder.

"OK…what's happened to Fiona then?" asked Sonic curiously, "She's all sharp-teeth and glowing green eyes!"

"I think I can guess…" murmured Sally, deploying her wrist blades and preparing to engage in battle, "I think she might have been used as a test subject for Finitevus's Synthetic Chaos Energy!"

"But why would he test it on Fiona? She's on his side!" protested Sonic, "And why does Fiona look more monstrous than say, Blizzard?"

"The answer to both those questions: I have no idea." said Sally tensely, "But I know one thing, we have to get it out of her. She'll be very dangerous like this."

"I know, I mean look at that that stuff did to Blizzard!" exclaimed Sonic, "Now Fiona's full of it, we need to get it out of her!"

"We'll take her down and then take her into Royal HQ." declared Sally, "Once in there, we'll remove the Chaos Energy and maybe see if we can use it for ourselves."

"I sure hope it won't effect us the same way it's effecting Fiona." muttered Sonic.

Then suddenly, Fiona pounced towards Sonic, snarling like a hungry lion and opening her jaws as wide as she could.

"CHAOS ENERGYYYYYYYYYYY!" she roared excitedly.

Sonic leaped a foot into the air backwards as Fiona sailed towards him. Fiona landed on her hands just in front of Sonic but before she was even aware of what was going to happen next, Sonic swung his leg upwards and walloped Fiona in the face. The vixen's head snapped backwards from the kick but creepily enough, it didn't seem to harm her all that much. Unlike Conquering Storm, Fiona wasn't hideously mutated into a grotesque monster so she was more resilient to pain than she was. Fiona stood up on both legs and simply lowered her head so she was back to staring at Sonic. The hedgehog shivered, wondering how a powerful kick like that had barely effected the treacherous woman.

"OK…that's kinda creepy." he said wearily, "She's hungry for Chaos Energy and a kick like that doesn't seem to hurt her all that much."

"I sure would like to know what the Chaos Energy worked positively on Blizzard but on Fiona, it's made her a Chaos craving vampire." mused Sally, preparing to leap into battle, "Either way, we need to bring her down FAST. If we go on for too long, she'll wear us out and then…you're dead. And maybe me too." she said with a shudder.

"It's not time for this hedgehog's funeral to be hosted yet!" declared Sonic, "Let's take Fiona down!"

Sally sprang into action ahead of Sonic, something that the

hedgehog noticed humorously for it would usually be him running into battle ahead of everyone else. There really was a bit of him in Sally after all, all the more reason why Sally was the woman he fell for. The queen squirrel swung her blades at Fiona, purposefully missing for she didn't want to dissect the vixen, only scare her off and leave her open for an attack. Fiona hastily retreated away as Sally swung her blades at her, the blades nothing more than a blue blur scything through the air with every swing of the squirrel's arms. Fiona growled viciously at Sally and she jumped into the air over the queen in a single leap. Sally was surprised she was even able to jump that high but she supposed she shouldn't be too surprised if Fiona started doing things she wasn't normally capable of doing before now she was full of Chaos Energy. Fiona landed behind Sally and kicked her in the back. The queen cried out in alarm as she was taken off her feet and thrown down onto the grass beneath her. Fiona's kick felt a couple times harder than usual, something that Sally once again assumed was because of the Chaos Synth-En. She began hoping that Fiona didn't have her blades either although it was very likely the vixen didn't even know how to use them anymore. Sally picked herself up and just narrowly managed to react fast enough to avoid a claw attack from Fiona. The demonic woman's claw-tipped fingers just slashed at the air in front of her belly. Sally sheathed her blades for the moment and she slammed her fists down on Fiona's shoulders. The red-furred fox seemed to let out a small yelp of pain although it sounded more like a yelp of being hit rather than of actual pain. Then Sally grabbed Fiona's shoulders and pushed her away vigorously, giving herself enough room for another attack. She spun around on her heel and roundhouse kicked Fiona in the face. The kick was more than enough to whisk Fiona up into the air and send her flying in an arch down onto the ground just metres away. Sonic gave his girlfriend the thumbs up as if to say "Nice kick Sally" without having to say the words themselves. Sally smiled back and stood by as Sonic raised his foot and prepared to stomp on Fiona's head. The Chaos Energy would likely have strengthened her body so he wouldn't kill her. At the most, he'd hopefully knock her out. But as he threw the attack at Fiona, the leather-clad Royal Fighter traitor, leaped up onto all fours and grabbed Sonic's ankle with her right hand. Sonic's face became a picture of horror as Fiona picked him up with one arm, still holding him by the ankle, and then spun him around. She threw Sonic

through the air and sent him crashing straight into Sally. Sally cushioned most of the impact for Sonic as they landed in a heap on the ground. Sonic sat up and rolled off of Sally so that she could get back up. Sonic stayed on all fours but that was so he could tear up clumps of grass and soil. He had a large clump of grass and mounds of soil clenched tightly in both fists and he grinned as an idea formed in his head.

"Now here's a tactic I don't use all that much…" he said to himself.

He turned around just as Fiona came running towards him and he jumped towards her. Fiona pounced but Sonic ruined the attack by kicking her in the face and bringing down onto her side.

Fiona sprang back to her feet, just as Sonic wanted her to do. He then slapped the grass and mud into Fiona's eyes, making the Chaos craving vixen roar in agony. Despite being resilient to some pain, the eyes were still a sensitive area for her. Fiona began rubbing her eyes vigorously to get the grass and soil out of them. While she was doing this, Sonic took the opportunity to spin-dash her directly in the torso and throw her backwards across the arena. Still unable to see properly, Fiona was helpless to fight back as Sonic zoomed up towards her and began to whale furiously on the vixen. He punched her several times in the face, stomach and shoulders and then roundhouse kicked her down onto her right side. Fiona felt every blow thrown at her and it made her growl furiously that she couldn't see properly and fight back. Fiona lay down on the grass, still rubbing her eyes to get the soil out of them as Sonic stuck his elbow out and threw himself down on top of Fiona, elbow-thrusting her in the back and causing the red vixen to scream in pain. But unfortunately, Fiona had managed to get all of the soil out of her eyes so just as Sonic aimed another attack at her, Fiona rolled out of the way and left Sonic to just slam himself down on the ground. Fiona got back up onto her feet and just as Sonic stood back up, she clawed at him. She caught him hard across the face and drew five bloody scratches across his cheek and eye. Sonic let out a bloodcurdling cry as he was scratched, fighting hard to stave off the pain but Fiona didn't spare him the chance to do that. She tackled Sonic down onto the ground and pinned him down with her hands and feet. Sonic fought desperately to get free but he couldn't.

Fiona was much stronger than she was before, strong enough to keep him pinned down. Sonic stared at Fiona, his face full of terror and his heart pounding wildly as Fiona opened her mouth and prepared to bite down at him.

"So much…Chaos Energy…you'll do nicely…you'll satisfy my hunger very nicely!" she hissed excitedly.

"S-S-Sally? Little help? Please?" whimpered Sonic, "I'm about to be Fiona chow!"

Sally ran towards Fiona and Sonic as fast as she could. Fiona was just about to bite down on Sonic's neck but before she could so much as move her head closer to Sonic, Sally deployed her wrist blades and she slashed Fiona across the face. The attack left a very long, terrible cut on Fiona's cheek and it began to stream with blood. Fiona let out a shriek of pain as the cut began to bleed and the air mixing with the blood made the cut sting unbearably. Fiona clawed at Sally but the queen stepped back to avoid the attack and she balanced herself backwards on one leg so she could draw her other leg back and kick Fiona as hard as she could. Fiona was knocked down by the kick and sent sprawling on the ground. Sally advanced towards Fiona and held her blades near the vixen's throat. Fiona was about to move but then her neck lightly touched the sharp, blue energy blades and she squealed in pain she they made contact with her skin. She kept her head down so she wouldn't hurt herself anymore.

"Stay down Fiona lest I be forced to chop off your head, as tempted as I am now." Sally said coldly.

Secretly, she wasn't tempted at all to cut off Fiona's head, she was just saying it in the hope that Fiona would understand what she was saying and believe it. But Fiona wasn't taking in what Sally said. Instead she reached up and grabbed Sally's wrist. She shoved Sally's arm aside and threw her opponent off balance. This gave Fiona the perfect time to get back onto her feet and jumped on top of Sally. The leather-wearing vixen pinned Sally down to the ground and opened her mouth, dripping saliva on Sally's face. The royal rodent's face contorted with disgust as Fiona dribbled on her. Many things disgusted her and having drool on her face was definitely

something she didn't like. She tried to get Fiona off of herself but the vixen refused to budge. She kept Sally pinned down and prepared to bite her in the neck. She had no Chaos Energy but Fiona wasn't hoping to feast on Sally, she would just kill her and stop her from interfering with her attempts to feast on Sonic. But Fiona wouldn't get the chance to kill her enemy for Sonic spin-dashed into her and threw Fiona straight off of Sally. Sally had saved him so he figured he'd return the favour. It was what made them the ideal couple, their tendency to save each other on the battlefield. Fiona hit the ground and winced tensely but she wasn't down for long. She stood back up and just as Sonic zoomed towards her, she jumped into the air and dropkicked him in the face. The blow made Sonic's senses go fuzzy and he stumbled backwards as his head throbbed like mad from the blow. Fiona grinned an evil toothy grin at Sonic and she stepped forward to grab him but Sonic recovered just in time and he swung his head straight into Fiona's forehead. A loud knock was heard as the two heads collided but unfortunately for Sonic, the blow hurt him more than it had hurt Fiona. He gripped his head and screwed his face up as pain flared through as skull. Fiona was merely just rubbing her head better as if the blow hadn't been that hard. Sally rushed in and slugged Fiona in the gut so she could buy Sonic some time to recover. Fiona doubled over, giving Sally the chance to then elbow her on her head. The attack threw Fiona down on the ground and she lay flat against it, grimacing in pain and screwing her face up in reaction to it. Sonic recovered from the head-butt and he saw that Fiona was down on the ground. Seizing his chance, he elbowed Fiona on top of her cranium. The blow was enough. The sharp knock on Fiona's head had been enough to knock the vixen out cold. Now she was knocked out, Sonic and Sally took a moment to rest before they picked up her unconscious body.

"Whew! That was tight!" cried Sonic breathlessly.

"It was true blue, it was indeed." gasped Sally, "We did better than I expected though. I guess Fiona didn't get the kind of dose Blizzard got. Blizzard told us she was able to beat Finitevus in a fight with the dose she had."

"And here, Fiona could barely keep up with both of us." sneered Sonic, "How lucky are we?"

"Indeed…and luckier still, we might be able to use Finitevus's precious Chaos Energy against him." purred Sally slyly, "I didn't think the doctor would be that stupid."

"Maybe he didn't expect us to win." crowed Sonic, "He seriously underestimates us, he really does."

Sally nodded agreeably as the two took Fiona over to Royal HQ to get rid of the Chaos Energy inside her body. It seemed odd for them to be wanting to help a villain like Fiona but Sonic reasoned with himself, deducing in his mind that they were doing it for *their* benefit and not Fiona's. Although he wondered if Fiona would come back to the Royal Fighters as thanks for curing her…

Later in Royal HQ, Fiona was laid down on a medical bed and as she rested, Sally took a syringe from the medicine cabinet and used it to get rid of Fiona's Chaos Synth-En. Given how there wasn't a whole lot inside of her, it didn't take long and the amount Sally ended up getting wasn't even half a syringe full. Yet it had been enough to drive Fiona insane and make her a Chaos-craving, vampiric monster. Sally shuddered just looking at the Synthetic Chaos Energy she now had inside the syringe. She was holding a lethal substance in her hand this very moment. She wanted to dispose of it quickly but at the same time, they had what Finitevus was hoping to make and use as part of his insidious scheme to resurrect Enerjak. They couldn't waste it like that, the potential things they could use the liquid for were too great. Sally instead took the syringe over to a canister and emptied the syringe's contents inside of it. The canister had a tiny green puddle inside that barely even filled more than two millilitres. Maybe if they could find out how to make some more, they could use a more powerful dose against Finitevus. But of course, they would have to find a way to make sure it didn't make them Chaos craving zombies as it had done to Fiona. Her body now empty of Chaos Energy, Fiona's mutations began to reverse back to normal. Her teeth returned to their normal state and her claws retracted back into her fingers. Sonic watched this with amazement and deduced that the Chaos Energy had indeed been responsible for that. He hoped Fiona would be grateful for what they'd done for her because as far as Sonic was concerned, even

this was too nice for her. He turned away from Fiona and peered into the canister that Sally had filled.

"So that's what Finitevus is making…and just that puny amount did that to Fiona." said Sonic grimly, "Ugh…I dread to think what a bigger dose would have done to her." he added, cringing in disgust.

"Me too." muttered Sally, "It makes me feel sick that we have Finitevus's evil brew in our hands right now. But at least we can use it for good. Just do some experimenting on it and we'll have the perfect counter-weapon to use against Finitevus."

"And our Synth-En won't make us zombified-Chaos cravers." declared Sonic cheerfully, "Though I wonder how we'll make sure it won't effect us the way it did Fiona."

"We'll work it out. Nicole can give us a hand with that." said Sally with a wink.

"Yeah, she can analyze the stuff and work out what it's made of and…"

Sonic was interrupted by a sleepy moan coming from Fiona herself. Sonic and Sally turned around and saw the vixen stretching a little and then sitting up, clutching her head tensely. Her eyes opened, now no longer glowing green and back to their normal blue colour. She sounded very sick as she woke up.

"Ugh…I've got the mother of all headaches…" she moaned, "What the heck's up with…"

"Hey Fiona, you're awake!" cried Sonic happily, "Now then, I suppose you can answer us some questions?"

Fiona's head snapped around to her right and she gasped at the sight of Sonic and Sally.

"YOU!" she gasped frantically, "You two knocked me out and took me here! What are you doing to me? Wait…is that Synthetic Chaos Energy?" she asked, pointing at the canister on the counter in front of her.

"It is." said Sally, "You had the stuff inside of you Fiona. Did Finitevus test it on you?"

"Oh no, nothing of the sort." explained Fiona, "Conquering Storm had it tested on her and it turned her into a monster. During the fight, I got scratched on the arm but we just bandaged it up and I seemed to be fine after that. But then…"

Fiona suddenly opened her eyes wide and went very pale and still as something crept into her head. She remembered everything. She remembered how she'd killed Scourge and sapped him dry of all Chaos Energy. Scourge had been completely at her mercy and she remembered how frightened he was when she tackled him down and killed him.

"I…I killed Scourge!" shrieked Fiona, "I KILLED MY OWN BOYFRIEND! I pinned him down and drained him dry of all Chaos Energy through a fatal bite to the neck! I killed the only one who made my life better than it was before!"

She then began to wail loudly into her hands. Her eyes streaming with tears, she pointed sharply at Sonic and Sally, the two staring at her incredulously as if they couldn't believe what they'd just heard..

"You ingrates! How dare you spare me! WHY DIDN'T YOU PUT ME OUT OF MY MISERY?!" she screeched at the top of her voice, "Do you want to torment me with the pain and agony of losing my beloved Scourge thanks to Finitevus's crackpot energy formula?!"

"Fiona, we didn't do that for that reason at all!" snapped Sally, "We were trying to help you! We got the energy out of you for your own good!"

"MY OWN GOOD?!" retorted Fiona, "THERE IS NO GOOD FOR ME ANYMORE! My life's been nothing but garbage since the day I was born and Scourge gave me a reason to carry on living! Now he's gone! I have nothing to live for anymore! You should have just put me out of my misery but you two selfish brats didn't! You spared my life just so I can live in more torment! Well guess what, you won't get that satisfaction! I'm outta here and you'll never see me again! Goodbye Sonic and Sally!"

With that said, the vixen stormed out of the room in tears, slamming the door of the medical room shut behind her and locking it just to stop Sonic and Sally from following her. Sonic and Sally ran up to the door and tried to open it but it was locked tightly shut. Sonic began pounding against it desperately, trying to get it open. He had a nasty vision in his head on what Fiona was going to do and he didn't want her to go the extra mile. As he tried to open the door and run after her, Fiona ran as fast as she could out of Royal HQ. She was a crying mess as she left, her eyes streaming endlessly with tears and her cheeks drenched to the bone. She could feel her heart aching in agony from the heartbreak she was suffering over Scourge's loss. She'd never be able to live with Scourge gone, less so with the fact that she'd killed him. She didn't want to live anymore and as Fiona ran through the city, she was already planning on how she'd put an end to herself.

By the time she'd run through and left New Mobotropolis, Sonic and Sally managed to break open the door with Sonic spin-dashing it down. He quickly ran off down the corridor, hoping to catch up with Fiona.

"Fiona! Wait!" cried Sonic, "Come back! You're just gonna hurt yourself even more!"

But as he ran outside of Royal HQ, he saw that he was too late. Fiona was gone, nowhere to be seen and presumably far beyond his reach. She was already on her way to the GreatForest as Sonic looked for her. Sally caught up to Sonic and put her hands to her mouth in despair.

"Oh the poor, poor girl…she's…she's going to…" she stammered, unable to say the horrible words that she was thinking of in her head.

"And we were too late to stop her…" sighed Sonic, "Oh man…and here I hoped Fiona would come back to us. Instead she's just leaving us and doing goodness knows what! What a rotten end to this day this is…" he moaned.

"I feel for her, I really do…" murmured Sally, "She killed her own boyfriend thanks to being infected by Conquering Storm, a Synth-En

test subject. Now Scourge deserved what he got but if I was in Fiona's shoes, I'd be racked with guilt as well. I'd never forgive myself if I killed you Sonic."

"It's like how Eggman made me torture you when I was Mecha Sonic…" mumbled Sonic, "I nearly killed you and I couldn't stop myself. Fiona's killed Scourge and all because of that Chaos Synth-En thingy corrupting her…she couldn't stop herself. And now she's lost her mind with grief."

"Well I hope she'll find a way to move on and not just…throw it away like we fear she's going to." said Sally, hugging Sonic sadly, "She can be better than this…she shouldn't just waste it like it seems she's going to."

"Indeed Sal…" mused Sonic, hugging Sally back sadly, "Indeed…"

As the two hugged, there was only one thought on their mind. What was going to become of the heartbroken Fiona Fox now…?

Footnotes:

See *The Terror of Enerjak

Something tells me that Fiona's not going to show up again sometime soon...so what will become of her? Well readers...that's your choice to make. It is up to YOU, yes, YOU THE READER, what's going to happen to Fiona.

In the meantime, Heroes of Mobius will be back with* "Operation: Nekronopolis Part 1"** ***and we get to see Finitevus's next sinister plan in action...

Dark Armada Part 18: Operation Nekron 1

Story 218: Operation: Nekronopolis Part 1

The Dark Armada Chapter 18 of 25

The meeting room seemed a whole lot emptier now as Dr. Finitevus and what remained of his Dark Armada sat down around the large round table in the middle of the room. It was a sight that disappointed the albino scientist greatly and he shook his head as he thought about what the armada had lost lately.

The past two days had been a pretty bad time for the Dark Armada. They had been on mostly a winning streak lately thanks to Cosmo the Seedrian providing them information behind the Royal Fighters' backs and keeping them on top of the game. They had managed to kill a couple of Royal Fighters, a nurse and had severely crippled Amy Rose and Knuckles the Echidna. But then came the time where Finitevus had tested his Synthetic Chaos Energy formula on Blizzard the Ice Witch. That one single moment seemed to have changed everything. Blizzard had helped the Royal Fighters to escape, which in turn had led to them stopping *The Nefarious* , the Dark Armada's ship, from destroying New Mobotropolis. Royal Fighter Geoffrey St. John had given his life to destroy the Oblivion Cannon, the ship's strongest weapon and as a bonus, had severely crippled the ship to the point that it couldn't fly anymore. *The Nefarious* was currently being repaired and the repairs were coming close to finishing. But then just the day before, Conquering Storm and her clan had attempted to rebel against Finitevus after one of the ninjas had been taken prisoner and had been asked about Enerjak, which led to Conquering Storm finding out what the plan was really about and giving her a reason to try her little coup d'etat. But her clan had been warped inside of MountAdabat to meet their fiery demise and Conquering Storm herself just ended up getting captured by Finitevus and used as an experiment for Synthetic Chaos Energy. Scourge the Hedgehog had attempted to use the formula on himself but a fight with the roboticized Tails the Fox, Mecha Tails, had ended up getting Conquering Storm injected. The formula's negative

energy was too much for the non-Chaos powered Conquering Storm so she ended up deforming and mutating into a monster of grotesque proportions. She had managed to infect Fiona Fox with Chaos Synth-En just before getting killed by the vixen herself and this in turn had lead to Scourge's sticky demise at Fiona's hands. Finitevus hadn't even bothered to cure Fiona since the emotional trauma of her killing Scourge would undermine her role in the armada and sully her usefulness so yesterday, he just dumped her in New Mobotropolis and let the heroes deal with her. The armada had lost an entire clan of ninjas and three of its strongest members all in the span of two days. A new day had begun now and Finitevus had a feeling that it wasn't going to be as good as he hoped it would be with his forces so greatly diminished. He took note of the empty seats around the meeting table and shook his head sadly. He'd worked so hard gathering up some of Mobius's worst villains ever and now his work had been undermined by recent events. The armada consisted now of just him, Ravage Bloodfang, Raphael the Cyber Husky, Captain Metal, Cutthroat Him, all four members of Team Diamond, Zira the Ruthless, Lord Sycorax and his two henchmen Vladek and Romeo. A decent enough army but completely underwhelming compared to before.

"Good morning my armada…at least what still remains of it." sighed Finitevus.

"Mornin' me heartie." said Captain Metal glumly, "I can't help but notice that our little crew seems to be missing a few ship mates now."

"I'll say Captain Metal." said Ravage dully, "Scourge, Conquering Storm and Fiona are no longer with us."

"I can't say that I'll miss Conquering Storm as that would be a lie." muttered Zira, "I'm glad that the wretch is gone, especially after what she tried to do to Finitevus…but I'm not one to say that her being gone is necessarily a good thing."

"Same goes to Scourge and Fiona." muttered Raphael, "Scourge was pretty much our Sonic and Fiona…she was pretty good, especially since she had them energy blades to match against that stupid Royal Fighter Queen whatever her name was. I actually kinda

liked those two and I'll miss them that's for sure." he added, looking genuinely sad as he said that.

"Oh get over it Raphael, Scourge and Fiona weren't all that great." sniffed Sycorax conceitedly, "Why mourn for those pathetic goons when you have somebody who's actually a great villain? Like me!" he added smugly.

"Oh can it you egotistical whack bag!" snarled Lennox Meers the Meerkat, "What have YOU done for us lately huh?! You haven't done a single useful thing since this armada formulated!"

"Yeah! Whereas Scourge and Fiona have done stuff for us already!" added Owen Pounder the Rabbit, "Scourge turned super and tried to kill the Royal Fighters and he and Fiona did a good job in making sure that nobody got their hands on Mecha Tails in Holoska! You on the other hand, haven't done ANYTHING worth crowing about!"

"Agreed. And if I recall, last time all of us had a battle, you got your tail kicked by your own son." growled Alistair Drakken the Bat sinisterly, "And you claim your "strength-enhancing" arm gauntlets make you unbeatable. Well they're not doing a good job are they?"

"You can all be quiet!" snarled Sycorax angrily, "The only reason I haven't done anything really important yet is because our idiot leader fails to realize my brilliance and hasn't bothered to give me an imperative task yet!"

"Your "idiot leader" hasn't done anything of the sort because he knows that you're nothing like what you pride yourself on." said Finitevus coldly, "Sycorax, your arrogance is why I never give you important tasks like what actually competent people such as Scourge and Fiona have been given before. You're so egotistical that it's just pathetic. I'm actually beginning to question recruiting you into my armada."

Sycorax looked physically hurt to hear Finitevus say that to him. His words had felt like a knife to the back. Vladek and Romeo looked worried as Sycorax stood up in his chair and bared his teeth at Finitevus.

"You DARE to suggest that the Great Lord Sycorax is PATHETIC?!" he bellowed angrily.

"Yes I do." said Finitevus coldly, "And I am not suggesting, I am stating a FACT."

"I am not pathetic!" yelled Sycorax angrily, "I once had an entire army of reptiles that destroyed political landmarks and wiped out governments! I was able to take on Vector and his puny team by myself! I even fought and beat Bunnie Rabbot unaided too*!"

"Yes and that's only because you wear those strength-enhancing arm gauntlets." noted Finitevus, "And even then, they do not appear to be very effective anymore for you seem to get beaten in a fight easier nowadays."

"I…um…uh…the heroes are just…better than before." stammered Sycorax feebly, "But uh…I came up with a brilliant plan that almost saw Queen Sally assassinated!**"

"And you were foiled by a mere child." snorted Finitevus, "Hardly anything to be proud of."

"Said child was a spy!" protested Sycorax furiously.

"That is not an excuse." snapped Finitevus, "Anybody who's plans are foiled by a mere child has nothing to be proud of. Sora is indeed a competent spy but she is still a child. She wasn't even a teenager at the time she foiled your stratagem a couple of years ago. Face it Sycorax, you have nothing to be proud of. That is why you're merely just a drone in the Dark Armada and not one worthy of being considered on the same level as Conquering Storm, Scourge OR Fiona."

Sycorax's jaw dropped in shock. Finitevus was actually saying that he was just a drone in the armada and he wasn't worthy of being considered to be on the same level as some of the other members?! The reptilian rebel began to feel very insulted and hurt to hear Finitevus saying those nasty things about him. Sycorax was about to lose his temper and attack Finitevus but then the crocodile began to think for a moment. Finitevus did have some legitimate points. He

didn't really have anything to be proud of did he? His schemes had been foiled every time he had met the Royal Fighters. And he was getting weaker, that much was certain. The heroes had been getting stronger while he'd been spending a lot of his time in prison and even when out of prison, the heroes would still have been training while he was pretty much catching up. Plus his strength-enhancing arm gauntlets were considerably out of date. They weren't making him as strong as they used to. Sycorax finally realized the cold hard truth. He was pathetic and he had no right to be so prideful. Vladek and Romeo appeared to feel sorry for Sycorax so they patted him on the shoulders softly.

"Don't worry boss, we still think you're a great leader and a great fighter." said Vladek.

"We don't think you're pathetic." said Romeo.

Sycorax ignored them and instead just talked to Finitevus. His expression had changed. He didn't look as confident and smug as he did moments ago, he instead looked desperate. Finitevus had clearly struck a nerve inside the crocodile.

"OK, maybe I am pathetic BUT I can prove that I'm not!" protested Sycorax, "Please Finitevus, give me a chance to prove myself worthy of being part of this armada!" he pleaded feebly, earning mocking smirks from everybody around the table.

"If you really want to prove yourself to my cause then you and your two henchmen can go over to Nekronopolis and cause a ruckus in the Golden Hive Colony. Maybe endanger the king and queen's lives if you want." ordered Finitevus, "Your hatred of politics gives you every reason to accept this task. Your primary objective is to do enough damage so that the Royal Fighters will have no choice but to come and save the bees. You are the bait that's going to lead those fools into my trap."

"Oh…th-thank you!" gasped Sycorax, his confidence suddenly returning to him as quickly as it had gone, "I won't fail you Finitevus! I'll do this armada proud! I'll carry the task out as expected!"

"You had better otherwise you'll be sharing a coffin with the

treacherous Conquering Storm." growled Finitevus menacingly, "Prepare yourselves for the mission while I finish discussing with the others about other affairs."

"Yes sir! Thank you sir!" cried Sycorax excitedly.

He, Vladek and Romeo leaped up out of their seats and ran out of the room to get themselves prepared for their mission. The armada watched them leave, not looking very impressed at all with the three reptiles and their task. Finitevus felt all eyes in the room being focused on him as the armada members turned their heads back towards him.

"I dunno Finitevus, you think Lord Sycorax will pull that off?" asked Roxy the Raccoon concernedly.

She looked a little worse than she had done a few days ago. The bruises under her eyes were even uglier and more noticeable than before and the hickeys on her throat were so large, they nearly painted her entire neck an ugly, reddish, purple colour. Her groin was also hurting so much that Roxy looked uncomfortable just sitting in her seat. She also looked so tired that she would fall asleep any moment now. Lennox had been getting rougher and rougher with her as time went on and the raccoon was getting sick of it. How she longed to get away from the perverted meerkat and back to the Royal Fighters! Finitevus looked at Roxy with his hands together, all five fingers fully extended and touching each other at the tips.

"Lord Sycorax will not actually succeed in his mission, because his mission is really to give the Royal Fighters a reason to come into our parlour." explained Finitevus, "It'll be a bonus if he does actually succeed in the "task" I've given him though."

"So Sycorax is the bait that leads the mouse towards the trap?" asked Ravage, "Sounds good but…what is the trap?"

"Simple. The Nefarious will be overseeing Lord Sycorax's mission and when the Royal Fighters come…I'll snatch them all up onto the ship." explained Finitevus, "And since Sonic will definitely be one of them, that'll be just what I need."

"And when you grab Sonic…you can kill him and get rid of the Royal Fighters' best member!" cackled Raphael.

"Wrong, I'm going to test my Synthetic Chaos Energy formula on him." said Finitevus matter-of-factly, "After making a new dose just yesterday night, I'm DYING to try it on Sonic, especially since Mecha Tails here reckons that the formula will have the desired effect if I use it on a Chaos-powered Mobian…like Sonic himself."

Mecha Tails just stood by, saying nothing at all.

"Yaaargh…that be an interesting plan indeed." said Captain Metal approvingly, "Ye know, I wonder what would have happened if I had successfully tested it on Blaze tharr other day?"

"Maybe if she comes to stop Lord Sycorax, we can try it on her." suggested Cutthroat Jim casually, "That crazy kitty deserves it what with thinkin' our plan is about some demon named Enerjak…"

"Yes, the Royal Fighters are quite insane in the brain I'm afraid." sighed Finitevus, almost sounding like he was pitying his sworn enemies despite hating them so much, "If they rave about an "Enerjak" at all, do not take them seriously. They're demented. Sadly, Conquering Storm didn't see that the Royal Fighters are mad and actually believed their ravings…which led to her unfortunate passing."

"Such a fool…I wouldn't have believed those fools if I were in that iron-toed wretch's shoes…" growled Zira furiously, her hate for Conquering Storm increasing even more upon hearing that.

"I know. Our plan is about creating hordes of Chaos Emeralds to give us enough power to rule the whole world…and maybe the multi-verse too." explained Finitevus, "The heroes only think it's about "Enerjak" because they want to turn you all against me, as they did to Conquering Storm. Our plan has nothing to do with him."

"I'm glad to hear it." said Zira, her tone much softer as she spoke, "I've heard terrible things about this "Enerjak" creature. He corrupted my country and drove my sworn enemy, Princess Matilda, insane!*** I was in my cell when I heard the guards fretting about it and it

disgusted me. Black magic is NOT acceptable in my country!"

"Indeed not my dear, which is why Enerjak is not part of our plan." lied Finitevus, "I'd never dishonour all of you like this by trying to resurrect a Chaos Demigod who wishes to destroy the world. We merely want to save it from the corrupted mess that it is, not destroy it."

"You bet." said Ravage grimly, "I can't get revenge on the country that scarred me for life if the world's destroyed can I?"

"Nor can I have my Cyborg paradise!" cried Raphael.

"Indeed." purred Finitevus, pleased that his lies had gotten the armada to support him and believe what he was saying.

"Though one has to wonder why you need to test the Synthetic Chaos Energy on people?" asked Roxy innocently. She was the only one in the room was beginning to question Finitevus's testimonies. She wasn't entirely sure if he was telling the truth or not. Finitevus looked at Roxy and answered her question.

"Simple. We need to know if our Synthetic Chaos Emeralds will work as well as an ordinary Chaos Emerald." he answered as if Roxy should have known that, "We don't want anything disastrous to happen now do we? After all…just look at what my formula did to Conquering Storm."

He addressed the fact in a tone that suggested he wanted the armada to pity the treacherous lynx even though she had just blatantly tried to overthrow him for believing in something delusional as far as the other members were concerned. Rather the armada just seemed to see the point in testing the formula on somebody before they began making duplicate Chaos Emeralds for their plan. If the plan was going to work as intended then they needed to know that the formula was safe to use. Roxy nodded slowly, still not sure if she was utterly convinced if Finitevus was telling the truth or if he was hiding something from the armada.

"Thank you for answering me doc." she said slowly.

"You're welcome." said Finitevus, "Now get ready for launch, we'll be taking off shortly."

"Uh…why?" asked Owen unsurely, "I mean, the ship's not fully repaired yet is it?"

"There's only superficial damages left to repair, the ship can fly just fine." Finitevus insisted, "Any repairs that still need doing can be done in the air and we only need Captain Metal for that. He can finish off the remaining repairs while we're in the air."

"I can do that for ye captain." said Captain Metal happily, "After all, I do all the other repairs when ye landlubbers are sleeping at night so I'm kinda used to working alone."

"Very good." said Finitevus, "Prepare yourselves everybody, we're going to Nekronopolis."

The meeting now concluded, the Dark Armada got up out of their seats and prepared to put their latest plot into action…

Meanwhile in New Mobotropolis, the New Mobotropolis Hospital would soon be short of a patient. Blizzard the Ice Witch, former enemy of the Royal Fighters and the first test subject for Finitevus's evil Chaos Synth-En formula, was still unconscious and resting peacefully in her bed. She'd fallen unconscious after the Chaos Energy began to seep its way into her brain and thus, cause a massive migraine that had been enough to knock her out. She'd been out for a few days but there was a sinister reason as to why that was. The Chaos Energy hadn't just seeped into her brain. It had fully corrupted her brain. The formula hadn't been too positive as Finitevus had thought. The negative side of the Chaos Energy had just taken longer to kick in than it should have done. The positive side and the negative side were nearly evenly balanced, the negative side just being stronger by 10%. Not enough to make Blizzard into a monster but enough to turn her evil now it was kicking in. The positive side of the formula had put up a good fight though and so had the ghosts in Blizzard's head. They had staved off the negative side for most of Blizzard's coma but as the Ice Witch was

beginning to come to, moaning sleepily and wincing as her headache eased, she began to think more evil thoughts than before. Her forgone desire for vengeance against Sally and the Kingdom of Acorn was coming back to her and it was getting hard for her to ignore the thoughts. Even Iceberg and her children were beginning to weaken from their constant struggles to keep Blizzard from turning bad. Then suddenly, Blizzard's eyes snapped open and she sat up in her bed. Her eyes were still Chaos green and glowing brightly, the room she was in now bathed in a greenish tint. One thought was on her mind right now.

"Haaaaaargh…must join Finitevus…get revenge on those who wronged me…must manipulate Royal Fighters…into helping me get to him!"

Over in Royal HQ, Sally Acorn was sitting at a desk studying the tiny dose of Synthetic Chaos Energy that she and her boyfriend Sonic the Hedgehog had managed to get from an infected Fiona Fox just yesterday. A scratch on the arm from a Chaos-powered, deformed and mutated Conquering Storm was all it took to infect Fiona and Finitevus, thinking she wouldn't be of any use to his armada anymore, just casually dumped her in New Mobotropolis and expected her to shorten some of the Royal Fighter's numbers at the most. Instead, only Sonic and Sally were needed to beat her and after knocking her out, they had extracted the Chaos Synth-En from Fiona's body and now Sally was studying it. Sonic on the other hand was out looking for Fiona. Fiona had left Royal HQ with a very suicidal mindset on her and Sonic was hoping that Fiona hadn't gone ahead with the dark deed. Sally didn't have the poor vixen on her mind at the moment though, she was focused squarely on the Chaos Synth-En. She had Nicole's handheld computer in her hand and she slowly ran her up and down the canister so the lynx could run a diagnostic test on the evil green liquid inside. It still amazed Sally that such a tiny amount of Chaos Synth-En could actually corrupt Fiona so badly and make her so crazy and monstrous. She still considered herself lucky she and Sonic had made it out of the fight alive. And now they had a bit of Finitevus's Chaos Synth-En, the one thing that was key in his plot to becoming Enerjak. It made

Sally feel cautiously excited about how they could use this against Finitevus just like how he'd tested the formula on Blizzard the Ice Witch only for Blizzard to just turn on the echidna and beat him into a pulp. If they used it on themselves, they could become stronger than Finitevus could ever imagine and the Dark Armada would never win now!

Nicole finished scanning the canister, the whole process having taken about a couple of minutes, and her holographic avatar appeared beside Sally. Even though she wasn't organic anymore, whenever her avatar appeared, Sally always felt like she still had her best friend with her. Sally put Nicole's handheld computer down on the counter and she turned to face her formerly Mobian friend.

"Well Nicole?" she asked politely, "What have you found out?"

"Scanning the viscous substance…it truly is a remarkable piece of science." murmured Nicole thoughtfully, "It's got Chaos Energy in it definitely…but it's a mixture of positive AND negative Chaos Energy. The Dark Chaos Energy is the dominant factor in the substance, presumably because of the fact Finitevus wants to resurrect Enerjak or even become Enerjak himself."

"The Dark Chaos Energy in the formula must have been what corrupted Fiona…" mused Sally, putting a hand to her lips in thought, "Is that possible?"

"Definitely." said Nicole matter-of-factly, "Oh definitely. Dark Chaos Energy is a very dangerous substance from what I've read in my studies of Chaos Energy and also hearing from Knuckles himself what Dark Chaos Energy can do. He told me once about the fight for AngelIsland with Imperator Ix. His clan had corrupted the Master Emerald with Dark Chaos Energy and when Ix used it, he became an unstoppable powerhouse."

"But Ix didn't become a Chaos-craving vampire monster did he?" asked Sally.

"No. I asked Knuckles about that last night and he said Ix was completely normal…just very powerful." explained Nicole.

"Then why did it have a monstrous effect on Fiona? And supposedly Conquering Storm too according to what Fiona told me and Sonic?" Sally asked, extremely curious now on how the formula worked and why it seemed to work in certain ways on certain people.

"This is an estimate but I THINK Ix was OK because he was already Chaos powered." explained Nicole, "Ix was full of the stuff so the Chaos Energy inside him would coalesce flawlessly with the Dark Chaos Energy and keep him stable. He was able to control the Dark Chaos Energy."

"And Fiona and C. Storm couldn't because they aren't Chaos Adepts…" murmured Sally, "But why is Blizzard not effected then?"

"I scanned her after she'd been put to bed and if I'm to guess… maybe the dose Blizzard received was too positive." suggested Nicole, "She's Chaos-Powered but isn't a Chaos craving monster because that particular dose was a positive Chaos Energy dominated formula. The only reason it caused her to faint a few days ago was because she probably couldn't control the power and…she suffered a burnout."

"And she still hasn't come to yet." said Sally sadly, shaking her head, "I do hope the stuff isn't killing her."

"Maybe we should run a test on her and see if the Chaos Energy is what's keeping her in this coma she's in." suggested Nicole.

"We'll do that later." declared Sally, "Now then, how would we make more of this Synth-En stuff?" she asked curiously.

"According to Knuckles, mix anything with Chaos Energy and it'll become Chaos Energy." explained Nicole, "How it works, I don't know. Chaos is a very strange substance. If we get something, crush it to pieces and mix it up with the dose we currently have then we'll make some more."

"But how can we make it more positive?" asked Sally, "So…you know, it doesn't make us Chaos Zombies?"

"A power ring from the Lake of Rings would be easily add some

positive energy to the formula. Those rings are practically *made* of positive energy." suggested Nicole, "Need we forget how Tails used one to cure Sonic after he'd been corrupted by Marik's Energy Diamond?"

Sally nodded agreeably. She'd heard all about that terrible event a day after it had happened. Sonic had told her the whole story himself.

"Well luckily for us, we know when a power ring comes out of that lake. Every three o' clock in the afternoon." said Sally brightly, "We could go down there and get a ring this afternoon. It's only got six hours left before it shows up."

Nicole smiled and nodded her head agreeably. It seemed they knew how to make Finitevus's evil formula more like a heroic formula and they knew how to make some more of it so they could use it against Finitevus himself. Sally could already imagine Finitevus's face when he saw them using his precious Chaos Synth-En against him. What a priceless expression he would emote! And it would serve him right for literally giving them the Chaos Energy itself by just dumping Fiona in New Mobotropolis like this! Finitevus had quite single-handedly signalled his own doom. Then suddenly, Sally and Nicole got a little surprise. The lab door opened up and in walked Sonic the Hedgehog. He walked in, looking very grim-faced and gloomy as he did so. Sally read the signs immediately and she ran over to her lover instantly.

"Oh Sonic, what's wrong dear?" she asked worriedly.

"I couldn't find Fiona anywhere…" muttered Sonic, "I looked in as many places as possible and I can't find her. Wherever she's gone… she really doesn't want to be found."

"Oh dear…" said Sally sadly, "I know it's weird for me to show sympathy for Fiona but I really do hope that wherever she is…she's OK."

"True she stabbed us in the back and acts like we're at fault for what her life's become and she actually ran off with my stupid brother… but it would have been nice to have her come back to the team, all

reformed and good again." Sonic sighed disappointedly, "But she's run off and given how suicidal she sounded…I bet she's gone and killed herself." he added, cringing horribly at such a thought.

"She was very distraught over the fact she killed Scourge." said Sally sadly, "Speaking of Scourge, he was your brother so how do you feel about his death?"

"I feel nothing. Scourge was never my brother." Sonic spat bitterly, his face cold, angered and sour as he thought about his green-furred nemesis "I have no feelings towards the asshole. All he ever did was compete with me for our parent's affections and try to kill me on several occasions. His death means nothing to me. I'm kinda glad Fiona did the job for us, he deserved such a karmic death. Although Scourge's death has probably ended up causing Fiona to take her own life…" he added grimly as if blaming Fiona's likely fate entirely on Scourge.

"So as good as it is Scourge is dead, at the same time it's done something bad…that is if Fiona DID kill herself." murmured Sally solemnly, "I guess we'll never know what happened to her."

"No, probably not." sighed Sonic sadly, "Such a pity, she could have been useful to us."

"Maybe. But moving onto other matters Sonic, me and Sally have been studying the Chaos Energy that we extracted from Fiona and we know how to make more of it, as well as make it safer to use." Nicole announced quickly as if wanting to change the subject for the sake of a more cheerful mood.

"Really?" asked Sonic, still grim-faced but feeling a bit less gloomy inside.

"Indeed." said Nicole sweetly, "The…"

She was suddenly interrupted by the main computer monitor of Royal HQ's lab flashing into life and displaying a rectangular box on the screen saying "Incoming Message". Sonic became more grim upon seeing this. If they had an incoming message, it meant one thing…the Dark Armada was causing trouble again. The trio turned

their attention to the screen and Sally pressed a button on the control panel to answer the call.

"Hello, this is Queen Sally Acorn of the Mobotropolis Royal Fighters." Sally answered, speaking directly into the intercom, "Who is this and how may we help?"

"Goodness gracious! Your Majesty! Thank goodness we reached you!" cried a voice that Sonic was unfamiliar with on the other side of the speaker, "This is King Stinger of the Golden Hive Colony! I've got three crazy reptiles attacking my colony! They're after me and my darling Queen Bessie! Please help us! QUICKLY!"

"We will be right there You Majesty." said Sally, "Hold on for us."

She then switched off the communicator and turned to Sonic and Nicole.

"The Golden Hive Colony's in trouble. The king says three "crazy reptiles" are attacking it." explained Sally.

"Lemme guess, is it Lord Egotist and his two henchmen Vladek and Romeo?" snorted Sonic rudely, "And here I thought it'd be something a bit more serious than those clowns."

"Need I remind you Sonic that they nearly assassinated me once and it was only because of Sora Prower that I wasn't killed?!****" snapped Sally angrily, livid to hear Sonic being so uncaring about the situation at hand, "You may not take Sycorax seriously but I do and remember, he's in the Dark Armada! That makes him a bigger threat since we know who he's got as back-up!"

"OK…I'm sorry Sal." said Sonic, feeling guilty over the fact he'd overlooked that detail that he should never overlook, considering that had Sycorax succeeded in his plan back when it happened, Sally wouldn't be here right now and he'd never have fallen in love with her.

"I hope you are." said Sally coldly, "Now then, me and you can't go alone. If Sycorax is attacking the Golden Hive Colony, he's bound to have the armada right behind him. We'll need extra hands to help us

in this fight."

"I recommend bringing Team Chaotix." suggested Sonic, "They all hate Sycorax after all. If the armada's with him then Bunnie might want a few words with Finitevus after what happened to the late Geoffrey St. John…" he added, taking a moment to pray for his deceased friend before carrying on, "And also, it never hurts to have Shadow and Rouge with us too. Especially since Rouge has scores to settle with Team Diamond."

"And if Blizzard's awake, we can take her too." suggested Sally, "Now then, I have a pretty cunning plan in mind. Team Chaotix will deal with Sycorax and his trio while we sneak aboard The Nefarious. Once we're onboard, I'll use Nicole to get our way around the ship. We'll find where Cosmo's being held and get her out and then after that, I'll use Nicole to see if we can access the ship's data banks. Hopefully…we'll find the plans for Finitevus's de-roboticizer rifle that he used on Bunnie to de-roboticize her."

"Ah, I see what you're planning that for!" cried Sonic happily, "We could build that thing for ourselves and use it to de-roboticize Tails! Sally, you're a genius!"

He then kissed his beautiful girlfriend on the lips delightedly, earning a giggle of pleasure from the queen and an awed expression from Nicole.

"Thanks true blue." said Sally brightly, "We won't be able to save Tails until we build the rifle but once it's built, we can just go aboard The Nefarious and use it on him."

"I hope my buddy won't be too horribly scarred by the whole thing…" said Sonic concernedly, "So let's do it to it!"

Now they had a plan formulated, Sonic and Sally (who picked up Nicole's handheld computer and put it into her pocket) left Royal HQ while Nicole de-materialized out of the lab and transported herself over to the New Mobotropolis Hospital where all the other Royal Fighters were gathered around. They were seeing the slowly recovering Amy and Knuckles again and just as Nicole materialized into the room, a swirl of pixels spinning around into a tornado that

formed into her familiar shape, Amy was doing her exercises again. She was now moving onto sit-ups and seemed to be struggling to do them as well as she could be doing. Everybody stared at Nicole as she appeared before them.

"Hello everyone." she said politely "Now listen here, Sonic and Sally are going to Nekronopolis to deal with Lord Sycorax and his henchmen and possibly the Dark Armada too. They wish for Team Chaotix, Bunnie, Shadow and Rouge to come and join them."

"Understood, we'll meet up with them immediately." said Shadow in his usual authoritative tone of voice.

"Ah'm glad they're choosin' me ta come with them." said Bunnie Rabboh grimly, "Ah owe that ugly armada much for causin' the death of mah Geoffrey…" she added, her face contorting with rage.

"If Lord Sycorax is involved, I'm definitely coming!" declared Vector the Crocodile, "Come on boys! We're goin ta Nekronopolis!"

"Hold on a second, is Blizzard awake yet?" asked Nicole curiously.

"I am now." came a husky voice that startled Nicole.

She turned to one side and saw that standing just outside of Amy's room was Blizzard the Ice Witch herself! She'd finally woken up from the coma she'd been placed in after receiving a terrible headache from the Chaos Energy and she looked like she was ready for a battle. Her glowing green eyes were as rich and luminous as before, suggesting she hadn't lost one iota of power since being rendered unconscious. Nicole was surprised and relieved to see Blizzard standing there, ready for battle and fully awake now.

"Well, that's fortuitous." said Nicole brightly, "Listen Blizzard, Sonic and Sally are taking a squadron to infiltrate The Nefarious and deal with some attacks in Nekronopolis. You're to use a Chaos Control to get Team Chaotix to Nekronopolis and then warp Sonic, Sally and their team aboard The Nefarious. Do you…feel well enough to use a Chaos Control again?"

"I feel like I could use A THOUSAND Chaos Controls and not fall

unconscious again!" cried Blizzard excitedly, "Let's go and destroy that accursed armada!"

Nicole beamed delightedly as Blizzard prepared to do her given tasks. The Dark Armada was in for a big surprise now Blizzard was awake and still able to use a Chaos Control for the Royal Fighters…

Over in Nekronopolis, Lord Sycorax, Vladek and Romeo were storming the Golden Hive Colony and they were taking the whole colony by storm. The panicked bees were flying around in a frenzy, not really sure which way they were going and which way was the best way to go. The Dark Armada had attacked the colony before, that time being so they could steal the colony's honey and make Synthetic Chaos Energy out of it. The entire group had gone at the time but now it was just Lord Sycorax, Vladek and Romeo. The three reptiles were all armed with heavy duty laser cannons and they were blasting at any building they could aim their guns at. They had already destroyed some of the honey factories and even the GoldenHivePalace with their weapons. Some of the Royal Guards had tried to fight off the reptiles but Sycorax's strength enhancing arm gauntlets made him far too much of a match for them. He fended them all off easily and began shooting at them to make them back off and fly away. Now they stood before a terrified King Stinger and Queen Bessie, their guns raised and ready to blast them to smithereens. Stinger and Bessie clutched each other tightly, shivering wildly and saying their prayers in their thoughts. They were backed firmly against the wall of a nearby building with nowhere to run or fly. Sycorax grinned happily. This was his idea of playtime, a good chunky weapon to shoot things with and a kingdom to destroy given his unhealthy hatred of politics. He was especially delighted that he had the king and queen at his mercy.

"How I love destroying kingdoms…" he purred smoothly, "And how delightful that I've cornered the king and queen of the Golden Hive Colony. I always did hate kings and queens the most, they're the bossiest, most tyrannical of all political figures!"

"Please vile beast, spare us!" whimpered Bessie feebly, "We've done no harm to you! You have no right to kill us!"

"We just want to live our lives peacefully! Please don't take that away from us!" wailed Stinger "We have a saying here, "You cannot kill innocent people, no matter the reason"!"

"I also have a saying. I. DON'T. CARE." snorted Sycorax, "You filthy political morons are the bane of Mobius! Policy is a disease that needs to be eradicated and that is what I am here for!"

"Say your prayers you dumb bees!" crooned Vladek mockingly, pointing his gun at Bessie's head, "You won't have much left to do!"

Stinger and Bessie both began to sob in fright. Their lives were going to be heartlessly snatched away from them and they couldn't save themselves from their untimely deaths. They could only hug and cry over each other as the reptiles prepared to execute them. But then just as their time had come, a green flash appeared behind the trio and Sycorax found himself being grabbed from behind and thrown about ten feet into the air by a pair of very strong arms. Team Chaotix had arrived on the scene thanks to Blizzard taking them to the colony via a Chaos Control. Blizzard quickly vanished from sight with another Chaos Control, leaving Team Chaotix to deal with Sycorax and his minions. Espio the Chameleon and Charmy Bee both kicked Vladek and Romeo in the face, knocking them aside and away from Stinger and Bessie. Charmy quickly flew over to the king and queen, his face legitimately full of concern for the rulers he'd once worked for.

"Hey Kingy, Hey Queenie, are you OK?" he asked worriedly.

"We're fine thank you Charmy." said Stinger brightly, "How fortunate for you and your reptilian friends to help us in this desperate time!"

"Indeed." mused Espio, "We came as soon as we heard you were in trouble."

"How did you do that green flash thing?" asked Bessie, "Do you have magic powers now?"

"It's a long story." said Vector casually, "Can't explain now, I've got an evil croc to deal with now!"

Lord Sycorax picked himself up from the pile of rubble that had buried him alive after he'd been sent flying into a building by Vector. He brushed the rubble off and he bared his teeth angrily. The sight of Vector was enough to make him see red.

"So…my pathetic excuse for a son has come to challenge me again!" he growled, "Good…I was hoping to have a rematch with you!"

"I can't say I missed kicking your butt either." snorted Vector, "And don't you dare call me "son" Sycorax! I'm not your son and you're not my dad! Never was, never will be! You're just Sycorax to me, an arrogant asshole who needs to get his brain fixed!"

"Pretty much what I was thinking…" sniffed Sycorax, "In that case, I won't feel any remorse when I send you to your grave!"

"Just try it…" said Vector in his usual grizzly tone of voice, "Boys, keep Vladek and Romeo busy. This crocodile cretin is mine!"

"You can have Sycorax." said Espio, "But me and Charmy will provide help if you need it."

Vector nodded and then he stampeded angrily towards Lord Sycorax, his jaws open wide and his teeth bared. Lord Sycorax came stomping towards Vector, his jaws open wide and ready for a powerful bite. The two crocodiles closed the distance between each other with their charges and they both pounced into the air towards each other. Vector was a fraction quicker than Lord Sycorax was and because of this, he collided into Sycorax before the evil region leader could even prepared for a grab. Vector wrapped his arms tightly around Sycorax's torso and brought him crashing down onto the ground. He felt the impact of his attack on Sycorax himself, the crocodile crying out loudly in pain as they crashed. Vector then threw all his weight over in an arch, allowing himself to position himself right side up and then throw his evil father across the battlefield. Sycorax let out a comical cry as he spiralled through the air and careened straight into a pile of rubble, crashing face first into it and sending chunks of rocks flying everywhere. Sycorax groaned loudly, furious that once again, his loathsome son was on top of the fight. He had to wonder why Vector was getting so much better than

him at fighting lately. Vector lumbered towards Sycorax, ready for another attack but the anarchistic reptile picked himself up, spun around on his heels and walloped Vector in the jaw with a powerful roundhouse punch. Vector was so stunned by the callous attack that he was amazed he hadn't been taken off his feet. He turned back to face Sycorax only to receive an uppercut to the face. That attack DID take him off his feet, Vector crying out stunned yells as he was sent hurling backwards through the air in a rainbow arch. He crashed down on his back but he wasn't given any time to ready himself for another attack. Sycorax charged towards Vector and wrapped his arms around the crocodile that he was ashamed to called a son. He constricted Vector in his grasp, the Chaotix Detective gasping for breath as Sycorax began to give him a big bear hug. But Vector managed to get out of the crushing hug by turning his head and biting down on the region leader's arm. Sycorax let out a terrible scream of pain as he felt his flesh being penetrated by powerful jaws and sharp teeth. Vector never seemed to tire of biting him on the arm it seemed. Vector sunk his teeth in Sycorax's arm as deep as he could force them to go in. The bite was so powerful that Sycorax's entire right arm went numb and blood poured out of the teeth marks. With no feeling in his arm, Sycorax was forced to let go of Vector. Now Vector was free, the Chaotix Leader spun on his heel and socked Sycorax directly in the snout. The attack snapped his head backwards and threw him off his feet and onto his back where he crashed down, bounced up into the air and landed down flat on his stomach. Sycorax got up onto his feet and growled at Vector.

"Is that the best you can do?!" he growled, trying to sound confident and failing miserably, "I'm just getting warmed up!"

"If this is a warm up then the main session must be a killer." snorted Vector, smirking confidently at Sycorax.

The two crocodiles bared their jaws again and charged towards each other like thundering rhinos…

Meanwhile, Blizzard had quickly returned to New Mobotropolis so she could get Sonic, Sally, Bunnie, Shadow and Rouge and Chaos

Control them onto *The Nefarious* . Having been on the ship itself, Blizzard knew most of the interior of *The Nefarious* and was successfully able to warp herself and Sonic's squad onto the ship. She had chosen to take everybody onto the top floor of the ship. The dimly-lit corridors of *The Nefarious* were alight with a green glow as the Mobians appeared in the corridor in a bright green flash. The moment the Chaos Control had finished, Sally turned to everybody in the team. She did her best to ignore the hideous interior of the evil ship as she talked to her friends.

"OK, first we're going to rescue Cosmo." said Sally, "Since Nicole still has the plans for The Nefarious that we got from Captain Metal's head a few days back, we'll know our way around this ship as if we own the place. If we run into any armada members, we fight them aside and carry on going."

"And since the armada's lost a few members, they won't be as strong as they could have been." noted Sonic with a snide smile on his face, "We'll have an easier time than before, especially since Finitevus won't expect us coming now he's got nobody spying on us for him like he did before."

"Yes, well please don't bring that up when we find Cosmo." said Sally sternly, "We don't want to give her any grief again. So anyway, studying these blueprints…" Sally paused for a moment as she looked down at Nicole and studied the blueprints of the ship they had just sneaked aboard, "The ship's lab is on the middle floor and next door to the lab, there's an isolation chamber. Since Finitevus said he was keeping Cosmo in hopes of experimenting on her, logically, she should be in there. As forThe Nefarious's main computer, it's up on the bridge which is on this very floor we're on now."

"We can't do two things at once sugah, we'll need ta split up." Bunnie noted, "Especially if we wanna do this QUICKLY. Finitevus will discover us eventually."

"Well Cosmo will be more comfortable seeing me and Sonic more than anything so me and Sonic will go and save Cosmo." said Sally, "You, Shadow and Rouge stay on this floor and plug Nicole into the ship's main computer. Once she's in, she'll find the blueprints for the

de-roboticizer rifle that Finitevus used to de-roboticize Bunnie."

"And we're doing that so we can make our own and use it on Tails right?" asked Rouge, "Well honey, I like this idea. It's a very good idea and we get to use Finitevus's own weapon against him." she added, earning a smile of pride from Sally.

"Ah'll say. Unlike me though, Tails actually needs to be de-roboticized." muttered Bunnie, "We'll be puttin' that rifle to better use when we make our own."

"Excuse me but what am I doing?" asked Blizzard, feeling very left out of the conversation since nobody had bothered to tell her what she was doing.

"Oh sorry Blizzard." said Sally guiltily, "Um, you're going to Chaos Control me and Sonic down to the lab. You've been in it before so you can do that and Cosmo's likely to be next door so you'll take us there."

"And if Cosmo's not in the isolation chamber then I'll just go super fast and look everywhere for her." suggested Sonic, "Let's do it to it guys! We haven't got a moment to lose!"

With their tasks now given, Sally handed Nicole over to Bunnie and she and Rouge held Shadow's hands as the black and red, genetically created Mobian prepared to take off with them in tow. With the map on Nicole, they knew where they would be going. Shadow skated off with Bunnie and Rouge holding on tightly to his hands as he whizzed off at top speed. The moment they left, Blizzard used a Chaos Control to take herself, Sonic and Sally down into *The Nefarious's* laboratory. The moment they arrived in the lab, the trio quickly ran out through the door and found themselves back in a corridor that didn't really look all that different from the top floor. It was a bit brighter lit down on the middle floor though so they could see a little better. Sally spotted a door that was about three strides away from the lab itself. There was merely a steel door with no features on it whatsoever that clearly looked like the door to a prison of some kind. Sally could see why Finitevus would have this as his "Isolation Chamber", it'd be the perfect room for isolating anybody. There was a keypad on the side of the door but Sally wasn't going to

use the keypad to open the door. She didn't know the code and it would take too long to work out what the code was. She instead clipped one of her blue wristbands on her right wrist and deployed the blue energy blade that the band was brilliantly capable of emitting. Sally slid the blade between the door and the wall and cut straight down, severing the lock that kept the door locked shut. Blizzard stepped forward and forced the door open, using every bit of strength the Synthetic Chaos Energy in her veins had given her. As the door was forced open, Cosmo the Seedrian gasped in shock and pressed herself firmly up against the corner of the cell. Sally caught sight of Cosmo and noticed sadly that the poor girl had a lot of visible injuries on her. She noticed the bruised eye and the bruises all over her body, as well as seemingly fresh cuts and some cuts that were healing. Cosmo had been put through hell and back in this little cell and it made Sally feel sick that Finitevus could torture the poor child like this. She felt bad for not saving Cosmo sooner but she supposed it was better late than never. Cosmo had clearly been traumatized by her experiences as Finitevus's prisoner for she seemed terrified and was already expecting the worse, something that made Sonic's heart bleed for her as the hedgehog watched her whimper.

"No! Please, don't hurt me whoever it is!" she whimpered, "I've been hurt enough already! Just leave me alone!"

"Cosmo, it's me, Sonic the Hedgehog!" cried Sonic, stepping into the cell and walking up towards Cosmo, "Me and Sally are here to rescue you!"

Cosmo uncovered her tear-soaked eyes and stared at the person who the voice that had spoken to her belonged to. She couldn't believe her eyes but to Sonic's horror, her reaction was more of shock than joy as she saw him and Sally.

"S-Sonic? Sally?" she asked, "Wh-why are you two here to save me? I'm a disgrace to the team! I betrayed you all, sold you all out to Finitevus! Some of the Royal Fighters have even DIED because of me! And for what? To save my Tails's life, something that wasn't going to happen since Finitevus was just going to make Tails kill himself anyway! You don't want me, you must really hate me for all I've done and for what a shame to the Royal Fighters I am! I'm a

stupid, pathetic little girl and you all must really despise me! Please just leave me alone!" she wailed, crying even harder and hiding her face in shame.

"Cosmo! How could you say that about yourself?!" gasped Sally in horror. She practically felt her heart breaking in two just to hear this sweet, innocent little girl berating herself and expecting her friends to hate her like this.

"Cosmo, you look at me." said Sonic firmly. He paused as Sonic sat up against the wall and looked at Sonic. Sonic then continued, "We do NOT hate you Cosmo. We know why you did what you did. Finitevus forced you into doing this. You betrayed us because Finitevus gave you no choice. You didn't do it on purpose. And besides, we were worried sick about you, really we were! Amy's awake and once she heard what happened to you, she's been worrying her heart about you! She wants you back safely with us Cosmo! Cream too! We would never leave you to be tortured and humiliated by Finitevus because of what you did! You're a Royal Fighter Cosmo and you belong home with us! Now come on little buddy, let's get you home and away from this horrible place. What do you say?"

Cosmo was surprised to hear this. Her time locked up on *The Nefarious* had made her very morbid minded and had caused her to believe that her friends hated her for what she did and that they would never come for her. To hear that her friends were worried about her and had come here just for her really touched her broken heart and the Seedrian began to feel more optimistic again.

"Y-y-y-you r-r-really…mean that?" sniveled Cosmo between sobs.

"Cosmo, I'm NOT the lying type." said Sonic gently, "I meant EVERY word I said."

"I promise you Cosmo, when we get home, you'll be welcomed with open arms." said Sally warmly, kneeling down in front of Cosmo and putting a hand on the Seedrian's cheek to wipe away her tears, "We all love you Cosmo, love you like you're one of us. Our team isn't the same without you."

"Not to mention, we have a plan to save Tails and I don't think he wants to be de-roboticized without you there to welcome him home." said Sonic with a wink.

Cosmo's tears were now replaced with new tears. Tears of happiness. She smiled for the first time since she'd been locked up in the Isolation Chamber. Very touched and feeling warm and loved inside, Cosmo got up onto her feet and embraced Sonic in a tight hug that a little sister would likely give to her older brother. Sonic hugged Cosmo back, smiling brightly along with Cosmo.

"Oh Sonic…Sally…I'm forever glad I ended up on this planet." said Cosmo happily, "You two are among the best people I've ever met. I'm so glad that you're willing to rescue me despite what I've done."

"Don't sweat it Cosmo." said Sonic brightly, "After all, you're a great friend and you make my best buddy very happy. I could never hate you Cosmo."

"And besides, you don't need to be sorry for what you did." said Sally, hugging Cosmo as if she was the Seedrian's mother and she was giving her daughter the kind of loving hug only a mother could provide, "Finitevus manipulated you. And as you say, he was going to blow up Mecha Tails anyway despite you complying to his wishes. You didn't know that. Your actions may have been costly, but they were never your fault. Finitevus is the one to blame and we're going to make him pay for traumatizing you like this sweetheart. We promise."

"Yes…please, make him pay for the scars he's left on me." said Cosmo glumly, "I'm not the type to want revenge…but I really want Finitevus to pay for making me betray you all."

"Oh believe me Cosmo, we intend to send him to an early grave." muttered Sonic, "Now come on Cozzie, let's go home."

Cosmo was all too happy to abide to that order. Sonic, Sally and Cosmo all stood up straight and they prepared to leave the cell. But then suddenly, Blizzard lunged forward and walloped Sonic and Sally in the face with a terrific punch that knocked them both out instantly. Cosmo screamed in terror as the two collapsed onto the

floor together but then Blizzard knocked her out with a powerful punch to the head. As Cosmo collapsed, Blizzard rubbed her hands eagerly and grinned a devil's smile. She'd been playing Sonic and friends for saps, abiding to their every order and any given task she'd been given just to fool them into thinking she was still on their side. Now the time was right, she had made her move.

"Yes! Got them!" she cried excitedly, "Now to deliver them to Dr. Finitevus so he can make them pay for their crimes against me!"

Blizzard…stop this. You're being corrupted. Please stop. whispered the ghostly voice of Iceberg in her head. His voice was harder to hear for her now due to the Chaos Energy prohibiting him from having a strong presence in her brain.

"Go to hell figment of my imagination!" barked Blizzard, "I am not corrupted! The Royal Fighters are! Besides, I have only one allegiance…and that is with the great and powerful Dr. Finitevus!"

She began to cackle maniacally as she reached forward to grab Sonic, Sally and Cosmo's bodies…

Footnotes:

*** As egotistical as he is, he's not lying believe it or not. See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 7: Rebellious Reptiles***

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles***

***** See *The Terror of Enerjak***

****** Sally's not kidding. They really did! Check it out in *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 11: Stratagem of the Reptiles* again!**

YIKES, YIKES AND DOUBLE YIKES! Blizzard's gone bad! Sonic,

Sally and Cosmo are knocked out! Shadow, Rouge and Bunnie do not know about this! What will happen next? Will this story have a happy ending or is it going to be a bad ending again?

Join in next time for Part 2...

Dark Armada Part 19: Operation Nekron 2

Story 219: Operation Nekronopolis Part 2

The Dark Armada Chapter 19 of 25

"Accordin' ta lil ol Nicole here, we should be at the bridge right now." said Bunnie Rabboh as Shadow the Hedgehog skidded to a halt just outside a huge steel door at the end of the very long corridor that he, Bunnie and Rouge the Bat had been going down.

"Let's have a little look for a moment hon…" said Rouge, peering over at the handheld computer that Bunnie had in her hands. This computer was Nicole's handheld form and on this little device, Nicole had the plans for *The Nefarious* on them. Rouge studied the plans for a minute before drawing a conclusion.

"Yep, this is the bridge alright." said Rouge, motioning towards the huge door that the trio was now standing in front of, "We followed the map as exactly and now we're here. That door won't keep us at bay though."

"Indeed…especially since you've got me." said Shadow smugly, cracking his knuckles and getting ready to break down the door.

Rouge and Bunnie stepped back as Shadow curled up into a ball and spin-dashed into the door. The door was strong and as Shadow hit it, he only left a slight dent in it. But Shadow was no the giving up type. He was one of the strongest Royal Fighters ever, being able to go toe-to-toe with Sonic and Scourge the Hedgehogs and also being the one who destroyed Black Doom during the Black Arms invasion of Mobius back in 2143. A single steel door was no match for the Ultimate Life form. Shadow spin-dashed at the door repeatedly until finally, he broke it down. The door made a huge, loud noise as it was torn away from its post and thrown across the room like discarded rubbish. The door now broken down, Shadow, Rouge and Bunnie stepped inside.

The Royal Fighters Service had initiated a new mission. Queen Sally

Acorn had come up with a rather ingenious plan to strike back at the armada. This involved getting onboard thanks to a Chaos Control from a Synthetic Chaos Energy powered Blizzard the Ice Witch and doing two imperative things. One was saving Cosmo the Seedrian, which Sally herself and Sonic had gone to do and Shadow, Rouge and Bunnie had been tasked with getting to the bridge of *The Nefarious* and once there, they would use Nicole to download the plans for Finitevus's de-roboticizer rifle and make one of their own so they could use it to de-roboticize Mecha Tails and get their twin-tailed kid-genius back on the team. The mission was going very well so far. The trio had reached the bridge with no complications and no armada members to get in their way. Shadow, Rouge and Bunnie inspected their surroundings as they entered the bridge. There were a lot of computer monitors and there was a huge control panel for the monitors themselves at the end of the room. Any source of light in the bridge came squarely from the screens themselves, their ominous, white glows making the bridge look a little spooky and eerie in atmosphere. The hedgehog, bat and rabbit approached the control panel and stared at it, trying to make out what they could in the little light that they had.

"So this is the bridge. Pretty boring really." murmured Rouge, "I bet Finitevus gets right square eyes looking at all these monitors."

"All the better to keep an eye out for intruders." mused Shadow, "So where can we plug Nicole into this thing?"

"Nicole, can ya'll give us a lil' more light please?" asked Bunnie, "It's a bit hard to see in here."

Nicole obeyed and a bright green light switched on from underneath the handheld computer. The light was much brighter than the monitors were and as Bunnie pointed it at the control panel, the entire device became much more visible. They could see everything more clearly now from all the buttons to the levers and even the LED lights that would signal if something was one, off or if something was faulty. To Bunnie's delight, there was a slot in the panel that Nicole could easily be inserted into.

"Aha! There's somewhere to plug her in!" she cried delightedly.

"You two get the information Sally requires, I'll keep a look out." said Shadow, turning around and walking off outside the bridge to keep watch for any danger or anybody trying to interfere with their mission.

Bunnie and Rouge nodded understandingly and they kept their attention fixed squarely on Nicole as the formerly cyborg rabbit held the handheld computer above the slot and deployed the device's USB slot. Nicole's slot had a feature that Tails had installed into the handheld computer himself long before the Dark Armada had even fully come together. It was able to change shape and size and fit into any USB slot in the world. Tails had once built a data stick that had that feature and it worked to perfection during the Devatron invasion. It worked again here, the girls watching in amazement as Nicole scanned the slot and then changed her computer's USB slot to be able to fit into it. Now it was able to fit, Bunnie inserted the computer into the control panel. Once she was plugged in, Nicole began to work her magic. She was one of the best hackers in all of Mobius and that was before she'd even become a computer programme. She'd been able to hack into Dr. Eggman's technology with ease and he wasn't even from Mobius. Being how *The Nefarious* had once been an Egg Carrier, Nicole found hacking into the ship as easy as hacking into Eggman's other devices. Her screen was alit as she began digging deep into the ship's data files, searching frantically for the right information.

"Well this was a little easier than I expected." mused Nicole, "Hold on girls, this could take a few minutes."

"No prob sugah." said Bunnie brightly.

"I will say, she may not be Mobian anymore but Nicole's sure being very useful to us." said Rouge approvingly, "It must be great for her to be able to do stuff like this now."

"It took her a while ta get used to bein' a computer programme and not a Mobian anymore." said Bunnie, thinking back to how hard it had been for Nicole to cope with her changes, "But if ya'll want mah opinion, Nicole's still as Mobian as we are, computer or not. And the fact that she came to accept her changes shows just how strong she really is."

"That really is commendable." said Rouge, nodding agreeably, "I don't think I'd have coped if I was…ahem, in Nicole's position."

"Knowing you, you'd be sulking at the face you wouldn't be able to hunt treasures anymore." chuckled Nicole, her face appearing briefly on the computer's screen as she spoke.

"Hey, less joking, more hacking sunshine." snickered Rouge.

Nicole laughed back and then continued with her work. Bunnie and Rouge stood by and watched with baited breath as Nicole continued searching for the information they required. As Nicole worked, Bunnie began smirking to herself. Finitevus had used the de-roboticizer rifle on her to take away her cybernetics and make her weaker than before. But he hadn't made her weaker. All he'd done was show Bunnie just how strong she really was, with or without cybernetics. She had new weapons to fight the Dark Armada with so her cybernetics weren't as big of a loss as they could have been for her. And right now, they were going to download the plans for the de-roboticizer rifle that had been used on her and then make their own so they could use it on Tails. What a slight against the Dark Armada this would be! It made Bunnie feel excited just thinking about it. What she wouldn't give to see Finitevus's face when they de-roboticized Tails! But then Bunnie had other things to think about. Just outside, the remaining members of the Dark Armada came storming down the corridor and towards the bridge. Captain Metal, Ravage Bloodfang, Raphael the Cyber Husky, Cutthroat Jim, Zira the Ruthless and all four members of Team Diamond. There was Lord Sycorax and his two henchmen too but they were outside down below fighting Team Chaotix in the Golden Hive Colony. Shadow's eyes widened as the armada came running towards him.

"Hey Rouge! Bunnie! We've got company!" he cried out at the top of his voice.

"How many is there?" asked Rouge concernedly.

"Not as much as before…" murmured Shadow, "That might be because Conquering Storm and Scourge are dead and Fiona's gone AWOL, as Sonic and Sally told us yesterday evening…I'll keep them at bay, you just keep your eye on Nicole!" he barked.

"If ya'll need help sugah, we'll be right behind ya!" Bunnie called back to him.

"I doubt I'll need help against such a minuscule threat…" sneered Shadow.

Rouge just rolled her eyes. It was just like Shadow to think so arrogantly. She had to wonder why Shadow thought so highly of himself at times. As the Dark Armada approached Shadow, the hedgehog summoned some Chaos Spears to his hands and he threw them at the oncoming attackers. The spears struck all the villains and knocked them down onto their backs. Captain Metal was the first to get back up onto his feet and he pointed his gun arm at Shadow.

"Shiver me timbers! We have intruders on tharr ship!" he cried, "No wonder Finitevus ordered us to come up here and investigate!"

"I'll give you all just one chance armada. Leave now or I'll stomp on all of you until there's nothing left but a nasty stain on the floor!" growled Shadow fiercely.

"You're trespassing on OUR ship scum, YOU are the one who should leave!" snarled Raphael, "You get outta the bridge now before we break every bone in your body!"

"I'd like to see you try..." muttered Shadow challengingly.

Captain Metal and Raphael both fired at Shadow, the Metal Sonic/pirate hybrid shooting with his gun arm and Raphael firing from his sonic wave emitter. A large cannon blast mixed with a tunnel of sonic waves hurtled towards Shadow but the hedgehog teleported out of the way. This proved to be a big mistake for Shadow for the blasts just carried on into the bridge itself. Bunnie was quick to react, whipping out her handheld cannon and shooting at the blasts to stop them from hitting the control panel. If the machinery was destroyed then Nicole would not be able to get what she was looking for. Outside, Shadow reappeared just behind Captain Metal and Raphael and he kicked the two in the back of the head, knocking them both down onto the floor. The two armada members grunted as they hit the floor. Inside the bridge, Rouge called to Shadow.

"Hey Mr. Ultimate Life form! Keep these clowns away from the bridge before they do some damage!" she yelled.

"Got it." said Shadow, turning around to attack Ravage as the wolf bore over him and prepared to grab him.

While the armada fought with Shadow, Bunnie and Rouge looked anxiously over at Nicole. The lynx appeared to be taking her time in finding the rifle's plans. They hoped Nicole would be done soon so they could get out of here as quickly as possible before the armada could overpower them...

"Well…isn't this a delightful turn of events?" purred Dr. Finitevus wickedly, "Looks like Blizzard is on my side now…better late than never as they say and now she's gotten me a Chaos Adept to test my beautiful Chaos Synth-En formula on…"

He smiled deviously at the captive Sonic the Hedgehog. The blue-furred, supersonic hero was lying against a raised restraint bed and his wrists and ankles were bound to the bed by laser binds. Just nearby, a bound and gagged Sally and Cosmo watched from where they were sitting as Finitevus began crowing over the recent turn of events that had turned in his favour. Sally and Cosmo's hands were fastened behind their backs by laser cuffs and their ankles were cuffed together too. Their mouths were sealed shut with a strip of duct tape. The girls were completely helpless and try as they might, they couldn't get free. The mission had taken a turn for the worst. Sonic and Sally had found Cosmo and were about to get her out of her cell but just as they were going to leave, Blizzard had suddenly turned on them and knocked all three of them out. After doing that, she had brought them all to Dr. Finitevus and Mecha Tails. Seeing what she'd brought and also seeing that Blizzard was wanting to work for him, Finitevus had been delighted and had brought the captured trio down to the laboratory immediately. The albino echidna had been delighted to receive Sonic himself from Blizzard but what pleased him was the fact that his Synthetic Chaos Energy formula had finally turned Blizzard evil. The formula was only flawed in the sense that the positive side had dominated the negative side for a while and upon entering her coma, Blizzard was unable to fight off

the dark side of the Chaos Energy. Thus, she'd been corrupted by the evil liquid in her veins and was now on Finitevus's side. Finitevus had lost some of his armada due to recent events and now he'd gained a new member. This day was going better than he possibly could have imagined. He now had the perfect test subject tied down to a restraint bed. He leaned forward and grabbed Sonic by the face.

"You were such a fool to come to my ship Sonic." sneered Finitevus, "Such a fool indeed. You see, my formula requires a Chaos Adept for testing on and you, a Chaos Adept, has delivered himself directly to me."

"More like Blizzard delivered me directly to you." muttered Sonic angrily, "So Einstein, why is Blizzard suddenly evil now?"

"Simple, the negative side of the Chaos Energy has dominated her mind and is now the dominant factor." purred Finitevus, "The overly positive side of the formula caused it to take a longer time to work than it should have done though, a very annoying side effect that has now diminished thankfully enough. Now Blizzard is in my armada and by far my strongest member ever! You heroes really think you can strike back against me but just when hope comes you way...it gets snatched back into relapse and I come out on top once again."

"Finitevus, quick question." said Sonic in an irritated tone of voice, "DO YOU EVER STOP GLOATING?! It's very irritating it's very stupid too!"

"Good, you're supposed to be irritated by it." snapped Finitevus, "Now I must say, it was quite an ingenious plan of your beloved Sally's wasn't it?"

He then turned away from Sonic and strode over to Sally, Mecha Tails and Blizzard staying put to watch over Sonic. The hedgehog's eyes narrowed into an angry scowl as Finitevus hauled Sally onto her feet and grabbed her by the face. Sally glowered at Finitevus, wishing dearly that she could give the evil scientist a beating he'd never forget.

"Yes Sally, you had a good plan didn't you? Use Blizzard to Chaos

Control onto my ship and then have a team to hack into the bridge while you get Cosmo out of her cage." crowed Finitevus, squeezing Sally's face as hard as possible, "Well let me tell you something Sally...your first mistake was to bring Blizzard with you. You should have gotten rid of the Chaos Energy when you had the chance. But you didn't. Now you get to see the consequences of your stupidity."

"Get off of her!" snarled Sonic. He hated it when people mishandled his friends in anyway, especially his girlfriend and just seeing Finitevus squeezing Sally's face made his blood boil with rage.

"You're in no position to order me about." muttered Finitevus coldly, "You're on MY ship, I give the orders."

But Finitevus let Sally go and forced her back down into a sitting position against the wall. The squirrel glared at Finitevus with piercing eyes that seemed a little too evil for somebody s noble as Sally. Finitevus turned around, promptly allowing his cape to swish directly in Sally's face and he walked back over towards Sonic. He stood before his restrained nemesis and grinned wickedly at him.

"Because of your girlfriend's stupidity, you're captured and Blizzard has spilled the beans on you." he crowed again, earning a sigh of annoyance from Sonic, "Right now, my armada will be stopping Shadow, Rouge and Bunnie from downloading the plans to the de-roboticizer rifle. You will NOT use the weapon to de-roboticize Mecha Tails Sonic."

"You're making a big mistake now Finny-Dumbass." snorted Sonic, "Shadow has more power in his pinkie than your entire armada does in the whole bodies! He'll curb stomp your armada and then they'll get what we came for and then they'll come to rescue us!"

"I sincerely doubt that considering they have no idea what's happening right now." gloated Finitevus, "And it doesn't matter if Shadow can beat my armada. I'll just get Blizzard to beat him up."

"Send me to the bridge now master! Let me fight Shadow, Rouge and Bunnie so I can stop them from infiltrating your database!" cried Blizzard eagerly, "Please, give me that task!"

"You know what Blizzard..." mused Finitevus thoughtfully, "That's an excellent idea. Why wait to send you up? I can just do it now."

The caped scientist then proceeded to summon a warp ring to his hand and he flicked it over his shoulder. The warp ring opened up a portal to the corridor where the bridge was. Finitevus had decided not to directly open it up in the bridge otherwise the trio of Royal Fighters would likely snatch it and use it against him. Blizzard eagerly ran through the warp ring and disappeared through it. The warp ring closed shut behind him and Finitevus put the warp ring back onto his wrist.

"There Sonic, now your second plan is going to fail spectacularly. And all because you didn't get rid of the energy in Blizzard." the albino scientist crooned smugly.

"Shadow will be enough to stop Blizzard, just you wait!" yelled Sonic, "And once this is over, we're going to get the energy out of Blizzard and use it against you! Then she'll be back to normal and back on our side!"

"We shall see if you'll even come close to achieving that..." sneered Finitevus, "Oh and speaking of getting Chaos Energy out...what did happen to Fiona Fox after I sent her to New Mobotropolis to kill the Royal Fighters?"

"We got the energy out of her and disposed of it. But that just ended up causing Fiona to feel very suicidal." muttered Sonic crossly, "She told us that because of your crackpot science experiment, she ended up getting infected by a Chaos Powered Conquering Storm and she killed Scourge. I have no love for Scourge but because of you, Fiona has no chance of redemption and has likely gone and wasted herself!"

"That is exactly why I let you have her. Without Scourge, Fiona is no use to me anymore due to how emotionally unstable she was before meeting him." jeered Finitevus, "And I do hope that she did kill herself. That way, she won't be tempted to take a shot at me since in a way, I was responsible for what happened to her."

"You're disgusting..." growled Sonic, "And I'm gonna kill you when I

get free!"

"Nice try Sonic but you haven't got a killer bone in your body." said Finitevus dismissively, "Need I remind you that I was the one who killed Eggman and not you?"

"I WAS going to kill Eggman before you interfered!" protested Sonic angrily. It was true, he had attempted to kill Eggman himself during his final battle with him on the Death Egg last year. But his conscience had ended up getting in the way and stopping him.

"And yet you didn't." jeered Finitevus, "Now then enough talk."

He turned around, his cape swishing into Sonic's face, and he walked over to the counter where all his science equipment was proudly displayed for all to use. Sally and Cosmo watched with horror as Finitevus picked up a syringe and opened up a canister full of green liquid. The girls knew what was happening, he was going to test his Synthetic Chaos Energy on Sonic! He had a fresh batch after Conquering Storm had guzzled his previous canister full of energy and now it was ready for testing. Finitevus stuck the needle into the liquid and he filled the syringe up to the top. Sally began to panic, the tape around her lips inflating in and out wildly with her frantic breathing. Finitevus was going to turn Sonic into an evil, Chaos-powered minion like he'd done to Blizzard! She had to help him and fast! Thinking quickly, Sally suddenly had an idea. She waited until Finitevus turned his back and walked back towards Sonic. Then Sally tucked her cuffed up legs up to her chest and lay down on her back. She slipped her bound hands over her bottom and up her legs so that they were no longer stuck behind her back. Then Sally peeled the tape slowly off her mouth and positioned herself on her arms and knees. Cosmo remained where she was, willing for Sally not to go ahead with her plan. It was very risky and she could get caught but Sally was willing to take that risk. She crawled slowly and quietly towards Finitevus, making sure that he didn't hear her. Mecha Tails wasn't keeping an eye on her. He was looking squarely at Sonic. Finitevus and Mecha Tails stood before Sonic, syringe in hand and ready to inject the hedgehog. Sonic gulped nervously, staring at the liquid as if it was poison.

"Mecha Tails, would you care to tell Sonic what this formula will do

to him?" purred Finitevus.

"Since the formula is perfected and ready for testing, the desired effects will work without fail." Mecha Tails claimed matter-of-factly, "It'll make you stronger, maybe more so than Blizzard due to you being a Chaos Adept already. You'll also be loyal to Finitevus and you'll have no goals in mind...except the destruction of Mobius."

"Why don't you do something smart and test it on yourself?!" yelled Sonic, "It's YOU who wants to become Enerjak! Not me!"

"Fie Sonic, this formula is merely the gateway to my becoming of Enerjak. It won't turn YOU into Enerjak." corrected Finitevus, "And why test it on myself? It's better that my enemies get the side effects and not me should the formula go horrifically wrong. It didn't work so well on a non-Chaos Adept so I need to know how it'll work on a Chaos Adept."

"But I'm positive Chaos Energy! You're negative! Even if it works as intended on me, it might work differently on you!" protested Sonic wildly, hoping that he'd be able to talk Finitevus out of the idea.

"I have a way of making sure it works as it should do on me." declared Finitevus, "Now when I pump you full of this, I'm going to order you to kill Sally and Cosmo. They're surplus to requirements. And then I'm going to use you to kill all the Royal Fighters. And once they're all dead, nobody will stop me from becoming Enerjak."

"You're insane! You'll destroy everything! The whole world even!" cried Sonic feebly.

"That's what I want to do idiot." snapped Finitevus, "The world needs to be cleansed with fire. My plan will see to it that that happens and given Silver and Blaze's dystopian future...it seems I succeed."

He smiled triumphantly as he aimed the syringe at Sonic's neck and prepared to inject the Chaos Energy into him. Sonic began to struggle feebly in his binds, desperate to get free but the laser binds held firm. Sonic was completely helpless to stop Finitevus. All he could do now was watch in terror as he was about to be tested on. But then suddenly, Finitevus straightened up in shock and let out a

terrible bellow of pain. He flung the syringe into the air as he did this. The syringe flew through the air and crashed down onto the floor, shattering to pieces and spilling Chaos Energy everywhere. Mecha Tails turned around and saw his master grab his right leg in pain and hop around like an injured rabbit. Sally had sneaked up behind Finitevus and bit him on the leg. So hard that she'd managed to draw blood and leave a very bad wound on his leg. Now Finitevus was distracted, Sally lay down on her side and kicked Finitevus in the good leg, tripping him up and bringing him down onto the floor. Mecha Tails leapt over Finitevus and lunged at Sally but the queen rolled out of the way and quickly pressed a button on the side of the bed. The laser binds switched off and Sonic leapt back onto his feet, relived to be free. Sonic spin-dashed into Mecha Tails and sent him flying away from Sally. With the villains out of the way, Sonic grabbed the laser cuff generator between Sally's wrists and crushed it between his hand. Sally held her legs out and Sonic stomped on the cuff generator between her ankles. Sally was now free and the gleeful queen leapt up onto her feet and embraced Sonic tightly. Sonic embraced her back.

"I've told you I love you before haven't I?" he asked cheekily.

"Yes Sonic, you have." said Sally gleefully, "Thank goodness I saved you before you could be tested on!"

"Let it never be said that it feels weird being the one who needs rescuing for a change." chuckled Sonic, "Let's get Cosmo free and get outta here!"

Sally obeyed and she quickly clipped on her wristbands so she could deploy her wrist blades. She ran over to Cosmo and carefully cut the laser cuff generators binding her wrists and ankles so that Cosmo could use her hands and feet again. Now free, Cosmo picked herself up and peeled the tape off of her mouth. But just before the trio could run for it, Mecha Tails got up onto his feet and suddenly flew towards Sonic. He grabbed the hedgehog and pinned him against the wall but Sonic kicked him away and spin-dashed him across the room. Mecha Tails crashed into the restraint bed, the impact knocking it down into its horizontal position and the roboticized fox lay on it, dazed and confused from the attack. Finitevus picked himself up and used a warp ring to grab a Chaos

Emerald from the bunker he'd hidden them in. He used a Chaos Regeneration to heal the bite wound on his leg and he quickly put the emerald back, not wanting to risk losing it to Sonic. Now healed, Finitevus took out two blue wristbands from his cloak pocket and clipped them around his wrists.

"It was a good thing I confiscated these from Fiona before she killed Scourge..." he growled to himself, "That was a very clever escape plan Sally, but not good enough! You three won't leave here alive!"

"Says who?" snorted Sonic cheekily, "I'm gonna beat the Chaos Energy outta ya!"

He zoomed towards Finitevus and leaped into the air, ready to attack him. Finitevus deployed his wrist blades and charged towards Sonic, blades blazing and hungry for Sonic's blood...

Meanwhile, Rouge and Bunnie were beginning to get anxious. Nicole was still searching *The Nefarious* 's data banks for the plans for the roboticizer rifle and Shadow was still fighting the Dark Armada outside. Bunnie was getting tempted to just leave Nicole and join in the fighting just to make sure that the armada didn't get past Shadow and into the bridge to stop them from completing their task. But Shadow seemed perfectly alright on his own, he didn't seem to need any help. The girls looked over their shoulders and watched as Shadow spin-dashed Cutthroat Jim up into the ceiling, the pirate hyena dropping his cutlass onto the floor as he was stricken. Unfortunately, Ravage scampered past Shadow and ran towards the bridge. He'd spotted Bunnie and now wanted to eat her alive, his jaws dripping with saliva as he ran towards his prey. But then Bunnie pointed her cannon at Ravage and blasted him away from the door. Ravage was sent flying backwards across the corridor and he crashed into Lennox Meers, the latter taking aim at Shadow with his revolvers only to miss as Ravage crashed into him. Rouge shook her head disappointedly.

"Remind me again who's bright idea it was to break the door down?" she sighed, "It would have been very useful at making sure the armada can't get to us!"

"Maybe we shoulda thought of that before we let Shadow spin-dash it down." said Bunnie thoughtfully.

"Well we don't need the door since we've got you for defence." noted Rouge cheerfully, "That cannon you have is as powerful as your old cannon, nobody's getting past that."

"Aw thanks sugah." said Bunnie brightly.

Rouge beamed and then glanced over at Nicole only to get a pleasant surprise, something that she wanted to receive for a change in this persistent fight with the Dark Armada over the past few days. No more scrambling through data was displayed on the screen and Nicole's digital face was beaming delightedly, meaning that she'd found what she was looking for at last.

"Got it!" she announced happily, "The plans for the rifle at least! Commencing download."

"Great job honey." said Rouge in applause, "Download that thing as fast as you can."

Nicole got to work immediately. Her face disappeared and was replaced with the words "Download Commencing..." on her computer screen. The bar icon just under the words was beginning to fill at a relatively quick pace. It had been a job finding the plans thanks to *The Nefarious's* enormous database but downloading was going considerably quicker than the searching itself. Rouge watched delightedly as the download was commencing. It felt good to have things going the Royal Fighters' way for once. But outside, things were about to take a very bad turn for the worst. Blizzard had arrived on the scene and was running towards Shadow. The Dark Armada saw him coming and they braced themselves, expecting Blizzard to jump in on the fight and attack them. But Blizzard instead summoned a Chaos Spear to her hands and threw it not at any of the armada members, but at Shadow. The spear struck Shadow in the chest and sent him flying across the room. He crashed down just at the foot of the door way to the bridge. Bunnie let out a shriek of horror that made Rouge jumped behind her. She turned around and saw Shadow pick herself up as Blizzard summoned some Chaos Energy icicles to her hands.

"Blizzard you crazy loon! Why did you just attack me?!" snarled Shadow, "I thought you're on our side!"

"That was then! This is now!" barked Blizzard, "I'm with Finitevus now and I'm supposed to stop you from getting any sensitive information from the ship's data banks!"

"Well then traitor...looks like you're on my list of people to beat up." growled Shadow.

"Wait sugah, don't hurt her too badly!" cried Bunnie frantically, "If might just be the Chaos Energy Finitevus gave her that's making her evil! We have ta subdue her so we can bring her home and get rid of the energy!"

"I doubt she'll come quietly..." muttered Shadow grimly, "I'll have to use force to bring her down..."

"And I'll help out." declared Rouge, abandoning Nicole so she could fight Blizzard with Shadow, "With that Chaos Energy, she floored Finitevus, you won't handle her on your own."

"For once, I'm happy to accept your aid." said Shadow with his usual grim facial expression.

Bunnie on the other hand decided to stay guarding the door to keep the armada away from the bridge. Nicole wasn't finished downloading the data yet although she didn't have long to go so Bunnie wouldn't have to guard the little computer for long. Just a couple more minutes and Nicole would be done. As Bunnie guarded the door, Shadow and Rouge both charged towards Blizzard. The Ice Witch held up her hands, ready to initiate a Chaos Control but Shadow was a fraction too quick for her. He curled into a spiky ball and rammed straight into her gut. The spin-dash took her clean off her feet and as Shadow kept on doing, he ended up taking Blizzard far down the corridor until eventually, he uncurled from his spin-dash and grabbed Blizzard by the torso. He crashed down onto the floor with Blizzard beneath him, bounded up in the air and then threw her across the corridor. That one spin-dash had cleared half of the whole corridor and Blizzard was sent hurling down the other half. She came down to a crashing halt just shy of the wall at the end of

the corridor. Shadow turned and skated back up the corridor but just as he reached the Dark Armada, Blizzard Chaos Controlled herself back to the beginning. Shadow spotted Blizzard but he didn't stop running. He carried on, hoping to attack her once again. But Blizzard summoned a bunch of Chaos Icicles to her hands and threw them at Shadow. The icicles hit the hedgehog all over his body and brought him down onto his knees in pain. Then Blizzard ran towards Shadow and grabbed the Ultimate Life form by the scruff of his neck. The Ice Witch tossed Shadow up into the ceiling. the blow so hard that Shadow left a heavy imprint of himself in the ceiling. Shadow groaned, feeling like his entire skeleton had cracked because of the attack. He slowly peeled out of the ceiling and fell down towards the floor. Blizzard drew her fist back and then socked Shadow as hard as she could. Shadow let out a terrible yell as he hurled down the corridor and landed down with a bone-crunching thud a few feet away. The white furred hedgehog was about to attack again but Rouge screw-kicked Blizzard in the back, the attack catching her by surprise as she was hit. Rouge's attack slammed Blizzard down on the floor, giving Shadow time to pick himself up and teleport himself back to Blizzard. Just as the Ice Witch prepared to throw Rouge off, Shadow uppercut her in the chin and sent her flying through the air. Raphael and Ravage got the shock of their lives as they saw Blizzard flying towards them and they scrambled frantically to get out of the way. Blizzard hurled down towards the floor…and crashed into Captain Metal instead of Raphael and Ravage. The two dogs gave a sigh of relief as Blizzard missed them but they still got hit anyway, receiving a blast to the back each from Bunnie. As the fight continued on, Bunnie glanced quickly over her shoulder and saw something that made her smile. Nicole's screen was displaying the words "Download Complete" and Nicole's face appeared.

"I'm done! Let's get outta here!" cried Nicole.

"Hey Shadow, Rouge, Nicole's dun got the info we wanted! We can skedaddle now!" yelled Bunnie happily.

"That's good, ugly club's beginning to get too ugly for me now." snickered Rouge.

But just as Bunnie grabbed Nicole and unplugged her, Blizzard picked herself up and blocked the doorway so Bunnie couldn't

escape. She glowered at Bunnie with a piercing, ghoulish stare that could freeze blood. It seemed to have that effect on Bunnie.

"You're not going anywhere!" snarled Blizzard, "Hand over that device and I might let you live!"

Bunnie refused to obey and instead, used her metal glove weapon to punch Blizzard in the gut and cause her to double over in pain. With that done, she ran past Blizzard and over to Shadow and Rouge. Shadow grabbed both girls by the hand and skated off as fast as he could, hoping that he could outrun Blizzard. He was sorely disappointed though for Blizzard merely Chaos Controlled after him. But Shadow decided to fight fire with fire. The black and red hedgehog used his short ranged teleporting abilities to teleport ahead of Blizzard the moment she reappeared. Blizzard growled in annoyance and she Chaos Controlled after Shadow as he reappeared a good distance ahead of her. Because of this, the chase between the two hedgehogs ended up clearing much of the corridor a lot faster than it would have normally. Shadow kept at it, hoping that he'd outrun the Ice Witch eventually. If he got caught then the whole mission would be compromised…

Meanwhile in the ship's lab, Finitevus was in heated combat with Sonic and Sally. The enraged echidna swung his energy blades wildly at the hedgehog and squirrel, trying desperately to cleave them in two with the absurdly sharp and very lethal weapons. It made him feel good to be using them. He'd stolen this particular pair of wristbands from Sally herself in a battle last year and now he was using them against Sonic and Sally. Fiona had used them well but Finitevus would use them better. Sonic leaped back in fright as Finitevus attempted to chop him to pieces, growling viciously with every swing of the blades. Sally charged in and clashed blades with Finitevus, a bright blue flash sparking as their blades clashed. The shine was so bright that both opponents had to close their eyes for a minute before carrying on the battle. Sally raised her right arm and aimed a slash attack at Finitevus's head. She was perfectly willing to kill Finitevus now she was in a position to do so. As the Royal Fighters had reasoned, he had to die so he couldn't bring Mobius to an end with his abhorrent scheme to become Enerjak. But Sally's

attack wouldn't be the killer blow for her caped opponent blocked the attack with his right blade. The squirrel cursed under her breath. Killing Finitevus here and now wouldn't be easy, she knew that well enough. The two opponents pushed on each other's arms, trying desperately to wrestle the other to the ground. Sally knew she wouldn't win this one. She was strong but not strong enough to win a sumo match against Finitevus. He'd overpower her easily. So Sally instead drove her knee directly into the echidna's gut. Finitevus doubled over, giving Sally the perfect opportunity to chop him to pieces but just as she brought the blades swinging down, Finitevus, pushed himself forward into Sally's gut with all the muscles in his torso. His head slammed into her gut and knocked her down onto her back. Sally was about to stand back up but Finitevus then stood on her arms, pinning them down and keeping her blades away from him. He raised his blades and prepared to cut the impudent queen's head off. He swung his blades but they never hit home as Sonic spin-dashed Finitevus in the back. Finitevus hurled straight into the counter, the impact causing it to shudder and many of the components atop the counter began to topple over. Finitevus picked himself up and he grabbed a class jar. He waited until Sonic came zooming straight towards him before he through it at him. The contained smashed to pieces as it hit Sonic squarely in the face, the shards of glass slicing through his skin and leaving thin, stinging cuts all over. Sonic cried out in pain, feeling like his face was being bitten at from various different angles. Finitevus cackled mockingly at Sonic and he kicked the hedgehog straight into the restraint bed. Sonic landed flat against the bed but he rolled himself off the bed and ran around behind it. Finitevus jumped in front of the restraint bed and he stomped on it, causing it to flick upwards and wallop Sonic in the chin. The hedgehog's head snapped violently backwards as hard metal slammed against solid chin bone and the hedgehog found himself thrown down onto his back. He gripped his neck and winced in terrible pain. The attack had given him a severe neck ache now, a result of his head being so sharply knocked backwards. Laughing maniacally, Finitevus ran towards Sonic and prepared to slice him in half. But Sonic had an idea that would make Finitevus hold back.

"Ungh…hey Finny! I thought you wanted to test your formula on me!" sneered Sonic, ignoring the agonizing pain in his neck long

enough to speak.

Finitevus did hold back but he gave Sonic a surprising answer.

"You forget, Shadow is on this ship too according to my newest member…" purred Finitevus, "I can just use it on him instead. You're not that compulsory."

"Yeah and what if you can't catch him?" noted Sonic, "You may as well just use me while you've got me haven't you?"

Finitevus began to think for a moment about the pressing thought. But Finitevus should have known better than to allow himself to be stalled like this. He had now left himself wide open for an attack from Sally. The furious, determined queen ran towards Finitevus, blades raised and ready to cut him to pieces. But the albino echidna heard Sally coming and he quickly threw a warp ring into her path. Sally couldn't stop herself in time and thus, the red haired squirrel ended up running through the warp ring. It reopened just above Sonic, the hedgehog crying out in shock as Sally ended up crashing down on top of him. While she was down, Finitevus now prepared to cut her to pieces. But just as he prepared to slice her up, Cosmo ran in behind Finitevus and grabbed him by the cape. She tugged on it as hard as she could, the cape now wrapping itself around the scientist's neck and pulling him back. Finitevus gagged and choked as the cape now pulled around his Adam's apple. He tugged back on the cape, pulling Cosmo down onto the floor but the Seedrian didn't give up so easily. She tugged back on the cape but as Finitevus tugged back, she knew she was fighting a losing battle. Trying to win a tug-of-war with Finitevus was like trying to pull a rhinoceros. She had no chance now he was pulling back. But while Cosmo kept Finitevus distracted, Sally picked herself up and prepared to stab him in the back. She never got the chance for Mecha Tails flew in behind Sally and seized her by the arms. He tossed Sally into the air and sent her crashing hard into a wall at the end of the room. Sonic got back up onto his feet, the pain in his neck now less unbearable, and he spin-dashed Finitevus in the back. This attack sent Finitevus hurling head over heels onto the floor but he wasn't down for long. The echidna picked himself up and he charged towards Sonic. Sonic attempted to leap back but Finitevus swiped the energy blade at him and just caught him across his

chest. A long thin cut was drawn across the hedgehog's chest and a slight trickle of blood oozed out of the fresh cut. Sonic winced but he ignored the pain for the time being. He knew that he wouldn't be able to beat Finitevus and Mecha Tails. Finitevus was a very skilled opponent and he had deadly weapons that could slice him to pieces if he wasn't careful. Mecha Tails was the one opponent he and Sally couldn't hurt lest they be forced to hurt Tails himself too. He had to face it, the match was lost and there was no way he could win. But he reasoned with himself that it didn't matter for their mission was to save Cosmo and get some important information, not to kill Finitevus. They hadn't been prepared for an assassination attempt and if they kept going like they were now, they could compromise the mission. There was also the fact Finitevus had sent Blizzard after Shadow's team, something that could very much compromise the mission. They had to abandon Finitevus for now and make sure that Shadow's team succeeded. He turned to face Sally and Cosmo, the two standing behind him and getting ready to fight.

"Hey girls, I know it's weird for me to say this…but I think we should retreat." said Sonic, "We have to make sure that Shadow's team have succeeded in their mission."

"You're right, we were here to get Cosmo and get some data." murmured Sally, sheathing her blades, "That's our number one priority. Let's get outta here now."

"Hold on tight girls, I'm gonna go as fast as I possibly can." said Sonic, grabbing Sally and Cosmo by the hands.

Just as Finitevus and Mecha Tails prepared to grab the three, Sonic took off as fast as he could and left Finitevus and Mecha Tails behind with a gust of wind blowing in their faces. Finitevus charged out of the lab after them but as he watched Sonic take off down the corridors, he knew that he'd never catch the supersonic hedgehog. But he did have a way of catching him that didn't require running after him. He summoned a warp ring and opened it up just in front of him. The exit to the warp ring was ahead of him while the entrance was in front of the fleeing Sonic the Hedgehog. But Sonic actually saw the warp ring open up ahead of him and he had a brilliant idea. He threw Sally and Cosmo ahead of himself, sending the two girls sliding across the floor on their backs and leaving himself free to

leap into the air, sail over the warp ring and just hook it on the end of his foot as he hurled past it. Finitevus watched with horror as the warp ring closed up, now in Sonic's possession due to his catching it. Sonic landed down on the floor and he flicked the warp ring ahead of himself, opening up a portal to the top floor of *The Nefarious* . But just as he, Sally and Cosmo were about to go through, they saw a surprising sight. Shadow, Bunnie and Rouge came rushing towards them with Blizzard hot on their heels. Blizzard was quite close to the trio, almost ready to lunge at them and snatch them up with her own hands. Quickly, Sonic closed up the warp ring and re-opened it, the portal now redirected to the Golden Hive Colony so they could help Team Chaotix finish off Lord Sycorax. Shadow saw the warp ring and he also spotted with relief that Sonic was the one using it. He could trust Sonic with a warp ring any day so he skated on towards the ring. Finitevus opened up a warp ring and leaped out of it, hoping to catch Sonic, Sally and Cosmo before they went through it. But the trio reacted just a fraction too quick. They jumped through the warp ring and on the other side of the warp ring, Shadow whizzed through it with Bunnie and Rouge in tow. The warp ring closed up in front of Finitevus, leaving him to sail past and crash head first into Blizzard. The two Chaos-powered Mobians collided and fell to the floor in a heap of tangled limbs and a cape. Finitevus picked himself up and he yelled angrily in frustration.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" he bellowed, "They got away! And they've got one of my warp rings again! Damn those Royal Fighters! I swear, next time I catch them, they will NOT escape from me alive!"

"So…what do we do now master?" asked Blizzard curiously.

"We just pick up Lord Sycorax and then leave Nekronopolis." murmured Finitevus grumpily, "Then we start plotting our next move. What a disappointing day this has become…"

With that said, he opened up a warp ring for Lord Sycorax to use to come back onto *The Nefarious* . Finitevus already imagined that the egotistical crocodile had failed miserably at his part of the plan. And he soon got the confirmation that he was right as a very battered and beaten Sycorax came through the warp ring with an equally as battered and beaten Vladek and Romeo. They all collapsed onto the

floor at Finitevus's feet, the echidna shaking his head in annoyance. Why he recruited such incompetent reptiles like them, he'd never know. He hoped that the next day would go much better than today had done…

Later today, the Royal Fighters had all returned home to New Mobotropolis. After escaping *The Nefarious* , Sonic and his friends had come to the Golden Hive Colony to aid Team Chaotix and beating Lord Sycorax. But it turned out that they didn't need to for Finitevus had simply given them a warp ring to come back onto the ship with. Pleased that the Dark Armada had been beaten and their missions had all been a success, the Royal Fighters just simply returned home and they were now inside Amy Rose's hospital room. Amy was in her bed, peacefully sleeping and letting the late Mariah the Medicine Cat's healing potion do more of its magic work on her. It was only her in the room at the moment, the other Royal Fighters were doing other things currently. As Sonic and his team arrived in the room, Amy woke up with a start and sat up straight in her bed. She smiled a small smile at her friends as she saw who it was.

"Oh hi guys." she said happily, "You're all back. That's good to see. Did you succeed?"

"We sure did." said Sonic brightly, "Team Chaotix made a right mess outta Sycorax…"

"…and Nicole got the plans for the de-roboticizer rifle." put-in Bunnie, "So now we can build the rifle ourselves and de-roboticize Tails with it."

"We also have a warp ring that we can use against Finitevus." said Shadow, smirking over the thought of using the potent device against the evil echidna.

"And we won't lose it this time." declared Sally, "And best of all Amy…"

She didn't need to say anything more. She just stepped aside and let Amy see who was standing behind her. The hedgehog put her

hands to her mouth in shock at who it was. Cosmo the Seedrian was standing before her, hands behind her back and a sweet smile on her face. The pink hedgehog's eyes streamed with happy tears as Cosmo climbed onto her bed and hugged her tightly, crying happily with her.

"Oh Cosmo! Thank goodness you're back!" Amy wept with delight, "I was so worried about you! When I heard what that monster did to you and the fact he was keeping you prisoner, I wanted nothing more than for you to come back safely! Thank goodness you're back!"

"I'm glad to be back too Amy." Cosmo cried happily, "It was horrible being locked up on that horrible ship with Mecha Tails beating me up whenever Finitevus was in a bad mood! I'm so glad to be back with you and all my friends! I missed you so much while I was on The Nefarious."

"I missed you too Cosmo." said Amy, wiping her eyes dry and smiling brightly at Cosmo, "Oh Cream's gonna be so happy to have you back! I will say, you do look a little banged up…" she murmured, taking note of Cosmo's healing injuries from the beating Mecha Tails had given her, "But I don't care. I'm just glad to have you back alive Cosmo."

"We're all glad to have Cosmo back." said Sally softly, smiling brightly along with Amy, "We all missed her very much while she was Finitevus's prisoner."

"And now we've got her back." said Sonic, grinning gleefully, "What a good day this has been."

"Indeed." said Cosmo agreeably, "Oh and Amy…it's so good to see you looking better." she added, taking note of Amy's considerably less injured appearance, "I'm so sorry that I became Finitevus's agent. Had I not done so, this may not have happened to you."

"Cosmo, don't be sorry, I heard it all from Sonic and the others." said Amy firmly, "You being Finitevus's agent was not your fault. Finitevus forced you to work for him, he did this to you. It's his fault I nearly died. And I promise you Cosmo, he is going to pay for what

he and his filthy armada did to us. Mark my words, he will pay."

"I know…I know he will." said Cosmo, hugging Amy even tighter, "For now, I'm just happy to be back home where I belong. Now I can repair the damages Finitevus did to me and be back with my loving friends. And I'll also pay my respects for poor Geoffrey too…" she added, remembering how the good-hearted, loyal skunk had ended up sacrificing himself to save New Mobotropolis the other day.

"Ah'm sure Geoffrey would' a been glad to have ya'll back too if he was still here Cosmo." said Bunnie gently, "Ah bet he's lookin' down on us from heaven and smilin' happily at the sight of you back with us."

That very image made Cosmo beam with delight. It was good to know that despite what Finitevus had forced her to do, she was still loved and that was a feeling she would always enjoy feeling. Sonic just beamed, pleased that everything had gone so well today and that the Royal Fighters were a step closer to beating the armada. He turned to Sally and put an arm around her.

"What a good day this has been hey Sal?" he asked delightedly.

"Oh yes…we succeeded in both our missions." agreed Sally, "We'll be able to de-roboticize Tails, we have a warp ring to use against Finitevus and we all escaped with our lives so we can all carry on the battle. I have a feeling that we're going to have some more good days to go along with this."

"Yup." said Sonic brightly, "Though it's a pity about Blizzard…" he added, just remembering that the Ice Witch was still with Finitevus, "We'll have to plan on how we're going to rescue her at some point."

"And we'll need a syringe ready to get the Chaos Energy out of her." noted Sally, "Still, today's been one of our better victories. We best make the most of it while we can. And hope that we'll have some more victories to go alone with this one…"

Sonic nodded agreeably. This had been a great victory and with any luck, today would be topped by more victories in the next few days. And the next victories would hopefully be total victories for them and

nothing for the Dark Armada too…

Yay! The heroes scored a big victory for once! :D Will it carry on though or will the armada strike back hard? We shall see who wins next time in Chapter 220...prepare yourselves for a* "Betrayal and Redemption" *...

Dark Armada Part 20: Betrayal & Redemp

Story 220: Betrayal and Redemption

The Dark Armada Chapter 20 of 25

Roxy the Raccoon groaned a long, sickly, repulsed groan as Lennox Meers the Meerkat approached her, grinning wickedly and rubbing his hands together, clearly ready to have his usual brand of "fun" with her. It was fun for the sick, twisted meerkat but not fun for the poor, bruised raccoon he had at his mercy. Once again, Roxy was in Lennox's dorm room and tied up to an overhead pipe, her arms raised and fastened together with a zip-tie and she was stripped to her underwear as usual. It never ceased to embarrass her every time it happened. It was a very vulnerable position her or indeed anybody to be in, arms firmly tied above the head and the body clad in just a skimpy bra and panties. But Roxy knew that it was part of Lennox's sick little game with her. A game to dominate and humiliate her at the best available opportunity until she had no choice but to submit to him and be his girl forever.

The Dark Armada had not been having a good time recently. Just over the course of one day, they had been betrayed by the Bride of the Conquering Storm and an experiment gone wrong had caused the armada to lose Scourge the Hedgehog and Fiona Fox. The armada had lesser numbers now and that seemed to be costing it dearly. Dr. Finitevus had hoped to strike back with an attack in Nekronopolis and while he now had Blizzard the Ice Witch on his side, that wasn't much of a victory considering that the Royal Fighters had escaped his grasp and with very important information to boot no less. They had downloaded the plans for the de-roboticizer rifle, an invention that Finitevus had created for the sole purpose of de-roboticizing Bunnie Rabbot, to which he'd successfully done and then destroyed the weapon to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. Finitevus had also lost a warp ring to Sonic, something that he REALLY didn't want to lose to his mortal enemies. He'd been planning on getting it back but as a result of the armada's defeats and some damages that needed repairing, he had

spent most of the day recuperating from the armada's latest defeat. It was now a brand new day and Finitevus was likely plotting the best way possible to get his warp ring back. While he was doing that, Lennox was having some alone time with his beloved Roxy, much to the raccoon's disgust. Anytime Lennox and Roxy weren't on a mission, Lennox was having his fun with her. His idea of "fun" seemed to be to groom and molest the purple-furred raccoon while she begged for him to stop. And being as she was tied up, Roxy couldn't fight back. She was helpless whenever Lennox's fun began. His fun also included some physical abuse which had begun to show under her eyes and Lennox took it open himself to give Roxy some very ugly hickeys on her throat. When applying them, he deliberately did it as painfully as possible which led to Roxy wondering if she'd been bitten by a vampire on more than one occasion. Lennox's fun also left her feeling very tired, drained and in agonizing pain, especially in her groin area whenever it ended. It had been a terrible life for Roxy but the raccoon had no choice. She had a bomb stitched inside her head. A small round disc sitting just atop her brain and waiting for somebody to give it the command to explode. Only Finitevus, Lennox or his two friends Owen and Alistair were able to set the bomb off and as life went on, Roxy began wishing Lennox would just put her out of her misery already. She'd rather be dead then be Lennox's little toy for life. But she also knew the easy way out wouldn't improve things for her, it just made her pathetic and cowardly. She wanted to improve her life from the crimes she did as a member of Team Diamond and she couldn't do that if she was dead. So she didn't give Lennox an excuse to set the bomb off and just waited for the right moment to strike, to pay the meerkat back and to get back her freedom. But the opportunity just wouldn't present itself to her and she was beginning to lose all hope.

Roxy waited for Lennox to come up to her and she could already feel his gloved hands on her scantily clad body before he even raised them and prepared to put them on her. The treasure-hunting criminal places his hands on Roxy's hips, staring straight into the defiant raccoon's eyes as he grinned wickedly.

"I hope you're ready Roxy, it's that time of day again." he purred seductively, "Play time for Lennox Meers."

"I'm very excited." muttered Roxy sarcastically, "Why do you do this to me you sick bastard? You do realize that abusing me like this isn't going to make me like you right?"

"I don't want you to like me my girl…" said Lennox coldly, lowering his head so her level with Roxy's neck, "I just want you to respect me. You're my girl now and you'll respect your master. I do hope that you're coming to accept your place as my dominated moll."

"Yeah right, I'll accept my place as your dominated moll…when I'm dead that is." snorted Roxy, "As long as I live, I'll NEVER be dominated by you."

"You will Roxy…you will." crooned Lennox softly.

He then placed his slimy lips on Roxy's neck and gave her a little nibble, making the raccoon cringe in pain and disgust. It felt like he was trying to suck her blood like a vampire.

"OW! That hurts! Stop that!" she wailed frantically.

Lennox didn't stop, he just bit down on the side of her neck even harder, making Roxy squeal loudly in pain. He bit her so hard that he left some very nasty teeth marks on her neck. Lennox just chuckled sadistically at the raccoon.

"You're so much fun when you squeal." he snickered wickedly.

"Look Lennox, abusing me like this doesn't make you tough or anything! It shows how pathetic you are!" snapped Roxy angrily, "You're picking on a defenceless, helpless girl! What's so great about doing that? I bet if you were against girls like those in the Royal Fighters Service, you'd be running away with your tail between your legs!"

"Fie, I'd have a bullet put in their brains more like." snorted Lennox, "Now be quiet before I decide to tape your mouth shut again!"

"You may as well do it to me anyway." sighed Roxy, "You don't care what I have to say. You think women should be seen and not heard."

Lennox ran his hand down Roxy's side and he pinched her in the belly. The raccoon gritted her teeth and held her pain as best as she could as Lennox gripped the skin on her belly and vigorously twisted it with his forefinger and thumb. The look on her face made him feel very happy indeed. He loved seeing his beloved Roxy in pain. He just hoped the raccoon would get sick of it eventually and just give into him already. But to his disappointment, his fun was interrupted by Finitevus using a warp ring to warp himself over into his dorm room. This was the first time he'd done this and the fact that somebody other than Lennox was now seeing her in her underwear, Roxy blushed bright red with embarrassment. Finitevus just stared ahead of himself in obfuscation, unsure what to think of what he was seeing. Lennox turned around, looking as guilty as a man who'd been caught doing something inappropriate in a working environment. Finitevus just narrowed his eyes at Lennox and folded his arms.

"OK…ahem…I shall pretend I don't know what's going on so I can deliver to you this imperative bit of news." he said tightly, ignoring Roxy and focusing squarely on Lennox, "I do hope you're not too busy fooling around with your scantily clad girlfriend Lennox for I have a job for you and Roxy."

"Whoa me? And Roxy? What an honour this is." said the hat-wearing meerkat delightedly, "So…what do you want us to do?"

"I want you two to take one of my warp rings, go to New Mobotropolis and get back the warp ring I lost to Sonic yesterday." ordered Finitevus, "Do NOT come back to me empty handed. Oh and if the heroes have built a de-roboticizer rifle yet…destroy it."

"I will do just that." said Lennox loyally, "But would it make more sense if my whole team went and not just me and Roxy?"

"Miniscule numbers are harder to detect than larger numbers." said Finitevus matter-of-factly.

"Hey, sorry for speaking my mind for a change but why not use Blizzard?" asked Roxy curiously, "She could just a Chaos Control thingy and freeze everybody right?"

"I'm afraid Blizzard is not available right now." said Finitevus grumpily, "The stupid woman picked an inconvenient moment to pass out. The Chaos Energy is obviously having a bad effect on her so I'm going to try and make sure she can function with it in her body and NOT pass out again."

"I see." said Lennox, "Very well, we'll do just that."

"Fail me, and Roxy will have more than just you to worry about…and Roxy will also not be the only one with bruises on her." growled Finitevus menacingly.

Lennox and Roxy both gulped in fear. The last thing either of them wanted was an angry Finitevus punishing them for failing. They'd seen what he'd done to the late Scourge the Hedgehog just for failing and they didn't want to know what would happen to them should they dare fail Finitevus. The consequences could potentially be WORSE than what Scourge had gone through. Lennox bowed down to Finitevus.

"We won't fail you Finitevus, neither me nor Roxy. That warp ring will be returned to you and the Royal Fighters' rifle will be destroyed, that much is certain." Lennox swore.

"Good." said Finitevus grimly, "The Dark Armada can scarcely afford to have a loss as catastrophic as yesterday's…"

With that said, he gave Lennox a warp ring and left the room through another one of his own warp rings. The moment Finitevus left, Lennox put the warp ring into his cloak and he turned to face Roxy. He jammed his face into the raccoon's face, making her feel very uncomfortable.

"We have a job to do my little pet…and you better not try and double-cross me or I'll set the bomb off in your head. Capisce?" growled Lennox menacingly.

"Oh please, I'd rather *keep* my head thank you." muttered Roxy, "Now please untie me so I can get dressed up for the mission."

Lennox proceeded to do just that. The last thing he wanted was for

Roxy to attract some attention, possibly unwanted and very awkward attention and thus, blowing their cover for the mission. Lennox reached up to Roxy's wrists and he undid the zip-tie. Roxy lowered her arms but then just before Lennox could do anything, the raccoon grabbed him by the shoulders and suddenly head-butted him directly between the eyes! The meerkat didn't even make a sound as Roxy swiftly knocked him out with the powerful blow to the head she'd inflicted on him. Roxy left Lennox to collapse onto the floor, completely unconscious before she got to work. Finitevus had given her the opportunity she needed to get her freedom back. The opportunity had come to her in the form of a mission involving her and a warp ring. Now the bodacious raccoon had just knocked Lennox out, she proceeded to tie him up with the zip-tie that had been used so often on her own wrists. Lennox was now propped up by his arms, the zip-tie biting into his wrists as he slouched against the wall. Roxy snickered to herself. How great it was to have Lennox tied up for once while she was free! She felt very excited. Finally, she was going to be free from the armada! All her nightmares would be over at last and she could be the good girl she wanted to be! No more abuse from Lennox and no more slaving for the armada just to keep her head! She was free at last! Roxy could hardly contain her joy as she thought about her brilliant her escape plan was. She then quickly grabbed a roll of duct tape and taped Lennox's mouth shut so that he wouldn't be able to cry for help when he came to. With her abused bound and gagged, Roxy took a moment to get herself dressed. She did not want to be skulking around in her underwear a moment longer, especially when it came to meeting the Royal Fighters. She quickly got out her bodysuit, boots and gloves and wasted no time getting them on. Now fully dressed, she snatched the warp ring from Lennox's cloak and stuck her tongue out at him.

"You really thought you'd beaten me…you REALLY did." she taunted, "Now you're gonna pay you gun-slinging bastard!"

With a sly grin, she flicked the warp ring over her shoulder and opened up a portal to NewMobotropolis. Having been there before, she knew what it looked like and was able to open a portal there with ease. Once there, she would tell Sonic the truth and get the bomb removed from her head. And once that was done, she'd make Lennox pay for all he'd done to her. Roxy turned her back hastily on

Lennox and jumped through the warp ring, leaving the unconscious meerkat bound and gagged in the room as the warp ring closed up behind her…

"Here it is Sonic and Sally, the de-roboticizer rifle all built and ready for de-roboticizing." announced Kari the Rat excitedly, presenting to Sonic the Hedgehog and Queen Sally Acorn a huge rifle that was silver in colour and designed like a standard sniper rifle.

"Me and Kari worked endlessly on that." said Jessica the Cougar, taking some sort of pride in the fact she and Kari in particular had been the ones who built it, "And now it's ready. We can now save our fellow friend Tails from Finitevus's evil control."

The Royal Fighters had had one of the first good days in a while since the war with the Dark Armada had begun. Yesterday, they'd successfully carried out a mission to save Cosmo the Seedrian from Finitevus's captivity and also downloaded the plans to the mad doctor's de-roboticizer rifle. Finitevus had built it to de-roboticize Bunnie Rabbot and had destroyed it before the heroes could get it for themselves but Sally had come up with the genius idea to steal the plans for the rifle and use them to create their own copy of the rifle and use it to de-roboticize Tails. The twin-tailed child prodigy was a credit to the Royal Fighters Service, being a great inventor and mechanic as well as being an amazing friend to anybody who knew him, especially Sonic himself and also being the boyfriend of Cosmo the Seedrian. Cosmo herself as with Sonic and Sally and she was delighted to see the one-way ticked to Tails being saved that the heroes now had displayed before them in Kari and Jessica's own hands. Kari and Jessica had been given the task of building the rifle since they were good at building things, the best they had without Tails on the team at the moment. Now the next day, they had finished it and were presenting it to Hero of Mobius and Queen of New Mobotropolis themselves. They were all standing just outside of Royal HQ. Sonic and Sally beamed delightedly at the sight of the completed weapon they had before them. Sonic himself was about to go wild with excitement. They could finally save Tails and get him back! And because they had a warp ring from Finitevus in their possession, the mission would be easy now! They could warp

straight onto *The Nefarious* and just use the rifle on Tails!

"Gotta say ladies, it looks great." said Sonic happily, "I bet it'll work perfectly."

"Oh we gave it a shot and it fires perfectly." said Kari proudly, "And I'm very sure that it'll work on Mecha Tails and turn him back to normal."

"One way to find that out." said Sonic brightly, "We'll go over to The Nefarious and use it on Mecha Tails! Then it'll be bye-bye Mecha Tails and welcome back Tails!"

"Provided it works that is…" murmured Sally worriedly, "But then again, it worked for Finitevus so why wouldn't it work for us? We followed his plans as exactly and given they're HIS plans for a weapon HE created, there's no guarantee it won't work." she thought, feeling less anxious now.

"You got that right Sal." said Sonic happily, "It'll work and Tails will finally be back with us again. I can't tell you how much I've missed my little buddy. This team really did feel incomplete without him…" he sighed sadly.

"And ever since he was roboticized, there's been a hole in my heart that cannot be filled without his return." said Cosmo solemnly, "But we'll get him back at last. I can't wait to see my adorable little fox again."

"There's many others who will go ballistic with glee upon his return too, namely Sora Prower." noted Sonic, "So Sal, when do we go to de-roboticize Tails?"

"In a moment Sonic." said Sally, "We'll get going as soon as we're ready."

"We'll just go and tell everybody the good news." offered Jessica, "They'll be so glad to hear that Tails will be coming home soon."

"Sure ladies, go ahead." said Sonic, taking the rifle from the cougar and rat.

Kari and Jessica nodded and they left to tell the other Royal Fighters the good news. As they left, Sonic turned to Sally and Cosmo.

"OK Sal, what are we waiting for?" asked Sonic impatiently, "I've got my ten year old best friend to save!"

"Remember the Chaos Energy we extracted from Fiona?" asked Sally, "Well thanks to a power ring, me and Nicole have managed to make a more positive formula and we now have a safe-to-use Synthetic Chaos Energy of our own to use against Finitevus. I plan to use another power ring in the formula just to make it EVEN MORE positive as a just in case."

"Well let's hope we won't turn evil later on with it like poor Blizzard has done…" said Sonic sadly, "Speaking of her, do we plan on rescuing her at any point because I sure want her back good. She made me proud after turning against her evil deeds and wanting to be good and Finitevus has just undermined all that."

"We won't make Blizzard's heel-turn in vain." promised Sally, "We'll rescue her. For now, we take it one step at a time. We'll save Tails first and save Blizzard for later. And I assure your, the Chaos Energy we now have has no negative Chaos Energy left after using that power ring. Nicole scanned it herself to reassure me that was the case."

"And my scans are NEVER wrong." added Nicole, suddenly materializing into view beside Sally.

"So maybe at some point, we could use it against Finitevus. Great!" cried Sonic excitedly, "I bet we'll floor him when we power ourselves up with it!"

"Indeed." said Sally, "Now I've given you the news, we can get going…"

Before anybody could make a move, a voice called out to them and startled the four Mobians. The voice startled Sonic and Cosmo more than anybody for they knew all too well who that voice belonged to and it was a voice they hadn't expected to hear anytime soon. The Mobians looked over at where the voice had come from and to their

surprise, they saw Roxy the Raccoon running up the hill to meet them. Sonic's blood began to boil with rage. Roxy had told him that she hated Team Diamond and wanted to betray them so he helped her do just that. And then Roxy had told him in his first battle with the armada that she had played him for a sap the whole time and had willingly joined the armada. The last time Cosmo had seen Roxy, she had been trying to protect her along with Tails only for Roxy to get kidnapped by Finitevus*. Cosmo suspected something was fishy about her joining the armada. She'd been trying to escape from Team Diamond after they were trying to kill her and then suddenly she joins the armada along with Team Diamond. Had what she and Tails gone through been an act too? She didn't know what to think. Roxy ran up to the top of the hill and stopped in front of Sonic, panting heavily and pausing for a moment to catch her breath. Sally, who was mostly unfamiliar with Roxy save for one meeting and one conversation with her, immediately took notice of the bruises under Roxy's eyes and the hickeys on her throat. What on Mobius had been going on with her behind-the-scenes? She had a feeling all was not what it seemed.

"Oh thank goodness I found you!" panted Roxy, "I was hoping I hadn't missed you or anything!"

"Roxy! What the hell are you doing here you treacherous bitch?!" snarled Sonic angrily.

"Sonic! We have a kid around!" hissed Sally angrily, disgusted to hear Sonic using profanity in the presence of a child. Cosmo however didn't seem all that shocked as if she had heard profanity before and knew what it was all about.

"Now, now Sonic, please don't be angry at me but I'm here to tell you something very important." Roxy insisted, "Just hear me out…"

"Get out of my city!" shouted Sonic, "Go on, beat it! Get lost! You're one of them! A filthy Dark Armada member! Get out before I throw you in prison!"

"Sonic please, let me explain myself!" begged Roxy, "This is all a big misunderstanding, I promise you…"

"Not interested! You told me yourself that your "heel-turn" was just an act and I feel for it! I'm not falling for your manipulation again Roxy now get lost!" growled Sonic angrily.

"No I won't actually because I'm not leaving until you hear the truth!" barked Roxy fiercely, "And here it is…I HATE the Dark Armada! I hate them even more than Team Diamond and I want nothing more than to get away from those heathens! You see, I was forced into joining the armada by Finitevus himself! He kidnapped me and stitched a bomb inside my head to force me to comply to his needs! I had no choice but to work for him just like your little friend Cosmo was forced into working for him!" she shouted, pointing at Cosmo upon mentioning her name, "Please, you HAVE to believe me!"

Sally, Cosmo and Nicole all looked concerned and even shocked to hear the raccoon's story. It sounded a bit amazing but Cosmo thought the story had some merit. She had seen Roxy get kidnapped by Finitevus so the story made sense to her. Maybe the raccoon was being truthful for a change. Sonic however didn't seem convinced.

"You seriously expect me to believe such an obviously made up story?" snorted Sonic.

"IT'S THE TRUTH YOU IGNORANT BASTARD!" bellowed Roxy angrily, her eyes streaming with angry tears, "You're so disgustingly obtuse you are! How dare you accuse me of lying! Did you really think that a former actress such as myself would really make up a story that crazy?!"

"I would actually." sniffed Sonic, "As you said, you used to be an actress. Your acting skills require you to make up crazy stories like this. Now go crawling back to the Dark Armada where you belong you lying scoundrel!"

Roxy grabbed her chest in shock as if the harsh words had just wounded her very heart. She didn't know that Sonic could be so callous and even spiteful towards somebody. The armada clearly left a very bad taste in his mouth, that much was certain.

"No Sonic, wait, I think she's being serious!" protested Cosmo,

standing defensively in front of Roxy, "You see, Roxy DID get kidnapped by Finitevus! Me and Tails told you about it ourselves remember? Finitevus snatched her up with a warp ring! Her story has credibility!"

"Yeah right. Didn't you consider the fact that Finitevus was in on her act too?" scoffed Sonic, "Don't you dare defend Roxy Cosmo! You of all people shouldn't be so gullible!" he added angrily.

"ENOUGH!" bellowed Sally at the top of her voice.

The silence that followed her shouting lasted for a few tense seconds. Nobody moved. Nobody even so much as breathed. Sally had never shouted so loudly before so this had shocked everybody. Sally then broke the silence and turned to Nicole.

"I now how to separate the truth from the lies. Nicole, is Roxy telling the truth?" asked Sally.

Nicole was the world's greatest lie detector, a blessing from her being turned into a computer and having a built-in lie detector. It had worked beautifully during Sally and Sonic's interrogation of Dàfeng Rai the other day and now Sally was going to see if Nicole could work out if Roxy was telling the truth. Nicole observed Roxy all over and then scanned her, firing a scanning beam out of her eyes and running it up and down Roxy's body. Roxy stood very still, holding her breath as Nicole scanned her. After the scan was complete, Nicole turned to her friends. Her face was ashen.

"Roxy is telling the truth…there IS indeed a bomb inside her head! It's a small disc sitting atop her brain!" she gasped hoarsely, "And to further prove this, she has a scar on her cranium from where it had been cut open!"

Sonic was hit with a wave of guilt as Nicole delivered her findings to him. He felt nothing but disgust at himself for being so horrible to Roxy. How could he have dismissed her claims like this?! Sonic began to wonder if his heart had just shrunk a couple of sizes for his spiteful behaviour. He had believed Roxy when she said she wanted to betray Team Diamond so how could he not believe her now? Sonic shamed himself and put his hands behind his back. Cosmo

and Sally just glared at Sonic as if to say "Serves you right for being so heartless you big jerk" to him without necessarily using their mouths.

"Oh…oh gosh…R-Roxy…I-I-I'm s-so sorry." stammered Sonic guiltily, "P-P-Please forgive me. I'm really sorry for what I said. I just…I just…"

"It's OK Sonic, I've been known to deceive people a lot before." sighed Roxy, "Even Lennox himself. Sometimes I've doubted if I'm being honest or not…now then, please can you lot get the bomb out of my head? If Finitevus or Team Diamond get me, they can set it off and then…"

"We'll take you to the hospital and get you a surgeon immediately." said Sally, "But I must ask Roxy, how did you escape the armada?"

"I knocked Lennox out with a head butt and used a warp ring Finitevus gave me and him for a mission we were supposed to be doing together." explained Roxy, showing the warp ring to Sally, "As for Lennox…you'll not believe what that psycho's done to me while I've been on the ship. He tied me up, had me wearing nothing but my underwear and he took it upon himself to abuse me physically and mentally at every available opportunity! He…he FORCED himself onto me against my will and because of that, it hurts between my legs every morning and I just look a ghastly sight! Have you see my bruises and hickeys?!" she exclaimed, pointing to them frantically.

"Yes I did." murmured Sally, "And it's terrible what you've been through Roxy. No woman in the world should ever have to go through what you did. I bet you've been traumatized by that horrible meerkat's actions for life…"

"I have! Because of that freak, I'm officially off dating forever now!" declared Roxy angrily, "I never want to have another man fawning over me as long as I live!"

"I understand very much dear." said Sally sadly, shaking her head and feeling nothing but sympathy for the raccoon, "Now then, let's get that bomb removed before anybody can set it off."

"And once that's done, you can help us save Tails!" suggested Sonic, "Give you a chance to redeem yourself if you wish."

"Oh thank you Sonic!" squealed Roxy excitedly, "I'd love to come on your mission with you!"

With that said, Sonic led Roxy over to the New Mobotropolis Hospital to get the bomb in her head removed…

After what felt like an eternity, Roxy the Raccoon slowly but steadily began to come to. She opened her eyes slowly, moaning sleepily as she began to regain consciousness.

Upon arriving at the hospital, Roxy was taken to a surgeon immediately and after a quick explanation about why Roxy was here and what the problem was, the doctors had seen to it that Roxy got her surgery as soon as possible. They had put the raccoon to sleep and worked carefully on removing the bomb from inside her head. The whole process had taken an hour and a half, most of it spent just carefully removing the bomb. To the doctor's relief, the bomb had been a little easier to remove than they had thought. They had expected the bomb to be fused to a piece of Roxy's brain but at the most, it was neatly attached there by a sticky substance under the bomb to keep it firmly in place. The removing of the bomb required the doctor's steady hands and a firm pair of tweezers. The bomb now lay on a counter just beside Roxy's bed, still blinking and soaked with fluids from Roxy's head. After the bomb had been removed, the raccoon's head was carefully stitched shut and the doctors left her to rest for another half hour. Two hours after the operation, Roxy was finally waking up. Her head felt like it was on fire as the mother of all headaches began flaring up in her skull. She didn't sit up, she remained lying down as she regained her consciousness. Sonic and Sally were standing beside her bed, watching her as the raccoon came to. They hadn't seen the actual operation going on, they had been requested to wait outside until the doctors had finished. Sonic eyed the stitches across Roxy's scalp. They would soon fade away and Roxy would have nothing but a scar hidden amongst her hair to indicate what had been done to it. Roxy's eyes fully opened and the groggy raccoon turned her head to

one side. She saw Sonic and Sally beside her, looking pleased to see her awake.

"Oh…hi guys." she said weakly, "So…how did it go?"

"Ask your doctor." said Sonic, "I'm sure he can tell you everything."

Roxy turned her head to her other side and saw her doctor standing by her bedside. The doctor was a pigeon who was one of the most skilled surgeons in the NewMobotropolisHospital. It was said that nobody had more skilled hands than he did. He wore a name tag that indicated his name was "Crawford Coo". He looked down at his patient and gave her the good news.

"Well Madame, it was quite a nerve-racking operation but we managed to get the bomb out of your head." he explained, pointing to the device on the counter beside the bed, "I must say, I've never had a case like this before. Stitching a bomb inside somebody's head? I can't imagine who'd do something so evil!"

Roxy took a moment to beam delightedly at the sight of the bomb, now out of her head, before answering Crawford Coo's questions.

"Dr. Finitevus, the leader of the Dark Armada, did it to me." muttered Roxy, "He did it so that he could force me to work for him or my head will go kaboom. Thank you so much for getting it out."

"You're quite welcome love." said Coo briskly, "As for that bomb, I'd recommend disposing of it before this Finitevus fellow sets it off."

"I know exactly what to do with it." said Roxy, her expression suddenly becoming very dark and serious, "Sonic, Sally, you two can go save Tails on your own if you wish. I on the other hand am going to put the bomb to a much better use."

She sat up on the bed and grabbed the bomb quickly. Before she could do anything though, Sally put a hand on the raccoon's shoulder and gave her a firm look. Roxy stared back at Sally. She wasn't sure if she was going to like where this was going to go.

"Now Roxy, I hope you're not going to use that bomb on Lennox." said Sally sternly, "He's wronged you, that much is certain, but killing

him won't make you any better. You'll actually feel worse for doing what I think you're going to do. Killing doesn't solve anything."

"Puh, try saying that when you're in my shoes sister." snorted Roxy, "Lennox is a demon and he needs to die. ONLY with his death will I ever be free! As long as he lives, I'll be plagued with the memories of my horrible experiences with him! I'm sorry you don't like this Queenie but I HAVE to do this! I'll never be content as long as that perverted freak lives!"

"Sorry to say this Sal, but I'm with Roxy on this." said Sonic tersely, "If we're OK to get rid of Finitevus then we shouldn't stop Roxy from getting rid of Lennox. Plus it's the fact we show our enemies mercy as to why they keep coming back to make our lives miserable. If Lennox lives, he has a chance to make Roxy's life miserable again."

"But Sonic, Finitevus is an entirely different monster altogether." protested Sally, "Silver and Blaze explicitly told us that he caused the end of the world! He HAS to be put down for exactly that reason! Lennox isn't that bad and if we can convince him we're telling the truth, he could…"

"Wait, what?!" shrieked Roxy suddenly, interrupting Sally and catching her attention, "Finitevus causes the world to end?! What do you mean?"

"Silver and Blaze are Mobians from the future and in their future, they found a book detailing Mobius's FINAL year." explained Sally, "Said final year is this year, 2144. The book describes a being called Enerjak being the one responsible and Enerjak's description in the book matches Finitevus's appearance, only with the Enerjak armour. This is more than enough proof that Finitevus's plan is to become Enerjak and the Synthetic Chaos Energy that he and the armada have been making must be the key element that helps him become Enerjak. That's why Finitevus in particular needs to be put down."

Roxy stared incredulously at Sally, taking in everything she'd said and thinking to herself for a minute.

"But...Finitevus told us that the plan had nothing to do with him..." murmured Roxy, "Then again, I shouldn't be surprised that he's

lying. And Enerjak destroys the world...the armada's plan wasn't about destroying the world!"

"Face it Roxy, Finitevus played all of you for saps, every single one of the Dark Armada." said Sonic sadly, shaking his head as if almost pitying his enemies, "It's obvious that you're all just unwitting pawns in his big game. And I have a nasty feeling that Finitevus might actually sacrifice the armada once his plan's complete. I mean, what use will he have for the armada when he becomes Enerjak?"

"Oh my god...and I would have been slaughtered by him if I stayed in the armada!" gasped Roxy hoarsely, unable to believe what she'd heard "Oh thank goodness I got away when I could."

"You have no idea how lucky you are." said Sally solemnly, "But the rest of the armada likely won't be so lucky. Maybe we could persuade them into turning against Finitevus..."

"Don't bother, they believed Finitevus when he told them the plan wasn't about Enerjak." said Roxy dismissively, "They won't believe you. Better to just get rid of Finitevus before the plan is executed."

"Fair enough but we could still try." murmured Sally, "Speaking of which, I think now's a good time to get Tails de-roboticized."

"Got the rifle right here." said Sonic brightly, holding it up for Sally to see, "And you've got the warp ring. You ready to go?"

"I am." said Sally brightly, "Roxy, are you coming too?" she asked, "As Sonic said, you've got a chance to redeem yourself."

"I sure am." said Roxy, "But first, I'm gonna get rid of Lennox. Then I'm going to help you."

She took out her own warp ring and opened up a portal to Lennox's room on *The Nefarious* . The former treasure hunter began to wonder if Lennox was awake yet. If he was still knocked out than Roxy would be surprised. She'd head-butted him very hard after all. Sally tried to follow Roxy through the warp ring so she could stop the raccoon from going ahead with what was essentially murder but the warp ring closed up behind her. Sally couldn't stop Roxy now. The

red-haired raccoon was going to kill Lennox. Sally admitted that after what Lennox had done to Roxy, the meerkat hardly deserved to live but murder was murder, no matter the reason. But if it was OK to kill Finitevus then it was hardly wrong to kill Lennox. Lennox had killed lots of people in the past and was very dangerous so maybe he deserved to die too. Sally decided to leave Roxy to her work and she turned to Sonic.

"Sonic, let's get your best friend back." she said happily.

"Hell yeah!" cried Sonic, "Tails, here we come!"

He then opened up his warp ring and jumped through it with Sally following closely behind. He had opened the warp ring up inside *The Nefarious* 's laboratory, a very good place to start looking. Now aboard, Sonic and Sally could put their plan into action...

On *The Nefarious* itself, Roxy was in her former dorm room with Lennox glaring straight at her. The meerkat had finally managed to wake up after being knocked out for so long, his wake-up call being a hard slap across the face from Roxy. Upon awakening, Lennox saw that his beloved Roxy had returned and to the gun-slinging treasure hunter's annoyance, she had that annoying little smirk on her face, a smirk that really pinched a nerve in him and made him go wild with anger. He struggled in his binds, trying to get free so he could deck Roxy for knocking him out. But the zip-tie held firm so he couldn't get away. Roxy just whipped out her trademark baton weapon and she walloped Lennox in the gut with it. How wonderful it felt to be hitting Lennox for once. She could do this forever. But instead of hitting him again, the voluptuous H.U.N.T. turncoat ripped the tape off of Lennox's mouth, making him wince in pain and leaving him with stinging lips.

"How does it feel to be hurt by me Lennox?" sneered Roxy.

"Roxy, set me free right now or your head goes kaboom!" snarled Lennox.

"Don't care." scoffed Roxy, "You won't do it anyway. You won't have

your little plaything now will you?"

"If I don't set the bomb off than Finitevus will!" yelled Lennox, "Or Owen or Alistair! Now let me go!"

"No. You refused to let ME go when I begged you to so why should you be any different?" said Roxy coldly, "Like I say, I HATE hypocrites like you."

"Roxy, last warning! Release me now or you're dead!" bellowed Lennox.

"If I'm to die now, at least I get the satisfaction of rubbing it in your face how I outwitted you once again and knocked you out for the second time." taunted Roxy, grabbing Lennox's face and shaking it, "You think you're so smart and yet you fooled yourself into thinking I submitted to you. You're a great big IDIOT Lennox. You really are if you think I'd ever submit to you. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to walk out of this room and out of your life forever. Goodbye Lennox...you perverted freak!"

She then followed her sentence with a punch to the jaw. Lennox was more surprised than hurt by the punch. Roxy could punch a lot harder than she looked like she could. The punch had left Lennox with a bleeding lip and some teeth falling out onto the floor. Lennox spat out blood and teeth as Roxy gave him a sly, triumphant grin of pleasure. Then sure turned her back on Lennox and casually walked out of the room. Enraged, Lennox bellowed after her.

"That's it, you won't get away with this!" roared Lennox, "Bomb: SELF DESTRUCT!"

Roxy heard the explosion that finished off Lennox Meers for good as clear as daylight as she walked down the corridor hastily. The explosion was surprisingly loud for such a small bomb and it caused her ears to wince in protest against the noise. She imagined what must have been going through Lennox's head as the bomb she'd sneaked under his hat went off. She imagined Lennox must have been horrified to realize that once again, he'd been tricked, and by her no less. And that had led to his extremely grisly death, She daren't imagine the mess that Owen and Alistair would have to clean

up in the dorm room. Just outside of Lennox's room, a huge spray of blood stained the walls and a trail of blood snaked across the floor as it leaving a trail that led to the wall. Smoke drifted out from the room. Roxy cringed, imagining that that could have been her had she not been able to get the bomb out of her head. She was thankful to Sonic and Sally for taking her to the hospital so it could be removed. And now she'd used it on Lennox and with the meerkat very much dead, the raccoon let out a cry of relief, relieved tears streaming down her face but she didn't sob. Her eyes did all the crying for her.

"Finally...I'm free, FREE!" she cried out ecstatically, "I live without fear of being shot by that scumbag at long last! That demon will never torment me again!"

She let out all her joy and relief for a moment before wiping her eyes dry and pulling out her warp ring.

"Now time to help Sonic and Sally de-roboticize a certain twin-tailed fox that tried to help me once...it's the most I owe him." she said softly to herself.

She flicked open the warp ring and allowed herself to step through it and into the room she expected to find Mecha Tails...the laboratory.

Roxy had been right to guess that Mecha Tails would be in the lab for down on the middle floor in *The Nefarious* 's laboratory, Mecha Tails was there studying the Synthetic Chaos Energy formula. He knew that the formula was ready to use and that there was nothing to worry about but he was double-checking to make doubly sure that the formula was perfect. His scans came out 100% positive. The formula was just right. Finitevus could still test it on somebody. Now who he wanted to test it on was beyond his realm of knowledge. He hoped that his master was going to test it on Sonic in particular. How he would love to see the blue-furred hedgehog become a test subject for Finitevus! Then suddenly, Mecha Tails found himself receiving a visitor. He turned to one side and stared in amazement as a warp ring opened up and out of it stepped not Dr. Finitevus, but Sonic and Sally. Mecha Tails dropped down into a battle-ready

stance and prepared to fight. He failed to noticed that Sonic had a gun slung around his back. Most notably...the de-roboticizer rifle. He focused squarely on Sonic and nothing else.

"Intruders. You will be exterminated." droned Mecha Tails.

"Hey Tails, put your hands in the air!" yelled Sonic.

He pointed the de-roboticizer rifle at Mecha Tails and fired it at him. A yellow laser blast shot out of the rifle and struck Mecha Tails. The Robian fox straightened all over as he was hit by the blast and he let out a robotic wail of agony. The hedgehog and squirrel watched with baited breath as the blast did its work. They watched with glee as Mecha Tails's body began to transform from metal and circuitry to flesh and blood. His tails became soft, bushy and furry, his bangs were no longer sharp and metallic, his optics became eyes and his metallic muzzle became furry and now had a mouth again. His hands and feet became organic and his gloves and shoes were now back to being clothes as opposed to his actual hands and feet. The de-roboticization had worked! Tails was back to normal again! The de-roboticized fox fell down to his knees and fainted onto the floor, the blast having drained some of his strength momentarily and disorientated him. Sonic threw down the rifle and ran over to Tails's side. The young cub was breathing softly but steadily and his pulse was normal. He wouldn't be out for long. Sonic turned Tails onto his back and held his head up.

"Tails! Buddy! Are you OK?" asked Sonic worriedly, "Please be OK pal! I've been trying to save you for so long! Please wake up."

Tails lay still in Sonic's arms for a few seconds before he finally opened his eyes and turned his head to one side. Sonic's heart leapt with joy as Tails began to wake up. He'd missed his buddy so much, especially his kind, friendly, loveable face that could put anybody in a good frame of mind. He was delighted to see him back to normal, no longer a robot and with his own body back. He especially liked seeing Tails's eyes slowly open and what lay under his eyelids were his normal, sky blue eyes instead of cold, emotionless optics. Sally knelt down beside Sonic, her eyes flowing with happy tears as she stared at the de-roboticized body of Miles "Tails" Prower. How good it was to see him back to normal at long last! Tails fully opened his

eyes and he stared at himself. He raised up his trembling hands and opened his mouth wide in shock.

"Oh…Oh my…oh my gosh! I'm…I'm not a robot anymore! I'm me again!" shrieked Tails, his voice a mixture of surprise and delight.

"Hey Tails! Buddy!" cried Sonic happily, his eyes now streaming with happy tears, "Look who's here for you!"

Tails turned his head to his right side and gasped as he saw who it was that was holding him in his arms and kneeling beside him. The fox burst into tears and threw his arms around his big brother figure, weeping hard into his shoulder and hugging him as if this was the last time they'd ever hug. Sally put her hands to her heart in awe as the hedgehog and fox shared their first brotherly hug in days. It felt like forever since Tails had been heartlessly yanked away from the Royal Fighters and now they had him back. Fate could be so kind when it wanted to be.

"Oh Sonic! Thank you so much!" sobbed Tails, "Thank you for de-roboticizing me! It was horrible being a robot working for Finitevus! He made me contribute to his plot to become Enerjak and while I was a robot, I said nasty things to you all and killed Mariah! I actually KILLED somebody while I was Mecha Tails! And Finitevus made me beat up Cosmo as well! It was horrible!"

"Oh Tails, you remember all that?" asked Sonic, horrified to hear that the heartbroken cub was reliving the events that had transpired upon him becoming a robot. He had hoped Tails wouldn't remember the horrors he'd done as Mecha Tails.

"I remember EVERYTHING!" howled Tails despairingly, "All the battles I had with you, the Royal Fighters I nearly killed, the fact I DID kill somebody, the times Finitevus made me beat up Cosmo and even all the contributions I made to his big plan! It's because of me the Synthetic Chaos Energy is even perfected! If only I didn't get kidnapped! I'm sorry Sonic! I'm so sorry! Sorry for everything I did as Mecha Tails and all the pain I caused! I'm so sorry…"

The twin-tailed genius lost any control he had over his sobbing and was unable to speak anymore. He just hugged Sonic even tighter

and wailed uncontrollably into the hedgehog's shoulder, drenching his fur with his tears. It broke Sonic's heart to see his best friend like this. Finitevus had ruined Tails's childhood by doing this to him. The poor fox would be scarred for life and his innocence would never return. And he wasn't even a teenager yet. Sonic patted Tails affectionately on the back and shed some tears along with him. He wiped his eyes dry and put his hands firmly on Tails's shoulders. The snivelling fox stared into the hedgehog's eyes, still crying but sobbing more quietly now.

"Listen to me Tails. NONE of this is your fault. NONE OF IT." Sonic insisted, "It's all the fault of that albino freak Finitevus. He roboticized you, he made you do all this, he's responsible for your evil-doings. None of that was you, it was never you. It was always Finitevus. You getting kidnapped wasn't your fault, neither of us could have foreseen Finitevus coming. He kept us so much in the dark that we didn't know when he was going to show up. Do not blame yourself for this buddy. Mark my words, you're blameless in the entire thing. Finitevus is the one to blame for everything. And I promise you, he will pay for what he did to you. He'll pay for EVERYTHING. For now, I'm just very happy to have by best friend and my little brother figure back with me and all my friends again. I've missed you so much while you've been Finitevus's lackey."

"I've missed you too Sonic." whimpered Tails, wiping his eyes dry "I've missed all of you while I've been Finitevus's robot slave…I'm so glad to be back to normal now. I can't thank you enough for making that de-roboticizer rifle to restore me to normal."

"Tails, you have no idea how welcome you are." said Sonic kindly, "Now come on, let's get you home buddy. A certain alien plant is dying to see you again."

"Yes, please, get me away from this horrible place." begged Tails, "I just wanna go home and see my beautiful Cosmo and my loving sister again."

Sally was already on hand to open up a warp ring and create a portal that led from *The Nefarious* 's lab to New Mobotropolis. But just as the warp ring opened up, another warp ring opened up beside it and a hand shot out to grab the warp ring and yank it

through the other one. Sonic, Tails and Sally gasped in horror as they saw Dr. Finitevus himself standing before them, putting his warp ring back onto his wrist. His face was contorting with rage. He had come to the lab to check on Mecha Tails only to see Sonic and Sally in the lab and Tails now fully organic and no longer a robot. He glared angrily at the trio.

"Well, well, well…it appears my glorious assistant is no longer a robot." growled Finitevus menacingly, "Too bad that your precious Tails will not live long enough to scorn my name and revile everything he's done."

"You stay away from Tails you creep!" snarled Sonic, pulling the terrified fox cub close to himself and hugging him tightly, "You've done enough damage to him already, I won't let you hurt him anymore!"

"I'd like to see you try." muttered Finitevus, "Now you don't have a warp ring anymore, you have no chance against me."

"Maybe not but we have an ace up our sleeves…" purred Sally confidently.

Finitevus dismissed the claim as a mere bluff and he prepared to attack the Royal Fighters. But then Sally's aforementioned ace-up-their-sleeve came into play. A warp ring opened up in front of Finitevus and a purple raccoon in a black bodysuit jumped out of it. Finitevus only just had enough time to register the fact it was Roxy who came out of the warp ring before he was walloped across the head by her trademark weapon. Finitevus cried out in pain and landed with a callous thump on the floor. Roxy bore over Finitevus and glared at him, pleased to have hit him at long last.

"That was for kidnapping me and forcing me to join your filthy army!" she snarled, "Now I've got the bomb out of my head, I leave you forever Finitevus! And don't bother sending Lennox after me…his brain's all splattered across the floor in his room now."

Finitevus slowly raised his head and got up on all fours as Roxy flicked open the warp ring and jumped through it. Sonic, Sally and Tails ran through the warp ring after Roxy from the other side,

transporting themselves from *The Nefarious* and back into New Mobotropolis. Finitevus lunged for the warp ring but it closed shut just before he could grab it. Finitevus stayed deathly still for a few tense moments as he let it dawn on him on what had just happened. Mecha Tails had been taken away from him, Roxy had gotten the bomb out of her head so he couldn't keep her in the armada and as she indicated, Lennox was dead, which now left him with a very small army indeed. His beautiful armada was merely a shadow of its former self. Enraged, Finitevus grabbed the discarded de-roboticizer rifle that had spelt the death of Mecha Tails and he tore it in half with his bare hands. Throwing the pieces into a wall, he bellowed a thunderous roar of anger, filling the entire room with an ominous echo that tail-ended his roars of anger…

Meanwhile in New Mobotropolis, Cosmo and Sora were waiting just outside of Royal HQ. Cosmo had brought Sora to Royal HQ to greet Tails when Sonic and Sally returned home with him. Cosmo had told Sora all about the plan and the teenage super-spy was ecstatic with glee that the heroes finally had a way to save Tails and now Sonic and Sally were going ahead with it. The girls waited with baited breath for Sonic and Sally to return. As the minutes passed, Sora began to grow worried and doubtful. Would the two succeed in saving Tails? Would they come back with him safe and sound and no longer roboticized? Sora couldn't let herself be too doubtful. Like Cosmo, she tried her best to remain optimistic as they waited for the hedgehog and squirrel to return. Then suddenly, a warp ring opened up and startled Cosmo and Sora. Their surprise quickly disappeared though when they saw who it was that was coming out of the warp ring. Sonic, Sally and Roxy all emerged from the warp ring and greeted the two girls happily.

"Hey Cosmo, hey Sora!" cried Sonic cheerfully.

"It's good to see you three back." said Cosmo brightly.

"It's also good to hear that you're on our side again Roxy." added Sora brightly, looking over at Roxy "So how did the mission go?"

"Well I went over and killed Lennox." explained Roxy, showing

nothing but pride in having done the deed, "I sneaked the bomb Finitevus put in my head under his hat and tricked him into setting it off. The psycho deserved it believe me."

"Given how he tortured me once and executed one of my friends, I can't say I'll attend his funeral." muttered Sora bitterly.

"And? Did you get Tails back?" asked Cosmo eagerly.

"We sure did sweetheart." said Sally happily.

She and Sonic stepped aside and allowed Tails to stand forward. His face beamed like the sunlight up above as he saw the two most special girls in his life standing before him. Cosmo and Sora put their hands to their mouths in pleasant surprise and they both began to cry happy tears. Their beloved Tails was back to normal at long last and was back on the team! To Cosmo and Sora, it had felt like a million years since they'd last seen him and now he was back! Tails looked as happy as they did.

"Hi Cosmo, hi Sora." he said, "I've been dying to see my girlfriend and my sister again for the first time in forever."

"Tails!" squealed Cosmo, throwing herself into the fox's arms and kissing him on the lips passionately as if they'd not kissed for a millennium or two, "My lovely little foxy! Oh it's so good to have you back!" she wailed delightedly after breaking up the kiss.

"We've missed you so much little brother!" cried Sora, hugging Tails along with Cosmo, "I've been praying day after day to have my cute, intelligent little brother back and now my prayers have been answered! Welcome home Tails!"

"Thanks girls." said Tails delightedly, "It's so good to be back. I've missed you both so much. And Cosmo, I'm sorry that beat you up while I was Mecha Tails." he added, looking sadly at Cosmo. He noticed with relief that her injuries had more or less gone now.

"Oh Tails, I don't care about that anymore. All I care about is the fact you're back to normal and back in my arms!" wailed Cosmo happily, "I'm never gonna lose you again my love!"

"Neither am I Cosmo, neither am I." said Tails brightly.

The two then shared another loving, passionate kiss that neither fox, nor Seedrian wanted to break up. Everybody watched the scene with awe as Tails hugged Cosmo lovingly, wrapping even his trademark twin-tails around her and kissing her as deeply as possible. They both cried tears of joy between each other as they kissed and hugged. Sonic found himself shedding a tear for his best friend. Tails's nightmare was over. He was back and the Dark Armada would never use him for evil ever again. It felt so great to have the fox back home and Sonic could hardly wait for Tails to join in with the battle against the Dark Armada. He had a feeling they wouldn't be around for much longer now their forces had been so heavily shortened and one of their biggest assets was back with them now. The armada would be defeated and Enerjak would never rise and destroy Mobius…

Footnotes:

See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 25: Raccoon on the Run

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Awwww! Tails is back to normal and is back home where he belongs! Aww! ^^

What will happen now Tails is no longer serving the armada? Join in next time for* "The Test" *...

Dark Armada Part 21: The Test Part 1

Story 221: The Test Part 1: A Shade of Chaos

The Dark Armada Chapter 21 of 25

The Dark Armada had been going through a terrible losing streak recently. This was a fact that humiliated Dr. Finitevus, the armada's founder, and it humiliated him so much that he was beginning to feel embarrassed just having to report the armada's recent failures to his disciples as they gathered around together in *The Nefarious* 's meeting room. But the most humiliating thing about all of this was that the Dark Armada had been constantly ahead of the Royal Fighters Service thanks to the unwilling help of Cosmo the Seedrian. Finitevus had blackmailed her into becoming an agent for him and because of her, he knew the Royal Fighters' every move before they made it. But it seemed that revealing Cosmo as the agent had been a costly mistake on Finitevus's part for since that day, the armada hadn't been on the winning streak it had once had. It all started with Finitevus testing his Synthetic Chaos Energy formula on Blizzard the Ice Witch. The formula had been flawed and the dark side of it hadn't kicked in at the right time so Blizzard ended up attacking Finitevus. Then she'd freed the Royal Fighters and albeit at the cost of Geoffrey St. John's life, the Royal Fighters had stopped him from destroying New Mobotropolis. Then after that, Finitevus had begun losing members of the Dark Armada one by one. The Raiju Clan had turned on him after figuring out what his plan was really about and thus, he'd been forced to kill them all just to make sure he made it out alive. He'd only spared Conquering Storm, the clan's leader, and due to the reckless actions of Scourge the Hedgehog, she'd become a Chaos-craving monster and during the fight, she'd infected Fiona Fox to which then led to Scourge's death. Fiona's fate was ambiguous although Finitevus greatly believed that the fox had gone and killed herself after being cured by Sonic and Sally what with the fact she'd ended up killing Scourge, the only one who gave her a reason to keep living after such a hard life. And now just today, he'd lost Lennox Meers the Meerkat to a treacherous Roxy the Raccoon and his glorious assistant Mecha Tails had been de-roboticized and

was now back with the Royal Fighters as Miles "Tails" Prower once again. Finitevus could easily say that the Dark Armada was a shadow of its former self now. He only had Zira the Ruthless, Captain Metal, Ravage Bloodfang, Raphael the Cyber-Husky, Lord Sycorax and his two minions Vladek and Romeo, Cutthroat Jim, Owen Pounder and Alistair Drakken left. He also had Blizzard on his side thanks to the Chaos Energy's negative side corrupting her but the armada still seemed very puny and insignificant with such miniscule numbers now. Only twelve people now populated the armada. And to think the numbers were much bigger at first. Now Finitevus felt like the armada would barely handle even half of the Royal Fighters Service with their current numbers. True he could fight Sonic's entire team to a standstill and Zira would definitely keep many of the Royal Fighters on their toes and also Blizzard would send many of them flying but the Royal Fighters still had bigger numbers and the more powerful members such as himself, Zira and Blizzard would be dealt with by the psychic-powered Silver the Hedgehog. Just a simple psychokinetic hold would stop them dead in their tracks. If Finitevus's grand plan was to succeed, he had to move on with Operation: Enerjak Reborn and get a test subject for his Chaos Synth-En before the Royal Fighters defeated the armada and got them all incarcerated. At the moment, he was giving what remained of his armada some updates on their current situation. All that was left of the armada were present, excluding Blizzard who was still unconscious after passing out again. The Chaos Energy had caused her to pass out shortly after getting all the Royal Fighters off *The Nefarious* and now it had caused her to pass out before Finitevus could use her for a mission earlier today. It was inconvenient for Finitevus for Blizzard was by far his strongest member currently because of the Synthetic Chaos Energy he'd given to her himself. He'd see to it that Blizzard came to after this meeting was done.

"Well my disciples, you may have noticed that we have a few empty seats in this room." sighed Finitevus, looking very disappointed with how his beautiful armada had crumbled down to just twelve people, eleven plus himself, in the span of four days.

"We had a few empty seats yesterday doc but now we have even MORE empty seats." sighed Raphael in annoyance, "We all know

what happened to poor Lennox..." he added, glancing over at a very gloomy Owen and Alistair who were seating quite near to him, "Poor dude had his head blown off and his brains spread out all over the room! How did that happen?!"

"Roxy ran to the Royal Fighters and in doing so, managed to get the bomb out of her head." explained Finitevus, "She told me so herself. She then used it to kill Lennox. And to think I actually trusted her and Lennox to carry out a simple task together..."

"No offence Dr. Finitevus but you were kinda asking for that." murmured Ravage with a frown, "You really should have known better than to give Roxy an opportunity like that."

"You say that as if he did that on purpose, KNOWING that Roxy would somehow get away from Lennox and get the bomb removed!" snapped Owen angrily, "Roxy's a master manipulator! It helps that she used to an actress before she came crying to H.U.N.T.! She obviously fooled us into thinking she'd given up all hope of getting free and because of that, she caught Lennox off-guard and...well, you know the rest."

"It was a very grisly sight in that room." muttered Alistair in his usual deep, growling voice, "Not that it bothered me as gruesome is my kind of thing. Although with Lennox gone and Roxy with those filthy Royal Fighters, Team Diamond really does feel incomplete now..." he sighed despairingly.

"You think your team's had it bad, what about our master?!" cried Zira frantically, "He's lost many members of the armada he worked so hard on formulating! I have no love for Conquering Storm but the rest are big losses for us all."

"Indeed Zira but none as big as Mecha Tails..." sighed Finitevus, frowning angrily to himself over the fact his greatest asset was now gone, "Tails is no longer a robot. He was de-roboticized moments ago thanks to Sonic getting away with the plans for the de-roboticizer rifle and making one to use on Tails. Now the little brat can help the team defeat us and as I've said before, Tails is a pretty dangerous opponent given his skills in technology and invention. Plus, he helped to make my Synthetic Chaos Energy! He can give

those fools the information they require to make their own and use it against us!"

"Yaaargh, that be a big and unfortunate loss indeed matey." sighed Captain Metal, shaking his head sadly, "That and our shortened number of crew mates will make us easy opponents to defeat now."

"Outrageous! We can still defeat those stupid heroes!" declared Lord Sycorax, "I mean most of us are pretty powerful opponents! Finitevus himself is one for starters and then there's the great and glorious me, Zira, Captain Metal, Ravage, Raphael and Owen who are all very strong fighters in many different ways! And of course, a Chaos-powered Blizzard the Ice Witch is on our side too and she's powerful! We're far from defeated!"

"Yeah, that's real great that it is." muttered Raphael sarcastically, "Eight out of twelve people who can fight well. Big frickin' deal. The four who aren't as good are just annoying distractions are they?"

"The Royal Fighters outnumber us by a long shot!" cried Ravage, "Yes we've killed at least two Royal Fighters and two of them are still hospitalized but that's not saying much! We're never going to accomplish our goals now!"

"Wrong Ravage, there's still a chance that we can succeed." noted Finitevus matter-of-factly, "Once Blizzard wakes up, she'll make all our fights easier for us by simply freezing the Royal Fighters with a Chaos Control. We still have the advantage over them. That and my Synthetic Chaos Energy is still ready for testing. All I need is somebody to test it on and if the test goes well, we can get started with making the duplicate Chaos Emeralds to carry the power."

"Why do we need duplicate Chaos Emeralds?" asked Zira curiously, "We already have eight and a giant Chaos Emerald that once kept an entire island afloat! Why do we need anymore?"

"Because it won't be enough to make us unstoppable." replied Finitevus firmly, "Plus, more Chaos Emeralds means more power for us all. According to Ancient Echidna History, one man could become a god with a hundred Chaos Emeralds. Imagine how powerful all of us could be with a hundred Chaos Emeralds plus the eight we

already have and the most powerful Chaos Emerald of them all, the Master Emerald, to power ourselves up with..." he purred delightedly.

"Aye, that would make us VERY powerful indeed!" cried Cutthroat Jim excitedly, "All of us could be god-powered and we could vanquish those Royal Fighters!"

"Indeed." said Finitevus, "Which is why if my formula works as it should on a Chaos Adept, I'll produce enough Synthetic Chaos Energy to make 100 Chaos Emeralds out of. And then we will accomplish our goals. Operation: Villains Rising will succeed, I know it will."

"Good to hear boss." said Owen grimly, "I hope Roxy's still alive when the plan is completed. I want to snap her neck for killing Lennox..." he growled, his fists trembling with rage as he gritted his teeth and fumed angrily.

"She'll pay for her treachery that much is certain." Finitevus swore, "I'm going to go over to New Mobotropolis and capture a Chaos Adept for testing. I'll go for whoever I come across first."

"I bet you'll pick your nephew." boomed Alistair, "Knuckles will be the perfect test subject. And given his arm's still broken from Zira's attack, I doubt he'll put up a very good fight."

"Knuckles will indeed make a very lovely test subject." crooned Finitevus wickedly, liking what Alistair was thinking right now, "But as I say, the first one I grab will do nicely. This meeting is over, remain on standby until further notice."

The armada members all obeyed and they left the meeting room to return to their duties. Finitevus on the other hand remained behind and opened up a warp ring to New Mobotropolis. He had four promising Mobians that he could kidnap for his test. Sonic, Shadow, Knuckles or Shade would suffice and either one of them would be great to test his Synthetic Chaos Energy on. Sonic, Shadow and Knuckles were full of the stuff and given how Shade had grown up with a Chaos Adept, his former master Imperator Ix, and had been guarding the Master Emerald with Knuckles, she'd have plenty in

her to call herself a Chaos Adept. Finitevus stepped through the warp ring, already excited about his mission and whom he was going to kidnap...

Over in New Mobotropolis, the de-roboticized Tails the Fox had been met with a wave of happy faces and delighted greetings from all the Royal Fighters in the R.F.S. Everybody had been so happy to see him back in the team, no longer a robot and no longer working for Dr. Finitevus. The New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had been the most happy about Tails's return. The fox had gone to the New Mobotropolis Hospital to meet them for they were all there seeing how the still bed bound Amy Rose and Knuckles the Echidna were doing. Tails's presence seemed to have brightened Amy and Knuckles's days for the moment they saw him, back to normal and all, they greeted him enthusiastically. The New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were all gathered around in Amy's room and they listened as Tails told them what it had been like for him as a member of the Dark Armada. Sonic the Hedgehog and Sally Acorn were right behind him to help him keep his nerves under control for he could very easily break down at any moment. He described in great detail how horrible it felt to him inside, powerless to stop himself from following Finitevus's orders blindly and unable to stop his beloved Cosmo from forcibly working for Finitevus. Cosmo in particular looked stunned to hear Tails describe how he'd been screaming in his head not to hurt Cosmo when Finitevus ordered him to beat her up and yet was helpless to do so as his Robian body obeyed the orders of his master and not his own will. The Royal Fighters all shook their heads sadly, feeling the pain that Tails was feeling just having to explain all of this in heartbreaking detail.

"…and let me tell you, working for that monster is definitely the worst thing that's ever happened to me." Tails finished, trying not to break down into floods of tears again, "If I had to choose between spending an eternity locked in a room with my mistake of a cousin or be roboticized and work for Finitevus again, I would honestly pick the former. It was THAT horrible!"

"We all know how that feels kiddo." said Mandy Mouse sympathetically, "We really do. We've all been roboticized before

too."

"And I can say, it's NOT a pleasant experience." said her husband Wilson the Dog in disgust, "Being roboticized, being ordered to do stuff against your will and fight against your own friends…"

"And being forced to hurt them too." muttered Sonic, remembering the time he'd been forced to torture Sally whilst he was a robot last year, "I know exactly how you feel bud and it's truly heartbreaking you had to go through all of this. And all at the age of ten no less."

"Ah bet ya'll will never forget about that…" said Bunnie Rabboh sadly.

"I won't indeed Bunnie." murmured Tails solemnly, "I feel like a part of me has died because of Finitevus. My innocence is gone and I have to live with the fact that as Mecha Tails, I killed somebody. I killed Mariah the Medicine Cat. It breaks my heart more than anybody else since she saved my life once. And I ended up depriving her of hers…"

"Mariah knew full well that you weren't yourself Tails." Cosmo insisted, "It wasn't you who killed her, it was the evil robot that Finitevus turned you into that did. I'm sure Mariah would be very glad to see you back to normal if she was still alive."

She put her arms around Tails and embraced him tenderly. Tails returned the embrace, delighted to be feeling Cosmo's arms around him.

"Thanks Cosmo." he said appreciatively, "As for Mr. St. John, my condolences for his passing Bunnie. At least, from what I heard as Mecha Tails, he died a hero."

"At least he died a hero indeed sugah." said Bunnie agreeably, "And ah'm sure he's lookin' down on us from heaven right now and is delighted ta see ya'll back ta normal Tails."

"Just like we are." said Ruben the Water Panther happily, "We've all missed you Tails, all of us. It's an honour to have you back with us."

"And now you're back, you can help us kick Finitevus's ugly

backside!" declared Amy excitedly, "I just wish that I was well enough to jump back into the fight at the moment…" she muttered grumpily.

"Well Sonic and Sally showed me earlier that they got some Synthetic Chaos Energy out of Fiona after she got infected by Conquering Storm." explained Tails, "Maybe we could use that to use a Chaos Regeneration on you and Knuckles." he suggested.

"Good idea Tails. This broken arm of mine's really had to keep me sidelined." sighed Knuckles in annoyance, glaring at the cast around his healing but broken arm as if it was mocking him, "It'll be great to fight again."

"You and me both my handsome guardian." said Shade the Echidna who was sitting beside Knuckles with her arms gently around him, "But Tails, is the Chaos Energy safe enough to use?"

"Me and Nicole used two power rings already." explained Sally, "I got today's power ring just shortly before bringing Tails over to you and Nicole assures me that the formula is safe to use."

"Then what are we waiting for?! Let's heal me and Knuckles already!" cried Amy impatiently.

"I'd wait a minute first, just let it settle for a minute for the power ring's power is still mixing in with the formula." said Sally firmly, "We'll use it the moment it's ready."

"Understood ma'am." mused Knuckles, "You know…how ironic is it that we'll use Finitevus's own voodoo against him?"

"I can just see his face now…" said Shade in a rather devious tone of voice.

"It serves him right for making me help him create the formula." muttered Tails bitterly, "I swear that next time I meet Finitevus, I'm gonna make him sorry he did this to me!"

His sudden change of attitude caught everybody by surprise. He was suddenly angry and vengeful and the look on his face didn't quite look like his own. Sonic could hardly blame his best friend.

Finitevus had pretty much scarred him for life and ruined his childhood forever. Tails would grow up with the memories of what he'd done as Mecha Tails and it would be difficult for him to get over the events. Sonic patted the fox on the back affectionately.

"We all intend to make him pay." said Sonic grimly, "Especially since Finitevus causes the end of the world this year."

"He does?!" squeaked Tails worriedly.

"He does." put in Silver the Hedgehog, "It's all here in this book me and Blaze found." he added, handing over to Tails the book that had given him and Blaze the answer to their question on what had caused the end of the world.

Tails stared in horror at the title of the book. Mobius 2144: The FINAL Year. His heart sank just seeing the title. 2144 was this year and in his hands, he was holding a book detailing how it was the final year before Mobius became a dystopian future that Silver and Blaze lived it! Tails read through the book and upon reaching the end of it, he dropped it on the floor in shock. His face was ashen and he was clutching his chest as if he was about to have a violent heart-attack. Cosmo saw that Tails was horrifically shaken and she was on hand to run up behind him and put her arms around him just to make sure that he didn't suddenly collapse onto the floor. Tails's older sister Sora Prower ran up to Tails and hugged him comfortingly too to make sure he didn't faint. The girls could feel Tails trembling as they put their arms around him.

"No…No…" Tails squeaked, his voice very weak and quiet as if he couldn't speak properly anymore.

"We're sorry you had to read that Tails, but you needed the truth." said Blaze the Cat sympathetically, "Me and Silver are in a post apocalyptic world because of Enerjak and we have enough evidence to prove that Finitevus is the one responsible for Enerjak's rising.

"And…he used me…to make the Chaos Energy…for him!" whispered Tails hoarsely, "I not only served Finitevus, but I was contributing to the end of the world?!"

"Now you know how I feel kid." said a very bitter Roxy the Raccoon. She was standing beside Sonic and Sally and had remained mostly quiet aside from explaining to the others why she was here and no longer with the armada. To her relief, they had welcomed her with open arms and were happy to accept her as one of them now.

"I'm afraid so little buddy." said Sonic, shaking his head sadly, "It's horrible I know. And that's why we're trying to not only stop the Dark Armada, but we want to KILL Finitevus too. I know it's not morally right and we're the good guys and all…but sometimes, we HAVE to make an exception. Finitevus cannot be allowed to live. Him being alive just means there's a chance that Enerjak will be able to come back and then slaughter us all. Sometimes we can't always do what's morally right, even if we are the heroes."

"You're right Sonic…" murmured Tails, "And given that Finitevus not only scarred me for life and killed a part of me forever but also destroys Mobius as Enerjak…I'm up for him dead too! It won't be something I'll enjoy but it's for a good cause."

"Indeed. The world safe is more important than anything in the world. We have to do what we can to stop Finitevus from becoming Enerjak." declared Sally gravely, "And considering we have some Synthetic Chaos Energy to use against Finitevus, we have a sporting chance."

"If it makes us as powerful as it made Blizzard than I'd say Finitevus is dead meat." muttered Knuckles, "And when we get rid of him, me and Shade can find a new place to keep the Chaos and Master Emeralds safe and out of evil hands. Somewhere less conspicuous than Angel Island for starters."

"And when the emeralds are in their new place, they'll STAY there." Shade declared as if knowing this was a promise that would never be broken no matter what happened.

The Royal Fighters trusted Shade in her statement. They knew full well that she and Knuckles wouldn't slouch on a job involving hiding the Chaos Emeralds for their own good. They'd probably hide the emeralds so well that even they themselves wouldn't have any idea on where to start looking for them. But then the Royal Fighters had

something other than Chaos Emeralds to worry about. Completely suddenly and out of nowhere, a warp ring opened up directly beside Shade and Knuckles, making the two echidnas jump in surprise. The Royal Fighters immediately managed to guess who was opening up the warp ring and they watched as Dr. Finitevus emerged through the warp ring. He had suspected that the Royal Fighters would all be in the New Mobotropolis Hospital because of Amy and Knuckles and it was a simple lucky guess that caused him to pick Amy's room as the one to open up a warp ring in. It was also extremely coincidental that he just happened to open it up beside Shade. A fortunate coincidence for him definitely. The echidna grabbed Shade by the arms, grinning deviously at his fortunate find and he pulled Shade towards the warp ring. Shade fought back, trying desperately to break free from the evil echidna.

"Get off me! Let go of me right now!" screamed Shade.

"Not a chance my child…I need you for a very important test right now!" growled Finitevus, giving Shade one final, definite yank that saw him winning the tug of war match and getting Shade through the warp ring.

Sonic spin-dashed towards Finitevus, hoping to hit him before he could make off with Shade but he reacted just a little too late. Finitevus and Shade disappeared through the warp ring and the warp ring closed, leaving Sonic to just scythe through thin air and crash into a nearby wall. Sonic picked himself up and shook his head as it began swimming from the crash into the wall he just ended up in. As he regained his senses, his face fell into despair. He felt bad that he'd failed to stop Finitevus and what made it worse was that Finitevus had gotten away with the girlfriend of one of his best friends. He could imagine how Knuckles was feeling right now, the very thought of his girlfriend being a test subject for Finitevus must be making him feel very worried indeed.

"Oh no…the doc's got Shade!" cried Sonic frantically.

"And he said he needs her for a "very important test"!" cried Knuckles worriedly, "He's going to test his Chaos Synth-En on her! We've gotta save her now before he tests it on her!"

"Indeed!" blurted Sonic, "Finitevus told me that he needs a Chaos Adept to test his formula on. Shade's gonna be full of the stuff, she's perfect for him to test the formula on! We need to get to it and quickly!"

"Hold it right there guys, I'll see if our Synthetic Chaos Energy is ready!" exclaimed Tails, "We'll have an advantage over the armada if we use it!"

"Just hurry up so we can save my girl Tails!" yelled Knuckles impatiently, "I don't want her to become my uncle's test subject!"

Tails wasted no time whatsoever. He turned to Roxy and quickly requested for the Dark Armada traitor to lend him the warp ring Finitevus had given her and the late Lennox Meers to use when he decided to recruit them for a mission. This had led to Roxy betraying the armada and Lennox's disturbing death. Roxy gave Tails the warp ring and the fox quickly flicked it open. It opened up a portal from the hospital to Royal HQ and the fox quickly dived through it. The warp ring closed up behind Tails as he jumped through it and Tails caught it in his hand before it could fall down onto the floor. He set it down on the work desk as he ran up to it and he grabbed the canister of Synthetic Chaos Energy. It was hard to believe that just a couple of days ago, they had gotten this small dose from Fiona Fox herself. In a way, a member of the Dark Armada was contributing to the downfall of the armada's schemes, something that made Tails smile grimly to himself. The twin-tailed child genius looked at the canister of green liquid he held in his hands. The liquid was fully settled and watery, just as it should be. The second power ring had fully dissolved and become a part of the liquid, its brilliant, positive energy making the formula more positive and safe to use than it would have been before. No turning into a Chaos craving zombie for anybody who used it now, the formula would just make them Chaos powered but not turn them evil as it had done to Blizzard. Tails felt sorry for Fiona that she had to become a monster and hoped that after Scourge's death, Fiona had found a way to get over it. As evil as she had been, Tails didn't really think she deserved to live in misery all her life, especially as she'd once been a Royal Fighter herself and had potential to be good again. He shook off all thoughts of Fiona and focused back on what he held in his hand. He picked

up a syringe and he plunged it into the canister. The yellow coloured fox pressed down on the plunger and the syringe sucked up the entire canister of Chaos Energy. There was only half a syringe full of energy but the two power rings that had been used in the formula would make it powerful enough. Tails then had a thought provoking idea. He stared at the syringe for a moment and then he stared at his own arm. Could he use the formula on himself? Tails supposed that it would be a sheer case of irony if he did. He'd be using what he helped Finitevus create against him. Finitevus deserved nothing less. But Tails wasn't a Chaos Adept. It could be very risky using it on himself. But Tails also reasoned with himself that he'd be fine for he'd been in contact with the Chaos Emeralds on more than one occasion. Maybe his body would be used to Chaos Energy and he'd be fine if he used the Chaos Synth-En. It was risky but Tails knew it'd be worth it if he meant he could beat up Finitevus and make him cry. Holding his breath and closing his eyes, Tails stuck the needle into his arm and injected himself with the Chaos Energy. His entire body jolted sharply and his arms threw themselves out to the side without his brain telling them to. His head jerked backwards and he stared up at the ceiling as if shocked to see it suddenly. He could feel the Chaos Energy flowing through his veins, feeding strength to his body. The feeling was sensational but luckily, it wasn't feeling painful or overwhelming. It felt…good. Very good in fact. It was like he'd been given a miracle cure for a disease he'd never known he'd had. Tails's arms lowered down until they hung by his sides and his head flopped down, his head now staring at the floor. For a moment he was deathly still as if becoming a statue suddenly. Then he moved again and flexed his muscles. He felt amazing and the Chaos Energy was beginning to flow naturally through his bloodstream. He felt like he could flatten an entire army and be home in time for dinner. He looked no different aside from his eyes now glowing a brilliant Chaos green colour but he felt very different inside, and all in a good way no less.

"Wow…I feel…incredible…epic even!" cried Tails excitedly, "Oh man…I needed that! Finitevus is so dead now!"

Laughing delightedly to himself, he picked up the warp ring and opened up a portal back to the New Mobotropolis Hospital. He stepped through the warp ring and found himself transported from

Royal HQ back to Amy's hospital room. The moment he emerged from the warp ring, all the Royal Fighters stared at him in amazement. The green eyes that Tails now sported had been what caught their attention and Tails could see from the looks on everybody's faces that they were amazed.

"Hey Tails! Your eyes…they're glowing green!" blurted Sonic.

"Did you…did you just inject yourself with the Synthetic Chaos Energy?" gasped Sally.

"I sure did guys." said Tails brightly, "But don't worry, Nicole assured us that the formula is safe to use. And I feel pretty amazing inside, I really do."

"But…you're not a Chaos Adept!" cried Knuckles, "The formula could have a nasty side effect on you!"

"I've been in contact with Chaos Emeralds before, I'm sure my body's used to it." said Tails reassuringly, "Now let's see if this'll work…"

He walked up to Knuckles and Amy and put a hand on each of them. He then yelled "Chaos Regeneration!" as loudly as he possibly could. As he yelled this, a bright flash shone between him, Knuckles and Amy and the entire room was engulfed in a bright light that caused everybody to shield their eyes from the dazzling light. The light lasted for a good few seconds before it eventually died down and everything returned to normal. For a moment, everybody was silent and still. Then suddenly, Amy got up out of her bed and started flexing her limbs as if this was the first time she'd ever got up and started moving in forever. The miraculous thing about this was that Amy was moving her body but she didn't appear to be in any pain as she did so! As for Knuckles, his arm no longer felt broken and because of this, he began to unwrap the cast from around it. Upon doing so, he flexed his arm and was amazed to feel no pain as he did so. His arm felt like it had never been broken! Amy and Knuckles both cried out in amazement.

"Wow! I feel great!" squealed Amy excitedly, "I don't feel hurt anymore!"

"My arm…it's fixed!" cried Knuckles, "The Chaos Regeneration worked!"

"Well what can I say? Tails is now a living Chaos Emerald." said Sonic with a smile, "All the better for us to use against Finitevus. With Tails now Chaos Powered, Finitevus is as good as dead!"

"Indeed Sonic." said Sally brightly, "Now Knuckles and Amy are better, we can see to carrying out a rescue mission for Shade. Sonic, you'll go of course and you can take a squadron of your choosing aboard The Nefarious. It wouldn't be wise for all of us to come incase Finitevus sends any of his minions to attack New Mobotropolis. If some of us remain behind, we can protect the city and you and your team won't be forced to abandon the mission to save it. I'll lead those who are left to protect the city."

"OK then Sally my girl." said Sonic, "Now then, I'll take Tails of course and I think Knuckles and Amy deserve to come too. Knuckles because it's his girlfriend we're saving and Amy because she has scores to settle with Captain Metal. I also think I'll take Silver and Blaze too. They wanna save their future so they deserve to take part in this."

"Why thank you Sonic." said Amy brightly, "I'd be delighted to take part in the mission. Especially since it means I get to flatten that Captain Metal for nearly killing me!"

"Me and you will have the pleasure of fighting him together." said Blaze grimly.

"I'm glad you're taking me and Blaze." said Silver appreciatively, "We'd love to play a part in the armada's downfall."

"That's why I'm bringing ya." said Sonic with a wink, "Amy, I'd get changed if I were you. A hospital gown's hardly the appropriate thing to go into battle with." he added, looking at Amy.

Tails handed the warp ring over to the pink hedgehog and she used it to warp herself back over to her house, most specifically, her bedroom. Upon arriving there, Amy took a moment to admire the sight of her own bedroom. She'd missed sleeping in there and it felt

good to be in her own home once again. She put aside her sentimentality for the moment as she stripped off the hospital gown that she'd been wearing for the past few days and quickly changed herself into some suitable clothes. But what she was putting on was an entirely new outfit compared to what she used to wear. Amy dressed herself up in a red dress with three yellow buttons on that came down just above the knees. The dress looked more sensible than the one she used to wear. She also wore purple stockings, her usual white gloves with gold cuffs around the wrists and red shoes with pink soles and toes. She wrapped a Sarashi around her waist. Now fully dressed, Amy warped herself back over to the hospital to show everybody she was now ready for a fight. Her new attire caught everybody's attention the moment she appeared, much to Amy's delight.

"Say Amy, that's a good look for you." said Sonic approvingly, admiring the hedgehog's new outfit, "Really suits you. What made you decide to have a costume change?"

"Let's just say that a girl likes to have a change of clothes every now and then." snickered Amy, "And also I thought I'd look a little more mature to show just how serious I am about beating the Dark Armada into a pulp."

"I see." said Sonic, "Well then team, let's go save Shade and stop the armada!" cried Sonic.

Amy tossed the warp ring over to Sally, deciding that she and the others wouldn't need it since they had a way onboard *The Nefarious* without it. Tails could just as easily Chaos Control everybody on the ship. Also, the warp ring was too valuable to lose to Finitevus so it was best to leave it home instead of bringing it around everywhere. Sonic, Knuckles, Amy, Silver and Blaze gathered around Tails and the fox whisked everybody away in a bright flash of light as he initiated a Chaos Control. As they disappeared, Sally took a moment to hope for the Mobians. Hope that they would succeed in their mission and that Shade would be saved. And Finitevus would be defeated for good…

Meanwhile on *The Nefarious* , Dr. Finitevus had fully prepared the captured Shade for his Synthetic Chaos Energy formula test. The female echidna was lying against the restraint bed that he had already used for his other test subjects such as Blizzard, Conquering Storm and Sonic, the only one whom he'd actually formula on for Sally had managed to rescue him before he could do it. With laser binds wrapped tightly around her wrists and ankles, Shade was completely helpless before the evil scientist and despite struggling as much as possible, the lasers wouldn't release her. The former Procurator of the Nocturnus Clan fumed angrily at Finitevus after she finally stopped struggling. It was bad enough that she'd been kidnapped by the echidna who once worked for her horrible, abusive father Imperator Ix but she was going to be tested on and she couldn't get away from Finitevus! She hoped dearly that her friends would arrive in time to save her from becoming Finitevus's little lab rat but it didn't seem likely for Finitevus already had the syringe in hand and he was filling it up with Chaos Synth-En. He dipped the syringe into the canister and sucked up some of the gooey, viscous liquid that he had contained inside of it. Finitevus was considering himself extremely fortunate that neither Sonic, Sally, Tails or Roxy didn't destroy the canister and waste his glorious creation when they had the chance. They had just fled for it before he could unleash all hell on them, a mistake that was going to cost the Royal Fighters very dearly. After filling up his syringe, he closed the canister and turned to face Shade. The female echidna gulped nervously. She was going to have the evil liquid tested on her and she couldn't stop Finitevus from going ahead with it. Her only chance now was if the Royal Fighters came in to save her. The captive Shade dared to think what Finitevus had made the formula out of though she imagined that a lot of Chaos Energy had gone into it. Most notably, dark Chaos Energy. Finitevus leaned over to Shade and began to softly stroke her face. Shade cringed with disgust but she kept her cool.

"Well Shade, I bet you weren't expecting to be the lucky Chaos Adept that would end up being my little test subject did you?" sneered Finitevus, "Well just be glad that I didn't grab Knuckles, he could have easily been my test subject instead."

"I assure you when Knuckles gets here, he's going to leave you

needing a new face." said Shade coldly, "He'll beat you up with just one arm if he has to!"

"Knuckles could barely beat me with BOTH arms so what chance does he have with one?" snorted Finitevus, "Now then, if I recall, you were once Imperator Ix's loyal servant and you once fought against Knuckles. Well my child, it looks like you're going to do it again. If all goes well, you'll be a loyal servant to me, only you'll have power greater than you can possibly imagine."

"Dare use that on me and you won't live to see another sunrise." Shade growled softly, "We know that you plan to become Enerjak and we'll do whatever it takes to stop you."

"Yes, the fact you know what my plan is about is a rather unfortunate inconvenience I admit, but you still won't succeed in stopping me." crowed Finitevus, "My lovely little test subject, you are the gateway to Enerjak's rising. If this test goes well then I will proceed with the next stage of my plan. All I need to do next is make a hundred Chaos Emeralds, all with this formula, and then Enerjak will rise. How does it feel to be the one who'll tell me if the formula is adequate or not?"

"Get fragged!" snarled Shade.

"Hardly." snorted Finitevus, "Now then, let us see if this works…"

He wasted no more time after that. He gripped Shade's face hard with one hand and aimed the syringe at her neck with his other hand. Shade tried to resist, squirming madly on the bed and trying to keep her neck from being exposed but Finitevus had an iron grip. He wasn't even TRYING to keep Shade's head to the side while he prepared to stick the needle into her neck. He was much too strong for Shade so try as she might, she couldn't move her head while Finitevus had hold of her. He inserted the needle into Shade's neck and injected her with the Synthetic Chaos Energy it contained. Shade winced as she felt the energy entering her bloodstream. Finitevus took the syringe out of Shade's neck and he put it back on the counter for in case he had to get rid of it. The last thing he wanted was a repeat of what Blizzard did to him. Shade writhed in pain as the formula swarmed through her body. She arched her

back and let out a terrible scream as the energy began to take control of her body. She fought hard to resist the formula's power but the strength of the green liquid was too great for her. She fell victim to it immediately and stopped screaming. She collapsed back down against the bed, eyes closed and breathing heavily as the formula settled down inside her. It was beginning to seep into her brain and the echidna could actually feel the liquid taking over her brain as it entered. She couldn't fight it off anymore, it was inside her bloodstream and taking over her body. Shade remained still for a moment before opening her eyes. Her eyes were Chaos green and they glowed amazingly brightly. She had a cold, emotionless look on her face as she looked at Finitevus. Shade made no attempts to escape from the restraint bed holding her down, nor did she show any hostility towards Finitevus. She just lay there as if waiting for Finitevus to give her an order.

"Master." she mumbled in a zombie-like manner, "I await orders. Do I have permission to destroy your hated enemies?"

Finitevus could feel himself about ready to go crazy with excitement. He could practically feel himself ready to do a crazy dance of joy. His formula had worked! At long last, he'd had a successful test and he now knew his Synthetic Chaos Energy was ready for making Chaos Emeralds out of! Cackling maniacally, Finitevus let out all his joy and excitement in that single laugh. How cathartic it was for him to have finally succeeded in his test! He stopped laughing and quickly released Shade from her restraints. Shade had a look on her that was so blank, she didn't seem to realize that she had even been restrained a moment ago.

"Rise Shade, my glorious, Chaos powered servant!" cried Finitevus delightedly.

Shade stood up from the bed and bowed down to Finitevus.

"What is your wish my master?" she asked loyally.

"Well Shade, I want you to suit up and Chaos Control to New Mobotropolis." ordered Finitevus, "Then once you're there. I want you to destroy the city and lay waste to the Royal Fighters!"

"Understood, your word is law." droned Shade.

Shade took a moment to use the costume changing device that Tails had built for her last year to change her casual clothes into her Nocturnus battle armour. As she changed into her armour, Finitevus couldn't help but notice that the Chaos Energy in Shade's body had altered her armour slightly. The glowing pink areas on the armour now glowed green instead. Even the eyes on Shade's helmet glowed green. He imagined that Shade's blades would have glowing green parts too when she whipped them out for a battle. But before Shade could use a Chaos Control to warp away to New Mobotropolis, a green flash filled the room with light. Shade turned to face the light but did nothing to suggest that she was surprised to see it. Finitevus was surprised to see it though. Who could be using a Chaos Control right now? That was the first thing that ran through Finitevus's head. Certainly not Sonic or his friends for they didn't have the Chaos Emeralds on them right now. Was Blizzard finally away and had Chaos Controlled to the lab to meet him? That was likely but Finitevus quickly saw to his disappointment that it wasn't Blizzard who was Chaos Controlling into the lab. It was in fact Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Silver and Blaze. The flash died down, leaving just the six Mobians that had come to stop Dr. Finitevus once and for all. Shade quickly registered the new arrivals as hostile and she adopted a battle-ready stance. Knuckles saw what had been done to Shade immediately and he growled angrily in rage.

"Shade! Your eyes are green…we were too late!" wailed Knuckles angrily, "That fiend has tested his formula on her!"

"Well now we're here, we can remove it." declared Sonic, "Finitevus, your time is up! Surrender now or face the consequences!"

"Fie, I refuse to let you grave-eager morons get in my way now!" snarled Finitevus, "My formula is finally ready to use for my plan, you'll not stop me now! So tell me, how did you manage to use a Chaos Control?"

"Remember Fiona?" sneered Sonic, "You sent her to New Mobotropolis to attack me and my friends. Thank you for doing that for we got the Chaos Energy out of her and decided to use it ourselves."

"Only we've made the formula 100% positive! Not a trace of Dark Chaos Energy anywhere!" declared Tails, "And now it's in me! You're dead meat now Finitevus!"

"I think not you little brat…" retorted Finitevus angrily, "For I have two Chaos-powered minions under my control. Blizzard is sadly unavailable right now but I have Shade right here before you. She'll put a stop to you all before you can get anywhere near me." he crowed, motioning to the Chaos-powered Shade standing before him.

"You get that stuff outta Shade right now or I'll break all your bones Finitevus!" bellowed Knuckles angrily. Just seeing his beloved co-guardian with the Synthetic Chaos Energy inside her made him livid with rage.

"Now, now dear nephew, is this anyway to talk to your uncle?" sneered Finitevus.

"You're not my uncle Finitevus…you're no family of mine!" growled Knuckles, "You're a monster and you deserve to join Imperator Ix in the afterlife!"

Finitevus glared at Knuckles as if the fact Knuckles was declaring him as no family of his was a dishonourable label to be given. But he shrugged it off and continued as normal.

"Perhaps, but I have no interest in the afterlife right now." purred Finitevus, "I have too much to live for."

"Well too bad because you won't get a chance to live much longer!" yelled Tails angrily, "With the Chaos Energy invested in me, I'm gonna use them to put you down for good! You have caused many heinous crimes against my friends and all of Mobius! You corrupted me and used me in your mad scheme to destroy the world and kill us all! You are gonna pay for your evil, immoral actions you devil! What you're doing is unforgivable and you must suffer for it!"

"I have no use for forgiveness young man, especially from somebody who dares to use my own formula against me." said Finitevus coldly, "I'll give you and your vacuous friends one chance.

Leave. NOW." he growled sinisterly.

"Not a chance! You're going down!" growled Tails determinedly.

"So be it…" snarled Finitevus.

He then lunged towards Tails, growling angrily and baring his teeth. Tails lunged back, fists clenched as he let out a blood curdling battle cry. As the two engaged in combat, Shade ran towards Sonic, Knuckles, Amy, Silver and Blaze and prepared to slice them all to ribbons. Sonic and his friends lunged towards her. Like it or not, they had to fight Shade and they had to beat her so they could save her from the Chaos-powered monster Finitevus had made her into. The fore coming battle was going to be a fight to the bitter end and no prisoners would be taken in it…

Finitevus's test is a success! But will he get the chance to carry on with his plan? Find out in Part 2 for a very titanic battle...

Dark Armada Part 22: The Test Part 2

Story 222: The Test Part 2: Showdown of Chaos

The Dark Armada Chapter 22 of 25

The doomsday clock was ticking dangerously by. 2144 was the year that Mobius came to an end and the cause of the end of the world was the almighty Chaos Demi-god Enerjak. Enerjak had shown the world what he was capable of when he came rising a year ago*. In the course of a day, he'd turned an entire country into a bunch of crazy cultists all screaming and worshipping his name. He'd also come close to finishing off the Royal Fighters in a battle that saw him being defeated although on his dying breath, he'd left the heroes with a cryptic message: "I'll never be a memory…". Little had they realized was how true he was to his word. The nefarious Dr. Finitevus was planning on becoming Enerjak so that he could lay waste to the very world that he was born on. He saw Mobius as corrupt and he desired to purge it with fire so that Mobius could start all over and fit his image of a perfect world. With him as Enerjak, the world would be remade in his image and he'd rule over everything. No heroes would rise up against him for there wouldn't be any heroes in his world. His plan was going to be achieved by making over a hundred Chaos Emeralds to give himself the power to become Enerjak. In order to make more Chaos Emeralds, he had created some Synthetic Chaos Energy, Chaos Energy made from using the energy of the eight Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald, the only Chaos Emeralds that remained after Knuckles's late father had fused the rest together to make Chaos Clusters. The clusters themselves had been destroyed after Perfect Chaos had been risen by Scourge the Hedgehog accidentally. The Synthetic Chaos Energy had taken a while to perfect but Finitevus had finally perfected the formula and a successful attempt on an unwilling Shade the Echidna told him that the formula was ready for Phase 2 of his plan. He would begin making one-hundred duplicate Chaos Emeralds, each in the eight different colours of the eight Chaos Emeralds, and when they were made, he could become Enerjak at last and bring the end of all things for Mobius. 2144 was Mobius's

final year and the very day Mobius ended was coming fast…

Luckily for Mobius, a team of five Royal Fighters had warped aboard *The Nefarious* to try and stop Finitevus from succeeding in his plan. Sonic the Hedgehog, Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat had come aboard Finitevus's insidious vessel in order to save the kidnapped Shade the Echidna from being used as a test subject, as well as to put an end to Finitevus before he could bring Mobius to its miserable end. Because of Finitevus, Silver and Blaze lived in a future where everything was decaying, dead and clinging onto life all at once and they were the only ones from the future who could prevent Finitevus from succeeding. They had already contributed greatly by warning Sonic and his friends of the coming apocalypse although that still hadn't stopped the Dark Armada from giving the heroes a hard time and putting them through hardships and tragedy. A few Royal Fighters had lost their lives in their crusade against the armada and Tails and Cosmo, two kids on the battlefield, had been corrupted and used against the Royal Fighters like pawns in Finitevus's deadly game. Tails had been roboticized and had helped Finitevus create the Synthetic Chaos Energy. Cosmo had been forced to be an agent for the echidna and had caused many of the hardships and tragedy that the Royal Fighters had had to go through such as the near death of Amy and the deaths of Taran the Lynx, Mariah the Medicine Cat and Geoffrey St. John. Tails was determined to make Finitevus pay for what he made him do as Mecha Tails and to do so, he had given himself a healthy dose of Synthetic Chaos Energy, the dose coming from an infected Fiona Fox that had gotten the Chaos Energy from a crazed and mutated Conquering Storm. The Chaos Energy had been given power rings to make it 100% positive Chaos Energy and Tails now had the entire dose in his bloodstream. He had Chaos Controlled the team aboard *The Nefarious* and was now in a battle with Dr. Finitevus while the rest fought against a Chaos-powered Shade. The battle would determine if Enerjak would rise later on or whether his resurrection would be cancelled before it could begin.

Tails and Finitevus lunged towards each other, growling and yelling angrily at each other as they sailed through the air. They collided into each other but Tails's crash was harder than Finitevus's. The

two crashed down onto the floor with Finitevus beneath Tails. Finitevus swung his legs up and threw Tails off of himself. Tails cried out in surprise as he was suddenly hurled into the air and onto his face. The impact didn't hurt Tails as much as it should have done though. To the fox's delight, the Synthetic Chaos Energy made him more resistant to pain than he normally would have been. The twin-tailed fox picked himself up only to receive a slash across the face from Finitevus's cape blades as he swung them at him. The blades left a small cut on Tails's face as Finitevus slashed him and a trickle of blood mixed with Synthetic Chaos Energy began to trickle out of it. Tails however healed himself with a Chaos Regeneration. Finitevus watched as the cut disappeared and closed up on itself with Tails's Chaos Regeneration. The echidna frowned to himself. If he was to beat Tails, he had to knock him out and then get rid of the energy inside of him. He'd keep the energy for himself and then corrupt it so he could add it to his own formula. Finitevus charged at Tails and slugged him in the stomach. Tails however didn't seem awfully effected by the attack. The blow had barely even caused him to gasp. Tails retaliated with a punch to the gut on Finitevus. The echidna felt the fox's fist slam hard into his gut and knock all of the wind in his lungs out of him. Finitevus had a violent coughing fit before Tails lashed out and grabbed him by the shoulders. He then proceeded to spin around and slam Finitevus against a wall as hard as he could. Finitevus broke out of Tails's hold and he uppercut the fox in the chin, the attack causing Tails's head to swing hard backwards but the actual punch doing little harm to him. Tails swung his head forward and walloped Finitevus in the forehead, causing him to back away and clutch his head furiously in pain. The scientist lunged at Tails again but the twin-tailed fox caught the echidna's fist with his hand. Tails then squeezed the scientist's hand as if hoping to crush it. Finitevus let out a bloodcurdling, pained howl as Tails single-handedly began to crush his hand. He could practically feel the bones in his hand giving way as the Chaos-powered fox's fingers pressed down hard on it. Finitevus socked Tails in the face as hard as he could but much to his dismay, Tails took the blow with merely his head going backwards slightly due to the punch. He smirked at Finitevus smugly.

"Ha…that tickled." he gloated.

Finitevus's eyes opened wide with horror. That was his hardest punch and Tails thought that it *tickled* ?! He had to act fast before the fox overpowered him! Finitevus grabbed the edge of his cape and he stabbed Tails in the gut with it. The fox let go his hand as he cried out in pain, feeling the blade penetrating his stomach. Finitevus yanked the blade out but before he could attack Tails, the kid genius warped away from him. He reappeared away from Finitevus and used a Chaos Regeneration to heal himself. That was exactly what Finitevus wanted Tails to do. He grabbed the syringe on the work desk and filled it up with Synthetic Chaos Energy. Unfortunately for him, Tails saw what he was doing and he froze the echidna in time with a quick Chaos Control. Finitevus was helpless to do anything as everything crawled to a standstill around him. He was so frozen in time that even his own heart was still. Now frozen, Tails rushed over to Finitevus and he dropkicked him in the head. Finitevus cried out in surprise as he was whisked off his feet by a powerful kick from the Chaos powered fox. He hit the floor hard, pain flaring up his arm as he crashed down and the syringe smashed to pieces on the floor, spilling the energy everywhere. Just as he was standing back up, Tails summoned some Chaos Spears to his hands and threw them at Finitevus. The spears hit Finitevus, sending pain flaring through his body and making him bellow in agony. It felt like he was being pelted at with fireballs. Every hit the Chaos Spears landed on him felt like a burn and Finitevus knew that he couldn't keep getting hit by the spears. He had to finish the fight fast before he was too weak to carry on. Tails charged towards Finitevus but the echidna stepped to the side and waited for Tails to go past him before positioning himself swiftly behind the fox and slamming him against the wall. This earned him a grunt from his opponent as he slammed the ten-year old's body against the wall. Finitevus punched Tails in the back of his head as hard as he could and kneed him in the back. Tails took the blows and he managed to get free by kicking backwards. He hit Finitevus in the gut and made the echidna back away, giving him enough space to spin around and punch the albino scientist across the room. Finitevus cried out at the top of his voice was he was sent on a brief flight across the room and into the wall on the other side. Now Finitevus was down for the moment, Tails grabbed the canister of Chaos Synth-En that Finitevus had made. He raised it above his head but just as he threw it down onto the floor, Finitevus summoned a warp ring beneath

where Tails was aiming. This caused him to simply chuck the canister down through the warp ring and into Finitevus's hands for the warp ring exit was right above them. Finitevus smirked at Tails and he used another warp ring to put the canister somewhere else. He inserted his hand through the warp ring and brought it back out minus the canister of Chaos Synth-En. He then closed the warp ring, eliminating any chance Tails had of getting the canister back.

"There Tails, now you will not destroy my precious formula." crooned Finitevus.

"But you just disposed of your only way of matching my power!" cried Tails.

"Who said anything about that canister being the ONLY power-up I have?" the caped scientist snorted in response to the fox's statement.

He then used a warp ring to open a portal to the room that he'd hidden the Chaos Emeralds in and he grabbed a Chaos Emerald. He had grabbed the purple Chaos Emerald, a fitting choice for the villainous scientist given the colour's often evil depiction in the media. Tails gasped in horror and realized that he'd forgotten a compulsory fact. Finitevus had the eight Chaos Emeralds and Master Emerald! He'd had them in his possession for an entire year and had gotten them due to him losing a Chaos Emerald to Captain Metal and then Captain Metal ending up in Finitevus's parlour! Finitevus now planned to use a Chaos Emerald against him. If he used the emerald than the already Chaos-powered Finitevus would be just as, if not more powerful than the fox himself and Tails would lose any chance he had of killing the evil scientist! Tails knew he had to get the Chaos Emerald away from Finitevus and he had to do it now. Unfortunately, Finitevus read his thoughts and he quickly initiated a Chaos Control to freeze Tails in place. Once Tails had been frozen, Finitevus rushed up towards Tails and pile-dived him in the head, throwing him off his feet and into the wall. Tails cried out as he hit the wall and he slid down to the floor. Finitevus cackled delightedly and then used another Chaos Control to teleport and reappear in front of Tails. Before the fox could do anything, Finitevus grabbed him by the neck and pinned him against the wall. Tails tried to break free of the echidna's iron grip but he held on surprisingly

tight. Too tight for even him to get free. Finitevus was getting power from the Chaos Emerald he held in his hand and he was getting a lot of it. The Chaos Emeralds had been corrupted whilst in his care and were mostly full of Dark Chaos Energy. His body was full of Dark Chaos Energy, the very thing that made him such a formidable fighter, so the Chaos Emerald's power coalesced flawlessly with the Dark Chaos Energy in his body. Tails was now back to being weaker than the evil echidna, a turnabout that Tails had hoped wouldn't happen.

"How quickly things turn around…" purred Finitevus, "You were on top of the battle but now I have a Chaos Emerald in my hand, I have all the power. Yes…the emerald's power is making me stronger than ever before. I feel like I could punch a hole through a building!"

"Doesn't matter…how strong you are…gack…Finitevus!" choked Tails, trying his best to speak despite being strangled by Finitevus, "You'll…still lose! You won't…win!"

"Oh Tails, you're so obtuse…you really think that you can beat me while I have the genuine Chaos article in my hand?" snorted Finitevus, showing Tails the Chaos Emerald tauntingly, "The Synthetic Chaos Energy maybe powerful but a Chaos Emerald will always be stronger, especially when wielded by an actual Chaos Adept."

"Then…maybe…I could…ack…urk…take that emerald…for myself!" declared Tails.

The fox then proceeded to use a Chaos Control to warp out of Finitevus's grasp. But the echidna was already predicting where Tails would reappear so he waited until a flash shone behind him before kicking out backwards and slamming his foot directly into Tails's gut as he reappeared. Tails was thrown down onto his back by the kick and he coughed loudly as the wind was knocked out of him. He should have known better than to do something so predictable. He vowed not to make the same mistake again as he got back up onto his feet and threw some Chaos Spears at Finitevus. The Chaos Spears never hit home for Finitevus summoned a warp ring in front of himself and re-directed the spears right behind Tails. The fox let out a bloodcurdling scream of agony

as the spears hit him hard in the back. Now he could imagine how Finitevus had felt when he threw the Chaos Spears at him. His back felt like it was on fire as the spears hit him. He winced in pain and tried his hardest to fight the pain off but he soon had more pain to fight off as Finitevus put the Chaos Emerald into his pocket and lunged at him. He punched downwards at Tails, throwing his head downwards as the punch hit him, and then uppercut the twin-tailed fox into the ceiling. Tails crashed directly into one of the lights and found himself on the receiving end of a brutal electrical shock as he broke the light. Tails eventually fell out of the ceiling but he was in agonizing pain from the shock the light had given him. He forced himself back onto his feet as Finitevus prepared to attack him again. The echidna sprang into the air towards Tails but the fox struck him down with a Chaos Spear to the face. The spear struck Finitevus and knocked him down flat onto his back on the floor. Before the echidna could recover from the blow, Tails pounced on him and pinned him down to the floor. What followed was a strangling match between the two as Tails's hands closed hard around Finitevus's throat and Finitevus's hands closed around his throat. The struggle was tense and hard with one opponent trying to get back up, the other trying to keep him pinned down as they throttled. Tails and Finitevus had to simultaneously fight for consciousness as they tried to throttle one another into unconsciousness. But then Finitevus Chaos-Controlled out of Tails's grip and reappeared behind him, stomping hard on his back and forcing him down flat onto the floor. Finitevus pushed down hard on Tails's back with his foot, applying enough pressure to keep the fox firmly pinned down. He smirked as he began to rub his foot vigorously on Tails's back and making the fox wince in agony, gritting his teeth hard and trying his best to keep the pain held in.

"What do you hope to gain from beating me Tails?" sneered Finitevus, "Do you think that getting rid of me will undo everything you've had to endure as Mecha Tails? Hardly. You'll not recover from the emotional trauma that I have put you through. It was like I told your impudent friends before attempting to destroy New Mobotropolis, you heroes fight for a forlorn cause. You're fighting for a cause that you'll never achieve. The scars I've left on you will be there forever, you'll never heal them."

"Maybe not…but my cause isn't just to make you pay for the emotional and mental trauma you've put me through!" retorted Tails, "My cause is to save my world and stop you from destroying it. And this isn't a forlorn cause for even 200 years in the future, we've got people trying to fix what you've done! Silver and Blaze have warned us in advanced about you becoming Enerjak and destroying Mobius so now we know what you're up to, we can stop you and save our world!"

Tails then Chaos-Controlled out from underneath Dr. Finitevus but instead of doing the most predictable option and reappearing behind him as he did earlier, he reappeared *beside* Finitevus instead. Finitevus didn't even have time to react as his twin-tailed opponent drove a powerful uppercut into his jaw. The attack took Finitevus clean off his feet and threw him straight into the wall just above the door. He crashed into the wall so hard that the young cub was amazed his evil adversary hadn't broken through it. Whipping out the Chaos Emerald from his cloak, Finitevus growled and he pushed himself off the wall, effectively sending himself flying towards Tails. Tails took flight with the aid of his namesakes and he hurled towards Finitevus, both opponents ready to cave each other's skulls in as the distance between them began to close…

Meanwhile, Sonic, Knuckles, Amy, Silver and Blaze were being kept well on their toes by Shade as they forcibly fought against their Chaos-Powered friend. Knuckles in particular could feel his heart wailing in protest as he threw punches at his co-guardian and girlfriend. He loved Shade more than he'd ever loved his duty as Guardian of the Master Emerald or Angel Island and he never wanted to fight against her again, especially since Shade had been a victim of abuse from her imprisoned father Imperator Ix and had been force to fight against him because of her undying loyalty to her abusive father. And now here he was, once again throwing punches at the echidna who used to be his enemy but was now his biggest love. Knuckles punched at Shade but the green-eyed, battle armoured echidna blocked his attack with ease. The Chaos Energy in her body made her reflexes much faster and sharper than before so she could block any blow Knuckles threw with ease. The red, spike-fisted echidna aimed a punch at Shade's helmeted face but the former Nocturnus Clan Procurator caught the blow with her own

hand and proceeded to slug him hard in the gut with an enhanced punch that seemed to glow green as she threw the punch. Knuckles gasped as his girlfriend's fist slammed hard into his stomach. Shade could already punch hard, nearly as hard as himself but this punch felt more like a punch Finitevus would throw at him as opposed to Shade. The Synthetic Chaos Energy truly was a powerful force that his evil uncle had created. He could see why Finitevus needed it to become Enerjak. Knuckles tried to fight back but the pain in his gut that had been inflicted upon him by Shade made it hard for him to even stand up straight. Shade took advantage of this and spun around on her foot, swinging her other leg through the air and driving her heel into the side of Knuckles's face. The kick was so hard that Knuckles began hoping his jaw hadn't been broken by the attack. He was hurled down onto his side and he remained on the floor, wincing in pain and willing for his cheek to feel better before he could continue fighting. Shade whipped out her two blades and twirled through the air towards Knuckles. She landed the balls of her feet and twisted her body to the right so her right arm came swinging down swiftly towards Knuckles's face. This should have cleaved the echidna's head in two but Knuckles was saved by the well-timed arrival of Amy Rose. She held her Piko-Piko Hammer, which now had a new, sleeker but heavier design to match her new outfit, just above Knuckles's head and left Shade's blade to strike against it. Her blade embedded itself into the thick head of Amy's hammer but the hammer withstood most of the attack. Amy yanked on her hammer and tore Shade's blade from out of her grip. Amy then sharply pulled the blade out of her heavyweight weapon and she raised the meaty hammer above her head. She swung it down towards Shade but the echidna Chaos Controlled out of her way, leaving Amy to slam the hammer down hard on the floor. The blow was so hard that Amy left a large dent in it. Amy spun around, expecting Shade to reappear behind her but Shade didn't do this. She instead reappeared where she had been just seconds ago. Amy didn't realize this until Shade suddenly kicked her hard in the back, sending her hurling over onto her stomach. Shade picked up her second blade and prepared to cleave Amy into pieces but just as she was about to, Sonic spin-dashed straight into her and sent her crashing into the nearby work table. The impact caused a lot of glass jars, test tubes and science equipment to fall over on the table or even fall off onto the floor and break into pieces.

"I'm sorry Shade but we have to get that stuff outta your body!" cried Sonic, "So I'm afraid it'll have to be lights out for you."

He aimed a powerful punch at Shade's head and he threw it at her. But Sonic would soon regret the action for he punched Shade's head and merely gave himself a very sore fist. Shade's helmet was much too hard for him to simply knock her out with a punch to it. Sonic shook his hand furiously to get rid of the pain but that only ended up being futile as Shade jumped back up onto her feet and slashed Sonic across the chest and shoulders. She left heavy cuts across the hedgehog's chest and shoulders from the attack and just as Sonic winced in pain, Shade added more to it by punching Sonic directly where she'd slashed him. This made Sonic cry out loud with pain but he was swiftly silenced by Shade upper cutting him into the air. Sonic spiralled crazily across the room but he was spared the moment of impact by Silver quickly catching him with his psychokinesis. He lowered Sonic down onto the ground and turned his attention onto Shade. The Chaos-Powered echidna charged towards the two hedgehogs, blades ready for a slice but Silver stopped her dead in her tracks with his psychokinesis. A teal glow surrounded Shade as she was stopped and frozen by the psychic hold. But Silver didn't have Shade restrained for long. The Chaos power in her veins made her even stronger than before, strong enough to break out of a psychokinetic hold easily. Shade broke free, much to Silver's shock, and she swiped the air with her blades. A wave of Chaos Energy swept through the air and struck Sonic and Silver. The attack left them lying down on the floor, grunting in pain and trying hard to get back up. Shade advanced menacingly towards Sonic and Silver but before she could attack them, Blaze struck her in the back with a fiery kick. The attack caused Shade to cry out in pain as Blaze hit her and brought her down onto her stomach. Shade picked herself up but Blaze began to unleash all hell on the echidna, punching her and kicking her as hard as she could on as many places on Shade's body as humanly possible. Each punch and kick she threw was enhanced with fire, making her blows so much harder than they normally would have been. Shade took all the blows although as Blaze attacked her more and more, she began to feel the blows more and more. The Chaos-Powered echidna tried to fight back but the lavender cat was attacking her at a speed too fast for her to fight back. Blaze concluded her mad

attacking spree with a punch to the chest that sent Shade hurling backwards into the lab door. She crashed into the door and tore it clean off its hinges, throwing it outside and sending it spinning into the wall outside the lab. Sonic, Silver, Knuckles and Amy all gathered around behind Blaze as Shade picked herself up and marched back into the lab.

"That Synthetic Chaos Energy's made Shade a tough little cookie hasn't it?" asked Sonic, rubbing the cut on his chest slightly as he spoke.

"I've given her all I got and she doesn't seem that fazed…" said Blaze in surprise, noticing how little Shade appeared to be actually hurt.

"She's too powerful for us…even I can't keep her down for long." murmured Silver.

"We'll have to get a needle and stick it into Shade so we can get that Synthetic Chaos Energy voodoo outta her!" declared Amy, brandishing her hammer and preparing to battle again.

"Just a damn pity that Finitevus's syringe broke while he and Tails were fighting…" muttered Knuckles, noticing the broken syringe from earlier in Tails and Finitevus's fight, "And I don't see anymore lying around." he added despairingly.

"Well maybe you could look for one Knuckles while we make sure Shade doesn't kill us!" suggested Sonic, "Finitevus could always have spares!"

"We'll cover for you." said Amy, "Just see if there's another syringe anywhere."

"Got it. Just don't hurt my girl too much!" protested Knuckles as he ran off to search for the work table for another syringe.

"I think you should worry about Shade hurting US more than us hurting her!" retorted Sonic, "At least if we hurt her, she can just Chaos Regenerate herself!"

Shade suddenly dashed towards the Mobians as Knuckles ran over

to the work table. Silver reacted in just enough time to stop Shade dead in her tracks before she could attack anybody. Shade broke free of Silver's grasp just seconds after being stopped by him and she Blade-Rushed the team across the room. Sonic, Silver, Blaze and Amy were swept off their feet by the wave and slammed hard into a wall. Shade jumped into the air and did an amazing somersault that didn't seem humanly possible to accomplish as she spiralled down towards the team. Amy leapt into the air and walloped the brainwashed Royal Fighters with her hammer. Shade was lucky she had Synthetic Chaos Energy in her body otherwise the hammer blow would have been much worse. Even then, Amy hoped she didn't break anything in her friend's body. Shade hit the floor at a force that made Amy cringe, fearing that the attack had done more harm than she wanted to inflict. But the green eyed echidna got back up onto her feet as if nothing had happened and simply cricked her neck. To her, it was like the blow wasn't even enough to give her a headache. She didn't even feel all that hurt. All that she did feel was anger at her pink coloured opponent for hammering her across the room like she had done. Shade ran towards Amy and readied her blades for a slash. The pink she-hog prepared to attack Shade again but just as she swung the hammer at her, her mind-warped attacked jumped into the air and landed feet first on top of her hammer. Shade's weight atop the already heavy Piko-Piko Hammer was too much for Amy to carry so she forcibly dropped the hammer as her muscles winced in protest. Shade jumped off the hammer and dropkicked Amy in the head, throwing her down onto the floor and leaving her clutching her forehead furiously. Blaze threw a jet of fire into Shade's face, hoping to make her back off so Amy could get back up. But then Shade used a Chaos Control to freeze the fiery feline and the pink hedgehog into place. As Blaze and Amy were frozen in time, Shade walked up to them and prepared to slit their throats. It was a very easy moment for her. Her female opponents were frozen, they couldn't move or defend themselves. One simple slash and Amy and Blaze would be going to heaven with the angels. The echidna held her blades near their necks and prepared to slice them open. But because Silver and Sonic weren't frozen in time, Silver used his psychokinesis to grab Shade and throw him away from Blaze and Amy. Shade was thrown across the room and just as she was recovering from the blow, Sonic spin-dashed into her and knocked her back down again.

Because Shade had been distracted, Amy and Blaze were safe for long enough for the Chaos Control to wear off. They began to move again and they regained themselves from the unpleasant experience. Shaking themselves off, Amy and Blaze returned to the battle just as Shade slashed at Sonic and Silver.

As the fight went on, Knuckles searched frantically for a syringe to use on Shade and get rid of the Chaos Energy in her body. But no matter how hard he searched, he couldn't see any syringes amongst the broken jars, test-tubes and toppled over equipment that littered the whole tabletop. The red echidna was beginning to feel frustrated. Surely his horrible excuse for an actual relative would have spare syringes somewhere! Why couldn't he find any?! Knuckles assumed that there would be somewhere else to find a syringe so he looked in some of the drawers under the table top. But as he searched through all the drawers, he still couldn't find any syringes. This was because Finitevus had had most of his other ones broken previously and hadn't gotten any new ones yet. It made Knuckles frown as to how his uncle was one of the smartest Mobians on the planet and yet he didn't have a spare syringe. He supposed the evil echidna did it on purpose to make sure that they couldn't cure whoever he test his formula on. In his anger, Knuckles pulled out two drawers and he glanced over his shoulder. He saw Finitevus and Tails still fighting with each other and so far, equally matched. Knuckles threw the drawers at Finitevus just to give Tails an edge over him. The drawers smashed against Finitevus, breaking into fragments as they crashed against him. The Chaos Emerald had enhanced his body strength so throwing something as heavy and solid as a drawer was like throwing a glass at a brick wall. But the attack had been enough to distract Finitevus long enough for Tails to summon a Chaos Spear to his hand and whack him with it like a baseball bat. Finitevus staggered backwards as he was hit by the powerful spear and Tails then threw it straight at his chest, adding insult to injury on the echidna. Finitevus clutched his chest as the Chaos Spear struck him. He didn't get the time he needed to recover for Knuckles pounced on him from behind and grabbed him by the arms.

"OK uncle, where can I find a syringe on this ship?!" growled Knuckles.

"You can't. Tails caused me to break my last one." snorted Finitevus, "And even if I had anymore, I wouldn't let you have any."

"You get a syringe for us right now so we can sure Shade or I'll break your neck!" bellowed Knuckles furiously.

"Fie, you fools are displaying killer tendencies towards me so you'll kill me regardless." scoffed Finitevus, "And besides, you fail to realize that I hold all the cards in this struggle…"

He then closed his eyes and tapped into the Chaos Emerald's power. Knuckles and Tails both realized too late what Finitevus was about to do. The echidna threw his arms out to the side and unleashed a purple coloured Chaos Blast that blew Knuckles and Tails off their feet and slammed them into the walls of the lab. Both echidna and fox let out agonizing wails as the Chaos Blast hammered against them and trapped them against the wall. The blast kept them pinned there for a few moments before it died away, leaving a very much power-drained and weakened Knuckles to lay against a wall and an exhausted Tails to slump onto the floor, recovering much faster than Knuckles thanks to the Chaos Energy in his body. Finitevus smirked triumphantly at Tails as he held the Chaos Emerald before his face.

"As long as I have this gem, I have all the power and there's no chance of winning." sneered Finitevus.

"Try saying that when you DON'T have that Chaos Emerald anymore!" cried Tails.

He was about to do something but before he could do so, Finitevus used a Chaos Control to freeze him into place. The Chaos Control wouldn't last very long on Tails though so Finitevus quickly made his move. He rushed towards the twin-tailed fox and he slugged him in the gut as hard as he could. Then just as the Chaos Control wore off, Finitevus seized Tails by the arms and threw him across the room. Tails screamed at the top of his voice as he was thrown like a baseball. Sonic turned around upon hearing Tails's screams and he saw that the fox was heading straight towards him. Amy was beside Sonic and she saw Tails heading towards him too. Sonic cried out in shock, fully expecting a very heavy crash from Tails to knock him

down onto his feet and send himself and Tails sprawling on the floor…but then Tails missed him completely and crashed into Amy instead. Sonic watched, relieved that Tails had missed him but feeling sorry for Amy that Tails had knocked her off her feet. He helped Amy and Tails get back up onto their feet.

"Hey Tails, I think you've got your work cut out for you!" cried Sonic, "I saw Finitevus use a Chaos Blast earlier…I bet he's using a Chaos Emeralds! We must get that Chaos Emerald away from him now!"

"I wish we could Sonic but he's too evasive…" muttered Tails, "I'll try what I can to get the emerald out of his hands!"

"One good idea would be to use a Chaos Control to freeze Finitevus in place and then swipe the Chaos Emerald from his hands." suggested Amy, "Though…he might be expecting that. He is a clever bastard after all…" she sighed in annoyance.

"We'll have to distract him long enough for Tails to freeze Finitevus in place." Blaze suggested, "That's got to stop him."

"And once we get that Chaos Emerald from him, we can use it to find the other seven and the Master Emerald so we can get them away from that maniac and ruin his Enerjak plan!" declared Silver, "Let's give it a shot!"

The Mobians nodded agreeably but just before they could do anything, Finitevus walked over to Shade and called to her, catching his minion's attention so he could speak to her. Shade stood loyally before Dr. Finitevus as the echidna gave her a command.

"Shade, go to New Mobotropolis and destroy the city. Leave NOBODY alive." he commanded.

"As you wish sir." droned Shade, "I will not fail you master."

The Royal Fighters all jaw dropped in unison upon hearing Finitevus give Shade the task. The wicked scientist was actually telling Shade to go to New Mobotropolis and destroy the entire city and kill everybody?! That was beyond sick, much sicker than anything Finitevus had ever done thus far. He had ordered Shade, a resident

of New Mobotropolis, to go to the city itself and destroy it and kill everybody who lived there! These included all the other Royal Fighters in the R.F.S. and some of her own friends! Shade would never forgive herself if she carried out the task and was ever cured afterwards so she could realize what she'd done. They had to stop her before she did something she would forever regret! Sonic whizzed towards Shade but before he could get anywhere near her, Finitevus threw a warp ring in front of him and re-directed him directly above Knuckles, who was beginning to get back up from the earlier Chaos Blast. As hedgehog and echidna collided, Shade Chaos-Controlled away from *The Nefarious* and headed off to New Mobotropolis. The moment she disappeared, Finitevus smirked wickedly at his opponents.

"Well my ridiculous Royal Fighters…what a dilemma this is. You have two choices now." gloated Finitevus, "You can kill me now and prevent Enerjak from rising but leave New Mobotropolis to be destroyed and your friends slaughtered. Or you can let me go and stop Shade from committing the biggest sin of her life. What do you choose?"

Sonic and his team found themselves in complete and utter torment. Finitevus had given them one heck of a dilemma to deal with. They had the chance to get rid of Finitevus thanks to Tails being full of Synthetic Chaos Energy and yet Finitevus was giving them a good excuse to abandon that mission. Shade was going to bring ruination to the very city that was giving her a home after Finitevus caused the destruction of AngelIsland last year. Said ruination would include a gruesome death toll ranging from the youngest of children to the oldest of adults and all of the Royal Fighters still alive and active thus far. Shade was not only going to kill an entire city, she was killing her own friends and Mobius's greatest heroes as well. Sonic doubted that Shade would succeed since surely the Royal Fighters back home would be able to stop her. But they wouldn't stop her destroying the city. All she had to do was unleash a Chaos Blast and given how she was pretty much a living Chaos Emerald now thanks to Finitevus, she could easily unleash a powerful Chaos Blast. The blast would wreck everything and likely cause many deaths. Any who lived, Shade would just slaughter herself and nobody would have the power to stop her. Only Tails had a ghost of a chance

matching up to Shade at this point in time. Sonic supposed Shadow the Hedgehog had a chance against Shade but even he would fall victim to her eventually. It was hopeless. Sonic just had to admit that they had no chance of killing Finitevus now and ending his attempts to become Enerjak. They could try and freeze him with a Chaos Control but Finitevus had a Chaos Emerald in his hand. He would probably do it before they could even utter the words and Finitevus also had warp rings so he'd just escape before the Chaos Control could take effect. Sonic had to admit it, his team's chances of stopping Finitevus were gone. He had to save New Mobotropolis before Shade destroyed it. He glared at Finitevus angrily.

"Fine then. We'll pick New Mobotropolis." he said angrily, "But don't think for a moment that we'll let you go this easily. We'll come back for you Finny, you know we will!"

"Indeed and because of that, I'll be expecting your next move already." sneered Finitevus.

"Aren't you always?" sighed Sonic, turning to Tails and looking at him grimly, "Come on buddy, get us outta here and back home. We'll kill Finitevus another time."

"I hope so." moaned Tails, very disappointed that he had to let Finitevus live this time. But he was more than happy to put his friends and home above Finitevus right now. What would be the point of stopping Finitevus if his home and friends were all slaughtered?

Tails held out his hands and Sonic, Knuckles, Silver and Blaze gathered around the fox, ready to be warped home with him. But then just as Tails was about to activate a Chaos Control, Finitevus held up the Chaos Emerald and suddenly activated one himself. He finished saying the words "Chaos Control" just as Tails was preparing to say it. The twin-tailed fox just managed to yell "Chaos…" before Finitevus's Chaos Control took effect. Tails's words slowed down until eventually his voice died in his throat and his body froze into place. So did everybody else around him. Time crawled to a deathly standstill around them and for the moment, they couldn't move. Not even an eyelid. Delighted, Finitevus marched over to the frozen Mobians and he reached into his cloak pocket. He

then pulled out the one thing Knuckles had been looking for earlier… a spare syringe! As a contingency plan, Finitevus had decided to keep any spare syringes in his cloak. This one had a retractable needle so that it wouldn't accidentally poke him in the back when he landed down on it. Finitevus deployed the syringe's needle and he inserted it into the frozen Tails's neck. The Chaos Control made it impossible for Tails to resist. He was stuck where he was, allowing Finitevus to freely use the syringe to deprive him of all Synthetic Chaos Energy in his bloodstream. Finitevus pulled back on the plunger until he had half a syringe full of the green liquid that he had painstakingly worked hard onto create. He was surprised at the fact he only had half a syringe full when he finished. But he didn't let the matter be too much of a bother to him. As long as Tails couldn't use his formula against him anymore, he was content. Tails really thought that he had a chance of beating him and now Finitevus had snatched it away. He'd been through a train of defeats and embarrassments lately but all of that had come to an end. He was back on top of the game and he was closer to becoming Enerjak now. Cackling maniacally, Finitevus used a warp ring to open up a portal where he'd put his canister of Synthetic Chaos Energy and he simply put his hand through the warp ring and placed his syringe beside the canister. He'd work on that small bit of Synthetic Chaos Energy later. As he put the syringe away, he noticed that Tails's Chaos green eyes were now beginning to slowly change back to his normal blue colour. The Chaos Control was slowly beginning to wear off. Quickly, Finitevus opened up a warp ring to New Mobotropolis behind the Royal Fighters and he shoved them all through it one by one. As all six Mobians were sent tumbling through the warp ring, Finitevus closed it up and put it back on his arm.

"Let's see you save your worthless city and your equally as worthless friends without any of my formula…" crowed Finitevus, "Now to get back into the lab in Megapolis so I can begin Phase 2 of Operation: Enerjak Reborn…"

Cackling delightedly, Finitevus warped himself over to Megapolis, leaving *The Nefarious* entirely in the care of his armada while he prepared the next stage of his plan. He would tell the armada what was going on so they would understand. He knew full well that the Royal Fighters still had a warp ring, most notably the one he'd given

Roxy the Raccoon to use before she turned on the armada. They knew *The Nefarious* too well so it would be illogical to take the ship back to Megapolis and thus, bring the heroes directly to where Phase 2 was being carried out. So *The Nefarious* was free to fly around as a means of keeping the heroes in the dark about his true whereabouts. He didn't really need the ship anymore, especially since he was so close to becoming Enerjak. It would take until tomorrow for the one-hundred Chaos Emeralds to be made but it would be worth the wait for his plan finally concluded and he finally became Enerjak…

Over in New Mobotropolis, Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Silver and Blaze were all dumped on top of each other in a heap as they fell out of Finitevus's warp ring. The Chaos Control wore off upon impact and the Mobians found themselves in a rather comical tangle of limbs and bodies as they realized what had happened. It took them a minute to get themselves untangled from each other and the moment they stood up, they saw that Shade was already in battle with the Royal Fighters. Sonic watched as Shadow the Hedgehog spin-dashed into the Chaos-powered echidna and sent her flying backwards across the battlefield. Shade wasn't down for long though. She was back on her feet in a millisecond and she struck Shadow in the face with a Chaos enhanced Blade Rush attack. Shadow cried out as he was hit by the wave and he winced as he hit the ground hard. Some of the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters charged towards Shade, hoping to bring her down so they could get the Chaos Energy out of her but the echidna swiped both blades and sent a wave of Chaos Energy sweeping towards them. The Royal Fighters were hit by the wave and thrown down onto their backs. Sonic watched in horror as Shade attacked her own friends. He turned to Tails quickly.

"Tails, freeze Shade with a Chaos Control now..."

His voice halted and he found himself unable to speak anymore after realizing something terrible. Tails's eyes were no longer glowing green! They were back to normal! Tails himself also realized that he now suddenly felt weaker and that he couldn't feel the Chaos Energy in his veins anymore. The fox went pale with shock as he

realized what had happened. His one chance of subduing Shade the easiest way possible had been confiscated!

"Oh no...Finitevus must have taken the Synthetic Chaos Energy out of me!" exclaimed Tails in horror, "He must have done it after he Chaos-Controlled us!"

"Well that's fantastic!" whined Knuckles angrily, "How can we possibly beat Shade and stop her from destroying everything now?! She'll be too strong for either of us to defeat!"

"Well Finitevus made one big mistake." noted Amy with a sly smirk on her face, "We're back in New Mobotropolis right? And we have plenty of syringes in Royal HQ or the hospital. There's plenty of distractions to keep Shade busy so one of us has to get a syringe and use it on Shade while she's being kept busy."

"Wow Amy, that's a good observation." said Blaze in amazement.

"I have my moments." chuckled Amy.

"I'll get the syringe since I'm super fast." declared Sonic, "You five join the others in the fight. Hold on for me as best as you can!"

"We will do." Tails insisted.

With nothing left to say or do, Sonic whizzed off towards Royal HQ at top speed. Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Silver and Blaze ran over to help the Royal Fighters keep Shade busy. They ran over just in time to see their tomboy friend Mandy Mouse punch Shade and throw her up into the air thanks to her steel knuckle attachments. Tails beamed delightedly, pleased to see that his glorious invention for the purple-furred mouse still worked as potently as before. Shade crashed down onto the ground but she picked herself back up and prepared to defend herself as Queen Sally Acorn charged towards the peach-furred co-guardian. Shade summoned Chaos Energy around her blades and she and her royal foe clashed blades. The Chaos Energy around Shade's weapons kept Sally's absurdly sharp blades from cutting through them. Sally pushed back against Shade's blades and tried to force her away but Shade was much too strong for the squirrel. The armoured echidna pushed her arms

forward and swiftly shoved Sally down onto her back. The Mobian A.I Nicole the Lynx materialized in front of Shade, her avatar carrying a shield thanks to Tails's upgrades to her last year allowing her to interact with the environment and use objects as if she was a normal person. Shade slashed at Nicole but she raised the shield and blocked her attacks. She then proceeded to throw the shield at Shade, hitting her squarely in the forehead and knocking her down onto her back. The echidna picked herself up but Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Silver and Blaze pile-dived their brainwashed friend in the back. Knuckles felt bad that he even had to do this to his own girlfriend but he knew that it was for a good cause so he let it slide. The New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters stared at the team as they tried their hardest to keep Shade pinned down.

"Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Silver, Blaze!" cried Sally, "Good to see you're all back! Where's Sonic?"

"Getting the one thing we need to get rid of Shade's Synthetic Chaos Energy corruption!" cried Tails, "He'll be back with a syringe in a moment!"

"That's good." said Nicole brightly, "And Dr. Finitevus?"

"We had to let him go so we could stop my girl from wiping you all out!" blustered Knuckles, using all the strength in his body to keep Shade down, "But he got rid of the energy Tails injected himself with so we can't use it against him anymore!"

"We still have a warp ring, we'll still be able to get aboard his ship and ambush him." noted Sally, "After we save Shade, we'll..."

Then suddenly, an explosion of green energy erupted from Shade's body and sent everybody flying through the air away from the corrupted Royal Fighter. In order to get back up, Shade had been forced to use a Chaos Blast to throw everybody off of her. Sally, Knuckles, Tails, Amy, Silver and Blaze all screeched in alarm as they were thrown away like an unwanted piece of litter and they all crashed down heavily onto the ground like a collapsing swarm of flies. Nicole hadn't been sent flying away thanks to Tails's programming causing her to become intangible the moment anybody attacked her. The formerly Mobian lynx had let her shield

take the Chaos Blast for her. She was dismayed to see that the shield had been reduced to barely useful scrap by the powerful blast so she tossed it away and de-materialized away so she could get another weapon to use. Shade picked herself up, relieved that nobody had her pinned down anymore and she advanced towards the Royal Fighters her Chaos Blast had stricken. She didn't get close to them for Ruben the Water Panther jumped in and fired a jet of water at her to keep her back. The water hit Shade but Shade just walked through the wave Ruben was throwing at her as if nothing was happening. The water panther gulped nervously. Shade was too strong for his attack! He kept it up anyway for it would provide a good distraction, making sure he backed away slowly so Shade wouldn't get too close to him. While Shade's attention was diverted, Ruben's girlfriend and also Tails's sister, Sora Prower, ran in and jumped up into the air like a rabbit. She swung her foot outwards and kicked Shade hard in the side of her head. This caused her to loose her footing and thus, Ruben's water attack was able to finally push her away now she had no proper balance on her feet. Ruben sent Shade hurling backwards for a good distance and when Shade eventually landed down on to her back, she stopped just at the foot of the hill that proudly displayed Castle Acorn in all its majestic glory and Royal HQ just beside the castle. It was a good thing that had happened for Sonic came running out of Royal HQ with a syringe in hand and he quickly noticed that Shade was just getting back up. He quickly grabbed the echidna and stuck the syringe into her neck. Shade tensed up as she felt the sharp pinprick of a syringe needle jab into her neck but before she could do anything about it, the red-sneakered hedgehog pushed up the plunger and sucked out all the Synthetic Chaos Energy in Shade's body. The entire syringe was full of green liquid by the time he had finished and as Sonic removed the syringe from Shade's neck, the echidna fell onto her hands and knees and panted heavily. The glowing parts of her armour glowed pink instead of green now and the eyes on her helmet became white with pink outlines again. Shade's helmet retracted back into her headband, showing that the co-guardian's eyes were back to their normal lilac colour. Her eyes were brimming with tears. Sonic noticed this and he could tell that Shade was about ready to start crying. Knuckles ran up towards Shade and quickly embraced her to make her feel better. Shade wrapped her arms around Knuckles and began to sob. Guilty tears trickled down her face but her sobs were

mostly quiet with just the occasional loud breathing between sobs. The spike-fisted echidna stroked Shade's back gently and hugged her warmly and tightly.

"I...attacked my friends...could have murdered you all...was ordered to destroy New Mobotropolis...and kill all of you." sobbed Shade, "Oh thank you for getting that stuff out of me before I could...! I'm so sorry I couldn't stop myself everyone! I'm so sorry..."

"Sssh, it's OK hon. You're OK now. You won't hurt any of us anymore." said Knuckles softly, running his fingers through his girlfriend's locks softly and kissing her forehead affectionately.

"And just like with Fiona, Finitevus has given us some Synthetic Chaos Energy to use against him again!" cried Sonic excitedly, looking at the syringe in his hand "We could take this, perfect it like before and then..."

"There's no time Sonic." said Shade sadly, "Finitevus tested it on me and it was a success. He'll be moving onto the next stage of his plan. We haven't go time to use that against him."

"Plus, we only made it positive because of a power ring." noted Tails, "Today's power ring has already been used. We have to wait until tomorrow before we can use one for that and even then, Finitevus's plan might conclude before we're ready for him. Shade's right, there's just no time."

"Oh man...that sucks." muttered Sonic, glaring at the syringe in his hand as if the Chaos Energy inside of it was mocking him on how he had no time left to make this particular dose positive.

"Finitevus may not get 100 Synthetic Chaos Emeralds made now but I'm sure he'll not be very long. Might even be tomorrow when it commences." thought Knuckles.

"You're right." said Silver glumly, "The book me and Blaze found stated specifically that the world ends on July the 21st 2144. I just remembered that the 21st is tomorrow."

Sonic's quills straightened in horror. The end of the world was

tomorrow?! How had tomorrow sneaked up so fast!? Sonic began to feel like the past eight days had suddenly been a blur and now he was just realizing that Enerjak's rising and Mobius's doom was tomorrow! Eight days had gone by so fast, so fast that even somebody as fast moving as Sonic couldn't believe how quickly they'd gone by. Sonic felt a little stupid for forgetting that the 21st was tomorrow but now Silver reminded him, he wouldn't be forgetting again very soon. Sonic's expression suddenly feel into an expression darker than he'd ever expressed before.

"Then, we stop Finitevus dead in his tracks..." growled Sonic, "**Before** tomorrow comes. If not, then we stop him tomorrow."

"I hope we can." said Tails worriedly, "Otherwise tomorrow will be our LAST tomorrow..."

The Royal Fighters all nodded agreeably. The doomsday clock was now ticking dangerously away towards its last day. July the 21st 2144 was the doomsday date, the Day of Reckoning that Silver and Blaze had hoped to prevent. The Mobians only had one last chance to stop Finitevus before the world came to its end. If they failed then they'd never have another chance, ever, EVER again...

Footnotes:

See *The Terror of Enerjak

Holy crap...Mobius's doom is only a day away?! Will the heroes stop Finitevus in time?! 0_0

I hope so...tune in next time for* "Enerjak Rising Part 1: The Beginning Stage" *as the beginning of the end arrives...

Dark Armada Part 23: Enerjak Rising 1

Story 223: Enerjak Rising Part 1: The Beginning Stage

The Dark Armada Chapter 23 of 25

The Day of Reckoning. Also known as "Last Judgement". Many religious beliefs feared about such a day for the Day of Reckoning was when the last judgement would be made upon the world from almighty God himself. And when that judgement was made, the end of all things arrived. Many people often feared on when the supposed Day of Reckoning was going to be. Many doomsday theories had been made in light of this and year after year, there were always predictions on when the world would come to an end. It was something that plagued all of humanity, the very people that Dr. Eggman had once belonged to when he was alive.

Mobius was no different to Eggman's world of Earth. Mobius had many doomsday theories too. Most of them had been debunked over the years though Mobius had legitimately come close to ending full stop. The most notable time Mobius nearly ended was during the legendary multi-verse crisis. The Eraser, the former God of Existence, had tried to erase everything for he felt that the current existence of everything that had been created was a repulsive, abhorrent existence and he wanted to start everything over. The Royal Fighters had managed to stop him with moments to spare but then Dr. Eggman came close to ending Mobius afterwards with his Death Egg. The Death Egg had been equipped with a weapon known as the Egg Annihilator Beam. Only the untimely intervention of Dr. Finitevus had stopped Eggman dead in his tracks…quite literally. The Death Egg had been destroyed thanks to Finitevus's sabotage and Eggman had been killed. This had allowed Mobius to live for another whole year…

…but tomorrow, on July the 21st 2144, Mobius was about to have its Day of Reckoning. The end of the world was coming in a mere few hours. Dr. Finitevus, Mobius's new worst enemy after Dr. Eggman himself had bit the dust had formulated an army of villains all with

one goal in mind: to achieve their desires and destroy the Royal Fighters. Some of the Dark Armada members had fallen so they would never live to see their ambitions come true but there were many other members still alive to have their goals achieved thanks to Finitevus's grand plan. But Finitevus's real motive was not anything of the sort. He wasn't interested in granting his armada's wishes. His plan was really to become Enerjak and destroy all of Mobius. He had become very nihilistic as time went by to the point he began to see the world as a "garden gone wild". He wanted nothing more than the world destroyed so that it could restart again. And as Enerjak, he would have the power to have the world the way he saw as perfect and no longer a garden gone wild. He was coming very close to achieving this goal. He had tested his Synthetic Chaos Energy on a Chaos Adept, namely Shade the Echidna and got the result he wanted. Now all he had to do was use the Synthetic Chaos Energy to create 100 Chaos Emeralds and then he could use them plus the emeralds he already had in his hands to become the mighty Enerjak. The Chaos Demigod had left his mark on Mobius the first time he had risen* and as Finitevus prepared to become the invincible entity that had nearly doomed Mobius last year, Enerjak would leave a new mark. A permanent mark that symbolized how Mobius came to its untimely end…

This was precisely why Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends were attempting to stop Dr. Finitevus before tomorrow came. As evening fell, the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had warped themselves aboard Dr. Finitevus's insidious ship *The Nefarious* with a warp ring that they had been given by a treacherous Roxy the Raccoon. They were hoping to ambush Finitevus in his own ship and stop him before tomorrow came. This was their best chance at preventing the world from ending. If they could stop Finitevus now than tomorrow would be a good day and no Enerjak apocalypse would happen. Just moments ago, they had been fighting against a Chaos-powered and brainwashed Shade, the unlucky Royal Fighter who had been picked by Finitevus to be his test subject for his Synthetic Chaos Energy. Finitevus had used Shade as a means of forcing Sonic and a team of Royal Fighters he had brought onboard *The Nefarious* with him earlier this day. Sonic's best friend Miles "Tails" Prower had pumped himself full of Chaos Energy that the heroes had gotten from an infected Fiona Fox and had used it against Finitevus but in

order to get rid of the Royal Fighters so he could make a clean getaway, Finitevus had sent Shade to destroy New Mobotropolis and kill everybody. This had forced Sonic and his team to abandon the mission and stop Shade before she could destroy everything. Finitevus had also managed to get the Chaos Energy out of Tails, preventing the fox from using his precious formula against him anymore. This was why the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters had come onboard *The Nefarious* with a warp ring, it was their only method of transportation and their only way on the ship currently.

All of the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were aboard the ship thanks to the marvellous device. Sonic the Hedgehog, Queen Sally Acorn, Tails the Fox, Knuckles the Echidna, Amy Rose, Cream the Rabbit, Cosmo the Seedrian, Bunnie Rabboh (formerly Rabbot), Wilson the Dog, Mandy the Mouse, Shade the Echidna, Ruben the Water Panther, Sora Prower, Abby the Squirrel, Mace the Elephant, Vector the Crocodile, Espio the Chameleon, Charmy Bee and even Roxy the Raccoon herself was among them as they prepared to infiltrate the ship. Roxy had come with the team because she fancied taking part in Finitevus's death as well as the others since Finitevus had done many terrible things to her and forced her to become part of the Dark Armada. The team also had future Mobians Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat joining them for they were the ones who had even alerted them about Mobius's Day of Reckoning in the first place. It only made sense that they helped to get rid of Finitevus too. Once everybody was onboard the ship, Sally stashed the warp ring away in her vest pocket and she turned to face her team. Her face had never looked so grave at any point in her life, something that Sonic picked up on immediately but he could hardly blame Sally for looking that way given what the Royal Fighters had been going through the past seven days, going on eight now. The past few days had been hell for the Royal Fighters with many hardships, shallow or bittersweet victories, tragedy, near losses and one of their own being forced to betray the team and work for Finitevus. They had been scoring more victories lately but it seemed their winning streak was dangerously close to ending. And now was the worst time for said streak to be ending for just tomorrow, Enerjak would rise and Mobius would be doomed.

"OK my fellow fighters, spread out and search this vessel."

commanded Sally, "Turn the place upside down if you have to. We're NOT leaving this ship until we find Dr. Finitevus. Leave NO place unturned or unsearched. You search everywhere and I mean literally "everywhere", even in a place you wouldn't normally look. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes your majesty." replied all the Royal Fighters.

"Good. And when you find Finitevus…kill him." Sally ordered, her face and tone of voice eerily ominous, even for her, "It disgusts me to give you such a horrible order but we have no choice. We want Mobius to survive? Then Finitevus has to die. No Finitevus, no Enerjak. No Enerjak, no apocalypse. Simple as that. Make sure your ear pieces are switched on so that when one of you finds Finitevus, you can alert the others and we can all fight him together. Thanks to my good friend Nicole, we'll navigate this ship as if we own it." she added, proudly showing off the handheld computer device that Nicole the A.I. Lynx was housed in.

Blaze just smiled upon seeing Nicole, still feeling very proud that she had taken Captain Metal's head the other day for the head had contained the plans for *The Nefarious* and thus, given them a very effective map to use whilst aboard. It was all thanks to her that the Mobians wouldn't get lost onboard this ship.

"We got ya Queenie." said Sonic with a wink, "We'll have this place thoroughly searched before you can say "Royal Acorns".

"I hope I'm the one who finds that monster…" growled Shade angrily, "I really want to kill him for what he did to me and what he ordered me to do whilst his Chaos-powered minion…"

"I think all of us want the doctor dead hon." said Knuckles grimly, nodding his head agreeably, "But this isn't a contest to see who finds him first. No matter who finds him first, we will put that wild animal down. I bet if my dad knew what a monster his brother was, he'd be hunting him down like we are."

Shade nodded agreeably. Knowing Knuckles's late father Locke the Echidna, Shade suggested that Locke would refuse to acknowledge Finitevus as his brother just like how Knuckles refused to

acknowledge Finitevus as his uncle. Knowing you're related to an evil monster is one of the worst feelings anybody in the world could feel. It was a feeling that could truly destroy a person inside. Shade pushed all thoughts of Locke and how he'd feel about Finitevus away as the Royal Fighters all spread out and began searching every inch of the ship they had sneaked aboard. Tails by far was the best Mobian out of the team to be searching the ship for he'd been a part of the armada for seven days as Mecha Tails. He had been everywhere on *The Nefarious* and knew all the hiding places. Sally was second best since she had a map of the ship on Nicole herself. The rest were just going to do as they had been ordered, search everywhere and even look in places that they wouldn't normally look in if this was another kind of mission. Some Royal Fighters stayed on the floor they had warped on, which was the middle floor where the laboratory was, while others searched on all the other floors. Soon every floor of *The Nefarious* had somebody searching in a room on it.

True to their orders, as the hours ticked slowly by, the Royal Fighters searched every inch of the evil vessel, leaving no corner unsearched and no object or furniture unturned. All of the rooms had been searched from the bridge to the prison cell to the laboratory and even all the armada's dorm rooms had been searched. During the search, Roxy had made very sure she didn't go anywhere near the late Lennox Meers's dorm room. The wicked, sadistic, perverted meerkat had imprisoned her in that room and had taken advantage of her, grooming and molesting her at every available opportunity. The raccoon still cringed just thinking about it and it was amazing to think that just earlier this very morning, she had managed to get away from Lennox and come to the Royal Fighters so they could free her from the armada's insidious grasp. Then Roxy had killed Lennox to make him pay for what he'd done to her. She still imagined the meerkat's head exploding into a cloud of blood as the bomb that had once been in her head exploded under his hat, the very place she'd smuggled the bomb in order to get rid of him. It was an image she'd cherish forever since Lennox had scarred her very badly. So badly that she insisted to herself she'd never be giving romance a try ever again. She was quite happy to stay single from now on. So on the search, Roxy had looked in any dorm room that wasn't Lennox's, leaving somebody else to search in Lennox's room.

Throughout the whole search, Tails and Cosmo had felt an overbearing sense of unease since the very appearance and atmosphere of *The Nefarious* gave them bad vibes. Tails was reminded of all the bad stuff he did as Mecha Tails and Cosmo was reminded of how she'd been a prisoner of the armada after her role as Finitevus's unwilling mole had been revealed. She still harboured feelings of overwhelming guilt despite being forgiven for what she'd done and welcomed back with open arms. The two had stayed close together on their search and as they inspected whatever room they had gone into, Tails had given Cosmo handy hints on where to search and where all the possible hiding places were. This had helped Cosmo very much and together, she and Tails had managed to search any room they looked in all over. But to their dismay, and to the dismay of all the Royal Fighters, they hadn't found Finitevus. He was nowhere to be seen aboard *The Nefarious* . He wasn't even in his own dorm room. Even the bridge was devoid of his presence, something that had surprised Bunnie for she had gone up there to search for him. She had really hoped that Fintievus was there. She still wanted to make Finitevus pay for being responsible for Geoffrey St. John's sacrifice. Geoffrey had been her boyfriend and his sacrifice had been hard on her so Bunnie wanted to make Finitevus pay for it. She would have to wait until they could find him though, much to the former cyborg rabbit's annoyance. It hadn't that surprising for the Royal Fighters that Finitevus wasn't in the lab for the lab was the most obvious room that he could be hiding in and as far as the Mobians knew, Finitevus was way too clever to pick such an obvious hiding place. The lab had been searched anyway but the Royal Fighters hadn't been surprised that they hadn't found him there.

After about three exhausting hours had been spent searching *The Nefarious* , the last hour spent searching everything a second, even a third time, the Royal Fighters all returned to the middle floor to give everybody their reports. Sally could see from the rather grim and disappointed faces of her Royal Fighters that nobody had had any success. That and the fact nobody had used their earpiece to tell them they'd found Finitevus had told the queen the bad news.

"I guess nobody had any luck finding Finitevus then?" asked Sally, her face looking very tired and very worried.

"Nada Sal, I searched the bottom floor three damn times and I couldn't find him." muttered Sonic, "And the agonizing part was that I had to do it SLOWLY just to make sure I didn't miss him!"

"He was in none of the dorm rooms your majesty." muttered Roxy, "And from what Sora told me since I didn't want to look in it, he wasn't even in Lennox's room." she added, looking over to the blue-furred vixen.

"I'm usually good at finding things but even I couldn't find any trace of her." sighed Sora, "If a spy like me can't find him then you know he's well hidden..."

"Me and Cosmo couldn't find him." sighed Tails, "And given how I know this ship better than anybody due to the fact I was WORKING for Finitevus as his Robian slave...you really can start worrying."

"If Tails can't find him anywhere than what chance do we have?" asked Cosmo worriedly.

"Ah was surprised that he wasn't in the bridge!" exclaimed Bunnie, "Though ah suppose it would'a been a little too obvious if he was up there..." she added thoughtfully.

"I probably would have been." murmured Amy, shaking her head, "I searched wherever I could though and me, Cream and Ruben had no luck."

"Me and the boys found nothing either. No Finitevus, not even the cape that he wears." sighed Vector disappointedly.

"And me, Nicole and Abby had no luck..." murmured Sally, "We searched high and low and neither of us could find him. Nicole couldn't even detect his heat signature! And here's a more disturbing fact..." she added, her face somehow looking more grave than before, "As a just in case, I used Nicole to find where the Chaos Emeralds were being kept. I cut open the wall that was hiding them and...they're gone too."

The Royal Fighters all gasped incredulously upon hearing this odd bit of news. They hadn't expected to hear that there were no Chaos

Emeralds onboard the ship as well as no Finitevus.

"The Chaos Emeralds aren't onboard either?!" blurted Knuckles disbelievingly, "That is weird..."

"What's even weirder than that is the lack of presence of the Dark Armada itself onboard!" cried Mace in alarm, "Seriously, I didn't find ANY member of the Dark Armada throughout the whole search!"

"I don't think any of us did." said Sonic grimly, "I know I didn't and nobody else has reported any such findings. Which makes this even weirder...why would Finitevus and the armada not be onboard The Nefarious?"

"Maybe...they did that to trick us." thought Cosmo, "They probably knew we'd come gunning for them so they left us an empty ship while they hide away to continue with Finitevus's plan.

"I bet that's exactly what they damn well did!" Knuckles bellowed in rage. He punched the wall furiously just for stress relief and continued to rant. "After Finitevus sent me and the team back to New Mobotropolis to save Shade, he and the armada must have took the emeralds and ran for it, leaving us on a wild goose chase while he uses them and his synthetic energy for his plan! We were fools to think he'd still be here! He's outwitted us again!"

"That Finitevus...he's a very sly and cunning individual." said a very nervous Wilson, "Have you noticed most of the time, his plans seem to hinge on us doing what we expect him to do?"

"Indeed sweetie." said Mandy, putting a hand on Wilson's shoulder and looking as nervous as he was, "Most of this war, Finitevus makes up plans and strategies that involve us doing what he expects us to do. And every time, we keep playing into his hands..."

"It's like no matter what we do, he's always got a way of outsmarting us!" moaned Ruben, "That's why we can never get him! He's too darn clever for us!"

"And it's also why Enerjak rises tomorrow..." sighed Silver, "Finitevus keeps outsmarting us and outsmarting us until he

becomes Enerjak."

"I'm scared Silver..." said Blaze anxiously, "What if we can't stop him in time? What if...what if..." she paused for a moment as she wrapped her arms around Silver to try and comfort herself, "What if we die along with the others when Enerjak rises?"

"We're from the future Blaze, it won't matter what happens to us." said Silver reassuringly, embracing the beautiful, pyrokenetic princess lovingly, "We'll still be born in the future and have the chance to come back and stop all of this."

"But you've changed history..." noted Abby, "You were never there when Enerjak rose right? You've changed history by coming back to the past to try and prevent the coming apocalypse. And Finitevus, from what I've heard, is fully aware of the fact you two know what he does. So when he becomes Enerjak, he might make sure that nobody in the future ever finds out how the world ends and thus, prevent his destruction from being halted!" she shrieked dramatically.

"Abby, you have an excellent point there!" gasped Sally, "So Silver and Blaze, you're in as much trouble as we are! Finitevus knows you're from the future and that there are still Mobians alive to tell about how he doomed the world! He'll probably make sure that NOBODY survives the apocalypse this time!"

"And if he does that...oh no...oh no! We won't exist!" exclaimed Silver, "Me and Blaze will be pretty much dead! If we die here and Enerjak kills everybody on Mobius, we'll never exist!"

"So we really do need to stop him!" cried Blaze, clutching Silver even harder over this worrying thought.

"Hang on a minute, if Enerjak dooms the world then how are there any survivors in the first place?" noted Sonic quizzically, "Like seriously, am I the only one wondering about that?"

"I guess Enerjak spared some of the Mobians just so he had somebody to kiss his ass." sniffed Tails, "Although how did nobody know about Enerjak 200 years later? He's a god isn't he so how did

he just disappear? Shouldn't he be immortal?"

"I'm afraid even we can't answer that." said Silver disappointedly, "The book that told us how Mobius ended doesn't have that information. I guess the author didn't know what happened to Enerjak."

"I have one theory..." mused Shade, "Notice how the Synthetic Chaos Energy was unstable with Blizzard and it caused her to faint?"

"And when Scourge accidentally used it on Conquering Storm she became a monster and Fiona got infected by her..." murmured Tails, "But that was because they weren't Chaos Adepts."

"Indeed but what if even in a Chaos Adept, the formula's unstable?" suggested Shade, "Maybe the energy gets so much for Finitevus that...after dooming the world, it kills him."

"That's a plausible theory." murmured Knuckles, "Maybe the reason Enerjak disappeared from memory is because he died. And nobody was around to witness it so they kinda forgot about him."

"But since Silver and Blaze have given us the information we require and I was an idiot and told Finitevus about it...he'll make sure NOBODY lives to tell the tale." grumbled Sonic, "Man I could just kick myself! It's my own stupid fault Finitevus knows about Silver and Blaze telling us about his Enerjak plot!"

"It's alright Sonic, don't beat yourself up." said Sally comfortingly, "All we have to do now is make doubly sure that Finitevus doesn't succeed in his plot. It's obvious we won't find him or his armada on The Nefarious so we'll have to go home and prepare for tomorrow."

"The tomorrow that might well be the last..." said a very worried and teary-eyed Cream. She looked like she was well on the way to breaking down into floods of tears so Amy decided to hug Cream for comfort. It was the most that the little rabbit deserved for her kindness towards her while she had been in a hospital bed recovering from injuries inflicted on her by Captain Metal.

"It could well be the last." said Sally nervously, "Depending on if we can find Finitevus in time tomorrow. Silver, when's the official time of Enerjak's rising?" she asked quickly.

"According to the book...I believe it said 12:00 noon." thought Silver, "So we have the whole of tomorrow morning to find Finitevus in time and kill him before he becomes Enerjak."

"I can help with that." suggested Sora, "I'll leave an orb on this ship and listen out for in case Finitevus or the armada comes back onboard. I'll have the earpiece the orb contains on me so I can hear anything it picks up."

"That's a great idea precious!" cried Ruben excitedly, "We may find out where Finitevus is hiding or we may even find out if he comes back onboard the ship! And once Sora's orb confirms Finitevus is back or where he's hiding, we can use a warp ring to grab him or force the armada to spill the beans!"

"We are SOOOOO fortunate we have a spy on our team." said a very delighted Mandy.

Sora grinned with pleasure as she took an orb off her utility belt and took the ear piece off of the orb. She stuck the earpiece into her ear and left the orb to hover down the corridors of *The Nefarious* . The small silver orb would be hard to spot in the dimly lit corridors of *The Nefarious* so if Finitevus or the armada was to come back onboard, they'd likely not see it. Now Sora's plan was in motion, the Royal Fighters had no reason to stay onboard the ship. Sally opened up the warp ring and she along with the Royal Fighters all filed through the open golden portal. They were transported off *The Nefarious* and back into New Mobotropolis. With everybody back home, there was nothing left for them to do except get some sleep. Although with the many worries that tomorrow would be bringing, the Royal Fighters doubted very much that they would even get any sleep tonight. Tonight was going to be the longest night of their lives...and possibly the last...

The next day dawned bright and sunny. A glorious beginning to the

end of the world. The Day of Reckoning was here at last. July the 21st 2144. The time was now 9:00 in the morning. Just five hours left until Mobius was obliterated by Enerjak. Such a glorious image was on the mind of the crazily working and still very maniacal Dr. Finitevus. He hadn't slept a wink last night for he had been far too excited to bother about something as useless and unnecessary as sleep. He didn't waste a single moment of last night setting up Phase 2 of Operation: Enerjak Reborn. After fleeing his own ship yesterday, he had come back to his favourite hiding place in the world, the old lab in Megapolis that he had taken refuge in since the day he began formulating the Dark Armada. He had first come to the lab after the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses had ended. Now the lab was being used once again for Operation: Enerjak Rising Phase 2. Finitevus had decided not to do it onboard *The Nefarious* itself for it was too dangerous and risky to try and create 100 custom made Chaos Emeralds on a ship that the Royal Fighters had an easy way onboard. They still had his warp ring so they could easily get on the ship and try to stop him. Thus as a contingency, he had installed his way of creating more Chaos Emeralds in the lab. He had known that he would need it in the lab since he already expected the Mobians to wise up enough to know the inside of his ship well enough to use a warp ring to get onboard. He had even expected at least to lose a warp ring or two during the whole conflict with the Royal Fighters which in turn had led to him creating this big contingency plan. The heroes that he longed to destroy had not been in the lab. They didn't even know about this lab. They would never know where to find him and thus, he could continue with Phase 2 of his plan in peace. And all night had been spent executing Phase 2. Finitevus had built himself a machine that was capable of duplicating his Synthetic Chaos Energy formula. It was also capable of creating a Chaos Emerald from any amount of Chaos Energy possible. Finitevus could have a drop of Chaos Energy and it would still make a Chaos Emerald, albeit a very small one. The machine was very large and bulky with a lot of switches, a conveyer belt for Chaos Emeralds to slide out on and a large container to hold them at the end of the belt. There was a large basin on one side to hold any Chaos Energy that was being created inside the marvellous invention. The machine was something Finitevus had invented during the days of Angel Island being on the ground. His machine hadn't been approved of unfortunately for the elders saw it as a device that could be used for

very nefarious purposes. And now Finitevus had built it again in the period between Eggman's death and the Dark Armada's first move. The machine had been at work all night and by morning, Finitevus could see that it had produced enough Chaos Energy to create 100 Chaos Emeralds out of. The albino echidna cackled delightedly, pleased to see his beautiful work ready for the next stage. He set the machine so it would shape the Chaos Energy into Chaos Emeralds and he waited back excitedly as it whirred into life and began to commence with its work.

"Yes...so glorious...such a marvellous piece of science...and it's working beautifully!" cackled Finitevus maniacally.

He wasn't at all amazed at how well his machine was working. He was the kind of scientist who made something and it never went wrong. His Synthetic Chaos Energy was the exception but most of it had been a case of testing it on the wrong people more than the formula being straight up wrong. But nevertheless, he was very happy with the results his machine was producing. He had enough Chaos Energy for 100 Chaos Emeralds and now his machine was preparing to make all the Chaos Emeralds. He watched excitedly as his beautiful work continued.

"It's a pity that those emeralds won't be ready for a few hours but the wait will be worth it. MORE than worth it!" cried Finitevus gleefully, "It's taken me a year's worth of waiting before Operation Enerjak: Reborn could commence. And now it's coming to a close. With Phase 2 completed, I shall FINALLY become Enerjak!"

The echidna grinned delightedly to himself. He could already imagine himself in the Enerjak attire now. Just a few hours away and he would be wearing the Enerjak attire and also wielding his power to deadly and catastrophic effect. And as a result, he would achieve his ultimate goal, to wipe out all of Mobius and to start it anew in his image. A world that worshipped him as the almighty Enerjak would be perfect for him and being a god, he would rule it for all eternity. Finitevus turned his back on the machine and he walked out of the room, leaving the device to do its work while he went to do something else. Finitevus had decided that before he became Enerjak, he would have one last bout of fun as himself just to give himself some entertainment before his plan came to fruition. He

wasn't the only one in the Megapolis laboratory. The entire Dark Armada was there with him too. Ravage Bloodfang, Raphael the Cyber Husky, Captain Metal, Zira the Ruthless, Owen Pounder, Alistair Drakken, Lord Sycorax, Vladek the Frill-Necked Lizard, Romeo the Chameleon, Cutthroat Jim and Blizzard the Ice Witch were all there, awake and alert and waiting for a task to do. Yesterday, Blizzard had fainted again thanks to the Synthetic Chaos Energy in her body but after a day's rest, she was now fully-rested and ready to fight again. Finitevus had realized what the problem with her was. The Chaos Energy was too much for her to control and because of this, a side effect of the formula was that Blizzard would "burn out" after many uses of Chaos Control and other Chaos Attacks and then fall unconscious. Finitevus had mitigated the problem last night by giving her a special serum that helped her natural energy balance out the Chaos Energy in her body. The serum had seemed to work for Blizzard looked very well as if she'd never fallen unconscious. The Dark Armada all bowed graciously to Dr. Finitevus as he entered the room. They had joined Finitevus in the lab instead of being onboard *The Nefarious* like they normally would have been as par Finitevus's gambit to make the Royal Fighters worried and anxious just to toy with their minds a little and maybe make them less prepared for the conclusion of Operation: Enerjak Reborn. With them not on the ship and in a place the Royal Fighters knew nothing about, the Royal Fighters were likely worrying their heads off on where they were now a feeling that made the armada feel great inside and that they were on top of the game once again.

"Good morning Dr. Finitevus." said Zira loyally, "Did you sleep pleasantly at all?"

"Oh Zira, I couldn't sleep last night due to how excited I am!" cried Finitevus ecstatically, "Our plan, Operation: Villains Rising, is nearly complete! Phase 2 is well underway as we speak and in a few hours, the plan can reach its conclusion!"

"That be great to hear me heartie!" cheered Captain Metal excitedly, "I'm so glad to hear that our plan is nearly complete! I bet those foolish Royal Fighters will not be prepared for us when we use yer Chaos Emeralds to make ourselves all powerful and destroy them

all in one fell swoop!"

"I can just hear their dying screams now…" purred Ravage delightedly, "And I hope to hear Bunnie's most of all…"

"As I hope to hear Dark and Kiara's the most!" added Raphael, "It's a pity that not all of the armada's here to see the plan reaching its conclusion…"

"Scourge and Fiona likely would have turned on me anyway." said Finitevus casually, "And Conquering Storm brought her fate upon herself. Their deaths were a necessity for us in the grand scheme of things. Lennox is the only one who really should be missed, he was a good asset to our army."

"You do have a point." said Sycorax, shrugging, "So, what are we going to do until the plan is completed?"

"I have a job just for Blizzard." explained Finitevus, "I hope to break Sonic's heart. So much so that he'll not have the spirit or motivation left in him to try and stop me and thus, give us all an easy kill when his time comes."

Blizzard looked surprised, yet delighted that she was being given a task.

"Why Finitevus, I'm honoured that you have a task for me in particular." said Blizzard, preening with pleasure, "So what is it you want me to do oh glorious leader?"

"You my lovely little Ice Witch will go over to Castle Acorn." ordered Finitevus, "And when you get there…you will assassinate Queen Sally Acorn. Sonic is madly in love with her, killing her will break Sonic so much that he'll want to be put out of his misery. And we will be kind enough to oblige to that request."

"Oh master, thank you so much!" squealed Blizzard excitedly, "I've always wanted to kill that impudent squirrel! Especially after what her father did to me!"

"Well you can put your grudge with Sally to rest my dear." purred Finitevus wickedly, "Do NOT come back to me unless you kill Sally

Acorn. And to prove to me that you have killed Sally…bring the body back with you."

"I will do." said Blizzard gleefully, "I'll have the squirrel dead before you can say "Villains Rising"!"

With that said, Blizzard warped out of the lab with a Chaos Control, heading over to Castle Acorn to carry out her wicked deed. The moment she left, the Dark Armada all bore eyes on Finitevus.

"And what are we going to do?" demanded Owen impatiently.

"You will all take The Nefarious and destroy Castle Acorn once Sally is dead." ordered Finitevus, "Come to New Mobotropolis with the ship invisible and de-cloak once you're ready to destroy the castle. Destroying New Mobotropolis's oldest and only remaining landmark from the first city will pour more salt onto a very big wound. With the queen dead and her iconic castle destroyed, the Royal Fighters will abandon all hope and fall into a despair so great that they'll not care when the time comes for us to end their lives."

"Great plan Finitevus! We'll get onto it immediately!" cried Alistair excitedly.

Finitevus smiled at his armada and he flicked a warp ring up into the air. The warp ring expanded to twice its size and opened up a portal to inside *The Nefarious* . The ship was still airborne, hovering just above Megapolis miles away from where Finitevus and the armada were hiding. Finitevus smiled wickedly over the thought of the Royal Fighters being closer to him than they initially thought only to miss him entirely as they came aboard his ship to search for him. The Dark Armada all filed through the warp ring onto the ship and as they all went through it, Finitevus closed up the warp ring and put it back onto his wrist. He began to cackle wickedly to himself as he walked back into the room where his machine was.

"Those fools…they really think I have their best interests at heart?" sneered Finitevus, "No…they were merely pawns in my big game. They'll be the first to die at Enerjak's hand as a reward for their cooperation. I can just see their faces now…"

He filled the room with a haunting, wicked cackle that could rival any evil laugh ever recorded and used in any entertainment media…

Over in New Mobotropolis, an anxiety ridden Sally Acorn sat in front of her vanity and tried her best to keep herself composed. Today was the day the world was supposed to end and the Royal Fighters were just beginning to wake up and get ready for their mission to stop the Dark Armada. But the trouble was, Sally still had no idea where to find Finitevus or his armada. It didn't help how last night, she hadn't slept a wink either. She looked extremely tired but her anxiety ridden body didn't make her feel very tired. It seemed to be the only thing keeping her awake at this moment in time. As she tried to control herself, Abby and Nicole stood behind her and tried their best to comfort their anxiety-fuelled friend.

"Take it easy Sally, we won't save Mobius from Enerjak if you act like that." said Nicole softly.

"We need you at your best Sally. We can't have you all worried like this. Please calm down." said Abby gently.

"Oh Abby, Nicole, I'm so sorry about this but today is doomsday for all of us!" shrieked Sally, her face a crazed expression of anxiety and fear, "It's impossible NOT to feel worried, especially since we don't really know where to start looking for Finitevus!"

"Well I'm sure Sora will pick up something." Nicole said matter-of-factly, "She left that orb on The Nefarious, it's got to pick something up eventually."

"And what if it doesn't?" asked Sally worriedly.

"Be realistic here cousin, the Dark Armada are always onboard that ship, they're never away from it permanently." said Abby softly, "I bet Finitevus and his gang were preparing the final stages of their plan and that's why they weren't on the ship. They'll be back on it now I bet."

"I sure hope they are." moaned Sally, "It's our only chance of finding

Finitevus and stopping him from becoming Enerjak…"

"I know it is." said Nicole, her face looking grave and serious, "Maybe in case Sora doesn't find out where he is in time, I could use Mobius's satellites to…"

Then suddenly, a bright green flash appeared behind Sally, Abby and Nicole and the girls received the shock of their lives when they saw who it was that had appeared in said bright green flash. Blizzard the Ice Witch stood before them, grinning like a she-devil and brandishing an ice dagger in her hand. She twirled the dagger around in her hands and pointed it at Sally.

"Ah Sally Acorn. So glad to see you still looking so healthy and alive…" purred Blizzard wickedly, "Good. It'll make killing you feel more special!"

Sally's heart missed more than a beat. It missed two beats. Blizzard was here to kill her?! And all while Mobius's doom was on its way to becoming a thing?! Sally didn't understand one little bit. Why would Blizzard come to kill her now? Finitevus had sent her, that much she knew but she wondered why Finitevus couldn't just wait until he became Enerjak before he killed her. What was he hoping to gain when he pretty much was about to become Enerjak? Sally then had a terrible though. Was Finitevus doing this to stab at Sonic? She knew how much Sonic loved her and with her dead, she doubted the hedgehog would handle himself. She'd heard how horrified he'd been over the fact Eggman had made him strip and torture her as Mecha Sonic last year. Her actually being dead would cause Sonic's heart to shatter like glass. Sally couldn't let the possessed ice-witch kill her now. She had to knock Blizzard out and get the Chaos Energy out of her veins immediately. Sally clipped on her wristbands and deployed her wrist blades. She gave Blizzard a look of steel as she prepared to fight her.

"Blizzard, you cannot kill me." said Sally coldly, "If you do, you'll make my friends very angry and they'll be after you."

"Who cares if they do come after me?" crowed Blizzard, "I'll just kill them all and thanks to my Chaos powers, I'll be unstoppable! The Royal Fighters cannot stop me!"

"We'll see about that." snorted Sally. She then leaned over to Nicole and whispered to her. "Nicole, get a syringe."

Nicole nodded understandingly and she materialized out of the room. Blizzard just dismissed Nicole's leaving the room as mere cowardice and didn't bother about the holographic lynx. She instead focused squarely on Sally. She didn't really bother about the blonde-haired squirrel with Sally for she didn't really know who she was and she'd been ordered to kill Sally. The Ice Witch clenched her teeth as she and her red-haired opponent prepared to fight each other. Abby was ready to fight too, not having any weapons on her but preparing to fight using mere fisticuffs and her battle prowess that she had learnt from being raised in a jungle for a time.

"Now I'll get the chance to avenge my dead cult. Your father killed them and now you'll pay for them in his name." growled Blizzard angrily.

"I hope when we get the Chaos Energy out of you, you'll not be thinking that anymore…" murmured Sally grimly.

She and Blizzard charged at each other, weapons raised and ready to strike. Blizzard swung her dagger at Sally but the squirrel swung her energy blades down and sliced the dagger in two. Blizzard had only seen a blue blur sweep downwards and didn't realize what Sally had done until the dagger fell apart. Blizzard gasped in horror at her severed weapon but she didn't let that bother her. She summoned some Chaos powered icicles to her hands and she threw them at Sally. The squirrel moved her blades in as many directions as possible, slicing through all the icicles as they hurled towards her and preventing a single one from getting near to her. But Blizzard had use the icicles as a distraction. She rushed towards Sally and punched her in the gut, sending the queen hurling backwards across the room and straight into her vanity. Sally crashed into the vanity, breaking it and cracking the mirror into shards of glass. Blizzard summoned another ice dagger to her hands and she prepared to throw it at Sally. But the royal rodent picked up the broken mirror and threw it straight at Blizzard like a Frisbee. The mirror crashed into Blizzard and knocked her down onto her back. Just as she was getting up onto her feet, Abby slugged the Ice Witch in the gut. The snow-coloured hedgehog doubled over in pain and Abby unleashed

some savage attacks on her that had a rather animalistic edge and motion to them. She clawed at Blizzard, kicked him, punched him and even head butted her in the chest. Every attack felt like a very hard blow that even a Chaos-Powered Mobian such as herself felt the brute strength and power of.

But Blizzard recovered very quickly and she used a Chaos Control to slow time around Abby as the squirrel threw another punch at her. Abby was now moving at the speed of a crawling snail. Blizzard manoeuvred herself around behind the former jungle girl and she pile-dived Abby in the back, throwing her down onto her stomach as the Chaos Control wore off. Abby winced as she hit the floor hard, her face feeling most of the impact. Sally rushed towards Blizzard but the Ice Witch ended up using a Chaos Control to stop time around her. She summoned a dagger to her hand, ready to plunge it into Sally's heart and finish her off. The frozen squirrel was helpless to defend herself. Stuck in a running pose before her icy opponent, she could only stand and watch as Blizzard prepared to kill her. But then Abby grabbed Blizzard's arm from behind and forced her to drop the dagger. Blizzard turned around and socked the squirrel in the face, sending her flying backwards across the room. She crashed into the door but the door withstood the impact and remained on its hinges. The blonde-haired squirrel rested for a moment to let the pain in her body subside. Cackling menacingly, Blizzard turned around to face Sally. But her Chaos Control had worn off so was met with a punch to the face from the Queen of New Mobotropolis. Blizzard's head jerked backwards in reaction to the punch that had been thrown at her. Sally then spun around on her heel and roundhouse kicked Blizzard in the face, knocking the snow-dwelling hedgehog onto her side. She then knelt down beside Blizzard and held her blades close to her throat.

"Don't make any moves Blizzard or it's bye-bye your head." said Sally coldly, "And don't bother using a Chaos Control. I'll behead you before you can say anything."

"Bah! You won't kill me!" snarled Blizzard, "You're too noble for that!"

"Am I really?" said Sally, feigning darkness in her attitude to try and convince Blizzard she wasn't kidding, "I plan to kill Dr. Finitevus. I

can easily kill you as well."

"But you won't…" purred Blizzard wickedly, "Especially because of this!"

Sally suddenly felt an icicle slice past her arm, drawing a long cut across it and making her scream in pain. Sally sheathed her blades and clutched the cut on her arm as it began to sting furiously. Blizzard had summoned an icicle to her hand without Sally realizing it and with merely a thought, she'd commanded it to attack the queen. With her opponent now distracted, Blizzard leapt back up onto her feet and uppercut the squirrel into the air. Sally flew backwards in an arch and landed down with a heavy thump onto the hard tiled floor stomach first. She picked herself up and deployed her energy blades again. Blizzard summoned an Ice Sword to her hands and prepared to attack Sally with it. But just before she could do so, Abby attacked her from behind once again. She kicked Blizzard behind her knees and made the white-furred witch fall over onto her knees. She didn't have time to get back up before Abby made a lunge for her hands and tried to wrestle the sword out of her grasp. But Blizzard was too strong for Sally's loyal cousin. She yanked her hands effortlessly out of Abby's grasp and kicked her in the stomach. Abby coughed loudly as she was kicked and she doubled over, grasping her belly in pain. Blizzard then grabbed Abby by the throat and tossed her across the room as if she was a rag doll. Abby crashed into the wall and fell down onto the floor after crashing into it. She tried to get back up but the squirrel had no strength left in her. She felt too weak to fight anymore. Sally gasped, hoping that Abby wasn't too badly hurt. She couldn't check on her cousin yet though, she had her life to fight for. Sally charged towards Blizzard and slashed at her with her blades. She caught Blizzard across the chest but the ice witch healed herself with a Chaos Regeneration. She then retaliated with a slash across the belly on Sally with her own sword. Thankfully, the cut wasn't very deep but Sally still grimaced as the cut began to sting and blood trickled thinly from the corners of the cut. Blizzard took advantage of this and she punched Sally as hard as she could into the wall. Sally hit the wall hard and just before she could go anywhere, Blizzard whipped out her wand and used a spell to freeze Sally's hands and feet to the wall, trapping her and putting her effectively at her mercy. Sally

struggled furiously in her icy binds, trying desperately to get free. Her heart was racing and she became very frightened. She was stuck and she couldn't get away! She was as good as dead now! Blizzard advanced menacingly towards Sally, sword pointed at her heart and she grinned wickedly.

"Now to kill you. I hope this hurts Sally Acorn! And now you can join your filthy father in hell for all eternity!" cackled Blizzard maniacally.

"No! Please! No!" whimpered Sally, "Please spare my life! I beg of you!"

Sally knew that begging was futile but she was mostly doing this to try and buy time for Nicole to return. It worked for Blizzard hesitated for a brief moment. But that was because she was getting ready to stab Sally's heart. The hesitation was enough for Abby to run up behind Blizzard and wrap her arms around her. She pulled Blizzard away, using all the strength she had in her body to keep her from stabbing Sally. Blizzard Chaos Controlled out of her grasp but Abby already knew where she was going to appear. Sally had taught her the very fundamental lesson of if somebody teleports, they will always teleport behind you so prepare for that. Abby turned around and just as Blizzard reappeared, she head-butted her directly above the bridge of her nose. Blizzard wailed in pain and staggered backwards, blood trickling from her nose and staining the fur above her lips red. Blizzard prepared to attack but just as the magical Mobian was about to attack, Nicole re-materialized into the room. The lynx had found a syringe at last and she quickly jammed it into Blizzard's neck before she could react. The Ice Witch cried out but her gasp of surprise died in her throat, causing her to merely make a choking sound as she comprehended what had happened. Nicole then used the syringe to get rid of the Chaos Energy in Blizzard's body. She had been brewing with the stuff for far too long so it was about time it was finally out of her. Sally smiled happily as Nicole got rid of Blizzard's Chaos Powers. Abby picked up Blizzard's Ice Sword and began seeing to getting her cousin free. She chipped at the shackles with the sword until eventually, she broke through all of them. Sally was now free again and she tightly embraced her cousin delightedly.

"Oh thank you for helping me fight off Blizzard cousin!" she cried,

"And double thank you for buying Nicole some time to arrive!"

"Oh Sally, you don't have to thank me." said Abby happily, "You're my cousin, it's my job to look out for you. Besides, it's doomsday today, I'd rather you were still alive beside me as we try to prevent it."

"That's a point." said Sally, nodding.

The two squirrels looked over at Blizzard as Nicole took the syringe out of her neck. She then materialized out of the room so she could dispose of the Chaos Energy. Blizzard collapsed onto her knees, her now normal icy blue eyes streaming with tears and her body trembling uncontrollably. Sally and Abby both pitied Blizzard. They imagined how terrible she must be feeling now having turned evil thanks to the Chaos Energy Finitevus had given her and all the bad things she had done. She had abdicated her evil ambitions to please her deceased family but she'd turned evil again. They imagined that Blizzard felt like she'd betrayed her family and the promise she'd made them. They both knelt down beside Blizzard and patted her back comfortingly.

"What have I done…?" she whimpered, "I…I almost killed Sally! And just after I got over my grudges with her! I also fought against the Royal Fighters…and contributed to the Dark Armada!"

"There, there Blizzard, it's OK." said Sally gently.

"No Sally, it's not OK!" wailed Blizzard, "I promised to be good for my beloved Iceberg and yet I ended up becoming evil again thanks to that energy in me! I should have had it removed immediately, I shouldn't have kept it in me! Oh Sally I'm so sorry! Please, please forgive me!"

She threw her arms around her former nemesis and wailed into her shoulder. Sally hugged Blizzard back, the squirrel feeling very sorry for the Ice Witch. She had worked so hard to be a good witch again and Finitevus had marred that very badly by doing this to her. Sally let Blizzard have a good cry before she patted her back gently and spoke to her.

"Blizzard, it's OK. I forgive you." she said, "I'm the one that should be sorry. I should have got the energy out of you when you fainted. But I didn't and I allowed this to happen to you. I should be asking for YOUR forgiveness Blizzard. I'm so sorry I caused this to happen to you."

"It's OK Sally…" snivelled Blizzard, wiping her eyes dry, "We all make mistakes, some very costly and others not so much. But now this mistake has been removed…I can join you again and fight against the Dark Armada, which is EXACTLY what I came to you for originally!"

"Yes indeed Blizzard." said Sally with a smile, "Oh and how's Iceberg and your kids?" she asked concernedly.

"I can hear their voices again." said Blizzard delightedly, "The Chaos Energy stopped them from communicating with me but now I hear them again. And they're so glad to have me back again!"

"Glad to hear that…I think." said Abby uneasily, "So Blizzard, can you tell us where Dr. Fini-Creep-Us is hiding? Surely you've been with him right?"

"Oh yes." said Blizzard, getting up onto her feet, "He's in a laboratory in Megapolis. Give me the warp ring and…"

She was interrupted by the bedroom doors bursting open and a very frantic looking Sora Prower rushing inside. The girls all stared incredulously into her direction as she ran up towards them, gasping and panting exhaustedly for breath.

"Sally! You'll…you'll not believe what…I've just heard!" shrieked Sora.

She paused for a moment as she suddenly registered the fact Blizzard, the Ice Witch who had nearly caused her an early death when she was still evil**, was now in the room but she looked normal again and no longer had the glowing green eyes.

"Oh, Blizzard. This is a surprise." gasped Sora, "I guess you've been cured now since your eyes are normal again?"

"I am indeed dear child." said Blizzard happily, "Nicole got the Chaos Energy out of us. Now sweetheart, what's the emergency?"

"The armada's back on the ship!" cried Sora, "And they're going to destroy Castle Acorn once Blizzard here kills Queen Sally! But given you're not evil anymore Blizzard, that won't be happening anytime soon."

"Well in that case, we'll have to stop the armada from destroying my castle before we deal with Finitevus…" murmured Sally, "Come on girls, let's get all the Royal Fighters together and storm The Nefarious. We'll beat the armada into submission, destroy the ship and then find Finitevus."

Everybody nodded agreeably and they followed Sally as she ran out through the doors. It was coming close to the end of the world but now Blizzard was back, Sally didn't have to worry about not finding Finitevus in time. Blizzard could easily warp them all over to where Finitevus was since she knew where he was. There was a chance that the end of the world could be stopped after all…

Footnotes:

*** See *The Terror of Enerjak***

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales of Mobius Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm***

This is it guys! We're on the official doomsday! The day Mobius ends! But there might be a chance it can be prevented! Will our heroes succeed? Or is there just no chance of that?

Find out in Part 2 next time...

Dark Armada Part 24: Enerjak Rising 2

Story 224: Enerjak Rising Part 2: The Final Stage

The Dark Armada Chapter 24 of 25

11:00 am

Only one whole hour left until the end of the world.

It was July the 21st 2144. On this very day, the terrifying Demi-god Enerjak came into existence thanks to the nefarious actions of Dr. Finitevus, the evil uncle of emerald guardian Knuckles the Echidna and Mobius's biggest enemy since the late Dr. Eggman. Finitevus had been preparing for this moment. Ever since the first Enerjak* and the Crisis on Infinite Mobiuses, Finitevus had desired nothing more than to become the chaotic demon himself. He was hoping to achieve this by making 100 synthetic Chaos Emeralds to go with the eight Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald he already had. 109 Chaos emeralds would be more than enough to give him the power to become Enerjak. Enerjak was a demon made of Chaos Energy and he was one of the most, if not the most, powerful enemies the Royal Fighters had ever faced. He had corrupted many people, turned Chun-Nan into a cultist country that worshipped him and had attempted to use the heroes themselves as bodies for himself to pilot and he'd also come close to ending all of Mobius. Only Sonic had been able to stop him. And now Finitevus was hoping to resurrect the armoured Chaos god…by becoming the very entity himself. He had formulated an army of villains to help him achieve this goal and now he was just two hours away from completion. As of now, his machine had made 50 Chaos Emeralds. Just 50 more and he could become Enerjak. Then the end of the world could begin. And when Mobius was nothing more than a sorry wreck barely able to support life, the Mobian populace could restart and then Enerjak would rule supreme over all of Mobius.

Only one force on the whole of the planet knew about this and they were hoping very much to stop it from happening. The Royal

Fighters Service. The R.F.S. had been formed the day Eggman invaded and attacked Mobius. It had been in service for the entirety of the war with Eggman and it was because of its long, loyal service to the world that Mobius was still intact. But now they were about to face their deadliest mission yet. They had to prevent the world from coming to an end yet again. But there was no Eraser behind it this time, no Dr. Eggman, no Perfect Chaos, no Solaris or anything of the sort. There was just Dr. Finitevus and his armada and Finitevus was on the way to becoming Enerjak. The armada knew nothing about this for Finitevus had assured them his plan had their best interests at heart and any ravings about Enerjak were quickly dismissed as just delusional thoughts, even though one of their own had believed it before dying at Fiona's hands. They would never be prepared for Enerjak's rising and unknown to them, Finitevus planned on sacrificing them after he became Enerjak. The Royal Fighters had received a very lucky break through on this very tense and adrenaline pumping day. Blizzard the Ice Witch, who had been pumped full of Synthetic Chaos Energy for a few days, had been sent to kill Queen Sally Acorn of New Mobotropolis but after a tense fight with her and her cousin Abby the Squirrel, Blizzard had been relived of the energy by Nicole the A.I. Lynx after she used a syringe to get rid of the energy that had corrupted her. This was fortunate for the Royal Fighters since Blizzard knew where Finitevus was hiding. And because she knew where he was hiding, she'd be able to provide them a simple portal to his hiding place with the warp ring that Roxy the Raccoon had given to them after betraying the armada. But the Royal Fighters had another problem to deal with. The Dark Armada itself was hoping to destroy Castle Acorn, the home of Queen Sally herself but they had to wait until Blizzard came back and showed them that she'd killed Sally first. This gave the heroes the time they needed to gather together and prepare for the fight of their lives.

In the centre of New Mobotropolis, all the Royal Fighters in the R.F.S. were gathered together in a crowd that stood before Sonic the Hedgehog and Sally Acorn. All the teams were there from Team Mobotropolis to Team Adabat to Team Chun-Nan to Team Nekronopolis and finally, Team Megapolis. There were even some who weren't technically Royal Fighters but still heroes nonetheless such as Shadow the Hedgehog, Rouge the Bat and the futuristic

duo Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat. Silver and Blaze were the ones who had actually informed Sonic and friends about Enerjak being the one that dooms the entire world in the first place. If it wasn't for them, they wouldn't have known at all and would be completely in the dark about the entire thing. The teams all stood patiently together as Sonic and Sally made their announcements.

"Everybody in the R.F.S.! Today will be the biggest day of our lives!" announced Sally importantly, "For thanks to information from our future friends Silver and Blaze, we know when Enerjak rises. He is coming this very day! At exactly 12 o' clock noon today, Enerjak will rise and unleash his rampage that'll destroy our world…and have us all very much dead as a result."

There were nervous murmurings and gasps of horror as the other Royal Fighter teams took in the information. The Mobotropolis Royal Fighters already knew about this so they didn't show any reactions to the announcement. Sonic and Sally both took in the reaction from the crowd before them. They knew it would have been hard to deliver such news to them but it had to be done.

"And we all know how to stop Enerjak from coming!" Sonic declared, "Finitevus is the one responsible! He becomes Enerjak and he destroys everything…and leaves Silver and Blaze living in a ruined future as a result. So we plan to kill Finitevus before he can become Enerjak!"

That statement seemed to gain approval from the Royal Fighters. They were all very much in on the idea of killing Finitevus, especially as it meant that Enerjak wouldn't destroy everything. Sonic was pleased to get such a reaction for he wanted the albino echidna dead more than anything too.

"And because Blizzard has been turned back to our side, she can help us find Finitevus." said Sally happily, "She'll use my warp ring to open a portal to where Finitevus is. I shall send three very trustworthy Royal Fighters to finish him off. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles will take care of the evil doctor." she said, looking at Sonic beside her.

"Nice choices Sal, especially since you picked me." snickered Sonic,

"Knuckles and Tails have very personal reasons for having Finitevus dead as well as me so they deserve to join me on the action."

"Indeed." said Sally, "And while those three send Finitevus to hell where he belongs, the rest of us are going to fight against the Dark Armada. A very reliable resource tells me they're plotting to destroy my castle." she said, winking at Sora in the crowed.

"But all of you won't let that happen of course." said Sonic brightly, "Sally here has been on The Nefarious enough times to visualize it perfectly. She can warp all of you on and then you can all beat the armada into submission. Whereas Finitevus has to die, the armada can do time for their actions instead and that's just be being generous, lucky for them."

"We must also consider the fact that the armada doesn't even know what Finitevus's plan is really about." noted Sally, "So after we beat the armada, we could maybe try and convince them that the plan's about Enerjak and not them at all and maybe get them to reform."

The Royal Fighters considered that option and began murmuring amongst one another. But Sonic didn't seem very convinced the idea was a good one and he made sure Sally knew about it.

"Uh Sal? Have you realized that sweet-talking the enemy rarely, if ever, works?" he noted, "I doubt the armada will believe you."

"It's still worth a shot." said Sally firmly, "Besides, the armada deserves some level of mercy since they're just pawns in Finitevus's wicked game."

"I can just imagine how they're all going to feel when they find that out." said Sonic, shrugging casually as if the thought was no big deal to him, "I kinda feel glad that Scourge, Fiona, Conquering Storm and Lennox had been spared of that revelation. Least Enerjak won't get them and all when he rises. The rest...they're pretty much doomed since I doubt Enerjak will spare them."

"All the more reason why it's worth seeing if we can turn them against Finitevus once we defeat them." said Sally with a smile, "I sure hope we succeed. Then when Finitevus is stopped and the

threat of Enerjak is cancelled, we will finally have peace."

"That would be very nice Queenie." said Sonic agreeably, "Might be much to hope for but hey, that's what we're here for. Anybody threatens Mobius's peace, we fight to keep it."

"Agreed." said Sally with a nod.

She then turned to the crowd and ordered Blizzard to come to her. Blizzard stepped shyly forward out of the crowd and walked up to Sally. Sally took the warp ring out of her vest pocket and she handed it to Blizzard. The snow-coloured hedgehog stared at the small device she now held in her hands. Finitevus had a lot of these on him and it amazed her to be holding a warp ring in her hands. She remembered how Finitevus tried to stop the fleeing Royal Fighters with it but they had instead used it against him and got away with it. How fortunate that the Royal Fighters had one now! The device was also a fascination to Blizzard for she saw it as a magical device. She loved all things magic to so be actually holding a magical device in her hands made her feel giddy with joy.

"Just visualize where you want to go and flick it into the air." ordered Sally.

"Thank you." said Blizzard, "It shouldn't be hard to visualize the inside of a dingy laboratory..."

She closed her eyes and imagined herself back in the laboratory with Dr. Finitevus and his disciples. The image wasn't something she was happy to be picturing but she put up with it. Blizzard pictured the lab so well that she began feeling like she was back into it. That was sure to get the warp ring to work. Blizzard had only really seen the room she and the armada had slept in of the lab, nothing else so that was the only room she could imagine. It would make it easier for the three chosen Royal Fighters to get in unnoticed for she doubted Finitevus would be anywhere except where his supposed machine was. With the perfect image in her mind, Blizzard flicked the warp ring into the air. She gasped in amazement as the warp ring expanded to twice its size and a portal opened up in the middle of it. How wonderful it felt to be using a warp ring! With the portal open, Tails and Knuckles emerged from

the crowd and ran over to Sonic.

"OK guys, you ready?" asked Sonic enthusiastically.

"Always!" cried Tails excitedly, "Let's make that monster pay for what he's done!"

"I'm with ya until the end Sonic!" declared Knuckles, "My uncle will not live to see another sunrise..."

"You said it." said Sonic agreeably, "Let's go get Finitevus!"

But just as he was about to leave, Sonic felt a familiar hand touch his shoulder lightly. He turned his head to see that Sally was beside him, a look of concern on her beautiful face.

"Good luck Sonic." she said softly.

"I don't think I need that much of it." said Sonic casually, "But thanks."

The two then shared a parting kiss before Sonic turned around to enter the warp ring. He, Tails and Knuckles eagerly charged through the open golden portal, transporting themselves over from New Mobotropolis to Fintievus's Megapolis laboratory hideout. The warp ring closed up but Sally grabbed it before it could disappear. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles would make their way back with the Chaos Emeralds when they got them back from Finitevus. The emeralds had to be with the mad doctor, they couldn't be anywhere else. Now the mission to kill Finitevus and stop his plan was well underway, Sally reopened the warp ring for herself and the others to storm *The Nefarious* and beat the armada. As she stepped through the warp ring, she hoped dearly that the armada could be turned. She didn't want them to keep serving a master who's plan didn't have their best interests at heart. Plus it would be nicer if they were all good people instead of evil people. Sally would just have to see what happened when she and her teams infiltrated the ship...

11:15 am

Over in Megapolis, Finitevus was watching as his brilliant machine continued making more and more synthetic Chaos Emeralds by the second. It was 11:15 now. Just 45 minutes and he'd have all one-hundred Chaos Emeralds ready for his ritual. He had 60 Chaos Emeralds currently made now. Only forty more Chaos Emeralds and he could begin. He was wishing dearly that the machine would hurry up and finish its job. He was getting impatient as he waited for his scheme to reach its terrifying conclusion. The white-furred echidna was so impatient that he was beginning to pace around the room aimlessly, glancing occasionally at the machine as if willing for it to go faster. He knew full well that he couldn't rush perfection. If he rushed it now, something could go catastrophically wrong and then the whole plan would end up being completely moot. He was not letting a year's worth of planning go to waste now. The caped scientist glance at the machine again, noticing that two more Chaos Emeralds had now been made. The Synthetic Chaos Emeralds were a dazzling bunch. The basket at the end of the machine contained them all and Finitevus noticed how brightly they all shone together. They all had the colours of the eight Chaos Emeralds that had been used to make all of this possible, making them look very colourful too. They were so much like actual Chaos Emeralds that Finitevus himself wasn't sure if he could tell the difference between the synthetic emeralds and the real ones. But it didn't matter to him, he'd use them all regardless. He planned to set up his Enerjak transformation ritual with the one-hundred Chaos Emeralds placed all around the Master Emerald in a big circle and then he would stand atop the giant green gem that had once kept Angel Island afloat to begin the transformation. A very beautiful image indeed for a nihilistic demon like Finitevus. He began pacing around the room again, leaving the machine to continue its work.

"What wouldn't give for all one-hundred emeralds to be ready now..." Finitevus muttered to himself, "But I suppose I shouldn't fret so much. The foolish Royal Fighters will never find me, I'm as safe as I can be here. I have all the time I need for my scheme to reach its conclusion. I do have to wonder how Blizzard and the armada is doing now? I do hope that..."

"Finitevus! Your tyranny ends now!" bellowed a voice he knew all to well.

Finitevus's dreadlocks straightened and he leaped a foot into the air. He felt like he was about to have a heart attack. He couldn't possibly be hearing the voice of his loathsome nephew! Finitevus turned around slowly as if dreading to see what he thought he was about to see. Finitevus's head snapped around and he gasped in incredulous shock. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles were right here in his lab and standing before him, teeth gritted and knuckles cracking as they were about to go to town on him! The echidna couldn't believe what he was seeing.

"WHAT?!" he shrieked in a rather comical tone of voice, "But...but...HOW DID YOU FIND ME?!" he demanded frantically.

"Blizzard got the warm and fuzzies and decided to switch sides." said Sonic coldly, "She used our warp ring to take us here."

"Now we can stop you from ending our world!" snarled Tails, his face losing any of the cuteness it usually displayed as he scowled angrily at Finitevus, "You're dead Finitevus! When were done with you, you'll be buried underground with nothing but a gravestone to mark where your rotting carcass lies!"

"In the name of Angel Island and everybody who used to inhabit it, I'll see you dead Finitevus!" snarled Knuckles.

No you can't!" begged Finitevus pathetically, "Don't you see you flaccid minded fools? I'm about to achieve a miracle of science! With the aid of all these Chaos Emeralds, I'm about to transform myself into a god of unstoppable power! Surely you wouldn't sully such an ambitious science project such as this?!"

"Of course we would because your "project" destroys our world!" growled Sonic, "Me and my friends have been fighting for far too long to keep Mobius safe and existing! We won't let you undermine our work Dr. Fini-Dork-Us!"

"OK stop calling me that, it's getting VERY irritating and it's NOT. FUNNY. AY ALL!" snarled Finitevus angrily, "And you really are hubristic, vacuous morons if you think you can just traipse in here and destroy my experiments! I have all the power! I have more Chaos Emeralds than you've ever seen in your worthless lives! Do

you really think you can stop me from achieving my goals?"

"We've stopped way bigger threats than you, you creep!" declared Tails matter-of-factly, "We stopped guys like the Devatrons, the Black Arms, Solaris and heck, THE ERASER HIMSELF! We actually defeated the God of Existence! We can stop you easily!"

"Well then, let us see how accurate your claim is..." growled Finitevus, "You trio of idiots will not leave this room alive!"

"Neither will you Finitevus!" growled Knuckles.

"This will be a fight to the death...for all of us." said Sonic coldly, "Tails, Knuckles, show him no mercy!" the hedgehog commanded.

"We won't." both Tails and Knuckles replied at once, sounding as equally as cold as Sonic himself did.

"Don't expect any from me either..." said Finitevus sinisterly, gripping the blades sown into the edges of his cape and preparing to attack.

The echidna let out an animalistic, savage roar of rage as he thundered towards his enemies like an angry lion. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles both cried out in unison as they charged towards their deadliest enemy yet. This was it. The battle that would determine the fate of everything. If Finitevus won then Enerjak was as good as risen. If Sonic, Tails and Knuckles won than Mobius would breathe a sigh of relief today, glad to once again avoid certain death at the hands of a mad person or creature.

Finitevus jumped into the air and twirled around in an amazing somersault that made the three heroes gasp in amazement. They were used to Finitevus's fighting style mostly but his gymnastic abilities still amazed them no matter how many times they saw him doing it. Finitevus landed directly before his mesmerized opponents but him landing on the floor had snapped them out of it just in time to duck as the echidna swung his blades at them in a scissor like manner. Sonic sprang up as Finitevus's blades missed him and he threw a punch at the echinda's head. The caped villain bent over backwards to dodge the attack, amazed he had even managed to react fast enough to do so, and he grabbed Sonic's arm with both

hands. The hedgehog pulled on his arm, trying desperately to get free. But Fintievus's grip was too strong, he refused to let go of his blue-furred nemesis. Finitevus then kicked Sonic's legs out from underneath him but he still held onto his arm, causing Sonic to fall over onto the floor from the waist down. Now Sonic couldn't pull back, Finitevus swung him around and walloped Tails and Knuckles with the Mobian hedgehog. Both Tails and Knuckles cried out as their friend was swung into them like a baton. Sonic seemed the most hurt for he'd been swung into two opponents at once. Finitevus then spun Sonic around until eventually, he let go and sent the Hero of Mobius flying across the room. He missed the impact of his attack as he turned around to see how Tails and Knuckles were doing.

He was met with a solid punch to the face from Knuckles. So solid that he was taken clean off his feet and thrown down hard onto the floor. Finitevus never ceased to be amazed on how hard his nephew could really punch. His late brother Locke had taught Knuckles well, very well in the art of fisticuffs. The scientist got back up onto his feet, only to then be uppercut in the face by the red-furred brawler. Finitevus's head snapped backwards so hard that he nearly lost his balance. He didn't keep it for long for Knuckles slugged him in the gut and knocked him down onto his bottom again. The spike-fisted echidna than pounced on Finitevus, taking advantage of his uncle being down on the floor, but as he landed on him, Finitevus swung his legs up and threw Knuckles over onto his back. The echidna than pounced back up onto his feet and quickly ducked just as Tails threw a punch at him. The fox, who was flying in the air and trying to attack the echidna, seemed more keen to beat up Finitevus than even Sonic and Knuckles. The echidna noticed this from the look in Tails's face and how heavily he was throwing his attacks. Tails threw a punch hard enough to break a jaw bone at Finitevus but he missed, much to his annoyance, as the echidna bent over backwards. The twin-tailed genius really wanted to land a good punch on Finitevus since the echidna had kidnapped him and roboticized him, forcing him to work for the evil scientist and even contribute to his overall scheme. Finitevus threw a punch at Tails, slugging him hard in the stomach and knocking him down onto his back. Tails lay on the floor, his eyes trickling with tears of rage as Finitevus gripped his blades and held them close to his throat.

"You really shouldn't be so vengeful little boy." he sneered, "You won't fare very well if you let blind rage motivate you."

"I'm not motivated by rage! I'm motivated by love, the love I have for my friends and my world!" retorted Tails angrily, any trace of his childlike innocence completely gone on his angry face, "Something you have no concept for because you're such a soulless, heartless monster!"

"And you say that as if I'm supposed to care." sneered Finitevus, "Love is a pathetic emotion and loving something only leads to heartbreak and trauma when you lose it. Why even have that emotion?"

"Because love gives us something to fight for...and we have MANY things to fight for!" declared Tails, "What do you have to fight for?! A world of ruination?!"

"No, I fight for a better Mobius!" snarled Finitevus, "I am razing this stupid planet to ashes so that life on Mobius can start all over! And in my image no less..."

"And for what?! Just so Silver and Blaze can be born in the future and then come to the past to stop you?!" yelled Tails, "And you think we fight for a forlorn cause...your cause is the epitome of forlorn!"

This seemed to offend Finitevus very much for he gritted his teeth and aimed the blades for a killer slash across Tails's neck. The fox covered his eyes in fright, worried that the end was coming for him. But then Finitevus was suddenly whisked off his feet and slammed into the wall by a very furious Sonic the Hedgehog. As the echidna was violently slammed into the wall, the hedgehog made sure his spin-dash hurt as much as possible as he continued spinning away into Finitevus's back, ripping his cape to shreds as he did so. The echidna screamed in agony as Sonic inflicted unbearable pain onto his back.

"Don't! Ever! Threaten! My! Best! Friend!" bellowed Sonic angrily.

He then uncurled from the spin-dash and tossed Finitevus across the room like a child throwing away an unwanted doll. Finitevus let

out a terrible cry as he was thrown across the room and he crashed into the wall, falling down onto the floor and grimacing in pain. Sonic took a moment out of the battle to check on Tails, leaving Knuckles to be the one that killed Finitevus. Knuckles grabbed one of the blades that Finitevus had sown into his cape. Sonic had ripped it to shreds, leaving on the shoulder section and a tattered piece of the back left that barely came down Finitevus's shoulders. The blades lay on the floor, uncovered now they were out of the cape. Knuckles intended to stab Finitevus with the blade, preferably in the chest for a stab to the heart guaranteed that he would be dead. As Knuckles walked over to the echidna to do the horrible deed, Sonic helped Tails up onto his feet.

"You OK buddy?" he asked concernedly."

"I-I'm fine Sonic." said Tails shakily, "I though I was dead for a minute. Thanks for saving me."

"I just got you back yesterday buddy, I can't lose you again." said Sonic, hugging his best friend affectionately, "I'll always save you, you know I will."

"And that's why we're best friends forever." Tails beamed delightedly.

Sonic smiled tenderly at his little brother figure. He then looked up and watched as Knuckles prepared to stab the momentarily distorted Finitevus. The hedgehog's heart leapt. This was it! Finitevus was going to die! And Knuckles was going to do it! They'd succeeded, Mobius wasn't going to end! But then Sonic's face fell as Knuckles stabbed down at Finitevus. The echidna caught Knuckles's wrist and squeezed on it as hard as possible, making the echidna cry out in pain as his hand numbed and the blade fell out of it. Finitevus kicked the blade away from Knuckles and then threw him onto the floor. He gritted his teeth so hard that Sonic wondered if he would end up with a killer toothache afterwards. His eyes were crazed and maniacal as he glared at his enemies.

"You destroyed my cape...how droll." he growled, "I liked that cape..."

"Too bad, you won't live to buy a new one Fini-Creepy-us!" retorted Sonic.

Angered, Finitevus charged towards Sonic and Tails, ready to fight them some more. Sonic and Tails charged towards him, ready to put him down once and for all...

11:30 am

The Dark Armada had lost track on how long they had been sitting on the ship waiting for Blizzard to kill Sally. They had gotten onboard a couple of hours ago and they were still waiting for Blizzard to come to Finitevus with the good news that Sally was dead. The armada consisted only of Zira the Ruthless, Captain Metal, Ravage Bloodfang, Raphael the Cyber Husky, Lord Sycorax and his henchmen Vladek and Romeo, Cutthroat Jim, Owen Pounder and Alistair Drakken. There used to be more members but the armada had decreased in numbers over the past few days.

The lost members had been the Bride of the Conquering Storm and her clan, Scourge the Hedgehog, Fiona Fox and Lennox Meers. She had turned traitor after getting the crazy idea that the plan was about some god named "Enerjak" and attempted to kill Finitevus. Instead, her clan had been warped inside a volcano by Finitevus himself and the lynx had been taken prisoner. She had been experimented on but the experiment had gone wrong and the result had ended up corrupting Fiona which then led to Scourge's death. Lennox had died at the hands of the only member of the Dark Armada who had been forced to join the army instead of being recruited, Roxy the Raccoon. She had gotten the bomb that Finitevus had stitched inside her head out by going to the Royal Fighters so they could take her to a doctor's to have it removed. Then she'd put the bomb under Lennox's hat and tricked him into setting it off. The result had been extremely messy and Owen and Alistair ached to kill Roxy in return to avenge their fallen leader and friend.

The armada was much smaller than it used to be, a fact that really bothered the remaining members. Before they felt like they were big enough and powerful enough to take on the entire Royal Fighters

Service. Now they felt they could barely handle the whole of Team Mobotropolis. But that fact would soon be mitigated when Finitevus finished creating the 100 synthetic Chaos Emeralds he was creating for the armada to use. Finitevus had told the whole armada how powerful one Chaos Emerald was and they had heard about how people like Sonic could turn super with the emeralds. They could all imagine how powerful they would be with 108 Chaos Emeralds plus the Master Emerald to use as a power source for them. They could probably flatten the entire R.F.S. with merely a wave of their hands. Just thinking about how powerful the emeralds could make them made the armada feel giddy with excitement. As they waited for Blizzard, they began wondering how Finitevus's work was coming along. They imagined he must be close to finished now. There was only half an hour left until his machine had completed its work.

"I bet Finitevus has nearly got the 100 emeralds he be making right now." purred Captain Metal.

"I can hardly wait to start using them..." said Ravage excitedly, "I bet they'll give me more power than the Sceptre of Fates*** back in Adabat did!"

"Finitevus tells us that Sonic and his friends have used them to defeat gods." said Zira grimly, her face serious and bleak, "They must be powerful."

"They will be." said Owen, "It's a pity instead of waiting to see Finitevus's plan come to fruition, we're stuck here waiting for that idiot Blizzard to kill that stupid queen what's-her-name person. What is taking that witch so long?!"

"I bet she's under heavy resistance from the Royal Fighters." boomed Alistair, "Those fools wouldn't leave their queen ungarded after all."

"Well I'm telling you scrubs now, if she doesn't hurry up and kill the royal bitch, we're firing on Castle Acorn anyway!" declared Raphael angrily, "I'm getting sick of this stupid waiting!"

"I'm sure Finitevus won't mind if we end up killing Blizzard as well when we destroy the castle." said Lord Sycorax casually, "After all,

sacrifices must be made."

"Aye laddie, they must." agreed Cutthroat Jim, "You know what, I say we attack now!"

"I second that Jim lad!" cried Captain Metal, "Let's destroy tharr castle! We might kill Sally by doing that, making Blizzard's entire mission moot and showing we're more competent!"

"Dare destroy my castle and you'll pay the price for it." said a very cold, feminine voice that the armada recognized but not as one of their own.

The gobsmacked armada turned around and stared incredulously at what was behind them. Sally Acorn herself was standing before them all with the all the other Royal Fighters with her. The huge group made the Dark Armada feel even smaller now they were looking at them all together. It was true that at least two Royal Fighters were dead but the group still looked enormous. The armada began doubting if they would fare well against the huge group of Royal Fighters. But they knew that they couldn't let the Royal Fighters stop them now or take over *The Nefarious* so the villainous group took up battle-ready positions and prepared to fight. They all noticed that Blizzard was among the Royal Fighters but she didn't have the green eyes anymore. That meant she had been power-drained and was back on the Royal Fighters's side, something that really made the armada feel like Finitevus had completely botched up the plan by sending her.

"Sally Acorn...in the flesh again." purred Captain Metal, "How delightful."

"If you think you can take this ship then you have another thing coming!" growled Zira, "We'll defend it to the bitter end and none of you will be left alive!"

"I sincerely doubt that considering how miniscule your numbers are." sneered Sally, "Seriously, with no Scourge, Fiona, Conquering Storm, Raiju Clan and Lennox, you're all pale shadows of your former selves. You barely have enough numbers to take on even half this group."

"Please, do us all a favour." said Princess Matilda of Team Chun-Nan firmly, "Surrender now and we'll spare you a needless beating."

"No chance of that morons..." said Owen coldly, cracking his knuckles, "We have scores to settle with you finks!"

"Well so do we." said Scott the Lynx of Team Adabat bitterly, "Like I owe Ravage a migraine for killing my brother!"

"And Captain Metal owes me big time for nearly killing me the other day!" snarled Amy Rose, brandishing her hammer menacingly and getting ready to fight.

"So what if I do ya pink wench?" snorted Captain Metal, "I'll just kill ye for real this time! And Blaze will be joinin' ye shortly afterwards!"

"Just try it scum..." growled Blaze angrily, summoning fire to her hands.

"Royal Fighters, ATTACK!" commanded Sally.

The Royal Fighters sprung into action immediately. Team Chun-Nan went straight for Zira the Ruthless since out of all the Royal Fighters, they were the ones that stood the best chance at fighting her. Zira went for Team Chun-Nan even though she knew that without Conquering Storm to help her, she likely had no chance of beating Matilda and her comrades. Zira threw a mighty punch at Matilda but the mongoose dodged it by stepping aside. Once Zira's arm shot past Matilda's the princess grabbed it and twisted it sharply to one side. The kung-fu leopard let out a terrible scream of pain as her arm was twisted by Matilda. The yellow-furred kung-fu master then threw Zira's arm back and kicked her sharply in the gut, throwing her across the room. Bladefeather the Falcon and Mushu the Iguana, Matilda's husband and good friend respectively, ran towards Zira and just as the leopard got back up to her feet, they both grabbed her arms and forced her against the wall. Matilda's best friend Li Moon the Vixen ran towards the pinned Zira the Ruthless and rammed her in the gut as hard as she could. Zira doubled over in pain but being a kung-fu master, the pain didn't bother her for very long. She growled in annoyance and yanked her arms sharply out of Bladefeather and Mushu's grips. The enraged mistress had been

humiliated enough times already, she refused to be humiliated again. She vowed to beat Matilda and her friends if it was the last thing she did. The snarling leopard charged at Matilda and let her have it with a powerful punch to the face. The mongoose stumbled backwards in pain and then Zira kicked her in the gut, causing Matilda to bend over and clutch it, grimacing tensely as she did so. Zira then slammed both fists down on Matilda's back, knocking her down onto the floor. But Matilda wasn't down for long. Zira aimed a claw attack at her royal nemesis but Matilda rolled out of the way, leaving the evil leopard to stick her claws into the floor. The black-haired mongoose then picked herself up and elbowed Zira in the neck, forcing her down on the floor and leaving her gasping for breath. Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon then pinned Zira down be kneeling atop her arms and legs and the read feathered falcon held a dagger just above Zira's neck. The leopard didn't dare move as Team Chun-Nan subdued her in case she caused her own head to be cut off by Bladefeather's dagger. Matilda smiled triumphantly, pleased that her team had beaten Zira again.

Team Chaotix had chosen to fight Lord Sycorax and his henchmen once again. It came off as no surprise given how personal the rivalry between the two trios was. Sycorax and Vector were father and son respectively and they hated each other more than anything on Mobius. Sycorax thundered towards Vector with his toothy jaws wide open and ready to chomp down on his loathsome son. Vector however gave Sycorax something very unpleasant to chew on instead. His fist. He swung a mean uppercut into Sycorax's jaw and sent him tumbling over onto his back. The punch felt harder than any punch Sycorax had received in his life. Vector truly was a strong opponent and worthy of being his rival. Sycorax leaped back onto his feet and he socked Vector in the nose. Vector clutched his nose and willed for the pain to go away. It always hurt when he was punched in the nose. The evil crocodile then prepared for another punch on Vector but the crocodile recovered from the nose punch in enough time to dodge the attack. He bent over backwards, amazed that despite his top-heaviness that he had managed to keep his balance. Then he grabbed Sycorax's arm and bit on it once again. It was something that Vector never tired of. The reaction of seeing his dad cry out in pain as he bit his arm was the best reaction he could ever receive. Vector then pounded Sycorax on the head, knocking

him down flat onto the floor. As Sycorax lay on the floor dazed and confused, Vladek and Romeo fought hard against Espio and Charmy. Espio and Romeo threw a barrage of punches at each other but Espio's were much harder and faster. Romeo was barely able to block any of his punches as the chameleon threw them. To the Chaotix ninja, it was like Romeo was in slow motion. Espio then punched Romeo in the gut and brought him down on to his side, clutching it in agony and willing for the pain to stop. Espio kicked upwards, sending Romeo hurling into the air and crashing down on top of Sycorax. Vladek kept clawing at Charmy but the bee was too fast for him. He flew out of Vladek's way every time the frill-necked lizard clawed at him. Charmy then booted Vladek in the face and stung him sharply on the shoulder. The reptilian henchmen winced in pain and clutched his shoulder, swearing he could feel a sore sport forming already. Laughing childishly, Charmy kicked Vladek into Romeo and Sycorax, leaving him to lay against the two and wince in pain. Three more armada members down for the count now.

Raphael had chosen his opponents very easily. He ran towards Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx and Kiara the Cheetah, the Megapolis Royal Fighters. He still very much had scores to settle with the two felines after they had trashed his camp and escaped being converted into cyborgs by him last year****. The cybernetic canine deployed his hand blades and he slashed at Dark and Kiara. Both Royal Fighters dodged his attack and Dark deployed his own arm blades. He clashed weapons with Raphael, the two blade-wielding Mobians crossing their weapons and growling furiously at each other as they pushed on each other's arms. Kiara ran around behind Raphael and elbowed him in the back, making sure her attack hurt as much as possible. She drove her elbow as far into the cyborg's back as possible, making Raphael wince in pain. Dark took advantage of this by kneeing Raphael in the groin. His body had some tough cybernetics but his groin wasn't cybernetic and still very much vulnerable. Raphael gritted his teeth and held in his pain as best he could. That became redundant as Dark and Kiara both took his legs out from underneath him with a swift kick behind his ankles. Raphael landed hard onto the floor but he was back on his feet very quickly. He fired his sonic wave emitter at Dark and Kiara and blew them both off their feet. The blast slammed the leo-lynx and cheetah

against the wall and Raphael kept the waves going to keep them pinned against it. But Dark and Kiara received some assistance in the form of Wilson the Dog and Mandy the Mouse. Mandy ran up behind Raphael and punched him in the back, her fist throwing the cyborg off his feet thanks to her steel knuckle attachments enhancing her punch. Raphael hurled towards Dark and Kiara, crying out loud as he hurled at them. Dark and Kiara both kicked Raphael away and sent him crashing down onto his back. He was about to get up but Wilson pinned him down with his foot and then pointed his double-bladed pole weapon at the husky's throat. Raphael thought about using his sonic wave emitter to blow Wilson away but Mandy punched his forehead apparatus, breaking it and rendering his weapon useless. Raphael was spared unconsciousness thanks to his forehead apparatus being very strong and resilient enough to cushion most blows to the head but he was very much trapped and unable to keep fighting. Dark and Kiara smirked triumphantly, pleased to have beaten the Cyber-Husky again.

Owen and Alistair, the only remaining members of Team Diamond, found themselves in a battle they had no chance of winning. The Team Diamond traitor Roxy was fighting against them but she was backed up by Shadow and Rouge. Rouge had scores to settle with Team Diamond's only remaining members and Shadow, being Rouge's friend, wanted to join in for her. Roxy was allowed first dibs on the duo. She batted Alistair and Owen both on the heads, whacking them as hard as she could with her black baton. The rabbit and bat growled furiously and Owen punched at Roxy. His punch never hit home for Rouge screw-kicked Owen in the face and sent him staggering backwards. It felt strange for the bat to be defending a member of Team Diamond but she knew that Roxy was no longer a villain. She had heard all about her heel turn from Sonic himself. Alistair took to the air and dropkicked Rouge in the back, knocking her down onto the floor. He flew towards Rouge but the bat turned onto her back and kangaroo kicked him in the face before the mask-wearing villain could grab her. Alistair groaned in pain and he felt his mask to see if it had been damaged or not. That gave Roxy the opportunity to wallop him on the head and knock him out with her baton. Owen lumbered towards the two girls angrily, hoping to break them both in two for knocking Alistair out. Shadow spin-

dashed the heavyweight bunny in the back and knocked him down onto his stomach. Owen grimaced in pain but the black and red hedgehog didn't relent. He slammed his heel down onto Owen's head, knocking him out too. Rouge and Roxy both high-fived each other, gleeful that their hated enemies were beaten. It felt good for the two that they, the traitors of Team Diamond, had worked together with Shadow to beat them.

Ravage found himself against a double dose of arch-enemies. He was fighting his local enemies Team Adabat and his former friend Bunnie Rabboh, former cyborg fighter who was still a tough opponent despite having no cybernetics anymore. Bunnie punched Ravage in the jaw with her metal glove weapon. The solid weapon was so hard that Ravage was whisked off his feet and sent hurling backwards through the air. Scott and his girlfriend Jessica both gave the rabbit a thumbs up. They were impressed with her new weapon and they liked how she was able to fight well despite not having any cybernetics. Ravage picked himself up and scampered towards Bunnie, his jaws streaming hungrily with saliva as he pictured himself eating the leotard wearing rabbit for dinner after the fight was over. Bunnie scowled at her former friend and blasted him with the hand cannon. The blast hit Ravage and knocked him down hard onto his back. Ravage stood back up but he had no time to fight back as Scott and Jessica bombarded him with energy spears. Ravage had killed Taran the Lynx, Team Adabat's fourth member and Scott's brother so they really wanted to make the wolf pay for what he'd done. Ravage cried in frustration as he was relentlessly pounded by the spears. The onslaughts left him no opportunity to defend himself or fight back. Felix the Peacock then dive bombed towards Ravage and clawed at him with his talons. Ravage roared furiously in pain and he clawed back at Felix. The peacock dodged and then grabbed two tail feathers from his bottom. He stiffened them into clubs and walloped the wolf with them. The blows left Ravage with a killer headache that kept him distracted long enough for Scott and Jessica to punch him in the face with an energy enhanced punch together. The caped wolf was tossed backwards and he slammed down hard against the wall. Bunnie stood before him and pointed her cannon at him, giving him a cold glare that said to him, "Move and you get blasted.". Ravage decided to surrender, feeling that trying to fight still was not a good idea at this moment.

Team Adabat cheered for joy, delighted to have avenged Taran by beating Ravage once again.

Finally, Captain Metal and Cutthroat Jim were left. Amy and Blaze had instantly nabbed Captain Metal for Blaze hated the robotic pirate more than anybody she knew and Amy wanted to make Captain Metal suffer for nearly killing her. Cutthroat Jim was fighting anybody he dared. Captain Metal blasted Amy in the gut, the hedgehog crying loudly as she was hit and she was brought down onto her back. The metal marauder was about to stab Amy with the cutlass blade at the end of his gun arm but Blade threw fire into his face. Being heatproof, Captain Metal didn't feel the flames. He cleaved his way through them and lunged at Blaze. The pyrokenetic princess of the future Fire Cat Kingdom retaliated quickly with a fiery punch to the gut that took Captain Metal for a brief flight across the room. The robotic rapscallion got back onto his feet only to be hammered on top of his head by Amy. Amy's face contorted with rage as she walloped the evil robot on the head. She was making sure every blow of the hammer hurt as she hit Captain Metal. She used her hammer to pole-vault up and kick Captain Metal in the face and just as he stumbled backwards, she landed feet first onto the floor in front of him and then she swung the hammer upwards, walloping Captain Metal up into the ceiling. He crashed hard into the ceiling and as he fell down towards the floor, Blaze leaped into the air and roundhouse kicked him across the room. Captain Metal sailed towards Silver. The psychic hedgehog grabbed the robot pirate/Metal Sonic hybrid with a psychic grab and he used his psychokinesis to crush Captain Metal's limbs. This left Captain Metal unable to move anymore. Silver tossed his limbless body onto the floor before Blaze and Amy. He sighed in annoyance as he was unable to continue fighting. Blaze and Amy smiled at each other, pleased they both beat up Captain Metal together. As for Cutthroat Jim, he swung his sword wildly at Sora, Ruben and Shade but he didn't land a blow on either of them. Unimpressed, Ruben just drenched Jim with water and then he, Sora and Shade all kicked him down onto the floor. Seeing as he had no chance of winning this fight, Cutthroat Jim surrendered instantly.

Sally, Abby, Cream, Cosmo, Blizzard and Team Nekronopolis hadn't done any fighting. They had watched the others do the dirty work,

content with the fact that they were all that was needed although Thunder and Bolt the Chipmunks couldn't resist the urge to let all the armada have an electric shock each. Pleased to see the armada defeated, Sally stood before the beaten members. Her face was a mask of triumph and smugness, something that annoyed the armada greatly.

"And we win. What a shocker." sneered Sally.

"Oh don't tell me you're gonna start gloating!" moaned Raphael, "We can do without the extra salt on the wound!"

"I wouldn't talk to my cousin like that." sneered Abby, "She might get very angry an you won't like Sally when she's angry."

"Indeed." said Sally, "Now then Dark Armada, we have an announcement to make."

"I suppose it's something we should care about?" sniffed Ravage.

"It is." said Sally grimly, "Finitevus has manipulated all of you. He has used you in a scheme to become a powerful demi-god known as Enerjak. His goal is to destroy all of Mobius and apparently, he succeeds. Silver and Blaze come from a ruined future and Enerjak is the cause of it. Finitevus is the one who becomes Enerjak and we have to stop him before we can do so."

"And before anybody dismisses it as lies, here's the evidence you need." announced Silver, using Sally's warp ring to open up a portal to where he'd left the book "Mobius 2144: The FINAL Year".

He stuck his hand through the portal and he grabbed the book. He took his hand out of the warp ring and then opened up the book. He held it out for the Dark Armada to read. The armada read the book in silence and as they went through the pages, their faces all became the embodiment of horror and shock. By the time Silver had finished, everybody except Captain Metal had pale faces. They couldn't believe what they had just read. Some were ready to deny it but they took in the fact that the book was about Mobius's final year and it was from the future. The book wasn't a lie, it was all real. The armada stared at the Mobians in horror.

"Finitevus...becomes...Enerjak...and...destroys...Mobius?!" gasped Zira.

"And he kills many people, leaving very few survivors?!" blurted Captain Metal.

"I cannot believe we allowed that caped monster to deceive us like this!" moaned Lord Sycorax angrily, "We've been tricked! Duped! Maniuplated! Played for saps! He was using us to become a demon and then he goes on to destroy the world!"

"We didn't sign up for this!" shrieked Owen, "Neither of us want the world destroyed!"

"We must stop Finitevus now before he succeeds in his plot!" cried Alistair frantically.

"Conquering Storm was right to betray Finitevus all along...she wasn't crazy! Finitevus had lied to us!" snarled Zira, "I am going to break his neck for this!"

"We all want Finitevus dead." said Sally stoically, "So Dark Armada, please will you relinquish your ties with Finitevus and contribute in stopping his plan? I have sent Sonic, Tails and Knuckles to kill him but we'll go over in case they haven't succeeded yet. Will you join us?"

"Aye lassie, we be on yer side now!" declared Cutthroat Jim, "We did not join his side to have tharr world destroyed! Death to that landlubber Finitevus!"

"DEATH TO FINITEVUS!" bellowed the Dark Armada.

"Well, looks like sweet-talking the villain CAN work after all." snickered Sally, "Now then Blizzard, if you please."

"It'll be my pleasure Sally." said Blizzard delightedly.

Silver handed the warp ring to the Ice Witch and she quickly opened up a portal to Finitevus's lab. Once the warp ring was opened up, the Royal Fighters and the Dark Armada charged through the warp ring frantically, leaving *The Nefarious* behind, completely deserted

and doing nothing but hovering around in the sky above. As the Mobians headed over to stop Finitevus, Sally hoped dearly that the job had already been done...

11:57 am

Three minutes left until Phase 2 of Operation Enerjak Reborn was complete.

To Sonic, Tails and Knuckles's annoyance, they still hadn't beaten Finitevus yet. The relentless echidna refused to back down throughout the entire fight and just continued fighting harder and harder against the trio. Finitevus somersaulted into the air and spiralled towards Tails. The fox was airborne again, spinning his tails around fast as he flew through the air. Tails flew towards Finitevus but the echidna struck him down and sent him dive bombing into the floor. Tails grimaced in pain as he hit the floor hard. Sonic spin-dashed towards the echidna but Finitevus did something impressive. He stood firmly on his own two feet, held up his hands at arm's length and caught Sonic like somebody catching a basketball. The spin-dash pushed Finitevus back a little but he managed to hold on. He then threw his arms to the sides and sent Sonic rushing straight into the wall. The spin-dash left a deep, hard dent in the wall but Sonic was otherwise unhurt from the attack. Chuckling confidently, Finitevus used a warp ring to warp himself in front of Sonic. He leapt out of the warp ring like a jack-in-the back tipped forwards and he slammed straight into the blue hedgehog. He slammed Sonic against the wall and punched him in the face. He punched Sonic so hard that the hedgehog's lip began to bleed. Sonic retaliated with a callous headbutt to the face on Finitevus. The white echidna backed off, clutching his face in pain and Sonic spin-dashed him in the torso. He sent Finitevus flying backwards across the room and the echidna headed straight for Knuckles. Knuckles jumped out, grabbed Finitevus and slammed him down onto the floor. The red bruiser of an echidna then grabbed Finitevus into a crippling headlock and tried to strangle Finitevus to death. The scientist broke out of his nephew's grip by stomping on his foot and kicking his shins. Knuckles let go of Finitevus and then got socked in the face by his uncle. Knuckles fell down onto his side, angry that

Finitevus was being so hard to subdue. It irritated him endlessly as to how his uncle was so hard to even touch, let alone land a blow on. Finitevus laughed at Knuckles as he kicked upwards and sent his abhorrent relative hurling upwards and crashing down a few feet away from him. Tails flew behind Finitevus and stomp-kicked him from behind, knocking him down onto his hands and knees. Finitevus fought off the pain that flared up in his skull before Sonic charged up to him at stop speed and grabbed him by the shoulders. He took Finitevus for a quick ride around the room and then threw him into his Chaos Emerald making machine. To Finitevus's luck, the machine withstood the impact. Finitevus picked himself up, glaring angrily as Sonic, Tails and Knuckles prepared to attack him again.

"Give it up Finny! You can't fight us forever! We're too tough for you!" boasted Sonic.

"Stand down and face your demise like a proper Mobian!" snarled Knuckles.

"We might make your death quick and painless if you comply!" yelled Tails.

But then things started to take a turn for the worst. The machine suddenly stopped whirring and the words "Emerald Creation Process: Complete" flashed on a digital screen on the machine. It had finished. All 100 synthetic Chaos Emerlads had been made. Phase 2 was complete. Now Phase 3 could begin...the transformation to Enerjak. Finitevus smiled wickedly and he opened up a warp ring just above the basket of 100 Chaos Emeralds at the end of the machine's conveyor belt. The eight Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald had been stored in another room until this moment and Finitevus now brought them atop the basket of Chaos Emeralds. All 109 emeralds were now together and they glowed in unison, filling the room with a dazzling, majestic glow that made Sonic, Tails and Knuckles cover their eyes. The Master Emerald glowed brightest of all. Laughing crazily, Finitevus back flipped on top of the Master Emerald and threw his arms up in triumph.

"You're too late! YOU'RE TOO LATE! AH, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA! AT LAST! I CAN BECOME ENERJAK!" he crowed, sounding very

berserk as he prepared to begin his transformation.

Finitevus held his arms out to the side and began the incantation that he needed to become Enerjak.

"The servants are the seven Chaos. Chaos is power enriched by my will. The server exists to enslave the Chaos! Mighty Chaos Emeralds, give me your power! I demand to be a Chaos god! Make me invincible! Make me...ENERJAK!"

The Chaos Emeralds glowed a dark black that shrouded the entire lab in shadows. Then the Dark Chaos Energy that had been infused with the Chaos Emeralds and the formula that had been used to create the Synthetic Chaos Emeralds began to feed into Finitevus's body. The echidna cackled maniacally as he felt himself growing in power. He was feeling an epic sensation as he was being fed the power he needed. It was the most marvellous, incredible feeling he had every felt in his life. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles watched despairingly as their enemy began the transformation to the doomsday monster himself. They had failed. Mobius was doomed. They couldn't stop Finitevus now. The Dark Chaos Energy surrounded the maniacal, crazed echidna in a shadowy energy bubble that obscured any view of him. For a moment nobody could see Finitevus anymore. At precisely this moment, a warp ring opened up and out of it filed the Royal Fighters and the Dark Armada. They all ran up behind Sonic, Tails and Knuckles and stared in indescribable horror. They were too late. Enerjak was rising! Everybody watched, horrified as the transformation concluded. The energy bubble faded away and a floating echidna loomed above the Mobians. Still baring Finitevus's white fur, the figure was glad in brilliant golden armour. He wore a helmet with a slight Egyptian look to it that had horns protruding from above and a face plate that covered the eyes and nose. The figure's eyes were a blood red colour and they glowed ominously. The dreadlocks were still visible, floating around beside the echidna's head gracefully. The armoured figure also had spiked knuckles and a golden tunic around the waist that flowed beautifully. It also had a sword in its hands, baring all eight colours of the eight Chaos Emeralds. It was large and had a curved blade that could slice through even atoms. The creature cackled delightedly, earning horrified stares and gasps

from the audience it had before it.

"I am Enerjak! I am the mightiest being in all of existence! I am reborn...AND I WILL LAY WASTE TO EVERY LAST INCH OF THIS TAINTED WORLD!"

Footnotes:

*** See *The Terror of Enerjak***

**** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 21: A Bitter Snowstorm***

****** See Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 4: Trouble in Adabat***

******** See *Sonic the Hedgehog: Tales from Mobius Arc 24: Terror of the Cyber Husky***

This is the end...the end of all things...Enerjak has risen! The Mobians are doomed! HOW WILL THEY STOP THE MIGHTY WRATH OF ENERJAK?!

Find out in the milestone epic, Chapter 225, as our heroes end up in the biggest battle of their lives! Next time truly is the FINAL battle...

Dark Armada Part 25: The Chaos Storm

Well folks, this it, the milestone epic that is Chapter 225, my NINTH milestone! :D This is also the FINAL chapter! Yeah, where the fuck has three years and ten months of my life gone?! This is it! This is the end! The final chapter! Read on my friends!

Story 225: The Chaos Storm

The Dark Armada Chapter 25 of 25

A whole year had been spent building up for this moment.

The evil Dr. Finitevus had been hard at work for over a year, gathering together an army of villains to provide help in his schemes and plotting to get rid of Dr. Eggman. He had succeeded in both and over the past nine days, he had been in battle with the Royal Fighters in hopes of breaking their spirits and preventing anybody from standing in his way. That hadn't been a success for no matter what hardships he put the heroes through, they still fought back and refused to give up. But their efforts had ultimately been futile. Finitevus had outsmarted them time and time again until finally, he achieved what he wanted. He had created 100 synthetic Chaos Emeralds to go along with the nine he already had. Using their power, he had become the almighty, invincible and terrifying Demi-god of chaotic power…Enerjak. There had been an Enerjak before*. He had done terrible things to Mobius and had proven to be quite a challenge. He had come close to total destruction and Sonic had only just managed to take him down. Now Finitevus was donning the Enerjak armour. He hovered above the terrified Royal Fighters, his huge black cloak billowing out behind him gracefully despite there being no wind. His fearsome red eyes seemed to petrify his victims. They were momentarily frozen to the spot with fear. The Royal Fighters were all in various teams and all the teams were here. Team Mobotropolis, Team Chun-Nan, Team Megapolis, Team

Nekronopolis and Team Adabat as well as some Mobians that weren't even part of any particular team. The Dark Armada was with the Royal Fighters for they had realized that Finitevus had manipulated them all into helping him become Enerjak. They were equally as terrified as the Royal Fighters were. Enerjak grinned wickedly, his mouth the only part of his face that was visible under the helmet. He was pleased to see that his victims were terrified of him. They had every right to be, he was going to end the entire world and lay waste to all Mobians, male and female, young and old and short and tall. Enerjak let out a terrifying laugh that filled the entire lab. The power he felt was grand and made him feel like he could do anything and the impossible would be possible with him.

"Fear me hero scum…I am the ultimate power! I am Enerjak and I will destroy everything in sight!" bellowed Enerjak, **"I shall demonstrate my power by laying waste to the entire city of Megapolis !"**

The crazed, demonic Demi-god rocketed up through the ceiling of the lab, leaving the Dark Armada and the Royal Fighters behind as he prepared to destroy the city. Enerjak was the size of an average Mobian and yet just rocketing through the ceiling was enough to destroy the entire ceiling and send it crumbling down towards the Mobians below. The terrified Royal Fighters and Dark Armada quickly ran for their lives and exited the lab as the ceiling caved in. A huge slab of metal crashed down on Finitevus's emerald machine, destroying it instantly. The basket full of Chaos Emeralds was untouched though, leaving the 108 Chaos Emeralds and the Master Emerald behind to just glow to themselves. The huge crowd of heroes and villains ran outside the lab and watched with horror as Enerjak cackled demonically and thrust his sword up at the sky. The tip of the sword glowed very brightly and he pointed it down onto the lab below. Huge bolts of lightening erupted from the sword and blasted at the lab, vaporising it into atoms in mere seconds. All that was left of the lab after her was finished was the floor and the debris from the broken ceiling. Enerjak cackled gleefully, pleased to see what power he wielded. He could vaporize a building in seconds so destroying Mobius would be a breeze for him. His goal was as good as achieved.

"Yes…the power…the absolute PO WER!" cried Enerjak delightedly, **"And it's all mine to command and control! Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"**

As Enerjak relished in his glory, the Royal Fighters all looked at each other nervously. They felt like that they had met their match. Despite all hardships they had battled against and survived, they truly felt that this was the end for all of them. Enerjak had power greater than they could possibly imagine. He was quite possibly their most powerful foe ever and they were powerless against him. What could they do to save Mobius now?

"And I thought Finitevus was bad enough as himself…as Enerjak, he's a nightmare!" exclaimed Sonic the Hedgehog in terror, "He can vaporize a building with a mere bolt of lightening!"

"I'm scared Sonic…I think we're all finished." whimpered his best friend Tails the Fox, clutching his girlfriend Cosmo the Seedrian as if knowing this would be their last hug ever.

"I've lost my home world…now I'm going to lose my new home world…and my life." said Cosmo fearfully, clutching Tails back.

"We're all dead Cosmo!" shrieked Amy Rose, her eyes streaming with terrors and her hands over her mouth in despair, "Enerjak's gonna kill us all! We don't stand a chance!"

"Well…this is it guys…the end of the world." said Queen Sally Acorn fearfully.

"We were too late…Enerjak has risen! Now we have no hope of saving Mobius now!" wailed the future Mobian Silver the Hedgehog.

"We should have gone back to an earlier time!" moaned Blaze the Cat, another Mobian from the future. "We should have gone back to before Finitevus even formulated the armada! We would have had a better chance of stopping him then!"

"I'm afraid that wasn't the case though…" said a very grim Shadow the Hedgehog, "I have failed my purpose. I was to protect Mobius after deciding that it was home to me. Now it's gonna be

destroyed…and we're all gonna be dead. I have failed…"

"Shadow…if we're to die now…" said Rouge the Bat worriedly, putting her arms around Shadow for comfort, "Just know that…that I always kinda "liked" you. Really, REALLY liked you…if you know what I mean."

Shadow was surprised to hear that from the bat. He hadn't suspected that the treasure-hunting Mobian had feelings for him that were greater than just like. He knew what Rouge was trying to say to him. She loved him. Shadow wasn't sure if he returned Rouge's love but he would happily give Rouge some comfort for their final moments before Enerjak killed them all. Shadow embraced Rouge affectionately, feeling the bat trembling against him as she hugged him.

"I know what you mean Rouge…and I'll be by your side as we die." Shadow promised.

"Thank you." whispered Rouge, letting a tear of fear escape from her eye as she buried her head into Shadow's chest fur.

"Oh Bladefeather…I think we're finished." said Princess Matilda worriedly, "Enerjak's original terror nearly cost our lives…now his new terror will really cost our lives!"

"And me and you only just got married my adoring flower…" said Bladefeather the Falcon sadly, hugging his kung-fu wife worriedly. They had gotten married a few days ago and already their lives were coming to an end. A short union if ever there was one. Both Bladefeather and Matilda cried tears of fright as they waited for the end to come for them.

"What are we gonna do to stop that maniac?!" cried Knuckles the Echidna frantically, "How can we stop Enerjak now?!"

"I don't think we can…" said his girlfriend Shade the Echidna worriedly, "We're doomed Knuckles, all of us. We can't stop Enerjak. We may as well dig our own graves for him."

"Enerjak maybe here and we may have no chance against him…but

that isn't gonna stop ME!" declared Sonic, "We've taken on many big threats in our lives and we've survived them all! I am not letting Enerjak take away our lives now! We're gonna stop that demon in the golden underpants…or die trying! We brought a year of peace to Mobius after finally being rid of Eggman, now let's get it back!"

"Sonic, are you insane?!" shrieked Sally, "We can't stop Enerjak! He's a Chaos Demi-god! He's quite literally a living Chaos Emerald with the power to lay waste to the world! WE CAN'T STOP HIM!"

"No such word as "can't" my queen." declared Sonic, "We stopped the Devatrons, we stopped the Martians, we stopped the Black Arms, we stopped Solaris, we stopped The Eraser, the God of Existence himself! We will stop Enerjak, that much I assure you! As long as we live, we still have a chance!"

"If the blue dude's not losing hope then neither am I!" declared MandyMouse hotly, "I'm with him until the end! Besides, I owe that bastard a migraine for when the first Enerjak possessed me!"

"If my wife won't give up then I won't either." said Wilson the Dog, "We may have no chance…but there's no harm in trying."

"There's no honour in surrendering now and accepting our fates… we decide our own fates. And our fates will NOT be to die at Enerjak's hands!" cried Ruben the Water Panther, "We'll fight for our lives and we'll end Enerjak's destruction before it begins!"

The Royal Fighters were beginning to feel much more hopeful now thanks to Sonic remaining as enthusiastic as ever. They maybe did have a chance of stopping Enerjak now that they thought about it. Silver and Blaze may have shown them a book detailing how Mobius came to an end on this very day in this very year but history still had a chance to be changed. The only reason Enerjak had succeeded the first time was because nobody knew he was coming. They had been unprepared for Enerjak's arrival. But Silver and Blaze had warned them in advanced so they were ready for Enerjak and could now plan on how to defeat him. There was a little bit of a chance for the heroes after all. But before anything could be done, the remaining members of the Dark Armada all ran towards Enerjak. Sonic saw them and he cried out in horror.

"No, don't charge straight at him! We need a plan!" he cried frantically.

The villains all ignored him and continued to charge towards Enerjak. The demonic entity glared down at the armada down below with his fearsome red eyes. What fools they were to dare to challenge him like this. He was invincible! He had power greater than anything the world had ever known! How could his former allies possibly hope to stop him? Enerjak shrugged it off and supposed that if the armada wanted an early grave, he could give it to them. Let them join Conquering Storm, Scourge, Lennox and possibly Fiona in the afterlife so the Dark Armada could be reunited…in death that is. Enerjak lowered down to the ground, a fiendish grin spread out on his helmeted face as his armada confronted him. Their faces were full of rage and they were ready to attack without hesitation.

"Finitevus! You have deceived us!" snarled Zira the Ruthless, "You used us in your demonic plan to destroy the world!"

"We didn't want the world destroyed so now we're gonna have to destroy you to save it!" declared Ravage Bloodfang.

"You'll pay for yer manipulation scurvy landlubber!" barked Captain Metal, "We will give you a slow but painful demise!"

"Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! You fools…you cannot possibly stop me!" gloated Enerjak, **"You're up against a god! What chance do you have of beating me?"**

"God, schmod. We'll make you wish you'd never become Enerjak Finitevus!" roared Lord Sycorax.

"You will refer to me as Enerjak…and you will bow to me!" thundered Enerjak, his voice like an earthquake as he shouted at the armada.

"Make us!" snapped Raphael the Cyber-Husky.

"We will never bow to you!" growled Owen Pounder the Rabbit.

"So like it or not, we will defy you and take you down Ener-germ!"

declared Alistair Drakken the Bat.

"Face it Jacky, you won't get us to serve you like you did as Finitevus!" gloated Sycorax.

Enerjak's smiled died away into a down-turned, teeth gritted expression as anger flowed through his godly body. He was livid that the armada dared to stand up to him, even while he had all this power. He would make them feel sorry that they didn't bow to him. His sword crackling, he glared at the Dark Armada.

"Fine then you vacuous mortals…you will bow to me…AS PILES OF ASHES!" bellowed Enerjak.

He pointed his sword at Lord Sycorax and fired a jolt of chaotic energy at the crocodile. Sycorax was mincemeat. The whole thing had happened so fast that Sycorax hadn't even had the time to scream as the energy struck his body, spread all over his veins and tore him apart atom by atom. All that remained of the egotistical, anarchistic reptile was a pile of ashes where he once stood. He had been completely vaporized just as the Megapolis lab had been. The armada gasped in horror at what had happened. But despite this, they weren't going to let Sycorax's death be in vain. Vladek and Romeo charged towards the evil being, a look of murder and both their eyes as they charged towards their leader's killer. Laughing confidently, Enerjak vaporized them too, reducing them to piles of ash in seconds. After that had happened, Zira pounced onto Enerjak and began clawing at him furiously, hoping to tear him apart. But every slash attack she threw was futile for Enerjak's armour was resilient to any mortal attack. Zira couldn't even scratch the echidna god. Zira could see that her attacks weren't working so the kung-fu mistress grabbed Enerjak by the neck. She sharply twisted his head to one side and snapped his neck, a horrible breaking sound echoing through the sky as she did it. But Enerjak merely put his hands to the side of his head and snapped his neck back into place. He looked unharmed and still very much alive. It was as if nothing had happened to him. The armoured echidna sneered at the kung-fu mistress as her jaw dropped and her eyes widened in horror. She'd snapped his neck and it didn't kill him?! Zira began to feel very worried. How could she stop Enerjak if she couldn't kill him. Enerjak lashed out at Zira and slashed her across the chest with the golden

spikes on his knuckles. Zira let out a scream of pain and she clutched her chest.

"I am immortal…you cannot kill me. " gloated Enerjak, **"That is why you were a fool to stand up to me…now then my armada, you shall all receive your rewards for helping me get this power. Your ETERNAL reward…"**

He pointed his sword at Zira and vaporized the evil leopard with a jolt of Chaos Energy. Zira was decimated into a pile of ash just like Sycorax had been moments ago. Raphael lumbered forward and slashed at Enerjak with his hand blades. Enerjak stood where he was, the attacks having no effect on him as he was hit. As far as he was concerned, nothing was actually happening to him. He couldn't even FEEL the slashes as Raphael kept attacking him and trying to cut him to pieces! Enerjak punched Raphael in the face, the punch feeling like being hit by a car to the husky was he was thrown across the battlefield and sent crashing down onto his back. Enerjak then disintegrated Raphael. Captain Metal and Cutthroat Jim charged at Enerjak and swung their swords at the Chaos god. Their swords hit Enerjak's body…and shattered into shards of metal. The two pirates gasped in horror at their broken weapons, gobsmacked to see how strong Enerjak was. No wonder the Royal Fighters had been trying so hard to stop Finitevus from becoming the invincible demon! Captain Metal shook off the shock of his broken weapon and he blasted at Enerjak with his gun arm. He considered himself lucky that Silver had used his psychokinesis to fix his limbs a moment ago so he could use them. He blasted as furiously as he could but the shots had no effect on Enerjak whatsoever. The robot rapscallion's attempts were futile, the shots bouncing harmlessly off of Enerjak's body as they hit him. Cackling triumphantly, Enerjak pointed his sword at Captain Metal and vaporized him. He did the same to Cutthroat Jim just seconds after. Ravage, Owen and Alistair all charged towards Enerjak together but the unstoppable Chaos powerhouse disintegrated them before they could even get close to him. The Dark Armada was completely obliterated. No more would the armada function in its insidious goal to achieve their life's desires. Enerjak just laughed heartlessly, showing no sympathy towards the army of villains that he had recruited to help him gain the power he currently wielded.

The Royal Fighters had watched Enerjak disintegrate the armada with ease and were amazed at how efficiently they did it. But they knew full well that they wouldn't let that happen to them. They knew what Enerjak could do so they knew how to avoid him and what was the one thing they shouldn't do, charge straight into him. They also had a few things that could stop Enerjak from killing them. They had a warp ring to shield themselves and dodge the killer strikes and Silver's psychokinesis could deflect anything, no matter how powerful the attack was. They would be safer than the armada had been. Sonic stood forward, fists clenched and teeth gritted. He had never been so determined to put an end to a threat in all his life. This fight was going to be bigger than any fight he'd ever fought. Even bigger than his last battle with Dr. Eggman. But Sonic didn't care. All he wanted was Enerjak dead and his world saved. With the Royal Fighters marching behind the determined Sonic, they all headed towards Enerjak. They were all sharing the hedgehog's determination to put an end to the evil demi-god before he could end them. They had saved the world many times before, they refused to let Enerjak undermine their hard work now. Enerjak stared at the Royal Fighters incredulously. How could they still be coming up towards him with determined faces after displaying just a sample of his power?! What did he have to do to break the heroes already?! As Finitevus, he'd tried and tried endlessly to break the will of the Royal Fighters and hadn't succeeded! He was now Enerjak and they STILL refused to give up! They still dared to come at him! Killing them would definitely be the most fun he'd ever have in his destruction of Mobius. Enerjak pointed his sword at the Royal Fighters.

"Just like I said...you heroes fight for a forlorn cause." gloated Enerjak, **"Look at me now...I have become Enerjak himself! Your efforts have failed! You tried vailiantly to stop me from becoming Enerjak and you failed! You now fight for a cause more forlorn than ever! You haven't a hope against me so why do you still fight? Why not just surrender and let me put you all out of your misery?"**

"We'll NEVER stop fighting Ener-jackass!" Sonic announced at the top of his voice, "We've fought long and hard to fight off many threats who have come close to conquering or destroying our world!

Multiple times even! And we fight because we have something to fight for...our lives and our world! As long as we live, we'll never give up! We'll fight no matter what the threat is! Silver and Blaze may come from a wrecked future but now we know what we're up against, we have a chance of changing that! We'll stop you and give Mobius a brighter future and no god-like monster like you is gonna stop me or my friends!"

"Noble words hedgehog...noble LAST words." sneered Enerjak.

"No actually, I have some more. I'm not done yet." said Sonic, smirking at the demon before him.

"Go on then..." purred Enerjak mockingly as if expecting Sonic's last words to be something incredibly stupid.

Sonic took a deep breath, held it in for a moment and then he spoke.

"Jumping-Jak, Ener-Tube, Flap-jak, Ener-State, Ener-Jak-In-The-Box. And come to think of it, "Enerjak" sounds like some kind of sports drink. Now I'm done." snickered Sonic, his trademark cheeky grin spreading out across his face in mockery at the invincible monster he was mocking.

The Royal Fighters gasped in pleasant but amused surprise. Only Sonic could stare death right in the face and still make a joke about it. One would think that being so close to the end of the world would cause Sonic to lose his humorous streak. They were glad he hadn't though. It was nice that he was giving them something to laugh at one last time before Enerjak vaporized them. Enerjak himself was not amused at Sonic's bantering. The enraged echidna in the golden Enerjak armour was livid to hear his name being used as bad-puns for Sonic to joke about. How dare he mock his name as he was about to destroy the world! Enerjak decided that Sonic would die first just for that. He raised his sword but just as he pointed it at Sonic, the hedgehog spin-dashed him in the head and bounced off of him. The attack distracted Enerjak long enough for the Royal Fighters to jump in and make their move.

"Everybody attack! And don't hold back!" commanded Sonic, "This is the fight of our lives and we're gonna win!"

All the Royal Fighters cried back in agreement. Enerjak wouldn't take their lives today. They would take his. Sally deployed her twin energy blades and she began furiously cutting away at Enerjak, hoping to tear him apart piece by piece. But the Chaos demon blocked all her attacks with his own sword and his sword was indestructible. Even Sally's energy blades couldn't cut through it. The two clashed weapons until Enerjak summoned a Chaos Spear to his hands and threw it at Sally's stomach. The attack felt like a colossal punch, knocking all the wind out of the royal rodent and throwing her backwards across the battlefield.

Enerjak prepared to kill Sally with a Chaos Lightening strike but Sonic and Shadow both spin-dashed him together, hitting him squarely in the head and knocking him backwards. The god kept his balance but Sonic and Shadow didn't relent. The two hedgehogs spin-dashed him again, hitting him squarely in the torso and knocking him down off his feet. Enerjak wasn't down for long though. Not only was he immortal, he was heavily resilient. The blows he'd received from Shadow and Sonic barely slowed him down at all. He smiled wickedly as he raised his sword over his shoulder and cleaved through the air with it. This caused an enormous, arrow shaped energy attack to whoosh out of the sword and hurtle towards the Royal Fighters. Sonic and Shadow were hit for they were in the way of it but Silver used his psychokinesis to carry everybody up and out of the way so the attack swept under their feet and missed them. The attack had left Sonic and Shadow feeling horribly weakened and unable to move for a moment as the nerves went numb from the attack. Enerjak cackled with glee. He was enjoying himself. He was relishing he heroes' futile attempts to stop him. How foolish they all were to try and fight against him! They should have known better than to attempt to stop a god such as himself!

Enerjak pointed his sword at Sonic and Shadow but the effects of his earlier attack wore off in time for Shadow to throw some Chaos Spears at him. The spears struck Enerjak but did no harm. The arrogant, omniscient creature fired a killer lightening attack at Shadow but the black and red ultimate life form warped out of his way to avoid getting hit. He reappeared in front of Finitevus and unleashed a flurry of attacks on him that made him back off, flipping, kicking and punching constantly at the evil monster in the armour,

helmet and cape. Shadow then kangaroo kicked Enerjak in the face and sent him staggering backwards. He didn't fall onto the ground

"I am the ultimate life form! You will fall at my hands Enerjak!" bellowed Shadow.

"You still call yourself the ultimate life form when you know full well that you're up against an actual ultimate life form?" sneered Enerjak, **"You're NOTHING Shadow! You're beneath me! You're no ultimate life form anymore! I am the true ultimate now!"**

Enerjak then threw a trio of Chaos Spears directly at Shadow, throwing him backwards as the spears struck him. Shadow hurled backwards a very long distance before he eventually came down with a crash onto the ground. Shadow winced in agonizing pain. The hedgehog had never felt anything so painful in his life. Enerjak truly was a powerhouse to behold. Just a Chaos Spear made him feel like he'd been hit by a nuclear bomb. He dreaded to think what else Enerjak could do. Rouge was livid to see Enerjak hurt her beloved Shadow like this so the enraged femme fetale flew straight at Enerjak and screw-kicked him in the shoulder. Enerjak shrugged off the blow despite Rouge using all the strength she had in her body to hurt him. He swatted Rouge down onto the ground and prepared to kill her with his deadly sword. The bat cowered in fright, fearing that her life was about to end. But the bat was saved just in time by Roxy the Raccoon, the Team Diamond traitor, rushing in and clubbing him in the face with her baton. All the blow had done was annoy Enerjak slightly and focus his attention on her instead. Roxy clubbed furiously at Enerjak, hoping to hurt him or at the most, dent his helmet. She felt more anger at Enerjak's presence than anybody for she had been forced to help Finitevus and his armada get this far. Also the fact Enerjak slaughtered the armada despite them helping him get this powerful made her angry for Enerjak could have done so to her had she not gotten away from him and learned the truth in time.

"You monster! You forced me to work for you so you could become this! I'm gonna give you a broken skull!" screamed Roxy angrily with every wallop of the baton she threw.

Enerjak took every single blow as if it was nothing and Roxy was hitting him as hard as possible. Enerjak swatted Roxy onto the ground and pointed his sword at her. The raccoon lay flat against the ground, terrified at what she was facing. She was going to join Lennox, Owen and Alistair in the afterlife now. Trembling, Roxy gulped as Enerjak's sword crackled menacingly.

"You betrayed me..." growled Enerjak, **"I'll make sure your death is more painful. I won't vaporize you...I'll just electrocute you until you beg for the pain to stop!"**

"NO! NO! Please, no!" whimpered Roxy.

Enerjak ignored her and fired a crippling jolt of electricity at Roxy. The bodacious raccoon let out an agonized howl as electricity coursed through her body. Already she wanted the pain to stop but she was so much in agony that she couldn't even form the words in her mouth. Her voice was focused only on screaming in pain. Luckily, the raccoon was spared anymore pain by Bunnie Rabboh thundering towards Enerjak and giving him an uppercut with her metal glove. To her amazement, she took Enerjak clean off his feet and sent him hurling into a nearby building on the edge of Megapolis city! Roxy lay on the ground, breathing heavily and smiling with relief as the pain stopped. She hoped never to experience it again. Enerjak picked himself up and he flew towards Bunnie. The former cyborg blasted at him with her handheld cannon weapon but Enerjak ploughed straight through the blast as if it was nothing. he landed in front of Bunnie and uppercut her into the air. Bunnie let out a squeal as she hurled through the air and crashed down heavily onto the ground. The rabbit cringed in pain, wondering if any bones in her body had been broken. Enerjak flew towards Bunnie and touched down in front of her. He pointed his sword at the Southern Belle, grinning sadistically with joy as Bunnie stared up at him in terror.

"Bunnie...I bet you miss your beloved Geoffrey." purred Enerjak in a voice feigning sympathy, **"Do you want to reunite with him? I'll be happy to oblige..."**

"Ah'm missin' mah man alright but Geoffrey wouldn't want me to just let you kill me!" declared Bunnie, "He'd want me to fight against ya'll and that's what ah'm gonna do...for the sake of our world!"

She jumped back up onto her feet and walloped Enerjak in the face with her metal glove. Enerjak stumbled backwards, wincing from the punch Bunnie had thrown at him. While he was distracted, Tails, Knuckles and Shade all teamed up on him. Tails flew behind Enerjak and kicked him in the back of his head, focusing all his strength and energy into the attack he threw at the god that Finitevus had made him help to create. Tails felt partially responsible for Enerjak's rising since Finitevus had roboticized him and used him as his personal assistant. As Mecha Tails, he'd created the Synthetic Chaos Energy with Finitevus and Finitevus had used it to become Enerjak. The enraged, angered twin-tailed fox wanted nothing more than Enerjak defeated so that he could undo what Finitevus had made him do. Enerjak bent over slightly under Tails's attack but spun around and slashed him across the face with his sword. The fox let out a pained howl and he clutched his face as a deep cut formed and began to sting in pain. Knuckles threw as many hard punches as he could at his uncle-turned-killer-god, making sure every punch was harder than the last one he threw. The spiked-fists that Knuckles was well-known for slammed callously into Enerjak's body but they did no harm to the god aside from irritating him slightly. Enerjak punched at Knuckles, knocking him down flat with just the one punch but Shade ran in and slashed his hands with her blades. She did manage to leave a cut on Enerjak's hands but the god merely healed them with a Chaos Regeneration. Shade Blade-Rushed at Enerjak, hitting him harmlessly in the face with a pink energy wave that barely did anything to the powerful Chaos monster. Laughing conceitedly, he punched Shade and sent her flying backwards. Just one punch and Shade felt like she'd been hit by a sack of rocks. Maybe even a boulder. Angered, Knuckles ran up to Enerjak and uppercut him into the air but he didn't send him flying quite as high as Bunnie had done earlier. Enerjak just simply somersaulted in the air and landed down on his feet. Cackling deviously, he surrounded himself with Chaos Energy and rocketed towards Knuckles and Shade. He struck them both and sent them spiralling away from him and crashing down a few yards either side of him. This was a Chaos Charge, one of Enerjak's strongest attacks and by far one of his deadliest. He was pleased to see how well the attack had worked and he decided to use it again, charging straight into an advancing Team Nekronopolis and sending all four of its members hurling backwards.

Team Nekronopolis wasn't down for long though. Miranda Mongoose, Kari the Rat, Thunder and Bolt the Chipmunks got back up onto their feet and prepared to attack. Thunder and Bolt both held hands and gave Enerjak a terrific electrical shock that despite not doing much harm to Enerjak, provided a great distraction for anybody else hoping to attack. As he was being electrocuted, Enerjak was unprepared for Kari and Miranda as they came running towards him. Thunder and Bolt stopped the electrical attack so Kari could whack him with her spanner and Miranda could taser him in the gut with her electric prod weapon. Both attacks did nothing and Enerjak simply swatted both girls away from himself. He prepared to disintegrate the four Mobians but Wilson and Mandy charged in to attack the omnipotent god. Mandy threw her hardest punch ever straight between Enerjak's eyes. Enerjak was invincible but the mouse's steel knuckle attachments still enhanced her punches by a great amount. The punch took Enerjak clean off his feet and threw him onto his back. Mandy punched the air excitedly, pleased that her attack had worked. She had just punched a god and actually took him down onto his back. This was a moment she'd never forget in a hurry. Enerjak picked himself up and he fired an electrical attack at Mandy. The mouse quickly dodged and Wilson stepped in, throwing his spinning blade weapon at him and also firing the one on the arm gauntlet Tails had built specially for him last year. Both blades shattered to pieces upon hitting Enerjak's armour. Wilson gulped worriedly. He had no weapons left now. He felt very weak and vulnerable now he had no weapons. Enerjak prepared to kill him but Mandy dragged Wilson down onto the ground out of his way. They both picked themselves up and Mandy ran towards Enerjak, hoping to throw another punch at him. Instead, she was struck by a Chaos Spear and brought down onto the ground. The purple-furred tomboy winced in agony as the Chaos Spear's effects took hold. Wilson ran over to his wife to see if she was OK and Enerjak prepared to vaporize them both.

Team Chun-Nan decided to step in and try their hand at defeating Enerjak. Matilda charged towards the omnipotent warrior. She leapt into the air and unleashed her most powerful kung-fu move on Enerjak, the Six Dragon Strike. She had taken Zira out with it and she hoped to do the same for Enerjak. She landed in front of Enerjak and punched downwards on his head, then uppercut him in

the chin, then spun around and elbowed him in the gut, then unleashed a left and right hook each on either side of his face and then finally punched him squarely in the chest. Enerjak hurled backwards and crashed down on to the ground back first. He bounced back up into the air but her somersaulted onto his feet and sneered. Matilda's strongest move hadn't done any harm to him whatsoever aside from leaving the princess with sore fists given she had punched a hard helmet and a hard chest plate. The mongoose rubbed her fists tensely, hoping that her attack had done a number on Enerjak. But Enerjak just simply marched towards Matilda, grinning wickedly as if nothing had happened to him.

"Ha, ha, ha...that tickled." he crowed.

Matilda's heart sank in despair. Her strongest attack and Enerjak dismissed it as a mere tickle?! How could she hope to bring Enerjak down if her strongest attack had no effect on him?! The Princess of Chun-Nan began to feel that she was not the kind of opponent to fight a god since her strongest attack had no effect on him. Bladefeather, Mushu and Li Moon charged towards Enerjak, hoping they could harm him in some way but Enerjak swung his sword and took Team Chun-Nan all off their feet and sent them on a brief flight across the terrain with a wave of Chaos Energy. Team Adabat charged towards Enerjak with Scott the Lynx and Jessica the Cougar throwing energy spears furiously at the armoured echidna. Felix the Peacock flew in and clubbed Enerjak's head with his tail-feather clubs. But all the attacks were futile. Enerjak took them all as if they were nothing. Enerjak then held out his arms and swung them upwards. He sent curved blades of energy sweeping towards Team Adabat, striking them callously and knocking them down onto their backs.

Dark Cat the Leo-Lynx and Kiara the Cheetah came charging towards Enerjak, the leo-lynx drawing out his arm blades and Kiara the Cheetah drawing out her broadsword. Dark pounced towards Enerjak and slashed at him as furiously as he could. His attacks were in vain for Enerjak took the blows and slugged Dark in the gut, flinging him upwards and sending him crashing down hard onto his back. Kiara swung her sword at Enerjak only for it to break as Enerjak held up his own sword and blocked the attack. Worried,

Kiara began unleashing a round of rapid fisticuffs at Enerjak. The golden armoured god laughed at Kiara's pitiful attempts and he punched her away. Kiara cried out as she flew backwards and she landed down hard onto her back.

Seeing Dark and Kiara failing to do anything against Enerjak, Team Rose decided to have a shot at Enerjak themselves even though they knew they wouldn't fare very well against him. At least trying to beat Enerjak would be better than doing nothing at all. Amy thundered towards Enerjak and she swung her Piko-Piko Hammer straight up into Enerjak's chin. The blow was surprisingly hard enough to knock the godly entity down onto his back, something Amy hadn't expected. The pink hedgehog then proceeded to hammer down on Enerjak as hard as she possibly could. She slammed the beefy hammer down on Enerjak, raised it above her head and slammed it down on him again. Enerjak took about six blows before he eventually held up his hand and caught Amy's hammer just as she was about to hammer him again. Enerjak picked himself up and yanked the hammer out of the female hedgehog's hands. Frightened, Amy tried to run away but was blasted in the back by a Chaos Spear. Pained, Amy fell onto her knees and grimaced, willing the pain to go away. Cream and Cosmo both threw their disc weapons at Enerjak but the feeble weapons didn't make any impact at all. Enerjak didn't even FEEL them. Cheese the Chao, Cream's pet and best friend, flew straight towards Enerjak in an attempt to punch him in the eye but Enerjak grabbed Cheese and threw him back at Cream, hitting her between the eyes and just above her nose. Cream was knocked down flat onto her back by the Chao. Cosmo backed away nervously but Enerjak rushed up to her and grabbed her by the neck. He hoisted the terrified Seedrian up to his eyeline and he smiled wickedly at her.

"You know, you did make an excellent agent for me Cosmo..." purred Enerjak wickedly, **"Maybe as a reward, I'll let you live as my little pet. It'll be a shame to waste a good agent like you."**

"I'd rather spend an eternity with Marik the Martian than you Enerjak!" spat Cosmo defiantly.

"Then you shall die with the others. But since I'm so generous, I'll put you unconscious and kill you in your sleep. You won't

feel anything then." said Enerjak coldly.

Cosmo began to shake fearfully as Enerjak tightened his grip on her neck. The Seedrian gagged loudly and tried to get free as Enerjak's hand denied her lungs any access to air. Cosmo could see black dots in front of her eyes threatening to coalesce together and send her to darkness. The Seedrian had no hope of staying awake. She was going to fall unconscious and then Enerjak would kill her. But just as Cosmo's lights were about to go out, Tails flew in behind Enerjak and dropkicked him in the head, causing him to drop the Seedrian onto the ground.

"Leave her alone!" screamed Tails, "Don't you think you've hurt her enough already?!"

"No. There's no such thing as "hurting somebody enough" you impudent little brat." snorted Enerjak, **"I intend to hurt all of you as much as I wish!"**

He turned around and let Tails have it in the face with a powerful blast of Chaos Energy form his hand. The blast sent Tails careening down into the ground in agonizing pain. He had his hands tightly clenching his face and for a moment, they seemed fixed to it due to how hard her was clutching it. Horrified, Cosmo ran over to Tails to see if he was OK. The fox was alive but he along with the rest of the Royal Fighters wouldn't be alive for long. Enerjak would finish them off unless they could do something about him. And there were still some Royal Fighters to try their hand at stopping Enerjak.

The only ones left who hadn't yet attacked Enerjak yet were Silver, Blaze, Ruben, Sora, Mace, Abby, Blizzard and Team Chaotix. Ruben ran forward and let Enerjak have a powerful jet of water to the face. While that kept him distracted, Mace the Elephant and Vector the Crocodile stampeded towards Enerjak and grabbed him by his arms. The two heavyweight Mobians brought Enerjak down onto his back and began to punch him as hard as they could. Mace even walloped Enerjak in the face with his mace but despite the powerful weapon slamming down hard on the god's face, no harm or even damage was done to him. Even the face plate had survived the blow. Enerjak teleported out from underneath Mace and Vector and he punched them both in the back. Ruben and Espio jumped into let

Enerjak have it with a bunch of martial arts skills they wielded but their attacks did no harm to the evil Chaos monster. Enerjak spun around and kicked Ruben and Espio away from them, bringing them down hard onto their sides. Blizzard whipped out her ice wand and fired a powerful, magical attack at Enerjak but he stood there and let the blow hit him. It slammed against him like a glass being thrown into a wall but he didn't even flinch. Enerjak summoned a Chaos Spear to his hand and he threw it at Blizzard, striking her in the stomach and knocking her down. Abby and Sora ran towards Enerjak but they quickly ran for cover as he attempted to vaporize them. The terrified Mobians fled as a Chaos Lightening struck at the spot where they had been momentarily. Charmy Bee flew towards Enerjak, aiming to sting him but the bee didn't get the chance for Enerjak blasted him with a Chaos Spear and brought him down onto his back. Only Silver and Blaze were left. The two future Mobians looked nervous as Enerjak drew out his sword and pointed it at them. Enerjak had a look on his face that could bring certain death as he pointed the sword at Silver and Blaze.

"You two...you came back in time to try and prevent me from becoming the demon that you see before you!" snarled Enerjak, **"Too bad. I succeeded! I have become Enerjak and to make sure you two do NOT exist in the future, I'll make sure that no Mobian survives my apocalypse! A whole new generation of Mobius will evolve in your places and they'll all be loyal to me!"**

"Some future..." muttered Silver, "And besides, big heads up for you. Me and Blaze spent a long time learning about you. Nobody in the future knows who you are and nobody has ever seen you!"

"That must mean you succeed in destroying Mobius but then you die afterwards!" declared Blaze, "So you're pretty much doomed if we beat you or not! You don't live forever!"

The lavender furred cat noticed with great satisfaction that Enerjak looked horrified to hear this from her. Enerjak was having trouble comprehending what he'd heard. He didn't exist in the future and nobody knew who he was, nor ever heard of him?! How was this possible?! He was immortal! He couldn't die so why didn't he exist in the future?! Enerjak wondered if somebody miraculously ended up beating him and everybody just happened to forget about him after

he was gone. This made the omnipotent demon more determined than ever to lay waste to the world and also make sure that he survived so he was still around in the future, whatever it was that killed him or put a stop to him. He kept his sword pointed at his psychic and fire powered foes.

"I shall see to it that I do exist in the future!" declared Enerjak, **"Thank you for the heads up so now I may make sure that I do not die..."**

He then fired a Chaos Lightening attack at Silver and Blaze. Yelping in fright, Silver quickly used his psychokinesis to stop the attack dead in its tracks. The tip of the lightening froze stiff just inches away from his face. How close he had been to being vaporized! Blaze growled menacingly at Enerjak and she scampered up to him, hands alit with flames and her face full of fury. She socked Enerjak as hard as she could in the face, hoping that the attack hurt Enerjak very badly. The attack didn't seem to have done much to Enerjak much to the cat's disappointment. She let Enerjak have in the face with a jet of blazing flames, hoping to incinerate the immortal villain into ashes. But the flames didn't do any harm to Enerjak whatsoever. It was like he couldn't even feel the fire as it rushed over his face. He didn't even feel hot, let alone feel any burns from the fire attack! Enerjak laughed at Blaze's pitiful efforts as she tried in vain to hurt him. Enerjak slugged Blaze in the stomach and then spun around on his heel, swinging his other foot directly into the cat's face and knocking her down onto her side. Cackling manically, Enerjak then kicked Blaze up into the air and sent her crashing down in front of Silver. Silver as furious to see Enerjak beating up his girlfriend like this and he swiped his arm, sending a wave of psychic energy rushing towards Enerjak. Enerjak cleaved through it with his sword and scythed through the air with it, sending a chaotic wave hurling towards Silver. The psychic hedgehog held up his hands frantically, hoping to stop the wave before it hit him but the attack was too strong and he reacted too late. The wave hit him and threw him backwards across the battlefield. He crashed down hard onto his back and winced in pain, unable to move for the moment. Enerjak prepared to finish off Silver but he was then spin-dashed in the face by Sonic. He staggered backwards from the attack and Sonic proceeded to trip him up with a kick to the legs. He jumped on

top of Enerjak and glowered at him angrily. He was now face-to-face literally with the most powerful foe he'd ever faced in his life. But the fact didn't scare him one little bit. To Sonic, Enerjak was just another villain who needed to die.

"Why are you doing this Ener-Joke?!" demanded Sonic furiously, "What do you hope to gain from destroying everything?!"

"A new improved Mobius!" bellowed Enerjak, **"This world is like a garden gone wild and it needs to be purged with fire! I only wish to make Mobius a better world...by giving it the chance to start all over again and become better than it is now!"**

"Well you do a damn good job at it!" snapped Sonic, "Mobius is a wreck and for over 200 years from now, it's STILL a wreck! You really improved Mobius a lot there Ener-chump! Silver and Blaze tell us that Mobius barely has any life left after your apocalypse so you're not really much of a saviour are you?!"

"You don't have any reason to care...you won't live to see the future!" roared Enerjak.

He then teleported out from underneath Sonic and reappeared behind him. He slashed Sonic across the back with his sword, leaving a long, deep cut across his back. Sonic screamed in agony and he put his hands over his back, screaming pained screams and willing the pain to go away. Enerjak was about to kill Sonic. He raised his sword and prepared to cut Sonic to pieces but just as he prepared to make the killing strike, all of the Royal Fighters cam charging towards him. They were hoping to pile on top of Enerjak and pin him down onto the ground to keep him from killing anybody. Enerjak saw them all coming and he laughed mockingly. He almost pitied his enemies. How desperate they were to stop him and yet their efforts were consistently futile. Why did they persist in such a hopeless case? They could never beat him and he'd beaten them all into the dirt moments ago. Shaking his head in faux pity, Enerjak smiled demonically and held up his arms.

"Chaos...BLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
he bellowed at the top of his voice.

An explosion of Chaos Energy erupted from Enerjak's body and rushed into the Royal Fighters. The explosion ploughed through all of them and sent them all hurling about hundred yards backwards away from him. They all crashed down in a circle spanning a wide distance all around Enerjak. They all lay where they were, weakened and unable to get back up again. The Chaos Blast had drained much of their strength, something that delighted Enerjak immensely. He laughed crazily in triumph as he admired his downed enemies. He had won and the Royal Fighters had lost. There was no way he could possibly fail now.

"Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! I win!" crowed Enerjak, **"Now to begin the end of this world and the dawning of a new Mobius...I shall now unleash my Chaos Storm!"**

He took off into the air and prepared to unleash his world-ending attack. The Chaos Storm was Enerjak's most powerful attack. It was an attack that formed storm clouds and had them constantly unleashing strikes of Chaos Energy that would disintegrate anything it hit. Nobody could stop Enerjak now as he raised his sword above his head and prepared to begin the Chaos Storm. Down below, Sonic began to sit up slowly, ignoring the pain in his body as he opened his eyes. He was lying next to Tails and Sally and they were struggling to get back up. Tails opened one eye and grunted. They stared up at Enerjak helplessly and watched as the storm clouds began to form together in the afternoon sky. They would all be dead soon and that thought made Sally and Tails feel very despaired.

"Sonic...it's no use. We can't defeat him!" Tails coughed.

"It's ridiculous how powerful this Ener-Germ is!" moaned Sonic, "He takes all our blows as if they're not happening!"

"He's like a living Chaos Emerald..." murmured Sally, "He's just borderline invincible! We haven't a hope against him!"

"Wait a minute...wait a minute!" cried Tails, snapping his fingers in realization, "That's it! Chaos Emeralds! Finitevus used them to become Enerjak! We can use the Chaos Emeralds against him!"

"But Tails, Finitevus might have corrupted them." noted Sally, "And

he made one-hundred of them with Synthetic Chaos Energy, a formula that's very corrupted. We might turn evil ourselves if we use it."

"Nah, ah, ah Sal, we can cleanse the emeralds of their dark powers." noted Sonic, "Knuckles's Master Emerald chant's good at this stuff and I bet if all of us do it at once, it'll cleanse the emeralds of all the dark energy in them! Remember that Chaos Emeralds are fuelled by emotions. Our positive aura will make the Chaos Emeralds more positive and make them safe for us to use!"

"Brilliant, just brilliant!" cried Tails excitedly, "And if Enerjak tries to stop us, we can just send out some distractions like...maybe Shadow! He could Chaos Blast Enerjak and keep him at bay and Silver's psychokinesis will slow him down too!"

"It's a risky gambit and it could go horribly wrong...it might not even be enough to stop Enerjak..." murmured Sally worriedly, "But what choice do we have? The end of the world is coming. At this stage, I'm ready to try ANYTHING as long as it means we save the world."

"I am too Sal...I am too." said Sonic, forcing himself onto his feet.

He held Sally and Tails stand back up and the trio noticed that the other Royal Fighters were getting back up too. They had been spread out a fair distance thanks to Enerjak's Chaos Blast but they soon closed the distance between then. Some were looking up at the sky nervously as it began to turn dark with black thunderclouds looming above them. Enerjak was still pointing his sword up at the sky and forming the thunderclouds. His Chaos Storm was ready to crackle and boom all over Mobius. He planned to use it to kill all the Royal Fighters and then he'd vaporize all of the nearby Megapolis City. It would be the first of many other cities in the world to fall at Enerjak's sword. The Royal Fighters gathered around together and Tails explained his plan to them all. They listened very closely, eager to hear if the plan would stop Enerjak once and for all.

"OK guys, I think I know how to stop Enerjak." announced Tails, "We'll go over to the Chaos and Master Emeralds and we'll use Knuckles's chant and our positive emotions to cleanse the emeralds of Finitevus's corruption. Then Sonic will use them to defeat Enerjak.

I have no idea what will happen to Sonic if he uses 109 Chaos Emeralds but if Finitevus can use them just fine then so can he. Shadow and Silver will distract Enerjak while we prepare Sonic for the emeralds."

"It's risky little boy but it's the only plan we have that can possibly stop him." said a very worried and concerned Princess Matilda.

"You bet it is." said Scott the Lynx agreeably, "We don't know how else we can stop the asshole so we've gotta try it."

"All of us showing positive emotions and using the emerald chant will definitely work." said Knuckles, "The more people chanting and the more emotions displayed positively, the stronger the cleansing will be. Even Finitevus's dark corruption won't survive it."

That filled the Royal Fighters up with a lot of hope, a positive emotion already being displayed inside them.

"I greatly approve of being chosen as the distraction." said Shadow with his arms folded, "I'd love to show that creep what a REAL Chaos Blast can do."

"And I'll be able to slow him down enough. Maybe even take him for a ride." said Silver approvingly, "This plan's got merit."

"Then let us do it to it. For the sake of all of Mobius." said Sonic, "The apocalypse will NOT happen today!"

The Royal Fighters punched the air and yelled along with Sonic. They had a plan and it was guaranteed to work. They had to move quickly though as a mauve streak of lightening shot down from the dark skies above and headed towards them. The Chaos Storm had begun! Streaks of lightening began crackling through the sky and striking down at the ground, singing any spots strike and vaporising any building hit by the lightening. The noise that the lightening made was deafening and the sight of the streaks destroying buildings was terrifying. Dark and Kiara were the most horrified to watch as the City of Megapolis was decimated building by building as colourful streaks of chaotic lightening struck down on it. Their headquarters was quickly vaporized by a strike of lightening and the horrified

felines watched as the building was reduced to ashes. The Royal Fighters wasted no time in getting a move on. They all ran quickly over to the pile of Chaos Emeralds that had granted Dr. Finitevus the power and image of Enerjak. Silver used his psychokinesis to carry Shadow up towards the demonic creature that was commanding the storm up above. Enerjak didn't notice the Royal Fighters. He was too busy cackling delightedly as he watched his Chaos Storm destroy the land and the city down below him. This was the staring phase of Mobius's destruction. He would spread his terror to all other countries in the world and reduced everything to ashes and dust. Shadow and Silver sneaked up behind Enerjak, avoiding the chaotic lightening strikes as the psychic hedgehog carried the ultimate life form up to the caped destroyer. Upon reaching Enerjak, Silver eased some of his psychic grip so Shadow could move his limbs. Shadow summoned a Chaos Spear to his hands and he threw it at Enerjak, striking him directly in the small of his back. Enerjak cried out in surprise as he was hit and he turned around, surprised to see Shadow and Silver behind him. He clenched his teeth angrily.

"You dare to strike a god?! You dare?!" bellowed Enerjak.

"I'm the ultimate life form, of course I dare." sniffed Shadow, "Now then, you showed us your Chaos Blast? Let me show you mine..."

"I do not think so..." growled Enerjak furiously.

He pointed his deadly sword at Silver and Shadow and prepared to decimate them but Silver grabbed him with a psychic hold and held him into place. He threw Enerjak downwards before he could break free, sending him near crashing down into the ground. Enerjak saved himself from the impact before he could crash into it and he boosted back up into the sky. He raised his sword above his head and prepared to cleave Shadow and Silver in two. But Shadow had removed his inhibitor rings and was preparing to unleash a Chaos Blast. He was glowing red as he prepared to unleash all the energy in his body. Silver released him from his hold and held onto his rings, leaving Shadow to let Enerjak have it. The armoured echidna came close to stopping Shadow dead in his tracks but Silver quickly deterred him with his psychokinesis, sending him careening to the left. Enerjak rushed towards Shadow after the slight detour Silver

had sent him on but he was too late. Shadow unleashed his Chaos Blast and pounded Enerjak with a huge explosion of raw energy. Enerjak held up his hands to block the blow but the blast sent him hurling backwards through the sky and Shadow kept it up for so long that Enerjak was sent flying a very long distance away. Even to a god like Enerjak, the Chaos Blast felt like being hit by an explosion. The blast was so powerful that Enerjak had been thrown straight into the Golden Caverns, a very long distance away from the city and a long way to walk back from. With the Chaos Blast now over, Silver caught Shadow before he could fall to the ground with a psychic bubble. Then he handed the hedgehog his inhibitor rings so he could power back up and prepare for Enerjak's inevitable return. He'd be gunning for them now, he wouldn't care about the others. They'd be safe and they'd take all the danger themselves. Perfect for the plan Tails had come up with.

Meanwhile, the Royal Fighters had all gathered around the stash of 109 Chaos Emeralds. They were mesmerized by the sheer beauty of the emeralds and amazed to see so many of them. Finitevus was truly a genius, creating so many synthetic Chaos Emeralds to build up the number to this amount. Sonic couldn't tell which Emeralds were the eight real Chaos Emeralds for the Synthetic Chaos Emeralds were that convincing in appearance. As Knuckles lay eyes on the Master Emerald, he felt himself feeling much happier all of the sudden. It was like seeing an old friend for the first time in forever. He hadn't seen the Master Emerald in a year. It had once kept Angel Island, his birthplace, afloat but Finitevus had destroyed it by stealing the Master Emerald and leaving the island to crash down onto the ground and break into rubble. He'd take the Master Emerald back and this time, he wouldn't lose it.

"OK everybody, I'll start the chant and you all have to repeat after me." ordered Knuckles.

"Got it." said the crowd of heroes behind him.

Knuckles grinned approvingly and he stepped towards the pile of Chaos Emeralds. He held out his arms and closed his eyes. The Royal Fighters copied him, supposing that doing what he did would also work too. They all begin to think positively and think of positive emotions like happiness, hope, joy, laughter and above all, love. The

positive emotions made them feel grand inside and the emeralds seemed to glow in response to this. It was like they could sense the positive emotions inside the Royal Fighters themselves. Chaos was an amazing force that reacted greatly in many ways to many emotions. Knuckles knew this and that was why he knew the cleansing would work.

"The servers are the seven Chaos...Chaos is power enriched by the heart...the sever exists to unify the Chaos!" chanted Knuckles.

"The servers are the seven Chaos...Chaos is power enriched by the heart...the sever exists to unify the Chaos!" chanted the Royal Fighters, repeating Knuckles word for word as he spoke.

"Mighty Chaos Emeralds, cleanse yourselves of the dark energy inside of you! Chaos is not a force for evil, it's a force for good! We want to use you for good! Oh mighty Chaos, give us your power, help us defeat the dark villains who threaten our peace and sanctuary!" Knuckles chanted again.

"Mighty Chaos Emeralds, cleanse yourselves of the dark energy inside of you! Chaos is not a force for evil, it's a force for good! We want to use you for good! Oh mighty Chaos, give us your power, help us defeat the dark villains who threaten our peace and sanctuary!" repeated the Royal Fighters.

"All together now..." murmured Knuckles, "Chaos Emeralds...embrace the light...BANISH THE DARKNESS!" he cried out as loudly as he could.

"Chaos Emeralds...embrace the light...BANISH THE DARKNESS!" cried the Royal Fighters in unison.

The positive emotions combined with the chanting was all that the Master and Chaos Emeralds needed. The combined forces of all the Royal Fighters thinking so positively and wishing for something so good gave the emeralds the strength they needed to destroy the dark energy that Finitevus had infected them with. A trail of black Chaos Energy whooshed out of the Chaos Emeralds and formed a huge energy bubble into the sky. The energy came out of every emerald, including the 100 synthetic emeralds. The energy bubble

loomed into the air for a moment before disappearing into nothing. It had been done. The Chaos Emeralds had been cleansed. No Dark Chaos Energy infected them anymore. The Royal Fighters cheered delightedly, earning a bright glow of appeal from the emeralds in reaction to their joy.

"It worked!" cried Knuckles excitedly, "I can't believe it! It worked!"

"Well done everybody!" shrieked Sally ecstatically.

"Now for Step 2!" cried Sonic, jumping onto the Master Emerald eagerly, "Time to see what happens when I use 109 Chaos Emeralds against an omnipotent crime against nature!"

"Go get him Sonic! Beat that Enerjak!" cried Tails eagerly, "Show him why you don't mess with us Royal Fighters!"

"Will do little buddy." said Sonic with a wink, "Wish me luck everybody!"

"Good luck Sonic!" the crowd replied happily.

"Time to bring light to our darkest hour..." murmured Sonic, smirking confidently as he looked up at Enerjak who was still fighting against Shadow and Silver.

Sonic closed his eyes and focused on the emeralds he stood upon. He could feel the energy beneath his feet. So much power and so much glory they all contained. He had never used more than eight Chaos Emeralds before so he was very excited but also nervous at the same time about using them. The blue hedgehog imagined that the emeralds would give him an amazing super form, one greater than he'd ever experienced before. Sonic held out his arms and willed for the emeralds to lend him his power. The Chaos Emeralds all obliged, feeding him trains of energy as he tapped into them. Sonic felt a glorious sensation that made him feel like he was on top of the world as he embraced the energy of the many Chaos Emeralds. This was the most amazing feeling he'd ever felt in his life! And all positive energy too! The Royal Fighters watched in amazement as Sonic was surrounded by a white ball of energy. He was completely lost within the white void of the ball for the moment

but he emerged after a few seconds, now looking very different. His fur was golden as usual but his spines had increased in length and he wore pieces of armour around his torso, shoulders, pelvis, shins, feet and lower arms. The armour was a brighter gold than Sonic's fur was and he, like Enerjak, also wielded a huge sword with a curved blade. A cloak billowed out from Sonic's waist. His eyes were red and he wore a face plate that covered all of his face except his mouth. He looked a little like a hedgehog version of Enerjak only he was completely good and full of positive energy. His presence even had a rather pleasant, friendly image to it. The Royal Fighters all gaped in amazement at Sonic, unable to believe what they were seeing. A chorus of gasps was all any of them needed to express their dumbfounded amazement at the majestic, beautiful sight before them. They were well impressed at what Sonic had become as a result of the emerald's energy. Sonic admired himself all over and grinned approvingly at what he was wearing.

"Ha, I always said I had a "golden" personality..." he chuckled, "And I've always wanted a sword too!" he added, admiring with delight the sword he now held in his hands. "This is epic! I feel more than super I do! I feel like...like...HYPER Sonic!"

"You look amazing!" cried Tails gleefully.

"I never thought a hyper form would be possible..." gasped Knuckles, unable to comprehend what he was looking at, "Dad would have been so amazed..."

"Even Imperator Ix never had that kind of power..." whispered Shade in amazement.

"Oh Sonic, you look wonderful." said Sally approvingly, "You really are our "golden boy" now."

"Thanks everyone." said Hyper Sonic happily, "Now let's beat down that Enerjak and save our world!"

Hyper Sonic rocketed up into the air in the blink of an eye. As he headed up towards Enerjak, it started to rain. Heavy, fat drops of water poured down onto the ground below, soaking anybody around and drenching the ground. Hyper Sonic barely felt the rain as it

hammered down over his body. He fixed his eyes firmly on Enerjak up above and he grinned confidently to himself. Finitevus had wanted to become Enerjak, now he'd wish that he hadn't. Hyper Sonic would make sure that Enerjak had a very, VERY painful send off when he was finished with him. Shadow and Silver saw Hyper Sonic coming towards Enerjak and they quickly left the scene, leaving Enerjak all for the hyper-powered hedgehog. Enerjak watched in confusion, wondering why Shadow and Silver were leaving. The demi-god soon realized why they had left after a colossal spin-dash slammed into his back and sent him spiralling crazily through the air. Enerjak had no idea what had hit him but he didn't take long to find out. He turned around and saw the most shocking sight he could ever see. Sonic the Hedgehog was before him and he was all hyper-powered with glorious armour and amazing power in his body! Enerjak's jaw dropped in astonishment.

"No! Impossible! How did you manage to turn hyper?!" he bellowed in bewilderment.

"You left the emeralds wide open for us to use..." sneered Hyper Sonic, "And we cleansed them of your filth Ener-joke! I've now used them to become Hyper Sonic and I am gonna use these powers to turn you into a memory!"

"You dare to use my emeralds against me?!" snarled Enerjak in a voice that sounded more animal than human, **"You disgust me...you will pay for this insolence!"**

"And you will pay for everything you've ever done and the fact you want to destroy Mobius!" shouted Hyper Sonic, "This is a fight to the death Cracker-Jacks!"

"Indeed you abhorrent little hedgehog..." growled Enerjak angrily, brandishing his sword and preparing to unleash all his power, **"This will be...our LAST stand..."**

Hyper Sonic was reminded instantly of his final battle with Dr. Eggman last year. He had declared the exact same thing before going to battle him. He was now in another last stand, this one with a god of chaotic power who used to be a scientist with great fighting abilities and an amazing brain. Hyper Sonic and Enerjak hovered for

a moment, staring each other down and preparing to make their first move. Rain trickled down their bodies as they waited. Hyper Sonic could feel the rain pitter-pattering on his helmet in the tense standoff he was in. Enerjak could feel the same. This was the battle of their lives, the battle to end all battles and most importantly, the battle to determine the fate of the world. Then suddenly, after a few tense seconds passed, both god-powered Mobians raised their swords and charged at each other like fighter jets. Bellowing at the top of their voices, the armoured beings swung their swords at each other. Their swords clashed together, making a sound louder than the thunder in the sky that accompanied the rain throwing down around them. Hyper Sonic felt Enerjak's strength pressing hard against his own sword. He was strong but Hyper Sonic's arms didn't bend in the slightest. He grinned to himself. He was on par with Enerjak! His hyper form was just what he needed to combat the evil echidna! As the two pressed on each other's swords, Hyper Sonic suddenly Chaos Controlled out of Enerjak's way and reappeared behind him. He spin-dashed into Enerjak's back, still holding his sword so he ended up churning into the echidna's cape with his sword. Unlike before, Hyper Sonic's attack was actually inflicting harm upon Enerjak! The hyper hedgehog listened with great delight as his attack caused Enerjak to bellow thunderously in pain. Only a god could hurt him and Sonic had come a god when so he could damage him! Hyper Sonic uncurled from his spin-dash and drop-kicked Enerjak down into the ground as hard as he could. Enerjak crashed into the ground, leaving a huge crater where he landed. Enerjak boosted back up into the sky and swung his sword at Hyper Sonic. The echidna's sword sent a wave of paralyzing energy towards Hyper Sonic but the hedgehog flew out of the wave's way and swung his own sword. A wave of energy hurled towards his evil opponent from the blade tip but Enerjak swung his sword down and cleaved through the wave, slicing it in two and saving himself the impact of the hit. Enerjak swung his sword upwards and sent a vertical wave of energy hurling towards Hyper Sonic. Hyper Sonic blocked the blow by sending a horizontal wave crashing into it. The hedgehog was enjoying himself immensely. He had amazing power, he had a sword and he was going toe-to-toe with Enerjak! This was the best day of his life hands down and he would cherish it for years to come. Hyper Sonic rocketed towards Enerjak and Enerjak rocketed towards him. Both opponents clashed swords as they flew

by each other and they turned around to stare each other down. Enerjak looked less cocky and more angry as this fight went on, something that made Hyper Sonic feel very pleased. He was beginning to get to the demi-god. He would win the fight! Enerjak raised his sword and prepared to make another attack.

"Grrr...impressive. Why waste all this amazing power you have to save this stupid world?" cried Enerjak angrily, **"You sicken me Sonic! You have the power I wield and you waste it all on your stupid friends and your pathetic world! You're a god! Use your power to its full potential! Don't waste it on the good, use it like I am! It'll be more enjoyable, I promise you..."** he purred, hoping that his weasel words would tempt Hyper Sonic to turn on his friends.

"I will admit, this is kinda fun, being a god and having amazing powers and all." said Hyper Sonic grimly, "But I use my power for one thing...to beat the crap out of freaks like you! You're the one wasting all his power on something as nihilistic and pointless as wonton destruction! You sicken me Ener-Jerk! And when I put you down, we'll make this a day of celebration and every July 21st, we'll celebrate YOUR death!"

He then swung his sword and sent another Chaos Wave cleaving through the air towards his golden-armoured foe. Enerjak roared in rage and he sliced through the wave with ease with his own sword. Hyper Sonic charged towards Enerjak and slashed him clean across the torso with a hefty swing of his huge bladed weapon. Enerjak winced in pain but he recovered quickly and slashed Hyper Sonic across his helmet. The blow didn't do much damage to Hyper Sonic. The hedgehog shrugged off the blow and he spin-dashed into Enerjak. He began churning away at his armour, leaving heavy scratches as he spin-dashed him. Enerjak bellowed angrily in annoyance and he punched Hyper Sonic through the sky with a powerful, Chaos enhanced punch. Hyper Sonic hurled backwards though the sky, unable to believe that Enerjak had managed to punch him so hard. Hyper Sonic shook himself off and sent another energy wave towards Enerjak with a swish of his sword. Enerjak did the same and both attacks cancelled each other out. Then both godly Mobians rocketed towards each other and began clashing

swords heavily, both opponents feeling the weight of each other's attacks on each other as they fought. They clashed and clashed several times until Enerjak suddenly caught Hyper Sonic sharply across the shoulder. Hyper Sonic winced in pain and clutched his arm, using a Chaos Regeneration to heal the wound. Enerjak sneered at him, brandishing his weapon for another strike.

"Heal yourself all you like...you'll still die Sonic." gloated Enerjak.

"The same could be said to you, you monster!" snapped Hyper Sonic, "With the power I have inside me, I'll NEVER stop fighting until you're gone forever!"

Enerjak didn't approve of what Hyper Sonic had said to him. He swung the sword viciously at Sonic and slashed him across the helmet, leaving a deep gash in it. Hyper Sonic winced, feeling the slash across his forehead as the sword struck his helmet just above the eyes. Angered, Hyper Sonic retaliated by cleaving his sword upwards, slashing Enerjak vertically up his helmet and leaving an equally as deep gash on Enerjak's glorious, golden head armour. Enerjak's head jolted backwards from the attack, throwing his balance off for long enough for Hyper Sonic to draw his leg up until his knee was touching his chest and kick outwards at Enerjak, throwing him backwards across the sky. Enerjak hurled backwards a fair distance before he regained himself and came charging back towards Hyper Sonic. A clap of thunder boomed in the stormy, rainy skies and lightening flashed as the two gods clashed weapons with each other once again. The swords made a loud noise as their blades came into contact with each other. Both Hyper Sonic and Enerjak grunted furiously as they pushed onto each other's weapons. Hyper Sonic however did something that Enerjak didn't. He took advantage of the situation and backhanded Enerjak across the face, sending him spiralling through the air in a dizzy spin that had him momentarily distorted. Hyper Sonic took advantage of this again by summoning a bunch of Chaos Spears to his free hand and throwing them at Enerjak. The hyper-powered hero of Mobius watched delightedly as the spears pierced through Enerjak's armour and inflicted grievous pain on him. The armoured Chaos god winced in pain as the Chaos Spears inflicted a lot of damage on him. He felt

like he was being burnt as they whooshed past over him and pierced through his armour. Enraged, Enerjak spun around and threw Chaos Spears at Hyper Sonic. The spears hit Hyper Sonic and left a few holes in his armour. The Chaos-powered hedgehog grimaced as the spears inflicted pain onto him. Hyper Sonic gritted his teeth angrily and he swung his sword, sending another Chaos wave at Enerjak. Enerjak sneered at his opponent's pitiful attack and he ploughed straight through it as he charged at Hyper Sonic with his sword held out. He soared towards Hyper Sonic until he was directly in front of him and he slashed at the hedgehog's chest plate. The attack left a deep gash on Hyper Sonic's chest plate but Enerjak wasn't done yet. He sheathed his sword and unleashed a hail of punches on Hyper Sonic, punching his opponent at a speed even the super sonic hedgehog was having trouble keeping up with. Hyper Sonic did his best to deflect his enemy's blows but Enerjak struck him too hard and too fast repeatedly all over his body. The blows felt heavy and callous and Hyper Sonic was having trouble resisting them. Enerjak then slugged Hyper Sonic in the stomach and bashed him on his head. The attack didn't really do much to Sonic for his helmet protected him from most of the impact. Then Enerjak spun round, raised his leg above Hyper Sonic and slammed his foot down on his opponent's head, throwing Hyper Sonic down into the ground below. Enerjak cackled manically as he flew down after Hyper Sonic and slammed down into his back, pushing him quickly downwards and slamming him into the ground as hard as he could. The impact left an enormous crater that sent a lot of wet gravel flying across the terrain. The Royal Fighters watched worriedly, hoping that Hyper Sonic was OK. In the crater, Enerjak stood up and Hyper Sonic lay down on the ground, panting and grunting as he tried to get back up. Enerjak grinned smugly and he drew out his sword, ready to kill Sonic and claim victory once and for all.

"An admirable effort Sonic…but you fall to the might of Enerjak!" declared Enerjak triumphantly.

He raised the sword above his head and swung it down towards Hyper Sonic. But the hedgehog turned over onto his back and blocked the blow with his own sword. He smirked at Enerjak cockily as he saw the echidna's surprised face.

"Like I asked before…do you EVER stop gloating?" snickered Hyper Sonic.

Hyper Sonic then warped out from underneath Enerjak and he reappeared behind him. Enerjak had already been expecting it so he quickly spun around and slashed Hyper Sonic across the face. Hyper Sonic ignored the pain in his face that had been inflicted on him by Enerjak's sword. He struck back, spin-dashing Enerjak into the edge of the crater. He cleaved away at Enerjak's armour, tearing away bits of armour as he attacked him. Furious, Enerjak pushed Hyper Sonic away and sent an energy wave hurling towards him. Hyper Sonic quickly blocked the attack, slashing through the energy wave with his own sword. He knew that he couldn't keep the battle going forever. If the fight was allowed to prolong, it could potentially threaten Mobius and the two would end up doing grievous damage to the planet. He had to end it now. But how could he kill an immortal being like Enerjak? That was a question that began to worry the hedgehog. Then suddenly Hyper Sonic realized something. He was a god so surely he could kill Enerjak, who was also a god? Hyper Sonic knew just what to do. He and Enerjak charged towards each other and clashed swords violently with each other. The heavy blades whacked against each other, creating a loud noise that rang in their eyes. They could feel the weight of their attacks as they clashed swords. Heavy attacks indeed. The two Chaos gods clashed swords together callously and swiftly, each blow striking hard and making the two wince as the clash noises rang loudly in their ears. Then Hyper Sonic unleashed his plan. He threw a Chaos Spear directly into Enerjak's eyes, blinding him for the moment and leaving him in terrible pain. Enerjak clutched his eyes and willed for the pain to go away. Hyper Sonic laughed to himself. He could dispose of Enerjak easily now. He teleported behind Enerjak once again, this time the echidna Demi-god completely unaware that Hyper Sonic was behind him. Enerjak realized it after getting his vision back…much too late. He didn't have time to react before Hyper Sonic grabbed his shoulder and suddenly plunged the sword straight through Enerjak's back, the blade emerging through his chest as the blade entered through his back. Enerjak let out a horrified gasp as he was suddenly impaled by Hyper Sonic. Hyper Sonic then added more pain to Enerjak by twisting the sword sharply while it was in his back. The god tried to

resist but he could feel his strength fading him. Only a god could kill another god and Hyper Sonic had just done so. His beautiful plan had failed. Hyper Sonic had beaten him. Enerjak would not destroy Mobius now. Hyper Sonic yanked the blade out from Enerjak's back, watching delightedly as trickles of green coloured blood poured out of Enerjak's chest, forming a grotesque, green puddle around his feet. Enerjak fell down to his knees and clutched the wound in his chest as if hoping that he could some how mend the wound. But he couldn't. His Chaos Energy was pouring out of his body. He was losing his strength. He couldn't find the strength to use a Chaos Regeneration and heal himself. He coughed loudly, blood pouring out of his mouth.

"No…impossible…you've…ruined…everything!" he spluttered hoarsely, hoping he still had any breath left after the fatal attack.

"Guilty as charged Enerjak." snorted Hyper Sonic, "You've lost Enerjak, you're dead and you can't destroy Mobius now."

"If…I'm to…die…then…I'm taking you…with me!" bellowed Enerjak.

The wounded Chaos god then forced himself onto his feet and initiated picked up his sword. He pointed it at Hyper Sonic and fired a Chaos Lightening attack, hoping to vaporize him and kill him so he could die a happy god. The strike hit Hyper Sonic squarely in the chest and the hedgehog screamed in agony as it began to eat away at his armour. He was a Chaos god thanks to the 109 Chaos Emeralds but even he couldn't stop Enerjak from vaporizing him. His immortality just slowed down the process that was all. Hyper Sonic could feel the strike tear apart his armour, digging away furiously to get at the body that lay underneath. Chunks of armour flew everywhere as the attack ploughed through it. In a matter of moments, Hyper Sonic's body would be touched by the lightening and he would be decimated. Hyper Sonic was very frightened. Enerjak was going to kill him if he didn't do something and fast! Hyper Sonic knew exactly what to do to save himself a violent death. Gritting his teeth, Hyper Sonic unleashed a Chaos Blast, using all the strength he had left in his body to initiate the powerful attack. It was his only chance of survival even though the blast could potentially drain his energy and he'd end up finishing the job for

Enerjak. The echidna Chaos God stared in horror as green energy erupted from Hyper Sonic and punched straight into him like a speeding lorry. The blast tore through the dying Enerjak, vaporizing his armour and churning away at his skin and bones. Hyper Sonic was pleased to see that his attack was working. He knew how gods worked. If they were dying, their power diminished dramatically to the point where they were easier to kill now. His stab to the back on Enerjak had been enough to weaken him enough for the Chaos Blast finish the job. Enerjak's limbs began disintegrating as the blast continued to rip him apart. He was in agony, a gaping sword wound leaking with blood in his chest and a Chaos Blast ripping him to pieces. Enerjak knew that his time had come. He only had enough energy left in him to let out his final breath.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
he bellowed in one final, loud, grating, dying bellow.

And then Enerjak was vaporized, reduced to nothing more than atoms by the Chaos Blast. There was nothing left of him after that killing attack. Every inch of him was gone from his helmet to even his sword. Enerjak, and also Dr. Finitevus, was no more. Mobius was safe. The end of the world had been prevented. Once again, Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends were triumphant. The Royal Fighters had watched Hyper Sonic finish off Enerjak in a spectacular fashion and they all exploded into applause. The feeling that went through them was nothing short of ecstasy. They had been so worried that the world was going to end. And Hyper Sonic had just prevented it from doing so. The cheering that followed Enerjak's death went on for several minutes.

"YES!" shrieked Tails gleefully, "We beat him! WE BEAT HIM! Enerjak is no more!"

"Mobius is saved! We're not gonna die and the world's not gonna end!" cheered Knuckles, punching the air excitedly, "Yahoo! Thank the guardians!"

"I can't believe it! I'm really glad we won but still, I can't believe it!" cried Amy happily, "It's a miracle! We won!"

"Praise the ancestors!" shrieked Silver ecstatically, "We've stopped

Enerjak and saved the world!"

"Our future is going to be perfect at last!" cried Blaze, hugging Silver delightedly, "We've saved Mobius and beat Enerjak!"

"Yes….we did!" said Sally, her eyes streaming with happy tears, "My beloved hero of Mobius has saved us all again. At last, Finitevus is gone so Enerjak's threat will never return…and we can have peace on Mobius again."

"Hang on everybody, where's the blue dude himself?" asked Mandy quickly, feeling bad about having to interrupt the happy mood.

"Still in the crater I suppose." said Wilson.

"Knuckles, get a Chaos Emerald." ordered Sally, "Just in case he needs a Chaos Regeneration."

Knuckles obeyed and he left to get the one Chaos Emerald that he had been placed in charge of for many years. The Master Emerald. He hoisted it above his head and carried it off, following the Royal Fighters as they ran towards the crater. The happy mood had quickly turned to a mood of intensity. The Royal Fighters were hoping that Sonic was all right as they approached the crater. Enerjak had come close to killing him just before Hyper Sonic finished him off. He might be hurt or dying, something that worried Tails and Sally very much. Everybody else was deeply concerned, hoping that Sonic wasn't too bad. Tails and Sally leaped down into the crater and stared in horror at what they saw lying in the middle of it. There, lying still in the middle of the crater was Sonic the Hedgehog. He was no longer Hyper Sonic. He had been too weak to stay Chaos powered so he powered down and fainted onto his side. He looked seriously hurt and as Sally and Tails turned him over to inspect him, they saw that a huge red mark stained Sonic's chest. It wasn't blood, it was merely a huge burn from the lightening strike that had nearly killed him. His eyes were closed and he was deathly still. Rain trickled down his body, some raindrops trickling down the corners of his eyes, making him look like he was crying in his sleep. Sally couldn't even hear him breathing. Tails felt his pulse. He found it, but it was very weak. Sonic was on death's door thanks to Enerjak and it was quite possible that he would end up dying from his

injuries. Sally shook Sonic nervously, her eyes brimming with tears.

"Sonic? Sonic?!" she cried out, "Please…please be alive! You've beaten Enerjak! We don't want to celebrate his death without you! Please don't be dead!"

She received no response. Sonic just remained still and silent, seemingly dead. The squirrel fought hard to contain herself, holding onto some hope that Sonic was still alive. She wouldn't give up on him yet. Sonic had survived much worse injuries before, surely he would survive this one.

"Knuckles! Master Emerald! Now!" cried Tails, his eyes already streaming with tears and mixing in with his soaking white muzzle.

Knuckles climbed down into the crater and he held the Master Emerald just above the dying Sonic. He closed his eyes and activated a Chaos Regeneration. As the emerald glowed brightly, Knuckles spoke over to Sally.

"If he doesn't wake up after this then he's dead!" cried Knuckles, "A Chaos Regeneration won't bring him back alive, it'll just heal his dead body! Chaos Regeneration heals people, not revives the dead!"

"Fingers crossed that we used it in time then…" said Sally, letting a few tears escape from her eyes as the Chaos Regeneration did its magic on Sonic.

She watched as the emerald's power healed the nasty burn mark on Sonic's chest and restored his body to normal. She clenched her fists tensely as the regeneration healed and the Master Emerald stopped glowing. Knuckles set it down beside himself and stared at Sonic, hoping that his friend was alive and the regeneration had healed him. Sally and Tails stared at Sonic too, both shedding tears and praying that Sonic was still alive. The Royal Fighters all shared Sally, Tails and Knuckles intense feelings. The Chaos Regeneration had healed his body but was that all it had done? Was Sonic dead and the regeneration had come too late to save him? It was possible but nobody wanted to think that. They wanted to think positively for they felt it would help Sonic come back. A few tense seconds

passed. Sonic still didn't move. Knuckles shook his head sadly. It appeared that Sonic was dead. The regeneration was too late. They had failed to save him. Tails put his hands over his eyes and sobbed loudly. He had only just gotten de-roboticized yesterday and now Sonic was gone. He would never recover from this terrible passing. Sally wrapped her arms around Sonic's body and began to cry harder. She wasn't believing that Sonic would be OK. She was convinced that her beloved hedgehog was dead. She was feeling hysterical. Her body trembled and she was drowning in tears.

"NO! Sonic…no…please no!" whimpered Sally, "Please don't leave me! Don't leave us Royal Fighters! We love you! I love you…" she whispered into her boyfriend's ear, knowing that he probably wouldn't hear her but nevertheless, she hoped that that was the last thing he would ever hear.

With her grief spilled out in a single sentence, Sally buried her head into Sonic's chest and cried, feeling for all the world she would never stop. The Royal Fighters all began to cry too, fearing that their bravest, noblest, adventurous, most big-hearted hero and Royal Fighter was dead. Poor Sonic the Hedgehog. He would never live to see Enerjak's death celebrated and a brand new day to open up on Mobius, a day that shouldn't even be coming. Boyfriends and husbands hugged their howling girlfriends and wives, creating a very sad and depressing atmosphere. How swiftly a cheer of victory had died out into one of the saddest days of Mobius history. It would probably even go down as the legitimately saddest day in the history of Mobius's universe. After a few miserable seconds passed, something amazing happened. Sonic's hand began to move! His hand reached up to Sally's face and lightly stroked the damp, wet fur that had been soaked by the still pouring rain. Sally ignored it, dismissing it as somebody else's hand and refusing to let go of her boyfriend. Then Sonic turned his head to one side and opened his eyes slowly. The Chaos Regeneration had worked after all. His injuries had been so bad that the regeneration just required him to lie still for longer just to full fix him up. Sonic's face curled into a smile as Sally lifted her head up from his chest and stared into his eyes. Her tear-soaked eyes shot open and her jaw dropped.

"Hey…I love you too my beautiful queen." Sonic whispered

hoarsely.

"OH SONIC!" shrieked Sally ecstatically.

She hugged Sonic tightly and pulled the hedgehog into a deep, passionate kiss that made the hedgehog feel like a new Mobian. Sonic returned the hug and kissed his beautiful girlfriend back. The Royal Fighters saw what was happening and they all cheered delightedly. The atmosphere around them was no longer sorrowful and bleak. It was now the happiest kind of atmosphere they could possibly imagine. The Hero of Mobius was still alive! What a miracle it was! And how happy and grateful the Royal Fighters were that their biggest hero was still alive. Now he could celebrate Enerjak's death along with them.

"HE'S ALIVE! YES! SONIC'S ALIVE!" hollered Tails.

"Yes I am." said Sonic brightly, "Thanks for the Chaos Regeneration Knuckie, I really needed that." he added, winking at the echidna.

Knuckles just smiled with pleasure. He had saved Sonic's life. This was the proudest moment of his life and his father would be so, so proud of his son if he could see him now. Tails threw himself at Sonic and hugged him along with Sally, earning a chuckle of pleasure from the fox.

"I'm so glad you're alive Sonic!" cried Tails.

"Thanks buddy." said Sonic, "I thought I was dead too. I tell ya, Enerjak got pretty damn close! That Chaos Blast I used saved me! I'm glad it did too for I promised you a great day between us to help you recover from Finitevus's evil." he added, smiling heart-warmingly at his brother figure.

"Oh Sonic…thank you so much!" said Tails delightedly, "That sounds wonderful!"

"Indeed." said Sally, her eyes trickling with happy tears now, "And now Sonic's alive, he can still give you that grand day Tails."

"Indeed I can." said Sonic brightly, "For now though. One more thing to say…WE BEAT ENERJAK!" he hollered at the top of his voice,

"MOBIUS IS SAVED! IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD FOR US! WE DID IT! HOORAAAAAAAAAAY!"

He punched the air triumphantly, earning a tumultuous applause from his friends as they cheered with him. This applause would go on for many, many minutes and the Royal Fighters intended for it to go on for as long as they wanted it to. This was the happiest day of their lives and Sonic being alive had just made it happier. Sonic relished the cheering and the happiness that was carried all around his friends. The clouds up in the sky parted and the sun came back out as if nature itself was smiling at the heroes and their efforts to save the world. Mobius would live on for many more days. And the future would be brilliant and wonderful. And Sonic would enjoy every last moment he spent in it. After all, he had plenty of life left in him to have more adventures. And he already had an idea on his next adventure…

Footnotes:

See *The Terror of Enerjak

What...an...epic...finale!

Well here you go folks, the final chapter of Heroes of Mobius! Hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I've enjoyed writing it! But it's not QUITE over yet...tune in next time, for the FINAL time, as we get an epilogue to the entire series. You'll love it. ;)

Epilogue: After the Storm

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Dark Armada Epilogue

It was late afternoon after the Royal Fighters had stopped celebrating the demise of Enerjak and gone back home to NewMobotropolis. The other Royal Fighter teams had gone home to their respective countries via the warp ring that the Dark Armada traitor Roxy the Raccoon had given to the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters. Being as the threat of Enerjak was over, the Royal Fighters didn't all need to be together anymore. So now the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were left in New Mobotropolis to gather around and think back about the events of today.

Today should have been the day the world ended. The nefarious Chaos scientist Dr. Finitevus became Enerjak and destroyed the world, leaving few survivors and the world in a state of decay. It was a future that Silver the Hedgehog and Blaze the Cat lived in and they had tried time and again to find out what doomed Mobius and how they could stop it. They had been the ones to find out about the world ending because of Enerjak and they had warned Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends in advance. This vital information had played a key part in their survival of Enerjak's wrath. Because they knew what they were up against, they had put their all into surviving the battle with Enerjak whilst also trying to stop him. Thanks to the 109 Chaos Emeralds that Finitevus had used to become Enerjak, Sonic became hyper-powered and had defeated the evil god although it had nearly cost him his life. The Royal Fighters had celebrated the demise of Enerjak before returning home and now the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters were back together at home, there was one thing left to do. Silver and Blaze needed a trip home but Blaze's Sol Emeralds had been destroyed so they couldn't go home with them. Knuckles the Echidna had used the Master Emerald to super-charge the warp ring they got from Roxy, the only surviving relic of Dr. Finitevus now. Thanks to the Master Emerald, Silver and Blaze now had a Super Warp Ring. They could use it to

go back home. As for the Master Emerald itself, the Royal Fighters had seen to bringing it and the 108 Chaos Emeralds home with them so they could figure out what to do with the emeralds. Silver took the warp ring from Knuckles, noticing how warm it felt after the super charge and he smiled at him.

"Thanks." he said graciously, "Me and Blaze can go home now."

"You're welcome." said Knuckles brightly.

"Thank you Silver and Blaze, for everything you've done for us." said Queen Sally Acorn, shaking both their hands graciously.

"You're the heroes of Mobius." said Sonic, "Without you, we would NEVER have prepared for Enerjak's coming. Because of you two, we survived and now we're here to celebrate a day that was supposed to be the doom of us all."

"You're very, VERY welcome." said Blaze, hugging Sonic and Sally each, "It was our pleasure. We wanted Mobius to have a better future so a better future is what we've helped to bring."

"When you go home, can you keep the warp ring open so we can see what Mobius looks like in the future?" asked Tails the Fox curiously.

"Sure." said Silver brightly.

He flicked open the Super Warp Ring, the ring expanding to about five times its normal size and opening up a portal to Mobius 200 years in the future. The Super WarpRing was now the size of a huge window. As far as Sonic was concerned, it was like looking through a window to the future. Silver and Blaze stepped through the warp ring hand in hand and warped back into their future.

As they emerged from the warp ring, they both gasped in surprise and amazement. Their future was completely fixed! Nothing was a wreck anymore! Cities were standing tall and displaying amazing architecture and sky scrapers, forests flourished all around, grass covered the ground and beautiful water streamed through the rivers and into the fast blue ocean! The sky was a beautiful blue and

healthy, happy Mobians roamed around without a care in the world, going about their daily lives and enjoying themselves. Vehicles roamed through the roads and skies. It looked very much like Mobius back in 2144. The silver hedgehog and purple cat both burst into tears of joy. They'd finally done it! Their future was no longer a wreck! Enerjak had been the missing link in the chain of events that led to Mobius's destruction! They had finally got it right! Silver picked Blaze up and twirled her around, earning a giggle from his feline love interest.

"YESSSSS! FINALLY! Our future's perfect!" cried Silver ecstatically, "We prevented the end of the world and gave Mobius a perfect future!"

"Oh Silver…it's…it's wonderful!" sobbed Blaze happily, hugging the hedgehog tightly, "It's what I've always dreamed of! I'm so happy right now that I could just…just…"

"I'm happy too Blaze!" cried Silver delightedly, "All our hard work… and we've been rewarded with this! I hope this isn't a dream!"

"It's no dream Silver…it's the beautiful truth." said Blaze breathlessly.

Delighted, she and Silver shared a loving kiss with each other. Sonic watched the whole scene with awe, pleased to see that Silver and Blaze's future was finally what they wanted. There was a happy ending for everybody today. And how grand it felt indeed. Silver and Blaze broke up their kiss and waved goodbye to the New Mobotropolis Royal Fighters.

"Goodbye everyone!" cried Silver, "Enjoy the present! You can all rest knowing that the future is glorious now!"

"We'll see you again soon my friends! Bye!" called Blaze.

"See ya around future heroes!" cried Sonic, "And thank you!"

Beaming delightedly, Silver and Blaze closed up the Super Warp Ring, leaving Sonic and friends alone to enjoy their lives while they were happening. Now that Silver and Blaze were taken care of,

Sonic turned to his friends.

"How about that then guys?" he asked, "Finitevus really thought we were fighting for something we couldn't achieve. Well look at us! We have a glorious future that Silver and Blaze now live in and we're all still alive to enjoy everything!"

"Not all of us ah'm afraid…" said Bunnie Rabboh sadly, "Ah wish Geoffrey was still here to see this."

Sonic knew what Bunnie meant. Geoffrey St. John was a good soldier and Bunnie's boyfriend. He'd been a credit to the Royal Fighters but sadly, had tragically lost his life to the Dark Armada a few days ago. Sonic patted Bunnie on the back gently.

"I'm sure Geoffrey's looking down on us right now." he said, pointing up to the heavens above, "And he'll be joyful about the fact Mobius is at peace at last."

"Indeed sugah hog…" said Bunnie, crying tears of happiness, "We finally did it mah sweet Geoffrey. Mobius is peaceful again and no threats are around to end the world anymore!"

In her mind, she imagined that Geoffrey was expressing his joy to her. He would be so happy to see Mobius peaceful again if he was still alive now. Pleased that Bunnie was feeling better, Sonic turned back to his friends.

"So who knows what the future holds for us?" asked Sonic delightedly.

"Indeed blue dude." said MandyMouse with a pretty smile on her face, "We can live our lives to the fullest now we're still alive to enjoy them."

"We don't have to worry about any threats anymore." beamed Wilson the Dog brightly.

"What an honour it is to be at peace again! This time, for good!" squealed Ruben the Water Panther excitedly.

"You bet my loveable water boy!" cried Sora Prower, hugging her

watery boyfriend gleefully.

"We've fought hard for a good few years to get Mobius the way it used to be…and we've succeeded." beamed a very happy Amy Rose, "Oh I'm so happy! I just wanna throw a party and dance all night!"

"Please can me and Cosmo come to the party if you throw one Miss Rose?" asked Cream the Rabbit sweetly.

"Of course!" cried Amy, hugging her two best friends delightedly, "I'd be happy to invite you two! Heck, I'll throw a celebration party first thing tonight and I'll invite everybody!" she added, grinning widely at the thought.

"And I'll dance the night away with my sweet little Tails." said Cosmo the Seedrian happily, walking back over to Tails and hugging him.

"Me too my little flower." said Tails brightly, hugging Cosmo back.

"It's gonna be a fun party that's for sure." agreed Vector the Crocodile, smiling widely with his big, toothy jaws.

"Wheeeeee! Partyyyyyyyyyyy! Yahoo, yahoo, yahoo!" squealed Charmy Bee ecstatically, "I'm gonna enjoy tonight!"

"I'm sure you will." said Espio with a dry smile on his normally serious face.

"It'll be the party of a life time." said Shade the Echidna, standing beside Knuckles and holding his arm, "Me and you may not be the biggest party animals, but we'll have fun too right handsome?"

"You bet gorgeous." said Knuckles agreeably.

"Me, Sally and Nicole could provide all the food for the party if you want Amy." offered Abby the Squirrel, "I love to cook and make food, especially for a party."

"Sure, you girls have my express permission to provide the food for the party." said Amy happily.

"I can hardly wait to taste it." said Mace the Elephant hungrily, "I bet you'll all make good food for the party."

"Well tonight, we'll make as much as you can eat." giggled Nicole the A.I. Lynx, her holographic avatar winking at the elephant, "And you'll enjoy every mouthful." she added, making Mace beam delightedly.

"Am I invited too?" asked Roxy nervously. Being a former villain and how she'd once played Amy for a fool during her times as a member of Team Diamond, she wasn't sure if the hedgehog would let her in.

"Roxy, you came to us and betrayed the bad guys. That deserves an invitation in my books." said Amy with a wink.

Roxy smiled, touched by Amy's kind words. She hugged the hedgehog graciously, shedding a tear of gratitude.

"Oh thank you…" she whispered delightedly.

"No problem Roxy. You're one of us now." said Amy cheerfully.

"I agree." said Sonic, "Roxy deserves a place among us after all she's done for us. With her help, I was able to get my best buddy back." he added, stroking Tails's head playfully.

"Indeed." said Sally, "So Sonic, will you attend Amy's party tonight?" she asked curiously.

"Is the sky blue? Is grass green? Is water wet?" snickered Sonic, putting his arms around Sally, "I'll be there and me and you can dance until our feet fall off."

"I hope your dancing's better than our first date." chuckled Sally teasingly.

"Oh I've been practicing." said Sonic, winking at his girlfriend and making her feel weak at the knee, "And Sally…I've got something for you."

Sally was intrigued. What would Sonic have specially for her? The hedgehog then took Sally's hands into his own and looked lovingly

into her eyes. How beautiful the queen's eyes were. He could stare at them all day. Sonic then bent down on one knee, giving many of the Royal Fighters an idea on what Sonic was doing. Sally's heart began to beat excitedly. Was Sonic about to do what it looked like he was going to do? She contained herself as Sonic smiled lovingly at his girlfriend.

"Queen Sally Acorn…will you marry me?" he asked.

The pleasant shock that Sally received from the proposal made her feel giddy with joy. She hadn't expected Sonic to finally pop the question at last. Sonic wanted to marry her! Her dreams had come true at last! Sally broke down hysterically, her face the embodiment of happiness as she threw her arms around the Hero of Mobius and hugged him tightly. The Royal Fighters all cheered, happy to see that Sonic had proposed to their beloved queen. The two were going to be very happy together, that much was certain.

"YES! Yes, yes, yes! I will marry you!" cried Sally, "Oh Sonic, you've made my dreams come true! I thought you'd never ask!"

"This hedgehog loves to surprise after all." said Sonic with a wink, "I'm ready to try marriage and you're the girl I want to spend my life with from now till forever."

"I'm glad you feel that way." said Sally happily, "And while you're my husband Sonic, you don't have to take on the title of king if you don't want. You can still be the free-spirited adventurer that we all know and love. That was the man I fell for."

"Sweet! Thanks Sally." said Sonic graciously, "I think we're going to be very happy together."

Sally nodded agreeably and the two kissed happily. Tonight the Royal Fighters would party. And later on, Sonic and Sally would be married. This was one event that nobody could possibly miss…

A month had passed since Sonic's proposal to Sally and now the blue hedgehog and the brown squirrel were standing before a crowd

of happy, teary-eyed Mobians as a vicar stood before the couple, ready to wed the two. The whole month had been spent preparing for Sonic and Sally's wedding and now the wedding was here. All the Royal Fighters had been invited to the wedding and they were all in the front row seats, watching as Sonic and Sally were about to become husband and wife. Sally was a sight to behold, wearing a beautiful white wedding dress with shoulder straps, a sash around her waist and a pretend flowers around the hem of the dress. Her hair was styled into a neat ponytail and she had bracelets around her wrists. Sonic wore a tuxedo with a white shirt, a red bow-tie and golden cufflinks. He had surprisingly been allowed to keep his trademark red sneakers. Sonic had given the excuse that he felt more comfortable wearing them no matter what the situation was. Sonic looked very smart, something that made Sally feel happy to be standing beside him on the podium as their knot was about to be tied. They held hands and smiled lovingly at each other. Both were very excited about the marriage. As the vicar finished the grand speeches, he looked delightedly over to the beautiful bride standing before him. How beautiful the Queen of New Mobotropolis looked as a bride he was going to wed with the lucky man beside her.

"Do you Queen Sally Alicia Acorn take Sonic the Hedgehog to be your lawfully wedded husband to have and to hold?" asked the vicar.

"I do." said Sally with a smile.

The vicar then looked over to Sonic. This wedding would easily be the best wedding he'd been a vicar for. He was marrying the queen with the hero of Mobius himself, Sonic the Hedgehog! What could possibly be a better couple for him to wed?

"Do you Sonic the Hedgehog take her majesty Queen Sally Alicia Acorn to be your lawfully wedded wife to have and to hold?" he asked.

Sonic held Sally's hand and smiled brightly at her.

"I do." said Sonic, "It's gonna be the start of a new adventure."

Sally glowed. The fact Sonic was seeing his marriage to her this way

made her feel even more pleased she was getting married to him.

"I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride." said the vicar delightedly.

Sonic and Sally embraced each other lovingly and they kissed quite possibly the best kiss of their lives. They were married and they could spend the rest of their lives together. The crowd watching them erupted into a mixture of excited cheers and sobs of joy as the newly weds kissed. The two were going to be a very happy couple together. And as life went on for Sonic the Hedgehog and Sally Acorn, they knew that there would be many amazing things in store for them. And with Mobius at peace and no more threats, they could enjoy them to the fullest. Their marriage was the beginning of a new adventure. And it was an adventure that both of them couldn't wait to begin…

THE END

Aaaaaaaand that's it for Heroes of Mobius my friends!

It's been a thrill ride and a great pleasure writing this epic series for you all to enjoy. Three years and ten months of my life has been well spent writing this thing. :D

A big thank you to all who read, favourited, commented, followed and enjoyed the story and gave me great feedback over the years. I couldn't have got this far without you guys. ^^

It's a shame that this story's over now...I think I'm gonna cry...sniff...excuse me...

Again, thank you all for reading and I hope you enjoyed the story!